The International Development Innovation Alliance

Managed by:

RESULTS FOR DEVELOPMENT

August 2017
A Call for Innovation...

Over the next 30 years, the global community has an extraordinary opportunity to eradicate extreme poverty. That will not be easy, given a global context where: two billion more people will be added to today’s 7.3 billion; 90% of humanity will live in low and middle income countries; and crucial new disruptive influences and demands on natural resources and human capital will need to be confronted.

Our world has already been dramatically transformed by the life-saving and life-improving innovations of entrepreneurs from many years ago, who saw where inadequate practices were slowing progress, and who took action to create more effective approaches. With the progress in addressing many of today’s development challenges still lagging far behind our aspirations, finding and supporting innovative solutions in a more efficient manner has become a priority for the international development community in order to enable billions of people to overcome poverty.

...and taking Impact to Scale

The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 posed some ambitious global targets for the development community – targets that will only be achieved if we address what some have called “the missing middle” – i.e. the gap between these top-down targets on the one hand and the bottom-up development initiatives, projects, and programs that are supported by governments, aid agencies, foundations, and social entrepreneurs.

In this context, it is important that the solutions that are identified, piloted and validated through the sourcing of innovation are also connected to the processes, stakeholders and resources that will enable them to be systematically scaled-up for maximum impact.
Innovation and scaling are difficult and complex processes to control, and are also inherently political in that they have the potential to change accepted ways of doing things, produce winners and losers, and challenge existing power relations. Furthermore, the impact of innovations may only begin to emerge after many years, and even then it may be difficult to measure and hotly contested.

For those in the international development community – be they governments, the private sector, civil society, academia and/or development agencies – innovation and scaling therefore require a commitment to doing things differently, and to find new ways of working together that transcend traditional boundaries to deliver greater impact, more quickly attained. This is particularly important given that many agencies working in development are already challenged by the need to achieve more with limited or reduced resources.

In response to this challenge, the Rockefeller Foundation provided leadership and resources to convene some of the world’s leading development innovation funders in early 2015 to form The International Development Innovation Alliance (IDIA) – a collaborative platform with the shared goal of “actively promoting and advancing innovation as a means to help achieve sustainable development”, including through the UN’s 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

At the heart of this Alliance is a commitment to exchange innovation-related knowledge and learning across organizational, sectoral and geographic boundaries. This shared learning is critical not only to collaboratively enhance the development of new products, services and ways of working, but to also ensure that the lessons arising from both success and failure can be disseminated to inform the more efficient adaptation and scaling of innovations within different countries, populations and contexts.

By leveraging the extensive knowledge and experience of its members, IDIA therefore seeks to stimulate the co-production of public goods that support innovation and, at the country level, hasten the creation of strong ‘innovation ecosystems’, in which favorable policy and regulatory frameworks, open data systems and domestic resourcing come together for innovation to thrive.
Our Members

IDIA is a unique platform that brings together the innovation teams of some of the world’s leading development agencies, governments, multilateral institutions and foundations, as well as leaders from organizations that have been specifically created to source and drive innovation around the world (such as the Global Innovation Fund and Grand Challenges Canada). Together, these institutions draw on a wealth of experience and learning in funding innovation to define the collaborative agenda through which IDIA seeks to achieve its goals.

To support decision-making agility and effective interaction, membership of the core IDIA group and its various Working Groups is by invitation only. Results for Development acts as the Secretariat for IDIA, providing support to the group as a whole in determining its strategy and activities, as well working with individual member agencies on specific innovation-related projects of benefit to the group and the development community more broadly.

Our current members are:
Our Approach to Advancing Innovation

Our Mission

The overall mission of IDIA is:

“To actively promote and effectively advance innovation as a means to help achieve sustainable development, including through the 2030 Agenda.”

IDIA will seek to do this by sharing knowledge, experiences and insights; identifying and addressing gaps in the innovation ecosystem; and collaborating to develop public goods that support innovation, including pooling resources as appropriate.”

