Step 10: Communicating for Impact at Scale
‘Letting the market system do the talking’

Summary

Step 10: Communicating for Impact at Scale explains how to create good conditions for the market actors directly involved in the PMSD process to spread ideas and promote changes throughout the market system beyond the reach of the project.

The guideline also provides recommendations for facilitators to communicate evidence effectively and strategically to key market actors who are hesitant to engage, donors and colleagues.

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Section 1: The importance of effective communication

Effective communication or exchange of resources such as money, goods, services and ideas is not only essential for market systems to work well; it is what makes markets such a powerful means to empower large numbers of people and reduce poverty at scale. This section explains why communication for uptake is at the heart of PMSD, and how to look at communications from a PMSD perspective.

How to get new or enhanced value to spread out into the system

Whilst the 10 steps of the PMSD Roadmap are not a linear path for you to follow, the final guideline nonetheless seems like the right place to come full circle and ask a critical question: why are we trying to use markets to fight poverty?

Markets are not just important because they are embedded in everyone's lives, or because they can make people a profit; in fact, profits are the least significant reason for why markets are important! Markets are important because they connect people with ideas and resources, allowing them to create value that people, organisations and governments need or desire. Value manifests not only as money or any other financial asset, but also as social and business relationships, technologies, services, influence, recognition or any other type of solution that improves organisational processes and people's lives, including their natural environment.

Effective communication drives and is driven by the creation of value. The production of new ideas and solutions requires access to knowledge that has to be communicated and adopted by different actors in the market system. But it is also true that when new ideas and solutions are created, they can flow throughout the market system by virtue of a set of processes, structures and actors. This guideline provides facilitators with basic recommendations and examples about these processes, structures and actors; helping them to create appropriate conditions for market actors to disseminate knowledge about new value that they are creating or evidence of its impact.

The more functional a market system is, the better knowledge flows and is used by public and private market actors. Likewise, the more inclusive a market system is, the more marginalised actors can access knowledge and take advantage of it.

The job of inclusive market facilitators falls into two categories:

- Helping public and private market actors to coordinate their efforts and collaborate to create pockets of value (i.e. localised creation or increase of value), and
- Creating the conditions for the value from these “pockets” to spread throughout the wider system as fast and as far as possible, and in ways that the most marginalised actors can access it and use it to improve their lives.

The core question that this guideline therefore tries to answer is:

How to get new or enhanced value to spread out into the wider market system, over which the facilitator has little or no influence?
How other steps of the Roadmap build conditions for the communication of knowledge for uptake

All the steps of the PMSD Roadmap are synergic: they inform, strengthen and enable each other. It follows therefore that previous steps of the Roadmap also contribute to a more effective and efficient communication between market actors. The following are some examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roadmap steps:</th>
<th>How they contribute to effective communication:</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 Market System Selection</td>
<td>Selecting a market system where the effort required by the marginalised actors to access, adopt and adapt useful knowledge is relatively low (compared to other markets).</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-3 Preliminary Mapping and Analysis, Strategic Design and Planning</td>
<td>Selecting the right combination of actors who will build new relationships between them, translate specialised knowledge to peers and influence other people's opinions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Empowering Marginalised Actors</td>
<td>Empowering the most marginalised actors (and not-so-marginalised if needed) to get their knowledge to shape the innovation process. This in turn makes the new ideas, solutions, models, products and services that come out of the PMSD process more appropriate for other marginalised actors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-8 Engaging Key Actors, Participatory Market Mapping, Participatory Planning, Facilitating Change</td>
<td>The participatory market mapping workshops and the facilitation of the working groups and their action plans are some of the most effective spaces and processes to build trust, collaboration, coordination, joint vision and collaborative testing of new ideas, solutions, models, products and services. These steps maximise the co-creation of optimal solutions (as opposed to the enforcement or push of the &quot;best&quot; solutions dictated exclusively by the donor, the NGOs or &quot;external experts&quot;).</td>
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Carrying out the other steps of the PMSD Roadmap properly will significantly reduce the effort required by the facilitator to promote the communication and adoption of knowledge throughout the system. In a well-facilitated PMSD process, it is the market actors themselves who “do the talking”: in other words, they communicate the benefits of the new or increased value created during the PMSD process to other market actors beyond the direct reach of the project. This communication can be formal or informal, quantitative or qualitative, empirical or anecdotal.

The facilitator should build the capacity of key market actors to communicate evidence of benefits and impact to their own networks or peers (e.g. the members of the market opportunity groups to their farmer peers), engage actors whose natural role is to communicate to strategic audiences or target groups (e.g. local media, extension agencies, shop owners, lead firms or agricultural research organisations) and monitor how these communication processes develop.
Section 2: The two sides of effective communication for scale

Systemic communication and strategic communication differ in who they target, and their purpose for doing so. Understanding their differences allows facilitators to be strategic in their use.

**Systemic communication: get the market system to do the talking**

For the purposes of PMSD there are two types of communication for scale-up: the one that the market actors do to share knowledge amongst themselves (systemic), and the one that the facilitator does to share evidence of impact with peers and donors (strategic). This section clarifies the difference between them and how the facilitator can use them effectively.

A functional market system communicates knowledge well. It gets useful knowledge to the actors who need it in the right moments and at relatively low costs. In contrast, in a dysfunctional market system knowledge remains either locked in a few “corners” or “pockets”, and never reaches the actors who need it to perform better, or when it flows to market actors it costs too much, reaches only a few people or is delivered in formats that cannot be used or understood by those who need it.

The key to systemic communication is to plan and execute the facilitation keeping in mind communication blockages in the wider system, and to reflect periodically about what is required for relevant knowledge to be regularly and effectively communicated to the actors who need it the most. Examples of relevant knowledge to communicate include changes in prices, new practices and quality standards, the outbreak of a disease or the arrival of a new technology.

