



**A Strategic Roadmap for  
Agriculture-Focused Business  
Development Services in Tanzania:  
Enhancing Support for Producers  
Organizations and Agri-SMEs**

**(2025-2030)**

## Background

Business Development Services (BDS) encompass a broad spectrum of non-financial services that entrepreneurs use to address challenges effectively, enhance business performance and competitiveness, gain market access, accelerate growth, and achieve larger scale. These services include acceleration, incubation, technical assistance, coaching, consulting, and other forms of non-financial support designed to improve business management and performance, corporate strategy, sales and marketing, financial management, as well as organisational and human resource management to mention a few. BDS play a pivotal role in bolstering the growth of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), which are widely recognised for their significant contributions to employment, income generation, and overall economic development.

Despite their importance, the BDS market in many developing economies, such as Tanzania, remains underdeveloped. Business services in Tanzania account for less than 1% of the total GDP and grow slowly at a rate of 1-2% per year. The recognition of BDS for enterprise development remains limited across public, private, and civil society organizations. Challenges include low quality of services, lack of coordination among providers, high dependency on donor funding, and limited access to specialised knowledge and technology, particularly in the agriculture sector.

The Agribusiness Market Ecosystem Alliance (AMEA) is a global network dedicated to accelerating the professionalization of farmer organizations. AMEA's vision is to ensure farmers receive a living income for fair working conditions, inspiring the next generation to invest in sustainable farming as a business. Its mission is to transform the systems that support farmer organizations and agri-SMEs to create value for both farmers and themselves. AMEA provides a platform that enables stakeholders to learn, innovate, and scale up the most effective ecosystem approaches for supporting farmers. By 2030, AMEA aims to support 20 local networks, and AMEA Tanzania is part of this expansion plan.

AMEA Tanzania was officially launched in July 2024 and has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Economic Empowerment Council (NEEC) to improve the BDS ecosystem in the agriculture sector in Tanzania. Hosted by ANSAF, AMEA Tanzania works with members and partners across the agriculture sector, including crops, forestry, livestock, and fisheries. The network intends to contribute to the government's vision as stipulated in ASPD II of commercialising the agriculture sector by supporting the development of agri-SMEs and the professionalisation of farmer organisations and cooperatives through the delivery of quality and cost-effective BDS. (Component 3)

## Roadmap development process

A concept note for the roadmap development process was developed and shared with AMEA Tanzania members and partners. This concept adopted a multi-stakeholder approach and was approved with the following steps agreed:

- 1. BDS Market development workshop:** Identify Major Milestones, Stakeholders, and Responsibilities: Outline key milestones, identify relevant stakeholders, and assign responsibilities to ensure a structured approach to the roadmap development.
- 2. Present Draft Roadmap at a Strategic Dialogue:** Engage stakeholders in a strategic dialogue to present the draft roadmap, gather insights, and foster collaboration.
- 3. Incorporate Comments and Validate the Revised Draft at a Stakeholder Workshop:** Refine the draft roadmap based on feedback from the strategic dialogue and validate the revised draft during a comprehensive stakeholder workshop.
- 4. Launch the Final Roadmap:** Finalize and launch the roadmap, setting the stage for implementation.

## Step 1 – BDS Market Development workshop

A BDS market development workshop was held on the 31<sup>st</sup> of October, 2024, which brought together over 34 diverse participants refer to annex 1. The workshop report can be accessed [here](#). The workshop followed a process to:

- Use the M4P tools to identify BDS market system constraints and drivers based on an analysis of the state of BDS in Tanzania
- Develop a common Vision for the BDS Market Sector in Tanzania
- Use a Theory of Change approach to create a Roadmap to achieve that Vision based on the analysis of constraints and drivers.

## The State of BDS in Tanzania

A recent study by JICA<sup>1</sup> in Tanzania identifies four (4) key reasons under performance of BDS programmes in the country:

Low uptake of private and public business entities to utilise and invest in BDS

Varied and inconsistency of quality standards of services offered by BDSPs

The critically insufficient capacity and experience among BDSPs in business diagnosis and BDS provision/service delivery models (SDM); BDS provision often falls short in addressing specific business challenges and meeting clients' needs.

Disorganized and weak coordination of BDS supply and demand functions.

