

**Non State and Sub National Actions in Agenda 2030 and Paris Agreement Implementation:  
Exploring the orchestration of partnership mechanism for effective implementation**

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## **Abstract**

Partnerships for Sustainable Development (PSD) are vigorously promoted as a tool for actualization of the twin global agenda of meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and implementing the “Paris Agreement”. It is assumed that groundswells of non-state and sub-national actions will facilitate the actualization of the agenda. However, a geographical analysis of partnerships shows that developing countries are grossly underrepresented, with initiating actors predominantly originating from developed countries. As initiators, they, among other things, frame the partnership agenda, institutional design and governance structure. Although most of the partnership agenda is framed around issues peculiar to the sub Saharan African region, actors from the region are mere adopters of partnerships. This hinders effective engagement of stakeholders from the region towards implementation of actions crucial for actualization of the agenda. Specifically, this raises questions about the legitimacy of partnership actions and perception issues that substantially impacts on the implementation of non-state and sub-national initiatives in the region. In this context, the proposed paper explores approaches towards orchestrating and incubating partnerships that facilitates strategic engagement of actors from the SSA in addressing the twin global agenda drawing on a case study on Nigeria. Nigeria is the most populated country and largest economy in the region, yet with varied and pressing sustainable development issues. The paper appraises Nigeria actors’ participation in partnerships, focusing on actors’ participation in the initiation and adoption. Second, the paper explores and seek to understand how Nigerian actors participating in partnerships perceive the legitimacy of PSD. Finally, the paper proposes an approach for orchestrating and incubating partnerships that enhances ownership and performance. From a policy perspective, the paper recommends stages in strategic engagement and partnership orchestration mechanisms that have the potential to create strong synergies among non-state and sub national actors from the global North and South that delivers smart solutions.

Key words: Non state, Sub national, Agenda 2030, Paris Agreement, Sub Saharan Africa

## **Introduction**

Partnerships for Sustainable Development (PSDs) are promoted as a veritable tool employed towards achieving a common social and environmental goals (Pattberg, Biermann, Chan, & Mert, 2012; Chan, Brandi, & Bauer, 2016; Gasbergen, 2007; Pattberg, 2010; Pattberg & Widerberg, 2016). It is an interaction of state and non-state actors that are voluntary, collaborative, risk, resource and responsibility sharing (IOB, 2013; Clark, 2014; Pattberg & Widerberg, 2014). The body of literature in the social science describes PSDs as a platform for the interaction of the public and private sphere to provide collective public goods and services (Schaferhoff, Campe, & Kaan, 2009; Pattberg & Widerberg, 2014). In this paper, I view PSDs to include multistakeholder partnerships, public – private partnerships, cooperative initiatives, networks and sub national coalitions. These entities are occupying very important space in sustainability governance architecture, transnational in nature and create significant influences through their decision making and implementation, in framing global sustainability governance. Their decisions and implementations create significant impacts, yet they do not create or instigate any legal obligation (Eberlein, Abbott, Black, Meidinger, & Wood, 2014). They share knowledge, provide services and set standards. The PSDs implement in several issue areas and sectors including agriculture, climate change, water, sanitation, biodiversity, deforestation and others. Regionally, PSDs implement in all regions of the world, including the Sub Saharan Africa – actively implementing in both issue areas of Climate Change and Sustainable Development. Both issue areas are interconnected in several ways as climate change impacts on the natural and economic well-being of the society while sustainable development influence the societal choice that cause climate change (Halsnæs, et al., 2007). Therefore the successful implementation of any of the agenda significantly impacts on the other. Lessons learnt over the years suggest that PSDs are not as effective on delivery of what they promised (Pattberg, Biermann, Chan, & Mert, 2012), especially in the SSA where actors are eager to adopt and join partnerships (Compagnon, 2012). Nevertheless PSDs have demonstrated the capacity to fill governance gaps in a development challenged areas through the provision of collective goods and services (Beisheim & Liesse, 2014). This phenomenon has received analytical attention in the academic focusing on PSDs governance, institutionalization and effectiveness (Pattberg & Widerberg, 2016; Beisheim & Liesse, 2014; Szulecki, Pattberg, & Biermann, 2011; Beisheim, 2014). Critically ignored in academic discourses is the way and manner PSD is orchestrated that is raising questions bordering on their legitimacy, particularly as it concerns the inclusiveness and participatory of actors from the Global South. Even when the PSDs initiative is regarded as a veritable tool towards actualizing the global sustainability landmark agenda, it is largely seen as a Global North affair (Bansard, Pattberg, & Widerberg, 2016) with the actors from the hemisphere framing the agenda, providing the governance leadership and resources. Non state actors and sub national entities from the Global South, especially the sub Saharan Africa are merely part of partnerships as adopters and joiners with no clear responsibility. In this paper, therefore, focusing on Nigeria as an illustrative case the paper seeks to understand how PSDs can be orchestrated that is more inclusive, participatory and equitable that will enhance legitimacy.

