



# Scaling Approaches and Methods Africa RISING in the Ethiopian Highlands

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Through action research and development partnerships, Africa RISING will create opportunities for smallholder farm households to move out of hunger and poverty through sustainably intensified farming systems that improve food, nutrition, and income security, particularly for women and children, and conserve or enhance the natural resource base.

The three regional projects are led by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (in West Africa and East and Southern Africa) and the International Livestock Research Institute (in the Ethiopian Highlands). The International Food Policy Research Institute leads the program's monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment. <http://africa-rising.net/>



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# 1. Introduction

In its first phase, Africa RISING in the Ethiopian highlands project has focused on the diagnosis of constraints and opportunities and technology development, testing and validation. The second phase of the project focuses on managing partnerships for scaling of successful innovations with and through development partners by providing backstopping research, capacity development and knowledge sharing support. Africa RISING in the Ethiopian highlands project is basically a research program and scaling of tested and evidence-based innovations and approaches is primarily the responsibility of development partners at different levels.

The Africa RISING program document outlines core elements of scaling strategies and approaches, which involve capacity development and knowledge management activities. In addition, individual projects have their own scaling paths to promote and increase uptake capacity of their respective development partners. It will be a valuable contribution for the program to further articulate its scaling strategies and approaches as the basis for systematic planning, implementation and monitoring of the process. In addition to supporting scaling of successful technologies, it will be a valuable knowledge asset for other development projects and programs elsewhere.

Scaling is actually quite complex in the conceptual and practical dimensions. Different understandings of scaling have been used in the literature. The appropriate models for scaling are both context specific and defined by the technologies to be scaled. The purpose of this scaling guide is to outline Africa RISING in the Ethiopian highlands project's understanding of what scaling actually is, how it can be successfully done, and the environmental conditions that are necessary to make scaling happen effectively and sustainably. It is intended to be used by those who are involved in planning, implementation, funding and scaling of successfully piloted research for development projects and programs.

## 2. Scaling pathways

The term *scaling* is used in a variety of ways and contexts. How scaling is understood and carried out depends on the nature and purpose of the implementing organization. For example, for a donor organization scaling may mean increased budgets or grantees. For a membership organization, scaling may be increasing membership base or constituency.

In the context of Africa RISING in the Ethiopian highlands project, we distinguish three complementary scaling dimensions.

**Scaling out** which is **horizontal spread** of innovations across geographical boundaries within a sector, particularly farm households, with or without the engagement of external actors. Horizontal scaling is geographical spread to cover more people and communities and involves expansion within same sector or stakeholder group. Scaling through expansion begins typically with programs which are tested on a small scale, adjusted and then extended (usually with further adjustment) to other locations until the desired coverage has been attained. Ideas are developed first on a relatively small scale, and expansion occurs in stages with adjustments based on learning from experience along the way. It involves getting others, including the public sector, to take up and implement tested technologies, processes and approaches.

**Scaling up** is a **vertical movement** of experience, knowledge, impact and effects higher up the levels of organization of a sector or society. It is institutional in nature – hierarchical institutional integration and partnership – that involves other sectors and stakeholder groups in the process of expansion from the level of grassroots organizations to policymakers, donors, development institutions and investors at international levels. In other words, vertical scaling refers to policy, political, legal, regulatory, budgetary or other systems changes needed to institutionalize innovations at the national or sub-national level.

**Scaling deep (down)** is more particular to the replication of programs, not just technologies, principles or processes, by breaking them down into smaller projects to facilitate planning, implementation and accountability at lower levels.

For Africa RISING in the Ethiopian highlands project, scaling out and scaling up are complementary activities. As the project influences the institutional levels (scaling up), the greater the chances for horizontal spread (scaling out) of innovations and approaches. Likewise, as the project spreads farther geographically (scaling out) reaching out to more sites and farm households, the greater the chances of influencing those at the higher levels (scaling up).

