

IERM 2023 Convention  
Public Open Spaces

# RE-IMAGINED

Community Engagement

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## A Results-based Framework of Effective Partnerships, The Case of Sundays River Valley Local Municipality, Eastern Cape.

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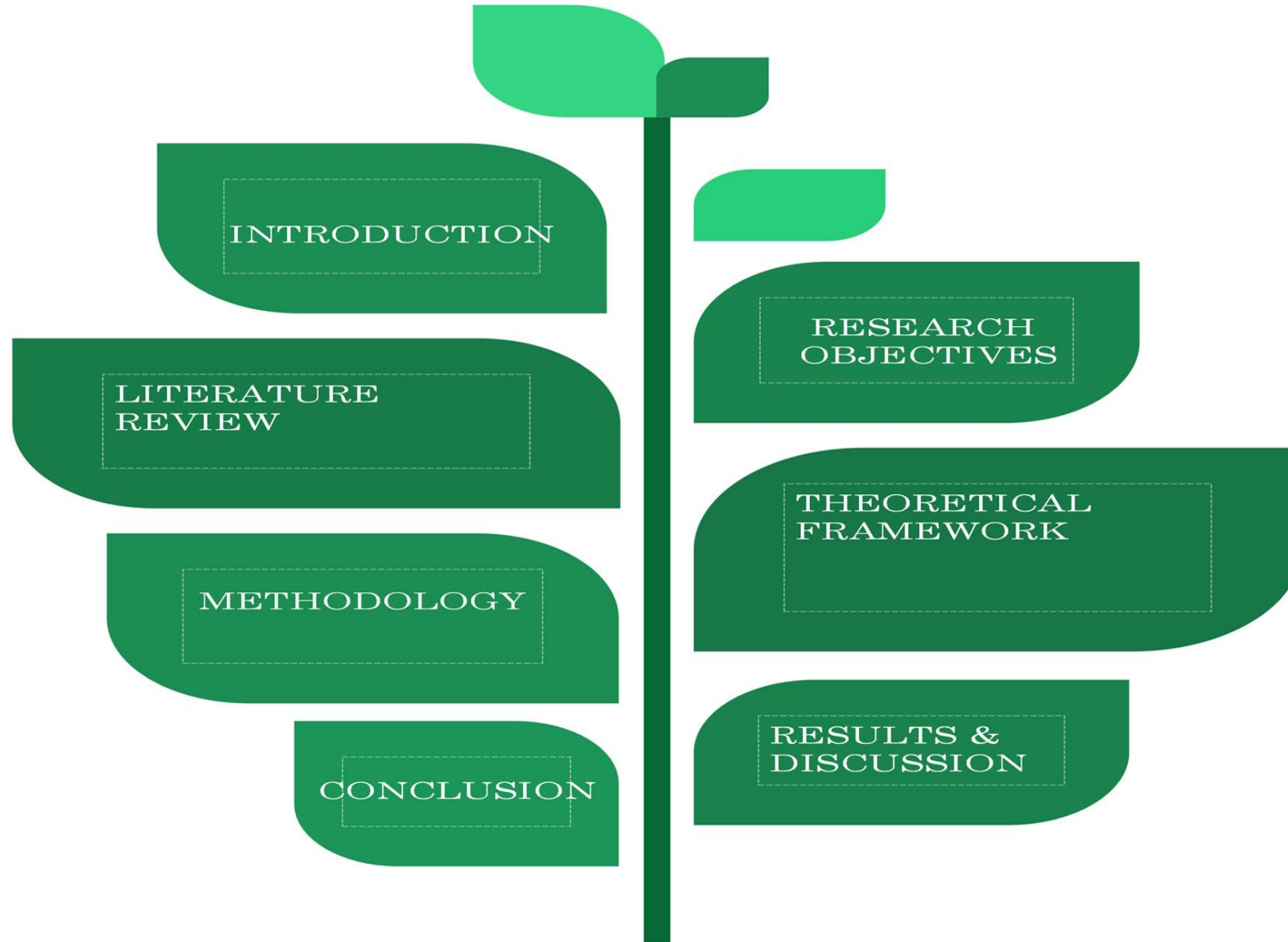
Andiswa Mbongwe:

