

Position Name:

MEL Advisor/Senior MEL Advisor

Who we are:

MSA is a socially driven global consulting firm. We provide innovative solutions for the private sector, government, and civil society to improve, measure, and communicate the economic and social impacts of their investments. We believe market dynamics have a strong impact on how people live their lives. Our vision is to improve economic systems in order to reduce poverty. We recognize complexity and as such, use a systems approach to design solutions that work within dynamic environments. We work collaboratively with our clients, serving as brokers of creativity to help catalyze systemic change.

We take a bespoke approach to every engagement, developing tailored services for clients around action research, monitoring, strategic advisory, evaluation and thought leadership across five topic areas: market systems development, jobs and trade, economic empowerment, financial inclusion, and impact investing.

Since 2009 we have worked with a wide variety of clients and partners in dozens of countries across six continents.

Our work:

At MSA, our staff build results measurement systems for development programs, social enterprises, and impact investors; research power dynamics and their influence on market behaviors; train client staff to think more systemically about the problems they seek to address; pitch MSA's services to new potential clients; write thought pieces; and brainstorm new approaches to old problems. Regardless of task, our focus on disrupting the status quo demands critical engagement.

Who we want:

MSA seeks a driven professional with strong economic development, private sector development, or market systems experience to join the team in the position of Advisor/Senior Advisor, with a preference for candidates located in Denver, Colorado;

MSA 's VALUES

EXCELLENCE

We believe in what we do – it's why we're here. Our work reflects our passion.

DISRUPTION

We're here to do development differently – more empowering, more systemic, with more proof.

HUMILITY

We see self-awareness as a prerequisite to learning.

HUSTLE

Good things don't come to those who wait. We drive networking and new business the same way we drive innovation – restlessly.

COLLABORATION

We're better together, drawing on each other's viewpoints and experiences to deliver for clients. Working in teams is core to our identity.

CELEBRATION

We work hard and life gets hectic – we take time to celebrate and enjoy it. Otherwise, what's the point?

Toronto, Canada; or Kampala, Uganda. Candidates not in one of these locations will also be considered.

MSA is growing – this opportunity offers significant potential for the successful candidate to grow with us, including possible transition to full-time HQ team member, assuming progressively greater responsibility with MSA.

The nature of the role:

The Advisor/Senior Advisor will join our growing global team. This role is integral in providing technical leadership on complex, multi-country MEL projects, particularly those focused on systems change. The **Advisor will bring 7+ years** of relevant experience; and the **Senior Advisor will bring 10+ years**, with a strong preference for candidates who have led MEL efforts for large-scale, complex USAID-funded projects. The position requires a blend of strategic thinking, technical expertise, and experience managing MEL for systemic change. The successful candidate will collaborate with cross-functional teams to deliver high-quality MEL solutions for MSA's diverse global clients.

Key Areas of Responsibility:

- **Push forward innovative learning and evaluation work**, such as MSA's work on catalyzing private sector learning considering different ecosystems and conditions; and leveraging the Disrupting System Dynamics framework to understand pathways of systemic change.
- **Develop and implement tools that support actionable insights** for some of the largest systems-focused projects in the private sector and market systems development space across geographies. This includes working directly with private sector actors to harvest and directly apply learning to improve decision-making and strategy. The Senior MEL Advisor will be expected to systematically look for ways and opportunities for continuous innovation and improvement towards more appropriate, robust, credible and right-sized methods for different client engagements.
- **Build the evidence base on what works in systems-focused projects** through designing and implementing rigorous and right-sized evaluations in collaboration with in-country research firms and teams, and MSA technical team members, ensuring that MSA's quality standards are met across all stages.
- **Actionable insights and report writing.** The Senior MEL Advisor will write reports that synthesize findings and present actionable recommendations to enable evidence-based decision-making in line with MSA's mission. They will integrate best in class learning and implementation knowledge into recommendations to improve uptake.
- **Thought leadership and institutional guidance.** One of the Research Team's main mandates is to cultivate a learning practice and excellence in evaluation and learning through leading on learning products, organizing learning convenings, and producing trainings and guides. The Senior MEL Advisor will produce learning products for internal and external learning products and thought pieces that improve MSA's work and / or our clients, as well as more broadly in the field.

- **Business development.** The Senior MEL Advisor will play a role in the growth of the MEL portfolio at MSA. They will serve as technical lead on proposals, helping to shape new initiatives as part of business development. They will represent MSA at external convenings and prospective client engagement.
- **Engagement leadership on MEL-focused projects.** On select projects, the Senior MEL Advisor can be an Engagement Lead on MERL-focused engagements, which includes leading communication with the client, designing the workplan and resourcing allocation and being responsible for the research process from design to delivery.
- **Effective organization and collaboration.** The Senior MEL Advisor is expected to be able to prioritize, implement and deliver high-quality work within tight timelines with minimal supervision. They will also be expected to provide guidance and mentorship to other team members. They will need to effectively allocate their time across multiple engagements that they are involved in and collaborate extensively as this is one of our core values that drives our mission and growth.

