

## Article

# The Role of Intermediaries in Supporting Collaboration for Sustainability: A Model of Commissioning Intervention in the Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration for Sustainable Territorial Development

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**Abstract:** The intervention of intermediaries in supporting collaboration for sustainability is considered an effective way to address the challenges faced by all parties involved in this type of commitment. Our paper includes several less frequently approached perspectives in this field of research and refers to the intervention of commissioning in supporting collaborative relationships with multiple stakeholders for sustainable territorial development. This paper proposes a model of structural and systemic development of commissioning at the national level, by specific geographical regions and development domains, and analyzes how commissioning structures intermediate the connection between multiple stakeholders, public authorities, and other relevant actors from different sectors of society, which mobilize resources to solve sustainability issues. The results show that the intervention of commissioning adds value to sustainability collaboration by providing stakeholders with an accessible and updated database specialized in development domains, where demands and offers for development resources can be managed safely, and the identification of the appropriate offer is carried out operatively through fast and secure computer systems able to create efficient and prompt connections. We believe that the model presented in the paper can be extended internationally to support global collaboration for sustainability, and we suggest further research in this direction.

**Keywords:** collaboration; sustainability; multi-stakeholder collaboration; sustainable territorial development; intermediary; commissioning

## 1. Introduction

Sustainable development raises complex economic, social, and environmental issues, which often exceed the capacity of individual organizations [1–6] or even national governments to solve them on their own. As a result, the strengthening of the collaboration for sustainability is considered as an effective way to address the major current challenges.

Nowadays, there is an increasing emphasis on the idea of developing an environment of collaboration and support between all stakeholders for building a sustainable society [7–11]. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly aims at ambitious actions related to all three dimensions of sustainable development and advocates for

collaboration to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Within them, Goal 17 explicitly mentions the need to collaborate and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development, further encouraging, through Goal 17.17, the strengthening of “effective, public, public-private and civil society partnerships”, based on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships [12]. These forms of collaboration involve multi-stakeholder alliances, actors from various sectors of society, government authorities, business environment, the scientific community, civil society and others, which mobilize knowledge, skills, and resources to create value for all parties involved [13,14] and for sustainability [15–17].

Numerous studies have focused on collaboration or partnerships with multiple stakeholders [3,18–21] working together for sustainable development [11,22–27], proving their value and viability [28]. These forms of collaboration address complex economic, social, and environmental issues that go beyond organizational boundaries [29] and aim to create benefits for a wider community than for specific interests [30]. Their role has often been compared to that of vehicles [14,31] that can help accelerate these synergies [32–34] and strengthen the joint effort to address sustainable development issues. Despite all the recognized benefits, there are several aspects that can become real challenges for the proper functioning of these forms of collaboration. Stakeholders need to often overcome differences in terms of development, capabilities, interests, values, and communication [14,26,27,35]. The connection between the parties can be difficult and complex [36], especially when actors from different sectors of society are involved. To reduce these issues, collaboration arrangements may benefit from the intervention of intermediaries that support and facilitate the connection between the parties and identify their interests and needs on time [37]. For these intermediaries, the literature uses different terms, such as partnership brokers [31,38–43], collaboration brokers [14], broker organizations [38,41,44,45], liaison officers [46], and liaison agents [47], who can act as negotiators, mediators, or commissioners [48] between the parties involved in the collaboration. Their role is to support and sustain the involved parties in their joint effort to add value through the collaboration for achieving the goals of sustainable development [49–52].

Using this theoretical background, we analyze in the paper the role of commissioning in facilitating the interconnection of stakeholders for sustainability, actors from different sectors of society who collaborate to solve together the complex issues of sustainable development from a specific geographical area. Considered an economic category, the concept of commissioning refers to a series of specialized services that can be provided by professional commissioners to individuals or legal entities based on contractual relations and performed on behalf of and for the benefit of their clients. In our study, the commissioners are organizations specialized in development domains (industry, agriculture, health, education, etc.) that provide professional services for the intermediation of demands and offers of development resources for actors from different sectors of society (public authorities, private companies, educational and research institutions, and others) involved in collaborative relationships for sustainability. The paper suggests a model of structural and systemic development of commissioning at the national level, by specific geographical regions and domains of development, and explains how this model is applied at the city level, metropolitan area, development regions, and finally, at the country level. Through its structures, the commissioning system supports collaboration for sustainability due to its potential to interconnect demands and offers for development resources from a wide range of stakeholders, interested in accessing and allocating resources (knowledge, expertise, technologies, and other resources relevant for sustainability) to solve sustainable development problems. We focus the analysis on how the commissioning structures can intervene in supporting the collaboration between territorial-administrative authorities as decision-makers, which set the objectives of sustainable development policy at the territorial level, and other stakeholders at the sectoral level, private entities, the scientific community, civil society, and others, that mobilize resources for development to build sustainable communities and to create value for sustainability [3,15,53], taking into account the reality and needs of development in terms of geographical scale [54].

