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A Global Framework for Climate Action (GFCA)

Orchestrating Non-State and Subnational Initiatives for More Effective Global Climate Governance

Sander Chan

Pieter Pauw

A global framework for climate action

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Dr Sander Chan, Guest Researcher, German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik, Department Environmental Policy and Natural Resource Management

E-mail: sander.chan@die-gdi.de

Pieter Pauw, German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik, Department Environmental Policy and Natural Resource Management

E-mail: pieter.pauw@die-gdi.de

© Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik gGmbH
Tulpenfeld 6, 53113 Bonn
☎ +49 (0)228 94927-0
🖷 +49 (0)228 94927-130
E-Mail: die@die-gdi.de
www.die-gdi.de

Abstract

The transformation towards a climate-resilient and low-carbon future will require collaboration between a host of institutions as well as state- and non-state stakeholders in addition to their numerous actions aimed at mitigation and adaptation. However, the "groundswell" of non-state and subnational actions and initiatives remains uncoordinated in a fragmented climate-governance landscape. This discussion paper investigates whether and how a Global Framework for Climate Action (GFCA) could become an advantageous link between the multilateral climate regime and non-state and subnational initiatives. It seeks to answer these questions by deriving lessons learnt from two case studies on existing frameworks that link non-state actions to multilateral processes: the Partnerships for Sustainable Development framework and the Private Sector Initiative under the UNFCCC Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change, respectively.

The case studies show a disconnection between the recognition of the hard-to-deny potential of non-state and subnational initiatives, and the performance of the samples of initiatives that take part in the respective frameworks. The studied frameworks largely fail to capture effective initiatives. Moreover, the studied frameworks are not successful at ensuring credible information, transparency and progress by participating initiatives. The lack of screening procedures and minimal requirements for participating initiatives have made these frameworks vulnerable to green-washing practices in which business-as-usual passes for being climate-friendly and sustainable. Moreover, the investigated frameworks lack sufficient means to operate larger programmes to mobilise non-state and subnational stakeholders in the long-term.

Based on lessons learnt, this discussion paper presents a design for a GFCA. The proposed GFCA is a comprehensive and collaborative programme. It is comprehensive, as it combines multiple functions, namely: the *mobilisation* of new and enhanced initiatives; the *recording* of initiatives in a publicly available registry; the *monitoring and verification* of progress; and the conducting of periodic *overall assessments* to ensure that the framework leads to higher ambitions and better implementation. A GFCA is collaborative, as it is operated and administered by a network of experts, think tanks, and public and private organisations rather than by a single administrative body. This network will yield the strengths of existing efforts and pool resources from multiple organisations, while retaining legitimacy through its partnership with international bodies such as the UNFCCC secretariat or UNEP. Moreover, by building on existing efforts, the GFCA would not require a heavy institutional footprint.

The proposed GFCA could become an important element in the future global climate-governance architecture. On the one hand, this framework would strengthen the orchestration capacity within the UNFCCC to steer non-state and subnational actions towards greater ambitions and the implementation of international targets and agreements. On the other hand, a GFCA would entail official recognition of non-state and subnational initiatives that substantially contribute to low-carbon and climate-resilient development. A credible and well-designed GFCA would be an additional motivation for reputation-conscious non-state stakeholders, such as businesses and NGOs, to participate.

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A note to the reader

This discussion paper engages academic debates on the role of non-state and subnational stakeholders, fragmentation in global climate governance and orchestration, but it also addresses policy-makers and stakeholders on a GFCA in conjunction with the multilateral UNFCCC process.

This discussion paper is logically arranged in six chapters, which could also be read independently of one another.

Chapter 1 introduces the main topic and purposes of the discussion paper and briefly explains the case selection for this study. Chapter 2 discusses key concepts and the background of the ongoing debate on the role of non-state and subnational initiatives in the UNFCCC process. Chapters 3 and 4 are empirical chapters describing experiences from existing frameworks that link non-state and subnational initiatives and multilateral processes, in particular the Partnerships for Sustainable Development and the Private Sector Initiative frameworks. This discussion paper has two concluding chapters. Chapter 5 synthesises lessons learnt from the previous chapters, while chapter 6 proposes practical and policy-relevant design characteristics for a GFCA. Policy-makers and stakeholders might want to pay particular attention to chapter 6, whereas scholars might want to pay closer attention to the empirical chapters and chapter 5.

Bonn, November 2014 Sander Chan and Pieter Pauw

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Abbreviations

ADP	Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action
COP	Conference of the Parties
DIE	Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik / German Development Institute
GFCA	Global Framework for (non-state and subnational) Climate Action
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
ICI	International Cooperative Initiative
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NWP	Nairobi Work Programme on Impacts, Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change
PSI	Private Sector Initiative
Rio+20	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
UN	United Nations
UNCSD	United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WRI	World Resources Institute
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

1 Introduction

The number of non-state and subnational initiatives on climate change mitigation and adaptation is vast, and many can be found in registries and lists. For instance, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) lists 60 "international cooperative initiatives" (ICIs) on its Portal on Cooperative Initiatives[1]; the United Nations (UN) Division for Sustainable Development's "SD in Action" lists another 174 climate- or energy-relevant "commitments" by member states, UN bodies, international organisations and "major groups"[2]; the "carbon*n* Cities Climate Register" lists more than 460 cities taking climate action; and more than 4,500 companies globally report through the Carbon Disclosure Project on their environmental and climate-relevant performance.

As countries negotiating under the UNFCCC are not on track to meet their agreed goal to limit global warming to two degrees Celsius, non-state and subnational climate change actions should complement this state-centred system of negotiations and multilateral governance. However, the "groundswell" of non-state and subnational actions is largely uncoordinated, resulting in a "fragmented governance landscape" (Van Asselt 2014). Although many non-state and subnational actions may be seen as positive examples or best practices, they could also exacerbate inefficiencies and conflicts in a fragmented climate-governance complex. Non-state and subnational actors might crowd out more innovative and radical alternatives (Poncelet 2001) or even pass off business-as-usual practices as green and climate-friendly ("green-washing"). By proposing their own standards, non-state actors might prevent stricter government regulations. And non-state and subnational actors may not address the most urgent issues and instead pick "low-hanging fruit" (Hale / Mauzerall 2004; Biermann et al. 2007). Non-state and subnational initiatives could also exacerbate asymmetrical power imbalances between northern-based and southern-based non-state and state actors and between different types of non-state actors, for example businesses and environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (Biermann et al. 2012). Finally, governments could also use non-state and subnational initiatives as an excuse to avoid (new) international obligations or greater mitigation ambitions, bringing about an unwarranted privatisation of governance (Van der Wel 2004) and risking overall lower ambitions on mitigation and adaptation.

The fragmented nature of global climate governance raises the question whether coordination capacities in a fragmented climate-governance landscape could be improved and whether non-state and subnational initiatives could be aligned with UNFCCC-centred multilateral climate governance to facilitate a transformation towards a low-carbon and climate-resilient future.

This paper proposes a Global Framework for Climate Action as an element in the future climate regime. A well-designed GFCA could link non-state and subnational initiatives to multilateral climate processes and improve overall accountability and effectiveness in a fragmented climate-governance landscape. This paper makes an empirical contribution by

1 See http://unfccc.int/focus/mitigation/items/7785.php (accessed 30 September 2014).

2 Nine overarching categories *"through which all citizens could participate in UN activities on achieving sustainable development"*, that is, local authorities; NGOs; women; workers and trade unions; business and industry; farmers; indigenous people; children and youth; science and technology community. See http://www.uncsd2012.org/majorgroups.html (accessed 30 September 2014).

drawing lessons learnt from existing frameworks that link multilateral processes and non-state and subnational initiatives. In doing so, this paper contributes to an ongoing discussion about forging links between the multilateral climate regime and non-state and subnational actions (Blok et al. 2012; Moncel / Asselt 2012; Hale / Chambers 2014; Harrison et al. 2014; Widerberg / Pattberg 2014). Finally, this paper is perhaps the first to presents a concrete design for a GFCA.

1.1 Case selection

This discussion paper draws lessons from existing frameworks that link multilateral processes with non-state initiatives. Chapters 3 and 4 of this paper present empirical case studies of the Partnerships for Sustainable Development framework, introduced at the 2002 World Summit for Sustainable Development, as well as the Private Sector Initiative (PSI) under the UNFCCC Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change (NWP). Both case studies operate between – and aim to link up – non-state and subnational initiatives with multilateral governance processes. Both linking efforts have been operational for an extended period of time, which allows for a better assessment of various performance aspects, for example whether they are effective at: mobilising a wider circle of stakeholders, producing output relevant to function or mobilising new resources. Both the Partnerships for Sustainable Development framework and the PSI make information publicly available through online tools and registries, respectively; both gather non-state and subnational initiatives that – at least – claim to make contributions towards a greater public good (realising sustainable development, and adaptation to climate change, respectively).

Additionally, these cases were selected for their comparability and their relevance in light of the current discussion on non-state and subnational initiatives in the UNFCCC process. Partnerships for Sustainable Development were introduced at the 2002 World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) as a set of collaborative initiatives that could help the implementation of internationally agreed outcomes (such as the Millennium Development Goals). The close conjunction of Partnerships for Sustainable Development with a high-level political process could be relevant to the discussion on non-state and subnational initiatives in the context of the Climate Conference in Paris in 2015 as a possible outcome or element of a new legal agreement (Haites / Yamin / Höhne 2013). Charged political environments surrounding international summitry could influence the outcome and design of a GFCA. The PSI was launched in 2010 as an element under the NWP and represents one of the earlier and more prominent instances of linking the multilateral climate process and private initiatives. The PSI's proximity to the UNFCCC process and its administration by the UNFCCC secretariat could provide lessons regarding how a GFCA would link to the UNFCCC (or its secretariat).

The case studies describe the relation of the respective cases to intergovernmental processes, assess their performance on various aspects (e.g. mobilising non-state actors, improving effectiveness and accountability) and reflect on how their designs influence performance. Finally, suggestions are made towards improving these frameworks, and experiences are discussed as to which could inform the development of a GFCA.

1.2 Structure of the paper

Chapter 2 discusses key concepts, including "non-state and subnational initiatives" and "orchestration". The chapter also provides an overview and the background of the ongoing debate on the role of non-state and subnational initiatives in the UNFCCC process. Chapters 3 and 4 describe experiences from the Partnerships for Sustainable Development and PSI frameworks, examining empirical evidence about their design and performance aspects, and deriving lessons learnt with a view on designing a GFCA. Chapter 5 synthesises lessons learnt from the previous two chapters and argues for a more comprehensive framework that combines several functions to coordinate non-state and subnational actions and the UNFCCC process. Chapter 6 presents recommendations and a design for a GFCA based on lessons learnt.

2 Key concepts and background

2.1 A global framework for climate action

This discussion paper proposes a Global Framework for Climate Action – a comprehensive programme to coordinate non-state and subnational climate initiatives towards international climate targets and agreements.

The programme could achieve this, for instance, by

- eliciting contributions to the implementation of reduction targets;
- officially recognising certain non-state and subnational initiatives; and
- gathering support resources and input from a wider circle of non-state and subnational actors.[3]

A well-designed GFCA could support and coordinate non-state and subnational actions so that they

- contribute to the implementation of internationally agreed mitigation targets;
- are consistent with multilateral priorities; and
- increase the overall level of ambition among state and non-state actors.

The novelty of a GFCA, as proposed in this discussion paper, lies in the following characteristics:

1. It would be the first comprehensive programme that combines multiple functions of orchestrating non-state and subnational climate actions – in particular mobilisation, monitoring, reviewing, verification and overall assessment.
2. A GFCA is not operated within or by a single intergovernmental body, neither would it constitute a completely new institution[4]; it would build on existing efforts and activities within the UNFCCC and a network of expert organisations and think tanks.

3 See chapter 6 for a more elaborate exposition of functions under a GFCA.

4 This would be difficult for all parties to unanimously agree to.

This discussion paper draws lessons from case studies in chapter 3 and proposes a more detailed design of a GFCA (see chapter 6). But before moving to the case studies, this chapter provides the conceptual background on "non-state and subnational initiatives" and "orchestration", as well as background information on the ongoing discussions about the role of non-state and subnational initiatives in the UNFCCC process.

2.2 What are non-state and subnational initiatives?

Non-state and subnational initiatives refer to a diverse set of governance activities taking place beyond strictly governmental and intergovernmental (or multilateral) settings. They take many organisational forms and relate to a wide array of objectives and governance functions. They have been variably referred to as

- networks – e.g. "global public policy networks" (Witte / Reinicke / Benner 2000),
- "transnational advocacy networks" (Keck / Sikkink 1998),
- partnerships (Brinkerhoff / Brinkerhoff 2011; Pattberg et al. 2012),
- initiatives (e.g. ICIs, Koehn 2008; Blok et al. 2012),
- commitments (e.g. "Announcements and Commitments" at the 2014 Climate Summit; and the Natural Resources Defence Council's "Cloud of Commitments"; Scherr 2013).

