



# Sustainable Outcomes for Inclusive Finance: The Experience of Social Investors

Abler Nordic



Norfund



*September 25th, 2025.  
Experience Sharing Webinar*

*hosted by*



# Agenda

1. Introduction: Outcomes Management to Achieve More Impact
2. Common Challenges on Outcomes Management
3. Core Projects Presentation & Lessons Learned
  1. Theory of Change as practical framework for investors and FSPs
  2. Outcomes management journey for FSP
4. Q&A with participants

# Speakers



Nawel Octave, Incofin  
Investment Management



Lone Sondergaard,  
Investment Director at  
Abler Nordic

**Abler Nordic**



Maya Kobalia, Head of  
Environmental & Social,  
Crystal, Georgia



Veena Yamini Annadanam,  
Ankuram Social Ventures  
Private Limited



- Sustainable outcomes management remains complex
  - However, more and more **concrete examples and approaches** to be shared
  - The SOM project is aimed at sharing and giving **resources** around **standards** of outcomes management, on a regular basis
- Wrap-up on 2 long-term projects
  - On Theory of Change at investor and investees' levels
  - On outcomes management at investees' level
  - Good timing to share **the core lessons** with our partners and wide audience



This webinar is hosted in the frame of the SOM Project



## Sustainable Outcomes Management

*Making the SDGs a roadmap for impact!*

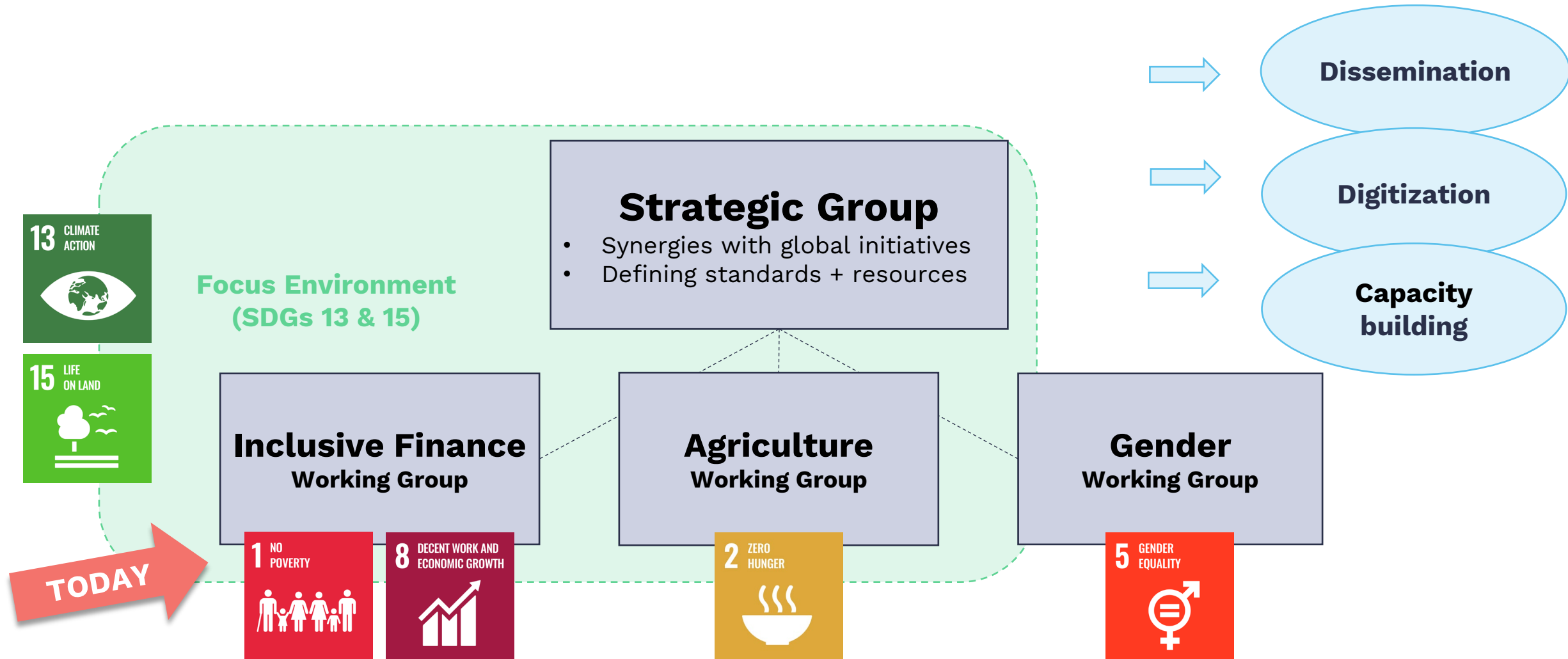
Measuring the contribution of microfinance institutions, social businesses, and impact investors to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

