



International Management & Business Consultants

Case Study

Private Sector Development:

Funding of Development Initiatives in Disability Management

The DFID £2.4 million-financed Knowledge and Research (KaR) Programme on Disability and Healthcare Technology, managed by GIC, has funded a number of projects focusing on the development and testing of products which aim to improve the quality of life of disabled people in developing countries. These include spectacles with adaptive lenses, wheelchairs adapted to rough conditions, simple Braille writing machines, and low-cost artificial limbs.

Although the technology for these products has been demonstrated and proved, and although potential markets undoubtedly exist at prices which would support commercially-viable production, the organisations developing them have generally found it difficult to raise private venture capital or bank finance to start mass-production. As a result opportunities are being missed for business initiatives which offer attractive returns to their promoters as well as meeting real needs.

Based on its experience in managing the KaR Programme and its knowledge of business planning and investment studies, GIC therefore undertook a project for DFID to identify the reasons behind this problem. The study made recommendations to DFID on ways to help development organisations to mobilise private funding, either through the creation of new financing facilities aimed specifically at disability-related products, or through measures such as training in commercial and financial procedures which will make them more attractive to venture capital providers.