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Kearney



Making Collaboration Work for Climate and Nature: Practical Insights from GAEA Award Winners

WHITE PAPER

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Contents

Foreword	3
Executive summary	4
1 Partnership models – a summary	5
1.1 Three transformational partnership models	6
2 Transformative collaboration in action	11
2.1 Three stages of partnership-building	11
Model 1 Joint ventures and strategic alliances	12
Model 2 Industry-wide alliances	14
Model 3 Cross-sector partnerships	17
3 Recommendations to accelerate transformative collaboration	20
3.1 Success factors for climate and nature partnerships	20
3.2 Five key enablers for an effective collaborator	23
Conclusion	26
Contributors	27
Endnotes	29

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Foreword



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Despite growing global commitments, the level of investment mobilised for climate and nature solutions still falls far short of what is needed.¹ Individual efforts cannot meet the scale of the climate and nature crises. The power of philanthropic capital to catalyse change, combined with corporate leadership and government-led policy action, creates a unique opportunity to unlock investment, align efforts and drive the world towards a net-zero, nature-positive future.

The World Economic Forum's inaugural [Giving to Amplify Earth Action \(GAEA\) Awards](#), developed alongside strategic knowledge partner Kearney and a global community of cross-sector experts, recognize partnerships tackling global climate and nature challenges with innovative, scalable solutions. From over 120 initial nominations, an expert independent jury selected fifteen finalists that are contributing to systemic change, including five winners, many of which are profiled in detail in this report. The awardees have been honoured for pioneering, adaptable, impact-driven efforts

in science, innovation, business, cross-sector collaboration and intergenerational leadership. They are now eligible to receive tailored support to accelerate and scale-up their impact.

However, such success stories remain the exception rather than the rule. To meet today's challenges, we need radical collaboration – at speed and at scale. This means possessing not just a readiness to partner across sectors and silos, but the capabilities to establish, execute and scale-up transformative partnerships. It also requires organizations to invest in becoming strong collaborators to maximize conditions for success.

Through research into potential awardees and dozens of interviews with selected GAEA Award winners and finalists, this report showcases what is possible when organizations break out of traditional boundaries. We hope these insights will inspire others to follow their lead and work together towards a sustainable future.

Executive summary

Successful partnerships can take different forms – but common success factors include a clear strategy, strong collaboration, flexibility and dedicated resourcing.

The past decade from 2015 to 2024 has seen the 10 warmest years on record,² while 75% of the Earth's land surface has been significantly altered by human actions.³ Clearly, traditional approaches to tackling the climate and nature crises are no longer sufficient. To drive systemic change at speed and scale requires multi-stakeholder partnerships. While there is extensive research highlighting the urgency for collaboration, success stories remain rare, as real-world dynamics prove more challenging than theory.

Whether new to partnerships or not, this white paper aims to help organizations think more strategically about working with diverse stakeholders. While there is no single “right” approach, this report offers practical insights, tested approaches and key considerations to build strong collaborations that deliver tangible, scalable impact.

Drawing on dozens of interviews and case studies of selected World Economic Forum GAEA Award winners and finalists, the paper discusses practical lessons across **three collaboration models**:

- 1. Joint ventures and strategic alliances:** businesses in the same industry or value chain that work together to improve sustainability. Success hinges on equitable representation, shared decision-making, long-term commitment and enabling external conditions.
- 2. Industry-wide alliances:** member-based coalitions that unite organizations within or across sectors with common goals. The key with these alliances is to balance the broad influence generated by more members with the deep engagement possible among fewer members. It is equally vital to set clear objectives, commit to realistic targets and engage members long-term.
- 3. Cross-sector partnerships:** a mix of public, private and philanthropic collaborations (in any combination) that create enabling policies, infrastructure and initiatives. Success comes from maintaining strong alignment and engagement across diverse stakeholders, measuring and communicating impact effectively and ensuring scalability.

Transformative partnerships are complex and require rigorous strategic alignment, planning and relationship-building at every stage. Whether an organization is establishing, implementing or scaling-up a partnership, it is essential that they successfully navigate evolving challenges across each stage of the process to maintain engagement and momentum.

Lessons learned in partnership-building

The case studies presented in this report illustrate the following three stages of partnership-building and some important lessons arising at each stage:

- 1. Establishing collaboration:** Begin small, with highly committed members; or adapt an existing platform to build momentum.
- 2. Building trust and measuring impact:** Establish structured governance to foster trust and transparency. Tracking impact requires a pragmatic and flexible approach, seeking meaningful progress rather than perfection.
- 3. Expanding and deepening collaboration:** Build scalability into the model from the start.

A fundamental factor in creating successful partnerships across every stage outlined above is the ability of each partner to be a strong collaborator. To achieve this, leaders should integrate the following five enablers within their own organizations:

- **Enabler 1:** Clear strategy and ambition.
- **Enabler 2:** Cross-functional alignment.
- **Enabler 3:** Collaborative mindset and culture.
- **Enabler 4:** Long-term planning and flexibility.
- **Enabler 5:** Dedicated resourcing, capabilities and skills.

Investing in these areas is crucial to optimize the conditions that drive breakthroughs and foster high-impact partnerships.

1

Partnership models – a summary

Strategic joint ventures, industry-wide alliances and cross-sector partnerships are three models of collaboration that can drive systems change across sectors and contexts.

Some multi-stakeholder partnerships are relatively tactical and transactional, focused on solving a well-defined problem or delivering a specific target outcome. However, the urgent and complex climate and nature challenges facing humanity require radical collaboration and transformative partnerships to scale-up systemic impact.

Forms of partnership vary widely – from the types of stakeholders involved, whether their reach is global or local, their goals and scope, and the commitment required. Based on a careful analysis of selected GAEA Award winners and finalists, this report explores three transformational partnership models:

Model 1 Joint ventures and strategic alliances.

Model 2 Industry-wide alliances.

Model 3 Cross-sector partnerships.

While they differ by focus and stakeholders involved, each one is relevant and replicable across sectors and contexts.

↓ **Credit:** Regenerative Production Landscape Collaborative (RPLC)



1.1 Three transformational partnership models

Model 1

“ Transformative joint ventures enable impact beyond collaborators’ own value chains.

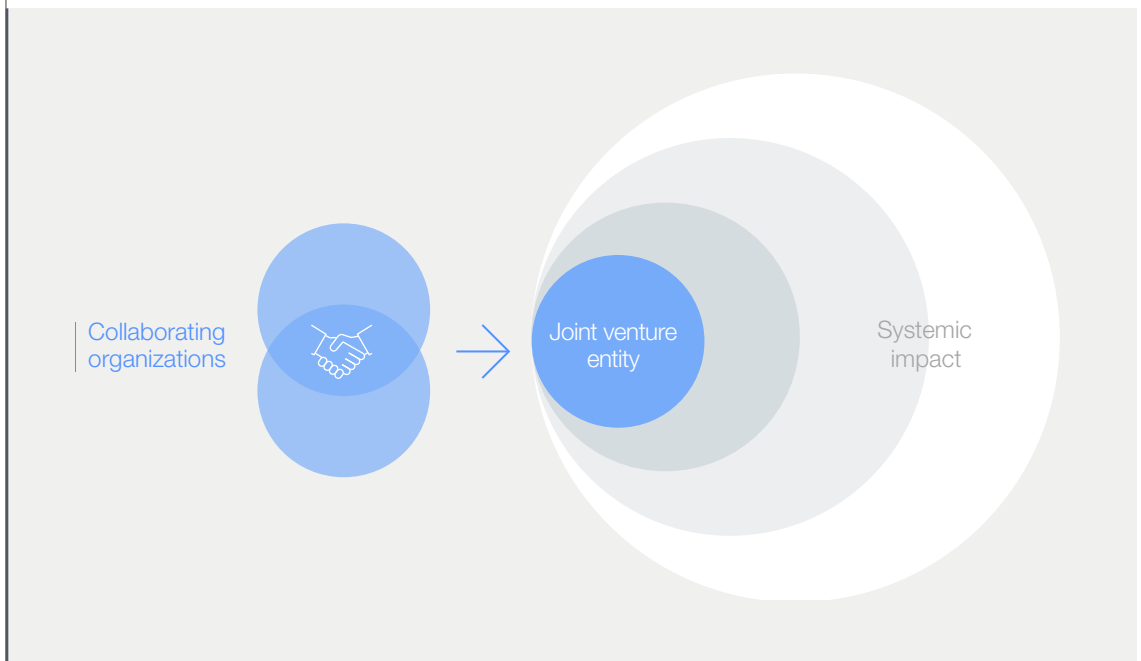
Joint ventures and strategic alliances

These partnerships typically involve businesses in the same (or related) industry or value chain, formally collaborating to address shared sustainability challenges for mutual benefit. Transformative joint ventures enable impact beyond collaborators’ own value chains; for example, reshaping the industry by scaling-up technological innovations or piloting new models.

