Scaling
Frontier
Innovation

FRONTIER INNOVATORS:
INTERIM RESULTS AND LEARNING REPORT

FEBRUARY 2019

DELIVERED BY
MOONSHOT GLOBAL & LIVING COLLABORATIONS

INNOVATION XCHANGE

Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Australian Aid

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OVERVIEW

FRONTIER INNOVATORS

The Frontier Innovators Program, an initiative of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's (DFAT) innovationXchange (iXc), is the first of four components within the Scaling Frontier Innovation (SFI) Program. The SFI Program supports social enterprises to scale their development impact in the Asia Pacific region.
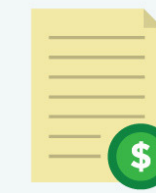
DFAT and their implementing partner SecondMuse designed the Frontier Innovators Program to promote the work of select social enterprises or 'innovators' by providing them with opportunities for peer learning, grants of AUD100,000, guides to offer one-on-one advice, an in-person training, and customised technical assistance to grow their impact.

Peer Learning   AUD 100,000   Grants   Expert Guides   In-Person Training   Customised Technical Assistance

DFAT implemented the SFI Program through partnerships formed among diverse entities, understanding the range of expertise needed to maximise results.

- 1 GRANT MANAGER
- 1 IMPLEMENTING PARTNER
- 1 MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING PARTNER
- 1 COMMUNICATIONS PARTNER
- 5 GUIDES
- 17 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS
- 50 EXPERT APPLICATION REVIEWERS
- 380 STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED

Frontier Innovators issued an open call to identify some of the most promising enterprises in the region, receiving 732 applications from 52 countries. Fourteen high-potential social enterprises from ten countries were selected to participate in the program.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report has the dual purpose of measuring the interim performance of the Frontier Innovators Program against the SFI performance framework (see page 7) and to capture lessons learned from implementation to date. The intent is to help DFAT understand the value of its investment in Frontier Innovators and to surface considerations and recommendations for future work.
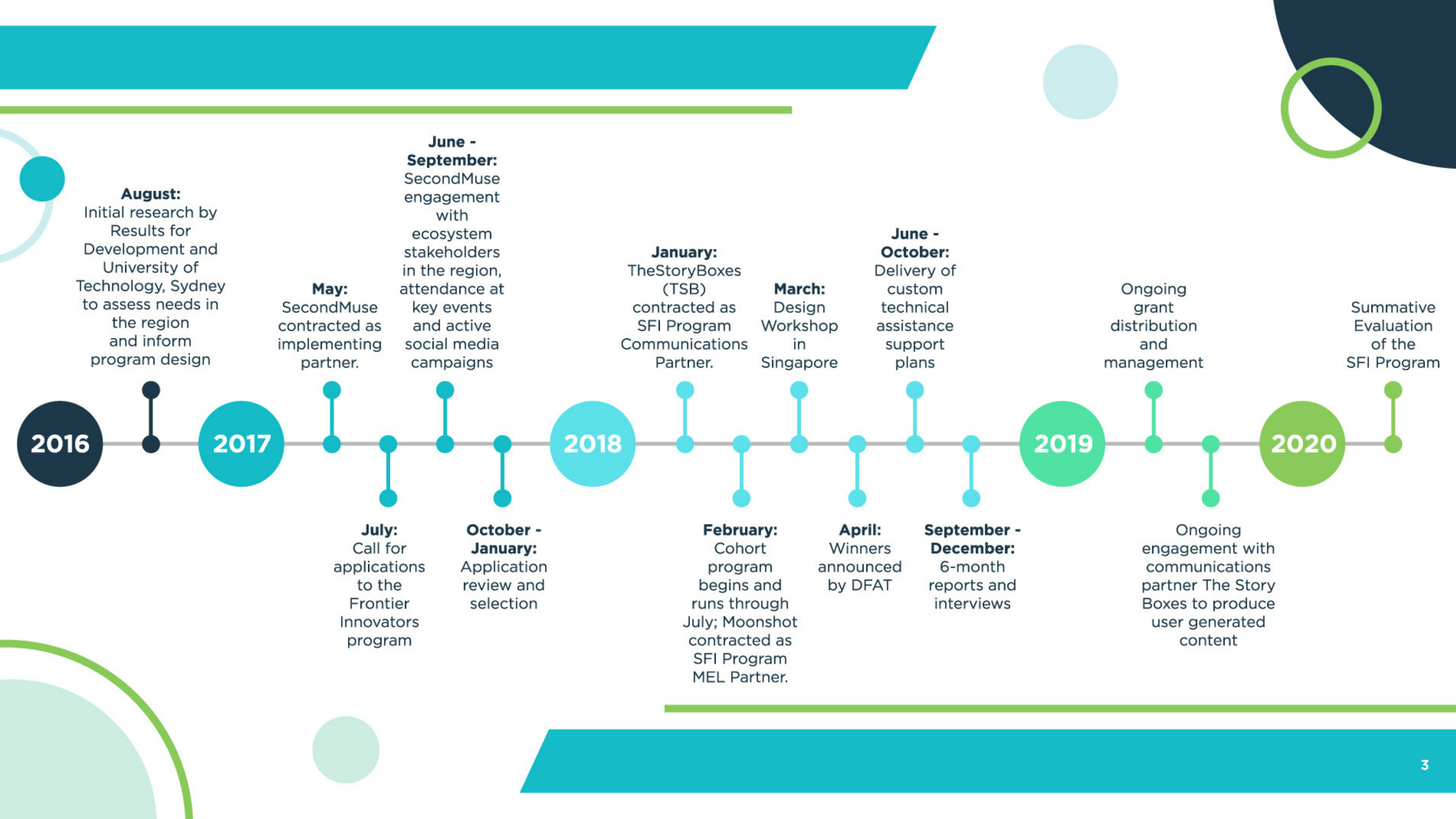
The report is informed by a series of surveys and interviews conducted with key stakeholders as well as observations by Moonshot Global (Moonshot), the SFI Program's Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) partner.

While formal implementation of peer learning and technical assistance activities concluded in July 2018, the grant component and other engagements are on-going. A summative evaluation of the SFI Program's four components is planned for summer 2020 when these findings will be updated.

This review was prepared by Moonshot and does not necessarily reflect the views of DFAT or the iXc. Many contributors offered input, guidance, and feedback. Special thanks are extended to Melina Chan, Will Scott-Kemmis, Hanna McCreath, Luke Marston, Janka Geckova, and Stephanie Kimber.

APPROACH TO MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING

Moonshot's approach to MEL combines developmental evaluation with traditional monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. The goal of this approach is to manage the SFI Program adaptively, addressing issues of performance management while also responding to learning questions identified in the MEL strategy development process. The implementation of the MEL strategy relies on the meaningful engagement with and incorporation of feedback from stakeholders —ranging from the organisations planning and carrying out the activities to those benefiting from them—as well as on interactions with ecosystem players that are part of the complex context surrounding the SFI Program.

August:
Initial research by Results for Development and University of Technology, Sydney to assess needs in the region and inform program design

2016

May:
SecondMuse contracted as implementing partner.

2017

July:
Call for applications to the Frontier Innovators program

June - September:
SecondMuse engagement with ecosystem stakeholders in the region, attendance at key events and active social media campaigns

October - January:
Application review and selection

January:
TheStoryBoxes (TSB) contracted as SFI Program Communications Partner.

2018

February:
Cohort program begins and runs through July; Moonshot contracted as SFI Program MEL Partner.

March:
Design Workshop in Singapore

April:
Winners announced by DFAT

June - October:
Delivery of custom technical assistance support plans

September - December:
6-month reports and interviews

Ongoing grant distribution and management

2019

Ongoing engagement with communications partner The Story Boxes to produce user generated content

Summative Evaluation of the SFI Program

2020

HYPOTHESIS

"Grounded firmly in the belief in the potential of market-based approaches to deliver development impact, the program intended for these winning Innovators to demonstrate what can be achieved when businesses that deliver impact are celebrated and supported to grow.

— SecondMuse Final Report

The Frontier Innovators Program was designed based on the following hypotheses:

1) That $100,000 AUD and customised technical assistance would help grow the impact of the selected social enterprises.
2) Impact measurement and strategic communications support would help grow the impact of selected social enterprises
3) That in-person convenings and curated cohort calls would promote network development and peer learning
4) Selecting high-potential social enterprises across the region would demonstrate:
    a) Lighthouse examples of businesses in the region
    b) The power of public-private partnerships
    c) The ability of enterprises to generate both social and financial returns
    d) That catalytic capital has the potential to grow business' impact towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As a result, the Frontier Innovators Program was designed to include a competition phase in which successful applicants were selected to receive strategic communications and impact measurement technical assistance to develop skills to increase exposure to the impact investment community and to promote awareness more broadly and participate in a facilitated peer network to help isolated entrepreneurs receive essential support.

This interim results and learning report measures the following result areas, which were adopted at mid-way through the program to measure performance both the implementation of the program and of development impact.

[1] Lighthouse examples are defined as promising models for social enterprises to scale their development impact. One of the SFI Program learning questions is as follows: Is it possible to identify 'lighthouse examples' of innovators? What are underlying characteristics of these examples?

HYPOTHESIS

As a secondary consideration, the Frontier Innovators Program contributed to another focus result area of the SFI Program that will be covered in the end of program evaluation:

The SFI Program influences the delivery of aid in the Asia Pacific region by demonstrating the efficacy of new market-based approaches in achieving development impacts

OUTCOME AREA 4

Awareness of social entrepreneurship and impact investment as mechanisms
for achieving development impacts in the Asia Pacific region increased

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

- Awareness of SFI Program objectives, activities, and outcomes among ecosystem partners, development partners, and DFAT increased
- Access to evidence, knowledge, and lessons regarding the implementation of market-based approaches to the achievement of development impacts increased

HYPOTHESIS

OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The SFI Program is creating sustainable poverty reduction in the Asia Pacific region through scaling the development impact of social enterprises
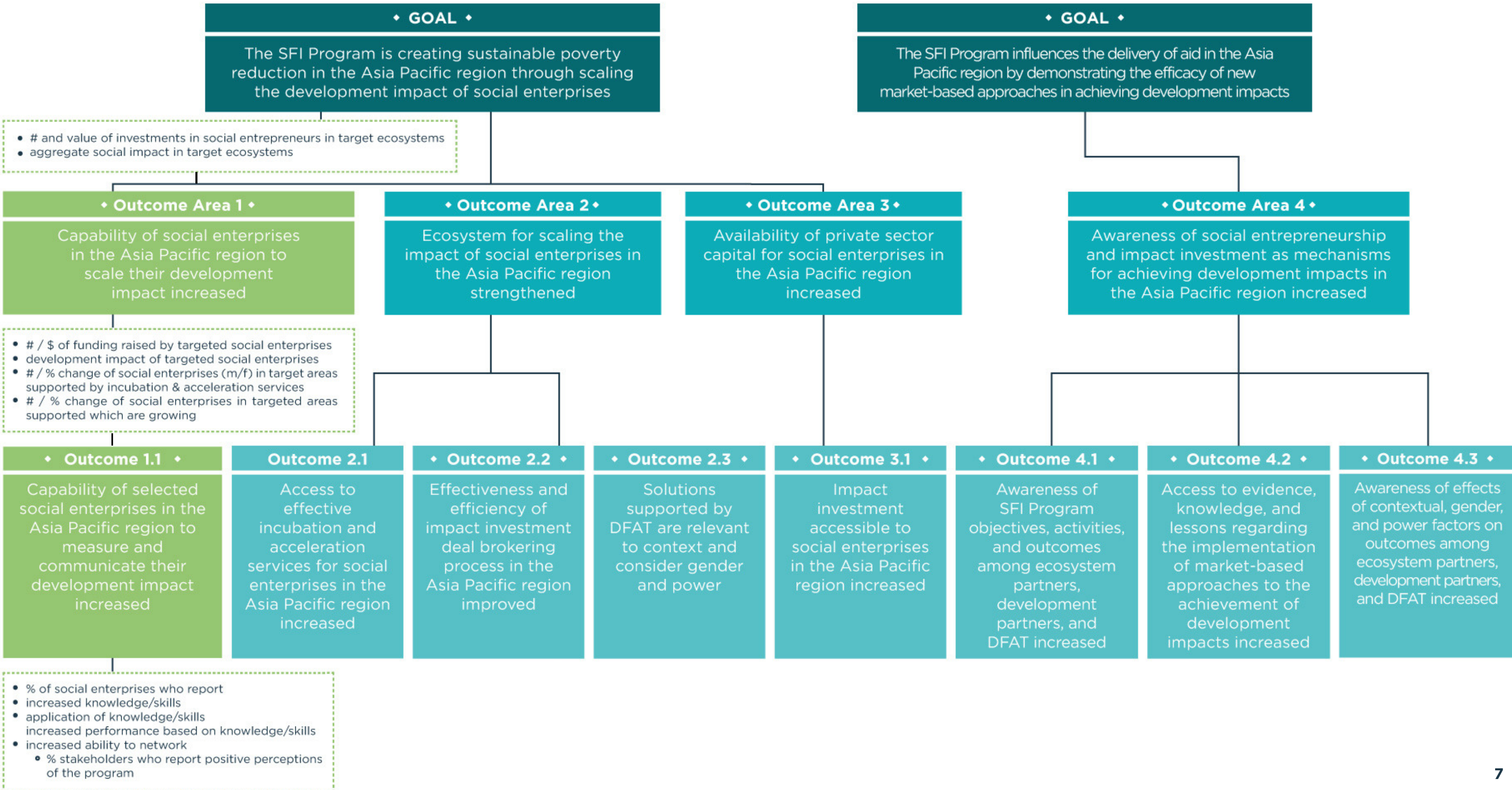
OUTCOME AREA 1

Capability of social enterprises in the Asia Pacific region to scale their development impact increased.

