International Institute for
Applied Systems Analysis
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International
Science Council

Transformations within reach: Pathways to a sustainable and resilient world

ENHANCING GOVERNANCE FOR SUSTAINABILITY

The COVID-19 crisis has illustrated the value of, and need for, effective governance structures that foster cooperation and collaboration at different levels. As the crisis evolves, it is becoming increasingly evident that enhancing such governance arrangements is an important leverage point for the achievement of sustainability transformations going forward.

The "Enhancing Governance for Sustainability" report of the IIASA–ISC Initiative, "Pathways to a Sustainable and Resilient World" studies and synthesizes emerging lessons from the governance of COVID-19 across scales and identifies options and recommendations for harnessing these lessons with a view to enhancing governance for sustainability overall. See Figure A1.
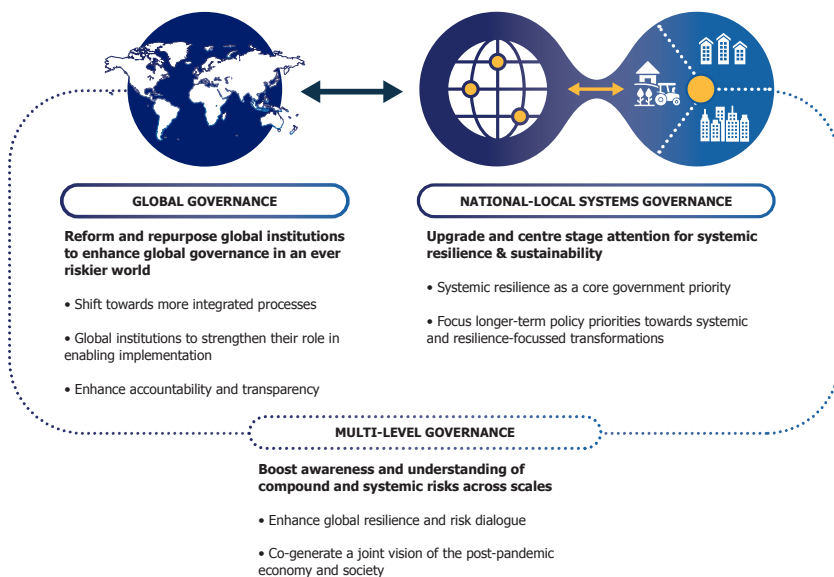

GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

Reform and repurpose global institutions to enhance global governance in an ever riskier world

• Shift towards more integrated processes

• Global institutions to strengthen their role in enabling implementation

• Enhance accountability and transparency

NATIONAL-LOCAL SYSTEMS GOVERNANCE

Upgrade and centre stage attention for systemic resilience & sustainability

• Systemic resilience as a core government priority

• Focus longer-term policy priorities towards systemic and resilience-focussed transformations

MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE

Boost awareness and understanding of compound and systemic risks across scales

• Enhance global resilience and risk dialogue

• Co-generate a joint vision of the post-pandemic economy and society

Figure A1. Options and recommendations for enhancing governance for sustainability across scales

Options and recommendations for enhancing governance for sustainability are differentiated by levels of governance: global, national–local systems, and multilevel governance. Among suggestions for the global level is to harness the leadership of sustainability champions to support reforms toward more integrated, accountable, and transparent global governance in an ever-riskier world. At national–local levels, options and recommendations encompass the need to put systemic resilience center-stage and to further mainstream transparency and accountability, including in the governance of recovery initiatives already under way across the world. Multi-level governance, as the link between global and national–local levels, could benefit from strengthened awareness of compound and systemic risk; scaling up toward a global resilience dialogue and a joint vision of a more sustainable, resilient post-pandemic economy and society are suggested to achieve this awareness.

The full report can be accessed on covid19.iiasa.ac.at/isc/outcome

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