



Report on the Workshop

MSPs promoted by Civil Society: How to Ensure Sustainable Transformative Change?

12th and 13th December 2023, online/ZOOM

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1. Introduction and Objectives

Within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the objectives of the *Zukunftscharta*, Multi Stakeholder Partnerships (MSP) have gained significance. The focus is on outcome-oriented collaboration involving at least three stakeholders from different sectors to instigate and implement tangible societal change processes in line with the Agenda 2030.

Since 2016, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has been supporting the instrument of civil society-initiated MSP within the funding title for civil society organizations ("Private Träger") to foster effective partnerships for sustainable development goals. Engagement Global/bengo provides expertise, consulting and capacity development to civil society organizations on MSP applications and their implementations.

The evaluation of the first phase of the funding instrument (2016-2021) in late 2021 set the stage for a workshop in October 2022. The workshop brought together stakeholders, including representatives from German private entities, BMZ, GIZ (Partnerships 2030), and bengo, to discuss and confirm the results and recommendations. A subsequent workshop involving staff from Southern-based partner organizations was decided upon.

This workshop, which took place online via zoom on December 12th and 13th, 2023, facilitated a cross-regional and cross-MSP exchange between about forty representatives of stakeholders of 15 anglophone MSP according to the following objectives:

1. An exchange of perspectives on the following four topics has taken place:
 - Transformative changes in MSP processes;
 - Roles and mandates of partner organizations in the Global South and Germany;
 - Strategies for the inclusion of stakeholder groups (private/public sector);
 - Sustainability, medium and long-term perspectives.
2. MSP have been equipped with practical tools to follow up on the above-mentioned topics.
3. Networking and peer exchange among partner organisations of different MSP have been facilitated.
4. The potential for joint visions or lighthouse-projects within the network of MSP projects has been explored.

2. Summary of Day 1

The official proceedings kicked off at 8:00 am with a warm welcome from Dr. Bernd Kuzmits (BMZ, Division G 42 Civic engagement, volunteer and exchange programmes, Engagement Global) and Daniela Schuster (EG/bengo, Head of African division) and the facilitators who introduced the workshop's objectives, agenda, and communication guidelines. The workshop then delved into the fundamentals of MSP.

The following session featured an exploration of three MSP experiences, fostering interactive group discussions on the nature of transformation, realistic expectations from MSP, and methodologies for identifying transformative outcomes. The three MSP experiences were shared by the following stakeholders.

Following a short break, an engaging discussion on the roles, mandates, tasks and expectations of stakeholders within MSP took place, encouraging participants to explore diverse perspectives in plenary and small-group settings.

The day concluded with the summary of key insights and takeaways, setting the stage for a promising continuation of discussions on day 2.

2.1. Deep-Dive into the main session A shared Vision: Transformative change through MSP

For this part of the workshop, three selected MSPs were invited to share their experiences and challenges in the area of "Achieving Transformative Change" through a fifteen-minute input. This was followed by a plenary discussion addressing the following questions:

- What is transformative change, and on what levels can it occur?
- What kind of transformative change can realistically be achieved or initiated through MSP?
- How can transformative change be identified?

The following three MSPs provided input:

- **MSP 1: SAIME - Sustainable Aquaculture in Mangrove Ecosystems in India, Bangladesh, Germany, presented by Ms Ajanta Dey :**

The presentation focused on the MSP named "Sustainable Aquaculture in Mangrove Ecosystem (SAIME)" in the Indian Sundarban region. The MSP aims to strengthen transformative processes in shrimp trade for the protection of mangrove ecosystems in South Asia, ensuring healthy mangroves, thriving coastal communities, and a robust value chain in the Indian Sundarban. The objectives of the SAIME model include demonstrating sustainable aquaculture in the typical Indian Sundarban context, establishing a benchmark for standard practices in aquaculture methodology, developing climate-resilient livelihood options with a focus on climate change and Sea Level Rise (SLR), and exploring blue carbon sequestration through integrating mangroves in brackish water aquaculture.

