GACD Implementation Science e-Hub

ADVANCED PROGRAMME

GACD
GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR CHRONIC DISEASES
AN ALLIANCE OF HEALTH RESEARCH FUNDERS

MODULE 1 | LECTURE 1D

Systems approach to scale up

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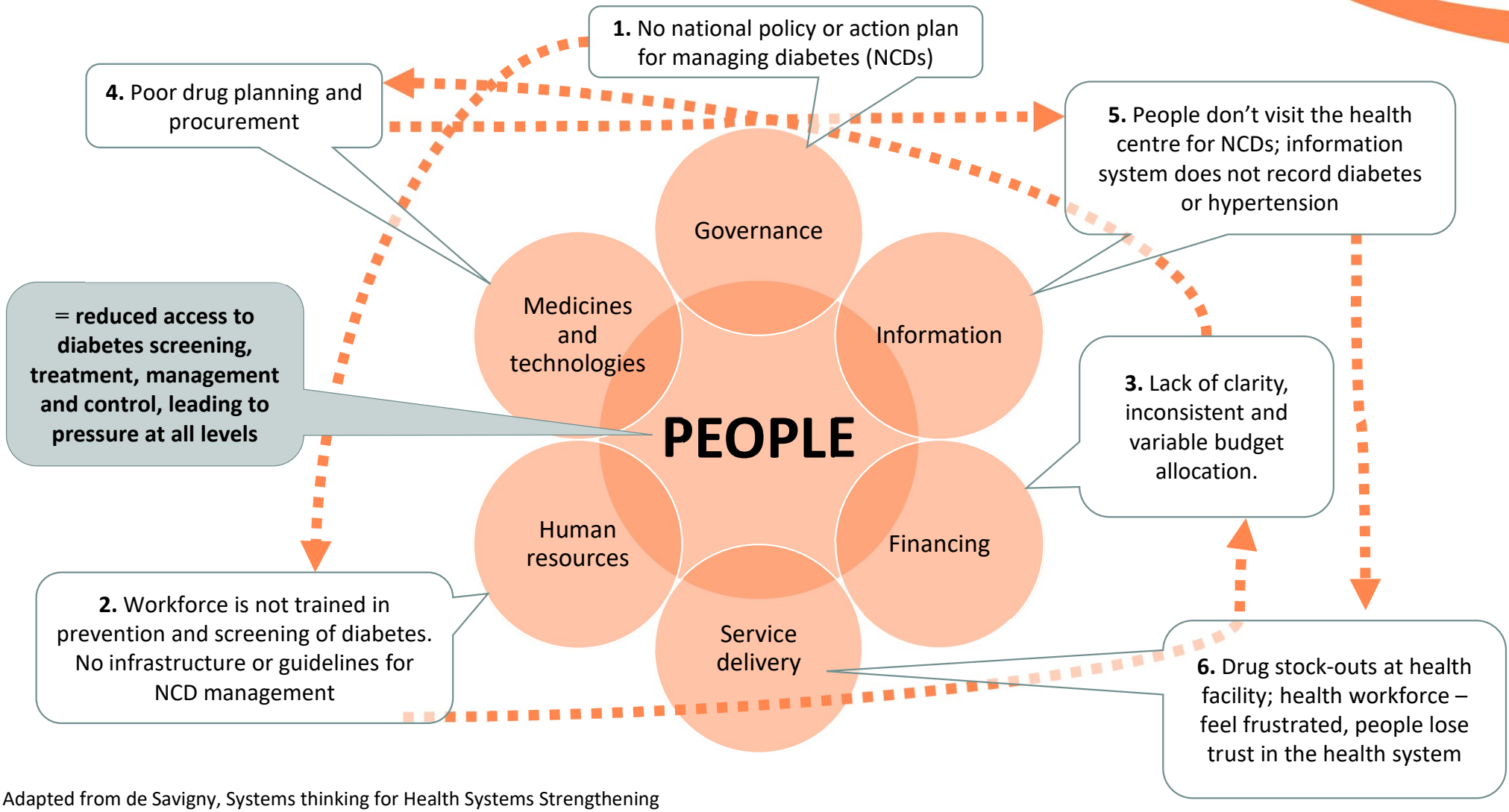
Lecture overview