The focus of this guideline is on effective communication for the dissemination of ideas and practices that can make market systems more inclusive, productive and efficient. However its scope is restricted to the processes and conditions that enable such ideas and practices to get from one actor to another, fast and at the lowest costs possible; it does not cover the processes and conditions necessary for their adoption. Getting the receivers of ideas and practices to actually use this knowledge in ways that improve their lives is not just about communication; it is not just about helping the receiver to “get it” or to have an “aha” moment. There are many other factors that play a role in the decisions that the receivers must make to change their routines and ways of thinking as a result of access to new knowledge. For example:

- Their capacity to access products and services that will allow them to put the new knowledge into practice (e.g. how to use a new fertiliser, and being able to purchase it)

- Their ability to build trusting relationships, coordinate and collaborate with other actors (e.g. regional vaccination campaigns to stop the outbreak of a pest or parasite)

- The existence of cultural norms that enable marginalised or vulnerable actors to recognise themselves as legitimate users of new knowledge (e.g. new legislation giving women preferential access to microfinance to set up their own businesses can boost their self-esteem and increase their desire to learn more about business management)
This guideline can certainly *contribute* to achieving the goal of getting the receivers to use the new ideas and practices on a long-term basis, but achieving this is the product of good facilitation of the whole PMSD process (and even of issues beyond the PMSD Roadmap). Sustained use of new knowledge emerges out of the interactions of many different processes within and beyond the control of the facilitators.

One way of approaching the planning and execution of your facilitation is by seeing knowledge as one of the products being produced, exchanged and consumed in the market system (all the steps of the PMSD Roadmap can be used for knowledge too!). Try to understand the connections between the product (e.g. rice, milk, coffee, etc), and the knowledge needed for innovations in one part of the system to be adopted in other parts. Reflect about:

- **The actors who produce, exchange and use knowledge** (e.g. consumers, government agencies, extensionists, intermediaries, processors, researchers, producers, the media, local schools, training institutes)

- **The relationships, networks and spaces** that enable or hamper the exchange of knowledge (e.g. business transactions, informal conversations in the local cafe, farmer groups, cooperatives, fairs)

- **The norms, incentives and infrastructures** that enable or hamper the production, dissemination and use of knowledge (e.g. training curricula, training standards, the belief that “women should not learn about certain types of businesses”, evidence that knowledge can solve real problems or lead to increased incomes, mobile phone networks)

You will notice that when you reflect upon these three categories, you will start to see actors, processes, spaces, institutions, incentives, etc. that you had not seen before. Reflect about how these “knowledge actors” should be empowered, engaged or connected in ways that boost the overall capacity of the market system to put useful knowledge at the fingertips of the actors who need it the most. And always remember: it is the market system who should do the talking; not you!

Remember the classic slogan of “who does, who pays?” from *Step 3: Strategic Design and Planning*. When it comes to getting the market system to do the talking (i.e. to communicate relevant knowledge to the actors who need it the most), it is very useful to think about who knows and who wants to know. Consider the new slogan: “Who does, who pays,WHO KNOWS?”.
Figure 1: An example of a knowledge version of a market map – the red arrows are examples of knowledge transfer.
Note: A clarification on what we mean by communication

Marketing communications which raise the profile of the organisations in which facilitators work (normally NGOs) are important, but are beyond the scope of this guideline. This is why the general public and supporters (e.g. people who donate funds to the organisation or support it in other ways) are not in the list of strategic audiences for impact at scale. If some segments of the “general public” are potential buyers in the market, then they should be considered as market actors.

Knowledge that empowers – let the system do the training:

Facilitators must regularly empower, train or raise the awareness of certain types of actors to engage better with other better-off actors (for more information go to Step 4: Empowering Marginalised Actors); however, this process also works the other way around: market engagement – even in its most simple or basic forms – is empowering. In other words, “empowerment through engagement” is as important as “empowerment for engagement”. There are limitations for the former though: processes of empowerment through engagement are difficult to facilitate in markets with high barriers to entry. For example, markets where compliance with strict quality and hygiene standards is required or use of sophisticated processing, packaging or marketing techniques is essential for success.

Furthermore, we have already discussed in Step 4: Empowering Marginalised Actors that the more marginalised the target groups are, the more facilitators will have to invest in building the basic minimum level of knowledge, attitudes and skills that will allow those actors to contribute to the creation and testing of appropriate solutions that can benefit large numbers of actors in similar situations. However, facilitators can share the “load” with the market system itself by leveraging the many opportunities for empowerment that exist in the process of engaging with other market actors. These interactions do not need to be sophisticated or expensive; in fact in our experience, it is normally the most basic or simple experiences – such as getting praise for a job well done, being part of a productive group with a shared mission, and enjoying the stability of the first long-term contract – that have the greatest power to break long-standing cycles of marginalisation and low-self-esteem.

Some examples of transferable skills and attitudes that marginalised or vulnerable market actors can build through regular engagement with other market actors are:

- How to negotiate with others
- How to pitch a product or service
- How to build trust, networks and partnerships
- How to build alliances, or other advocacy processes to influence policy-makers
- How to identify key issues to improve the forecasting of trends and shocks
- How to spot business opportunities, read the “small print” and detect good and bad intentions

In synthesis:

Our goal as facilitators is to create good conditions for marginalised actors to engage with other market actors (both public and private); to interact, coordinate and collaborate with them to add value to the
whole system in ways that benefit them and others, and to make sure that the processes of knowledge production, sharing, use and adaptation are as seriously considered as the production, transformation and consumption of goods like milk, bananas, coffee or rice.

**Strategic communication: “look... it is working!”**

Strategic communication is what facilitators use to inform or raise the awareness of key groups of stakeholders about what is working well and about challenges and needs throughout the PMSD process. Three of the most important groups of stakeholders to communicate with are:

- **Market actors**: to get the interest of those who have not engaged in the PMSD process and who should be participating
- **Donors**: to keep those who fund our projects informed about progress and challenges and, more broadly, to inform the policies and practices of donors working in the fields of inclusive market systems.
- **Peers**: to share knowledge and promote collaboration and coordination with those in your team and organisation; your partners and those peers all over the world working on inclusive market development.

**Communicating with market actors**

The main goal here is to raise the awareness of public and private market actors who have *not* been part of the PMSD process, and who should be part of it (See [Step 5: Engaging Key Actors](#) about the benefits that they could accrue by participating in it.

