Success Factors in Transformative Multi-Actor-Partnerships

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GERMANWATCH

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INTRODUCTION

The multi-actor partnership (MAP) concept is based on the assumption that cooperation with a high commitment, beyond pure consultation of different partners and accounting for the complexity of interests of involved and affected actors, leads to sustainable solutions. We are convinced that the challenges of the socio-ecological transformation in the sense of the Global Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030, as well as the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement in particular, can only be overcome if actors from civil society, politics, the private sector and academia work together on jointly developed goals at eye level.

Stakeholders from civil society, politics, private sector, media and academia at the joint MAP workshop n Nakuru, Kenya, October 2019
Photo: Germanwatch

More than three years of experience in establishing, maintaining and sustaining seven multi-actor partnerships form the basis of this analysis, which focuses on drawing conclusions about concrete success factors and conditions for transformative multi-actor partnerships. The goal of this analysis is to draw concrete recommendations. These are based on the presentation of exemplary success factors, challenges, conflict situations as well as customised solutions, which can serve as support for actors who are planning a MAP or are already in the process of implementing one. Recommendations are also formulated with regard to the framework conditions for funding, so that they can be aligned with the desired goal of a multi-actor partnership at eye level.

We base our analysis and recommendations derived from it on experiences gained by local partners in tandem with Germanwatch, in seven MAPs in the field of climate, energy and just transformation. These MAPs are implemented in very different country contexts and had reached different stages at the time of data collection. Because of this diversity, a wide range of success factors and challenges can be addressed. At the same time, no claim to completeness of all possible problem constellations or solution strategies is possible. Accordingly, the focus of this publication is not on systemic scientific analysis, but on generating practice-oriented

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useful knowledge for practitioners and promoting institutions of international cooperation.

Data sources were the evaluation of project activities (e.g. in questionnaires), ongoing project monitoring as well as an external project evaluation and the analysis of impacts after completion of the project. The analysed experiences therefore have the character of case studies. Nevertheless, the authors aim to generate fundamental theses that can be transferred to other contexts.

B.1 Conceptual background of the MAP approach

Cooperation between actors from different sectors is a core prerequisite for achieving the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Explicitly formulated, Goal 17 "Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development"[1] emphasises the importance of partnerships for the achievement of all goals. Multi-actor partnerships are systems of cooperation that work on complex societal challenges, oriented toward the common good. In these systems, actors from different sectors, particularly politics, civil society, academia and the private sector, work together to develop tangible solutions benefitting all of them. MAPs can be active in diverse areas, according to the SDGs, and range from international climate protection to poverty reduction or sustainable production. The key goal is to achieve long-term transformation toward sustainable development supported by a MAP[2].

By involving various stakeholders, a MAP also incorporates their respective perspectives and expertise in dealing with complex challenges. The particular advantages of such an approach are ownership developed by the partners and the joint definition of the problem to tackle. In addition, the actors develop viable solutions and jointly implement them.

The basic idea of multi-actor or multi-stakeholder collaboration is already well established and widely applied in development cooperation and the climate sector. The theoretical underpinning and conceptualisation of this collaboration serves the purpose of being able to comprehend and specifically set up the underlying process that needs to be followed. To this end, slightly different approaches exist for the successful establishment and implementation of a MAP.

Two of these approaches, which have proven to be helpful to Germanwatch in preparing and setting up, monitoring and evaluating its own MAP projects, are included in more detail: the "Dialogic change model"[3] (DCM), developed by the Collective Leadership Institute (CLI), and the "MSP Process Model"[4] by the Centre for Development Innovation (CDI).

1   https://sdgs.un.org/goals
2   https://www.partnerschaften2030.de/
3   https://www.collectiveleadership.de/blog/article/the-dialogic-change-model/
4   Brouwer, H. et al.: (2015). The MSP Guide - How to design and fascilitate Multi-Stakeholder-Partnerships.

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Both approaches structure a MAP into four phases that are chronological, but can also be revisited at any time if necessary.

Figure 1:
Phase models of multi-actor-partnerships;
a) Dialogic Change Model of the Collective Leadership Institute and, **b) Multi-Stakeholder Partnership Process Model**

a)

b)
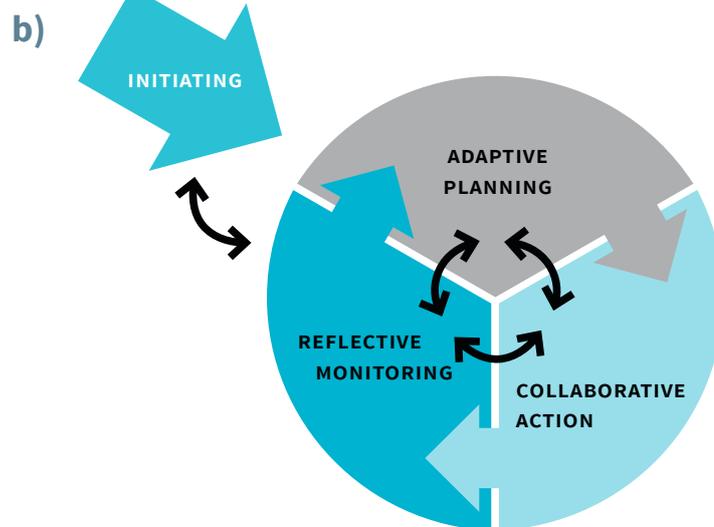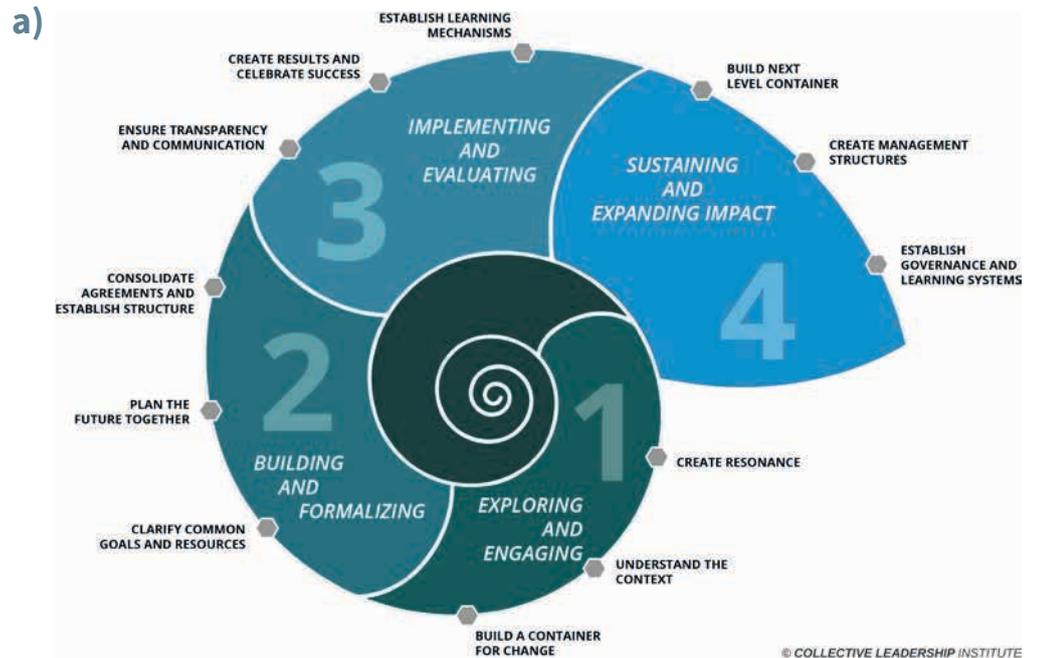
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The classification and naming of the phases were merged by Germanwatch and edited towards its own MAP perception[5]:

