MAINSTREAMING SCALING INITIATIVE CASE STUDIES

the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

Johannes F. Linn
29 December 2023

SCALING
COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

MAINSTREAMING SCALING

A Case Study of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

by

Johannes F. Linn
Co-Chair of the Scaling Community of Practice

29 December 2023

A Case Study for the Initiative on
Mainstreaming Scaling in Funder Organizations

For the Scaling Community of Practice
www.scalingcommunityofpractice.com

Preface

The Scaling Community of Practice (CoP) launched an action research initiative on mainstreaming scaling in funder organizations in January 2023. This initiative has three purposes: to inform the CoP members and the wider development community of the current state of support for and operationalization of scaling in a broad range of development funding agencies; to draw lessons for future efforts to mainstream the scaling agenda in the development funding community; and to promote more effective funder support for scaling by stakeholders in developing countries. (For further details about the Mainstreaming Initiative, see the Concept Note on the COP website).

For the purpose of this study, scale is defined as sustainable impact at a significant share of the need, demand, or problem. Scaling is the process of reaching scale. Mainstreaming of scaling is defined as the systematic consideration by the funder of the scaling process in the appraisal of a project, in the decision to fund it, and in the monitoring and evaluation of the project's implementation.

The Mainstreaming Initiative is jointly supported by Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and the Scaling Community of Practice (CoP). The study team consists of Richard Kohl (Lead Consultant and Project Co-Leader), Johannes Linn (Co-Chair of the Scaling CoP and Project Co-Leader), Larry Cooley (Co-Chair of the Scaling CoP), and Ezgi Yilmaz (Junior Consultant). MSI staff provide administrative and communications support, in particular Leah Sly and Gaby Montalvo.

The principal component of this research is a set of case studies of the efforts to mainstream scaling by selected funder organizations. These studies explore the extent and manner in which scaling has been mainstreamed, and the major drivers and obstacles. The case studies also aim to derive lessons to be learned from each donor's experience, and, where they exist, their plans and/or recommendations for further strengthening the scaling focus.

The present case study focuses on International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). It was prepared by Johannes F. Linn.

Acknowledgements

The support of current and former IFAD managers and staff in providing insights and experience in interviews and in commenting on a draft of the report is gratefully acknowledged. Comments on the draft were also received from Carlos Manuel Icaza Lara and Richard Kohl. No funding was provided by IFAD for this case study.

Table of Contents

Preface..... ii

Acknowledgements..... ii

Table of Contents..... iii

List of Acronyms..... iv

Executive Summary..... v

Introduction..... 1

IFAD's Mainstreaming Journey – A Long-term Engagement with Many Ups and a Few Downs..... 3

Enabling Conditions – Drivers and Barriers for Mainstreaming Scaling in IFAD..... 11

Conclusions, Recommendations and Lessons..... 28

Annexes..... 35

List of Acronyms

AVP	Associate Vice President
CD	Country Director
CoP	Community of Practice
ECG	Environment, Climate, Gender And Social Inclusion Division
GF	Global Fund for HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFAD8, 9, 10, 11, 12	8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th IFAD Replenishment
IOE	IFAD's Independent Office of Evaluation
ME&L	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MSI	Management Systems International
PCR	Project completion report
PMD	Program Management Department
PMI	Sustainable Production, Markets and Institutions Division
PTA	Policy and Technical Advisory Division
QAR	Quality Assurance Review
QER	Quality-at-Entry Review
SKD	Strategy and Knowledge Department
UN	United Nations
USD	United States Dollar

Executive Summary

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is a midsize multilateral international finance institution established to support agricultural and rural development in low and middle income member countries, with a special focus on often neglected or difficult to reach smallholder farming communities. IFAD has actively pursued mainstreaming of a scaling agenda in its operations since 2002. This makes IFAD in many ways an exceptional case among its funder peers, since few if any have so systematically focused on scaling as a way to enhance and sustain the development impact of the interventions that they fund.

This case study of IFAD's mainstreaming efforts is part of an action research initiative of the Scaling Community of Practice. Based on interviews, document review and the personal experience of the author as an adviser on scaling to IFAD and as chair of three replenishment consultations, it traces IFAD's mainstreaming journey over two decades and analyzes what were the main enabling conditions – drivers and obstacles – for scaling. The paper concludes with a set of recommendations for IFAD management and with lessons for the funder community at large.

Like all the other case studies under the Mainstreaming Initiative of the Scaling Community of Practice, this case study focuses principally on whether, when and how IFAD has pursued mainstreaming of scaling as a change management process and the extent to which this has been reflected in project design and implementation. It does not focus on whether this has led to more effective scaling up in IFAD-supported programs or what has been the longer term development impact of scaling efforts. These questions are important, but go beyond the scope of this study.

The study finds that IFAD's mainstreaming effort can be divided into five distinct phases:

- 2002-2008: early efforts to anchor scaling in IFAD's strategy and independent evaluations of IFAD's scaling in its operations;

- 2009-2012: detailed analysis and evaluation of IFAD's prevailing scaling practice and efforts to develop a mainstreaming approach, with the support of a joint Brookings/IFAD team leading to IFAD declaring scaling as "mission critical;"

- 2013-2017: an intensive and comprehensive mainstreaming effort in IFAD's strategy and operations, with the development of an operational mainstreaming framework, establishment of an organizational anchor, integration of scaling in the operational processes, extensive knowledge work, and an independent evaluation of IFAD's mainstreaming efforts;

- 2018-2021: a partial pause in IFAD's mainstreaming efforts, due to changing priorities of a new senior management team and disruptions caused by a major effort to decentralize IFAD's staff and by the COVID pandemic; while some aspects of the mainstreaming effort continued, others dropped by the wayside;

2022-2023: a resumption of IFAD's mainstreaming activities with the preparation of an Updated Operational Scaling Framework and focus on scaling practice and lessons in the 2023 operational "stocktake" by IFAD management.

The review points to overall progress since 2002, with a move from small, one-off projects to a more programmatic approach and greater selectivity, more focus on policies and partnerships, knowledge management, scaling metrics and independent evaluations. But it also notes that IFAD has not yet been able to fully drive scaling into front-line operational engagement, that scaling is just one of many institutional priorities for IFAD, and that, in the face a large number of corporate priorities but also binding budget and staff constraints, middle managers and project teams have found it difficult to devote systematic attention to the scaling agenda. Therefore, in effect, scaling is still mostly

opportunistic, even as a well-articulated overall institutional approach to scaling exists in IFAD. So, clearly, challenges remain.

The paper goes on to unpack how different enabling or hindering factors have affected the IFAD mainstreaming journey during the five phases of mainstreaming experience summarized above:

- At the corporate level, vision and strategy, policy, partnerships, and independent evaluation stand out with consistently positive efforts.

- Decentralization, which supports scaling in the long-term, was pursued consistently after 2009, and especially during 2018-2021, although the process proved disruptive during that period.

- The role of governance bodies as authorizing environment and commitment mechanism was generally positive – albeit not strongly so –, mostly because of the anchoring of the scaling agenda in the Replenishment Consultation commitments and continuous monitoring and tracking of scaling performance with metrics in the results management framework.

- Top-level leadership, operational processes, organization, evidence and knowledge management, and timing and sequencing showed relatively strong performance during 2009-2012 and 2013-2017, and then again during 2022-2023, but relatively weaker performance during 2018-2021.

- Leadership at mid-level management and institutional capacity (people and budget) stand out as persistently weak or negative, even during the periods of strong mainstreaming effort.

This pattern sheds light on an apparent paradox: that despite remarkably strong and persistent efforts made by IFAD in mainstreaming scaling into its operational practice across most enabling conditions for much of the time between 2009 and 2023, this effort so far has not significantly affected the front-line country teams in terms of their systematic attention to scaling. The explanation is twofold: First, two key interrelated factors acted throughout as a barrier to mainstreaming scaling into front-line operations, but especially after 2017: the increasing overload of country teams with a plethora of institutional priorities in the face of declining front-line budgets, and the persistent lack of interest (and even resistance) by mid-level operational managers to pursue the scaling priority in their regions, most likely because they too felt the burden of priority overload and resource constraints. Second, the transition in IFAD's top management in 2017 and the attendant change in institutional priorities came at a critical moment in the mainstreaming process, when much of the preparatory work for mainstreaming had been completed and the independent evaluation of 2017 had identified steps needed for implementation. Since there was no consistent follow-up after 2017 in implementing the mainstreaming of scaling as a central corporate priority, this meant that momentum was lost until management once again began to focus on scaling in 2022-2023.

Looking ahead, the case study concludes that scaling remains mission critical for IFAD, that it has an exceptionally strong track record with its past mainstreaming scaling efforts, and is therefore well placed to pursue a strong mainstreaming agenda. Building on its just approved Updated Operational Scaling Framework, IFAD needs to focus on implementing its mainstreaming agenda as an "all of organization" priority that cuts across all of IFAD's corporate priorities and needs to be pursued throughout the institution. The case study recommends that IFAD management focus special attention on strengthening a few key areas of IFAD's mainstreaming approach:

- **Leadership:** IFAD's President and senior management team must clearly embrace the scaling mainstreaming agenda and process, and ensure that middle managers are fully on board and promote the agenda with vigor in their units; all managers must clearly communicate internally and externally that "scaling is back" and "scaling is mission critical" for IFAD.

- **Vision and strategy:** All managers and staff in IFAD, from the President on down, need to recognize that impact at scale is not like other corporate mainstreaming priorities (environment and climate, gender, nutrition, youth, etc.), but is a cross-cutting priority – success in achieving IFAD's corporate goals in other mainstreaming areas will be undercut if they are not effectively scaled.

- **Institutional capacity:** The capacity of IFAD's country teams needs to be significantly strengthened.

- **Organization:** IFAD needs an organizational anchor for its scaling mainstreaming agenda, similar to what was in place in 2013-2017.

- **Evidence:** Scaling needs to be incorporated into monitoring, evaluation and learning (ME&L) and knowledge management needs to actively compile, assess and promote experience and lessons internally and externally.

In reshaping IFAD's scaling mainstreaming agenda, it is important to keep operational processes as simple as possible and focus on changing incentives and thus mindsets.

The study concludes with lessons for the funder community more generally from IFAD's 20 years of experience of mainstreaming scaling. It notes that (a) mainstreaming is a long-term process that requires a systematic and comprehensive approach and persistence; (b) sustainable impact at scale must be an explicit part of the vision, mission and strategy statements of the organization, but scaling is not just another corporate priority since it is foundational in underpinning successful implementation at scale of all other priorities; (c) scaling needs clear and sustained leadership from the top if it is to be mainstreamed throughout the organization, but it also needs to be owned by mid-level managers and front-line teams; (d) governance bodies can be helpful as authorizing environment and commitment mechanism to keep the mainstreaming process on track by requiring the monitoring and reporting of corporate scaling metrics; (e) scaling needs to be guided by operational policies and processes, but also not be yet another unfunded mandate pushed on front-line staff; (f) in particular, partnership management and policy engagement need to be adequately resourced and ideally led by (decentralized) staff in country; (g) mainstreaming needs a dedicated organizational anchor; (h) evidence on implementation of the mainstreaming process and its impact is essential, including scaling metrics, long-term tracking of scaling impact, and independent evaluations at project and corporate level; and, finally, (i) communication – internal and external – is an important component of a mainstreaming strategy.

Since under most circumstances, each of these factors is necessary, but not sufficient on its own, the mainstreaming agenda may appear to be overwhelming, and indeed it is important not to minimize the challenge it represents. Like any other significant change, the mainstreaming of scaling needs to be carefully planned and implemented as a comprehensive and sustained effort that might stretch over a multi-year year period. The advantage of funders today is that they do not have to learn about scaling from scratch, as did IFAD. The scaling community now has a much better understanding of the why, what and how of scaling than it did twenty years ago. Mainstreaming scaling will make the difference between a funder supporting one-off projects and pilots-to-nowhere as against funding initiatives that represent important steps along the pathway to sustainable impact at scale.

Introduction

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) was founded in 1977 in response to a major global food crisis. IFAD is a UN agency and an international financial institution that supports agricultural and rural development programs in low and middle income countries with grants and long-term low-interest loans, as well as with technical and policy advice. IFAD is owned and governed by its 177 member countries. It is funded through replenishments of its resources by its member countries every three years and since 2022 by issuing bonds in the financial markets. It has a total staff of over 800, of whom about 60% percent are currently located at its headquarter in Rome, Italy, with the remaining staff mostly located in borrowing countries. IFAD financing and technical assistance is provided to recipient governments in connection with specific projects that typically last five to seven years and tend to fall in the range of USD 20-100 million with an average loan size of USD 39 million.[1] Since its foundation, IFAD has made USD 23.2 billion in grants and loans, and currently commits some USD 1.1 billion in new financing annually.[2]

IFAD's governance bodies consist of (a) the Governing Council made up of senior officials of all member countries, in which all powers of the Fund are vested and which, inter alia, appoints the president, approves the administrative budget and adopts policies and regulations;[3] (b) the Executive Board, which approves IFAD's program of work, its projects, programs and grants, and institutional policy, the annual administrative budget, applications for membership and staffing within the Fund, subject to final approval by the Governing Council, where appropriate;[4] and (c) the Replenishment Consultation, which is a committee of member country representatives established by the Governing Council at regular intervals (every three years, in practice) to review the availability of resources for IFAD's operations and to prepare a report for the approval of the Council outlining the commitments that IFAD has agreed to undertake and the pledges of contributions from Member States.[5] IFAD also has an Independent Office of Evaluation (IOE), which reports to the Executive Board.

IFAD is in some respects a unique organization for the purposes of the Mainstreaming Initiative, since it combines the following features:

- It is a mid-sized, full-service official multilateral financial institution, i.e., not a "pass-through" fund that channels its resources through other financial institutions;

- It is a vertical fund, i.e., it focuses on a specific sector/thematic area (agriculture and rural development), rather than dealing with multiple sectors/thematic areas as is the case for many official multilateral and bilateral development funding agencies; however, in contrast to many other vertical funds, its remit is broadly sectoral rather than focused on narrow subsectoral targets (such as the Global Fund for HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria – GF);

- Contrary to many other vertical funds (such as the GF) and UN agencies (e.g., UNICEF) it does not only provide grants, but also credits and loans, and it finances itself in part through market borrowing; and

- Most importantly, IFAD has pursued efforts to mainstream scaling in its operational approach for about 20 years.

[1] According to IFAD staff, average project size is USD 93 million, with the difference accounted for by national and international cofinancing.
[2] For more information about IFAD see its website: https://www.ifad.org/en/about
[3] https://www.ifad.org/en/governing-council
[4] https://www.ifad.org/en/executive-board
[5] https://www.ifad.org/en/replenishment

The purpose of this case study is two-fold: first, to review the journey of IFAD's efforts to mainstream scaling and draw lessons for the wider development and funder community as part of the action-research project undertaken by the Scaling Community of Practice; second, to support IFAD in its current efforts to intensify its focus on scaling in its operational work. The paper will therefore end with a set of recommendations for IFAD and with a set of general lessons for funders. Like all the other case studies under the Mainstreaming Initiative of the Scaling Community of Practice, this case study focuses principally on whether, when and how IFAD has pursued mainstreaming of scaling as a change management process and the extent to which this has been reflected in project design and implementation. It does not focus on whether this has led to more effective scaling up in IFAD-supported programs or what has been the longer term development impact of scaling efforts. These questions are clearly important, but go beyond the scope of this study.

Box 1: What this report means by "Mainstreaming" – a point of clarification for IFAD readers

In IFAD the term "mainstreaming" is used to refer to the institutional commitment of mainstreaming the specific crosscutting operational priorities of environment and climate change, gender, nutrition and youth into its country strategies and financing operations. In contrast, this report uses the term "mainstreaming" as a shorthand for "mainstreaming scaling" into IFAD's country strategies and financing operations.

