



The Donor Committee for Enterprise Development

Case Study in using the DCED Standard Seeds and Markets Project (SAMP)

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This case study shows how Seeds and Markets Project (SAMP) is working to integrate the different elements of the Standard in its results measurement system. SAMP works in Southern Africa, aiming to increase availability and accessibility of seeds to farmers from Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Lesotho, addressing constraints in the sector by providing market based solutions. The introduction of the Standard was one of the critical factors in making this project a success, as one of the intervention managers has stated: “the DCED Standard methodology provided stakeholders with a new thinking and a step forward in the right direction to proving positive changes were happening in SAMP”.

The case study was prepared by Mihaela Balan and Bekezela Dube.

Part 1: Overview of the Programme

SAMP is funded by Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC) and implemented by GRM International. This project aims to improve seed security strategies and policies being adopted in Southern Africa as part of SDC’s Regional Food Security Strategy for Southern Africa which highlights seeds as a niche area.

The project is unique as it changes emphasis away from the emergency phase experienced in the recent past into a phase of livelihoods development through agricultural recovery. SAMP is pilot testing a range of approaches to enhance seed security (availability, access and quality): by increasing farmers’ access to markets, they will be in a position to sell produce (“outputs”) which will provide an income with which they can procure improved ‘quality’ seeds (inputs) and improve their livelihoods. Through this approach over 6,500 farmers will start using quality seeds *by 2013* only in Zimbabwe, with 950 new quality seeds producers entering the market; 400 tonnes more of quality seeds being produced; and additional income generated by the project of over \$1.9 million. In Swaziland activity has just started , with 17 farmers producing quality seeds on more than 30 ha.

The project works in partnership with commercial companies by sharing their risk to invest in drought prone remote farming areas where they would not normally invest. SAMP also links them to public research institutions such the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) and International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) for procurement of quality germplasm.

How and why SAMP became involved with the Standard

From the commencement of the project, in October 2010, Mihaela Balan, a result measurement consultant, who has experience in applying the Standard in similar initiatives, introduced the Standard to the SAMP Team Leader Alex Carr, explaining its relevance and opportunity to use this approach to develop the M&E system for the project.

SAMP had a number of interventions designed at that stage. Some of these are **contract farming** of high value cash crops and seeds – to provide a guaranteed market stimulus for farmers; **enhancing agro-dealer networks** – to increase the access to high quality seed for farmers but also to provide a means for farmers to cash their crops; **community based seed enterprises** – to initiate production and increase availability of quality seed at community levels where more formal market channels are weak. These interventions have farmers engaged at different points in the value chain for seed production.

Following on the discussions with SAMP Team Leader, in May 2011 SAMP organized a workshop when Mihaela went to Zimbabwe to introduce the Standard to staff and project partners, commercial companies and government agencies. Everyone was keen on the approach and they quickly started working on developing result chains and result measurement plans for the project’s existing interventions.

The participants experience with the DCED Standard was reflected in the feedback provided:

Works participant’s feedback:

“Result chains make it easy to implement even complex projects by breaking them apart into simpler interventions logics and checking on achievement of each intervention logic chain using the result measurement plan....” Bekezela Dube workshop participant

Part 2: SAMP Work towards the Standard

The two-day workshop was the first step in SAMP’s “journey” towards setting up the M&E system by the project staff. Partners including four commercial companies, government agencies and the seed regulatory authority from Zimbabwe took part in the workshop. The discussions covered the DCED Standard, developing results chains and result measurement plans, and key steps in setting up a results measurement system for SAMP with different elements of the Standard. SAMP wants to become compliant with the Standard eventually.

Articulating result chains

The work on setting up SAMP results measurement system continued on after that, with staff, that included Technical Assistance Team (TAT), together with officers from each commercial company that will be in charge with managing the intervention, meeting to finalise these results chains and result measurement plans.

The team experienced few challenges on their way to setting up the system - especially developing results chains. The most important one was putting the “logic” of the result chain “in practice”. It was clear that each intervention needed to show a link of how SAMP’s activities will create changes in the way service providers (the support market) transact with the farmers, and the change in behavior that will occur. The next step was to show in the intervention logic how the change in the support market will result in improved performance for the farmers (by improving productivity – one of SAMP’s objectives), and in increased income for the farmers. This proved to be more challenging and long discussions followed. The link between different interventions also needed to be reflected in the result chains, as some interventions were complementing and supporting each others. But the final ‘product’ – final version of the results chains- covered all these challenges: “the logic of each result

chain (RC) closely reflected how SAMP performs the bulk of its work”, as one of the project partners stated after the meeting.

Nine result chains have been developed. An example of result chain is included below in Annex 1.