Figure 2: The 4-phase model of Germanwatch

The first phase defines the preparation and start of the MAP process. It is referred to as "Initiating" or "Exploring and Engaging." The formation of a MAP stems from a specific cause or need for action. The actors who want to establish a MAP first establish the core group, analyse the context in the first step and involve a first group of important stakeholders. The scope and goal are formulated for the first time. In the following, this phase is referred to as "Exploring and Initiating".

The second phase builds on the first phase. It is called "Adaptive Planning" or "Building and Formalising". It is used to distribute specific responsibilities, allocate resources and to design future scenarios and visualise possible target constellations of the MAP. The strategies to achieve these scenarios or goals should also be developed in the second phase. A shared vision, clearly defined goals, trust, coordination and good communication are central at this stage (and subsequently). The phase is referred to as "Building and Structuring" in further course.

Phase 1
Explore and Initiate

Phase 2
Build and Structure

Phase 4
Evaluate and Sustain

Phase 3
Collaborative Action
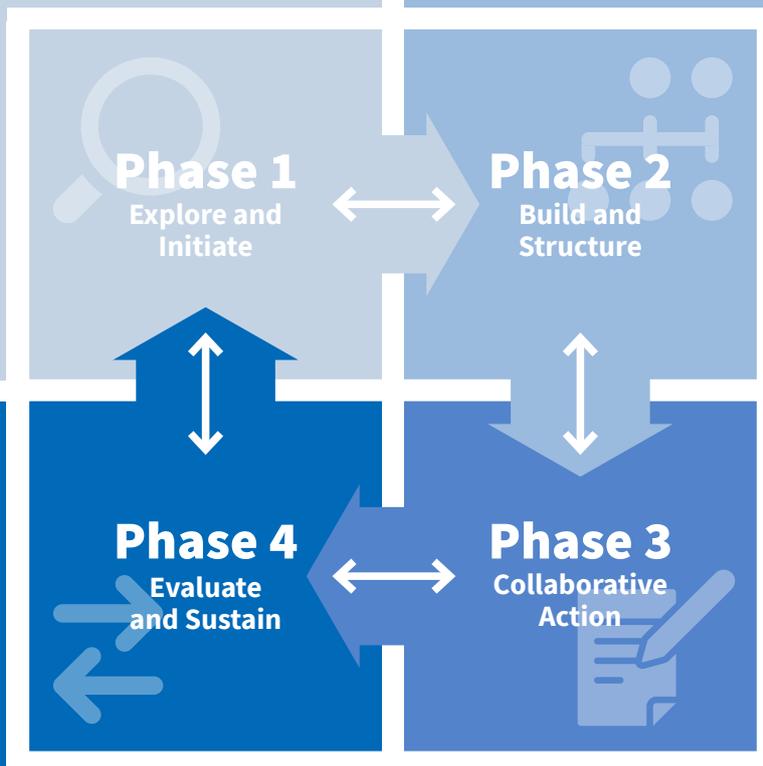
The fourth phase is dedicated to finalise the partnership or continue the work in a different format. At this point, the two theoretical approaches differ, as the DCM refers to it as "Sustaining and Expanding" and the MSP Guide refers to it as "Reflective Monitoring". Depending on the context and MAP, both approaches are used, as some partnerships actually persist and become institutionalised in this phase (for example, as government working groups or as separate organisations), while others do not continue and the phase remains for reflection. This last phase is further referred to as "Evaluating and Sustaining".

The third phase is the action phase. It is referred to as "Collaborative Action" or "Implementing and Evaluating". It is important to keep all relevant decision-makers involved in order to achieve initial success. Action plans can be drafted here and put into practice. In the following, this phase is called "Collaborative Action".

5   For more extensive reading on the models and the corresponding phases, please refer to the indicated sources.

B.2 Germanwatch in transformative Multi-Actor-Partnerships

Partner organisations of Germanwatch have initiated MAPs at local, national or multinational level in different regions of the world since 2017, supported by our "dynamic facilitation". All these partnerships are intended to support the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement and the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The focus here is on striving for system transformation – for the preservation of livelihoods and for enhanced global justice. Thematic focus of the MAPs lies on sustainable energy supply and the management and financing of climate risks (thus contributing to SDGs 7, 8, 10, 13).

Our partner organisations have initiated international multi-actor partnerships on the ground with our support on the following topics:

- In **Kenya**, the MAP is working on climate risk insurance and its human rights-based implementation to benefit the most vulnerable populations in the aftermath of weather extremes.
- In **Senegal**, the MAP focuses on supporting the development and implementation of gender-responsive, pro-poor, and human rights-based approaches to climate and disaster risk financing.
- In **India**, the MAP is focused on de-risking solar energy investments – to accelerate the expansion of renewable energy in India.
- In **Ukraine** and **Kosovo**, a MAP exists to phase out coal and expand renewable energy – to build an energy supply that is climate-friendly, economically sustainable and supportive of peace processes.
- In **Morocco** and **pan-Africa**, a MAP aims at a decentralised expansion of renewable energies- to strengthen the sustainable development of the country with its "anchoring effect" for parts of the African continent.

