

TOWARDS STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIP THEORY IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

BASED ON AN
AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC
CASE STUDY METHOD
IN UKRAINE

Olena Shevtsova

Förvaltningsakademin

TOWARDS STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIP THEORY IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

**BASED ON AN
AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC
CASE STUDY METHOD
IN UKRAINE**

Olena Shevtsova

Södertörns högskola



Södertörns högskola
SE-141 89 Huddinge

© Olena Shevtsova & Förvaltningsakademin

Cover: Jonathan Robson
Graphic form: Per Lindblom & Jonathan Robson
Printed by E-Print, Stockholm 2023

Förvaltningsakademin 28
ISBN: 978-91-89504-48-6

Content

Acknowledgements.....	5
Abbreviations.....	7
1. Introduction.....	9
1.1 Purpose and research question.....	10
1.2 Methodology.....	10
2. Stakeholder Partnership Concept: Paradigm of Efficiency in Implementing Reforms.....	13
2.1 Times of uncertainty – stakeholder partnership vs multistakeholder partnership.....	17
2.2 Multi-stakeholder initiatives vs. reform initiatives in stakeholder partnerships.....	23
3. Stakeholder Partnership as a Mechanism for Reform Implementation.....	25
3.1 Initiation Phase.....	27
3.1.1 Stage 1. Public agency.....	29
3.1.2 Stage 2. Public Agency inspired by transformation anchors prepares the initiative.....	35
3.1.3 Stage 3. International Actors.....	44
3.1.4 Stage 4. Selecting implementor.....	45
3.1.5 Stage 5. Implementor.....	46
3.2 Implementation phase.....	48
3.3 Validation phase.....	50
4. Stakeholder Partnership as a Form of Transnational Cooperation.....	55
5. SWOT-analysis for the Stakeholder Partnership Model.....	63

6. A New Theory – Model of Stakeholder Partnership in Public Administration	69
7. Conclusions.....	73
References.....	81

Acknowledgements

I would like to express the sincerest gratitude to Prof. Anders Ivarsson Westerberg and Assoc. Prof. Therese Reitan for all their support and comments during the development of this theory. I would also like to thank Assoc. Prof. Zhanna Kravchenko and Assoc. Prof. Noomi Weinryb for commenting on the paper.

Abbreviations

SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
EU	European Union
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
UN	United Nations
UN ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
ONS	UK Office for National Statistics
CODE	Center for Open Data Enterprise
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
EGRIS	Expert Group on Refugee, IDP and Statelessness Statistics
IRIS	International Recommendations on IDP Statistics

1. Introduction

With the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2019, we were all witness to a turbulent period. Our collective response was miraculously quick – for example, switching to online mode and remote participation, which, in turn, although having certain drawbacks, facilitated transnational cooperation. We demonstrated our ability to adapt in an efficient way. Switching to online work allowed people around the globe to better unite, gaining access to networks and exchanging ideas. Thus, experts in Estonia could easily join webinars in the United States of America or Canada, to share, as well as to acquire knowledge about new practices. I myself managed to speak at events in Thailand, Copenhagen, and even Americas, etc., by just clicking the button on my personal computer while not stepping one foot out of Ukraine.

Today the concept of uncertainty has acquired a new connotation, insofar that the situation is now aggravated by Russia's full-scale invasion and war against Ukraine, which has detrimental consequences for Ukraine, first and foremost, but also the rest of the world.

No matter what notion we use – times of uncertainty, anxious times, times of crises – the uncertainty encountered today has a new connotation depriving all of us of a sense of a long-term perspective and the least idea about timelines that may endure. Some scholars have tried to measure it and outline the grade – higher uncertainty, deep uncertainty (Moallemi et al., 2020), for example – while others that argue “uncertainty cannot be quantified specifying the unknowns to be unknown” (Aagard and Nielsen, 2021).

Regardless of how we look at this era of limbo uncertainty – whether as a new reality to be learned and afterwards adapted to, or a special mode we shall all know how to switch on – it is evident that we need new ways to interact for development that is cost-, time-, and resource-efficient in achieving common goals.

1.1 Purpose and research question

The main purpose of this paper is, through the transnational prism, to develop a new model for the efficient implementation of reforms in times of uncertainty. This it will do in view of the limitations posed specifically by our own times, namely lack of resources, unpredictability, time limits, etc. In addition, the study aims to explore how stakeholders' active engagement can contribute to these processes and what the mechanism of their interaction should look like. This paper is called to answer the following research questions: what is stakeholder partnership, and how can this phenomenon be conceptualised? What are the opportunities and challenges of the stakeholder partnership model?

1.2 Methodology

The use of a case method for the development of theories is not new and has gained momentum in recent decades. Moreover, case methods are widely used in theoretical backgrounds surrounding decision-making under uncertainty, as an appreciated tool for building alternatives. For example, Robust Decision-Making theory, an outstanding framework for uncertainties, comprises a computer-assisted case generation phase simulating a vast number of experiments. Every case is relevant to a certain scenario: a future system behaviour with a precise assumption about uncertainties applied (Moallemi et al., 2020). My concept is the opposite, whereby the theoretical background is developed based on the efficient repeated cases that formed patterns in the past for the purposes of multiplying the practical domain in the future.

Graphically, it can be outlined as follows:



Figure 1. Interrelation of a practice and theory cycle

Such an approach is consolidated by the definition of the case study via its ability to be generalised and used with respect to other events (George and Bennett, 2005).

My proposal for a new theory is prepared using an autoethnographic case study method in Ukraine, which is explained by my official capacity in supporting the reforms to the State Statistics Service of Ukraine between 2019 and 2022. Hence, it is worth outlining that field work, where depicted reform initiatives are the ones I generated and coordinated, laid foundations for new theory development. They do not comprise other agency activities based on a donor – beneficiary/recipient approach within international technical assistance projects.

The uniqueness of using an autoethnographic case study method for research and studies in public administration is that in times of uncertainty it is a reliable method for transferring practice into theory, thus not only sharing best practices, but putting regularities and patterns from the case studies into theory for the sake of sustainability in development despite vague predictabilities about the future and limited time frames. Another advantage of this approach is that the theory derives from empirical work; thus, it is already tested by default, since it arose from repeated experience in the past. The most prominent cases proving its efficiency and effectiveness are the Ukraine Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) progress assessment, the new Law of Ukraine on Official Statistics, and Ukraine’s Open SDG platform.

Table 1. Data sources used to prepare the study

Source	Number / (amount – pages, hours)
Emails	6 549
Articles, reports and reform proposals	291 pages
Project documentation, concept notes, papers	18 / (194 pages)
Webinar documentation	24 (162 pages)
Webinars on Youtube, FB (SSSU)	18 / (43 hours)
Published working papers, in (co-) authorship	6 / (59 pages)
Presentations made at high-level events as results of work	8

The study consisted of three phases: 1. Writing autoethnographic notes, whereby the reliability of information was ensured by using data sources in parallel with memory for the purpose of ensuring the objectivity of results, thus overcoming the main challenge of autoethnography, i.e., author's subjectivity (Ellis, Adams & Bochner 2011); 2. depicting every reform initiative as a separate case, ascertaining patterns and regularities, and 3. depicting the new theory together with an overview of existing and adjacent theoretical backgrounds based on patterns and regularities.

The case study method is known for being used in theory development via creating hypotheses or confirming those that already exist (George and Bennett, 2005). The uniqueness of this study is that the case studies that lay the foundation for this new theory is that it automatically overcame the stages of hypotheses and testing, since it is based on repeated occurrences and implemented reform initiatives in the past or, to put it simply, the theory appeared from practice.

2. Stakeholder Partnership Concept: Paradigm of Efficiency in Implementing Reforms

A whole variety of literature outlines the importance of using different stakeholders for the efficient implementation of reforms with special attention paid towards veto players as actors impeding and protracting the respective processes. Researchers underline the possibility of efficiency in reaching support through the interaction of actors representing three levels – political, civil society and functional cooperation if they build networks and work in synergy (Samokhvalov and Strelkov, 2020). The success of the reforms is mostly tied to stakeholders such as governmental agencies, local governments, professional organisations, the civil society sector and mass media (Kralikova, 2022), whereas international organisations' role is described as bridging communication gaps between non-member states and the European Union (EU) (Wunderlich, 2011).

However, most reform initiatives are implemented through the project management mechanisms and regulated by the international technical assistance legislation. Scholars argue that international assistance programmes failed to show wide success. They outline pressure as a key factor in reaching successful implementation. Sometimes, a lack of formalised pressure on the EU side is directly named as the cause for the failed compliance or reform (Rabinovich and Egert, 2022). The recently developed “sandwich model” (Nitsova, Pop-Eleches and Robertson, 2018) foresees success in reform through international engagement and civil society pressure inside the country in the form of a “sand-

wich”, later outlining broader public support, and not only by limiting the civil society sector (Samokhvalov and Strelkov, 2020). Thus, looking at it from both inside the country and outside, i.e., the EU perspective and an “external governance” approach, we may observe the receiving role, putting the country into a “receiving position” and, to a certain extent, the passive role, in contrast to being a leading actor. “External governance” (functional cooperation) theory adherents emphasise the viability of international technical assistance’s projects and programmes in reform implementation via handing over the innovations, norms, cooperation and enhancing capacity in relevant sectors that, in turn, support changes and reforms (Freyberg et al., 2015). On the other hand, despite a vast variety of international assistance projects in the Ukraine, for example, political practices have failed to undergo deep transformations (Samokhvalov and Strelkov, 2020). To some extent, this is related to the lack of coordination between policy initiative trends in the EU institutions with those of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) countries (Lehne, 2014).

Hence, the processes are referred to differently – importing EU norms, approximation, Europeanisation, reform, adoption, adaptation, adjustment, etc. Some scholars perceive the reform “as the process of adaptation of new norms into local environment, in which the EU norms encounter the local norms” (Kralikova, 2022, p. 246). Others explain that countries respond by means of adapting or adopting the norms or rejecting and resisting them (Björkdahl et al., 2015). Research points to the leading role of the EU, rather than the country itself, during reforming processes. The EU is understood to exert direct influence through implementation of the international projects and programmes in third countries to achieve the goals of its policies, implying that projects and programmes of international assistance are a form of the EU’s influence on non-member states (Wunderlich, 2011). Moreover, the technical assistance projects serve as the beacon of challenges for the officials when implementing reforms (Raby-novych and Egert, 2022).

Interestingly, the country's role is defined mostly as an object of change, rather than a subject initiating and implementing these changes, although it is surely always a different degree of passiveness, sometimes equilibrating on the edge of a participatory role in the process, but almost never initiating or leading one. The national actors' role constitutes not only in taking the norms, but also moulding the changes inside the country, arguing that the EU's efficient influence is interrelated with national ownership and domestic leadership (Kralikova, 2022). Thus, there is a missing perspective on stakeholder roles from inside the public administration when reforms, initiated by the public administration, lead to an efficiency in implementation.

Apart from that, the existing system of cooperation in terms of projects and programmes shows many drawbacks and imperfections due to overlapping, duplicating, poor coordination and absence of a unified database. It causes discrepancies, parallel definitions and activities, as well as existing gaps (Batora and Rieker, 2018; Khadzhyradieva and Shevtsova, 2021). The complexity is even more aggravated by the fact that when implementing reforms through a project-based approach, many funds are spent on the salaries of the project team, although that is a doubtful investment, as far as it has a temporary effect – they only bring positive effects during the lifetime of the project and do not ensure the continuity and renewability of results.

If we approach and study the same background issue from the national perspective, for example, Ukraine's perspective, we will witness the country's lack of a functional role in effective legislation as it is defined as a beneficiary or recipient of international projects. Modern approaches to the use of international technical assistance identify donors and recipients of assistance as partner parties sharing values, interests and objectives, whereas the tasks of assistance are agreed at the intergovernmental and interdepartmental levels. At the same time, there is a collision of notions at the national level that need clarification – several definitions of the concept of “programme” in effective legislation see it as a sum of projects (Resolution of Ukraine's Government 2002) or as “a

document that is an integral part of the agreement on funding that sets the goals and objectives of reforming the relevant spheres of implementation of state policy with the use of sectoral budget EU support, expected results, volumes, conditions and procedures for obtaining financial resources provided by the EU, a mechanism for conducting monitoring” (Resolution of Ukraine’s Government 2010). In Ukrainian research, there are already recommendations developed on how to raise the efficiency of EU reform supporting programmes from the point of view of contents, form and mechanisms – putting the country into an active leading role (Shevtsova, 2021). However, the role of stakeholders in reform implementation in times of uncertainty remains understudied.

Much has been said and studied in terms of why reform implementation fails. In some case studies of domestic demand and conditionality from the EU and international partners, reform implementation showed limited success “due to implications for entrenched power relations and practices among affected political actors” (Kralikova, 2021, p. 254). Moreover, “approximation as interplay amid complexities of local political and institutional contexts” is placed at the forefront of compliance practices on the ground (Rabinovych and Egert, 2022, p. 2). Some cases are analysed through the prism of actors – whenever different teams of actors are needed for the promotion and implementation of reform to ensure its effectiveness and efficiency (Samokhvalov and Strelkov, 2020).

To sum up, whenever we assess the problems and challenges of implementation, we are so focused on the topic that sometimes we completely forget to raise our head to see if it is not the content, but the mechanism, that causes deviations from taking the right track. Furthermore, the best tactics to be applied here do not problematise even more, but simply change it. In other words, when we fall ill, and the doctor prescribes us pills that do not work, we change the pills instead of exploring why they did not work and how they can be made to work. But the mechanism has never been questioned as the main obstacle towards successful reform

implementation, namely, being based on donor-recipient/ beneficiary relations.

