



THE DEVELOPMENT PARTNER INSTITUTE DEEP LEARNINGS SERIES

Lessons from The Impact Catalyst *South Africa*

FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIPS



2022

Introduction

Development partnerships are complex but critical, not least when the mining sector is deeply involved. The Impact Catalyst in South Africa is an important example of a development initiative that started as an idea in the minds of a group of like-minded people facing similar organisational challenges and evolved to become a multi-partner, cross-sectoral, impact-driven development effort.

In early 2022, the Development Partner Institute (DPI) spent time speaking with the seven partners of the Impact Catalyst to capture some of the group's key learnings in this brief, alongside the story of how the Impact Catalyst was formed and the progress it has made to date.

While not a comprehensive report on all that makes up the Impact Catalyst, we hope that the insights presented here help to guide anyone considering a development partnership now or in the future.



Julia Baxter-McGoldrick



Amy Harris

On behalf of the Development Partner Institute



It's a passionate purpose-driven group. We need to keep that moving forward.

Joanne Bate, IDC



Some of it is about having the self-belief in our role for pushing development forward. It doesn't matter what company you are, how big you are, you should be doing that.

Dr Matthew Chadwick, Anglo American

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The scale of what we've done is so small compared to the need in our country. We've got a long way to go in the scale of our impact, the depth of that impact, and still to be tested, the sustainability of that impact.

Bruce Layzell, World Vision

Deep Learnings at a Glance

Based on the interviews with the Impact Catalyst partners, we've grouped our Learnings into three core categories: **Ambition and Partnership, Ideation, Delivery and Impact, and Governance and Inclusion.**

In this document, we'll expand further on the points listed below and how they apply in the context of a development partnership.

Ambition and Partnership

SUMMARY LESSONS

It doesn't matter what organisation you are or how big you are, believe in your role in pushing development forward.

An urgent and common challenge will likely be the trigger that leads to the exploration of a partnership.

Call upon existing working relationships to test ideas and appetite for a new approach.

A sense of purpose is the glue that joins the partners at the core and keeps the organisational commitment in-tact.

Build partnerships with people who are very good at the things you need to achieve. This saves time and generates credibility.

Defining the parameters of the Impact Catalyst, clarity about what it is and what it isn't and how it works alongside the work done by individual partners is an important input to the shared direction.

Different organisational working styles can take some adjustment .

It's not necessarily about equal voice, it's about appropriate voice.

A willingness to give up a level of control is fundamental to making the partnership work, but it's hard.

Development initiatives need a close and trusting relationship with governments rather than being held at arm's length. This aids planning, risk management, decision-making and delivery.

Focus on the internal organisational sale.

Partners step up when other partners are watching.

Establishing an independent organisation provides an appropriate degree of separation.

Ideation, Delivery & Impact

SUMMARY LESSONS

The macro context is your bedrock. It's not merely re-investing but thinking from the beginning what the future looks like.

Don't design what's possible, design what's needed.

Identify the right spatial area to launch the development partnership.

Launch quickly to gain traction and momentum – don't wait for the perfect plan.

Project strategy must be realistic and calibrated to needs and existing plans.

Prioritise opportunities and consider focussing on social interventions (before economic) to demonstrate your value.

High standards of field research and field networks are vital to programming and should be an integral part of design, delivery and risk management.

Data will drive development.

Focus on feasibility. Pilots are paramount to demonstrate viability and attract funding.

Build an A-team that can deliver.

Say no. As you grow, people will want to utilise the service, but you've got to be realistic about what you can do.

Risks are highly likely to materialise and should be embedded in the adaptive strategy and shared between partners.

Project branding and communications contributes to greater legitimacy in the region and cultivates a positive narrative at home in the communities.

Rapid growth is stressful, especially if resourcing is a challenge. Staying true to the original intent will help to manage this anxiety.

It is possible to talk about impact in the early years.

Remember to always keep communities at the centre.

Governance and Inclusion

SUMMARY LESSONS

Establish an active and engaged Board.

Consider adding a third-party strategic perspective.

Adapting governance structures as you grow can be disruptive.

Multi-partner funding constructs are an effective means to pool risk, leverage resources and influence and harmonise support.

Seed funding commitments will likely need to be longer than two years.

Explore impact investing as part of the fundraising model.

Drive partner and team diversity from the very beginning.

For Government. Over-regulation of the [mining] sector can stifle development partnerships and investment; consider any necessary policy adjustments.

