

news

ethnic minority
business
advocacy
network

Issue two: Spring 2011

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Welcome...

Welcome to the Spring 2011 Ethnic Minority Business Advocacy Network (EMBAN) newsletter

A message from EMBAN's Interim Board Chair, Parvin Ali OBE



'Be an effective, and independent, national lobbying body for the minority ethnic business sector and you have our full support' — that was the strong mandate given to EMBAN, from delegates representing networks and businesses, attending the national network event in Nottingham last November.

Since then we have undertaken a series of very successful Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) briefing sessions across the country. The sessions not only demonstrated to local partners the benefits of cross-community participation, but also encouraged our members to be more proactive.

As a result EMBAN has been invited to deliver follow up activity for the emerging South West LEP, and EMBAN will sit on a new Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) group to ensure all communities' interests are understood by LEPs.

However, the immediate priority for EMBAN is to make the smooth transition from the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) and establish itself as a legal entity before 31st March 2011.

At their inaugural meeting in January, the Interim Board agreed the steps needed to accelerate the handover process and identify
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New EMBAN website

Useful information and key documents for EMBAN's stakeholders will be hosted on a new website at www.emban.org from Friday 1st April 2011.

The case for improvements to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) business support and other key documents will be available for download.

EMBAN's networking activity will continue through LinkedIn and Facebook.

...future funding to ensure EMBAN is a sustainable organisation. On 1st April 2011 we fully anticipate that:

EMBAN will be incorporated as a company limited by guarantee without shares

EMBAN will have its own website

EMBAN will take over its intellectual property from the RDAs including reports and resources spanning four years

EMBAN will have a funding strategy in place.

Yet in the midst of all this change it is important to remember that EMBAN is only as effective as its membership, and that the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) business networks remain our primary constituents.

So over the next couple of weeks we will be inviting the 200 networks currently on our database to become full voting members of a new network council and therefore eligible to nominate their representative for one of the two seats reserved for networks on the future constituted Board.

Meanwhile if you have any suggestions for the EMBAN Interim Board on its priorities or opportunities for funding please get in touch as we would like to hear from you.

PARVIN ALI OBE, Chair, EMBAN Interim Board

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Parvin Ali OBE, Chair, EMBAN Interim Board

Parvin is the lead for Business Support & Enterprise on the Board of East Midlands Development Agency, Chair of China Innovation & Development Association UK, co-Founder for Africa First and Founder of FATIMA Women's Network. Previously Member of the National Ethnic Minority Business Task Force and World Islamic Businesswomen's Network, based in Malaysia. She has presented on enterprise and leadership in over twenty countries.

Jacky Wright, Vice President and Chief Information Officer of IT&S, British Petroleum

Jacky is responsible for driving British Petroleum's IT Strategy and delivery of key enabling technology for all corporate functions globally. Jacky has previously held senior management positions at General Electric and Accenture.

Daniel Taylor, Founder and Managing Director, Metro Design Consultants

Daniel has led Metro Design Consultants in the design and construction of iconic workplaces including the Conservative Party's Headquarters in London. He is a Board Member of the Creative and Cultural Skills Council and is on the JP Morgan list of the UK's 100 most influential Afro-Caribbean business people.

Dr John Stageman, Vice President, UK Science Affairs

Dr Stageman developed AstraZeneca's competitive biopharmaceutical strategy, leading to the acquisition of two companies. John has recently returned to the North West as Vice President of UK Science Affairs. He has been a member of the North West Science Council since its inception in 2002.

Sarabjeet Soar OBE, Owner, ITM Economic Development

Sarabjeet has worked in economic development for more than 22 years, including as Chief Executive for Solihull and Warwickshire Partnership and as Assistant Director at Birmingham City Council. He is a Committee Member of the Institute of Asian Business and has advised the Government on finance for businesses.

Darryl Newport, Director, Sustainability Research Institute, University of East London

Darryl has held various positions including Head of the London Thames Gateway Development Corporation's Sustainability Procurement Project. Darryl is also leading the development of Dagenham Dock Institute for Sustainability Business Park.

Thalej Vasishtha, Managing Director, Paragon Law

Thalej is a Senior Solicitor at specialist immigration practice Paragon, which he founded in 2003. He works with companies wishing to employ skilled foreign nationals or companies seeking to trade with or invest in the UK.

Julie Lindo, Sector Coordinator, Congress WBN

Julie has led global strategic initiatives for Congress WBN, an international faith-based organisation. Her work has involved networks of professional groups, educational establishments, businesses, churches, national leaders, university students and technology centres.

