



Collaboration in Logistics: Motivation and Success Factors

Valerija Golubić, Berfu Ünal, Kees Jan Roodbergen, Ilke Bakir
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Problem

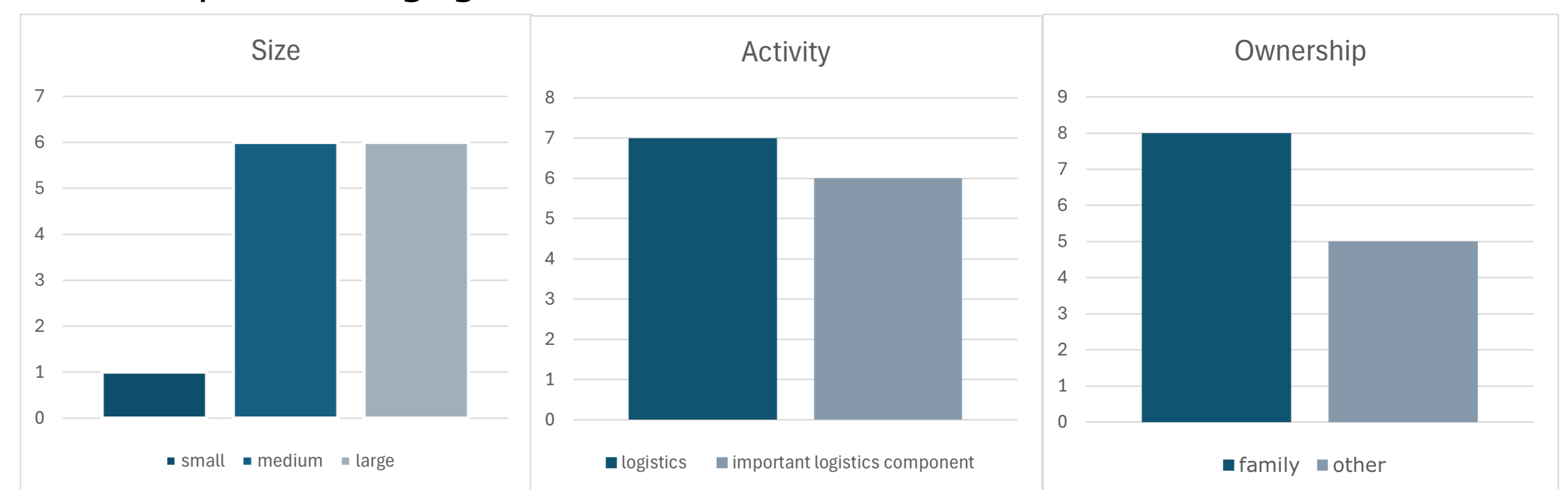
- Transition to sustainable logistics demands collaboration through sharing and recombining resources, knowledge and skills.
- But** there are very few examples of real-life, successful and longer-lasting collaborations in logistics.

What would be the motivation of logistics companies to start collaborating with each other (for the sake of sustainability)?

How can this collaboration be made successful?

Method

- 17 semi-structured interviews with 19 managers or managing directors of companies engaged in some kind of collaboration



