

Success Factors in Tech4Dev Scale Up and Partnerships

An independent assessment prepared for the MIT Solve, Atlassian and DFAT innovationXchange Partnership

Summary Report, July 2019



Stephen Parsons and Scott Rankin
Consultants
Research and Communications Group
Email: sparsons@rcgglobal.net
srankin@rcgglobal.net
www.rcgglobal.net

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Acronyms

AUD	Australian Dollar
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DSHA	Digital Superheroes Academy
IRF	Innovation Resource Facility
iXc	Innovation Exchange
KRQ	Key Research Question
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MoEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport
MP	Member of Parliament
OLE	Open Learning Exchange
SPLF	South Pacific Flying Labs
PVI	Peripheral Vision International
RCG	Research and Communications Group
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
ToR	Terms of Reference
TULA	The Ultimate Learning Accelerator
USD	United States Dollar

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The research team comprised Scott Rankin and Stephen Parsons from the Research and Communications Group. A steering group consisting of Simona Achitei (AECOM), Josh Metcalf-Wallach (DFAT iXc), Melissa Beaumont Lee (Atlassian), and Sara Montebaro (MIT Solve) oversaw the research.

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Point to note: *This is a summarized version of the report. To enable it to be published on the DFAT website, any content that could possibly be linked to the specific contributors has been removed. This has resulted in little change to the body of the report, but numerous appendices have been removed, including the Solver team online survey responses, the List of Interviewees, and the Interview Data Thematic Display Grid. The full report, with all appendices, was made available to DFAT iXc, the Atlassian Foundation and MIT Solve.*

Executive Summary

A feature of the 21st century to date has been extraordinarily rapid advances in technology and innovation. While this evolution ensures new opportunities for economic and employment growth and even environmental protection, it also presents complex challenges given half of today's jobs are expected to become obsolete in the not too distant future. Preparing youth, particularly disadvantaged youth, to navigate this challenging landscape is increasingly recognised as being of vital importance. Furthermore, there is increased recognition of the critical role to be played by the private sector in successful navigation of these challenges, through identification of socially responsible innovations that can ensure broad based benefit emerges from the technological revolution that is occurring.

In an effort to provide a fresh response to these complex challenges, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and the Atlassian Foundation (Atlassian) formed a strategic partnership aimed at identifying innovations capable of supporting disadvantaged youth to better prepare for the workforce of the future - the Youth, Skills and Workforce of the Future program. As the Partnership approached its two year anniversary, it was decided to take stock of its effectiveness in supporting 'Solver organisations' to succeed and achieve scale within their projects, and also the degree to which they are well positioned to achieve greater scale moving forward.

This led to the Partnership initiating a call for proposals to undertake a study into 'Success Factors in Tech4Dev Scale Up and Partnerships', with the following objectives:

- To identify what support Solver organisations need in order to achieve scale during Phase Three, including analysis of key challenges, barriers and success factors; (*Implementer level*)
- To identify how the MIT/Atlassian/DFAT partnership could be adapted to best support Solver organisations attempting to reach scale in Phase Three; (*Donor/partner level*)
- To more broadly use the Partnership as a case study to provide lessons learnt on how the private, education and government sectors can engage effectively for development impact.

Data collection for the study was primarily qualitative in nature, involving:

- Review of a wide range of published and grey literature, and program documentation;
- Surveying of the 11 supported Solver teams;
- Semi-structured key informant interviews and occasional group interviews with a wide range of stakeholder groups across the Partnership, Solver teams and the broader Tech4Dev community;
- Field work allowing detailed analysis of the experience of two Solver teams – 40K in Cambodia and Ruanguru in Indonesia.

The Partnership

An important strength of the Partnership is that it was formed around an issue of mutual interest. This allowed it to benefit from a strong sense of complementarity and clear awareness amongst partners of the comparative advantage brought by each to the overall effort. The way that the Partnership was formed and the speed with which it was possible to get the challenge process moving forward was another significant strength. This capacity to quickly progress the program reflects the unity of purpose and levels of trust achieved amongst partners, and enabled Solver teams to quickly take their ideas forward. Overall, it is notable what the Partnership has been able to achieve in just two years.

Interviews with those who have been supported through the Partnership highlight the different strengths and comparative advantages of each individual partner. Both Solvers and partners place great value on being associated with the prestige of the MIT brand, and use this relationship to open doors and stimulate interest in the work of the Partnership overall. Atlassian's culture of 'giving back' facilitates staff time to volunteer, which in turn has provided Solver teams access to very high level and ongoing technical support from Atlassian staff. Their willingness and capacity to adapt and redirect funding according to changed circumstances also stands out as a significant strength of the program. DFAT brings important qualities to the Partnership in terms of being a respected donor and an experienced development focused organization, with a broad cross-section of relevant skills.

It is also noted that each partner has contributed significantly in helping progress other partners towards their own organisational goals. For example, the decision of both DFAT and Atlassian to provide financial support to MIT Solve competition winners has been significant in allowing MIT the opportunity to trial a new model, and to compare this with its standard approach of not providing competition 'winners' access to funding. DFAT places great value on the quality of the relationship established with Atlassian, and uses it as an exemplar for the potential of private sector engagement in innovation and international development work more generally. Atlassian see their own approaches having been strengthened significantly through implementing alongside experienced delivery entities such as DFAT and MIT.

Despite there being sophisticated understanding amongst partners of the inner workings and shared benefits of the broader Partnership, the Partnership actually lacks standard documentation regarding its approach and objectives. This is reflective of its rapid-fire commencement and a desire to be innovative and do things differently. However, in retrospect, there would have been value at Partnership commencement in taking time to step back and clearly articulate and define what success would look like at both partner and Partnership levels, and why the partners believed they could more effectively support innovative tech4dev solutions by working together than they could working independently. This analysis would have enabled the development of a unified plan and performance metrics that could have been used to better monitor and evaluate performance during implementation. Even as Phase Three approaches, there is still value in going through this process, including involvement of the remaining Solver teams to broaden input and further strengthen the overall approach.

Despite these concerns, it is acknowledged that a not inconsiderable benefit of this lack of formal Partnership structure appears to have been greater capacity to be responsive and agile in an implementation space that is constantly shifting and urgently requires adaptability in terms of positioning to seize opportunities as they arise. Significantly, the Partnership was consistently praised across for its willingness to support changes in direction of Solver teams, allowing them to respond optimally to contextual changes. Given this overall context, it is felt that a middle ground can be found, in terms of retrospectively developing 'partnership documentation' that is supportive of strengthened monitoring and performance measurement, while not constraining the Partnership from continuing to be agile and adaptive.

Supporting Solvers to achieve scale

While performance metrics have not been clearly set at Partnership level, Solver teams are for the most part very positive about the support that they have been provided by partners. A survey of the 11 Solver teams highlighted that:

- 100% of respondents rate their experience with the MIT Solve Challenge as being helpful (60%) or very helpful (40%);
- 100% would recommend the process to other organisations;
- 80% of respondents have not had any difficulties with support provided by the Partnership, and;
- 70% rate their scaling up activity as *successful* to this point.

A feature of the survey and interviewing of Solvers was the value placed on non-financial support, with many citing examples of positive engagement with MIT, and high quality technical support being provided by Atlassian volunteers. DFAT support to development of child protection policy and procedures was cited by a number of teams as vital, and an example of unexpected value coming from the Partnership. Monitoring and evaluation support supplied through Solidaritas was also appreciated, although mostly described in the context of it being a good start, but insufficient to meet overall measurement needs.

Overall, where support to non-financial needs worked best was when there was a clear match between Solver team need and available partner skills and knowledge. Despite this, it was also noted that non-financial support available from the three partner organisations is actually quite narrow, and insufficient to overall needs. It is therefore recommended that a technical assistance facility be made available to Phase Three participants so that they can access exactly the skill sets they require.

Surveying of Solver teams highlighted the most significant barrier to scaling being clear understanding and effective management of dealings with local systems and structures, market understanding and general challenges related to establishing the relationships necessary to carry an initiative forward. This area of vertical scaling is one where funders and grantees can work more productively together to identify critical issues, players and relationships, and develop a clear strategy to address known, context specific challenges. It is also an area where Solver teams are seeking deeper support in order to better understand and more strategically engage their operating landscape, including support from partners to help progress key relationships capable of advancing initiatives further. In this context,

Australian Embassies have great potential to support such understanding given their focus on contextual understanding and shifts in the development and economic landscape.

Solvers also identify funding and resource mobilisation as a major challenge, and commonly see this challenge as a by-product of inadequately understanding their implementation context. In this respect, they place emphasis on the importance of being aware of key competitors, locally and further afield – and also shifts in their market capture and product offering.

In Indonesia, the Solver organization PT Ruang Raya Indonesia (and their innovation Ruangguru Digital Bootcamp) is a strong demonstration of the value of sophisticated, granular understanding of both the policy landscape and prevailing market dynamics, and subsequent opportunities in relation to partnership development, resource mobilisation and political capital.

A related issue is the importance of Solver capacity to clearly articulate their vision and the value of their product, to optimise engagement of potential partners and/or investors. This difficulty relates to systems for performance measurement commonly being given low priority by start-ups, due to competing priorities and resource limitations. This has the impact of restricting their ability to clearly define progress, which in turn affects their ability to be persuasive when engaging potential partners and investors. Support to overcome this obstacle to scaling is warranted.

Given the above, a key recommendation of this review is the need to undertake a detailed assessment of non-financial needs with each of the teams progressing to Phase Three, in order to:

- identify the types of non-financial support sought and required;
- assess whether these needs can be addressed from within, or whether resources need to be sourced external to the partners;
- inform the development, scope and structure of a fund to be used to provide non-financial support for Solver teams to access specialist skills not available within the staff resources of the partners;
- support clearer determination of the availability of staff within partner organisations who have the skills, knowledge and time available to support needs identified by the Solver teams;
- support Solvers to establish and maintain a ‘community of practice’ where they can share experiences, ideas and networks with other like-minded organisations.

Thinking about Phase Three

The reality of Phase Three is that the number of Solvers will be reduced to a far smaller number of initiatives. Given that the Partnership now has stronger overall understanding of the challenges facing the remaining Solvers, along with a high level of trust and close working relationships, there is an opportunity for highly tailored responses to organisation-specific issues and challenges that have emerged on the journey to date. In particular, clear sighted, targeted approaches need to be put in place to progress and consolidate partners on their

particular pathway to scale, with the aim of strengthening organisational foundations and structures in ways that will support progress beyond support from this Partnership.

Such support can feasibly enable Phase Three partners to move effectively through what is likely to be a difficult consolidation phase, as they by necessity need to identify new partners and partnerships. Moving forward, needs identified both at Partnership and Solver levels to better support progress to scale include:

- reducing reporting and administrative requirements to allow Solver teams to focus more purposefully on assembling key information related to progressing their specific initiative and forming new partnerships;
- strengthening Solver capacity to better understand their stakeholder landscape and be more strategic in how, when and for what purpose they communicate with potential partners and donors;
- remaining open and flexible to the needs of partners, and structured to quickly respond as new needs emerge;
- focused support aimed at supporting Solvers to improve MEL systems with a view to generating strategic, clear and persuasive data on results to date, enabling the development of compelling approaches to potential partners that assure such partners that they can invest with confidence;
- supporting Solvers to better communicate their product and results;
- draw on collective networks and capacities to identify and engage potential funders.

Increased levels of trust and more nuanced understanding of the context and needs of remaining Solvers also opens the opportunity for stronger and more deliberate relationships with Australian Embassies. This is particularly the case in terms of supporting Solver teams in better understanding their stakeholder landscape, the significance of political shifts, and to also support Solvers in terms of identifying potential supporters for their initiative – within government, the donor community or the private sector.

Lessons Learned

There is a growing body of literature focused on the contribution of private-public partnerships in supporting transformative change in the development sector. A common conclusion reached is that such partnerships are highly effective due to their ability to draw on the varied competencies and experience of different actors to address complex development issues and achieve breakthroughs. This dynamic can be seen in Youth, Skills and Workforce of the Future program.

Another key learning of the sector has been that if cross-partner learning is to be optimised, it is vital that learning be placed at the centre of the approach, and that there is clear documentation and well thought through performance management frameworks in place. More generally speaking, there are dynamic communities of practice in place that are very interested to progress learning both in terms of Private-Public Partnerships and also the potential of tech4dev approaches.

The Youth, Skills and Workforce of the Future program is well placed to be an important contributor to these communities of practice, and is already engaged with many of the key

actors. Through strengthening mechanisms for learning, the program will be well placed to make an important contribution in relation to the complex challenges of scaling innovation.

