

GDC INVESTMENT CATALYST FACILITY PROGRAMME MANAGER



ABOUT PRACTICAL ACTION

We are an international development organisation putting ingenious ideas to work so people in poverty can change their world.

We help people find solutions to some of the world's toughest problems. Challenges made worse by catastrophic climate change and persistent gender inequality. We work with communities to develop ingenious, lasting and locally owned solutions for agriculture, water and waste management, climate resilience and clean energy. And we share what works with others, so answers that start small can grow big.

We are committed to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment through all our work. This includes programmes, knowledge sharing, advocacy, external communications, and our own organisational development. At a minimum, we ensure that all our work is gender sensitive, seeking gender transformative approaches as our overall ambition and in accordance with context.

We're a global change-making group. The group consists of a UK registered charity with community projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America, an independent development publishing company and a technical consulting service. We combine these specialisms to multiply our impact and help shape a world that works better for everyone.

OUR AIMS

We help people find solutions to some of the world's toughest problems, made worse by catastrophic climate change and persistent gender inequality. Our aims are to:

- Make agriculture work better for smallholder farmers, many of them women, so they can adapt to climate change and achieve a good standard of living
- Help more people harness the transformational effects of clean affordable energy and reduce avoidable deaths caused by smoke from indoor stoves and fires.
- Make cities in poorer countries cleaner, healthier places to live and work.
- Build disaster resilience into the lives of people threatened by hazards – reducing the risk of hazards and minimizing their impact on lives and livelihoods.

ABOUT GLOBAL DISTRIBUTORS COLLECTIVE (GDC)

The Global Distributors Collective (GDC) is a collective of 250+ last mile distribution (LMD) organisations operating in over 50 countries. These are organisations that focus on providing beneficial products to underserved consumers, i.e. low-income, remote, or otherwise marginalised people. The GDC has two main strategic pillars:

1. Help distributors improve their business performance and grow
2. Build a collective voice for the last mile distribution sector

The GDC was founded in 2018. It is a partnership between Practical Action and Bopinc; Practical Action hosts the GDC and Bopinc is the GDC's strategic and implementing partner.

ABOUT THE ROLE

The Investment Catalyst Facility (ICF) is a new initiative under GDC's Access to Finance (A2F) workstream. Its main goal is to mobilise debt capital for last mile distributors (LMDs) by addressing both supply- and demand-side financial challenges. The ICF runs alongside other investment readiness projects and tools offered by the GDC including:

- **Access to Finance Catalyst Programme:** A six-week accelerator run by the GDC in collaboration with Catalyst Energy Advisors focused on investment readiness, covering unit economics, profitability, and financial modelling.
- **Benchmarking Tool:** A tool developed by the GDC in partnership with Hystra to help LMDs calculate key performance indicators and diagnose strengths and weaknesses.

Access to finance is consistently rated by GDC members as their top challenge, and the ICF is a brand new GDC initiative designed to help address this gap. This is an exciting time for the ICF Programme Manager to join the GDC team; they will oversee the implementation and management of the ICF, ensuring that it effectively mobilises capital for GDC members and, by extension, positively impacts the lives of last mile customers downstream.

This role requires a highly strategic thinker with demonstrable experience working with, investing in and/or advising start-ups and SMEs operating in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia or Latin America. A strong background in finance, project management and stakeholder engagement are essential.

More information on the Investment Catalyst Facility (ICF)

The ICF design currently includes five key phases:

1. **Programme inception** and kick-off, including the development of an application process that will select approximately eight companies to participate in the ICF.
2. **Pre-investment support** to participating companies, including the provision and monitoring of small grants for investment readiness activities, e.g. financial audits, or hiring an accountant. This phase will also include implementation of the Benchmarking Tool to help diagnose areas for improvement, as well as areas of good performance.
3. **Financial screening and due diligence** of participating companies including a financial screening simulation which will be conducted by the ICF Programme Manager. Companies that receive an adequate outcome will be introduced to the ICF's core investment partners.
4. **Investment and de-risking** of transactions by companies that pass due diligence. Companies that pass through due diligence with an investor will be eligible to apply for equity-like grant capital as co-funding alongside their debt investment. Investors will also be able to apply for funding to de-risk transactions.
5. **Post-investment and learning** will involve tracking results and performance of ICF companies. It will also involve the development and publication of one to two reports sharing lessons learned during the implementation of the ICF and recommendations for others in the sector looking to catalyse smaller debt transactions of \$10k to \$200k.

