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# Katalyst blog series: Lessons from 15 years of implementation



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All blogs

**Before the market system development programme Katalyst closes, they are keen to share their insights.**

Katalyst, or its official name of Agri-business for Trade Competitiveness Project (ATC-P), is a market development project that aims to contribute to increasing the income of poor men and women in rural areas in Bangladesh. It does this by facilitating changes in services, inputs and product markets, which in turn increases the competitiveness of farmers and small enterprises. It is implemented by Swisscontact under the umbrella of the Ministry of Commerce, Government of Bangladesh.

The project started in 2002 and has gone through several phases since then – outlined in the table below. It is currently in its third and final phase, which started in March 2014. Implementation activities of Phase 3 ended in December 2016. However, a one-year extension of Katalyst has been approved by its donors, starting from 1 April 2017. During the extension period Katalyst will extensively be sharing its experiences and anchoring its knowledge and practices in various public and private institutions in Bangladesh.

|                 | Phase 1                 | Phase 2               | Phase 3                |
|-----------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Timeline</b> | October 2002-March 2008 | March 2008-March 2013 | March 2013- March 2017 |
| <b>Budget</b>   | CHF 26 million          | CHF 51 million        | CHF 32 million         |
| <b>Approach</b> | Innovating, testing and | Reaching greater      | Deepening systemic     |

|               |                         |                      |                           |
|---------------|-------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
|               | proving the methodology | scale in sectors     | change and capitalisation |
| <b>Funder</b> | SDC, DFID, SIDA         | SDC, DFID, CIDA, EKN | SDC, DFID, DANIDA         |

Up to March 2017, the interventions of phases 1-3 generated an additional net nominal income for 4.79 million farmers and entrepreneurs in a sum of USD 766 million. 380,735 of them were women and at the end of Phase 3, 76% of the beneficiaries were poor (average income of less than USD 2.5 a day); out of that 23% were extremely poor (average income of less than USD 1.25 a day). In Phase 1 and Phase 2 of Katalyst, it worked on 17 sectors to bring about a change in the market system. In Phase 3 of Katalyst, the project portfolio has been consolidated by focusing on three core sectors (vegetables, farmed fish and maize) with key topics (seed, fertilizer and forward marketing) and three cross-sectors (information channels, local agri-business networks and women's economic empowerment), plus an overarching mandate of capitalisation

Given the history of the project in implementing the M4P approach around 15 years, the project is house to a significant pool of knowledge and experience. A number of case studies exist on our [website](#). However here, in collaboration with BEAM Exchange, we would like to share some of the practical lessons, experiences and challenges faced by front-line staff during implementation. The blogs are spontaneous write-ups from our dynamic and young team of professionals giving an idea of what practitioners do on a daily basis, and they reflect the topics that staff felt they had real insights to share. The blogs will cover monitoring and results measurement, private sector engagement, and testing out tools in development.

We hope you enjoy the blogs. You are welcome to express your interest in certain topics/areas which we will try to express in our upcoming blogs/short write-ups. To express some of your interest please email [jannat.adib@swisscontact-bd.org](mailto:jannat.adib@swisscontact-bd.org).

> [BEAM Programme Index: Katalyst Phase 3](#)

## More in the Katalyst blog series

- > [Working on women-led distribution networks](#)
- > [Extracting valid information from farmers](#)
- > [Working with government](#)