

Deep Dive

Zambian Business in Development Facility (ZBiDF)

Thom Sprenger, Andrew Kambobe & Joost Guijt



Evidence for MS Platforms

enhancing the effectiveness of
multi-stakeholder platforms in agrifood

Contents

1. Introduction	3
Background to the research program	
Background to the deep dive	
2. Platform Overview	5
Platform evolution	
3. Theory of Change	8
4. Available evidence	11
Evidence collected by the platform	
5. Contribution story	13
Alignment to impact	
Outputs, results, and the casual link assumptions	
6. Learning and recommendations	22
Trajectory towards system transformation	
7. Conclusions	25
8. Colophon	26

1

Introduction

Background to the research program

This deep dive to support the Zambian Business in Development Facility to assess its effectiveness was carried out as part of a two-year action research program. The ‘Evidence for Multistakeholder Platforms’ program reflects on how effectively MSPs contribute to sustainable solutions to agrifood issues, and to identifying more appropriate approaches for assessing this effectiveness.

Deep dives were the second of three steps in the research program:

- 1. Structured scans:** mapping and categorizing the universe of MSPs and the connections between MSPs.
- 2. Deep dives:** working with selected MSPs to research how a platform’s intentions are reflected in its activities, leading through direct and indirect outcomes to its impact, taking into account the platform’s theory of change.
- 3. Designing an assessment process:** developing a generic, MSP-appropriate approach to assessing effectiveness.

The purpose of each deep dive is to explore the reality for each MSP of assessing and communicating its own effectiveness, and to consider how more appropriate approaches can be developed. Four deep dives working with MSPs at different scales, with different purposes, and at different stages of maturity have made it possible to identify the common need to demonstrate effectiveness and common lessons about how change is being achieved. The background to the research program is the increasing effort over the past 10–15 years that has gone into collaborative action through MSPs to tackle the complex challenges that the food and agriculture sector faces. There is a matching need to say something about how these platforms contribute to inclusive and sustainable development, and to design better means of assessing a platform’s effectiveness.

We hope with this work to:

- help platforms credibly assess their contribution, leading to their improved effectiveness;
- identify appropriate and plausible evidence and new approaches to assessing the effectiveness of MSPs;
- support decision-makers with choices on strategic support for MSPs.

More on our methodology and initial findings from our quick scans can be found on our website: <http://msplatforms.org/>

Background to the deep dive

This collaborative ‘deep dive’ between the Zambian Business in Development Facility (ZBiDF) and the Partnering Initiative (TPI) started in September 2017, with the aim of reaching a better understanding of how the facility has created value in its main goal of reducing poverty by establishing and supporting partnerships with businesses that contribute significantly to Zambia’s development goals. The deep dive zoomed in to the setting up and progress of one of the sector partnerships—namely, the Cassava to Flour Partnership.

The ZBiDF platform was created in 2013 to systematically catalyse private sector led cross sector partnerships that yield both business and developmental benefits, creating a safe space for multi-stakeholder collaboration as well as stimulating innovation. In 2014, the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), through its Embassy in Zambia, gave a boost to the platform’s activities by providing funding for ZBiDF’s core supporting activities and setting up a small support team of partnership brokers.

The activities of the ZBiDF team are currently dormant after the extended pilot phase, and the team is awaiting decisions of the key platform stakeholders and funders on how to continue. While there is broad agreement that the ZBiDF reached some of its main (intermediate) results, stakeholders have different perspectives on the contribution of the ZBiDF activities, and thus different expectations of the way forward.

The document is structured as follows:

- **Platform overview** – basic information regarding ZBiDF and its evolution.
- **Theory of change** – what is the change ZBiDF aspires to, and how are platform’s activities intended to support this change?
- **Available evidence** – information on the evidence and data collected so far
- **Contribution story** – what results have been observed so far, and what has contributed to them?
- **Learning and recommendations** – what have we learned about ZBiDF’s contribution to engaging the private sector in reaching its development goals and the lessons learned from the perspective of the Cassava to Flour Partnership—and what does this mean for the future of ZBiDF?
- **Conclusion** – a summary of the findings of this deep dive

This deep dive research has supported key stakeholders in clarifying different perspectives on the platform’s value creation, gathering evidence on effectiveness and drawing lessons for the results framework (theory of change and the monitoring and evaluation system) of this type of public–private development partnership.

2

Platform Overview

The ZBIDF multistakeholder platform seeks to establish cross-sector partnerships to encourage businesses to invest in initiatives that not only have business value but also contribute to reaching the social and economic development goals in Zambia.

The approach of ZBIDF is to broker partnerships between businesses, government, CSOs, and donors. In these ZBIDF partnerships, the primary focus is the long-term development goals—such as reducing poverty and improving the quality of life for marginalized communities. These brokering activities include match-making, coaching, and assisting partners in reaching agreement on a specific partnership. Later stages involve identifying and mobilizing resources, supporting partners in setting up governance structures, agreeing on benchmarks, and so on. The partnerships are in turn expected to contribute to business and development outcomes as well as poverty reduction through the projects they implement.

The ZBIDF was **initiated** as a platform in 2013 by stakeholders led by the Zambian government, donors, and business and operated a facility from 2014 to September 2017 with SIDA funding.

Its sector focus is to establish business partnerships primarily in agriculture, manufacturing, and mining.

Participating in ZBiDF platform are champions from business, government, donors, and civil society in Zambia, including the Zambian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Zambia Association of Manufacturers, Musika Zambia, UNDP, USAID, IFC and SIDA.

The platform's **funders** have mainly been the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) through the Swedish Embassy in Lusaka. SIDA funded the ZBIDF backbone organization as a proof of concept to examine the value of cross-sector partnerships as catalysts encouraging business to directly or indirectly invest in Zambia's development goals.

As for **governance**, ZBIDF was hosted by the African Management Services Company (AMSCO) during the pilot phase under the auspices of a Champions and Advisory Group (CAG), which consists of influential stakeholders from Zambia's cross-sector environment, including the Zambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Zambia Association of Manufacturers, the Private Sector Development Industrialization and Job Creation Office (PSDJIC) - Cabinet Office, the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry, the Zambia Development Agency, The Partnering Initiative and internal donor organizations. The Partnership Initiative (TPI) was subcontracted by AMSCO to provide capacity building services and mentoring and coaching for the ZBIDF team.

