

# Role of Multi-Stakeholder-Partnerships for Achieving a Higher Degree of Sustainability in Cross-Border Agri-food Supply Chains

## 1 Background

Ever since the Club of Rome's first report on *The Limits to Growth* in the early 1970s, sustainability has become an increasingly important factor in global supply chains. Many multi-lateral actors have since formulated frameworks seeking to improve sustainability levels in all areas of social life, including along (global agri-food) supply and value chains. However, a lack of "level playing field" in international markets makes it difficult for sustainably ambitious companies and policy makers alike, to implement according to international guidelines.

Extract of Sustainability Frameworks Over Time



- ▶ Through multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSP) in consumer countries, government representatives, private companies from the agri-food industry as well as civil society actors and research institutions aim to jointly and nationally address sustainability issues within certain global supply chains.
- ▶ One of the goals of MSP is to jointly influence (political) frame conditions for an improved sustainability framework in Germany. But is this voluntary option really suited to do so?

## 2 Research Question & Research Objective



To what extent can MSP in Germany influence policies and legislation on sustainability in global agri-food supply chains?



Close research gap on the impact of MSP on policy lobbying and identify key actors for the initiation of change processes

## 3 Methodology



Identification of  
2 MSP



- ▶ Since 2014
- ▶ 8 Members
- ▶ Public funds

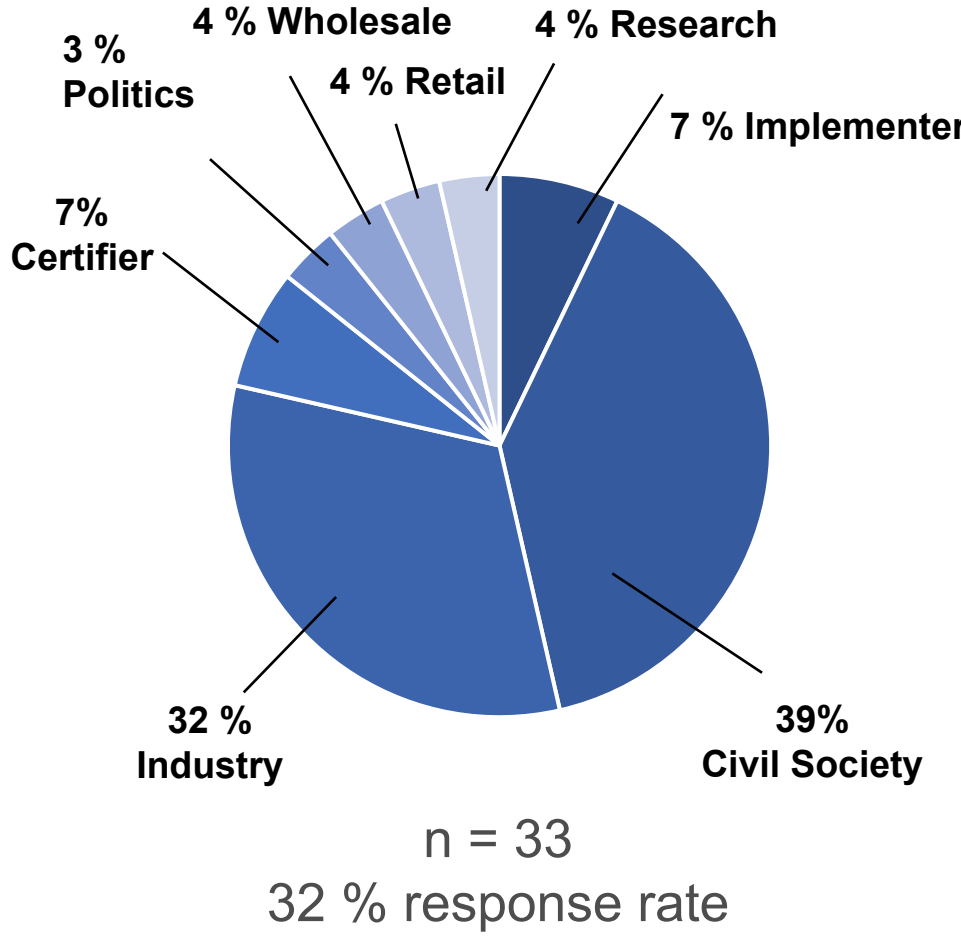
- ▶ Since 2012
- ▶ 77 Members
- ▶ Private and funds



Develop  
questionnaire for  
network analysis

- ▶ With whom are you in regular exchange on the topic of sustainability in (agri-food) supply chains?
- ▶ Who are the 7 most important actors, able to influence the level of economic, ecological and social sustainability in cross-border (agri-food) supply chains in Germany?
- ▶ On which occasion do you exchange on the topic?