The presentation emphasized the Dialogic Change Model in multi-stakeholder partnership building, highlighting its instrumental role in collaborative efforts for synergistic solutions. Stakeholders of the MSP are categorized into three working groups: Mangrove Working Group, Livelihoods Working Group, and Value Chain Working Group. These groups include government departments, research institutes, civil society organizations, local administration, and farmers.

Consistent engagement of stakeholders, especially government departments, is stressed for inclusiveness in the innovative approach, as well as a major challenge to achieve transformative change. Effective communication and the identification of a common location or office are highlighted as key factors in ensuring the success of the MSP were equally emphasized as challenging.

During the discussion, key insights were shared about the SAIME project, particularly its collaboration with government and academic institutions for mangrove conservation as part of climate change mitigation. This strategy, vital for addressing the declining shrimp industry, involved direct interventions with farmers to restore ecosystems. Essential to the project's success was the continuous collaboration across various government departments like forestry, fisheries, and irrigation.

Participants involved with SAIME highlighted the scientific validation of the SAIME model in Bangladesh and India, and the challenges in its introduction and acceptance at the community level. The integration of ecological and economic benefits was seen as crucial for gaining government support. The discussion also touched on the challenges faced, such as political changes and the need for local community engagement and awareness.

A significant focus was on the ADAMS BD policy-making approach, emphasizing the need for specific policies in the coastal regions of Bangladesh and India, centered around the blue and mangrove economies. The importance of transitioning from a project-based to a sustained, comprehensive approach was underscored. This includes forming a transboundary Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with seven key elements for a cohesive strategy. Finally, the discussion acknowledged the need to address specific challenges like biodiversity conservation in mangrove areas and the limitations of current crab hatcheries.

- **MSP 2: Land for Life - Making Policies Work for Food Security in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, presented by Mr. Berns Lebbie**

The network represents a coalition of national platforms committed to advancing land governance for improved food security across Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Liberia, and Sierra Leone.

Coordinated from Bonn, Germany, they serve as facilitators for national MSP on land governance, advocating for inclusive decision-making and seeking to establish regional and global networks in land governance.

Each country presents distinct challenges. Burkina Faso contends with high poverty, a challenging political landscape, and outdated land laws. Ethiopia faces political complexities, a fragile democracy, and resistance to transformative change. Liberia and Sierra Leone, post-conflict nations, demonstrate political willingness but grapple with traditional, cultural, and educational obstacles.

For the MSP, transformative change involves implementing robust national land laws, fostering inclusive decision-making, promoting responsible agribusiness, ensuring access to customary land, and resolving conflicts peacefully.

In Sierra Leone, their engagements encompass policy dialogues, district-level multi-actor processes, engagement with traditional authorities, and community-level monitoring. Success stories highlight the acceptance of the MSP process and the active role of civil society, leading to power shifts in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Burkina Faso.

Delving into Sierra Leone's case, the need for change, drivers of change, and positive outcomes such as the 2015 National Land Policy, effective multi-stakeholder processes, and progressive laws in 2022 are identified.

Their collaboration played a crucial role in preventing an abrupt disruption of the reform process in Sierra Leone. The background includes existing laws recognizing traditional institutions, opposition from CSOs, and disagreements involving CSOs, private sector investors, and traditional leaders.

Multidimensional disagreements and challenges in the policy dialogue room were emphasized, underscoring the tough and confrontational nature of the process. Commitment statements from stakeholders, despite challenges, ensured the reform process continued without hindrance.

The MSP faces conflict of interest, context fragility, trust issues, limited technical capacity, gender limitations, and funding constraints. These hurdles, including political, social, and economic interests, underscore the need for sustained, adaptive funding to address urgent contextual issues.