It must be stressed that this case study is not a formal evaluation following standard evaluation guidelines, but a high-level review and assessment of IFAD's mainstreaming journey over twenty years, carried out with limited resources and in a short span of time. The approach for gathering information for this case study involved 16 virtual interviews with current and former managers and staff of IFAD (see Annex 1) and a review of relevant documentation[6] carried out by the author in July-August 2023. In addition, the author could rely on his personal recollections and insights, since he had led an in-depth institutional scaling review of IFAD carried out by a team of experts from the Brookings Institution during 2009-2013 with funding from IFAD and in cooperation with IFAD staff. The author also served as Chair of three IFAD Replenishment Consultations (IFAD9 in 2011/12, IFAD10 in 2014/15, and IFAD11 in 2017/18), which involved, inter alia, consideration by IFAD's governing bodies and management of IFAD's approach to scaling. The author also was peer reviewer of IFAD's recent effort to refresh its scaling approach.[7]

The strengths of this approach are (a) a long-term perspective with insights from key actors involved in IFAD's past and current journey of mainstreaming scaling, (b) access to a rich body of documentation, including an independent evaluation of IFAD's scaling experience, and (c) the first-hand observation of the mainstreaming process by the author for extended periods. Weaknesses, due mostly to constraints of time and resources, are (a) the limited number of interviews, in particular that there were no interviews with project team leaders and staff and with recipients; (b) the lack of detailed analysis of operational policies, guidelines, budgets, management and staff incentives, training documents and practices; and (c) possible biases of the author as a participant-observer of the IFAD mainstreaming process.

This paper is organized as follows: The Section 2 presents IFAD's mainstreaming journey since 2002 across five distinct phases. Section 3 assesses how 14 factors representing enabling conditions have been acting as drivers and facilitators – or as barriers – of the mainstreaming process. Section 4 summarizes the main conclusions, offers recommendations, for IFAD's management and draws lessons for the wider development and funder community.

[6] All IFAD reports are referenced in footnotes with electronic links provided where available. Other documentation is referenced in footnotes as "Author name(Year)", with full titles and links where available shown in Annex 2.
[7] IFAD. "IFAD's Operational Framework for Scaling Results." Programme Management Department. October 2023.

IFAD's Mainstreaming Journey – A Long-term Engagement with Many Ups and a Few Downs

This section summarizes the IFAD journey in its efforts to mainstream scaling systematically into its funding operations over the last 20 years. The period can be subdivided into five distinct phases: (i) early efforts (pre-2009); (ii) intensive analysis and development of a systematic approach to scaling (2009-2012); (iii) mainstreaming scaling in IFAD's operational approach (2013-2017); (iv) a partial pause in IFAD's scaling focus during major organizational reform and COVID pandemic (2018-2021); and (v) resumption of the mainstreaming agenda (2022-23). A brief summary of major features for each phase is presented below. While these phases show distinct characteristics in terms of the mainstreaming efforts undertaken, the dividing lines between them are not always sharply drawn as various factors (e.g., leadership changes or reorganizations) were staggered or took time to take hold.

Pre-2009: Early mainstreaming efforts – recognition that scaling matters for IFAD

The idea that innovation needs to be complemented by learning and scaling of successful interventions gained some attention in development circles in the 1990s and more so in the 2000s. The pioneering work by Peter Uvin on scaling interventions against hunger and poverty was perhaps most relevant for IFAD's work[8], but others also focused on scaling successful development interventions, including James D. Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, who organized a big international conference on the global experience with scaling in Shanghai in 2004 that led to the publication of two influential books on the topic[9] and who in 2005 supported the creation of the Wolfensohn Center for Development at the Brookings Institution with its research agenda on scaling development interventions.[10] Others also pursued the scaling agenda at that time, including Larry Cooley and Richard Kohl at MSI and Ruth Simmons and her colleagues at ExpandNet,[11] but more generally scaling had not yet become a significant concern in the development and development finance community.

IFAD began to focus on scaling during the early 2000s in recognition of the fact that as a mid-size development funding agency its projects on their own could not expect to contribute sufficiently to addressing the global agriculture, rural development and food security challenges.[12] Its Strategic Framework 2002-2006 stated that IFAD "has to become more systematic in identifying, validating and scaling up innovation."[13] At about the same time, IFAD's Independent Office of Evaluation (IOE) carried out an evaluation entitled "IFAD's Capacity as a Promoter of Replicable Innovations in Cooperation with other Partners," which noted that "IFAD had "not put sufficient emphasis on the identification of innovative and capable actors and institutions and the development of strategic alliances and partnerships to support the promotion and scaling up of innovations."[14] The 2002 evaluation document noted that "the ultimate goal of any project extends beyond 'direct impact' to achieving replicability and scaling up of successful innovative approaches" and presented a broad scaling framework and recommendations for modifying IFAD's funding processes to promote replication and scaling up of successful innovations, including staff hiring and training.[15]

IFAD's focus on scaling continued with its Strategic Framework 2007-2010, the 2007 Innovation Strategy, the 2007 Knowledge Management Strategy and in the commitments IFAD made during the

[8] Uvin (1995)
[9] Moreno-Dotson (2005); IFAD staff participated in the conference.
[10] Gertz (2017); Hartmann and Linn (2008a)
[11] Cooley and Kohl (2006); Simmons, Fajans and Ghiron (2007)
[12] The information presented in this and the next paragraph draws on the historical section in the evaluation of IFAD's scaling approach carried out by IFAD's Independent Office of Evaluation in 2017 (IOE Evaluation Synthesis Report 2017; https://webapps.ifad.org/members/ec/96/docs/EC-2017-96-W-P-6.pdf)
[13] IFAD. Strategic Framework for 2002-2006. Enabling the rural poor to overcome their poverty. 2002.
[14] https://www.ifad.org/en/web/ioe/w/evaluation-of-ifad-s-capacity-as-a-promoter-of-replicable-innovation
[15] https://webapps.ifad.org/members/ec/96/docs/EC-2017-96-W-P-6.pdf

consultations and documentation in 2008 for the eighth replenishment of IFAD's resources (IFAD8 for 2010-12). These documents stressed the links of innovation, learning and scaling up, as well as the importance of integrating IFAD projects into broader programs, of hand-off to partners, and of policy reform and knowledge management in support of scaling. The IFAD8 commitments included setting a target for "innovation, learning and/or scaling up" in projects (90 percent at least moderately satisfactory at entry, 80 percent at implementation and 75 percent at completion).

2009-2012: Intensive analysis and development of a systematic approach to scaling

During the second half of the 2000s, a small team of experts of the Wolfensohn Center for Development at Brookings was working on developing a systematic approach to scaling in development based on a review of research and practice.[16] Its recommendations included a call for the preparation of institutional scaling reviews by funder organizations in the form of "a scaling up audit" with independent outside input. "This audit would assess how far the agency focuses on scaling up and what changes are needed to induce more systematic and effective scaling up efforts. Project preparation manuals and operational policies should be amended to reflect the need for scaling up. Country and sector strategies as well as project documents should address scaling up explicitly."[17]

Early in 2009, the Brookings team approached IFAD's Associate Vice President (AVP) for operations, with the question whether IFAD would be interested in carrying out such an institutional scaling review with the support of the Brookings team. The AVP and IFAD's President accepted this idea, due to their interest in strengthening IFAD's impact at scale and based on the realization that IFAD needed to do more to turn itself into a scaling organization. They were focused laser-sharp on achieving sustainable impact at scale for IFAD – for example, in 2012 they set a target for IFAD reaching 90 million poor people and taking 80 million out of poverty.[18] The Brookings team worked with IFAD colleagues in two stages over four years, funded by two IFAD grants: A first, exploratory stage (2009-10) reviewed then prevailing operational practice in IAFD from a scaling perspective, adapted the Brookings scaling framework for application by IFAD (see Annex 3 for the framework and framing questions developed by the Brookings/IFAD team), and recommended a basic approach to mainstreaming scaling in IFAD.[19] During the second stage (2011-12) the team reviewed selected areas in greater depth (eight country case studies; institutions and partnerships for scaling; monitoring, evaluation and managing for scaling; scaling in agricultural value chains; and IFAD's operational modalities for scaling).[20]

The first stage of the Brookings institutional scaling review coincided with the preparation by IFAD's IOE of an evaluation on "IFAD's Capacity to Promote Innovation and Scaling Up", with its report also published in 2010.[21] This evaluation and the Brookings/IFAD institutional review concurred in their principal conclusions:

- IFAD had identified scaling up as an institutional goal, but so far tended to lump together innovation, learning and scaling;
- IFAD had good examples of scaling up; they provide useful lessons that need to be distilled;
- But scaling up was not systematically integrated into IFAD's operational practice;

[16] Gertz et al. (2017) and Hartmann and Linn (2008a)
[17] Hartmann and Linn (2008b) p. 7. The term "scaling up audit" was eventually replaced by the term "institutional scaling review", as representing a less daunting proposition for donor agencies.
[18] Hartmann et al. (2013)
[19] Linn et al. (2010)
[20] Hartmann et al. (2013)
[21] https://ioe.ifad.org/en/w/ifad-s-capacity-to-promote-innovation-and-scaling-up

- IFAD needed a systematic approach to scaling in its operational policies, processes, instruments, evaluations, resource allocation and staff incentives.

And the two assessments broadly agreed in their recommendations, including

- Treat scaling as "mission critical" for IFAD;
- Systematically address scaling in IFAD country strategies and in all stages of the project cycle, with larger projects better suited to pursue scaling goals;
- Intensify knowledge work, policy dialogue and partnerships;
- Increase staff incentives and capacity to support scaling; and
- Keep the scaling approach and processes as simple as possible.

The second stage of the Brookings review resulted in detailed analysis and recommendations in each of the main areas of its assessment and recommended a comprehensive set of recommended steps for follow-up by management, including:

- update the main operational processes to reflect a systematic scaling approach;
- establish midterm reviews of projects as a key management instrument for ensuring an effective focus on scaling during project implementation;
- review the scaling experience in each major business line;
- introduce scaling modules in standard operational training programs (for staff, country tams and consultants);
- explore outreach activities to help disseminate the scaling idea in the rural development community at country level;
- design incentive mechanisms, especially the use of IFAD's grant program to support operational scaling initiatives; and
- build on IFAD's lead position among donor agencies in regard to the scaling agenda and promote its wider acceptance.

Three aspects of the Brookings/IFAD review are worth noting: (a) the team had access to and the support of IFAD's senior management throughout its work; (b) all work was carried out in close collaboration with a senior IFAD staff member who also had responsibility for the management review process of IFAD's country assistance strategies, who joined the team as a member and co-author during the second stage; who supported the team in engaging frequently with IFAD managers and staff; and (c) the team's findings were published as Brookings working papers and widely disseminated to other funders and stakeholders in the development community. A summary stocktake of IFAD's experience was published in 2012 as part of a set of IFPRI policy briefs on scaling in agriculture, rural development and nutrition.[22]

The results of the evaluation and of the Brookings review also began to be reflected in IFAD's high-level strategic statements and commitments, including in its "Strategic Framework 2011-2017," and in the policy commitments under the 9th Replenishment (IFAD9). (See Box 2) Moreover, the IFAD9 report

[22] The stocktake was prepared by Cheikh Sourang, who served as IFAD's principal contact point for the Brookings team, see Sourang (2012).

stipulated a separate target for scaling in projects with "90 per cent of projects rated moderately satisfactory or better at completion regarding replication and scaling up."[23]

Box 2: Scaling in IFAD's Strategic Framework 2011-2017 and IFAD9 Replenishment Report

Strategic Framework 2011-2017:
"Scale up successful approaches and innovations, when appropriate, by treating scaling up as 'mission critical', and building on recent efforts to better understand the preconditions for successful scaling up and to systematize IFAD's approach in this regard; and review existing policies and strategies on knowledge management and innovation to develop an integrated innovation, learning and scaling-up strategy focused particularly on RB-COSOPs and projects."

IFAD9 Commitment:
"Strengthen country programme development, monitoring and management processes to ensure systematic attention to scaling up, broader partnership-building, more rigorous policy analysis, and active engagement in national policy dialogue on agriculture and rural development. Strengthen knowledge management processes to enhance IFAD's capacity to better capture and harness evidence-based knowledge for scaling up."

Sources: SF 2011-2017; IFAD9 report

2013-2017: Mainstreaming scaling in IFAD's operations (2014-2017)[24]

Following up on the findings of the scaling evaluation and the Brookings institutional review, IFAD's senior management decided to push forward with implementing many of the recommendations of these two assessments in support of mainstreaming scaling in IFAD operations. They were very supportive of the scaling agenda developed by the Brookings/IFAD team and handed responsibility of the mainstreaming process in 2013 to IFAD's Policy and Technical Advisory Division (PTA) under the leadership of its director, Adolfo Brizzi.

The mainstreaming process focused on six main areas:

IFAD's Operational Framework for Scaling Up Results (2015):[25]

With the assistance of a consultant, PTA prepared an Operational Framework document. It refined the analytical framework developed by the Brookings/IFAD team (see Annex 4) and presented detailed guidance on how scaling was to be integrated into IFAD's country strategy formulation and into the processes governing project preparation, supervision and quality reviews. The framework also addressed the leveraging of partnerships with public, private, international and community actors, knowledge management and policy dialogue, and assessment and managing risks associated with scaling. Guiding questions were inserted into project design and focus of quality at entry reviews, less so in Quality Assurance reviews. Key was to present as part of normal business, not an add on.

IFAD10 Replenishment consultations (2014/15)

IFAD management used the IFAD10 replenishment consultations for active promotion of its scaling agenda, with the presentation and discussion of a paper on its scaling agenda that identified scaling as "mission critical" for IFAD, previewed the analytical framework of the Operational Framework, and contained a "detailed roadmap for mainstreaming the scaling agenda" (See Annex 5). The IFAD10 consultation report committed IFAD to implement its ambitious mainstreaming agenda and set a target of having 90 per cent of projects rated moderately satisfactory or better at completion regarding innovation and scaling up.

[23] https://webapps.ifad.org/members/ec/96/docs/EC-2017-96-W-P-6.pdf)
[24] This section draws on the history of IFAD's scaling efforts in the Synthesis Evaluation 2017 (https://webapps.ifad.org/members/ec/96/docs/EC-2017-96-W-P-6.pdf)
[25] https://www.ifad.org/en/-/document/ifad-s-operational-framework-for-scaling-up-resul-1

IFAD's Strategic Framework 2016-2025

This ten-year strategic framework, which is still in place in 2023, identifies scaling (along with innovation and learning) as one of the five principles of engagement for IFAD (see Box 3).

Box 3: Scaling up in IFAD's Strategic Framework 2016-2025

"Innovation, learning and scaling up. Business as usual is not an option for achieving the SDGs and, like many other development partners, IFAD is compelled to increase the impact of every dollar it invests. For these reasons, during the framework period IFAD will comprehensively pursue an agenda that focuses on innovation, learning from that innovation, and scaling up successes for expanded and sustainable impact. Concretely, the agenda aims to support countries to broaden successful pro-poor rural development models, widen their geographical coverage and reach larger numbers of people. It is predicated on bringing successful approaches through strengthened partnerships to government, development agencies and the private sector to support enhancement of national policies, programmes and practices, and expand investments in the rural sector."

Source: IFAD Strategic Framework 2016-2025, p. 19

Knowledge management

During 2015-16 IFAD produced ten Country Scaling-up Notes (Bangladesh, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Mauritania, Nigeria, Peru and Sudan), eight Thematic Scaling Notes (Climate-resilient agricultural development; Gender equality and women's empowerment; Inclusive rural financial services; Land tenure security; Nutrition-sensitive agriculture; Smallholder institutions and organizations; Smallholder livestock development; and Sustainable inclusion of smallholders in agricultural value chains), as well as a paper on IFAD's experience with project-level scaling in the Asia and Pacific region.

Dissemination, outreach and networking

IFAD developed an internet page that collected its own knowledge documents for internal and external dissemination, including a self-training module teaching the basic concepts and approaches in scaling for IFAD: https://www.ifad.org/en/scaling-up-results.[26] Moreover, IFAD became a founding member of the international Scaling Community of Practice (CoP) in 2015 (www.scalingcommunityofpractice.com) and one of IFAD's senior staff members very effectively chaired the CoP's Agriculture and Rural Development Working Group until her reassignment in IFAD in the late 2010s.

Evaluation of IFAD's scaling approach

In 2016 IOE carried out a high-level ("synthesis") evaluation of IFAD's experience with mainstreaming scaling.[27] This evaluation focused on the period 2002-2015, with special attention to the years 2010-1015. The main conclusions of the evaluation can be summarized as follows:

- IFAD's approach to scaling is sound and it is a leader among funder agencies in its sustained and intensive efforts to mainstream scaling.
- But IFAD's mainstreaming of scaling remains work in progress as it faces a number of challenges. These include:
- There is a need to remain focused on scaling during project implementation.

[26] For a number of years the IFAD scaling website also posted relevant scaling materials from outside IFAD, with a special emphasis on scaling agricultural and rural development interventions. This practice was discontinued in the late 2010s.