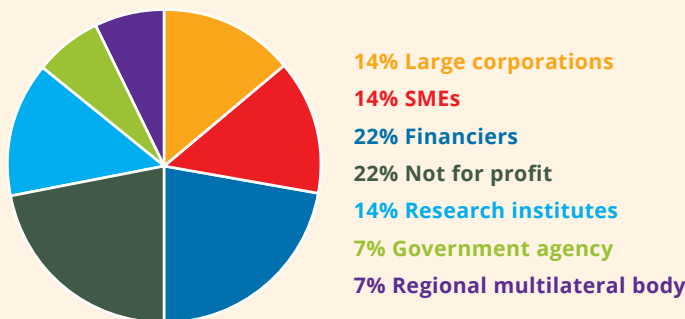
The ZBIDF team during the pilot consisted of a national coordinator and three partnership brokers (agriculture, mining and manufacturing). The team implemented the ZBIDF strategy, identified cross-sector partnerships, provides partnership development and support, and conducted monitoring and evaluation under the tutelage of TPI

ZBiDF is part of an international network of partnership hubs that is being developed and supported by Businesses Partnership Action (BPA).

The Cassava to Flour Partnership (C2F)

The aim of the Cassava to Flour Partnership is to create employment and reduce poverty by increasing production and processing of cassava, while adding value to the crop. The partners range from research institutions to end users, and it is envisaged that jobs will be created along the value chain, improving the livelihoods of people:

- Scoping started in 2014, and the partnership agreement was signed in 2016.
- Twenty-two organisations participated in the sector dialogue process, of which eleven businesses and organizations signed the agreement, which was championed by Premiercon Starch Company Limited and the Zambian Breweries Plc..



During a scoping study for ZBIDF, the following elements were identified as hampering multistakeholder cooperation:

- Even though economic conditions in Zambia are improving, the distribution of wealth is uneven, with many areas in poverty. Particularly affected are rural areas, due to poor infrastructure, subsistence farming, low employment, poor skills, and low productivity.
- The poor have inadequate knowledge and awareness of their rights concerning displacement from land due to mining and agricultural activities, creating greater poverty and hardship.
- There is a lack of coordination between sectors (government, NGOs, donors, and business) to make the most of the available resources to efficiently achieve the development goals.
- The cost of doing business is high due to inefficient bureaucracy, poor services, and fragmentation of service delivery.
- The local labour force does not have the skills or training to meet the needs of industry and manufacturing. The education and vocational training curricula are not producing suitably qualified workers, forcing business to seek skilled workers from outside of the country.
- The private sector is not explicitly focused on achieving development goals. However, in collaboration with other stakeholders, it could mobilize resources that would enhance business value while addressing development goals.

To address these issues, it was deemed necessary for all sectors to work together towards a common vision in a coordinated way.

Platform evolution

ZBiDF was launched in 2014 as a multistakeholder platform that brings together key public and private stakeholders in Zambia. With SIDA stepping in as a funder, a small support team consisting of a programme manager and three brokers was established to focus on identifying and establishing six partnerships in three sectors. After the ZBiDF team was set up, the platform moved from this foundational stage to implementation. After the extended pilot phase, in September 2017, while awaiting decisions on further funding, the facilitation work of the ZBiDF team stopped, though the implementation of the three key partnerships continued. Only when an agreement has been reached with the original members on an approach to further establishing the ZBiDF platform will it move into its next phase.

The Cassava to Starch Partnership is in the implementation stage of its life cycle, having started as recently as 2017.

3

Theory of Change

At ZBiDF's inception in 2014, a fairly elaborate theory of change and platform logic described the conceptual model of how ZBiDF will achieve its development goals through a results chain based on a set of assumptions. The framework was prepared by a consultant assigned by the funding agency (SIDA), based on interviews with the primary stakeholders. The implementing partner (AMSCO) was contracted after the project design was agreed.

The programme assumed, for instance, that the potential exists for these cross-sector partnerships, but that the current environment prevents them from being successfully formed, from contributing to the development goals, and from attaining sustainability. The barriers and challenges identified during inception included a lack of trust between sectors and 'cultural silos', weak cross-sector dialogue, a lack of facilitation and coordination, and a challenging business environment leading to difficulties in both partnership identification and implementation.

Central to the logic model has been the theory that the private sector in Zambia could make positive contributions to Zambia's development goals through cross-sector collaboration while also creating business value. If ZBiDF were able to raise awareness of the opportunities, by means of targeted brokering services or other awareness-raising approaches, then business and other partners would be able to seek out these opportunities and explore options with other potential partners, with the aim of leveraging more significant value. Initially, ZBiDF was not specific in defining potential business value, except as a list of possible elements including revenue growth, cost savings, access to capital, risk management, human capital, brand and reputation, and improved environmental and social processes.

ZBiDF has three specific objectives:

