

Tool #2: Scalability Assessment

An assessment to determine the scalability of different interventions/ activities based on factors such as credibility, support, ease of adoption, and funding sustainability.

SOURCE: USAID Basic Toolkit for Systematic Scale-Up, developed by MSI based on ExpandNet: Nine steps for developing a scaling-up strategy, p.17

Not all interventions/activities with a solid evidence base are feasible to scale and sustain. Several characteristics need to align in order to make an attempt at scaling a priority. Taking time to assess the fit of an intervention/activity for scale up in your context can avoid problems later on.

How to use this tool

1. Go item by item, and fill in the circle indicating if the intervention/activity is closer to one side of the scale or the other—or if it sits in between.
2. Total the filled-in circles for each column. Transfer the subtotals for each scalability factor to the final page of the tool (Reflect on Scalability). The scores for each scalability factor are, of course, not precise. They are only meant to provide a basis for discussion in Step 2.
3. Discuss each factor's score; consider other aspects you may know about, but which were not discussed. For each factor, mark whether the intervention/activity is strong, moderate, or weak.
4. Think about and discuss how this intervention/activity might be strengthened for scale up.
5. Determine together if, overall, this intervention/activity has potential for scale up in your context.



Children's Engagement

A key component in scalability is the acceptability of an intervention/activity to the communities for whom it is designed. When using this tool Joining Forces seeks children's engagement in two distinct ways: 1) integrating information about children's views and perspectives as it relates to the tool's topic and 2) as a source of data for each tool. Locating opportunities for child participation and child safeguarding (as separate and complementary) is a shared responsibility of all Joining Forces partners. As noted in Step 1 of this tool, the perspectives of children and their families is a critical aspect of credibility. To determine their perspectives, it may be possible to review reports, evaluations and literature about the intervention/activity. If such documented perspectives are not available, children and families who have experienced implementation of the model intervention/activity can be formally or informally surveyed. Other ideas for generating ideas from children can be found in the "[Tools and Techniques for Children's Engagement](#)" compendium provided at the end of this guide.

Reminder

Feel free to adapt this tool in any way that works for your team and your context!

Scalability Assessment

1. For each item, fill in the circle on the 3-point scale from left-side statement to right-side statement to indicate where the intervention/activity sits on the scale.
2. Count the filled in circles of each column and write the total number for each section.
3. Copy over the score for each section to the final score sheet.
4. Use the final score sheet to reflect on the scalability of the intervention/activity.

STEP 1: ASSESS THE INTERVENTION/ACTIVITY

NAME OF INTERVENTION/ACTIVITY

A. How credible is the intervention/activity package?	
A1. Evidence base	A lot of or sound evidence ←○—○—○→ Little or no solid evidence
A2. Evaluation	Independent external evaluation ←○—○—○→ No internal evaluation
A3. Diverse contexts	Substantial evidence that it works in diverse contexts ←○—○—○→ Little or no evidence that it works in diverse contexts
A4. Expert judgment	Supported by eminent individuals or institutions ←○—○—○→ Few or no eminent individuals or institutions support it
A5. Visible, attributable impact	Decision-makers see impact and link to intervention/activity ←○—○—○→ Decision-makers do not see impact or link to intervention/activity
A6. Reflects perspectives of children and their families.	Clearly reflects children’s perspectives ←○—○—○→ Does not reflect children’s perspectives

Subtotals	←○—○—○→
(add up the number of filled in circles in each column)	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 30px; margin: 2px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 30px; margin: 2px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 30px; margin: 2px;"></div>

B. Does the intervention/activity have relative advantage over existing practices?

B1. Other solutions	Current solution(s) are adequate ←○-○-○→ Little or no evidence it is superior to other solutions
B2. Evidence it is more effective	Solid evidence it is superior to current intervention/activity ←○-○-○→ Little or no evidence it is superior to current intervention/activity
B3. Cost Effective	More cost effective than existing practices ←○-○-○→ Less cost-effective than existing practices

Subtotals

(add up the number of filled in circles in each column)

←○	-○	-○→
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C. How strong is support for the intervention/activity?

C1. Urgency	Strong sense of urgency regarding the problem or need ←○-○-○→ Little or no evidence it is superior to other solutions
C2. Leadership commitment	Strong leadership committed to intervention/activity ←○-○-○→ Little or no evidence it is superior to current intervention/activity
C3. Significance of problem	The problem is significant and persistent ←○-○-○→ The problem affects few people or has limited impact
C4. Policy priority	Addresses an issue that is high policy priority ←○-○-○→ Addresses an issue that is low on the policy agenda
C5. Opposition	Faces limited opposition ←○-○-○→ Faces strong opposition
C6. Felt Need	Addresses a felt need, problem or policy priority ←○-○-○→ Does not addresses a felt need, problem or policy priority

Subtotals

(add up the number of filled in circles in each column)

←○	-○	-○→
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D. How easy is the intervention/activity to transfer, adapt and sustain?

