

11 Conclusion

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Public-private and multistakeholder partnerships are now embedded in the fabric of global governance. As claims intensify as to the variety of functions that are expected to be provided by partnerships across multiple levels of governance, this volume offers a dual contribution, elaborating an innovative theoretical framework on partnership effectiveness and applying it to generate new qualitative evidence and data across multiple issues that are at the core of advancing sustainability.

The main theoretical contribution of the volume is the articulation of a new disaggregated framework that identifies a set of pathways and conditions underpinning the variable effects of partnerships (Chapter 1). The framework challenges prevalent debates about the nature of partnership governance. Public-private and multistakeholder initiatives neither necessarily provide functional solutions to governance failures associated with globalization and policy stalemates, nor do they necessarily amount to largely superficial window-dressing driven by corporate actors. Rather, a more nuanced and interdisciplinary conceptualization of the effectiveness of partnerships highlights how different types of effects can materialize across different constituencies and layers of governance. These effects must be actively examined rather than assumed, while recognizing relevant counterfactuals, inequalities of power, and the emergence of second-order positive or negative outcomes. We argue that understanding the distribution of such different effects provides us with a more accurate perspective on what partnership effectiveness entails, as well as its limitations or outright failures. This is a necessary baseline from which it is possible to analyze the relative contribution of public-private and multistakeholder partnerships to both addressing specific problems and pursuing sustainable development more generally, alongside or in interplay with, other governance modalities.

The second, empirical, contribution of this volume lies in the wealth of cases, data and analyses presented (Table 11.1), which present ample evidence of the value of assessing partnership effectiveness against more numerous and complex dimensions of effectiveness than previously recognized. The contributions of partnerships to problem solving and advancing sustainable development is ultimately a matter of producing multiple effects across different pathways for multiple constituencies. Effectiveness is amplified when such pathways work together

Table 11.1 Issue areas, cases, data and crosscutting themes analyzed in the volume

<i>Issue Area Crosscutting Theme</i>	<i>Case Studies, Data and Chapter(s)</i>
Climate change, carbon funds & markets	Case study of World Bank-brokered funds and market mechanisms for greenhouse gas emissions reduction since 1999 (Michaelowa, Michaelowa & Andonova, Chapter 4).
Biodiversity and clean energy	Comparative case studies of the Amazon Region Protected Areas Program (ARPA) (Brazil); Instituto Nacional de Biodiversidad (INBio, Costa Rica); San Cristóbal Wind Power partnership (Ecuador) (Andonova & Piselli, Chapter 2).
Protected areas, conservation and development	Case study of Reserva de Desenvolvimento Sustentável do Uatumã (Brazil) (Silva-Muller & Faul, Chapter 3); protected areas also covered by Andonova & Piselli (Chapter 2).
Durability and adaptability of partnerships for environmental protection and sustainability	Dataset and survey of 27 partnerships from the Roy Family Award for Environmental Partnerships. Case studies of Noel Kempff Climate Action project (Bolivia); Mexico City Metrobús (Mexico); and Alianza Shire partnership for energy Access to refugees (Ethiopia) (Sardonis and Lee, Chapter 8).
Transparency in natural resource revenue management	Panel-level data on the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). National case studies of Senegal and Indonesia (Fraser and Carbonnier, Chapter 9).
Children's rights	Case study of Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children (Bissell and Stevens, Chapter 7).
Global health: polio	Case study of Global Polio Eradication Initiative (Pillinger, Chapter 6).
Global health: access to medicines	Data on 10 product development partnerships for drugs, vaccines and diagnostics (DNDi, FIND, IPM, IVCC, IVI, Lifebox, MMV, Meningitis Vaccines Project, PATH, TB Alliance) (Vieira et al., Chapter 5).
Partnerships' governing boards	Faultline analysis of 3 partnerships focusing on climate change (Adaptation Fund, Green Climate Fund, and Global Environment Facility) and 3 focusing on health (GAVI, GFATM, Roll Back Malaria) (Faul and Boulanguem, Chapter 10).

Source: Authors.

in a cumulative manner. However, our research shows that this is not always the case, revealing instances of tensions and even contradictions and trade-offs across pathways to effectiveness.

This concluding chapter provides a synthesis of our main findings. We shed light on recurrent challenges to effectiveness and the ways in which some partnerships have succeeded in overcoming them, alongside limitations related to the types of solutions that they contribute to sustainability and entrenched power

dynamics. We begin by noting that the durability of partnership arrangements has emerged in our empirical research as an important baseline that plays a key role in shaping the extent to which partnerships exert their anticipated effects. We then turn to the discussion of our findings with respect to the pathways to effectiveness and the conditions related to partnership structuring. Finally, we offer reflections on the contributions of the volume in dialogue with different strands of literature on global governance and sustainability, and suggest avenues for future research.

Durability of Partnerships

In order to effectively contribute to sustainability, partnerships must at least last long enough to pursue their goals. However, this baseline expectation of durability cannot be taken for granted, as several of the case studies presented in this volume and the survey of the Roy Family Award partnerships aptly illustrate. Existing research has already highlighted that a notable share of partnerships registered at high-level international platforms may never take off in ways that provide sufficient inputs for implementation (Pattberg et al. 2012). Our findings further elaborate this line of inquiry by demonstrating that even partnerships that have actually been implemented frequently face internal or external setbacks. External risks have included changes in the political context (for example, a change in government, withdrawal of support from a particular initiative, amendments to existing policies, etc.) or in market conditions that prevent anticipated financial returns from materializing. Internally, partners have to manage differences in organizational culture, priorities and power which, if overlooked or undermined by lack of transparent engagement, could stall effectiveness and unravel cooperation. Achieving durability sometimes involves a prolonged start-up phase, sacrificing immediate efficiency for eventual longer-term effectiveness. Indeed, among the case studies in this volume, partnerships that succeeded in achieving their objectives also demonstrated capacity for endurance and adaptability, both with respect to planned strategies and in the face of unexpected risks.

The recurrent theme of partnership durability that emerges through our research is significant because it highlights that partnerships are ubiquitous but also fluid features of governance. By their nature, these initiatives are embedded in broader institutional frameworks through overlapping activities and the diverse affiliations of their stakeholders. At the same time, individual partnerships tend to pursue highly specific and sometimes time-bound objectives; they are not necessarily wired as long-term institutional fixtures. These dual characteristics of partnerships as embedded and highly focused modes of governance further validate the need for a more disaggregated assessment of concrete effects along different pathways to effectiveness, which considers objectives and processes internal to the partnership and also their external impact on societies and institutions.

