MAINSTREAMING SCALING IN FUNDER ORGANIZATIONS

AN INTERIM SYNTHESIS REPORT

Richard Kohl, Johannes Linn, and Larry Cooley

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Mainstreaming Scaling in Funder Organizations

An Interim Synthesis Report

on the Findings from an Ongoing Action-Research Initiative
of the Scaling Community of Practice

by

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For the Scaling Community of Practice
www.scalingcommunityofpractice.com

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Preface: A Short Guide for This Document

This report is an interim synthesis of findings from a **two-year research initiative** undertaken by the **Scaling Community of Practice**. It reports on preliminary results of the analysis after the first year for the purpose of stimulating discussion and feedback as part of the ongoing research. The initiative is expected to be completed by mid-2025.

The world faces great development and climate challenges which require actions that achieve sustained impact commensurate with the global scale of the problems. The pursuit of international development and climate interventions with sustained impact at scale in turn requires a shift from prioritizing innovations and the immediate outcomes of projects and programs to increasing the capacity to deliver long-term sustainable impact that addresses a significant portion of the global problem.

Section I of this paper argues that development and climate funder organizations play a key role in supporting the pursuit of sustainable impact at scale, but that in the past they have in general not focused adequately on the scaling agenda. However, recognizing that they need to increase their overall effectiveness and address the scale of global problems today, funders are now increasingly focusing on impact at scale. This report assesses how selected funders have mainstreamed scaling into their operational practice and what lessons can be learned from their experience. Mainstreaming scaling means systematically integrating scaling into organizational objectives, strategies, business models, operations, resource allocation, managerial and staff mindsets and incentives with a focus on impact and results, not disbursements and short-term outcomes achieved.

Based on twelve case studies, we assess in Section II the role of funders in supporting scaling and overall progress on mainstreaming scaling. Case studies were purposively selected to examine a wide range of funder organizations known to be conducting some mainstreaming to facilitate the development of lessons learned and recommendations. Following an “action research” approach, funder staff wrote or supported the writing of case studies. We find that individual funders support different stages in the pathway from innovation to sustained operation at scale and in principle could seamlessly support the scaling process. In practice, gaps in the support for scaling initiatives regularly occur for lack of coordination and hand-off from one funder to the next and the fact that large project funders who could integrate scaling into their projects often do not. We find that there has been progress with mainstreaming scaling, especially among smaller funders and those focused on innovation. Larger funders, and especially the bilateral and multilateral official funder organizations, still tend to be stuck in the one-off project mode and do not effectively cooperate with smaller and innovation funders to scale the latter’s successful initiatives.

Section III identifies the main enabling conditions that support mainstreaming scaling in funder organizations. We find that sustained efforts by senior leadership are the most important driver of success in mainstreaming scaling. Leaders who achieve the greatest progress in mainstreaming scaling spearhead a process of long-term systematic organizational change in pursuit of mainstreaming. This includes establishing shared organization-wide concepts and definitions of scaling and an understanding of the organization's role within the overall development community. To maximize the chances of success, mainstreaming requires sustained and cohesive action across the entire organization, including a clear statement of the long-term vision of sustainable impact at scale, and integration of a scaling approach into organizational mission statements, strategies, partnerships, incentives, operational policies and guidance documents. It requires organizational and staff incentives to be aligned with a well-resourced scaling agenda.

Section IV argues that mainstreaming also has to embody the principles of good scaling. This, starts with a focus on not just "transactional scaling" (i.e., more money for larger one-off projects and programs), but on "transformational scaling" (i.e., full attention to long-term scaling goals and potential pathways to achieve these goals that are aligned with local priorities and ownership and leverage local knowledge and solutions). The scaling approach also has to consider equity and inclusion, changes in policies and institutions (also referred to as "systems change"), localization, partnerships, and intermediaries to support funding continuity over the scaling pathway. Good scaling relies on monitoring and evaluation not only of impact but also of the enabling conditions needed to achieve sustainable impact at scale. Sections V and VI conclude the paper by drawing summary lessons respectively for individual funders and for the funder community at large. Readers who wish to take a shortcut to the main takeaways from this report are encouraged to review these last two chapters.

Acronyms

AfDB	African Development Bank
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CO_2	Carbon Dioxide
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
ECF	Eleanor Crook Foundation
FTF	Feed the Future (US govt. program)
GCC	Grand Challenges Canada
GFF	Global Financing Facility
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HR	Human Resources
IDB	InterAmerican Development Bank
IDIA	International Development Innovation Alliance
IDRC	International Development Research Center
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
MOPAN	Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network
MSI	Management Systems International
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
OECD-DAC	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
SCoP	Scaling Community of Practice
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SFSA	Syngenta Foundation
SOFF	Systematic Observations Financing Facility
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank

Acknowledgements

The Scaling Community of Practice and the authors are indebted to the many colleagues from the funder partner organizations that participated in this Initiative with case studies and in commenting on the findings. They also wish to express their special thanks to the Agence Française de Développement and to Eric Beugnot for the financial support extended to make this Initiative possible. They also thank Charlotte Lane for her editorial support in finalizing this paper. The authors bear sole responsibility for the contents of the paper.

I. Introduction: Background, Motivation and Scope of This Report

A. The Background of This Report

The pursuit of sustainable development and climate[1] impact at scale – or scaling, for short – has been receiving growing attention in the international development community over the last few years. The exponential growth of the **Scaling Community of Practice** (SCoP) membership from some 40 participants at its founding in 2015 to about 4,000 in 2024 is one indicator of this interest. There are many others, including statements by leaders of major development finance institutions, such as the World Bank's President in his speech at the International Monetary Fund (IMF)/World Bank Annual Meeting in October 2023,[2] and the inclusion of achieving impact at scale now found in many mission statements of international and national development agencies.

This is largely due to recognition that approaches to development and development finance are not having the needed impact relative to the size of the problems, as evidenced by the fact that the world is off track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.[3] In addition, there is general acknowledgement that despite their tremendous promise, investments in innovation have not realized their potential. While donors, national governments and the private sector could and should allocate more financial resources to meet the development challenge, that is an unrealistic solution given the size of the financing gap and the fact that the history of development finance tells us that money alone will not do the trick.[4] Therefore, scaling development impact for given resources – improving long-term impact-cost ratios – is increasingly being turned to as the solution. In this understanding, scaling is not simply doing more, though it is often used that way. It involves achieving economies of scale, scope, continuity and cooperation so that greater impact can be achieved with whatever financing can be mobilized. For funders it means, ideally, that scaling by domestic actors continues after funder efforts end and reaches more people and places as needed to address development challenges.

Despite the growing buzz around scaling, and while there are of course examples of successful scaling, most development observers would agree that not enough is being done by the principal development actors – governments, private investors, civil society, and

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[1] In this paper we include climate finance and action in the definition of development since the arguments for scaling apply equally.

[2] See Larry Cooley on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iF97Sv773tA

[3] Johannes F. Linn (2023). "Scaling Up the Impact of Development Programs Must Complement Other Approaches to Achieve the SDGs and Climate Goals." Global Summitry E-Journal Special Issue 2023. https://globalsummitryproject.com/special-issue-2023/scaling-up-the-impact-of-development-programs-must-complement-other-approaches-to-achieve-the-sdgs-and-climate-goals/

[4] Ibid.

development funders – to pursue scaling systematically.[5] To the extent that scaling does occur, it is mostly ad hoc and opportunistic, and not the result of a deliberate organization-wide strategy. What is needed for scaling to really have an impact is for development actors to mainstream scaling, i.e., to systematically integrate scaling into their strategies, business models, operations, and managerial and staff mindsets and incentives. While funders are not the only relevant actors, many implementing organizations and local actors report feeling constrained from systematically pursuing scaling approaches because of the way funders operate.

In this context in early 2023, the SCoP launched the "Mainstreaming Initiative." The Mainstreaming Initiative is a two-year "action-research" effort to study mainstreaming scaling in international development funder organizations. It followed a year-long preparation process, which included the preparation of a background paper[6] and intensive discussion among the SCoP's members. The purpose of this initiative is to (i) assess progress to date, (ii) develop lessons learned, and (iii) disseminate those lessons to encourage and inform further mainstreaming by interested organizations. To facilitate learning, the initiative focuses on funders that are interested in partnering with the SCoP and known to have made some progress in mainstreaming scaling. This interim synthesis paper reports on the results of the first year of the Mainstreaming Initiative.

B. Focus on Funders and Their Challenges in Scaling

Why the focus on funders? Funders generally do not directly implement development programs, projects or policy changes. However, they have an outsized influence on program goals, strategies, results and deliverables; approve the designs and workplans of the organizations and projects that they fund; and often require specific implementation, procurement and monitoring and evaluation practices. Many funders also provide training, technical assistance and capacity building for program delivery as well as support for policy and institutional reform. Indeed, funder money, while a small share of national and sectoral budgets in most countries, often represents the lion's share of discretionary financial resources, i.e., those available to initiate and support change. Therefore, funders carry a special responsibility to ensure that their funding practices and technical support facilitate, rather than impede, scaling by the recipients of their funds.[7]

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[5] Richard Kohl (2022). "Exploratory Study of Mainstreaming Scaling in International Development Funders: A Summary of Findings and Recommendations for the Scaling Community of Practice." Background Paper. Scaling Community of Practice. https://scalingcommunityofpractice.com/exploratory-study-of-mainstreaming-scaling/

[6] Ibid.

[7] Arntraud Hartmann and Johannes Linn (2008). "Scaling Up: A Framework and Lessons for Development Effectiveness from Literature and Practice." Wolfensohn Center for Development Working Paper No. 5. Brookings. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/10_scaling_up_aid_linn.pdf Hartmann and Linn (2008). See also the video of a panel discussion during a Skoll-organized event on "Elephant in the Room: Funder/Government Power Dynamics" for some of the issues and challenges in the relationship between funders and recipients governments in the process of scaling.

Aside from providing finance, funders could and should serve as important champions, facilitators, intermediaries and providers of incentives for the scaling process.[8] Unfortunately, most funders do not explicitly focus on funding scaling let alone target sustainable impact at scale. In fact, many traditional funder practices inadvertently undermined scaling efforts:

- Funders typically support time-bound (2-4 year), one-off projects. They focus on delivering impacts for project beneficiaries during the project's duration, but not beyond project closeout.
- Funder staff are rewarded for presenting ambitious, innovative and complex projects to their management and boards. Staff receive less recognition, if any, for supporting the design and implementation of projects that ensure sustainability and scalability by others beyond project end. Similarly, scaling follow-up to previous projects is often less valued by management than starting new ones.
- Funders have not done enough to align with national priorities and ownership. Often, they do not align with and address country-specific public or private sector constraints on financial resources and institutional capacity that stand in the way of long-term, sustainable scaling.
- The "aid architecture" is heavily fragmented. Funders operating in the same development space (geography, sector, thematic area, etc.) often have poor coordination, siloed reporting systems, duplicative efforts, etc.[9] While partnerships are almost always necessary for successful scaling, international development funders have not overcome systemic obstacles to successful collaboration despite decades of efforts.
- Supporting "innovation" has become popular in the past fifteen years, as demonstrated by the proliferation of innovation labs, challenge funds, incubators, accelerators and hackathons. In too many cases, such approaches have not been accompanied by efforts of systems change, i.e., to address the shortcomings of local systems and enabling environments that perpetuate development problems. Innovation funding generally has neither created institutions that can take innovations to scale ("intermediaries") nor allocated the necessary funding to scale promising innovations. Instead, innovation funders presume that scaling will either happen spontaneously or is the responsibility of

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[8] Johannes F. Linn (2011). "Scaling Up with Aid: The Institutional Dimension." in H. Kharas, K. Makino and W. Jung, eds., Catalyzing Development: A New Vision for Aid. Washington: Brookings Institution Press; and Kohl (2022), op. cit. The Million Lives Collective, which is supported by the International Development Innovation Alliance (IDIA), an alliance of development funders, champions initiatives that reach scale. However, there appears to be no systematic link between the Collective and the funding by IDIA members to support further scaling.

[9] Linn (2011), op. cit.; World Bank (2022). "Understanding Trends in Proliferation and Fragmentation for Aid Effectiveness during Crises." https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/ef73fb3d1d33e3bf0e2c23bdf49b4907-0060012022/original/aid-proliferation-7-19-2022.pdf.

unspecified "other" institutions.[10] As a result of this "magical thinking," scaling often does not happen and the enormous potential of innovations goes unrealized.

- Project monitoring and evaluations focus on delivery against project plans, timely disbursement of funds, narrow results targets and impact. Monitoring and evaluation processes usually fail to collect data to support future scaling efforts. They typically do not focus on selecting among competing approaches; minimizing complexity and unit cost; identifying the role of context, social issues and the political economy across relevant stakeholders; or assessing the enabling environment. In addition, monitoring and evaluation processes rarely examine whether projects put in place conditions for sustainability and scaling impact beyond project end.[11]

Of course, it is not enough for funders to focus on scale and scaling – they also need to do so in ways that scale for transformative and sustainable impact, or what might be called "good scaling." Therefore, we believe that it is particularly important for funder agencies to support scaling in a more systematic and more effective manner than they have done hitherto. Many funder agencies now demonstrate a commitment to impact at scale in their strategies and communications. Given this stated priority, we believe it is particularly important for funder agencies to make intentional changes to the way they operate that enable them to support scaling effectively and systematically and achieve the sustainable impact at scale they aspire to.

