

## **MASTER THESIS**

# **IMPROVING IMPACT MONITORING**

*Improving the Monitoring System for a Business Development Organisation in  
Ghana*



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**University of Twente, Enschede, the Netherlands  
Master Business Administration  
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**for**

**SPEED Ghana, Accra, Ghana**

## IMPROVING IMPACT MONITORING

### *Improving the Monitoring System for a Business Development Organisation in Ghana*

#### **Master Thesis**

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## Summary

This research and subsequently this report are based on the problem formulation

***'How can the impact of selected IDEAS projects at MSME-level be assessed and what recommendations, leading from this, can be given to improve the current monitoring system within SPEED-Ghana?'***

Five research questions were developed to structure and guide this research to eventually come to the answer of the problem formulation. First the theory of project management and performance measurement in BDS was reviewed to see what literature could contribute to assessing the impact of selected IDEAS projects. It was concluded that to assess the impact, the focus should not only be on impact assessment but on performance measurement as a whole, the different life cycle phases of a project should be taken into account to develop and implement a monitoring and data collection system. McVay's Framework was selected and used as a basis for measuring performance and thus impact in Business Development Services. She describes in her framework different goal categories and indicators to be measured at different moments in time during the project.

The selection of indicators and development of interview questions was based on theory and practice. Theoretic models like McVay's Framework, Balanced Score Card and EFQM model were used and practical lessons were learned from reviewing monitoring methods used under SPEED I and SPEED II. Besides that some practical lessons were learned from experts on how to do a research in the specific setting of Ghana, how to collect data from MSME's and what BDS is.

The design of the research focuses on collecting impact data at one moment in time. A qualitative research design was used in which both MSME's during and after intervention and BDS providers were interviewed by using qualitative open ended questions. A qualitative design was chosen because there was the probability of having small samples, which would be too small to draw quantitative conclusions from. This actually proved a good decision because samples of each of the three selected IDEAS projects were relatively small. Also in the scope of the research the strength of causal inferences proved to be a weakness because the three separate IDEAS projects selected were a too small sample to conclude on the whole SPEED I IDEAS project. Conclusions drawn are based on the collected data and no generalisations for the whole SPEED I IDEAS project could be made.

As said the actual selection of indicators to assess the impact has been based on theoretic and practical indicators proposed. The indicators selected were used to capture the necessary data for the four goal categories developed: outreach, satisfaction, awareness and impact. The goal categories were divided into different indicators and they were divided into different interview measurement indicators (IMI's) which on their turn were the basis for the actual interview questions. The selection and development of goal categories, indicators and IMI's was done in such

a way that they are usable in a broader way besides only measuring impact on selected IDEAS projects. With little adjustments they can be used in other BDS projects or programs as well. It has already been shown that with some adjustments the model developed could be turned into a monitoring tool for gathering progress and impact data in SPEED II BDS projects.

The first part of the problem formulation consists of assessing the impact on selected IDEAS projects. Impact of three IDEAS projects has been assessed by visiting and questioning BDS providers and MSME's during and after intervention. The most important outcomes were that none of the actual services made a considerable contribution to making the BDS market more sustainable. Only one service still exists, but due to financial problems it barely provides any service anymore. Also the retention rate of repeating customers at a service provider was very low. Only very few interviewed participants repeated a service at the specific service provider.

The services had overall a positive impact on participating MSME's, most of them had direct or indirect benefits and used or still use the knowledge they acquired through the service. Impact was noticed on financial, business and personal level. It should be noted however that impact and benefits are not only due to the specific services. Impact and benefits are also caused by other supporting services, education and practical experience.

The second part of the problem formulation consists of recommendations to improve the current monitoring system of SPEED Ghana's BDS component. The biggest gap found was that there is no proper monitoring system to measure project progression. No data on indicators is collected during the different project phases. Therefore a recommendation to SPEED Ghana is to implement a checklist to collect performance data during and after the projects. The impact assessment tool has been turned into a checklist for project members to measure the progress of their projects by asking simple questions to BDS providers and participating MSME's.

Criteria given in theory to prevent pitfalls were applied to guard foremost the validity and reliability of the research. However in some cases validity and reliability can still be questioned.

It is recommended that for future use of the tool, small adjustments are made to fit the tool to the specific setting, this tool is made for the specific setting of MSME's in Ghana. Most literature focuses on impact assessment tools which collect longitudinal data, therefore this tool can be used for impact assessments where no data has been gathered during any of the project phases.

## Preface

In this report you will find the end-result of the Master's Thesis research conducted at SPEED Ghana in Accra, Ghana for the University of Twente, School of Management and Governance. This research was started in September 2007 with a literature review which resulted in a research plan. From November 2007 to May 2008 the actual field research was conducted at SPEED Ghana in Accra, Ghana.

This preface is used to thank those persons and organisations without whom it would have been not possible to conduct this research. First and foremost my gratitude goes out to Mr. Paul Weijers who has given me this once in a lifetime opportunity to conduct my research in Ghana. Also my supervisors from University of Twente, Ir. S.J. Maathuis and Prof. Dr. Ir. E. J. de Bruijn, I would like to thank for their help, advice and guidance. A very special thank you goes out to my local research assistant Marmata Mayaki for her effort to help, guide and advice me in the field research undertaken in Ghana. Further gratitude goes out to all of the other colleagues at SPEED Ghana who advised, helped and supported me whilst in Ghana. My gratitude also goes out to all interviewed experts, MSME's and BDS providers, especially Crossbridge Consult – Miss A. Ageyeman, OBI – Mr. K. Donkoh and Hopespring Foundation – Mrs. A. Darkwa – Amanor. Last I want to thank all other persons and organisations who contributed their part to this research and whom are not mentioned by name here.

H.G.M. Schabbink

June, 2008

## Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>10</b>
1.1	SPEED Ghana	10
1.2	Background and Objective	11
1.3	Problem Formulation and Research Questions	11
1.4	Research Approach and Research Structure	12
<b>2</b>	<b>Theory of Project Management</b>	<b>15</b>
2.1	Project management	15
2.1.1	Project Management Life Cycle	15
2.1.2	Performance Measurement	17
2.2	Project Management in BDS	20
2.2.1	Performance Measurement in BDS	21
2.2.2	BDS Performance Measurement Framework	23
2.3	Conclusions	27
<b>3</b>	<b>Performance Measurement in Practice</b>	<b>29</b>
3.1	SPEED I - IDEAS Projects	29
3.1.1	Measuring Methods in Project Management Life Cycle	29
3.2	SPEED II	32
3.2.1	Measuring Methods SPEED II	33
3.2.2	Measuring Indicators SPEED II	33
3.3	Expert Lessons	33
3.4	Conclusions	34
<b>4</b>	<b>Impact Assessment Tool</b>	<b>36</b>
4.1	Units of analysis	36
4.1.1	Selection of BDS Providers	36
4.1.2	Selection of MSME's	37
4.2	Method of Data Collection	37
4.3	Selecting and Operationalising Indicators	39
4.3.1	Goal Categories	39

4.3.2	Measurement Indicators _____	40
4.3.3	Indicator Selection Criteria _____	43
4.3.4	Validity & Reliability _____	46
4.4	Impact Assessment tool _____	47
4.4.1	Conclusions _____	49
<b>5</b>	<b>Actual Impact Assessment _____</b>	<b>51</b>
5.1	Final Impact Assessment Tool _____	51
5.1.1	Finalising BDS Provider Interviewing Questionnaire_ _____	51
5.1.2	Finalising MSME Interviewing Questionnaire _____	51
5.1.3	Finalising Methodology _____	52
5.1.4	Test-interview Conclusions _____	52
5.2	Impact Assessment _____	53
5.3	Cross Case Analysis _____	55
<b>6</b>	<b>Consequences for SPEED II Monitoring System _____</b>	<b>60</b>
6.1	Project Management Life Cycle _____	60
6.2	Gaps in SPEED II Monitoring System _____	60
6.3	Desired Monitoring System _____	61
<b>7</b>	<b>Conclusion, Recommendations and Reflection _____</b>	<b>65</b>
7.1	Conclusions _____	65
7.2	Recommendations _____	67
7.3	Reflection Research _____	68
7.3.1	Theoretic Reflection _____	68
7.3.2	Empirical Reflection _____	68
7.3.3	Methodological Reflection _____	69

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## List of Abbreviations

<b>BDS</b>	Business Development Services
<b>DANIDA</b>	Danish International Development Assistance
<b>EFQM</b>	European Foundation for Quality Management
<b>GTZ</b>	Die Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
<b>IDEAS</b>	Innovation and Development in Enterprise Assistance Scheme
<b>IMI</b>	Interview Measurement Indicator
<b>MSE's</b>	Micro and Small Enterprises
<b>MSME's</b>	Micro Small and Medium Enterprises
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>OBI</b>	Oguaa Business Incubator
<b>PMLC</b>	Project Management Life Cycle
<b>SME's</b>	Small and Medium Enterprises
<b>SFF</b>	SPEED Funding Facility
<b>SPEED Ghana</b>	Support Programme for Enterprise Empowerment and Development Ghana
<b>TA to MFI</b>	Technical Assistance to Financial Institutions with a Micro Finance Component



## **1 Introduction**

This research was conducted at SPEED Ghana in Accra, Ghana, as part of the study Master Business Administration – International Management, at the University of Twente.

This first chapter gives an introduction about SPEED Ghana, the background and objective of the research are described and the research problem, research questions and research structure are formulated and explained.

### **1.1 SPEED Ghana**

Since 1957 Ghana has been an independent country, but due to corruption, coups and the unstable geographic region, Ghana's economy, especially in the period 1973-1983, was disastrous. As in the past, economy revolves today around agriculture, which accounts for 37% of GDP and 60% of the workforce. The major export product is cocoa and other important export products are gold, timber, diamonds, aluminium and tuna. Its economic growth has been 6% in 2006. Due to the unstable geographical environment foreign investors are actually attracted to establish their West-African headquarters in Ghana because of the country's stability. A very important and growing inflow of capital comes from Ghanaians living abroad; so-called remittances. However Ghana is still to a large extent dependent on funds, grants and (international) organisations that support promote and stimulate economic development and growth.

SPEED Ghana (in short: SPEED) is such an organisation, funded by GTZ (under the German Ministry for Cooperation) and DANIDA (under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark), who signed a project agreement to deepen donor collaboration in 2003. SPEED Ghana facilitates the development of the financial market and business development services for Ghana's micro-, small- and medium enterprises (from now on MSME's), which contributes to their increased competitiveness. SPEED Ghana supports intermediaries such as business development and microfinance service providers to deliver market oriented and sustainable technical and financial services. The role of SPEED Ghana is that of facilitation and networking with institutions and it tags onto and expands further on existing and sometimes planned interventions of the Ghanaian government and other Development Partners. SPEED Ghana has three components namely Business Development Services (BDS), Technical Assistance to Financial Institutions with a Micro-Finance component (TA to MFI) and a Wholesale Funding Facility (SFF). These components work together to create synergies in achieving the objectives of SPEED.

The vision of SPEED Ghana is to contribute to the sustainable development of Ghana's private sector and support social and geographically balanced growth, income and employment creation. Its mission is to create a major platform for Micro, Small en Medium sized Enterprise (MSME's) support. The overall objective of SPEED is for MSME's to use improved Financial- and Business Development

Services to strengthen their competitiveness and to increase their growth.

## 1.2 Background and Objective

In 2004 SPEED Ghana started a BDS facilitating project under the name of SPEED-I. The general purpose of SPEED-I was to implement IDEAS projects (Innovation and Development in Enterprise Assistance Scheme), it is an open financing facility earmarked to create additional flexibility in supporting the piloting and development of new innovative instruments that will go to support enterprise growth, mainly in difficult or emerging markets (non traditional exports, food processing, ICT, start-ups, etc) and to assist the development of sustainable instruments for service provision to micro-enterprises that are unable to access the commercially marketed products (*SPEED Ghana, Operating Manual, 2006*).

Because the development organisations fund the projects, they want to have a clear view on what happens and whether their development funds are actually benefiting economy or businesses in Ghana, they require feedback data. Feedback data required are amongst others performance measurement data and data on the impact of projects. Because up to the starting point of this research no data on actual performance or impact had been gathered on the IDEAS projects, the focus of this research is on projects initiated under the first phase of SPEED-I, which ended September 2006. The objective of this research is to develop and test a tool to measure the impact that BDS interventions have had on the targeted MSME's in selected IDEAS projects.

After SPEED-I had ended, a new project, SPEED-II, was started in which some commitments made under SPEED-I were proceeded. Under SPEED-II BDS is facilitated to focus sectors, namely wood, textiles and garments, ICT, natural plant products and tourism. Recently the focus shifted to only tourism and wood.

Compared to SPEED-I a completely different system of BDS facilitation and monitoring and evaluating was applied. Therefore another objective is to evaluate the current monitoring system and to possibly give improvement recommendations for the monitoring process for (future) projects conducted under SPEED-II.

## 1.3 Problem Formulation and Research Questions

The description and objectives of the research leads to the following problem formulation:

***'How can the impact of selected IDEAS projects at MSME-level be assessed and what recommendations, leading from this, can be given to improve the current monitoring system within SPEED-Ghana?'***

The research leads to a better understanding of the impact that the chosen intervention on targeted MSME's have had. Besides that it gives a clear view whether the current monitoring process needs improvement. To find an answer to the problem formulation, the research is divided into 3 main research questions.

**Research Questions:**

The first question leads to the design of a tool used to measure the performance and subsequently the impact of selected IDEAS projects on targeted MSME's. The tool is based on a combination of criteria given in literature, by experts and by SPEED Ghana. The first step taken within this research question is to get familiar with the subject; what does literature say about project management. Special attention is being paid to performance measurement within project management to get an overall idea how and why performance should be measured.

The next phase of the research is to get a more broadened view on performance measurement by consulting experts with experience in doing field research in Ghana and with experts in the field of conducting performance measurement in BDS projects. Also Speed Ghana's activities concerning current and previous performance measurement in BDS projects are analysed and will be discussed.

**1. What tool can be developed to assess impact of selected IDEAS-I projects?**

- a. How can impact of IDEAS projects be measured according to the theory?
- b. Which practical and organisational lessons can be learned from performance- and impact measurement experiences?

The next step is the description of how the tool was applied to assess the impact of three selected IDEAS projects. Besides this, impact conclusions are drawn.

**2. What is the impact of selected IDEAS-projects on MSME-level?**

- a. What is the impact of three selected projects at BDS provider level and at MSME-level?
- b. What overall conclusions can be drawn based on the impact assessment of the individual projects?

The last step taken in the research is to evaluate the current (SPEED II) monitoring methods to give a recommendation on how to improve these methods.

**3. What recommendations can be given to improve current monitoring and evaluation methods at SPEED Ghana?****1.4 Research Approach and Research Structure**

To give an answer to the research questions, first the theory of project management and performance measurement within project management is being researched. Within the theoretical part it becomes clear how impact is being assessed within BDS projects. After the theoretical part a more practical approach to find out how to assess impact and how to conduct a field research in Ghana are discussed. IDEAS-I projects and project monitoring methods as well as SPEED-II's monitoring methods are analysed and described. Experts were consulted to find out

how to conduct a field research and which indicators are relevant in assessing the impact of the IDEAS projects. Both from the theoretical and the practical parts usable indicators, as many as possible, are retrieved to be selected and used in the final impact assessment tool. The visual overview of the research is showed in the figure 1.

Research Question

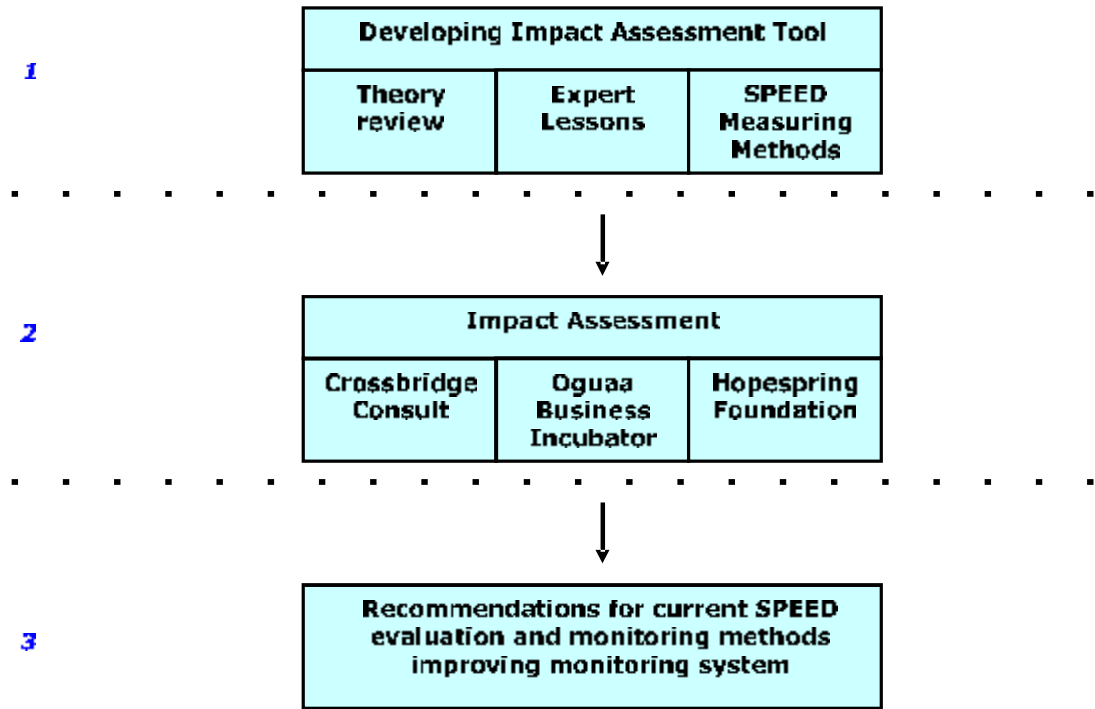


Figure 1 - Research Structure

## 2 Theory of Project Management

In this chapter a literature review is made on the theory of project management. Models and theories are used to describe, explain and eventually lead to answering the first research question. Models and theories that are used are from scientific journals, articles, books and the Internet. The first step to taken is looking deeper into project management to get a deeper understanding what it actually is. For this research the topic of project management is very important because SPEED I can be described as a project. Within project management, the project life cycles are discussed; how are projects being run through and which phases are being passed. The next step taken is to find out about performance measurement within project management and more importantly 'how is it being performed' and 'what methods are used'? The final step taken is looking more specifically into one aspect of performance measurement - impact assessment within BDS projects.

### 2.1 Project management

The overall SPEED I project has, as most projects, been going through different phases to eventually come to the end phase. To go through all the project phases successfully a project has to be managed carefully. Therefore the first step to consider is to look into project management, how and what it actually is.

The approach of project management is a relatively modern one, methods of restructuring management and adapting special management techniques characterise this approach. The purpose of project management is to obtain better control and use of existing resources (Kerzner, 2003). According to Kerzner, project management can thus be described as: *"Planning, organizing, directing and controlling of company resources for a relatively short-term objective that has been established to complete specific goals and objectives. Furthermore, project management utilizes the system approach to management by having functional personnel assigned to specific projects."* To get a deeper and better understanding of project management, next the different steps taken and cycles passed during a project are discussed.

#### 2.1.1 Project Management Life Cycle

In project management there are two different kinds of life cycles that work parallel to each other throughout the course of a project. On the one hand there is the project life cycle, it describes the tasks to be completed to produce a product or a service. On the other hand there is the project management life cycle, which defines how to manage a project. In this research the focus is on the latter.

Management tends to, generally, complete projects in a linear way. This can be seen in figure 2, where different steps have to be followed one after the other in order to complete all phases of the project management life cycle (PMLC). This cycle helps employees or researchers to establish a sense of how their duties relate to the project they are working on. (Charleston Business Journal, 1998) In general

the life cycle consists of four or sometimes, according to some researchers, five main phases. In this report the focus will be on the four-phase cycle.

The main phases in the life cycle are: (*Method123, Project Management Life Cycle*)

- Project Initiation
- Project Planning
- Project Execution
- Project Closure

#### *Project Initiation*

In the first phase of a project, the project will be started up. Usually it starts with defining objectives, scope, purpose and goals of the project and deliverables to be produced.

With this it is possible to, already in an early stage, set up some overall performance measurement indicators.

A project team should be set up that is responsible for the ongoing activities.

#### *Project Planning*

The second phase, planning, involves creating a set of detailed plans to guide the project team through the execution and closure phases of the project.

#### *Project Execution*

In the project execution phase the project plan has been completed and the project team and necessary resources should be able to perform the project activities stated in the project plan. The focus shifts from planning to participating, observing and analyzing the work being done. As can be seen in figure 2, the Project Management Life Cycle, particular attention should be on project monitoring and controlling. They involve measuring and evaluating project performance to see whether the targeted performance standards are met. The measuring part will be done in this phase whereas the evaluating part will be done in the next phase. A measuring system should be set up to measure actual performance as compared to planned performance to be able to monitor and more importantly to control whether the right track is being followed. General performance indicators to be measured can be time, cost, quality, communication, acceptance and risk. Other, more specific indicators depend on the kind of project and should be defined per project. Controlling and monitoring of the indicators should be done on a regular basis (e.g. weekly, monthly) and should be complete (all dimensions for the project should be taken into account) to work effectively.

#### *Project Closure*

In the prior phase the actual measuring is done during the execution of the project. In this last phase of the life cycle the data collected on the different performance



**Figure 2- Project Management Life Cycle**

(source: *Charleston Business Journal*, 1998)

indicators can be evaluated on an overall performance level. When evaluating the performance, there are some overall questions that every project team has to ask itself; has the project vision been achieved, have the project objectives been met, has all critical knowledge been captured and can project resources be released for new projects? If the data has been collected according to the given criteria and is valid and reliable, these questions can be answered and evaluated as a last step before ending the project.

The project management life cycle shows the different steps to be taken to complete a project. To adapt these steps to this research, the most important steps in the first two phases are to establish objectives, goals, scope and purpose. The execution and closure phases will be dealt with in detail, because two crucial activities during a project are monitoring and controlling in order to keep the project going according to plan and to measure the performance of the project. Special attention will be given to these activities to see how monitoring and controlling has been exercised. In order to monitor and control a project, project performance has to be measured to find out whether goals and objectives are or can be reached or whether they should be adapted. In the light of project execution and closure, in the next section the concept of performance measurement will be explained more thoroughly.

#### 2.1.2 Performance Measurement

According to Performance Based Management Handbook (Artley, W., Stroh, S., 2001) the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) provides the following definition of performance measurement: *"Performance measurement is the ongoing monitoring and reporting of program accomplishments, particularly progress towards pre-established goals. It is typically conducted by program or agency management. Performance measures may address the type or level of program activities conducted (process), the direct products and services delivered by a program (outputs), and/or the results of those products and services (outcomes). A 'program' may be any activity, project, function, or policy that has an identifiable purpose or set of objectives."*

Performance in business has been measured in cost, time, productivity, quality, quantity etc. for a long time, and is seen as an important element of Total Quality Management. The purpose of performance measurement in project management is to help organizations understand decision-making processes or practices led to success or failure in the past and how that understanding can lead to future improvements (Committee for Oversight and Assessment of U.S. Department of Energy Project Management, National Research Council, 2005).

##### *Initiation and planning phase*

According to the definition of performance measurement, some pre-established goals should be set. This was also shown in the project management life cycle, where in the first phase these should be defined. Without pre-established objectives or goals, it is impossible to see discrepancies between an actual and



desired result, because then there is no desired result. Therefore in the next sub-section it will be explained why objectives should be set and consequently why performance should be measured.

#### *Execution and closure phase*

After the project has been started, the initiation and planning phase have been run through it should be thought about to set up a complete performance measurement system on how to measure performance.

As part of the execution and closure phase of project management, monitoring and controlling of project activities should be exercised by looking at how performance is. This step is very important, because it reveals the success of a project. In this section it will become clear what performance measurement is and why performance of projects should be measured. Also the concept of impact assessment is a part of performance measurement. So by looking into performance measurement as a whole, impact assessment will be covered as well.

Within project management several tools are developed to measure performance, as part of Quality Management. The focus for this research is on holistic performance measurement tools, because they tend to look at the organisation as a whole. All separate organisational parts interact with each other and together form the basis for an organisation's performance. The benefit of this is that performance can be viewed at a broader scale to see the reasons behind a performance, too see why things happen and not only to look at what happens.

One of the most common and widely used performance measurement tools in Quality Management is the Balanced Score Card. Another, lesser known, tool is EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management). Both tools are used in this research because they complement each other. They both focus on results, customers, processes and innovation and combine elements that contribute to the success of an organisation (Francis Manas, 2001).

#### *Balanced Score Card*

Robert Kaplan and David Norton introduced the Balanced Score Card as a way of motivating and measuring an organisation's performance. The concept takes a systematic approach to assessing internal results while probing the external environment. The Balanced Score Card translates an organisation's missions and strategy into a comprehensive set of performance measures that provides the framework for a strategic measurement and management system.

The scorecard measures organisational performance across four balanced perspectives: financial, customer, internal business processes and learning and growth (Kaplan, R, Norton, D, 1996).

The perspectives (indicators):

1. Financial – How do we look to our stakeholders?
2. Customer – How well do we satisfy our internal and external customer's needs?
3. Internal Business Process – How well do we perform at key internal business

processes?

4. Learning and Growth – Are we able to sustain innovation, change, and continuous improvement?

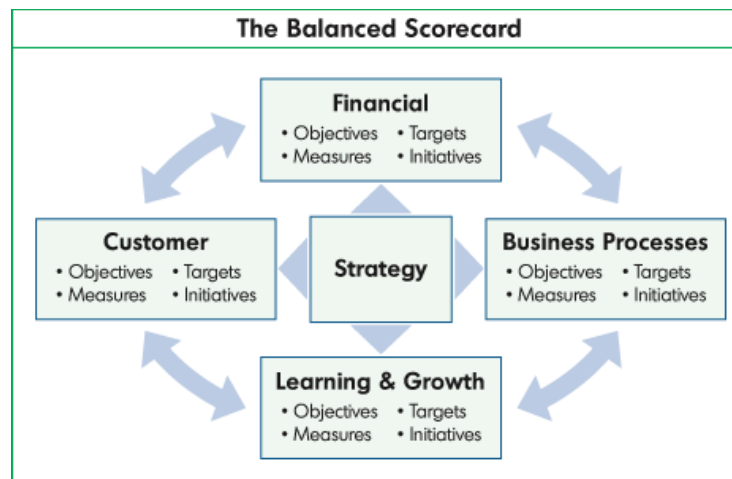


Figure 3 - Balanced Score Card (source: Kaplan, R, Norton, D, 1996)

The balanced score card is a very useful model in measuring performance aligned to mission and vision at different levels in an organisation. For this research the downside of this model is that it does not have indicators directly aimed at measuring the impact of organisational actions, it does not tell what the consequences of actions are. The positive side of this model is that it gives overall indicators that show how performance is after organisational actions. Usable indicators are Customers and Learning and Growth.

#### EFQM Excellence Model

The European Foundation for Quality Management developed this model as a tool to help organisations in their drive to become more competitive. The model is based on the premise that: "Excellent results with respect to Performance, Customers, People and Society are achieved through Leadership driving Policy and Strategy, that is delivered through People, Partnerships and Resources, and Processes." (EFQM.org). It helps organisations to measure where they are on their path to excellence, it helps organisations to understand the gaps and it stimulates solutions. The model is based on 9 criteria. Five are 'Enablers' and four are 'Results'. The 'Enabler' criteria cover what an organisation does, what they are concerned with, how the organisation conducts itself, how it manages staff and resources, how it plans strategy and how it reviews and monitors key processes. 'Result' criteria cover what an organisation achieves and it encompasses the level of satisfaction amongst employees and customers, the impact on the wider community and key performance indicators. The purpose of this research is not to

create an excellent organisation, it is purposed to assess the impact and to, if possible, provide recommendation on how to improve current and future performance measurements and impact assessments. This model has the advantage of assessing some of the impact, but at a very broad level. It is therefore useful because some of its indicators capture the impact during performance measurement. Interesting to know is that this model is also used by GTZ.

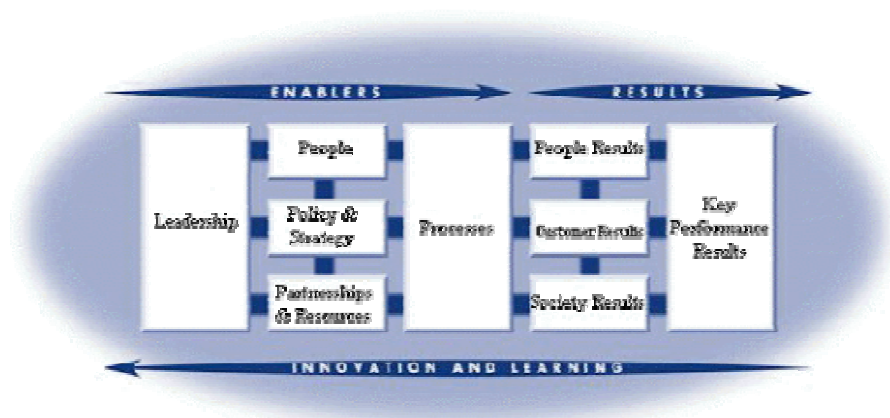


Figure 4 EFQM excellence model (source: [www.efqm.org](http://www.efqm.org))

The next section will go more specifically into project management, how project management is performed within BDS.

## 2.2 Project Management in BDS

BDS is a relatively new strategy for attaining two development objectives; improved performance of micro- and small enterprises (MSE's) and reduced poverty (Downing et al, 2003). Miehlebradt and McVay (2002) say that "small businesses are constraint by non-financial factors such as lack of education, inadequate technical skills, poor access to markets, lack of information and unreliable infrastructure. BDS is designed to help MSE's to overcome these barriers to increase profitability, productivity and access high value markets so they can realize their potential to help poor people work their way out of poverty, grow local economics and create jobs."

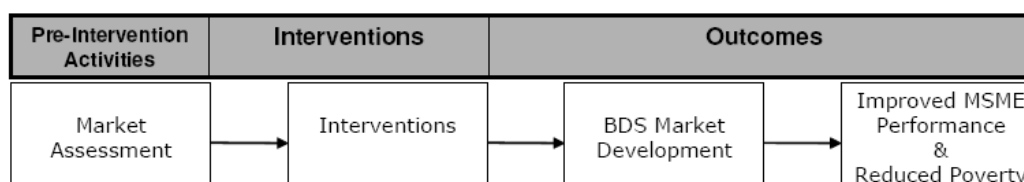
The process of project management earlier discussed can exactly be applied to BDS project management as well. Each of the PMLC - phases mentioned in the previous section has to be run through to eventually successfully (or not) close a project. Performance measurement in BDS however has its specific monitoring and measurement methods with a framework for measuring performance in BDS,

developed by Mary McVay, as one of the leading and most well known methods. Therefore within this section first performance measurement in BDS projects and after that the framework developed by McVay are discussed.

### 2.2.1 Performance Measurement in BDS

To narrow things down it is important to look into performance measurement in BDS projects.

Downing et al (2003) state that: *"Fundamental to the BDS market development paradigm is the hypothesis that BDS market development leads to the improved performance of micro-, small-, and medium enterprises (MSME's), which in turn leads to poverty reduction, economic growth, and achievement of other social objectives."* This hypothesis is illustrated in figure 5.



