

# The results achieved by programmes that use the market systems development approach

A narrative synthesis of current evidence

BEAM Evidence review 2019

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The DCED is a forum for funding and inter-governmental agencies to learn about the most effective ways to create economic opportunities for women and men living in poverty. The BEAM Exchange is a DCED platform for knowledge exchange and learning specifically about the market systems development approach.



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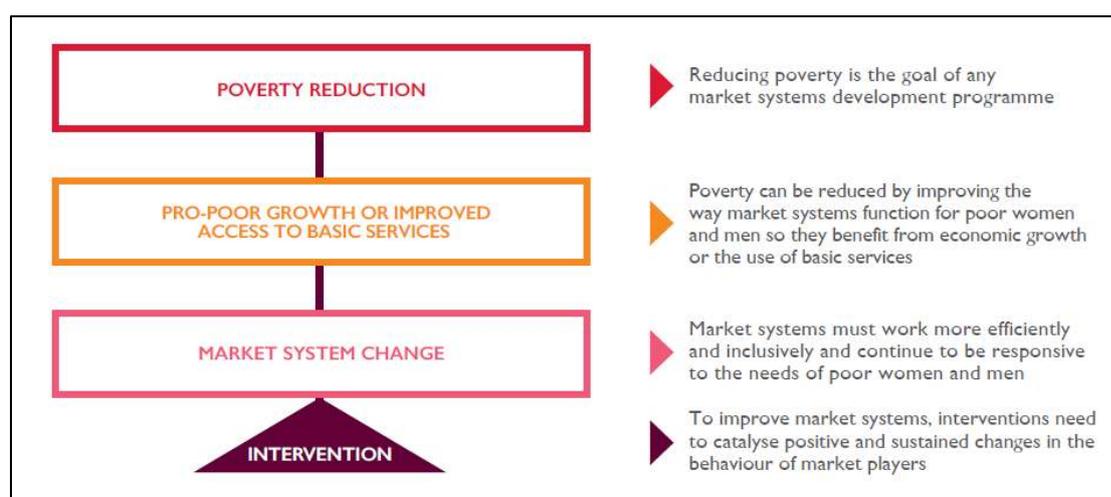
# The results achieved by programmes that use the market systems development approach

## Executive Summary

Market systems development (MSD) is an established approach to understanding and intervening in markets so that they perform better for poor women and men. Historically, private sector investment and enterprise growth has provided a reliable means for large numbers of people to find jobs, earn income and access services. However, in many contexts, this potential is not realised. Even when growth occurs, people living in poverty are often left behind: excluded or disadvantaged by the way that markets operate in particular sub-sectors, services or industries.

Programmes that use the MSD approach look at growth constraints, exclusion and disadvantage from the perspective of markets as ‘complex systems’ which are often beyond the control of individual firms<sup>1</sup>. They aim to address the root causes of these problems by instigating lasting changes that make that particular industry or service more productive, inclusive and resilient in future. According to the theory of change implicit in the MSD approach, if successful, this systemic change in turn leads to pro-poor growth or improved access to services. Hence ultimately to poverty reduction.

Figure 1 Strategic framework for MSD



The crucial question then, is ‘how well does the MSD approach work in practice?’

Donors, recipient governments and other stakeholders need to be able to hold the implementers of development cooperation and aid accountable. There are growing calls for evidence of results. Since 2016 the BEAM Exchange has sought to help decision-makers by gathering and collating documents that report the outcomes and impact of the MSD approach on businesses, incomes and the livelihoods of people living in poverty.

In December 2018 BEAM’s Evidence Map<sup>2</sup> held over 150 such evidence documents – meeting BEAM’s inclusion criteria to assure their quality<sup>3</sup>. By interrogating this database, this Evidence Review

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Koh et al. [2014] *Beyond the Pioneer*: [www.beamexchange.org/resources/106](http://www.beamexchange.org/resources/106)

<sup>2</sup> BEAM Evidence Map: [www.beamexchange.org/resources/evidence-map](http://www.beamexchange.org/resources/evidence-map)

<sup>3</sup> Evidence Inclusion Criteria: [www.beamexchange.org/evidence/evidence-map/methodology-evidence-map](http://www.beamexchange.org/evidence/evidence-map/methodology-evidence-map)

examines what results MSD programmes have delivered, whether they deliver value for money, and how they achieve systemic change.

## Do programmes that use the MSD approach deliver results?

The BEAM Evidence Map shows that many programmes applying the MSD approach do achieve significant results. We have evidence about systemic change – meaning markets working more efficiently and inclusively - from fifty of the documents (a third of the database). And evidence of how market system change is leading to poverty reduction in a further forty documents.

The Evidence Map also shows the breadth of the application of MSD approach across sectors and regions. Over two-thirds (72%) of evidence still relates to initiatives in the agricultural sector. However, examples of results are growing from the use of MSD in other fields, such as energy services, health services, financial services and tourism.

Using documents in the Evidence Map we explored five examples of MSD intervention initiatives in detail in order to understand how the approach delivers results. The cases demonstrate how adaptable the MSD approach is. It is being applied in diverse sectors from livestock silage and fodder markets in Pakistan, to business advocacy and policy reform in Nigeria. Each case demonstrates that working through various local actors with a systemic approach can achieve lasting change that benefits large numbers of poor women and men.

- In Malawi the MOST programme's initiative<sup>4</sup> worked with government agencies and private input-supply businesses to improve access to oil-seed inoculants. It benefited over 38,000 farmers in 2017 (with annual benefits valued at US \$ 3.7m). It was projected to reach over 65,000 farmers in 2018.
- In Indonesia the PRISMA programme's initiative<sup>5</sup> worked with animal feed firms to promote better pig-rearing practices. It improved the incomes of almost 50,000 farmers in 2017 (with annual benefits valued at US \$ 26m). This impact was projected to double in 2018.
- In Pakistan the MDF programme's initiative<sup>6</sup> worked with silage producers and livestock farmers and reached 11,000 smallholders by 2017 (with annual benefits valued at US \$ 15m). The benefits are projected to reach 100,000 farmers by 2020.

These examples illustrate the potential for MSD programmes to achieve systemic change that leads to significant growth and poverty reduction. Most importantly, the studies predict continued increases in outreach and income for these successful initiatives.

## Caveats with the BEAM Evidence Map

Some care is needed in interpreting these achievements. The scale of success in these cases is not representative of all initiatives undertaken by MSD programmes. Indeed, the entrepreneurial nature of the MSD approach presumes that many, even most initiatives (like most start-up businesses), fail. In well-managed programmes (i.e. that are responsive, adaptive and effective at learning) the costs of failures should be modest. So the measure of a successful MSD programme is whether, over time,

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<sup>4</sup> MOST (2016) *annual results report*: [www.beamexchange.org/resources/1163](http://www.beamexchange.org/resources/1163)

<sup>5</sup> PRISMA (2018) *progress report*: [www.beamexchange.org/resources/1132](http://www.beamexchange.org/resources/1132)

<sup>6</sup> Owen-Edmunds (2017) *MDF Silage case study*: [www.beamexchange.org/resources/1141](http://www.beamexchange.org/resources/1141)

the aggregate benefits of a few large-scale successes outweigh the costs of the more numerous small failures. Our findings in this regard are open to four critiques.

- Firstly, there is publication bias: positive stories are told, but failures are generally buried. This problem is not peculiar to MSD programming.
- Secondly, most of the evidence documents in the Evidence Map were commissioned by teams implementing programmes themselves, so lack clear independence. Their inclusion in the Evidence Map was justified in some cases by the programmes subscribing to the DCED Standard for Results Measurement<sup>7</sup>.  
In the cases of PRISMA, MOST and MDF their results measurement systems were subjected to a rigorous audit against the DCED Standard, which adds additional confidence to the results.
- Thirdly, we still have far too few ex-post impact evaluations which might look at the overall performance of a programme including its successes and failures. Only one was added in 2018.
- Finally, MSD programming does not lend itself to the most rigorous forms of ‘controlled’ evaluation (e.g. RCTs). Interventions are not uniform treatments that can be randomised. They necessarily evolve over time in response to changing knowledge and market dynamics. And market users (customers) are inherently self-selecting, making it impractical to prevent cross-contamination of ‘control’ groups.