C. The Case Studies of Funder Mainstreaming Experience

The Mainstreaming Initiative organized case studies of international development funder organizations that explored five main questions: (i) why certain organizations have pursued mainstreaming; (ii) what specific forms mainstreaming is taking internally and in what areas progress has been made (or not); (iii) what challenges commonly arise and how they are addressed; (iv) whether funders have mainstreamed good scaling practices; and (v) what lessons can be derived for organizations either contemplating mainstreaming and looking for direction and support, or wishing to progress beyond their existing efforts. What the case studies generally did not look at was whether progress on mainstreaming led to increased scaling, greater impact at scale, or both, as this would have required detailed evaluations of the scaling performance of organizations for which the initiative did not have sufficient resources. Moreover, since many funder organizations have either not progressed very far with the mainstreaming agenda, or mainstreaming is relatively recent, an evaluation of its

[10] Kohl (2022), op. cit., notes that innovation and challenge funds are increasingly held to account for impact at scale without having the resources to support scaling effectively.

[11] See for example the OECD-DAC website: "Evaluation Criteria." https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm

impact would have been, at best, of limited value. However, where information was available on the impact of mainstreaming scaling, the case studies incorporate this information.[12]

Underpinning the case studies are the definitions, principles and lessons that have emerged from research on good practice in scaling, as found in the Principles and Lessons of Scaling compiled by the Scaling Community of Practice.[13] Box 1 (next page) briefly summarizes the most relevant of them.

In the spirit of a highly collaborative "action research" undertaking, the case studies were either prepared by experts from within the funder organizations with support from the Scaling Community of Practice or written by Community of Practice members with cooperation from the organizations. The case studies were guided by a broad set of questions identified in the Concept Note for the Mainstreaming Initiative (see Annex) and adapted in each case to the specific conditions of the funder organization under review. Funding for the case studies was provided by the Scaling Community of Practice (including an earmarked grant by Agence Française de Développement), by financing and in-kind contributions from the organizations, and by pro bono contributions of the authors.

In 2023, we were able to conduct twelve case studies of mainstreaming for a broad variety of actors in international development.[14] The mix of organizations covered is diverse (see Table 1 on page 7). It includes: (i) large bilateral and multilateral funders that mostly finance (and sometimes implement) development projects across a broad range of sectoral and thematic areas; (ii) vertical funds that focus more narrowly on specific sectors or subsectors; (iii) research and innovation funders and research organizations; (iv) large international NGOs that mostly implement donor projects; and (v) small foundations either that provide grants for innovations or that fund both innovation and scaling. For more information about each funder organization, see the case studies posted on the SCoP website.

A second phase started at the beginning of 2024 with an additional 10 or more case studies to be prepared by mid-2025. The second phase of the Mainstreaming Initiative is expected to have a special focus on the role and practices of foundations and vertical funds (i.e., single purpose/sector funds) and on the health sector. It will draw more extensively on the experience of recipients in developing countries, develop an analytical tool to track and support mainstreaming in funder organizations, and complete a parallel effort to assess whether and how scaling has been incorporated into the evaluation practices of the

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[12] In parallel with the case studies, the Mainstreaming Initiative has been conducting a review of evaluation methodologies and guidelines of official development funders (including OECD-DAC and MOPAN); preliminary results indicate that few of the evaluation offices consider scaling in their evaluation methodologies and practices (Johannes F. Linn and Yilmaz (forthcoming). "Evaluation Guidelines and Practice of Official International Development Funders: A Review from a Scaling Perspective." Scaling Community of Practice.

[13] Scaling Community of Practice (2022). "Scaling Principles and Lessons. A Guide for Action to Achieve Sustainable Development Impact at Scale." https://scalingcommunityofpractice.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Scaling-Principles-and-Lessons_v3.pdf

[14] The case studies and background documents, such as formative research, can be found on the COP website at https://scalingcommunityofpractice.com/mainstreaming-initiative/. One of the posted studies is a blog covering funder scaling practices in the education sector from a bird's eye perspective.

Box 1: Definitions, principles and lessons

Let's start with definitions:

- *Scale*: sustainable impact at large scale, where large is defined as a significant share of the problem.
- *Scaling*: actions taken overtime in pursuit of sustainable impact at scale.
- *Doer*: a domestic implementing, delivery or producing organization that continues to provide the product or service and has the capacity, infrastructure and organizational resources to do so.
- *Payer*: a funding mechanism or business model that sustainably funds the activity from domestic resources.
- *Systems change*: policy, legal or regulatory reforms to the public sector enabling environment; action to strengthen and filling gaps in public sector institutions and market systems; and changes to social norms and beliefs.
- *Sustainable*: impact endures over time.

Based on these definitions, the SCoP has identified several principles that characterize good scaling practice.* As part of assessing progress on mainstreaming, the study not only looks at to what extent mainstreaming is happening, but whether good practices are being mainstreamed. Sustainability is arguably the most important and occurs when there is: (i) a domestic implementing, delivery or producing organization – a "Doer" – that continues to provide the product or service and has the capacity, infrastructure and organizational resources to do so; and (ii) a funding mechanism or business model that sustainably funds the activity from domestic resources – the "Payer". For sustainable scaling to happen, Doers and Payers should be able to continue to maintain and grow the scale of impact relative to the size of the problem. In most cases, sustainable scaling needs to be accompanied by systems changes, including social norms and enabling environments, for maximum effect.

Other lessons of good scaling practice include:

- focusing on scaling from the beginning;
- using scalability assessments and criteria in the design of interventions, for continuous improvement and adaptation, and to decide whether further investment is warranted;
- considering equity and inclusion and other cross-cutting issues, in addition to scale itself;
- focusing on local ownership and engagement (or "localization");
- partnering with other funders, especially in handing off to partners who can continue to take an intervention to scale;
- developing appropriate results management and monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) frameworks for scaling; and
- acting as an intermediary in supporting scaling or ensuring that some other actor has the funding and resources to play that role.

* Reference: Scaling Community of Practice, "Scaling Principles and Lessons" (2022), op. cit.

independent evaluation offices of official development funders. The continued research on funder practices will be complemented by active outreach efforts in the form of webinars under the auspices of the Mainstreaming Working Group of the Scaling Community of Practice and by outreach to individual funder organizations or groups of funders to disseminate and discuss the findings to date of the Mainstreaming Initiative. Ultimately, our goal is to inform and influence the operational approaches and practices of funder organizations so that sustainable scaling becomes their default approach and is an integral part of their missions, policies, implementation support, management and staff incentives and monitoring and evaluation practices.

Table 1: Case studies completed and ongoing under the Mainstreaming Initiative
(All case studies are posted here: https://scalingcommunityofpractice.com/resources/case-studies/)

Organization	Type of the funder organization	Case Study Status
Phase 1, 2023		
1. GIZ (Germany)	Large bilateral official funder of institutional and systems strengthening; broad sectoral/thematic coverage	Posted
2. Catholic Relief Services (CRS)	Large international NGO; broad sectoral/thematic coverage	Posted
3. Interamerican Development Bank (IDB)	Large multilateral development bank for Latin America; broad sectoral/thematic coverage	Posted
4. HarvestPlus	Vertically integrated research/implementation of fortified food	Posted
5. Systematic Observations Financing Facility (SOFF)	Small multilateral official funder; focused on vertically integrated research/implementation of fortified food	Posted
6. International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)	Medium-sized multilateral official funder; focused on agricultural development, especially for small family farmers	Posted
7. Syngenta Foundation (SFSA)	Small foundation focused on innovation and scaling of agricultural and rural development innovations	Posted
8. Feed the Future, USAID FTF	Department of a large bilateral official funder; focused on innovation and scaling in agriculture and food systems	Posted
9. Grand Challenges Canada (GCC)	Small bilateral official funder of innovation and scaling of health sector solutions	Posted
10. IDB-Lab	Small multilateral official funder of innovation and scaling private for private enterprises; affiliated with IDB	Posted
11. CGIAR	A multilateral international agricultural research organization	Posted
12. CARE	Large international NGO; broad sectoral/thematic coverage	Posted
13. Education (blog)	Review of funder practices in the education sector	Posted
Phase 2, ongoing		
14. African Development Bank (AfDB)	Large multilateral development bank for Africa; broad sectoral/thematic coverage	June 2024
15. Global Financing Facility Every Woman Every Child (GFF)	Small multilateral funder of maternal and child health and nutrition interventions and system strengthening; affiliated with the World Bank	June 2024
16. Eleanor Crook Foundation (ECF)	Small Foundation; focused on funding nutrition research and advocacy	June 2024

It is important to note a few caveats. First, the case studies are neither a random nor a representative sample. Rather, in most cases they were drawn from organizations that we know and that made some efforts at mainstreaming. Second, selection generally required cooperation from the organization, again affecting the sample composition. Third, the case studies do not represent formal, in-depth, independent evaluations, but learning efforts jointly by the funder organizations and the team of experts from SCoP with limited resources and time frame. Fourth, given the diversity and small sample size that limits the degrees of freedom for any particular type of organization, the analysis is of necessity qualitative; and the patterns identified, and conclusions and recommendations drawn need to be taken in that context.[15] However, in the interest of bringing to bear as much evidence as possible for our conclusions, we selectively draw on experience with funder practice beyond the case studies, especially the above mentioned background paper and consultations leading up to the Mainstreaming Initiative.

The structure of this interim synthesis report is as follows: Section II explores what roles funders play in supporting scaling and the overall state of mainstreaming scaling. Section III explores how funders identify and describe the main enabling factors of mainstreaming that emerged from the case studies, from integrating scaling into mission and vision, operations and MEAL to the importance of leadership and changes in organizational culture and incentives. Section IV analyses the extent to which funders have integrated good scaling practices into their mainstreaming efforts. Section V and VI conclude with summaries of preliminary lessons respectively for individual funders organizations and for the funder community at large. Annex 1 presents the high-level questions addressed by the funder case studies. Annex 2 provides an overview of tradeoffs and tensions that funders face and need to manage as they mainstream scaling into their operational practices.

II. Funder Roles and the Progress on Mainstreaming

A. Funder Roles

As noted in Section I, there is a great diversity of funders in our sample. For the analysis of our findings, it helps to categorize them broadly by purpose and type (Table 2, next page). As regards purpose, we divide them into funders of research, funders of innovation with scaling, and funders of projects with scaling. For each type, we distinguish between small and large funders, and among large funders between bilateral and multilateral official agencies, implementing or intermediary partners, and vertical (i.e., single purpose) funds.[16] Several funders fall into more than one category, both in terms of the purpose and their type. For example, USAID Feed the Future (FTF) supports both research and innovation with scaling. The

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[15] Our case studies are therefore comparable to business school case studies.

[16] The categorization in Table 2 is indicative only and open to different interpretations; for example, many of the smaller funders are focused on specific sectoral or sub-sectoral areas and thus share similarities with the vertical funds. Moreover, there are many diverse types of vertical funds, some of them with a very narrow focus (e.g., SOFF), while others such as IFAD and GFF, while operating in a particular sectoral area, undertake a broad range of interventions.

Systematic Observations Financing Facility (SOFF) is both a small official funder and a vertical fund. Five of the funder agencies are principally engaged in supporting agriculture, rural development and food systems making possible a deeper dive into the specifics of scaling in that sector. Building on the experience of our Mainstreaming Initiative, much could be gained from future research comparing funders with similar roles and sectoral or thematic emphases.