- Holistic perspective on health systems
- Understanding scaling up
- Upscaling working group joint study protocol: Our progress
- Two case studies to show diversity
- Lessons learnt and key messages

Interconnectedness of health systems

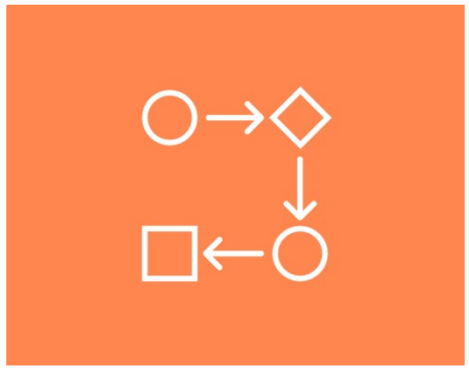


Source: Adapted from de Savigny, Systems thinking for Health Systems Strengthening

Complexity of health systems

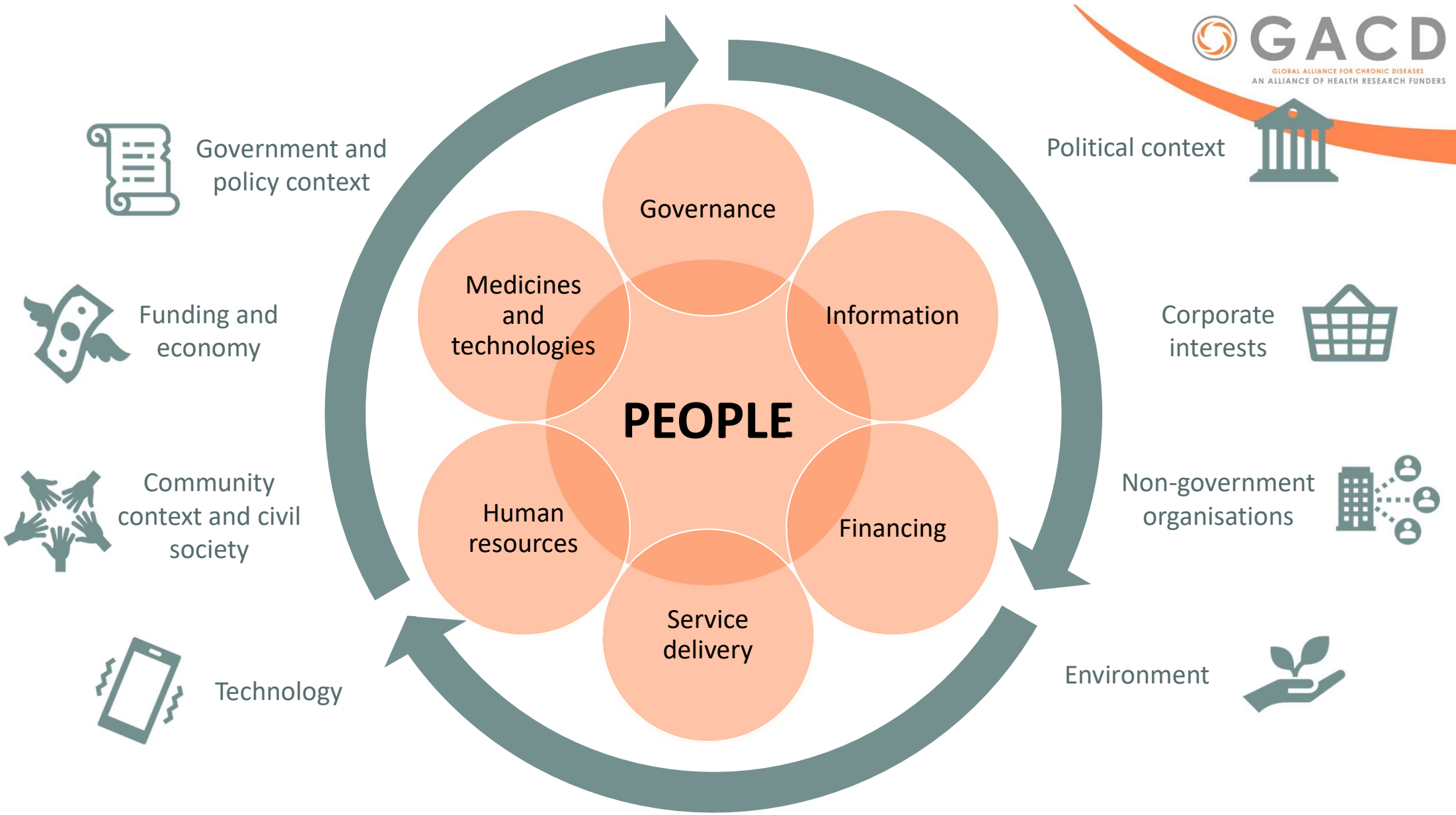
Complex systems with interactive elements

