

## ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNMENT-FUNDED SMALLHOLDER DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN THE EASTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA: THE CASE OF THE RAYMOND MHLABA MUNICIPALITY

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### Abstract

Agricultural development projects are used by governments of countries as a strategy for community development and job creation. In the developing countries, agricultural projects are the leading edge of rural development. These development projects however require huge capital outlay from governments. There are evidences in literature which report that in developing countries huge sums of money are being lost through agricultural projects that end up failing, and South Africa's government is no exception to this trend. In South Africa, particularly in the province of the Eastern Cape, agricultural development projects are implemented through the existing participation between farmers and extension officers under government programme. The records of these agricultural development projects in the Eastern Cape province is mixed, whilst some succeed, most also fail to achieve their goals. This paper assessed the cause of why South African government funded agricultural project fail in the province of the Eastern Cape, particularly in the Raymond Mhlaba Municipality. The overall results of this study revealed that about 54.9% of the projects that the respondents were involved in have failed. This study identified the top five factors that for failure of the government funded agricultural projects. They are Supervision, Communication, Monitoring, Political interference and Commitment to project respectively. Government funded agricultural projects in the Raymond Mhlaba Municipality registered some minimal impact therefore discouraging and decreasing willingness of farmers or communities to participate in government funded projects. In the area under study most of agricultural projects failed to achieve objectives and collapsed. Others are struggling to survive and become sustainable.

**Keywords:** *Government funded projects, Agricultural development projects, project failure, smallholder farmers*

**JEL classification:** *Q14, R00*

**LCC:** *S560*

### Introduction

Smallholder agriculture is a basic of the food consumption (Kearney, 2010) and is the mainstay of agricultural production in South Africa, while it plays a critical role in improving livelihoods and reducing the susceptibility of rural households to food insecurity and hunger (Baumüller et al., 2020). In view of this, the South African government embraces improving rural livelihoods as a national priority, and within this identifies small-holder agriculture as the viable way of achieving improved rural livelihoods. South African Scholars have reported that there is both a dire need and vast potential, for a more vibrant small holder farming sector in

the Eastern Cape. To this effect, the Provincial Growth and Development Plan (PGDP) of the Eastern Cape government have placed particular emphasis on the provision of full support to smallholder agriculture. As agriculture has a close correlation to economic development (Timer, 2002), according to Aliber and Hall (2010) the government support manifest through an array of initiatives in South Africa. A broad range of ad-hoc smallholder support initiatives have been implemented throughout the nine provinces with the department of agriculture being tasked with the responsibility for their success. Formation of cooperatives, on-farm infrastructure investment and niche-commodity schemes are examples of the types of projects that have been undertaken by government in an attempt to strengthen small-holder development.

According to Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2013), smallholder agriculture is not achieving its central role of encouraging the attainment of food security due to the fact that smallholder farmers are confronted more and more with severe problems, which retard their progress with consequent problems for their livelihood survival. Moreover, smallholder agriculture, which is the predominant source of livelihoods in South Africa, has proven to be as at least as efficient especially when compared to commercial agriculture when farmers have received similar governmental support services. Hence, post-apartheid government of South Africa has been steadily instituting agricultural development programmes and in the form of project strategies to address underdevelopment, unemployment and poor services while harnessing the enterprise and skills of smallholder farmers located in the former homeland areas of the country.

According to Aliber and Hall (2012) by large numbers these initiatives have not been successful due to their narrow focus together with weak implementation and oversight that have contributed to the high failure rate. In South Africa projects are implemented through the existing participation between farmers and extension officers under government programme. The record of projects in South Africa is mixed, whilst some succeed, most also fail to achieve their goals. Specifically, in the Eastern Cape, a reviewed literature into government agricultural projects in this province reveal that millions, almost billions of South African Rands are wasted as a result of failed agricultural projects because the government's focus remains on unrealistic projects that look good on paper, but are no more than impractical failures in practice. Majority of the government funded agricultural projects in the Eastern Cape have ended up falling through the cracks and becoming a breeding ground for corruption.