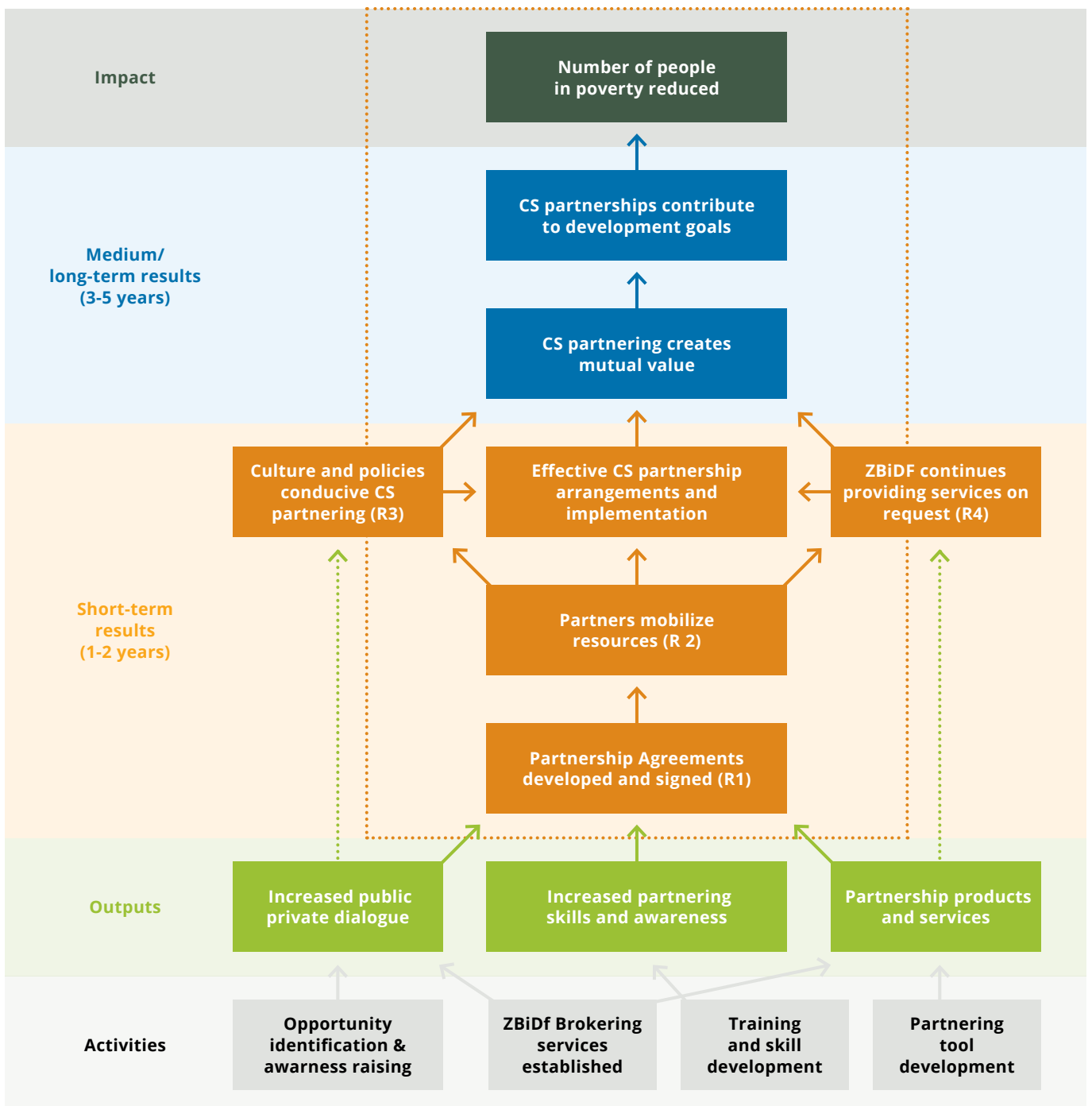
- 1. To develop a conducive partnering culture** by creating awareness of the private sector's role in development; facilitating cross-sector dialogue, building the capacity for effective partnering, and accelerating favourable policies.
- 2. To establish high-impact cross-sector partnerships** through providing tailored backbone support and facilitation.
- 3. To establish ZBiDF as a sustainable social enterprise** that continues to support partnership development and management through fees for services. It will also contribute to learning and innovation in partnering with the private sector to advance development goals.

ZBiDF's intended approach to achieving transformative change in public-private collaboration is set out in its theory of change, which shows the cause-and-effect logic of how ZBiDF's activities will result in the desired impacts. The programme's assistance in building trust between partners, creating a culture conducive to partnering, and providing access to a range of partnering skills, tools and techniques leads partnerships to form and strategize ways of contributing to the development goals (including by mobilizing resources).

3

ZBiDF's partners identified the main barriers and challenges to establishing cross-sector partnerships in Zambia and seek to create an environment and provide tools to overcome them. These barriers and challenges are:

- The lack of trust between sectors and the existence of 'cultural silos'
- Weak cross-sector dialogue, facilitation, and coordination
- A challenging business environment
- Difficulties in partnership identification
- Difficulties in partnership management.



Parallel with the ToC, the ZBIDF results framework has been developed—this is a logic model and a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) matrix, including a detailed set of progress indicators. As the ToC has not been updated since the project’s inception, the research team has proposed an updated ‘working’ ToC as the basis for assessing contributions and effectiveness.

The working ToC shows how the platform’s current opportunity identification and matchmaking (such as the innovation lab series) contributes to an improved cross sectoral dialogue, ultimately leading to a more conducive partnering environment. These activities then provide opportunities to identify and form cross-sector partnerships; coupled with ZBiDF’s continued partnership brokering services and partnering skills development, these give rise to more capacitated partners. These elements together create a framework supporting the successful development and implementation of cross-sector collaboration, delivering the desired impact of reducing the number of people living in poverty in Zambia.

Both the original and the updated ToC’s combine two closely interacting pathways. The first of these is ZBIDF’s role in launching cross-sector partnerships with a potential development impact while at the same time also contributing to developing a so-called conducive partnering environment in Zambia. The other pathway starts when a sector partnership agreement has been signed and the partners take on the responsibility of developing further and implementing a successful partnership (see the red dotted box in the ToC). Crucial steps in this last pathway are partners providing resources to manage and expand the partnership, and agreeing on an effective partnership arrangement. The updated ToC expresses these two pathways more prominently. It is worth realizing that the original ToC indicates the signing of sector partnership agreements as an output. Consequently, the timeline for the short-term, intermediate, and long-term results stages only began after this.

ZBIDF has not developed a separate results framework (ToC, log frame, performance indicators) for the Cassava to Flour Partnerships.

4

Available evidence

This section reviews ZBiDF's approach to collecting evidence relevant to understanding the platform's results and contribution.

Evidence collected by the platform

The summary table of the original M&E framework includes a description of what success means at the various stages of achieving results and impact, as well as suggestions on what needs to be monitored and what needs to be evaluated in general terms. This includes a list of 29 key performance indicators, categorized according to the time expected to achieve them. Shorter-term indicators were scheduled to be assessed in the first two years of the project, medium-term indicators in three to five years, and longer-term indicators beyond five years.

As described in the results framework, ZBiDF relies on the following sources of information to support the M&E indicators and address the decision-making needs of stakeholders:

- **MSCO and ZBiDF management documentation:** ZBiDF prepared regular (starting every quarter) progress reports and annual plans, including regular staff activity reports to track progress, issues, lessons learned, and emerging risks.
- **Broker Journals:** Each broker was required to maintain a written journal of events, meetings, tools used, observations, lessons, risks, and other notes on partnerships.
- **Partnership reporting and self-assessment:** Brokers prepared partnership progress reports based on partnership self-assessments (partnership scorecards), health checks, and focus-group discussions and interviews to triangulate evidence. It was anticipated that these would be conducted, where agreed in the partnership agreement, at 3, 6, 12, and 24 months after the signing of the partnership agreement.
- **The last two tools** were used to collect results and impact data from the private sector actors in the established partnerships.

The additional ZBiDF in-depth case studies and the independent evaluations also described in the original results framework were never executed, mainly due to team capacity reasons. After the first year of operations (September 2015), the ZBiDF implementing agency (AMSCO) commissioned an 'M&E rapid review', which concluded that the results framework was seen as highly complex and placed a significant additional burden on the ZBiDF brokers who would be required to complete the M&E tools and perform basic analysis.