- **MSP 3: Strengthening civil society actors in Ghana and Germany in MSP on sustainable cocoa supply chains presented by Nana Kwasi Barning Ackah**

SEND GHANA is actively involved in monitoring pro-poor policies and development programs in Ghana, operating across 65 districts and extending its influence to Liberia and Sierra Leone.

The MSP project, titled "Strengthening Civil Society Actors in Ghana and Germany in Multi-Actor Partnership to contribute to Sustainable Cocoa Supply Chains," seeks to develop innovative strategies for the betterment of cocoa farming families and the protection of natural resources. CSOs from both Ghana and Germany engage in multi-stakeholder dialogues, emphasizing living income and responsible pesticide use, contributing strategies, and actively participating in impact monitoring efforts. In addressing identified issues, the MSP plays a pivotal role by providing technical support, networking with national and international actors, and fostering a platform for learning and sharing experiences.

Significant progress has been made by the MSP, including the publication of monitoring reports on gender and cocoa farmgate pricing. The establishment of the Ghana Civil-society Cocoa Platform (GCCP) and the capacity-building initiatives for cocoa farmers on pricing, living income, and human rights mark notable achievements.

SEND GHANA's efforts have also increased awareness among farmers regarding current events in the cocoa sector, especially pertaining to the EU DDHRD. The organization has successfully established relationships with civil society networks in both Africa and Europe, enhancing the visibility of their work through the development of a website and social media handles.

Further accomplishments include press releases on critical issues like floor pricing, cocoa-induced deforestation, and the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) boycott. The establishment of a platform for farmers' media engagements, relationships between cocoa farmers and key stakeholders at decentralized levels, and contributions to cocoa barometer reports for 2020 and 2022 underline the impact of their initiatives.

The Ghana Civil-society Cocoa Platform (GCCP) has played a crucial role, publishing Farmgate Price Communiques, facilitating farmers' participation in EU Cocoa Talk consultations, and being invited to high-level working groups.

The platform has actively engaged with policymakers in Europe and is striving to institutionalize the Living Income Working Group in Ghana, showcasing the depth of their contributions to the cocoa sector's sustainable development.

The discussion evolved around the following points:

- MSP platforms play a central role in driving transformative change, with their composition, member commitment, and functionality crucial for determining impact.
- Platforms and their members serve as powerful tools for effecting change at various levels—local, regional, and national.
- Key observations highlighted during the discussion:
 - In the early stages of an MSP, platforms are less formal, facing challenges like finding partners, securing resources, structural consolidation, commitment, and identifying common interests among actors.
 - The process of increasing formalization involves systematically promoting members' responsibilities to instill a sense of ownership. Members' individual interests become pivotal at this stage.
 - Financing the platform poses challenges, emphasizing the need to move beyond exclusive project funding. Encouraging early ownership through memberships, contributions, and sponsoring is essential.
 - Personnel changes and fluctuations due to elections can impede continuity, particularly concerning state actors.

Summary of statements in the plenary?

2.2. Deep-Dive into the main session *On a Mission: Roles, Mandates and Expectations within the MSP*

Facilitators orchestrated a workshop segment aimed at enhancing clarity and dialogue around roles, mandates, tasks, and expectations within MSPs. The session commenced with participant introductions, emphasizing the importance of these elements for effective collaboration and accountability in MSPs.

Participants were then sent into four groups and guided through a tool on Miro facilitating the visualization of their discussions. The exercise unfolded in distinct phases:



1. **Roles:** Collective brainstorming identified existing roles within MSPs, fostering discussions on alignment, attribution, and role separation. Participants scrutinized the significance and priority of each role.
2. **Mandates:** The focus shifted to mandates, prompting discussions on clarity, delegation, and sharing. Blue squares on the board captured participants' insights into each role's official permissions and instructions.
3. **Tasks:** Task identification followed, with participants noting specific activities for each role. Debriefing involved scrutinizing the overall task landscape, ensuring alignment, and discussing challenges and resource needs.
4. **Expectations:** Yellow squares on the board housed expectations, detailing inter-role dynamics. Debriefing questions explored the realism of expectations, their fulfillment, and the potential consequences of unmet expectations.