This becomes even more relevant and important today when we need to resort to and develop new methods that will work for all and bring better results at a lower price in all equivalent measurements. Whenever applying the donor – recipient/beneficiary mechanism, a huge amount of funding is allocated for these purposes. Thus, for example, between 2007–2013 the EU allocated 1.0056 bln dollars to Ukraine’s bilateral assistance, when, inter alia, democratic development and good governance were determined as priorities (EU-Ukraine Association Agenda 2014). However, in times of uncertainty, new forms of interaction, which would be time-, resource-and cost-efficient, are needed as never before.

2.1 Times of uncertainty – stakeholder partnership vs multistakeholder partnership

Scholars argue that the multistakeholder governance approach was aimed to form transnational public policy through cooperation among governments, and the business and civil society sectors. This trend is most remarkable when issues concern global matters, where engagements by governments on their own is insufficient (Malcolm, 2008). However, the roles of actors in multistakeholder governance have a rather auxiliary nature – coordination and maintenance of dialogue rather than principal – yielding results (Pohle, 2016). Recently, the notion of multilevel governance appeared as reflecting the complex nature of interaction among many partners, which “in its descriptive ambition, has been perceptive of the increasing complexity and multi-actor, cross-sectoral, public-private networks from which decisions and new policy emerge” (Turunen, 2021, p. 18).

Stakeholders have a substantial role in public policy development in general, being actively engaged in the processes of decision-making. Times of uncertainty are not an exception. On the contrary, the accents are even reinforced. Thus, the Epoch-Era analysis framework puts stakeholders in the focus of desig-

ning systems resilient to uncertainties, putting their needs and expectations to the fore and being mindful of their changeability (Moallemi et al., 2020), whereas the deep uncertainty or limbo uncertainty conditions we now experience stipulate the search for new variables, with the alleged shift from needs and expectations to activities and results turning stakeholders into active agents of changes.

The active stakeholders' role, not just participation and presence, is not new. Some managerial practices include "stakeholders' involvement in value cocreation activities, boundary spanning to establish interorganisational knowledge exchanges and acquisition of dynamic capabilities" (Ciasullo et al., 2022, p. 204). Moreover, the results of recent research indicate that coproduction facilitates value cocreation (Wu et al., 2020). This leads to the conclusion that it is firstly expedient to create new mechanisms of interaction comprising many actors, who are stakeholders regarding the issue in question, which will have positive effects with respect to co-creating joint value.

In times of uncertainty, from a business model perspective, companies will partner more to reach expected results quicker and cheaper. However, "when a group of individuals intend to form a corporation with themselves as the shareholders or form a union to increase their total bargaining power, they usually find some disagreements among themselves. The disagreements come from the difference in their subjective evaluations of the decision making problems which arise" (Yu, 1973). This leads to a conclusion of paramount importance, setting a viable form where such stakeholders co-create values and the distribution of roles among them is to be undertaken.

Multistakeholder partnerships comprising governments, international organisations, civil society and private sector actors proved their efficiency in fostering the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals. Multistakeholder partnerships became the object of studies, proving they were key instruments of global governance in certain fields (Lie and Granheim, 2017). The concept of the multistakeholder part-

nership permeates each of the 17 SDGs as the efficient tool to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, although there is a separate thematic goal, Goal 17 (“Partnership for the Goals”), implying that the SDGs can only be realised through partnerships. A successful development agenda requires inclusive partnerships at all levels — global, regional, national and sub-national. Thus, the idea of partnership among the interested parties having been tested in sustainable development possesses all prerequisites to be included into the change management and project management domains, as well as public policy and decision-making.

The term ‘multistakeholder partnership’ as an overarching concept highlights the idea that different groups can share a common problem or aspiration, while nonetheless having different interests or ‘stakes’ (Brouwer et al., 2016).

Whenever I say stakeholder partnership, I imply the key groups (organisations or individuals) who need, can and may be affected by the results of the initiative having interest about and influence over its implementation. They are stakeholders with respect to the initiative itself and form a partnership with designated roles at the phase of initiation, making each its input (resources). This means that stakeholder partnerships are united not by the problem, first and foremost, but through the purpose of co-creating value that will, in its aftermath, tackle the problem.

Recent research shows that “multistakeholder partnerships for development play a central role as new financial actors in shaping the legal and ideational structures of development assistance, pushing for a financialized development assistance model that relies on the steady multiplication of new financial markets and instruments” (Erdem Türkelli, 2022, p. 84). Since there is no legal definition of multistakeholder partnership, and in practice it has been realised through different forms (Erdem Türkelli, 2022), there is space for introducing this concept into the legal domain and launching it as a new efficient form of transnational cooperation.

The study of the evolution of the multistakeholder partnership role for development is an important step towards a legal con-

ceptualisation of this phenomenon, although there remains a missing perspective with respect to reform implementation as a new paradigm for international technical assistance operation and cooperation. While doing so, we are making a shift from the transnational to the national level but with a multi-level engagement.

Moreover, research outlines the tendency of framing the transit from object of development to the agent of development as happened with the “private sector” (Mawdsley et al., 2018). Thus, from a reform-based angle, this prerogative should concern the public agency having a mandate within a reform theme.

Some scholars define multistakeholder partnership “as a form of governance – in other words, a way in which groups of people can make decisions and take action for the collective good, be it at local, national, or international scale” (Brouwer et al., 2016, p. 12). There are those who see it as synonymous with multistakeholder arrangements in global governance (Scholte 2020). The Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation offers the following definition: “a process of interactive learning, empowerment and participatory governance that enables stakeholders with interconnected problems and ambitions, but often differing interests, to be collectively innovative and resilient when faced with the emerging risks, crises and opportunities of a complex and changing environment.” (Brouwer et al., 2016, p. 14)

Reforms and governance are interdependent concepts and closely tied to each other and defined as “the arts and the science of administration and politics which correspond to administrative reform, functionally, deal with reorganization and change in the affairs of institutionally arranged governmental apparatus of the state for “crisis management,” and ultimately achieve overall “national development.” (Azizuddin, 2016)

While multistakeholder partnerships may be diverse in their duration perspective – ranging from short- to long-term stakeholder partnerships for reforms – implementation lasts until there is a validation of reform initiative outcomes, or to be more precise, until the results are made public and placed on relevant institutional channels.

While a multi-stakeholder partnership implies a “semi-structured process helping people work together on a common problem” over diverse periods of time and engaging with one another in different ways (Brouwer et al., 2016, p. 14), stakeholder partnership comprises the cohesive and coherent activities of stakeholders around the reform initiative, with a definite structure, timelines and roles that shape its mechanism and form.

The core of stakeholder partnership’s philosophy is the partnering of stakeholders for creating new outcomes of development opportunities aimed at value co-creation with a legitimisation of the outputs. This is very important, since the main difference I see between multi-stakeholder partnership’s existing frame and the one I offer in tangible outcomes is that stakeholder partnership serves not only to solve problems and create new opportunities, it is also a result-oriented mechanism and has a certain product as its output.

Moreover, stakeholder partnerships have much in common with collaborative governance if we use the definition offered by Ansell and Gash (2008): “A governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programs or assets”. However, the difference is that I do not imply decision-making in the policy context, where stakeholders work together and agree on solutions in collaborative governance. In the stakeholder partnership model, the reform initiative is developed and prepared by the public agency, and other stakeholders express their consensus by joining the partnership, where further decision-making processes within this partnership focus on the implementation of the reform initiative and its validation, rather than on the topic or gist of the reform initiative itself, leaving it a prerogative for the public agency. However, these two concepts are interlinked if we look at them, not from the national perspective, but from a transnational perspective that created the background for a reform initiative – model laws, tools, platforms, etc. In this way we deal with a colla-

borative governance at a transnational level that is being effectuated in the national context with multi-level engagement.

The reason why I do not speak about governance here is stipulated by the focus on the reform initiative, where partnership is its *modus operandi* and its implementation is a viable mechanism that forms the ecosystem of acting between determined actors operating through different stages while performing their prescribed roles. On the other hand, the needs of governance in a broader context are satisfied by the outputs of the reform initiative – i.e. changes introduced by the reform.

Moreover, stakeholder partnership in its transnational perspective is, of course, a form of transnational governance, if we look at it as a mechanism for implementing transnational reforms. I will highlight the double nature of both perspectives in this study, for the sake of each, as well as show their interdependences and interlinkages, which will help to construct new mechanisms “for killing two birds with one stone” in the future. However, for the purposes of the practical value of this study, it may be used as the guidelines for further reproduction and implementation in the national perspective of the implementation of transnational reforms and their interconnections and interdependence from the multi-level perspective that, for me, plays an important role.

Such partnering may include the interaction and engagement of actors from different levels of stakeholders within the reform initiative context. This brings the concept of stakeholder partnership to the level of a new form of transnational cooperation. For example, in my case there was the reform initiative for implementing the International Recommendations on Internal Displacement Statistics. This accounts for the connection of the reform initiative connection with the global level, while the methodology for assessing the progress of the Sustainable Development Goals was developed at a regional level. The United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific, GLOS¹

¹ The framework is called to reinforce and update the legal operation field on official statistics, based on the international recommendations and findings

generic law on official statistics, was developed jointly with the European Free Trade Association and Eurostat as part of a broader United Nations Economic Commission for Europe statistical capacity for building projects financed through the United Nations Development Account (2017). Thus, all the initiatives when first implemented at the national level facilitate not only the reforming processes in the national context, but also the transnational reforms – creating solid legal frameworks, digitalisation, Agenda for Sustainable Development till 2030 fostering, etc.

Although the roles are different, in putting the public agency to the fore, the form of partnership secures the reform initiative's viability and legitimacy. This is explained by the equality and shared authorship of the stakeholders engaged in such a partnership and helps to diminish the risks of the reform initiative's failure. This means that if a public agency, at the process of validation, expressly declines to make the results of the reform initiative public, other stakeholders may do so with a label: the outcomes produced as a result of a partnership can still be presented as the results of such a reform initiative using institutional or social channels. Another question arising here will be the scope of positive effects derived from such a venture, but how to raise this issue is another important question for an additional study.

2.2 Multi-stakeholder initiatives vs. reform initiatives in stakeholder partnerships

Multi-stakeholder initiatives as a key concept in global governance date back to 1980. Having different interests predetermined by their sphere of operation, be it the state, business or society, they also make resource contributions in forming, implementing and evaluating the rules and regulations governing a certain policy domain. Thus, if multi-stakeholder initiatives are “a form

of Global Assessments of national statistical systems carried out in Eastern European countries, the Caucasus, as well as in Central Asia.

of club governance that is based on ideational factor” (Schneiker and Joachim, 2018, p. 2), the reform initiatives may be considered as an ideational embodiment of stakeholder partnership as such. Multi-stakeholder initiatives usually comprise national governments and/or international organisations alongside non-governmental and civil society organisations and business actors. Furthermore, the level on which they are organised may also vary from sub-national to international (Scholte 2020).

This study sees a reform initiative as a key concept in stakeholder partnerships that has transnational importance as it works nationally to satisfy the needs of stakeholders and qualitatively and quantitatively affects them, but it also matters transnationally by creating empirical material for other levels of governance, thus potentially impacting further value co-creation and contributing to the efficiency of transnational reforms.

The main argument here is that in times of deep uncertainty we need new tools to interact for development that would be time, cost, and resource-efficient. The concept of sharing and co-creating values put stakeholder partnership to the fore – as a new efficient mechanism of reform implementation, with distributed roles, defined phases, stages and timelines and a new efficient form of transnational cooperation, foreseeing multi-level engagement and creating the potential for further value co-creation.

3. Stakeholder Partnership as a Mechanism for Reform Implementation

The World Bank depicted five phases of the public sector governance reform cycle (World Bank 2004):

1. Identify strengths and weaknesses in governance and raise awareness. Example: World Bank Institute aggregate indicators.
2. Assess the scope for political change and reform (commitment, constraints, and risks). Example: Governance and Anticorruption Diagnostics.
3. Specify problems and design reforms. Example: Heavily Indebted Poor Country expenditure tracking.
4. Manage the politics of reforms and ensure sustainable implementation. Example: stakeholder analysis.
5. Monitor and evaluate results and adjust reform process. Example: score-cards.

Judging by this classification, stakeholders play an important role in managing policies of reforms and ensuring their sustainability. Although I am convinced that it is too late to start thinking about them in phase 4. Apart from that, the World Bank exercised pilot studies to map stakeholders in the reform process in East Asia based on the Expected Utility Stakeholder Model aimed at foreseeing possible resistance and support towards the reform depending on the power they have (World Bank 2004).

Interestingly, that such exercises may be omitted – and both funds and time spared, if the stakeholders implement the reform themselves – means that the authors are automatically transformed into ambassadors and adherents. Unsurprising, given that to deny what one has created would go against one's natural inclinations.

The reform launch is conditioned by having nicely formulated long-term objectives (Smith 2001). The fact that we find ourselves in limbo uncertainty poses a challenge to fulfilling long-term objectives when deprived of possibilities to develop long-term plans in view of a swiftly changing environment. This creates a prerequisite for finding ways to achieve long-term objectives with the use of short-term mechanisms. This would mean ensuring the integrity of the reform process through minor reform initiatives effectuated through stakeholder partnerships that will contribute to the general process of reforming, thereby diminishing the risks of reform failure in general, such as recourse to a system in case of some reform initiative failure.

If we look at stakeholder partnership as a mechanism of reform implementation, I see it as a cohesive consecutive process united in three phases: initiation, implementation and validation of reform initiatives.

I see a reform initiative as a minimum unit of a reform system, which has a tangible outcome of co-created value – be it law, communication strategy, Sustainable Development Goals progress assessment, a roadmap for the transition to register-based census in Ukraine, or, as is the case in my example, a roadmap for the implementation of the United Nations (UN) Recommendations on Internal Displacement Statistics.