About the Impact Catalyst

A cross-sectoral, multi-partner development initiative, founded by Anglo American, the South African Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR), Exxaro, Zutari and World Vision South Africa.



In partnership with the Government of South Africa, the Impact Catalyst designs and delivers large-scale socio-economic development projects in three provinces of South Africa: Limpopo, Mpumalanga and the Northern Cape.

After a time of ideation and formation the Impact Catalyst was launched in October 2019. Since then, it has welcomed new partners the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) of South Africa and the Mine Water Coordinating Body (MWCB) of South Africa, to the fold.

Inspired by the Collective Impact Model, the Impact Catalyst has created a unique approach to development partnership using the mining sector as the anchor for broad-based regional development.

The Five Conditions of Collective Impact

- 1 Start with a common agenda
- 2 Establish shared measurement
- 3 Foster mutually reinforcing activities
- 4 Encourage continuous communications
- 5 Have a strong backbone.

Collective Impact Forum

Unlike traditional partnership or collaborative approaches, the Impact Catalyst is underpinned by a long-term commitment between various organisations all working towards a common goal.



Leveraging the expertise, skills, networks and resources of each partner the Impact Catalyst is able to focus on multiple sectors and design public-private initiatives aligned with the provinces' and municipalities' own Integrated Development Plans.

Active programmes include Community Orientated Primary Healthcare (COPC) in Limpopo, the Mpumalanga Winter Wheat Pilot and the Rustenburg Fresh Produce Market.

The initiative draws down on a variety of funding streams, including seed funding, project-specific funds, and grants. This has contributed to the growth of the Impact Catalyst team which is structured along the value chain: strategic planning and ideation, operations and communications and marketing. Where needed, experts and implementation partners are brought in to support delivery.

The Impact Catalyst model is currently being replicated in Peru, Chile and Brazil, by Anglo American with local and international partners.

Read more here: www.impactcatalyst.co.za

Ambition and Partnership

It doesn't matter what organisation you are or how big you are, believe in your role in pushing development forward.

At the heart of development partnership is self-belief in your role as a development partner. The Impact Catalyst is a blend of multi-national, national, and regional partners. This diversity, in terms of size and sector, is a clear demonstration that neither of these factors determine an organisation's ability to contribute beyond its traditional business mandate. Every organisation has an opportunity to contribute to society in multiple ways and any company can play a role in accelerating socio-economic development.



There is a passion and urgency in the partner members; it's not a job, it's a purpose that people are living.

Joanne Bate, IDC

An urgent and common challenge will likely be the trigger that leads to the exploration of a partnership.

The mining sector, in the case of the Impact Catalyst, shared a common problem. The social interventions of mining companies were being challenged. Development interventions at the time were typically highly localised and focused on host communities, which not only raised expectations in the communities, but was also increasingly in conflict with the expectation that companies needed to do more, do better and at scale.



If you sit in a sea of increasing levels of poverty... you are a beacon of development, and this needs to be spatially spread and jointly planned.

Dr Matthew Chadwick, Anglo American

There is no swift or easy remedy to address this kind of challenge, but a clear-eyed, objective assessment of models of impact that puts individual organisational short-term brand value to one side (even momentarily) can – and did – enable a more strategic approach. Scalable impact required additional resources, skills, and expertise, signalling the need for a cross-sectoral collaborative effort.

Innovation needs a safe space. Call upon existing working relationships to test ideas and appetite for a new approach.

Organisations grappling with similar challenges came together, largely informally at first. The trust that already existed amongst many of these individuals and organisations was hugely valuable, especially in those early days of ideation. They all shared the intention of wanting to bring about a systemic uplifting of communities – raising the standard of living beyond a siloed focus on jobs or education – and, importantly, they felt free to share openly with one another. The similar mindset and shared direction deepened trust and led to the founding of a core group of partners. A space for conceptualising – and subsequently birthing – the Impact Catalyst now existed.

A sense of purpose is the glue that joins the partners at the core and keeps the organisational commitment intact.

A company that understands the true spirit of shared value, rather than corporate application of shared value is still relatively uncommon. Partners talked about this as a mindset, rather than a recipe.

This shared value mindset was shared by the core group of individuals who dedicated significant time and energy to building the concept of the Impact Catalyst up off the ground, often outside their working hours. A persistent motivation shared by partners who have since joined the collaborative effort. This shared purpose is undoubtedly the foundation stone of the Impact Catalyst.



All of the people on the Board, and in operational management, really believe what the Impact Catalyst stands for and the regional impact it can make.