The paper proceeds as follows: first, the paper reviews, lessons learnt focusing on Nigeria non state actors and sub national entity's participation in PSDs; second, the review various methods used in orchestrating PSDs; and finally, the proposed a Co-Creation approach for orchestrating PSDs.

### **PSDs in Sustainability Governance: Lessons Learnt**

Notwithstanding the political debates and criticism that trailed its emergence, PSDs has been described as a potent instrument towards implementation of global sustainable development agenda since the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg, South Africa (Chan & Mert, 2012; Zammit, 2003; Richter, 2003). Over the years, the number of PSDs has continued to grow and their influence expanded to include cities and sub national coalitions increasingly becoming influential in the sustainability governance. However an evaluation of PSDs based on effectiveness and legitimacy suggests that partnerships do not deliver on the promises made at the point of orchestration and launch. This is more obvious in the sub Saharan Africa, where very limited actors from the region are involved in the creation of a partnership, but are quick to adopt PSDs for, perhaps, filling implementation gaps (Compagnon, 2012). Despite the mixed result of the evaluation, there is an assumption that PSDs provides a veritable capacity and platform to fill governance and implementation gaps, especially in development challenged region such as the SSA (Beisheim & Liesse, 2014; Haas, 2004). This assumption has continued to strengthen the support given to the creation and deployment of partnerships in implementing the landmark global sustainability agenda - from the local to the global level aimed at tackling social and environmental issues. For example, about 77 PSDs cooperative initiatives comprising companies, cities, regions, investors and CSOs from about 180 countries have made over 12500 global climate action commitments towards achieving a global climate change agenda. Also the NDC Partnership Funding and Initiative Navigator, have recorded 474 PSDs making funding pledges and initiatives towards assisting countries with their Nationally Determined Commitments on Climate Change. Similarly, about 2318 multistakeholder partnerships and initiatives are registered on the SD knowledge platform to support the implementation of Agenda 2030. Out of this figure, about 211 are focused on actions to combat climate change and its impact (Goal 13) within the SDGs framework, underscoring the strong dual relationship of the twin global agenda. PSDs emerge through different ways. Majorly, partnerships often emerge following international or regional events such as conferences and summits. For example, following the Johannesburg Summit, over 200 PSDs were announced and at the Paris Conference of Parties (COP), several PSDs non state driven initiatives were announced. Partnerships use such major events and other platforms to attract publicity and invite interested actors to sign up to their initiatives. An example of other platforms used by PSDs to announce their emergence is the UNFCCC media platform that is active in announcing new initiatives that is focused on climate change. Prior to the announcement, PSDs promoters orchestrate partnerships through several ways, among which include, interactions of actors either as observer status members of conventions, summits and conferences; based on previous

organizational relationships or/and providing an online platform for interested non state and sub national entities to join. In the latter case, prospective members are required, simply, to fill out a questionnaire to join the partnership. These methods have failed to galvanize non state and sub national actions from the SSA region to participate actively in partnerships. Even with the limited participation of actors from the region in PSDs, most of the PSDs agenda is framed around issues peculiar to the region. More so, many partnerships are implementing in the region and the impact of their actions, for example in climate change, affect national policies. The non involvement of non state and sub national actors from the region in the orchestration of partnerships often erodes the legitimacy, required by PSDs for effective delivery of their promises. Yet it is important that PSDs are orchestrated in a better way (Abbot, 2014) that the potentials of non state and sub national actors especially from the region are harnessed to actualize the effective implementation of the twin agenda.

### **Nigerian Non state and Sub national Actors in PSDs**

Nigeria is the largest economy in Africa with vibrant non state actors. The country participates in several regional and international summit on both sustainable development and climate change. For example, about 22 non state actors from the country hold UNFCCC observer status membership with an interest in women & gender, environment, youth and others. Also non state and sub national actions of the country have shown real interest in joining and adopting PSDs yet their participation in partnership agenda framing and governance is grossly limited. A review of the Non State Zone for Climate Action (NAZCA) shows that out of 2253 cities that registered their climate commitment on the NAZCA platform, only two (2) are from Nigeria. Among the global regions only one (1) region of Nigeria recorded its commitment to the platform. Further review of the platform shows that only two (2) companies, one (1) investor and one (1) CSO respectively are participating in climate change commitment initiatives. A major finding from the analysis is that none of the Nigerian non state and sub national actors are part of the initiators of the cooperative they participate in. Rather the actors adopted the PSDs after the PSD launch with most of the actors joining by filling out an online membership questionnaire.