[27] https://webapps.ifad.org/members/ec/96/docs/EC-2017-96-W-P-6.pdf

- IFAD needs to assess scalability more systematically and collect more evidence in support of scaling during project implementation.
- Country ownership and IFAD country presence are essential.
- More attention needs to be paid to partnership and policy dialogue.
- Resources for non-lending work are often insufficient.
- Staff remain skeptical that scaling is more than a theoretical concept.

The report recommended (a) more effective integration of scaling in IFAD's country programs and project operations, (b) building stronger consensus in-house on scaling; (c) focusing on evidence that the scaling pathway is being developed, not merely on "potential" for scaling, when setting targets for scaling metrics and monitoring progress; and (d) rating innovation and scaling separately in project and country program evaluations.

2018-2021: A partial pause in further mainstreaming scaling[28]

Between 2009 and 2017 IFAD had made considerable progress in developing a systematic approach to scaling in its operations, as documented above in the preceding two subsections. However, for a variety of reasons that will be further explored in Section 3, the scaling agenda had not yet been mainstreamed into frontline operational work, as documented in the 2017 evaluation. The subsequent four years (2018-2021), saw what amounted to a partial pause in the mainstreaming effort.

During this period a new senior management team, led by a new IFAD President with no apparent interest in scaling[29], focused on organizational reform, with a major effort to decentralize IFAD staff from its headquarters in Rome to country and regional offices closer to the client and to recalibrate IFAD's business model to focus more on the effective operational delivery of fewer and larger projects. IFAD's management also focused much attention on the other mainstreaming agendas (see Box 1 above) and on expanding the financial base of IFAD by successfully seeking access to the financial markets by getting a credit rating and floating bonds in the capital markets.[30] At the same time, there were also significant changes in the organizational structure of the operational and strategy units of IFAD. While the organizational focus on the mainstreaming areas other than scaling was strengthened, the team in the operational vice presidency that had been working on the scaling agenda was broken up. The PTA director who had provided strong intellectual and managerial leadership to the mainstreaming agenda, was moved to another position in 2017 and retired in 2018. The senior staff, who had supported him also transferred to another post with other responsibilities, thus eliminating the core of managerial and staff engagement on the mainstreaming agenda. More generally, there was significant turnover in managerial and staff positions in IFAD's operational units and hence a loss of institutional memory regarding the scaling agenda. The arrival of the COVID pandemic in early 2020 and the resulting demands on management and staff to keep basic financing operations going under extraordinarily difficult circumstances further diverted attention from longer term strategic challenges.

As a result of these cumulative events, much of the work dedicated to systematically promoting the further mainstreaming of scaling in IFAD appears to have stopped during this phase.[31] There was no follow-up by management to the scaling synthesis evaluation. New knowledge work on scaling largely

[28] This section draws on interviews with former and current IFAD staff and managers.
[29] According to interviews.
[30] On 8 June 2022 IFAD issued its first bond for USD 100 million (https://www.ifad.org/en/web/latest/-/ifad-s-bond-issuance-marks-milestone-connecting-capital-markets-to-rural-poor-around-the-world?p_l_back_url=%2Fen%2Fweb%2Flatest%2Fgallery).
[31] Interviewees used terms such as "hiatus", "dilution" and "scaling was lost in transition".

ceased, and the IFAD scaling website atrophied with virtually no new additions after 2016.[32] IFAD withdrew from participation in the Scaling Community of Practice. Attention to scaling in the quality assurance reviews for country strategies and projects reportedly also dropped. Indications are that scaling once again was largely left to the initiative of individual program managers and task team leaders. In effect, the scaling agenda was crowded out by other corporate priorities and what could have been a continued mainstreaming effort designed to drive the scaling agenda systematically into the front-line operational practice of IFAD's country teams largely dissipated.

However, the pause can also be seen as partial. According to IFAD's current Associate Vice President for operations, while scaling was less in the forefront of operational activity during 2018-2021, IFAD's organizational foundation for scaling was actually strengthened by the reorganization and decentralization during these years. With fewer and larger projects IFAD and with a majority of its operational staff located in country offices or regional hubs, rather than in Rome, IFAD will be better able to pursue a scaling agenda in future, because of its greater leverage and proximity to local and international partners on the ground. Moreover, a more selective, nimble, adaptive and decentralized approach to managing IFAD's funding operations and a greater focus on non-lending engagement in country, esp. on policy dialogue and partnerships, allow for a more effective pursuit of the scaling objective.[33] However, as a result of the failure to implement the scaling approach that had been developed in the previous period and since the recommendations of the independent evaluation were not implemented, IFAD's scaling performance, as measured by its own performance metrics remained weak throughout the period. (Box 4) Much then depends on how IFAD builds on these enhanced institutional conditions as it now revives its mainstreaming agenda.

Box 4. IFAD project's performance remains weak on the scaling metric during 2018-2021

IOE produces ratings for scaling under IFAD projects, which complement the self-assessment ratings by IFAD's management. They show that the average ratings for scaling performance in recent years have been lower for IOE than for IFAD management's project completion report (PCR) ratings, and that both ratings have decreased for project cohorts from 2012-2014 to 2019-2021. The different ratings for IOE and management can be explained by the fact that IOE applied a more rigorous methodology (requiring demonstration of efforts to ensure scalability) than management. The decline in ratings between 2012-2014 and 2015-2017 may be due to two factors: first, the fact that in the earlier years innovation and scaling were rated together, and, second, that evaluations became generally stricter in their assessment of scalability as a result of the more explicit focus on scaling between 2002 and 2016.

Figure 1. IOE and IFAD (PCR) project performance ratings on the scaling metric

Note: PCR = project completion report
Source: ARIE 2023. P. 62 ;
https://www.ifad.org/en/web/ioe/w/2023-annual-report-on-the-independent-evaluation-of-ifad

[32] After 2016, only four items were posted: the case study of scaling in the Asia and Pacific region, which had been completed in 2016; a grants results sheet on a scaling initiative in supported by an IFAD grant in Africa in 2018; an infographic brochure on IFAD's approach to scaling in 2018; and a virtual self-training module on scaling in 2019.

[33] One of the interviewees also noted that the replenishment policy documents for IFAD11 and 12 retained a focus on scaling, and in particular that the IFAD12 policy document mandated the preparation of an updated scaling strategy. During this period, IFAD's policy agenda during this period also included the strengthening of policy engagement and of strategic partnership. Moreover, the corporate target for IFAD's projects evaluated as (moderately) satisfactory from a scaling perspective was raised to from 90 to 95 percent, and while actual ratings fell significantly short of the target (as they had done previously), there was no deterioration in the ratings during this period (see Figure 1). Finally, IFAD's performance on policy dialogue improved over the years 2018-2022 (ARIE 2023, p. 18; https://www.ifad.org/en/web/ioe/w/2023-annual-report-on-the-independent-evaluation-of-ifad).

2022-2023: Revival of the mainstreaming agenda

After having been pushed to the margins of IFAD's institutional priorities, IFAD's scaling agenda saw a revival starting in 2022.

The paper on IFAD's business model and financial framework prepared for the IFAD13 Replenishment Consultations summarizes the main changes in IFAD's business model since 2016 and plans for further changes through 2027. From a scaling perspective it is particular notable that the paper stresses cofinancing with national and international partners for greater impact at scale and an associated focus on IFAD's Program of Work (PoW), which includes cofinancing, rather than only on its Program of Loans and Grants (PoLG). For 2022-2027, the paper also promises increased reliance on multiphased programmatic project approached and for 2025-2027 a "focus on scalability and sustainability," with a special focus on partnerships, policy engagement and innovation.[34]

Another area of progress during the last two years has been the development of an institution-wide definition of scaling, agreed between IOE and IFAD management as part of the preparation of IFAD's revised Evaluation Manual produced in 2022. It stresses the importance of partner engagement and hand-off by IFAD of its projects to others for scaling.[35] And it eliminates the past difference between IOE and management in the approach to measuring the quality of scaling in programs and projects. Management had used a loose concept of "potential for scaling", while IOE had required the identification of specific steps taken during project implementation that increases the likelihood that partners will scale up the intervention after IFAD's project is completed. The IOE approach has now been adopted also by management. Beyond this, the new Evaluation Manual provides clear and detailed guidance to evaluators on how to assess the scaling dimensions of IFAD projects and programs.[36]

A further indication that "scaling is back" in IFAD is the fact that scaling and sustainability were two of the three deep-dive areas of IFAD management's annual "Stocktake" of operational activity in July 2023. Drawing on more detailed submissions by IFAD's five regional operational departments, the Stocktake presented the main elements of the updated scaling framework (see below), summarized an analysis of recent scaling performance according to the standard results metrics, noted the links to sustainability and other performance areas of IFAD, and presented three country examples of successful scaling. It closed with three takeaways: (a) IFAD's projects need to be scaled up by others; (b) scaling needs to be better understood across IFAD; and (c) IFAD needs to foster partnerships, government ownership and better knowledge management. (See Annex 6)

Commitments regarding sustainability and scaling made in connection with IFAD's 12th Replenishment Consultations (2020-21) also contributed to reviving the focus on scaling over the past two years. Since the ratings of IFAD projects for sustainability and scaling had been persistently lower than targeted and declining in recent years, IFAD management committed to produce during the IFAD12 consultation an action plan on sustainability and an updated scaling framework. A Sustainability Action Plan was completed in December 2022.[37] It recognizes the close linkage between sustainability and scaling[38] and

[34] Ref: IFAD13 Business Model and Financial Framework, IFAD Doc. IFAD13/2/R.2, 2023
https://webapps.ifad.org/members/repl/13/2/docs/IFAD13-2-R-2.pdf

[35] "Scaling up takes place when: (i) bi- and multilateral partners, the private sector and communities adopt and disseminate the solution tested by IFAD; (ii) other stakeholders invest resources to bring the solution at scale; and (iii) the government applies a policy framework to generalize the solution tested by IFAD (from practice to policy)." Ref. IFAD Evaluation Manual, Part 1, p. 47
https://ioe.ifad.org/documents/38714182/45756354/IFAD-2022-IFAD-EVALUATION-MANUAL-COMPLETE-def.pdf/05bd1a53-26ee-c493-b1a0-2fc3050deb80

[36] Linn and Yilmaz 2024 (under preparation)

[37] IFAD Action Plan for Sustainability of Benefits. December 2022.

[38] The scaling literature has long recognized the close link between sustainability and scaling; e.g., Cooley and Linn (2014) and Scaling Community of Practice (2022).

highlights a number of factors that have limited sustainability of IFAD's projects, many of which also have limited scalability and scaling. The sustainability action plan is designed to address these challenges.[39]

Most importantly, an updated framework for scaling is currently under has recently been completed and approved by IFAD management.[40] This document recognizes the importance for IFAD of an effective focus on achieving sustainable impact at scale: "With less than 10 years remaining to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, IFAD's capacity to leverage the impact of its operations is crucial. Key to this is the extent to which the net benefits of IFAD's interventions and strategies are sustainable and are brought to scale by government authorities, development partners, the private sector and other agencies and stakeholders." (p. 2) The paper notes IFAD's declining performance on the scaling metric since 2012 (see Box 4 above) and develops a pragmatic operational approach to scaling that is intended to offer guidance to IFAD's operational managers and frontline staff.

Drawing on the concepts and lessons of the earlier scaling approach developed by Brookings and IFAD in the period 2009-2017, on the findings of the IOE evaluation of IFAD's scaling experience in 2017, and on recent operational experience and scaling examples, the updated framework represents a comprehensive institutional approach to scaling. It aims to incorporate scaling aspects into IFAD's operational practice (country strategies, project appraisal, project implementation and project completion), stressing that scaling has to be considered at the outset of and throughout the project cycle, not just at the end. It also notes the importance of policy dialogue, of partnerships with public, private, community and development partner counterparts supported by long-standing country presence, and stresses the role of evidence of impact, and of effective harnessing of scaling experience (knowledge management). To help project teams and their managers, the framework develops a comprehensive set of questions for each stage of the project cycle. And it proposes a set of near-term actions to implement the mainstreaming of scaling that, if adopted and implemented, promise to advance the scaling mainstreaming agenda substantially. Due to its importance for the scaling mainstreaming process, Annex 7 presents the list of actions in full.

Overall assessment

Interviewees acknowledged overall progress since 2002, and especially after 2011 (IFAD9 and IFAD10 Replenishments), with a move from small, one-off projects to a more programmatic approach and greater selectivity, more focus on policies and institutional capacity, knowledge management, evaluations, etc. Moreover, after the pause in 2018-2021, there now appears to be a revival of attention to scaling in IFAD over the last two years. But those in front-line operational positions also noted that IFAD has not come far enough, that scaling is just one of many institutional priorities for IFAD and that, in the face of binding budget and staff constraints, it is difficult for project teams to focus sufficient attention systematically on the scaling agenda. Therefore, in effect, scaling is still opportunistic, not systematic, even as a well-articulated overall institutional approach to scaling exists in IFAD. So, clearly, challenges remain. The next section explores how different enabling or hindering factors affected the IFAD mainstreaming journey across the last twenty years during the five phases of mainstreaming experience summarized above.

[39] For the IFAD13 consultations, which were in progress during 2023, management prepared a paper on the IFAD13 Business Model and Financial Framework. Under the heading "Enhancing the sustainability and scalability of investments'' this paper notes that "[S]ustainability and scalability of results are key for the longer-term impact, which is a priority for client countries." (p. 18). https://webapps.ifad.org/members/repl/13/2/docs/IFAD13-2-R-2.pdf
[40] "IFAD's Operational Framework for Scaling Results" October 2023

Enabling Conditions – Drivers and Barriers for Mainstreaming Scaling in IFAD

Mainstreaming scaling in a funder organization requires that the enabling conditions are right or, in other words, that potential drivers for mainstreaming are in place and that potential obstacles and barriers are removed to the extent possible.[41] In this section we review internal fourteen potential drivers and barriers as they have affected IFAD's mainstreaming journey, recognizing what may be a driver at one time may turn into a barrier at another time. For example, leadership can be an important driver of mainstreaming, but it can just as well get in the way if leaders do not recognize the importance of scaling or actively discourage it inadvertently. In addition, the section briefly considers potential external constraints to IFAD's ability to support scaling.

Enabling conditions may be internal to an organization or external. This section first explores the internal ones – which are most relevant to the mainstreaming agenda – and then considers external ones. The former are under direct control of the organization, even if they may be difficult to address in practice, while the latter must generally be taken as given, at least in the short to medium term. Nonetheless, external factors need to be taken into account in designing mainstreaming strategies.

Leadership

Leadership is generally considered to be the single most important factor in driving change, including mainstreaming of scaling, in an organization. Leadership at the top of the organization is probably most important, but it also matters at middle management levels and in task team leadership, as the case of IFAD demonstrates.

During the two phases of deliberate and strong mainstreaming – 2009-2013 and 2014-2017 – there was strong and concerted leadership in the senior management team of IFAD, with the President and the Associate Vice President for operations supporting the analytical phase of the process during 2009-2013 and then the implementation phase during 2014-2017. They widely communicated the clear message that "Scaling is mission critical" for IFAD, including with the Board of Directors and in the Replenishment Consultations, in meetings with managers and staff, and in external communications, publications and events. They assured that the methodological and evidence base for a mainstreaming effort was established (through the Brookings-IFAD institutional scaling review), and they put in place a process, organizational structure and resources to implement the mainstreaming agenda. In short, they pursued the mainstreaming agenda as a principal institutional priority.

One of the key decisions of the top leadership during these years was to appoint and empower staff and managers at middle levels who would manage the analytical implementation process and the implementation process respectively. These individuals provided strong leadership at their respective levels in driving the mainstreaming process. As a result much progress was made in terms of putting in place key elements of the mainstreaming agenda during those years. The leadership team for mainstreaming was complemented at the staff level with a senior staff appointed to manage the day-to-day implementation of the mainstreaming process. She also showed strong leadership as the first co-chair of the Agriculture and Rural Development Working Group of the Scaling Community of Practice. It positioned IFAD as a lead player in the international scaling community at the time.

However, at the level of top leadership the priority given to scaling diminished significantly as a new President took over in 2017 and as senior management focused on new institutional priorities. The loss of attention at the top was compounded by loss of dedicated scaling leadership in the middle management and at staff levels, as the relevant people were moved or retired and were not replaced. As

[41] Mainstreaming is in many ways a scaling process, subject to similar principles and lessons (see Scaling Community of Practice, 2022)

a result of these changes in leadership, as noted earlier, the effort to mainstream scaling took a pause: new knowledge work on scaling stopped, and scaling played a reduced role in management's attention in country strategy design and in project appraisal and supervision. The focus on scaling by management in Board meetings and the Replenishment Consultations dropped. And IFAD retreated from an external lead role on the scaling agenda and stopped participating in the Scaling Community of Practice. Fortunately, scaling did not disappear entirely from IFAD's corporate priorities: Scaling targets were raised in IFAD 12 (to 95%) and the IFAD12 replenishment paper (2020) included direct commitments with scaling, sustainability, partnerships, and policy engagement. In this period IFAD also released its Partnership Framework (2019), while regional and PMD periodic stock-takes focused on areas such as sustainability, country level policy engagement, partnerships or co-financing.