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Germanwatch focuses on partnerships at eye level, follows a human rights-based approach[6], advocates the inclusion of affected and particularly vulnerable population groups and contributes to conflict mediation.

The involvement of actors from different sectors is central to the cooperation. Civil society actors work together with actors from academia, trade unions, the private sector and politics to pave the way for a sustainable future – in the partner countries, in Germany and internationally.

As a well-connected actor in Germany and Europe, Germanwatch takes on the role to strengthen civil society capacities in selected regions outside Europe and to promote their integration into international networks. German and European climate policy, as well as the role and impact of German development cooperation, are critically reflected and findings from the projects are fed back to the responsible political actors.

6   Specific application of the human rights-based approach has been made in the area of climate risk insurance (https://www.germanwatch.org/de/16050) and somewhat more broadly for climate and disaster risk finance (https://www.germanwatch.org/de/19280), among others.

C.1 General recommendations for cooperation in MAPs

Several factors distinguish multi-actor partnership projects from other types of projects. First, the exchange of information between partners in consultations or via communication platforms plays a central role. Furthermore, shared learning is particularly important for the joint implementation of common goals. This requires a much stronger and more binding involvement between the partners in the MAP than in the context of pure implementation projects. It requires motivation and incentives (relevance of the topic, joint development of goals), but also a certain structure of the MAP (such as a functioning core group, a shared vision and clear goals, appropriate communication channels, trust) and much more. The establishment and maintenance of a MAP is therefore a goal in itself, in addition to its political goals.

Based on the experience we have gathered, we compiled a list of recommendations that seem particularly useful to us for building and maintaining multi-actor partnerships. These experiences are developed from the perspective of a "dynamic facilitation", in which we assume that organisations like Germanwatch support a MAP, but do not act neutrally. Instead, it would be recommended to help shape political debates in line with the SDGs and the Paris Climate Agreement. For example, from our perspective, nuclear energy is not part of renewable energies and therefore would follow that the energy transition in Morocco should be carried out through solar and wind energy.

Wind farm Bedburg
Photo: Germanwatch

BOX 1

MAP checklist –
recommendations for implementation

Preparation

1 **Allow sufficient time to build and maintain the multi-stakeholder partnership:**

- The establishment of a MAP is a separate goal or activity in itself and accordingly requires a specific amount of time and capacity for the involved organisations.

2 **Take the context into consideration:**

- Strategies for critical political contexts, as well as in-country conflicts or changing political support to MAP targets

- Analysis of the previous cooperation (and its obstacles) between the actors from different sectors

- Analysis of existing cooperation structures such as networks, dialogue platforms and initiatives on the topic in the country and ways to integrate and use them

- Address the cultural context on ways of working and collaborating

3 **Identification of potential partners:**

- Early identification of potential actors (persons) in the various organisations and institutions

- Consider as wide a range of actors as possible, from political decision-makers and actors from the private sector to marginalised groups (and/or their representatives)

Respectful and inclusive design of cooperation

4 **Identify and specify the added value of the MAP for all involved actors:**

- Function : create resonance, strengthen involvement, motivation and commitment of partners, promote ownership and retain partners

5 **Support good communication between partners:**

■ Regular and transparent exchange: initiate and maintain exchange via virtual calls, WhatsApp groups, individual phone calls, email lists, online project management platforms and physical meetings

■ Function: involve all partners and keep them informed, motivated and engaged, build trust, share information and knowledge

6 **Joint development of a charter or something similar to define decision-making and joint strategy development on work plans and processes; this includes, but is not limited to:**

■ Definition of structures within the partnership

■ Common decision rules

■ Clear distribution and shared understanding of roles and responsibilities of all partners

■ Function: appreciative working atmosphere, cooperation at eye level, strengthening of ownership, involvement of all partners, promotion of commitment and reliability, counteracting imbalance of power

7 **Conduct team/group building activities:**

■ Organise field trips, excursions and joint dinners

■ Function: strengthen the motivation and commitment of the actors, promote a sense of community

8 **Allow access:**

■ Provide information about the MAP, its objectives and key issues, documents and project progress to new partners

■ Make the course and developments of the partnership traceable through documentation, e.g., via a project management platform

■ Function: anticipating and managing change – cushioning the fluctuation of responsible staff members within the participating organisations and institutions and enabling access for new partners even during the course of the project/partnership

9 **Capacity building to bring all partners (with different professional backgrounds and degrees of expertise) on the same level, also regarding the MAP approach:**

- ■ Function: mutual and shared learning, collaboration at eye level, continuous MAP development

10 **Support the involvement of all partners:**

- ■ Apply interactive as well as inclusive communication and workshop methods

- ■ Also keep silent partners with fewer resources in mind and actively involve them

- ■ Function: compensate for imbalance of power

Outreach

11 **Understand and influence the MAP environment by embedding it in context and the surrounding actor field:**

- ■ Cooperation with experts/actors outside the MAP

- ■ Prepare information about the contents and objectives of the MAP in a comprehensible way

International participants met for the first MAP conference in Bonn, Germany, January 2019

Photo: Germanwatch

C.2 Success factors and approaches to solutions for typical challenges in the four MAP phases

In each of the four phases of a multi-actor partnership outlined above, there are factors that promote the success of the partnership. These can be external factors that relate to the political or country **context**, internal factors that affect the **actors and group dynamics**, and organisational or structural factors that affect the **methodology and process** of a partnership. By paying attention to the success factors, some challenges can be pre-emptively counteracted.

Nevertheless, typical challenges may arise at each MAP stage, such as the concrete collaboration and the challenge of creating **resonance** among the involved actor, the external conditions and **understanding of the context** in which a MAP operates, and the central effort to institutionalise the interaction beyond occasional meetings, i.e., to **form a core group**.

The following presentation of success factors and approaches to solutions for typical challenges in MAPs is based on an online survey[7] designed according to the outlined MAP phase structure, and thus distils the experiences from the existing seven MAPs with Germanwatch participation. In this survey, partners in the different MAPs were asked about partnership-specific experiences. A first result was the confirmation of the initial thesis that certain success factors and challenges could not only be observed in individual projects, but could equally occur in different contexts, thus ensuring usability for other MAPs as well.

