

# e+i Network: Needs Assessment NPOs 2017

## Introduction

SDC's e+i network is meant to provide operational and thematic advice in the organizational units, to foster learning and to transmit knowledge and methodological competence, to capitalize experience and formulate good practices for employment and income (e+i) measures. It is also meant to provide a wide range of services e. g. website with news and newsletter, event calendar, documents, links and other resources, project and member lists, e-discussions, webinars, online groups; events like F2F, training; coaching etc.

The e+i focal point commissioned to assess the needs of its key clients, the National Programme Officers (NPOs), to focus e+i network services to this demand, to identify potentials for individual coaching and support and to take up interesting topics for future e-discussions and f2f interactions.

A questionnaire with mainly semi-structured questions was developed, divided in an introduction, two main and a final part:

- Introduction explaining the purpose of the assessment and catching information concerning the interviewee and the projects in the portfolio relevant for the assessment;
- Part A: Challenges and needed support of NPOs along the project cycle;
- Part B: NPOs interest for topics and channels of communication;
- Part C: Final comments

In the database of the e+i Shareweb 35 countries were identified with good data on NPOs with PSD, VSD and/or FSD projects in their portfolio. A dozen of interviews were planned, but due to the interest of NPOs, finally 17 were arranged, one per country. Those countries appear underlined in the following table.

**Tab./Fig. 1: Countries informed and effectively interviewed concerning "Needs Assessment NPOs 2017"**



The report is structured in two main chapters: "Findings and conclusions" on the one hand, "Proposals" on the other. At the end is a short summary. In the following chapter, for each of the questionnaire parts A, B and C the findings are described and conclusions are drawn. In the last chapter, the findings and conclusions are reformulated as proposals to the network.

# Findings and conclusions

As explained above, the interviews focused with semi-structured questions on part A "Challenges faced by NPOs and required support along the PCM" and part B "NPOs interest for topics and channels of communication" and had the additional part C addressing "Final comments". In the annex of this report, the author summarises the answers of part A and B by country. This chapter here starts with a synthesis of this two parts and ends with a summary of part C.

## Part A: Challenges faced by NPOs and required support along the PCM

The summarised results of each interview in the annex in part A show that NPOs experience a wide range of challenges and therefore have manifold support needs in the PCM of PSD/VSD/FSD projects. They obviously differ depending on their experience or level of expertise:

1. People new in SDC face many challenges: they have to deal at the same time with questions linked with basic processes and questions linked with the specific topics of PSD/VSD/FSD. The lack of experience of an NPO makes procedures like tendering or monitoring an implementer time consuming for both, the NPO and the supervisor. Therefore it is difficult to focus on the specificity of PSD/VSD/FSD projects, even more, when the supervisor is also lacking expertise there. Problems with English contribute to that. These basic skills are important to build on for improving expertise level 2 and 3, but are not in the focus of the e+i network.
2. For people new in the area of e+i, the time to learn to apply the specific approaches and methods and to find the right information takes long. A lot is available, but how to find what is relevant and then how to apply it? First, the specific concepts have to be learnt/understood and then applied in the PCM. Training like a NADEL MSD course are useful, but need a follow-up, when people start to apply, what they have learned. When the supervisor is not an e+i expert, coaching by a senior NPO with expertise in this topic would be useful. During the PCM, typical needs are inspiration for the project idea in the beginning, then how to define indicators and later to make the facilitative approach reality and measure outcomes and impact.
3. PSD/VSD/FSD projects in a country tend to evolve e. g. from strengthening agricultural production to value chain and to agricultural insurance or from training program to inclusion of the PS to PPDP. This means: Also NPOs who have large experience with SDC and even with projects in the area of e+i, they still have many questions, however, they become more specific and change the domain according to the project. The questions are not anymore around approaches and methods, but rather around where to get the most relevant information to make best use of those approaches and methods. However, for them it is similar like for people on expertise level 2: It is not easy to find them in a timely manner. E. g. Bangladesh has a long experience in M4P, but for the NPO it is challenging to enter in the specific area of insurances. What NPOs could contribute to the e+i network is their experience concerning approaches and methods, but for that there is normally no time.