In these regards the MSD approach is similar to other areas of development cooperation and aid that deal with dynamic problems in complex environments with multiple actors and functions. MSD has parallels with systemic and politically informed approaches such as Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA)<sup>8</sup>, with common characteristics of being locally led, analysis based, facilitative in delivery and adaptive in management.

## Do MSD programmes deliver value-for-money?

Individual MSD initiatives (i.e. intervention areas), such as the cases highlighted in this report, sometimes generate very impressive impacts. These cases show potential for future value-for-money (VfM) with projected benefits reaching hundreds of thousands of people, and worth tens or hundreds of times the initial investment of donor funds.

However, the picture is less clear when whole programmes (with a portfolio of intervention areas) are examined. Eight of the 58 new additions to the Evidence Map in 2018 were studies that assessed VfM, and only half of these already show clear evidence of programme-wide benefits exceeding costs. For others, we need to assume and project impact a few years into the near future in order to see value-for-money. Hence, it is still very difficult to draw definitive conclusions about the VfM of programmes that use the MSD approach. The amount of information currently in the Evidence Map documents is typically too limited.

Calls for VfM assessments are entirely legitimate (politically and managerially), and programmes could do more to improve VfM reporting and make the process as meaningful as possible. At a minimum, this means ensuring VfM indicators are appropriate to the programme’s theory of change. Implementers should also ensure that information about programme spending is clearly tagged to different areas of activity (intervention areas). This would facilitate more accurate attempts at cost-

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<sup>7</sup> DCED Standard for Results Measurement

[www.enterprise-development.org/measuring-results-the-dced-standard/](http://www.enterprise-development.org/measuring-results-the-dced-standard/)

<sup>8</sup> Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA), for example: [www.vimeo.com/album/5477026](https://www.vimeo.com/album/5477026)

benefit analysis, and potentially enable comparative VfM across interventions and between programmes.

Evaluators of MSD programmes face conceptual and practical obstacles that go beyond the caveats described earlier. The absence of clear benchmarks for what represents ‘good’ VfM, and how it is expected to vary across contexts, risks making cross-programme comparisons of VfM indicators spurious. In complex, dynamic systems long-term pro-poor changes that endure after an intervention ends are the *raison d’être* of the MSD approach. But attempts to project and quantify the benefits emerging from such changes can become quite tenuous. And evaluators still then face the additional challenge of determining what share of these benefits can be objectively attributed to a programme’s work.

VfM assessment holds out the promise of enabling us to compare programmes and interventions over time and context, ensuring that we maximise the impact of donor money. In practice, however, the difficulties above risk rendering VfM calculations simplistic or misleading. Consequently, we recommend that donors and senior managers treat VfM calculations with caution.

### **Are the principles of the MSD approach valid?**

Even though it may not yet be possible, from the available evidence documents, to make robust claims about the efficacy or value-for-money of the MSD approach in general, it is clear that many MSD programmes have significant successes. Even if these outstanding cases are merely ‘positive deviants’ from a more lacklustre norm, they are worth learning from.

The evidence from the highlighted case studies suggests that interventions in the private sector to achieve lasting benefits for people living in poverty work well when they apply the core MSD approach principles to:

- Address the root causes of weak system performance: to achieve scale and sustainability
- Be led by a vision of sustainable outcomes: working with incentives and capabilities in the system
- Play a facilitative role: catalysing change through temporary partnerships with market actors
- Programme adaptively: being flexible and entrepreneurial around the dynamics in each system

Additional factors underpinning success were strong team members and a high-quality results management system. We recommend these principles be supported and promoted in programme design by donors.

# The results achieved by programmes that use the market systems development approach

## 1. Introduction

Market systems development (MSD) is an approach to understanding and intervening in markets so that they perform better for poor women and men. Historically, private sector investment and enterprise growth has provided a reliable means for large numbers of people to find jobs, earn income and access services. However, in many contexts, this potential is not realised. Even when growth occurs, people living in poverty are often left behind; excluded or disadvantaged by the way that markets operate in particular sub-sectors, services or industries.

Programmes that use the MSD approach look at this from the perspective of markets as ‘complex systems’ beyond the control of individuals or firms<sup>9</sup>. They aim to address the root causes of poor performance; instigating lasting changes that make that particular industry or service more productive, inclusive and resilient into the future. If successful, this systemic change in turn leads to pro-poor growth or improved access to services. Hence ultimately to sustained impact for businesses, incomes and the livelihoods of people living in poverty.

Donors, recipient governments and other stakeholders need to be able to hold the implementers of development cooperation and aid accountable. So a crucial question is ‘how well does the MSD approach work in practice?’ Since 2015, the BEAM Exchange has gathered and collated documents that report the outcomes and impact of programmes that use the MSD approach on. The purpose of the [BEAM Evidence Map](#) is to help decision-makers and practitioners to design and implement better programmes, share knowledge and achieve value-for-money.

From time to time, BEAM Exchange then publishes a review of this material. The 2016 Review found that MSD programmes had credible evidence of impact and recommended ways that data collection should be strengthened in future<sup>10</sup>. The 2017 review concluded that the Evidence Map ‘provides a rich and varied description of the results of programmes that use a markets systems approach in a range of country context and at different results levels.’ It recommended more investment in impact evaluations and systemic analysis of results<sup>11</sup> These observations and recommendations remain relevant.

This 2019 Evidence Review will focus on three key questions:

- What results have MSD programmes delivered?
- Does MSD deliver value for money?
- How do MSD programmes achieve change?

The aim is to provide decision makers and practitioners with guidance on how to shape their MSD programmes to increase the probability for success and provide better return on investment. We also hope to demonstrate the rich documentation of the Evidence Map and encourage practitioners to explore further. Finally, where we find limitations in the Evidence Map, we suggest ways that programmes and donors can strengthen reporting, research and evaluation.

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<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Koh et al. (2014) *Beyond the Pioneer*: [www.beamexchange.org/resources/106](http://www.beamexchange.org/resources/106)

<sup>10</sup> O’Sullivan & Rylance (2016) *BEAM Evidence Review 2016*, [www.beamexchange.org/resources/813](http://www.beamexchange.org/resources/813)

<sup>11</sup> Robinson & Rust-Smith (2017) *BEAM Evidence Review 2017*, [www.beamexchange.org/resources/1011](http://www.beamexchange.org/resources/1011)

## 2. What is market systems development?

**Market systems development (MSD)** is a coherent approach to understanding and intervening in markets so that they perform better; creating lasting improvements in the livelihoods or well-being of large numbers of poor women and men. Starting in around 2005<sup>12</sup>, the approach has been applied in diverse sectors from agriculture to finance to water & sanitation in almost every region of the globe, to create jobs, raise incomes and improve access to services.

### Definition of a market system

A market system is an arrangement of actors (organisations & individuals) who produce and exchange a similar type of product, good or service or provide various market-supporting functions, in a particular region. Market actors may include both public agencies and private sector enterprises, formal and informal. They all operate in the context of formal rules and informal norms - also part of the system - that shape actors' behaviours and influence the overall performance of the system. *(adapted from Taylor and Donovan, 2016).*<sup>13</sup>

The MSD approach is different from much conventional development cooperation and aid. It starts by identifying the root causes of weak or exclusionary performance, in particular market systems. Instead of reacting to observed problems or symptoms with quick fixes, programmes aim to work by leveraging the actions of system actors (both business and governments). Through them, they aim to bring about lasting changes in incentives, rules, norms or supporting functions which ultimately improve the terms of participation in that particular system for poor women and men.

### 2.1 Principles of MSD

From practical experience the MSD approach has evolved four main principles. These are the core values and perspectives that guide MSD practitioners' analysis, understanding and decision-making:

#### **Principle 1: address root causes of weak system performance**

Sustainability and scale are the watchwords of the MSD approach. The reason programmes choose to tackle the underlying causes of exclusion or weak performance in market systems is so that results endure and improve the terms of participation for large numbers of poor people<sup>14</sup>

#### **Principle 2: be led by a vision of sustainable outcomes**

The MSD approach demands a credible vision of how things could work better for large numbers of poor women and men. That means working with the incentives and capabilities of the people and businesses (market actors) who have ownership of changes, so they continue to behave differently in future.

#### **Principle 3: play a facilitative role**

MSD programmes avoid becoming players in the market systems that they work in. They play a catalytic role and the art of facilitation is central to good implementation; offering time-bound and

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<sup>12</sup> The MSD approach evolved out of, and has close ties to work on Business Development Services (BDS), Value-chain Development (VCD) and the Making Markets Work Better for the Poor (M4P) approach.

