HARVARD Kennedy School
Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative

TACKLING GLOBAL CHALLENGES:

Lessons in System Leadership from the World Economic Forum's New Vision for Agriculture Initiative

Jane Nelson and Beth Jenkins

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"Ultimately, we need system change—the very nature of capitalism: what it means to be a consumer—to be a citizen. And to achieve this change, we must work in coalition. After all, business cannot stay on the sidelines of a system that gives them life in the first place."

Paul Polman
CEO, Unilever and member, World Economic Forum Global Agenda Trustees on Food Security and Agriculture
Remarks at UN Global Compact Summit, UN General Assembly, New York, 25 June 2015

"The innovative approach of the World Economic Forum's New Vision for Agriculture initiative has generated extraordinary momentum to date, putting a transformational vision into action around the world. This approach can serve as a model for leaders seeking to address complex global challenges in many other sectors and regions."

Prof. Klaus Schwab
Founder and Executive Chairman, World Economic Forum

"To enable environmentally sustainable and inclusive agriculture growth we need partnership among stakeholders across the agricultural value chain, including government, domestic, regional and multinational companies, multilateral and civil society organizations, farmers, consumers and entrepreneurs. Farmers should be recognized as not only beneficiaries and producers but also as equal partners, at the center of the partnership, with significant involvement in the decision-making processes."

Estrella Penunia
Secretary-General, Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development and Member, Grow Asia Steering Committee

"Only by rapidly transforming the agriculture sector can Africa meet the growing food needs of its urban population, while boosting incomes for millions of its farmers—the majority of whom are women—and creating much needed jobs. We must think differently: grow agriculture as a business, to become a wealth-creating sector, not one for managing poverty."

Dr. Akinwumi Adesina
President, African Development Bank Group
Inaugural speech, Abidjan, September 1, 2015

Executive Summary

A special form of leadership, system leadership, is needed to tackle global challenges like food security, climate change, job creation, and gender parity.

These challenges are complex and systemic, rooted in the actions and interactions of diverse yet interconnected, interdependent stakeholders. Leaders in business, government, and civil society increasingly recognize that they cannot be addressed in a top-down, pre-planned, linear fashion and that point solutions don't work. Instead, the solutions require stakeholders to change the way they operate at the global, national, and local levels. Over time, they must develop new technologies, products, services, business models, public service delivery models, policy and regulatory innovations, voluntary standards, and cultural norms and behaviors that together deliver new results. System leadership can help align the efforts of diverse stakeholders in order to accelerate this process, and ensure that it delivers more sustainable, inclusive business growth and human development.

Individuals, institutions, and interactive structures all have system leadership roles to play.

Individual leaders and institutions across business, government, and civil society must pursue their interests in ways that benefit the broader systems in which they operate, recognizing that in the long term, the two are inextricably linked. And innovative interactive structures—called backbone organizations, multi-stakeholder initiatives, cross-sector coalitions, or partnership platforms—must mobilize, support, align, and coordinate the efforts of individuals and institutions system-wide.

System leadership works by cultivating a shared vision for change, empowering widespread innovation and action, and enabling mutual accountability.

A shared vision galvanizes diverse stakeholders and helps to ensure that their efforts align, complement, and build on one another, producing better results faster than they could otherwise have done. While not all stakeholders will be early movers, a critical mass of individual, institutional, and interactive system leaders must innovate and act in order to "tip" the system and influence the rest. And mutual accountability is both a powerful incentive and a critical enabler. In a system, where stakeholders are interdependent, they will only sustain the investment of time, effort, and resources needed to play their parts if the others do, too.

Country ownership and action are essential for on the ground impact and change.

There is growing recognition that strong individual and institutional system leadership, supported by strong interactive structures, are especially important at the country level. The need spans business, government, and civil society—but efforts to drive systemic change cannot be sustained or scaled without proactive leadership from government leaders and relevant ministries, or without clear alignment between national development priorities, public policies and market-based approaches. Country-led, country-based interactive structures that bring stakeholders together across sectors with the explicit purpose of fostering communication and collaboration and coordinating their activities can help to achieve the necessary alignment.

The World Economic Forum's New Vision for Agriculture (NVA) initiative is one example of system leadership in practice, and a rich source of insight for those seeking to exercise it.

The NVA aims to transform agricultural systems to improve food security, environmental sustainability, and economic opportunity. It is at a relatively early stage in what will be a long-term process of mobilizing the wide range of actors needed to drive systemic change. Nevertheless, it demonstrates how individual, institutional, and interactive system leadership can come together to create momentum for such change. In particular, the NVA demonstrates the potential of establishing interactive structures at the country level to coordinate the efforts of diverse stakeholders across sectors and value chains. This report seeks to distill the lessons—and strategic questions—for system leaders in agriculture, food security, and beyond. These are summarized in the diagram on page 6.
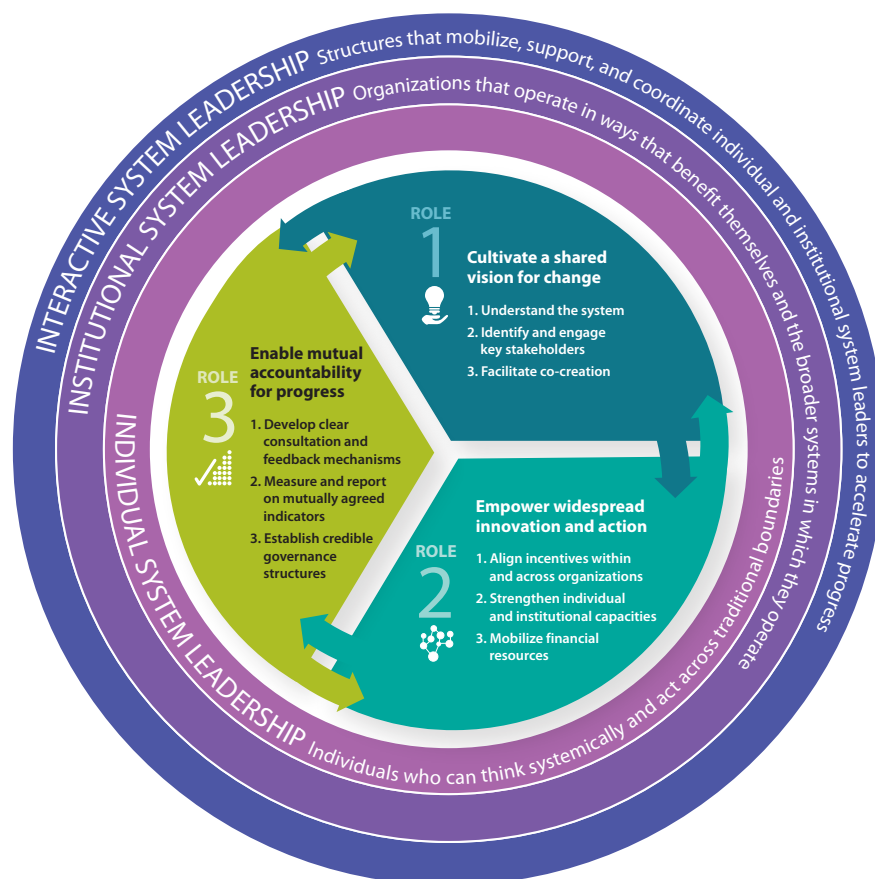
To tackle global challenges, we will need to develop, implement, and scale up diverse, interlocking solutions that together transform entire systems—and we will need to mainstream system leadership to achieve it.

In 2015, the member states of the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals, focused on 17 global challenges, and endorsed historic agreements to tackle climate change and mobilize financing for development. To realize these ambitious commitments, we will need more than ever before to combine domain expertise and technical skills with the ability to think and act systemically. Companies, governments and civil society organizations need to develop and reward many more individuals with this still relatively

rare combination of mindsets and skill sets. These institutions must adapt their internal organizational structures, processes and delivery models to be more effective at working in partnership and through broader networks. And they must make long-term investments in the interactive structures that serve to strengthen communication, coordination and collaboration among them.

None of this is easy. It requires a deliberate commitment of time, talent and financial resources. Yet it creates enormous opportunity for impact, developing individual leaders, organizations, and systems that are fit-for-purpose in an increasingly complex and uncertain future.

Three Key Roles of System Leaders

INTERACTIVE SYSTEM LEADERSHIP Structures that mobilize, support, and coordinate individual and institutional system leaders to accelerate progress

INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM LEADERSHIP Organizations that operate in ways that benefit themselves and the broader systems in which they operate

INDIVIDUAL SYSTEM LEADERSHIP Individuals who can think systemically and act across traditional boundaries

ROLE 1
Cultivate a shared vision for change
1. Understand the system
2. Identify and engage key stakeholders
3. Facilitate co-creation

ROLE 2
Empower widespread innovation and action
1. Align incentives within and across organizations
2. Strengthen individual and institutional capacities
3. Mobilize financial resources

ROLE 3
Enable mutual accountability for progress
1. Develop clear consultation and feedback mechanisms
2. Measure and report on mutually agreed indicators
3. Establish credible governance structures

1 The need for system leadership

Sustainable, inclusive business growth and human development depend on our ability to tackle complex global challenges and drive long-term change.

Business, government, and civil society share an interest in tackling these challenges. Companies that do so can stay ahead of evolving trends, improve their operating environments, manage risk, reduce costs, strengthen competitive positioning, and create or capture new markets.[1] Governments and civil society organizations must do so to fulfill their mandates and missions. In September, 2015, the 193 member states of the UN General Assembly committed to partner across national and sector boundaries to address 17 such challenges, formally adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, followed by adoption of the Paris Agreement within the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in December, 2015. Both of these historic global agreements are testament not only to international diplomacy and cooperation, but also to unprecedented dialogue and consultation between political, business and civil society leaders.[2] Attention most now turn to delivery.

These challenges are complex and systemic. They have arisen over periods of years, even decades, from the actions and interactions of many diverse yet interconnected, interdependent stakeholders. And these stakeholders must change the way they operate at the global, national, and local levels in order to resolve them.[3]

A broad academic and practitioner literature makes it clear that tackling complex, systemic challenges is a distributed, adaptive process.[4] Top-down, controlled, linear approaches do not work, because no single individual or organization has sufficient knowledge, resources, or authority over others in the system. Instead, the answers emerge as many different individuals and organizations experiment, learn, and adapt within parameters that are always changing as a result of one another's efforts. Over time, they develop new technologies, products, services, business models, public service delivery models, policy and regulatory innovations, voluntary standards, and cultural norms and behaviors that together deliver new results. This process is constant, self-organizing, organic, and therefore unpredictable.

A special form of leadership, system leadership, is needed to accelerate this process and ensure that it delivers more sustainable, inclusive business growth and human development at scale. As outlined in a recent paper by Peter Senge at the Massachussetts Institute for Technology, Hal Hamilton at the Sustainable Food Lab, and John Kania at FSG, the fundamental role of system leadership is to "foster collective leadership." It is to "shift the conditions through which […] those who have a problem can learn collectively to make progress against it."[5] This must happen at several levels—individual, institutional and interactive—as outlined in Box 1.

To tackle the many complex, systemic challenges we face, system leadership must emerge into the mainstream. This makes it critical to identify and learn from examples of system leadership in practice. There is a growing number, ranging from city-level alliances to global, issue-focused initiatives to improve access to healthcare, nutrition, education, energy, and more. There is also an emerging focus on the concepts of 'country ownership' for implementing global development goals, 'domestic resource mobilization' to drive financing for development and 'nationally determined contributions' to tackle climate change. These place the core responsibility and opportunity for leadership clearly at the country level, although effective global governance and international support remain essential.