Based on the results, particularly with regard to individual experienced challenges, online workshops and a virtual conference (involving the same participants as in the survey) were used in the fall of 2020 to develop solution approaches for specifically selected challenges. Selection was based on the most frequent mentioning of a specific challenge in the survey to ensure optimal representation of projects and to make findings relevant to other MAPs as well.

The majority of the named factors are concentrated on Phases 1 and 2, as the MAPs were predominantly in Phases 2 or 3 at the time of the survey and were, therefore, able to evaluate the previous Phases 1 and 2. It also follows that significantly less

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7   A summarised overview of the survey results can be found in the appendix.

information could be provided for Phases 3 and 4. Thus, the analysis here cannot draw on experience from the current partnerships.

The analysis is structured according to the four described phases of a MAP (cf. **Figure 2**) and structures the experiences into

✓ **sucess factors** and

💡 **approaches to solutions** for

⛰ typical **challenges**.

EXPERIENCES FROM
7 MULTI-ACTOR PARTNERSHIPS
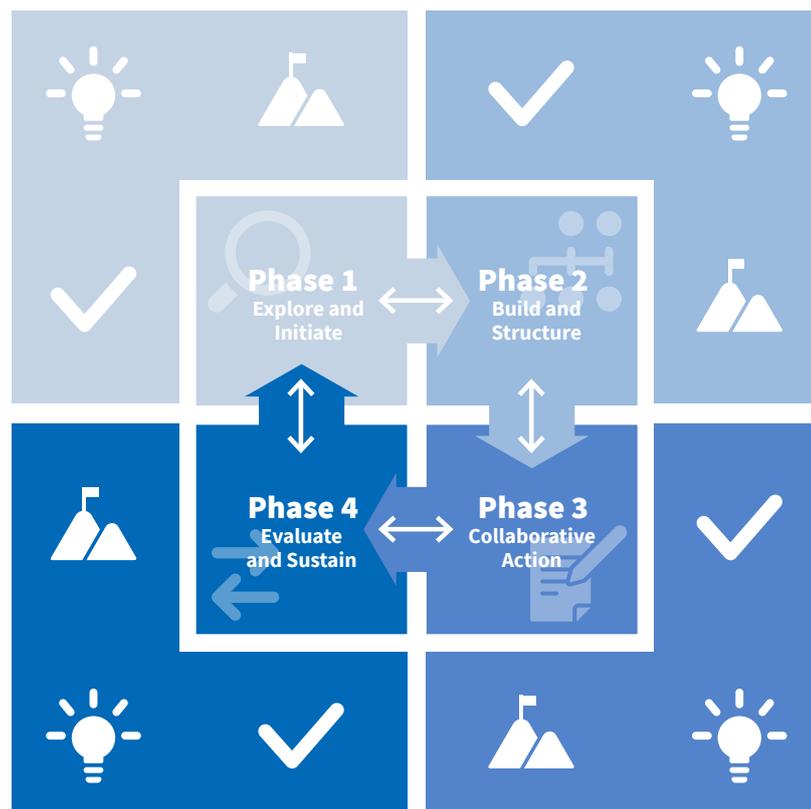
Phase 1: Explore and Initiate

The **"Explore and Initiate"** phase comprises the preparation and start of the partnership and is elementary as the foundation of all further steps and phases. According to our findings, the following success factors are particularly relevant, but challenges also arise after some time, for which we outline possible solutions from our wealth of experience – without claiming to be exhaustive:

Success factor "Include context"

Embedding a multi-actor partnership in the local context in which it operates is important, as cross-sector partnerships are (co-)determined by country-specific (political, socio-economic and cultural) factors. Therefore, a feasibility analysis taking into account the political situation, socioeconomic realities and an assessment of the MAP stakeholders, as well as the target group, is valuable when establishing the partnership, as is the ability to embed the MAP in a thematically meaningful way and to formulate political goals accordingly.

Only if the MAPs are contextualised in this way and their relevance for the actors is visible, will it be possible to generate sufficient interest among political actors, among others, who are usually very central to the effectiveness of the MAPs, and to promote the development of ownership for the MAPs. This also applies to other potential partners.

For example, even though a MAP is guided by international frameworks (e.g. Paris Climate Agreement, global Sustainable Development Goals – SDGs), national implementation strategies, which can vary greatly from country to country, are often more crucial for a MAP. Dealing with challenges and an understanding of, for example, potential for delay in the face of difficult national political situations must be considered.

Another important aspect of the contextual embedding of the MAP concerns the landscape of actors, i.e., the roles that individual actors play in the topic chosen for the MAP and how they have been interacting with each other in this regard to date. It is particularly important to consider how cooperation between actors from different sectors works in the country, as this is the only way to account for norms and barriers to cooperation. The opportunities for civil society participation in different countries are also crucial for ensuring sustainable network development. When aligning the goals of a MAP, **marginalised and particularly vulnerable groups** should be **placed at the centre**. For this, it is important to know the context of the situation to identify these groups.

BOX 2

Challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic

The **Covid-19 pandemic and the associated mitigation efforts** posed and continue to pose significant challenges to all multi-actor partnerships at all stages. It has implications for local and international economies, in-country policy priorities, and also for priorities and capacities of key partners. Such a **shift in priorities** may mean that already acquired actors (can) become less involved and that it is difficult to attract new actors. If necessary, the pandemic and its implications can result in a striking shift in political priorities that the MAP's original approaches risk to become (temporarily) irrelevant under the changed circumstances.

Possible solution strategy: the current context of the Covid-19 pandemic should be analysed and taken into account by the MAPs in their countries. **Adjustments to political embedding, re-adjustment of objectives and timelines** must be factored in and processes must be repeatedly adjusted according to the current situation, so that meetings are held virtually or postponed.

In purely practical terms, the pandemic impacts the **feasibility of physical activities** such as meetings, workshops and other gatherings that are essential to MAP processes, but not possible in lockdown situations. Thus, the Covid-19 pandemic complicates the establishment and maintenance of MAPs and delays their processes and successes.

Possible solution strategy: particularly in times of the Corona pandemic, the **correct use of online platforms** is important in order to be able to maintain good communication. Care should be taken to ensure that no actors are excluded when choosing a particular medium. Concrete support for individual actors should be provided (for example, in terms of a stable Internet connection). Under no circumstances should communication be paused.