This is particularly important during the early stages of the facilitation of market opportunity groups and interest forums (See [Step 7: Participatory Planning](#) for more on these). It is very common for some actors to stay totally outside or in the margins of the process before they decide to invest time and effort in it. Make sure that you are regularly keeping them informed about benefits, results, challenges or impacts related to issues that matter to them (not about everything; otherwise you risk alienating them even further). Select the messages carefully depending on the actor.

Remember that the actors who are already engaged and interested in the PMSD process are your biggest communication asset; in many cases, they can be much more effective at communicating with similar market actors who are hesitant or unwilling to engage. Help those market actors who are already engaged and aware of the benefits of the PMSD process to get the message across to their peers, colleagues or to actors who they have influence upon.

Examples of typical activities that facilitators can do to communicate with market actors or to help market actors already in the PMSD process to let new market actors know that “it’s working”:

- **One to one visits**: For instance, a visit to a lead firm who has not yet engaged but has the capacity to copy a business model and benefit thousands of marginalised farmers. These meetings can be time-consuming and expensive, so make sure they are worth your time. Get the approval of the lead firms already involved in the PMSD process before you do this!
• **Conferences or seminars**: You can organise them or work to get invited to one. Here you can share lessons, evidence of impact and case studies showing successful innovations. See who comes to talk with you during the break and explore if they could be strategic actors to engage in the PMSD process.

• **Field visits**: Get some of the actors who could benefit from the new knowledge to visit those who are doing things in new and successful ways.

  **Tip**: If you can get all the actors to travel together in one vehicle, do it. Avoid separating them in small vehicles unless it is necessary for safety reasons. The longer the travel time, the more important having them travelling together will be because they will be able to interact, get to know each other and come up with ideas to improve their system. If the passengers have not met before, spend a few minutes helping them to introduce themselves to the rest and share key objectives or interest. Do this before they get in the vehicle because after the introduction session they can identify who they want to sit next to.

• **Production of “knowledge assets”**: Such as brochures, papers, reports, briefings, videos, podcasts or any other products packaged in appropriate formats for different types of market actors.

• **Engaging with local or national journalists**: Providing basic training about PMSD and helping them to see their role as key information service providers in market systems; organising field visits and opportunities for them to interview key market actors; and flagging up newsworthy successes, issues or challenges for them to report about. Make sure you select the journalists according to the audiences you need to reach out to (newspapers, TV, radio, specialised magazines, etc.).

**Communicating with donors:**

The main goal here is to **keep donors informed about the PMSD process and collaborate with them to realise their potential as drivers of scale-up.**

Donors play at least two critical roles in scale-up:

• As makers or promoters of policies and practices that influence the work of facilitators and development organisations working in inclusive markets

• As learning partners and learning catalysts

Facilitators and donors must collaborate to improve the balance between traditional, formal reporting (i.e. how the resources are being used) and a trust-based dialogue that recognises the complexity of market systems and embraces flexibility and learning. More often than not, facilitators will have to engage with donors who are only interested in traditional, formal reporting; however, facilitators should also be looking for opportunities to redefine their relationships with donors with the aim of promoting scale-up through facilitation-friendly policies and effective learning.
Additional to the reports specified in the contract, try to build alternative, more informal relationships with the donor that allow you to communicate progress, success and challenges more quickly. This can shorten the information gaps, increase your adaptability to unexpected events, and engage the donor’s expertise and other intangible resources. Make yourself available to the donor when they organise conferences, seminars or workshops to disseminate their experiences. Contribute with content when the donor produces knowledge products such as reports, briefings, videos, web pages, flyers, etc.

**Communicating with Peers:**

The main goal here is to communicate effectively with other development practitioners who are working (or will work) on similar initiatives or on initiatives that could make synergies with your own work.

In this case, communities of practice, informal peer meetings, in-person and virtual seminars, etc. are spaces where communication of relevant knowledge can contribute to scale-up and efficient use of resources through more coordination and collaboration.

Advances in information and communication technologies and social media have led to an explosion of formal and informal learning groups, networks or communities of practice. Some examples are [MaFI](#) (The Market Facilitation Initiative), [The M4P Hub](#) and [Business Fight Poverty](#). Organisations are also creating their own internal learning groups or communities of practice. Engage in these platforms, share your experiences and learn from the other members. Do not hesitate to ask relevant questions or share the challenges you are facing; even if you think they are very simple or basic. You will be surprised how much interaction, recognition and collaboration you can generate through real-life, practical issues.

Despite progress in the virtual world – or perhaps as a result of them – in-person interactions and local learning are gaining quite a lot of attention and traction from donors and practitioners alike. These face-to-face, contextualised interactions have advantages that the virtual world lack; such as immediate feedback, full immersion (people in the room are less distracted by their routines), communication enriched by body language, and selection of participants by geographic location and language, to name just a few.
Section 3: Types of knowledge

Knowledge can manifest in different ways. Understanding these, and the differences in their dispersal and opportunities they create is imperative to a successful project.

Defining knowledge: explicit, tacit and implicit

There are three main ways in which knowledge can be represented: explicit, tacit and implicit. Many projects and scale-up processes fail because they ignore the fact that knowledge can exist in these different states; it therefore spreads through different mechanisms, can be assimilated by different people in different ways, and creates different opportunities and challenges for specific types of business models.

Explicit knowledge: any type of knowledge that can be codified, or put into words, images, sounds or a combination of them. Not only written or spoken words are explicit language; sign language, Braille system, Morse code and traffic signals are just a few examples. Explicit knowledge can be converted into knowledge objects or assets but they are not the same. Converting explicit knowledge into knowledge products can be costly, difficult and introduces barriers to entry that can hamper its dissemination. However it can also create business opportunities.

Tacit knowledge: any type of knowledge that requires practice in order to be “absorbed”. It can be equated to skills and aptitudes. It allows experts to make decisions in a seemingly intuitive and even unconscious way.

Implicit knowledge: any type of knowledge that is accepted by the majority of people in a given socio-cultural context. It can be equated to social norms and institutions. It is “how we do things around here”. Knowing that people arrive late to meetings, that getting support from a public institution requires some form of bribery, that leaders in a village should be treated in a certain way, that people go home for lunch and have a nap, or that in order to close a business deal one has to get drunk with the client, are all forms of implicit knowledge.

