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- 1. Introduction:** Highlights the governance crisis in BDSPs and its consequences across **East Africa**
- 2. Reform Priorities:** Beyond Regulation: Self-Governance as the Future of Quality BDS Delivery – the **West African** Experience
- 3. Summary:** Summary of key stakeholder roles in implementation



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

Certifying BDSPs

- Establishing a credible certification system for 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.

Attempts for BDSPs Self-Governance

- In the absence of BDSP certification & accreditation system in East Africa Partner States, self-governance is a good entry point to improve quality
- There are attempts to create BDSP Associations e.g.
 - BDS Tanzania Society (Tanzania);
 - ASEK (Kenya)
 - ILO-trained BDS Provider's Network (Uganda).
- Nevertheless, these BDSP organisations have not been able to gain wider acceptance by BDSPs and spearheading improvement of quality of service and service delivery models (SDM)

Attempts for BDSPs Self-Governance

- The emerging public sector-led BDS Guidelines in Tanzania and Uganda as well as the new EAC BDS Guidelines and AMEA-led ISO 18716 are continuous attempts to formalise the governance of BDSPs' conduct and service delivery models (SDM)
- In East Africa, the challenge is for the demand side to recognise and empower these young associations and endorse the newly launched guidelines



Beyond Regulation:
Self-Governance as the Future
of Quality BDS Delivery
The West African experience

Limited Reach & Coverage

Many rural and underserved areas lack access

Low Capacity & Quality

Inconsistent service quality; weak M&E frameworks

Unsustainable Business Models

Overdependence on donor funding

Weak Linkages to Finance

BDS often disconnected from actual funding pipelines

Low Willingness to Pay

MSMEs see BDS as a cost, not an investment

Fragmentation & Duplication

Poor coordination between actors; overlap of services

Strengthen Certification, Accreditation & Quality Assurance

- Standardize BDS training & certify providers

Improve Funding Models

- Encourage fee-for-service models, blended finance, results-based payments

Digital Transformation

- Expand access via mobile/digital platforms, e-learning, remote mentoring

Enhance Coordination

- National registries/platforms for BDS actors and services

Link BDS to Finance

- Integrate services into MSME loan, grant, and equity pipelines

Promote Demand-Side Awareness

- Campaigns to educate MSMEs on the value of BDS

TOPIC 2 | BEYOND REGULATION: SUSTAINABLE BDSP ASSOCIATIONS

ESO Collaboratives – Self Governance



Category	Ghana – Impact Investing Ghana	Nigeria – Impact Investors Foundation
Lead Initiative	SCALE Programme (Technical Assistance + Grants)	ESO Collaborative (RISA-funded)
ESO Reach	12 ESOs supported	100+ ESOs engaged
Key Interventions	Technical assistance – GHS 22,800 grants – Training on selection, service models, M&E, leadership	National ESO network creation – ESO Forum – Mapping study & strategy design
Inclusion Focus	Support for women and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)	Noted gaps in support for underserved groups; roadmap to address them.
Digital Innovation	Online ESO directory platform launched: – 50+ ESOs listed – Uses SCALE Assessment tool – Feedback mechanism for quality	Mapping digitization & coordination underway; integration with Deal Source Africa
Capacity Building	Operational improvements in ESOs via SCALE	Sustainability standards training (IFRS) for 100+ MSMEs and professionals
Funding Success	Small grants per ESO	Secured US \$545,256 from RISA Fund to scale ESO efforts
Investment Infrastructure	Not applicable	Partnership with Kuramo Capital to manage Nigeria’s Wholesale Impact Investment Fund (WIIF)
Policy & Advocacy	ESO self-improvement through tools & platform	Engaged with Financial Reporting Council and GSG on policy & reporting standards
Overall Impact	Improved ESO quality, increased accessibility, promoted inclusiveness	Strengthened national ESO system, boosted transparency, attracted new investment pathways

Francophone BDS Collaboratives – AMEA's Efforts



Country	National BDS Register	Scope	Status
Benin	Yes	Agri-BDS providers (150+ entries)	Active and publicly developing
Côte d'Ivoire	In progress	General BDS providers	Digital directory in planning
Senegal, Mali, Burkino Faso	Not yet	N/A	Roadmap & stakeholder dialogues

- IIF to establish the ESO Pool of Funds
 - The initiative seeks to drive long-term economic impact.
 - Improve ESO service quality,
 - foster collaboration, and
 - unlock early-stage capital for SMEs
 - especially those led by women, youth, and persons with disabilities
- Expansion of Scale project
 - 13 ESO currently running Accelerator programs in Nigeria
- Scalability of programs being run by IIG and IIF



- How can donors and governments incentivize self-governance?
- What verification mechanisms would build sponsor confidence?
- How might funding models evolve to support quality-focused networks?



Thank You - Contact Details



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