Dr Eduard Vorster, Zutari

Build partnerships with people who are very good at the things you need to achieve. This saves time and generates credibility.

Emphasis on the cross-organisational linkages will help to bring coherence and unity of vision to any proposed development partnership, as well as ultimately efficiency and effectiveness of partner support. The first partners of the Impact Catalyst drew heavily on personal relationships to build it. Naturally, when individuals go away, there is a risk to the dynamic. Agreeing how the partners complement one another, the skills each one brings, and how they will work together at an organisational level happened early on and helped to translate the individual relationships into organisational ones. Anglo American and Exxaro - with projects nearby each other - gave the Impact Catalyst its spatial focus, as well as the necessary financial

and technical resources to get started. Zutari offered contextual experience and expertise. CSIR, the home of data and technological innovation in South Africa and a respected institution by government, lent gravitas and science. World Vision took on the role of a social conscience.



There is enough of a middle section on the Venn diagram of partners to provide a common purpose for the Impact Catalyst work.

Bruce Layzell, World Vision.

New partners bring their own value. The IDC, a wholly owned government institution, mobilises its deep experience of South African development and its provincial relationships to guide programming and the Mine-Water Coordinating Body brings its collaborative approach to water management in Mpumalanga.



Defining the parameters of the Impact Catalyst, clarity about what it is and what it isn't and how it works alongside the work done by individual partners is an important input to the shared direction.

There is naturally a tension between the common desire of partners for collective impact and the tendency of organisations and those that work for them to revert to the individual agenda and approach that they know. Continually returning to this framing has created the forum for transparency and robust conversation amongst Impact Catalyst partners about the common purpose. A clear framing of the scope of the Impact Catalyst continues to help distinguish between the work of the Impact Catalyst and the work of individual partners ensuring conflicts of interest are carefully managed and the partnerships leveraged. Note, it was decided early on that the Impact Catalyst would not be a mining sector initiative, and that this cross-sector focus was a strength in the context of South Africa.

Different organisational working styles can take some adjustment.

The high-performance culture of companies can sometimes clash heads with the different pace of work of public or not-for-profit organisations. The Impact Catalyst's mix of organisations – public, private and NGO – raises questions about how these working cultures blend.

The Impact Catalyst, over time, has deepened its understanding of the various partners and created its own working culture, appreciating that slower consideration also has a place, especially when thinking about what is known about a community and what needs to be done. There are also (unintended) cross-partner cultural leanings that have been beneficial for partners to take back into their own organisations. For example, a smaller organisation with a smaller budget told us they have been pushed to think bigger and be more assertive in their asks, helping them to become a bolder organisation.



We underestimated how different the companies and entities are that we come from. Even though you work together in different relationships on a day-to-day basis, we didn't understand each other's organisations. It was a bit of a grind that we had to overcome initially. Especially if we wanted to sit at the table as equals.

Dr Eduard Vorster, Zutari



It's not necessarily about equal voice, it's about appropriate voice.

To force equal voice or contribution can impact or stunt the work that is being done. Whilst all partners of the Impact Catalyst are equal in terms of decision-making, there is recognition that for the expertise of each partner to be truly leveraged the most appropriate organisation in a particular context should have the floor.

It's about understanding the strengths of the participating organisations and when to call on them. This provides important legitimacy to the work of the Impact Catalyst and serves as a reminder that the Impact Catalyst is not about any one organisation, regardless of size or financial muscle.

A willingness to give up a level of control is fundamental to making the partnership work, but it is hard.

For mining companies this seems to be particularly tough. Much of the way mining companies operate requires almost total control and so relinquishing control to an independent entity largely goes against the industry's mindset. Doing so, however, is likely to give interventions a better chance of sustainability and is ultimately critical for the partnership to succeed.

Partners of the Impact Catalyst did accept that there would be times when individual partner agendas come second to the common agenda of the Impact Catalyst. As the Impact Catalyst continues to grow this trade-off may be more robustly tested, especially if new partners are added.



You've got to be pragmatic. There are decisions you're going to make as a collective that you probably wouldn't have made solely. But for the longer-term benefit of the partnership and to keep and build the trust, you've just got to accept those.

Dr Matthew Chadwick, Anglo American

Development initiatives need a close and trusting relationship with governments rather than being held at arm's length. This aids planning, risk management, decision-making and delivery.

The role of government is often spoken about as one of the most complicated – and sensitive – areas of development partnership. However, deepening the relationship with different levels of government can be of great benefit to any development initiative.



