



Dear colleagues,

This is not your usual Newsletter, but then these are highly unusual times. In this Newsletter we share with you our thoughts about the severe crisis in development and climate assistance and involve you in the process we are undertaking to respond to the crisis as a Community of Practice.

The Crisis

Our basic assumptions about development and climate assistance have been upended by the destruction of USAID. On top of this there is the US withdrawal from UNFCCC and WHO and the reversal of its pledge to the Green Climate Fund, and the possibility that the US will not pay its current IDA contributions and withdraw from many multilateral development institutions.

This tragic story in the US is still unfolding as we write and both its extent, duration and severity of impact cannot yet be fully gauged. But one thing is clear: The current US actions, alongside the deep cuts in development and climate assistance by many European countries, mean that we will see severe declines in ODA and in development and climate financial flows more generally. Many millions of people in the Global South will suffer as a result of this man-made disaster. And many of you who have devoted your lives to making development and climate action more effective, will see your professional work and your livelihoods threatened.

The immediate challenge is for all of us to adjust to this new reality and to do the best we can to protect those who depend on us, especially the poorest and the most vulnerable, but also our families and friends whose livelihoods are threatened by these shocks.

At the same time, we – and the Executive Committee of the Scaling Community of Practice -- believe that we need to seize the opportunity of this crisis to lay a foundation for stronger and more effective development and climate action in future.

Our response: A five-year campaign to mainstream scaling in the development and climate communities

We believe this crisis has implications for the future direction and work of the Scaling Community of Practice. We are convinced that business-as-usual with short-lived, stand-alone, unsustainable projects that are not owned by the countries and communities they are intended to serve has to be replaced by an approach that embodies transformational scaling – working to solve development challenges problems sustainably at scale.

We therefore have concluded that the best way forward is to organize a five-year Campaign 2026-2030 to mainstream the scaling idea and practice into the development and climate action eco-system of institutions, including governments, civil society, private sector, and external funders, and into global

standard setting forums. This is an ambitious goal, but we believe we can help reach a tipping point so that by 2030 the integration of a systematic, country-led scaling approach in the development and climate communities is substantial, endogenous and irreversible.

In this vision, those resources that continue to flow from North to South and from South to South will be more effectively combined with countries' and people's own resources to support action at the national and local level, whether by government, private business or civil society in pursuit of long-term and sustainable scaling pathways.

And here's what we're doing

Our plans for preparing and implementing the Mainstreaming Campaign come at a time when we were exploring how best to put our Community on a stronger and more sustainable organizational footing and financial. We have taken or are currently undertaking the following steps:

- We have leveraged the volunteer effort of the members of the Executive Committee with the part-time professional support of three colleagues: Charlotte Coogan as Program Manager; Simon Winter as Director of Transformational Partnerships; and Richard Kohl in his capacity as Co-Chair of the Mainstreaming Working Group and Co-Leader of the Initiative on Mainstreaming Scaling in Funder Organizations.
- With their support, we have developed a strategy that identifies the rationale and mission of the campaign; the organizational, leadership and governance pillars; and the principal activities the Campaign will pursue. As part of the Newsletter, you will find a two-page "pitch document" that explains key elements of this strategy.
- We have identified a not-for-profit host organization, Dalberg Catalyst, that will house our Community and actively support the Campaign, and we are developing strong partnerships with IPA and other likeminded organizations.
- We have begun an active outreach to potential funders.
- We have drafted an op-ed article for placement in a major international newspaper. It will argue that we need a new development paradigm in the face of the current crisis and that the mainstreaming of scaling in the international development ecosystem is an essential element of a new approach to development effectiveness.

An invitation for you to get involved

The Executive Committee and we urge you to do whatever you can to help address the urgent and immediate needs of those affected by the crisis.

We also ask you to join us in our effort to us shape and support the Mainstreaming Campaign. We will send you an invitation and link for a **virtual all-member townhall meeting on April 2nd at 11am EDT**, when we plan to brief you in greater detail on our current plans, listen to your ideas and suggestions, and explore ways to involve you actively in the Mainstreaming Campaign going forward.

The Executive Committee and we look forward to your engagement with the Scaling Community and wish you and yours the very best possible during these troubled times.

With warm regards,

Larry Cooley and Johannes Linn, Co-Chairs, Scaling Community of Practice

MAINSTREAMING CAMPAIGN OF THE SCALING COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

**01** Overview

In response to the crisis in international development assistance and the urgency of global development and climate challenges, the Global Community of Practice on Scaling Development Outcomes (or *Scaling Community of Practice, SCoP, for short*) is launching a five-year campaign to put effective strategies for achieving sustainable outcomes at scale at the center of international development and climate action, with a special focus on actors in the Global South. This note frames the rationale, plans and resources needed for the intensive, action-oriented phases of the effort.