It is conceivable that a request for necessary **adjustments of the activities** up to the extension of the project duration is necessary with the sponsor. If the pandemic has a serious impact on the objectives of the MAP, an even more extensive adjustment must be made.
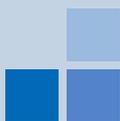
EXPERIENCES FROM
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Challenge "Creating resonance"

Lack of participation and motivation of key stakeholders is a major challenge for the success of a MAP and can have different causes. Possible reasons include lack of key stakeholder involvement, lack or absence of funding for the work of the majority MAP stakeholders, lack of trust in the stakeholders, perceived irrelevance of the project, lack or waning interest in participating or difficulties with the MAP approach, and scepticism about the application or lack of knowledge of the methodology.

> **Possible solution strategy: for many actors, the relevance of the content and the coherence of the MAP with their own goals generate resonance. Once the actor has been won over to the MAP, the organisation can ensure regular (online) meetings to exchange background information, processes, goals, decisions, etc., and further strengthen the resonance.**
>
> **One possible solution is to make the MAP actors aware of the relevance of the goals. This can be done, for example, through field visits and experience reports.**

Success factor "Stakeholder involvement and group dynamics"

The **systemic involvement and wide range of involved actors** is as crucial as the contextualisation of a MAP. A multi-actor partnership is based on the principle of cross-sectoral cooperation, which is why it is important to involve the right actors from all four sectors – science, civil society, politics and the private sector. A stakeholder analysis with stakeholder mapping is used to identify relevant actors and their roles. In this context, it is important to identify stakeholders who are interested in achieving the goals on the one hand, and who can ensure that the goals are achievable through their positions on the other. But actors who have reservations about the goals should also be involved in order to understand their motives and to strive for joint solutions. However, a common lowest denominator when **involving potential adversaries** should be agreement on fundamental principles and goals. Principles such as the Paris Climate Agreement or SDGs must not be up for negotiation.

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At the beginning or in the run-up, it should be ascertained how **cooperation between actors from different sectors** has worked thus far. If concrete hurdles are known, they should be addressed in a manner that is as sensitive and appropriate as possible for the respective culture, and appropriate solutions should be developed.

The **creation of an appreciative working atmosphere** in the partnership is of great importance for the group dynamics. Only through good cooperation at eye level can the partners feel respected and build trust in each other. To this end, structures and processes in the partnership, such as decision-making processes, must be designed to be as inclusive as possible. This also serves to even out imbalances of power. The active involvement of all actors can be promoted, for example, through the co-organisation of workshops or co-authorship of studies and publications.

Challenge "Building trust"

A **lack of trust** and an **imbalance of power** between the actors can lead to difficulties in implementing joint action. This challenge often arises in constellations between actors with unequal resources (funding, influence, etc.), such as civil society actors and actors from politics and the private sector.

Possible solution strategy: address the lack of trust through transparent processes and an open culture of discussion in regular exchanges. Professional, inclusive moderation of the meetings to bring out the strengths of actors perceived as weaker in order to balance out the imbalance of power. The identification and concrete naming of the added value of the respective actors in the MAP (who brings which perspectives, knowledge, contacts, etc.) also helps to show that everyone has an equal place in the MAP.

Possible solution strategy: the development of a charter for the MAP is helpful to jointly define "rules of the game" such as decision-making processes. This increases trust in equal cooperation within the MAP.

Possible solution strategy: ensure a neutral environment. Political actors often feel very much at home in a conference setting, while this is not necessarily the case for the local population. A neutral environment, or even an environment that strengthens the weakest actor (for example, in Morocco, a meeting in a tent), can be very helpful.

EXPERIENCES FROM
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Success factor "Formatation a core group"

At the beginning of a MAP, responsibilities and liabilities should be defined in an established group that forms the active core of the MAP. In most cases, this **core group** is formed by people who initiated the partnership and by actors who are particularly motivated to achieve the goals. The formation of a core group is also very helpful for future processes and decisions. It is important to note that the core group consists of actors who are important for the co-design, as well as actors who can contribute significantly to the achievement of the goal. It is very important that actors in the core group do not act as private individuals, but as representatives of a relevant sector (e.g. ministry, company, NGO, etc.). This ensures the sustainability of the partnership as the organisation can continue to be represented even when employees leave.

Challenge "Core group functionality"

If the **functionality of the core group is at risk**, the entire partnership process may also be at risk. This may be due to the fact that roles as well as responsibilities and tasks are not (yet) clearly distributed, an existing imbalance of power needs to be balanced or resources are scarce. For the core group itself, it may mean that an optimal way of working has not yet been found, which quickly has repercussions for the entire MAP.

> Possible solution strategy: as the core group is the supporting pillar of the MAP in the following phases, it is worthwhile to repeatedly spend the necessary time on maintaining the core group. Regular, interactive, and transparent exchange and the creation of a cooperative working atmosphere have proven their worth.

Success factor "Methodology and process"

In order to help all actors (in the core group) of a MAP and to have the same level of knowledge, to get to know each other, and to generate group cohesion, motivation and ownership, **study trips and excursions** can be a helpful tool as actors can, for example, better understand the situation on site (e.g. in an affected area, at production sites for renewable energies, etc.) and can be motivated based on the experiences or gain new insights.

Phase 1: Explore and Initiate
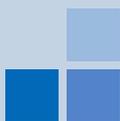
BOX 3

Study tour from Donbass to the Ruhr area

In the course of the MAP Energy transition Donbass/Ukraine "from coal to renewable energies", a study tour of the partners from the Donbass coal region to the Rhenish Revier and the Ruhr area in Germany was carried out at the beginning. A delegation of 20 Ukrainian mayors, representatives of civil society and the regional Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK) met representatives of municipalities, civil society, public institutions and energy suppliers. They exchanged views on common challenges in the context of the coal phase-out. The mutual understanding "from coal region to coal region" and the common vision for the future inspired the Ukrainian mayors, NGOs and IHK to initiate a platform for the sustainable development of the Donbass coal cities directly after the trip. This platform has developed joint positions for structural change, presented them nationally and internationally, and is currently working with various international projects on a strategy for transformation.