We don't spend enough time understanding the complexity of government and can become critical. Once I began to understand the intricacies, it made me appreciate how complex it is. There are different entities in the government, and they will speak differently; you've got to be mindful of that.

Mzila Mthenjane, Exxaro

The function of government within the Impact Catalyst has been to help understand where the challenges are, what the policy constraints are and how best to navigate them. While a trusted relationship, especially with the Office of the Premier, did take some time to establish, the Impact Catalyst now benefits from senior level political support and interest, helping it stay abreast of any wider strategy and policy issues. Strategic guidance

from the President is cascaded down and translated at the provincial level; an approach described by the government as working with the Impact Catalyst in an integrated way. In the last months, the Department of Economic Development and Tourism has handed over certain objectives to the Impact Catalyst proving that the relationship is currently strong and uncompetitive.

Impact Catalyst partners, CSIR and the IDC, are well regarded amongst the Government of South Africa, and this continues to be of significant benefit to the Impact Catalyst. These organisations, although independent, are 'part of the family' to state organisations and helped the Impact Catalyst develop a closer connection to government; a connection the private sector alone would struggle to achieve.

A challenge for the Impact Catalyst with respect to its relationship with government will be navigating political changes at all levels. Maintaining a Board without direct government representation - but working closely with government on planning has so far been effective.

Focus on the internal organisational sale.

Bringing the whole organisation to the initiative will generate a long-term commitment that transcends any individual, group of individuals or team. Creating opportunities to showcase the opportunity, justify its value and share successes can be an effective way to raise interest and support across partner organisations, and access the breadth of skills internally.

Multinational partners of the Impact Catalyst noted this learning specifically, highlighting that the relationship between the initiative and the organisation can be mutually beneficial. For example, Anglo American is now piloting the Impact Catalyst model in Peru and has plans to do so in Brazil and Chile.

Partners step up when other partners are watching.

It's well documented that people are typically motivated to work harder when others are watching. The inputs of Impact Catalyst partners were said to have been important motivators to other partners, ensuring that contributions remain at roughly an equal level and pace. At Board level, when new partners have joined the Impact Catalyst, they've typically put in considerable effort to earn the trust of the existing partners quickly. This has often prompted an increase in activity across the piece.



New partners have stepped up and put pressure on other partners to do the same.

Mzila Mthenjane, Exxaro

Establishing an independent organisation provides an appropriate degree of separation.

Creating a stand-alone legal structure, resourced with an autonomous expert team can help to cement a development partnership for the long-term. Whilst this is not always possible or necessary, in the case of the Impact Catalyst it signalled to all internal and external stakeholders a focus on outcome and longevity.



Ideation, Delivery & Impact

The macro context is your bedrock. It's not merely re-investing, but rather thinking from the beginning what the future looks like.

The development impacts the Catalyst aspires to over the long term will need to stand up to the threat of climate change - for several partners this is their big picture. Programming today therefore needs to respond to this challenge and streamline climate change responses throughout decision-making and interventions. Significantly, Limpopo, the Northern Cape and Mpumalanga all have a role to play in the transition.

The Impact Catalyst continues to ask itself questions such as how do we think about that, what role do we play in informing the Just Transition element in our priority regions, and how can we build on ongoing efforts or what we've done already?



If you do something like the Impact Catalyst, the big promise is that you will change things.

Dr Eduard Vorster, Zutari

Don't design what's possible, design what's needed.

Big ambition should not mean an over-reaching design; resist the temptation to design too big. The Impact Catalyst selected broad buckets of intervention, used research and data to understand the opportunities, and moved to design projects that align with the expectations of impacted communities, ensuring it would deliver some early wins.

Keeping it simple at the beginning and leaning into the organic growth of the initiative allowed it to thrive, rather than operating against design plans focussed on scalability and superficial growth. The Impact Catalyst now operates in three provinces of South Africa, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, and the Northern Cape. This relatively rapid growth since its launch in Limpopo only a few years ago, perhaps surprisingly, was not foreseen.



Now we have a presence in three provinces, but we didn't foresee that growth. It was good that we didn't because we would've grown for the sake of growing.

Mzila Mthenjane, Exxaro

Identify the right spatial area to launch the development partnership.

A concentration of multiple actors in an area means there will be communities and project priorities in common. Whilst Limpopo seemed like a logical pilot area for the Impact Catalyst - Anglo American and Exxaro's mines neighbour one another - partners have offered the insight that a focal start where there are many more (mining and sector diverse) companies operating close by, like in the Northern Cape, may be preferential to ensure even greater alignment on first stage interventions.