We believe that innovation thrives best when facilitated by a strong ecosystem of favorable enabling conditions, including better policy and regulatory frameworks, open data and standards, and expanded access for innovators to resources. More effectively tapping into capital flows through blended finance, for instance, will harness additional resources that far exceed the current capital available for poverty reduction. The same is true when the development of science, technology and innovation (STI) capabilities is promoted, by strengthening the regulatory, infrastructure, and human capacity foundations that support the growth of local STI ecosystems.

Our Objectives

In support of its mission, IDIA has articulated three main objectives:

1. **INFLUENCING** – Increasing understanding and visibility of innovation among a wide variety of stakeholders as a path to support sustainable development, including developing country governments, private sector actors and civil society.

2. **COLLABORATING** – Sharing data, instruments and experience to develop common platforms for supporting innovation from idea to scale.

3. **ENABLING** – Helping to build sustainable innovation ecosystems at the local level by engaging and supporting developing country governments and institutions that are mobilizing domestic resources for development innovation.
Our Innovation Principles

The IDIA members have also coalesced around six Innovation Principles that evidence and experience suggest will be effective in facilitating innovation within international development:

**PRINCIPLES TO FACILITATE INNOVATION IN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- **Invest in locally driven solutions**
  - Recognize that the best ideas can come from anywhere, anywhere. Support innovators in emerging countries, since proximity to the challenge is critical for designing better solutions. Encourage innovators to partner with talent and resources from global networks.

- **Take intelligent risks**
  - Understand that experimenting with new possibilities is the essence of progress. Navigate uncertainty in an informed manner, using rigorous data to learn and improve, while also upholding the principle of do no harm. As initial steps yield stronger evidence, invest more boldly.

- **Use evidence to drive decision-making**
  - Evidence is critical to understanding what works and to improving impact and cost-effectiveness. Develop clear metrics early on and measure progress against milestones on an ongoing basis. Be prepared to reduce funding if a project or idea no longer shows promise for achieving large-scale impact.

- **Fail fast and iterate**
  - Embrace failure as an opportunity for learning. Revamp and retry, again and again, even good ideas can be made better. Demonstrate impact before scaling.

- **Facilitate collaboration and co-creation across sectors**
  - Coordinate the application of scientific and technical, social, and business innovations with partners across all sectors—public, private, and civil society. Leverage intellectual, financial, and social resources from all to address the urgent need for life-changing and life-saving solutions. Share results widely, good and bad, to accelerate learning from, and building on, the work of others. Strive for openness—in data, standards, sources, and the innovative process.

- **Identify scalable solutions**
  - Identify solutions that demonstrate high potential to achieve disproportionate impact and to change systems impeding progress, especially for the poor. Invest in sustainable solutions that deliver significant impact, cost-effectiveness, and open the potential to reach millions of people in need.
Our Working Groups

To scope and implement specific innovation-related projects in pursuit of its objectives, IDIA also establishes Working Groups that bring together specialists from within IDIA member agencies and, where appropriate, invited experts from external organizations who have relevant knowledge and experience.

Current IDIA Working Groups, the challenges they are addressing and their high-level objectives are summarized in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Working Group</th>
<th>The Challenge</th>
<th>High-Level Objectives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DATA PLATFORMS</td>
<td>Funding agencies that engage in identifying, funding and scaling innovations typically have their own internal repositories for tracking and managing potential, active and past investments. This has resulted in a proliferation of innovation platforms promoting diverse data and a lack of coordination and collaboration among them.</td>
<td>To improve the comparability, accessibility and quality of data that innovators, funders and others need to better identify, support and scale impactful innovations.</td>
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<td>MEASURING IMPACT</td>
<td>Innovation impact tends to occur farther in the future (e.g. 5 or 10 years out) than traditional M&amp;E models are typically designed to evaluate; they may have wider, system-level impacts that can be hard to anticipate and/or capture; and there are few tools available to measure the impact of an agency’s innovation portfolio.</td>
<td>To develop new approaches to better understand which innovations will have / are having the greatest impact, and more efficiently allocate scarce resources as a result.</td>
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<td>SCALING INNOVATION</td>
<td>Remarkably little is understood about how to design scalable projects, the enablers and impediments to reaching scale (e.g. access to finance, supportive policy environments, etc.) and the most appropriate pathways and implementation models for getting there.</td>
<td>To develop / improve upon financing, delivery and partnership (public and private) models that support the scaling of appropriate innovations for transformational impact.</td>
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<td>GENDER EQUALITY</td>
<td>IDIA members seek transformative development impact through innovation, which we recognize as vital to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals outlined in Agenda 2030, including SDG 5 which seeks to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Developing policies, approaches, programs and partnerships that recognize the nexus between gender and innovation will provide useful insights that could lead to new tools and approaches for better results and greater impact.</td>
<td>To encourage mutual learning and knowledge sharing on “what works” in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls through development innovation projects, programs and policies, with the intention of enhancing IDIA member expertise and that of the broader development community.</td>
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Resources