**Phase 2: March 2024 - December 2026**



# Introduction

*Structure of the SOM Project*



# Common Challenges on Outcomes Management

- **Attribution and data quality**

Difficulty to isolate the impact of financing from other factors.

Difficulty in collecting reliable, segmented, and high-quality data, especially over time.

- **Resource and capacity constraints**

Importance of acknowledging that institutions may face limitations in funding, technical skills, and staff time needed to design, implement, and analyze robust outcome measurement systems.

- **Integration and use of findings**

How to fully leverage it for strategic decision-making and feed it back in portfolio level correction remains a challenge.

*“Investees can be afraid to share honest outcomes results in case investors are dissatisfied.”*

A **customized, bottom-up approach** to outcomes management can make it harder to aggregate results across institutions.

However, this challenge is an opportunity : by working together, we can develop innovative solutions that respect **local relevance** while building **sector-wide learning**. Let's embrace this complexity as a chance for collective progress.

# Project Presentation

Abler Nordic



Norfund



- Abler Nordic, Impact Fund Denmark (ex IFU), and Norfund

The report cover features a photograph of a woman in an orange sari on the left. On the right, there is a red button with the word "REPORT" in white. Below the button are the logos for AN, Norfund, and the Investment Fund for Developing Countries. At the bottom right of the cover is the Sustainable Outcomes Management logo.

**REPORT**

AN Norfund INVESTMENT FUND FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

**Sustainable Outcomes Management**

**Bringing the Theory of Change of Financial Service Providers into the Business Strategy for Value Creation**

Recommendations for Investors

<https://en.spi-online.org/news/view/theory-of-change-recommendations-for-investors>



- 18 months of action research:
  - *What drives positive change?*
- Diverse group of stakeholders + insights from technical assistance
  - Phase 1: stakeholder perspectives on Theory of Change
  - Phase 2: experiences of financial service providers (FSPs)
  - Phase 3: direct support to 3 investees





## ABLER NORDIC THEORY OF CHANGE

### INPUT



- Patient and risk-willing capital
- Active ownership through Board positions and value creation plans
- Capacity strengthening through Technical Assistance Facility
- Risk mitigation through Foreign Exchange Facilities

### OUTPUT



- Growth in number of customers reached
- Improved operations and financial results
- Improved ESG & Impact Management

### OUTCOME



Increased access to relevant financial services enables:

- Starting and growing small businesses
- Improved household income
- Increased spending on education, health quality meals and house improvements
- Improved resilience to volatility in income and shocks

### IMPACT










Abler Nordic builds sustainable financial institutions that enable low-income households in developing countries to create a better future.



# Theory of Change as a practical framework for investors

*“Building sustainable financial institutions that enable low-income households in developing countries to create a better future.”*