The goal of the five-year campaign is to shift public, philanthropic and private development action and financing to a new paradigm of transformational scaling that dramatically increases development impact and effectiveness. In the current foreign assistance crisis precipitated by the abrupt closure of USAID and major cuts by other bilateral funders, this paradigm shift is more important and timely than ever. Building on a 3-year, self-financed action research effort on mainstreaming scaling in funder organizations, the SCoP is seeking to raise \$2.5 million to fund a broad-based campaign to mainstream scaling more generally in the institutional ecosystem of development and climate action. These resources will be used to build support among a critical mass of decisionmakers in the Global North and Global South; to generate additional evidence where necessary; to develop operational tools and standards, and to promote their uptake. The goal is to enable a broad array of development funders and implementers – host country governments, official donors, private foundations and intermediaries, private enterprises and CSOs –, to integrate effective approaches to scaling into their strategies, funding models, and day-to-day work.

02 Addressing Urgent Challenges in Development Effectiveness through Transformational Scaling

Early in 2025, the reduction in public funding has hit crisis levels. We sit at a moment when the future role for official development assistance to achieve sustainable impact at scale looks distinctly gloomier than at any time in the past five decades. Yet, the challenges of the changing climate, forced migration, losses in biodiversity, increasing water scarcity, degrading soils and increasing poverty, social inequality and fragmentation, all persist and often are worsening. Moreover, with its high degree of fragmentation and limited capacity for effective coordination, the architecture of assistance for scaling development outcomes that was flawed to begin with finds itself in particularly urgent need of reform.

The prevailing response to the current crisis is understandably to try and minimize the immediate damage from the cutbacks in assistance. But this will not be enough. A strategic shift in approach to development effectiveness is urgently needed. The traditional project approach of relatively small, isolated, single-funder, donor-driven and short-lived interventions has not worked well. The Campaign is grounded in the need to integrate an alternative approach – what is appropriately termed “transformational scaling” – as the dominant framework for development assistance and investments.

Transformational scaling involves building realistic pathways to scale into the design of projects and innovations; investing in systems change and strengthening to create the enabling conditions – policies, institutions, value chains, financing – that relieve constraints to scale and sustainability; and funding longer-term (10 year plus) pathways to transformative change.

Funders need to recognize that the only viable path to **sustainable impact at scale** is to go beyond notionally linking assistance to national strategies and priorities, by having country actors – governments, private sector and civil societies – champion and pursue outcomes at scale that in turn are collectively and pragmatically shaped, equitably distributed, and serve multiple objectives. And those pursuing reform of the external assistance architecture need to recognize that the challenges created by the fragmented development assistance structure can only be overcome if a critical mass of funders mainstream a transformational scaling approach in their operational practices. Absent that, there will continue to be limited or no incentives for alignment of external support with national priorities. But of course, scaling has to be mainstreamed not only into funder practice, but critically into countries’ own public, private and civil society; ultimately, this will ensure that investments are truly working to achieve local development goals aligned with local resource and implementation constraints.

In pursuing the goal of mainstreaming transformational scaling, we are not starting from scratch. Examples abound of transformational scaling that span public and private pathways to scale. Among the cases we and others have documented are the following: Natural Rural Health Mission in India, oral rehydration and deworming solutions in Africa, GAVI’s global efforts at immunization, M-Pesa in Kenya, vitamin A-enriched sweet potatoes in West Africa, BRAC, cash transfer programs in multiple countries (including Progres-Oportunidades in Mexico), digital public infrastructure and IDs in India, and an array of Chinese government-supported development programs. Yet, such examples are the exception, not the rule. We need to ensure that their lessons are truly learned and their example replicated systematically by development and climate actors around the globe.

03

The Scaling Community of Practice

Since 2015, the Scaling Community of Practice (SCoP) has been advancing concrete proposals centered on transformational scaling linked to global and national development and climate goals. The SCoP, composed of nearly 5,000 members from 400 organizations in 70 countries – the majority from the Global South – and guided by a highly diversified **Executive Committee** of over 30 representatives from many leading partner organizations, has compiled an extensive body of experiences and methodologies, set standards (e.g., the “**Scaling Principles and Lessons**”), and engaged in advisory work and advocacy that have had a significant impact on international development. It took years of consistent and concerted effort to build this community, whose established foundations of credibility and trust now uniquely position the SCoP to seize this critical moment.