It is evident that the government agricultural projects largely fail because government continue to invest in new projects without having to review and take lessons from their previously failed projects. According to Sikrwela (2013) agricultural development projects are so poorly managed such that there are limited to no available records of the success and setbacks from previously implemented projects from which the various municipalities might use as reference of "lesson learned" in order to do better in the implementation of future projects. The Author further note that there is also an information gap about farmer's perceptions on already implemented agricultural development projects. Prysiazhniuk and Plotnikova (2017) have reported that many governmental development projects are limited to a project level, without managing to unlock the significant power of government to impact at a wider societal level, Furthermore, facts remain that none singly or collectively governmental development intervention have addressed the felt needs of the farmers to any significant and sustainable extent. Arguably, for smallholder development programme to succeed, one of its major concerns should be to reflect the realities, needs and aspirations of the people involved. What transpires from the latter statement is the prevalent poor attitude of the government to the execution of agricultural programmes which is always a top-bottom approach system. Against this background, this paper seeks to draw evidence on the effectiveness of government-funded

smallholder development projects in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. To do this, our primary research assesses the cause of why South African government funded agricultural project fail in the province of the Eastern Cape based on four specific objectives which seek to: 1) describe the initiation and implementation of government funded agricultural projects in Raymond Mhlaba Municipality of the Eastern Cape Province; 2) identify patterns in terms of failure within the government agricultural projects; 3) identify causes and effects of failure of government funded agricultural projects; and 4) discussing the impact of government funded agricultural projects in Raymond Mhlaba Municipality.

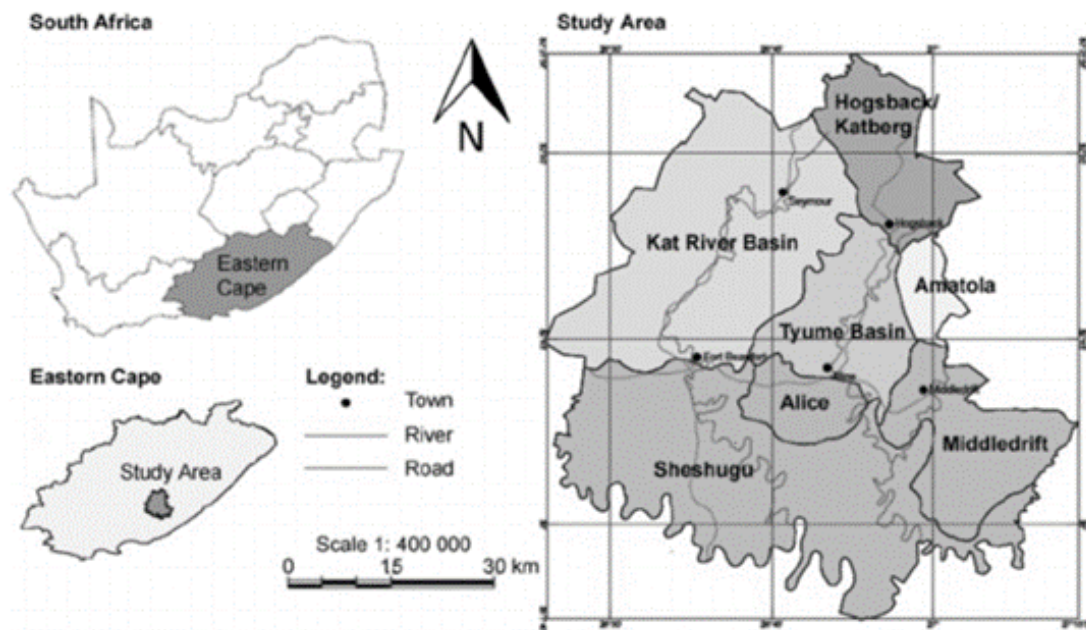
## **Material and Methods**

Basicall, primary research was used to reach our goals described above. The population of relevance for this paper are the beneficiaries of government funded agricultural development projects located in South Africa. South Africa ranks the 9th largest country in Africa by total area and it is situated at the southernmost tip of the African continent. The classification of the South Africa climatic conditions report that it is semiarid such that its precipitation is highly variable which is the main reason why most farmers within the country often face water shortages (Statistics South Africa, 2017). South Africa is a diverse country with a variety of ethnic groups speaking different languages.

The multi-ethnic makeup of South Africa is reflected in the country's constitution that recognizes 11 official languages spoken in the country. In 2019, South African ethnic composition statistics showed that the country consist of 80.7% of black people, 8.8% Colored people (mixed race), 7.9% White people and 2.6% Asian/other (i.e., Indian) (Statistics South Africa, 2019). South Africa remains the dominant country in sub-Saharan Africa, both economically and politically. The World Bank classifies South Africa as an upper-middle-income economy, and a newly industrialized country. Its economy is the second largest in Africa with a relatively high GDP per capita compared to other countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Within South Africa this study is interested in the project beneficiaries that are located in the Province of the Eastern Cape.

It has a total population of 6 562 053 (12, 7% of the South African population) making it the second most populated province after Gauteng provinces (23.7%) in South Africa. The province is comprised of six district municipalities which are the Alfred Nzo, Amathole, Chris Hani, Joe Gqabi, OR Tambo and Sarah Baartman (Statistics South Africa, 2011). The province's economic growth rate has been slow and even slower than the rest of the country averaging a percentage growth of 1.4% per annum (Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Council Community Survey, 2016). In 2020, the Eastern Cape contributed 7.7% to total national GDP which is the fourth highest provincial contribution compared to other provinces (Statistics South Africa, 2021). From the 7.7%, the 1.7% was a contribution from the Agricultural sector. Having mentioned the District municipalities, this study zeroed in into the Amathole, district from which the Raymond Mhlaba municipality is located (Figure 1.).

Raymond Mhlaba Municipality is a Category B municipality with an estimated population of 156,000 people. Falling under the jurisdiction of the Amathole District, the Raymond Mhlaba Municipality is the largest municipality of the six in the Amathole district, which means that it is comprising a third of its geographical area. This municipality is predominantly a rural municipality such that its economy is largely driven by the agricultural sector, which includes, livestock production, citrus production, forestry and crop production. The Raymond Mhlaba municipality is renowned of its rich heritage and history. This municipality has identified tourism as one of the catalysts to drive economic growth and development.



**Figure 1. Map of South Africa, Eastern Cape and Raymond Mhlaba Municipality**

*Source: Google images search, 2022*

There were two sets of population selected to participate in the collection of the data. The first one contains the government officials who were stakeholders that were directly involved with the planning and the implementation of the government funded agricultural projects. The second type of population of relevance for this study were the smallholder farmers that were beneficiaries of government funded projects. Given the scope of this study, the choice of smallholder farmers who were project beneficiaries was concerned with the impact that the government funded agricultural projects would have on them therefore they possess knowledge about how failure affects them. Overall, both these population of relevance were people that were expected to have expert knowledge by virtue of having gone through the experiences and processes of project failure.

Given the nature of the data needed for this study, a primary data collection method was used. The primary data was collected through a survey. This was done through an online questionnaire link that was distributed to smallholder farmers and government individuals who were willing to participate in the research through emails. Additionally, since the researcher was remotely located from the study area, a numerator who understood both IsiXhosa (native language) and English assisted the researchers with administering the questionnaires to the farmers in person. Alongside the primary data collection, secondary data was also used, collected from government reports, census and national statistical databases as well as university repositories. In this paper however we concentrate on only our primary results and findings.

A sample of 35 people represented the government funded agricultural development project members population. Initially, before the data collection, our research planned and anticipated to collect data from at least 50 farmers who were beneficiaries of different government funded agricultural projects. Specifically, the research planned to interview at least 10 government officials who were involved in either the planning or the implementation of government funded agricultural projects in the Raymond Mhlaba municipality. Within the government officials, we planned to interview 5 project committee members, 3 project staff and 2 extension officers. However, the reality on the ground was different. We collected data from 33 farmers out of the

50 expected respondents translating to 66% response rate. With regards to the government officials, we managed to collect data from 2 government officials who were the representation of project staff. A non-probability sampling technique was used in choosing the aforementioned sample. Specifically, purposive sampling technique was chosen and used to allow for units of a certain population to be selected on the basis of a specific purpose that will assist in the achievement of the aims and objectives of the study. Therefore, in the basis of this study, purposive sampling is best fitting because not all the people in the chosen population/community are beneficiaries of the government funded agricultural projects that have been implemented. Data that was collected was through questionnaire that was inclusive of a section with a semi-structured interview to gather information from stakeholders (government officials) and farmers who are or were the beneficiaries of government funded agricultural projects in the Raymond Mhlaba Municipality.

