

## Research Project D1

### Partnerships for Sustainable Development in Areas of Limited Statehood: Impact, Conditions for Success, and Meta-Governance

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#### 2. Summary

This project explores the *conditions* for the success of transnational partnerships for sustainable development in areas of limited statehood. The third funding phase will focus on analyzing the *impact* of these partnerships and on investigating what *consequences* the experiences and evaluations of the actors involved may have in terms of their *meta-governance*.

The results of our first two research phases show that many partnerships have difficulties achieving the desired *output* and *outcomes* with their individual projects in areas of limited statehood. They have even greater difficulties with regard to *impact*, i.e., making a broader and long-term contribution to problem solving in these areas. Yet such impact is essential for sustainable governance beyond isolated project successes.

First, the project will investigate participant and stakeholder views on the extent to which transnational partnerships *impact* sustainable development governance and the *conditions* for a broader and long-term impact in areas of limited statehood. Second, the project will examine the resulting *consequences* for a next generation of partnership activities: Based on the experiences of participants and stakeholders over the past ten years, how will/should these governance constellations be further developed and embedded? A focal point of this part of the research will lie on the question of whether and how international or national actors are attempting to build better *meta-governance* for these initiatives. In that context, we will specifically investigate the new UN Registry for partnerships, the UN Partnership Facility, which

Secretary General Ban Ki-moon is advocating, and the new review at the UN's High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), which shall provide a platform for partnerships.

Empirically, we will continue to talk to a wide range of transnational partnerships' members, staff, and stakeholders at the international and transnational level. At the national and local level, we will study the activities of three previously identified types of partnerships and their work to promote sustainable water governance in areas of limited statehood in Kenya: a *service* partnership working to improve access to water and sanitation facilities (Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor, WSUP), a *knowledge* partnership working to develop and disseminate the policy concept of Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) (the Global Water Partnership, GWP), and a *standard-setting* partnership working in the framework of a multi-stakeholder roundtable to develop the International Water Stewardship Standard for water users (the Alliance for Water Stewardship, AWS).

### 3. Research Goals and Questions

This project studies the conditions necessary for the success of transnational partnerships for sustainable development in areas of limited statehood. Having focused on local-level activities of service partnerships in the previous funding period, the third phase will take an expanded approach to reassess the governance contribution of transnational partnership in areas of limited statehood, specifically the assessment of their impact as perceived by involved local, national, transnational, and international actors. The project has two main goals:

- First, to identify the most important conditions for partnership *impact* in areas of limited statehood by conducting interviews with local, national, transnational, and international actors involved in or affected by the projects.
- Second, to investigate what *consequences* these actors' experiences and assessments are having on their role in the various governance constellations that are the subject of this study. Are project partners shifting their priorities, and if so, how? Are their roles changing? Are they intensifying or reducing their involvement in projects? We are particularly interested in finding out whether actors are endeavoring, based on past experiences, to increase *meta-governance* of projects in order to shift the focus to long-term solutions.

The project aims at identifying the causal mechanisms underlying both of these aspects (see Figure 1) and thus at contributing to the development of theory both on the questions guiding the research center SFB 700 and on the existing gaps in the research on partnerships (see Hodge et al. 2010: 607).

*Figure 1: Focal Points of Research in the Third Funding Period*

<i>Conditions</i> for the success of partnerships in areas of limited statehood, particularly regarding <i>impact</i>	⇒	<i>Actor perspectives</i> specifically on <i>impact</i>	⇒	<i>Consequences:</i> changes in actors' roles within the governance constellation from withdrawal to increased <i>meta-governance</i>
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**(1) *Partnership impact and conditions for success: Perspectives of those involved and affected by projects***