Throughout the process of mainstreaming scaling at IFAD, two other leadership groups played an important role, judging from the interviews. First, most Regional Directors of IFAD's operational units did not actively push the corporate mainstreaming agenda and possibly were relieved when it lost in salience during 2018-2021.[42] This served as a blockage in senior management's efforts to drive scaling down to the operational front lines. A second important group was that of Country Directors. These are the managers who design and oversee the design and implementation of country strategies. According to the interviews, some of them pursued scaling strategies proactively, while others did not.[43] Clearly, leadership at this level needs to be nurtured with appropriate appointments and incentives. The fact that the middle level operational managers did not systematically get incentivized to pursue scaling ended up as a significant barrier to the mainstreaming process.

A key lesson from the IFAD case is that leadership understanding, commitment and continuity at the top level of management level is critical for mainstreaming the scaling agenda, as is senior management's ability to drive mainstreaming throughout the management chain to front-line operational teams. However, leadership, while necessary, is not sufficient, not least because leaders may not be in place long enough to assure effective implementation of a mainstreaming agenda and/or because other factors may limit their ability to effect lasting change.

Vision and strategy

A clear vision of what scaling means for an organization, why it is important, and what is the desired long-term impact is an important element of a mainstreaming approach, with its basic elements clearly articulated in an organization's statement of strategy. This sense of vision was developed by IFAD as part of the groundwork laid by the Brookings/IFAD team during 2009-2012 and then reflected in successive IFAD strategy statements. The most recent IFAD Strategic Framework 2016-2025 contains a focus on scaling (see Box 2 above), as do previous strategic frameworks, as well as the replenishment documents, which also have a strategic purpose. During the pause (2018-2021) of IFAD's mainstreaming process, the IFAD 12 replenishment report retained references to the scaling objective, albeit with less of a central focus than previously. However, it did include the important commitment to prepare an updated scaling strategy, which led to the preparation of the updated IFAD Operational Framework in 2023. One of the main aims of this report is to clarify, harmonize and promote a vision of what scaling is in IFAD.

We noted earlier that IFAD management's target of poverty reduction announced in 2012 reflected an explicit scale goal and reinforced the mainstreaming focus at the time. IFAD has retained targets for its institutional impact since, but these are short-term (three-year) goals, rather than long-term scale goals

[42] One of the skeptical regional directors was appointed as AVP for Operations 2015-18; according to interviews he actively discouraged continuation of the mainstreaming agenda.

[43] In the case of the Ghana program in the 2010s, two successive country directors actively supported scaling strategies only to have a third country director abandon the approach once appointed, leading to a collapse of the scaling initiatives put in place by the predecessors. There are other examples of strong country program leadership, including in Peru in the 2010s, and in India, Brazil and Ethiopia in the 2020s.

and there apparently has been no effort to measure progress against long-term scale objectives.[44] One way to do so would be to express progress against the short-term targets as a percentage of a long-term goal.[45]

Overall, IFAD has had a consistent focus on scaling and impact at scale in its strategy documents, even as the centrality of the role of scaling varied over time. As with leadership, inclusion of scaling and scale objectives in vision and strategy statements is an important factor supporting mainstreaming, but it is not sufficient without the enabling factors also falling into place.

Designing and guiding the process for mainstreaming scaling

As for all major institutional change, mainstreaming of scaling requires planning, guiding, monitoring and evaluation. In the case of IFAD, there was no overarching plan for the entire mainstreaming process. However, planning, guiding, monitoring and evaluation took place at various times, if not consistently and comprehensively throughout.

Interviews generally noted that the work of the Brookings/IFAD team was formative in setting the foundation for the subsequent mainstreaming effort. Its final report recommended the development of "a systematic program of institutional change" and identified selected elements of such a program.[46] This was followed by the development of what in effect amounted to an action plan for mainstreaming scaling presented in a paper for the IFAD10 Replenishment in 2014.[47] The mainstreaming process during the period 2013-2017 was guided and monitored by PTA. After 2018 no such planning and guiding took place and no manager and staff was tasked with pursuing the mainstreaming agenda. However, the recently approved Updated Scaling Framework includes key elements of an action plan (see Annex 5).

Finally, the monitoring of quantitative targets of inclusion of scaling in country strategies and project documents was part of IFAD's results management framework since 2009 and has continued throughout. The fact that it showed a serious and persistent shortfall in IFAD's scaling performance during the last decade was a significant factor in convincing management that a review and updating of IFAD's scaling approach was needed. In this connection, the inclusion of a segment on scaling in the Annual Stocktake of IFAD operations represented a welcome opportunity to monitor how scaling is pursued in country programs and what are the lessons learned.

Operational processes for country strategies and projects

A key challenge for IFAD, as for other development finance organizations, has been to overcome the long-standing obstacles to scaling embedded in the time-bound, one-off project model. Under this approach, it has been common that the principal focus is on securing Board approval and on the timely disbursement of funds while observing prudential requirements, on applying innovative interventions,

---

[44] See this excerpt from the press release about the IFAD Impact Assessment Report 2019-2021: "According to its newly released IFAD Impact Assessment Report 2019-2021, IFAD's investments improved the incomes of 77.4 million rural people by at least 10 percent within the three-year period, compared to its target of 44 million. Over the same period, 62 million rural people saw their production, measured by the value of crop, livestock and fish production, rise; IFAD had set a target of 47 million. About 64 million rural people improved their access to markets, enabling them to sell their production, against a target of 46 million… … IFAD is the only international financial institution that measures the impact of its investments at corporate level. The Fund systematically conducts rigorous impact assessments on a sample of at least 15 percent of projects."
https://reliefweb.int/report/world/ifad11-impact-assessment-report-2019-2021

[45] Interviewees noted that measuring IFAD's long-term impact in relation to long-term scale goals is difficult, since it would require assessing for each project what has been its long-term contribution to the goal even after a project ends.

[46] Hartmann et al. (2013), p. 45.

[47] https://webapps.ifad.org/members/repl/10/3/docs/IFAD10-3-R-2.pdf?attach=1

and on achieving the promised development impact by the time the project is completed. Little or no attention was traditionally devoted to ensuring sustainability and scalability/scaling beyond project end.

The scaling approach recommended by the Brookings/IFAD team (2009-2012) and the subsequent approach embodied in the operational scaling framework developed during 2013-17 operational sought to change this by focusing the processes and procedures for project preparation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation on the scalability of project interventions. Sets of "guiding questions" were the preferred instrument for ensuring that the scaling issues were addressed by the project team, especially through an assessment of enabling conditions for project scalability. These questions were included in the IFAD's project implementation guidelines and remain in place today. In addition, emphasis was placed on using the country assistance strategy[48] formulation process to identify scaling opportunities, again aided by a set of questions to be pursued by the teams preparing the strategies. Important opportunities to check on the application of the scaling lens were the quality-at-entry reviews (QERs) early in project preparation process and the quality assurance reviews (QARs) at the end of the preparation process. Interviewees noted that while these steps were helpful in principle, in practice they were often applied pro forma.[49] Moreover, while the QER was a good opportunity to consider scaling aspects, the QAR was too late in the project preparation process to seriously address scaling issues. Interviewees from the operations group also noted that procurement and financial management requirements were not helpful for developing effective scaling approaches.

One interviewee noted that providing after-project follow up is a challenge for all IFIs and development institutions once the project is completed and no more budget resources are available for follow-up. However, he also noted that IFAD provides special care on planning and setting an exit strategy in which to articulate and leave the elements for providing sustainability, and promoting scalability. The extent to which such exit strategies are developed early enough in the project cycle could not be ascertained for this report.

The Updated Scaling Framework prepared in 2023 focuses explicitly on the operational processes, including country strategy formulation and project preparation and supervision. Like its predecessor in 2015 it has developed sets of guiding questions to help the operational staff address scalability issues. If applied effectively, this is a promising development.

Operational instruments

IFAD's operational instruments to support scaling consist of financial instruments, policy advice and capacity building.

The multiyear project loan (usually for 5-7 years)[50] has been and remains IFAD's basic financing instrument. Before 2009, there was little attention to scaling in the design and supervision of IFAD's project loans, but this began to change as IFAD focused more on its scaling agenda after 2009 and designed project processes that integrated scaling consideration into the preparation and supervision of project loans. Interviewees also note that adaptations of the traditional project loans allowed for selective support for scaling. This included (i) "topping up" of projects by adding additional resources for an extension of project activity; (ii) sequences of projects supporting replication and scaling of interventions in a particular country, as for example in IFAD's decades-long support for highland development in Peru;[51] (iii) "multiphase programmatic" financing under which IFAD commits to longer

[48] IFAD uses the abbreviation COSOP for its country assistance strategy documents.
[49] One interviewee note however that in recent years there is more serious scrutiny of the implementation of supervision and completion guidelines and a focus on reducing the disconnect between the self-evaluations carried out by management and the ex post evaluations of IOE.
[50] For the poorest and most highly indebted member countries, IFAD can also provide project grants instead of loans. These are to be distinguished from the grants provided under the IFAD grant program discussed in the next paragraph.
[51] Massler (2012)

terms financing to be delivered in sequential phases, where each new phase is conditioned on successful conclusion of the earlier phase; and (iv) "type C operations" under which IFAD supports large projects initiated, led and primarily financed by other partners (often the World Bank).[52]

Each of these options has provided some flexibility to IFAD's country directors to pursue scaling options, if they were so inclined, and as a result they have been implemented so far only on a selective and ad hoc basis. Interviewees noted that longer-term engagement by IFAD allows more time and resources to be devoted to building the partnerships with local and international development partners and thus facilitates eventual hand-off for continued scaling and sustained operation at scale. The IFAD12 Replenishment Report included a commitment to develop guidelines and pilot multi-phased programmatic approaches to deliver results at scale. As noted earlier, the IFAD13 Business Model and Financial Framework document indicates that multiphase programmatic financing is to be more systematically used in future years to support scaling and sustainability and guidelines for such financing are expected to be ready during 2024. Other funders have applied multiphase financing (including the World Bank)[53] with varying degrees of success. As IFAD pushes ahead with the use of this instrument for more systematic support of scaling, it may wish to gather more information on the lessons from its use by other funders in order to ensure that multiphase financing effectively supports scaling.

IFAD also has had for many years a grants program devoted principally to support research, innovation and testing of innovative approaches as well as for the support of policy analysis, institutional capacity building and partnership development. While broadly successful in the past in supporting research and testing of innovative solutions, policy action, policy dialogue and partnership development, IFAD management recognized that grants had not been deployed to achieve maximum catalytic effect. Therefore, a new grants policy was approved in 2021, aimed to deploy grants more effectively in support of IFAD's country programs to achieve scaled up and more sustainable impact.[54] The extent to which this change in grants policy is being applied in practice and its impact could not be determined in this study.

IFAD has long recognized the importance of the policy framework for agricultural and rural development in the countries in which it operates. This recognition was reinforced by the increased focus on scaling since 2009. The need for in-depth policy analysis and dialogue was incorporated very explicitly in the Brookings/IFAD scaling approach and in the 2015 Scaling Framework. However, the capacity for IFAD to support policy change was limited by its lack of in-country presence and by limited staff and budget resources compared to, say, those of the World Bank. The aggressive decentralization program initiated in 2016 was designed to increase IFAD's presence on the ground (see also the discussion of organization below). And the revised grants program, along with small budget allocations to project teams for policy analysis and dialogue, was intended to help – and, according to interviewees, did help to some extent –strengthen IFAD's ability to support policy reform as a critical element of its scaling agenda.

Policy engagement

Efforts to scale successful interventions frequently run into constraints of policy (e.g., banking regulations limiting rural credit projects). Implementers and their funders can either accept the policy constraints and work within them, or – if they have the capacity, access and influence – they can endeavor to get the policies adjusted so that constraints to scaling are removed. Funders can also support policy change on

[52] As noted in "IFAD's Operational Framework for Scaling Results" (op. cit.), this arrangement is serving to bolster and scale initiatives or approaches tested by previous IFAD operations. IFAD approved 12 type C operations over the last five years, amounting to US$ 3.5 billion, of which US$ 400 million was contributed by IFAD and US$ 3.1 billion by domestic and international cofinancing (information provided by IFAD).

[53] https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/203081501525641125/pdf/MPA-07192017.pdf

[54] "Improving the availability and uptake of relevant knowledge and innovation for enhanced impact and sustainability. Relevant knowledge will include innovative pro-poor research and technology, and will focus in particular on testing, piloting and adapting innovations targeting the poor, including for future scaling up by the concerned governments, through the IFAD programme of loans and grants (PoLG) or using resources from IFAD's development partners." p. 5/6. https://webapps.ifad.org/members/eb/132/docs/EB-2021-132-R-3.pdf

a free-standing basis (i.e., not linked to particular investments) on the grounds that this achieves development impact at scale (e.g., reform of banking regulations) can lead to more lending by banks to farmers more generally, with or without a funding provided for a specific rural credit project.

The importance of policy reform for effective scaling was flagged prominently by the Brookings/IFAD scaling team in their work in 2009-2013 and in the IFAD Scaling Framework of 2015 (see Annex 4). Traditionally, however, IFAD did not have the staff capacity, operational budget and presence on the ground to effectively tackle policy reform in most of its recipient countries. Starting in the mid-2010s, increasing attention was paid by management to policy engagement as reflected inter alia in the replenishment reports for IFAD11 and IFAD12. The potential for better delivery of policy engagement was also one of the reasons for pushing forward with the intensive decentralization efforts during the same period. Recognizing that policy engagement required resources and incentives for country teams, a small share of IFAD's annual operational budget, as previously noted, was earmarked to support policy engagement with small budget allocations. While this helped, the capacity and budget of country teams to deliver sound policy advice appears to have remained limited, especially when compared with the significant resources devoted to support policy reform by the World Bank.

Partnerships and leverage

IFAD recognized early on that, as a relatively small funding organization, it needed to pursue partnerships with other funders to achieve an impact of its projects that exceeded what could be attained with IFAD's money alone. This was reflected in IFAD's pursuit of cofinancing opportunities and by its focus not only the size of its Program of Loans and Grants (PoLG), but also of its Program of Work (PoW), which includes the cofinancing amounts raised from national and international sources in connection with IFAD projects. Cofinancing targets have been part of IFAD's results management framework for many years and have been made more ambitious in recent years (1.2 under IFAD10; 1.4 under IFAD11; 1.5 under IFAD12).[55] The 2015 Operational Framework for Scaling Up Results considers cofinancing in passing as a useful instrument for achieving greater scale with IFAD projects, but does not stress it as a critical element for scaling, perhaps in recognition of the fact that cofinancing per se does not necessarily mean an effective focus on support for a longer-term scaling pathway.[56] This is consistent with IFAD's 2018 Cofinancing Strategy and Action Plan document, which makes only passing reference to scaling.[57] IFAD current presents itself as an "assembler of finance",[58] which can indeed be an important part of a scaling strategy, as long as the assembly of finance serves to support a longer term scaling pathway.

Beyond cofinancing, the focus on partnerships in support of longer-term scaling objectives was a core element of the Brookings/IFAD approach of 2009-2012,[59] and then again of the IFAD Operational Scaling Framework launched in 2015. The framework casts cooperation with partners of government, the private sector, community organizations and international development agencies as an integral element of IFAD's scaling approach. (See Annex 4) The focus on scaling remained strong in IFAD's Partnership Framework of 2019. It notes at the very beginning that "[s]trategic partnerships are central for IFAD to deliver on its mission and achieve impact at scale and contribute as a partner to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)." It further lists "achieve country outcomes at scale" as the first among three

[55] Meaning USD 1.2, 1.4 and 1.5 of cofinancing for each 1 dollar of IFAD financing.
[56] This point was recognized in the 2010 Brookings/IFAD paper: "while cofinancing allows a larger scale of funding for any given project, it does not necessarily mean that the project is itself designed and implemented as part of a scaling up pathway. In the absence of institutional mandates for scaling up, cofinanced projects are more likely to be stand-alone interventions that do not lead to greater scale impact beyond the project itself." Linn et al. (2010) p. 38.
[57] https://webapps.ifad.org/members/eb/125/docs/EB-2018-125-R-9.pdf?attach=1
[58] See for example, https://webapps.ifad.org/members/eb/137/docs/EB-2022-137-R-9.pdf
[59] The IFAD Partnership Strategy of 2012 in passing mentions "scaling up" as one of the objectives of partnership development;
https://www.ifad.org/documents/38711624/39426394/partnership_e.pdf/a58f127f-b7fa-4708-9294-d9f241af6969?t=1507290185000

outcomes IFAD aims for with its partnership framework.[60] Partnership also figures prominently in the draft IFAD13 Replenishment Report (2023) in connection that that report's focus on scaling and in the Updated Scaling Framework of 2023.[61] And the fact that IFAD in recent years has defined scaling for its operational purposes as pursuit of sustainable impact at scale in partnership with others confirms the central place that partnerships have for IFAD's operational modus operandi.