It is important to note that going to scale is not just about technologies but is more a development process of scaling a vision starting from farm communities. It is about political and organizational leadership, about vision, values and mind-set and about incentives and accountability. It is expansion

resulting from not just having more numbers and larger areas but also from evolving roles and responsibilities that go with improved institutional and organizational capacities of scaling partners and the enabling environment.

### 3. The scaling process

Broadly speaking, the scaling process involves two major steps:

- **Developing a solution that works.** It involves identifying a promising innovation, context specific elements of the innovation and scaling domains. Typically the innovation consists of a set of interventions including not only a new technology but also the managerial processes necessary for successful implementation of a new idea. A new agricultural technology as well as the approaches and methods to promote and disseminate it among a social system of farm households is considered the innovation.
- **Developing a way to provide the solution on a wider scale.** It involves the scaling approach, scaling partnership and monitoring the scaling process. A key factor is identification and analysis of scaling partners who may have differing perspectives, interests, constraints and capacities. It is important to deal with these multiple and often conflicting views, interests and objectives of scaling partners.

#### A step-by-step scaling process

- **Identify scalable innovations and decide whether to scale.** Identify what the innovation is and list all components which are necessary to implement it in the setting where it is to be expanded.
- **Identify scaling domains.** Make realistic decision on the number of geographic and population targets which are expected to adopt the innovation and the time period during which scaling will take place. Evaluate expectations about the scope and pace of scaling and establish targets in light of the nature of the innovation, the organizational capacities of implementing organizations and the opportunities and constraints in the enabling environment.
- **Identify appropriate models and paths to scaling,** drivers for scaling and spaces (political space, policy space, organizational space, cultural space, partnership space, and learning space) for the innovation to grow. Africa RISING in the Ethiopian highlands project will develop appropriate scaling scenarios and target scalable options using geographic information systems and remote sensing and modelling tools to reach out to a large number of beneficiaries.
- **Forge scaling partnerships.** Select scaling partners, define their roles and develop their innovation and implementation capacity through a variety of learning and sharing activities. It is important that scaling partners feel connected to a common purpose and share a commitment to working together.

- **Plan, manage and monitor the scaling process and outcomes.** Regular monitoring and evaluation and feedback from user communities, key partners and frontline extension staff is important for learning and adjustments to take place.

### **Key checklists:**

- What is it that is to be scaled – a technology, process, approach, method or principles behind an innovation/technology? Are the key aspects of the innovation packaged in clear and concise messages for user communities?
- When is scaling appropriate (scaling readiness)? What is the time period during which scaling will take place? At what stage of a technology/method, process or development approach? Why?
- Where will scaling of agricultural innovations occur (scaling domain)? What scale of involvement is needed (national, provincial or local)? Why? How many sites are expected to adopt the innovation? Where are they located? Are there regional differences between sites (economic, cultural, political and programmatic)?
- Who are we trying to reach in the scaling process? What are the conditions and context of the target population? How does this affect the scaling process?
- Will the scaling implementation strategy be standardized or flexible and adaptive? What needs to be done to ensure flexibility in the face of regional and other differences?
- What methods/approaches/activities will be used to transfer and communicate the innovation to user communities and other relevant stakeholders?
- Do implementing organizations have the capacity (training capacity, technical skills, leadership, resources needed, values and orientation supportive of the innovation, monitoring and evaluation capacity, etc.) to implement and scale the innovation?
- What are the concerns and worries about scaling? What are the different environments that are influencing or are likely to influence the process of scaling the innovation?



## 4. Forging and managing scaling partnerships

Scaling *with* and *through* public and NGO delivery systems is a major scaling model of the Africa RISING in the Ethiopian highlands project. National agricultural growth and transformation programs provide the wider strategy and investment framework for government and development partners. National and regional development priorities and strategies are critical drivers for widespread dissemination and adoption of sustainable agricultural intensification innovations.

Typically four stakeholder groups are involved in Africa RISING in the Ethiopian highlands project partnership-based scaling process.