The term *impact* refers to the far-reaching effects of partnership activities, in particular, the potentially long-term and widespread effects that continue even after a project's conclusion. These include the project's contribution (or lack thereof) to solutions, its sustainability, and its possible (unintended) negative or positive side effects. In the second phase of the project, we were already able to identify several medium-term effects at the local level, including some unintended negative side effects. As our findings show, it is extremely difficult to measure the impact of partnerships based on "objective" indicators; it is also nearly impossible to identify causal relationships (attribution problem, see Ulbert 2013). We have therefore chosen an actor-oriented approach that incorporates the (inter-)subjective view of the actors involved in the partnerships. Although this approach can present methodological problems (especially ex-post rationalizations), we assume that the subjective viewpoint is highly relevant for the future behavior of the actors in governance constellations. Selected external actors at the transnational and international level will be interviewed as well as actors involved in and affected by projects at the national and local level (see Figure 3). These various actors will also be asked to provide their assessments of the key conditions ensuring that partnerships achieve their desired impact.

At the partnership level, our focus lies on the water partnerships that have achieved the most interesting results so far in regard to the conditions for success and necessary adaptation processes (see Beisheim 2011; Beisheim/Campe 2012). The selected partnerships are devoted to providing three key governance services in this area: access to water and sanitation (*Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor*, WSUP); integrated water resource management (*Global Water Partnership*, GWP); and establishment of standards for water users (*Alliance for Water Stewardship*, AWS). These three examples represent the three types of partnerships defined during the first funding period and vary correspondingly in their approaches and project designs: WSUP, as a *service* partnership, implements its own projects at the local level in areas of limited statehood; GWP, as a *knowledge* partnership, develops policy tools and advises national governments in their implementation; AWS as a *standard-setting* partnership to develop the International Water Stewardship Standard and a certification program for a broad range of water users. This variance in types and governance activities of partnerships ensures that our study will cover a large number of actors involved in and affected by these projects, the different conditions required for project success, and the diverse impacts of projects on numerous levels.

**(2) *Consequences for the governance constellation: Changing roles of the actors involved?***

Second, this project will study whether actors have revised their assessments of project impact and conditions for success in areas of limited statehood, and whether these possibly changed assessments are in turn having an effect on their activities and governance constellations. Are there shifts in the "interplay" (Wolf 2008) among the actors in a partnership? What consequences does this in turn have for the international system or for state actors in areas of limited statehood?



Of particular interest is the question of whether actors are working to increase *meta-governance*, that is, to create more rules for partnership activities (“governing of governing”, Kooimann 2003: 170; “regulation of self-regulation”, Sørensen 2006: 98; “organization of self-organization”, Jessop 1998: 42, 2009). International organizations could certainly be discussing and working toward this kind of meta-governance. Results-oriented donors, partner countries that want to coordinate donor activities, as well as private actors that want to establish their own credibility could also have an interest in meta-governance. Depending on the particular actor and type of partnerships, one might consider fostering or developing different types of meta-governance (Hoxtell et al. 2010: 18). The characteristics of the chosen form of meta-governance may also prove to be explanatory variables for a partnership’s effectiveness and impact.