JICA and Match Maker Associates (MMA) analysis also considered there to be a significant mismatch between supply and demand in the BDS market. They attribute this to the following characteristics of the BDS market:

<sup>1</sup> **JICA (2023)** Data Collection Survey to Support Business Development Service (KAIZEN) for Private Sector in the United Republic of Tanzania Final Report. *Japan International Cooperation Agency and UNICO International Corporation, February 2023*

Most surveyed BDSPs are small-scale, employing 19 or fewer individuals with limited experience, primarily handling less than ten service cases in each of the four BDS areas in the last three years.

The majority of BDSPs primarily serve micro and small companies with 49 or fewer employees and producer organisations (PO) managing business enterprises. There are a limited number of BDSPs who can serve medium and large companies.

BDS in marketing is the most common service, followed by financial management and corporate strategy/management. However, organisational and human resource management services have lower demand, and ICT-related services are the least available.

Training is the most prevalent service delivery model (SDM), followed by consultation/advisory. Coaching and mentoring services are less common.

There are no BDSP standards or regulations & networking remains informal, with limited success in formalisation.

BDSPs usually find clients through external support from the development partners (DPs) for cost reduction, often providing low-cost services like training. Consulting, coaching and mentoring services are relatively more costly due to their time and expertise requirements and are rarely supported by external sources development partners (DPs).

The following analysis of the challenges and drivers was presented and validated by workshop participants. This analysis was then taken into a process to develop a future Vision for BDS in Tanzania.



## Drivers of BDS supply & demand in Tanzania

- 1) Challenges
- 2) Emerging key drivers

### SUPPLY SIDE: BDSPs

#### Challenges:

- Weak standards and regulations
- Capacity and skills gaps
- Limited geographic reach and funding constraints

#### Key Drivers:

- Enhancing standards, regulations & trust building mechanisms
- Need for capacity-building (data-driven BDS) and market development
- Enhancing digital and physical infrastructure
- Access to financing for BDS provision

### DEMAND SIDE: Agri-SMEs & Producer Organisations

#### Challenges:

- Low willingness to pay for BDS
- Limited awareness and understanding of BDS benefits
- Limited linkage between BDS provision and agri-SME/PO access to finance

#### Key Drivers:

- Increase awareness of BDS value
- Increased utilization and investment in BDS
- Provide initial subsidies or cost-sharing models
- Strengthen access to finance for BDS investment
- Access to financing and related financial services

## Vision for a BDS Market in Tanzania by 2030

A Theory of Change approach starts with the development of a Common Vision. Tanzania stakeholders worked to develop the following elements to the Vision of a Tanzania BDS Market.

<b>1. Synergy</b>	This represents a well-coordinated BDS ecosystem where providers collaborate effectively, maximizing the benefits of BDS interventions. For BDS to truly serve Tanzania's agricultural community, collaboration among all stakeholder's government bodies, private BDS providers, NGOs, and SME's is essential. This involves sharing resources, knowledge, and aligning goals so that everyone is pulling towards the success of BDS delivery in Tanzania. When BDS providers collaborate rather than duplicate efforts, farmer organizations and small agri-businesses can access better, more streamlined support, which is vital for their growth and sustainability
<b>2. Quality</b>	High-quality standards in BDS services are essential to provide reliable and impactful support to MSMEs. Expanding BDS alone isn't enough the services must also be effective and consistent. Raising the quality of BDS means setting clear standards, providing comprehensive training for providers, and ensuring their support truly benefits agricultural businesses. For farmers and agri-SMEs relying on BDS, high-quality services lead to real improvements, making them more efficient, profitable, and resilient in a competitive market. Prioritizing quality builds trust, making BDS a valuable resource that businesses will want to return to time and again.
<b>3. Scale</b>	This will create broad reach and coverage of BDS services across the target region, ensuring that BDS benefits as many MSMEs as possible. Reaching more people, especially those in rural areas, is crucial if BDS is to make a real difference in Tanzania's agricultural sector. By leveraging digital tools and mobile technology, BDS can reach more agri-businesses and provide services more efficiently. Scaling up means more farmers and businesses can get the support they need to grow, tap into new markets, and contribute to the broader economy

## Best Practices for BDS Capacity and Delivery: A Summary of Research Findings

The following best practices were then presented and discussed. This summary is drawn from AMEA's work<sup>2</sup>, ISF research<sup>3</sup> and Argidius's research<sup>4</sup> (which also informs the draft East Africa BDS standards on capacity<sup>5</sup> and delivery<sup>6</sup>).

