

# **The green economy in Tanzania: From global discourses to institutionalization**

**Jill Tove Buseth**

**Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU)**

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this paper is to examine the transfer of the green economy from a global discursive level to institutionalization at the national level in Tanzania. While there is a growing amount of research discussing technological aspects of the green economy, less attention has been paid to policy implications and governance aspects, especially in developing countries. There is an increasing emphasis on technological and market-based solutions to environmental challenges globally and in the developed part of the world. However, in developing countries, ‘green growth’ often implies transformed control over natural resources – under schemes that are often driven from abroad. Over the last five to ten years, investments aimed at increasing productivity in the rural agricultural sector in developing countries have become a focus area of the green economy, but various concepts of *green* have become confused. Such (mis-) interpretation of the green economy has consequences for implementation and outcomes of various ‘green’ projects. Drawing on governmentality as well as the concept of institutional *bricolage*, I examine how the green economy discourse and policy at the global level have been re-shaped and re-interpreted to fit the existing agri-business initiative of the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT), which has been championed as a model for green economy implementation in Africa. I discuss how the green discourse has been ‘grabbed’ as an opportunity to ‘greenwash’ SAGCOT in its establishment and institutionalization.

*Keywords: green economy, agricultural investment, institutional bricolage, green governmentality, grabbing green, SAGCOT*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since 2012, the ‘green economy’ has been presented as a framework for climate mitigation; a new, ‘green’ driver for economic growth, and a tool for poverty alleviation; functioning as an overall catalyst towards the achievement of sustainable development (United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), 2011). While there is a growing amount of research discussing technological, financial and practical aspects of the green economy, less attention has been paid to policy and governance aspects, especially in developing countries. At the same time, agricultural development has, to an increasing extent, been interpreted as green economy implementation, especially across the African continent (Bergius, Benjaminsen & Widgren, 2017). This paper examines how the green economy discourse and policy at the global level has been ‘grabbed’ and interpreted to fit an existing agri-business scheme in Tanzania; and how this initiative has been re-shaped and presented as representing ‘green growth’ along the lines of the prevailing green economy trend (Kabubu, 2012).

The years prior to the promotion of the green economy at the Rio+20 conference in 2012, saw an increased awareness of climate change and its relationships to economic growth and the financial crisis. For many, these crises presented a “unique moment in history in which major environmental and economic challenges could be tackled simultaneously” (Tienhaara, 2014, p. 1). Governments and policy-makers around the world proclaimed that economic recovery after the financial shocks of 2007/8 should be ‘green’ in order to ensure sustainable growth (Ban & Gore, 2009; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2009). These were not new ideas (see e.g. Pearce, Markandya, & Barbier, 1989), but led to new and invigorated debate around sustainable development (WCED, 1987).

Green economy ideas cover a wide range of areas, but the leading policy papers demonstrate a strong reliance on technological and market-based solutions to environmental problems (UNEP, 2011; OECD, 2009). There seems to be an assumption that we can solve the world’s combined challenges by simply adjusting economic systems (Ehresman & Okereke, 2015). However, what is often lacking in green economy policy strategies is attention to political and institutional implications, as well as issues of power, and social and environmental (in)justice in various ‘green’ transformations (Scoones, Newell & Leach, 2015; Newell & Mulvany, 2013; Brockington & Ponte, 2015; Brown, Cloke, Gent & Hill, 2014).

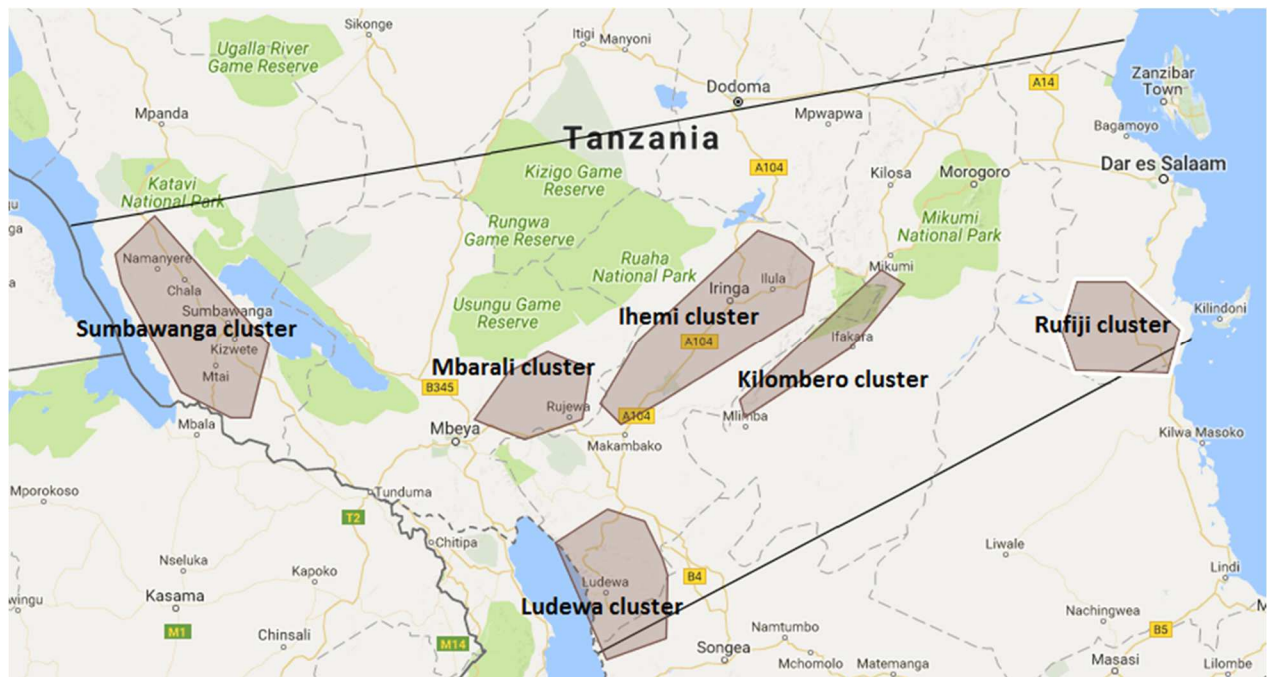
Simultaneously, there has been an increase in foreign control over farmland and natural resources (Anseeuw, Boche, Breu, Giger, Lay, Messerli & Nolte, 2012), particularly in Africa. A renewed ‘scramble’ for Africa’s farmland was sparked after the food price-hike in the mid-2000s (Evers, Seagle & Krijtenburg, 2013; Sulle, 2015). Interestingly, this urge to make money from, or control, Africa’s natural resources and farmland has recently been combined with the idea of the green economy and its implementation. Given that ‘green transformation’ most often includes parallel strategies of poverty reduction, climate mitigation, environmental preservation and economic growth, the pathway chosen has often been agricultural investment in developing countries (GRAIN, 2015; UNEP, 2015). Investing in agriculture and intensifying production are often perceived as efficient interventions in order to curb rural poverty (Kay, 2014). Championed under a green economy banner, this combination has paved the way for large-scale agricultural initiatives and agri-business investments such as the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) (Oakland Institute, 2016; McKeon, 2014; Daño, 2007; Sulle, 2015). According to Nhamo and Chekwoti (2014), we are now witnessing a fourth generation of land acquisition in Africa, taking place under the contemporary green economy transition.<sup>1</sup>