We now turn to the most important insights on partnership effectiveness along the specific pathways elaborated in the theoretical framework (Chapter 1). We reflect on some of the synergies that have materialized across pathways, but also on contradictions and limitations that became apparent through our empirical inquiry.

Pathways to Effectiveness

Goal Attainment

Actors convene partnerships around a set of objectives that they have agreed upon, albeit from different positions of power in negotiating them. Moreover, once these goals have been set, the possibility of measuring their attainment represents an important means through which to rally partners, raise additional funding and communicate results. It is therefore not surprising that goal attainment proved to be the most prominent pathway to effectiveness along which partners themselves evaluate the performance of partnerships.

Notably, partnerships that focused on relatively concrete and circumscribed targets placed strong emphasis on their attainment. The ARPA partnership, for instance, set out with a goal of expanding and consolidating protected areas to cover 10% of the Amazonian biome in Brazil and attained this target in the first phase of its implementation, subsequently expanding it to 15%. It ultimately became one of the largest and most ambitious transnational conservation initiatives in scope, creating value beyond what public or private actors would have been able to achieve by themselves. At an entirely different scale and setting, the Alianza Shire partnership successfully implemented its pilot phase, securing access to electricity and improvements in safety and services in a refugee camp in Ethiopia. In turn, the data and analysis of a set of ten pharmaceutical Product Development Partnerships (PDPs) has provided evidence of additional investment in research and development for diseases that were previously neglected, resulting in renewed product pipelines and specific medical products that are more broadly accessible in low-income contexts and offer significant therapeutic advances. World Bank-brokered partnerships were successful in their goal to jump-start the development of carbon markets by mobilizing finance, elaborating accounting methodologies, and creating capacity in low- and middle-income countries.

And yet, while concrete and relatively narrow partnership goals can focus partner resources and commitment on their implementation, in some cases they may sidestep or even undermine other objectives that are essential for attaining sustainability broadly conceived. We have observed such dynamics among the cases examined, with implications for the direct and indirect effects of partnerships. For example, critical concerns (including within partnership boards) that initiatives such as GPEI and Gavi may indirectly divert resources from other health priorities in comparison to more disease-focused goals, have led to decisions to dedicate a small proportion of funding to strengthening health systems. In the case of the ARPA partnerships, civil society organizations in Brazil contested its predominant focus on protected areas, demanding greater attention to social and development issues in the Amazon region, and the inclusion of sustainable-use and extractive reserves in the scope of the program's provisions.

Our research furthermore reveals that partnerships often revise their goals in the course of implementation. Some initiatives introduced more ambitious targets along the way, as in the cases of the Mexico City Metrobús and ARPA. Others, like

the Galápagos Wind project, succeeded in their immediate objective of displacing 2.4 megawatts of fossil fuels by implementing a hybrid wind power system on San Cristóbal Island, but had to downscale the original expectation of a 50% reduction in fossil fuel use to 30%, due to a rise in local energy demand that could not be anticipated. The initiative similarly adapted its goals early on to include wildlife conservation and capacity-building components as essential aspects for the sustainable development of the island. The GPEI followed yet another trajectory. It made substantial progress toward the goal of eradicating polio, with 99.96% fewer polio cases in 2020 than in 1988. However, a host of political and place-specific reasons have prevented eradication in the two remaining endemic countries. The decision was taken not to adjust the target, but rather to persist with the partnership's ultimate goal of eradication. This, in turn, triggered significant internal change (updating the initiative's strategy and financial commitments), as well as external controversy regarding the high volume of resources committed to a priority that is not widely supported in the countries affected. Multiple partnerships explored in this volume also developed a set of auxiliary targets early on during the implementation to address aspects of sustainability adjacent to their principal goals, a tendency that also became evident through the survey of the Roy Family Award finalist partnerships.

In several of the cases analyzed, the immediate partnership goals materialized only partially or were ultimately not achieved, providing more insight on recurrent challenges to partnership effectiveness. Prominent transnational initiatives such as the Noel Kempff Mercado Climate Action Project in Bolivia and INBio in Costa Rica started with ambitious goals and implementation phases, but experienced in their institutional history what Oran Young (2011) has termed "arrested development" (p.19855). In both instances, the partnerships and the attainment of their objectives were highly dependent on political and market-based contextual factors. Ultimately, both partnerships ceased to exist despite some early achievements, most notably the creation of the National Biodiversity Inventory by INBio. In turn, the analysis of EITI membership and its impact on the terms of international finance reveals a gap between countries' adoption of EITI principles and the complex political dynamics of implementation that remain detached from the partnership. To attain the EITI's goal of reducing corruption and illicit financial flows, member countries must allow the partnership to perform its oversight function. However, long histories of opacity and deeply rooted political complexity in the management of resources have prevented investors from gaining confidence in the governance of the extractives sector, effectively weakening the signal associated with EITI membership.

Overall, our findings suggest that the goal attainment pathway of partnership effectiveness tends to materialize with respect to relatively well-specified and often narrowly targeted goals that command strong and durable commitments from core partners. This approach is highly characteristic of partnerships as a transnational mode of governance, and can produce tensions with other pathways to effectiveness, for instance with respect to impacts on affected populations and broader sustainability objectives.

Value for Partners

Political questions of who gets what, when and why (Sell 2003) are central to examining the effectiveness of partnerships. Many of the cases analyzed in the volume reveal that the value created for partners tends to be associated with the attainment of partnership goals, suggesting a close nexus between these two pathways. However, this could also indicate that core partners – those who have led the founding of the partnerships and who are represented in its governance – may contribute to a narrow framing of the partnership’s goals that aligns with their own expectations. Moreover, our multi-disciplinary and broadly comparative empirical approach has allowed us to examine how different types of benefits materialize to public, private sector and civil society partners, and the contradictions that may emerge.

Across several cases examined, project documents and partners who were interviewed speak of value created both at the macro level for sustainability and for core partners, both public and non-state. For example, the value of PDPs materialized in correcting a market failure in the development of medicines for neglected diseases, and also by creating value for the academic, government, industry, and philanthropic organizations that participated in the initiatives. In a field of innovation and technology development, where competitive R&D and profit maximization dominates, PDPs facilitated more open and efficient sharing of knowledge and increased resource flows to partner organizations (as well as to the partnerships as a whole). It also created value in terms of access to more affordable and context-adapted medical technology.