It was decided to produce a simpler, more manageable framework and a set of monitoring tools for the brokers, giving more prominence to the three core goals of the pilot, ensuring that the timeframes of the monitoring framework were aligned to the duration of the ZBiDF pilot project. This streamlined performance matrix includes eleven indicators that are tracked for each of the three signed partnerships.

4

For a variety of reasons, the agreed monitoring tools were not consistently utilized, resulting in evidence gaps in some cases or no data at all in others. The data that have been collected so far have not been processed or analysed. The available quantitative data were mainly on the level of outputs (agreements signed, meetings held, people trained, number of partners engaged etc.).

The ZBiDF broker journals and monthly reports were the most valuable sources of qualitative information for this deep dive. Identification of the changes in how the actors are working together—including perspectives on what was contributed to a conducive environment—was mainly based on stakeholder interviews.

Developing the ZBiDF contribution story included the following steps:

- Review existing documents—mainly weekly broker journals and monthly reports, minutes of meetings, workshop reports. The broker journals and monthly ZBiDF reports were the most valuable sources of information for this deep dive.
- One-on-one interviews with key stakeholder to define foreseen and unforeseen results and to define key assumptions that link the different levels of the ToC.
- Articulate ZBiDF's updated theory of change, including the main assumptions.
- Compile the evidence that has been collected and develop a ZBiDF contribution story.
- Identify other evidence that is available and desirable.

5

Contribution story

The contribution story describes the linkages between the different levels in the theory of change and seeks to understand the contribution of ZBiDF and the Cassava to Flour Platform to the overall goals. In this case, we are talking about a two-stage process; providing evidence and a line of reasoning to understand how ZBiDF catalyses successful cross-sectoral partnerships and to describe the contribution of specific cross-sector partnerships to a ‘changed’ (conducive) partnering environment—and ultimately to the development goals in Zambia. In the case of ZBiDF, where the work of the broker’s team has been on hold since 2017, the contribution story can support the stakeholders in developing shared language to describe the added value of the different ZBiDF activities and what this should mean for the future.

At the end of the pilot phase, it was anticipated that ZBiDF would demonstrate progress towards the following results:

- A total of six partnerships agreements would be signed (two per sector), of which at least three (one per sector) would have actively started implementation.
- The three active cross-sector partnerships in manufacturing, agriculture, and mining would have begun mobilizing resources towards achieving the agreed partnership objectives and development goals.
- There would be an increased awareness across sectors of the value of establishing cross-sector partnerships, and the demand for partnering services through ZBiDF would increase.
- ZBiDF would demonstrate the potential to be a sustainable social enterprise through its growing and diverse client base and revenue stream.

This section describes the contribution story for ZBiDF and the Cassava to Flour partnership. The focus of the story is on understanding the value added by ZBiDF’s activities in launching and facilitating the Cassava to Flour partnership, identifying the cause-and-effect linkages of the activities improving the ‘partnering’ culture in Zambia.

ZBiDF contribution story

ZBiDF engages business, facilitates cross-sector dialogue, and provides brokering support to private sector led action in overcoming business and development challenges. Together with developing partnering skill and capacity, this promotes a conducive environment for multistakeholder collaboration in Zambia. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) funded this facility from 2013 to 2017 as a ‘proof of concept or pilot’ to examine the value of cross-sector partnerships as catalysts to encourage business to invest directly or indirectly in the Zambian development goals. The pilot approach also

included a demonstration of the potential of establishing ZBiDF as an independent entity, providing professional services on request.

In the first year, ZBiDF selected, trained and coached three partnership brokers, each working in a different sector. In the first half of 2015, the ZBiDF brokers reported their first concrete brokering activities in their sectors, including initial engagement and mapping of stakeholders, agreement on the approach to prioritizing opportunities, developing supporting sector documentation, and organizing stakeholder meetings. More than thirty representatives of interested stakeholder organizations were trained in two Essential Skill Training Workshops. Half of the trainees came from the private sector, one-

third from civil society, and the rest from donor organizations. There was no information available on what was put into practice after the training workshops.

Organizing the Innovation Series for Job Creation was instrumental to establishing the signed partnership agreements. This series was organized on the request of (and with the funding of) the Zambian Government under the auspices of its Industrialization and Job Creation Office within the Cabinet Office. The series included four sector-specific stakeholder consultations and a national prioritization meeting (involving more than 60 organizations) that identified nine potential partnerships. For each of the nine recognized partnerships, at least one champion was asked to lead the process of further design and scope. On-going brokering support for the proposed partnerships was provided at the national meetings by ZBiDF to develop the partnership ideas further and to confirm details, resources, and capacity to implement the partnerships, culminating in the drafting of a partnering agreement. Numerous partnerships meetings were held to achieve this end.

As a result, three partnership agreements have been signed, all of which are still functioning a year after the pilot period. These agreements include the Cassava to Flour Partnership, the Consortium of Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Producers Partnership, and the National Skills Development Partnership. Most of the partnerships included seven or more partners, while the Cassava to Starch partnership consists of thirteen partners.

The process that has led to the establishment of the Cassava to Flour Partnership has been reconstructed from the brokering journals, minutes of meetings and interviews.

ZBiDf facilitated the development of the Cassava to Flour Partnership concept notion to further engender buy-in in the partnership idea and also to promote the process of negotiation for the partnership agreement, which included resource commitments proposed by stakeholders, an implementation plan, as well as governance structures for the partnership. The ZBiDF broker carried out five initial engagement efforts with key stakeholders, which culminated into the first stakeholder meeting being facilitated by ZBiDF on 18 November 2015. It was at this first stakeholder meeting that the partnership roles and contributions were clarified and a shared vision was agreed on—namely, to “reduce poverty through increasing employment by increasing cassava production and processing”.

The Cassava to Flour Partnership was signed in May 2016 by 13 stakeholders, consisting of large corporations such as Zambian Breweries, not-for-profits like Musika, as well as financiers like the Citizens’ Economic Empowerment Commission (CEEC), AgDeVcO, and the Development Bank of Zambia. The Premiercon Starch Company, based in Lusaka, championed the partnership. In an early stage of involvement by ZBiDF’s brokers, a key champion for collaboration in the cassava sector reported the struggle to coalesce the disparate actors around any issue in the sector in order to create the change necessary for growth. In his view, they were ‘hesitant or wavering in their commitment to the cassava initiative, signifying an urgent need for brokering support’. This changed when ZBiDF became involved.

