

Step 5: Engaging Key Actors

‘The Market Actors are compelled to join the process’

Summary

In *Step 5: Engaging Key Actors* you will find guidance about how to develop and implement a **strategy of engagement** to convince market actors to join the process of participatory market system development.

Don’t underestimate the importance of this step: market actors almost always have pre-existing prejudices and particular expectations about NGO-led initiatives and these will affect their willingness to take part in the activities you organise.

This step helps you to really understand the actors that you want to engage, devise ‘hooks’ based on their incentives to attract them, and find ways to **keep them interested** even when things are not going to plan.

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Section 1: Key actors

Identify key actors according to their influence and relevance to the intervention. What are the systemic issues that affect these actors?

Influence and relevance

In [Step 2: Preliminary Market Mapping and Analysis](#) you used market mapping to identify all the actors in the market system. Using the Influence-Relevance Matrix, you then categorised some of these actors as **key actors**: those whose leverage and influence over the system make them critical to engage into the PMSD process. This step provides guidance on how to make sure that these key actors in the market system are compelled to join the PMSD process.

As a reminder (repeated from *Step 2: Preliminary Market Mapping and Analysis*):

Key actors are the market actors who are highly relevant to the functioning of the market system, and/or have a high degree of power or influence to bring about change in the market system.

The term ‘actor’ can mean an individual, an organisation, a group or a company. A number of different individuals work within these organisations, and you must pay special attention to identify specific individuals you will want to reach out to for strategic reasons. Note also that in many situations an actor refers to a single individual who represents others like him/her formally or informally (e.g. an individual producer or trader).

The two dimensions that make some market actors key actors are **influence** and **relevance**:

- **Relevance** relates to how important a type of market actor is to the functioning of the system. Would the market’s performance suffer if these actors were not there? Would the functions that these market actors carry out be taken up by another group of actors, or would such functions cease to occur? If the market actors’ functions can be replaced by another group, how easily or quickly could this happen?

Warning: Be careful categorising actors that you have put onto the Market Map as “not relevant”. Market systems are complex, and unintended consequences of changes in the system are very common. A market actor that appears to be irrelevant might turn out to be supporting some functions of the system in ways that are difficult to detect. They could also be an unexpected catalyst or driver of change in a participatory market mapping or in other key events of the PMSD process. Keep an open mind.

- **Influence** of a market actor describes how capable an actor is to either change things directly or mobilise others to change. Influence can manifest in different ways. Some market actors, such as a government regulator, have explicit or direct power: a government regulator has the power to set a rule that affects every business in a sector across the country, and finance companies have the power to change their lending practices, which in turn affects how businesses operate. Other market actors have more invisible or indirect power. For example, a lead farmer or a small cooperative may not be able to produce significant change on their own, but their ideas or

practices may influence how many other peers think or act – which in itself can lead to structural changes.

Examples from the field – Attracting influential actors in Kenya’s charcoal market: The national energy consumption statistics in Kenya show that biomass is the most commonly consumed form of energy, and charcoal provides energy for 82% of urban and 34% of rural households (Wa Gathui, 2010). Due to a long history of political, environmental and legal issues surrounding its production, there were a number of gaps in the charcoal value chain that had yet to be addressed to enable the true sustainable commercialisation of the industry.

In November 2009, a participatory market mapping workshop was organised by Practical Action Consulting East Africa, to draw lessons on how sustainable charcoal production and marketing can be used to improve livelihoods and at the same time improve energy access in both rural and urban Kenya.

The issue of legality was key to the charcoal market at that time – although discussions were well underway to re-legalise charcoal production, police would give arbitrary fines to anyone carrying charcoal, and market actors had limited awareness of the policies and legislation. The underground culture that had built up around charcoal production continued, which led to exploitation and confusion over laws.

Practical Action knew at the beginning that the issue of harassment by officials, especially police during the transport of charcoal was a key issue to all market actors. They therefore made sure that the police were a part of that meeting. The police not only became some of the most active participants of the meeting, but other actors were also hooked as a result of knowing that they would be there.