The starting point in conducting this study is the systemic challenges faced by governments, local public authorities, and non-state actors involved in sustainable territorial development.

The collaborative connections between these sustainability stakeholders are often difficult and can affect the development of managed communities, with all the economic, social, and environmental implications. This finding was also confirmed by the consultations we had with Romanian practitioners and experts with experience in collaboration approaches for the sustainable development of a geographical area and who explicitly mentioned the difficult issues associated with these collaborations from the perspective of the current low-efficiency management system of demands and offers for development resources and the long time to identify and allocate appropriate offers to solve sustainability challenges. We aimed to address these issues by suggesting the national development of a commissioning system, structured by geographical regions and domains of development, which collects the demands for development resources through hierarchical structures and also structurally manages the resource offers for sustainable development to operatively ensure the identification and allocation of appropriate offers for the requests made. Such an intervention can support the sustainability collaboration between government decision makers, local administrations, and entities from different sectors interested in implementing a system capable of achieving the efficient and operative interconnection of demands and offers for development resources. We believe that its implementation in Romania, initially as a pilot system, at the level of cities and metropolitan regions, can support public administrators and the development of practitioners to interact better so that the process of collecting, managing, and capitalizing on demands and offers of development resources can become more efficient, safer, and more operational and thereby contribute to the achievement of the strategic objectives of sustainable development.

Concerning the contribution to the current state of knowledge on these issues, the concept of a commissioning system, structured in geographical areas and development domains, as presented in this paper, draws attention to elements that can support new ways of intermediating the collaboration with multiple stakeholders for sustainable development, public authorities, and entities from different sectors of society. This study emphasizes the benefits that commissioning can bring to all parties involved in collaboration for sustainability, interested in accessing and allocating resources for sustainable development by providing them with an easily accessible, centralized, and updated database in which the demands and offers of resources for development are managed safely, and the identification of the adequate offer is carried out operatively through fast and secure computer systems able to create efficient and prompt connections. Furthermore, we seek to understand whether the commissioning system can be extended at the international level by designing models for the structural development of the commissioning at the continental and global levels. In this context, our paper attempts to be a starting point for the future research agenda concerning the role of commissioning in the intermediation of collaboration commitments for sustainability between countries from the same geopolitical regions or the entire world.

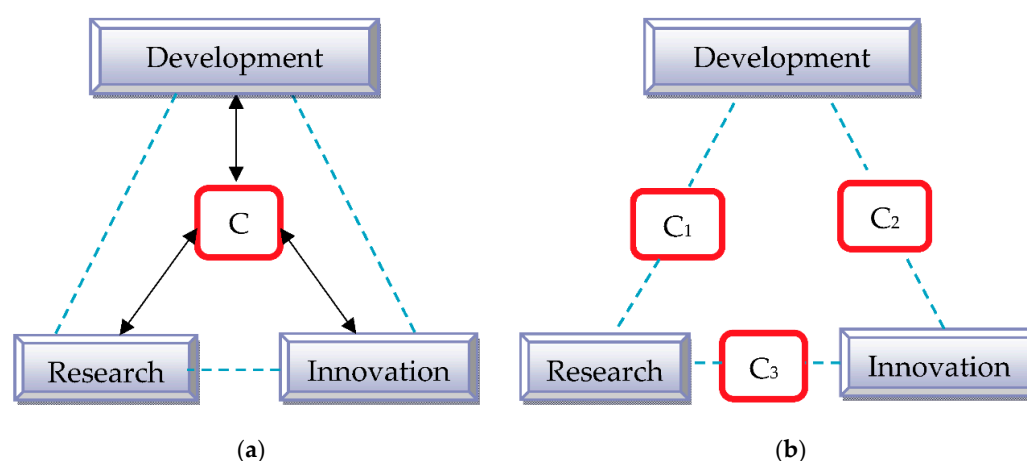
The paper is further structured as follows: Section 2 presents the intervention of commissioning for supporting the collaboration between structures that create value for sustainability. Section 3 shows the model of structural development of the commissioning system at the national level and explains how commissioning structures can act as intermediaries between all stakeholders, public authorities, and other relevant actors from different sectors of society, working collaboratively to achieve sustainable development goals. Section 4 presents the structural development of the commissioning system, starting at the city level, continuing with the metropolitan areas, the development regions, and finally, at the state level. Section 5 calls into question the main aspects that recommend commissioning as an intermediary to support collaboration for sustainability. The contributions to theory and practice and proposals for future research are also discussed. The authors consider that the model proposed in the paper can be extended internationally to support global collaboration for sustainability.

## **2. The Intervention of Commissioning for Supporting the Collaboration between Entities that Create Value for Sustainability**

The research–innovation–development trinomial can ensure sustainable development through the effects it produces, being the main engine for progress and economic sustainable growth [55–59].