Although there is no agreement on what exactly constitutes a non-state or subnational initiative, various conceptualisations converge on the multi-faceted nature of governance, in particular assuming agency beyond traditional players in global politics (e.g. national governments and intergovernmental organisations).

In our understanding, non-state and subnational initiatives represent a diverse set of arrangements in public governance. Non-state and subnational initiatives reflect many modes of internal organisation; participatory constellations; goal and function definitions; themes; and issue areas. For instance, some initiatives consist of only one type of partner – the World Business Council on Sustainable Development's Energy Efficiency in Buildings project mainly involves large corporations; whereas the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles includes more than 80 partners from the business community, civil society, local governments and international organisations. Also, some initiatives may take the form of projects with limited terms. The Partnerships for Clean Indoor Air, for example, which was intended to reduce smoke from cooking and heating installations, was launched in 2002 and finalised in 2012. Other initiatives are open-ended. The Global Methane Initiative, for instance, was launched in 2004 and continues to develop activities to reduce global methane emissions. In spite of their great variety, non-state and subnational initiatives tend to emphasise collaboration and consensus among equal partners rather than hierarchical decision-making structures. They also tend to address more limited issues areas and (claim to) fulfil specific goals and provide solutions (e.g. a certain standard, technique, product, method). Non-state and subnational initiatives are also aimed at the public good (e.g. a cleaner environment, climate resilience or sustainable development), rather than purely private interests (e.g. maximising profits).

The outcomes and impacts of a large number and variety of non-state and subnational initiatives are difficult to determine. Although individual initiatives are showcased as

"best practices" or "case studies" (see chapter 4), the lack of a comprehensive overview of these initiatives complicates assessments of their intended and unintended effects, and their influence on multilateral processes. According to some, the emergence of highly specialised (problem-specific and solution-oriented) initiatives leads to an alternative global politics, which is not state-centred and features greater roles for private firms and markets (Sassen 2006). Consequently, in this understanding, initiatives would strengthen private actors in public governance, possibly resulting in a privatisation of formerly public governance functions (Miraftab 2004; Van der Wel 2004; Litzinger 2006). Others see non-state and subnational initiatives as being, by and large, compatible with existing multilateral governance. For instance, non-state and subnational initiatives could help implement international agreements (Haas 2004), or even strengthen the role of states and international organisations as they employ measures designed to steer non-state and subnational actors (Abbott / Snidal 2009).

Looking at a great number of non-state and subnational initiatives, it is clear that climate actions and initiatives are dispersed – they are not necessarily state-centred, nor are they congruent with the international climate regime. Although there is disagreement about the overall effect of non-state and subnational initiatives on global climate governance, the most immediate effect seems to be a fragmentation of climate governance (Zelli 2005; Biermann et al. 2009; Van Asselt 2014), where multiple loci of governance overlap, interact and occasionally conflict with one another.[5]

2.3 What is orchestration?

In a fragmented climate-governance landscape, the challenge is to prevent inefficiencies and conflicts[6] and to align non-state and subnational initiatives and multilateral climate governance. In this regard, an "orchestration deficit" has been observed in the global climate-governance architecture – a lack of coordination between multilateral politics and a plethora of non-state and subnational initiatives (Abbott / Snidal 2009; Abbott 2012; Hale / Roger 2014). Orchestration could be defined as a wide range of activities to steer non-state and subnational actions towards public goals.

Such orchestration activities include the initiation of initiatives, the shaping of a larger field of non-state and subnational initiatives by states and international organisations (Hale / Roger 2014), and measures by international organisations to steer, empower, convene and facilitate non-state and subnational actors (Abbott / Snidal 2009). Orchestration can take the form of directive and facilitative measures. For instance, states and intergovernmental organisations can pressure non-state actors to take "voluntary" actions (Abbott / Snidal 2009). Seemingly voluntary initiatives could emerge in the "shadow of hierarchy" (Héritier / Lehmkuhl 2008) when governments threaten to take regulatory measures in case non-state actors do not take matters into their own hands. More often, however, orchestration entails facilitative instruments (Abbott / Snidal 2009). States and intergovernmental organisations could provide support and advice for certain initiatives;

5 The fragmentation of climate governance is not necessarily detrimental. Overlaps between non-state and subnational initiatives could lead to synergies. A wide variety of approaches employed by a diverse range of initiatives allows for cross-learning, innovation and experimentation.

6 See chapter 1.

collect, aggregate and disseminate best practices (Koremenos / Lipson / Snidal 2001); enable socialisation and learning (Dobbin / Simmons / Garrett 2007); strategically initiate initiatives; selectively recognise some initiatives (e.g. by simply listing initiatives on their websites) while ignoring others (Hale / Roger 2014), etc.

Orchestration can take place within non-state and subnational initiatives – for instance, several large sustainable forest management partnerships coordinate activities and allocate tasks among multiple stakeholders (Visseren-Hamakers / Glasbergen 2007). More often, however, orchestration is associated with activities by international organisations (Abbott / Snidal 2009). International organisations – and UN organisations in particular – have regularly engaged in systematic efforts to mobilise and increase the visibility of non-state and subnational actors:

- The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) administers the Partnerships for Sustainable Development framework, which invites collaborative actions towards the implementation of global sustainable development (see chapter 3).
- The UN Global Compact registers voluntary sustainable development commitments by companies.
- More recently, the Executive Office of the Secretary-General of the UN launched the Sustainable Energy for All Initiative to engage non-state and subnational actors in the provision of sustainable energy.
- In the run-up to Rio+20, a green economy database was launched with voluntary commitments towards sustainable development, which later developed into the SD in Action database.

There is, however, no reason why orchestration efforts should be limited to UN organisations. Beyond the UN system, ICLEI – an association of local governments for sustainability – has, for example, developed the "carbon*n* Cities Climate Register" of subnational climate initiatives; and the Global Green Growth Institute is registering climate initiatives. Private actors have also undertaken various orchestration efforts.

- The sustainable energy partnerships Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century and Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership have developed the Clean Energy Information Portal clearinghouse for renewable and energy-efficiency policies.
- The Clinton Global Initiative keeps a register of "commitments to action" by member organisations (often companies and private foundations) to address global challenges, including climate change, environment and energy, health and education.
- The Global Investor Coalition on Climate Change records investment initiatives.
- The National Resources Defense Council's "Cloud of Commitments" collects actions and initiatives related to the Rio+20 Earth Summit from various registration platforms.

This discussion paper argues that orchestration efforts in a GFCA could be best performed by a network of intergovernmental organisations, experts and think tanks (see chapter 6).

2.4 Background: non-state and subnational initiatives and the UNFCCC

Many non-state and subnational stakeholders are recognised as "observers", which article 7.6 of the Convention defines as:

> *Any body or agency, whether national or international, governmental or non-governmental, which is qualified in matters covered by the Convention, and which has informed the secretariat of its wish to be represented at a session of the Conference of the Parties as an observer, may be so admitted unless at least one third of the Parties present object.*

Observer participation at climate conferences has steadily increased over the years, reaching a record of 16,700 observer organisation delegates at COP 15 in 2009 (Schroeder / Lovell 2012). Non-state and subnational stakeholders have also played an important informal role in the UNFCCC process, suggesting ideas and solutions to climate governance in side events; making statements in plenary sessions through their constituencies; submitting written proposals; and – generally – bringing in expertise, information and perspectives (UNFCCC 2003). The passive-sounding notion of "observing" should therefore also be understood in a more active sense, as these observers play a role in advocacy and agenda-setting, and they offer insights on the basis of their specific expertise. Non-state and subnational stakeholders actively seek to diversify their roles beyond mere observation. For instance, some organisations employ "insider advocacy" (lobbying) strategies to influence the negotiations directly (Betzold 2013). Moreover, the UNFCCC secretariat has been promoting non-state climate action. A recent and notable example is its Momentum for Change initiative to *"shine a light on the enormous groundswell of activities underway across the globe that are moving the world toward a highly resilient, low-carbon future".*[7] Through the Momentum for Change campaign, the UNFCCC secretariat recognises and increases the visibility of *"innovative and transformative solutions that address both climate change and wider economic, social and environmental challenges".*

2.5 Beginnings of a UNFCCC framework for non-state and subnational initiatives?

Negotiations towards a new climate treaty have given new impetus to the discussion on non-state and subnational initiatives and their role in global climate governance. Non-state and subnational initiatives are seen as being instrumental in inspiring greater ambition. For instance, Ban Ki-moon's UN Climate Summit[8] sought to *"galvanize and catalyze climate action* […] *that will reduce emissions, strengthen climate resilience, and mobilize political will for a meaningful legal agreement in 2015".*[9]

Non-state and subnational initiatives have also become increasingly linked to practical implementation, especially in greenhouse gas mitigation. Since the 2011 UN climate conference in Durban, Work Stream 2 of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban

7 See http://unfccc.int/secretariat/momentum_for_change/items/6214.php (accessed 22 October 2014).

8 This conference, held on 23 September 2014, did not formally fall under the UNFCCC process.

9 See http://www.un.org/climatechange/summit (accessed 29 October 2014).

Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP) discusses options *"to identify and explore options for a range of actions that can close the ambition gap, with a view to ensuring the highest possible mitigation efforts by all Parties"*, and considers to officially acknowledge so-called international cooperative initiatives. ICIs are "practical and results-oriented" (UNFCCC 2013b) initiatives, including non-state and subnational ones,[10] whose actions complement multilateral mitigation efforts. Suggestions have been made within the ADP process for non-state and subnational stakeholders to set ambitious goals, to scale-up actions and to communicate actions to the secretariat on a regular basis (UNFCCC 2014b). Moreover, technical examinations (so-called Technical Expert Meetings) and technical working papers (UNFCCC 2013b; UNFCCC 2013c) under the ADP regularly feature ICIs as exemplary mitigation approaches.

There is also growing support from parties to recognise non-state and subnational contributions in achieving mitigation ambitions. Positive statements regarding non-state and subnational initiatives and ICIs by parties increased between the first part of the second session of the Ad-Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action in April 2013 and the fifth part in June 2014, from four to sixteen (Chan et al. 2014). The increasing attention to ICIs has also led to concerns among some governments (Third World Network 2013) and non-state stakeholders (Maede 2013). For instance, India, on behalf of the "BASIC group" (Brazil, South Africa, India and China), has stated that *"initiatives can't substitute for the core actions required under the Kyoto Protocol"* (Government of India 2014); China argued that *"international cooperative initiatives* [...] *shall not introduce any new or additional commitments for developing countries and should not replace the mitigation commitments by developed country Parties"* (Government of China 2014). However, reservations about the greater engagement of ICIs in the UNFCCC process have been mild. At COP 19 in Warsaw, Parties requested that the secretariat enhance the visibility of actions by public and private entities (UNFCCC 2013a).

The UNFCCC secretariat has begun listing ICIs on its website (Portal on Cooperative Initiatives) has (tentatively) defined them as "[c]*ooperative climate actions undertaken around the world at various levels by governments, international organizations, civil society, and business that contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions"*.[11,12] Although the Portal on Cooperative Initiatives improves the visibility of non-state and subnational initiatives, such recordings have many limitations. In this paper, we argue that a GFCA should link multiple functions, in particular mobilisation, recording, monitoring and assessment efforts (see chapter 6), in order to:

10 ICIs have not been formally defined, leaving several conceptual questions, for instance: Are ICI "cooperative" in the sense that they involve more than one partners, or are they cooperative in the sense that they are additional to multilateral actions? Moreover, do ICIs include (inter-) governmental initiatives? The UNFCCC portal records a very broad range of initiatives, which are not necessarily cooperative in an organisational sense. Some international regimes (e.g. the Montreal Protocol) and international organisations (e.g. the International Renewable Energy Agency) feature as cooperative initiatives. In this paper, the emphasis is narrower, namely on non-state and subnational initiatives. Therefore, the authors prefer to use the term "non-state and subnational initiatives" to refer to actions beyond the multilateral climate process, instead of the – more politically defined – ICI.

11 In spite of the ongoing discussions in the UNFCCC, ICIs have not yet been formally defined; see http://unfccc.int/focus/mitigation/items/7785.php (accessed 7 October 2014).

12 See http://unfccc.int/focus/mitigation/items/7785.php (accessed 1 November 2014).

- catalyse their actions and contributions towards climate mitigation and adaptation;
- build trust and support among different types of stakeholders;
- ease the implementation of national and international climate policies;
- help to improve capacities of non-state and subnational stakeholders (e.g. through knowledge-sharing and the matching of ideas and resources);
- enhance transparency to track progress by non-state and subnational initiatives;
- demonstrate and diffuse experience among governmental parties;
- enhance the visibility of concrete efforts and solutions;
- contribute to a positive narrative, which could inspire new initiatives.

