

Common But Differentiated Governance (CBDG): A Metagovernance Approach to Make the SDGs Work

Dr. Louis Meuleman & Dr. Ingeborg Niestroy

Presentation at the
**Center for International
Environment & Resource Policy**
Fletcher School, Tufts University, Boston

21 September 2015



1. Introduces the principle of 'Common But Differentiated Governance' (CBDG);
2. Elaborates a metagovernance approach to designing tailor-made, dedicated governance frameworks for implementing the SDGs.



How to develop (national, subnational) governance frameworks for implementation of the SDGs, that

- ✓ take into account the common Goals;
- ✓ are tailor-made: built on the specific conditions/constraints/opportunities of each country

Why is this a relevant question?



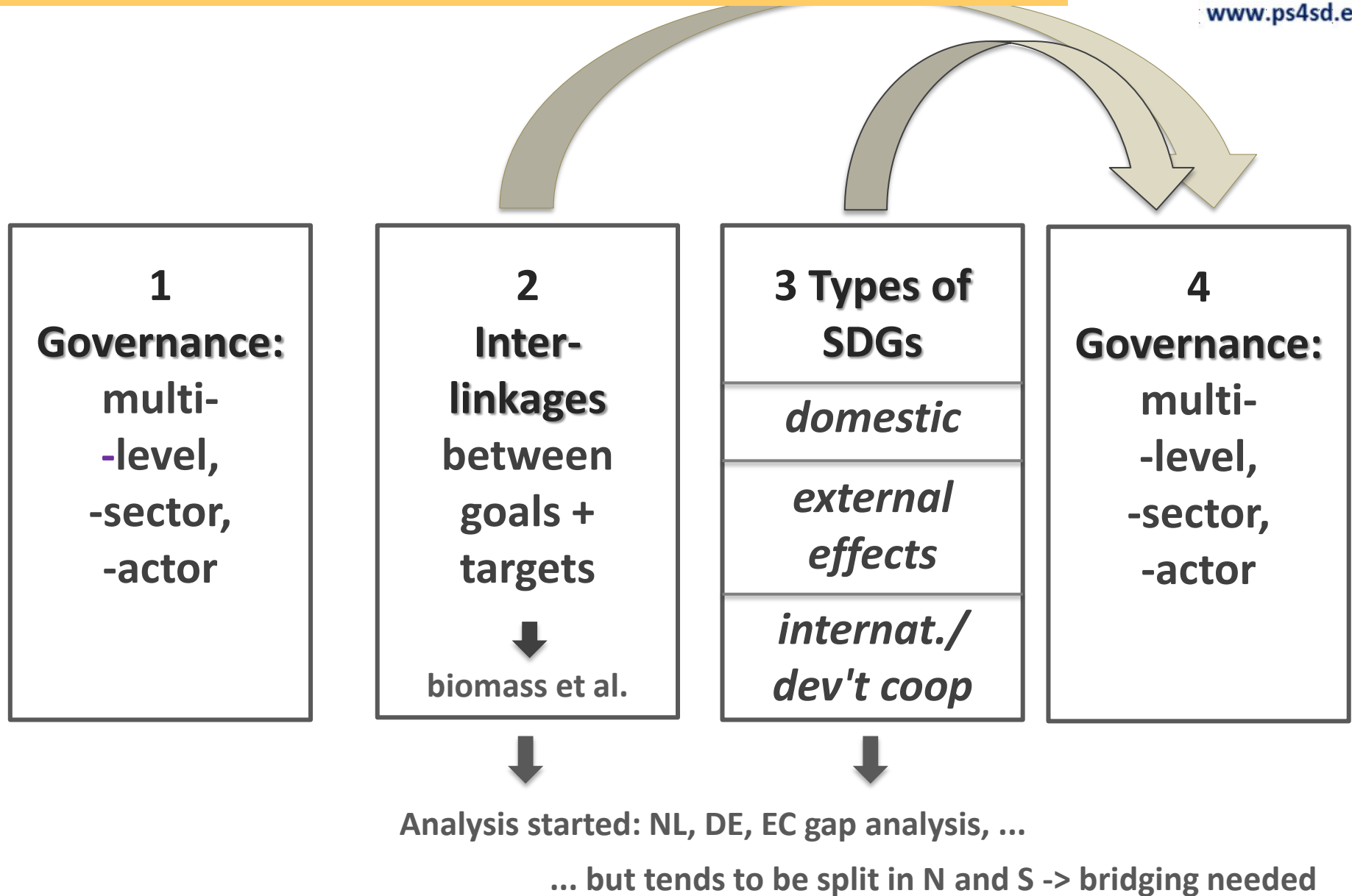
Because (among others...):