Launch quickly to gain traction and momentum – don't wait for the perfect plan.

The launch of the Impact Catalyst was the point after which broader interest and awareness snowballed, which opened the door to talking with new parties about funding opportunities and confirmed the initiative as real in people's minds.

Offered by the partners as an important reflection, the Impact Catalyst did not launch as quickly as it could have done having spent considerable time building the jigsaw behind closed doors. The two-year incubation process, a process of discussion about levels of partner maturity, business design, an appropriate consortium and then the creation of the Impact Catalyst, whilst important to achieve the necessary partner buy-in and commitment, prolonged the "learning whilst doing" phase, key to any start-up.



As a start-up you've got to get your hands dirty and start learning. We could've got out of the blocks more quickly.

Charl Harding, Impact Catalyst/CSIR

Project strategy must be realistic and calibrated to needs and existing plans.

Aligning regional approaches with the regions' own Integrated Development Plans and co-creating interventions with impacted parties demonstrates an understanding and respect for the skills and agency within the region, typically leading to greater local accountability and ownership. Each province of the Impact Catalyst decides collectively on which projects to use the regional funds for.



There is no cowboy attitude. I've observed it's a two-way street; an acute understanding that projects need to be attuned to what's happening on the ground. It's a co-creation thrashed out through very robust dialogue.

Bashan Govender, Department of National Water and Sanitation

As part of this, the Impact Catalyst's outcome-focused approach to its projects allows the team, in partnership with government and communities, to explore non-traditional, best fit methodologies, grounded in the local context.

This means staying open to all possible ways of responding to a need or challenge and leaning on innovation through piloting. It also means not doing something simply because the challenge is there and it seems easy, but instead evaluating the feasibility studies and interrogating the skills you have available to focus on where the best outcomes can be achieved.



Naturally, you tend to look at things and try to solve them in a traditional way. But the whole point of this kind of initiative is that it is non-traditional. You've got to go back to first principles and keep focused on that.

Dr Matthew Chadwick, Anglo American



Prioritise opportunities and consider focusing on social interventions (before economic ones) to demonstrate your value.

Prioritisation is important to be able to deliver effectively using the resources available and demonstrate some early success. The experience of partners to the Impact Catalyst has been that social interventions are less complicated to design and deliver than economic interventions.

Focusing on social interventions first may more quickly generate a feeling of accomplishment, key to any early-stage initiative or organisation and provide runs on the board critical for fundraising. It's helpful to be able to point to projects that have gone from concept to delivering value relatively quickly. For a modest sum, for example, the Impact Catalyst has supplemented a government primary health care programme to help achieve scale from which it is estimated more than two million people have benefitted.

High standards of field research and field networks are vital to programming and should be an integral part of design, delivery, and risk management.

The interventions of the Impact Catalyst would not have been possible without thorough due diligence and research to identify regional and community dynamics, establish most appropriate project options and set engagement criteria.

In each region, the Impact Catalyst implements a dual approach during ideation: Scientific Approach, looking at what is possible, identifying the gaps in the market and using data analytics, assessing the viable opportunities and an Innovative Approach, seeking out people with great ideas who are looking for ways to make them a reality.

Data will drive development.

Development doesn't happen by accident; it happens by design. The analysis team of the Impact Catalyst maintains several channels of data input, cross-checking findings with civil society and other projects.

This data collection should importantly begin early on to set a baseline for interventions. For example, undertaking perception surveys will help to more rigorously assess how the needle is moving over time. Development partnerships should be wary of deprioritising data collection due to resource constraints; it would be a false economy.



We need data to drive development – we understand the lay of the land, the demographics, the business opportunities and out of that, we target development. The biggest value has been having something to point to, to prove the need for data in design.

Joanne Bate, IDC



[For example.] In Limpopo, we carefully looked at various relevant data sets [related to health, education, livelihood enhancement, enterprise and social development] to tell us what was currently happening and what was possible. This showed us what the future could be and how we might deliver on that future.

Charl Harding, Impact Catalyst/CSIR

Focus on feasibility. Pilots are paramount to demonstrate viability and attract funding.

Large-scale projects need large-scale funding and successful pilots help to achieve funding at scale. Pilot projects of the Impact Catalyst are made possible by the pool of seed funding allocated to each region. The pilots make up the feasibility phase of a regional plan, shaking out feasible and bankable projects. The team then seeks funding for viable projects.

