

20 December 2004

Irwin Grayson Associates are consultants in enterprise and economic development. I noted in the last newsletter that I had been to Africa almost every month. Well, it seems that set a trend for the year, though I have also found time to undertake work in the UK, mostly on incubator workspace. This newsletter summarises just a few of the assignments undertaken by David Irwin in the second half of the year.

## World Bank: World Development Report

The World Bank's World Development Report 2005 entitled "A Better Investment Climate for Everyone" was launched on 28 Sept. DFID commissioned a number of background papers for the WDR, one of which I wrote. WDR 2005 can be downloaded from the Bank's website at [www.worldbank.org/wdr2005](http://www.worldbank.org/wdr2005) as can all the background papers.

## Ghana: Supporting business associations

DFID has decided to create a fund to support business associations to engage in advocacy activities in an effort to influence the public sector. It has been agreed to merge this with a similar initiative already launched by DANIDA, the Danish Aid Agency. So I found myself back in Ghana in July to assist in the negotiations for the expanded fund and to encourage USAID to come on board as well.

## Start Here

Start Here is an interesting, not for profit, initiative which aims to make available to the public information on topics like health and employment as simply as possibly. I have been providing them with assistance to review their strategy and business plan.

## Uganda: incubator workspace

The Uganda Gatsby Trust and 40 businesses in the Mbarara Gatsby Club have bought a site of around 12 acres on which they hope to build small business units for sale. They have ambitious plans to build 72 units, each of 60m<sup>2</sup> which will be sold to members and possibly to other businesses in Mbarara. I went back to Uganda in November to help them with their business plan and their proposal for additional financial support to be submitted to DFID's Business Linkages Challenge Fund.

## Kenya: The enabling environment

For the last three years, DFID has been funding a project designed to improve the enabling

environment for business. This has had three components – supporting research undertaken by KIPPRA (the Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research & Analysis), supporting advocacy by the private sector (primarily through supporting KEPSA, the Kenya Private Sector Alliance) and public sector capacity building.

In partnership with a local consultant, I was asked to undertake the end of programme review. Whilst progress had perhaps been slower than hoped, good foundations have been laid. So the main recommendation was that DFID should consider designing and implementing a follow-on programme.

## Nigeria: Small business support

Earlier in the year, I prepared feasibility studies for business support in Abuja and Enugu. In October, I returned to Abuja to write a detailed business plan for the proposed Abuja Enterprise Agency. This will provide not only advice, training and consultancy to new and growing businesses but also incubator workspace and micro-finance. It is hoped that this will attract financial support from the Ministry of the Federal Capital Territory, DFID and UNDP.

## Incubator workspace

In partnership with Annabel Jackson Associates, David Irwin has won contracts from Stratford on Avon District Council, Wychavon District Council and Gravesham Borough Council to assess the feasibility of establishing incubator workspace. These studies are being supported by the Small Business Service's incubator fund.

The work on these is continuing. However, it looks like the recommendations will be different.

For the District of Stratford on Avon, the primary recommendation is to pilot a rural virtual incubator (tying in with an urban virtual incubator being launched by Coventry University Enterprises). This will be complemented by 'touch down' centres providing space to meet with customers and

suppliers, wi-fi, etc. In addition, it has been proposed that a private developer of incubator workspace develops a site at Stratford and experiments with satellite centres (each providing 4-6 units of 200-400 sq ft) at a number of rural locations.

In Evesham, we are proposing the establishment of a more traditional incubator workspace of around 35,000 sq ft providing around 70 units.

Kent Thameside, particularly between Ebbsfleet and Gravesend, is going to see an explosion of new housing over the next few years, with as many as 30,000 new homes being built. This makes estimating demand based on current business activities almost impossible. So we are recommending the preparation and adoption of an incubation strategy which will provide for incubator workspace at a number of locations

For further information about ways in which we might be able to work with you please contact David Irwin on 0191 241 1984 or at [david@irwin.org](mailto:david@irwin.org)

and of different qualities to cater for different types of business need.

### **Other**

I undertake occasional assignments for the Sainsbury Family Charitable Trusts and the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation.

### **Stop Press**

IGA has won a contract from the British Venture Capital Association to review the different ways that schools and colleges are introducing their students to enterprise and entrepreneurship, to identify good practice internationally, and to make recommendations for specific ways in which BVCA can contribute.