The stakeholders worked together to come up with recommendations for improving the charcoal market and its supporting services. They also acted to establish demonstration farms highlighting sustainable production techniques and pushed for more efficient improved kilns to be adopted by charcoal producers.

Key actors and systemic issues

Under Action Point D in [Step 2: Preliminary Market Mapping and Analysis](#), you also identified systemic issues in the market system and considered which key actors were most affected by and involved with these issues. Systemic issues include blockages, opportunities and risks.

Definitions

Systemic blockages: A blockage, sometimes also referred to as a constraint or a bottleneck, is a situation or a process that hampers the ability of the market actors to make the market system work better (i.e. become more inclusive, efficient and productive).

Systemic opportunities: A moment in time or a combination of favourable circumstances that create an opening or leverage point that market actors can use to achieve their objectives and that would result in the market system becoming more inclusive, efficient and productive.

Systemic risks: Risks are the possibility of negative consequences of circumstances and events upon the efficiency, inclusiveness or productivity of the market system, or that may expose the market actors to dangerous situations, that can result from actions taken either by market actors or by yourself as a facilitator.

Our top lessons for engaging key actors

- **Gather information on the incentives and motivations of each actor** you want to engage, and design your invitations accordingly
- When inviting actors, remember that **almost anything can be a hook or a detractor**. Think about who delivers the message, who is hosting the meeting and so on
- **Build relationships first:** If the actors you want to engage understand your objectives and respect you, it will be much easier to get them involved
- **You will know you've prepared a great hook** when it feels that you are doing the market actor a favour by inviting them, not the other way around

Using the information from *Step 2*, you can now compile a list of the key actors in the market system and the systemic issues that affect them or that they are involved with. Follow the instructions in *Action Point A: Key actors and systemic issues* to complete this.

Action Point A – Key actors and systemic issues

Drawing on *Action Point C – Influence -Relevance Matrix* and *Action Point D – Identify systemic issues* in [Step 2: Preliminary Market Mapping and Analysis](#), draw up the following list of key actors in the market system.

This is the list of key actors that you will learn more about and develop engagement strategies for throughout the rest of this step. This table can help you to design your hooks and invitations to the key actors.

Key actors	What are the systemic blockages that affect them or that involve them?	What are the systemic opportunities that affect them or that involve them?	What are the systemic risks that affect them or that involve them?
Actor A			
Actor B			
Actor C			
[...] Actor Z			

Section 2: Understand incentives of key actors

Incentives of market actors are the reasons and driving forces behind their behaviour. In order to effectively engage with key actors and convince them to participate in the PMSD process, it is essential that you actively seek to understand these.

What you need to understand about key actors

In order to effectively engage with key actors in the market system, and convince them to participate in the PMSD process, it is essential that you know enough about them.

Incentives of market actors are the reasons and driving forces behind their behaviour. It is absolutely essential for facilitators to understand these incentives. With an understanding of the incentives of key actors, you can tailor your messages and signals strategically, attracting them to the PMSD process by communicating clearly how it will help them to achieve what they want and benefit them.

We find it helpful to unpack the idea of incentives of market actors into the following elements:

- **Interests:** What actors want or need to improve their business and livelihoods;
- **Motivations:** Positive and negative factors that affect the choices actors make;
- **Influences:** Influential actors who have an attracting or repelling effect on others, but who are not linked through formal hierarchies;
- **Drivers:** Individuals in the organisations you are trying to attract who are keen to join the process and drive change. These are the individuals that you should target.

Read on for more explanation about each of these elements, and ways to learn about the key actors' incentives. *Action Point B: Understanding key actors* provides a template to help you organise this information.

Interests

Interests are what market actors want or need to achieve (eg. to expand their market share, upgrade their processes or technologies, recover from a price fall or a natural disaster, attract government investment, increase their profit margin, or advocate for a policy change). Market actors make decisions based on their interests and take action to meet them. Sometimes interests are expressed in a formal manner, in the form of statements of purpose and a set of objectives and priorities. With other actors, needs and interest are not expressed explicitly and instead remain informal.

