

**FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE SMALL-SCALE FARMERS' WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE IN AN AGRICULTURAL PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP IN THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**

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by

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**DECLARATION**

I, Anovuyo Fakade, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my original work and has not previously, in its entirety or in part, been submitted at any university for a degree.

22<sup>ND</sup> July 2025

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Signature

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Date

## ABSTRACT

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Willingness to participate can be described as having the fundamental element of freedom to decide whether or not to join in something (Khosdel and Bakshan, 2015). Willingness to participate is an emerging concept that is increasingly becoming recognised as a vital element that adds considerable value to collaborative partnerships such as Agricultural Public-Private (Agri-PPPs) (Khosdel and Bakshan, 2015). Within the context of sustainable stakeholder management, this study investigated the poor participation of small-scale farmers in a grain production enhancement Agri-PPP in the South African province of the Eastern Cape. Through this, the study attempted to provide a useful contribution to improving the prospective involvement of small-scale farmers in this Agri-PPP, which would eventually increase their agricultural output and improve sustainable stakeholder management.

This research aimed to evaluate the factors that influence small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP. A qualitative approach was adopted in this study and data was collected through semi-structured and in-depth interviews with 10 small-scale farmers that are currently participating in this Agri-PPP and 15 small-scale farmers that are currently not participating in this Agri-PPP. All 25 interviewees were from the five district municipalities in the province of the Eastern Cape. These district municipalities are namely O.R. Tambo, Alfred Nzo, Joe Gqabi, Chris Hani, and Amathole.

The research findings of the study indicated that small-scale farmers who were willing to participate in an Agri-PPP ascribed this to several factors such as market accessibility, access to advanced technology, economic benefits, technical support and training, the availability of modern agricultural machinery and the potential for increased income. Equally, the findings revealed barriers that contribute to the hesitance of small-scale farmers to participate in an Agri-PPP. These were trust issues stemming from past negative experiences, high costs and the complexity of bureaucratic processes. Furthermore, hesitant small-scale farmers expressed a sense of disillusionment due to unmet expectations from previous partnerships that they have participated in, consequently eroding their trust and creating a reluctance to participate in future Agri-PPPs.

To enhance small-scale farmer participation in Agri-PPPs, the study recommends frequent evaluations and feedback mechanisms be established and implemented, flexible and phased application processes be created and that flexible financing options such as low-interest loans, revolving credit, and partnerships with microfinance institutions be established and

implemented. Transparency in costs, community-based communication initiatives in local languages and extension supported local knowledge centres are vital to raise knowledge of Agri-PPPs amongst small-scale farmers. Agri-PPPs should also respect small-scale farmers' autonomy in making decisions, highlight the economic and productivity benefits, and provide flexibility in crucial areas like crop selection and marketing.

At a stakeholder level, this study advances and contributes to a better understanding of the factors that influence small-scale farmers' willingness to participate.

**Keywords:** Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), Agricultural Public-Private Partnerships (Agri-PPPs), willingness to participate, small-scale farmers, influence

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***“Ndiv’ izwi lako, Nkosi, Liti, ‘ndize kuwe, Ndihlanjwe ngqe e-Gazini Elop’ e-Kavalri”***

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

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**Agri-PPP(s)** - Agricultural Public-Private Partnership(s)

**BFS** - Blended Finance Scheme

**NPO** - Non-Profit Organisation

**PPPs** - Public-Private Partnerships

**RU-HREC** - Rhodes University Human Research Ethics Committee

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# **CHAPTER 1: RESEARCH CONTEXT**

## **1.1 Introduction**

Agriculture in South Africa is a cornerstone and backbone of human civilisation (Ekobi, Mboh and Tanga, 2023). It encompasses the cultivation of crops, livestock rearing, forestry and aquaculture (Mathithibane, 2021). This sector contributes approximately 2.5% to the Gross Domestic Product of South Africa (Mpundu and Bopape, 2022). Its importance is premised on the basis that it provides food, raw materials and bioenergy, which are all needed for overall economic stability and societal development (Nguyen and Toan, 2024). Also, agriculture serves as a main contributor to income, job creation, and export earnings for numerous countries (Nolte and Ostermeier, 2017). Agriculture has overtime evolved from traditional subsistence farming to modern, mechanized, and technology-driven practices that capitalise on efficiency and maximise production output (Mdoda, Mdletshe, Dyiki and Gidi, 2022; Bontsa, Mushunje, Ngarava and Zhou, 2023). With improvements in mechanisation, irrigation, biotechnology, and data analytics, agriculture has become a key driver of economic growth and food security, particularly in developing and emerging economies (Bastian, Swanepoel and van Niekerk, 2019). Nonetheless, it also faces challenges such as climate change, land degradation, resource scarcity, and global population growth, needing sustainable agricultural practices to meet the increasing demand for agricultural products and also to balance productivity with environmental stewardship (Mathithibane, 2021).

## **1.2 Background of the study**

The South African province of the Eastern Cape is one of South Africa's nine provinces that has a strong agricultural tradition, with agriculture playing a significant role in the province's economy and being a key contributor to rural livelihoods (Ngumbela, Khalema, Nzimakwe, 2020). This province will be the focus of this study, as illustrated in Figure 1.1. Its varied topography, which includes both mountainous and coastal parts, makes it an ideal place for a variety of agricultural activities (Shackleton and Luckert, 2015). In the Eastern Cape, the agricultural sector operates as a dual system, comprising a highly developed commercial agricultural sector and a small-scale agricultural sector that sustains and supports rural livelihoods (Mujuru and Obi, 2020). Small-scale agriculture plays an important role in ensuring food security and maintaining ecological balance by promoting biodiversity and sustainable production practices (Adenle, Wedig and Azadi, 2019). Furthermore, it maintains rural communities, protects traditional knowledge, and fosters a connection between the land and

the people (Adenle, Wedig and Azadi, 2019). Arguably, small-scale agriculture which comprises small-scale farmers, is the foundation of food systems and agricultural production in the context of the Eastern Cape (Zantsi, Greyling and Vink, 2019). According to Gidi, Mdoda, Ncoyini-Manciya and Mdiya (2024), small-scale farmers produce an estimated 60-65% of the food supply in the South African province of the Eastern Cape on communal land. Also, supporting this segment of farmers in this province is the implementation of policies and programs by the government of South Africa that are aimed at promoting inclusivity and sustainability in the agricultural sector.

Agriculture functions within an intricate, interdependent and dynamic ecosystem of stakeholders, each playing an important role in influencing this sector's performance, inclusivity, and sustainable development (Ogawa, Garrod and Yagi, 2023). For instance, fostering a successful and sustainable agricultural system requires an understanding of the responsibilities and contributions of each stakeholder (Mangeni, 2019; Dagar and Pavithra, 2023). These stakeholders are but not limited to small-scale and commercial farmers, government, non-profit organisations (NPOs), researchers and research institutions and consumers (Ogawa, Garrod and Yagi, 2023). Notably, the role of government in this context is to ensure it creates an enabling environment for this Agri-PPP to succeed, which includes but is not limited to responsible and accountable leadership, policy implementation for agricultural development and cutting red tape. Within this intricate ecosystem of stakeholders, initiatives such as Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) exist between these stakeholders, providing opportunities for collective action, shared responsibility and enhanced productivity (Ferroni and Castle, 2011). Lastly, agriculture can develop into a more resilient, adaptive, inclusive, and sustainable industry that can satisfy the needs of coming generations by establishing alliances and bringing all stakeholders' interests into alignment (Smyth, Webb and Phillips, 2021; Sibhensana and Maistry, 2023).

Specifically, the term an Agricultural Public-Private Partnership (Agri-PPP) has been used in the literature and can be described as a formalised, contractual, risk-sharing, and flexible collaborative partnership between two or more public and private sector entities, is an innovative tool that can address critical challenges and foster sustainable agricultural systems (Ferroni and Castle, 2011; Raidimi and Kabiti, 2017; Bruce and Costa, 2019; Mangeni, 2019; Agarwal, Malhotra, Dagar and Pavithra, 2023). An Agri-PPP is typically of a long-term nature, contributing one or more functions like planning resources and activities that are aimed at achieving specific and shared goals that are set out by the partners in the agricultural sector

(Raidimi and Kabiti, 2017; Bruce and Costa, 2019). There is also a common and shared understanding in literature that states that an Agri-PPP combines the strength of a government’s policy mandate and the ability to deliver public services with the private sector responsible for production and distribution systems, investments and technology (Ferroni and Castle, 2011; Raidimi and Kabiti, 2017; Bruce and Costa, 2019; Mangeni, 2019; Agarwal et al., 2023). One of the characteristics and design mechanisms of an Agri-PPP is that it is stakeholder-centered, thus it is often based on trust, equality, mutual understanding, and obligations (Ponnusamy, 2013). An Agri-PPP is also best described as an effective mechanism to foster and accelerate sustainable agricultural development. (Velten, Jager and Newig, 2021).



**Figure 1.1: A map of South Africa illustrating its nine provinces (Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Consultative Council, 2012).**

### **1.3 Small-scale farmers**

Various scholars have attempted to define the small-scale farmer concept by using farmer typologies to categorise farmers into groups (Kirsten and van Zyl, 1998; van Averebeke, Denison and Mnkeni, 2011; Chitja and Morojele, 2014; Carelsen, Ncube and Fanadzo, 2021; Bartol, 2023). Mathithibane (2021) argued that this type of categorisation is too generalised and discriminative because small-scale farmers cannot be judged solely on a farm's viability based on its land size, but rather other attributes such as the specific farming enterprise and managerial ability should be considered. Moreover, Terblanche (2013) and Tshuma (2014) posited that these farmer typologies have been developed with the intention of understanding small-scale farmers; however, the outcomes have failed to produce a clear understanding of these farmers. Thus, Mathithibane (2021) specifically referred to small-scale farmers as those farmers who, at a primary level, produce for the consumption of the household and the markets. Alternatively, agriculture is intentionally pursued as a means of generating income as well as meeting the needs for household sustenance (Mathithibane, 2021). The author further expanded on this definition and stated that the terms “small-scale farmer” and “smallholder farmer” are used interchangeably in the literature (Mathithibane, 2021). However, the term “small-scale farmer” will be used in this study as it correlates to the study scope and the intended outcome objectives.

According to Terblanche (2013) and Tshuma (2014) small-scale farmers have the potential to develop their farming operations and become commercial farmers; however, they need access to widespread technical and financial support and managerial instruments. Notably, small-scale farmers are not a group of homogeneous farmers; therefore, they do not practice agriculture in the same way. Instead, this varies, and their farming needs differ depending on the needs of their livelihood (van Averebeke, Denison and Mnkeni, 2011; Carelsen, Ncube and Fanadzo, 2021).

### **1.4 Importance of participation**

The importance of sustainable multi-partner and collaborative partnerships in small-scale agriculture is increasingly becoming central to its enhanced productivity, development and success (Vanslebrouck, van Huylbroeck and Verbeke, 2002; Ferroni and Castle, 2011; Ponnusamy, 2013). Additionally, not only are multi-partner and collaborative partnerships key to increased productivity in small-scale agriculture, but they are also regarded to both directly and indirectly support the creation of social, economic, and ecological advantages in

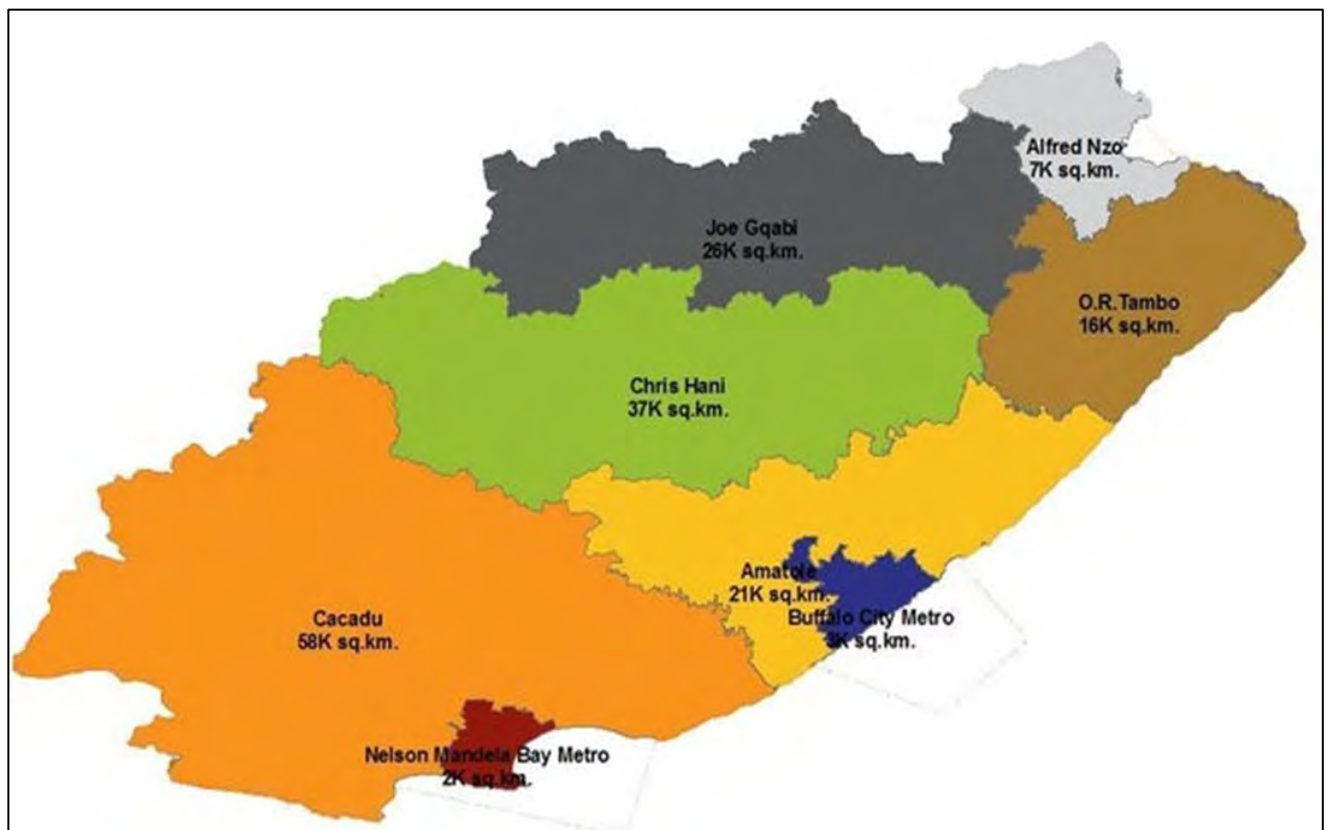
agricultural contexts. Low productivity in small-scale agriculture is a problem because of a lack of resources, poor skills development and poor technical knowledge, which are critical for enhanced productivity (Myeni, Moeletsi, Thavhana, Randela and Mokoena, 2019). Essentially, multi-partner and collaborative partnerships ensure increased efficiency in coordinating resources and the sustainable utilisation of social, financial and natural capital by stakeholder partners and the intended beneficiaries (Velten, Jager and Newig, 2021).

The premise of this study is based on evaluative research, which focuses on the factors that influence small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in a particular Agri-PPP. Concerning the Agri-PPP aspect, this collaborative effort is a grain production enhancement initiative currently taking place in the South African province of the Eastern Cape between the Ukhanyo Farmer Development Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) and John Deere Africa-Middle East (Feni, 2023). This Agri-PPP is currently taking place in five district municipalities in the province of the Eastern Cape, South Africa (Feni, 2023). As reported by Feni (2023), these district municipalities are O.R. Tambo, Alfred Nzo, Joe Gqabi, Chris Hani, and Amathole, and they are depicted in Figure 1.2. In the context of this initiative, the public partner is the NPO as it serves a public purpose in that it advances sustainable, inclusive, and resilient agricultural development by empowering small-scale farmers in the South African province of the Eastern Cape (Feni, 2023). Equally, the private partner in this initiative is John Deere Africa-Middle East (Feni, 2023). Formed in 2019, this Agri-PPP has been labelled exemplary, innovative, and progressive in the small-scale farmer segment focusing on grain production. (Feni, 2023). This is because this collaborative effort is seen as a catalyst for change in ensuring sustainable agricultural asset acquisition that is financially inclusive, enhanced productivity, improved value creation and effective business development.

Feni (2023) reported that this initiative targets small-scale grain farmers who historically have been excluded from mainstream grain production due to discriminatory barriers to trade, poor skill development, and the inaccessibility of technological resources. The mandate of this Agri-PPP is to ensure that small-scale grain farmers can access reliable agricultural machinery without having to put forward upfront collateral (Feni, 2023). Furthermore, this initiative ensures that these small-scale grain farmers can access reputable agricultural technical advice, continuous business development training and technical training, mentoring, market access, and infrastructure development opportunities, to name a few. Another critical aspect of this Agri-PPP is that it recognises the importance of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals,

which clearly define the necessity of more constructive relationships between the public and private sectors in the agricultural context (Feni, 2023). Moreover, through these partnerships, the promotion of long-term, sustainable agricultural development can be a reality.

The willingness to participate aspect concerning the targeted beneficiaries in multi-partner collaborations is a vital issue when it comes to enhancing and tightening social capital (Dhillon, 2009). Set in the context of the Agri-PPP mentioned above, it is an essential issue because it highlights the importance of adequately engaging and empowering the stakeholders who are beneficiaries in the participation and development processes to maximise their participation (Feni, 2023). Furthermore, this aspect is vital because it benefits the public and private parties of this Agri-PPP through the achievement of the set outcomes of this initiative. Over the years, policymakers have strongly advocated for small-scale farmers to participate in multi-partner collaborations (Ponnusamy, 2013). This brings forth the crucial perspective that willingness to participate is a fundamental element in enhancing and ensuring sustainable stakeholder management because it delivers opportunities for stakeholders to continuously review why there is low participation and how this low participation can be increased (Adjabui, 2018).



**Figure 1.2: Map of the South African province of the Eastern Cape showing the five district municipalities that are the focus of this study (Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Consultative Council, 2012).**

### **1.5 Problem statement and justification for the study**

Progressive, forward-thinking and innovative agricultural approaches are becoming essential in successfully navigating the complex agrarian landscape and mobilising relevant stakeholders to be part of a practical and high-value agricultural orientation (Ponnusamy, 2013). Furthermore, such approaches are seen as solutions to address the agricultural industry's challenges and contribute towards achieving enhanced agricultural productivity and sustainability, especially in a small-scale farmer context.

Ponnusamy (2013), Herbold (2014), Mangeni (2019) and Mathithibane (2021), affirmed that the multi-partner and collaborative approach had been proven to be the most effective and successful method in addressing the plethora of challenges facing the agricultural sector daily. Sustainable agricultural development initiatives in the South African province of the Eastern Cape, such as (Agri-PPPs) aimed at developing small-scale grain-producing farmers, have arguably brought about a heightened interest from various stakeholders in the agricultural sector (Agbugba, Christian and Obi, 2020). This is because of the noteworthy role that these small-scale farmers continue to play in rural economic growth, indirect and direct employment creation, food security and supporting livelihoods in the industrial raw material supply chain. To this end, various Agri-PPPs have been established in the province of the Eastern Cape in a bid to develop and commercialise small-scale farmers (Agbugba, Christian and Obi, 2020).

One distinctive characteristic of an Agri-PPP is that it is stakeholder-centred (Mangeni, 2019). The Agri-PPP currently taking place in the province of the Eastern Cape, which this study focuses on, is in no way wayward of this distinctive characteristic because it comprises an NPO, a private company and small-scale farmers. Amid this, stakeholder-centeredness is stakeholder relationships. Managing stakeholder relationships can be complex and challenging, especially in the case of an Agri-PPP, because the intended impact on beneficiaries cannot be maximised due to a lack of a proper understanding and a misalignment of the essentials of engagement from either the public or private stakeholder or from the beneficiaries themselves. Crane (2020) stated that stakeholders should never be traded off against each other; instead, they should align and strengthen their connectedness to increase the impact of their collaborative effort. If the assumption is that participation is key in an Agri-PPP because of the positive change and impact it has on beneficiaries, then it is crucial to understand the essentials of engagement in multi-partner collaborations. This is because focus and emphasis can be placed on encouraging more small-scale farmers to participate. Furthermore, concentration and

priority can be placed on increasing participation in the Agri-PPP and sufficiently addressing its ongoing challenges whilst expanding its scope of work.

Willingness to participate can promote cooperation between public and private organisational stakeholders and the intended beneficiaries, which permits the fostering of stronger bonds between an Agri-PPP and these intended beneficiaries, leading to the contribution of sustainable stakeholder management (Kgosiemang and Oladele, 2012). As mentioned above and confirmed by Adjabui (2018), willingness to participate is a component that strengthens stakeholder relationships in a collaborative initiative, which can lead to increased social capital. Thus, the more stakeholders exhibit increased social capital, the more likely they are to achieve their set outcomes and create higher value. Social capital has drawn keen interest as a channel through which it can be better understood regarding the willingness to participate aspect (Nan and Ouyang, 2020). Nan and Ouyang (2020) have explored social capital and have identified positive correlations between itself and willingness to participate.

Studies on the factors that influence small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP in the context of the South African province of the Eastern Cape are rare, if at all existent. This segment of farmers is associated with low agricultural productivity due to a lack of resources, skills and adequate technical support (Mathithibane, 2021). Furthermore, it is imperative that this segment of farmers does not lag behind in developmental initiatives because of the vital role they continue to play in supporting livelihoods, food security, and economic development. Coincidentally, this study focuses on small-scale farmers who produce grains such as yellow maize. This grain crop is the transcendent grain crop in South Africa, critical to food security, and a primary feed and industrial crop (Mathithibane, 2021).

This research is premised on investigating the poor participation of small-scale farmers in a grain production enhancement Agri-PPP in the South African province of the Eastern Cape. Despite this Agri-PPP being highlighted as an exemplary initiative, as reported by Feni (2023) and Ukhanyo Farmer Development NPO (2019), the level of participation in it is low, thus reducing its intended impact. Therefore, this research may assist in making a practical contribution towards enhancing small-scale farmers' potential participation in this Agri-PPP and ultimately contributing to their increased agricultural productivity and enhancing sustainable stakeholder management. This practical contribution will be at a stakeholder level and intends to append to the stakeholder theory, given how multi-partner collaborative

partnerships are integrated and stakeholder-centred in the broader context of the stakeholder realm. The results of this study are essential for both the small-scale farmers and the Agri-PPP partners as they may enhance participation in this multi-partner partnership, increase social capital and contribute to sustainable stakeholder management.