A focal point will lie on the role of international organizations and donors. Most partnerships for sustainable development were launched under the Johannesburg UN World Summit for Sustainable Development in 2002 (see Brinkerhoff 2002; Nelson 2002; Tesner 2000). Starting in 2004, these partnerships have also been registered in the database of the UN Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD) (see Bäckstrand et al. 2012). More than ten years later, the question arises: What conclusions have UN actors drawn from their assessments of their partnerships’ impacts and chances of success? One strand of the literature maintains that partnerships ultimately lead to “neo-liberal corporate globalisation” (Utting/Zammit 2009) and an economically oriented “market-multilateralism” (Bull 2010: 493; Bull/McNeill 2007). What is needed, according to this perspective, is a realistic view of the distribution of roles and responsibilities (Bull 2010: 492) and an expansion of international meta-governance into partnerships (Glasbergen 2011). Thus, if international organizations are working with partnerships and are able to actively steer these organizations by using conditionalities and other mechanisms, one could describe this as a kind of “orchestration” (Abbott/Snidal 2010; Abbott et al. 2011) or at least as a “interplay management” (Glasbergen 2011; Oberthür 2009; Oberthür/Gehring 2011). Up to now, this kind of targeted steering of partnerships has taken place little if at all (Abbott 2012: 563; Beisheim 2012). In recent years, international organizations and donor institutions have been placing a stronger focus on *monitoring* and producing measurable results with a widespread impact (see Faust/Neubert 2010). This idea has also been discussed repeatedly in the context of partnerships (see UNGC 2007) but has never been put into practice. As early as 2005, the first UN General Assembly resolution *Towards Global Partnerships* made explicit reference to the necessity for partnerships to be developed further in the direction of sustainable impact and criticized the lack of a functioning mechanism for impact assessment. In the process of implementing the resolutions of the Rio+20 conference, the UN Secretary-General intends to establish a *UN Partnership Facility* that will provide more extensive support to partnerships. A new *SD in Action Registry* has already been put online. Further reforms of the UN sustainability institutions were adopted at the Rio+20 conference in 2012, which will also affect how partnerships are dealt with at the international level (Beisheim 2012; Beisheim/Lode/Simon 2012). The idea underlying these reforms is that the future *review process* at the HLPF should offer a *platform for partnerships*. In this project phase, we will investigate to what extent these plans are actually realized and whether it is creating effective meta-governance for partnerships and their activities in areas of limited statehood. We will also ask which evaluation criteria and conditions for success are being affected by this process: Does



meta-governance intensify the (inter-)national “shadow of hierarchy,” *monitoring*, and potentially also sanctioning, institutional learning, and partnerships’ orientation towards sustainability (on a similar note, see Abbott 2012)? Are there guidelines for institutional design—for example, regarding transparency, participation, or accountability (Conzelmann/Wolf 2007)? Are concrete incentives, guidelines, and support being offered for activities in areas of limited statehood?

The partnership actors themselves are struggling, to meet growing demands from their partners and donors for rapidly visible results as well as coping with time-consuming start-up processes in areas of limited statehood. Partnerships are also operating based on an assumed *win-win* situation, which limits the motivation of participating partners to allocate resources for local capacity building before the initial successes and outputs have been achieved. For that reason, profit-oriented enterprises have gradually reduced their involvement in many partnership projects over time (see Bull 2010; Hale/Mauzerall 2004) as they realized that the *business case* in areas of limited statehood was much harder to build than originally hoped. In response, the secretariats of the respective partnerships have had to mobilize public funds to build local capacities, the lack of which was impeding rapid project success. In this context, how do the actors in partnerships assess the role of meta-governance: How could it be helpful, and how might it be harmful? Would specific guidelines make sense for different types of partnerships to achieve their desired impacts (OECD 2008)? How effective are private approaches to meta-governance such as the *Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards* of the *ISEAL Alliance* or the guidelines of the *Global Reporting Initiative* (see Glasbergen 2011)? What are the key resources the private actors need to have at their disposal if they intend to engage in *meta-governance* themselves (Sørensen 2006)? Might there be a market evolving for an “evaluation industry” (Utting/Zammit 2009)?

State actors in areas of limited statehood are interested first and foremost in capacity building. In the cases we have studied so far, fears that partnership activities are weakening government’s administrative capacities have not been confirmed. Rather, partnerships staff had to realize the need to build government capacities in order achieve successful medium- and long-term results in areas of limited statehood (see Bateley/McCloughlin 2010). In our study, we intend to investigate the extent to which state actors in areas of limited statehood are actively calling for such capacity building within their own administrative structures and are working toward providing certain governance services in cooperation with partners in the future (see De Juan 2011; Bold et al. 2009). Are state actors in Kenya willing and able to effectively steer the external interventions into development cooperation, which have increased substantially through partnership projects (Mwega 2009)? Are they capable of expanding meta-governance for partnerships in this process? To what extent are donors and international organizations in a position to provide support for meta-governance of partnerships?