Interests also vary with time-frames. In other words, the immediate needs and interests of market actors are often different to their medium or long term interests. Furthermore the importance that market actors put on their immediate needs and interests compared to their longer term ones also varies from market actor to market actor.

The PMSD process helps market actors meet their interests, and when you understand what these specific interests are, you can attract market actors to engage with the process by making this clear to them. The PMSD process often contributes to medium to long-term needs and interests, sometimes at the expense of immediate ones. You may need to take care about how you communicate with market actors who put much more importance on their immediate needs and interests, as they may be detracted from engaging with the PMSD process if the immediate effort required is too high.

Motivations

Motivations are the factors that affect whether a market actor chooses to follow a particular strategy to achieve their needs and interests. These are often informal or implicit, and have a variety of roots; they could relate to financial, relational, personal, tactical or needs-based reasons. You may find it useful to consider two groups of motivations: those that are positive and lead the actor towards engaging, and those that are negative, which detract the actor from engaging.

Motivations are just as important as needs and interests. If you have not thought about the actor's motivations it is possible that you will fail to attract them to the PMSD process, even if the process will help them to meet their needs and interests. For example, you may communicate to a private company that the PMSD process will help build its supply chain linkages. However if the company is really squeezed on staff and/or they have had negative experiences with NGOs organising meetings that come to nothing, the company has strong motivations not to send anyone, or to send someone who has no decision-making power.

Examples from the field – Promoting hooks effectively in Nepal:

After sending out their invitations, the Nepal team realised in hindsight that offering market actors the opportunity to market and promote themselves at the workshop event would have acted as an additional hook. This would have conveyed the message that the workshop was a business opportunity, rather than being perceived as a waste of time involving fruitless discussions.

Influences

Under **influences**, we focus on market actors who have an influence upon other market actors. Most market actors are attracted to or deterred from events based on who they think will show up, who is convening the event, who is facilitating, who is chairing and so on. A powerful way of engaging key actors is to clearly signal that those who positively influence them will attend or even lead the process in some way. At the same time it may be advisable to tone down references to the market actors that you think will deter them.

Examples from the field – Communicating participatory market mapping workshops in Nepal:

The Nepal team was very careful when promoting the participatory workshops amongst private companies; rather than advertising them as 'pro-poor' events hosted by development NGOs, the team branded them as business-orientated supply chain upgrading workshops hosted by the respected Chitwan District Chamber of Commerce and Industry. As a result, the team were much more successful at attracting key private sector actors, who perceived the workshops as spaces to explore new business opportunities.

Drivers

Drivers refer to key individuals who are innovation leaders in the organisations that you are trying to bring to the table. You should explore who within the organisations that you are trying to engage with are forward thinkers and decision-makers. These are the people who have the strongest incentives to engage with the PMSD process and you should therefore target them and engage them carefully.

Table 1 and 2: Examples of interests, motivations and drivers in Nepal

Key Actor		Department of livestock services
Address	<i>[this should be filled in]</i>	
Background of organisation	<p><i>The Department of Livestock (DoL) has been going under a big restructuring process and a change of leadership. Big budget cuts will hamper the capacity of the DoL to deliver appropriate extension services to marginalised areas in the project areas. However, the new director, Mr. Sheshtra is very innovative and keen to build public-private partnerships and find innovative business models to compensate for these cuts.</i></p> <p><i>A problematic situation in parliament (division and tensions between two main parties) is distracting from developments in agriculture. Next year the environment will improve after local elections.</i></p>	
Key individuals in organisation	Forward thinking / visionary	<i>Permanent secretary at the Department</i>
	Influential or relevant	<i>Minister of Agriculture Permanent secretary at the Department District Livestock Officers</i>
Needs and interests	Shorter term	<i>Meet this year's targets for vaccination and de-worming</i>
	Medium term	<i>Reduce rate of nutrition related illness in cattle by 20 % Increase vaccination coverage to 50% in western province</i>
	Longer term	<i>Reach 100 % coverage of extension services in western province Reduce rate of nutrition related illness by 80 %</i>
Motivations	Reasons to engage	<i>Opportunity to connect with well-organised producers to meet this year's targets Raise awareness for vaccination and de-worming services</i>
	Reasons not to engage	<i>Lack of resources/personnel</i>
Influential actors over the organisation	Positive influences	<i>Implementing NGOs with good track record for effectiveness Feed companies with track record of investment</i>
	Negative influences	