The collected data was analyzed by using both the descriptive analysis and quantitative analysis. Descriptive analysis was used to provide details of the profiles of the respondents, those being, the personal information such as age, gender, level of education and occupation status. The quantitative analysis was performed in the form of the Statistical Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The SPSS computer program was used in computing data, turning it from raw into information that a decision in the form of statistics can be drawn from.

### Findings and Discussions

The questionnaire used in the collection of data for this study was developed using multiple Likert scale statements. This therefore necessitates to measure if the scale is reliable or not. In order to consider the results of this study valid, we needed to ensure that the measurement procedure is reliable. To do this, the reliability of the questionnaire was measured by the Cronbach's alpha. Cronbach's alpha is a measure used to assess the reliability of a set of scale or test items. Presented on Table 1 are the results of the Cronbach's alpha test carried out for the questionnaire used in this study. Relating to the results internal consistency is achieved when the standard measure of internal consistency is ( $P \geq 0.70$ ). In this questionnaire, the results of Cronbach's alpha are evidently higher than 0.70 (acceptable reliability) which means that the results generated from the data collected through this questionnaire can be retested and provide consistent results.

**Table 1: Reliability test of the questionnaire used in the primary research**

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Initiation and Implementation	0,944	17
Causes of Failure	0,963	15
Effects of Failure	0,943	14
<b>All Scales</b>	<b>0,942</b>	<b>46</b>

Source: own research and edition, 2022

### Demographic profiles of the respondents

The descriptive results shown in Table 2 are demographic characteristics of the surveyed project beneficiaries such as gender, age, employment status and type of agricultural project they were involved in.

The majority of the respondents (74,29%) were males, and the rest (25,71%) were females. Male respondents dominated the total number of respondents mainly because majority of the people who are involved in agriculture in the rural areas are males. Less involvement of females in agricultural activities or farming in general could also be explained by that many rural women often look at the urban sector for employment as a route to supplement household economic survival.

The age distribution of the respondents was categorized into four categories as follows: 18 to 30 years; 31-45; 46-60 and above the age of 60. At least 8.57% of the respondents had an age that is between 46-60 years whilst 22.86% of the respondents had an age of between 18-30 years. The age category of 31-45 had the highest (37.14) percentage of respondents followed by the last category of age above 60 which had 31.43 % of the total sample. It is evidently visible that agricultural projects in the Raymond Mhlaba municipality benefited the youth.

According to the results the respondents' position in the household were 17.14% - Mothers, 22.86% - Sibling and 60.00% - Fathers respectively. The highest value of project beneficiaries being father could be associated by the existence of entrenched gender roles in developing countries such as South Africa that prevent women from owning agricultural lands. Moreover, fewer women benefit from agricultural projects because of the raised concerns that they have the potential of slowing down the projects based on the work and responsibility burden that is associated with women's other household roles.

**Table 2: Socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the surveyed project beneficiaries**

<b>Gender of respondents</b>					
	<i>Male</i>		<i>Female</i>		
Percentage	74		26		
<b>Respondents' Age Groups</b>					
	<i>18-30</i>	<i>31-45</i>	<i>46-60</i>	<i>Above 60</i>	
Frequency	8	13	3	11	
Percentage	22.86	37.14	8.57	31.43	
<b>Respondents' Position in the household</b>					
	<i>Mother</i>		<i>Father</i>	<i>Sibling</i>	
Percentage	17.14		60.00	22.86	
<b>Respondents' Level of education</b>					
	<i>Grade 8-12</i>		<i>Tertiary Education</i>		
Percentage	97.14		2.86		
<b>Respondents' Employment status</b>					
	<i>Employed</i>	<i>Unemployed</i>	<i>Pensioner</i>	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Student</i>