Cofinancing and partnership development are not costless, a point noted in the Brookings/IFAD 2010 scaling paper of 2010.[62] To ensure maximum impact in terms of scaling benefits, it is therefore important that they focus not only on increasing the scale of an individual project (i.e., serve in a "transactional" mode), but that they also lay the foundation for continuation for scaling after the project ends or, in other words, that they support a longer term scaling pathway by creating financing and partnership platforms that last beyond project end (i.e., serve in a "transformational" mode).

Capacity – people and budget

Key to IFAD's ability to implement mainstreaming is to ensure it has the right people, motivated, able, empowered and supported by appropriate budget means, to pursue scaling systematically in IFAD operations.

Considering first the capacity of people to implement IFAD's scaling agenda, it appears from interviews and relevant documents that this is an area where more could have been done in the past and more likely needs to be done in the future. The first report of the Brookings/IFAD team had a detailed section on the human resource challenges, noting especially the critical role of Country Program Managers (CPMs) and the constraints they face.[63] These included an overload with institutional mandates, limited staff support in their teams and heavy reliance on consultants for all operational work, lack of technical expertise in regard to scaling and limited support from central technical units, and lack of incentives to focus on scaling. It recommended that these issues be addressed, including with suitable training. The second Brookings/IFAD report reiterated the need for action, but did not present any specific recommendations on how to address this.[64] Under the mainstreaming program during 2013-2017, IFAD did develop some limited central capacity for supporting country teams, various knowledge products that provided general guidance and detailed sectoral and country case material, and a training module.[65] It does not appear that incentive issues (e.g., the managerial and staff performance criteria and process) and CPM overload were seriously considered. Moreover, the measures that were taken did not have a chance to affect the country teams in a significant way by the time IFAD's focus shifted away from mainstreaming scaling during 2018-2021.[66]

Since then, capacity limitations appear to have become even more constraining.[67] A number of factors contributed to this situation: The central capacity in PTA for supporting scaling was disbanded. The decentralization process in the short term was detrimental as regards technical and managerial staff capacity and disruptive of country program engagement as many experienced staff retired, departed, or

---

[60] Ref. IFAD Partnership Framework 2019, https://webapps.ifad.org/members/eb/127/docs/EB-2019-127-R-4.pdf This focus on scaling may in part be explained by the fact that this document was prepared by IFAD's Global Engagement, Partnership and Resource Mobilization Division, which had maintained an active interest in scaling, in part because of the commitments undertaken by IFAD in connection with prior replenishments.

[61] Report of the Consultation on the Thirteenth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources: Building Rural Resilience for a Food-Secure Future.
https://webapps.ifad.org/members/repl-se/IFAD13-informal-meeting-2023-09-22/docs/Draft-Report.pdf

[62] Linn et al. (2010)

[63] Linn et al. (2010)

[64] Hartmann et al. (2013)

[65] See the IFAD scaling webpage:
https://www.ifad.org/en/web/knowledge/publications?mode=search&catCorporate=39130721

[66] Based on interviews and the IOE Scaling Synthesis Evaluation, 2017
(https://webapps.ifad.org/members/ec/96/docs/EC-2017-96-W-P-6.pdf)

[67] Interviews unless otherwise noted.

were reassigned, even as it undoubtedly strengthened IFAD's capacity to support scaling in the longer term.[68] During 2020 and 2021 COVID added to the stresses to which country teams were exposed and increased the pressures to simply maintain the portfolio while also mounting a crisis response, reducing their ability to deal with longer-term challenges. The problem of country manager and project-team overload got more serious, as IFAD added a number of new mainstreaming objectives or intensified requirements on existing ones (i.e., environment and climate change, gender, nutrition, youth, etc.), added mandates for policy work, institutional capacity building and partnership development, and also tightened procurement and financial management requirements. Importantly, also, the budget allocations for operational work (esp. project preparation and supervision) have been cut significantly in nominal and especially real (inflation-adjusted) terms.[69] In effect, this has meant that frontline budget resources declined over the years even as institutional mandates that country teams had to deliver significantly expanded. Looking ahead, it will be important to be sure that a strengthened effort to mainstream scaling is not yet another "unfunded" mandate for country teams.[70]

Over the last two years it appears that some of IFAD's capacity challenges have begun to be addressed: As the most intensive phase of the decentralization process was completed and the COVID pandemic receded, the disruptions caused by these events eased and stability in staffing returned. The decline of frontline budgets was partially reversed in 2023. And the Updated Scaling Framework proposes a focus on scaling in the IFAD Academy, IFAD's staff training program. However, judging from the interviews, the country manager overload challenge remains to be addressed, as does the apparent lack of staff and managerial incentives and the need to develop of a serious staff training culture in IFAD.[71]

Organization

Organization matters for the mainstreaming effort as is apparent from IFAD experience over the last 15 years. Two particular dimensions deserve consideration: the organization of support for mainstreaming scaling and the decentralization of staff out of IFAD's Rome headquarters. In addition, it matters how reorganization is implemented.

During the first phase of IFAD's mainstreaming effort (2009-2012) the external team of experts from Brookings was teamed up with a senior internal staff member attached to the front office of the AVP. This helped ensure that the AVP was well informed about the approach and progress of the Brookings/IFAD team and could guide and support it as necessary and that the Brookings team had continuous insight into IFAD staff views and reactions. For the second phase of mainstreaming (2013-2017), the decision was made to place responsibility for implementation with the director of the technical support division (PTA), who had a strong commitment to the mainstreaming agenda. This was an excellent choice since the mainstreaming agenda was aligned with the mandate of PTA, and it allowed the director to devote staff resources to the task and to drive the agenda throughout the operational units of IFAD. The transfer of the director and his staff who had worked on mainstreaming to other positions in IFAD, along with the restructuring of PTA – and with it the disappearance of any institutional capacity dedicated to mainstreaming scaling – was a signal that the implementation of the mainstreaming agenda was no longer seen as a central corporate priority. And the lack of organizational capacity dedicated to support scaling by IFAD staff meant that the work focused on mainstreaming scaling quickly atrophied, even as work on mainstreaming other cross-cutting corporate priorities (environment and climate change,

[68] https://ioe.ifad.org/en/w/corporate-level-evaluation-of-ifad-s-decentralization-experience-2023-1; see also below under "Organization".

[69] **https://ioe.ifad.org/en/w/corporate-level-evaluation-of-ifad-s-decentralization-experience-2023-1**

[70] The problem with unfunded mandates is not only an issue at Brookings. The author recalls long debates during his years as an operational staff and manager at the World Bank about how to address the frequent appearance of unfunded mandates. Note that some operational managers indicated that their problem was not principally one of insufficient budget, since they felt that they had enough flexibility to attract budget resources with special allocations for policy work, and by doing repeater projects whose administrative costs tended to be lower than new projects.

[71] The lack of staff training culture was flagged in interviews.

nutrition, youth, etc.) took centerstage, supported by its own dedicated organizational unit. Work also continued on policy engagement and partnership, which in principle supported scaling, but in practice the effort the mainstream scaling into the operational front lines largely paused.

Turning to decentralization, all interviewees agreed that decentralization is an important step towards facilitating effective support for scaling development impact in IFAD's country programs as it allows country teams more effectively to collaborate with country counterparts, thus helping to ensure alignment with national priorities and local ownership. It also facilitates policy dialogue and the development of partnerships with international development partners. Therefore, interviewees supported the intense decentralization effort that started in 2016. But there were also concerns expressed about the way the decentralization process was designed and implemented. First, the decision to set up regional hubs, rather than strengthening country offices, was questioned, since there were no clear benefits from locating staff in hubs instead of at headquarters, while weakening central technical staff units and their flexibility to guide and support country teams. Second, the front line country teams often did not have sufficient staff and budget resources to deliver on their complex mandates, in part because the costs of decentralization were significant and not adequately foreseen. Third, the way the process of decentralization was organized, and in particular the extent and speed of decentralization involving a large number of staff, was seen by the interviewees as disruptive in terms of staff turn-over and coherence and ability of country teams to deliver. The most recent IOE evaluation of the decentralization process confirmed these concerns.[72] This very extensive reorganization effort also meant that senior management was focused intensively on the decentralization process, with reduced bandwidth for other corporate priorities, including scaling.

Looking ahead, the decentralization process continues with further increased in country offices and decentralized staff, but the pace will likely be less disruptive and the long-term benefits of a more decentralized business model will hopefully come into play and in particular support an effective mainstreaming of scaling.

The role of governance bodies – the authorizing environment and commitment mechanisms

Every funder organization works within a governance system, also referred to as "authorizing environment," usually represented by an executive board in the case of multilateral bodies, foundations or NGOs, or by government and its parliamentary bodies in the case of bilateral official agencies. The authorizing environment sets the mission and guides the strategy, appoints the chief executive, provides the financial resources and monitors implementation of the strategy. For mainstreaming scaling in funder organizations, a key question is what role the governance bodies play in ensuring that scaling is part of the strategic priorities of the organization. In the case of IFAD the two most relevant governance bodies are the Executive Board and the Replenishment Committee (see Section 1 above).

According to the interviews, the mainstreaming of scaling during the years 2008-2017 was driven mainly by IFAD's senior management, using the replenishment consultations (especially IFAD9 and IFAD10) as the key vehicles to demonstrate IFAD's development impact and to seek endorsement. As reported above, relevant replenishment documents for these two replenishments established that scaling was "mission critical" for IFAD and laid out the approach to be followed in mainstreaming scaling. Moreover, the results managements frameworks for these replenishments incorporated performance indicators and targets for scaling in projects project, continuing a practice that had already started earlier, but now focusing on more ambitious performance targets specifically for scaling up.[73] When management's

[72] https://ioe.ifad.org/en/w/corporate-level-evaluation-of-ifad-s-decentralization-experience-2023-1

[73] Performance metrics for IFAD's self-evaluation loosely measured "potential for scaling", while IOE assessed whether specific actions were undertaken to support scalability after project completion. In 2022 IOE and management agreed to use the IOE measurement approach for both self-assessments and IOE evaluations. As

attention to scaling paused after 2016, there was apparently no significant push back from IFAD's governing bodies. However, the fact that scaling commitments had been made in earlier replenishments and performance targets set, led the IFAD12 Replenishment Consultation to include a commitment to update the IFAD operational scaling framework that was adopted in 2015. This along with the realization that IFAD's project performance on the scaling indicator had dropped over the preceding ten years was one factor motivating management to prepare an updated scaling framework document in 2023. In this sense, the Replenishment Consultations with its policy prescriptions and monitorable and monitored performance targets provided a commitment framework that has resulted in some durability for the mainstreaming agenda of IFAD, even as management's attention was diverted for a few years.

Evidence: knowledge management, impact analysis, and monitoring, evaluation and learning

Evidence underpins all scaling efforts, as documented in the "Scaling Principles and Lessons" of the Scaling Community of Practice.[74] And it is highly relevant for mainstreaming scaling in funder organizations. It is needed to justify the mainstreaming effort and inform its design, to monitor its implementation and verify that scaled impact actually happens, to evaluate whether mainstreaming approach is well designed, implemented and impactful, and to communicate the mainstreaming agenda effectively externally.

Evidence has been an important part of IFAD's mainstreaming efforts. The Brookings/IFAD institutional review of IFAD's scaling efforts 2009-2012, the knowledge work undertaken by and for PTA 2013-2017 and the Synthesis Evaluation of Scaling in 2017 represent important milestones in evidence gathering, knowledge management and learning. These were important ingredients of any scaling mainstreaming effort. IFAD also effectively connected itself to outside scaling experience by actively joining the international Scaling Community of Practice when it was set up in 2015 and leading the Agriculture and Rural Development Working Group established under this Community of Practice. During this time IFAD also developed a high-quality webpage on scaling. This page contained not only relevant IFAD knowledge products but also was a repository of externally produced documents relevant to scaling in the agriculture and rural development field. This webpage was a valuable resource for the Agriculture and Rural Development Working Group of the Scaling Community of Practice and potentially served IFAD as a valuable institutional memory.

Knowledge work in the form of country and sectoral analysis declined substantially after 2017[75] and IFAD dropped out of the Scaling Community of Practice and the Working Group. IFAD's scaling webpage continues to exist to this day, but now only shows IFAD's own scaling knowledge products with no additions for the last five years. IFAD resumed its knowledge work on scaling with the preparation of the updated scaling framework in 2023 and the focus on scaling experience and lessons as part of the annual operations stocktake exercise in 2023. The Updated Scaling Framework under preparation in 2023 recommends that IFAD rejoin the Scaling Community of Practice.

Besides these initiatives targeted specifically to gather evidence on scaling by IFAD, a few other instruments for gathering evidence relevant for scaling should be mentioned:

---

noted earlier in the text the scaling targets were further increased for IFAD10 and IFAD11 and raised even higher (95%) in IFAD12.

[74] Scaling Community of Practice (2022)

[75] Two note-worthy knowledge products were a useful brochure on scaling : "Scaling up in agriculture and rural development" (September 2018) (https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/39155737/Scaling+up+in+agriculture_infographics.pdf/146b0502-f120-4984-9d9f-56df300ce22c?t=15396934680000) and an e-learning course on scaling (2019) (https://www.ifad.org/en/web/knowledge/-/publication/scaling-up-e-learning). IFAD also supported the development of a platform to take household methodologies to scale: https://www.ifad.org/en/web/latest/-/a-platform-to-take-household-methodologies-to-scale.

- **Project performance targets:** As noted in the previous subsection, over the last 15 years, IFAD has continuously monitored the scaling performance of its projects against targets established in the evolving IFAD results management frameworks.

- **Impact assessments:** IFAD introduced the practice of rigorous impact assessments of its project intervention on a pilot basis under IFAD9, and subsequently established it as a regular practice, subjecting at least 15 percent of projects during the iFAD11 period to rigorous quantitative impact assessment and using it to monitor achievement of IFAD's corporate-wide quantitative impact targets.[76] These impact assessments are potentially very useful for scaling assessments and promotion, and interviewees recognize the potential value of the evidence they represent. However, according to one knowledgeable interviewee, impact assessments have been used mainly for accountability, less for learning and not for scaling decisions. Moreover, while the IFAD assessment team in IFAD tried to focus on broader perspective (why does it work, at what cost, etc.), IFAD's Executive Board and management did not pursue these results in any significant way to inform a scaling approach. This represents an opportunity for future attention as part of the scaling mainstreaming agenda.

- **Project-level monitoring, evaluation and learning (ME&L):** Project implementation is accompanied by ME&L activities, including impact assessments. IFAD project staff have to track and report on the performance on a scaling metric is notable, and recently management agreed to the IOE approach of measuring the extent to which projects support steps to support scaling. But this case study could not gather information on whether and how IFAD's ME&L practices focus specifically on the scalability aspects of project design and implementation, including monitoring and assessing whether the enabling conditions (financing, partnerships, institutional capacity, etc.) are being put in place during project implementation that would support sustainability and scaling after the project is completed. Projects usually have a mid-term review at which progress with project implementation and impact are reviewed in depth and decisions are taken to ensure the effective implementation during the remainder of the project. In principle, this is a golden opportunity to assess scalability and what needs to be done to enhance it.