Defining indicators

Indicators form an essential element of measuring the extent to which each change in the intervention logic (result chain) has been achieved in SAMP.

After developing result chains the team started developing indicators to measure changes r from activity level up to impact level for each of the result chain. The team chose two or more indicators for each level in the result chain to assess if and to what extent expected changes actually happen. Many of these indicators are standardized across the project interventions.

All indicators identified needed to be precise and measurable within the program timeframe and budget; they are either quantitative or qualitative. These indicators include information on the likelihood of sustainability – this means that the changes described in the results chain will continue after the program ends. Key indicators were included in the Result Measurement Plan.

Setting up Result Measurement plans

Result measurement plans were next on the agenda for the SAMP team. The measurement plan had to include how data was going to be collected (data collection tools), who would do it, and when this was going to happen.

“The Result Measurement plan is a very simple tool that will help us to measure achievement of program targets and activities in the future. This DCED system has come to our project at the most opportune time as we prepare to implement field activities.” Nelson Munyaka – Seed specialist with SAMP

Setting up work plans

If the Result Chains provided the team with the vision and strategy to make SAMP M&E system work, setting detailed activity plans (“SAMP Work plan”) helped the team put it in practice. Based on key activities from the result chain, detailed schedule of activities and responsibilities had to be developed. The plan included (1) the activity; (2) when it starts and when it finishes, (3) the place where it will happen and (4) the person who will ensure that it happens.

This exercise is even more important when there is more than one partner working in an intervention and coordination between and understanding of roles across these partners is key.

The development of these plans included a wider audience with representatives from all project stakeholders, e.g. commercial company head office staff, field extension staff and key government operatives, coming together to prepare these plans. The exercise was viewed as a key milestone in the life of the SAMP project. For the first time private sector players were engaging in activity planning with public sector players. More importantly each

participating organisation representative agreed “formally” on key responsibilities they had, their role in the process in order to facilitate the implementation of that intervention. It became at the end more like a “formal commitment” between all partners: a challenging but also a very effective exercise that was considered a key stepping stone to ensuring SAMP project success and ownership later.

The document that was produced by the team formed one of the most important project documents for the project staff and project partners. It was part of the Implementation plan for an intervention and contained: the results chain, the result measurement plan and this “work plan”.

By bringing together all intervention partners to develop the work plan, by defining roles and responsibilities and clarifying commitments from the very first day of SAMP, the project put the first building blocks to ensure project success.

Conducting the Baseline Survey

The Baseline survey, subcontracted to a local University, was designed in late 2011 with a view of capturing the project status at the project start so that progress can be measured and compared afterwards.. The baseline data included information on key changes of each result chain as outlined on the Result measurement plans.

Part 3: Opportunities and challenges in setting up the M&E system

Aligning the DCED Standard with existing SAMP logframe

SAMP has a project logframe that was defined well before the project has started integrating the elements of the Standard to its results measurement system. This presented a challenge at some point and the team had to find a way to reconcile both systems. The existing logframe could not be changed as it has already been agreed with and approved by the donor during the project inception phase.

Therefore the result chains changes were from the very beginning designed in a way to respond as much as possible to the SAMP goal, purpose and outcome. The process of aligning the result chain impact indicators with the SAMP overall logframe was not an easy one either. Two of the ‘universal indicators’ recommended in the DCED Standard, Scale and Income, were already included in the SAMP logframe at the purpose level. This was an important step. However “jobs” were not in the logframe. Job creation is less obvious as SAMP’s key aim is to make processes more productive. The programme will however try to measure job creation through the number of farmers involved in seed production (self-employed) and the number of jobs created through the agro dealer network expansion. If this is not going to work for SAMP, then the indicator will be abandoned. As mentioned in the Standard it is okay to not measure job creation in a project, if a reasonable explanation is provided on why the project is not doing so.

All the other logframe indicators have been more or less mirrored in the result chains.

Developing result chains

The concept of result chain was new to most of the project staff as they were rather used to the logframe system for projects. Starting with the Result Measurement workshop was very

useful for the team in order to (1) grasp the key M&E concepts earlier in the implementation rather than later, (2) be actively and proactively involved in the process of developing the Measurement system for SAMP rather than having it been given to them; (3) have the opportunity to practice developing the logic of each SAMP intervention - using this effective tool- the result chain- and make them think in a clear output-outcome step by step logic .