Frequency	1	2	3	28	1	
Percentage	2.86	5.71	8.57	80.00	2.86	
<b>Respondents` distribution by type of agricultural project involvement</b>						
	<i>Livestock Production</i>	<i>Crop Production</i>	<i>Dietary Diversity</i>	<i>Poverty Alleviation</i>		
Frequency	19	10	1	5		
Percentage	54.29	28.57	2.86	14.29		
<b>Distribution of Respondents by the main aim of the project</b>						
	<i>Improving production yields</i>	<i>Improving production sales</i>	<i>To earn income</i>	<i>Improve skills/knowledge</i>	<i>Market availability</i>	<i>Reduce Poverty</i>
Frequency	6	8	9	3	3	6
Percentage	17.14	22.86	25.71	8.57	8.57	17.14

Source: own research and edition, 2022

Out of the 35 respondents, 97.14% of them have a High School education, with the rest, 2.86% having a tertiary education. Tertiary education means that respondents have in possession of either a bachelor’s degree, a Master’s Degree, a PhD and or any kind of College professional Education. Based on the distribution of respondents displayed in Table 2, it is clear that majority of them had farming as their occupation. The least occupation came from the student and employed categories. Majority of the sampled respondents were beneficiaries of livestock agricultural government projects with 54.29%. The least came from the beneficiaries of projects that were target as improving household food security with a 2.86%. Majority (25.7%) of the sampled project beneficiaries were involved in agricultural projects that had the main aim of increasing their incomes, followed by the involvement in agricultural projects that aimed to improve production sales. The least percentage of the aim of projects come from those projects that had the goal of improving skill and knowledge to project beneficiaries (8.57%), and those that wanted to make the project beneficiaries to have access to markets (8.57%).

**South African Government Agricultural Project Failure**

Presented on Table 3 is the output from the analysis of descriptive statistics for all the variables deemed to be the measure of failure in South African government funded agricultural projects.

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Initiation and Implementation**

	Frequencies (%)				Descriptive	
	SD	D	A	SA	N	Mean
The project had the project manager/committee responsible for control and managing the project	11.43	8.57	48.57	31.43	35	3.00

The government was involved during initiation of the project	20.00	14.29	28.57	37.14	35	2.83
Project beneficiaries were involved during initiation and implementation of the project	8.57	25.71	40.00	25.71	35	2.83
The progress of the project was communicated to the beneficiaries	11.43	22.86	40.00	25.71	35	2.80
Funds received were recorded in project financial books	11.76	23.53	41.18	23.53	34	2.76

Note: SD - Strongly disagree; D - Disagree; A - Agree; SA - Strongly agree

Source: own research and edition, 2022

Table 3 displays the ranking of the respondents' responses on the degree on which they were satisfied about the initiation and implementation of the projects that they were involved in. In the order of importance, the results presented in table 3 reveal that most of the respondents were in agreement that the project had a manager that was responsible for controlling the project. The variable that recorded the lowest mean score is the involvement of carrying out workshops for project members to improve their performance and production capacity.

Table 4 shows that most of the respondents were indicating with strongly agreement that supervision (lack of) is the main cause of failure in government funded agricultural projects in the Raymond Mhlaba Municipality.

**Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Project Failures**

	Frequencies (%)				Descriptive	
	SD	D	A	SA	N	Mean
Supervision	2.86	5.71	14.29	77.14	35	3.66
Communication	2.86	8.57	22.86	65.71	35	3.51
Monitoring	5.71	5.71	25.71	62.86	35	3.46
Political interference	5.71	11.43	14.29	68.57	35	3.46
Commitment to project	2.86	8.57	31.43	57.14	35	3.43

Note: SD - Strongly disagree; D - Disagree; A - Agree; SA - Strongly agree

Source: own research and edition, 2022

The variable that recorded the lowest mean score is the commitment to the project Presented in Table 4, it is visibly seen that the respondents ranked project supervision as the most influential cause of failure in the South African government funded agricultural projects, this is followed by Communication, Monitoring, Political interference and Commitment to project respectively. The respondents ranked their top three as Supervision, Communication and Monitoring, therefore, this means that the farmers ranked project management-related issues as more influential factors.