**Figure 5 – BDS Intervention Cycle (source: Downing et al, 2003)**

They continue by saying that: *"While very basic, this causal model used by the Donor Committee's BDS Working Groups defines final and intermediate impact objectives and provides the basis for a common approach to impact assessment and indicator selection."*

To go a little deeper into how BDS reduces poverty, again the work of Miehlebradt and McVay (2002) is used. In general, Business Development Services are aimed at increasing MSME's sales or reducing costs in order for businesses to grow and to become (more) profitable. This in its turn will, according to the authors: *"lead to increased income for owners, increased employment for people in the community and economic growth for other businesses in the same market."* They continue by saying that: *"many BDS programs aim to achieve supplemental development impacts such as environmental preservations, gender equity, empowerment and democratization, livelihood security and stabilization or improved health and HIV/AIDS mitigation."* These supplemental development impacts can be classified as indirect impacts to the intervention and the impact can most likely only be measured in a timeframe of possibly decades of observations and measurements. In the context of this research it is impossible to give conclusions on these indirect impacts. The timeframe in which this research is conducted is too short to make generalizations about these major social and environmental changes. For this reason, the main focus of this research is on the outcomes of 'improved MSME performance' and 'BDS-market development'.

#### *Why measuring BDS performance?*

Why should performance in BDS-programs be measured? In literature some typical reasons are given why performance in BDS-programs should be measured:

1. To assess the impact of the program. From previous research on the impact of BDS interventions it became clear that:
  - Marketing and business skills of the business operators have made significant improvements
  - The businesses have been helped by the facilitators in securing credits and obtaining land or house for businesses
  - Business operators have gained improvements in sales, income, and acquisition of equipment or premises and in opening employment opportunities for other people
  - While most (95%) of the business operators keep in high regard to adopt their new capacities in practice, there are a few operators who make complaints that their businesses are not in the right track of operation.
  - The overall improvement in the working conditions (sales, income, premises, and assets) of the surveyed operators compared to their situations prior to the project intervention has exhibited an 80 % increase.
2. To identify better performing programs so that best practices can be documented and disseminated
3. To gain information that helps deliver better services to MSME's

To go back to the first research question it can be said that, according to McVay and Michlbradt, by measuring performance, the impact of programs can be assessed as well as better performing programs can be identified which can help to deliver better services as well as to modify the evaluation process.

Therefore to be able to give an answer to the research question it is important to not only focus on impact assessment, but first on performance measurement as a whole. This is in line with many recent research findings. According to these researches a problem within recent monitoring and evaluation is that the emphasis is made exclusively on 'impact evaluation'. Alan Gibson (2001) explains that *"the development community will only have more success in their endeavours when they improve their approach to monitoring and evaluation"*.

In the eyes of many new researchers in the field, whose thoughts are combined on a BDS-forum, activity monitoring is the basis of impact evaluation. They ask the question; *"How can one evaluate the performance and quality of a programme if one does not know what and how much has been done?"* According to the researchers activity monitoring in BDS should capture the following data, before starting the actual impact evaluation:

- Number and type of businesses involved (by business-sector, region and gender)
- Number and type of services provided (by gender)
- Number and type of trainings provided (by gender) and partner organisations involved.

Keeping this in mind, it is known that for years there has been a debate about how to measure BDS-performance and only in the last couple of years a certain consensus has been achieved around what should be measured. Richard Bond (2002) describes in his work ten popular methods or tools to be used in assessing the impact of Rural Enterprise Development Activities. Among others he recommends a worldwide accepted framework to be used for measuring performance of BDS, the BDS Performance Measurement Framework by Mary McVay (1999).

As earlier described, only assessing impact is not sufficient, why then using Bond's work? His work describes tools for assessing impact in a broader view. It describes that the BDS Performance Measurement Framework is not only focused on assessing impact, but that impact assessment is just a one of five pre-selected goal categories for measuring performance. Instead of focusing on an assessment only on impact, McVay recommends to focus on all the aspects of the framework, according to her: *"In a proper impact assessment, one would want to capture all the benefits of the program, including benefits to consumers, family members, and other indirect beneficiaries. This performance framework is focused on providing practitioners with indicators and incentives to provide better business development services to customers."*

These pre-selected indicators are described by McVay, according to her "BDS projects around the world typically measure performance in the following categories":

- *Scale*
- *Impact on MSME's and the wider economic/social environment*
- *Outreach*, meaning both the number of MSME's reached and the effort to provide services to people not served by existing markets
- *Sustainability of business service delivery and supplier institutions*
- *Cost-Effectiveness of program activities*

#### 2.2.2 BDS Performance Measurement Framework

McVay developed the BDS Performance Measurement Framework by using different goal categories on the vertical axes and the players on the horizontal. This framework should be used as a general guidance for the goals, specific indicators for assessing the goals, tools and methodologies for data collection and analysis (see table 1). The five different categories can be used to measure performance at different levels (players), as can be seen in the framework. In this research, the goal categories will be measured for the players 'MSE customer' and 'direct service provider', in this research respectively called MSME's and BDS providers.

During the initiation phase the overall indicators to be measured and monitored already have to be selected, but in the execution and closure phase of the project other, more specific indicators, have to be set. That is why McVay developed the five different measuring categories. The indicators given by her in these categories are only proposed, not compulsory and to be generally applied.

### *Proposed measurement indicators*

According to McVay the first step to take is to monitor and evaluate the program to get a general idea of what and how much has been done. Two categories will be measured in this phase: Scale and Outreach. Indicators determining these categories can be found in Table 1. A distinction in measuring is made between the BDS provider and -customer (MSME's).

After having measured the indicators determining the monitoring and evaluating phase, the framework proposes to measure the impact. McVay starts with explaining the methodological side of a good framework, or as she calls it a "*Methodology on Impact*," these are guidelines given by her on how to tackle the methodological side on measuring impact.

The BDS facilitator/provider will survey entrepreneurs and independent service providers using random sampling techniques.

A survey tool will be developed for customer satisfaction and for assessing standard business benefits (i.e., profits, sales, assets, employees). The BDS provider will develop another tool for assessing service-specific use and benefits.

The proportion of users will be calculated (i.e., the number of users divided by the number of acquirers).

The proportion of people benefiting will be calculated (i.e., the number of those benefiting divided by those acquiring).

Customers will be asked how their business has changed as a result of the services. Initially, customers will be asked an open-ended question about how they think the service benefited their business, and answers will be coded. Customers will then be asked specific follow-up questions to quantify specific business benefits (e.g., sales, profits) for the benefit categories they have identified.

Having taken these methodologies on impact as a starting point in designing indicators to measure impact, McVay proposes 5 indicators. L. Zandniapour et al (2004) describe how the indicators should be tracked for both MSME's and BDS providers in order to get a clear view on the impact the BDS-interventions have on MSME's and overall economic/social life:

#### **1. Customer satisfaction.**

- Client satisfaction with business services and/or provider – use of strategic consultancies, satisfaction with strategic consultancies
- Client perception of relevance of service to their needs
- Client perception of usefulness of BDS
- Repeat customers

#### **2. Service-specific use.** Percent of customers using the service as intended.

The BDS-facilitator will define the service-specific use.

- Number of MSME's aware of importance and availability of business service (including embedded services, inputs, and market linkages)
- Improved capacity to provide quality services to MSME's Factors

- (limiting the demand for consulting/training by MSME's)
  - Reasons MSME's reluctant to use consulting services
  - Effects of training on knowledge of MSME's needs
  - Effects of training on introduction of MSME's specific new products
3. **Service-specific benefits.** Percent of customers benefiting from the service as intended, and an indicator of the extent of the change. The BDS facilitator will define the service specific benefits.
- Immediate changes in service providers (e.g., new training courses, improved training courses, more diversification in training)
  - Shorter-term changes in service providers (rent space, hire temporary staff)
  - Longer term capacity changes in service providers (acquisition of productive assets, including space, equipment; new permanent staff, new or expanded facilities)
  - Institutional 'maturity' of service providers
  - Improved performance of business service providers
  - Increased sales and profits of service providers
4. **General business benefits.** Percentage of customers reporting an increase in:
- profits
  - sales
  - assets
  - employees
  - number of customers
  - product/service lines
  - decreased costs
- The extent of these benefits as measured by the average percentage change in these indicators that customers attribute to the BDS.
5. **Timeframe.** The BDS provider will state the timeframe of its analysis—i.e., how much time has elapsed between BDS service provision and the impact data collection?

The last two categories of the framework are determined by economic indicators. The categories to be measured are cost effectiveness and sustainability. The actual indicators can be found again in Table 1.

The framework given by McVay is very useful for this research because first of all it is developed especially to measure BDS projects and second it is a measuring tool that is able to be used as a monitoring and controlling tool. The indicators proposed in the framework are therefore used as a basis for developing an impact assessment tool for measuring performance and impact of IDEAS projects. It should be stressed that due to miss-planning no measures on performance or impact, before this research started, have been done whatsoever.



Player:	MSE Customer	Direct Service Provider	Service Facilitator	Marketplace
<b>Goal:</b>				
<i>Scale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cumulative number of entrepreneurs or farmers acquiring the service through commercial transactions</li> <li>Number acquiring per year</li> <li>Annual growth rate of number acquiring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cumulative number of entrepreneurs providing business development services directly to microentrepreneurs (or farmers)</li> <li>Same for NGOs or government institutions</li> <li>Number of copycats/providers</li> </ul>	None; scale is measured at the MSE and provider levels	None; scale is measured at the MSF and provider levels
<i>Outreach</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% owned by women</li> <li>% poor</li> <li>% with other barriers (e.g., geographic, ethnic)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of service delivery locations</li> </ul>	None; outreach is measured at the MSF and provider levels	Geographic spread of services
<i>Impact</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% of MSE customers who use the service as intended</li> <li>% of MSF customers who benefit as intended, and the extent of those benefits, when applicable</li> <li>Satisfaction level (scale of 1-5)</li> <li>% of repeat customers</li> <li>% change of MSF customers reporting standard business benefits (profits, assets, etc.)</li> <li>Timeframe of analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% of providers acquiring facilitative services who use them as intended</li> <li>% of providers acquiring facilitative services benefit as intended</li> <li>Satisfaction level (scale of 1-5)</li> <li>% of providers who report standard business benefits, percent change in these, and timeframe of analysis</li> </ul>	None; impact is measured at the MSF and provider levels	None; impact is measured at the MSF and provider levels, if there is a practical indicator, deployment effects could be assessed here
<i>Cost-Effectiveness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total transaction costs to acquire and use the service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For private sector or cooperative providers: up-front investment costs to provide the service</li> <li>For nonprofit providers: service provision costs to be included in facilitator indicators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost per MSF customer acquiring, annual and cumulative</li> <li>Cost per MSF customer using, annual and cumulative</li> <li>Cost per MSF customer benefiting, annual and cumulative</li> <li>Cumulative and last year's cost per person who increased sales, profits, assets, employees, number of customers, product or service lines, or who reduced costs</li> <li>Same for providers</li> </ul>	None; cost-effectiveness is not measured at the market level
<i>Sustainability</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Payback period: average amount of time it took for an entrepreneur's or farmer's investment in the BDS to pay for itself in increased income, as reported by the entrepreneur/farmer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual profits or cost recovery of the BDS and facilitative services provided, broken down by activities ranging from pure facilitation to direct service provision</li> <li>Institutional independence of service provision and facilitation</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comparison of number of people serviced to program costs</li> <li>Number of copycats</li> </ul>

**Table 1 - BDS Performance Measurement Framework (source: McVay, 1999)**

## 2.3 Conclusions

To answer the first part of the research question thoroughly an overview of this chapter is given:

- In project management, also in BDS project management, four phases have to be run through to successfully (or not) complete a project, as discussed in PMLC.
- For performance measurement in project management special attention should be given to the monitoring and controlling activities during the last two phases of the PMLC. Therefore the research started with analysing the project cycle of SPEED I. To analyse the project life cycle more general performance measurement models used to monitor and control are the Balance Score Card and EFQM-model. These models are not specifically aimed at BDS performance. A BDS impact assessment model does not only have to have specific BDS impact indicators. As described, impact should according to many researchers, be assessed in a broader view, therefore the indicators used in these two models are very useful in capturing data that a specific impact tool does not capture.
- Within BDS it is important to not only focus on impact but on performance measurement as a whole, therefore McVay proposes to use: *Performance Measurement Framework*. Performance measurement in BDS has been looked at, especially McVay's framework for performance measurement in BDS. To assess the impact of projects, McVay proposes not only to do an impact assessment, but instead use her framework to measure performance by measuring scale, outreach, impact, cost-effectiveness and sustainability. Her recommendations are therefore used as a basis in this research for selecting indicators and setting up a tool for assessing the impact. The actual selection of indicators will be discussed in Chapter 4 of this report.

Concluding from theoretic point of view it can be said that a framework measuring not only impact, but performance as a whole, suits best for this research. McVay's Framework and Balanced Score Card and EFQM model proved to contain most usable indicators.

The selected indicators from McVay's Framework are:

- All indicators in the goal categories – Outreach, Impact, Cost Effectiveness and Sustainability
- 'Cumulative number of entrepreneurs or farmers acquiring the service through commercial transactions' and 'Copycat providers' from the goal category of Scale.

The selected indicators from Balanced Score Card and EFQM-model:

- Learning and growth criteria - objectives, targets, initiatives and measures
- Customers – satisfaction of customers

- 
- People and Society – impact on whole society

### 3 Performance Measurement in Practice

The previous chapter dealt with what theory says about project management and performance measurement. In this chapter the practical and organisational side of the PMLC and performance measurement are discussed. This chapter is based on answering the second part of the first research question.

First the SPEED I - IDEAS project is evaluated and discussed in terms of the PMLC and measuring methods used during the project. After that, monitoring and controlling measuring methods of SPEED II are discussed; PMLC for SPEED II can not yet be discussed because the project is still ongoing and also for the scope of this research the PMLC is at this stage not relevant. Last some lessons learned from experts are discussed that were taken into account during setting up and conducting this research.

#### 3.1 SPEED I - IDEAS Projects

Within the overall project SPEED I the emphasis has been on the implementation of IDEAS (Innovation and Development in Enterprise Assistance Scheme) projects. The purpose of SPEED I was only to guide the different IDEAS projects through the implementation process. After successful implementation the proponents should be able to market the service they offer themselves. The IDEAS Fund is an open financing facility earmarked to create additional flexibility in supporting the piloting and development of new innovative instruments that will go to support enterprise growth, mainly in difficult or emerging markets (non traditional exports, food processing, ICT, start-ups, etc) and to assist the development of sustainable instruments for service provision to micro-enterprises that are unable to access the commercially marketed products, the SPEED I - IDEAS project started in 2004 (SPEED, operating manual 2006).

The project and its measurement methods are discussed by applying the different phases of the project management life cycle to SPEED I. The phases being described are mostly based on documented data and information gathered by interviewing key employees that worked under SPEED I.

During the implementation of IDEAS projects, the only responsibility for SPEED Ghana was the implementation of the different IDEAS projects, monitoring of projects therefore only took place during the project implementation phases. It was not important to and no emphasis was placed on monitoring and evaluation after the implementation and therefore performance measurement data has not been gathered.

##### 3.1.1 Measuring Methods in Project Management Life Cycle

In this section the different phases of the PMLC are discussed for SPEED I, also at the end a conclusion is drawn.

### *Initiation phase*

Within the initiation phase, the first step taken was to find BDS providers with projects that could fit into the realm of IDEAS. It had to be an innovative project plan that could benefit MSME's. After an initial assessment BDS providers were selected and invited by SPEED to be informed about an extensive project proposal they had to write. The Initiation phase was run through three times under SPEED I, because there have been three different 'calls' for BDS project providers to hand in proposals.

For this research not much usable data is gathered from the initiation phase, only on some projects the evaluation papers were filed, otherwise not much about the selection process was filed.

### *Planning phase*

After the proposals were evaluated and final providers had been selected the actual planning of the different project phases began. All projects were divided into three or more project phases, and for each phase there was a budget allocation. All specific IDEAS projects had different project targets and objectives. Also during this phase, no usable data, such as baseline data, has been gathered.

### *Execution phase*

The actual execution of the project usually went in no less than 3 'budget phases', in which the total available money for a specific project had been divided into three unequal amounts. Each project had to accomplish certain targets during each phase.

*The first phase* in which the BDS provider received the first part of the money to be used to set up the project. During this phase no proper monitoring, evaluation or measuring has been done on objectives or targets of the different projects to see whether or not they were still in line with projected objectives or targets of the projects and to see whether or not they had to be adapted. Only monitoring was done on spending, to see what had to be rightfully reimbursed to BDS providers.

During the *second phase* the provider would get the lump sum of the budgeted money after which activities again could commence. During the execution phase no actual measuring of performance was done, in other words, no adaptations could be made to goals, objectives or targets because it was unknown how a project performed, so the project became more and more uncontrollable. Unfortunately, in the beginning of this phase no measuring system had been selected and no general or project specific indicators to measure performance or impact had been selected.

*The third phase* in which the providers received the last part of the money has not been reached in time by many projects due to delays and/or cancellation. The majority of projects, and all projects selected for this research, have eventually

been completed though. But again, no useful data has been gathered, so it has become difficult for both BDS providers carrying the project as well as for SPEED to get any information about the 'success' of the project. Furthermore it has become impossible to make a final evaluation about the projects based on data gathered during the execution of the projects. The only evaluation that can be made would be based on the progress reports which are not reliable and valid, and based on subjective evaluations.

Monitoring and controlling of the projects, however, has been done. Monitoring has been done through keeping track on the whole process of the projects and by project visits and meetings with project teams and controlling has been done by collecting 'spending evidence'<sup>1</sup>.

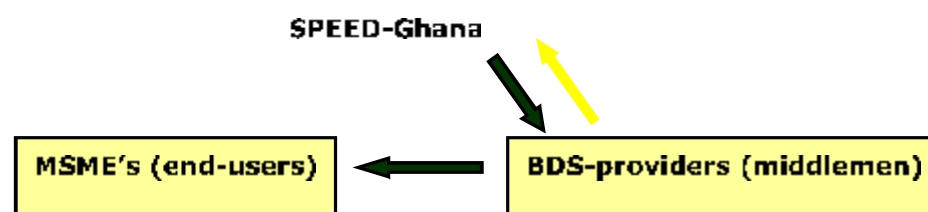
#### *Project Closure*

When the SPEED I project closed, most projects had not been completed, because of this the commitments made under SPEED I have been taken over by SPEED II to, if possible, complete all the projects.

#### *Conclusions*

An overall conclusion about the data collecting methods under SPEED I projects concerning performance and impact of projects can be drawn. The first phase was done more or less consistent. During the first phase some overall indicators should have been established for measuring performance and impact, and baseline data should have been gathered and documented. During the execution phase the goal, objectives and project targets should have been adapted to the situation and project specific measuring indicators should have been selected. Due to the fact that neither of these important steps has been taken, not much useful data has been collected and no ongoing impact reports have been made.

To adapt the causal model of Downing et al, 'BDS Intervention Cycle' described in the previous Chapter, to the realm of this research, the interventions of SPEED Ghana can be visualised as can be seen in figure 6. It shows what actually has been done during the different project phases. The outcomes of SPEED interventions are part of this research to conclude on and can therefore be found in the conclusions chapter.



**Figure 6 – IDEAS Interventions in practice**

<sup>1</sup> Spending evidence: collection of receipts during each project phase to justify the spending of BDS providers

The green arrows represent the interventions that have occurred, SPEED Ghana only facilitated BDS by supporting BDS providers in their projects and BDS providers stimulated or supported MSME's, SPEED Ghana does not support individual enterprises (MSME's). During each step, each phase of the project management life cycle should have been run through. The yellow arrow represents the 'spending evidence' that has been collected after each budget phase.

As can be seen in the figure, information has, besides spending evidence, only been flowing one way, no actual performance feedback has been received or collected at the different levels. The initiation phase and project planning phase have been run through, but during the execution and closing phase the monitoring and controlling activities that took place were not sufficient enough to capture the data needed to measure the performance and impact of the project, so the pre-established goals and objectives have not been measured during the projects. It is also uncertain in what way the providers have gone through the different project phases. To be selected they had to 'deliver' all the steps required in the initiation phase, but unfortunately it is not known whether this has been measured or monitored. It should be stressed that most of the measuring during this research is done approximately two years after most projects were finished. Therefore the data collected is of only one moment in time and there is a possibility that it is unreliable due to the fact that no usable performance- or impact measurement data has been collected during the different project phases to compare.

During the execution phase many projects suffered a delay or even cancellation. The most obvious reason for the delay and cancellation is that due to the fact that in the previous phase the goals, objectives and targets have not been updated, so not adapted, they could not be controlled anymore.

Controlling a project only by collecting 'spending evidence' is only a very small part of what a good controlling system should cover.

### 3.2 SPEED II

In this section the current measuring methods and indicators of SPEED II are discussed. SPEED II aims to support Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME's) by providing better access to financial and non-financial services. The idea is that with these services, the MSME sector will grow in terms of asset building, turnover, income and create new jobs. These expected developments in turn are linked to the Millennium Development Goals to cut by half extreme poverty in the world by 2015, an objective that is also strongly endorsed and supported by the Governments of Ghana, Germany and Denmark (*SPEED Ghana, Inception Report, 2007*). In chapter 6, SPEED II will be discussed again but then it will be analysed whether the impact assessment can lead to improved measurement methods.

The overall objective of SPEED-II is to contribute to socially and geographically balanced development of growth-oriented MSMEs through market-oriented financial and non-financial business support instruments.

At the start of SPEED II, 21 projects of SPEED I were still active. Because of commitments made under SPEED I, these projects and commitments made were 'proceeded' under SPEED II.

### 3.2.1 Measuring Methods SPEED II

Compared to the methods used under SPEED I projects, the current situation is quite different. The first major difference is that the current performance measuring and monitoring system is based on AURA (Auftragsrahmen) set up by GTZ, and aims at putting more emphasis on project results and more flexibility for implementation. This way there is an overall base- and guideline in setting up a measuring and monitoring system.

### 3.2.2 Measuring Indicators SPEED II

In SPEED II indicators are measured at three different levels:

- *Direct benefits (or objective)*
  - Direct benefits in general – socially and geographically balanced development of MSME's
  - Direct benefit for BDS components – quantity and quality of market-oriented BDS for MSME sector increases in main urban areas and also in more remote areas of the country
- *Use of outputs*
  - Improved awareness and understanding of BDS by MSME's
  - Supported BDS providers countrywide have an increased offer of services
  - Multi-Stakeholders cooperate and coordinate MSME development initiatives
- *Outputs*
  - In the tourism sector, 3 types of BDS instruments and products are developed and promoted: Market Access, Skills Development and Quality Management.
  - In the wood products sector, 4 types of BDS instruments and products are developed and promoted: Market Access, Skills Development, Production Processes and Quality Management.
  - Development and mainstreaming of a BDS Knowledge Bank.

Every level and sub-level has its own specific set of measuring indicators. These specific measuring indicators can be found in Appendix I. The actual indicators selected from the current monitoring system can be found under Appendix II.

## 3.3 Expert Lessons

During this research, some experts in different fields were consulted. While setting



up the research BDS experts were contacted by asking them how an impact assessment tool could be set up and how to apply this in a developing country like Ghana. Almost all of the experts recommended more or less the same approaches, developing a framework with indicators that could be used in Ghana.

Because of the limited foreign research experience of the researcher it seemed, before consulting more BDS experts, more important to get an overall idea on how and what doing research in developing countries is, and besides that to find out what and how Ghana is, i.e. developing and cultural wise. Therefore some more experienced researchers in doing research in developing countries and some experts who worked and lived for many years in Ghana were consulted. Also during the actual field research in Ghana some experienced Dutch researchers in Ghana were consulted.

Many important general lessons on how to behave, anticipate and get around cultural problems and differences and how to conduct a research in Ghana were learned. Many of the guidelines given by the experts were directly or indirectly used in conducting the field research. From small cultural differences, like never accepting something with your left hand, to major research reliability and validity issues, such as many Ghanaians want to please the researcher and will therefore say yes or say what he/she thinks the researcher wants to hear. Other cultural things learned were that many Ghanaians are un- / low educated, illiterate or do not speak sufficient English.

Partly due to these expert lessons learned this research could be conducted more smoothly and cultural and organisational differences could be anticipated because of understanding the background of the Ghanaian culture some more.

Mostly during the field research in Ghana, BDS experts were consulted both internally and externally. All information retracted from these consultations made the understanding of what BDS in practice actually is. It created awareness and understanding for the researcher on the need of BDS and how BDS is facilitated and provided to MSME's in Ghana. Besides that the experts gave some insights in what MSME's in Ghana are, how they operate and how they do business. BDS experts also gave some insight in what to expect and what not to expect from MSME's while interviewing them. This in its turn helped very much in selecting the indicators and developing questions.

### 3.4 Conclusions

During the initiation phase of SPEED I purpose, goals, scope and objectives were not defined properly which resulted in the inability of the project team to measure performance of the project from the beginning on. After the initiation and project planning phases, no specific indicators were selected to monitor and control the projects during execution and closure phases. The lesson learned from this is that without a proper set-up of a project it is impossible to conduct ongoing performance or impact measurement.

The indicators selected for measuring the project performance under SPEED II have

a much better foundation and were already selected at the beginning of SPEED II. Therefore the indicators used for SPEED II that are selected and used in developing the impact assessment tool for this research are on Use of Output level:

- Improved awareness and understanding of BDS by MSME's
- Supported BDS providers countrywide have an increased offer of services

To conclude this section an answer is given to the second part of the first research question.

Practical lessons learned are:

- Experts in several fields gave useful and applicable information and learned some valuable lessons. Practical lessons learned are on cultural, business and research level.


Organisational lessons learned are:

- The monitoring and controlling methods used to measure performance and impact during SPEED I were not sufficient. A recommendation for a better way of monitoring and controlling is given in figure 7.
- The methods for monitoring and controlling projects and thus measuring performance and impact are for SPEED II more structured and have a clear foundation. Indicators can be used in developing the impact assessment tool.

The lessons learned from experts were on:

- Cultural level – how to deal and how to understand the Ghanaian culture
- Business level – how do MSME's do business and how to understand them
- Research level – what is BDS, how to deal with MSME's and what to expect during interviews

## 4 Impact Assessment Tool

 Improvement is impossible without measurement. (Mark Graham Brown)

The development process of the tool for assessing the impact at MSME level of selected IDEAS projects is discussed in this chapter. First the units of analysis to assess the impact on are discussed and selected. Next the methodological part of the tool is discussed in the section about research design of the tool. After that the indicators are selected, developed and operationalised. The final section in this chapter discusses the completion of the impact assessment tool.

### 4.1 Units of analysis

For this research the units of analysis are chosen first because the actual development and design of the tool depends a great deal on how many projects are chosen, and participant size (total number of MSME's).

The units of analysis are not only MSME's but also the service providers. The reasons why service providers were also chosen are:

- To find out more general information about the project and to see whether overall project goals, objectives and targets have been met.
- To come to a final list of MSME's to be interviewed the help of the providers was essential, because SPEED Ghana does not have direct contact with the beneficiary MSME's.
- To have a so called 'double check' on some indicators.
- Because they can be seen as experts in the field of BDS. They can give extra insights.

MSME's are divided into a 'during SPEED intervention' and 'after SPEED intervention' group, to see how the project has developed over time. In this way some kind of timeline is created because the two groups have acquired the same service at different moments in time.

#### 4.1.1 Selection of BDS Providers

The projects that are selected for the impact tool to be tested on are *Crossbridge Consult*, *Hopespring Foundation* and *Oguua Business Incubator*. The full description of the projects with project objectives and outcomes can be found under Appendix III.

These projects are carefully selected together with employees of SPEED Ghana who participated in the SPEED I project or were directly connected to it. In the case of selecting the projects it is only possible to make a selection according to the purposive sampling technique (Babbie, 2004). The selection of the projects is done based on the level of successful completion of the projects. These projects have all been successfully completed and have run through all project phases. Another

reason for selecting these projects is the fact that within these projects there is the biggest chance of being able to measure and being able to interview the BDS proponent and getting names and addresses of beneficiary MSME's. Of course this gives a greater chance of biased measurement data, because now only the 'successful' and 'reachable' projects are being measured. However, without the 'successful' and 'reachable' projects there will not be anything to measure at all. Also these projects will give more valid and reliable data, the fact that they have been successful gives them lesser reasons, compared to the unsuccessful projects, to manipulate data.

#### 4.1.2 Selection of MSME's

To assess the impact, a list of participating MSME's is collected from BDS providers. This list of participants consists of 'during' and 'after' SPEED Ghana intervention participants. After receiving a final participants list, MSME's (both 'during' and 'after' participants) were selected according to a combination of simple random sampling and stratified sampling. Selection of MSME's has been done systematically; MSME's in the same line of business were selected amongst the 'during' and 'after' participants to be compared. Stratified sampling was used in cases where there was access to a somewhat larger group of participants operating in a variety of different businesses. In this case participants were stratified according to business they operate in. Within each stratum selection has been done according to a simple random sample method. In this way, the SPEED-II focus sectors have been taking into account as well, so data gathered on the focus groups can be used for SPEED II as well.

In consult with SPEED Ghana experts and the supervisor a choice is made that for this research to have a control group it is too difficult to select a sample, because virtually any MSME would be a target for the control group. To establish a causal relationship between the service and the benefits an MSME has had is not possible, because the service was not received 'all the time', also other factors could have been of influence. To compare a control group which did not receive this treatment (and maybe ten other treatments) with the 'treatment group' whose causal relation cannot be established, no conclusions can be drawn because it does not say anything about the impact of the service. Theoretic validation of this can be found under Appendix IV.

#### 4.2 Method of Data Collection

For a research like this the field research should have been based on a dynamic research structure - a longitudinal research - because when assessing performance or impact, data at several moments in time has to be gathered to give valid and accurate conclusions. But hardly any progress data on performance or impact has been gathered over the project cycle phases, therefore in this research it is impossible to give conclusions based on data gathered over more than one moment in time. This research is therefore based on a more static research design with retrospective aspects in it (Vennix, 2005).

The data gathered on BDS-providers is mostly qualitative data because:

- Only 3 selected projects are too little to make generalised statistical conclusions on all SPEED I - IDEAS projects.
- Before the field research there was the chance that within each of the projects only a limited number of MSME's would want to cooperate. With a limited number there would simply not be enough data to make any objective statistical analysis.

According to some researchers a qualitative style of interviewing to collect impact data is not a suitable style, because in determining a causal relationship between the intervention and the impact (changes or effects on participants) more control conditions are required. However in the setting this research has been conducted a quantitative approach would have had more negative influences on the validity and reliability of data compared to a qualitative approach. According to Ezemenari et al (1999) *"the validity and reliability in a quantitative approach depend on the precision of measuring. The level of skill and training of the individuals who will be responsible for administering a quantitative survey is important to determining the reliability of the data. In addition, to ensure precision using the quantitative approach, a large enough sample of the population of interest is taken to ensure that the estimates are precise to a specific degree"*. The level of skill and training of the interviewers can not be guaranteed, because if interviewees do not speak sufficient English a local research assistant takes over the interview, she is beforehand not sufficient enough skilled and trained. Also the sample of population could not be guaranteed because it greatly depended on the willingness of MSME's to participate. Therefore in this specific setting a qualitative open interviewing approach with some minor quantitative aspects is more suitable.