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME 1.1

Capability of selected social enterprises in the Asia Pacific region to measure and communicate their development impact increased. Indicators for this result area are based on a customised application of the World Bank Group's Capacity Development Results Framework (CDRF).[2]

[2] Moonshot proposed using the CDRF, which is designed for capacity building initiatives, as a foundational model for evaluating capability development under the SFI Program. Customisation and application of the CDRF facilitates the review of how innovators receiving assistance are able to drive development impact and scale through increased capacity that comes from learning they experience from participating in Frontier Innovators activities.
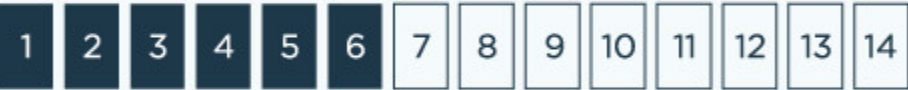
SFI PROGRAM PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

◆ GOAL ◆

The SFI Program is creating sustainable poverty reduction in the Asia Pacific region through scaling the development impact of social enterprises

- # and value of investments in social entrepreneurs in target ecosystems
- aggregate social impact in target ecosystems

◆ GOAL ◆

The SFI Program influences the delivery of aid in the Asia Pacific region by demonstrating the efficacy of new market-based approaches in achieving development impacts

◆ Outcome Area 1 ◆

Capability of social enterprises in the Asia Pacific region to scale their development impact increased

- # / $ of funding raised by targeted social enterprises
- development impact of targeted social enterprises
- # / % change of social enterprises (m/f) in target areas supported by incubation & acceleration services
- # / % change of social enterprises in targeted areas supported which are growing

◆ Outcome Area 2 ◆

Ecosystem for scaling the impact of social enterprises in the Asia Pacific region strengthened

◆ Outcome Area 3 ◆

Availability of private sector capital for social enterprises in the Asia Pacific region increased

◆ Outcome Area 4 ◆

Awareness of social entrepreneurship and impact investment as mechanisms for achieving development impacts in the Asia Pacific region increased

◆ Outcome 1.1 ◆

Capability of selected social enterprises in the Asia Pacific region to measure and communicate their development impact increased

- % of social enterprises who report
- increased knowledge/skills
- application of knowledge/skills increased performance based on knowledge/skills
- increased ability to network
  - % stakeholders who report positive perceptions of the program

◆ Outcome 2.1 ◆

Access to effective incubation and acceleration services for social enterprises in the Asia Pacific region increased

◆ Outcome 2.2 ◆

Effectiveness and efficiency of impact investment deal brokering process in the Asia Pacific region improved

◆ Outcome 2.3 ◆

Solutions supported by DFAT are relevant to context and consider gender and power

◆ Outcome 3.1 ◆

Impact investment accessible to social enterprises in the Asia Pacific region increased

◆ Outcome 4.1 ◆

Awareness of SFI Program objectives, activities, and outcomes among ecosystem partners, development partners, and DFAT increased

◆ Outcome 4.2 ◆

Access to evidence, knowledge, and lessons regarding the implementation of market-based approaches to the achievement of development impacts increased

◆ Outcome 4.3 ◆

Awareness of effects of contextual, gender, and power factors on outcomes among ecosystem partners, development partners, and DFAT increased

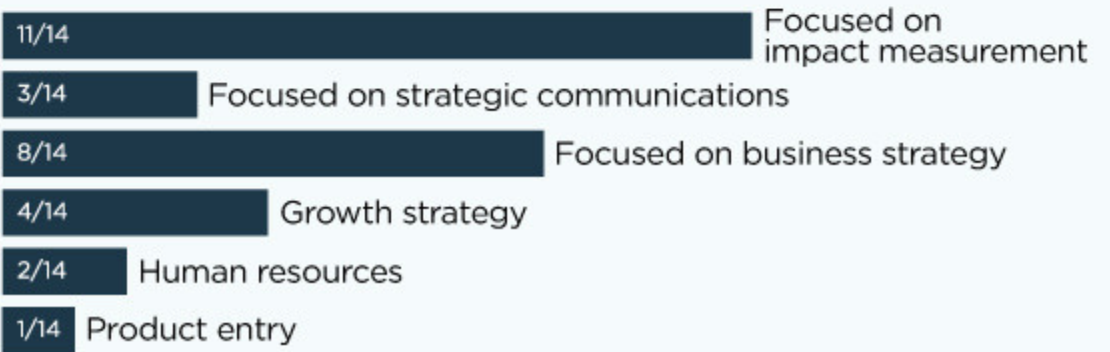# PERFORMANCE METRICS

PERFORMANCE METRICS

The following results have been achieved against the performance framework to date.
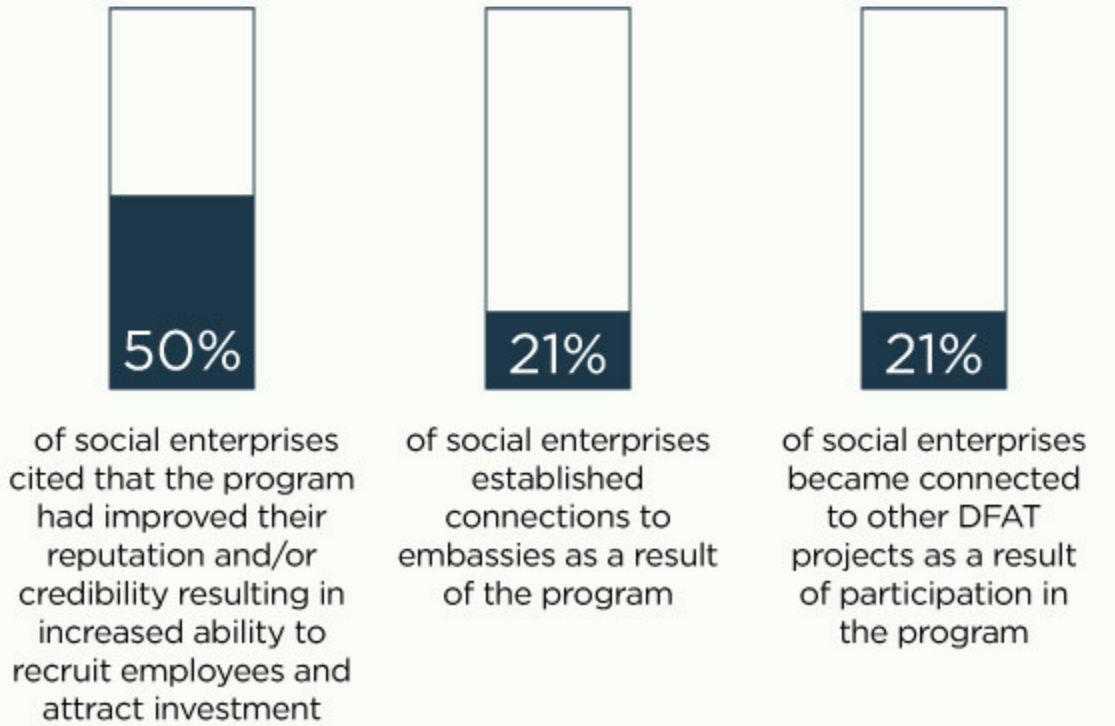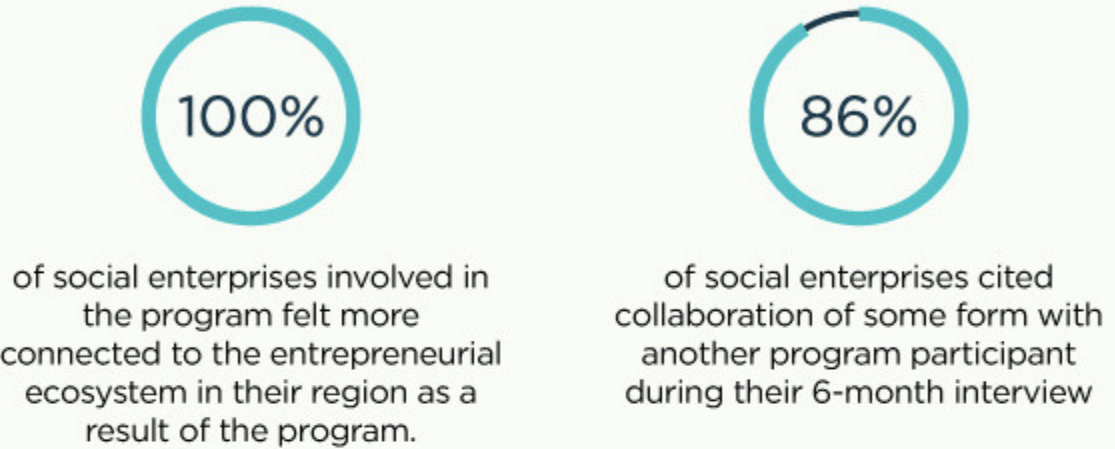
MEASURE 1: KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS

The majority of social enterprises reported increased capabilities as a result of participating in the Frontier Innovators Program. However, not all enterprises ended up receiving impact measurement or strategic communications support as initially intended.
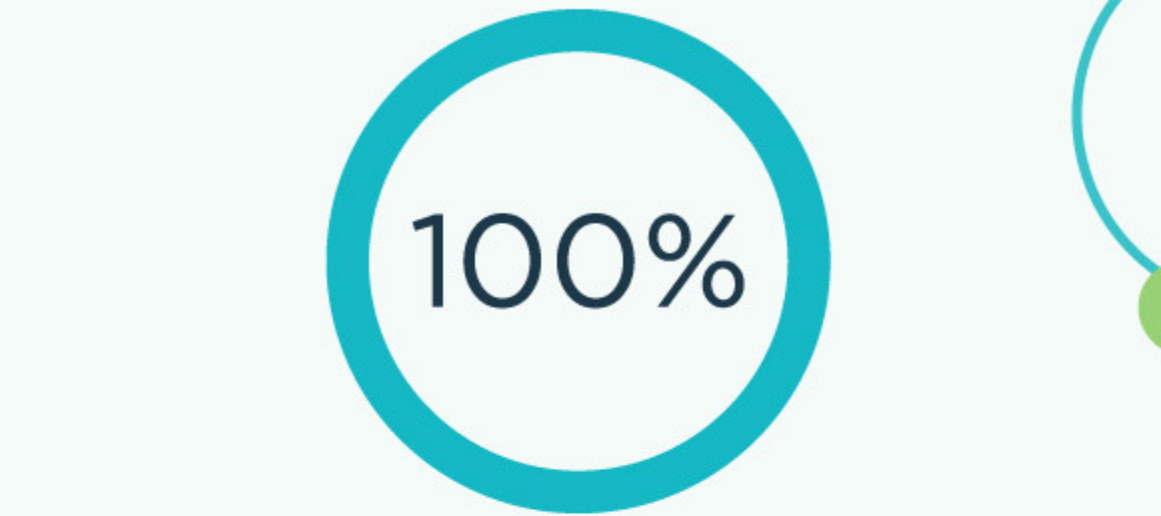
93% of social enterprises involved in the program reported increased knowledge/skills

93% of social enterprises involved in the program reported application of new knowledge/skills to their work

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |

innovators had anecdotal evidence of increased performance based on knowledge/skills. This indicator will be followed up with in the End of Program Evaluation.

21% of social enterprises (all from the Pacific) were assessed to need both strategic communications and impact measurement support

14% of social enterprises received both strategic communications and impact measurement support

78% of social enterprises received some form of impact measurement or strategic communication support while others opted for support that fell into either growth strategy, business strategy, operations, or human resources support.

11/14	Focused on impact measurement
3/14	Focused on strategic communications
8/14	Focused on business strategy
4/14	Growth strategy
2/14	Human resources
1/14	Product entry

MEASURE 2: ABILITY TO NETWORK

100% of social enterprises involved in the program felt more connected to the entrepreneurial ecosystem in their region as a result of the program.

86% of social enterprises cited collaboration of some form with another program participant during their 6-month interview

2 2 social enterprises have signed a MOU to pursue formal collaboration as a result of participation in the program

100% of social enterprises involved in the program felt they made additional connections as a result of the program

50% of social enterprises cited that the program had improved their reputation and/or credibility resulting in increased ability to recruit employees and attract investment

21% of social enterprises established connections to embassies as a result of the program

21% of social enterprises became connected to other DFAT projects as a result of participation in the program

MEASURE 3: PERCEPTION OF PROGRAM

100% of social enterprises reported positive perceptions of the program

100% of social enterprises felt the capability assistance was appropriate for their business

100% of social enterprises felt they benefited from the program

100% of social enterprises felt their business is in a better place to succeed as a result of the program

AGAINST STAGES OF SCALING INNOVATION

The program received 732 applications from 52 countries. From these applications, 14 high-potential business from 10 countries were selected to receive funding and technical assistance.

As a member of the International Development Innovation Alliance, DFAT has decided to track innovations against IDIA's Six Stages of Scaling Innovation.

IDEATION

Defining and analyzing the development problem and generating potential solutions through horizon scanning of existing and new ideas.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Further developing specific innovations that have potential to address the problem.

PROOF OF CONCEPT

When the intellectual concept behind an innovation is field-tested to gain an early, 'real-world' assessment of its potential.

TRANSITION TO SCALE

When innovations that have demonstrated small-scale success develop their model and attract partners to help fill gaps in their capacity to scale.

SCALING

The process of replicating and/or adapting an innovation across large geographies and populations for transformational impact.

SUSTAINABLE SCALE

The wide-scale adoption or operation of an innovation at the desired level of scale / exponential growth, sustained by an ecosystem of actors.

