

**LAND ACQUISITION STRATEGY AND EMERGING BLACK FARMER SUPPORT: A  
CASE STUDY OF MPOFANA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

by

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## DECLARATION

I, Siphon Anthony Ntuli, declare that

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- ii. The dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any university.
- iii. The dissertation does not contain other people's work data, pictures, graphics or other information unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
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Signature

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November 2024

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The submission of this dissertation would have not been possible without the Lord Jesus Christ, the Almighty God, who has always been on my side. When my personal life changed after suffering a stroke, and when I lost the only person I knew as a parent, God was and has always been on my side. When my family was shaken, God made us stronger.

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May the Lord Jesus Christ shower you with his blessings.

## ABSTRACT

This study aimed to assess the effect of the Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) on the development of emerging black farmers in Mpfana Local Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. This was appraised by examining the processes involved in leasing farms, the support offered to beneficiaries, the current condition of the farms, and the skills levels of the beneficiaries.

The study begins by examining the background of land reform in ‘developed’ and ‘developing’ nations, and the rationale for its implementation. This broader context provided the basis for examining the more local research problem. Although Mpfana has had the greatest number of land reform farm transfers in the district, agricultural activities have been declining for the past ten years. This justified an investigation of the involvement of land reform in this decline.

A qualitative case study was applied using purposive sampling to pinpoint potential participants. The final sample size consisted of fifteen potential participants. Twelve PLAS land reform beneficiary farmers in Mpfana and three government officials. Nine participants were interviewed: six land reform beneficiaries, and three government officials. Content analysis was used to analyse the data generated from in-person interviews, document analysis and observations.

The study found that the processes involved in land reform applications and recapitalisation need to be reviewed. The current administrative landscape is not clear and is producing outcomes that are destructive for land reform, employment and food security. The government has also failed to provide the financial and technical support required by the beneficiaries. Many land reform farms in Mpfana have collapsed due to this lack of support. Those still functional are leased out to the commercial farmers from whom the land was originally bought. Support is needed to bridge the critical skills gap identified in the emergent farmers. None of the participants had formal agricultural training, and all needed education on accessing markets and financial management.

The breakdown of the land reform farms in Mpfana is an indictment of certain administrative processes, the lack of support provided to beneficiaries, and certain corrupt activities. Nonetheless, there is hope that with the correct political will these problems can be addressed, and black emergent farmers can be productively brought into the agricultural economy of Mpfana, through

supporting sustainable, functional farms that increase agricultural production, strengthen food security, and create much-needed employment.