3.1 Initiation Phase

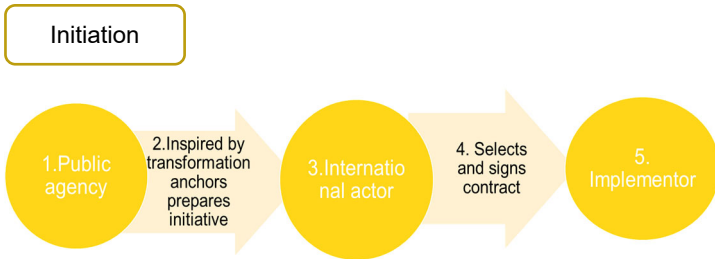


Figure 2. Stakeholder Partnership as a mechanism

Initiation is the most important phase within the mechanism, ensuring the smooth operation of activities. It outlines that all stakeholders regarding the reform initiative are engaged from the very beginning when a stakeholder partnership is set and the roles are distributed, including the synergy of efforts provided.

Research shows that a multi-stakeholder partnership is in its ecosystem paradigm rather complicated. “Partnering across societal sectors is difficult. It requires bringing together organisations with quite different approaches, cultures, interests, vocabularies and values to together find an equitable approach that delivers value for all” (Stibbe and Prescott, 2016). This challenge is overcome in the stakeholder partnership model, as there is a specific leading role prescribed to the public agency as the initiating actor to set a partnership and select a topic for the reform initiative. That is why a public agency inspired by transformation anchors and prepares the initiative and afterwards addresses the international actor. The international actor, in support of the reform initiative, selects this option via effective transparent procedures and signs a contract with the implementor.

As far as the public agency plays a leading role at the initiation phase, it automatically ensures a political commitment for reform and a political consensus in favour of reform (Smith 2001); these are outlined as key points for starting the reform process.

Importantly, a public agency's leading role also helps to overcome another challenge – “different forms of decentralization will have varying political impacts and these need to be considered when deciding the appropriate method of reform” (Smith 2001). Thus, the implementation mode within my theory offers a decentralisation of reform implementation in order to reach efficiency in times of uncertainty.

The German platform “Partnerships2030” refers to four characteristics of multi-stakeholder partnerships as a form of collaboration (Salz 2019):

1. Anchoring to at least three different sectors (public sector, private sector, civil society, academia)
2. Equality
3. Organised and long-term engagement
4. Contribution to the common good.

Moreover, the mechanism of stakeholder partnership envisages singling out three key stakeholders at the process of initiation:

1. Public agency
2. International actor(-s)
3. Implementor (organisation – civil society organisation, academic institution, private company, individual – experts, academia, etc.).

However, the roles of other stakeholders are also distributed at the initiation phase, although their active participation may appear at a later stage or remain inactive/ dormant during this phase.

With respect to equality, as far as we speak about a partnership, all partners are equal in terms of authorship concerning the outcome or reform initiative implementation. Having said this, equality is perhaps not the right term to characterise their roles, since they all have different functionalities, altogether forming the ecosystem of the reform initiative implementation.

Although multi-stakeholder partnerships are called to be “time- and resource-intensive due to the inherent difficulties in

coordination among stakeholders” (Salz 2019), the stakeholder partnership model foresees the coordination, as effectuated by the public agency, as one of its main roles, as well as the principle of role-distribution approach, which, *inter alia*, adds value to the smoothness of the process.

That is why whenever we speak about stakeholder partnership as a model, it has an organised mechanism, though the duration of which lasts until the validation of outcome. This may take 3-6 months from the period when such a partnership emerged. Such short-term engagement may be explained by the transnational nature of reform initiatives – taking the developed tools, models and platforms as a backbone for work.

The nature of the contribution to the common good in a stakeholder partnership is complicated. On the one hand, while working together, all stakeholders co-produce and co-create value at the national level, but while pursuing transnational reform initiatives at the national level, they also participate and contribute to the process of transnational reforms. This, in turn, also proves the efficacy of applying this mechanism in the promotion of transnational reforms.

3.1.1 Stage 1. Public agency

The first stage of the mechanism of stakeholder partnership is public agency, since it is the leading stakeholder in the initiation process. To start the implementation of the reform initiative using the stakeholder partnership model, the public agency must do its homework comprising 6 assignments (see picture below).

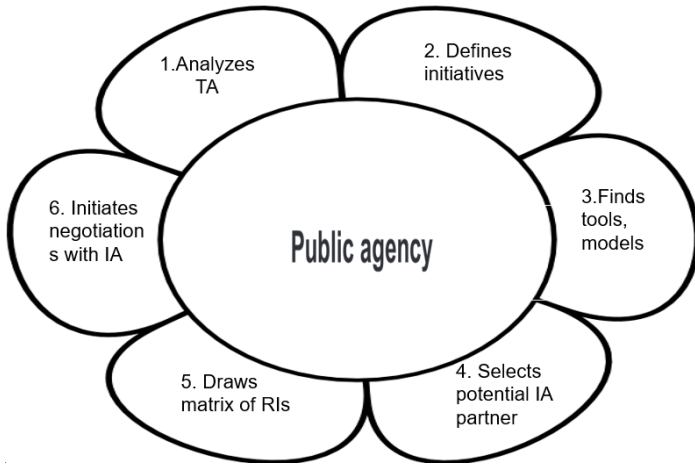


Figure 3. Stage 1 of the mechanism of stakeholder partnership's initiation phase

Below we study each assignment in a more detailed way.

3.1.1.1. *Analysing transformation anchors*

First and foremost, the public agency analyses transformation anchors. Under transformation anchors, I consider the conscious course of state development respectively as reflected in national legislation. These processes are closely connected with the external assistance of transformation processes in the country. Transformation anchoring is closely related with conditionality of policy (Trappmann, 2019) directed at building conformity with relevant standards and developing internal capacities.

Although transformation anchoring is understood as external influence on transformation processes in the country, automatically tying this term to the "external governance" concept, I see it as external support and am inclined to depict it through an inspiration tied to conditionality and accountability. I thereby imply that the country's development is stipulated by the commitments taken in its modernisation processes, but it is the country's

responsibility to report and perform them. For this reason I use the term formalised inspiration.

Importantly, while deciding on the transformation anchors, a public agency shall select whatever corresponds to the institution's mandate.

For example, in my case, while working for the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, these were defined as the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals. These may be explained by the reinforced Europeanisation of Ukraine now gaining momentum, that is, its EU candidate status as a further important step in becoming a fully-fledged EU member and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development endorsed by the Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015 as a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity (UN A/RES/70/1 2015). The importance of the 2030 Agenda is reflected in relevant aspects of Ukraine's legal framework – Decree No 722/2019 of the President of Ukraine, dated September 30, 2019, on the Sustainable Development Goals of Ukraine for the period until 2030. This foresees the SDGs as permeating all programme documents and draft legal texts to ensure balanced economic, social and ecological domains in Ukraine's sustainable development, as outlined in Sustainable Development Goals: Ukraine National baseline Report, Order No 686-p of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, dated August 21, 2019 on the issue concerning data collection to monitor the implementation of SDGs.

3.1.1.2 Defining reform initiatives

Having analysed the transformation anchors relevant for the operation activities of the public agency, the next step is to define the reform initiatives. The reform initiatives portfolio is best to be developed uniting reform initiatives under themes. Their selection is predetermined by the functions and tasks performed within the institution's mandate.

3.1.1.3 Finding tools, models

After defining the reform initiatives, a public agency finds existing tools and models ready for re-use. There are many transnationally developed patterns and tools – laws, platforms, communication strategies, etc. In my case we can talk about the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP) methodology for Sustainable Development Goals as a progress assessment, developed at the regional level, regarding the general law on official statistics developed by the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and Eurostat as part of a broader United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) statistical capacity. Moreover, the Open SDG platform is an open, easily accessible source that is free and ready to reuse to disseminate data and report on statistics related to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Open SDG was created as the output of a partnership between the UK Office for National Statistics (ONS), the US government, the non-profit Centre for Open Data Enterprise (CODE) and members of the Open SDG community. Among the list of users we find: Armenia; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Canada; Democratic Republic of Congo; Faroe Islands; Germany; Ghana; Iceland; Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan; Lao PDR; Moldova; Montenegro; Nepal; Poland; Rwanda; South Korea; Tajikistan; Turkey; Ukraine; the United Kingdom; the United States and Vanuatu (Open SDG website).

3.1.1.4 Selecting an international partner

The next step will be to select an international actor partner locally based within the international actor's mandate. For example, in my case, it involved: capacity development, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); population and census, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); internally displaced people, the International Organization for Migration (IOM); and stateless persons, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

3.1.1.5 *Drawing matrix of reform initiatives*

Having done all this, the public agency draws the matrix of reform initiatives. An additional exercise useful at this stage could be the audit of the institution or functional survey. The matrix shall comprise the themes further disaggregated by the reform initiatives. Interestingly, that matrix will have a universal theme for all public agencies – an operational portfolio – in order to ensure the functional sustainability and operation of the agency. We may refer to the legal framework, communications and human resources policies, IT, etc., to the operational portfolio. For example, in my case, I have been working on the project named the “Development of a Training System for Ukraine’s National Statistical Actors”, with the Institut für Europäische Politik, which involves building a training system and introducing a systemic approach as an important component of any reform. It is for this reason that the project included a train-the-trainer course.

Other themes I see as forming part of the matrix will be organisation-specific in view of the functions and tasks of the agency with due diligence paid to transformation anchors. In my case, we speak about: Sustainable Development Goals; vulnerable groups of people – internally displaced persons (IDPs) and stateless people, as well as a census – the transition to a register-based census, for example. Afterwards, the public agency indicates the available pattern and model, as well as the organisation and level on which it was developed. Having done this, the public agency proceeds by identifying international actors at the national level. It is highly advisable to invite them to join the reform initiative according to its topic and their primary mandate. Using this approach secures the possibility to engage more international partners and to establish a system of reform, if we assume that the sum of all reform initiatives joined under themes as a reform system, creates space for a “win-win” approach that will reduce the competition among international actors “to get full partnership over the whole public agency”, given that they will receive less engagement with a larger number of institutions nationwide. The availability of a matrix ensures a comprehensive approach so

that no field remains undeveloped. Another advantage of the matrix is to ensure that no overlapping of international funding occurs in the future. Finally, this safeguards implementation, as well as to a certain degree, political responsibility, in that the public agency is much more likely to implement what it itself initiated.

3.1.1.6 Negotiating with an international partner

Having prepared the matrix of reform initiatives, the public agency initiates negotiations with a relevant international actor.

International actors are more likely to support such an approach, since the tangible results are in the focus; the topic is in line with the transformation processes' course, and the mechanism is also available.

If the public agency has sufficient capacity, a very good option would be to draft the initial papers in question – if the reform initiative concerns a law and strategy and submits these as an input to the partnership with the international actor and defines its comments and revisions as the core activities within a stakeholder partnership. Their drafting is supported and simplified using the models and patterns. This occurred in my case – the State Statistics Service of Ukraine submitted a draft communication strategy and draft law on official statistics to UNDP in Ukraine as an input of the partnership, and their revision and commenting formed the foundation for initial cooperation.

3.1.2 Stage 2. Public Agency inspired by transformation anchors prepares the initiative

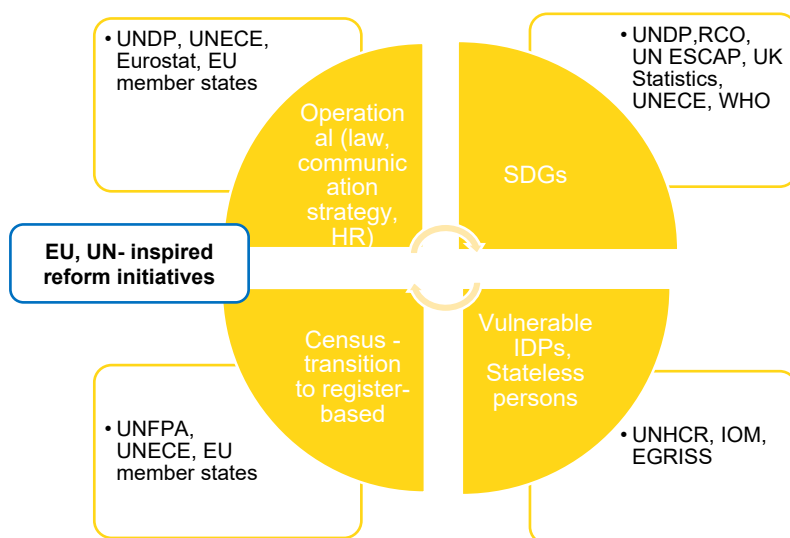


Figure 4. Multi-level engagement case of my activities at the State Statistics Service of Ukraine

Some scholars examine the influential role of the EU in neighbouring states by outlining the weaknesses of external incentives and the strong resistance to change, thereby trying to identify the actors who veto and hinder changes in a particular sector of EU-driven reform (Dimitrova and Dragneva, 2013). This category of scholars argues that EU external governance will only succeed if the state's willingness to reform the policies designates domestic policy change as a priority against EU cooperation with third party states (Guerin and Rittberger, 2020). This puts the country in an active position to decide, making its decision crucial in promoting the Europeanisation agenda. Interest and willingness are described as decisive features signalling openness and receptiveness for partnership and reform. The EU, in turn, while pursuing the policy reform, is advised to dedicate its efforts to third

party states by showing a willingness and ability to, first of all, follow policy reforms (Guerin and Rittberger, 2020).

Academia now tends to use the term “external governance”, which has no implications regarding the violation of sovereignty or independence of the state. In other words, “less than ‘government’, ‘governance’ is determined to be more than ‘co-operation’, as it implies a system of rules which exceeds the voluntarism implicit in the term co-operation” (Lavenex, 2004, p. 682). As already mentioned, I suggest using the term “formalised inspiration” in relation to transformation anchors and the state, as far as the country itself makes a decision on the course of its own development via an expression of the will of its people, whereas the adaptation and transformation processes take place with external assistance. In the case of Ukraine, for example, we may speak about formalised inspiration as far as the incentives are duly reflected in the relevant international treaties – the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, for example – but also within a national context – the Europeanisation course of Ukraine is envisaged by the Constitution of Ukraine, the supreme law of the country.