<sup>2</sup> <https://amea-global.com/call-action/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://isfadvisors.org/assessing-the-cost-efficiency-and-effectiveness-of-business-development-services-for-agri-smes/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.argidius.com/en/learning/how-to-fulfill-the-potential-of-business-development-services-using-scale>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.tbs.go.tz/uploads/publications/en-1686554054-DEAS%201159%202023%20Business%20Development%20Services%20%E2%80%94%20Building%20Organisational%20Capacity%20%E2%80%94%20Guidelines%20for%20Providers.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.tbs.go.tz/uploads/publications/en-1703671573-DEAS%201185-2023%20Business%20Development%20Services%20%E2%80%94%20Delivery%20of%20Business%20Development%20Services%20%E2%80%94%20Guidelines%20for%20Service%20Providers.pdf>





## BDS Good Practice

1. Encourage holistic assessments of Agri-SMEs and sharing of that data.
2. Increase investment in the Agri-SME selection process and use segmentation to determine the type of support
3. Change procurement practices which recognize the BDS market is dysfunctional e.g. better screening of BDSPs and partnering rather than open tenders.
4. Support BDSPs to use approved “proven” approaches/curricula that have potential for scaling
5. Support BDSPs to implement cost recovery in all their services
6. Support BDSPs to use data to segment, tailor, learn and improve. Data availability and quality is a massive problem that must be addressed.
7. Support testing of service delivery models that are effective in increasing outreach/decreasing cost whilst maintaining quality. Digital, peer to peer.

Stakeholders then critically discussed and agreed on the following key market system changes that we would pursue collectively as they have the greatest potential for achieving this Vision:

1. **Certifying BDSPs.** Establishing a credible certification system for Business Development Service Providers (BDSPs) ensures that providers meet consistent minimum quality standards. With the creation of a BDS Association, BDSPs would be certified based on predefined quality metrics, helping agricultural businesses to identify trustworthy service providers and fostering a more structured support network. This system aims to ensure most of the commissioned BDSPs are certified, elevating diligence, reliability and professional standards in the sector.
2. **Standardised Data on BDS Cost Effectiveness.** The roadmap advocates for collecting and sharing data on BDS cost-effectiveness across various initiatives. By generating uniform data, stakeholders can assess the impact and efficiency of BDS, facilitating evidence-based learning and continuous improvement. This initiative will promote transparency, trust, improve collaboration, and foster a knowledge-sharing culture that helps optimising resource allocation and enhance effectiveness of BDS Interventions.
3. **BDS Cost share facilities.** The roadmap calls for larger-scale cost-sharing facilities, supported by both government and donors, to make BDS more accessible to agricultural SMEs. These facilities would not only subsidise the cost of services but also contribute to improving BDSP quality through training and professional development programs. This broader support system would help scale up the reach and impact of BDS, ensuring that rural and underserved areas benefit from these services, thus promoting equitable access to BDS in Tanzania.

These market system changes were then unpacked into milestones/outputs, and these are presented below in the Draft Roadmap flowchart (refer to next page).

## Taking Action in 2025!

As indicated earlier, this is the first step to developing a Draft Roadmap, which will then be refined, validated and used by all key stakeholders in Tanzania. However, we emphasised that while finalising the roadmap, we must work on some of the key milestones and initiatives. We therefore agreed on targets for 2025 and how they align to longer-term contributions toward improving synergy, quality and scale. These 2025 plans are also included on the following pages.

## Join Us. System Change requires Collective Action.

Implementation of the roadmap from 2025 to 2030 will be led by AMEA Tanzania under the ANSAF umbrella in partnership with NEEC and other key stakeholders for each milestone and activity. Coordination of various BDS initiatives will be essential and potentially coordinated through the organisation that oversees the efforts.

We welcome inputs from all stakeholders in this Draft Roadmap and will be planning the Strategic Dialogue in early 2025. This Dialogue can also validate the draft Roadmap and agree on specific processes/timetables/participants for action in 2025.

