
Re-thinking Scaling Up: Institutions, Governance, and Place-Based Land Use

Date: March 12, 2026

Venue: Lecture Hall, Research Institute for Humanity and Nature (RIHN), Kyoto and online (zoom)

Background and Context for the Seminar

Land-use outcomes are fundamentally shaped by region-specific social, ecological and institutional contexts. This recognition has led to broad consensus in land-use and sustainability research on the importance of place-based approaches. At the same time, it raises a persistent theoretical challenge: how can locally embedded initiatives be extended, connected, or re-articulated across scales without losing their contextual relevance or normative grounding?

In this seminar, “*scaling up*” is conceptualized not as linear replication of local best practice, but as a **generative and relational process** through which locally grounded initiatives are stabilized, institutionalized, and reinterpreted across spatial, administrative, and governance scales. From a theoretical perspective, scaling up entails processes of institutional alignment, policy integration, and network formation among heterogeneous actors, while simultaneously engaging with value conflicts and/or synergies inherent in land-use decision-making.

Central to this process are **institutions as mediating arrangements**—including formal policies, organizational practices and informal norms—that enable coordination across scales and reconcile potentially competing objectives such as productivity, environmental integrity, and social equity. Scaling up thus involves both vertical interactions across governance levels and horizontal integration across policy domains and sectors including agriculture, environment, and supply chains. Seen in this way, scaling up refers to the creation of **enabling governance conditions** under which diverse and context-sensitive land-use initiatives can coexist, interact, and cumulatively contribute to broader land-use transformations, without converging toward a single uniform model.

This international seminar aims to advance both theoretical and empirical discussions on the institutional and policy mechanisms that support the scaling up of land-use initiatives. Drawing on

empirical case studies and participant experience, it will critically interrogate “*scaling up*” as an analytical and normative concept in sustainability-oriented land-use governance.

Agenda

9:30–9:45 **Opening Remarks: Objectives and Analytical Orientation of the Seminar**

Professor Mikitaro Shobayashi (Program Director, RIHN)

9:45–12:30 **Session I: Conceptual and Institutional Dimensions of Scaling Up**

Theme 1: Institutionalization and Policy Alignment

1. Institutional design for stabilizing local initiatives

Dr. Leo Maier (Former Head of the Policy Evaluation Unit, Directorate-General for Agriculture, European Commission)

2. Supply chains as governance arenas for scaling up land-use practices

Dr. Lucy MacLennan (Director, Organic Research Centre, ADAS, UK)

3. Managing trade-offs across objectives and governance scales

Dr. Takayuki Kimura (Director, Environmental Policy Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Japan)

*Presentations will be followed by integrative comments from **Dr. Hiroyuki Suematsu** (Former Permanent Secretary, MAFF in Japan) offering key insights from an institutional and policy-governance perspective.*

Theme 2: Re-situating Local Initiatives within Multi-level Governance

4. Unlocking local potential across scales: Insights from placed-based rural experimentation

Dr. Nina Denisova (University of Sofia, Bulgaria)

5. Civil society organizations as intermediaries in land-use governance

Dr. Taku Fujita (The Nature Conservation Society of Japan)

6. Coalition-building among land users: insights from COP30

Ms. Eri Otsu (Organic farmer and Visiting Associate Professor, RIHN)

The presentations will be followed by integrative comments from Dr. Eiichiro Nishizawa (Professor, Hosei University) focusing on theoretical implications for multi-level and polycentric governance.

12:30–13:30 Lunch Break

13:30–14:30 Session II: Empirical Reflections from the FairFrontiers Project

Speaker:

Dr. Grace Wong (FairFrontiers Project Leader, RIHN)

Following the presentation, Professor Janet Dwyer (SATOCONN Project Leader, RIHN) and Dr. Norie Tamura (Pluriverse Project Leader, RIHN) will engage in a discussion with Dr. Wong on how findings from the FairFrontier Project inform theoretical debates on scaling up, particularly in relation to institutions, actor networks, and value negotiation.

(Closed session)

14:45–16:45 Session III: Workshop — Co-producing the Meaning of “Scaling Up”

All participants will be divided into two or three groups and actively engage in facilitated discussions.

Rather than assigning predefined themes aligned with the sub-themes of Session I, workshop topics will be **co-developed by participants**. Drawing on the presentations and commentaries in Session I as well as their own professional experiences and knowledge, participants will identify **the elements they consider most critical to scaling up land-use innovation**. These elements will then be synthesized and clustered into workshop themes, facilitated by Dwyer and Tamura.

This participant-driven process is intended to ensure **conceptual breadth and openness** in these discussions, allowing emerging priorities and perspectives to surface beyond the original analytical framing of Session I. In doing so, the workshop seeks to explore scaling up as an *emergent concept* shaped through collective reflection, rather than as a predefined analytical category.

17:00–18:00 Roundtable: Toward a Shared Research and Policy Agenda on Scaling Up Land-Use Innovation facilitated by Dr. Ei (Senior researcher, SATOCONN Project, RIHN)

18:00 Thanks and Close of Seminar