The **resource organization** (i.e. Africa RISING in the Ethiopian highlands project) has ideas about what should work (scalable innovations) and seeks to promote and facilitate wider use of successfully tested and validated innovations. The project works with scaling partners at different levels (implementing organizations) to facilitate wider scaling of tested innovations. Helping scaling partners to have the required capabilities is the task of the project through backstopping action research, capacity development and knowledge sharing to ensure successful delivery of outcomes at scale. A strong resource organization with the appropriate skills and sufficient time commitment is a major factor in ensuring scaling success. More attention must be given to facilitation of innovation processes through providing overall leadership and co-ordination of systemic learning, institutional change and continued interaction with various scaling partners to enhance the combined efforts to bring about the required knowledge flows. Innovation platforms are one way of enhancing innovation capacity of scaling partners at different levels by creating institutional linkages, coordination of action and mobilization of knowledge resources.

In the scaling process, Africa RISING in the Ethiopian highlands project will have the following roles:

- Identify and package evidence-based innovations and approaches in a participatory process
- Recommend scaling domains and specify requirements for scaling of specific technology packages
- Develop capacity of development partners through selected training events and provision of coaching and mentoring support
- Document and transform project generated knowledge in different formats to meet the needs of different partners
- Strengthen and support innovation platforms at different levels
- Develop implementation guides, manuals and learning materials to aid scaling process
- Conduct participatory monitoring and evaluation activities to document the scaling process and make improvements as scaling unfolds.
- Conduct scaling action research to test different scaling approaches and document lessons and experiences
- Support development partners to organise a number of knowledge sharing and learning events

- Provide backstopping action research support to refine technologies as scaling progresses
- Organise policy dialogues and high level knowledge sharing events to influence the enabling environment
- Forge linkages and partnerships with national development programs, strategies and frameworks, such as GTP, AGP and ATA
- Participate in high-level events organised by other partners to influence the enabling environment.

The **implementing organization** (i.e. public and NGO scaling partners) figures out how an idea, technology or approach that works in a small scale can be brought to greater scale. Scaling requires a set of technical and organizational skills and values which are supportive of innovation and collaborative processes. Scaling partners must have capacity in technical skills, training, leadership and coordination, monitoring and evaluation, values supportive of the innovation and policy framework necessary to scale agricultural innovations. It is important to assess the values and organizational processes of implementing organizations with a focus on managerial, coordination, promotion, monitoring and evaluation, and adaptive and collaborative capacities within the scaling system.

In the scaling process, development partners at different levels will have the following roles:

- Identify and characterise sites where scalable innovations will be taken to
- Identify farm households who are willing and able to adopt scalable innovations
- Set realistic scaling targets in terms of number of farm households reached, technologies adopted, area covered, approaches and processes adopted, new structures created and policies influenced
- Integrate scalable innovations and approaches into regular planning, budgeting and implementation processes
- Promote scalable innovations to new sites through a variety of promotional and demonstration interventions
- Organise learning and knowledge sharing events at different levels to share knowledge and influence thinking and practice
- Own and lead innovation platforms at different levels
- Document the scaling process and improve implementation as scaling progresses
- Strengthen implementation capacity and mainstream scaling process into government development process.

The **user community** (i.e. farm households) is the target population that seeks to adopt sustainable agricultural intensification innovations. A number of factors affect the dissemination of innovations among the social system of farm households. These include:

- Situational characteristics (farm size, degree of specialization, capital availability)
- Personal characteristics (social background, education, age, income)

- Psychological characteristics (personal traits, interests, attitudes, motivations, beliefs and values, community norms)
- Sociological characteristics (social status, social participation, social relationships, receptivity to and competence in use of information channels)
- Macro-environmental characteristics (state of technological advance, government agricultural and financial policies, economic situation).

It is important to use a variety of demonstration and promotion approaches and methods to introduce innovations in new sites. Audio-visual aids might be more appropriate while dealing with a largely illiterate farming population. Once innovations are widely popularized through various methods and farm households are aware of the innovations and the principal ideas behind them, it is important to plan how to support spontaneous scaling of innovations. It is also important to gain experience in a few new sites where they are points of strength with dissemination approaches prior to broader scaling. Examples of success from different sites can serve as models and build momentum for further scaling.

