

AN OVERVIEW OF THE BUSINESS FRAME WORK AND ALSO THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR IN SIERRA LEONE

Sierra Leone is still in the process of rebuilding its economic, social and infrastructural sectors. One challenge that SMEs however continue to face is the sustainability gap; something that can be blamed on the lack of adequate knowledge and entrepreneur skills that can help them manage their small and medium sized enterprises. There are several construction companies in the country also, however only a hand full could be counted as premier, even though they are branded as such. This is mainly because they lack the technology and equipment to do a lot of the jobs in the market. It is therefore a common sight to see foreign companies like the companies being awarded contracts because the local ones cannot adequately compete with them due to the reasons above.

I believe the key to development in Sierra Leone is through Collaboration. Sierra Leone has been making steady strides in collaborating with its international partners. One of the biggest challenges, that have been identified, is the management issue: we call it "Intercultural cooperation management. Sierra Leone and the region need to learn more about collaboration and regional transfer of success stories. Also, basic economic theory: in boom times, create reserves). Emerging economies have an "underdevelopment advantage" or "privilege of backwardness" in that respect. Learn from mistakes of others, share best-practice, speed-up regional knowledge transfer & uptake: shorten the technology & development gap.

The European partners from the construction sector have no (!!!) idea about Africa. On the other hand also the local partners have mostly only a few ideas about Europeans SMEs from the construction sector. With the intended BizClim project it will develop instruments for both sides: practical and fast to use instruments to prevent the cultural shock for the joint venture partners.

Here is an excellent story on engineering infrastructure open innovation to illustrate some points: The construction sector in comparative terms to yester years is booming. It is a common sight to see new buildings and roads everywhere in the country. This is primarily due to the government's drive to revamp the infrastructure of the country; building new bridges, roads, school, etc.

The quality of related work can be argued to be as per specs required. It is argued that we rather have the least standard than not having one at all. This is clearly made manifest by the rejection of the bids from Wan-Abu and Sal-cost in some major road contracts because of the related cost vis a vie quality of road works. This doesn't mean the works are substandard, what it means is that we went in for the minimum standard. This I believe should not be the case.

As stated earlier, there are several constrains facing the sector especially local companies, some of these are: availability of materials, equipment and capital.

There is also a need for profession training for most of the Engineers and Technicians so as to keep them up to international standards.

Information regarding related issues in the private Business and construction sector could be obtained from relevant ministries and other private consortiums.

The Biz project is an unique program and recommend it should be geared to continuity to enhance sustainability to the construction sector and SME to gain more knowledge in joint venture partnership.