

The
Accountability
Group

**Boards and
Senior Leaders**

**Key Concepts
in Regenerative
Governance
2024**



TAG RESOURCES

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Reference Tools

Regenerative Governance

In our new reality, long-term sustainability requires a regenerative governance (RG) approach with its emphasis on connectedness, collaboration, creativity, and contribution to living systems vitality.

1

Revitalization

Regenerative governance is a living system perspective grafted onto conventional governance. “Regenerative” means that conditions for life and an ongoing vitality are present. Regenerative governance acknowledges that we, and our organizations, are not separate from nature. Fiduciary duty is surrounded by the context of the living world. Good governance integrates systemic, evolutionary, and ecological perspectives in order to both protect the vitality of living systems, and transition people, organizations, communities and ecosystems towards thriveable futures.

2

Benefits

Regenerative governance is beneficial and enlivening. RG recognizes that organizations can mirror life’s emergent creativity in new situations. Proactive boards put into place the conditions (leadership, policies, infrastructure, etc.) that foster everyone’s adaptive capability together—motivating employees, stakeholders and organizational networks to innovate new arrangements. This foresight reduces future expenses due to inaction, and allows revenue, processes and value propositions to adjust. Positive reputation is earned by the organization’s responsiveness to the circumstances of the new reality.

3

Shift

Boards and senior leaders shift from “business as usual” to learning and adapting through transition. As circumstances change, so will the risks and opportunities. Priorities include setting the right intent and enabling the conditions for the organization to become “fit” in its dynamic ecosystem. This means allowing genius and creativity to emerge in the organization and throughout its networks. This requires breaking down barriers, investing in learning and adaptive capability across the organization, and developing horizontal and reciprocal relationships in critical areas of interdependence.

Regenerative Governance is a living system perspective that grafts onto conventional governance to support transition from “business as usual” towards thriveable futures.

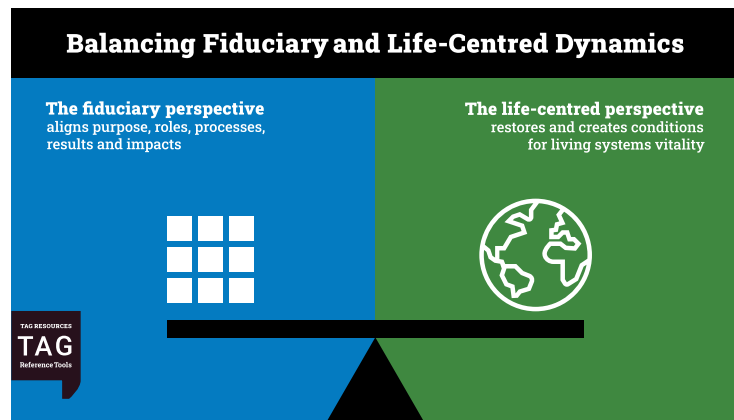
TAG Thinking Frameworks in Regenerative Governance

Intro 01 | Regenerative Governance
Restoring Vitality for Thriveable Futures



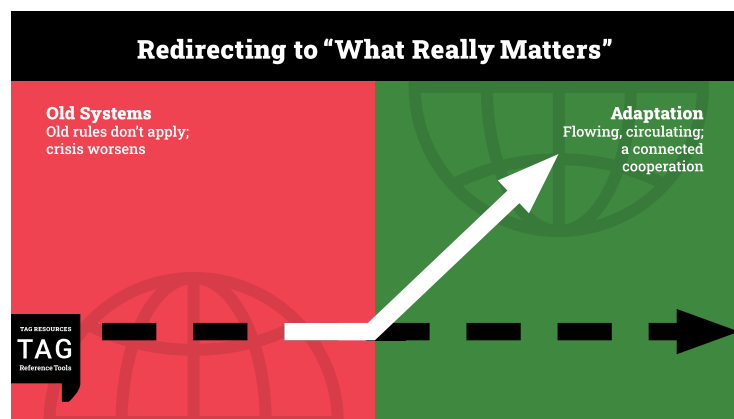
TAG Thinking Frameworks in Regenerative Governance

Intro 02 | Regenerative Governance Dynamics
Balancing Fiduciary and Life-Centred Dynamics



TAG Thinking Frameworks in Regenerative Governance

06 | New Story
Redirecting to “What Really Matters”



Regenerative Boards

Next level boards are anticipatory, courageous, grounded, and relentlessly constructive.

Let's shift Board conversations to the new reality.

Boards can shift and flow purpose, leadership, investment, incentives, information and communications to new learning, collaboration, and regeneration. When aware of living systems, they can make informed decisions to create conditions both for the long-term resilience of their organization and a wider well-being. This requires attention to new dimensions of board work through the next transitional period.