RESULTS

JUNE 2017: PROJECTS & INNOVATION STAGE

IDEATION	RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT	PROOF OF CONCEPT	TRANSLATION TO SCALE	SCALING	SUSTAINABLE SCALE
		JEEON	AQYSTA	PROXIMITY DESIGNS	
		MAMA'S LAEF	AMARTHA		
		NORA'S PLANTATION FOOD	ATEC*		
			BAGOSPHERE		
			KOE KOE TECH		
			GHAM POWER NEPAL		
			IGROW		
			SEHAT KEHANI		
			SHREENAGAR AGRO FARM		
			SKYEYE		

* Pre-Application

11
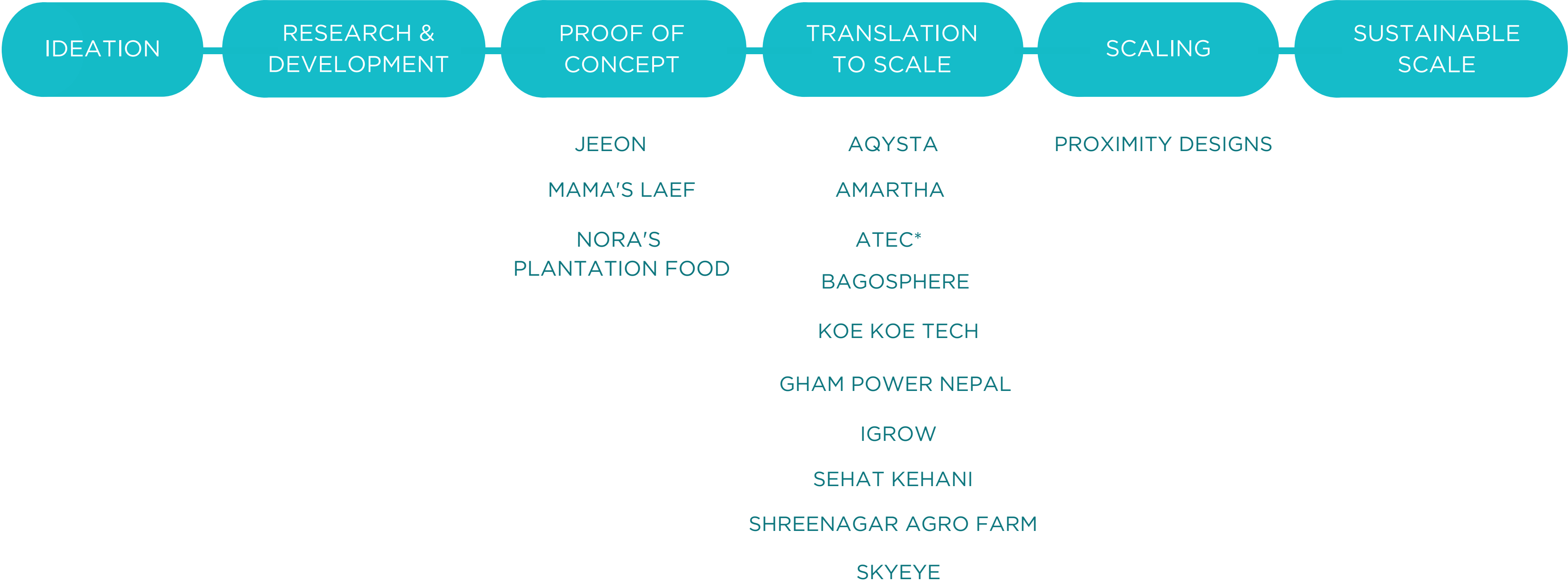
RESULTS

JUNE 2018: PROJECTS & INNOVATION STAGE

IDEATION	RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT	PROOF OF CONCEPT	TRANSLATION TO SCALE	SCALING	SUSTAINABLE SCALE
			AQYSTA	PROXIMITY DESIGNS	
			AMARTHA		
			ATEC*		
			BAGOSPHERE		
			JEEON		
			KOE KOE TECH		
			GHAM POWER NEPAL		
			IGROW		
			MAMA'S LAEF		
			NORA'S PLANTATION FOOD		
			SEHAT KEHANI		
			SHREENAGAR AGRO FARM		
			SKYEYE		

* Pre-Application

12
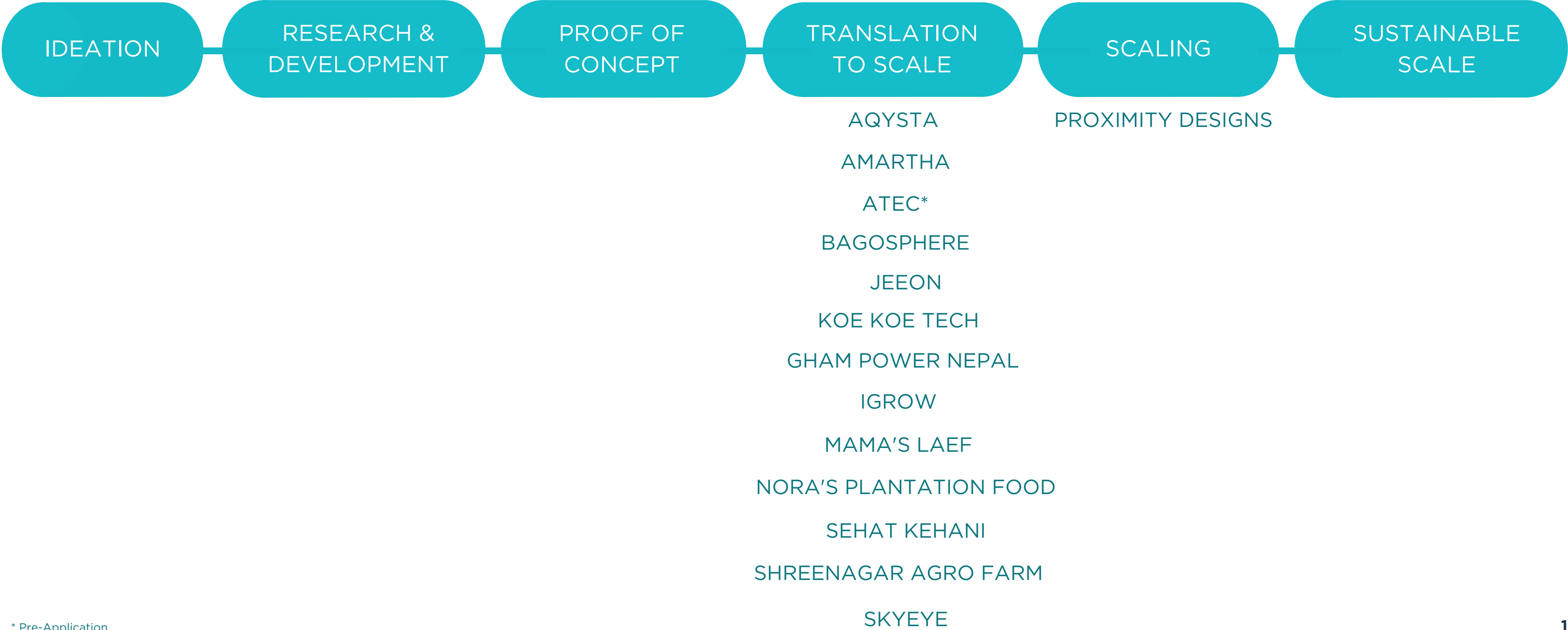
RESULTS

DECEMBER 2018: PROJECTS & INNOVATION STAGE

IDEATION	RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT	PROOF OF CONCEPT	TRANSLATION TO SCALE	SCALING	SUSTAINABLE SCALE
			AQYSTA	AMARTHA	
			BAGOSPHERE	ATEC*	
			JEEON	IGROW	
			KOE KOE TECH	PROXIMITY DESIGNS	
			GHAM POWER NEPAL	SEHAT KEHANI	
			MAMA'S LAEF		
			NORA'S PLANTATION FOOD		
			SHREENAGAR AGRO FARM		
			SKYEYE		

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

Despite having positive perceptions of the program, innovators cited a number of ways they felt the program could be improved.

36% of the participating social enterprises were frustrated that they could not be announced as winners immediately following the conclusion of the selection process (DFAT decided to delay the announcement due to scheduling reasons) and wished there could have been more early promotion to raise the program's profile.

> *The delayed announcement meant we weren't able to maximise the marketing benefit of being in the program.*
>
> — Frontier Innovator Participant

100% felt the timeline for implementing the technical assistance support plans was too short.

86% of participants desired another convening to connect with the other innovators in person and share their progress towards the end of the program.

INNOVATOR STORIES

INNOVATOR STORIES

This section highlights some of the key results achieved by the fourteen social enterprises after six months of participating in the Frontier Innovators Program.

AMARTHA

AQYSTA

ATEC

BAGOSPHERE

GHAM POWER

IGROW

JEEON
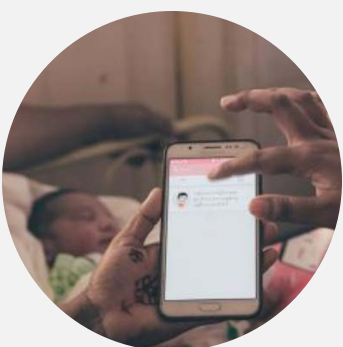
KOE KOE TECH

MAMMA'S LAEF

NORA'S PLANTATION FOODS

PROXIMITY DESIGNS

SKYEYE

SHREENAGAR AGRO FARM

SEHAT KEHANI

NEPAL
Gham Power
Shreenagar Agro

NETHERLANDS
aQysta

CAMBODIA
ATEC

PHILIPPINES
Bagosphere

PAKISTAN
Sehat Kahani

BANGLADESH
Jeeon

MYANMAR
Koe Koe Tech
Proximity Designs

INDONESIA
Amartha
iGrow

SAMOA
Nora's Plantation
SkyEye

VANUATU
Mama's Laef

AMARTHA

TECHNICAL SECTOR
Financial Technology

COUNTRY
Indonesia

DESCRIPTION
Amartha is a peer-to-peer platform that connects rural villagers who need affordable loans with lenders who wish to invest their money.

GRANT FUNDING
Amartha has used its grant funding to support the design and implementation of its "Connecting Happiness Project." This project seeks to improve the incomes of micro-entrepreneurs by providing them with new skills and connections through a series of entrepreneurship workshops, competitions, networking events, and continuous monitoring systems. In particular, 21,112 women have received training in environmental and sanitation awareness and financial literacy from Amartha, which was able to reach 420% more women villagers with the funding from the Frontier Innovators Program. Beyond grant funding, Amartha is exploring opportunities for collaboration with the Australian Embassy in Indonesia and has been invited to submit proposals to work with other DFAT projects based on their involvement in Frontier Innovators.

> " This grant differs in flexibility as we are not beholden to reaching a certain number of beneficiaries but can focus on what we think is essential to long term growth and sustainability -- making more efficient, affordable products. "

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

- Type: Human Resources
- Provider: 3V
- Application: 3V worked with Amartha to support the human resource needs of the growing company. Amartha's full-time staff grew from 750 to 903 during the first six months of the Frontier Innovators program, which was a significant increase from their team of 320 in 2017 at the time of application to the program. Support from 3V included establishing a structure for a 'People & Culture' team, analysing the organisation's human resource needs for the next one to three years, developing an employee journey and retention strategy, and creating a plan to raise brand awareness about Amartha in the job market to increase the competitiveness of recruiting among the industry.

> " 3V helped us understand how to improve our organisational structure and build a culture as a growing enterprise. "

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

- Type: Strategic Communications
- Provider: Vision Strategy Storytelling (VSS)
- Application: Amartha worked with VSS to improve their internal and external strategic communications.VSS helped Amartha identify priorities for how to collect information about and develop messaging for specific audiences. Internally, Amartha has found the communication strategy critical to ensuring that everyone in the company is oriented around a shared vision. Externally, the organisation has the tools to increase awareness about and trust in their work.

> " As a qualitative assessment, I would say that our strategy has helped the public build trust in the company. We rely on trust to build out the company. We had a lot of stories, but we were not sure how to tell them; we are now able to produce monthly "Impact Stories." This news is distributed to our internal staff as well as our external stakeholders (lenders, partners). Approximate outreach is 35,000 readers monthly. "

AQYSTA

TECHNICAL SECTOR
Agriculture, Energy

COUNTRY
Netherlands

DESCRIPTION
aQysta develops sustainable, hydro-powered irrigation systems that do not use any fuel and can be operated at virtually zero cost.

GRANT FUNDING
aQysta has used the funding from Frontier Innovators to refine existing products and build its product portfolio. Such activities have included developing a version of their Four Spiral Pump for higher capacity that has been fabricated and experimented in two different sites, testing a substitute for floating pumps that may reduce costs, and conducting additional experiments with solar Barsha pumps. aQysta is also recruiting a cost reduction team, exploring the possibilities of local manufacturing, and working to develop a new financing mechanism.

" This grant differs in flexibility as we are not beholden to reaching a certain number of beneficiaries but can focus on what we think is essential to long term growth and sustainability -- making more efficient, affordable products. "

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

- Type: Impact Measurement
- Provider: Impact Investment Exchange (IIX)
- Application: The IIX conducted a third-party impact assessment of aQysta, developing a framework with critical indicators for the organisation to track moving forward. A key element of this assessment involved completing a Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis that aQysta plans to use when communicating with investors. aQysta will also be using this assessment as a way to benchmark their performance moving forward.

" Within the impact measurement support what I asked for in the beginning was that we are a startup we have limited resources, and time is there a framework to collect data from the field and do this at a low cost. More of a practical vs. strategic question. Go to the field and collect that. Sometimes we struggle with that. "

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

- Type: Business Strategy
- Provider: One to Watch Nepal
- Application: One to Watch Nepal analysed aQysta's existing product lines against levels of profitability, impact, and potential for sustainable growth. These findings were consolidated into a strategic plan that will focus the business over the next 3-5 years as aQysta continues to move towards sustainable scale.

ATEC

TECHNICAL SECTOR
Energy

COUNTRY
Cambodia

DESCRIPTION
ATEC is a manufacturer and distributor of biodigester systems that provide families with renewable gas for cooking and organic fertiliser for farming.

GRANT FUNDING
Conducted seven market assessments, five scoping trips, investor outreach, strengthening internal systems via procurement of customer relationship management (CRM) platforms and implementation plan, and review of production processes. The goal is to plan for scale by understanding feasibility of entry to target markets, secure necessary operational procedures and platforms to facilitate scale, and understand the impact will have on production and future needs as expansion continues.

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

- Type: Impact Measurement
- Provider: Impact Investment Exchange (IIX)
- Application: ATEC received support from IIX to complete an impact assessment of their work and linking it to expansion by using forward looking projections to help build their narrative to pitch to investors. This resulted in the confirmation of current impact and the development of a vision for 2030.