Conduct  
interviews with  
MSP members



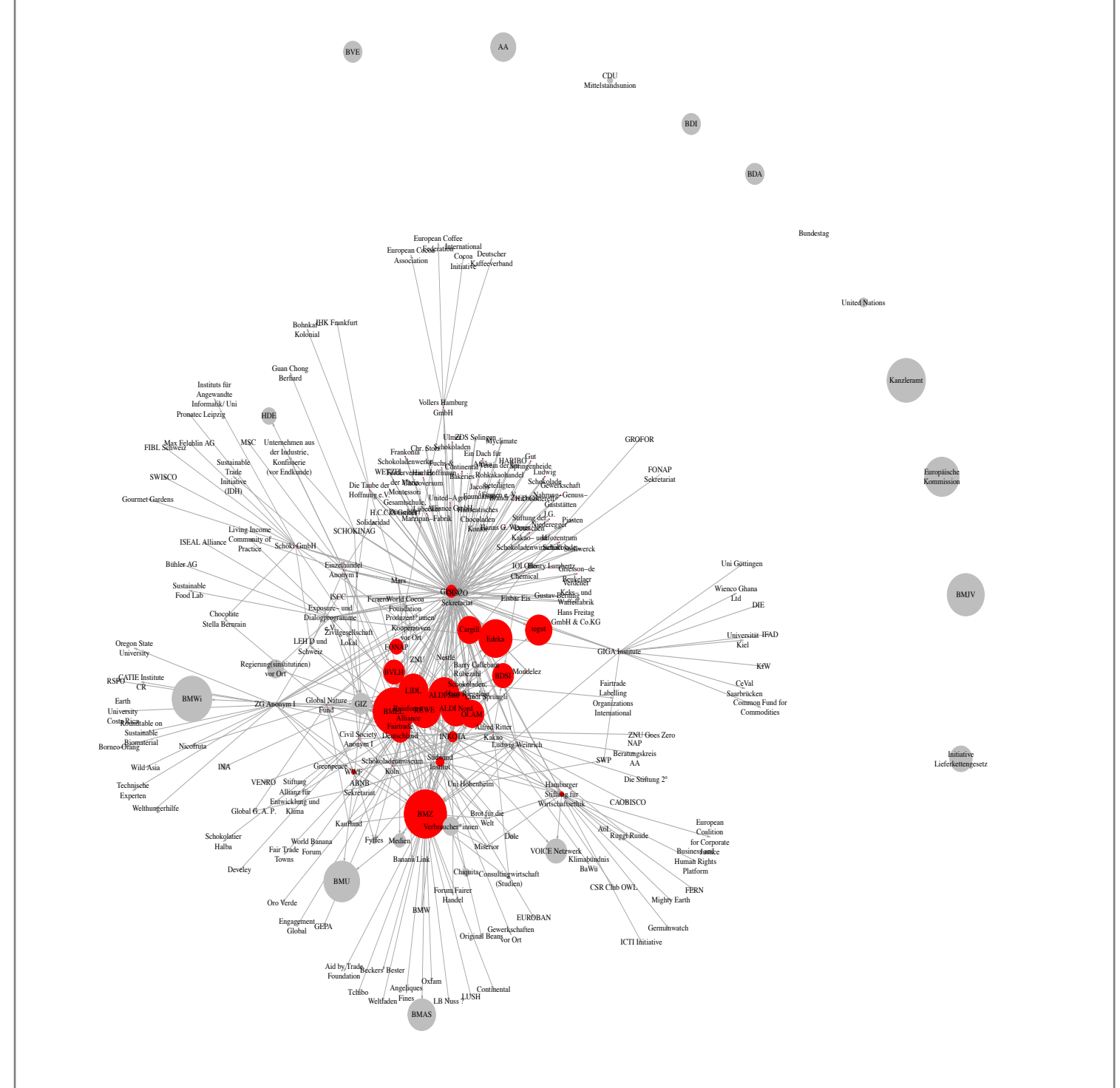
Conduct  
interviews with actors  
mentioned in first  
collection round  
(snowball method)