In conclusion, these three levels show a typical learning path of NPOs (see table 1). The first level may start with a training in SDC-specific project management, the second with a more focused training e. g. for MSD, a F2F event or study tour. To improve level 2, it is important to build on a solid basis of skills of level 1. In both cases, an on-the-job follow-up would increase effectiveness to apply the acquired knowledge and turn it into skills. This follow-up includes refreshment, deepening and widening of knowledge, exchange with peers and coaching by seniors to build the necessary methodological skills. NPOs do not always feel secure, when they apply approaches or have to advise implementers. Experienced NPOs look more for specific information to use along with their methodological skills. E. g. Honduras has gained a lot of experience with market development projects, but the actual one is new in the thematic of cocoa and PPDP. So the NPO is looking for example contracts. As supervisors may have limited expertise on level 2 and 3, experienced NPOs may have a stake in coaching newcomers in e+i and driving the development of new knowledge in the area.

The most frequently expressed needs are: Many interviewees would appreciate a coaching, stronger regional networks or at least a sparring partner to discuss and get a feedback. The need for good examples and best practice recommendations was often mentioned. NPOs tend to feel alone in the complexity of PSD/VSD/FSD projects. The conclusion is that the way to find the right information within the documented knowledgebase should improve. The "right information" can refer to learning and training material to build methodological skills as well as data to be used when applying those skills. Meta information, didactically improved material and decision trees can help to structure the documented knowledgebase. This could be resumed as "less, but better information". In addition, different forms of exchange and coaching should be strengthened.

**Table 2: Typical learning path of NPOs in the area of e+i**

Area of learning \ Level of expertise	New in SDC	New in topics of e+i	Experienced in e+i
<b>Basic knowledge about SDC's PCM/procedures</b>	Guidance from Division and superior		
<b>PSD/VSD/FSD-specific concepts, approaches and methods; examples with show-case value; training rather than exchange; support focused on learning.</b>	Self-study, e-learning, training course and follow-up with coaching. Regional meetings with focus on deepening/widening the knowledge, building networks with coaches. Not focused information (e. g. newsletter, blogs, search result on the shareweb, e-discussion with experts...) may be not so conducive.		
<b>News and specific information; examples with focus on variation of the concepts, approaches &amp; methods; exchange rather than training, support focused on exchange &amp; capture experience.</b>		e-discussions to analyse variation, how to optimise. Regional meeting with focus on broadening the knowledge, learning on new aspects. Global meetings with focus on learning and contributing to the most advanced aspects, building networks with peers. News are of great value.	

#### **Part B: NPOs interest for topics and channels of communication**

Concerning topics, there is not one favourite. The topics proposed in the questionnaire were all considered as relevant. Social inclusion and how to work with the private sector was mentioned quite often, as well as management questions around adaptive management, facilitation and scaling-up. Here the conclusion is to focus on a plan when to treat what topic rather than seeking the top one.

Concerning channels, some NPOs like and dislike specific ones, but mostly they say that it depends on the situation. So the conclusion is that they all are valid. Key is focusing them:

- Reduce, but not skip global F2F events to have more time and resources for regional ones. A global F2F meeting in Switzerland offers the opportunity to know the headquarters, to discuss topics globally and meet people from all over the world. It is especially valuable for e+i experts (expertise level 3).  
Proposal: all 3 to 4 years.
- Strengthen regional networks and F2F events, so that the e+i network becomes geographically more decentralised. Proposal: all 1 to 2 years.
- Develop a standard training and coaching scheme<sup>1</sup> to start and follow up with PSD/VSD as a priority. It uses self-study material, guides and checklists. It is animated by webinars and training and is linked with best practice examples. Side events during virtually all global and regional F2F and study tours become the standard channel for trainings. Participants can be invited worldwide. Experienced NPOs may become teachers & coaches.
- Improve the structure of the information on the Shareweb:
  - learning/teaching material explaining concepts, approaches and methods
  - best practice examples (show cases)
  - non prioritized information to dig into e. g. newsletter or project information. Increase significantly the searchability of this information and also structure and tag it. Improve the actual search masks to include/exclude information and to adapt the way information is presented. Lobby through SDC to have more project information in searchable data bases.
- Establish thematic sub-groups of different user types and animate them proactively using channels like Skype and WhatsApp. This leads to a thematic "decentralisation", but geographically those sub-nets are global.
- Personalised support like mentoring, coaching is very much appreciated.

<sup>1</sup> Examples for comparable standardised skills development & certification programs: Open Learning Campus of the World Bank offers a "comprehensive learning curricula [...] from bite-sized lessons to full-length courses to peer-to-peer conversations" (<https://olc.worldbank.org/about-olc/about-olc>), CECRA is a standardised (and certified) skills development program spreading over Europe ([www.cecra.net/index.php/en/](http://www.cecra.net/index.php/en/)), German speakers may also look at an standardised Swiss on-the-job introduction [https://agridea.abacuscity.ch/abauersimage/Agridea\\_2\\_Free/1486\\_2\\_D.pdf](https://agridea.abacuscity.ch/abauersimage/Agridea_2_Free/1486_2_D.pdf).