Why external assistance? Because transformation activities are performed with the use of international technical assistance – financial and other resources and services provided by the development partners to support Ukraine free of charge, irrevocably under international treaties with Ukraine (Resolution, Ukraine’s Government 2002). The resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (government) on the “Creation of a Unified System for Attracting, Using and Monitoring International Technical Assistance” endorses the order of engagement, use and monitoring of the international technical assistance in Ukraine and explicitly states that official requests to countries and international organisations, such as development partners for the attraction and use of international technical assistance, are sent by the Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, showcasing the initiating position of the government. However, the state authorities and the government are recipients and beneficiaries under such a mechanism (Resolution, Ukraine’s Government 2002).

The stakeholder partnership model foresees not only an initiating role from the inside, but also creates an input, turning the state authorities into fully-fledged partners with a solid contribution in a joint value co-creation.

EU-, UN- inspired reform initiatives, in the cases in question, were formed and effectuated by means of formalised inspiration. The topics were selected as a synthesis of institution's mandates and transformation anchors, from which they were derived. Let us return to the previous cases and thoroughly study the examples depicted in the picture above – Figure 4.

For example, the draft Law on Official Statistics: The then effective law dates back to 1992, and there were plans to amend it in light of the Global Assessment of national statistical systems conducted for Ukraine. The EU-Ukraine Association Agreement comprises Title V “ECONOMIC AND SECTOR COOPERATION”, the fifth Chapter of which is dedicated to statistics. It foresees the harmonisation of the national statistical system with European norms and standards with respect the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, taking into account the EU *acquis* in statistics, including the European Statistics Code of Practice. The *acquis* in statistics is set out in the annually updated Statistical Requirements Compendium annexed to the Agreement (EU-Ukraine Association Agreement Title V). Article 356 (a) states that cooperation shall aim at further strengthening the capacity of the national statistical system, focusing on a sound legal basis, adequate data and metadata dissemination policy, including user-friendliness. Thus, the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement does not explicitly state the new law adoption, but it was needed for harmonisation purposes and ensuring a “sound legal basis” clause, which is why we speak about formalised inspiration here. We do not single out UN-inspiration separately in a given case, as it is cited in the EU paper, but we do imply that inspiration was derived from the EU and the UN. That primary inspiration was backed up with the EU regulation 223/2009 to support professional independence.

Another good example from my activities is census, to be more precise, the transition to the register-based census in Ukraine. The abovementioned chapter on statistics in the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement argues that “the Parties shall cooperate within the framework of the European Statistical System, in which Eurostat is the EU statistical authority. Such cooperation shall focus, inter alia, on the areas of: (a) population statistics, including censuses” (EU-Ukraine Association Agreement Title V). The UN recommends a census every 10 years, and in 2010, Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland had a register-based census, while the Czech Republic, Estonia, Italy, Spain, Latvia and Lithuania used a combined approach. For its part, Ukraine’s latest census dates back to 2001 (UNECE 2018).

The 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme (approved by the Statistical Commission at its 46th session and adopted by the United Nations Economic and Social Council in resolution E/RES/2015/10) recognises population and housing censuses as “an important source for supplying disaggregated data needed for the measurement of progress of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, that makes this initiative inspiration linked to the UN too” (E/2015/24-E/CN.3/2015/40, 2015, p. 16).

The inspiration for this transition project came from Estonia. It took 10 years to prepare for a register-based census in Estonia, despite learning from the previous experience of other countries. Project REGREL was initiated to develop the transition to a register-based methodology in Estonia. It was a partnership between Statistics Estonia, the Estonian Institute for Population Studies (at Tallinn University) and the consultancy firm AS Ernst & Young Baltic, where 80 per cent of the activities within the project were funded by the European Social Fund (UNECE 2018).

Another inspiration, a reform-derivative example, is the Sustainable Development Goals progress assessment. The role of reliable data cannot be neglected in ensuring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and trustworthy data is needed to assess the progress underway on the transformation path. After a global set of indicators was adopted at the global level, at the national level,

countries resorted to different ways of realising them – some countries chose global criteria, some nationalised, and others a mixed approach. Ukraine nationalised global SDG targets, as reflected in the 2017 “Sustainable Development Goals: Ukraine National Baseline Report”. A relevant governmental resolution to endorse the national indicators was adopted in 2019, entrusting the State Statistics Service of Ukraine with an information provision to monitor SDGs implementation in Ukraine (Shevtsova 2020). The Voluntary National Review was prepared highlighting “adaptation of the SDGs in Ukraine, monitoring and analysis of key trends, and evaluation of the extent of SDG targets incorporation into the strategic and policy documents of Ukraine” (Voluntary National Review – Ukraine 2020). But there was no explicit commitment taken nor any binding necessity to make a progress assessment. Instead, the inspiration came from the United Nations Economic Commission of Asia and the Pacific, which developed a methodology allowing one to evaluate the country’s progress towards targets since the selected year, as a share of total progress accounting for the country’s past progress as a benchmark. This provided a “unique toolkit even for the nationalized sustainable agenda to see the helicopter view of SDGs in the country, to foresee and measure the SDG progress through the prism of 2030 being in 2020, which gives an opportunity to cover existing gaps and implement SDGs in the country” (Shevtsova 2020).

Another example of a UN- and EU-inspired reform initiative I dealt with is internal displacement statistics in Ukraine. The Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine administers the register on internally displaced persons (IDPs), as far as Ukraine has been addressing internal displacement since 2014 due to Russia’s war against it. The effective legislation of Ukraine defines ensuring the development and implementation of state policy in the field of statistics as the main task of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine (Government’s Resolution on the State Statistics Service of Ukraine 2014). In 2020, the United Nations Statistical Commission endorsed the International Recommendations on IDP

Statistics developed by the Expert Group on Refugees, IDP and Statelessness Statistics (EGRISS). IOM and Ukraine are Steering Committee members; I once represented Ukraine there. Thus, in this case, a joint value co-created at the global level inspired its manifestation at the national level.

3.1.2.1 The “Multi-level engagement” concept

If multi-level governance is a concept to describe the decision-making process, then multi-level engagement is the right term to reflect the complicated nature of engaging stakeholders that represent organisations at different levels – global, regional, national, sub-national – in the implementation of transnational reform initiatives. Here we should keep in mind the transnational context and nature of reform initiatives. This means that we may look at the reform initiative as a reforming process in the national context inspired by other levels, or as its manifestation at the national level that forms part of and contributes to transnational reforms. For example, the development of the new draft law on official statistics was inspired by the EU and UN and is a national reform initiative from a national perspective. However, at the same time, I imply that the transnational reform initiative – the development of a new legal framework for statistics in the Eastern European countries, the Caucasus and in Central Asia and beyond – is in this case a contribution that Ukraine makes to the transnational reforming processes in its transnational perspective.

For example, as of 2020, several countries in the United Nations Economic Commission for the Europe region have already adopted new statistical laws based on model laws, namely Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Norway and Moldova. Moreover, other countries in the UNECE region have reported using model laws to prepare draft legislation, for example, Albania, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Malta, Slovakia, Switzerland, and Ukraine. Countries outside the UNECE region that have reported using model laws for revision of legislation are Afghanistan, Chile, Colombia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Rwanda, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zanzibar. Thus, the transnational reform initiative of developing a new

statistical legal framework in the data era has been implemented throughout the region, and beyond, rather successfully with the use of specially developed patterns.

I suggest studying multi-level engagement from two sides. On the one hand, it concerns the object, that is, the initiative itself, and the ways of studying the possibility of using the same idea at different levels, the so-called multi-level transition of the reform initiative, which makes it transnational. For example, Ukraine used the UN ESCAP SDG progress assessment at a national level, but it has also been used at regional level by developers. Moreover, Ukraine went further and decided to explore the viability and relevance of its transit to another level – the sub-national level – and conducted a pilot study in this regard; in fact, it was know-how from Ukraine that added value to this transnational initiative. Ukraine also practised and piloted a thematic perspective and prepared a global and national scope for Goal 3 in view of the Covid-19 pandemic that made the topic of health of paramount importance. Hence, this reform initiative is multi-levelled and relates to the global, regional, national and sub-national levels. This means that it can be tailored as a transnational reform initiative for assessing the progress of the Sustainable Development Goals. It is important to select such tools for the sake of a time-, cost- and resource-efficient approach. Thus, Ukraine, on the one hand, used a legitimate tool, a proven methodology, while on the other taking ownership and adding its new vision – sub-national and thematic levels – thus establishing interchange, interlinkage and a use-and-give approach, finishing with the ‘adding country ownership’ technique.

Such practices show the importance of exploring the existing developed tools and having a fresh look at them, as well as not limiting the ideas within certain frames, but rather taking a helicopter view towards reform themes and initiatives ideas.

Apart from that, transition may sometimes concern not only level-to-level shift, but also changing fields. For example, on 8 April 2022, we published “Education Data in Displacement Context: What Ukraine Does and Has to Do to Collect Data on

IDPs?” (a blog by Olena Shevtsova and Anastasiia Fitisova). In this article, we brought together the terms internally-displaced persons and UN ESCAP SDG Progress Assessment methodology for the first time as a start for launching a discussion and exploring possibilities of how its modality might be adjusted in this field (Shevtsova and Fitisova, 2022).

Nevertheless, multi-level engagement means getting actors on board from different levels and studying the possible advantages and benefits, as well as interlinkages, of working at different levels and re-using the methods used or lessons learned.

For example, the work on the development of the Roadmap for Implementation of the International Recommendations on IDP Statistics in Ukraine took place at the national, regional, transnational and global levels, since EGRISS is among the members of the working group in Ukraine. Hence, we were able to make use of the global expertise or country cases. At the same time, I represented the State Statistics Service of Ukraine on the EGRISS Steering Committee, thus working at the global level and sharing our experiences and best practices there, inspiring and sharing it worldwide:

That is why the support and global expertise of EGRIS has been vital in ensuring a robust framework and a global exchange of lessons learned. Parallely, SSSU is an important actor at the global level, being a long-standing member of EGRIS, whose contributions and experiences have been relevant to the development of IRIS and continue to inform other EGRIS country members.

Ms. Olena Shevtsova: “It is important to engage all stakeholders at the process of initiation. It is important to set a working group and ensure multi-level engagement during this work. It is crucial to recall the working out algorithm of work providing synergy of efforts to make sure all stakeholders are involved and no overlapping is happening.” (Event Report. Making the most vulnerable visible: Data gaps and official statistics on forced displacement, 2021, p. 3)

This is where the inspiration came from, from the global level to the national one, inviting all stakeholders at the process of initiation, the approach used when developing international recommendations at a global level and inviting the legitimate stakeholders to participate. This dealt with the problem or made such a problem available, yet adapted it to national realities, from national to global, sharing the roadmap development approach, phases and management criteria. There has been a continuous process of using global approaches at a national level, and vice versa.

For example, I shared Ukraine's example of setting a working group to develop a roadmap for International Recommendations on IDP Statistics (IRIS) implementation with Americas, which yielded positive results:

Jun 11, 2021

luca splendore di gennaro, PhD

@lucasplendore75

Thank you Olena Shevtsova, #EGRIS Steering Committee, for your Welcome Speech at workshop on the International Recommendations on #IDPStatistics: @ACNURamericas @sg_sica. Your 'voice' was mentioned by many people during the workshop." (Twitter post, Luca Splendore Di Gennaro, 2021)²

Another vivid example might be the work around statelessness statistics. In 2019, UNFPA jointly with UNHCR, organised an expert group meeting in Bangkok, Thailand to discuss the development of International Recommendations on Statelessness Statistics, which was later included under the EGRIS umbrella. Participants comprised experts from national statistical offices and line ministries, with 16 countries represented from across Europe, Asia and Africa. Colleagues from UNHCR, UNFPA and

² https://twitter.com/lucasplendore75/status/1403376999675146250?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1403376999675146250%7Ctwgr%5E%7Ctwcon%5Es1_c10&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fpublish.twitter.com%2F%3Fquery%3Dhttps3A2F2Ftwitter.com2Flucasplendore752Fstatus2F1403376999675146250widget%3DTweet

UN regional commissions also facilitated discussions during the meeting (EGRISS Newsletter November 2020).

I was in the group working on “Chapter 5: Measurement of socio-demographic characteristics of stateless populations and SDG Indicators”. I was appointed a co-leader, one of three, and during the visit we elaborated on the working notes. At this meeting I noticed how the concept functioned in the following way: UN representatives take the problematic aspect, proposing recommendations, and inviting all stakeholders on board. To make it easier afterwards, during the process of implementation in terms of advocacy, as far as there are representatives of the countries in question – making it a product of a teamwork – an expert group worked to cover the outlined theme. The working group’s activity reflects the fundamental principles of project management.

In parallel, based on the speculations mentioned above, at the national level, the State Statistics Service of Ukraine and UNHCR organised a webinar entitled “Improvement of Quantitative and Qualitative Data on Stateless Population: the Sustainable Development Goals and How “Leave No One Behind (LNOB)”. Its objectives can be implemented to draw attention to the topic in the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, the result of which was that the census questionnaire was amended to better capture this category of population.

3.1.3 Stage 3. International Actors

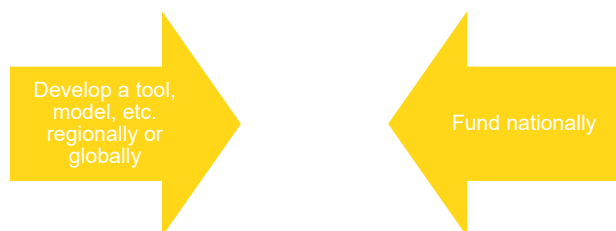


Figure 5. Roles of international actors in stakeholder partnerships

International actors have a dual function in the stakeholder partnership. This may be explained by the multi-level engagement discussed in the previous chapter. On the one hand, international actor(-s) develop a tool, model or pattern regionally or globally that may be reused. On the other hand, they fund its implementation nationally by paying for the services of the implementor. Here the international actor does not necessarily have to be the same institution or organisation.