### Contact Information

**For any recommendations or input regarding this document, please contact any of the following individuals.**

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## Tanzania National BDS Roadmap 2025 -2030 (Draft for Consultation)

The Draft Roadmap below shows the key milestones/outputs planned to contribute to the Vision for BDS Market System transformation.

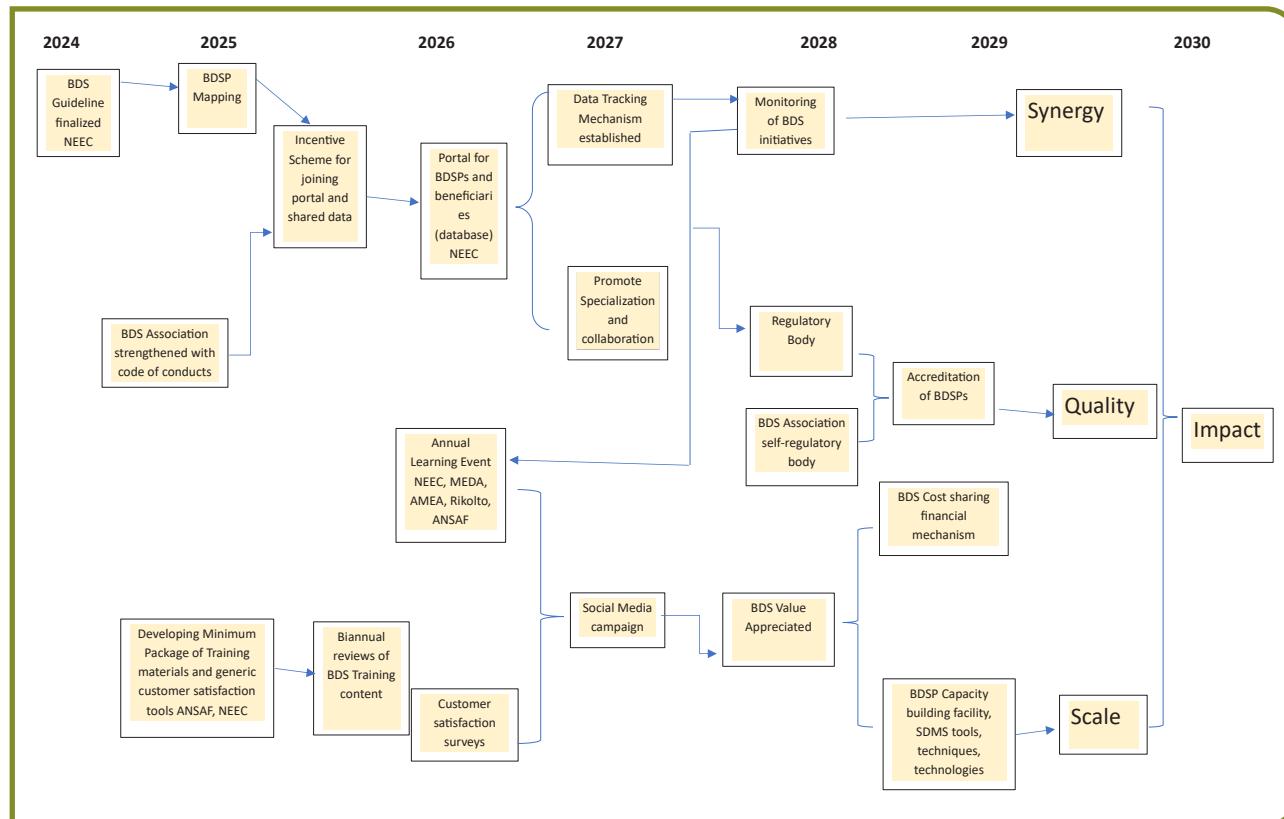


Photo credit: Freepik



The key initiatives are explained in more detail with specific plans for 2025, which we expect can be moved forward.