## Part C: Final comments

The e+i network in general and the idea of coaching in specific were widely appreciated, as were the interviews themselves. However, interview participants mentioned the lack of time to really think, process and digest, share and discuss things related to e+i to grow their skills. Some repeated the need for regional networks.

Additional comments were: Field offices should not decide without considering e+i and share among all staff their PPDPs; BeamExchange is virtual and focused in promoting itself as an institution rather than supporting NPOs whereas e+i is personal and really for NPOs; inconvenient timing of webinars; closing PPDP fund is regrettable.

The conclusion here is that the positive feedback concerning the interviews shows that NPOs appreciate a network that takes care of their individual challenges and offers more personalised exchange.

## Proposals

The proposals listed in table 2 are based on the interviews and the summary of the previous chapter "Findings", the own assessment of discussions from the interviews and the author's experience as an e+i backstopper. They are ordered along the following key issues:

- Animate the development of active regional subnets of the e+i network with own agenda.
- Develop an offer of a standard on-the-job introduction, when a NPO starts to work in e+i projects with self-study courses, training and coaching.
- Improve time spent to get the information needed.

Measures need to be deepened in order to be operational. The table serves as an overview for the e+i focal point to prioritise. Thereafter, measures can be further developed.

**Table 3: Proposals to improve the services of the e+i network**

Topic	Issue	Measure
<b>Structure / general functioning</b>	Actually the e+i network is headquarters oriented/centralised (see the leftmost of the three pictures at the right side), sometimes not very present/known to NPOs or too generic. NPOs feel rather alone and do rarely have a sparring partner. They communicate mostly with Bern and not too much among each other. The inputs that drive the network normally are coming from the FP.	<p>Evolve towards a decentralised network (see the picture in the middle at the end of this paragraph) with <b>stronger subnets of 3-5 countries</b> with working groups and a F2F or study tours with training as side event once within 1 – 2 years.</p> <p>Work and share more in groups during the PCM. Senior NPOs could assist new NPOs.</p> <p>Hold global F2F only once within 3 to 4 years.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">centralised                    decentralised                    distributed</p>
<b>Procedures</b>	<p>Questions on procedures range from procedural questions (which format to use) to very specific questions like e. g. PPDP in cocoa. It is suggested to distinguish 3 levels:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <b>For completely new NPOs:</b> Standard SDC procedures like PCM with design, implementation, evaluation</li> <li>2) <b>For NPOs new in e+i:</b> Best practice procedures/ approaches/ frameworks in topics like PSD, VSD, etc.</li> </ol>	<p>Level 1: It is assumed that here the responsibility for introduction and follow-up lies with division/desk/supervisor. English skills should be improved.</p> <p>Level 2: <b>e+i standard introduction with trainings, follow-up by coaching</b> from headquarters/a regional senior:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online information is organised as self-study material and ...</li> <li>• ... animated through training events (webinars, side events, courses). There are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ descriptions of methods and ...</li> <li>◦ ... linked examples.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Develop a comprehensive structure of methods/approaches/frameworks and didactically good material.</p>

	3) <b>For all including NPO experts:</b> Specific infos/experiences e. g. from projects and people, evaluations/capitalization, research, external expertise...	<p><b>Level 3: Structure news, make project details accessible</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a comprehensive structure of information (commented tag hierarchy).</li> <li>Link the newsletter information with it, so that articles from the newsletter can directly be integrated and vice versa.</li> <li>Make the newsletter the starting point of discussions by putting questions into articles and offer a moderated comment functionality.</li> <li>Connect an animated forum to further discuss articles and other contributions in small groups of NPOs and experts on specific topics to grow actively the knowledge around the topic.</li> <li>Make information of project more searchable: Develop search masks to filter specific information and/or train NPOs to use smart search, produce searchable meta data as the commented tag hierarchy grows.</li> </ul>
<b>Topics of interest &amp; channels</b>	<p>Overall, the interest for topics is large and not very specific. It includes thematic ones as well as such concerning methods and procedures. There is no general preference for specific channels, but there are different user types.</p>	<p>Treat the following topics through thematic newsletter editions in combination with e-discussions: Social inclusion, how to work with the private sector, adaptive management, facilitation and scaling-up.</p> <p>Establish a webpage/survey where NPOs and network members constantly can put topics and rank them following the personal interest. Topics may be structured by the Focal Point and further commented by NPOs and network members. The Focal Point may integrate comments to further develop a topic. This guarantees the quality of the proposals.</p> <p>The above mentioned animated forum and regular e-talks/webinars with small groups are the way to go. The latter will already be implemented in 2018.</p> <p>Maintain, but limit the "traditional" channels like global F2F and e-discussion.</p> <p>Expand regional F2F and focussed study tours as well as coaching. In the annex, coaching topics per country are given.</p>