The following two chapters present case studies of frameworks for non-state and subnational initiatives – the Partnerships for Sustainable Development framework (chapter 3) and the Private Sector Initiative (chapter 4) – and provide lessons learnt for a more comprehensive framework in global climate governance.

3 Case study: Partnerships for Sustainable Development

The Partnerships for Sustainable Development framework, administered by the UNCSD, represents one of the earliest examples of a framework linking non-state and subnational actions with a multilateral process. Some would even interpret the framework as the dawn of a different type of global politics, which is more inclusive and solutions-oriented (WRI 2002). The framework could be considered innovative; it linked (previously) unrelated non-state and subnational actions to the multilateral sustainability process; it recognised partnerships as implementation tools in global sustainability governance; and it assumed that non-state and subnational initiatives could be steered towards international targets and priorities.

Partnerships for Sustainable Development have been analysed as being a mostly coherent sample of non-state and subnational initiatives (Andonova / Levy 2003; Benner / Streck / Witte 2003; Hale / Mauzerall 2004; Bäckstrand 2006a; Pattberg et al. 2012). However, the coherence of this sample did not develop spontaneously. Underlying the sample of Partnerships for Sustainable Development is a political process that defined the framework and determined the scope of participating initiatives. The political process also affected the overall performance of the sample.

This chapter discusses Partnerships for Sustainable Development as a framework to orchestrate transnational activities. It draws from current scholarly literature to investigate how Partnerships for Sustainable Development emerged as a global framework, paying particular attention to how – and which – terms of operation were included in the framework. Then, drawing on several large-n studies of samples of Partnerships for Sustainable Development, the chapter evaluates the performance of the framework, particularly in terms of improving overall effectiveness and legitimacy of global sustainability governance. This chapter concludes with lessons learnt and recommendations for an improved or new UN framework for Partnerships for Sustainable Development.

3.1 Partnerships for Sustainable Development as a global framework

The Partnerships for Sustainable Development framework emerged as a result of the WSSD, held 10 years after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development,[13] where governments agreed to a comprehensive action plan for sustainable development (Agenda 21) and three conventions: the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change; the UN Convention on Biological Diversity; and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification. After 10 years of sustainable development as a leading global development strategy, the international community was also confronted with the sober assessment that many environmental indicators had worsened and the wealth gap between developed and developing countries had continued to widen. Sustainable development had been thwarted by a lack of political will, (institutional) capacity and resources. Many felt the focus of the WSSD should have been on implementation, rather than on new agreements. Multi-stakeholder partnerships were seen as a vehicle to bring about much-needed implementation, innovation and action on the ground (e.g. Reinicke 1998; Witte / Reinicke / Benner 2000; Glasbergen / Groenenberg 2001; Brinkerhoff 2002; Arts / Leroy / Van Tatenhove 2006); they were seen as engaging more non-state actors and increasing transparency and accountability in global sustainable development (e.g. Haas 2004; Bäckstrand 2006b; 2008).

Although there seems to be a rational case for Partnerships for Sustainable Development to address implementation and participation deficits in global sustainability governance, the framework was highly contingent on politics (Chan / Müller 2012). The outcome was a compromise, reached under pressure to deliver an official outcome at the WSSD, amid contestations and opposition from several major groups and country delegations (Mert / Chan 2012). Partnerships for Sustainable Development were originally conceptualised as an approach to get donors and a wider community to engage and commit to sustainable development, particularly in developing countries. However, the final framework was weakly defined: it set few conditions for participating initiatives, attributed a weak mandate to and insufficient resources for the UNCSD, and required no reviewing and monitoring arrangements. A closer look at the terms of inclusion, operation and the platform for the Partnerships for Sustainable Development framework reveals its shortcomings.

The Preparatory Committee of the WSSD decided that a record of the commitments would be announced and released as part of the summit outcome. Terms of inclusion in what became the Partnerships for Sustainable Development framework were implied in General Assembly Resolution 56/226 (28 February 2002) (UN 2002) and a further set of guiding principles were formulated at the Bali Preparatory Committee in June 2002: Bali Guiding Principles (Kara / Quarless 2002). The Guiding Principles carefully avoid coercive language, instead of setting conditions for inclusion; the less obligating auxiliary verb "should" is often used. The Guiding Principles emphasised the participatory scope of the framework, stipulating that "[a]*ll partners should be involved in the development of a partnership from an early stage, so that it is genuinely participatory in approach".* The Guiding Principles, moreover, stipulated that *"involvement of local communities* [...] *is strongly encouraged"*, and that *"impact should extend beyond the national level (global, regional and/or sub-regional)".* Partnerships should also relate to the implementation of intergovernmental outcomes, in particular the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, Agenda 21 and the Millennium Development Goals. Moreover, the framework should capture new initiatives, or existing initiatives, that create added value in the context of the

13 Also known as the Rio Summit, Rio Conference or the Earth Summit.

WSSD, for instance by including a greater number of partners in existing initiatives, by replicating initiatives into new regions or by featuring increased investments. The Guiding Principles also state that partnerships should be backed up by resources, in particular financial resources: *"At least the initial funding should be assured at the time of the Summit, if the partnership is to be recognized there"*; however, the registration procedure allows partnerships to report funds that have yet to be acquired.

The weakly defined terms of participation not only left ample room for interpretation, they also did little to clarify the operation of the framework as a whole. For instance, while the Guiding Principles emphasise the importance of accountability arrangements (partnerships should set *"clear objectives and set specific measurable targets and timeframes* [...] *specify arrangements to monitor and review their performance against the objectives and targets they set"*), the framework does not ensure the monitoring, reviewing and assessment of the total set of Partnerships for Sustainable Development. Moreover, the Guiding Principles designate the UNCSD as the coordinating body, but do not give a mandate to monitor or steer the partnerships process, nor does it make sufficient means available for administration. Without a monitoring mandate, the UNCSD could not decide to exclude or revoke the participation of partnerships that do not meet minimal requirements, and without sufficient means, it could not embark on a larger programme to catalyse non-state and subnational actions over the long term. Nonetheless, within a limited mandate and with limited means, the UNCSD set up a "partnerships team" to maintain the framework's online presence and organise "partnership fairs" and side-events during annual meetings of the UNCSD. By doing so, the framework improved the visibility of a wide range of non-state and subnational initiatives.

3.2 Performance of the partnerships for sustainable development framework

The weak wording of the framework impacted on the performance of the total sample of partnerships, particularly in terms of effectiveness and legitimacy. This section discusses the most important findings from a few large-n studies that have been conducted on the sample included in the framework (Andonova / Levy 2003; Hale / Mauzerall 2004; Pattberg et al. 2012).

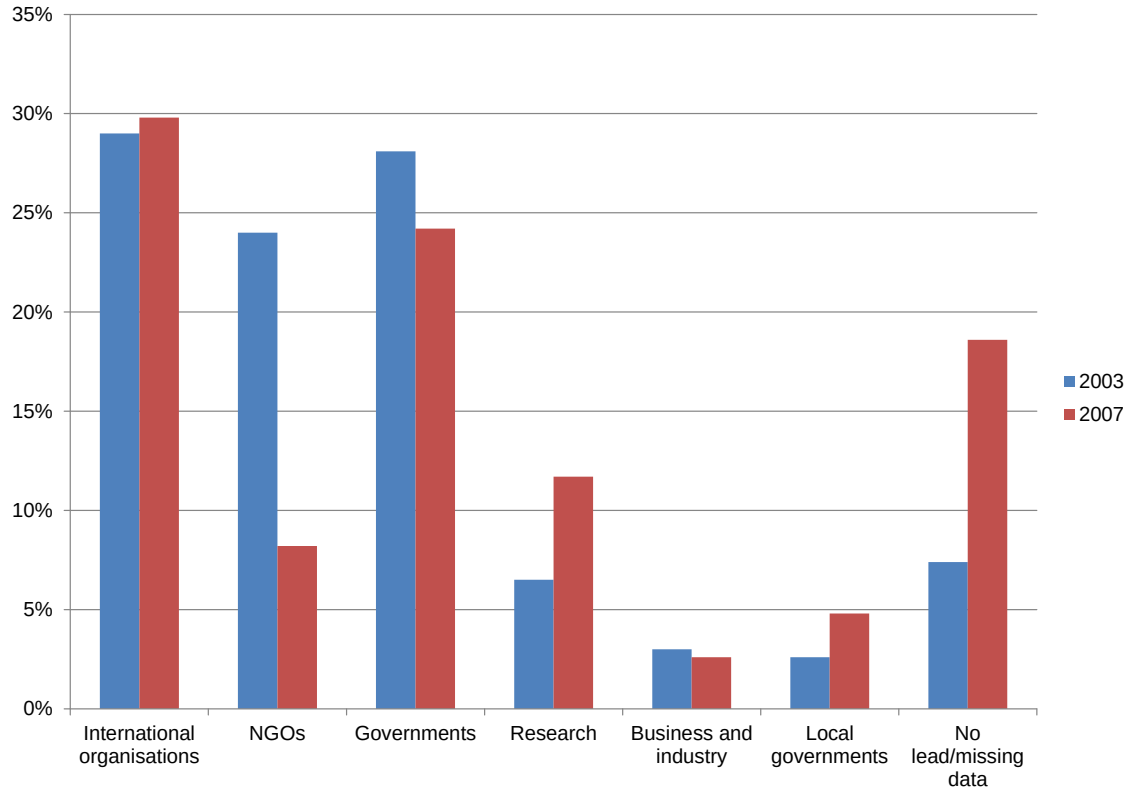
3.2.1 Legitimacy

One of the arguments for a framework for Partnerships for Sustainable Development is the improvement of transparency and accountability in global sustainability governance. Many Partnerships for Sustainable Development are multi-stakeholder arrangements; therefore they would increase the number and types of stakeholders involved. Moreover, through the online database of partnerships, their activities become more visible and traceable.

Nonetheless, scholars have criticised the framework for being supply-driven rather than driven by the needs of underrepresented stakeholders. For instance, Andonova and Levi (2003) explore the extent to which Partnerships for Sustainable Development effectively respond to functional demands and to which extent they are a function of supply (e.g. by traditionally powerful stakeholders). In their study of 231 partnerships, they found that partnerships appear to be largely supply-driven. Most partnerships are led by already powerful developed-country governments, NGOs and businesses, while local groups and

partners from developing countries are underrepresented (see Figure 1). Similarly, Biermann et al. (2007), in their study of 330 partnerships, find that *"Northern actors play a major role in initiating, funding and operating public-private governance"*, while 56 per cent of partnerships do not feature state partners from the global South (in spite of the framework's rhetorical emphasis on developing countries).

Figure 1: Partnerships for Sustainable Development lead partners

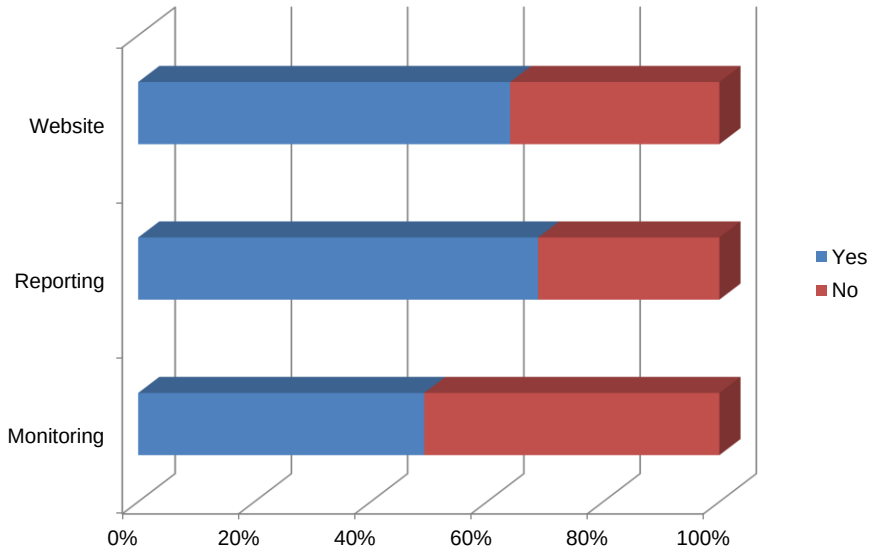


Source: Andonova and Levy (2003); Biermann et al. (2007)

Imbalances are also often found among non-state actors. Marginalised groups such as partners representing farmers, workers, indigenous people, women, youth and children are represented in fewer than one per cent of Partnerships for Sustainable Development (Biermann et al. 2012), whereas traditionally powerful groups in global politics, such as international organisations, governments, business and industry are overrepresented. Therefore, the Partnerships for Sustainable Development framework confirms the role of already powerful actors in global politics, rather than emancipating weaker groups.