Summary of Recommendations

1. *The Partnership should retrospectively develop a monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) framework that documents the theoretical underpinning of the Partnership, including a shared definition of how it defines scaling and intends to measure effectiveness come the end of Phase Three.*
2. *The Partnership should support establishment of a ‘community of practice’ that allows Solvers – past and present – to share experience, ideas and networks with each other, and also potentially provide technical support to each other.*
3. *The Partnership should undertake a detailed assessment of non-financial needs should be undertaken with each of the teams progressing to Phase Three, in order to:*
 - *identify types of non-financial support sought and required;*
 - *assess whether needs can be addressed from within or resources need to be sourced external to the Partnership;*
 - *inform development, scope and structure of a fund to be used to provide non-financial support for Solver teams;*
 - *support clearer determination regarding the availability of staff within partner organisations with the requisite skills, knowledge and time to support needs identified by the Solver teams.*
4. *The Partnership should support Solvers to clearly define where they currently sit on its ‘scaling innovation pathway’, including development of tailored monitoring, evaluation and learning systems aimed at clear capture of results and mobilisation of resources to further progress towards scale.*
5. *The Partnership should work more actively with Solver teams to identify investment and resource mobilisation options, in order to develop nuanced resource mobilisation strategies that clearly articulate roles and responsibilities of different actors.*
6. *Given Australian Embassies focus on contextual understanding, DFAT should explore options through which Solver teams can benefit from that understanding and be supported to better understand and engage their local context.*
7. *DFAT should explore options for similar partnerships that leverage the complementarity of a well credentialed innovation think tank, a dynamic innovation focused private sector actor and an experienced development actor. Any new relationship would benefit greatly from learning to date, evolution of approach that has been achieved by each partner across implementation to date, and better appreciation of how such a partnership can be optimally leveraged moving forward.*
8. *Future partnerships should place priority on ‘formalising’ learning as a key objective from its outset, based upon development and ongoing improvement of a MEL Framework that details outcomes and monitoring approaches at both partnership and investment levels (including a shared understanding of scaling).*

9. *If considering a future challenge/competition selection model to identify grantees, partners should consider the range of approaches possible in the context of their broader objectives. Challenges and competitions can take diverse forms and offer opportunities to engage with potential grantees in a diverse range of ways.*

1. Introduction

The 21st century has been marked by extraordinarily rapid advances in technological innovation. While new technology can generate jobs and increase labour productivity, it also has the potential to contribute to job displacement and widen the skills gap. Today's younger generation faces a world in which globally nearly half of today's jobs are at risk of becoming obsolete due to automation and technological advancement in coming decades. The future of work provides both challenges and opportunities for governments, private sector and communities everywhere.

In 2017 the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and the Atlassian Foundation International (Atlassian) formed a strategic Partnership aimed at identifying innovations capable of supporting disadvantaged youth to better prepare for changing workforce dynamics - the Youth, Skills and the Workforce of the Future challenge.¹

Through this Partnership, DFAT and Atlassian have funded and provided non-financial support to organisations (Solvers) with the aim of supporting initiatives that work to prepare disadvantaged youth for the workforce of the future. DFAT has invested and/or committed up to AUD \$3.1 million, while Atlassian has invested and/or committed up to USD \$2.3 million. MIT's role in this Partnership has been to provide the open innovation platform (MIT Solve) through which potential grantee organisations have been identified and selected for funding. MIT Solve managed the Youth, Skills, and the Workforce of the Future challenge competition online and in-person and provided support to selected Solver teams through a range of mechanisms. Prior to this Partnership, MIT Solve had not provided successful Solvers with grants, meaning that this particular Partnership brought forth a new 'funded' approach allowing MIT to compare and contrast different models of support to its successful Solver cohorts.

The Partnership has now been functioning for two years with two phases of grant funding allocated to selected Solvers. As the two-year mark approached, partners took a decision to try and better understand how effective the Partnership had been in supporting Solver organisations to succeed and achieve scale within their projects, and the degree to which they were positioned to achieve greater scaling in the future. Within the proposed study was also an interest to consider opportunities for further strengthening of the Partnership moving forward, in order to better support Solver organisations in the coming years, whether formally within or outside the scope of the current Partnership.

One of the key features of this Partnership has been the bringing together of three very different entities with a shared interest in exploring how the benefits of innovation can be maximised, as described below.

¹ The official name given to the program by partners is the Youth, Skills and Workforce of the Future program. However, the program is also often referred to as the MIT Solve project, given that it emerged from the MIT Solve challenge.

Table One: Youth, Skills and the workforce of the future program partner context

DFAT's innovationXchange

In 2015, the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade launched the Australian innovationXchange (iXc) to catalyse and support innovation across the Australian aid program. The purpose of the iXc is to facilitate learning and knowledge sharing, and broker new connections that help position innovation as a defining feature of the Australian aid program. All learning, experimentation and partnerships supported through Australia's iXc are intended to assist DFAT to deliver on its Foreign Policy White Paper and give effect to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in 2015. DFAT has a focus on the Indo-Pacific region.

In its role as managing contractor of the DFAT-funded Innovation Resource Facility (IRF), AECOM provides access to technical advisory services in the fields of aid, development and innovation. AECOM also currently manages seven funds on behalf of iXc, including the MIT Solve *Youth, Skills and the Workforce of the Future* challenge.

MIT Solve

Solve is an initiative of MIT that aims to advance lasting solutions from tech entrepreneurs to help address the world's most pressing problems. Each year Solve issues specific actionable challenges across its pillars – Economic Prosperity, Health, Learning, and Sustainability – to identify the most promising Solvers whose solutions are driving transformational change. Solve then acts as a marketplace – brokering partnerships between the Solver class and MIT's global community of private, public, and non-profit leaders – to accelerate positive impact.

Atlassian Foundation International

The Atlassian Foundation International is helping to educate 10 million disadvantaged youth within 10 years – preparing them for the workforce of the future. It is assessed that by 2030, over half of the world's young people will not have the skills they need to thrive in work and life. The world's poorest children are the most likely to be left behind. Through the use of technology and innovation, leapfrogging is possible. The Atlassian Foundation operates globally and partners with innovators looking to accelerate learning for the world's poorest young people to ensure everyone has the skills they need for a fast-changing world.

2. Research Aims

In December 2018, the Partnership commissioned an external review to consider the success factors of efforts to date, and opportunities to best support scaling and strengthened partnerships in general. A premise of this review is that Solvers are unlikely to have achieved impact at this stage, thus commissioning a traditional evaluation would likely have been ineffective and not yielded the results sought. It was also agreed that the primary purpose of this review was partner learning, and laying the ground for continuous improvement of the Partnership. It was therefore agreed that the focus of the review should be internally facing, primarily considering structural and Partnership issues, and the degree to which plausible pathways to scaling exist and can be further supported.

The Research and Communications Group Ltd (RCG) was contracted to undertake a formative research of the Youth, Skills and Workforce of the Future program, shaped by the following three key objectives and associated key research questions (KRQs):

1. *Implementer level*: To identify what support Solver organisations need in order to achieve scale during Phase Three. This includes an analysis of key challenges, barriers and success factors. The KRQs are:
 - 1.1 What are the key challenges Solvers face when attempting to scale up their projects?
 - 1.2 How effective has the support provided to date been for the Solvers? Are there things that the Partners should do differently?
 - 1.3 How could Solver organisations be further supported to help them achieve scale?
2. *Donor/partner level*: To identify how the MIT/Atlassian/DFAT Partnership could be adapted to best support Solver organisations attempting to reach scale in Phase Three. The KRQs are:
 - 2.1 How effective has the MIT/Atlassian/DFAT Partnership been?
 - 2.2 What are the comparative advantages of each partner? And have those comparative advantages been fully leveraged?
 - 2.3 With the aim of improving support to Solver organisations, what could be improved or modified to build on the Partnership and further leverage each Partners' unique strengths?
 - 2.4 How should the Phase Three funding model be adapted to most effectively support Solver organisations achieve scale? (i.e. length of funding, degree and type of technical assistance, number of grantees)
3. *Broader partnering level*: Using this Partnership as a case study, to provide lessons learnt more broadly on how the private, education and government sectors can engage effectively for development impact. The KRQ is:
 - 3.1 What lessons can be learnt from this Partnership that can be applied more broadly to future cross-sector partnerships?

Discussions at an initial briefing convened between partners and the research team confirmed that these three objectives remained the foundation of the consultancy. In addition, a range of nuances were teased out to help shape the focus and methodology of the research. The following points were identified as being of interest to all three partners:

- A desire to explore how this Partnership might have ongoing value beyond this specific initiative, and what the contribution of each of the partners might look like in such an ongoing collaboration;
- The value in analysis of the broad range of research and reports available in the development sector (taking an education and employment of the future focus) focused on issues such as multi-stakeholder partnerships, grant funding, scaling up, and challenge models;
- Case studies around the two Solver teams to be visited through the field trips (Ruangguru – in Indonesia, and 40K – in Cambodia) to assist in assessing the effectiveness of the challenge approach and Partnership model in identifying potentially successful innovations and supporting them to scale;

- Consider the degree to which grantees clearly understand the implementation landscape that they operate within, and whether or not sufficient attention has been paid to local factors and, if required, global barriers and enablers;
- Explore whether there are particular factors relevant to identifying grantee organisations that are more likely to succeed in effectively scaling up;
- Identify clear recommendations as to how best phase three can be shaped.

3. Methodology

Given that the MIT Solve initiative is at an ongoing, formative stage and the expectation of the consultancy to focus on learning from what has taken place to this point and also from the broader research and thinking on partnerships and successful scaling in international development, it was proposed to use a *formative evaluation* approach. Formative evaluations focus on identifying strengths and areas for improvement, rather than passing judgement on performance. To do this the consultants placed emphasis on working closely with those on the ground (the partners and the Solver teams) to understand what has happened, what has worked well, and how things might be done differently to make the initiative more effective moving forward. This approach allowed for collected primary data to be triangulated with the most relevant current research and thinking in the field, with recommendations subsequently made based on the themes that emerged.

Data collection methodology for this review was primarily qualitative in nature, based on the following components:

- *Reading a wide range of published/grey literature and extensive Youth, Skills and Workforce of the Future program documentation:* The literature review focused on (i) effective partnership models, (ii) effective scaling-up, and (iii) the challenge/competition model as a grantee selection approach. A summary of the key themes in current thinking on these topics was developed and can be found in Appendix 2. The Reference List is also included in Appendix 2.
- *Solver teams online survey:* An online survey was distributed to the 11 Solver teams selected through the Solve challenge. There were 10 responses.
- *Interviewing:* There was an emphasis on semi-structured key informant interviews and occasional group interviews across the wide range of stakeholders. These key informants included:
 - Representatives from MIT Solve, Atlassian, DFAT (specifically current and former iXc staff responsible for the program) and the IRF;
 - Key contact points in each of the 11 Solver teams selected to participate in Phase One of the program. These interviews were done as a follow up to the online survey, providing an opportunity to focus discussion on themes coming out of the survey responses;
 - DFAT staff in Cambodia and Indonesia;
 - International experts in key content areas who provided additional information to support the desk research in the areas of effective partnership models and scaling-up.

- *Field Trip*: The field trip to Cambodia and Indonesia provided an opportunity to gather more detailed data from two of the Solver teams (Ruangguru in Indonesia and 40K in Cambodia), along with national and provincial government officials, education sector partners of the Solver teams, and beneficiaries. Three days were spent in each location. Both consultants, along with representatives from Atlassian and AECOM, participated in the field trip.

4. Audience

The primary audience for the final research report and the associated presentation/debrief is the key representatives from each of the three partner organisations – DFAT (specifically the iXc), MIT Solve and Atlassian Foundation. AECOM, as the managing contractor responsible for the DFAT-funded IRF, will also be a primary recipient of the report.

The following stakeholders may also be invited to engage with all/some of the report findings and recommendations:

- Representatives of the Solver teams selected for the Youth, Skills and the Workforce of the Future program;
- Selected staff more broadly from across the partner organisations

It is also noted across the innovation support sector that there is growing emphasis being placed on grant providers exploring new ways of partnering and sharing their learning more widely and openly with organisations working in the same space. It is therefore hoped that DFAT, Atlassian and MIT may decide to share some elements of the report with external stakeholders provided all parties agree to do so.

5. Limitations

The following limitations were noted by the research team:

- The scale and complexity of this assignment was significant, involving data gathering from multiple stakeholders across the three partners, the 11 Solver teams and a range of sectoral experts, and an extensive literature review covering educational innovation, tech4dev, scaling and challenge/competition models. In addition, the research team was asked to drill down and explore in more detail the two Solver teams visited in the field trip – Ruangguru and 40K. This was an additional component not included in the original Terms of Reference. These factors meant that several possible data gathering options mentioned in the research plan did not eventuate. These included:
 - Asking the Solver teams to produce a *most significant change* story: There was the option of having a simple free text question in the online survey where Solver teams would be asked to describe the change in the beneficiary community they are most excited about/proud of, and how they believe they have contributed to the change. However, in order to keep the survey manageable, it was decided that the most significant change story was not central to the purpose of the research – it was therefore not pursued;

- Identifying examples of *positive deviance*: There was not sufficient time or opportunity to explore this issue with the Solver teams.
- The *effectiveness* of the Partnership itself and the support provided to the Solver teams was a focus of the key research questions. However, in the absence of a clearly articulated monitoring and evaluation framework for the Youth Skills and Workforce of the Future program and associated objectives, baseline data, indicators and predictions of change, there were challenges involved in assessing aspects of the Partnership and support effectiveness.

6. Program Delivery Summary

In May 2017 at MIT Solve’s annual flagship event, Atlassian and DFAT co-announced their pledge of USD\$2 million in grant funding for Solver teams selected for the Youth, Skills, & the Workforce of the Future Challenge. Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Laurene Powell Jobs, Founder and President, Emerson Collective served as Co-Chairs of the Challenge.

Over the course of June – July 2017, Atlassian, DFAT and MIT organised 9 Solveathon workshops across the Indo-Pacific aimed at generating quality submissions to the challenge and promoting social innovation across the region. By the submission deadline on August 1, 2017, MIT had received 493 solution submissions in total.

Together, MIT, Atlassian and DFAT reviewed and evaluated the submissions for alignment with the challenge, scalability, feasibility, novelty, potential for impact, and prize eligibility. In the end, 20 finalists were chosen to pitch their solutions live in front of a panel of judges at the Solve Challenge Finals in New York City on September 17, 2017.