## Summary

The **actual services of the e+i network are appreciated** by the NPOs, in particular for exchanging in the network.

Depending on the experience and expertise NPOs have and the topic they are working in, the challenges are different: Staff new in SDC and new in the area of e+i has learning needs for SDC's PCM procedures and specific concepts, approaches and methods respectively. Experienced staff seeks specific information and peer-to-peer exchange. This has the following implications for services of the e+i network:

- When it comes to structural questions: **Stronger regional networks** can make it easier to learn, work and exchange in teams. While the staff of one office may be a good team for questions concerning the general PCM of SDC and how to do it, the regional network would help improving thematic knowledge and give new inputs on what to do as well as how to do specific things in the area of e+i. Newcomers and experienced NPOs in e+i can exchange with peers of their level or between the levels (coaching). Methods therefor should be defined and trained to improve the exchange.
- When it comes to questions of topics and channels of interest, NPOs do not have general preferences. It is more a matter of focus: **For newcomers** the services shall focus on **learning** of SDC's PCM and e+i specific concepts, approaches and methods. While improving the skills in PCM is probably more a task of the supervisor, the e+i specific skills should be improved through services of the e+i network, through a well-defined program of training and coaching. **For experienced NPOs, specific topics** related to their projects are of interest, with a didactical focus on peer-to-peer exchange rather than coaching. For example contracts for PPDP in the area of cocoa or agricultural insurances. The list of topics & channels the NPOs were asked to give their opinion and to complete, is in the questionnaire in the annex.

## Annex

### Part A: Challenges and support of NPOs needed along the project cycle

The text in the four tables are the author's summary of the interview answers.

#### Africa: Kenya, Mali, Tanzania

Challenges	Support needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Even with a general experience in development cooperation, as a newcomer in MSD it is not easy e. g. to develop a logframe or to orient actors e. g. to set up right-sized and effective M&amp;E. Knowledge &amp; skills are very specific. Therefore training &amp; backstopping are helpful (even if M4P training was very fast)</li> <li>For somebody without MSD-background it took a moment to understand that also big companies do not make "a donation", but look for "the business case"</li> <li>Understanding "facilitation" by a project team of a humanitarian NGO</li> <li>When market actors are used to grants, it is challenging to facilitate them. Therefore an experienced implementer was helpful</li> <li>How to catch good results, when monitoring is weak</li> <li>Change from production oriented projects to value chain facilitation/MSD</li> <li>Strengthen umbrella organisations</li> <li>Even if you finally find the right information on the shareweb or elsewhere, it takes too long to get it. The Field Handbook is a good example of the opposite.</li> <li>To be understood in Bern</li> <li>Decentralization: Capacity (knowledge/finances) of subnational level</li> <li>Frequent steering on national and district level is important for ownership and needs budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>refresh training to give better advice resp. coaching for upcoming tender (e. g. log-frame for MSD, monitoring, beneficiaries assessment, cost benefit analyses)</li> <li>NADEL training was helpful</li> <li>Improve the whole range of knowledge relevant to PSD/VSD/FSD. Short time: coaching for TOR (Results/outcomes for call for bids), later: implement the former developed result chain; M&amp;E for national/ local government, umbrella organisations, local organisations and communities; list of consultants for backstopping/evaluation</li> <li>strengthen a regional subnet for knowledge sharing</li> <li>Discussion to share experience with e+i network</li> <li>Training for project team (or hire experts/backstopper). Project needs budget for that.</li> <li>Shorten time for NPOs to find the right, specific information: More intuitive structure, better meta-information, tagging and search engines/results on shareweb, support and so on.</li> </ul>