Key Actor		Chicken feed developer, manufacturer & distributor
Address	<i>[this should be filled in]</i>	
Background of organisation	<i>Company has been a successful player in the market for the past 5 years. Their visionary manager pushes forward some strong social/ CSR policies, and they have shown a keen interest in expanding their customer base to poorer buyers. Their most recent annual report showed positive signs of growth.</i>	
Key individuals in organisation	Forward thinking / visionary	<i>Head of R&D, Operational manager for Western Province</i>
	Influential or relevant	<i>Head of R&D, and through him Executive Director</i>
Needs and interests	Shorter term	<i>Grow sales volume of existing product Grow customer base R&D in new products</i>
	Medium term	<i>Consolidate market share Increase customer loyalty Roll-out new product R&D in new sectors (e.g. cattle)</i>
	Longer term	<i>Become market leader in chicken feed sector Enter new sectors (e.g. Cattle)</i>
Motivations	Reasons to engage	<i>Opportunities to increase awareness for products Opportunity to increase smallholder customer base and sales Opportunity to access R&D finance for new products and sectors Not wanting competitors to take advantage of opportunities before them</i>
	Reasons not to engage	<i>Wariness of NGO-led 'development' initiative Existing research suggests serious barriers of entry to smallholder market Limited resources to engage</i>
Influential actors over the organisation	Positive influences	<i>Competitors: Not wanting to miss opportunities other take advantage of Chamber of Commerce and Industries: Representing a large potential customer base Processing companies: Opportunities for strategic partnerships</i>
	Negative influences	<i>NGOs: Past experience of unproductive partnerships</i>

How to learn about key actors

Because the incentives of market actors are intangible, finding about them requires detective work and reflection.

To start with, you can organise what you already know about the market actors. It is useful to work as a team at this point: different team members will know different things about the actors. Alongside what you know about the market actors, you will also have some hunches about them. You can include these, but make sure you highlight them so that you can check them with further investigation.

Here are some ideas for sources of information:

Information source	Remarks
Websites	Use company and government department / ministry website to find out about the external goals and objectives that they publicise. You may also find out about existing partnerships that are in place.
Other published material	These might be few and far between but don't ignore them completely.
Speak to a representative	If you are dealing with formal companies and organisations, it is the job of public relations or communications staff at the institution you are focusing on to deal with requests from the public. Try contacting them. Often however you will be trying to bring in organisations that have an informal structure and they may not have such well-defined roles. In these cases speak to whoever you can. The first person might not be able to help you, but may be able to refer you to someone else who can.
Use your network to talk to sector experts	You might be able to reach a sector expert within the organisation you are focusing on. They might be able to tell you 'insider information'. At the same time, experts outside the organisation might know a lot about them too. They won't have 'insider information' but they may know things that the organisation wouldn't tell you themselves.
Use coordination bodies and professional organisations	Local Chambers of Commerce and Industries might be useful. Also ask around within development sector 'communities of practice' such as the Market Facilitation Initiative (MaFI) or the Market Development Forum (MDF) in Bangladesh. They might happen to know a lot about the sector and context.
Third party research	If the sector of focus is a strategic one amongst other organisations, there may be a lot of research published about it with helpful information. Look for FAO, World Bank and UN publications, as well bilateral aid agencies.
Other sources	This is not an exhaustive list. You may be able to find many other options based on the context.

Rapid investigation methods

There are many different ways to collect information. Sometimes the best approach is to seek out key informants within the system or in the government; you can speak with them to access their knowledge and gain their perspectives. Other times it is appropriate to carry out desk-based research and read websites and reports produced by the actors you are trying to engage. You may also feel that you need to “triangulate” your information, and therefore seek perspectives through a number of different methods to get a broader picture.