Ultimately, if you cannot pilot something, you cannot show it's working. Even when scaling a successful pilot there are challenges that will arise – but it's about mitigating those risks and addressing those challenges.

Build an A-team that can deliver.

Building a team – a new team – involves clearly defining roles, finding the right skills, strengthening capacity, and giving employees agency through clear delegation and lines of responsibility. The current team is strong and is a result of a thorough recruitment process.

The team is structured along the value chain: strategic planning and ideation (data, geospatial analysts, stakeholder engagement experts), operations (provincial managers, project managers and coordinators) and marketing and communications.

// *What we've done well is bring in external experts when necessary.*

Bruce Layzell, World Vision

All the partners to the Impact Catalyst offer in-kind support, including expertise, resources, and staff-time. It's been the case that leveraging these skills has meant that employing a person into a needed role hasn't always been the right option.



A lot of Impact Catalyst employees are seconded from partners, so it's not a service provider relationship, it's an integrated relationship. You can tap into the partner organisations and that makes life a lot easier. The Impact Catalyst doesn't sit outside the organisation, it's inside.

Charl Harding, Impact Catalyst/CSIR

However, as the scope of the Impact Catalyst grows it will become increasingly important to prioritise its own institutional capacity and bring these skills inside the organisation. Further, balancing urgent resource needs with sourcing high quality people will continue to be a tension for the Impact Catalyst as it continues to grow.

The senior level commitment and support of each participating organisation has facilitated each organisation bringing their full toolkit to the table in a way that has undoubtedly accelerated the development and growth of the Impact Catalyst.



Say no. As you grow, people will want to utilize the service, but you've got to be realistic about what you can do.

To keep the promise of delivery, justified choices about projects and support are important, especially in a resource-constrained context. Even in the pillars chosen by the Impact Catalyst, the initiative was stretching and diluting its resources and time. A CEO and a team able to say "no" when needed is critical.

Risks are highly likely to materialise and should be embedded in the adaptive strategy and shared between partners.

Without risk tolerance it would have been difficult to achieve much thus far, and for circa three years proactive risk management has been reasonably effective for the Impact Catalyst. The trusted flow of information between partners is an important element to maintaining a healthy risk profile as an initiative.

As the Impact Catalyst enters its new phase and as partners move into a more strategic and less operational role, their risk tolerance and ability to absorb risks may be further tested.

Project branding and communications contributes to greater legitimacy in the region and cultivates a positive narrative at home in the communities.

Projects should be assertive in their communications. The question about when to shine the light on individual partners and when to promote the work of the Impact Catalyst is a persistent one, and therefore some projects have been slow to prioritise communications, entailing lower brand awareness in the community. The marketing and communications team at the Impact Catalyst works closely with the partner teams to navigate through this on a case-by-case basis.

The Impact Catalyst has a good story to tell about its work in South Africa and the promotion of a public narrative can help to challenge naysayers or myopic media coverage, especially in the mining sector. A stronger public narrative may also make a more compelling case for other companies to consider similar development partner models.



If you want to know that the Impact Catalyst can successfully create something, look at the Impact Catalyst itself. It's a success story on its own – we've created jobs, we've created a company. It's a reflection of what we're doing outside, taking the lessons we've learned internally and applying them externally.

Charl Harding, Impact Catalyst/CSIR



Rapid growth is stressful, especially if resourcing is a challenge. Staying true to the original intent will help to manage this anxiety.

The Impact Catalyst is a start-up and that doesn't always mature with ease. There are big companies, competitors, government interests involved, and the context is evolving.

However, the initial desire of the organisations that sat at the table can't be hijacked. Returning to what it is all parties are together trying to do on the ground is a good way of calming any anxiety about growth and change. The importance of intention extends to bringing in new partners in the future and ensuring that they are partners with purpose, and not just looking for a developmental tick box; not always easy to guarantee early on in a new relationship.



What's interesting is the complexity that happens when more organisations want to join. What does that look like?

Bruce Layzell, World Vision

It is possible to talk about impact in the early years.

There is a different maturity rate for things to become self-sustaining, but a way of measuring success over time is a vital tool for any development partnership. Agreeing on the different measurements of success and holding each other accountable has been a disclosed challenge for the Impact Catalyst partnership, perhaps largely due to the pace of growth and changing expectations. A sound monitoring and evaluation framework at project and initiative level will help to set expectations about what impact means at each stage of the initiative.