For example, in my case I speak about the global level when I refer to the International Recommendations on IDP Statistics drafted by the Expert Group on Refugee, IDP and Statelessness Statistics, and about the national level when referring to the International Organization for Migration's Mission to Ukraine that partnered with the State Statistics Service of Ukraine in coordinating the working group in Ukraine to develop the Roadmap for IRIS implementation there. I referred to the regional level when addressing the United Nations Commission for Asia and the Pacific's methodology to evaluate SDG progress and the United Nations Development Programme's Office in Ukraine, which supported its national implementation and sub-national assessment. However, when I speak about the thematic progress assessment for Goal 3 "Good Health and Well-being", I refer to the World Health Organization's Office in Ukraine. Furthermore, I imply the transnational level when we resort to the Generic Law on Official Statistics, implying the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Eurostat and European Free Trade Association and then UNDP in Ukraine, which provided nationally supported funding while implementing the initiative.

3.1.4 Stage 4. Selecting implementor

The next stage foreseen as a mechanism in the stakeholder partnership is selecting an implementor. This is an important stage as it implies transparency and anti-corruption measures. Transparency is secured by the fact the implementor is appointed as a result of the tender process applicable to the international actor involved in the stakeholder partnership. Public agency has no

relation to the proceedings in question, which serve as the main anti-corruption measure. Moreover, the use of the stakeholder partnership model excludes expensive contracts, because:

1. The existing pattern is taken as a backbone, and
2. Much work is carried out by the public agency and every stakeholder contributes to the partnership, the implementor being only one of them, diminishing the burden and scope of work to be achieved.

Let us study in more detail the way that criteria ensure cost-, time- and resource-efficiency in a given model.

Cost-efficiency is ensured by the fact the implementor receives payment only for working hours, such as services, not the production of goods, since these are the object of the contract.

Time-efficiency is provided by the use of an already existing and operative model or pattern, and this is a developed mechanism and form.

Resource-efficiency is foreseen by the mentorship clause, which ensures a long-lasting effect so that it is not a one-time exercise, as far as the launched activities will be repeated, thus providing continuity of endeavour. Moreover, the mentorship programme, if launched before the widespread use and practical embodiment of the model and appropriate reflection in the legal texts, will help the stakeholders – public service corps at national and transnational levels, international actors (international organisations, governments, civil society representatives, academia, experts, etc.), who receive the necessary theoretical and practical knowledge, as well as the skills to properly operate it.

3.1.5 Stage 5. Implementor

When selecting an implementor, the key task for the international actor involved in the stakeholder partnership will be to define which level of implementor is best suited in a given context – one at the organisational level or individual level. Undoubtedly, implementors at both the individual and organisational levels

have advantages, so the key aspect would be to determine what requirements need to be satisfied by the reform initiative in each particular case.

For example, if it involves a reform initiative requiring advocacy, then the individual level, the public opinion moulder, will work best. In this way, while working upon the initiative, this individual is simultaneously advocating for it and turns into the reform initiative ambassador. However, when the reform initiative is greatly desired by the government, for example, an individual performing the work is needed, with no anchoring in special advocacy or an institution. In my case, this was the situation with the Open SDG platform. This initiative was so highly praised and exciting that it was included by UNDP Ukraine into the UN programme “Promoting Strategic Planning and Financing for Sustainable Development on National and Regional Level in Ukraine”, funded by the Joint SDG Fund. As a simple technical implementation was needed at the individual level, an individual consultant was hired for those purposes.

What are the main advantages of having an implementor at the organisational level? One is that civil society organisations or academia have institutional anchoring. Namely, they have social media, websites and platforms, as well as their own audience and networking channels. For example, if the public agency starts thinking at a certain stage that it is no longer expedient to make the results of the initiative public, then implementor organisations can make the results public using their own channels. Furthermore, with respect to the partnership, the results will be made public with the disclosure of all partners, including the public agency. Accordingly, we can safeguard that the results are made public. The question that remains regards the platform, but does the platform itself really matter at this point? This was the case with my activities, when the results of the sub-national and thematic SDG progress assessment were published on the implementor’s channel – “VoxUkraine” (Tyshchuk et al., 2021; Ivanchuk et al., 2021).

However, even when such cases occur, the right thing to do would be to engage in extra advocacy, amplifying co-created value. Although the results of the sub-national and thematic SDG progress assessment were published on the implementor’s channels under the partnership logo with the enumeration, including the public agency, afterwards, I, in my capacity as the Ukraine State Statistics Service’s official, and Dayyan Shayani, the representative of the Statistics Division of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, presented these initiatives at UNECE events in 2022, such as the Workshop on Statistics for SDGs and the 6th Expert Meeting on Statistics for Sustainable Development Goals, concluding that “there are no borders in partnering for the sake of sustainable development when the Government works in synergy with national and regional development partners and the private sector to assess SDG progress” (Shevtsova and Shayani, 2022). At the Expert meeting we offered a new vision of SDG monitoring, outlining it as a complex process consisting of reporting, measuring and progress assessment adding in such a way a country’s ownership (Shevtsova and Shayani, 2022).

3.2 Implementation phase

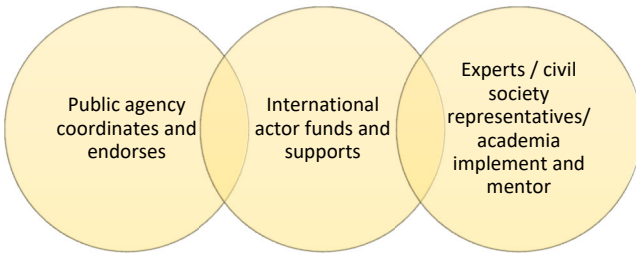


Figure 6. Implementation phase

The second phase in the stakeholder partnership theory views a stakeholder partnership as a mechanism in implementing the reform initiative. The concept of a new theory foresees that initiation is the main phase ensuring the efficiency of the reform

initiative's implementation. If everything is done properly during the initiation phase, then during the phase of implementation, everything should go smoothly, if the stakeholders involved simply perform their functions professionally, that is, the public agency coordinates and endorses the co-created value, international actors fund and support the activities, and experts/ civil society organisations/ academia implement the reform initiative and mentor the staff responsible for further operation around the co-created value.

The initiation phase finishes with the contract signed between the international actor and implementor. That is why the implementation itself has a narrower meaning than in a traditional understanding, since it implies only services provision, consultations with the international actors, owners of the model or patterns under the coordination of the public agency. The final stages of the implementation phase finish with the endorsement of the outcome from the public agency's side and start preparations around the validation, as well as the mentorship, of the officials that will operate the co-created value in the future.

Let us here take the reform initiative of the development of the Open SDG platform in Ukraine as an example and study how the implementation occurred. The consultant selected by UNDP's office in Ukraine received the link to the instructions concerning how to create the platform using the existing pattern.³ They received the relevant data from the public agency to place on the platform and consulted the developers via the public agency whenever questions occurred. The public agency checked whether the data was placed correctly and afterwards, upon prior agreement, received the tuition on how to operate it in the future via an online assistance – having tuition sessions and question-and-answer sessions.

³ <https://open-sdg.readthedocs.io/en/latest/quick-start/>

3.3 Validation phase

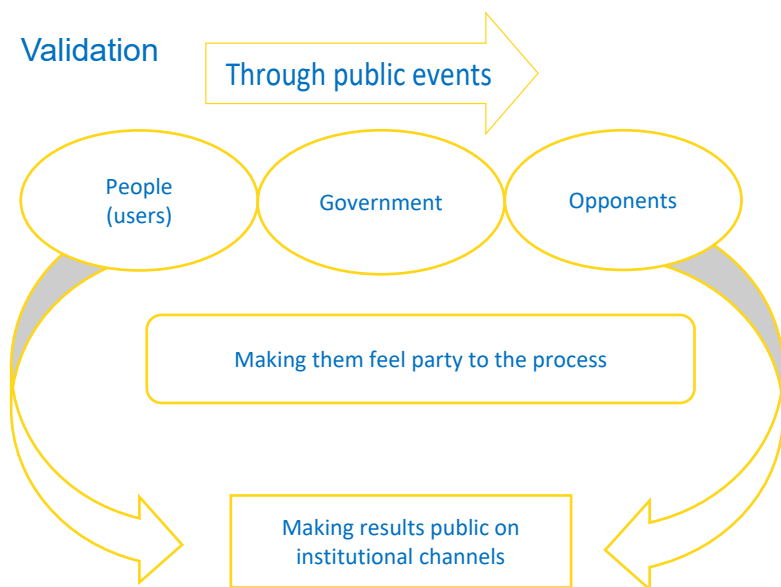


Figure 7. Validation phase

The final phase, foreseen by the stakeholder partnership as a mechanism, is the validation of the co-created value. Validation is a process of the public presentation of the co-created value under the logo of partnership operating within the reform initiative with the participation of all stakeholders. For example, in my case, we moved from wording ‘supported by UNDP’ to the formulation ‘in partnership with’ when joint activities started yielding positive results.

Stakeholders of key importance during this phase are people (users of reform initiatives), governments and opponents, although the main workload is performed by key stakeholders within a stakeholder partnership, as described in previous chapters. These are public agency, international actors and implementors, and it is important not to mix the notions.

This group of stakeholders – users of the reform initiative, governments and opponents, feel during this phase that they are

a party to the process, although their engagement is foreseen already during the process of initiation.

Having a positive previous experience of using public events for advocacy purposes (previously in my advisor's capacity at the Fund for the Support of Youth Housing Construction), I organised an international symposium called "Housing Cooperatives as a Model for Creating Affordable and Adequate Housing in Ukraine", drafting a joint statement under its results that supported advocacy for the initiative. Every project I dealt with in the State Statistics Service of Ukraine also ended up with a webinar – due to the pandemic the whole world switched to online interactions – highlighting the achieved results within a partnership, as well as inviting leading international and European experts, including members of academia, to ensure a comprehensive, transnational, informative and educative approach. Moreover, live broadcasting and placing video recordings on YouTube channels made them accessible when needed.

Here are some tips on how to make users of the reform initiative, governments and opponents, feel like they are a party to the process during this phase:

1. All materials within the event shall be saved on the e-folder with a link sent to the participants.
2. Enable everyone to ask questions – whether participants on Zoom or those watching live on Facebook; include the possibility to ask a question while filling in the registration form.
3. Use different approaches to invite people – e.g. partners create events on Facebook pages, users are registered and then receive a link either to the online platform or to a live broadcast on social media. One can also write news releases, provide placement links for registration on all social media pages and websites, and write official letters of invitation to all stakeholders, especially public authorities and state institutions who tend to observe the timelines prescribed by law.

Signing joint statements by relevant stakeholders in power is a good validation backup. Its main specifics are its non-binding nature, from a legal perspective, to the signatories, signalling serious intentions while also having a positive effect on the target audience. All these factors contribute to building trust in the reform initiative.

Apart from public events, the results shall be made available on the institutional channels of partners, which we all learned how to do when we switched to online platforms during the pandemic.

In general, research shows that the use of integrated platforms, for example, social media platforms, facilitate the means for both effective and efficient organisational responses to change “by enabling flexible business processes, remote collaborations and real-time connectivity between all internal and external stakeholders involved in the firm’s ecosystem” (Ashrafi et al., 2019).

If we want to produce a transnational effect when implying a national instantiation of transnational reforms, an important tool for transnational validation would be recordings of the English translations of the events. I used this technique in my own activities, and there are English recordings of webinars placed on the YouTube channel of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine. Of course, some losses are inevitable in the process of simultaneous interpretation, but such an approach ensures a synergy of efforts, which is especially significant in pursuing transnational reform initiatives. In the case of other countries, this would, of course, involve different languages.

Another important tool for transnational validation is reform initiative ambassadors and the presentation of cases at events at different levels. Unlike multi-level engagement that envisages involving stakeholders working at different levels in a stakeholder partnership, multi-level validation ensures that presentations are made public at different levels. In my experience, I presented Ukraine’s cases – regarding national expertise at global level events – at the UN World Data Forum 2021 and the United Nations Statistical Commission’s side event of the Expert Group on Refugee and IDP Statistics (EGRIS). Regarding national

expertise at the regional level, I presented at the UNECE Expert Meeting on Statistics for SDGs (2021) and the 37th session of the Asia-Pacific Stat Café on "Measuring National SDG Progress". However, regarding both national and regional expertise at the regional level, I made presentations at UNECE's Sixth Expert Meeting on Statistics for SDGs, and my experience regarding national and global expertise at the regional level comprises my contribution to the UNHCR, Central American Statistical Commission (CENTROESTAD) of the System of Integration of Central America (SICA) webinar on the implementation of the EGRIS international recommendations on forced displacement statistics, etc.