Without ZBiDF's support and resources, it is difficult to imagine companies like Premiercon and Zambian Breweries bringing stakeholders together, beginning with the painstaking initial stakeholder engagement in the sector. They may not have been able to work with everyone to single out a common issue as a partnership opportunity, or to negotiate the partnership agreement for a mutually beneficial Cassava to Starch Partnership. Several stakeholders have specifically mentioned that dissolving the ZBiDF team affected partnership progress, due to the loss of ZBiDF's resources.

The facilitation of dialogue, tool development training, and brokering services all contributed to what is called a conducive environment for cross-sector partnering. The signed agreements and ongoing collaboration in the three sector partnerships are supporting evidence that progress has been made. The Zambian Government has embraced the promotion of cross-sector partnering in its Seventh National Development Plan (7NDP), as an approach to creating jobs and boosting industrialization (GRZ 7NDP, 2017). This was as a result of the successful initial innovation series conducted by ZBiDF at the behest of the PSDIJC Cabinet Office, which yielded three high impact partnerships including the Cassava to Starch Partnership

The National Coordinator of the PSDIJC at Cabinet Office describes engendering 'mutually accountable public-private dialogue' as one of the advantages of multistakeholder partnerships. In the partnership, the private sector showed that it could take responsibility for following up on agreed actions, instead of its usual habit of formulating a wish list for government action. According to the National Coordinator, his division now realizes the need to involve outside stakeholders in the government system and the vital role of multistakeholder partnership as a practical approach to more effectively implementing a government programme. This is different from the regular practice, where the public sector automatically takes the lead in developing and implementing the programmes, with limited interaction with main actors. He also pointed out that other government ministries are now more open to this kind of collaboration, as evidenced by the involvement of the Ministry of Agriculture in the revision of the Cassava National Strategy. Also, private sector interviewees referred to the fact that they valued how the collaboration challenged them to put forward a concrete proposal for action, instead of merely preparing a to-do list for other (mostly governmental) organizations.

Enabling environment to alignment

The Cassava to Starch Partnership is playing a significant role in sector coordination. The Cassava to Starch Partnerships brought all stakeholders together to share challenges and experiences, giving impetus to the revision of the Cassava National Strategy, which had neither been implemented nor reviewed before the partnership. ZBiDF gave an essential push through funding this review process, which also considered new actors and how to align implementation. It was agreed that the strategy should focus on feedstock requirements for off-takers like brewers, biofuel manufacturers, and the mines. It also provides a platform to build relationships and develop the sector. Zambian Breweries has set up a ZMW 5 million cassava processing plant and attracted a loan based on the partnership agreement. The company has said it would not have invested in the processing plant without support from the partnership to strengthen the supply chain as the company

sources cassava as raw material (starch) for their Eagle Beer. Once in the partnership, Zambian Breweries developed relationships with producers and were able to establish a sourcing operation in Luapula Province, which is now purchasing cassava chips from up to 3000 farmers, just two years after commencing the buying operation. Through the partnership Zambian Breweries was also able to provide information to the farmers regarding the demand for new and improved cassava varieties (older varieties which have higher fibre content tend to clog up the processing machines). According to Zambian Breweries, they had earlier tried to engage the cassava industry by relying on a third-party consultant from the UK with little local knowledge and networks.

Premiercon also mentioned significant support from many stakeholders in the partnership—for example, support in mobilizing farmers from the Cooperatives department of the Ministry of Commerce, Trade, and Industry (MCTI). The Citizen Economic Empowerment Commission (CEEC), through the diversification programme of the Africa Development Bank (AfDB), awarded Premiercon a loan of ZMW 4.45 million (USD 445,000, in 2016) for a plant and its housing, with the remainder going to financing inputs.

It is less clear whether and how these activities have contributed to the anticipated longer-term change in the way private and public partners are collaborating. Is there any evidence that the different stakeholders see mutual value in establishing these partnerships, or even overcoming the lack of trust between sectors? There are some qualitative indications that public and private partners are more open to working together. According to the Zambian Government, multistakeholder partnerships have over the last 3–4 years been embraced as a practical approach to implementing the government’s job creation strategy, including the fact that the Seventh National Development Plan explicitly mentions promotion of cross-sector partnerships, as a ‘strategy and programme for creating jobs as well as boosting industrialization’. The government representative particularly valued the emerging, mutually accountable cross-sector dialogue inherent in multistakeholder partnerships, with the emphasis on equity as well as mutual benefit. An interviewee from the private sector described the set of stakeholder meetings as “the most constructive approach to private and public sector engagement we have seen in this country, where every stakeholder is expected to contribute actively and not just to offer a list of things for government to address”.

Alignment to impact

While it seems safe to conclude that the activities of ZBiDF have contributed to the establishment and start-up of at least these three cross-sector partnerships, it is too early to say whether these partnerships are on track to contribute to development goals in Zambia. There are many other (often donor-funded) private sector initiatives implemented in the selected sectors, directly and indirectly contributing to the same goals. Different interviewees, especially from the donor community, expressed that these more ‘technical’ sector projects are more effective when combined with the skill-focused brokering services provided by ZBiDF.

By organizing the Innovation Series for Job Creation, the expectation was that over 200,000 jobs would be created, but we were unable to verify claims of job creation (beyond of the scope of this research)

In terms of sustainability, the pilot phase seems to have been too short to demonstrate evidence of the potential of ZBiDF continuing as an independent entity providing partnering services on request. Different stakeholders stressed that providing independent broker services is key to successful cross-sector partnering. Although some stakeholders indicated that they would consider paying for this type of service in the future, to date now no partner outside the government has invested in ZBiDF. More work needs to be done to explore the setup and feasibility of such a service provider after the pilot.

Outputs, results, and the casual link assumptions

This section describes the underlying evidence for the contribution stories in more detail.

ZBiDF results and casual link assumptions

Looking at the key results, marked as R1 to R4 in the ToC, the research provided the following information:

Result 1: At least three active partnerships have been established by the end of the pilot phase, and a total of six partnership agreements are signed (two per sector).

This short-term result has been reached: three partnership agreements have been signed, all of which are still functioning a year after the pilot period. These agreements include the Cassava to Flour Partnership, the Consortium of Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Producers Partnership, and the National Skills Development Partnership. Additionally, in May 2016, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by three key business associations in the extractive sector in Solwezi, North Western Province, Zambia,

who agreed to work closer together in approaches to overcoming common business challenges. No information is available on the present status of this MoU. Most of the partnerships included seven or more partners, while the Cassava to Starch Partnership consists of thirteen partners.