Interactions and inter-relationships



Unpredictable and non-linear

Feedback loops and adaptive mechanisms


GACD
GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR CHRONIC DISEASES
AN ALLIANCE OF HEALTH RESEARCH FUNDERS
Government and policy context
Funding and economy
Community context and civil society
Technology
Political context
Corporate interests
Non-government organisations
Environment
Governance
Medicines and technologies
Information
PEOPLE
Human resources
Financing
Service delivery

Defining scale up

Requires planning

Making it useful

Providing scientific evidence

"Deliberate efforts to increase the impact of successfully tested health innovations so as to benefit more people and to foster policy and programme development on a lasting basis"

Greater numbers, more equitable

Embed in policy

Sustainable

World Health Organization, 9 steps for developing a scaling-up strategy, 2010.

Summary of scale up

Scale up is more complex than large scale implementation

Increasing coverage and reach of interventions but considering....

Context-specific

Evidence-based planning

Equity: available, accessible, affordable

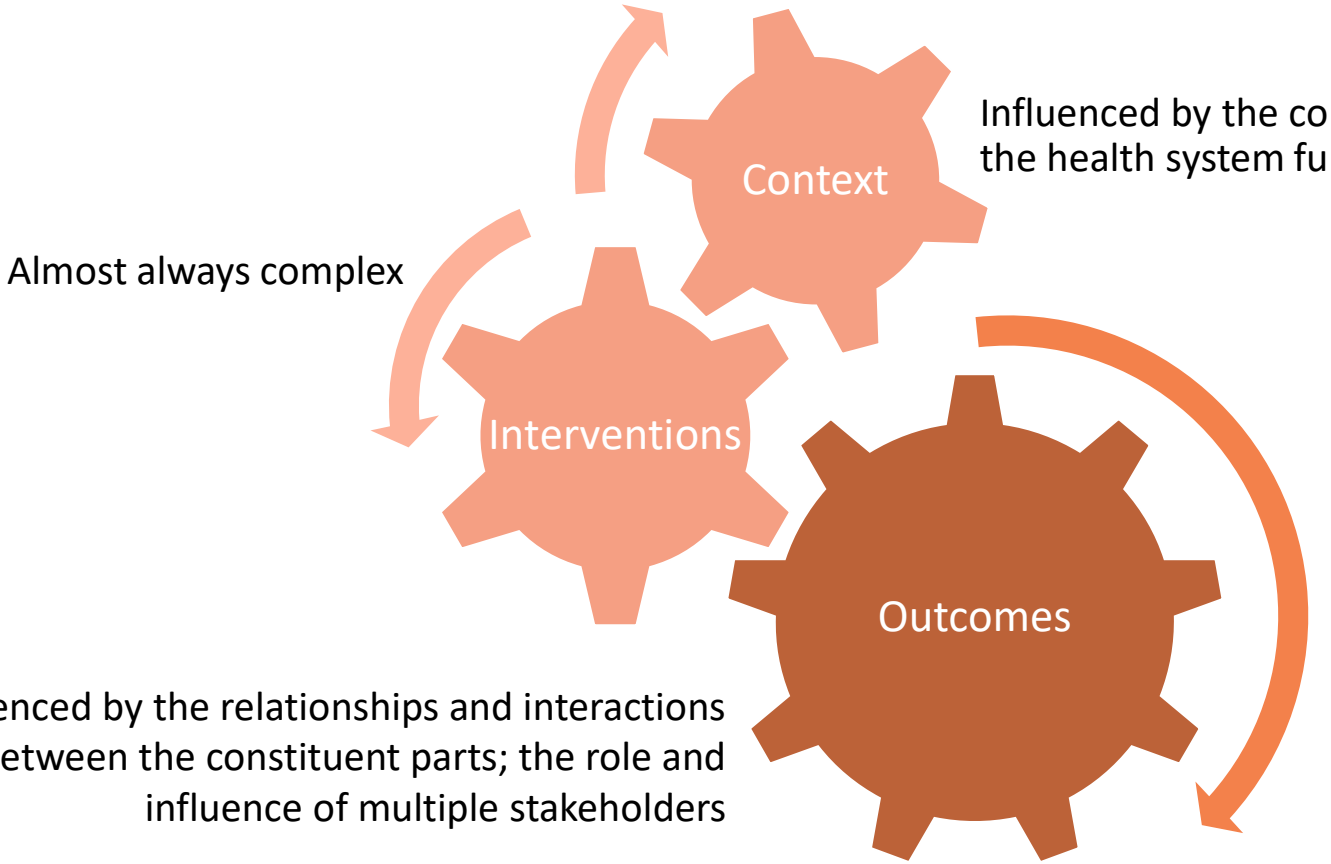
Quality and fidelity standards: while scaling up and over time