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

- Type: Growth Strategy
- Provider: Impact Investment Exchange (IIX)
- Application: IIX supported ATEC in the development of stakeholder mapping and a strategic market entry plan for Bangladesh. ATEC will be using this plan in the coming year to frame their entry into this market. The provision of such a template and process can be replicated in future markets by ATEC staff. In addition expansion within Cambodia enabeld ATEC staff to double in size within the first six months of the grant program from 32 to 64 staff.

Beyond this support, ATEC has formed several partnerships with others in the program.

BAGOSPHERE

TECHNICAL SECTOR
Vocational Education

COUNTRY
Philippines

DESCRIPTION
BagoSphere provides a faster, smarter way for disconnected youth to launch transformational careers. They run immersive programs.

GRANT FUNDING
The funding from the Frontier Innovators Program has helped BagoSphere expand their existing programs by supporting capacity building for high potential trainers and curriculum developers with the development and implementation of the "T3" program. The T3 program is a free training program given to potential trainer hires who failed our trainer teaching demo. The T3 program enables BagoSphere to develop high potential trainers who might not have sufficient teaching experience so that we can strengthen our teaching force). BagoSphere has also been able to develop a Trainer Development Plan (TDP). To help trainers progress from a junior role to specialised roles. Finally, the grant funding is also being used to support BagoSphere to understand which Enterprise resource planning (ERP) is best suited to their needs as the company continues to grow. BagoSphere was on track to impacting 1,255 learners in 2018, compared to 221 in 2017, and achieved a 200% increase in retention rate.

" We have completed the development and piloted a T3 program in Bacolod. It resulted in the hiring of 5 trainers and helped us considerably in rolling out more classes to meet the demand and government contracts. "

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

- Type: Strategic Communications
- Provider: VSS
- Application: BagoSphere received strategic communication support from VSS and is currently using the communication assets created during the engagement for the development of a new website and to help synthesise their our overall mission. VSS helped BagoSphere think through how to develop and implement their messaging, which is now being integrated into sales and business development materials.

" We made a breakthrough in a short amount of time. "

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

- Type: Growth Strategy
- Provider: Villgro Philippines
- Application: Villgro worked with Bagosphere to develop a business strategy based on an understanding of their market size, target audiences, current strategy, and positioning, etc.

" These activities, paired with grant funding, have set BagoSphere up as we prepare for expansion. "

GHAM POWER

TECHNICAL SECTOR
Energy

COUNTRY
Nepal

DESCRIPTION
Gham Power provides complete, off-grid solar project development for businesses and remote sites in rural areas.

GRANT FUNDING
Gham Power used their funding to develop the Off-Grid Bazaar, an online platform that aims to increase the reach of smallholding farmers to reliable and cost-effective irrigation solutions. Gham Power is also developing smart meters for commercial purposes (to-date 35 solar water pumps have been equipped with smart meters), investing in training local Gham Power agents in product installation and use of their Off-Grid Bazaar platform, market research surveys (currently covering 60 farmers), and activities to raise awareness amongst rural farmers (made two promotional videos).

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

- Type: Impact Measurement
- Provider: IIX
- Application: Impact measurement was a completely new term to this team. IIX supported Gham Power in conducting a SROI analysis. This has influenced the company to develop a new data collection process moving forward so they can continue to track things like increased access to energy and productivity of their users. Gham Power has also gone on to use their SROI figures when pitching to potential investors in Singapore.

> *We had conducted a site visit to collect data and information necessary for impact measurement.... we learnt a lot on data collection process and realised that we have been missing out on collecting other necessary information.*

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

- Type: Business Strategy
- Provider: IIX
- Application: The IIX also worked with Gham Power to validate their current business model based on profitability, effectiveness and sustainability. This resulted in identifying the need for Gham Power to increase the selling price of one of their products to maintain their current profitability. The IIX also refined Gham Power's financial statements and provided guidance on various types of company valuation processes.

> *We are in a better position to assess the valuation of our company.*

IGROW

TECHNICAL SECTOR
Financial Technology, Agriculture

COUNTRY
Indonesia

DESCRIPTION
iGrow is a public marketplace that helps farmers to utilise underproductive land to produce scalable and efficient organic farms.

GRANT FUNDING
Much of the funding iGrow received from the Frontier Innovator Program has gone toward the development of their blockchain platform (http://igrowchain.com/coomingsoon/), including the analysis of user needs of the system to be built, platform development and refinement according to the design needs, testing and validation, and training on system usage to iGrow staff and documentation for system usage. iGrow launched their blockchain platform in January 2018. To date, iGrow has reached 6 million USD in lending to the farmers. The goal of the blockchain platform is to automate smart contracts so that mass transactions will be executed in a timely efficient manner and make previously costly transactions borderless transactions so that no loss of exchange arises. Ultimately, this will help iGrow expand within Indonesia and beyond, increasing scale and impact for farmers and the communities in which they work.

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

- Type: Growth Strategy
- Provider: Empassion
- Application: Empassion worked with iGrow to help them identify potential investors who might be interested in investing in their existing platform given that it was too early to invest in Based on connections facilitated by Empassion, iGrow was able to secure at least one investment of USD 100,000 to date.

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

- Type: Impact Measurement
- Provider: Instellar
- Application: Impact measurement was relatively new to iGrow. With the support of Instellar, iGrow was able to produce an impact report, enabling them to reach out to venture capital firms interested in impact investing and share their impact with the public and other stakeholders. Having this framework, and increase awareness of their social impact, will help iGrow track their progress and set targets to maximise their impact moving forward.

" *The interesting part was that we didn't realise we were creating a lot of impact before they measured it. Through this process, we realised are creating impact for the farmers. It's increasing more than 50% of those who are sending kids to school; they can buy healthier food, etc. Before we only saw the income of the farmer increasing. But there a lot of other aspects that are impacting. Them but didn't measure it before. The report now can help us measure that.*" "

JEEON

TECHNICAL SECTOR
Health

COUNTRY
Bangladesh

DESCRIPTION
Jeeon provides local intermediaries in rural areas with the training and equipment needed to facilitate meaningful consultations with remote doctors.

GRANT FUNDING
Jeeon invested the funds from the Frontier Innovators Program into their existing product/service package in improving the volume of available content and quality of services, and a network of providers (doctors and partner facilities) on their platform. Primarily, the resources went towards the development of Jeeon's e-learning platform for village doctors. The platform allows village doctors to upskill themselves and connect/refer patients to quality formal providers. Through case solving games and triage algorithms, village doctors can learn and apply the proper treatment and prescription protocols for simple cases. During implementation, Jeeon reached 1800+ village doctors using their e-learning application from its launch in April 2018 to September 2018. However, they discovered new insights that led to a pivot from their initial strategy of adding new content and increasing referral partners.

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

- Type: Impact Measurement
- Provider: IDInsight
- Application: Jeeon created an impact framework with support from ID Insight which they plan to use to measure impact systematically in the future. Jeeon has also gone on to hire an impact director with substantial experience in qualitative and quantitative analysis of impact.

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

- Type: Business Strategy
- Provider: LightCastle Partners
- Application: Light Castle Partners supported Jeeon with the development of a business strategy identifying alternative sources of revenue. One of the areas LightCastle recommended was that the pharmaceutical industry would be a good market segment on which to focus. Despite positive engagement, Jeeon faced challenges with maintaining village doctors on their e-learning platform they are now going to monetise the platform by targeting pharmaceutical partners and turn a profit. Refocusing all of their resources on a drug ordering application that they are launching with three pharmaceutical partners. Selling products and referral services from the pharmacy is continuing through some non-profit partner awards and grants. If Jeeon had not had prior strategic advice about alternative customers from LightCastle Partners, they would have had to start over from scratch.

> " When we ran up against a wall we were able to walk around it. This meant that we had to pivot but can continue to progress our roll out thanks to [the support we received]… Overall, we feel that we are on a more promising path towards financial sustainability at the moment, even though our initial hypotheses and trajectory did not fully yield results. "

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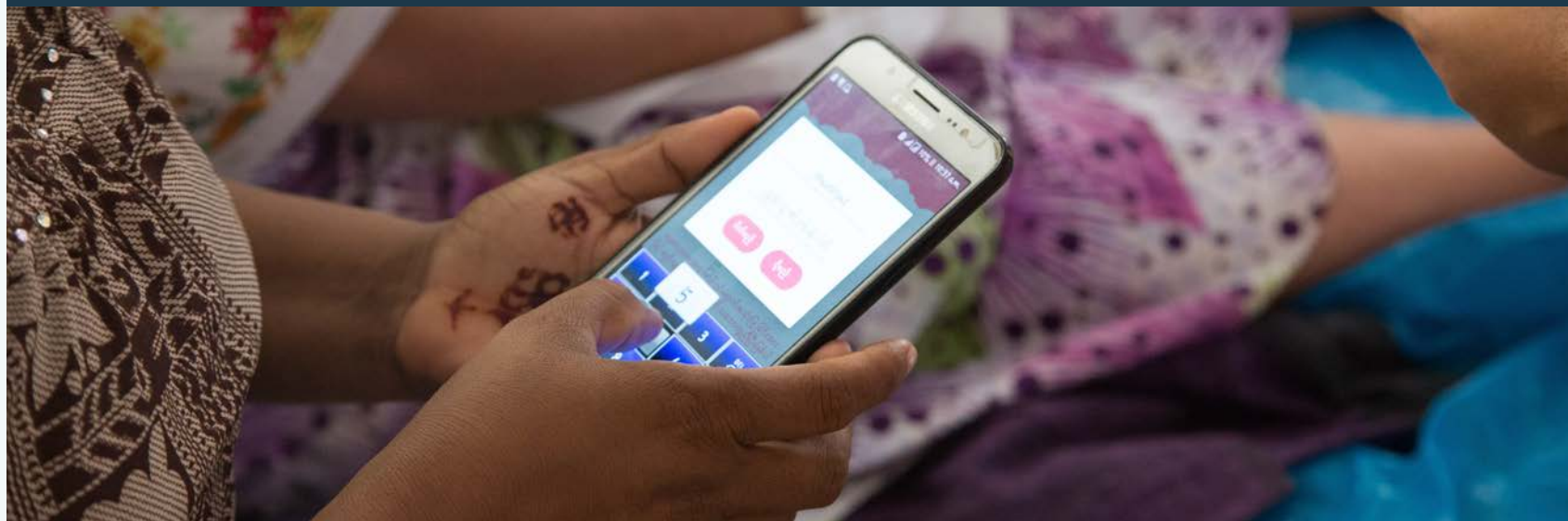
KOE KOE TECH

TECHNICAL SECTOR
Health

COUNTRY
Myanmar

DESCRIPTION
Koe Koe Tech develops mobile software applications that help to reduce maternal and child mortality rates and increase access to healthcare information.

GRANT FUNDING
Koe Koe Tech used their grant funding to promote the development of a payment platform for their existing Hospital Management Information System/Clinic Management Information System (HMIS/CMIS). The common payments platform will enable quick and easy payments with low transaction fees, which will allow PSI to make regular small payments to its Sun clinicians (e.g., Universal Healthcare capitation payments). Patients will also be able to pay clinic fees. The payment system will also cover administrative matters as well, including payments for subscription fees for the use of Koe Koe Tech's CMIS software, and clinics will also be able to pay their suppliers. This payment module on CMIS will be launched in 2019. The funding has helped Koe Koe Tech in its effort to develop necessary partnerships, test monetisation strategies, and carry out training to support monetisation with clinicians and patients. The funding from the program enabled Koe Koe Tech to hire staff to develop the software, user test the software, and form partnerships, as well as travel and accompanying costs involved in stakeholder engagement and operations.

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

- Type: Impact Measurement
- Provider: IIX
- Application: IIX completed an impact assessment for Koe Koe Tech and helped the enterprise understand how to conduct a Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis. The enterprise noted that this analysis has added value to Koe Koe Tech's principals (goals) such as continuous learning and innovation to the company by diversifying knowledge in impact measurement models. What's more, Koe Koe Tech can use these third-party analyses when communicating their impact to external audiences and other potential donors.

" *This analysis will enable Koe Koe Tech to evaluate non-financial impact return by putting more value on social impacts on the beneficiaries.* "

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

- Type: Strategic Communications
- Provider: VSS
- Application: VSS assisted in helping Koe Koe Tech with their strategic communications through impact storytelling, using visual materials and digital platforms, and brand guidelines. These assets are being used to help Koe Koe Tech make necessary changes in their current digital marketing. VSS delivered branding guidance using multiple channels from printing materials to digital platforms. Koe Koe Tech has since hired a digital marketing manager and hopes to hire a marketing manager who will use the branding toolkit created by VSS. These resources will be used to promote existing Koe Koe Tech projects as well as to communicate with future partners needed to expand their online payment platforms.

" *If Koe Koe Tech weren't part of the [Program], we wouldn't be able to see what necessary steps we need to take for effective storytelling practice in the company. We learned how to use storytelling as an effective tool for brand marketing in an attempt to reach our story to a bigger audience.* "

MAMMA'S LAEF

TECHNICAL SECTOR
Health

COUNTRY
Vanuatu

DESCRIPTION
Mamma's Laef produces environmentally friendly, reusable menstrual hygiene pads that empower and educate women in Vanuatu.

GRANT FUNDING & CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT
Mamma's Laef is one of the earliest stage enterprises involved in Frontier Innovators. The needs assessment for Mamma's Laef showed that the enterprise would benefit from both impact measurement and strategic communications support; however, being one of the earlier stage enterprises, Mamma's Laef first needed to become a formally registered business before they would be able to absorb their grant funding and technical assistance fully. Given the flexibility of the program, funding was able to first focus on core business, legal, and operational issues required to set Mamma's Laef up as a success, sustainable social enterprise. As such, funding is primarily supporting existing, internal staff time.

NORA'S PLANTATION FOOD

TECHNICAL SECTOR
Agriculture

COUNTRY
Samoa

DESCRIPTION
Nora's Plantation Foods sources fresh crops in Samoa to make tasty, unique foods that provide a sustainable local market for farmers and increase employment.

