



From problem to opportunity

What's the problem?

Since 2000, \$3.4 trillion has flowed into international development assistance but the good intentions of the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness were never realized. The gap between actual impact and possible population-level impact remains stubbornly wide, not because of bad intentions, but because of a broken system and practice of development cooperation.

- Aid fragmentation increased as the number of donor agencies trebled 2004-2023 and average grant size shrank.
- Most donor-funded interventions fail to scale due to lack of local ownership, lack of planning beyond project end, lack of systematic handoff from one funder to the next, and lack of sustained efforts to build local systemic capacities.
- As a result, only a fraction of potential beneficiaries are reached and the “scaling dividend” goes unclaimed.

The Opportunity

Following more than two decades of efforts to reform development cooperation, there is now an opportunity to make transformational scaling the standard practice for development and climate action across national, regional and global institutional ecosystems:

- From projects to **systems development**
- From donor agency to **local agency**
- From short-term results to **pathways addressing unmet needs**
- From fragmented aid to **funding scaling platforms**
- From ex-post evaluation of project impact to **real-time scaling progress assessments**

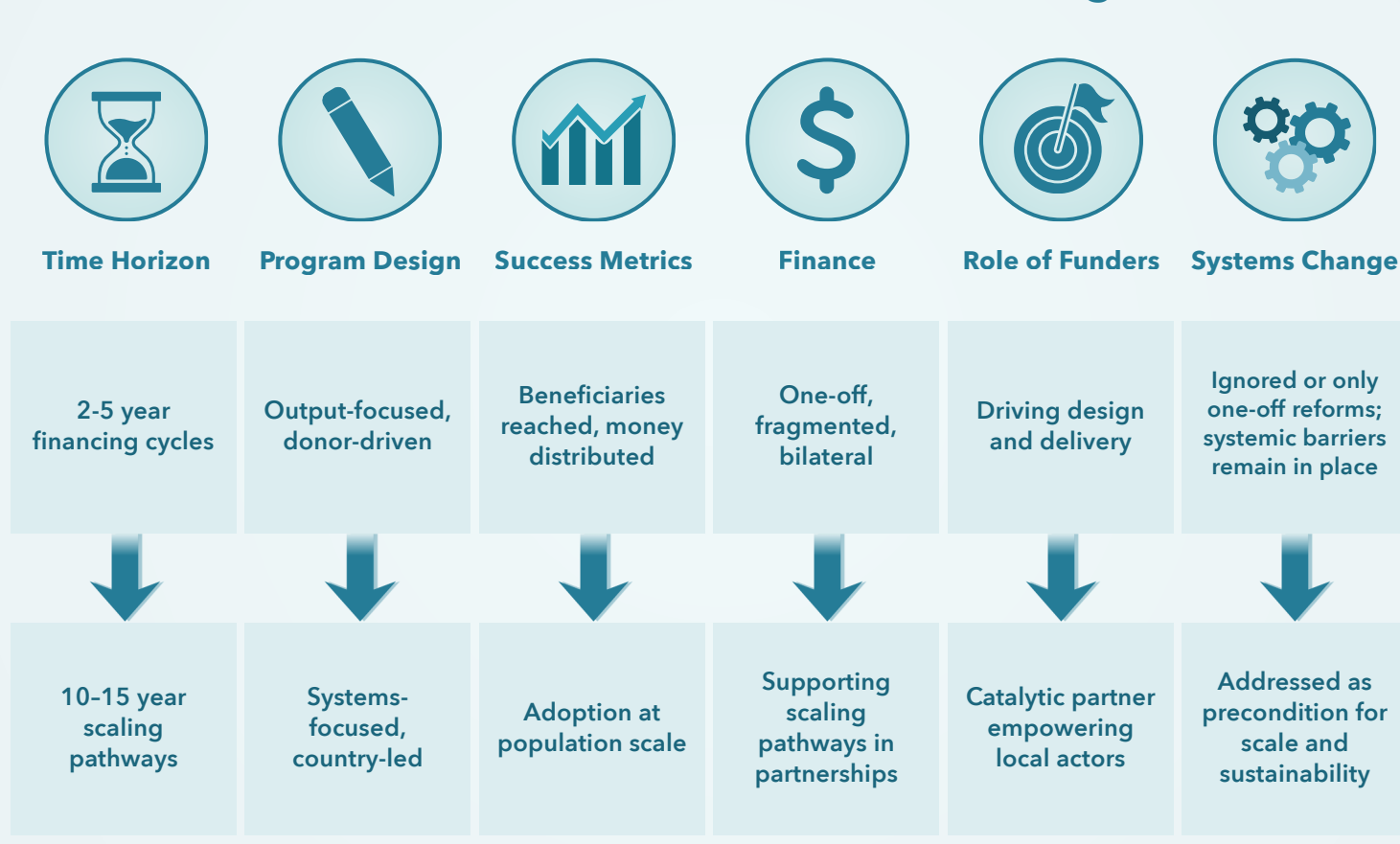
Development cooperation that works via partnerships in support of nationally owned transformational scaling pathways will build systemic capacities and generate dynamic enterprise, investment and employment growth, which fragmented project-based cooperation fails to do. The current crisis in international development and climate finance heightens the urgency of a more effective use of national and external resources.