This report seeks to draw lessons from the World Economic Forum's New Vision for Agriculture (NVA), which aims to transform agricultural systems in order to improve food security, environmental sustainability, and economic opportunity. The NVA is at a relatively early stage in what will be a long-term process. Nevertheless, it demonstrates how individual, institutional, and interactive system leadership can come together to create momentum for change, especially at the country level, and offers a number of lessons for other system leaders in agriculture and beyond.

Box 1 **Three dimensions of system leadership**

System leadership starts with the individual leader, but has individual, institutional, and interactive dimensions.[6] These three dimensions are interdependent and equally important in tackling complex, systemic challenges and achieving the outcomes we seek.

Individual System Leadership	Institutional System Leadership

Individual System Leadership

An **individual system leader** is someone who plays a leadership role in his or her organization not only for its own benefit, but for the benefit of the broader system in which it operates—recognizing that in the long term, the two are inextricably linked. Individual system leaders:

- Engage and inspire other human beings, whose beliefs and behaviors are at the heart of system change;

- Serve as champions of change within their organizations, often challenging and pushing their organizations to develop and adopt new ways of operating and working with others;

- Provide and mobilize support for interactive leadership structures.

According to Senge and his colleagues, individual system leaders have the ability to see the larger system, foster reflection and generative conversation, and shift the focus from problem solving to co-creating the future.[7] They and other observers have pointed to personal qualities like self-awareness, openness, curiosity, comfort with emotion and ambiguity.[8] System leaders must be able to live with what FSG has called "the paradox of combining intentionality (that comes with the development of a common agenda) and emergence (that unfolds through collective seeing, learning, and doing).[9] While formal authority makes a powerful difference, other forms of influence are also relevant; while we need system leaders at the top, we also find them playing instrumental roles from other levels of their organizations.

System leadership implies a fundamental shift in the way leaders conceive of themselves and their roles, and in the ways that they operate and interact with others. They must often make the case for their organizations and others to invest new resources, take on new risks, and prioritize actions that will benefit the system as a whole.

Present systems do not always encourage or reward these ways of operating, and they can challenge people's routines and mental models. As a result, many of today's individual system leaders have had to take real personal risk to do things differently.[10]

Institutional System Leadership

An **institutional system leader** is an organization that pursues its own interests in ways compatible with, and that intentionally contribute to, the health of the system in which it operates. Complex, systemic challenges are rooted in the actions and interactions of existing organizations—and they can only be addressed if those organizations act in a way that benefits the system as a whole.

Organizations can strengthen the systems in which they operate in three ways, and leading organizations frequently use all three, whether sequentially or simultaneously:[11]

- First, through **unilateral efforts** to innovate and influence others, such as developing new products, technologies, business or public service delivery models, policies, and regulations;

- Second, through **project-based partnerships** that leverage the resources and capabilities of others to help develop and scale innovations that would have been impossible, or at least inefficient, to do on their own;

- And third, through **broader networks** that connect many organizations, amplify their voices, align their efforts, and facilitate collaboration to meet common needs such as basic research, shared infrastructure, and the creation of new institutions for interactive leadership.

Internal organizational change and capacity-building are frequently needed to make the most of any of these strategies. While high-level commitments are usually required to set the stage, dedicated roles and teams in areas such as innovation, partnership, and/or sustainability often need to be established or strengthened.

At the same time, core functions and processes like research and development, strategy, project development, operations, finance and budgeting, human resources and performance management continue to play a crucial role and must be aligned to support any system change effort.

Interactive System Leadership

Interactive system leadership comes from a special type of organization that mobilizes, supports, aligns, and coordinates the efforts of individuals and institutions across the system to accelerate progress and achieve scale. Commonly called a backbone organization, multi-stakeholder initiative, cross-sector coalition or partnership platform, this type of organizaton is critical because most others lack the time, incentive, or credibility to do the job.[12] A growing literature indicates that this job typically includes:[13]

- Identifying relevant stakeholders and articulating the value proposition for them to get involved;
- Bringing stakeholders together across traditional boundaries, creating a sense of inspiration and energy, challenging their perceptions of one another, cultivating mutual understanding, respect, and trust, and developing a common language;
- Uncovering and promoting opportunities for stakeholders to collaborate;
- Securing financial and other resources for innovation and collaborative work, ranging from research to pilot projects on the ground;
- Keeping stakeholders accountable to one another by facilitating regular dialogue, hosting formal consultation and feedback mechanisms, helping them to define mutually agreed indicators of progress, and pressuring them to measure and report;
- Enabling stakeholders to learn from one another by documenting and disseminating their approaches and lessons and facilitating peer-to-peer learning and site visits.

While many describe the work of backbone organizations as "neutral facilitation," researchers at Wageningen University in the Netherlands point out that "the key is not so much to be neutral, but to maintain integrity."[14] Backbone organizations must exercise visionary leadership and provide some amount of "push"; it is a matter of how. Certainly it is a long-term endeavor. In its collective impact work, FSG suggests that backbone organizations must be willing to dedicate a decade or more to advancing a systemic effort.[15]

Backbone organizations and other types of interactive structures can only be effective when individual and institutional system leaders support them. In particular, they must invest financially and dedicate the time needed to participate actively in the change these structures aim to facilitate. FSG points out that while this is a relatively new strategy for most existing individuals and institutions, "it can be a highly leveraged investment. A backbone organization with a modest annual budget can support a collective [process involving] several hundred organizations, magnifying the impact of millions or even billions of dollars in existing funding."[16]

2 The New Vision for Agriculture Story

The agriculture sector is at a crossroads. With the global population growing, demand for agricultural production is increasing. Natural resources, especially water, are under stress, and weather conditions are becoming more volatile. Approximately 2.5 billion people depend on agriculture for their livelihoods, and many of them live in poverty.[17] The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals call for profound change in agriculture and food systems in order to end hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition by 2030.

Transforming agriculture is a complex, systemic challenge. Consumer demand for food and beverages is being shaped by demographic shifts and growing awareness of the impacts of people's choices on their own health, on farmers' and workers' well-being, and on the environment. Retailers and manufacturers are working to keep up. Manufacturers, processors, commodity traders, farmers, input providers, investors, and insurers are responding to signals from each other. Smallholder farmers are struggling to gain access to the financing, inputs, technologies, and skills to move beyond subsistence and engage in value chains in the first place. Governments are experimenting with new rules and incentives to facilitate innovation while protecting consumers and the environment, and civil society, industry, and cross-sector coalitions are stepping up to fill real and perceived governance gaps with voluntary standards. Technological innovators are constantly shifting the boundaries of what is possible, from biotech to information and communications technology, and in doing so, raising questions about what is acceptable for society as a whole.

Aligning these dynamics to deliver food security, economic opportunity, and environmental sustainability is no small task. Yet this is precisely what the New Vision for Agriculture and many others are working to do—from United Nations agencies and donor programs to multi-stakeholder initiatives on palm oil, sugar, soy, cocoa, and other commodities, to business coalitions such as the Sustainable Agriculture Initiative and Consumer Goods Forum.

The World Economic Forum's New Vision for Agriculture initiative has its roots in the 2008 food crisis. The Forum counts among its members some of the largest food and beverage companies, commodity traders, and agricultural input manufacturers in the world. With spiking prices causing civil unrest in many countries, the food crisis highlighted a long-term threat to food value chains and created the impetus for these companies to work together, knowing there was a limited amount they could do on their own. They asked for the Forum's help framing a big picture response. By the time of the Forum's annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland, in January 2010, that response had evolved into the New Vision for Agriculture (NVA). A report released at that meeting described the opportunity to position agriculture as a driver for improving food security, environmental sustainability, and economic opportunity by 20% each decade through a combination of business approaches and policy innovations delivered through broad-based collaboration involving companies, governments, civil society organizations, and farmers themselves.[18]

This shared vision emerged over the course of many months of intensive dialogue among stakeholders in business, government, and civil society. While considered exclusive and even elitist by some, few debate the strength of the World Economic Forum's brand and convening power. The organization used this strength to its advantage, bringing a core group of 17 companies together to discuss the issues in a neutral, "safe space"—and to meet with key governments and civil society groups around the world. Agriculture and food security experts helped them map out critical issues, understand linkages, and identify opportunities. Facilitation experts helped them to design and

Figure 1 **The New Vision for Agriculture**

FOOD SECURITY

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

deliver more creative, collaborative ways to engage with each other. For most participating companies, engaging in this kind of discussion with some of their biggest competitors— let alone stakeholders across sectors—was a new experience. It took time to develop a common language and build trust.

Throughout the process, the Forum leveraged its reputation and relationships to suspend traditional power dynamics among these stakeholders and facilitate the co-creation of new ideas. For example, Forum staff would deliberately level the playing field by providing equal speaking time and visibility for diverse stakeholders to share their views. They would discourage prepared remarks and powerpoint presentations, in favor of unscripted, informal dialogue focused on joint problem-solving. Instead of advocating for specific business approaches or policy reforms, they would create space for leaders themselves to inspire and advise others, or to jointly develop new approaches.

A range of champions were critical in the process of broadening, building momentum, and bringing this dialogue to a shared vision. These include representatives of the 17 original companies, who became the NVA initiative's first Project Board, and members of the Forum's Global Agenda Council on Nutrition and Food Security, spanning business, government, civil society, and farmers' groups. These also included a self-selected set of government and civil society leaders who stepped forward not only to help drive the conversation, but also to engage their organizations in turning conversation into action.

The official launch of the New Vision for Agriculture at Davos in January, 2010 shifted this group of champions and key staff at the Forum into a new phase focused on empowering innovation and action around the world. Just after Davos, President Jakaya Kikwete of Tanzania asked for support putting the vision into action in his country. A similar message soon arrived from the Government of Vietnam. Within several months, coalitions of local and international partners were building new initiatives in both countries. By the end of 2011, additional countries had followed suit—including Indonesia, Mexico, Mozambique, Kenya, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Ghana and Burkina Faso.

Over the next few years, two regional platforms were launched to provide dedicated support to multiple countries.

• Inspired by the experience in Tanzania, the African Union, New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and the Forum jointly launched Grow Africa in 2011 to help realize national agriculture-sector goals through increased investment and partnership. To date Grow Africa is engaging with 12 countries.

• In Southeast Asia, leaders involved in NVA-catalyzed partnerships in Vietnam, Indonesia, and Myanmar called for the formation of a similar regional platform. The Forum in collaboration with the ASEAN Secretariat launched Grow Asia, with a Secretariat based in Singapore, in 2015.

Between them, staff at the Forum, Grow Africa, and Grow Asia have now helped build and support independent state-level, national, and regional initiatives in 19 countries.

The NVA network has made a strong commitment to country ownership and action. While the country-led initiatives are all different in structure and focus, according to local context and priorities, they all aim to facilitate communication, coordination, and collaboration among stakeholders that share the "New Vision for Agriculture." And these initiatives all reflect five core principles:

Guiding Principles of NVA Country Initiatives	
1	Locally owned and aligned with country goals
2	Multi-stakeholder, with open and inclusive engagement from the beginning
3	Market-driven, with projects led by the private sector and rooted in viable business cases
4	Holistic, addressing the full value chain and all actors in the agricultural system
5	Globally supported by an international network providing solidarity and support

Over 500 different organizations are now participating in these collaborative initiatives. For example, companies, donors, development finance institutions, and civil society organizations are working with farmers' groups to build more sustainable and inclusive value chains for specific commodities. Commodity traders and food and beverage manufacturers are sharing the farmers' needs with financial institutions so that appropriate credit and insurance products can be developed. Governments are paying close attention and adjusting policies and regulations to allow promising approaches to scale. Research institutes and consultants are starting to undertake impact evaluations at the project level.

