Article

Improving Governance of Tenure in Policy and Practice: A Conceptual Basis to Analyze Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships for Multi-Stakeholder Transformative Governance Illustrated with an Example from South Africa

Louisa J.M. Jansen * and Patrick P. Kalas

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), 00153 Rome, Italy; Patrick.Kalas@fao.org
* Correspondence: Louisa.Jansen@fao.org

check for updates

Abstract: Tenure governance is a complex and multi-dimensional issue that requires cross-sectoral and holistic approaches, gathering the resources, information and expert skills of a variety of actors while exploring innovative, polycentric multi-stakeholder governance arrangements to address collective action challenges. To do this, multi-stakeholder partnerships are formed where public and private partners pool their resources and competencies to address mutual goals more effectively. A coherent theoretical framework to analyze multi-stakeholder partnerships as part of multi-stakeholder governance is presented based on internal conditions and the external environment. The paper expands existing frameworks to analyze multi-stakeholder partnerships through introducing a new element the deliberative capacity, a decisive success factor for the effectiveness of multi-stakeholder partnerships for multi-stakeholder transformative governance at the national level. Moreover, the practical applicability of this expanded framework is illustrated in a real case example in South Africa. This country-driven, inclusive multi-stakeholder partnership process, which integrates a variety of actors in collective decision-making on the land reform process as part of a multi-stakeholder governance process, is used as an illustration of the above framework. Such a partnership linked to multi-stakeholder governance is the key instrument to attain agreement and recognition for the dedicated implementation and monitoring of the 'Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security' (VGGT). The investment made by the different stakeholders in this organically constituted partnership may add to a greater transformative potential in the VGGT implementation and monitoring process, and the probability that the situation on the ground will change sustainably given the explicit linkage to national governance arrangements.

Keywords: tenure governance; Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT); internal conditions; external environment; deliberative capacity; multi-stakeholder partnership; multi-stakeholder governance; South Africa; Sustainable Development Goals

1. Introduction

The acknowledgement that intricate and multi-dimensional topics, such as sustainable development, necessitate approaches that are related to different interconnecting cross-disciplinary issues, and the gathering of the resources, information and expert skills of a variety of actors, is increasing [1–4]. No single stakeholder would be able to tackle the complex and multi-dimensional issue alone. This realization originates from the context of natural resources management whereby

stakeholders share a common-pool resource, and 'multi-stakeholder partnerships' were formed that contributed to the collective management of the resource [5–7]. The logic of working with multiple stakeholders has been expanded from this local level to national and global levels, and from sustainable development to governance [8,9].

In national 'multi-stakeholder partnerships', non-governmental actors work with governmental actors. The core idea is to create a win–win situation where public and private partners pool their resources and competencies to address joint aims more successfully [10]. This means that effective multi-stakeholder partnerships bring together diverse resources (e.g., natural, human and/or financial) in ways such that together, one achieves more, including added impact, greater sustainability, increased value to all [11]. A multi-stakeholder partnership is greater than the sum of its parts and it is about creating lasting, i.e., sustainable, and meaningful *impact* at all levels of action through maximizing synergies [1,11].

Multi-stakeholder partnerships are seen as complementary to governments' efforts; they do not replace institutional forms of decision-making. The acknowledgement that farming families, indigenous peoples and local communities should not only be considered as beneficiaries, but also as intelligent and well-informed partners, dates back to progress in rural participatory development methodologies in the 1980s and 1990s (e.g., Rapid Rural Appraisal; see for an example [12]).

Governments generally seek to attain numerous, sometimes competing, goals at distinct scales. They may see multi-stakeholder partnerships as a means to profit from the expert skills, knowledge and ideas of non-state stakeholders in order to define country-wide goals and priorities, and as a tool to prepare and organize non-state actor resources to achieve these objectives. In the end, governments are answerable to their citizens. The state is ultimately the primary duty-bearer for guaranteeing the human rights of citizens and for ensuring sustainable development. Since the 1990s, states have been expected not to unilaterally issue and impose regulations, but to be open for flexible and consensus-seeking forms of governance [13].

In the global United Nations context, in 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) defined nine "major groups" through which the thriving and full participation of stakeholders could be made easy in political deliberations on sustainable development, as follows: women, children and youth, indigenous peoples, non-governmental organizations, local authorities, workers and trade unions, business and industry, the scientific and technological community, and farmers (see https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/aboumajorgroups.html). In 1995, the UN Commission of Global Governance repeated the responsibility of states, but at the same time requested them to work with non-state actors [14]. In 1996, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) recognized and clearly identified the *consultative* relationship between the UN and non-governmental organizations (in Resolution 1996/31 available at http//:www.un.org/documents/ecosoc/res/1996/eres1996-31.htm). ECOSOC started, from 2008 onwards, to assemble annual meetings to reinforce UN collaboration with representatives from the private sector, charitable foundations, civil society organizations (CSOs) and researchers to advance the 2030 Agenda. The 2012 Rio+30 Summit acknowledged, in its final declaration, the critical contributions of existing and new partnerships at different scales to achieve sustainable development [15]. This declaration highlights the significance of partnerships that assist the complete, effective and meaningful engagement of all actors, so as to tackle multifaceted issues and multi-dimensional matters, share understanding and know-how, and advance access to pertinent education to improve capabilities at all levels. They confirmed the categorization of the major groups by UNCED. However, this categorization resulted from a top-down approach; there was no chance for stakeholders to propose their own types of organization [16].

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the blueprint for global sustainable development adopted in September 2015, supports "the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by the use of multi-stakeholder partnerships" (SDG17.16 and 17.17) as a means of implementation [17]. The UN resolution defines partnerships as "voluntary and collaborative relationships between various parties, both public and non-public, in which all participants agree to

work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and, as mutually agreed, to share the risks and responsibilities, resources and benefits" (A/RES/70/224, paragraph 2). In academic literature, however, multi-stakeholder partnerships are defined as institutionalized interactions between public and private actors, which aim at the provision of collective goods [18]. When stakeholders with unique complementary strengths or core competencies add value to sustainable development efforts and pool their resources and assets in solving problems, the concept of multi-stakeholder partnership as an instrument for achieving a common development goal is sound [1,3].

At both national and global levels, working with multiple stakeholders has wide appeal, especially in negotiations, policy and decision-making related to complex and multi-dimensional issues. The institutional support for working in this manner continues to grow.

Not only sustainable development, but also responsible tenure governance is a complex and multi-dimensional, multi-sectoral and multi-actor issue. At the global level, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the importance of tenure, explicitly so in target 1.4, which aims to "ensure that all men and women, particularly the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, [...], ownership, and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, [...]" and target 5.a, to "undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, and access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, [...], inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws") [17]. There is a clear relationship between sustainability and tenure across global, national and local levels. The primary responsibility for governance lies with states. The access to and control over more and more limited resources, such as fisheries, forests, land, minerals and water, requires cross-sectoral and holistic approaches to respecting, protecting and safeguarding the rights and right holders of these resources, especially those whose livelihoods are dependent on the use of these resources [4,19,20].

A broad, inclusive, participatory process finalized through intergovernmental negotiations, led by the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), resulted in the 'Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security' (in short 'VGGT') [19], an innovative instrument of soft law [21]. The purpose of the VGGT is to serve as a reference and to provide guidance on responsible tenure governance, with the overarching goal of achieving food security for all and supporting the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security. The VGGT are intended to contribute to efforts towards the eradication of hunger and poverty, based on the principles of sustainable development and with the recognition of the centrality of land to development by promoting secure tenure rights and equitable access to land, fisheries and forests [19].The level of participation of representatives of government, CSOs (e.g., organizations of small-scale food producers and indigenous peoples), the private sector and research institutions in the negotiation of all words in the final text sets it apart. This devoted time, effort and energy by the various actors may add to a greater transformative capability in the VGGT implementation process, and the probability that its real application and uses may be altered, especially for those mainly concerned with food insecurity and malnutrition [20,22,23]. The already mentioned 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is, in fact, the key in ensuring that the VGGT remain firmly and properly on the global sustainability agenda.

In the context of how countries work on improving tenure arrangements, multi-stakeholder approaches represent a fundamental change. They are anchored in human rights-based approaches drawing a distinction between right holders, duty bearers (state authorities) and third parties (e.g., academia, private sector, non-governmental organizations, religious institutions, etc.) [23]. Though the term 'multi-stakeholder platforms' appears only once in the VGGT, on page 39 [19], these are seen as *the* key tool to get agreement and recognition in the national dedicated VGGT implementation processes and monitoring to achieve systemic and sustainable change. Such processes generate partnerships beyond technical disciplines or organization types, and function to activate support by many and varied actors [20]. The role of the collective capacities and knowledge pooled in multi-stakeholder partnerships is becoming more critical in finding solutions [24]. It is key to

understand that multi-stakeholder partnerships, processes and platforms for governance of tenure are a means, not a goal. They open up spaces for dialogue and deliberations [25], and they offer an environment wherein diverse, sometimes divergent, stakeholder groups can have a conversation that might not otherwise happen. In doing so, they reflect how the CFS works, and the importance of working in that manner, at the country level.

This paper, which is part of a series on VGGT implementation, focuses on the question of how to analyze multi-stakeholder partnerships for the responsible governance of tenure at the country level. Recently, multi-stakeholder partnerships have received a fair amount of attention [24], but few of these studies relate to understanding the underlying processes that make partnerships work, and how they contribute to multi-stakeholder transformative governance. This analysis is important because understanding the factors that make multi-stakeholder partnerships effective is an essential component of an appraisal of whether to participate in or endorse a partnership initiative. Participation in multi-stakeholder partnerships in the VGGT implementation context is voluntary, and the partner engagement needs to be maintained over a long time. The VGGT furnish no guidance on what these partnerships should look like or how they should operate, let alone how they are monitored. Little exploration has been undertaken to systematically analyze the multi-stakeholder partnerships, particularly in the context of multi-stakeholder governance. These multi-stakeholder partnerships have been explored more deeply in a qualitative manner over the period 2014–2020 to understand which mutually reinforcing factors, both from within the partnership and from outside, and under what conditions, contribute to their success and sustainability. The qualitative methodology aims to understand the complex reality and various dimensions of multi-stakeholder partnerships at the country level, including deepening the understanding of such partnerships in a particular context. The qualitative methodology applies inductive reasoning whereby the experiences, observations, and lessons learnt are synthesized to come up with a conceptual basis for the analysis of multi-stakeholder partnerships for responsible governance of tenure. The methodology is focused on aspects of the multi-stakeholder partnership reality that cannot be quantified, such as the understanding and explanation of the dynamics of social relations (human behavior) over time within the partnership. This concerns partnership (changing) attitudes, beliefs, meanings, motives, and values. These correspond to a deeper space of relationships, processes and phenomena that cannot be reduced to quantitative variables. The selected methodology therefore allows one to go to the persons in partnership processes in their natural setting for data collection and analysis, rather than going through inventories or questionnaires. It is important to observe social relations dynamics in their natural setting, as this setting influences behavior, and it is also flexible in the inquiry of partnerships in their evolving context. We allowed questions to emerge over time and change with the aim of discovery, while becoming more familiar with the multi-stakeholder partnerships under study. This would not have been possible with preset inventories or questionnaires.

The descriptive data come from first-hand observations, note-taking, focus groups, and informal exchanges with participants of 24 workshops, seven missions and six capacity development activities in the period 2014–2020 at national and regional levels across Africa and Asia, as well as five studies (see Appendix A for more information) and the study of existing literature. The questions to answer are as follows: what are the conditions inside multi-stakeholder partnerships that influence their functioning? What factors from the external environment influence them? Are there interactions between conditions inside these partnerships, between the external environment factors, and/or between conditions inside and the external environment?