A sustainable society can only be created if the three components work in close interdependence to protect the well-being, the natural environment, and to support the sustainable development of the economy [60,61]. The interaction between the three basic elements, grouped and defined as the development trinomial, is based on their functional interdependence at the level of each development area of human activity [62]. While creativity produces knowledge, innovation makes it possible to exploit it to create value [63,64] and to improve sustainable competitive advantages in a dynamic and changing environment [65]. Thus, by producing new knowledge, research supports innovation and the creation of new technologies, products, and services, which in turn allow the increase in economic competitiveness able to ensure sustainable development. A central place in this equation is represented by the collaboration and the system of interactions between the multi-stakeholder, entities from different sectors that form the three poles of the trinomial and act together to support sustainable development.

The collaboration between structures that create value through research and innovation and development practitioners is complex and requires additional elements to function optimally. The key role of intermediaries is well defined in the functioning of these forms of collaboration, which involve multiple actors working together to create value for sustainability [3,15]. The commissioning can support collaboration between these parties by including it as an intermediary between the structures that form the research–innovation–development trinomial. Centrally located (Figure 1a) or between two elements of the trinomial development (Figure 1b), commissioning intermediates the collaborative relationship between all components of the trinomial, being able to create efficient and fast connections between all stakeholders to generate a sustainable development model [66–68].



**Figure 1.** Ways of inserting the commissioning (“C”) in the structure of the development trinomial. (a) Placing commissioning in the center. (b) Placing commissioning between two elements of the trinomial.

Placed in this way, the commissioning structures support the interaction between the entities operating in the field of research, innovation, and development through activities related to the mobilization, collection, and management of demands and offers of knowledge, expertise, technologies, and other resources relevant for sustainable development and their transfer between producers of knowledge, creators of innovative technologies, and development practitioners. Commissioning will collect in a database specialized in domains of development, both the demands for these resources and the submitted offers, carrying out within its structures the identification and allocation of the appropriate offer to each demand through fast and secure computer systems. Using this database, the development practitioners who submit the demands for resources needed to solve a development issue are exempted from the effort of identifying the offers submitted for these resources, the commissioning taking over all the information to identify quickly the appropriate offers in their databases. In this way, entities operating in the field of research, innovation, and development and acting together for sustainability save valuable time, devoting themselves exclusively to the specific activities to be carried out.

### 3. The Model of Structural and Systemic Development of Commissioning

The sustainable territorial development is extremely challenging due to the complex issues raised by all three of its dimensions, i.e., the economic, social, and environmental ones [69,70]. Government authorities have a key role in this process, setting the objectives of sustainable territorial development [53,71,72], acting in collaboration with other relevant parties from different sectors of society involved in facing sustainability challenges [11,28].

In this paper, we designed a model of structural and systemic development of commissioning at a national level, explaining how commissioning structures can support collaboration with multiple stakeholders for the sustainable development of a specific geographical area. We delimit our analysis to the city, metropolitan area, region, and finally, the country, focusing on the role of commissioning in intermediating the collaboration between the territorial public authority, as a decision-making entity, representative for local territorial development, and other entities from different social sectors, which can be engaged in achieving the sustainable development goals set at the territorial level, through their resources and skills [53,73,74]. At the territorial level, the commissioning structures, specialized in development domains, can be organized as development offices or agencies monitored by public authorities (city halls, territorial administration councils of metropolitan areas, or development regions) or can be private entities, operating independently. At the national level, a centralized structure can be conceived and monitored at the governmental level. If the commissioning structures are organized and monitored by the public authorities, there is the advantage of structural and functional simplification of the system, the databases being centralized at the level of territorial-administrative units and thus being easier to access and use. The concept of a national, centralized, and systemically organized commissioning system could ensure an orderly and well-structured environment for collecting, managing, and capitalizing on the requests and offers of resources for the sustainable development of a country.

Using its structures, the commissioning system can provide professional services both to public authorities, interested in accessing these resources to achieve the sustainable development goals set by governmental as well as non-governmental actors who can allocate knowledge, expertise, technologies, and other resources to address these demands in the form of offers.

The selection of demands and offers of development resources is made by the commissioning structures organized and monitored at the level of territorial public authorities or the governmental level, depending on the sustainable development priorities established by the strategic objectives provided in the national sustainable development strategy and the regional development strategies. At the territorial level, the territorial-administrative units set the strategic objectives for the sustainable development of the community they manage and launch demands for development resources to meet them. The commissioning structures operating in the respective administrative territory receive the applications for development resources in the form of demands submitted to actors from various sectors of society (private entities, the scientific environment, civil society organizations, and others), which can mobilize skills and resources for achieving the sustainable development goals set through public policies. On their turn, they send their offers to the commissioning to mobilize the requested resources. At the national level, the demands for development resources are launched by the governmental authorities depending on the strategic objectives set by the national sustainable development strategy and are taken over by the centrally operating commissioning structure, monitored at the governmental level. It centralizes all offers of development resources mobilized from a wide range of stakeholders to address the challenges of sustainable development at the national level.

