

Market Systems Development Working Group

Thursday 24th November 2025, Zoom Teleconference

Minutes

Participants

Chair

Gatsby Africa)
CBI

MoFA
ILO
FCDO
LuxDev
ILO
SDC

DCED Secretariat

Mike Albu, Mike Klassen
Isabelle Gore
Melina Heinrich

Members attending

Sida
FAO

AGENDA

1. Welcome & introductions
incl. approval of previous minutes & announcements from Chair
2. Brief workstream activity updates
 - 1.1 BEAM CMS migration & usage statistics
 - 1.2 Translation of key MSD resources
 - 2.1 Benin MSD Network
 - 3.1 Building capacity for sector transformation
 - 3.2 MSD for employment activities
 - 3.3 New Green MSD assignment
3. Global Seminar & AGM in June 2026
4. Upcoming DCED & BEAM webinars
5. Agency updates
All members are welcome to brief colleagues on latest new
6. Closing remarks, ideas for next WG Meeting

1. Welcome & introductions

The meeting opened with 15 participants representing various DCED member organizations and the Secretariat. The minutes from the September meeting were presented and with no objections raised by participants, were formally approved.

2. Brief workstream activity updates

Workstream 1.1 BEAM CMS migration and usage statistics

Secretariat reported significant progress with migration of BEAM Exchange to a new Wagtail CMS (content management system), accompanied by a fresh look and design for the site. Most of the content will remain the same, but the Guidance section has been revised and updated.

Earlier in 2025 we discovered problems with the cookie-consent set up, which impacted our usage statistics. These issues have now been resolved, with a switch from Google Analytics to PiwikPro. Members were presented with [data analysis graphs](#) to show this year's usage, downloads and levels of engagement.

It was noted that top downloads included the new [MSA Toolkit](#), and the [Greening MSD in Agriculture](#) guidance. There was some discussion of the usage trends, including speculation about the impact of the USAID's closure.

Workstream 1.2 Translations of key MSD documents

Secretariat also reported that the work to publish translations of six key MSD documents in Spanish, French and Arabic is almost complete. Most of the translations are already available on BEAM, and the remaining few will be uploaded by early December.

Workstream 2.1 Benin MSD Network

The initiative to support MSD in the French-speaking community through a Benin-based platform has progressed with finalized terms of reference and invited bid. Three applications have been received for a six-month assignment with 25 person-days starting early 2026.

LuxDev noted that the platform requires structural support, as collective decision-making processes sometimes slow feedback mechanisms. The Dutch embassy confirmed involvement through Emmanuel Bossennec, following the departure of a previous champion. Potential connections were identified through **FAO's** Benin Padame project work and **(Secretariat)** noted the Small Foundation in Ireland's network-building expertise.

Workstream 3.1 Building capacity for sector transformation

Gatsby Africa noted that while government engagement in Tanzania has slowed due to the current political context, work on the "building government capability for sector transformation" stream has moved forward. Inputs from two consultants — one supporting Gatsby's work with the National Planning Commission (NPC) and the President's Office for Planning and Investment (POPI), and another providing an academic perspective — have now been completed. These insights will be synthesised into a presentation deck to be shared with the wider MSD Working Group, with strong interest already expressed by members including JICA, IKEA, LuxDev and others. A learning session is planned for late January 2026 to discuss

case examples from Gatsby's work in Tanzania, gather peer experience on what has and hasn't worked, and jointly shape next steps toward a tangible workstream deliverable by June 2026.

Workstream 3.2 MSD4E dissemination activities

Secretariat reported that dissemination of the MSD for Employment Landscape Study continues with high-quality tailored sessions. Completed sessions include SDC and Sida . Six presentations are scheduled over the next three weeks including LuxDev with wider Luxembourg stakeholders, WUSC (Canadian NGO), Global Affairs Canada, UNIDO, and Palladium.

Three blog posts are in development by Justin covering the numbers game around different employment objective magnitudes, employer incentives within MSD approaches, and MSD ex-post work building on agriculture sector momentum. The goal is to generate ten new intervention examples for the library, with six currently confirmed. All deliverables remain on track for the December 31st contract completion deadline.

Workstream 3.3 Green MSD dissemination

SDC reported that the [Green MSD guidance](#) authored by Tom Hilton and Andrew Panton (Canopy Lab) was discussed and well received by the task team meeting in Geneva in October during the ILO Conference on MSD for Just Transition. Environmental specialists identified strong relevance for scaling conservation project sustainability impact. The MSD task team agreed to support dissemination and piloting in concrete conservation projects to help practitioners design systemic solutions to market-based environmental problems.

Secretariat will now draft terms of reference in consultation with Tom Hilton. One member provided important context about conservation community concerns where market-based approaches risk losing conservation focus, with theories of change often stopping at income generation without maintaining continuity to actual conservation outcomes. Secretariat will get in touch with Megan Hill a former USAID staffer.

A [BEAM Exchange webinar](#) about the Green MSD guidance is scheduled for December 4th.

3. AGM and Global Seminar in 2026

Secretariat presented updated plans for the combined Annual Meeting and Global Seminar in Nairobi, confirmed for June 15-19, 2025. The theme "PSD at a Crossroads: Navigating a Shared Way Forward" will address effective systemic private sector development work in a significantly changed global context.

The week structure includes working group meetings and interactive member updates on Monday, three full seminar days Tuesday-Thursday with in-depth technical discussions, and traditional annual meeting business session plus side events on Friday. The target audience combines donor headquarters staff and experienced practitioners, with special efforts to attract potential members from foundations and financial sector actors.