D1. Consistent with policy	Fully consistent with government and organizational policies	←○—○—○→	Requires substantial change in government and organizational policies
D2. Fits with existing systems including data access policies.	Can use existing systems, infrastructure, and human resources	←○—○—○→	Needs significant new or additional systems, infrastructure, or human resources
D3. Operational & resource capacity	Implementing organization(s) have the capacity to implement at scale	←○—○—○→	No implementing organization(s) have the capacity
D4. Breadth of agreement for selection.	Few decision-makers were involved	←○—○—○→	Many decision-makers were involved
D5. Simplicity of contextual differences	Homogeneous problem, target group and setting	←○—○—○→	Multiple, diverse contexts
D6. Adaptability	Intervention/Activity is a clear and straight-forward technology	←○—○—○→	Intervention/Activity is not easily adapted
D7. Level of complexity	Low complexity; few components	←○—○—○→	High complexity; many components—integrated package
D8. Maintaining quality	Intervention/Activity is self-regulating	←○—○—○→	Intervention/Activity requires substantial supervision and monitoring
D9. Limited testability	Able to be tested by implementers on a limited scale	←○—○—○→	Implementing organizations try out the new practice without fully adopting it
D10. Degree of change	Intervention/Activity requires a small departure from current norms, practices and resources.	←○—○—○→	Intervention/Activity requires a large departure from current norms, practices and resources.

Subtotals

(add up the number of filled in circles in each column)

←○	—○	—○→
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E. How good is the fit with the implementing organization(s)?

E1. Compatibility	Practice is compatible with current values or services of the implementing organization. ←○—○—○→	Practice is not compatible with current values or services of the implementing organization.
E2. Built-in support for intervention/activity	Strong leadership committed to intervention/activity ←○—○—○→	Needs significant new or additional systems, infrastructure, or human resources
E3. Support of staff and local implementing partners	The problem is significant and persistent ←○—○—○→	No implementing organization(s) have the capacity
E4. Adaptive capacity	Key decision-makers are comfortable with making strategic adaptations ←○—○—○→	Key decision-makers are not used to making strategic adaptations
E5. Scale-up experience	Organization(s) has worked with systematic scale-up approaches before. ←○—○—○→	Organization(s) has not worked with systematic scale-up approaches before
E6. Safeguarding children	Risks to children are relatively easy to mitigate ←○—○—○→	Risks to children are significant and difficult to mitigate
E7. Degrees of adaptation	Addresses a felt need, problem or policy priority ←○—○—○→	High complexity; many components—integrated package

Subtotals ←○—○—○→

(add up the number of filled in circles in each column)

F. Is there a sustainable source of funding?

F1. Additional Resources	Requires limited additional human or financial resources or commodities ←○—○—○→	Requires major additional human or financial resources or commodities
F2. Startup funds	Requires small commitment of funds to begin ←○—○—○→	Requires large commitment of funds to begin
F3. Internal funding	Financed by internal funding (e.g., user fees) or endowment ←○—○—○→	No internal funding, requires substantial external funds

Subtotals ←○—○—○→

(add up the number of filled in circles in each column)

STEP 2: REFLECT ON SCALABILITY

Bring over the subtotals from the previous pages to help you determine the overall scalability.

NAME OF INTERVENTION/ACTIVITY

SUMMARIZING RESULTS FROM THE ASSESSMENT								
SCALABILITY FACTOR	TOTAL FROM EACH COLUMN <i>EASIER TO SCALE</i> ← <i>HARDER TO SCALE</i> →							
A. CREDIBILITY OF THE INTERVENTION/ACTIVITY	<table style="border: none;"> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 30px; text-align: center;">←○</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">+</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 30px; text-align: center;">○</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">+</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 30px; text-align: center;">○→</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">=</td> <td style="font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold;">5</td> </tr> </table>	←○	+	○	+	○→	=	5
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B. RELATIVE ADVANTAGE OVER EXISTING STRATEGIES	<table style="border: none;"> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 30px; text-align: center;">←○</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">+</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 30px; text-align: center;">○</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">+</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 30px; text-align: center;">○→</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">=</td> <td style="font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold;">3</td> </tr> </table>	←○	+	○	+	○→	=	3
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C. SUPPORT FOR THE INTERVENTION/ACTIVITY	<table style="border: none;"> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 30px; text-align: center;">←○</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">+</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 30px; text-align: center;">○</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">+</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 30px; text-align: center;">○→</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">=</td> <td style="font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold;">6</td> </tr> </table>	←○	+	○	+	○→	=	6
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D. EASE OF TRANSFER AND ADAPTATION	<table style="border: none;"> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 30px; text-align: center;">←○</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">+</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 30px; text-align: center;">○</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">+</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 30px; text-align: center;">○→</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">=</td> <td style="font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold;">10</td> </tr> </table>	←○	+	○	+	○→	=	10
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E. IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATION FIT	<table style="border: none;"> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 30px; text-align: center;">←○</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">+</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 30px; text-align: center;">○</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">+</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 30px; text-align: center;">○→</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">=</td> <td style="font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold;">7</td> </tr> </table>	←○	+	○	+	○→	=	7
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F. FUNDING SUSTAINABILITY	<table style="border: none;"> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 30px; text-align: center;">←○</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">+</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 30px; text-align: center;">○</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">+</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 30px; text-align: center;">○→</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">=</td> <td style="font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold;">3</td> </tr> </table>	←○	+	○	+	○→	=	3
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ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS FROM THE LOCAL JOINING FORCES TEAM										
HOW STRONG IS THE INTERVENTION/ACTIVITY IN TERMS OF SCALABILITY?	HOW MIGHT THIS INTERVENTION/ACTIVITY BE STRENGTHENED FOR SCALABILITY?									
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CONCLUSION: DOES THIS INTERVENTION/ACTIVITY HAVE STRONG SCALE-UP POTENTIAL?
 Yes
 Yes, with modification
 No

Justification: