

Management

01

Adaptive management

Fast, iterative learning and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances are critical to market systems approaches.

Market systems consist of multiple actors with their own goals and points of view and your programme will operate in complex, dynamic and unpredictable situations.

In the early phases of a programme, it's especially important to experiment and embrace trial and error. This is not always easy for programme managers to understand, especially if they're used to direct delivery approaches. So instead of trying to control every variable, try to manage adaptively.

Adapting lean thinking to market systems development

Navigate ambiguity and risk while using resources effectively.

Implementation doesn't happen in a bubble. The rules, procedures, and incentives that development organisations follow can enable or hamper programme efforts to become more adaptable. Donors also have an important role to play.

Navigating complexity

What's needed to support effective adaptive management.

A BEAM study examines the incentives and constraints to adaptive programming across the donor-implementer relationship - and how the behaviour that results influences market systems programming.

02
Financial systems

03
Donor relationships

04
Managing subcontractors

05
Communications strategy

06
Organisational culture

07
Building a balanced team

▣ **The road to adaptive management**

Examining the incentives and constraints to adaptive programming across the donor-implementer relationship - and how the behaviour that results influences market systems programming.

For adaptive management to work well, invest in:

- › **Structures:** prioritise learning and flexibility and embrace higher levels of risk and uncertainty
- › **Culture:** strong analytical skills and the confidence and creativity to make decisions quickly and responsibly
- › **Processes:** adopt new tools and processes, such as management, recruitment, analysis, communications, M&E, and financial systems that prioritise flexibility.

▣ **Managing complexity: adaptive management at Mercy Corps**

How organisations and programmes can be better at adapting.

What does adaptive management mean in practice?

- › **A high level of experimentation:** some initiatives will work, others won't
- › **Excellent monitoring processes** that feed a continual flow of information
- › **The ability to change** strategies, plans, and activities rapidly in response to new information.

▣ **M4P Operational Guide, Chapter 6: Management**

How implementers can move away from 'business as usual'.