And behind these collaborative initiatives are organizations and individuals willing to invest money, time, and effort, often without much certainty about where things will lead. Among donors, for example, the US Agency for International Development, the UK Department for International Development, and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation support Grow Africa, and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the

Government of Canada's Global Affairs Canada support Grow Asia. The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs supports the NVA's Transformation Leaders Network, which brings leaders from state-level, national, and regional initiatives together to share their experiences and lessons learned.

A core budget from the World Economic Forum, which is funded through membership fees, has been instrumental throughout, enabling the NVA team to operate flexibly and build upon new opportunities as they emerged organically through a growing series of leadership dialogues.

The individuals, organizations, and collaborative initiatives in the NVA network have built considerable momentum, and are increasingly focused on sustaining that momentum. They are working to institutionalize the leadership exercised by the individual champions of the early days, both through organizational change within the businesses, governments, and civil society groups involved and through capacity-building of the new collaborative initiatives established to bring them together—including the development of sustainable funding models.

The NVA network is also working to sustain momentum by enabling mutual accountability among those involved. They know it is critical to engage additional stakeholders without providing a platform for those who are not truly committed—and to demonstrate that value is being created for all. As with any new approach to problem-solving, there has been skepticism. For example, the civil society group Oxfam released a report calling "mega public-private partnerships" in African agriculture—including Grow Africa, the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania, the Beira Agricultural Growth Corridor in Mozambique, the Bagre Growth Pole in Burkina Faso, and others outside the NVA network—"unproven and risky," and "likely to skew the benefits of investments toward the privileged and more powerful, while the risks fall to the poorest and most vulnerable." [19]

Recognizing the risks, the NVA team at the Forum has developed an initial set of seven core indicators, and two optional ones, to guide stakeholders' efforts to measure and aggregate the benefits from the project level up. And the regional, national, and state-level collaborative initiatives

are all working on their own approaches to accountability, including stakeholder engagement, results measurement and beyond. Grow Asia, for example, learned from Grow Africa's experience, and engaged farmers and civil society groups in strategy development and partnership governance from the beginning. Both Grow Africa and Grow Asia are developing robust results measurement frameworks and grievance mechanisms. This is becoming the model for all new collaborative initiatives emerging in the NVA network.

So far, the NVA network has achieved substantial outputs and outcomes. For example, the organizations and partnerships involved have committed over US$10.5 billion in investments, of which almost US$1.9 billion have been realized to date, and are engaged in more than 90 value chain projects. They have reached 9.6 million smallholder farmers globally, 8.6 million of them through Grow Africa.[20] Projects evaluated to date have enabled participating smallholders to increase their yields between 12% and 75% and their incomes between 10% and 75%. Improved technologies, farming and environmental practices have been implemented on around 450,000 hectares in Asia and Mexico.[21]

However, at this stage in its development, the NVA network's most significant results may be cultural and institutional. The NVA network has fostered greater alignment within the private sector. It has brought business, government, and civil society together, and shifted thinking about the role of market-based solutions in food security—not in place of, but alongside, public and humanitarian responses. And it has incubated the kind of institutional infrastructure needed to catalyze, support, and align organizational efforts and partnerships in favor of a broad, shared vision. While it will be difficult to measure and attribute the impact of this kind of change, the NVA considers it critical to accelerating agricultural transformation, and ensuring that transformation delivers food security, environmental sustainability, and economic opportunity.

The NVA story is far from over. Its vision is long term, and there are challenges at many levels. Among other priorities, the NVA network continues to work to:

• Translate high-level conversations and commitments into practical action and results on the ground, especially at scale;

• Fully engage, build the capacity of, and deliver measurable benefits for smallholder farmers;

• Better understand and mitigate the negative environmental impacts of agriculture, including its contribution to climate change;

• Enable more interactive structures to emerge at the national and state levels, while ensuring that existing structures institutionalize, become financially sustainable, and scale up their impact; and

• Develop more credible and meaningful methods of measuring results, and of understanding what they add up to in the context of long-term transformational change—at the level of individual projects, commodity value chains, national and even global food systems.

Ultimately, success will depend on sustained leadership by all the individuals, institutions, and interactive structures in the NVA network—as well as other multi-stakeholder initiatives in agriculture. Box 2 summarizes the different levels of system leadership that are driving the New Vision for Agriculture. The rest of this report seeks to distill insights from the NVA experience for all of these system leaders, in agriculture and beyond.

Box 2 **System leadership in the NVA network**

NVA's progress to date is due to the actions of diverse **individual and institutional system leaders** working both on their own and collectively with each other to address systemic challenges in transforming agriculture. They come from a wide variety of sectors and functional backgrounds, and play varied but mutually interdependent and complementary roles in driving the agenda forward. In addition to collaborating on specific value chain investments and working groups, their most important contribution has been building multi-stakeholder **interactive leadership structures** to accelerate and scale change at regional, country and state levels.

Individual System Leadership

More than 1,400 individual leaders are engaged in the NVA network, investing personal time and effort to champion the cause, bring others into the community, and drive innovation and action within—and beyond—their own organizations. Three key types of individual leader have been essential to NVA's progress:

• *Senior level champions* have played a vital role to co-create a compelling shared vision, both globally and nationally, establish the incentives and enabling environment for implementation, and demand accountability to sustain momentum.

• *Operational practitioners* have worked on the ground to jointly identify priorities for implementation that explicitly align economic, social and environmental goals, and to develop and execute new public policies, technologies, financing mechanisms, business models and management systems that are relevant for specific commodities and value chains.

• *Technical experts and thought leaders* have offered expertise and advice ranging from science and agronomy to strategy and development impact, designed and facilitated processes for shared learning and agenda-setting, and added data-driven credibility to the concept of the New Vision for Agriculture.

In addition to engaging in the NVA through their own organizations, many leaders serve on working groups, advisory councils and governance bodies for the different interactive structures or secretariats in the NVA network.

Even the most senior leaders involved have often had to take risks and engage with non-traditional partners in order to challenge the *status quo* and advance the agenda for transformational change.

Institutional System Leadership

More than 500 institutions from different sectors have participated in the NVA network, seeking greater understanding of the systems they operate in and the stakeholders with which they coexist. They have engaged in dialogues, contributed financial or in-kind resources at the global, regional, and/or national levels, and increasingly taken action on their own and in partnership with other organizations on the ground, including investments in specific value chain projects.

In order to engage externally with other organizations in the NVA network, many institutions have undertaken change

internally. Government departments, for example, have strengthened capabilities to work with business and non-governmental partners, and vice versa. Some institutions have created new strategic goals and/or programs and teams aimed at aligning their internal management systems and incentives to support the objectives of the NVA. And a number have established advisory councils to listen and learn more systematically from non-traditional perspectives outside their own organization and sector.

Interactive System Leadership

In addition to the global NVA team at the World Economic Forum and the two regional secretariats, Grow Africa and Grow Asia, a number of national and state level partnership structures have been catalyzed by the NVA. Led and driven by host governments together with local and global stakeholders, they are the driving force for action and investment on the ground, and an essential component of NVA's vision to transform agriculture. Many, though not all of them, are multi-stakeholder in composition. Their core roles are to mobilize, align, coordinate and strengthen the efforts of individual and institutional leaders in specific locations and value chains, and to align market-driven approaches to national agriculture goals and strategies. Of the 19 countries participating in the NVA network, shown on page 15, not all have established

formal interactive structures—some are in process of establishing such structures as partnership platforms, or in the case of several African countries are linked into and supported by the broader regional platform.

The global NVA team, the regional Grow Africa and Grow Asia secretariats, and specific individuals and institutions in the broader NVA network have provided dedicated support to help structure, mobilize resources for, and recruit professional staff to drive these partnership secretariats. Yet most of them are relatively new and remain under-resourced. Sustained funding and support will be critical to maintain, expand, and further professionalize the vital shared services they provide.

Figure 2 **The NVA's network of system leaders**
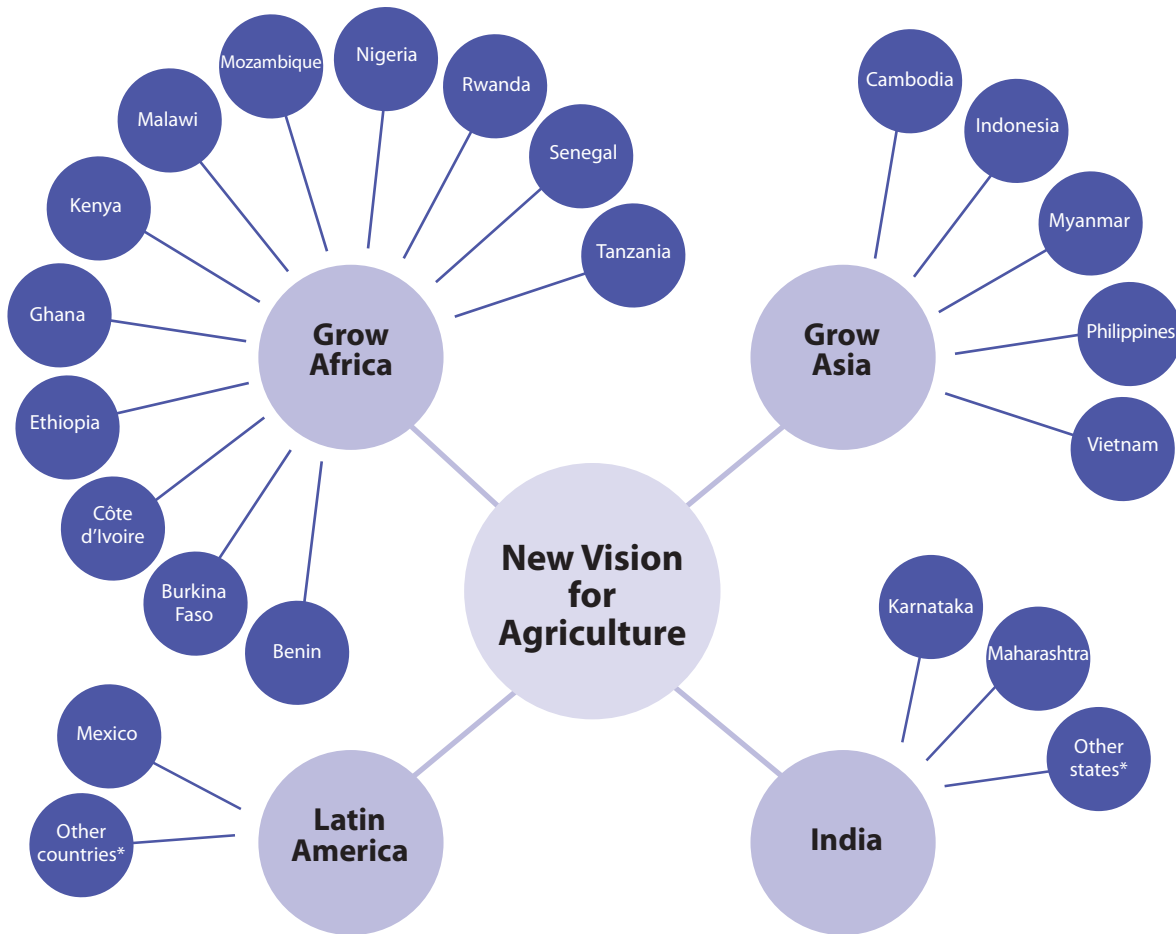
In additon to the 1,400 individuals and more than 500 institutions in the NVA network,
the NVA team works with leaders in the following structures and networks at the global level:

Global Challenge Partners for Food Security and Agriculture	**Global Agenda Council on Nutrition and Food Security**	**Transformation Leaders Network**
Global Challenge Partners collaborate closely with the World Economic Forum on food security and agriculture. They include leaders from:	The Global Agenda Council provides expertise and thought leadership on food and nutrition security. Its members include senior leaders from:	The Transformation Leaders Network is a multi-stakeholder network of some 150 individual system leaders. It provides an interactive platform for these leaders to learn from each other, and to share challenges, lessons and good practices. It includes:

Global Challenge Partners for Food Security and Agriculture:

A.P. Møller-Maersk
AT Kearney
BASF
Bayer CropScience AG
Bunge Ltd
Cargill Inc.
Carlsberg Group
CF Industries Holdings Inc.
The Coca-Cola Company
DuPont
HEINEKEN
International Finance Corporation
Louis Dreyfus Commodities
McKinsey & Company
Mondelez International

Monsanto Company
Nestlé SA
Novozymes A/S
PepsiCo Inc.
Rabobank International
The Rockefeller Foundation
Royal DSM
Sinar Mas Agribusiness & Food
Swiss Reinsurance Company Ltd
Syngenta International AG
Unilever
UPL Limited
Wal-Mart Stores Inc.
Wilmar International
Yara International ASA

Global Agenda Council on Nutrition and Food Security members:

- **Companies:** Nestlé, Rabobank, Royal DSM, and Unilever
- **Governments:** Canada, Ethiopia, India, and the Netherlands
- **International and regional organizations:** AGRA, FAO, IFAD, UN, WFP, World Bank
- **Knowledge institutions:** Embrapa, ICRIER, IFPRI, Tufts University
- **Civil Society and farmers associations:** AFA, Landesa.