In a similar vein, the attainment of core objectives by partnerships such as ARPA, GPEI, Alianza Shire, Galápagos Wind and Mexico City Metrobús delivered value to international partners and donors who expected these projects to contribute to their strategic priorities and agendas, as well as to national government agencies and local municipalities, who could raise resources and gain political leverage to pursue ambitious programs that they otherwise would not have been able to embark upon. Private sector actors, in turn, have sought to obtain reputational benefits and explore the potential for future market opportunities, while simultaneously reducing their own financial risks through blended financing strategies which involved financial contributions from host governments and other donors.¹ Our research on global financing partnerships found that there is a significant association between the public sector and providing partnerships funds, while business, finance and civil society representatives enjoy the benefit of holding decision-making seats in financing partnerships for health.

Finally, several chapters found that the strong commitment to realizing value for core partners may also create tensions with respect to more comprehensive sustainability objectives, or for constituencies that are not directly represented in a partnership’s governing structure. Prioritizing value creation for core partners, the early portfolio of World Bank partnerships rolled out large-scale, low-cost carbon offsets implemented disproportionately in large emerging economies and at times produced contradictions and even pathologies – such as investing in HFC-23

(trifluoromethane) destruction projects or overlooking the climate-related challenges in low-income countries – that could ultimately compromise political trust in carbon markets as instruments to advance sustainability. Similarly, while polio eradication has continued to represent a key priority within the agendas of international partners involved in the GPEI, it has progressively become less relevant to national governments that are simultaneously dealing with other public health issues which require significant resources.

In this respect, a crucial problem therefore consists in the level of engagement of affected populations, whose perspective could help deliver synergies between the value accruing to individual partners and the overall problem-solving effects of the partnership. Despite being frequently referred to as partners in partnership documents, these populations and communities in many instances are not sufficiently represented in governance structures, while their well-being is fundamental to advancing sustainable development. For example, civil society organizations working in RDS Uatumã in the Brazilian Amazon facilitated the creation of value for many partners in the complex of Brazilian environmental governance (including for local communities, by ensuring a voice in decision-making structures and improving education and livelihood opportunities; for transnational partnerships and donors, by translating and implementing their goals at the local level; and for federal and state-level public actors working to protect the Amazon). Yet, the role of local civil society organizations in wider transnational partnerships such as ARPA often takes place at the level of local implementation, rather than substantial participation and influence in the partnerships' decision-making structures. Additionally, competition between partners regarding the value that may accrue to them can hinder partnership formation and structuring. In the End Violence partnership, smaller NGOs were satisfied that participation in the partnership would increase their resource base, whereas some larger civil society and international organizations railed against their decreasing share of existing resources.

In sum, while many cases reveal convergence between partnership goals and value creation for partners, tensions arise when there is competition for resources, creation of split incentives for certain partners and the support for broader impacts of the partnership, ambiguous signals to and from markets, and inadequate involvement of affected communities as core partners. Such contradictions with other pathways depended on the extent to which partners' incentives were congruent with partnership goals and with the pursuit of sustainable development at large.

Collaboration within Partnerships

Another advantage of disaggregating the pathways to partnership effectiveness is the opportunity to inquire more deeply into processes of internal collaboration and their implications for advancing sustainability. What does it take for partners to collaborate effectively? While business administration studies have focused substantially on how internal partnership structuring and processes affect

collaborative outcomes (Austin and Seitanidi 2012a, b; Stadler and Probst 2012), the international relations scholarship has so far attributed less attention beyond scrutinizing the tendencies of uneven participation across stakeholders (Andonova 2014; Andonova and Levy 2003; Bäckstrand 2006; Bulkeley et al. 2014; Pattberg et al. 2012). Indeed, questions remain about who gets to be a partner and what the power dynamics within an initiative are (Faul 2016; Faul and Tchilingirian 2021). Several dynamics along this pathway became apparent through our research.

To begin with, the role of partnership brokerage has proved to be an important factor contributing to the effective management and adaptability of partnerships, as well as in linking them more effectively to other initiatives horizontally and to local communities. Interestingly, we found that in our sample of initiatives, different types of non-profit organizations have most frequently taken on brokerage roles in many of the partnerships examined. They range from expert organizations as in the cases of *Alianza Shire* and *PDPs*, to civil society organizations such as *FAS* in the Brazilian Amazon, transnational NGOs such as *WWF* in *ARPA* and the *WRI* in the Mexico City Metrobús partnership, as well as not-for-profit industry associations such as the *GSEP* (which itself operates as a sustainability partnership bringing together CEOs of electricity companies) in *Galápagos Wind*. The World Bank is a particular type of actor which, as an international organization with considerable agency, assumed roles both as governance entrepreneur and partnership broker to establish carbon offset partnerships. The United Nations Fund and the UN Office for Partnerships have similarly taken on the role of partnership facilitators of larger portfolios of partnerships within the UN, which are exemplified by the *Galápagos Wind* project in our study.

Several of these organizations (the *WWF*, the World Bank, and *GSEP*), but not all, have assumed multiple roles in partnering processes – initially as governance entrepreneurs for the creation of new partnerships, then as core partners in the respective initiatives, and also as brokers and thus facilitators within specific partnerships. Overall, broker organizations have played an important role in stabilizing collaboration among partners, often by leveraging resources and expertise to cushion unanticipated setbacks, as well as by shaping the design of the processes and institutional mechanisms through which partnerships are implemented.

Our collective research further highlights that continued and substantial coordination among core partners is highly significant for steering partnerships toward realizing their objectives. This is particularly the case at critical junctures in which a partnership may need to manage unexpected challenges or update the nature of their agreements, the roles of the partners, or its implementation activities. Interviews cited across several chapters highlight that effective communication, as well as the distribution of risks and responsibilities according to the shared understanding of roles and comparative advantage of each partner, allow partnerships to better manage different types of setbacks. More generally, setbacks can be characterized as inherent to cross-sector partnerships, due to the diversity of contexts, organizational cultures, logics of action and incentives that partnerships bring together.