#### Asia: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Uzbekistan

Challenges	Support needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For an inexperienced NPO, switching to a next phase is always a challenge, but it is easier with the same implementer and partner/stakeholder, even more, when the implementer is an international specialist in facilitative approaches.</li> <li>Limitations on personal level, in the team, even in the region e. g. in English, in applying guides/format for document writing like ProDoc (they are not clear). Therefor time is a real constraint.</li> <li>The tender process has a difficult procedure, e. g. what fees to negotiate for expats? The support of an external e+i specialist in the tender committee was helpful</li> <li>Reporting with implementers is a challenge, as one does not report as desired and the other complains that SDC changes a lot its reporting procedures.</li> <li>The coaching by the donor in a former project was more intensive than now with SDC.</li> <li>Many relevant changes from the government are about to come</li> <li>When end of phase report (EPR) and mid-term review are close, EPR is just work and not really helpful</li> <li>Implementation is challenging, but the strong implementer is helpful</li> <li>The insurance sector is not developed =&gt; few ground to build on for agro-insurances.</li> <li>Analyse risks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information on best practice (dos+donts) in PCM of e+i projects</li> <li>Exchange of ideas, especially in the moment of project design</li> <li>Experience from abroad is needed</li> <li>Participation of partner in event was a good experience and is lacking now.</li> <li>More training for NPO to give better guidance to implementer e. g. for M&amp;E.</li> <li>Training also for team leader/staff</li> <li>Learning offer like webinars, training open for partners/actors/stakeholders</li> <li>Time for webinars that fits office hours</li> <li>follow-up after training =&gt; coaching needed</li> <li>Improve the exchange of NPOs with implementers in whole a region.</li> <li>Build regional thematic network within SDC</li> <li>Build local thematic network with other partners</li> <li>Proposal: e+i could organize regional workshop in general and in the same time support formulation of new ProDoc</li> <li>Improve exchange with FP. The "how" is open.</li> <li>Examples, checklists on agro insurance &amp; risks</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have time to reflect, analyse, disseminate besides the daily work</li> <li>• Identification of (systemic) interventions in the domain of risk and stakeholder analysis</li> <li>• Adaptive management (negotiation with PS, what and how much support, risk and knowledge sharing)</li> <li>• Partners/actors are not well capacitated for project implementation.</li> <li>• Guidance: how to adapt outdated project design</li> <li>• Steering/monitoring is not a challenge, as it is a kind of standard for NPOs</li> <li>• Many stakeholders (e. g. 17 ministries).</li> <li>• All want training, but we have to make sure system building/systemic change</li> <li>• System and VET perspective is important/needed</li> <li>• To take private in PPDP on board is challenging little trust between private and public sector.</li> <li>• Monitor that project activities (training, curriculum adaptation...) really lead to more employment. Therefore, the private sector should be part of the steering committee.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newsletter: Put the topic (agro)insurance from time to time</li> <li>• special need: financial management of mandated projects</li> <li>• Actual project ends with great experience: how to transfer to state/partners (video, distribution on national/regional/global level)</li> <li>• Get guidance on where to go to disseminate learnings</li> <li>• e-discussions in general and namely in the beginning of 2017 are useful</li> <li>• As knowledge management is important, monitoring should include action research.</li> <li>• Not simply a list of consultants, but a database with feedback/rankings from NPOs about the quality of the work of consultants.</li> <li>• To reach systemic change, several phases are needed. E. g. (1) get everybody on board and the project really starts; (2) implement the core part locally; (3) scale up and exit</li> </ul>
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#### *Latin America and the Caribbean: Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua*

<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Support needed</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to design, follow-up and evaluate PPDPs</li> <li>• It is key to read the context and the actors.</li> <li>• Design an integrated program in a fragile context (many topics, complexity, MSD governance, human rights, flexibility, PPDP...)</li> <li>• After years of international aid, the local capacities in methodology are low and shall be strengthened in the next program. Partners have difficulties to understand their facilitative role. They just "execute".</li> <li>• Define the indicators/methods to measure change, not just products (e. g. to write about in the annual report)</li> <li>• Cacao and adaptation to CC: best practice and how to measure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coaching in the formulation of details of PPDPs e. g. in cacao (necessary elements, best practice).and how to measure them</li> <li>• Information and M&amp;E on cacao and CC: best practice and how to measure, specifically ex-ante/base line</li> <li>• Methods to read the context</li> <li>• Methods better adapted to fragility</li> <li>• Methods to enable local actors to act as facilitators</li> <li>• Support for evaluation and capitalization is needed.</li> <li>• Exchange of experiences</li> </ul>

#### *Europe/Caucasus: Armenia, Kosovo, Moldova, Ukraine Georgia*

<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Support needed</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The entry proposal through the Balkan Division was backstopped by FP e+i</li> <li>• Develop the logframe and the interventions for MSD projects</li> <li>• Implementation is easy with experienced international implementer, difficult with local one</li> <li>• Limited knowhow of NPO and supervisor (they are not trained, just some handbooks are available)</li> <li>• HQ requested more programmatic proposals</li> <li>• VSD is a new topic, especially working with the PS in this area. Processes are different from SECO (transition from Phase I to II)</li> <li>• To get the right information is too time consuming</li> <li>• VSD network is useful e. g. SDC expert from the region and from headquarters assist in a stakeholder meeting</li> <li>• Have the flexibility to react on needs of phase II</li> <li>• The new sector of agro-insurance is challenging, as SDC does not have experience and no consultants available</li> <li>• Analyse the systemic constraints</li> <li>• Develop logframe with indicators for MSD projects</li> <li>• Define baseline</li> <li>• Cooperation with stakeholders, especially with the government, is challenging, if continuity is not given and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More capacity building for SDC, project team and partners: Worldwide peer-to-peer exchange on topics and exchange within the region. For SDC staff the thematic focus lies on designing and monitoring e+i projects, for project team and partners on implementing it</li> <li>• Global F2F do not replace regional ones and vice versa: Global F2F are good for general topics and larger regions like a continent. Local F2F are more for operational topics, e. g. study tour with NPO and project team, experience exchange in the region, know each other personally.</li> <li>• Support on DCED and definition of indicators</li> <li>• Support in project formulation, connect with competent consultants and similar projects</li> <li>• How to conduct CBA. There are so many assumptions. Dos and donts.</li> <li>• Best practice examples</li> <li>• Backstopping is recommendable for writing a ProDoc for a new phase building on former experiences</li> </ul>

<p>the facilitative approach is confronted with subsidies for loans/insurance. At least transparency about changes should be established</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good M&amp;E is sometimes difficult, especially with new implementers.</li> <li>• Government engagement can not only be insufficient, it can also be too much</li> <li>• Develop a new ProDoc building on former experiences</li> <li>• Understanding of facilitative approach sometimes difficult with co-funder</li> <li>• partner doesn't understand "facilitation", so it have to be replaced</li> <li>• Implementation is easy, when previous steps of the PCM and mutual understanding between NPO and implementer is ok.</li> <li>• For monitoring, good indicators and a baseline are important</li> <li>• Good data are key for a next phase</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support in working with local NGO as implementer</li> <li>• International backstopping was helpful. To steer on strategic level and advice the project team remains challenge and needs support (e. g. coaching).</li> <li>• Access to experts to give training about strategies in VSD, but also for teaching and developing curriculae</li> <li>• Springfield: Very good training/coaching</li> <li>• Sharing the topic of M&amp;E with e+i network, including project partners</li> <li>• E+i network members read draft of project idea or entry proposal and give feedback</li> <li>• Participating in e-discussions or just reading them are both helpful</li> <li>• Support from Division could be improved</li> <li>• NADEL was useful</li> </ul>
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## Part B: NPOs interest for topics and channels of communication

The text in the four tables are the author's notes of the interview answers.

### Africa: Tanzania Kenya Mali

Topic of interest	Channels of communication of interest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate Change in general</li> <li>• Energy (in a broad sense, all around this topic)</li> <li>• Skills development/youth</li> <li>• Innovation (agro, finances)</li> <li>• The topics proposed in the questionnaire are all relevant</li> <li>• MSD should be seen as a transversal topic</li> <li>• Adaptive management</li> <li>• Inclusion of women in agriculture, international indicators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No general likes or dislikes. It depends on the specific need/offer.</li> <li>• 5-days introduction course for M4P was very fast. Fresh-up useful.</li> <li>• F2F/courses could start with an online introduction to save time.</li> <li>• Most appreciated: coaching!</li> <li>• Low participation due to time restriction. Valuable are webinars and online infos</li> <li>• E-learning to build the capacity of SDC staff to better assist projects in their methods and knowledge management</li> <li>• More regional events with joint preparation, more French in working groups and e-discussions</li> </ul>