Non-discriminatory: geography, gender, religion

Embedded in policy

Sustainable: ongoing resources

Systems thinking and scaling up

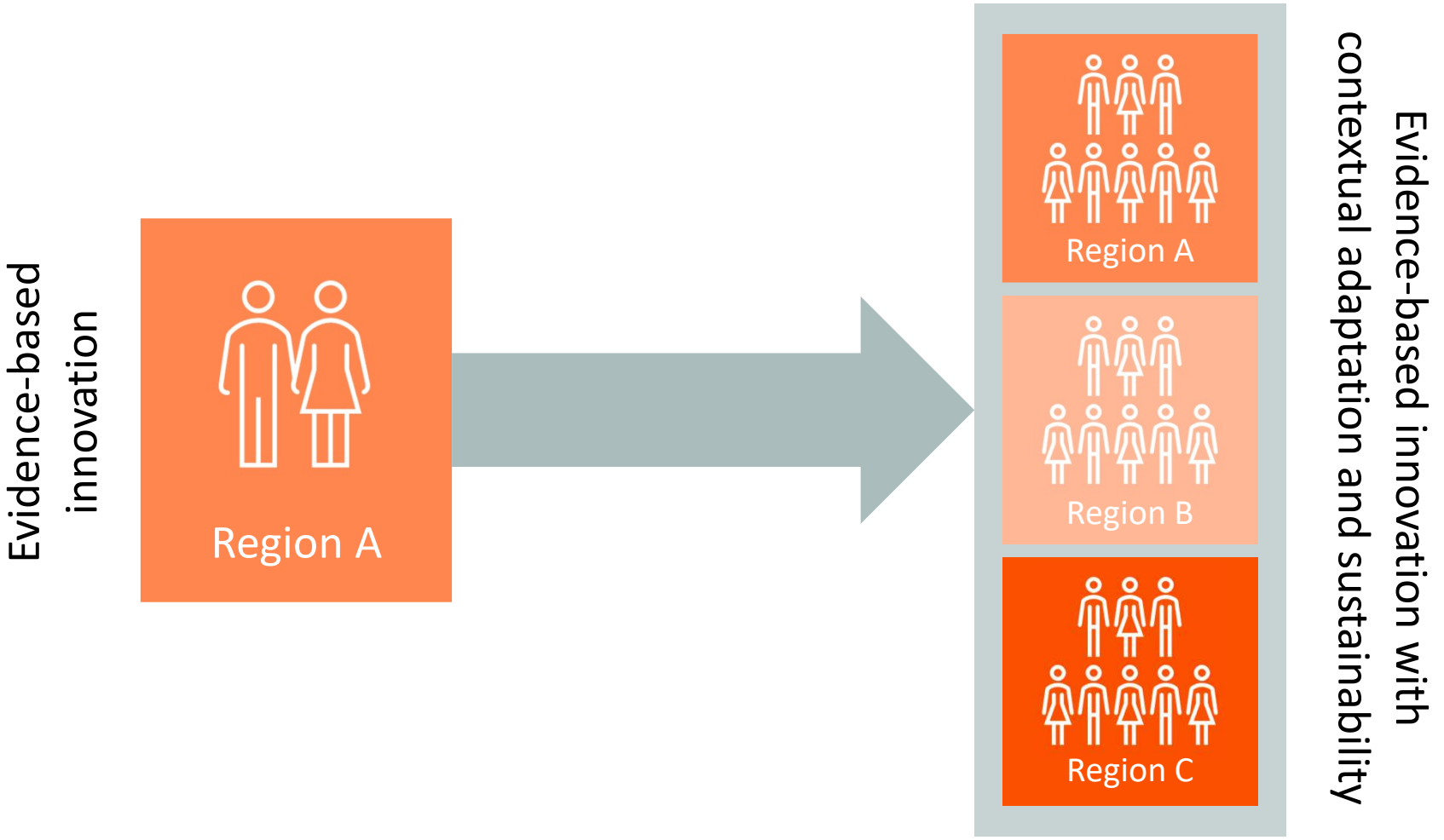


Influenced by the context in which the health system functions

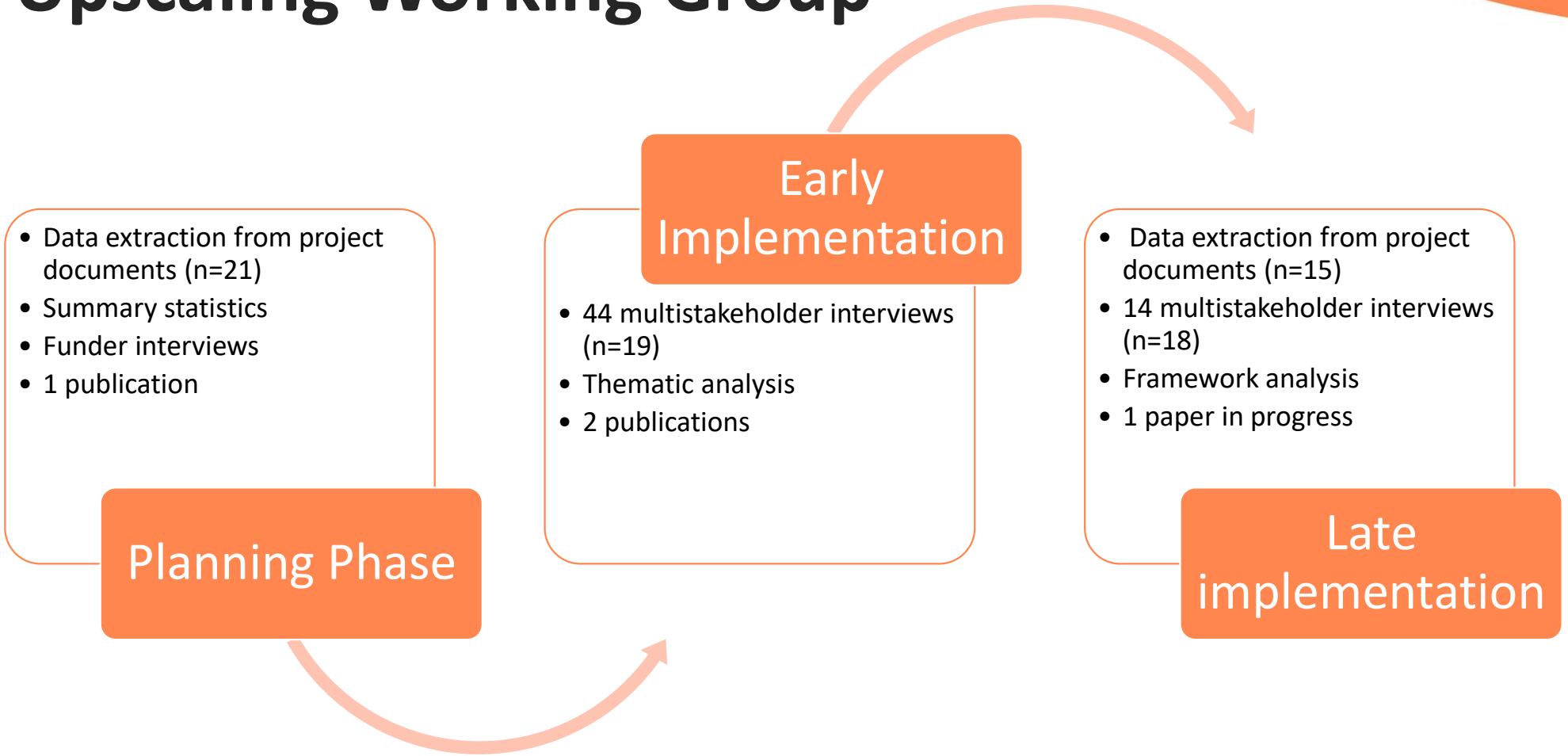
Almost always complex

Influenced by the relationships and interactions between the constituent parts; the role and influence of multiple stakeholders

Role of scale up research



Upscaling Working Group



The SUNI-SEA Project

Scaling interventions for diabetes and hypertension across Vietnam, Indonesia, and Myanmar

Key objectives

- Strengthen prevention and control of NCDs.
- Enhance primary healthcare systems.
- Build sustainable, evidence-based models.