Based on these findings, this paper proposes, after clarification of the terminology used (Section 2), a conceptual basis formed by the *internal conditions* and *external environment*, and combines this with the *deliberative capacity* for the assessment of multi-stakeholder partnerships for multi-stakeholder *transformative* governance (Section 3). There is a gap in the current literature on what makes a multi-stakeholder partnership part of a multi-stakeholder governance system, to address collective action challenges, such as the governance of tenure. Adding the deliberative capacity is something

innovative and turns out to be a decisive factor for the success of transformative partnerships. The authors are aware that the development of a coherent theoretical framework is in its infancy. The purpose of the qualitative methodology was to construct a conceptual base that reflects the multi-stakeholder partnership reality, rather than the researchers' perspective. This proposed conceptual basis, illustrated by the country-driven multi-stakeholder partnership process in South Africa and the first results of this bottom-up partnership process (Section 4), may offer important points of entry and lessons learnt (Section 5) pertinent to lots of other countries, and state and non-state actors. However, one should keep in mind that the findings of the qualitative research cannot be extended to other country contexts with the degree of certainty that quantitative research can. This is because the findings presented in this paper have not yet been tested to discover whether they are statistically significant or due to chance. Validation of the proposed conceptual basis would be the next step.

2. Terminology: Governance, Stakeholder, Actors, Partnerships, Platforms and Processes

In the context of partnerships between state and non-state actors, the ministerial meeting on governance and international commodity markets [26] defined 'governance' as "all the formal and informal rules, institutions, and organizations and processes through which public and private actors articulate their interests; frame and prioritize issues; and make, implement, monitor, and enforce decisions". This definition is meaningful to use because there is no definition of 'governance' in the VGGT. We will come back to this definition at the end of paragraph 3.7.

The term 'stakeholder' may imply a differentiation in responsibilities, rights, roles, motivation, stakes, influence and legitimacy between partners. The 'stakes' of these 'holders' may not be equal. By some, therefore, the term 'actor' is preferred as being more neutral. In this paper the two terms are used interchangeably. The terms 'partnership' and 'platform' are employed to point to concerted arrangements between different stakeholders. 'Partnership' is seen as a continuously evolving relationship with adjustments and adaptation [11]. A 'platform' is related to the concept of learning alliances which promote multi-stakeholder learning processes for stimulating innovation and business development [27]. Because platforms involve stakeholders of diverse types, a producer cooperative or an inter-ministerial working group are not considered to be platforms. Platforms make actions possible that none of its members could have achieved alone. Others have referred to 'processes' when the arrangement did not lead to any formal or formalized arrangement [25].

Though each partnership is unique, three main categories are distinguished [11] (p. 9):

1. 'Leverage/exchange': one partner contributes to the work of another, or partners exchange resources, to allow one or both partners to deliver more;
2. 'Combine/integrate': two or more partners combine complementary resources for a common goal because together they deliver more than each could deliver alone;
3. 'Transform': multiple partners work together through collective action to tackle complex challenges in an innovative and multi-facetted manner that results in systemic change/transformation.

The multi-stakeholder partnership envisaged in tenure governance is one that leads to transformation, though it does not exclude the first two types.

3. Proposed Theoretical Framework to Analyze Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships for Multi-Stakeholder Transformative Governance

The creation of multi-stakeholder partnerships may be triggered by policy and institutional changes, natural disasters, or external shocks (e.g., increased food prices) [4]. The potential benefits, limitations, performance and relevance of multi-stakeholder partnerships need to be discussed in these different contexts, together with careful examination as to whether such a partnership is the most appropriate means in a specific context [23]. It will not always be the most appropriate means.

It is remarkable to see the rise of multi-stakeholder participation as a means in global governance and sustainable development. Yet, there is little explicit theory behind the creation of platforms [27]. The approach aspires to combine, on a voluntary basis, multiple actors, i.e., stakeholders, in joint decision making. Inclusion, transparency and accountability, which are VGGT principles of implementation, are utilized to examine the approach. The latter is seen, generally, as encouraging conduct designed to attain a consensus and, therefore, be more liberalizing. The evolving significance of multi-actor processes and multi-stakeholder initiatives and partnerships, as part of a new multi-stakeholder governance approach at different scales, is, however, not without discussion. Several factors are the primary causes for thriving platforms and processes [28]. For effective collaboration between stakeholders, factors such as different logics, interests, and values need to converge [29]. Thus, a single factor is not responsible for their success; instead, we found an amalgamation of jointly strengthening factors that are discussed in more detail below, and that are, based on the qualitative analysis and applying inductive reasoning, proposed as a theoretical framework for the analysis of multi-stakeholder partnerships. Such a framework is required to understand which mutually reinforcing factors under what conditions contribute to its success, as well as being able to compare. For example, the qualities of an apple only become clear if one has other apples with different qualities as a reference framework, as this enables one to compare the apple with other apples [30] (on p. 126). Similarly, if one looks at a single multi-stakeholder partnership in a specific context, a framework would help to judge the qualities of this multi-stakeholder partnership in comparison to other partnerships.

Based on our qualitative analysis, the success of a multi-stakeholder partnership is affected by *internal conditions*, where building trust, power asymmetries, and costs are important (described in paragraphs 3.1 to 3.3), as well as by the *external environment*, where enabling conditions such as transparency and accountability, the sharing of lessons learnt, system-wide capacity development, policy convergence and sound institutions affect the performance of the multi-stakeholder partnership (described in paragraphs 3.4 to 3.6). Internal conditions without an external environment will lead to failure in achieving the common objective [31]. However, what is innovative and unique in the proposed conceptual basis is that any assessment also needs to include the *deliberative capacity* of the multi-stakeholder partnership to assess to what extent the communicative processes in a partnership are inclusive, consequential and authentic (in paragraph 3.7) and will, therefore, lead to systemic and more sustainable change/transformation (partnership type 3 in paragraph 2).

3.1. Internal Conditions: Building and Nurturing Trust

Changes in the governance of tenure take time. The multi-stakeholder platform or process should thus be maintained over the long-term and embody a sustained attempt comprising an uninterrupted series of actions and exchanges. A platform may have a lengthy initial phase of mutual learning and role definition, before it can get down to business [27]. To have a conversation and develop mutual understanding takes time. Multi-stakeholder partnerships start a dialogue aimed at building trust among actors who, by sharing benefits, resources, responsibilities, and risks, become partners in the achievement of a shared goal. The engagement of the stakeholder thus means involvement in order to achieve the collective goal, not to advance one's own interest.

Building trust requires an ongoing engagement between the stakeholders to become genuine partners. This trust is built over a series of VGGT implementation activities. Building trust is also an important strategy to reduce the costs of the multi-stakeholder partnership, as it will help in properly managing interactions between actors (see paragraph 3.2). This entails the following [25]:

- For building trust between different stakeholder groups, time is required. Often it is the first time that persons from different technical and/or organizational backgrounds and with varying interests come together. For developing mutual understanding and mutual respect, to learn to appreciate existing commonalities and differences, while having due regard for diversity, and bringing together several views into a shared plan, taking the appropriate time is key;

- Building trust within the same stakeholder group is required because in many instances they are meeting for the first time, and these different groups within a constituency may consider being in competition.

The roles of stakeholders in a platform dealing with tenure governance can differ between members, who are the core actors who make up the platform, and partners, who interact with the platform. In practice, this division is not so clear-cut, as some members in a platform may be more passive than partners [27].

3.2. Internal Conditions: Costs

Governance arrangements and inclusive procedures in multi-stakeholder partnerships are likely to produce more satisfactory decisions with added authority. Furthermore, such a process needs time. Partnerships across societal sectors require significant investment of both time and resources to develop and manage them. Consequently, being inclusive causes higher costs, but this is an investment in more sustainable results. Funding and resources management are the basis for the functioning and success of the multi-stakeholder partnership. Partnerships of type 2 and 3 (paragraph 2) may involve a substantial interval of time between the input of resources and the evidence of the added-value output. Participating in complex multi-stakeholder partnerships will thus need (greater) patience and management skills, as well as a long-term commitment before the benefits of the common goal may be achieved (see also paragraph 3.6). These should be deemed a lasting investment to reinforce accountability, inclusiveness and transparency (see paragraph 3.4), with the assumption that the multi-stakeholder partnership will produce positive results in the long run.

Given the high costs of creating and maintaining multi-stakeholder partnerships, these should only be used when they have the genuine potential to create value well in excess of their inputs [11]. Important to acknowledge is that the investment of both time and resources in the partnership by different actors may be subject to asymmetries, which are more regularly acknowledged when they concern power asymmetries (see paragraph 3.3).

As stated before, building trust between stakeholders and within a stakeholder group (paragraph 3.1) is an important strategy to reduce the transaction costs of the multi-stakeholder partnership, because it will help in appropriately managing exchanges between actors.

3.3. Internal Conditions: Representation and Power Asymmetries

Full and inclusive representation by multiple stakeholders is challenging, because some groups and/or sectors may be difficult to include, particularly the vulnerable and marginalized [25]. This may result in processes or platforms failing to include the perspectives of some on the priorities at stake, consequently reducing the legitimacy of the process and outcome. When a true representation is lacking, the partners that are included may be (mis)led to believe that their perspective on the identified priority is the only, or the correct, perspective [32].

There is a role for each stakeholder group. The presence of government as duty bearer and decision-maker is important (paragraph 3.7), civil society, representing the interests and perspectives of a large part of the citizens, cannot be ignored, and the private sector should be included to broaden the effort in scope, foster innovation, and to be economically sustainable. Whether the representatives are truly representing or whether they are merely 'designee spokespersons' depends on their consultation with the specific group they represent. In the case of 'designee spokespersons', one should examine whether the partnership is exclusive rather than inclusive. In all countries in which the VGGT implementation process has materialized, the question of who participates, and under what conditions, was key to creating an effective space for dialogue. Statements that "all relevant stakeholders" are engaged are frequently found as supplemental evidence of the democratic character of the partnership, but more often than not partnerships are not truly inclusive.

Having all relevant partners on board is one thing, but one should also consider interlinkages and nexus issues across sectors. How will each partner gain net value from their meaningful participation?

This participation of the target groups should not only help to achieve the objectives more effectively; it should also boost the recognition and legitimacy of the work of the multi-stakeholder partnership [10]. All too often the assumption is that because multiple stakeholders are involved, the work automatically gains recognition and legitimacy.

Not every major multi-stakeholder group easily attains an internal consensus. There are a variety of interests and short- and long-term visions. Partners can progressively work on their differences and potential trade-offs if this is appropriately recognized and reflected within the partnership. Open communication will be essential to recognize such divergences (e.g., access to information will not be equal among stakeholders). Sometimes it may be necessary to consider this variety within broad categories of stakeholders (e.g., government, civil society, private sector or academia) and to delineate more accurate subcategories, adhering to the principle that the diversity of stakes articulated in each category must be perceptibly smaller than the differences noticed among diverse categories [33]. Exchanges of information, participation in decision-making, or the resolution of conflicts determine the quality of the dialogue space within the multi-stakeholder partnership [23].

Existing dynamics and inherent ambiguities in multi-stakeholder processes and platforms may be associated to power asymmetries (e.g., which person or organization can participate and who cannot; can open communication take place in a variety of formats, such as reasoned argumentation, humor, rhetoric, testimony/storytelling, etc.; or a combination of any of these). Existing power asymmetries and a lack of trust (see paragraph 3.1) may hamper the possibility of voicing discourses, resutling in uneven chances for all, and should be recognized. The authenticity and legitimacy of the dialogue space, and its potential impact on advancing the tenure rights of communities and people, are determined by who is participating under what conditions [23]. Though power will never be fully equal among partners, a balanced relationship between partners is a prerequisite for the partnership to succeed. Thus, as mentioned by many workshop participants, partnerships should seek to level the playing field between all relevant stakeholder groups [23,34], rather than reproducing existing power asymmetries and reinforce the standing of more influential actors [4] (p. 16).