Conduct network  
analysis

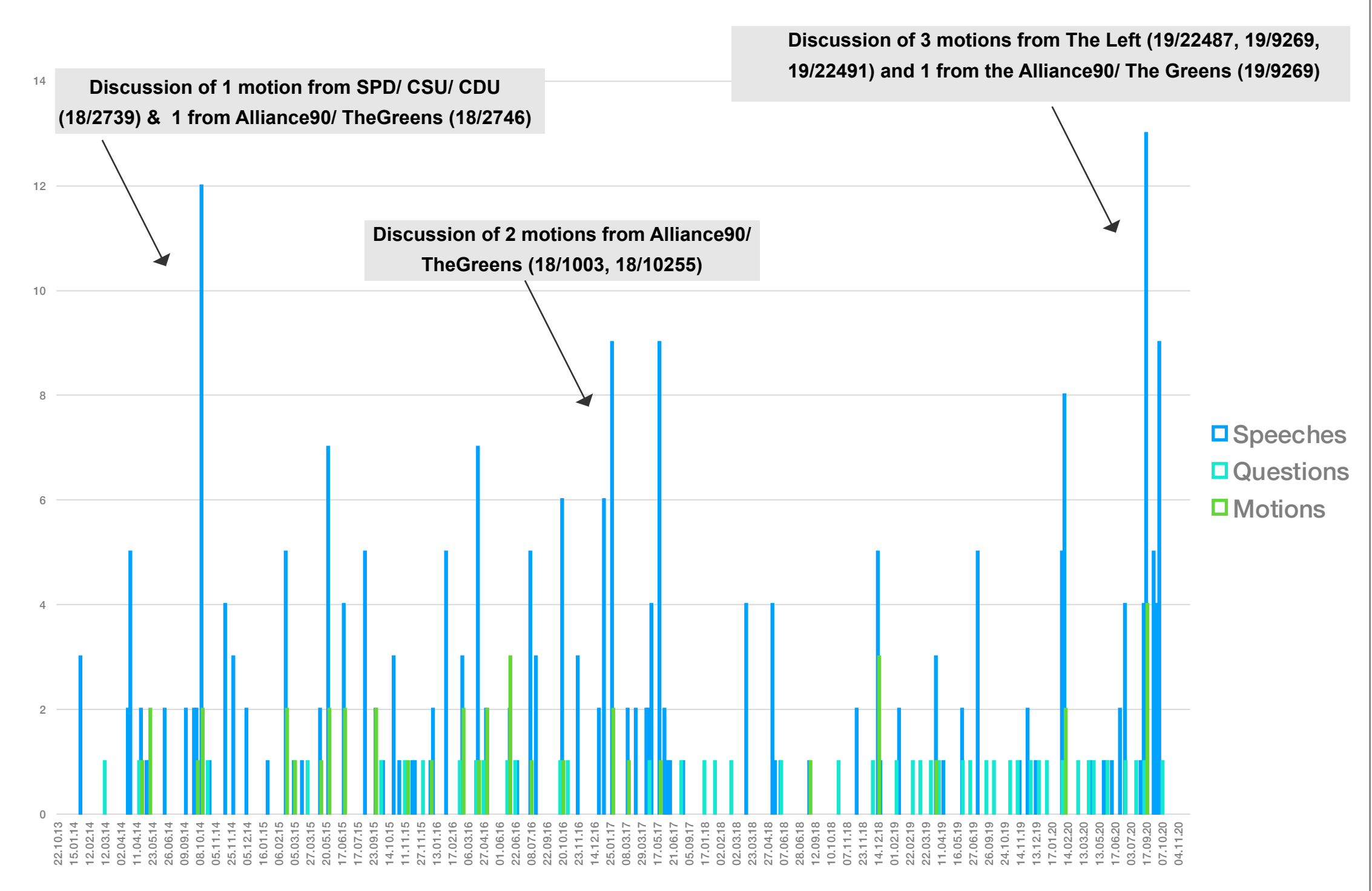


## 4 Preliminary Results

Preliminary network map based on first round of questions



Thematically relevant debates, motions and question in the Bundestag (electoral term 18 and 19)



## 5 Preliminary Conclusions

- ▶ Responsibility for the topic is spread across at least 7 German Ministries
- ▶ Ministries, the German Chancellery, industry associations and retail are perceived as the most influential actors, influencing both positively and negatively
- ▶ Only around 50 % of the most influential actors are also members of those MSP being subject to analysis
- ▶ According to preliminary results of the network analysis, German Parliament is - at least in the current electoral term - not perceived as being influential at all
- ▶ Nevertheless, the Parliament is debating on the topic constantly. Since 2013, the topic was addressed in more than 40 motions, 250 speeches and raised in 46 questions



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