Table 2: Funders by purpose and type

	Small	Large or within Large Organizations		
Type Purpose	**Foundations or Official Agencies**	**Bilateral and Multilateral Agencies**	**Implementing or Intermediary Partners**	**Vertical Funds[1]**
Research	ECF	CGIAR, USAID FTF		
Innovation with scaling	GCC, Syngenta Foundation, HarvestPlus	IDB-Lab, USAID FTF		
Projects with scaling	Syngenta Foundation, SOFF	GIZ, IDB, AfDB	CARE, CRS	IFAD, SOFF, GFF

1. Vertical funds are focused on a specific issue, purpose, or sectoral area.
Acronyms: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Systemic Observations Financing Facility (SOFF), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), United States Agency for International Development's Feed the Future (USAID FTF), Inter-American Development Bank – Lab (IDB-Lab), Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)

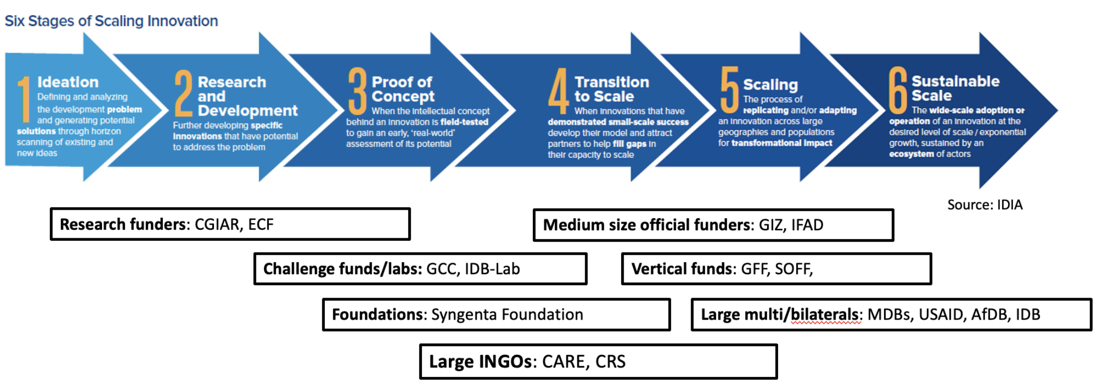
Smaller funders and those with narrower mandates (especially vertical funds) appear to find it easier to mainstream scaling than larger funders or those with a broad mandate. The latter types of funders face greater internal bureaucratic obstacles, disincentives and inertia, and find it difficult to adjust their traditional one-off project funding approach that is problematic for reasons outlined above. Differences are not attributable entirely to the project model but at least equally to how they and their governing bodies define and measure success. Many smaller funders, foundations and vertical funds work through projects that incorporate longer time horizons (e.g., tacit commitments to multiple rounds of funding) and allow for learning and strategic pivots.

Using the six International Development Innovation Alliance (IDIA) innovation and scaling stages,[17] we characterize funder roles according to where they operate along the

[17] IDIA (2017). "Insights on Scaling Innovation." https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6295f2360cd56b026c257790/t/62a1d43829d380213485d4f9/1654772794246/Scaling+innovation.pdf. A similar pathway could be constructed for projects, where one or more interventions are piloted, refined, and evaluated for scalability before deciding to scale them.

innovation-scaling spectrum. As demonstrated in Figure 1, there are overlaps across the types of funders across the six IDIA stages along the innovation-scaling spectrum. So, in principle, the entire scaling pathway is covered with appropriate financing and effective hand-off from one funder to the next is possible – in principle. However, the case studies and other evidence demonstrate that, in practice, there are significant gaps in funding support along the scaling pathway since funders continue to focus on innovation or address issues through one-off projects at a limited scale. As they do not integrate scaling systematically, this limits their ability to scale their own projects, innovations that they may have developed elsewhere, or the innovations originating with other organizations. In particular, research and innovation funders (operating at stages 1-3) should be able to hand-off successful initiatives to project funders (stages 4-6) but generally have problems in finding suitable partners.

Figure 1: Stages at which funders could support scaling, within their mandates and resources



Note: This figure is only a linear approximation of the process of scaling, especially in stages 1-3. Scaling is often non-linear, iterative and simultaneous. For example, systems strengthening and capacity building can often occur concurrently with innovation, piloting or initial projects, precede them, or be characterized by alternating systems changes and design-test-learn-revise cycles.

HarvestPlus operates across the entire pathway and is, therefore, not included.

Acronyms: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Systemic Observations Financing Facility (SOFF), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), United States Agency for International Development's Feed the Future (USAID FTF), Inter-American Development Bank – Lab (IDB-Lab), Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), international non-governmental organization (INGO).

Unfortunately, the links between research and innovation funders and project funders tend to be weak. For example, there is no systematic process of integrating agri-food innovations developed by the CGIAR with large donor agri-food projects, such as those of IFAD. The integration of innovations developed by USAID's own Agricultural Innovation Laboratories and its Feed the Future projects does happen, but not systematically. Similarly, there are few links between GCC supported innovations and health projects funded by Global Affairs Canada. The same holds true for IDB-Lab and IDB. This limited coordination between research and innovation funders and project funders contributes to the well-known "valley-of-death" between innovation and scaling. It is encouraging that some research and innovation funders have pushed downstream along the scaling pathway by funding stage 4 ('Transition to Scale'), helping ensure that innovations are scale-ready and supporting partnerships.

Similarly, funders generally do not focus on hand-off at project end to government, private business and/or other funders for sustainable operation at scale, i.e., stage 6. For this reason, innovations or project interventions are often not aligned with prevailing implementation modalities and capacity, budgetary resources or viable private business models. Bridging these gaps is an important challenge that funders must address if they wish to systematically support scaling.

An important consideration regarding funder roles is the extent to which funders serve as facilitators or intermediary institutions in support of systems change with policy advice, capacity building, coordination and investment mobilization. Systems change is generally a necessary complement to scaling, and support for system change can help achieve sustainable impact at large scale. The case studies contain many noteworthy examples of funder organizations that extend their roles beyond funding to support systems change. Larger (project) funders are generally better equipped to do so than smaller funders, particularly official funders like the GIZ, IFAD and GFF. These funders work directly with governments and can support investments in infrastructure, changes to the policy enabling environment and strengthening public sector capacity. Conversely, innovators and innovation funders are often restricted by their mandates and resources from supporting systems strengthening. As a result, scaling by smaller funder initiatives is rarely accompanied by systems change, creating significant constraints. In principle, hand-off to larger project funders offers important opportunities for the latter to support scaling with systems change. But, in practice, support for systemic reforms by large funders is rarely coordinated with or explicitly linked to innovations supported by smaller funders or even to projects financed by the same large funder.

B. The State of Mainstreaming Scaling

The case studies allow insight into the current state of mainstreaming scaling in funder organizations. We use a simple framework for describing the state of mainstreaming within funder organizations as shown in Table 3 and Figure 2 (next page).[18] The framework employs five categories of progress in mainstreaming: (i) scaling is outside the organization; (ii) scaling is on the periphery of the organization; (iii) scaling is prominent somewhere in the organization; (iv) scaling is located at the center of the organization as a key corporate goal, but not implemented throughout; and (v) scaling is intrinsic to the organization. However, we need to stress that the placement of funders in Figure 2 is only indicative and a snapshot at a particular time. For example, according to our case study, IDB falls into category (iii)

[18] Figure 2 adapts a graphical device developed by Sabine Junginger (Sabine Junginger, 2009 Https://Www.Researchgate.Net/Publication/266281802_PARTS_AND_WHOLES_PLACES_OF_DESIGN_THINKING_IN_ORGANIZATIONAL_LIFE.) The figure includes ECF and GFF based on our preliminary work with these two funder organizations.

(somewhere in the organization), but since IDB has recently approved a new corporate strategy which places scale at the center of IDB's corporate mission, it could well move into category (iv). Furthermore, while in general it would be desirable for funders to move from top to bottom in Table 3 (next page), or from left to right in Figure 2 (next page), not all funder organizations should necessarily aim for the "intrinsic" outcome in their mainstreaming efforts. For example, for organizations that fund emergency humanitarian assistance, it may be appropriate for mainstreaming to fall "somewhere" or "at the center."

Overall, the case studies are consistent with the hypothesis that funders are paying more attention to scaling.[19] All the funders in the case studies have at least some scaling within their organization (Figure 2). Moreover, the case studies confirm that many funders are making efforts to move from left to right across the mainstreaming spectrum. Let us take a brief look at individual funder cases from right to left in Figure 2:

- Six funders (ECF, GCC, GFF, HarvestPlus, SOFF and Syngenta Foundation) stand out as having decided that intrinsic scaling is appropriate to their organization. These funders made significant efforts and progress over the last 5-10 years in mainstreaming scaling throughout their organizations with strong leadership from the top. They have systematically oriented their funding (and delivery) practices to support that decision.
- Five funders (IFAD, CARE, CRS, CGIAR and IDB-Lab) have placed scaling centrally in their organizational vision, mission and goals with strong leadership from the top. It is not clear in some of these cases if there is an organizational consensus to move further on mainstreaming (making it "intrinsic") or whether they have decided that "centrally" is what is appropriate for their organization. However, all these organizations are still in the process of rolling out scaling throughout their organizations and with continued efforts some of them at least can be expected to move into the last column eventually.
- Three funders (GIZ, IDB and USAID FTF) are shown in the middle column, indicating that scaling is pursued somewhere (and possibly in multiple locations) in the organization, but is neither at the core of the funder's mission and vision nor systematically mainstreamed into the overall funding practices of the organizations. As noted earlier, IDB may move to the right as its new corporate strategy focuses on impact at scale.
- Figure 2 also identifies two funder pairs. The GFF/World Bank (WB) pair is placed in the middle column, since the GFF is a trust fund housed at the World Bank, and GFF and the World Bank collaborate and cofinance in support of impact at scale. The IDB-Lab/IDB pair is in the second column from the left, since the IDB-Lab case study notes that there are few effective links with IDB programs. Therefore, the pair is considered to have mainstreaming "on the periphery" while IDB-Lab itself has mainstreaming "at the center of the organization."

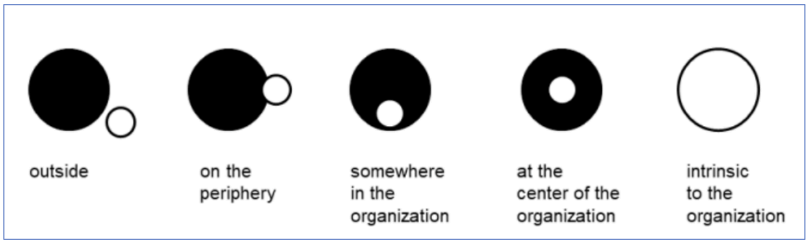
[19] Since funder partner selection was in part based on interest by the funder organization to be involved in the mainstreaming initiative, the finding that our funder partners are on balance focusing on scaling is of course not surprising.

Table 3: Criteria for categorizing funders by state of mainstreaming

	Incorporated into corporate-level vision, goals	Toolkits and Frameworks developed	Integrated into Strategy, Operations and Procedures	Adoption or Utilization Level
i. Outside	Not	Not	Not	Not
ii. On the periphery	May be mentioned	Not for the organization	Not	*Ad hoc*
iii. Somewhere in the organization	May be mentioned	Developed or relatively advanced for parts of the organizations	Not systematically yet, or still being operationalized	*Ad hoc*, low levels, not required
iv. At the center	Central to the organizations' core goals	Developed or well advanced	Relatively advanced	Started, still a small percentage
v. Intrinsic	Central	Developed	Largely integrated	Throughout most of the organization

Figure 2: Funders placement on the mainstreaming spectrum

Notes: Figure 2 adapts a graphical device developed by Sabine Junginger (Sabine Junginger, 2009



on the periphery	somewhere in the organization	at the center	intrinsic
IDB-Lab/IDB	GFF/WB GIZ IDB USAID FTF	CARE CGIAR CRS IDB-Lab IFAD	ECF GCC GFF HarvestPlus SOFF Syngenta Foundation

Https://Www.Researchgate.Net/Publication/266281802_PARTS_AND_WHOLES_PLACES_OF_DESIGN_THINKING_IN_ORGANIZATIONAL_LIFE)

The figure includes ECF and GFF based on preliminary work with these two funder organizations. We include two funder pairs. The GFF/World Bank (WB) pair, since the GFF is a trust fund housed at the World Bank. The IDB-Lab/IDB, since the IDB-Lab is housed within the larger IDB. Global Affairs Canada, the main Canadian foreign assistance organization, was not included among our case studies. We therefore cannot assess where, on its own, it would be placed in the figure.

Acronyms: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Systemic Observations Financing Facility (SOFF), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), United States Agency for International Development's Feed the Future (USAID FTF), Inter-American Development Bank – Lab (IDB-Lab), Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).

Four additional findings emerge from the overall mainstreaming experience of our case studies:

i. It appears that smaller funders and those with narrower mandates (especially vertical funds) find it easier to mainstream scaling than larger funders or those with a broad mandate. The latter seem to face greater internal bureaucratic obstacles, disincentives and inertia, and to find it difficult to adjust their traditional one-off project funding approach that is problematic for reasons outlined above.

ii. Differences between small and large funders are not attributable entirely to the project model. Many smaller funders, foundations and vertical funds work through projects that incorporate longer time horizons (e.g., tacit commitments to multiple rounds of funding) and allow for learning and strategic pivots. SFSA is a good example of this type of small foundation.

iii. Some research and innovation funders have pushed downstream along the scaling pathway into funding stage 4 ('Transition to Scale'), helping ensure that innovations are scale-ready, and supporting partnerships. Nonetheless, as noted in Section II A., they have so far had limited success in linking up their innovations with the resources and capacities of larger project funders, governments and the private sector to help recipients overcome the "valley of death." Nonetheless, some innovations supported by those funders (like GCC) that have been developed by social enterprises do go to scale; those that require uptake by the private or public sector have had less success.

iv. Mainstreaming scaling takes time. IFAD has been working on this agenda for twenty years and it remains a work in progress. For other funders (GIZ, CRS, CARE, Harvest-Plus, etc.), it has been 10 or more years of progressive efforts to mainstream scaling. The CGIAR began serious mainstreaming efforts around 2020 and expects this to continue until the end of the decade.

