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GUIDANCE NOTE

Scaling Up Development Programmes

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United Nations Development Programme

POVERTY REDUCTION

Executive Summary

Many development organizations, national and local governments and civil society organizations are faced with the issue of scaling up development interventions—the main questions raised time and again are: a) what should be scaled up, and how it can be scaled up; b) is there a strong reason for a particular initiative to be scaled up; and c) what should be the value-added of the scaling up efforts, and how can practitioners ensure that technological and other innovations are being integrated for improved development effectiveness? Answers to these questions depend on a host of complex realities—the relative strengths and weaknesses in national and local systems, political and economic situations, including vulnerability of country systems to shocks, commitments from development partners, power dynamics between various groups and stakeholders in a given country, regional and global environments. For the United Nations Country Teams (UNCT) and UNDP offices, another factor to consider is how to maximize our respective comparative advantages.

This guidance note summarizes the main conceptual thinking available from development institutions and academia, and presents a simplified conceptual framework and roadmap for scaling up processes. It also provides UNDP programme staff and UNCTs with practical actions and checklists to consider when designing and implementing programmes that support national scaling up initiatives, and proposes actions that can be undertaken at the regional and global levels. Although intended for internal audiences, the scaling up concept and recommendations can also be used by the public and private sector, civil society and social entrepreneurs.

This note benefited from a wide consultative process held in 2011, including practical recommendations and proposals from colleagues at country offices and regional/global centres. Their insights have been instrumental in the distillation of main recommendations presented in this note, and the individuals who provided substantive contributions are gratefully noted in the Acknowledgements section.

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List of Abbreviations

AESTF	Agriculture Extension Special Task Force (in China)	MDG	Millennium Development Goal
ARR	Assistant Resident Representative	MFI	Microfinance Institution
BDP	Bureau for Development Policy	MIC	Middle-Income Country
CBR	Community-based Rehabilitation	MVP	Millennium Villages Project
CCA	Common Country Analysis	NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
CD	Country Director	NPBR	National Park and Biological Reserve
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research	OSG	Operations Support Group
CIAT	International Center for Tropical Agriculture	PMU	Project Management Unit
CP	Communities Programme (in Tajikistan)	PPP	Public-Private Partnership
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan	PSC	Programme for South-South Cooperation (in Costa Rica)
DCD	Deputy Country Director	RBEC	Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization	RC	Resident Coordinator
GSSLCI	Government Subsidized Student Loan Credit Insurance (in China)	RDS	Rural Development Scheme
GTZ	German Organization for Technical Cooperation	REDP	Rural Energy Development Programme (in Nepal)
HQ	Headquarters	ROAR	Results-Oriented Annual Reporting
IBBL	Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited	RR	Resident Representative
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development	RSC	Regional Service Centre
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute	UN	United Nations
ILO	International Labour Organization	UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration	UNCT	United Nations Country Team
JOBS	Job Opportunities through Business Support (in Bulgaria)	UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
LDC	Least Developed Country	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
LIC	Low-Income Country	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation	UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
MAF	MDG (Millennium Development Goal) Acceleration Framework	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
		WFP	World Food Programme
		WRI	World Resources Institute

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1. Relevance to UNDP Mandate and Functions

Evidence across the board shows that MDG strategies and nationally defined development goals are much more likely to succeed when national governments work closely with local governments, civil society and the private sector. The following analysis of the scaling up challenges and opportunities looks at one of the most common development initiatives—local development programmes and projects—which often do not move beyond pilots to deliver lasting impacts on the ground. It should be noted that a similar analysis can be conducted for all development interventions. Other examples of scaling up efforts are provided based on best practices to date, such as the MDG Acceleration Framework (MAF) and the ‘Delivering as One’ Agenda.

Strengthening local development is central to human development, and thus a critical element of UNDP and UNCDF work in poverty reduction and governance. UNDP has worked closely with national governments in supporting local governance and decentralization processes for more than 30 years, and with greater intensity since 2000. The 2008-2013 UNDP Strategic Plan underscores the need to prioritize local governance and local development, drawing on the local governments’ capacity and resources to deliver effective economic and social policies that promote human development and manage the public services that citizens expect. UNCDF’s programmes provide a unique combination of investment capital, capacity development and technical advisory services to promote microfinance and local development in least developed countries (UNDP 2010a).