Table 5 displays the ranking of Effects of Failure. The results reveal that most of the respondents were at least agreeing that corruption is the most felt effect from failure of government funded agricultural projects in the Raymond Mhlaba Municipality. This is followed by “Bad image for government (Incompetency)”, “Slowed down economic growth”, “Decreased willingness to participate in government funded projects” and “Financial institutions losing confidence in the state respectively”.

**Table 5: Descriptive Statistics for Effects of Failures**

	Frequencies (%)				Descriptive	
	SD	D	A	SA	N	Mean
Corruption	5.71	8.57	11.43	74.29	35	3.54
Bad image for government (Incompetency)	8.82	5.88	11.76	73.53	34	3.50
Slowed down economic growth	2.86	11.43	22.86	62.86	35	3.46
Decreased willingness to participate in government funded projects	5.71	5.71	28.57	60.00	35	3.43
Financial institutions lose confidence in the state	5.71	11.43	17.14	65.71	35	3.43

Note: SD - Strongly disagree; D - Disagree; A - Agree; SA - Strongly agree

Source: own research and edition, 2022

**Results Pertaining to Hypotheses (Correlation analysis)**

We hypothesized that the lack of a) farmers’ involvement in the project planning process; b) needs analysis; c) training of project members and d) monitoring and evaluation causes failure in government funded agricultural projects. In order to test this hypothesis relationship, a Spearman's rank-order correlation was run on the farmers’ involvement in the project planning process, needs analysis, training of project members and monitoring and evaluation variables.

The results of the Spearman correlation analysis presented in Table 6 indicate that farmers’ involvement in the project planning process do not lead to failure of the South African government funded agricultural projects.

**Table 6: Correlation Spearman's rho rs(8)**

Spearman's rho $r_s(8)$						
		PF	INV	NA	MEV	COM
Failure of the South African government funded agricultural projects (PF)	Coefficient	1.000				
	Sig.	.				
	N	35				
Farmers’ involvement in the project planning process (INV)	Coefficient	0.250	1.000			
	Sig.	0.148	.			

	N	35	35			
Needs analysis (NA)	Coefficient	0.022	0.619**	1.000		
	Sig.	-0.9	0.000	.		
	N	35	35	35		
Monitoring and evaluation (MEV)	Coefficient	0.019	0.634**	0.599**	1.000	
	Sig.	-0.278	.000	.000	.	
	N	35	35	35	35	
Communication (COM)	Coefficient	0.024	.565**	0.513**	0.504**	1.000
	Sig.	-0.893	.000	.002	0.002	.
	N	35	35	35	35	35
Training of project members (TPM)	Coefficient	0.010	0.659**	0.588**	0.524**	0.624**
	Sig.	-0.552	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.000
	N	35	35	35	35	35