From a small-scale farmer perspective, increased participation in initiatives that advance them bodes well for multi-partner initiatives because these initiatives can magnify their impact and achieve their intended outcomes. The research hopes to provide small-scale farmers and partners of this Agri-PPP and other multi-partner initiatives alike with evidence that a profound understanding of the factors that influence this segment of farmers to participate willingly is crucial to their success and attaining their developmental objectives. By their very nature, Agri-PPPs are meant to make a difference and be impactful positively, hence the importance of one's participation in them (Ponnusamy, 2013).

With the above view in mind and with multi-partner collaborative initiatives being punted as catalysts for change as described by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 17, it is clear that there is a need to investigate the factors that influence small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP in the South African province of the Eastern Cape. Moreover, not only are these multi-partner initiatives catalysts of change, but they are also central to supporting and accelerating sustainable development and advancing the attainment of all the SDGs in the world, specifically in developing countries, of which South Africa is one (United Nations, 2015).

## **1.6 Research goals**

The research aimed to evaluate the factors that influence small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP. The specific objectives of the study included the following:

- To assess small-scale farmers' willingness and/or hesitance to participate in an Agri-PPP;
- To assess the drivers that influence small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP;
- To articulate recommendations on how small-scale farmer participation in Agri-PPPs can potentially be enhanced.

## **1.7 Outline of the study**

The following five chapters are presented in this study:

**Chapter 1** provided a general introduction to the study, a background of the study, a description of small-scale farmers and the importance of participation. This chapter further provided a problem statement and the justification of the study, the presentation of the research goals and objectives, and an outline of the chapters contained in this study.

**Chapter 2** addresses the literature which is currently available for this emerging and relatively new field of study. At the start of the chapter, there is an introduction of the relevant literature followed by a review of the stakeholder theory that underpins this research. Willingness to participate is also defined in this chapter and the factors that influence willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP are also explored.

**Chapter 3** outlines the details of the research methodology that was used for the research and elucidates the procedure followed in conducting the study. Furthermore, this chapter also comprises an explanation of the research paradigm and the ethical considerations for assurance of quality. The chapter also provides details of data gathering techniques and the research participants, as well as a description of the data analysis process.

**Chapter 4** presents the key findings gathered during the interviews and ventilates these findings in relation to the study's research goals. .

**Chapter 5** presents a discussion of the findings of this study and the recommendations thereof.

**Chapter 6** concludes the study, and serves to summarise the contributions of the study. The implications and/or ramifications of the findings concerning small-scale farmer participation and non-participation are discussed in this chapter, and sustainable stakeholder management is discussed whilst recognising the research limitations, and outlining recommendations for further research.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to explore and provide a review of the literature on the willingness to participate concept, the factors that influence small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP and the stakeholder theory as an underpinning theory of this study.

Agriculture is seen as the pillar of most African countries, and small-scale farmers, in particular in this sector, play an important role in employment creation, human welfare, poverty reduction, and alleviating food insecurity at the household level (Tshuma, 2014). The agricultural environment in the Eastern Cape Province has attracted increasing attention from various public and private stakeholders (Agbugba, Christian and Obi, 2020). Small-scale farmers are part of a dual agrarian economy wherein well-resourced commercial farmers control a significant proportion of the food supply value chain and function in parallel with less-resourced small-scale farmers who face numerous structural challenges (Mathithibane, 2021). According to Montshwe (2006), the potential significance of small-scale farmers in developing rural livelihoods is undeniably supported by their significant contribution to the macro and microeconomic environment.

Various countries and organisations see (PPPs) as an integral strategy and an innovative policy tool to address deeply rooted socio-economic, political, infrastructural, fiscal, and societal challenges (Fombad, 2013; Sibhensana and Maistry, 2023). According to Senyolo, Long and Omta (2021), PPPs are also recognised for improving project monitoring and ensuring increased accountability, which is necessary to protect the efficacy of public and private sector interventions in solving existing challenges. Specifically, (Agri-PPPs) are fundamental to sustainable agricultural development, poverty reduction, and food security (Mangeni, 2019). Moreover, effective agricultural partnerships empower and capacitate small-scale farmers by enhancing their crop, animal, and natural resource management knowledge. They can lead to new power configurations, development opportunities, and market transformations (Mangeni, 2019). Agri-PPPs also provide a platform enabling different agricultural industry participants to contribute their skills and energy to the growth of agricultural innovation (Ferroni and Castle, 2011).

The essence of willingness to participate is premised on having a free choice to take part or engage in something (Khosdel and Bakshan, 2015). Willingness to participate has been considered an important aspect of its significant role in sustainable development and its positive

influence on social efficacy (Khosdel and Bakshan, 2015). As a result of this, willingness to participate is an enabler that strengthens relationships between stakeholders, which can lead to the long-term success of a multi-partner collaborative partnership such as an Agri-PPP (Kgosiemang and Oladele, 2012; Ponnusamy, 2013; Mangeni, 2019). Kgosiemang and Oladele (2012) and Ponnusamy (2013) further confirmed and asserted that strengthening stakeholder control and power over sustainable development projects and multi-partner collaborative partnerships that have an impact on the stakeholders concerned in society, willingness to participate is further seen as an iterative process. Furthermore, willingness to participate includes the constant readjusting of ties between the stakeholders concerned because of their desired development outcomes and strategic focus, which changes regularly. In the context of multi-partner collaborative partnerships, willingness to participate can be described as a planned initiative within institutions and organisations to expand stakeholder access to resources, control over associated decision-making, and support for sustainable living (Kgosiemang and Oladele, 2012). Adjabui (2018) and Sivalingam and Ramaswamy (2024) acknowledged that current arguments in literature around willingness to participate have continued to explore the role it plays in enhancing sustainable stakeholder management due to the balancing of active and in-depth engagement. Similarly, in the context of Agri-PPPs and willingness to participate, current arguments in literature have emphasised the need for a profound understanding of the visions, beliefs, changes, and planned development outcomes of these multi-partner partnerships that are collaborative in nature (Khosdel and Bakshan, 2015; Adjabui, 2018). Therefore, the more frequently the role of willingness to participate is taken cognisance of by stakeholders in a multi-partner initiative such as an Agri-PPP, and the more profound the understanding of this aspect, the more sustainable stakeholder management can be enhanced positively.

## **2.2 Underpinning theory**

According to Freeman (2004) and Miles (2017), the stakeholder theory was first presented by an organisational theorist called Ian Mitroff in the early 1980s and emanated in the 1990s as a refutation of the notion that an organisation's primary goal or objective is to generate maximum value for its shareholders. The ongoing debate within stakeholder theory regarding the definition of a stakeholder is endless and continues to carry on even in the present day (Strand and Freeman, 2015; Miles, 2017). Accordingly, 'stakeholder' ought to be regarded as a term that is powerful because of its wide conceptual scope (Kakabadse, Rozuel and Lee-Davies, 2005; Strand and Freeman, 2015; Miles, 2017). Owing to its wide conceptual scope, the term

stakeholder has several interpretations that are dependent on the context of different scopes within the literature (Strand and Freeman, 2015).

Freeman (1984, p.46) defined a stakeholder as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of an organisation’s objectives”. This study will adopt this definition of a stakeholder because, to date, it is the predominantly cited definition in the literature. Moreover, because the scope of this study orbits on an Agri-PPP and small-scale farmers, which are indicative of what stakeholders are, the term stakeholder and its subsequent definition illustrate to this study the core collaboration and stakeholder relationship between small-scale farmers and parties of an Agri-PPP. Consequently, stakeholders, in this case, would be small-scale farmers or partners of the Agri-PPP who would be impacted by or would impact an organisation’s strategy because they may be considered legitimate and important (Miles, 2017). Lastly, various authors have presented their definitions, which often than not differ in terms of inclusivity. A universally accepted stakeholder definition could arise through further scholarly debate because such debates could lead to improvements in the definitions and ensure that the stakeholder theory develops into a theory that can be better understood from a stakeholder terms perspective (Strand and Freeman, 2015; Miles, 2017).

The stakeholder theory addresses the relationships between organisations and their stakeholders, in addition to the procedures and outcomes associated with these relationships (Jones and Wicks, 1999). Organisations must dedicate time to researching stakeholder behaviours, beliefs, and contexts to ensure that their stakeholder interests fit with their vision of what they stand for (Strand and Freeman, 2015). Three levels of stakeholder analysis are proposed by Freeman (1984). These are the rational level, the process level, and the transactional level. To make sure that their (stakeholder) interests are aligned with the ideals of what they stand for, businesses must devote time to studying the behaviours, values, and settings of their stakeholders. The focal point of the rational level is the organisation's perception of stakeholders (Freeman, 1984). Subsequently, the locus of the process level is on integrating stakeholder relationships into an organisation's operational processes (Freeman, 1984). Lastly, the transactional level induces the daily bargaining of these relationships (Freeman, 1984). Accordingly, as affirmed by Freeman (1984), the aforementioned analytical levels ought to direct the planning and execution of the organisation's strategic goals and direct the primary focus of management. Jayiya, Makwambeni and Adebayo (2022) asserted that the stakeholder theory offers an ethical, practical, and efficient approach to operating organisations. These authors explore this assertion by explaining what each means. Thus, it is

efficient and effective in the instance that stakeholders are appropriately treated, they'll recompense favourably to the organisation with positive attitudes and behaviours, and because the energy of the stakeholder can be channelled towards the accomplishment of the organisation's objectives (Jayiya, Makwambeni and Adebayo, 2022). Managing stakeholders suitably enhances the organisation's information, based on which choices that are good can be made (Kujala, Sachs, Leinonen, Heikkinen, and Laude, 2022). This is because the appropriate handling of stakeholders has the potential to result in shared value and opportunities that are synergistic in nature (Dwivedi, 2021). According to Mangeni (2019), stakeholders of an Agri-PPP that are aligned will be more orientated to the same synergy and will most likely retain their loyalty in that Agri-PPP.

Of fundamental importance, the stakeholder theory affirms that the success of an organisation is based on its ability to clearly define its stakeholders, ascertain their interests, and understand how they relate to their interests (Donaldson and Preston, 1995). Moreover, the stakeholder theory emphasises how important it is to recognise the various expectations of stakeholders and how, in doing so, an organisation has a duty to respond to them in a morally right way. Notably, numerous authors have continuously pointed out the issue of stakeholder identification as a major flaw in stakeholder theory (Donaldson and Preston, 1995; Fares, Chung and Abbasi, 2021; Menezes, Vieira and de Oliveira, 2022; Wöcke, Grosse, Mthobeni and Pfeffer, 2023). These authors have also suggested procedures for determining which individuals or organisations are regarded as stakeholders and which ones are not within the context of the stakeholder theory (Donaldson and Preston, 1995; Fares, Chung and Abbasi, 2021; Menezes, Vieira and de Oliveira, 2022; Wöcke et al., 2023). Thus, the capacity to ascertain what and who matters is crucial for applying management theory in practice. Also, the management team of an organisation is in a unique position as they are the only group in an organisation with relationships with all other stakeholders. Freeman, Wicks and Parmar (2004) found that stakeholder theory assists in articulating the responsibilities of stakeholders from an organisational perspective. This is because it recognises and analyses the characteristics of individual and group stakeholders that are either impacted by or have an impact on the decisions and actions of the organisation.

### **2.3 Stakeholder theory and Agri-PPPs**

Freeman (2004) and Miles (2017) alluded that the stakeholder theory is interconnected and fosters a mutual relationship between its different stakeholders through the sharing of core values and principles. The fundamental understanding of the stakeholder theory is that it aims

to create value for parties with vested interests in a particular business venture through stakeholder relationships (Freeman, 2004). Stakeholder theory in business is not just about increasing profits, but it encompasses social responsibility and builds solid relationships, especially when seeking a business to flourish within a supportive community (Miles, 2017). In this research case, a business that partakes in an Agri-PPP supports resource-poor small-scale farmers to succeed and become sustainable and efficient. Moreover, the relevance of the stakeholder theory for this research is brought about by the fact that any collaboration in business must ensure the effective management of their relationships because all stakeholders are equally important (Gosling and Mintzberg, 2003). This is a case in point for small-scale farmers and an Agri-PPP.

According to Ponnusamy (2013), Agri-PPPs are “collaborative” and combine various stakeholders to work towards a common goal. Ferroni and Castle (2011) also stated that Agri-PPPs are a common kind of cooperation and are not limited to bilateral collaboration between a government agency and a private corporation. For example, a collaboration can include multi-partner structures that combine non-governmental organisations, university research institutes, small and big businesses, farmers, and foundations. Their creation is justified by the desire to collaborate to accomplish more than any of the parties could individually (Ferroni and Castle, 2011). Mangeni (2019) argued that Agri-PPPs are recognized by their ability to provide a multi-stakeholder platform that pools together actors who are needed to address multiple challenges and manage risk effectively.

The relevance of the stakeholder theory to Agri-PPPs is premised on it playing a critical role in Agri-PPPs and enabling effective stakeholder management in the context of these multi-partner partnerships because it enhances their functioning, success, and performance through enhanced stakeholder engagement (Xegwana, Herron and Nyika, 2024). Raidimi and Kabiti (2017) affirmed that in enhancing the functioning, success, and performance of these multi-partner partnerships, the stakeholder theory is central to fostering productive, strategically aligned, and mutually beneficial relationships with relevant stakeholders, and it strengthens the interaction between these relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, the stakeholder theory in the context of Agri-PPPs encourages the incorporation of diverse perspectives and the active involvement of relevant stakeholders for the duration of the Agri-PPP to increase the chances of achieving its set outcomes.

According to Maryono (2023), in the context of Agri-PPPs, the significance of the stakeholder theory arises from its emphasis on collaborative decision-making and coordination. This is because an Agri-PPP requires structured coordination and collaborative decision-making amongst stakeholders to ensure coherent action plans and decision-making processes that are participatory and inclusive. Very often, Agri-PPPs require the pooling together of resources, skills, technology, and expertise from both the public and private parties (Ferroni and Castle, 2011). Thus, the stakeholder theory advances a collective synergy between these parties, which leads to a mechanism that is more effective and efficient in the use of resources through these collaborative frameworks (Kula and Fryatt, 2013; Raidimi and Kabiti, 2017; Strasser, Stauber, Shrivastava and Riley, 2021; Maryono, 2023).

From the perspective of managing Agri-PPPs, the stakeholder theory provides an understanding of the critical role that stakeholders play in a multi-partner partnership within the agricultural ecosystem and how its effective management is key to leading to more sustainable and equitable management practices (Uddin, Ong and Matous, 2023). Similarly, from the perspective of managing Agri-PPPs, the stakeholder theory encompasses the idea of creating shared value for all stakeholders involved in a multi-partner partnership through the improvement of agricultural productivity, the promotion of sustainable production practices, fostering economic development in rural communities and enhanced agricultural management (Ferroni and Castle, 2011; Uddin, Ong and Matous, 2023). Equally, the applicability of the stakeholder theory to the management of Agri-PPPs means that they become inclusive, transparent, and adaptive because they not only address stakeholder concerns but also leverage their collective knowledge to achieve sustainable and equitable agricultural development and outcomes (Wojewnik-Filipkowska and Wegrzyn, 2019; Castro-Acre and Vanclay, 2020). The management of Agri-PPPs in the context of the stakeholder theory affirms its traditional stakeholder-centric component because it aids in navigating the dynamic complexities of these multi-partner partnerships and asserts the imperative that the interests of all stakeholders who can influence or be impacted by the partnership's objectives should be duly considered (Kula and Fryatt, 2013; de Schepper, Dooms and Haezendonck, 2014; Bonokwane, Dooms and Haezendonck, 2014; Mangeni, 2019).

#### **2.4 Stakeholder theory and willingness to participate**

The stakeholder theory in the context of willingness to participate is managerial because it is the impetus for enhanced participation as it asserts that the ability to recognise, comprehend, and manage the interests and influences of stakeholders is necessary for participation to be

improved, successful and sustainable (Reynolds, Schultz and Hekman, 2006; Khosdel and Bakshan, 2015; Jayiya, Makwambeni, Adebayo, 2022). Adjabui (2018) argued that when one is willing to participate in something, they usually have an interest in it, hence why the stakeholder theory is essential when it comes to identifying those willing to participate and identifying the key interests and responsibilities that they may have shall they participate. Equally, willingness to participate under the auspices of the stakeholder theory has an influence on and plays a critical role in the success of that particular activity or multi-partner initiative being participated in (Khosdel and Bakshan, 2015; Jayiya, Makwambeni, Adebayo, 2022). This is because those who participate possess the ability to influence the achievement of a certain activity's or multi-partner initiatives' objectives. Another imperative of the stakeholder theory in the context of willingness to participate is that it prioritises the relational strategies for those willing to participate in an activity or an initiative (Adjabui, 2018; Jones, Harrison and Felps, 2018; Dwivedi, 2021). The prioritisation of relational strategies is based on the fact that willingness to participate does not exist in isolation, but rather plays a key role in the stakeholder environment, which may have a limitless number of stakeholders (Benn, Abratt and O'Leary, 2016; Adjabui, 2018).

The interplay between the stakeholder theory and willingness to participate is premised on the basis that these two components are integral to stakeholder-centered activities and multi-partner initiatives that require participation (Benn, Abratt and O'Leary, 2016; Adjabui, 2018). This is because the stakeholder theory is a useful instrument that can be used to explain the relationships that interconnect relevant stakeholders and how these relationships need to contribute to the development of comprehensive strategies that seek to enhance participation in an activity or initiative (Adjabui, 2018; Jayiya, Makwambeni, Adebayo, 2022). Charatsari, Kitsios, Stafyla, Aidonis and Lioutas (2018) confirmed that willingness to participate is an emerging concept in research that is gaining increasing attention, and because of this, the stakeholder theory provides a better understanding of its complex interactions in both an internal and external stakeholder environment. An internal and external stakeholder environment is one characterised by regular change due to changes in relevant stakeholder interests (Nguyen and Mohamed, 2020). Also, a key determinant in managing this regular change is the ability to effectively ensure all stakeholder interests are duly considered in a balanced manner.

The nature of the willingness to participate concept asserts the element of stakeholder purpose and the element of stakeholder responsibility when placed in the context of the stakeholder

theory (Dhillon, 2009; Freeman, 1984). These elements are premised on the need for those who participate in an activity or initiative to be aware of missions, visions, and objectives as well as values, beliefs, and possible implications of these activities or initiatives (Dhillon, 2009). The stakeholder theory's imperative role in willingness to participate is that it assists in analysing the suitability of those willing to participate in an activity or initiative. This aspect is important because relevant stakeholders need to make decisions that will ensure effective strategy implementation in the case of multi-partner initiatives (Vanslebrouck, van Huylenbroeck and Verbeke, 2002; de Gooyert, Rouwette, van Kranenburg and Freeman, 2017; Adjabui, 2018). As affirmed by Khosdel and Bakshan (2015), willingness to participate is a conscious approach to active engagement; therefore, in this context, the stakeholder theory facilitates the understanding of how relationships should be managed with relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, this active engagement approach contributes to a clear and robust understanding of the risks and roles of these relevant stakeholders and reinforces the importance of values and ethics in stakeholder engagement. Khosdel and Bakshan (2015) also highlighted that this active engagement approach of willingness to participate develops and tightens social capital because it enables relevant stakeholders to work together to effectively achieve a common purpose.

### **2.5 Willingness to participate and the success and performance of Agri-PPPs**

According to Kgosiemang and Oladele (2012), willingness to participate is at the centre of development initiatives that are collaborative in nature because it is a foundational element that contributes to delivering sustainable and innovative agricultural development. Furthermore, the complexities brought about by a rapidly changing agricultural environment mean that collaborative efforts that have stakeholders who are willing to participate in them are crucial to addressing these complexities strategically and sustainably. In the area of willingness to participate, various studies have suggested a positive interaction between this concept and the success of Agri-PPPs because it reliably enables relevant stakeholders to mediate their contradictions, improve their participation enhancement strategies, and strengthen their ability to achieve their set objectives (Adjabui, 2018; Bruce and Costa, 2019). One of the components that contribute to the success of Agri-PPPs is effective participation because they promote collaborative synergies, which encourage participation and inclusivity by relevant stakeholders (Raidimi and Kabiti, 2017; Bruce and Costa, 2019).

As stated by Dhillon (2009) and Spielman, Hartwich and von Grebmer (2010), the success of Agri-PPPs is significantly influenced by the enterprising interaction brought about by willingness to participate because this concept fosters the inclusive engagement of stakeholders

and ensures active and sustained participation. Furthermore, this interaction between these two components can be characterised as enterprising because it drives the dynamic and innovative efforts that are necessary for the success of Agri-PPPs. Ponnusamy (2013) and Adjabui (2018) argued that the success of an Agri-PPP is influenced by the fact its value must be seen to be of significance to those who are willing to participate in it. This value significance will ensure participation over the long term. In the context of the success of Agri-PPPs' willingness to participate is crucial for the actual implementation of the strategies of these multi-partner collaborative initiatives because it contributes to clearly deriving the solutions and advancements that these initiatives offer to those who are willing to participate (Vanslebrouck, van Huylenbroeck and Verbeke, 2002; Ponnusamy 2013). Notably, both Dhillon (2009) and Spielman, Hartwich and von Grebmer (2010) have focused their recent research on what makes an Agri-PPP successful, and they both have emphasised and confirmed that willingness to participate is pivotal to their success.

The willingness to participate concept plays a critical role in the performance of Agri-PPPs because it strengthens relationships between stakeholders and also promotes and builds trust (Ponnusamy, 2013; Agarwal et al., 2023). The strengthening of stakeholder relationships and the building of stakeholder trust, as affirmed by Freeman, Wicks and Parmar (2004) and Adjabui (2018), are key elements and aspects in successful social and economic interactions of stakeholders because they are essential for the ethics, and fairness and collaboration in the case of a multi-partner collaborative partnership or partnerships. In their seminal works, Adjabui (2018) and Agarwal et al. (2023) acknowledged that willingness to participate and the performance of Agri-PPPs are intertwined because they are both imperative in influencing the overall effectiveness and significance of these multi-partner collaborative initiatives. Dai, Han, de Vries and Wang (2022) identified that, within the literature, this overall effectiveness and significance is brought about from a singular front, namely efficiency and productivity, capacity and knowledge building, risk mitigation, economic and social impact, and environmental sustainability. Willingness to participate also enhances the performance of Agri-PPPs through regular monitoring and evaluation by way of their progress, level of participation, and impact, which affords Agri-PPPs the opportunity to make the necessary strategy adjustments and improvements.