Photo: Germanwatch

Phase 2: Build and Structure

The **"Build and structure"** phase is entirely dedicated to building MAP's strategies and structures such as setting concrete goals and corresponding work plans. According to our analysis, the following success factors and mastering typical challenges are particularly relevant for this:

Success factor "Consider context"

In phase 2, it is important to take into account the country-specific context when designing the MAP in terms of its concrete and achievable goals, planning the processes for achieving the goals and shaping the cooperation. It is a matter of building the MAP according to its context and of creating goal-oriented operational structures for the actors. Points of orientation are, on the one hand, political realities in the country or region on which goals are based. In order to be able to define the goals of a MAP, especially its transformative goals, it is helpful to orient oneself to international frameworks and the **national legal framework**, if it exists, in the targeted thematic area. For example, if laws already exist that include individual goals of the partnership, such as working toward an energy transition, they can be built upon.

On the other hand, it is important to set up the MAP processes appropriately for all actors and to design forms and structures of cooperation prudently with regard to the diversity of the actors and the respective contexts.

Success factor "Stakeholder involvement and group dynamics"

Regular meetings of all partners and the joint formulation of a strategy to create a clear structure for cooperation help the group dynamics, define a common goal and keep it in view. Assigning responsibilities, for example in a work plan, also helps to make the joint commitment more binding and to actively involve all actors. This ownership is central – also for the next phase.

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Phase 2: Build and Structure
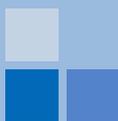
Success factor "Methodology and process"

Capacity building on the MAP approach offers the opportunity to bring all MAP stakeholders to a common understanding and to establish common MAP structures. This capacity building, e.g., in the form of workshops or through information materials, should be addressed to all MAP stakeholders.

A **solid planning process and the development of a joint work plan** can then emerge in this phase. It lays the foundation for successful implementation in phase 3. Here, responsibilities, capacities and the process architecture can be discussed again. It is obvious to distribute tasks according to knowledge and competencies, so that think tanks, for example, can lead technical expertise development. In addition, it can be helpful to closely link the activities and responsibilities in the partnership with already existing, financed activities of the participating organisations and thus make the best possible use of synergies. As well as to think about the partnership and its activities in fundraising and project applications and, if necessary, to be able to provide financial support for individual MAP tasks.

Challenge „Clarify common goals and resources"

A **lack of financial resources**, e.g., for the core group, as assistance to smaller NGOs, or for planned or additional activities, can significantly limit the MAP effectiveness and efficacy. Unbalanced resources can also exacerbate the imbalance of power in the partnership if some partners rely more on funding than others.

> Possible solution strategy: a successful MAP can be an interesting partner for national and international actors. If the cooperation can be sustained, the actors can develop joint project ideas and applications. If necessary, funds can be raised beyond the existing project funding. Additional fundraising can thus support planned activities or enable additional initiatives. In the case of the Morocco MAP, the first pilot projects are ready to be made possible.

EXPERIENCES FROM
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Challenge "Different interests"

Not all MAP partners share the same interest in the partnership. **Difficult cooperation with decision-makers** occurs when the different sectors pursue different interests despite the partnership. This can also lead to conflicts of interest between the partners or to a disturbance of the balance of power if, for example, private-sector actors with resources such as money and influence meet small civil society organisations at eye level.

> Possible solution strategy: such a situation is exemplary of the fact that earlier processes in MAPs may well have to be repeated in order to keep all actors engaged and to maintain the functionality of the MAP. In this case, the benefits of the MAP for all stakeholders and their roles in the MAP would need to be repeated, reworked or revised up to the point of common goal setting.

Challenge "Maintaining the core group"

Keeping membership in the MAP and especially in the core group as continuous as possible is very central to its functionality. A high turnover of positions in government offices, organisations or other institutions can lead to a **lack of reliability and continuity of the actors** in a MAP.

> Possible solution strategy: fluctuation in itself is almost impossible to prevent. Project management platforms offer a practical way of making MAP information available so that new members can quickly bring themselves up to speed. Documenting all internal meetings and external project activities, such as events, is an important support here.

Phase 2: Build and Structure

BOX 4

Core group supplemented by advisory board

In the context of the MAP on de-risking solar investments in India, it turned out to be difficult to include actors from the private sector and especially from the government in the core group. Reasons include hierarchies between civil society and government actors, but also tight time capacities. This could be bridged by providing the core group of representatives from research and NGOs with an advisory board of representatives from the government and the private sector. In this way, a MAP structure with clear roles for the individual actors was created in line with the Indian context. It is important that the core group and the advisory board are well interlinked.

Representatives of companies, governmental organisations, NGOs and think thanks in discussion on de-risking of solar investments, MAP workshop, August 2018 in Mumbai, India

Photo: TERI

Phase 3: Collaboratie Action

The third, **"Collaborative Action"**, phase is concerned with implementing the strategies planned in Phase 2. The structures developed in phase 2 must now prove their worth. Success factors for multi-actor partnerships have emerged as well as challenges in achieving results.

Success factor "Stakeholder involvement and group dynamics"

Regular and transparent communication about the professional exchange on the part of the core group, but also of all other actors, is a very important factor for success in order to enable a common understanding and appreciative work at eye level.

On the one hand, the cross-sectoral character of the partnerships is important in order to bring all relevant actors to the same table. At the same time, only the interdisciplinary and the coming together of the different sectors enable **joint learning**, when different perspectives can be brought in and thus new solutions for the common goal can be identified. Each sector brings its own expertise, approaches, experience, as well as contacts, data and concrete insider knowledge. It is often advisable to minimise traditional learning formats within MAPs and make learning more practice-oriented, "on the MAP job." For example, the joint development of a publication can help to build capacity among the involved actors. For this, communication and sharing of knowledge and information should be transparent and, if necessary, applied in self-moderated small groups. Written revisions and feedback loops can consolidate the acquired competencies.

Success factor "Clear responsibilities"

Clear responsibilities in the core group, but also in the wider partnership environment, are important to avoid misunderstandings and ambiguities in the implementation phase. Clearly defined roles are also important for external communication. In particular, actors who are active in the core group should have **ownership and identification with the goals** of the partnership. Ownership means that actors are willing to invest a lot in achieving the goals. It also shows whether the goals are relevant to the context.

Furthermore, it has proven particularly effective in this third phase when a core group organisation takes on a facilitating role and drives implementation forward
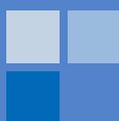
in a prudent but determined manner. In most of our MAPs, Germanwatch has taken on this role of "dynamic facilitation".