Typical Evolution of the Forms of Board Governance				
Initiating BOARD	Management BOARD	Formalized BOARD	Professional BOARD	Regenerative BOARD
<p>"Hands-on" style</p> <p>Consists of founder(s) and directors</p> <p>Governs in a flat organizational structure</p> <p>Advises and also deploys board members' personal skills and networks</p>	<p>Hires a professional staff complement</p> <p>Differentiates role; yet involves itself in significant matters of operational decision-making</p> <p>Creates committees to increase capacity of the board</p>	<p>Delegates policy, strategy development, and operations to professional staff</p> <p>Reviews, modifies and monitors strategic plans; sets priorities; critiques performance</p> <p>Integrates common governance practices/tools</p> <p>Strengthens external orientation at the board level as stakeholders increase in number</p>	<p>Creates diversity in board profile; often assigns recruitment of directors to consultants</p> <p>Increases stakeholder engagement, transparency and concern for Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) factors</p> <p>Develops sophisticated enterprise risk reporting mechanisms; strengthens internal controls</p> <p>Utilizes digital and analytical tools to support decision-making</p> <p>Adjusts operations through regular feedback and adaptation</p>	<p>(IN TRANSITION)</p> <p>Values and seeks to apply regenerative design principles</p> <p>Contextualizes governance functions in relevant systems; deliberates in longer time frames; monitors system feedback loops</p> <p>Stewards vital multicapitals</p> <p>Fosters conditions for adaptation and resilience—internally and externally—through capacity-building, policy, collaboration, and leadership-advocacy</p> <p>Iterates strategically while participating in a relational, circular economy</p> <p>Experiments and builds mutual trust</p> <p>Acknowledges different ways of knowing—from analog/relational experience to digital analytic perspectives—and back again</p>

Regenerative Frameworks

While no prescriptions exist for these times, certain frameworks can support regenerative thinking. These perspectives help illuminate the various dimensions of regenerative governance.



01 | Zooming Out, Zooming In

Zooming Out, Zooming In takes in views from different system levels with different ways of knowing in order to perceive wholeness: influences, impacts, dependencies, and evolving relationships.



02 | Three Horizons Thinking

Three Horizons Thinking applies the framework of three major stages of systems change in order to contextualize deliberation.



03 | Vital MultiCapitals

Vital MultiCapitals values assets beyond the financial that together support the thriveability of whole systems within nature.



04 | The Adaptive Cycle

The Adaptive Cycle appreciates the cyclical nature of all things, how adaptive change happens, and where innovation emerges.



05 | Conditions, Conditions

Conditions, Conditions creates circumstances and parameters for adaptation that allow people to develop their capabilities and make purposeful contributions.



06 | New Story

New Story attends to what really matters now and for future generations.

Initiating the Regenerative Shift



Both learning and unlearning are required to shift towards a regenerative direction.

Each organization must navigate its way to resilience and contribution in the new reality, and reconcile short and long-term interests. Organizational purposes and activities may have to evolve or be supplemented. Boards and senior leadership will want to engage the intelligence, creativity, and participation of their full range of stakeholders both early and wisely.

Shifting the Conversation

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[The Accountability Group](#) (TAG) provides professional development in governance for boards and senior leaders across sectors that readies them for addressing contemporary issues with a whole systems approach. TAG helps boards anticipate their strategic role in complex systems, develops the skills and perspectives for effective dialogue, and introduces regenerative governance (RG). This perspective grafts onto conventional governance as an essential 21st century board shift. RG prioritizes organizational contribution to whole systems vitality, and helps organizations navigate towards thriveable futures. Lyn and TAG guide purposeful leaders to identify their next steps. Based in Toronto, Canada, TAG networks with local, national, and global expertise to support our clients. [*Supporting Good Governance Since 2008*](#)



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Lyn McDonell is Principal of The Accountability Group. She has served as CEO, COO, Board Chair, and Director, and is a Fellow of the Institute of Certified Management Consultants of Ontario and a Chartered Director. She earned her MA studying the stages of organizational development. An experienced facilitator, Lyn has provided governance training to directors across sectors since 2006. Her passion is inspiring boards and senior leaders to transition from “business as usual” towards thriveable futures. She helps leaders recognize their critical role in leading context-based sustainability and how they can foster conditions for successful adaptation. Lyn is adjunct faculty in the Master of Financial Accountability Program at York University and a contributor to [*The Handbook of Board Governance: A Comprehensive Guide for Public, Private, and Not-for-Profit Board Members*](#), 2nd (2020) and 3rd (2024) Editions. (Wiley). Richard Leblanc (Editor).



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