



# “Yes I get it. Small deposits do make sense.”

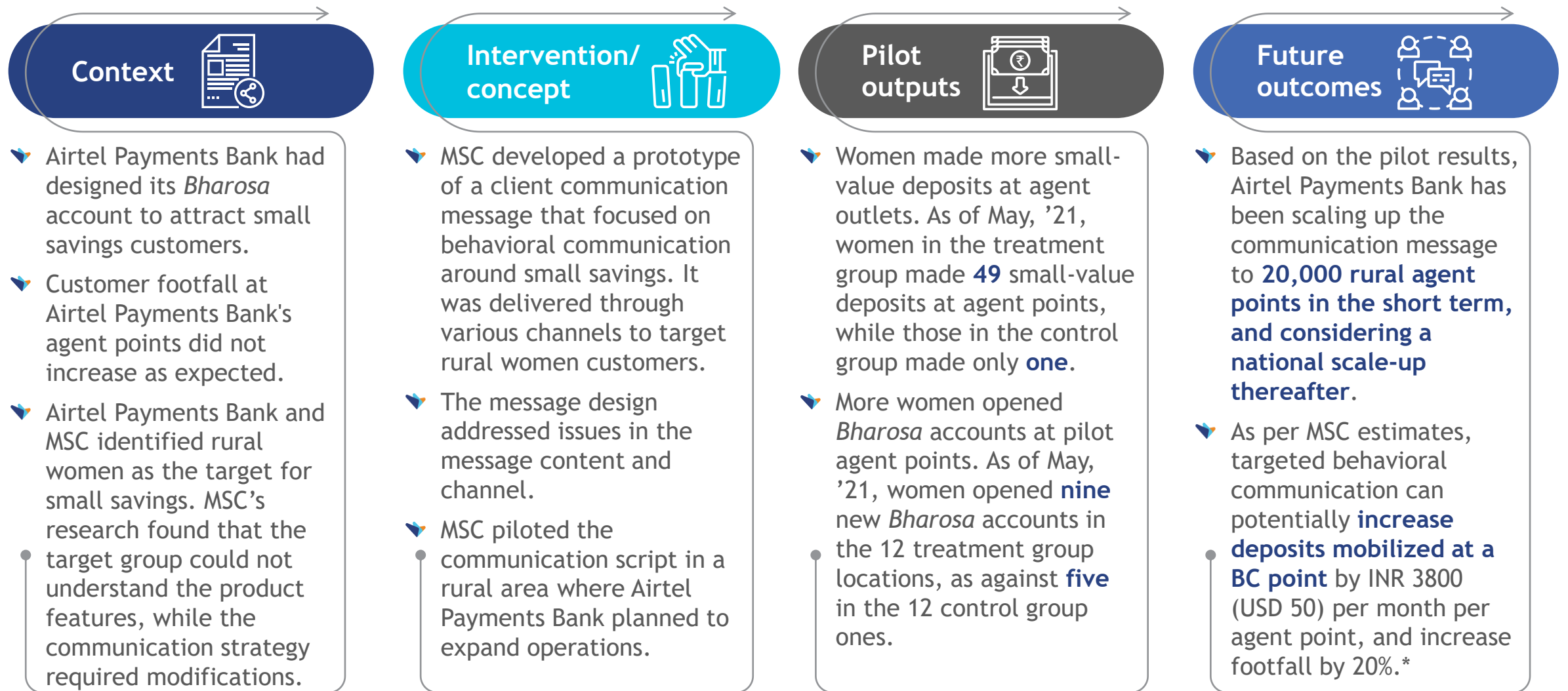
Lessons from a pilot with Airtel Payments Bank on client communication

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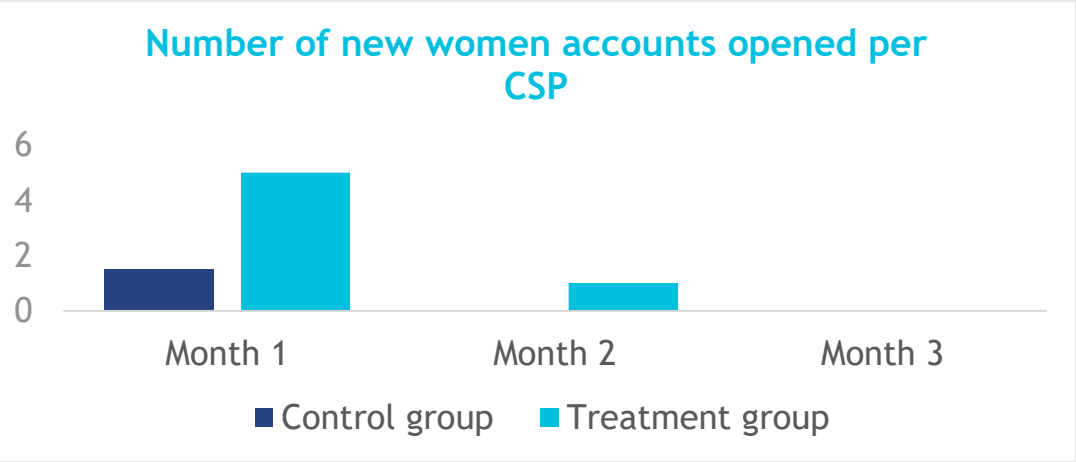
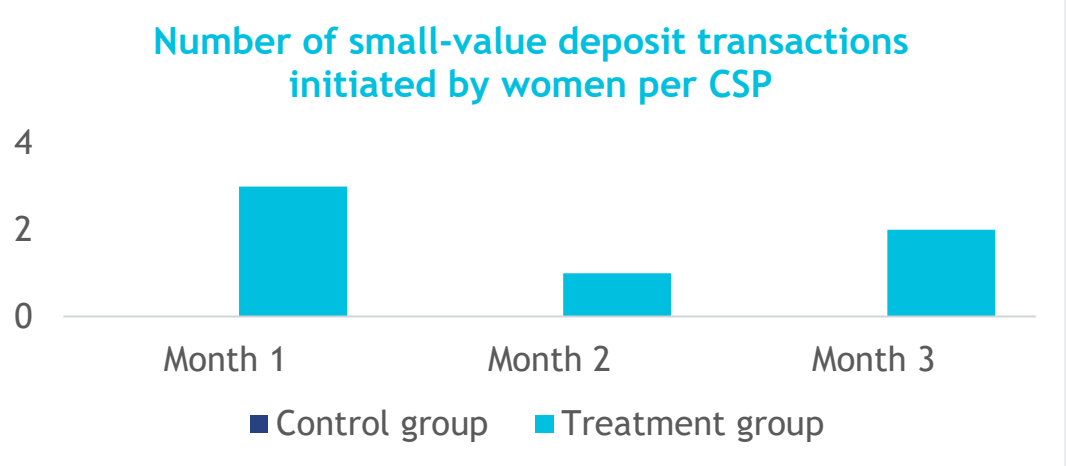
We thank [Nitish Narain](#) and [Zeeshan Ali](#) for their valuable contribution on this deck. Their suggestions helped us immensely in articulating the structure and key messages of this piece.

# We helped Airtel Payments Bank sharpen its communication to rural women customers to nudge them to make small deposits through BC points



\*For specific providers the target base will be different. We only indicate potential business opportunity. Numbers based on MSC analysis and guesstimates.