Tanzania has embarked on a journey towards a green transformation agenda through the large-scale agricultural initiative SAGCOT – the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania. SAGCOT is a public-private partnership between the Tanzanian Government and more than 100 partners, including agri-corporations, local organizations and associations, a small number of donors and development partners, and most importantly foreign/ multi-national investors and business corporations (SAGCOT, 2013). When launching the initiative in 2010, the government proclaimed that this was the new, green road to economic growth, increased agricultural production, and environmental preservation. In order to “unlock the region’s potential,” SAGCOT aims, by 2030, to “mobilize 3.5 billion USD in investments, bring 350 000 hectares of land into commercial farming, create 420 000 new employment opportunities, [and] lift 2 million people permanently out of poverty” (SAGCOT, 2015). Their strategy is to incorporate small-scale farmers into enhanced and commercialized agricultural production and provide market access and agricultural assistance to smallholders through partnerships in value chains, out-grower models,

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<sup>1</sup> Previous rounds of land acquisition took place in pre-colonial, colonial and more immediate post-colonial eras.

and a small number of plantations (SAGCOT, 2011). SAGCOT is targeting one-third of the Tanzanian mainland, encompassing around five million hectares of land (Fig. 1), with a total population of approximately ten million people. SAGCOT is championed as a typical green economy initiative (SAGCOT, 2013; Kabubu, 2012; Bergius et al., 2017), flagged as green transformation, green growth, or, in its own words, ‘agriculture green growth’ (SAGCOT, 2013).



**Figure 1: Map of Tanzania and the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor with the six production ‘clusters’ (map produced by author based on original map of Tanzania from Google Maps).**

There is a growing amount of research pointing to the consequences of large-scale land acquisitions and privatization of agricultural investments in Africa in ‘the name of green’ (Byiers & Rampa, 2013; Nhamo & Chekwoti, 2014; Cotula, 2013; Kaag & Zoomers, 2014; Evers et al., 2013), including SAGCOT (Sulle, 2015; Sulle, 2016; Bergius et al., 2017; Coulson, 2015; Chung, 2017). While concerns have been raised about the possible impacts of SAGCOT, both at national and local levels, this study does not aim to point to implications of the initiative itself. Rather, I seek to explore how and why the framing of SAGCOT changed from being an agricultural investment portfolio project to a so-called ‘agriculture green growth’ and ‘inclusive green growth’ initiative, and the ways in which it has been justified as such.

I will do so by drawing on a theoretical framework which combines the concepts of discourse institutionalization (Hajer, 1995), governmentality (Foucault, 1991), environmentality (Luke, 1999), political ecology (Peet, Robbins & Watts, 2011) and in particular, institutional *bricolage* (Cleaver, 2012). The original meaning of the word *bricolage* is a “construction or creation [of something new] from a diverse range of available things,” regardless of the original purpose of those things (Cleaver, 2012, p. 33). Cleaver (2012, p. 45) defines *institutional bricolage* as “a process in which people consciously and non-consciously draw on existing social formulae [...] to patch or piece together institutions in response to changing situations”. It is important to “incorporate awareness of the ‘invisible’ workings of power” into institutional understanding and analysis (Cleaver, 2012, p. 22). The idea of institutional *bricolage* has been used primarily to demonstrate how local communities adjust existing structures and institutional practices in local natural resource management (Cleaver, 2012). I seek to explore how institutional *bricolage* can be useful in explaining how discourses and policies change from policy to practice, in a ‘piece-and-patch-together’ manner, as well as how various sources of authority have re-legitimized the notion of ‘green.’ This work contributes to an understanding of how the green economy moves from being a policy and discourse, to practical implementation, and the findings can provide insight into how green growth is manifest on the ground in a developing country.

Data collection for this research study was carried out between 2015 and 2017, at multi-national and international levels, as well as at national, district and local levels in Tanzania. I used qualitative data collection methods mostly in the form of interviews (80 in total) among agribusiness and agriculture sector actors and corporations, global organizations, ministries and government institutions in Tanzania, as well as Tanzanian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and researchers. Members of the SAGCOT board, the SAGCOT leadership and other SAGCOT staff members were among the key informants, as well as SAGCOT partners, representatives from the Tanzanian government and institutions who were involved in the formation of SAGCOT. I also carried out document analysis, as well as using participatory methods such as observation and mapping. Finally, I participated in several high-level international green economy policy conferences with a total number of approximately 2,200 participants, as well as the SAGCOT Annual Partnership Forum 2017, with around 500 participants. In addition to activities and interviews carried out at these events, I analyzed the

conference sessions, coverage and documents through event ethnography (Campbell, Corson, Gray, MacDonald & Brosius, 2014) and participant observation.

## **2. THE POLICIES AND DISCOURSES OF THE GREEN ECONOMY**

In the years before and after the launch of the Brundtland report “*Our Common Future*” (WCED, 1987), there was a debate around the concept of ‘sustainable development.’ Already at that point a type of green economy idea was suggested as an alternative to conventional economic models, based on the argument that sustainable development would not be possible if economic systems and the environment were treated separately (Pearce et al., 1989). However, these ideas did not gain substantial traction in academic and policy circles until the late 2000s, when several different schools of green transformations developed, mostly as responses to the ‘triple F’ crisis (food, fuel and finance crises between 2007 and 2010) (Tienhaara, 2014; Death, 2015; Newell, 2015; Dale, Mathai & de Oliveira, 2016; Luke, 2009).

### **2.1 Prevailing policies and discourses**

Today, there are several parallel ‘green’ schools in addition to, or as sub-categories of, the overall green economy approach, most notably ‘green growth’ (OECD, 2009) and ‘green transition’ or transformation (Scoones et al., 2015).<sup>2</sup> UNEP (2011, p. 16) provides the most commonly used definition, defining a green economy as one “that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities.” The key aim for a transition to a green economy is “to enable economic growth and investment, while increasing environmental quality and social inclusiveness” (UNEP, 2011, p. 16). The main message is that economic growth should continue, not be halted, in adapting economic systems to become more environmentally viable.

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<sup>2</sup> In this paper, I refer to the overall green economy as well as green growth, and regard these as largely being synonymous. However, green growth focuses more on economic growth and the environment being something to utilize to achieve that, and is advocated to a greater extent by OECD (2009, 2011), whilst UNEP (2011, 2015) places more emphasis on social inclusivity and environmental sustainability in their green economy agenda.

The green economy is a multi-dimensional construct involving a wide range of actors and policies. Policy and scholarly debates have, however, been concerned mostly with investment and innovation, technological solutions and governance (Ehresman & Okereke, p. 2015). Indeed, Newell (2015, p. 69) argues that “much of the policy debate so far, as well as existing academic scholarship on these questions, has [...] focused more on the *governance* of transitions than the *politics* of transformation” (my emphasis).

It is important to distinguish between the green policies and transformations that take place in practice (Parr, 2016; Newell, 2015; Mazzacuto, 2015; Spratt, 2015) and the overall green *discourse* that shapes these policies. The discourse concept is important to understand how the green economy is being implemented, because discourses “coordinate the actions of [...] people and organizations” (Dryzek, 2013, p. 10), especially in global politics, power and practices (Hajer, 1995).

There are furthermore many interpretations and categorizations of the green economy – politically, discursively and practically.<sup>3</sup> However, it is striking that most green economy definitions and concepts lack an understanding of questions of justice and inclusiveness (Scoones et al., 2015). Even though many green economy policy frameworks and strategies (such as UNEP’s own), discuss poverty and global inequality, few of them tackle questions of power and distribution very well.