In the scaling process, user communities will have the following roles:

- Assess own situation, resources and capacity to adopt scalable innovations.
- Be willing to try out new technologies and work in groups to share knowledge and support one another.
- Be willing to share own knowledge and demonstrate new practices to other farm households.
- Actively participate in learning and knowledge sharing events such as field days, study tours and demonstration activities.
- Take collective action to increase access to technologies, inputs and marketing services
- Articulate clear vision into their own future and what it requires in terms of resources, knowledge and skills.

The **enabling environment** (i.e. policies, markets, regulations) are those who create conditions that allow the scaling process to grow and sustain. The project will advocate for changes in decision-making forums such as national, regional and local planning and review meetings in order to create supportive scaling conditions. It will also use political, personal or other informal channels and relationships to convince new geographic areas (regions, zones, districts and kebeles) to introduce scalable innovations. It is important to identify key decision-makers and opinion leaders who will be instrumental in allowing scaling and institutionalization of sustainable intensification innovations to move forward and find ways to effectively engage them.

In the scaling process, the enabling environment will have the following roles:

- Organise policy dialogues and learning and sharing forums to influence thinking and practice of scaling process.
- Support private sector actors in the multiplication and supply of technologies through facilitation of credit and markets.

- Support the scaling process as a mainstream development activity and hold scaling partners accountable to development outcomes.
- Strengthen innovation and learning capacity of development partners through creating inter-sectoral policy and planning integration and developing accountable development management systems at all levels.

## 5. Scaling approaches and methods

The Africa RISING in the Ethiopian highlands project's scaling strategy for sustainable agricultural intensification basically focusses on developing innovation capacity of scaling partners (implementing organizations) and the adoption and demonstration capacity of farm households (user communities).

There are primarily two entry points for scaling: farmer research groups (FRGs) and model watersheds. FRGs provide the entry points for technology testing, validation and scaling. The office of agriculture at each project region is expected to manage wider scaling, identifying local priorities in collaboration with the project innovation platforms. As illustrated in Figure 1, the project adopts localized and context specific technology promotion and scaling approach starting from research farm households (clustering approach) influencing gradually other farm households through their demonstration effects and informal contacts.

The project works with groups of innovative farm households (farmer research groups) who partner with research teams to test and validate technologies. Tested and validated technologies are then promoted to other farm households within and beyond project kebeles through a variety of dissemination mechanisms. Scaling partners, particularly offices of agriculture, take the lead in taking technologies to scale using the government's extension system. It is expected that informal and formal promotion and dissemination interventions will ultimately take innovations beyond project kebeles and districts. It is also expected that capacities created with scaling partners (the extension system at different levels) will achieve wider scaling of innovations beyond project regions.