# Trends of small saving deposits and account opening by women show a clear distinction between agents in the pilot and control groups

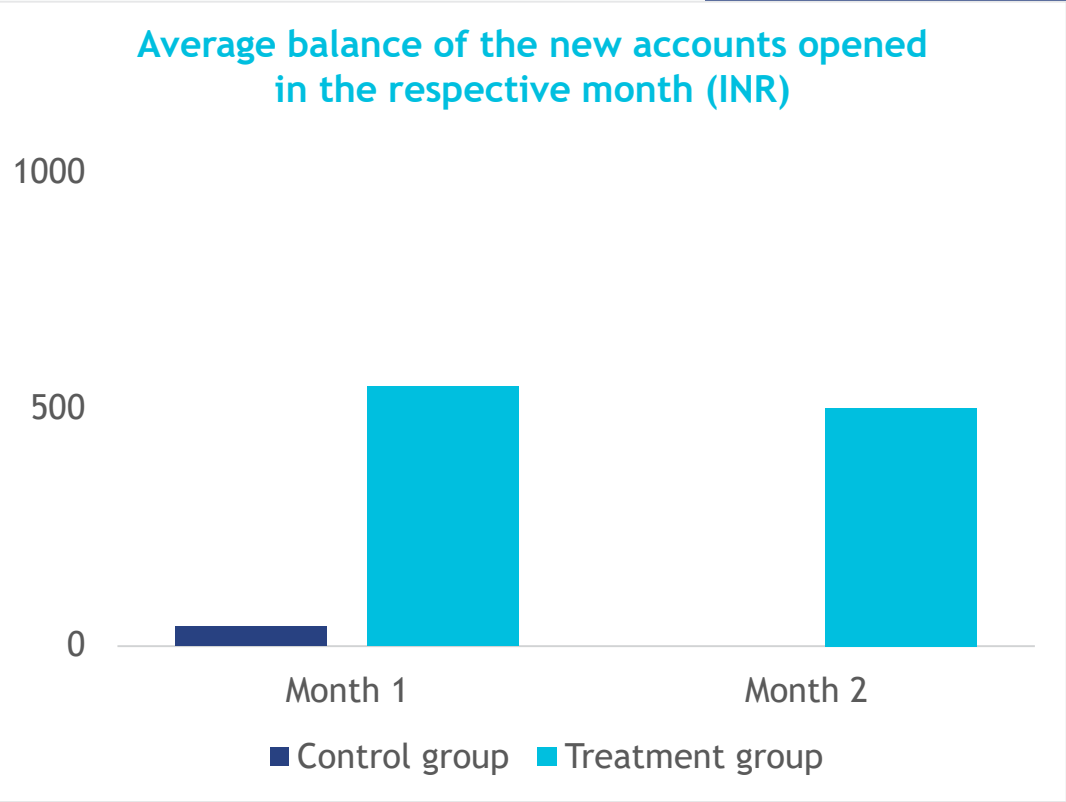


## Findings



- For both pilot and control groups, we see a gradual dip in business activities in the second and third months (Dec, 2020 and Jan, 2021), compared to the first month. As discussed with the Airtel Payments Bank team, this is a normal business curve seen during the initial phase of its launch.
- The two agent groups show a clear difference on the number of small savings deposit transactions. **Only** the treatment group customer service points (CSPs) had some traction (**six transactions** overall), while the control group CSPs showed **no** small-value deposits done. Further, as of May, 2021, women in the treatment group did **49** small-value deposit transactions overall, while those in the control group did only **one** transaction.
- The treatment group CSPs performed better on the account opening parameter as well. They opened six *Bharosa* accounts for women as against three by those in the control group.

# Women in the treatment group saved significantly more, proving the effectiveness of the audio clip

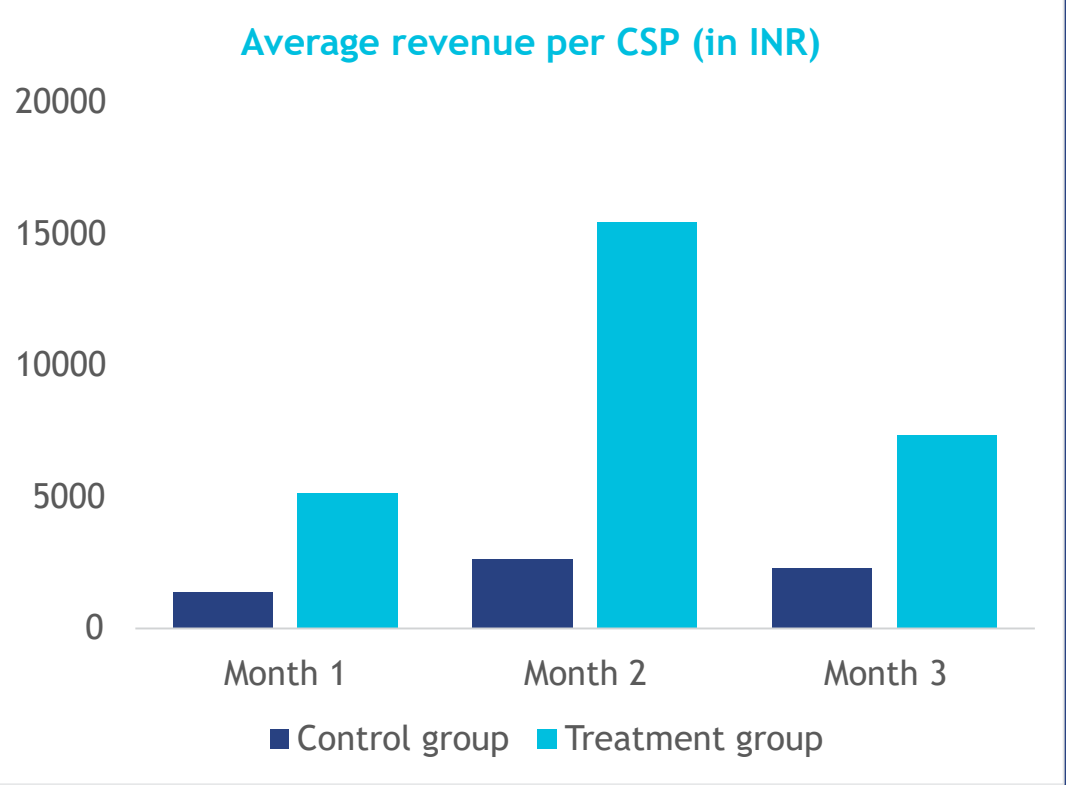


## Findings



- ✦ The average balance of new accounts opened by women in the treatment group was about **54 times** that of women in the control group during the pilot period. Women in the treatment group maintained a monthly average balance of **INR 385** (USD 5.06), while their counterparts in the control group kept only **INR 6.8** (USD 0.09) in their accounts.
- ✦ Also, both groups showed **zero** small-value withdrawals during the pilot period. Since the control group accounts did not have any balance, it directly reflects the intention of women in the treatment group to start small savings **AND** also to protect the savings from getting spent on avoidable expenditures. This was one of the clear messages in the audio clip disseminated in their villages.

# Early trends indicate that the pilot intervention has increased the income of agents



## Findings



↘ CSPs in the treatment group consistently generated higher business volumes throughout the pilot duration. Their average revenue of **INR 10,144** (USD 133) was much higher than **INR 2537** (USD 33.27) seen for the CSPs in the control group. This higher income may be attributed to higher awareness levels created by the spread of the audio message, which led to **higher footfall** at the treatment group CSPs and ultimately raised their overall earnings.