At the Finals, Ewen McDonald, Deputy Secretary, DFAT and Jo-Hannah Lavey, Program Manager, iXc represented the DFAT Indo-Pacific Prize judging panel while Mark Reading, Head of Foundation, and Melissa Beaumont Lee, Foundation Manager, served as judges for the Atlassian Foundation “10 in 10” Partnership Prize.

During the Closing Plenary of the Solve Challenge Finals, 11 Solver teams were selected for the Youth, Skills, & the Workforce of the Future Challenge. The Honourable Julie Bishop MP, Australian Minister of Foreign Affairs announced the eight selected recipients of the Australian DFAT Indo-Pacific Prize and Mark Reading announced the seven recipients of the Atlassian Foundation “10 in 10” Partnership Prize. Of the prize recipients, five were co-funded by the Atlassian Foundation International and DFAT.

From September 2017 to March 2018, MIT Solve, Atlassian and DFAT worked together to support the Solver teams implement phase one pilots. Through initial USD\$50,000 prototyping grants, the recipients of the DFAT Indo-Pacific Prize and the Atlassian Foundation “10 in 10” Partnership Prize were assigned Partnership managers (Atlassian employee volunteers) and dedicated aid consultants (AECOM) to manage their grant projects. In addition, all Solver teams selected for the Youth, Skills, & the Workforce of the Future Challenge worked with the MIT Solve team to build partnerships, connections, and global opportunities through the Solve community.

On March 31, 2018, prize recipients submitted phase one grant reports and new proposals for additional funding. Following rigorous internal assessment and decision-making process, on May 16, 2018 during *Solve at MIT 2018*, Atlassian and DFAT announced the recipients of second round funding who received the remaining pool of funding (USD\$800,000 for Atlassian and USD\$745,000 for DFAT). The recipients of the second round of Atlassian funding were 40K, Open Learning Exchange, Raspberry Pi Foundation, and Ruangguru. The recipients of the second round of DFAT funding were 40K, Baan Dek Foundation, Ruangguru, Rumie, Wanji, and WeRobotics.

Solver Team Profiles²

Solver team and their proposed solution	Phase 1 support	Phase 2 support
<p>40K PLUS (an innovation of the 40K Foundation Australia)</p> <p>Description: In remote villages around the world, education is limited by fluctuating electricity, little-to-no internet, and a lack of available quality teachers. 40K PLUS bridges this gap by transforming village classrooms into tablet-based learning centers using their Planet PLUS app.</p> <p>On Planet PLUS, a team of superheroes transports students through six levels of primary English. Delivered through rural government schools in Cambodia, the app tracks student performance and syncs data between online and offline environments, enabling rapid analysis and intervention even without internet access.</p> <p>Countries: Cambodia, India</p>	DFAT & Atlassian	DFAT & Atlassian
<p>A Books to Bytes Revolution for Youth Employment (an innovation of the Rumie Initiative)</p> <p>Description: Marginalized children around the world face great obstacles to receiving a quality education. Yet we live in an era where skills and employment resources are more abundant than ever. To fill this gap, The Rumie Initiative collects and curates locally-relevant and context-appropriate job skills content from the internet, and sorts and organises it on its LearnCloud. Rumie now seeks to expand access to these resources with a new LearnCloud Android app.</p> <p>Countries: Afghanistan</p>	DFAT & Atlassian	DFAT
<p>Open Learning Exchange (an innovation of PeaceBuild Pathways)</p> <p>Description: Around the world, poverty, violence, and climate chaos disrupt education for millions. To ensure that all people have the opportunity to learn, Open Learning Exchange (OLE)</p>	Atlassian	Atlassian

² The content in this table is drawn from the Solver teams' own materials which can be found at <https://solve.mit.edu/challenges/youth-skills-the-workforce-of-the-future/solutions#challenge-subnav-offset>

<p>developed Planet Learning, a repository of free resources. In OLE’s approach, local communities organize and maintain Community Learning Centers.</p> <p>At these centers, disadvantaged youth use a dashboard to personalize their learning experience and download a wealth of multimedia materials like books, courses, and team activities. Learners rate and comment on their materials, and course leaders track their progress. Periodically, leaders connect to the internet to receive new resources and upload learners’ activity data.</p> <p>Countries: Somalia</p>		
<p>Digital Superheroes Academy (an innovation of the Baan Dek Foundation)</p> <p>Description: In Thailand and elsewhere in Southeast Asia, many disadvantaged children are not exposed to sufficient opportunities for critical thinking and positive social development. Through their Digital Superheroes Academy (DSHA), the Baan Dek Foundation expands children’s opportunities for development. DSHA is an educational app that teaches children critical thinking, soft, and life skills while also promoting responsible use of technology.</p> <p>The curriculum is based on an existing program in which 15 life skills are taught to children in 30 slums in Chiang Mai, Thailand. These life skill “superpowers” strengthen children’s ability to learn and grow. The app also monitors use, measures learning outcomes, and even determines possible e-learning extension needs such as literacy and numeracy.</p> <p>Countries: Thailand</p>	DFAT	DFAT
<p>Kolorob Jobs (an innovation of Save the Children)</p> <p>Description: In Bangladesh, where the underemployment rate is 40 percent, many people work in low-paid hazardous jobs. To help them leave this work, Kolorob Jobs’ digital platform enables young people to find blue collar jobs in the formal sector.</p> <p>The platform has three primary features: it posts verified job opportunities, provides youth with training opportunities through accredited institutions, and matches job-seeker profiles with suitable employers. The platform also tracks feedback on job seekers, making it easier for employers to find the right candidates.</p> <p>Countries: Bangladesh</p>	DFAT	-
<p>Ruangguru Digital Bootcamp (an innovation of PT Ruang Raya Indonesia)</p> <p>Description: In Indonesia, 24 percent of students drop out of high school, and most dropouts are unemployed or limited to work in</p>	DFAT & Atlassian	DFAT & Atlassian

<p>the informal sector. Formal sector work is often impossible, since almost all jobs require a high school graduation certificate. Through a digital bootcamp, Ruangguru gives dropped-out youth the resources they need to pass their exams and earn their graduation certificate.</p> <p>The digital bootcamp provides access to test-prep materials, a dedicated tutor for each subject, and a learning consultant to help students strategize a learning path and plan life after graduation. Students use a group-chat based mentoring system and can access the solution anytime, anywhere.</p> <p>Country: Indonesia</p>		
<p>Increasing global access to the Raspberry Pi Foundation digital making curriculum (an innovation of the Raspberry Pi Foundation)</p> <p>Description: Coding education programs are plentiful, but to impact the most disadvantaged communities, resources must be translated into a wide range of languages. To expand global access to their Code Club learning materials, Raspberry Pi Foundation is building a Translation Community to localize resources into many languages.</p> <p>The solution uses machine translation and translation memory tools to initially translate content, which is then reviewed by the Translation Community to ensure high quality. Translations are provided free to millions of learners through the Raspberry Pi Foundation learning platform and support thousands of young people attending Code Clubs across the world.</p> <p>Countries: 130 countries - Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa</p>	Atlassian	Atlassian
<p>South Pacific Flying Labs (an innovation of WeRobotics)</p> <p>Description: WeRobotics wants to equip young people with skills for the 21st century. Through the South Pacific Flying Labs (SPFL), WeRobotics does just that, giving disadvantaged youth robotics training in aerial and marine imagery, thereby developing the next generation of drone pilots.</p> <p>First phase activities include teaching young people in Fiji how to use aerial and marine robotics responsibly and effectively for social impact, training on hardware and software solutions, showing them how to carry out humanitarian and environmental projects using these technologies, and evaluating how a learning journey is created in the training and how it might be turned into a formal STEM course.</p> <p>Countries: Fiji, Vanuatu</p>	DFAT & Atlassian	DFAT

<p>The Ultimate Learning Accelerator (an innovation of JF Learn Anything)</p> <p>Description: Education takes place both in school and at home. But for most children in the developing world, schools are poorly equipped and managed and parents are often busy working multiple jobs. The Ultimate Learning Accelerator (TULA) transforms after-school learning to help children improve their academic performance, develop character traits, and enhance 21st-century skills.</p> <p>TULA establishes tech-enabled centers near public schools and uses project-based learning to deliver personalized learning experiences, helping kids build the life skills needed to succeed.</p> <p>Countries: The Philippines</p>	DFAT	-
<p>Wanji Games (an innovation of Peripheral Vision International)</p> <p>Description: More than 50 percent of the world’s population does not have internet access, limiting the availability of online education resources. Peripheral Vision International (PVI) developed Wanji Games so people can effectively use the tools at their disposal to learn. With Wanji, users dial a toll-free number and, using voice interactive response technology, can play interactive audio stories in their local language.</p> <p>Using their keypad, users make decisions that influence the plot and are able to explore and understand the potential consequences of their actions. Deep analytics about the paths players choose lets Wanji measure and quantify learning objectives. The game is most useful for people that are underserved by traditional training, including rural and low literacy populations.</p> <p>Countries: Cambodia</p>	DFAT & Atlassian	DFAT
<p>Code Nation</p> <p>Description: The tech sector has become a poster child for lack of diversity and inclusion. As our current education system fails to properly prepare students—particularly those from under-resourced schools—for careers in tech, the problem will persist. Enter Code Nation, a program bringing tuition-free computer programming courses to underserved high schools in tech hubs. With courses taught by a volunteer corps of over 200 software developers, Code Nation's programs include technical training, professional role models, paid engineering internships, and ongoing professional development. Code Nation students establish direct connections to the tech industry and go on to secure well-paid computing jobs and take control of their economic futures.</p> <p>Countries: USA</p>	Local Atlassian support	Local Atlassian support

This formative research was timed to take place towards the end of the second phase of the challenge, and prior to the selection of the Solver teams to be supported in Phase Three.

7. Data Collection

As detailed in Section Three, the data for this consultancy was collected through the following activities:

- An extensive review of published and grey literature
- An online survey for the Solver teams
- A wide range of interviews
- A field trip to engage with two of the Solver teams - (i) 40K in Cambodia and (ii) Ruangguru in Indonesia

This range of approaches resulted in a large amount of data. In each case the data was analysed and themes identified. These themes have been triangulated to inform the findings and recommendations contained in this report. The themed data was collected into the following formats:

Literature review: A summary of the notes taken from the published and grey literature was sorted into a matrix and shared with key partner stakeholders midway through the research process. This enabled these stakeholders to gain an early insight into broader research into partnerships, scaling and challenge competitions, preparing the ground for informed discussions during the field trip and final workshop.

The notes were analysed and key themes identified. Themes were identified where – (i) a specific point of learning regarding effective partnerships, scaling or challenges was present in three or more of the papers reviewed, or (ii) a key finding was presented in a research paper from a highly regarded information source, derived from a large sample. The resultant themes are presented in Appendix Two.

Online Survey: The survey results were a key resource in developing the report findings.

Interview Data: The data from the interviews was captured through hand-written notes. The notes were then sorted under three categories – (i) partners, (ii) Solver teams, and (iii) experts. Key themes were identified where multiple interviewees (generally 5 or more) expressed similar/related views.

Field trip: Data collected during the field trip was integrated into an interview display grid and used in the development of short case studies of Ruangguru and 40K.

In addition, a workshop with key partner stakeholders took place at the end of the research process. At this two-day workshop (May 14th and 15th 2019) a matrix with the discussion/analysis, findings and draft recommendations was worked through. The discussion provided valuable, granular input that resulted in minor revision to some factual inaccuracies, and also contributed to the presentation of information in Section Eight of this report.

8. Findings, Analysis and Recommendations

The following section aims to provide a coherent and integrated narrative description of the outcomes of the desk and field research. To aid readability and avoid repetition, its layout varies slightly from the sequence of key research questions outlined in Section Two.

The data and analysis that follows provides examples of the evidence underpinning the findings and recommendations reached over the course of the research. These are plotted throughout the section and located at the point where it is felt they most logically sit. However, it is important to note that findings and recommendations are mostly underpinned by a cross-section of data and will therefore carry relevance to multiple discussions occurring through the analysis. More complete data sets can be found in the full report and relevant appendices.

8.1 Partnership context

8.1.2 Overview

The Partnership was formed around an area of mutual interest. MIT Solve is a marketplace for social impact, aiming to identify tech entrepreneurs from around the world and broker partnerships across the community to scale their innovative work. The Atlassian Foundation has a vision of helping to educate 10 million disadvantaged youth in 10 years, preparing them for the workforce of the future. In early 2017, an Atlassian Foundation staff member attended a conference presentation by MIT Solve, and saw that the MIT Solve concept was consistent with the values and goals of the Atlassian Foundation in terms of aiming to find innovative solutions for some of the world's most intractable problems. The 'workforce of the future' was an area of agreed interest. Atlassian identified that the MIT Solve challenge provided a platform and approach that was well suited to their needs. Atlassian in turn approached DFAT to co-create and co-fund the 'Youth, Skills and the Workforce for the Future' challenge. For DFAT, in particular the iXc, innovative practice, partnership development, private sector engagement and addressing issues related to the workforce of the future were all areas of interest, and the MIT Solve challenge model fitted well with these priorities.

This overall context led to rapid commencement of the Partnership in the first half of 2017, in order to align with the existing MIT Solve challenge schedule. The upshot of this 'flying start' is that the Partnership lacks a range of baseline documentation that would typically be expected of an initiative such as this. While the lack of documenting Partnership objectives and success measures has been a contributing factor in this review's inability to formally assess Partnership effectiveness, it also had the benefit of providing a degree of flexibility that has proven very important over the course of implementation. As one partner representative said, *"an agile approach was great at the start of this initiative – we just jumped in and got things going, there wasn't time to sit around and talk about things"* (P3)³. The tensions inherent in adopting an agile approach will be discussed in more detail below.