Findings

Incentives to collaborate

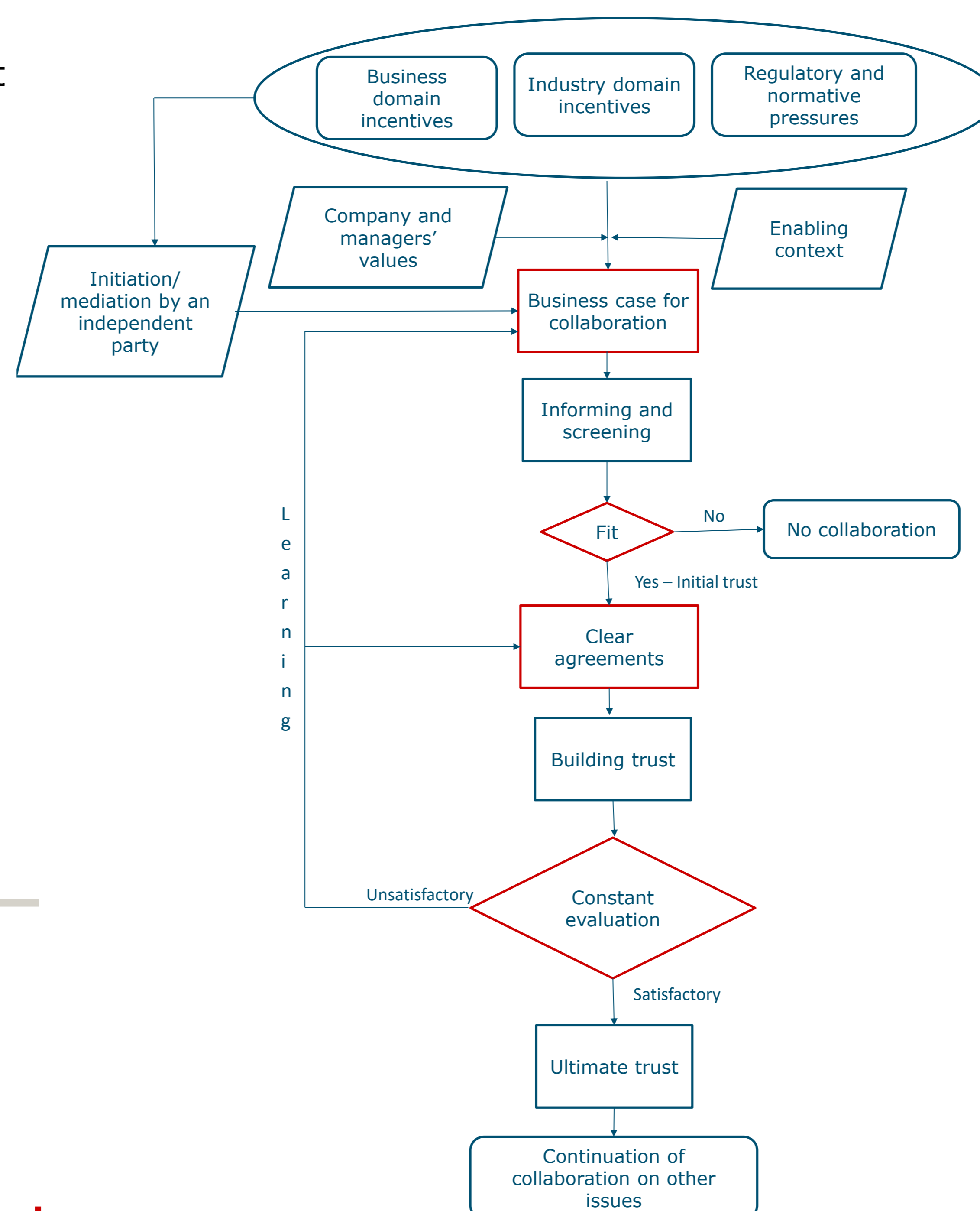
- Business:** increase efficiency, reduce costs, increase revenue, supplement capacity, provide new services, exploit a new business opportunity, expand the customer base
- Industry:** gain knowledge and exchange experience, tackle staff shortages, increase competitiveness
- Regulatory and normative pressures:** representation towards the government, solutions to complex and expensive sustainability issues, joint large or risky investments

Sustainability is not an incentive to collaborate, unless it presents a too big an issue to tackle alone!

Barriers to collaboration

- Finding a **joint business case** and a **good fit**
- Giving **initial trust**
- Defining agreements**
- People's **willingness and commitment**

Collaboration for sustainability - process



Enabling context

For **sustainable logistics**:

- Long-term policy vision
- Investment support
- Availability of infrastructure

For **collaboration**:

- Surrounded by potential collaborators
- Seeing collaboration examples, successes and best practices

An ideal partner

- Technological fit:** similar activities/goods, development phase, customer relations strategy, procedures; compatible IT systems
- Cultural fit**
- Geographic **proximity**
- Good **reputation**
- Preferably **not direct competitors!**

Collaborating with competitors

- Solving problems of **importance for the industry**
- With a help of **a mediator**
- When **complementing** each other
- When a competitor is also **a customer**
- With **clear agreements** and a **cultural fit**

Key takeaways

- A **sound business case** is the driver of collaboration efforts. An **enabling context** plays a role in building a business case.
- Logistics is complex and **collaboration is not always possible** – not all activities can be combined in a way that creates benefits for all.
- Existing collaborations could be used as **case studies** to provide details on the process and the success factors.
- Mediation of an independent party** might facilitate establishing and maintaining (some forms of) collaboration, especially among competitors. This could be a role for professional organisations or even a business model.

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Expected publications

- Report on the research project
- Journal article on the collaboration for sustainability process