GRANT FUNDING
Inspired by their introduction to impact measurement during the Singapore Workshop, Nora's Plantation Foods decided to use some of the funding from the Frontier Innovators Program to develop their impact framework, called the Hardship Index. This framework was developed in-house to meet the needs of the Samoan context, based on the Poverty Probability Index for Fiji. The Hardship Index was informed by a thorough survey of Taro farmers in Samoa. The Nora's PFL Hardship Index will be used to track Nora's social impact progress moving forward, which marks a significant shift for the enterprise which previously was more profit-focused. The enterprise also hopes to use their impact data in the future when seeking investment. Additional funding from the Program has gone toward research on kitchen equipment, packet design, and other preparations for market entry.

> *The training in Singapore helped us realise we had to measure our impact properly. We had to go back to understand the baseline of hardship for Taro farmers in Samoa. We realised that none of the existing tools suited our needs, so we decided to create something ourselves. We were able to get input from the other participants on how they measure impact and from Jody York, who provided training during the Singapore workshop.*

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

- Type: Business Strategy
- Provider: Fast Mover Consumer Goods (FMCG) Consultant
- Application: Nora's Plantation Foods were paired with an FMCG consultant to help prepare for market entry. Significant changes to their market approach (shifting from pop-up stores to in-store) were made based on this collaboration. The consultant then helped develop a list of contacts to seek out future wholesale actively, helped re evaluated their market understanding and targeted demographics, and refine their Taro Crisps packaging design. With this shift in strategy, Nora's Plantation Farm will be shifting production to Samoa to fit their projected budget.

PROXIMITY DESIGNS

TECHNICAL SECTOR
Agriculture, Finance

COUNTRY
Myanmar

DESCRIPTION
Proximity Designs develops and delivers affordable, income-boosting agriculture and finance based products and services that offer a dramatic opportunity to reduce poverty in rural Myanmar.

GRANT FUNDING
Proximity Designs used the funding from the Frontier Innovators to assist with the research, design and manufacturing and distribution of new products and expansion into new markets to grow their current impact. In particular, much of the funding has been focused on the irrigation team 's new product venture for training sales staff and promoting Yetagon Irrigation. To date, funding has been used to sales representatives and zone managers; every sale representative in over 105 townships received training on problem-solving and how to utilise critical thinking to address the problems and needs of customers. In October 2018, Proximity Designs held a soft-launch for their new ground spray mister and introduced several new irrigation tools. Unlike other funding Proximity Designs has received, the flexibility of this grant enabled them to choose to focus on their irrigation business and areas for which it has been more challenging to secure funding.

> " Our grants have allowed us to sell our products at extremely affordable rates, giving farmers access to cutting edge technology. Moreover, based on the most recent impact assessment for Yetagon Irrigation, our customers see an increase of USD 254 in their annual income when using our irrigation products. This high return on investment means that farmers can continue to purchase longer lasting products in the future, but also contributes to greater income equality between rural and urban households. "

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

- Type: Business Strategy
- Provider: Institute for Smallholder Farmers (ISF)
- Application: ISF worked closely with Proximity Designs' business development manager on strategy and growth modeling, resulting in a three-year implementation plan which is already being implemented. ISF was selected based on their keen understanding of the cultural and local environment context in which the enterprise operates.

> " This process provided an opportunity to review our current challenges in partnership with new stakeholders and have fresh ideas presented. "

SEHAT KAHANI

TECHNICAL SECTOR
Health

COUNTRY
Pakistan

DESCRIPTION
Sehat Kahani brings female doctors back into the workforce and improving rural healthcare through women-focused telehealth solutions.

GRANT FUNDING
Sehat Kahani utilised the grant funding from the Frontier Innovators Program to help expand and improve their operations. The resources directly funded opening of four clinics in three provinces in Pakistan, which included conducting feasibility studies, procuring medical equipment, recruiting and training staff, mobilising community focused campaigns, and hosting online consultations. These clinics served over 500 patients in the first few months of operations. The funding also enabled Sehat Kahani to conduct in-depth, qualitative research to help understand patient needs to inform the design of their clinics and their expansion strategy. Finally, Sehat Kahani was able to hire two clinic specialists to meet patients' priority needs.

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

- Type: Human Resources / Growth Strategy
- Provider: Courtney Lawrence
- Application: Consultant Courtney Lawrence worked with Sehat Kehani to plan for growth over the next few years. This support included understanding and preparing for both internal organisational changes as well as external expansion to set the organisation up to be financially sustainable and revenue generating. This resulted in the development of a team strategy for Sehat Kahani's internal organisational structure as well as a review of their business model and proposed adjustments over the next five years.

" *We would not have had time or resources to deal with these specific challenges at the moment and having support to solve them came at just the right time.* "

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

- Type: Impact Measurement
- Provider: Center for Economic Research in Pakistan (CERP)
- Application: CERP worked with Sehat Kahani to develop a customisable impact evaluation tool. The development of the tool involved door-to-door research to gather data from communities and resulted in the design of a mobile tool that can be used offline by Sehat Kahani workers to collect data from patients in 5-10 questions

" *It was brilliant. They made a tool that was flexible so we can evaluate almost anything!* "

SHREENAGAR AGRO FARM

TECHNICAL SECTOR
Agriculture

COUNTRY
Nepal

DESCRIPTION
Shreenagar Agro Farm is a farming integration system that provides low-income farmers in Nepal with world-class livestock, market access, capacity building programs, and after-sale services.

GRANT FUNDING
The funding from the Frontier Innovators Program has helped Shreenagar Agro Farm develop a customised, user-friendly Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system which is expected to contribute in improving the company's productivity and efficiency and supported the design a mobile application for poultry farmers to assist with all required information on poultry management. The app provides farmers with market information, vaccination dates, weather forecasts, disease outbreak, and more on a regular basis. Funding also supported the installment of a new feed plant, which doubled Shreenagar Agro's production capacity, and started operating a market outlet for chicken products like egg, fresh meat and meat products along with other products like dairy and farm fresh vegetables, which they hope will contribute in market linkage for small and medium farmers.

> " Without funding from the Frontier Innovators Program, we wouldn't have been able to have a customised ERP system, and we are the first in Nepal to use this. We were able to use user-centered design to ensure that the package has been easily accepted by farmers. "

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

- Type: Impact Measurement
- Provider: IIX
- Application: IIX provided mentoring to help Shreenagar Agro understand their impact and calculate their Social Return on Investment (SROI) based on four major outcome areas: increased access to quality inputs, improved skills, and knowledge, increased agricultural productivity and increased access to markets. As a profit-generating enterprise, Shreenagar Agro was already aware of calculating their financial returns but was given a framework and methodology for understanding the social impact of their organisation on the farmers and customers with whom they interact. Since receiving this support, Shreenagar Agro has been invited to discussions with the government and other donors to discuss how they are generating social and financial returns. This information also informed the development of a one-page impact story that can be used to help communicate their value.

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

- Type: Business Strategy
- Provider: One to Watch Nepal
- Application: One to Watch worked with Shreenagar Agro to develop a business strategy. This strategy will be used to inform the expansion of Shreenagar Agro over the next year.

SKYEYE

TECHNICAL SECTOR
Technology, Environment

COUNTRY
Samoa

DESCRIPTION
SkyEye develops vehicle tracking and aerial imagery software solutions that are tailor-made for the Pacific Islands.

GRANT FUNDING
The grant funding from the Frontier Innovators Program is being used by SkyEye to scale up their geographical information systems human resource capacity and tools. With the funding from Frontier Innovators, SkyEye was able to hire a qualified lead to build their GIS team. Beyond providing the funding for the new position, SkyEye felt they were able to leverage their involvement in the Frontier Innovators Program to attract high-quality talent. SkyEye has also applied their funding from the program to upgrade their Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) equipment to have an increased range of 650%, which will allow the enterprise to expand their operations by bidding on more regional projects. Finally, funding helped SkyEye reduce the risk of expansion and launch operations in Tonga earlier than they had anticipated.

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

- Type: Impact Measurement
- Provider: Akina Foundation
- Application: SkyEye completed an impact measurement program with the Akina Foundation. Social impact measurement was a newer concept to the enterprise, which is increasingly interested in understanding their social impact. The process uncovered that their repeat customers were most interested in public safety, which was a surprising insight. Staff feel that the impact framework and tools will be a useful way for them to have the quantitative data to verify feedback they have received from customers. After working with Akina, SkyEye plans to add impact measurement tools to their new products, including an app that is currently under development and incorporate practices in their new operations in Tonga.

> " *The capacity training was about understanding what impacts are most critical to us, how we can measure it and where to measure it and from which source has been phenomenal for us to comprehend.* "

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

- Type: Business Strategy
- Provider: Akina Foundation
- Application: Interested in expanding their operations in the region, SkyEye received guidance from Akina on how to expand and secure customer base to protect model from new entrants and develop a clear business model that enables compelling market offering. This guidance has been applied to SkyEye's recent expansion of operations to Tonga.

HOW WE DID IT

PROCESS

APPLICATION SOURCING AND SELECTION

What We Did
- Three-month engagement process to source applications with input from over 370 stakeholders in the Asia Pacific entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- Internal screening and external review drawing on 50 experts with relevant experience to support in identifying promising enterprises.
- Selected the 14 Frontier Innovators winners.

What We Learned
- Fieldwork and in-person engagement were critical to securing such a high volume of diverse applicants.
- Application data can provide useful insights about a specific sector in which you are working.

MAKING AND MANAGING GRANTS

What We Did
- Awarded grants of AUD100,000 intended to them social enterprises scale.
- Designed grants to provide the flexibility to adapt and enable participants to identify how they wanted to allocate resources.

What We Learned
- Flexibility helped create a sense of trust within the program that is atypical with traditional donor-beneficiary dynamics.
- Some innovators could have used support from experts on how to most effectively use their funding.

DESIGNING AND DELIVERING SUPPORT TO SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