Across multiple cases, meaningful engagement by national and subnational governments in the establishment and governance of a partnership has also enabled successful on-the-ground collaboration for implementing and adapting partnership goals. This is illustrated by the significant role of Brazilian government environmental agencies in the ARPA partnership; the central involvement of the San Cristóbal municipality and its electric utility in the Galápagos Wind project, alongside strong coordination by representatives of the Ecuadorian government; and the driving role of Mexico City's mayor and environmental agencies in the Metrobús partnership. The early implementation of the End Violence partnership through pathfinder countries has similarly sought to leverage strong policy commitments from national governments to advancing the cause of ending violence against children in practice.

However, dynamics of close-knit collaboration among core partners can also create certain risks should core partner support be withdrawn, as well as a tendency toward selective club governance rather than more broadly representative structures. Such political risks are exemplified by the freezing of the Amazon Fund's resources after the election of the government of President Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, or the withdrawal of government and donor support from the INBio partnership in Costa Rica. Even where partnership governance design includes representatives of conventional stakeholder groups (public, private, and voluntary sectors), faultlines within these sectors may divide the core partners into different subgroups that have more consequential effects on group functioning. In the six global financing boards examined, differences within the public sector grouping (between donors versus non-donors, and economic- versus issue-logics of action) appear at least as significant as between public and private sectors. Furthermore, the extent to which PDPs meaningfully engage host governments and intended beneficiaries tends to be rather indirect and top-down, through transnational partners and specialized agencies. The resulting tension – between close substantive collaboration at the level of partnership governance as a consequential basis for effectiveness, alongside the potential disenfranchisement of actors with less power, access, and voice – holds implications for issue-framing, agenda-setting, as well as partnership activities themselves. These risks and tensions shape the kinds of effects that are produced and their distribution, and therefore have implications for the legitimacy of partnerships.

Impact on Affected Populations

By focusing attention on external as well as internal pathways to effectiveness, our analytical framework allows us to scrutinize indirect effects, which are less well understood in the partnership literature. While partnerships ultimately aim to influence a broad range of actors beyond core partners, disentangling their effects on affected populations is often challenging. Through our collective research, it has become apparent that data on partnership effectiveness at the subnational level and with respect to specific domestic constituencies is less readily available. Partnership documents tend to focus on overall goal attainment and more

visible macro-level inputs and effects. Moreover, they interact with a multiplicity of policies, institutions, and other transnational initiatives to shape outcomes at national and local levels. As a consequence, understanding such interactions and the relative contribution of a partnership to effective governance depends, in part, on the angle a researcher takes and the pathways that can be scrutinized through different research methodologies. The deliberate diversity of cases selected in our study reflects the multi-layered nature of partnership governance. It reveals how the specific focus of partnerships, the nature of partners, and the localization of initiatives profoundly shapes which types of effects are prioritized and produced for affected populations.

The cases of partnerships in the Brazilian Amazon have illustrated the complex interplay between domestic institutions, transnational partnerships and their impacts on local populations and governance. This reflects the density of domestic and transnational governance initiatives that have come to populate the region throughout its turbulent history over the last four decades (Hecht 2011). In this context, civil society organizations and subnational programs such as the state-level Bolsa Floresta have been essential intermediaries between affected communities and the multitude of transnational initiatives working in the Brazilian Amazon. It is such interactions on the ground that can generate positive effects for local communities: in RDS Uatumã, for example, rendering affected populations more visible to national and transnational governance bodies. Thus, partnership initiatives have had some positive social impacts in the region through the participation of local and regional actors. For instance, they have indirectly regularized the land rights of some local communities by prompting the government to formalize the status of protected and sustainable-use areas; they increased attention to local priorities in natural resource management, and provided education and health services. At the same time, our research also has revealed the limitations of transnational partnerships, for example, with respect to their contribution to core sustainable development priorities such as poverty reduction, or in terms of their very ability to operate in high-deforestation areas that are dominated by commercial interests and related political struggles (see also Pinho et al. 2014).

Overall, the analysis across our cases suggests that effectiveness for local constituencies was realized to a greater extent in partnerships that were more localized at the subnational level in terms of their core objectives, and worked closely with sub-state authorities and stakeholders. Both the Galápagos Wind partnership and the Mexico City Metrobús initiative produced concrete benefits for specific municipalities and their citizens, including improved access to public services (energy and transportation, respectively), reduced air pollution, increased investment, realization of much-needed infrastructures, and development of local capacity and skills. The Alianza Shire partnership created tangible benefits for refugees in its pilot phase, including access to electricity, services and improved security. The global PDPs examined were explicitly established to provide for an unmet need in affected populations: cheap and effective treatments for neglected diseases. This global goal setting in response to local needs has resulted in positive outputs

for those affected, with new products that offer therapeutic benefits at lower cost and that can reach patients in marginalized or hard-to-reach communities.

Notably, however, even with respect to these locally embedded cases and objectives, it is primarily through global partners and their publications that information on partnership outcomes is reported, resulting in relatively limited detail about local communities or direct input from them. Moreover, affected communities are often not directly or systematically included in the governance structures of many large partnerships with a global scope. Nonetheless, the analysis of partnership boards demonstrated that of the three global health financing partnerships examined, two include one representative from affected communities at the board level (Gavi and the Global Fund), showing that the design and structuring of initiatives has implications for who is represented or excluded from decision making. By targeting both high- and low-income countries as pathfinders in its implementation, the End Violence partnership has sought to overcome the framing of the problem of violence against children as pertaining to low-income countries alone, making the suffering of children and their voices more directly heard and more readily visible both globally and within national contexts.

Influence on Cooperation and Institutions Outside the Partnership

Our analytical framework furthermore allowed us to consider the extent to which partnerships produce diffuse and potentially catalytic effects beyond the immediate scope of their goals, that is, on other institutions and governance processes.

At the national level, several of the initiatives examined have produced significant spillover effects in terms of creating and locking in new institutional capacities and policy development for sustainability. In at least four cases (the Mexico City Metrobús, Galápagos Wind, ARPA, and the World Bank carbon partnerships), a broader institutional effect became clearly visible through our research. Notably, the first three of these partnerships adopted an exit strategy that strengthened domestic institutional capacity to continue the provision of collaboratively developed services and public goods. These institutional effects have coincided with strong engagement by government agencies and subnational authorities as core partners, the leveraging of resources by both global and domestic partners for the medium and long term, and the engagement of local civil society organizations.

