

**Professional profile and current work**

David Irwin is a consultant in enterprise and economic development working with clients such as Danish International Development Agency, Department for International Development, Sainsbury Family Charitable Trusts, International Labour Organisation, International Trade Centre and World Bank. He has considerable economic development experience in the UK and internationally and substantial experience of assisting small businesses. He advises organisations wishing to set up initiatives to support businesses such as enterprise agencies, incubator workspace and equity & loan funds. He advises on regulatory reform, private public dialogue, private sector advocacy and ways to improve the enabling environment. He trains, mentors and supports business associations and others in dialogue, advocacy and negotiation. He provides strategic support to not for profit organisations, social entrepreneurs and social enterprises. He was awarded the Queen's Award for Enterprise Promotion in 2009. He is non-executive Chairman of Cobweb Information Ltd, which researches, publishes and markets business information for new and growing businesses. He is a Visiting Fellow in the School of Politics at Newcastle University and in Newcastle Business School at Northumbria University.

**Current & recent assignments**

- Team leader assessing the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Nepal (World Bank, 2019)
- Supporting chambers of commerce to build skills for advocacy in Sri Lanka and Bhutan (ITC, 2018-2019)
- Partner in a consortium managing Kenya's Business Advocacy Fund to support business associations advocating reforms of public policy (DANIDA, phase I: 2007/11; phase II: 2011/16; and phase III: 2016/20) and in a consortium managing similar programme in Mozambique (DANIDA, 2010/16)
- Member of small team undertaking a high-level evaluation of ILO's activities to build capacity of its constituent bodies: employers' organisations, workers' organisations and government (ILO, 2018)
- Team leader for programme known as Connect to Grow (managed by IMC Worldwide) intended to spread innovation and promote partnership between enterprises in India and enterprises in sub Saharan Africa or south Asia (DFID, 2015-2018)
- Assessor of UK commercial & international applicants for Ashden Awards for Sustainable Energy
- Appraiser & supporter of social enterprises for Sainsbury Family Charitable Trusts

**Previous employment****2000 to 2002      Small Business Service: Founder Chief Executive**

In March 2000, David Irwin was appointed first Chief Executive of the Small Business Service, an executive agency of the DTI, responsible for all the government's support for small businesses and a role as the "strong voice for small business at the heart of government".

I set a vision, subsequently taken up by government, that, by 2005, the UK should be the best place in the world to start and grow a business. SBS was responsible for the Business Link network in England as well as finance schemes such as the Small Firms Loan Guarantee, Regional Venture Capital Funds, a high tech venture capital fund and early stage funds. Achievements included:

- Creating and subsequent growth of SBS to 330 staff and £350m budget
- Ensuring adoption by the government and EU of Think Small First
- Mitigating effects of red tape through membership of Cabinet Sub-Committee on Regulatory Accountability
- Launching Regional Venture Capital Funds to provide over £200m for investment in new and early growth businesses



- Persuading Treasury to give extra funding to establish early stage funds (£50m) and to establish an incubator workspace loan fund (£75m)
- Speaking at conferences and seminars, including representing the Small Firms Minister at OECD conference in Bologna
- Establishing profile for SBS through personal contact with media including the Financial Times, the Sunday Times and Today programme.

### **1980 – 2000      Project North East, Co-founder and Director**

Before joining SBS, David Irwin co-founded Project North East (PNE), an innovative enterprise and economic development agency based in Newcastle. Achievements included:

- Growing turnover from start up in 1980 to £4m in 2000
- Staff increased from two founders to 95
- In 1985, won contract from Shell to manage LiveWIRE to encourage young people to think about starting in business; then extended to expand LiveWIRE internationally
- Creating first Youth Enterprise Centre, which became model for YECs in UK and internationally
- Initiating one of UK's first non-bank loan funds
- Developed & implemented Design Works, a £1.7m initiative to promote the importance of design & marketing to commerce & industry, for the Burton Group
- Working extensively with emerging enterprise agencies mainly in central Europe and southern Africa

### **1978 – 1980      Dunlop, Development Engineer**

Worked in electronics and IT in technical department of Hydraulic Hose Division

#### **Academic qualifications**

2015-2019	PhD (Politics): Newcastle University (part time)
1983-1986	MBA: Newcastle University (part-time)
1977-1978	Advanced Course in Production Methods & Management: Cambridge University
1974-1977	B.Sc. (Honours) Engineering Science and Management: Durham University

#### **Professional qualifications**

Member	Institute of Directors
Fellow	Royal Society of Arts

#### **Other**

Holder	Queen's Award for Enterprise Promotion (2009)
Winner:	EZI/AMBA Enterprise and Achievement Award (1990)
Winner:	Junior Chamber International – one of Ten Outstanding Young Persons, 1990, Business and Entrepreneurial Accomplishment

#### **Selected papers**

- The influence of business associations on legislation: the case of Kenya, Journal of Public Affairs, (2017) 17 (4) with Mary Githinji
- The Kenya Chamber of Mines: a case study in public sector advocacy, in The SAGE Handbook of International Corporate & Public Affairs, Eds: Phil Harris and Craig S. Fleisher Sage: London (2017) with Kariuki Waweru
- Business Associations in Kenya: the success factors, Journal of Public Affairs, (2016) 16 (2) pp.162-180, with Mary Githinji
- Building the capacity of business associations in developing countries to influence public policy, Interest Groups & Advocacy, (2015) vol 4 (2) pp. 185-204

(Full list available at <http://irwingrayson.com/igPapers.php>)

Has worked in Bhutan, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, China, Colombia, Czech Republic, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Honduras, Hungary, India, Kenya, Latvia, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, OPT, Rwanda, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Tanzania, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, UK, Uruguay, USA, Vietnam, Zambia and Zimbabwe.