4. Stakeholder Partnership as a Form of Transnational Cooperation

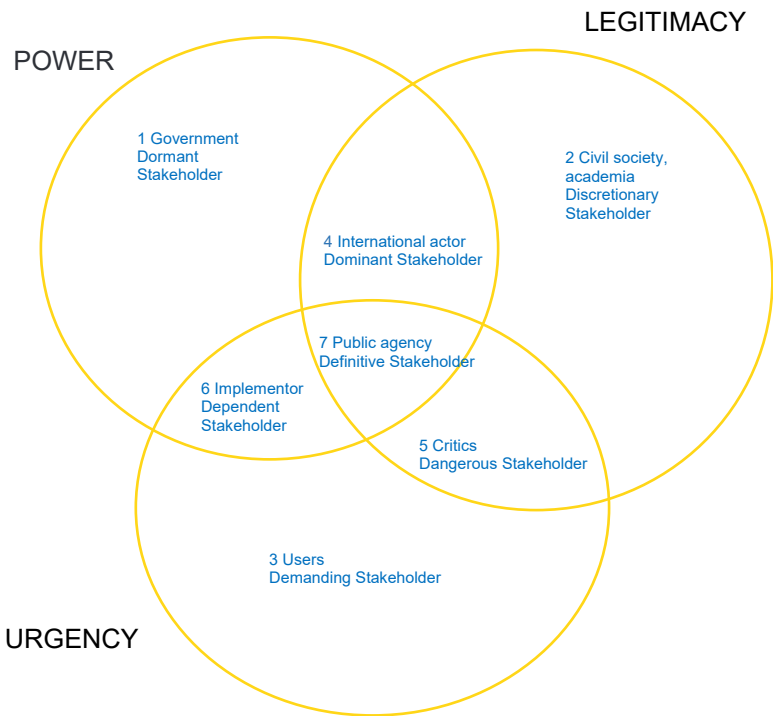


Figure 8. Stakeholder types and attributes

Another cornerstone of the new theory is to see the stakeholder partnership as a form of transnational cooperation. To study this role of stakeholder partnership, it is vital to have a general picture of how stakeholders are interrelated, and for these purposes, it is

expedient to have a scrupulous eye on a theory of stakeholder identification that can reliably differentiate between stakeholders and nonstakeholders. Ronald K. Mitchell, Bradley R. Agle and Donna J. Wood defined three attributes that identify stakeholders: power, legitimacy and urgency. They also analysed how these attributes behave in different organisational theories, asserting that “persons, groups, neighbourhood, organizations, institutions, societies, and even the natural environment are generally thought to qualify as actual or potential stakeholders and find that it is the view taken about the existence and nature of the stake that presents an area of argument, because it is upon the basis of “stake” that ‘what counts’ is ultimately decided” (Mitchell et al., 1997, pp. 855-856).

Although this theory was developed for business administration, some of its tenets may be especially valuable for public administration. The theory of stakeholder identification and salience proves the need to outline latent stakeholders as both a comprehensive and useful exercise, where showcasing the potential relationship can be highly relevant. As the groups of stakeholders may migrate from one category into another, it is very important to take this group of stakeholders into account when launching any public administration reform initiative in view of the legitimacy of the outputs.

Key constructs in the theory of stakeholder identification and salience have the following definitions.

Power – “a relationship among social actors in which one social actor, A, can get another social actor, B, to do something that B would not have otherwise done”. (Mitchell et al., 1997, p. 869)

From a stakeholder partnership perspective, this predominantly concerns the authority and influence to satisfy the interest posed by the initiative.

Legitimacy – “a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, definitions”. (Mitchell et al. 1997, p.869)

In stakeholder partnership theory, this means that the partners implementing the reform initiative are sufficiently competent and empowered to deal with it, the topic of the initiative is within their mandate, and the scope of activities and results will be trusted by the public.

Urgency – “the degree to which stakeholder claims call for immediate attention” (Mitchell et al. 1997, p.869).

From a stakeholder partnership perspective, this means that the initiative to be implemented must be in line with legitimately approved state policies and commitments and have a valuable social, ecological or economic impact.

The theory of stakeholder identification refers to the business administration domain, and I tested it for the first time in a public administration environment. While the original theory was based on a study of stakeholders with respect to an organisation, I studied them with regard to a reform initiative. The variables in this experiment remained the same – power, urgency and legitimacy – but as a result, certain stakeholders shifted their places in relation to these variables. Nonetheless, three core stakeholders remained the same from the mechanism I depicted in previous chapters – public agency, international actors and implementors.

Public agency is the definitive stakeholder comprising all variables with respect to the reform initiative: power – that is, a public institution operating in a certain field; urgency – that is, a change that anchors and inspires development and reform; and legitimacy – that is, a reform initiative that already has a mandate. In my case it was the State Statistics Service of Ukraine. This organisation took the lead in terms of initiating and coordinating the activities, where the main task of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine is to ensure the development and implementation of public policy in the sphere of statistics, so all initiatives were legitimate. Moreover, the Europeanisation and the role of data for SDGs are prescribed by the 2030 Agenda and the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, so all the reform initiatives were urgent.

International actors are also dominant stakeholders. This group encompasses those with both legitimacy and power, hence

we can refer international actors to this category of stakeholders within the reform initiatives in public administration. In my case, international organisations, the EU and EU member governments, funded the initiatives' implementation, or their trusted methodology, expertise, tools, etc., were used. For example, the UN was the dominant stakeholder for SDG progress assessment in Ukraine. The UN ESCAP developed the methodology and is generally interested in encouraging its use worldwide, having a legitimate angle and UNDP supporting its implementation, which represents power.

In comparison, implementors are dependent stakeholders (individual consultants, NGOs, etc.). In our case, the implementors represent international organisations (be it individual consultants or organisations – NGOs). They are thus dependent on the dominant stakeholders to hire them for the implementation of work and must advocate themselves as the best nominees for the expected role. If we compare the KPI that dependent stakeholders might bring, the best way is when they have an institutional anchoring. For this might be used as an extra platform for advocacy – i.e., a website, social media, etc., or being 'on a partnership board' when implementing the reform initiative. An implementor has urgency, because this is their job; they are hired for these purposes and thus have the power to influence the reform initiative as they are included in the "partnership logo".

Whereas the remainder of academia and civil society, unless involved as implementors, only has legitimacy with respect to the reform initiative, the only thing they can do is to give professional feedback and comments on the activities surrounding the reform initiative. This makes them a discretionary stakeholder. In my case, unless involved as implementors or members of the working groups, they were "the receivers of corporate philanthropy" without having any power or urgent claims on the described reform programme portfolio, namely, they were the users of the projects' results and participants in the webinars from which they gained new knowledge.

The government is determined as a dormant stakeholder. As we can see from the picture, the relevant attribute of the dormant stakeholder is the power to impose their will on the initiative. In my case, however, there was no need for this, since the initiative was launched by a public authority, with a legitimate status in the sphere of the initiative. Thus, there was no need for an urgent claim from the government's side to use that power. In simple words, the government has the power to stop the reform initiative at any time if anything goes wrong. By the same token, they do not need to intrude if everything is working smoothly.

Critics and opponents are defined as dangerous stakeholders as far as they have legitimacy and urgency, but they experience the lack of power that usually brings them to the role of opponents. There are mechanisms for how to move this group to another, for example, making them implementors. This however is a question of expedience, i.e., how risky and dangerous they, in fact, are, as far as their place will be occupied by other opponents and critics. So, they have urgency, legitimacy, and provide much criticism, but they do not have the power to influence decisions. In my case, these were “disagreeing individuals” who attended the webinars trying to criticise the initiative that was being presented for the purpose of drawing attention to their personalities. The way out of coping with such challenges was to invite them and give them access to the events; however, with regard to selecting the “webinar” mode on the platforms, insofar as it does not provide participants the option of switching on the microphone by themselves, the control remains in the hands of the moderator.

Users of the reform initiative are demanding stakeholders. This notion derives from defining Ukraine as a service state for its citizens. So, users have urgency, because they want to be positively affected by the results of the reform initiative. In my case, they were users of statistical information as a category that was buzzing to find new convenient tools for them to apply and interact with for the purposes of statistical analysis, economic forecasting, informed policy development, evidence-based decision-making, training, research, forming a general outlook, etc.

Let us here study how the stakeholder partnership is manifested as a form of transnational cooperation based on “SDG progress assessment at the subnational level in Ukraine”.

I generated the reform initiative of going sub-national with assessing SDGs in Ukraine by analogy – if shifting levels and using UN ESCAP methodology worked at the regional and national level, it might be applied sub-nationally as well, especially with certain indicators to be disaggregated by region, as was foreseen by the relevant governmental ruling. Despite a high degree of resistance to change from within the office, this initiative was highly relevant to setting a baseline and starting to move in this direction at the sub-national level to ensure the balanced development of regions in the future, rather than providing immediate subnational assessment.

The definitive stakeholder was the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, a public agency with its mandate in statistics and transformation anchored in the EU and UN. These supranational institutions inspired this reform initiative, since my reform initiatives’ matrix included (comprised) the SDGs theme.

The dominant stakeholders were the UN ESCAP Statistics Division as the developer of the pattern and the UNDP office in Ukraine, who hired the implementor and paid for the services to assess the SDGs’ progress at the subnational level.

The implementor selected by UNDP Ukraine was “Vox-Ukraine”. Institutional anchoring was important in this case, since in view of the initiative’s novelty, there was a high risk that it would not be finished by the public agency, and the platforms were needed for validation.

The critics and dangerous stakeholders were the employees of the State Statistics Service who mostly expressed a high degree of resistance to this change, which led to the outcome of the results never being officially published in the governmental domain. However, the results of this initiative were validated at a webinar and further established by other partners within stakeholder partnership with the logo “the State Statistics Service of Ukraine

in partnership with UNDP Ukraine, ‘VoxUkraine’ funded by the Kingdom of Denmark”.

The government (dormant stakeholder) was represented by the Ministry of Regional Development of Ukraine during the process of validation.

The discretionary stakeholder representing academia was the representative from the National Institute of Strategic Research, who presented at the validation phase those available results that had been achieved earlier in this area.

Users of this reform initiative that represented demanding stakeholders showed a high interest, which proved the urgency of the topic, where 300 participants registered for the validation phase. For example, there are 392 views of English and Ukrainian versions of the webinar on the YouTube channel, and about 1400 views on Facebook page.⁴

Transnational validation at the national level was ensured by inviting the regional-level speaker to the validation phase – a representative of UNECE – and placing English video recordings of the webinar on the YouTube channel.⁵ Transnational validation via ambassadors was moreover ensured at the regional level by national and regional level expertise when UN ESCAP’s representative and me prepared a working paper for UNECE’s Workshop on SDGs and a presentation for the UNECE’s Sixth Expert Meeting on Statistics for SDGs.

Thus, in this chapter, you have learnt how stakeholder partnership works as a form of transnational cooperation.

⁴ <https://cutt.ly/k20uO7y>

⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SE96Z9HunDo>

5. SWOT-analysis for the Stakeholder Partnership Model

To ensure the comprehensiveness of this study, and a well-balanced approach, it is worth weighing the opportunities as well as challenges posed by the developed theory in both roles of the stakeholder partnership offered in this research – as a mechanism of reform implementation and as a form of transnational cooperation.

For these purposes, I offer a SWOT-analysis to follow the risks and challenges that may appear from the use of the newly developed model, as well as the advantages and benefits it may bring. SWOT-analysis provides us with a useful toolkit to explore the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the given model.

Strengths (S) – the dissemination of this theory will facilitate the unification of the world, exploring the interlinkages of how something whole may be a part of something bigger, in this case, seeing the national implementation of reforms as national reforming processes, but also as a specific national instantiation of wider transnational reforms. The stakeholder partnership is used in both roles – as a mechanism of reforms implementation and as a form of transnational cooperation.

Understanding our own times as marked by “limbo uncertainty”, requires a new *modus operandi*, one that will satisfy the main challenges it poses – sparing time, costs and resources, which are available in limited quantity – as well as determine ways to achieve better progress with fewer of the named variables.

Solid empirical value – the theory appeared from practice, where repeated patterns in the past from my activities as a public servant can be immediately used in public administration practices without additional testing.

As far as decentralisation in the reform system is in focus in the reform initiatives' implementation, it will simplify overcoming bureaucratic challenges and will make the heads of public authorities eager to show their KPI if it becomes their responsibility to reform their agencies. Moreover, splitting the reform into reform initiatives will diminish the risk of reform failure in the system, as the failure of some reform initiatives will not influence the other initiatives, and in aftermath, one element will not ruin the whole reform system.

Putting a public agency in the leading position makes the outcome of the reform initiative implementation more feasible, since the agency is more likely to fulfil what it itself initiated. At the same time, public agencies take a political responsibility while advancing a reform initiative that might question its reputation if derailed, which serves as an additional impetus to make things happen.

Another benefit with the new theory is its cheapness, since services and hourly rate are subject to the contract with the implementor, not the purchase of goods. However, the load of services is less than usual since the responsibility and input to be made are divided among all partnering stakeholders. Transparency helps to prevent corruption as international actors within the stakeholder partnership hire implementors using their tender procedures, ensuring quick and cheap wins for all partners.

The next advantage offered by this theory is that it has an inbuilt mechanism to combat the dubbing of projects or their overlap – a reform initiatives' matrix is being developed by the public agency with the indicated international actor at the national level to support its implementation.

A contrastive perspective is also an important benefit of the new theory, since the stakeholder partnership model application foresees the use of existing patterns, models, etc., by adding the national ownership to them. It would create a dimension of comparable reform objects providing a chance to see what worked nicely in the national contexts and where the adaptations occurred and ways of adding national ownership. This would

create space for combining convergences with divergences and studying the tendencies, shifts, impetus and amplitude of shifts and their causes, as well as modelling possible scenarios for overcoming challenges and solving problems in future.

Weaknesses (W) – the stakeholder partnership theory in its current interpretation and phase of development does not envisage “genuine know-how creation”, because co-created value is an outcome based on existing patterns, models etc. That notwithstanding, adding authenticity by “country ownership component” is present, but it still will not be fully authentic, rather value cocreated by means of “reproduction with adaptation and amendments”. Thus, it cannot be applied to know-how creation at the current stage of theory development.

For this reason, the use of the stakeholder partnership model cannot fully replace the mechanism of the international technical assistance, but it can beneficially complement it so that whenever the cooperation concerns goods, purchases, or whenever patterns or models are unavailable, the mechanism applied will remain the international technical assistance. In all other cases, it is worth switching to the use of the stakeholder partnership model described in the given paper for the sake of cost-, time- and resource-efficiency.

