

FAQ

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1. What is Katalyst?

Katalyst is a market development project operating under the Bangladesh Ministry of Commerce and jointly implemented by Swisscontact and GIZ International Services. The aim of the project is to increase the income of poor men and women, thereby contributing to sustainable poverty reduction in Bangladesh. Katalyst has been working in Bangladesh since 2003.

2. What is M4P?

M4P stands for 'making markets work for the poor'. It is a development approach that works

indirectly with local partners (including business, public associations, universities). This approach addresses key constraints of a sector, leading towards more inclusive business practices aimed at bringing about sustainable change.

3. How does Katalyst apply M4P in its implementation?

First, Katalyst conducts a constraint and opportunity analysis of each sector it works in. It then designs interventions to address the constraints it has identified, in a way which improves the market environment for the poor. The interventions are implemented by identifying and working with national or international partners who have a business incentive or mandate in a sector; this is done on a cost-sharing basis. Then, as private companies start to see results in terms of their profits, they gradually incorporate the M4P model into their business strategy. In this way, sustainable, broad-based economic growth creates income earning opportunities for poor women and men leading to reduced poverty.

4. What is an intervention?

An intervention is a set of activities specifically designed to address the constraints identified by Katalyst in each sector in which it works. It aimed at improving the services needed by the sector, to support the enterprises in that sector, to increase their competitiveness and gain increased income as a result.

5. Who are Katalyst's partners?

Katalyst works with private companies and business associations with an interest, commitment and mandate to work in a given sector. It also works with other development agencies relevant government agencies and ministries academic institutions and the media.

6. How does Katalyst work with the private sector?

Katalyst identifies private sector partners and collaborates with them to ensure that they have the right incentives and capacity to increase the positive economic impact they have on the poor.

7. What is Katalyst's focus in Phase 3?

Katalyst's focus in Phase 3 is the consolidation of its sector portfolio, the deepening and widening of its pro-poor impact, capitalisation of the knowledge and experience gained since the

project began in 2002, influencing key stakeholders and improving monitoring and measurement results. By the end of this phase, the project's goal is to reach 1.43 million farmers and SMEs, and increase income impact for these beneficiaries to USD263 million.

8. Who are the beneficiaries of Katalyst?

Katalyst's direct beneficiaries are a) poor, marginal farmers and b) small and medium enterprises. However, Katalyst also has indirect beneficiaries: other farmers and enterprises that are not directly covered by one of the project interventions but that still benefit indirectly by copying or adopting the practices introduced by Katalyst to its direct beneficiaries.

9. What are the common constraints faced by Bangladeshi farmers?

The common constraints faced by Bangladeshi farmers are lack of access to quality inputs and relevant information, and inadequate links to markets and distribution channels.

10. What is systemic change?

Systemic change is change which happens to the existing market system (or to the people who are involved in that market system) as a result of one or a series of activities. Systemic changes instigated by Katalyst's work are aimed at improving the market system by 'correcting' the functions and rules that shape businesses that involve the poor at the core of the market.

11. What is a market system?

A market system is a sub-set of the wider system of a sector, where the poor are involved as entrepreneurs, workers, or consumers.

12. How does Katalyst work to improve a market system?

Katalyst facilitates change to the business practices of its partners to improve the market environment in order to benefit the poor. With systemic constraints addressed by Katalyst, the market system responds to the needs of the poor, enabling them to have access to opportunities that were previously unavailable to them.

13. What were Katalyst's achievements during Phase 2?

Katalyst's major achievements during Phase 2 were:

Maize: Katalyst assisted in the development of contract farming of maize and introduced it in the chars and the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Farmers in these areas now have access to quality inputs and knowledge, a buy-back guarantee from the contractor, and the assurance of a fair price for their produce.

Vegetable and Seed: Katalyst promoted integrated pest management technology and judicious pesticide use to vegetable farmers. Through a combination of multifaceted interventions, including research and development, Katalyst improved distribution concepts and introduced mini-packs of quality seed. These were sold in millions and mean that small farmers can now get better quality seed at an affordable price.

Fish: Katalyst promoted the nationwide cultivation of high-value fish species such as tilapia, pangas and koi, and helped to strengthen links between farmers, hatcheries and input companies to improve access to quality inputs, including broodstock.

Improving Local Government Services (ILGS): Katalyst initiated a public-private mechanism whereby business membership organisations identified farmer groups, voiced the farmers' needs to government extension workers, and arranged training and other information dissemination events for farmers.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Media: Katalyst worked with local telecom operators to a) introduce ICT services (helplines) appropriate for farmers and small businesses, and b) increase ICT-enabled services for farmers. Katalyst also achieved a better integration of business information in Bangladesh's print media, supported by improved and more focused training for business journalists.

14. What is Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE)?

From the start, Katalyst has worked to integrate women into its core rural sectors (maize, vegetable and farmed fish) through activities that encourage their engagement and advancement. In Phase 3, it has begun to do this by engaging private actors who will take the lead in focusing women in a rural context. WEE will work in selected value chains (poultry, dairy and handicrafts) to facilitate the development and promotion of appropriate service packages, distribution mechanisms and improved market access targeting women farmers and entrepreneurs.

15. What are information channels?

Katalyst uses a number of information channels print media (newspapers), electronic media (television, community radio), and information and communication technology (ICT) to deliver information services to the rural population. These services currently include agricultural programmes and news, agricultural helplines, and financial services (such as being able to pay bills and find out about loans specifically for farmers) are available via mobile phone.