Literature has established a common cause and premise that a higher degree of participation in Agri-PPPs is most desirable for the public and private stakeholders who are invested in these multi-partner collaborative initiatives, hence their performance imperative (Vanslebrouck,

van Huylenbroeck and Verbeke, 2002; Bruce and Costa, 2019; Batjargal and Zhang, 2021). Literature understands that from the standpoint of the performance of Agri-PPPs, willingness to participate has a positive impact on these multi-partner collaborative partnerships by way of several mechanisms such as consistency between resource inputs and quality, ensuring a good institutional environment and support and reliable contraptions for risk sharing and responsibility (Brogaard and Petersen, 2017; Adjabui, 2018; Agarwal et al., 2023; Malhotra, Dagar and Pavithra, 2023). Ponnusamy (2013) and Adjabui (2018) argued that Agri-PPPs need to continuously adapt and be flexible to the needs of those who are willing to participate and those who are participating in multi-partner collaborative initiatives to ensure sustained performance. This is brought about by the ever-changing and unpredictable agricultural landscape that predominantly warrants a collaborative and practical solution-based approach to a multitude of challenges (Mathithibane, 2021).

## **2.6 Defining willingness to participate**

The definition of willingness to participate is relatively new as acknowledged by the literature, hence the need for it to be further explored and developed (Khosdel and Bakshan, 2015). Also, previous studies have mainly focused on the willingness to pay concept of which a clear distinction between the two can be made. Albeit, willingness to participate has been found by the literature to be an essential aspect when it comes to contributing to sustainable development because of its favourable impact on social efficacy in the context of multi-partner collaborative partnerships (Kgosiemang and Oladele, 2012; Ponnusamy, 2013; Mangeni, 2019; Dai, Han, de Vries and Wang, 2022). The reason or reasons why Agri-PPPs are formed have an impact on willingness to participate to a greater extent because it sets the tone for the level of participation in them and whether opportunities to enhance participation exist or not (Ponnusamy, 2013; Adjabui, 2018). Furthermore, because willingness to participate revolves around stakeholder-centeredness, opportunities exist to build and strengthen stakeholder relationships.

Through the research of Vanslembrouck, van Huylenbroeck and Verbeke (2002) and Dhillon (2009) and on the aspect of willingness to participate, it was established that this concept involves an alignment dynamic between those who are willing to participate and those who require participation in something to happen. The definition of willingness to participate by Khosdel and Bakshan (2015), which states that willingness to participate is defined as having a fundamental element of freedom to decide whether or not to join something, seems to be the definition that is clear cut and that is currently accepted by literature. Currently, the literature does not present any new or adapted definitions of willingness to participate (Dai, Han, de

Vries and Wang, 2022). Willingness to participate is posited to be an essential driver of success in collaborative partnerships, especially in sectors that are intricate and resource-intensive, like agriculture (Vanslebrouck, van Huylenbroeck and Verbeke, 2002; Khosdel and Bakshan, 2015; Adjabui, 2018). According to Dai, Han, de Vries and Wang (2022), willingness to participate can be considered as a method or goal to encourage people to engage in collective decision-making and responsibility sharing. Hurlbert and Gupta (2015) noted that willingness to participate is a vital element in development strategies because it performs various functions such as being a mobilization tool that organises and elevates public-private development initiatives. Kalkbrenner and Roosen (2016) further noted that willingness to participate encompasses inclusive decision-making thus, enhancing perceived participant worthiness. Scholars have concluded that willingness to participate cannot be ignored when it comes to successfully achieving the goals of multi-partner collaborative partnerships because the higher the level of participation, the more successful these multi-partner collaborative partnerships will be (Hurlbert and Gupta, 2015; Kalkbrenner and Roosen, 2016; Adjabui, 2018). Kalkbrenner and Roosen (2016) affirmed that willingness to participate tightens the circles and chains of social capital by denoting engagement in social networks and relations.

Within the stakeholder theory, abundant information exists regarding the interconnectedness of mutual relationships and the management of stakeholder relationships (Miles, 2017). Willingness to participate is considered to be a key element when it comes to fostering and developing productive relationships with stakeholders within collaborative initiatives (Khosdel and Bakshan, 2015; Adjabui, 2018). Increased participation in the case of small-scale farmers in these initiatives is likely to maximise impact, improve overall productivity and strongly encourage an increase in resource allocation by public and private stakeholders (Adjabui, 2018). From a review of the literature, willingness to participate is integral to sustainable development because of the prominence brought about by its positive influence on social efficacy (Kgosiemang and Oladele, 2012). Public and private stakeholders cannot manage the willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP because some factors, such as the perception and attitude of small-scale farmers, are not controlled by these stakeholders (Adjabui, 2018). Therefore, public and private stakeholders must be cognizant of constantly having active and in-depth engagements with the intended beneficiaries to manage their willingness to participate to a certain extent.

In the context of willingness to participate and where there is a low appetite to participate willingly, studies have found the existence of a knowledge gap concerning the understanding

of the factors that influence small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP (Vanslembrouck, van Huylenbroeck and Verbeke, 2002; Adjabui, 2018). The small-scale farmer segment is a segment that is characteristic of having low productivity and has historically been left out from accessing credit and capital and participating in value addition and value-chain-related processes (von Loeper, Musango, Brent and Drimie, 2016; Blignaut, 2018; Mathithibane, 2021). This is because small-scale farmers in this segment are not all in a position to present historical financial performance records, which is deemed a risk and a barrier by various financial institutions (Aliber and Hall, 2012). This study possesses the ability to assist stakeholders in this Agri-PPP, similar Agri-PPPs currently taking place, and future Agri-PPPs, agricultural sector organisations, and the government in advancing sustainable stakeholder management. Furthermore, this study has the potential to contribute to creating a conducive environment for enhanced participation in such initiatives, improved agricultural productiveness, and strategic growth in rural agriculture.

Even though willingness to participate is regarded as a relatively new and emerging concept, it is considered an essential component that adds notable value to collaborating stakeholders because of its distinctive features of active and comprehensive engagement (Khosdel and Bakshan, 2015). Furthermore, willingness to participate can encourage stakeholders to give more than just their expertise. This study was positioned within the context of sustainable stakeholder management. In doing so, this research underscored the critical need for a better understanding of the essentials of engagement in multi-partner collaborations, thus enhancing potential participation in them and maximising the impact of developmental initiatives that are collaborative in nature and are predominantly stakeholder-centred. It sought to answer the questions: What factors influence small-scale farmers to participate willingly in an Agricultural Public-Private Partnership (Agri-PPP), and how can potential participation be enhanced?

## **2.7 Factors that influence willingness to participate**

The core focus of this research was on sustainable stakeholder management, and it evaluated the factors that influence small-scale farmer's willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP. Sustainable stakeholder management is defined as the methodical identification, evaluation, organisation and execution of actions that are intended to interact with stakeholders to ensure the long-term success of an organisation or project (Perrini and Tencati, 2006). It is in light of this that the following principle concepts were deduced for the research, and they are itemised alongside the below definitions:

### **2.7.1 Attitude**

According to Ajzen (2005), attitude is a psychological construct that refers to the feelings, predispositions, and beliefs towards a certain person, object, or event, and as such, this concept can be positive, negative, or neutral; thereby, it can influence disposition and decision-making. Furthermore, an attitude is predominantly formed through experiences, social influence, and personal beliefs. Marcinkowski and Reid (2019) posited a similar definition of attitude by stating that it is understood to be a consistent and enduring value of judgement of or affective reaction to a stimulus object or circumstance that can be either positive or negative and it influences behaviours that are aimed towards the attitude object. These definitions in the literature allow room for some of the ambiguities that have complicated the study of attitudes and provide for greater adaptability in its application (Ajzen, 2005; Marcinkowski and Reid, 2019).

Altman (2008) and Vaughan-Johnston, Fabrigar, Xia, de Marree and Clark (2023) suggested that the concept of attitude is broken up into three key components, namely the affective, cognitive, and behavioural components. According to Altman (2008) and Vaughan-Johnston et al. (2023), the affective component refers to the emotions or feelings a person feels about an object. Similarly, the cognitive component includes the characteristics, thoughts, and beliefs that a person associates with the object (Altman, 2008; Vaughan-Johnston et al., 2023). The behavioural component is how attitudes impact actions or behaviours (Altman, 2008; Vaughan-Johnston et al., 2023).

In spite of the literature offering varying definitions of *attitude*, its evaluative approach to the subjects is a shared characteristic (Adjabui, 2018). Ajzen (2005) defined an attitude as an inclination to respond positively or unfavourably to an object, person, institution, or event. This author further expanded on this definition and stated that an attitude's "evaluative (pro-con, pleasant-unpleasant) nature" is its distinguishing quality. Petty, Fazio and Brinol (2008) defined attitude as an implicit reaction, often unconscious, that is focused on approaching or avoiding a particular issue. This study, however, will adopt the definition stated by Ajzen (2005) because it is straightforward and easily understandable. Consequently, attitude in this study shall refer to a small-scale farmer's disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to the willingness to participate in an agricultural public-private partnership.

### **2.7.2 Awareness**

Bizzarri, Giuliani and Mocenni (2022) affirmed that awareness refers to the level to which the subject is phenomenally aware of the stimulus that begins a process, the operation of the

process itself, and/or the product of the process. Awareness is also defined as the state or ability to perceive, feel or be cognisant of events, objects, or sensory patterns (Gafoor, 2012). Being aware also refers to knowing, realising, or having an interest in learning about something or the significance of something. According to Klussman, Curtin, Langer and Nichols (2022), awareness is dependent on integrated brain functions that include taking in, sorting through, and relating sensory data to memories and emotions to connect it to a greater extent and understand its meaning. Either a concentrated attention on certain elements of one's surroundings or internal condition, or a general state of alertness, can be characterised as awareness (Gafoor, 2012). According to Bizzarri, Giuliani and Mocenni (2022), there are four types of awareness, namely self-awareness, situational awareness, social awareness, and environmental awareness. Self-awareness refers to the recognition of one's behaviours, thoughts, and emotions, whilst situational awareness refers to being conscious of your surroundings and what is going on around you (Bizzarri, Giuliani and Mocenni, 2022). Similarly, social awareness involves recognising and being aware of other people's feelings, ideas, and actions, whilst environmental awareness refers to the understanding of the natural world and how human activity affects it (Bizzarri, Giuliani and Mocenni, 2022). Awareness is an essential component of human cognition that facilitates individuals to effectively interact with their internal and external environments (Gafoor, 2012).

### **2.7.3 Perceived financial gain**

Perceived financial gain relates to an entity's or individual's belief or expectation regarding the financial benefits they will receive from a specific course of financial action or investment that is influenced by factors such as prior experiences, market conditions, organisational or personal objectives and available information (Morris, Kamano and Maillet, 2023). Morris, Kamano and Maillet (2023) further defined perceived financial gain as subjective and based on judgement that is personal or the understanding of the potential rewards. Perceived financial gain is also defined as the expected increase in financial benefits or profits that an individual or organisation believes they will achieve from a particular financial action or investment (Morris, Kamano and Maillet, 2023).

### **2.7.4 Social influence**

The concept of social influence has been described within the literature as interpersonal processes that alter a person's thoughts, feelings, or behaviours (Gopinath and Narayanamurthy, 2022). It is human to influence, and as such, social influence permeates almost every aspect of daily human life (Smith, Louis and Schultz, 2011). Furthermore, because

humans are social creatures, they spend a significant portion of their time trying to influence each other and resisting each other's attempts to influence others. Molleman, Ciranka and van den Bos (2022) further added that social influence is non-coercive and often operates through peripheral processing. Contrary to persuasion, which is usually deliberate and necessitates some level of awareness on the part of the target, social influence can occur accidentally or unintentionally (Molleman, Ciranka and van den Bos, 2022; Smith, Louis and Schultz, 2011). Social influence is also defined as any change in a person's thoughts, feelings, or behaviours brought on by other people, whether they are physically present, imagined or just implied (Molleman, Ciranka and van den Bos, 2022). It also involves intentional and unintentional efforts to change these thoughts, feelings or behaviours and takes a wide variety of forms, including but not limited to peer pressure, obedience, conformity, persuasion, social facilitation and loafing.

#### **2.7.5 Legal and regulatory requirements**

Nieuwenhuizen (2019) and Bottoms (2019) defined legal and regulatory requirements as laws, regulations, guidelines and specifications that are relevant to organisational processes. Legal and regulatory requirements are also industry-wide minimum standards of best practice that are invoked by designated regulators to constrain, facilitate or encourage specific business behaviours (Nieuwenhuizen, 2019; Bottoms, 2019). Legal and regulatory requirements are also defined as all applicable statutes, statutory instruments, orders, and regulations, including but not limited to the standards, guidelines, norms, and codes of good practice relevant to an organisation or organisation's processes (National Treasury, 2019).

#### **2.7.6 Government facilitation**

The concept of government facilitation has frequently been described in the literature as essential because it plays a pivotal role in enabling sustainable development through public and private initiatives and fosters a competitive economy (Khaile, Roman and Davids, 2021). Government facilitation is strongly associated with creating an environment that is enabling, meaningful, and conducive to achieving effective socio-economic development and innovation by ensuring barriers and red tape are removed and that resources are easily and readily available to society for utilisation (Kotze, Ferguson and Leigland, 2000; Kaywood, 2021). Bherer and Verhoeven (2013) and Bynner, Escobar and Weakley (2023) have both referred to government facilitation as the steps and actions done by the government to facilitate, assist, and allow the smooth operation of social programs, the economy, or other public service. Bherer and

Verhoeven (2013) further referred to government facilitation as an effective and dedicated way of designing and implementing government policy that supports public and private initiatives.

Government facilitation is also defined as a process that ensures adequate policies are formulated and implemented and a conducive environment is created to simplify the operation of public and private initiatives (Grotenbreg and van Buuren, 2017). Furthermore, government facilitation is also whereby the government ensures that the self-regulated actions of non-governmental actors align with the government's overall goals. Sørensen and Torfing (2011) also defined government facilitation as a process undertaken when the government seeks to resolve a problem in the public's interest. However, it does not wish to be the primary planner or financier of the proposed solution to be adopted, and it does not rely on the old-style statist systems of government.

## **2.8 Chapter conclusion**

The literature reviewed in this chapter highlighted the importance of PPPs and specifically Agri-PPPs in the agricultural context as they address socio-economic challenges and empower small-scale farmers who are often resource-deficient. Also, this review of literature discussed the concept of willingness to participate and its importance in sustainable development, social efficacy, and strengthening stakeholder relationships in the context of multi-partner collaborative initiatives such as Agri-PPPs. This review of literature explored the underpinning theory of this study, which is the stakeholder theory and its evolution and applicability to Agri-PPPs wherein effective stakeholder management is critical for their success. Furthermore, this theory's link to Agri-PPPs is highlighted in this study as fostering productive relationships and enhancing the functioning and performance of these partnerships. The literature reviewed also explores the association between the stakeholder theory and willingness to participate, arguing that this theory is managerial and crucial for improved participation. Lastly, this review of literature emphasises the importance of willingness to participate in the success and performance of Agri-PPPs.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The detailing and outlining of the methodology and design of the research utilised in this study in the information gathering and analysis connected to the study issue are presented in this chapter. This includes an explanation of the methods employed to comprehend the qualitative data, which consists of a discussion of the paradigm for the research. Further, this chapter narrates the participants, the technique used in sampling the participants for the study, and their relation with the Agri-PPP of interest within the framework for research. A coding manual guided by the theoretical framework was developed for deductive thematic analysis purposes. The chapter also addresses research quality, ethical considerations, and confidentiality concerns.

### **3.2 Research design**

A research design can most appropriately be described as an approach or plan of action that is selected and carried out to combine different study components in a logical and cogent manner (Ngulube and Ngulube, 2015; de Klerk and Harmse, 2020; Scholtz, de Klerk and de Beer, 2021; Makwembere, 2022). This ensures that the study's research problem and objectives are addressed appropriately. Makwembere (2022) defined research design as the coherent flow that links the empirical data to a study's original research question and, eventually, to the conclusions of a study. The research design utilised for this study was the evaluation research method, which was examined through qualitative methods. This study adopted the post-positivism research paradigm, which can be described as an approach to knowledge based on an unconscious evaluation of the nature of reality (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Fox, 2008). Furthermore, the post-positivism research paradigm aims to cultivate objective and generalisable knowledge concerning social patterns, aiming to assert the existence of prevalent characteristics or rules in connections between predetermined variables. The relevance of the post-positivist paradigm to this research is construed on the premise that through this paradigm, the researcher takes on the role of learning rather than testing and needs to be able to perceive the entire picture while attempting to engage in social construct (Taylor and Medina, 2011).

Given this study's evaluation of the factors that influence small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP, understanding how and why these factors influence small-scale

farmers or don't influence small-scale farmers to participate in an Agri-PPP willingly is central to understanding how sustainable stakeholder management can ultimately be advanced.

For this study, a qualitative technique was considered appropriate. This was because an in-depth understanding was needed as to what factors influence small-scale farmers' willingness to participate or not to participate in an Agri-PPP. This necessitated one to acquire insight into their thoughts, interests, aspects of money and how their immediate social environment and society at large influenced them or did not influence them to participate in an Agri-PPP, to name a few. Also, a qualitative technique was suitable for this study because the researcher sought to gain an "insider's view" of the group under study, which was small-scale farmers. As a qualitative study, this study sought to comprehend people's experiences and to help them express their viewpoints through the undertaking of interviews (Mohajan, 2018). When little is known about a topic, Jamshed (2014) and Mohajan (2018) confirmed and recommended that the qualitative research approach is the most pertinent approach to be undertaken in discovering more about the topic in question. Khosdel and Bakshan (2015) confirmed that willingness to participate is a relatively new and emerging concept. Thus, as is the case above, qualitative research is appropriate in this regard because little is currently known about the willingness to participate concept and the researcher, through this study, seeks to discover more about it. Strengthening the qualitative approach to a greater extent is that through the study, recommendations are to be articulated on how small-scale farmers can potentially participate in Agri-PPPs.

### **3.3 Research method - Evaluation**

This study employed an evaluation research technique within a qualitative research design (Kellaghan, 2010). The relevance of the evaluation research method to this study is premised on its objectives and purpose of providing information that can be used in decision-making. Furthermore, as this study seeks to advance knowledge and decision-making, which may lead to practicable solicitations, the evaluation research method is applicable to this study. Considering this, the focus of the evaluation research method in the setting of this study will aid in the profound understanding of the factors that influence small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP and stakeholder interconnectedness through collaborative multi-partner initiatives and ultimately advance sustainable stakeholder management.

### **3.4 Data collection**

Semi-structured and in-depth interviews were utilised as a data collection instrument (Kvale, 1996) to collect data for this study. These semi-structured and in-depth interviews were held with five small-scale grain farmers from each of the five district municipalities in the South

African province of the Eastern Cape. These district municipalities are O.R. Tambo, Alfred Nzo, Joe Gqabi, Chris Hani, and Amathole. These interviews focused on asking the potential participants various questions to seek and obtain specific information while encouraging them to express their views.

#### **3.4.1 Semi-structured interviews**

A crucial component of a worthy interview is enabling the interviewees to discuss their experiences concerning a specific social phenomenon that the interviewer is observing (Frances, Coughlan and Cronin, 2009; Jamshed, 2014). Jamshed (2014) confirmed that an interview is the most appropriate qualitative research data collection format. Consequently, as this is a qualitative research study, an in depth and semi-structured interview process was assumed. This gives this study the beneficial advantage of using a set of interview questions while allowing enough latitude to explore any relevant side subjects that may have come up throughout the interview process (Frances, Coughlan and Cronin, 2009; Leedy and Ormrod, 2016; Dunwoodie, Macaulay and Newman, 2022). Equally, using an in-depth interview explicitly acknowledges that to get the information needed, the researcher would unavoidably have to probe for further explanation and possible examples (Sayrs, 1998; McGrath, Palmgren and Liljedahl, 2019).

An interview schedule, attached as Appendix 1, was prepared and sent to prospective interviewees prior to the interviews. Written consent was obtained from each interviewee to record their interview. After this consent was obtained, each interview was recorded so the interviewer could record each conversation verbatim and, if needs be, also check the recording against the text to ensure the data was accurate. To ensure the conversation was recorded verbatim, the researcher of this study utilised Otter.ai as a reliable recording tool. Where required, the text was appropriately amended. The interviewee was provided with the text document to ensure the incisiveness of the recording of the discussion and to give the interviewee an opportunity to take further information into account. Where and if necessary, follow-up interviews were carried out to fill up any gaps in participants' responses or to elicit further details about themes that were beginning to emerge.

#### **3.4.2 Population and sampling**

The population of this study was small-scale farmers in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. Sampling is foremost in qualitative research (Robinson, 2014). Purposive sampling (Campbell, Greenwood, Prior, Shearer, Walkem, Young, Bywaters, and Walker, 2020) was used to select the participants (small-scale farmers) of the research because it determines and

selects participants that are most likely to yield the most pertinent and appropriate information. Moreover, this study adopted purposive sampling because it ensured a broad viewpoint was attained with regard to the factors under study. Robinson (2014) and Campbell et al. (2020) affirmed that purposively selected participants can increase the breadth of comprehension in addressing the research propositions. Therefore, a large or random sample is unnecessary for qualitative research (Robinson, 2014; Campbell et al., 2020). A researcher assumes a purposive technique centred on the presumption that, given a study's aims and objectives, certain kinds of people could have important and differing views relevant to the study proposition and, as such, should be encompassed in the sample. Considering the qualitative nature of this study, it will investigate the factors that influence small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP.

Therefore, small-scale farmers who specifically produce grains such as yellow maize, soybeans, sunflower, and oats and are not currently participating in a grain production enhancement Agricultural Public-Private Partnership (Agri-PPP) project were purposively selected for this study. This initiative is between two organisations, namely the Ukhanyo Farmer Development Non-profit Organisation (NPO) and the company John Deere Africa-Middle East (Feni, 2023). Secondly, written consent was obtained from the NPO to gain access to its small-scale farmer database so the researcher could purposively select the sample of these farmers. Feni (2023) reported that this Agri-PPP is currently being undertaken in five district municipalities in the South African province of the Eastern Cape, namely O.R. Tambo, Alfred Nzo, Joe Gqabi, Chris Hani, and Amathole (see Figure 1.2). Braun and Clarke (2006) recommended a minimum sample of six to be sufficient in a qualitative study because it is large enough to make logical explanations for the sample. Thus, this qualitative study will target 10 small-scale farmers that are currently participating in this Agri-PPP and 15 small-scale farmers that are currently not participating in this Agri-PPP, resulting in a total sample size of 25 small-scale farmers from the five district municipalities mentioned above.

