



> Consultation Report

Executive summary

The BEAM Exchange

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Executive Summary

This report outlines the key findings from the BEAM Exchange (“BEAM”) consultation process. Between May and July 2014 the team conducted a four-stage consultation including key informant interviews, an online survey, follow-up interviews and data analysis. Our consultation sought to gather views on BEAM’s vision, BEAM’s audience, priority sectors, priority themes, knowledge sharing and networking, capacity building, practitioner incentives, key networks and BEAM positioning. Details for each section are outlined in the document, but headline findings include:

Who should BEAM focus on?

- Donor staff (both at headquarters and in-country) and the individuals and organisations implementing market systems programmes in the field were viewed as requiring the most support. Consultants were seen most likely to engage with BEAM.
- The principal barriers preventing practitioners from engaging with learning networks were identified as being limited time and budget. This suggests BEAM will need to explore ways to make it easier for practitioners to share what they learn, connect to the latest information, and help them write-up their experience and good practice.
- The Donor Committee for Enterprise Development (DCED), the former M4P Hub, the SDC Employment and Income (E&I) Network and the SEEP Network are important networks for BEAM to engage with.

What are the key issues and sectors?

- The consultation showed that the greatest need for support relates to the ‘how to’ of market systems approaches, e.g. analysing market failures and underlying causes and negotiating with the private sector.
- Priority issues included identifying systemic change, improved tools for evaluating systemic change and moving from pilot to scale-up. Nevertheless, priorities differed amongst practitioner groups, with job creation a key theme for donors, but not for others, for instance.
- Sectors with the highest level of interest amongst the practitioners we consulted with included labour markets, impact investing, agriculture and nutrition/ food security.

How can BEAM support and facilitate learning in the market systems community?

- To facilitate knowledge-sharing and networking, practitioners highlighted the value in more matchmaking, signposting to accredited experts and help desk services. Face-to-face events were also identified as an important way to build trust and relationships.
- To support capacity development, practitioners expressed the need for further support in exchange visits and mentoring. Suggestions were also made for facilitating the training market, such as adding on optional externally provided trainings to BEAM events.
- The consultation suggests that BEAM should strive to be inclusive, practical, complement other networks and facilitate the market rather than take a direct role.

Emerging issues for BEAM to consider

- Should BEAM focus on countries where a number of networks are already highly active, or where they are less established and programmes have limited knowledge-sharing resources?
- Messages are mixed on the degree to which BEAM should support work in conflict-affected environments (CAEs) and women’s economic empowerment (WEE).
- Should BEAM have a funding window for knowledge sharing activities? If yes, how will it ensure funds are fairly accessible and have sustainable market-building impacts?
- Should BEAM develop processes to feed back programme procedural challenges to donors and if so, how?
- Should BEAM carry out assessments of programmes across donor portfolios? Should BEAM support the standardisation of programme reporting and assessment?