The partial rectification of power asymmetries can be provided through a trusted and neutral convener [35–38]. Many participants in the governance of tenure processes identified the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) as a neutral convener.

Effective leadership and the willingness of the actors to invest time and relevant resources are crucial. This is helped by having a clear vision and, possibly, a theory of change, as well as having an inclusive goal-setting process with clear roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders, and transparent communication (see paragraph 3.4).

Partners in a multi-stakeholder partnership focus their energies and optimize the way they work and operate to ensure that they deliver the greatest value, including agreeing not to work together in areas where extra value is not being created [11]. In addition, adjusting to changing realities and needs may be challenging, and this may impact representation and power asymmetries. This is particularly the case in tenure governance processes related to customary tenure systems and investments.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships are complex. It is often better to start modestly and then adjust, adapt and advance as they go, based on the experience of, and new insights gained from, running the partnership seriously. This means that (re)iteration is part of the process.

3.4. External Environment: Transparency and Accountability

In addition to power asymmetries (see paragraph 3.3), the accountability of multi-stakeholder representation, participation and decision-making is a concern, both within the platform or process, and within each stakeholder group, and this will have an effect on decision-making [25]. One should not be blind to any reputational benefits that partners can expect to enjoy from their involvement in the multi-stakeholder partnership [24]. The repartition of power within multi-stakeholder partnerships directly impacts representation, inclusiveness and accountability. Improved inclusiveness can cause reinforced accountability and transparency. The latter can also add to accountability (see Table 1).

These factors are listed by Dodds [34] as elements to be considered in assessing partnerships. These three factors jointly are likely to enhance the legitimacy of the multi-stakeholder partnership [4]. The three general principles, i.e., integrity, transparency and accountability, are guding the UN system-wide way to partnerships for sustainable development. The transparency and accountability of the VGGT principles of implementation are also identified as key elements to assess the performance of multi-stakeholder partnerships; they are important for preserving trust between partners (see paragraph 3.1), for addressing power asymmetries (see paragraph 3.3) and empowering vulnerable partners (see paragraph 3.5), and for maintaining stakeholder engagement in the long run (see paragraph 3.6).

Table 1. VGGT principles of implementation: transparency, accountability, equity and justice [19].

Transparency: clearly defining and widely publicizing policies, laws and procedures in applicable languages, and widely publicizing decisions in applicable languages and in formats accessible to all.
Accountability: holding individuals, public agencies and non-state actors responsible for their actions and decisions according to the principles of the rule of law.
Equity and justice: recognizing that equality between individuals may require acknowledging differences between individuals, and taking positive action, including empowerment, in order to promote equitable tenure rights and access to land, fisheries and forests, for all—women and men, the youth, and vulnerable and traditionally marginalized people—within the national context.

Dryzek [39] identified legitimacy, representation, communication and consensus as the foundations of deliberative governance. Legitimacy not only echoes the characteristic of being legal, but also the characteristic of being consistent with the more general principles of equity, human rights, and social justice (see Table 1).

In recent years, there has been a change in how public and private actors perceive and define their roles, aligning stakes and involvement in joint activities. These changes challenge the legitimacy of governments as ultimate decision-makers and call for strong transparency and accountability mechanisms in multi-stakeholder partnerships. By some, public–private partnerships are considered a subset of multi-stakeholder partnerships, and by others, a collaboration with a shift in responsibility and risk from one party in society to another, usually from the government to the private sector. Transparency is key to avoiding corruption, and it is instrumental in conflict mediation, or conflict resolution, among partners.

3.5. External Environment: Sharing of Lessons Learnt and System-Wide Capacity Development

Power asymmetries (see paragraph 3.3) can be rectified by targeted capacity enhancement activities across people, organizations and the enabling environment. These provide all stakeholders with the needed technical, communication and negotiation abilities to significantly participate and add to the multi-stakeholder process [40–42]. By promoting the engagement of different staff from partner organizations in partnership meetings (e.g., in a series of workshops or capacity development programs over longer periods), shared working knowledge and a mutual culture in the partnership can be created. An accommodating external environment can foster the sharing of lessons learnt and capacity development. For example, the CFS, by publishing a report on multi-stakeholder partnerships [4], fosters the sharing of lessons learnt, as well as by organizing the Global Thematic Event on the implementation of the VGGT during its 43rd Plenary Session.

To capitalize on country ownership, commitment and mutual accountability for enduring outcomes at scale, system-wide capacity development has been proven to be essential [43]. This should be based on mutually considered country needs [28,44]. Capacity development is a process originated in empowerment [45], which begins with a participatory capacity analysis covering three dimensions: (1) the individual level, covering skills and knowledge; (2) the organizational level (including coordination mechanisms, mandates, and roles, among others); and (3) the enabling environment,

covering policies, laws, governance structures, institutional political economy, and multi-stakeholder platforms and/or processes. Validated capacity analysis results provide the ingredients for a contextualized design of capacity development interventions that can, subsequently, be followed by mutually monitoring outcomes. All through the process, the goal is to foster country ownership, commitment, and mutual accountability through the inclusivity and two-way flow of the dialogue. Such a capacity analysis gathers the key 'change agents' (i.e., persons who voluntarily take an interest in the adoption, implementation, and success of a cause, policy, program, project or product. They cause a change in the way things are done, or the way ideas are viewed. They are also called 'change advocates' or 'champions'.) in tenure governance. The bottom-up process to develop local ownership and context-specific customized measures, as well as to invest in local capacity development for long-term impacts, are essential elements for success.

For people from different constituencies to contribute efficiently and meaningfully in multi-stakeholder platforms and processes, there is frequently the requirement of enhancing their capacities [40–42]. Thus, the platforms and processes themselves develop into a useful medium for offering possibilities for people to (further) develop their capabilities, to level the playing field [25]. This helps stakeholders to contribute to the development and implementation of policies and processes.

3.6. External Environment: Policy Convergence and Sound Institutions

As discussed, multi-stakeholder partnerships emerge when stakeholders from different spheres (government, CSOs, private sector, research centers) start a joint action, by developing suitable institutions (e.g., shared norms and rules), combining their matching resources (e.g., human, financial, in kind), and sharing responsibilities and risks, to pursue a common goal. This process within the multi-stakeholder partnership intended to reach this common goal can be, in itself, a main result of the partnership [4]. Such a process can also offer a voice to marginalized and vulnerable groups, which are emphasized in the VGGT, and that are usually excluded from decision-making procedures.

The platform or process must be linked to a national priority to have a reason to exist [25]. This priority sets the agenda. If not, the platform will just be a place for persons to converse but nothing will be achieved, and over time, people's interest will drop. Thus, having a joint focus will result in having a single conversation, in which the subject may be either broadly outlined or very specific.

The collective interest should be the joint and shared interest of the partners (by contrast, a 'public interest' indicates the general interest of the whole society). The national priority is able to pool complementary resources together, foster synergies, and help partners to improve the sharing of risks and responsibilities, to invite new resources, or to better aim at and employ existing resources so as to attain the joint goal. Independent of whether the national priority is cross-sectoral or multi-sectoral, it requires transversal coordination as well as policy coherence at several scales (e.g., policy-making at national level and policy implementation at local level), and will be related to the sustainable development of the country. Any effort should be complementary and avoid duplication. Thus, the specific focus in each country is dissimilar because it is set by national priorities. By furnishing space for policy dialogue between stakeholders, partnerships can improve mutual understanding, facilitate the sharing of lessons learnt (paragraph 3.5), and reach an improved and shared understanding of the situation before moving forward with a decision. To reach a decision, different perspectives can be weighted to reach either common understanding or consensus, through discussion and open communication. Such a decision can count on broad support and lead to the better VGGT implementation by all involved in the process.

Sound and stable policy, legal and organizational frameworks generate confidence and create an enabling environment for the stakeholders. These frameworks should mirror the interconnected relationships between land, fisheries and forests, and their uses, and set up an integrated approach to their administration [19] (paragraph 5.3).

Keeping the momentum is key for activities continuing over the long(er) term, as enthusiasm may wane over time [24]. Having people and organizations who drive things forward with leadership is pivotal, as follows:

- A limited number of 'change agents' at the start, as well as through the whole process [46], may be key to progress (usually these are people who already have a fulltime job);
- The stakeholders' capacity to establish necessary steps and conditions for joint action. Bringing together resources alone may not suffice to provide for a harmonized and collaborative arrangement among diverse, and sometimes divergent, actors. Reciprocity, joint understanding, trust and reputation, and transparent rules of representation and delegation are all key to collective action [6,47];
- If appropriate, it may be valuable to institutionalize the partnership with appropriate resource allocation and build a powerful core that can gather frequently;
- Over time, varying types of involvement may be needed (see paragraph 3.1 on members and partners).

Wide ownership, commitment and political will are required [36]. Political risks and instability, policy change, or emergencies (e.g., the COVID-19 pandemic), may affect the multi-stakeholder partnership's performance [4]. For the platform or process to be effective, it needs not only to be linked to a national priority, but it requires also ownership of and commitment to the process, and political will and commitment. If not, policy and legal reforms will not happen, and changes on the ground will not become real (see also paragraph 3.7).

Usually, political will and commitment need to increase over time, which is why long-term sustainability and ongoing momentum are vital. The platforms and processes can play a key role in the following manner: when increasing numbers of persons representing different stakeholder groups participate, they progressively attract attention, thereby creating a critical mass. When the popular base supporting the platforms and processes increases, politicians will become aware of the important topics being discussed and ministers begin to realize that they and their institutions need to be taking an active role. The wider the basis of political will, the greater the likelihood of continuity after ministers or governments have changed [25].

3.7. Deliberative Capacity: Public Space, Empowered Space and Their Interactions

Most authors and participants in VGGT implementation processes consider (part of) the *internal conditions* and *external environment* as key in analyzing multi-stakeholder partnerships, as discussed in paragraphs 3.1 to 3.6 (Figure 1). This is, for instance, what the Committee on World Food Security—High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (CFS-HLPE) [4] did. However, while working on multi-stakeholder processes and platforms in various countries across Africa and Asia, the authors realized that an important aspect is missing for the partnership to be truly *transformative*. The proposed conceptual basis in this paper, therefore, wants to include an aspect from the literature that is often overlooked. Not only do the internal conditions and external environment determine the success of the multi-stakeholder partnership, but this transformative success is also determined by the place it takes in the deliberative system, with its *deliberative capacity*.
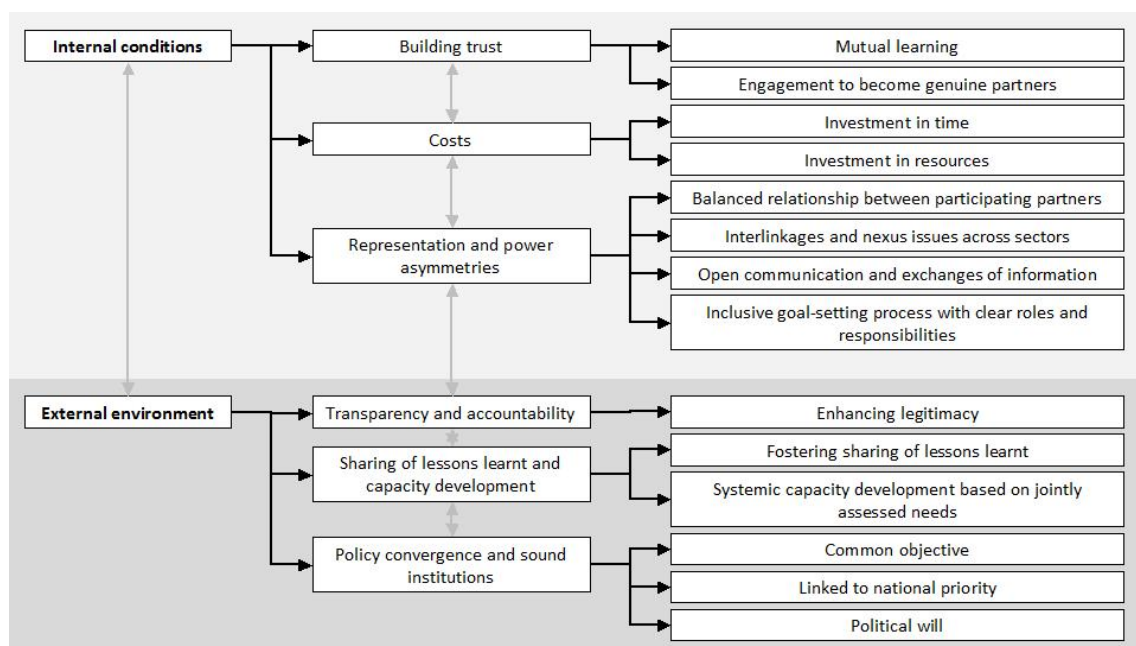
Figure 1. The internal conditions and external environment to assess multi-stakeholder partnerships.