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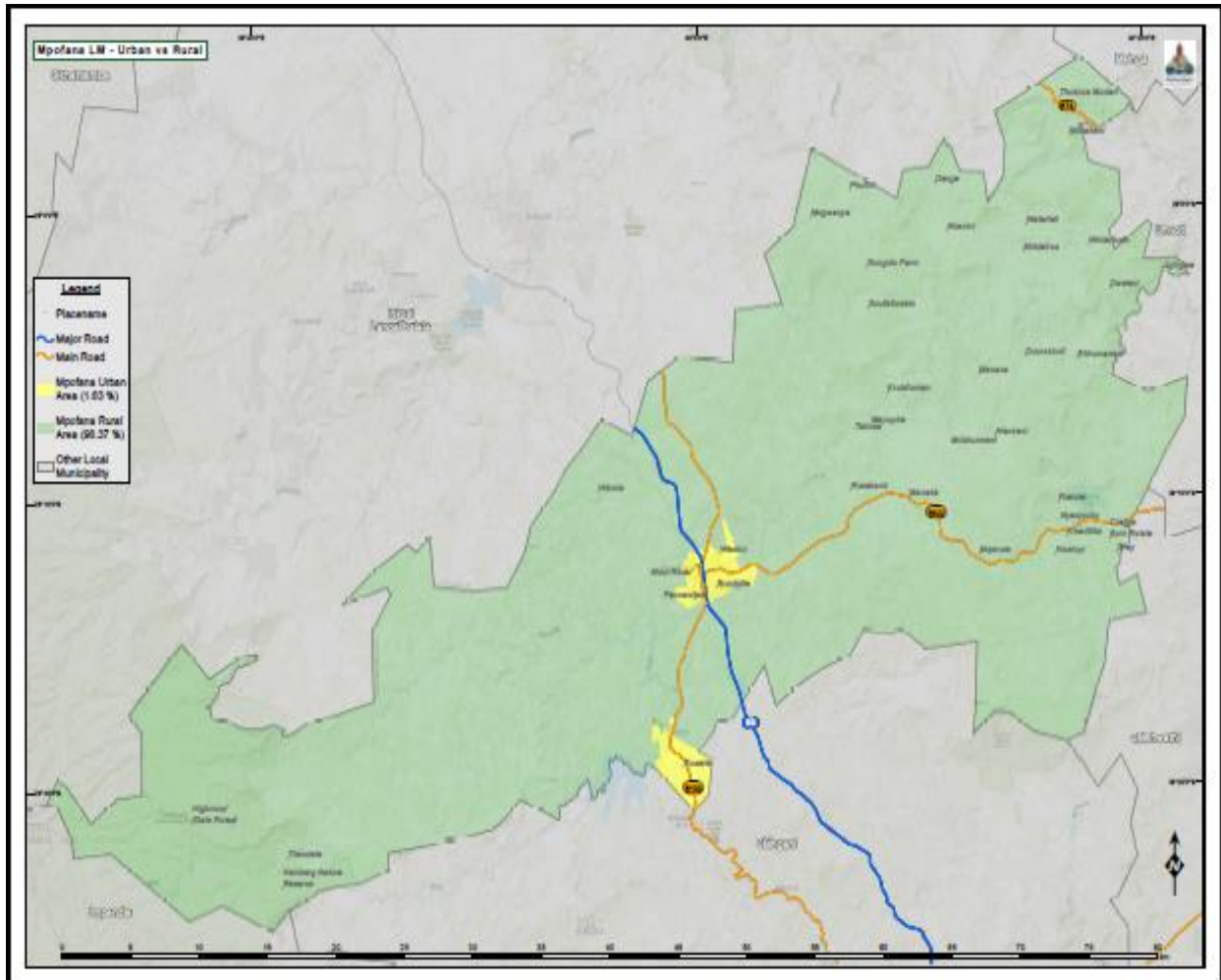


Figure 1: urban vs rural portions of Mpofana Local Municipality

## ACRONYMS

ADA	Agribusiness Development Agency
CPA	Communal Property Association
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
CASP	Comprehensive Agriculture Support Programme
CRLR	Commission on Restitution of Land Rights
CPLA	Crown Pastoral Land Act
DAFF	Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DARDLR	Department of Agriculture Rural Development and Land Reform
DBSC	District Beneficiary Selection Committee
DORA	Division of Revenue Act
EDTEA	Economic Development Tourism and Environmental Affairs
EDU	Enterprise Development Unit
ESTA	Extension of Security of Tenure Act.
FPSU	Farmer Production Support Unit
GIS	Geography Information System
GVA	Gross Value Add
LRAD	Land Restitution for Agricultural Development
MAFA	Mpofana African Farmers Association

MAFISA	Micro Agricultural Financial Institutional Scheme of South Africa
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NLAC	National Land Allocation Committee
PLAS	Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy
POPIA	Protection of Personal Information Act
PRI	Institutional Revolutionary Party
RECAP	Recapitalisation and Agricultural Development Programme
SCAP	Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers
SCM	Supply Chain Management
SLAG	Settlement Land Acquisition Grant
StatsSA	Statistics South Africa

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Land reform policies have been implemented in a variety of ways for a range of different purposes throughout human history. Many governments have introduced land reform policies in an effort to mitigate the effects of poverty and economic and political exclusion. Land reform has also been implemented in the service of political revolutions and social movements, in order to mobilise support from those who desire land. In many countries, major revolutions succeeded because they were supported by the poor. In Cuba, for example, half of the people who served in Fidel Castro's government were former farm workers (Prosterman, 1972, p. 130).