Sundays River Valley Local Municipality

Director Community Services & Public Safety



# PRESENTATION OUTLINE

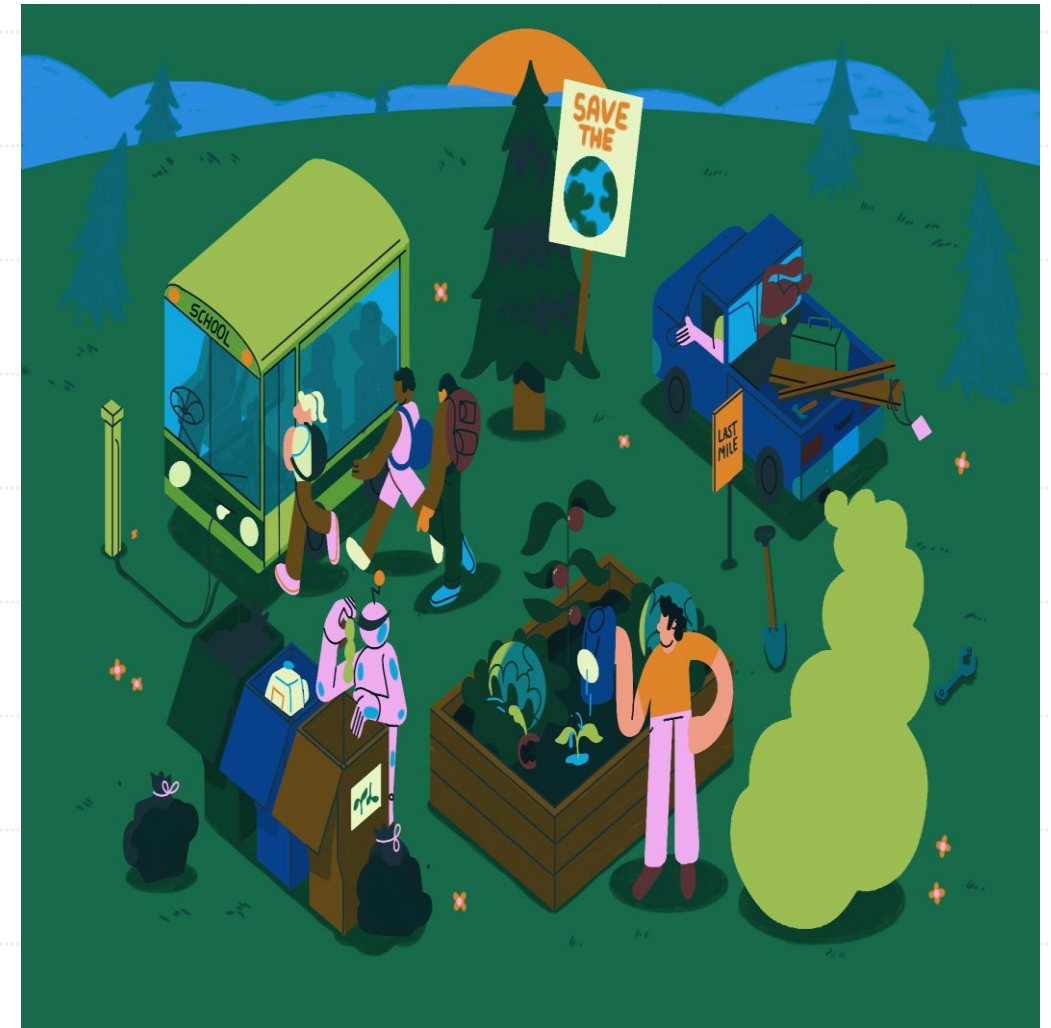


# 1. BACKGROUND

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, under Chapter 2 of the Bill of Rights, stipulates that: *“Everyone has the constitutional right to have an environment which is not harmful to their health or well being”* Various pieces of legislation flow from this overarching law.

This basic human right was given recognition by the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2021. Through a resolution, (Limon, 2021)

DFFE (2022) states that establishment of an Open space network can shape community areas & attract investments. Besides integrating greening into any municipality's development plans and objectives, integrating open space management is equally crucial.



# 1.1 Problem statement

- ❑ Municipalities are faced with resource constraints in ensuring effective and efficient service delivery, yet they are often reactive and slow to source external support.
- ❑ The gap between municipalities and their stakeholders widens. Some partnerships don't go beyond Signing Ceremonies, be it MOUs or Twinning agreements.
- ❑ The world has seen several partnerships established over the years, some of which have lasted only briefly, Gibson et.al. (2018).
- ❑ This can be attributed to the fragmented means of municipal cooperation which is a current problem facing municipalities, leading to disintegration of power in the respective municipalities, Dusek (2017)
- ❑ Valuable contributions can be made through partnerships that bring stakeholders from different organizations together.
- ❑ Resource sharing for greater value creation can result in far reaching and long term positive spinoffs.