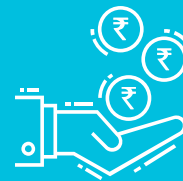
# The pilot led to many success stories



A

## Struck the right chord

The message in the audio clip successfully resonated with the women. It is evident in the high number of small savings deposit transactions at Sewapuri CSPs. We frequently heard from the women: **“500 rupay hi nahin, 10 rupay bhi jamaa kar saktein hain”** (We need not save only larger sums like 500 Rupees. We can even deposit 10 Rupees if we want)



B

## Set the small savings wheel rolling

The audio clip could break the inertia for women from the LMI segment regarding small savings, as mirrored in the dashboard results. It is also likely to **create a reference group** of early adopter female clients, who are powerful influencers, as MSC’s field research indicates as well.



C

## Emerged as a winner in the cost-benefit analysis

The team integrated the pilot activities in Airtel Payments Bank’s existing operational model, with no extra cost beyond the development of the audio clip. Based on the pilot results, Airtel Payments Bank intends to start playing the audio clip at 10,000 agents in Hindi-speaking areas initially, and across all rural (**20,000**) CSPs subsequently. Airtel Payments Bank will incur no additional cost for this scale up.



D

## Became a launch pad for the field staff

As an Airtel Payments Bank staff mentioned, playing the audio clip generated initial interest while setting **up an excellent stage** for the Airtel Payments Bank staff to start communicating with this elusive client segment.

# The pilot also offers some important sectorial lessons

## Power of behavioral messaging



Behavioral messaging can nudge difficult-to-penetrate segments. The Airtel Payments Bank experiment used it to resolve difficult issues around the awareness, interest, and mobility of rural women.

## Organization holds the key



An organization's (Airtel Payments Bank in this case) openness to innovation plays a decisive role in how successfully it can experiment with new concepts.

## Work hard to keep it simple



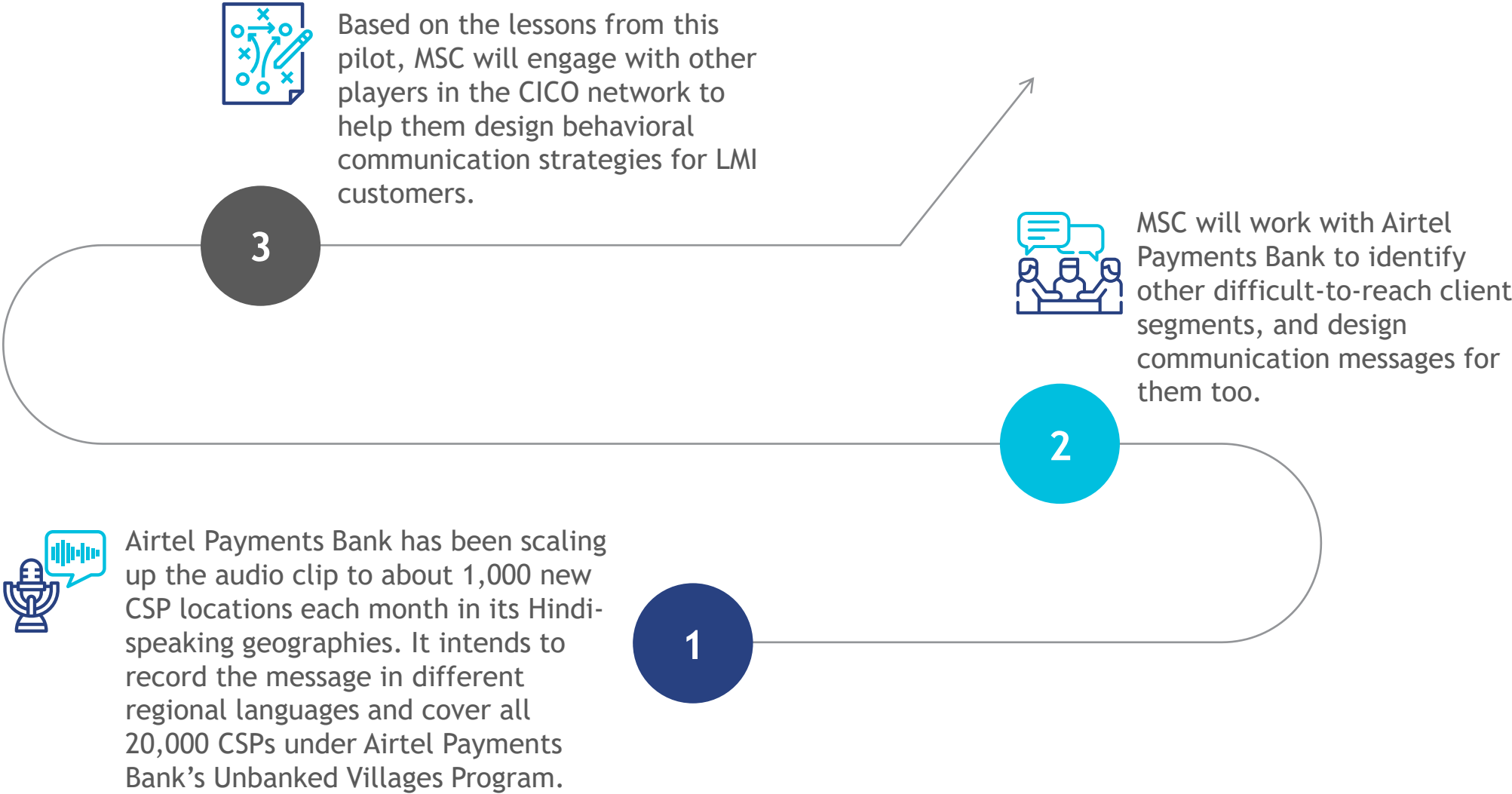
Designing a clear, simple, and powerful ATL communication for the LMI segment is difficult. As the uptake and usage data shows, the Airtel Payments Bank pilot's end product is a short, easy-to-absorb, and relatable audio message.

## Feedback must feed back



An intervention must quickly adapt to emergent realities of the field. The team at Airtel Payments Bank was quick to notice and use the SHG channel to relay its message to more women.