Before selecting and operationalising indicators the research design and especially the method of data collection were chosen. The selection and development of the indicators depends for a great deal on the method of data collection. Within a qualitative research design there are several ways of collecting impact data, two of the most common are observing and interviewing. Furthermore, the choice for a data collection method depends on the following aspects:

- Purpose of the research
- Availability of cooperating BDS providers and MSME's
- Reachability of BDS providers and MSME's
- Available time to do the actual field research
- Available resources and budget to do the actual field research
- Complexity of the questions to be addressed

Based on these aspects a choice is made that for both BDS providers and MSME's an interviewing questionnaire measuring different indicators is used. The interview style used is a structured standardised interview, asking pre-determined open-ended questions (Vennix, 2005), but with the possibility to deviate from the questions where and when necessary. The providers and MSME's were visited and interviewed in order to collect data and to see in what kind of setting their business

is and what it is they exactly do. Another reason why providers and MSME's were visited was to improve validity, if the interviewees were contacted through the internet or phone, there was the possibility that questions were misunderstood or that answers were misinterpreted.

### **4.3 Selecting and Operationalising Indicators**

For the purpose of this research the focus is on holistic performance measurement tools, because they tend to look at the organisation as a whole. Therefore, as discussed in chapter two, the framework developed by McVay is selected. For this research McVay's framework only does not suit as a holistic framework, therefore Balanced Score Card and EFQM model are selected as well to retrieve indicators from.

The indicators selected from theory are used in a broad way to measure impact and/or performance of BDS projects. When the actual field research in Ghana was set up, it was soon found out that not all theoretic indicators could be used in the impact assessment tool, because they simply could not be measured or no data was available. Therefore the indicators used from theory as well as from practice were selected together with experts of SPEED Ghana who worked under IDEAS I projects. It should be stressed again that the indicators that were selected have not been measured whatsoever during the project phases. This way it limited the chance of collecting valid and reliable data.

#### **4.3.1 Goal Categories**

Before selecting the actual indicators, the overall goal categories were selected. Each indicator belongs to a goal category, based on the same way McVay uses goal categories in her framework for measuring performance.

##### **Outreach**

The first goal category in the impact assessment tool is outreach of the project. Outreach shows in a broad way how far a project or service reaches MSME's.

##### **Satisfaction**

The second category is the level of satisfaction. To measure the satisfaction, it shows in a certain way the success of the project, why it was chosen and it also gives feedback about what has been done well and what should be done differently in future projects. All theoretic models suggest in some way satisfaction indicators. McVay and Michlbradt suggest a service tool for satisfaction measurement. Therefore this goal category is an important part.

##### **Awareness of BDS**

The third category is awareness of BDS. This category measures the level of knowledge and recognition of the importance of BDS in reducing poverty and on the one side building a sustainable business environment and on the other side creating a sustainable BDS market. By measuring this, it becomes clear how willing

providers are to offer services and how willing MSME's are to invest in these services and really understand the benefits and what BDS is and has to offer. This goal category is not based on any theoretical model but purely based on practical research findings before selecting the goal categories and indicators. All BDS experts talked about the level of awareness of MSME's, do MSME's even know what BDS is and how to acquire it? These were very often heard questions. Also within SPEED II the new focus is on visibility of BDS, awareness can show if and how BDS is even 'visible' amongst MSME's. Therefore this goal category is developed to get a deeper understanding of the reasons why BDS is provided and why BDS is acquired or not.

### **Impact**

The fourth category is impact of using BDS. Measuring this category shows the actual direct and/or indirect impact a BDS project has on MSME's, because it shows the benefits of a specific Business Development Service and it shows if and how an enterprise has grown over the period during and after the service provided to them, both in quantitative and qualitative terms.

In the next part, the goal categories are explained in more detail and indicators are selected and operationalised. The indicators defining the four different categories differ somewhat for BDS providers and MSME's. For BDS providers the level of measuring is on a more general level and for MSME's it is directly focused on measuring impact at that level. The indicators are developed and selected partly based on the criteria McVay's gives for selecting and developing new indicators. The way her criteria are applied is discussed after the selection.

After having selected the goal categories, they are operationalised into different overall indicators, each indicator is operationalised into specific Interview Measurement Indicators (IMI's); these are the basis and guideline for gathering data on the overall indicator. The IMI's are developed in such a way that when the actual method of data collection is chosen they can be implemented rather easy without having to make too many alterations for future impact assessments or performance measurements. The complete table with selected and operationalised goal categories, indicators and IMI's can be found under Appendix V, VI and VII.

#### **4.3.2 Measurement Indicators**

In this section the indicators per goal category are discussed.

### **Outreach**

The basis for this goal category lies with McVay's framework. She measures different indicators that define outreach. The indicators used in this research to measure outreach for this goal category both for BDS provider and MSME's were almost the same.

Indicators measured at both BDS provider and MSME level:

- *Type of MSME's*

- Promotion and distribution of the service
- Copycat providers

Indicators measured only at BDS provider level:

- Geographical scale

Goal Category	Indicators MSME's	Indicators BDS Providers
<b>Outreach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Type of MSME</li> <li>- Promotion and distribution of service</li> <li>- Copycat providers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Type MSME</li> <li>- Geographical scale</li> <li>- Promotion and distribution of service</li> <li>- Copycat providers</li> </ul>

**Table 2 – Measuring Indicators for Goal Category Outreach**

### **Satisfaction**

This goal category is mainly based on McVay's indicator of customer satisfaction. Besides only looking into McVay's Framework also the Balances Score Card's perspective of 'Customer' and the EFQM-model enabler of 'Customer Results' are used to select indicators. Indicators measured at both BDS provider and MSME level:

- Customer satisfaction
- Repeat customers
- Learning criteria

Goal Category	Indicators MSME's	Indicators BDS Providers
<b>Satisfaction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Customer satisfaction</li> <li>- Repeat customers</li> <li>- Learning Criteria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Customer satisfaction</li> <li>- Repeat customers</li> <li>- Learning Criteria</li> </ul>

**Table 3 – Measuring Indicators for Goal Category Satisfaction**

### **Awareness**

This goal category of Awareness is not actually based on an existing category or indicator from theory. After several discussions with experts it became clear that many MSME's do not even know what BDS is, what to use it for or how and where to acquire it. With that in mind and looking into specific BDS theory, it became clear that most existing measuring tools do not focus on awareness of MSME's within the field of BDS. In most theoretic tools awareness is not measured as such, also McVay's framework does not specify this or does not go deeper into this topic, within some goal categories she however includes some indicators to measure related topics of awareness. But because, as already said, for this research the focus is on holistic tools to research reasons and motives behind the performance or impact of a program, this goal category is added. The measurement indicators however are partly based on specific indicators from different goal categories from McVay's framework.

Indicators measured at both BDS provider and MSME level are:



- *Other Business Development Services*
- *Performance measurement*

Indicators measured only at BDS provider level are:

- *Other supporting organisations:*

Indicators measured only at MSME level are:

- *Awareness of BDS*
- *Reasons for acquiring service*
- *Relevance of the service*

Goal Category	Indicators MSME's	Indicators BDS Providers
<b>Awareness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Awareness of BDS</li> <li>- Reason for acquiring service</li> <li>- Relevance of the service</li> <li>- Other (Business Development) Services</li> <li>- Performance measurement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Other Business Development Services</li> <li>- Other supporting organisations</li> <li>- Performance measurement</li> </ul>

**Table 4 Measuring Indicators for Goal Category Awareness**

### **Impact**

Indicators measured at both BDS provider and MSME level are:

- *Direct benefits*
- *Cost of acquiring the service*

Indicators measured at BDS provider level:

- *Project objectives:*

Indicators measured at MSME level:

- *Financial Benefits:*
- *Sustainability of benefits:*

Goal Category	Indicators MSME's	Indicator BDS Providers
<b>Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Direct benefits</li> <li>- Financial Benefits</li> <li>- Cost of acquiring service</li> <li>- Sustainability of benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Direct benefits</li> <li>- Cost of acquiring the service</li> <li>- Project objectives</li> </ul>

**Table 5 – Measuring Indicators for Goal Category Impact**

### 4.3.3 Indicator Selection Criteria

Criteria for selecting/developing indicators and guarding validity and reliability were selected. The criteria are partly based on McVay's criteria for selecting performance indicators and partly based on major pitfalls in performance measurement.

McVay's Criteria	Pitfalls In Performance Measurement
<u>Indicators should be:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Standardized across a broad mix of business development services</li> <li>- Comparable across program size and maturity</li> <li>- User friendly</li> <li>- Valid &amp; Reliable</li> <li>- Multiple uses for both evaluating performance and learning from practice</li> <li>- The chosen indicators are quantified so that practitioners can track actual against intended outcomes at each stage in the process</li> <li>- Applicable for the specific setting</li> <li>- Incentives for good practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gaming/Manipulation of performance data</li> <li>- Unaligned metrics</li> <li>- Cause and effect of outcomes are not easily established</li> <li>- Collecting inconsistent, unnecessary and conflicting data</li> <li>- Collecting too much or too little data</li> <li>- Tunnel vision/sub-optimisation</li> <li>- Myopia</li> <li>- Ossification</li> <li>- Misinterpretation</li> <li>- Low validity &amp; reliability</li> </ul>

**Table 6 – Indicator Selection Criteria**

#### **McVay's criteria**

*Performance indicators should be:*

- *Standardized across a broad mix of business development services.* – The indicators are chosen to be measured on a broad scale and to be used generally in measuring impact of BDS in Ghana as well as to measure the specific projects without having to make major adaptations
- *Comparable across program size and maturity.*– Most of the IDEAS projects differ in size and maturation and because the selected indicators are measured in the same way on each project, they are comparable
- *User friendly* – Indicators are selected/developed to make it also possible for the local research assistant, with limited experience, to understand and use them as well
- *Multiple uses for both evaluating performance and learning from practice* – By measuring satisfaction level, awareness of BDS and learning criteria, the indicators can be used to (re-) design BDS offerings, because these

indicators show what can be changed in the future to make projects even more effective. It also gives a better understanding on MSME's opinions towards awareness, use and relevance of BDS

- *The chosen indicators are quantified so that practitioners can track actual against intended outcomes at each stage in the process.* – In a qualitative research not all indicators can be quantified, because an opinion can not be quantified. Therefore a conclusion can be made that this criterion and the prior one do not completely match because when learning from practice, opinions have to be asked and they are hard to quantify. However, a number of the selected indicators are quantified and a number of the non-quantified indicators can be quantified into overall percentages (e.g. percentage that is satisfied with the service provided). This criterion became therefore a weakness for this research, because it proved impossible to base all indicators on quantifiable aspects.
- *Incentives for good practice.* – By measuring direct benefits and learning criteria it becomes clear how and if MSME's benefit and what needs to be changed in the future to even have more benefits or benefits at another level (other demand).
- *Applicable for the specific setting* – The indicators are specifically developed and selected to be applied in Ghana on both BDS providers and MSME's.

All these criteria are taken into account in selecting the indicators. When they are all taken into account, they immediately have an effect on the degree of validity and reliability of the indicators. Therefore the last criterion used for selecting performance indicators is: Performance indicators should be:

- Valid & Reliable

### ***Pitfalls in Performance Measurement***

The major pitfalls that are considered to have a strong effect on the validity and reliability of the research serve as criteria for selecting the indicators. They were taken into account very well before and during the indicator selection process. It is recommended to always anticipate on them before the actual data collection starts, because anticipating on the pitfalls is a good method to reduce the change of selecting invalid or unreliable indicators and collecting invalid and unreliable data.

#### *Gaming/Manipulation of performance data*

Participants in projects and programs try to make their program data look better, especially when accurate data is not available. The chance that this occurs is rather high, especially in the case of micro enterprises, e.g. food vendors do not write down every sale and cost they make and how much their sales rose after intervention. It is practically impossible to avoid this problem especially in developing countries, it is therefore always important to remember that measured data are an approximation of the actual system.

#### *Unaligned metrics*

Research metrics and goals do not support the organisational strategic goals. The

only way to avoid this pitfall is by starting to understand the organisation's goals. First get to know the organisational vision and mission and project goals, then integrate them in the research. In this research, this pitfall was tried to be avoided by focusing, besides on vision, mission and goals, on SPEED-Ghana's current situation in measuring performance in projects, and requirements internal experts suggest concerning performance indicators.

*Cause and effect of outcomes are not easily established*

Outcomes can reveal the impact of a program but without collaborating data it will become almost impossible to see the causes of the outcome. When this happens, impact cannot be assessed, therefore all available collaborating data must be collected to give conclusions on the outcomes of different projects.

*Collecting inconsistent, unnecessary and conflicting data*

This pitfall can occur when the scope of the research is unclear and boundaries are not set. Before actual data collection, it is important to know who and what is being measured and why. Therefore measuring indicators should be defined and chosen to measure the same things in different cases and get consistent, necessary and non-conflicting data

*Collecting too much or too little data*

This pitfall has the same problems as the previous one. Also by pre-establishing indicators, the correct amount of useful data can be collected.

*Tunnel vision/sub-optimisation*

Focus is too much on the same areas, therefore other important areas remain unmeasured. The problems of this pitfall are common to the problems in the prior two pitfalls, scope of the research and boundaries. But an extra problem is that the avoidance technique from the previous pitfalls, pre-established indicators, can actually be the source of this pitfall. If the indicators are chosen based on too little sources, this pitfall has the biggest negative consequence by affecting also other pitfalls.

Therefore not only should pre-established indicators be chosen, but they should be based on well- founded decisions and in line with literature, organisational goals and objectives and experts opinions.

*Myopia*

The tendency to focus too much on short term issues at the expense of long term issues that may show up only after some years. Because the time this research takes is only half a year, it is very hard to make sure that after the research has been finished, measuring will still take place. However, to avoid the myopia problem, if possible also indicators will be chosen that measure performance and impact on a long term as well.

*Ossification*

It means that the researcher(s) is unwilling to change the performance measure

scheme once it has been set up. This pitfall is under the researcher's own control, for this research it means that criticism about the impact assessment tool and about research methods have to be taken into account very well.

#### *Misinterpretation*

The failure to recognise the complexity of the environment is always, especially in other non-western countries, a present danger. It is wise to try to see things as much as possible through the eyes of the other culture and/or environment. Not to judge immediately according to western standards, also trying to understand why things happen the way they do helps to accept and appreciate a totally different culture and/or environment. Therefore to possibly avoid this pitfall it is important to talk to and listen to local people or learn from other western people having experience in dealing with complexity of different cultures and/or environments. For this research both locals and internationals having experience in Ghana have been consulted.

#### *Low Validity & Reliability of data*

Because of the importance of collecting valid and reliable data in the next section this is discussed in more detail.

#### 4.3.4 Validity & Reliability

Validity and reliability of data are sometimes hard to maintain, especially in subjective matters, where manipulation can occur. Manipulation is hard to avoid, but there are methodological ways to keep validity and reliability high. Collecting data should be done according to pre-established strict methodological rules guarding validity and reliability.

In every research, also in this research, pitfalls occurred at some point. Pitfalls that actually occurred during the interviewing phase

- Gaming / manipulation of data interviewees tried to make the data look better for personal reasons or because they think the researcher only wants to hear 'good news'.
- Misinterpretation due to the interviewer's cultural background sometimes he misunderstood and/or misinterpreted answers.

Validity pitfalls that occurred were:

- Researcher is not objective interviewer is because of prejudice or because of opinions from third persons not objective.
- Cultural differences: interviewer and interviewee have different cultural backgrounds, therefore they do not understand each other or they do not want to try to understand each others' differences in e.g. language and behaviour.

- Because of using open ended questions in the interviews, still it remained difficult to simplify the questions to the degree that all interviewees were able to understand the questions. The positive side of open ended questions was there was always the possibility of explaining the questions or deviating a little from the direct subject, to eventually come to an answer.

Reliability pitfalls that occurred were:

- No generalisations of the whole IDEAS projects can be made for the fact that only three projects have been assessed.
- Within the projects not all participating MSME's were willing to cooperate in this research. This means that at both provider and MSME level only a small percentage of the population has been measured.
- Due to cultural and language difficulties sometimes the local interviewer had to take over or undertake the interview, this has an effect on reliability because then circumstances are not the same during all interviews.
- Interviewees tended to talk a lot, and not talk about the questions they are asked, but about the things they have in their minds at that moment. They then try to link their current problems to answering the question.
- Interviewees had the tendency to 'help' the researcher by giving very positive answers and answers they thought the interviewer(s) wanted to hear.
- Because most services were provided over two years ago, not all interviewed participants were able to fully remember all the details about the service. Some were not able to remember anything; these interviews could not be used in drawing conclusions.

When the pitfalls occurred it was important to find a way to deal with them so they did not influence the research too much in a negative way. How to deal with them is not a black and white matter, for it is different in every single situation. Therefore no single one answer can be produced on how to deal with pitfalls once they occur, but by establishing goals, purpose, objectives and scope in the initiation phase and by choosing a suitable measurement tool many of the pitfalls can be avoided, because by creating clarity and objectivity and by developing and using a tool, a lot of uncertainties can be uncovered beforehand. Also by using a specific and good measurement tool, a more structured way of measuring is guaranteed. In the next section it is discussed how, among others, the chance of these pitfalls occurring was reduced.

#### 4.4 Impact Assessment tool

The tool for assessing the impact has now been shaped after the measurement indicators selection and operationalisation.

This section gives an answer to the research question and a short overview of the previous sections, in which the whole structure for developing the actual assessment tool is described. Eventually this section leads to the actual impact

assessment tool. The first step was selecting the projects to assess the impact on, because this way the tool could be aimed specifically at these projects. The tool was developed to be used as a general tool in assessing impact of BDS projects in Ghana, but by knowing beforehand which projects to assess it was easier to anticipate when and where project specific adaptations had to be made for a project. The projects that were chosen are: Crossbridge Consult, Hopespring Foundation and Oguua Business Incubator.

The design of the research is a qualitative research design because in this specific setting and with these projects it was only possible to conduct a qualitative research. By developing an interview questionnaire, asking open-ended questions in a structured, pre-determined way, information was actually gathered on the projects over the whole period from the start of the project until now. This has an effect on reliability and validity of the research, because instead of measuring 'hard fact' quantitative data, now impact and growing/changing patterns are measured by asking opinions and points of view of the interviewees, without having 'hard fact' data. The units of analysis within this research are both BDS-providers and MSME's, divided into a 'during and after intervention group' to see how the service (project) has evolved and developed over time and also to see whether the effect the service has had on MSME's changed once it evolved. By showing that after the SPEED intervention the project is still being provided, the sustainability of a service, at least over the past few years, can be proven. The actual interview questions are derived from the selected and operationalised indicators, the indicators are selected from the different models and theories discussed in Chapter 2, they are adapted and new indicators are added according to the criteria McVay gives for selecting indicators.

The concrete steps of this impact assessment tool are shown in tables 7 and 8.

Goal Categories	Indicators	Measurement level	
		MSME	BDS provider
<b>Outreach</b>	- Type of MSME	X	X
	- Promotion & distribution of service	X	X
	- Coopycat providers	X	X
	- Geographical scale		X
<b>Satisfaction</b>	- Customer satisfaction	X	X
	- Repeat customers	X	X
	- Learning Criteria	X	X
<b>Awareness</b>	- Awareness of BDS	X	
	- Reason for acquiring service	X	
	- Relevance/usefulness of the service	X	
	- Other (Business Development) Services	X	X
	- Performance measurement	X	X

	- Other supporting organisations		X
<b>Impact</b>	- Direct benefits	X	X
	- Financial Benefits	X	
	- Cost of acquiring service	X	X
	- Sustainability of benefits	X	
	- Project objectives		X

Table 7 - Goal Categories with Indicators for MSME's and BDS providers

Concrete step	Realization for IDEAS-1
Selecting projects	Purposive sampling: Crossbridge Consult, Hopespring Foundation, OGLaa Business Incubator
Research Design	Qualitative research
Unit of Analysis	BDS-providers, MSME's and non-MSME's (during and after intervention)
Selection and Operationalisation of Indicators	Indicators in the goal categories of: Outreach, Satisfaction, Awareness and Benefits
Method of data collection	Structured standardized interview, asking pre-determined open-ended interview questions
Selection of MSME's	Stratified sampling / simple random sampling
Validity and Reliability of data collection	Strengths due to local research assistant, cross checking, repeating questions, exploring questions deeper. Weaknesses due to cultural differences, manipulation of data and objectiveness of researcher

Table 8 - Impact Assessment Methodology

#### 4.4.1 Conclusions

A first conclusion that can be drawn, as McVay's framework and her criteria for selecting/developing indicators already suggests:

- An impact assessment should be based on mainly quantifiable data measured at different moments in time, to see the actual impact. Therefore to do an impact assessment and to develop a tool, the actual research should actually be based on a longitudinal research, in which measurement of baseline data should be the first step. After that it will be relatively easy to measure data at different moments in time and to get a quite clear view on the progress and impact of projects.

However, for IDEAS I projects no data has been gathered during the project, the development of this impact assessment tool was done with that in mind.

- Therefore to create some kind of baseline data, MSME's were split up into a 'during intervention' and an 'after intervention' group. The 'during intervention' group form the baseline group, because they were the first group that the service was provided to. The 'after intervention' group was used to see e.g. how the service developed over time, whether benefits changed or whether MSME's needs changed (maybe the service was



- cancelled after some time, due to lack of interest).
- It became clear that for this research qualitative data is best gathered
- This data must be gathered by interviewing MSME's, asking them pre-determined open-ended questions.
- It proved to be impossible to establish a causal relation between the specific services and their business benefits. More and other factors in this causal relation are of influence, especially over a longer period of time. Therefore the impacts on MSME's should actually be considered as indirect impacts, because it can be said that due to the intervention certain changes were seen or knowledge or skills have been acquired or improved. This is also one of the main reasons that no control group has been selected, because in a period of some years not all other intervening factors can be eliminated, also the sample of MSME's drawn was too small to compare to a non-treatment (control) group.

IDEAS projects selected were Crossbridge Consult's 'Thinking and Acting Growth', OBI's Incubator programme and Hopespring's 'APEX SPRINGBOARD; A need based approach to BDS'. Within these projects MSME's that participated during and after SPEED intervention had to be selected as well. Therefore it was not only important to discuss the selection of IDEAS projects but also the selection process of MSME's both 'during and after' SPEED intervention.

#### *Answer to research question*

The answer to the first research question is that the tool to be used in assessing the impact of IDEAS-I projects is a number of methodological steps to be taken in a chronological order, as can be seen in table 8. Besides that an actual measuring framework for assessing the impact of selected IDEAS projects was set up. Goal categories were selected and developed and within these goal categories different indicators for MSME's and BDS Providers were selected to measure the goal categories, as can be seen in table 7. Therefore the answer is: the tool to develop is both a structured methodology as well as a framework with goal categories and belonging indicators per MSME and BDS Provider operationalised and selected from theory, SPEED and self-development. These indicators can then be turned into interview questions.

## 5 Actual Impact Assessment

Now that the actual tool is shaped, it can be tested, fine-tuned and used to assess the impact of the selected projects. This chapter describes the actual field research, the interviewing, gathered data and conclusions.

### 5.1 Final Impact Assessment Tool

This section discusses the testing and finalising of the tool. Before assessing the impact, the tool needed to be tested to see whether and how it was applicable in the specific setting of Ghanaian MSME's and BDS providers. It was also important to test the interview questionnaire to find out whether the questions were valid, what needed to be altered to make the questionnaire effective in measuring the impact. Also how the interviewer should conduct the interviews in a satisfying way for himself and the interviewee and where he should focus on to avoid mistakes or collecting invalid or unreliable information. Therefore it is chosen to test the tool on the Crossbridge Consult 'Thinking and Acting Growth' project. First the provider was interviewed and after that the MSME's, to see whether questions were consistent, valid, and not too hard to understand or if certain questions were missing. The data gathered during these interviews was used to make an impact conclusion on the Crossbridge project.

Because of the limited experience in conducting a research in a developing country of the researcher it was necessary to have a test run.

In this section only the technical outcomes are discussed on which questions needed to be added or needed alterations, the actual test interviewing process and outcomes are discussed in section 'Impact Assessment' in this chapter. First the alterations for BDS providers are discussed and next for MSME's. Last, in test interview conclusions and recommendations, some overall research findings, conclusions and recommendations are discussed that have to be taken into account during the actual impact assessment.

#### 5.1.1 Finalising BDS Provider Interviewing Questionnaire

It became clear after the test interview with Crossbridge that some questions had to be changed or removed and that some questions had to be added. The adaptations and final version of the interview questionnaire for BDS-providers can be found under Appendix VIII and X, XI, XII.

#### 5.1.2 Finalising MSME Interviewing Questionnaire

After the first three MSME interviews alterations were made in the interview questions because sometimes questions were interpreted wrong, in almost all cases questions were formulated too difficult or seemed impossible to measure and questions had to be added to increase the validity of the indicator.

From the 'during SPEED intervention' test interviews it already became clear that

the questions had to be simplified and some questions had to be altered or added for MSME's, so also for the after intervention interview questions were simplified and questions that were the same as in the 'during intervention interviews' were altered and added the same way. These alterations proved to work effectively for the after intervention interviews, because no other alterations on questions had to be made. Only the order of questions had to be altered to ask questions in a more logic order.

#### 5.1.3 Finalising Methodology

After testing the impact assessment tool on Crossbridge Consult as a provider and on MSME's participating in this service during and after SPEED intervention, the tool is finalised in this section. As a result of testing the impact assessment tool, some alterations had to be made, these can be found under Appendix IX. The final impact assessment methodology can be found in Table 8.

As discussed and concluded in the previous section some alterations were made in the interviewing questionnaire.

#### 5.1.4 Test-interview Conclusions

After analysing the test-interviews, some overall conclusions to take into account in upcoming interviews were drawn, not directly related to a specific interviewing group.

- To improve validity and clarity of the interview questionnaire:
  - o During the test-interviews it became clear that some questions needed to be changed.
  - o Especially at MSME-level, questions needed to be simplified.
  - o Questions needed to be added
- Interviewees are willing to cooperate better if the interviewers show interest in their business by visiting them, a pitfall in this is that because interest is shown, interviewees have the tendency to 'help' the researcher by giving very positive answers and answers they think the interviewer(s) wants to hear.
- Overall it can be said that the interviewer should be able to pick up nuance differences per interviewee and the interviewer should be able to use that in formulating his questions and in gathering data. The interviewer should be confident in order to deviate from the interviewing questionnaire where possible or necessary to gather the (extra) information needed. Specific examples of this are given in the next conclusions
- During the interview some topics / questions needed to be explored deeper by asking related questions (not stated in the interviewing questionnaire) and by talking further about the topic to get a satisfying answer and to get all the information needed. This was done to increase the validity, to get all the information needed.
- Interviewees, both MSME's and providers tend to stay, especially in the beginning of the interview, on the surface and do not go too deep into certain questions. Or they do not feel comfortable yet. Therefore some questions

were repeated in a somewhat other way, later on in the interview when interviewees felt more relaxed and started talking more. This was also done to increase the validity.

- Sometimes questions do not have to be asked at all because during the conversation an answer is already given without asking the question. This is to avoid confusion and redundancy.
- Questions were sometimes also repeated to increase reliability, if the interviewer noticed that the answer given did not really match prior answers or if the interviewer noticed that not the whole truth was being told, questions were repeated in a somewhat different way later on in the interview.
- A local research assistant should be involved in the research. In this research the local research assistant was able to avoid data analysis mistakes made by the researcher. The researcher interpreted answers according to his European background, but the Ghanaian research assistant was able to correct the mistakes because she interprets the answers with her Ghanaian background. Involving a local research assistant reduces the chance of making systematic and/or coincidental measuring errors which on its turn increases respectively validity and reliability.
- A local research assistant should be ready and prepared to assist in or take over the interview. During interviews in this research the local research assistant took over or assisted when the interviewee was not able to fully understand or answer the questions in English. Also when the interviewee did not understand the pronunciation of English of the interviewer, the local assistant clarified it. Again the chance of measuring errors reduces and also the chance of interviewees not being able to answer questions reduces. This increases validity and reliability of the research.

The impact of the projects can be assessed by using the methodology designed, the indicators selected and interviewing questions developed which form the impact assessment tool in the previous chapter. Testing them on a selected IDEAS project and selected MSME's in order to be able to finalise the methodology and to finalise the indicators and interviewing questions, in other words to finalise the impact assessment tool, it enables to effectively assess the impact.

The actual conclusions and recommendations are discussed in the next section.

## 5.2 Impact Assessment

In this section the actual interview outcomes are visualised in table 9. Interview outcomes are given per BDS provider, Crossbridge Consult, Oguaa Business Incubator (OBI) and Hopespring Foundation. Crossbridge test interviews were already discussed in the previous section. For Oguaa there were 11 participants during intervention. 5 participants were able to be reached and indeed interviewed. After intervention the service slowed down considerably due to financial problems

of OBI. Only 3 participants were attracted after intervention, 2 of these participants were available to be interviewed.

Hopespring Foundation attracted 161 participants during intervention. Due to financial problems Hopespring only existed during the SPEED intervention period, afterwards it stopped to exist in practice. Many of the 161 participants' enterprises do not exist anymore as of today. Also most contact details were outdated, therefore it was only possible to interview 19 participants. In table 9, all impact assessment outcomes of each of the three projects per measured indicator can be found.

Table 9

### 5.3 Cross Case Analysis

In this section the similarities and differences as well as overall impact assessment conclusions are discussed.

The impact on participating MSME's for all three services is overall seen positive. The services were however only provided to a minimal number of MSME's therefore the impact on the whole business community is low. Also none of these services contributed in making the BDS market more sustainable, only the OBI incubator service currently still exists and provides the same service, but due to financial problems it is very slow. Only one service provider, Crossbridge, still contributes in making the BDS market more sustainable because they still offer services to MSME's.

#### **Outreach**

The types of MSME's participating in the services were very broad, no focus was placed on certain industries or business types.

The number of women owned enterprises that participated in all three services was around 50%. The geographical outreach of the service was only in the targeted areas; none of the services has been copied or has 'travelled' outside the targeted regions.

#### **Satisfaction**

Most interviewed MSME's at Crossbridge and Hopespring were satisfied with the service provided to them. The most common reason given for being satisfied was that MSME's acquired new knowledge. At OBI many interviewed MSME's were not positively satisfied, because OBI personnel and management did not treat all incubatees equally. Measurement of satisfaction has not been done consistently during the IDEAS projects, neither by SPEED Ghana nor by BDS providers. Hopespring, Crossbridge and OBI did some form of measurement, but not very consistently. A learning point for both SPEED Ghana and BDS providers is when MSME's are not satisfied and can not share it they might not feel comfortable in participating in services anymore. Another learning point is, when performing a project like IDEAS again, to take up a smaller number of projects because when taking up a large number like has been done in SPEED I focus and control on projects is lost during the execution phase. Projects did not finish partly due to that and had to be continued under SPEED II.

During almost all interviews MSME's complained about the fact that to start up or grow a business they need money. But going to a bank to get a loan does not help,

because they do not get a loan.

Business management related services offered to MSME's, like the three services assessed, are very often found to be too theoretic, MSME's work in a practical environment and need practical and implementable advice, not theoretic models.

### **Awareness**

An overall conclusion concerning the awareness of MSME's that can be drawn is that many MSME's do not know how to find business management, accounting or product quality improvement services, trainings or workshops if they need one. They do not know which services are offered or where to find providers.

For all three services most MSME's did not have to pay acquiring costs. By offering BDS for free, MSME's do not see the importance of the services. When it is offered for free and MSME's participate, in some cases there is no awareness and understanding of what the service is.

Performance measurement both by SPEED Ghana and service providers during and after the services has overall not been done very well. An often heard point of criticism is that for future services there should be more regular follow ups by either contacting businesses personally or having follow- up workshops. This way the service can have an even bigger impact on MSME's because after some time the service has ended, many enterprises are left with questions and uncertainties about what they have been taught.