³ The interview feedback has been de-identified using the following coding system: P = Partner representative (from Atlassian, MIT Solve, DFAT or AECOM), ST = Solver team, E = Expert in the education and/or scaling field. Each interviewee has also been allocated a number.

The way in which the Partnership was formed, and the speed with which it was possible to get the challenge process moving forward with decision-making 'on the go', is a tribute to the shared vision, active cooperation and flexibility of the partners. As mentioned above, there has been a unity of purpose and an important level of trust established amongst partners that has made it possible for 11 Solver teams to take their ideas forward. As a Partner representative said:

"The Partnership has been open and transparent – all parties brought particular experience to the table. For example, DFAT has expertise in child protection and human trafficking that has been incredibly valuable for the other partners and the Solver teams." (P4)

Another Partner representative spoke of the *"ecosystem created by the Partnership ... and the rich support network this ecosystem provides for the Solver teams"* (P8). This mutual regard and trust were evident across the partner interviews.

***Key finding:** The MIT Solve/Atlassian/DFAT Partnership has benefitted from a strong sense of complementarity and comparative advantage across its three partners. This includes shared understanding of the motivation and objectives underpinning each individual partner's participation.*

The partners spoke of the way in which the Partnership met their specific interests and needs at the point in time they came together. This complementarity is addressed in more detail below at section 8.2 in the context of Partnership effectiveness. Each partner appears to have understood and appreciated the motivations and attributes of the other partners, and this sense of mutual understanding and goodwill meant that partners were able to act quickly and move the challenge process forward with strong coordination and appreciation of each partner's strengths and capacity to contribute to the competition start up. Where specific performance objectives were set, they were framed in terms of each partner's view of their internal objectives. For example, the Atlassian Foundation, under its 'educate' banner, had specific Objective Key Results (OKRs) that the establishment of this Partnership has helped them progress. DFAT was in turn motivated to find a high profile, socially responsible private sector partner.

Knowing what it is they are looking to take from the Partnership and understanding what the other partners are seeking to achieve has been a great strength of this program. What was not established initially, which is discussed in more detail below, is a clear set of objectives for the Partnership as a whole, as a basis for answering the question 'has this Partnership been successful?'. The target setting that has been done to date has been framed in terms of the needs of the partner organisations individually, rather than in terms of the Partnership as a whole.

The Partners themselves acknowledge this gap. As one said, *"a lot of the documentation you would expect to see is just absent – I'm not so happy about the lack of a paper trail"* (P2). The literature on development partnerships also emphasises the importance of some

form of initial planning and design work⁴. For example, the ENDEVA paper entitled *Proving and Improving the Impact of Development Partnerships – 12 Good Practices for Results Measurement*⁵ stresses the importance of practices such as carefully thinking through immediate and intermediate outcomes with a view to tracking progress, and identifying success indicators which can be used across multiple initiatives.

There would therefore have been value at the start of the Partnership to step back for a moment from the drive forward to clearly articulate why the partners believed they could more effectively support innovative tech4dev solutions by working together, rather than independently. This analysis would have enabled the development of some form of unified plan that could be used to monitor and evaluate the performance of the Partnership as a whole.

Key finding: While the Partnership is now moving into its final phase, there still remains value in a clear articulation and an agreed position on its higher-level purpose and objectives, and approaches for measuring Partnership performance.

Partners mentioned in the interview that they did not want to be constrained by the burden of long-winded, unused planning documentation that can often be associated with traditional development programs. However, to demonstrate the success of any initiative, it is essential to be clear in advance about what you believe success will look like, and why you believe the actions you are taking are likely to be an effective means of achieving that success. Even as Phase Three approaches, there is value in going through this process. Involving the remaining Solver teams in this activity also presents as an exciting opportunity to further strengthen the overall approach.

Recommendation One: The Partnership should commit to a planning process that supports retrospective development of a monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) framework that documents the theoretical underpinning of the Partnership, including a shared definition of how it defines scaling and intends to measure effectiveness come the end of Phase Three - at both Partnership and Investment levels.

Responsibility: DFAT, MIT Solve and Atlassian

8.1.2 Level of clarity across stakeholders of initiative objectives (KRQ 1.1)

Despite the lack of traditional documentation around the Partnership approach and objectives, there is a broadly shared understanding of the expectations and objectives of the MIT Solve Challenge amongst Solver teams. This appears to relate to the Challenge selection process and the ongoing oversight and support provided to the successful teams, as well as the shared understanding of partners described above.

Key finding: Solver teams are generally clear regarding the broad expectations and objectives of the MIT Solve challenge, and their obligations to it.

⁴ See Appendix 2 for the full Reference List – papers 4, 8, 13, 14 and 30 have more on the importance for partnerships of initial planning, establishment of MEL frameworks etc.

⁵ Tewes-Gradl, C., de Ruyter de Wildt, M., Knobloch, C., Huppert, J., 2014, [Proving and Improving the Impact of Development Partnerships - 12 Good Practices for Results Measurement](#), ENDEVA

One aspect of the Partnership that has caused some uncertainty for several Solver teams has been Atlassian's '10 in 10' goal, and what this meant in terms of being selected by Atlassian for initial Phase One support, and subsequently to move from Phase One to Phase Two, and now Phase Three. It appears likely that this contributed to some 'highly aspirational' targets being set by some Solvers, based on their thinking that such 'stretch' was required to progress to Phase Two. Several Solvers were quite direct in the interview about the challenges inherent in this – as one Solver put it, “...our objectives get shaped to fit Atlassian's objectives... at times it feels like there are disconnects within Atlassian in terms of what they are trying to achieve, and this makes it difficult for us” (ST5).

8.1.3 What are the comparative advantages of each partner, and have these been fully leveraged? (KRQ 2.2)

As mentioned above, there appears to have been clear understanding and appreciation of the motivations and attributes of each partner. This sense of mutual understanding and goodwill has been key to strong coordination, based in genuine appreciation of each other's strengths and capacity to contribute to the overall approach.

Interviews with participating staff from each of the partners and those who have been supported through the Partnership highlight the different strengths and comparative advantage perceived of each individual partner.

MIT

Arguably the most commonly held Solver perception of any partner is the value of being associated with the prestige of the MIT brand. In fact, this is not only true of the Solvers, but also of DFAT and Atlassian, who place great value on the credibility that MIT brings to the Partnership. All cite a benefit from the global perception of MIT as an epicentre for innovation, and believe they are able to use this relationship to open doors and stimulate interest in the work of the Partnership overall, and also in individual Solvers. A Solver had the following to say in the survey:

“The MIT brand has conferred legitimacy to the project and acts as an endorsement for the work, both with our existing funders and potential future donors. This value translates into raising our profile with potential fee-for-service clients in a way that we believe has helped us to raise additional revenue-based contracts.” (SR5)⁶

While the Partnership offers theoretical access to MIT faculty, this has proven to be less available than most expected at commencement. In instances where a link has been established between the technical need of a Solver and the availability of an appropriately skilled MIT faculty member, there have been very positive outcomes – such as Raspberry Pi being linked with a world leading translation software engineer based at MIT.

⁶ The Solver Response (SR) labels e.g. SR1, SR2 etc. simply indicate the chronological order in which the text responses to each question were received. Free text responses were optional in the survey, so therefore Solver teams do not consistently have any specific label/number. All survey free text responses can be found in Appendix 2.

MIT also maintains the interest of high-profile connections in the information technology and philanthropic sectors, and is theoretically well placed within the Partnership to facilitate introductions between Solver teams and potential funding and/or investment partners. While many such meetings have occurred, actual results in terms of funding for Solvers through MIT networks have been negligible to date. As one Solver team said, “...*the Solve at MIT event ... was a good networking opportunity, but hasn’t led to anything – just lots of conversations without any outcomes*” (ST7). Despite this, ongoing dialogue is occurring in many cases with interested investors, and there remains an opportunity for MIT facilitated funding to support scaling to still be achieved. MIT Solve has also acknowledged the extensive learning curve they have experienced over the last two years in terms of effective partnership brokering, signalling that feedback from the Solver teams has certainly been taken on board.

MIT Solve has its own high profile as a type of secretariat for innovation and start-up support, and is very experienced in managing Global Challenge events. Its June/July 2017 Solveathon and September 2017 Solve Challenge Finals allowed both DFAT and Atlassian quick access to competitors who were already well advanced in their innovation thinking, thus helping fast track the Partnership into actual implementation. MIT Solve also has great freedom to innovate and participate in a Partnership such as this, given the project is funded through an endowment that respects MIT Solve capacity and the importance of allowing them to be flexible and innovative.

It is also noted that this Partnership with DFAT and Atlassian is but one of many that MIT Solve is currently managing, and that each different activity stands to benefit from the learning occurring through other activities. In this way, MIT Solve provides DFAT and Atlassian with ongoing access to innovations in this rapidly evolving space. It is also important to note that MIT is currently in the process of establishing the Solve Innovation Fund, which will make debt and equity investments in for-profit Solver teams that are selected through the annual, open Global Challenge process. Over time, this fund is expected to raise US\$30 million from philanthropic donors through tax-deductible gifts to MIT that participants in this Partnership would be entitled to apply to.

Atlassian

Atlassian is a highly successful Australian software company that develops products for software developers, project managers and content management. Beyond its business success, it is renowned for its philanthropic endeavours and commitment to corporate social responsibility, primarily through the Atlassian Foundation, which has a vision is to advance humanity through helping educate 10 million disadvantaged youth within 10 years - preparing them for the workforce of the future.

Central to Atlassian’s business approach has been to build a culture of ‘giving back’ amongst its workforce. This occurs through facilitating Atlassian staff time to support causes they believe in, by donating licenses to non-profit projects, and by donating money to charities.

The contribution of Atlassians to the Partnership is significant, with many Solvers benefiting from the high-level technical support provided by Atlassian staff. Where there was a good

match between the technical skills and knowledge of the Atlassian volunteers and the needs of the Solver teams, the contribution was immense – for example, during an interview a Solver team member pointed out:

“The Partnership, Atlassian and MIT in particular, was able to provide us with very focused and unique, highly technical support. More generally, a shout out to Atlassian for providing specific skills on an adhoc basis.” (ST4)

The financial resources made available through the Foundation are also a significant aspect of the Partnership.

Most importantly, Atlassian brings capacity for great flexibility and responsiveness to the Partnership and to the needs of Solver teams. This contrasts to the more traditional approaches in place in larger bureaucracies such as DFAT. This flexibility has helped allow the Partnership to adapt and respond to dramatically changed circumstances amongst many of the Solver teams, in ways that would likely not have been possible had Atlassian not been involved.

DFAT

DFAT's primary focus and interest in the Partnership is to support innovation specifically in the Indo-Pacific region. DFAT brings important qualities to the Partnership in terms of being a respected donor and an experienced development focused organisation. Being a government entity, DFAT brings the benefit of its convening power to the relationship, and was able to help raise awareness of MIT Solve challenge at the UN General Assembly. It also maintains embassies across the Asia Pacific that have the potential to be significant in helping Solvers best understand their operational landscape in those countries, and help facilitate connections and networks of relevance to progressing Solvers pathway to scale.

However, it is also noted that in reality Solver connections with Australian embassies have been very limited to date. This has been an area of frustration for a number of the Solver teams. As one Solver team member said, *“DFAT Post has the potential to be an important partner in-country as they’re very active in education, but we’re skeptical about their level of interest” (ST6)*. The partners, including iXc and IRF are aware of this challenge, and the many competing interests posts need to deal with. One possibility moving forward would involve getting Solver program timing better linked into Aid Investment planning cycles, with the aim of ensuring support for innovative initiatives, including private sector engagement, is included in post priorities for forward planning cycles.

Collectively

The decision of both DFAT and Atlassian to provide financial support to MIT Solve competition winners has been significant in allowing MIT the opportunity of trialing a new model, and to undertake comparative analysis against its traditional approach which has not provided competition ‘winners’ access to funding. The early success of this model has also allowed MIT to mobilise cash resources through other partners, by allowing them to showcase possibilities when carefully selected partners work holistically.

From the Solver team perspective, the funding provided by DFAT and Atlassian was unambiguously vital. When asked in the survey which support has been most helpful over the first 2 phases, 70% of Solver teams mentioned funding support, with 40% citing funding as the core element helping them carry their initiative forward.

It is also important to note that partners highly value each other's contribution, and see the achievement of their own specific objectives being supported by the work of other partners. For example:

- MIT rate their relationship with DFAT very highly;
- DFAT place great value on the quality of the relationship established with Atlassian, and use it as an exemplar for the potential of private sector engagement in international development work;
- Atlassian see their own approaches being strengthened through partnership with experienced delivery entities such as DFAT and MIT.

Key finding: For the most part, Solvers work to leverage the comparative advantage of each partner as it pertains to their specific context, but see room to further refine and strengthen the support on offer.

Opportunities seen within the Partnership to better leverage the comparative advantage of different partners include:

- Solvers better leveraging DFAT Post awareness and understanding of 'landscape dynamics' and opportunities that could further strengthen their traction and potential, and enhance understanding of vertical scaling challenges;
- MIT Solve could strengthen the guidance and support it gives to Solver teams when introducing them to potential investors/partners, and also better support strengthened M&E;
- Atlassian could strengthen support through more tailored approaches to 'skilled volunteering', including using its connections and networks to provide access to other forms of relevant non-financial support, as well as financial support.