The deliberative capacity of the multi-stakeholder partnership may be defined as the extent to which a system possesses structures to host deliberation that is authentic, inclusive, and consequential [48], via the following factors:

- *Authenticity* can be understood as the requisite that deliberation must induce reflection non-coercively, connect claims to more general principles, and exhibit reciprocity;
- *Inclusiveness* applies to the range of interests and discourses present in a specific setting (see also paragraphs 3.1 until 3.6);
- *Consequentiality* means that deliberative processes must have an impact on collective decisions or social outcomes (see partnership type 3 in paragraph 2). This impact need not be direct, i.e., deliberation need not involve the actual making of policy decisions (e.g., public deliberation might have an influence on decision-makers who are not participants in deliberation). This might occur when an informal deliberative forum (e.g., not formalized partnership) makes recommendations that are subsequently taken into account by policy makers.

It is important to note that the pursuit of deliberative capacity may be secured, relating to different sorts of institutions and practices. There is potentially a variety of deliberative systems.

Dryzek's Deliberation System Framework comprises the following elements [48] (pp. 1385–1386):

- The *public space* made up of a wide range of views and discourses which interact and affect each other within the public realm. The public space is populated by a diverse range of civil society and commercial actors. One should be aware that inequalities in access to the public space exist. However, in this space the diversity of the values, interests, and needs of society, including the least advantaged and most vulnerable, are captured;
- The *empowered space* where authorative collective decisions are produced (e.g., legislatures, constitutional courts, parliamentarians, empowered stakeholder dialogues, governance networks). The empowered space may take a more informal character in the case of the community-based governance of common pool resources [5];
- *Accountability* of the holders of power in the empowered space to give an account for their decisions to the public space. Accountability mechanisms comprise elections, where voters can hold governments to account for their actions, but could also entail briefing sessions in

which members of the empowered space inform and update their fellow citizens. Accountability strengthens legitimacy;

- *Transmission* between the public and empowered spaces is influenced by the development and interaction of narratives in the public space (e.g., through political campaigns or cultural change initiated by social movements). It is important that transmission works from the public space to the empowered space and back;

- *Decisiveness* is the extent to which power is dispersed inside and outside the system facilitating or preventing autonomous action. The deliberation should be consequential, as well as authentic and inclusive;

- *Meta-deliberation*, which is the examination of the qualities of the system itself by those involved in it at all levels. It is, thus, about how well the system as a whole reflects the discourses and narratives within society, and acts on them (by, if necessary, changing its structure).

In keeping with the application of Dryzek's Deliberation System Framework for the governance of climate change [49] and the CFS [35], respectively, we propose to include it for multi-stakeholder partnerships for the transformative governance of tenure processes. It is important to be aware of the position of the multi-stakeholder partnership in the deliberative system. If the multi-stakeholder partnership is part of the public space, it will contribute to the articulation of interests, and the framing and prioritizing of issues (see the FAO definition of governance in paragraph 2), but this does not necessarily lead to the authorative collective decision needed for transformative and sustainable solutions. For that, the multi-stakeholder partnership needs to be positioned in the empowered space, where it will contribute to making, implementing, monitoring and enforcing decisions (see again the FAO definition of governance in paragraph 2). The ultimate goal of the multi-stakeholder partnership in the context of improving the governance of tenure in policy and practice is to contribute to, and establish transformation through, multi-stakeholder *governance* (Figure 2).
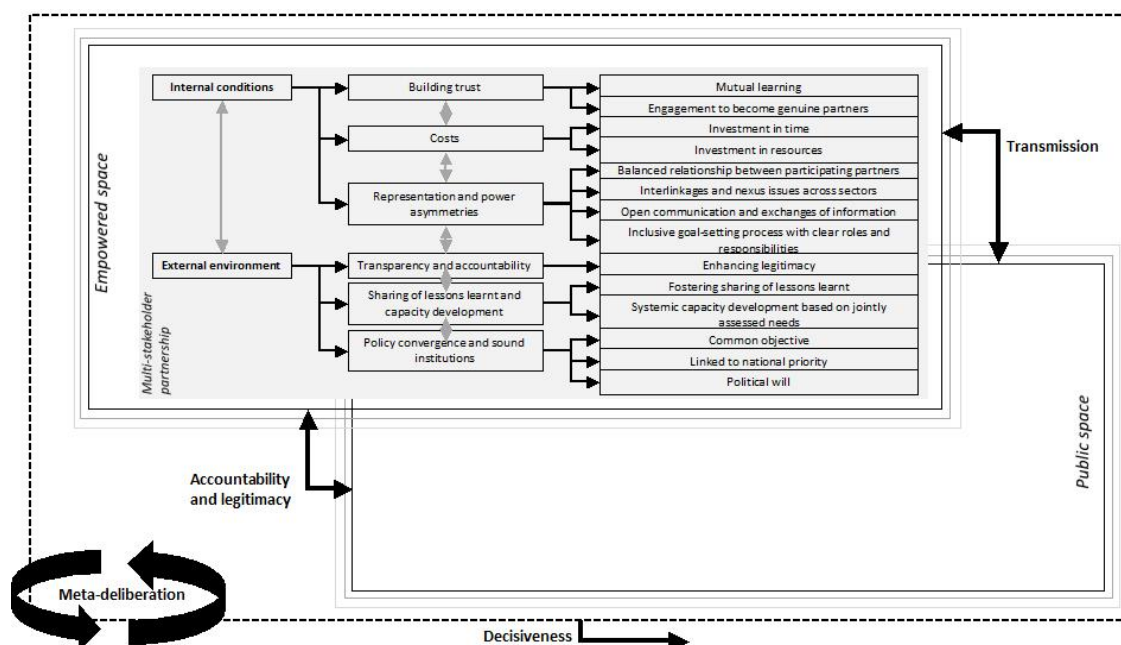

Figure 2. Proposed theoretical framework to assess multi-stakeholder partnerships for transformative multi-stakeholder governance of tenure (based on [35,48,49]).

Deliberative systems provide a new way of thinking about representative engagement with different perspectives that are represented and interact within society. It is, thus, not exclusively concerned with the extent to which stakeholders or actors are represented within institutions; it is equally concerned with the range of views present and how they interact. It is important to realize that

from a systems perspective, not all stakeholders or actors within the system need to be deliberative, but the system as a whole must be [35]. It is important to broaden the range of debates and narratives that are being considered, and open up the issues under discussion, to enable making, implementing, monitoring and enforcing informed decisions. In the above-described context, the decisions will be informed by the interaction between public and empowered spaces, but the informed decision-making solely takes place in the empowered space. For this reason it is imperative to have government members and parliamentarians as core members of the partnership, and especially parliamentarians who have a mandate and who can be held accountable by the electorate [13].

4. The Proposed Conceptual Basis Applied to the National Multi-Stakeholder Partnership Process in South Africa

With multi-stakeholder participation and consultation having become vital qualities in global tenure governance institutions and processes, the country-driven, bottom-up, inclusive process in South Africa is useful to illustrate the described proposed conceptual basis. Multi-stakeholder partnerships are considered as "advancing the deliberative quality of institutions and thereby improving democratic quality, legitimacy and effectiveness of both the institutional landscape and the decisions made in it" [35].

In the following five paragraphs, the proposed conceptual basis is used to analyze the internal conditions, external environment and deliberative capacity of the national multi-stakeholder platform (paragraphs 4.3 to 4.5, respectively); this is preceded by a description of the national context of the land reform (paragraph 4.1) and the country-driven, bottom-up, inclusive multi-stakeholder partnership process (paragraph 4.2).

4.1. National Context of Land Reform

South Africa's economy remains uniquely dual, and faces the challenges of continued inequality and structural unemployment, and has 55.5% of the population living in poverty (of which 64.2% are black and 41.3% are colored). Of the South African population, 86% depend on smallholder agriculture for livelihood and food security [50].

The UN World Social Report 2020 [51] (pp. 28–29) states that income disparities continued to increase in South Africa during the post-apartheid period until at least the mid-2000s, despite sustained economic growth and the expansion of social protection, particularly social assistance programs. The Gini index, measuring the degree of inequality in the distribution of family income in South Africa, is 0.63, this being one of the highest in the world (see https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2172rank.html). Persistent high unemployment, strong polarization of the labor force, and high wage gaps are the main reasons for the income inequality. The latter is also associated with the unequal land holding patterns.

The decline in interracial inequality has been driven largely by the faster income growth in non-white lower-income households and by a growing percentage of non-white, middle and upper-income households [52]. Efforts to reverse the effects of decades of segregation have been underpinned by anti-discriminatory legislation and by a Constitution establishing citizens' rights to food, water, social security and social assistance.

The duality in the agricultural sector manifests in having a minority of the population controlling the well-developed commercial agricultural sector, where applied research and improved farm management practices, and business-driven extension and advisory services, result in high outputs, while the majority of the rural population earns their living using subsistence-oriented practices with minimal resources. The predicted increases in incidences of floods, droughts, longer dry spells, rainfall variability and elevated air temperatures caused by climate change threaten the sustainability of rainfed crop production [53], as well as the sustainable livelihoods of, in particular, smallholder farmers. To feed a rapidly growing population under economic, environmental and social dynamics,

food production must be based on sustainable agricultural productivity [53]. Consequently, food and nutrition security are high on the country's list of priorities.

The sustainable land reform aligned to the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme, approved in August 2009 (see https://www.gov.za/about-government/government-programmes/ comprehensive-rural-development-programme-crdp), is a key country priority, alongside sustainable natural resources management and food and nutrition security.

The land reform is aimed at redressing dispossession and creating a more equitable land distribution. Since the first democratically elected government in 1994, South Africa has sought to redress the highly inequitable land distribution through a series of land reform programs. These reforms, based on market-led agrarian reform, focused on the following:

- *Restitution* of land by compensating individuals who had been forcefully removed. Because its success was limited, the policy shifted to redistribution with secure land tenure;
- *Land tenure reform* by recognizing people's rights to access, control and utilize land and natural resources. Many claims to tenure rights exist. The process to mediate and resolve disputes is long;
- *Redistribution* of land by the 'willing seller/willing buyer' principle (owners willing to sell and government willing to buy) to, subsequently, redistribute the land and maintain public confidence in the land market. This was the most important land reform component, but its implementation has proven to be difficult because of the time needed to negotiate the land value and the selection of rightful beneficiaries.