However, some partnerships in our sample that started with a strong set of long-term commitments and were initially on track to successful implementation (such as the Noel Kempff Mercado Climate Action Project and INBio) ultimately encountered challenges that stifled both goal attainment and the anticipated, broader catalytic impacts. Somewhat surprisingly, our studies found that even partnerships that had an observable institutional impact at the domestic level did not necessarily scale up beyond their specific contexts, with direct diffusion of innovative practices only taking place to a limited extent. For example, the survey of a set of partnerships selected over 15 years as finalists for the Roy Family

Award, because of their high promise for environmental effectiveness, revealed that a substantial share of these initiatives faced challenges related to political or policy change, financing, or project-specific circumstances. The promise of broader impacts materialized for some of these projects, but not others.

In turn, owing to their nature and goals, large global partnerships directly aim for extensive impacts on a global scale. However, their influence on governance and sustainable development beyond their targeted objectives appears to be circumscribed. For instance, while PDPs have produced a significant change in the development of and access to drugs and diagnostics for neglected diseases, their potential to spur disruptive and productive changes to the traditional pharmaceutical R&D business model remains unrealized. Moreover, the anticipated effect of EITI on financial markets, which are several steps removed from its adoption in specific countries, has so far failed to materialize. Of the large global initiatives examined, the World Bank partnerships had a visible catalytic impact on the development of international carbon markets, particularly in their early stages, enabling a faster emergence of carbon markets and the development of technical expertise. However, questions remain regarding the extent to which these partnerships may have also contributed to either crowding out other initiatives led by the private sector or, conversely, crowding in investments that otherwise would not have been mobilized.

Partnerships are often touted as a widely replicable and generalizable model of cooperation for sustainability, and yet many cases analyzed in these pages speak to the high degree of specificity regarding the context and selection of partners in a given partnership arrangement, as well as the micro-foundations of relations between partners across and within sectoral categories. Certain initiatives had broader effects that can be empirically traced through replication and lessons learned: for example, INBio inspired the establishment of similar research institutes in other low- and middle-income countries, and ARPA provided inputs to the creation of the Amazon Fund and the Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Program. Nonetheless, the broader diffusion and uptake of specific partnership innovations remained limited. This finding is somewhat surprising, because several of the partnerships studied explicitly sought to implement projects that would have a larger, replicable impact. It reveals that the partnership model is not generic, but rather specific to their context, partners, and problems. Our findings thus suggest further research is needed on the conditions that can amplify catalytic impacts (Hale 2020; Bernstein and Hoffmann 2018), and more critical engagement with the widespread policy narrative of partnerships and sustainable development.

Conditions for Effectiveness

We start from the premise that partnerships function as one type of governance mechanism among many others inside complex and multi-layered governance systems. Our approach therefore attempts to isolate a set of conditions that are specific to partnerships and may shape their effectiveness in significant ways, while recognizing that contextual factors are also important in enabling

or frustrating the realization of partnerships' contributions to sustainability. Our conceptual framework identifies four key factors in the structuring and characteristics of partnerships that shape their effectiveness: sophisticated contractual arrangements, credible commitment of resources, adaptability, and innovation. One significant insight of our collective research is that these four conditions for partnership effectiveness do not work in isolation. In certain cases, two or several design features of a partnership may reinforce or undermine the degree to which the partnership may be considered effective in one or more of the pathways delineated above. In other instances, failure in one of the conditions may undermine the viability of an initiative either directly or through negative feedback loops across other conditions for, or pathways to, effectiveness.

Contracting

First, we found that sophisticated contracting appears to be of fundamental significance both for the durability and effectiveness of partnerships, including in a number of cases as a prerequisite for securing credible commitments of resources and enabling adaptability. Extensive front-loading of efforts is often required for partners to establish a common language and understanding of objectives, and also to clarify the respective roles of partners according to their comparative expertise, the inputs they would provide, and the benefits that may accrue to them. In addition, sophisticated contracting typically involves agreement on the organization and governance of the initiative, as well as on the processes through which it will be implemented, reviewed, and evaluated to create feedback loops for monitoring, information sharing and accountability. Where present, such elements of contracting generally helped to establish greater trust and stable expectations among core partners and with other stakeholders, facilitating credible commitments to, as well as subsequent implementation and adaptation of the partnership – a finding that was anticipated by our framework and theoretical approaches to institutional effectiveness more broadly (Haas, Keohane and Levy 1993; Keohane 1984; Ostrom 1990). Of particular relevance to partnerships, unambiguous contracting is theorized to attenuate the potential negative effects of faultlines between the diverse groups and individuals that are brought together (Crucke et al. 2015).

Multiple interviews and cases have illustrated the significance of such upfront contractual arrangements, which mainly happen through soft and informal means such as planning documents, feasibility documents and, in some instances, memoranda of understanding. Only in rare instances does the structuring of partnerships also involve the adoption of domestic legislation to enable specific aspects of implementation. In several cases (for instance Galápagos Wind, End Violence, GPEI, and ARPA) the upfront contractual work took extended periods of time to complete, and required some adaptation from partners to agree on the scope of partnership objectives and the structuring of governing bodies. For instance, GPEI's multi-level, consensus-based decision making may be inefficient, but it has proved highly effective at holding dissimilar partners together over time and allowing for agreement on evolutionary (not disruptive) changes in the

partnership's governance and accountability mechanisms. Furthermore, survey responses from the Roy Family Award finalist partnerships indicated that governance structures that had been negotiated and endorsed provided legitimacy and reassured core partners that they would be heard – thus introducing certain expectations of 'internal' accountability. Sophisticated contracting therefore may take time, but it provides partners and partnerships with a shared understanding of their goals and roles, which facilitates other conditions for and pathways to effectiveness. At the same time, a number of the case studies revealed that sophisticated contracting has only rarely been used to provide partnerships with established mechanisms of external accountability, particularly with respect to affected populations and other stakeholders that are not represented in their governance structures.

Resources

The credible commitment of resources often depends on sophisticated contracting, and at the same time provides incentives and motivation for innovation in several of the studies presented. Such commitments have proved to be of critical significance for the attainment of partnership goals. Moreover, they have had important implications for the nature of cooperation within the partnerships, and ultimately for their effects on sustainability more broadly. Financing mechanisms capable of outlasting changes in partnership governance were needed, including effective fundraising, anticipating revenue streams, or maintaining financial support from donors or partners.