8.2 Effectiveness of Partnership in Supporting Solvers

8.2.1 Key challenges faced by Solvers when attempting to scale their projects (KRQ 1.3)

The Solver teams survey highlights the most frequently mentioned barrier to scaling is a clear understanding and effective management of dealings with local systems and structures, and challenges related to establishing the relationships necessary to carry an initiative forward.

The relevance of such concerns is widely reflected in literature which suggests that there is great value in addressing these vertical scaling issues as early as possible. As described in a Dutch study on shaping successful scaling processes through public-private engagement:

"...making big bets to tackle a problem without first immersing yourself in understanding what is holding it in place is a recipe for disaster. On the other hand, bringing attention to shifting the power dynamics at play, identifying where people are connected or disconnected from others who must be part of the solution, exposing mental models that inhibit success,

*and investigating your own organization's conditions that help or hinder external aspirations - this is the nature of successfully changing systems. This is systems change ... [A]pplying the systems lens early on appears to be one of the main factors for fostering success in effective and sustainable scaling".*⁷

Support to vertical scaling is an area where funders and grantees can productively work together to identify critical issues, players and relationships, and develop an effective approach to addressing challenges. As noted by the Brookings Institute, "...scaling does not happen in a vacuum. Largely guided by governments from national to local, the environment in which programs or policies operate plays a critical role in facilitating or impeding the scaling process."⁸

This is an area where Solver teams are seeking deeper support in order to best understand and engage their operating landscape⁹, including facilitation from partners of key relationships capable of advancing initiatives further. Embassies have great potential to support such understanding given their focus on contextual understanding and shifts on the development and economic landscape.

Solver teams appear to understand that it is vital within their approach to scaling that they demonstrate and reflect astute understanding of their operating landscape, including complexities of working with government systems, the need for strong relationships with key political players and the importance of understanding of policy settings.

Solvers also identify funding and resource mobilization as another major challenge, and appear to see it in many respects as a by-product of inadequately understanding their implementation context. In this respect, they place emphasis on the importance of being aware of key competitors, locally and further afield – as well as of shifts in their market capture and product offering.

***Finding:** A leading concern and major challenge for Solver teams relates to vertical scaling issues and funding in terms of their capacity to scale up.*

In Indonesia, Ruangguru is a strong demonstration of the potential benefit of sophisticated, granular understanding of both the policy landscape and prevailing market dynamics in their target area of education resourcing. Their connections into key national, regional and local government agencies are exceptional, and they are deeply aware of their competitors in the marketplace. This means they can both adjust and seek to shape elements of the systems within which they are operating.

⁷ Ubels, J. & Jacobs, F., (2018), Shaping successful scaling processes with public-private engagement, PPPLab Food & Water, p. 8 and 14

⁸ Perlman Robinson, J., Winthrop, R., with McGivney, E., (2016), Millions Learning: Scaling up Quality Education in Developing Countries, Brookings Institute. See the following readings in the Reference List for more detail on the importance of vertical scaling: 2, 3, 14, 17, 18, and 22

⁹ 60% of the Solver team survey respondents identified dealing with the local systems, structures and relationships as a one of the main barriers they face in scaling up their project – this is more than selected ongoing funding as a key barrier.

8.2.2 Effectiveness of support as experienced by Solvers (KRQ 1.2)

Assessing effectiveness of support provided through the Partnership presents a complex challenge given the significant variation in organization types supported; that all are still on their pathway to scale; and that not all partners supported all Solvers, meaning that significantly different forms and levels of assistance were provided to each. While this is endorsed as highly appropriate to the disparate context of supported Solvers, it presents challenges in reaching definitive conclusions regarding effectiveness of support.

Another aspect of the ‘measurement challenge’ is that the Partnership did not clearly define how ‘effective support to the Solver teams’ should be judged when they were in the initial stages of their collaboration. While it seems reasonable to claim in broad terms that the Partnership has been successful, such a statement runs the risk of being viewed as a subjective judgment (to be discussed in more detail in 8.3).

***Finding:** Assessing the effectiveness of the MIT Solve/Atlassian/DFAT Partnership is undermined to an extent by there being no clearly defined performance measurement or monitoring and evaluation framework guiding the Partnership.*

Despite this, feedback provided to the researchers through both interviews and the online survey were without exception very positive. Key results from the survey included:

- 100% of teams rating their experience with the MIT Solve Challenge as being helpful (60%) or very helpful (40%);
- 100% of teams being willing to recommend the MIT Solve challenge to other organisations;
- 80% of teams indicating they have not had any difficulties with support provided by the Partnership.

***Finding:** Solver teams themselves report high levels of satisfaction with the support provided through the Partnership.*

In addition to high overall levels of satisfaction, teams believe this support has directly contribute to improvements in their performance:

- 70% of teams rating their scaling up activity to this point as *successful*;
- 60% of respondents assessing that participation in the MIT Solve challenge has helped them secure further support from other organisations

Both the survey and the key informant interviews highlighted the value placed by Solvers on non-financial support, with numerous instances cited where the non-financial support provided by partners was regarded as extremely valuable in helping address urgent and pressing needs of Solver teams. This was particularly the case in terms of support to ‘getting technology right’.

A critical element of the non-financial support has been the fact that it has not been forced onto the Solver team, which is significant, since the literature indicates that this can often be a problem¹⁰. Partners often have great organisational capacity they are keen to share

¹⁰ See the Literature Review summary (Appendix 2) for more information on this issue.

with grantees. But in their enthusiasm to help, partners can fall into the trap of supplying support which does not in fact meet the needs of the grantees. Funders often *push* advice and opportunities rather than *pulling*¹¹. Grantees do not want to appear ungrateful so they put up with it. It is to the credit of the Partnership that they have, for the most part, avoided this issue.

Finding: Where there was a clear match between Solver team need and available partner skills and knowledge, the non-financial support was cited as extremely valuable.

Support provided by DFAT in areas such as supporting development of child protection policy and procedures was cited by a number of the teams as vital, and an example of unexpected support coming through the Partnership.

As reported by one Solver team (and a sentiment shared by many), *“DFAT through AECOM has been fantastic support. Nothing has been too difficult. The support in producing child protection policy and procedures was incredibly valuable” (ST1).*

As mentioned earlier, Atlassian’s technical skills were also assessed as extremely valuable by several Solver teams. This appears to have occurred most optimally where there was a match between the level of technical sophistication of the Solver team and the skill sets available through Atlassian technical staff. Matching of needs to Atlassian staff skills and capacity is the responsibility of Atlassian’s Volunteer Program Manager. Interestingly, interviews with Atlassian staff highlighted the perspective that there remains a need and opportunity for Atlassian to further strengthen its approach to better identifying the skills needs of the Solver teams to make the match with Atlassian volunteers as strong as possible. As one partner staff member explained in an interview, there can be a tendency to feel all solutions exist in-house, which is wrong (P11). Atlassian are aware of this challenge and keen to address it.

MIT was also able to provide very high-level technical support, but such cases were more isolated. 40% of survey respondents indicated they had been linked to technical experts by MIT to provide mentoring and support in scaling.

M&E support supplied through Solidaritas (and supplied through AECOM) was also greatly appreciated by the teams, although mostly described in the context of it being a good start, but insufficient to overall measurement needs.

Overall it is important to mention how positive, encouraging and respectful the ‘people’ support provided by partners to Solvers has been perceived by Solver teams. Even when they felt they were not getting exactly the technical assistance they required, they pointed out that the human engagement was always very positive, respectful and equitable. This particularly relates to Atlassian volunteer contact, which appears to have been universally respected.

¹¹ See Grady, H., Diggins, K., Schneider J., and Paley Rose, N., 2017, *Scaling solutions toward shifting systems*, Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors for a more detailed description of this issue.

It is worth stating again that while non-financial support has been valued greatly by the Solver teams, funding support remains a critically important element of Partnership support.

Solver teams without exception see and value their association with the three partners as demonstrating to potential partners and clients a strong sense of credibility and viability. In particular, the importance of MIT's 'brand' is widely valued and regularly leveraged by Solver teams in day-to-day relationship management and resource mobilisation efforts. The belief is that organisations with the reputation of MIT, Atlassian and DFAT would not be associated with anything other than a credible initiative, and while this has not always led to diversified funding, it has allowed doors to be opened, and discussions have commenced that Solvers still hope will reap financial rewards moving forward.

***Finding:** Being a Solver team is great for reputation, profile and visibility.*

In this sense, there was a collegiate view of Solvers towards other Solvers in terms of being part of a shared approach and community. Related to this, Solvers saw a missed opportunity in the Partnership not better facilitating engagement between Solver teams, with many reporting their belief that a 'community of practice' could have been better supported and leveraged. This sort of information and experience sharing could take a number of different forms. The Solver teams made particular note of the MIT Solve events in New York and Boston, where they felt more could have been done to create a collaborative spirit of partnership between them and ensure maximum value in the trip even for those who did not progress to phase two.¹²

There is a range of literature¹³ that supports the concept of encouraging and enabling grantees to share experiences, learning and ideas. For example, OpenIDEO reports a key insight regarding supporting grantees to scale, which is to "open up your process so that participants can share knowledge and learn from each other along the way."¹⁴

***Recommendation Two:** The Partnership should consider ways in which the Solver teams (including those which have not progressed to Phase Three) can be supported to establish and maintain a 'community of practice' where they can more effectively share experience, ideas and networks with each other, and also potentially provide technical support to each other. This should be initially progressed through a 'convening event' of phase three participants to occur during quarter three of 2019, and where many of the recommendations of this report can be grounded within the specific context of individual Solvers.*

Responsibility: DFAT, MIT Solve and Atlassian

Overall, Solver teams consistently indicated satisfaction that the three partners had all made genuine efforts to provide meaningful and useful non-financial support. This included

¹² It is noted that MIT Solve has now integrated such an approach into subsequent events, with encouraging results.

¹³ See readings 11, 21 and 22 in the Reference List (Appendix 2) for further information.

¹⁴ Open Reflections – the OpenIDEO Impact Report, (2017), p. 61

DFAT providing access to a technical assistance fund to help support progress on non-financial needs – although this was under-utilised.

However there were areas where this did not play out as well as would have been hoped. As outlined earlier in this section, the support from DFAT Post has generally been less than had been anticipated. In both the interviews and the online survey, Solver team regularly mentioned that Posts were either too busy or seemingly uninterested in their activity. Partner interviews also brought this issue to the surface – the resources of the Posts were often seemingly too limited or directed elsewhere, and there was little inclination to directly engage or support the Solver team activity. However, DFAT Post visits during the field trip demonstrated that Post staff were interested in the updates that were provided, perhaps demonstrating that carefully thought through communication is going to be one element of Solver’s achieving greater traction with DFAT Posts.

The technical range of the offering of partners was narrower or less available than Solver teams had anticipated. Some teams commented that their technical requirements were ‘messy’ and in some respects low level, which did not connect neatly with the high-level support on offer through partners such as Atlassian. Solvers frequently expressed that they would have benefited from access to more practical advice from people who had experienced similar challenges themselves. Naturally, finding the right match is not always possible. One Solver team described the situation as follows:

“It was like the Atlassian support team were trying to answer a question that we weren’t asking, and that they couldn’t answer the question we were asking. The skill sets and experience within Atlassian are probably better suited to supporting a more developed, refined product. We presented messy problems, and the Atlassian volunteers couldn’t really help.” (ST2)

MIT Solve support was not as available or effective as Solver teams had initially anticipated.

- Just 10% of the survey respondents indicated they had participated in the MIT Brains Trust and bootcamp workshops;
- 0% of the survey respondents indicated they had had support to develop a business plan.

While all Solver teams have capacity to promote and articulate their vision and the value of their product, many seem to have found difficulty communicating and engaging potential partners and/or investors. Partnership-facilitated links to potential funders for Solver teams have only rarely come to fruition. Solvers identified the following actions the Partners could explore:

- More tailored support to the development of robust business plans;
- Support for strengthened performance measurement and M&E systems;
- More support in the development of effective communications and marketing strategies and tactics;
- Better sharing of funding opportunities and business intelligence about the Solver teams with potential partners.

***Finding:** Generally, support to address the need for robust business plans seems particularly important, given that the absence of a strong plan is likely to negatively impact on Solver teams' capacity to connect with alternative funding partners.*

In particular, it is noted that approaches to M&E at the Solver level have been unstructured and lacking in strategy. This relates in large part to the nature of 'start ups' who have limited resources and competing priorities. This has contributed to an absence of baseline information to inform performance measurement, but also has the longer-term impact of restricting capacity of Solver teams to persuasively articulate their approach and results to would be investors.

***Finding:** Systems for performance measurement are commonly given low priority by start ups, due to competing priorities and resource limitations. This has the impact of restricting their ability to clearly define progress, which in turn affects their ability to be persuasive when engaging potential partners and investors.*

Support to M&E from Solidaritas (managed through AECOM) was valued by Solvers in terms of helping them consider what indicators best fit their needs, and were manageable within their staffing structure. However, most Solvers report that they would have valued additional M&E support. In several cases, Solvers still regard their M&E system as inadequate to needs and a constraint to business development.

While an external online M&E and reporting system introduced through the Partnership has helped guide thinking of Solvers on results measurement, it is regarded more as a reporting mechanism than an M&E framework. Solvers also note its limitations and spoke of it not being user friendly - especially in relation to capturing impact and qualitative issues. As one Solver reported "*the [external provider] template seems restrictive and inclined to want to quantify progress and bring in measures such as 'number of lives impacted' before this is a useful measure to foreground*" (ST2).