Such partnerships enable organizations to overcome internal barriers by pooling resources, sharing risks and harnessing complementary

expertise and capabilities. Importantly, clear boundaries for engagement and collaboration should be defined to prevent anti-trust behaviour⁴ and safeguard competitive integrity. Joint ventures are particularly effective for businesses seeking to embark on high-investment or high-risk projects such as early-stage R&D or technological development. For example, given the investment required, this model is proving an effective way to develop technologies needed to decarbonize heavy industries.

FIGURE 1 How a joint venture or strategic alliance can create systemic impact



MODEL 1 CASE STUDY HYBRIT

Click to open
case study details



This joint venture between SSAB, LKAB and Vattenfall aims to transform the Swedish iron and steel industry by developing a technology that enables fossil-free steel production.



Model 2

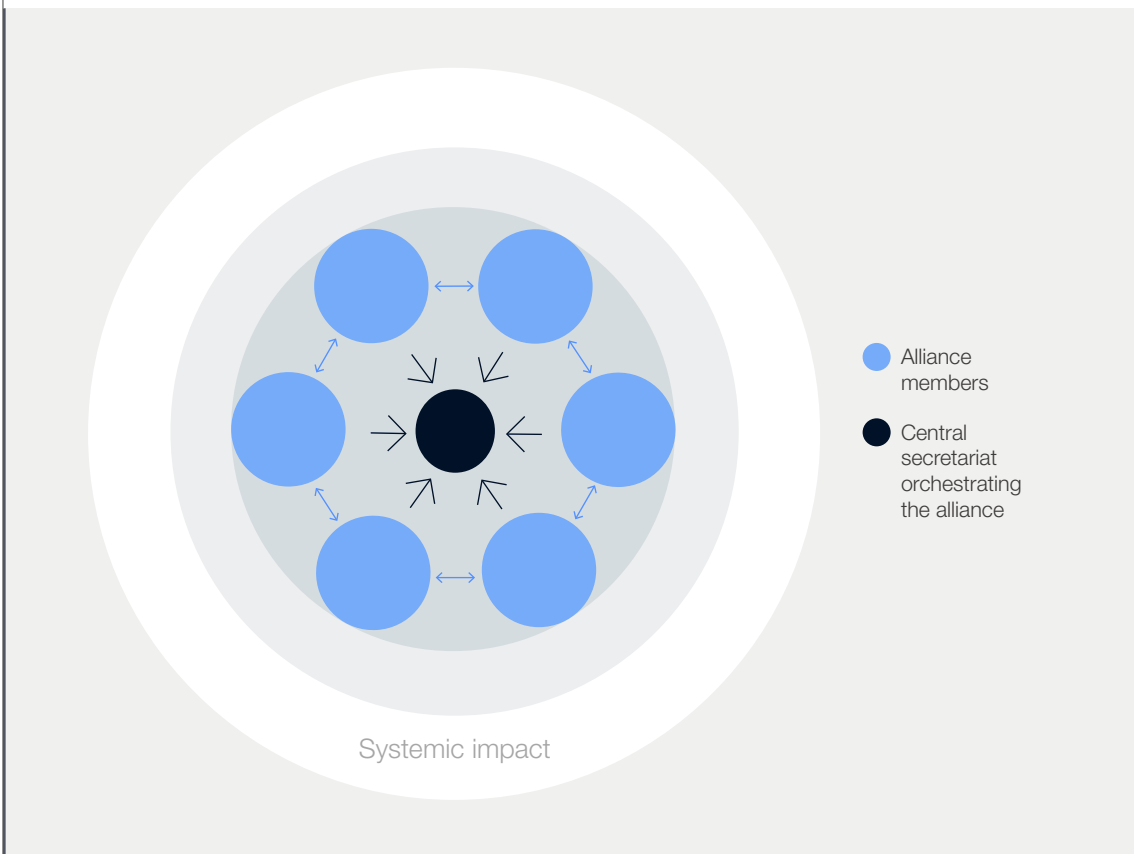
“ Industry-wide alliances aim to leverage complementary capabilities, knowledge and collective influence to define or improve industry standards and practices.

Industry-wide alliances

These alliances are member-based coalitions that unite organizations in the same sector or across sectors around common goals. They aim to leverage complementary capabilities, knowledge and collective influence to define or improve industry standards and practices. This may be in response to supply chain sustainability challenges and industry-wide regulation, or to harmonize approaches and foster innovative solutions in particularly fragmented industries.

These coalitions achieve their goals by fostering transparency and knowledge-sharing, fuelling standardization and disseminating best practices. Convened by a central secretariat – either member-led or independently orchestrated – members typically sign on to formalized commitments to defined climate and nature actions and targets, aligning to a shared public-good objective that transcends individual incentives. Members collectively address industry barriers to achieving climate and nature objectives and may leverage their influence to influence or advise on public policy and regulation.

FIGURE 2 How an industry-wide alliance can create systemic impact



MODEL 2 CASE STUDY
BUILT BY NATURE
(BbN)

Click to open
case study details



Orchestrated by a central non-profit, this cross-industry network-of-networks brings together demand-side actors across the construction industry to accelerate the timber-building transition, by sharing knowledge and collectively developing solutions.



MODEL 2 CASE STUDY
**CLIMATE ACTION DATA
(CAD) TRUST**



Click to open
case study details

Led by the World Bank, the International Emissions Trading Association (IETA) and the Government of Singapore, CAD Trust brings together stakeholders working across carbon markets to harmonize data, standards and practices and to increase confidence in global carbon credit markets. Leveraging a metadata platform, CAD Trust tackles industry challenges such as the risk of double-counting, improving transparency and trust in carbon markets.



MODEL 2 CASE STUDY
**TOGETHER FOR
SUSTAINABILITY (TfS)**



Click to open
case study details

Orchestrated by a central secretariat, members of the chemicals industry have come together to improve the sustainability of their own operations and that of their suppliers, setting an industry-wide standard for environmental, social and governance (ESG) supply chain performance.