# Scaling up and broadening the scope of the communication pilot



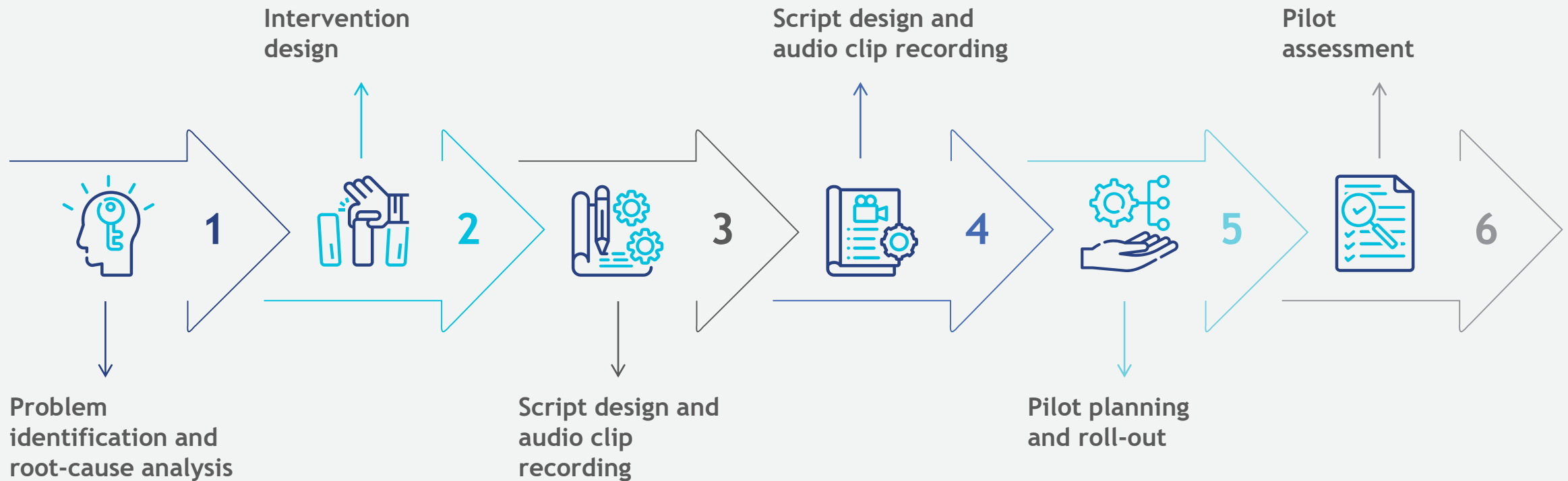




# Appendices

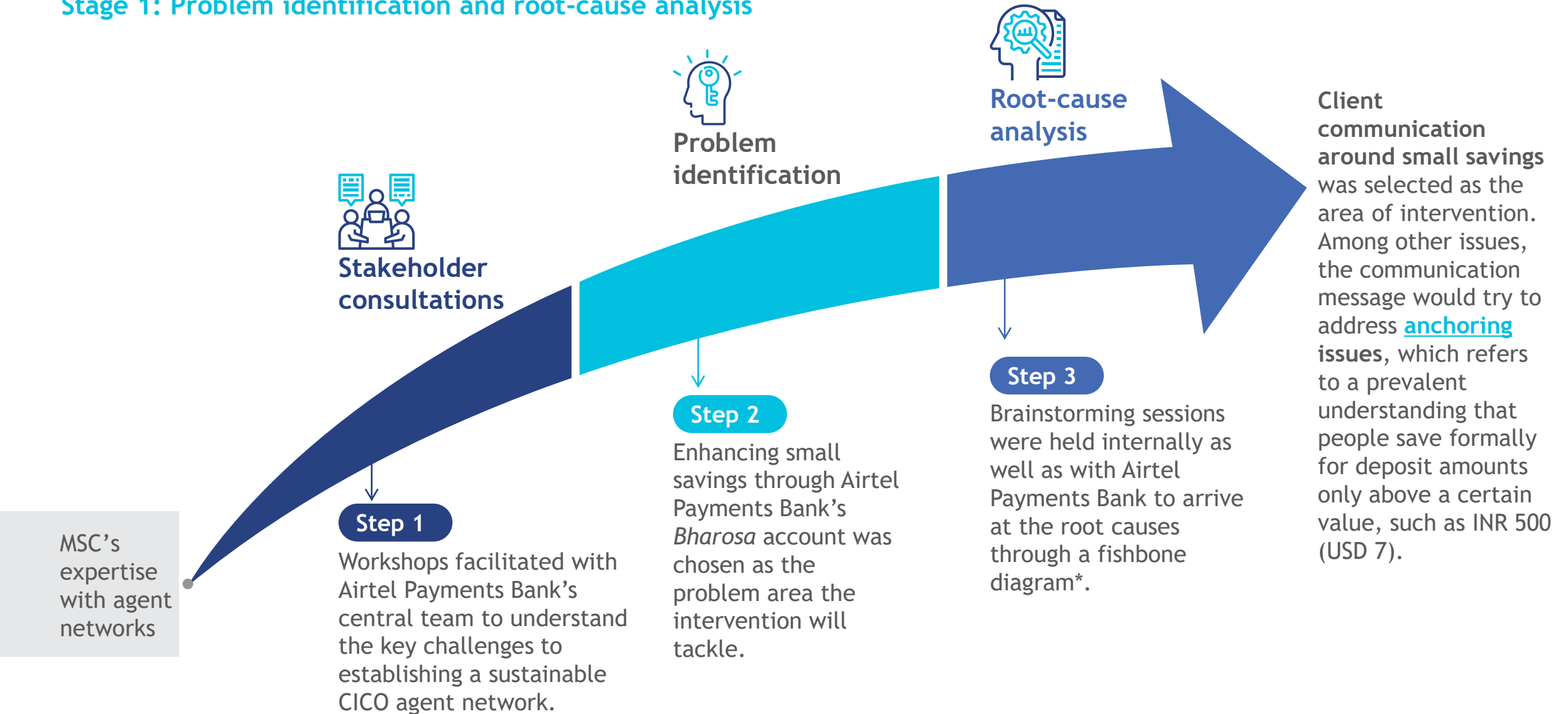
# Appendix 1: Key milestones of the pilot intervention (1/10)

The journey was a mix of intense stakeholder discussions, analytical tools and frameworks, field research, message design using behavioral concepts, pilot roll-out, and post-pilot assessment.



# Appendix 2 : Key milestones of the pilot intervention (2/10)

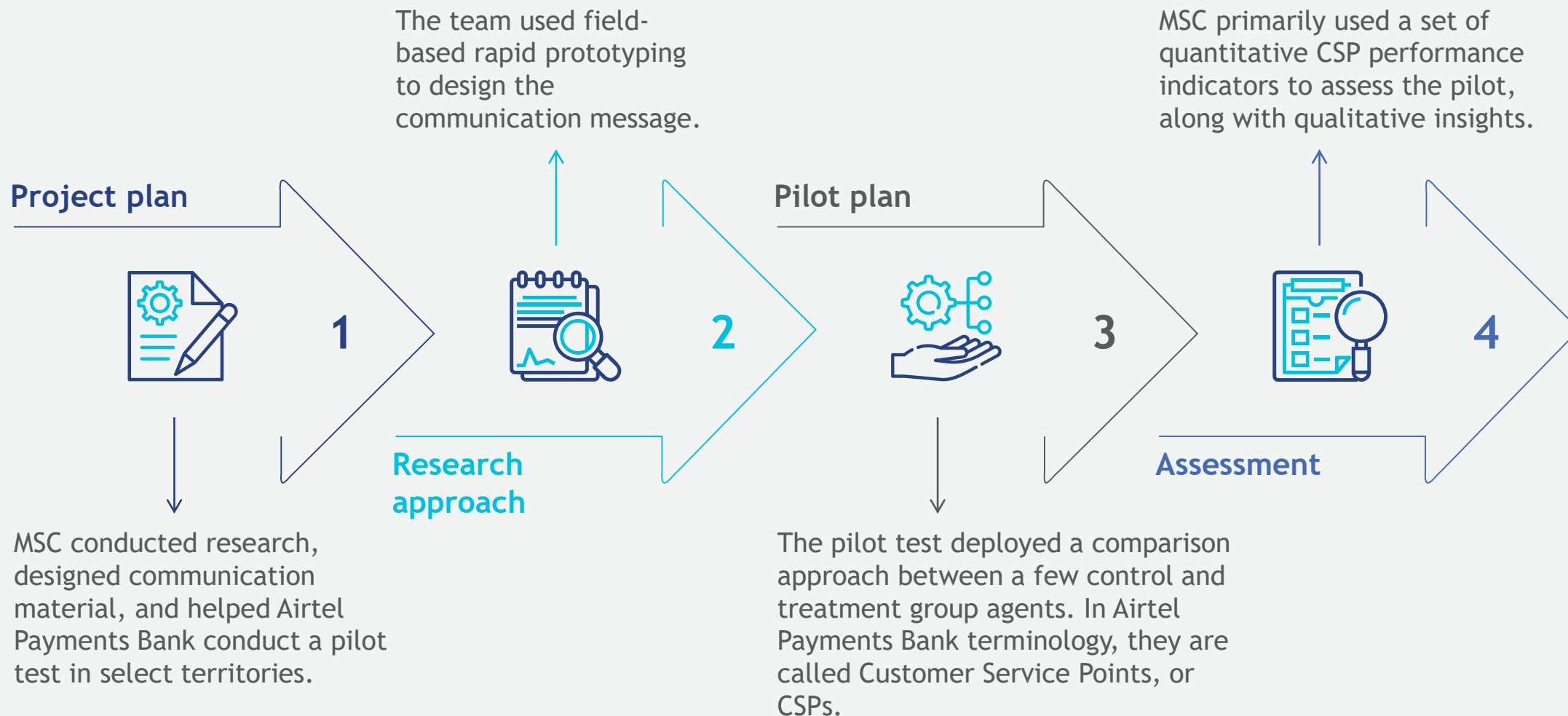
## Stage 1: Problem identification and root-cause analysis