Independent ex-post evaluation

IFAD has had an active Independent Evaluation Office (IOE) throughout the years under consideration. IOE played an important role in the IFAD mainstreaming process. IOE has included scaling in its project performance evaluation criteria and metrics since at least the 2000s and in greater detail since the 2010s. In 2022, IOE joined with IFAD management in updating IFAD's Evaluation Manual; this resulted in an agreed definition of scaling and a detailed set of criteria and metrics for project performance evaluations that are much more elaborate than the evaluation guidelines of the OECD-DAC or of most other official development finance agencies.[77]

Three types of IOE evaluations are relevant for the mainstreaming of scaling in IFAD:

Corporate level evaluations of scaling

These evaluations consider intermittently how scaling is pursued throughout IFAD's operational engagement. As noted in Section 2 above, IOE conducted in 2002 a corporate-level evaluation of "replicable innovation" under IFAD programs that stressed the importance of replication and scaling. In 2010 it produced a corporate-level evaluation on innovation and scaling, which together with the Brookings/IFAD institutional scaling review supported the intensification of IFAD's mainstreaming process in subsequent years. In 2017 IOE carried out a corporate-level evaluation (a "synthesis") on scaling that

[76] IFAD11 Impact Assessment Report 2019-2021.
https://reliefweb.int/report/world/ifad11-impact-assessment-report-2019-2021
[77] Linn and Yilmaz (forthcoming)

provided a comprehensive assessment of progress with mainstreaming; it showed mixed results as regards the implementation of IFAD's mainstreaming efforts (see Section 2 above). While the lessons from that evaluation did not get any traction at the time and did not prevent the pause in IFAD's focus on mainstreaming scaling in the subsequent years, it served as a useful baseline in 2023 for the preparation of the Updated Scaling Framework report.

Country program evaluations

These evaluations assess intermittently IFAD's engagement in particular countries, typically looking back ten years or more. They have in recent years included explicit consideration of IFAD's performance in supporting scaling in the countries concerned. These evaluations are particularly helpful, since they can track whether IFAD has focused on scaling in its country operations and whether and how IFAD's project interventions have been replicated and/or scaled beyond project end. The findings of selected recent country program evaluations show that for individual projects IFAD supports replication through its own projects and scaling through hand-off to governments and other funders for some individual projects, but it does not pursue scaling systematically in its country strategies and with the majority of its project operations.[78]

Ex-post evaluations of individual projects

This case study did not review individual project evaluations to assess how and how effectively the scaling aspects of IFAD's evaluation guidelines are incorporated into the IOE's project evaluations. However, IOE does produce ratings for scaling under IFAD projects, which complement the self-assessment ratings by IFAD's management. As noted in Section 2, they show that the average ratings for scaling performance in recent years have been lower for IOE than for IFAD management's ratings, and that both ratings have decreased for project cohorts from 2012-2014 to 2019-2021. (Figure 1 above)

The interviews shed divergent light on the role which IOE's evaluations have played in promoting the agenda of mainstreaming scaling: interviewees from the operations side generally recognized IOE's evaluations of scalability as an important driver of IFAD's mainstreaming focus – "when IOE speaks, people listen," one of them said. In contrast, the interviewee from IOE noted that management had taken a lead in mainstreaming scaling and that IOE then followed with its evaluation practice.[79] The apparently diverging views can be reconciled in following sense: evaluation doesn't drive mainstreaming but it acts as a commitment mechanism by tracking performance against corporate goals once they have been established even during periods of reduced attention by management, as was the case with the IFAD mainstreaming process during 2018-2021. IOE also has acted as a quality-enhancement mechanism for IFAD's approach to scaling as witnessed by the fact that the agreed definition of scaling and the adoption by management of IOE's superior measurement of scaling performance in project evaluations was driven by IOE in the context the joint preparation of IFAD's Evaluation Manual and was subsequently adopted in the Updated Scaling Framework.

Interviewees also expressed concern that IFAD has not so far systematically analyzed its long-term track record of supporting scaling, especially where it involved hand-off to partners at project end. This is seen as weakening incentives for scaling and undermining IFAD's ability to present to its authorizing environment a key performance dimension, i.e., its ability to leverage its limited resources and project

[78] See the IOE Country Program Evaluations for Burkina Faso, Colombia, Guinea-Bissau and Kyrgyz Republic, and the sub-regional evaluation for five countries in the Sahel and Northern Nigeria. This result is consistent with the findings of the 2017 Scaling evaluation synthesis (https://webapps.ifad.org/members/ec/96/docs/EC-2017-96-W-P-6.pdf)

[79] This is consistent with the general evaluation philosophy which holds that evaluations should only assess performance against the avowed corporate goals, not against some broader standards of development effectiveness.

impact into multiples of long-term impact. Interviewees noted that the country performance evaluations to some extent address this issue, but they also suggested that a more systematic and comprehensive assessment of long-term scaling performance is needed. This could be a research effort sponsored by IFAD's Strategy and Knowledge Department (SKD).

Timing and sequencing

The IFAD scaling journey shows that mainstreaming scaling, like any fundamental change in institutional practice and mindsets, requires careful and sustained effort and appropriate sequencing. Looking back over IFAD's journey of mainstreaming scaling one may conclude that the sequencing was done well during the two main phases (2009-2012 and 2013-2017). Having decided that scaling was an important institutional priority during the 2,000s, the next step involving in-depth analysis (Brookings/IFAD scaling review and the IOE evaluation of 2010) was appropriate. This was followed by translating the findings of analysis into practical guidance for operational staff, the compilation of relevant knowledge products, and outreach to the external scaling community for support and promotion. Arguably, the steps could have been accelerated, since it took six years from the beginning of the Brookings review to the publication of IFAD's Operational Framework for Scaling Up Results. One might also wonder whether more could have been done to drive the mainstreaming agenda into the operational teams. The fact that IOE carried out an evaluation of the scaling effort relatively early after the Framework had been issued was criticized by some of the interviewees as premature, before the mainstreaming effort had a chance to take hold; however, it can also be argued that this "synthesis" evaluation represented a potentially effective tool for adaptive management, which could have allowed IFAD to take necessary steps to drive the mainstreaming process forward in a timely manner.

One reason for trying to accelerate the mainstreaming process is that many "slips between cup and lip" can derail the effort: leadership changes can displace scaling as a corporate priority, as it did with IFAD; organizational changes, such as IFAD's decentralization efforts, can undermine the scaling agenda, even as it may help in the long-term; and – as noted by interviewees – "agenda fatigue" can set in, as managers and staff get blasé about the mainstreaming idea with a "been there, done that" attitude, especially as new mainstreaming priorities other than scaling gather momentum. The fact that scaling up was seen to represent yet another unfunded mandate imposed on the country teams also likely bred cynicism and a tendency to ignore the mainstreaming initiative where ever possible.

Since significant institutional change inevitably takes time, even if undertaken with all due speed, it is critical that there be a steady focus on scaling in the governance bodies that represent the authorizing environment, that senior management sticks with the scaling priority even as other demands are placed on the institution, and that there is a commitment mechanism to sustain at least a minimum focus even in times when institutional attention fades, as was the case with IFAD's performance management metrics and the evaluation practice of IOE.

Communication

Communication is potentially an important instrument for implementing a mainstreaming agenda. Three dimensions are relevant:

First, senior management needs to communicate the rationale for mainstreaming, its mainstreaming goals, approach and instruments clearly to middle management and country teams. Some of this was done by IFAD during the heydays of its mainstreaming effort; but more could have been done. Some interviewees commented on the distance between headquarters and field staff and the lack of knowledge in the front line what scaling is, why it matters, and how it can be effectively implemented within the constraints of IFAD's limited resources. In this context, middle management plays a key role: if many middle managers are not on board with the mainstreaming initiative, as was the case in IFAD even during the height of the mainstreaming effort, then communication from the top to the operational front

lines will not work. Of course, this then becomes not only a communication issue, but also a question of monitoring what happens on the frontlines and of performance management of middle management.

Second, communication is an important instrument for influencing the authorizing environment to support the mainstreaming agenda. During IFAD9 and especially IFAD10 replenishment consultations, management was effective in presenting the rationale for IFAD's mainstreaming effort as "mission critical" for IFAD and in explaining IFAD's scaling approach, which in turn helped with the resource mobilization effort during the replenishment process. IFAD's engagement with the Scaling Community of Practice, its outreach in various development forums and think tank publications, and the development of its excellent scaling website also positioned IFAD among the leaders on the scaling agenda and helped it gain outsized visibility in the development community.

Third, communication of IFAD's scaling agenda is essential to create sustained demand for IFAD's scaling support in country and to mobilize partners. However, this requires decentralized in-country staff that is well equipped to communicate and then deliver on the scaling agenda. Since the scaling agenda was not effectively driven into IFAD's country teams throughout the mainstreaming process, it is unlikely that they effectively communicated the agenda at country level.

With the recently completed Updated Scaling Framework now in place, it will be important to develop a communication effort along these three dimensions –with staff, with the governance bodies, and in-country.

Ultimately, all three types of communication efforts rely on effective evidence of IFAD's impact – hence the importance of sound impact analysis, ME&L and evaluation – and of its commitment to follow through with its scaling agenda on a sustained basis. Communication of ambitions not grounded in good evidence and untethered from effective implementation will undermine trust in the institution in the longer term.

External enabling or constraining factors

In addition to the internal enabling or constraining factors for mainstreaming scaling there are also some external factors to be aware of. Since they are external, they are less subject to being managed by actors within the funding organization, but they nonetheless need to be taken account of when mainstreaming scaling. They include the following aspects.

Local ownership and capacity

Interviewees noted that programs need to be owned by stakeholders and there has to be local capacity if programs are to be sustainably scaled with IFAD support. Frequent government turnover and changing priorities are an obstacle in some countries, as is fragmentation of ministries and project management units (PMUs). Weak market institutions and farmer organizations are additional constraints to scaling. This puts a premium on what is currently referred to as "localization" of funder support.[80] Interviewees noted that this requires IFAD to adjust its scaling agenda accordingly, including: decentralization of staff; strengthening analytical work and policy dialogue with participation of local experts; embedding project interventions in government delivery structures; supporting "policy convergence" across ministries; working through centralized PMUs; strengthening market institutions and farmer organization; and, very importantly, providing convincing evidence that the interventions supported by IFAD have a strong development impact, thus establishing IFAD's niche and ensuring its value added is recognized by local counterparts.

[80] Cooley and Linn (2023)

Fragile and conflict situations

IFAD has long recognized that supporting small-holder development in fragile and conflict situations (FCS) requires special operational approaches, as many of the constraints on local ownership and capacity are particularly severe and further compounded where conflict prevails. IFAD's operational approach in FCS has been refined over the last decade as reflected in successive policy documents, including the "IFAD Strategy for Engagement with Countries in Fragile Situations" (2016) and Annex IV in the IFAD13 replenishment report "Report of the Consultation on the Thirteenth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources: Building Rural Resilience for a Food-Secure Future" (2023).[81] The IFAD13 document highlights many elements of its engagement that will be helpful for a strategic scaling approach in FCS, including a sound analysis of the conditions of fragility and conflict, the need for engagement with local communities and power structures, intensive cooperation with international development partners, effective linkage between humanitarian assistance and support for long-term development, etc. The report further recognizes the need for specialized expertise and skills development, and for the establishment of a special FCS unit to support country teams and identifies the incremental costs of an intensified engagement by IFAD in FCS. So far, however, the reports did not focus on the opportunities and challenges of scaling up successful interventions in FCS. And according to the recent IOE evaluation report "Subregional evaluation of countries with fragile situations in IFAD-WCA. Learning from experiences of IFAD's engagement in the G5 Sahel countries and northern Nigeria" (2023), country programs in the FCS in this subregion did not systematically pursue a scaling agenda, even as specific examples of scaling up were noted.[82] One interviewee noted that a focus on scaling in the implementation of the IFAD13 FCS approach will be appropriate and requested any references that might help develop a suitable approach.[83]

Willing international development partners

As noted in subsection 3.6 above, partnerships with other international funders are critical for IFAD's ability to scale up, but it requires not only efforts by IFAD to reach out and seek out cooperation opportunities, but also requires that potential partners are willing and able to engage in such partnerships since, as the popular saying goes, "it takes two to tango." Cooperation, coordination and cofinancing involves additional costs in terms of time and administrative effort, and may be perceived as resulting in a loss of control and visibility by the partner organization. Therefore, as noted by interviewees, readiness by other funder organizations for effective partnership cannot be taken for granted. IFAD's recent decentralization, its focus on cofinancing, and participation in locally-led donor coordination platforms all contribute to identifying willing international funding partners and to more effective cooperation in the interest of scaling. However, they would be further strengthened by a more systematic focus on scaling by IFAD's country teams. Tracking the long-term scaling of IFAD supported programs by international partners would also help providing evidence on IFAD's effectiveness in supporting scaling, which according to interviews is not sufficiently recognized and appreciated.

Focus, knowledge and support for scaling in the external ecosystem

When IFAD started focusing on scaling as a corporate priority in the early 2000s, there was little attention given to the scaling agenda in the development community at large, among development

---

[81] https://webapps.ifad.org/members/eb/119/docs/EB-2016-119-R-4.pdf and https://webapps.ifad.org/members/repl/13/3/docs/IFAD13-3-R-2-Rev-1.pdf

[82] The report notes concludes as follows: "Scaling-up results with governments have been very limited, with few good examples found in Nigeria and Niger. There is evidence of scaling-up through other development partners, but IFAD's monitoring systems rarely seem to pick these up. Supporting governments in defining and implementing strategy for scaling up is essential in the G5+1.Mixed scaling-up results achieved in the G5+1 contexts reflect weaknesses in terms of KM and policy-engagement activities." https://ioe.ifad.org/documents/38714182/47359034/SRE+Fragile+States+-+Report+with+cover_Optimized.pdf/0dab46c6-4734-aedb-7d6e-86cf80121ca5

[83] Useful references include Chandy and Linn (2011) and Cooley and Papoulidis (2017)

partners or in the professional evaluation community, nor did a strong knowledge base exist on scaling in the development literature and practice.[84] It was a matter of serendipity that the Brookings team reached out to IFAD in 2009 to seek its cooperation in implementing a pilot institutional scaling review at a time when IFAD management and IOE were also grappling with how to develop a more systematic approach to scaling and hence were ready to engage on this initiative. This led to a fruitful and mutually reinforcing cooperation which was reinforced by IFAD's active engagement in the Scaling Community of Practice, which provided IFAD with access to the growing external knowledge base, tools and motivation to pursue scaling, at the same time as IFAD contributed substantially to strengthening these elements of its external scaling ecosystem. This external ecosystem continued to develop and gain in strength even after IFAD's mainstreaming efforts paused after 2017 and after it ceased its engagement with the Scaling CoP. IFAD in 2023 began to reengage externally on scaling when it asked the author to serve as a peer reviewer of its updated operational scaling framework, when it agreed to cooperate with the Scaling CoP in the preparation of this case study on mainstreaming scaling, and by considering to rejoin the Scaling CoP. Active engagement with the external knowledge community and teaming up with other development partners in seeking to develop a stronger and more effective focus by the international development community on scaling should be an important part of IFAD's future mainstreaming agenda.

Summary overview of enabling conditions

Having taken a detailed look at the 14 factors enabling and constraining the mainstreaming of scaling in IFAD over the last 20 years, a summary assessment of enabling conditions in tabular form is provided in Annex 8 across the five time periods covering the last 20 years of IFAD's mainstreaming history with an indicative rating of the degree to which specific mainstreaming efforts contributed positively – or, in some case, negatively – to integrating scaling into IFAD's operational work.

Some important patterns emerge that help interpret the IFAD's mainstreaming journey. The detailed analysis in this section confirms that the period 2009-2017 showed a particularly intense and -- very importantly – comprehensive effort to mainstream scaling, followed by a partial pause during 2018-2021, and then a resumed focus on scaling during 2022-2023. Beyond this, the analysis also permits to unpack how different enabling and constraining factors contributed to the overall trends:

- At the corporate level, vision and strategy, policy, partnerships, and independent evaluation stand out with consistently positive efforts.

- Decentralization, which supports scaling in the long-term, was pursued consistently after 2009, and especially during 2018-2021, although the process was disruptive during that period.

- The role of governance bodies as authorizing environment and commitment mechanism was generally positive – albeit not strongly so –, mostly because of the anchoring of the scaling agenda in the Replenishment Consultation commitments and continuous monitoring and tracking of scaling performance with metrics in the results management framework.

- Top-level leadership, operational processes, organization, evidence and knowledge management, and timing and sequencing showed relatively strong performance during 2009-2012 and 2013-2017, and then again during 2022-2023, but overall weak performance during 2018-2021.

- Leadership at mid-level and institutional capacity (people and budget) stand out as persistently weak or negative, even during the periods of strong mainstreaming effort.

