

Leveraging the Science and Practice of Scaling for More Impactful One CGIAR Initiatives

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The scaling of innovations (novel technologies, products, services, management practices, organisational models and/or institutional arrangements) is a key requirement and challenge for achieving impact that One CGIAR strives for. 'Impact' or 'system transformation' never arises from an isolated innovation or change but involves the uptake of multiple interdependent changes across different actors, levels and spheres. One CGIAR initiatives will need to engage with multiple scaling partners and processes simultaneously and consider both the 'up-scaling' of novel technologies, practices and arrangements, as well as the 'down-scaling' of the currently dominant ones.

While 'scaling' can and should be considered instrumentally as a practice, activity or strategy that One CGIAR initiatives and their partners need to develop, manage and coordinate, 'scaling' is also a topic of scientific investigation that can be approached from several disciplines. A recent (2020) special issue on ['Science of Scaling' in Elsevier's Agricultural Systems journal](#) suggests that there are a number of important knowledge gaps where insights from different disciplines are likely to be relevant. We propose, through a collaboration between Wageningen University (WUR) and ILRI, to engage with One CGIAR initiatives to embed scaling concepts and tools into their initiatives, covering both the science and practice of scaling, and complementing parts of a holistic and integrative approach to scaling.

Wageningen University's Social Sciences Group is among the world's leading organizations in the field of science of scaling. It combines scientific investigation with a practical orientation. It is the principal designer of Scaling Readiness, a complexity sensitive approach to supporting scaling initiatives that guides the development of context-specific innovation packages, and agreed-upon strategies for overcoming scaling bottlenecks. Similarly, Wageningen University is at the forefront of developments in inclusive innovation and responsible scaling. In the past five years, collaboration with the CGIAR RTB Research Program and multiple other CGIAR centers has resulted in eight completed PhD dissertations and more than 40 peer reviewed scientific articles on topics related to innovation and scaling as well as on the role of ICT in supporting effective collective action for downscaling pests and diseases. Wageningen University is strongly committed to continuing collaboration with One CGIAR on topics of mutual interest, including further developing the science of scaling.

ILRI impact at Scale Program (I@S) has been working on concepts, tools, and practices of scaling in the CGIAR's context since 2019. Last year, I@S published an integrated [scaling framework](#), and conducted inaugural studies with the CGIAR Research Program on Livestock, and is currently undertaking 10 scaling studies across the ILRI and Livestock CRP portfolio. The I@S approach is iterative, agile and focuses on practical steps and facilitating skills and approaches that allow projects to identify and adapt to changes quickly. It offers flexibility on the tools used to suit the specificities of projects. The process facilitates smooth implementation of scaling assessments, assists with data collection and analysis, tracking scaling trends, and can offer support to scaling activities in projects across a range of 'modules'.

WUR and I@S propose to collaborate to support a set of One CGIAR initiatives. By combining our respective expertise in the science and practice of scaling within CGIAR, we can support initiatives as they:



Design context-specific innovation packages



Conduct scaling studies including Scaling Readiness of the key innovations in the initiative, help create a 'baseline' and trend of the scaling potential.



Develop scaling strategies for overcoming scaling bottlenecks and support responsible scaling



Provide ongoing support on setting up dashboards and reports for key scaling work of the initiative



Explore research and management questions related to innovation, scaling, and their societal and institutional embedding

Initial research ideas to explore include:



Study the strengths and weaknesses of innovation and scaling models governed through the public sector, the private sector, or the public-private partnerships



Study how different dimensions and components of change co-evolve over time, and which type(s) of change provides leverage over others in processes of innovation and scaling for systems transformation.



Study how positive and negative consequences of scaling and system transformation can be anticipated, and how trade-offs and synergies can guide investments in responsible innovation and scaling processes and pathways



What modalities for scaling support are implemented in different initiatives/configurations? How effective are different modalities/models these in fostering effective scaling strategies? How is this influenced by different institutional arrangements and set-ups?



What similarities and differences do we see with regard to innovation packages aimed at achieving different types of outcomes (resilience, intensification, transformation)?

Contact:

Cees Leeuwis, Professor of Knowledge, Technology and Innovation, Wageningen University Cees.Leeuwis@wur.nl

Iddo Dror, Program Leader – Impact at Scale, ILRI, i.dror@cgiar.org