Model 3

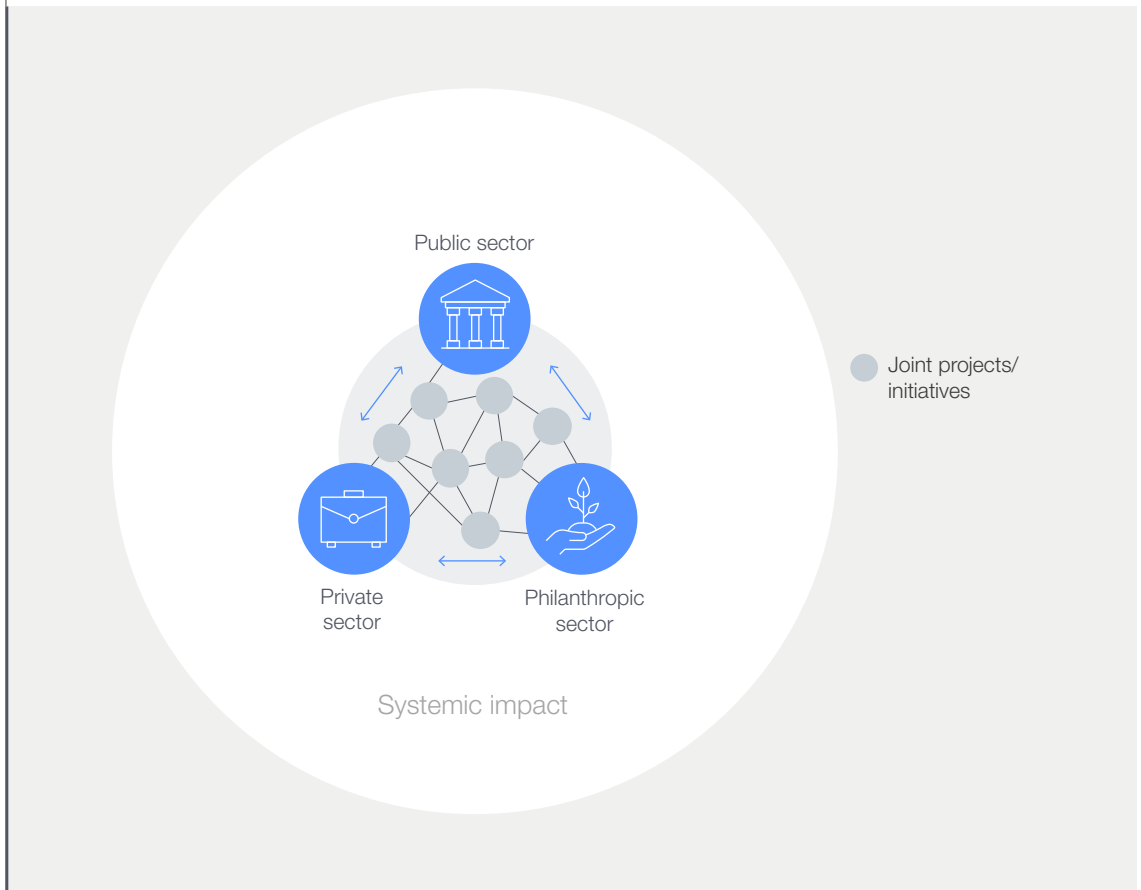
“ Cross-sector partnerships involve public, private and philanthropic sectors to deliver progress at speed and scale.

Cross-sector partnerships

Cross-sector partnerships and initiatives involve the public, private and philanthropic sectors (in any combination), to leverage their distinct capabilities to deliver climate and nature progress at a scale and speed unachievable by any one actor or sector.⁵ These partnerships often work alongside NGOs, non-profits, community organizations and research institutions.

This joint approach can transform the ways in which sustainability challenges are addressed, both locally and globally. However combined, the patient capital of philanthropy, the private sector's ability to innovate and scale-up, and the public sector's influence on policy and regulation create the enabling environment to accelerate and grow initiatives beyond incremental progress.

FIGURE 3 How a cross-sector partnership can create systemic impact



MODEL 3 CASE STUDY
GLOBAL ENERGY
ALLIANCE FOR PEOPLE
AND PLANET (GEAPP)

Click to open
case study details



This global alliance convenes governments, communities, technology providers, policy-makers, development banks and private-sector partners, leveraging catalytic philanthropic capital alongside the unique strengths of alliance members to scale-up green energy solutions and increase energy access in emerging markets.



MODEL 3 CASE STUDY
REGENERATIVE PRODUCTION
LANDSCAPE
COLLABORATIVES (RPLCs)

Click to open
case study details



These are collaborative governance structures that bring together farmers, non-profits and community organizations with businesses and government representatives. RPLCs aim to address systemic challenges such as degraded landscapes and declining yields to restore ecosystems, while improving the sustainability of textile and agricultural supply chains and promoting local community resilience.



↑ Credit: RPLC

Transformative collaboration in action

Collaboration is complex and challenging – rigorous planning, strong relationship-building and strategic alignment are needed at every stage.

“ Systemic barriers to collaboration include fragmented sectors with siloed stakeholders, misaligned incentives, funding shortfalls and regulatory uncertainty.

Transformative multi-stakeholder partnerships for climate and nature are inherently complex. To succeed, they demand rigorous planning, strong relationship-building and ongoing alignment. Systemic barriers often stand in the way: fragmented sectors with siloed stakeholders, misaligned incentives, funding shortfalls and regulatory uncertainty can all hinder progress. Internally, collaborators may face challenges around data-sharing and attributing impact, especially given

the long-term nature of environmental projects. By proactively addressing these obstacles at every stage, organizations can foster more resilient, effective collaborations that drive lasting change.

The following three stages of partnership-building and the practices involved are common across all the case studies examined in this report and are pivotal to their success.

2.1 Three stages of partnership-building

Stage 1 Establishing collaboration

- **Internal scoping:** Clearly define internal organizational priorities and the strategic rationale for collaboration. Assess internal capabilities and secure executive sponsorship.
- **External scanning:** Identify collaborators based on sector context, influence, technical expertise, mandate alignment and ecosystem fit.
- **Shared alignment:** Articulate a shared view of success and mutual value. Define collective objectives and metrics, and clarify roles.
- **Governance and resourcing:** Establish clear decision-making structures and inclusive governance. Ensure fit-for-purpose financing and resourcing, aligned to ambition level and agreed time horizon.

Stage 2 Building trust and measuring impact

- **Coordinating solutions:** Consistently engage collaborators to surface priorities and challenges. Collectively develop solutions and coordinate joint initiatives.
- **Strengthening trust:** Deliver on agreed commitments in line with clearly defined

responsibilities. Address issues proactively and collaboratively.

- **Measuring impact:** Agree interim targets, metrics, milestones and an impact measurement and reporting approach. Attributing and quantifying impact is a particular challenge in initiatives seeking industry- or system-wide impact. Partnerships may require a pragmatic approach initially, using proxy metrics such as collaborator engagement.

Stage 3 Expanding collaboration and deepening impact

- **Continuously improving:** Proactively strengthen partner engagement over the long term, supported by robust measurement and reporting to refine and adapt approaches.
- **Scaling-up and replication:** Target systemic impact by identifying opportunities to replicate and scale-up collaborative approach through new sectors, partners, geographies or initiatives. Codify learnings to aid repeatability.

The case studies that follow provide practical examples of these insights and how they can help partnerships to overcome common barriers at all stages.

Model 1

Joint ventures and strategic alliances

These partnerships involve businesses in similar industries or value chains that formally collaborate to address shared sustainability challenges for mutual benefit.

CASE STUDY

HYBRIT – Winner, 2025 GAEA Award for Moving Force in Business

HYBRIT (Hydrogen Breakthrough Ironmaking Technology) is a transformative joint venture between three leading Swedish companies, sharing the investment and risk required to develop the technology in the value chain required for the industrial production of fossil-free steel.⁶

In 2016, Swedish steelmaker SSAB joined forces with LKAB (Europe's largest iron ore producer) and Vattenfall (one of Europe's largest energy companies) to develop the first fossil-free steel. HYBRIT replaces the current blast furnace process, reliant on coal and coke, with a fossil-free hydrogen gas-based process which emits water instead of CO₂.⁷

Prompted by Sweden's climate policy framework targeting zero emissions, HYBRIT originated from SSAB's exploration of hydrogen-based steelmaking at scale. Further impetus came from Fossil Free Sweden, a government entity that coordinates sector initiatives and aligns government/business efforts.

To help drive the transition of the value chain, SSAB sought out LKAB and Vattenfall, both state-owned companies. Their market power and influence were crucial: LKAB produces 80% of the EU's and almost all of Sweden's iron ore,⁸ while Vattenfall provides a significant portion of Sweden's power capacity.

In 2017, the three companies formally established Hybrit Development AB, a tech-development company, as an independent joint venture with equal ownership and balanced governance through a tripartite board. This structure pools

skills and resources to harness synergies and share risks and investment. The Swedish Energy Agency and the European Union (EU) Innovation Fund have contributed financial support.

The transition to HYBRIT technology in the value chain is expected to reduce Sweden's CO₂ emissions by more than 10% and Finland's by 7%; there is also significant global potential. Volvo Group, Epiroc, Peab and others are already using HYBRIT's fossil-free steel in vehicles, heavy machinery, buildings and consumer products.