## ABLER NORDIC – IMPACT TARGETS

THEME	FINANCIAL ACCESS	FINANCIAL RESILIENCE	IMPROVED INCOME & QUALITY OF LIFE	CLIMATE ADAPTATION & MITIGATION	FOOD SECURITY
FUND V TARGETS	  > 125% increase in number of borrowers over investment period	  > 50% increase in number of savers over investment period	   > 70% of customers with increased income	 > 75% of investees have had a capacity building project focused on climate	 > 40% of loans are extended for agricultural purposes
ADDITIONAL TARGETS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• % clients previously unbanked or underbanked</li><li>• % low-income clients</li><li>• % female clients</li><li>• % of investees offering digital solutions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• % increase in savings balance per depositor</li><li>• % end-clients reporting improved ability to cover emergency expenses</li><li>• % end-clients reporting decreased financial stress</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• % of loans provided for productive purposes</li><li>• % of end-clients employing more people</li><li>• % of end-clients reporting an improved quality of life</li><li>• % of end-clients increasing “social” spending</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• % of investees offering “green” products or services</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Number of investments in Companies focusing on providing financial services to smallholder farmers</li></ul>

- Much clearer on what we are trying to achieve and that it doesn’t come automatically
- Ready for SFDR article 9 - targets for substantial contribution
- Elevated the discussion at investment prospect stage

# Theory of Change as a practical framework for investees

- In due diligence we often find that FSPs are weak on Dimension 1 on the Universal Standards
  - which also makes it difficult to confirm and work with dimension 2 and 3
- ToC as a starting point for what is relevant to measure + identify where can investors support e.g., with technical assistance.
- Targets and data:
  - Are we successful in achieving what we intent to achieve?
  - Better understanding of clients' needs and challenges with the institution/products
- Don't do it for others – do it for yourself (your organization)
- Actionable data – inform business strategy

## **1 Social Strategy**

- 1A. The provider has a strategy to achieve its social goals.  
1B. The provider collects, analyzes, and reports data that are specific to its social goals.

## **2 Committed Leadership**

- 2A. Members of the board of directors hold management accountable for achieving the provider's social goals.  
2B. Senior management is responsible for implementing the provider's strategy for achieving its social goals.

## **3 Client-Centered Products and Services**

- 3A. The provider collects and analyzes data to understand clients' needs.  
3B. The provider's products, services, and channels benefit clients.

- **Not over complex**, to be used by FSP but as management tool
- High importance of collecting both **qualitative** and **quantitative data**
- **Make use of the tools & resources available** for efficient outcomes measurement and management
- Can be few questions added to regular **satisfaction surveys**
- **Be flexible**, start with what FSP have, Meeting the investee where they are is key and should seek continuous improvement of existing framework.
- Consider outcomes measurement as **an investment rather than a cost**
  - **Building internal capacities + incremental, but consistent efforts + using the data for decisions**



