

Market Systems Development Working Group (MSD WG)

Online meeting 31st March 2025

Minutes

Participants

Chairs

Pauline Baars (CBI)
Karen Kimami
(GatsbyAfrica)

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

Apologies in advance

David Neven (FAO)
Elisabet Montgomery (Sida)
Gun Eriksson Skoog (Sida)
Rob Skidmore (ITC)
Severin Oman (FAO)
Rana Fakhoury (UNIDO)
Guy Redding (MFAT NZ)
Urkaly Isaev (IFC)
Mike Klassen (DCED)

Members present

Alex Kucharski (BII)
Marleen van Ruijven (MoFA)
Merten Sievers (ILO)
Nic van der Jagt (IKEA)
Pascal Fabing (LuxDev)

DCED Secretariat

Melina Heinrich,
Mike Albu, Isabelle Gore,
Nabanita Sen Bekkers

Agenda items

1. **Welcome & introductions**
2. **Agency updates**
3. **Brief workstream activity updates**
 - 1.2 Translation of key MSD resources
 - 1.2 Salvaging MSD resources from USAID-funded sites
 - 2.1 MSD Team Leadership brief
4. **Impact measurement & management** activity proposal
5. **Work Plan 2025 / 6**
 - Upgrading BEAM search functionality
 - 3rd Edition of Operation Guide to MSD
 - Support for MSD network in francophone Africa
 - MSD & development finance
 - MSD Employment & skills
 - Beyond greening MSD / MSD for trade facilitation
 - Putting systems thinking into practice
6. **Plans for DCED AGM** in June
7. **Closing remarks**, ideas for next WG Meeting

WG papers: <https://sites.google.com/beamexchange.org/msdwg/mar-25> (DCED members only)

1. Welcome & introductions

Co-Chair Pauline (**CBI**) welcomed all to the 37th meeting of MSD Working Group. No changes were proposed to the minutes of the previous meeting, which were therefore approved.

⇒ [Minutes of MSD WG meeting \(11th February 2025\)](#)

2. Agency updates

Steven (**SDC**) informed members that SDC budget cuts and re-prioritisations will reduce the time he has available for PSD-related work. On a more positive note, he explained that SDC are exploring options to support the Markets-in-Crises community & platform after it lost its funding from USAID. Other members reacted warmly to this prospect.

Pauline (**CBI**) also described shifting but still uncertain priorities in Dutch agencies.

Merten (**ILO**) mentioned an MSD project in Kenya for urban refugees closing due to loss of US State Dept funding. He also noted two upcoming events in Dhaka (May) and Maputo (August) marking the end of Sida-partnership projects with a MSD and Green Transition them.

Nic (**IKEA Foundation**) provided an update on the Foundation's strategic review, to be made public shortly. It indicates a shift towards climate-focussed programming without reducing resources. However, they will be moving away from 'grant-based' partnerships towards 'systemic' programming.

Alex (**BII**) reassured members that the recent UK Aid cuts are unlikely to affect the UK's approach to development finance. BII has a [new CEO recently](#) and they are working on a new strategy. The CEO has set out that BII should do more market development programmes.

3. Brief workstream activity updates

Workstream 1.2(a) Translation of key MSD resources

Isabelle (**DCED Secretariat**) reported good progress towards contracting consultants to undertake translation of popular MSD resources into French, Spanish and Arabic. The CV's of a short list of preferred candidates have now been submitted to IFC procurement dept.

Workstream 1.2(b) Salvaging MSD resources from USAID-funded sites

Mike A (**DCED Secretariat**) informed members about the MSD WG Chairs' recent decision, endorsed by the ExCo., to re-purpose the current budget line for upgrading BEAM Search functionality. This will be used instead for salvaging and maintaining access to MSD resources that were previously hosted on USAID-funded knowledge platforms such as MarketLinks. ToRs for this work have been published and applications received from 14 candidates.

⇒ [ToRs for 'Maintaining access to valuable MSD resource'](#)

Workstream 2.1 MSD Team Leadership brief

Mike A (**DCED Secretariat**) advised members that a final draft of the second knowledge brief on MSD Team Leadership entitled 'What do MSD leaders need to thrive?' is completed. The BEAM Exchange will publish it later this month.

4. Impact measurement & management activity proposal

Nabanita (**DCED Secretariat**) shared a proposal from **SDC** for an impact measurement and management initiative, emphasizing the importance of collaborating with the impact investing community. Pascal (**LuxDev**) supported the idea, noting its strategic significance in bridging gaps between grant-based financing and impact finance. Steven (**SDC**) suggested a scoping study to explore cost-effective ways to implement impact measurement for SMEs.

Melina (**DCED Secretariat**) suggested incorporating this as collaborative idea under the MSD WG work plan, with a joint meeting planned for the annual meeting in Geneva to refine the concept. Nabanita indicated that a portion of the results measurement working group's budget could be reserved for this initiative. Steven (**SDC**) emphasized the importance of developing concrete proposals before the June meeting

5. Work Plan 2025 / 6

Members then moved on to review the contents of the current draft of the 2025/6 WorkPlan

⇒ [MSD WG Work Plan 2025/6 \(Current Draft\)](#)

Mike A (**DCED Secretariat**) started by sharing the summary table for the budget – with a total of \$55,000 requested from the **IFC** Trust Fund. He also noted that up to \$57,000 may be carried forward unspent from the current year budget.

Members then discussed each proposed workstream activity.

Workstreams 1.1 – 1.3 BEAM Exchange and related activities

Mike A (**DCED Secretariat**) described how the three main workstreams here are largely unchanged, being continuations of the BEAM Exchange activities from previous years. He noted, however, the renewed request for funds for upgrading the BEAM Search functionality – necessary following the decision mentioned earlier (point 3 above).