Recommendation Three: The Partnership should undertake a detailed assessment of non-financial needs with each of the teams progressing to Phase 3, in order to:

- identify types of non-financial support sought and required;
- assess whether needs can be addressed from within or resources need to be sourced external to the partners;
- inform development, scope and structure of a fund to be used to provide non-financial support for Solver teams to access specialist skills not available within the staff resources and availability of the partners;
- support clearer determination of the availability of staff within partner organisations who have the skills, knowledge and time available to support needs identified by the Solver teams.

Responsibility: DFAT, MIT Solve and Atlassian

8.2.3 Effectiveness of the MIT/Atlassian/DFAT Partnership (KRQ 2.1)

It is difficult to reach concise conclusions on the effectiveness of the support provided through the Partnership because clearly documented objectives, outcomes, indicators and

targets were never set to use as a reference point for performance measurement. Further, inconsistent approaches to M&E among Solver teams means that their reporting sheds little light on performance at 'Partnership' level (and provides only limited insight at team level).

It is also noted that different partners view success of the Partnership differently. DFAT is motivated by the opportunity of a strong multi-stakeholder partnership able to support innovation in the Asia Pacific region, with particular appreciation that the Partnership includes a high profile, socially responsible company such as Atlassian. While DFAT is interested in scaling as a performance measure, in the context of this Partnership, it is also very interested in the front end of the process, supporting start-ups to establish themselves. The Rumie Initiative operating in Afghanistan and WeRobotics in the Pacific have been supported by DFAT not because of the likelihood of them rapidly going to scale, but more because of the strategic value of their work in the larger picture of DFAT activity in these regions.

Atlassian is more ambitious in its objectives than the other partners and sees plausible progress towards scale as a key performance measure. This ambition is fueled by Atlassian's own metric of 'ten million disadvantaged youth reached in ten years'.

At the time of Partnership commencement, MIT's approach was largely focused on the front end of the Partnership, facilitating the process that led to Solver team selection. Since then, MIT has become more focused on longitudinal monitoring of Solvers to help better understand the impact of their work in supporting start-ups.

Finding: While partners have differences in motivation, and look at success and effectiveness differently, this can be seen as strength of the program since it motivates the active participation of each.

While Solver teams value the complementarity of partners, they mostly do not experience the Partnership as one entity with an integrated approach. According to needs, different teams engage different partners according to their own area of focus and the opportunity they see in each donor. While this makes perfect sense, it also points to the absence of a clearly articulated Partnership approach and objectives. This vacuum contributes to Solvers viewing partners in isolation. One Solver described it as follows:

"In terms of the Partnership, it feels as though it was primarily opportunistic – MIT Solve had a platform and a challenge process that DFAT and Atlassian could jump on board with and get a group of 'vetted' Solver teams they could work with. It felt like dealing with three separate organisations rather than one Partnership, with three different focal points, which has added an administrative burdens." (ST2)

Finding: Solver teams mostly experience the Partnership as three different organisations, rather than a single, integrated Partnership, and assess the contribution of each independently.

The literature¹⁵ suggests that partnerships successfully supporting innovation demonstrate a combination of flexibility/agility and careful planning and preparation. For instance, in 2017 USAID made a number of very specific recommendations¹⁶ regarding a planned yet adaptive approach to supporting innovation, highlighting:

- Flexibility in initial design and scope of work, focusing on outcomes rather than activities;
- Continuous interaction between implementers and financiers to foster adaptive management;
- Building in intermediate targets and recognizing that these will need to be adapted, as current knowledge and methodologies for identifying these milestones are limited;
- Work plans need to be negotiated annually based on events to date and should be revisited over the course of the year.

Within this Partnership, flexibility, agility and responsiveness to Solver context were clearly evident and valued. However, the absence of clearly defined objectives at start-up has impacted development of a clear, mutually agreed pathway for the Partnership aimed at ensuring the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

It is important at the start of a partnership to make clear what the measures of success will be, and why the partners believe that their approach will lead to successful outcomes. Traditional development language would describe this practice and the related documentation in terms such as Theory of Change, Program Logic, and Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. But even without using this language, having a hypothesis about why the Partnership is a good idea, and being able to define how the success (or otherwise) of the Partnership will be judged, is fundamentally sound practice.

Having said that, MIT, Atlassian and DFAT appear to have maintained very close, functional relations that mitigate significantly against limitations posed by the absence of a logical framework to guide the overall approach. A related observation is that Solver teams value the capacity of the Partnership to adapt quickly and respond to emerging challenges and opportunities. One Solver survey respondent put it as follows:

“I would also like to particularly thank DFAT/Atlassian and MIT for tolerating the risks associated with organisations doing innovative work. Innovation by definition means that all Solvers are trying to do things not yet done before, so with that comes high risk. A massive thank you to DFAT/MIT/Atlassian for tolerating and backing us to take risks, fail at some, but keep forging forward.” (SR4)

Notably, Solvers speak of this attitude often being in stark contrast to other support on offer from other donors and/or investors, which is often rigid and immovable – even when there is compelling evidence for a shift in direction or of resources.

Finding: Solver teams highly commend partners for their flexibility in responding to changes in direction by the Solver teams.

¹⁵ See readings 2, 3, 7, 8, 10 and 13 in the Reference List (Appendix 2)

¹⁶ In Ubels, J. & Jacobs, F., 2018, *Shaping successful scaling processes with public-private engagement*, PPPLab Food & Water

Potentially, the flexibility of the Partnership relates to the absence of a clearly defined approach and targets – highlighted above as a weakness! However, it is also noted that strong and reliable lines of communication have been established between partners, including weekly meetings.

8.3 Moving forward

8.3.1 How could Solver organisations be further supported to help them achieve scale? (KRQ 1.4)

As mentioned, Solver teams are extremely appreciative and place great value on the overall support provided by the different partners. However, they also identify several ways in which their quest to develop their innovation and take it to scale might be even more strongly supported. The literature on successful scaling supports Solver team perspectives. Examples of areas where ongoing improvements can be explored include:

- *Streamlined administrative/reporting requirements:* Solver teams for the most part believe expectations have been reasonable in terms of reporting and application requirements to move through the phases. However, any reduction in the time and resources required to meet administrative requirements is time that can be committed to the task of scaling their product. This is backed up by a cross-section of literature that highlights how better functioning partnerships have clarity around the governance and administration of the activity taking place under the Partnership umbrella. This is particularly important in terms of reducing the administrative and reporting burden placed on grantees.¹⁷
- *Remaining open and flexible to the needs of grantees:* Several of the teams stressed how much they have appreciated the willingness of the partners to give them room to pivot in their strategy, allowing adjustment of approach to changes in the environment. As Phase Three approaches and there is greater understanding and trust between the remaining Solver teams and the partners, there is the opportunity to find ways to provide even greater freedom still for the Solver teams to make adjustments and focus their attention where it will be most productive.¹⁸
- *Provision of more targeted and structured support and mentoring:* As has been discussed elsewhere, some of the best directed non-financial support has been exceptionally successful. There is an opportunity to expand the range of support resources to ensure the needs of all the Solver teams are being addressed as effectively as possible through re-establishment of some form of technical assistance fund that Solvers can draw on to access support in areas of expertise that sit outside the capacity of partners to offer.
- *Facilitation of networking and collaboration between Solver teams:* Explore mechanisms to have the Solver teams directly sharing their experiences and learning with each other, whether that be online or if possible, face-to-face.

¹⁷ See Reference List readings 3 and 6 for more detail

¹⁸ High quality communication between partners, and between partners and the grantees, is regularly cited in the literature as a core feature of successful partnerships. See Reference List 2, 3 and 7 for more detail

- *Greater clarity and follow through in terms of access and introductions to potential partners:* A largely unfulfilled aspiration of all teams was that there would be more deliberate focus placed by the three partners on connecting them with additional partners and funding agencies. There is a need to continue to build on the work of MIT Solve to strengthen its approach aimed at linking grantees with potential partners.

As highlighted above, the challenge posed by vertical scaling remains critically important to scaling success. Phase Three is late in the process to be addressing this issue for some Solvers, but it must be addressed if it has not already been. Approaches must also be tailored to context - Solver teams are at very different stages of development in terms of their understanding of, and capacity to deal with, vertical scaling issues such as Government policy settings, educational governance issues and connecting with and leveraging local networks.

The Partnership has the potential to more actively engage with Solver teams at regular intervals about their progress on this front, since the diverse range of connections and experience the partners can call upon appears to be an under-utilised resource.

8.3.2 What could be improved or modified to build on the Partnership and further leverage each partners' unique strengths? (KRQ 2.3)

Most Solver teams are offering innovative approaches to resolving complex issues of acute relevance to context and future opportunities for youth. By better communicating the relevance of their approaches, underpinned by stronger performance measurement, the Partnership could better support teams to identify and engage a broader range of partners (and potential funders). All Solver teams acknowledge existing weaknesses within their monitoring systems, with some identifying urgent and complex needs in this respect.

The urgency of such systems being developed can be seen in difficulties gaining traction with potential funders when results to date or projected results cannot be persuasively communicated. The potential for Solver teams to effectively engage and influence potential partners would be greatly enhanced by strengthening capacity to more persuasively measure and articulate results and impact (or progress on pathways to impact).

***Finding:** It is widely believed that there is a need to develop a robust M&E Framework for the Partnership and the Solver teams, more capable of guiding learning.*

Given the importance of high-quality performance monitoring to learning, strategic direction setting, stakeholder engagement and resource mobilisation, more emphasis should be placed on development of purpose-built monitoring systems for individual Solvers.

MIT Solve has already taken a step towards better M&E across all Solvers, including assembly of baselines for all 99 Solvers supported to date.

Given the level of interest demonstrated by Australian Embassies during the field work, there appears to be an opportunity for strengthening communication and connection with Australian Embassies, with a view to enlisting their support in relation to landscape analysis

and vertical scaling. Such an approach appears to be a more realistic and manageable opportunity as the number of Solvers reduces and those remaining are more able to clarify and articulate their needs. Support to Solvers to strategically communicate with Embassies should be part of any such approach.

8.3.3 How should Phase Three be shaped? (KRQ 2.4)

The reality of Phase Three is that the number of partners to be included will be reduced to a far smaller number of initiatives, and that the Partnership now has strong understanding of the challenges facing the remaining Solvers, along with a high level of trust and close relations. This presents the opportunity for highly tailored responses to organisation-specific issues that have emerged on the journey to date, and a clear focus to progressing each to both further progress on its pathway to scale, but also to further strengthen their organisational foundations and structure in ways that will support progress beyond the involvement from this Partnership.

For those teams moving forward to Phase Three, it is important that funding and support be provided in a form that best enables them to move effectively through what is likely to be a difficult consolidation phase. By definition of being in Phase Three, these teams will have demonstrated their readiness for greater levels of independence. Supporting this evolution should be a key consideration when shaping Phase Three support. The literature supports this more collaborative approach. For instance, Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors¹⁹ completed extensive research into successful scaling – they looked at more than 100 funders and 23 grantees. They found that shifting the power dynamics between funders and grantees so as to engage as true partners was one of the key features of successful scaling initiatives.

Given that the Partnership has strong knowledge and understanding of Phase Three teams, a practical form of support would be to reduce reporting and administrative requirements on Solver teams and allow them to focus on preparation of assembly of key information related to progressing their initiative. The Partnership can then use such outputs as proxy indicators of Partnership performance in Phase Three, while also stipulating select key data required for Partnership purposes.

***Finding:** There is an opportunity within Phase Three for grantees to be released from the treadmill of fund-raising and reporting.*

With Partnership support to better generate access to strategic, clear and persuasive data on results to date, Solvers can initiate more compelling approaches towards potential partners that better assure them that they can invest with relative confidence.

***Finding:** Currently, most Solvers see weakness in their monitoring systems and recognise this as contributing to difficulties in engagement of potential partners.*

¹⁹ Grady, H., Diggins, K., Schneider J., and Paley Rose, N., 2017, [Scaling solutions toward shifting systems](#), Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors

Communications is too often understood as limited to standard approaches such as promotional material or press releases. Strengthening awareness and capacity of Phase Three partners to better understand their stakeholder landscape and be more strategic in how, when and for what purpose they communicate with potential partners and donors is another important need that could be addressed through phase three support.

Overall, more integrated and strategic approaches along the continuum of performance monitoring, evaluation and learning, and communicating of results is needed to best support Phase Three partners on their pathway to scale.

Recommendation Four: While it is noted that each Solver is at a very different stage of evolution, with unique needs, each would benefit during Phase Three from Partnership support to clearly define where it currently sits on its ‘scaling innovation pathway’ and what it can do to progress on that pathway. Assistance should revolve around development of tailored monitoring, evaluation and learning systems aimed at clear capture of results and mobilisation of resources to further progress towards scale. Through development of such systems, Solvers will be better placed and have strengthened capacity to:

- undertake sophisticated, purposeful stakeholder mapping;
- identify and best manage risks and opportunities presented by their stakeholder landscape, so that risks can be mitigated and opportunities optimised;
- clearly and persuasively articulate and communicate results;
- mobilise resources to further progress towards scale.

Responsibility: DFAT, MIT Solve and Atlassian

Recommendation Five: Closely aligned with Recommendation Four, the Partnership should work more actively with Solver teams to identify investment and resource mobilisation options, in order to develop nuanced resource mobilisation strategies that clearly articulate roles and responsibilities of different actors.