Interestingly, the opportunity to excel at some of the things the Impact Catalyst was doing during Covid was identified by partners, namely in health, technology, and education. Partners were quickly able to align projects already underway in these areas with community partners, to scale up at pace through the Impact Catalyst. For example, the upskilling and distribution of health workers in the Limpopo region or using the fibre backbone of CSIR to connect schools in host communities to the internet, benefiting students from 180 schools.



The next big challenge to show is job creation. We've set up good toolsets to measure this economic impact, even down to a household level.

Dr Eduard Vorster, Zutari

The journey to impact, the likelihood of impact and the early signs of impact however are all elements the Impact Catalyst can speak about fluently. The only way you create replicable programs is to have evidence of success that can be scaled and applied in other provinces; this is happening.



In terms of actual implementation, it is still an infant but growing at a rapid pace. It's shown significant inroads with project delivery. Even for what's at an early stage, there is buy-in and support. It has ironed out the level of mistrust and we pull with a common objective. That's quite a fundamental achievement. If it had been driven by individual parties, it would not be as successful.

Bashan Govender, Department of National Water and Sanitation

We asked:

What would you do differently if you were starting again?

Better anticipate the different working styles of the diverse partner organisations, potential challenges, and ways to improve collaboration early on.

More deeply interrogate the most appropriate pilot area, based on number of active companies, mining and other, likely common interests and spatial coverage. The Northern Cape may have proved a more suitable pilot region.

Launch more quickly and continue to form the partner and delivery plan in parallel so not to miss out on integrating early implementation lessons into the strategy.

Focus more on baseline data collection, perception surveys for example, to demonstrate quantitatively and qualitatively the results of various interventions and to help tell the story of progress.

Stick more strictly to the agreed areas of focus and resist the temptation to take on other work which sits outside the mandate and puts pressure on resources.

Much earlier on, consider the communications approach for the Impact Catalyst and how the initiative and individual partners will share the communications successes.

Better foresee the potential governance changes required as the project grows and plan accordingly.

Think about (and establish) a diverse and representative Board from day one.



Governance & Inclusion

Establish an active and engaged Board.

A committed and involved Board is a key driver of success, especially in the early stages of any organisation. These individuals help to keep strategy and operations on track and true to the original intention of the initiative.

The Impact Catalyst is an independent legal entity governed by a Board made up of seasoned executives from all six core partners to the initiative. The Board meets every two weeks and is actively involved in the progress of the Impact Catalyst. Shifting between strategy and operations is an ongoing challenge, but important for the current stage of the Impact Catalyst. As the initiative continues to grow, graduating the role of the Board to fully strategic will be important.



It's been small enough to be intimate, but now it needs to move to the next level of maturity. It'll be an interesting phase for the Impact Catalyst.

Joanne Bate, IDC

Consider adding a third-party strategic perspective in the early stages.

To provide a third-party perspective, the Impact Catalyst instituted a Steering Committee of CEOs, meeting on a quarterly basis to bring fresh eyes, ask pertinent questions and help to keep the focus. The Steering Committee was disbanded in December 2021 now that the Board is strong enough to take that leadership piece on.

Adapting governance structures as you grow can be disruptive.

Anticipating the best long-term governance structures at the earliest stages of an initiative is a challenge. The Impact Catalyst ultimately has grown much more quickly than partners had expected, meaning that the early days governance structures are under review just two and a half years later.

Partners recognise that thinking more about future governance and better anticipating that growth from a smaller group to a bigger successful group, may have provided more stability. This will continue to be an area for thought as the Impact Catalyst balances plans to bring in other sectors to the initiative with the need to maintain a Board size fit for a small company.

Multi-partner funding constructs are an effective means to pool risk, leverage resources and influence and harmonise support.

A wide and diverse set of partners means value and risk is shared. Pooled resources, financial and in-kind, strengthens the Impact Catalyst as a coherent and sustainable development initiative, not dependent on one party alone.



Seed funding commitments will likely need to be longer than two years.

Fundraising is hard and without question a pain point. Not all partners are equal in terms of financial muscle and there isn't a minimum funding requirement to enter the Impact Catalyst.