Source: own research and edition, 2022

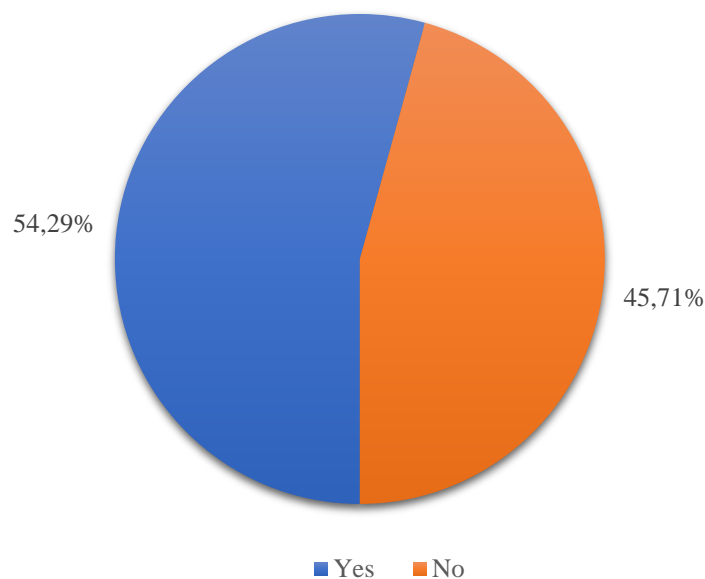
Evident from the Spearman's correlation results, the relationship is statistically not significant at ( $r_s(8) = 0.250$ ;  $n = 35$ ;  $p = 0.148$ ). These results are inconsistent with a study by Mqamelo (2017) which noted that project beneficiary involvement in the planning stage of any project is the key that ensure the understanding of their needs and make decisions that will meet those needs in the best possible way. Based on the results there is a strong negative correlation between Failure of the South African government funded agricultural projects and needs analysis (NA), which is statistically significant at ( $r_s(8) = -0.899$ ;  $n = 35$ ;  $p = 0.022$ ). These results are consistent with a study by Christensen (2016) who noted that a needs analysis is important before the initiation of any project because it helps project planners/ implementers to become proactive in approaching potential issues before they become actual problems, not only this, needs analysis helps with the identification of the areas that need to be prioritized during the project cycle. The results of the spearman correlation analysis indicates that the relationship between Project failure and Monitoring and evaluation is not statistically significant ( $r_s(8) = 0.019$ ;  $n = 35$ ;  $p = 0.278$ ). The results contradict literature findings revealed that many projects fail to sustain because their activities are not monitored which is the most important aspect in the life of the project (see Namakhoma, 2015).

These results also contradict the findings of our research (see Table 3). When respondents were asked about their satisfaction on whether the departmental officials including ward committee members visited the project to check its progress, about 45.71% (the highest percentage) showed that they were in strong disagreement which means that departmental officials and ward committees are not doing enough in terms of monitoring and evaluation of the progress of projects. The results of the spearman correlation analysis presented in table 6 above indicates that the relationship between Project failure and Communication is statistically insignificant ( $r_s(8) = 0.024$ ;  $n = 35$ ;  $p = 0.893$ ). These findings are not in alignment with the literature that have proved that effective communication is vital in the project environment as it helps to avoid

duplication of information and provides all the necessary parties involved in the project with relevant, timely information for effective and efficient delivery of the project. Ndou (2012) assert that lack of communication of project goals is a factor which lead to failure of projects. A study by Boakye (2015) outlined the lack of communication between managers and staff led to heightened fear levels and lack of trust as an issue which hampered change. Lastly, the results of the Spearman correlation analysis presented in table 6 above indicates that there is a negative relationship between Project failure and Training of project members ( $r_s(8) = 0.010$ ;  $n = 35$ ;  $p = 0.552$ ). According to our research participants in the study identified the need of training as a tool that will enhance performance of projects and resulted in projects becoming sustainable. In order to implement plans and manage the project more effectively, further training is needed by project members, similar to Oates's (2006) findings.

### ***Failure of government funded agricultural projects in the Raymond Mhlaba Municipality***

Presented in Figure 2. there are the results of failure of government funded agricultural projects in the Raymond Mhlaba Municipality, Eastern Cape. Quite evidently, 54.9% of the projects that the respondents were involved have failed, while 45.71% voted that the projects that they were involved in were successful. For those who voted that the projects failed they mentioned several factors that were the contribution to this result. These factors are the ones that have been previously highlighted on Table 2 "Descriptive Statistics for Initiation and Implementation", Table 3" Descriptive Statistics for the Causes of Project Failures" and in Table 4 "Descriptive Statistics for Effects of Failures".



**Figure 2: (Did the project fail?) (%)**

*Source: own research and edition, 2022*

Evident from these factors we can summarise that the respondents mentioned the top-down approach to the project which led to non ideal projects being implemented and corrupted administrative systems. Lack of commitment of the project management team was highlighted in the sense that majority of the projects were not monitored also they involved least site visits.