What We Did
- Convened a 3-day workshop in Singapore for the 14 social enterprises, experts and other program partners.
- Facilitated nine video calls as part of the program's cohort approach to fostering peer learning.
- Identified guides (individuals with specific technical and geographic expertise) to provide support to participants throughout the program.
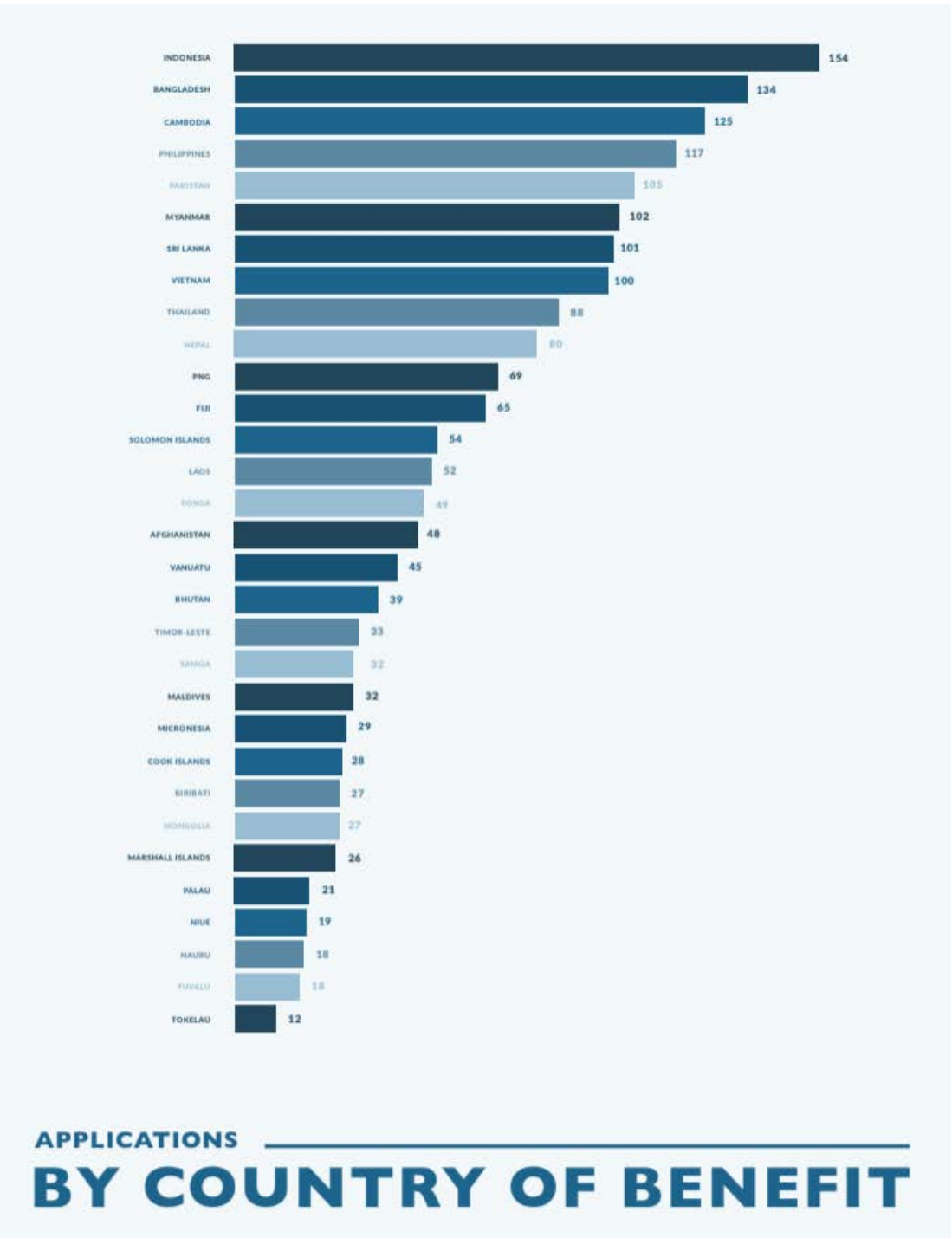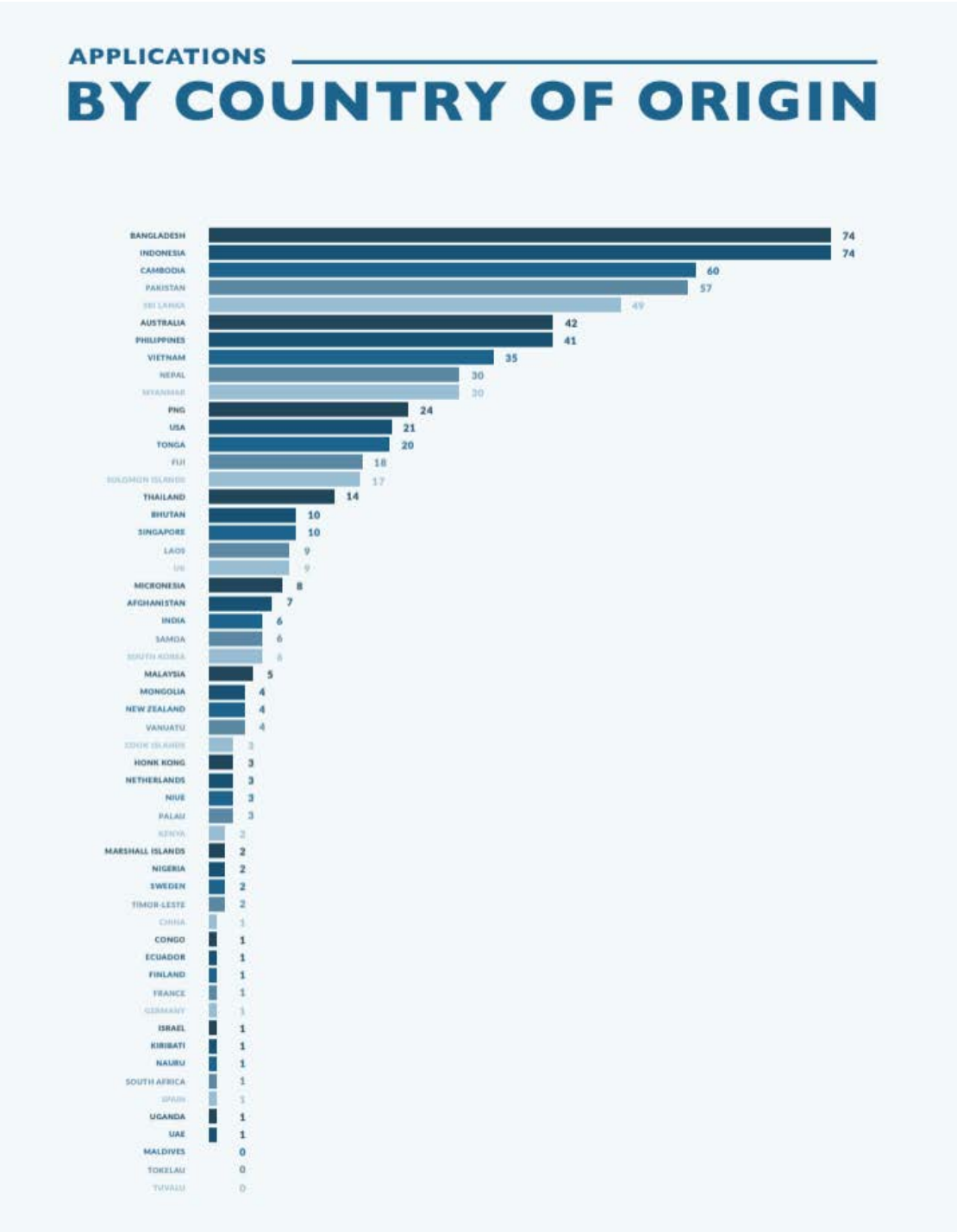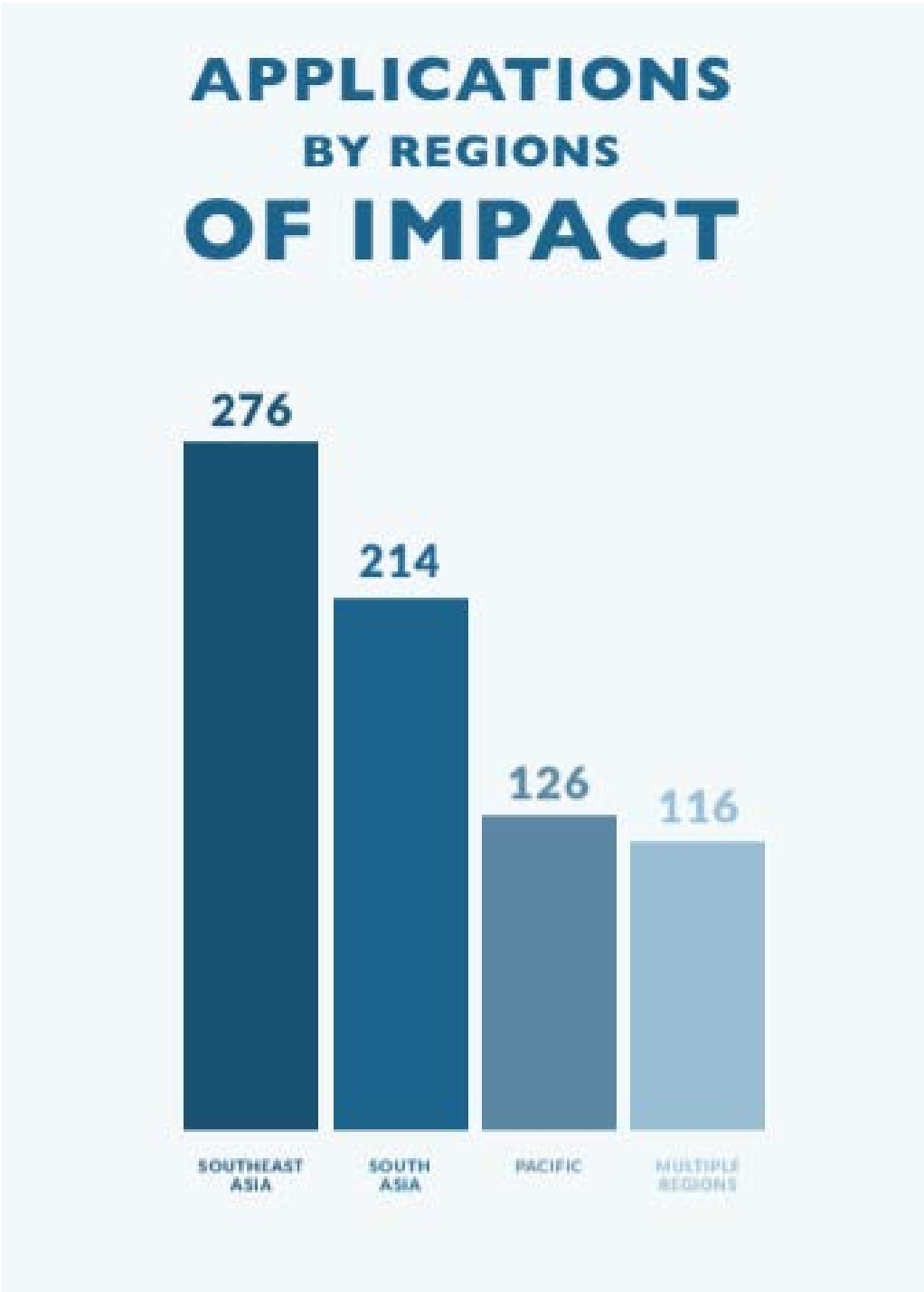- Provided custom technical assistance to each participants based on needs assessments.

What We Learned
- In-person convenings are viewed as contributing substantially to relationship building
- Peer-learning sessions focused on specific challenges were viewed as having the highest potential value.
- Guides were viewed as adding most value through structured conversations and when guides had relevant technical, sectoral, geographic, and cultural expertise.
- Needs assessments are an important tool in providing social enterprises with appropriate technical assistance for their specific needs, especially when dealing with a diverse cohort.
- There are benefits (e.g., diversity of knowledge, access to insights about new markets, limited fear of competition, etc.) and limitations (e.g., coordination challenges, not all materials will be equally relevant to social enterprises at different stages, etc.) of having a diverse cohort of program participants

APPLICATION SOURCING AND SELECTION

This section outlines the process for and lessons learned from application sourcing and selection under the Frontier Innovators Program.

APPLICATIONS BY REGIONS OF IMPACT

Region	Applications
SOUTHEAST ASIA	276
SOUTH ASIA	214
PACIFIC	126
MULTIPLE REGIONS	116

APPLICATIONS BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Country	Applications
BANGLADESH	74
INDONESIA	74
CAMBODIA	60
PAKISTAN	57
SRI LANKA	49
AUSTRALIA	42
PHILIPPINES	41
VIETNAM	35
NEPAL	30
MYANMAR	20
PNG	24
USA	21
TONGA	20
FIJI	18
SOLOMON ISLANDS	17
THAILAND	14
BHUTAN	10
SINGAPORE	10
LAOS	9
UK	9
MICRONESIA	8
AFGHANISTAN	7
INDIA	6
SAMOA	6
SOUTH KOREA	6
MALAYSIA	5
MONGOLIA	4
NEW ZEALAND	4
VANUATU	4
COOK ISLANDS	3
HONK KONG	3
NETHERLANDS	3
NIUE	3
PALAU	3
KENYA	2
MARSHALL ISLANDS	2
NIGERIA	2
SWEDEN	2
TIMOR-LESTE	2
CHINA	1
CONGO	1
ECUADOR	1
FINLAND	1
FRANCE	1
GERMANY	1
ISRAEL	1
KIRIBATI	1
NAURU	1
SOUTH AFRICA	1
SPAIN	1
UGANDA	1
UAE	1
MALDIVES	0
TOKELAU	0
TUVALU	0

APPLICATIONS BY COUNTRY OF BENEFIT

Country	Applications
INDONESIA	154
BANGLADESH	134
CAMBODIA	125
PHILIPPINES	117
PAKISTAN	105
MYANMAR	102
SRI LANKA	101
VIETNAM	100
THAILAND	88
NEPAL	80
PNG	69
FIJI	65
SOLOMON ISLANDS	54
LAOS	52
TONGA	49
AFGHANISTAN	48
VANUATU	45
BHUTAN	39
TIMOR-LESTE	33
SAMOA	32
MALDIVES	32
MICRONESIA	29
COOK ISLANDS	28
KIRIBATI	27
MONGOLIA	27
MARSHALL ISLANDS	26
PALAU	21
NIUE	19
NAURU	18
TUVALU	18
TOKELAU	12

Source: SecondMuse

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APPLICATION SOURCING AND SELECTION

SecondMuse was tasked with attracting a diverse pool of applicants- with specific strategies to attract applications from businesses owned by women- from across the Asia-Pacific region and facilitating the application review and selection process.

> " *In a three month process that combined a mixture of virtual and on-the-ground engagement, we sought to attract as many variations of impactful business as possible.* "
>
> — SecondMuse Final Report

SecondMuse undertook a three-month engagement process to source applications, conducting over 130 interviews with stakeholders in the Asia Pacific entrepreneurial ecosystem and speaking with an additional 250 stakeholder via consultations, online communication, or other events. This process resulted in 732 applications that were primarily from for-profit, growth stage enterprises, which far exceeded the initial goal of 500 applicants.

An initial, internal screening of the submissions was followed by an external review drawing on 50 experts with relevant experience to support in identifying those enterprises who showed the most promise. In the final stages, 60 interviews were undertaken to help select the 14 Frontier Innovators winners and 17 finalists.

APPLICATION SOURCING AND SELECTION

- 36% of applicants identified as women
- The highest percentage of women applicants (over 50%) came from women in Vietnam, Myanmar, Laos, and Papua New Guinea.
- These results were achieved by including measures to attract a significant number and wide array of applications from the region, pursuing specific strategies to attract applications from businesses owned by women, being gender and disability inclusive, and incorporating strategies to ensure participation from these groups.

SecondMuse found that fieldwork and in-person engagement were critical to securing such a high volume of diverse applicants. With inclusivity in mind, the approach was intended to source applications from those who may not hear about similar DFAT open calls through traditional challenges. SecondMuse's Stage One report notes:

> *[W]e had less than [five] applications from Bangladesh before the team visited but closed with over 70, up to 80% of which we could attribute to the field work (8% heard at a conference, 41% from a friend, 30% from social media). For many of the winners and finalists (and the broader shortlist) a referral/endorsement to the program, encouragement from a trusted advisor, or a direct connection with our team to answer questions was required to convince them to apply. In all three regions - Southeast Asia, South and West Asia, and the Pacific - the greatest number of applicants attributed their awareness of the program to 'hearing it from a friend'.*
>
> — SecondMuse Stage One Report, P. 13

THE STRUCTURE AND FORM OF APPLICATIONS MATTER

Further analysis of the large number of applications, surfaced insights about social enterprises in the region, resulting in the development of the report Insights into Social Entrepreneurship in the Asia-Pacific Region: Findings from Analysis of Applications to the Program' by Second Muse.

Application data can provide useful insights about a specific sector in which you are working. If you intend application data to inform the design of a particular program, make sure the questions in the application will capture relevant information, the timing is appropriate for informing the design of the next program/ activity, and you have a plan in place to make sure the data and insights are disseminated to relevant and interested parties.

SecondMuse research found that "[o]ne of the biggest frustrations [among applicants] with awards, challenges, and competitions is the lack of feedback provided. Any effort to do this would be greatly appreciated by businesses, intermediaries, program managers and investors alike (SecondMuse, Stage One Report, p.34)." This is something for DFAT to consider as they look to add value beyond a select cohort of winners.

A part of the selection process focused on supporting DFAT overall development priorities (e.g., geographic diversity) rather than solely on an analysed potential to scale or degree of innovation of the social enterprise's business model. This was considered an important part of pursuing inclusivity and diversity of the program, given the different contexts across countries in the region (e.g., how mature their entrepreneurial ecosystems are). As a result, the social enterprises selected were diverse regarding sector, geography, stage, and business model.

For more information on application sourcing, review **Appendix A - Application Dashboard**.

MAKING AND MANAGING GRANTS

MAKING AND MANAGING GRANTS

This section outlines the process for and lessons learned from making and managing grants for social enterprises under the Frontier Innovators Program.