# 1.2 INTRODUCTION

Brogaard (2019) PPPs are vehicles for cooperation between the public and private to collaborate formally on a project or to provide a service.

Lubisi (2020) asserts that the concept of PPPs is no longer confined to government and the private sector only but has widened to include communities in what can be called Community PPPs or Social compacts.

External sources of support include District Municipalities; National and Provincial departments; Sister cities in partnership, Community based organisations, State owned enterprises ;Business sector and community interest groups.



# 1.3 Objectives of the study

This paper draws on multimethod qualitative research towards building better and more sustainable partnerships. It presents a proposed framework that seeks to explain and guide the development of a partnership framework. The objectives of the study are:

- a) To investigate critical success factors crucial for sustainable partnerships;
- b) Navigate dynamism in the partnership design
- c) Unravel challenges facing prospective partners in the establishment of partnerships with municipalities and vice versa;
- d) Establish baseline processes towards effective partnerships



# 1.4 BEST PRACTICE MODEL

- Kigali Vision 2040 Master Plan, (Haley, 2021).
- Political championship (Green politics) & technical implementation. Through partnerships they established the “Adopt a street/park” project
- Broken Windows Theory
- According to DFFE (2022), how open spaces are used currently determines future air quality and climate change adaptation.



## 1.5 CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS FOR EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

- Clarity and commitment
- Competent staff
- Programmes
- Good previous achievements
- Evidence of effective management & leadership
- Financial systems
- A good reputation and credibility, Dhillon (2013)
- A high level of institutionalization, good coordination with international regimes.
- Partnership review mechanism
- Looking beyond geographical boundaries





## 1.6 Challenges faced by municipalities as service delivery machinery

- Budget allocation
- The intricacy of setting up formal partnerships and potential delays in initiating activities and realizing impacts; Political support and legislative backing;
- Convincing partners to invest in municipal programmes and explaining the link between the municipal mandate and the potential partner's core business;
- Having a coordinated approach in towards achieving impact. Kulczyk-Dynowska, and Bal-Domańska (2019).

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Dumping waste is a crime.  
Let's all take responsibility.

**#StopIllegalDumping**



# 2. Theoretical Framework

## 2.1 Theory of Change (TOC)

- Explains how and why a desired change is expected to occur in a particular context, Dhillon and Vaca, (2018). It identifies first the long-term objectives and then works backwards from there, identifying all circumstances (outcomes) required (and how they are causally linked), Taplin, Clark, et.al (2013).