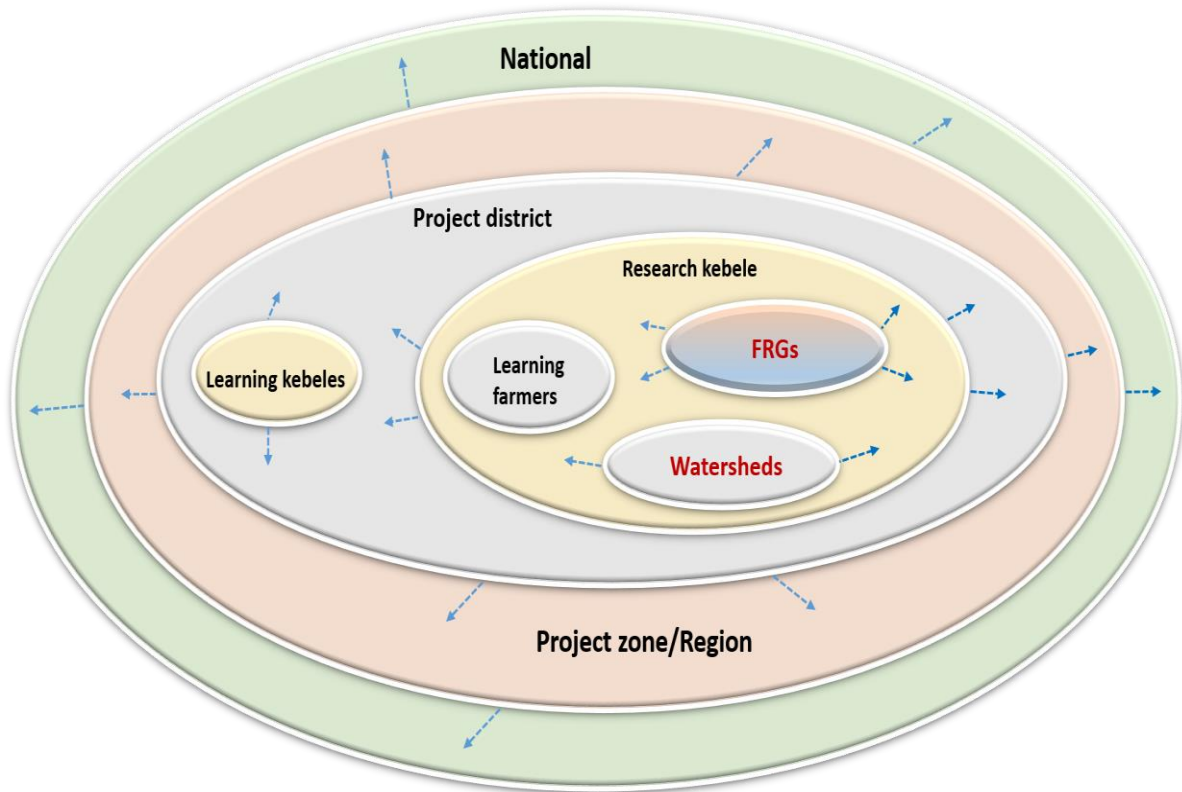


Figure 1: Africa RISING in the Ethiopian highlands project scaling model

A number of formal and informal scaling approaches and methods can be used to promote and disseminate scalable technologies and approaches. The Africa RISING in the Ethiopian highlands project adopts the following approaches and methods to engage with development partners in supporting scaling of sustainable intensification innovations.

The different scaling approaches and methods have different objectives, address different target groups and operate at different levels in a complementary way. Each of these approaches and methods have their own strengths and influencing contributions. In terms of cost and influencing at the community level, field days can be more effective. Exchange visits are also effective in terms of influencing and increasing motivation for immediate knowledge application but they can be expensive and require a high level of organizational and management capacity. A key rule is that no single approach is effective alone and scaling partners will use a combination of different learning and knowledge sharing approaches and methods to facilitate the scaling process.

## Formal scaling approaches and methods

- **Training, technical assistance and cultivating champions.** Training, coaching and mentoring and self-study materials are complimentary ways to acquire knowledge and skills. Training could be good for something but a lot of personal development happens through reading self-study materials and provision of coaching and mentoring support. Africa RISING in the Ethiopian highlands project will work closely with public and NGO partners to transfer knowledge and skills and problem solve scaling challenges. Coached and mentored partner staff at the regional and zonal levels will continue to provide technical support to development agents and farm households at the community level. Continuous follow-up and provision of technical support in terms of coaching and mentoring and selected training will ultimately create champions and sustain scaling efforts and benefits.
- **Field days, study tours, demonstrations, dissemination meetings and review and planning meetings.** A variety of learning and sharing events will be organized for different partners to stimulate collaborative action, innovation behaviour and dissemination and adoption of scalable innovations. Field days are used at the community level to promote and spread innovations mainly through the demonstration effects of lead farm households. Study tours are used for motivating and influencing policy makers, administrators, experts, development agents and lead farm households through exposure to external knowledge. Field visits to demonstration sites where innovations have been in place for some time are an important way for policy makers, community members and local leaders to appreciate the benefits of the innovations and create a broad sense of ownership. Africa RISING in the Ethiopian highlands project will work with scaling partners to develop institutional capacity for the integration and institutionalization of innovative learning and knowledge management practices.
- **Personal advocacy, political influence, policy dialogue and peer-to-peer exchanges.** Communication of policy relevant Africa RISING generated knowledge products such as policy briefs and lessons-learned materials, engagement of policy makers in strategic knowledge sharing and learning events and conducting policy dialogues such as policy panels and briefing sessions will be key policy influencing activities in support of scaling. Africa RISING in the Ethiopian highlands project will document and synthesise policy relevant materials and engage policy makers in dialogues and learning and problem-solving events to influence the larger environment under which scaling of innovations takes place.
- **Websites, media campaigns, digital materials, publications and policy briefs.** Communication and knowledge sharing is key to scaling interventions. Communication materials will be targeted to impact different partners such as implementing partners, farm households, policy makers and researchers. More emphasis will be given to gender differentiated and beneficiary-targeted communication materials and media outreach through documentation and packaging of project generated results and lessons to support scaling efforts.

