



The Donor Committee for Enterprise Development

Market Systems Development Working Group

MINUTES

Tuesday 11th February 2025 at 13:00 UCT

Chair

Margot Lobbezoo (CBI)
Pauline Baars (CBI)

Steve Hartrich (ILO)
Steven Geiger (SDC)
Susanne Thiard-laforet (ADA)

Members present

Karen Kimami (Gatsby)
Merten Sievers (ILO)
Pascal Fabing (LuxDev)
Severin Oman (FAO)

DCED Secretariat

Melina Heinrich, Mike Albu,
Mike Klassen, Isabelle Gore

Apologies in advance

David Neven (FAO)
Elisabet Montgomery (Sida)
Gun Eriksson Skoog (Sida)
Marleen van Ruijven (MoFA)
Nic van der Jagt (IKEA)
Rana Fakhoury (UNIDO)
Guy Redding (MFAT NZ)
Urkaly Isaev (IFC)

AGENDA

1. Welcome & introductions
2. Changes to the MSD WG Chair
3. Agency updates
4. Brief Workstream activity updates
5. Responding to the freeze on USAID programs
6. Proposed support for MSD network in francophone Africa
7. Discussion about how to support DCED members' staff
8. Gauging support for a new edition of the MSD Operational Guide?
9. New ExCo guidance to WG re work plans & budgets for 2025/6
10. Provisional plans for DCED AGM in June
11. Closing remarks, plans for next WG Meeting

Papers will be found at: <https://sites.google.com/beamexchange.org/msdwg/feb-25>

1. Welcome & introductions

Co-Chair Margot (CBI) welcomed all to the 36th meeting of MSD Working Group. No changes were proposed to the [Minutes of the previous meeting](#), which were therefore approved.

2. Changes to the MSD WG Chair

Margot (CBI) confirmed that she is leaving CBI, and so stepping down as co-Chair. Karen Kimami (**Gatsby Africa**) who covered Pauline's maternity leave in 2024, had agreed to be nominated as her replacement. In the absence of other nominations or objections, members present welcomed her to replace Margot.

3. Member agency updates

Steven (**SDC**) explained that SDC is coping with substantial budget cuts; but so far not affecting their MSD portfolio, except that three entire country programmes (including Bangladesh) are closing.

More positively, Steven reported on a successful second learning clinic for staff in Asia & the Caucasus, using [the system change resources](#) he previously shared. These resources have been updated to reflect lessons from the recent clinics. More are planned in Africa, the Middle East and Balkans.

Steven (**SDC**) also described a proposal SDC recently received seeking support to develop an Executive MBA course for programme managers using a market systems approach.

ACTION: any WG members to contact him if interested to co-invest in this initiative.

Steve (**ILO**) said ILO has been offering an excellent training course on measuring system change (provided by Aly Miehlebradt) to field colleagues, and commended it other members. He also informed members that ILO has commissioned a review of ILO's strategy for systemic change. Finally he recommended the new [Starting Strong](#) paper about managing inception phases of programmes.

Karen (**Gatsby Africa**) reminded members that Gatsby are undertaking a sector scoping exercise – which has identified BPO and Waste Management services as new priorities. They are also exploring initiatives in Coconut, Soya and Manufacturing sectors. Margot (**CBI**) noted that ITC is also working on BPO services in east Africa, in case this is useful.

In other news the Gates Foundation agreed to support their Livestock programme, and the Ezra Foundation agreed to co-invest in their Forestry sector strategy. In Tanzania, Gatsby is engaging with the government's Planning Commission to support them in refining and prioritising key growth sectors. Lastly, ISF advisors are finalising their investment case-studies, focused on Gatsby's aquaculture and tea sectors.

Pascal (**LuxDev**) noted that Parliament will be debating development cooperation on Feb 12th. In contrast to the general trend in other countries, they are expecting Luxembourg to increase their support / ODA to 1% GNI. The geographical scope is likely to shift away from west Africa, towards long term commitments to countries that share similar values and respect for human rights (e.g. Cambodia).

Suzanne (**ADA**) reminded members that Austria still has no functioning government, so all activities are on hold. Fresh elections are possible. Given the political atmosphere, future priorities is likely to focus on work that 'serves the nation'. For security reasons, their programme in Burkina Faso is closing, and a new office opening in Ghana.

Margot (**CBI**) explained that the Netherlands is expecting a new development policy paper in a few weeks, that is likely to focus on trade-related priorities, as well as migration and security issues. Existing work continues, but cuts can be anticipated. CBI is also working on a new long-term strategy.

4. Workstream activity updates

Workstream 1.1 BEAM Website Performance

Isabelle (**Secretariat**) briefed WG members on the usage and resource downloads of the BEAM website in past six months as illustrated [in this graphic](#). Members asked about the relative popularity of resources generated by the WG activities, and **ACTION:** Isabelle agreed to share these statistics.