DESIGN

Grant funding is often available, but it has its risks - terms can be onerous, expectations can conflict with core business, it can lack the flexibility required, rarely does it come with quality support, and it too much of it can put off potential investors.

— SecondMuse, Stage One Report, Pg. 4

Each of the **14 social enterprises** selected to participate in the program was awarded grants of AUD 100,000, which were intended to go towards helping them achieve scale. AECOM's **Innovation Resource Facility (IRF)** is responsible for distributing and managing these grants over a two-year period.

These grants are being used for a range of activities including, expanding programs, testing new products, scoping and implementing internal operations systems, hiring new staff, and building new software and applications.

The grant helps significantly as a stepping stone to be impact-investor ready for a commercial project that would impact positively on Samoa at a large scale that is not present in the country.

— Frontier Innovators Participant

Wary of imposing burdensome reporting requirements and acknowledging that the needs of social enterprises are often rapidly evolving, the grants were designed to provide the innovators the flexibility to adapt and based on the assumption that the innovators themselves would know the best way to allocate the funding to help them continue to grow.

AMARTHA
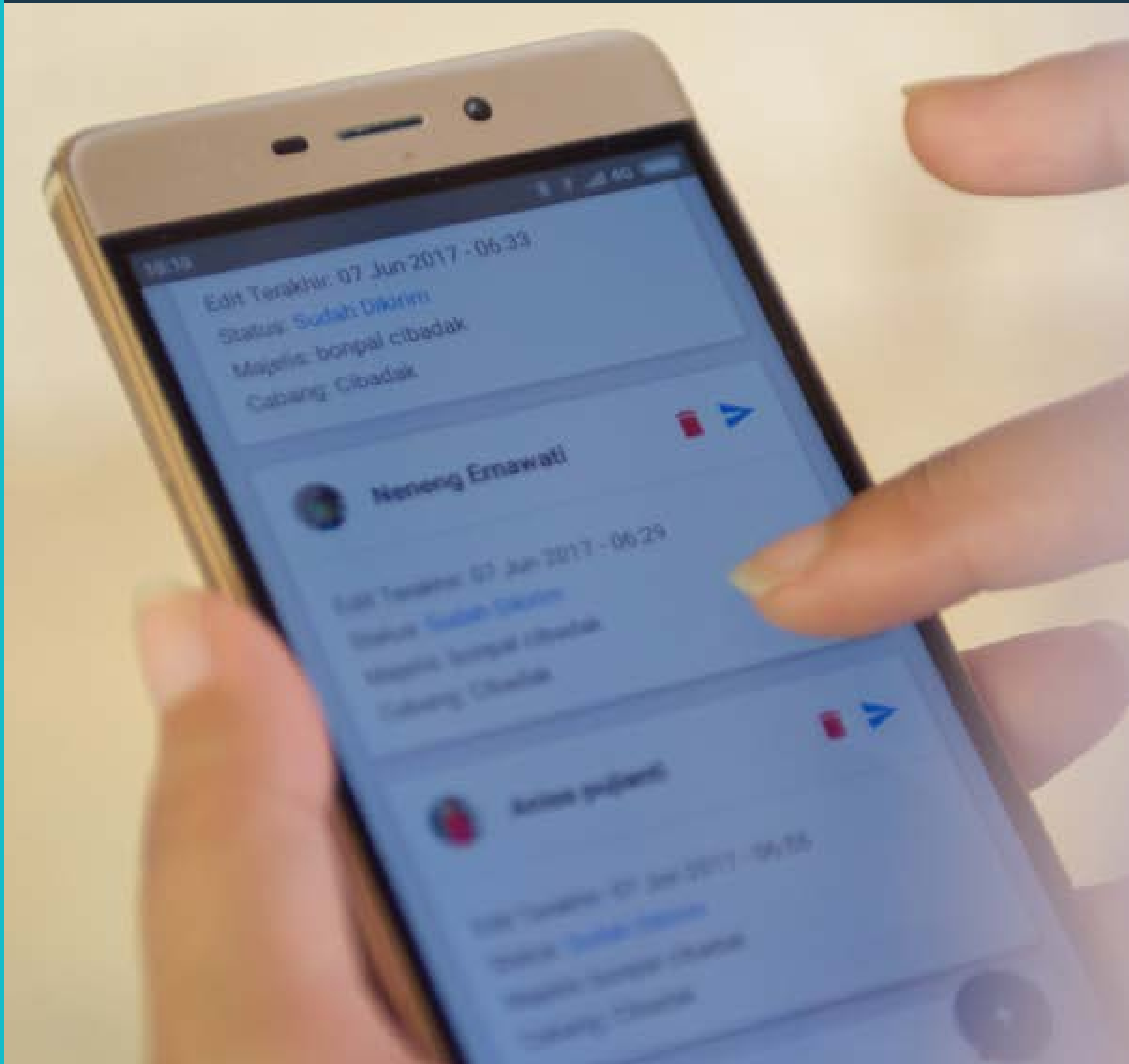
Amartha is a peer-to-peer platform that connects rural villagers who need affordable loans with lenders who wish to invest their money. Amartha initially designed their grant to expand their work with existing borrowers. However, during implementation, they realised that there were many new customers interested in their work. By being able to adapt their programming and re-purpose the grant, Amartha far exceeded their initial objectives for outreach by 123% after 6-months of implementation.

The grants were designed to give the innovators maximum flexibility and incentivise communication between the winners and DFAT. As a result, milestones payments are triggered by activities such as producing six-month reports and engaging in interviews with the SFI Program's monitoring, evaluation, and learning partner. The intention is to understand better the ways in which DFAT can support social enterprises at different stages in the region.

> " *Unrestricted funding enables us to shift course and be agile to emerging needs and new ideas.* "
> — Frontier Innovators Participant

SEHAT KAHANI

Sehat Kahani is brings female doctors back into the workforce and improving rural healthcare through women-focused telehealth solutions. Sehat Kahani has used their grant funding to open four clinics in Pakistan that have already served more than 500 patients.

JEEON

Jeeon provides local intermediaries in rural areas with the training and equipment needed to facilitate meaningful consultations with remote doctors. Jeeon used the grant funding to continue their existing product/ service package. "This added two and a half months to our runway, and we secured matching funding of $100,000 from another investor".

FEEDBACK AND FINDINGS

64%   OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISES SAID THERE WAS A CLEAR PROCESS OF ADMINISTERING THE GRANTS PROGRAM

4/14   OF THE SOCIAL ENTERPRISES NOTED CHALLENGES RELATED TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF GRANTS

100%   OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISES VALUED THE FLEXIBILITY OF THE GRANTS

Participating social enterprises cited that the flexibility helped create a sense of trust within the program that is atypical with traditional donor-beneficiary dynamics. While they were freed up from extensive reporting to focus on the business, one participant noted "the time commitment for the overall program (cohort calls, meetup in Singapore, calls with our guide, drafting the grant, etc.) is much more significant than other donors/ thought partners. Increasing the value of each interaction would be helpful." When having adaptive milestones in grants can also create some confusion around what is required for disbursements of funding to be made. It is important to strike the right balance in providing clear guidelines without being overly prescriptive.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR GRANTS

When considering taking a flexible approach to funding:

- Make sure the timing of grants distribution is aligned with the provision of technical assistance. That way funding can go towards new needs identified and activities identified won't be delayed.

- Make sure you will have sufficient data to understand if the program is going well.

- Provide some support to those who aren't sure how to use the funding.

- Overall timing of the program and commitments required to engage in the program should also be considered when trying to increase flexibility. For many, having activities spread out over a longer period of time can make it easier to ensure smaller enterprises have the capacity to get the most out of technical assistance and other program activities.

DESIGNING AND DELIVERING SUPPORT TO SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

DESIGNING AND DELIVERING SUPPORT TO SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

This section outlines the process for and lessons learned from designing and delivering support to social enterprises under the Frontier Innovators Program.

COHORT APPROACH

Singapore Workshop

In March, 2018, SecondMuse convened a three day workshop in Singapore for the 14 social enterprises and their guides,[3] a select group of expert Panelist and training providers, and other SFI Program partners. The event was intended to help assess the needs of participating social enterprises, deliver training on impact measurement and strategic communications, and inform the design of the technical assistance support plans. This workshop was the only formal opportunity for cohort members to connect with one another in-person.

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[3] Each of the participating social enterprises were paired with a guide, or expert from the ecosystem, whose role was to help support, prepare and advocate for them throughout the different stages of the program

FEEDBACK AND FINDINGS

100% SOCIAL ENTERPRISES CITING WORKSHOP AS MOST IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

100% OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISES WERE SATISFIED WITH THE WORKSHOP ALTHOUGH 43% OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISES FELT THE LENGTH OF THE WORKSHOP WAS TOO SHORT.

4/14 SOCIAL ENTERPRISES CITED IMPACT MEASUREMENT AS A NEW CONCEPT FOR THEIR COMPANY

12/14 SOCIAL ENTERPRISES FOUND THE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS SESSION RELEVANT TO THEIR ORGANISATIONS

13/14 SOCIAL ENTERPRISES FOUND IMPACT MEASUREMENT SESSION RELEVANT TO THEIR ORGANISATIONS

FEEDBACK AND FINDINGS

The impact measurement session was especially eye opening to the innovators, many of whom had not previously thought of themselves as a social enterprise or had considered impact measurement before.

While considered valuable to making connections within the program, several of the later stage enterprises did not feel the materials were as relevant to their organisations and would have preferred more opportunities for sector specific discussions and time to meet one-on-one with experts. When designing for such a deliberately diverse cohort, cohort-wide activities should be structured and and facilitated accordingly to maximise the benefits cohort mentioned and minimise the issues.

> " *While [we] already had advanced capabilities in these areas, we still found it useful to hear different perspectives at the workshop. We are always interested in reviewing and providing innovative ideas for our existing impact measurement and strategic communications approaches.* "
>
> — Frontier Innovator Participant
>
> " *Once meeting in Singapore of course, as one would expect, the relationships were on a different level. In hindsight, more time away from "exercises" and more around, sitting down to a meal together to share our journeys, for me would have done more to connect with the others.* "
>
> — Frontier Innovator Participant

For more information on the Singapore Workshop, click here.

DESIGNING AND DELIVERING SUPPORT TO SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

COHORT CALLS

In addition to the Singapore Workshop, SecondMuse facilitated nine video calls over five months as part of the program's cohort approach to fostering peer learning. The calls were intended to be informal with the agenda determined and delivered by the participants. Seven breakout sessions were led by participants on topics such as leveraging corporate partnerships, how to make a movement and why social entrepreneurs need to align with policymakers, and discussions continued via email and WhatsApp. Participants were required to attend the calls as part of their grant agreements. Several social enterprises noted that it was never made clear why the calls were mandated and think it would have helped to clearly articulate the logic behind the cohort calls as a forum for peer learning. In addition 75% of social enterprises suggested that the calls would have been more useful if they focused on specific challenges facing participating innovators and 57% wished they could have developed a deeper understanding of the other participants' businesses.

> 66 *We were very diverse and different stages in terms of our organisations. That's where a challenge was in trying to relate to others. But that has also an advantage to see how others have advanced to carry out tasks. We have had side discussions with some of the cohort to ask them specific things, which has been quite invaluable especially when it comes to learning from others who are succeeding.* 99
>
> — Frontier Innovator Participant

The Frontier Innovators program differs from many challenges or open calls in that the winners are all focused on different sectors, located in different geographies, and at different stages, rather than being unified with a focus on a shared problem. The diversity of this cohort had both benefits and limitations.

LIMITATIONS AND BENEFITS

LIMITATIONS

- Innovators from earlier stage enterprises perceived that they got more out of workshop and cohort program than later stage enterprises who did not feel all of the content was as relevant to their organisations.
- Limited ability for sector-specific learning.
- Time differences made it difficult to coordinate calls and in-person meetings.

BENEFITS

- Ability to share information about different countries/ markets for those considering expansion.
- A sense of shared challenges across sectors and geographies and the ability to identify common ground.
- Opportunity to surface fresh ideas from those facing similar challenges sense of willingness to collaborate.

" *We know there is a group of people we can ask questions. We often broke off into small groups to discuss.* "

" *The group has been great about sharing documents. You can ask anyone and they will share what they have already created for you to use rather than starting from scratch.* "

86% of social enterprises cited collaboration of some form with another program participant during their 6-month interview and two social enterprises have signed a MOU to pursue formal collaboration as a result of participation in the program. The majority of the concrete examples of peer-learning cited by participants (via survey and interviews) were based on one-on-one interactions pursued by participants themselves, rather than during the workshop or cohort calls. There connections may have been first stimulated through the relationships initiated at the workshop and through the periodic interactions.

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT & FEEDBACK AND FINDINGS

GUIDES

Each social enterprise was matched with one of five 'guides'. These guides were individuals with specific technical and geographic expertise whose role was to help prepare the enterprises for the initial Singapore Workshop and provide support throughout the program as needed.

64% OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISES FELT THE GUIDES ADDED SIGNIFICANT VALUE TO THE PROGRAM.

29% OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISES HAVE CONTINUED ENGAGEMENT WITH THEIR GUIDE.

100% OF THE GUIDES WERE SATISFIED WITH THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROGRAM.

4/5 OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH GUIDES

3.6/5 OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH THE GUIDES ABILITY TO PROVIDE RELEVANT ADVICE

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

Participants that felt the guides provided value cited having structured conversations and clear requests for input from the guides as helping them get the most out of their conversations. Relevant technical, sectoral, geographic, and cultural expertise were also considered as key factors for making these relationships a success. Those that got less value out of these relationships felt their guides were too busy to dedicate sufficient time to the program or felt their discussions lacked focus.