In the final debrief, facilitators expressed gratitude and encouraged participants to share their main takeaways in the chat. Participants were prompted to consider applying the exercise within their MSPs and share their thoughts on the exercise in the chat using one word. Those who participated in the chat were intrigued by the exercise, calling it thought-provoking, interesting, eye-opening and insightful.

A script of facilitation for readers who would like to implement this tool within their organization may be found in the annex of this report.

2.3. Conclusion Day 1

The workshop concluded with a mentimeter. Here, participants were able to share

- the element that popped up during the workshop and which they would like to explore further:
 - Role and task clarification for each actor within the MSP (named by seven different participants).
 - Connecting with other MSP practitioners in related fields.
 - Indicators for measuring the transformative impact of MSPs.
 - In-depth understanding of the concept of transformative change and the roles/tasks of MSP actors.
 - Structured sharing and exchange opportunities among MSPs to facilitate mutual learning.
 - Delving into MSP network structures and their operational dynamics.
 - Detailed examination of roles and expectations tools.
 - Examples of running MSP platforms and tasks accomplished without constant NGO involvement.
 - Achievements related to beneficiaries within MSPs.
 - Exploration of transformative change dynamics within MSPs.
 - Examining possibilities for increased flexibility within project cycles (organizational and financial).
 - Sharing best practices and experiences from successful MSPs.
 - Reviewing the "UNITE TO IGNITE" Report of the Partnerships2030.
 - Measurement strategies for assessing the success rate of MSP approaches.
 - Incorporating bottom-up approaches for effective MSP implementation.



and

- one key take away from the workshop:
 - other MSPs have similar challenges;
 - the example of role clarification to MSP;
 - the importance of MSPs and their work around the globe;
 - internal expectations with respect to tasks need to be reviewed;
 - the meaning of transformation change;
 - examples of MSP approaches;
 - every member of the MSP has a vital role to play that makes the MSP successful;
 - this workshop is relevant and it is one of those that help the internal organisational development of a successful MSP.

3. Summary of Day 2

The second day of the workshop began with a brief welcome and continued with the interactive session "Bringing Everyone on Board: The Question of Power and Strategies for Inclusion." Participants conducted a self-assessment of power dynamics within the MSP, followed by breakout group debriefs and a brainstorming session on strategies for inclusive stakeholder engagement.

After a break, participants focused on "Sustaining the Vision: Sustainability of MSP." Challenges related to the medium- to long-term perspectives of MSP projects were discussed, with three breakout groups collectively brainstorming solutions and sharing promising practices for sustaining MSP initiatives.

3.1. Deep-Dive into the main session Bringing Everyone on Board: The Question of Power and Strategies for including Stakeholders in MSP

The session started with a breakout group in which participants discussed their understanding and definition of power and where power plays out within MSP.

Power, as defined by workshop participants, encompasses various dimensions:

1. Authorization and Decision-Making:

- To set the agenda.
- Authority or dominance over others.
- Authorization.
- Capacity to impose opinions.
- Decision-making capacity.
- The ability to overrule others' priorities.

2. Influence and Capacity:

- The capacity to act effectively.
- Capacity to influence other people.
- Influence over others.
- Influence on situations or people.
- Capacity to influence objectives.



- Collective leadership in a collaborative ecosystem.
 - Influence.
3. **Resource and Knowledge/Skills:**
- Resource power.
 - Knowledge/skills.
 - In the MSP context, power is seen as the amount of decision-making space, influenced by resources, information, and the ability to shape the group's direction.
 - Those with resources have more power, relationships, and influence.
4. **Change and Responsibility:**
- The ability to change something or solve an issue.
 - Power comes with responsibility.
 - Make change.
5. **Positional and Distributive:**
- Hierarchical power.
 - Positional power.
 - Distribution of power.
6. **Money and Information:**
- Money flow.
 - Information.
 - Power is associated with the potential to drive change and influence policies.