The provision of basic information and commitments on an online platform may have effectively increased the visibility of (some) transnational initiatives. However, increased visibility does not imply greater transparency and accountability by individual transnational initiatives. In a study of 250 Partnerships for Sustainable Development, Hale and Mauzerall (2004) found that many partnerships lacked minimal transparency arrangements, in particular a reporting system, a monitoring mechanism and/or a website. In 2003, fewer than half of the registered partnerships had monitoring arrangements in place, while 31 per cent failed to produce reports (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Accountability arrangements



Source: Adapted from Hale and Mauzerall (2004)

In a 2012 study of 330 partnerships (Pattberg et al. 2012), only 12.7 per cent of all registered partnerships provided budget plans, and only 46 per cent of all registered partnerships were reporting on their activities.

In sum, the emphases on multi-stakeholder initiatives and transparency have not prevented the Partnerships for Sustainable Development framework from reproducing imbalances between more established and weaker actors. Also, partnerships have remained difficult to trace, as most of them do not have monitoring mechanisms in place and fail to produce activity reports and budget plans.

3.2.2 Effectiveness

Effectiveness could be considered in many ways – at the level of individual partnerships, and in terms of effectively fulfilling governance functions. In the discussion on Partnerships for Sustainable Development, most assessments focus on whether or not they lead to better implementation in global sustainability governance, for instance by pooling additional resources and by garnering implementation actions from a wider range of state and non-state actors. In the following, we address three issues: whether partnerships mobilise new and additional resources; whether partnerships focus on implementation; and whether individual partnerships deliver what they promise.

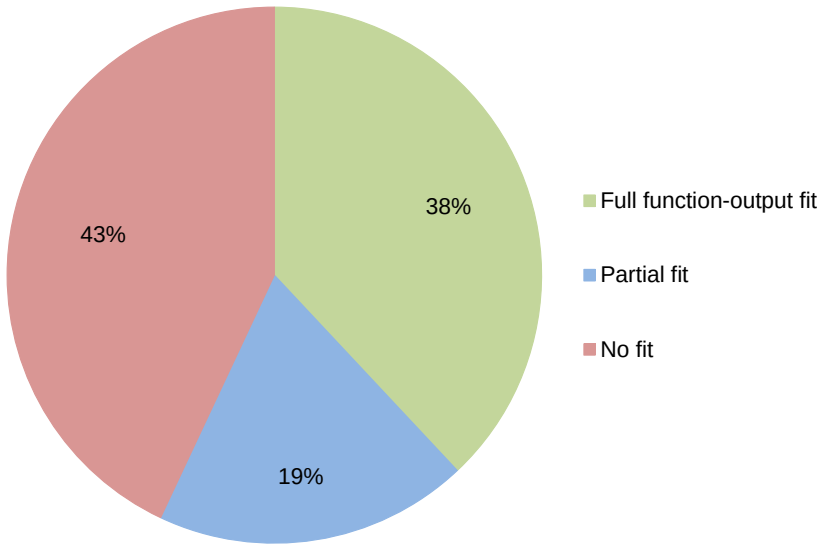
In terms of new and additional funding, at the time of the summit, funding for partnerships amounted to US$ 250 million; by 2004 funding had increased to US$ 1.02 billion (Hale / Mauzerall 2004). Although these amounts might seem large, according to Biermann et al. (2012) 65 per cent of registered partnerships were still looking for funding, and many of them lack the means to reach their self-declared goals. In the larger scheme, these amounts would also seem small when compared to official development assistance (Biermann et al. 2012). More importantly, it is difficult to distinguish genuinely new funding from funding

that was allocated before the WSSD (Bäckstrand 2006a). A substantial amount of increased funding was due to the reclassification of bi- and multilateral programmes. Moreover, few non-state actors contributed funding for partnerships; only an estimated 1 per cent of new funding is accounted for by businesses (Hale / Mauzerall 2004).

In terms of whether partnerships focus on implementation or direct environmental benefits, the answer also appears to be negative. In spite of the rhetorical emphasis on implementation, only a few partnerships focussed on implementing previously existing technologies, pilot projects, plans and policies. Only 17 per cent of energy-related Partnerships for Sustainable Development belonged to this category (Szulecki / Biermann / Pattberg 2011). Most partnerships rather focussed on functions such as knowledge dissemination, institutional capacity-building, training, and knowledge production. Although all of these functions may be important for improving global sustainability governance, the direct effect of Partnerships for Sustainable Development does not seem to be implementation as such, but the development of *"a bureaucratic procedural universe in parallel to existing intergovernmental processes"* (Biermann et al. 2012, 77).

In terms of whether individual partnerships deliver what they promise, Pattberg et al. (2012) have assessed the accuracy and consistency of declarations from 330 partnerships on their goals and functions and compared them with their actual activities and products (output). The resulting indicator – the "function-output fit" – serves as a minimal indicator for effectiveness. Although a fit between function and output does not indicate behavioural change (outcome), or changes in environmental indicators (impact), such a fit could be considered a necessary condition to achieve behavioural change and improvements in environmental indicators. Employing this method, Pattberg et al. (2012) found that 43 per cent of all Partnerships for Sustainable Development produced no output or no function-relevant output; another 19 per cent produced only the minimal output necessary to achieve their functions. Only 38 per cent of the partnerships could potentially achieve desired impacts and outcomes because they produced function-relevant outputs (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Function-output fit of total sample of Partnerships for Sustainable Development



Source: Pattberg et al. (2012)

3.3 Suggestions for reforms and lessons learnt

Partnerships for Sustainable Development could be regarded as illustrative of how a framework is deployed to address perceived deficits in global sustainability governance. At the same time, the longstanding operation of the framework also allows for rigorous assessments of whether – and to which extent – it provides answers regarding these deficits. In this regard, there is little reason for optimism. Empirical studies of the sample of participating partnerships have consistently demonstrated that their contribution towards a more effective and inclusive global sustainability governance is doubtful. These sobering findings, however, should not be seen as indicative of the potential of partnerships *per se*, nor should they be seen as representative of partnerships not directly related to the Partnerships for Sustainable Development framework. Rather, the findings should be contextualised and specifically associated with Partnerships for Sustainable Development as a framework, as the coherence of the sample of partnerships is primarily defined by politics (Mert / Chan 2012).

The fact that partnerships were primarily supply-driven rather than demand-driven is not surprising in the political context of the WSSD. Many initiatives were brokered under great pressure in order to be announced at the summit. Moreover, the terms of inclusion and operation were negotiated under pressure as well in order to feature partnerships as visible and action-oriented counterparts of the intergovernmental outcomes. Subsequently, the Guiding Principles for the framework were weakly defined, masking considerable disagreement among governments on the role of non-state and subnational initiatives in global sustainability governance. The operation of the framework suffered from a weak mandate and an under-resourced UNCSD, and partnerships received little guidance. To most observers, it therefore seems clear that the Partnerships for Sustainable Development framework is in need of reform (Steets 2005; Bäckstrand 2006a, 2006b; Beisheim 2012; Pattberg et al. 2012, 245). The most frequently suggested reforms relate to how inclusive a framework should be, accountability arrangements and the role of the administering body.

Some argue that Partnerships for Sustainable Development have been defined too broadly, with the expectation that they would address a wide range of targets and agreed outcomes such as Agenda 21, the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (in 2012 the Rio+20 outcomes were added). According to Bäckstrand (2006a) these outcomes – especially Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation – are broadly formulated and contain few specific or new targets. As a result, the thematic scope became too broad, complicating the link between actions on the ground and internationally agreed outcomes. Mert and Chan (2012), on the other hand, argue for a wider functional scope; according to them, their narrow definition as implementation instruments does not play to the potential of partnerships in functions such as setting (private) standards and norms as well as with regards to (technical, scientific and institutional) innovation. The scope of initiatives captured in the partnerships process is therefore perhaps too broad in a thematic sense; partnerships should address clearly formulated international priorities and targets. At the same time, the functional scope should perhaps be widened to capture the full functional potential of partnerships, which is not necessarily related to implementation in a narrow sense.

Currently, the Partnerships for Sustainable Development framework and the successor framework SD in Action do not require monitoring and reporting from individual partnerships, which complicates further assessment. The Partnerships for Sustainable Development framework would gain credibility and relevance if it could better guarantee transparency and accountability. Indeed, most suggestions for improving the Partnerships for Sustainable Development framework relate to accountability arrangements. One problem with designing accountability arrangements, however, relates to the wide range of partnerships to which different forms of accountability may be applicable *"to match the plural and amorphous features of global multi-sectoral partnerships"* (Bäckstrand 2006b; cf. Beisheim 2012). Moreover, in a framework such as Partnerships for Sustainable Development, the "chain of accountability" (Steets 2005) becomes longer. Partnerships need to be accountable towards all actors in multilateral processes: partners, partners' accountability holders, donors, people affected and governments. The two most often suggested improvements of the framework in terms of accountability are to either limit the number of partnerships or to differentiate accountability according to different functions and themes of subsets of partnerships. A framework could, for instance, capture a more limited sample of similar partnerships with *"measurable targets and timetables, more effective leadership, improved accountability mechanisms, and more systematic review, reporting and monitoring"* (Bäckstrand 2006b, 303). Alternatively, a framework could capture a broad thematic and functional scope and still allow for accountability through differentiated guidelines that are applicable to different types of partnerships (e.g. Steets 2005; Beisheim 2012).

Finally, observers have also called for a more active role of the administering body. The administering body should have the authority to not only maintain the basic infrastructure of the framework (e.g. an online platform), but also to assess individual partnerships and to decide on their participation in the framework. For instance, Hale and Mauzerall argue that *"partnerships that fail to meet these (minimal conditions) could, after a grace period, be removed from the partnerships program"* (Hale / Mauzerall 2004, 228). Similarly, Pattberg et al. (2012) argue that partnerships that fail to prove activity (through regular reporting, or through external validation, either by the coordinating agency or by external reviewers) should be removed by the administering body. A reinforced coordinating role, however, would also imply an extended mandate as well as sufficient financial allocations and administrative capacity.

Current recommendations are perhaps too narrowly focussed on the operations of the online platform, the operation of the Partnerships for Sustainable Development database, and procedures for inclusion and exclusion. Even within its limited mandate, the UNCSD as an administering body had been *"a thin shell of organizational infrastructure"* (Andonova / Levy 2003, 30). A reinforced administering body could proactively engage with partnerships as well as non-state and subnational stakeholders in a programmatic manner, actively enhance learning among partnerships, explore opportunities to broker new partnerships, etc. To some extent the Partnerships for Sustainable Development framework attempted to expand its operations. The UNCSD organised side events on the margins of the annual Commission for Sustainable Development meetings and "partnership fairs". However, the effect of these side events and fairs were compromised, as they had to compete for attention with high-level meetings. Partnership fairs –

conceived as venues to support partnerships and to broker new ones – never resulted in newly brokered partnerships, and every year after 2002, fewer partnerships registered with the framework (Mert / Chan 2012).

3.4 Conclusion

In spite of the mounting criticism of the Partnerships for Sustainable Development framework, it was not substantially improved in the context of the Rio+20 conference. A Partnerships Forum at Rio+20 reportedly *"ignited the enthusiasm, commitment and leadership of different stakeholders to continue to strengthen partnerships in the follow up of the conference"* (UN 2012a), but the role of partnerships in a reformed sustainability division remained unspecified. The Rio+20 document "The Future We Want" (UN 2012b) merely restated a commitment to partnerships without suggesting reforms. Attention rather focussed on "voluntary commitments", which is a comparatively obscure term, as partnerships at least allude to a certain type of organisation and a certain participatory quality. The Partnerships for Sustainable Development as a framework gradually became integrated in the SD in Action platform, and some database entries of Partnerships for Sustainable Development were integrated in the SD in Action database[14] together with entries from other initiatives within the UN such as the UN Global Compact. Contrary to the abovementioned recommendations, the SD in Action platform does not require more stringent accountability arrangements and does not clearly specify the functional and thematic scope of participating initiatives. However, there is hope that the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) (which replaced the UNCSD in September 2013) will have greater capacity to engage in stakeholder dialogues and will further develop a platform for partnerships (see paragraph 8c, A/RES/67/290, UN 2013a). For the further development of the SD in Action framework, the UN Special Report on Voluntary Commitments and Partnerships for Sustainable Development (UN 2013b) recommends a new architecture that encompasses *"proactive review, monitoring and accountability processes in a regular manner"* and a strong link to Sustainable Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda. Subsequently, a reformed transnational linking framework should ensure that partnerships thematically and functionally correspond with the Sustainable Development Goals (Widerberg / Pattberg 2014), and that partnerships fit within the greater scheme and mandate of the HLPF.

A reform of how the UN engages with partnerships is still necessary (Beisheim 2012). Until functional and thematic scopes of partnerships are more clearly defined, a stronger review and accountability mechanism is in place, and sufficient capacity is allocated, the Partnerships for Sustainable Development/SD in Action framework will continue to stand as an example of a global framework that fails to meet high expectations of a more effective and participatory global sustainability politics.