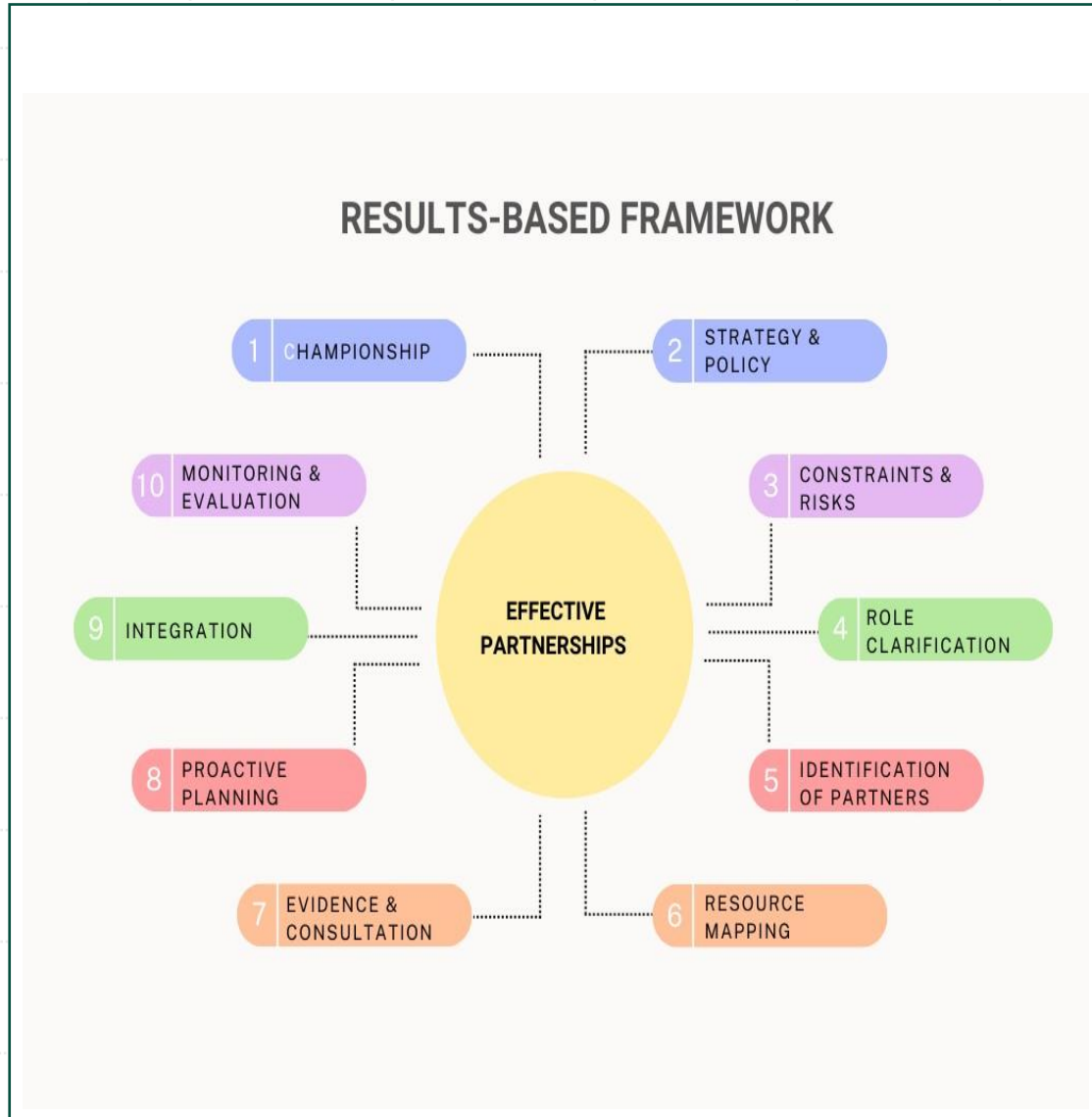
### 2.1.1 Applicability of the Theory of Change (TOC) in municipal partnerships

- To understand better the partnership's goals, objectives, and strategies, identify resources and activities necessary to achieve desired outcomes, identify expected outcomes and how to measure success.
- **TOC is too linear, complex, time consuming and expensive and does not account for the complex reality of municipal partnerships.** They argue that the TOC must allow for more flexibility and adaptability. **Experiences and observations indicate that complicated partnership agreements result in a loss of interest in the partnership.** To ensure the success of the theory of change, it is important to create a collaborative environment that values the input of all stakeholders and to develop a clear POA that outlines the steps to be taken and the resources available. This is the basis for the strong view on collaborative partnerships.

## 2.2 Theory of Constraints (Tcon)

- Any complex system is limited by its weakest link.
- Optimizing resources and processes creates a more efficient and effective partnership, Partner (2017).
- Measure progress and ensure the partnership meets its desired objectives, Catalano (2020).
- The needs to be consensus on how the bottleneck will be addressed, Goldratt (1984).
- TCon inherently prioritizes improvement activities.
- An excellent methodology for rapid improvement in environments where improvement is essential.
- **Some argue that the TCon is too simplistic and does not consider the complexities of real-world situations.** They argue that focusing on the relationships between stakeholders is more important than eliminating bottlenecks. One potential drawback of using the theory of constraints in municipal partnerships is that it can lead to conflict between stakeholders, Folmer (2011)

## 2.3 PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK



### 2.3.1 CHAMPIONSHIP

- ❑ Partnership champions can help identify potential partners and ensure that the municipality taps into all available resources;
- ❑ Build relationships with the community, foster collaboration between departments, and ensure that the municipality works together to achieve its goals, Ramaswamy *et al.* (2016).
- ❑ Helping to plan initiatives, coordinate activities, and ensure that the municipality is working towards a shared vision.
- ❑ Facilitating and nurturing relationships with community partners creates opportunities for collaboration and ensures that partnerships are used to their fullest potential, Hill, (2016).
- ❑ Ensure that partnerships are managed effectively and efficiently and that the results are tracked, Wassmer, Pain, and Paquin, (2017). However, Przywojska *et.al* (2019) is of the view that Political leaders and management that prefer participation and solidarity are more likely to prioritize non-traditional policy/practical areas and interventions to solve urban sustainability challenges.



