



DCED Annual Meeting and Global Seminar

Nairobi

15-19 June 2026

PSD at a crossroads:
Navigating a shared way forward

Provisional outline and application form

This flyer covers two separate DCED events, the Annual Meeting for DCED member agencies and the Global Seminar for members and practitioners.

- *The three-day Seminar will take place from 16-18 June.*
- *DCED Annual Meeting elements will take place on 15 and 19 June, and are exclusive to DCED members and invited potential members. Information about the Working Group meetings on 15 June and the Business Session on 19 June will be shared separately with members.*
- *Details about side events and training opportunities on 19 June for interested participants will also follow in due course.*

This outline is provisional and will be subject to continuous updates and refinement as session content is curated.

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Overall vision for the event

The DCED's 2026 Annual Meeting and Global Seminar will strategically bring together DCED Members with the wider community of private sector development (PSD) practitioners. We will examine the implications of the evolving global aid landscape for PSD for different types of participants:

- **Bilateral donors:** to hold frank discussions on managing political pressure while maintaining development integrity
- **Foundations:** to connect with peers navigating similar challenges around scale and transformation
- **Implementers:** to learn practical strategies for thriving in the new funding landscape.
- **All participants:** to engage in a unique exchange of the latest experiences, lessons and debates on how to promote systemic PSD under changing parameters effectively.

Since our last Global Seminar in 2024, there have been seismic shifts in the world of PSD. Bilateral aid budgets have been cut or eliminated; there is increased political pressure to align PSD with domestic trade benefits for donor countries; and donor countries are increasingly turning to Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) and other sources of finance to drive development outcomes. This is set against the backdrop of rising fragility and climate shocks, which demand more integrated responses that align prevention, recovery and adaptation with more systemic approaches. In all these responses, inclusion principles are under considerable strain yet remain essential for sustainable growth.

These trends bring together different development stakeholders from public and private spheres. They all have systemic ambitions and can make PSD more effective. But while ambition and complexity have increased, resources have decreased. How can we find and navigate a shared way forward? The Seminar will explore this question with funders and experienced implementers at the forefront of PSD programming globally. We will create a space for frank exchange and constructive conversations to generate actionable, collective insights on the future of PSD programming.

Thematic strands

Discussions at the Seminar will be organised around the following strands. These will be further refined and narrowed in conversation with relevant stakeholders in the coming months. Seminar sessions will prioritise practical lessons emerging from PSD experience, evidence of what is working well, and analysis of the pitfalls.

1. A changing funder landscape and implications for PSD. Bilateral donors are rethinking funding envelopes and mechanisms, including procurement routes and the implications of widespread co-financing. Implementers and multilaterals are scrambling to diversify and experiment with new funding sizes, types and business models. As bilateral donors face budget cuts and focus more on domestic issues, an opportunity arises for others to step in. Will foundations, private investors and DFIs move in to support and sustain systemic approaches? Beyond a common label such as ‘foundation’, there is enormous variation within and among these funders: in culture, funding processes, budgets, time horizons and risk appetite. The implications for project conception, design, procurement and implementation will be specifically addressed in this stream but also integrated into specific technical discussions across the entire agenda.

2. Mutual benefits? Searching for synergy between PSE/PSD and donor country interests. Bilateral donors face growing political pressures to reconcile domestic interests - such as trade, market and resource access - with (private sector) development objectives abroad. One vehicle for this agenda is private sector engagement (PSE) programmes that involve donor country businesses in development. Ideally, these and other approaches can create a win-win situation for countries connected by a shared value chain, strengthening their respective earning potential, long-term economic relations, and supply of sustainably sourced critical raw materials. But there are also questions that need to be asked: What does it take to deliver shared benefits for both donor and developing countries through PSE and PSD? And how can domestic benefits be captured and communicated effectively without losing sight of the ‘development’

objectives of PSD? Sessions will explore policy shifts and practical examples of how to achieve synergies and navigate tensions, through concrete steps taken at both HQ and programme levels.

3. Creating markets for SME finance – from shared language to shared practice. There is a need to create systems through which finance can reach SMEs, and in which SMEs can develop to attract finance. The 2024 Global Seminar demonstrated that access to finance for dynamic SMEs in emerging markets requires collaboration between PSD and finance specialists. Building on the ongoing work of the new DCED Finance Working Group to develop a shared language and vision for SME finance, the 2026 Seminar will focus on practice: concrete examples, institutional configurations and the results and learning that are emerging.

4. Systemic approaches at the cutting edge: how is MSD practice evolving to meet global challenges? As a flagship systemic approach in PSD, MSD remains a key choice for donors and implementers alike. Significant updates to core guidance are in progress, and these should be examined and debated by the community. The Seminar will also mark 25 years since the publication of the Guiding Principles for Business Development Services (the 'Blue Book'). What lessons have been learnt since its release, and how has the operating environment for MSD evolved? Is funding for neutral market facilitators being squeezed out? How are team leaders adjusting to increasing pressures for results, inclusion, climate impact, and achieving multiple objectives? And do new funders offer opportunities or risks to sticking to core MSD principles?