14 Amounting to an unofficial review and selection of "SD-in-Action-worthy" partnerships.

4 Case study: the Private Sector Initiative under the NWP

The Private Sector Initiative framework of the UNFCCC Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change represents one of the longest-standing experiences of engaging the private sector in multilateral climate change adaptation governance. Although case studies under the PSI are often referred to in research (e.g. Pauw / Pegels 2013; Pauw 2014; Surminski 2013; Sussman / Freed 2008; Kato et al. 2014), the PSI initiative itself has hardly been analysed.[15] Therefore, this chapter first explains how the PSI was established before analysing its outcomes against the initial targeted outcomes of the NWP (see Box 1 and UNFCCC 2007), the aims of the PSI in NWP's second phase (UNFCCC 2012, 2014a) as well as the expected outcomes of the NWP overall. The chapter concludes with remarks on the PSI's effectiveness and draws some lessons for future improvements.

4.1 Nairobi work programme and the PSI

The PSI is an attribute of the larger NWP under the UNFCCC. The NWP was established at COP 11 (2005) as a mechanism under the Convention to facilitate and catalyse the development and dissemination of information and knowledge that would inform and support adaptation policies and practices (UNFCCC 2006, dec. 2/CP.11). Its objective is twofold: 1) to assist all Parties, in particular developing countries, to improve their understanding and assessment of impacts, vulnerability and adaptation; and 2) to assist all Parties in making informed decisions on practical adaptation actions and measures (UNFCCC 2007, 2). Neither the private sector nor forms of cooperation are mentioned in the objectives. Initially, the private sector was not part of the NWP, but this changed over time, with the UNFCCC website currently stating that *"the NWP is implemented by Parties, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, the private sector, communities and other stakeholders".*[16]

The initial activities of the NWP that were planned from 2007 onwards included action at different levels of "Parties and organisations". The latter is better explained as follows: *"most significant activities of the NWP will be those undertaken by organizations, institutions, experts and communities, at their own initiative, in support of the objectives of the NWP, and catalyzed by the work of the NWP."* This is an interesting sentence for two reasons: 1) these "organisations" are hardly further defined, and the word "private" appears nowhere in the document; and 2) the "most significant activities" will be taken at "own initiative", which makes the NWP (and its PSI) a cooperative programme based on voluntary action – and therefore an interesting institution for this discussion paper (UNFCCC 2007). The expected outcomes of the NWP – all related to adaptation – are shown in Box 1.

15 Similarly, the NWP is often referred to in literature; see, for example, Fankhauser and Burton (2011); Harmeling, Kreft and Chamling Rai (2011); Horstmann (2011); Kreft, Oumar Kaloga and Harmeling (2011); Persson et al. (2009); and PwC (2010). But, as such, the programme was not analysed on its governance implications or effectiveness.

16 See http://unfccc.int/adaptation/workstreams/items/6995.php.

Box 1: Expected outcomes of the NWP
The expected outcomes of the NWP are (UNFCCC 2007, 3): 1. enhanced capacity at international, regional, national, sectoral and local levels to further identify and understand impacts, vulnerability and adaptation responses, and to select and implement practical, effective and high-priority adaptation actions; 2. improved information and advice to the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and to its subsidiary bodies on the scientific, technical and socio-economic aspects of impacts, vulnerability and adaptation; 3. enhanced dissemination and use of knowledge from practical adaptation activities; 4. enhanced cooperation among Parties, relevant organisations, business, civil society and decision-makers, aimed at enhancing their ability to manage climate change risks; 5. enhanced integration of actions to adapt to climate change with those to achieve sustainable development.

The second phase of the programme focusses on further engagement of organisations, experts, the private sector and other stakeholders (UNFCCC 2008, 12). Engagement of the private sector was foreseen to be done through an initiative by the UNFCCC secretariat, aiming to 1) highlight case studies of adaptation-related work carried out by the private sector, and 2) showcase business opportunities in adaptation planning and implementation. This resulted in the launch of the PSI in 2010. According to the UNFCCC (2014a):

> [T]*he unique expertise of the private sector, its capacity to innovate and produce new technologies for adaptation, and its financial leverage can form an important part of the multi-sectoral partnership that is required between governmental, private and non-governmental actors.*

The PSI provides an online platform for businesses to contribute to adaptation, both in their operations, and, *"importantly, in those of the most vulnerable countries and communities around the world"* (UNFCCC 2014a). From the website and a flyer (UNFCCC 2012), three targeted outcomes can be distilled:

A. aiming to catalyse private sector engagement in climate change adaptation efforts;
   - in particular in the most vulnerable countries and communities;

B. providing a platform for the private sector to showcase and exchange best practices and experiences;

C. presenting organisations the opportunity to:
   - develop knowledge on climate change adaptation;
   - build adaptive capacity;
   - be part of a growing network of organisations taking measures to adapt.

Whilst analysing whether these targeted outcomes are met, this discussion paper follows the definition of adaptation provided in the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, as this is also the definition used by the PSI itself: *"initiatives and measures to reduce the vulnerability of natural and human systems against actual or expected climate change effects,"* stressing that these are thus *"activities that enable businesses and communities to become more resilient to the impacts of climate change"* (UNFCCC 2014a).

4.2 Method for analysing PSI outcomes

The PSI website offers 100 publicly accessible case studies based on pre-defined forms. The advantage of these forms is that case studies are comparable; the disadvantage is that case study descriptions are short (two to five pages in length), which sometimes compromises the level of detail of the information contained in the documents.

The 100 case studies are analysed to identify whether they meet the aims of the PSI, as described in Box 2. These aims comprise the three targeted outcomes of the previous section (A–C) as modified to include:

- the aims of private sector engagement in the NWP's second phase to highlight case studies and showcase business opportunities[17] (both integrated in aim 2 of Box 2); and
- four additional expected outcomes of the overall NWP (see Box 2):
  - capacity at different levels (integrated in aim 1);
  - improved information to the COP and its subsidiary bodies (integrated in aim 2);
  - enhanced dissemination and use of knowledge (integrated in aim 2);
  - integration of actions in adaptation and sustainable development (added as outcome 4).

Box 2: Aims of the PSI[18]

1. Catalyse private sector engagement in climate change adaptation efforts:
   - at different levels: local, national and international
   - in particular in the most vulnerable countries and communities
2. Provide a platform for the private sector to showcase and exchange best practices and experiences:
   - highlight case studies
   - showcase business opportunities
   - provide improved information to the COP and its subsidiary bodies
3. Present organisations with the opportunity to:
   - develop knowledge on climate change adaptation
   - build adaptive capacity
   - be part of a growing network of organisations taking measures to adapt
4. Enhanced integration of actions to adapt to climate change with those for achieving sustainable development

The case study descriptions are based on voluntary self-submission, which presents three limitations for this analysis. First, it might lead to positively biased communication. This is not considered to constrain the analysis, as the PSI does not aim at effective adaptation as such, but rather at the three targeted outcomes of: catalysing action; providing a

17 Pauw (2014) and Pauw and Pegels (2013) describe two types of business opportunities of adaptation. First, there is a growing market for new and innovative products (e.g. in water purification and irrigation); and second, there is increasing financial support from the public sector for the private sector to implement adaptation projects.

18 The aims are distilled from the targeted outcomes of the PSI (A-C), the aim of private sector engagement in the NWP's second phase, and the overall expected outcomes of the NWP.

platform; and providing opportunities for developing knowledge, building capacity and networking. The analysis thus looks at the general nature of private engagement and is therefore not deceived by overly positive self-descriptions.

Second, voluntary self-reporting might limit the quality of submissions. This issue, too, would be more pressing if this analysis were to focus on adaptation effectiveness rather than on the three targeted outcomes.

The third limitation is a lack of representation. The database is neither representative of the entire private sector, nor evenly distributed across sectors. On the first issue, companies that "wait and see" – those with a strategy of deferral towards climate change impacts – and those that "share and shift" and thereby seek to externalise climate change risks through insurance and collaboration (see Berkhout / Hertin / Gann 2006, 151) are unlikely to submit a case study. The uneven distribution across sectors is evident: "water resources" (52 per cent of all case studies) and "food security, agriculture, forestry, fish" (47 per cent) are overrepresented, whereas tourism might be underrepresented (7 per cent). However, the lack of representation and the uneven distribution do not mean that the database is not a success. The dataset is likely to be skewed towards frontrunners – or in any case companies with a clear interest in climate change – but in a way that complements the implicit aims of the PSI: to showcase best practices and experiences (aim 2) and catalyse action (aim 1).

Although the database includes 100 case studies, 1 occurs twice, and 16 were excluded because they advertised an adaptation product or service without showing evidence of it already being tested in a case study. Altogether, 83 case study descriptions are analysed.

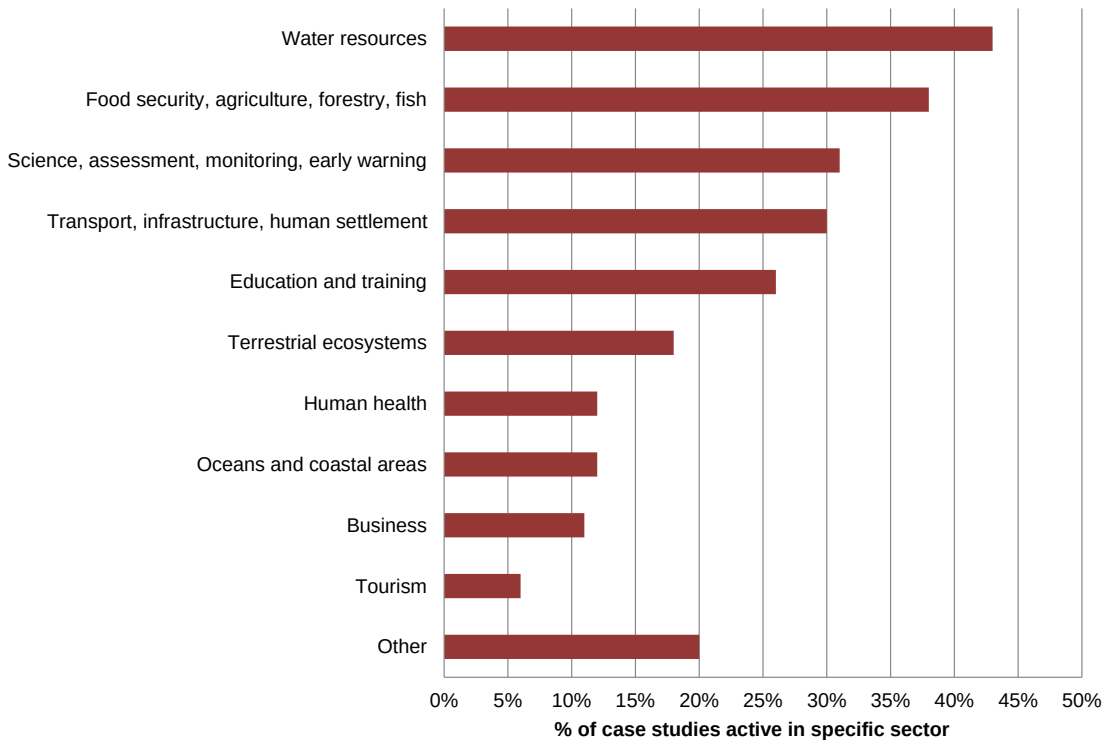
4.3 Results

4.3.1 Catalyse private sector engagement in climate change adaptation efforts

The PSI covers the entire world, with 21 projects in Europe, 19 in North America, 27 in Africa and Arab states, and 27 in Asia. However, it hardly prioritises developing countries, as aimed for by the NWP; and it definitely does not prioritise the "most vulnerable countries" as aimed for at later COP decisions on financing of adaptation.[19] The different prioritisations between the ongoing UNFCCC process and the non-state actions under the PSI could have many reasons; it might, for example, resemble the difficult business environment and low preparedness for private sector adaptation in these countries (cf. Pauw / Pegels 2013), or a lower awareness of the PSI among companies in developing countries. Projects also cover all sectors (see Figure 4) and all levels, with 61 per cent taking place at the local level, 25 per cent at the subnational level, 32 per cent at the national level and 17 per cent at the regional level (N=69).

19 §95 of decision 1/CP.16: the COP "[t]*akes note of the collective commitment by developed countries to provide new and additional resources" and "funding for adaptation will be prioritized for the most vulnerable developing countries, such as the least developed countries, small island developing States and Africa."*

Figure 4: Representation of sectors in the PSI[20]



Source: Authors' representation

The registry shows that the private sector engages in adaptation all over the world, and in every sector. Furthermore, 10 case studies have explicitly stated they were going to extend their projects. At least eight more projects are hinting at extension – some sort of "catalysation" – but most of the others have left it open. Overall, from the case study descriptions it remains unclear to what extent additional engagement has truly been catalysed by the PSI. Kato et al. (2014) looked at the BASIX-ICICI Lombard case study on rainfall-index insurance in India in more detail and found that the project was already implemented and up-scaled before the PSI even existed.