Political ecology can offer a framework for analysis to understand how green economy implementation affects local communities and vulnerable groups in developing countries, especially in cases of natural resource management control, conservation and extraction under the current neo-liberalization of nature (Peet et al., 2011; Robbins, 2012; Wanner, 2015). Hall (2015) moreover suggests that political ecology can contribute to studies of international agri-food systems; both through studies of ‘the global land grab,’ but also because of political ecology’s “combination of attentiveness to global forces and processes with a concern for the specificities of the human metabolism with nature and for heterogeneity and complexity” (Hall, 2015, p. 414). As Bergius et al. (2017, p. 1) also note, political ecologists “have expressed worry about the adverse

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<sup>3</sup> See, amongst others, Death (2015); Scoones et al. (2015); Ferguson (2015) and Tienhaara (2014) for extensive overviews.

effects on smallholder livelihoods of a green economy focused on modernization in a development context.”

## **2.2 Agricultural development as a green economy implementation in the global South**

Interestingly, the green economy seems to be interpreted differently in the global North and South. In developed countries, green economy often implies technological advancement to make fossil fuels more energy efficient, advocacy and support for a switch to renewable energies, as well as implementation of market-based and fiscal instruments to control the environment. By contrast, in developing countries, green economy implementation often reads as environmental protection and management of, and control over, natural resources. Initiatives such as carbon and biodiversity offsetting, REDD+, water catchment control and wildlife conservation are examples of this. However as Death (2015, p. 2208) argues, we need to pay more attention to the national strategies and development programs that are being deployed by governments in developing countries, “some of which are mobilizing the green economy in ways which have only peripheral relationships to the traditionally ‘green’ issue areas of conservation and natural resource management.”

A good example of such mobilization is agricultural investment programs which are presented as green economy implementation. Targeting the agricultural sector in developing countries has been seen by many actors as a promising pathway to reduce poverty and increase economic growth, while simultaneously assuring environmental sustainability (FAO, 2017; UNEP, 2015; WEF, 2010). The idea of agriculture corridors as an economic development strategy, particularly in Africa, has gained increased global attention since 2008 (Byiers & Rampa, 2013). The World Economic Forum (WEF)’s groundbreaking roadmap, *Realizing a New Vision for Agriculture* (2010), was largely responsible for laying the foundation for increased engagement of multinational companies in agricultural investment in developing countries. This strategy aims to provide global food security, increase agricultural production in an environmentally sustainable way – including tackling the threats of climate change – and, finally, generate economic growth and opportunity (WEF, 2010). These aims correspond closely with the aims of the green economy (UNEP, 2011).



The last decade has seen a wave of various agricultural schemes across the African continent.<sup>4</sup> Interestingly, the new ‘green revolution’ in Africa, largely driven by multi-national actors such as the Rockefeller Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and inspired by the green revolution in Asia in the 1960s, is often merged both discursively and politically with the green economy under new terms such as ‘agriculture green growth’ (Daño, 2007; SAGCOT, 2013). There are a vast number of policy documents that discuss and frame so-called agriculture green growth and highlight similar goals to those of the green economy agenda (New Alliance 2012; Grow Africa 2013; WEF, 2010). Despite the distinction between the green *revolution*, with its emphasis on increased production, and the green *economy*, agricultural initiatives are, to an increasing extent, interpreted and presented as green economy implementation in developing countries. SAGCOT is a case in point – its agriculture green growth approach is a hybrid of green economy and green revolution concepts. According to the SAGCOT Framework for Agriculture Green Growth (2013) (also called, and from now on, the Greenprint):

While [agriculture green growth] incorporates traditional environmental management tools [...], its focus is on identifying and catalyzing new opportunities in agricultural production, technical and institutional infrastructure, and conservation and livelihood activities for sustainable economic growth (SAGCOT, 2013, p. 4).

### **3. THE CASE OF THE SOUTHERN AGRICULTURAL GROWTH CORRIDOR OF TANZANIA:**

Tanzania is among the top countries in Africa targeted by foreign land investors (Anseeuw et al., 2012; Sulle, 2015). This is driven by both push and pull factors – the global rush for farmland, and the government’s drive towards modernizing the agricultural sector. SAGCOT’s aim of “foster[ing] inclusive, commercially successful agribusiness” (SAGCOT, 2015) corresponds with Tanzania’s 2009 national policy *Kilimo Kwanza* (‘agriculture first’). The aim of *Kilimo Kwanza* is to commercialize and modernize the agricultural sector in Tanzania, with the help of incentives from the private sector (Coulson, 2015; Sulle, 2015), and SAGCOT was established as the first

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<sup>4</sup> Examples include the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), Grow Africa, as well as numerous national plans (see e.g. Daño (2007) and Nogales (2014) for an overview).

major program under this policy.<sup>5</sup> SAGCOT's goals of poverty reduction, economic growth and environmental preservation are also obvious echoes of the green economy. However, neither of these were the main drivers behind its establishment.

The first ideas came largely from the multi-national, Norway-based fertilizer company, Yara, in 2007/8 related to agreements with the Tanzanian Government to establish a storage facility in Dar es Salaam. Yara had been involved for a long time in creating a coordinated approach towards agricultural development in Tanzania.<sup>6</sup> The President of Tanzania in the mid-2000s, Kikwete, was a strong proponent of agricultural development, and sought increased cooperation from abroad. At the same time, the idea of agriculture corridors emerged – this was also first suggested by Yara at the United Nations Private Sector Forum in 2008 (Jenkins, 2012; Paul & Steinbrecher, 2013). In the African context, the agriculture corridor approach came largely from the World Economic Forum (WEF) and the Grow Africa initiative. The previously-mentioned 'New Vision for Agriculture' was launched at WEF in 2009, led by a number of multi-national food and agribusiness corporations (Nogales, 2014; WEF, 2010).<sup>7</sup> These initiatives were aligned with the African Union's Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), and CAADP, which is the agriculture program of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (Nogales, 2014).

The SAGCOT idea was conceived in this environment at the WEF in 2009 as a collaboration between the Government of Tanzania, Tanzania Agriculture Partnership (TAP), the Tanzania Investment Center (TIC), Yara, the Norwegian Embassy, the Norwegian Investment Fund for Developing Countries (Norfund), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the World Bank. SAGCOT was officially launched at the WEF held in Tanzania one year later (2010), and the

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<sup>5</sup> Later, in 2013, the government announced the 'Big Results Now' initiative, aiming, among other things, to establish a number of large-scale commercial farms to grow rice and sugarcane by 2015/ 16; however, as of November 2016, none of these have been implemented (Chung, 2017).

<sup>6</sup> These efforts resulted in the establishment of the Tanzania Agriculture Partnership (TAP) – a collaboration between Yara and the Agriculture Council of Tanzania (ACT), as well as support from Prorustica and the Norwegian Government. TAP is often perceived to be the forerunner of SAGCOT.

