

# Doing Business in Africa

## Nairobi

5th Term MBA-II-2018

**Prof. Gaizka Ormazábal**

Academic Director Second Year  
MBA Program

**Prof. Alejandro Lago**

Production, Technology and Operations Management

# Doing Business in Africa

## Introduction

This course will introduce you to the reality of doing business in Africa. The African continent has long been considered outside the main currents of economic development, and, hence, has been overlooked in the agenda of companies and business leaders from developing economies. However, a more accurate reality shows that the continent has potential — still small but growing nevertheless — to the continent on a sustainable path of economic growth, and that will make countries less dependent on financial development new ideas and successful business models. It is showing business potential that will hopefully put aid and donations.

The main objective of this course is to help students experience in-situ this potential and expose them to the opportunities and challenges that Africa presents to business leaders. Some notions of world geopolitics as they affect Africa will also be discussed.

The course should also help students set the context and develop crucial ideas for the development of the Nairobi New Realities project.

## Objectives

- Understand the context: socio-economic, political and business
- Discuss new opportunities linked to key successful industries in Africa — agribusiness, consumer goods, tourism, financial services, natural resources, and others
- Discuss key success models with local entrepreneurs and managers of both indigenous and foreign companies
- Understand the management challenges of working in Africa, including political risks, people management issues and legal questions
- Increased knowledge of the African context
- Critical thinking with regard to a new business environment (assessed via class participation and a term final project)
- Multi-cultural awareness and abilities (assessed via participation in different cross-cultural exercises)
- Practice robust decision-making in highly uncertain and rapidly changing environments

## Competences

- Decision-Making
- Critical Thinking
- Judgment
- Communication

## Methodology

The course will be structured as a multidisciplinary seminar in which several professors and speakers will introduce topics in economics, marketing and operations, finance and leadership. Some classes will be taught through a series of African cases that represent real management decisions and students will have the opportunity to discuss the cases with relevant local managers. There will also be round table discussions with guest speakers and site company visits, and networking exercises with Kenyan E-MBAs.

In addition to the sessions, students will be asked to (a) prepare a logbook on their experience; and (b) prepare a short team paper-preparation (3 pages) on either an African economy, a relevant business opportunity in Africa or an industry of interest.

## Professor's Biography



Alejandro Lago is Associate Professor in the Production, Technology and Operations Management Department at IESE. He holds a PhD in engineering from the University of California at Berkeley, where he was distinguished as a Gordon F. Newell Fellow. He also holds a degree in civil engineering from the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya and has completed a Program for Management Development at IESE Business School.

Dr. Lago's interests focus on the management of complex operations systems, for both the manufacturing and services environments. Early in his career, his research focused on the optimization of large transport and distribution systems, and the design and operation of logistics partnerships. Currently his research interest has gradually shifted to the design of service systems, with a focus on studying the involvement of suppliers and customers in operations through the use of new technologies.

Before joining IESE, he worked as a researcher for the French Commissariat for Atomic Energy (CEA) and Institute for Transportation Studies (ITS). He also has extensive experience as a senior consultant in the area of operations and service management, having worked for large industrial and retail firms, airlines and airport authorities, and lately for banks and insurance companies, among others.

He also developed his entrepreneurial spirit by joining a California start-up during the 2000 internet boom, and is now a partner in several initiatives around the use of new mobile technologies.

### Areas of interest

- \* Logistics, Supply Chain Management
- \* Service Operations Management
- \* Operations Strategy

# New Immersion Realities: Nairobi Projects NAIROBIPR

## Nairobi

5th Term MBA-II-2018

**Prof. Gaizka Ormazábal**

Academic Director Second Year  
MBA Program

**Prof. Alejandro Lago**

Production, Technology and Operations Management

# New Immersion Realities: Nairobi Projects

## NAIROBIPR

### Introduction

During January 2018, a group of 60 full-time IESE MBA students will attend a Nairobi-based INTENSIVE module. As a part of this module, we offer the MBA students the opportunity to work together with local business leaders on specific business problems that Kenyan companies face.