South Africa's Constitution strongly commits national institutions to respect, protect and strengthen the land rights of women and men, gender equity, equitable access to and distribution of land, and the rights of human rights defenders. Section 25 of the Constitution, known as the 'Property Clause', extends and protects land and property rights, and allows for the expropriation of land. Sections 25 (5), (6), (7) and (9) guarantee (a) equitable access to land through redistribution, and (b) restitution to those whose rights were historically dispossessed as a result of racial discrimination.

4.2. The Country-Driven, Bottom-Up, Inclusive Multi-Stakeholder Partnership Process

The Government of South Africa requested the FAO support the implementation of the VGGT in the land reform process (Table 2). Supporting the implementation of the VGGT in South Africa means using a CFS instrument that focuses on the most food-insecure, namely smallholder farmers, small-scale fisher folk and women. The VGGT and other CFS instruments focus less on the productive capacity of smallholder farmers and their ability to increase food availability on domestic and international markets, and more on smallholder farmers' access to the productive resources and infrastructure needed for small-scale food production and for achieving food security, as well as more broadly securing an income to make food accessible. This emphasis on the access of small-scale producers to productive resources, such as land and water, grounds recommendations that break away from the productivity paradigm [54]. In South Africa, land is thus not only a productive asset, but also a natural resource, a "commons" more than a "commodity" of the food producers with different interests for its use, and a territory traditionally owned by people, occupied or otherwise used or acquired, and which they have the right to own or use, develop and control [21]. The VGGT recognize the inextricable link between the tenure of land, fisheries and forests, and access to and management of other natural resources, i.e., water and mineral resources, mentioned in the preface [19] (p. iv).

Table 2. National VGGT-related activities facilitated with FAO support.

When	Where and with What Objective	Partners
December 2015	In Johannesburg, the first multi-stakeholder workshop was held focusing on creating general awareness and mutual understanding to initiate a facilitated and interactive process and dialogue with meaningful, inclusive stakeholder participation [55]. The participants formulated an implementation framework focusing on VGGT awareness raising and communication, the adoption of VGGT principles and internationally recognized good practices in the policy and legal frameworks, the engagement and empowerment of capacitated stakeholders, and the monitoring of the action plan. The land, fisheries and forest sectors were included.	The Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) co-organized the workshop. DRDLR is responsible for topographic mapping, cadastral surveying, deeds registration, and land reform.
May 2016	In Cape Town, further general awareness was created to continue a facilitated and interactive process, and a capacity analysis was performed in the context of the land reform process. The latter concentrated on a participatory and facilitated analysis of capacities needed to successfully improve tenure governance. The need for assessing those capacities was one of the outcomes of the first national workshop. The analysis resulted in two action lists [56]. This workshop built on the results of other activities related to the increased capacities of CSOs and grassroots organizations to implement the VGGT, and the gender and land blended learning program (both not further discussed in this paper).	DRDLR co-organized the workshop.
February 2017	In Durban, on the basis of the validation in groups of the two actions lists that resulted from the second national VGGT workshop's capacity analysis, a new and improved list of actions resulted. A synthesis of these actions provided the basis for the development of a road map [57]. Unanimously, the multi-stakeholder dialogue designed to culminate in the establishment of a multi-stakeholder platform was identified as key to the VGGT implementation process. To drive this process, all groups agreed that an interim secretariat representing all sectors and stakeholder groups needed to be formed. This interim secretariat is intended to draft the terms of reference for the multi-stakeholder platform to be established later in 2017. As a second priority, the review of the existing and draft/proposed policies and legislation was performed, together with mobilizing human and financial resources, and capacity development. The other identified actions were listed as lower priorities, though all are priority actions.	Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) and DRDLR co-organized the workshop. DAFF is responsible for overseeing and supporting South Africa's agricultural sector, as well as ensuring access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food by the country's population.
September 2017	In Johannesburg, a national multi-stakeholder platform workshop ratified the terms of reference following an iterative process until consensus with all participants was reached [58]. The composition of the national multi-stakeholder platform was agreed with a small effective core group with representatives from government, CSOs, academia, and private sector. Furthermore, agreement on establishing working groups will be formed, when needed, which will be drawn from the wider stakeholder base to execute specific activities. Through a participatory process it was decided that DRDLR will be the chair of the national multi-stakeholder platform, and AFRA the co-chair.	Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA), DAFF, DRDLR, Land Access Movement of South Africa (LAMOSA), and Transkei Land Service Organisation (TRALSO) co-organized the workshop. AFRA, LAMOSA and TRALSO are CSOs.

In the process of the national VGGT-related activities, participants discussed the challenges of the land reform. They agreed that South Africa has most of the legislation in place, including VGGT principles, but that the implementation of the land reform is the major challenge. The government departments present acknowledged that they could not do the job alone, and collaboration with other stakeholders is essential. CSOs and academics would like to see such involvement, especially in the early stages of land policy and law formulation, and not just in the consultation process after formulation. CSOs in particular mentioned that the identification of relevant stakeholders is currently absent from the consultative process.

As obstavles to implementation, the lack of capacities and the need for improved communication between stakeholders were identified. Interdepartmental consultation was seen as a *sine qua non* for the successful use of the VGGT in the land reform process, since most issues cut across departments. The lack of resources at the lower administrative levels with interdepartmental coordination mechanisms was identified as an issue, as was the lack of human and financial resources to effectively implement the laws and policies. The CSOs recognized the need for consultation and the raising of awareness among the broader CSO community on the use of the VGGT in the land reform process. A joint approach including all actors was considered as having better chances of being successful.

Jointly, the main points identified for moving the use of the VGGT in the land reform process forward were the following:

- South Africa has many policies and laws in place that comprise part(s) of the VGGT principles and best practices, even though they pre-date the VGGT (i.e., from before May 2012). Not only sectoral policies, but also cross-sectoral policies were identified;
- Major gaps were identified between policies and laws, and in their implementation among all relevant stakeholders. The latter appears to be a "bottleneck". Actions to overcome this bottleneck were identified and all stakeholders may contribute to these. While the two government departments carry out activities related to the existing legal framework and policies, CSOs face the realities on the ground. The increased interaction between these stakeholders can lead to the (further) improvement of existing or new laws and policies, thereby improving the governance of tenure in the country;
- Capacity development was one of the issues to be worked on, together with awareness raising at all levels of society and including all parts of society. Such awareness raising should use local languages and different means of passing the message (not only written text, and using several languages);
- Many state and non-state organizations are involved in tenure governance, but particularly the private sector and financial institutions should become more involved;
- The effectiveness of organizational and institutional coordination mechanisms varied widely across national and sub-national levels. They operate at national, ministerial and district levels, operating within a single sector or inter-departmentally. Communication to the public via the identified coordination mechanisms could be enhanced according to the participants. Monitoring and evaluation by independent organizations was underlined, as was peer review.

The priorities for the joint way forward formulated by the government and the CSOs/academia showed many commonalities. This provided a window of opportunity to move forward, and to do this jointly. The next steps in the multi-stakeholder process included the validation of the identified issues and actions by the actors, resulting in an improved list of actions that were included in a road map ranked according to identified priorities (Table 3).

Table 3. Synthesis of actions as identified by participants [57].

Synthesis of Actions
Convene a multi-stakeholder dialogue to culminate in the establishment of a national structure, i.e., the national, cross-sectoral multi-stakeholder platform with identified key stakeholders and beneficiaries (e.g., with suitable human/financial resources, will power, service delivery plans, accountability, etc.). Tasks of the multi-stakeholder platform: (1) develop a charter to hold all participants accountable; (2) participate actively in the platform to develop a framework for VGGT adaptation ("domestication") and translation (e.g., in the most common languages); and (3) identify sector-specific needs to feed into the platform.
Review existing and draft/proposed laws and policies against the VGGT, with due regard to customary and informal tenure rights, using the outcomes of the Motlante High Level Panel to inform the discussion (as this process is already nearing completion), followed by an action plan to lobby for legislative change and/or strategically litigate key components.
Raise awareness and common understanding in government, its relevant departments, and the general public, including media campaigns within the organizations, beneficiary groups and the public at large.
Capacity development (training) for all actors on the VGGT, which may include both online and face-to-face training about the importance of VGGT, how to apply it in daily work, etc.
Align work with the VGGT principles and best practices.
Mobilize human and financial resources and human capacities to do tenure governance work.
Monitoring of indicators of gender compliance and inclusion of marginalized groups, such as the youth, less able persons and veterans, within the whole process of implementing the VGGT.
Embed VGGT into civil society and grassroots organizations to enable marginalized groups to defend their legitimate tenure rights, in order to ensure the government recognizes, respects and safeguards tenure rights.
Create synergies in the implementation of the VGGT in Africa-wide initiatives, such as the Land Policy Initiative, to get more of the African governments' to buy in.
Establish transparency initiative for the disclosure of state information on leases, restitution, distribution, allocation of fishing rights and strategic partners in order to eradicate corruption in the governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forestry.

The synthesis of actions provided the basis for the development of a road map. The participants unanimously identified, in an inclusive, bottom-up process, as key to the use of the VGGT in the land reform process, the multi-stakeholder dialogue to culminate in the establishment of a national multi-stakeholder platform. To drive this process, all participants agreed that an interim secretariat, representing all sectors and stakeholder groups, needed to be formed. This interim secretariat was formed in February 2017. It drafted terms of reference for the national multi-stakeholder platform to be established. The validation of these terms of reference in September 2017 followed an iterative process until consensus was reached [58].

The core composition of the national multi-stakeholder platform formed comprised a small group with representatives from the government, CSOs (eight), academia/research centers (three), and the private sector (three). This core was meant to stay small for effectiveness. However, it was envisaged that working groups would be created that would draw from the wider stakeholder base to execute specific activities. To be considered for nomination, decision-making power was identified along with having a mandate in line with the VGGT, resource mobilization ability, commitment, convening power, legitimacy, and gender balance. Participants agreed that the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) would be chair and that the co-chair would be formed by a CSO. The Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA) was selected as the co-chair through a participatory process. Each stakeholder group also nominated its representatives [58]. With the creation of the interim secretariat leading to the establishment of the national multi-stakeholder platform, the process reached a decisive point in 2017.

In 2018, the developed road map was revisited in light of the ongoing discussion on land reform, especially the discussion on expropriation. The FAO's support of the national multi-stakeholder platform needed to be tailored by the stakeholders to the evolving national context. Another

development was that in 2018 two multi-stakeholder platforms were established in South Africa: next to the already mentioned national multi-stakeholder platform, co-chaired by DRDLR and AFRA, a CSO platform was established, led by AFRA, with support from the International Land Coalition (ILC). Thus, AFRA is in a strategic position, being the linking pin between the National and the CSO platforms.

From 2019 onwards, the FAO's support focused on a series of activities supporting the national multi-stakeholder platform, comprising tailored capacity development and policy dialogues and engagement on responsible tenure governance in the context of agricultural and rural development, in line with the VGGT. In June 2019, the DRDLR was merged into the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD). The outputs of these activities resulted in the following:

1. Tailored capacity development was delivered in October 2019 by FAO, AFRA and ILC, in Johannesburg, to multiple stakeholders related to the setting up of a national land governance monitoring system. This was based on LANDex, an indicator-based systems developed by ILC (with 19 indicators covering 46 VGGT sub-principles), to provide a baseline on which to monitor progress in achieving the agreed-upon improved responsible tenure governance implementation plan, agreed by the national multi-stakeholder platform;

2. Development of four Policy Briefs between late 2019 and January 2020, serving as inputs to the meetings specified under 3 below. The four themes of the Policy Briefs are:

    ○   Support to safeguarding tenure in smallholder agriculture (small-scale farming), enhancing agro-ecological practices to improve resilience to climate change in the UN Decade of Family Farmers, and to make evident their contribution to the agricultural sector in South Africa;

    ○   A gender analysis of relevant policies as a cross-cutting theme "to ensure the equal right of women and men to the enjoyment of all human rights, while acknowledging differences between women and men and taking specific measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality when necessary" (VGGT principle of implementation 'gender equality'), and to close the gap in women's rights to land. Because of the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and existing gender-based inequalities, women's views, voices and leadership should be integrated in the COVID-19 response to ensure that their needs and priorities are adequately addressed [59];

    ○   In view of the central role of land administration, improvement of the Land Administration System in line with the VGGT Technical Guide 'Improving ways to record tenure rights' [60] to achieve an integrated and inclusive system that will allow the recognition and protection of diverse land tenure rights and their enjoyment by the right holders;

    ○   A set of recommendations for equitable land redistribution, with the aim of using agricultural land effectively and productively—within the biophysical setting and selected farming system—contributing to rural development.