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>GLOBAL</b>	<b>SSA</b>	<b>NIGERIA</b>
<b>Cities</b>	2253	30	2
<b>Region</b>	150	2	1
<b>Companies</b>	2090	61	2
<b>Investors</b>	425	10	1
<b>CSO</b>	235	5	1

**Table 1: Analysis of Nigeris Non state action on NAZCA**

Further review focusing on Nigeria state participation in initiatives on NAZCA platform, shows that Nigeria as a state actor also has low participation in initiatives registered on the platform. For example, an analysis of the Nigeria state actor pattern of participation in NAZCA platform shows that the country participates in cooperatives focusing on agriculture, energy access & efficiency, short term pollutants and emission reduction. In contrast to the non state and sub national actions, Nigeria state actors are promoters of some of the cooperative they participate in and in some instance, part of the governance structure. However, the state actor's performance in the partnership is mixed and beyond the scope of this paper.

<b>Focus Area</b>	<b>No. of Climate Cooperatives</b>	<b>Nigeria Country Participation</b>
<b>Agriculture</b>	8	2
<b>Energy Access &amp; Efficiency</b>	6	2
<b>Renewable Energy</b>	6	0
<b>Private Finance</b>	5	0
<b>Transport</b>	5	1
<b>Short term pollutants</b>	4	2
<b>Forestry</b>	3	0
<b>Resilience</b>	3	0
<b>Innovation</b>	1	0
<b>Emission Reduction</b>	15	2
<b>Use of carbon Price</b>	1	0
<b>Others</b>	1	0

**Table 2: Analysis of Nigeria State Patterns of participation in Climate Cooperatives**

A review of PSDs and initiatives registered on the sustainable development (SD) knowledge platform shows that about 48 partnerships and initiatives are registered as implementing in Nigeria. Out of this number, about 40 PSDs are implementing in the issue area of climate change. However a further review of the SD knowledge platform shows that most of the partnerships and initiatives are orchestrated by both states, non state and sub national actions. In some cases, intergovernmental organizations such as UN agencies are part of the partnerships and initiatives. These intergovernmental and state actors provide the leadership and governance of the PSDs.

Following the result of the analysis, Nigeria non state and sub national actions have limited participation in non state and sub national actions. This shows that while actors in the global north are effectively galvanized towards participating in PSDs as described from the global perspective, the same cannot be said of actors from Nigeria. However, rather than limiting the analysis to only NAZCA and SD knowledge platform, I went further to look at partnerships and initiatives by analyzing partially, n-sample of PSDs implementing in Nigeria.

A review of n-sample of PSDs<sup>1</sup> shows that about 152 companies participates in such PSDs as the Global Alliance for Clean Stove, Alliance for Rural Electrification, Caring for Climate, Business Leadership Criteria on Carbon Pricing, Global Methane Initiative, Energy Access Practioner Network and others. Out of this number, 132 are classified as Small & Medium Scale Enterprise (SME), 14 are described as quoted public liability company, and others. Similarly, a review of the the n-sample shows that about 196 CSOs participates in the PSDs described above. Out this figure, 138 are NGOs while 16 are research institutes and 4 are business associations. However, further review shows that majority of Nigeria actors, especially the private sector participates in networks such as the Global Alliance for Clean Stove and Global Methane Initiative that has some business component to its activity. Their participation in most cases is limited to implementation while governance, implementation and institutional decision making are reserved for partners from the global north. For example, the 26 non state actors participating in the Global Methane Initiative are mere implementing partners. None of the non state and sub national actors from Nigeria are part of the initiators or promoters of the PSD they participate in.

The foregoing result strongly suggests that Nigerian non state and sub national actors, though eager to participate in global sustainability actions, are yet to be spurred towards participating actively in PSDs with the aim to actualize the twin global agenda of the Paris Agreement and SDGs implementation. This is largely grounded in the way PSDs are orchestrated that are often lacking inclusiveness and participation. Therefore, the key challenge is to replicate the success and potential of PSDs as recorded elsewhere, in the Sub Saharan Africa. The discussion around the non-state and sub national actions should include orchestration mechanism that brings actors from the global north and south together in governance, agenda setting and implementation decisions of PSDs. In Nigeria, it is imperative that the potential of the non-state and sub national actors, is properly harnessed. While the voluntary nature of PSDs is noted, there should be conscientious effort to ensure inclusiveness and participatory in the orchestration of PSDs that would attract actors from the region into partnerships and increase Nigerian actor involvement in non-state and sub national actions. Therefore, it is imperative that an PSD orchestration mechanism that is grounded in co-creation is adopted by the promoters of partnerships to ensure inclusiveness, ownership and acceptance.