Another drawback is that the risks of reform initiative failure increase if the leader who was its driving force leaves the incumbent office of the public agency. Apart from that, it is important to develop the professional competence of the users of this model in practice, without whom its successful operation will not succeed, with a special focus on public servants.

Opportunities (O) – this model gives a unique toolkit to implement initiatives faster, cheaper, and with less staff involved. Additionally, it helps to spare funds spent on project teams’ salaries within projects of the international technical assistance that have a temporary effect and develop public servants’ competencies, which will instead have a continued effect with renewable outcomes.

As far as the model is universal and may be applied all over the world, it has a great number of opportunities to offer depending on the national/transnational contexts.

For example, in Ukraine it could help to rebuild more quickly and cheaply and resuscitate post-war life, which faces consequences of brain drain and professional outflow.

European Neighbourhood Policy countries can use this model to quickly disseminate the European standards and put them into practice, ensuring transparency and the time-, cost- and labour-efficiency of reforms.

This model is important for the United Nations and the European Union in better pursuing their policy, fostering transnational initiatives and receiving better results, while spending less money.

A possible way forward and logical next step could be an international project, at national and regional levels, to launch the stakeholder partnership model into practice.

Ukraine would be the greatest candidate for the national level block. It could be a two-component project encompassing training and practical components. To launch this model into common practice, it is important to develop a mentorship program and teach the stakeholders, primarily public servants in Ukraine. The second, but equally important component, would be to create frames for its operation – putting it into legal field.

After successful implementation at the national level, it could be transferred regionally to Eastern European countries.

Another promising opportunity is to test the mobility of the stakeholder partnership theory from public administration and experimentally pilot it within cases in the business environment. There are many good examples of where business administration theory has successfully moved to the public administration domain, so it would be a nice try to test a reverse trend – a theory from public administration moving to business administration.

Threats (T) – the biggest potential threat, as far as the model concerns the cooperation with international donors and funding from external sources, is a lack of willingness from the public

administration sector. This is stipulated by several factors, firstly, the most interested might appear to be the parties owning funds, i.e., donors, as naturally they are eager to cover three countries instead of one while providing assistance with reforming processes.

In the case of public agencies, or vice versa, they will get extra work; they will have more to do – undertake a mentorship programme, analyse, draw a reform matrix, etc., and have the basic competence level required to proceed with such work. This may provoke, in turn, a strong resistance to change, no matter how important and efficient its benefits and advantages might be. This could be mediated by foreseeing some of the bonuses for public servants who will be engaged in this type of activity by donors, making it attractive for skilled professionals.

Another threat is that donor funds will be directed towards funding the rebuilding of Ukraine and helping people, in essence, without having an extra project to launch it with. Hence, it is advisable to launch it as quickly as possible and try to use this time for wisely – to receive knowledge, create the frames for its smooth operation and switch its operation during the country's post-war rebuilding time.

6. A New Theory – Model of Stakeholder Partnership in Public Administration

In perceiving a reform as a system, it is worth outlining its structure – reform initiatives joined into the thematic portfolio that is being implemented ensures the functioning of the system. Reform initiatives may be implemented consecutively or simultaneously. Being in times of uncertainty deprives us of the possibility to build plans for the long run. Such an approach diminishes the risk of the whole system's failure to reform, since it is split into the initiatives, and the failure of one reform initiative will not destroy the whole system.

The process of the reform initiative consists of three phases: initiation, implementation and validation. Initiation is the most important phase of the reform initiative cycle. Transformation anchors perform the inspiring role, or formalised inspiration, to be precise, since the inspiration comes from the commitments that already exist within the legal field. The reform initiative begins inside the public administration.

This theory explores the interconnections and importance of cooperation at different levels outlining the reform implementation at the national level, as the national level manifestation of transnational reform initiatives being implemented in countries also contributes to transnational reforms' implementation and supports such a form of cooperation, which, in turn, may be useful for fostering transnational reforms efficiency.

All stakeholders are put on board at the process of initiation, and roles are distributed at the process of initiation, although they

may be operable at different phases of the reform initiative cycle, but not compulsory at all phases.

The theory introduces a new term ‘multi-level engagement’, implying joint implementation by means of cooperating with actors from different levels of governance in the mechanism, bringing a “win-win approach” to all the stakeholders involved in the process.

As far as the model foresees the application of ready-to-reuse tools, models and patterns creating a bank of such data would be convenient for all the users and potential users. The use of certain tools and patterns simplifies and fastens the reforming process, but to escape mirroring and repetition throughout countries, administrative units, or regions, the procedure of ‘adding country ownership’ to the pattern shall take place.

Another important key point is to use the principle of “decentralisation” of reform initiatives implementation with assistance from international actors, giving a leading role to the public agency. As of now it is a mandate of the Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (Chancellery of the Ukraine’s Government) to send the official requests seeking international technical assistance (Ukraine Government’s resolution 2002). This decentralisation can be feasible as far as the stakeholder partnership model does not envisage the use of big funding, so there is no need for strong coordination from the government’s side. It could be especially relevant in times of limbo uncertainty as it was already tested during crisis times within business administration. The existing case study results show that decentralised firms were better able to adjust to changing conditions in times of crisis. “Decentralization was associated with relatively better performance for firms or establishments facing the toughest environment during the crisis,” the researchers reported. (Frick, 2019)

The era of stakeholder partnership will foster unity and coherence between academia and practitioners, whose synergy is crucial for better progress and efficiently overcoming times of uncertainty.

The key advantages of stakeholder partnership theory are the following:

- cost-, time-, resource- efficiency;
- universality and multidisciplinary nature; and
- the fact that it may be applied from micro- to macro-level initiatives.

Although many theoretical principles came from business administration into the public administration domain, stakeholder partnership theory is viable for transit from public administration to business administration, although additional experimental research is needed to test how it would work and what transformations and modifications it may be subject to in the business environment.

7. Conclusions

Times of uncertainty deprive one of the possibility to build long-term perspectives and to clearly determine their timelines. Nevertheless, the widespread techniques under conditions of uncertainty would be adaptation, or in limbo uncertainty – new ways to interact for development that would be cost-, time-, and resource-efficient for achieving common goals.

Combined with autoethnography, a case study is a recognised efficient method to develop theory. It offers a sound methodology for transferring practice into theory in public administration in times of uncertainty. Using one in synergy means that not only best practices can be shared, but also regularities and patterns, which could be put into theory for the sake of sustainability in development despite vague predictabilities of the future and limited time frames.

The concept of the stakeholder partnership theory is developed based on the autoethnographic case study method using my professional experience at the State Statistics Service of Ukraine between 2019 and 2022.

Much has been said and studied as to why reforms fail, but what has not been questioned is the fact that the mechanisms serve as the main obstacles towards successful reforms implementation.

In stakeholder partnership theory, I imply the key groups (organisations or individuals) who need, can and may be affected by the results of the initiative having interest and influence upon its implementation. They are stakeholders with respect to the initiative, and form a partnership with designated roles at the phase of initiation, making each its input. This means that stakeholder partnerships are united not by the problem, first and fore-

most, but are brought together for the purpose of co-creating value that will, as the aftermath, tackle the problem.

The core of stakeholder partnership's philosophy is partnering stakeholders for creating new outcomes of development opportunities aimed at value co-creation with the legitimisation of the outputs. This is a very important difference – the main difference between multistakeholder partnership's existing frame and the one I offer: in terms of tangible outcomes, the stakeholder partnership serves not only to solve problems and create new opportunities, it is also a result-oriented mechanism that has a certain product as its output.

The reason why I do not speak about governance in the sense of the stakeholder partnership model is that it is stipulated by the focus on the reform initiative, putting the partnership as a *modus operandi* while implementing it as a viable mechanism forming the ecosystem of acting with determined actors operating through different stages while performing their prescribed roles. In contrast, governance's needs in broader context are satisfied by the outputs of the reform initiative – changes introduced by the reform.

However, stakeholder partnership in its transnational perspective is, of course, a form of transnational governance if we look at it as a mechanism to implement transnational reforms. This study explores both perspectives showing interlinkages that will help to create new mechanisms “for killing two birds with one stone” in the future.

The partnering in question may include the interaction and engagement of actors on different levels being stakeholders in the reform initiative. This brings the concept of stakeholder partnership to the level of a new form of transnational cooperation.

If multi-stakeholder initiatives are a form of club governance that is based on ideational factors, the reform initiatives may be considered as an ideational embodiment of stakeholder partnership as such. This theory sees a reform initiative as a key concept in stakeholder partnerships that has transnational importance as it works nationally to satisfy the needs of stakeholders and qualitatively and quantitatively affects them, while also mattering

transnationally, creating empirical material for other levels of governance, thus potentially impacting further value co-creation.

Stakeholder partnership as a mechanism of reforms implementation is a cohesive consecutive process united in three phases – initiation, implementation and validation of reform initiatives.

I see a reform initiative as a minimum unit of reform that has a tangible outcome of co-created value – be it a law, communication strategy, Sustainable Development Goals progress assessment or roadmap for the transition to register-based census in Ukraine, as in my case.

Initiation is the most important phase within the mechanism, ensuring the smooth operation of activities. It outlines that all stakeholders regarding the reform initiative are engaged from the very beginning when a stakeholder partnership is set and the roles are distributed, as well as the synergy of efforts provided.

The mechanism of stakeholder partnership envisages singling out three key stakeholders at the process of initiation:

1. Public agency;
2. International actor(-s); and
3. Implementor (organisation – civil society organisation, academic institution, private company, individual – experts, academia, etc.).

However, the roles of other stakeholders are also distributed during the initiation phase, although their active participation may appear at a later phase or remain inactive/ dormant at this stage.

Whenever I speak about stakeholder partnership as a model, it has an organised mechanism, but the duration lasts until the validation of the outcome, which may take 3–6 months from the period when such a partnership emerged. Such short term-engagement may be explained by the transnational nature of reform initiatives – and by taking the developed tools, models and platforms as basics for work.

The nature of contribution to the common good in a stakeholder partnership is complicated. On the one hand, while wor-

king together all stakeholders co-produce and co-create value at the national level, but while pursuing transnational reform initiatives at national level, they also participate and contribute to the process of transnational reforms. This, in turn, proves the efficacy of applying this mechanism in the promotion of transnational reforms.

The first aspect of the mechanism of stakeholder partnership is public agency, as the leading stakeholder in the initiation phase. To start the implementation of the reform initiative using a stakeholder partnership, public agency must conduct the home assignment, i.e., analyse transformation anchors, define reform initiatives, find tools and models, select potential international actor partner(-s), draw matrix of reform initiatives, and initiate negotiations with international actors. The stakeholder partnership model foresees not only the initiating role from the inside, but also creates input, turning the state authorities into a full-fledged partner with a solid contribution into a joint value co-creation.

I suggest using the term “formalised inspiration” in relation to transformation anchors and the state, as far as the country itself makes a decision on its development course via the expression of the will of its population, whereas the adaptation and transformation processes take place with the external assistance rather than external influence.

If multi-level governance is a concept to describe the decision-making process, then multi-level engagement is the right term to reflect the complicated nature of engaging stakeholders that represent organisations at different levels – global, regional, national, sub-national – forming them into a partnership to implement a reform initiative. Here I keep in mind the transnational context and nature of reform initiatives. This means that the reform initiative may be seen as a national context inspired by other levels, or as a national manifestation that forms part of and contributes to the transnational reforms.

I suggest studying multi-level engagement from two sides. On the one hand, it concerns the object, that is the initiative itself, and concerns the ways of studying the possibility of using the same

idea at different levels, a so-called multi-level transition of the reform initiatives. On the other hand, multi-level engagement means getting actors on board from different levels and studying the possible advantages and benefits, as well as interlinkages of working at different levels and the re-use the methods used or lessons learned. Hence, international actor(-s) develop a tool, model or pattern regionally or globally that may be reused while also funding its implementation nationally by paying for the services of an implementor. Thus, the international actor does not necessarily have to be the same institution or organisation.

Cost-efficiency is ensured by the fact the implementor receives payment only for the working hours, since services, not the production of goods, are the object of the contract; the scope of the work is less important.

Time-efficiency is provided by using already existing and operable models or patterns.

Resource-efficiency is foreseen by the mentorship clause, which ensures long-lasting effects so that it is not a one-time exercise, as far as the launched activities will be repeated, thus providing a continuity of endeavour.

If everything is done properly at the initiation phase, at the phase of implementation, everything will go smoothly if the stakeholders involved simply perform their functions professionally: public agency coordinates and endorses the co-created value, international actors fund and support the activities, and experts/ civil society organisations/ academia implement the reform initiative and mentor the staff responsible for further operation around the co-created value.

The final phase foreseen by the stakeholder partnership as a mechanism is the validation of the co-created value. Validation is a process of the public presentation of the co-created value under the logo of partnership operating within the reform initiative, with the participation of all stakeholders. Key importance stakeholders at this phase are people (users of the reform initiative), governments and opponents, although the main load of work is

performed by key stakeholders within a stakeholder partnership – public agency, international actors and implementor.

Another cornerstone of the new theory sees the stakeholder partnership as a form of transnational cooperation.

The theory of stakeholder identification refers to the business administration domain, and I tested it for the first time in a public administration environment. Originally, it studied stakeholders with respect to an organisation, but I studied them with respect to a reform initiative. The variables in this experiment remained the same – power, urgency and legitimacy – but as a result, certain stakeholders shifted their places in relation to these variables. Three core stakeholders remained the same from the mechanism we depicted earlier – public agency, international actors and implementors.