Although the team knew the activities they were doing, outputs and outcomes of these activities, the process of placing them correctly in a logical cause- effect manner up the chain, sequencing them, including small intermediate steps to allow step-by-step checking and therefore correction if needed later, or making the team think now at how to deal with “attribution” later proved to be a challenge. Switching the team more and more towards this thinking was, at the beginning, a challenge. Support from an external consultant, in this case, Mihaela was beneficial in getting the process started. When the SAMP project moved into Swaziland and Lesotho, the team was able to design the results chains for similar interventions by themselves with minimal support from the Adviser.

The need to develop work plans

This activity is considered by the team the most important exercise in developing SAMP results measurement system and needs be developed for any other intervention. This is not unique for a project, but the way it was done was a winning point in SAMP: by bringing all partners together, for the first time under “one roof”, by starting the implementation of SAMP interventions... with planning it properly. Key to this process was that the team had already the most important “paw” in place when developing the plans: the result chain, to guide them and see the bigger picture. It is this process of developing the work plans together that the team said it should not be missed in any intervention planning.

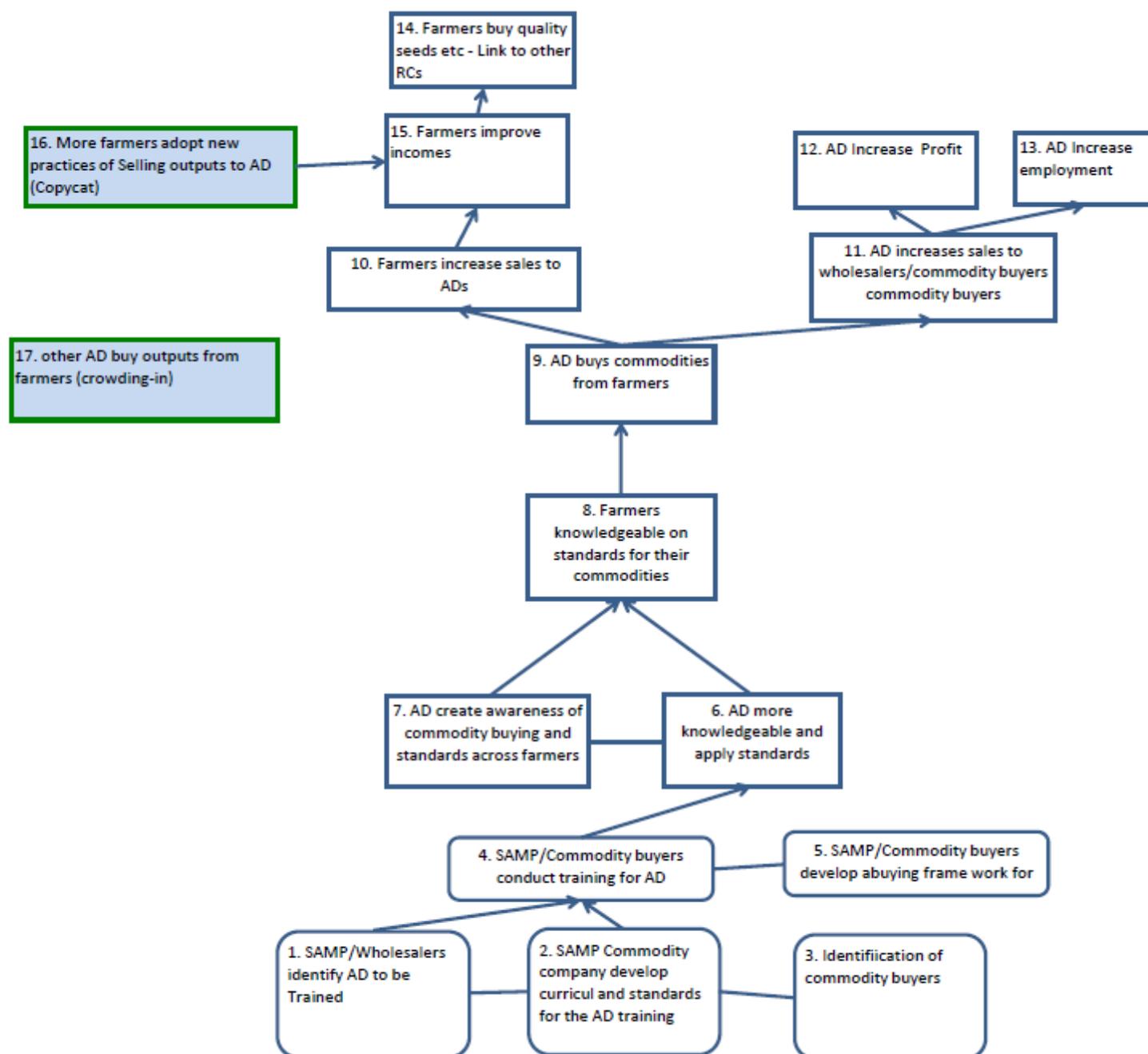
Building Capacity in M&E

Strengthening Monitoring and Evaluation skills was perceived critical by staff and project partners. The SAMP team and its stakeholders in both public and private sector wanted to better manage SAMP, improve decision making and make SAMP a success. This was possible also by understanding and using the M&E system more effectively. It helped the team not only to improve their work but also to a make them understand, through proper measurement system in place, the contribution they were making through the project.