Moving from pilot to commercialization, the joint venture plans to:

- Continue developing the technology for implementation of a fossil-free value chain at industrial scale.
- Drive further R&D for industrialization, including supporting LKAB's planned demonstration plant for hydrogen based direct reduction.
- Extend the pilot-based development for large scale storage of hydrogen towards industrial implementation.

🔗 **The transition to HYBRIT technology is expected to reduce Sweden's CO₂ emissions by more than 10% and Finland's by 7%; there is also significant global potential.**

Highlights

- **Strategic value chain partnering.** Each owner contributes complementary strengths, skills and resources, along with significant scale in its respective field, plus a willingness to share risk.
- **Development accelerated by collaboration.** Close external and internal collaboration among project engineers and researchers from universities and research organizations enabled the pilot to reach its goals faster than anticipated.⁹
- **Transformative impact potential.** HYBRIT is on track to achieve the partners' original long-term vision: to transform the industry in the value chain. Onsite fossil-free hydrogen production and future hydrogen storage is transferable to other industrial plants. Other hydrogen-based industries can also benefit from co-location.¹⁰

Key success factors – joint ventures and strategic alliances

Equitable representation and shared decision-making

Equitable governance, combined with balanced decision-making mechanisms and shared risk-taking, ensures that all partners are represented effectively for long-term impact. Participants' contributions may vary – for example, in technical expertise or financial contribution – but formalizing balanced roles and decision rights reinforces mutual accountability and long-term commitment to success.

Equitable power can be institutionalized through formal governance: for example HYBRIT Development AB is an independent company, jointly and equally owned by each founding entity. Each company provides a board representative, with a rotating chairmanship.

Long-term commitment

To realize impact beyond the value chain of core collaborators, transformative joint ventures and strategic alliances should be designed for scalability and replicability from the start.

For HYBRIT, transforming global markets has always been the ambition: it is securing patents and moving to the next phase of industrial-scale implementation. Among other benefits, patenting opens the technology to outside investment: any company will be able to apply for a commercial licence to use HYBRIT technology in their own products and services.¹¹

Enabling external conditions

Joint ventures often push technological boundaries. External support – from policy-makers, regulators, infrastructure financing bodies and the public – is critical to ensure commercialization and growth.

Factors such as Sweden's innovative steel industry, access to renewable electric power and high-quality iron ore gave the HYBRIT venture a strong foundation. In addition, the state has been directly involved in fostering the development of green steel. The Swedish Energy Agency and EU Innovation Fund have provided funding, with HYBRIT cited as a leading initiative in the energy efficiency implementation plan for the European Strategic Energy Technology Plan (SET Plan), which prioritizes the development of renewable hydrogen-based fuels.¹²



Model 2

Industry-wide alliances

These member-based coalitions unite organizations within or across sectors around common goals, leveraging complementary capabilities and influence to improve industry standards and practices.

CASE STUDY

Built by Nature – Winner, 2025 GAEA Award for Impactful Innovation Enabler

Built by Nature's network model scales-up innovation in timber-based building, while fostering knowledge exchange and defining standards and policy in the European and global construction industry.¹³

Buildings account for 40% of global energy-related emissions,¹⁴ with concrete and steel a major source of CO₂. Founded in 2021, Built by Nature (BbN) aims to cut industry emissions and promote the safe and effective storage of carbon in buildings, by championing timber-based solutions.

BbN's philanthropic funding brings the alliance an independence that allows it to be objective and mission-driven in its activities. By mobilizing national networks of demand-side actors – “frontrunners” such as developers, contractors, architects, engineers, property owners, investors, insurers and city officials – BbN cuts through siloes, fosters knowledge-sharing and works to overcome transition barriers. Members address value chain considerations, conduct R&D, develop policy and regulatory recommendations, and promote timber's scalability. The wide cross-section of stakeholders embodies the collective strength

needed to problem-solve, share and disseminate knowledge, and influence policy. For example, BbN has collaborated with the Forest & Climate Leaders' Partnership to develop new international *Principles For Responsible Timber Construction*.¹⁵

BbN's networks across Europe tackle complex local challenges; for example, its UK network is addressing insurability concerns around mass timber use, while the Netherlands network has developed new financing models for bio-based social housing. BbN also enables thematic collaboration between and within networks and amplifies solutions across borders. Each network features 25-50 frontrunners, selected for their influence (whether scale or disruptiveness) and reputation for innovation.

🔗 Buildings account for 40% of global energy-related emissions, with concrete and steel a major source of CO₂. Built by Nature aims to cut industry emissions and promote carbon storage by championing timber-based solutions.

Highlights

- **Alignment across collaborators.** An annual survey of local network members helps ensure network-wide alignment on challenges and priorities.
- **Conducive structure for problem solving.** The national network structure allows members to identify commonalities and differences across regions and subsectors, accelerating progress.
- **Creating trust and engagement.** Limitations on members in each network fosters familiarity, trust and deeper collaboration. Members (even competitors) display a high willingness to share knowledge, best practice and insights.



CASE STUDY

Climate Action Data Trust – Finalist, 2025 GAEA Award for Moving Force in Business

Climate Action Data (CAD) Trust pioneers global carbon market data integration by combining security, transparency and collaboration through its infrastructure, data model and governance.¹⁶

CAD Trust was launched in 2022 from the World Bank's Climate Warehouse initiative, in collaboration with the International Emissions Trading Association (IETA) and the Government of Singapore. It leverages a blockchain-powered metadata platform to link, aggregate and harmonize carbon credit registry data. This enhances transparency, reduces the risks of double counting and increases confidence across fragmented and complex global carbon credit markets. The platform enables a public, open-source and common reference layer to support the integrity of carbon trading markets, in line with Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.

Collaboration is core to CAD Trust, as it seeks to integrate independent standards, national carbon registries and UN mechanisms and to help users reconcile data between them.¹⁷ In addition to data connectivity, CAD Trust is also a multi-stakeholder alliance with industry experts co-developing

solutions through clearly defined governance forums. These include the technical committee, which is focused on the technical development of the data model and platform; the user forum, where market practitioners and users advise on data functionality and use; and the council, which provides strategic direction and decision-making.

Participation is merit-based and independent of funding, with members opting to contribute according to their interest and expertise. This preserves CAD Trust's operational independence and focus on pursuing the public good. Robust governance is a fundamental part of the Trust's value proposition, enabling members to meaningfully contribute within the relevant forum, while ensuring trust, credibility and objectivity.

“ CAD Trust's blockchain-powered platform enhances transparency, reduces double counting and increases confidence across fragmented and complex carbon credit markets.

CASE STUDY

Together for Sustainability – Finalist, 2025 GAEA Award for Moving Force in Business

Together for Sustainability (TfS) is an industry-leading, member-driven coalition of 57 major chemical companies, representing a global annual turnover of more than €800 billion.¹⁸ TfS is dedicated to developing and raising industry standards on supply chain sustainability and Scope 3 emissions.

TfS assesses, standardizes and improves the sustainability performance of chemical supply chains. Founded in 2011, it has established the de facto global standard for ESG performance across the chemical industry. Members commit to building sustainable supply chains, meeting regulatory requirements and improving the sustainability of their own and their suppliers' operations. To facilitate collective expertise and member engagement, TfS members apply the TfS tools and processes in their supply chains, provide dedicated resources to lend their expertise to TfS workstreams and regional teams, and ensure their Chief Procurement Officers' participation.

TfS' most recent work area is the Scope 3 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions programme, which aims to establish a harmonized industry-wide approach to calculating emissions

that drive 75% of the industry's global footprint. Among the programme's features is *The Product Carbon Footprint Guideline for the Chemical Industry*, an industry-specific approach to calculating the carbon footprint of products that is publicly available on the TfS website.¹⁹ The product carbon footprint (PCF) data exchange platform enables businesses to exchange PCF data safely, retaining control over their own data at all times. TfS members actively work on the development of the Scope 3 programme, in addition to other TfS tools and processes such as supplier assessments, supplier audits and follow-ups with suppliers to improve their sustainability performance through training materials and tailored corrective action plans.

All TfS members have a seat and a vote in the TfS general assembly, which sets the strategic direction for TfS and elects the TfS steering committee and president.

“ Together for Sustainability assesses, standardizes and improves the sustainability performance of chemical supply chains.

