



Business and Development Centre

Research and practical analysis on the impacts of business on development and the role of governments, donors and NGOs

www.ids.ac.uk/business

Business has powerful impacts on poverty, equity, human development and the natural environment

Political, private sector and development leaders broadly agree that business has a critical role to play in driving innovation, promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth and improving human wellbeing. Yet, there is currently little robust analysis of how business can best be mobilised for the achievement of development goals in areas as diverse as agricultural development, ensuring better health services for the poor and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Business and development activity is growing in these areas. UN Global Compact and the World Business Council on Sustainable Development have expressed an explicit commitment to engaging with post-2015 development objectives; multinational corporations are putting resources into improving sustainability and how they work with local communities, while international NGOs are working jointly with businesses where once this was frowned upon. Initiatives such as Business Fights Poverty are drawing together these diverse communities into shared dialogue and mutual learning.

Yet such initiatives are taking place while development challenges are growing in complexity: around climate change, food price volatility, market failure and pressures on land and resources, health crises and pandemics as well as the opportunities for innovation: around finance, around technology and around partnerships.



What can the Business and Development Centre bring to this?

The Business and Development Centre brings together thinking from business, economics, political science and development studies to tackle critical questions on the role of business in development, focusing initially on agriculture, food and nutrition, the green economy and public health. We take a “problem-oriented” approach, diagnosing obstacles to more effective business contributions in specific circumstances and for specific types of market challenges.

The Centre will focus on:

- 1. Alignment between business objectives and development goals.** Alignment is shaped by short-term interests, long-term strategic considerations and immediate moral imperatives, but how can it be shaped and reinforced in the context of specific development challenges, such as tackling antimicrobial resistance or enhancing infant access to nutritious foods?
- 2. Understanding business potential and limits.** Where can business make the most substantial contributions to the achievement of development goals, where is business impact detrimental, and where might other mechanisms, such as public action or social enterprises deliver development goals more effectively?
- 3. Identifying priorities and being strategic.** Businesses offer many different ways to engage with development initiatives, but which forms of engagement are likely to deliver the best returns and provide the best use of the scarce resources of both businesses and development agents.
- 4. Achieving large-scale impact.** How do we move beyond piecemeal interventions around business and development to create systemic change?

Alongside its Director Professor John Humphrey, nine IDS researchers and a range of global institutions will be associated with the work of the centre, which as well as conducting and publishing new research, will bring together businesses, policymakers and researchers to discuss ways forward.

Why IDS?

A centre of academic excellence in research, teaching and learning

The centre builds on IDS’s understanding and experience of how markets affect the lives of the poor. We have a track record of generating original, empirically-based knowledge and policy strategies on a range of areas, such as the role of Chinese entrepreneurs in African development, and how businesses can best meet the challenge of undernutrition. Our research draws on mixed methods that include quantitative analysis, in-depth fieldwork interviews, impact assessments, political economy analysis and new approaches such as ‘green growth diagnostics’.

Masters in Globalisation, Business and Development

Teaching the next generation of business and development practitioners, our MA examines the key elements of business, international development and private sector development.

A global network of partnerships

Our extensive networks involve practitioners, policymakers and research partners from around the world. These include, for example, the Future Health System research consortium, aimed at promoting a greater shared understanding and analysis of how health market systems can better serve the needs of the poor in low- and middle-income countries; work with researchers in South Asia on improving market provision of nutrient-rich food for the poor; and working with researchers in China, India and sub-Saharan Africa on the role of business in the green transformation.

Agri-food business and agricultural trade

Trends in the global business of producing food through agriculture, or 'agri-food' business, have substantial impacts on farmers and workers involved in its production and processing, many of whom are in developing countries. A number of donors are also aiming to connect agriculture to nutrition by making their agricultural projects 'nutrition sensitive' in addition to increasing yields and incomes.

IDS is exploring the impacts of changes in global agri-food business around:

- Public-private partnerships (PPPs) in agriculture – identifying and supporting innovative PPPs to improve nutrition; additionally, to bring sustained improvements in smallholder livelihoods and positive outcomes across rural communities
- Food safety and quality – examining how stricter food safety and quality standards, both public and private, have the potential to exclude developing countries from international trade
- Food system scenarios and climate modelling and standards compliance – exploring how a global value chain framework can be used to improve capacity-building efforts directed at compliance with food safety and quality standards in international trade.
- Trade structures – looking at value chains for processed agri-food products, and considering whether these provide greater scope to include more small-scale producers.

Partners

Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), Sokoine University of Agriculture and University of Ghana.

Key projects

- Framework for Assessing the Impacts of Efforts to Enhance Access to Nutritious Foods
- Partnering for Better Food
- Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) in Agriculture: Enabling Factors and Impact on the Rural Poor
- Strengthening Agri-food Value Chains for Nutrition

Key publications

Maestre, M., Robinson, E., Humphrey, J. and Henson, S. (2014) 'The Role of Businesses in Providing Nutrient-Rich Foods for the Poor: A Case Study in Tanzania', *IDS Evidence Report 52*, Brighton: IDS

Henson, S., Humphrey, J. and McClafferty, B. (2013) *Nutritious Agriculture by Design: A Tool for Program Planning*, *GAIN-IDS Discussion Paper*, Switzerland: GAIN

Anim-Somuah, H., Henson, S., Humphrey, J. and Robinson, E. (2014) 'Policy Guidelines: Enhancing Markets for Nutrient-Dense Foods in Ghana', *IDS Evidence Report 28*, Brighton: IDS

Willenbockel, D. (2012) *Extreme Weather Events and Crop Price Spikes in a Changing Climate: Illustrative Global Simulation Scenario*, Oxford, Oxfam

Key contacts

John Humphrey, Jodie Thorpe and Spencer Henson

Business from the BRICS

The IDS Rising Powers in International Development programme looks at the role of the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) in international development cooperation, to produce new evidence and practical guidance.