Most UNDP country programmes have incorporated local development interventions in their poverty and governance portfolios. UNDP interventions range from supporting local governance for improved service delivery and local employment generation, to enhanced democratic representation and genuine community participation and local natural resources management. In low-income countries (LICs) and least developed countries (LDCs), local development initiatives focus on delivering integrated service packages to accelerate poverty reduction and employment creation. In Bhutan, UNDP has been supporting the Rural Economy Advancement Programme (REAP), which identifies sections of the population who have not benefited from the broad based poverty reduction interventions aimed at enhancing agricultural productivity and creating employment and income generation opportunities. In Zambia, UNDP has been supporting the Economic Empowerment for People

Living with HIV/AIDS in poor districts, and promoting local economic development and income generation among households affected by the HIV epidemic. In the context of post-conflict states, UNDP has supported the engagement of civil society and non-state actors in local development initiatives. In Somalia, UNDP implemented the Employment Generation for Early Recovery (EGER) project in partnership with local NGOs and community-based organizations to create employment opportunities and income for vulnerable populations, particularly women, marginalized groups and youth through infrastructure rehabilitations, vocational trainings, start-up grants and micro-credits. UNDP in collaboration with international NGOs are currently supporting the Reconstruction and Employment Programme (IREP) in Iraq which provides temporary emergency employment for the most vulnerable unemployed Iraqis through labour-intensive infrastructure rehabilitation, land clearing and irrigation schemes. In middle-income countries (MICs), UNDP is currently supporting local development and MDG localization initiatives in ‘pockets of poverty.’ For example, UNDP is implementing an integrated local rural development initiative in Turkey, which aims to create sustainable employment opportunities among rural women and other vulnerable groups, in districts that have not benefitted as much from the economic growth. In the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, UNDP has been supporting employment schemes targeting marginalized groups (Roma) and female headed households. Thus, regardless of a country’s level of development, these programmes demonstrate that continued support for MDG progress at the local level is vital for sustainable and resilient development.

UNDP-supported local development and local governance programmes succeeded in spurring lasting policy and institutional reforms. The 2010 evaluation of UNDP’s work in local governance and local development revealed that ‘UNDP support for local governance reforms has been highly relevant,’ and provided effective support to national reform processes (UNDP 2010b). In Bulgaria, UNDP introduced the Job Opportunities through Business Support (JOBS) Project which has become a widely replicated practice in the country. The JOBS Project created a countrywide network of business support organizations, providing non-financial and financial services in rural regions. It also promoted sustainable business development in economically depressed rural areas by helping Bulgarian micro and small businesses grow and create long-term jobs. JOBS currently operates in 60 communities and

in 2004, at the policy level, the JOBS project was embedded in the Government's National Employment Strategy, and has been part of the country's National Employment Action Plan ever since. In Albania, UNDP implemented a project to improve mine victims' access to, and quality of, medical and rehabilitative services, and supported their social and economic re-integration through the establishment of the community-based rehabilitation (CBR) network in 39 mine affected villages. In 2005 the success of this initiative led the Government of Albania to adopt a National Strategy on People with Disabilities. Furthermore, UNDP's Communities Programme (CP) in Tajikistan implemented the principles of area-based development in providing support to capacity development, enhancing economic development mechanisms and facilitating access of poor people to public services. CP has alleviated poverty in 40 of Tajikistan's 66 districts and 120 sub-districts. CP managed to upstream its influence from district to the regional and national level by supporting regional government authorities in the introduction of participatory planning and the improvement of information systems.

Scaling up innovative and cost-effective efforts for greater impact and sustainability is a priority that has been highlighted by development practitioners. The MAF, for example, seeks to scale up priority solutions to key bottlenecks in off-track MDGs by calling for the acceleration of progress rates in off-track MDG targets by 2015 (UNDP 2010d). The MAF is a flexible yet systematic process of identifying and analyzing bottlenecks and possible high impact solutions to achieving a country's MDG priorities. The MAF has been rolled out in more than 36 countries so far, resulting in the formulation and implementation of focused and practical MDG action plans. UN agencies such as UNICEF have also adopted an equity-focused approach to MDG acceleration at both national and local levels in the most practical and cost-effective way (UNICEF 2010). The 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness also highlights the need to 'scale up for effective aid' by eliminating duplication of efforts and harmonizing development assistance for better results (UNDP 2010d).

Through the 'Delivering as One' agenda, UN agencies are reorienting efforts to avoid duplication, scale up joint UN efforts and provide more efficient, demand-driven support to national and local partners for greater efficiency and

impact ("Delivering as one" 2010). In Mozambique, for example, FAO, IFAD and WFP are jointly implementing the programme 'Building Commodity Value Chain and Market Linkages for Farmers' Association' that seeks to reduce disparities by improving agricultural production for farmers and helping them sell their produce on the market. Since 2009 the programme has reached 11,355 farmers in five provinces, with plans to scale up to reach more than 15,000 farmers in additional provinces ("Stories.." 2010). In Costa Rica, seven UN agencies (UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, IOM, ILO and FAO) are collaborating in the Joint Programme on Youth, Employment and Migration, which facilitates access to decent employment by improving the employability and entrepreneurialism of young people between the ages of 15 and 24, especially women, migrants and those in rural areas and vulnerable situations ("Joint Programme" 2010). The success of these programmes in reducing disparities has been attributed to the effective coordination of the UN agencies, coupled with strong leadership and ownership of the national and local governments. In this context, UNDP works with UNCDF and other UN agencies to implement scaling up initiatives by providing the necessary technical, managerial and sometimes funding support needed for effective delivery.