Key success factors – industry-wide alliances

“ A large membership base can expand reach and resources but risks diluting focus and trust.

“ To keep members engaged, alliances must continually demonstrate value.

Balancing broad influence with deep engagement and trust

Deciding who joins an industry alliance involves balancing trade-offs between the broad influence that comes with a large group of members and the deep engagement and transparency that come with a smaller group of members. A large membership base can expand reach and resources but risks diluting focus and trust. Optimal membership scope and structure depend on the alliance’s goals, maturity and sector fragmentation.

For example, Built by Nature, operating in the highly fragmented construction sector, currently engages ~50 participating organizations in its national networks. BbN convenes smaller topic-focused sessions to foster trust and open dialogue, even on live projects.

Meanwhile, Together for Sustainability operates in a different context: the breadth of its coverage is core to its value proposition. With 57 of the largest chemical companies as members, TfS can set de facto global standards for ESG performance in supply chains and increase value for members by maximizing its database of supplier audits and assessments, while ensuring transparency and trust by leveraging a trusted platform for data-sharing.

Aligning on strategic priorities

Effective alliances co-create their objectives and priorities with members via a structured process, to ensure focus, buy-in and faster progress. BbN surveys all members annually on their most urgent barriers and solutions, to help shape each year’s agenda.

Meanwhile, CAD Trust uses a robust governance model with clearly defined forums to gather members’ expert perspectives and to align on strategic direction. Its central council sets strategic direction and priorities, based on inputs from dedicated technical and user committees in which members address specific questions. The council may mobilize task forces to address cross-cutting issues, with double-counting being a recent example. Structured engagement and governance enable transparency and agility; this helps the alliance to stay closely aligned with the organizational and business needs of members, which in turn accelerates adoption and progress.

Engaging members long-term

Sustained member commitment is essential for alliances that are built upon knowledge-sharing and collective problem-solving. This engagement begins with a compelling purpose and value proposition. For example, CAD Trust was created to address barriers to implementing Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, while BbN arose to tackle silos in the fragmented construction industry that prevent progress in the timber building transition. Even after 14 years, TfS has only increased in relevance with ever-rising industry regulations.

To keep members engaged, alliances must continually demonstrate value. CAD Trust, for example, is moving to a “use case” model to showcase to different users the benefits of participation, such as carbon market integrity and interoperability. Formalized commitments – such as the dedicated resource contributions provided by TfS members – can further solidify engagement. For BbN, this is a complex consideration. Although its philanthropic funding enables the alliance to maintain operational independence, BbN also recognizes the potential value of financial contributions, both in boosting engagement and to enable more formalized review cycles with members.

Setting achievable, accountable targets

To maintain credibility, alliances must go beyond high-level pledges and set concrete, measurable, time-bound goals – as well as supporting members in achieving them. For example – based on research from thinktank InfluenceMap – Unilever has assessed 26 of its key trade association memberships to ensure alignment with its climate policy objectives.²⁰ TfS embeds accountability in its articles of association, requiring members to commit resources to supply-chain decarbonization and to adhere to science-based targets.

Meanwhile, BbN takes a tailored approach, helping members define realistic goals suited to their sphere of influence, given the relatively early stages of transforming the timber-building industry. While targets are not mandatory, BbN members are encouraged to share and benchmark commitments within similar sub-sectors, promoting transparency and mutual accountability.

Model 3

Cross-sector partnerships

These initiatives leverage the distinct capabilities of public, private and philanthropic sectors to deliver climate and nature progress at a scale and speed unachievable by any one actor or sector.

CASE STUDY

Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet (GEAPP) – Winner, 2025 GAEA Award for Catalytic Partnership for the Planet

GEAPP is a growing coalition of public, private and philanthropic partners working together to end energy poverty and drive inclusive economic growth through clean energy.²¹ The alliance aims to connect 1 billion people to electricity, avert 4 gigatonnes (billion tonnes/Gt) of carbon emissions and power sustainable jobs and livelihoods for 150 million people.

GEAPP collaborates with governments down to the local level to scale-up green energy solutions in emerging markets. Governed by a board of directors and a cross-sector leadership council, the alliance's partners include development banks, philanthropies, government representatives, investors, technology partners and other private sector players. As an alliance, GEAPP is much greater than the sum of its parts, mobilizing partners to transform projects into lasting systemic change. Through funding, technical assistance, project development and market-shaping expertise, partners develop tailored, scalable energy and financing solutions. To reduce barriers to participation, GEAPP has a flexible commitment model.

Since its launch in 2021, GEAPP has committed \$471 million of investment, which it has leveraged into \$6 billion for some

170 projects in nearly 40 countries. It has improved electricity access for almost 85 million people, avoided 44 megatonnes (million tonnes/Mt) of emissions and created or improved 2.5 million jobs.

GEAPP's mission of driving lasting systemic change is already underway, through its flagship initiative, the BESS (Battery Energy Storage System) Consortium. This partnership of governments and resourcing partners is building a pipeline of investable BESS projects in emerging markets, with the aim to reach a tipping point to create a viable 100-200 gigawatt (GW) market. The consortium intends to support 5 GW to underpin this, having already established a 2 GW project pipeline across 18 countries.

🔗 **GEAPP's achievements: leveraged \$6 billion for 170 projects in ~40 countries, improved electricity access for ~85 million people, avoided 44 Mt of emissions and created or improved 2.5 million jobs.**

Highlights

- **Private sector engagement at all levels.** GEAPP engages the private sector globally, within its advisory leadership council; among investors, in creating green energy opportunities; and in projects, within local value chains.
- **Scalability.** GEAPP seeks scale by engaging alliance partners to address key constraints and by providing catalytic funding for policy and regulatory reform to build capacity and create business models and first-mover projects. It also consolidates learning across initiatives and geographies into global playbooks.
- **Measuring systemic impact.** Measuring the value of alliances in creating systemic impact is crucial to achieving GEAPP's core mission. Because systemic impact takes time, GEAPP will assess its progress towards achieving systems change and whether it is addressing key constraints or inhibitors of progress. Specifically, GEAPP will measure how it and its partners contribute to improving policies, practices and processes; shape participants' capacities and incentives; and generate relational change²² among them to collectively achieve scale.

CASE STUDY

Regenerative Production Landscape Collaboratives (RPLCs) – Finalist, 2025 GAEA Award for Catalytic Partnership for the Planet

The RPLC model promotes sustainable agriculture, ecosystem restoration and community resilience.²³ This model supports both climate mitigation and adaptation, through collaborative governance structures that facilitate engagement between governments, businesses and civic organizations at the community, regional and national levels in India, Pakistan, Tanzania and Brazil.

Founded in 2021, RPLCs take a landscape-based approach to implement regenerative agriculture. The model aims to address systemic challenges such as degraded landscapes, declining yields and incomes of smallholder farmers, socio-economic issues and limited government funding. The RPLC approach goes beyond individual farm interventions for regenerative agriculture and, instead, focuses on restoring and improving an ecosystem. This is combined with a landscape approach to land management, addressing the unique needs of each landscape with targeted, local solutions. The focus is on sustained ecosystem health, reducing long-term risks and creating more resilient sourcing models.

At the core of each RPLC are localized, participatory governance structures called “compacts”, established in key commodity-sourcing areas. Compacts enable direct engagement between private sector companies from the food and fashion sectors, local government representatives, philanthropies and local farmer collectives. Compact members co-design and execute tailored initiatives to meet collectively agreed landscape improvement targets, such as implementing regenerative agriculture practices. For companies that often directly fund these initiatives, engaging with farmer collectives improves supply chain visibility and sustainability and enables implementation of targeted projects while directly supporting local communities and creating landscape-level impact.

The RPLC approach originated from various sustainable cotton projects involving the private sector, farmer collectives and other multi-stakeholder organizations, such as the Organic Cotton Accelerator (OCA) in India. This initiative proved the value of creating market links between farmer collectives and the private sector within the cotton supply chain, and encouraged government involvement. It also demonstrated potential in agricultural areas beyond cotton. With seed funding from the Laudes Foundation, the RPLC model was formalized with founding partners including WWF, IDH (Sustainable Trade Initiative) and GIZ (the German government’s principal development agency), which convene these collaboratives in the four countries.