- **Program visibility and presence at all levels.** Assignment of partner focal persons and site coordinators is a key strategy to facilitate communication amongst CGIAR centres and local research and development partners and to follow up on the scaling process. Focal persons are partner representatives assigned to facilitate improved communications between Africa RISING and its implementing partners as well as to facilitate and follow-up on partner implementation responsibilities and commitments. In order to ensure that focal persons have sufficient status to request or at least encourage colleagues to play their identified role in project implementation, they should be office heads and team leaders.
- **Innovation platforms** are key to promoting scaling of innovations by enhancing communication and learning among CGIAR and local partners (researchers, farm households, policymakers, extension staff, NGOs, etc.) around scaling constraints, opportunities and strategies. Platform meetings operate at different levels. At the operational level, they aim to promote interaction, share knowledge and create linkages among scaling partners. At higher level, they are used to bring scaling challenges to the attention of policy makers and help take policy actions.
- **Scaling action research and problem-solving support.** A key scaling backstopping activity for Africa RISING is to conduct action research to document scaling processes, constraints and outcomes and to refine scaling pathways as implementation unfolds and lessons from practice emerge and grow. The Africa RISING in the Ethiopian highlands project will continuously reflect, document and test different scaling approaches and methods and draw lessons to inform planning and implementation of scaling interventions, particularly cost effectiveness and inclusiveness.
- **Multi-level planning, review and learning systems.** The partner cross-learning and feedback forum and project steering committees provide venues for development partner representation and active engagement in the planning, implementation and review of scaling interventions. As the Africa RISING in the Ethiopian highlands project moves towards scaling and backstopping research, it will rely mainly on the active engagement and ownership of development partners (research, extension, training institutions, policy makers and private sector partners).
- **Private sector input and service provision system.** Supporting individual and group-based businesses such as seed and planting materials producers, small-scale mechanization agents, irrigation equipment suppliers, livestock feed suppliers and animal health service providers has been a core scaling strategy of the project aiming at developing and increasing efficiency and effectiveness of the service supply system to meet the input and service demands of farm households as scaling grows. It is also expected that output marketing will be an issue with increased production volumes as a result of wider scaling and adoption of agricultural innovations. Development of location specific marketing strategies and strengthening of farmer collective actions such as farmer cooperatives and marketing groups would be crucial to sustain the benefits of scaling innovations.



## **Informal (spontaneous) scaling approaches**

Diffusion and spill over are other methods of replication or expansion. They tend to be spontaneous in nature and occur when an innovation spreads by informal networking with new or existing user communities (districts and communities).

Farmer-to-farmer dissemination such as through farmer research and extension groups (FREGs) and demonstration effects of lead farm households can stimulate more widespread dissemination of innovations within and beyond intervention districts and communities.

Spontaneous scaling of innovations occurs in several occasions outside of the intervention of formal extension services, such as:

- When farm households discuss new ideas during market visits or at small social meetings
- When farm households on their own initiative visit other farm households who are doing something that appears to be interesting
- When farm households exchange seeds and planting materials
- When farm households report what they have seen to a large group, for example, during a village meeting held for another purpose
- When farmer innovators coach and mentor a number of farm households in neighbouring villages by working together with them in their fields.