Retention rate of the three services is very low, actually it is close to zero. For Crossbridge and Hopespring none of the participating MSME's during SPEED intervention were repeat customers, for OBI none of the interviewed participants during SPEED intervention were repeating customers (yet), it should be noted that the OBI service is still ongoing for some participating incubatees. Following up by the BDS provider can be a good way to increase retention rates for BDS, because providers can advise and / or offer MSME's which other services to attend to overcome problems or uncertainties

### **Impact**

According to McVay, as described in Chapter 2, some aspects have to be captured during an impact assessment.

*The proportion of MSME's benefiting (i.e., the number interviewed of those benefiting divided by those acquiring)*

The proportion of MSME's benefiting was already calculated for each service separately, but not the average proportion for all interviewed participants benefiting. The average proportion of MSME's benefiting is calculated by counting all benefiting MSME's divided by all acquiring MSME's interviewed, the latter will be used. 37 participants benefited out of 41 participants interviewed.

$$\frac{37}{41} = 0,90$$

90% of all interviewed participants benefited from the service that was provided to them. To conclude it can be said that these statistical calculations confirm what was already concluded from the qualitative research findings.



*The proportion of users (i.e., the interviewed number of users divided by the interviewed number of acquirers)*

Also for the proportion of users in this part of the research only the average proportion is calculated by dividing the number MSME's who found the service useful and have used or still use it by the total number of acquiring participants.

$$\frac{40}{41} = 0,98$$

98% of all interviewed participants found the service useful and have used it or still use the knowledge they acquired during the service as of today. Only 1 interviewee answered that she did not find the service useful at all. A conclusion that can be drawn from this is that these services seem to be very useful in helping MSME's to grow and to become more sustainable. The usefulness is also a good way of making MSME's more aware of the importance of BDS.

It is rather curious that almost all interviewed participants benefited and found the services useful, because in the OBI service many participants were not fully satisfied and in the Hopespring service the topics discussed during the service were only 'taster topics', they were not dealt with in full detail. This can either mean that even the slightest form of business management service already has benefits on MSME's because their business knowledge and skills are very poorly developed. Or it means that the services were very informative and in-depth. For Crossbridge this reason is likely, but for the other two services this reason is not very likely because participants answered that the level of the service was low compared to other services they participated in and that they did not benefit the way they were told to benefit.

The overall impact of the services noticed by interviewed participants was on personal, business and financial level. The separate research outcomes and conclusions report for Crossbridge Consult, OBI and Hopespring Foundation can be found respectively under Appendix XIII, XIV and XV. In table 10 on the next page, the Operationalised Framework for MSME's with outcomes and conclusions can be found.

#### *Research Question*

To answer the second research question; the impact the services had on MSME's is overall seen positive but the number of MSME's reached remains considerably low. MSME's did however benefit from the services they participated in, it is however questionable whether the BDS providers are solely responsible for the benefits MSME's noticed. A more plausible explanation is that partly due to these services, other BDS services, education and practical experience in general, MSME's noticed benefits and growth of their enterprises.

*Table 10*

## 6 Consequences for SPEED II Monitoring System

First the current monitoring and evaluation system in the eye of the project management life cycle are discussed and gaps are determined. Measuring methods were already briefly discussed in Chapter 3 and in this chapter they are elaborated on in more detail. In the last section of this chapter recommendations are given on how to improve current measuring methods and how to implement them.

### 6.1 Project Management Life Cycle

In this section the current evaluation and monitoring methods of SPEED II are discussed in the light of the project management life cycle. Because this project is in the middle its execution phase, the closure phase cannot be discussed.

#### *Initiation phase*

During the initiation phase it was described in the inception report that SPEED II would monitor operations on three result levels, the first level is Direct benefit level which measures how the BDS market develops. The second is Use of outputs and the last is Outputs level. The focus within SPEED II is at all three levels, whereas the last two levels are monitored more frequently, both having a specific set of projected results and indicators defining them.

#### *Planning phase*

The planning phase is an ongoing phase and it runs parallel with the execution phase. In the initiation phase only the overall goals and purposes of the project are stated. During the beginning of this phase the overall project planning is stated, but this phase is ongoing because the specific BDS projects are determined through the execution phase as well. Besides that the focus of SPEED II changed during the execution phase, i.e. focusing on two from the originally five focus areas and concentrating on only 4 types of BDS. This refocusing had its impact on the adjusting the project planning.

#### *Execution phase*

Within this phase the execution of the specific BDS project is done, the right project team is formed for projects and projects are executed. The projects executed fit the focus areas and the results levels determined. For each project a project document and an annual plan of operations is drawn up and specific targets are set and indicators for each BDS project are selected. Targets are set in a way that measuring is done by assessing the completion of certain steps within a project, when targets are met. No actual measuring is done on at project operational level.

### 6.2 Gaps in SPEED II Monitoring System

This section discusses the gaps in the monitoring system within SPEED II BDS projects found by analysing the project management life cycle. By interviewing employees and analysing operational manuals and reports it was found that the

monitoring process has been well designed. Project monitoring is at 3 levels, i.e. Output level (where the outputs from SPEED in supporting its partner organizations is monitored), Use of Output level (where it is monitored to which extent the partner organizations use the new BDS tools and products) and Direct Benefit level (where the change in the BDS market itself is monitored). At Output level, targets and indicators are set for each project phase. Tools used to monitor the projects are monitoring visits by SPEED staff to check whether targets, indicators and deadlines are still in line. Besides that, SPEED receives progress reports from partner organisations (BDS projects) periodically in which an update is given on the status of project implementation. A monitoring tool used to monitor project activities (that lead into outputs) is the BDS team meeting, once a week, in which all BDS projects are being discussed. Activity targets are updated, indicators are discussed and an overall update on all specific BDS projects is given.

However, the system showed that actual collection of progress data at Use of Output and Direct Benefit levels during the execution of specific BDS projects is not done properly. Changes at the use of output and direct benefit levels lag behind the project interventions. However, by not collecting any progress data at those levels, it will again in the future become almost impossible to assess the impact on the BDS market of the different projects. When collecting progress data during the project execution, also BDS projects can be controlled better by SPEED staff. With progress data it becomes, in an early stage, visible if the project is going in the right direction or not. If it is going in the wrong direction, SPEED can change the course of direction of the project.

Besides that, when progress data and/or impact data is collected periodically during the execution of a BDS project, SPEED staff stay in better contact with providers and also MSME's, they will be able to pick up MSME's needs and difficulties much better. Without any progress data collected it is hard for the Technical Director, Management and Steering Committee to keep good control over the effectiveness of the BDS component of SPEED. It also becomes more difficult to justify to the Steering Committee and to Donors why projects are chosen, what the specific outcomes are and how they benefit MSME's or how they contribute to making the BDS market more vibrant.

Therefore the focus of improving the monitoring methods within SPEED II will be on improving collecting progress data during BDS projects implementation, especially on the Use of Outputs level (MSME's have improved awareness and understanding of BDS', 'Supported BDS providers countrywide have an increased offer of services') and the Direct Benefit level. Recommendations on how to improve this will be given in the next chapter.

### 6.3 Desired Monitoring System

After determining the gaps in the current monitoring system, in this section a recommendation is given to update the monitoring system. This section also gives an answer to the third research question.

It is desired and recommended to implement a simple checklist with fixed indicators and additionally to that some project specific indicators should be included. The word simple is used deliberately because from prior research experience it became clear that, especially data collection at MSME level, questions should not be too difficult and they should be brought down to the level of the interviewee.

The monitoring checklist focuses especially on the 'wood and tourism sectors' within the Use of Output level, it focuses on the following goals:

- *Improved awareness and understanding of BDS by MSME's*  
This can be measured by using indicators from the goal categories of 'Awareness' and 'Satisfaction'
- *Supported BDS providers countrywide have an increased offer of services*  
This can be measured by using indicators from the goal categories of 'Awareness', 'Outreach'
- *Multi-Stakeholders cooperate and coordinate MSME development initiatives*  
The focus of the recommendations is not part of this research project.

A new goal category 'benefits', based on 'impact' will besides the other goal categories be measured to get some insight data in the way enterprises develop. By collecting measurement data on these levels, it can contribute to draw more reliable conclusion on the different levels.

The checklist (Appendix XXI) should consist out of at least three (3) specific progress data collection moments.

- i. Baseline data collection
- ii. Progress data collection
- iii. Project closure data

If possible within SPEED II budgets and timeframes a fourth data collection moment is recommended:

- iv. Data collection one year after closure

Data should be collected at both BDS provider and participant / MSME level. Only the fixed indicators are selected. Project specific indicators are stated together with targets in the annual plan of operations (APO), these targets and specific indicators can be measured alongside the fixed indicators. The fixed indicators are chosen according to the developed impact assessment model's rules and guidelines and most of the indicators are actually taken from the impact assessment model.

#### *Baseline data collection*

At the beginning of a BDS project general data should be collected that gives project members an idea at which level BDS provider and participants / MSME are at that moment. It provides the zero point data where to build from. For baseline data collection the goal categories measured are outreach, awareness and benefits,

both for providers and MSME's. The actual indicator selection and checklists for all collecting moments can be found under Appendix XVI, XVII, XVIII and XIX. The result Matrix for SPEED II with different overall indicators can be found under Appendix XX.

#### *Progress data collection*

Once the project is ongoing, progress data should be collected to keep in control of the project. Without knowing how a project progresses one can never stay in full control over a project. Therefore it is recommended that progress data is collected at least once, but preferable more often during the execution of the project. Measuring indicators during this phase gives project members insights in how a project is going? Is it on track or are any changes needed? The goal categories measured for providers are outreach, satisfaction and benefits and for MSME's outreach, satisfaction, awareness and benefits.

#### *Project closure data*

When the project is still ongoing and SPEED Ghana is still intervening, the progress data collection can be repeated as often as necessary. When the collaboration between SPEED Ghana and a BDS provider ends, again data should be collected, project closure data. This can show insights in how a service contributes to a sustainable BDS market and how it contributes in developing participants' enterprises or lives. The goal categories measured for providers and MSME's are outreach, satisfaction, awareness and benefits.

#### *Data collection one year after closure*

To conclude on the impact a program or project has had, after one year again data should be collected to see the sustainability of the benefits of the service for all parties (BDS providers and participants). The goal categories both for providers and MSME's are outreach, satisfaction, awareness and benefits.

For all four collection moments indicators have been chosen and a checklist has been designed both for BDS provider and for MSME's which can be used to collect progress data.

#### *Guidelines for collecting data*

To collect consistent and reliable and valid data there are some guidelines that project members should follow. These guidelines are based on data collection experience.

- Question a broad range of participants so the sample is not skewed
- Be flexible in questioning and keep it simple and adapt level of questioning to the level of interviewee
- Explore topics deeper when there is a need for that
- Try to pick up nuance differences to find out whether answers are reliable
- Every project and each situation is different therefore every project and each situation should be dealt with specifically
- After every data collection make a progress report and compare it to the

prior progress report

### Conclusions

In this conclusion part a visual overview of the current and desired situation is given.

In figure 7 and 8 both the current and desired monitoring system are visualised. In both figures the green arrows represent the monitoring and controlling activities. SPEED Ghana controls and monitors both BDS providers and MSME's.

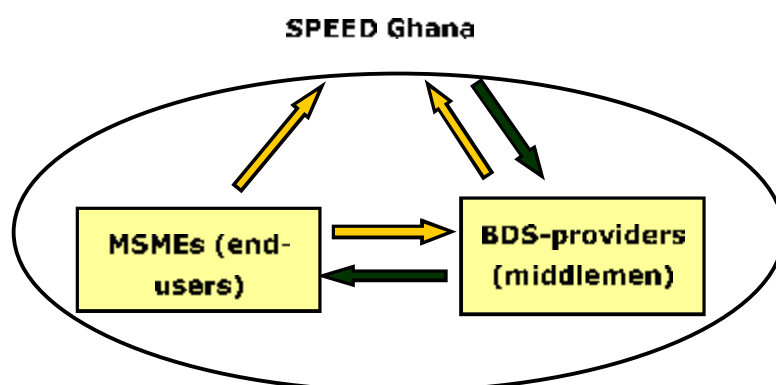


Figure 7 – Current monitoring system

The yellow arrows represent collection of the actual data, receiving feedback. They show outcomes measured at the different levels to see whether the three goals are reached; there is improved awareness and understanding of BDS by MSME's, supported BDS providers countrywide have an increased offer of services and multi-Stakeholders cooperate and coordinate MSME development initiatives. Besides that data can be collected to see whether MSME's performance improved and to assess the impact of interventions.

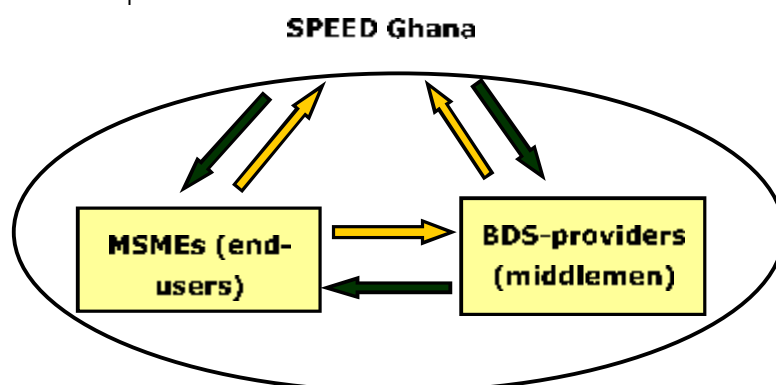


Figure 8 – Desired monitoring system

The difference between the current and desired monitoring system is that SPEED Ghana does not execute monitoring and controlling activities at MSME level

properly. SPEED receives feedback from MSME's, however this is just general feedback, not measurable data. When a 'green arrow' and thereby monitoring and controlling activities is added in the relation between SPEED and MSME's, SPEED has control over the kind and amount of feedback they want to receive at different moments in time. Then desired performance and impact data can be gathered as well as data concerning the three goals. It is therefore recommended to SPEED Ghana to implement this checklist.

## **7 Conclusion, Recommendations and Reflection**

The last chapter of this report reports the recommendations, conclusions and a detailed reflection and discussion of the research. Also in this chapter the problem formulation is answered.

### **7.1 Conclusions**

This conclusion section focuses mainly on the overall research, not on specific parts of the research.

By reviewing literature it became clear that to assess the impact of Business Development Services, impact should be researched on a broader scale, in the form of performance measurement. Therefore the goal categories and indicators from the Performance Measurement Framework by McVay were used. This framework, together with indicators from EFQM model and Balanced Score Card, was selected and used in developing a framework suitable for measuring in Ghana. Even though McVay's model is specifically developed for BDS markets, still not all indicators were suitable for the specific setting in Ghana. Therefore a framework for the specific setting in Ghana was developed.

This framework was more suitable for this research and was able to draw more valid conclusions compared to McVay's because her framework presumes a longitudinal research design. When using McVay's Framework to collect data for this research, no valid conclusions can be drawn because it is aimed at drawing conclusions based on data collection over a longer period of time. The framework developed for this research is applicable for performance measurement and impact assessment with data collection on one moment in time and therefore much more appropriate for this research setting. Because during this research it was only possible to collect data at one moment in time, the framework used in this research improves the change of collecting more valid data compared to using McVay's Framework.

For this framework it proved that the impact was hard to conclude on. First of all because no causal relation between the services provided and business benefits and growth could be established, therefore most impacts should be seen as indirect impacts. Also no generalisation could be made because the sample taken was too small to draw reliable generalised conclusions on. It can be overall concluded that



the best way of assessing the impact of BDS projects should be based on a longitudinal research design.

According to theory, practical and organisational knowledge and expert opinions it proved that for this research setting indicators in four (4) different goal categories had to be measured. The goal categories are Outreach, Satisfaction, Awareness and Impact. Most important conclusions of the assessment were:

- The impact was overall seen positive. Most MSME's noticed some benefits (partly) due to the service they participated in. Impact was noticed on financial, business and personal level.
- None of the services has made a contribution to making the BDS market more sustainable. Only one of the three services assessed still exists, but this service is currently very slow due to financial problems.
- The retention rate of repeating customers proved to be very low as well, only very few interviewed participants repeated acquiring another service at the service provider.
- Awareness on how and where to find and acquire BDS is very low. Most interviewed MSME's did not know where and how to find a specific BDS provider, providing services to their needs.

During the project life cycle of SPEED I the different phases have not been run through properly. This resulted in not being able to control the projects and measure performance and / or impact during the different phases. Based on this it can be concluded that to control and monitor projects, a monitoring system has to be implemented in the initiation phase of each project. This system should measure performance and collect impact and performance data at the different project phases.

During SPEED II the different phases are run through properly, however there are some gaps to be filled and the current monitoring system has some room for improvement. The biggest gap is that no measurable performance and impact data is gathered during the different phases. Therefore a conclusion was drawn to give a recommendation to SPEED Ghana to improve their current monitoring system by implementing a checklist capturing performance and impact data through the different life cycle phases of BDS projects.

#### *Problem Solution*

***'How can the impact of selected IDEAS projects at MSME-level be assessed and what recommendations, leading from this, can be given to improve the current monitoring system within SPEED-Ghana?'***

The answer is that the impact of the selected IDEAS projects - Crossbridge Consult, Hopespring Foundation and OBI - on MSME level could be assessed by designing a tool for assessing the impact. This tool is based on indicators retrieved from theoretical models and practical lessons learned. To assess the impact, different indicators are measured in four goal categories of outreach, satisfaction, awareness

and impact. To actually assess the impact the indicators were turned into qualitative open ended interview questions.

The conclusions based on the actual field research are used to give recommendations to improve the current monitoring system within SPEED II. First the gaps within the current SPEED monitoring system were uncovered. It proved that it is desired for SPEED Ghana to execute controlling and monitoring activities directly at MSME level. In Chapter 6 a recommendation was given in which a desired monitoring system for SPEED Ghana was visualised. It is recommended that a checklist collecting data at different moments in time should be implemented.

## 7.2 Recommendations

The recommendations that can be given to improve evaluation and monitoring tools are partly based on conclusions drawn from the impact assessment and partly based on practical solutions and advice given by project members. Practical solutions and advice given are taken into consideration as well to be able to actually implement the recommendations directly into SPEED II BDS projects.

In Chapter 6 it was already recommended to implement a simple checklist with indicators. Besides that it is also desired to have some overall guidelines on how to monitor and control projects and how to collect progress data consistently. This can guide project members to implement the checklist in their projects. It is important because if done consistently the data can be used to reveal the impact after the project ends, it reveals which indicators show progress and which indicators should get more attention. If done consistently, measuring does not necessarily have to be done by the same SPEED staff everytime and can even be done by the BDS provider.

It is recommended that SPEED Ghana implements this checklist and guides her employees in implementing it.

It is recommended that a short term consultant advices and helps in implementing this checklist. This consultant can also set up guidelines to monitor and control projects and to collect progress. The consultant can also advice SPEED Ghana for which BDS projects a checklist is suitable and feasible.

Another recommendation towards SPEED Ghana is to use the framework developed in this research to collect performance and impact data on more individual IDEAS I projects. By collecting data on more projects a more valid and reliable - and even more important, a generalised - conclusion can be drawn on the overall IDEAS I project.

A recommendation is to use the framework again to collect the same data again at the same interviewees interviewed for this research, to conclude on the impact after more than one data collection moment. But more importantly to follow up and to keep track on progress of MSME's, because only then it can be seen whether

MSME's benefit over a longer period of time and whether there is a sustained impact.

The last recommendation is that when the framework is used and data is collected preferably by local researchers. In this research many times the interviewees were not fully able to understand the question or answer the question in English. Also when processing data it is important to consult local researchers because they understand the answers as meant.

### 7.3 Reflection Research

This section discusses the researcher's own reflection on the research. Why was the tool chosen, what are the pitfalls and opportunities for the tool developed and how can it be used. First a reflection on the used theories is done, after that an empirical reflection and last a methodological reflection is given.

#### 7.3.1 Theoretic Reflection

McVay's Framework has been an essential guideline in structuring the tool and selecting indicators. EFQM model and Balanced Score Card were usable because they complement each other very well. Both are highly used models in controlling and measuring performance within Quality Management.

In literature many tools and frameworks for assessing impact of measuring performance of projects can be found, however most of them are more general and do not focus especially on BDS. McVay's framework is aimed especially at assessing impact in BDS markets, mostly in developing countries. The indicators proposed, the criteria given in selecting (new) indicators and the guidelines given to tackle the methodological side of designing a good framework were for this research very important and useful. Her framework is designed in such a way that it is applicable in settings such as Ghana where data collection is somewhat difficult due to lack of available data. For this research the downside of her framework was that it is designed in such a way that it presumes that impact data collection has been done throughout the different project phases.

For this research the general downside in using models from literature is that they all presume that data has been collected throughout the different phases, but during SPEED I no data has been collected. Most literature concludes that without proper impact data, preferably quantified, collected throughout the different project phases, a proper conclusion on impact of a project cannot be drawn. A new impact assessment framework has been designed to deal with these problems. Therefore the academic as well as practical contribution of this research is that this framework is able to capture valid and reliable performance and impact data collected at one moment in time.

#### 7.3.2 Empirical Reflection

The research design chosen for the impact assessment is a qualitative research style. With a qualitative design, the data collection style was in the form of asking pre-determined open-ended questions with some quantitative aspects in it. It was

hard to develop a framework capturing qualitative data, because the danger of asking open ended questions to MSME's, who are mostly low or uneducated, is that there is the chance of collecting unreliable data, because they either do not understand questions or they do not speak sufficient English or they tell the researcher what they think he wants to hear. However this proved to be the best way because with open-ended questions there was the possibility to explain the questions to interviewees and interviewees were given the opportunity to answer the questions in their own words. With the local research assistant it was also possible to change from English into the local language.

### 7.3.3 Methodological Reflection

SPEED Ghana's wish was to develop a methodology to retrieve key indicators to assess the impact of selected BDS projects at MSME level. Therefore key indicators were selected and developed to eventually be turned into interviewing questions. In some cases questions proved to be too difficult to understand for MSME's and had to be explained by the researcher or the research assistant.

A positive side of the tool developed is that, especially in developing countries, in many cases no impact data is gathered during project phases, therefore this tool has been designed in such a way that, with minor adaptations, it can be used to assess the impact of other BDS projects without prior collected impact data as well. A pitfall for the research was the validity of collected data. Guidelines were developed to deal with this pitfall.

In this research all the information, or at least as much as was possible, had to be retrieved from the interviewed MSME's. Because MSME's information needed to contain some time aspect and some background data, it was in most cases only possible to simplify the questions to a certain degree. With these simplified questions it proved to be possible to draw valid and reliable conclusions. Based on the conclusions a recommendation could be given to improve the current monitoring system. As shown in the implementation for SPEED II, with some adaptations the tool can also be used as a monitoring tool for collecting progress and impact data during the different project phases in BDS projects in general.

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## Appendices

<b>I</b>	<b>AURA based indicators SPEED II</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>II</b>	<b>Selection of SPEED II indicators</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>III</b>	<b>Selected IDEAS projects description</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>IV</b>	<b>Validation of unit of analysis selection</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>V</b>	<b>Indicator Selection</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>VI</b>	<b>Operationalised framework for BDS provider</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>VII</b>	<b>Operationalised Framework for MSME's</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>VIII</b>	<b>Finalising Interview Questionnaires</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>IX</b>	<b>Finalising Methodology</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>X</b>	<b>Final interview questionnaire BDS Provider</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>XI</b>	<b>Final interview questionnaire MSME's during SPEED intervention</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>XII</b>	<b>Final interview questionnaire MSME's after SPEED intervention</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>XIII</b>	<b>Interview outcomes and conclusions Crossbridge Consult</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>XIV</b>	<b>Interview outcomes and conclusions OBI</b>	<b>123</b>
<b>XV</b>	<b>Interview outcomes and conclusions Hopespring Foundation</b>	<b>136</b>
<b>XVI</b>	<b>Indicator selection and checklist baseline data</b>	<b>145</b>
<b>XVII</b>	<b>Indicator selection and checklist progress data</b>	<b>147</b>
<b>XVIII</b>	<b>Indicator selection and checklist project closure data</b>	<b>149</b>
<b>XIX</b>	<b>Indicator selection and checklist one year after closure</b>	<b>152</b>
<b>XX</b>	<b>Result Matrix SPEED II</b>	<b>154</b>
<b>XXI</b>	<b>Checklist BDS Provider</b>	<b>155</b>



## 8 AURA based indicators SPEED II

Indicator level	Indicator sub-level	The measuring indicators
<b>Direct Benefit General</b>		The MSME-clients of SPEED II-supported service providers have significantly increased their turnover
		Half of the new MSME-clients of SPEED II – supported service providers are female owned or managed
		The SPEED-II supported institutions have grown on average by 25 percent in terms of their loan portfolio and turnover
		A representative survey among MSME's, MSME FI's and BDS providers indicates that the number of MSME's accessing market-oriented financial and non-financial services outside Accra, Kumasi, Takoradi, Sunyani and Tamale has increased significantly.
<b>Direct Benefit BDS component</b>		At least five new BDS product lines are introduced and offered on a commercial and sustainable basis by private BDS providers. At least one of these BDS product lines is tailored towards female-combated economic activities.
		The use and the retention of BDS in targeted sub-sectors increased by 10 percent
		In at least three of the targeted sub-sectors, action plans to reduce bottlenecks to enterprise development as agreed upon in a multi-stakeholder dialogue have been implemented

Indicator level	Indicator sub- level	The measuring indicators
<b>Use of Outputs</b>	<i>Awareness and understanding of BDS by MSME's</i>	The awareness and understanding rates of BDS in targeted sub-sectors increased by 10 percent
	<i>Supported BDS providers countrywide have an increased offer of services</i>	70 percent of all directly supported BDS providers have included the newly acquired services in their portfolio
	<i>Public-sector improved its regulatory framework for MSME's</i>	Three different government regulations have been improved for MSME's with support of SPEED
		One government act directly geared to promote MSME's has been drafted with support of SPEED and approved by the Government of Ghana
<b>Outputs</b>	<i>Multi-Stakeholders cooperate and coordinate MSME development initiatives</i>	SPEED joined multi-donor supported BDS market development interventions at meso-level
		SPEED initiated and joined a multi-donor supported seminar relevant to BDS market development
		Five sector studies completed
		Impact review of (sub) sectors that were addressed is completed
		A total of equivalent to DKK 4.3 million has been disbursed from the IDEAS fund via 'call for proposals' that were initiated under SPEED I by July 2006
		A total equivalent to DKK 14.72 million has been disbursed from the IDEAS fund for calls for sector-based BDS projects by the end of September 2009
		In each of the targeted (sub)sectors a BDS demand development intervention has been completed successfully
		The use of ICT has been promoted among MSME's and BDS providers, focussing on the (sub)sectors addressed by the programme
		Operations manual for the IDEAS funds revised and approved
		At least 5 BDS tools and instruments to be applied in those (sub)sectors addressed by the IDEAS fund are available for the market

<b>Outputs</b>	<i>Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue</i>	BDS multi-stakeholders meetings are held and attended on a quarterly basis
		Cooperation between SPEED-BDS and relevant projects of DANIDA and GTZ have been established and formalized
		In each of the selected (sub)sectors a Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue process has been initiated and institutionalized
		Two different studies that contribute to improved regulatory framework have been completed
	<i>Best practice lab</i>	A sector-wide monitoring system is operational to which all major stakeholders contribute and benefit
		A web-based Best Practice Lab is operational to which all major stakeholders contribute, including at least five Development Partners (DP's)
		Low-cost instruments for rapid market appraisal are available
		One major BDS promotion event is undertaken in Ghana with international outreach

## 9 Selection of SPEED II indicators

For this research the main focus will be on measuring IDEAS projects at MSME level, therefore the indicators that will turn out to be somewhat appropriate at first sight will be selected to be used in the measuring framework. For the appropriate levels, the useful measuring indicators will be given.

### *Direct Benefit General / Direct Benefit BDS component*

This level will not be used, because SPEED II only focuses on Outputs and Use of Outputs.

### *Use of Outputs*

The relevant measuring indicators are:

- The awareness and understanding rates of BDS in targeted sub-sectors increased by 10 percent
- 70 percent of all directly supported BDS providers have included the newly acquired services in their portfolio

### *Outputs IDEAS*

The relevant measuring indicators are:

- Impact review of (sub)sectors that were addressed is completed
- In each of the targeted sectors a BDS demand development intervention has been completed fully
- The use of ICT has been promoted among MSME's and BDS providers, focussing on the (sub)sectors addressed by the programme
- Operations manual for the IDEAS funds revised and approved
- At least 5 BDS tools and instruments to be applied in those (sub)sectors addressed by the IDEAS fund are available for the market

### *Outputs Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue and Best Practice Lab*

These output sub-level is not relevant, because it do not have a direct relation with measuring at MSME-level.

## 10 Selected IDEAS projects description

The projects that were selected are:

- Crossbridge Consult
- Hopespring Foundation
- Oguaa Business Incubator

### **Crossbridge Consult**

Crossbridge Consult realized that many entrepreneurs stop applying business principles that will help him/her to achieve the goals set for their business. This results in a cycle of frustrations and disillusion since what will cause growth is not applied consistently and expectations are therefore not realized. Crossbridge wants to overcome this by monitoring and coaching participants after 'behaviour change' workshops to ensure effective and sustainable change at the various levels in an organization. This service was provided in 2005 and is called 'Thinking and Acting Growth'.

The objectives of the project are as follows:

- To sensitize service providers to the importance of this new training to ensure continuous application of business practices
- To sensitize service providers to its complementary role to make their existing entrepreneurial and management services more effective
- To sensitize entrepreneurs to the linkage between continuous application of training and achieving life goals
- To sensitize entrepreneurs to the concept of growth
- To sensitize entrepreneurs to personally develop a profit oriented growth mindset
- To sensitize entrepreneurs to grow the enterprise from the survival stage

Project outcome:

The objectives of the project have been achieved; service providers and entrepreneurs have been sensitized and the new approach has been tested amongst the service providers and the entrepreneurs. Manuals have also been developed to be used by both trainers and trainees.

Since the launching of the project, Crossbridge Consult has offered the new approach as one of its services, and it has held several workshops to further sensitize and disseminate the idea.

### **Hopespring Foundation**

The 'APEX Springboard; A need based approach to BDS' intends to overcome complaints by entrepreneurs about time, cost and value for their money by delivering an extension, consultancy and counselling service. This service was provided in 2005.

Project objectives

- The service provider must know the client and bond with him/her

- It also means the delivery of any form of advice or material assistance outside a classroom, usually to clients at their place of business
- It includes both consultancy and counselling

The APEX Springboard differs from other services in the following way:

- It offers a relationship and not just a service
- A client will be worked with for a minimum duration of one year
- Organizational development approach to be used
- Focused towards business growth and market positioning
- Service branded and offers a variety to clients based on their ability to pay
- Service offered at clients doorstep

Project outcome:

During the project it was realized that the APEX Springboard worked best in an incubation setting, which gave birth to the APEX Business Incubator and the Springboard Enterprises Program, which is a women's virtual incubation package. According to the proponent it also became clear that even though all identified and contacted groups (nineteen) initially showed great interest in the service, they were not ready for it. This came out as the project team met to review the whole process. Those who apparently demonstrated sustained interest were a group of young entrepreneurs, who had been trained in August 2005. During the project eight (8) advisors and eleven (11) trainers were trained. Four (4) entrepreneurs signed onto the APEX Springboard through in-house incubation. Outside the incubation programme four (4) entrepreneurs were also trained. The most visible outcome of the project is the equipping of the APEX Springboard small business centres with ICT equipment. Hopespring Foundation has with this project been given the opportunity to develop and introduce a quite new approach on how to consult and support SME's. The sustainability of the service is, however, still to be proven. The demand for the service has partly been proven during the project, but it is rather questionable if the SME's will actually value the service in a way that they will also be willing to pay a commercial market price for it. If not so, the objective with SPEED Ghana's support has not been fulfilled

### **Oguaa Business Incubator**

The proponents behind OBI (Oguaa Business Incubator) applied to the IDEAS Fund for support to start a project to nurture young enterprises in Cape Coast, to stimulate and accelerate innovation, strengthen capability of local entrepreneurs, develop the incubator as a good example of a sustainable growth-oriented entity and offer enterprise services (Internet access, printing and publishing, training etc.) at affordable prices. This service started providing to 'during' intervention MSME's in 2005, but because it is an enduring service, some 'during' MSME's still get provided the service.