3. A series of online multi-stakeholder policy dialogues on the themes described under 2. The Policy Briefs were originally intended to feed the multi-stakeholder policy dialogues scheduled to take place on 20–21 March 2020, in Johannesburg, but because of the COVID-19 outbreak and the lock-down measures taken in South Africa, these physical meetings were converted into online meetings, the first of which was held on 19 June 2020 with around 150 participants (see, for three short interlinked videos, https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLjIyt5KTjOBdSkTb0CW0sCwvctLkSODi5), and the second one on 22 August 2020 (see https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLjIyt5KTjOBe45aJS-Dj2aWwTILQOUl4J). These dialogues responded to the changing conditions in the country as a consequence of the confinement measures to contain the spread of COVID-19. With disruptions in value chains, food supply and production, the food security and nutrition of households was at risk. Nearly half of the households already experienced hunger or insufficient nutritious daily food prior to the COVID-19

pandemic. Since the lockdown, more people became dependent on the distribution of grants in order to purchase food. The CSOs mobilized to assist vulnerable communities [61]. Participants called for clear objectives on land reform in the next 5–10 years, the right to food in times of the COVID-19 pandemic (which is having a heavy toll on the poor and marginalized), access to healthy and nutritious food, and support to smallholder farmers;

4. The development of a fundable project/programme to ensure the sustainability and scaling-up of agriculture and rural development dialogue and engagement is underway.

The multi-stakeholder policy dialogues will be pivotal in assessing whether the investment of stakeholders in the national multi-stakeholder platform will bring about a better transformative capability, as well as the probability that the reality on the ground will change.

4.3. Internal Conditions: Building and Nurturing Trust, Representation and Power Asymmetries, and Costs

The awareness raising and common understanding of the VGGT and its contents started in what Dryzek's Deliberation System Framework [48] defines as the public space, by gathering representatives from government, civil society, traditional leaders, farmer organizations, research institutions, and private sector, representing the land, fisheries and forests sectors. Participation, inclusion and representation are important because they increase the amount of knowledge and expertise in the national multi-stakeholder platform. Stakeholder participation is aligned with South Africa's democratic principles of participation. Participation, in turn, creates legitimacy, ownership and commitment for the identified priority of land reform, and may reduce resistance to transformation/systemic change at the implementation stage. The true representativeness of participants in the series of events is difficult to asses, as they participated of their own choice. What one should realize is that the "willing" participated as a result of a kind of self-selection, and this may have introduced bias, as well as chance, into our analysis. The dialogue allowed for a diversity of viewpoints on the land reform process being expressed between several stakeholders that otherwise would not easily have met. Moreover, misconceptions were overcome and common understanding on challenges and solutions was reached. Creating and using such space was made possible by the FAO through their assisting in the organization and facilitation of various national workshops. These helped in enhancing general and more specific awareness and joint understanding (described in more detail in Table 2). Thus, the FAO's support focused on the process of creating the internal conditions.

The created enhanced awareness and common understanding activities provided an opportunity to build trust between different stakeholder groups and within stakeholder groups. This resulted in several heated debates over time, but everyone kept communicating as the focus in the facilitated discussion remained on what is best for South Africa, rather than pointing fingers among individual groups. This communication became more effective over time as stakeholders got to know each other better, with a deep realization of a mutual interdependence to make progress and move collectively forward. Land reform is a highly sensitive topic, and over time the increased trust and representation have led to the common understanding of, and agreement to engage collectively in, the land reform process. Power asymmetry was recognized from the very beginning, thus allowing open communication, and a real desire was shown by all participants to have an inclusive process. The FAO was involved in the role of a trusted and neutral convener. The key meaning of such a role is the facilitation of the advancement of the whole VGGT implementation process, to build and nurture trust by addressing and overcoming any existing power asymmetries within stakeholder groups or between such groups.

The facilitated joint diagnosis, joint learning and joint action and implementation enhanced the ownership of this process by all stakeholders, and led to increased commitment and the enhanced mutual accountability of the intended results. Table 2 shows the activities at the national level. More activities were organized by the FAO and others (e.g., addressing gender and land, increasing capacities of CSOs and grassroots organization in using the VGGT) that are not shown in the table.

These awareness-raising events contributed to leveling the playing field between partners and providing the most vulnerable with the needed communication and technical skills.

It takes time to have a conversation and develop mutual understanding. This requires an ongoing relationship between multiple actors in order to be able to develop and maintain trust, both between stakeholders and within stakeholder groups. In doing so, the platform and process reflected how the CFS works and the importance of working in that manner at the country level.

At the heart of this process emerged slowly the conviction that in order to 'drive' the land reform process forward collectively, a mutually respected and conceived 'vehicle' was needed: a national multi-stakeholder platform (result of the second workshop). It is crucial to understand that this realization came from the stakeholders, from the bottom up (i.e., not imposed from outside), and reflects *their* perspectives, priorities and needs. Such a multi-stakeholder platform, planned with an initial set up with all stakeholders in the third workshop, aimed at creating a legitimate space for dialogue, and at achieving consensus on the main concerns, started with a small group of persons representing the various constituencies and three sectors, and grew from there as a result of openness to whoever wanted to join, and because of the "snowball effect" that was seen when more and more organizations were represented in the platform and more critical mass was gathered. In the fourth meeting, a national dialogue, the stakeholders met again to validate the drafted terms of reference and to agree on a shared vision and programme. This process resulted in the establishment of the national multi-stakeholder platform. The process emerged organically and from the bottom up, and was not imposed from outside. As mentioned, the national multi-stakeholder platform is co-chaired by the DALRRD and AFRA. Having a governmental organization as chair and a CSO as co-chair is important to ensure inclusiveness and being egalitarian, because the door to who qualifies as a stakeholder and partner should be left wide open for the benefit of all [13]. This multiple-years' process helped in developing a clear vision and joint action plan, including a resource mobilization strategy, thus institutionalizing the structure to enhance the prospects of sustainability.

4.4. External Environment: Transparency and Accountability, Sharing of Lessons Learnt, System-Wide Capacity Development, Policy Convergence and Sound Institutions

The legitimacy of the national multi-stakeholder platform lies in its truly multi-stakeholder representation, its accountability to each constituency, and its having been developed organically as a result of a facilitated process, as well as in a transparent manner from the bottom up, in line with the country's needs. The country has a democratic constitution that is setting the conditions for the involvement of people in decision-making processes. Significant developments in the promotion of human rights, the rule of law and gender equality have been made. Now progress in the responsible governance of tenure for multi-stakeholder transformative governance is expected to happen, and this is all the more urgent in the face of social and environmental change dynamics that require an enhancement of productivity and the resilience of farming systems.

The experience in South Africa also showed the critical importance of system-wide capacity development for the vulnerable, with a view to tackling and overcoming power asymmetries. The importance of initiating and facilitating a participatory and inclusive capacity enhancement process should be underlined because it increases country ownership and commitment through multi-stakeholder participation and consultation, fosters dialogue, and develops mutual trust. The capacity enhancement process will also benefit stakeholders in the long term by having strengthened, or acquired, capacities that facilitate and nurture working together. This is beneficial in the multi-stakeholder context, as well as within an individual organization. The capacity of the partners in the national multi-stakeholder platform will need to be further strengthened to create a meaningful public space, i.e., where a diversity of viewpoints and discourses interact without legal restriction. It is important to hear as many voices as possible to cover a multitude of perspectives. This is important to collectively feed into the empowered space.

The VGGT, a non-binding instrument "may encompass strong political commitments or moral obligations, even though they are not legally binding" [62], referring to the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, art. 34. Thus, the VGGT are a flexible tool for achieving policy objectives by states and non-government actors on a voluntary basis, and this is something that they are probably less willing to do if legally obliged [21]. All stakeholders in the platform are very aware of their stake and the unique chance they have to be part of progress in land reform.

Political will is needed for the national multi-stakeholder platform to be effective, i.e., to ensure that policy and legal reforms are not only discussed but will take place for the benefit of all. Therefore, the linkage to the land reform process as a national priority is key. The commitment of the members of the national multi-stakeholder platform to keep driving things forward and to keep the momentum, even more prominent during the COVID-19 pandemic, will be key to ensuring that the activities of the platform continue over the long term, and have an impact in collective actions in the empowered space. The strong support and involvement of the Minister of DALRRD is underlining the political will and commitment.

4.5. Deliberative Capacity: Public Space, Empowered Space and Their Interactions

With the national multi-stakeholder platform created, this being co-chaired by DALRRD and AFRA, and closely feeding into the empowered space, it is important that the synergies and complementarities between the National Engagement Strategy (NES) and the Land Observatory, chaired by AFRA and supported by the International Land Coalition, and the VGGT-related activities merge into a single approach to strengthening tenure governance, especially for the marginalized and vulnerable groups. Actors such as the Land Access Movement of South Africa (LAMOSA), Masifundise Development Trust, the Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS), as well as many other organizations, have played an active role in Phase I of the support of VGGT implementation. This culminated in the creation of the national multi-stakeholder partnership in September 2017, and the participation of these organizations in the operational stage of the partnership is being fostered and strengthened. The national multi-stakeholder platform contributes to the representation of diverse social interests and may assist in pacifying any societal conflicts, but such a platform should avoid acting in such a way that citizens are co-opted and/or mobilized as an additional resource for the legitimization or stabilization of the established order. This would be detrimental to the whole effort and erode trust in democratic institutions and procedures.

The multi-stakeholder policy dialogues in 2020 are pivotal in assessing whether the deliberative capacity of the national multi-stakeholder platform, in the form of a set of recommendations addressing four specific aspects of the land reform process, will have an impact on future land reform decisions and lead to transformation and sustainability. It will be the moment at which to assess the fitness of working in multi-stakeholder partnership, as well as its ability to deliver transformational change. Land reform is a long-term process with objectives, visions and ideals that cannot always be easily, or immediately, translated into practical policies. Participation in the national multi-stakeholder platform may help to articulate commitment, make the common objective of land reform more imaginable, and maintain political momentum over the longer term. In this manner, it is anticipatory. This is often needed to forge consensus and to encourage collaboration between the stakeholders—all the more so in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. South African society has many issues to make progress on. Not all of them can be immediately resolved, but they need to be addressed. These policy dialogues induce reflection and exhibit reciprocity by open communication on the various interests and discourses presented both by the partnership and by the participants in these dialogues (e.g., invited thematic experts). As these dialogues are ongoing, it is hoped that the multiple partners in the national multi-stakeholder platform will have an impact through their collective action, enacting a transformation with actual changes on the ground. If this will be the case, the deliberative process will also be consequential. If the collective action of multi-stakeholder transformative governance, involving multiple stakeholders and additional layers of deliberation and thereby creating a more

complex process, will not lead to tangible impact on the ground, the whole idea of multi-stakeholder partnerships as a new way of doing business should be re-examined.

