

## FACT SHEET

# Business Information Centres

An innovative, pro-poor business model for communities at the base of the economic pyramid

### HARNESSING THE POWER OF ICT FOR MSMEs

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has established the Business Information Centre (BIC) programme, as an impact-oriented, pro-poor initiative that caters to the needs of rural entrepreneurs.

The BIC programme builds on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and business development services as a tool to enhance the productive capacity and competitiveness of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), particularly in rural areas where access to information is a challenge.

The BICs provide demand-driven and sustainable ICT-based information and advisory services and training to MSMEs. The innovativeness of the approach was

### FAST FACTS

#### CHALLENGE

- Fragmented, out-dated information services for entrepreneurs, especially in rural areas
- Poor access to ICT services and training
- Expensive hardware, software and connectivity

#### SOLUTION

- Establishment of sustainable, private sector driven Business Information Centres (BICs) to provide ICT-based business information, training and internet access to rural entrepreneurs on a commercial basis

#### BENEFITS AND IMPACTS

- Improved decision making through tailor-made business information
- Relevant ICT training, entrepreneurial advice and ICT support
- Unprecedented access to new markets, technologies and services