- ✓ Implementation of the universal SDGs starts in one week!
- ✓ Countries have settled the WHAT (SDGs), now it's time for the HOW (governance)
- ✓ Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR) is not about action: we need an action principle to get things done
- ✓ Standardised approaches like 'good governance', networks/alliances, 'the market' or central steering alone often don't work -> but remain popular because so easy;
- ✓ Existing SD governance frameworks tend to 'handle' just one level and miss linkages (multi-level); also weak on horizontal & vertical coordination

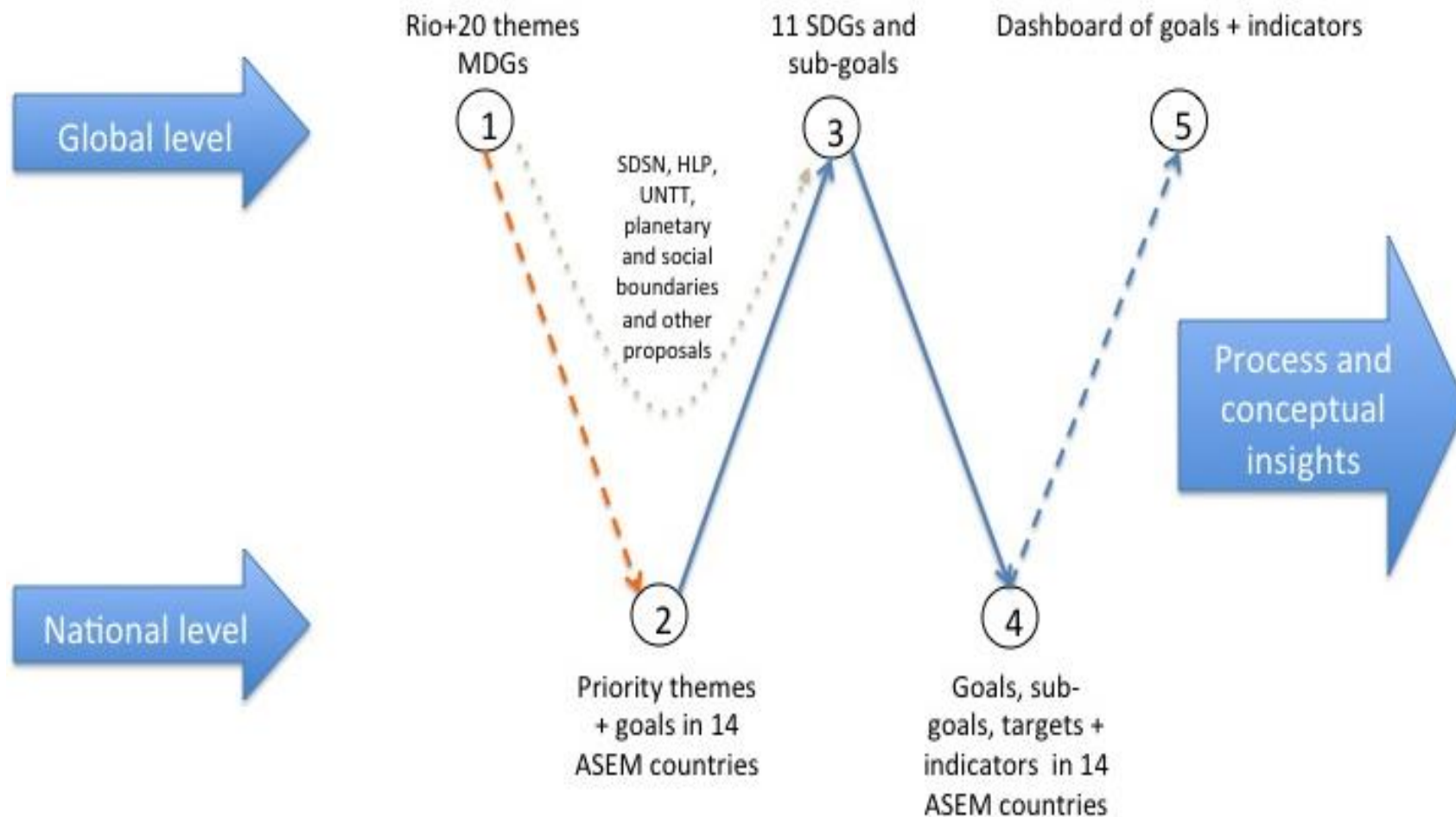


“Sustainable development is really all about governance” (Meadowcroft 2011)