This pattern sheds light on an apparent paradox: that despite remarkably strong and persistent efforts made by IFAD in mainstreaming scaling into its operational practice across most enabling conditions for

[84] Ref.: Hartmann and Linn (2008)

much of the time between 2009 and 2023, this effort so far has not significantly affected the front-line country teams in terms of their systematic attention to scaling. The likely explanation is twofold: First, two key interrelated factors acted throughout as a barrier to mainstreaming scaling into front-line operations, but especially after 2017: the increasing overload of country teams with institutional priorities in the face of declining front-line budgets, and the persistent lack of interest (and even resistance) by mid-level operational managers to pursue the scaling priority in their regions, mostly likely because they too felt the burden of priority overload and resource constraints. Second, the transition in IFAD's top management and the attendant change in institutional priorities in 2017 came at a critical moment, when much of the preparatory work for mainstreaming had been completed and the independent evaluation of 2017 had identified steps needed for implementation. Since there was no consistent follow-up after 2017 with implementing the mainstreaming of scaling as a central corporate priority meant that momentum was lost until management again began to focus on scaling in 2022-2023.

Conclusions, Recommendations and Lessons

Conclusions and general recommendations for IFAD

Scaling is mission critical for IFAD. This position was clearly recognized and convincingly articulated by IFAD during the main phase of its mainstreaming process (2009-2017). As a relatively small development finance organization it needs to focus on leveraging its limited resources for sustained development impact at scale.

IFAD has an exceptionally strong track record in its effort to mainstream scaling and is well placed to pursue an effective scaling agenda. With the experience of twenty years of mainstreaming effort IFAD has built a strong foundation for systematically support sustainable impact at scale. IFAD's track record in systematically pursuing integrating scaling into its operational work is highly unusual for official multilateral and bilateral funding agencies, even as so far the mainstreaming effort has not yet had the desired impact: ensuring that all IFAD-funded projects reflect a systematic scaling approach.

IFAD needs to rebuild and refocus is mainstreaming agenda. IFAD's mainstreaming agenda was never fully implemented during the heydays of its mainstreaming efforts (2009-2017), and in particular did not get systematically implemented by its country teams, due to insufficient commitment by middle level management and insufficient focus on people and budget capacity. Moreover, the mainstreaming process was interrupted by changes in management and organization, and by the refocusing of corporate priorities.

Scaling is an "all of organization" priority. Scaling is not simply another mainstreaming agenda, like the other mainstreaming agendas that IFAD pursues today. It truly cuts across the entire organization and all its operations. To achieve all other corporate priorities, including environmental and climate change, gender, nutrition, and youth priorities, IFAD needs to pursue a scaling agenda in each and every area of its operational, knowledge, partnership, resource mobilization and communication engagement. But most importantly, the scaling agenda must be systematically pursued by its front-line operational teams at country level, and central units – operational and non-operational – need to support, encourage and monitor their operational colleagues in their pursuit of sustainable impact at scale.

Special attention needs to focus on strengthening a few key areas of IFAD's mainstreaming approach. These are the areas of

- **Leadership:** IFAD's President and senior management team need to embrace the scaling mainstreaming agenda, and ensure that middle managers are fully on board and promote the agenda with vigor in their units; all managers must clearly communicate internally and externally that "scaling is back" and "scaling is mission critical" for IFAD.

- **Vision and strategy:** All managers and staff in IFAD, from the President on down, need to recognize that impact at scale is not like other corporate mainstreaming priorities (environment and climate, gender, nutrition, youth, etc.), but is a cross-cutting priority without effective mainstreaming which IFAD's achievements of all its corporate goals will be undercut.

- **Institutional capacity:** The people and budget capacity of IFAD's country teams need to be significantly strengthened.

- **Organization:** IFAD needs an organizational anchor for its scaling mainstreaming agenda, similar to what was in place in 2013-2017.

- **Evidence:** Scaling needs to be incorporated into monitoring, evaluation and learning (ME&L) and knowledge management needs to actively compile, assess and promote experience and lessons internally and externally.

Other areas, including operational processes and instruments, partnerships, independent evaluation and communication also play important roles in supporting the mainstreaming agenda, but they are already areas of relative strength for IFAD or play a supportive rather than a driving role.

IFAD needs to implement the scaling mainstreaming action agenda in the Updated Scaling Framework. IFAD's Updated Operational Scaling Framework contains many of the essential ingredients of an effective scaling mainstreaming action plan, in particular its Annex III (see Annex 5 of this case study). Based on the findings of this case study, certain aspects can be added or refined as indicated in the next subsection. This would include an allocation of responsibility to appropriate organizational units in IFAD for the scaling agenda and elaborate a process for monitoring implementation.

Keep it simple. Introduction of new (or revived) institutional priorities and practices is often characterized by tendency to develop complex processes and highly detailed and technical guidelines.[85] They tend to be disregarded by the operational staff or honored only pro forma, due to lack of time and resources to fully absorb and implement them.[86] Interviewees noted that operational staff had felt that concepts, documentation, guidelines and communication of the mainstreaming approach during 2009-2017 were too theoretical and not sufficiently tailored to guide operational practice. The Updated Operational Scaling Framework has avoided this problem. Focus on the core elements of each aspect of the scaling process is what is needed; to the extent more detailed and sophisticated technical approaches and tools may be helpful in certain circumstances, references to existing knowledge sources and technical tools can be provided, including those made available by the Scaling Community of Practice.

Specific recommendations for IFAD

As noted above, it is advisable for IFAD to now focus on implementing a systematic process for mainstreaming scaling, building on the foundations of the history of IFAD's earlier mainstreaming efforts and the recommendations of the Update Operational Scaling Framework. Table 1 below summarizes key recommended action steps, based on the analysis in section 3 of this paper. The recommendations are meant to be indicative and will have to be vetted by IFAD's management in as participatory fashion as possible with middle management and staff, to ensure that they reflect the wider perceptions of issues and challenges and that the action plan that eventually gets approved has wide ownership throughout IFAD.

[85] An example for a highly technical and potentially complex approach is the "IFAD Action Plan for Sustainability of Benefits" (2022).
[86] According to interviews.

Table 1: Specific recommendations for a possible scaling mainstreaming action plan

Factors	Indicative recommendations
Leadership	
Top	Senior management team, with strong leadership from President, AVPs PMD and SKD, to commit to and communicate the scaling agenda and lead on development and implementation of the Updated Scaling Framework.
Middle	Regional Directors and Directors of SKD to commit and be incentivized to implement scaling agenda.
Country team	Higher-level management to support and incentivize CDs.
Vision/strategy	The next IFAD Strategic Framework (following the Strategic Framework 2016-2025) to embed scaling as "mission critical" with key mainstreaming actions highlighted.
Mainstreaming Process	Implement the steps in Annex V of the Updated Framework, adjusted to include elements recommended in this case study (as per this table) implement; ensure effective link with sustainability action plan.
Operational Processes	Implement Updated Framework, esp. questions, etc.; focus systematically on scaling country strategies (COSOPs) and in QA and QE, as well as in mid-term reviews; keep processes and guidelines simple.
Operational instruments	Review actual use of instruments in scaling, esp. multiphase loans and type C operations.
Policy engagement	Ensure that front line staff have adequate resources and support for policy engagement in support of scaling objectives.
Partnerships and leverage	Fully implement existing partnership policies, complemented by active communication, with special focus on local ownership and empowerment, and with full engagement of the private sector; reach out to national DFIs (development finance institutions).
Capacity	
People	Incorporate the scaling objective in job descriptions and in performance assessment criteria (and practice) for managers and staff; include mandatory scaling modules in training under Operations Academy; extend training to consultants and offer it to PMUs.

Budget/ Overload	Assess (i) CD and country team work stream to explore widely held "overload"; (ii) operational budget; (iii) incremental cost of mainstreaming action plan.
Organization Mainstreaming Decentralization Stability	 Place explicit responsibility for mainstreaming scaling in a PMD unit with director-level accountability and senior staff support; establish a roster of staff and consultants who can mentor/assist country teams with scaling challenges Complete decentralization process without major disruption. Ensure stability of management and staff assignments to the extent possible and allow for effective hand-off when CDs and task team leaders change.
Authorizing environment/ commitment mechanisms	Convey clear message to Board and Replenishment Consultation, as well as to IFAD's external stakeholders that "scaling is mission critical for IFAD" and "scaling is back in IFAD."
Evidence/knowledge management	Incorporate scaling explicitly in ME&L guidelines and practices and make it a mandatory component of mid-term reviews; empower the SKD impact assessment team to focus, report and advise on scaling dimensions as part of their impact assessment; incorporate scaling explicitly into the work of each of the mainstreaming work streams in ECF and in PMI; research (a) what can be scaled up from IFAD's operational interventions, (b) use of instruments, (c) how to bring down costs of replication, and (d) what is the scaling track record of IFAD projects after completion; rejoin and actively engage in Scaling Community of Practice (with engagement of PMD and SKD)
Independent Evaluation	Ensure full implementation of the scaling dimension of the IFAD Evaluation Manual; carry out a full evaluation of IFAD's scaling process in 2024 or 2025.
Timing/sequencing	Review the above actions in terms of priority and sequencing and monitor the implementation of the mainstreaming process.
Communication	Develop a communication plan for the scaling mainstreaming agenda, with specific guidance for key managers and staff (including Senior Management, Regional Directors and CDs.

Lessons for other funders

The IFAD experience with mainstreaming scaling should be of great interest to other funder organizations that wish to mainstream scaling into their financing operations. Having pursued the systematic integration of a scaling approach for twenty years provides a rich set of lessons that is worth considering. The main lessons for other funders can be summarized as follows:

- Mainstreaming is a **long-term process** that needs systematic and comprehensive approach, and persistence, just like scaling itself; however, drawing out the process should also be avoided, since it increases the risks of derailment with changes in leadership and corporate priorities.

- Sustainable impact at scale must be an explicit part of the **vision, mission and strategy statements** of the organization.

- Scaling is **not just another corporate priority**, but cuts across all others; it is foundational since it underpins successful implementation at scale of all other priorities.

- Scaling needs clear and sustained **leadership** from the top if it is to be mainstreamed throughout the organization.

- Scaling needs to be **owned** by mid-level managers and front-line teams.

- **Governance bodies** can be helpful as authorizing environment and commitment mechanism to keep the mainstreaming process on track by requiring the monitoring and reporting of corporate scaling metrics

- **Operational policies and processes** are an important ingredient of mainstreaming, but not enough by themselves. The have to be kept simple.

- Scaling must **not be another unfunded mandate** pushed on front-line staff; if scaling – and other priorities for frontline staff -- are underfunded, frontline staff will resist and ignore the mainstreaming effort.

- **Partnership management and policy engagement** for systemic change need to be adequately resourced and ideally led by (decentralized) staff in country.

- Mainstreaming needs a dedicated **organizational anchor** with accountability for the mainstreaming agenda.

- **Evidence** on implementation of the mainstreaming process and its impact is essential, including scaling metrics, long-term tracking of scaling impact, and independent evaluations at project and corporate level.

- **Communication** – internal and external – is an important component of a mainstreaming strategy.

Since under most circumstances, each of these factors is necessary, but not sufficient on its own, the mainstreaming agenda may appear to be overwhelming, and indeed it is important not to minimize the challenge it represents. Like any other significant change management effort it needs to be carefully planned and implemented as a comprehensive and sustained effort that might stretch over a 3-5 year period. The advantage of funders today is that they do not have to learn about scaling from scratch, as did IFAD. The scaling community now has a much better understanding of the why, what and how of scaling than we did twenty years ago. Mainstreaming scaling will make the difference between a funder supporting one-off projects and pilots-to-nowhere as against funding initiatives that represent important steps along the pathway to sustainable impact at scale.

Annexes

Annex 1: Interviews

Name	Title
Current IFAD managers and staff	
1. Donal Brown	AVP of PMD
2. Jo Puri	AVP of SKD
3. Nigel Brett	Director, Operational Policy and Results Division
4. Ulaç Demirag	**Country Director & Representative and Director, South Asia**
5. Hardi Viera	Country Program Officer, Brazil
6. Meera Mishra	Country Program Officer, India
7. Mohamed El-Ghazaly	**Country Director and Representative, Uganda**
8. Dina Saleh	Regional Director of the Near East, North Africa and Europe Division
9. Sara Mbago-Bhunu	**Regional Director East and Southern Africa**
10. Maria Elena Mangiafico	Knowledge Management Specialist
11. Fabrizio Felloni	Deputy Director for IOE
Former IFAD managers, staff and consultants	
12. Kevin Cleaver	Former AVP of PMD
13. Paul Winters	Former AVP of SKD
14. Adolfo Brizzi	Former Director, PTA
15. Amnon Golan	Former consultant
16. Cheikh Sourang	Former senior staff

Annex 2: References

Note: IFAD documents are referred to in the text footnotes with electronic links and are not listed below.

Chandy, Lawrence and Johannes Linn (2011). "Taking Development Activities to Scale in Fragile and Low Capacity Environments." Wolfensohn Center for development, Brookings.
https://www.brookings.edu/articles/taking-development-activities-to-scale-in-fragile-and-low-capacity-environments/

Cooley, Lawrence and Richard Kohl (2006). "Scaling Up—From Vision to Large-scale Change: A Management Framework for Practitioners." MSI
http://cquin.icap.columbia.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/MSI_scalingup-framework_2006.pdf

Cooley, Lawrence and Johannes Linn (2014). "Taking Innovations to Scale: Methods, Applications and Lessons." MSI and R4D.
https://2012-2017.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/v5web_R4D_MSI-BrookingsSynthPaper0914-3.pdf

Cooley, Lawrence and Johannes F. Linn (2023)."Localization and Scaling: Two Movements and a Nexus." In Financing the UN Development System by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation.
https://www.daghammarskjold.se/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/c1-3-larry-cooley-and-johannes-f-linn-dhf-financial-report-final.pdf

Cooley, Lawrence and Jonathan Papoulis's (2017). "Scalable solutions in fragile states." Brookings.
https://www.brookings.edu/articles/scalable-solutions-in-fragile-states/

Gertz, Geoffrey et al. (2017). The Imperative of Development: The Wolfensohn Center for Development. Brookings. https://www.brookings.edu/books/the-imperative-of-development/

Hartmann, Arntraud and Johannes Linn (2008a). "Scaling Up: A Framework and Lessons for Development Effectiveness from Research and Practice." Wolfensohn Center for Development. Brookings.
https://www.brookings.edu/articles/scaling-up-a-framework-and-lessons-for-development-effectiveness-from-literature-and-practice/

Hartmann, Arntraud and Johannes Linn (2008b). "Scaling up through aid – the real challenge." Wolfensohn Center for Development. Brookings.
https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/10_scaling_up_linn.pdf

Hartmann, Arntraud et al. (2013). "Scaling Up Programs for the Rural Poor: IFAD's Experience, Lessons and Prospects (Phase 2)." Wolfensohn Center for Development, Brookings.
https://www.brookings.edu/articles/scaling-up-programs-for-the-rural-poor-ifads-experience-lessons-and-prospects-phase-2/

Linn et al. (2010). "Scaling Up the Fight against Rural Poverty: An Institutional Review Of IFAD's Approach." Wolfensohn Center for Development, Brookings.
https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/10_ifad_linn_kharas.pdf

Linn, Johannes and Ezgi Yilmaz (forthcoming). "Evaluation Guidelines of Official International Development Funders: A Review from a Scaling Perspective." Scaling Community of Practice.

Massler, Barbara (2012). "Empowering Local Communities in the Highlands of Peru." Focus 19, No. 4. IFPRI. https://www.rfilc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/IFPRI__Scaling__Up__Linn__2012.pdf

Moreno-Dotson, Blanca, ed. (2005). Reducing Poverty on a Global Scale. World Bank.
https://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/abs/10.1596/978-0-8213-6362-1

Scaling Community of Practice Scaling principles (2022). "Scaling Principles and Lessons."
https://www.scalingcommunityofpractice.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Scaling-Principles-and-Lessons_v3.pdf

Simmons, Fajans and Ghiron (2007). "Scaling up health service delivery: from pilot innovations to policies and programmes." ExpandNet and World Health Organization. https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/43794

Sourang, Cheikh (2012). "IFAD: Adopting a Systematic Approach to Scaling in Agriculture and Rural Development." Focus 19, No. 17. IFPRI.
https://ebrary.ifpri.org/utils/getfile/collection/p15738coll2/id/126977/filename/127188.pdf

Uvin, Peter (1995). "Fighting hunger at the grassroots: Paths to scaling up". World Development. Volume 23, Issue 6, June. Pages 927-939

Annex 3: The Brookings-IFAD Scaling Framework and Framing Questions

KENYA | Write-shop on Scaling Up Frameworks | Nairobi, 19–21 February 2013

Framing Questions

Ideas

1. What is the intervention that is to be scaled up? Is it a new idea (innovation or an idea adopted and adapted from prior practice elsewhere?
2. Whose idea is it?
3. Has it been tested/piloted/evaluated?