First of all, partners themselves committed resources to partnerships. For instance, the World Bank partnerships' requirement of unconditional promissory notes by participants served as a signal of credible commitment of resources, while the ex-ante announcement of a minimum total funding level required for each fund further strengthened the incentives for collective action among partners. Furthermore, the commitment of resources to the global financing partnerships was significantly associated with public sector board members, but not to the same extent with businesses or financial institutions. Similar trends have been documented also in larger sets of global public-private partnerships (Andonova 2018). In other words, these partnerships have not secured financial resources from private sector partners on a significant scale, but the potential of these actors to provide such resources (if not credible commitments) has been sufficient to give them a voice in partnership decision making. According to Faul and Tchilingirian (2021), private sector actors may provide other, non-financial, resources such as expertise or networks, but the primary reason given for their inclusion is increasing and improving financing for sustainability (AfDB et al. 2015). In the same way, despite the creation of a multi-donor Trust Fund to support the objectives of the End Violence partnership, concerns remain about securing adequate resources to support both its secretariat and governance functions.

In addition to donors who provide resources, the type of financing mechanisms used by partnerships matters. In the cases of ARPA, Galápagos Wind

and Mexico City Metrobús, sophisticated institutional design and contracting mechanisms became the basis for adopting and implementing innovative financial instruments. The Roy Family Award finalists overwhelmingly described a lack of sustainable financing mechanisms as the main barrier to their durability and effectiveness. In one case, after its initial funding mechanism failed, a partnership changed its business model to gain access to a different funding stream. Moreover, the resources required for effective partnerships are not limited to finances alone: PDPs leveraged the multi-year public and philanthropic funds they obtained to also secure contractual commitments ensuring access to the scientific data and biobanks critical to the partnerships' effectiveness. Thus, the credible commitment of resources by partners to their collaborative initiative remains a fundamental factor for the realization of partnership effects and their contribution to sustainability.

The links between this and other conditions for effectiveness are seen in many cases. For instance, once GPEI reached a stage that required a significant new mobilization of resources, an important restructuring of its governance – and re-contracting with core partners – took place to reaffirm the partners' commitment of resources, and to the partnership's goals. In contrast, although the INBio partnership started with strong resource commitments from the government, private partners and donors, its implementation was plagued by concerns regarding the limited transparency and accountability of the original contracts, which was ultimately a factor that contributed to ending the partnership.

Adaptability

Adaptability to overcome unanticipated risks in the implementation of partnership objectives is critical to partnership effectiveness across multiple pathways. Different partnerships reported on multiple approaches to adaptability and evolution, including adapting governance structures and business models and extending a partnership's spatial dimensions or objectives to better match those of the problem being tackled. Partnerships with a pilot phase in their design, such as Alianza Shire or the World Bank's Prototype Carbon Fund, built in expectations that some learning and adaptation was likely to be required with respect to the scope, efficiency, and legitimacy of their approach. A large proportion of respondents to the survey of the Roy Family Award finalist partnerships identified the need to learn and adapt flexibly to external shocks (in political and economic contexts) and internal stressors (over time, or in scope and scale) as a critical factor in effectiveness.

Our findings across cases demonstrate that adaptability of partnerships is enabled by contractual arrangements that facilitate regular interaction and transparency between partners, as well as with their wider stakeholders. For instance, the Mexico City Metrobús partnership made important adaptations to involve bus drivers directly as stakeholders and address their concerns regarding potential loss of income, which was essential for the long-term success of the project. In the ARPA and Galápagos Wind cases, adaptation in the scope of

their activities was required early on in response to civil society concerns. These adaptations improved the prospects for the effectiveness of these partnerships, particularly with respect to impacts on affected populations and the environment respectively, which had not been fully considered in the initial blueprints of the initiatives.

Adaptability is frequently required to secure new and stable resources when expected market benefits do not materialize or other financial hurdles occur, again illustrating the interplay of the underlying conditions for effectiveness we have identified. In several of the cases examined (such as INBio or the Noel Kempff Mercado project), the limited capacity to adapt to political and economic changes proved to be the Achilles' heel of the partnerships in terms of their viability and effective implementation. The long-term effectiveness of the ARPA partnership was directly dependent on its ability to mobilize resources from a number of different donors (such as the GEF, bilateral country donors, private foundations), while those of Galápagos Wind relied on the successful diversification of financing sources. In a number of ways, adaptability is facilitated by sophisticated contracting, and required for partnerships to ensure the credible commitment of resources over time.

Innovation

Finally, efforts to develop innovative products or approaches to achieve partnership goals (including innovative financing mechanisms) proved to be explicitly at the core of the majority of partnerships examined. This is a telling finding, since our research did not deliberately select cases according to this dimension. For instance, PDPs leveraged resources with the primary objective of developing new products and technology for neglected diseases; in order to achieve that aim they adopted an innovative R&D business model and partnering practices that have the potential (as yet unrealized) to transform conventional commercial practices in the pharmaceutical industry. ARPA's financing mechanisms sought to create innovative long-term instruments for conservation financing (referred to internally as "finance for permanence"), which were in turn closely integrated with the governance, monitoring and implementation aspects of the partnership and national institutions involved. Equally, the global financing partnerships studied provided innovative pooled financing mechanisms to which public and private donors could contribute, even if private donors in the main elected not to. In turn, the End Violence partnership developed a new tool, INSPIRE, to guide and benchmark policy interventions that seek to end violence against children.

Overall, whether the specific output was renewable energy, more efficient transport, development of drugs for neglected diseases, payments for ecosystem services, or more participatory protected areas management councils, the innovations identified in this volume represent elements of more complex innovation and governance systems for sustainability (Anadon et al. 2016). In all of these cases, the creation and diffusion of innovations was not only an objective itself of the partnership (to create value, and to impact populations and institutions),

but was also central to the approaches through which the partnership's goal would be achieved. In several cases, early experiments with innovative activities did not reap the expected returns, illustrating (as discussed earlier) the political embeddedness of partnerships and the risks associated with the partnership approach.

