

Assessing Scalability

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Key Points

1. Assessing scalability has multiple uses in research and implementation
2. Scalability: characteristics of innovation & context, context-specific
3. Most scalability assessments have no clear answer, not thumbs up or down. Identify strengths & weaknesses, what would be involved in scaling
4. Key question: 'is there a viable scaling pathway?' Can private sector fill roles in scaling, at scale? Capacity and Incentives? If not, public or NGOs?
5. A Scalability Assessment translates directly into scaling strategy to address weaknesses and gaps (spaces and drivers)
6. Decision on whether to invest in scale (or more research) based on tradeoff between cost, level of effort & potential results
7. Agricultural research projects often don't generate key information needed for a scalability assessment, both about innovation & context.

Rationale and Potential Uses

- ❑ USAID Bureau of Food Security faced large number of research innovations moving through and emerging from the Feed the Future research pipeline. Which ones to (re)invest in next phase of research given limited resources? Which innovations to support scaling?
- ❑ Developed Agricultural Scalability Assessment Toolkit for USAID's Bureau of Food Security containing Decision Tree and Scalability Assessment Matrix
- ❑ Draws on 15 years of diffusion of innovation literature, MSI field work on scaling up generally, USAID case studies of successful scaling of agriculture innovations through commercial pathways

Points where ASAT can be Used

Can Be Used By:

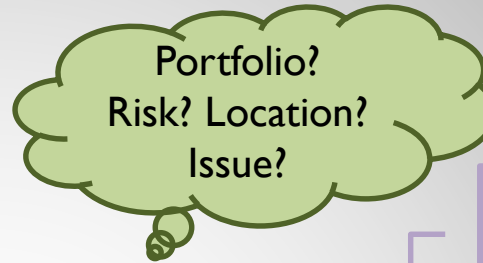
BFS staff in DC

Donor Mission Staff

Researchers

Implementing Partners

Do we reinvest?
Ensure SOW
generating data
for scaling



Invest in
scaling? What
role for donor?
RFP, Design,
Workplan, M&E
indicators

Implementation,
Strategic Pivots
And Course
Corrections

**Basic
Research**

**Applied
Research**
(Field testing)

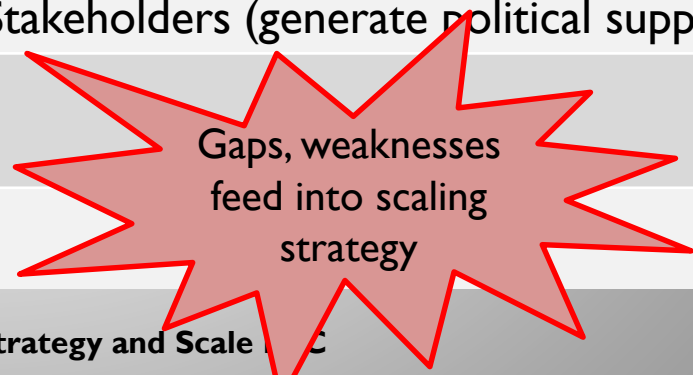
Scaling Pilot
(creating
preconditions &
critical mass)

Full Scaling

Which Pathway or Mechanism

- ❑ Key context question: 'is there a viable scaling pathway?'
- ❑ Prefer Private or Commercial Pathway given sustainability and resources, but always some role for Public Sector


Roles	
Produce or Supply Innovation (inputs)	<u>Downstream</u> : Create or Strengthen Processing and Processing Capacity
Distribute Innovation	<u>Downstream</u> : Create/Expand Demand for Increased Product Output
Create Demand (marketing, demos)	<u>Political Space</u> : Approval and Compliance with Regulations, Licensing, Permits, etc.
Provide Training, TA, Extension Support	<u>Political Space</u> : Enroll, Coopt, or Overcome Stakeholders (generate political support)
Drive/Manage the Overall Scaling Process	