The Impact Catalyst relies on seed funding mobilised by Anglo American (originally Anglo Platinum and then the Foundation) and Exxaro, and other partners fund in kind. Each region has a separate funding pool made up of seed funding to cover the minimum costs of operating in that province and additional funding is sourced for specific regional initiatives. Although a seed funding commitment of a few years was expected, early projections for weaning the Impact Catalyst off its seed funding after two years were ambitious, and partners have acknowledged that a longer-term funding commitment of most likely up to five years is required. In our interviews, government expressed an interest in financially contributing to the Impact Catalyst in future years. This is both an exciting and potentially challenging prospect.

Explore impact investing as part of the fundraising model.

Exploring independent sources of funding early on and ensuring the team has the right skills to effectively do this could remove some uncertainty about funding commitments. Partnering with impact investors, for example, to deliver the development plan is a possible avenue to explore; the Impact Catalyst is currently looking at options to do this.

Drive partner and team diversity from the very beginning.

Development partnerships benefit from the same emphasis on diversity as other organisations or initiatives. The Impact Catalyst is prioritising gender and race diversity at all levels – partner, team, and project, but shares that not focusing more on this in the early stages was a missed opportunity. The partners on the Board are majority male in 2022; a more diverse Board will likely be an important priority going forward.

Over-regulation of the [mining] sector can stifle development partnerships and investment; Government may need to consider how to enable the most conducive policy environment.

For an initiative such as the Impact Catalyst to flourish and deliver maximum benefits it requires a conducive policy and regulatory environment. Part of the role of government in the partnership is to secure an enabling environment for the development partnership to thrive.

For example, in South Africa companies are required to contribute to Social Labour Plans (SLPs). Budget for this cannot currently be re-directed to the Impact Catalyst due to legislative requirements. If SLPs were able to include development partnerships like the Impact Catalyst companies may explore more collaborative opportunities able to achieve broad-based development outcomes in a way that only focussing on a single locality, community or sector cannot.

Looking back, planning forward

There are no hard and fast rules to creating a development partnership – individual actors, geographical context, and other factors all play a role in what this might look like in practice.

Our purpose in this Deep Learnings exercise is not to provide a prescriptive map for partnership – but rather to uncover some insights and advice from partners who are actively working in this mode.

Remember to always keep communities at the centre of your efforts.

As with any growth, there is a risk of losing sight of that upon which all else was built. The impact of the Impact Catalyst will ultimately boil down to the opinions of the communities it is supporting. In many of these communities, there is a generational attachment to mines.

The Impact Catalyst sees its opportunity to show the communities that they are valuable, that it appreciates what they've given to the (mining) industry, and that it can do the right thing to show these communities they can thrive beyond the life of the mine.



Who says if we're successful or not? It can only be the communities we serve. If they're not saying we're better off for you being here, we've failed... We're at the initial stages of what's possible and what we need to do for sustainable change.

Bruce Layzell, World Vision.

In the Minds of Partners:

10 Questions for the future

- 1 How do we ensure the lessons we have learnt about capacity building and implementation across the three provinces can be used for scale and replicability?
- 2 How can the secret sauce of the partnership be preserved as new partners come onboard?
- 3 As we navigate a process of further growth, is everyone still aligned to the original intent of what we want to do?
- 4 How do we build growth in a way that doesn't destroy what we're building and doesn't make us less effective?
- 5 How much of a focus should we place on the things that can deliver at scale and how much should we focus on smaller, useful things?
- 6 Is the role of the Impact Catalyst to catalyse development or do development? What is the risk if we 'own' everything? How do we ensure we avoid owning everything?
- 7 Is there a role for multilateral partners within the Impact Catalyst?
- 8 It's a tall order if you project the full order of funding that might be needed on the ground. What is the future of funding for the Impact Catalyst? What are our plans should we be unable to achieve the full funding? Government fortunes are cyclical, and mining is cyclical – how do we avoid the Impact Catalyst crashing when the inevitable downturns occur?
- 9 As we mature, how do we move to a more strategic Board?
- 10 How do we piggy-back off the Impact Catalyst model and apply these learnings and approach to other sectors of the South African economy?

The Development Partner Institute is an international coalition of ambitious leaders from across the global mining ecosystem.

Our purpose is to facilitate alignment on how mining creates a better world. Our work is underpinned by the principles of the Development Partner Framework – a set of principles designed to help mining companies, host countries and communities carve out their path to long-term success and to set the foundation for new ways of operating and collaborating.

The goal is to co-create a shared purpose and build pathways for solutions and impact that result in economic, social, and environmental outcomes during and beyond the life of mines and mining products – especially for indigenous people and communities.

We'd love to have a conversation with you about development partnerships in mining.

Email wendy@dpimining.org to learn more.

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