

WEBSITE POST

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Springfield Centre and Swisscontact join forces

The Springfield Centre (SFC) and Swisscontact (SC) are pleased to announce that from 7th June 2019 they have joined forces. The reputation of SFC as a global leader in inclusive market systems development combined with the technical expertise of SC in designing and managing large scale socio-economic development projects is a strong combination which, we believe, will address the many changes and challenges in global aid markets.

The mission of both our organisations is to reduce poverty and improve livelihoods through sustainable and inclusive economic development and, whilst continuing to provide high quality advisory and training services, the combination of SFC and SC provides opportunities to support larger programmes and to develop and deliver new services to corporate and philanthropic aid markets.

Both organisations are convinced that future development challenges need new partnerships that use synergies and build on complementarity. They are dedicated to leverage their rich experience and common track record to provide new, innovative solutions to development challenges.

“We share the same values and are we are fully committed to continuing our mission to deliver more effective and better development to make a meaningful contribution to long-term economic growth in developing countries; creating jobs and increasing incomes. The Board of Swisscontact and management team are convinced that, together, we can exploit significant synergies, increase innovation and strengthen the breadth and depth of, market relevant, services.” said Samuel Bon, CEO Swisscontact.

Jon Burns, from the Springfield Centre said: “The global Agenda 2030 and the related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are necessarily ambitious and successful delivery will require new thinking, including the development of new delivery and financing models, broader and deeper multi-stakeholder initiatives, much closer collaboration and new partnering models with the private sector, inter-disciplinary interventions, delivered through local and regional organisations and the appropriate application of new technologies. All donors and impact investors are increasingly seeking partners with significant quality outreach services which are characterised by greater flexibility and smarter, business-oriented, approaches. In this context, the ability to deliver larger scale and lower cost high quality services is becoming a fact of life in our existing and emerging markets.”

Rob Hitchins and Jon Burns will both remain as executive directors of the SFC business. Jon will take on the role as CEO. Rob will continue to play a critical role in the leadership of the business. In particular, he will be responsible for the training programme, as well as innovation in new aid markets. Since last year, Rob has been supporting SC to deliver the Australian government’s Market Development Facility in the Asia-Pacific region. He is also working on Seco’s Cocoa Sustainability

Programme in Indonesia. The senior management team of Roger Oakeley, Kate Fogelberg and Sarah Barlow will remain with SFC.

David Elliott will not transition to the new organisation. Jon and Rob would like to thank David for his significant contribution to the growth and development of SFC during the past 17 years and they wish him every success in his new endeavours.

A long common history

For nearly two decades, SFC and SC have worked together as partners in various projects around the world. Most significantly, our two organisations pioneered new market development approaches, financed by the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) and UK Aid, called Market Systems Development (MSD) for the Poor. These approaches have shaped systemic thinking in development around the globe and have since been adopted by many agencies.

Leveraging our experience

SFC and SC can together bring more value to our financing partners on one hand and leverage the synergies of our competencies in favour of our beneficiaries on the other hand. Together, we are a more relevant actor, combining research and advisory services with implementation capacity. By leveraging the wealth of experience and expertise of both SFC as well as SC we will enhance our capabilities to provide advisory, training and implementation services in a wide range of development activities and approaches.

Both brands will be retained. As a subsidiary of Swisscontact SFC will continue to operate as a stand-alone, UK-based company. The maintenance of the existing locations in Switzerland and the United Kingdom and thus the safeguarding of jobs is very important to both organisations. The terms of the transaction are not being disclosed.

About Swisscontact

Swisscontact promotes economic, social and ecological development by giving people the opportunity to improve their living conditions on their own. In its project work, Swisscontact facilitates access to vocational training, promotes local entrepreneurship, creates access to local financial services and supports the efficient use of resources with the aim of effectively promoting income and employment.

Swisscontact was founded in 1959 as an independent foundation of personalities from the Swiss economy and science. It is exclusively active in international development cooperation and has been carrying out its own and mandated projects since 1961. Since its foundation, Swisscontact has been close to the private sector. In 2018, Swisscontact was active in 36 countries with around 1,100 employees. The Foundation's registered office is in Zurich.

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About Springfield Centre

The Springfield Centre has been instrumental in the initial conception, development, and improvement of the Market Systems Development (MSD) approach. The approach and variants of it,

has since been employed by a wide range of donors in multiple sectors, with over £3bn having been programmed, sustainably increasing development outcomes of millions of poor and disadvantaged people. SFC has significantly contributed to understanding, defining and intervening in systems to catalyse change, and then monitoring and measuring it. It is renowned for its biannual global training programmes and for its strategic and organisational development work towards delivering sustainable and large-scale change. It delivers innovative working papers which address issues in an academic but expedient manner to influence policy and practice. These papers are widely used by policy makers. Its influential case studies have examined and advised on, interventions, sectors, thematic areas, or entire programmes over the last two decades.

The Springfield Centre was founded in 1996 as a commercial enterprise. It has since been providing advisory, training and programme implementation support, targeting the poorest and disadvantaged. Through the delivery of training programmes to over 2,000 development practitioners, and over 400 advisory and implementation support assignments for public and private clients, it has built a global reputation in inclusive market systems thinking and practice

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