

WEBINAR SERIES:  
INGREDIENTS FOR SCALING

WEBINAR TWO  
The Science of Scaling

*Presented by the Communities of Practice on Data-Driven  
Agronomy and Scaling.*



QUESTIONS TO THE PANELISTS THAT HAVE NOT BEEN REPLIED (received during the webinar.)

#	Questions	Answers
1	What is meant by science of scaling?	For IDRC: The empirical understanding of scaling and how it can increase likelihood that innovations benefit society
2	How does 'scaling' relate to or differ from 'dissemination' of innovations?	For IDRC: I'm interpreting this question as linked to the differentiation between scaling science and knowledge translation. We approach scaling as supplementary to knowledge translation. Knowledge translation already, arguably, goes beyond dissemination of research results and innovations to target and engage knowledge users in a given context to move research into action. We would say that scaling goes even further by considering the full range of initiators, enablers, competitors, and impacted who will support or hinder downstream results of the innovation in order to amplify, distribute, sustain, and at times de-scale, the impact of these actions.
3	Hayley, who defined/owned the scaling strategy in your case example?	The scaling strategy in this case example was iterative and involved engagement with an expanding set of actors in the scaling system on an ongoing basis – the

		research team was able to respond to what they learned through this engagement with adjustments in their approach to scaling, so I would say it was co-owned by the researchers and those they needed to coordinate with in the broader system to enable scaling.
<b>4</b>	Is there a metric to judge "optimality" of impact?	No, there is not a single, universally applicable metric given that “optimal scale” will be different in each case depending on context. It is really about considering the trade-offs between the magnitude, variety, sustainability and equity of impacts – and ensuring you are collecting evidence along the way that will help you to assess these factors in the context where you are operating (e.g. dynamic evaluation).
<b>5</b>	Recognizing that "the bigger is not necessarily the better" and that there are tradeoffs to scaling; how do we take into account value for money and recognize the importance of scaling when optimal scale is limited?	I would argue that optimal scale, and the fact that it means we won't indiscriminately pursue a high magnitude of impact without consideration of sustainability, equity or variety, can actually supports consideration of value for money. It should allow us to understand where our investments will have impact for those most in need, whether and how those impacts will be sustained, what other impacts an intervention might produce—as well as whether and how the intervention might need to be tailored to achieve impact in other contexts. Perhaps we would also need to nuance our understanding of “value” to mean more than magnitude and incorporate consideration of these trade-offs in sustainability, equity and variety.