

Addressing the Sustainable Development Goals through **partnerships**

Opportunities and conditions for successful partnerships

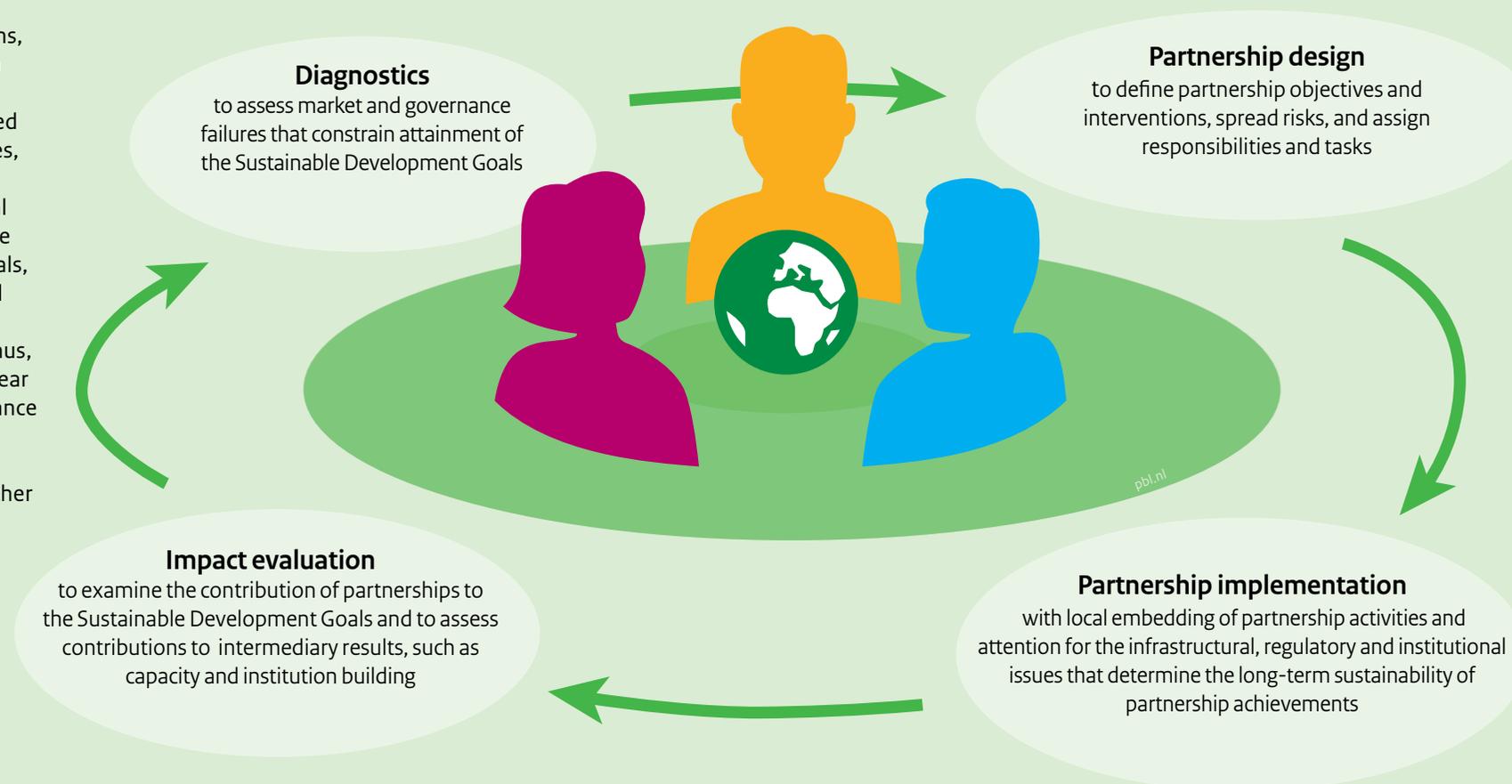
The use of partnerships in international cooperation is increasing. In a globalised world, national governments lack the influence, capacity and mechanisms to coordinate actions across different levels and therefore cannot effectively stimulate sustainable development. Partnerships have the potential to combine the efficiency of the market, the regulatory capacity of the public sector and the social representation of civil society organisations. In fact, revitalising global partnerships is itself one of the sustainable development goals.

Stronger civic and private-sector engagement should not be understood as the public sector withdrawing from these policy areas. Neither the private sector nor civil society has the capacity, or incentives, to tackle the market and governance failures that constrain the attainment of the sustainable development goals. For example, without infrastructure development, initiatives to enhance agricultural productivity are not sustainable. Similarly, if water use is unregulated,

initiatives to promote sustainable use of water resources fall short. And if marginalised stakeholders are not represented through local institutions, efforts to stimulate inclusive growth are doomed to be short-lived.

Partnerships are generally expected to deliver on development challenges, but there is mixed evidence about whether they will succeed. For global partnerships to effectively contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals, issues on a local level must be linked to the global level, and public and private interests must be aligned. Thus, effective partnerships start with a clear diagnosis of the market and governance failures that need to be tackled, and follow a design that clearly assigns risks, responsibilities and tasks. Further requirements are that partnership activities are strongly embedded in the local situation, which ensures that context-specific knowledge is available and that outcomes are evaluated, including the contribution of the partnership to the sustainable development goals.

Connecting partnership capacity and challenges



 **Civic**

Civil society, including NGOs
Civil society is often represented in partnerships by global NGOs which do not necessarily represent local interests. When there are no institutions representing stakeholder interests, partnerships may need to invest in local institution and capacity building to ensure inclusive outcomes for the long term.

 **Public**

Public partners or governments
The role of public partners is often limited to funding, whereas for guaranteeing public outcomes it is important that public partners are more actively involved. Since, for global donors, it is difficult to guarantee local outcomes, it is crucial that the public objectives of the partnership are defined clearly, the partnership is accountable and local government is somehow involved.

 **Private**

Private partners or businesses
A private partner may be a local business organisation or a multinational, both with very different interests in joining a partnership. It is important to acknowledge such differences. In fact, the main objective of many partnerships is to link businesses to each other in global supply chains.