<sup>13</sup> Taylor & Donovan (2016) <https://beamexchange.org/resources/1225>

<sup>14</sup> Further definitions of systemic change in Taylor (2016): [www.beamexchange.org/resources/819/](http://www.beamexchange.org/resources/819/)

balanced support to stimulate a market response. ‘Facilitators are external players... whose role is to stimulate and support change in the way the market works’<sup>15</sup>

#### **Principle 4: programme adaptively**

The MSD approach recognises and respects the dynamism and unpredictability of markets. Every system problem requires a solution owned by local actors. Programmes therefore emphasise flexibility, experimentation and adaption. Successful interventions are amplified, while unsuccessful interventions are allowed to fail fast.

## **2.2 Convergence of MSD and other approaches**

The MSD approach is not unique in converging on these kinds of principles and practices. As Ramalingam (2013) observed, many of today’s most pressing development and humanitarian challenges are complex and dynamic.<sup>16</sup> New approaches are emerging in various fields, including state building and social development (partly in response to disappointing results of conventional programming). The similarities with the MSD approach are striking.

**Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA)** focuses on tactics and strategies for building state capacity<sup>17</sup>  
Its framework and concepts encourage practitioners to focus on:

- Local solutions for local problems, best-fit over best-practice
- Being problem-driven: deconstructing problems and building solutions
- Positive deviance: promoting experimentation, entrepreneurial thinking
- Iterative and adaptive learning from implementation, supported by evidence-based feedback

**Doing, Development Differently (DDD)** manifesto<sup>18</sup> decries strict reporting structures and pre-defined results that inhibit entrepreneurial solutions. Instead it advocates:

- A focus on solving local problems defined by local people
- Ownership and legitimacy at all levels (politically and socially)
- Work through ‘conveners’ who mobilise those who have a stake in progress
- Implementation through rapid cycles of action, reflection and revision
- Risk management by pursuing success and dropping others

In the next section we will discuss how programming with these sorts of principles in mind creates particular challenges for the production of evidence.

## **3. Evidence production for the MSD approach**

### **3.1 The demand for evidence**

There is a growing demand for evidence regarding the impact, value for money, and what ‘works’ in international development. Funders, recipient governments, and other stakeholders in the foreign aid

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<sup>15</sup> Ruffer et al. (2018): *Evaluation of the MSD approach* [www.beamexchange.org/resources/1182/](http://www.beamexchange.org/resources/1182/)

<sup>16</sup> Ramalingam (2013) *Aid on the Edge of Chaos: rethinking international cooperation in a complex world*. OUP

<sup>17</sup> Harvard University Centre for International Development (2018): *PDIA Toolkit*  
<https://vimeo.com/album/5477026>

<sup>18</sup> ODI (2014) *DDD Manifesto* [www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/events-documents/5149.pdf](http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/events-documents/5149.pdf)

industry rightly want to hold implementers accountable for the resources used on their behalf. Moreover, there continues to be public debate on the effectiveness of aid.<sup>19</sup> A focus on evidence seems to hold out the promise of enabling comparisons between programmes and judgements on their effectiveness.

In private sector development impact is commonly reported as the number of poor people benefiting, the number of jobs created, or the amount of net increased income.<sup>20</sup> Increasingly, programmes are asked to show that they are creating impact in the most cost-effective way, often referred to as Value-for-Money (VfM). Common VfM indicators are cost per beneficiary, and cost of increased income).<sup>21</sup>

### 3.2 Adaptive rigour

Programmes that seek to manage adaptively face particular obstacles in demonstrating evidential 'rigour' and VfM. In the MSD approach the challenges to conventional evaluation arise because:

- a. Beneficiaries self-select to participate in markets (by selling their labour or purchasing a product). Identifying appropriate control groups to assess attribution is therefore difficult.
- b. The principle of working through market actors makes it harder to exert the level of control necessary to conduct experimental or quasi-experimental methods.
- c. The adaptive nature of interventions tends to make large-scale baselines or control groups redundant as the area of intervention, the relevant indicators, and the expected route to impact will likely shift during implementation.
- d. MSD programmes focus not just on direct beneficiaries but seek to create broader changes in market systems – which by their nature are harder to define and measure.

While evaluations have utilised creative methods to overcome these challenges, the cumulative effect is to reduce the certainty of any single piece of evidence, and make the evidence base correspondingly difficult to interpret.

As noted earlier, these problems are not unique to the MSD approach. This is explicitly recognised by DFID and USAID, for example, through the recent joint funding of the GLAM Initiative<sup>22</sup>. GLAM addresses the question: How can programmes be more rigorous in monitoring and learning from their work, while also being adaptive and dynamic?

GLAM's recent briefing<sup>23</sup> on the subject argues for:

- a documented, transparent trail of intentions, decisions and actions, so there is scope to change what is being measured and evaluated when and if needed.

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<sup>19</sup> Riddell (2014) *Does Foreign Aid Really Work?* [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2409847](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2409847)

<sup>20</sup> See for example the 'Common Impact Indicators' proposed by the Donor Committee for Enterprise Development [www.enterprise-development.org/measuring-results-the-dced-standard/](http://www.enterprise-development.org/measuring-results-the-dced-standard/)

<sup>21</sup> Jackson (2012) <https://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/49652541.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> Global Learning for Adaptive Management (GLAM) initiative website [www.odi.org/projects/2918-global-learning-adaptive-management-initiative-glam](http://www.odi.org/projects/2918-global-learning-adaptive-management-initiative-glam)

<sup>23</sup> Ramalingam et al. (2019) *Making adaptive rigour work*, GLAM Briefing, ODI [www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/12653.pdf](http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/12653.pdf)

- a shift from evaluation as something considered only at the design and end stages of a programme, to evaluative thinking as a capacity and process which is embedded throughout the implementation of an intervention.

It is important to note that similar thinking underpins the design of the DCED Standard for Results Measurement. The Standard provides a framework supporting private sector development programmes to measure, manage and report their results.<sup>24</sup> It addresses concerns around measurement of MSD programme results in a number of ways.

- Firstly, measurement frameworks are tailored to each organisation. The DCED Standard does not prescribe indicators or measurement techniques but emphasises the importance of developing intervention-specific theories of change and letting these guide the monitoring. This enables a single measurement framework to cover a broad range of possible MSD programmes.
- Secondly, the DCED Standard focuses on internal rather than external monitoring, which ensures that the monitoring is conducted by those who best understand the programme.
- Thirdly, organisations using the DCED Standard rely primarily on small sample sizes. This enables information to be gathered quickly and cheaply and used swiftly to improve the programme. It also minimises losses in the case that an intervention changes or does not work and enables measurement to be conducted internally.

This has not resolved all concerns about lack of independence and methodological rigour in measuring results of MSD programmes. Some of those reading this report to learn whether MSD 'works' or not are therefore bound to be disappointed.

When examining the evidence in more depth below we will look for evidence that MSD programmes have been successful in certain contexts. This does not show whether MSD will always work, but at least show that it has the potential for significant impact. Moreover, an in-depth analysis of the Evidence Map can give some valuable insights into how and in what circumstances results have been achieved. This will contribute to evidence produced by new approaches showing the benefits of locally driven, adaptive development.