Each RPLC provides a forum for stakeholders, who otherwise lack the pathways to connect and address shared challenges. Formal governance – along with a structured, repeatable process across RPLCs that facilitates joint target-setting and ownership – enables a diverse group of stakeholders to collaborate and remain engaged. Landscape and project-level targets for each RPLC are based on initial baseline studies and benchmarks, conducted in partnership with organizations such as the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in India, followed by a member consultation process to ensure collective agreement and accountability.

To date, the RPLC model has:

- Enabled ongoing restoration of 1 million hectares, affecting more than 300,000 farmers.
- Boosted smallholder farmers’ income by 25-30%, including issuing approximately €16 million of premium payments to farmers in India through partners such as OCA for regenerative and organic practices.
- Organized more than 500 self-help groups for women and village savings and lending associations to support diversified earning models.

With multiple RPLCs underway, the focus is now on standardizing approaches and highlighting shared lessons, to help achieve the project’s ambition of regenerating 50 million hectares globally by 2035. As a founding partner, Laudes Foundation is working to set up a global landscape finance facility with a range of institutional investors and partners to ensure RPLCs can access the long-term sustainable financing they need to grow. Some financial models for scaling-up RPLCs are already being tested: for example, the project is working with the Green Climate Fund in Tanzania on a blended finance and technical assistance facility to enhance climate adaptation and food security for smallholder farmers across landscapes in Sub-Saharan Africa.

“ Each RPLC provides a forum for stakeholders, who otherwise lack the pathways to connect and address shared challenges. Formal governance enables a diverse group of stakeholders to collaborate and remain engaged.

Key success factors – cross-sector partnerships

“ With rigorous, transparent monitoring, reporting and verification systems, these partnerships remain accountable, adaptive and scalable.

“ Cross-sector partnerships are diverse in resources, scale, maturity and operating environments. Local knowledge and early proof points benefit their progress.

Measurement and communication of impact

Given their diverse mandates across complex landscapes, PPPs need common, credible metrics to measure performance, align incentives, demonstrate progress and build trust. Otherwise, they risk fragmented efforts, mission drift or loss of stakeholder confidence. With rigorous, transparent monitoring, reporting and verification systems, these partnerships remain accountable, adaptive and scalable, ensuring that their collective resources and strengths contribute demonstrably to transformation.

For example, GEAPP’s approach to measuring systemic impact involves assessing the partnerships it builds, because its focus on bringing relational change among participants is vital for transformative change. Meanwhile, RPLCs define collaborative-level and project-level targets and are refining their approach to measuring portfolio-level impact.

Ensuring scalability and replicability are prioritized

In implementing local projects, partners never lose sight of their larger purpose: harnessing their combined resources to achieve systemic impact. They ensure that lessons emerging at project level are shared globally through a central coordinating body.

With RPLCs, having already scaled-up from a focus on the cotton supply chain to a systemic landscape approach, a key focus is now on sharing lessons and disseminating successful practices across the different collaboratives. GEAPP similarly codifies learnings across projects – its project development playbook outlines replicable approaches and the conditions of success to enable projects to grow.

Long-term financing

Long-term financing is essential for scalability and sustainability. GEAPP’s BESS Consortium illustrates this through its robust pipeline of investable projects that offer clear pathways to invest in renewable

solutions, aligned with the private sector’s long-term needs. RPLCs are exploring a blended global financing facility to ensure future financial sustainability, leveraging their value proposition of direct market access and supply chain visibility. To support this shift, RPLCs’ founding partners are exploring a variety of blended financing vehicles, ensuring they are tailored to the context in which the RPLCs operate, such as availability of small-ticket investments suitable to benefit farmers.

Securing engagement and alignment across diverse stakeholders

Cross-sector partnerships are vastly diverse in resources, scale, maturity and operating environments. Local knowledge and early experience benefit their progress. Before formalizing the collaboratives, RPLCs’ founding partner Laudes Foundation supported community farmers in producing sustainable cotton. Building local trust ultimately led to direct trade with leading food and fashion brands – in turn, attracting government support. Meanwhile, GEAPP’s operating model is based on forging close community, government and private sector partnerships at every level, for example through convening country workshops on specific topics. These partnerships aim to create relational change, a core element of systems change.

Early proof points help solidify engagement. In the RPLC model, pilot projects demonstrate to communities and governments the value of market linkages between private sector brands and farmer collectives. In the BESS Consortium, GEAPP places significant focus on consolidating lessons from across the BESS project pipeline, aiming to highlight successful projects and financing models to strengthen stakeholder engagement in future projects.

3 Recommendations to accelerate transformative collaboration

From fully committed partners to designing in scalability from the start, there are many “get rights” to ensure partnerships create lasting impact.

↓ Credit: Built by Nature



3.1 Lessons for climate and nature partnerships

The case studies presented in this paper, selected from the broader landscape of climate and nature partnerships explored through the GAEA Awards, highlight key success factors for overcoming common barriers and achieving transformational impact for climate and nature. Although they

represent just a fraction of potential models, they offer guiding themes and inspiration for organizations aiming to launch new collaborations or strengthen existing ones. This section summarizes success factors across the three models, at each stage of partnership building.

Stage 1

Establishing collaboration

“Starting small” with a few highly engaged stakeholders or an existing model.

“ Deep, early engagement with a focused group of aligned stakeholders can accelerate trust, streamline decision-making and reduce complexity.

Many GAEA Awards winners and finalists highlight the value of starting small, building on trusted relationships and existing networks to form effective climate and nature partnerships. Deep, early engagement with a focused group of aligned stakeholders can accelerate trust, streamline decision-making and reduce complexity. For example, TfS grew from six founding members to industry-wide coverage by anchoring early efforts in a tightly aligned group. Similarly, HYBRIT emerged from trusted supplier-buyer relationships, while the RPLC model built upon existing community, business and philanthropic engagement in local projects. Starting with a small group of aligned actors helps partnerships converge around shared goals and tackle early challenges.

Organizations need not reinvent the wheel. Many sectors already have collaborative platforms –

such as trade associations, industry alliances or regional philanthropic networks – that can support and accelerate more ambitious collective action. Rather than duplicating efforts, new initiatives should consider tapping into these existing structures, practices and experiences. For instance, companies in trade associations can elevate sustainability targets, formalize membership requirements, enhance data sharing and co-develop sector-specific solutions. Similarly, innovation partnerships can scale-up impact by expanding the adoption of proven technologies or practices across their industry. By building on proven relationships, models and platforms that already exist, organizations can accelerate the formation of effective partnerships and create stronger foundations for success.