Eight thematic tracks are planned with up to four sessions each: changing funder landscape implications; trade/minerals access synergies with PSD; SME finance market creation; advances in MSD including potential operational guidelines launch; green PSD and just transition moving beyond agriculture adaptation; markets in fragile/conflict environments; evidence framework updates; and women's economic empowerment and inclusion.

Registration will open this week with early registration advised. Members provided feedback on ensuring clear audience expectations following lessons from the previous seminar, potential public sector participation, and connections to recent related events like the Vikara Market Systems Symposium.

4. Upcoming BEAM and DCED webinars:

Secretariat outlined upcoming BEAM webinars including the December 4th [Green MSD webinar](#) “Making Markets Work for People, Climate and Nature,” a January 29th session with Canopy Lab on inclusive MSD insights from 2025 gender equality conversations, and on March 12th a presentation of the MSD Team Leaders Competency Framework featuring early adopter examples.

Secretariat highlighted DCED topical exchanges for members on emerging issues, including the recent domestic benefits session and upcoming December 2nd Critical Minerals Value Chains discussion.

5. Member agency updates

MoFA Netherlands

MoFA NL reported that the Ministry continues to face significant cuts to the Dutch aid budget, but remains committed to mainstreaming systemic and MSD approaches in country portfolios. The PADEO methodology is being integrated into a broader “cluster approach” in partner countries rather than maintained as a standalone program. In parallel, MoFA has established a new Trade and Investment Promotion Facility aimed at strengthening collaboration between Dutch and local entrepreneurs in lower- and middle-income countries.

ILO

ILO shared that, with continued support from Sida, the ILO-hosted Systems Change Initiative has been extended for a further two years, through to the end of 2027. This will allow the team, led by Steve, to continue consolidating learning on systemic change in labour-market and just transition programmes and to follow up on discussions from the recent Geneva conference on MSD for Just Transition. A follow-up communication is planned for participants and DCED members to maintain momentum and link this agenda into future DCED events, including the Nairobi seminar.

SDC

SDC updated the group on two major activities:

- **MSD Operational Guide update:** SDC and ILO will jointly finance an update of the MSD Operational Guide. Terms of Reference have been agreed with the WG task team and issued to nine candidate consulting firms. Proposals have been received and selection is underway, with the assignment expected to start early 2026. The timeline foresees a first draft by April (in time to feed into the Global Seminar) and a final version and BEAM Webinar by late 2026.
- **Market Makers ex-post evaluation:** SDC will commission an ex-post sustainability and systemic change evaluation of the Market Makers MSD programme implemented from 2013–2023 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, focused on improved employment opportunities

for young women and men in sectors such as food production and processing, business-process outsourcing and tourism. The evaluation will assess the depth and durability of systemic change and derive lessons for future MSD programming and ex-post reviews. Completion is expected by end of Q2 2026, with a proposal to present findings in a BEAM Webinar.

CBI / Netherlands Enterprise Agency

CBI explained that it is preparing its new strategy period starting in 2026. A key emphasis is to better connect domestic economic benefits for the Netherlands with inclusive and sustainable outcomes in partner countries. CBI is exploring how to integrate “domestic benefits” more explicitly into programme design and measurement, while keeping MSD principles central to its export and value-chain support programmes.

Sida

Sida mentioned that Sida has recently organised internal learning events on trade and MSD for both thematic and country staff. These sessions have begun to unpack how MSD approaches can support Sida’s growing emphasis on trade-related work, and how to address common implementation challenges. Sida is drawing on DCED products and plans to continue this internal learning in 2026.

Gatsby Africa Foundation

Gatsby Africa noted that elections in Tanzania (October) and Uganda (January) will likely slow engagement with centres of government and sector work. In the interim, Gatsby has focused on completing key analytical pieces — including the investment case study on how Gatsby leverages investments as a tool for systems change with examples from its aquaculture programme in East Africa and the tea programme in Rwanda, which is on track for completion by end-December and will be shared with the MSD Working Group and wider DCED community. Gatsby is also progressing the “building government capability for sector transformation” workstream, as outlined in the earlier update.

Others

One member described a new initiative to develop a food systems resilience learning agenda that uses the abrupt reduction in USAID funding as a “natural experiment”. A roundtable, convened together with the Global Food Institute at George Washington University, brought together donors (including FAO, Gates, Rockefeller), private sector and research actors to consider what can be learned about resilience when a major funder exits. Follow-up work is exploring where further research should sit (academic vs. funder-led) and how resulting evidence could guide remaining donors on where limited resources can have the greatest systemic impact. The MSD WG and DCD Secretariat will be informed of next steps and potential collaboration options.

6. Closing remarks, ideas for next WG Meeting

The Chair thanked all participants for their contributions and updates.

Summary of Action Points

- **Secretariat:** Draft terms of reference for Green MSD piloting in consultation with Tom Hilton
- **Secretariat:** Complete publication of remaining translated resources by early 2025
- **LuxDev:** Select Benin MSD network service provider and initiate six-month project early 2025
- **Gatsby Africa:** Finalize Gatsby investment case study by December and plan government capability webinar for January 2026
- **SDC:** Connect Lourdes with Bosnia evaluation colleague regarding systems change measurement approaches
- **Secretariat:** Launch formal Global Seminar registration this week
- **All members:** Provide feedback on seminar thematic tracks, speakers, and session design via email
- **Secretariat:** Connect interested members to evidence measurement task team led by Nabanita Bekkers
- **Secretariat:** Coordinate potential collaboration on food systems resilience learning agenda