- *Complexity* of SD challenges
- Implementation of the SDGs requires
 - *Systemic thinking* (transitions);
 - *Comprehensive* approaches (overcome pillarization);
 - *A holistic* view (interdependencies);
 - *Consideration of multi-level, -sector, -actor* dimensions;
 - *Usable knowledge*;
 - *Awareness of reflexivity* (of social systems);
 - *Integration of the time dimension*;
 - Rather *‘and’* than *‘or’* (U. Beck); e.g. ‘glocalization’; redundancy



"W" methodology of Small Planet: linking levels



Source: <http://www.asef.org/index.php/pubs/asef-publications/3182-sustainable-development-goals-and-indicators-for-a-small-planet>

“Sustainable development is really all about governance” (Meadowcroft 2011)

Need for a very **broad governance definition**, that leaves no instruments, processes, type of involvement out:

“**Governance** is the totality of interactions, in which government, other public bodies, private sector and civil society participate, aiming at solving societal problems or creating societal opportunities”
(Meuleman 2008)

Three ideal-typical Governance Styles

Accountability

Partnership

Legitimacy

Efficiency

Stakeholders

Transparency

Networking

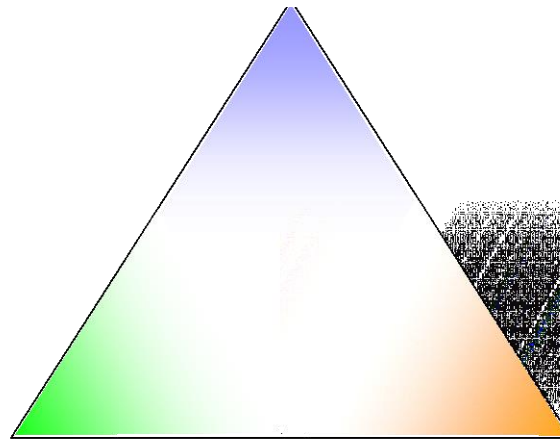
Coordination

Cooperation

Competition

Empowerment

Hierarchical governance



**Network
governance**

**Market
governance**



***“If you only have
a hammer, you
tend to see every
problem as a
nail”***

Abraham Maslow





***“If you only have money,
you tend to see every
problem as a
financial/monetary
problem”***



“Priceless: On knowing the price of everything and the value of nothing”
Frank Ackerman & Lisa Heinzerling, 2004



***“If you only have trust,
you tend to see every
problem as a relational
problem”***





Governance styles have typical **failures**



Governance styles **undermine** each other



Governance styles are **belief systems**

None of the 3 styles is universally applicable

So how to create suitable governance frameworks for the SDGs?

Definition **governance framework**:

“the totality of instruments, procedures, processes and role division among actors designed to tackle a group of societal problems”
(Meuleman 2014)

- Make use of the three ‘basic’ governance styles
- Good balance between having a direction and maintaining flexibility
- Tailor-made solutions / transition pathways
- The principle of “Common But Differentiated Governance” (CBDG)
- So we need to ‘manage’ governance: “**governance of governance**”

Definition **metagovernance (MG)**:

“**Metagovernance** is a means by which to produce some degree of coordinated governance, by designing and managing sound combinations of hierarchical, market and network governance, to achieve the best possible outcomes from the viewpoint of those responsible for the performance of public-sector organizations: public managers as ‘metagovernors’ ” (Meuleman 2008)

MG strategies: combining, switching, maintaining

MG application fields: governance design, management of governance frameworks

Selected issues (1):

- MG is a method/approach, not a governance style (like *metaphysics* is not physics);
- Does not take 1 governance style as the 'best' (however: MG for networks is a special branch of research (Sørensen/Torfig))
- Triggers looking beyond 'business as usual';
- May result in better integration future costs/benefits (e.g. costs of non-action);
- Is becoming more popular, but:
- Meets resistance: MG requires taking perspectives *beyond* the personal preference or organisational default