NB: A full list of [most downloaded resources in 2024](#) is now available. The top five are:

1. M4P Operational guide (The Springfield Centre, 2015)
2. Tool: Example addendum to lead firm MOU (Action for Enterprise, 2020)
3. Greening the MSD approach in Agriculture (DCED / BEAM, 2024)
4. Rough Guide to the MSD approach for Youth Employment (DCED / BEAM 2022)
5. BEAM Evidence Review 20204 (DCED / BEAM 2024)

Workstream 1.2 BEAM Translations of Key Resources

Isabelle (**Secretariat**) reported to WG members the progress towards creating translated version of five key resources in French, Arabic and Spanish. Selection of candidates is underway and contracting is anticipated in March.

Workstream 2.1 MSD Team Leadership Briefs

Mike K (**Secretariat**) briefed members about steps to complete the paper on support for MSD Team Leadership that grew out of the clinics in 2024. A 90% finalised draft is being revised to give more emphasis to the recommendations, aiming for publication in March. Margot (CBI) suggested that WG discuss the final paper at the AGM in June.

Workstream 3.1 MSD & Dev Finance

Karen (**Gatsby Africa**) reported they are now finalising the case-study on systemic investments. It focuses on Gatsby's tea and aquaculture sectors work, and should be complete for sharing in March.

Workstream 3.2 Youth Employment / MSD4E

Mike K (**Secretariat**) advised members that the new searchable [MSD4E Interventions Library](#) is now live on BEAM with over 50 detailed examples. A [blog](#) was published, and a well-attended [webinar](#) was held in January to promote this resource.

On the downside, contracting of the consultant to undertake dissemination, learning seminars & helpdesk functions with member agencies is still held up in IFC (albeit progress this week).

Workstream 3.5 MSD & Trade

In Gun's absence, Mike A (**Secretariat**) explained that work on a draft ToR is continuing with inputs by Janneke (CBI) and Karolina (Sida), but urged other members of the task team to engage with the process so we can move to contracting as soon as possible.

5. Responding to the freeze on USAID programs

Members proceeded to discuss the impact of the recent freeze on USAID programme on their agencies. Margot (CBI) noted already the loss to the MSD WG of a very active and constructive member in Kristin (USAID). Isabelle (**Secretariat**) noted the loss of crucial knowledge platforms such as AgriLINKS and FEWSNets, and described steps BEAM Team is taking to mitigate this.

Steve (ILO) explained that 22% of ILO's core funding was from USA, loss of which is likely to lead to cuts in programming, in addition to directly funded initiatives. Margot (CBI) articulated people's worries that other governments may follow suit.

Mike K (**Secretariat**) asked members to consider what happens to the employment market for people with MSD skills and experience following this massive industry shock. How can we protect institutional capability? Members expressed how difficult it is for other agencies to respond and step into the voids that have been created.

6. Proposed support for MSD network in francophone Africa

Pascal (**LuxDev**) talked about the potential for an MSD network in Francophone Africa, with a focus on Benin before disseminating them across all Francophone countries. The idea was met with interest from Margot (CBI), who suggested linking the initiative to recently formed network

for Arabic speakers. Mike (**Secretariat**) proposed creating a task team on regional non-English language networks – perhaps with a view to supporting local networks in the 2025/6 WorkPlan. Steve (**ILO**), Steven (**SDC**) and Margot (**CBI**) all expressed interest in this, and suggested organizing inter-agency exchanges for learning and knowledge sharing.

7. Discussion about how to support DCED members' staff

Inspired by Steven's (**SDC**) update (above), Mike A (**Secretariat**) asked members how the Secretariat might support agencies to do more to engage their colleagues in learning and sharing experience about MSD. Margot (**CBI**) expressed interest in organising bilateral exchanges between agencies. Steve (**ILO**) said they are already doing this e.g. with FAO, and would be willing to discuss with other members. Steven (**SDC**) likewise. **ACTION: Any members** to liaise with Steve or Steven.

8. Gauging support for a new edition of the MSD Operational Guide?

The [M4P Operational Guide](#) is almost 10 years old, and still the [most downloaded](#) and influential resource on the MSD approach. SDC Steven (**SDC**) asked if other donors would be interested in collaborating with SDC to fund an update. New material might include content on learning and experimentation, on setting up programmes, on greening MSD, on MSD in FCAS, on ex-post evaluation etc.

Several members agreed the Guide needs a refresh, but also appreciated what a significant undertaking this would be. Perhaps a new digital format would be advantageous? Steven argued that the refresh may not need to be so extensive.

ACTION: All members to share their views please.

9. New ExCo guidance to WG re work plans & budgets for 2025/6

Melina shared some [new guidance](#) from the ExCo regarding the scheduling and budget envelopes that Working Groups should adopt for the 2025/6 Work Plan. Each WG need to share final versions of plans by early April, and aim for an overall request to IFC within \$45,000 per year. Requests beyond this limit need to be seen as contingent on unused budget being available from other WGs.

ACTION: All task teams to urgently prepare their proposals for 2025/6 budget requests by end of March

10. Provisional plans for DCED AGM in June

Melina (**Secretariat**) advised members that the AGM will most likely be in Geneva in the week beginning June 16th.

11. Closing remarks, plans for next WG Meeting

Pauline (**CBI**) wrapped up the meeting by letting members show their great appreciation to Margot for all her work as Chair of the MSD Working Group during the past two years.

ACTION: Mike A (Secretariat) will poll members for the next date in early April.