

The OPIC Blog

Spotlight on OPIC Impact Award winners: Helios Investment Partners

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In addition to the direct financing OPIC provides to many projects in emerging markets, the Agency also supports development by providing financing to privately-owned and managed equity funds investing in emerging markets.

These funds serve multiple roles from providing capital to up-and-coming companies and guiding strategic decisions in rapidly changing markets to advising on best practices in management and information technology.

Since 1987, OPIC has committed \$4.4 billion to 63 private equity funds in emerging markets. These funds in turn have invested \$5.6 billion in more than 570 privately-owned and managed companies across 65 countries.



Earlier this month, OPIC recognized Helios Investment Partners LLP, one of the investment firms it has supported, with an Impact Award in the

Private Equity category. Helios focuses its investments exclusively on Sub-Saharan African nations and is led by Africans.

At the March 11 Impact Awards ceremony, Gregory Meeks, U.S. Congressman from New York, presented the award and lauded Helios for its ability to delve deeply into the unique national or regional context in which its investees operate, and use that knowledge to bolster its success. “Helios developed unique knowledge of the regulatory environment in each country, the social and consumer trends and the strengths and weaknesses of managers inside companies,” he said.

“As a result, its investments have improved the daily lives of Africans – from a young couple who needs a first mortgage to an entrepreneur bringing a new product into the market. Helios had the vision to bring liquidity to sectors vital to Africa’s long-term growth, such as telecom and financial services. And they have helped strengthen the management of countless companies.”

Founded in 2004, Helios was selected as a co-manager of OPIC’s \$110 million Modern Africa Growth Fund (“MAGIC”). Two years later, OPIC provided financing of \$50 million for the Helios Investors II Africa fund, for which it was recognized with the Impact Award. The strong performance of that fund led OPIC in 2010 to provide \$100 million in financing for a successor fund. Helios’ portfolio now encompasses companies in more than two dozen African countries.

In accepting the OPIC Impact Award, Helios Chief Operating Officer Henry Obi described many of the businesses it had invested in, in sectors ranging from technology to financial services to energy.

“Helios would not be standing here today without OPIC,” he said. “OPIC gave us our first break in 2004, and now we manage over \$2 billion, investing in all sorts of projects across Africa.”

<http://www.opic.gov/blog/events/spotlight-on-opic-impact-award-winners-helios-investment-partners>