

Scaling Brief #1: Scaling Web Conference Series with the CGIAR Science Leaders

Background, Contents and Outcomes

Agricultural Research for Development plays an important role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and making the world's food systems more sustainable. The products, services and solutions of the CGIAR can facilitate significant positive change for producers and consumers in partner countries. Scaling these innovations is one of the key goals of the new **CGIAR 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy** and an important driver of the **One CGIAR process**, which is aimed at stronger integration of its capabilities, knowledge, assets, and people.

The heart of the Research and Innovation Strategy is food system transformation, i.e., “a major shift – bringing about significant positive change in the governance and functioning of a system.” There multiple levers available for changing systems; for example, political changes may favour action for or against climate change mitigation, and disasters such as droughts or a global pandemic drive changes in the ways that rural areas and agri-food systems operate. Most of the effects induced by these levers cannot be foreseen, with the result that no single organisation can control them. However, one important lever does lie within the field of expertise of the CGIAR and its partners – the uptake of agricultural innovations. CGIAR has a critical role to play here by identifying inventions from upstream research and conducting translational research so they can be applied as innovations in practice at scale. However, not all innovations are suitable for wide uptake by beneficiaries; their cost per unit may be too high, or they might be too knowledge-intensive. One important

scaling role the CGIAR plays is to assess, adapt and improve the scalability of its innovations. The scaling interventions themselves can also be enhanced by the CGIAR, enabling them to make a significant contribution towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Scaling has been one of the central topics in various CGIAR Research Programs, and important conceptual advances have already been achieved by different research groups. Many scientists with a strong interest in scaling participate in the Agriculture and Rural Development Working Group of the **Global Community of Practice on Scaling Development Outcomes**. Although scaling-related questions increasingly receive attention in the CGIAR, a systematic exchange on scaling among CGIAR Science Leaders has not yet taken place. As a response to this gap, **four Scaling Web Conferences** were jointly organised between August and November 2020 by

- members of the CGIAR Science Leaders community, representing the heads of CGIAR Research Programs, Platforms and Research Directors,
- members of the **CGIAR System Management Office**,
- other members of the CGIAR interested in scaling and the
- **GIZ/CGIAR Task Force on Scaling**.

The goals of the series of web conferences were to

- contribute to a common understanding of scaling in general and the role of the CGIAR in scaling activities;
- identify ways of integrating comprehensive scaling concepts into the design of future research programmes of One CGIAR;
- create awareness of opportunities and challenges for interventions aimed at changing the behaviour and transformation of food systems; and
- to create awareness of inclusive scaling strategies with regard to gender/diversity.

The conferences featured contributions from scaling scientists and practitioners within the CGIAR and outside of it. They included an introduction to the **GIZ/CGIAR Task Force on Scaling**, an input from representatives of the **CGIAR GENDER Platform** on “gender and scaling” and a presentation of **HarvestPlus’s** Strategy for “Catalysing Scale up of Biofortification” (i.e., increasing the density of vitamins and minerals in a crop). Larry Cooley (MSI, Global CoP on Scaling) provided views on scaling from a non-agricultural perspective. A real-life example was shared for identifying, analysing and integrating existing scaling tools and management approaches in a CGIAR Research Program (**Impact at Scale**), followed by a panel discussion with developers of scaling approaches and tools. Results from surveys on the status of scaling in the CGIAR were also presented. A total of 23 people were directly and indirectly involved as speakers, panellists and moderators.

During the course of the seminar, three work groups were formed; they worked on

- principles for scaling,
- scaling approaches and tools and
- harmonising the terminology of scaling within the CGIAR.

Each work group ultimately produced a brief on a specific aspect of scaling. These scaling briefs were developed as supporting material for the new CGIAR 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy, but they can also be applied in broader contexts. **Brief #2** lays out five actionable principles built on established scaling guidelines that can be used to embed scaling in CGIAR initiatives. By presenting key features of selected scaling approaches and tools that are (or could potentially be) widely used in the CGIAR, **Brief #3** is aimed at supporting CGIAR scientists and research managers in operationalising scaling for projects and research investments that adequately address these scaling principles. It also refers to further information in its Annex. **Brief #4** contributes to the harmonised use of scaling terminology.

It became clear that there are heterogeneous perspectives about scaling in the CGIAR. The series of web conferences marked the beginning of a closer dialogue between CGIAR staff who are interested in scaling and a wider community. The outcomes of the webinar series can support the scaling interventions of the CGIAR and its partners in different contexts and stages of implementation in the future.

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This is a common output of members of the CGIAR Science Leaders community, the CGIAR System Management Office, other members of the CGIAR interested in scaling and the GIZ/CGIAR Task Force on Scaling.

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