The demand on the ground and the knowledge accumulated over time show that scaling up is a necessary (not sufficient) condition for resilient development. The scaling up process inevitably requires partnerships and coordination with a variety of actors, including the private sector, civil society, and even in some cases, groups that do not want any part in the scaling up efforts. (Some groups and communities do not want to take part in the development 'progress', especially as dictated by national governments. This is the case in post-conflict situations and in countries with large minority groups.) It is important to acknowledge the evolving nature of the demand on the ground, the nature of development challenges and the fact that not every development initiative should be scaled up. The next chapter provides a conceptual framework for scaling up local development initiatives and practical recommendations that UNDP can take to enhance its support at the national, regional and global levels. The recommendations were extracted from the 'most practical' insights that have emerged from successfully scaled up initiatives across a wide range of contexts, based on feedback shared by colleagues and practitioners around the world.

2. Conceptualizing Scaling Up

2.1 What is scaling up?

Scaling up is not a new concept for development practitioners and academics. Discussions on this concept started as early as the 1970s and were brought to the forefront of the development agenda within the last decade, especially since the issue of development effectiveness has become a priority for development agencies, donors and governments. Although there has been significant evolution in the discussion of scaling up development interventions, some of the practical and fundamental questions remain unanswered and not all the knowledge has been distilled to its ultimate application for different stakeholders. There is a concern that “scaling up is often attempted without proper guidance, preparation and tools, leading to a frustrating experience” (Binswanger-Mkhize et al, 2009). [Annex 1](#), Summary of the Conceptual Evolution of the Scaling Up Topic, highlights the most relevant literature that address the issue of scaling up and the main takeaways from each.

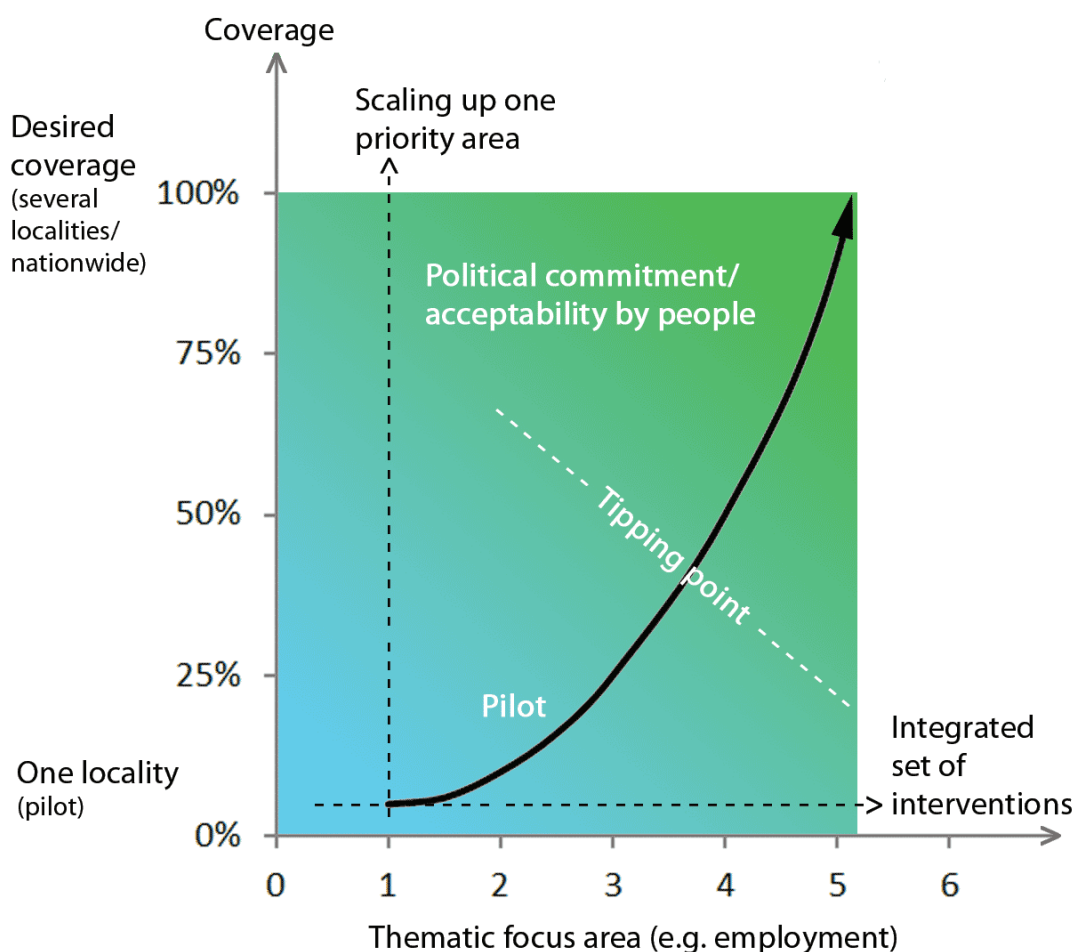
Scaling up is about ensuring the quality of a development impact, reaching out to those ‘left behind’ and ensuring the sustainability and adaptability of results. It is not about just replicating successes to cover larger groups or populations. Thus, a scaled up intervention or investment can deliver multiplier effects at a larger scale, including spurring policy and institutional reforms. It can also serve as an entry point for the development and scaling up of a multidimensional approach. Scaling up entails the following dimensions: *social* (social inclusiveness), *physical* (replication), *political* (policy and budget commitments) and *conceptual* (changing the mind set and power relations—a deep transformation of power and administrative structures). A scan of existing literature on scaling up reveals a great variety of interpretation of the concept, but also a convergence towards the above definition. [Annex 1](#) provides a summarized chronology of the scaling up concept. Ultimately, scaling up should entail: (1) Strengthening joint/multi-practice support at the local level to deliver higher development impact, including addressing inequalities across regions and populations, where joint/multi-practice support entails a combination of the comparative strengths of UNDP governance, poverty reduction and environmental sustainability programmes with the expertise of other UN agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) providing service delivery support; (2) Addressing the knowledge gaps and weaknesses in business processes and institutional arrangements required