In the next section of this report, we unpack how funders have pursued the mainstreaming goal, followed in Section IV by an assessment of how and how far good scaling practices were incorporated into the mainstreaming process by the funders included among our case studies.

III. Enabling Factors of Mainstreaming Scaling

We know from prior experience that a number of enabling factors can support the mainstreaming of scaling in funder organizations.[20] These include leadership; integrating scale into organizational mission and vision; operational instruments, policies and practices; organizational, technical and budget resources; analytical tools, learning and knowledge; evaluations; and planning and sequencing the interlocking incentives in support of a scaling

[20] Johannes F. Linn (2022). "Hardwiring the scaling-up habit in donor organizations." The Brookings Institution. https://scalingcommunityofpractice.com/hardwiring-the-scaling-up-habit-in-donor-organizations/; Kohl (2022), op. cit.

mindset and practice. In this section we examine for each of these factors how our prior assumptions are borne out by the experience of the case studies in terms of whether and how the case studies confirm the priors for each type of enabling factor.

A. Leadership to Drive Scaling

Across the case studies, the most important enabling factor for mainstreaming is leadership from top management. This is consistent with the prior understanding that leadership needs to be relentless champions for scaling. The SCoP Scaling Principles emphasized the centrality of leadership for scaling itself. The case studies confirm that leadership is as important for mainstreaming scaling. Organizational leaders must create a clear vision, understanding and expectation of role of scale and scaling for the funder organization, including how they are defined and measured. Leaders need to drive integration into operational policies and procedures, and realign organizational structures, resources, culture and incentives around their vision. Creating common definitions and language is a critical, but insufficiently acknowledged, role for leadership. This common lexicon is especially important if mainstreaming includes a transition from a transactional to transformational approach to scaling.

Leadership was a factor for the relatively successful mainstreaming record of ECF, Syngenta Foundation, HarvestPlus, and others. Recently, the promotion of an explicit scaling agenda by the presidents of the IDB and the World Bank started a process under which impact at scale is getting more systematic attention.[21] One of GCC's co-Executive Directors is an active proponent of scaling both internally and in the innovation community. As a result of the new Executive Director who took over in 2017, the Syngenta Foundation successfully put scaling at the center of its corporate ambition. For CARE, the initiative came from senior management and included creating a Vice President for Impact and Innovation generally and a Director of an Impact at Scale. In the cases of IFAD and GIZ, changing priorities of and attention from top leadership largely explains the ups and downs in attention to mainstreaming. IFAD is an example of the potential for discontinuity in the focus on mainstreaming scaling when leaders change.[22]

Leadership needs to ensure that middle management and staff have incentives to implement mainstreaming objectives, as demonstrated by the experience of IFAD and other funders. This requires a clear articulation of operational goals, accountability and rewards for achieving targets as well as resources that enable managers and frontline teams to deliver (see Section III D: Organizational, Technical, and Budget Resources).

Support and, in some cases, pressure from the governing bodies of the funder organizations (boards, ministries, etc.) can also drive mainstreaming (e.g., for Syngenta Foundation, CARE,

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[21] At the World Bank two past presidents drove a scaling agenda during their respective tenures: Robert McNamara (1968-1981) and James Wolfensohn (1995-2005). The Bank's recently appointed President, Ajay Banga, once again put scale of impact at the core of the institution's objectives.

[22] This was very notable at the World Bank in the wake of the departure of Presidents McNamara and Wolfensohn respectively.

CRS and GFF). The push to mainstream scaling in the CGIAR system was largely a response to donor pressure for greater impact at scale and accountability for that impact. In the case of IFAD, the fact that management had committed to a mainstreaming agenda and specific operational performance metrics under various resource replenishment negotiations facilitated some degree of continuity in the institutional focus on scaling achieved across leadership cycles.

Bottom-up stakeholder or partner pressure in recipient countries is not generally cited in the case studies as a driver for mainstreaming. GFF is to some extent an exception. Senior government representatives from recipient countries play an active role in the GFF governance structure and have pushed for alignment of funder support with national priorities for long-term universal health objectives. More generally, though, not many recipient country governments have had leadership roles in developing systematic approaches to defining and pursuing longer-term scaling pathways as part of their development strategy implementation. The development paradigm of the People's Republic of China is an exception, as are selected development programs of Ethiopia (agriculture), India (health in particular), Indonesia, Vietnam and Mexico. In these cases, governments did push their external funder partners to support scaling programs, but did not aim to change funders' operational practice more generally in the direction of mainstreaming scaling.

Bottom-up pressure or demonstration of success from within the funder organization can help. But it rarely provides the leadership needed for corporate-wide mainstreaming. In the CGIAR case, the creation by staff and middle management of a scaling framework and tools helped advance scaling mainstreaming rapidly once senior management prioritized scaling in response to pressure from funders.

B. Integrating Scale into Corporate Mission, Vision and Goals

An obvious first step in mainstreaming scaling is to incorporate scaling and explicit scale goals into funders' corporate vision and mission statements. An increasing number of funder organizations have done so (Box 4, on next page). This is a relatively simple, but crucial, step to take as it provides the foundation for other essential steps.

Beyond announcing their intention to pursue impact at scale as part of their vision and mission statements (often linked to support of the SDGs), a few funders also announced concrete and measurable medium or long-term goals for impact at scale. HarvestPlus, for example, has the goal of reaching one billion consumers with nutrient-enriched food by 2030. IFAD, in 2012, announced its goal to reach 90 million farmers and take 80 million people out of poverty. SOFF set an explicit, quantitative target to close the weather and climate observations gap in Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries over a ten-year period. In addition to its poverty goals, the CGIAR has concrete goals for improvements in food security (e.g., yields) and nutrition (e.g., micronutrient consumption) and natural resources (e.g., deforestation and agricultural greenhouse gas emissions. CRS has six strategic platforms as part of its 2030 Strategic Vision, and each has quantitative targets.

However, many funders do not set quantitative long-term impact goals. Instead, they pursue specific short- to medium-term goals as part of their results management frameworks, often stated in terms of absolute numbers or changes relative to a baseline. From a scaling perspective, it is more appropriate to express goals relative to a long-term target or in terms of the fraction of a needs gap to be filled.

Closely related to setting scale targets and announcing scaling as a corporate goal is the need to define what is meant by scaling for the funder organization. In developing the concepts and definitions of scale and scaling, funders should focus on transformational scaling and

Box 4: Examples of scaling mission statements

- CRS: "Catalyze Humanitarian and Development Outcomes at Scale"[23] and "The synergy and opportunity that is created from direct services, to systems change, to catalyzing outcomes at scale."
- CARE Vision 2030: "CARE contributes to lasting impact at scale in poverty eradication and social justice, in support of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)."[24]
- CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework 2016-2030: "350 million more farm households [in addition to 100 million reached by 2022] have adopted improved varieties, breeds or trees, and/or improved management practice; 100 million people, of which 50% are women, assisted to exit poverty."[25]
- GCC: "Grand Challenges Canada is dedicated to supporting Bold Ideas with Big Impact®."[26]
- HarvestPlus: "By 2030, our strategic objective is to help partners worldwide sustainably reach 1 billion people by embedding biofortified crops and foods in food systems."[27]
- Syngenta Foundation: "To strengthen smallholder farming and food systems, we catalyze market development and delivery of innovations, while building capacity across the public and private sectors."[28]
- IFAD: "Scaling is mission critical."[29]
- SOFF: "SOFF will ensure that SIDS and LDCs have the capacity and financing to deliver on their GBON commitments."[30]

not just on transactional scaling. Transformational scaling is about achieving long-term goals whereas transactional scaling focuses on more money, on larger projects and on growing an organization financially (Box 5 next page).[31] Transformational scaling prioritizes continued scaling and impact by domestic actors and resources after project end to achieve a well-defined long-term goal. So far, only a few funders – CRS, HarvestPlus, IFAD, Syngenta

[23] CRS (no date). "Catalyze Humanitarian and Development Outcomes at Scale. CRS 2030 Strategy." 181129_crs_strategy_rev_062519_a.pdf p. 23. CRS sees itself as maximizing its abilities within direct services to convene systems actors at the scale of the problem.

[24] https://www.care-international.org/resources/care-vision-2030

[25] CGIAR Strategy And Results Framework 2016-2030 Redefining How CGIAR Does Business Until 2030

[26] https://www.grandchallenges.ca/who-we-are/

[27] https://www.harvestplus.org/home/mission-strategy/

[28] https://www.syngentafoundation.org/our-strategy-2021-2025

[29] IFAD case study

[30] https://www.un-soff.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/SOFF-Terms-of-Reference.pdf

[31] Another common definition of scaling focuses on replication (transfer of a solution from one location or beneficiary group to another). While potentially a useful approach to scaling (including across countries), this may be no more than multi-location, transactional scaling unless it incorporates attention to how local enabling conditions and constraints affect appropriate project design, implementation for sustainable long-term impact at scale in the location or country where it takes place.

Foundation, and arguably GCC and GFF – have focused explicitly on transformational scaling. IFAD, for example, carefully considered and announced its definition of scaling:[32]

Box 5: Distinguishing between transformational scaling and transactional scaling

There is a continuum from purely transactional to fully transformational scaling. We describe the end points of that continuum, understanding that many projects and interventions will likely fall somewhere in between.

Transformational scaling takes place when initiatives, innovations or projects are pursued with full attention to long-term scale goals and potential pathways to achieve these goals. They must be aligned with local priorities and ownership and leverage local knowledge and solutions. Transformational scaling focuses on the supply-side of the solution, as well as on creating demand, where necessary, to ensure adoption and utilization. Initiatives, innovations or programs are designed, implemented and evaluated as steppingstones to achieve goals with explicit reference to addressing systemic barriers and ensuring enabling conditions exist for sustainable scaling. Sustainability occurs by identifying, and strengthening where necessary, local actors with the necessary mandate, incentives, resources and implementation capacity, whether public or private, and persuading them to take on the roles of ongoing financing and implementation. Preferably, local actors continue to scale until reach and coverage align with the scope of the problem. This often implies that scaling is combined with substantial systems changes, in terms of policy reform and institution strengthening for scale. Impact is measured in relation to the long-term target such as: "The number of women of reproductive age with access to and using basic reproductive health services moves from current levels of 30% to 75% over the next decade." Or: "The intervention reduces CO_2 emissions by five percent of the long-term emissions reduction target."

Transactional scaling focuses on the impact that a one-off project or program is expected to achieve – or has achieved – at completion. The one-off impact of transactional scaling can be significant. But, this approach does not consider how much of a contribution the project makes to solving the underlying development problem, i.e., the denominator. Transactional scaling does not consider what happens beyond the project's end (or at best pays lip service to whether the solution is sustainable and scalable), nor does it mobilize or facilitate ownership by local actors who could ensure sustainability and scalability. Capacity building, systems strengthening and addressing the enabling conditions are minimal, if they occur at all, and largely focus on ensuring achievement of the project's short-term objectives. While transformational scaling can occur beyond transactional projects through follow-up projects, this usually involves significant and unnecessary costs and delays that could have been avoided if projects pursued transformational scaling from the outset. Most often, transactional scaling impact is considered in absolute terms or in relation to a baseline, but not in relation to a long-term need or target. Examples include: "Our project will provide 10,000 women access to reproductive health care." Or: "Our program will reduce the CO_2 emissions by five percent." If systems change occurs at all in transactional scaling, it is limited to what is sufficient to ensure impact at the project scale. Moreover, system change efforts can also be transactional, in the sense that they only look at whether a particular change is introduced, but not whether its impact is sustained and whether it supports additional steps of system change required.

> *"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)."*

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[32] 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

The corporate definition of scale and scaling must be widely disseminated and understood among staff, recipients and partners for it to be impactful. IFAD incorporated its approved definition of scaling into operational and evaluation policy to avoid conflicting interpretations of mainstreaming scaling in different units of the organization.

Finally, the design of the mainstreaming effort needs to have a clear vision, definition and implementation pathway for the mainstreaming efforts themselves. This extends beyond how organizations wish to achieve ultimate impact, to include intermediate concrete markers for progress with the mainstreaming effort and the pathway of introducing organizational change. These markers can then serve as benchmarks for assessing progress in monitoring and evaluating the mainstreaming process during implementation (see Section 5 G: Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning.).

C. Funders' Operational Instruments, Policies and Practices for Scaling

Funders' financial instruments as well as their funding policies and processes need to be tailored to support their recipients in advancing along the scaling pathway. Foundations and innovation funders, such as GCC and Syngenta Foundation, have flexibility in deploying grants in the early stages of the scaling pathway, and then pivoting to loans, guarantees and equity investments in the later stages. GCC, for example, supports a series of Transition to Scale grants, social enterprise coaching, communities of practice and intermediary organizations that foster linkages to public sector actors. The larger multilateral and bilateral development agencies tend to be more constrained in their use of financing instruments, relying mostly on either standard loans or grants. Results-based funding instruments can also support scaling effectively since they allow greater flexibility for implementing entities to apply the tools of adaptive management[33] in the scaling process. GFF and SOFF employ results-based funding; however results-based funding, programmatic or performance-based approaches only really support sustainable impact at scale if they are used to achieve transformational scaling.