As far back as Ancient Rome, land reform was introduced in an attempt to address poverty by transferring land from the wealthy landowners to the poorer citizens, but with very limited success. Greece introduced a policy of land reform in the sixteenth century, and many countries in Europe and Asia followed suit after the French Revolution of 1789 (Jones, 2012, p. 112–113). The economic exclusion of landless Greek peasants motivated them to join the war against Ottoman rule, after which land was distributed to them as a reward for their participation (Aroni-Tsichli, 2014, p. 47). Socialist parties in Russia, China and Eastern Europe used land reform to break the feudal system (Sikor & Muller, 2009, p. 1308), while the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) of Mexico introduced land reform in the 1930s and 1940s to weaken the threat posed by rural instability, and to entice peasants to vote during local and national elections (Albertus et al., 2016, p. 156).

In Africa, where agriculture plays a critical economic role, many countries introduced post-independence land reform policies in an attempt to reshape their countries in the aftermath of their imperialist history, which was characterised by dispossession, landlessness, rural starvation and inequality. In South Africa, the consensus that emerged during the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA), which happened from 1990 to 1993 during the period negotiating the end of apartheid, paved the way for the introduction of South Africa's land reform policy. This policy was later enshrined in the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The objective of South Africa's land reform policy was to address the problems of inequality and poverty that

were inherent in the land dispossession initiated by colonialism and the apartheid system of governance, in particular by the Native Land Act of 1913 and the Native Land and Trust Act 8 of 1936, and to build the country through improving agricultural production (Makombe, 2018, p. 1402–1403).

The purpose of this study was to assess the impact of South Africa's Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS), adopted in 2006. The objective of the policy was to develop emerging black farmers incrementally into commercial production, using government support and grants in line with the Provision of Land and Assistance Act 1993 (Act No. 126 of 1993). The provisions of the Act provide a land reform framework within which government can purchase land and lease it to emerging black farmers.

## **1.2 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE**

Historically, land reform policies have been introduced to address social, economic and political problems (Tuma, 1979, p. 17). Tuma (1963b, p. 52) observes that a common element in all land reform policies, from Greece to the south of Africa, is the connection between the concentration of land ownership and inequality.

In sixteenth-century Greece, which saw an economic transition from bartering to trade, land ownership was the means to economic prosperity. For landless peasants, who were a source of labour for their landlords, this transition was tantamount to economic exclusion (Tuma, 1963b, p. 54). The poverty resulting from this economic exclusion motivated the peasants to join the war against Ottoman rule in Greece (Aroni-Tsichli, 2014, p. 47), and their participation was rewarded through land redistribution after the war.

In Africa, post-colonial land reform has been necessitated by the land dispossession and expropriation that was legislated by the former colonial rulers. In Kenya, for example, Britain had declared all land that was not occupied a usufruct or Crown land to be allocated to white settlers (Claxton, 2003, p. 535). Tanganyika (Tanzania) faced the same predicament, with unoccupied land being declared public land that was controlled and managed by the Crown (ibid, p. 540). Population increase, unemployment, and poverty contributed to the politicisation of landlessness

throughout Africa, with many Africans hoping that at independence they would be able to seize their ancestral land and drive white farmers off it.

In South Africa, the relationship between land and inequality is defined by Bush (2011, p. 392) as accumulation through dispossession. This dispossession took place over 350 years (Walker, 2005, p. 808), creating a socio-economic structure that pushed black Africans into poverty-stricken areas where they became a supply of cheap labour for white settlers. Apartheid legislation in the form of the Native Land Act of 1913 and the Native Land and Trust Act 8 of 1936 allocated 87% of the land to the white minority and 13% to the black majority, mainly in homelands (Makombe, 2018, p. 1401). With accumulation and dispossession defining the struggle for access to land and its politicisation, South Africa's land reform policy was introduced post-1994 to facilitate restitution, land tenure and land redistribution (Claxton, 2003, p. 531).