Result 2: Cross-sector partnerships in manufacturing, agriculture, and mining have begun mobilizing resources towards achieving agreed partnership objectives and development goals (R2)

Mobilizing cofounding, especially from the private sector, to reach the development goals is an essential element of the Zambian National Development Plan, which is the rationale for explicitly including this as a result in the ZBiDF results framework. Although the different partnerships are still in early stages of their development, Zambian Breweries has invested in a cassava processing plant based on the partnership agreement. Zambian Breweries clarified it would not have invested in the processing plant without support from the partnership to strengthen the

supply chain. In the case of the Cassava partnership, several stakeholders specifically mentioned that dissolving the ZBiDF team affected partnership progress, due to the loss of ZBiDF's resources.

Result 3: Establishing a culture and policies conducive to cross-sector partnering

Establishing a cross-sector partnering culture was one of the three key objectives of ZBiDF. The streamlined performance matrix (2015) suggested a few performance indicators (KPIs) for measuring success, including the number of people trained, the percentage of people trained who then applied this knowledge at work, the number of stakeholders involved in the partnering journey, and the average level of trust among project partners.

Most of these indicators showed progress after the pilot period. In the first year, ZBiDF selected, trained, and coached the three partnership brokers, each working in a different sector. ZBiDF trained more than 30 representatives of interested stakeholder organizations in two Essential Skill Training Workshops. There was no information available on what was put into practice after the training workshops. ZBiDF reported on its website that, by organizing the Innovation Series for Job Creation, ‘over 60 organizations have been engaged, leveraging financial and in-kind resources, expected to create over 200,000 jobs’. Verification of the claim of job creating was beyond of the scope of this research.

Partnership health checks were planned to provide information on whether and how the partners improved the way they worked together; these were not implemented. The deep dive interviews did however provide some evidence that ‘a culture conducive to cross-sector partnering’ is emerging.

One indication is that the Zambian Government has embraced the promotion of cross-sector partnering in its Seventh National Development Plan (7NDP), as an approach to creating jobs and boosting industrialization (GRZ 7NDP, 2017). This was as a result of the successful initial innovation series conducted by ZBiDF at the behest of the PSDIJC Cabinet Office, which yielded three high impact partnerships including the Cassava to Starch Partnership. The National Coordinator of the PSDJIC at Cabinet Office describes engendering ‘mutually accountable public–private dialogue’ as one of the advantages of multistakeholder partnerships. In the partnership, the private sector showed that it could take responsibility for following up on agreed actions, instead of its usual habit of formulating a wish list for government action. According to the National Coordinator, his division now realizes the need to involve outside stakeholders in the government system and the vital role of multistakeholder partnership as a practical approach to more effectively implementing a government programme. This is different from the regular practice, where the public sector automatically takes the lead in developing and implementing the programmes, with limited interaction with main actors. He also pointed out that other government ministries are now more open to this kind of collaboration, as evidenced by the involvement of the Ministry of Agriculture in the revision of the Cassava National Strategy. Also, private sector interviewees referred to the fact that they valued how the collaboration challenged them to put forward a concrete proposal for action, instead of merely preparing a to-do list for other (mostly governmental) organizations.

Result 4: ZBiDF continues providing services on request to cross-sector partnership development, preferably as an independent entity.

Due to the pressure to deliver on the first two outcomes, the ZBiDF team undertook a limited number of activities to develop the way forward. In June 2016, a high-level workshop was held to discuss a ‘hybrid’ business model, under which the ‘public good’ activities of ZBiDF that broadly benefit all stakeholders should be financed by government or donors. The private sector can then invest in the specific ZBiDF activities that arise after the partnership agreements are signed, such as maintaining and managing the partnership. There is no ZBiDF material available other than a short page concept note on its value offering to stakeholders. It is unclear whether this single-page document was drafted and circulated as resolved at the meeting.

The Cassava to Starch Partnerships results and casual link assumptions

In the private sector, the CEO of Premiercon said he believes the Cassava to Starch Partnerships was successful in bringing all stakeholders together to share challenges and experiences. It also gave impetus to the revision of the Cassava National Strategy, which had neither been implemented nor reviewed before the partnership. ZBiDF gave an essential push through by funding this review process. Premiercon also mentioned significant support from many stakeholders in the partnership—for example, support in mobilizing farmers from the Cooperatives department of the Ministry of Commerce, Trade, and Industry (MCTI). The Zambia Development Agency (ZDA) linked Premiercon to a thousand individuals displaced by the Kabompo hydroelectric power project.

Critically, the Citizens Economic Empowerment Commission (CEEC), through the Africa Development Bank (AfDB) Diversification Programme, has awarded Premiercon a loan of ZMW4.45 million (in 2017 around US\$445,000.00) for plant and housing, with the remainder going to financing inputs.

Similarly, the agriculture manager of Zambia Breweries (ZB) said that they had started purchasing cassava from smallholder farmers in 2016 and were already in their second cycle by the time of the interview. According to ZB, they had earlier tried to engage the cassava industry by relying on a third-party consultant from the UK with little local knowledge and networks, which put them at a disadvantage. ZB didn’t know where to begin sourcing the raw materials. Once in the partnership, they were given contacts and were able to establish a sourcing operation in Luapula Province. For ZB, the Cassava to Starch Partnership provided a platform to build relationships with the cassava industry. The agriculture manager said, ‘we were all kicking around but didn’t know the players’, and pointed out that the partnership was significant for coordination. ‘You do not decide to set up a ZMW 5 million plant when farmers have 5-year-old varieties’. It was mainly through the partnership that Zambia Breweries was able to push the message to farmers on the need for new and improved cassava varieties. The older varieties, with their higher fibre content, tended to clog their processing plant, resulting in significant downtime.

5

The process that led to the establishment of the Cassava to Flour Partnership has been reconstructed from the brokering journals and minutes of meetings. It occurred in the following steps:

Initial engagement of stakeholders in the sectors	
Prioritization of partnership opportunities in two national meetings	National meetings held in September and November 2018
Stakeholder mapping and drafting sector concept note	ZBiDF broker developed the first draft of 'Starch Partnership Concept' in November 2015
Stakeholder workshops facilitated by ZBiDF	Twenty organizations discussed the concept note
Governance structure and implementation plan	Agreed in a second stakeholder workshop February 2016
The signing of the partnership agreement	Third stakeholder meeting, May 2016
Review and update of the Cassava sector Development strategy	Zambia National Cassava Association (ZANACA) in collaboration with ZBiDF and the Ministry of Agriculture. ZBiDF facilitated a three-day workshop in March 2017

A crucial step in the engagement of stakeholders was the organization of the Innovation Series for Job Creation. This series was initiated and funded by the Zambian Government under the auspices of its Industrialization and Job Creation Office within the Cabinet Office. On its request, ZBiDF has acted as the organizer and facilitator of all the four sector sessions. The series included four sector-specific stakeholder consultations identifying nine potential partnerships in agriculture, manufacturing, construction, and tourism. For each of these nine recognized partnerships, at least one champion per partnership agreed to lead the further scoping of a partnership to increase the level of skilled employees and create jobs in Zambia.