Funders' operational policies and procedures include criteria for the preparation, design, selection and approval of projects; supervision of implementation, procurement and contracting; quality assurance, adaptive management and risk management (see Section III F: Results Metrics, Monitoring, and Evaluation). Operational policies and procedures should include explicit reference to the conditions necessary for scaling, as demonstrated by some of the case studies (e.g., IFAD, GCC, and the Syngenta Foundation). Small organizations, like GCC, Syngenta Foundation,[34] and HarvestPlus, made considerable progress in mainstreaming through persistent, ongoing leadership with varying degrees of integration into formal processes and procedures. The CGIAR is embarking on what will hopefully be widespread internal adoption of its Innovation Package and Scaling Readiness framework and tools.

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[33] Andrews, Matt, Lant Pritchett, and Michael Wool-cock (2012). "Escaping Capability Traps through Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA)." HKS Faculty Research Working Paper RWP12-036. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Kennedy School. Andrews, Matt, Lant Pritchett, and Michael Woolcock. "Doing Iterative and Adaptive Work." CID Working Paper Series 2016.313, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, January 2016.

[34] Syngenta nonetheless believes that in their case more rigorous processes are still needed.

However, without strong leadership and adequate organizational, technical and budget support for frontline teams in the funder organizations, changes in policies and processes will likely have limited impact in driving changes in frontline operational practice towards scaling, risk taking and adaptive management.

Logic and experience suggest the importance of job descriptions, performance evaluations, professional development, training requirements, salaries and promotions (i.e., Human Resource policies and practice) in the successful execution of any corporate policy. To support scaling, these need to include criteria reflecting a funder organization's determination to support scaling. We have found little evidence in the case studies that funders intent on scaling reflect this in their corporate Human Resources policies.

D. Organizational, Technical and Budget Resources for Scaling

Dedicated organizational, technical and budget resources are required to ensure effective and sustained mainstreaming. Some of the case study funder organizations (e.g., CARE, CGIAR, CRS, GIZ and USAID FTF) have dedicated technical, organizational and budgetary resources to support and sustain the mainstreaming process. However, where they exist, scaling support units are quite small: USAID's FTF and CARE's scaling support units are composed of a few people and GIZ has one person playing that role. In contrast, the CGIAR has a central support unit, trained several hundred staff to act as local resource people and introduced a small scaling fund to support innovation teams working to achieve Scaling Readiness. IFAD had a scaling capacity in its Central Technical Support unit for a few years, but later disbanded it.

A central unit can facilitate mainstreaming and support operational units to integrate scaling, but it is not sufficient. In all cases where scaling has become intrinsic to the organization (including ECF, GCC, GFF, HarvestPlus, SOFF and the Syngenta Foundation), it is an "all-of organization" effort and sufficient resources are allocated to front line staff to pursue a scaling approach. However, in practice this does not happen. Therefore, while front-line staff and project teams generally recognize the benefits of a systematic scaling approach when it is presented to them as a way to improve the effectiveness of their projects, they resist when confronted with a scaling mandate that is not adequately funded. In practice, many staff, especially in the larger official funder organizations (e.g., GIZ, IFAD and CGIAR), see themselves as already bearing a heavy burden in meeting cumulative "unfunded mandates" in the design, implementation and evaluation of projects. These mandates include a multitude of policy and fiduciary requirements (gender and social inclusion, environment and climate change, community outreach, private sector engagement, anti-corruption, etc.) that have been added to staff workloads, often without additional administrative or budget resources. As a result, middle managers and frontline staff often resist, when confronted with an unfunded mandate to incorporate a scaling perspective in their work, tend to ignore or honor it only in a pro forma manner.

Generally, smaller funders (e.g., Syngenta Foundation, HarvestPlus, ECF and GFF) find it easier to incorporate scaling into staff's operational practices and incentives and the overall organizational culture than larger ones. With a short chain of command, leadership may more directly influence staff behavior and better understand staff's constraints. Rather than mainstreaming scaling throughout the institution, large funders find it easier to focus on scaling in selected programs, as seen through the World Bank's GFF and its new Global Challenge Program.[35] The GFF provides targeted resources to complement the financing of World Bank loans for maternal and child health. The GFF's resources allow scaling to be systematically supported in these loans through technical assistance for country-driven strategy formulation, institution building, policy reform and resource mobilization in support of a longer-term scaling pathway. Given the challenges that larger funders face in mainstreaming, a strategy that uses a phased approach, starting with narrow objectives ("scaling somewhere in the organization", Figure 2) may be the most effective approach, as long as the objective is transformational scaling. Over the long haul, efforts can spread the mainstreaming agenda throughout the organization.[36] The CGIAR is a good example of this; mainstreaming is being rolled out starting with early adopters who are self-motivated to adopt it. Combined with coaching, financial support and incentives, the CGIAR strategy is to create a critical mass of adopters that will then spread via example throughout the system.

E. Decentralization

Funder organizations in our case studies recognize that local context and ownership are critical for effective scaling (see also Section IV D: Country Ownership and Localization). This, in turn, requires that funder staff understand local context, needs and preference of local stakeholders. While usually not driven by scaling considerations, some organizations have set up local offices in recipient countries and relocated staff to recipient countries ("decentralized") or recruited locally for these offices. Decentralization has both positive and negative effects for mainstreaming scaling. It facilitates mainstreaming through a better understanding of local context, political economy and priorities, enabling funder organizations to establish long-term relations with key local stakeholders. It also allows staff to identify and take advantage of often transient windows of opportunities. On the other hand, greater independence of country offices can make organization-wide adoption and implementation of a scaling approach more challenging. Country staff can feel threatened by efforts to apply and refine "their" flagship programs through a scalability lens.

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[35] World Bank (2023). "Ending Poverty on a Livable Planet: Report to Governors on World Bank Evolution." DC2023-0004. September.
https://www.devcommittee.org/content/dam/sites/devcommittee/doc/documents/2023/Final%20Updated%20Evolution%20Paper%20DC2023-0003.pdf

[36] Some commentators on an earlier draft of this Synthesis paper communicated with us that they are currently pessimistic about mainstreaming scaling into their investments through existing operational units, given how heavily entrenched the short-term project model is. Instead, they believe that creating a separate central scaling unit with its own budget and team to finance scaling of successful projects would be a worthy experiment. The idea of a separate scaling unit would be, presumably, to identify scalable interventions sometime during their implementation or afterwards and take them from there. To the best of our knowledge, this approach has not been tried in any development funder or implementer and was not found in any of the twelve case studies. Such an idea conflicts with many of the core principles of scaling, not the least of which are the needs to start with a scaling vision in terms of what the scale of the problem is and to integrate scaling into interventions from the very beginning. However, if the constraints to mainstreaming throughout the organization from the outset are too severe, setting up a central scaling unit of this type may be worth exploring as a second-best approach, but most likely should be seen as a transitory rather than a permanent solution on the way to organization-wide mainstreaming.

Organizations without local offices have found other solutions. One innovation funder, GCC, shifted the emphasis away from universities and research centers located in the Global North to those in the Global South, and from researchers to social entrepreneurs who have a better understanding of local markets and public systems. In general, though, our research to date suggests that smaller funders find it more difficult to decentralize their operations.

F. Analytical Tools, Learning and Knowledge for Scaling

Front-line staff need analytical tools, training and knowledge management support for the systematic pursuit of scaling as part of project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Some of the case study funders (e.g., IDB-Lab, CRS, CGIAR, GFF and USAID FTF) developed specific conceptual frameworks combined with tools to integrate scaling into intervention designs, assess scalability and monitor progress or used existing tools such as the Management Systems International (MSI) Scalability Assessment tool.[37] Some also put in place training modules for scaling as part of their standard staff training (e.g., IFAD, CGIAR and CRS) or grantees' training facilities (e.g., USAID FTF). So far, none of the case study funders included consultants and local counterpart teams in their scaling training. Since these actors often play a key role in supporting funders' frontline teams, conducting ecosystem assessments and design, training them in scaling can be critical to successful mainstreaming.[38]

Some funders developed systematic knowledge management activities and products that help staff pursue scaling.[39] For example, IFAD prepared reports on the scaling experience and approaches in various specific areas of agriculture and rural development for its staff and published them on its website. GIZ developed a scaling framework and guidance document and is developing guidance for scaling digital innovations. Nonetheless, even in cases where internal tools and guidance have been developed, there usually remains a substantial gap between those knowledge products and tools and their widespread application and utilization. This gap reinforces the need for leadership, changes in organizational culture and incentives, and commitment of dedicated resources.

G. Monitoring and Evaluation as Drivers of Mainstreaming Scaling

In order to understand whether mainstreaming scaling is actually happening and whether it is having the desired effect in terms of achieving sustained impact at scale a systematic process of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the mainstreaming process is required. The insights gained from such M&E would help drive mainstreaming scaling by providing

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[37] MSI (2021). "Scaling Up: From Vision to Large-Scale Change: Tools for Practitioners." https://www.msiworldwide.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/ScalingUp_toolkit_2021_v5_0.pdf

[38] The "Millions Learning Real Time Scaling Labs" approach for scaling innovative programs in education, which was developed by the Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution, may prove to offer a model for how to strengthen the institutional capacity of local teams to support scaling. https://www.brookings.edu/articles/millions-learning-real-time-scaling-labs/

[39] Participation of funders in networking and knowledge sharing platforms focused on scaling (including the Scaling Community of Practice, the IDIA, OECD-DAC's 3i community) can contribute to wider and more easily accessible inventories of tools, training modules and knowledge products.

evidence for accountability and learning by the leadership, governing bodies, staff, and stakeholders. However, the case studies suggest that this potential driver has not played much of role in the past nor is it being currently leveraged since the funder organizations under review have not systematically monitored or evaluated their mainstreaming process, even as they monitor and evaluate the implementation of the projects the finance. The closest we found to assessing the mainstreaming process was in GIZ and IFAD, which carried out ex-post evaluations or assessments of their scaling performance.[40] The results of these have been informative, but they have not been major drivers of internal reforms to integrate scaling.[41] Other case study funders do not appear to have carried out comparable evaluations.[42]

However, even where ex-post evaluations are carried out, they generally do not consider the 10-15 year time horizon needed to determine whether the support for scaling achieved its long-term scaling goals. Only longer-term retrospective evaluations will be able to assess scaling impact. None of the funder organizations considered have conducted such an evaluation, as far as we can determine from the case studies. Such evaluations might best be conducted as cooperative efforts across multiple funder organizations since partnerships and hand-off from one to another funder are such a critical determinant of successful scaling.

H. Planning and Sequencing Mainstreaming[43]

Each of the enabling factors or drivers presented in this section creates incentives for managers and staff to focus on scaling. For small organizations (e.g., ECF, GCC and Syngenta Foundation), concerted drives by senior leadership may be sufficient for scaling to become intrinsic to the organization. However, the enabling factors discussed above have so far not been sufficient to support the effective implementation of a mainstreaming effort in large organizations.

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[40] AfDB's approach to scaling in its country assistance documents was evaluated as part of a more general evaluation of the effectiveness of the Bank's country strategies. See Johannes F. Linn (2015). Linn, Johannes F. (2015). "Scaling-up in the Country Program Strategies of International Aid Agencies: An Assessment of the African Development Bank's Country Strategy Papers." Global Journal of Emerging Market Economies. Volume 7, Issue 3. https://doi.org/10.1177/0974910115592.

[41] In the case of IFAD, for example, the independent evaluation found that IFAD had made a lot of progress in integrating scaling into its mission statement, operational policies and procedures and knowledge work, but that these steps had not yet had the desired impact on the front line funding activities, since middle managers and staff had not yet fully bought into the idea that a focus on scaling as essential and feasible, given staff and budget constraints for operational teams.

[42] The International Development Research Center of Canada (IDRC) commissioned an independent evaluation of its support for scaling. See IDRC (2020). "Evaluation of the International Development Research Centre's strategy to scale research results." https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/items/55abef2b-c342-4464-a638-0a212bd1672d. The GFF is currently commissioning an independent evaluation of its overall performance; since the GFF is focused centrally on supporting scaling, this evaluation represents an opportunity to assess its scaling performance in detail.

[43] The focus here is on incentives to support the effective mainstreaming of scaling. Sustained incentives create an organizational culture. So, it is also possible to talk about an organizational culture that support scaling. However, ultimately, we need to analyze the incentives in order to understand whether and why an organizational culture supports scaling.

General commitment by senior management to pursue a mainstreaming agenda and aspirational references to scale and scaling are not sufficient in driving organizational culture change in large institutions without incentives for middle management and front-line staff. Policies and processes (including Human Resources policies and accountability), organizational and budgetary support, technical help and learning opportunities must complement clear mission statements and corporate strategies with scaling at their core. These can be amplified by strong messaging from the top leadership and backed by the governing bodies. Monitoring metrics and evaluation of mainstreaming performance and scaling impact can be additional incentives and accountability instruments for managers and teams.