Action Point B – Understanding key actors

Research in your team and fill this table out for each of the key actors. This can be updated and referred back to throughout their engagement.

Key Actor		Who is the market actor?
Address		
Background		Note down any relevant bits of information that come up in your research here. For example, have they had any recent successes or failures in the business? Does their political or personal environment have any effects on them that should be considered? What contact methods/times have you found to be most successful?
Systemic issues		What are the systemic issues that affect the actor or involve them?
Key individuals	Forward thinking / visionary	Who within that organisation is forward thinking and most likely to thinking that taking part in the process is a good idea?
	Influence or relevance	Who within that organisation has power and influence to lead the organisation to take on change?
Needs and interests	Shorter term	What are the actor's immediate and short term (3 to 6 months) interests?
	Medium term	What are the actor's medium term (6 months – 2 years) interests?
	Longer term	What are the actor's long term (2 year – 5 + years) interests?
Motivations	Reasons to engage	Why will the actor think that it is a good idea to be part of the PMSD process?
	Reasons not to engage	Why might the actor not want to be part of the process? What are the risks for them?
Influential actors	Positive influences	Whose participation will attract the actor to take part in the process?
	Negative influences	Whose participation will put the actor off taking part in the process?

Section 3: Engagement strategies

Communication is not only about what you say, it is also about whether someone listens

With a detailed understanding about the incentives that drive each of the key actors, you are well placed to devise a **strategy of engagement** to bring them into the PMSD process. A strategy of engagement has two parts:

- The communication message, or “**hook**” you use to attract key actors (this is covered in this section);
- The initiation of **relationships with key actors** so that you can communicate the hooks (this is covered in Section 4).

How should you measure achievement in communication? Is it about how many key messages you send out, or how many people listen and take on board what you have to say? Communication is like a football pass: it is not successful just because the first player kicks the ball; it is successful if the second player manages to receive and control the ball.

In the case of hooks for engaging key actors, effective communication should not be too difficult. If you have identified the hooks effectively, these should relate to issues of real importance and urgency for the key actors (their interests and needs). Using the football analogy: the actors will not only be able to receive and control the ball, but will be eager to do so.

How much effort?

The guidelines in this step are very comprehensive. They capture a combination of the practices we know work well. However we also know that in many situations you will not always have the resources and time to carry out all of the parts of this process in detail. If this is the case, follow these tips:

Top tips on hooking key actors

- **Familiarise yourself with the ideas in this step** and allow this to guide the time and resources that you have to deploy;
- **Concentrate your time and resources** on identifying hooks that really reflect what is important and urgent for the actors;
- **Look for common hooks.** Sometimes a common message will bring market actors from different backgrounds to the table;
- **Make every interaction count:** Think carefully about your ‘killer’ pitch.

Communicating hooks

Hooks are the messages you use to attract key actors to engage in the process of participatory market system development. As the process moves forward and it starts to benefit the actors you will find that

you need to spend less time crafting the messages to them. However, at the beginning of the process careful communication is absolutely essential. This is because some actors may have preconceptions about NGO-led initiatives that make them reluctant to take part at all or, on the contrary, take part for the wrong reasons (e.g. they may think that they will get subsidies or hand-outs).

Hooks are much more than just **what** the content of the message is. They are also about **how** the message is communicated and by **whom**, amongst many other factors.

It is not possible to give a full list of what you can take into account. This is context-specific and will depend on your time and resources. In principle, every element of every contact you have with the key actors can attract or detract them. In practice though, you will not be able to plan and rehearse every situation, but you should have a clear approach and be aware of the main success factors.

The factors you should think about to identify and prepare the hooks should at the very least include the following:

Recommended factors to consider when preparing hooks

- **The content:** What is the content of the message that will really attract the key actor?
- **Opportunities to communicate:** What situations and opportunities do you expect to have in which you can communicate the hook with the key actor? E.g. a workshop organised by a third party, or an out-of-work social situation
- **Other contact methods:** What opportunities can you create for yourself to communicate the message to the key actor? E.g. phone call, email, letter, setting up a meeting
- **The communicator:** Who would be the best person to communicate the message to the key actor? Remember that you can arrange for a third party to be the communicator
- **The recipient:** Who within that organisation should you target in particular? Use the analysis of 'key individuals' in Section 1 to help you here
- **Intensity/frequency:** Will it work better to communicate the message in a light-touch manner once and then leave it for a while, or would it be better to follow the actor up more intensively or frequently?