Implicit knowledge is very difficult to modify during the life cycle of typical development projects and it should normally be seen as part of the context that the project and the facilitator have to take into account to design strategies and activities. It is part of the landscape (the business environment in the market map) that the project must navigate. However, facilitators can use implicit knowledge to leverage communication processes or boost its legitimacy, acceptance, influence or outreach.

Using traditional meeting spaces in Nepal:

In rural areas of Nepal, it is common for farmers to meet at chautaras—the pedestals on which holy trees are planted—to relax and chat about the happening of the day. Important knowledge can be disseminated in these spaces and people are prone to chatting in informally and openly. Chautara meetings or “meetings under the tree” were incorporated by Practical Action’s inclusive markets team in Nepal, in the design of knowledge sharing and training workshops for local para-vets (local providers of agricultural knowledge and inputs).
Example from the field: Leveraging traditional role models in Peru:

In the High Andes of Peru, during the Inca Empire of the 16th century, the Kamayoq were the Emperor’s special agriculture and climate advisors. They were trained to anticipate weather patterns and were responsible for advising on key agricultural practices such as optimal sowing dates. The Kamayoq had high social standing and reputation. Four centuries later, Practical Action revived the idea of the Kamayoq amongst indigenous communities and has been using it successfully to promote a local approach to the much needed provision of relevant and timely agricultural knowledge to low-income smallholders living in very remote areas of the Andes. For indigenous communities in these areas, the idea of the Inca Kamayoqs is still seen with respect and admiration and has been passed orally from generation to generation. This image has been a very attractive “hook” for young men and women to participate in training courses to become certified kamayoqs and develop their own technical service business.

Communication-funding models: who pays for knowledge and why?

Now that we are familiar with the different types of knowledge, we can focus on how it is disseminated between the market actors. The rest of this section explains four models that facilitators should consider to maximise the outreach and sustainability of knowledge dissemination; namely: direct, indirect, embedded, subsidised and sponsored.

Each model has strengths and weaknesses depending on the context, the actors involved and the type of knowledge communicated. Facilitators should pay careful attention to the connection between the business models proposed by the market actors and the type of knowledge that such models require to succeed.

Note that the models cover scenarios where someone pays someone who knows about something to communicate that knowledge to others. The section does not cover other types of communication processes that take place in the absence of commercial transactions, such as oral transfer of traditions amongst members of a tribe or family; and of course, it does not cover knowledge transfer as a result of random or coincidental encounters or interactions.

Facilitators must be aware of certain communication processes that are closely linked to personal and cultural beliefs, are deeply rooted in social institutions, and are protected by powerful actors whose decisions can affect large numbers of people. The facilitator should only use them if appropriate and ethically acceptable. The facilitation principle of letting the actors drive the process and decide what can or should be done must be observed carefully in these cases to avoid introducing unnecessary tensions or blockages, or, even worse, (unintentionally) harming others.

The “paid-for” models below are ordered in no particular order of importance:
Model 1: Direct ("I want your knowledge and I can pay for it")

In this model, actors who need the knowledge pay to receive and use it for their own benefit. It normally involves highly specialised or expert knowledge that is difficult to obtain or that is protected by some sort of intellectual property right. The less specialised or protected the knowledge is, the easier it will be for the buyer to get it in different places or through different channels, and, therefore, the incentives to pay for it will be reduced.

A common mistake that market development projects or inexperienced business people make is to design or invest in business models in which profitability is based on the provision of paid-for technical assistance or advice that can be easily codified and transferred. In this case the barriers to entry are very low and practically no one is willing to make repeated purchases of such knowledge. We have seen many projects where farmers will start sharing what they have learned (e.g. a new agricultural technique or how to build simple technologies or artefacts) through word of mouth. This dissemination of information and knowledge is great and should be promoted but should not be the decisive factor for the commercial sustainability of any business model.

Model 2: Indirect ("I need more or better goods from you and I can pay for the knowledge you need to give me what I need")
This model is commonly used when buyers need more or higher quality produce and are willing to invest resources to give the producer the knowledge required to meet their needs. The producer benefits because they can expand production or upgrade quality to fetch higher prices and/or sell to more buyers, and they can use any transferrable knowledge for other businesses or livelihood strategies (e.g. an agricultural technique that can be used in more than one crop, or management, administrative or accounting techniques); the buyers benefit too because they achieve their objectives of more or better inputs or raw materials.

**Example from the field: Training that benefits everyone, Sudan:**

In Sudan, an exporter of dried hibiscus (an important ingredient in fruit teas) invested his own money to pay for extensionists to train marginalised farmers to use a simple tool (“gargara”) to extract the seeds from the chalice with minimum breakage of the petals. This innovation helped the buyer to reduce cleaning and separation costs and to increase the quality of the final product. He recovered the investment quickly and could pay 10-20% more to the farmers.

**Model 3: Embedded (“if we make a deal, I’ll tell you something you need to know”)**

This model is useful when very few people are aware of or are willing to pay for knowledge that is essential to perform effectively in the market (e.g. grow, harvest, or process a crop, or respond quickly to consumer trends). It is possible that knowledge is not circulating because potential users are not aware of it (i.e. don’t know what they don’t know) and therefore are not demanding it. It is also possible that, as mentioned above, people will tend to avoid paying for knowledge that can be easily codified and transferred (e.g. orally through a neighbour, a radio programme or a video on the web).