Transformation Leaders Network includes:

- Individuals who are playing key leadership roles in building the national and state-level collaborative initiatives that are underway in 19 countries
- Representatives of the governments, companies, farmers' associations, civil society groups, donors and other organizations that are active participants in these initiatives.

* Other countries and states are exploring additional partnerships, including Brazil and Nicaragua in Latin America, and Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh in India.

3 Lessons in system leadership from the New Vision for Agriculture

Our analysis of the NVA experience highlights the importance of individual, institutional and interactive system leadership in addressing complex challenges like transforming agriculture. Such leadership is needed at both the national and international levels. It is particularly important at the national level, if efforts to drive systemic change are to be sustained and scaled over time.

System leaders have three main roles to play: cultivating a shared vision for change, empowering widespread innovation and action, and enabling mutual accountability. These roles are illustrated in practice by the numerous individual, institutional, and interactive system leaders the NVA network. They are also reflected in the growing body of academic and practitioner literature on new models of leadership and collaboration.

ROLE 1	ROLE 2	ROLE 3
Cultivating a shared vision for change	**Empowering widespread innovation and action**	**Enabling mutual accountability for progress**

A shared vision for change provides a clear sense of what stakeholders would like to achieve, and generates commitment to the new ways of working required to do it. It also paves the way for ongoing communication, coordination, and collaboration among stakeholders with diverse interests, experiences, and positions within the system. This helps to ensure that their efforts align, complement, and build on one another, producing better results faster than they could otherwise have done.[22]

Shared vision cannot be imposed; it must be cultivated. The task for leaders is to facilitate a process of co-creation that fosters a sense of ownership among stakeholders, and builds the initial basis for trust in each other that stakeholders need to move from vision into action.

Complex, systemic challenges arise out of the actions and interactions of many diverse yet interconnected, interdependent stakeholders that must change their behavior to resolve them. Not all stakeholders will be first or early movers, but a critical mass must innovate and act in order to influence the rest. Widespread innovation and action also broaden and diversify the learning process—enabling locally appropriate solutions to be developed faster and adapted to evolving conditions in real time.

Action of the scope and scale necessary to address complex, systemic challenges cannot be organized top-down; it must be empowered.[23] The task for system leaders is to work within their spheres of influence to put the necessary incentives and capabilities in place.

Accountability is a powerful incentive for stakeholders to take action that drives progress toward a shared vision. It is also a critical enabler. In a system, stakeholders are interdependent, their actions affecting one another's incentives and opportunities to act. They will only sustain the investment of time, effort, and resources to play their parts if the others do, too. Transparency and accountability are even more important in systems with histories of mistrust among stakeholders.

It is also true that accountability has the potential to discourage innovation and action by heightening the consequences of failure, thus increasing risk. And few stakeholders have sufficient authority—or capacity—to hold the others accountable unilaterally.

The trick for system leaders is thus to enable mutual accountability among stakeholders in a way that fuels and accelerates change. While the collaborative initiatives in the NVA network have begun to tackle this role more recently compared to the other two, their experience to date suggests that enabling mutual accountability is a particularly critical role for system leadership at the interactive level. The literature reflects this, and indicates it is also one of the most challenging.[24]

Our aim in the rest of this section is to share insights and examples from the individuals, institutions, and interactive system leadership structures in the NVA network about how to execute these three roles. These are summarized in Figure 3.
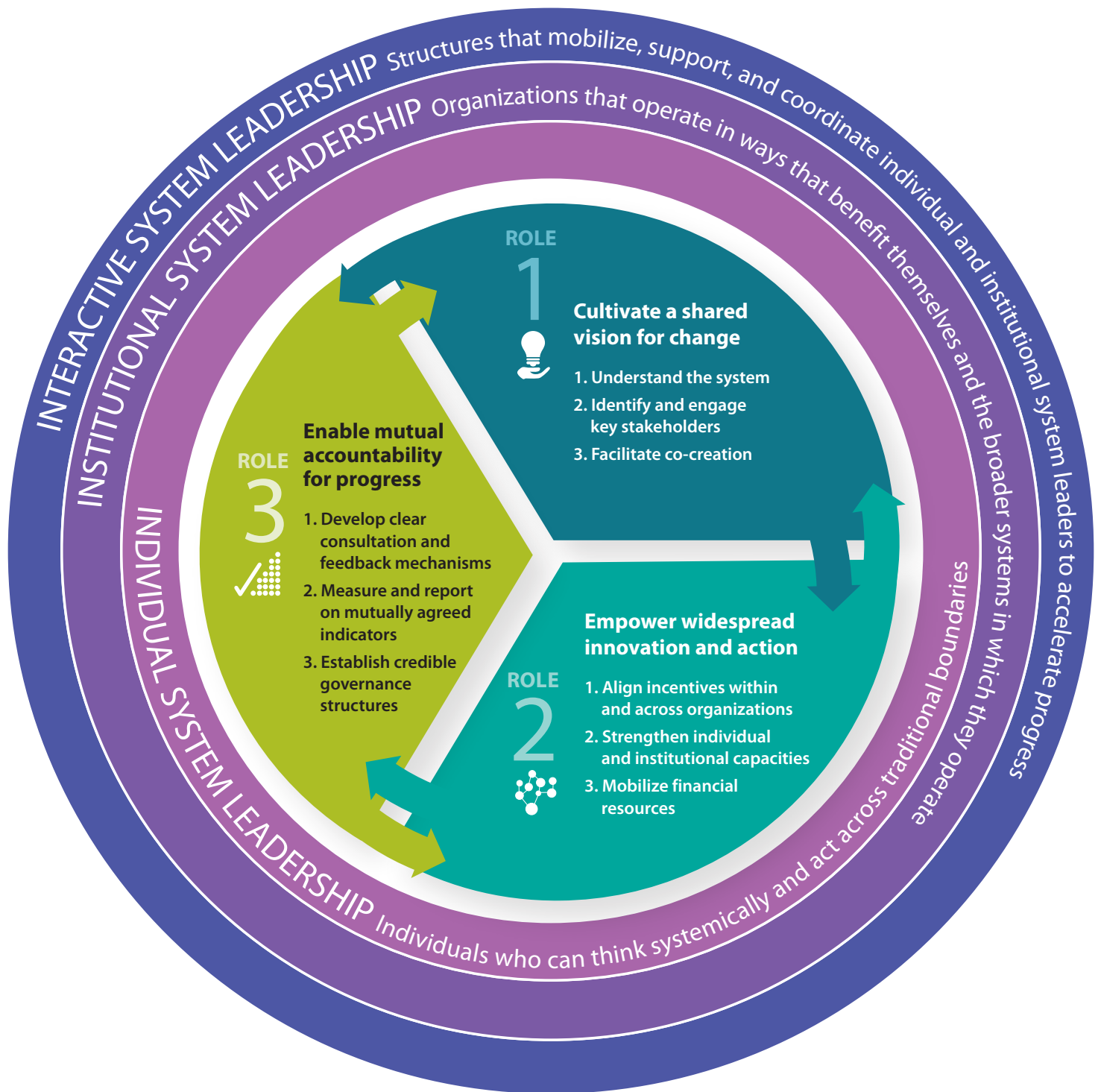
At the same time, what it means to be a system leader should not be oversimplified. Because system change is not linear, but emergent—unfolding as new ideas are tested, new lessons learned, new actors engaged, and new variables introduced—cultivating shared vision, empowering widespread innovation and action, and ensuring mutual accountability are not discrete or sequential steps, but rather interdependent and ongoing roles. There is an enormous human factor, with individual actions driving both opportunities and risks. Power and politics come into play. When systems change, some people win and some people lose—at least in the short term. Not all will want to play active or constructive roles in the process, and not all need to. System leadership is therefore a set of balancing acts. The NVA experience reveals a number of these, summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 **System Leadership Balancing Acts**[25]

Local ownership and action to make progress on the ground	AND	**Global support** to encourage leaders, share lessons, and help address cross-border issues
Market-based solutions that are financially self-sustaining and can scale	AND	**Public policies** that foster investment and innovation and address market failures
Inclusiveness to bring in those stakeholders necessary for change	AND	**Championship** by a core set of leaders
Respect for stakeholders' different truths, including priorities, incentives, capabilities, and constraints	AND	**Visionary leadership** to co-create a shared truth and to sell new ideas and new ways of working to achieve them
Incubation of new norms that challenge existing power dynamics	AND	**Extremely high levels of trust** to get people to work differently, with uncertain results
Individual championship to catalyze and drive action	AND	**Institutionalization** to scale it up
Public conversation and celebration to build awareness and motivation	AND	**Behind-the-scenes investment** of time and money in dialogue, collaboration-building and problem-solving
A focus on quick wins to build momentum and keep energy up	AND	**A focus on long-term outcomes** of the shared vision
Idealism to keep one's eye on the ultimate goal	AND	**Pragmatism** to be flexible about how to get there, learning as we go
Innovation and calculated risk-taking	AND	**Mutual accountability** for progress
Comfort with ambiguity and a willingness to share control of processes and outcomes	AND	**Rigorous metrics and management systems** to monitor and account for results
Technical skills and domain expertise	AND	**Soft skills and personal qualities** to manage the fundamentally human aspects of system change

Figure 3 **Three Key Roles of System Leaders**

INTERACTIVE SYSTEM LEADERSHIP Structures that mobilize, support, and coordinate individual and institutional system leaders to accelerate progress

INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM LEADERSHIP Organizations that operate in ways that benefit themselves and the broader systems in which they operate

INDIVIDUAL SYSTEM LEADERSHIP Individuals who can think systemically and act across traditional boundaries

ROLE 1

Cultivate a shared vision for change

1. Understand the system
2. Identify and engage key stakeholders
3. Facilitate co-creation

ROLE 2

Empower widespread innovation and action

1. Align incentives within and across organizations
2. Strengthen individual and institutional capacities
3. Mobilize financial resources

ROLE 3

Enable mutual accountability for progress

1. Develop clear consultation and feedback mechanisms
2. Measure and report on mutually agreed indicators
3. Establish credible governance structures

LESSON 1. **UNDERSTAND THE SYSTEM**

To begin to tackle complex, systemic challenges, it is critical first and foremost to understand the systems that have created them.[26] Who are the stakeholders involved? What roles do they play? How do they interact with and depend on each other, affecting one another's incentives and behaviors? Among a multitude of possibilities, which issues, risks, and opportunities need to be prioritized? And what kinds of interventions offer greatest likelihood of success? Understanding the system is not only an analytical exercise; it is also experiential. Those involved in the NVA network have combined these two equally essential methods to understand key dimensions of the system at the global and national levels where they operate:

- **Undertake research and analysis to map the system and identify and clarify issues.** This research can combine independent data collection and analysis with joint projects or internal efforts led by participating organizations. It needs to draw on diverse disciplines and methodologies. It may include desk-based reviews, consultation with global and local experts, surveys and participatory needs assessments, economic and scientific modeling, and other methods.