# Field Experience in India

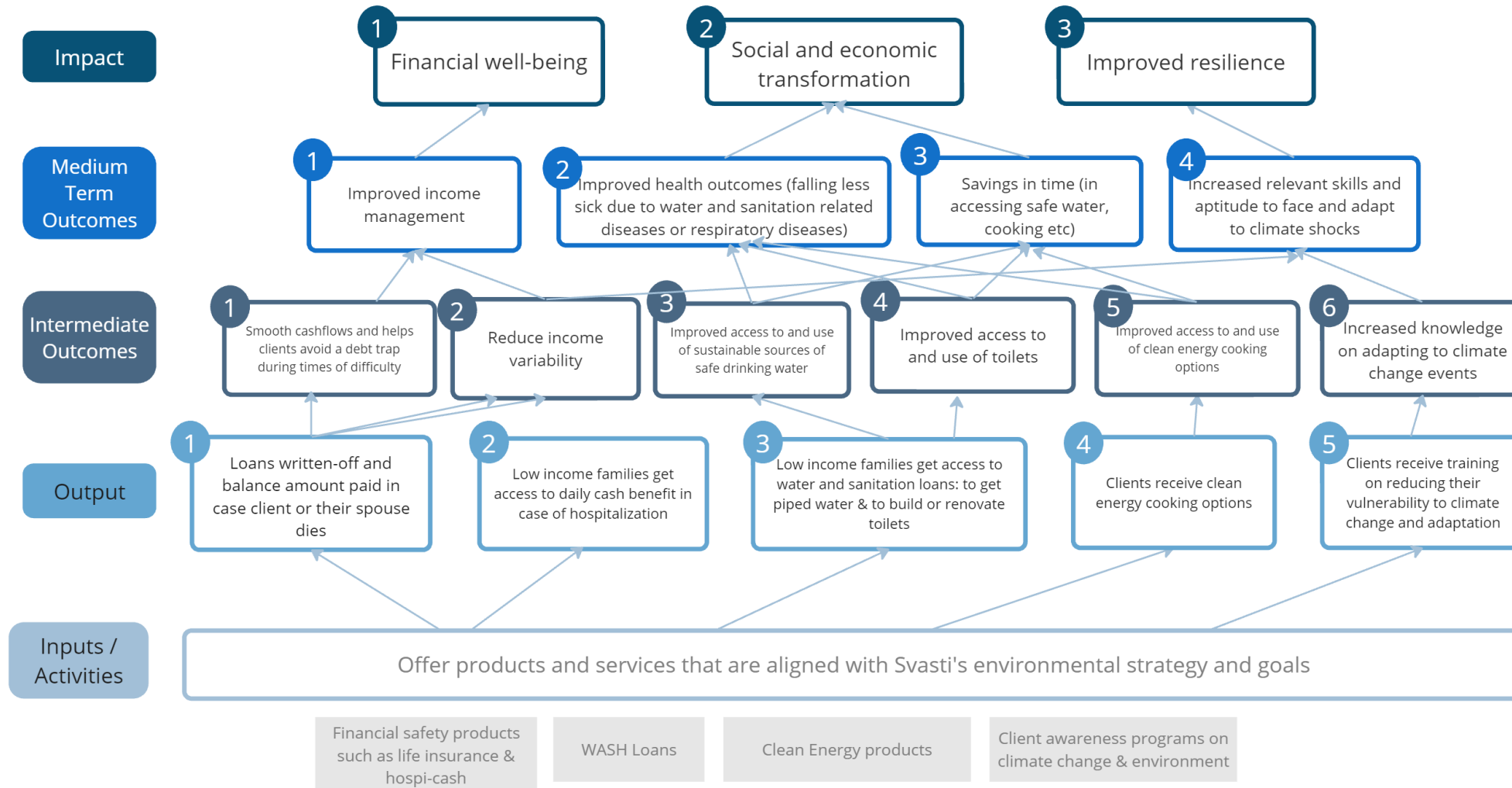


Abler Nordic



Sustainable Outcomes Management

Positively transform the lives of enterprising women from low-income households by improving their quality of life and well-being



# Project Presentation



## OBJECTIVES

### **Strengthen capacity of AGRIF investees**

Support the development of rural based, socially underprivileged communities by building the capacities of the Fund's investees to measure their impact and track progress towards their social strategy and the UN SDGs.

### **Turn data into action**

Help partners track meaningful indicators and develop dashboards that translate data into strategic decisions and improved client outcomes.

### **Deliver practical, hands-on investor support**

Leverage Incofin's expertise in social performance to design tailored support and on-the-ground guidance that drives real change.

### **Foster a culture of learning and innovation**

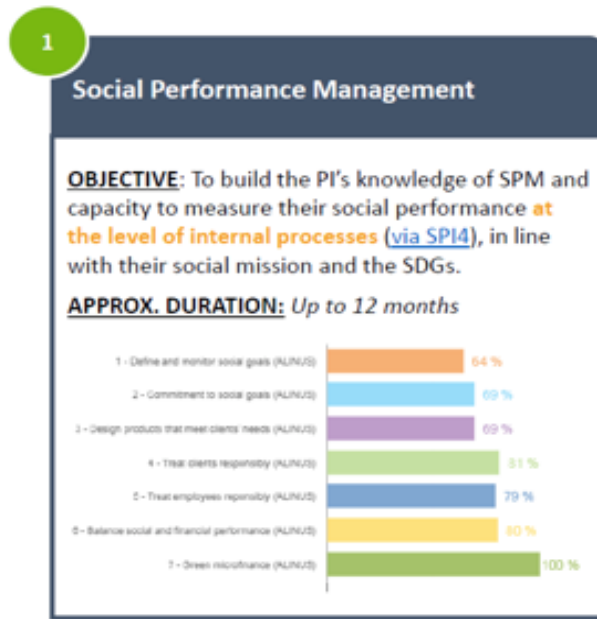
Co-create rigorous outcomes frameworks and share best practices across institutions to promote continuous improvement and sector-wide learning.