## 2.3.2 Strategy and Policy

- ❑ Develop partnership and collaboration policies to bring about greater efficiency, increased resources & more creative solutions.
- ❑ Set forth the desired outcomes for the collaboration & consider the long-term impacts of any decisions.
- ❑ A structured and guided partnership will also help to reduce conflict and build trust between stakeholders.

## 2.3.3 Identification of Constraints

- ❑ Identify constraints that will hinder achievement of goals, Frolova, Medvedeva et.al (2016).
- ❑ Bylaws, financial, political, social, environmental, human capital, and skills, bureaucratic red tape, poor infrastructure and a lack of technology, and a need for coordination between government departments, hence the importance of a collaborative arrangement.
- ❑ However, external factors such as political instability, natural disasters, and population growth can also have an impact on partnership effectiveness, Wibisono et.al. (2019).



## 2.3.4 Role clarification

- Role clarification is crucial when establishing partnerships; it ensures each party understands their responsibilities and expectations.
- The purpose of this is to prevent future misunderstandings and conflicts.
- It also ensures that all parties agree and work towards the same goal, Chicksand, (2015) Clear roles and responsibilities also help to create an effective & efficient working environment, (Dubini et al. 2012; Kaehne, 2015).



## 2.3.5 Identification of partners

- **Form follows function in a partnership formation**; this is a critical success factor. This means that structure, governance, and processes follow the function.
- **Important characteristics**: previous partnership experience, expertise, commitment to collaboration, and ability to provide the resources needed to create and maintain open spaces, financial capacity, and commitment to open space management area of focus, stakeholder representation, exchange of protocols and understandings, power dynamics, cultural fit, time horizons for the activities, and reputation., Shah, (2015).
- Agreeing on norms, building trust, managing conflict, reaching consensus, devising accountability criteria, sharing power, ensuring voice, and cultivating effective leadership, Calanni, Siddiki, et.al (2015).
- Businesses operating near a park, illegal waste disposal site or a water canal or in a particular street can adopt it, enter a partnership for maintenance of the area, marketing of the area, in exchange for branding, reduced rates and taxes towards a sustainable environment.



## 2.3.5.1 Untapped areas for sustainable partnerships

- Institutions of higher learning and municipalities. Law faculties, Horticulture students to practice in the municipalities, a win-win situation. Internship programmes
- Business industry – Awareness on open space maintenance / “NO DUMPING”
- Outsourcing certain recreational facilities through an expression of interest, (swimming pool facilities and play parks).
- Competitive process to select partners for open space management.
- This process involves issuing a request for proposals (RFP/EOI), evaluating the responses, and selecting the best partner. The criteria used to evaluate the proposals should be based on the municipality's specific needs and goals.

## 2.3.6 Resource mapping

- A municipality must map out its resources and identify constraints before sourcing additional support.
- Alternative resources are not always financial, they can be human capital, skills development, best practices, and equipment, Stan et al. (2018)
- Create an action plan to implement their goals and measure their progress.
- Evaluate the risks associated with open space management and develop mitigation plans, Prendergast et.al (2018). (examination of local regulatory frameworks and assessing the potential for public-private partnerships).
- Assessing the needs of the local population, budget availability, and the availability of staff and volunteers. Prendergast (2018) further posits that, this assessment will help the municipality prioritize open space management activities and identify areas where external support may be necessary.
- Consider existing environmental regulations and identify areas of opportunity to help increase access to open spaces.

## 2.3.7 Evidence and stakeholder consultation

- Recognition & positive feedback are essential to maintaining good relationships.
- According to Warsen, Klijn, and Koppenjan (2019), Successful partnerships are influenced by both relational and contractual conditions. This speaks to trust and good relations.

## 2.3.8 Proactive planning

- Proactiveness in open space management is critical to ensure no opportunity is missed, as municipalities usually face resource constraints.
- Alignment with both partners interests to ensure that all potential sources are identified and utilized, (Nisar, 2013; Clark and Record, 2017). Timely and accurate information is key to making informed decisions.

### 2.3.9 Integration

- For partnerships to be achieve their intended objectives, integration of plans is critical. Ensuring that there is shared interest, alignment of strategies and projects the partnership will undertake are in the IDP of the municipality.