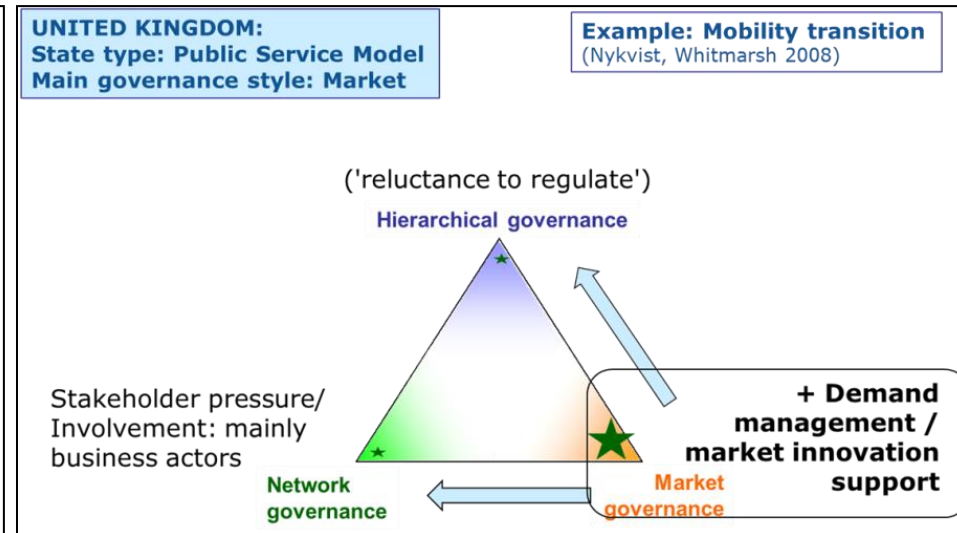
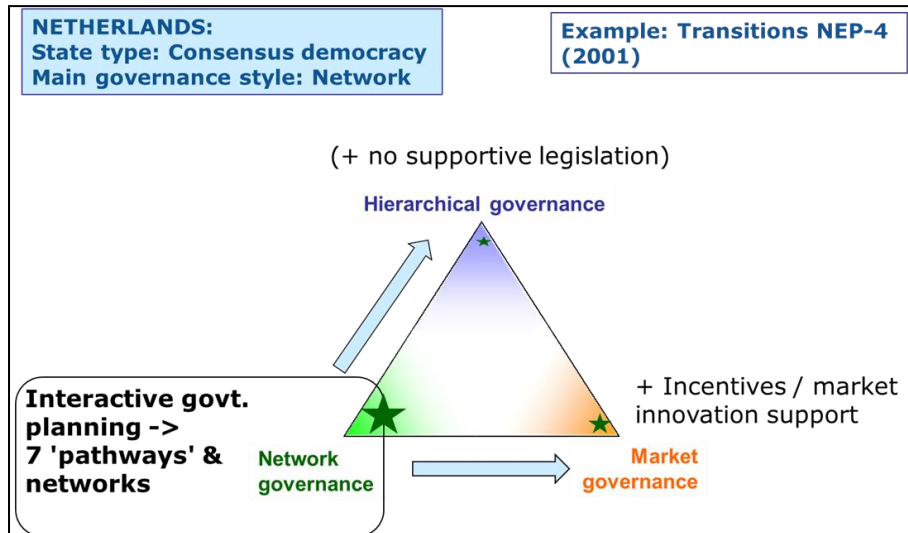
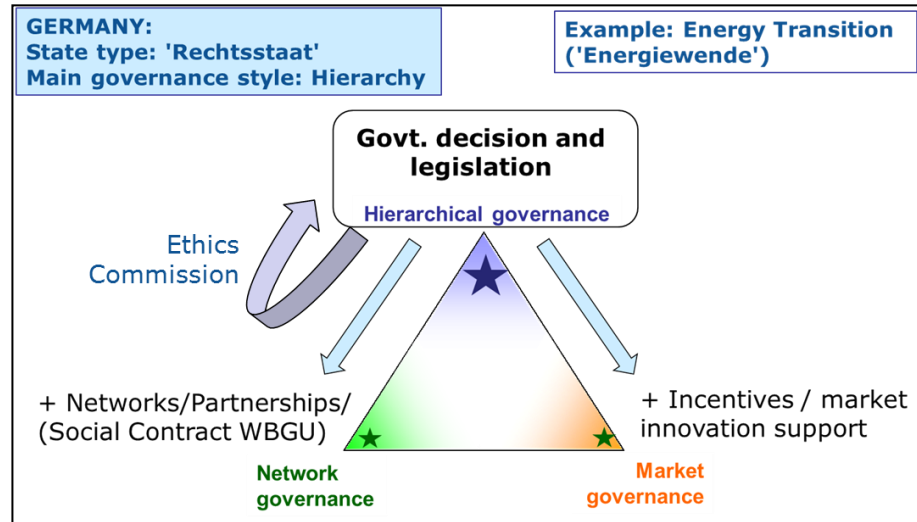
Selected issues (2):