In this model, the transfer of knowledge is *embedded* within a commercial transaction of either goods or services. Buyers win because they benefit from information about how to use the products they are buying more effectively (e.g. ideal quantity of pesticide or good techniques to apply it or use it more safely) or because they get additional services (e.g. more time to pay or the possibility to pay in kind). Sellers benefit because embedded services can create competitive advantages, differentiation and consumer loyalty. This can be particularly important in highly commoditised or competitive markets, such as the sale of branded pesticides, feeds or fertilisers, or the provision of livestock vaccination services by local paravets in densely populated contexts.
Examples from the field: Embedded services in animal health and aubergine seedlings, Kenya and Bangladesh:

George Lenguro is a successful animal health extensionist in Samburu (Kenya) who is constantly looking to upgrade his knowledge through new training opportunities. His service covers settlements in a 50 mile radius of the district town, Maralal. He declared:

“I now cover forty villages and have developed an efficient business approach. I have a partner in each village, to help with the work, to witness the work and count the animals. The partner gets 200 shillings [USD 2.30]. I engage in barter trade if my client has no money to pay for my services. Agreement is reached before treatment starts that the payment will be a certain amount, and I will follow up on such a day. I keep very accurate records”

In Faridpur (Bangladesh), Mr Rahman produces aubergine seedlings. In one month at least 20 people buy seeds or seedling from him and look for advice on issues like transplanting seedlings, appropriate spacing, how to prevent pest infestations and good practices for fertilizer application. Most of his clients are from his village. Sometimes people see his vegetables in the market and they get motivated to visit him for good quality seeds and seedlings. He sells 100 seedlings for 30 taka (USD 0.06). The same amount of seedlings sell at 5 taka in the local market but because of the good quality of his product people prefer to buy from him. His seeds produce double the yield.

Model 4: Subsidised (“I will pay for the production and dissemination of knowledge because it is good for society”)

In this model, public actors such as government agencies, ministries, bilateral and multilateral development organisations and even private companies, foundations and philanthropists, pay for the creation and dissemination of knowledge according to political or developmental agendas. In this model, knowledge is seen as a public good (in a very simplistic way, knowledge that can be used by all); consequently, once the knowledge has been produced, barriers to entry tend to be relatively low and dissemination relatively easy.

This model is appropriate in the following cases:

- When the production or dissemination of knowledge is not seen as a means to generate profit.
- When the costs of producing or disseminating the knowledge are higher than the perceived benefits.

- When the people who could benefit from the production or dissemination of knowledge wait for others to make the investment and reap the benefits with zero or minimum costs. The end result is that no one invests.

- When the actors can see the benefits of producing or disseminating the knowledge but too far into the future. This means that perceptions of uncertainty and risks are higher than expected returns.

- When the actors cannot see the connections between the knowledge and their business performance or when they can see the connections but they are not closely linked to their performance (too many cause-effect steps). This is common with investments in basic science or in seemingly unrelated fields (e.g. actors working in the dairy market may find it difficult to see the benefits of investing in new types of antibiotics).

This list is not exhaustive but gives an idea of the difficulties that facilitators and market actors face when investing in the production, dissemination and adoption of certain types of knowledge.

**Model 5: Sponsored (“I can pay for that knowledge but as long as my brand goes with it”)**

In this model, sponsors pay for the production, dissemination and even adoption (e.g. through training) of knowledge that they see as directly or indirectly contributing to their goals or performance. A sponsor can see direct benefits when the knowledge produced, disseminated or adopted creates a more receptive or friendly environment for their operations; and indirect benefits when their brand or concepts are associated with products or services that are widely recognised and respected or that generate positive emotions on consumers.
Examples from the field: Partnerships that spread knowledge in the High Andes:

A livestock and dairy development project in a remote region of the Andes built the capacity of a group of rural promoters (community-based extensionists, para-vets or animal-health service providers) who provide basic technical advice and agro-vet inputs to small-scale farmers in their communities and in surrounding areas where no professional veterinaries are available.

There is a continuous demand for veterinary services and inputs in the area. This contributes to the financial viability of fee-based knowledge provision services. However, it was very common for the promoters to find that their clients did not have enough cash to pay for their services or inputs at the moment of their visit. The promoters themselves had very little or no savings that would have allowed them to offer credit to clients. Lack of working capital meant that the promoters could not buy in bulk and get better prices from the agro-vet distributors.

Having this in mind, the rural promoters established the Association of Livestock Promoters of the Alto Llaucano (a sub-region of Cajamarca), which set a goal for themselves of having one promoter in each village. The project helped them to build trust with one of the main providers of agro-vet inputs in the area (chosen by the Association). A guarantee fund was set up by the project to kick start a pilot scheme of purchase in bulk that would allow the promoters to get a better price from the provider and sell to their clients on credit (maximum of 30 days). In a few months, the provider realised that the Association had a viable business model and were disciplined in their payments. The guarantee fund became redundant.

With increased trust and business success creativity grew. The provider decided to invest his own money and time to help the promoters increase their clients’ base and the quality of their advice (if they did better, he would do better too). For example:

- He started organising workshops where experts from the agro-vet companies in Lima would come to meet with the members of the Association to share good practices or inform them about new products or technologies
- He started co-investing with the Association to organise vaccination campaigns in large areas
- He funded radio adverts to inform listeners about the name and location of promoters working with the Association and making the link between them, their skills and his shop
- He invested in the production of promotional materials (e.g. caps, pens, T-shirts, etc.) that he would give for free to the members of the Association for them to give to their clients as gifts.

These investments allowed the Association to not only serve more clients and reduce costs, but also to access new and better knowledge on a regular basis.

One of the main criticisms of this model is that sponsors may have strong incentives to put their interests before those of the final users of the knowledge. This is a justified concern and facilitators should be mindful of this possibility. If possible, try to engage sponsors in the PMSD process who have a wide portfolio of products or brands (this may reduce the possibility of them locking users into a narrow set of options), and help the stakeholders to explore rules, mechanisms or business models that minimize this possibility. However, in our experience, access to new knowledge –even if it is initially narrow- can open up new possibilities, connections and awareness amongst the users, which in turn can lead to heightened critical analysis and better decision-making processes both at the individual and organisational levels.

In the case of the Alto Llaucano Association mentioned in the case study above, the sponsor did not have strong interests to promote one single brand of agro-vet products because he had a large portfolio of brands. Even more interesting was his attitude: he knew that trying to restrict the choices of the
members of the Association would backfire because it would have been seen by the Association as a disloyal move. The members of the Association also built direct relationships with the big agro-vet houses in Lima thanks to the training workshops organised by the distributor, and the Association knew that they could use those contacts to contrast, verify or “triangulate” information provided by the local distributor if they felt misinformed.