Responsibility: DFAT, MIT Solve and Atlassian

As described above, a disconnect of the Partnership to date has been the lack of evolution of any kind of meaningful relationship between Solver teams and the Australian Embassy in the countries where Solvers implement activities. This can be explained in part by the complex nature of Partnership start-up where a large number of teams were supported and understanding of the value of their offering (and potential risks posed) was limited. However, it is also a missed opportunity given global interest in the huge challenge posed by better supporting the ‘workforce of the future’, and the potential contributions posts could make in terms of their deep local knowledge and well-developed networks with government, other donors and the private sector.

As the number of Partnership supported Solvers reduces, and the Partnership’s awareness of their context and needs becomes more nuanced and clearly defined, there is potential for mutually beneficial relationship to be established. In particular, Australian Embassies are well placed to support and challenge Solver teams understanding of their stakeholder

landscape, the significance of political shifts, and to also support Solvers in terms of identifying potential supporters for their initiative – within government, the donor community or the private sector.

Within this process of ‘relationship development’, the Partnership should foster clear recognition amongst Solvers that most Australian Embassy staff are extremely time poor (and risk averse). This highlights the importance of the point made above of the need to strengthen capacity of Solvers for clear communication of results and purposeful/strategic engagement of key stakeholders. Such support should build understanding of how best to engage Embassies and would also offer Embassies the benefit of more efficient access to learnings being generated in relation to innovations around youth employment generation.

Recommendation Six: Opportunities for Solver teams to better understand and engage the local context can be significantly enhanced by Australian Embassies given their focus on contextual understanding. DFAT should explore options through which Solvers teams can benefit from that understanding and be supported to better understand and engage their local context. For such support to occur, realistic lines of communication and support need to be agreed that adequately take into account core workloads and responsibilities of Embassy staff.

Responsibility: DFAT.

8.4 Lessons learned

8.4.1 What lessons can be learnt from this Partnership that can be applied more broadly to future cross-sector partnerships? (KRQ 3.1)

There is a growing body of literature showing that cross-sector partnerships can be effective in supporting important change in the development sector. The following quote of the Public Private Partnership Lab in The Netherlands summarizes a widely held perspective:

*“Private Public partnerships have been seen as an instrument for overcoming certain barriers to scale as they combine the competencies and experience of different actors to address difficult development issues and to create breakthroughs”.*²⁰

Finding: Public-Private partnerships such as this are an exciting opportunity with a track record of performance.

This literature is helping build an increasingly textured and nuanced picture of the characteristics and attributes of successful partnerships. However, it should be equally noted that a partnership between reputable, successful organisations does not as a matter of course mean the partnership will be successful.

One of the most exciting elements of a cross-sectoral partnership is the learning opportunities it provides. All the partners in the DFAT/Atlassian/MIT Solve collaboration have spoken at length about the lessons they have learned from each other and the value

²⁰ Ubels, J. & Jacobs, F., 2016, Scaling: From simple models to rich strategies, PPPLab Food & Water, p.4. Also see Reference List and readings 1, 3, 5, 6 and 7 for more detail

this learning has brought to their own activity. This learning can challenge established ways of operating and open doors to new ways of thinking. This quote is just one example:

“It was an eye opener to see how fast and flat Atlassian is with decision making. On one occasion we worked full-time for two days to push a key decision through the DFAT system and were really pleased with the speed. It took Atlassian about 5 minutes – an email then a phone conversation!” (P4)

There is also the opportunity for the learning to take place between the partners and the grantees, in both directions. The challenge is to document and act on the lessons. Building learning into the objectives and associated indicators of the Partnership is one way to capture the new knowledge being generated..

Clear documentation of learning is also an important strategy for sector engagement that can help build relationships and connections that could be significant in connecting Solvers with funding opportunities and important non-financial assistance. Consultations through this review already indicate that there is great interest within the tech4dev sector to better understand results of this Partnership.

***Finding:** Cross-sectoral partnerships provide a wonderful learning opportunity for all involved, particularly in relation to maximising the benefits of Public-Private Partnerships.*

In partnerships where the focus is on selecting and then supporting grantee organisations to deliver development outcomes, there is normally a focus on getting the grantees to develop and implement a robust theory of change and program logic, with an associated monitoring and evaluation process, so that they can provide evidence they are progressing as expected and are worthy of ongoing support.

Partnerships needs to make sure they have the same standards and expectations of themselves as they do of their grantees. They need to start with questions such as ‘what will a successful partnership look like?’ While there are many possible and quite reasonable answers to this question, it remains very important that criteria for success are spelled out from the start. There is also great opportunity to involve the grantees in this discussion, to identify (and possibly at the same time manage) their expectation of the relationship. Critical issues such as vertical scaling challenges and transition to different funding mechanisms can be explored, and the nature of the partner support spelled out. The resultant documents do not need to be long or overly detailed. But the Partnership does need to be clear as to how it will be held to account.

***Finding:** At the start of a partnership there is value in all stakeholders going through some form of planning process that documents the theoretical underpinning of the partnership, and how it intends to judge its effectiveness.*

Moving from early stage innovation through to the point at which significant scaling is taking place needs to be understood as almost always being a long journey. Equally, it is almost certain that organisations taking this journey will have different funding sources as they move through the various phases of development. Partnerships supporting such

organisations need to be clear as to the intended duration of their involvement – they also need to think deeply about how they can best work alongside grantees so that good ideas don't 'fall over' because funding dries up. The literature confirms that moving from proof of concept into scaling is a critical and often problematic phase, where many innovations fail. Terms used to describe it include the "pioneer gap"²¹ and the "stagnation chasm"²². Funders often see this as a point at which new revenue streams should be taking over, but the transition is often complex and unreliable. Planning for this phase needs to be in place well before it arrives. Within this picture is an important need for well managed and communicated exit strategies, that aim to ensure the supported Solver is well positioned moving forward.

Finding: Supporting grantees to transition to new sources of revenue as they move their own organizational development is a critical element of the support partners can provide, and it should be factored in from the design phase.

There is extensive literature on the process of challenges and competitions and the various approaches that can be taken²³, and the wide variety of models provide numerous interesting options for partnerships to consider. For example:

- In some challenges the funding body has intensive engagement with applicants/finalists in the stages prior to the final selection process. This not only enables them to make a deeply informed decision regarding the successful applicants, but it also provides the ultimately unsuccessful organisations with a rich learning experience;
- Some partnerships commit to extensive sharing of information about the applicant organisations with other funding bodies, to increase likelihood diverse funding sources for the grantees, both in the present and the future;²⁴
- In some challenges there is strong emphasis on collaboration and 'open innovation' between applicant organisations, so that they are learning from each other even during the selection process itself, with the possibility of 'communities of practice' forming;
- In some cases the funding partnership provides intensive support for successful applicants immediately following their selection – this can be a time when issues such as M&E can be explored in depth, and the most tricky issues identified and addressed.

Each of these options has resource and time implications, but each brings quite specific benefits. Partnerships need to think carefully about which model might best work for them and the grantees they will be working with.

Finding: The 'Challenge' selection model can serve a valuable purpose, but needs careful consideration – there are many variations to consider that have significant implications for the way in which the subsequent program/project plays out.

²¹ Ubels, J. & Jacobs, F., 2016, Scaling: From simple models to rich strategies, PPPLab Food & Water

²² Ubels, J. & Jacobs, F., 2018, Shaping successful scaling processes with public-private engagement, PPPLab Food & Water

²³ See readings 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 24 in the Reference List (Appendix 2) for more information

²⁴ See Finding, Funding, and Scaling, (2019), Stanford Social Innovation Review

Scaling any product or program is full of uncertainties and complexities – there are no guarantees. While there is no perfect system for selecting scaling ‘winners’, there is a growing body of literature that explores the organisational attributes/ingredients and environmental conditions that are likely to maximise the likelihood of successful scaling taking place. For example, Ubels and Jacobs²⁵ list ten (10) ingredients for successful scaling:

1. Technology – An effective and efficient solution for the issue at stake
2. Business case – An attractive financial/economic proposition for users and others
3. Awareness & demand – A wish and readiness for the consumer or producer to use the solution
4. Financing – Effective financing options for users and providers or buyers
5. Value chain development – Effective input and supply provision and other support services
6. Coordination platform – Strategic collaboration between key stakeholders
7. Public sector governance – Enabling policies, regulations and mechanisms
8. Lobby and advocacy – A ‘change coalition’ that pursues scaling and influences others
9. Knowledge and education – The required knowledge and professional capacity and recognition
10. Data & ICT – Evidence and facts that underpin and communicate the scaling ambition

Papers such as this offer an important resource that can be used to provide a guide for funders to help them create their own criteria to reflect the context they are operating in.

***Finding:** When selecting and then supporting grantees, funders need to be clear about the attributes and conditions that are likely to lead to successful scaling.*

***Recommendation Seven:** Noting that there appears to be little appetite for a second phase of this particular Partnership, DFAT should still explore options for similar partnerships that leverage the complementarity of a well credentialed innovation think tank, a dynamic innovation focused private sector actor and an experienced development actor (such as DFAT). Any new relationship would benefit greatly from learning to date, the evolution of approach that has been achieved by each partner across first phase implementation, and a better appreciation of how such a Partnership can be optimally leveraged moving forward.*

Responsibility: DFAT.

***Recommendation Eight:** Future Partnerships should place priority on ‘formalising’ learning as a key objective from its outset, based upon development and ongoing improvement of a MEL Framework that details outcomes and monitoring approaches at both Partnership and investment levels (including a shared understanding of scaling).*

Responsibility: DFAT, MIT Solve and Atlassian

***Recommendation Nine:** If considering a future challenge/competition selection model to identify grantees, partners should carefully consider the range of approaches possible in the context of their broader objectives. Challenges and*

²⁵ Ubels, J. & Jacobs, F., 2016, Scaling: From simple models to rich strategies, PPPLab Food & Water

competitions can take diverse forms and offer opportunities to engage with potential grantees in a diverse range of ways. Points worthy of consideration include:

- More intensive engagement with applicants/finalists in the stages prior to the final selection process, developing the capacity of even the unsuccessful organisations;
- Greater sharing of information about the applicant organisations with other funding bodies, to increase likelihood diverse funding sources;
- More collaboration and 'open innovation' encouraged between applicant organisations, building 'communities of practice';
- Greater intensive support with successful applicants immediately following their selection, developing a stronger platform from which to build.

Responsibility: DFAT, MIT Solve and Atlassian

APPENDIX 1 Terms of Reference

Short Term Consultancy "Success Factors in Tech4Dev Scale Up and Partnerships"

ARF Professional Discipline Category: C3 (for information on the DFAT ARF follow this link:

<https://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/adviser-remuneration-framework-2016.pdf>

Location/s: Flexible - Desk based with travel to 2 countries, potentially Indonesia and Cambodia

MIT SOLVE BACKGROUND

The beginning of the 21st century has been marked by rapid advances in technological innovation. While new technology can generate jobs and increase labour productivity, it also creates job displacement and widens the skills gap. Today's generation of young people now face a world in which nearly half of today's jobs globally are at risk of becoming obsolete due to automation and technological advancement in the coming decades.

The future of work provides both challenges and opportunities for governments, private sector and communities everywhere.

In 2017, in response to this challenge, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) formed a strategic partnership with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and the Atlassian Foundation (Atlassian). Through this partnership, DFAT and Atlassian have funded and supported organisations (Solvers) that are working to prepare disadvantaged youth for the workforce of the future. DFAT has invested and/or committed up to AUD \$3.1 million, while Atlassian has invested and or/committed up to USD \$2.3 million. MIT's role in this partnership has been to provide the open innovation platform (MIT Solve) on which potential grantee organisations are identified and selected for funding. Solve managed the Youth, Skills, and the Workforce of the Future challenge competition online and in-person, provided support to selected Solver teams through connections to MIT faculty and resources; Solve member organizations; mentorship opportunities; Solve's flagship events; and media exposure.

The Partnership has now been functioning for two years with two phases of grant funding allocated to winning Solvers. There is an interest amongst all three partners to understand how effective the partnership has been in supporting Solver organisations to succeed in their projects and achieve scale to date. There is also an interest to learn what can be modified in the partnership to better support Solver organisations in the coming years.

OBJECTIVES

To produce an internally-facing research piece that will answer the following key questions:

Implementer level: To identify what support Solver organisations need in order to achieve scale during Phase 3. This includes an analysis of key challenges, barriers and success factors.

Donor/partner level: To identify how the MIT/Atlassian/DFAT partnership could be adapted to best support Solver organisations attempting to reach scale in Phase 3.

Donor/partner level: Using this partnership as a case study, to provide lessons learnt more broadly on how the private, education and government sectors can engage effectively for development impact.

KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Implementer Level

What are the key challenges Solvers face when attempting to scale up their projects?

How effective has the support provided to date been for the Solvers? Are there things that the Partners should do differently?

How could Solver organisations be further supported to help them achieve scale?

Donor/Partner Level

How effective has the MIT/Atlassian/DFAT partnership been?

What are the comparative advantages of each partner? And have those comparative advantages been fully leveraged?

With the aim of improving support to Solver organisations, what could be improved or modified to build on the partnership and further leverage each Partners' unique strengths?

How should the Phase 3 funding model be adapted to most effectively support Solver organisations achieve scale? (i.e. length of funding, degree and type of technical assistance, number of grantees)

Partnering

What lessons can be learnt from this partnership that can be applied more broadly to future cross-sector partnerships?

TIMING, METHODS AND DELIVERABLES

Timing:

It is expected that this assignment will take the following amount of time:

Initial verbal briefing by Partner organisations – 2 hours

Background reading of relevant grey and published literature / Document review and development of research plan – 4 days

Implementation of research – 4 weeks

Draft report – 1 week

Review of draft report by Partners – 1 week

Final report – 3 days

Presentation/De-brief – 1 day

Up to max total = 8 weeks (40 days)

The assignment timing will depend on the selected consultant's availability. However, the assignment would ideally be completed by March 2019. Consideration of longer timelines may be provided to outstanding applicants.