On-going brokering support for the proposed partnerships was provided at the national meetings by ZBiDF to develop the partnership ideas further and to confirm details, resources, and capacity to implement the partnerships, culminating in the drafting of a partnership agreement. Numerous partnerships meetings were held to achieve this end.

At the third stakeholder meeting for the Cassava Partnership, in May 2016, it was agreed to review the 2010 to 2015 Cassava National Strategy to consider new actors and to align implementation to relevant outputs. The initial strategy assumed an annual production of four million metric tons of cassava—a scenario that no longer holds in the current situation. It was agreed that the strategy should work on the outputs concerning the feedstock requirements for off-takers like brewers, biofuel manufacturers, and the mines.

Without ZBiDF's support and resources, it is difficult to imagine that Premiercon and Zambian Breweries would have brought stakeholders together, beginning with the painstaking initial stakeholder engagement in the sector. They may not have been able to work with everyone to single out a common issue as a partnership opportunity, or to

5

negotiate the partnership agreement for a mutually beneficial Cassava to Starch Partnership. Working alone, Premiercon had struggled to coalesce the disparate actors around any issue in the sector in order to create the change necessary for growth. This changed when ZBiDF became involved. Furthermore, without a partnership set up for success, it would have been difficult for these two organizations to unlock some of the benefits of the collaboration, such as farmer networks and financing in the case of Premiercon.

As the partnerships brokered with ZBiDF support only began their activities in 2017, evidence is not yet available on the longer-term result and impacts of ZBiDF on job creation and ultimately on well-being. To be able to say something about these partnerships being on track in producing results, an important step is to develop a partnership-specific ToC that includes intermediate results and related indicators.

6

Learning and recommendations

The ZBiDF contribution story provides insight into ZBiDF's effectiveness to date. The deep dive collaboration process delivered evidence that the different activities of the ZBiDF team (training, capacity development, stakeholder engagement initiatives, brokering services, and so on) have contributed to the establishment of at least three cross-sector partnership agreements under ZBiDF. Although it is unlikely that this may have happened without ZBiDF's efforts, at least in this timeframe, it is good to realize that many other (mostly donor-funded) private sector activities have been developed over the last few years. Whereas most of these current activities are focused on what one interviewee called 'unblocking specific sector issues', there is no other initiative specifically focusing on partnership facilitation and skill development. For the Cassava to Flour partnership, overcoming both the technical and the partnering capacity issues seems to have been important for the observed progress.

The interviewees mentioned that they had seen limited progress since the signing of the agreement, referring to the lack of brokering support and some seed funding after ZBiDF was put on hold. This is an indication that partners are still expecting some 'external support' for the further development of the partnership, although this has not yet been worked out in the original ZBiDF set up.

One of the main observations is that ZBiDF, although showing some clear results, has not yet been successful in convincing the broad stakeholder group of the value they can added over the longer term. During the deep dive, when we jointly reconstructed the contribution story of ZBiDF, it became clear that although many interviewees described progress over the last few years, this has not always been attributed to the work of ZBiDF.

One reason that emerged from the interviews was that there are different perceptions of what ZBiDF entails. The government representative expressed this by stating that 'ZBiDF should be assessed as a multistakeholder platform and not only as a 'donor-funded project', being the team of partnership brokers established'. He welcomed the financial support to capacitate ZBiDF—adding that, in his view, 'after 2013, it stopped working as a broader platform' as a result of focusing on setting up a ZBiDF structure and getting a minimum of three partnership agreements signed. As a result of this focus, other ideas were not picked up or worked out. 'As soon as money was put on the table, this almost worked counterproductively', as it took attention away from the longer-term government development goal of creating jobs through public-private engagement. For the Government, it is a priority to continue ZBiDF as a broad platform, an accelerator for partnership ideas, in which everybody has a stake. The private sector is interested in an entity that is independent from the government and which provides brokering services, and eventually some seed money for partnering related activities.

One reflection from the research team is that it is important to address these perception issues, as they directly affect expectations of the future role of the ZBiDF team of brokers. While the government expected the team to work as a secretariat for the existing platform members, the brokers focused on accelerating concrete action in the three sectors.

Considering the limited time and resources, there is much to be said for the ZBiDF team's approach of concentrating on showing results in three sectors first. The tension between

the ZBiDF a broad collaborative platform and the ‘ZBiDF accelerator focus’ could be solved by separating (and allocating) the different tasks more clearly. This tension could have been bridged by better management of stakeholder expectation.

The pilot phase of ZBiDF experienced some programmatic issues that negatively affected functioning and progress, including the time it took to set up the team and streamlining (downsizing) the complex results framework in the second year, leading to limited data collection and uncertainty over the continuation of the funding. As this deep dive does not aim to evaluate the implementation of the project, our focus is on making sense of the evidence collected so far, identifying gaps and formulating learnings and facilitating a discussion between stakeholders on the way forward.

Another central learning is the relevance of collecting more qualitative process-related data in a systematic manner. In this deep dive, the information was taken from broker journals and partnership reporting and self-assessments. Each broker maintained a written journal of events, meetings, tools used, observations, lessons, risks, and other notes on partnerships. Brokers also prepared Partnership Progress Reports based on partnership scorecards and health checks for brokers.

The following reflections could support the ZBiDF stakeholders in considering a way forward:

- The results framework would benefit from a clearer distinction between the different interacting pathways, including the formulation of underlying assumptions and indicators. The first pathway involves further developing ZBiDF as an accelerator for high impact partnerships and exploring options to make it less dependent on core funding. The second pathway describes the different development steps of the individual partnership after they have signed the agreement, from implementation to sustaining the outcomes, based on the partnering cycle. Both pathways support the development of a ‘culture conducive to cross-sector partnering’ in Zambia.
- Discuss the ToC, the contribution story, and the causal link assumptions with the key stakeholders. Develop a revised ToC that includes priorities, gaps, and additional required evidence.?
- Given that some of the original goals were formulated in a relatively open manner (‘a culture conducive to partnering’, ‘partnerships adding value’ and so on), the pathway to them was not clear from the start; ZBiDF thus benefits from a learning-by-doing approach. The original results framework turned out to be too strict and was therefore only partly implemented. Regularly testing and reviewing the ToC and the assumption every 3–6 months will allow keeping track of progress and should guide early adaptation.
- There are some dominant underlying assumptions in the ZBiDF ToC (see paragraph below). It could be helpful to explore whether there are additional activities needed to make these assumptions work.