Initiating relationships

The hooks you identify should relate to issues of real importance and urgency for the key actors. This will mean that they are likely to respond to them and engage quickly. In some situations we have had experiences where even a good hook takes a few attempts at communicating before it is 'heard' or makes sense to the actor. This may be because you have not had the opportunity to speak to the right person in the organisation, or the message has been confusing or complicated. It is in these situations that this section is particularly helpful.

A straightforward way to establish relationships with the key actors is to reach out to them for information to strengthen the *preliminary* market map and analysis. You can even invite them to be part of the project design process. If you decide to follow this path, make sure that their expectations are managed, and no promises are made to them regardless of whether the project is selected for a grant.

Another way to establish a relationship is to look out for relevant workshops, conferences and round-tables organised by a third party. These are often good places to network. If you are on good terms with the organiser of the event, you may even be able to get hold of a list of registered participants. Often you will have the opportunity to meet more than one key actor at a big workshop. However, be aware about the kind of circles that actors are part of: private companies tend not to go to ‘development’ workshops, for example, but are much more likely to attend events organised by chambers of commerce and industry, and other business associations.

Examples from the field – Attracting influential actors in Nepal’s dairy market: In the initial stages of the Nepal Dairy “Market Access for Smallholder Farmers” (MASF) project, the Nepal team partnered with four local NGOs, one in each working district, which had already worked with the farmers and other market actors. When selecting the NGOs the team looked for partners who showed evidence of innovation, positive mentality towards change and learning as well as more traditional criteria of experience, effectiveness, efficiency and accountability. The team also sought and gained the support of the Chitwan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI). These partnerships were formed in the early stages of Nepal’s dairy programme, even before the project was designed or awarded funding. Practical Action sought considerable input from the partners in the design of what became the Dairy MASF project through a series of ‘write-shops’. Both Practical Action and the partners acknowledged that this process was incredibly important in achieving a strong sense of shared commitment and motivation towards the project.

It is also essential to keep in mind who the forward thinkers and decision makers are within the organisations that you are targeting. There may be little point spending a lot of time with a representative from an organisation who has just been sent to an event to fill a seat; instead focus your efforts on those who you perceive to be either highly influential over decisions made within the organisation or open to new ways of thinking. Note however that discovering the true strategic value of an individual within their organisation can be extremely difficult due to invisible or non-hierarchical relationships with influential colleagues.

Our recommendations for initiating and nurturing relationships

- **A ‘killer’ pitch and building relationships over time:** It is important to think about how you can make a lasting impression with minimal interaction. This is because in practice you will have limited time and resources to nurture a relationship. Think about your pitch: How do you establish your credibility as a facilitator? How can you show them quickly what you have to offer? How do you communicate this smartly?
- **At the same time, it is true that relationships develop over time and you may not be able to ‘hook’ the actor with a single interaction.** Don’t think that you’ve done your job because you have interacted with a key actor on one occasion. Especially if there is a long period of time between your initial contact and the time when you send out invitations for an activity, make sure you keep in contact. Send them an email to thank them for the initial interaction. Forward them relevant information that gets sent to you about the sector. But be careful not to over-do it.

Using invitations and event organisation to ensure participation

Make sure that you don't fail at the last hurdle. When it is time to organise the first activity which you want the key actors to attend, make sure that even the way that it is organised will attract them. The invitation itself can be an attractor or a detractor, so think about this too.

On the invitation, there is nothing stopping you from taking a different approach for each key actor, with a different message, specially formulated for them. When it comes to the event however, you will of course not be able to personalise it for individual actors. There are however still plenty of options available to you to make it appealing to all attendees, as discussed below and in *Action Point C*.