Project objectives:

- Nurture young enterprises
- Stimulate and accelerate innovation

- Strengthen capability of local entrepreneurs
- Develop the incubator as a good example of a sustainable growth-oriented entity
- Offer enterprise services (Internet access, printing and publishing, training etc.) at affordable prices

**Project outcome:**

The incubator is still operational and several small enterprises have been nurtured and have also succeeded to start up outside the incubator. Presently the incubator has an incubatee base of twelve enterprises; from ICT and media to travel agencies and manufacturing. The objective of the project has therefore so far been met. The incubator is, however, still facing financial constraints, and the near future will show if it is able to either attract additional financial support or reach the critical mass of incubatees. The challenge for a small incubator like OBI; which is itself a start-up, is that most of the start-up enterprises do not have the means to pay high "rent" to the incubator. This is, off course, the dilemma for the incubator and for these enterprises, as they are the ones that need the incubator services the most. The incubator has joined hands with the Prince of Wales' Youth Business International to launch the Youth Business Ghana Programme with the aim to develop 500 small enterprises throughout Ghana over the next five years, and The Ministry of Trade and Industry has expressed interest to hand over a large office premise on the outskirts of Cape Coast to the incubator. This could support them in reaching the critical mass for long-term sustainability.

## 11 Validation of unit of analysis selection

The theoretic validation for not selecting a control group is in line with Oldsman and Hallberg's article 'Framework for evaluating the Impact of Small Enterprise Initiatives' (2002) in which they give guidelines for selecting impact assessment methods. They explain in the next two figures which units of analysis to select in the impact assessment collection method.

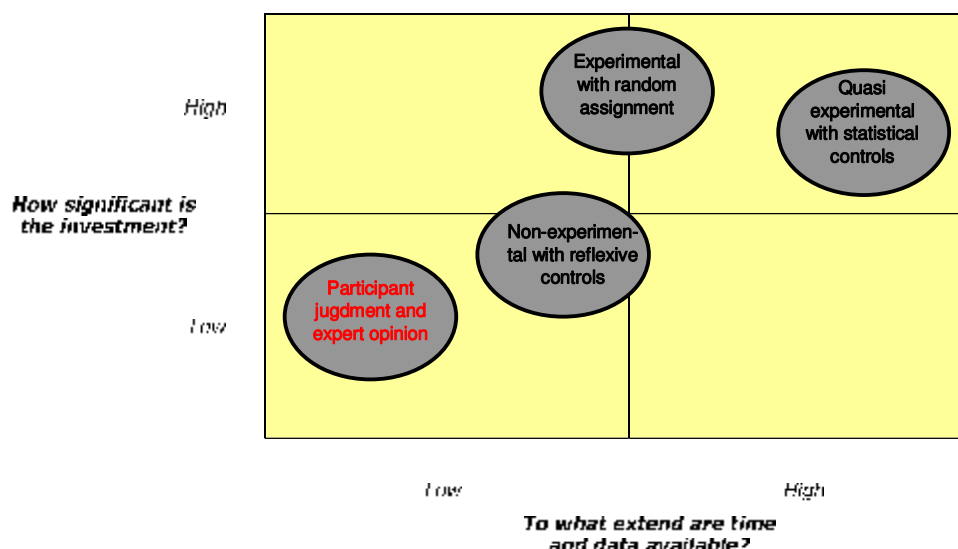


Figure 8 – Guidelines for selecting Impact Assessment Method (source: Oldsman and Hallberg, 2002)

In figure 8 it is explained that with low significance of investment and with a low extend of available time and data only participant judgements and expert opinions should be assessed. The investment per project is a maximum of \$50,000, in developmental projects this can be considered as of relatively small significance. The available data and time is also low, because no data on impact has been gathered in the past on these projects and time is limited as well.

Next, figure 9 explains that with a low strength of causal inference and with low complexity and costs of the project, participant judgment and expert opinions are sufficient. For the projects on which impact is assessed for this research, strength of causal inference is not high because for most MSME's this was not the only treatment they received, many of them participated in other BDS projects as well, therefore other aspects are of influence as well. Besides that, most MSME's received the 'treatment' over two years ago and over a period of two years not all other aspects causing biasedness in the causal relation can be eliminated. Complexity and cost of the projects were not high, as discussed in the previous figure the investment per project was relatively small, also the complexity of the projects is rather low.



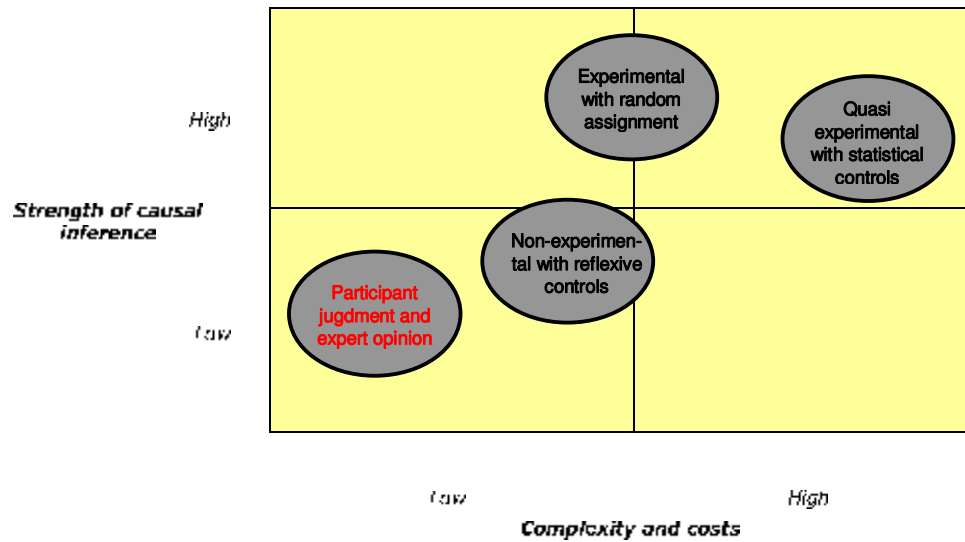


Figure 9 – Trade offs in evaluation design (source: Oldman and Hallberg, 2002)

## 12 Indicator Selection

Indicators measured at both BDS provider and MSME level:

- *Type of MSME's:* To measure this indicator at both BDS provider and MSME level, it is divided into IMI's measuring the Organisation types, Number of enterprises and Number of women owned enterprises the service was provided to.
- *Promotion and distribution of the service:* To measure this indicator, IMI's measure how a geographical area is reached and how a service is distributed into the area
- *Copycat providers:* In BDS markets a copycat provider is something positive because for the facilitator (SPEED Ghana) of BDS this means that the service has been picked up by other service providers and is provided on a larger scale, therefore an IMI developed for this indicator measures whether and how many other provider or consultants copied this specific service.

Indicators measured only at BDS provider level:

- *Geographical scale:* To see how far a project reaches in terms of geographic scale, this indicator is measured by an IMI that measures whether the service is provided in the targeted areas only, or whether it expanded outside the boundaries of the targeted community, city, region or country.

Goal Category	Indicators MSME's	Indicators BDS Providers
<b>Outreach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Type of MSME</li> <li>- Promotion and distribution of service</li> <li>- Copycat providers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Type MSME</li> <li>- Geographical scale</li> <li>- Promotion and distribution of service</li> <li>- Copycat providers</li> </ul>

**Table 2 – Measuring Indicators for Goal Category Outreach**

### **Satisfaction**

This goal category is mainly based on McVay's indicator of customer satisfaction. Besides only looking into McVay's Framework also the Balances Score Card's perspective of 'Customer' and the EFQM-model enabler of 'Customer Results' are used to select indicators. Indicators measured at both BDS provider and MSME level:

- *Customer satisfaction:*
  - o BDS providers are asked whether they know the level of satisfaction of their customers and whether and how they actually measured the satisfaction of customers. To measure this indicator it is split up into two IMI's: Level of customer satisfaction and Measurement of satisfaction.
  - o MSME's are interviewed on their level of satisfaction of the BDS provider. Also they are asked whether their satisfaction has been

measured by the provider. This indicator is used to cross check as a way of guarding reliability. To measure this indicator it is split up into two IMI's: Level of customer satisfaction and Satisfaction measurement by BDS provider

- *Repeat customers:*
  - o For a provider of BDS to see whether a project has been successful in terms of customer satisfaction, the number of repeat customers is an important indicator. This indicator can also show the retention rate of MSME customers, this is important because it shows that besides satisfaction, MSME customers are aware of the importance of BDS. This indicator is measured by measuring IMI's: Number of repeat customers for the BDS provider (provider's retention rate) and number of MSME's willing to acquire services again – measuring whether the provider knows the willingness of its customers to acquire BDS in the future again
  - o For MSME's this indicator shows the retention rate of MSME customers, this is important because it shows that besides satisfaction, MSME customers are aware of the importance of BDS. MSME's are interviewed on their willingness to take the same or another service of BDS provider again and Repeat customers for other comparable services
- *Learning criteria*
  - o Getting feedback from BDS providers in the form of points of improvements and overall project remarks is a method for getting data on how to improve the way of working and of how to change certain project phases, structures or systems. This indicator is measured by the following IMI's: Points of improvement for SPEED and Overall remarks
  - o Getting feedback from MSME's in the form of points of improvements and overall project remarks is a method for getting data on how to improve the way of working or how to change certain project phases, structures or systems. IMI's measuring this indicator: Points of improvement for the BDS service provider and Overall remarks

Goal Category	Indicators MSME's	Indicators BDS Providers
<b>Satisfaction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Customer satisfaction</li> <li>- Repeat customers</li> <li>- Learning Criteria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Customer satisfaction</li> <li>- Repeat customers</li> <li>- Learning Criteria</li> </ul>

**Table 3 – Measuring Indicators for Goal Category Satisfaction**

### **Awareness**

This goal category of Awareness is not actually based on an existing category or

indicator from theory. After several discussions with experts it became clear that many MSME's do not even know what BDS is, what to use it for or how and where to acquire it. With that in mind and looking into specific BDS theory, it became clear that most existing measuring tools do not focus on awareness of MSME's within the field of BDS. In most theoretic tools awareness is not measured as such, also McVay's framework does not specify this or does not go deeper into this topic, within some goal categories she however includes some indicators to measure related topics of awareness. But because, as already said, for this research the focus is on holistic tools to research reasons and motives behind the performance or impact of a program, this goal category is added. The measurement indicators however are partly based on specific indicators from different goal categories from McVay's framework.

Indicators measured at both BDS provider and MSME level are:

- *Other Business Development Services*
  - o To see whether BDS provider are aware of the importance of offering services stimulating business development, they are asked whether they: Offer or have offered other services aimed at business development for MSME's
  - o To see whether MSME's are aware of the importance of acquiring services stimulating business development, they are asked whether they: Acquire or have acquired other services aimed at developing their business.
- *Performance measurement:*
  - o Another indicator for awareness at BDS provider level is performance measurement, if in a project the responsible parties know how to measure performance and know how the important measuring performance is, they might be able to adapt the project phases in time. Besides being aware of the importance of measuring performance it can give some indirect learning criteria.
  - o To cross check whether BDS providers have measured performance, MSME's are asked whether or not the performance of the service has been measured on MSME level.

Indicators measured only at BDS provider level are:

- *Other supporting organisations:*
  - o A part of awareness for providers of BDS is knowing how to reach supporting organisations such as SPEED Ghana and convincing them to support a certain project or program

Indicators measured only at MSME level are:

- *Awareness of BDS:*
  - o For MSME's to be aware that services, like BDS, exist is important in their sustainability and growth. Therefore it was measured how useful they consider this service for their line of business. Their willingness to

take the same service again without SPEED Ghana intervening was asked to find out whether they were genuinely interested in BDS or only because they were offered a free service. Besides that to get an idea about retention rates in the future, they were interviewed about their opinion of BDS as a supporting mechanism in general and if they consider using BDS again in the future. The last question is a cross check question again. The indicator is divided into: Usefulness of service, willingness to take the same service again without SPEED intervention, opinion BDS in general as a supporting mechanism and MSME's considering using BDS again

- *Reasons for acquiring service:*
  - o This indicator gives the reasons why MSME's acquire a Business Development Service. It can be checked whether there are different reasons for acquiring in the 'during and after intervention groups' of MSME's.
- *Relevance of the service:*
  - o To find out whether MSME's even see the relevance of the service that was provided to them and whether there are differences in relevance level between the questioned MSME's during and after the intervention, this indicator is a crucial part in showing the awareness of BDS in general.

Goal Category	Indicators MSME's	Indicators BDS Providers
<b>Awareness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Awareness of BDS</li> <li>- Reason for acquiring service</li> <li>- Relevance of the service</li> <li>- Other (Business Development) Services</li> <li>- Performance measurement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Other Business Development Services</li> <li>- Other supporting organisations</li> <li>- Performance measurement</li> </ul>

**Table 4** Measuring Indicators for Goal Category Awareness

#### **Impact**

Indicators measured at both BDS provider and MSME level are:

- *Direct benefits*
  - o At BDS provider level this indicator was measured in a threefold way, first the initial benefit objectives baseline data from the providers was captured about the projections of the benefits. Next, the actual number of MSME's that benefited as intended and in what way, were captured to see if the initial objectives were even reachable and if they were reached. Last, the number of MSME's that still benefit was measured, to get insight in the sustainability of the benefits over a longer period of time. This indicator was thus measured by measuring: Initial benefit objectives, Number of

- MSME's that benefited as intended and Number of MSME's that still benefit
- BDS providers provide the answers on how they planned to have MSME's benefit and how MSME's actually benefit. Therefore MSME's were interviewed on the same topic to see whether they actually did benefit as the BDS provider states. Also to measure the sustainability of the benefits, if MSME's only benefit during the service provision or whether the service provided to them has (had) an effect on a long term was measured. Last it was measured whether the benefits for MSME's employees have changed due to the service. This indicator is divided into: Number of benefits, Sustainability of benefits (length), Benefits for staff in working conditions.
- *Cost of acquiring the service*
  - When it is clear how much it costs for MSME's to acquire the service, the financial benefits on MSME-level are easily calculated, as well as the time it takes MSME's to earn the investment back. The amount of costs can also show if the service is (still) focused on MSME's or that it has shifted to a broader focus group. This indicator is measured on both levels as a back-up indicator.

Indicators measured at BDS provider level:

- *Project objectives:*
  - The reachability of project objectives shows the level of how successful the project can become. Therefore this indicator was measured thoroughly, the first IMI tried to find out the type of organisation of the BDS provider. To see whether the service they provide fits their core activities. Also the sustainability of the service was measured, to see whether the service only survived during the SPEED Ghana intervention or whether it proved sustainable without the help of SPEED Ghana. Last the number of employees at provider level was measured. The indicator was measured by measuring: Organisation type BDS, Sustainability of service, Reachability of objectives, and Number of employees at provider.

Indicators measured at MSME level:

- *Financial Benefits:*
  - To measure the impact the service has had on the financial figures of MSME's improvements per day/week/month/year were measured in: Sales, Profit, Number of employees, Number of customers. Decrease per day/week/month/year in: Costs  
Because of the possibility that MSME's do not have these figures on all these time bases, it was left open in the interview, to have a greater chance of collecting financial data on some moment (e.g. yearly)

- *Sustainability of benefits:*
  - o This indicator measures how sustainable the improvements or decreases in financial figures are. Did or do, due to the service, these figures keep on improving/decreasing and for how long, has the service contributed to the growth of the enterprise and so they contribute to the sustainability of the enterprise.  
This indicator was measured by measuring: Contribution of service to growth enterprise, Contribution to sustainability of enterprise.

Goal Category	Indicators MSME's	Indicator BDS Providers
<b>Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Direct benefits</li> <li>- Financial Benefits</li> <li>- Cost of acquiring service</li> <li>- Sustainability of benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Direct benefits</li> <li>- Cost of acquiring the service</li> <li>- Project objectives</li> </ul>

**Table 5 - Measuring Indicators for Goal Category Impact**

### 13 Operationalised framework for BDS provider

Categories	Indicators	Interview Measuring Indicators
<b>Outreach</b>	Type of MSME customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organisation type</li> <li>- # of enterprises provided</li> <li>- # of women owned enterprises</li> </ul>
	Geographical scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Outreach on geographical scale</li> </ul>
	Promotion and distribution of service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Way of promoting and distributing the service</li> </ul>
	Copycat providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Other BDS providers copying the service</li> </ul>
<b>Satisfaction</b>	Customer satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Level of customer satisfaction</li> <li>- Measurement of satisfaction</li> </ul>
	Repeat customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- # of repeat customers</li> <li>- Retention rate of MSME's</li> </ul>
	Learning Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Points of improvement for SPEED</li> <li>- Overall remarks</li> </ul>
<b>Awareness</b>	Other Business Development Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Offering other services</li> </ul>
	Other supporting organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support of other organisations in providing BDS</li> </ul>
	Performance measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review by SPEED</li> <li>- Time between project end and impact data collection</li> </ul>
<b>Benefits</b>	Direct benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Initial benefit objectives</li> <li>- # of MSME's that benefited as intended</li> <li>- # of MSME's that still benefit</li> </ul>
	Cost of acquiring the service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Costs for MSME to acquire the service</li> </ul>
	Project objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organisation type BDS</li> <li>- Sustainability of service</li> <li>- Reachability of objectives</li> <li>- # of employees at provider</li> </ul>



## 14 Operationalised Framework for MSME's

Categories	Indicators	Interview Measuring Indicators	
Outreach	Type of MSME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Organisation type</li><li>- # of women owned enterprises</li><li>- # of employees in enterprises divided into women and men</li></ul>	
	Promotion and distribution of service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- way of promoting and distributing the service</li></ul>	
	Copycat providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- did MSME come across another provider of the same service</li></ul>	
Satisfaction	Customer satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Level of satisfaction</li><li>- Satisfaction measurement by provider</li></ul>	
	Repeat customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Willingness to take the same or another service of provider again (retention)</li><li>- Repeat customers for other services</li></ul>	
	Learning Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Points of improvement</li><li>- Overall Remarks</li></ul>	
Awareness	Awareness of BDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Usefulness of service</li><li>- Willingness to take the same service again without SPEED intervention</li><li>- Opinion BDS in general as a supporting mechanism</li><li>- MSME's considering using BDS again</li></ul>	
	Reason for acquiring service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Reasons why BDS was acquired</li></ul>	
	Relevance of the service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Do MSME's see the relevance</li></ul>	
	Other (Business Development) Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Acquiring other/comparable BDS services at other providers</li><li>- Support by other facilitators or BDS providers</li></ul>	
	Performance measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Performance measurement by SPEED / provider</li></ul>	
Benefits	Direct benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Number of benefits</li><li>- Sustainability of benefits (length)</li><li>- Benefits for staff in working conditions</li></ul>	
	Changes in financial figures	Improvements in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Sales</li><li>- Profit</li><li>- # of employees</li><li>- # of customers</li></ul>	Decrease in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Costs</li></ul>
		Sustainability of improvements / decreases	
	Cost of acquiring service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Acquiring cost</li><li>- Time to earn back investment</li></ul>	
	Sustainability of service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Contribution of service to growth enterprise</li><li>- Contribution to sustainability of enterprise</li></ul>	

## 15 Finalising Interview Questionnaires

### **BDS Provider**

It became clear after the test interview with Crossbridge that some questions had to be changed or removed and that some questions had to be added:

Questions –

- 'Looking back at the service provision after it had ended, how many entrepreneurs did actually benefit as intended and how did they benefit divided into during and after?' and – 'How many entrepreneurs, you know of, do still benefit from the service you provided divided into during and after?' - created confusion, the provider did not understand the questions.
- A BDS expert within SPEED pointed out that an extra question should be added to the questionnaire, because SPEED was interested in knowing changes in employees' working conditions due to the service.

### **MSME's**

After the first three MSME interviews alterations were made in the interview questions because sometimes questions were interpreted wrong, in almost all cases questions were formulated too difficult or seemed impossible to measure and questions had to be added to increase the validity of the indicator. Only fundamental alterations in questions are discussed because almost all the other questions in the questionnaire were formulated in a different simplified way, they will not be discussed because they were not altered fundamentally.

Extra questions added:

- 'Do you know BDS and what it is about?' – to measure the awareness and the concept of BDS more clearly the indicator 'opinion of BDS as supporting mechanism' is broadened to increase validity
- 'Have their, due to your service provision, been any changes in your employees' working conditions?' – same reason as with BDS provider interview
- 'What is the overall impact this service had on your business / personal life?'
- 'Were you ever (financially) supported in acquiring another support service?'

Alterations in questions:

- 'How much did it cost to acquire the service? Were you financially supported in the acquiring cost?' – to measure whether MSME's are aware that they are supported and to crosscheck whether they participated because it was for free
- The questions about relevance and usefulness were merged into – 'Do you think this workshop provided is relevant / useful for your kind of business?' – Because if asked in two separate questions MSME's gave the same answer, they were confused and even said that they already answered that question.
- Financial benefits in the way they were asked proved to be non-measurable because most MSME's do not know the exact amounts of sales or profit increases and of costs decreases. They were however able to tell that there has been an increase or decrease, therefore it is only asked in what way sales, profit, customer increased and costs decreased. E.g. administrative costs decreased or due to networking more customers came etc.
- Because most MSME's during the test interviews had never heard about BDS, the name supporting services/programs is used in questions to clarify what is meant.

- In measuring the level of satisfaction an extra part was added where the interviewee had to grade the BDS provider from 1-10 (1 for lowest, 10 for highest) but after one interview and consulting with the local research assistant it became clear that the grading system in Ghana is based on A-F (A for highest, F for lowest). Therefore it has been changed into A-F.

## **16 Finalising Methodology**

As a result of testing the impact assessment tool, some alterations had to be made.

- **Unit of Analysis** - as discussed in the previous section, not only BDS providers and MSME's were interviewed, but also non-MSME's. Therefore non-MSME's is added to units of analysis, though MSME's still remain the main target group in this research.
- **Selection and Operationalisation of Indicators** - the framework had to be altered, because interview questions were added, removed or altered.
- **Method of data collection** - in principle stays the same, but it should be noted that according to the conclusions of the test-interviews, it should be anticipated that during the interview not every question could be asked in the pre-determined structured way and not every interview could be conducted in a structured and standardized way.
- **Validity and Reliability of data collection** - validity of the interview questions can be strengthened by exploring questions deeper when the interviewer feels that the answer is not satisfying or if the interviewer notices that there is more beneath the surface, to get all the information needed.

## **17 Final interview questionnaire BDS Provider**

### Questionnaire

*SPEED Ghana is assessing the impact of IDEAS BDS projects that have successfully been completed. The impact assessment should give SPEED and its donors a better understanding of the consequences of their interventions. This research focuses on the direct impact it has on BDS Providers and MSME's (your customers).*

*Therefore besides asking you to answer these questions we would also like to ask you to provide us a list with contact details of all MSME's acquiring this specific service.*

*We would like to stress that there is no right or wrong answer, please answer the question according to the facts or what you or your organisation's opinion is.*

### **COMPANY PROFILE**

Name of Beneficiary

Type of Organisation

Postal Address

Location

Name of Contact Person

Position in Organisation

Number of Employees Male: Female:

1. Do you still provide the same service?

If yes, how many different groups of acquiring entrepreneurs have there been?	If no, how many different groups of acquiring entrepreneurs have there been and why not anymore?
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*If there have been more cycles after the project period with SPEED, explain that the interview questions from now on will be divided into 'a during' and 'an after' SPEED intervention part*

2. What type of MSME's did you provide your service to:

a. <b>During</b> the project period?	b. <b>After</b> completing the project?
<p><i>Tourism</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Food and Beverage</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Accommodation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Travel Agency</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Tour Guide</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Transportation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Community Based Tourism</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Handicraft</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other</p> <p><i>Wood</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Furniture</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Handicraft</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Construction Materials</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> ICT</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Garment and Textiles</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Natural Plant Products</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Financial</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, namely</p>	<p><i>Tourism</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Food and Beverage</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Accommodation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Travel Agency</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Tour Guide</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Transportation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Community Based Tourism</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Handicraft</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other</p> <p><i>Wood</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Furniture</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Handicraft</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Construction Materials</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> ICT</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Garment and Textiles</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Natural Plant Products</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Financial</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, namely</p>

3. How many enterprises did you provide the service to **during** the project period?  
What were the sizes of the enterprise you provided the service to **during** the project period, in employees?

<i>Enterprise - type</i>	<i>Number of enterprises</i>
Micro (0-5 employees)	
Small (6-20 employees)	
Medium (21-50 employees)	
<b>Total number</b>	

4. How many enterprises did you provide the service to **after** the project period?  
What were the sizes of the enterprises you provided the service to **after** the project period, in employees?

<i>Enterprise - type</i>	<i>Number of enterprises</i>
Micro (0-5 employees)	
Small (6-20 employees)	
Medium (21-50 employees)	
<b>Total number</b>	

5. How did you promote and distribute your service to the entrepreneurs:

a. During this project?	b. After the project?
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6. What was the outreach of the service you provided? On community, village/city scale, region or country scale?

a. During this project?	b. After the project?
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7. How many of the entrepreneurs you provided the service, were women owned?

a. During this project?	b. After the project?
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8. Before the service cycle started, you thought about how entrepreneurs could benefit from your service, how and in what way could entrepreneurs benefit from your service?

a. During this project?	b. After the project?
-------------------------	-----------------------

9. Looking back, how many entrepreneurs, you know of, have actually benefited and do still benefit from the service you provided them? And in what way?

a. During this project?	b. After the project?
-------------------------	-----------------------

10. Have their, due to your service provision, been any changes in your employees' working conditions?

If yes, in what way?

11. How much did it cost for the entrepreneurs to acquire the service?

a. During this project?

b. After the project?

12. Did or do you provide another Business Development Service?

If yes, what?

If no, is there a reason for this?

13. Are you being, or have you been supported by any other organisation in providing your service(s)? If yes, by whom?

14. Did or do you have repeat customers?

From entrepreneurs acquiring the service during the SPEED project?

From entrepreneurs acquiring the service after the SPEED project?

15. Do you know whether the entrepreneurs who acquired BDS during the project, would be willing to acquire BDS afterwards as well?

If yes, why?

If no, why not?

16. Have there been any providers (that you know of) that copied your service?

17. Did you reach your overall **project** objectives?

If yes, how?

If no, why not?

18. Do you think/know the entrepreneurs were satisfied with the service you provided?

**From entrepreneurs acquiring the service during the project period?**

If yes, how do you know?

If no, why not?

**From entrepreneurs acquiring the service after completion of the project?**

If yes, how do you know?

If no, why not?



19. Did you measure performance of the service you provided?

From entrepreneurs acquiring the service during the project period?	
If yes, how did you measure?	If no, why not?

From entrepreneurs acquiring the service after completing the project?	
If yes, how did/do you measure?	If no, why not?

20. Was your performance reviewed by SPEED?

If yes, how and how often?
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21. Were you satisfied with the support SPEED Ghana gave you?

If yes, do you have some points of improvement?	If no, why not and what could be improved next time?
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22. How much time has elapsed between the project ended and the impact data collection?

23. Other remarks:

**ASK FOR:**

List of all MSME's acquiring the service, during and after SPEED intervention

## **18** Final interview questionnaire MSME's during SPEED intervention

### MSME Questionnaire

*SPEED Ghana is assessing the impact of IDEAS BDS projects that have successfully been completed. The impact assessment should give SPEED and its donors a better understanding of the consequences of their interventions. This research focuses on the direct impact it has on MSME's .*

*We would like to stress that there is no right or wrong answer, please answer the question according to the facts or what you or your organisation's opinion is.*

### **COMPANY PROFILE**

Name of Beneficiary

Type of Organisation

Postal Address

Location

Name of Contact Person

Position in Organisation

Number of Employees Male: Female:

**Questionnaire to MSME's acquiring the service during SPEED intervention**

The questionnaire will start with some General questions:

1. What type of business do you operate in?

<i>Tourism</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Food and Beverage <input type="checkbox"/> Accommodation <input type="checkbox"/> Travel Agency <input type="checkbox"/> Tour Guide <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Community Based Tourism <input type="checkbox"/> Handicraft <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<i>Wood</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Furniture <input type="checkbox"/> Handicraft <input type="checkbox"/> Construction Materials  <input type="checkbox"/> ICT <input type="checkbox"/> Garment and Textiles <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Plant Products <input type="checkbox"/> Financial <input type="checkbox"/> Other, namely
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2. How many employees did you employ during the Hopespring service?

3. Is this enterprise male or female owned?

4. How long ago did you acquire the specific Hopespring Service?

5. Why did you choose to participate in this service?

6. How did you find out about this service and how was the workshop presented?

7. Have you been offered or did you come across other Consultants or Providers offering the same service / workshops or addressed the same subjects?

8. Do you think this workshop provided is relevant / useful for your kind of business?

If yes, why	If no, why not?
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9. Do you think that due to the knowledge you acquired during the workshop(s), it helped in the growing of your enterprise?

If yes, why?	If no, why not?
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10. Do you think that the knowledge you acquired during the workshop will contribute to the sustainability of your enterprise?

If yes, why?	If no, why not?
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11. Have you used or do you still use the knowledge you have learned during the service in your day to day (business) life?

If yes, in what way?	If no, why not?
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12. How much did it cost to acquire the service? Were you financially supported in the acquiring cost?

13. Were you ever (financially) supported in acquiring another support service?

14. Would you have considered attending the workshop(s) without being financially supported?

If yes, why?	If no, why not?
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15. Were you satisfied with the service being provided to you? Grade A - F

If yes, why?	If no, why not?
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16. Did Hopespring directly ask (orally or evaluation form) how satisfied you were? If yes, how?

17. Did Hopespring measure your performance afterwards/still? How?

18. What could have been improved to the service being provided to you?

19. Do you know BDS and what it is about?

20. Do you think (BDS) services/workshops supporting MSME's development is a good way of supporting business growth/sustainability (amongst MSME's)?

If yes, why?	If no, why not?
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21. Did you attend other services provided by Hopespring?

If yes, what and why?	If no, why not?
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22. Did you attend other or comparable services from other service providers?

If yes, why? From who?	If no, why not?
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23. Would you consider attending a supporting service again in the future?

If yes, why?	If no, why not?
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24. Did the knowledge you acquired during the workshops, directly or indirectly benefit you?

If yes, in what way?	If no, why not?
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25. Do you still benefit from this knowledge?

If yes, in what way?	If no, why not?
----------------------	-----------------

26. During or right after the service provision, as a result of using the service, did you notice an improve in:

	No	Yes, in what way?
Sales per day/week/month/year?		
Profits per day/week/month/year?		
Number of customers per day/week/month/year?		

or decrease in:

Costs per day/week/month/year?		
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27. Do you still notice improvements?

If yes, in what way?	If no, why not?
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28. Have there, due to the service, been any changes in employees' working conditions?

