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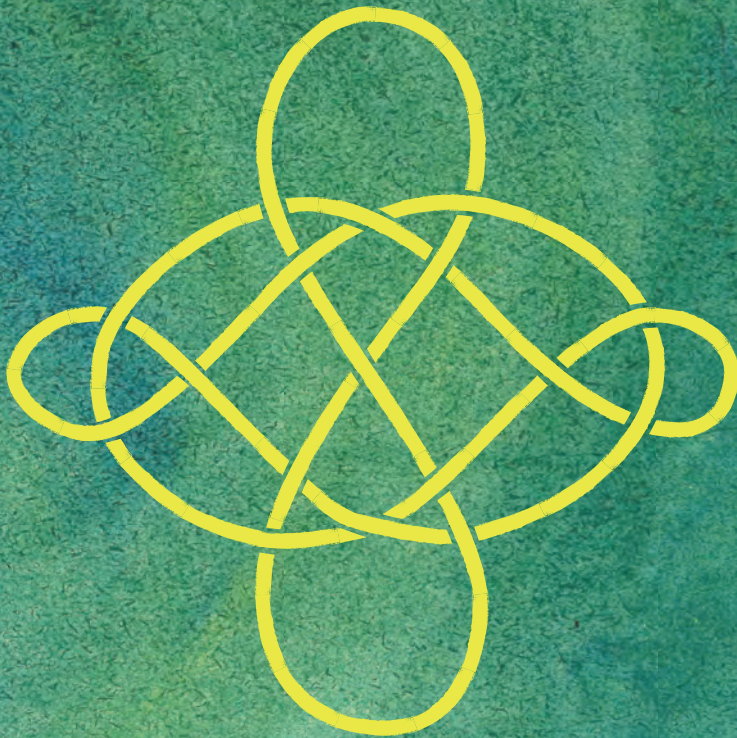
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A balancing act

Convening cross-sector partnerships
to strengthen sustainable development
in global supply chains



Iteke van Hille

Realizing sustainable supply chains is an important yet looming challenge for many organizations. Generating fair wages for farmers, marketable prices for traders, attractive quality product for customers – all of these need to be considered and coordinated. Collaboration between business, non-profit organizations and/or governments in 'cross-sector partnerships' (CSPs) are considered a promising approach in furthering sustainable trade. However, CSPs are complex organizational forms and certainly not a guaranteed recipe for success. Therefore, CSPs can benefit from the involvement of third-party actors, here referred to as *conveners*, to mitigate potential conflicts or challenges that can arise, and ensure an effective formation and implementation of the CSP.

This book focuses on the role of conveners as initiators of CSPs, and explains *how mission-driven conveners initiate and convene cross-sector partnerships to strengthen sustainable development in global supply chains*. This question is answered through a qualitative study of three cases in the coffee, tea and timber industries. The study shows that, while conveners are faced with tensions and conflicting demands on multiple levels, they cannot be simply considered as 'problem solvers'. Instead, conveners need to navigate these demands and tensions, as a means to safeguard a transition towards sustainable trade. This is a balancing act, whereby conveners display flexibility, pragmatism and creativity in response to the multilevel, perpetual tensions they encounter in their work.