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Land reform policies have been successfully implemented in a number of countries. In post-World War II Japan, for example, a land reform programme transferred 30 million land parcels to tenant farmers within five years, decreasing the number of tenant farmers from 28% to 5%. This programme of land redistribution produced an increase in agricultural production, agricultural exports, and economic growth (Ouchi, 1966, p. 134–139; Trewartha, 1950, p. 383).

The agrarian reforms instituted in Egypt after its 1952 Revolution saw the transfer of 10% of the land to tenant farmers, together with mechanisation and livestock, over a period of five years (Warriner, 1953, p. 5). Egypt's agricultural census conducted in 1982 confirmed the success of this land transfer to former peasants, showing that between 1961 and 1977 landholders with less than 1 feddan had increased from 434 200 to 1 458 800 (Margold, 1957, p. 9; Springborg, 1990, p. 28). Egypt built on its initial land reform programme with the introduction of cooperatives that produced on a larger scale and whose production was coordinated with other sectors of the economy (Tuma, 1963b, p. 66).

Similarly, Mexico's land reform programme is generally viewed as successful, as it has promoted equality, has reduced poverty, and has redistributed land that was taken away from the poor (Tuma, 1963b, p. 57).

Unfortunately, the same successes cannot be claimed for the land reform programme in South Africa. The initial target set in 1994 for land distribution was to transfer 24.5 million hectares to black South Africans within five years. However, in 2012, only 26% of this envisaged 24.5 million hectares had been transferred (Binswanger-Mkhize, 2014, p. 255). Since the introduction of South Africa's land reform policy, the targets have changed numerous times. Makombe (2018, p. 1403), Binswanger-Mkhize (2014, p. 260) and Mukovhe and Moyo (2019, p. 72) have all concluded that land reform has performed poorly in South Africa. Some of the reasons for this poor performance include underfunding by the state and a failure to follow the prescribed policy.

These contrasting experiences of land reform prompted the researcher to assess the impact of the Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) on the development of emerging black farmers. Mpofana Local Municipality in uMgungundlovu District in KwaZulu-Natal was selected as a suitable setting for assessing this impact, for the reasons provided below.

#### **1.4 AN OVERVIEW OF MPOFANA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

Mpofana Local Municipality is located along the N3 freeway between Estcourt and Pietermaritzburg. Its main town is Mooi River, where the Mooi River Toll Plaza is located. According to the 2022 census, Mpofana has a population of 33 382 people, showing a slight decline from 38 103 in 2016. The majority of the population are black African (92.2%), followed by whites (5.2%), Indians (1.6%) and coloureds (0.6%) (Statistics South Africa [StatsSA], 2022). Sixty-one percent (61%) of the population are considered youth, with 30% between the ages of 0 and 14 years, and 31% between the ages of 20 and 34 years. The majority of the working-age youth (29.3%) are unemployed. About 60% of the total population fall below the poverty line (StatsSA, 2016).

## **1.5 MOTIVATION FOR SELECTING MPOFANA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

Mpofana Local Municipality is one of the seven local municipalities that constitute uMgungundlovu District. According to the Mpofana Spatial Development Framework (Mpofana Local Municipality Town Planning Unit, 2022), the municipality does not have land that is controlled by the traditional authority of the Ingonyama Trust. Only 1.63% of the land is urban, and 98,37% is farmland. The 2016 StatsSA report on Mpofana's economy and Gross Value Add (GVA) shows that agriculture is the third leading job creation sector after community services and trade (StatsSA, 2016).

