

Irwin Grayson Associates are consultants in enterprise and economic development. They undertake strategic reviews, programme design and assist with implementation on initiatives intended to provide support to new and growing businesses such as incubator workspace and finance. They provide policy advice to governments and private sector organisations. This year has been another busy year!

Advocacy and public policy

Private sector advocacy has been a recurring theme of IGA's work this year.

Ghana: BUSAC Fund

DANIDA launched the Business Support for Advocacy Challenge Fund in 2004 in Ghana to support business membership organisations, labour unions and the media who wish to engage in advocacy to promote private public dialogue with the objective of improving the enabling environment. This is also supported by DFID and USAID. In February, I was asked to undertake a review and to prepare the Monitoring & Evaluation Framework.

Kenya: Business Advocacy Fund

In addition to Ghana, DANIDA had also launched a programme in Tanzania. It decided, in 2006, to follow with the creation of a programme in Kenya.

Irwin Grayson Associates, in a consortium led by Enterplan, bid for this contract and was successful. The programme was launched in November and is now actively seeking applicants seeking grants and capacity building to advocate changes in public policy.

My role is largely focusing on developing a range of programmes and materials to assist in developing the capacity of BMOs to advocate.

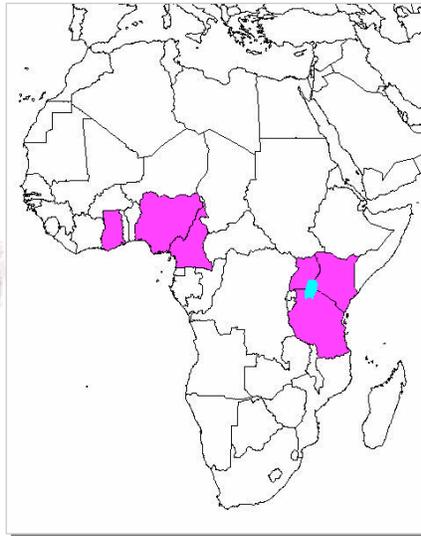
Tanzania: BEST-AC

DANIDA, together with DFID, SIDA and the Royal Dutch Embassy is supporting a major programme known as Business Environment Strengthening Programme. One element – the Advocacy Component – is intended to support BMOs with grant aid. IGA, with support from

Enterplan, undertook the Mid-Term Review in September, making a number of recommendations, of which the most important were to extend the life of the fund and to provide it with more resources.

African Gatsby Trusts

The Gatsby Charitable Foundation, in the 1990s, supported the creation of NGOs in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Cameroon.



These are similar to enterprise agencies in the UK and are aiming to support new and growing businesses, though with different services and programmes. I was asked to work with all of them to undertake a strategic review. They have undertaken such reviews in the past, but this was the first time that an outsider had worked with them. It was particularly fascinating that four NGOs, with broadly similar objectives, were so very different in the way that they aimed to fulfil their purpose.

Nigeria

Convention on Business Integrity

David Irwin has previously provided support to Integrity to help them with strategic thinking and business planning. They are aiming to encourage private sector companies to work ethically and not to engage in corrupt practices. Companies commit to the Convention, put in place principles and procedures and aim to meet the requirements to be awarded the CBI tick mark. In 2006, they appointed IGA to help them develop a detailed toolkit and manual to assist businesses that are working towards the tick mark. David Grayson visited staff, members and prospective members in November. The toolkit was launched in December and should shortly be available on Integrity's website.



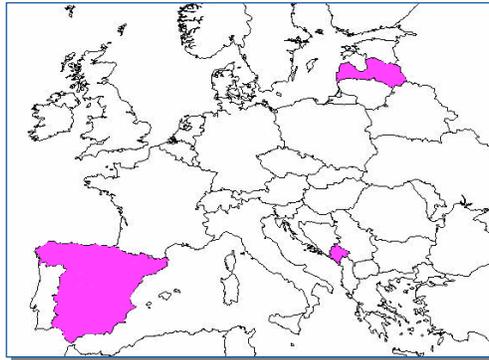
Small business support

IGA has continued to support the Abuja Enterprise Agency with training and mentoring support. David Irwin visited twice during the year as well as providing support by e-mail. This support will continue into 2007.

AEA was delighted when Peter Lilley MP visited in November to learn at first hand how the agency was supporting people to start in business. The level of activity has exceeded all forecasts. AEA has been particularly successful in persuading government departments to co-operate. They have, for example, an excellent partnership now with the Corporate Affairs Commission which makes it considerably easier for anyone wishing to register a new company.

OECD: Promoting FDI in Valencia

David Irwin was invited to join a multi-national team assembled by the OECD to review the economy of Valencia in Spain with particular reference to ways of improving the attraction of foreign direct investment. However, a major part of the review was to consider the support for SMEs and, in particular, how they could be supported to 'internationalise'.



The team included consultants from Australia, Sweden, Mexico and the UK. The final report is due by the end of December.

EBRD: Business Advisory Service

The European Bank for Reconstruction & Development manages a Business Advisory Service in around 18 transition countries. BAS is basically a subsidised consultancy scheme intended to support businesses with specific needs but also introduce them to the benefits of consultancy.

Capital Representatives was appointed to undertake a Mid Term review covering six countries – one in each of the regions in which BAS operates. I was invited to join the team,

undertaking the reviews in Montenegro and Latvia. The overall conclusion was that BAS provides a valuable service but there were a number of lessons that could lead to considerable improvements.

Supporting SMEs in China

DFID has appointed Enterplan to continue its work in China supporting SME Bureaux in Shenzhen, Lanzhou and Chengdu as well as advising on ways of improving the regulatory environment. David Irwin is a member of the team and expects to be visiting China fairly frequently during 2007.

FAIFarms

FAI Farms has an exciting proposal to improve the welfare of chickens through genetic selection. They had asked a charitable trust for financial support; they were interested but felt FAI needed advice on preparing a detailed proposal. I was appointed and found myself asking many dim questions which resulted in a more compelling business case, though FAI is still awaiting the final decision.

Other

I continue to undertake assignments for the Sainsbury Family Charitable Trusts and the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, both appraising organisations, mostly social enterprises, that have applied for grants, and providing support to organisations that have already been awarded a grant but who are looking for some external support.

Best paper in track

I continue, periodically, to give speeches and write papers. This year I presented a paper at the NFEA conference on micro-finance provided by the enterprise agencies. I co-wrote a paper on barriers to SME finance which was presented at the ISBE national conference – and won the prize for the best paper in its track.

For further information about ways in which we might be able to work with you please contact David Irwin on 020 7193 9984 or 07785 901020 or at david@irwin.org