The Business and Development Centre is collaborating on themes that focus on the nature of the engagement of different BRICS business sectors in Africa, from large companies to small and medium-sized enterprises.



What business practices do companies from rising powers bring to Africa, and how do these compare with northern-based companies and with the practices of domestic businesses?

Work is also ongoing on key sectors including energy, climate change and agriculture.

Partners

This programme draws upon IDS' strong existing networks of research partners in the rising power countries, including, the South African Institute of International Affairs and the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration.

Key projects

- Businesses from the rising powers as development actors in Africa
- China-UK Cooperation on African Trade
- BRICS Economic Engagement Studies

Key publications

Navas-Alemán, L. (forthcoming) 'Businesses from the Rising Powers as Development Actors in Africa', *IDS Evidence Report*, Brighton: IDS

Cirera, X. (2013) 'The Economic Engagement Footprint of Rising Powers in sub-Saharan Africa: Trade, FDI and Aid Flows', *IDS Evidence Report 43*, Brighton: IDS

Watson, N., Younis, M. and Spratt, S (2013) 'What Next for the BRICS Bank?', *IDS Rapid Response Briefing 3*, Brighton: IDS

Key contacts

Jodie Thorpe and Jing Gu

Transforming health markets

Health systems in low- and middle-income countries have evolved quickly into a complex mix of financing and services from a range of public and private sector providers. This has resulted in clear gaps in coverage but also patches of excellence. The challenge now is to ensure access to safe, effective and affordable health services for all.

We provide:

- Analyses of health markets; insights into regulatory approaches; and assessments of partnerships between state and non-state actors to tackle defined health issues
- Research into innovations that support quality and affordable health services for the poor, with a focus on the role for information and communication technologies and point-of-care diagnostics
- Support for cross-boundary learning platforms to support rapid synthesis and sharing of health market information.

Partners

The Business and Development Centre is a member of the Future Health Systems research consortium. FHS is a partnership of leading research institutes from across the globe, led by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, working in low-income countries (Bangladesh, Uganda), middle-income countries (China, India) and fragile states (Afghanistan) to build resilient health systems for the future.

Key activities

Through the support of a number of funders and projects, we are currently exploring:

- How information and communication technologies (ICTs) are shaping the health knowledge economy
- How informal providers of health services can be harnessed to expand access to care
- How regulation can be effective in the face of pluralistic health markets
- How to stimulate innovations in health markets

We also convene a number of knowledge and learning activities. For example, we jointly convene The Private Sector in Health with Results for Development and Karolinska Institutet in collaboration with HANSHEP, a grouping of funders and governments.

Key publications

Bloom, G. Wilkinson, A. Standing, H. and Lucas, H. (2014) Engaging with Health Markets in Low- and Middle-Income Countries IDS Working Paper 443, Brighton: IDS

Bloom, G., Henson, S. and Peters, D.H. (2014) Innovation in Regulation of Rapidly Changing Health Markets Globalization and Health 10.53

Bloom, G., Kanjilal, B., Lucas, H. and David Peters, D. (2013) *Transforming Health Markets in Asia and Africa: Improving Quality and Access for the Poor*, London: Routledge

Peters, D. and G. Bloom (2012) Bring Order to Unregulated Health Markets, *Nature* 487 (7406): 163-65, London

Key contacts

Gerry Bloom and Jeff Knezovich

Business for the Green Transformation

The Green Transformation is the process of restructuring which brings the economy within the planetary boundaries. This area of work concentrates specifically on carbon emissions which contribute to climate chaos.

This green transformation is a political struggle in which parts of the business sector make the required investments and drive the change while others parts seek to protect their assets and oppose it. Our research examines the role which business plays in transformative alliances. This political assessment is an essential part of our green growth diagnostics.



Partners

Indian Institute of Technology, School of Public Policy at Tsinghua University

Key projects

- Global Power Shift and Low Carbon Transformation
- Green Growth Diagnostics for Africa
- Low Carbon Innovation Paths in China, India and Europe
- Political Economy of Low Carbon Investment in China and India
- Rent Management: the Heart of Green Industrial Policy
- Who Drives Climate Policies in the Rising Powers?

Key publications

Pueyo, A., Gonzalez, F., Dent, C., and DeMartino, S. (2013) 'The Evidence of Benefits for Poor People of Increased Renewable Electricity Capacity: Literature Review', *IDS Evidence Report 31*, Brighton: IDS

Schmitz, H. (2014) *How does the Global Power Shift Affect the Low Carbon Transformation?*, Brighton: IDS

Schmitz, H., Johnson, O. and Altenburg, T. (2013) 'Rent Management – The Heart of Green Industrial Policy', *IDS Working Paper 418*, Brighton: IDS

Spratt, S. and Griffith-Jones, S. with Ocampo, J. A. (2013) *Mobilising Investment for Inclusive Green Growth in Low-Income Countries*, GmbH, Bonn: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Key contacts

Ana Pueyo, Hubert Schmitz and Stephen Spratt

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About IDS

The Institute of Development Studies is a leading global organisation for research, teaching and communication on international development.

IDS enjoys an international reputation based on the quality of its work and its commitment to applying academic skills to real world challenges. Its purpose is to understand and explain the world, and try to change it - to influence as well as inform.

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