Mpofana received the lion's share of land reform farms within uMgungundlovu District in KwaZulu-Natal province from the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Reform (DARDLR). By 2016, 57 farms had been transferred to local communities through land reform by the DARDLR. In October 2024, the number of land reform farms transferred stood at 60. These farms were transferred through various government programmes, including PLAS. The objective of PLAS was to buy and lease farms to emerging black farmers who would be developed incrementally into large-scale commercial farmers through government support and grants.

## **1.6 AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

While land reform policies have been implemented successfully in some countries, after thirty years of democracy there is no general consensus in South Africa about the impact of land reform and its constitutionalised objectives.

The aim of the study was therefore to assess the effect of South Africa's Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) on the development of emerging black farmers in Mpofana Local Municipality.

The study has four primary objectives:

- i. To ascertain whether the State Land Lease and Disposal Policy process was followed during redistribution in Mpofana Local Municipality

- ii. To understand the extent of support given to the PLAS beneficiaries in Mpofana Local Municipality.
- iii. To determine changes in the condition of the farms from hand over to the current.
- iv. To establish the experience and skills of the PLAS beneficiaries during land transfer.

## **1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The research questions formulated for this study were as follows:

1. What processes were followed in leasing the farms to emerging black farmers in Mpofana Local Municipality?
2. What support did the government provide to the emerging farmers in Mpofana Local Municipality?
3. What is the current condition of the leased farms in comparison to their condition at the time of handover?
4. What are the skills levels of the land reform beneficiaries?

## **1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A qualitative approach was employed throughout this study, in order to provide the land reform beneficiaries and government officials the opportunity to articulate their experiences and insights into the impact of the PLAS. The overall methodology was therefore interactive and humanistic, and relied on words as opposed to statistical data (Phillip, 1998, p. 266).

A qualitative approach was deemed suitable for eliciting information that would have been impossible to obtain using quantitative methodologies (Hoepfl, 1997, p. 49), such as the types of support government provided to the land reform beneficiaries, how this support was perceived, and whether it was successful (Hossain, 2011, p. 114).

For this particular study, which sought to evaluate the impact of aspects of the South African government's land reform policy, a qualitative approach allowed for critical information on the

implementation of the policy, and on the beneficiaries' attitude towards the policy, to be gathered (Hossain, 2011, p. 114).

The qualitative approach employed during the study is discussed in further detail in section 3.2 of Chapter 3.

## **1.9 RESEARCH DESIGN**

A descriptive, case study research design was deemed suitable for this investigation, as it allows for the sort of in-depth, detailed investigation required to respond to the research questions about processes, government support, the conditions of the leased farms, and the skill levels of the participants (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 545; Rowley, 2002, p. 16). Case studies enable a researcher to describe the context in which an intervention has occurred, to describe the intervention itself, and to evaluate the outcomes of the intervention (Tellis, 1997, p. 3).

The strength of using a case study research design was its ability to allow the participants to describe and provide their own experience of the PLAS, and to probe their answers further (Dempsey et al., 2014, p. 101; Ganesha & Aithal, 2022, p. 26; Yüksel & Yildirim, 2015, p. 2). According to Van Wyk and Taole (2015, p. 175), case studies are appropriate for investigating policy implementation, as they enable researchers to determine the level of support provided for a policy, and the challenges experienced in its implementation. Such case studies can be used to determine the efficiency of a programme, or to test whether the objectives of a programme have been achieved (Zainal, 2007, p. 1).

The case study research design employed for this study is discussed in more detail in section 3.3 in Chapter 3.

## **1.10 RESEARCH SETTING**

The researcher aimed to assess the impact of the Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) on the development of emerging black farmers, and so Mpofana Local Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal was selected as an appropriate research setting for a number of reasons.

Mpofana Local Municipality is 99% farmland, and less than one percent (0.8%) is urban. The area does not have Ingonyama Trust land, or any area that falls under a Traditional Authority. In this municipality the DRDLR has already transferred 57 farms through restitution, land tenure, and redistribution, and so the area lends itself to an examination of the policy of land reform as a transfer of farmland owned privately by individual citizens, and to an exploration of whether the objectives of South Africa's land reform policies have been met.