At the same time, we offer the opportunity to local businesses in Kenya to have a group of very eager and prepared MBA students working on a short-term company project under the supervision of a local Kenyan general manager or CEO and with the support of IESE and Strathmore professors. These projects are jointly sponsored by Strathmore and IESE business schools.

### Objectives

**Students in the course will benefit from:**

- Developing skills to analyze a business issue comprehensively
- Developing experience to analyze a problem in the field and going beyond desk number crunching
- Understanding the implications of going from analysis to implementation
- Getting exposure to management issues in a different cultural and market environment
- Interacting directly with local entrepreneurs and managers

**Companies involved will benefit from:**

- A practical set of recommendations that the company could implement after the project
- The involvement of bright young professionals with a comprehensive business management education capable of analyzing the problem, and providing an outside view
- Discussion and testing of solutions/ideas from other economic contexts
- Cultural enrichment via the day-to-day interaction with professionals of different cultural and professional backgrounds

### Competences (Scope of projects)

The scope of the projects can be very diverse and multifunctional:

- Analyze market opportunities and define market strategies for new product/service introduction
- Elaborate a strategic plan for a division of the company

- Improve existing business processes (operations, finance)
- Develop financial strategies for growth

It will help students develop the following competences:

- Critical thinking with regard to a new business environment (assessed via class participation and a term final project)
- Multi-cultural awareness and abilities (assessed via participation in different cross-cultural exercises).
- Practice robust decision-making in highly uncertain and rapidly changing environments
- Develop implementation skills

## Methodology

In what follows, we describe the project structure, requirements and deadlines.

The projects will mainly consist of the following phases:

- **Briefing preparation phase**

- Companies submit project proposals to Strathmore Business School. Companies are visited by the IESE-SBS Course Team to interview and clarify the scope of the project.

- **Project kick-off: Problem definition and preparation of relevant information**

- Students are presented with the “Initial Company Project Briefings” and teams are allocated to projects based on student preferences.

- **Phase 1. IESE student off-site pre-analysis and definition of alternatives**

With the problem definition and the information, students will develop a “**Project Interim Analysis Report**”

- Analysis of the company situation and data (students may ask for additional company information).

Students must also elaborate a detailed plan of field activities for the full week in Kenya in which different tasks are distributed among team members.

- **Phase 2. Field work and Final analysis (concurrently with Kenyan management).**

MBA students will be in Kenya during one initial (academic) week or a second (project work) week.

## Professor's Biography



Alejandro Lago is Associate Professor in the Production, Technology and Operations Management Department at IESE. He holds a PhD in engineering from the University of California at Berkeley, where he was distinguished as a Gordon F. Newell Fellow. He also holds a degree in civil engineering from the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya and has completed a Program for Management Development at IESE Business School.

Dr. Lago's interests focus on the management of complex operations systems, for both manufacturing and services environments. Early in his career, his research focused on the optimization of large transport and distribution systems, and the design and operation of logistics partnerships. Currently his research interest has gradually shifted to the design of service systems, with a focus on studying the involvement of suppliers and customers in operations through the use of new technologies.

Before joining IESE, he worked as a researcher for the French Commissariat for Atomic Energy (CEA) and Institute for Transportation Studies (ITS). He also has extensive experience as a senior consultant in the area of operations and service management, having worked for large industrial and retail firms, airlines and airport authorities, and lately for banks and insurance companies, among others.

He also developed his entrepreneurial spirit by joining a California start-up during the 2000 Internet boom, and is now a partner in several initiatives around the use of new mobile technologies.

### Areas of interest

- Logistics, Supply Chain Management
- Service Operations Management
- Operations Strategy

# www.iese.edu

Barcelona  
Madrid  
Munich  
New York  
Sao Paulo



A Way to Learn  
A Mark to Make  
A World to Change

 IESE Business School

 iesebschool

 IESE Business School

 iese