Stage 2

Building trust and measuring impact

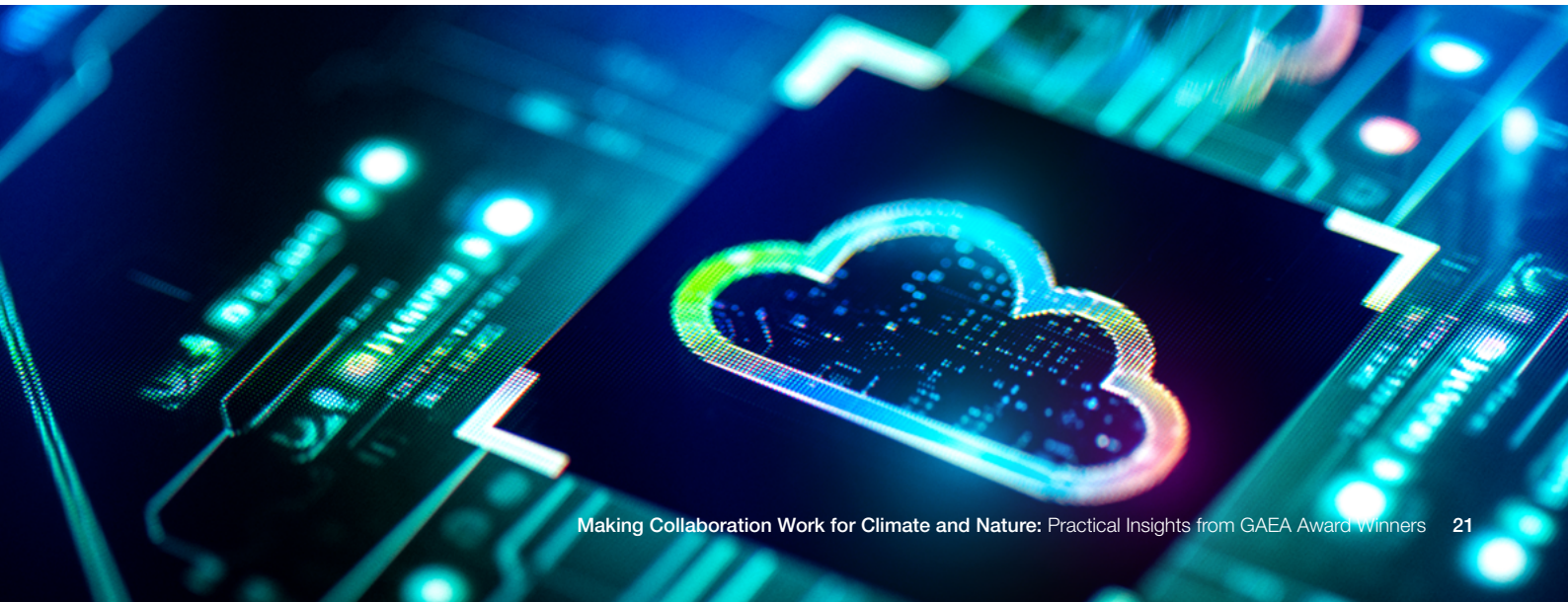
Transparency and trust through robust, inclusive governance and operational independence.

“ Strong governance frameworks are essential for building transparency, trust and shared ownership, helping to overcome common barriers such as unclear accountability and reluctance to share data.

As demonstrated by the case studies, rigorous and structured governance with clear engagement guidelines, inclusive decision-making processes and well-defined roles, responsibilities and discussion forums are not only an operational necessity for climate and nature partnerships but a key differentiator in enabling effective collaboration. Strong governance frameworks are essential for building transparency, trust and shared ownership, helping to overcome common barriers such as unclear accountability and reluctance to share data. Inclusive, member-led decision-making supports the alignment of complex priorities across diverse stakeholders and is vital in building cooperation among competitors, which is particularly important for industry-wide transformation.

For example, TfS’s general assembly highlights the role of transparent, member-led governance in coordinating across the highly competitive and complex global chemicals sector. CAD Trust, BbN and TfS demonstrate the value of transparent, independent governance, combined with clear anti-trust guidelines to maintain focus on collective progress over individual gain.

In cross-sector partnerships, inclusive governance is just as critical. GEAPP and RPLCs show that engaging a diverse cohort of partners across sectors – from global philanthropies and businesses to local NGOs and community organizations, often with differing levels of influence – calls for inclusive and transparent decision-making forums where all voices are effectively represented and adequately resourced.



Stage 3

“ To go beyond isolated outcomes and achieve systemic impact, it is critical that partnerships are designed from the outset to scale-up.

Expanding and deepening collaboration

Designing partnerships with scalable solutions and financing in mind.

As described above, partnerships often benefit from starting small, with a limited, closely-aligned group of collaborators in the early stages. However, to go beyond isolated outcomes and achieve systemic impact, it is critical that partnerships are designed from the outset to scale-up. Early decisions on governance, data-sharing and decision-making frameworks should allow for future expansion and inclusion of new partners.

TfS exemplifies this approach with inclusive, member-led governance and clear anti-trust guidelines, enabling its growth from six founding partners to over 50 multinational chemical companies and their suppliers. Similarly, BbN's scalable network model enables replication of governance and decision-making approaches in new cities, addressing country-specific challenges.

To drive system-wide change, partnerships must also ensure that scalability is built into the solutions they design, by ensuring they are suitable for industry-wide adoption and expansion to new users. HYBRIT's strategy of securing patents for its technology facilitates industry-wide transformation through commercial licensing. CAD Trust's metadata platform and TfS's PCF data exchange prioritize interoperability, for carbon markets and GHG emission methodologies respectively, to encourage broader adoption and participation.

Another example is Decarbonising Rice, a philanthropically funded research project designed to scale-up innovative regenerative agriculture practices across regions through widespread farmer adoption (see Box 1). It achieves this by partnering with social enterprises and governments to engage local farmers and develop region-specific baselines. To drive large-scale adoption, the programme is ensuring that the solution offers multiple revenue streams for farmers – collaborating with MRV organizations to enable carbon credit income and pursuing offtake agreements with private sector partners to support scalability.

Access to sustainable financing is also key to long-term scalability. For cross-sector partnerships, there is broad consensus that engaging the private sector is crucial for unlocking impact at scale. GEAPP is a highly effective example: although philanthropy-led, GEAPP's global leadership has included private sector representation from its inception, ensuring cross-sector input into strategic decisions. GEAPP also supports a pipeline of renewable energy projects and solutions, for example through the BESS Consortium, designed to attract private sector investment and to be implemented within local private sector value chains. For cross-sector partnerships led by philanthropies, non-profits or development banks, transitioning from lending-based models to designing projects as investable opportunities for the private sector from the outset is crucial to achieve scale and impact.

BOX 1

Decarbonising Rice, by Temasek Life Sciences Laboratory – Winner, 2025 GAEA Award for Breakthrough Scientific Contribution

Despite surging demand, rice yields have been stagnating for this vital staple food in Asia. Rice is not only a victim of climate change, it is also a contributor, producing some 10% of global methane emissions. The Decarbonising Rice project, led by Singapore's Temasek Life Sciences Laboratory (TLL), provides an innovative solution for rice cultivation that reduces GHG emissions, reduces water use and improves yields.

This multi-stakeholder partnership applies a novel methodology including climate-resilient rice varieties, water use management through controlled irrigation, and soil health management through customized fertigation. This sustainable approach also aims to stabilize and augment the livelihoods of small-scale rice producers, who comprise 80% of rice farmers in Southeast Asia.

TLL partners with public agencies, social enterprises, private sector companies, philanthropies and farmer cooperatives. These partnerships operate in different ways – researching, forming joint ventures, convening with industry to

problem solve and developing funding mechanisms. In the Decarbonising Rice project, government organizations, for instance, provide expertise to execute trials, while local research organizations connect participants for field implementation. A steering committee provides partners a forum for communicating, assessing successes and failures, and surfacing new ideas and solutions.

As rice production and supply chains are so fragmented, collaboration is essential to disseminate knowledge and engender trust and a sense of ownership among farmers. TLL sees science as the glue that unites stakeholders and builds connections. Through the Decarbonising Rice project, TLL plans to leverage the specific skillsets and resources of partners, offtakers, microfinance institutions and monitoring organizations to refine carbon credit methodologies, with the final aim to de-risk solutions, secure climate benefits and improve income for farmers.

Source: see endnote.²⁴

3.2 Five key enablers for an effective collaborator

Beyond partnership structure and scalability, the success of a collaboration is determined by the commitment, willingness and readiness of the organizations involved. Partners must assess their own ability to contribute meaningfully, collaborate effectively and maximize impact. Without strong commitment, partnerships may struggle to maintain engagement, manage complexity and align conflicting goals.

Insights from impactful partnerships within the GAEA Awards partner ecosystem suggest five key enablers for organizations to become strong collaborators:

1. Clear strategy and ambition.
2. Cross-functional alignment.
3. Collaborative mindset and culture.
4. Long-term planning and flexibility.
5. Dedicated resourcing, capabilities and skills.

Enabler 1: Clear strategy and ambition

Before embarking on partnerships, organizations should define a clear internal strategy to meet sustainability goals, backed by solid organizational support and ideally with a clear business case. For example, Vattenfall – one of the partners in the HYBRIT joint venture – says: “The aim of our strategy is fossil freedom. This commitment provides both a clear direction and significant business opportunities.”²⁵ This clarity helps align external collaborators and more effectively engages internal stakeholders in the partnership’s value. Internal support is crucial for success; without it, partnerships often fail.