Methods:

It is expected that this research would include a desk-based review, phone and in-person interviews, as well as travel to visit Solver organisations in at least 2 countries.

Team Composition:

It is expected that this assignment will be completed by 1 or 2 people. Applicants in teams are encouraged to apply jointly.

Deliverables:

The expected deliverables of this assignment are:

Detailed research plan.

A draft report (for comment) including an executive summary, analysis, recommendations and relevant annexes.

A final report.

A presentation (ppt or other) for use in the final de-brief.

KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

Required experience:

10 years of relevant work experience in one or more of the following fields:

Social science research

International development with a focus on the education sector

Technology for development

Required skills and qualifications:

Tertiary degree in social science research, international development, education, technology for development or a related field OR comparable experience

Demonstrated experience in the monitoring, evaluation and learning of international development, education or technology focused programs.

Cultural / language requirements:

Fluency in written and spoken English.

Strong writing skills (previous reports may be requested as evidence).

Desirable experience:

Experience with international development programming in the Asia Pacific region.

Previous work experience with or for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Experience working in or evaluating cross sector partnerships in international development

APPENDIX 2 Key Themes arising from Literature Review and Reference List

An important element of the consultancy was extensive reading of published/grey literature and project documentation. The literature review focused on effective partnership models, effective scaling up, and the challenge model as a method of grantee identification/selection.

The following themes emerged from the reading in relation to partnerships, scaling and selecting/supporting grantees.

A. Public/Private and Multi Stakeholder Partnerships have a demonstrated capacity to operate very effectively in a development context. (3.1)

There is extensive literature exploring the characteristics of partnerships which operate effectively in supporting grantees to scale up their innovative practice. There are common themes in 'healthy' partnerships, and many of these are highlighted in this literature review. There is value in partnerships (both when they start and at regular intervals during their operation) in doing a 'health check' to assess the quality of their partnership performance.

e.g. "Private Public partnerships have been seen as one instrument for overcoming certain barriers to scale as they combine the competencies and experience of different actors to address difficult development issues and to create breakthroughs" (1)

Reference List: See 1, 3, 5, 6 and 7 for more detail

B. Taking into account horizontal AND vertical scaling is critical – both in terms of selecting grantees and then supporting them to succeed. The challenges of vertical scaling are often not sufficiently addressed. (1.3)

The issue of vertical scaling comes up regularly as being a critical factor – grantees need to have an awareness of the broader environment in which they will be operating, the systems they need to deal with, the political players, the main competitors. Partners need to engage with grantees about these issues and explore their capacity to address the inherent challenges.

- Horizontal: the innovation/technology driven view of scaling as an expansion of new practices
- Vertical: a systems change perspective – scaling up as changing the 'rules of the game' (2)

"For effective scaling, it is necessary to understand the present system drivers and failures and to have attractive and viable alternatives. This is not the case with many scaling ambitions that are primarily product driven." (1)

Reference List: See 1, 2, 3 and 7 for more detail

C. There is great value in addressing the issue of vertical scaling as early as possible, both during the grantee selection process and immediately following selection. (1.4, 3.1)

Doing situation analysis/actor mapping/systems analysis is critical to understand the political, economic and social challenges facing any innovation. Grantees must have/develop a strong and deep local knowledge, and a scaling plan to address any barriers. Funders can work alongside and support grantees to take the ecosystem into account.

e.g. "Making big bets to tackle a problem without first immersing yourself in understanding what is holding it in place is a recipe for disaster." "...applying the systems lens early on appears to be one of the main factors for fostering success in effective and sustainable scaling." (2)

"...scaling does not happen in a vacuum. Largely guided by governments from national to local, the environment in which programs or policies operate plays a critical role in facilitating or impeding

the scaling process.” (14)

Reference List: See 2, 3, 14, 17, 18, and 22 for more detail

D. There are various ingredients/criteria for successful scaling that can form a reference point for the development of a selection/monitoring rubric or framework. (3.1)

Partnerships can need to have a clearly thought through set of selection criteria when identifying grantees, and when making decisions about which grantees will move to the next phase of support. There are many examples of criteria that can be referred to when developing a selection framework.

For example, one paper proposes these 10 ingredients for successful scaling (1):

- 1. Technology** – An effective and efficient solution for the issue at stake
- 2. Business case** – An attractive financial/economic proposition for users and others
- 3. Awareness & demand** – A wish and readiness for the consumer or producer to use the solution
- 4. Financing** – Effective financing options for users and providers or buyers
- 5. Value chain development** – Effective input and supply provision and other support services
- 6. Coordination platform** – Strategic collaboration between key stakeholders
- 7. Public sector governance** – Enabling policies, regulations and mechanisms
- 8. Lobby and advocacy** – A ‘change coalition’ that pursues scaling and influences others
- 9. Knowledge and education** – The required knowledge and professional capacity and recognition
- 10. Data & ICT** – Evidence and facts that underpin and communicate the scaling ambition

Reference List: See 1, 2, 16, 17, 22, and 23 for more detail

E. Moving from Proof of Concept into Scaling is a critical and often problematic phase, where many innovations fail. Funder support through this phase is vital. (2.4)

Many papers refer to the point at which initiatives/products are ready to move into scaling, and the significant challenges which occur through this phase. Terms used to describe it include the ‘pioneer gap’ (1) and the ‘stagnation chasm’ (2). Funders often see this as a point at which new revenue streams should be taking over, but the transition is often complex and unreliable. Planning for this phase needs to be in place well before it arrives.

Reference List: See 1 and 2 for more detail

F. Partnerships successfully supporting innovation in the development sector demonstrate a combination of flexibility/agility and careful planning and preparation. (2.1)

It is important at the start of a partnership to make it clear what the measures of success will be, and why the partners believe that their approach will lead to successful outcomes. Traditional development language would describe this practice and the related documentation in terms such as *Theory of Change*, *Program Logic*, and *Monitoring and Evaluation Framework*. But even without using this language, having a hypothesis about why the partnership is good idea, and being able to define how the success (or otherwise) of the partnership will be judged, is fundamentally sound practice.

Reference List: See 2, 3, 7, 8, 10 and 13 for more detail

G. Successful grantees generally require strong leadership, and there needs to be the capacity within the organisation to deliver on their objectives – funders need to know the organisation well enough to make these judgements. (2.4)

Organisational capacity is a critical element of successful grantee organisations. They need to have the capacity to grow and adjust as their initiative scales. Partners need to think carefully

about how they will make judgements about the capacity of the organisations they are planning to support, and how they will work with them through times of change and growth.

Reference List: See 1, 2, and 13 for more detail

H. There is extensive literature on the process of challenges, competitions etc. and the various approaches taken, raising numerous interesting options. (3.1)

Challenges and competitions can take a diverse range of forms. Partners should make themselves aware of all the options at their disposal should they go down the challenge route. Points worthy of consideration include:

- More intensive engagement with applicants/finalists in the stages prior to the final selection process, developing the capacity of even the unsuccessful organisations (17, 19, 20, 22, 24)
- Greater sharing of information about the applicant organisations with other funding bodies, to increase likelihood diverse funding sources (17)
- More collaboration and ‘open innovation’ encouraged between applicant organisations, building ‘communities of practice’ (19, 21)
- Greater intensive support with successful applicants immediately following their selection, developing a stronger platform from which to build (16, 17, 22)

Reference List: See 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 24 for more detail

I. In strong partnerships there are honest conversations about areas of disagreement and conflict. Power differences are acknowledged and addressed. (2.1)

Trust and respect are key elements of any successful partnership. Partners need to be willing to share their concerns and failures, and to provide feedback to partners when they identify issues that need to be addressed. Respectful, open communication is critical.

Reference List: See 3, 7, and 8 for more detail

J. It is important to have a clear MEL framework set up at the start of the partnership, to track the performance of the partnership and the various grantees. (1.2)

Partnerships are no different to any other development initiative – time needs to be committed in the early stages of the partnership to discussing what success will look like, how progress will be monitored and lessons learned, and how impact will be judged. Embedding MEL capacity and resources is vital. Examples of MEL commentary in the literature include:

- It is valuable to have carefully thought through immediate and intermediate outcomes, with a view to tracking progress (4)
- Look for indicators which can be used across multiple initiatives (4)
- Focus on growth and learning in the grantees, rather than just outputs and ‘the number of people helped’ (8, 13, 14)
- Make sure vertical scaling indicators are included (14)
- Critical to include customer feedback in the framework (30)

Reference List: See 4, 8, 13, 14 and 30 for more detail

K. Good partnerships have clarity around the governance and administration of the activity taking place under the partnership umbrella. This is particularly important to reduce the administrative and reporting burden on the grantees. (2.1)

Individual funders within a partnership can have varied approaches to monitoring the progress of grantees and dealing with budgeting and administrative matters. An inconsistent approach across a partnership can place unreasonable burdens on lightly resourced grantees. It is vital that partnerships display high quality governance and models the sorts of practices it seeks in the the

grantees.

Reference List: See 3 and 6 for more detail

L. High quality communication between partners, and between partners and the grantees, is a core feature of any successful partnership. (2.1)

It seems obvious, but the literature refers consistently to the need for effective communication systems and processes to be put in place – between the various partners, between partners and grantees, between the various grantees, and between the grantees and the key players in the environment within which they are operating. The breadth and depth of the communication required means it cannot be taken for granted – it needs to be planned and resources. It is an area when partners have the potential to provide grantees with particularly valuable non-financial support.

Reference List: See 2, 3, and 7 for more detail

M. It is important not only learn from mistakes, but also to document both the mistakes and learning. (1.2)

It is one thing to talk about learning from mistakes – it is another thing to report on mistakes, share the learning and support changes to be made as a result. Innovation requires a willingness to learn from mistakes, but organisations are often reluctant to share such experiences for fear of negative judgement, withdrawal of funding etc. Grantees and partners alike need to be willing to share the experiences which things don't go as planned.

Reference List: See 3, 4, 6, and 10 for more detail

N. A shift in power dynamics between funders and grantees to true partnership and two-way exchange of views can be an important contributor to successful scaling. (2.4)

Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors completed extensive research into successful scaling – they looked at more than 100 funders and 23 grantees. Shifting the power dynamics with grantees to operate as true partners was one of the key features of successful scaling initiatives. For instance:

- Enable the grantees to pursue pivots in strategy, and openly discuss power dynamics (12)
- *“Create a two-way exchange so participants get feedback from you – and you can learn more about how they think and act” (21)*

Reference List: See 12, 21, and 30 for more detail

O. It is important for funders to have a deep understanding of the context in which potential/current grantees will be/are operating. (2.4)

The Rockefeller research stresses the fact that funders must be continually learning – they need to develop more knowledge on shifting systems, and when and how to support grantees.

Negotiating the complexity of vertical scaling is an area where the experience and capacity of funders is often under-utilised. *“Our interviews indicated that non-profits and social entrepreneurs rarely receive support from funders to reach or help influence ... system actors.” (12).*

Reference List: See 12 and 30 for more detail

P. Funders should be actively seeking effective collaboration with other funders, to maximise the likelihood that good quality applicants will gain initial funding support and then transition to appropriate funding partners as they move through the various scaling phases. (2.3, 3.1)

Another issue the Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors and the Stanford Social Innovation Review

stress is the importance of funders working actively and early to share information with other funders about their grantees and their performance, and to actively work with grantees to identify opportunities to transition to new revenue sources.

- Collaborate and share intelligence with other funders. Grantees often spend too much time on fundraising and reporting – please rethink! (12)
- Build on and share due diligence on potential grantees with other funders (13)

Reference List: See 2, 12, 13, and 17 for more detail

Q. As soon as possible, release grantees from the treadmill of fund-raising and reporting. (2.4, 3.1)

Funders often at one level acknowledge the importance of not having unnecessary and unreasonable reporting and administrative expectations of grantees, but in reality request high levels of detailed reporting on a regular basis. Consciously reducing this burden on grantees will free them to do the work funders want them to be spending their time on.

- Streamline and redesign the grant-making process. Avoid the cyclical trap of the very common one year grant. Treat it like venture capital. *“Exploring how funders can hold ourselves accountable to shifting systems as much as we hold grantees accountable for it will be a key part of our work in the future.”* (12)
- Focus applications and reports on what the grantee is learning and changing, not on activities and outputs (13)
- Make funding decisions based on the documents grantees are likely to already have/are able to easily produce (13)

Reference List: See 12 and 13 for more detail

R. Encourage and support a ‘community of practice’ between the grantees operating under the partnership. (1.2, 1.4, 3.1)

Grantees want to learn from other organisations that are having (or have had) similar experiences to them. Partnerships can guarantee that grantees will learn from each other, but they can help to create an environment where there is the potential for such exchange of information to happen.

Reference List: See 11, 21, and 22 for more detail

S. It is important that any non-financial support provided to the grantees is driven by the needs of the grantees. (1.2, 2.3)

Partners often have great organisational capacity they are keen to share with Grantees. But in their enthusiasm to help, partners can fall into the trap of supplying support which doesn’t in fact meet the needs of the grantees. It is important to have honest discussions about the non-monetary support that will be of benefit. Funders often *push* advice and opportunities rather than *pull* advice and opportunities. Grantees don’t want to appear ungrateful so they put up with it. (12)

Reference List: See 12, 17, 21 and 22 for more detail

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