### **3.5 Data analysis**

The data analysis procedure entails assembling or reconstructing data that is true to the original participant's stories in a way that is sincere or understandable to ensure that this procedure is comprehensive, rigorous and transparent (Bowen, 2009; Noble and Smith, 2014). As such, every interview undertaken in this study was recorded and transcribed verbatim. As a foundation for analysis, the recorded transcripts were utilised. For simplified accessibility and safekeeping, the original recording and authenticated transcripts were stored in a (password-

protected) cloud storage facility. This implied that accessibility to the data could be effortlessly obtainable if additional analysis, re-analysis and or reviewing were necessary. The adapted conceptual framework from Khosdel and Bakshan (2015) and Adjabui (2018) served as a foundation for the interview questions, which are attached as Appendix 1. A deductive thematic analysis of the data was used as this analysis method was appropriate for determining, analysing, and reporting patterns or themes within the interview data. In the context of qualitative research, deductive thematic analysis utilises theoretical propositions derived from a review of the literature and serves as a point of departure that subsequently informs how the data is collected and analysed (Pearse, 2019).

### **3.6 Research quality**

Quantitative researchers have frequently questioned the trustworthiness of qualitative data (Elo, Kääriäinen, Kanste, Pölkki, Utriainen, Kyngäs, 2014). This is because each field of research approaches the conventional concepts of data validity and reliability differently (Shenton, 2004; Anderson, 2010; Marshall and Rossman, 2014; Kalu and Bwalya, 2017).

The credibility of this study was ensured by allowing participants to see the interview discussion and assess its correctness and feedback on the degree to which their responses had been correctly recorded (Riege, 2003). They were also given feedback regarding the extent to which their opinions had been correctly recorded (Creswell, 1994; Riege, 2003). The participants were granted an opportunity to modify their answers as needed and furnish more details if they thought it essential.

Dependability within this study was ensured through a thorough study methodology and consistency throughout the inquiry process using a reliable tool to record all the interview data (Otter.ai) (Bitsch, 2005). Also, all the interview data will be archived for any future reference. Further to this, dependability in this study was ensured by acknowledging and being aware of the research to protect against their theoretical stance and prejudices.

### **3.7 Ethical considerations**

Ethical principles are crucial for all types of research (Louw and Delpont, 2006). Ethical principles for qualitative research are centred on protecting participants of a research study to ensure they are not harmed (Roets, 2017; Arifin, 2018). Qualitative research frequently necessitates the researcher's engagement in intricate, challenging, sensitive topics, situations and relationships that are unpredictable (Taquette and Souza, 2022). Ethics should always be considered when human interaction dynamics are present (Louw and Delpont, 2006). Standard

ethical norms should be followed since ethical concerns might emerge throughout the interview process (Louw and Delpont, 2006). These include respecting the participants' autonomy where appropriate, maintaining confidentiality at all times, acquiring informed permission at all levels, and ensuring voluntary participation (Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Fomani, Shoghi and Chergai, 2014).

Ethics approval was obtained from the Rhodes University Human Research Ethics Committee (RU-HREC) with the ethics approval number: 2024-7595-8413. The confirmation of ethics approval is attached in Appendix 2, and this approval enabled the research to be undertaken. Informed consent was attained from all the interviewees (i.e. small-scale farmers).

This study utilised a formal consent form, and all the interviewees were made aware through a participant informed consent declaration that their confidentiality and anonymity of records would be sustained. Furthermore, all interviewees were made aware of the conflict of interest that the researcher of this study had with the NPO and that their participation in the study was entirely voluntary. Further to this, the interviewees were made aware that should they wish to withdraw from participating at any point, they could do so without any negative consequences. The participant informed consent declaration is attached as Appendix 3. The validity of this participant-informed consent declaration was recognised only through a valid signature from each interviewee. During the interview process, ethical principles were upheld by respecting the autonomy of the interviewees where applicable and ensuring transparency. Moreover, the interviewing procedure was transparent and open and encouraged the research participants to share knowledge and communicate freely without worrying about fabrications or deceptive study findings.

### **3.8 Chapter conclusion**

The chapter described the research methodology utilised to acquire and analyse qualitative data. This research's data was collected through semi-structured interviews and, consequently, analysed through the utilisation of deductive thematic analysis. The quality of data of this study was strengthened by ensuring the credibility and dependability of the data. This was achieved by taking into account the credibility and dependability of this research's data. Compliance with the requisite ethical standards set out by the RU-HREC were complied with. Additionally, confidentiality and anonymity were sustained and maintained throughout the interview process. Lastly, the following chapter explains the study's findings in connection to the published literature after presenting the data gathered, examined, and evaluated during the interviews.

## CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

### 4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the findings of this study, which have been generated through numerous semi-structured interviews that were held with grain-producing small-scale farmers who are participating and not participating in an Agri-PPP between Ukhanyo Farmer Development NPO and John Deere Africa-Middle East taking place in the South African province of the Eastern Cape. This study sought to evaluate the factors that influence small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP. The interviews were conducted in IsiXhosa and were subsequently translated into English because the mother tongue of the interviewees was IsiXhosa. The findings presented in this chapter are qualitative in nature and were analysed by utilising a thematic approach. Additionally, the findings of this study are presented in accordance with the objectives that were outlined in Chapter 1.

For the sake of completeness, the objectives of this study are enlisted below, with this chapter presenting the findings for the first two study objectives enlisted below. The final objective of this study will be addressed in Chapter 5:

- To assess small-scale farmers' willingness and/or hesitance to participate in an Agri-PPP;
- To assess the drivers that influence small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP

### 4.2 Summary of sampled respondents

Concerning this qualitative study, a total of 25 small-scale farmers were purposively selected and interviewed. This comprised of 10 small-scale farmers that are currently participating in this Agri-PPP and 15 small-scale farmers that are currently not participating in this Agri-PPP from the five district municipalities mentioned in (Table 4.1) below.

**Table 4.1:** Small-scale farmers noted per district municipality

District municipality	Sampled small-scale farmers	Respondent code
O.R. Tambo	Five respondents	SSF 1 – SSF 5
Alfred Nzo	Five respondents	SSF 6 – SSF 10
Joe Gqabi	Five respondents	SSF 11 – SSF 15
Chris Hani	Five respondents	SSF 16 – SSF 20
Amathole	Five respondents	SSF 21 – SSF 25

### 4.3 Identified themes of small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP

From the data, three main themes were identified as themes of small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP, namely, access to and the utilisation of advanced technology, economic benefits, technical support, and training. The identified main themes were broken down into five sub-themes. These themes and sub-themes emerged in response to the question of obtaining more background information regarding the interviewee's participation in an Agri-PPP, as found in the interview schedule attached as Appendix 1 in the study. Similarly, these themes and sub-themes also emerged in response to the question of the interviewees describing their personal feelings towards participating in an Agri-PPP, as found in the interview schedule attached in Appendix 1. These three main themes and five sub-themes are depicted in (Table 4.2) below.

**Table 4.2:** Themes and sub-themes of small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP

<b>Theme 1: Access to and the utilisation of advanced technology</b> Sub-theme: a) Having access to leading agricultural machinery
<b>Theme 2: Economic benefits</b> Sub-themes: a) Market access b) Increased income potential
<b>Theme 3: Technical support and training</b> Sub-theme: a) Capacity-building

#### 4.3.1 Theme 1: Access to and the utilisation of advanced technology

The first identified theme related to small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP was access to and the utilisation of advanced technology. The data revealed one sub-theme under this main theme as follows:

##### a) Having access to leading and modern agricultural machinery

The concept of having access to leading and modern agricultural machinery was common amongst all of the small-scale farmers who were willing to participate in an Agri-PPP. The data showed that all the small-scale farmers who were willing to participate in an Agri-PPP indicated that having access to leading and modern agricultural machinery would significantly improve the efficiency and productivity of their grain-producing enterprises. Furthermore, this would enable the timely execution of time-sensitive grain-production-related tasks such as soil

preparation, planting and harvesting. They further indicated that access to leading and modern agricultural machinery would enhance precision in applying inputs such as fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides, greater upward scaling of their grain-producing enterprises, and reduced post-harvest losses. The findings also revealed a common indication amongst all the interviewees that not having access to leading and modern agricultural machinery will disadvantage the small-scale farmers who are willing to participate in an Agri-PPP because it will lead to the continued utilisation of untransformed and unsustainable grain production practices. The interviewees made the following comments:

- *“As a willing participant of an Agri-PPP, accessing the latest agricultural machinery that possesses cutting-edge technology is a critical and transformative factor in improving throughput in my grain-producing enterprise as a small-scale grain farmer.” (SSF 3)*
- *“By having access to modern agricultural machinery, completing grain-production related tasks on time such as preparing the soil for planting, planting and harvesting, is in my view a driving force behind the success of grain production because you get a lot more done in a shorter space of time allowing you to focus more on resource optimisation and reducing the waste of inputs.” (SSF 8)*
- *“As a small-scale grain farmer willing to participate in this Agri-PPP, not being able to access technologically advanced agricultural machinery will not enable me to adopt more sustainable grain production practices such as minimum tillage, therefore contributing to increasing environmental degradation and poor soil health.” (SSF 18)*

#### **4.3.2 Theme 2: Economic benefits**

The second identified theme pertaining to small-scale farmers’ willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP was economic benefits. The data showed two sub-themes under this main theme as follows:

##### **a) Market access**

The data showed that the market access concept was frequent among all interviewees willing to participate in an Agri-PPP. They all commonly pointed out that participating in an Agri-PPP will enable them to have access to more diverse and reliable markets, which will afford them enhanced economic benefits such as financial stability and improved cash flow management practices. The findings further indicated that the interviewees considered market access a pivotal component in the success of their grain-producing enterprises because it enabled them to access higher-value markets that offer higher prices and strengthen their competitive

advantage. Another common finding among the interviewees who were willing to participate in an Agri-PPP in the context of market access was the ability to negotiate and secure better terms for their produce. This was based on the premise that by connecting directly with buyers in the market, more favourable pricing and payment terms can be negotiated for their produce, thereby eliminating the need for intermediaries in the marketing process and ensuring market stability. They all agreed that this ability would lead to greater marketing autonomy when they willingly participated in an Agri-PPP. The interviewees made the following comments:

- *“Accessing varied and dependable markets has been an immense challenge as a small-scale grain producer despite my produce meeting all the market norms and standards such as quality, moisture content, oil and starch content, which has not benefited me economically. However, my participation in this Agri-PPP will present greater access to markets for my produce, bring about enriched financial stability, and elevate cash flow management techniques.” (SSF 13)*
- *“As a small-scale grain farmer, I strongly believe that market access and, subsequently, high-value market access is very important because of the premium and competitive prices that one can get for their produce in these unique markets. One can become a powerful competitor in this space.” (SSF 23)*
- *“As a small-scale grain farmer willing to participate in this Agri-PPP, I have always had to be a price taker for my produce in the market because of the presence of the middleman in the grain marketing process. Nevertheless, by participating in this Agri-PPP, I am better positioned to link directly with buyers in the market and negotiate more favourable terms and conditions and prices for my produce.” (SSF 4)*

#### **b) Increased income potential**

As shown in the data, the concept of increased income was common amongst all of the interviewees who were willing to participate in an Agri-PPP. Commonly, all the interviewees pointed out that by participating in an Agri-PPP, the potential for their grain-producing enterprises to generate more revenue and profit over time can be maximised through effective cost management practices like financial planning and budgeting. The findings showed that the interviewees commonly indicated that effective cost management was premised on identifying cost-saving opportunities through the efficient allocation of resources, ensuring a greater portion of their revenue contributes to profit, thus improving overall income potential. The findings also indicated that the interviewees considered product innovation as a critical component in the context of increased income potential because it advantageously positioned

them as small-scale grain farmers to satisfy changing consumer demands, thus capitalising on their earning potential. The interviewees made the following comments:

- *“From my perspective, participating willingly in this Agri-PPP can earn my grain-producing enterprise more money over time through efficient cost control techniques such as budgeting and financial planning. The foundation of efficient cost control techniques is finding ways for me to reduce costs by allocating resources more effectively. This ensures that a larger share of my grain-producing enterprise's revenue contributes directly to profit and ultimately enhances the enterprises' overall income potential.” (SSF 2)*
- *“My viewpoint as a small-scale grain farmer who is willing to participate in this Agri-PPP is that product innovation is key in driving increased income potential because this strategic focus enables my grain-producing enterprise to embrace, adapt and respond to ever-evolving consumer demands, giving me a competitive advantage in the market and ensuring that I capitalise on opportunities that directly contribute to my increased income potential.” (SSF 9)*

#### **4.3.3 Theme 3: Technical support and training**

The third identified theme pertaining to small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP was technical support and training. The data showed one sub-theme under this main theme as follows:

##### **a) Capacity-building**

As shown in the data, the concept of capacity building was common amongst the interviewees who were willing to participate in an Agri-PPP. They all commonly pointed out that capacity building in the form of education and training programs can lead to them being empowered to adopt more efficient and sustainable production practices, which would contribute to the long-term success of their enterprise and that of the environment. They also indicated that the capacity-building aspect is very valuable for them as small-scale grain farmers because only some of them have received formal education, and they all have access to high-quality agricultural extension services. The interviewees made the following comments:

- *“As a small-scale farmer who is willing to participate in an Agri-PPP, I strongly believe that capacity-building through learning is central to me enhancing my ability to implement production practices that are environmentally friendly and productive within my grain-producing enterprise. I believe this is the case because these practices*

*lead to a more sustainable approach that aligns with the long-term success of my grain-producing enterprise and that of the broader environment.” (SSF 15)*

- *“As a small-scale farmer willing to participate in an Agri-PPP, capacity-building is valuable because of my limited formal education and access to agricultural extension services. I see the value of capacity-building in the context of an Agri-PPP as a critical support system that bridges the gap between my current skills and the technical knowledge needed for the modern-day grain-producing enterprise.” (SSF 21)*

#### **4.4 Key themes of small-scale farmers’ hesitance in Agri-PPP participation**

From the data, three main themes were identified as themes of small-scale farmers’ hesitance to participate in an Agri-PPP, namely, complexity and bureaucracy, trust issues, and financial concerns. The identified main themes were broken down into three sub-themes. These themes and sub-themes emerged in response to the interviewees' question about their feelings towards their non-participation in an Agri-PPP, as found in the interview schedule attached in Appendix 1 of the study. These three main themes and three sub-themes are depicted in (Table 4.3) below.

**Table 4.3:** Themes and sub-themes of small-scale farmers’ hesitance to participate in an Agri-PPP

<b>Theme 4: Complexity and bureaucracy</b> Sub-theme: a) Complex processes and bureaucratic hurdles
<b>Theme 5: Trust issues</b> Sub-themes: a) Past negative experiences
<b>Theme 6: Financial concerns</b> Sub-themes: a) High costs

##### **4.4.1 Theme 4: Complexity and bureaucracy**

The first identified theme related to small-scale farmers’ hesitance to participate in an Agri-PPP was complexity and bureaucracy. The data revealed one sub-theme under this main theme as follows:

##### **a) Complex processes and bureaucratic hurdles**

The concept of complex processes and bureaucratic hurdles emerged as a common concept amongst all of the small-scale farmers who were hesitant to participate in an Agri-PPP. The data showed that all small-scale farmers who were hesitant to participate in an Agri-PPP indicated that stringent and often complicated eligibility criteria and procedures such as strict qualification thresholds and onerous compliance audits make them hesitant to

participate as these are difficult to meet and comply with. The data also indicated that the small-scale farmers who were hesitant to participate in an Agri-PPP were all in agreement that this hesitance was exacerbated by their limited resources, knowledge and technical capacity. The findings further revealed a common indication that all small-scale farmers who were hesitant to participate in an Agri-PPP ascribed their hesitance to the burden of ongoing monitoring and reporting concerning their progress in formats they are not accustomed to. The findings also indicated that all of the small-scale farmers who were hesitant to participate in an Agri-PPP indicated that lengthy and cumbersome application procedures contributed to their hesitance to participate. Furthermore, they were all in agreement that these protracted and cumbersome application procedures were intimidating because of the uncertain and extended processing times they had to deal with. The interviewees made the following comments:

- *“My hesitation to participate in an Agri-PPP is due to its complicated and rigid processes and eligibility criteria, which create an overwhelming sense of exclusion. This complexity makes complying difficult and makes me reluctant to participate in an Agri-PPP.” (SSF 20)*
- *“My hesitance to participate in an Agri-PPP is attributable to my limited resources, knowledge, and technical capacity. These three components, I believe, are important when overcoming the complex processes and bureaucratic hurdles that are often rooted in an Agri-PPP.” (SSF 6)*
- *“The administrative fear and burden of having to continuously report my progress with regards to my grain-producing enterprise in formats that I am not familiar with makes me, as a small-scale grain farmer, hesitant to participate in an Agri-PPP because I feel that it is time-consuming, overwhelming and it undermines my autonomy. This administrative burden makes my participation in an Agri-PPP seem more like a liability than a benefit.” (SSF 12)*
- *“My hesitance towards participating in an Agri-PPP as a small-scale grain farmer is the application procedures that are drawn-out and laborious, which give me a sense of overall inaccessibility and inability to navigate these procedures successfully.” (SSF 17)*

#### 4.4.2 Theme 5: Trust issues

##### a) Past negative experiences

As indicated in the data, the concept of past negative experiences was frequent amongst all of the small-scale farmers who were hesitant to participate in an Agri-PPP. They all commonly pointed out that they have in the past experienced exploitation because of their limited bargaining power and resources, which has led to them not benefitting fully from an Agri-PPP, thereby fostering hesitance to participate in an Agri-PPP. The findings also revealed that small-scale farmers who were hesitant to participate in an Agri-PPP attributed their hesitance to historical failed Agri-PPPs, which have left them in a precarious financial position, making them highly risk-averse when considering participating in an Agri-PPP. Another finding that the data revealed in the context of small-scale farmers' hesitance to participate in an Agri-PPP was unmet expectations in previous Agri-PPPs that have eroded their trust in these partnerships and created a sense of disillusionment owing to a disconnect between what was expected and what was delivered in reality. The findings further indicated that past negative experiences have had a negative psychological impact on small-scale farmers, which has contributed to their hesitance to participate in an Agri-PPP because of the inherent sense of feeling powerless in influencing the outcomes of these partnerships. The interviewees made the following comments:

- *“In the past, I have participated in an Agri-PPP and have been subjected to unfair terms and conditions, which have been disproportionate. I view these partnerships as important for agricultural development; however, because I lacked sufficient bargaining power, I was exploited to the point that I felt short-changed by the partners. This is why I am currently hesitant to participate in an Agri-PPP.” (SSF 2)*
- *“The previous Agri-PPP I participated in failed, and this has made me reluctant to participate in any other Agri-PPP because of the current difficult financial position that my grain-producing enterprise is in. Participating in another Agri-PPP is risky and can worsen matters further, threatening my livelihood.” (SSF 25)*
- *“When I participated in an Agri-PPP previously, I had high expectations. However, these unmet expectations led to an erosion of trust, frustration and disillusionment in an Agri-PPP.” (SSF 14)*
- *“In previous Agri-PPPs that I have participated in, I have felt as though I had little to no input in the decision-making processes of these partnerships because of the unbalanced power dynamics. This made me feel disconnected from the outcomes of*

*these partnerships because I could not affirm my preferences and interests, and this led to me feeling a deep sense of frustration and disempowerment. Ultimately, this experience had a negative psychological impact on me.” (SSF 1)*

#### **4.4.3 Theme 6: Financial concerns**

##### **a) High costs**

According to the data, high costs emerged as a common theme amongst all small-scale farmers who were hesitant to participate in an Agri-PPP. These small-scale farmers who were hesitant to participate in an Agri-PPP all commonly pointed out that the substantial upfront and ongoing financial costs required to be paid for them to participate in an Agri-PPP are prohibitively high and, therefore, unaffordable. The data showed that all of the small-scale farmers who were hesitant to participate in an Agri-PPP agreed that these high costs would make them financially insecure. If they had to participate in an Agri-PPP, they would have to take on debt or divert resources away from their personal or grain-producing enterprises' essential needs. The data further indicated that they all concurred that hidden costs associated with Agri-PPPs contributed to their hesitation to participate in an Agri-PPP. They ascribed this to hidden costs exacerbating the already high cost of participating in an Agri-PPP. It is interesting to note that opportunity cost was cited as a contributing factor to their hesitance to participate in an Agri-PPP because participating in such partnerships often requires them to change the grain crop or grain crops that they produce so they can focus on a specific grain crop, possibly deserting traditional practices of producing these grain crops or decreasing their cultivation of which they emphasised to be essential for food security. The interviewees made the following comments:

- *“In my view, the high initial and continuing expenses are key factors driving my reluctance to participate in an Agri-PPP, and as such, the financial burden of participating in such a partnership is simply unaffordable for me given my access to limited financial resources.” (SSF 16)*
- *“An aspect of high costs that makes me hesitant to participate in an Agri-PPP is the compliance standard of having to take on some debt or divert resources which are critical away from my personal needs or the needs of my business to comply with this standard. This can lead me to be financially insecure. My grain-producing enterprise operates on thin financial margins, and committing to complying with these standards can potentially have serious implications for the sustainability of my enterprise and livelihood.” (SSF 22)*

- *“The prospect of encountering unexpected expenses related to an Agri-PPP makes me reluctant to participate in it because these costs would further increase the already steep expenses of participating in an Agri-PPP.” (SSF 10)*
- *“Another aspect that makes me hesitant to participate in an Agri-PPP is the aspect of opportunity cost because of the potential trade-off between maximising profits through commercial grain production and maintaining longstanding traditional practices tied to crop diversity. These longstanding practices serve not only to ensure household food security for my family and the community but also serve to prevent the loss of crop diversity.” (SSF 5)*

#### **4.5 Drivers of small-scale farmers’ willingness in Agri-PPP participation**

From the data, six themes were identified as drivers that influence small-scale farmers’ willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP. These themes were attitude, awareness, perceived financial gain, social influence, legal and regulatory requirements and government facilitation. These themes emerged in response to questions related to the factors that influence small-scale farmers’ willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP, as found in the literature review in chapter 2 of this study and in the interview schedule attached in Appendix 1.

