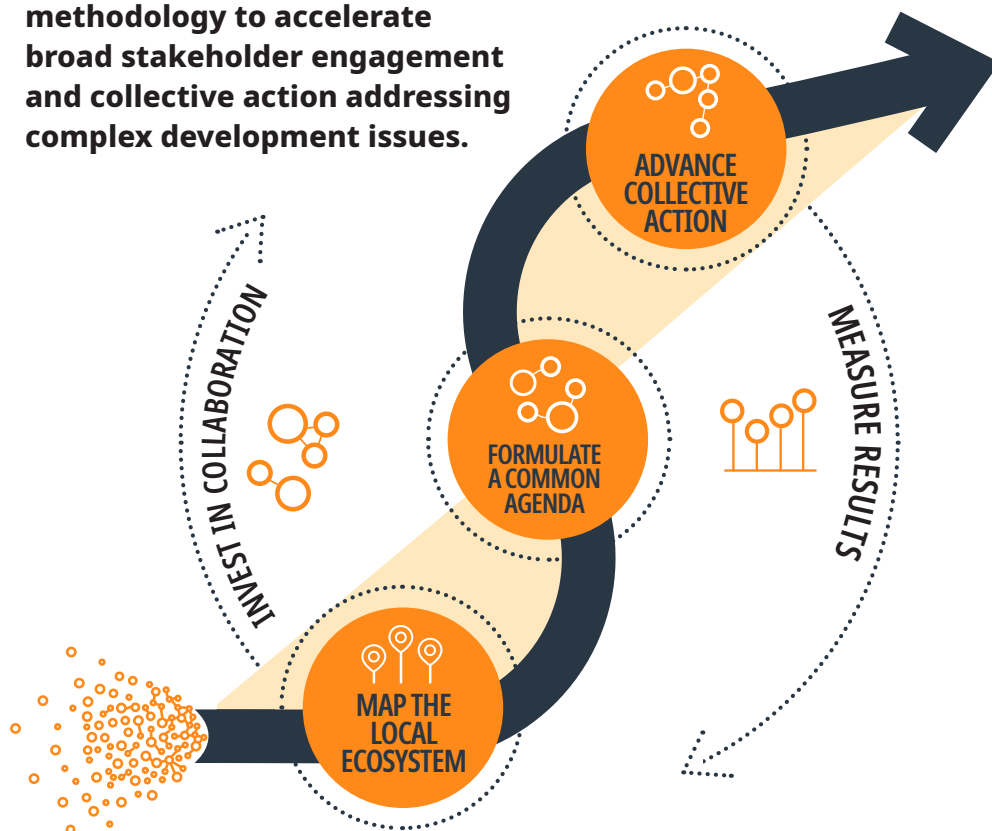


SCALE+ is a local-systems-driven methodology to accelerate broad stakeholder engagement and collective action addressing complex development issues.



Why SCALE+?

SCALE+ offers a process for approaching development challenges from multidisciplinary perspectives and with stakeholders from multiple sectors. It can help project managers design and invest more efficiently in smart, enduring solutions to problems. Its purpose is to bring about broad and sustained collective impact.¹ Three principles are fundamental to SCALE+

Apply a systems lens to identify and leverage local resources and partners

Systems² are made up of interdependent parts that continuously affect one another; systems are by nature dynamic rather than static. These related two features are common in ecological systems, market systems, social systems, corporations and even the average family. A system may be healthy or unhealthy: it may meet the varying needs of its different members or institutions, or it may exist in a state of dysfunction and harm. To change or transform a system requires more than action at a unilateral level, or even at several discrete points, because the system functions as a web of mutual relationships.

SCALE+ is based on “systems thinking,”³ which embraces the need to understand how diverse forces and structures influence a complex development issue—so that committed groups can work effectively towards a commonly agreed-on objective.

Build and invest in social capital

Donor-funded projects are accountable for measuring sector-specific results. SCALE+ also specifies indicators to help evaluate progress toward improved stakeholder relationships and increased social capital. Social capital—or the strength of bonds

EVOLUTION OF SCALE+

After years of using behavior change communications and social marketing in agriculture and environment sectors beginning in the 1980s, SCALE was developed in partnership with USAID in 2004 to capture techniques and best practices for mobilizing diverse partners in support of development efforts. SCALE+ is the evolution of SCALE based on 20 years of learning and adapting while applying the methodology in almost all sectors.

Collective Intelligence and Impact

[The goal of systems thinking] is to understand how it is that the problems that we all deal with, which are the most vexing, difficult, and intransigent, come about to give us some leverage and insight as to what we might do differently... The smartness we need is collective... and it will never be achieved by a handful of smart individuals... It's about what we can do collectively. So the intelligence that matters is collective intelligence.