### **Stages of PSD Orchestration Mechanism**

Following the lessons learnt and drawing from the sustainability governance body of literature, PSDs through non state and sub state actions hold potential for the effective implementation of the twin global agenda of Paris Climate agreement and the Agenda 2030. Such potentials can only be harnessed when it is seen as a global movement rather than a global north agenda that would be regarded by skeptics as a ploy to distract and create interferences with national policies

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<sup>1</sup> The n-sample is still under construction and part of the larger research on partnership in SSA. The full analysis of the n-sample is yet to be conducted. This is just a partial analysis.

and priorities especially in the sub Saharan Africa. However, literature in social science research has argued that PSDs needs a new framework for better engagement, orchestration and performance (Pattberg & Widerberg, 2016; Abbot, 2014). Therefore, I propose the following stages for building a better mechanism for orchestration of PSDs that is inclusive and enhances legitimacy especially in the SSA region.

The first stage involves identification of interest with non-state and sub national actors whose interest aligns with the promoters' interest. This can be achieved by creating a virtual pool where a mix of actors from the global north and south, interests, funders and actors across sectors checks in to seek for collaboration, resources and partners towards tackling a problem or promoting an interest. The actor participation should not be restricted but open to actors of various sizes, type, age and capacity. At this stage, no partnership is formed, but intentions are made. It is required for prospective promoters to aggregate the interests of participants in the pool. Ensuring that actors and their interests are identified, and that there is an alignment of the interests identified with the aspiration of the proposed PSD. Following the aggregation of the interest, actors including funders would be invited to the next stage based identification. In the first stage also, there is a need for the intending PSDs promoters to understudy strengths and weaknesses of the actors with interests that aligns with the intending PSDs. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of intending partners will help the proposed PSDs during the governance and institutional structure setting discourse. At this stage, key issues to be focused on include collaborative spirit, trust, support to capacity deficit participants, confidence building, interaction, and discursiveness..

At the second stage, the actors identified will be invited to participate in the framing of the PSD agenda in line with the aggregated interests, agree on a governance and institutional structure that is inclusive, participatory which will increase discursiveness. Also the accountability structure of the PSD is agreed and collectively established at this stage. In this process, the actors from the global south that are participating in this stage will see themselves as strategic stakeholders in the PSD rather than adopting or joining members. This will enhance the acceptability of PSDs in the region as well ensure ownership and sustainability of implementation in the region. Although the intending members from the region may not have the expertise, resources or capacity to fit into the meta governance structure of PSDs, their strength in local knowledge of implementation communities would help in articulating a PSD agenda that aligns with community interest. At this stage, key issues to focus on include strategies, ideas, agenda framing, assumptions, resources, institutions and governance.

The last stage of the mechanism is the announcement of the PSDs at a major event. Such announcement will demonstrate the inclusiveness and participatory of the PSD with all the institutions already in place. This will ensure that adopters and joiners of partnerships are reduced to the barest minimum, thereby enhancing positive actions of the non state and sub national actors of the region as well promote strategic engagement and partnership that have the

potential in creating strong synergies among non-state and sub national actors from the global North and South that delivers smart solutions.

### **Conclusion**

Partnerships for Sustainable Development (PSD) are vigorously promoted as a tool for actualization of the twin global agenda of meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and implementing the “Paris Agreement”. Although PSDs are regarded as being supported by the developed countries with developing countries grossly underrepresented, it is assumed that a groundswell of non state and sub national actions will help in actualizing the effectiveness of Agenda 2030 and Paris Agreement implementation. However a major finding from the pattern of non state and sub national actors of Nigeria participation in PSDs is that actors from Nigeria are mere adopters of partnerships. However, some of the actors participating in PSDs registered in the SD knowledge platform are actually part of the initiators but has little impact on the decision making as the PSDs are governed by an intergovernmental organization and state actors. Generally, there is low participation of actors from the sub Saharan African region in non state and sub national actions to actualize the effective implementation of the twin global sustainability agenda. Following this, a mechanism for orchestrating partnership that enhances strategic engagement between actors of the global north and south as well increasing participation, enhancing ownership and acceptance is proposed. It is important that a more robust empirical study is carried out focusing on the analyses of PSDs implementing in the region to understand the impact of the limited participation of actors from the region on their performance.

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