##### **4.5.1 Theme 1: Attitude**

In the data, it emerged that all of the small-scale farmers who were willing to participate in an Agri-PPP had a positive attitude towards such a partnership, thus influencing them to participate in it. These small-scale farmers all agreed that their positive attitude towards such a partnership was premised on the potential economic and technological benefits and opportunities they would receive if they had to participate. Equally, all these interviewees also agreed that their historical positive, participatory experiences in Agri-PPPs have brought about a positive attitude towards such a partnership. These previous positive experiences have built trust and optimism and enabled them to strengthen their relationships with other stakeholders. It also emerged in the data that all of the small-scale farmers who were willing to participate in an Agri-PPP attributed their positive attitude towards such a partnership to the formidable reputation of the stakeholders in a partnership together. Furthermore, they all affirmed that these stakeholders have a strong track record of delivering effectively on their mandates in other Agri-PPPs. This entrenches their positive attitude towards an Agri-PPP.

In contrast, the data showed that all of the small-scale farmers who were unwilling to participate in an Agri-PPP had a negative attitude towards such a partnership, therefore influencing them not to participate in it. These small-scale farmers all agreed that their negative attitude towards

such a partnership was based on their concerns about financial risk and their reluctance to shift from their traditional grain production practices to new grain production techniques and management systems unfamiliar to them. Their negative attitude towards such a partnership was also based on their concern about the potential loss of control over their grain-producing enterprises. The interviewees made the following comments:

- *“In my view, my positive thoughts are influencing me to participate willingly in an Agri-PPP. These positive thoughts are grounded on the perceived economic and technological value it could bring to my grain-producing enterprise.” (SSF 7)*
- *“My past participatory experiences in Agri-PPPs have shaped a strong positive attitude towards these partnerships and have built a foundation of trust, optimism and relationship strengthening with other stakeholders. In my view, these partnerships have worked well and delivered on their intended outcomes. Furthermore, these positive past participatory experiences have enabled me to see these partnerships as opportunities for sustained positive progress.” (SSF 11)*
- *“An aspect that has shaped and influenced my positive attitude towards willingly participating in an Agri-PPP is the strong track record and good reputation of the partners involved in it because they have consistently fulfilled their mandates by being trustworthy and effective.” (SSF 19)*
- *“My negative attitude towards participating in an Agri-PPP is based on my financial risk concerns because this risk can be harmful to my grain-producing enterprise. Another concern I have is potentially neglecting the traditional grain production practices that I have grown up learning and knowing and changing to ones that are foreign to me and less suitable in my local context.” (SSF 24)*
- *“My negative attitude towards participating in an Agri-PPP is centred on reducing my independence to make decisions over important aspects of my grain-producing enterprise. This is because an Agri-PPP can impose strict guidelines or dictate terms and conditions limiting my ability to make independent decisions in the best interest of my grain-producing enterprise.” (SSF 3)*

#### **4.5.2 Theme 2: Awareness**

The findings indicated that all of the small-scale farmers who were willing to participate in an Agri-PPP were aware that such a partnership exists, thus influencing them to participate in it. These small-scale farmers all commonly pointed out that the visibility of such a partnership enabled them to see the advantages of participating in it and broaden their knowledge about it.

They also commonly indicated that awareness through continuous engagement between them and an Agri-PPP enabled them to see the support systems, resources and communication channels available to them if they would participate in such a partnership.

Conversely, the findings revealed that all of the small-scale farmers who were unwilling to participate in an Agri-PPP indicated that they were unaware of such a partnership. These small-scale farmers were all in agreement that their non-awareness limited their access to information about such a partnership, thus limiting their appetite to participate in it. Furthermore, they also all commonly pointed out that their non-awareness of such a partnership was exacerbated by poor communication strategies on the part of the partner's themselves, which made comprehending the information about the partnership difficult for them. The interviewees made the following comments:

- *“The visibility of an Agri-PPP influences me to participate willingly in such a partnership because it enables me to see the potential benefits of participating in it and expands my knowledge about it.” (SSF 15)*
- *“In my view, I see ongoing engagement between myself and an Agri-PPP as a way of seeing routes of communication, resources and support and where an environment is created to directly engage with stakeholders to build a clearer understanding of how the partnership works.” (SSF 7)*
- *“I am not aware of this partnership, and my non-awareness influences me not to participate in it willingly because I have limited information about its goals, potential benefits and operational mechanisms.” (SSF 22)*
- *“My non-awareness of this partnership was made worse by the ineffective communication approaches used by the partnership's stakeholders, which made it difficult to access or understand essential information about an Agri-PPP.” (SSF 8)*

#### **4.5.3 Theme 3: Perceived financial gain**

In the data, it emerged that perceived financial gain influenced all of the small-scale farmers to participate in an Agri-PPP willingly. These small-scale farmers all commonly pointed out that their perceived financial gain comes from the cost-saving opportunities aspect that an Agri-PPP offers. The findings further indicated that these small-scale farmers who were influenced by perceived financial gain to participate willingly in an Agri-PPP attributed this to access to financial resources, which they viewed as an opportunity to increase their economic capital. Interestingly, none of the interviewees commonly pointed out that perceived financial gain

influenced them not to participate in an Agri-PPP willingly. The interviewees made the following comments:

- *“Perceived financial gain for me comes from the prospect of saving on costs through an Agri-PPP, which aligns with my primary goal of maintaining profitability.” (SSF 18)*
- *“I view perceived financial gain as an opportunity to significantly increase my economic capital through an Agri-PPP by accessing financial resources.” (SSF 2)*

#### **4.5.4 Theme 4: Social influence**

The findings revealed a common indication that all of the small-scale farmers who were willing to participate in an Agri-PPP agreed that social influence influenced them to participate willingly in such a partnership. These small-scale farmers all commonly indicated that their families, peers, community networks, highly respected leaders and trusted key stakeholders in the agricultural sector influenced them to participate willingly in such a partnership. They all agreed that this was all premised on social validation, and they felt confident in their decision to participate willingly. On the other hand, it is noteworthy to observe that the data revealed divergent views of small-scale farmers who indicated that social influence did not influence them to participate willingly in an Agri-PPP. They all affirmed that their strong sense of independence in the processes of decision-making shaped their non-influence by social influence to participate in an Agri-PPP willingly. Furthermore, they further indicated that this was because they relied on their personal judgement and social experiences rather than the social influence of their families, peers, community networks, highly respected leaders and trusted key stakeholders. The small-scale farmers who held these divergent views also pointed out that while they respected the beliefs and thoughts of the people in their internal and external social environment concerning participating willingly in an Agri-PPP, they prioritised factors such as economic benefits, access to and the utilisation of advanced technology and control over their grain-producing enterprises over these social considerations. The interviewees made the following comments:

- *“From my perspective, my peers, family, networks in the community, and the leaders that I look up to in the agricultural sector influenced me socially to consider participating willingly in an Agri-PPP. Furthermore, I felt reassured that by following people's advice in my internal and external social environment, I was making a good, credible choice to participate willingly in such a partnership.” (SSF 24)*

- *“I view social influence as an aspect that does not influence me to participate willingly in an Agri-PPP because when I make decisions around my grain-producing enterprise, I make them from an individual perspective. Also, my decision to participate in such an Agri-PPP is based on my personal assessment of the financial and practical aspects of such a partnership rather than the social influence of my internal and external environment.” (SSF 5)*
- *“I respect the thoughts and beliefs of people in my internal and external social environment when it comes to participating willingly in an Agri-PPP, but for me, factors like economic benefits, access to and the utilisation of advanced technology and control over my business carry more weight than social validation or the expectations of people in my social space.” (SSF 12)*

#### **4.5.5 Theme 5: Legal and regulatory requirements**

As shown in the data, it emerged that legal and regulatory requirements influence small-scale farmers not to participate in an Agri-PPP. These small-scale farmers ascribed this to the complex and stringent legal and regulatory requirements of such a partnership, which they affirmed to be difficult to comprehend and comply with. They further elaborated that legal and regulatory requirements in the context of burdensome legal documentation and the possibility of coming across unforeseen legal issues influenced them not to participate in an Agri-PPP. Interestingly, the data did not reveal any small-scale farmers who were influenced by legal and regulatory requirements to participate in an Agri-PPP willingly. The interviewees made the following comments:

- *“In my view, an Agri-PPP's legal and regulatory requirements influence me not to willingly participate in it because they are hard for me to understand and abide by.” (SSF 13)*
- *“Legal and regulatory requirements do influence me not to participate in an Agri-PPP because I view them as a burden when it comes to legal documentation, and I fear encountering unforeseen legal issues.” (SSF 9)*

#### **4.5.6 Theme 6: Government facilitation**

From the data, it emerged that government facilitation influenced all of the small-scale farmers to participate in an Agri-PPP willingly. These small-scale farmers all agreed that government facilitation in the context of policy and regulatory framework implementation aided them in participating in such a partnership because a conducive environment was created for it to thrive and be successful. They further indicated that government facilitation strengthened the

credibility of an Agri-PPP because when they see the government endorsing such a partnership, they are reassured of its legitimacy. The data further indicated that these small-scale farmers who were influenced by government facilitation to participate willingly in an Agri-PPP all agreed that this facilitation was a tool for them to narrow the equality gap between themselves and their commercial counterparts, who are highly resourced and technologically advanced.

In contrast, the data also revealed divergent views of small-scale farmers who were not influenced by government facilitation to participate willingly in an Agri-PPP in that they all agreed that this was because of the inefficiencies and lacklustre nature of government. They further indicated that from their experience, government facilitation is different from what is expected in reality, as they feel such a partnership needs to receive the required institutional support from the government. The interviewees made the following comments:

- *“In my view, I see supportive government regulatory frameworks and policies as a foundation to ensuring a conducive environment is created so I, as a small-scale farmer, can participate in an Agri-PPP.” (SSF 6)*
- *“From my perspective, when the government actively endorses such a partnership, I see it as providing a sense of legitimacy and trustworthiness to such an initiative. Furthermore, I see the active endorsement by the government as a way of ensuring accountability instruments are in place.” (SSF 19)*
- *“I see government facilitation in my view in the context of an Agri-PPP as an important tool to close the gap between myself as a small-scale farmer and a well-resourced commercial farmer, therefore improving my competitiveness.”*
- *“I am not influenced by government facilitation to participate in an Agri-PPP because I have seen the ineffectiveness and the inefficiency of government when it comes to implementing its policies on the ground.” (SSF 4)*
- *“In my view, government facilitation is supposed to create an environment that is enabling and supportive to such a partnership to help it achieve its set outcomes; however, in actual practice, this is either lacking or insufficient.” (SSF 23)*

#### **4.6 Chapter conclusion**

In this chapter, the findings of the study were presented, with the focus being on the willingness and hesitance of small-scale farmers to participate in an Agri-PPP. Furthermore, the findings were presented in line with the objectives of the study. Consequently, several key themes emerged that highlighted small-scale farmers’ willingness or hesitance and the drivers that

influence them to participate in an Agri-PPP willingly. The data indicated that small-scale farmers who were willing to participate in an Agri-PPP attributed this to several drivers such as market access, access to advanced technology, economic benefits, technical support and training, the availability of modern agricultural machinery and the potential for increased income.

In contrast, the findings revealed barriers that contribute to the hesitance of small-scale farmers to participate in an Agri-PPP. Trust issues stemming from past negative experiences, high costs and the complexity of bureaucratic processes were identified as major deterrents. Furthermore, hesitant small-scale farmers expressed a sense of disillusionment due to unmet expectations from previous partnerships that they have participated in, consequently eroding their trust and creating a reluctance to participate in future Agri-PPPs.

In conclusion, the chapter underlines the complex interactions of factors that influence small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP. While there are clear advantages that can be derived from such partnerships, addressing the concerns and barriers faced by hesitant small-scale farmers is imperative for fostering enhanced and sustainable participation in these progressive initiatives.

## **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter aims to present a discussion of the pertinent findings that have emerged from the collected data and are related to the objectives of the study. Furthermore, it uses these to address the final objective of this study, which is to articulate recommendations on how small-scale farmer participation in Agri-PPPs can potentially be enhanced.

### **5.2 Discussion of key findings**

#### **5.2.1 Themes on small-scale farmers' willingness in Agri-PPP participation**

Numerous themes relating to the first objective of the study emerged from the data. The data revealed three main themes (see Sections 4.3.1 to 4.3.3) related to small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP. These themes were further amalgamated into four sub-themes as per the discussion below.

##### **a) Access to and the utilisation of advanced technology**

The first main theme was access to and the utilisation of advanced technology, and under this main theme, having access to leading agricultural machinery emerged as a sub-theme from the data (see Section 4.3.1). This finding aligns with those of Mdoda et al. (2022) and Uddin, Ong and Matous (2023), who found that when small-scale farmers have access to modern agricultural machinery and technology and utilise it effectively, it increases their willingness to participate because it significantly increases their gross income and yield per hectare from different grain crops. According to Muroyiwa, Shokopa, Puseletso and Rantlo (2020) and Dhillon and Moncur (2023), access to modern agricultural machinery and technology reduces small-scale farmer post-harvest losses and reduces their overall input costs, which elevates their economic viability and strengthens their competitiveness. Also, production-related activities can be undertaken on time as they contribute to grain productivity (Muroyiwa et al., 2020). Conversely, this finding confirms those found within the literature as it has been found that small-scale farmers who don't have access to modern agricultural machinery or who don't utilise it effectively exacerbate their production inefficiencies, experience a reduction in their profitability and grain crop quality and contribute to soil degradation (Mdoda et al., 2022; Bastian, Swanepoel and van Niekerk, 2019). It is, therefore, imperative that participation in Agri-PPPs be enhanced to ensure small-scale farmers have access to and can utilise advanced technology.

## **b) Economic benefits**

The second main theme was economic benefits, and under this main theme, market access and increased income potential emerged as sub-themes from the data (see Section 4.3.2). As market access was a prevalent sub-theme in the findings of this study, it confirms findings in the literature that when small-scale farmers participate in an Agri-PPP, they can leverage the resources and market networks of the partnership to ensure they can access different and dependable markets (Barrett, 2008; Poulton, Dorward and Kydd, 2010; Mangeni, 2019). Furthermore, this can be advantageous to them because they can benefit from more competitive prices in the market and their dependency on one market is reduced. The findings of this study under the market access sub-theme agree with the findings of Kydd and Dorward (2004) and Adjabui (2018), who found that accessing markets ensures better financial planning and brings about financial stability to small-scale farmers who are willing to participate in an Agri-PPP because market access provides dependable markets, which results in improved cashflow management practices and increased investment in business development components. Kydd and Dorward (2004) and Mangeni (2019) reported that market access reduces risks that are associated with unstable market prices and demand because often, more than not, small-scale farmers face the double challenge of low market prices and price volatility, which can affect their profitability.

Market access is the foundation for accessing higher-value markets, and small-scale farmers can realise opportunities to increase their revenues by gaining access to more competitive and valuable markets when they take part in an Agri-PPP (Barrett, 2008; Mangeni, 2019). In the literature, market access is a well-documented challenge that small-scale farmers face, and one of the ways to overcome it is to participate in a partnership such as an Agri-PPP (Cheteni and Mokhele, 2019). This is because such a partnership offers structured value chains, which better position small-scale farmers to capitalise on higher prices in higher value markets and strengthen their competitive advantage (Dumani, Mbangcolo, Mpambani, Mpengesi and Titimani, 2023). As evidenced in the findings of this study, when it comes to connecting and negotiating directly with buyers in the market, small-scale farmers who participate in an Agri-PPP willingly can have direct control over how and when their produce should be sold (Cheteni and Mokhele, 2019). This eliminates the need of having to go through intermediaries or middlemen, which leads to enhanced bargaining power, marketing autonomy and stability, the securing of higher prices and better terms and conditions that suit the financial needs of these

small-scale farmers (Ranjan, 2017). This finding concurs with those of Reardon and Timmer (2012) and Poulton and Macartney (2012).

### **c) Technical support and training**

The third main theme was technical support and training, and under this main theme, capacity-building emerged as a sub-theme from the data (see Section 4.3.3). Consistent with literature, capacity-building is an essential component when it comes to small-scale farmers participating willingly in an Agri-PPP because it empowers them to increase their productivity in terms of yield and improves their resource optimisation and environmental stewardship (Apleni, Aliber, Zhou and Zantsi, 2019; Manasoe, Mmbengwa and Lekunze, 2024; Bontsa, Gwala, Mdiya and Mdoda, 2024). Apleni et al. (2019) similarly found that the value of capacity-building is fully realised when those with limited formal education are capacitated through education and training programs to better understand modern agricultural technology and techniques, and ensure this translates to better financial stability.

### **5.2.2) Themes on small-scale farmers' hesitance in Agri-PPP participation**

The data revealed three main themes (see Sections 4.4.1 to 4.4.3) related to small-scale farmers' hesitance to participate in an Agri-PPP. These themes were further synthesised into three sub-themes as per the discussion below.

#### **a) Complexity and bureaucracy**

Under the themes relating to small-scale farmers' hesitance to participate in an Agri-PPP, the first main theme was complexity and bureaucracy, and from the data, complex processes and bureaucratic hurdles emerged as a sub-theme (see Section 4.4.1). Processes that are complicated and bureaucratic hinder small-scale farmers from accessing supportive and innovative partnerships such as Agri-PPPs because such partnerships often fail to consider the realities of this segment of farmers (Mangeni, 2019; Halakhe, Anyango and Mwangi, 2022). Literature highlights that this creates a gap between policy intentions and practical access because what underpins this is the constant and non-adaptable emphasis on overly technical and restrictive frameworks that are disproportionately discriminative towards small-scale farmers (von Loeper et al., 2016). Similar observations have been made in a previous study, and this study extended to find that these complex processes and bureaucratic hurdles exacerbate small-scale farmers' hesitance to participate in Agri-PPPs, and as a result, this leads to disengagement and missed opportunities to advance their business interests (Myeni, Moeletsi, Thavhana, Randela and Mokoena, 2019; Halakhe, Anyango and Mwangi, 2022).

Literature supports the view that the burden of ongoing reporting and monitoring in formats that are unfamiliar to small-scale farmers contributes to their hesitance to participate in an Agri-PPP (Halakhe, Anyango and Mwangi, 2022). The literature further notes that ongoing reporting and monitoring when one participates in an Agri-PPP fails to account for the restricted organisational capabilities of small-scale farmers (Halakhe, Anyango and Mwangi, 2022). Consistent with the findings of Halakhe, Anyango and Mwangi (2022), lengthy and cumbersome application procedures are demonstrably complex and uncertain, which also leads to hesitance to participate in an Agri-PPP, particularly in the case of small-scale farmers whose operations are underpinned by season-dependency.

#### **b) Trust issues**

The second main theme was trust issues, and under this main theme, past negative experiences emerged as a sub-theme from the data (see Section 4.4.2). Mistrust and risk aversion amongst small-scale farmers have been caused by historical exploitation and unmet expectations in Agri-PPPs, which has contributed to their hesitance to participate in such partnerships (Dhillon and Moncur, 2023). This aligns with the literature, which indicates that when expectations of Agri-PPPs that are meant to advance the development of small-scale farmers are not met, they often feel misled, which creates mistrust (Dhillon and Moncur, 2023). This is also in line with the findings of van der Ploeg, Ye and Schneider (2019), who similarly found that small-scale farmers develop trust issues as a result of these past negative experiences, and as such, they do not benefit fully from these initiatives and are exposed to vulnerability. Equally, as a result of power dynamics in the context of Agri-PPPs, small-scale farmers are often at a disadvantage, which leads to inequitable benefits. As similarly found by Sharma and Bhaduri (2021), failures of Agri-PPPs disproportionately impact small-scale farmers because they are left in a financial position that is precarious, and they lack the financial resilience to recover from incurred financial losses when compared to their commercial counterparts. The hesitancy expressed by these small-scale farmers (as indicated in literature) only heightens their sensitivity to risk, especially when historical partnerships did not yield the expected financial returns or had a negative long-term impact on their livelihoods (Sharma and Bhaduri, 2021). Notably, the psychological impact of these past negative experiences compounds small-scale farmers' hesitance to participate in an Agri-PPP because it cultivates deep-rooted mistrust between themselves and such partnerships (van der Ploeg, Ye and Schneider, 2019). The psychological impact also brings forth a sense of powerlessness, as found by Manyise and Dentoni (2021) in the context of small-scale farmers because of the perceived asymmetry in control between

themselves and the public-private partners in an Agri-PPP. This leads to entrenched hesitance to participate in such partnerships.

### **c) Financial concerns**

The third main theme was financial concerns, and under this main theme, high costs emerged as a sub-theme from the data (see Section 4.4.3). This finding aligns with the literature in that literature affirms that financial barriers, including upfront and ongoing costs, pose significant challenges to small-scale farmers' participation in developmental initiatives such as Agri-PPPs (von Loeper et al., 2016). These financial barriers are prohibitive and make it unaffordable for them to participate in such partnerships, thus embedding their hesitance to participate in these initiatives (von Loeper et al., 2016). Specifically, these financial barriers often include upfront investments, specialised inputs or meeting particular production standards that are required by such partnerships. This finding is consistent with that of Khanal and Omobitan (2020), who found that the financial capital required by small-scale farmers to participate in developmental initiatives is often beyond their reach. Of importance in this finding is the similar suggestion that financial barriers exacerbate small-scale farmers' hesitance to participate in Agri-PPPs and as such, financial vulnerability comes forth (Khanal and Omobitan, 2020).

Hidden costs that are associated with participation in an Agri-PPP further exacerbate small-scale farmers' hesitance to participate in them because they add an additional layer of risk and uncertainty (Martey, Etwire, Wiredu and Digbe, 2014). As similarly reported by Martey et al. (2014), hidden costs such as compliance fees, certification and or administrative costs are not always fully disclosed at the outset to small-scale farmers, which can lead to increased financial strain on them. When cost structures are not transparent, they erode trust and contribute to small-scale farmers being hesitant to participate in partnerships such as Agri-PPPs because they can be perceived as potentially exploitative or financially unpredictable (Aseete, Barkley, Katungi, Ugen and Birachi, 2023).