The VGGT multi-actor process in South Africa represents a shift from the top-down ways of doing business to bringing people together, allowing a conversation, by creating a space to advance consensus on the country's main concerns, that otherwise may not have happened, eventually leading to authorative informed decision-making. South Africans are more determined than ever to move, collectively, towards actually doing, changing and impacting [13].

5. Conclusions and Discussion

The inductive reasoning used in the analysis of the data collected at the national and regional levels, together with the literature study, has led to a synthesis of factors that provide a conceptual basis to analyze multi-stakeholder partnerships for transformative governance of tenure. The application of this conceptual basis to the national multi-stakeholder platform in South Africa shows that all factors identified as either internal conditions, external environment or the newly proposed deliberative capacity are mutually reinforcing factors for multi-stakeholder transformative governance. The internal conditions create an enabling environment within the multi-stakeholder partnership, whereas the external environment creates the enabling environment outside the partnership. Both are primarily addressing the functioning of the multi-stakeholder partnership in the governance of tenure. The deliberative capacity is key in determining whether the partnership will be effective in achieving systemic change/transformation in the country through its explicit linkage to the empowered space. The sustainability of the responsible governance of tenure is determined by having internal conditions, an external environment and a deliberative capacity in place.

In more detail, the creation of the national multi-stakeholder platform in South Africa is, as confirmed by the CFS-HLPE [4], already a result in itself. Such a partnership is not the easiest, but certainly the most effective way forward to ensure that no one is left behind when taking decisions on the land reform process. Its effectiveness in dealing with this process will be shown over time. Dealing with land reform and sustainable development in a world with a changing climate, declining biodiversity, increased competition over and degradation of natural resources, and health emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic, is challenging, and requires perseverance and stamina. Continuing the multi-actor dialogue will be pivotal in achieving the ultimate aim of mutually agreed reforms, and in reducing the likelihood of conflicts. It is implicitly assumed that all stakeholders involved in the platform have goals that coincide with the identified priority. This creates positive, mutually reinforcing interdependence and positive synergies, because stakeholders can achieve their own objectives only to the extent to which all other stakeholders can achieve theirs. Thus, stakeholders will realize that they depend on each other. This is, of course, conducive to establishing collaborative relations, interactions and communication. However, one should not forget a situation in which a stakeholder would want to achieve an objective at the expense of the achievement of the objectives of others. This creates negative interdependence, which may lead to hated debates, and even conflictual relations and win–lose dynamics. To have both positive and negative interdependencies in the national multi-stakeholder platform was important in order to arrive at an inclusive priority setting, and to foster the addressing of land reform for South Africa as a country over time.

In South Africa, the multi-stakeholder partnership resulted from an organic, inclusive, bottom-up process of implementing the VGGT in the land reform process. Taking the realities and needs of people on the ground as a starting point, be they farmers, fishers and/or foresters, or a combination of these, the national multi-stakeholder platform serves as an entry point to finally discuss and make progress concerning multiple actors' real-life problems, and allows the anchoring of the debate in the empowered space where decision-making processes (e.g., parliamentary processes) take place, as well as the implementation, monitoring and enforcement of such decisions. This bottom-up process leading to the establishment of the national multi-stakeholder platform is more likely to ensure the adequate participation of the groups most affected by land reform issues. In parallel, civil society has

organized itself autonomously in a multi-actor platform, supported by ILC, to improve its capacity to participate meaningfully and effectively with other groups on the national platform. This will enhance a more dynamic society–state interaction. This may, in turn, trigger a more systematic and more institutionalized interaction between rights-holders and state authorities.

The proposed theoretical framework applied to the national multi-stakeholder platform in South Africa is an example. It is important for the continued validation of this proposed conceptual basis to apply it in other countries with different contexts of multi-stakeholder governance of tenure processes, as well as to solicit feedback on the analysis from the participants in the countries and regions where the data were collected. Such feedback could be collected through a quantitative survey or questionnaire. This would contribute to testing whether the identified factors are statistically significant.

The partnership dynamic itself is also an area that merits further research. Partners in a multi-stakeholder partnership are learning by doing, and are further developing their capacities that subsequently can be brought back into their own organization.

More study is needed to assess the proposed conceptual basis and whether it can be generalized to other contexts. This is a viable approach moving forward, as in many countries multi-stakeholder partnerships have been formed around a specific topic while implementing the VGGT. These partnerships share the same contextual similarities. Another challenge to the possible generalization of our findings is whether there is any bias or chance in the factors described. The number of participants and events from which data were collected was considerable, but one should be aware that not all organizations invited participated, and there was a kind of self-selection involved that may have limited the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, the validation, mentioned above, should include the recognition of any bias, misunderstanding or chance. As a next step, such validation will, in turn, provide evidence leading to an increased understanding of how multi-stakeholder partnerships may improve governance of tenure in practice by rigorously examining both supporting and discrepant examples. Causal relations between the multi-stakeholder partnerships and their goal achievement, and thus their "success", should also receive more research attention. The example of South Africa did not lend itself to such an analysis because the land reform is not yet achieved. What is already clear, however, is that multi-stakeholder transformative governance processes are country- and context-specific, having factors in common that are proposed on the conceptual basis for assessment, but they do not follow a standard model that can be applied everywhere as a 'one-size-fits-all' exercise.

Appendix A

Table A1. Overview of events in the period 2014–2020 wherein data were collected.

Location	Date	Events	Collected Data
Asia	December 2015	Regional multi-stakeholder participatory workshop in December 2015 with 11 countries participating	First-hand observations, informal exchanges
Cambodia	March 2017	National multi-stakeholder participatory workshop	First-hand observations, note-taking, focus groups, informal exchanges
	December 2018	National multi-stakeholder participatory dialogue workshop	
	December 2019	Participatory workshop with government and academia	
	March 2020	National multi-stakeholder participatory workshop in March 2020	
China	November 2014	National multi-stakeholder participatory workshop	First-hand observations, note-taking, informal exchanges
	December 2016	2 national participatory workshops with government, state-owned enterprises and academia	
	May 2020–ongoing	Study on COVID-19 impact on tenure governance by academia	
Japan	January 2019	International capacity development for government officials from 6 countries	Note-taking, informal exchanges
	February 2020	Capacity development for government officials from Vietnam	
Lao PDR	October–December 2018	Learning program for government officials with speakers from private sector and CSO from with kick-off workshop	First-hand observations, note-taking, focus groups
	December 2019	Mission in December 2019	
Mekong	March 2015	Regional multi-stakeholder participatory workshop in March 2015	First-hand observations, note-taking, informal exchanges
	June 2016	Regional multi-stakeholder forum in June 2016	
	May 2018	Regional multi-stakeholder forum in May 2018	
	June–December 2019 and July–August 2020	Legal study with validation in second period	
Mozambique	April 2020–ongoing	Study on COVID-19 impact on tenure governance by CSO	First-hand observations, informal exchanges
Myanmar	October 2015	National multi-stakeholder participatory workshop	First-hand observations, note-taking, focus groups, informal exchanges
	June 2016	Private sector workshop	
	February 2017	National multi-stakeholder participatory workshop	
	June 2017	National multi-stakeholder participatory workshop	
	September 2018	Mission	

Table A1. *Cont.*

Location	Date	Events	Collected Data
	October 2018–February 2019	Learning programme for government officials with speakers from private sector and CSO	
	September 2019	Mission	
	September 2020	2 online webinars by government	
	October 2020–ongoing	Study on COVID-19 impact on tenure governance by academia	
South Africa	December 2015	National multi-stakeholder participatory workshop	First-hand observations, note-taking, focus groups, informal exchanges
	May 2016	National multi-stakeholder participatory workshop	
	February 2017	National multi-stakeholder participatory workshop	
	February 2019	Multi-stakeholder webinar meeting	
	October 2019	Capacity development activity by CSO	
	June 2020	Online multi-stakeholder webinar	
	August 2020	Online multi-stakeholder webinar	
Tanzania	April 2020–ongoing	Study on COVID-19 impact on tenure governance from by CSO	First-hand observations, informal exchanges
Viet Nam	July 2018	National multi-stakeholder participatory workshop	First-hand observations, note-taking, focus groups, informal exchanges
	March 2019–ongoing	Legal study government agency with cooperation of CSO	
	April 2019	Mission	
	July 2019	Study visit from government delegation from Myanmar to government and CSOs in Vietnam	
	November 2019	Mission	
	September to December 2020	Learning program for government officials with speakers from private sector and CSO	

References

1. Global Knowledge Partnership. *Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships*; Issue Paper; Kuala: Lumpur, Malaysia, 2003; 59p, authors: Overseas Development Institute and Foundation for Development Cooperation.
2. Brouwer, H.; Woodhill, J.; Hemmati, M.; Verhoosel, K.; Van Vugt, S. How to Design and Facilitate multi-Stakeholder Partnerships. In *The MSP Guide*; Centre for Development Innovation (CDI), Wageningen University and Research: Wageningen, The Netherlands; Practical Action Publishing Ltd., Bourton on Dunsmoore: Rugby, UK, 2016; 180p, Available online: http://www.mspguide.org/sites/default/files/case/msp_guide-2016-digital.pdf (accessed on 20 November 2020).
3. Hemmati, M.; Dodds, F. *Principles and Practices of Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships for Sustainable Development–Guidance and Oversight from UN Decisions*; Prepared for a Workshop of the Friends for Governance for Sustainable Development: New York, NY, USA, 2017; pp. 16–34. Available online: http://friendsofgovernance.org/index.php/papers/background-paper-for-session-1-principles-and-practices-ofmulti-stakeholder-partnerships-for-sustainable-development-guidance-and-oversight-from-un-decisions (accessed on 20 November 2020).

4. Committee on World Food Security-High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition. *Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships to Finance and Improve Food Security and Nutrition in the Framework of the 2030 Agenda*; A report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS); Committee on World Food Security: Rome, Italy, 2018.

5. Ostrom, E. *Governing the Commons*; Cambridge University Press: Oxford, UK, 1990; 280p.

6. Ostrom, E. A behavioural approach to the rational-choice theory of collective action. *Am. Political Sci. Rev.* **1998**, *92*, 1–22. [CrossRef]

7. Röling, N.; Leeuwis, C.; Pyburn, R. *Beyond the Aggregation of Individual Preferences: Moving from Multiple Cognition in Resource Dilemmas*; Wheelbarrows Full of Frogs: Social Learning in Rural Resource Management; Leeuwis, C., Pyburn, R., Eds.; Koninklijke van Gorcum: Assen, The Netherlands, 2002; pp. 25–47.

8. Gleckman, H. *Multistakeholder Governance and Democracy—A Global Challenge*; Routledge: New York, NY, USA, 2018; 38p.

9. Horan, D. A New Approach to Partnerships for SDG Transformations. *Sustainability* **2019**, *11*, 4947. [CrossRef]

10. Beisheim, M.; Simon, N. *Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships for Implementing the 2030 Agenda: Improving Accountability and Transparency; Analytical Paper for the 2016 ECOSOC Partnership Forum (March 18, 2016)*. 2016. Available online: https://ssrn.com/abstract=2767464 (accessed on 20 November 2020). [CrossRef]

11. The Partnering Initiative and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Maximising the Impact of Partnerships for the SDGs*; A Practical Guide to Partnership Value Creation; UNDESA: New York, NY, USA, 2019; 40p.

12. Chambers, R. The origin and practice of participatory rural appraisal. *World Dev.* **1994**, *22*, 953–969. [CrossRef]

13. Blühdorn, I.; Deflorian, M. The collaborative management of sustained unsustainability: On the performance of participatory forms of environmental governance. *Sustainability* **2019**, *11*, 1189. [CrossRef]

14. Commission of Global Governance. *Our Global Neighbourhood*; Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK, 1995.

15. UN. *The Future We Want*; Outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 20–22 June 2012; Available online: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/733FutureWeWant.pdf (accessed on 20 November 2020).