How can I personalise the invitation?

- **The message:** What personal message in the invitation will get the actor to come?
- **The contact method:** How should the message be communicated? E.g. a formal letter, an informal email, a personal phone call?
- **The communicator:** Who would be the best person to communicate the message to the key actor? Remember that you can arrange for a third party to be the communicator
- **The recipient:** Who within that organisation should you target in particular? Use the analysis of 'key individuals' in Section 1 to help you here

How can I hook key actors with the event organisation?

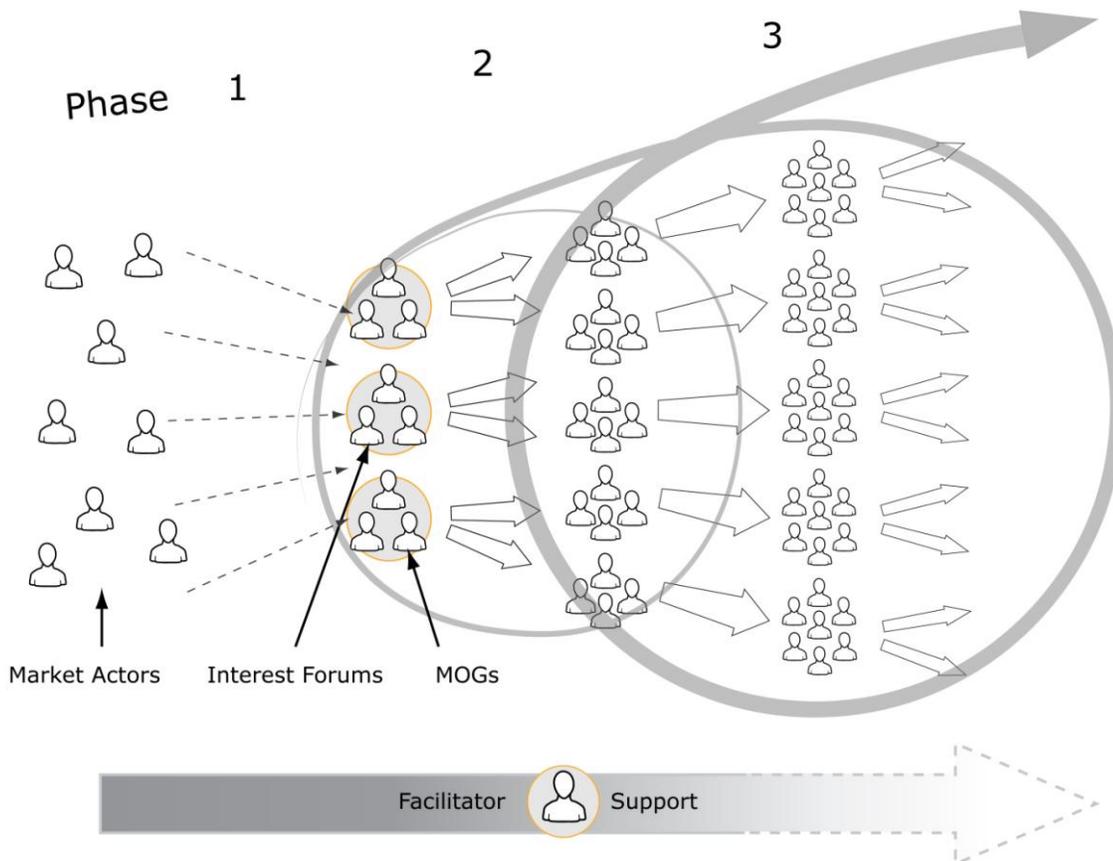
- **The title of the event:** What is a title that will attract everyone, or at least not detract anyone?
- **The host and location:** Where should the event be held to attract everyone, or at least not detract anyone?
- **The convener, facilitator and chair:** If necessary you can appoint a number of positions for the event, each one attracting a different set of key actors
- **Technical experts:** On occasion, you can invite technical experts to give presentations on topics that are relevant for actors who are showing little to no levels of engagement. Make sure you know in advance the core messages that the experts will bring to the group, and try to select the experts so that they cover the full range of the debate, especially in the case of controversial issues (This could be one expert who can present the full range of the debate, or two or more experts, each one presenting a particular point of view). If you have experts in the group, you could ask them to present to the rest of participants – but always make sure that the main, opposing aspects of the debate are discussed as openly and clearly as possible.
- **The date and timing:** Are there any issues to do with date or time that will influence whether key actors attend?