# Project Presentation

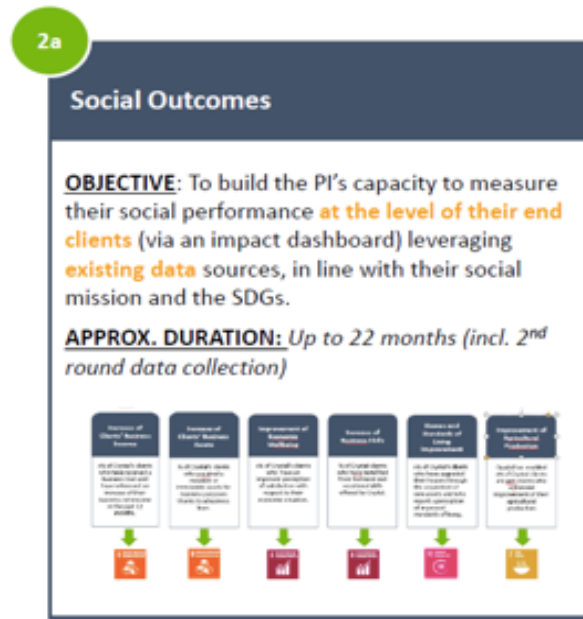


- Depending on the SPM readiness of the investee, the following 3 packages were offered:

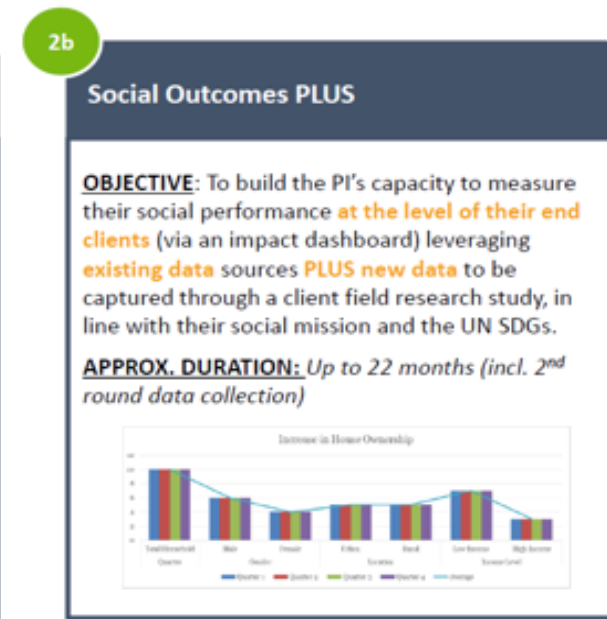
## *SPM Beginner*



## *Good SPM*



## *Experienced SPM*



# Project Presentation



Nine  
investees  
across Asia  
and Africa



## A Customized Approach to Outcomes Measurement: Key Considerations

- **Strategic alignment and customization**

Outcomes management must be tailored to each financial institution's context and aligned with its strategic priorities. A customized approach ensures relevance and buy-in, especially when grounded in a clear social strategy and Theory of Change (ToC).

- **Phased implementation based on readiness**

Institutions vary in maturity and capacity. A flexible, adaptive journey, starting with foundational elements and building up, avoids overload and fosters sustainable integration. Leveraging existing frameworks like the Universal Standards guide this process effectively.

- **Data as a strategic asset**

Social data should be seen not just as a reporting tool, but as a driver of strategic decision-making. Triangulating data from diverse sources enhances credibility, while involving staff in analysis builds internal awareness and ownership of social goals.

- **Governance and cultural integration**

For outcomes management to be sustainable, it must be embedded at all levels, including board oversight. Clear roles, responsibilities, and sufficient time for cultural and technical integration are essential to make impact measurement part of the institutional DNA.