SCOPE

Title	GDC Investment Catalyst Facility Programme Manager
Reports to	GDC Access to Finance Lead
Direct reports	N/A
Relationships	Head of the GDC, GDC Senior Advisor, GDC Access to Finance Lead, GDC Communications Manager
Budget scope	Responsible for the Investment Catalyst Facility budget of circa €500k
Grade	
Location	Kenya
Duration	One year contract
Travel	Expected 2-3 weeks per year

ACCOUNTABILITIES

The ICF Programme Manager will lead the programme and work with the GDC's A2F Lead, Davinia Cogan.

Programme implementation and support

- Oversee the day-to-day operations of the ICF, ensuring alignment with GDC's strategic objectives and timely achievement of programme goals.
- Assist in the selection of companies for the ICF programme and the associated Access to Finance Catalyst programme, including designing selection criteria and undertaking financial due diligence on applicants.
- Coordinate regular in-person and virtual workshops to deliver key finance and investment readiness topics to last mile distributors.

Entrepreneur support and coaching

- Guide entrepreneurs through a structured coaching programme focused on improving profitability, customer traction, and business operations.
- Develop bespoke support plans for companies, providing personalised one-on-one coaching sessions and facilitating group working sessions, to enhance strategic decision-making as it pertains to business financials.
- Provide hands on support to businesses in developing and executing their growth and scaling strategies.

Stakeholder engagement, advocacy, and investor relations

- Cultivate and maintain relationships with last mile distributors (LMDs), investors, and other key stakeholders to promote collaboration and catalyse investment opportunities for the last mile sector.
- Build relationships with and work closely alongside funders and investors to improve financing accessibility for last mile distributors.

- Help to shape and drive the GDC's presence at high profile industry events (including designing and leading panel sessions and investor roundtables), and proactively represent the GDC at such events (including securing and participating in panel sessions and other awareness raising activities).

Financial oversight and reporting

- Manage the allocation of grants and financial resources across the ICF programme, ensuring transparency, compliance and effective utilisation of funds.
- Provide weekly and monthly reports summarising programme progress, challenges and key outcomes.
- Deliver a comprehensive programme conclusion report, assessing impact and lessons learned.
- Prepare reporting requirements in line with donor requirements.

Sensitivity on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion:

Should have respectful beliefs regardless of their gender, age, sex, race, ethnic background, culture, different ability, nationality, religion, and marital status. Is sensitive and adaptable to gender and social inclusion and adopts inclusive practices. Responds and behaves appropriately in different situations.

Safeguarding

It is all staff's shared responsibility and obligation to safeguard and protect populations with whom we work with, including vulnerable adults and children.

Practical Action believes that it is unacceptable for anyone to experience exploitation or abuse in any form, anywhere. All staff members undergo mandatory Safeguarding training and are expected to always commit/adhere to our Safeguarding Policy whilst working for or on behalf of Practical Action.

PERSON PROFILE

To be successful in the role, the ideal candidate should meet the following requirements:

Essential experience

- Bachelor's degree in finance, economics, business administration, or a related field. MBA preferred.
- Minimum 5 years of experience in private equity, venture capital, business advisory or financial services.
- Professional certification - CFA, CISI, CPA, CIFA or equivalent will be an added advantage.
- Strong understanding of last mile distribution, impact investing and the drivers of investment.
- Proven track record in coaching or mentoring SMEs and startups, particularly in emerging markets.
- Experience in developing and executing go-to-market strategies to drive customer traction and business growth.
- Sector-specific experience in productive use and household energy, agriculture or consumer products a plus.
- Experience working in or with the private sector and on corporate partnerships

Skills & Competencies:

- Project management: Proven ability to manage complex programmes with multiple stakeholders.
 - Financial acumen: Strong understanding of financial analysis, investment processes and grant management.
 - Coaching, mentoring and partnership building abilities: Ability to provide structured business support, focusing on growth and financial sustainability.
 - Strategic thinking: Excellent problem-solving skills with a data-driven approach.
 - Communication and facilitation: Strong interpersonal skills, with the ability to engage with diverse audiences.
 - Adaptability: Comfortable working in a fast-paced, multicultural environment, independently or as part of a team.
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