The commissioning structures collect the demands and offers of development resources, organize them in databases specialized in development domains, and ensures through the horizontal collaboration of the system, where possible, or the vertical collaboration, the harmonizing the information and identifying the appropriate offers to solve the sustainability issues for which the demands were submitted. In this way, the commissioning system carries out the:



- interconnection of stakeholders for sustainability (it creates the connection between entities that make demands for development resources and those that launch offers for these resources);
- interconnection of structures at the same territorial level that monitor the same areas of development or complementary areas;
- interconnection of own structures operating at a certain territorial level with counterparts from the same territorial level but different geographical areas (horizontal interconnection);
- interconnection of own structures from a territorial level with counterparts from higher or lower territorial levels (vertical interconnection).

The searching steps can take place quickly if the information in the databases (both horizontally and vertically) is structured, classified, and coded on development domains.

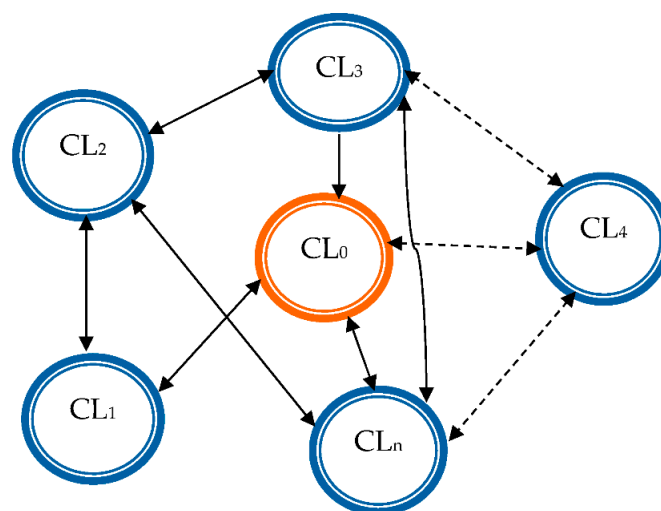
There must be collaborative relationships between all the hierarchical structures of the commissioning system to be able to access the demands and offers for development resources recorded by each structure of the system operating at the territorial level. In this way, the functioning of the system is ensured rationally—between the commissioning system structures and between them and the parties involved in collaborative relationships for sustainability.

#### 4. The Use of the Model at the National Level

This section presents the model of the structural development of the commissioning system at the national level, starting at the city level, continuing with the metropolitan areas, the development regions, and finally, at the state level.

##### 4.1. The Structural Development of the Commissioning System at the City Level

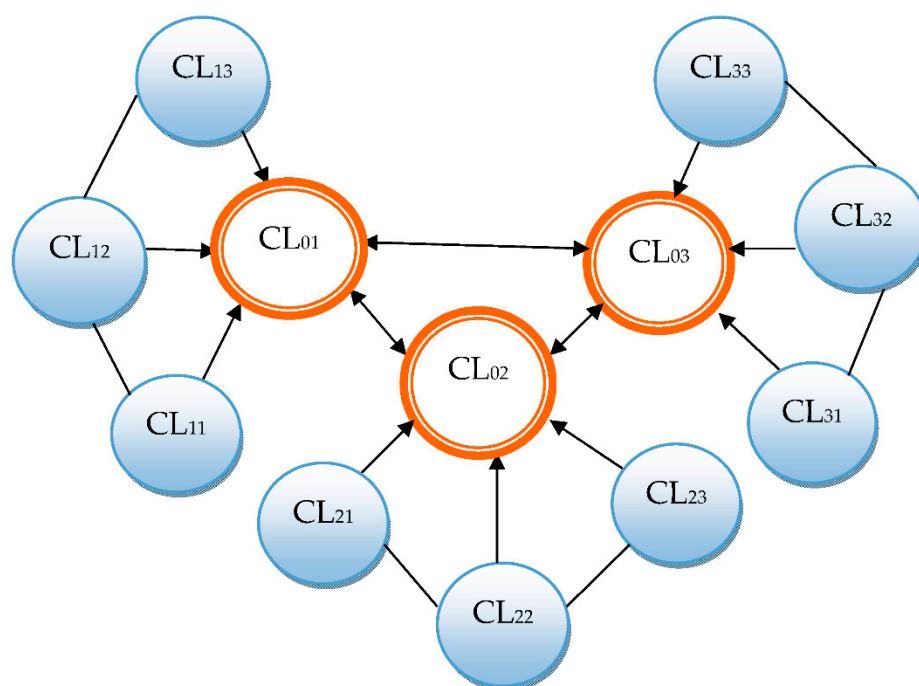
At the city level, the commissioning structures can be managed by the city hall, or they can be independent entities specialized in development domains. The commissioning structures created at the city level can be organized based on the informal principle (Figure 2) when the independent commissioning structures ( $CL_n$ ) interconnect with each other for information exchange or when they also interconnect with the commissioning structure managed at the city hall level ( $CL_0$ ).