— Peter Senge, Senior Lecturer
MIT, Founding Chair, Society for
Organizational Learning

Social Capital & Cohesion

Social capital refers to the institutions, relationships, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society's social interactions. Increasing evidence shows that social cohesion is critical for societies to prosper economically and for development to be sustainable. Social capital is not just the sum of the institutions which underpin a society—it is the glue that holds them together.

— World Bank

Collective Action

Collective Action is an intentional and agreed-upon process that engages interested parties to take joint actions in support of shared objectives. The Collective Action approach prioritizes engaging stakeholders directly to build cohesion, and support local stakeholders to lead efforts to enact their own agendas. This kind of action will lead to greater success, producing lasting change.

— Michele Sumilas, Assistant to the
Administrator, Bureau for Policy,
Planning and Learning, USAID

within each group as well as the bridges to other groups within a defined network—is essential for stimulating collective action within a system and for sustaining that process over time.⁴

Use strategic communications to facilitate locally-driven development

Most development projects adhere—at least on paper—to the principle that local problems require locally driven solutions. Nevertheless, most are driven by a technical assistance agenda designed and delivered by external experts. Likewise, the majority of development efforts aim to improve systems that often seem intractable. But the usual project model is to enter into formal partnership with a few congenial groups—not with the whole array of sometimes competing institutions and forces. SCALE+ begins with a mapping of the whole system and aims to engage local energy, local resources, local intelligence, and mutual accountability to analyze a problem and act. The role of strategic communications is to not just enhance the project's visibility, but to coordinate and align the commitments of all system actors and accelerate the momentum for collective action.

How do you use SCALE+?

SCALE+ consists of five components. Some occur in sequence and some are supported continuously throughout a project and beyond:



1. INVEST IN COLLABORATION or “apply a systems lens” to reach across sectors to engage as many actors and relationships in a system as possible.



2. MAP THE SYSTEM to define issues, geographies, and vertical and horizontal linkages among stakeholders.



3. FORMULATE A COMMON AGENDA with all the stakeholders to build social capital and form stronger networks of people pursuing common goals and technical excellence.



4. ADVANCE COLLECTIVE ACTION with evidence-based, adaptable technical assistance at key leverage points. Apply social change methodologies to continue growing social capital.



5. MEASURE RESULTS to assess sector-specific impacts as well as the strength of social networks for improved decision making. Highlight the value of collaboration and new resources.

When do you use SCALE+?

Use SCALE+ to start at the scale of impact you wish to achieve. The greatest challenge for many development efforts is to take the experiences of a pilot project and “scale up.” Instead of starting small and testing technical assistance on a few, start at scale and transform a system.

Use SCALE+ to ignite system-driven change; launch new processes of problem analysis; engage stakeholders in the act of co-creation; transform relationships; and sustain collective action over time. SCALE+ can be used at any time in a development program but is most effective when started from the beginning.

Where do you use SCALE+?

Use SCALE+ when seeking integrated, multidisciplinary solutions driven by engaged stakeholders. The size of the system you want to transform can be as large as a geographical region encompassing several countries or as small as a rural village.

SCALE+ has been applied by FHI 360 in more than 30 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East within agriculture, health, tourism, education, fisheries, and economic development programs.

Who implements SCALE+?

FHI 360 facilitates the SCALE+ process in diverse contexts and with myriad local partners, from government to the private sector and civil society including the media to marginalized groups who may be most affected by the dysfunctional effects of a system. These stakeholders are represented in any given “project” by a Cross-Sector Advisory Committee. Local ownership, demand, and energy are fundamental to SCALE+. FHI 360 acts as a neutral facilitator to engage the stakeholders in the initial steps of the consensus-based process, provide technical support to fill needs identified in concert with stakeholders, and lead participatory monitoring.

1 Stanford Social Innovation Review, “... collective impact initiatives typically have five conditions that together produce true alignment and lead to powerful results: a common agenda, shared measurement systems, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and backbone support organizations.” As defined by FSG, collective impact “occurs when organizations from different sectors agree to solve a specific social problem using a common agenda, aligning their efforts, and using common measures of success.”

2 Banathy (1997) defines a system as: a configuration of parts connected and joined together by a web of relationships.

3 Systems thinking means the ability to see the synergy of the whole rather than just the separate elements of a system and to learn to reinforce or change whole system patterns. Many people have been trained to solve problems by breaking a complex system, such as an organization, into discrete parts and working to make each part perform as well as possible. However, the success of each piece does not add up to the success of the whole. Richard Daft (2008) *The Leadership Experience*. p. 141.

4 World Bank: Social Capital and World Bank: Bonding vs. Bridging

Origin of SCALE+

SCALE+ was inspired by SCALE, which was first conceived of in 2004 and developed under the USAID-funded Environmental Education and Communication Project (GreenCOM II IQC, 2000-2006) implemented by AED. FHI 360 continues to produce, refine, adapt and apply the SCALE+ methodology, graphics, and associated materials to address development challenges worldwide.

For more information
on SCALE+:
scaleplus.fhi360.org