In practice that means that for the larger, complex funder organization, a systematic, multi-year effort to establish the enabling conditions and incentives is required for successful mainstreaming and organizational culture and mindset change. This, in turn, requires explicit prioritization and sequencing of multiple steps towards the mainstreaming of scaling. For funders early in the mainstreaming process, the initial priority is to assure an explicit focus in mission statements strategies and workplans, clear and appropriate definitions of scale and scaling, and strong signals from top leadership. This should be accompanied by developing scaling frameworks, operational policies and processes in support of scaling; simple results metrics for monitoring and tracking progress; and training and resource people to support their utilization. For funders that are further along, the priority will likely be to (i) integrate scaling into operations, procedures, monitoring and evaluation; (ii) provide significant dedicated financial and human resources especially for front-line teams; (iii) ensure and incentivize implementation by front-line teams; and (iv) track longer-term experience with scaling to revise, refine and update their approach. The IFAD case study demonstrated how prioritization and sequencing can work well in practice, but also some of the potential pitfalls faced in implementing a long-term organizational change process in support of mainstreaming scaling. (Box 6, next page)

IV. Incorporating Good Scaling Practices into Mainstreaming

So far, we have focused on the current state of mainstreaming and on its principal enabling factors. We now consider the extent to which funders incorporate proven scaling practices into their operational approaches. Mainstreaming scaling will not be effective without mainstreaming good scaling approaches as we noted in Section I.[44]

Perhaps the critical aspect of good scaling practice, which we already introduced in Section III as an enabling factor for mainstreaming because it is foundational for a mainstreaming effort, is the need to focus on transformative rather than merely transactional scaling. The other aspects of good scaling in effect help ensure that the scaling approach is transformational.

[44] See also "Scaling Principles and Lessons", Scaling Community of Practice (2022), op. cit.

Box 6: The case of IFAD with its 20-year effort of implementing the mainstreaming of scaling

Leadership by top management was the critical ingredient to mainstreaming scaling in IFAD, starting in 2008 with an analysis of what was needed for mainstreaming. This was followed by the development of an organization-specific scaling framework and operational processes and policies. These, in turn, were followed by an independent evaluation of mainstreaming through 2015. This independent evaluation of the mainstreaming effort in 2017 demonstrated that IFAD was making progress in many areas, but also that it had not yet managed to drive the implementation process into the front lines, most likely because middle management and front-line teams had not bought into the scaling agenda in the face of significant budget and staffing constraints.

The evaluation made a series of recommendations that were not systematically acted on by management, since the new top leadership team chose to focus on different priorities, including an ambitious decentralization process and, subsequently, the COVID crisis. As a result, attention to mainstreaming scaling in IFAD went through a lull until 2022, when a new effort got under way.

Source: IFAD Case Study

A. Scaling from the Beginning ("Start with the End in Mind")

The scaling literature stresses the importance of pursuing scaling from the beginning, rather than at the end of an innovation process or project. Here the story is encouraging. The case studies suggest that many funders focus on scaling early in the innovation or project preparation process (e.g., CARE, CGIAR, CRS, GCC, IFAD, Syngenta Foundation and HarvestPlus). However, for larger funders, getting project teams, managers and quality assurance units to focus adequate attention on the scaling agenda during project preparation remains a challenge. There are simply too many other corporate priorities that they must address with limited time and resources.

B. Scalability Assessment

Scalability assessment have multiple functions: (i) to help determine whether an innovation or project is suitable for scaling; (ii) to assess what may have to be adjusted in the design of the intervention in the face of systemic constraints; and (iii) to identify accompanying system changes needed to address constraints or to put in place appropriate enabling conditions for scaling to succeed.

Some of the funders we studied recognize the need for an explicit scalability assessment and have developed and used tools to conduct such an assessment (e.g., CGIAR, GCC, IDB-Lab, CRS and CARE). CGIAR's tool is the most advanced and complex in this regard. It requires identifying all complementary innovations relative to a core innovation, the "Innovation Package," and conducting context, stakeholder and political economy analyses. These analyses are used to determine bottlenecks to scaling and develop actions to address those bottlenecks. GCC includes scaling potential among its general grant making criteria, and scaling is at the core of its funding instruments that target transition to scale. Some funders pay special attention to the financing constraints to sustainable scaling (e.g., GFF), while others focus more on policy and institutional strengthening (e.g., GIZ and GCC). IFAD's scalability assessment involves a systematic consideration of enabling conditions (or "drivers and spaces"). USAID's FTF developed a detailed guidance document on scaling, the

Agricultural Scalability Assessment Tool. It is now testing a tool – "Innovation to Impact" (or i2i) – that applies criteria used by private agri-business to decide whether to invest in innovations as they move through the stages of research, development and testing, i.e., establishing what are called stage gates to decide whether to advance to the next stage of innovation and scaling.

C. Integrating Systems Change with Scaling Support

As noted above, systems change often is critical complement to scaling and scalability assessments focus on systemic constraints and the need to address them. At small scales, development funders and their projects, or implementing partners, grantees and social enterprises have sufficient resources to address obstacles to successful implementation, results and impact. However, scaling to the size of the problem, especially if that scale is national and regional, inevitably encounters systemic obstacles that can severely constrain or prevent scaling. National public policy, legal and regulatory environments are obvious examples, along with the implementation capacity of potential public or private sector Doers, and with the availability of fiscal space if the public sector is the Payer. Because the resources involved at large scale are so much greater, scaling inevitably becomes a political economy question and the interests of many stakeholders are implicated and must be addressed. The same can be true with social norms and beliefs. Addressing some or all of these issues can be essential to successful scaling, which means that they need to be included in mainstreaming.[45] System change may also affect the demand for an innovation (positively or negatively) and this affect the scope for scaling, e.g., when tax or subsidy policies change and affect demand for a public or private service.

Most large official funders support systems change. GIZ, for example, both helps build capacity and change the public sector enabling environment. However, very few larger organizations in our sample coordinate their investments in systems change with the needs of scaling, GFF and IFAD excepted. Integrating systems change is particularly a challenge for smaller funders and those working on innovation, as their mandate is to focus on the innovation, and not the system. Nonetheless, GCC and the CGIAR have taken steps to integrate systems change, as far as possible with their limited resources. The CGIAR strengthens national agricultural research and extension services and provides policy advice. GCC launched pilot efforts to help health officials identify and prioritize scaling needs.

The relationship between scaling and systems change once again reinforces the need for effective partnerships for scaling, in this case with organizations that invest in systems strengthening. Among small funders, Syngenta Foundation has arguably done the most in developing systems change partnership, as demonstrated by their SEEDS2B program (Box 7). However, this example also demonstrates the challenges for funders even when there are willing partners ready to support scaling with systems change.

[45] Because of this, CARE includes in its Approach to Impact at Scale six approaches; (i) scaling and adapting proven models; (i) advocacy to influence policy and the enabling environment; (iii) promoting change in social norms and beliefs; (iv) systems strengthening and social accountability; (v) supporting social movements; and (vi) inclusive market-based systems. See https://scalingcommunityofpractice.com/cares-new-guidance-for-impact-at-scale/

Box 7: Syngenta Foundation's SEEDS2B partnership with USAID

The SEEDS2B program strengthens the seed production value chain, particularly domestic seed companies and the relevant public sector actors, so that when new, improved varieties of seed are developed and introduced, there is a Doer with the capacity to take them to scale. SEEDS2B worked in several African countries with USAID financing and achieved notable success in seed systems strengthening. Given this success, Syngenta Foundation and USAID have contemplated replicating this approach to other agricultural innovations, such as animal breeds and agricultural services, machinery and practices. They found that there is a major challenge to replicating this approach: each innovation has a particular scaling pathway and different actors and stakeholders in the supply chain. Agricultural supply chains can be complex, including registration and certification, production, distribution and aftermarket support. Moreover, the relevant pathways and actors can vary widely for the same product, service, etc. across countries and crops. Because of this, the resources required to affect systems change in agriculture are quite substantial. In future mainstreaming, it would be worthwhile to explore whether this same challenge exists in other sectors (e.g., for health products, machinery, services, and practices). The case study of the GFF indicates that, indeed, system change in the health sector requires considerable resources and faces considerable challenges, too.

D. Equity and Inclusion

Most of the funders specifically include equity and inclusion objectives in their efforts to pursue scaling, whether it is small-holders farmers in general (e.g., Syngenta) or in remote areas (e.g., IFAD), farmers overall (e.g., CGIAR), or women and children (e.g., GFF), or other equity and inclusion targets. CARE puts gender and gender equity at the center of its work. One of CRS's scaling principles is to: "Engage with systems actors, both traditionally underrepresented and existing decision-makers, to prioritize equitable scaling." However, the explicit consideration of the potential tension between scale and equity and inclusion received less attention in our sample. Also not explicitly considered is the fact that scaling typically results in losers as well as winners, and in a variety of unintended consequences. Thus, there are often implicit and unacknowledged tradeoffs between equity and scale (see Section V: Challenges, Tradeoffs and Tensions).

E. Country Ownership and Localization

The pursuit and achievement of sustainable impact at scale requires country ownership of the goals and interventions supported by funders. More broadly, what is now often referred to as "localization" provides an important underpinning for effective and sustainable scaling.[46] This includes broad stakeholder engagement; creation of demand for innovative solutions; market development; support for and use of local capacity and systems; and preparing for effective hand-off at project or program end to national organizations. By way of example, GFF supported the development of inclusive country platforms for maternal and child health programs. These platforms bring together an array of national stakeholders, including concerned government ministries and representatives from the private sector and civil society, to jointly develop a sector strategy, implementation modalities, results tracking approach and MEAL activities.

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[46] Larry Cooley and Johannes Linn (2023). "Localisation and scaling: Two movements and a nexus." https://scalingcommunityofpractice.com/localisation-and-scaling-two-movements-and-a-nexus/

A growing number of our agricultural cases showed a shift from supply to demand-driven scaling, which requires engagement and ownership by local input producers, farmers, processors and consumers. Syngenta Foundation, in its SEEDS2B work with local farmers, seed companies and other parts of the seed value chain, creates target product profiles based on local market research. HarvestPlus works with stakeholders across all stages of the innovation-to-scale pathway for biofortified foods, including researchers, seed producers, farmers, food processors and distributors, and ultimately retailers and consumers.

While many funders preach the benefits of national ownership and localization, many face challenges in implementing their good intentions. Challenges are especially severe for larger official funders because their leaderships, parliaments and ultimately the taxpayers find it difficult to give up control over their individual priorities.

Staff and managers in some funder organizations also noted that national ownership, while necessary for long-term sustainable scaling, is no guarantee for success. National priorities may shift unpredictably with election cycles, government overhauls and economic and social crises, disrupting the best-laid scaling plans. These shifts put a premium on funders' abilities to maintain support in a manner that respects national priorities but also allows the core elements of a scaling strategy to remain in place. Moreover, multi-stakeholder engagement requires an ongoing country presence and long-term relationships that are difficult to create or maintain when work on the ground is project-by-project and supported from abroad with intermittent expert visits. CRS mitigates these risks by engaging with multiple stakeholders on the ground, especially market and civil society actors, so that support remains even when governments and their policies change.

Finally, as noted in Section III above, many funders, especially the larger ones, have pursued decentralization of their operational staff to national or regional offices, closer to the clients. This in principle should help with generating local ownership, building partnerships on the ground, and monitoring progress in and constraints to scaling innovations and projects. As such it should support localization and also scaling. However, experience shows, including from the case studies, that decentralization alone does not necessarily mean stronger localization or better scaling. Much depends on whether the many other enabling factors and good scaling practices are effectively established through the funder organization and effectively driven into front line decision making. As noted in Section III, decentralization can actually make it more difficult to achieve some aspects of scaling due to greater institutional distance between headquarter and country office.

F. Partnerships with Other Funders

Aside from the need to support domestic stakeholder platforms for the joint and sustained pursuit of a scaling strategy, international funders also need to coordinate and cooperate with one another in the often highly fragmented development assistance architecture.[47]

[47] World Bank (2022), op. cit.

The funders in our case studies universally recognize the need for partnerships as a key element for achieving impact at scale. HarvestPlus puts partnerships at the center of its work and approach. As such, HarvestPlus invested substantial resources in its internal capacity to create and manage partnerships. USAID's FTF created an Office for Market and Partnerships to facilitate partnerships with other funders. However, in the case of FTF, the office has few staff and an extremely limited budget. The CGIAR recognized the need for greater partnership internal capacity and developed a strategy for this. But, the strategy has not yet been implemented. IFAD defined scaling as working with other partners to increase impact.