**Figure 2.** The commissioning structure at the city level;  $CL_0$ —the specialized structure of commissioning managed at the city hall level;  $CL_1$ ,  $CL_2$  ...  $CL_n$ —independent structures of commissioning.

The commissioning structures manage the database of demands for resources needed for sustainable local development and the offers submitted by stakeholders to allocate these resources, harmonize the information, and identify the offers of resources to address the sustainability issues for which the demands were submitted. All stakeholders involved in sustainable local development

can directly access these databases. For the demands submitted at the level of the city for which no offers can be found in these databases, a similar informal structure from another city in the same geographical area can be used (horizontally interconnection). An efficient variant of organizing the commissioning structures and their local interconnection is presented in the neural form in Figure 3. In this model, the structures organized at the city hall level play an important role, being the ones that manage the database regarding the demands and offers for development resources submitted at the city level. In this way, the information flow is much faster and finding offers to the submitted demands for solving the development issues is more operative. Through the presented structural organization, the systemic functioning of commissioning implies that—in the case of submitting a demand for resources necessary for sustainable local development, filed by a development applicant and addressed to a local commissioning structure, specialized in the applicant's field of interest—it will identify the adequate offer in its database and immediately provide the solution.



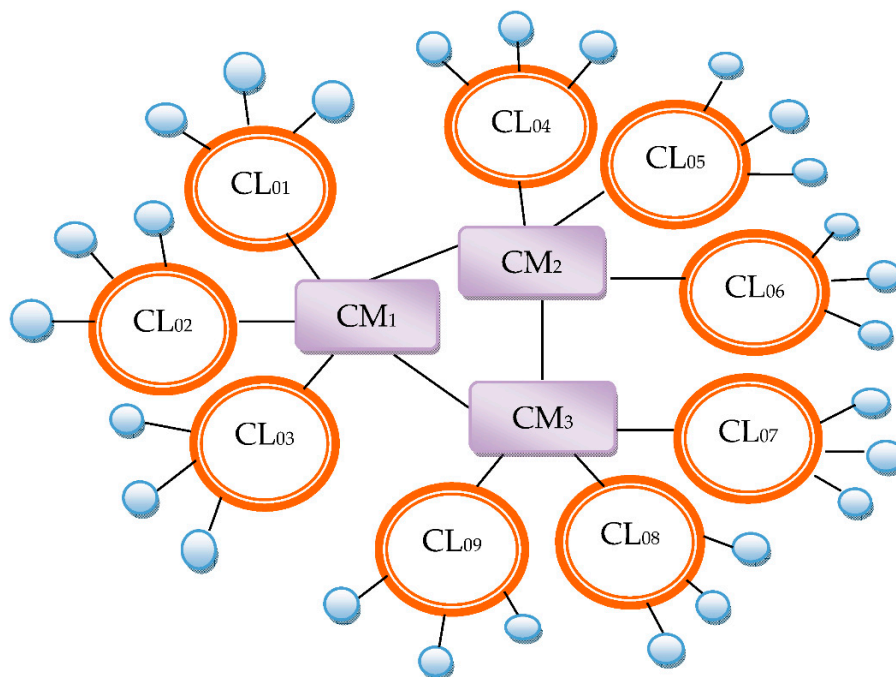
**Figure 3.** The neural structure of commissioning at the level of interconnection of local structures; CL<sub>01</sub>, CL<sub>02</sub>, CL<sub>03</sub> ... CL<sub>0n</sub>—specialized structures of commissioning managed at the city halls level; CL<sub>11</sub> ... CL<sub>1n</sub>; CL<sub>21</sub> ... CL<sub>2n</sub>; CL<sub>31</sub> ... CL<sub>3n</sub>—specialized structures of commissioning at the city level.

If the local structure does not have a suitable offer, it may ask horizontally other similar structures from other cities in the same geographical area (CL<sub>0x</sub>) to find a suitable offer. If an adequate offer is not found based on the horizontal approach of the system, then the commissioning structures operating at the level of the metropolitan areas and development regions will be accessed vertically.

#### 4.2. The Structural Development of the Commissioning System at the Level of Metropolitan Areas and Development Regions

The metropolitan areas and development regions have an important role in the sustainable development of a country, being considered a bridge between the local and national level. Cooperation and partnership relations are developed on multiple levels of sustainable inter-community development between the localities that form these areas. Extrapolating the reasoning from the local level to the metropolitan area level or the level of the development regions, similar commissioning structures can be designed, with a strong predilection for using the neural structures as being much more efficient.