Three insights that change everything

1. FROM TRANSACTIONAL SUPPORT TO TRANSFORMATIONAL SCALING

Development assistance has offered “transactional” support with one-off, fragmented projects or simply doing more of the same. Instead, it needs to pursue “transformational scaling” by reframing the entire logic of intervention design, incentives, and impact measurement. (See Table and Annex 1)

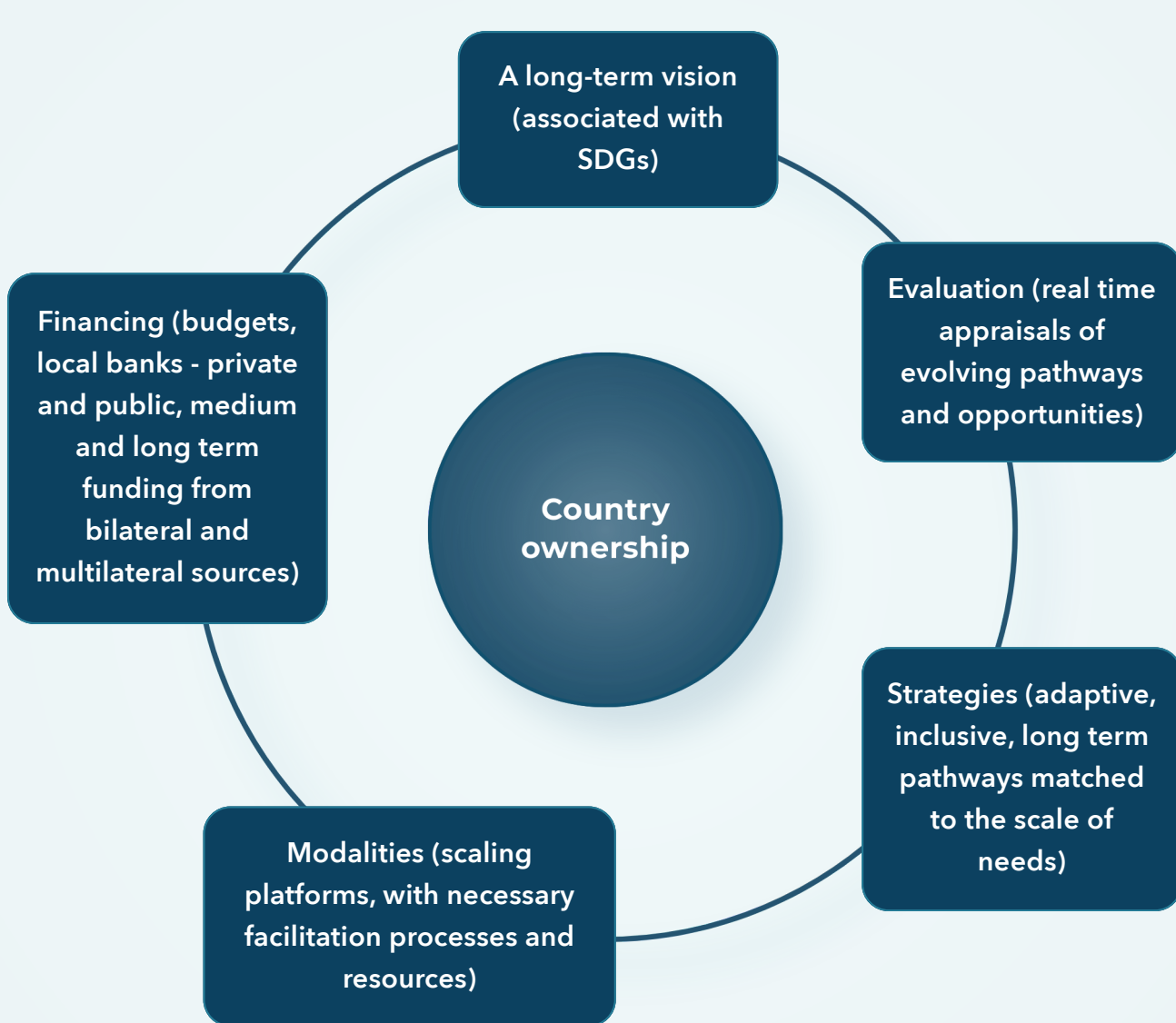
transitioning from *transactional* to *transformational scaling*