A clear strategy should include recognition of the organization’s strengths and gaps and an understanding of their role in broader ecosystems and where they can add value, whether through technical expertise, capital, local connections or policy influence. Renewable energy company ReNew is an example of an organization that recognizes the strategic areas in which it needs

to partner to deliver on its ESG objectives more effectively. Scope 3 accounts for 90% of the company’s emissions (primarily from purchased goods and capital equipment). So to achieve its climate goals, ReNew must work closely with suppliers, industry peers, policy-makers and civil society to align decarbonization pathways, drive innovation, enhance ESG data transparency and build long-term resilience – and how it will contribute to achieving shared outcomes.

Enabler 2: Cross-functional alignment

Senior management across all functions should be ready to mobilize the full capabilities of the organization to maximize the partnership’s impact and value. Cross-functional engagement – in which different parts of an organization engage with each other (e.g. legal with sustainability) – plays a critical role in this process. It helps proactively address internal hesitations around collaboration – for example, by ensuring appropriate anti-trust safeguards when working with competitors or by committing necessary resources and financing.

This type of internal collaboration also ensures alignment with other ongoing initiatives by identifying interdependencies, uncovering potential synergies and resolving conflicts. Furthermore, cross-functional coordination supports the effective implementation of new standards, practices or technologies that may emerge from industry partnerships across all relevant teams.

Enabler 3: Collaborative mindset and culture

Partner organizations should cultivate a collaborative culture that embraces working as “one team” with partners, both to contribute effectively and to maximize shared value. This mindset is most effective when championed by senior leadership and reinforced across all levels of the organization. Clearly defined legal and governance frameworks within partnerships help to establish boundaries that encourage transparent collaboration while respecting anti-trust requirements. Ongoing internal communication about partnership goals and progress further builds alignment and strengthens internal support.

“ A collaborative mindset is most effective when championed by senior leadership and reinforced across all levels of the organization.

Bayer's leadership in sustainable procurement is underpinned by its skill in collaborating, both externally and internally. A key member of Together for Sustainability (TfS) and the Pharmaceutical Supply Chain Initiative (PSCI), Bayer shows how a collaborative mindset, strong cross-functional integration and a clear articulation of value create the conditions for seeking and forging impactful partnerships.

"Collaboration should be the default," says Thomas Udesen, Bayer's Chief Procurement Officer. "Many solutions for sustainable procurement already exist. If people just talked to each other, we would all move a lot faster. Collaboration is good for business, good for people and good for our planet."

Bayer's collaborative culture is reflected in its engagement in transformative initiatives such as TfS, including active participation in the development of such leading industry frameworks as *The Product Carbon Footprint Guideline for the Chemical Industry*.

Through TfS and PSCI, Bayer also collaborates externally with other chemicals and pharma players to ensure it can procure goods and services in the most sustainable way – since aligning procurement with ESG targets and regulation is an integral part of Bayer's sustainability strategy. This kind of external collaboration has helped Bayer to overcome initial challenges in implementing the new PCF methodology across its internal teams.

Bayer's commitment to collaborative procurement is a function of the cross-functional engagement of its procurement and sustainability teams, which together shape key internal frameworks such as the company's supplier code of conduct. This close internal collaboration is supported by formalized governance, provided by an internal sustainability council of senior leaders from across functions and supported by an external sustainability council of thought leaders whose expertise informs Bayer's sustainability strategy.

Source: see endnote.²⁶

Enabler 4: Long-term planning and flexibility

As Jennifer Morris, Chief Executive Officer of The Nature Conservancy noted, in an interview conducted for this report: "Conservation and landscape-level change cannot always be measured for quarterly reports or on an election cycle. To promote durable, community-led results, funding sources must be patient, long-term and reliable." As noted earlier, transformative climate and nature projects often require long-term commitment and patience from all partners.

Organizations should strengthen internal capabilities, including systems thinking and scenario planning, to sustain long-term engagement. Aligning differing incentives demands flexibility and a willingness to adapt established ways of working, particularly with less familiar partners. For example, philanthropies and development banks may need to redesign infrastructure project structures to attract private investment, while companies engaging local suppliers may need to adapt global procurement processes.

Enabler 5: Dedicated resourcing, capabilities and skills

To fully contribute to and benefit from transformational partnerships, organizations must commit appropriate resources – time, budgets and capable people. In models such as TfS, dedicated resources and engagement from senior management are membership prerequisites. Even when not formally required, partner organizations should ensure they provide the skills to support complex and innovative collaborations, such as relationship management, partnership-specific financial expertise, and capability in monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL).

One example of an important but often underdeveloped capability, as recognized by the GAEA Awards, is effective collaboration between generations. The Youth Climate Justice Fund addresses this capability gap directly, facilitating donor training and providing advisory services for traditional philanthropies to partner more effectively with youth-led initiatives (see Box 3).



Through the GAEA Awards, we've learned that collaboration is not just about the structure or model itself – it's about the everyday behaviours and choices organizations make. The most impactful partnerships are those in which participants invest in being good collaborators.

Calin Brown, Programme Lead, GAEA Awards, World Economic Forum

BOX 3 | **Youth Climate Justice Fund – Winner, 2025 GAEA Award for Intergenerational Climate and Nature Champion**

The Youth Climate Justice Fund (YCJF) was founded in 2023 to strengthen youth-led climate action through participatory grant-making, peer-to-peer capacity development and donor advisory services. Although youth organizations account for less than 1% of climate grants, YCJF recognizes their essential role in advancing climate and environmental justice.

At the core of YCJF's work is a commitment to fostering network-driven intergenerational collaborations. The partnership connects grantees with ecosystem supporters – including more than 20 philanthropies and private sector funders – who provide trust-based funding and resources.

Trust-based funding is YCJF's way of empowering grantees to create meaningful impact through grants that support the grantees' own approach, without micromanagement by the philanthropy providing the grant. This form of funding disrupts typical grant-making power dynamics and is particularly suitable for youth- and Indigenous-led initiatives that may take different approaches.

YCFJ funds more than 100 youth-led projects globally, helping young leaders implement local solutions and fostering a global network for collaboration and replication of successful initiatives.

Source: see endnote.²⁷



Conclusion

Transformation at pace and scale demands more ambitious, inclusive and systemic collaboration across all forms of climate and nature action.

The case studies and insights presented in this report underscore both the urgency and opportunity for cross-sector collaboration to drive systems change for climate and nature. GAEA awardees and finalists illustrate the power of partnerships designed not as standalone projects, but rather as platforms with the capacity to shift financial flows, business models, policies and mindsets.

Joint ventures and strategic alliances are accelerating innovation. Industry-wide alliances are changing incentives and standards. Cross-sector, public-private-philanthropic partnerships are creating the conditions that enable scale. While these models differ, they share common success factors. All started small with a highly committed core group. All have fostered transparent, trusted governance and have applied creative yet pragmatic approaches to measuring impact. All have been designed for scalability from the outset.

Yet these collaborations remain the exception, not the norm. To accelerate systems change, the wider ecosystem must mobilize. Doing so requires enabling conditions such as patient capital and supportive policy environments. It also requires organizations themselves to step up and become stronger collaborators.

As this report demonstrates, effective collaboration is as critical as the partnership model itself. This calls for some essential priority actions:

- Framing a clear strategy and ambition that is rooted in a well-defined business case or mission.
- Ensuring alignment across the leadership and teams of partner organizations.
- Fostering a mindset and culture that prioritize transparency and shared learning.
- Demonstrating flexibility, adaptability and the ability to plan for the long term.
- Committing the resources, capabilities and skills needed to navigate complex, multi-stakeholder processes.

The GAEA Awards programme will continue to champion pioneering collaborations; but achieving transformation at pace and scale demands more ambitious, inclusive and systemic collaboration across the entire ecosystem of climate and nature action. We urge all stakeholders to consider how they can become better collaborators – turning today's proof points into systemic pathways for a just and sustainable future.



To match the urgency of the climate and nature crises, we need to make these kinds of collaborations the norm, not the exception. Through the GAEA Awards, we're seeing how different models can accelerate systems change – but this only works if the broader system is ready to embrace these approaches.

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