<sup>7</sup> These companies are: AGCO Corporation, A.P. Møller-Maersk, BASF, Bayer CropScience, Bunge, Cargill, CF Industries Holdings, Coca-Cola Company, Diaego, DuPont, General Mills, Heineken, METRO Group, Mondelez International, Monsanto Company, The Mosaic Company, Nestlé, Novozymes, PepsiCo, Rabobank, International, Royal DSM, SABMiller, Sinar Mas Agribusiness and Food, Swiss Reinsurance Company, Syngenta International, Unilever, Wal-Mart and Yara International (Nogales, 2014).

overall stated aim was to transform Tanzania’s agricultural sector through commercialization and modernization (SAGCOT, 2011). Thus far, SAGCOT is one of two agriculture corridors in Africa that have been implemented on the basis of such partnerships.<sup>8</sup>

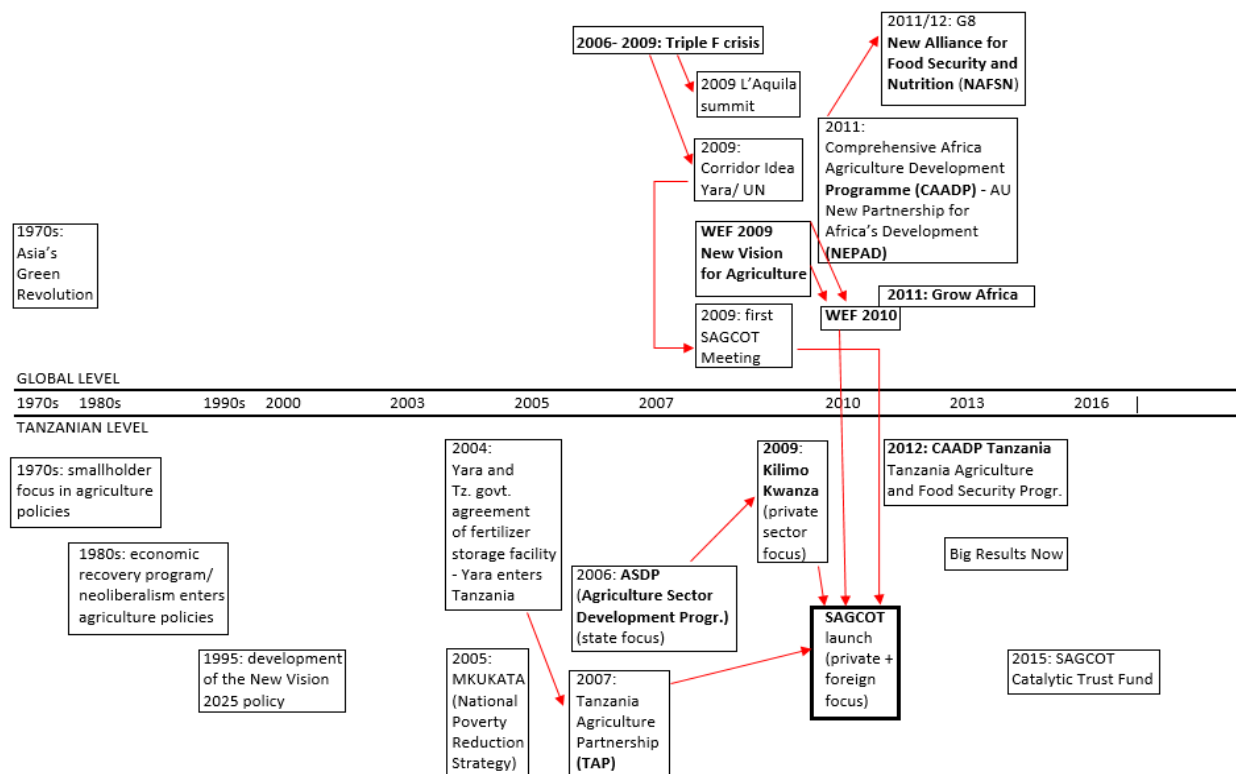


Figure 2: Linkages and events leading up to the formation of SAGCOT.

### 3.1 Grabbing the green discourse and the (green) growth narrative

From the beginning, SAGCOT had a clear top-down agri-business profile, dominated and driven by foreign multi-national organizations and corporations. This is in line with prevailing trends in international development, which emphasize the importance of foreign investment (Norwegian Government 2015, 2017; Bergius et al., 2017), and links with the overall green economy aim of seeking the bulk of investments from the private sector (UNEP, 2011). A study done by the Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative at Harvard Kennedy School, argues that “the private sector is increasingly recognized by the development community as a crucial partner” in

<sup>8</sup> The other one is the Beira Agriculture Growth Corridor (BAGC), in Mozambique.

addressing the challenges of underdevelopment and climate change (Jenkins, 2012, p. 4). Moreover; “new technologies, products and services, and more inclusive business models are helping to improve livelihoods and quality of life for millions of low-income households while at the same time improving the efficiency of natural resource use and decreasing environmental degradation” (Jenkins, 2012, p. 4). This corresponds with the visions of SAGCOT. Former president Kikwete stated in the foreword of the SAGCOT Investment Blueprint (called from now on: the Blueprint) that earlier agricultural strategies in Tanzania failed to recognize the “critical importance of the private sector participating actively in the agricultural production,” and that SAGCOT now properly anchors this involvement (SAGCOT, 2011, p. 5).

SAGCOT is a good example of how the green economy discourse has been able to attract interest from the business sector in a way that the sustainable development school never managed to achieve. During the first few years (2010-2013), SAGCOT attracted more than 80 partners. This focus on business opportunities is also the most distinguishing factor between sustainable development and the green economy, as economic growth has been foregrounded in the latter concept.

SAGCOT was heavily influenced by the growth narrative within the green economy agenda (OECD, 2009) when it was initiated. Indeed, SAGCOT states clearly that agriculture green growth should be mainstreamed into its investment strategies in order to “position the Southern Corridor as a place that attracts ‘best in class’ investors and innovators that integrate sustainability into their business plans” (SAGCOT, 2012, p. iv). According to the OECD (2011, p. 4), “green growth means fostering economic growth and development, while ensuring that natural assets continue to provide the resources and environmental services on which our well-being relies.” This approach emphasizes the need to create economic growth and enhance the possibilities of utilizing the environment to this end. In SAGCOT, “Agriculture Green Growth (AGG) [is a strategy] to sustainably intensify agriculture [...], while simultaneously conserving the natural resource base” (SAGCOT, 2012, p. ii). This rhetoric is apparent in SAGCOT’s focus on creating investments and economic growth based on the utilization of natural resources (i.e. farmland and crops) and the monetarization of natural resources (i.e. Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES), conservation, eco-tourism). Moreover, the Blueprint identifies several so-called ‘early-win’ investment

opportunities for fast profit, and spends several chapters arguing why investors should engage in Tanzania. This investment focus is also illustrated by the fact that out of a 70 million USD grant allocated to SAGCOT by the World Bank in 2016 (the first big grant they have received), more than one-third will go directly to ‘investment facilitation’ at the SAGCOT center and the Tanzania Investment Centre (TIC).<sup>9</sup>

The reliance on the growth narrative in the implementation of the green economy shows that the green economy and green growth discourses are just new ways of maintaining neoliberal capitalism (Wanner, 2015). Multi-national agri-corporations sought to open up new markets for their products partly as a response to the financial crisis and the related rise in food prices – an important factor in the establishment of SAGCOT. When faced with crisis from 2007 to 2009, actors started looking outwards for new arenas in which to invest. According to GRAIN (2015, p. 3), fertilizer companies such as Yara “moved aggressively to control the international debate on agriculture and climate change, and to position themselves as a necessary part of the solution.” This can illustrate Harvey’s (1981, 2001b) notion of a ‘spatial fix,’ referring to “capitalism’s insatiable drive to resolve its inner crisis tendencies by geographical expansion and geographical restructuring” (Harvey, 2001a, p. 24). This might illustrate capitalism’s tendency towards expansion for survival, but is also interesting to analyze through the lens of the green economy discourse, as well as the formation of SAGCOT. Indeed, the establishment of SAGCOT was directly influenced by the global trends in the aftermath of the triple F crisis.<sup>10</sup>

The ways in which SAGCOT was created can hence be described as a policy process heavily guided by prevailing global discourses. Dryzek (2013) holds that environmental issues are interconnected through institutional interplay, mechanisms, structures and actors. He further argues that discourses can “embody power in the way they condition the perceptions and values of those subject to them, such that some interests are advanced, others suppressed” (Dryzek, 2013, p. 10). The concept of “discourse institutionalization” is used by Hajer (1995, p. 61) to explain when a “given discourse is translated into institutional arrangements.” This relates to Adger et

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<sup>9</sup> According to key informants in SAGCOT: Informant 66, 25.10.16, and informant 72, 03.11.16.