Briefings explore ideas for engaging with Local Enterprise Partnerships

A number of EMBAN briefing sessions took place across England recently. These were designed to engage with leaders involved with the new Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), to inform ways in which barriers to ethnic minority enterprise and economic development can be overcome.

The events were held in Reading, Bolton, Warrington, Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield and Bath.

Event outcomes

There was a positive response from the representatives of the LEPs, and a desire to understand the needs of the BAME business community. Some of the key themes that came out of the sessions were:

- There is considerable uncertainty over the rationale and purpose of the LEPs
- A lack of recognition of the importance of diversity in delivery arrangements
- A sense that BAME entrepreneurs were being overlooked and not being seen as able to contribute to economic growth
- BAME business is seen as a social issue and not an economic opportunity

Response from the LEPs

The LEP representatives made commitments as follow:

- A further workshop to address barriers to BAME enterprise would be held
- BAME business communities were provided with channels of communication through special interest groups/forums.

EMBAN's response

EMBAN will respond to the outcomes by engaging and working with BAME business organisations in each area to work together and provide a single voice to feed into the LEPs.

EMBAN will continue to engage with the LEPs to encourage representation from BAME business organisations on the LEP Boards, particularly in LEP areas where ethnic minority enterprise makes up a major element of the local economy.

EMBAN will undertake local economic assessments and form economic strategies to fully explore the opportunities for targeted BAME enterprise interventions for both: addressing particular economic needs and capitalising on particular economic opportunities.

***“Diversity shouldn't be a minority pursuit, It's everyone's business.”
Professor Monder Ram***



We will facilitate and be a part of the Department for Community and Local Government (CLG's) ongoing monitoring of LEP engagement.

Angus Cleary from the Equality and Human Rights Commission said that he was very pleased that he had attended the meeting and learned so much.

EMBAN is clear that many BAME business leaders would like to be involved in strategic decisions affecting their communities. There is also sense that the LEPs will value EMBAN's input in attending to all communities' needs.

Colin Skellet, Chair of the West of England LEP, felt that there were two real opportunities where BAME community input could add real value: the Skills agenda and the link to jobs and job creation, and the SME business support agenda and the need to find ways of ensuring that the loss of Business Link is mitigated as much as it's possible.

**Contact us with your views on
office@emban.org
Call 0845 164 9018**

Taking EMBAN's findings to Government



EMBAN is communicating its findings on BAME enterprise and business support to the Government through a series of policy papers, helping policymakers to unlock the potential of minority ethnic enterprise.

This activity builds on current Government priorities which are focused on:

- Supporting start-ups and helping unemployed people become employed
- Improving online resources so businesses can access information whenever and wherever it is needed
- Addressing barriers to enterprise for all groups including women and ethnic minorities.

Meanwhile EMBAN is urging the Government to:

- Commit to engaging EMBAN in national policy development around business and enterprise, and supporting the range of its activities where it can, to support the growth of ethnic minority enterprise
- Commit to working with EMBAN to address weaknesses in the way these business services reach-out, engage with, and deliver services to BAME groups
- Encourage private sector business service providers, such as major banks and business organisations, to engage and work with EMBAN to address weaknesses in the way these business services reach-out, engage with, and deliver services to BAME groups
- As part of wider efforts to improve accessibility of public sector procurement opportunities to SMEs, engage with and consult EMBAN to improve the accessibility of these opportunities to BAME businesses

While there are already more than 320,000 minority-led businesses in the UK, there are many more would-be BAME entrepreneurs. EMBAN understands that by reducing barriers to BAME enterprise the £25 billion already contributed to the UK economy by BAME businesses will increase year on year.

Events of interest

13th Annual Dinner and Business Awards 2011

Thursday 31st March 2011

Leeds

Join more than 850 guests at one of the most diverse business awards and networking events which will also feature superb speakers. Book places at www.abdn.org.uk

Opportunity Now Awards Dinner 2011

Thu 12th April 2011

London

The annual Opportunity Now Awards recognise organisations for their outstanding contributions to gender equality and diversity. Book places at www.bitc.org.uk/events

MSDUK Supplier Diversity Day

Tuesday 7th June

London

Discover supply chain opportunities, take part in workshops and network with a diverse array of companies and business people at this event. Register at www.msduk.org.uk

About EMBAN

"The only independent body representing Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Businesses across the UK"

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