The commissioning structures operating at the level of metropolitan areas (CM) manage the offers and demands for development resources in databases structured in development domains, harmonize the information, and make available to the development applicants from the localities that make up the metropolitan area the offers of resources for solving applications for which no solutions were found locally in the horizontal approach of the system. If the metropolitan structure does not have a suitable offer, it may ask horizontally other similar structures (CM<sub>x</sub>) to find a suitable offer (Figure 4). If the appropriate offer is not found in the databases provided by the commissioning structures at the level of metropolitan areas, then the commissioning structures at the level of development region which the metropolitan area is part of (CR<sub>x</sub>) will be accessed based on the vertical approach of the system.



**Figure 4.** The neural structure of commissioning at the level of metropolitan areas and the level of interconnection of structures at the level of cities; CM<sub>1</sub>; CM<sub>2</sub> . . . CM<sub>n</sub>—the specialized structures of commissioning at the metropolitan areas level managed by the territorial public authorities.

If a suitable offer is found, then the request will be solved. If the offer is not found at this level, then, horizontally, all the other structures of development regions (CR) will be asked (Figure 5).

If a suitable offer is not found in the databases provided by the commissioning structures at the level of development regions, then the national commissioning structure will be asked in the vertical approach of the system.

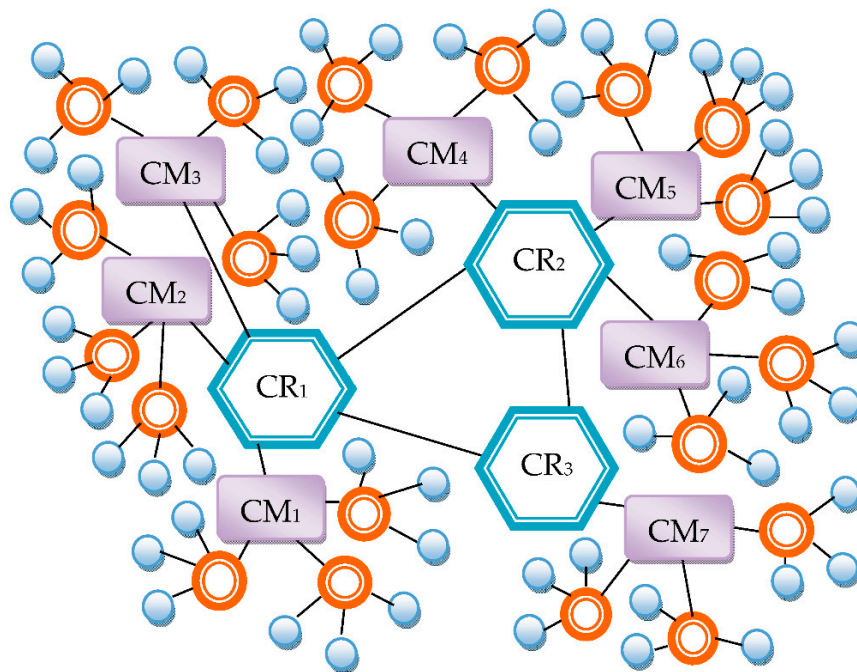
#### 4.3. The Structural Development of the Commissioning System at the State Level

At the state level, the commissioning can be organized as a centrally functioning structure, monitored at the government level (CN). In this case, there can be the advantage of structural and functional simplification, the created databases being easier to access and use by all the structures of the commissioning system operating at the territorial level. From the level of the development regions to the national level, the interconnection procedure is similar and preferably also neuronal (Figure 6).