What does become clear is that private sector engagement itself catalyses adaptation beyond its private benefits; 78 per cent of the case studies (N=79) explicitly articulate adaptation benefits that reach beyond the firm (to e.g. communities, other firms or governments). Some engagement has a direct and positive influence on the livelihoods of people: for example, though improved water availability, or increasing agricultural output. Other engagement efforts result in minor side-benefits only, such as climate-resilient rail tracks (comforting travellers – thus ensuring customers), or new hiking paths where glaciers have retreated (benefitting hikers – potentially attracting more tourists). An adaptive measure such as wetland restoration can have positive effects on livelihoods (some case studies emphasise improved natural resource management) or be a minor side-benefit only (one case describes the "natural amenity" for local inhabitants). Fifty-nine per cent of the case studies (N=79) go beyond outreach and directly include stakeholders as beneficiaries in the operation of the

20 These categories are predetermined by the UNFCCC. Many case are active in one or more sectors.

initiative, for example when poor farmers receive support for increased and climate-resilient production, or when flood protection is provided through dikes or wetland restoration. In other cases, benefits are indirect and do not necessarily constitute adaptation, for example access to micro-credit or increased school enrolment.

4.3.2 Providing a platform for the private sector to showcase and exchange best practices and experiences

As written in the previous section, the PSI highlights case studies all over the world, at all levels, and across sectors. Individual case studies are often referred to in research, as they comprise useful examples of private sector engagement in adaptation (e.g. Pauw / Pegels 2013; Pauw 2014; Surminski 2013; Sussman / Freed 2008; Kato et al. 2014). The authors also know that businesses have presented the activities they undertook in their case studies at international conferences. In that sense, it seems to do a good job in "highlighting" and "showcasing".

But the provision of "improved information" to the COP is unlikely, partly because there are no guidelines for such information. Although case study descriptions are concise and have a similar format, they describe adaptation outcomes and outputs in different and often unclear ways; they are also not transparent on the generation, governance, delivery and use of finance (cf. Klein 2011). Only in seven case studies are cost estimates provided, but these are hardly representative and cover a wide range of investment amounts that range from US$ 3 million to 460 million Swiss francs (approx. US$ 516 million). Almost in all (98 per cent) case studies are websites referred to for more information, but that is hardly useful for the COP.

It goes beyond the scope of this discussion paper to analyse in detail whether "highlighting", "showcasing" and "improved information" catalyse more private sector engagement in adaptation (see also aim 1). Yet, the analyses of the case studies provide some first insights. Only in 12 case studies are there plans to scale-up projects, half of which in the "most vulnerable countries". Some projects cannot be scaled-up: Thames Water and Network Rail, for example, formulated strategic adaptation plans for the areas where they operate. Their assessments could be extended or inspire others, but the companies themselves have no physical area for up-scaling.

4.3.3 Presenting organisations' opportunities to develop knowledge, build capacity and be part of a network

The case studies as such probably helped organisations to "develop knowledge on climate change adaptation" and "build adaptive capacity". Many case studies (59 per cent) are also implemented with a partner – two thirds of which with a public entity – which also hints at a *"growing network of organisations taking measures to adapt".* However, it remains unclear whether these actions are catalysed by the PSI (see also aim 1), or taken independently. For example, in eight case studies it is explicitly stated that the government or its policies influenced project plans or outcomes. Four more case studies were implemented in consultation with the government. Yet, there is not one case study in which the PSI is mentioned as being the main cause for implementing a case study, which

also raises doubts about the capacity of – as well as the need for – the PSI to create opportunities to develop knowledge, build capacity and offer a network. Furthermore, in 2008 Sussman and Freed already wrote about private sector adaptation projects that only became case studies under the PSI after their initiation in 2010, such as the case studies of Rio Tinto and The Travelers Companies.

Finally, it can be questioned whether the case studies themselves are deliberately aimed at adaptation intervention, or "accidentally" contribute to it. For example, climate change impacts are described in only 55 per cent of case studies (N=84). In five case studies, climate change is not even mentioned, and in no case study can a definition of the concept of adaptation be found.

4.3.4 Enhanced integration of adaptation and sustainable development

It is difficult to assess the elements of the sustainable development of PSI case studies beyond having longer-lasting impacts. In general terms, adaptation has strong links to the environment (e.g. Fankhauser / Schmidt-Traub 2010; Mustelin et al. 2013; Pauw 2013) and development (e.g. Denton 2010; Romani / Stern 2011). Therefore, actions taken without reference to climatic change have the potential to affect vulnerability to it, and enhancement of adaptive capacity to climate change can be regarded as a component of sustainable development (Smit / Pilifosova 2003). Enhancement of adaptive capacity involves similar requirements as the promotion of sustainable development. Smit and Pilifosova (2003) listed such requirements (see below). Given that the fourth distilled aim of the PSI is enhanced integration, organisations would not have to meet all of these requirements in order to contribute to sustainable development. Examples of organisations actively engaging individual requirements are provided below, if available.

- **Improved access to resources** – Nestlé provides training to farmers on better farming practices, to improve both quality and yield, conserve water, optimise fertiliser use and increase soil fertility.
- **Reduction of poverty** – Fasiam Agro Farms and Jammu & Kasmir MAP Growers' Cooperative aim to lead farmers in Kasmir (India) out of the *"conundrum of climatic uncertainties, lost crops, debt and poverty and setting examples in feasible farming alternatives"*.
- **Improved education and information** – Ericsson improves access to weather and climate services for fishermen at Lake Victoria to make more informed decisions.
- **Improved infrastructure** – The international union of railways have undertaken a feasibility study analysing the impacts of climate change on rail transport infrastructure, focussing on an integrated management of weather- and climate-related natural hazards.
- **Respect for accumulated local experience** – SEKEM is building on local communities and their practices as well as consumer needs in its activities to incorporate adaptation priorities into its sustainability strategy.
- **Moderate long-standing structural inequities** – The Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, the International Center for Tropical Agriculture and the Catholic Relief Services evaluate their adaptation projects' impacts on income, poverty and equity.

- **Assurance that responses are comprehensive and integrative, not just technical** – Based on public consultation, Thames Water developed a Strategic Direction Statement to build capacity in terms of assets and employees on how to integrate climate change in business.
- **Active participation by concerned parties, especially to ensure that actions match local needs and resources** – In a public-private partnership, Cafédirect and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit supported smallholder tea and coffee farmers in six developing countries to cope with risks and impacts of climate change by improving their farming practices.
- **Improved institutional capacity and efficiency** – Many case studies include aspects on increasing capacities, but none of them include aspects on improving institutional capacity or efficiency.
- **Lowering of inequities in resources and wealth among groups** – Not explicitly addressed by case studies.
- **Diminished intergenerational inequities** – Not explicitly addressed by case studies.

The examples show that individual case studies are addressing at least some of the requirements of Smit and Pilifosova (2003). The short case study descriptions do not allow for an analysis of the extent to which these requirements are met.

4.4 Conclusion

The PSI was partly effective in achieving its aims, as formulated in Box 2. As a registry, it has succeeded in highlighting private action in adaptation across sectors, on many levels, and all over the world. The case studies highlight how broad the private sector's role in adaptation can be and show that there are business opportunities in adaptation. As such, the activities of the case studies probably helped organisations to develop knowledge on climate change adaptation and build adaptive capacity. Finally, the notion of sustainable development seems to be integrated in many of the PSI case studies, although not all of the identified requirements are met.

Yet, the extent to which the PSI has truly catalysed new or additional action – rather than just listing existing activities – remains unclear. This touches upon the very foundation of the use of the PSI: Is it merely a record of private sector activities in adaptation, or should it be a registry that aims to proactively mobilise private sector activities in the field of adaptation, and perhaps also monitor and verify their contributions? Although the NWP is often seen as a cornerstone for the further development of climate change adaptation-related issues under the UNFCCC (see e.g. Harmeling / Kreft / Chamling Rai 2011; Kreft / Oumar Kaloga / Harmeling 2011; PwC 2010), the PSI hardly comes to mind as a registry with such purposes. Yet there is potential to make the PSI a cornerstone – individual case studies are often referred to in research as useful examples of private sector engagement in adaptation (e.g. Pauw / Pegels 2013; Pauw 2014; Surminski 2013; Sussman / Freed 2008; Kato et al. 2014).

For the PSI to become more than a collection of useful case studies, reforms are needed. Orchestration from the UNFCCC secretariat or another legitimate body is necessary. Currently, the UNFCCC secretariat does not analyse the case studies – in a disclaimer it states that it does not take responsibility for them. As a result, accountability is low. For

example, one case study is taken up twice in the registry, and for 16 cases it remains unclear whether projects have actually been implemented. More striking is that it remains unclear as to what the case studies truly contribute to adaptation – and whether their activities are new and in addition to existing ones or just new labels on existing activities. There is even the risk that the PSI is used for window-dressing, or that its case studies cause maladaptation. More orchestration would move the PSI beyond being a registry.

It is likely that the private sector's appetite for adaptation has increased since the PSI was launched in 2011 – in any case, the private sector has good motivations to engage in adaptation (see Pauw 2014; Pauw / Pegels 2013). An increased appetite would result in a larger potential pool of cases, meaning a reformed PSI can be more selective and raise the bar when it comes to the type and quality of case studies registered. Proactive reviewing, monitoring and accounting, as well as options for reports on progress, can be considered under a more orchestrated PSI.

5 Lessons learnt for a GFCA

This discussion paper has two concluding chapters. Firstly, this chapter summarises experiences gained from the empirical data provided in chapters 3 and 4. Secondly, building on these lessons learnt, chapter 6 comprises policy-relevant design characteristics for a GFCA. For reasons of consistency and to create a better overview, both this chapter and the next chapter are built around the following four key points for a future GFCA.

1. A GFCA should be a comprehensive framework comprising multiple functions.
2. A GFCA should have clear guidelines and minimal conditions for participating initiatives.
3. A GFCA should be supported by sufficient organisational capacity.
4. A GFCA should be a well-designed framework for the long term and not too closely associated with political events.

A comprehensive framework

Both the Partnerships for Sustainable Development and PSI frameworks emphasise recording and visibility functions, such as making information searchable through publicly available online databases and showcasing best practices. However, a heavy emphasis on these functions does not ensure sufficient transparency and accountability, nor does it ensure effective mobilisation of new or enhanced non-state and subnational initiatives. In fact, a singular focus on visibility has been shown to backfire when highlighted initiatives do not deliver on their promises. The reliance on voluntary self-reporting in these existing frameworks has likely led to overly optimistic self-representations. For instance, the Partnerships for Sustainable Development framework has been accused of facilitating green-washing, that is, passing off business-as-usual activities as green and sustainable (Friends of the Earth 2003).

Both the Partnerships for Sustainable Development and PSI frameworks do not perform particularly well at ensuring accountability from non-state and subnational stakeholders towards the respective frameworks. In the case of the Private Sector Initiatives, the

UNFCCC does not analyse showcased initiatives, and it remains unclear whether initiatives actually contribute to adaptation. In the case of Partnerships for Sustainable Development, most initiatives do not produce minimal outputs to be considered effective. To some extent the Partnerships for Sustainable Development framework also implied a mobilisation function; for instance "partnership fairs" were organised in conjunction with annual meetings of the UNCSD. However, the catalysing effect of the Partnerships for Sustainable Development framework has been limited, and there is no evidence that new initiatives were brokered within the framework (Mert / Chan 2013). To some extent, this may be due to a lack of organisational capacity within the framework to consistently perform functions beyond recording and registration of non-state and subnational initiatives.

A GFCA could considerably improve upon the Partnerships for Sustainable Development and PSI frameworks by emphasising a number of linked functions alongside recording and visibility functions. This includes, in particular, the mobilisation and monitoring of initiatives. A monitoring function would make the overall and individual contributions by participating initiatives more traceable and enable the distinction between initiatives that make substantial contributions and those that represent business-as-usual. A GFCA could also include a more active role in the mobilisation of non-state and subnational initiatives, for example by matching resources and partners, by brokering new initiatives, facilitating and advising existing initiatives, or by partaking in certain initiatives.

Guidelines and minimal conditions for participating initiatives

In the development of a GFCA, two questions need to be answered regarding the scope of participating initiatives: What should be the minimal conditions for participation in the GFCA? Which types of initiatives should be included in a GFCA?