The following table provides a summary of key aspects of the five models and the types of knowledge that are more suitable for each one of them:

Table 1: Key aspects of the five communication-funding models, and the types of knowledge that are more suitable for each

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge-funding model</th>
<th>What it is about</th>
<th>Main incentives to pay</th>
<th>Suitable type of knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1: Direct</td>
<td>“I want your knowledge and I can pay for it”</td>
<td>Need for knowledge</td>
<td>• Explicit but highly specialised, protected by intellectual property rights or difficult to find</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Implicit that requires lots of practice to acquire and/or highly specialised trainers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Implicit and its practice exposes the learner to dangerous situations or requires standardised equipment or safety conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2: Indirect</td>
<td>“I need more or better goods from you and I can pay for the knowledge you need to give me what I need”</td>
<td>Need for better quality or more volume of produce</td>
<td>The same as Model 1 but in this case, the knowledge funder does not need the knowledge; they need the goods or services that will be improved by the knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 3: Embedded</td>
<td>“If we make a deal, I’ll tell you something you need to know”</td>
<td>Need to create competitive advantages and differentiation from competitors</td>
<td>Explicit with low business value in itself but useful to increase the performance or value of the product/services exchanged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 4: Subsidised</td>
<td>“I will pay for the production and dissemination of knowledge because it is good for society”</td>
<td>Need to promote a political, developmental or moral agenda</td>
<td>Explicit or implicit. Works better when:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• The perceived business value of knowledge is low (e.g. primary education)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• When knowledge is highly qualified or standardised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 5: Sponsored</td>
<td>“I can pay for that knowledge but as long as my brand goes with it”</td>
<td>Need to create or expand brand recognition</td>
<td>Explicit or implicit: when the production, dissemination or adoption of knowledge creates a more receptive or friendly enabling environment, good reputation or recognition for the funder.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Engaging the right actors for dissemination of knowledge: the importance of the messenger:**

Market systems have great potential to spread resources and information, but this does not mean that they actually do; there are many factors that keep such potential unrealised. This section focuses on one of these factors: lack of participation of key actors.

According to traditional communication theory, for communication to take place, three things must be in place: a transmitter, a message and a recipient. This model works well when we are interested in the communication between two individuals. However, when our interest is communication of knowledge at scale, this model is insufficient.

For effective communication of useful knowledge to happen in ways that reach large numbers of marginalised actors, facilitators must keep in mind that the existence of capable communicators, well-crafted messages and keen and capable listeners is not enough. For knowledge to spread throughout the system, a mix of translators, connectors and opinion makers is also required.

In order to create a good mix of translators, opinion makers and connectors to spread knowledge, facilitators must be able to strike a balance between self-selection, group selection and strategic selection of market actors:

**Self-selection** is when actors decide on their own to participate in the PMSD process,

**Group selection** is when a group elects or appoints a representative to be part of the PMSD process and

**Strategic selection** is when the facilitator makes or influences the selection of market actors and “hooks” them into the PMSD process.

The facilitator should allow, prioritise and promote self-selection and group selection, but when the facilitator sees that key actors are still missing and that this will risk hampering the dissemination of knowledge throughout the system or make it sluggish, the facilitator must influence the process to make sure that the right mix of actors is there.
As mentioned in the “Basic Competencies for Engagement” section of *Step 4: Empowering Marginalised Actors*, effective communication processes that spread knowledge throughout the market system require three types of actors: *translators, connectors* and *opinion-makers*. This is true not only for effective communication within market opportunity groups but also between market opportunity groups and the people whom their represent, between the interest forums and the actors they are connected to, mass media, etc.

**Translators** are those actors who can take an idea or concept and convert it into something that can be understood by other actors (e.g. farmers and agricultural researchers, policy-makers or buyers). They build new meaning.

**Connectors** are actors who are very well connected to a large number and/or variety of market actors and who are prone to share their social capital with others (i.e. to invite them to connect). They build new connections.

**Opinion-makers** are actors whose opinions or behaviours can influence the choices, investments and attitudes of their peers or many other actors. They build new behaviour.

In practice, most people can display more than one of these abilities; however it can sometimes be difficult to find actors who are very strong in one of these areas, especially when they are acting outside of their comfort zone (i.e. interacting with unfamiliar actors). The crucial task here is to try to influence the process of selection and engagement of market actors to make sure that the three types of profiles are present in each segment or area of the system where the knowledge needs to flow.
**Action Point A – Understand the knowledge market system**

The purpose of this exercise is to plan and execute the facilitation of knowledge dissemination, and to establish where energies can best be focused.

To do this:

1. View knowledge as a “product” being produced, exchanged and consumed in the market system, and try to understand the connections and processes involved
2. “Zoom out” to view the system as a whole
3. Find out the actors, linkages and forces that exist in the knowledge market, and those that are missing.
4. Identify which actors, linkages and forces are enabling, promoting and hampering the production, dissemination and use of knowledge
5. Zoom back into those issues that you and the market actors see as critical for the production, dissemination and use of knowledge
6. Include those “knowledge-related” issues in your strategy and facilitation process as you would do with any other “market-related” issue.

**Step 2: Preliminary Market Mapping** can guide you in the preliminary mapping and analysis of knowledge if you see it as a product (just like rice, milk, or coffee) that is produced, transformed, transacted (see the five knowledge funding models above) and consumed or adapted (learned). This Step can also guide you to prioritise “knowledge actors” according to their influence and relevance (see the Influence-Relevance Matrix)
Section 4: Key PMSD spaces and groups for knowledge dissemination at scale

Market opportunity groups, interest forums and lead firms can play an important role in the processes of communications for uptake. Facilitators can leverage the potential that these groups have to amplify the outreach, influence and clarity of messages that can transform the wider market system.

Market opportunity groups

Market opportunity groups are fundamental for poverty reduction at scale and to increase the inclusiveness of the system. As discussed in Step 4: Empowering Marginalised Actors and Step 7: Participatory Planning, they are composed of democratically elected representatives of the marginalised market actors, who act as a bridge between wider groups of marginalised actors and key spaces like the participatory market mapping workshops, the interest forums and the interest forums’ working groups.

This means that the impact of the market opportunity groups increases with their ability to mobilise their constituencies to adopt new knowledge (e.g. business models, techniques or technologies) circulated or produced in spaces like the participatory market mapping workshops and interest forums.