Participants highlighted the importance of **local engagement, trust, transparency, and effective communication** in fostering successful MSP.

Collaboration, knowledge sharing, and inclusive decision-making were also emphasized as crucial elements for achieving positive outcomes within partnerships. Additionally, **having a clear vision and mission**, along with a **commitment to continuous improvement**, were seen as essential aspects of successful MSP.

Afterwards, participants engaged in a self-reflection exercise designed to explore key aspects of their MSP. By individually considering a provided list of questions, participants will delve into various dimensions, including governance structure, shared values, objectives, challenges, and more.

This introspective exercise encouraged thoughtful contemplation about the MSP's structure, functioning, and goals. While the reflections needed not be shared openly, participants were encouraged to use a list as a resource for future discussions within their MSP (the list is attached to this report as an annex). The goal was to foster a deeper understanding of partnership dynamics, laying the groundwork for enhanced collaboration in the future.

Following the exercise, participants were sent into breakout groups to discuss the practices within their MSP they would like to keep, improve, stop or start (**KISS-method**) in order to foster a more inclusive and participative partnerships. The following results were collected through a mentimeter.

**KEEP:**

Successful MSP practices that should be **KEPT** include the **independence of partners, leveraging local knowledge, building trust, sharing resources, active participation, great teamwork, inclusive decision-making, successful organizational structures, transparency, knowledge sharing, cooperation, effective knowledge management, continuous communication, open communication, collaborations, tolerance, clear vision, and a combination of effective communication and structure.** These practices contribute to the overall success of MSPs and should be retained for ongoing effectiveness.

IMPROVE:

Workshop participants acknowledged existing promising practices within MSPs but identified areas for improvement. Key areas highlighted for enhancement included a collective call to **improve communication**, boost the effectiveness of **monitoring and evaluation**, and elevate the standard of **leadership** within MSPs.

The importance of having **clear roles and responsibilities** was recognized, emphasizing the need for continued improvement in this aspect. Participants stressed the significance of **transparency**, both as a repeated practice and an area for ongoing enhancement.

Acknowledging **collective leadership** as a promising practice, participants called for its continuous refinement. The need to further enhance **diversity and inclusivity** within MSPs was emphasized, highlighting that these aspects are critical for robust collaboration.

Enhancements in **communication methods**, stronger **compliance**, and the constant evolution of roles and responsibilities were identified as areas for improvement. Flexibility in allocating **resources** (financial, staff, and time) was acknowledged as a promising practice, with suggestions for refining and expanding these flexible approaches.

The workshop recognized the importance of **monitoring and evaluation**, calling for ongoing improvements in these processes. The theme of **commitment** emerged as both a recognized strength and an area with potential for improvement. Continuous **learning** and **information sharing** were acknowledged as positive practices, urging further investment in these aspects for greater impact.

While data collection, processing, and documentation of results were acknowledged, participants suggested allocating **more resources**, particularly in staff, to strengthen these activities. The need for consistent **transparency** and **commitment**, along with addressing issues related to irregular communication, were also highlighted as areas requiring ongoing improvement.

STOP:

Participants in the workshop identified practices that they deemed counterproductive and should be **STOPPED** to ensure the success of partnerships. A recurrent theme was the need to halt **siloed working**. Participants advocated for ending practices that breed **mistrust, conflicts, and irregular or one-way communication**.

The participants recognized the detrimental impact of **resisting change** and called for an end to **unequal efforts within MSPs**. The detrimental practice of **micromanagement** was highlighted as something to be stopped, as well as the tendency to **prioritize personal interests** over collective goals.



The participants emphasized the importance of abandoning **top-down approaches**, stressing the need for more inclusive and participatory decision-making processes. **Neglecting well-being, both individually and collectively**, was identified as a practice that should be stopped.