<sup>10</sup> According to SAGCOT CEO Jennifer Baarn, official speech at the SAGCOT annual forum dinner, 11.03.17, and among others informant 44, 20.04.16, representing the donor community, and informant 14, 06.11.15, representing Yara.

al.'s (2001, p. 681) argument that there is a “*global environmental management* discourse representing a technocratic worldview by which [...] external policy interventions can solve global environmental dilemmas.” This is called ‘cockpit-ism’ by Hajer, Nilsson, Raworth, Bakker, Berkhout, de Boer, Rockström, Ludwig & Kok (2015, p. 1652), referring to “the illusion that top-down steering by governments and intergovernmental organizations alone can address global problems.” Hajer et al. (2015) argue that this applies to the post Rio+20 green economy in general, as top-down, but it also relates to how the green economy manifests via initiatives such as SAGCOT. Following Hajer’s (1995) definitions, SAGCOT is a good example of discourse institutionalization and of a discourse, in this case the green economy, becoming hegemonic, as this happens when theoretical concepts are translated into both concrete politics and institutional arrangements (Hajer, 1995, p. 61).<sup>11</sup>

Discourse institutionalization relates furthermore to notions of governmentality, here seen as an analytic tool to explain how discourses have a conscious or un-conscious influence over the governing processes in the implementation of various development schemes (Foucault, 1991; Dean, 2010). Governmentality is seen by Foucault (1991) as the ‘conduct of conduct,’ or a governing technique and tactic (Burchell, Gordon & Miller, 1991), and can be understood as a way of exercising power, often related to top-down implementation of policies, as in the case of SAGCOT (Scott, 1998; Mosse, 2005; Ferguson, 1994). According to Li (2007, p. 19), power operates at a distance through governmentality. It is therefore useful in understanding how the green economy is institutionalized in the case of SAGCOT as discussed in this paper.

A useful and expanded notion of governmentality in environmental governance, can be found in the term ‘green governmentality’ (Rutherford, 2007; Parr, 2016), which refers to a way of analyzing how power is being exercised in environmental governance through discourses (see also Adger et al., 2011), and ‘environmentality’ (Luke, 1999; Fletcher, 2017, see also Valdivia (2015) on ‘eco-governmentality’). These interrelated terms can shed light on how the green economy is being implemented and institutionalized through top-down steering affected by global power patterns. Agrawal (2005) stresses that power, knowledge, institutions and subjectivities are

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<sup>11</sup> There are however examples of local resistance to SAGCOT (and to the green economy in general), so the green economy discourse is not completely hegemonic.

essential in understanding changes in environmental governance. Elements of green governmentality, such as power, environmental governance and discourse influence, can explain how SAGCOT came into being in the first place, and secondly, how SAGCOT became *green* as illustrated in this paper.

The case of SAGCOT as green economy implementation is an example of what Corson, MacDonald and Neimark (2013) call ‘grabbing green’ (not to be confused with the well-known term ‘green grabbing’ (Fairhead, Leach & Scoones, 2012)). According to Corson et al. (2013, p. 2), “grabbing green” refers to how the environment “is being used instrumentally by various actors to extend the potential for capital accumulation under the auspices of being green.” I regard this ‘grabbing green’ as a deliberate way of manifesting the green economy in practice in the case of SAGCOT. Indeed, as Corson et al. (2013, p. 5) argue, grabbing green is “both a manifestation of environmentalism’s transformation and a constitutive force in producing the Green Economy.”

### **3.2 From investment opportunity to ‘inclusive green growth:’<sup>12</sup> the greening of SAGCOT**

The fact that growth has become the mantra in green economy thinking and practice (OECD, 2015), is key in understanding how the green economy manifests in practice. According to Dale et al. (2016, p. 6), green growth has “persuasive power” because “it constitutes a plea for sustainable development without tears,” and represents a ‘quick fix’ in fulfilling environmental regulations and agreements. This means that where sustainable development used to be a policy companies had to follow, at the expense of the economic growth rate they aimed for, green economy offers an environmental policy framework companies can more easily adhere to, based on the appealing growth rhetoric.

SAGCOT was, as demonstrated, initiated from and relied heavily on the ‘growth’ focus taken from the global green economy discourse from the very beginning, but it was not *green* growth. Neither did SAGCOT have an obvious green economy profile in its early years. It was predominantly initiated as an agricultural investment initiative, and the policy framework was more concerned with investments in farming programs, techniques and strategies. Despite this, SAGCOT has, since

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<sup>12</sup> SAGCOT (2011, 2017).

its launch and increasingly today, been presented and championed as a green economy, or green growth, initiative. In a side-event at Rio+20 in 2012, organized by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and AfDB, the Tanzanian Minister of State at the Vice President's Office for the Environment, presented SAGCOT as a green economy initiative that Tanzania would "benefit immensely" from (Kabubu, 2012). It would be a "laboratory for testing and implementing [the] concept [of green growth which] will provide valuable lessons for the agriculture sector in Africa" (Kabubu, 2012), illustrating the visions of transforming and commercializing African agriculture through corridors at large. The Minister referred to the newly published SAGCOT 'Greenprint' (SAGCOT, 2012), and emphasized that Tanzania is now embarking on the road to implementing a green economy.

SAGCOT had a focus on private investments in the agricultural sector in the early stages (2009-2011), but was soon re-shaped to fit with the prevailing green economy discourse. The first SAGCOT Concept note (2009) included a vision to attract and support investment partners, and paved the way for the 2011 Investment Blueprint (Jenkins, 2012). Whereas the Blueprint describes how smallholders will be commercialized through foreign investments, presents details of, and offers thousands of hectares of "available plots" for large-scale investments and so-called "early wins," the Greenprint aims to "refine the SAGCOT strategy to ensure that development in the Corridor is environmentally sustainable, socially equitable, and economically feasible" (SAGCOT, 2012, p. ii). This is based on the recognition that:

...society now looks to agricultural landscapes to provide a range of goods and services – not just food – and that markets are increasingly rewarding farmers for doing so. In this way, resource conservation, efficiency, and sustainability are not costs of doing business; on the contrary, they are woven into the core logic and business case of all new land-based investment (SAGCOT, 2012, p. ii).

When SAGCOT first adopted the 'green' profile, it was through the Greenprint document (SAGCOT, 2012). Interestingly, however, the Greenprint was initially meant as a strategy for landscape and biodiversity analysis of the geographical areas that would be affected by SAGCOT. Green growth and the green economy did not form any reference points in this work.<sup>13</sup> During its development, the Greenprint was however eventually mainstreamed with an overall green economy approach, including strategies regarding ecotourism, conservation and biofuels, as well

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<sup>13</sup> According to informant 44, 20.04.16, who was involved in initiating the Greenprint.



as PES. Indeed, the Greenprint stresses that a green growth approach is necessary to achieve the goals of SAGCOT, and that this is part of the green economy strategy which actors around the world are striving to implement. SAGCOT further states that:

...the Green Growth approach involves engaging a wide range of investors, going well beyond 'business-as-usual.' They include new sustainable agricultural investment funds, climate mitigation investment funds, international financial institutions with screening criteria for sustainability, and international companies that have incorporated environmental and social values into their business models. (SAGCOT, 2012, p. iii)

