

The emerging **governance landscape** for sustainable development

New agents of change are appearing in governance structures for the SDGs

New forms of multi-actor governance have emerged in the field of global sustainable development. Businesses, civil society, and engaged citizens increasingly collaborate in multi-actor initiatives. In the 1990s, these actors were still considered outsiders, lobbyists or observers, but since then they have progressively taken on a more active role to become 'new agents of change', both within and outside multilateral negotiations.

among a plethora of public and private actors that collaborate in a network of institutions, on various levels. This landscape has been characterised as a 'distributed or polycentric global governance landscape' in which private actors fulfil various governance functions, including the setting of standards, networking, policy implementation and finance.

This change is illustrated here for biodiversity governance. The trend in actor participation and connectedness in different initiatives show how the governance landscape has changed. Common for all initiatives is the lack of proven impacts, which reflects the inherent

difficulty of measuring them. To build on and stimulate such multi-actor networks, governments need to create the right conditions for societal initiatives to develop, learn and deliver on public goals. The role of such an enabling and facilitating government involves: positioning on targets and objectives, creating the right infrastructure, rewarding frontrunners, setting dynamic regulations, choosing the right financial instruments for behavioural change, and organising monitoring and feedback. Continuous reflection on the progress of these components will help governments to increase their effectiveness towards achieving the SDGs.