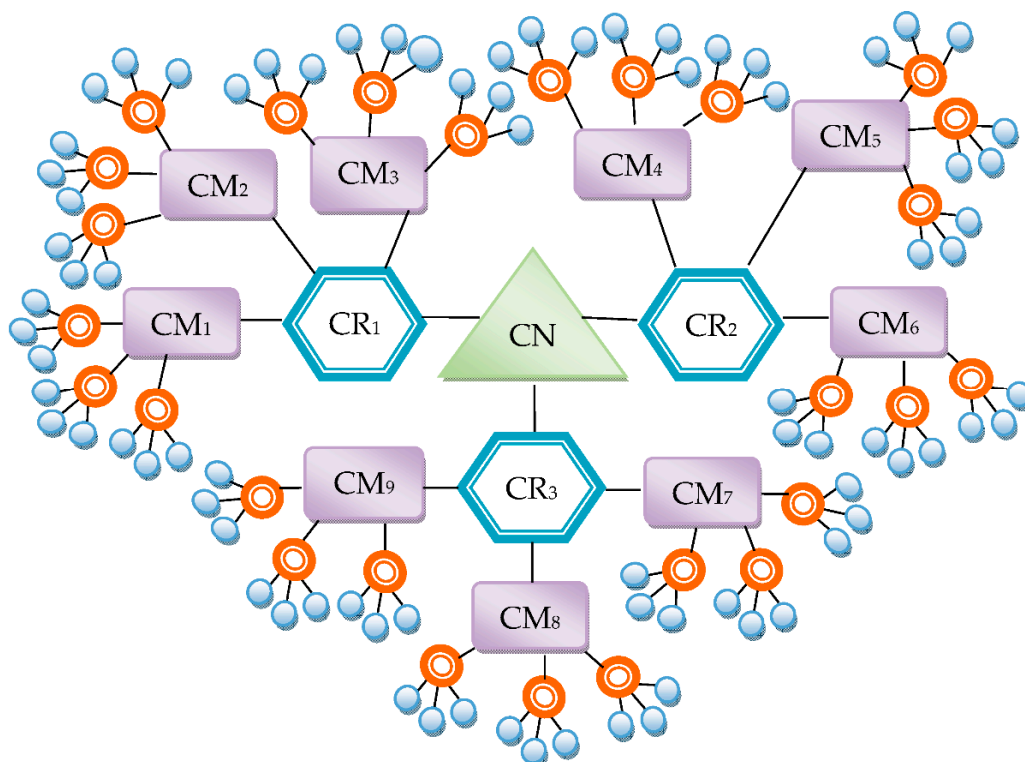
The national commissioning structure concentrates on the databases created at this level. Specialized in development domains, all offers for development resources are mobilized by multiple actors from different sectors of society interested in solving complex issues implied by sustainable national development. At this level, the commissioning supports collaboration between government authorities, which set the national goals of sustainable development policy and submit demands for



development resources and all stakeholders to mobilize resources to help solve sustainability issues and meet the national sustainable development goals.



**Figure 5.** The neural structure of commissioning at the level of interconnection of the structures of the development regions; CR<sub>1</sub>; CR<sub>2</sub>; CR<sub>n</sub>—the specialized structures of commissioning at the level of the development regions.



**Figure 6.** The neural structure of commissioning at the level of national interconnection; CN—the management structure of the commissioning at national level.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1. Implications

The paper refers to the intervention of commissioning in supporting collaborative relationships with multiple stakeholders for sustainable territorial development. We consider that this paper contributes to the literature concerning the collaboration for sustainability by addressing issues that have been less theorized and investigated so far. Based on our knowledge, few studies are tackling commissioning in terms of its potential to facilitate the connection between public authorities and entities in different sectors of society, providing professional services for the intermediation of demands and offers of development resources. We also believe that this study could extend the application area of the model and help create the necessary framework for the internationalization of the commissioning system. From this point of view, the authors consider that the model proposed in the paper represents a starting point for the internationalization of the system and the transition to international commissioning networks that support the global collaboration for sustainability.

The study also highlights a number of implications that can be beneficial for public authorities and other sectoral stakeholders who work together for the sustainable development of the specific geographical area. The model suggested in the paper explains how the structural and systemic development of commissioning at the national level by geographical regions (city, metropolitan area, development region, state) and domains of development can add value to collaboration for sustainability in a specific geographical area due to its potential to interconnect demands and offers for development resources from a wide range of stakeholders, public authorities, and other relevant actors from different sectors of society, interested in accessing and allocating resources to solve sustainable development problems.

At present, there is no system in Romania that collects the demands for development resources through hierarchical structures and also structurally manages all these resources in the form of offers for sustainable development to operatively ensure the identification and allocation of the adequate offer to any request made. The idea of developing the system suggested in the paper was generated by the studies that the authors consulted in the field of sustainable development in the national and regional context, as well as discussions and interviews with Romanian practitioners operating in the public and private sector who face many challenges in solving the problems involved in sustainable territorial development. They mainly emphasized the difficulties they encounter in the process of accessing and allocating demands and offers for development resources, mentioning the long time needed to identify the appropriate offers to meet the sustainable development objectives set at the territorial level. Using the commissioning structures, this process becomes easier, safer, and more operational. Through its structures, the commissioning system provides stakeholders with professional services for the operational intermediation of demands and offers for development resources at the level of a geographical area. In this way, the parties involved in collaboration for sustainability save valuable time, being exempted from the effort of identifying the most appropriate offers submitted for the requested resources, the commissioning structures carrying out the identification, and allocation of the offer corresponding to each demand in their centralized, updated, and easily accessible databases.

The development and implementation of the commissioning system at the national level is the attribute of the governmental authorities, which organize the structure of the system at the territorial level and monitor the commissioning activities using its structures such as development agencies, operating at the level of territorial-administrative units. The structural development of the commissioning system from local to national level depends on the governmental policy of each country on sustainable development at the state level and involves the engagement of both territorial-administrative and governmental units at all levels.