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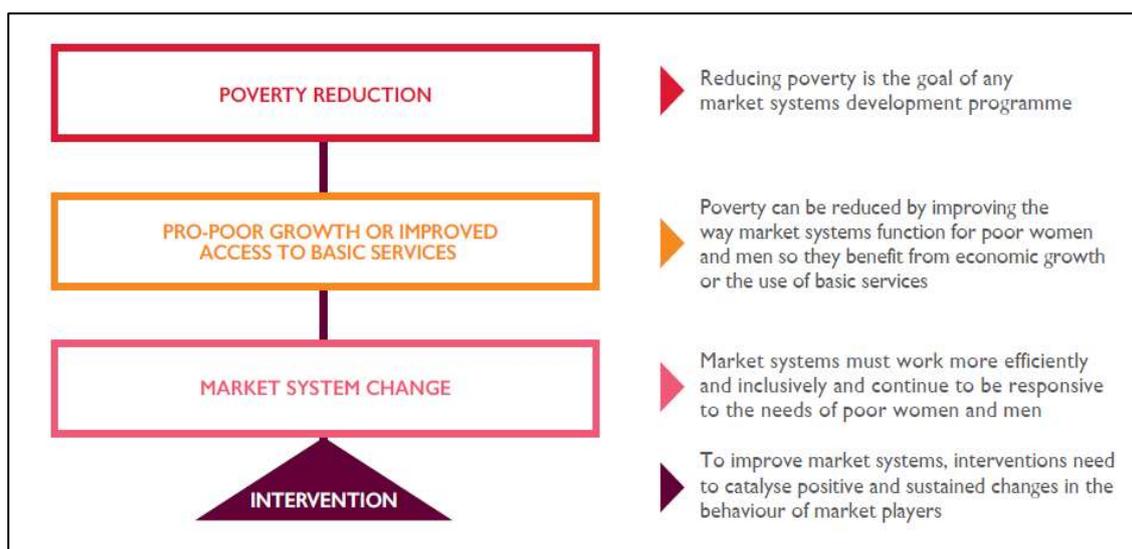
<sup>24</sup> DCED Standard for Results Measurement  
[www.enterprise-development.org/measuring-results-the-dced-standard/](http://www.enterprise-development.org/measuring-results-the-dced-standard/)

## 4. What evidence is there that MSD programmes have delivered results?

### 4.1 What type of evidence does the Evidence Map contain?

The BEAM Evidence Map<sup>25</sup> database contained 151 resources in December 2018 when this review was commissioned. Evidence documents are categorised (tagged) according to the main results-levels of the information they contain. The results-level tags are based on the M4P strategic framework illustrated below: Intervention, Systemic Change, Growth and Access to Services and Poverty Reduction<sup>26</sup>

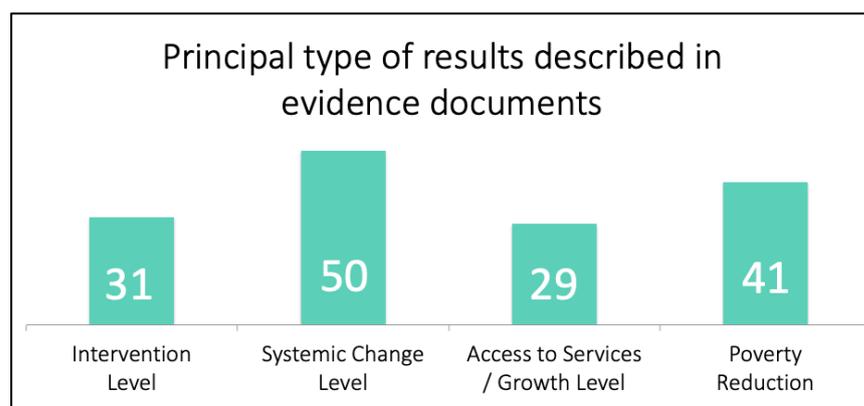
Figure 2: MSD Framework, *The Operational Guidelines for M4P Approach* (Springfield Centre, 2015)



### 4.3 What results have MSD programmes achieved?

The Evidence Map now contains a fair spread of evidence documents reporting results at all levels.

Figure 3: Results-levels described in Evidence documents

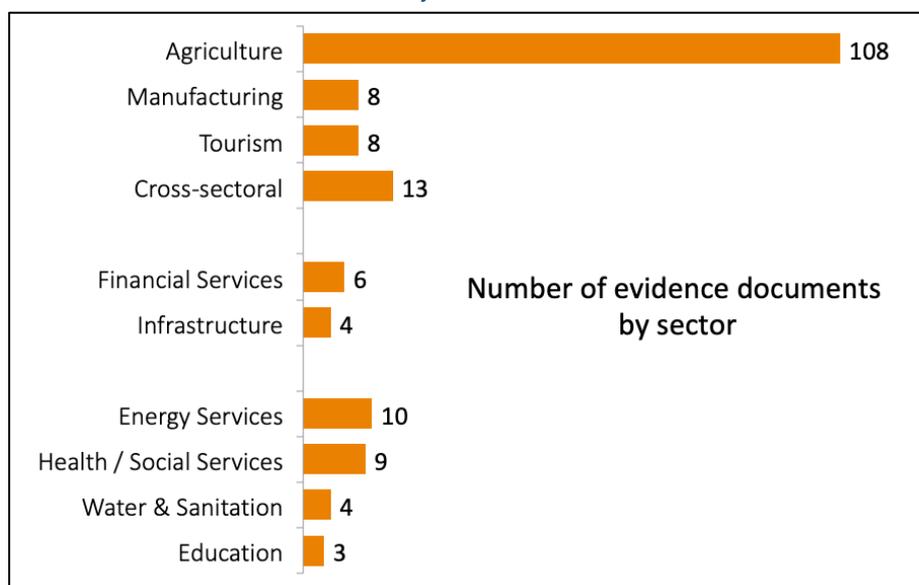


<sup>25</sup> The methodology and inclusion criteria for the Evidence Map are included in Annex 1. New additions to the Evidence Map in 2018 include documents published before 2018, but not previously submitted to BEAM.

<sup>26</sup> Some overlap exists between resources reporting results across multiple levels.

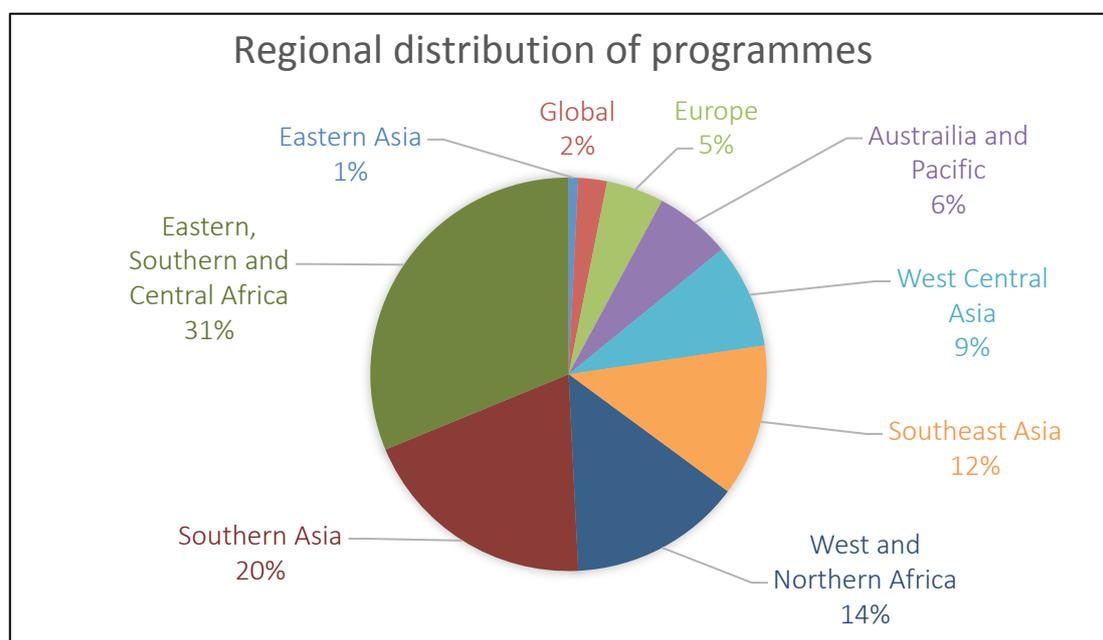
The Evidence Map also covers a broad range of sectors in which MSD programmes work. However, most resources by far still stem from programmes in the agriculture sector. This is understandable given how broad the agriculture sector is, and its role in poverty reduction.

Figure 4: Number of evidence documents by sector<sup>27</sup>



We can also see from the distribution of resources in the Evidence Map that MSD programmes are reporting from almost every region. African programmes (45%) are particularly well represented.

Figure 5: Regional distribution of programmes represented in the Evidence Map



At the aggregate level there are some clear findings.

Firstly, the Evidence Map has an extensive collection of resources which suggest that programmes applying MSD approaches can deliver results from intervention level to poverty reduction.

<sup>27</sup> Some evidence documents report results from more than one sector

Secondly, the broad applicability of the MSD is clear in the variety of sectors and regions programmes are applying the approach.

Therefore, the Evidence Map will be of high value to those who wish to deepen their understanding of MSD within sectors, or countries, providing a variety of successful examples. To understand how programmes applying a market systems approach achieve results requires further exploration of reported programme activities and pathways to change.