\*The [appendix](#) presents the fishbone diagram in detail.

# Appendix 3 : Key milestones of the pilot intervention (3/10)

## Stage 2: Intervention design



# Appendix 4 : Key milestones of the pilot intervention (4/10)

## Stage 3: Field research and rapid prototyping (1/3) - the challenges to be overcome



### Challenge 1

Absence of a **channel** to reach out to a large section of the LMI women segment.



### Challenge 2

Absence of good quality message **content** that could resonate strongly with LMI women.

# Appendix 5: Key milestones of the pilot intervention (5/10)

## Stage 3: Field research and rapid prototyping (2/3) - resolving the 'channel' challenge

### Resolving the channel challenge



Social norms implied that the rural women segment was **difficult to reach**, even within the household.



Women enjoy **lower mobility** due to traditional societal norms.



Ownership of **mobile phones** remains low.



Women from the rural LMI segment have **negligible literacy** levels.



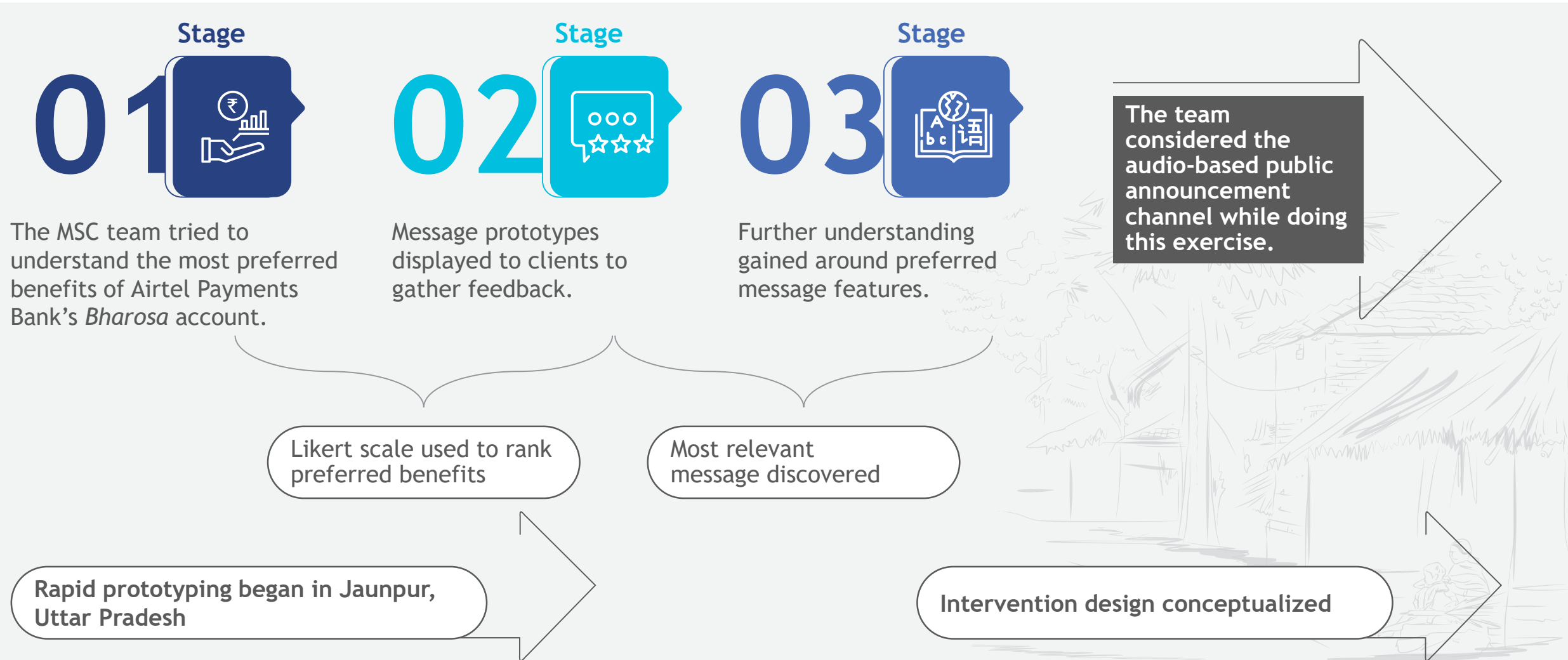
Based on the findings, the team decided to use an audio-based public announcement system as the communication channel for the intervention.





# Appendix 6 : Key milestones of the pilot intervention (6/10)

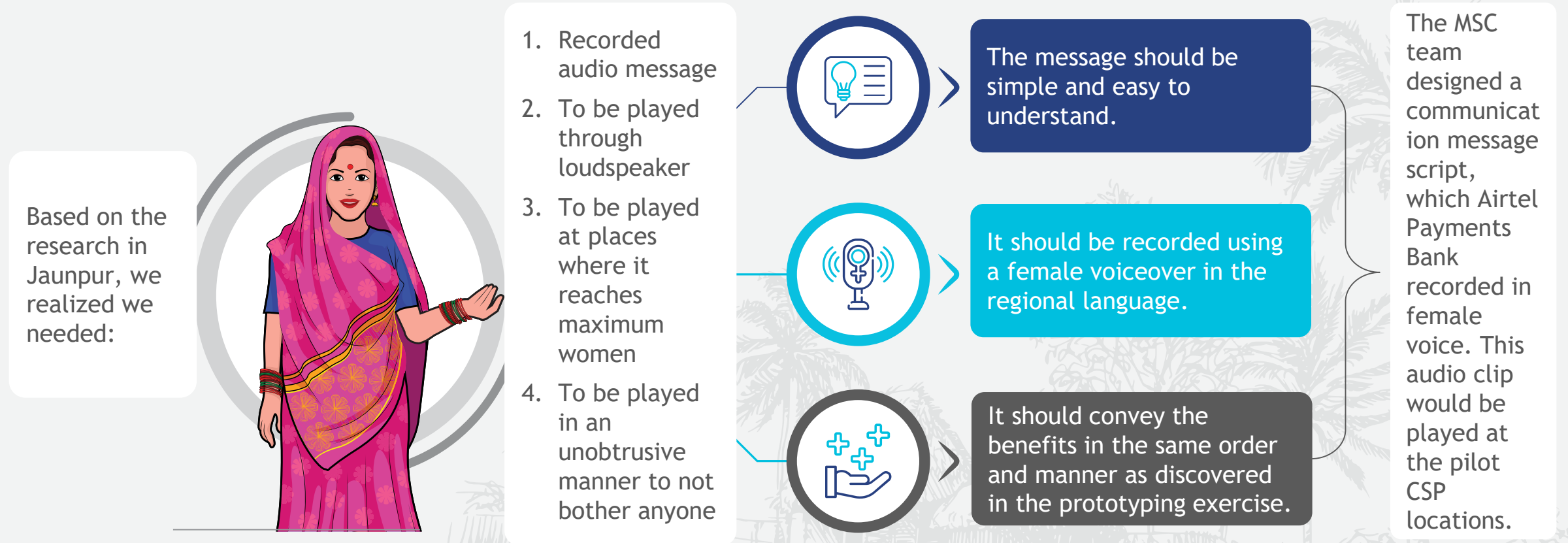
## Stage 3: Field research and rapid prototyping (3/3) - - resolving the 'content' challenge