29. What is the overall impact this service had on your business / personal life?

30. Other remarks?

## **19 Final interview questionnaire MSME's after SPEED intervention**

### MSME Questionnaire

*SPEED Ghana is assessing the impact of IDEAS BDS projects that have successfully been completed. The impact assessment should give SPEED and its donors a better understanding of the consequences of their interventions. This research focuses on the direct impact it has on MSME's .*

*We would like to stress that there is no right or wrong answer, please answer the question according to the facts or what you or your organisation's opinion is.*

### **COMPANY PROFILE**

Name of Beneficiary

Type of Organisation

Postal Address

Location

Name of Contact Person

Position in Organisation

Number of Employees: Male:                      Female:

**Questionnaire to MSME's acquiring the service during the project period**

The questionnaire will start with some General questions:

1. What type of business do you operate in?

<p><i>Tourism</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Food and Beverage</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Accommodation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Travel Agency</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Tour Guide</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Transportation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Community Based Tourism</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Handicraft</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other</p>	<p><i>Wood</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Furniture</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Handicraft</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Construction Materials</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> ICT</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Garment and Textiles</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Natural Plant Products</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Financial</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, namely</p>
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2. How many employees did you employ during the Hopespring service?
3. Is this enterprise male or female owned?
4. How long ago did you acquire the specific Hopespring Service?
5. Why did you choose to participate in the thinking and acting growth service?
6. How did you find out about this service and how was the workshop presented?
7. Have you been offered or did you come across other Consultants or Providers offering the same service / workshops or addressed the same subjects?
8. Do you think this workshop provided is relevant / useful for your kind of business?
9. Do you think that due to the knowledge you acquired during the workshop(s), it helped in the growing of your enterprise?

If yes, why?	If no, why not?
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10. Do you think that the knowledge you acquired during the workshop will contribute to the sustainability of your enterprise?

If yes, why?	If no, why not?
--------------	-----------------

11. Have you used or do you still use the knowledge you have learned during the service in your day to day (business) life?

If yes, in what way?	If no, why not?
----------------------	-----------------

12. How much did it cost to acquire the service? Were you financially supported in the acquiring cost?

13. Were you ever (financially) supported in acquiring another support service?

14. Would you have considered attending the workshop(s) without being financially supported?

If yes, why?	If no, why not?
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15. Were you satisfied with the service being provided to you? Grade A - F

If yes, why?	If no, why not?
--------------	-----------------

16. Did Hopespring directly ask (orally or evaluation form) how satisfied you were? If yes, how?

17. Did Hopespring measure your performance afterwards/still? How?

18. What could have been improved to the service being provided to you?

19. Do you know BDS and what it is about?

20. Do you think (BDS) services/workshops supporting MSME's development is a good way of supporting business growth/sustainability (amongst MSME's)? (after explaining what BDS is)

If yes, why?	If no, why not?
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21. Did you attend other services provided by Hopespring?

If yes, what and why?	If no, why not?
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22. Did you attend other or comparable services from other service providers?

If yes, why? From who?	If no, why not?
------------------------	-----------------

23. Would you consider attending a supporting service again in the future?

If yes, why?	If no, why not?
--------------	-----------------

24. Did the knowledge you acquired during the workshops, directly or indirectly benefit you?

If yes, in what way?	If no, why not?
----------------------	-----------------

25. Do you still benefit from this knowledge?

If yes, in what way?	If no, why not?
----------------------	-----------------



26. During or right after the service provision, as a result of using the service, did you notice an improve in:

	No	Yes, in what way?
Sales per day/week/month/year?		
Profits per day/week/month/year?		
Number of customers per day/week/month/year?		

or decrease in:

Costs per day/week/month/year?		
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27. Do you still notice improvements?

If yes, in what way?	If no, why not?
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28. Have there, due to the service, been any changes in employees' working conditions?

29. What is the overall impact this service had on your business / personal life?

30. Other remarks?

## **20 Interview outcomes and conclusions Crossbridge Consult**

### **Crossbridge Consult Report – ‘thinking and acting growth’**

#### **Interview BDS Provider - Miss Agyeman – Crossbridge**

Conclusions:

##### **Outreach**

- The focus of SPEED I was to attract MSME's, however during and after the SPEED intervention, the Crossbridge service did not attract any Micro enterprises, only Small and Medium enterprises. During the intervention around 90% of participants were Small enterprises and 10% Medium, the total number of participants was 35. The whole Crossbridge project was seen as the test project, however after interviewing five during and five after SPEED intervention participants, the final interview questionnaire was completed. The actual number of female owned companies is not known, but during the intervention it was above 50%. After SPEED intervention, the service hardly attracted SME's. Currently, the service has evolved into a different service called 'beyond entrepreneurship' focused only on SME's. This new Crossbridge service attracts around 60% Small enterprises and 40% Medium Enterprises. The number of female owned enterprises participating now is between 25%-35%. A reason for this can be that when women owned enterprises are fully financially supported, they are more willing to participate in a BDS service
- The participating MSME's during and after the intervention period were MSME's operating in all kinds of different sectors, from handicraft to wine importers, to textbook printers to textile manufacturers. No specific sector was targeted. A positive feature was that due to the variety of enterprises many new business relations were established amongst the participating enterprises. A negative side was that due to generality of enterprises, no specific sector bound problems or opportunities could be addressed.
- The promotion of the service mainly went through networking of Crossbridge with potential participants and through advertising. An advertisement was placed and enterprises responding to it were selected only if they showed they wanted their business to grow. The distribution of the service was 1 or 2 days of workshops including handouts with useful information and tips. Downside to this was that most SME's said they would have liked the workshop to be followed up. For most enterprises 1 or 2 days were not sufficient, however they all agreed that only due to 1 or 2 workshops, their mindset changed. The beyond entrepreneurship service anticipated that problem, the current structure is 2 days of training, 30 days of monitoring (working) repeated three times. In total 6 days training and 90 days monitoring. According to the answers Crossbridge gave during the interview the same style of training and monitoring had been done during the SPEED intervention, but according to the answers of participants, only 1 or 2

workshops had been organised. Also follow up was promised to them, but most of them never heard anything ever again.

- The geographical outreach of the service is only in and around Accra and Cape Coast/Takoradi, the actual focus areas for this project. The specific service was not copied or was/is not offered by other consultants or BDS providers. The new service however has expanded from Accra and Kumasi even to abroad, e.g. Nigeria. The need for the service is there, so they plan to expand to other countries as well, but for financial reasons this has up to now not been possible. None of the interviewed SME's had been offered or came across a likewise service offered by another consultant/provider.

### **Satisfaction**

- According to Crossbridge almost all participants are satisfied with the service they provided them. Crossbridge measured satisfaction level by having participants filling out evaluation forms during the intervention. After the intervention, also evaluation forms are filled and Crossbridge can also see the level of satisfaction because almost every enterprise comes back for follow up courses, monitoring sessions or other services.

A curious fact however is that even though almost all of the interviewed SME's say that the BDS service changed their business and personal life positively, only half of them acquired a business development service again. According to Crossbridge, if the service had been followed up correctly both by Crossbridge and SPEED, more of the participants during the intervention would have participated in the new service as well, also because participants of the new service are partly funded, 60% of the acquiring costs is funded by IFC. Due to the reason of not following up, Crossbridge has no contact anymore with participants during the SPEED intervention none of them have acquired another service from Crossbridge. The problem is, that most of the SME's do not know that Crossbridge even offers more services. They do not know how to acquire the information when and where new services are available. Also SME's must see the need for their business to acquire a service.

- The performance review by SPEED was done after each project phase had ended. Crossbridge had to hand in a progress report. If the targets were met, SPEED paid the amount set for that phase. After the intervention had ended it seemed that SPEED was not interested anymore, because there was no monitoring or review session anymore, not even to see how the service evolved or how the service was going.

Crossbridge is overall satisfied with the support of SPEED, only they regret that there has not been much follow up after the intervention period ended, they would have appreciated it, if SPEED would keep in touch and follow up the service, also because the purpose of SPEED/DANIDA/GTZ is to stimulate SME's on a longer term. But now there is only short term thinking, because there has been no follow up and impact cannot be measured on longer term this way. Crossbridge would like once in a couple of months (3 or 6) a short review/monitoring sessions on how things are going, should things be adapted etc etc. If SPEED had come 3 months after the project had ended,

they still could have done something with/for the acquiring SME's during the project period. E.g. set up a knowledge database. Review during the phases should be broader, not only based on accounting, not only based on the receipts a provider can produce. There are other costs- not receipts like - that are made by providers. E.g. telephone costs, copying, faxing costs etc. The accounting system should be different. SPEED could provide photocopiers for them so they could reduce cost on copying manuals etc.

### **Awareness**

- The services Crossbridge offers are all interwoven with each other, that is why it was possible for the 'thinking and acting growth' service to evolve into the 'beyond entrepreneurship' one. All services Crossbridge offers are focused on behavioural change. The services offered are on very different levels though, e.g. universities, ministries and commercial enterprises but still focus on behavioural change. This shows that Crossbridge is contributing to making the BDS market (more) sustainable, by constantly offering services aimed at business development to MSME's. By developing and the evolvement of new services, it shows that Crossbridge Consult is aware of the problems MSME's encounter and aware of the need MSME's have for Business Development Services.
- The time between gathering this impact data and the project end has been over 1 year
- Recently, Crossbridge developed a new service based on the 'thinking and acting growth' service, aimed especially at SME's, named 'beyond entrepreneurship', which is highly successful amongst SME's. The current acquiring costs are \$1200 per SME, but 60% of the costs are funded by IFC (International Finance Corporation).

### **Benefits**

- The goal during the SPEED intervention was to have enterprises grow systematically and have their mindset changed. It had to be done through training consultants in targeted areas; the consultants would then be able to offer the service to a wide range of SME's. But due to financial reasons this proved not to be possible after some training sessions. The overall objective was to change behaviour of participants. Therefore the SME benefit objective for this service was and still is to have enterprises grow systematically, to be sustainable (enterprise should outlive the entrepreneur) and have their mindset changed to focus on the important parts of the enterprise, e.g. first focus internally, with the same cost attract more customers or produce more. The objective seems to have been reached; Crossbridge itself does not know whether they have reached it, because in most cases no follow up has been done, this means no performance measuring has been done. The only thing Crossbridge was interested in was if the enterprise had moved on, or changed and does the enterprise know what has to be done. If Crossbridge could see that this was achieved, no further measuring was done. The

interviewed SME's all answered that indeed their mindset had changed and it changed forever, their focus has shifted and almost all of them still benefit from the knowledge they acquired during the workshops. For the new service, performance measurement is done still in the same way and it has been shown that almost all participants' mindsets changed and enterprises have grown.

### **Overall conclusion**

The service 'thinking and acting growth' from Crossbridge attracted only small and medium enterprises (SME's), no micro enterprise participated in the service. The actual service SPEED intervened in does not exist anymore but has evolved into a service called 'beyond entrepreneurship'. As in most projects the actual service had some flaws and therefore Crossbridge developed it to a better service. The new service focuses directly on SME's in helping them to change their mindset. The sustainability of the service has therefore been low, because it only lasted for some time after SPEED Ghana's intervention ended. But because the service evolved into another service the sustainability of BDS that Crossbridge offers is high. Crossbridge participates in developing a sustainable BDS market for Ghana, because they offer and keep on offering Business Development Services to the Ghanaian market.

The service SPEED intervened in, attracted SME's only during the time SPEED intervened, SPEED supported SME's in acquiring the service. In supporting SME's the downside is that only certain SME's are attracted, and possibly not the ones that are the target group. This could be seen in the acquiring (paying) group of participants after the SPEED intervention had ended. The focus of SPEED was to facilitate a service that would help SME's to become sustainable and to grow, but after the intervention ended the participants were mainly NGO's, Ministries, and large enterprises, probably because SME's were not able to fully pay for the service without support. Another reason could be that during the intervention only SME's were allowed to participate, so Crossbridge focused on attracting only SME's (through inviting personal friends, business relations etc.), but after the intervention, Crossbridge was free in attracting anyone interested in the service. Of course NGO's, ministries and large enterprises are more willing and able to pay the full price compared to SME's. Instead of evolving into a successful service for SME's this service evolved into a successful service mainly for non-SME's. However, according to the answers of SME's interviewed, the acquiring cost were different from enterprise to enterprise, some got it for free, whilst others had to pay. However, the service was in 2005 so the reliability of these answers can in some cases be low.

According to Crossbridge the impact of the service is rather high, because it changed business and personal behaviour of all participants positively. It helped enterprises to become viable, sustainable and growing enterprises. It became clear that, when interviewing export consultants, one of the

consultants that worked for Crossbridge during this service worked also for SPEED I. She was responsible for the monitoring of the SPEED I projects, it must be noted that she was hired as a short-term consultant and was engaged in SPEED I well after the selection and implementation of the Crossbridge service 'Thinking and Acting Growth'.

### **MSME's during SPEED intervention**

#### **Outreach**

- The types of MSME's participating in the service are very diverse, there is no specific type of MSME's targeted. The downside of this is that some MSME's feel that if the service was focused on specific businesses they could have learned more from overcoming business specific problems and learning from other MSME's working in their business. A positive side is that due to the diversity of MSME's participating, many participants were able to build up a broad network and even get new customers.
- The service did not really have an influence on employee growth of the MSME's. In some cases the number of employees even decreased because they were taught that growth of their enterprise is not the same as growth in number of employees. It also did not have an influence on the number of female employees. According to Crossbridge the number of female owned enterprises is approximately 50%, out of our sample taken from the participants this is in line with that percentage.
- Most of the Accra participants interviewed were contacted personally by Crossbridge to participate in the service, others heard about the service through advertisements or their business associations. The Cape coast interviewees were almost all contacted personally, either through a phone call or received a letter from Crossbridge in which they explained the content and purpose of the service. One entrepreneur heard about the service through word-of-mouth. Distribution of the service was through workshops organised, during the workshops discussions, lectures, group assignments were held. Handouts and files were given to read and as a helpful tool for the future.
- None of the interviewed participants, neither in Accra nor in Cape Coast had heard about or came across consultants or service providers offering or copying the same kind of service Crossbridge offered. This means that the service did not have an impact on a greater scale outside the targeted areas or outside the boundaries of Crossbridge Consult.

#### **Satisfaction**

- The satisfaction level amongst the SME's interviewed ranged from high to very high, even after some years they still are very positive about the service. Almost all of the interviewed SME's would even be willing to participate in the service if it would be offered to them again. They say that this service made them more aware of how to run their business. More than half of the interviewed participants gave Crossbridge an A or higher and no

one gave a grade lower than C. All interviewees had positive experiences with the service Crossbridge provided. Most participants said that their satisfaction was measured through written evaluation form afterwards. Also some interviewees said that they were asked about their level of satisfaction in an informal way. Although most participants are satisfied with Crossbridge and the benefits are good, the retention rate in repeating customers is very low, no interviewed participant acquired another service from Crossbridge afterwards again. A main reason for this was because Crossbridge had never followed up on the 'thinking and acting' growth service.

- Almost all interviewed participants answered that they had taken one or more supporting services in the past though. This number seems to be high for the future as well because again almost everyone answered they are willing to participate in supporting services in the future again. The reasons why they attended or will attend supporting services again are that SME's feel it helps their business. However, most of them will only attend if they feel there is a need for attending. The validity of this can be questioned because there are no clear boundaries of what exactly BDS is amongst facilitators, providers and MSME's. So if MSME's do not exactly know whether a service they participate in is BDS or not, they might not answer the question as meant. If the definition SPEED Ghana uses for BDS is taken, then all non-financial services taken by MSME's, even though providers do not even know they are offering BDS as such, can be considered as BDS.
- Points of improvement that were frequently mentioned:
  - o More regular follow-ups from Crossbridge afterwards
  - o More frequent workshops / training days e.g. quarterly/yearly instead of 2 days service – a continuous service

Point of improvement that were sometimes mentioned:

- o During the workshop experts could have been brought in, to have more detailed information on topics addressed during the workshops

### **Awareness**

- The reasons why MSME's attended the Crossbridge service are because most MSME's were interested in the topic of the service, they wanted to improve themselves. A few MSME's participated just because "they wanted to see what it was", they had no idea beforehand about the topic or what to expect.
- All interviewed participants agreed that the service was relevant for their kind of business, actually relevant for every business type because it addresses broad business aspects for every business to apply. It was useful to all of them also because of this, many answered that they now understand what it is to have a business and how to manage it, how to take care of customers, how to do your finances and accounting properly and how to separate your personal expenses from your business expenses.
- Because this is the test run, data on financial support in acquiring supporting services has been added later on in the questionnaires; This data has only

been gathered on Cape Coast participants, the test-interviews were all conducted in Accra. Most interviewed participants said that other business development services they acquired were either financed or participants were supported financially in acquiring them. Examples of supporting organisations are Barclays Bank, USAID, DANIDA and UNDP.

- Participants answered that they were willing to pay for the service if it had not been supported. Of course asking this question after the service has proven its benefits gives biased data, because now benefits were and still are good and satisfaction is high. Therefore no reliable conclusion can be drawn from this data.
- Performance measurement has not been done properly; both SPEED and Crossbridge did not really measure the performance or impact of the participants after attending the service. Crossbridge did however some follow ups to ask how things were going, so performance was measured in an informal way in some cases. It should be noted that actual performance measurement was not part of the SPEED I IDEAS overall project description. Only selection and implementation of IDEAS projects was part of the overall project.
- Most of the interviewed participants had never heard about BDS and do not know what the concept of BDS is. A quick conclusion then made is, awareness is low. But not knowing the concept or the words does not mean not knowing what it is about. After explaining to SME's what BDS is, they knew what was meant by it. They had heard about non-financial services supporting businesses, but they did not know that this is called BDS. Still awareness is low; many interviewees do not know how to acquire or how to reach BDS, supporting services or service providers.
- Most of the interviewees attended other services besides the Crossbridge service. But almost none of them have an idea whether these are BDS services or other services. The service providers they acquired the service from were e.g. Empretec, USAID, DANIDA, UNDP, Ministry of Trade, Standard Board, ATAG, GIMPA.

### **Benefits**

- All interviewed participants answered that they had indirect or direct benefits due to participating in the service and still do benefit from the service now.
- The impact this service had benefit-wise on the participating MSME's is good. Because almost all MSME's answered the knowledge they acquired during this service helped or partly helped them to grow their business and make it more sustainable for the future. The benefits of the service have a psychological effect on participants, it creates awareness of what they are as a business entity. The growth and sustainability benefits are due to a combination of factors and one of them is the knowledge they acquired from the Crossbridge service. The sustainability aspect is there because almost all participants answered they had changed their mindset and the knowledge they acquired became a habit in their behaviour. This mindset and habits will continue to be there for the rest of their lives, because participants became



aware now how to do things differently. Most of them still use the knowledge on a day to day basis.

- There have not been major employee benefits for employees working at SME's that participated in the service. Most participating enterprises just transferred the knowledge acquired during the service to their employees. And in some occasions employers started treating their employees as equals, because they learnt that employees are the ones that 'bring in the money'.
- Direct benefits to most MSME's for this service are:
  - o how to separate personal life from business life
  - o how to treat customers.
  - o the importance of managing finances and record keeping,
  - o how to make job descriptions
  - o how to market the business.
  - o networking
- Many participants feel that the benefits were extra high because most of them did not have to pay anything to acquire the service. However some interviewed participants answered that they had to pay, respectively approximately 80 and 300 GHC. It can be questioned whether the reliability of these answers is high because it has been over two years ago that they acquired the service and the interviewees did not exactly know the amount anymore.
- The financial benefits are hard to determine by MSME's, because they do not use professional accounting systems. But most entrepreneurs were able to tell that their sales and profits had gone up after participating in the service, some were even able to tell that sales and profits grew enormously. For the participants whose sales and profits had not gone up, it was due to reasons not related to the service. More than half of the interviewed participants could notice an improvement in number of customers, because their focus towards customer care and service changed. The cost aspect was hard to find out and validity and reliability are probably low because many MSME's do not exactly know what costs are. After explaining to them, some noticed a decrease in cost due to synergy effects, doing more with the same amount of money (cost) or doing the same with lesser money (costs). Because most participants still notice a gradual improvement in their financial benefits these benefits have a long term effect, therefore the sustainability of the benefits is good. It is to be questioned whether this gradual improvement is only due to the Crossbridge service, a more plausible explanation would be that it is partly due to this and partly due to other services.
- The service had a positive impact on interviewees. The impact aspects it had on SME's:
  - o Because participants are aware of the importance of separation of business and personal life, they are now able to manage their finances better and keep track of actual business costs and income (profits).

- Participants gained knowledge on how to manage their business and are therefore now able to run their business more smoothly and are able to manage the most important areas of doing business, such as:
  - how to market your business
  - how to treat customers
  - the importance of managing finances and record keeping
  - how to make job descriptions to have employees know what is expected
- Another important aspect participants learned was the importance of networking, to go out into the market to find customers instead of waiting them to come to you

#### **Overall remarks**

- Overall remarks, not directly connected to the specific Crossbridge service, made were:
  - There should be a better link between BDS and Financial services. If MSME's participate in business development services without having the money or the assistance in getting money to grow their business, their business will never grow. MSME's would like more financial support and advice when and how to start up a business, how to acquire loans etc.
  - Services should not be free, because it attracts in some cases the wrong kind of participants. It attracts participants who are not serious about taking the service, they just come in (usually late) and see whether they like it or not. Some people even heard participants saying they were there for the free lunch. The serious participants are willing to pay something for the service.
  - There should be services, besides the general business services, that are business specific to help MSME's overcome business specific problems or teach them business specific competencies.
  - All donor programs should work together to create one Ghana platform for BDS, so all MSME's know where to go and how to reach or acquire BDS. It should not be too 'fancy' because especially micro and small enterprises do not have access to the internet and do not feel comfortable to go into 'nice offices with people wearing suits and ties'. Besides unawareness of BDS, the main reason for not acquiring BDS is not feeling comfortable going into an office.
  - Awareness of BDS amongst MSME's is low and should be more sensitized. If MSME's learn to realize what their business is about, the number of survivals will grow.

#### **MSME's after SPEED intervention**

Conclusions – due to the fact that after the SPEED intervention the service hardly attracted any SME's, a distinction will be made in overall service impact and SME-specific impact.

**Outreach**

- The type of participants of the service after SPEED intervention shifted from SME's to mainly non-SME's. The participants amongst others were ministries, banks, a cocoa buying company and consultants. Two out of three SME's participating were interviewed, one is male owned and the other female owned.
- For SME's the service had for one enterprise a huge influence on the number of employees and for the other it had no influence.
- The service was mainly promoted through Crossbridge offering the service within its network. Other ways of promotion were through advertisements in the newspaper. The service was presented in the Golden Tulip Hotel, participants received a file and they went through it and did exercises during workshops.
- None of the participants has heard of other providers or consultants offering the same service. However, some came across or heard about consultants offering the same kind of service dealing with different aspects. One consultant interviewed answered that he actually copied the service himself and that he uses it in his workshops. He only offers it to large enterprises such as Nestlé and Fanmilk.
- A remarkable fact is that Ministries and larger enterprises are offered a lot more services directly than MSME's. Consultants and service providers come on a regular basis to offer their services to them personally. An explanation for this can be that ministries and larger enterprises are able to pay the acquiring costs.

**Satisfaction**

- The overall satisfaction amongst all interviewed participants after SPEED intervention is high, most participants were satisfied due to the fact that the service changed their mindset and helped them in growing their businesses. Satisfaction measurement by Crossbridge has been done, according to some interviewees, by filling out evaluation forms. Other participants of the same service (of the same workshop at the same day) answered there was no measurement at all. Most likely, the reliability of these answers is very low because it has been more than 2 years ago that they participated in the service.
- Retention rate level of repeat customers for Crossbridge of interviewed participants after SPEED intervention is low. Almost all participants still have regular contact with and are advised by Crossbridge, but none of the interviewed participants actually acquired another service or program offered by Crossbridge. Reasons why interviewees have not yet acquired other services from Crossbridge again are:
  - o They have no time or need for other services at this moment
  - o They have no budget for other services at this moment
  - o There were no interesting services offered for their kind of business

The future retention rate of repeat customers seems to be high because

most interviewees answered that they are willing to acquire the same service or another services from Crossbridge again in the future.

- Most of the interviewed participants did not give any points of improvement because they either had none or it was too long ago and they were not able to remember what could have been improved. Points of improvement for this service given by interviewed participants after SPEED intervention who could remember are:
  - o During the workshops there was too much 'lecture', it was too academic. Participants should discover their needs themselves by more interaction with each other in small parallel groups to learn from each others' problems and solutions. The way this workshop was presented was more in a classroom way addressing overall business problems and solutions instead of focusing on specific SME business problems and solutions.

### **Awareness**

- The reasons why participants participated in the service were because most of them thought it could be an interesting service for them and their business to benefit from. Furthermore to learn new things and see things from a different perspective and to learn from an expert how to change your enterprise internally. Also to learn new aspects of managing your business, because "an entrepreneur does not know all aspects of doing business and it is always good to learn more about the aspects you know not so much about".
- Both the relevance and usefulness of this service in general are shown in this part of the research, because both SME's and non-SME's were attracted after SPEED intervention. All participants (SME's and non-SME's) found the service to be very useful and relevant for their kind of business. Interviewed participants answered that the usefulness is not only business wise but also on a personal level and almost all answered that it is still useful and will be useful because it has changed their mindsets. Some remarks were that the usefulness could be even more if the level of the service was not so academic, because then SME's would be able to better understand the service, which on its turn would increase their business awareness again. To increase the relevance of the service a frequent heard answer was that if the service (or BDS in general) would focus more on sub-groups and specific business needs (per business) it would be more effective and therefore more relevant and even more useful.
- The awareness of what BDS is and what it is about is low amongst SME's and non-SME's. Even in the ministries they had never heard about BDS. There was only one consultant who knew all about BDS because he is a provider of BDS himself.

After explaining what BDS is about, all interviewed participants think it is a good way and some even say it is a necessary and vital way of making businesses sustainable and grow. Again more than half of the interviewees participated in other BDS / supporting services in the past few years, a

remarkable fact is that they participate in services without knowing that it is BDS.

- None of the participants interviewed were supported financially in acquiring the Crossbridge service (however one did not pay because she was invited personally by Crossbridge to attend for free). Almost all interviewees paid the other services they participated in, on themselves; there was only one interviewee who was supported in the past, by DANIDA's project for private sector development. All interviewed participants consider participating in another service in the future again if there is an interesting service on which to learn and benefit from and that fits into their budgets.
- Performance measurement also after SPEED intervention has not been done.
- A conclusion can be drawn that the awareness of BDS / supporting services amongst interviewed participants is high. Even though most interviewed participants of 'after SPEED intervention' do not know the term BDS, they do feel the need and see the relevance for their business in acquiring and participating in services.

### **Benefits**

- All interviewed participants answered that they directly or indirectly benefited from the service and still benefit in some way. Some even think that they will benefit their whole (business) lives from the service, because certain thinking patterns became a habit. One interviewee answered that she will use the knowledge she acquired in the near future again when she moves her business to a new and bigger premise.

Direct benefits are:

- o Knowing the importance of prioritizing
  - o Organising and managing business
  - o How to brand your business
  - o Networking
- The benefits for employees in working conditions are hard to determine. For most interviewed participants there are changes but this goes gradually because they try to transfer their knowledge to their employees. One interviewed participant however realized the importance of her personnel and therefore salaries increased, incentives for employees were increased and she saw (partly because of that) her personnel's job satisfaction growing.
- Increases in employee conditions could only be shown for one enterprise who increased salaries and incentives for enterprises. For the other enterprises it was just that the knowledge acquired during the service was transferred to the employees. And in some occasions employers started treating their employees as equals, because they learnt that employees are the ones that 'bring in the money'.
- For financial benefits only SME's are analysed, because the service does not have a financial impact on for example a ministry as a whole and besides that a ministry does not have sales, profits or customers.

SME's noticed a positive change in sales and profits, and number of customers went up. However, this is not only due to the Crossbridge service, it is partly due to the service. Interviewees did not notice real changes in their costs. The impact the service has had financially, is also on a longer term noticeable, most interviewees answered that because their mindset has changed they still notice growth in sales, profits and customers.

- Most of the participants interviewed could not remember anymore what they had to pay for the service. The ones that could remember all gave different answers, therefore no conclusions can and will be drawn from this data, because most likely reliability is too low to give proper conclusions.
- Conclusions on data for "contribution the service has had on enterprise growth and sustainability" will only be drawn for SME's, because for this research growth and sustainability data for e.g. ministries are not relevant and have therefore been measured in a different way by asking whether it contributed to the efficiency and effectiveness of their department. This data will not be used to make conclusions, however it is interesting to say that the answers were almost exactly the same as SME's answers on the original question.

The contribution on enterprise growth of this service is very high, because participants' mindsets changed. They became more aware of their business and therefore their attitude towards their business and how to run and manage it changed drastically.

Also the contribution on enterprise sustainability is high, because according to participants 'the fundamental issues of growth over a longer period of time were addressed during the workshops'. The importance of becoming a sustainable enterprise was taught to them. They were taught that "the enterprise should outlive the entrepreneur".

- Concluding it can be said that the impact this service has had benefit wise is high, because all interviewed SME participants saw financial and non-financial benefits for their business.
- The impact aspects it had on SME's:
  - o Participants gained knowledge on how to manage their business and are therefore now able to organise and run their business better and are able to manage their most important areas of doing business, such as:
    - how to market your business
    - prioritizing activities and payments
    - the importance of managing finances and record keeping
  - o Another important aspect participants learned was the importance of networking, to go out into the market to find customers instead of waiting them to come to you

#### **Overall remarks:**

Overall remarks, not directly connected to the specific Crossbridge service, made were

- Services are too general and should be more business specific. Services in general are too broad and only focused on the mindset of the service provider. But MSME's are much more dynamic, the services should be more specified to the kind of business.
- Services are too academic, they reason from a theoretic approach but businesses work in a practical environment, therefore services should be aimed more at practical matters
- Awareness of MSME's about how to run a business is not good, they do not know how to start up, where to go, how to grow etc.
- Awareness of MSME's about BDS is low. They do not know what it is and what to use it for.
- The focus of BDS and supporting services is too much on BDS providers developing or providing a service, instead of focusing on the needs of MSME's. Also are providers not willing to change their mindset, they have a certain project in mind and are sticking to it even though MSME's do not benefit. Providers should be more flexible, willing to change or adapt the project to MSME's needs. There is a huge gap, because providers and MSME's think on different levels now.
- To add value to aid in general, donors and facilitators should know the real needs and aspirations of MSME's, instead of what they think the needs are and working on a completely different level. Focus of donors and facilitators is too much on BDS providers, you want MSME's to fit in BDS programs not the other way around.
- There should be a deeper understanding of providers and facilitators on how MSME's operate and what their challenges are.

#### **Overall conclusion & recommendation**

These overall conclusions given are only based on data gathered on the actual target group in this research, Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME's). During and after SPEED intervention the Crossbridge service attracted small and medium enterprises from all sorts of businesses, however by focusing on a specific business type during a service, MSME's might acquire more detailed knowledge and information about their type of business. It will help them in building up a more focused network and also the probability to get new customers is high because MSME's can sell e.g. services/product parts to each other.

All interviewed SME's, during and after SPEED's intervention, were satisfied to very satisfied with the service Crossbridge provided. A recommendation and an often heard point of criticism is that in the future services like this should be followed up, by either contacting businesses personally or having follow- up workshops. This way the service can have an even bigger impact on (M)SME's, because after some time the service has ended, many enterprises are left with questions and uncertainties about what they have been taught. Following up can also be a good way to increase retention rates, because providers can advise MSME's which other services to attend to overcome problems or uncertainties. A recommendation

towards SPEED is therefore to look within the timeframes and budgets of projects to see whether there is some room for follow-ups.