Approach

- Systems thinking to address workforce, drug supply, and patient engagement.
- Collaboration with policymakers, healthcare providers, and communities.

Key takeaway: SUNI-SEA showcases the power of systems thinking and stakeholder collaboration to scale up health interventions. Early community engagement and context-specific adaptations are critical for long-term sustainability and equitable impact.

The Bangladesh D:CLARE Project

Scale-up strategy

- **Governance:** Collaborated with the Diabetic Association of Bangladesh and national policymakers
- **Expansion:** Designed to integrate into urban and high-risk regions to enhance scalability
- **Local Adaptation:** The project is designed to be context-specific, adapting to local needs and using community health workers for implementation and follow-up

Lessons learned

- Effective scale-up requires community ownership and policy alignment.
- Flexible implementation is critical in navigating systemic challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic

The D:CLARE project tackled the prevention and management of diabetes in rural Bangladesh using a Participatory Learning and Action approach, engaging local communities in awareness campaigns and strategic health interventions across six unions in Faridpur district.

Key enablers and barriers in scaling up NCD interventions

Enablers

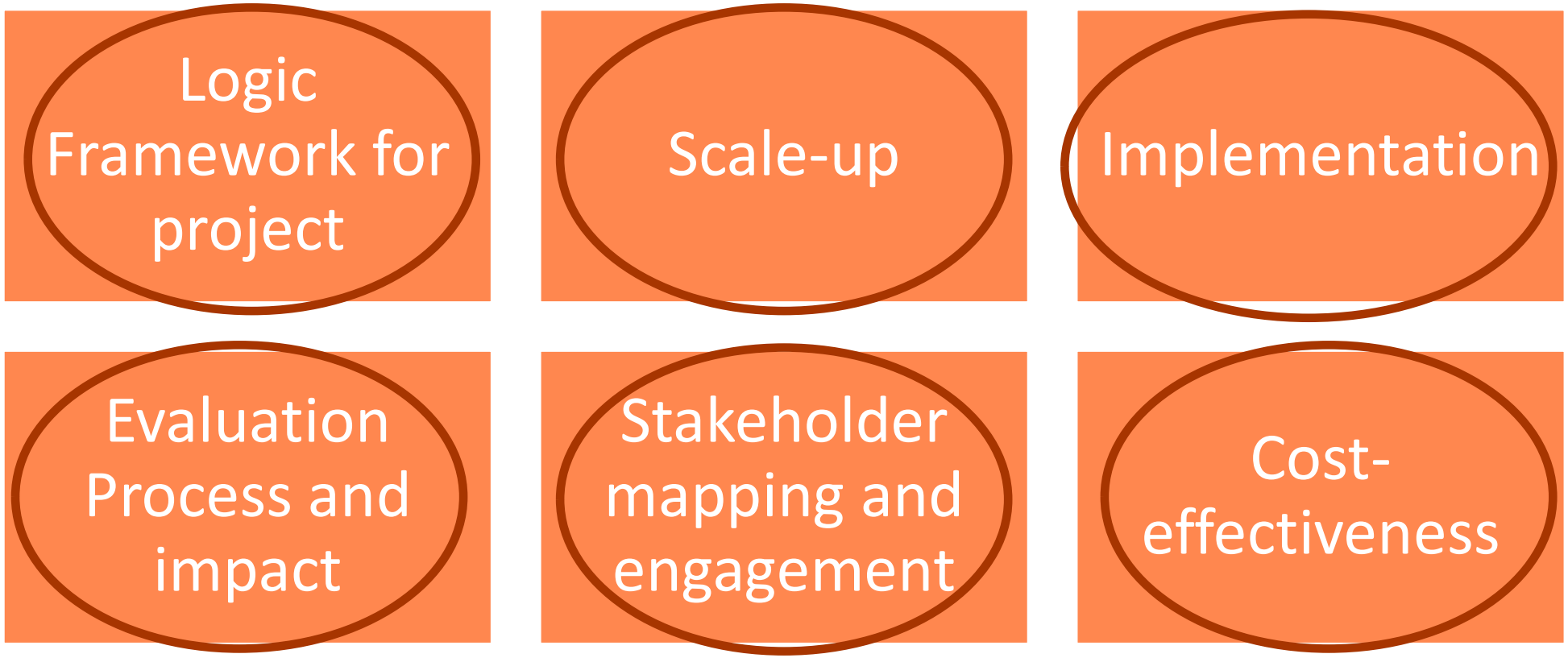
- **Adaptability:** Tailoring interventions to local contexts enhances acceptance and sustainability.
- **Digital health tools:** Strengthen communication, data management, and service continuity, especially in resource-limited settings.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** Early and ongoing involvement ensures local ownership and long- term success.

