

# Pioneering Real-time Impact Monitoring and Evaluation

## PUTTING PRIME INTO PRACTICE

*PRIME NEWSFLASH, FIRST QUARTER OF 2015*

In the first quarter of 2015 PRIME has sharpened many of the methodologies developed in earlier stages. In this newsletter we give an overview of the process of fine-tuning the indicators used for the cohort analysis and the status of their implementation in the M&E system of CBI and PUM. Other work has been done on the case studies, including a pilot test of the coding tool to be used for analysis and synthesis. And a mission to Myanmar took place in April.

**The PRIME research team, PUM and CBI had final discussions on the indicators used for the cohort analysis.** All parties agreed on the final version of the list, with two changes made. First, to assess the medium-term impact of the programme on gender inequality the team added gender related employment indicators. Second, we dropped some indicators that related to existing business support organisations. Instead the information about the relationship between the firms and these organisations will be collected through the qualitative case studies.

**The modalities to collect the M&E data are better defined.** As a first step, the data inventory document was fine-tuned. The document summarizes whether the agreed upon indicators are covered in the existing PUM and CBI M&E systems. The “gaps” were discussed with CBI and PUM. To fill the gaps, the research team proposed implementing an online survey before the summer to collect data for the 2013 and 2014 cohorts.

The PRIME team defined several steps in the case study process. First, the website will have a page on which we give insight into sector choice, mission activities and the next steps. Second, each mission will have a debriefing with the participating PUM and CBI staff. In this meeting the PRIME case study researcher will share some insights from the first mission, ask for clarifications on certain topics and give space to provide input into follow-up research. Third, and most importantly, all raw data is documented and stored on the team site (e.g. interview reports, secondary information). The researchers will synthesize the information around the key assumption in the intervention logic of the supporting organisation in each case-study country. This will result in reflection upon the facilitating and constraining factors that influence the effectiveness of the support and grounded in the interview reports and other evidence collected. The research team developed a coding tool to do so, using the software package ATLAS.ti.

**The research team has started debriefing meetings for Bolivia, Peru, Indonesia and Bangladesh.** The overview of these case studies will be presented on the website. We are also in the process of deciding on the focus of the additional survey, which will be implemented by a local consultant mid-2015. A first mission to Uganda is planned for the second quarter of 2015. The second missions will be in 2016 and will explore and verify observations from the first

**What is PRIME?** The Centre for the Promotion of Imports from Developing Countries (CBI), the Foundation Netherlands Senior Experts (PUM), the Agricultural Economics Research Institute (LEI Wageningen UR) and the Erasmus School of Economics (ESE) have developed a joint programme to pioneer impact evaluation methods of support to small and medium enterprises in developing countries. The PRIME programme is designed to develop an approach to data collection that enables the impact of PUM and CBI to be tracked while at the same time giving both organisations more insight into their interventions and the opportunity to learn about how they can manage for greater impact.

**How does PRIME use the M&E data?** Time-series datasets will be constructed with data on key indicators of SME clients. This dataset will be used in the econometric analysis of impact and to develop a typology of different modalities of support provided.

**How does PRIME use the case studies?** The case studies are complementary to the quantitative analysis of the monitoring data. Case studies will include in-depth semi-structured interviews with client enterprises, non-client enterprises, BSO representatives, and local (sector) experts in order to get a deeper understanding of the mechanisms that resulted in the (non) changes in SME processes and performance. Case studies will also include the measurement of key indicators among non-supported firms.

mission and the additional data collection. The overall case study analysis will start late 2016/early 2017, followed by a verification workshop in the region.

**Collaboration with the International Trade Centre (ITC) was formalized in April.** In PRIME-ITC we evaluate the activities of the third phase of the Netherlands Trust Fund Export Sector Competitiveness Programme (NTF III – ESCP). The organisation contracts PRIME to contribute towards improving the design and implementation of a more impact-oriented, robust and credible monitoring and evaluation system in ITC. Moreover, the cooperation increases corporate and strategic learning between the different private support programmes.

**Erasmus University conducted a case study on the activities of CBI in the garment sector in Myanmar** in late March/early April. After decades of military rule and Western economic sanctions in the 2000s, political and economic reforms in 2011 have seen an inflow of foreign investments to the Myanmar garment sector and of local firms preparing to enter or re-enter the European market. As CBI is in the process of starting up activities in Myanmar the case study addressed a number of questions regarding key challenges in the garment sector, expectations of local firms regarding the CBI programme, cooperation with other international development and trade initiatives in the sector as well as an exploration of possibilities for complementary quantitative data



First case study mission to Myanmar: textile factory

collection. Key issues to emerge included (i) low productivity of workers compared to neighbouring countries such as Bangladesh and Cambodia, (ii) the need for improving both technical and management capacities, (iii) the need for public-private cooperation in developing and implementing decent labour and environmental standards and (iv) strong competition for medium-sized locally-owned firms from very large foreign-owned garment enterprises.

**On December 9th PRIME had its fourth Advisory Board meeting.** Various issues were addressed: the preferred (scientific) methods versus (practical) implications for CBI/PUM; impact analysis versus M&E; qualitative versus quantitative analysis and scientific outputs versus organisational learning.

**In February the Programme Board met** to discuss, amongst other issues, the planning for 2015 and the synergies between PRIME and PRIME-ITC.

We are happy to announce that **Cecille Fassaert** replaces Jan Willem Oosterbroek from CBI, with Rozemarijn Vermeulen remaining as the main contact person for now. **Elsbeth Akkerman** replaces Marhijn Visser in the Advisory Committee.