Ensuring Real time measurement

A consistent focus on results and responsiveness were critical for SAMP effectiveness. Setting up a results measurement system incorporating the elements of the DCED Standard was the key mechanism to operationalise the necessary focus on results and to ensure real time measurement – whereby results on the ground will regularly be collected, then analysed and fed back into decision making of the project. Staff role has changed significantly from what was originally designed in the project design document - in that they now use monitoring as a tool for managing interventions. The system put in place enables intervention managers to use information about results to choose revise, and improve interventions (or shut them down). The Capacity Building Advisor, Bekezela Duba, took over also the role of SAMP M&E Coordinator and further supports the team with the implementation of the system.

Annex 1: Agrodealer Output Results Chain



Annex 2: Project Work plans: June 2011 – June 2012 Agro dealer Agricultural Output Marketing Strengthening- CNFA

SAMP Output 3: Pilot Schemes to increase Income from Output Sales designed and Implemented						
Strategy 3.10: Agro dealer Agricultural Output Marketing Strengthening - CNFA						
Key Activity from the Result Chain	Indicator	Sub-Activity	Start	End	Venue/Place	Responsible Person
1 SAMP/Wholesalers identify AD to be trained	Names, IDs and location List of ADs	a) Select wards b) Set selection criteria c) Visit and assess potential ADs d) Identify ADs to be trained	June 28 June 1 July 1 July	June 28 June 15 July 15 July	Glenlivet Glenlivet Zaka Zaka	Pedzisai/Mapanga Pedzisai/Mapanga Pedzisai/Mapanga Pedzisai/Mapanga
2 SAMP/Commodity companies develop curriculum & standards for AD training	Number of modules developed and approved for use in training	a) Identify training needs of ADs b) Identify module developers c) Develop modules d) Approval of training documents f) Training	1 Dec 1 Dec 1 Jan 16 Jan Mid Feb	31 Dec 31 Dec 15 Jan 31 Jan 22 Feb	Masvingo Masvingo Harare Harare Masvingo	Pedzisai/Taswell Pedzisai/Taswell Agritex/Bekezela Agritex/Alex Pedzisai/Taswell/Bekezela
3 Identification of commodity buyers	Name, IDs and List of Buyers	a) Identify crops available/grown b) Carry out market survey for the crops c) Listing potential buyers d) Select commodity buyers	1 March 1 March 1 March 31 March	31 Mar 31 Mar 31 Mar 31 Mar	Zaka Harare Harare Harare	Pedzisai/Mapanga Bekezela Bekezela Bekezela
4 SAMP/ Commodity buyers conduct training for ADs	Number of ADs trained	a) Identify resource trainers b) Selection of venue c) Invite participants d) Administer pre test e) Conduct the training f) Administer post test g) Produce training report	1 Feb 15 Jan 15 Jan April April April April	8 Feb 31 Jan 31 Jan April April April April	Harare Masvingo Masvingo Masvingo Masvingo Masvingo Masvingo	Bekezela Mapanga Mapanga Trainers Trainers Trainers Trainers
5 SAMP/ Commodity Buyers Develop a Buying Framework	Commodity Buying Framework Document Number of ADs who are participating in commodity buying scheme	a) Developing draft framework document b) Circulate draft document c) Approve draft document d) Conduct a survey e) Data analysis f) Report writing	April April April June June June	April April April Yearly Yearly Yearly	Harare Harare Harare Zaka Zaka Zaka	Bekezela Bekezela Alex Pedzisai/Mapanga Pedzisai/Mapanga Pedzisai/Mapanga
6 AD more knowledgeable and apply standards	Number of set standards that are being applied by each AD	a) Application of standards & knowledge acquired b) ADs secure seller licenses c) ADs negotiate with producers on prices of different crops	May May May	Conti.. Conti.. Conti..	AD shops AD shops Zaka	ADs ADs ADs
7 ADs create awareness of commodity buying & standards across farmers	Number & type of awareness events conducted by ADs	a) Holding meetings b) Explain commodity and standards required c) Agreeing on commodity prices	End Apr End Apr End Apr	Conti.. Conti.. Conti..	Zaka wards Wards Wards	ADs ADs ADs