Interestingly, the data revealed opportunity cost as a contributor to small-scale farmers' hesitance to participate in an Agri-PPP. This finding is underpinned by the fact that such partnerships often require small-scale farmers to shift their focus to producing specific grain crops, which may not be parallel with their traditional practices or priorities concerning food security (Abegunde, Sibanda and Obi, 2019; Zenda and Rudolph, 2024). As a result of this, these small-scale farmers are mandated to adopt monoculture practices or other forms of specialisation as required by an Agri-PPP, which can decrease crop diversity of the crops that are grown, therefore threatening local food security (Abegunde, Sibanda and Obi, 2019). By

moving away from traditional or staple crop production, small-scale farmers run the risk of not only losing control over their production choices, but also jeopardise household and community food security, a grave concern for them as resource-constrained small-scale farmers (Kom, Nethengwe, Mpandeli and Chikoore, 2020). As similarly reported and affirmed by Abegunde, Sibanda and Obi (2019), opportunity cost is a contributor to small-scale farmers' hesitance to participate in an Agri-PPP because they evaluate the advantages of taking part in these development initiatives against the risks of undermining their long-term sustainability and food security.

### **5.2.3) Drivers influencing small-scale farmers' willingness in Agri-PPP participation**

The data also revealed themes relating to the drivers that influence small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP as per the second objective of the study. They are discussed below (see Sections 4.5.1 to 4.5.6).

#### **a) Attitude**

It is evident from the findings of this study that the small-scale farmers who were willing to participate in an Agri-PPP displayed a positive attitude towards it (see Section 4.5.1). As similarly found in a study by Adjabui (2018), positive attitudes, especially when entrenched in clear perceived benefits, centrally influence small-scale farmers to participate in innovative developmental initiatives such as Agri-PPPs. The positive attitude expressed by these small-scale farmers towards such a partnership brings forth the basis that they are forward-looking and see the tangible advantages, such as, enhanced productivity, should they participate in it (Adjabui, 2018). The small-scale farmers with a positive attitude towards an Agri-PPP underscored this to positive historical participatory experiences, which built trust and optimism. Equally, shaping these positive attitudes is the psychological belief of reliability and viability in such a partnership, which mitigates common concerns such as mistrust and risk aversion, which often discourage participation in them (Ajzen, 2005; Adjabui, 2018). Small-scale farmers attributed their positive attitude towards an Agri-PPP to their enduring value of judgement in the context of the reputation of the stakeholders involved in such a partnership. This is because stakeholders with a proven track record of delivering on their mandates inspired confidence amongst the small-scale farmers. Previous studies have indicated that the credibility and effectiveness of stakeholders involved in partnerships play a pivotal role in shaping farmers' positive attitudes and influencing them to participate in them (Adjabui, 2018; Marcinkowski and Reid, 2019).

Comparatively, the findings revealed that small-scale farmers unwilling to participate in an Agri-PPP had a negative attitude towards such a partnership (see Section 4.5.1). This negative attitude influenced them not to participate in an Agri-PPP, and this can be attributed to the fact that their attitude towards risks and change can be substantial barriers to participation (Khosdel and Bakshan, 2015). According to Kgosiemang and Oladele (2012), small-scale farmers have, in the past, often perceived Agri-PPPs as financially risky to participate in them. Equally, traditional production techniques have often represented security and familiarity in the context of small-scale farmers, who have relied on these techniques for many generations (Beharielal, Thamaga-Chitja, Schmidt, 2022). Thus, the negative attitude expressed by these small-scale farmers towards an Agri-PPP is premised on their unwillingness to adopt new production techniques should they participate in it. This is a similar finding that was reported by Adjabui (2018), who affirmed that this stems from the uncertainty about the effectiveness of these new production techniques and the perceived complexity of modern agricultural practices by small-scale farmers. Therefore, there are small-scale farmers who prefer to remain with what they know, even if new production practices can bring higher yields or efficiency gains. The negative attitude towards such partnerships compounds this resistance to change, and is further compounded by a lack of access to technical knowledge (Kgosiemang and Oladele, 2012; Adjabui, 2018). Another finding that was revealed in the data was that small-scale farmers had a negative attitude towards an Agri-PPP because of the concerns they have about potentially losing control over their grain-producing enterprises should they participate in such a partnership. Aligned with the findings of Raidimi and Kabit (2017) and Visser and Alford (2024), participation by small-scale farmers in such partnerships brings forth the concerns that private or public entities can exert negative influence over key decisions, which are related to their operations and reduce their ability to operate independently. These key decisions include but are not limited to production techniques, crop choices or market strategies. Notably and aligned with literature, small-scale farmers won't always necessarily have a positive attitude towards an Agri-PPP due to their varying attitudes towards risk, adoption of new production techniques and decision-making autonomy in their grain-producing enterprises (Raidimi and Kabit, 2017; Visser and Alford, 2024).

#### **b) Awareness**

Evidently, the findings from this study indicated that all the small-scale farmers who were willing to participate in an Agri-PPP were aware of the existence of such a partnership (see Section 4.5.2). Subsequently, this influenced them to participate in it. Awareness of such

partnerships enables small-scale farmers to see the tangible advantages of participating in them and they also broaden their knowledge of it and its various offerings (Ajabui, 2018). When small-scale farmers are aware of an Agri-PPP they are more likely to participate willingly in it because it is a strong catalyst for participation, and it also reduces uncertainty and demonstrably enables and empowers them to make informed decisions because of the clear and understandable information they have (Adjabui, 2018). As affirmed by Adjabui (2018) in the context of small-scale farmers, awareness is a critical catalyst for continuous engagement with stakeholders involved in an Agri-PPP. This is because continuous engagement can enable them to better understand the support systems, resources, and communication channels that will be available to them if they were to participate. Furthermore, continuous engagement through awareness in this context builds familiarity and fosters a sense of inclusivity and sustainable support. Literature also suggests that small-scale farmer awareness of an Agri-PPP builds resonance with developmental partnerships because of its aligned outcomes between itself and the outcomes of their enterprises; thus, influencing them to participate (De Schepper, Dooms, Haezendonck, 2014; Dwivedi, 2021).

Contrariwise, the findings revealed that small-scale farmer non-awareness of an Agri-PPP limited their access to information regarding it, which influenced their disinterest in participating (see Section 4.5.2). Literature suggests that awareness is an important component of informed decision-making and that non-awareness reinforces scepticism and brings forth a sense of exclusion, particularly because small-scale farmers rely heavily on local networks to access information (Adjabui, 2018; Bonokwane and Ololade, 2022). Consistent with the findings of Adjabui (2018), non-awareness reflects not only a lack of information about an Agri-PPP but also the absence of outreach programs or initiatives by the public and private partners that are tailored to local contexts, which is critical in enhancing participation in them. Another finding revealed in the data and common amongst the non-aware small-scale farmers was their identification of poor communication strategies on behalf of the Agri-PPP partners. This can be attributed to the inadequate dissemination of Agri-PPP information to small-scale farmers or their difficulty in comprehending it (Bonokwane and Ololade, 2022). According to Raidimi and Kabiti (2017) and Mangeni (2019), the need by Agri-PPP partners to communicate effectively is essential in enhancing awareness, building trust, and ensuring equitable access to Agri-PPP information regardless of literacy levels or prior knowledge. Smallholder farmers' non-awareness of an Agri-PPP is exacerbated when these partners don't consider local

language and cultural contexts and preferred communication channels, which further influences them not to participate (Adjabui, 2018).

**c) Perceived financial gain**

Concerning perceived financial gain, the data revealed that this driver does influence small-scale farmers to participate willingly in an Agri-PPP (see Section 4.5.3). This finding aligns with the insights of Adjabui (2018), who affirmed that small-scale farmers see a perceived financial gain as a key mechanism that can potentially provide direct economic incentives in the context of an Agri-PPP. As a component of perceived financial gain, increasing revenue and cost-saving opportunities underscore the significance of reduced input costs and enhanced profitability in the context of small-scale farmers who participate willingly in an Agri-PPP (Adjabui, 2018; Agarwal et al., 2023). Another reason that can be attributed to perceived financial gain being a driver that influences small-scale farmers to participate willingly in an Agri-PPP is the fact that they see it as a mechanism that can contribute to their enhanced productivity and economic stability (Moobi and Oladele, 2012). Adjabui (2018) also reported this. Underpinning perceived financial gain is access to increased financial resources, which all of the small-scale farmers who were willing to participate in an Agri-PPP commonly pointed out (Mthombeni, Antwi and Oduniyi, 2022; Bontsa, Mushunje and Ngarava, 2023). The findings suggest that access to increased financial resources facilitates the investment in modern agricultural machinery and grain production inputs and the funding of modern and resource-efficient production practices, as also reported by Adjabui (2018). Equally, this finding suggests that small-scale farmers see access to increased financial resources as a pathway that enhances their economic resilience because they often operate in a resource-constrained environment, particularly in the context of limited financial capital (Bonokwane and Ololade, 2022). Notably, one of the ways this Agri-PPP assists small-scale farmers is by ensuring they can have access to reliable agricultural machinery without having to put forward upfront collateral.

An interesting finding that this study revealed was that none of the interviewees pointed out that perceived financial gain influenced them not to participate willingly in an Agri-PPP (see Section 4.5.3). This affirms the findings of Moobi and Oladele (2012) and Adjabui (2018), who also, in a study, found that the positive outlook on financial gains, economic incentives and benefits of Agri-PPPs are well-recognised and are appealing to this segment of farmers. Furthermore, perceived financial gain clearly outweighs any financial concerns.

#### **d) Social influence**

Regarding social influence, the data revealed that this driver does influence small-scale farmers to participate willingly in an Agri-PPP (see Section 4.5.4). Consistent with the findings of Adjabui (2018), social influence underscores the significant influence of family, peers, community networks, highly respected leaders and trusted key stakeholders. Similarly, when these close social circles express positive sentiments about an Agri-PPP and strongly advocate for it, it lends significant credibility to the initiative, and small-scale farmers are likely to participate in such a partnership (Adjabui, 2018). Social influence through social validation affirms the standpoint that it provides small-scale farmers with confidence in their decision to participate willingly in an Agri-PPP (Raidimi and Kabiti, 2017; Adjabui, 2018). The literature also suggests that social validation provides social assurance and is particularly impactful in risk-prone or uncertain contexts because small-scale farmers often view such partnerships as either risky or present uncertainty for them (Smith, Louis and Schultz, 2011; Adjabui, 2018; Molleman, Ciranka, and van den Bos, 2022).

Contrastingly, the data of this study revealed that a minority of small-scale farmers indicated that social influence did not influence them to participate willingly in Agri-PPP (see Section 4.5.4). This may be attributed to a strong sense of independence in their decision-making processes and the fact that they prioritised objective factors such as economic benefits, technological access, and enterprise control over social acceptance (Bonokwane and Olodale, 2022). In line with the findings of Bonokwane and Ololade (2022), independence in the context of social influence emphasises that personal judgement is relied upon rather than external validation and collective influence. In essence, this finding reinforces the perspective that not all small-scale farmers respond to social influence in the context of Agri-PPP participation, as some may view their grain-producing enterprises as primarily individual business ventures rather than socially community-driven. Consistent with the findings of Ajabui (2018) and Bonokwane and Olodale (2022), this study found that social influence does not necessarily influence small-scale farmers to participate in an Agri-PPP willingly, and is rather context-dependent.

#### **e) Legal and regulatory requirements**

Evidently, the findings from this study indicated that legal and regulatory requirements influence small-scale farmers not to participate in an Agri-PPP (see Section 4.5.5). Ascribing these legal and regulatory requirements as burdensome, stringent and comprised of complicated legal processes and documentation, these small-scale farmers pointed out these as

components that discourage them from participating in an Agri-PPP. Significantly, Agri-PPPs are often set up using detailed legal contracts of which when small-scale farmers are willing to participate in such partnerships, they lack the necessary legal knowledge and resources to effectively comply with these legal demands (Vanslebrouck, van Huylenbroeck, Verbeke, 2002; Batjargal and Zhang, 2021). As similarly found by Adjabui (2018), legal and regulatory requirements can potentially present the occurrence of unforeseen legal issues that expose small-scale farmers to legal risks such as disputes over contract terms and conditions, liability issues and compliance with evolving regulations. Adjabui (2018) also affirmed that legal and regulatory requirements are a barrier to small-scale farmer participation in partnerships such as Agri-PPPs because they are often discriminative and not designed for this farmer segment.

An interesting finding that this study revealed under this driver was that there were no instances where legal and regulatory requirements influenced small-scale farmers to participate willingly in an Agri-PPP (see Section 4.5.5). This suggests that legal and regulatory requirements are exclusively seen as a barrier to participation in an Agri-PPP rather than as an enabler to participation in an Agri-PPP (Ferroni and Castle, 2011). This underscores the importance of ensuring that these legal and regulatory requirements in the context of an Agri-PPP are inclusive, transparent, simplified and comprehensible to the small-scale farmer segment, as similarly found by Raidimi and Kabiti (2017) and Batjargal and Zhang (2021).

#### **f) Government facilitation**

It is evident from the findings of this study that government facilitation does influence small-scale farmers to participate willingly in an Agri-PPP (see Section 4.5.6). This can be ascribed to how the government, through policy and regulatory frameworks, creates a conducive environment for such partnerships to thrive. In return, this conducive environment ensures that small-scale farmers are able to be supported so they can successfully navigate Agri-PPPs when they participate and fully benefit from them. Equally, government facilitation strengthens Agri-PPPs' credibility, which instils confidence in small-scale farmers to participate in such partnerships as similarly reported by Adjabui (2018) in a study. This is essential to overcome initial hesitance and mistrust in participating in such partnerships. Government facilitation also influences small-scale farmers to participate in an Agri-PPP because they see it as a mechanism that brings about equality and levels the playing field between themselves and their commercial counterparts, fostering a more inclusive agricultural sector (Maryono, 2023). Small-scale farmers often operate with limited resources and lack access to advanced agricultural

technologies, which inhibits their ability to be fully productive and competitive (Ferroni and Castle, 2011).

Contrastingly, the data revealed that a minority of small-scale farmers indicated that government facilitation did not influence them to participate willingly in an Agri-PPP (see Section 4.5.6). This can be attributed to perceived poor government efficacy and inadequate institutional support when it comes to Agri-PPPs (Batjargal and Zhang, 2021). The premise of this is based on the fact that when government facilitation fails to address structural weaknesses or alleviate challenges that make participation difficult, participation is discouraged and undermines any potential positive impact (Batjargal and Zhang, 2021). Consistent with the findings of Adjabui (2018), when government frameworks lack consistency or clarity, partnerships frequently fail to meet their goals, thus contributing to small-scale farmers' hesitance to participate in them. This is due to the discrepancy between the intended policy support for Agri-PPPs and the on-the-ground implementation, being a problem that is often encountered in developing these partnerships where institutional constraints impede progress (Batjargal and Zhang, 2021; Ramolobe and Khandanisa, 2024). Lastly, another reason why a minority of small-scale farmers indicated that government facilitation does not influence them to participate in an Agri-PPP as found in this study is because of past negative experiences, poor responsiveness, accountability and transparency concerning government facilitation, which has led to their scepticism and reluctance to participate in future Agri-PPPs. This finding is in line with the finding of Ajabui (2018). Additionally, this has led to them relying on their own resources and networks rather than experiencing the inconveniences, complexities, and uncertainties associated with government-supported Agri-PPPs. Notably, and as evidenced in the findings of this study, government facilitation does not always provide a conducive environment for small-scale farmers to participate willingly in an Agri-PPP and this may be context-dependent.

### **5.3 Recommendations to enhance small-scale farmer participation in Agri-PPPs**

The final objective of this study was to articulate recommendations on how small-scale farmer participation in Agri-PPPs can potentially be enhanced. The recommendations are unpacked below.

#### **5.3.1 Enhancing utilisation of advanced technology and access**

It is also recommended that a tiered leasing system be established where small-scale farmers can scale their access to modern agricultural machinery as their grain-producing enterprises expand (von Loeper et al., 2016). This tiered leasing system must be established alongside a

seasonal or crop cycle-based payment option to match small-scale farmers' cashflow. To enhance the utilisation of advanced technology and access thereof, it is recommended that this Agri-PPP should encourage the formation of small-scale farmer co-operatives to ensure greater inclusion and collective access as it does not currently play this role (Mangeni, 2019; Ntombela, 2020). Co-operatives have been proven to offer a cost-effective way for small-scale farmers to benefit from accessing and utilising advanced agricultural machinery without bearing full ownership costs individually (King and Ortmann, 2007; Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, 2016; Donkor and Hejkrlik, 2021). Through this co-operative model, small-scale farmers can also be offered training on the maintenance and safety practices of this advanced agricultural machinery in order to build their technical capacity and maximise its utility (Donkor and Hejkrlik, 2021). To reduce the use of outdated agricultural machinery by these small-scale farmers, it is recommended that this Agri-PPP offers incentives to encourage them to utilise machinery that conserves the soil and integrates soil health monitoring tools. This machinery includes but is not limited to no-till or minimum-till seed drills, strip till equipment, mulchers, cover crop seeders and roller crimpers. This will ensure the soil remains productive and contributes to high grain crop quality overtime (Sims and Kienzle, 2017).

It is also recommended that this Agri-PPP sets up formalised regional resource and technical support hubs in each of the district municipalities in the province of the Eastern Cape as these are currently non-existent. Currently, this Agri-PPP operates without a formalised network of regional resource and technical support hubs as support to small-scale farmers is provided in a fragmented and centralised manner. This will bolster the development of adequate infrastructure (Abrahams, 2020; Kruger and Steyn, 2024). This is to ensure information dissemination on the use of technologically advanced agricultural machinery and its maintenance. The importance of regional resource hubs is premised on the fact that they facilitate access to timely information insights and resources, which small-scale farmers may lack due to geographical or economic barriers (Kruger and Steyn, 2024). It is also recommended that the government develop and implement policies that support the integration of modern agricultural machinery into small-scale farming operations by Agri-PPPs (Raidimi and Kabit, 2017; Nyabvudzi and Nkwana, 2024). These include import duty exemptions for agricultural machinery, tax incentives and simplified regulatory processes. It is also recommended that this Agri-PPP conduct regular assessments to evaluate the impact of modern agricultural machinery on small-scale farming, its access and utilisation thereof (Sims and

Kienzle, 2017). Lastly, it is also recommended that this Agri-PPP establishes feedback mechanisms to gather information from small-scale farmers on the persistent challenges of accessing and utilising technologically advanced agricultural machinery to ensure that future initiatives are well-informed and tailored to be responsive to these challenges (Sims and Kienzle, 2017).

### **5.3.2 Alleviating complexity and bureaucracy**

To alleviate complexity and bureaucracy, it is recommended that Agri-PPP frameworks prioritise simplicity and accessibility by simplifying complicated procedures and reducing bureaucratic barriers (Ramolobe and Khandanisa, 2022). Additionally, it is recommended that Agri-PPPs implement interactive digital platforms and educate small-scale farmers on how to utilise these digital tools (Smidt and Jokonya, 2022; Bonstsa, Mushunje, Ngarava and Zhou, 2023). These interactive digital platforms will use simplified language and interactive elements to guide small-scale farmers through the application procedures step by step (Bonstsa, Mushunje, Ngarava and Zhou, 2023). Policymakers and Agri-PPP partners must consider the practical and operational realities of small-scale farmers by developing a less restrictive and more adaptive Agri-PPP model to ensure it can bridge the policy-practice gap and ensure it is small-scale farmer-centred (Ramolobe and Khandanisa, 2022; Bonstsa, Mushunje, Ngarava and Zhou, 2023). This type of model should also take into account the limited technical resources and seasonal production cycles of small-scale farmers. It is recommended that application procedures to participate in Agri-PPPs should be shortened and optimised to ensure enhanced accessibility to them (Bruce and Costa, 2019; Ramolobe and Khandanisa, 2022). This can be done by undertaking a phased application approach, which allows small-scale farmers to access basic support immediately and then submit additional documentation at a later stage. This would reduce the initial bureaucratic load while retaining due diligence and enabling more timely participation for operations that are season-dependent (Bruce and Costa, 2019).

To alleviate complexity and bureaucracy, training is also recommended to small-scale farmers, and that advisory support services be established to assist them navigate these complex and bureaucratic processes and strengthen their organisational capabilities (Mhlongo and Daya, 2022). Peer support groups should also be established within small-scale farmer circles wherein they can share their experiences and advice and support each other as they navigate Agri-PPP processes (Henning, Jammer and Jordaan, 2022; Adamaagashi, Juda and Ezezi, 2023). This community-based strategy can enhance collective problem-solving and knowledge sharing.

This can be done through collaborative networks, which include government agencies, similar NPOs, local agricultural extension services and private agricultural companies. Such training and access to advisory services can build the capacity of small-scale farmers and provide them with the much-needed skills to confidently partake in partnerships such as Agri-PPPs (Maake and Antwi, 2022; Adamaagashi, Juda and Erezi, 2023). Through this, their hesitance to participate in Agri-PPPs can also be reduced.

It is recommended that standardized and simplified reporting formats be aligned with the capabilities of small-scale farmers (Wale, Chipfupa and Hadebe, 2021). This ensures compliance with them. In view of enhancing small-scale farmer reporting and monitoring systems, a feedback mechanism should be established within Agri-PPPs wherein small-scale farmers are enabled to communicate the challenges they encounter within the processes of the partnership (Dhillon, 2009). This mechanism enables policy changes to reflect real-time feedback from participants, resulting in a more responsive and flexible partnership model. In addition, a feedback mechanism would also develop a sense of inclusion amongst small-scale farmers, decreasing the gap between their demands and the design of Agri-PPPs thus, ensuring these processes remain relevant and manageable (Dhillon, 2009; Wale, Chipfupa and Hadebe, 2021).

### **5.3.3 Resolving trust issues**

To resolve trust issues regarding participation in Agri-PPPs, it is recommended that frequent and transparent communication channels between all stakeholders that are involved be established and that institutional support be strengthened (Bruce and Costa, 2019; Ibrahim and Jantan, 2024). Open, clear communication, particularly regarding benefits, risks, and potential limitations, can build a solid foundation for trust in the context of participation in Agri-PPPs (Ibrahim and Jantan, 2024). Regular updates, meetings, and open forums can assist in fostering confidence and keeping small-scale farmers informed about partnership developments and activities. Also, it is recommended that clear expectations, roles, and responsibilities are outlined to all stakeholders involved because detailed and transparent agreements can prevent misconceptions and establish a strong basis for trust (Greenwood and van Buren, 2010; Harrison, Freeman and Sá de Abreu, 2015). Given the power imbalances that are frequently present in Agri-PPPs, Kgosiemang and Oladele (2012), it is recommended that accountability measures such as establishing independent oversight committees, regular performance evaluations and third-party audits are implemented wherein representatives of small-scale farmers participate actively in decision-making processes to ensure they have a voice and their

interests are represented. It is also recommended that policies that promote equitable benefit distribution be incorporated with financial safeguards that reduce the vulnerability of small-scale farmers and provide peace of mind if the Agri-PPP fails (Mokgomo, Chagwiza and Tshilowa, 2022). This will also ensure that small-scale farmers feel like equal stakeholders rather than passive participants.