Vision

4. What is the appropriate ultimate scale of the intervention which the IFAD project or program supports in country X? i.e., how many people, households, districts, etc. could and should ultimately be reached, not merely by IFAD's own program and also by others (government, IFIs, etc.)?

Drivers

5. What or who are the drivers that are pushing, or are expected to push, the scaling up process ahead? Including local leaders or champions, external catalysts and incentives? (see Box 1)

Spaces

6. Space has to exist or be created so the intervention can grow to achieve the desired scale. What are the government and IFAD doing to ascertain or help create this space in its multiple dimensions? (see Box 2)

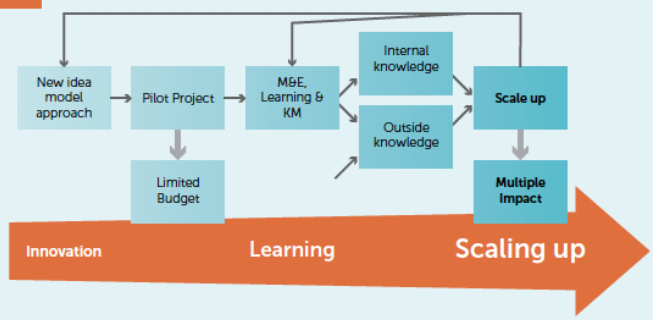
Pathways

7. What are the pathways that define the way interventions in country X are (to be) scaled up with IFAD support, moving from idea/innovation to learning to scaling up? (see Box 3)
8. What is the time horizon over which the pathways are expected to extend?
9. How do the drivers and spaces define these pathways?
10. What are the most serious likely obstacles and risks, and what can be done to mitigate them?

IFAD's Role

11. What is IFAD's specific role in promoting the scaling up process?
12. How do IFAD's policies, procedures and resources support the implementation of the scaling up process?

BOX 3 Innovation, learning and scaling up linkages



BOX 1 Drivers of scaling up

A few key factors drive forward the process of scaling up:

Ideas, Vision, Leadership: Need to recognize that scaling up of a (new) idea is necessary, desirable, feasible. Successful scaling up is usually driven by champions.

External Catalysts: Political or economic crisis, pressure from outside actors (donors, EU, etc.)

Incentives: These include rewards for actors and institutions, competitions, accountability through the political process, peer and other evaluations, etc. Incentives are key to drive behavior of actors and institutions towards scaling-up; requires accountability.

Source: Adapted from Hartmann and Linn, 2008

BOX 2 Spaces for scaling up

If scaling up is to succeed, space has to be created for the initiative to grow. The most important spaces are:

Fiscal/financial space: Fiscal and financial resources need to be mobilized to support the scaled up intervention, and/or the costs of the intervention need to be adapted to fit into the available fiscal/financial space.

Natural resource/environmental space: The impact of the intervention on natural resources and the environment must be considered, harmful effects mitigated or beneficial impacts promoted.

Policy space: The policy (and legal) framework has to allow or needs to be adapted to support scaling up.

Institutional/organizational/staff capacity space: The institutional and organizational capacity has to be created to carry the scaling-up process forward.

Political space: Important stakeholders, both those in support and those against the intervention need to attended to through outreach and suitable safeguards to ensure the intervention.

Cultural space: Possible cultural obstacles or support mechanisms need to be identified and the intervention suitably adapted to permit scaling up in a culturally diverse environment.

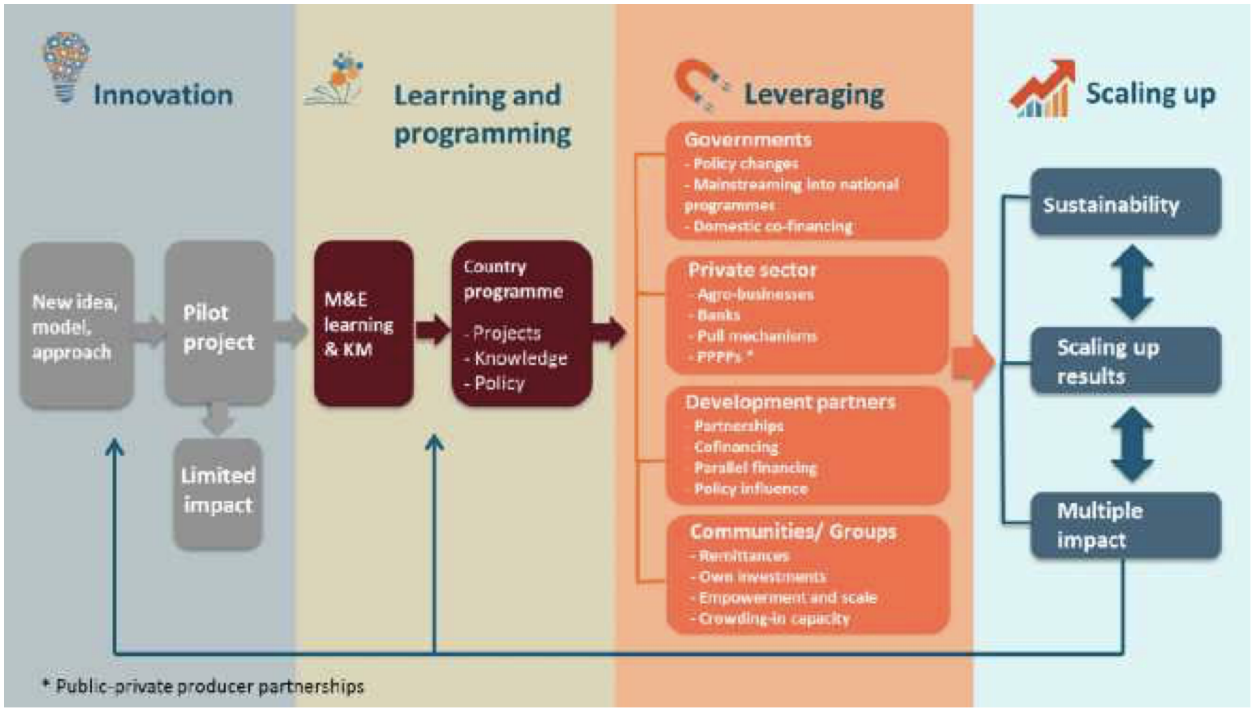
Partnership space: Partners need to be mobilized to join in the effort of scaling up.

Learning space: Knowledge about what works and doesn't work in scaling up needs to harnessed through monitoring and evaluation, knowledge sharing and training.

Source: Adapted from Hartmann and Linn, 2008

Source: Cooley and Linn (2014)

Annex 4: Refined analytical scaling framework in the IFAD Operational Framework



Source: IFAD Operational Framework for Scaling Up results (2015)
https://www.ifad.org/en/-/document/ifad-s-operational-framework-for-scaling-up-resul-1

Annex 5: IFAD's detailed road map for mainstreaming the scaling up agenda for IFAD10 (2014)

Road map for mainstreaming the scaling-up agenda

Action	*Description*	*Time frame*
Preparation of guidance notes on scaling up	A toolkit of about 10 thematic notes* and 10 country briefs on scaling up, providing practical information to guide IFAD staff involved in the design, monitoring and supervision of IFAD-funded programmes and projects on how to scale up interventions specifically by thematic area (as scaling-up pathways are business-line specific) and in different country contexts.	October 2014
Learning events	Specific training sessions provided to IFAD country teams or integrated with other training (direct design, supervision, etc.).	Throughout all training
Develop an operational framework	Business processes, financial instruments, incentives and procedures in place to move the scaling-up results agenda forward.	March 2015
Possible revisions to processes/ procedures	Based on the operational framework IFAD may need to revise processes/procedures (i.e. COSOP guidelines, the project design report template, QA/QE processes, supervision, M&E, etc.)	2015
Development of training and course materials	Based on the operational framework, cross-cutting analysis and case studies, professional trainers will develop course material and training modules for IFAD staff, country teams, project teams and consultants.	2015
Review of monitoring and evaluation	IFAD's M&E experts will review M&E practices and guidelines and develop approaches that effectively address the scaling-up dimension.	2015
Harnessing knowledge	As scaling-up experiments and initiatives will be pursued by several divisions/departments, a knowledge management (KM) approach that captures and disseminates these experiences in a systematic manner will be developed.	Continuous
Implementation of the operational framework	Design, implement and monitor country programmes based on the new operational framework for scaling up results.	2015 and beyond
Deploying grants in support of scaling up	The revised IFAD Policy on Grant Financing will include scaling up considerations as a key selection criterion.	2015 and beyond

* Subjects of thematic notes include: (i) climate resilience, (ii) financial inclusion, (iii) gender, (iv) water for food, (v) land tenure, (vi) livestock, (vii) nutrition, (viii) remittances,(ix) smallholder institutions; and (x) value chain development.

Source: https://webapps.ifad.org/members/repl/10/3/docs/IFAD10-3-R-2.pdf?attach=1 p.12

Annex 6: 2023 Stocktake on Scaling

2023 Updated Operational Framework on Scaling

Scaling

Why do we care about Scaling?

- **IFAD is small institution with a large mandate: delivering impact requires synergies with other actors and efforts.**
- **In a context where non-IFAD resources are becoming more relevant, it is crucial to promote scaling.**
- **Less than 10 years to 2030: IFAD's ability to expand the impact of its operation is crucial.**

IFAD monitorable action #32 → **Update 2015 operational framework**

New shared IFAD definition - "Evaluation manual 2022"

"The extent to which the net benefits of an IFAD's intervention or strategy are scaled (or are likely to be scaled) by other partners"

Explicit emphasis on the involvement of external actors

- Private sector
- Government
- Development partners
- Farmers Org. and civil society

What is Scaling?

- ✓ Adoption or dissemination of an IFAD tested initiative/approach, by other partners
- ✓ An "evolution" of an IFAD project getting access to further external resources or engagement
- ✓ A public policy build over an IFAD approach or initiative

What is NOT Scaling?

- ✓ Second phase of an IFAD project
- ✓ Additional IFAD Finance not involving scaled impact AND further involvement of other actors.
- ✓ Initiative or approach adopted by other IFAD project

Successful experiences

Scaling

Ethiopia	Brazil	Kyrgyzstan
✓ **Policy engagement** with several Ministries ✓ Long-standing and strong **IFAD in-country presence:** ▪ High level of advocacy ▪ Participation in the political process	✓ **Strong policy engagement** at subnational level ✓ **Long-standing IFAD in-country presence**	✓ **Government ownership**: institutionalizing IFAD approaches.
✓ **Strategic partnership with** THE WORLD BANK	✓ **Partnerships with:** IDB, Green Climate Fund, Spanish Cooperation AECID	✓ Diverse **partnerships** focused on value added: USAID, UN WOMEN
✓ **Focus and build over IFADs added value**: CDD approach; pastoral areas and communities...	✓ **IFAD has a recognised value added**: in the semi- arid; food and nutrition security, indigenous peoples.	✓ **Focus and build over IFADs added value**: pasture approaches; Gender/ GALS.
✓ **Programmatic approach**; several phases **learning and building progressively** over achievements.	✓ **Exploiting inter-institutional synergies** Closing the gap between public programs requests and poor-small farmers capacities.	✓ **Strong Knowledge Management** and dissemination of results

40

TAKE AWAYS

- In the global context with increasingly scarce resources, for IFAD to expand its impact, **its operations need to be taken to scale by other actors**. IFAD's resources alone will not be sufficient to achieve the SDGs

- **The concept of scaling needs to be better understood** across the institution with a more stringent definition and guidance on how to assess it at completion

- IFAD needs to create the right conditions for scaling by fostering **partnerships and government ownership**, and better knowledge management, including dissemination of results and impact.

Annex 7: Summary of key concrete suggestions (verbatim excerpt of Annex III of the 2013 Updated Scaling Framework)

The concepts and definitions included in this updated framework have been revised in line with the recently updated IFAD Evaluation Manual; they still need to be integrated into the current operational guidelines. To facilitate the discussion, the following concrete updates are proposed.

Definitions and guidelines

Revised definitions of scaling and sustainability in all the main operational guidelines (including design, implementation, completion and country strategy guidelines) should be integrated. More specific suggestions are provided for the following:

- **Project design guidelines and templates:** "Additional Financing – Scaling Up". Currently, the guidelines refer to scaling up as additional financing for an ongoing project, non resulting from a financing gap at design. Instead, it is suggested that this become "additional finance for replication" to avoid misunderstanding. This update is currently ongoing.

- The new **PDR template** (to be approved) will move up the scaling section in the template along with the exit strategy and sustainability to create a unified section.

- **Project implementation guidelines:** Annex 1 – Performance score descriptors. Forthcoming versions of the guidelines and templates should update the guiding questions for identifying potential for scaling in line with this updated framework, including the guiding questions provided in annex II. Particular emphasis will be placed on reporting on advances in policy engagement, and in building partnerships and engagement with external actors (government, other development partners, private sector) that may support the scaling.

Project and COSOP design

- The set of guiding questions (tailored to COSOP or project design) included in annex II will be shared with the main **reviewers from the Operational Strategy and Policy Guidance Committee (OSC) and the Development Effectiveness Matrix (DEM+)** to ensure that reviewers look at scaling consistently with the approach defined in the framework.

- It is also suggested that **DEM+** unify, assess and rate under a single category of "sustainability, scaling and exit strategy" both for projects and for COSOPs.

Evaluation

IFAD would benefit from an ex-post evaluation and assessment of the overall scaling impact of its operations and country programs. As previously mentioned, scaling tends to occur over a longer time horizon compared to IFAD projects and even COSOPs. It also involves external actors. As a result, it requires long-term evaluations, able to capture its overall impact and lessons learned beyond project completion. In this respect, an ad hoc impact assessment on scaling in a sample of projects by RIA and/or a new evaluation synthesis on scaling by IOE would help to ensure a broader and more complete assessment of the impact and knowledge acquired when scaling IFAD initiatives.

Knowledge management

Pending (human and financial) resource availability, it is advisable to further strengthen IFAD's knowledge database (internal) related to scaling, including:

- Updating the existing thematic notes on scaling, adding new areas and countries, and looking at different types of investments and themes in different regions;
- Updating and giving more visibility and dissemination to the existing IFAD webpage on scaling results.
- Re-establish IFAD visibility on scaling, by re-engaging in the global Scaling Community of Practice, particularly in the subgroup on agriculture and rural development.
- Include scaling in one of the forthcoming corporate portfolio stock takes as a focus area (done in the 2023 annual stocktake review).
- Update existing e-learning and include scaling under the curriculum of IFAD's Operations Academy.

Managing knowledge with partners/governments (external):

- Support capacity-building of M&E/KM at project level in order to produce credible evidence.
- Support development of innovative/convincing evidence-based products to share with potential scaling partners on a regular basis (i.e., with governments or United Nations Resident Coordinator representatives).

Annex 8. Summary assessment of internal enabling and constraining factors for mainstreaming scaling in IFAD

Factors	Pre-2009	2009-2012	2013-17	2018-2021	2022-2023
Leadership					
Top	+	++	++	0/-	+
Middle	0	0	0/+	0	0/+
CD/Country team	0/+	0/+	0/+	0/+	0/+
Vision/strategy	+	+	++	+	++
Mainstreaming Process	0	+	++	-	+
Operational Processes	0	+	++	0/+	+
Operational instruments	0/+	0/+	+	0/+	0/+
Policy engagement	0/+	0/+	0/+	+	+
Partnerships and leverage	+	+	++	++	++
Capacity					
People	0	0	0/+	-	0/+
Budget/overload	0	0	0	-	0/+
Organization					
Mainstreaming	0	+	++	--	0
Decentralization	0	+	+	++	+
Stability	0	+	+	--	+
Authoriz. env./ commitm. mech.	+	+	+	+	+
Evidence/KM	0	++	++	0	+
Independent Evaluation	+	++	++	+	+
Timing/sequencing	0	++	++	0	+
Communication	0	+	+	0	0/+

Legend:	0	= absent/insignificant
	0/+	= mixed insignificant/positive
	0/-	= mixed insignificant/negative
	+	= positive/increasing
	++	= strongly positive/increasing
	-	= negative/decreasing
	--	= strongly negative/decreasing
	n.a.	= not applicable