



The story of AOG

The story begins, not in Africa, but Geneva. The seeds of what was to become AOG were planted back in 1986 when its founders, a group of ambitious young oil and energy traders, realised that their ideas had become too big for their employer. The choice between containing their ambition and breaking free to pursue bigger ideas was a relatively easy one to make, even though it meant leaving behind their comfortable lives, re-mortgaging their houses and taking a leap into the unknown. But they never looked back. And so it was, in 1987, that AOG was born.

From its inception, AOG has been characterised by a lively 'can-do' spirit and an instinctive ability to seize opportunities more quickly than less agile competitors. The choice of the addax and the oryx as symbols of the firm reflected this nimble approach as well as evoking the geography in which AOG would blossom: Africa.

AOG was characteristically quick to recognise the potential to invest and grow its business in the African subcontinent, a land close to the hearts of its founders. Its versatility in adapting to local business cultures, without compromising its firmly rooted principles of fairness and equality, earned it a reputation for integrity in a region where commercial exploitation had become all too familiar. Unlike other oil and energy investors, because AOG was privately owned and managed, it was not beholden to the short-term demands of shareholders and kept its sights fixed firmly on long-term growth rather than short-term profits. The approach paid off and the business gathered momentum, extending from oil trading into energy infrastructures, both upstream and downstream, under the Addax and Oryx brands.

The competition intensified as the group became a force to be reckoned with across sub-Saharan Africa. It took tenacity, focus and courage to stay ahead, as well as some shrewd and audacious initiatives, such as the launching of Oryx Gas in Cote d'Ivoire at a time when others were losing their nerve and pulling-out. Then there was the new sugarcane bioethanol and renewable electricity project in Sierra Leone, which became recognised as a model for sustainable development in a region that so badly needed it.

The flexibility to see and understand the world through local eyes, while maintaining a global perspective was another of AOG's key strengths. Perhaps it was, and still is, the eclectic mix of nationalities and cultures united by a neutral Swiss identity that enables such a clear and enlightened perspective to develop, free from politics, discrimination or compromise.

As the group grew and its fortunes rose, so the fruits of its social programmes became a more prominent part of its identity. It has consistently invested generously in sustainable projects that will help tackle the long-term root causes of poverty across the nations of Africa.

In 2009, shortly after its 21st birthday and with the frenetic years of growth now behind it, the time had come for AOG to prepare for a new phase of maturity. Consequently, it sold the phenomenally successful upstream business that it had created and re-focused its long-term vision on developing a portfolio of strategic property investments in Europe and North America, and other capital investments.

The same entrepreneurial curiosity, the same quick, intuitive thinking and the same open, straightforward approach that set AOG apart in the energy sector would soon be recognised in the property markets as its portfolio grew. Meanwhile, it still remains an adventurous, independent player in the international energy sector. Versatility has always been second nature to AOG.

And so to the future. With its sights firmly fixed on the long-term, AOG will continue to evolve and mature into an established, but never an establishment, firm. There will always be a twist of the unexpected, its quick reflexes and mischievous spirit being frequent reminders of its formative years.

Alert, principled and adaptable.

Three words that sum-up AOG and always will.