Concerning resolving trust issues regarding participation in Agri-PPPs, it is recommended that this Agri-PPP recognises and acknowledges the past negative experiences and exploitation that small-scale farmers have faced in previous Agri-PPPs and openly addresses these issues with those who are hesitant to participate in such partnerships (Ibrahim and Jantan, 2024). This can be done through structured, open forums where these small-scale farmers can deliberate on previous grievances and recommend future partnership improvements (Ibrahim and Jantan, 2024). This can aid in rebuilding trust and demonstrating a commitment to change. It is also recommended that community support programs are established wherein psychological and social support to small-scale farmers can be offered (Govender, 2023). Through this, small-scale farmers can be helped in addressing the psychological impact of these past negative experiences and build a community network that is supportive and empowering.

Regarding resolving trust issues in Agri-PPPs, it is recommended that all Agri-PPP stakeholders work consistently with local private and public organisations that have existing credibility with small-scale farmers (Sikwela and Mushunje, 2013; Mokgomo, Chagwiza and Tshilowa, 2022). Agri-PPPs can better overcome previous scepticism by integrating trust through established networks (Ajabui, 2018). Lastly, it is recommended that this Agri-PPP establishes long-term relationship building for partnership continuity to foster trust and reassure small-scale farmers that such a partnership is dedicated to their continuous success, thus lessening their sensitivity to risk and unwillingness to participate (Sikwela and Mushunje, 2013; Ibrahim and Jantan, 2024).

#### **5.3.4 Addressing financial concerns**

As an approach to addressing the financial concerns of small-scale farmers who are hesitant to participate in an Agri-PPP, it is recommended that such a partnership establishes entry programs that alleviate the exorbitant costs of purchasing modern agricultural machinery (Simela and Marwa, 2020). This can be done by offering financial assistance for upfront investments and introducing a sliding scale of subsidies that gradually decrease as small-scale farmers become more financially self-sufficient (Qwabe, 2014; Simela and Marwa, 2020). It is also recommended that flexible financing such as revolving credit facilities, low-interest loans

and instalment-based payment systems be introduced, which can enable small-scale farmers to meet the cost requirements of the Agri-PPP (Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, 2015; Simela and Marwa, 2020). Concerning addressing the financial concerns of small-scale farmers who are hesitant to participate in an Agri-PPP, it is recommended that a partnership like this collaboratively partner with microfinance institutions or agricultural banks to provide credit solutions specifically for this segment of farmers (Parlasca, Johnen and Qaim, 2022). Fostering institutional collaboration can reduce costs and enhance access to financial resources. Flexible finance terms and conditions that are aligned, associated and tailored with crop cycles and season-dependent revenue would enable small-scale farmers to manage expenses more efficiently and with less risk (Qwabe, 2014; Simela and Marwa, 2020). Such financing methods have been proven to reduce financial risk whilst increasing trust in Agri-PPP structures (Ajabui, 2018).

It is also recommended that transparency in cost structures be ensured through clear communication of all the costs involved regarding participation (Parlasca, Johnen and Qaim, 2022; Sansome, Wilkie and Conduit, 2024). Transparency in cost structures should also be achieved by distributing a detailed cost analysis for small-scale farmers that clearly outlines certification costs, compliance fees, and other associated expenses (Ncube, 2020). Establishing upfront pricing transparency can assist small-scale farmers in planning their finances more accurately, decrease unanticipated financial expenses, and foster trust. Moreover, it is also recommended that regular updates on anticipated cost adjustments throughout the partnership be undertaken, which can assist in preserving this transparency and further strengthen small-scale farmers' trust in their investment (Muzekenyi, Zuwarimwe and Kilonzo, 2021; Sansome, Wilkie and Conduit, 2024). To reduce the impact of hidden costs as a financial concern, it is recommended that a cost-sharing model be implemented whereby administrative and certification costs be shared between the Agri-PPP and those small-scale farmers who are hesitant to participate in such a partnership (Kaupa, Kamuinjo and Shindume, 2022). This can include contributions from public-private partner funding and government grants. A cost-sharing approach decreases the financial burden on small-scale farmers, specifically for costs that may unexpectedly emerge (Simela and Marwa, 2020). By reducing these constraints, Agri-PPPs can minimise the hesitance amongst small-scale farmers and enhance their active participation in them. It is also hereby recommended that a contingency financial support fund be established for small-scale farmers who are participating in Agri-PPPs in order to enable them to cope with unexpected costs that may unexpectedly arise (Department of Agriculture,

Forestry and Fisheries, 2015; Simela and Marwa, 2020). This is particularly true if these costs arise as a result of natural disasters, unforeseen compliance requirements and market volatility. In times of adversity, such a fund can provide grants or interest-free loans, reducing the risk that small-scale farmers will leave the partnership owing to financial constraints (Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, 2015; Simela and Marwa, 2020). In addition to establishing contingency financial support, it is recommended that insurance schemes be developed that will protect small-scale farmers from potential financial losses associated with Agri-PPPs (Qwabe, 2014; Parlasca, Johnen and Qaim, 2022). Such initiatives can serve as a safety net, thus reducing the perceived risk of participation.

### **5.3.5 Fostering a positive attitude**

In light of fostering a positive attitude towards this Agri-PPP, it is recommended that such a partnership designs change management and risk mitigation programs to address the apprehensions of small-scale farmers concerning new production techniques and financial risks (Ajabui, 2018). These programs can include educational workshops that contour the benefits and practical advantages of advanced production processes, with a concentration on providing real-world case studies to demonstrate successful outcomes (Ajabui, 2018). Furthermore, Agri-PPPs can assist small-scale farmers by providing resources for risk assessment and management strategies. Through this, such partnerships can assist small-scale farmers in better understanding and mitigating perceived risks (Ajabui, 2018). Consequently, these strategies can transform attitudes towards positive participation and openness to change, addressing concerns about financial risk and novel production practices. It is also recommended that demonstration farms or small-scale pilot programs be established wherein small-scale farmers can see first-hand the advantages of new production techniques, which can alleviate concerns about adopting production practices that are unfamiliar (Dhillon, 2009). These initiatives should be anchored in local communities where these small-scale farmers are based and actively involve them in the learning process. By directly seeing successful results first-hand, this can reduce the risk concerns of small-scale farmers, build familiarity, and encourage small-scale farmers to embrace and adopt modern and advanced agricultural practices, whilst reinforcing trust in Agri-PPPs' objectives (Ajabui, 2018). This approach can demonstrate to small-scale farmers how contemporary methods can be compatible with their traditional practices, making transition pathways transparent and realistic (Ajabui, 2018). If they are not compatible, the stakeholders of this Agri-PPP can consider co-designing solutions together or finding context specific alternatives to ensure sustainable working solutions. It is also recommended that this Agri-PPP provides ongoing technical support and capacity-building

resources that are specifically designed to meet the needs of small-scale farmers (Ajabui, 2018). This can include providing access to extension officers and field specialists who can give hands-on guidance and training on new production practices, ensuring that knowledge gaps do not hinder small-scale farmers from participating in the Agri-PPP. To provide ongoing technical support and capacity-building, it is recommended that regular workshops, digital resources and small-scale farmer-to-small-scale farmer mentorship programs are offered to ensure accessibility to practical and technical knowledge. Through this, concerns over the complications of modern techniques can be addressed, and a gradual transition to advanced production practices can be fostered.

To address the negative attitude towards an Agri-PPP by small-scale farmers because of the concerns about losing control over their grain-producing enterprises, it is recommended that such a partnership develops clear policies that protect small-scale farmers' autonomy in making operational decisions such as production techniques, marketing strategies and grain crop choices. These policies should clearly define decision-making boundaries and ensure that farmers maintain control over critical areas of their business. Through this, transparency can be fostered between small-scale farmers and the Agri-PPP, which can steadily counteract negative attitudes and increase small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in such a partnership (Dhillon, 2009; Ajabui, 2018). Also, trust can be built with small-scale farmers, and it will show them that their participation in an Agri-PPP does not undermine their independence. Lastly, it is recommended that incentives for early adopters be introduced, such as input subsidies and financial support to encourage participation and generate a positive attitude towards this Agri-PPP (Ajabui, 2018; Mokgomo, Chagwiza, Tshilowa, 2022). Moreover, using a peer-led learning method, whereby successful participants share their experiences can address misconceptions and contribute to generating a positive attitude towards an Agri-PPP by other small-scale farmers.

### **5.3.6 Increasing awareness**

To increase awareness of this Agri-PPP to small-scale farmers, it is recommended that this partnership develops outreach programs that are community-based and are tailored to the local contexts of small-scale farmers (Mangeni, 2019). Through such programs, small-scale farmers can be actively informed about the Agri-PPPs' opportunities, processes and benefits. Furthermore, these programs could include utilising multiple platforms, such as hosting information sessions at local events or agricultural fairs and disseminating information on community radio stations, local newspapers, social media and village meetings (Mangeni,

2019). It is also recommended that these outreach programs be conducted using local languages to ensure they resonate with the target audience. These efforts will enable this Agri-PPP to directly and indirectly engage with small-scale farmers and reach a broader audience, thus increasing its awareness of them. It is also recommended that this Agri-PPP establishes local knowledge hubs, which must be based in local communities to serve as physical spaces wherein small-scale farmers can attend information sessions and learn more about such a partnership and also get assistance in comprehending the criteria of the partnership (Ferroni, 2011). These local knowledge hubs could be facilitated by local agricultural extension officers who can offer in-person guidance, respond to enquiries and assist small-scale farmers with the application process should they want to participate in the Agri-PPP. By setting up these local knowledge hubs, the awareness of this Agri-PPP can be enhanced, and they can provide small-scale farmers with a reliable and easily available information source (Ferroni, 2011; Mangeni, 2019).

It is also recommended that the partners of this Agri-PPP leverage already existing small-scale farmer co-operatives, networks and associations so they can serve as essential information channels and close the non-awareness gap (Bruce, 2019; Mangeni, 2019). This is especially because small-scale farmers rely on and trust their local networks for information. Equally, this Agri-PPP can collaborate with these networks to enhance its awareness by disseminating information about the partnership, its benefits and its application processes, thus enhancing awareness about it (Ajabui, 2018). Lastly, it is recommended that the partners of this Agri-PPP hold regular meetings with small-scale farmers to understand their information requirements, preferred channels of communication, and any challenges they may have comprehending partnership details (Ferroni, 2011; Bruce, 2019; Mangeni, 2019).

### **5.3.7 Fostering a positive social influence**

To foster a positive social influence with regards to the participation of small-scale farmers in an Agri-PPP, it is recommended that the partners of such a partnership acknowledge and respect the decision-making autonomy of small-scale farmers who value personal judgement over societal influence (Ajabui, 2018; Ngaka and Zwane, 2018). By giving these small-scale farmers objective data on economic benefits, productivity gains, and control over enterprise decisions, this Agri-PPP can be appealing to this segment of small-scale farmers. Tailoring outreach materials to emphasise actual benefits, such as possible profit margins, yield gains, and access to modern agricultural technologies, can assist in addressing their individual reasons for independent participation (Ajabui, 2018). It is also recommended that this Agri-PPP designs itself to enable participants to maintain significant control over their enterprises, which can

appeal to small-scale farmers who value independence (Ajabui, 2018). Furthermore, this partnership should focus on a partnership model that provides flexibility in decision-making areas such as grain crop selection, production practices, and marketing strategies (Steenkamp, Pieterse and Rycroft, 2019). This approach can empower these small-scale farmers with the confidence that their autonomy is protected, thus enhancing their willingness to participate without feeling encroached by partnership constraints.

It is also recommended that self-directed learning opportunities be created wherein small-scale farmers, particularly those who are independent-orientated, can explore the benefits of the Agri-PPP independently (Ajabui, 2018). This can foster informed engagement that is aligned with small-scale farmers' self-sufficient approach to decision-making (Ajabui, 2018). Additionally, this can highlight the fact that an Agri-PPP can enhance and not inhibit their individual enterprise goals. To resonate with independence-orientated small-scale farmers, it is recommended that the partners of the Agri-PPP feature testimonials from other small-scale farmers who have successfully maintained control of their grain-producing enterprises within the partnership (Ferroni, 2011). These testimonials can provide reassurance to small-scale farmers who are hesitant about participating in such partnerships and demonstrate to them that participation does not compromise their independence. Also, these case studies should highlight the experiences of small-scale farmers who balanced their Agri-PPP participation with individual decision-making, demonstrating to future participants that collaboration and autonomy can coexist. Lastly, it is recommended that this Agri-PPP develops customised partnership agreements that will ensure that small-scale farmers maintain substantial control over their grain-producing enterprises (Smyth, Webb and Phillips, 2021). These customised partnership agreements must clearly define the parameters of collaboration and decision-making processes to promote transparency and autonomy.

### **5.3.8 Fostering accommodative legal and regulatory requirements**

In view of fostering accommodative legal and regulatory requirements, it is recommended that the partners of this Agri-PPP work on streamlining these requirements and reducing the documentation volume and requirements necessary for participation (Ajabui, 2018). It is also recommended that simplified contractual terms, forms, and compliance processes that are tailored to small-scale farmers' capabilities be introduced. This would lower the entry barriers and make participation more manageable. Furthermore, developing standards and easy-to-understand legal and regulatory requirements can assist in explaining expectations without overwhelming participants with legal terminology (Ajabui, 2018). It is also recommended that

the partners of this Agri-PPP offer legal education seminars or resources that are focused on contract fundamentals, rights, and responsibilities in Agri-PPPs (Nyabvudzi and Nkwana, 2024). To undertake this, it is recommended that this Agri-PPP partners with local legal experts, other NPOs, and universities to provide this guidance in accessible formats such as community meetings, interactive sessions and easy-to-read guides (Ajabui, 2018). This will, in turn, empower small-scale farmers with foundational legal knowledge, and reduce participation concerns. Moreover, providing *pro bono* legal support or legal consultations that are affordable through this partnership will enable small-scale farmers to be on boarded successfully and ensure they receive legal clarity on contractual terms (Ajabui, 2018).

To foster accommodative legal and regulatory requirements, it is recommended that the partners of this Agri-PPP maintain transparency by clearly communicating any potential legal obligations and liabilities early in the participatory process (Ajabui, 2018; Ramolobe and Khandanisa, 2023). Information on dispute resolution methods, compliance standards, and any financial or operational liabilities must be revealed upfront. By aiding small-scale farmers in comprehending potential risks before signing, the Agri-PPP partners can foster trust and reduce misconceptions that would otherwise deter participation (Ajabui, 2018). It is also recommended that legal contracts be integrated to include legal safeguards for small-scale farmers such as clear exit clauses, liability limits and dispute resolution mechanisms to protect their interests in the event of unanticipated problems (Ajabui, 2018; Ncube, 2020). By providing these safeguards, small-scale farmers can feel less responsible for all risks, which will encourage them to participate in the partnership. Also, legal advisors who are knowledgeable about small-scale farming contexts should be appointed by this partnership so they can review these safeguards to ensure they are fair and practical (Ajabui, 2018; Ncube, 2020).

It is also hereby recommended that this Agri-PPP considers adopting and implementing a phased or tiered compliance model to enable small-scale farmers to fulfil particular legal requirements as their participation develops gradually (Ajabui, 2018; Smidt and Jokonya, 2022). For instance, small-scale farmers can begin by fulfilling the basic requirements and then steadily add more compliance steps and documentation as they grow their operations or enter more advanced Agri-PPP stages. This model can make the legal components less daunting and more flexible to comply with, especially because small-scale farmers operate with limited resources (Ajabui, 2018; Smidt and Jokonya, 2022).

Regarding fostering accommodative legal and regulatory requirements, it is recommended that the partners of this Agri-PPP collaborate with policymakers and advocacy groups to create policy reforms that encourage small-scale farmers to participate in such a partnership (Raidimi and Kabiti, 2017; Ajabui, 2018). A systematic reduction in legal burdens would result from efforts to influence more efficient, inclusive regulatory systems. For instance, establishing an Agri-PPP compliance category with modern regulatory standards for small-scale farmer operations could remove obstacles without sacrificing legal integrity. Lastly, it is also recommended that contract language and compliance requirements be in local languages and cultural contexts and that these be recognised through policy development and implementation (Ajabui, 2018; Maswanganyi, 2023). This is to enable a better understanding of their legal responsibilities. Training and educational sessions should also use local languages, using examples and situations that are familiar and culturally appropriate.

### **5.3.9 Enhancing government facilitation**

In light of enhancing government facilitation in the context of this Agri-PPP, it is recommended that the government prioritise strengthening institutional capacity and efficiency of agencies that are responsible for Agri-PPPs (Kaupa, Kamuinjo and Shindume, 2022). This can include providing training for government officials and improving the government's infrastructure. The government can improve perceptions of efficacy dependability by clearly assigning roles, reducing bureaucratic red tape, and providing small-scale farmers with effective support (Kaupa, Kamuinjo and Shindume, 2022). Through this, the experience would be streamlined by simplifying regulatory procedures and providing small-scale farmers with direct points of contact for inquiries (Kaupa, Kamuinjo and Shindume, 2022). This would eliminate perceived inefficiencies and enhance trust in government facilitation. It is also recommended that Agri-PPP regulatory bodies and the government ensure transparency regarding their facilitation roles and obligations (Ajabui, 2018). This can include regular progress reports, successes, and enhancements within Agri-PPP frameworks. It is also recommended that specialised dedicated units be established within the Department of Agriculture Land Reform and Rural Development to concentrate solely on supporting and facilitating Agri-PPPs (Department of Agriculture Land Reform and Rural Development, 2021). To deal with the particular difficulties of these collaborations, these institutions can offer specialised expertise and resources. Establishing channels for small-scale farmer feedback and maintaining open lines of communication can address concerns regarding accountability and assist in correcting any misconceptions about government support in Agri-PPPs (Ajabui, 2018). It is also recommended that the government develop uniform Agri-PPP policy frameworks that can be

actively implemented at the provincial and national levels (Ajabui, 2018; Ramolobe and Khandanisa, 2023). Discrepancies in policy implementation, which frequently result in ineffective support and missed objectives, may be reduced by having clear, consistent rules and regulations. It is also recommended that a regular policy review cycle that is informed by small-scale farmer feedback be implemented to ensure regulations are kept responsive to the evolving needs of this farmer segment (Ajabui, 2018).

Regarding enhancing government facilitation in the context of this Agri-PPP, it is recommended that the government addresses structural weaknesses in government-facilitated programs such as Agri-PPPs (Ajabui, 2018). This can be done by identifying the structural barriers within the support systems of Agri-PPPs. Also, by routinely evaluating these Agri-PPP programs, adjustments can be made to reduce inefficiencies and maximise resource allocation, fostering an environment where small-scale farmers see Agri-PPPs to be pertinent and responsive to their needs (Raidimi and Kabiti, 2017). Similarly, to address these structural weaknesses that inhibit effective government facilitation, it is pertinent to tackle issues such as slow trading and permit approvals, inadequate and inconsistent funding or insufficient technical resources, which would improve the overall experience of participating in government-facilitated partnerships such as Agri-PPPs. It is also recommended that the government work with NPOs, development agencies, and private entities to fortify its support systems (Ramolobe and Khandanisa, 2023). Collaborating with these stakeholders can close knowledge gaps, offer more resources, and create a stronger network of support for small-scale farmers. Additionally, ensuring such partnerships are explicitly communicated as complementary to government facilitation will reduce any mistrust linked to government inefficiencies. It is also hereby recommended that the government fortify its agricultural extension services to give small-scale farmers practical support in Agri-PPP contexts (Mbatha, 2024). By integrating these services within local farming communities of small-scale farmers, they can receive information and resources in a timely manner to aid them in navigating partnerships more effectively (Mbatha, 2024). Furthermore, extension officers must be equipped to offer training, ongoing guidance and technical support to ensure small-scale farmers are able to fully leverage Agri-PPP opportunities with government support (Mbatha, 2024). Lastly, it is recommended that the government, through the Department of Agriculture Land Reform and Rural Development, actively share and build on success stories from small-scale farmers who are participating in the Agri-PPP and where government facilitation has been effective (Department of Agriculture Land Reform and Rural Development, 2021). These

success stories can be communicated through various platforms, such as local media, community events, and agricultural extension services. This can reassure hesitant small-scale farmers of the potential of the Agri-PPP despite it being government-facilitated (Department of Agriculture Land Reform and Rural Development, 2021).

#### **5.4 Chapter conclusion**

In conclusion, this chapter sought to provide a comprehensive analysis of the findings that are related to the participation of small-scale farmers in Agri-PPPs. The discussion of the findings in this chapter has highlighted several key themes that influence small-scale farmers' willingness and hesitance to participate in these innovative partnerships. The findings of this study revealed that access to advanced technology, economic benefits, and technical support are significant drivers that enhance small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in Agri-PPPs. When small-scale farmers have access to modern agricultural machinery and technology, they experience increased productivity and profitability, which fosters a positive attitude towards participation. In addition, the ability to access new markets and financial resources through Agri-PPPs further incentivizes their participation.

Contrariwise, this chapter also identified barriers that contribute to the hesitance of small-scale farmers to participate in partnerships such as Agri-PPPs. Trust issues stemming from past negative experiences, financial concerns related to high costs, and the complexity of legal and regulatory requirements were prominent themes that deterred participation. The psychological impact of these barriers, coupled with a sense of powerlessness in the face of power dynamics within Agri-PPPs, exacerbates the reluctance of small-scale farmers to engage in Agri-PPPs.

Subsequently, the recommendations, which are articulated in this chapter aim to address these challenges by fostering trust, enhancing financial accessibility, simplifying bureaucratic processes, and improving government facilitation. By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders can create a more inclusive and supportive environment that encourages small-scale farmers to participate actively in Agri-PPPs.

Consequently, the findings of this study underscore the importance of understanding the unique challenges and opportunities faced by small-scale farmers in the context of Agri-PPPs. By addressing their concerns and leveraging their strengths, it is possible to enhance their participation, thereby contributing to the overall success and sustainability of agricultural development initiatives.