> " *I wanted to learn from the [social enterprises] that were selected...additional value was generated as a result of the relationships I was able to build upon and the new ones that were created, particularly thanks to the in-person, face-to-face, design workshop in Singapore. I think this was critical for the success and coherency of the program.* "
>
> — Frontier Innovators Guide

GHAM POWER

Gham Power provides complete, off-grid solar project development for businesses and remote sites in rural areas. The Gham Power team worked with their guide to review their new business model, for which they had previously considered hiring an independent consultant.
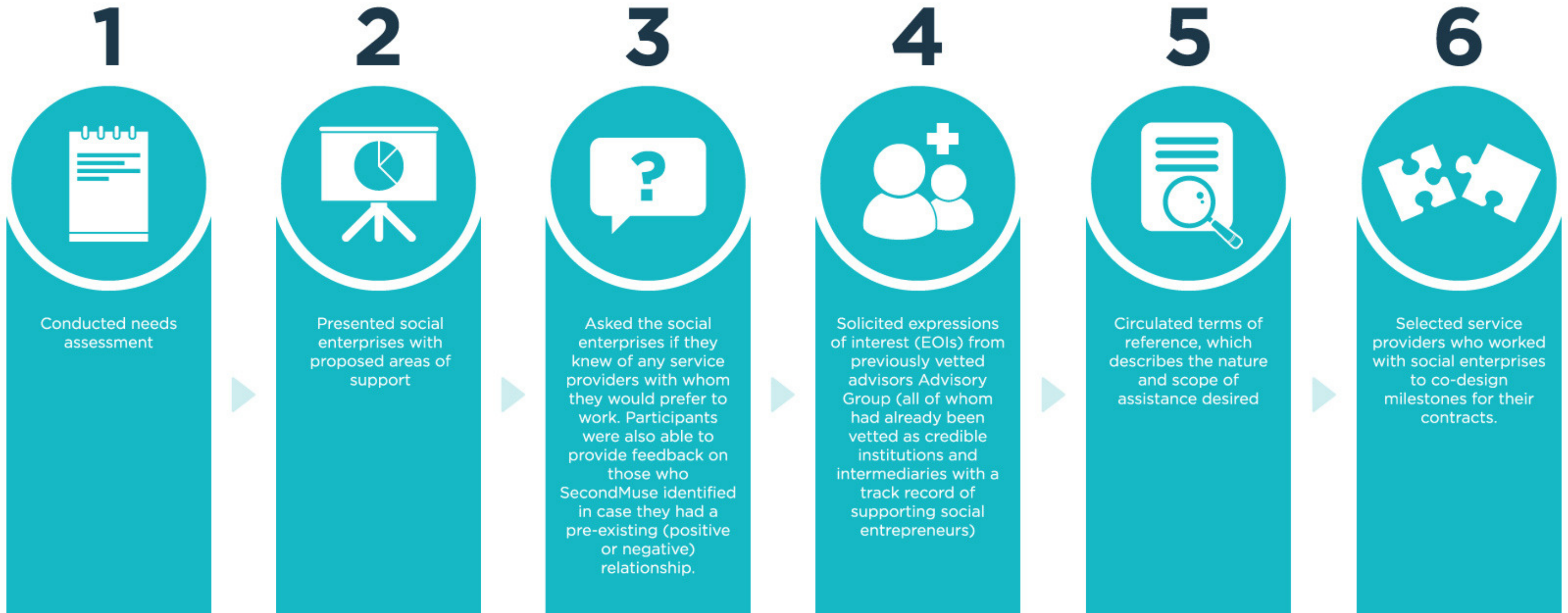
> " *We were in coordination with our guide before and during the Singapore Workshop. We were moving into a totally different area regarding our business model and were not confident about it. We needed someone to review it and let us know if there were any errors in our thinking. At the time when [the program] started, we just were venturing into Off Grid Bazaar, and we didn't have a clear picture. [Our guide] helped make it clearer.* "
>
> — Frontier Innovator Participant

DELIVERY PROCESS

SecondMuse took the following approach to identifying technical assistance service providers.

1

Conducted needs assessment

2

Presented social enterprises with proposed areas of support

3

Asked the social enterprises if they knew of any service providers with whom they would prefer to work. Participants were also able to provide feedback on those who SecondMuse identified in case they had a pre-existing (positive or negative) relationship.

4

Solicited expressions of interest (EOIs) from previously vetted advisors Advisory Group (all of whom had already been vetted as credible institutions and intermediaries with a track record of supporting social entrepreneurs)

5

Circulated terms of reference, which describes the nature and scope of assistance desired

6

Selected service providers who worked with social enterprises to co-design milestones for their contracts.

CUSTOM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Needs assessments for each social enterprise were used to identify priority areas of support needed. During the design of the Program, it was hypothesised that each innovator would need (or benefit from) strategic communications and impact measurement support. However, during these assessments (which were conducted during the Singapore Workshop) it became apparent that not all of the innovators were in need of the same types of support at that time for a range of reasons (e.g., organisations had already invested in impact measurement or strategic communications support or they had more pressing needs based on their context and stage of growth) However, for many, the Singapore Workshop was the first time the enterprises had given much thought to impact measurement or strategic communications. As a result, instead of pursuing solely impact measurement and strategic communications support, the program adapted to provide technical assistance based on the identified needs and requirements of each social enterprise.

> "
> [We] had not given much importance to impact measurement and communication before winning this grant. With the support program provided by Frontier Innovators, we not only know its importance but we also know ways of measuring and communicating it.
> "
>
> — Frontier Innovators Participant

CUSTOM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

NEEDS ASSESSMENTS WERE CREATED FROM A NUMBER OF INPUTS:

- Application data
- Expert notes from application review
- Innovator self-diagnostics
- Review from their guides
- Review by experts at the workshop
- Independent assessment by impact measurement and strategic communications experts

> " *The freedom in letting us choose the most important areas we need focus and support on is fundamental.* "
>
> — Frontier Innovator Participant

SECONDMUSE TOOK THE FOLLOWING APPROACH TO IDENTIFYING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SERVICE PROVIDERS.

1. Conducted needs assessment
2. Presented social enterprises with proposed areas of support
3. Asked the social enterprises if they knew of any service providers with whom they would prefer to work. Participants were also able to provide feedback on those who SecondMuse identified in case they had a pre-existing (positive or negative) relationship.
4. Solicited expressions of interest (EOIs) from pre vetted advisors Advisory Group (all of whom had already been vetted as credible institutions and intermediaries with a track record of supporting social entrepreneurs)
5. Circulated terms of reference, which describes the nature and scope of assistance desired
6. Selected service providers who worked with social enterprises to co-design milestones for their contracts.

CUSTOM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

17 providers were selected to implement 28 custom technical assistance support plans (technical assistance requests).

> *[I] cannot stress enough the growth we have achieved being part of Frontier Innovators. We were at a stage where we thought some things were too big for us and we should narrow and keep to our lane but the help of the FI and the fellow Innovators, we have embraced what we feel is our calling in providing our service that benefit as many people and countries that require our services.*
>
> — Frontier Innovators Participant

> *Starting from the basics, I understand that those supports were necessary in order to place [us] in a stronger position to move forward and to attract the right kind of donor / support in the future. Having a consultant to set up legal entity in both countries was vital. There are a few gaps which was due to the process and extreme time constraints placed.*
>
> — Frontier Innovators Participant

> *What we have gotten out of the program far exceeds our expectations of the support and the relevance of the help we received. The non-cash support is just or more worthwhile for the growth of our company.*
>
> — Innovator

FEEDBACK AND FINDINGS

100% OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISES FELT THAT THEY BENEFITED FROM PARTICIPATING IN THE PROGRAM OVERALL

100% OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISES FELT THAT THE AREAS OF CAPABILITY SUPPORT THEY RECEIVED WERE THE RIGHT AREAS FOR THEIR BUSINESSES CURRENT STAGE

100% OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISES WERE SATISFIED WITH THE PROVIDERS THEY WERE MATCHED WITH TO DEVELOP THEIR CAPABILITIES

93% OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISES GOT WHAT THEY EXPECTED FROM THE PROGRAM. ONE RESPONDENT NOTED THAT THEY ORIGINALLY ANTICIPATED JUST A CASH AWARD, BUT THE ACTUAL RESULTS OF THE PROGRAM FAR EXCEEDED THEIR INITIAL EXPECTATIONS

100% OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISES FELT THAT THE PROGRAM PROVIDED THEIR BUSINESSES WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP CAPABILITIES OR TOOLS NEEDED TO PROGRESS

100% OF INNOVATORS FELT THAT THEIR BUSINESSES ARE IN A BETTER PLACE TO SUCCEED AS A RESULT OF THE FRONTIER INNOVATORS PROGRAM

100% FELT THE TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SUPPORT PLANS WAS TOO SHORT

FEEDBACK AND FINDINGS

While surveys and interviews surfaced high levels of satisfaction and application of new knowledge and skills as a result of custom technical assistance, there was limited change in how participating social enterprises rated their abilities to both measure and communicate their impact at the start of the program and at the end of the cohort program in July, 2018.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest, the cohort average self-reported ability to measure the impact of their organisation's work:

3 AT THE START OF THE PROGRAM
3

3.7 AT THE SIX-MONTH PERIOD
3.7

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest, the cohort average self-reported ability to communicate the impact of their organisation's work:

3.2 AT THE START OF THE PROGRAM
3.2

3.6 COMMUNICATING IMPACT AT THE SIX-MONTH PERIOD
3.6

CONSIDERATIONS

WHEN CONSIDERING DESIGNING A PROGRAM THAT PROVIDES TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO SOCIAL ENTERPRISES...

- Involve participants in the procurement process. Many participants expressed gratitude that they were engaged in the process of identifying their service providers and thought it helped promote transparency. Only one of the innovators felt that the process could have been more transparent.

- Make sure there is enough time for social enterprises to engage meaningfully with service providers. Several participants suggested spreading out or leaving some additional level of effort to enable social enterprises to ask follow up questions as they begin to implement and test recommendations provided.

- Create opportunities to ensure social enterprises are satisfied with service provision and that the relationships are working / productive for both the social enterprises and service providers.

- If a program is designed to deliver a specific kind of support, it should be included as selection criteria to ensure participants need that type of support. However, if you want to provide more general support to achieve scale, a variety of technical assistance may be needed.

- Using needs assessments can help test assumptions about the type of technical assistance needed by innovators.

- Leave flexibility to adapt based on the specific needs of your portfolio/cohort

USER-GENERATED CONTENT

In addition to custom strategic communications support provided to some of the innovators as part of their custom support plans, innovators were given the option to receive additional support from the SFI Program's communications partner The Story Boxes to develop user-generated content (UGC) in collaboration with the innovators. UGC is content (video, photographs, audio, etc.) that has been created by innovators themselves based on guidance provided by The Story Boxes. This guidance includes a tips and tricks for capturing high quality photo and video content. UGC is intended to improve the ability of innovators to communicate their stories and narratives of social impact, which can often be difficult for target audiences to understand (e.g., donors, investors, customers, etc.). Social enterprises have used UGC for a variety of purposes, depending on their unique needs.

FEEDBACK AND FINDINGS

43% OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISES HAVE REQUESTED UGC SUPPORT FROM THE STORY BOXES

100% OF THESE SOCIAL ENTERPRISES HAVE REPORTED INCREASED KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS RELATED TO STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

100% OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISES WORKING WITH THE STORY BOXES HAVE CONCRETE EXAMPLES OF HOW THEY HAVE APPLIED THEIR KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS TO PRACTICE

FEEDBACK AND FINDINGS

Bagosphere has disseminated their UGC via Facebook to drive numbers of potential future students by showing the unique experience of past students and the educators, demonstrating why Bagosphere is such a fun and open place to come and study. Their video has been viewed over 5,600 times, which is more than any of their other paid content.

> " *This really helped us to get a number of inquiries for future students. We actually hit two birds with one stone and were able to use it for trainer recruitment. So we had people who want to join the company (as staff or in trainer positions) and people who want to be students (still the majority of responses).* "

Nora's Plantation has used their UGC when competing in competitions for additional funding and are working with The Story Boxes to use a QR code on their packaging to link to a short clip for customers to help understand their social impact story.

Gham Power has used UGC to capture impact stories of how their work is supporting local farmers which they share via social media.

> " *The UGC has been extremely valuable... we are now able to go on and tell our own stories with more confidence.* "

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on lessons learnt from the Frontier Innovators Program. For more information on how the program was designed and implemented, see **'How We Did It'**.

CAPABILITY ASSISTANCE

1 - Program design should be informed by research to understand the needs within the ecosystem but maintain flexibility to adapt activities over the course of implementation based on:

- Evolving priorities of and conditions experienced by the social enterprise (e.g., stage of innovation, preferred modality of assistance, timing, etc.)
- Results of needs assessments to ensure that the provision of capability assistance is appropriate for social enterprises' stage and context.

2 - When designing programs with a technical assistance component, two things should be included:

- First, plan for recipients to follow up with service providers three and six months after they receive technical assistance.
- Second, plan to follow up to gather results at least six and twelve months after the program has concluded, as it can take time for technical assistance to be applied and business objectives and development impact to be achieved.

RECOMMENDATIONS

PEER LEARNING / COHORT

3 - Peer learning should be a intentionally designed and planned element of all DFAT programs that feature a cohort. Over the course of SFI Program implementation there were a number of instances of effective peer-to-peer learning; however, there also were missed opportunities for social enterprises to learn even more from one another. As such, P2P activities (e.g., budget for study tours, funding for learning exchange, etc.) should be incorporate up front intentionally put in place to help maximise and ensure proper resourcing and measurement of activities. Specific results areas around peer learning should be identified and money should be made available to support these efforts. Peer learning was recognised as a potential benefit for the Frontier Innovators Program, but was not adequately funded, however real connections were made and there are many tangible examples where peer learning has occurred. In all programs with a cohort element make sure a peer learning program is defined with resources set aside to achieve those and that those resources can be accessed by the social enterprises themselves.

Rubayat Khan from Jeeon shared that their team benefited when being able to meet up with other participants in person. For example, they were able to meet up with Ben Jeffreys from ATEC in Bangladesh a few time. Ben was able to share his finance experience with Jeeon and provide guidance on the importance of and process for setting up a full time board for accountability purposes. Having such targeted discussions where a fellow participant could really dig into a particular problem and share solutions from their experience was viewed as especially useful. The value of such interactions could be further extended if additional funding were available to continue to capture these types of exchanges and share knowledge with the wider group or if grants were available to formally enable these types of in person exchanges that are less accessible to others.