- **Invest time to reflect on one's own experience and understand the perspectives of other key stakeholders in the system.** Participating in multi-stakeholder dialogues at the global, regional and national levels, and in project-based site visits, can strengthen understanding of—and respect for—different stakeholders' interests, spheres of influence, responsibilities, and constraints. This in turn can help to develop a shared sense of "who can do what" to drive change.

Understanding the system in Tanzania's Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor

As local and international stakeholders began to coalesce around the idea of collaborating to accelerate sustainable agricultural growth in Tanzania's Southern Corridor—an area the size of Italy containing five of the country's six "breadbaskets"—a key step in cultivating shared vision was to develop a shared understanding of the system there.

An Executive Committee for the budding Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT) initiative stepped forward, co-chaired by Unilever and the Tanzanian Ministry of Agriculture, and including the Prime Minister's office, the Agricultural Council of Tanzania, the Confederation of Tanzania Industries, the Tanzania Sugarcane Growers Association, the multinational fertilizer company Yara, the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), the US Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Irish Embassy. The Executive Committee acted on behalf of, and reported to, a broader stakeholder group of founding partners.[27]

With funding from the Tanzanian government, USAID, AGRA, the Norwegian Embassy, and Norfund, the Executive Committee commissioned the SAGCOT Investment Blueprint.[28] The document takes stock of the climates, soils, available water resources, and existing agricultural activities, and identifies the major crop opportunities in the corridor. It identifies six clusters and for each, estimates the type and number of potential farm projects as well as the rate at which they could be developed. Then it calculates the cost of the infrastructure required to support those projects.

And just as important as the Blueprint itself was the process of consultation and engagement behind it—which relied, as one stakeholder put it, on help from "anyone who had the time, interest, and capability to contribute." SAGCOT Executive Committee members ACT, CTI, TASGA, and the Tanzanian Prime Minister's office engaged stakeholders at the local level. At the international level, Yara, Unilever, and the World Economic Forum did.

Getting specific about the needs and opportunities through research, modeling, and dialogue was critical, enabling prospective partners to see themselves participating (or not) in what had previously been a fairly theoretical idea. It set the stage for firm commitments from partners and ultimately the launch of the SAGCOT Centre Ltd to help bring them together.[29]

LESSON 2. **IDENTIFY AND ENGAGE KEY STAKEHOLDERS**

It is necessary to invest heavily—and on a continuous, long-term basis—in building and managing relationships to drive system change. Key stakeholders must be involved from the beginning to cultivate a shared vision for change if they are to build mutual respect and trust, innovate and act to their full potential to achieve such change, and bring others along with them. Those involved in the NVA network have followed two key principles:

• **Focus on change-makers.** Identify and engage stakeholders with the ability to change the way that others think and act. Although some stakeholders have the authority to command change, for example through new regulations,

corporate strategies or performance requirements, in many cases they can only exert influence over each other, especially outside their own organizations. They may exert influence through inspiration and persuasion, or through actions that change the incentives and opportunities available to others. In particular, it is important to:

- *Leverage the support of champions* —people who are well-respected internally in their own organizations or more widely in the system, who can identify, engage, and mobilize others to take action, and

- *Provide support for traditionally under-represented groups*, such as women, minority groups, youth, smallholder farmers, and small-

scale entrepreneurs, which may be essential to driving change but need greater access to decision-makers, or additional resources or capacity-building to enable participation.

• **Pay special attention to activating and supporting stakeholders at the national and operational levels, where implementation must ultimately happen.** These may include public, private and civic organizations and departments within organizations, as well as entrepreneurs with disruptive technologies or business models. Country ownership, especially by government leaders, is often essential to initiating and sustaining collaborative efforts to drive system change.

Mobilizing key stakeholders for the Philippines Partnership for Sustainable Agriculture (PPSA)

The initial meeting about a sustainable agriculture partnership in the Philippines took place at the Grow Asia Agriculture Forum in Manila in May 2014,[30] and the partnership was formally launched in April 2015. The Secretary of the Department of Agriculture championed the partnership and its launch.

Following the launch, Grow Asia commissioned research to analyze value chains and map key stakeholders. The aim was to evaluate value chains for five crops to identify who was working at each stage—including farmers' groups, domestic and international companies, government agencies, and development partners such as donors and civil society organizations. These stakeholders were then prioritized on the basis of their interest and existing activities, as well as other stakeholders' recommendations.

When the analysis was shared, a number of leaders stepped forward to champion the emerging collaborative effort. Especially active were CEOs of global companies and senior executives of farmer organizations such as the Asian Farmers' Association and PAKISAMA.

Cultural norms facilitated stakeholder engagement: farmers' associations, companies, government agencies, and civil society organizations in the Philippines are accustomed to interacting. Many existing, formal networks convene across sectors regularly. This has created a strong network, and word of the new collaborative effort spread quickly. In addition, farmer associations and civil society organizations are well organized to engage with partnership initiatives.

At the same time, a surplus of associations and meetings in the Philippines has generated some "talk shop fatigue," and the bar for new initiatives is high. Individual champions have been essential in overcoming cynicism and encouraging others to engage. Champions have also helped set the right tone at meetings. For example, at a meeting of CEOs, champions helped mobilize companies to volunteer to lead working groups on priority crops and issues. This process expanded the circle of champions and helped build momentum at the first general meeting of the PPSA in November 2015, which convened more than 125 people. The Secretary of Agriculture, who hosted the meeting, was instrumental in creating impetus for action—asking working group members to develop and submit plans by January 2016.

LESSON 3. **FACILITATE CO-CREATION**

Facilitating the co-creation of a shared vision helps to ensure that it is truly embraced by the key stakeholders that will need to take action to achieve it. They cannot just hear a message developed by others—they have to experience and own it. And they have to develop a certain level of trust that one another will uphold their ends of the bargain when the time comes to take action. The NVA network has facilitated the co-creation of an over-arching shared vision, and the co-creation of context-specific goals and plans for implementing this vision in different locations and circumstances, through using the following approaches:

- **Convene stakeholders regularly.** This provides them with ongoing exposure to one another's perspectives and experiences, greater opportunity to develop mutual understanding of each other's realities, and from this, to build respect and trust. Regular dialogue also helps to create a common language across organizations and sectors.

- **Recognize diversity of expertise.** Academics, corporate executives, government officials, civil society representatives, smallholder farmers, and others all have very different forms of expertise to contribute. It is important to formally acknowledge the unique contributions that different stakeholders have to make and be intentional about drawing on them.

- **Design processes that tap into and transform diverse contributions into new ideas for the future.** Such processes can include creative dialogues and engagement techniques that allow inspiration and energy to flow from stakeholders themselves in a dynamic and mutually reinforcing way. They can be structured with "rules of the game" that challenge existing norms and dynamics—such as providing stakeholders as diverse as farmer leaders and heads of government with equal opportunities to participate in constructive, informal dialogue. And they can be intentional about bringing in traditionally under-represented voices and choices for change.

Facilitating co-creation of solutions at the strategic and operational level

While facilitating co-creation is at the heart of everything the NVA does, two specific approaches include:

■ **High-level events to develop and sustain top leadership support**
The NVA has harnessed the regular convening power of the World Economic Forum through the Annual Meeting in Davos and regional meetings to bring together Presidents, agricultural ministers, corporate chief executives, farmer leaders, and heads of research institutes and civil society groups—but not in a traditional manner that adheres strictly to protocol, hierarchy and prepared speeches. Creative session design and facilitation have been used to foster a genuine sense of community. Participants are encouraged to 'roll up their sleeves' and get actively involved, with everyone's views and experiences having relevance. Priorities are identified through roundtable discussions, followed by self-selected

working groups that focus on co-creating practical solutions.

Over several years, this model of dialogue has involved many of the same leaders resulting in the evolution of mutual respect and new professional relationships across sectors. Participants have been able to develop a common understanding of the system they all operate in, identify common priorities that influence one another's agendas, and cultivate a shared vision to take back to their own organizations and networks. Each high-level meeting is now used to celebrate milestones, identify gaps, and set goals for the next stage.

■ **Practitioner forums to co-create solutions for specific projects**
At the practitioner level, the process of co-creation includes both strategic vision and agenda-setting as well as resource mobilization and implementation.

Similar 'rules of engagement' apply to develop a sense of common ownership. Grow Africa, for example, hosts an annual Investment Forum that engages approximately 300 participants from all stakeholder groups to assess progress, develop solutions, and agree on next steps to further advance the implementation of investment commitments in Grow Africa countries.

In Mexico, the VIDA partnership engages over 20 local and global companies in partnership with the government, the leading national farmers association, and other stakeholders with focus on four commodity groups (coffee/cacao, fruit & vegetable, oilseeds, and grains). Value chain working groups convene regularly to drive activities on the ground, and the full network of stakeholders convenes periodically with the Minister to assess progress.

LESSON 1. **ALIGN INCENTIVES WITHIN AND ACROSS ORGANIZATIONS**

Many different stakeholders need to act and interact differently to resolve complex, systemic challenges. Change is hard—and people only do it when it is in their best interests. Empowering people to innovate and act in support of a shared vision thus begins with aligning their incentives, both internally and across organizations. This is typically a matter of reducing cost and risk on the one hand and/or increasing expected reward and opportunity on the other. Those involved in the NVA network have worked to:

- **Combine ambitious strategic goals with concrete performance frameworks and targets within their organizations.** This helps to enable employees to innovate and act to achieve those goals—especially when longer-term thinking and/or more calculated risk-taking than usual is needed. For example, companies can set clear sustainability goals, plans and targets and integrate these into performance metrics, establish internal challenge funds for employees to meet these or establish award programs for best practice. Although less common, government departments and NGOs can do likewise. And in all cases, regular report-backs to the senior management team, CEO or government minister can help to align incentives for action.

- **Form partnerships to align risks and benefits externally.** Creating partnerships across organizations can share costs, jointly address variables that cause risk, and increase the likelihood of success at scale. These can range from project-based partnerships to broader alliances, and from innovative financing mechanisms to efforts to create a level playing field through shared standards. Facilitating such partnerships is a key role of the interactive leadership structures in the NVA network.

Partnering to share cost and risk in India and Vietnam

In India, more than 50% of the population depends on agriculture for its livelihood, and yet the sector contributes only 13.7% of GDP. The government has increased the level of funding available to help farmers improve their productivity and access to markets in recent years, but without a commensurate improvement in outcomes.

The Public-Private Partnership for Integrated Agriculture Development (PPPIAD) in the state of Maharashtra was created to improve these outcomes by aligning government funding to value chain projects driven and co-funded by agribusiness companies. The aim is to incentivize companies to work with greater numbers of farmers, and make it easier for farmers to access available subsidies and services. Since 2011, around 33 value chain projects have been initiated, with the government, agribusinesses, and farmers themselves sharing virtually equally in the costs.