#### 4.4 Five MSD intervention case studies from the Evidence Map

The following examples of MSD interventions from the Evidence Map demonstrate how programmes applying MSD achieve systemic change, growth and access, and poverty reduction.

The examples were selected from the Evidence Map using the following criteria:

- The programme achieved systemic change and reported in some detail
- The programme achieved growth/access to services and impact on the poor
- The programme reported on how results were achieved, what worked, and it was possible to identify the principles behind the programme design

The examples below are only a summary of large and complex programmes. In most cases, the summary covers only one intervention among several being implemented by the MSD programme. Therefore, readers are encouraged to use the Evidence Map to explore these programmes and others in more detail.

##### **Malawi Oilseed Sector Transformation (MOST), Soybean Sector, Malawi** <sup>28</sup>

MOST reduced poverty through facilitating changes in seed markets. Its most significant success is within the soybean sector. MOST's vision was to improve smallholders' access to yield-increasing inoculant by facilitating the development of a private sector production and distribution system. The Malawi department for Agricultural and Research service had a monopoly on inoculant production (previously providing less than 4% of an estimated annual need for over 400,000 sachets).

MOST established a dialogue between agri-input suppliers, the Department of Agriculture, and other stakeholders to facilitate the transfer of inoculant production to the private sector. Agro-Input Supply Limited (AISL) secured permission to produce and market inoculant. MOST supported AISL in both these areas, including cost-sharing an agronomist and distribution activities.

##### **Systemic Change:**

Change in regulations allowing the private sector to produce and market inoculant. Private sector production and marketing of inoculant expanded to meet greater demand. With the increase in production, the number of distributors quadrupled from 20 in 2014 to 87 in 2017. Market actors have continued to invest and innovate. AISL plans to introduce larger 100gm pack sizes and combine with seed sales.

##### **Growth and Access to Services:**

**By 2015-16 season**, 17,500 poor farmers had purchased inoculant and experienced higher yields. This was forecast to grow to 65,000 by 2018.

##### **Poverty Reduction:**

MOST reports that poor farmers accessing inoculant in 2015-16 increased their income by US\$ 80 on average. This equated to over US\$ 1.4 million in additional income. If MOST's forecast of over 65,000 poor farmers benefiting by 2018 is realised, this will lead to over US\$ 5 million / year in additional income.

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<sup>28</sup> MOST (2016) *annual results report*: [www.beamexchange.org/resources/1163](http://www.beamexchange.org/resources/1163)

### **Market Development Facility (MDF), Silage intervention, Pakistan**<sup>29 30</sup>

In Pakistan MDF worked to increase yields and returns for smallholder farmers. They developed an innovative business model for silage production at a suitable size (60kg bales) to allow small farmers to maintain livestock through drought seasons. Improved year-round feeding is shown to double milk yields. MDF partnered with Pioneer, an agri-business company, to identify potential silage entrepreneurs. Pioneer provided technical training while MDF supported the entrepreneurs financially.

MDF shared the cost of silage equipment and marketing efforts with 12 entrepreneurs investing in starting silage businesses. After initial success MDF worked with a leading Pakistan bank, Bank Alfalah, and machinery supplier Cattlekit to improve access to finance. Under the agreement, Cattlekit agreed to collateralise loans for silage equipment, thereby reducing the bank's risk. This resulted in a 3 to 6 % discount on loans to new silage entrepreneurs.

#### **Systemic Change:**

All MDF-supported silage entrepreneurs sold out in the first season. Crowding in of more than 100 other small bale silage entrepreneurs into the market.

#### **Growth and Access to Services:**

MDF's silage interventions contributed to 37,000 silage bales sold, benefitting 11,000 smallholder farmers. MDF projects this outreach to increase to almost 33,000 farmers by 2019

#### **Impact:**

Eleven silage entrepreneurs increased annual incomes by USD 9,694 by 2016. The 11,000 smallholder farmers were estimated to increased annual income from higher milk yields worth US \$ 15m in 2017.

### **Promoting Rural Income through Support for Markets in Agriculture (PRISMA), Pig Sector, Indonesia**<sup>31</sup>

PRISMA worked to improve husbandry, slaughter and marketing in the pig farming sector, aiming to raise productivity and growth. It introduced 'Good Rearing Practices' through demonstration and information sharing with 16 private sector partners. This included supporting pharmaceutical and feed companies in their entry and expansion plans. Examples include feed manufacturers producing smaller packs, more easily purchased by the poor. Sierad, one of their feed producer partners, on the advice of PRISMA, introduced a new incentive scheme for its sales force and invested in additional field staff.

In early 2017, during an outbreak of Hog Cholera in East Nusa Tenggara, PRISMA facilitated a multi-stakeholder conference with industry stakeholders to generate a united response to the outbreak. This resulted in the training of vaccinators and government backing of a regional strategy on Hog Cholera eradication.

#### **Systemic Change:**

The number of households benefiting from GRP expanded. The resilience of the private sector to continue to increase pig feed sales after the outbreak of Hog Cholera is a strong indicator of sustainable market.

#### **Growth and Access to Services:**

GRP benefited 47,959 households in 2017, projected to increase to 103,000 by 2018.

#### **Poverty Reduction:**

PRISMA estimates households have benefited from almost USD 26 million in increased incomes by 2017. This is projected to increase to over USD 64 million by 2018.

<sup>29</sup> Owen-Edmunds (2017) *MDF Silage case study*: [www.beamexchange.org/resources/1141](http://www.beamexchange.org/resources/1141)

<sup>30</sup> Cardno (2017) *MDF Activity completion report* [www.beamexchange.org/resources/1124](http://www.beamexchange.org/resources/1124)

<sup>31</sup> PRISMA (2018) *Progress report*: [www.beamexchange.org/resources/1132](http://www.beamexchange.org/resources/1132)

### **ELAN DRC, Renewable Energy Portfolio, Democratic Republic of Congo<sup>32</sup>**

Within its energy portfolio in DRC, ELAN saw an opportunity to improve access to renewable energy by assisting private market players to develop effective models of product marketing and distribution. The programme ultimately partnered with Altech, a private distributor of solar lamps to pilot an innovative distribution system to get more off-grid households to start using solar lighting.

ELAN supported Altech with technical assistance to train and expand its sales force; develop a credit purchase model and negotiate and agree a pay-as-you-go financing methodology.

#### **Systemic Change:**

Altech developed the first national distribution network of solar energy, developed new direct sales and pay-as-you-go models. Altech raised £150,000 in private investment and four international companies crowded into the market.

#### **Growth and Access to Services:**

By the end of 2017 the company sold more than 120,000 solar home systems.

#### **Poverty Reduction:**

On average each household using solar had US\$ 78 per year more to spend due to extra income and savings.<sup>33</sup> In 2017 alone, this implied combined annual benefits of over US\$ 9 million.

### **Enhancing Nigeria Advocacy for Better Business Environment (ENABLE2), Business Roundtables<sup>34</sup>**

ENABLE2 worked to achieve local business environment reforms that will benefit the poor. It did this through improving capacity and incentives for constructive dialogue between business member organisation and government.

In 2015 ENABLE2 worked to improve dialogue between the National Assembly and the organised private sector to overcome barriers and to build trust in the legislative process. ENABLE2 facilitated a dialogue platform on business environment reforms, which became known as the National Assembly Business Environment Roundtables (NASSBER).

The Senate President took leadership of NASSBER. Working with private sector representatives, the Nigerian Bar Association and technical experts, NASSBER, led to the prioritisation and passing of a host of critically important legislative Acts and Amendments at an unprecedented pace.

#### **Systemic Change:**

NASSBER identified 13 priority bills and held several public private dialogues independent of ENABLE2. Wide participation of industry and legal experts indicates local ownership.

#### **Growth and Access to Services:**

By May 2017, two pieces of legislation had been signed into law. Secured Transactions in Moveable Assets Act and the Credit Reporting Act. 11 other bills also progressed through the legislative process.

#### **Poverty Reduction:**

NASSBER estimates impact of the passage and implementation of priority bills. They estimate the Secured Transactions in Moveable Assets Act would remove constraints to MSMEs' access to finance that could result in up to 50% more capital available to MSMEs with an average of around 1.6 million jobs yearly, with income growing by an average of 5% per annum.