Milestone	Description	Targets 2025	Long-Term Contribution:	Responsible
<b>BDS Guidelines</b>	AMEA will work with NEEC to facilitate and coordinate stakeholder consultation to ensure the recommended BDS guidelines are effective in improving the quality of BDS. This work is likely to link with the development of accreditation services as per agreed BDS Standards	BDS Guidelines are launched and agencies are incentivized to test the guidelines	This initiative promotes synergy as it helps identify potential partnerships to fill service gaps	NEEC and partners
<b>BDSPs mapping</b>	BDS Mapping will create a comprehensive database that locates BDS providers, details the types of services they offer, and highlights areas where service availability is lacking. This initiative is vital for achieving a more coordinated and equitable BDS system that can effectively reach underserved agricultural businesses and farmer organizations.	BDS mapping completed. Database designed and implemented. Evidence of database being used.	This initiative promotes synergy as it helps identify potential partnerships to fill service gaps	NEEC and partners
<b>Creation of an Online Marketplace for BDS (BDS Portal)</b>	The BDS portal will serve as an online marketplace where agri-SMEs can easily find accredited BDSPs, explore the services they offer, and make informed decisions tailored to their needs, while improving their access to high-quality Business Development Services. Acting as a link between the BDS Association and the market, the portal will enhance visibility and make it easier for service providers to connect with beneficiaries like SMEs and Farmer organizations. The BDS Association Code of Conduct, will ensure that BDSPs uphold high standards of professionalism and ethics. The portal will also encourage self-regulation by linking the association to a regulatory body, helping BDSPs stay aligned with established guidelines and deliver top-notch services.	Launch the BDS portal, register accredited BDSPs, and make initial service offerings available.	This initiative addresses scale by expanding BDS accessibility to rural areas. It also promotes synergy by centralizing information on BDSPs, fostering a connected ecosystem of providers and clients.	NEEC

Milestone	Description	Targets 2025	Long-Term Contribution:	Responsible
<b>Strengthening of the BDS Association</b>	Strengthening a BDS Association with member self-regulation mechanism aims to provide a reliable signal to the market about the quality of BDS providers. This association will serve as an accreditation body, ensuring that only qualified and trusted BDSPs are certified, creating a recognizable standard of quality.	Strengthening the foundational committee, register the association, and accredit an initial set of BDSPs who meet predefined quality standards. These BDSPs would be expected to be included in the portal.	By endorsing BDSPs, the association will contribute to quality and synergy in the sector. This initiative will enable agricultural businesses to identify trusted service providers, fostering a stronger support network for agri-SMEs	NEEC, ANSAF, AMEA, MEDA Tz
<b>Development and Promotion of a Minimum Package of Training Materials</b>	The idea of a Minimum Package came from TAPBDS and other BDSPs. This process could mirror the AMEA process to create its' Global Toolbox with the ambition of promoting the most effective approaches/ tools in the Tanzania context. This could be done within the framework of the BDS Association workplan.	Set up a Technical WG to review tools/ approaches used in key programs and by leading BDSPs. Agree on a Minimum Package which can be promoted to all programs using BDS.		TAPBDS
<b>Annual Learning Processes to Foster Dialogue</b>	Annual learning events will be held to review key findings, celebrate success stories, and gather valuable insights from the data collected through the BDS portal and other sources. These events will promote stakeholder engagement and create opportunities for reflection and feedback. Stakeholders will be encouraged to share their experiences and insights, helping to refine the BDS and adjust strategies where necessary. The event will foster dialogue, ensuring that challenges are addressed and improvements, such as refining the SOPs for Service Quality, are implemented. By capturing lessons learned and best practices, we will keep the roadmap relevant and flexible. This ongoing feedback loop will drive continuous growth, enhance service delivery, and ensure alignment with changing needs.	Organize the first learning event with representatives from BDSPs, government bodies, agri-SMEs and other sectors to review the year's progress and highlight areas for improvement.  AMEA Tanzania will also be contributing at least 2 case studies per year as part of Learning into Action initiative.	The annual learning process strengthens synergy and quality by creating a platform for collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and collective problem-solving.	AMEA, NEEC and other partners

Milestone	Description	Targets 2025	Long-Term Contribution:	Responsible
<b>Use of the BDS Portal to Track Performance and Generate Learning</b>	The BDS portal will serve as a central platform for tracking the performance of BDS providers and generating valuable insights into cost-effective, scalable approaches. Designed to help BDSPs, SMEs, and farmer organizations monitor service delivery, the portal will gather data on various aspects of BDS performance, enabling users to assess effectiveness and identify best practices. Over time, it will evolve to include a client feedback mechanism, allowing beneficiaries to share their experiences and provide input on the services they receive. This feedback will be essential for identifying areas for improvement, refining approaches, and driving evidence-based learning to make BDS more impactful and accessible	This action will take place after 2025 once the Portal has been established and is being used effectively.	This feature supports quality and scalability by providing insights that improve service effectiveness and identify the most successful BDS approaches, creating a feedback loop for ongoing learning and adjustment	NEEC



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The following are the kpis for the implementation of the strategic roadmap for agriculture-focused business development services (bds) in tanzania, 2025–2030.