In maize, for example, the state government has partnered with three companies in three different districts to provide extension services and seeds that are suitable for local agro-climatic conditions. The government identifies the farmers, and the companies, United Phosphorus Limited, Monsanto India Ltd and Pioneer (PHI Seeds Ltd), provide the extension services. Farmers adopting best practices have increased their productivity by 85-200%.[31]

In Vietnam, where there are approximately 400,000 coffee farming households, one of the first initiatives of the Partnership for Sustainable Agriculture in Vietnam was a working group on coffee. Led by Yara along with Nestlé and Syngenta, a number of companies came together with government, civil society organizations, and farmers in a pre-competitive effort to replace aging coffee trees and provide extension and financing services. By the 2014-2015 season, farmers had increased their yields by 21% and net incomes by 14%, and decreased their carbon emissions by 63% and water usage by 30%.[32]

As results came in, in 2013, the Vietnam Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development decided to institutionalize the working group's efforts by establishing the Vietnam Coffee Coordinating Board. A multi-stakeholder body hosted by the government, the Board's purpose is to help align government policies and programs nationally to strengthen incentives for coffee sector stakeholders to sustain and scale promising approaches. For example, in 2015, the Minister of Finance launched a Coffee Development Fund to finance infrastructure development, agricultural research, and other "common goods" that all sector stakeholders need.[33]

LESSON 2. **STRENGTHEN INDIVIDUAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES**

Once stakeholders have the incentive to act and interact differently, they need the capacity. Some of the necessary capacities may be readily available—for example, the technical skills required for product innovation or financial management. Others must be developed, strengthened or mainstreamed, especially soft skills required for effective system leadership and working in partnership. Those involved in the NVA network have worked to:

- **Invest internally in their organizations** both in individual skills and in new staff positions, teams, advisory committees, policies, and operating procedures for the organization as a whole. Critical individual skills such as active listening, relationship management, intrapreneurship, the ability to work across functions and sectors, and partnership design and management often need to be developed on-the-job, for example through coaching and mentoring, as little formal professional training is currently available.[34]

- **Facilitate knowledge exchange and learning across the system.** Documenting and disseminating best practices across organizations can help reduce the trial-and-error period, allowing people to cut time and cost in project design and reduce risk by building on what has worked elsewhere. Peer-to-peer networks can be particularly powerful vehicles for knowledge exchange and learning through ongoing dialogue, events and workshops.

Building capacity through peer-to-peer learning

With Grow Africa and Grow Asia taking over more and more of the day-to-day support for the national collaborative initiatives in the NVA network, the NVA team at the World Economic Forum has been shifting into more of a strategic advisory role over the past years. In particular, it is focusing on institutionalizing, disseminating, and replicating best practices using a peer-to-peer approach consistent with its philosophy of inclusivity and local ownership.

One vehicle the NVA team has created is the Transformation Leaders Network (TLN), launched in 2013 with support from the Government of the Netherlands. The TLN connects more than 150 individuals playing system leadership roles in more than 30 countries—including the leaders of the national and state-level collaborative initiatives that are underway in 19 countries as well as representatives of the companies, governments, civil society groups, farmers' associations, donors, and other organizations that participate most actively in them.

The TLN meets in person once annually, and members participate in thematic working groups and other virtual collaboration groups throughout the year. Members share their activities, what they've learned, and what they're struggling with, and act as peer advisors and mentors—both challenging and providing moral support to one another.

As one member put it, "Elsewhere, you try to sell the recipe; in the Transformation Leaders Network, you bring the ingredients and cook together."[35] Members report leaving TLN's annual meetings feeling empowered and supported, often with concrete ideas and opportunities for collaboration.

In 2015, the NVA team at the Forum undertook a major effort to document lessons emerging from members of the TLN in the form of a user-friendly, practitioner-focused toolkit about how to build the kind of collaborative initiatives they are all involved in. The result is the World Economic Forum's New Vision for Agriculture Country Partnership Guide.

While acknowledging the diversity among the NVA-affiliated initiatives underway in 19 countries, the Guide distills the essence of a new model of collaboration to tackle systemic challenges in the agriculture sector, including the five guiding principles for NVA country initiatives listed on page 12 of this report. It then lays out an eight-step framework for building and operating collaborative initiatives on this model, including tips on common challenges, key success factors, and deep dives on topics such as building leadership capacity, financing solutions, and measuring impact.[36]

LESSON 3. **MOBILIZE FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

Innovation and action take time, technology, materials, and equipment, and these cost money. In the early stages, when the results are uncertain, financing can be difficult to come by. Once proven, some approaches become financially self-sustaining (e.g. new business models) but others require additional resources to sustain over time, let alone scale (e.g. public services and interactive system leadership structures). Systems leaders must mobilize the right kinds of financial resources at the right times.[37] Those involved in the NVA network have focused on efforts to:

- **Convene stakeholders to identify financing needs and opportunities.** Investment forms, campaigns calling for funding commitments, and ongoing regional and national financing working groups have been used to bring banks, insurers, development finance institutions, donors, and governments together with farmers' groups, civil society organizations that work with farmers' groups, and companies all along the value chain. A key focus has been to identify context-specific solutions.

- **Develop and use blended financing mechanisms.** Between public funding and philanthropic grants on one end of the spectrum to commercial equity and debt on the other, stakeholders have utilized a range of blended instruments to match different risk-return profiles—such as matching grants, output-based aid, concessional loans, long-term loans, and partial credit guarantees. These have enabled participants to meet needs and capture opportunities that they could not finance on their own using traditional investment criteria and instruments.

Grow Africa working at multiple levels to mobilize financial resources

Mobilizing financial resources is at the heart of Grow Africa's mission to realize agriculture's potential—particularly for smallholder farmers, women, and youth—by increasing private sector investment and impact.[38] The initiative works at two levels to do it: first, increasing investment in agriculture, and second, helping the enterprises making those investments as well as farmers find appropriate and affordable financing.

First, Grow Africa encourages companies to sign Letters of Intent to invest in ways that benefit smallholders. Signed between companies and governments, these letters form part of broader tripartite commitments with donors under the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition to support specific national agricultural transformation goals. Each letter describes how the investment aligns with those goals and provides a target figure. As of 2015, approximately 200 companies—

70% of them African owned—had signed more than 300 Letters of Intent to invest anywhere from thousands to millions of dollars, for a total of $10.2 billion committed.[39]

Second, recognizing that small to medium-sized agribusinesses in Africa struggle to attract affordable financing, Grow Africa provides a neutral platform to identify and incubate solutions. For example, country-based multi-stakeholder initiatives focused on specific crops and a Grow Africa Finance Working Group have developed solutions that stabilize supply and demand, link different types of lenders to blend the different risk appetites and lending criteria of each, and mitigate risks inherent to agriculture. Two such solutions include:

- **A "patient procurement" platform developed with the World Food Programme and Rabobank.** The platform aggregates demand from multiple buyers and provides farmers with medium-term

contracts. These contracts offer farmers greater security than spot contracts and can be used as collateral for financing. For buyers, they reduce the risk that farmers in need of cash will sell to traders offering immediate payment.[40] In 2016, the platform will be piloted in Tanzania, Rwanda and Zambia, with 75,000 tons of aggregated demand for maize and beans produced by more than 70,000 smallholders.

- **A new Lending for African Farming Company (LAFCo) launched by AgDevCo, Root Capital, and KfW, the German development bank, with early support from UKAid.** LAFCo has mobilized a blend of public and private funds to provide flexible debt products that meet the working capital needs of agribusinesses with the potential to increase smallholder farmers' productivity and incomes through enhanced access to formal markets.[41]

LESSON 1. **DEVELOP CLEAR STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION AND FEEDBACK MECHANISMS**

Clear stakeholder consultation and feedback mechanisms enable organizations, partnerships, and broader networks to identify and hold themselves accountable for the things that matter most. These mechanisms can include needs and impact assessments, stakeholder dialogues, advisory groups or councils, designated liaison teams, social media surveys, and hotlines and other grievance procedures. They also include stakeholder behavior—if stakeholders do not see value, they will not attend meetings, participate in trainings, purchase products and services, and so on. These mechanisms are particularly important for identifying unknown or emergent issues and unintended consequences. To do so, they must engage both funders and champions on the one hand, and intended beneficiaries on the other. Those involved in the NVA network have learned the following lessons:

- **Be inclusive but realistic about how to gather representative views.** While diverse perspectives are important, thoughtful design and implementation are needed to ensure that they are not too costly to capture or to provide. It may be necessary to provide the resources and build the capabilities that under-represented groups need to participate.

- **Establish grievance mechanisms and ensure they are accessible.** Stakeholders should have clear options for expressing concerns and complaints. Establishing mechanisms at the local level, ensuring that escalation procedures exist in case they are needed, and paying attention to cultural barriers can enhance accessibility.

Grow Asia's evolving approach to stakeholder engagement and accountability

The Grow Asia Secretariat has made stakeholder engagement and accountability a priority. In addition to its multi-stakeholder Steering Committee, it is undertaking consultation with key stakeholder groups to build consensus in developing a set of inter-related management processes and engagement mechanisms. They will aim to achieve the following common goals throughout the diverse country partnerships, value chain working groups and projects that make up Grow Asia:

- Strengthen transparency, good governance, and trusted relationships;
- Build an evidence-based foundation for better decision-making, resource allocation and communication;
- Create impact on the ground through sharing best practice and developing innovative solutions.

The evolving framework has four core components, all of which are relevant for similar multi-stakeholder initiatives in other sectors and locations. In development currently are:

■ **Multi-stakeholder Governance:** Grow Asia is guided by a multi-stakeholder Steering Committee, which provides strategy and governance oversight, and a Business Council and Civil Society Council to represent the views of important stakeholder groups. A Farmer Advisory Council is being established to provide input from farmers to ensure that their voices are heard as equal stakeholders, and not simply beneficiaries.

■ **A Project Design Checklist:** Developed in response to requests from the Civil Society Council, this will provide guidance to country partnerships on integrating social and environmental considerations into their projects. It will not prescribe technical solutions, but rather guide implementers toward design goals for: farmer engagement; women's economic empowerment; healthy and safe farming practices; equitable land rights; efficient water use; greenhouse gas reduction; and improved soil quality.

■ **A Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework:** A consultative process is underway with country partnerships to agree on a common set of indicators to measure and report on project and country-level outputs, outcomes and impacts. These are aligned to the social and environmental areas listed above as well as the NVA measurement framework and includes long-term outcomes and development impacts.

■ **A Grievance Policy:** This is a precautionary mechanism, should there be any complaints or concerns. Grievances should be addressed by directly involved stakeholders at a project, company / organization or country level through a step-based approach. It includes an alternative judicial or arbitration pathway, if grievances cannot be resolved within the country partnership.

Each of the above processes both relies on and strengthens the process of stakeholder engagement. They each have relevance on their own, but are particularly valuable in improving the quality of decision-making and ensuring mutual accountability when implemented on a collective basis.

LESSON 2. **MEASURE AND REPORT ON MUTUALLY AGREED INDICATORS**

Results measurement generates evidence of what stakeholders have done and what progress they have made. Evidence is the basis of mutual accountability. The accumulation of evidence helps to build trust among stakeholders over time. It also facilitates learning about what is working and what isn't, for whom, and how that could influence stakeholders going forward. This kind of learning is critical for informing better decision-making and keeping innovation and action aligned to achieve a shared vision over time. At the same time, results measurement can be extremely challenging in the context of system change where innovation and action are happening at many levels and causality is difficult to

prove. At the project level, measurement has become more straightforward, though ultimate impacts are costly to measure, take time, and are difficult to directly attribute. But practitioners and experts still struggle to understand what multiple projects add up to, whether nationally or globally, and whether backbone organizations are making a difference by helping accelerate progress or delivering better outcomes. Continued investment is needed to address these questions. Those involved in the NVA network are working on all of them, and have identified two priorities:

- **Agree on a small number of common indicators.** Efforts are underway to identify a small number of indicators

that are both cost-effective to capture on a regular basis and meaningful proxies for long-term system change. Useful lessons about what and how to measure can be drawn from both the business community and the development community.

