



Mainstreaming Campaign of the Scaling Community of Practice

July 2025

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 \$3.5 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 decision makers in the Global North and Global South; to generate additional evidence where necessary; to develop operational tools and standards, to build country platforms and to build capabilities in organizations committed to scaling. 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.

Addressing Urgent Challenges in Development Effectiveness through Transformational Scaling

Early in 2025, the reduction in public funding hit crisis levels. 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 already flawed, finds itself in particularly urgent need of reform.

The prevailing response to the crisis is understandably to try and minimize the immediate damage from the cuts in assistance. This will not be enough. A strategic shift in 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 an alternative approach – “transformational scaling”.

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 – across governments, private sector and civil society – champion and pursue outcomes at scale that are collectively and pragmatically shaped, equitably distributed, and serve multiple objectives. 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. And, scaling must be mainstreamed not only into funder practice, but critically into countries’ public, private and civil society. This will ensure that investments are truly working to achieve local development goals aligned with local resource and implementation constraints.

In pursuing mainstreaming of transformational scaling, we are not starting from scratch. Examples abound 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 de-worming solutions in Africa, GAVI’s global efforts at immunization, M-Pesa in Kenya, vitamin A-enriched sweet potatoes in West Africa, BRAC’s graduation model, cash transfer programs in multiple countries (including Progresa-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.

The Scaling Community of Practice

Since 2015, the Scaling Community of Practice (SCoP) has been advancing 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 with significant impact. 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, is underway with recent events in Washington, Nairobi, Paris and Sevilla, and more to come across the OECD and the Global South, for example, in Abidjan and Rome and in our Annual Forum, planned for February 2026.

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.

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

Campaign Initiatives

Key components of the Campaign will include:

- **Influencing:** 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; and inserting mainstreaming into discussions about development finance and funding reform (as happened alongside the FfD4 summit in Sevilla), the post-2030 agenda, etc. One area of great interest in the looming lean times, is how to more effectively engage the private sector, especially larger corporates and investors, earlier in the development cycle.
- **Funder transformation:** Supporting funders which want to implement mainstreaming strategies and organizational change. This area could include working with smaller bilaterals; looking at best sectoral funding practices (e.g., in health), the unique role of private philanthropy, and evaluations of the longer term impacts of scaling initiatives.
- **Country and local agendas:** Identifying and supporting local opportunities such as through country and sector platforms, and what is required to make specific, strategic shifts to embed scaling. Specific focus areas could include: fragile states and humanitarian solutions, the role of public development banks, and the enabling and catalytic role for global south governments.
- **Sector building:** Developing and sharing knowledge and communications materials; and, developing, running and supporting the development of sector standards, together with leadership development, training and capacity building for interested individuals and organizations.
- **Innovation to scale:** Interest is growing in how to ensure that organizations and funders have effective models to bridge from early stage innovations to adoption at scale, the need for supportive local innovation ecosystems, the role of social enterprises, and, the CGIAR, in particular, has launched a Scaling for Impact program.

A number of such ideas are captured in a separate note that describes substantive initiatives through which the mainstreaming work could ‘projectize’ building further knowledge, guiding improved practice, and influencing and supporting needed transitions.

Funding and Phasing

Membership in the SCoP is open to everyone free of charge. It has benefitted from extensive voluntary engagement by its members and leaders. Financial support has come 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, which includes support for a small, paid professional staff to drive the Campaign.

The Campaign will have 3 phases with at least US\$3.5m being needed for the full Campaign:

- A *“Set-up” phase*. For the second half of 2025, we have raised about US\$200K but additional an additional grant of US\$100-150K would allow us to intensify our preparation efforts for the Campaign.
- An *“Outreach and Advocacy Campaign” phase during 2026-2030*. The annual cost of the SCoP and Campaign will be ~US\$600K, which is expected to be significantly higher during the formative first year. In addition, we expect at least US\$300K annually to fund substantive initiatives. 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 SCoP and 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.