<sup>32</sup> ASI (2017) *ELAN Annual Report* [www.beamexchange.org/resources/1164](http://www.beamexchange.org/resources/1164)

<sup>33</sup> Bekkars & Zulfiqar (2018) *The story of MSD told through twelve real-life cases from four continents*. Opportunities Unlimited B.V. Final Draft December 2018.

<sup>34</sup> Elliott & Mantey (2017) *ENABLE 2 Case study* [www.beamexchange.org/resources/1026](http://www.beamexchange.org/resources/1026)

## 4.5 Assessment of the evidence

These five case studies represent only a small selection of the evidence on MSD from over 150 documents in the BEAM Evidence Map. In each case, they highlight only one intervention from the portfolio of activities that each programme undertook. Yet, combined they have clearly impacted on the lives and incomes of the poor. As interventions continue this could increase substantially. Coupled with the overall assessment of the Evidence Map in section 5, these cases provide examples of market system approaches being applied in a variety of way to deliver results.

However, there are limitations on what conclusions we can draw from the Evidence Map and how confident we can be in the results. This is for three main reasons.

Firstly, a substantial number of the reports were commissioned by the teams implementing programmes, eager to share success. As Taylor (2016)<sup>35</sup> notes, programmes assess interventions where they predict success. Funders commission evaluations where they think there's a chance of a good news story. Some programmes – perhaps the most successful – are more likely to submit resources than others. For example, over 17% of the new resources added to the Evidence Map in 2018 were from the Market Development Facility. On the other hand, evaluations of failed programmes are less likely to get published or widely reported. This probably explains why none of the resources added to the Evidence Map in 2018 reported failure. Therefore, analysis of the Evidence Map is constrained by this publication bias. Donors enabling space to celebrate and publish failure would improve the international development communities learning.

Secondly, the number of impact evaluations are low, with only one added in 2018. Impact evaluations tend to be more data driven and demonstrate a clear methodology for assessing results, for example, see the Midline Impact Assessment Report for the Dairy Sector, Kenya Market Trust<sup>36</sup>. This level of detail is frequently absent from case studies and other reports. Moreover, none of the impact evaluations within the Evidence Map yet assess change after a programme has ended, through ex-post evaluations. The lack of impact evaluations limits our ability to look at attribution, long-term sustainability and large scale impact of systemic change. It would strengthen the Evidence Map and the MSD sector if more impact evaluations and external reviews were available, especially two, three or five years after interventions end.

Finally, the transparency and quality of the resources in the evidence map is mixed. Some resources (tagged as 'High Confidence' in the BEAM Evidence Map) offer well documented insights into the programme theory of change, intervention logic, pathways to success and the basis of programme results. Others (tagged as 'Low Confidence') provide insufficient information about how results were calculated or how they fit within the wider theory of change. Many lack detail on how systemic change happened and how results were measured. This reduces the confidence in the results reported by the programmes, and their usefulness as a guide to practitioners.

We selected our five examples to maximise the quality of the data. Despite this, the above concerns apply. All case studies primarily rely on self-reported data from the programme team, published either as a stand-alone case study or part of an annual report. A partial exception is the case study of ENABLE2, written by an external consulting firm (the Springfield Centre).

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<sup>35</sup> Taylor (2016) *The system of evidence* (Blog) [www.springfieldcentre.com/the-system-of-evidence/](http://www.springfieldcentre.com/the-system-of-evidence/)

<sup>36</sup> AFREDEC (2017) [www.beamexchange.org/resources/1161](http://www.beamexchange.org/resources/1161)

All five examples have a degree of transparency and credibility in their results. PRISMA, MDF and MOST all apply the DCED Standard, and have passed an audit to demonstrate that they are following the principles appropriately (see Section 5). MOST had an additional internal grading of evidence, from low to high and references the source of data, for example direct interviews or internal surveys. Internal measurement systems rarely meet the standards set by external evaluations or academic researchers. Despite this, the DCED Standard audit provides some assurance that results were credibly measured.

The ENABLE and ELAN documents provide little information on how results were measured. Referencing and publication of measurement documents that underpin the reports would improve the credibility of the evidence. Until then, it is uncertain how much faith to put in their results.

A natural response to the above is to redouble calls for independent, high quality assessments of MSD programmes, including evidence of failure as well as success. This echoes previous recommendations from the 2016 and 2017 Evidence Reviews. We hope that the significant investment in external evaluations over the last few years will start to produce more robust evidence soon.

## 5. Do MSD programmes deliver Value-for-Money?

The Evidence Map has examples of MSD programmes achieving results ranging from systemic change to growth and poverty reduction. However, policy makers and funders also need to know if programmes are maximising resources. It is not unusual now for programmes to be evaluated on Value for Money (VfM) and be expected to make VfM central to implementation<sup>37</sup>. This section explores what the Evidence Map says about cost effectiveness and VfM of programmes applying MSD approaches.

### 5.1 VfM in the Evidence Map

Only eight of the 58 new resources added to the Evidence Map in 2018 explicitly discuss VfM. They are summarised below.

*Table 1: Evidence Map Resources that contain VfM analysis*

Programme / Resource Name	Type of Resource	Delivering VfM?	Example VfM Metrics:
MDF Fiji Innovating Private Sector Engagement in the Indo-Pacific Region <sup>38</sup>	Case study	Yes	Additional market transactions /investment in partnerships Additional incomes divided by partner investment.
PRISMA Indonesia AIP – Rural Economic Development, Mid-Term Review <sup>39</sup>	External review	Yes	Investment Leverage Social Return on Investment Investment per Farmer.
MOST Malawi Annual Results Report <sup>40</sup>	Internal/ External review	Unclear	Qualitative assessment

<sup>37</sup> DFID (2011) [www.beamexchange.org/resources/270/](http://www.beamexchange.org/resources/270/)

<sup>38</sup> Heinrich-Fernandes (2015) [www.beamexchange.org/resources/1125/](http://www.beamexchange.org/resources/1125/)

<sup>39</sup> Fargher (2016) [www.beamexchange.org/resources/1130/](http://www.beamexchange.org/resources/1130/)

<sup>40</sup> MOST (2016) [www.beamexchange.org/resources/1163/](http://www.beamexchange.org/resources/1163/)

Programme / Resource Name	Type of Resource	Delivering VfM?	Example VfM Metrics:
CAVAC, Cambodia Completion Evaluation <sup>41</sup>	External review	Yes	Cost Benefit Ratios Qualitative Assessment
GREAT, Tajikistan Final Evaluation Report <sup>42</sup>	External review	Unclear	Cost Benefit Ratios
LIFT, Myanmar Annual Report <sup>43</sup>	Internal review	Unclear	Outreach Cost per Household Outreach Cost per Individual Investment Leverage
3i, Cambodia Report of Scalability Review <sup>44</sup>	External review	Yes	Co-investment leveraged
DEEPEN, Nigeria End line Evaluation Volume 1 <sup>45</sup>	External review	Unclear	Outreach Cost per Student Outreach Cost per School

## 5.2 Key Findings on VfM

Firstly, comparing VfM indicators across programmes is conceptually challenging and offers very limited insights. For example, indicators at the Effectiveness level, such as Cost Per Beneficiary or Cost Per Increase in Income, have the advantage of being easily understood. However, as noted earlier, the MSD approach is applied across a wide variety of sectors with different types of partners and interventions. Many other factors also affect programme results. Arguably, narrow forms of VfM measurement do not provide meaningful conclusions about what offers the best value for money. Despite this, there is a high demand for VfM calculations, often by donors who wish to demonstrate the impact of their programmes to domestic audiences.

Secondly, VfM assessments were hindered by a lack of data gathering or post-programme assessments of impact results. The external reviewers of DEEPEN, Nigeria noted that the cancellation of outreach and impact surveys meant it was impossible to say if DEEPEN offered VfM. Ex-post programme evaluations of impact are rare, with no examples currently in the Evidence Map. However, the nature of the MSD approach means the benefits of systemic change often come towards the end of the programmes and increase post programme. VfM assessments restricted to the lifetime of a programme will not capture the long-term value of successful systemic change.