While the first Greenprint draft (SAGCOT, 2012) was entitled *A Green Growth Investment Framework*, the final Greenprint, which came one year later, changed focus and title to *A Framework for Agriculture Green Growth* (SAGCOT, 2013). The content is similar with only slight changes in wording, but these changes have implications for the interpretation of SAGCOT – whether it is regarded as an *agricultural* initiative or an *environmental* initiative. As the focus in the title shifted from 'investment' to 'agriculture green growth,' so the branding of SAGCOT changed direction towards the increasingly popular 'green growth' discourse instead of the business-opportunity narrative it started off with. At the SAGCOT Partnership Forum in 2017, a four-page document entitled *Creating a Definition of Inclusive Green Growth in SAGCOT* was distributed among the 500 participants. Interestingly, there was no discussion of these terms in any of the plenary sessions, nor did this document seem to serve any purpose other than simply informing the audience about SAGCOT's profile, and, obviously, associated branding of the initiative as being both green and inclusive. The document states that SAGCOT is committed to a mission of "inclusive, commercially successful agri-businesses that will benefit the region's small-scale farmers, and in so doing, improve food security, reduce poverty and ensure environmental sustainability" (SAGCOT, 2017, p. 1). It lists elements of 'inclusive green growth' in agriculture: inclusivity, environmental management, and sustainable business strategies. Interestingly, the wording has again changed from 'agriculture green growth' to 'inclusive green growth.' Indeed, according to a social and environmental specialist in SAGCOT: "*We are seeing SAGCOT moving from agricultural production to more green growth activities.*"<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Informant 66, 25.10.16.

This move contributed to firstly, gaining positive attention from a broader audience, including environmental organizations, activists and initiatives, as well as secondly, increased possibilities for attracting donor money. One informant, representing the donor community at the time SAGCOT was formed, said *“I guess [the aim] really was both increased production and sustainability... but you know, for me who sat there listening to their proposals, they know what they need to say to get positive responses. They say the right things.”*<sup>15</sup> Another one said: *“They are running wherever they can get support, and the holistic approach suffers.”*<sup>16</sup> This is supported by evidence from several other informants, who said that although environmental sustainability and green growth was not at the core of SAGCOT in 2010-12, today it is.<sup>17</sup>

The green economy’s pillar of creating *economic* growth, however, was central in the creation of SAGCOT, and the second – alleviating poverty – is also clear in its policy and visions. However, the third green economy pillar – assuring environmental sustainability – seems to have been added, or at best re-interpreted, in order for SAGCOT to comply with prevailing discourses. One informant said that SAGCOT now has a green profile, in order to ‘fit’ with *“whichever prevailing trends there are.”*<sup>18</sup> This was backed by information from several informants, among others one member of the SAGCOT Board who was also involved in its formation, who said: *“I cannot [...] lie [and say] that when we took off, [green growth] was very much on the agenda. But we have had to go through a learning curve, bringing on board various stakeholders, we brought on board the environmentalists. Yes, it has changed.”*<sup>19</sup>

In sum, by adopting the ‘green growth’ label, SAGCOT succeeded in attracting a huge number of investors and partners from new sectors, such as environmental organizations, as well as becoming more attractive to companies that sought to fulfill environmental obligations in their investments. Regardless of the intended purposes, this changed SAGCOT’s profile from primarily being a business investment to focusing primarily on environmental sustainability. This also anchors the green economy’s aim of bringing the environment and business together. Since green growth is

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<sup>15</sup> Informant 84, 14.02.17.

<sup>16</sup> Informant 14, 06.11.15.

<sup>17</sup> Personal communication with several key persons in Yara International 06.11.15, 10.03.16 and 27.04.16.

<sup>18</sup> Informant 44, 20.04.16.

<sup>19</sup> Informant 79, 07.11.16.

vague as a policy term, it can be incorporated into almost any policy or project, because actors themselves can define what ‘green’ means. Under this ‘green growth’ rhetoric, powerful actors have managed to establish schemes that have been framed as environmentally sustainable, but which in reality are often business-as-usual. ‘Growth’ is hence increasingly framed as ‘green,’ without actors really having to tackle the problems of environmentally unsustainable production and consumption patterns (Hoffman, 2016).

### **3.3 Formation and institutionalization of SAGCOT through the lens of institutional *bricolage*:**

The greening of SAGCOT illustrates the theory of institutional *bricolage* (Clever, 2012; Cerny, 2010). *Bricolage* is useful in explaining how various pieces of the green economy were re-shaped, pieced-and-patched and interpreted, to blend with, or fit on top of existing institutions and initiatives, or policies, such as SAGCOT.

The formation of institutions based on changing situations, is hardly surprising. However, in many cases, the creation of new institutions takes place by a ‘piece-and-patch’ process; meaning that actors may take ‘whatever’ there is at hand to use in the formation of something new (Clever, 2012). This is at the core in *bricolage* thinking, where actors apply almost a ‘do-it-yourself’ kind of approach in the creation of institutions. The formation of SAGCOT illustrates this. Elements of a green revolution policy of increased agricultural production based on access to inputs, such as fertilizers and improved seeds, formed the foundation for initiating SAGCOT, as well as the overall agriculture corridor concept. This was mixed with neoliberalism and the triple F crisis, and merged to create something new and different – namely the concept of ‘agriculture green growth.’ This was added on top of the agri-business initiative from which SAGCOT was born, and on top of existing Tanzanian agricultural policies. As shown by the findings of Cleaver (2012) and Cerny (2010), this represents a typical ‘blending’ of arrangements and policies.

The *bricoleurs* in the process of the SAGCOT initiation were powerful key individuals, also coined the ‘*early champions*’ by several informants,<sup>20</sup> who, based on the changing global environment

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<sup>20</sup> Informant 38 (10.03.16); informant 75 (04.11.16) and informant 79 (07.11.16).

(e.g. the triple F crisis), saw an opportunity to ‘grab’ the green discourse and ‘create something new’ which would generate economic growth and profit. As discussed, these *bricoleurs* were representatives from the World Bank, Norfund, AfDB, TIC and the Tanzanian Government, but most importantly, Yara. As Lohmann (2016, p. 42) argues; “in practice, green growth is not about solving ecological crises but rather reinterpreting them, creating new opportunities to take business advantage of them, and diffusing responsibility for them.” Thus, the green economy focuses more on stimulating economic growth through investments, rather than on the *green* per se. The *bricoleurs* who continued with the implementation of the corridor in Tanzania, were individuals who were positioned at the newly established SAGCOT center, in collaboration with various government agencies, private sector actors, and the multi-national level actors. A periodization in the *bricolage* process can be shown between the initial stages of SAGCOT (2007-2010) and the later *institutionalization* of the initiative (2010-2013).

An important consequence of the *bricolage* type of forming and re-shaping of SAGCOT is that the content and structure of the initial ideas behind SAGCOT changed during the institutionalization process, but also that the green economy itself was also re-interpreted to fit with the ‘greening’ of the initiative. In this way, the involved actors, or *bricoleurs*, can form and define the content of the initiative and its core concepts as they wish. This may lead to unintended outcomes, as the *bricoleurs* have varying competencies in creating these new arrangements. As previously discussed, in the case of SAGCOT, this led to misunderstandings and re-interpretations of several key concepts within SAGCOT. Since the ‘green economy’ definitions are rather broad and open for interpretation, it is easy for actors themselves to define what counts as ‘green’ (or not), and hence also to define their own agendas and outcomes. Indeed, many of my informants defined the green part of SAGCOT in quite different ways, varying from “*a biodiversity safeguard*,” “*a geographical landscape analysis*” and “*sustainable economy*,” to “*green and inclusive growth for local communities*,” “*climate measures*” and “*climate smart agriculture*.” In this case, and many others, the real meaning of *green* is lost along the way, ending up as describing only how natural resources should be utilized to create economic growth, thus focusing mainly on the needs and objectives of investors.