Barriers

- **Resource limitations:** Financial and infrastructural constraints hinder scalability, especially in LMICs.
- **Cultural resistance:** Misalignment with local norms reduces intervention acceptance.
- **Political instability:** Governance changes disrupt continuity of scaled interventions.

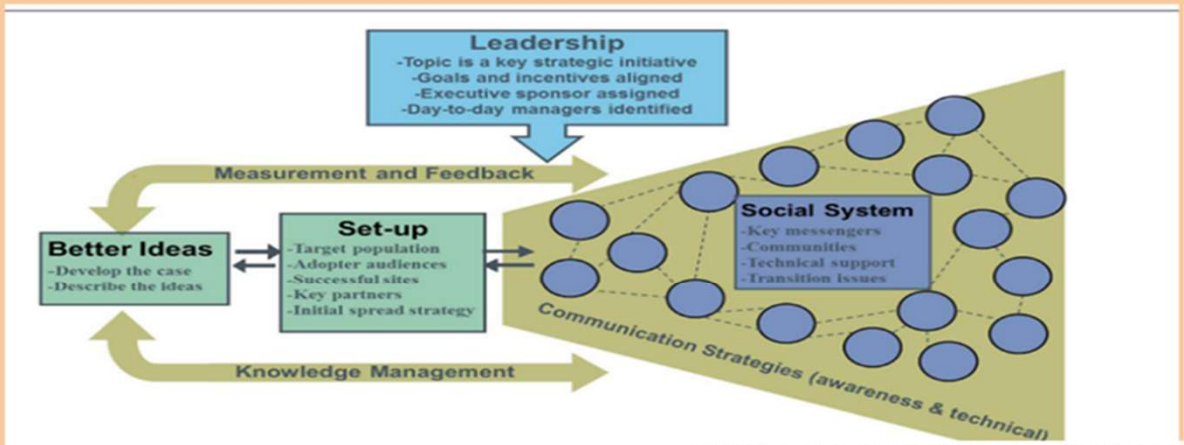
Takeaway: Scalability requires context-specific, adaptable models, sustainable financing, and robust partnerships to overcome systemic barriers.

Examples of frameworks/ theories used in scale-up research planning



Scale up frameworks

ExpandNet	Conceptual and Operational Framework	IHI Framework	4 step guide to scaling-up interventions
AIDED model	Framework for success	NASSS Framework	Dynamic Sustainability Framework



