

TBIF NEWS

A KIST / CITT initiative

The start of "Incubation within walls"

Newsletter No 5



New constructed TBIF Incubator Buildings

Key Achievements

Cooperation

In line with the second round of the Business Plan competition run by the Rwanda Private Sector Federation, TBIF participated in the sensitization program and pre-selection.

Linkages

On May 23, 2006 students from US Wharton School, representative of the Africa Development Foundation (ADF) and the Commercial Attaché from the US Embassy in Kigali visited Kigali Institute of Science and Technology (KIST) had a roundtable discussion on Entrepreneurship Development in Rwanda with the TBIF Team and clients.

Appreciating the achievements made so far, the ADF country advisor Mr. Don Welty donated Business Plan development software to TBIF.

Consulting

Additional 12 people received TBIF counseling on how to prepare viable business proposals and run successful businesses. Some of them have indicated interest to locate their businesses in the incubator so that they fully benefit from the TBIF support.

NEW CLIENTS

During the period, two projects were approved for funding, i.e. DAPE S.A.R.L and Rural ICT Development Centre (RIDC).

DAPE S.A.R.L. is a new jungle boots processing company, supplying to security firms in Kigali. The company started with four permanent employees and the number is expected to increase to eighteen. With TBIF support the company expects to increase its production and broaden the market locally and within the neighboring countries. It also plans to diversify and produce ladies shoes, belts and school uniforms.

Rural ICT Development Centre (RIDC), located at Ruhengeri, will mainly specialize in tele-centre and mobile training services. This will be the second rural tele-center to be established under TBIF support.

In both, developed and developing world, the private sector is considered as the most effective engine of economic growth and development. In the case of Rwanda, a number of initiatives have been taken to promote entrepreneurship and the development of the private sector, including the establishment of the Technology and Business Incubation Facility (TBIF).

Since the TBIF became operational by the end of 2005, it has been involved in training in business development, mentoring, appraising business ideas/plans and assisting clients during the implementation of their businesses, including access to finance and acquisition of capital assets. As a result of these activities, six new enterprises are presently operational and four are in their final stages of obtaining start up capital.

While the construction of the physical incubator building was ongoing the TBIF has provided Business Development Services to clients outside the incubation walls. The building was completed at the end of June 2006. The Incubator has capacity to accommodate 12 tenant enterprises and includes offices for TBIF staff. In addition to provision of (net)workspace, the TBIF tenants "within walls" will benefit from free internet connectivity, parking space, conference facilities, resource centre, postage services, common cleaning and secretarial support. Tenants will be able to share the use of other facilities at subsidised rates based on consumption, these services include photocopying, fax, scanning, digital photography amongst other.

The Incubation system stimulates networking amongst incubatees operating within and outside the TBIF space, between Rwandan entrepreneurs and other private sector stakeholders with the objective to enhance synergies between themselves, their markets and financial resources to eventually attain competitiveness in the market place.

Monitoring the performance of the TBIF clients, operating within and outside the walls, is crucial for the success of the incubation process and is considered priority by the TBIF. Unless business problem areas are diagnosed in an early stage it might not be possible to rectify them later. Regular conversation between clients and the TBIF facilitating team is highly encouraged, both formally and informally. Regular interaction enables the TBIF facilitators to ascertain areas where clients require assistance. It has been noticed by many incubator managers that it is not easy to get clients to provide financial information on their businesses and be actively involved in the incubation process. Creation of mutual trust is therefore essential and realised through group discussions and participation in the Incubation program.

Note of the Editor

Dear Reader,

During the period the Incubation facilities were under construction the TBIF worked with clients operating in their own market environment (incubation outside the walls). Presently we are pleased to announce that the Incubation facilities are ready and the TBIF is in the position to incubate its first tenants "within the walls"

The TBIF Team.

Reactions to: tbif@kist.ac.rw

Phone: 55103056

TBIF Manager Visits Seattle, Washington State in USA.

From 6-16 May, 2006 the KIST TBIF Manager was among the 3 people from Rwanda who visited Washington State, USA. The other 2 were from the National University of Rwanda (NUR) and the Ministry of Education. This visit was organized by the Washington State University and sponsored by the USA Government.

While in Washington State, the delegation had an opportunity to visit Williams Small Business Incubator in Tacoma, amongst other activities. This is an award-winning incubator that has been operating successfully for over 20 years. The staff shared their best practices for success as well as their forms and processes. The Rwandan team shared the Rwandan experience and initiatives that has been taken by the Government and other partners in the development of entrepreneurship and the promotion of the private sector, including the establishment of the Technology Business Incubation Facility (TBIF) at KIST.

During discussions, it was obvious that Mentorship is an essential part of Business Incubation. In that spirit, the business incubator staff in Tacoma agreed to be available for Incubation support required in Rwanda.