Recommendations to boost the capacity of market opportunity groups to communicate for impact at scale:

- **Allow marginalised actors to elect their representatives** to the market opportunity groups. This increases the trust levels between them and enhances the ability of the market opportunity groups to influence their constituencies. However, make sure that the market opportunity group has a good mix of translators, connectors and opinion-makers (who can influence not only their peers but also other market actors if possible).

- **Meet between workshops (or regularly) with the members** of the market opportunity group to:
  - *Monitor how they are using the knowledge circulated* and produced in the workshops to mobilise their constituencies.
  - *Assist them to package and communicate effectively* the agreements, ideas, feedback or proposals from their constituencies into spaces like the interest forums
  - *Find opportunities to talk with their peers or constituencies* to do “satisfaction checks” (these can be formal or informal). Informal conversations can give you an idea of how well the market opportunity group members are managing to mobilise or listen to their peers. Be clear with the market opportunity groups that you will do this and how you plan to do it; ask them to give you ideas to improve the feedback process.

- **Be sensitive to power dynamics or imbalances** that can be created by the mere existence of the market opportunity group. By definition these groups are exclusive in the sense that only a few can participate and there are always risks of them becoming cliques or elites. These power imbalances can hamper the communication and mobilisation processes and therefore the scale of impact.
Examples from the field: Market opportunity groups in Bangladesh’s dairy market:

In the Dinajpur district approximately 90% of rural households rear cattle. Although more than 80% of the milk consumed in the district is produced by these households, productivity is very low (0.8-1 L per cow per day). Most of these producers are women who have suffered exploitation or abuse by other market actors, because they lack information about prices, required qualities and volumes, and available services in their region; they also lack information about the structure and dynamics of the regional market system.

Despite the fact that milk collection occurs at the farm gate, it is very irregular. In many occasions the milk goes off waiting for the collectors to arrive; carrying such small amounts of milk to the market is not profitable for farmers individually. After conversations and market mapping workshops with the farmers, the project team decided to facilitate the formation of market opportunity groups composed of women farmers who were keen to try out new ways of doing things to solve their problems.

The project team created spaces for the members of the market opportunity groups to learn about appropriate cattle rearing, hygienic milk production and negotiation skills. To solve the problem of small quantities of milk per producer, the team decided to introduce a new business model: instead of waiting at home for the collectors to arrive, these producers would bring their milk to one place at the same time to bulk it up. This created economies of scale and increased their bargaining power. A portion of the savings the collectors incurred by not having to collect door to door was shared with the producers; and the time saved allowed the collectors to serve more producers. Quality controls were introduced using a lactometer which increased the price paid to producers. The women started saving part of their extra income to acquire more productive cows and became regular clients of local input and service providers who in turn provided them with different types of knowledge embedded in their vaccination services, such as advice on how to improve the feed mix for their cows.

The members of the market opportunity group meet regularly to share ideas, and organise vaccination and de-worming campaigns. They also participate in a dairy interest forum promoted by the project team, and monitor milk prices at processor level. The latter increased the transparency of the transactions between them and the collectors.

These women now see dairy production as a proper business, and the voice is spreading: other marginalised producers (including men) who are not part of the market opportunity group are coming to the collection point to sell their produce too. Milk production practically doubled (to 1.75-2.0 L per cow per day), as did the number of cattle and the income of women dairy farmers.

Interest forums

The main characteristic of interest forums within the context of knowledge dissemination is diversity. These spaces include a wide range of public and private market actors who exchange between them a wide range of visions, opinions and experiences. As the process evolves, it is very common to see members of the interest forums taking new knowledge circulated or constructed in the market mapping workshops to other actors beyond the direct influence of the facilitator. Such actors can be subordinates, colleagues, peers or trusted friends upon which the members of the interest forum have a relatively high level of credibility and influence. In other words, interest forums take new knowledge from one point of the system to another.

Additional to the recommendations made in Step 7: Participatory Planning, facilitators can do two things to increase the dissemination of knowledge beyond their direct sphere of influence through the interest forums:
• When planning the forum’s meetings reflect about the actors who are influential and relevant in the production, transformation, transfer and use of knowledge (See the influence-relevance matrix in Step 2: Preliminary Market Mapping). You may not need to have all these actors participating from the very beginning or all the way, but you may need to inform them about evidence of success regarding particular issues that matter to them, or that matter to actors they can influence beyond the facilitator’s reach.

• Meet regularly with people who are involved in the PMSD process to get a better understanding of how they are using the knowledge they adopt during the workshops and meetings; explore with them ways to maximise the value of what they have learned (e.g. should they communicate with stakeholders that they have not thought about?)

Examples from the field: E-forums connecting the knowledge of different actors in fish market systems in Sri Lanka:

Prawn fishing is the main source of income for about 200 families living around Rekawa lagoon (Southern Sri Lanka) but productivity was decreasing over the last decade. This was mainly due to a negative factor in the Business Environment: a causeway across the lagoon built in 1984 was restricting the mixing of sea water with river water, required for prawn breeding. Several attempts were made by environmental activists, the fishermen and their Lagoon Management Authority to bring this issue to the attention of the authorities but to no avail. The fishers lacked confidence, organisational strength and scientific evidence to voice and back their problems to the relevant authorities.

The project team worked with the fishers to help them strengthen the Rekawa Lagoon Management Authority (RLMA) and get legal recognition from the authorities. This also helped the team to identify opinion-makers within the communities. The team worked with these opinion-makers to make sure they had the key concepts and basic capabilities to interact with other market actors and make sure their interests, problems and potentials were understood.

After doing market mapping workshops with the RLMA and other community leaders, the project team then organised an e-forum to create a space where fishers’ representatives (mostly RLMA leaders), fisheries scientists and environmentalists could interact. This e-forum had the following effects on the communication processes:

• The relationships between different types of actors created by this space exposed fishers to new knowledge, which they managed to understand with the help of other participants and the facilitators. They learnt that there was scientific evidence showing that prawn production was in fact decreasing and that the lagoon was in danger of being destroyed forever. The RLMA members went back to their communities and shared this knowledge with their peers in ways that they could understand it.