If one only looks at the answers SME's gave one would conclude that awareness of BDS is low. However looking under the surface it seems that maybe awareness is not so low, but that BDS as a concept is not known. Most interviewees have never heard of BDS and almost no one knows what it is. Therefore it might be a good idea to put some effort into branding BDS as a concept, to make MSME's aware what it is and that it is available on a wide scale.

The reason why awareness proved not to be so low after all is because more than half of the interviewed SME's actually participated in one or more of supporting service in the past other than the Crossbridge service. Also most of them are willing to participate in services again in the future. A problem with awareness of BDS / supporting services is that even though SME's have participated in more than one service, they have difficulties in finding services. They do not know how and where to search or reach for service providers and which organisations can help them. And even if they know where to find it, especially small enterprises find it hard to go into an office and acquire information the step to take to go into a 'fancy office' with people in suits and ties is too big. A recommendation to all donor organisations in Ghana is to work together to create a platform, easy to access for all kinds of enterprises that combines all BDS and supporting services offered in their region. If this is not possible, a recommendation for GTZ, DANIDA and therefore also SPEED Ghana is to combine their forces and to build this platform, to be sure to reach a broad range of MSME's that can benefit from the offered services.

A recommendation to increase awareness of the importance of BDS / supporting services is to have participating MSME's in services pay an (small) amount. When services are offered for free they attract besides the motivated MSME's, also a lot of unmotivated MSME's who participate because of free lunches, or out of curiosity.

Another recommendation both for SPEED Ghana as well as Crossbridge is to measure performance of projects. SPEED as facilitator should measure performance of the service provider in an objective way and at fixed moments in time. Besides that, SPEED should receive objective and reliable performance data on MSME's collected on fixed moments in time by the BDS provider / independent researcher. Otherwise, the impact interventions have on MSME's can never be assessed fully.

The benefits the service had on SME's is rather high, there is a distinction made between direct benefits and financial benefits. The direct benefits are:

- How to separate personal life from business life
- How to treat customers
- The importance of managing finances and record keeping,
- How to make job descriptions
- How to market and brand the business.
- Knowing the importance of prioritizing
- Organising and managing business
- Networking



Financial benefits were harder measure for participants, because of the lack of keeping financial records. Many interviewed participants however noticed an improvement in sales, profits and/or number of customers after they participated in the Crossbridge service. It is not possible to determine the causal relationship between the service and the improvements, because most possibly there are other and more factors of influence. But a conclusion can be made that partly due to the influence of the Crossbridge service an improvement could be noticed in sales, profits and/or number of customers. The cost part of the financial benefits was hardest to measure, because many interviewed SME's did not exactly know what costs are, therefore the validity of conclusions drawn from this might be low. Some interviewees thought costs were the price paid for a product in a shop. So in terms of their business, the selling price of the products they produce. In some cases costs decreases due to synergy effects after applying the knowledge they acquired in their business.

The influence this service had and has on the sustainability and growth of participating SME's is high. As already mentioned, in terms of growth many interviewees notice financial benefits. In terms of sustainability, at the time this data was collected the service had already been two years ago, so a more reliable conclusion on the impact the service has on the sustainability of SME's can be drawn. After these two years, SME's still notice they benefit from the service, some even on a day to day basis. The knowledge acquired from the service became a habit and due to that SME's apply the knowledge constantly and see their businesses grow gradually. The conclusion that can be drawn from the impact this service had on participating SME's is very positive. The impact has been and still is on the next levels:

- Personal level – separating personal and business life

- Financial level – increase in sales and profits, manage finances, importance of customer care and networking

- Overall business level – awareness of how to manage business and employees, how to prioritize business activities and how to market your business

## 21 Interview outcomes and conclusions OBI

### **Interview BDS Provider - Ken Donkoh – Oguuaa Business Incubator (OBI)**

Conclusions:

#### **Outreach**

- The focus of Oguuaa Business Incubator (OBI) was and still is on small enterprises just starting up their business. They have no focus on specific businesses it ranges from tourism to agriculture to ICT and manufacturers. During the SPEED Ghana intervention period, there were 11 participants, incubatees, in the OBI service. After the SPEED intervention ended business for OBI slowed down because OBI was not funded anymore by any other organisation. After the SPEED intervention the service has only been provided to five new participants. During SPEED intervention there were three women owned enterprises and after the intervention only one woman owned enterprise participated.
- The promotion of the service started with a radio talkshow weekly in which OBI talked about what they do and what business incubation is. They also had radio announcements that they would start a business incubation program and that interested entrepreneurs could send in a concept paper, around 70 entrepreneurs sent in their concept paper. Eventually OBI selected 11 incubatees to participate. Incubatees were offered an office space in the OBI building and were allowed to use shared facilities OBI offered (copier, computer, internet, bookkeeping etc). Not all incubatees, especially after the intervention, used office space because they had a premise on their own, they did however use the OBI premise as their customer face to meet (new) customers. OBI constantly monitored incubatees on their performance, consultants specialised in the kind of business of an incubatee came in and general business trainings and seminars were given. After SPEED intervention the process was almost the same, only more individual trainings were given to incubatees because it was too expensive to have specialised consultants coming in.
- The geographic outreach of the service is only the targeted area of Cape Coast and surroundings. However DED and NBSSI showed interest in the OBI service, they had heard about it on the radio and saw about it on the internet. They were interested in offering the same kind of service in KNUST (Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology), but nothing has been finalised about this yet.

#### **Satisfaction**

- According to OBI, in general incubatees are satisfied with the service, however because OBI did not clearly explain their objectives and what the incubation service was about, some incubatees had other expectations. When the service was started it seemed that besides the non-financial services of business incubation also financial services would be offered. SPEED promised OBI and incubatees that due to their cooperation with Kakum Rural Bank it would be possible for incubatees to have financial

assistance through loans. But for some reason no one knows, this never happened. Therefore some incubatees had different expectations and they felt and still feel that they were drawn under false pretences. After the intervention of SPEED, the objectives of OBI were much clearer and incubatees were explained beforehand what to expect, so after intervention there were no false expectations. OBI has some points of improvement however for SPEED

- o The SPEED intervention was too short term focused, in one year you cannot have an impact on a business community. A business incubation program should at least be supported for five years, before the incubator is viable to stand on its own feet. Besides that, the funding was too small to make an impact. OBI was not able to help the incubatees the way they wanted to help them.
  - o There should have been a better coordination between the BDS and financial component of SPEED.
- Satisfaction in case of OBI cannot be measured by looking at repeat customers. Because all incubatees are "in-house", no line can be drawn which incubatees are repeating customers and not. Therefore no conclusions can and will be drawn on retention rates of repeating customers.

#### **Awareness**

- The services OBI offers besides business incubation are business plan writing, internet services (they run an internet café as well) and a photocopy services. All these services are offered separately from business incubation, but all these services are used by incubatees as well, because they are part of the facilities incubatees can use.
- Initially the OBI service was supported by SPEED Ghana, Barclays and Youth Business International and was aimed at 'nurturing early stage ventures'.
- OBI put in some effort to making people more aware of business incubation and business services in general by participating in a weekly radio talk show on Saturdays talking about business incubation and other business services. According to OBI the incubatees participating in the service became aware of BDS because OBI exposed them to other services, the incubatees however do not know this is under the name BDS.
- OBI thinks that BDS is not too developed yet, people and businesses do not exactly know how to get access to BDS
- BDS is not yet appreciated too much by MSME's, because they do not see the benefits of BDS, they think on a short term basis only on how much it costs them now, but do not think about the long term business benefits
- Awareness of BDS is low in general in Cape Coast amongst MSME's, therefore BDS must be developed and awareness must be created.
- Performance measurement by SPEED has been done in the form of tracking the progress of implementation of the specific development phase, after each phase OBI had to hand in a progress report. There were also some formal face to face reviews with OBI by Mr. Eku and Mr. Frisk.

- Performance measurement of incubatees by OBI has been done constantly. There was and still is close interaction between OBI and incubatees because they saw each other on a daily basis. There was very close monitoring on incubatees, OBI sometimes heard complaints from incubatees of too much monitoring, they felt they had too little privacy. Overall performance measurement was done during personal meetings with incubatees, asking how performance of their business is.
- The time between the support of SPEED Ghana ended and impact assessment is one year.
- All project objectives were met

**Benefits**

- The benefits OBI had anticipated from the service for its incubatees were for the incubatees:
  - o to focus on their core business, instead of worrying about administrative duties (e.g. hiring secretary etc.)
  - o have synergy effects, because they can combine their expenditures by using shared facilities
  - o build up business credibility to access funding and towards (potential) customers, by doing business from the OBI premise.
  - o Financial assistance from SPEED (SFF) through Kakum Rural Bank.
- Some of the incubatees have indeed benefited as intended, but not fully the way OBI anticipated them to benefit. A benefit that OBI did not anticipate for, but looking back did occur was that incubatees started doing business with each other.
- The incubatees had to pay GHC 30 for rent (office, facilities) after they made profit. Eight incubatees were able to make profit.
- Within OBI there have been positive changes in employees' working conditions. Due to the service the employees were able to develop themselves as well, they received training and got in touch with other incubators. They were able to network and learn.

**Other remarks:**

To support an incubator program, the support should be long enough to go through more than 1 cycle of incubatees. To be sustainable and viable an incubator program should be supported for at least 5 years, this is what they do in other countries where incubator programs are very successful.

**Overall conclusions & recommendations**

The business incubation service from OBI focused on attracting small youth start-up enterprises. It did not attract any micro enterprises (medium would be impossible, because it was a service for start-ups). The service SPEED intervened in still exists, however it slowed down a lot due to limited financial funding. The retention rate of the service is barely noticeable but it still exists, but because the activity is slow, it does not have a huge contribution to the sustainability of the BDS market. It is one of the only BDS providers in Cape Coast and surroundings and

could therefore be the centre of BDS activity in Cape Coast, but unfortunately there was no funding after the SPEED intervention.

A recommendation towards SPEED Ghana is when supporting business incubator programs, the support should last longer than one year. To research on how long it takes for an incubator to stand on its own feet a program can have a bigger impact on the business community.

According to OBI the impact the service had on businesses in Cape Coast and its surroundings is not as big as they hoped it would be. There is a small impact however, because due to the service OBI offered some participating incubatees saw their businesses develop and grow and were able to hire employees.

### **MSME's during SPEED intervention**

#### **Outreach**

- The types of MSME's participating in the service were only Small Enterprises, in a broad range of businesses.
- The service seemed to have an influence on the growth of the enterprises in the number of workers they employ. Almost all interviewed incubatees saw an increase in number of employees, most of them increased their staff by one or two.
- Most enterprises interviewed are male owned. This is in line with the data gathered from the provider; they also said that there were few female owned enterprises that participated in this service.
- The interviewed incubatees got to know about the service (promotion) in many different ways. Some through word of mouth, some through hearing about it on the radio and seeing advertisements in the newspaper and other through personal contact with employees of OBI. The incubatees sent in a concept paper, went through a selection process and were eventually selected. All of them could use OBI office space, facilities and were offered seminars, trainings and workshops.
- None of the incubatees came across another provider or consultant offering the same kind of service OBI does

#### **Satisfaction**

- The satisfaction level of the interviewed incubatees is divided. More than half of the incubatees are not satisfied anymore. In the beginning, when the service started, most enterprises were satisfied but after some time it started to decrease, the main reason for this is that participants participated because they thought they would get financial assistance, which never happened. Two participants even said that they wasted their time participating in the OBI service. It seems that the only incubatees who were satisfied with the service are the incubatees who had personal contact with OBI employees before the service. The average grade OBI received was a C. OBI measured satisfaction of its incubatees in some cases, in the form of evaluation session and or forms. There was also an open forum in which incubatees could speak freely about their satisfaction. One incubatee however answered that there was no evaluation at all. The reliability of the

answers this incubatee gave may be questioned, because this incubatee especially had quite a grudge against OBI. It might be questioned because all other incubatees interviewed answered that at least there had been an open forum.

- None of the incubatees attended other services from OBI, however almost all services OBI offers relate to the incubator service.
- All incubatees attended other services besides the OBI service. Examples of other services taken are business advisory from NBSSI and services from UCC, Crossbridge Consult and Technoserve.
- All interviewed incubatees answered that they would be willing to acquire supporting services in the future again. Most incubatees agree that such services help to learn about and develop their business. A downside in Cape Coast however is that incubatees do not know where to go to acquire other supporting services, they also believe that most MSME's in Cape Coast do not know how to get information about or how to acquire supporting services.
- Points of improvement frequently mentioned:
  - o OBI should be financially supported, because only then can the incubator service be maintained and with financial support the service can help MSME's grow and help the Central Region as a whole.
  - o Management, personnel and policies of OBI should change. They should focus more on incubatees' enterprises as if they were their own, to show that they want their incubatees to succeed. Because some incubatees noticed that management of OBI had a double agenda because their relatives were amongst the incubatees. According to many interviewees these incubatees seemed to grow harder and better than the others. Relatives' incubatees flourished on the expenses of others.

#### Points of improvement sometimes mentioned

- o Besides non-financial services, OBI should offer also financial assistance to incubatees, because with financial means a business can start up and grow.
- o OBI should get their own premise, so they will not come across problems that recently occur (the landlord tapped illegally into their energy supply and OBI was not able to pay their bills anymore, so all power has been cut down).

#### Awareness

The interviewed incubatees got to know about the service (promotion) in many different ways. Some through word of mouth, some through hearing about it on the radio and seeing advertisements in the newspaper and others through personal contact with employees of OBI.

- The main reason why interviewed incubatees participated in the service was because they thought they would get both financial and non-financial assistance and support. And also because most incubatees wanted help in starting up their businesses. Another reason, not mentioned by all

incubatees was that by operating from the OBI premise they got a 'customer face', a reference point for customers to locate them.

- Most incubatees found this service to be relevant and useful for their kind of business, especially relevant for start up businesses, because they were helped in starting up their business without having to worry about renting and/or buying office space, facilities, hiring secretarial and administrative personnel etc. It was also useful for networking purposes because the incubatees amongst each other were able to build up a business network. Some incubatees feel that the service could have been more useful if there had been better financial assistance. For manufacturing incubatees the usefulness was only on advising areas, because there were no manufacturing facilities or space available at the OBI premise. Some manufacturing incubatees felt that the service was therefore not so relevant and useful to them.
- More than half of incubatees interviewed were supported in acquiring other Business Development Services, these services was supported by organisations such as Barclays and NBSSI
- None of the interviewed participants know what BDS is and most of them have even never heard about it. After explaining to them what the concept of BDS is about, they were all positive towards BDS, however many interviewees thought that BDS could be more effective if the link between non-financial services (BDS) and financial services is better.
- Most interviewees answered that their performance was measured from time to time, but not in a formal way. The measuring is mostly done by monitoring or asking in a meeting how things are going.

### **Benefits**

- All participants answered they had in some way benefited directly or indirectly from the service. However most of them are not really convinced, although they all benefited they have mixed feelings because they think the benefits could have been bigger.
- Most incubatees felt that the service OBI offered had contributed in some way to the growth of their enterprise, reasons why it had helped are:
  - o Advice that was given / knowledge acquired on how to start up and run a business
  - o Helping to register the enterprise officially
  - o Helping to register with a bank
- The effect the OBI service had on making the incubatees' enterprises sustainable is in this case hard to conclude on because all business are still starting up. According to general business principles an enterprise should survive for 2 years before anything can be said about its sustainability. But for the shorter term sustainability most enterprises felt that the things they learnt and the knowledge they acquired could help them in the near future to sustain their business.
- The direct benefits incubatees had are:
  - o able to build up a network

- o acquiring knowledge
  - o a customer and business face / reference point
- The sustainability of the benefits, and therefore the effect the service had on incubatees over a longer period of time, is good. Most interviewed incubatees still benefit from the service in that they still use the network they built up, the knowledge they acquired about running and managing a business.
- The relationship between financial benefits and the service OBI provided is better to determine in this project, because the incubatees received the service 'all the time'. But still no reliable causal relationship can be established. For more than half of the interviewed incubatees sales grew initially, later on it declined. There is only one incubatee who saw his sales grow 'tremendously'. The same incubatees that saw their sales grow also saw their profit grow. Most incubatees did not see their number of customers grow, and a decrease in costs was for most interviewed incubatees not really applicable because they had just started up their business, for the incubatees that had been operating somewhat longer, they saw a decrease in administrative cost. The long term financial benefits of the service can be questioned, because most interviewees answered that the benefits were there only for a short time.
- The overall impact this service has had on interviewed incubatees is both on positive and negative sides.

The positive impact the service had:

- o Building up a network
- o Makes a real business of your enterprise
- o Gives the enterprise a customer face during the start-up phase

The negative impact the service had:

- o Because OBI could not offer financial assistance they had to borrow money.
- o The service did not have the expected benefits, so some incubatees are at the same point, business wise, as when they started participating in the service.

#### **Overall remarks:**

- Overall remarks, not directly connected to the specific OBI service, made were:
  - o The OBI premise / service should be rejuvenated, it could help new businesses benefit. Then OBI can make a bigger impact in Cape Coast and surroundings
  - o All incubatees said that financial assistance was promised by SPEED (Mr. Kofi Blako), he promised them that together with Kakum Rural Bank an assistance plan would be set up, this never happened. Next time a better link between non-financial and financial services has to be established.
  - o Barclays gave the incubatees the possibility for a loan of GHC 800



- Cape Coast and surroundings still need a lot of services, there are too little supporting services available in the area for enterprises
- SPEED Ghana could monitor and review better, also on MSME level.
- Services should be organised focused on specific businesses, e.g. ICT

#### **MSME's After SPEED intervention**

After the SPEED intervention activity at OBI slowed down considerably, the service was provided only to five new incubatees. After making appointments it seemed that one of these incubatees had gone back to school again and one was not able to be interviewed. Therefore only two out of three still existing incubatees were interviewed. Conclusions are therefore based only on these two.

#### **Outreach**

- The kind of businesses are ICT and air-conditioning and fridge repair
- One of the enterprises grew with 1 employee and 2 trainees and the other did not grow employee wise
- Both enterprises are male owned
- Both enterprises heard about the OBI service through television and radio announcements and through word of mouth. The distribution of the service is that participants get advice or trainings from time to time. Also one of the enterprises used the facilities of OBI and uses the premise as his office.
- Both enterprises had not heard about the same service being provided, however one of them heard that Busy Internet started with an incubating service just like this one.

#### **Satisfaction**

- The satisfaction level of the service provided to these enterprises is good, both of them were satisfied, one had no reason for not being satisfied whilst the other was satisfied because OBI explains in detail everything he wants to know and they even translate it into Twi for him. One gave a C and the other an A.
- Satisfaction measurement by OBI has according to one of the enterprises not been done and according to the other he filled out a form. So there is some discrepancy between the answers, there are two explanations, either the answers are unreliable or OBI only measures satisfaction of some enterprises.
- The retention rate is also in this case hard to establish because part of the incubator service is offering trainings, workshops etc., so each training the enterprise participates in can not really be seen as a 'repeat customer' but as part of the service.
- Points of improvement:
  - Support / assist MSME's financially, BDS providers should work more and better together with financial institutions so incubatees can start up better and in this case buy equipment.
  - The activity of OBI is slow these days, it should be improved

- o If OBI is funded by organisations it could do more and have a bigger impact than it has now. Then OBI can also have a bigger premise.

### **Awareness**

- The reasons why the enterprises participated was because one of them thought he would get financial assistance and advice and the other because he heard the service was good, he did not need to make use of the office space and facilities because he already had that, he only uses the incubator service for training purposes.
- Both think the service was both relevant and useful to them. One answered because without OBI it would have not been possible for him to start up his business and the other because it helped him to prepare his business plan, they are his source of information by e.g. helping and teaching him how to use internet to find new suppliers
- The use of BDS amongst the two enterprises is average, one of them did attend two other services, one at Cedecom and the other one in Accra but he cannot remember where it was, and the other enterprise did not attend any. Both enterprises, however, consider attending other supporting services in the future again. A reason for this is that: "if you want to learn more you have to learn it from service providers (experts)"
- Both enterprises do not know what BDS is and what it is about, but after explaining it to them they both think it is a good way of supporting MSME's, but it could be better when adding financial support
- Both enterprises were not supported financially
- Both were not financially supported in the acquiring costs of this service
- Both say OBI measured performance; it was an informal way of monitoring.

### **Benefits**

- At questioning both enterprises whether the service contributed in the growing of their enterprise one of them answered that it had and still does contribute in the growth of his business, because the knowledge acquired on writing a business plan helped him to get a small loan from the bank which he used in acquiring now an more efficient equipment and having a showroom. He still uses the knowledge he acquired in making his business decisions, also he still goes to OBI to get information and to have them help him. For the other enterprise it did not contribute to the growing of the enterprise, because he got a small loan which was not enough and further without financial assistance for his kind of business he was not able to grow because he was not able to buy the equipment needed to run a professional business. But he used and still uses the knowledge though, so in a way that helps him to at least run his business.
- The service contributed, according to both enterprises, in making their business sustainable because OBI helped him in getting a loan and because of that his business grew and still grows, he will be able to build his new premise and workshop in a few years.
- The acquiring costs for the service are per enterprise different, one enterprise does not make use of facilities and premise of OBI so he pays only

for the separate trainings and workshops etc. he participates in, for this enterprise it was not possible to answer how long it takes him to earn back the invested money in increased income, he did not know. The other enterprise initially had to pay GHC 600, at the time of the interview he had paid half of the money. The time it would take him to earn back the invested amount in increased income due to the service is approximately five months.

- The direct benefits for the enterprises are:
  - o Use of office space (customer face)
  - o Use of facilities such as, computer, internet, phone, secretary etc.
  - o Advice on financial matters (amongst others helping to get a loan – this was for the enterprise that had already been established some years ago and had his own premise)
  - o Help in searching information in field of business – e.g. finding and selecting suppliers
  - o Help in preparing a business plan
- A conclusion on the benefits over a longer period of time can only be drawn for one enterprise, because the other enterprise started with the incubation service just ten months ago, and still is in the middle of the 'treatment'. The benefits over a longer time for the other enterprise are still the same, he now knows how to gather information and how to find and select his suppliers.
- The financial benefits for this service in terms of sales and profits are divided amongst the two enterprises, one noticed an improvement in sales and profit but the other did not notice any. For number of customers both did not notice any changes due to the service OBI provides. Both did however notice a reduction in costs, one of them not as much as he expected and the other one notices it now, before the service he was not aware of the ways to reduce costs in the enterprise.
- Again for only one of the enterprises the longer term financial benefits could be measured, he still notices an improvement in his sales and profits and a decrease in costs, even after two years due to the loan he got through the help of OBI, he is able to fabricate his own machines now, which decreases his costs and improves his profits and sales.
- The service did not really have an impact on the participant's employees' working conditions
- The overall impact the service had on the enterprises after SPEED intervention is:
  - o Advice on financial matters
  - o Use of facilities
  - o Low starting-up business costs
  - o Due to the help in writing a business plan, getting a loan and therefore being able to grow his company
  - o OBI is a source of information and helps in finding relevant information

#### Overall Remarks:

- In helping youth businesses, it should be possible for the youth to be assisted to get financial assistance or help. The initial loan should be substantial enough to start up the business as intended. There are, in Cape Coast, a lot of starting youth MSME's with start up problems due to the lack financial assistance.
- OBI should be funded over a longer period so the services they offer can have a bigger impact on the Central Region

### **Overall Conclusions & Recommendations**

- Although most incubatees said the service OBI offered gave them a 'customer face', most of them did not see an increase in the number of customers.
- Satisfaction measurement should be done consistently. This is a learning point for both SPEED Ghana and BDS provider because when MSME's are not satisfied and can not tell it, they might not feel comfortable in participating in services anymore.
- Because there was no focus on specific businesses, certain MSME's were attracted that could actually not benefit from an incubator service as intended, because the office space and facilities OBI offered were not sufficient for these kind of enterprises (such as manufacturing and specific ICT enterprises).
  - o A recommendation for future incubator services would be to focus on specific business groups because then real synergy effects can be reached in terms of offering business specific in-depth trainings, workshops, knowledge and business specific facilities. This way the impact will most likely be bigger because in stead of offering general business knowledge, incubatees can overcome specific problems for their kind of business and gain in-depth knowledge specifically aimed at their business, without having to monitor and train each incubatee separately.
- Satisfaction level is divided, on the one side there are participants who are positive about the service because the service met their expectations and on the other side a part of the participants were not satisfied because their expectations were not met. They expected to get financial support as well, besides the non-financial services. This was partly because it was promised to them by SPEED Ghana. SPEED would set up cooperation for them with Kakum Rural Bank so it would be possible for participants to have access to special loans which made OBI promise participants they would get financial assistance or support during the service. Therefore the participants' expectations were different from what they were actually offered.

- A recommendation for future projects: it is important, both for SPEED Ghana and the BDS provider, to have a clear and uniform policy. Participants should not be drawn under false pretences because it will do more harm than good to the impact of MSME's. It will also then have a negative impact on the credibility and reliability of BDS in general. MSME's might not feel comfortable attending other services anymore.
- Almost all interviewed enterprises agreed that a better link between financial and non-financial services should be established, because they all think that you need money to start up a business and only then will BDSI be relevant to help your business grow further. Most of them do not know how to get to access to a loan or financial support.
  - Recommendation: create a link between financial and non-financial services. A recommendation is to set up a BDS pilot project together with SFFL component of SPEED, to see whether the impact on MSME's is bigger when MSME's have direct access to both financial and non-financial services.
- Amongst interviewed MSME's the awareness of existing BDS or supporting services is very low, they have only heard about OBI offering services, they do not know any other provider or consultant offering it and also they do not know how to find information on where to acquire services. This problem does not only occur for the OBI interviewed participants but also for the Crossbridge Consult interviewed participants in Cape Coast.
  - Recommendation: Focus on certain areas, such as Cape Coast and its surroundings, to offer specific services there, or create an easy accessible platform or database with services available in more sub-urban or rural areas.
- Some interviewed participants complained that with the money SPEED Ghana supported OBI, only certain incubatees were supported. According to these interviewees these incubatees' businesses flourished much more than the other businesses, amongst these incubatees were relatives and personal friends of employees of OBI.
  - Recommendation: These problems are very hard to overcome, because SPEED Ghana does not have control over this, they only have the role of facilitating and do not intervene between BDS provider and MSME's. However if closer performance and satisfaction measurement could be performed, complaints and/or matters like this can be dealt with during the project period.

- Benefits both participants before and after SPEED Ghana's intervention noticed are:
  - o Use of office space (customer face)
  - o Use of facilities
  - o Advice on financial matters (amongst others helping to get a loan – this was for the enterprise that had already been established some years ago and has his own premise)
  - o Help in searching information in field of business – e.g. finding and selecting suppliers
  - o Help in preparing a business plan
  - o able to build up a network
  - o acquiring knowledge
  - o a customer and business face / reference point
- The impact the service has had on MSME's is both positive and negative  
The positive impact aspects for MSME's were:
  - o Incubatees were able to build up a network amongst each other
  - o Incubatees commented that the service makes a real business of your enterprise, it opens your eyes of what business is, beforehand they did not actually know what is was to run a business and were more like amateurs.
  - o Because incubatees were able to use office space in the OBI premise it gave the enterprise a customer face during the start-up phase. It made their enterprise look more credible to (potential) customers.
  - o There was advice on financial matters; how to apply for loans, how to manage finances
  - o Administrative costs could be saved because incubatees were able to use facilities of OBI. Incubatees were now able to spend their money on core activities and had low starting-up business costs.
  - o OBI is the source of information for incubatees and helps in finding relevant information on e.g. suppliers
  - o Due to the help in writing a business plan, some incubatees were able to get a loan and therefore being able to grow the company

The negative impact aspects for MSME's were:

- o Because OBI could not offer financial support, as expected, some MSME's had to borrow money
- o The service did not have the expected benefits both for incubatees as for OBI, so some incubatees are at the same point, business wise, than before they started participating in the service.

## **22 Interview outcomes and conclusions Hopespring Foundation**

**BDS Provider Hopespring Foundation Report** - APEX SPRINGBOARD; A need based approach to BDS

### **Conclusions**

#### **Outreach**

The focus of Hopespring Foundation was mainly on Micro enterprises. 70% of enterprises were micro-enterprises. The remaining 30% were Small enterprises. During the SPEED intervention 161 enterprises participated. There was no focus on a specific type of enterprise, mainly enterprises in the informal sector participated, such as, beauticians, dress makers, hairdressers etc. There was only a during intervention service, after SPEED's intervention they did however set up a pilot version but it failed because Hopespring was not able to finance it. This pilot version is still under review to see whether it is viable for the future. Hopespring does not really exist anymore now, they only exist on paper, but not in reality.

The actual number of women participating in the service is not known, but according to Hopespring it was more than 60%. The focus of the service was on women and youth enterprises. Hopespring promoted the service through marketing means, such as brochures and flyers. Promotion however was done mainly through business associations; they held a presentation about the service during business association meetings and tried to attract participants or informed associations' heads about the service. The distribution of the service went through workshops organised in Adenta. Different participating groups had workshops at different dates. During the workshop they trained and coached participants.

The target areas of Hopespring for this service were 4 regions in Ghana – Greater Accra, Western Region, Eastern Region and Ashanti Region. The service did not spread out to other regions. It was Hopespring's goal that the service would spread out and be copied by other providers as well; they actually trained providers so they would offer these services to MSME's. But Hopespring has not heard about any providers offering or using the service as of today.

#### **Satisfaction**

According to Hopespring participants were interested in the service but were not completely satisfied because they did not fully benefit. However Hopespring did not measure any performance of MSME's participating in the service, therefore their conclusion might not be completely reliable.

Hopespring did not have any repeat customers, the idea of the project was to have a lot of repeat customers, but this failed due to participants' unwillingness to pay after SPEED's intervention. There were a lot of drop outs who were not able to pay the services offered after the 'supported SPEED service'. The workshop was more like a 'taster' in which Hopespring showcased what they could do for MSME's, if any

MSME was interested it had to pay the full acquiring costs, but most MSME's did not. The retention rate for Hopespring services is therefore very low. Hopespring thinks however that many MSME's will acquire BDS in the future again, because they think many MSME's are aware of the importance of BDS, they even think awareness of BDS amongst MSME's is higher than 40%.

The satisfaction level of Hopespring towards SPEED is low, Hopespring is not satisfied with the support SPEED gave them, because indicators were not measured in a human/flexible way and inconsistent. They were measured too bureaucratic, because if SPEED thinks after a budget phase (target) the target was not met, they would not get the financial support for that phase. Also the monitoring process was inflexible and closure procedures needed to be better.

Hopespring had some points of improvement for SPEED and some overall remarks. These are:

- The voucher system SPEED was setting up should be completed, because it could be a way of supporting MSME's in acquiring services
- IDEAS should be continued because it is a good project
- There should be a better linkage between the different components of SPEED instead of being three different organisations within SPEED
- MSME's should be supported to understand BDS, because BDS has a lot of potential. MSME's should be better sensitized.
- There should be needs assessment of MSME's; their needs have to be known before any intervention should occur.
- In Ghana there are a lot of developing agencies who have the same goals, like GTZ and DANIDA etc. They should work together to strive for the same goals. The BDS market is already difficult enough for MSME's to understand.

According to Hopespring there has been a minimal level of impact in MSME's during this service because the project could not completely run through to the end.

#### **Awareness**

- Hopespring offered, besides this service, other services in the past such as business plan writing.
- Hopespring had a partnership with SNV and IBIS as well for providing other Business Development Services
- The time between gathering this impact data and the project end has been more than one year.