Workstream 1.4: 3rd Edition of the MSD Operational Guide

Steven (**SDC**) then spoke about proposals to update and publish a 3rd Edition of the Operational Guide to MSD – the 2nd Edition of which is now ten years old, but remains the most frequently downloaded resource on BEAM. **SDC** are willing to make a significant voluntary contribution to this activity and asked other members to share costs. Steve (**ILO**) said they supported this initiative, and is happy to engage. Steven confirmed that SDC is looking to contract this work, and Mike A (**DCED Secretariat**) added that the BEAM Exchange team will help coordinate the process.

Workstream 2.1 Support for non-Anglophone MSD practitioner network

Mike A (**DCED Secretariat**) introduced a proposal to support non-Anglophone MSD practitioner networks, emphasizing the need for resources in Arabic and French. Pascal (**LuxDev**) elaborated on the difficulties in promoting MSD in French-speaking countries and mentioned a collaborative platform in Benin that aims to enhance dialogue among stakeholders. Several participants, including Steve (**ILO**) and Pauline (**CBI**), expressed their willingness to contribute to the task team for this initiative.

Workstream 3.1 Placeholder for Gatsby Africa in-kind contribution

Karen (**Gatsby Africa**) confirmed that her organization is finalizing its planning process and will provide a written update later. **ACTION ALL:** Melina (**DCED Secretariat**) noted that the draft work plan needs to be completed by the third week of April.

Workstream 3.2 MSD for Employment & Skill Development

Mike A (**DCED Secretariat**) reminded members that this work was included in the current Work Plan but has been substantially delayed. The final stage of this activity is due to begin as soon as the IFC Procurement Dept. complete current contracting processes – and is expected to continue into the 2025/6 financial year.

Workstream 3.3 Beyond Greening MSD

Mike A (**DCED Secretariat**) observed that relatively little progress was made with this activity during the past year – it lacked a clear champion. He asked members whether it was still felt to be a priority. In particular, how did it compare with the MSD & Trade activity which it was in competition for funding.

Steve (**ILO**) said he felt that **ILO** could engage more actively with this than the Trade activity. Merten (**ILO**) reinforced this, adding that the DCED Annual Meeting agenda in Geneva will include a systemic approach to greening economies and a Just Transition. He also noted that **ILO** and **Sida** will have a joint event in October to mark the end of phase of their current partnership on this theme.

Melina (**DCED Secretariat**) added that the Results Measurement WG (in collaboration with Green Growth WG) already plan to commission some case studies on green indicators. **ACTION:** Nabanita (**DCED Secretariat**) offered to share the ToRs. She invited MSD WG members to join this task team.

Pascal (**LuxDev**) said they would sign up to this. Steven (**SDC**) also offered to support.

Workstream 3.4 MSD for Trade Facilitation

Mike A (**DCED Secretariat**) observed that while some progress was made with this activity during the past year, the future direction is uncertain now that both Gun and Karolina leaving **Sida**. He asked members whether it was still felt to be a priority.

Merten (**ILO**) noted that many donors are shifting to emphasize trade for national interests. He suggested we keep the activity as a placeholder at least. Marleen (**MoFA NL**) agreed that the aid-trade nexus has become more important in the Netherlands – although mainly in terms of trade promotion. Nevertheless, she supported looking at how the potential for the MSD approach in trade facilitation.

Both Merten (**ILO**) and Marleen (**MoFA NL**) agreed to contribute to the task team if we carry this activity and budget forward into the 2025/6 Work Plan.

Workstream 3.5 Putting systems thinking into practice

Mike A (**DCED Secretariat**) observed in the past year, this topic had a high profile at the Global Seminar in Nairobi, and that some plans above are aligned with the general aim of this workstream activity (e.g. 3rd Edition of Op Guide; Support for francophone MSD network;).

Marleen (**MoFA NL**) was keen that members should confer and compare how we are putting systems thinking into practice. What are our theoretical frameworks? And most importantly, what are the results? This could be a useful contribution to the revised Operational Guide.

Nabanita (**DCED Secretariat**) noted that the Results Measurement WG are (through **GIZ**) currently commissioning a study of how donors measure their contribution to systemic change.

⇒ [ToRs for Measuring donor contributions towards changing systems](#)

Once contracted, the consultant will reach out to interview DCED members, and also join us at the AGM so **ACTION: DCED Secretariat** should arrange a joint discussion in Geneva.

6. Plans for DCED AGM in June

Continuing the conversation above, with the opportunities of the annual meeting in Geneva in June (16th – 19th) in mind, Steven (**SDC**) added that it would be valuable to also examine how PSE interventions (such as impact investment) could be more systemic. He suggested that a joint activity with the PSE WG to study the most promising approaches and lessons would be interesting.

Nic (**IKEA Foundation**) agreed, noting that the philanthropy world has struggled to find some common understanding of what a systemic approach means, how to bound systems and measure change. More profoundly, bearing in mind current shifts and trends in international development, he asked whether it might be useful to modernise the WG structure of the DCED.

Melina (**DCED Secretariat**) explained that the Secretariat is indeed hoping to touch on these issues during the Annual Meeting – where changes to the Global Aid context is a key theme.

ACTION: DCED Secretariat will be sharing more information about this very soon.

7. Closing remarks, ideas for next WG Meeting

Co-Chair Pauline (**CBI**) noted that the next MSD WG meeting will take place in person in Geneva on Monday 16th June afternoon.

Meanwhile, **ACTION: DCED Secretariat** a final draft of the Work Plan 2025/6 will be shared with members after the Easter weekend on 22nd April most probably.