The creation of the necessary framework for the organization and operation of the commissioning system at the national level involves a series of legislative, organizational, and methodological aspects. We are taking into consideration the following:

- creating a legislative package regulating the organization, structure, and functioning of the commissioning system, including the relational system between the specific structures;
- organizing an administrative structure at the national level (e.g., the Ministry of Development) to manage the commissioning activity and organize the structure of the system at the territorial level;
- organizing, structuring, classifying, coding, and establishing the methodology for storing the demands and offers of resources by development domains;
- establishing a system for charging the commissioning services;
- starting the bottom-up process of system organization from the local level by designing a computer system of structural interconnection;
- permanently updating the databases in the commissioning structures (demands and offers).

We believe that this system can support the collaboration of stakeholders in the sustainable development of a specific geographical area, and we support its development in Romania, starting in a first stage at the level of cities and metropolitan areas.

### 5.2. Future Research Directions

The paper opens perspectives for further research developments. Although the study highlights the role of the commissioning system in facilitating the connection between stakeholders for sustainability, we believe that further research is needed, using the qualitative methods, to deepen and develop a better understanding of the roles that the commissioning system can play in supporting the parties collaborating for sustainability, in particular case studies with rigorous methodology and qualitative analyses. We also aim to conduct quantitative research that allows us to obtain a larger volume of data, which, following statistical processing and analysis, will provide a more comprehensive picture of the practitioners' opinion in the field on the development of this system and the extent to which they consider that the intervention of the commissioning structures supports the collaboration for the sustainable territorial development. Consequently, approaches to mixed research methods may support more in-depth research. As a result of this research, we aim to provide additional information to the entities engaged in sustainable development efforts on how the implementation of the commissioning system supports their joint efforts for sustainable development.

Another research direction could consider the international extension of the commissioning system to support the global partnership for sustainable development through actions that mobilize and manage the offers and demands for development resources and facilitate their exchange and transfer between the countries and all stakeholders involved in the collaboration for sustainability.

In the globalized world in which we live, the sustainable development of all states must be considered as a global project supported by the collaboration between all nations and all stakeholders to build a sustainable and prosperous world. This approach, encouraged by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) included in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, involves the strengthening of international collaboration and solidarity for the exchange and transfer of knowledge, expertise, technology, and other essential resources to address the challenges of sustainable development [12].

We consider that the design of an international model of structural development of the commissioning system could provide the fast interconnection of national commissioning systems, thus enabling states involved in collaborative commitments to jointly mobilize their capacities and resources for development, with the commissioning system supporting the management of offers and demands for resources through national, continental, or global databases, using its structural elements. To function effectively at this level, the commissioning system requires serious commitments of collaboration and solidarity between nations, motivated by the desire to evolve and achieve sustainable development together.

### 5.3. Concluding Remarks

The intervention of intermediaries in supporting collaboration for sustainability is considered an effective way to address the challenges faced by all parties involved in this type of commitment.

Our paper includes several less frequently addressed perspectives related to the intervention of commissioning as an intermediary in supporting collaborative relations between multiple stakeholders for sustainable development, public authorities, and other actors from different sectors of society who are able to mobilize resources for national sustainable development.

The article presents a model of structural and systemic development of commissioning at the national level, by geographical regions and domains of development, and explains how commissioning structures can act as intermediaries between all stakeholders to access and allocate resources for sustainability, taking into account the needs of development at the territorial level. The model was designed starting from the city level, continuing with the metropolitan areas, development regions, and the state level. Operating at the local, regional, and national level, the commissioning structures facilitate the interaction of sustainability stakeholders by mobilizing and managing the demands and offers of development resources in databases specialized in development domains, ensuring the operative identification of appropriate offers to address the sustainability issues for which the requests have been launched.

The paper was justified by the need to support the sustainability collaboration between government authorities, local public administrations, and other social actors in the context of multiple challenges that may affect the joint effort for the sustainable development of a country. The problems identified in Romania, following consultations with development specialists and practitioners on sustainability collaboration, have highlighted the low efficiency of the current management system of demands and offers for development resources. The discussions critically reflected in particular the lack of efficiency in identifying and allocating appropriate offers to address sustainability challenges in a specific geographical area. This led to the idea of developing the commissioning system at the national level, by geographical regions and domains of development. Due to its potential to facilitate the efficient and operative interconnection of demands and offers for development resources, the commissioning system reduces the inconsistencies associated with stakeholder interaction in accessing and allocating resources for sustainability, thus increasing the effectiveness of joint sustainability actions. As a result, the authors suggest the development of the commissioning system in Romania on a moderate scale, in the first stage, respectively, at the level of cities and metropolitan regions, then to be extended to the regional and national level in the following stages. Furthermore, we believe that the model presented in the paper can be extended internationally to support collaboration for sustainability, and we suggest further research in this direction. The structures of the commissioning system, specialized in development domains, can support collaboration arrangements that bring together governments, non-governmental institutions, the private sector, the civil society, the scientific community, and other actors relevant to sustainable development. Therefore, we consider this approach a useful contribution to the problem of collaboration for sustainability, as it is able to generate the interest of actors involved, such as government authorities, development practitioners, and scientists.

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