# Appendix 7 : Key milestones of the pilot intervention (7/10)

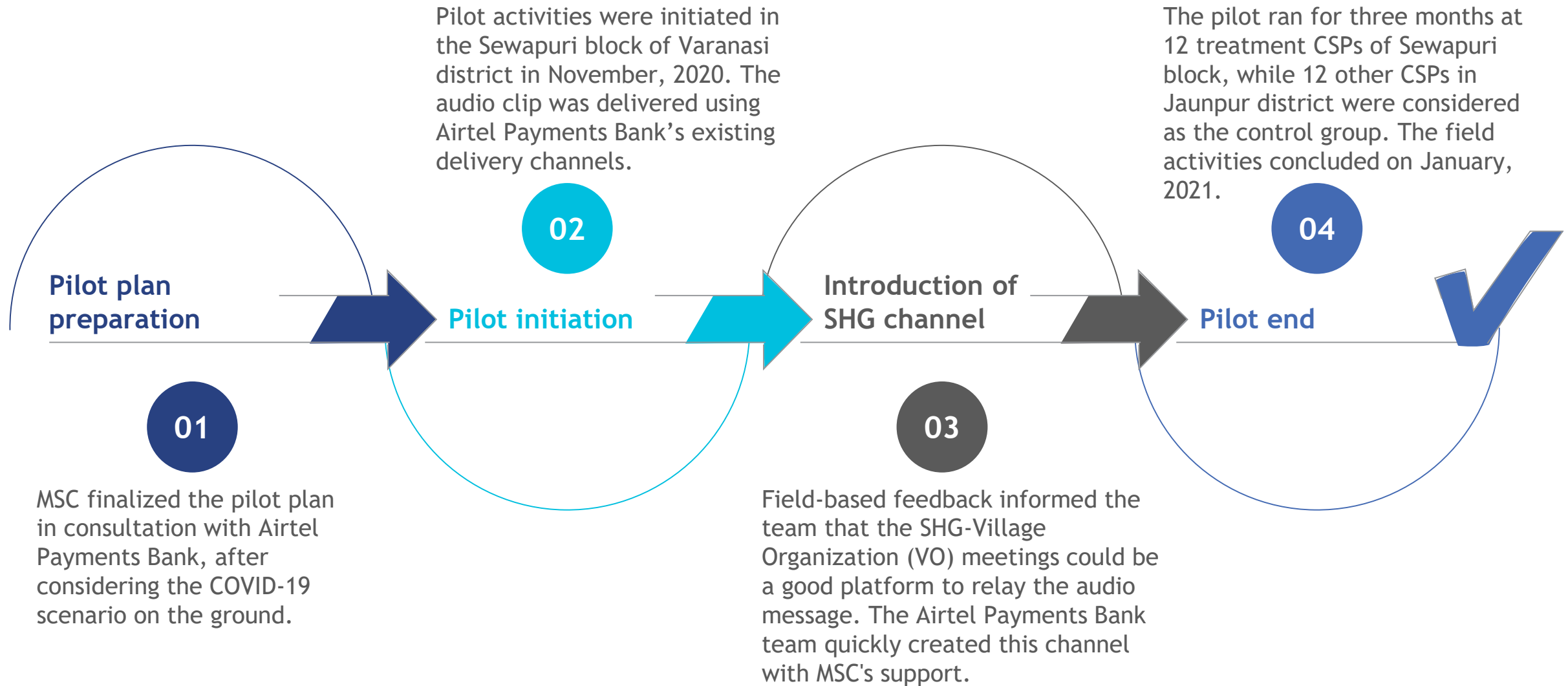
## Stage 4: Script design and audio clip recording

Stitching the findings of primary research to create the communication message framework



# Appendix 8 : Key milestones of the pilot intervention (8/10)

## Stage 5: Pilot planning and roll-out



# Appendix 9 : Key milestones of the pilot intervention (9/10)

The pilot implementation journey in pictures

1

Field research  
in Jaunpur

Seeking various  
message dissemination  
channels



2

Field research  
in Jaunpur

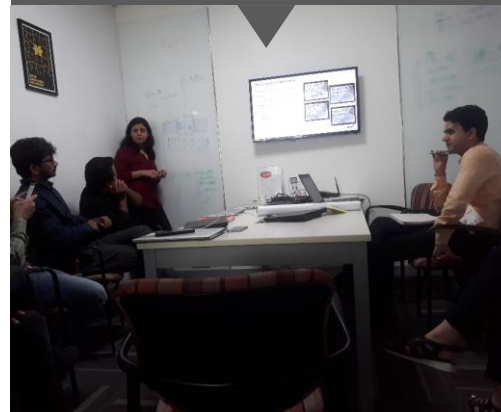
Rapid prototyping in  
progress with a  
respondents from the  
target segment



3

Pilot plan  
preparation

Pilot planning  
workshop at Airtel  
Payments Bank's head  
office



4

Pilot activities  
at Sewapuri  
CSPs

Audio clip being  
played at a *shamiyana*  
activity during a CICO  
agent launch



