



Tropentag, September 10-12, 2025, hybrid conference

“Reconcile land system changes
with planetary health”

Responsible scaling of agricultural innovations: Lessons learned from the efforts of the GIZ and CGIAR

KATHARINA SCHILLER¹, THOMAS PIRCHER²

¹*International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), Sustainable Agrifood Systems (SAS), Mexico*

²*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, Fund International Agricultural Research (FIA), Germany*

Abstract

The responsible and inclusive scaling of agricultural innovations is paramount for current agri-food systems to confront global problems such as climate change, while becoming more sustainable and continuing to produce sufficient and nutritious food. The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) has been supporting scaling initiatives of the global research partnership for a food secure future (CGIAR) by providing human capacities to facilitate science-practice partnerships. With this aim, the “GIZ-CGIAR Task Force on Scaling”, a group of up to 8 members spread across CGIAR centers, designed and implemented context-specific scaling approaches from 2017 to 2024. Building on the work of the Task Force on Scaling, the GIZ continues to support innovation and scaling partnerships through the PeOPLE fund by strengthening human capacities in the CGIAR, national partners and international organisations. The presentation presents the work of these GIZ initiatives on scaling and reflects on lessons learned, deducing mechanisms of success for scaling agricultural innovations. Based on these mechanisms of success, the article ends with recommendations for CGIAR’s future scaling work, particularly around its new Scaling for Impact program.

The results provide an overview of the work of integrated experts from the PeOPLE fund on inclusive innovation and responsible scaling, and dive deep into three case studies. We uncover similarities and differences between the three case studies and focus the discussion on cross-cutting issues. First analyses show that, regardless of the type of innovation and context in which it is being scaled, three points are key for successful scaling: 1) ensuring responsible and inclusive scaling processes that address multiple stakeholder demands and capacities; 2) building multi-sectoral partnerships with actors from civil society, private sector, public sector and academia; 3) creating institutional mechanisms and pathways for scaling; and 4) building scaling capacities of CGIAR and partners’ staff. Based on the analysis, the paper ends with recommendations for the Scaling for Impact programme and other programmes as well as for GIZ and other partners to support these efforts.

Keywords: Capacities, food security, inclusive innovation, multistakeholder partnerships, responsible scaling