to move beyond ‘pilots’; and (3) Supporting advocacy and activism at the local level, and not relying only on a top-down approach to ‘trickle down’ to communities.

Scaling up processes can take many forms, and range from a national outreach covering the entire population to a policy reform spurred by a successful pilot. This can be in the form of expanding, replicating, adapting and sustaining successful policies, programmes or projects in a geographic space and over time to reach a greater number of rural and urban poor. While it makes economic and political sense to launch a national programme for a large middle-income country with diverse populations (eg. NREGS in India, agricultural extension special taskforce in China), scaling up within a limited geographical scope can be more practical in smaller, developing countries and fragile economies (eg. Nepal, Bhutan, Zambia, etc.). Instead of a geographic expansion of a successful pilot, scaling up can also be vertical, such as resulting in a policy commitment/legislative act (eg. Bulgaria’s national employment act, Yemen’s decentralization policy or Cambodia’s 10 year programme on sub-national democratic development). Crucially, scaling up depends on successfully designed and implemented pilots, as well as political and fiscal space that is available for wider institutionalization of results. While many local development programmes take an integrated development approach of combining a set of employment creation and basic services delivery interventions, a substantial scaling up can focus on one to two high impact interventions that provide a ‘multiplier’ effect across MDG targets (eg. employment, vocational education/health or education interventions targeting women and youth).

The main lessons emerging from scaling up efforts point to the necessity of strong leadership/political backing; putting financial and natural resources in the hands of communities and local governments; developing well-designed projects and programmes (already accounting for scaling up challenges from the outset); and promoting transparent and accountable organizations that can *institutionalize* the successful results achieved through pilots. It needs to be acknowledged that scaling up is a long haul process (often taking over five to 10 years), and that for longer term sustainability an effective decentralization or de-concentration agenda needs to be pursued. (Decentralization entails the transfer of function from the central to local level, and takes three forms:

FIGURE 1. CONCEPTUALIZING THE PROCESS OF SCALING UP



deconcentration (roles and responsibilities are dispersed from the central ministries to local agents), delegation (transfer of management responsibilities to local authorities), and devolution (decision-making authority and resources are transferred to local governments). (Refer to *Scaling Up Integrated Local Development Innovations*, 2010.)

2.2 What are the main challenges to

have required substantial human and financial resources. Once the critical results and lessons in the service delivery/business processes have been distilled, the challenge then lies in adopting these lessons and making them work within the capacity and financial constraints of a given country. In some cases, the same results obtained in the pilot phase may not be feasible during the scaling up phase, when resource commitments (especially from donors) are diminished and/or

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