Problem Solving for Sustainability

Ultimately, partnerships should be expected to contribute to problem solving for sustainability, including the consideration of the potential trade-offs and tensions that may arise in the pursuit of specific environmental, social, and economic objectives. From this perspective, the case studies covered by the volume are relevant to a broad range of issue areas that pertain to advancing sustainability (Table 11.1). If we use the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a reference, these include, *inter alia*, the contribution of PDPs and global health and financing partnerships to the achievement of Goal 3 on Good Health and Well-being, the role of conservation partnerships in reducing deforestation and mitigating biodiversity loss as part of Goal 15 on Life on Land, and diverse efforts to achieve Goals 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and 13 (Climate Action) through the deployment of clean energy projects and sustainable electricity and transportation systems at the local level. Many partnerships targeted several issue areas simultaneously.

How can we assess the effectiveness of partnerships in terms of problem solving with respect to pressing sustainability issues such as those that are formally recognized by the SDGs? Our findings confirm that the approach taken by partnerships in addressing sustainable development problems is necessarily partial, as most of the initiatives examined sought to make a specific intervention as part of a broader range of solutions to complex global issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, unequal access to health, or decarbonization. The notion of the incremental and potentially disjointed contribution of new mechanisms of governance such as partnerships to global governance solutions has been advanced before (Andonova 2017; Faul and Tchilingirian 2020; Biermann et al. 2009), prompting us to approach the question of effectiveness through a disaggregated analysis of the intermediate pathways through which different effects materialize at different times.

Whereas it can often be difficult to quantify the relative contribution of a partnership to the overall solution of a complex problem, the adoption of specific, outcome-oriented partnership targets can, if implemented successfully, provide measurable indicators against which such performance can be evaluated. In the case of partnerships that attained their goals, the chapters in the volume have highlighted their specific contributions in terms of reduced or avoided CO₂ emissions, improved air quality in urban environments, increased access to life-saving medicines, access to more efficient and reliable sources of energy and public transportation, avoided deforestation, and access to electricity and greater security in a refugee camp setting. In this sense, partnerships themselves engage in

defining the specific problems and a set of specific interventions to address them. The inclusion of measures of goal attainment in our framework also allows us to document failures to achieve such goals, and the factors driving variable effectiveness along this pathway.

Another important advantage of using a disaggregated framework to understand partnership effectiveness consists in the possibility of identifying tensions or trade-offs that may exist between different intermediate pathways and the overall problem-solving effect of an initiative. For example, is there always synergy between the creation of value for partners and the problem-solving potential of a partnership, or can the first also occur at the expense of the latter? In partnerships such as ARPA, Galápagos Wind, Alianza Shire or the Mexico City Metrobús, which were characterized by the creation of value for the partners (e.g., specific benefits for national and local stakeholders, mobilization of additional financing, alignment with partners' goals and priorities), the value created for partners provided an overall positive contribution to advancing action and solutions on the broader environmental issues being tackled. However, as demonstrated by the case of the GPEI, this creation of value for partners does not necessarily translate into overall problem solving for sustainability, as it may support narrower goal attainment strategies that correspond to how an issue was framed by the partners, rather than to more integrated approaches on health services and infrastructure. Equally, the World Bank carbon funds created value for partners through the mobilization of finance, introduction of market incentives, and deployment of carbon offset projects. However, their long-term contribution to addressing climate change in a way that responds to broader sustainability concerns depends on adopting more ambitious and rigorous additionality standards over the prioritization of efficiency and profit for core partners.

Establishing the contribution of partnerships to problem solving through second-order effects that are often indirect or unintended is another challenge which is nonetheless crucial to address, as it pertains to the broader sustainable development impacts of partnerships beyond a specific goal or issue area. For instance, participation in transnational and domestic policy partnerships has helped to increase the capacity and political leverage of relevant authorities to pursue more robust sustainability agendas. These findings echo broader theoretical approaches that identify gains in domestic institutional capacity as key mechanisms for effective problem solving and advancing sustainability (Clark and Harley 2020; Haas et al. 1993; Young 2011), and extends them to transnational mechanisms of governance such as public-private and multistakeholder partnerships. And yet, we found that data are less readily available on many of these dimensions, being external to the core objectives of individual initiatives. Our findings provide qualitative descriptions of such effects across the various cases that we examined, both because relevant quantitative data are often missing and because partnerships' broader sustainability objectives are themselves formulated qualitatively. Our research thus implies that establishing partnership targets (and related monitoring and information sharing frameworks) across all five pathways to effectiveness that we identify in this volume would better account for an initiative's

impact. This could represent a critical means to make the effects of a partnership's efforts more visible and thereby increase learning among core partners, as well as accountability toward other partners and stakeholders with respect to advancing sustainability as an integrated objective.

Partnerships, Global Governance, and Sustainability

Partnerships represent a distinct modality in the polycentric and complex structure of contemporary governance. Such initiatives hold the promise of producing important contributions toward advancing sustainability. However, what we call the 'partnership paradox' highlights the fact that partnerships promise a great deal but without clarity as to what they deliver. Thus, we argue that rigorous conceptual and empirical work on the actual effectiveness of partnerships is critical to understanding their relevance and role in international relations and sustainable development. In this concluding section, we reflect on the ways in which our analysis has attempted to advance academic and policy debates on public-private and multistakeholder partnerships, global governance, and sustainability, as well as on fruitful avenues of future research.

First, the dual contribution of this volume (theoretical and empirical) holds promise for a more innovative and in-depth understanding of the pathways to partnership effectiveness and the conditions that can shape their performance. If partnerships are to break free from the current partnership paradox, more nuance and rigor is required for understanding and assessing their actual effects. The multi-disciplinary theoretical framework that we present takes seriously the potential of partnerships to contribute to sustainability and, rather than assuming that such effects will materialize, gives researchers the analytical purchase to examine them in a more nuanced and critical manner. It allows us to highlight aspects of partnership functioning and effectiveness that may be well-researched in one discipline, but not in others. For example, while the literature on management and business administration foregrounds the internal workings of partnerships, this has been largely overlooked in politics and international relations accounts. At the same time, questions of power and contractual arrangements that are frequently addressed in political analyses tend to be missing in business administration research. This volume offers a theoretical apparatus that is successfully applied to diverse empirical cases, and could be extended both to broader data sets and case studies of partnerships.