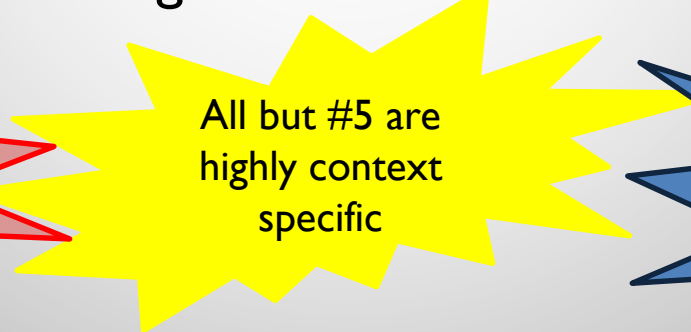
Gaps, weaknesses feed into scaling strategy

Assessment Criteria

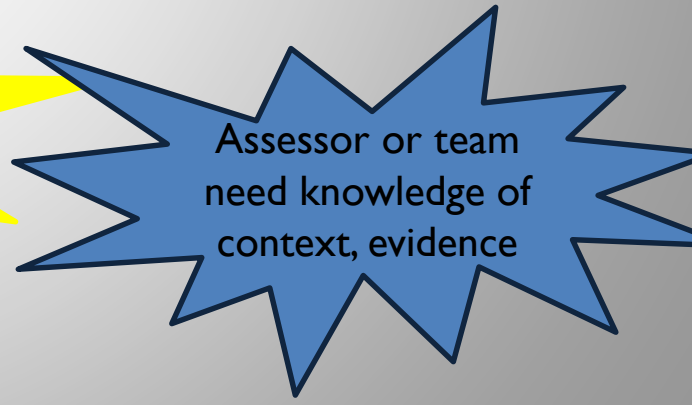
1. Potential Scale, Impact, Relevance to Policy goals
2. Relevance to Felt Needs of Adopters
3. Evidence/Credibility/Familiarity (in actual live context)
4. Net Benefits & Risk (Business Case), Incentives for Actors
5. Ease of Adoption & Robustness
6. Affordability
7. Strength of Market System, Upstream, Downstream value chain
8. Public Sector Enabling Environment



Gaps, weaknesses
feed into scaling
strategy



All but #5 are
highly context
specific



Assessor or team
need knowledge of
context, evidence

Information Needed

1. Agricultural research projects often don't generate key information needed for a scalability assessment, both about the innovation & context
2. Innovation Example: Business Case for Adopters, Robustness (variance)
3. Context Example: What agricultural producers or importers who can make or distribute the innovation technically and with required capacity?
Felt Needs of Potential Adopters, Current GAPs
4. Someone has to generate this data

Information Needed

Innovation	Context
Agro-ecological requirements (and performance variance)	Size of relevant agro-ecological zone, number of potential adopters
Financial Benefits (business case for potential adopters)	Crop budget equivalent, input and output prices and variance
Comparative Agronomic & Financial Performance versus Competing Solutions	Current Technology Being Used, its price and availability
Good Agricultural Practices and Complementary Inputs Needed	Current agricultural practices and input use by potential adopters
Robustness/Sensitivity of Performance to Full Adoption of Package, Fidelity	Diverse uses possible in this context
Total Cost of adoption, including complementary inputs and equipment	Equipment currently in use, diffusion
Innovation Retail Prices	Existence, and Capacity of Potential Local or Regional Producers
Technical and capacity requirements to produce the innovation	Existence, Strength, Coverage of Distribution Networks

Conclusions

- Scalability assessment less about Yes vs. No and more about Potential Costs, Weaknesses, and Benefits
- Can be used at various stages from research to scaling pilots to full scale implementation
- Preference for Private Sector, challenge because many innovations are public goods or Social Benefits are greater than the private benefits
- Requires assessor or assessment team to have knowledge of potential scale, innovation and the context, further down the pipeline, more context
- Last but not least, someone has to generate a lot of data that is not currently generated by many research projects