## 2.3.10 Monitoring and Evaluation

- This includes tracking progress, evaluating effectiveness of strategy, impact, and identifying lessons learned, Valentijn, Vrijhoef, et.al., 2015; Berrone et.al (2019).
- Review intervals must be clearly stipulated at both the project and organizational levels.



# 3. Limitations of the Study

- **TCon** is simple, practical & easy to understand. It provides a smooth pattern to follow, which enables the user to focus on an area that needs attention. Very effective in dynamic business environments as quick results can be achieved by removing or minimizing the limiting factor in a process.
- Difficult to maintain. Requires changes to the business processes, making it not sustainable. Constraints have a domino effect, Javed (2023). **The Resource Based View Theory** can be explored and might yield a different result if the focus is on resources each partner has instead of constraints.
- Highly legislated nature of local government makes it difficult to pinpoint constraints due to interdependency of functions. Hence, the study brings in the theory of change, which is universally acceptable in public administration. Although the TCoc works very effectively in real-life situations faced by organizations, its effects are short-term, Javed (2023). **The study focused on a Category B local municipality**, which could have yielded different results if it was a District or Metro, given the diversity of service offerings and constraints facing that particular category. To address the potential for common method bias, the study classified the respondents to represent the participants in the ecosystem.

# 3. Methodology

- Multimethod qualitative methodology (Questionnaires & Empirical literature review)
- The population was 30 individuals.
- Sample composition: SRVM staff, partners in government and private sector organisations, non-governmental organisations, and community leaders.
- The questionnaire was used to obtain information on the research respondents' biographical details, opinions, beliefs, and convictions about the topic, (effectiveness of the programmes done in partnership, awareness of these collaborative efforts, their level of effectiveness, and their contribution to communities and the municipality).

## 3.1 Data collection

- The questionnaire survey method was utilized primarily to explore the role and impact of partnerships in the effectiveness of the municipality in its service delivery mandate. These views and beliefs informed the proposed framework in the study.
- Questionnaires According to Watts and Halliwell (1996), administering questionnaires is the oldest, most frequently used and most effective method of social survey enquiry. Questionnaires were administered to collect data on the These two data collection tools were utilized to ensure accuracy and comprehensive data so that their analysis would result in the successful conclusion of the study.

## 4. Results and Discussion

- Out of a total of 100%, in terms of demographics, the survey results, indicate 25% being municipal employees, 25% representing government departments, 25 % being private sector representatives, 18.8% being non-profit organisations and 11.2% being leaders in the community.
- Predominantly respondents are based in Kirkwood (20%) , 13.3% from within the district, Addo (13.3%) and the rest representing the various communities within the municipal jurisdiction. In terms of awareness, of partnerships between public sector organisations and stakeholders, on a scale of Extremely, Somewhat and No, 50% of the respondents indicated that they are extremely aware of the partnerships and 50% somewhat aware. This indicates a balance that communication is taking place in terms of creating awareness and information sharing.



# 5. Focus areas of the questionnaire

- 6.1 Benefits of Partnerships and Framework development
- 6.2 Effectiveness of current partnerships
- 6.3 Successful partnerships in place
- 6.4 Factors for consideration in developing partnerships
- 6.5 Challenges faced in establishing partnerships
- 6.6 Applicable Theories
- 6.7 Influence of stakeholders on the outcomes of a partnership
- 6.8 Dynamism of the partnership design
- 6.9 Perspectives on partnerships between municipalities and stakeholders for service enhancement & Integration
- Integration of plans for sustainability

## 4.1 Navigating dynamism in the partnership design

On a 5-point likert scale, 68.8% of the respondents (Strongly) agree that partnership designs must evolve and mature over time. This gives space for changing needs and priorities across the partner institutions. 31.2% (Agree). This result is an indication of the importance of flexibility of partnerships. The question had an open-ended component where views of the participants were sought, and this below is how they responded:

- ❑ Partnerships must be more collaborative in nature than tight-knit agreements, be flexible and fluid;
- ❑ They must be project based with clear timelines and contingency measures for any changes along the way;
- ❑ They must be driven from a clear strategy, reviewed periodically;
- ❑ Be responsive to the needs, adapt to changing demands & ensure constant communication;
- ❑ Policies promoting inequality and exclusion should be identified.
- ❑ Youth participation in policy development and reviews