#### **Benefits**

The overall project objectives were not fully reached by Hopespring because they lacked of resources. They achieved to develop the product, they achieved to develop the marketing strategy but they failed to implement the marketing strategy.

The goal during the SPEED intervention was for MSME's to get an integrated support to make them more profitable and grow. Hopespring wanted to achieve



this by helping MSME's to get better access to markets and better access to finances. Hopespring's idea was to develop business demand in order for MSME's to acquire services afterwards again as well.

Because the project was not a success the employee morale went down. Some employees had to be laid off, now Hopespring does not even have an office anymore. A change in employees working conditions was noticed, it was however a negative change

Hopespring cannot tell the actual outcomes, benefit wise, because according to them they did not notice any actual direct benefits for MSME's.

The first 3 trainings and 2 follow ups cost GHC30 for 6 months, they changed that to GHC 10 because otherwise it would be too expensive for MSME's.

### **Overall Conclusions**

The original plan for the service was to aim at MSME's who have the need for close supporting and services. Hopespring started marketing their service, most of the time at gatherings of business associations, in which they invited possible participants to inform about this service. This introduction workshop was like a 'taster' after which MSME's had to pay the full acquiring costs if they participated. Besides business associations also other businesses were attracted through other marketing means. Many of the MSME's participated in the service at first, but because the service was too expensive for MSME's the acquiring price had to be reduced. Hopespring was not able to fully implement their marketing plan as intended and therefore problems started arising because the service that was planned to be offered could now not be offered anymore which resulted in MSME's not benefiting. This, and acquiring cost issues, resulted in MSME's not wanting to acquire repeat services. This can either mean that Micro and Small enterprises are not aware of the importance of BDS, they want quick benefits or that there was no need for the services Hopespring offered. Also this means that acquiring prices of this BDS are too high, if BDS is developed for Small and Micro enterprises the acquiring prices should not be high, because MSME's are simply not able to pay the acquiring price. Hopespring priced themselves out of the market by setting a too high acquiring price for MSME's. It can be concluded from this that the introduction service in which the participants participated was not aimed at having impact on MSME's, it could not even have a big impact on MSME's because the topics discussed were not discussed in full detail, only as a 'taster'.

According to one of the closure reports: "The demand for the service has partly been proven during the project, but it is rather questionable if the SME's will actually value the service in a way that they will also be willing to pay a commercial market price for it. If not so, the objective with SPEED Ghana's support has not been fulfilled" It can now be concluded that the objective has not been fulfilled, because Hopespring did not have any repeating customers. Customers were simply not willing to pay for the services. Therefore the demand that was tried to develop (demand developing) has failed.

Because there were no repeating customers the retention rate of Hopespring is very low, also the contribution of Hopespring to a sustainable BDS market is low because Hopespring does not offer BDS anymore to the market. Also sustainability of the actual APEX Springboard service is very low; it only existed during the SPEED intervention period, after that it died silently.

### **Conclusions & outcomes MSME's**

#### **Outreach**

The types of MSME's interviewed varied. However there were a high number of beauty- and hair saloons interviewed. This was because the associations Hopespring visited to inform about their service were amongst others the Ghana Hairdressers' and Beauticians' Association. In total 20 MSME's were interviewed from which 19 were suitable to use in this analysis, because the other interviewee did not remember anything anymore of the service. Most of the interviewed MSME's were female owned (more than 70%) and most interviewed enterprises can be considered as Micro enterprises.

The reliability of some answers, either from Hopespring and/or MSME's, can be questioned, because many interviewed participants could not remember everything about the service anymore, this was shown already in the answers to the question "when did you participate in the service". The project started in 2005, but some answered that they participated many years earlier, e.g. 2000 and some had files showing they participated only once in a Hopespring service, in 2003.

The way MSME's found out about the service is very diverse, most beauty- and hair saloons found out through presentations of Hopespring during one of the Hairdressers Association's meetings. The interviewed participants at Budumburam Camp (Liberian Refugee Camp) found out through Social Welfare. Other participants found out through networking or through friends, or were sent by their boss.

All participants answered that they had not come across the same kind of service offered by any other providers or consultants. Only one interviewed participant answered that she came across a similar kind of service offered by the Ronald Brown Institute, this service was about developing enterprise skills.

#### **Satisfaction**

All interviewed participants were satisfied with the service provided to them. The average grade the participants gave Hopespring for the service they offered is a B-. General reasons why participants were satisfied are:

- They acquired knowledge on how to run a business
- They learnt how to do proper bookkeeping and keeping records

Almost all interviewed participants answered that Hopespring measured their satisfaction by having them fill out an evaluation form after the service. During the workshops participants even filled out pre- and post forms; before the workshop their expectations and after the workshop their satisfaction were asked.

Participants did have some improvements and remarks however, frequently mentioned were:

- Better financial linkages and support so MSME's can acquire loans to grow their business (preferably with lower interest rates); when they acquire a loan they should be informed on how to spend the loan wisely
- There should be more follow-ups by the service provider, MSME's should be mentored and monitored (more follow ups) better after the service for some time
- The workshop should be offered more often (e.g. periodically) to refresh the knowledge of participating MSME's
- The level of the service should be aimed to suit level of the participants (if there are illiterates it should be more practical) – therefore in the future select participants more specifically
- Many interviewed participants do not know how to find information on where services are offered. Many suggest the creation of a platform or database e.g. online, through business associations or through periodic journals

Other improvements and remarks given were:

- MSME's should be helped to get better market linkages
- The level of the service compared to other services was too low
- There should be needs assessments to find out the real needs of MSME's to develop tailor made programs.
- Customer care should be emphasised because that is very low in Ghana

The number of repeat customers for services at Hopespring is very low, only one participant answered that he participated during another service offered by Hopespring, because he was invited by them. Therefore the retention rate for Hopespring specifically is very low.

Only 4 out of 19 answered that they had not participated in any other service besides the Hopespring service. The main reason why participants did not participate in other services is due to a lack of time. The services that participants participated in where amongst others from: UNAID, Empretec, PPAD, Ronald Brown Institute and Business specific trainings by business associations

Most participants are willing to acquire supporting services like the Hopespring service again in the future, only one participant answered that she could not leave her business to go for services. The reasons why participants would want to attend other services in the future are:

- To gain new knowledge
- To improve and upgrade their skills
- It helps to know how to deal with problems
- A business needs to innovate itself, because the environment is innovative as well

### **Awareness**

The reasons why participants chose to participate in this Hopespring service are

diverse, but the general tendency was because they were interested in the topics to improve or learn (new) skills and to acquire knowledge on how to run and manage a business and its finances.

All interviewed participants found the workshop useful and relevant for their business because participants learnt how to manage their business in general and gained some business specific knowledge as well.

The awareness of the importance of BDS seems good, 14 out of 19 interviewed participants answered that they were willing to pay for the service if it had not been financially supported. This does not completely match with prior research findings in which Hopespring and participants answered that services are too expensive. Apparently MSME's are willing to pay, but only up to a certain amount. The main reasons why is because interviewees in general find it important to acquire new knowledge to improve their business and now they have seen that they gained knowledge they would have paid for it again. The reliability of this answer can be questioned, because the acquiring costs for the introduction would, without SPEED support, be probably as much as the other services. In other questions interviewees answered that they did not want to pay for other services provided by Hopespring, because the acquiring costs were too high. It is curious to see that MSME's who need the service, in the researcher's opinion, most are not at all willing to pay for the service without SPEED intervention. These are the enterprises run by illiterate or very low-schooled entrepreneurs.

Amongst the interviewed participants, awareness and recognition of the concept of BDS is very low. Only two participants had heard about BDS but they did however not know what BDS is exactly about. After explaining to all interviewed participants what BDS is, only one participant answered that BDS does not really help MSME's and one answered she did not know. The other participants were positive about the concept of BDS, almost all answered:

- It improves your knowledge and awareness on how to run or manage a business and how to overcome business specific problems
- It improves your business skills

Because most interviewed participants only participated in the first 'introduction' workshop for 1 or 2 days (the taster) they did not pay anything for the service. The other participants who took the whole introduction workshop for a couple of days paid mostly only a small administration fee, amounts paid vary from GHC10 to GHC20, probably these amounts are not very reliable, because it is over 2 years ago that they paid. Most participants did not know the service (workshop) was supported by SPEED Ghana, only very few knew it was supported by SPEED. Approximately half of the interviewed participated in other supported services. Most of these services were for free. Only 3 interviewees did not participate in any other service besides this Hopespring service. The other participants all attended other services.

The performance measurement of Hopespring was better than for the other services (Crossbridge and OBI), 13 of 19 interviewed participants reported that Hopespring followed up after the last workshop to ask how business is going and whether they benefited.

### **Benefits**

Most interviewed participants benefited from the service provided to them. Only two participants did not benefit at all, one because she does not speak English (the workshops were in English). Overall the benefits of the service for participating MSME's were:

- Gained knowledge on how to build up and manage the business and solve problems
- Gained knowledge on how to handle business finances on: bookkeeping, record keeping, separate business spending from personal spending, differences between income and profit

Some individual benefits were:

- Improvement in presentation skills
- Building up business competences
- Learning which employee is suitable for what job

All interviewed participants who benefited, still benefit from the service at the time of interviewing. Most of them who still have their business still benefit in the same way, the ones who changed direction - either stopped their business or started up a new business - also still benefit but in another way. They apply the knowledge more in their job or in building up their new business. Therefore it can be concluded that the benefits MSME's had due to the service are very sustainable and have affected the lives of the participants in a positive way.

The financial benefits for MSME's interviewed are not direct benefits, and increases are only partly due to Hopespring's efforts because many participants attended other services as well. Most interviewed participants noticed an increase in either their sales, profits or both. Also many participants noticed a decrease in their costs. Most MSME's say that when there were increases in sales and profits and decreases in costs it was due to keeping a better eye on their financial situation (bookkeeping, record keeping etc). There is no plausible relation between increased sales / profits and decreased costs and the Hopespring service. The only conclusion that can be made is that Hopespring partly contributed to the increase or decrease. Number of customers increased for many participants as well due to customer care topics discussed during the workshops.

13 participants still notice a gradual improvement in sales, profits and/or number of customers as of today. Participants could not quantify any improvements. Therefore it is again hard to conclude that the improvements are due to the Hopespring service, most likely Hopespring has partly contributed.

17 out of 19 interviewed participants answered that the knowledge they acquired

helped them in the growing of the enterprise, because of the benefits mentioned earlier. Again it should be noted that this service probably only contributed partly to the growing of the enterprises, because especially after more than two years there are and have been other factors of influence to the growing of these enterprises as well. The sustainability of most interviewed enterprises is harder to establish, especially for Micro enterprises because they have the tendency to change their business. But despite this more than half of the enterprises still think their business has sustained in some way over the past couple of years.

There were changes in employees' working conditions for the enterprises that actually do have employees (5 do not have any employees). The participants who do have employees noticed changes in their employees' conditions, the researcher only has a feeling that the answers might not be completely reliable because only three participant could actually tell what kind of changes occurred. At all three enterprises either salary increases were given or above industry salaries are paid, one enterprise pays its employees social securities and incentives and one enterprise pays its employees 'chop money'. These changes were not only due to the things learnt at the Hopespring service; it is partly due to this service and partly due to knowledge acquired at other services.

The other participants who noticed changes came up with more general changes in conditions such as:

- Transferred the knowledge learnt during the service to their employees
- Know the importance of employees now and treat them better

The service had a positive impact on most participants. Only the participants who did not understand the workshop or stopped their business and started working did not have a direct impact on their business. It did however then in some cases have an impact on a more personal level.

- Business impacts were:
  - Partly due to the knowledge acquired at Hopespring many participating MSME's now have more knowledge and gained better skills in how to manage and improve their business and their finances
  - Learnt to separate the business from personal life
- Personal impacts were:
  - Partly due to this service some participants are more able to stand on their own feet, life improved for them.
  - Knowledge learnt can be applied in other facets of life as well, some participants who stopped business apply it in their jobs now

### **Overall Conclusions**

Although the service was not implemented completely as was projected and Hopespring felt that the service did not benefit well, most interviewed participants still noticed some benefits and positive impacts for their business. Most participants

were also rather satisfied with the service provided to them. Most surprising to see is that even though according to Hopespring the benefits were not well, participants did benefit, this can mean that the level of knowledge of participating MSME's is very low, because they even benefit from a failed service like this. It is also surprising that MSME's did benefits because some (more educated) participants participated in another service from Empretec which also addressed topics such as managing your business. These participants told that the level of the Empretec service was much higher than the Hopespring service. This can mean that the level of the other participants who did not participate in the Empretec service is very low, that even with the slightest effort some benefits and impacts for their businesses can be reached.

Most MSME's:

- say they value the importance of BDS
- are willing to participate in other BDS in the future and
- were willing to pay the full acquiring price to Hopespring when the service had not been supported financially by SPEED,

A surprising conclusion that can be drawn from this is that although MSME's say this, they did not want to acquire the repeat services from Hopespring again because most MSME's thought the acquiring costs were too high. This can either mean that the costs were actually too high for them to pay or it means that the reliability of their answers is low because they do not really value the concept of BDS as intended, they then value it only when direct benefits can be shown from services for a very low acquiring price.

The improvements/remarks MSME's mention, again are almost the same as other participating MSME's during other interviews said. Mostly there should be better financial and market linkages created, follow ups should be better and the workshops should be offered more often (e.g. periodically) to refresh their knowledge.

The benefits for MSME's participating in the service are similar to the impact it had on their business, the general opinion was that the service contributed partly to a better understanding and an improved knowledge on how to manage a business and its finances.

## 23 Indicator selection and checklist baseline data

### Indicator Selection

Participant / MSME	BDS Provider
Business type	Project objectives
Reasons for acquiring service	Expectations
Promotion and distribution of service (how did participant / MSME find out about the service)	Projected outreach
BDS awareness	Projected benefits
Number of customers, sales/profit (if applicable)	Satisfaction
Expectations	Acquiring costs
Acquiring costs	

### Checklist MSME's

Name of enterprise:

Contact Details:

<b>Outreach</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Organisation type	
Gender of owner	
Number of employees	Female: Male:

<b>Awareness</b>	<b>Answer</b>
How did you find out about this service?	
Why do you participate in this service?	
Did you participate in other supporting services/workshops/ Trainings from this BDS provider?	
Did you participate in comparable supporting services/workshops/trainings from other BDS providers? If yes, why did you stop participating?	



<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Answer</b>
What are your expectations of this service?	
How much did you have to pay to participate in this service?	

**Checklist BDS Provider**

<b>Outreach</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Project objectives	
Number of employees	Female:                      Male:
Number of service delivery location	
Projected geographical outreach	

<b>Awareness</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Does provider provide any other service/workshop/training?	

<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Expectations	
Acquiring cost	
Projected number of participants	
Projected benefits for participants	

## 24 Indicator selection and checklist progress data

### Indicator Selection

Participant / MSME	BDS Provider
BDS awareness	Project objectives
Satisfaction and Learning criteria	Expectation alignment
Direct benefits and / or Financial benefits	Satisfaction and Learning criteria
Sustainability and Growth of participants' enterprise	Direct benefits / Financial benefits
Expectations alignment	
Relevance / Usefulness	

### Checklist MSME's

Name of Enterprise:

Contact Details:

<b>Outreach</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Number of employees	Female:                      Male:

<b>Satisfaction</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Are you satisfied?	
Do you have some points of improvement?	

<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Is the service already useful to you?	
Do you notice benefits already? Which benefits?	
Are expectations met so far?	
Do you notice business growth?	
Do you notice an improvement in income?	
Do you notice an improvement in number of customers?	

**Checklist BDS Provider**

<b>Outreach</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Number of employees	Female: Male:
Are project objectives reached so far?	

<b>Satisfaction</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Satisfied with SPEED?	
Points of improvement	

<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Are expectations for BDS provider met so far?	
Number of participants	
Noticed benefits for participants	

## 25 Indicator selection and checklist project closure data

### Indicator Selection

Participant / MSME	BDS Provider
BDS awareness	Project objectives
Satisfaction and Learning criteria	Expectation alignment
Direct benefits and / or Financial benefits	Satisfaction and Learning criteria
Sustainability and Growth of participants' enterprise	Benefits
Expectations alignment	Repeating service (future)
Relevance / Usefulness	
Repeat services	

### Checklist MSME's

Name of Enterprise:

Contact Details:

<b>Outreach</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Number of employees	Female:                      Male:

<b>Satisfaction</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Are you satisfied?	
Do you have some points of improvement?	

<b>Awareness</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Will you acquire other services/workshops/trainings again at this BDS provider?	
Will you acquire other comparable services/workshops/trainings again at other providers in the future?	

<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Has service been useful to you?	
Do you notice benefits already? Which benefits?	
Are your expectations met?	
Do you notice business growth?	
Do you notice an improvement in income?	
Do you notice and improvement in number of customers?	
What is the overall impact the service has had on your business?	

**Checklist BDS Provider**

<b>Outreach</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Number of employees	Female:                      Male:
Are project objectives reached?	
Number of service delivery locations	
Geographical outreach	

<b>Satisfaction</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Satisfied with SPEED?	
Points of improvement	

<b>Awareness</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Will BDS provider keep on providing the service?	
Will BDS provider provide other services in the near future?	
Will there be follow - ups for participants?	

<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Are expectations for BDS provider met?	
Number of participants who finished the service?	
Noticed benefits for participants	
Noticed benefits for BDS provider	

## 26 Indicator selection and checklist one year after closure

### Indicator Selection

Participant / MSME	BDS Provider
BDS awareness	Project objectives
Direct benefits and / or Financial benefits	Satisfaction and Learning criteria
Sustainability and Growth of participants' enterprise	Benefits
Usefulness	Repeating service (future)
Repeat services	

### Checklist MSME's

Name of Participant:

Contact Details:

<b>Outreach</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Number of employees	Female: Male:

<b>Awareness</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Have you participated in comparable services/workshops/trainings in the past year?	
Have you acquired services/workshops/trainings again at BDS provider?	
Will you acquire other services/workshop/trainings from this BDS provider again?	

<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Has the service proven to be useful to you?	
Do you (still) notice benefits? Which benefits?	
Do you (still) notice business growth?	
Do you (still) notice an improvement in income?	
Do (you) notice an improvement in number of customers?	
What is the overall impact still after one year?	

**Checklist BDS Provider**

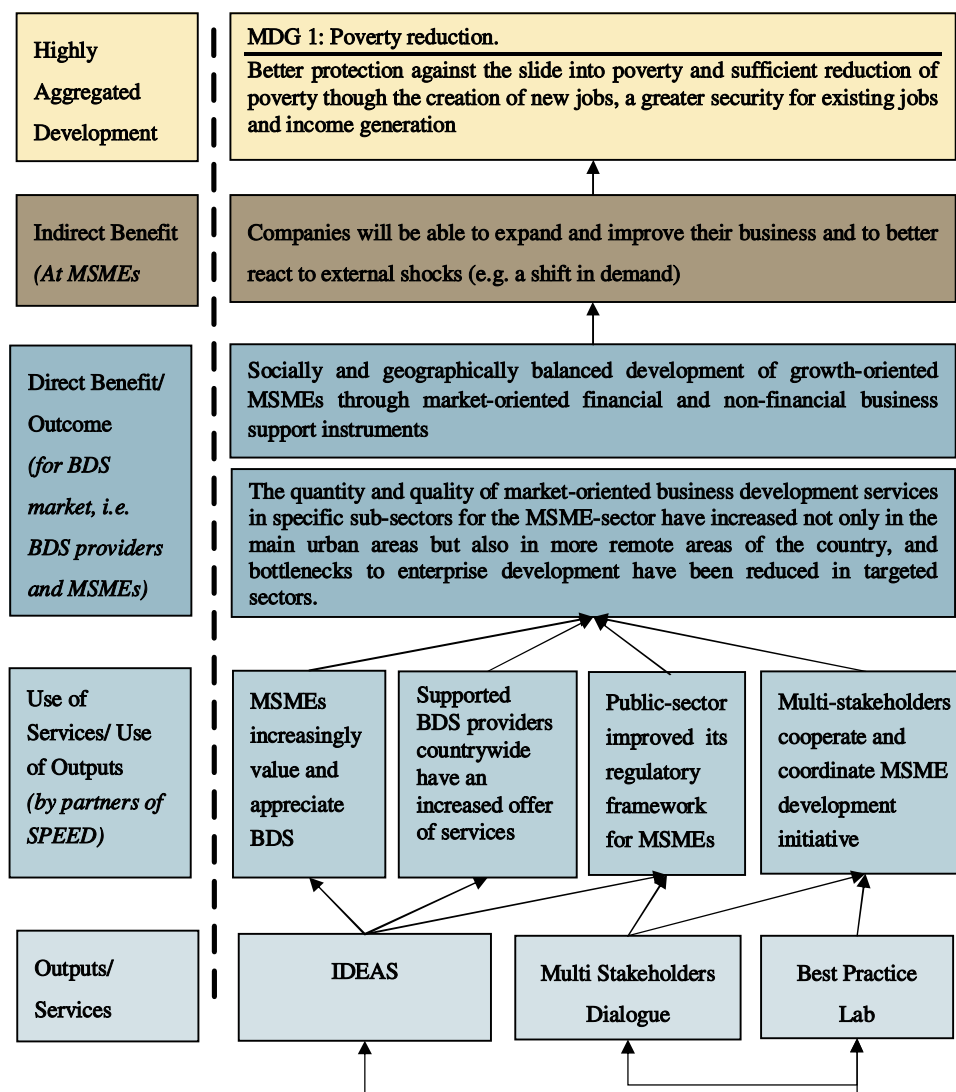
<b>Outreach</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Number of employees	Female: Male:
Number of service delivery locations after one year	
Geographical outreach of service after one year	

<b>Awareness</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Does BDS provider still provide the service?	
Does BDS provider provide other services?	
Have there been follow – ups for participants?	
Does BDS provider have repeat customers? How many?	

<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Answer</b>
What benefits for BDS provider have there been?	



## 27 Result Matrix SPEED II



## 28 Checklist BDS Provider

<b>Outreach</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Number of employees	Female: Male:
Number of service delivery locations after one year	
Geographical outreach of service after one year	

<b>Awareness</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Does BDS provider still provide the service?	
Does BDS provider provide other services?	
Have there been follow – ups for participants?	
Does BDS provider have repeat customers? How many?	

<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Answer</b>
What benefits for BDS provider have there been?	





Categories	Indicators	Crossbridge Consult	Oguana Business Incubator	Hopespring Foundation
Outreach	Type of MSME	During intervention: Service was aimed at MSME's however only Small and Medium Enterprises were attracted. After intervention: Almost no MSME's were attracted, only large enterprises and public institutions were attracted	During / After intervention: Small start-ups enterprises are attracted. After intervention only three enterprises were attracted.	During intervention: Focus on women and youth owned Micro-enterprises. However only 70% Micro-enterprises attracted After intervention: there has not been an after-intervention group
	Promotion and distribution of service	During / After intervention: participants were personally attracted and service was provided through different workshops	During / After intervention: Participants were attracted personally and through advertisement. Service was an internal incubation service	Promotion was done through different business associations. Service was provided through different workshops
	Copycat providers	Service has not been copied by other providers	Kumasi based incubator showed interest in the specific service	Initial goal of service was to be copied by other providers, however it did not happen
	Customer Satisfaction	During / After intervention: satisfaction level is high	During / After intervention: satisfaction level is mixed from low - high	Satisfaction level is high
Satisfaction	Repeat customers	During intervention: very low - none After intervention: very low - none	During / After intervention: the service is an ongoing in-house service, it does not have a fixed end date	Very low- only one repeat customer
	Learning Criteria	During intervention: More follow-ups by the service provider Workshop should be offered more often to refresh the knowledge After intervention: Service was too theoretic	During intervention: The SPEED intervention was too short term focused Better financial linkages After intervention: The SPEED intervention was too short term focused OBT's personnel, policies and management have to change - think in participants' best interest.	Better financial linkages More follow-ups by the service provider, MSME's should be mentored and monitored better after the service The workshop should be offered more often to refresh the knowledge of participating MSME's
	Awareness of BDS	During intervention / After intervention: No one knows the concept of BDS. After explaining all interviewees feel BDS contributes to helping MSME's grow and develop. They do feel however that BDS should be provided together with financial services.	During intervention / After intervention: No one knows the concept of BDS. After explaining all interviewees feel BDS contributes to helping MSME's grow and develop. They do feel however that BDS should be provided together with financial services.	- Only one knows the concept of BDS. After explaining all interviewees feel BDS contributes to helping MSME's grow and develop. They do feel however that BDS should be provided together with financial services.
Awareness	Reason for acquiring service	During intervention: Mostly because MSME's wanted to improve on themselves	During/After intervention: Most heard reason was that MSME's thought they would get financially supported during the	Generally to improve on or to learn new skills To acquire new knowledge on how to run and manage the business and its finances

		After intervention: Thought that business could benefit from the service and to learn how to manage business	incubation service.	
Other (Business Development) Services	During intervention: Most participants participated in others as well, but do not know where to find new ones After intervention: More than half of the participants interviewed, participated in other BDS as well in the past couple of years	During intervention: Many participated in other services and were supported in the acquiring cost by developing organisations as well. After intervention: One did participate in other BDS and one did not	Most interviewees participated in other BDS as well. These services were mostly offered for free.	
Performance measurement	During / After intervention: No one measured performance, Crossbridge did some follow-ups but did not measure anything	During/After intervention: Performance was measured from time to time, but not in a formal way	13 out of 15 reported that Hopespring followed up and measured performance	
Direct benefits	During intervention: How to separate business from personal life How to treat customers How to market your business Managing finances and record keeping Networking After intervention: Know how to prioritize Organizing and managing business Know how to brand the business Networking	During intervention: Build up a network Building up a customer face / reference point Acquiring new business knowledge After intervention: Use of office space (customer face) and facilities Advice on financial matters Help in preparing business plan Help in searching relevant business information	Most saw benefits, only 2 did not see any benefits, because these participants did not understand the workshops (English language) Acquired knowledge on how to build up and manage business and to solve business related problems Acquired knowledge on how to handle business finances such as: bookkeeping, record keeping, difference between profit and income, difference between business and personal spendings/finances	
Changes in financial figures	During intervention: Participants noticed gradual increase in their income After intervention: Financial benefits were not analysed because mostly non-MSME's participated (Ministries etc)	During intervention: For more than 50% of incubatees sales and profit grew initially, but declined later on. No long term financial benefits After intervention: One noticed improvement in sales and profit and one did not	Most participants (except 2) noticed either increase in sales and profit or decrease in their costs. MSME's felt this was because they now had better control over their finances.	
Cost of acquiring service	During intervention: Differed per MSME, some for free and some had to pay	During intervention: No acquiring costs After intervention:	Small administration fee had to be paid, amounts paid vary from GHC 10 to GHC 20	



**Improved Impact Monitoring**

		After intervention: Current acquiring costs: 51,200 (60% of this amount is funded by IFC)	Pay for each participated service the incubator offers	
	Sustainability of service	During intervention/After intervention: Most still benefit from the service because as MSME's say: "the knowledge acquired became a habit in their daily business and personal lives".	During intervention/ After intervention: For most MSME's the service is still ongoing, for those who stopped participating the service did not contribute to growth, knowledge acquiring etc.	Those who benefited still benefit from the service as of today. Knowledge acquired became a habit to those who still benefit.

Categories	Indicators	Interview Measuring Indicators	Outcomes	Conclusions
Outreach	Type of MSME	Organisation type	Broad range of MSME's from all kinds of industries	A broad range of MSME's has been reached, however none of the services reached MSME's beyond the scope of the three services. Because none of the three services is offered on a large scale anymore they do not contribute to making the BDS market more sustainable. Therefore outreach of the services is low.
		% of women owned enterprises	Number of women owned enterprises is 50 %	
		% of employees in enterprises divided into women and men	Employees were more male than female	
	Promotion and distribution of service	Way of promoting and distributing the service	Through advertisements, word to mouth and direct marketing distribution through workshops	
	Copycat providers	Did MSME come across another provider of the same service	None of the services has been provided by another provider	
Satisfaction	Customer Satisfaction	Level of satisfaction	Most MSME's were satisfied because they acquired new knowledge	Satisfaction amongst MSME's is high, however almost none of the participating MSME's participated in other services from their service provider again. The retention rate for all three services is therefore very low. Again this has not
		Satisfaction measurement by provider	Not done consistently neither by BDS providers nor by SPEED Ghara	
	Repeat customers	Willingness to take the same or another service of provider again (retention)	Retention rates for all three services are very low	
	Learning Criteria	Points of improvement	Give MSME's opportunity to give their opinion Focus on specific business types to address business specific	



			Overall Remarks	problems	contributed in making the BDS market more sustainable.
<b>Awareness</b>	Awareness of BDS	Usefulness and relevance of service	Willingness to take the same service again without SPEED intervention or Opinion BDS in general as a supporting mechanism	98% of all interviewed MSME's found the service to be relevant and useful and used the knowledge they acquired for a long time or still use it. Many MSME's were willing to take the same service again, providing they had money to pay the full requiring cost After explaining the concept of BDS MSME's opinion about BDS was very positive but most do not know where to find service providers Almost all MSME's considered acquiring a management or accounting service again in the future to gain more knowledge	An overall conclusion concerning the awareness of MSME's that can be drawn is that many MSME's do not know how to find business management, accounting or quality improvement services, trainings or workshops if they need one. They do not know which services are offered or where to find service providers. Therefore awareness about offered services is low, but awareness about the importance of acquiring BDS to grow business is good.
	Reason for acquiring service	Reasons why BDS was acquired	MSME's considering using BDS again	Most thought that they could acquire knowledge which could help their business	
	Other (Business Development) Services	Acquiring other/comparable BDS services at other providers		Almost half of the MSME's interviewed participated in other services from other providers	
	Performance measurement	Support by other facilitators or BDS providers		Most other services MSME's participated in where (partially) subsidised by e.g. UNAID, GTZ, DANIDA, Empretec etc.	
	Direct benefits	Performance measurement by SPEED / provider		No proper performance measurement has been done during or after intervention	
	Impact	Number of benefits		90% of all interviewed MSME's benefited in some way from the service they participated in. Benefits were: acquired new business knowledge, know how to manage, know how to separate personal from business finances, record- and bookkeeping etc.	
<b>Impact</b>		Sustainability of benefits (long-h)		Many interviewed MSME's still benefit from the knowledge they acquired because it became a habit for them.	The overall impact of the three services on MSME level is rather good. It seemed that even with relatively minimal service provision many MSME's benefited considerably.
		Benefits for staff in working conditions		Reliability of answers was low minor benefits in working conditions	

			conditions	The impact MSME's noticed was on personal, business and financial level.
Changes in financial figures	Improvements in: Sales Profit # of employees # of customers		Many MSME's thought that noticed improvements in sales/profit and decreases in costs were due to the knowledge they acquired during the specific IDEAS service. Outcomes however proved to be not valid and reliable and there was no causal relation to be established between change in financial benefits and the specific service	
	Decrease in: Costs			
	- Sustainability of improvements / decreases			
Cost of acquiring service	- Acquiring cost Time to earn back investment		All three services were either for free or participants had to pay a small fee. Reliability of the answers was very low because most payments were over 2 years ago. Time to earn back investment answers were very unreliable	
Sustainability of service	Contribution of service to growth enterprise Contribution to sustainability of enterprise		In most positive scenario it can be said that the services partly contributed to growth and sustainability of the MSME's. There was no causal relationship to be established between growth / sustainability and offered service.	

Table 10 – Operationalised Framework MSME's with outcomes and conclusions