We are looking for someone who finds fulfillment in:

1. **Being a research and data nerd.** We want someone to join the team who loves qualitative research and enjoys analyzing this data. This person loves research methods; designing surveys, interview and focus group discussion guides; training interviewers; collecting data in-country; and all of the deep analysis that follows. Knowing how to do all of this from a market systems perspective is a major bonus.
2. **Understanding the perspective of the private sector.** Most of our work is in the space of market systems and private sector development, and the ideal candidate will be driven by supporting effective economic development programming.
3. **Workshopping and co-creation.** We do not do research for research's sake. We like action research that leads to better decision-making, project performance and eventual social impacts. All MSA technical team members enjoy working with our partners and clients to get better results. This means we need to be good listeners, get their buy-in and always think about how to engage with them in a process of co-creation.
4. **Skilled in right-sizing rigor.** The ideal candidate will work closely with stakeholders to define research questions and needs that will inform future decision-making. This means that the researcher needs to be capable of supporting stakeholders to select the best approach to answering research questions that balances rigour, precision and validity with the available resources.
5. **Helping team members to do their work better.** We have projects that are solely dedicated to generating research insights for clients and for capturing or evaluating impact, using qualitative methods for behavioral analysis, norms diagnostics, and social network analysis. But we also want to do a better job of integrating our measurement approaches across our portfolio. Someone who enjoys designing and communicating tools for our internal team to use, as well as supporting a variety of projects will enjoy this work.
6. **A focus on learning and practical application.** We want someone who not only likes to learn themselves and think outside the box but have ways to help our clients to

continuously learn and utilize their data. We need people who enjoy distilling complex approaches into simple and practical activities to match on-the-ground realities. This means you see good data as a means to an end, to influence interventions, to influence policy, to change practice and a means to create more meaningful social impact for all.

7. **Embracing complexity and adaptation.** We work on a lot of projects that measure changes at the systems level. We love this work. To do this work well, you likely enjoy seeing the bigger picture of your work, thrive in complex environments, but also have the ability to quickly distill complexity into useful tools and systems that get things done. You also enjoy helping those around you to digest complexity and help them navigate how they can practically play their part in achieving project goals.
8. **Completing high quality work.** We believe in what we do. Our work and productivity reflect our passion. We want another team member to believe the same!
9. **Working in a rapidly expanding company.** Our company is small, but we are growing rapidly. If you enjoy fast-paced working environments and engaging in strategic discussions, we are a good fit. If you are looking for a place to work with the same daily checklist and regular work, this is not the position for you.

Requirements:

- **Bachelor's degree** in economics, international development, decision sciences, business, or a related field.
- At least **seven years (Advisor) and ten years (Senior Advisor)** of significant experience designing and conducting qualitative and quantitative evaluation and learning studies, including multi-country, in an international development or consulting context.
- Expertise in MEL for **systems change**, with demonstrated experience in market systems development, private sector engagement, or economic empowerment.
- Experience working in **global roles** and supporting global technical teams and projects remotely.
- Experience developing and implementing measurement and learning plans, particularly to measure challenging concepts in practical ways and applying systems approaches.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills, including experience in writing reports, and presenting actionable recommendations in a concise way that maximizes uptake.
- Strong interpersonal skills, including the ability to work and build relationships with team members and clients from diverse backgrounds.
- Ability to prioritize, implement, and deliver high-quality work within tight timelines and with minimal supervision.

Other desired characteristics:

- Masters' degree in economics, international development, decision sciences, business, or a related field.

- Experience with leading private foundations, or USAID specifically in learning initiatives and/or evaluations for market systems development, economic development, and/or private sector engagement projects.
- Experience with USAID MERL activities, such as designing and implementing Monitoring and Evaluation Plans and Collaboration Learning and Adaptation plans is preferred.
- Experience working for a consulting firm and managing consulting projects.
- Proficiency in another language, preferably written and oral French.
- Experience working and living in developing countries.

Other information:

This is a full-time HQ position that will report to the Research Team Lead. It may require up to 35% travel. For reference, the salary band for this position is USD \$70,000-\$95,000 for Advisor and USD \$75,000-\$100,000 for Senior Advisor if the selected candidate is based in Denver, US. For candidates based in other states or outside the United States, MSA will consider rates aligned with local market rates and/or our salary bands by Hub Zones (Kampala, Uganda and Toronto, Canada). Where a candidate falls within this range is based on previous years of experience and versatility (i.e., number of required and desired characteristics as well as expected capability).

Application Details:

Applications will be considered on a **rolling basis**, and interested candidates are encouraged to apply early. To apply, please click on the job link – <https://marketshareassociates.bamboohr.com/careers/49> If you have not heard back within 2 weeks after the application deadline, please send a follow up email to recruitment@marketshareassociates.com. We want to make sure no emails get lost in cyberspace!

Please also include a cover letter (maximum **one page**) explaining your interest in this role and answering the following questions:

- 1) What do you see as the most important innovation in learning and evaluation approaches?
- 2) List the three things, in order of impact, that you would bring to MSA to take us to the next level.
- 3) Which of our values most resonates with you, and why?
- 4) Where are you based? What is your location preference? Where are you legally authorized to work?
- 5) Where did you learn about this role?
- 6) Have you applied for a role previously at MSA? If so, which one?
- 7) What is your salary expectation? And if selected, how soon would you be able to start?

If you don't meet every requirement, we still encourage you to apply. Research has found that certain groups, including women, LGBTQ+ and people of color, often feel they need to meet every qualification before applying. MSA is committed to fostering

an inclusive, diverse, equitable, and welcoming environment, so if you're interested in this role, please apply—you might be the ideal candidate for this or another position with us.