

GHANA

Strengthening Business Development Services Provision in Ghana

Report on Private Sector Consultancy Workshop: 16 June 2010

Over 800 companies were identified in different areas of strategic and technical consulting and invited to take part in this project. The project aims to engage these consultants in supporting high growth businesses. This will be done by linking businesses to private sector consultancies that are able to help them overcome business problems. The project is contributing by developing a consultancy management training course to help small consultancy practices to win and manage work with growing SMEs; and will provide guidelines for an accreditation service and advice on a professional development programme.

Report on Consultancy Workshop Management Information System for SME Development Ghana

This workshop was held to discussion with management consultants the current situation of commercial consultancy support services to SMEs in Ghana. The objective was to gain consultants reactions to the initial conclusions of the research and brainstorm how commercially supported services could be enhanced.

An on-line quantitative survey of consultancy practices in Ghana has been arranged at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/L72K35Y> . This survey will be open until the end of August but the preliminary results of the first 23 respondents¹ was presented to the event. This presentation is attached as annex I.

There was an animated discussion on the information generated by the survey which led to a brainstorm on the problems and opportunities facing consultancy practices in the country. The main views expressed during the discussion were:

- that there were a lot of one-person temporary practices formed primarily by younger people that did not survive long in the market place
- that small practices balanced work between donors and SMEs
- only larger established SMEs have the turnover and profitability to purchase consultancy services
- many people were surprised at the level of SME work reported, expecting the balance to be stronger towards donors
- that initiatives have been made in the past to create consultancy association able to accredit consultants and set ethical standards. Despite the donor support this had not worked in practice
- that such accreditation was important to overcome SME owner reluctance to use consultants
- might be the case that Empretec could establish a consultants forum to explore accreditation issues
- the main SME markets for consultancy work were likely to be:
 - technical areas
 - design of production lines, technical advice
 - building design and management
 - recruitment
 - bookkeeping and accountancy
 - ICT usage
 - strategic
 - improving management by introducing ICT based MIS
 - planning expansion
 - coping with changed market conditions
 - generational ownership transfer
- While a wide range of technical services exist it is difficult to envisage how to market and deliver commercially the strategic services
- Consultancy practices are not themselves always well managed with owners/senior consultants needing help on practice management
- That ideas, tools and management help was needed for consultants to start to provide more strategic services to SMEs

1 As at 4th July there are 36 respondents