5

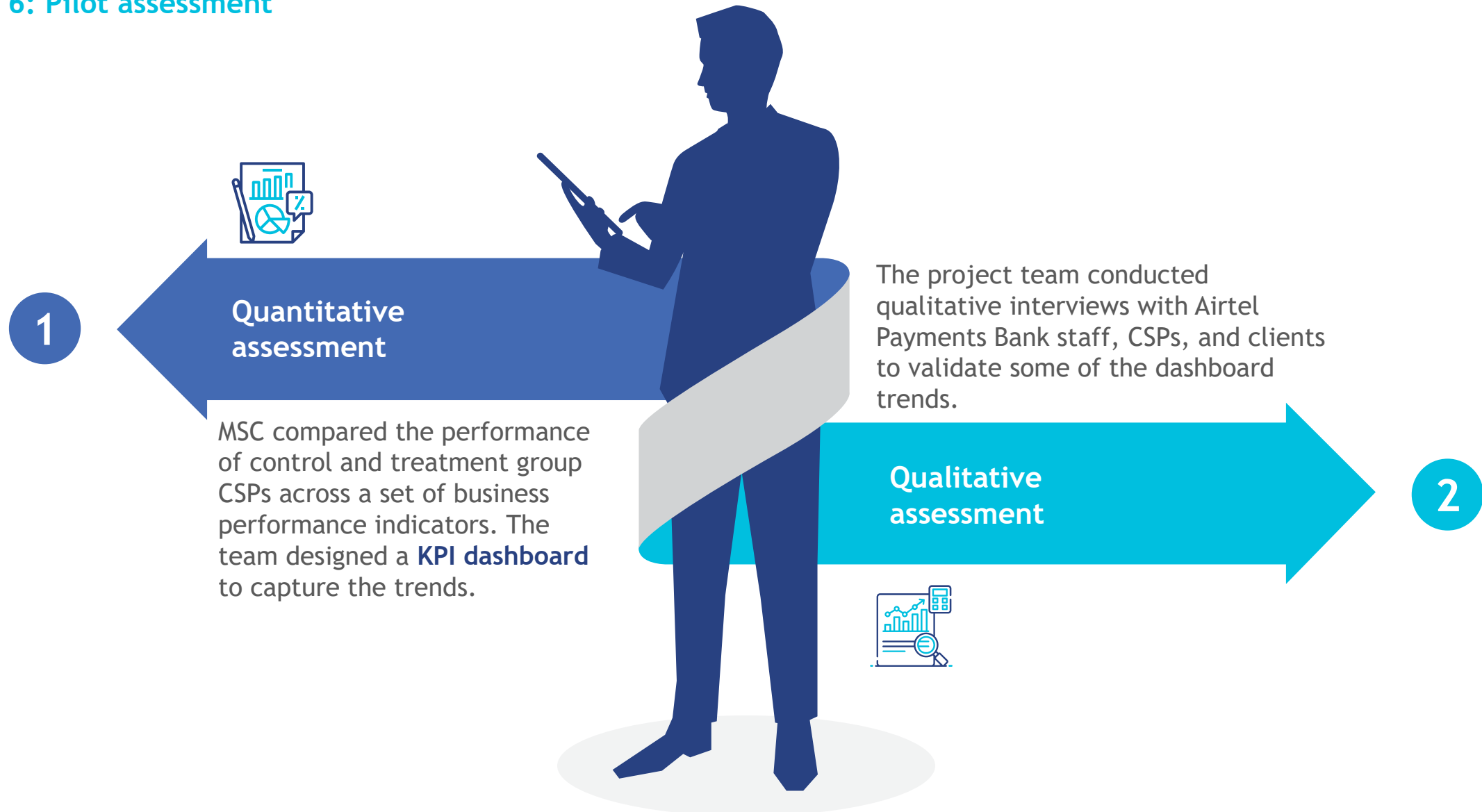
Pilot activities  
at Sewapuri VO  
meetings

Audio clip being  
played at SHG-VO  
meetings



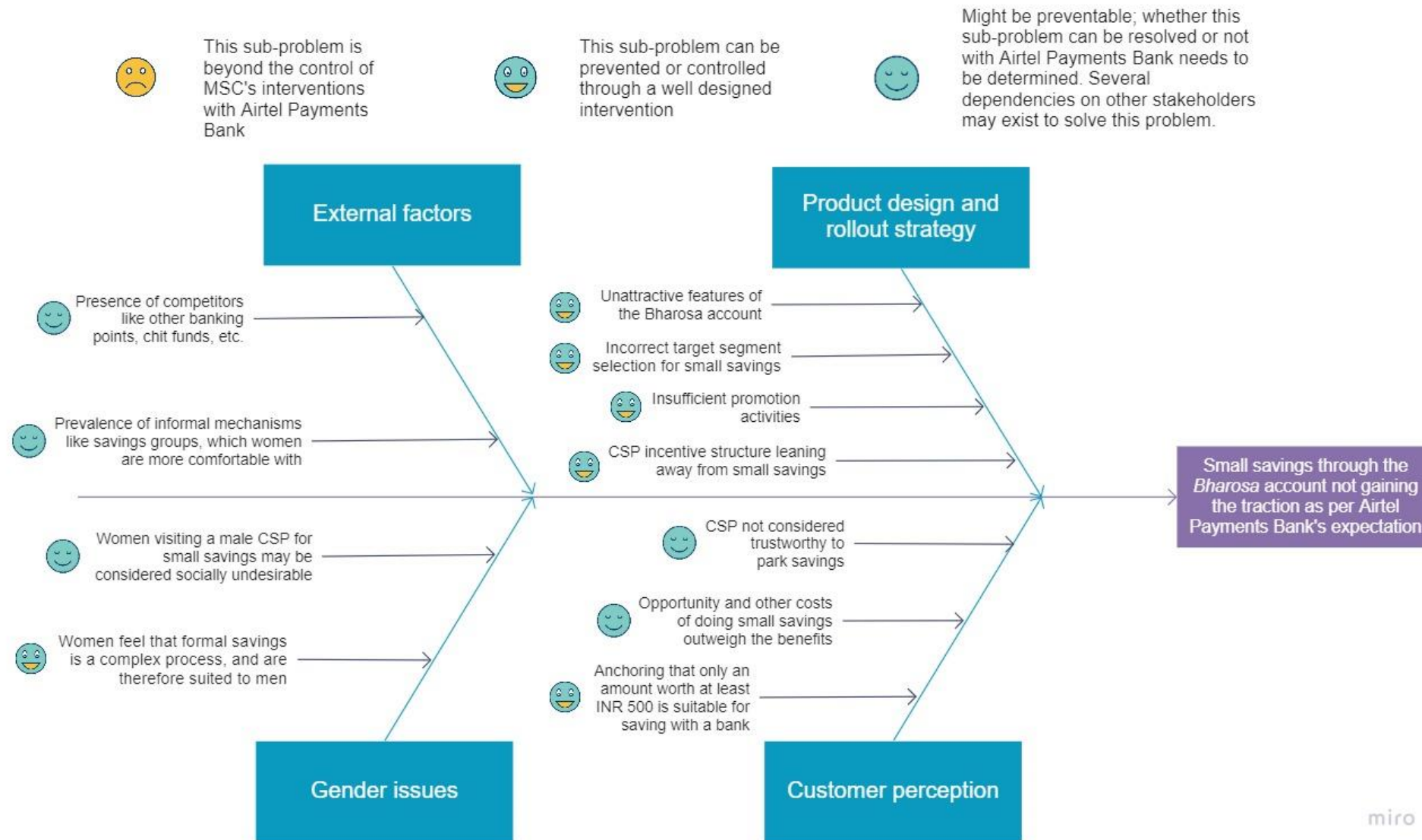
# Appendix 10 : Key milestones of the pilot intervention (10/10)