Thirdly, many programmes are unable to provide sufficiently structured spend data to enable VfM assessments. This was the case for the evaluation of the GREAT Programme in Tajikistan. VfM analysis requires spending data to be linked to a programme's activity areas. There is an absence of this type of disaggregated spending data reported in the selected examples and throughout the Evidence Map as a whole. This means that programmes report their intervention-level results, but do not report how much they spend to achieve them. To make a convincing argument for VfM, programmes, in partnership with funders, need to develop indicators across the Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness

<sup>41</sup> CAVAC (2017) <https://beamexchange.org/resources/1067/>

<sup>42</sup> IMC Worldwide (2017) <https://beamexchange.org/resources/1148/>

<sup>43</sup> LIFT (2017) <https://beamexchange.org/resources/1136/>

<sup>44</sup> DFAT (2017) <https://beamexchange.org/resources/1098/>

<sup>45</sup> EDOREN (2018) <https://beamexchange.org/resources/1178/>

levels and link these to activity spend. However, this process requires close collaboration between technical and financial administrative teams.

Perhaps, for the above reasons, most resources within the Evidence Map do not discuss VfM. VfM analysis is more frequent in External Reviews, but these make up only 9% of the Evidence Map resources. This is likely because funders are requesting external reviewers to assess the VfM of programmes. Of the three other resources that look at VfM, two are internal annual reports, and one is a case study.

Where VfM is assessed, half of the assessments conclude that MSD programmes are delivering VfM, see Table 3 above. The others came to no clear conclusion. Where MSD programmes provide clear VfM, there is a combination of the following attributes:

- Quantitative metrics which were designed early in the programme and measured over time
- A Cost Benefit Analysis which shows a positive return on investment
- Internal and external comparisons of intervention costs and number of beneficiaries

Where all three of the above attributes are included, the VfM assessment is stronger. For example, PRISMA’s Mid Term Review contains all three above and is a convincing analysis of a programme delivering VfM. Overall, there are limited practical examples of this level of VfM measurement and reporting.

## 6. Do the MSD principles make a difference?

The Evidence Map resources give some valuable insights into how and in what circumstances results have been achieved and the factors that underlie this success. Based on these examples we asked *what* makes MSD work? Referring to the principles of MSD, do the examples from the Evidence Map implement these in practice?

*Table 1: Evidence of MSD principles in practice*

Programme intervention	Addressed root causes of weak performance	Worked with incentives & capabilities in system	Played a facilitative role	Programmed adaptively
<b>MDF Silage</b>	Identified an opportunity to develop an innovative business model for silage at a suitable size for small farmers.	Engaged with Pioneer, Cattlekit, Bank Alfalah and individual entrepreneurs .	Tripartite agreement with Bank Alfalah and Cattlekit to finance for silage equipment.	Adapted original model from part financing to assisting Banks finance silage entrepreneurs.
<b>MOST Soybean</b>	Addressed market failure in the production of soybean inoculant by opening the production and marketing to the private sector.	Engaged with AISL, ACE and 11 other firms in the marketing and productions of seed and inoculant.	Facilitated DAR to permit private production & sale of inoculant.  Training to support AISL.	Developing new size packaging, 100mg. Development of contract farming.
<b>ELAN Solar Lighting</b>	Opportunity to improve access to and use of renewable energy by assisting private sector to develop effective models of product marketing and distribution.	Engaged with Altech Dlight, GLP, Omin-Voltaic and Bbox in solar distribution. Wider portfolio of 150 companies.	Technical training to support commercial negotiations and develop credit models.	Offered new market actors similar technical support.  ‘Pay as You Go’ innovation to expand Altech sales and de-risk credit.

Programme intervention	Addressed root causes of weak performance	Worked with incentives & capabilities in system	Played a facilitative role	Programmed adaptively
<b>ENABLE2 NASSBER Roundtables</b>	Worked with National Assembly to address regulatory and legal constraints to businesses.	Created a dialogue platform led by the Senate President and involved Nigerian Economic Summit Group and the Nigerian Bar Association.	Provided technical training on consultation and advocacy. Facilitative NASSBER which became locally owned.	NASSBER structure emerged organically in response to stakeholder needs.
<b>PRISMA Pig Husbandry</b>	Identified the market opportunity for pig farming to grow by promoting Good Rearing Practices with the private sector.	Engaged with 16 partners, from animal feed and pharmaceuticals	Provided technical support on marketing and sales. Workshops in response to Hog Cholera	Adapted its intervention activities during the outbreak of Hog Cholera to respond to a new crisis.

Looking at MSD programme interventions that have successfully delivered systemic change we can clearly see that in each example there is evidence of MSD principles being applied. However, the Evidence Map does not contain many examples of MSD interventions that failed. Such a counter-factual analysis would be useful as evidence becomes available. Donors should encourage programmes to publish learning from failures.

Every MSD programme operates in complex market systems which each require solutions tailored to the constraints they face. However, we would argue that when the principles of the MSD approach are applied, there can be greater confidence that programme activities will achieve impact and systemic change.

Beyond the MSD principles, resources in the Evidence Map also give insights into other factors that are associated with success in programmes.

#### 1. Strong team members drive results.

Several resources acknowledge the role of entrepreneurial teams in achieving success. The PRISMA – AIP report notes that human resources are the key value added by the programme. As MSD programmes place importance on the facilitative role and technical support, over providing resources or financial assistance, the skills of team members and advisors will have a significant impact on programme success. As such, programmes such as MDF perceive staff costs as part of implementation costs rather than as an overhead.<sup>46</sup>

#### 2. Quality Monitoring and Results Management Systems (MRM) benefit decision-making.

MRM systems provide confidence interventions are progressing and keep teams up to date on changes within partners and markets. The PDIA and DDD frameworks acknowledged the importance of feedback loops in decision-making, while MSD programmes require feedback on interventions to be able to adapt effectively to changes in the market system.

<sup>46</sup> Heinrich-Fernandes (2015) <https://beamexchange.org/resources/1125/>

## 7. Conclusions and recommendations

This Evidence review has discussed the ‘good practice’ emerging across the development community which is associated with being locally-led, evidence-based, facilitative in delivery and adaptive in management. Programmes which apply the Market System Development approach also espouse these principles.

The Evidence Map provides funders and practitioners with documented results from programmes dealing with the complexity of market systems. The conclusions of the previous Evidence Reviews remain valid; it is a valuable resource for assessing market systems approaches to development. The Evidence Map provides a rich insight into what programmes applying the MSD approach have done and what they have achieved.

We sought answers to the following:

- What evidence is there that MSD programmes deliver results?
- Do market system programmes deliver Value-for-Money?
- How do market systems programmes achieve change?

### 7.1 Do market systems programmes deliver results?

The Evidence Map has grown and now has 151 resources. It will continue to grow as development programmes, evaluators and funders publish more material.

The Evidence Map shows that programmes applying the MSD approach report the delivery of results. Systemic change was reported in over a third of the evidence and 40 resources record poverty reduction. The Evidence Map also shows the breadth of the application of MSD across sectors and regions, demonstrating its wide applicability.

The five examples of programmes from the Evidence Map explored here give credence to these findings. It is clear that market systems approaches are highly applicable, being used in diverse sectors from silage and fodder markets in Pakistan, to business advocacy and policy reform in Nigeria. Each case also demonstrates that working through local system actors it was possible to achieve systemic change that benefits the poor in a variety of ways. For example, working with government agencies and private sector input supply businesses in Malawi to improve access to inoculant for farmers; or working with animal feed firms to promote good rearing practices to pig farmers in Indonesia. Finally, the examples reinforce the findings from the analysis of the Evidence Map that programmes can achieve systemic change that leads to growth and poverty reduction.

Good case studies such as these are welcome, their inclusion strengthens the evidence base and they provide practitioners the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of the application of MSD across a variety of sectors and fields. However, knowledge and learning could be furthered if there was more openness to discussing failures, particularly in published programme material.

The Evidence Map would also benefit from more impact evaluations and external reviews. These currently make up only 14% of the Evidence Map, yet they offer more quantitative rigour and independence to the analysis of market systems programmes’ results.

## 7.2 Do MSD programmes deliver Value-for-Money?

Overall, it is difficult to make any concrete conclusions on the programmes that use the MSD approach and their Value for Money with the limited amount of information currently in the Evidence Map. Only 8 of the 58 new additions to the Evidence Map in 2018 assessed VfM.

Assessments of VfM face both conceptual and practical challenges. Conceptually, finding appropriate indicators to quantify and compare systemic change across sectors is difficult. Even if indicators are identified, data is often absent or unreliable. There are not yet any clear benchmarks on what represents 'good' Value for Money, nor how this can change across contexts. Despite this, there is a high demand for VfM calculations, often by donors who wish to demonstrate the impact of their programmes to domestic audiences.