## 1. BDS Guidelines

**Objectives;** Develop and roll out standardized guidelines for BDS delivery to ensure consistency and improved quality across providers

KPI	Description
Number of stakeholders engaged	Measures the breadth of consultation in guideline development - ensuring buy-in and relevance to all ecosystem actors (government, private sector, CSOs, BDSPs).
Completion and launch of guidelines	Indicates readiness and formal adoption of the guidelines for implementation.
Number of institutions using guidelines	Shows uptake and institutional alignment; a sign that the sector is coalescing around a common quality framework.

## 2. BDSPs Mapping

**Objective;** Map and categorize Business Development Service Providers (BDSPs) across regions and sectors.

KPI	Description
Mapping database completed and functional	Tracks progress towards having a centralized national BDS registry.
Number of BDSPs listed	Reflects coverage and inclusivity of the mapping exercise - aiming for both urban and rural representation.
Monthly database usage	Shows practical value of the database and how actively it is used by agri-SMEs and institutions to identify services.

## 3. BDS Portal

**Objective:** Create an online, searchable BDS marketplace to connect agri-SMEs with accredited providers.

KPI	Description
3.1 Portal launched and functional with BDSP listings	Indicates accessibility and readiness of the platform for public use.
3.2 Number of transactions or service bookings via portal	Measures effectiveness in connecting users to services.
3.3 User satisfaction rate	Provides insight into the user experience and overall value perception. Feedback could guide iterative improvements.



## 4. BDS Association

**Objective:** Strengthening a sector-led body for self-regulation, accreditation, and professional development.

KPI	Description
4.1 Association strengthened	Support Operationalization of the BDS association
4.2 Number of BDSPs accredited	A core indicator of trust and quality control in the market. Accreditation validated provider credibility
4.3 Number of compliance/disciplinary cases resolved	Reflects enforcement of standards and ethical practices

## 5. Minimum Package of Training Materials

**Objective:** Identify and standardize effective tools and approaches for BDS provision.

KPI	Description
5.1 Number of tools reviewed and included in package	Measures comprehensiveness and quality of the training toolkit
5.2 Programs adopting the package	Shows alignment across training and development
5.3 BDSPs trained using the toolkit	Demonstrates diffusion and capacity building reach

## 6. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

**Objective:** Develop practical service quality protocols based on best practices and draft East African standards.

KPI	Description
6.1 SOP developed and shared	Indicates completion of quality framework and readiness for application
6.2 BDSPs Trained on SOPs	Reflects knowledge dissemination and capacity-building efforts
6.3 Percentage of trained BDSPs adopting SOPs	Shows practical application and behavioral change among service providers

## 7. Annual Learning Events

**Objective:** Facilitate continuous improvement and stakeholder engagement through yearly learning cycles.

KPI	Description
7.1 Learning event held	Tracks event delivery, with documented agendas and outputs.
7.2 Number of organizations participating	Reflects engagement and stakeholder diversity.
7.3 Lessons or policy actions adopted post-event	Shows how learnings are applied to strategy and implementation.

## 8. Performance Tracking via BDS Portal

**Objective:** Use portal analytics and client feedback for real-time performance monitoring and learning.

KPI	Description
8.1 Client feedback mechanism established	Indicates system readiness to receive and process performance data.
8.2 Number of feedback entries received	Reflects user engagement and willingness to participate in quality control.
8.3 Performance improvements linked to feedback	Demonstrates the portal's contribution to service quality evolution.

## 9. Social Media and Public Awareness

**Objective:** Increase public appreciation, trust, and demand for BDS.

KPI	Description
9.1 Number of BDS success stories shared	Tracks outreach and storytelling around positive outcomes.
9.2 Campaign engagement metrics (e.g., likes, comments)	Measures online interest and public resonance.
9.3 Increase in BDS inquiries linked to media campaigns	Shows effectiveness in generating actual demand.



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Agricultural Non State Actors Forum

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