In 2017, following 18 months of synthesizing learning and experience from across members of the IDIA Working Groups on Scaling Innovation and Measuring the Impact of Innovation, IDIA published the following three reports:

**INSIGHTS ON SCALING INNOVATION**

This report looks at the key challenges for funders around scaling innovation. It presents a high-level architecture comprising six scaling stages, eight good practices and a matrix of influencing factors to help guide funders through the long and complex process of scaling innovation.

**SCALING INNOVATION**

*Good Practice Guides for Funders*

This report explores the eight Good Practices identified in these Insights on Scaling Innovation in more detail, and provides funders with further guidance on tools and knowledge products that can help them start to operationalize these Good Practices within the context of their own agencies.

**INSIGHTS ON MEASURING THE IMPACT OF INNOVATION**

This report looks at the key challenges for funders around measuring the impact of innovation, and presents an approach highlighting key impact domains and indicators to help focus funder approaches.

All reports are available to download at [http://insights.globalinnovationexchange.org](http://insights.globalinnovationexchange.org)
# The IDIA Theory of Change

**IDIA MISSION:** Actively promote and effectively advance innovation as a means to help achieve sustainable development.

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<thead>
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<th>IDIA MISSION</th>
<th>IDIA PRINCIPLES</th>
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<td>Develop common platforms for supporting innovation from idea to scale</td>
<td>Take intelligent risks</td>
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<td>Engage and support countries that are mobilizing domestic resources for development innovation</td>
<td>Use evidence to drive decision-making</td>
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<td>Identify scalable solutions</td>
<td>Facilitate collaboration and co-creation across sectors</td>
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## Inputs

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<th>IDIA Member Agencies</th>
<th>IDIA Working Groups</th>
<th>IDIA Secretariat</th>
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<td>Targeted investments for group activities</td>
<td>Engaging external experts and pooling knowledge and learning around shared challenges</td>
<td>Coordination, facilitation, communication and knowledge synthesis</td>
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<td>Thought leadership and influence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commitment to collaboration</td>
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## Activities

### Influencing
- Increasing understanding and visibility of innovation
- Convening decision makers around challenges and best practice
- Harmonizing innovation terminology

### Collaborating
- Sharing data, instruments and experience
- Co-creating and sharing governance of common platforms and tools for mutual benefit

### Enabling
- Working with local change agents to identify gaps, challenges and opportunities for domestic innovation
- Leveraging agency networks, resources and expertise for targeted support

## Outputs

### Communication & Collaboration
- Improving understanding, communication and strategic gap-filling around innovation interventions
- Crowding-in new stakeholders and attracting increased resources

### Global Public Goods
- Creating and disseminating resources built on synthesized knowledge of what works and what doesn’t across and beyond IDIA member agencies for greater efficiency and impact

### Ecosystem Support
- Strengthening innovation ecosystems in developing countries

## Outcomes

- Development innovation is mainstreamed among funders and actors who design and deliver international development assistance
- Increased collaboration, efficiency and sustainable impact across innovation investments
- Innovation is mainstreamed into country level development, including policymaking and resource mobilization
The International Development Innovation Alliance

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