Given this demand, we recommend that donors treat VfM cautiously. A single number can never be the basis for comparing effectiveness, nor for allocating resources from one area to another. VfM calculations can be a useful input into decision-making processes, but they cannot substitute for them. Consequently, discourse around VfM requires a level of humility and caution that is often lacking in practice.

Programmes can take certain steps to improve the way in which VfM is calculated. Although this will not address all the above challenges, it will help make VfM calculations more transparent and comparable. Programmes need to develop VfM indicators which are appropriate to the logframe, and link spending data to programme activities through to impact. Subsequent analysis must track indicators over time, show a cost benefit analysis and attempt to compare VfM across interventions and between programmes.

## 7.3 How do MSD programmes achieve change?

The Evidence Map displays the great range of diversity in programmes that apply MSD principles and practices which can utilise different partners, sectors, geographies, and mechanisms of support. Market systems approaches are not a homogenous treatment whose efficacy can be experimentally assessed. It is a commitment to shared development principles. We argue that the question of whether MSD 'works' is neither coherent nor answerable. It is more appropriate to ask 'how have programmes achieved change?' or 'what factors make MSD programmes work?'

Consequently, it is important to use case studies and programme reviews to understand whether they are implementing the principles of MSD in practice, and whether it is achieving results.

Looking at five examples of programmes from the Evidence Map, we can trace intervention activities to systemic change and poverty reduction. The programme examples tell us the principles of the MSD approach can be applied across the diverse sectors and settings of development. We argue, therefore, that programmes using MSD approach 'work' best when they apply these principles:

1. Address the root causes of weak system performance: to achieve scale and sustainability
2. Be led by a vision of sustainable outcomes: working with incentives and capabilities in the system
3. Play a facilitative role: catalysing change through temporary partnerships with market actors
4. Programme adaptively: being flexible and entrepreneurial around the dynamics in each system

Donors have recently supported initiatives to promote adaptive management. Likewise, promoting and holding programmes accountable for being facilitative and working with local actors could help further uptake of these principles.

## Annexes

### Annex 1: BEAM Evidence Map inclusion protocol

Criteria	Description
<p><b>Relevance:</b> The document is aligned with the objective of the BEAM evidence base</p>	<p>The document contains evidence of results from programmes that used market systems approach. Documents may include evidence of results from programmes which are designed using a market systems approach only for one component of the programme. Some documents contain evidence of results from multiple programmes using a market systems approach.</p> <p>In particular, the document should illuminate the connection between market system interventions and the intended or unintended results. It is not essential for results to be measured by an independent party or against a counterfactual for the document to be included in the evidence base.</p> <p>The database does not include theoretical or conceptual studies which focus on the construction of new theories rather than generating or synthesising empirical data. The database also does not include knowledge products, such as guidance, think pieces, blogs etc.</p>
<p><b>Currency:</b> The document has been produced no earlier than 2000</p>	<p>The start date for evidence documents included in the database is 2000 because this is when the original framework document for making markets work better for the poor (M4P) was developed.</p>
<p><b>Accessibility:</b> The document is publicly accessible or publication on the BEAM website has been approved by the owner of the copyright</p>	<p>All documents are published or publicly available. If not publicly available, BEAM Exchange must have the written consent of the organisation or programme/project to publish it in its evidence database.</p>
<p><b>Language:</b> English language documents only</p>	<p>Only English documents are included in the evidence database at present as the BEAM Exchange team does not currently have the capacity to review and assess documents in other languages.</p>
<p><b>Transparency:</b> The document is transparent about the data collection and analysis methodology used to measure results</p>	<p>All documents included describe the methodology used to collect and analyse data, and the sample frame used to select data sources (including size and composition) to measure results.</p> <p>Documents based on secondary sources must all describe the methodology to select, assess and compile these sources.</p> <p>Programme documents which self-report results and have successfully passed a DCED audit are rated as partially achieving the criteria. The rationale is that if DCED-audited, the programme has been certified as using good measurement techniques, even if the exact methodology is not shared in the document.</p>
<p><b>Credibility:</b> The data collection methods generate a credible dataset, and analysis methods generate credible results.</p>	<p>All documents included describe a methodology that applies robust measurement and analysis practices that are generally accepted to represent best-fit for the study design to generate data and study results.</p>
<p><b>Cogency:</b> The report presents a convincing argument</p>	<p>All documents included deliver a plausible, coherent and convincing argument (from design, through data collection, analysis to conclusions) to explain results achieved.</p>

## Annex 2: Process for selecting & profiling evidence

The process to collate and assess evidence documents has been adapted from the stages described in ODI's Guidance Note<sup>47</sup> on doing rigorous, evidence-focused literature reviews. It is also informed by Snilstveit et al.'s<sup>48</sup> evidence gap maps tool. Some of the stages were modified to account for the fact that BEAM's goal is to fill an evidence database and provide a broad overview of the existing evidence, rather than answer a particular research question.

The BEAM team developed a 6-step management process which is detailed below. The management process was reviewed and updated in December 2016. The original evidence inclusion protocol was updated to include an evidence quality grading system (see below).

The evidence map population process is continued periodically throughout the lifetime of BEAM and therefore after the initial map population, new evidence may be added from time to time.

### The 6-step process

#### Step 1: Setting objective and scope

BEAM set the objective of the map and database; to compile an evidence database that provides a broad overview of the existing evidence.

#### Step 2: Setting the inclusion criteria

BEAM set primary inclusion criteria to narrow down relevant documents for review, then a more detailed set of secondary criteria to assess the quality of documents in a consistent manner.

#### Step 3: Developing a strategy for populating the evidence database

BEAM worked in two phases: initial population of the evidence map on the BEAM website (Phase 1); and secondary population of the evidence map (Phase 2).

##### Phase 1

1. Internet search based on pre-defined search strings, both in relevant databases but also using popular search engines.
2. 'Eye-ball' elimination of some documents coming up as a result of the search string. This is used particularly when it is very clear a document does not meet the relevance criterion.

Following this initial population of the evidence map, additional evidence is sourced via connecting with BEAM's network:

##### Phase 2

3. Crowd-sourcing using BEAM's networks and community
4. Snowball searching for documents through key informants and contacts in implementing organisations

#### Step 4: Retrieval

The retrieval happens in two phases following the above-mentioned strategy:

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<sup>47</sup> Hagen-Zanker & Mallet (2013) *How to do a rigorous, evidence-focused literature review in international development* [www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8572.pdf](http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8572.pdf)

<sup>48</sup> Snilstveit et al. (2016) Evidence Gap Maps <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2367606>

1. An initial first effort aimed to capture as many evidence documents as possible that are currently published.
2. After the first effort, the database is periodically updated with newly published evidence documents by the BEAM team, and the community are asked to contribute new documents.

### Step 5: Screening

During the screening phase, the collated evidence documents are assessed relative to the defined inclusion criteria.

There are two rounds in the screening process. The first screening is against the primary inclusion criteria, assessing titles and abstracts. All documents must pass all primary inclusion criteria to be included in the evidence base. The second screening is done by assessing the full text of the document, using the secondary inclusion criteria.

### Step 6: Evidence characterisation

At this stage, all evidence documents will be categorised according to the criteria defined in table 2.

#### Characterisation tags

Criteria	Description
1. Results level	This category will be used to locate the document on the evidence map <b>Possible tags:</b> impact, systems qualities, systemic change, interventions
2. Type of document	This is an open category where tags will be developed as documents are added. (The number of tags should be as small as possible, i.e. the categories are broad.) <b>Possible tags:</b> project monitoring report, internal project review, donor review, external review, impact evaluation, case study
3. Method	<b>Possible tags:</b> experimental, quasi-experimental, before/after, observational/qualitative
4. Data source	<b>Possible tags:</b> monitoring data, primary surveys, secondary data
5. Sector	This is an open category capturing the sector a particular evidence document reports about. This category will also be used to locate the document on the evidence map. <b>Possible tags:</b> agriculture, manufacturing, water supply, education
6. Intervention type	This is an open category that will specify the type of intervention the evidence document looks at. <b>Possible tags:</b> improvement of input supply, improvement of value chain coordination, improved marketing of products, improved product quality

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