

Advocacy and dialogue

November 2017

David Irwin has considerable experience in public private dialogue and private sector advocacy.

In 2000, he was appointed as founder CEO of the British Government's Small Business Service where, inter alia, he was expected to be a 'strong voice for small business at the heart of government'. He sat on the Ministerial Panel for Regulatory Accountability. He persuaded the government to adopt a government wide policy for its approach to small business: Think Small First. He influenced a considerable number of government regulations and legislation – including taking a business-friendly approach to flexible working and introducing Business Improvement Districts rather than levying supplementary rates on business. He persuaded the government to adopt a policy of always seeking to consult with business and allowing a minimum period of 12 weeks. He was responsible for 350 staff and a budget of £350m.

Since leaving the SBS, he has been working in the UK and internationally in enterprise and economic development. Assignments focusing on regulatory reform, dialogue and advocacy include:

ILO (Africa, MENA & Asia)

- Undertook evaluation of programme of support for Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce & Industry (2017)
- Undertook evaluation of programme of support for Employers' Organisations in 11 countries including field missions to Cambodia, Vietnam and Zambia (2016)
- Invited to Beirut to present key note address at conference of Employers' Organisations from Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan and Yemen (2016)
- Training course for Jordan Chamber of Industry to improve their approach to strategy, dialogue and advocacy (2016)
- Invited to participate in Symposium on Future of Employer and Business Organizations: Adaptations and Transformations, Konstanz (2015)

Sri Lanka

- Appointed by ITC to assess the capability of three chambers of commerce in Sri Lanka and to undertake a training programme to develop the advocacy skills of those three chambers and others (2017)

East Africa

- Delivered workshops for the International Trade Centre on 'planning for advocacy' as part of ITC's programme of support being delivered under DFID's SITA programme, which is looking at 8 sectors in five countries. David has run workshops in Kenya and Ethiopia and is about to run a workshop in Tanzania.
- Ran an advocacy training programme for East African Business Council and selected business membership organisations. This was funded and organised by the International Trade Centre, who subsequently commissioned him to support the Chamber of Commerce in Burundi and the Private Sector Federation in Rwanda to prepare policy position papers on a specific aspect of the trade in services around east Africa.
- Undertook the design of a key component for TradeMark East Africa – to support private sector and civil society organisations become more engaged in the process of regional integration and more active in seeking to influence public policy at national and regional level. He subsequently started to implement the programme in advance of the appointment of staff



Kenya

- Partnered with Coffey International Development to manage the DANIDA funded Business Advocacy Programme from 2006 to 2011 – assisting business membership organisations with capacity building and grants to support them to advocate change in public policy, achieving some 56 policy ‘wins’. The consortium won the contract for second phase of support, which started at the beginning of 2012 and ran until 2016. We have now won the contract for a third phase of support which will last until 2020. As well as providing support to manage this programme, I contribute to training of business membership organisations and have been working directly with organisations to write policy position statements. I have been training mentors of business membership organisations.
- Undertook an institutional review for KEPSA (the successor organisation to the Private Sector Forum), with a view to putting in place an appropriate strategy for private sector influencing of the government, together with an organisational structure, covering both staff and volunteers, able to implement the strategy. Outcome was that DFID agreed to continue providing financial support (DFID, 2004)
- Undertook the end of programme ‘output to purpose’ review for the DFID funded ‘umbrella project’ contributing to efforts to simplify the enabling environment. The outcome was a detailed report assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the programme, together with recommendations of which the two key ones were to extend the programme for six months and to design a new programme. (DFID, 2004)
- Worked with the Private Sector Forum to develop strategy for bringing together the private sector in order to influence more effectively public policy formulation. This included a review of regulation and suggestions for ways in which the effects on private business could be mitigated. (DfID, 2002)

Tanzania

- Leader of team (with Annabel Jackson Associates & Coffey International Development) undertaking longitudinal assessment of BEST-AC; objective of LIA is to determine the impact arising from advocacy projects undertaken by private sector organisations (DFID, 2010-16)
- Commissioned survey, analysed results and wrote the Business Leaders’ Perception Survey for BEST Dialogue (2015)
- Undertook (with Annabel Jackson Associates) the annual review and project completion review for BEST (Business Environment Strengthening in Tanzania) Advocacy Component (AC), a programme intended to support private sector organisations to undertake advocacy and dialogue (2013)
- Organised, at invitation of DANIDA, the first conference of African business advocacy organisations (2012)
- Undertook the design of phase II of BEST-AC (DANIDA, 2009)
- Undertook end of programme evaluation of BEST-AC (with Annabel Jackson Associates), intended not only to provide assessment of the programme as implemented, but also to identify lessons which could inform phase II.
- Preparation (with Annabel Jackson Associates) of monitoring and evaluation framework for phase II of the SME Competitiveness Facility, a programme designed to support clusters of small and micro-businesses working in food, food processing and food marketing build market linkages
- Undertook the mid-term review of BEST-AC (with Coffey). The objective was not only to assess effectiveness and impact of fund to date but also to make recommendations for future development (DANIDA, 2006)

Mozambique

- Member of consortium that has won the contract from DANIDA to manage an advocacy support programme, known as FAN: Fundo para Ambiente de Negocios, which started in the middle of 2011 and lasted until mid-2016.