## Stage 6: Pilot assessment





# Appendix 11: Results of the root cause analysis (fishbone diagram)







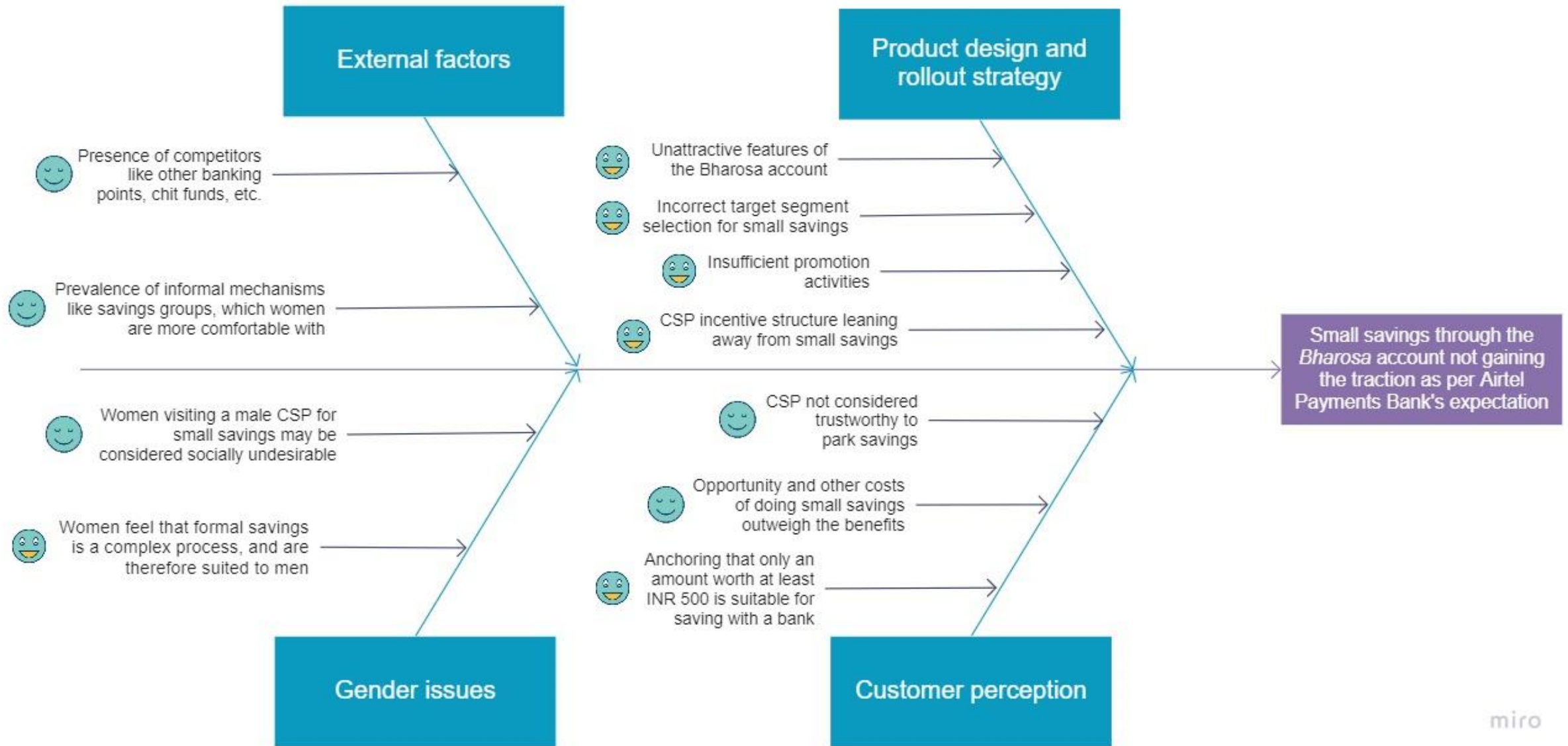
This sub-problem is beyond the control of MSC's interventions with Airtel Payments Bank



This sub-problem can be prevented or controlled through a well designed intervention



Might be preventable; whether this sub-problem can be resolved or not with Airtel Payments Bank needs to be determined. Several dependencies on other stakeholders may exist to solve this problem.



# Sectors we work in

## Providing impact-oriented business consulting services



# Multi-faceted expertise

## Advisory that helps you succeed in a rapidly evolving market



# MSC is recognized as the world's local expert in economic, social, and financial inclusion



International financial, social, and economic inclusion consulting firm with **20+** years of experience



**>200** staff in **11** offices around the world



Projects in **~65** developing countries

## Our impact so far

**>550**  
clients

**>1,000**  
publications

Assisted development of digital G2P services used by **>875 million** people

Implemented **>875 DFS** projects

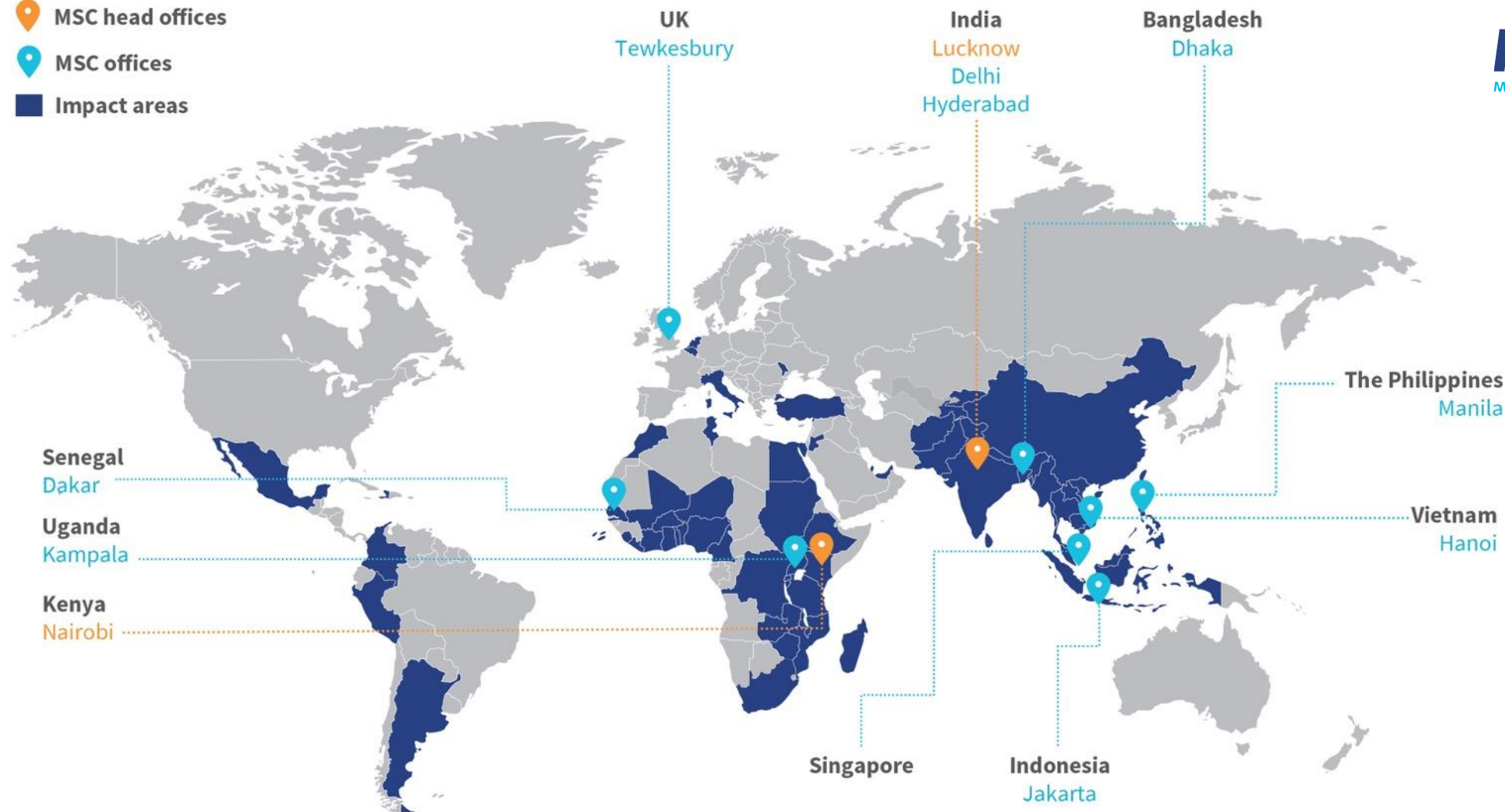
Developed **>275 FI products** and channels now used by **>55 million** people

Trained **>10,500** leading FI specialists globally

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