Both the Partnerships for Sustainable Development and PSI frameworks fail to formulate stringent minimum conditions for participation. For instance, although the Partnerships for Sustainable Development framework stipulates that initiatives should be new or make additional contributions to global sustainable development, it does not explicitly define what would count as "new" or "additional". Generally, neither framework has strict guidelines on the inclusion of non-state and subnational initiatives, nor requires that they have start-up funding, report at regular intervals, set clear objectives and measurable targets, etc. Consequently, many ineffective initiatives are included. Moreover, because both frameworks lack mandates to screen participating initiatives, underperforming initiatives are not removed and continue to be featured as case studies and best practices, seemingly enjoying the recognition of the UNCSD and the UNFCCC. In the case of the Partnerships for Sustainable Development framework, businesses have lost interest because the framework is too inclusive, and businesses are concerned that their reputations will suffer from being associated with low- or non-performing initiatives.[21]

A GFCA could set minimal conditions for participation through more stringent guidelines, such as the availability of start-up funding, budget plans and regular reporting. Such conditions also would be consistent with the finding that more successful initiatives generally feature a minimal degree of institutionalisation (see chapter 3).

21 Interview with representative of a business and industry non-governmental organisation (constituency group).

In terms of types of initiatives that a framework should include, the Partnerships for Sustainable Development and PSI frameworks are quite different. Whereas the PSI framework focusses on contributions in the form of case studies from (individual) businesses, the guidelines of the Partnerships for Sustainable Development framework stipulate that initiatives should be collaborative and multi-stakeholder arrangements should be aimed at implementation. By design, the Partnerships for Sustainable Development framework is therefore more inclusive, inviting the participation of a host of non-state and subnational actors. Moreover, Partnerships for Sustainable Development are considered implementation instruments, whereas initiatives in the PSI are considered case studies.

In the proposed case of a GFCA, participating non-state and subnational initiatives do not necessarily need to focus on implementation alone. In practice, many participating non-state and subnational initiatives are not solely focussed on direct implementation; they may also introduce new norms, for example setting new and private standards through labelling or through phasing out substances (e.g. Refrigerants Naturally! – phasing out hydrofluorocarbon gases in refrigeration; or Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles – phasing out lead in fuels). It has also been argued that non-state and subnational initiatives may be most effective and influential in newly emerged areas that are not (yet) the subject of internationally agreed policies (Gunningham 2007; Mert / Chan 2012). Another question relates to the constellation of partners within participating initiatives. Should GFCA initiatives be cooperative in nature, as in the case of the Partnerships for Sustainable Development Framework, involving more than one partner, or could they also include actions by individual non-state or subnational actors? Moreover, should government-only alliances or "mini-lateral climate clubs" (Weischer / Morgan / Patel 2012) also be considered possible participants in a GFCA? In determining the scope of initiatives, it seems to be of foremost importance that participating initiatives do not compete with the multilateral UNFCCC process (which might be a reason to exclude mini-lateral clubs), and that participating initiatives make credible contributions towards a low-carbon and climate-resilient future, which implies that participating initiatives agree to regularly report on and monitor progress.

Sufficient organisational capacity

A GFCA needs sufficient organisational capacity to consistently perform multiple functions and responsibilities over the long term. In the case of the Partnerships for Sustainable Development and the PSI frameworks, there is, for example, a lack of organisational capacity to successfully perform mobilisation functions. As a result, these frameworks are mainly associated with online registries with limited functionality, and they are prone to be outdated and lacking in regular reporting from participating non-state and subnational initiatives. Part of the problem is the fact that the administrative bodies of these frameworks – the High Level Political Forum (previously UNCSD) and the UNFCCC secretariat – have limited capacities to devote their efforts to non-state and subnational initiatives when their priorities as international bodies primarily rest with intergovernmental processes.

In the case of a GFCA, organisational capacity is even more crucial, as it is envisaged as a comprehensive framework with multiple functions, including mobilisation, monitoring and overall assessment of non-state and subnational initiatives. Although the UNFCCC secretariat would seem to be the natural home for a GFCA due to its convening power, its centrality in the multilateral climate process, and its legitimacy in global climate gover-

nance, its priority also lies with the intergovernmental process. Diverting limited means to administer a GFCA may generate criticism within the UNFCCC process. Moreover, a UNFCCC-administered GFCA might lead to unnecessary political interference, for instance in the day-to-day operations of the framework. A solution that both yields the strengths of the UNFCCC secretariat while avoiding politicisation and a lack of institutional capacity might lie in a network approach. This approach disaggregates responsibilities for multiple functions under a GFCA and allocates them to multiple actors, including think tanks, expert organisations, research organisations and academia, and international bodies. Such a network could yield the strengths and pool resources from multiple organisations while retaining legitimacy through the support of and partnership with international bodies such as the UNFCCC secretariat or the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

A well-designed framework for the long term

Although non-state and subnational initiatives are not part of the multilateral climate process and generally should not be subject to the (same) political deliberations as intergovernmental negotiations, in practice the close alignment between multilateral and non-state and subnational processes has caused some concerns (Chan 2012; Mert / Chan 2012). Most lessons in this regard could be drawn from the Partnerships for Sustainable Development framework, as this framework is closely associated with the WSSD. The close conjunction between the framework and the WSSD has led to criticism that the focus on non-state and subnational initiatives distracted too much from international negotiations. Moreover, the Partnerships for Sustainable Development framework lost momentum soon after – and even during – the WSSD. Although governments agreed that non-state and subnational initiatives could make important implementation contributions, they still did not devise fitting guidelines and mandates for the operation of the framework. Subsequently, the Partnerships for Sustainable Development framework quickly became outdated. The number of initiatives registering dwindled after the WSSD. Similarly, the PSI collected its 99 case studies rapidly, but subsequently no new case studies were added. As a result, the Partnerships for Sustainable Development and PSI frameworks were mostly associated with online registries that quickly became outdated. Rather than representing permanent features in global sustainability and adaptation governance to mobilise non-state and subnational action, the frameworks resembled temporary snapshots of non-state and subnational action.

As governments look towards a future climate regime at the climate conference in Paris in 2015, they have a unique opportunity to engage non-state and subnational actors through a GFCA. However, a GFCA should not be merely associated with an individual conference. It should be a fixed feature in the climate-governance landscape. Therefore, a GFCA should be well-designed and not rushed so as to be featured as an “outcome” of a particular conference. A global framework would be most effective when attention is given to both the launch of a GFCA and subsequent follow-up processes. The pressure to launch a GFCA and new initiatives should not lead to a weakly defined framework.

The next chapter builds on lessons learnt from the case studies on the Partnerships for Sustainable Development framework and the PSI, identifying the key elements and a possible design for a GFCA.

6 Design of a GFCA

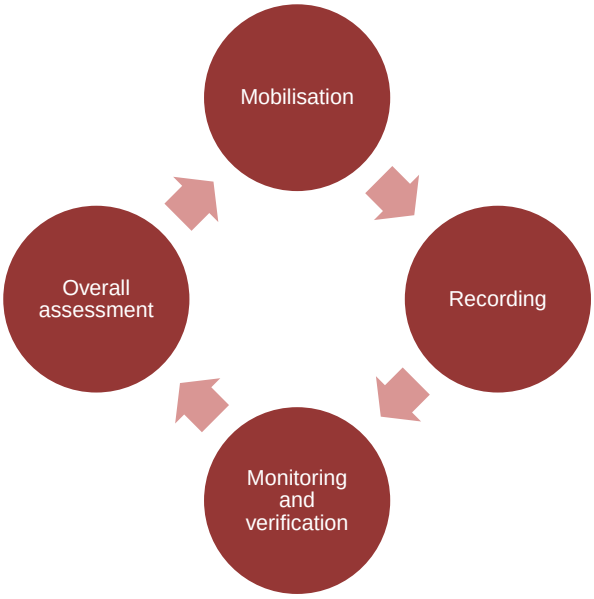
This is the second concluding chapter in this discussion paper. The previous chapter derived lessons learnt from the empirical data provided in chapters 3 and 4. This chapter builds on these lessons learnt and proposes practical and policy-relevant design characteristics for a GFCA. This and the previous chapter are centred on four lessons learnt.

1. A GFCA should be a comprehensive framework, comprising multiple functions.
2. A GFCA should have clear guidelines and minimal conditions for participating initiatives.
3. A GFCA should have sufficient organisational capacity.
4. A GFCA should be a well-designed framework for the long term and not too closely associated with political events.

A comprehensive framework

Although most existing frameworks linking non-state and subnational initiatives with multilateral processes emphasise the function of recording, this function should be embedded in a more comprehensive programme that mobilises new and enhanced actions; facilitates information exchange and networking; ensures quality of data; and monitors and verifies the performance of individual non-state and subnational initiatives. Such a comprehensive approach would incorporate functions of mobilisation, recording, monitoring and overall assessment (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Functions under a comprehensive framework



Source: Authors' representation

- **Mobilisation** assumes an orchestrating role by an administrative body to reach out to – and to support – non-state and subnational stakeholders and their actions. Outreach is a function to identify, invite and engage stakeholders and (existing) initiatives to relate their actions to policies, goals, targets and multilateral priorities. Targeted stakeholders could be national, subnational, private, civil society and multilateral. In terms of support, a GFCA could help non-state and subnational actors and initiatives to: develop effectively; match partners and resources; provide advice and guidance; and facilitate virtual and physical venues for information exchange.

- **Recording** is the function of featuring non-state and subnational initiatives in a publicly available register. It assumes a certain infrastructure and set of operations for updating the registry. Inclusion in a register serves as recognition that a particular action contributes towards the multilateral priorities; therefore, fitting procedures and guidelines should be in place to define to scope of participating non-state and subnational initiatives (see below). Registration in the framework could be done through self-registration, or the administering body of the GFCA could approach certain initiatives. Although the recording might seem a straightforward and one-off function, consistent recording requires long-term and continuous attention. Subsequent functions – monitoring and verification in particular – build on effective recording.

- **Monitoring and verification** ensures progress on the basis of regular reporting by non-state and subnational initiatives, and they safeguard that participating initiatives meet minimal requirements. Without regular (self-) reporting, recognition frameworks may gradually become repositories of past – and not always successful – experiences. Therefore, initiatives should provide regular proof of activity (Pattberg et al. 2012). Existing voluntary reporting schemes (such as the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme, ISO 14001 and the Global Reporting Initiatives) could inform minimal standards for reporting; more ambitious reporting schemes (such as GRI and the Carbon Disclosure Project) could inform reporting on various environmental aspects (such as water and electricity use, emissions, etc.). A GFCA could collaborate with existing reporting standard initiatives to avoid unnecessary administrative burdens. Most frameworks assume self-reporting as a sufficient means to track progress. However, they have also come under scrutiny for lack of verification (Bäckstrand 2006a; Biermann et al. 2007; Pattberg et al. 2012). A global framework would gain credibility from a verification function through external or peer assessment. Verification would also encourage participants to deliver on their promises. Verification requires a significant investment of time and resources, but this burden could be shared among various accredited bodies, or between reviewing peers.[22]

- **Overall assessment** allows for an aggregate view of the broad sample of participating non-state and subnational initiatives. Individual assessments should be periodically synthesised in overall assessment reports. This could take the form of a report by the UNFCCC secretariat. Such a report would account for the overall effectiveness of the GFCA. Bodies outside of the UNFCCC could also carry out assessments with a view to a wider audience. Periodic assessments could become important drivers in advancing non-state and subnational initiatives, demonstrating the utility of (certain)

22 As registered initiatives assess among themselves, peer pressure and enhanced circulation of lessons and best practices should safeguard consistency with the overall objectives of the framework.

initiatives (e.g. by sector, or by function), and informing mobilisation efforts. For instance, mobilisation efforts could be directed towards areas where initiatives are relatively underrepresented.

Guidelines and minimal conditions for participating initiatives

A GFCA should set minimal criteria for inclusion in order to distinguish beneficial non-state and subnational initiatives from superficial ones (Hale / Chambers 2014; see example guidelines Box 3).

Box 3: Example guidelines

Participating initiatives under the GFCA are:

- focussed on climate mitigation, or at the very least have mitigation or adaptation as an associated concern ("co-benefit");
- additional to multilateral efforts; the additional value of initiatives relates to the implementation of governmentally and multilaterally agreed outcomes. Additional value may furthermore lie in functions such as knowledge production and dissemination, education, innovation, accountability, non-state norm and standard-setting;
- contributing to a framework assuming positive incentives; participating initiatives and non-state actors should see the benefits of liaising with the UNFCCC process;
- collaborative in nature and require contributions from two or more entities. Targeted stakeholders must have something to contribute to collective actions rather than their own internal policies (such as corporate social responsibility);
- relevant to multiple parties. Initiatives and actions should have a geographic scope (in terms of organisations and/or operations) beyond individual national constituencies;
- oriented towards present operations and future results; targeted stakeholders should aim at new commitments or expanding existing actions and initiatives, rather than merely showcasing past experiences (such as best practices).