Trajectory towards system changes

What differentiates a theory of change from a logic model is that it includes causal assumptions between outputs and results and between results and impacts. Assumptions are events and conditions that the platform believes need to occur for each link in the causal pathway to work as expected—they represent what is necessary for the link to work, such as changes in attitudes, behaviour, or stakeholder dynamics. In a complex setting like multistakeholder platforms, specific activities need to be defined to make these assumptions happen. In the case of ZBiDF, the results framework doesn't make the causal assumptions explicit, though in some cases the formulated results could also be interpreted as assumptions. The interviews and other discussions during the deep dive process provided some initial information on the critical assumption, especially those with more strategic implications.

Cross-sector partnering creates mutual added value.

Originally defined as a result, effective cross-sector partnerships have the potential to show both social (development) and business value. Business value, in turn, should convince private partners to invest, and to continue investing, in this type of collaboration with the public sector. The business value was initially defined in broad terms, including developing innovative products and services, improving the supply chain, and increasing revenue and reach. The project time span was too short to show quantitative results in the value chains, although the interviews provided some indications that the private sector does see added value. The development and investment in an extra processing plant for cassava, connecting farmers in an underdeveloped area to the supply chain, could be seen as a first step towards creating value and impact.

ZBiDF has the potential to become a sustainable social enterprise through a growing and diverse client base and by generating a revenue stream.

Another critical underlying assumption is that there is potentially a demand for independent brokering services, and that the private partners in particular are willing to pay for these services. Almost all interviewees expressed the need for partnering skill and capacity development in combination with providing brokering services. This need will only turn into a demand if the different 'users' are prepared to pay for these services. The Government of Zambia has shown interest in continuing to pay for specific ZBiDF services, subject to the availability of funds, at the same time linking this to 'clarity on the future of the platform's operations'. When asked the same question, the private companies in the cassava sector said they would consider paying for some specific services. Despite these positive intentions, no partner outside the government has invested in ZBiDF activities. More work needs to be done to explore the setup and feasibility of such a service provider.

Linking this to the first assumption, and taking the (lack of) willingness to pay for brokering services as a proxy indicator of the added value of cross-sector partnering for the stakeholders, we could say that more time and effort is needed to build a case.

7

Conclusions

The purpose of this deep dive and the contribution story developed here is to explore how relevant and credible evidence can be identified and used to understand the effectiveness of the ZBiDF in catalysing cross-sector partnerships against its theory of change (ToC). The process identified some significant results that were achieved regarding partnering skill and capacity development, a more constructive cross-sector dialogue, the establishment of three signed sector partnership agreements, and the role of the ZBiDF team in supporting these changes. There are also some early indications of a more open and constructive public–private collaboration. Although almost all stakeholders confirmed these positive results, there were different views of the contribution of ZBiDF activities to these results. It also showed that ZBiDF is at a critical point in defining a new way forward, mainly forced by the end of the (extended) pilot project phase and of the associated funding of the ZBiDF team activities. The consequence of this—that the team of brokers was dissolved in 2017—requires some persistence and flexibility from all partners to build on the success so far.

Almost all interviewees recognized that the following steps are crucial for a successful multistakeholder partnering process in Zambia:

1. Getting people together is relevant, but keeping them together (overcoming the silo mentality) is even more challenging. ZBiDF’s activities contributed to narrowing the gap between private sector and government.
2. The role of coordination is critical in private sector development. Choosing the value chain and defining what is needed for the intended change in the value chain to occur (systemic approach) needs to be done carefully.
3. Shared (sector) landscape analyses are a prerequisite for collaboration, and are preferably conducted by an independent entity; they form a sound basis for dialogue and developing a joint approach.
4. Third-party partnership facilitation and capacity building are needed to establish a substantial partnership agreement and to guide the partnership into the next stages of implementation, review, and adjustment. Not all parties will be ready to pay for that.

The deep dive process provided a framework and a shared language to further these discussions. The points of reflection in the final section offer some suggestions for regularly reviewing and updating the results framework, and especially the ToC. This includes clarifying the role of the ZBiDF team acting in brokering-specific partnerships as opposed to a broader facilitating role for the platform.

To start with, a future ZBiDF as an accelerator should be independent of government. Preferably, it would be hosted’ by an organization that has convening power.

Colophon

Authors:

Thom Sprenger, Andrew Kambobe & Joost Guijt. The Partnering Initiative, Oxford, UK

Citation:

Sprenger, T., Kambobe, A. and Guijt, J. (2018). Deep Dive: Zambian Business in Development Facility (ZBiDF) IDS Institute of Development Studies and Wageningen University & Research.

© 2018 Institute of Development Studies and Wageningen Research

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the Rockefeller Foundation for their willingness to invest in an unknown but necessary topic to explore. We would also like to thank those who have been involved at different stages of the research conceptualisation and implementation, including particularly Caroline Ashley, Sean de Cleene, Riti Hermán Mostert, Andrew Kambobe, Mar Maestre Morales, Kavita Prakash-Mani, Don Seville and Seerp Wigboldus. We also appreciate the efforts of all the staff from MSPs who helped explore ideas and contribute to discussions, including Rafael Seixas and Sven Sielhorst from Bonsucro and Saori Kitajima and Kajsa Nyerere from Farm to Market Alliance, as well as Akim Dharmawan and Patrizia Fracassi from the Scaling Up Nutrition initiative.

Design: rco.design

Institute of Development Studies
Library Road, Brighton, BN1 9RE, UK
t +44 (0)1273 606 261
e ids@ids.ac.uk
www.ids.ac.uk

The Partnering Initiative
21B Park End Street, OX1 1HU, UK
t +44 (0)1865 582248
e info@tpiglobal.org
TPIglobal.org

Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation
part of the Stichting Wageningen Research
P.O. Box 88, 6700 AB Wageningen, The Netherlands
t + 31 (0) 317 48 68 00
e info.cdi@wur.nl
www.wur.eu/cdi

This report can be downloaded for free at <http://doi.org/10.18174/541804> or at www.wur.eu/cdi (under “Publications”).

The Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation uses a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 (Netherlands) licence for its reports.





**Evidence for
MS Platforms**