### Asia: Uzbekistan Mongolia Cambodia Myanmar Bangladesh Nepal

Topic of interest	Channels of communication of interest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scaling-up of innovative practices</li> <li>• Capacity building of partners</li> <li>• (un)employment, with focus on youth</li> <li>• Youth economic empowerment</li> <li>• How to cooperate with the private sector (PPDP)</li> <li>• Social entrepreneurs</li> <li>• Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA)</li> <li>• Share capitalization of VSD in Mongolia</li> <li>• Crosscutting topics of MSD (like SECO white paper on VSD/PSD)</li> <li>• Private sector engagement in VSD</li> <li>• Financing/sustainability of VSD</li> <li>• Policy dialog</li> <li>• How to promote visibility of projects?</li> <li>• Career guidance</li> <li>• Social inclusion</li> <li>• Facilitation and scale-up strategies</li> <li>• Adaptive management</li> <li>• Sanitation, hygiene (low cost, local PPDP)</li> <li>• How to get private sector on board</li> <li>• Vocational qualification framework</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most of the proposed channels are useful, namely the physical presence. E-learning and online information is ok so far, but e-discussions are not appreciated. Online groups are not very useful, only for the preparation of an event. Mentoring/coaching is a good idea.</li> <li>• F2F are a good opportunity to deepen knowledge</li> <li>• Newsletters and also webinars and e-discussions are good channels, when the timing is convenient</li> <li>• More regional events together with partners</li> <li>• Mentoring/coaching is a good thing, but it's costly</li> <li>• Package of seminar with theory &amp; practical exposer visit with government e. g. in the region or in Switzerland. No experience with F2F, but may be a good form, e-learning may be not.</li> <li>• Training are ok, but need a follow-up.</li> <li>• Coaching would be appreciated, but backstopper need to know the region.</li> <li>• Physical present like course, F2F</li> <li>• All proposed channels are ok, but F2F should be regional to build personal relationships for mutual understanding. Webinars face the challenge of time lag.</li> <li>• Mentoring/coaching would be appreciated</li> <li>• E-discussions are a good channel</li> </ul>

*Latin America and the Caribbean: Haiti Honduras Nicaragua*

<b>Topic of interest</b>	<b>Channels of communication of interest</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agriculture and Climate Change: Questions around agro insurances</li> <li>• Innovation in agriculture (production and more)</li> <li>• PPDP in a fragile context</li> <li>• How to analyse actors in a conflictive situation</li> <li>• Socio-economic inclusion</li> <li>• PPDP in cacao</li> <li>• Monitoring systems in cacao</li> <li>• Public private dialog platforms: what topics to discuss, what are key elements</li> <li>• Cacao and adaptation to Climate Change: best practices and how to measure.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not interested in global F2F: too many people. More visits, more exchange</li> <li>• Global F2F need lots of informal space for NPOs to meet</li> <li>• Study tours</li> <li>• All channels are welcome</li> <li>• The online information is to general, not focused on specific topics like cacao</li> </ul>

*Europe/Caucasus Kosovo Moldavia Ukraine Georgia Armenia*

<b>Topic of interest</b>	<b>Channels of communication of interest</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social inclusion in MSD</li> <li>• Facilitation and scaling up</li> <li>• All proposed topics are interesting</li> <li>• Labour market services</li> <li>• VSD: Dual education</li> <li>• Access to finances</li> <li>• Vocational Skills Development</li> <li>• Agricultural Value Chain Development</li> <li>• How to write a good credit proposal</li> <li>• WEE</li> <li>• Social inclusion</li> <li>• Facilitation and scaling up strategies</li> <li>• Capacity building of implementers, government (it should not simply accept, but take a stake &amp; informed decision), decision makers of donors.</li> <li>• How to have better access to all the knowledge in all the SDC offices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical presence is preferred over virtual seminars e. g. from BEAM Exchange</li> <li>• Online infos and online groups may be ok, but there is no need for coaching.</li> <li>• Events with physical presence, namely training courses, are appreciated. E-learning material and webinars are fine to, while e-discussions are time intensive.</li> <li>• Mentoring/coaching is a good channel, a backstopper should be planned in projects</li> <li>• Global and regional F2F and training</li> <li>• From time to time a global F2F is fine, but not too frequent. Also develop strong regional nets, on-job training</li> <li>• Webinars are a good tool, whereas e-discussions are too long.</li> <li>• Learning material is not sufficient structured</li> <li>• Global F2F not too frequent (once in 2 to 3 years)</li> <li>• Mentoring was helpful especially when new in e+i</li> </ul>



**e+i** | employment and income network

## Questionnaire Demand Assessment NPOs

### Introduction

SDC's e+i Network (<https://www.shareweb.ch/site/EI/Pages/Home.aspx>) is meant to:

- provide operational, thematic advice in the organizational units;
- foster learning and to transmit knowledge and methodological competence;
- capitalize experience and formulate good practices.
- provide a wide range of services e.g. website with news, newsletter, calendar, documents, links and other resources; project and member lists; e-discussions, webinars, online groups; events like F2F, trainings; coaching..