Challenge "Transparency"

As explained above, transparency and regular exchange are elementary for a MAP. **Weak communication between partners** suggests that the exchange does not take place regularly enough, is not based on trust, or that actors do not want to share their information. In Phase 3, transparent communication is particularly central, as actors in this implementation phase enter into communication with actors outside of the MAP. Information, progress and challenges need to be reported back to the MAP to be considered accordingly by the MAP as a whole.

> **Possible solution strategy: formats for simple reporting, e.g., in writing in a project management platform and verbally in regular calls, in order to share new developments with the MAP in a timely manner. A culture of open exchange with the highest possible level of trust between stakeholders needs to be established and maintained. Meetings can be recorded, online as well as offline, to keep missing members informed. However, it is essential to consider the needs of the stakeholders.**

Phase 4: Evaluate and Sustain

With the final phase of the MAP, **"Evaluate and Sustain"**, Germanwatch has not yet been able to gather as much experience as with the previous phases, but individual success factors are emerging.

Success factor "Actors / Group dynamics"

Good maintenance of the multi-actor partnership is important in order to further develop it towards the end of the project funding with a **joint perspective for the future**. Above all, financial sustainability must be regulated, but new concepts and, if necessary, adapted or new objectives must also be drafted. In the best case, a MAP can then be institutionalised and thus have long-term impact. This requires a broad and stable base of actors (from the core group or beyond) who are willing to maintain the partnership (also financially) and continue to pursue the goal.

Success factor "Methodology and proces"

Cooperation with experts outside the MAP is also connected to this. It can be helpful, for example, if the goal is mainstreaming, for which there may not be sufficient expertise within the MAP or data may be lacking. Targeted cooperation with communication institutions, universities or media could be considered in that case. To ultimately reach a larger audience, mass media can be used to disseminate knowledge from the project.

Challenge "Maintaining partnership"

Due to the predominantly early stages of the MAP development, little experience has been gained with the fourth and final phase. In order to take this into account, the concrete aspirations of the partners were surveyed during a workshop. Activities planned by the partners to continue the work and effectiveness of the MAPs after the end of the project include:

- Increasing influence on and participation in political decision-making processes
- Early planning for institutionalisation of the partnership, including funding structure and effective and transformative leadership for continuity after the project ends
- Regional or international expansion of the partnership

- Implementation of lighthouse projects for the concrete implementation of the proposals developed by the MAP
- Prepare information about the partnership for a broad population in order to generate more awareness among the population about partnership issues

Solar panel in India
Photo: Rixa Schwarz

Phase 4: Evaluate and Sustain
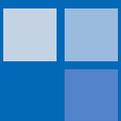
EXPERIENCES FROM
7 MULTI-ACTOR PARTNERSHIPS

C.3 Importance of the design of funding conditions for MAP project success

The framework of project funding for non-governmental organisations has an influence on the feasibility of multi-actor partnerships. The source of the following observations are both the seven MAPs under project responsibility of Germanwatch and the external expert evaluation of the MAPs in Kenya and India.

We consider the following feedback to be particularly relevant:

Members of a community in Marsabit County, Kenya, which is characterised by an arid climate
Photo: Transparency International Kenya

Promotion of unusual cooperation

The funding of MAP projects in itself stimulates cooperation between actors who are otherwise less likely to collaborate, let alone perpetuate their cooperation. This is very important in terms of a successful Theory of Change. In this context, it is essential to develop a common understanding of the common goals oriented towards the common good as well as the distributed, partly contradictory roles (and interests) in achieving these goals. If it is possible for actors who are usually assumed to be political opponents - because of their societal interests - to cooperate in achieving the goals, this can have a very constructive effect on the desired transformative process. Such a process presupposes the building of trust and a certain flexibility with regard to the selection of partners.

Flexibility

Learning together, creating new knowledge and acting collectively in a multi-actor partnership are ambitious and complex change processes that cannot be planned conclusively in advance. The schema of a classic consultative development project with predefined activities and outputs including indicators for goal fulfilment is not very suitable for the co-creation processes of a MAP. In order to be able to set up and implement a project in line with the MAP concept in such a way that there is sufficient ownership by all partners, flexibility is therefore required in project planning and implementation.

Essential elements of a MAP often cannot yet be defined at the time of application. This applies to both the institutionalisation of a MAP and the substantive outcomes, as both are strongly influenced by process dynamics among the actors. An iterative approach - possibly with evaluation discussions after setting the course - would therefore promote the feasibility of the MAP approach.

This concerns, for example, the areas:

a) Selection of MAP partners: for the MAP to be successful, it is essential to select partners according to their relevance, affectedness, interests and influence. Firstly, there should be sufficient flexibility in the first phase of the MAP and, secondly, actor mapping should be carried out at regular intervals during the MAP and, if necessary, the circle of MAP partners should be expanded or also restricted. The possibility of including partners in the course of the project is therefore beneficial.

b) Concrete definition of political goals and indicators and activities based on them: in line with the MAP concept, the objectives originate from a joint problem definition and identification of the key challenges – taking into account all stakeholder perspectives, the objectives are then jointly defined. If the context of the MAP changes politically or otherwise, it may be necessary to adjust the objectives during the project period. From our perspective, this is in line with the logic of impact structures in development cooperation.

This flexibility is particularly relevant to the inclusivity of the MAP, partners gaining ownership throughout the process, and achieving real and contextually relevant change.

Context-specific classification of the development status of the MAP

Multi-actor partnerships function as transformative partnerships based on actor logics and in specific political contexts, not on linear development logics. Insisting on rapid progress in terms of a linear institutionalisation path may not be purposeful, and at times may even be detrimental to ownership. For example, prioritising the creation of bodies rather than substantive work can lead to frustration among stakeholders and reinforce the impression that it is not an equal collaboration. A deepening of MAP activities without formal institutionalisation may even lead to much better concrete results (such as policy statements, studies) and significantly increase the quality of actor relations as well as the importance of the MAP. In this case, funding should be based on a qualitative, systematic assessment of the MAP's development status without too much reduction to linear steps of organisational development.

Possibility to apply in English

In order to involve international partners in the development of the application on an equal footing, the possibility of submitting the proposal in English – depending on the context – is relevant. Especially when working with partners in an international context and on eye level, central project documents must be understandable for all, especially for the permanent project partners. It should also be possible to prepare the project reports in English in order to involve the partners on an equal footing.