- **Cultural and gender issues:** there are issues connected to the facilitation of an event that are strongly influenced by cultural and gender issues such as **geographic location** (can women or marginalised farmer get there?), **physical infrastructure** (are there toilets and rooms appropriate for women? Are there facilities for people do their prayers?), **logistics** (do you need to cater for vegetarians? Will one or more translators be required? Should you have access to Wi-Fi or special telecommunication technology?). Plan for these in advance.

Engagement of key actors is an iterative process

Engaging market actors is an iterative process. With each iteration, a wider number of actors are engaged and the need for a facilitator decreases as the engagement progresses successfully.

Figure 1: The iterative nature of engaging key actors



Phase 1: Engagement of the key actors:

During the first phase of engaging key actors, there is a strong and direct contact between the facilitator and a wide range of actors, who belong to different types of formal and informal organisations or networks.

The role of the facilitator here is to “hook” these actors into the PMSD process – through their own organisations or networks, and also through new groups like the interest forums, market opportunity groups, working subgroups and task forces.

In this phase especially, finding the right hooks and using effective communication is a key part of building strong and trusting relationships.

Phase 2: Engagement of additional actors using evidence of change

In this phase, we rely upon our existing relationships with key actors, and the successes derived from these linkages to provide evidence to actors who have not yet engaged.

This phase is especially useful for hooking those actors who have been reluctant or unsure about the value of the process, and actors who look up to the actors who have already been engaging in the PMSD process.

Good hooks and good communication are also important in this phase; however it should be easier to hook the new actors as a result of the credibility built up from existing work and linkages.

Examples from the field – Using the awareness and expertise of engaged actors to engage others in Nepal

Anticipating the dynamics and issues inherent to the participatory workshops, the actors invited were selected carefully to create the right balance for the workshops. For example, the district Chamber of Commerce and Industry were selected for their facilitative nature, the program officer of the GTZ support office in Chitwan for their particular expertise and insights on relevant subjects, and the chairperson of the District Milk Cooperative Association for their influence on other market actors.

The project team worked with the partners and farmer representatives to think about whom or what would motivate different priority market actors to attend the workshops. Who should send the invitation as well as the content of the message were taken into account, and invitations were tailored for each set of market actors. Furthermore, questions as to where and when the workshop should take place were also taken into account.

Phase 3: Engaged market actors convince others to engage

In this phase, most of the efforts of the facilitator shift to providing guidance and support to the engaged market actors, both to raise awareness about the benefits of the PMSD process and to hook a wider audience.

Examples of guidance and support that the facilitator can provide include accompanying market actors during phone calls and meetings, and providing technical backstopping or background about the PMSD process during conversations with actors who have not engaged.

Action Point C: Identify hooks

Complete this table for each key actor to help you to identify hooks to attract them.

Key Actor	Who is the market actor?
The content	<i>What content can you include in the message that will really attract the key actor?</i>
Opportunities to communicate	<i>What situations and networking opportunities do you expect to come about for you to effectively communicate the hook with the key actor? E.g. a workshop organised by a third party, an out-of-work social situation</i>
Other contact methods	<i>What other opportunities can you create for yourself to effectively communicate the message to the key actor? E.g. phone call, email, letter, setting up a meeting</i>
The communicator	<i>Who would be the best person to communicate the message to the key actor? Remember you can arrange for a third party to be the communicator</i>
The recipient	<i>Who within that organisation should you target in particular? Use the analysis of 'key individuals' in Section 1 to help you here</i>
Pressure	<i>Will it work better to communicate the message in a light-touch manner once and then leave it, or would it be better to take a high-pressure approach of connecting on a regular basis?</i>