The focal point likes to assess the demand of its key clients, the National Programme Officers (NPOs), to:

- focus e+i network services and offer them more demand-based;
- identify potential for individual coaching and support;
- take up interesting topics for next e-discussions and f2f interactions.

Apart of this introduction, the present questionnaire is structured in:

- Part A: Questions along the project cycle;
- Part B: Topics of interest;
- Part C: Final public and anonymous comments.

### 1. Question: The basic data for the interviewee are:

Name/Country	
Phone/Skype/Mail	
Interview date/time	

2. Question: Please list projects in the field of e+i, where you were/are involved - if any (Private Sector Development PSD, Vocational Skills Development VSD, Financial Sector Development FSD):

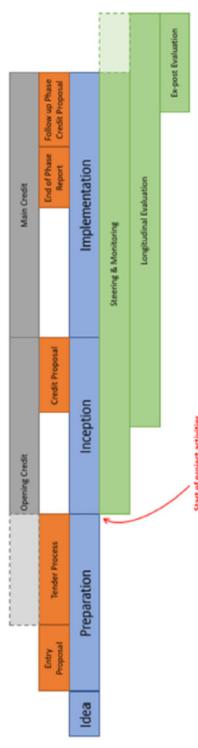
Period	Topic/Title	Project No.

## Questionnaire

### Part A: Questions along the Project Cycle

#### 3. Question: When following the generic project cycle below:

- What challenges did/do you face in the different phases of your PSD/VSD/FSD projects?
- What support did/do you need and from whom? How the e+i network could support you?
- Do you know the guidance paper "Managing MSD Projects" or other resources/support that you consider useful?



#### Section 2.1: Project idea, entry proposal and tender process

What challenges did/do you face in the mentioned phases of your PSD/VSD/FSD projects e.g. knowledge of staff and stakeholders about facilitative approaches or about best market systems?

What support did/do you need and from whom? Have you involved the E-I network?

#### Section 2.2: Inception phases and credit proposal

What challenges did/do you face in the mentioned phases of your PSD/VSD/FSD projects e.g. capacity building of project team members, own capacity building, identification of (systemic) interventions, set-up of result chain, define logframe?

What support did/do you need and from whom?

### **Section 2.3: Implementation phase**

What challenges did/do you face in the mentioned phase of your PSD/VSD/FSD projects e.g. selection of and negotiations with key actors/partner, develop (adaptive?) management?

What support did/do you need and from whom?	
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### **Section 2.4: Steering & monitoring, Evaluation and end of phase report**

What challenges did/do you face in the mentioned phases of your PSD/VSD/FSD projects e.g. adequate monitoring and reporting systems, strategic review, knowledge management?

What support did/do you need and from whom?	
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### **Section 2.5: Follow up phases**

What challenges did/do you face in the mentioned phases of your PSD/VSD/FSD projects, e.g. planning workshops, produc wrting?

What support did/do you need and from whom?	
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### **Part B: Topics of interest**

4. **Question:** What are interesting topics to you and why? Some ideas for thematic and procedural topics are: WEE, Social inclusion/reaching marginalised groups with PSD projects, Facilitation and scaling up strategies, Capacity building, Adaptive management... Through what channels would you like to aboard them and why? We propose the following channels
- Physically present: F2F and side events, training courses
  - E-learning: learning material, webinars, e-discussions
  - Online infos: Dgroups, Shareweb, newsletter, best practice
  - Online groups: Dgroups, Shareweb, WhatsApp, Skype
  - Personalised support: Mentoring, coaching

What are interesting topics to you and why?	Through what channels would you like to aboard them and why?

### **Part C: Public and anonymous comments**

5. **Question:** Do you have some comments on your challenges, needs and expectations towards the e+i network and SDC in general or any reflection, ideas etc. you want to share? This will be reported to the Focal Point of the e+ network in connection with your name, so that it is possible to come back and discuss further if necessary or you may have a specific question and you want to have an answer.

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6. **Question:** Do you have some comments on your challenges, needs and expectations towards the e+i network and SDC in general or any reflection you want to share? This will be reported to the Focal Point anonymously, so that it will not be possible to come back. E.g. you may want to mention a sensitive critique.  
**Please feel free to criticize or to propose new things!** This is an excellent learning opportunity for focal points so we can improve the service and our performance.