5. Towards a new generation of green PSD programming: strategic approaches to navigating environmental, climate and socio-economic outcomes. In the past two years, a Just Transition has become a central topic on the agendas of many funding agencies. Yet, examples beyond climate adaptation in agriculture remain sparse. What are the limits of tweaking existing portfolios, projects and interventions? In a time of shifting funding priorities, how will new projects be conceptualised and designed differently? Trade-offs between environmental and socioeconomic (employment) outcomes need to be openly discussed between funders and implementers to enable a strategic vision of who is at risk and who might gain. Crucially, this also requires engagement with businesses at the forefront of market intelligence on climate risks and supply chain shifts. By injecting new voices, including those from foundations whose core strategy rests on a Just Transition, and harvesting best-in-class insights from the frontiers of green PSD practice and measurement, Seminar sessions will explore the contours of a new generation of green PSD programming.

6. Markets in fragile and conflict-affected settings - is there life after the funding collapse? Against the backdrop of a humanitarian funding collapse, more people than ever before are faced with protracted crises and displacement. Populations that have depended on prolonged humanitarian assistance are coping with dwindling food assistance and other support for their basic needs. In recent years, there has also been growing interest in the use of market systems approaches in fragile contexts and displacement settings, as well as efforts to sustain critical markets through shocks. What has the sector learnt about the potential to support vulnerable populations through more sustainable and stronger local markets? How are people currently coping and adapting in displacement settings and in fragile contexts? How are organisations adapting to the new normal in ways that deliver both value for money and meaningful impacts? And what roles do new funders and private sector partners play in supporting resilient market systems in such contexts going forward? This stream will challenge norms and explore critical questions for improving how we work in the world's most challenging places.

7. Results measurement in the hot seat: getting PSD (measurement) right when ambitions are up and budgets are down. Communicating credible evidence on effective PSD remains important to mobilise conventional and new funders. But while aid budgets are shrinking, the goalposts of results measurement in PSD keep shifting to capture diverse outcomes: green ambitions, trade effectiveness, systemic change, gender, youth and vulnerable groups inclusion. There is also a growing demand for credible self-reported

data from market stakeholders such as SMEs to reduce monitoring costs and empower local actors to communicate their development relevance and attract impact finance. Sessions will show the latest PSD evidence and discuss emerging good practices in trying to tackle the different measurement aspects in credible, yet practical and cost-effective ways.

8. Courageous leadership: safeguarding and deepening women's economic empowerment and inclusion. Inclusion can be mainstreamed within systemic development programming, supported by years of evidence showing that programmes and private investments are more successful and sustainable when designed through an inclusion lens. Yet, in some circles, the entire premise is being challenged. Creating space for and valuing inclusion requires courageous and continuous leadership at multiple levels as the PSD landscape shifts towards new topics and ways of operating. Sessions will unpack what this looks like in practice. This will include experiences in championing inclusion through intersectional approaches (e.g. to WEE, climate and care); as well as steps taken at policy and HR levels to 'hold the line' in this vital domain at a time when it most needs protection.

Participants

Participants will include up to 200 representatives from current and potential DCED members (bilateral donors, foundations, IFIs/DFIs, UN agencies) along with PSD practitioners with experience relevant to the agenda. We aim for balanced representation among practitioners and funding organisations' staff from headquarters and field offices.

Location, dates, schedule

The 5-day event in Nairobi will combine traditional elements of DCED Annual Meetings (Working Group meetings, member updates, Business session) with a 3-day Global Seminar. The proposed schedule is as follows:

- **Monday 15 June 2026:** DCED Working Groups conduct technical exchanges and discuss progress on work items (for members only)
- **Tuesday 16, Wednesday 17, Thursday 18 June 2026:** Seminar with approximately 24 technical sessions in various interactive formats (for registered participants)
- **Friday 19 June 2026:**
 - DCED Business Session on formal DCED decision-taking (for members only)
 - External workshops and training events for all interested participants (programmes to be announced; registration directly with training providers)

Application

Please apply to participate in the DCED Annual Meeting and/or Global Seminar by completing the [application form](#). Applicants will be selected in a way to ensure a suitable mix of participants. Applications are reviewed monthly, starting in January 2026. Early application is recommended. There will be no fee to attend the DCED Global Seminar 2026. The DCED Annual Meeting components (Monday, 15 June and Friday, 19 June) are open to DCED members and potential member agencies only.

If you are accepted, the DCED Secretariat will contact you with additional information on logistics. Participants will be responsible for arranging and covering the costs of their own travel, accommodation and subsistence. For any questions, please contact seminar@enterprise-development.org.