#### 4. Implementation

##### *Research Hypotheses on the conditions for success of development partnerships*

We have developed a set of working hypotheses on the conditions for success of partnerships in areas of limited statehood (see Figure 2). These hypotheses operationalize the conditions for effective governance discussed in the project application in project-specific terms. In a





process of reflection on findings from the first two project phases on the conditions for the success of partnerships (see project report and publications), in the next phase of the project, we will consolidate our findings, refute or further refine our hypotheses, and add specific explanatory factors for project *impact*. In addition, we will take complex causal relationships between various conditions for success into consideration.

*Figure 2: Conditions for the Success of Development Partnerships*

To ensure (long-term and broad-scale) effectiveness:

*Institutional arrangements*

- Partnership projects must have a local presence and an adaptive design that allows them to respond and adapt to the conditions as well as local interests and values in areas of limited statehood (degree of obligation, monitoring, and precision of norms should be kept consistently high, but the content of norms should be adaptable).
- *Learning outcomes* must be reflected and institutionalized in the multilevel structure of the partnership.

*Incentives and win-win situation*

- Project partnerships must create win-win situations by providing incentives not only for transnational partners but also for local actors in areas of limited statehood. Otherwise, at the transnational level, the partners' individual interests could stand in the way of cooperation. At the local level, veto players could block implementation, and the incentives that would enable the project to continue on autonomously after financing has run out would be lacking.
- Replication or upscaling of pilot projects must ensure profitability at least in the medium term. If partnerships are not successful in achieving this—due to the problems that continually arise in areas of limited statehood, thereby increasing costs—it becomes difficult for them to achieve broad-scale success.

*Statehood and other external conditions*

- Projects must be fundamentally feasible and not –due to major problems with security, capacities, or other context factors –impossible or extremely difficult to implement. State authorities must at least allow and not sabotage partnership activities.
- Deficits in local statehood must be compensated through supplementary capacity-building efforts or through the help of capable local partners.
- Partnership activities must be aimed at having local actors take over responsibility in the long term.

*Empirical legitimacy*

- Service partnerships must build trust and legitimacy (ownership) in the target areas, both locally, e.g., by involving recipient/user groups through a community-based organization (CBO), and at the state level, e.g., through cooperation and capacity-building measures.
- In the process of developing standards, standard-setting partnerships must incorporate those who their standards are designed for as well as other relevant stakeholders to increase later voluntary adherence to the standards.
- Knowledge partnerships must incorporate recognized experts and provide space for open dialogue – based on arguing – to validate their claim to produce legitimate and well-established consensual knowledge.

*Research Hypotheses on the consequences for the actors involved and the areas of limited statehood*

The second step of the project aims to identify the consequences of governance activities of partnerships in areas of limited statehood. A focus will lie on the involved international organizations, states, donors, and private actors as potential providers of meta-governance for partnerships. In the following (Figure 3), we present a summary of our hypotheses for this part of the project.



*Figure 3: Consequences for the Actors Involved and the Areas of Limited Statehood*

The work of transnational development partnerships in areas of limited statehood leads to:

- *Donors, state actors in partner countries, and international organizations* are increasingly forced into the role of “governance managers” (Beisheim et al. 2011). Often they end up merely muddling through instead of engaging in meta-governance or “orchestration.”
- *Many external economic actors* tend to pull out after initial experiences when there is no *business case* established and do not contribute further skills or resources to project implementation.
- *Partnership secretariats* end up under pressure to find public *donors* to build the necessary capacities in areas of limited statehood.
- *Non-governmental organizations (NGO)* involved in projects are criticized by other NGOs when a partnership does not contribute visibly to medium-term solutions. This leads NGOs to split into factions: those that want to cooperate with the business community and international organizations, and those that oppose such cooperation or at least want (inter-) governmental institutions to exercise increased control.
- *Affected user groups and involved CBOs in target areas* initially profit from capacity building, but after projects come to an end, it is challenging for them to continue mobilizing their members and organizing themselves without any incentives or external support and thereby to maintain the social basis for a sustainable governance service.
- *Local economic actors* profit from their involvement in partnership projects by improving their image and gaining comparative advantages while simultaneously edging out competitors.
- *Clientelistic power structures and local big men* may be strengthened by attempts to involve local authorities in project implementation, which may impede social change, but may also lead to the emergence of new governance actors.