However, many funder partnerships are one-off creations by implementing partners for particular projects and hence commitment to achieving transformational, rather than transactional partnerships remains limited. Transformational partnerships allow effective cooperation and potential hand-off from one partner to another, and ultimately to organizations able to deliver and fund goods and services on a sustainable basis at scale. In contrast, transactional partnerships simply represent cooperation or cofinancing for a larger one-off project without a longer-term strategy for sustainable scale. In other words, most funders find it relatively easy to organize partnerships with other funders to expand the size of a particular intervention or project and the resource dedicated to it through cofinancing or parallel financing. It is much more challenging to identify partners to hand-off to (i.e., longitudinal partnerships) and to involve these partners early on in project preparation and implementation with a view to their longer-term engagement beyond project end. Of course, ultimately the most important – and most frequently neglected – hand-off comes when external funders exit and local government and/or private funders and operators have to step in to sustain the scaling process or operation at scale.

Smaller funders in particular frequently emphasize partnerships since they lack the resources to finance stages 5 and 6 in the innovation-to-scale pathway. But the case studies suggest that they often find it challenging to identify longitudinal partners to hand off to. Larger funders tend to be interested in transactional rather than transformational partnerships because it fits better within their existing approaches and operational procedures. The Syngenta Foundation is an example of the conundrum smaller funders face in connecting with larger funders for transformational scaling. While Syngenta Foundation has had some success in attracting support from large funders for scaling its work in seed systems strengthening (i.e., SEEDS2B), in other areas (agri-services and agri-entrepreneurs) scaling partnerships with the private sector have suffered from the transactional problem (see also Box 7 above).

More generally, funders have not focused explicitly on the challenges that effective collaboration and coordination implies. There are staff and budgetary costs to develop and maintain partnerships, there are issues of control and meeting specific fiduciary requirements, and many funders are loath to dilute their brand and forgo the ability to literally plant their national or institutional flag at project sites. Unless these constraints to partnership building are confronted head-on by all funders, there will likely be not much progress in partnership building. (See also Section V: Lessons for Individual Funder Organizations.)

G. Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL)

As we noted in Section III above, the progress with mainstreaming scaling needs to be monitored and evaluated to ensure accountability, learning and adaptation of the mainstreaming process. We found that few of our case study funders have practiced this type of monitoring and evaluation. However, there is an additional dimension to the MEAL challenge when it comes to mainstreaming good scaling practice. This relates to the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of innovations, projects and programs. Ideally, this monitoring and evaluation should not only focus on whether the innovation or project "works" (i.e., has been implemented in an efficient, effective and timely manner according to plan and has a positive impact), but also whether it is sustainable and scalable.

MEAL is essential to the iterative, adaptive, learning nature of scaling, from initial design of interventions all the way to sustainable scale. MEAL can identify and engage viable Doers and Payers for sustainable scale, strengthening institutions, shift social norms, and address potential losers from scaling. A strategic learning focus can provide information for multiple purposes in supporting scaling: (i) to apply a scalability assessment and improve scalability; (ii) inform decisions whether to scale; (iii) to provide inputs about the intervention, its costs, required in puts, and sensitivity to context in developing a scaling strategy; (iv) to monitor and adapt that strategy as it is implemented; (v) to institutionalize with local domestic Doers; and (vi) to progress towards addressing the problem at scale.

Integrating scaling into MEAL is a good scaling practice where the least progress has been made across our sample of case studies, though there are important exceptions. A key challenge in monitoring progress on scaling is assessing the extent to which systems changes and other foundational pieces of scaling are in place and permit or facilitate scaling. The CGIAR, USAID's Agricultural Innovation Laboratories, and the GFF are the funders in our case study sample that have most explicitly focused on these considerations. GFF systematically includes specific metrics for system change as part of its monitoring process, through its support for a "One Plan/One Budget/One Record" approach in all the countries where it is active and by including scaling considerations in its results management metrics and MEAL framework. IFAD also generally assesses the extent to which the preconditions for scaling are put in place through programs. SOFF evaluates its progress against long-term scale goals.

For most funders, however, especially larger official funders, MEAL continues to emphasize accountability for project outcomes, disbursements, and outputs achieved and not the strategic learning, which is critical for scaling. For bilateral and multilateral official funders, the current OECD-DAC and MOPAN evaluation guidelines do not explicitly take scaling into consideration in their recommended MEAL guidelines,[48] and only a few of the indicators that

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[48] Linn and Yilmaz (forthcoming), op.cit.

they include are useful for evaluating scaling. Thus GIZ, which follows the DAC guidelines closely, has only a few indicators relevant to scaling in its evaluation template.

For innovation funders, tracking scaling beyond their own engagements (i.e., up to readiness or transition to scale) has historically proved to be a challenge. The CGIAR is now committed to tracking the progress of its innovations all the way to sustainable scale. This still faces challenges, as it currently relies on data from its partners, such as national agricultural research centers, which can vary widely in reliability. GCC measures the impact of its innovations based on funding support for scaling that its grantees raise. It has updated that approach with data on actual longer-term scaling as its portfolio has matured and conducted one-off assessments of the entire portfolio's progress towards financial sustainability and scale.

Finally, it is important to note that most funder organization have their own MEAL requirements for recipient organizations. This not only creates a heavy administrative reporting burden but does not facilitate creating scaling metrics. Where it is possible, a common MEAL framework across all funders engaged in a sector, partnership, multi-funder platform or strategic initiative would facilitate developing scaling strategies and metrics, providing a basis for tracking progress in going to scale and adapting key elements of the scaling pathway during implementation. Common MEAL systems and indicators would facilitate monitoring and evaluation of collective impact, i.e., the impact of all the international entities working together, whether in a partnership, collaboration or some other platform. Given the universal interest in partnerships across the case studies and agreement as to their importance in scaling, this would be an important next step. If a common approach to MEAL to could be extended over the long-term, it would allow the funder community to assess whether and how its collective support helps achieve sustainable impact at scale.

H. Funders as Intermediaries

Intermediary organizations facilitate the transition from innovators to large public and private sector delivery systems.[49] Intermediaries support scaling by finding and supporting champions; convening stakeholders and building consensus; packaging investments; providing scaling advice assistance; helping to identify policy and regulatory obstacles; etc. Among our case study partners, CRS and GFF are the organizations that have most comprehensively adopted an intermediary role. Others, including HarvestPlus, IFAD, IDB-Lab, and GCC provide intermediary support in a more limited fashion. Innovators and innovation funders generally do less in this area since they do not fund scaling itself (i.e., stages 5 and 6 in Figure 1 above).

For the sustainability of the national scaling process, however, national organizations that function as credible intermediaries are needed. Funders must strengthen or support the creation of local, national, or regional intermediaries. The Syngenta Foundation and GCC have

[49] See "Scaling Principles and Lessons", Scaling Community of Practice (2022), op. cit.

taken preliminary steps in this direction. GCC supports innovation and scaling ecosystems in Africa that will include intermediary institutions. The Syngenta Foundation creates and supports catalytic intermediaries. They wrestled with the challenge of whether there is a sustainable business model for intermediaries and to which extent intermediaries need to be subsidized in part or whole. A more explicit consideration of funders' roles in strengthening and financing intermediary organizations and a viable business model for intermediaries, especially in recipient countries, is an important topic which needs further research. The other case studies do not provide much information on whether funders are currently taking action to function as intermediaries, suggesting that it is not happening.

V. Lessons for Individual Funder Organizations

Many of the findings of the case studies confirm the preexisting understanding of the opportunities and challenges of mainstreaming scaling in funder organizations. However, there were several new insights, esp. regarding the need for sustained leadership from the top; the need for strong incentives to change organizational culture, esp. in larger funder organizations; and the importance of transformational rather than transactional scaling. The case studies also revealed that smaller funders, private (non-official) funders and vertical funds mainstream scaling more easily than large official funders. Large official funders suffer from bureaucratic inertia, a multiplicity of mandates and critical flaws in the traditional investment project model. The case studies also demonstrated that there is a complex relationship between mainstreaming scaling, decentralization and localization. Lastly, we concluded that monitoring and evaluation needs to focus squarely not only on impact but also on whether and how the enabling conditions for scaling prevail, including the scalability of an intervention, or are created.

The case studies also reveal that funders face many tradeoffs and resulting tensions across goals as they aim to mainstream scaling into their funding practices. These include the tension between managing for innovation or project impact versus scalability; pursuing quantity versus quality; aiming for scale versus equity; pursuing scaling versus supporting system change; relying on risk aversion in the traditional project mode versus embracing risk with scaling; balancing the administrative, staff and time costs of a more systematic focus on scaling with the inevitable administrative budget constraints faced by funder organizations; and others. These are explored further in Annex 2 for the interested reader. In recognition of the tradeoffs, some funders (e.g., CRS) use the approach of "Optimal Scale" developed by IDRC and others,[50] which holds that more is not necessarily better because scale must be considered along with other dimensions of impact. "Optimal Scale" goes beyond equity and inclusion to include other issues such as gender, unintended consequences, magnitude, variety and sustainability, as well as issues of power such as who decides whether something

[50] See Robert McLean and John Gargani (2019) *Scaling Impact: Innovation for the Public Good*. Routledge: London and New York. and International Development Research Centre: Ottawa https://idrc-crdi.ca/sites/default/files/openebooks/scalingimpact/index.html

should be scale and what is the “right scale.” Given their importance, we plan to focus more explicitly on these trade-offs during Phase 2 of the Mainstreaming Initiative.

While each funder organization must develop its own analysis of the opportunities and challenges it faces in development impact at scale, the preliminary lessons that emerge from the case studies and prior experience provide guidance for the design and implementation of a strategy for mainstreaming a systemic approach to scale. Lessons for individual funders are loosely organized in this section based on the structure of the main report. The next and final section of this report summarizes lessons for the funder community as a whole. The validity and relevance of these lessons will be further explored in Phase 2 of the Mainstreaming Initiative.

A. General Lessons

- **Development effectiveness depends critically on mainstreaming sustainable scaling into funders’ operational practices.** Achievement gaps will not be closed by greater resources alone. Greater long-term impact at scale per dollar spent is required to attain national and global goals. Sustainable impact multiplies these benefits for years to come.
- **Many funders now focus on scaling, and a few have made substantial advances in integrating scaling into their work, but most have some way to go.** Even those that have put in place most of the pieces still are working on achieving adoption and utilization by all internal users. Others need to focus on operationalizing mission statements, tools and support teams.
- **Funders can serve as important intermediaries in facilitating scaling in the countries that they support.** As intermediaries, they need to provide not only financing, but technical assistance, policy advice and support for institution building, including the development of local intermediary capacity. For those funders that already support these types of investments, they need to be organized around affecting transformational scaling.
- **Mainstreaming scaling means systematically integrating scaling into funder’s operational modalities.** These include mission, objectives, strategies, business models, operations and managerial and staff mindsets and incentives with a focus on impact and results, not disbursements and short-term outcomes achieved.
- **Scaling is not simply another cross-cutting objective to be added to the already large and growing list.** A scaling approach positively affects the impact of work in all sectors and cross-cutting issues, including gender, climate change, and equity, inclusion and marginalization and hence must be pursued in all priority areas of a funder organization.
- **An all-of-organization approach is preferred, rather than one where scaling is the responsibility of just one support unit.** For those organizations in which it appears impossible to mainstream scaling corporate-wide, experimentation with separate scaling units may be a worthwhile transition strategy.

- **Effective mainstreaming needs a long time horizon (10-15 years) with sustained attention until full implementation is achieved.**

B. Enabling Factors for Mainstreaming Scaling

- **Leadership from the top by senior management is the biggest single factor driving mainstreaming,** combined with support from middle management and pressure from governance bodies. In more decentralized organizations, this can mean not only central leadership but also from country and regional offices and sectors units.

- **A well-articulated vision of measurable scaling goals and targets at an institutional level, appropriate for the funder's mandate and size, ensures monitorable and accountable progress.** Monitoring and evaluation for the mainstreaming process for accountability, learning and adaptation is essential to track progress against goals and targets.

- **A pathway for implementation of organizational change to mainstream scaling defines practical steps and ensures the whole organization moves towards mainstreaming.** Ideally this should be seen as a change management process and relevant facilitation expertise be brought on board, especially in large, bureaucratic organizations. Monitoring and evaluation of the mainstreaming process will support accountability and adaptation as needed.

- **A focus on transformative scaling (achieving sustainable long-term goals) rather than transactional scaling (more money, larger projects, growing the organization) will be needed to support long-term sustainable impact at scale.** More generally, clear definitions of scale, scaling (and scaling pathways), and sustainable impact at scale, and a commonly understood set of concepts and lexicon are essential for a change in organizational culture and incentives as well as accountability.

- **A clear focus on scaling needs to be introduced into existing organizational practices, policies and procedures as part of the mainstreaming process.** This applies in particular to project or intervention design, internal reviews and quality assurance, and approval criteria.

- **Incentives for management and staff need to support changes in behavior and mindsets and ultimately in institutional culture required for mainstreaming scaling in funder organizations.** These incentives include the internal allocation of resources, promotion, salaries and status based on performance indicators and reviews linked to effective implementation of the scaling agenda. Along with leadership and MEAL, alignment of incentives and organizational culture to support mainstreaming, is essential to achieving organization-wide scaling goals and utilization of new scaling tools, processes and procedures.