Financial structure

The appropriate financing structure is also very relevant for the success of MAP projects. In our experience, this should be considered:

- Financing of a scoping phase in the sense of an interactive approach
- Funding opportunities beyond the permanent project partners, e.g., for the fulfilment of specific tasks within the framework of the core group
- Possible follow-up financing after the first, usually three-year term, as this initial project term is often too short for the sustainable development of a transformative partnership. And breaking off activities in the middle of building trusting cooperation for partnership-based transformation can undermine much of the trust that has been built up and set back promising transformative approaches.

Due to their intersectoral structure, multi-actor partnerships are very well suited to address complex challenges. The perspectives and expertise of actors from different sectors can lead to smarter and more sustainable solutions to challenges of socio-ecological transformation in line with the 2030 Agenda and, in particular, the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement. As the establishment and maintenance of the MAP are goals in themselves, in addition to the political goals it pursues, they require significant time capacity from all partners and prudent commitment from the initiators. In addition, embedding in and adapting to the respective country-specific context are prerequisites for making MAPs a success. The right framework conditions from project funding can also contribute to the success of a MAP.

We hope that the lessons learned and compiled will inform future multi-actor partnerships and contribute to their success.

MAP Workshop on Climate and Disaster Risk Financing in December 2020 in Saly, Senegal
Photo: ENDA
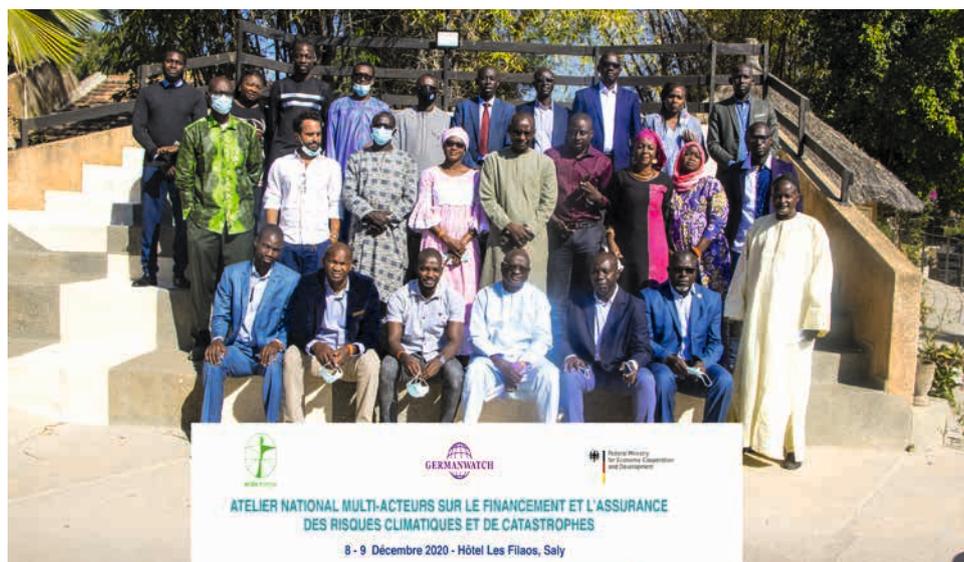
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Goat herder in the arid county of
Marsabit, Kenya, February 2019
Photo: Transparency International Kenya

Evaluation of the survey

The following list contains the information mentioned in the survey among the actors of Germanwatch's MAPs – categorised as success factors and challenges. The number of mentions is given in parentheses in front of the information.

Success Factors

A Strategy Development

(8) Paris Agreement

(7) Regular stakeholder meetings/conferences for strategy formulation

(5) SDGs

(4) High level support with national legal framework

B Cooperation Management

(10) Systemic involvement and wide range of stakeholders

(6) Creation of valuing cooperation environment (trust, respect etc.)

(3) Ownership and identification with the objective

(3) Network Maintenance

(3) Balance of Power

Perceived as very important to prevent conflict and misunderstanding

C Steering and Credibility

(8) Regular and transparent communication

(5) Mandate and role of Germanwatch

(5) Clear responsibilities for leading organisations and other partners

D Process Architecture

(5) Creation of core container/group

(5) Thought through and solid planning processes

(4) Using suitable online platforms

E Learning and Innovation

(6) Mutual learning

(4) Good knowledge management using suitable online tools

(4) Study trips

(2) Capacity building workshops

F Impact Orientation and Effectiveness

(8) Embeddedness in relevant context (local, national, thematic)

(6) Cooperation outside of the MAP bubble with external experts

(2) Benefit for most vulnerable and marginalized communities

(1) Using mass communication to distribute knowledge about project

Challenges

Project Context

(9) Covid-19 – influencing projects in various ways e.g. instable economy, uncertainty, need more resources, no physical meetings possible, no community action possible

(7) Political factors - political will, armed conflicts, corruptive system, political instability

Resources and Capacities

(9) Lack of Time – for research, whole process, finding right partners

(8) Lack of Knowledge - thematic topic, local context, scientific background, CDRFI, combining disaster risk and climate risk, finding right experts for research, not enough research, lack of data

(3) Lack of funding – core container, access to resources for small NGOs

Leadership and Participation

(8) Lack of reliability and continuation in partners - in ministries, research, staff, stakeholder, too many changes in staff in partner/governmental institutions

(7) Lack of participation/motivation – no regular participation, important stakeholder not involved or lost interest, partner organisation not willing to use MAP, outreach to stakeholder unsuccessful

(6) Difficult cooperation with stakeholder – unclear role of state, power imbalance with big companies, buy-in by stakeholder, conflict of interests, different interests

(2) Lack of trust - in general direction of MAP project, between stakeholder, lack of trust between partners

Communication and Transparency

(3) Weak communication – between partners, at start with important stakeholder, lack of external presence

Process and Project Development

(4) Functionality of Core Container endangered – weak interaction between core container and advisory committee, unclear roles

(1) Lack of distribution of Knowledge – in project context

Germanwatch

Following the motto of **Observing. Analysing. Acting.** Germanwatch has been actively promoting global equity and livelihood preservation since 1991. We focus on the politics and economics of the Global North and their world-wide consequences. The situation of marginalised people in the Global South is the starting point for our work. Together with our members and supporters, and with other actors in civil society, we strive to serve as a strong lobbying force for sustainable development. We aim at our goals by advocating for prevention of dangerous climate change and its negative impacts, for guaranteeing food security, and for corporate compliance with human rights standards.

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