Guidelines and minimal conditions for participation define the scope of participating partnerships and reflect the objectives of a GFCA. For instance, a framework could specifically aim at quantified reductions in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and therefore only engage non-state and subnational initiatives with quantified emission-reduction targets (e.g. Blok et al. 2012). However, few initiatives have the capacity or the knowledge to account for their emissions in a detailed manner. Furthermore, by accounting for emissions, a GFCA could be perceived as competing with the multilateral UNFCCC process, in which an accounting of emissions usually happens at the level of sovereign states. Governments of non-annex I Parties in particular might become suspicious that a GFCA could shift responsibilities from large emitting countries to voluntary and non-state initiatives.

It has also been suggested that frameworks linking non-state and subnational initiatives could include a wider scope of actions and initiatives and recognise contributions that are not necessarily measurable in quantifiable terms such as innovation, raising awareness and organisational capacity-building (Mert / Chan 2012). A more inclusive GFCA would require a fitting design that accommodates different functions and different types of initiatives. Instead of one registry that mixes all types together, a GFCA could include

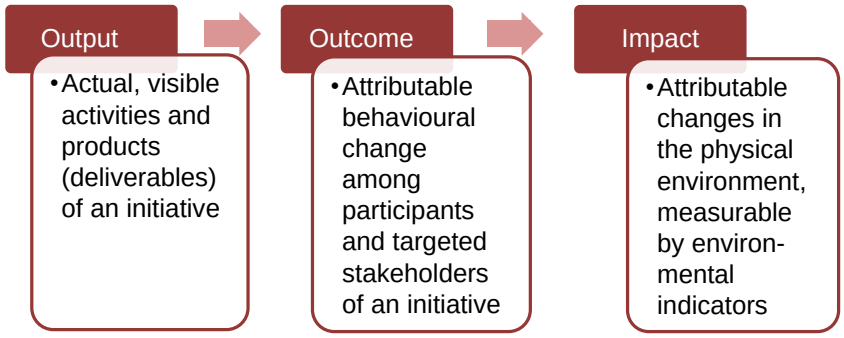
multiple "layers" or sub-registries that gather different types of initiatives (cf. Hale / Chambers 2014; Höhne / Dixson-Declève / Morgan 2014).

A layer refers to a distinct sample of initiatives that share certain:

- characteristics (e.g. climate commitments by subnational governments),
- geographical groupings (e.g. initiatives in Small Island Developing States),
- functions (e.g. awareness-raising, norm and standard setting, technical implementation, education), as well as
- the declaration of quantified targets, and
- the policy areas they address (e.g. renewable energy, buildings, land-use), etc.

The shared characteristics of each layer could inform subsequent accountability procedures through a layered assessment methodology. A layered framework could follow Easton's (1965) three-dimensional concept of effectiveness in systems analyses (see Figure 6), which has been successfully applied in recent scholarship on non-state actors and subnational initiatives (Pattberg et al. 2009; Chan / Müller 2012; Pattberg et al. 2012).

Figure 6: Three-dimensional concept of effectiveness



Source: Authors' representation

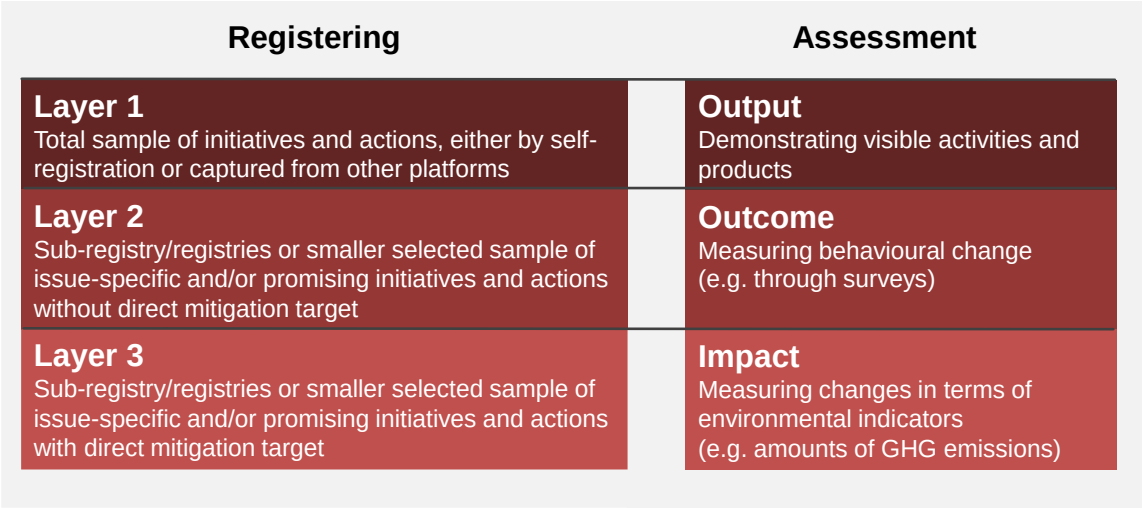
Some layers may aim at measurable changes in environmental indicators ("impact"), whereas other aim at behavioural change ("outcome"), and all initiatives can be expected to produce visible activities and products ("outputs").

In a layered GFCA (see Figure 7), not every recorded initiative needs to be assessed to the same degree. Although all participating initiatives could be part of a simple assessment (layer 1), mainly focussing on self-descriptions and outputs (e.g. production of reports, the holding of meetings and the realisation of infrastructure),[23] a subset ("layer 2") could be assessed on behavioural change (e.g. through surveys); a further subset ("layer 3") of

23 Pattberg et al. (2012) developed an assessment methodology "function-output-fit" that matches outputs and functions. The underlying logic is that in order to fulfil a certain function effectively, an initiative should produce certain output. For instance, an initiative that declares training as its function should at least produce a curricular programme and organise seminars. Moreover, in order to generate higher order effects (outcomes and impact), an initiative could be expected to have a function-output-fit.

initiatives with explicit mitigation targets could be assessed in terms of amounts of reduced GHG emissions.

Figure 7: A layered GFCA



Source: Authors' representation

Sufficient organisational capacity

A single administrative body for a GFCA may not have sufficient organisational capacity to perform all functions under a comprehensive framework. For instance, the UNFCCC secretariat has limited means and workforce capacity to operate a GFCA, and its focus will remain on multilateral negotiations. Moreover, international bodies may be subject to considerable political pressure – for instance, the UNFCCC secretariat's politically charged environment complicates the allocation of sufficient means and mandates to operate a global framework for an extended period of time.

At the same time, a GFCA would benefit from a close association with an international body, such as the UNFCCC secretariat or UNEP, because it could build on existing mobilisation efforts within these organisations, and because international organisations have significant convening power and widely perceived legitimacy and normative weight through universal membership.

Therefore, a global framework could be organised as a network involving both expert organisations and international organisations, including the UNFCCC secretariat. Such a framework would disaggregate responsibilities for functions under a comprehensive umbrella. The UNFCCC secretariat could continue – and reinforce – its mobilisation and recording efforts, for instance in Technical Expert Meetings and the Momentum for Change Initiative, while experts and research organisations could focus on the monitoring and assessment of non-state and subnational initiatives. An interesting example in this regard is the "Cloud of Commitments", in which a non-state partner (Natural Resources Defence Council) gathers initiatives registered with the HLPF and reviews and promotes certain actions. Moreover, assessments by non-state partners in a GFCA could strategically inform the UNFCCC secretariat to *"develop cross-cutting programmes to*

recognize particularly valuable commitments and enhance the transparency of initiatives", or *"to help build networks in areas where they do not exists (e.g. regional networks)"* (Hale / Chambers 2014).

A well-designed framework for the long term

A GFCA should provide effective coordination between multilateral processes and non-state and subnational initiatives over the long term. Therefore, it needs to be well-designed and consider and address possible concerns and reservations at an early stage.

Negotiators may be under pressure to reach an agreement in the short term. However, they should avoid relegating future engagement with non-state and subnational initiatives by focussing on an individual objective – or just a few. A singular focus on visibility, and the launch of a few eye-catching initiatives, could backfire if highlighted initiatives do not deliver on their promises. Although there is a blueprint for developing and negotiating a GFCA, three perceptions should be avoided.

- A framework should not distract from reaching a comprehensive climate agreement ("window-dressing").
- It should not infringe on the sovereignty of governments.
- It should not allow participants in a framework to claim climate-friendly policies while continuing business-as-usual ("green-washing").

The design of a comprehensive and layered GFCA, as presented in this chapter, addresses some of these concerns. The GFCA has a limited institutional footprint, as it links and builds on existing efforts in a network of experts, research organisations and international organisations. The continuous operation of a GFCA allows governments to focus on reaching ambitious climate agreements instead of presenting and mobilising non-state initiatives. Moreover, monitoring and verification functions greatly enhance the credibility of the overall framework, preventing its misuse for green-washing. A robust monitoring and verification function also makes the framework more attractive for non-state and subnational stakeholders, who see reputational benefits in a credible and ambitious GFCA.

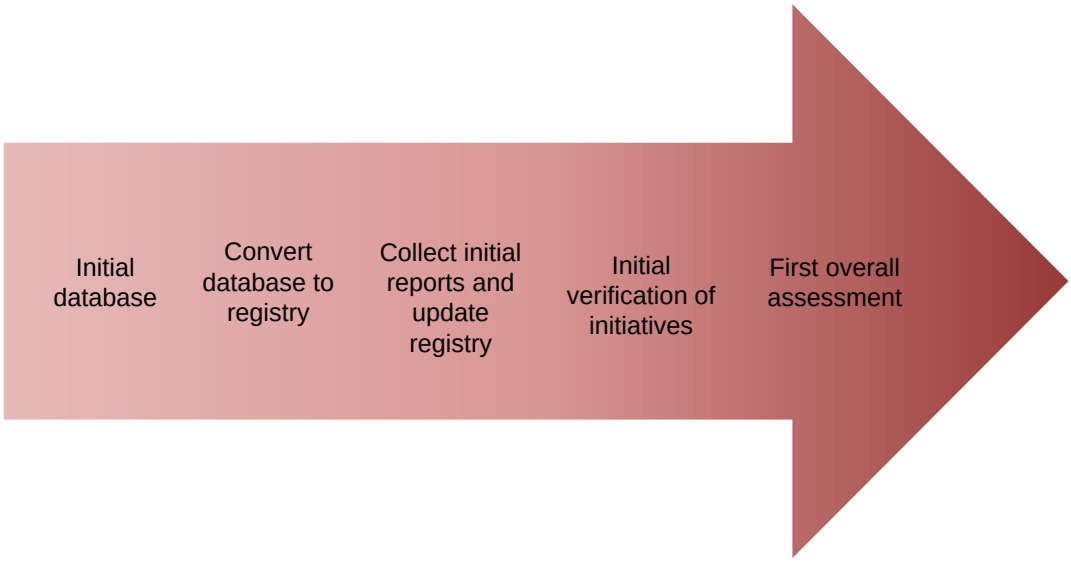
In the further development of a GFCA, special attention should be given to the needs of developing countries. When non-state and subnational initiatives are envisaged as contributing towards implementation in developing countries, it is reasonable to expect a certain commitment of resources and facilities. In this regard, opportunities could be explored to couple a GFCA with possible financiers and credit facilities.

Next steps

The further development of a comprehensive framework could be phased (see Figure 8) by gradually building on existing efforts within the UNFCCC as well as expert and research communities, and progressively extending functions. Existing databases (e.g. the Portal on Cooperative Initiatives and the PSI) could be synthesised and expanded, and registration functions could be added to produce a GFCA registry. The initial GFCA registry could require regular reporting at a later stage. Once regular reporting is introduced, the registry can be cleaned up; initiatives that fail to report – following the

example of the UN Global Compact – could receive a one-time grace period to meet participation requirements. At a later stage, external research and expert organisations could verify the progress of (sets of) participating initiatives. On the basis of verified progress data, the first of a series of (annual) overall assessments could be conducted.

Figure 8: Phased development of a GFCA



Source: Authors' representation

A GFCA, as presented in this discussion paper, would represent a major improvement to previous frameworks linking non-state and subnational initiatives with multilateral processes. The proposed GFCA would be a durable and collaborative programme rather than the outcome of a particular summit. Rather than being operated and administered by a single administrative body, the GFCA would be operated and administrated by a network of experts, think tanks, public- and private organisations, in collaboration with the UNFCCC. Moreover, the proposed GFCA would combine multiple functions, namely to mobilise new and enhance initiatives; to record them in a publicly available registry; to monitor and verify their progress (with the possibility to deregister non-communicating or underperforming initiatives); and to conduct periodic, overall assessments to ensure that the framework leads to higher ambition and better implementation.

The proposed GFCA could become an important – even pivotal – element in the future global climate-governance architecture. On the one hand, this framework would strengthen the orchestration and coordination of non-state and subnational efforts, steering them towards the implementation of international targets and agreements, and towards more ambitious actions. On the other hand, this framework would also entail official recognition of those who really contribute to low-carbon and climate-resilient development. Participation in a well-designed GFCA would be an additional motivation for reputation-conscious non-state stakeholders, such as businesses and NGOs.

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