- MG can be applied by anyone with some kind of leadership role within or outside government/administrative bodies
- It is not 'hyper rational' but rather inspired by 'mindfulness' (Weick & Sutcliffe 2001)
- It makes things more complex like the 'Mutual Gains Approach' does, in order to reach the best solutions / package deals
- As analytical tool, it shows that national cultures are influential in the design of SD transitions governance frameworks

Mindfulness: “Combining ongoing scrutiny of existing expectations, bringing in new experiences, the willingness and capability to make sense of unprecedented events, dealing with context and improve foresight”

National cultures & SD governance frameworks

Examples from
SD transition
processes in DE,
NL and UK





European Commission First Vice-President Frans Timmermans on 27 May 2015 in Brussels during DG Environment's 'Beaulieu Café' on **Better Regulation and the circular economy**

Selected issues (3):

- More on the 'common' side
 - Accountability
 - Rules of law, access to justice
- Different governance styles result in different choices regarding e.g.
 - Horizontal & vertical coordination
 - Partnerships
 - Participation
 - Capacity building
- And in different problems/solutions regarding policy topics like
 - Energy
 - Health

A *possible* approach to apply metagovernance for the SDGs in 7 steps (which may overlap / be in parallel / take a different order):

1. Mapping the relevant governance environment: who/what/history etc?)
2. Problem-setting & challenges *incl. (re-)framing*
3. Evaluation/SWOT of existing policies/situation
4. Policy options, objectives, targets;
5. Design of governance framework(s)
6. 'Management' of governance framework(s)
7. Evaluation & review of governance framework(s)

In all steps taking into account:

- Governance principles;
- Dynamics of governance environment
- Governance style toolboxes, etc.

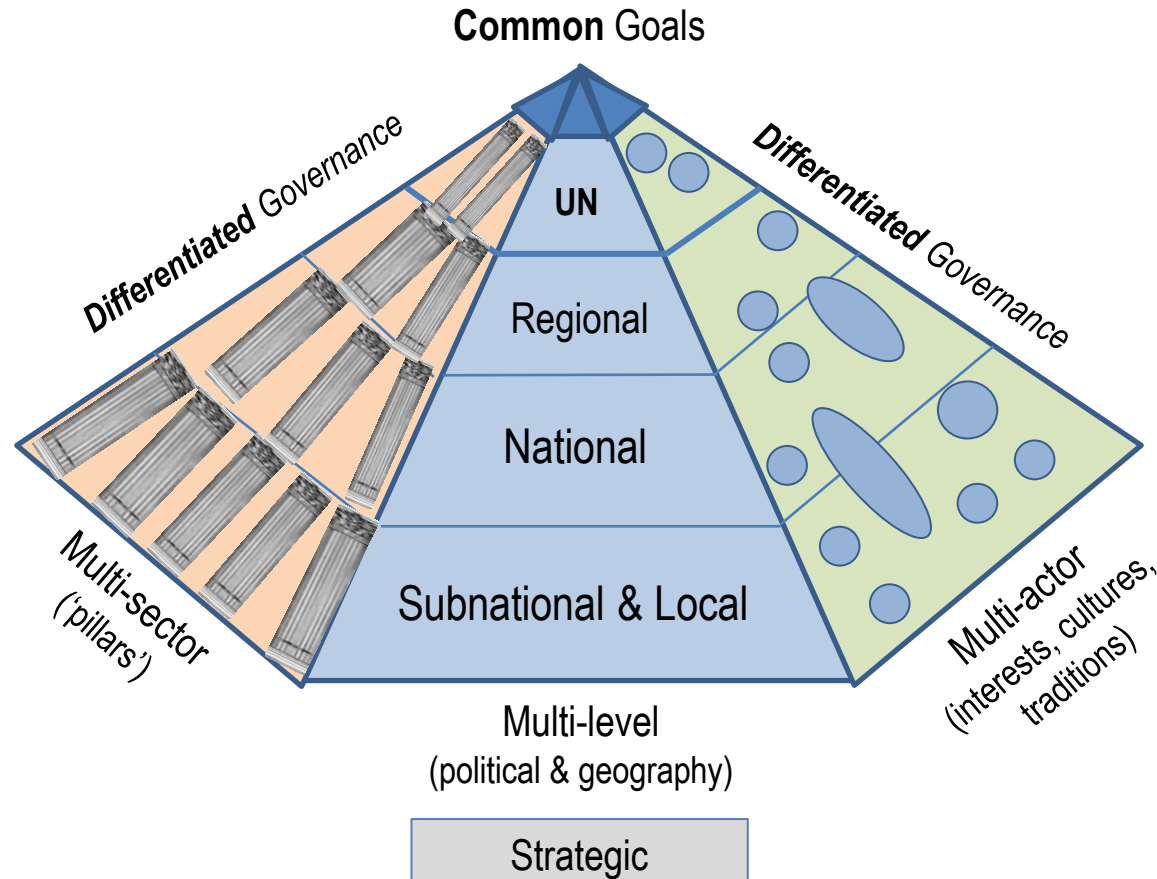
Probably needed: national strategy / action programmes, peer review, SD councils/commissions, and a coordination point at the highest level