• The experts and environmentalists learned how to better communicate with fishers. The e-forum helped them to exercise their ability to interpret the reality of the fishers. This was a process of empowerment of well-off actors that was fundamental for them to influence policy-makers and the public in general.

• Repeated interactions built trust amongst these groups of actors and a sense of solidarity from the scientists and environmentalists towards the cause of the fishers.

After the e-forum gained momentum the project team attracted the media to give regional echo to the discussions happening in the e-forum. This “opened the eyes” of government officials to the problem and potential solutions.

This e-forum was essentially a virtual version of an interest forum. The Sri Lankan e-forum continued and is now comprised of 10 members with expertise in fisheries, environmental issues, and legal aspects with regard to
environmental protection. They have agreed on research priorities in the small scale fisheries sector in Sri Lanka and are working on papers to be presented at the influential Annual National Fisheries Dialogue Workshop.

Based on the evidence produced by the e-forum, the government released funds to construct a bridge that will allow free flow of water in and out of the lagoon. The Minister of Environment declared Rekawa as a ‘Special Sensitive Environment Area’, which gave the RLMA the right to supervise any activity within a 2 Km radius that may affect the lagoon. The Municipal Council has also taken measures to stop dumping of waste in the lagoon.

**Lead firms**

This section focuses on the role of lead firms as communicators of knowledge and drivers of learning throughout the market system. For more information on lead firms, see Step 7: Participatory Planning.

As mentioned in Step 7, lead firms are not defined by their size, but by their ability to connect or influence significant numbers of market actors. An exclusive focus on size can lead facilitators to miss important leverage points to improve systemic communication. To prevent this, it is useful to think about a spectrum of possibilities between very large and very small lead firms

*Figure 2: The communication potential for different sizes of lead firms*

It is also important for facilitators to keep in mind that the behaviour of lead firms (and many other market actors) can shift between coordination, collaboration and competition at different stages during the PMSD process. The following are recommendations that can help facilitators to leverage each type of behaviour to maximise the dissemination of knowledge across the system:

- **Coordination** is when actors do things on their own but determined by the actions of the others. Coordination is mainly based on timing. Firms can decide to launch products or communicate information at the same time following seasonal patterns like harvesting times or the outbreak of a disease. They can also accelerate or delay the launch of products or services to maximise visibility and profitability relative to their competitors.
Coordination can take place with or without a coordinator. Seasonal trends or policy signals can make a large number of firms behave in similar ways without even knowing each other. However, in some cases coordination requires some degree of collaboration. For example, different market actors pooling resources to pay for a coordinator.

**Examples:**

- Synchronisation or sequencing of messages to produce a larger effect or visibility. For example, facing the threat of an animal disease outbreak, one firm launches a vaccination campaign one week, and a competitor launches another campaign the following week in another location. Both firms know that they are using information about the movements of the disease provided by the government.

- Technical, social or market research undertaken in complementary or synergic issues to avoid replication of efforts. For example: one firm focuses research on a particular type of pest and the other one on a particular type of predator that can be used against the pest. They then share the results.

**Collaboration** takes place when firms decide to work together and invest time, expertise and/or funds to achieve their goals, solve problems, avoid threats or exploit opportunities that they would not be able to achieve, solve, avoid or exploit on their own.

**Examples:**

- Pooling of funds to access mass media (e.g. for information or educational campaigns), promote basic or applied research of hired or in-house experts to train their providers, etc.

- Pooling of expertise, such as consultants or in-house experts to train providers. Of special importance in PMSD is the training of marginalised producers who may be able to sell to these companies if they improved quality, quantity and reliability.

**Competition** takes place when firms try to capture scarce resources for themselves. These resources can be in the form of raw materials, knowledge, skills, market share, etc.

Competition can motivate firms to take risks or adopt new policies or practices they would not normally take in the absence of competitors.

Remember that explicit or implicit knowledge with high barriers to entry (e.g. sophisticated or capital intensive industrial processes, inventions that required high-tech or large investments in basic science, or skills that require special training) will normally create incentives for competition. Avoid trying to promote or push collaboration around this type of knowledge. Coordination may be possible as long as intellectual property or industrial secrets that generate competitive advantages are not at risk. Lead firms may be convinced (or even happy) to share the general aspects of innovative and successful business models, but may not be willing to share details about their back-end operations (e.g. how they manage their clients' database or financial processes, or how they process raw materials).
Examples:

- Competition of firms doing marketing campaigns of similar products or services creates repetition of ideas that can contribute to changes in behaviour of marginalised producers, consumers and other key market actors.

- Competing firms investing in training and loyalty-building programmes for marginalised producers to capture some or all of their produce.

Examples from the field: Lead firms motivating knowledge sharing and social organisation in Nepal

In Nepal there were around 3.5 million families that produced milk, yet only 400,000 of them sold it into formalised value chains. The rest produced milk for self-consumption and informal markets with low levels of productivity. However, unsatisfied demand created opportunities for marginalised farmers, such as those in Tanahu, western Nepal, where a large milk processing plant was struggling to meet even 10 per cent of its installed capacity. Before this opportunity could be exploited by the market actors, several problems in the market system had to be addressed, such as fodder shortages, animal health malpractice, weak transport infrastructure, and mistrust caused by violent conflicts.

The project team designed Participatory Market Mapping (PMM) workshops to improve their understanding of the market system. During the workshop, farmers and traders initially exchanged barbs about milk prices, but the facilitators were patient and refrained from too much interference. They found that the nature of the discussions took a positive turn when one of the milk processing firms began to discuss with farmer representatives how they could provide a chilled collection facility and veterinary services if the farmers became more organised.

"The bigger challenge was to come up with a workshop design that would create the space or environment for market actors to understand the issues, engage with each other to find a win-win solution and to move ahead with an action plan. This was easier said than done and required a lot of patience to stop ourselves from jumping in and finding a quick fix." (Deepak Khadka, former Practical Action Team Leader in Nepal).

The proposal of the processing firm was easily understood by the farmers. These farmers were members of the market opportunity groups, who went back to their peers with a very concrete and practical solution that responded directly to their needs and possibilities. The members of the market opportunity groups could easily explain it (translate it) to their peers, who started organising themselves to provide the required volumes of milk to acquire the refrigeration technology.