Cerny (2010, p. 175) uses the *bricolage* concept at the level of institutional politics, and argues that the architecture of global institutions is becoming “highly fragmented, disorganized, and tangled,” resulting in it being “ineffective, inefficient, riddled with gaps, and even counterproductive.” He argues that the process of *bricolage* is accelerating at the transnational level, resulting in “ad hoc experiments” being piled “on top of each other” (Cerny, 2010, p. 177). Such ‘piece-and-patch’ blending of institutions and policies is legitimized by the involvement of authoritative sources in Tanzania (namely, the government), and also by the green economy discourse itself. This is key in greenwashing, as *green* becomes *the* legitimizing power (meaning that *green* as a term itself has become so important it becomes persuasive), and is also evident at the discursive level, as environmental sustainability and climate measures have been moved to the forefront of most government policy agendas during the last five to ten years. Indeed, one of the main criticisms of the green economy in general is that unequal power relations and social hierarchies are largely left out of the agenda in practice.

Many green economy initiatives are driven and implemented as collaborations between state actors, elites and multinational or foreign actors, and hence often represent a “blend of government-led green-economy strategies and ‘private regimes’” in economic cooperation and development (Bailey & Caprotti, 2014, p. 1799). The actors involved may have different aims and means, but the policies and projects are nonetheless coordinated and placed in the same ‘green’ discursive framing or box. Bailey and Caprotti (2014) hold that it is important to examine the organization of green economy implementation at all levels in order to understand the driving dynamics and forces, and how environmental governance is being shaped by various discourses. According to Cleaver (2012, p. 45), actors consciously or unconsciously “navigate the institutional landscape.” She argues that legitimacy or meaning does not just happen – rather there is “an iterative relationship between *bricoleurs* and the institutions they shape and are shaped by” (my emphasis). This was exemplified in the creation and institutionalization of SAGCOT, as it was largely colored by the agri-business agendas of the involved actors and institutions.

Scoones et al. (2015, p. 1) also stress the necessity of turning attention towards the political situations which are *driving* the green transformation, especially on “questions of institutional change and policy, as well as more profound shifts in political power.” With the formation of

SAGCOT, organization, policy and power were shifted from the Tanzanian Government to multinational actors at the global level, as the SAGCOT initiators and board members are mainly from outside Tanzania. This relates to the goal of bringing in the multinational level in Tanzanian agriculture, as outlined in the SAGCOT Blueprint and as stated by the then president Kikwete. This also relates to Agrawal's (2005, p. 202) finding that "reorganization of institutional arrangements has facilitated changes in environmental practices and levels of involvement in government," demonstrating how global discourses can influence national policies and governance, and, in the case of Tanzania, it illustrates how multinational companies increased their power through SAGCOT.

### **3.4 Implications of the *bricolage* formation and greening of SAGCOT:**

In adopting the 'green growth' label, as previously discussed, SAGCOT succeeded in attracting a huge number of investors and partners from new sectors such as environmental organizations, as well as several big conservation agencies and environmental NGOs.<sup>21</sup> Regardless of the intended purposes, this changed SAGCOT's profile from business investment to environmental sustainability, and strengthened SAGCOT's self-proclaimed green profile.

However, hardly anything changed on the ground. These partnerships are still far from materializing in practice.<sup>22</sup> Although these partnerships were celebrated during initial interviews as 'flagships' that would lead the 'green' road of SAGCOT,<sup>23</sup> according to some of the partners themselves at that time, they were "*not really partners in practice, only maybe in the future.*" Some of the envisaged green projects, such as Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) and water catchment control programs, are now starting to operate, but to a rather limited extent compared to the proclaimed goals and intentions in the policy documents (SAGCOT, 2012).<sup>24</sup> From my understanding, many actors have been listed as partners on rather thin grounds, such as initial

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<sup>21</sup> For example, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the WWF and the Nature Conservancy. A 2016 list of partners can be found at:

[http://www.sagcot.com/fileadmin/documents/2016/SAGCOT\\_Partner\\_List\\_External\\_04.05.2016\\_TM.pdf](http://www.sagcot.com/fileadmin/documents/2016/SAGCOT_Partner_List_External_04.05.2016_TM.pdf)

Accessed 11.07.17.

<sup>22</sup> E-mail correspondence with TNC, WWF and AWF, autumn 2014.

<sup>23</sup> Informant 4, 07.05.15, SAGCOT social and environmental specialist.

<sup>24</sup> Informant 66, 25.10.16 (SAGCOT staff); informant 68, 28.10.16 (TNC employee); informant 83, 22.11.16 (IUCN employee), and informant 76, 04.11.16 (CEO of key SAGCOT partner company).

discussions or by being partners in affiliated schemes. This shows that SAGCOT's 'green' profile is perhaps not very substantial in practice. Indeed, on the question as to whether SAGCOT is a green growth initiative today, a key informant responded: "*Green growth mainly means sustainable agriculture.*"<sup>25</sup> Another informant said: "*SAGCOT is a unique initiative. We should have more corridors, taking the approach that agriculture is business, because THAT is what SAGCOT is about! The green is only a safeguard.*"<sup>26</sup> Also literature points to the importance of the business focus behind agriculture corridors. While agriculture corridors may bring infrastructural development and boost economic activity in some areas, evidence points to the risk of "corridors of power" being created (Byiers & Rampa, 2013) where smallholders lose, while multinational corporations benefit (Paul & Steinbrecher, 2013), or as manifestations of the corporate food regime (Bergius, 2014; McMichael, 2013). Indeed, according to Paul and Steinbrecher (2013, p. 1), African agricultural growth corridors are "designed to facilitate the conversion of millions of hectares of land into industrial agriculture [...] led by private companies." One informant from a Tanzanian research institute, said: "*I am concerned about the corridor, because that is a new form of land grabbing.*"<sup>27</sup> This was supported by many others, especially the Tanzanian farmers' association MVIWATA, who expressed concern about SAGCOT based on the drivers and motivations behind it.<sup>28</sup>

Several informants also expressed concern about SAGCOT being championed internationally as a large-scale green development initiative, because they, based on their involvement in the initial stages, did not recognize this focus.<sup>29</sup> One informant said: "*SAGCOT was not supposed to be a development project, it was only a small investment portfolio. People have misinterpreted it as something much bigger, hence the expectations have been high whilst results, so far, have been low.*"<sup>30</sup> Importantly, however, contrary to these statements, SAGCOT has to an increasing extent focused on the impressive development impacts they expect to see in poverty alleviation, job creation, infrastructure development and economic growth, especially for the millions of

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<sup>25</sup> Informant 88, 08.03.17, head of the SAGCOT board.

<sup>26</sup> Informant 75, 04.11.16, former CEO of the President's Delivery Bureau and Permanent Secretary to the Prime Minister's office (PMO), who was heavily involved in the formation of SAGCOT.

<sup>27</sup> Informant 10, 12.08.15.

<sup>28</sup> Informant 78, 07.11.16.

<sup>29</sup> Informant 38, 10.03.16.

<sup>30</sup> Informant 85, 01.03.17.

smallholders in the region. Also, the then Norwegian Minister for International Development and the Environment (2005-2012, at the time SAGCOT was formed), and today Executive Director of UNEP, said in an interview with me that the Norwegian government supported SAGCOT exclusively on the basis of the potential positive development effects they saw from the initiative.<sup>31</sup> SAGCOT is indeed branding the initiative as bigger than it is. Very few projects had materialized on the ground as of June 2017, but on July 3<sup>rd</sup> 2017, the CEO of SAGCOT, Geoffrey Kirenga, claimed that it has been a huge success ready to be rolled out across the whole country (The Citizen, 2017).