At the international level, the international organizations and donor institutions concerned with partnerships will be interviewed. These include the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), the UN Office for Partnerships (UNOP), and the Global Compact office. The environment and development programmes of the United Nations (UNEP and UNDP) are involved in the partnerships—on their boards, as observers, or as partners in implementation. The World Bank is financing the activities of some partnerships (including WSUP) and has also evaluated them (including the GWP).

In two selected areas of limited statehood in Kenya (Kibera and the Lake Naivasha region), key actors in partnerships, recipients and other stakeholders at the national and local level will be asked to assess the impacts of partnership projects and their chances of success. Kibera (in Nairobi) is the largest informal settlement in Africa and fulfills the definitional criteria for an area of limited statehood: the state monopoly on violence and the state’s capacity to enforce rules are limited and also vary from one region to the next. The region around Lake Naivasha was a “hotspot” of violence after the elections in 2008 due to ethnic tensions between groups of migrant workers living there. Approximately 75,000 people work on water-intensive flower farms and live in peri-urban slums, most of them without access to adequate water and sanitary facilities. We established contact with both areas in 2011/12 while studying WSUP projects there, whose impact we will now again investigate. In 2003, GWP built a Country Water Partnership in Kenya whose aim is to support the development and implementation of integrated water resource management (IWRM). In 2009, Kenya passed an IWRM plan but it has not yet been fully implemented. The AWS selected Naivasha in 2011 for a pilot project to test the potential of its standards and to engage in discussions with local *stakeholders*.

*Figure 4: Selection of Actors*

<i>Level</i>	<i>Involved actors and stakeholders</i>	
<i>International System</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UN and international donor organizations</li> <li>International NGOs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UN DESA, CSD/HLPPF, UN Office for Sustainable Development, UN Office for Partnerships, UNEP, UNDP, World Bank</li> <li>International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling (ISEAL) Alliance, Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)</li> </ul>
<i>Transnational Water Partnerships</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secretariats</li> <li>Donors</li> <li>Boards: Economic actors and initiatives</li> <li>Boards: NGOs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WSUP, GWP, AWS</li> <li>DFID, GIZ, USAID, AusAid, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF)</li> <li>Veolia Water, Unilever, Halcrow, CEO Water Mandate</li> <li>Care, WWF, WaterAid, The Nature Conservancy</li> </ul>
<i>Area of Limited Statehood</i> (Kenya, Kibera, and Naivasha)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State agencies</li> <li>Partnership offices and implementing organizations</li> <li>Local service providers and companies</li> <li>User groups and other stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministry of Water, Athi Water Service Board (Nairobi), Rift Valley Water Services Board (Naivasha)</li> <li>WSUP Kenya, Care Kenya, regional GWP office</li> <li>Informal Settlement Department of Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company, Naivasha Water and Sewerage Company</li> <li>In projects by WSUP, GWP, AWS</li> </ul>

The selected multi-level study design has the advantage of allowing us to explore our findings on the relevance of institutionalized learning in greater depth (especially between the local project level and decision makers on partnership boards).

As in the two previous stages of this research we use a medium number of cases in the project (21 partnerships, approximately 40 projects, and now approximately 40 actors), which makes it possible to collect the necessary qualitative data that provide the basis for more intensive investigation of causal relationships. To supplement the interviews, we plan to discuss findings with experts. These include fellow researchers who worked quantitatively on the subject and have created comprehensive databases (for example Pattberg et al. 2012 or Homkes 2011). The internal and external validity of previous and new project findings will thereby be evaluated from multiple perspectives. Our evaluation will take a triangulation approach, combining internal and external assessments and various data sources and methods (interviews, participatory observation, database, document analysis).

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