## 6. Scaling principles, success factors and indicators

### 6.1. Scaling principles

**Systems thinking:** Systems thinking means being aware that scaling of agricultural innovations occurs in a complex network of interactions and influences of scaling partners at different levels. In other words, systems thinking refers to the interrelationships between the innovation, the resource organization, the implementing organization, the user community and the environment within which scaling takes place.

**A focus on sustainability:** Scaling must ultimately be concerned with institutionalization of agricultural innovations in policies, program guidelines and budgetary allocations of the agricultural system.

**Gender perspective:** Scaling should be grounded in the values of equity and guided by participatory approaches.

### 6.2. Scaling success factors

#### **Create vision of success for a scaling process**

It is important to have a vision and realistic expectation of what success will look like with a scaling process that takes into account the nature of the *innovation*, the capacity of the *implementing organization*, the characteristics of the *enabling environment* within which scaling takes place, the nature of the *target population* (user community) and the *resources* available (resource organization) to support the process. This allows key partners involved to conceptualize and define the overall scaling process including initiating the scaling process and managing and sustaining the initiative and the benefits that come with that initiative. Success with scaling requires a careful balancing act between desired outcomes and practical realities and constraints of the scaling system.

#### **Clarify expectations and roles of scaling partners**

Scaling requires assignment of functions to specific implementing partners at different levels, clear communication on what they should do, how to do it and what tools to use and ways of building a sense of ownership and coordination of relationships among the partners involved. In addition, development of procedures suitable to specific situations, a constant adaptation of such procedures in light of lessons from learning and systems for sharing and spreading knowledge among different partners are essential components for a successful scaling of agricultural innovations.

#### **Adopt phased, adaptive approaches to scaling**

Success with scaling requires a careful analysis of the system to which pilot-tested innovations will be taken. Simply adding on a new innovation to a system which has no the mindset and capacity to integrate new practices and sustain changes will result in failure.

In addition, overambitious and extraordinary speed of scaling implementation can create considerable pressure on development partners to the extent that they force farm households to adopt innovations without due consideration of their capacities and needs. It can also hamper adequate follow-up and technical support by development partners, which is key to enable farm households to adopt innovations.

Scaling through authority decisions may yield high initial adoption rates, but there is also a high likelihood of circumventing it later. A more gradual, phased process allows experiential learning about how a successful scaling of innovations can be attained and sustained.

There is also a risk that development partners could promote individual components of a technological package without taking the development context into account. Such over-simplification of the challenges of scaling innovations can lead to rejection by farm households of these technologies.

### **Provide backstopping capacity development and knowledge sharing support**

Given the high public staff turnover at all levels, continuously providing access to experience sharing and knowledge for leaders and technical staff is important to ensure a strong sense of ownership and commitment for scaling. A supportive role, not only in selected training but also in the mentoring of administrators, political leaders and public extension staff and provision of trouble-shooting advice would be important for a successful scaling of Africa RISING generated innovations, approaches and methods.

A critical strategic choice to make is how the process, outcomes and impacts of scaling be documented and shared. It is important to formulate specific indicators and establish simple tracking systems to assess progress. Monitoring of scaling process focuses on key factors such as whether all the components of the innovation are implemented, whether local adaptation maintains the essential elements of the innovation and whether local adaptation continues to produce the desired outcomes and impact of the innovation.

## **6.3. Scaling success indicators**

For a scaling intervention to be successful, there are conditions that need to be met. Africa RISING in the Ethiopian highlands project will use the following indicators to gauge the success of its scaling efforts.

These indicators include:

- Increased evidence generation and influencing capacity
- Reduced risk of replication
- Adequate financial resources
- Improved innovation and learning capacity of scaling partners
- Improved social capital and connectedness of scaling partners
- Effective learning and communication strategies to support scaling process
- Strong partnership and networking among the project and its scaling partners
- Increased commitment and ownership of policy makers and local administrators

- Improved coordination, alignment and planning capacity of scaling partners
- Increased knowledge culture of partners
- Increased use of gender-responsive and inclusive development approaches and methods
- Increased adoption and demonstration capacity of farm households.

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