## 4.2 Baseline processes towards effective partnerships

- ❑ Confidence in capabilities and competency before entering into partnership as partnership is not about one partner being an extension of the other.
- ❑ Link a partnership to an IDP / Council term/ Board term. This linkage serves as a mechanism to monitor projects completed within a specific time frame.
- ❑ The SWOT analysis must be realistic and reviewed annually as it forms the baseline for constraints identification and resolution.
- ❑ Sharing insights for creating partnerships that are fit-for-purpose and have long-lasting positive impact
- ❑ Establishing task teams with a multi-perspective inclusive model, consisting of a healthy balance between local representatives and professionals irrespective of their age, gender, culture/language and political affiliation.
- ❑ Partnerships should be governed by a Social Compact or something similar;
- ❑ Create a single window of coordination within the institution, The initiating institution must lead in terms of setting partnership framework which both parties should agree on. Continuity

## 4.3 Perspectives on partnerships between municipalities and stakeholders for service enhancement & Integration

- ❑ Accountability in the structure.
- ❑ Mutual beneficiation
- ❑ A cap on profit percentage that the private sector partner can make is important as well as their contribution to the partnership.
- ❑ Integration in PMS. Municipalities should be encouraged to tap into expertise outside their environment; A clear policy framework is necessary to guide partnerships.
- ❑ Governance and processes must be as light as possible—resist any temptation to over-engineer how a Partnership will operate and think clearly about which types of decisions require coordination and consensus of the partnership, including those that can be delegated.
- ❑ Design and enable an executive governance structure that can quickly make decisions when needed or a management team with the authority to execute those decisions.
- ❑ Partners must be open to re-prioritize and deactivate working groups that aren't generating the desired value and impact where needed.



# PARTNERSHIPS @ WORK



"Think  
Clean  
Project"



- Local community leaders/change agents in collaboration with the private sector and SRVM. Trucks, TLBs, Tractors, Trailers, plastic bags, gloves and drinking water all sponsored by the Private Sector.





# PARTNERSHIPS @ WORK

- "A SAFE ENVIRONMENT"

**Social Crime & Rural Safety** – This partnership was initiated by volunteers in the community through Ward Committee structures. Omega Security provided/sponsored the PSIRA training after they received their clearance certificates from SAPS.

The Citrus Producers Forum sponsored cameras and two vehicles managed and monitored by a central control room. Certificates were handed. This partnership includes the municipality, SAPS, Traffic, Private Security Organisations, Community Police Forums/Sector Police, Citrus Producers Forum and other volunteers.





# Partnerships @work

- ❑ Community-based general workers, focusing on open spaces
- ❑ PPE and salaries paid by one of the Citrus Farms and another group employed by SAN Parks
- ❑ SRVM supervises with the ward councillor
- ❑ Citrus growers and other stakeholders providing Trucks, Machinery during cleaning campaigns







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YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE!**





# PARTNERSHIPS @ WORK

- **“Ensuring safety in recreational activities”**
- National Sea Rescue institute & the Department of Water & Sanitation, SRCC Foundation
- Youth Training on water safety, to curb drowning at the canals



# 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- ❑ A Shared vision, communication and commitment, fluidity, reduced red tape, and championship.
- ❑ External resources within the legislative framework must be prioritised.
- ❑ Partnering must be outcomes based
- ❑ A partnership's success will be influenced by external drivers, partners' motivations, partners' characteristics and issues associated with the process.
- ❑ The environmental ecosystem determines the nature of collaborative partnerships that can be effected
- ❑ It is equally important for municipalities to answer critical questions and establish what is it that partners can benefit, apart from resources, could be more efficiency? Quicker turnaround times?
- ❑ With the partnerships in place and functioning, a study by Heshmati and Rashidghalam, (2021) suggested that national government should implement strict environmental regulations and incentivise municipalities for meeting environmental quality objectives.



# KEY LEARNINGS

- ❑ Partnerships work if you do!
- ❑ Municipalities and their partners must embark on partnerships with caution, against Predatory partnership proposals
- ❑ More investment should be directed towards research, best practice modelling, and community education to enable municipalities to provide high-quality services to meet society's current and future needs. **(Research done in this area be looked into)**
- ❑ Aksenova et.al (2017) emphasise **that regional and municipal participation in partner projects should be transparent** to national and international investors and in accordance with best practices.
- ❑ Partnerships or partners must not be seen as an extension of a particular department/partner institution.







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THANK YOU

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