# Field Experiences – Crystal, Georgia

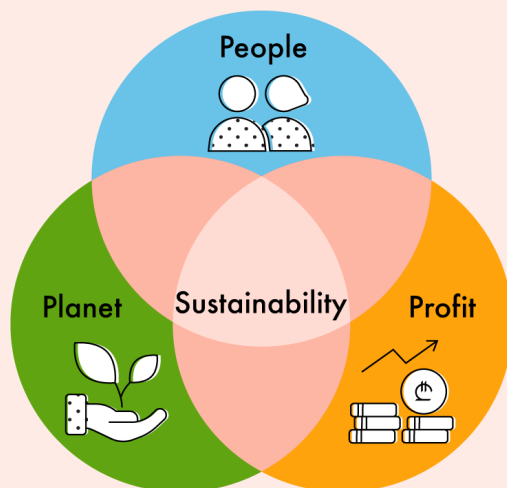


- The journey, from the project to regular Social Impact Report.
- **Governance** barriers to overcome.
- New perspectives on Women for Crystal (e.g., why small ticket size?)
- On the method for OM: **not over complex**, but “voice of the clients.”
- How to make the most of outcome surveys:
  - ✓ **Segmentation**
  - ✓ **Negative results**
  - ✓ **Qualitative focus groups to complete quantitative data**

# Crystal Experience - Social Impact Report



Crystal uses the **Triple Bottom Line** sustainability framework to measure its impact. This framework measures **3 key areas: planet, people, and profit**.



While measuring its impact as well as in the Company's Strategic Goals Crystal chooses the following 3 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):



Gender Equality



Affordable and clean energy



Reduced inequalities

**59%** of Crystal's customers are women



Their portfolio amounts to **49%** of the total portfolio.



**In 2022, the financial capabilities of Crystal's customers improved.**

Improved quality of life **86%**

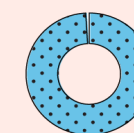
Improved the ability to cope with large expenses **61%**

Increased access to finance **31%**

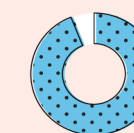
**70%** of business customers have seen an increase in business profit.



The vast majority of customers are satisfied with the service provided by the company.



**99%** are fully informed and have never been charged fees unexpectedly.



**94%** have never had any difficulty with the service.

**Crystal's loan had a significantly positive effect on the self-perception of consumers.**

**78%** of customers have an enhanced ability to achieve their goals

**57%** of respondents have become more self-confident

**40%** make financial decisions more easily

In 2022, **10,514** of Crystal's customers (**6.7%** of total users) were Internally Displaced Persons.



Their portfolio amounted to **23,4** million GEL (**5.9%** of the total loan portfolio).



**MICROBANK CRYSTAL**

# Lessons Learned on Outcomes Management

- It is insufficient to monitor only outreach; **outcomes management is fundamental to customer protection**
- Not harming customers requires **ongoing engagement** with outcomes management
- Use both **quantitative and qualitative data** to understand the customer experience
- **Segment** outcomes data by customer profile is key (e.g., product used, gender, age)
- **Be realistic** in terms of both the types of outcomes customers may experience and what role financial services play in overall well-being
- **Measure more than one thing** – outcomes are multi-dimensional
- Many **challenges**: worry about negative findings, poor data quality, complexity of analysis
  - *"in a market with many different FSPs, and where the clients have been using microfinance for years, their perceived outcomes will be very different compared with clients who are using microfinance for the first time, and who didn't have any access to financial services before us. That doesn't mean our subsidiary in the more mature market is behaving worse."*
- **Outcomes data is part of a bigger picture**: use outcomes data, along with other data (e.g., social audits, complaints data) to determine if the FSP is responsible

*"We heard more than once that the most actionable information is negative outcomes information."*



# Questions & Answers



# Resources

<https://cerise-sptf.org/outcomes/>



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## Collection of Resources for Outcomes Data Management

Visit our Resource Center to find reports, tools, training materials, and more on client-level data management.

[Resource Center](#)

<https://en.spi-online.org/resources/view/resources-collection-outcomes-and-sdgs>