TradeSift - International trade policy analysis

The Enterprise Panel provides a route to success

TradeSift is software for analysing international trade policy choices, it draws on an analytical framework using simple diagnostic statistical indicators that can be calculated with existing available data sources.

The core product is purpose-built software which enables the method to be applied coherently, robustly and flexibly. It can be packaged with training and policy advice supplied by Sussex senior academic experts.

The situation

Trade agreements between countries are notoriously complex and costly to analyse. They can have unpredictable effects on economies and the cost of mistakes are potentially high. Avoiding such mistakes requires developed and developing countries to invest in high-cost analysts and consultancy services as well as sophisticated modelling. TradeSift was developed with the intention of empowering policy analysts, particularly in developing countries, with nothing more than core economic knowledge to make evaluations for themselves at relatively low cost in financial and human resources.

Sussex expertise in trade policy is acknowledged worldwide and this project combines this expertise with software programming skills to help decision makers make quicker, better, and more easily understood decisions at much lower cost in cash and skilled staff.

Enterprise Panel input

The team had developed some software with the support of the UK Department of Business, but needed further capital to help turn it into a commercial product. They also believed University involvement and backing would add reputational value in future approaches to potential funders of development work. In addition there appeared to be direct and indirect benefits to the University from this activity – a judgement with which the Panel agreed. The Enterprise Panel were immediately sympathetic, offering funding and input from The Sussex Innovation Centre (SiNC).

The solution

- Business plan produced - working with SiNC team.
- University agreed to take a stake in the company.
- Funding provided to fund further development of the software and to scope out business infrastructure.
- Spin out company created that will be jointly owned with the University but run by the founders.
- TradeSift development is now well on the way, with a beta version delivered to the Department of Business, presented in Geneva to the World Trade Organisation and other international organisations as well as to academics, NGOs and private sector practitioners.

Outlook

The balance between sales of software and training and consultancy projects is still open and last touches are still being given to the commercial version of the software. The team have, however, every indication that this project will succeed in a variety of ways. Apart from being profitable and raising funds for the University we see it raising the profile of the University around the world, attracting students and providing work experience opportunities for our graduate students in particular.

Want to know more?

For more information about the Enterprise Panel and how we could help you please contact:

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