Another good example of the implications of green economy re-interpretation and ‘piece-and-patch’ implementation, is the confusion about the ‘inclusiveness’ concept in SAGCOT. SAGCOT has to an increasing extent used ‘inclusiveness’ in their policy documents (SAGCOT, 2013, 2017). This is surprisingly often interpreted as meaning the inclusion of both public and private sectors.<sup>32</sup> When I discussed this with one key informant from the Tanzanian branch of an international development NGO, she said: *“No that’s not inclusive... and I think that is why we keep going back and forth. Who are you talking about really? If you are talking about inclusiveness in terms of bringing private sector and communities together, how are you doing it? Because these are two different groups. One group has more power and money and connections. The other group has nothing, so when you are talking about inclusive, what does that mean?”*<sup>33</sup> Indeed, actors define green economy approaches differently based on their various backgrounds and the result is a patchwork of different, sometimes contrasting, agendas. This relates to how Cleaver (2012) describes the actions of *bricoleurs*. Actors involved in the shaping of new initiatives, as in the institutionalization of SAGCOT, can in a *bricolage* process easily prioritize some agendas and exclude others in the creation of new policies. This can mask underlying and contrasting goals as well as obscure both practices and power patterns among those involved. According to Cleaver (2012, p. 48; p. 49), this is an “ability to exercise agency,” shaped by “authoritative processes” and “relations of power.” Moreover, “the taken-for-granted elements of institutions and the need for them to be socially workable ensure the reproduction of social inequalities” (Cleaver, 2012, p. 49).

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<sup>31</sup> Informant 17, 18.12.15.

<sup>32</sup> This was outlined by several informants (66 (25.10.16); 74 (04.11.16); 75 (04.11.16) and 79 (07.11.16)).

<sup>33</sup> Informant 80, 08.11.16.



The findings and statements by informants discussed above illustrate how SAGCOT has been showcased as greener than it has been in practice so far. There is however an important distinction in the way SAGCOT has been branded. At the national and institutional level (everything below the SAGCOT board, which includes the SAGCOT center), informants have largely described SAGCOT as an agriculture partnership, whilst at the global and multi-national level, SAGCOT has basically been profiled as a green economy and green growth initiative.<sup>34</sup> This may be referred to as a form of ‘greenwashing.’ This means that SAGCOT has been branded primarily as a green economy initiative rather than as an agri-investment or green revolution scheme. This outcome can be attributed to several parallel influences and processes that took place and which may be discussed along the lines of discourse institutionalization and governmentality – illustrating a certain ‘grabbing green’ process, as well as institutional *bricolage*. This demonstrates both ‘grabbing green’ and ‘greenwashing,’ and these processes were carried out by separate actors and by separate means. I argue that the grabbing of the green discourse was largely a deliberate process in which *bricoleurs* at the multi-national level saw an opportunity to make profit in an emerging space, whilst the subsequent greenwashing of SAGCOT happened more as a result of this ‘grabbing green,’ driven by the need to ‘re-shape’ the initiative so that it could ‘fit’ with the prevailing discourse. Based on selected elements from the green economy discourse (namely the growth narrative), SAGCOT was ‘pieced-and-patched’ together in a ‘created space’ (Harvey, 1981, 2001b).

As illustrated above, terminology is used in mixed and contradictory ways, and realities can be masked using the power of language and metaphors (Dryzek, 2013). This is also the case for implementation of the green economy, and relates to what Bailey and Caprotti (2014, p. 1799) refers to as a “mosaic of practices,” and what Crang (1992, p. 537) discusses as “the polyphony of politics,” or “polyphonic ethnography,” referring to processes in the production and construction of policy texts. In sum, this blended mosaic of power structures and differing interests among various stakeholders represents one of the main problems in implementing the green economy in practice, and SAGCOT can serve as an example of this.

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<sup>34</sup> Informant 8c (08.08.15); informant 17 (18.12.16); informant 37 (08.03.16); informant 38 (10.03.16) and informant 88 (08.03.17).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

In Tanzania, the initial SAGCOT ideas were concerned with agricultural investment opportunities and green growth narratives, created at the multi-national level in the aftermath of the triple F crisis, and implemented in cooperation with state actors. The initiative rapidly took on a ‘green’ profile, with branding reflecting first ‘green growth investment’ and later ‘agriculture green growth.’ Today, SAGCOT uses slogans such as ‘inclusive green growth’ – however without corresponding changes to the content and practices of the initiative on the ground. Supported by data from informants and documents, this paper demonstrates that SAGCOT has gone through a process of re-shaping its profile to fit in with the global green economy and green growth discourses, which in turn, have also been re-interpreted in the institutionalization of SAGCOT. SAGCOT is championed at the global level as a good example of how the green economy can manifest in practice, and this paper illustrates how such green economy implementation comes to life in actual arrangements in a developing country. SAGCOT’s policy is not a good representative of inclusive green growth, but rather of the global rush for land and how the agri-business sector finds new, attractive labels to frame their interest and investments within.

Through processes of institutional *bricolage*, namely the piecing-and-patching together of institutions, discursive legitimation, and a blending (or ‘melding’ together) of practices and policies – SAGCOT has taken on a profile that differs from its original purpose. Institutional *bricolage* connects with the concept of governmentality through power patterns, and is useful in order to “understand agency, practices and mechanisms as shaped by layers of power, operating through a variety of channels” (2012, p. 42). Cleaver (2012) explains how institutions are created and re-shaped, often as a response to a changing situation (for example, SAGCOT, as described above). This piece-and-patch process has consequences for the implementation of new institutions and initiatives, as a result of radical policy changes that may occur during the process, also as described in this paper. A link can be drawn with the political ecology literature, which emphasizes power relations in environmental management and governance and the need to investigate these (Adger et al., 2001).

This paper identifies two distinct, but closely related, processes: i) ‘grabbing’ the green discourse in the initial stages of forming the initiative; and subsequently ii) ‘greenwashing’ SAGCOT in its

process of institutionalization in order to fit with this discourse and become more attractive for actors such as partners, investors and donors. It argue that the grabbing green process in the formation of SAGCOT largely paved the way for subsequent greenwashing. The consequence of these processes is that powerful actors have managed to brand SAGCOT as something which is much more appealing to donors and policy-makers, thus distracting attention from (and possibly masking) the intentions and aims behind the partnership, as initiated by the multi-national agri-business sector.

SAGCOT and its institutionalization is a good examples of how green economy strategies in the global South are often led nationally, but within networks of different actors “seeking to capitalise on opportunities offered by green economy agendas” (Bailey & Caprotti, 2014, p. 1799). The findings of this study illustrate what Bailey and Caprotti (2014, p. 1799) calls a “mosaic of practices that displays both synergistic components and dysfunctional overlaps and which has hazy systems of accountability for ensuring consistency between higher level visions of the green economy visions and on-the-ground green-economy strategies.”

It is of crucial importance to investigate drivers and motivations behind such large-scale agricultural investment schemes that are being implemented across the global South in the name of the green economy. It is necessary to understand the potential outcomes and implications for governance at the national level, and for the millions of smallholders at the local level. In sum, I argue that the incorporation of the ‘green’ concept and the interchangeable use of various ‘green’ terms and concepts which are not sufficiently or properly defined in SAGCOT, represent an overall process of greenwashing of the agri-business sector’s drive towards penetrating the African continent in boosting a new, green revolution in Africa. This argument can provide valuable insights into how the green economy manifests on the ground in a developing country.

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