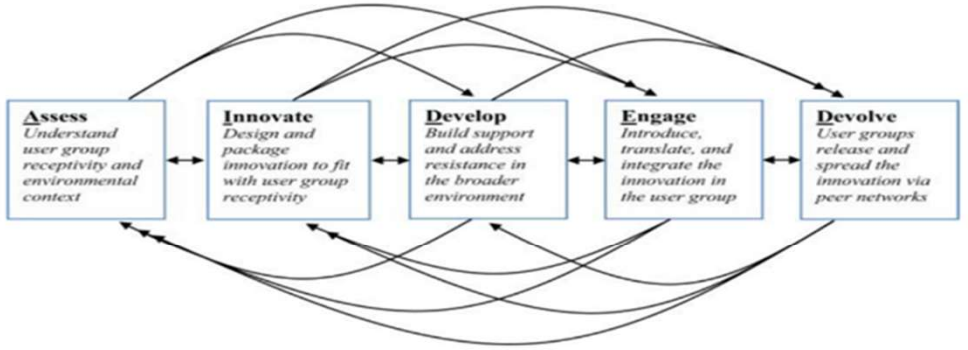


Figure 1. The ExpandNet/WHO framework for scaling up

7. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2012-000987

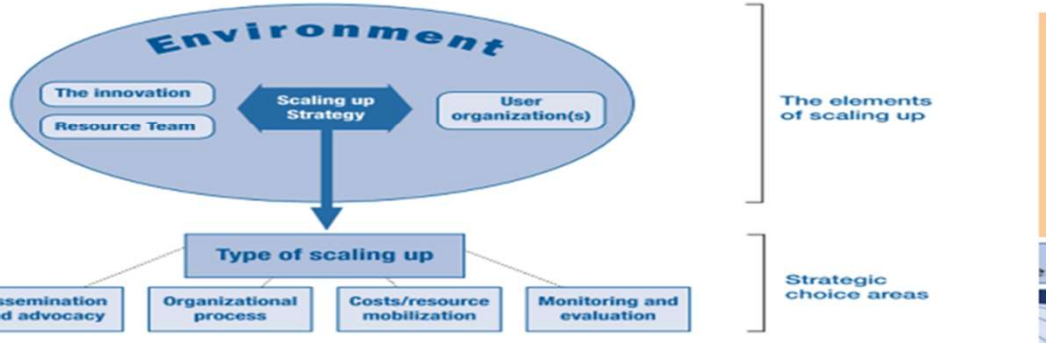


Table A defines each of the elements represented inside the oval and provides examples.

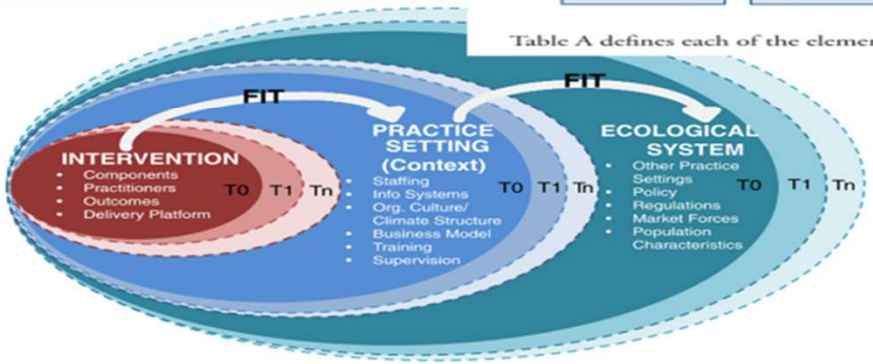


Figure 2 The dynamic sustainability framework. Illustrating the goal of maximizing the fit between interventions, practice settings, and the broader ecological system over time (represented by T_0, T_1,...,T_n), each of which has constituent components that may vary.

6. WIDER SYSTEM
6A Political / policy
6B Regulatory / legal
6C Professional
6D Socio-cultural

5. ORGANISATION
5A Capacity to innovate (leadership etc)
5B Readiness for this technology / change
5C Nature of adoption / funding decision
5D Extent of change needed to routines
5E Work needed to implement change

4. ADOPTERS
4A Staff (role, identity)
4B Patient (simple v complex input)
4C Carers (available, nature of input)

1. CONDITION
1A Nature of condition or illness
1B Comorbidities, socio-cultural influences

2. TECHNOLOGY
2A Material features
2B Type of data generated
2C Knowledge needed to use
2D Technology supply model

3. VALUE PROPOSITION
3A Supply-side value (to developer)
3B Demand-side value (to patient)

Key messages

1	Begin planning for scale-up early
2	Identify the goal of scale-up: is it advocacy, is it a process improvement, is it costs/resource mobilization?
3	Multistakeholder engagement: strengthening stakeholder connections for cohesive action
4	Research activities: planning, implementation, evaluation, stakeholder analysis, cost-effectiveness, process.

Key messages

5	Contextual adaptation of intervention but retain core elements; can adapt some details for better fit
6	Choose low-hanging, easy-to-reach groups first; use these as exemplars to showcase
7	Plan for early policy and/or practice changes
8	Leadership and 'champions' are critical for influencing change

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