2. FROM TRANSACTIONAL TO TRANSFORMATIONAL COUNTRY PLATFORMS

Country coordination platforms are important instruments to align national stakeholder and external funder interests with a country's long-term development agenda. However, the platforms must be transformational in design and implementation, underpinned by a transformational scaling approach by each of the participating organizations. Regional and thematic platforms can support transformational scaling at country level, including recent initiatives by the international funder community, such as Mission 300 for energizing Africa, Health Works, Water Forward and the Global Energy Alliance.

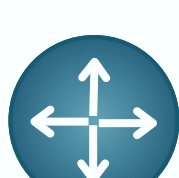
Transformational country-led platforms coordinate key domestic and international stakeholders in support of transformational scaling:



Principal stakeholders have to mainstream transformational scaling pathways into their operational practice if they are to be effective in supporting transformational country platforms.

3. FROM TRANSACTIONAL TO TRANSFORMATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

International development funders have a special responsibility to mainstream a transformational scaling approach into their operational practice.



Mainstreaming means integrating the scaling perspective throughout the funder organization (figure below).



Mainstreaming doesn't happen on its own. It involves a systematic institutional change process.



Mainstreaming needs persistent leadership to change internal culture, incentive, resource allocation, operational processes and monitoring and evaluation.



The Scaling Community's Scaling Campaign and Call to Action

The **Scaling Community of Practice (SCoP)** launched **Scaling Campaign 2026-2030** aiming to put these insights into action by developing actions that embed proven approaches to transformational scaling in how governments and supporting and climate actors plan, fund, and deliver results that reach and sustain impact at the scale of the problem. In March 2026 the SCoP issued a **CALL TO ACTION** for relevant actors to support the aims of the Scaling Campaign.

SCALING CAMPAIGN 2026-2030: CALL TO ACTION

All international development and climate actors are invited to collectively take specific action not only for one-off short-term project outputs, but for long-term, locally led sustainable impact at the scale of the problem:

- **Governments:** Forge national consensus to design and navigate pathways to sustainable scale by embedding effective solutions in public systems at scale
- **Private sector:** Leverage innovation, investment and delivery mechanisms for impact at scale
- **Researchers:** Strengthen the evidence base for scaling development outcomes
- **Intermediaries:** Catalyze and anchor the scaling process as champions and by mobilizing technical and financial resources
- **Funders:** Make transformational scaling outcomes a core institutional priority at country level and support the Scaling Campaign, including with field-building support for the SCoP Secretariat