The SCoP is completing a three-year applied research study assessing the Mainstreaming of Scaling in Funder Organizations (2023-2025). It is collaborating with 25 development and climate finance organizations to develop evidence-based case studies analyzing funder practices, and has produced companion publications detailing **recipient perceptions**, and discussing **lessons learned**. The Initiative also assisted development of

the OECD-DAC’s **scaling guidance**, developed a **mainstreaming tracking tool**, and assessed how scaling is included in **funders’ standard evaluation approaches**. The evidence generated provides the basis for the proposed advocacy campaign with key stakeholders that, resources permitting, will begin with events in major capitals throughout the OECD and the Global South beginning in Washington, Nairobi, Paris, Seville, and Rome.

04 The Mainstreaming Campaign: 2026 to 2030

By the end of the Campaign, a critical mass of development actors, including host country governments, implementers, funders, intermediaries and evaluators, will have adopted and will be implementing a new paradigm centered around transformational scaling.

The SCoP is uniquely positioned to lead the Campaign given the breadth and diversity of its membership; its international legitimacy and status as a neutral actor; its comprehensive, cross-sectoral scope; and its extensive network and relationships throughout the development ecosystem. To support this effort, the SCoP will leverage its **High-Level Advisory Group**, its small secretariat, and its array of partner organizations.

Business model for the Campaign

The Campaign will be organized around six main activity areas as captured in the following diagram designed to provide a global public good by creating an ecosystem of commitment and capacity.

<p>Networking and Advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share practices, tools, lessons • Forums, working groups • Match-making, partnerships 	<p>Knowledge Products</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainstreaming cases with funders • Tailor to governments, private sector, PPPPs, use of AI 	<p>Funder standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundamentals guidelines • OECD-DAC-like principles • Accountability tools
<p>Capacity Building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed scaling in funders • Develop assessment methods • Guide training 	<p>Monitoring & Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop frameworks and guidelines • Support development actors 	<p>Global standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scaling standards for financing frameworks • Showcase successes

Campaign Advocacy

Key components of the advocacy work will include:

- Producing a campaign document that enshrines its goals, methods, and expected outcomes;
- Engaging ambassadors and champions including leaders of funders, developing country governments, private investors, think-tanks, CSOs and development practitioners;
- Identifying local and global opportunities and what is required to make specific, strategic shifts;
- Developing knowledge and communications materials; and,
- Inserting mainstreaming into discussions about development finance and funding reform, the Financing for Development 4 Summit in Sevilla, the post-2030 agenda, etc.

Funding and phasing

While membership in the SCoP is open to everyone free of charge and has benefitted from extensive voluntary engagement by its members and leaders, financial support has come in the form of fees from 14 SCoP member organizations (“Sustaining Members”); funding for knowledge projects/products (including the

mainstreaming cases); in-kind contributions from cooperating organizations; and fees for advisory services. While much appreciated, these sources of income are insufficient to cover the cost of the action phases of the Campaign. The SCoP is therefore looking to raise additional grant funding for the Campaign, which includes transitioning from a largely, volunteer organization to one with a small, paid professional staff to drive the Campaign.

The Campaign will have 3 phases with an immediate need of US\$100k and US\$2.5m for the full Campaign:

- A “Set-up” phase during 2025. The first half of 2025 is covered by US\$70K available at 30 June 2025. For the second half of 2025, one member organization has committed to contribute \$100K, if we can raise a matching grant of US\$100K from another funder.
- An “Outreach and Advocacy Campaign” phase during 2026-2030. The annual cost of the SCoP and Campaign will be ~US\$500K. In addition, we expect to receive ~US\$300K annually for research projects and advisory services and from Sustaining Members. Ideally, we would mobilize a substantial fraction of the 5-year funding requirements during the set-up phase in 2025.
- A “Sustainable networking” phase from 2031 onwards. Following a successful Campaign, we expect the SCoP to return to playing its original learning, networking and standard setting functions. We are not currently seeking funding for this phase.

Leadership and host organization

Strong leadership is critical to the Campaign. It will be led by an Executive Director, who will support and guide the SCoP in the Mainstreaming Campaign with the help of a small team of scaling experts already engaged in the SCoP. The Campaign will be hosted by **Dalberg Catalyst**, a dynamic not-for-profit organization with highly complementary goals and capacities and will include a close partnership with **Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA)**. Its governance structure will include:

- a Steering Committee (SC) consisting of representatives of funders, chairs of the 10 SCoP working groups, representative of Dalberg Catalyst and IPA, and the Executive Director;
- an Executive Committee (EC) drawn from the SC will guide and monitor the day-to-day activities of the SCoP and its Secretariat; and
- a High-Level Campaign Advisory Group (HLAG) made up of notable figures from across the development and climate change landscape will advise the Campaign and serve as vocal advocates.