## **CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter aims to present a conclusion of this study by synthesising the research findings and highlighting their significance and implications. This chapter also consolidates the insights gathered from evaluating the factors influencing small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP. It presents the contributions to sustainable stakeholder management within such partnerships. This chapter also reflects how the research relates with or diverges from existing literature, thus setting the stage for ongoing inquiry, development and advancement in this emerging study area. Lastly, this chapter aims to acknowledge the limitations and delimitations of this study and its contribution to the stakeholder theory whilst providing guidance and recommendations for future research.

### **6.2 Research aim achieved**

This research aimed to evaluate the factors that influence small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP. The specific objectives of the study included the following:

- To assess small-scale farmers' willingness and/or hesitance to participate in an Agri-PPP;
- To assess the drivers that influence small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP;
- To articulate recommendations on how small-scale farmer participation in Agri-PPPs can potentially be enhanced.

These objectives set out above in this study have been achieved as the study extensively discussed various themes influencing small-scale farmers' hesitance or willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP (see Sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2). These themes arose as a result of semi-structured interviews being conducted with small-scale farmers who are participating or not participating in a grain production enhancement Agri-PPP in the South African province of the Eastern Cape. Secondly, these hesitance and willingness themes were compared with existing literature to confirm or validate alignment with broader agricultural development trends or challenges. Equally, based on the identified drivers that influence small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP (see Section 5.2.3), actionable strategies to enhance participation were proposed (see Sections 5.3.5 to 5.3.9). By implementing these strategies, an inclusive environment can be created that enhances participation in Agri-PPPs for small-scale farmers.

## **6.2 Limitations of the study**

This study focused on a single Agri-PPP and a particular segment of farmers. Also, this study was limited to one province, the Eastern Cape, in South Africa. The focus of this study was also on five district municipalities in this province instead of seven district municipalities. Therefore, this study's findings relate to this single Agri-PPP and to this particular segment of farmers and to five district municipalities in the province of the Eastern Cape, South Africa. Therefore, it should be noted that the findings of this study cannot be generalised for other district municipalities in the province of the Eastern Cape, nor can they be generalised for other district municipalities in South Africa. This is because the factors influencing small-scale farmers to participate in an Agri-PPP may not be the same. Equally, the findings of this study cannot be generalised for other Agri-PPPs because other Agri-PPPs could focus on different objectives and serve different purposes. The findings of this study cannot be generalised for other segments of farmers, such as commercial and medium-scale farmers, because they are in a different context than small-scale farmers from a production scale and resource availability point of view. In addition to the research findings, it may be pertinent to consider other farmer segments and Agri-PPPs in other provinces in South Africa, as this would add to the robustness of the research findings.

Lastly, because of the nature of data within qualitative research, Atieno (2009) acknowledged that one is limited when conducting any statistical rigour. This implies that it is difficult for one to confidently and readily extrapolate the results to a larger population. Within this qualitative study, the data was coded, and the themes were ascertained by one individual, discussing the analysis with a supervisor. This meant that while uniformity in the methodology might be achieved, different viewpoints in identifying the codes and themes within the data may have enhanced the data.

## **6.3 Future research**

As the agricultural landscape changes in South Africa and worldwide, so will the functioning and participation in Agri-PPPs change in the context of small-scale farmers. Thus, it is recommended that future research be undertaken to explore social and cultural factors by examining how social norms, cultural influences, and community structures influence small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in Agri-PPPs. Furthermore, given the unique social dynamics that small-scale farmers operate in rural areas, additional information may reveal other willingness or hesitance factors that enhance or deter willingness to participate in Agri-PPPs. Future research should also be undertaken in examining how trust in government

institutions, private companies and historical participatory experiences in Agri-PPPs influences (or influenced) participation in them. Historical exploitation or unmet expectations in previous partnerships may lead to reluctance; thus, understanding and addressing these trust dynamics is critical for fostering enhanced participation in Agri-PPPs. Future studies should also consider evaluating the financial literacy and risk perceptions of small-scale farmers because these two components can bring about their focused understanding of Agri-PPP financial models, anticipated economic benefits and risk management. Future research should also explore how government policies, frameworks, and institutional support influence small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP. Future research should also consider conducting long-term studies by assessing Agri-PPPs' impacts on small-scale farmers' productivity and income. This may provide invaluable insights into how small-scale farmers' participation in an Agri-PPP or Agri-PPPs evolves over time, therefore, aiding future partnerships to better align with the expectations of small-scale farmers and their sustainability goals. Lastly, future research should also consider exploring similar studies in other provinces in South Africa or other regions or states of other countries to draw comparisons. Moreover, understanding the factors influencing small-scale farmer participation across various contexts may reveal universal rather than region-specific barriers or motivators, thus providing insights for developing flexible and scalable Agri-PPP models. By addressing these areas, future research can deepen the understanding of the factors that influence small-scale farmer participation in Agri-PPPs and aid in identifying practical and actionable strategies to improve the effectiveness and inclusivity of such partnerships.

#### **6.4 Contribution of the study**

This study contributes to a better understanding of the factors that influence small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP in the province of the Eastern Cape, South Africa. By examining drivers and hesitance factors, this study provides invaluable insights into what drives small-scale farmers to participate in such partnerships, such as perceived financial gain and long-term sustainability. Equally, it highlights what makes small-scale farmers hesitant to participate in such partnerships, such as legal complexities and resistance to altering traditional production practices. This study's findings provide valuable and practical insights for agricultural development organisations and policymakers aiming to develop more effective and inclusive Agri-PPPs, ultimately fostering more sustainable and equitable agricultural growth. Importantly, this study addresses a knowledge gap in agricultural development literature by providing localised insights that could inform specific policy interventions and

partnership models. This study's contribution is also premised on setting a foundation for future research and policy development by suggesting areas for further research, such as the influence of training programs and gender dynamics. Lastly, these contributions provide a comprehensive framework for continuous policy refinement and innovation, enabling more responsive and successful Agri-PPPs that support the diverse needs of rural farming communities in the Eastern Cape and, ultimately, in South Africa.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

This study evaluated the factors influencing small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in an Agri-PPP in the province of the Eastern Cape, South Africa. Encouraging small-scale farmers' willingness to participate through open communication and focused capacity-building underscores the importance of stakeholder theory in managing diverse interests within Agri-PPPs. This study illustrates how Agri-PPPs may enhance the socioeconomic well-being of small-scale farmers, promote trust, and better support sustainable development by addressing these aspects. Furthermore, this study contributes to the discourse on Agri-PPPs, providing insights for future research and policy interventions to augment small-scale farmers' active participation in these partnerships. From a theoretical standpoint, this study contributes to the understanding and advancement of the stakeholder theory by demonstrating how the relationship between Agri-PPPs determines and is impacted by the desire to participate.

Practically, this study offers actionable insights for creating Agri-PPPs that meet the requirements and objectives of small-scale farmers, thereby improving the sustainability of agricultural projects in comparable settings. To enhance participation, it is essential to ensure that partnerships such as Agri-PPPs provide tangible economic benefits, simplified and easy access to modern technology, and structured capacity-building programs. Moreover, simplified legal and regulatory requirements and incentives to mitigate financial risks can encourage small farmers to participate actively in Agri-PPPs. These factors, together with awareness and positive attitudes towards Agri-PPPs, were shown to be essential for enhancing participation and accomplishing the cooperative objectives outlined in the partnership. Secondly, this study contributes to a vital understanding of small-scale farmers' motivations and barriers to participating in Agri-PPPs, affirming the necessity for robust government support, technological empowerment, and inclusivity. Agri-PPPs can be effective instruments for rural development by tackling these issues, making a significant contribution to both the SDGs and the overall socio-economic growth of the agricultural industry. This study also validated the stakeholder theory as a valuable framework for comprehending and improving stakeholder

interactions in Agri-PPPs, highlighting the necessity of balancing the interests of all stakeholders for sustained success.

In conclusion, this research accentuates the transformative potential of collaborative partnerships such as Agri-PPPs as tools for social and economic empowerment in rural agricultural landscapes such as those found in the province of the Eastern Cape, South Africa. Furthermore, this research reinforces the significance of small-scale farmers' participation in these collaborative partnerships as a vital component of sustainable agricultural development. By profoundly understanding and addressing the factors influencing small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in Agri-PPPs, all stakeholders can create more valuable, inclusive, practical, productive, resilient, and sustainable partnerships such as Agri-PPPs. In line with the Sustainable Development Goals and improving the financial stability of rural communities, this study highlights the potential of Agri-PPPs to act as catalysts for socio-economic empowerment. Lastly, policymakers, Agri-PPP partners, and agricultural stakeholders may all benefit significantly from the study's insights, which provide valuable recommendations for enhancing participation and sustainability outcomes.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1 – INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

DURATION IN MINUTES	ITEM
	Receive completed and signed individual consent form from the participant.
5	<b>SECTION 1: INTRODUCTIONS</b>
	1. The interviewer will welcome and introduce himself to the participant and thank the participant for agreeing to participate in the research.
	2. The interviewer will remind the participant that the interview will be recorded.
	3. The interviewer will explain the interview process.
	4. The interviewer will inform the participant that the questions will address aspects surrounding the factors that influence them to participate willingly or not to participate in an Agri-PPP.
	<b>SECTION 2: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS</b>
4 Questions (15 min)	<b>BACKGROUND QUESTIONS</b>
	<p>1. In this section, the interviewer seeks to obtain high-level information from the participant on their participation or non-participation in the Agricultural Public-Private Partnership (Agri-PPP).</p> <p>2. Currently, are you participating or not participating in the Agri-PPP project between the Ukhanyo Farmer Development Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) and the company John Deere Africa-Middle East?</p>
	<p>3. If you are taking part in this Agri-PPP, please provide me with some background information regarding your participation in it to date.</p> <p>Follow-up questions:</p> <p>a. How long have you been participating in this Agri-PPP?</p> <p>b. What are some benefits that you've experienced in participating in this Agri-PPP?</p> <p>c. Is there anything else you want to add concerning your participation in this Agri-PPP?</p>
	<p>4. If you are participating in this Agri-PPP, could you please describe your personal feelings towards your participation in it?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>OR</u></b></p> <p>5. If you are not participating in this Agri-PPP, please describe your feelings towards your non-participation.</p>

14 Questions (50 MIN)	<b>SECTION 3: QUESTIONS RELATED TO EACH OF THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE IN AN AGRIPPP</b>
<b>Attitude</b>	<p>1. What are your thoughts towards your participation in this Agri-PPP? Follow-up questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. How have these thoughts towards this Agri-PPP influenced you to participate willingly?</li> <li>b. Do you have anything else to add regarding your thoughts about participating in this Agri-PPP?</li> <li>c. Do you have anything else to add regarding how these thoughts have influenced you to participate willingly in this Agri-PPP?</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>OR</u></b></p> <p>2. Are your current thoughts towards this Agri-PPP influencing you not to participate?</p> <p>3. What concerns do you have towards participating in this Agri-PPP willingly?</p> <p>Follow-up questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. How do these concerns influence you not to participate willingly in this Agri-PPP?</li> <li>b. Do you have anything else to add regarding your thoughts and concerns towards participating in this Agri-PPP?</li> </ul>
<b>Awareness</b>	<p>4. How did your interest in this Agri-PPP influence you to participate willingly?</p> <p>Follow-up question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Do you want to add anything else regarding how your interest in this Agri-PPP influenced you to participate willingly?</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>OR</u></b></p> <p>5. Currently, do you know of this Agri-PPP that is taking place?</p> <p>Follow-up questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Can you describe why you don't know of this Agri-PPP?</li> <li>b. Had you known this Agri-PPP, would it have influenced you to participate willingly in it?</li> </ul>

	<p>c. Do you want to add anything else regarding your non-awareness of this Agri-PPP and whether it would have influenced you to participate willingly in it if you had known about it?</p>
<p><b>Perceived financial gain</b></p>	<p>6. What aspects of money have influenced you to participate willingly in this Agri-PPP?</p> <p>Follow-up questions:</p> <p>a. Why do you think so?</p> <p>b. Is there anything else you want to add regarding the aspects of money that influenced you to participate willingly in this Agri-PPP?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>OR</u></b></p> <p>7. What aspects of money have influenced you not to participate willingly in this Agri-PPP?</p> <p>Follow-up questions:</p> <p>a. Why do you think so?</p> <p>b. Is there anything else you want to add regarding the aspects of money that influenced you not to participate willingly in this Agri-PPP?</p>
<p><b>Social influence</b></p>	<p>8. Can you describe how your immediate social environment influenced you to participate willingly in this Agri-PPP?</p> <p>Follow-up questions:</p> <p>a. Can you describe how broader society influenced you in any way to participate in this Agri-PPP willingly?</p> <p>b. Do you have anything else to share regarding how your immediate social environment influenced you to participate willingly in this Agri-PPP?</p> <p>c. Do you have anything else to share regarding how broader society influenced you in any way to participate willingly?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>OR</u></b></p> <p>9. How does your immediate social environment influence you not to participate willingly in this Agri-PPP?</p> <p>Follow-up questions:</p>

	<p>a. Can you describe how broader society is influencing you in any way not to participate willingly in this Agri-PPP?</p> <p>b. Is there anything else you want to add regarding how your immediate social environment influences you not to participate willingly in this Agri-PPP?</p> <p>c. Is there anything else you want to add regarding how the broader society is influencing you in any way not to participate willingly in this Agri-PPP?</p>
<p><b>Legal and regulatory requirements</b></p>	<p>10. How do you think legal and regulatory requirements influenced you to willingly participate in this Agri-PPP?</p> <p>Follow-up question:</p> <p>a. Do you have anything else to add regarding how you think legal and regulatory requirements influenced you to willingly participate in this Agri-PPP?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>OR</u></b></p> <p>11. How do you think legal and regulatory requirements influence you not to participate in this Agri-PPP willingly?</p> <p>Follow-up question:</p> <p>a. Do you have anything else to add regarding how you think legal and regulatory requirements influence you not to participate in this Agri-PPP willingly?</p>
<p><b>Government facilitation</b></p>	<p>12. Can you share your thoughts on how government facilitation influenced your willingness to participate in this Agri-PPP?</p> <p>Follow-up question:</p> <p>a. Is there anything else you want to add regarding your thoughts on how government facilitation influenced your willingness to participate in this Agri-PPP?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>OR</u></b></p> <p>13. At present, can you please describe to me how government facilitation is influencing you not to participate willingly in this Agri-PPP?</p> <p>Follow-up question:</p>

	<p>a. Is there anything else you want to add regarding how government facilitation influences you not to participate willingly in this Agri-PPP?</p>
<b>Other factors named by participants</b>	<p>14. What other factors influenced you to participate willingly in this Agri-PPP? Please name them.</p> <p>Follow-up questions:</p> <p>a. Can you describe how these factors influenced your willingness to participate in this Agri-PPP?</p> <p>b. Do you have anything else to share regarding how these factors influenced your willingness to participate in this Agri-PPP?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>OR</u></b></p> <p>15. What other factors influence you not to participate willingly in this Agri-PPP? Please name them.</p> <p>Follow-up question:</p> <p>a. Can you describe how these factors influence your willingness not to participate in this Agri-PPP?</p> <p>b. Do you have anything else to share regarding how these factors influence your willingness not to participate in this Agri-PPP?</p>
	<b>SECTION 4: CONCLUSION</b>
<b>1 QUESTION (5 MIN)</b>	<b>CONCLUSION</b>
	<p>1. How can potential participation in this Agri-PPP be enhanced? (Ask this question if the participant is not currently participating in this Agri-PPP).</p> <p>2. Is there anything specific that you would like to add concerning the topics covered above?</p> <p>3. Do you have any questions?</p> <p>Provide contact information should the participant have further questions.</p> <p>Thank the participant for their time.</p>
<b>Total time in minutes: 60-70 min</b>	

## APPENDIX 2 – ETHICAL APPROVAL



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**Rhodes University Human Research Ethics Committee**  
PO Box 94, Makhanda, 6140, South Africa  
t: +27 (0) 46 603 7727  
f: +27 (0) 46 603 8822  
e: [ethics-committee@ru.ac.za](mailto:ethics-committee@ru.ac.za)  
NHREC Registration number: RC-241114-045  
<https://www.ru.ac.za/researchgateway/ethics/>

17 March 2024

Mr Anovuyo Fakade

Email:

Review Reference: 2024-7595-8413

Dear Mr Anovuyo Fakade

**Title:** FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE SMALL-SCALE FARMERS' WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE IN AN AGRICULTURAL PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP IN THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA

**Researcher:** Mr Anovuyo Fakade

**Supervisor(s):** Miss Leticia Greyling

This letter confirms that the above research proposal has been reviewed and **APPROVED** by the Rhodes University Human Research Ethics Committee (RU-HREC). Your

Approval number is: 2024-7595-8413

Approval has been granted for 1 year. An annual progress report will be required in order to renew approval for an additional period. You will receive an email notifying you when the annual report is due.

Please ensure that the ethical standards committee is notified should any substantive change(s) be made, for whatever reason, during the research process. This includes changes in investigators. Please also ensure that a brief report is submitted to the ethics committee on the completion of the research. The purpose of this report is to indicate whether the research was conducted successfully, if any aspects could not be completed, or if any problems arose that the ethical standards committee should be aware of. If a thesis or dissertation arising from this research is submitted to the library's electronic theses and dissertations (ETD) repository, please notify the committee of the date of submission and/or any reference or cataloguing number allocated.

Sincerely,

**Dr Janet Hayward**

**Chair: Rhodes University Human Research Ethics Committee, RU-HREC**

cc: Ethics Coordinator

## APPENDIX 3 – PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION



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### PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION

(To be signed by research participant/s)

Project Title: Factors that influence small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in an Agricultural Public-Private Partnership in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa.

Mr. Anovuyo Fakade from the Rhodes Business School at Rhodes University has requested my permission to participate in the above-mentioned research project.

The nature and the purpose of the research project and of this informed consent declaration have been explained to me in a language that I understand.

I am aware that:

1. The purpose of the research project is to evaluate the factors that influence small-scale farmers' willingness to participate in an Agricultural Public-Private Partnership (Agri-PPP).
2. Rhodes University has given ethical clearance to this research project (*Ethics Approval Number: 2024-7595-8413*), and I have seen/may request to see the clearance certificate by contacting the Ethics Coordinator ([ethics-committee@ru.ac.za](mailto:ethics-committee@ru.ac.za))
3. By participating in this research project, I will contribute to the generation of a better understanding of how potential small-scale farmer participation as a critical stakeholder in Agri-PPPs can be enhanced. Moreover, I will benefit by being given a platform and or opportunity to express my challenges or concerns as a small-scale farmer in participating or potentially participating in an Agri-PPP to improve relevant stakeholder engagement and ultimately enhance sustainable stakeholder management.
4. I will participate in the project by partaking in a semi-structured and in-depth interview, which will be recorded using Otter.ai as a recording tool, estimated to take 60-70 minutes to conduct, whereby the researcher will ask me questions as indicated in the interview schedule.
5. My participation is entirely voluntary, and should I at any stage wish to withdraw from participating further, I may do so without any negative consequences.
6. I am aware that the Researcher has a personal relationship with the chairman of Ukhanyo Farmer Development NPO through family ties, which constitutes a conflict of interest.
7. I will not be compensated for participating in the research, but my out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed.

Ethics Coordinator, Rhodes University Research Office,  
Room 204, Main Admin Building, Drostyd Road, Grahamstown, 6139  
[ethics-committee@ru.ac.za](mailto:ethics-committee@ru.ac.za) t: +27 (0) 46 603 7314



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8. The following risks are associated with my participation:
  - I am being interviewed by the researcher who has a conflict of interest with Ukhanyo Farmer Development NPO and on whose database I am registered. Through this, I may somewhat feel obligated to participate in this research.
  - My personal information on the NPO database is at risk of being used for ulterior motives or distributed to other parties unlawfully.
  - Unsafe and poor storage of my collected data by the researcher.
  
9. The following steps will be taken to alleviate the risks mentioned above:
  - At the outset of each interview, the researcher will disclose that there is a conflict of interest between the Researcher and Ukhanyo Farmer Development NPO to each purposely selected participant before each interview.
  - The Researcher will sign a non-disclosure agreement with each participant before each interview.
  - The Researcher will sign a non-disclosure agreement with Ukhanyo Farmer Development NPO to protect the personal information of participants.
  - As the collected data will be stored on a cloud platform with a secure password, only the Researcher and Supervisor will have access to it.
  
10. The Researcher intends to publish the research results in the form of a thesis, which will be available at the Rhodes Library. However, confidentiality and anonymity of records will be maintained. My name and identity will not be revealed to anyone who has not been involved in the conducting of the research, *unless I indicate to the contrary/recognise that as a public figure, my identity will inevitably be/become known, in which case I agree to accept the loss of anonymity.*
  
11. In terms of the Protection of Personal Information Act (No. 4 of 2013), it remains my right to request the Researcher to provide me with a detailed explanation of exactly how confidentiality and anonymity of the data I provide will be achieved. I may also request to know exactly how my personal information will be stored securely and for how long it will be stored.
  
12. Data collected from me for this research project will not be used for any further study.  
  
If any data collected from me for this research project is to be used by the Researcher for any further study, I am to be informed in writing, and my written consent is requested again. I need not give consent for the new research if it is incompatible with the initial purpose of the present study (POPIA, s15(3)). Equally, I can simply reject the request. In such cases, a formal request needs to be made to me by the researcher via the Ethics Coordinator ([ethics-committee@ru.ac.za](mailto:ethics-committee@ru.ac.za)).
  
13. In terms of the POPI Act, I possess the right to receive feedback about this research. This will take the form of a short report unless *I elect not to receive this feedback.*

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[ethics-committee@ru.ac.za](mailto:ethics-committee@ru.ac.za) t: +27 (0) 46 603 7314



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- 14. Any further questions that I might have regarding the nature of the research and/or my participation in it will be answered by Anovuyo Fakade ( )
- 15. By signing this informed consent declaration, I am not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies. A copy of this informed consent declaration will be given to me, and the original will be kept on record by the Researcher.
- 16. I **agree** to the Researcher's use of voice recording of my comments and opinions during interviews, the purpose of which is to ensure the accurate recording of my views/responses. Furthermore, I have the right to request a copy of the interview transcriptions to confirm that my opinions are accurately recorded.

I, ....., have read the above information / confirm that the above information has been explained to me in a language that I understand, and I am aware of this document's contents. I have asked all questions that I wished to ask, and these have been answered to my satisfaction. I fully understand what is expected of me during the research.

I have not been pressurised in any way and I voluntarily agree to participate in the above-mentioned project.

.....  
**Participants' signature**                      **Witness**                      **Date**

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