Wrap-up: overview scheme

Operational

Possible Step-by-Step Approach:

1. Mapping the relevant governance environment
2. Problem-setting & challenges
3. Evaluation/SWOT
4. Policy options, objectives, targets
5. Design of governance framework(s)
6. 'Management' of governance framework(s)
7. Evaluation & review of governance framework(s)



Governance principles & Metagovernance strategies

- Long-term vision
- Reflexivity
- Not 'or' but 'and'
- Resilience
- Combine tools from different governance styles
- Switch to another style when needed
- Ensure maintenance of the governance framework; deal with governance failures

Instrumental

Toolbox of Solutions:

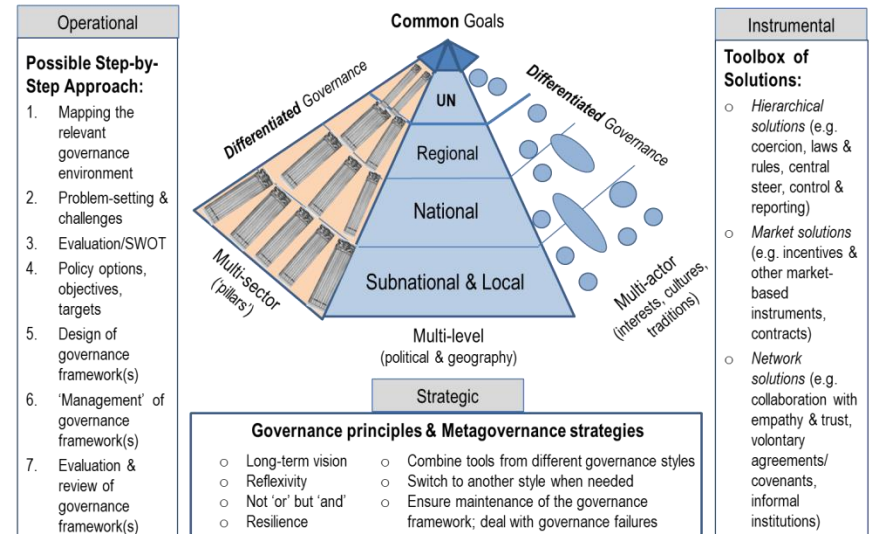
- *Hierarchical solutions* (e.g. coercion, laws & rules, central steer, control & reporting)
- *Market solutions* (e.g. incentives & other market-based instruments, contracts)
- *Network solutions* (e.g. collaboration with empathy & trust, voluntary agreements/covenants, informal institutions)

Common But Differentiated Governance (CBDG): A Metagovernance Approach to Make the SDGs Work

Dr. Louis Meuleman & Dr. Ingeborg Niestroy

Presentation at the
Center for International
Environment & Resource Policy
Fletcher School, Tufts University, Boston

21st September 2015



Thank you for your attention!