1. Public agency is the definitive stakeholder comprising all variables with respect to the reform initiative.
2. International actors are dominant stakeholders who have both legitimacy and power.
3. Implementor – a dependent stakeholder (individual consultant, NGO, etc.) that depends on the dominant stakeholder to hire them for the implementation of work.
4. The rest of academia and civil society, unless involved as implementors, only have legitimacy with respect to the reform initiative, so the only thing they may do is to give professional feedback and comments on the activities surrounding the reform initiative. This makes them a discretionary stakeholder.
5. The government is a dormant stakeholder as the initiative was launched by a public authority, with a legitimate status in the sphere to which the initiative belongs, and, thus, there was no need for an urgent claim from the government's side or need to use power.
6. Critics and opponents are dangerous stakeholders as far as they have legitimacy and urgency, but they experience

the lack of power that usually brings them into the role of opponents.

7. Users of the reform initiative are demanding stakeholders. This notion is derived by defining Ukraine as a service state for its citizens. So, users have urgency as they want to be positively affected by the results of the reform initiative.

At the end of the paper, a SWOT-analysis for the Stakeholder Partnership Model is offered to show its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, as well as threats it may bring, including a synopsis of the new theory. Below is the matrix of the SWOT-analysis:

<p>S – time-, cost-, resource-efficiency, simultaneous multi-level operation, universality, solid empirical value, decentralisation of reforms implementation, reform unit notion, transparency, win-win approach, inbuilt mechanism avoiding dubbing of projects, contrastive perspective.</p>	<p>W – absence of know-how creation, may only complement not fully replace the ITA mechanism, much work to be done to develop professional competence of the model's users.</p>
<p>O – spare funds, time, no project team needed, universality, applicability from micro- to macro-level, developing competence of public servants, project to launch it into wide practice, renewability.</p>	<p>T – lack of willingness from public administration, brain drain in public service, expedience in hierarchy of needs</p>

References

- Alexander, G. L., & Bennett, A. (2005). *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. MIT Press. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.till.biblextern.sh.se/lib/sodertorn/detail.action?docID=6401866>
- Andrea, S., & Jutta J. (2018). Revisiting Global Governance in Multi-stakeholder Initiatives: Club Governance Based on Ideational Prealignments. *Global Society*, 32(1), 2–22. DOI: 10.1080/13600826.2017.1377688
- Ansell, C., & Alison G. (2008). Collaborative Governance in Theory and Practice. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 18(4), 544.
- Ashrafi, A., Ravasan, A.Z., Trkman, P., & Afshari, S. (2019). The role of business analytics capabilities in bolstering firms' agility and performance. *International Journal of Information Management*, 47, 1–15.
- Azizuddin, M. (2016). Reforms and Governance. In Farazmand, A. (Ed.), *Global Encyclopedia of Public Administration, Public Policy, and Governance*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-31816-5_1853-1
- Björkdahl, A., Chaban, N., Leslie, J., & Masselot, A. (2015). Introduction: To Take or Not to Take EU Norms? Adoption, Adaptation, Resistance and Rejection. In Björkdahl, A., Chaban, N., Leslie, J., Masselot, A. (Eds.), *Importing EU Norms. United Nations University Series on Regionalism, Vol. 8*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-13740-7_1
- Brouwer, H., Woodhill, J., Hemmati, M., Verhoosel, K., & van Vugt, S. (2016). *The MSP Guide, How to design and facilitate multi-stakeholder partnerships*. Wageningen: Wageningen University and Research, WCDI. Practical Action Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3362/9781780446691>
- Carolyn E., Adams, T.E., & Bochner, A.P. (2011). Source: Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung, 36(4) (138). Conventions and Institutions from a Historical Perspective / Konventionen und Institutionen in historischer Perspektive, pp. 273–290.

- Ciasullo M.V., Montera R., & Douglas A. (2022). Building SMEs' resilience in times of uncertainty: the role of big data analytics capability and co-innovation. *Transforming Government: People, Process and Policy*, 16(2), 203–217. Emerald Publishing Limited 1750-6166 DOI 10.1108/TG-07-2021-0120
- Dimitrova, A., & Dragneva, R. (2013). Shaping convergence with the EU in foreign policy and state aid in post-Orange Ukraine: Weak external incentives, powerful veto players. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 65(4), 658–681.
- EGRIS Newsletter (2020) Issue 2. <https://egrisstats.org/wp-content/uploads/1.F-EGRIS-Newsletter.pdf>
- Erdem T. G. (2022). Multistakeholder Partnerships for Development and the Financialization of Development Assistance. *Development and Change*, 53, 84–116. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dech.12687>
- EU-Ukraine Association Agreement Title V. <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/storage/app/sites/1/uploaded-files/TITLE%20V.pdf>
- Event Report. (2021). *Making the most vulnerable visible: Data gaps and official statistics on forced displacement*. <https://egrisstats.org/wp-content/uploads/1.C-UNWDF-Report-.pdf>
- Freyburg, T., Lavenex, S., Schimmelfennig, F., Skripka, T., & Wetzel, A. (2015). *Democracy Promotion by Functional Cooperation. Challenges to Democracy in the 21st Century*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Frick, W., (2019). How to Survive a Recession and Thrive Afterward. *Harvard Business Review*, pp. 98–105.
- Guérin, N., & Rittberger, B. (2020). Are third states pulling the strings? The impact of domestic policy change on EU-third state cooperation. *Journal of European Integration*, 42(7), 991–1008.
- Khadzhyradieva, S., & Shevtsova, J. (2021). Efficiency of implementation European reform support programs public governance in Ukraine. *Public Administration and Regional Development*, 13, 797–816. <https://doi.org/10.34132/pard2021.13.11>
- Králiková, M. (2022). Importing EU norms: the case of anti-corruption reform in Ukraine. *Journal of European Integration*, 44(2), 245–260.
- Lavenex, S. (2004). EU external governance in 'wider Europe'. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 11(4), 680–700. DOI: 10.1080/1350176042000248098
- Lehne, S. (2014). *Time to Reset the European Neighbourhood Policy*. Policy Paper. Carnegie Europe. https://carnegieendowment.org/files/time_reset_enp.pdf
- Lie, A.L., & Granheim, S.I. (2017). *Multistakeholder partnerships in global nutrition governance: protecting public interest?*

- <https://tidsskriftet.no/en/2017/10/global-helse/multistakeholder-partnerships-global-nutrition-governance-protecting-public#:~:text=Multistakeholder%20partnerships%2C%20involving%20public%20and%20private%20actors%2C%20have,of%20interst%20be%20adeuately%20adressed%2C%20and%20by%20whom%3F>
- Malcolm, J. (2008) *Multi-stakeholder Governance and the Internet Governance Forum*. 1st Paperback Ed. Terminus.
- Mawdsley, E., Murray, W.E., Overton, J., Scheyvens R., & Banks, G. (2018) Exporting Stimulus and “Shared Prosperity”: Reinventing Foreign Aid for a Retroliberal Era. *Development Policy Review*, 36, O25–O43.
- Mitchell, R. K., Agle, B. R., & Wood, D. J. (1997). Toward a theory of stakeholder identification and salience: Defining the principle of who and what really counts. *Academy of Management Review*, 22(4), 853–886.
- Moallemi, E.A, Elsawah, S., Ryan, M.J. (2020). Robust decision making and Epoch–Era analysis: A comparison of two robustness frameworks for decision-making under uncertainty. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 151, 119797. ISSN 0040-1625, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2019.119797>
- Nielsen, C., & Annabeth Aagaard, A. (2021). The Fifth Stage of Business Model Research: The Role of Business Models in Times of Uncertainty. *Journal of Business Models* 9(1), 78.
- Open SDG platform website. <https://open-sdg.org/about>
- Pohle, J. (2016). Multistakeholder governance processes as production sites: enhanced cooperation “in the making”. *Internet Policy Review*, 5(3). DOI: 10.14763/2016.3.432
- Rabinovych, M., & Egert, O. (2022). Explaining Non-compliance in the EU Differentiated Integration: The Case of Transport and Infrastructure Obligations under the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*.
- Salz, S. (2019). *Multi-stakeholder partnerships: why they matter and how to get them right*. <https://global-diplomacy-lab.org/blog/multi-stakeholder-partnerships-why-they-matter-and-how-to-get-them-right/>
- Samokhvalov, V., & Strelkov, A. (2021). Cross-dimensional network of democracy promotion: public administration reform in post-Euro-aidan Ukraine. *Journal of European Integration*, 43(7), 799–814.
- Scholte, J. A. (2020). Multistakeholderism Filling the Global Governance Gap? Research Overview for the Global Challenges Foundation.
- Shevtsova, O. (2020). SDGs Progress Measurement in Ukraine Based on UNESCAP Methodology. Paper to the Expert Meeting on Statistics for SDGs. S1_SDG paper_UKRAINE.pdf (unece.org).

- Shevtsova, O. (2021). *Use of European reform support programs of public administration in Ukraine: problems and prospects. – Qualifying scientific work as a manuscript*. Educational and Scientific Institute of Public Administration and Civil Service of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Kyiv, Ukraine, 2021.
- Shevtsova, O., Shayani, D. (2022). *Application of ESCAP Methodology to Assess SDG Progress at Thematic and Subnational Levels in Ukraine*. Working Paper No. 3, Workshop on Statistics for SDGs, UNECE. WS2022 WP3 - Ukraine UNECE_SDG_workshop_2022-DS3 - Formatted.pdf.
- Shevtsova, O., Shayani, D. (2022). *Application of ESCAP Methodology to Assess SDG Progress at Thematic and Subnational Levels in Ukraine*. Presentation, Expert Meeting on Statistics for SDGs, UNECE Application of ESCAP Methodology to Assess SDG Progress at Thematic and Subnational Levels in Ukraine (unece.org).
- Shevtsova, O., & Fitisova, A. (2022). *Education Data in Displacement Context: What Ukraine Does and Has to Do to Collect Data on IDPs?* <https://www.norrag.org/education-data-in-displacement-context-what-ukraine-does-and-has-to-do-to-collect-data-on-idps/>
- Smith, L.D. (2001). *Reform and Decentralization of Agricultural Services: A Policy Framework* FAO. Agricultural Policy and Economic Development Series, 7. <https://www.fao.org/3/Y2006E/y2006e08.htm#fn46>
- Stibbe, D., & Dave Prescott, D. (2016). *The Partnering Initiative, n introduction to multi-stakeholder partnerships*. Oxford. <https://www.thepartneringinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Introduction-to-MSPs-Briefing-paper.pdf>
- Sustainable Development Goals – Ukraine. (2020). *Voluntary National Review*. 26294VNR_2020_Ukraine_Report.pdf (un.org)
- The World Bank. (2004). *The Public Sector Governance Reform Cycle: available diagnostic tools*. https://www.academia.edu/62701954/The_public_sector_governance_reform_cycle_available_diagnostic_tools
- Trappmann, V. (2019). External Transformation Anchors. In Merkel, W., Kollmorgen, R., & Wagener, H.J. (eds), *The Handbook of Political, Social, and Economic Transformation*. Oxford Academic, 21 March 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198829911.003.0049>, accessed 13 Jan. 2023.
- Turunen, J. (2021). *Transnational public administration: Background study for the development of a course and competence centre on transnational public administration*. Södertörns högskola.
- Tyshchuk, T., Shurgot, Y., Alekankina K. (2021) <https://voxukraine.org/en/good-health-and-well-being/>

- UNECE. (2018). *Guidelines on the Use of Registers and Administrative Data for Population and Housing Censuses*.
<https://unece.org/DAM/stats/publications/2018/ECE-CESSTAT20184.pdf>
- United Nations Statistical Commission. (2015). *Report on the forty-sixth session E/2015/24-E/CN.3/2015/40*. <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/46th-session/documents/statcom-2015-46th-report-E.pdf>
- United Nations. (2015). *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development A/RES/70/1*. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N15/291/89/PDF/N1529189.pdf?OpenElement>.
- Wu, L-W, Wang Ch-Yu, & Rouyer, E. (2020). The opportunity and challenge of trust and decision-making uncertainty. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 38(1), 199–218.
- Wunderlich, D. (2012). Europeanization through the grapevine: Communication gaps and the role of international organizations in implementation networks of EU external migration policy. *Journal of European Integration*, 34(5), 485–503.
- Yu, P. L. (1973). A class of solutions for group decision problems. *Management Science*, 19, 936–946.
- Іванчук В., Мошняга Н., аналітики «Вокс Україна» Досягнення Цілей сталого розвитку у національному та регіональному розрізах <https://voxukraine.org/doslidzhennya-sdg/>
- Порядок денний асоціації між Україною та ЄС для підготовки та сприяння імплементації Угоди про асоціацію. URL: https://www.kmu.gov.ua/storage/app/imported_content/news/doc_248012532/UA_15-1%20final.pdf
- Про затвердження Положення про Державну службу статистики України: постанова Кабінету Міністрів України від 23 вересня 2014 р. № 481. URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/481-2014-%D0%BF#Text>
- Про затвердження Порядку підготовки, виконання та проведення моніторингу програм секторальної бюджетної підтримки Європейського Союзу в Україні: постанова Кабінету Міністрів України від 15 вересня 2010 р. № 841 URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/841-2010-%25D0%25BF#Text>
- Про створення єдиної системи залучення, використання та моніторингу міжнародної технічної допомоги: постанова Кабінету Міністрів України від 15 лютого 2002 р. № 153. URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/153-2002-%25D0%25BF#Text>

Following the outbreak of COVID-19, the entire world entered a turbulent period. The collective response was surprisingly quick, with many switching to remote working and participation, for example, facilitating transnational cooperation.

Uncertainty in the world today has a new connotation, depriving us of a long-term perspective and giving us scant idea of timelines to be endured. Regardless of how we consider this limbo, we need new ways to interact for development that are more cost-, time-, and resource-efficient. This report, through the transnational prism, presents a new model for the implementation of reforms in times of uncertainty.

This series is attached to the Academy of Public Administration (*Förvaltningsakademin*), which is a multidisciplinary centre for learning at Södertörn University. We carry out contract education and research into public administration and work with qualificatory meetings between research and practical experience.

sh.se/forvaltningsakademin | publications@sh.se | sh.se/publications