START:

Participants in the workshop highlighted several key practices to **START** within MSPs. Notable suggestions included fostering **innovative thinking** and problem-solving, implementing systematic **monitoring** of MSP activities, and conducting regular follow-up meetings among partners for continuous improvement.

The importance of **transparent power transfers** within partner organizations, financial resource transparency, and establishing clear **governance dynamics** was emphasized. Perfecting **monitoring and evaluation** processes, including the use of dedicated tools like MSP assessments, was deemed crucial for assessing progress and impact.

Acceptance of innovative ideas and active participation from all stakeholders were identified as practices to be actively promoted within MSPs. Integrating Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (**MEAL**) processes strongly into MSP operations was suggested to enhance learning and accountability.

Participants called for the initiation of **collaborative efforts**, with an emphasis on **capacity development for internal facilitators**. Ensuring **sustainability** was a recurring theme, urging stakeholders to proactively consider the long-term viability of MSPs.

In summary, the suggested practices to start or enhance within MSPs included **innovative thinking**, systematic **monitoring and follow-ups**, transparent **power transfers**, financial transparency, **governance clarity**, robust **monitoring and evaluation**, tool-based assessments, **acceptance of innovation**, active participation, strong **MEAL** integration, collaborative efforts, and **capacity development for sustainability**.

3.2. Deep-Dive into the main session *Sustaining the Vision: Sustainability of MSP*

The session focused on exploring challenges and potential solutions for sustaining MSP. Participants shared insights, highlighting key issues such as staff turnover, conflicts of interest, and commitment, while also proposing innovative strategies for long-term success :

Insights and Challenges

- Turnover of staff and stakeholders: Participants identified turnover challenges among staff, partners, and stakeholders, especially government officials, emphasizing the need for sustained engagement throughout the entire MSP process.
- Commitment and involvement: Little commitment and involvement were noted as challenges, particularly regarding government representatives. Election-related challenges were acknowledged, emphasizing the need for innovative approaches to maintain stability during periods of change.
- Resource mobilization: The challenge of mobilizing resources, both human and financial, was discussed. A sustainable foundation was identified as trust, fostering commitment from all stakeholders.



- Selection of partners: The selection of suitable partners emerged as a challenge due to numerous potential candidates. Participants proposed a resource mobilization strategy as a solution.
- Institutionalization : Concerns about institutionalization were raised, suggesting an inter-ministerial structure and exploring innovative hosting options such as academic institutions or universities.

Promising Practices

- Communication and collaboration: Promising practices involved bringing together different working groups and partners on a common platform, fostering effective communication as a means to address challenges.
- Institutionalization as a solution: The potential solution of institutionalization was highlighted to strengthen the MSP structure, with suggestions ranging from income generation schemes to domestic resource mobilization.
- Common platform for working groups: Creating a common platform for different working groups emerged as a promising approach, facilitating collaboration and synergy among diverse stakeholders.
- Dedicated staff : Solutions suggested involved having qualified personnel with full-time responsibilities for secretariat and coordination.

3.3. Conclusion of the Workshop

The workshop closed with a last mentimeter :



Following the mentimeter, participants provided feedback and recommendations for future MSP workshops.



Key points included a preference for more participatory in-person sessions, a desire for deeper engagement with advanced MSP projects, and a focus on understanding MSP agreements and structures.

Participants highlighted the workshop's effectiveness in generating ideas for transformative changes through MSPs.

Suggestions encompassed improving virtual engagement by mixing groups in breakout rooms, maintaining connectivity through platforms like MEA, and considering local time for scheduling.

There was a call for regular exchanges, discussions on conducting MSP meetings, and greater transparency in setting workshop goals.

Annex

- Facilitation Script « Roles and Expectations Matrix »
- List « Power Dynamics within MSP »
- MSP Presentations PDF

All documents, inputs, contacts and results of the workshop are still available to all participants on the MEA (mobile event platform) under the following link, using the event password:

[EG Events \(engagement-global.de\)](https://engagement-global.de)