Such application is all the more important from a policy perspective. Presently, there are two formal SDG indicators related to measuring the contribution of multistakeholder partnerships to achieving sustainability, both of which we argue are insufficient to the task. First, SDG Indicator 17.16.1 seeks to measure no more than the "number of countries reporting progress in multistakeholder development effectiveness monitoring frameworks that support the achievement of the SDGs" (UN Statistical Commission 2021, p.22). Secondly, SDG Indicator 17.17.1 initially required reporting against the "amount of United States dollars committed to public-private and civil society partnerships" (UNGA 2017, p.24), a measure

that was then narrowed further to the “amount of United States dollars committed to public-private partnerships for infrastructure” (UN Statistical Commission 2021, p.22). Resourcing of partnerships, while crucial for their success, is just one of multiple conditions for effectiveness as we have elaborated in this volume.

The analytical framework and findings presented in this volume constitute an important call for the development of additional methodologies to both understand and track the implementation of partnerships and their effects along different pathways. Such frameworks would also enable the scrutiny of the synergies, as well as the contradictions and trade-offs, between different effects, pathways and with respect to the broader objective of advancing sustainable development as an integrated overarching objective and in an equitable manner. We recognize that this is a challenging task. Yet it is crucial if partnerships are to live up to their promised contribution to sustainability and additionality alongside existing policies and instruments, which cannot be assumed to be linear or essentially synergistic. Our research has revealed that evidence of the attainment of a broader range of sustainability objectives (creating additional social and environmental benefits, and strengthening capacity) is more mixed compared to data on immediate partnership goals. Assessment may be blurred due to more limited and variable availability of information. As multistakeholderism increasingly becomes an important mode of governance across global issues – from health and the environment, to cyber security, private military companies, the Internet, education, and clean energy – expanding our practical understanding of multiple pathways to effectiveness and aggregate outcomes is a salient and pressing agenda in both research and practice.

Second, our study brings in a renewed focus and novel approach on effectiveness to the broader literature on global governance. Terms such as complex governance, regime complexity, polycentric governance and governance fragmentation have captured the dynamic reconfiguration of agency, modalities, organizational fields, authority and hierarchy, legal arrangements and degrees of formality in the contemporary institutional architecture.² Variable sets of partnerships thus exist within a thicker layer of transnational initiatives and networks, in which more traditional expressions of power continue to play out, and certain states and institutions hold – and can wield – more power over others (Barnett and Duvall 2005; Bulkeley et al. 2014; Djelic and Quack 2010; Slaughter 2005). Applying the framework elaborated in this volume to the broader swath of transnational initiatives can help to achieve a more grounded, multi-dimensional and in-depth inquiry into the effectiveness of transnational forms of governance. Additional research using diverse methods is needed to establish the cumulative effect of multiple transnational initiatives, especially as partnerships continue to be framed as key means for achieving sustainable development. Moreover, our research unveils a significant degree of interface between preexisting policies, the activities of international institutions and a variety of partnerships and other transnational initiatives. The interplay between different modes and instruments of governance with respect to pathways to effectiveness is another angle of inquiry that is ripe for further research. Such investigation requires substantial new data and methods of analysis and aggregation at – and across – different levels, while

maintaining a critical scrutiny on the distributional and power implications for relevant constituencies. Building on the pathways to effectiveness framework, such inquiry would provide new lenses to better understand the effects of the multi-modal and overlapping institutional architecture of global governance.

Thirdly and importantly, the volume engages what many observers view as an increasingly pressing and existential question – how to advance sustainable development for present and future generations through effective transnational collaboration and local action. Challenges recurring on a global scale – such as pandemics, a changing climate, loss of biodiversity, and the unprecedented depletion of diverse natural stocks, alongside the persistence of social prejudice, inequalities, and violence – put at risk the capacity of societies to achieve inclusive well-being, particularly for vulnerable and marginalized groups. Our research has sought to generate new knowledge on the pathways through which public-private and multistakeholder partnerships can effectively contribute to a trajectory toward sustainability. The findings provide evidence that successful partnerships, in terms of intermediate goal attainment, tend to contribute relatively targeted solutions to concrete and well-articulated problems around specific issues, spaces, and political jurisdictions. Moreover, effectiveness along specific pathways can be associated as well with negative second-order impacts on other dimensions or gaps driven by power inequalities, which can in turn detract from the overall objective of sustainability. Indeed, while clearly establishing sustainable development as the overarching aspiration of the international community, the SDGs themselves are organized around targeted problems and indicators (Kanie and Biermann 2017). While such an approach seeks to enable concerted action and greater accountability, our research findings caution that it may inadvertently obscure how the realization of a specific target may produce trade-offs that run counter to the complex and integrated character of the concepts and practices of sustainable development. Understanding the contribution of partnerships to sustainability requires us to consider the different pathways to effectiveness as our research has demonstrated, as well as their interplay with other institutions and issues that are at the core of realizing inclusive well-being and safeguarding natural capital to sustain it. Such an understanding demands that researchers and policy makers pose critical questions. What kinds of issues or solutions that may be key for sustainability are strategically omitted from the purview of partnerships or other institutions? What strategies can contribute to stronger complementarities across different pathways to effectiveness, as well as between transnational and formal government institutions, and across the SDGs? Finally, such integrative questions are also important for discerning the catalytic or disruptive effects of governance experiments such as partnerships. While we found limited direct diffusion of innovation outside the immediate context of most partnerships analyzed in the volume, there is much to be explored on the types of processes that hold the greatest potential to create cumulative change in practices, norms, and capacity to support broader uptake of innovation and a shift in paradigms. We offer a theoretical framework and the wealth of grounded empirical research presented in this volume as a helpful tool and entry point to new integrative research on pathways to sustainability.

Notes

- 1 The proportionality of the value accruing to private partners in terms of profits (particularly in comparison to the cost of pursuing the same goal through other means) has been raised in the literature (Shaoul et al. 2008; Ehrenstein and Neyland 2018), but was not examined in the case studies in this volume, which mostly included partnerships in which private actors did not seek a direct return on their investments or allocation of resources.
- 2 See, for example, Abbott, Green and Keohane 2016; Alter and Raustiala 2018; Andonova 2017; Avant, Finnemore and Sell 2010; Barnett, Pevehouse and Raustiala 2021; Biermann and Kim 2020; Faul 2016; Kahler 2018; Keohane and Victor 2011; Ostrom 2010; Raymond and de Nardis 2015; Roger 2020; Vabulas and Snidal 2013; Westerwinter, Abbott, and Biersteker 2021; Zelli and van Asselt 2013.

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