- **Co-invest in impact assessment.** Companies, donors, and governments should be encouraged to co-invest in specific impact evaluations at the project level and broader system level, and in broadening the technical and interpersonal capabilities required to execute them. This can be done according to their resources and the benefits they expect to obtain.

Measuring progress toward agricultural transformation

The collaborative initiatives in the NVA network use different metrics and methodologies to measure their results, according to context and objectives.

■ **The Partnership for Indonesia Sustainable Agriculture (PISAgro)** has adopted the global New Vision for Agriculture goals of increasing yields by 20%, improving farmer incomes by 20%, and reducing GHG emissions by 20% each decade.

Ultimate responsibility for measuring results rests at the project level, where partners working to strengthen various commodity value chains must identify key performance indicators and track and report on their progress monthly. As a result, there is some variation in the nature of the data that emerges. For example, partners have found that yield and income increases are relatively straightforward to measure. Across projects, yields have

increased between 12-60% and incomes between 30-150% depending on the commodity.[42] In contrast, emissions reductions and other environmental sustainability metrics are proving difficult to capture. Multiple methodologies exist and they require specialized skills to implement. Across projects, 380,000 hectares of land have come under improved management practices, including more environmentally sustainable ones[43]—but capacity-building is required to measure the full impact of these changes.

■ **Grow Africa**, which aims to increase private sector investment and impact in agriculture, conducts an annual stocktaking exercise with companies that have signed Letters of Intent to invest, as described on page 24. Through the stocktaking, companies are asked to quantify the amount of the investment implemented to date and the benefits of that investment

for local communities—including numbers of jobs created and smallholders reached through production contracts and services. To date, $10.2 billion has been committed; in 2013 and 2014, $1.8 billion was disbursed, creating 58,000 jobs and reaching 8.6 million smallholder farmers with inputs, services, and training.[44]

The stocktaking also asks companies to provide comments on the enabling environment for their investments, which Grow Africa uses to produce an aggregated private sector perspective on progress and priorities for agricultural policy and infrastructure in their countries. This feeds into national tripartite reviews of progress against the commitments made by governments, donors, and companies under the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, serving to inform decisions on areas of focus for public and donor funding.

LESSON 3. **ESTABLISH CREDIBLE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES**

Credible governance structures help organizations, project-based partnerships, and broader collaborative initiatives build trust with skeptical stakeholders and perform their functions effectively. They are particularly important for effective risk management and strategic direction in partnerships and collaborative initiatives whose funding and operational models are still relatively untested. Those involved in the NVA network are building governance structures with the dual goals to:

- **Involve representatives of key stakeholder groups, with a context-appropriate mix of expertise and influence.** There is no one "right" mix. Because tackling complex, systemic challenges involves multiple stakeholders, across sectors, a diverse governance structure is often most effective. However, a government or private sector-led board can also be effective to achieve certain objectives depending on context. For example, a government-only board may be needed to gain support and alignment across government ministries before reaching out to the private sector and civil society. Likewise, a private sector-led governing body can help build alignment and championship among a group of companies that then contribute collectively to a multi-stakeholder partnership.

- **Ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities.** Typically, to be credible, governance structures must have some oversight over risk management, strategy, resourcing, and execution, and some responsibility for representing the interests of key stakeholder groups. The key is to be clear what the governance structure's roles and responsibilities are, and to communicate these publicly.

Governing regional and national collaborative initiatives through different stakeholder mixes

The collaborative initiatives in the NVA network are governed by different stakeholder mixes, reflecting local context and objectives. Key variables can include whether the initiative is supported by a formal or informal secretariat; whether the secretariat is independent or hosted by an existing organization; and key stakeholders' capabilities and constraints, which can change over time—affected for example by business performance, post-election changes in government administration, and other factors.[45]

■ **Grow Asia** is coordinated by a formal, independent secretariat in Singapore structured as a Company Limited by Guarantee, currently funded by donors. Its objective is "to enable sustainable and inclusive agricultural development in South East Asia" with a focus on smallholders and environmental sustainability. It is governed by a 9-member cross-sector Steering Committee representing business, civil society, farmers' associations, the ASEAN Secretariat and member states, donors and the World Economic Forum. The Steering Committee meets two to three times a year and publishes a summary of decisions made at each meeting.[46]

■ **The Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania** (SAGCOT) initiative is coordinated by a formal, independent secretariat structured as a limited liability company funded by donors, the government, and stakeholder membership fees. Its objective is to "to foster inclusive, commercially successful agribusinesses that will benefit the region's small-scale farmers, and in so doing, improve food security, reduce rural poverty and ensure environmental sustainability."[47] It is governed by a seven-member cross-sector Board representing the Ministry of Agriculture, business, the World Economic Forum, and independent experts.

■ **The Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agenc**y (ATA) is a "strategy and delivery oriented government agency", which is governed by an Agricultural Transformation Council comprised of federal and regional ministers and chaired by the Prime Minister.[48] ATA's goal is to enhance the capacity of key stakeholders to achieve agricultural transformation by: a) introducing new technologies and approaches that can address systemic bottlenecks & catalyze transformation of the sector; and b) playing a catalytic role to support partners to effectively execute agreed upon interventions in a coordinated fashion. It grew out of a two-year extensive diagnostic study of Ethiopia's agriculture sector, led by the Government and facilitated by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

■ **The Partnership for Indonesia Sustainable Agriculture** (PISAgro) is coordinated by a formal, independent secretariat structured as a non-profit organization funded through partner membership fees. Its aspiration is "to advance economic growth, global food security and environmental sustainability through market based approach."[49] It is governed by a Board made up of representatives from seven founding companies, the International Finance Corporation, and IDH-Sustainable Trade Initiative that meets quarterly.[50]

4 Mainstreaming system leadership

System leadership is needed to tackle the complex, systemic challenges that underpin many of the major risks and opportunities we face today.

In 2015, UN member states adopted a series of historic global agreements, including the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development, the 2030 Agenda and the sustainable development goals, and the Paris Agreement to address climate change. New approaches to leadership and collaboration are now needed to implement these agreements and achieve the ambitious targets that have been set. As UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has stated, "The 2030 Agenda compels us to look beyond national boundaries and short-term interests and act in solidarity for the long-term. We can no longer afford to think and work in silos. Institutions will have to become fit for a grand new purpose."[51] And he has highlighted the need for, "…visionary leaders, working through partnerships with other stakeholders to make the implementation of the SDGs as effective as possible."[52]

The New Vision for Agriculture initiative and other crucibles of system leadership are starting to deliver these new approaches to solving global challenges. They are building connections across a wide variety of sectors and systems to improve economic opportunity, environmental sustainability, and social progress. They are cultivating a shared vision for change, empowering widespread innovation and action, and enabling mutual accountability. And they are breaking important new ground in developing the types of individual, institutional and interactive system leadership that are needed to accelerate change and scale impact. These new approaches are demonstrating what is possible, despite the challenges of doing things differently, and the ongoing need to build trust between actors and sectors. Now, system leadership must become much more common. It must become less of a special concept and more the *de facto* way of operating.

Mainstreaming system leadership is not only about addressing the challenges of today; it is about building the very different mindsets, skill sets and institutional structures needed to operate in an increasingly complex, interconnected future. To continue to thrive, individuals and organizations must continue to develop and upgrade increasingly sophisticated technical capabilities and domain expertise. At the same time, they must become much more adaptive, collaborative, innovative, and outward-looking.

They must be able to deliver results in the short-term and commit investments for the long-term. They must strengthen the capability of existing institutions to engage more effectively in tackling complex, systemic challenges. At the same time, they must be creative about building new interactive structures, such a backbone organizations, multi-stakeholder initiatives, cross-sector coalitions, and partnership platforms that can mobilize, support, align and coordinate the efforts of individuals and institutions across an entire system. When they make these changes, the systems they operate in will become more resilient and more capable of delivering on our aspirations for sustainable and inclusive growth and human development.

The scope and scale of the task are daunting, but there are reasons for optimism. Senge and his colleagues, for example, point to a growing awareness of complex, global challenges that is driving more and more people to think about the broader system they operate in; more and more tools available to help them act; and a "hunger for processes of real change."[53] To these, we would add:

- the increasing frequency of career paths that span business, government, and civil society;

- greater communication and collaboration across sectors; and

- the emergence of new financing structures, organizational forms, and disruptive technologies that have the potential to accelerate and scale up transformational change.

At the same time, mainstreaming system leadership will require greater, more deliberate, and more courageous investment by today's leaders in all sectors. New models of individual, institutional and interactive leadership will not evolve on their own at the scale or speed that is required without targeted support and incentives. Concerted commitment is needed by today's leaders to create an enabling environment for system leadership to become the norm rather than the exception. And such commitment must be sustained over the long term. Some of the key actions required are outlined in Table 3:

Table 3 **Actions needed to mainstream system leadership**

Build system leadership capacity at the individual level	System leadership must become a key focus of graduate and professional education as well as organizational hiring, leadership development, performance evaluation, and succession planning. Training and academic institutions, as well as senior management teams and human resource professionals in government ministries, companies and civil society organizations all have a key role to play in identifying current and potential system leaders and helping them to develop the mindsets, skill sets and networks required for success. These can be developed through a combination of on-the-job training and classroom based education, special assignments, cross-function or cross-sector teamwork, communities of practice, exchange programs and advisory opportunities, and other types of experiential learning.
Build system leadership capacity at the institutional level	Greater innovation and experimentation is needed to develop internal organizational strategies, structures, processes, and delivery models that enable institutions in all sectors to drive transformational change successfully. To implement these at scale, most organizations will need to develop new investment criteria and new performance management and incentive structures for personnel. And to enable this, investors, taxpayers, and philanthropists will need to be more effective at factoring the long-term, and social and environmental risk and opportunity into their decision-making. Governments may need to consider new rules and incentives to level the playing field, ensuring that organizations desiring to act as system leaders can shoulder additional costs and still compete.
Build system leadership capacity at the interactive level	It will be difficult to accelerate progress and scale up impact without interactive leadership structures that can help to facilitate better communication, coordination and collaboration among the many diverse individuals and institutions operating within a system. In order to be effective, these backbone organizations, multi-stakeholder initiatives, cross-sector coalitions or partnership platforms require sustained investment of money, time and talent. Leaders in all sectors must be willing to make these investments. And they must support the analysis, documentation, and dissemination of best practice about how to design, manage, and measure the impact of these unique interactive structures. Such structures are especially needed—and currently often under-resourced—at the national and local levels, where action ultimately happens.

The investments needed to mainstream system leadership at the individual, institutional and interactive levels are significant and may be uncomfortable, even risky, in the short term. Yet, they create enormous opportunities for long-term impact. Today's leaders in government, business and civil society have an unprecedented opportunity and responsibility to invest in mainstreaming system leadership. In doing so, they have the potential to change the *status quo* fundamentally, making individual leaders, organizations, and systems fit-for-purpose for an increasingly complex and uncertain future—and ensuring more sustainable and inclusive development for years to come.

Acknowledgements

Report Background and Methodology

Background

Since 2003, the CSR Initiative at the Harvard Kennedy School has worked to understand different models of engagement among companies and other key actors to tackle complex development challenges. Over the last five years in particular, we have strengthened our focus on what is needed to effect change that is truly systemic—and that brings about sustainable impact at scale. Our 2012 report on the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania, a multi-stakeholder platform that is part of the New Vision for Agriculture network, was an early example. This report is the latest in an ongoing effort to understand complex, systemic challenges in agriculture and other sectors, and the different ways in which companies can take action to help address them, both individually and in collaboration with others.