16. Foster, J.W.; Anand, A. (Eds.) Whose World is It anyway. In *Civil Society, the United Nations and the Multilateral Future*; United Nations Association in Canada: Ottawa, ON, Canada, 1999.

17. UN. *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; A/RES/70/1*. 2015. Available online: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf (accessed on 20 November 2020).

18. Schäferhoff, M.; Campe, S.; Kaan, C. Transnational public-private partnerships in international relations: Making sense of concepts, research frameworks, and results. *Int. Stud. Rev.* **2009**, *11*, 451–474. [CrossRef]

19. FAO. *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security*; Committee on World Food Security/FAO: Rome, Italy, 2012; 40p.

20. Beckh, C.; Gärtner, E.; Windfuhr, M.; Munro-Faure, P.; Weigelt, J.; Müller, A. Taking stock after three years of adoption: Experiences and strategies for implementation and monitoring of the UN Voluntary Guidelines on Tenure (VGGT). *Int. Soil Water Conserv. Res.* **2015**, *3*, 324–328. [CrossRef]

21. Paoloni, L.; Onorati, A. Regulations of large-scale acquisitions of land: The case of the Voluntary guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Land, Fisheries and Forests. *Law Dev. Rev.* **2014**, *7*, 369–400. [CrossRef]

22. Arial, A.; Palmer, D.; Vidar, M.; Garcia Cebolla, J.C.; Romano, F.; Shamsaifar, L. Governance of tenure: Making it happen. *Land Tenure J.* **2012**, *1*, 63–75.

23. Seufert, P. *Policy Dialogue Spaces and Multi-Actor Platforms in the Context of Tenure Governance*; A Civil Society Perspective on Experiences and Criteria to Advance Human Rights Based Governance of Tenure; Working Paper FIAN International: Heidelberg, Germany, 2017; 22p.

24. MacDonald, A.; Clarke, A.; Huang, L.; Seitanidi, M.M. Partner strategic capabilities for capturing value from sustainability-focused multi-stakeholder partnerships. *Sustainability* **2019**, *11*, 557. [CrossRef]

25. Jansen, L.J.M.; Kalas, P.P.; Bicchieri, M. Improving governance of tenure in policy and practice: The case of Myanmar. *Land Use Policy* **2020**, *100*. [CrossRef]

26. FAO. *Ministerial Meeting on Governance and International Commodity Markets*. Concept Note, 2014. 6 October 2014. Available online: http://www.fao.org/3/a-ml297e.pdf (accessed on 20 November 2020).

27. Thiele, G.; Devaux, A.; Reinoso, I.; Pico, H.; Montesdeoca, F.; Pumisacho, M.; Andrade-Piedra, J.; Velasco, C.; Flores, P.; Esprella, R.; et al. *Multi-Stakeholder Platforms for Linking Small Farmers to Value Chains: Evidence from the Andes*; Innovation for Inclusive Value-Chain Development, Successes and Challenges; Devaux, A., Torero, M., Donovan, J., Horton, D., Eds.; International Food Policy Research Institute: Washington, DC, USA, 2016; pp. 249–267.

28. Kalas, P.; Abubakar, A.; Chavva, K.; Gordes, A.; Grovermann, C.; Innes-Taylor, N.; Ketelaar, J.; Laval, E.; Phillips, S.; Rioux, J. Multi-Stakeholder, Multi-Actor Processes, Platforms and Networks for Climate Smart Agriculture. In *Climate-Smart Agriculture Sourcebook*, 2nd ed.; Enhancing Capacities for a Country-Owned Transition towards Climate Smart Agriculture; FAO: Rome, Italy, 2017; Available online: http://www.fao.org/climatesmart-agriculture-sourcebook/en/ (accessed on 20 November 2020).

29. Ayala-Orozco Rosell, J.A.; Merçon, J.; Bueno, I.; Alatorre-Frenk, G.; Langle-Flores, A.; Lobato, A. Challenges and strategies in place-based multi-stakeholder collaboration for sustainability: Learning from experiences in the Global South. *Sustainability* **2018**, *10*, 3217. [CrossRef]

30. Kinneging, A. De onzichtbare maat. In *Archeologie van Goed en Kwaad*; Uitgeverij Prometheus: Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 2020; 639p.

31. Global Donor Platform for Rural Development. *Characteristics of Successful Models for Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships to Improve Land Governance in Developing Countries*; Study commissioned by the Global Donor Working Group on Land (GDWGL): Bonn, Germany, 2015; 31p.

32. Curșeu, P.L.; Schruijer, S.G.L. Participation and goal achievement of multiparty collaborative systems dealing with complex problems: A natural experiment. *Sustainability* **2020**, *12*, 987. [CrossRef]

33. Kolk, A. Partnerships as a Panacea for Addressing Global Problems? On Rationale, Context, Actors, Impact and Limitations. In *Social Partnerships and Responsible Business: A Research Handbook*; Seitanidi, M., Crane, A., Eds.; Routledge: London, UK, 2012; pp. 15–43.

34. Dodds, F. *Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships: Making Them Work for the Post-2015 Development Agenda*; Study commissioned by UNDESA; Global Research Institute: Denver, CO, USA, 2015; 28p.

35. Alves Zanella, M.; Goetz, A.; Rist, S.; Schmidt, O.; Weigelt, J. Deliberation in multi-stakeholder participation: A heuristic framework applied to the Committee on World Food Security. *Sustainability* **2018**, *10*, 428. [CrossRef]

36. Kalas, P.P.; Jansen, L.J.M. Country-level implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security in South Africa. In *Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships to Finance and Improve Food Security and Nutrition in the Framework of the 2030 Agenda*; A report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS): Rome, Italy, 2018; p. 91.

37. Nederhof, S.; Wongtschowski, M.; Van der Lee, F. (Eds.) Putting heads together. In *Agricultural Innovation Platforms in Practice*; KIT Development, Policy & Practice Bulletin 396; KIT Publishers: Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 2011; 123p.

38. Rioux, J.; Kalas, P. Capacity Development at Multiple-Levels for Effective Implementation of Sustainable Land Management. In *Sustainable Land Management (SLM) in Practice in the Kagera Basin: Lessons Learned for Scaling Up at Landscape Level*; FAO: Rome, Italy, 2017; pp. 82–85.

39. Dryzek, J.S. *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond: Liberals, Critics, Contestation*; Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK, 2000.

40. Kurbalija, J.; Katrandjiev, V. (Eds.) *Multi-Stakeholder Diplomacy–Challenges and Opportunities*; Diplo Foundation: Geneva, Switzerland, 2006.

41. Kalas, P.P. Multi-stakeholder partnerships and diplomacy in communications technology for development at the global policy level. In *A Study of the UN Working Group on Internet Governance*; Discussion Paper; Diplo Foundation: Geneva, Switzerland, 2007.

42. Saner, R. Development diplomacy by non-state actors: An emerging form of multi-stakeholder diplomacy. In *Multi-stakeholder Diplomacy—Challenges and Opportunities*; Kurbalija, J., Katrandjiev, J., Eds.; Diplo Foundation: Geneva, Switzerland, 2007.

43. Kalas, P.P. System-Wide Capacity Development for Sustainable Food and Agriculture. In *Sustainable Food and Agriculture—An Integrated Approach*; Campanhola, C., Pandey, S., Eds.; Elsevier/FAO, 2019; Available online: https://www.sciencedirect.com/book/9780128121344/sustainable-food-and-agriculture (accessed on 20 November 2020).

44.　Jansen, L.J.M.; Kalas, P.P.; Bicchieri, M.; Nicodemi, C. Improving governance of tenure in policy and practice: Capacity analysis of the enabling environment, institutional and individual levels in Cambodia, Myanmar, South Africa and Viet Nam. 2020; in press.

45.　Sen, A. *Development as Freedom*; Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK, 1999; 366p.

46.　Kruuse, M.; Reming Tangbæk, K.; Jespersen, K.; Gallemore, C. Navigating input and output legitimacy in multi-stakeholder initiatives: Institutional stewards at work. *Sustainability* **2019**, *11*, 6621. [CrossRef]

47.　Ostrom, E. Towards a behavioural theory linking trust, reciprocity and reputation. In *Trust and Reciprocity: Interdisciplinary Lessons for Experimental Research*; Ostrom, E., Walker, J.A., Eds.; Russell Sage Foundation: New York, NY, USA, 2003; pp. 19–78.

48.　Dryzek, J.S. Democratization as deliberative capacity building. *Comp. Political Stud.* **2009**, *42*, 1379–1402. [CrossRef]

49.　Dryzek, J.; Stevenson, H. Global democracy and earth system governance. *Ecol. Econ.* **2011**, *70*, 1865–1974. [CrossRef]

50.　Mujuru, N.M.; Obi, A. Effects of cultivated area on smallholder farm profits and food security in rural communities of the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. *Sustainability* **2020**, *12*, 3272. [CrossRef]

51.　UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Inequality in a Rapidly Changing World*; World Social Report 2020; United Nations: New York, NY, USA, 2020; 196p, Available online: https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/01/World-Social-Report-2020-FullReport.pdf (accessed on 20 November 2020).

52.　Hino, H.; Leibbrandt, M.; Machema, R.; Shifa, M.; Soudien, C. *Identity, Inequality and Social Contestation in the Post-Apartheid South Africa*; SALDRU Working Paper No. 233; Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU), University of Cape Town: Cape Town, South Africa, 2018; 30p.

53.　Myeni, L.; Moeletsi, M.; Thavhana, M.; Randela, M.; Mokoena, L. Barriers affecting sustainable agricultural productivity of smallholder farmers in the Eastern Free State of South Africa. *Sustainability* **2019**, *11*, 3003. [CrossRef]

54.　Lambek, N. The UN Committee on World Food Security's break from the agricultural productivity trap. *Transnatl. Leg. Theory* **2019**. [CrossRef]

55.　FAO. *Technical Workshop Awareness Raising on the"Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security"*; Final Report, 9–11 December 2014; FAO: Johannesburg, South Africa, 2015; 45p.

56.　FAO. *Second National Workshop and Initial Stakeholder Capacity Assessment to Improve Governance of Tenure with the "Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security" (VGGT)*; FAO: Johannesburg, South Africa, 2016; 51p.

57.　FAO. *Third National Workshop to Improve the Implementation of the "Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security" (VGGT)*; FAO: Johannesburg, South Africa, 2017; 32p.

58.　FAO. *National Multi-Stakeholder Platform Workshop on the "Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security"*; Workshop Proceedings; OR Tambo Tsogo Sun Hotel: Johannesburg, South Africa, 2017; 20p.

59.　FAO. *Addressing Inequality in Times of COVID-19*; FAO: Rome, Italy, 2020; 11p, Available online: https://doi.org/10.4060/ca8843en (accessed on 20 November 2020).

60.　FAO. *Improving Ways to Record Tenure Rights*; Governance of Tenure Technical Guide No. 10; FAO: Rome, Italy, 2017; 85p.

61.　Oettle, L. *Food and Nutrition Security in the Context of COVID-19 in South Africa: Civil. Society Action Planning*; Document prepared for the Land Network National Engagement Strategy for South African (LandNNES): Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, 2020; 13p, Available online: https://landnnes.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Food-and-Nutrition-Security-in-the-Context-of-COVID-19-in-South-Africa_LandNNES-CSO-Action-Planning.pdf (accessed on 20 November 2020).

62. *Intergovernmental Working Group for the Elaboration of a Set of Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Food in the Context of National Food Security*; Information Paper on Implications of the Voluntary Guidelines for Parties and non-Parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; FAO: Rome, Italy, 2003; Available online: http://www.fao.org/3/J1632E/J1632E.htm (accessed on 20 November 2020).

Publisher's Note: MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.