The respondents were asked if the projects involved the management team that was competent or had the necessary skills to handle the projects and they have expressed that the project managers lacked capacity in terms of knowledge and skills to manage such kind of projects. This led to poor quality of work and failure to meet the project aims. Poor communication, lack of beneficiary involvement particularly in the initial, planning and designing phase of the project and in decision making processes and poor financial management were spotted out by the respondents as factors that contributed to project failure.

### ***Satisfaction with project impact***

Presented in Table 7 there are the results of respondents' responses when asked to what extent were they satisfied by the general impact of the projects that they were involved in.

**Table 7: Distribution of Respondents satisfaction with the impact caused by the projects they were involved in**

Responses	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Greatly satisfied	11	31,43%	31,4	31,4
Not at all satisfied	16	45,71%	45,7	77,1
Satisfied	4	11,43%	11,4	88,6
Somewhat satisfied	4	11,43%	11,4	100,0
Total	35	100%	100,0	

*Source: own research and edition, 2022*

Based on the results, as regards to the impact that was registered by the project, 31.43% of the respondents were greatly satisfied with the impact that was registered by the project, 11.43% were just satisfied, followed by an equal percentage of 11.43 of those who were somehow satisfied, and the remaining 45.71% were dissatisfied with the impact registered by the project. This means that 54.29% of the respondents were on the satisfied side and 45.71% on the dissatisfied side. Those on the satisfied side highlighted the following as the impact that was registered by the project has increased their income levels and the social status of those who benefited them improved. They expressed that the introduction of the agricultural project offered them an introduction of new ways of farming to the farmers that were focusing specifically to the traditional ways of farming. Those on the dissatisfied side expressed that they felt cheated and used, the project had not benefited them as they thought and as they were promised.

### **Conclusions**

Projects will remain the dominant means of initiating development in the foreseeable future because they offer important advantages to all participants in development as they are, or should be, manageable units of activity. This study revealed that government funded agricultural projects are becoming more and more difficult to manage, hence their prevalent failure even with the abundance of factors identified as causes of project failure, however it is

apparent that governments in the developing countries developing will continue to use projects as a major way of activating and attaining development irrespective of their continuous reported failures and the many challenges associated with their management. This study identified that there are no new factors that cause project failure. Factors that ended up leaving to project failure are those that are reported severally in project planning, implementation, and management literature since the dawn of studies on project success/failure many decades ago. Yet, they continue to plague current government funded projects despite several years of both collective and individual experience in their planning, implementation management.

In the area under study most of agricultural projects failed to achieve objectives and collapsed. Others are struggling to survive and become sustainable. The South African government is turning project failure into a norm because instead of examining the failures of previously implemented projects to generate insights for future ones, they are given pleasant names like “uncompleted but closed” and filed away. These compound their failure and make it become inevitable. This study has identified some insightful views as to why government funded agricultural projects are failing. This study asserts that there are certain traps in their management are responsible for the problems they encounter and their eventual failure. In the analysis of the project failure causes, this study found that these projects get caught in one or more traps. The one-size-fits-all trap where there is the notion that all types of projects share similar characteristics therefore it should be planned in the way as the previously implemented. The accountability-for-results trap which occurs when too much emphasis is placed on strong procedures and guidelines, resulting in “accountability for results” to the neglect of “managing projects for results”. It is evident that it is only when government funded agricultural projects break free from these traps that their chances for success can increase.

According to the results of this study, it can be seen that many governmental development projects are limited to a project level, without managing to unlock the significant power of government to impact at a wider societal level. Furthermore, facts remain that none singly or collectively governmental development intervention have addressed the felt needs of the farmers to any significant and sustainable extent. Arguably, for smallholder development programme to succeed, one of its major concerns should be to reflect the realities, needs and aspirations of the people involved. What transpires from the latter statement is the prevalent poor attitude of the government to the execution of agricultural programmes which is always a top-bottom approach system. Furthermore, the area itself where these projects were implemented tended to be treated as a self-contained development unit with little attention given to the need to link self-governing area into larger, more economically viable regional units. It is quite evident from the issues causing failed projects that the South African government is stuck in a vicious cycle whereby it invests on projects that do not reap economic benefits more so, projects that are aimed at combating rural poverty prove futile.

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