Objective and Audience

This report aims to draw lessons from the New Vision for Agriculture experience for leaders in business, government, and civil society who recognize a need to think and work more systemically to drive business growth and more inclusive and sustainable development.

Methodology

This report is based on a comprehensive review of documents produced by the NVA, Grow Africa, and Grow Asia as well as seminal academic and practitioner literature related to system leadership, cross-sector partnership, and inclusive business. The insights draw heavily on interviews with the NVA team at the World Economic Forum, leaders of Grow Africa and Grow Asia and the country collaborative initiatives, and other stakeholders in business, government, and civil society. Interviews were conducted by telephone and in person at the Transformation Leaders Network workshop in Amsterdam in October 2015. Although we did not conduct new field visits for the purposes of this report, past field visits and participation by the authors in global and regional NVA stakeholder dialogues also influenced our findings.

Important Qualifications

While we conducted more than 30 interviews, the number pales in comparison to the more than 1,400 individual leaders from more than 500 different organizations who have been involved in the NVA network, and the even greater number of stakeholders affected by the initiative's work, including an estimated 9.6 million farmers and their families. Stakeholders have different perspectives on the NVA network's achievements to date and its prospects for driving truly transformational change over the long term. We have not attempted to undertake an evaluation or impact assessment. Rather, we have attempted to distill from the experience—positive and negative, successes and challenges—lessons for other leaders who are ready to tackle similar systemic challenges in their own fields.

Endnotes

1   See, inter alia, Nelson, Jane and David Prescott. 2003 and 2005 (2nd edition). "Business and the Millennium Development Goals: A Framework for Action." The International Business Leaders Forum and United Nations Development Programme, and World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD). 2013. "Measuring socio-economic impact: a guide for business." Geneva: WBCS .

2   The Sustainable Development Goals are also called the Global Goals of Agenda 2030. A complete list can be found online at http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/. The Paris Agreement within the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/l09.pdf.

3   The concepts of complexity and systems are now widely used in many different contexts, ranging from the biological to the organizational to the societal. There are a number of definitions, descriptions, and applications we have found useful. These include, inter alia, Kauffman, Stuart. 1995. At Home in the Universe: The Search for the Laws of Self-Organization and Complexity. New York: Oxford University Press; Waldrop, M. Mitchell. 1992. Complexity: The Emerging Science at the Edge of Order and Chaos. New York: Simon & Schuster; Moore, James F. 1996. The Death of Competition: Leadership and Strategy in the Age of Business Ecosystems. New York: HarperBusiness; Beinhocker, Eric D. 2006. The Origin of Wealth: Evolution, Complexity, and the Radical Remaking of Economics. Harvard Business School Press; Colander, David and Roland Kupers. 2014. Complexity and the Art of Public Policy: Solving Society's Problems from the Bottom Up. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; and FSG's work on collective impact, available at http://www.collectiveimpactforum.org (accessed November 23, 2015). Cooperrider, David L. and Jane E. Dutton (eds). 1999. Organizational Dimensions of Global Change: No Limits to Cooperation. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, London and New Delhi.

4   In addition to work referenced above, we have found Peter Senge's work on systems thinking and learning particularly helpful. Please see, inter alia, Senge, Peter M. 1990. The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization. New York: Doubleday.

5   Senge, Peter, Hal Hamilton, and John Kania. 2015. "The Dawn of System Leadership." *Stanford Social Innovation Review* Winter 2015, page 28. It should be noted that the concept of system leadership has a longer history and shares attributes of other concepts of leadership, including adaptive leadership, network leadership, and collective leadership. All of these concepts can apply at the organizational level, considering organizations as complex systems unto themselves, and at the broader level that we focus on here, comprising many different organizations across industries and sectors. Among many excellent sources on each of these concepts of leadership, we recommend Ron Heifetz' work on adaptive leadership (inter alia, Heifetz, Ronald A. 1994. Leadership Without Easy Answers. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press); Retired US Army General Stanley McChrystal's work on

network leadership (McChrystal, Stanley A., Tantum Collins, David Silverman, and Chris Fussell. 2015. Team of Teams: New Rules of Engagement in a Complex World. New York: Portfolio).

6   Nelson, Jane. 2011. "Corporate Sustainability Leadership at the Edge." University of Cambridge Programme for Sustainability Leadership. Online at http://www.cisl.cam.ac.uk/publications/archive-publications/what-is-corporate-sustainability-leadership (accessed November 19, 2015). Also see Nelson, Jane, Beth Jenkins, and Richard Gilbert. 2015. "Business and the Sustainable Development Goals: Building Blocks for Success at Scale. The CSR Initiative at the Harvard Kennedy School, Business Fights Poverty and UKAid. Online at http://reports.businessfightspoverty.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/49/2015/09/BusinessandSDGs.pdf (accessed November 28, 2015).

7   Senge et al 2015.

8   See, inter alia, Senge et al 2015 and Heifetz 1994; Scharmer, Otto. 2007. Theory U: Leading from the Future as it Emerges, the Social Technology of Presencing. Cambridge, MA: The Society for Organizational Learning Inc.; and Woodhill, Jim. 2010. "Capacities for Institutional Innovation: A Complexity Perspective." IDS Bulletin Volume 41, Number 3: pages 47-59.

9   Kania, John and Mark Kramer. 2013. "Embracing Emergence: How Collective Impact Addresses Complexity." Stanford Social Innovation Review. This describes well the process some have called adaptive problem-solving (e.g. Heifetz) and organizational learning (e.g. Senge).

10 Ron Heifetz has written extensively about the "disequilibrium" that adaptive leadership, a concept that shares many attributes with system leadership, causes, and about strategies that leaders can use to manage the risk it poses. See Heifetz 1994 and, among other articles, Heifetz, Ronald and Marty Linsky. 2002. "A Survival Guide for Leaders." Harvard Business Review June Issue. Online at https://hbr.org/2002/06/a-survival-guide-for-leaders/ar/1 (accessed November 20, 2015).

11 Gradl, Christina and Beth Jenkins. 2011. "Tackling Barriers to Scale: From Inclusive Business Models to Inclusive Business Ecosystems." Cambridge, MA: CSR Initiative at the Harvard Kennedy School. Online at http://www.hks.harvard.edu/m-rcbg/CSRI/publications/report_47_inclusive_business.pdf (accessed November 20, 2015).

12 See, inter alia, Gradl and Jenkins. 2011; Kania, John and Mark Kramer. 2011. "Collective Impact." Stanford Social Innovation Review Winter 2011; Brouwer, Herman and Jim Woodhill et al. 2015. "The MSP Guide: How to Design and Facilitate Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships." Wageningen, Netherlands: Centre for Development Innovation, part of the Dienst Landbouwkundig Onderzoek Foundation. Online at http://www.mspguide.org/msp-guide (accessed October 30, 2015); Global Development Incubator. 2015. "More than the Sum of its Parts: Making Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives Work." Online at http://www.globaldevincubator.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Making-MSIs-Work.pdf (accessed November 20, 2015); Koh, Harvey, Nidhi Hegde

and Ashish Karamchandani. 2014. "Beyond the Pioneer: Getting Inclusive Industries to Scale." Monitor Deloitte. Online at http://www.beyondthepioneer.org/ (accessed October 30, 2015); Reid, Stuart, John Paul Hayes, and Darian Stibbe. 2014. "Platforms for Partnership: Emerging Good Practice to Systematically Engage Business as a Partner in Development." Oxford: The Partnering Initiative. Online at http://www.thepartneringinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/PLATFORMStealcoverallpages.pdf (accessed November 20, 2015). Nelson, Jane. 2013. "Scaling Up Impact Through Public-Private Partnerships," Chapter 12 in Chandy, Hosono, Kharas & Linn (eds), "Getting to Scale: How to Bring Development Solutions to Millions of Poor People." Brookings Institution Press, Washington, D.C. Pages 305-342; Waddell, Steve and Sandra Waddock, Sarah Cornell, Domenico Dentoni, Milla McLachlan and Greta Meszoely. June 2015. "Large Scale Systems Change: An Emerging Field of Transformation and Transitions." The Journal of Corporate Citizenship Issue 58. Greenleaf Publishing; Waddock, Sandra and Greta M. Meszoely, Steve Waddell and Domenico Dentoni. October 2015. "The complexity of wicker problems in large scale change." Journal of Organizational Change Management, Vol. 28 Iss 6 pp.993-1012. Online at http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/JOCM-08-2014-0146; Cooperrider, David L. and Jane E. Dutton (eds). 1999. Organizational Dimensions of Global Change: No Limits to Cooperation. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, London and New Delhi.

13   ibid.

14   Brouwer and Woodhill et al 2015, page 127.

15   Hanleybrown, Fay, John Kania, and Mark Kramer. 2012. "Channeling Change: Making Collective Impact Work." Stanford Social Innovation Review.

16   Kania and Kramer 2011, page 41.

17   United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). 2013. "FAO Statistical Yearbook 2013." Online at http://www.fao.org/docrep/018/i3107e/i3107e00.htm (accessed August 25, 2014). Page 1.

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21   World Economic Forum 2015.

22   General McChrystal and his colleagues also refer to the concept of shared consciousness, a shared understanding of the context and objectives, achieved through high transparency, that enables decentralized decision-making. While they focus on this concept at the organizational level, we find it useful at the broader system level as well. Senge et al 2015 also make the link between shared vision and action, highlighting the role of individual system leaders in "learning how to use the tension between vision and reality to inspire truly new approaches" (page 29). FSG's work on collective impact also makes it clear that it is greater coordination and alignment, not breakthrough innovation or significantly increased funding, that accelerates change. See, for example, Kania, John and Mark Kramer. 2013. "Embracing Emergence: How Collective Impact Addresses Complexity." Stanford Social Innovation Review.

23   The term "empowerment" implies some relinquishing of control, or at least comfort with ambiguity. It has been interesting to see this term come into use even within such a traditional hierarchy as the United States military (see McChrystal et al 2015).

24   See, inter alia, Hanleybrown et al 2012; Global Development Incubator 2015, pages 13 and 23; and Bezanson, Keith A. and Paul Isenman. 2012. "Governance of New Global Partnerships: Challenges, Weaknesses, and Lessons." CGD Policy Paper 014. Washington DC: Center for Global Development. Online at http://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/1426627_file_Bezanson_Isenman_FINAL.pdf (accessed November 23, 2015).

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28   SAGCOT 2011.

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29   Jenkins 2012, pages 16-17.

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32   Grow Asia. 2015. "Grow Asia Vietnam." Online at http://www.growasia.org/assets/files/1648_GA_A5_vietnam_03.pdf (accessed November 26, 2015). Page 3.

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About the Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative (CSRI)

The Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative (CSRI) at the Harvard Kennedy School's Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Business and Government (M-RCBG) is a multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder program that seeks to study and enhance the public contributions of private enterprise. The initiative explores the intersection of corporate responsibility, corporate governance, and public policy, with a focus on analyzing institutional innovations that enhance governance and accountability and help to achieve key international development goals. It bridges theory and practice, builds leadership skills, and supports constructive dialogue and collaboration among business, government, civil society and academics. Founded in 2004, the CSR Initiative works with a small Corporate Leadership Group consisting of global companies that are leaders in the fields of corporate responsibility, sustainability or creating shared value. The Initiative also works with other leading CSR and sustainability organizations, government bodies, non-governmental organizations, foundations and companies to leverage innovative policy research and examples of good practice in this field. The CSR Initiative is chaired by Professor John Ruggie and directed by Jane Nelson.

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