- **Mainstreaming scaling should not be another "unfunded mandate" for managers and staff.** Mainstreaming needs to be supported with budgetary, technical and organizational resources, especially for frontline staff that ultimately need to make the organizational focus on scaling work. Analytical tools, training and knowledge management in support of frontline staff, consultants and local counterpart teams also will empower and motivate them.

- **Implementation of mainstreaming scaling needs to recognize and transparently manage tradeoffs and tensions.** These tradeoffs and tension arise from a multiplicity and complexity of objectives, differing interests across stakeholders, the need to address costs and risks along with potential benefits, and more.

C. Key Aspects of a "Good" Scaling Approach for Funders

- **Scaling from the beginning of project preparation, or early in the innovation cycle is the most important aspect of systematic scaling.**
- **Scaling from the beginning needs to be combined with "localization" (i.e., aligning scaling goals and outcomes with local priorities expressed by key stakeholders) to support scaling and sustainable change.** Ideally, this involves a co-design process with local actors, and potential Doers and Payers at future sustainable scale, including a plan to affect necessary systems changes, rather than a simple hand-off prepared in the last year of a project.
- **Systematic use of scalability assessments and criteria are needed for effective scaling,** including:
    - assessing local context and actual demand (versus need); adapting innovations/interventions to local context; being prepared to invest in demand creation;
    - determining who will do scaling and implementation at sustainable scale, and where the resources will come from;
    - documenting total and unit costs and inputs needs, the role of context and potential for economies of scale and scope; and
    - explicitly considering systems, resource and capacity constraints in the country given intervention costs and requirements and supporting system change, capacity building and resource mobilization where necessary and possible.
- **As part of their assessment of financing opportunities in support of scaling, funders need to focus on equity and inclusion, on unintended consequences, on potential losers, and on political economy implications.** The goal is not "maximal scale" but "optimal scale."
- **Country-led inclusive country platforms can support scaling** by:
    - integrating local leadership in design and implementation decisions about scaling and the use of evidence, demand creation, stakeholder engagement and capacity building in private and public sectors;

  - involving local stakeholders from the beginning, especially to create ownership or prepare for effective hand-off at project end;
  - enabling partnerships and coordination among international partners for transformational impact at scale, recognizing that their creation, alignment, and ongoing management and operation is neither easy nor costless; and
  - facilitating joint monitoring, evaluation and learning by all local stakeholders and international partners.

- **Partnerships are essential for scaling both in terms of going to scale and sustainable implementation at scale.** However, they need to be seen in the context of transformational scaling, not simply assembling more resources, covering a greater area or population, or agreements and division of labor to achieve short-term project goals.
- **Results management and MEAL frameworks metrics need to be adapted** for:
  - tracking progress in going to scale, with a focus not only on impact but also on whether and how the enabling conditions, including systems change, are supporting the scaling process; and
  - evaluating scaling impact retrospectively over longer time horizons that assess sustained impacts of good scaling practices (partnerships, policy reform and capacity building, intermediation, hand-off, etc.) years after the funder has disengaged from a project.

VI. Lessons for the Funder Community

The report noted in Section II that despite the significant progress on mainstreaming found in many of the case studies, there remains a major gap in the scaling ecosystem in terms of linkages across funders along the six stages of the scaling pathway. Innovation funders, and smaller funders more generally, do not have the resources, and frequently not the mandate, to scale. Larger funders have the resources, but often are focused on transactional rather than transformational scale, and in any case lack institutionalized relationships with innovation and smaller funders for hand-offs from such organizations. More generally, coordination and cooperation among funders for sustainable impact at scale requires that not only one or a few funders focus on scaling, but that the funding community as a whole mainstreams scaling in its operational practice. Since the costs of cooperation are borne by each individual funder agency, but the results and impacts are not easily measured and attributed to a particular funder, cooperation for sustainable impact at scale is in effect a quasi-public good and steps need to be taken by the funder community as a whole to ensure that it provides effective support for scaling.

This need for collective action by the funder community results in a set of six interlocking proposals which should be further pursued as part of a concerted effort to support sustainable impact at scale:

- **Create formal coordination mechanisms and institutions to facilitate linkage between small donors, innovators and innovation funders and larger funders;**
- **Ensure that the large funders, including bilateral and multilateral funders as well as the large foundations, focus on transformational scaling overall and in key areas of global development and climate change;**
- **Invest more resources in funder organizations that have internalized the role of intermediary funders in particular sectoral or thematic areas,** such as the Global Financing Facility, IFAD and SOFF;
- **Invest greater resources in creating and strengthening the capacity of country-led, inclusive country and regional platforms**, such as the country platforms under the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) or regional donor consortia or organizations like the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa or the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program;
- **Integrate scaling into widely used MEAL frameworks such as the OECD-DAC evaluation guidelines** as this can potentially have a multiplier effect beyond bilateral and multilateral funders; and
- **Integrate scaling into the global development effectiveness agenda** to encourage funder organizations to set organization-specific quantitative targets for their contributions to impact at scale in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or other global goals, such as for carbon emissions reduction or biodiversity protection. Taking on a proportionate share of responsibility among various global players could create powerful incentives.

Annex 1: Main Questions to Be Addressed for Each Participating Funder

(From the Mainstreaming Initiative Concept Note)

For the selected funders case studies will ideally seek to obtain answers to the following questions:

i. Is scaling a central part of the organization's mission statement and has the visible support of the organization's leadership?

ii. Does the funder have a systematic approach to the support of scaling that is appropriate for the organization and its mission, with special attention to current organizational practices in six areas:

(a) organizational strategy;

(b) operational business models and financing instruments;

(c) internal policies, guidelines, and management processes;

(d) approach to partnerships, coordination and networking;

(e) staff and management incentives; and

(f) monitoring and evaluation of funded projects/programs?

iii. How does the organization define scaling, and does it include a consideration of the devolution of resources and responsibility to recipients?

iv. Does the funder's project model incorporate a systematic focus on sustainable scaling beyond project end and on the devolution of resources and responsibilities to recipients?

v. If the organization is aiming at mainstreaming, what is it doing to:

(a) strengthen enabling factors (leadership from the top, champions, support from the authorizing environment such as Boards and replenishments;

(b) strengthening the organizational practices identifies under ii. above);

(c) reducing barriers (including bureaucratic inertia, staff overload, and multiplicity of initiatives);

(d) assuring appropriate budget, staffing and training support); and

(e) monitoring and evaluating progress with the mainstreaming process?

Annex 2. Tradeoffs, Tensions and Challenges in Mainstreaming Scaling

Funders face many tradeoffs and resulting tensions across goals as they aim to mainstream scaling into their funding practices. This annex summarized the main areas where tradeoffs, tensions and challenges arise in the design and implementation of mainstreaming scaling in funder organizations.

1. Comprehensiveness of impact in traditional project design versus scalability

Traditional funder practices reward comprehensiveness in program design and implementation since it promises greater impact for a particular project. But complexity almost always increases cost, which limits the scalability and sustainability of interventions. Sustainable scaling often requires simplification of program design to reduce costs and implementability given long-term resource and capacity constraints.

2. Effectiveness of interventions from the funder perspective versus country ownership

Funders' authorizing environments (taxpayers, parliaments, contributors, etc.) shape the objectives they pursue and how they define the effectiveness of their funding. As a result, funder goals are often misaligned with the goals of the national authorities and stakeholder communities in recipient countries. This tension is reflected in funders' MEAL frameworks, which focus on accountability in terms of project goals but not meeting national goals for long-term impact. Unless resolved through creative alignment efforts, this tension undermines the sustainability and scalability of funder-supported programs.

3. Quantity versus quality

The tension between quantity (i.e., scale) and quality is perhaps the most pervasive that has long troubled design and delivery of social services and arises especially in the context of education and health services, but can also affect other areas of development investment and policy. "Scaling deep," i.e., improving quality without necessarily expanding geographic or population scale of a program, is a valid scaling objective, esp. where the reach and coverage of a program is already near universal.

4. Equity and inclusion versus scale

As noted earlier, many funders have explicit equity and inclusion objectives for poverty reduction, gender inclusion, reaching under-served communities, support to fragile and conflict-affected populations, etc. These are valid objectives, but reaching these equity and inclusion goals will generally require adaptation in program design and implementation modalities with higher, often substantially higher, unit costs for delivery as well as higher risk of failure.

5. Expected benefits of an intervention versus unintended consequences and potential losers

The principal focus of funders has traditionally been on assuring the intended results for the beneficiaries of the project by the time of project completion. Funders often pay limited attention to indirect and unintended consequences, and to the fact that interventions – particularly those that involve systemic change – create losers as well as winners. Funders will have to pay more attention to these aspects when they mainstream scaling into their funding objectives and practices. As the scale of interventions grows, the impact of these tensions becomes more severe, evident and potentially disruptive. Transformational scaling can only succeed if unintended consequences, losers and the resulting political opposition to change are accounted for.

6. Benefits versus costs from partnership and coordination

Partnership and coordination are at the core of many funders' intended efforts to improve development effectiveness in general and their scaling performance in particular. However, achieving alignment of goals, roles and reporting frameworks can prove challenging and consume considerable time, effort and resources. As noted above, this coordination usually has substantial implications for staff engagement, loss of control and dilution of brand. As with other "unfunded mandates," the costs of pursuing partnerships and coordination are generally not counted or confronted, which ultimately leads to lack of effective implementation.

7. Risk aversion in transactional scaling versus embracing risk in transformational scaling

Many funders, especially official funders, are averse to risk in their transactional approach to projects. They often measure their corporate success in achieving positive development outcomes in terms of the percentage of projects that are individually rated as "at least moderately successful" in achieving their ex-ante project objectives and implementation design. In contrast, a transformational scaling approach does not simply do whatever is needed to ensure an individual project meets its own narrow one-off goal, but looks to learn lessons from challenges encountered in project implementation, allow for adaptation in design and implementation and focus on the overall impact of a portfolio of projects (or innovations) over the longer term. Non-official funders, and especially foundations, appear more ready to embrace risk and focus on the transformational impact of their entire portfolio of interventions, especially because they often envisage a longer-term relationship with a grantee beyond a single grant or project. This tension is not only encountered on an organizational level but translates into disincentives for project, sector or country managers to design and implement risky projects and investments.

8. Systems change versus scaling

In principle, systems change and scaling are complementary and good scaling practice often involves systems change. In practice, many funders find themselves doing one or the other. It is hard to do both in a mutually supportive way because of a difference in underlying approach, philosophy and practice. One of the ways this shows up is in different starting points, conceptually and practically. Transformational scale starts with the scale of the problem and local systems actors collectively transforming various systems to meet needs, iteratively designing and testing specific innovations and interventions. Innovation funders and innovators start with the innovation. Only when the innovation reaches a certain stage do they start to think about systems. At that point some do embrace a transformational perspective, while others engage in transactional scaling.

9. The complex link between localization and decentralization

Successful scaling involves co-creation with Doers and Payers, creating demand at the user level, and building local intermediation capacity. It moves away from supply-driven scaling to focus on local ownership, buy-in, demand and capacity. Therefore, national ownership and localization are critically linked with decentralization within funders. Country or regional officers are better able to identify windows of opportunity in situ as well as develop long-term relationships with key stakeholders (i.e., with empowered staff in-country, rather than at headquarters). Long-term relationships include commitments to a more programmatic approach and longer-term perspective necessary to develop national policy, augment institutional capacity, and coordinate ultimate hand-off to national actors (i.e., systems change).

But, there are several tensions in the localization and decentralization agenda. Although smaller funders have more flexibility to take longer-term relationships and a programmatic approach, they often lack the resources to maintain multiple regional or country offices and to support systems change, suggesting that they may need to be more focused geographically. Larger funders have the resources for country offices and support for systems change but lack the flexibility to easily put in place a longer-term, transformational scaling approach. Moreover, decentralization in larger organizations creates a tension between mandating and enforcing organization-wide diffusion of scaling and the greater autonomy of their country offices. Moreover, decentralization creates additional distance between headquarter-based innovation units and the country-based project teams, making hand-off from the former to the latter difficult.

10. Mainstreaming scaling versus the cost of doing so in the face of corporate budget constraints

Perhaps the most pervasive and troublesome tension is between wanting to do more in support of scaling on the one hand, and the constraints funders inevitably face in meeting the increased administrative costs of doing business on the other. Mid-level management and frontline teams feel unduly stretched by unfunded mandates and, therefore, tend to resist adding scaling to their extensive list of deliverables, even as they see its intrinsic value. This puts the burden on the governance bodies and top management to be explicit about the costs of all mandates and budget for them, and (i) find ways of mainstreaming that involve little or no incremental administrative costs, (ii) free up resources by weeding out lower priority corporate activities, and (iii) seek additional resources to fund mainstreaming initiatives. Ultimately though, the answer to resolving this tension will lie in recognizing that scaling is not like many other corporate mandates – it is not an “add on,” but it is a different way of doing business in the pursuit of all funder mandates. To be effective in achieving crosscutting corporate goals, funders will have to mainstream a scaling approach for each of these goals.