Nigeria

- Undertook 2012 annual review of ENABLE, a DFID funded advocacy support programme working in Nigeria
-

- Assisted ENABLE to publish a survey of Business Leaders' Perception of the Enabling Environment
- Undertook the first annual review of ENABLE
- Prepared a booklet for ENABLE introducing the first stage of the five step approach to advocacy
- Undertook a review of public private dialogue and advocacy activities in four states (Kano, Kaduna, Lagos and Cross River) for the World Bank
- Advised the National Economic Summit Group on a survey to assess the level and success of BMOs involved in public private dialogue and advocacy
- Member of team pulled together by the Policy Practice to design a pro-poor growth programme – in which my role was to design the public private dialogue component

Ghana

- Reviewed BUSAC (Business Advocacy Challenge) Fund and prepared a monitoring and evaluation framework (DFID, 2006)
- Persuaded DFID to support BUSAC and partially redesigned the programme to meet DFID's objectives. One of the outcomes of the work with the Private Enterprise Foundation (see below) was a proposal that DFID might consider providing support, perhaps on a challenge basis, to business membership organisations to strengthen their capacity to undertake effective advocacy. DFID agreed that this was worth exploring so I was commissioned to undertake a design study. However, it transpired that DANIDA was launching a challenge fund with almost identical objectives, so we worked instead to enable DFID to provide financial support to that fund, though this also required renegotiating some of the objectives to meet DFID's needs. I returned later in the year to negotiate the final programme and again in early 2005 to finalise the MoU. (DFID, 2004/5)
- Worked with the Private Enterprise Foundation to develop a strategy to assist the private sector speak with a common voice in order to influence public policy formulation more effectively. This included a brief review of some of the regulatory pressures and suggestions for a series of actions that could be taken by PEF to influence government, to strengthen the capacity of the trade and business associations and to provide a forum for the private sector to debate their position and agree common approaches. (DFID, 2003)

Zimbabwe

- Undertook the first annual review of DFID's Business Enabling Environment Programme (BEEP) which has two components, one implemented by the World Bank and a second, a fund to support trade associations, known as Zimbisa (DFID, 2015)
- Ran a training course for several business associations for the International Trade Centre and then provided support to the Zimbabwe National Chamber of Commerce to develop a policy position paper; subsequently ran a training programme for a women's business associations (2015)
- Supported the Zimbabwe Agricultural Competitiveness Program to research and publish Perceptions of the Investment Climate for Agri-Business in Zimbabwe 2011 (USAID)

China

- Member of team providing development support to SME support centres in cities of Shenzhen, Chengdu and Lanzhou. My role was specifically on the enabling environment looking at ways of improving the enabling environment both nationally and in the three cities that formed the focus for this project. (DFID, 2005-8)

UK & other

- Commissioned by DFID to write one of a series of background papers for the World Bank's World Development Report 2005, "A better investment climate for everyone". My paper was on 'Creating FDI Friendly Environments in South Asia'. (It is available on the WDR website and also on my website)
 - Commissioned by ONE North East to undertake international benchmarking of small firms policy implementation, performance measurement (based on outcomes rather than outputs or inputs) and needs assessment. (2002)
-

- Invited by ONE North East to be member of Financial Support Steering Group, one of five groups established to review policy in relation to small firms' support (2002)

Papers

- Irwin, D & Githinji, M (2017), The influence of business associations on legislation: the case of Kenya, *Journal of Public Affairs*
- Irwin, D & Waweru, K (2017), The Kenya Chamber of Mines: a case study in public sector advocacy
- Irwin, D & Githinji, M (2016), Business Associations in Kenya: the success factors, *Journal of Public Affairs*, 16 (2) pp.162-180, DOI: 10.1002/pa.1573
- Irwin, D (2015), Building the capacity of business associations in developing countries to influence public policy, *Interest Groups & Advocacy*, vol 4 (2) pp. 185-204
- Irwin, D (2015), Kenya's business networks: an inside circle? *Sage Open* DOI: 10.1177/2158244014565977
- Irwin, D (2014) Features of business association advocates in Tanzania, *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, vol 27 (4), pp. 306-316, DOI: 10.1108/IJPSM-02-2012-0019
- Irwin, D (2014) Doing business: using ratings to drive reform, *Journal of International Development*, vol 26 (5), pp.658-667, DOI: 10.1002/jid.2906
- Irwin, D (2008) Can the private sector successfully advocate change in public policy in Africa? ISBE conference, (*Winner of award for best practical paper*)

Books

- 'Advocacy for business associations', with Annabel Jackson and Penny Hawley

Other

- Maintains www.businessadvocacy.net, with hints and tips for business advocacy, and writes occasionally at advocacyinsight.wordpress.com
-