Mpofana Local Municipality is discussed in more detail in section 3.4 in Chapter 3.

## **1.11 SAMPLING**

The total sample population of the study consisted of the land reform beneficiary owners of the 57 farms in Mpofana Local Municipality that had been transferred through different land reform programmes prior to 2016, as well as PLAS farms that had been transferred after 2016. A non-probability purposive sampling strategy was applied to identify the owners of farms to be included in the final sample.

The researcher's criteria for including a participant were that the participant had to be a land reform beneficiary of the PLAS or a government official involved in implementing the PLAS, and had to be willing to participate and available to be interviewed. Participants were excluded if they were not a land reform beneficiary of the PLAS, if they did not have knowledge relevant to the study, or if they were unwilling to participate or were unavailable for interviews.

Twelve PLAS beneficiaries and three government officials constituted the final sample size. Altogether nine participants were interviewed: six PLAS beneficiaries and three government officials responsible for the implementation of the land reform policy.

The specific processes involved in the researcher's sampling strategy, and the researcher's rationale for selecting these processes, are debated in further detail in section 3.5 of Chapter 3.

## **1.12 DATA COLLECTION**

As the sole researcher, the investigator used in-depth, in-person interviews as the primary data collection instrument (Merriam, 2002, p. 8). Since qualitative studies benefit from multiple sources of data (Creswell, 2009, p. 179–180; Merriam, 2002, p. 12), the researcher supplemented the information gathered during the interviews with document analysis and observation.

The specific processes followed by the researcher before, during and after the in-person interviews, and with the document analysis and observations, are explained in detail in section 3.6 of Chapter 3.

## **1.13 DATA ANALYSIS**

To analyse the qualitative data generated from the interviews, document analysis and observations, the researcher chose to employ content analysis, which is a popular strategy for analysing qualitative descriptive data (Maree, 2016, p. 111). Content analysis is a systematic, replicable technique for compressing the large quantities of text in interview transcripts that require interpretation into fewer content categories, based on a process of systematic coding and categorisation on the basis of identified trends and patterns (Choy & Lee, 2014, p. 4).

The specific steps taken by the researcher to conduct the content analysis, and the precautions taken to ensure that a trustworthy analysis was conducted, are expressed in detail in section 3.7 of Chapter 3.

## **1.14 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY**

Qualitative research does not have the clear definition of validity that quantitative research does (Leech & Onwuegbuzle, 2007, p. 233), but instead relies on some general principles to safeguard that the trustworthiness of a study is strengthened as much as possible. Qualitative researchers

therefore need to consider whether their data supports their research findings, whether their conclusions are logical, and whether they have conducted their research in an open and transparent manner. A number of aspects are therefore thought through by qualitative researchers to strengthen the trustworthiness of their research and establish confidence in its validity (Golashani, 2003, p. 602), and these include confirmability, dependability, credibility, trustworthiness, and transparency.

The measures taken by the researcher throughout the study to strengthen confirmability, dependability, credibility, trustworthiness, and transparency are described in detail in section 3.8 of Chapter 3.

### **1.15 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Since qualitative research involves human participants, and since its success depends on the honest disclosures and goodwill of these participants, a careful consideration of the ethics adhered to by the researcher is an integral part of qualitative research practice. Creswell (2009, p. 73) writes that a consideration of ethical issues should begin during the initial research proposal, and should continue through every stage of the study.

The researcher strove to guarantee that the privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality of the participants was ensured throughout the study, and that the study did not put the participants at risk of any physical or emotional harm. The study was conducted to minimise any disruption or inconvenience to the participants.

While emerging farmers are not generally classified as vulnerable persons, the participants in this study did have some level of vulnerability since they were participants in a government programme but were not yet beneficiaries of that programme in the real sense. It was not clear whether any criticisms of the programme would directly or indirectly result in negative consequences. This vulnerability was considered during the study by carefully safeguarding that the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants was protected.

## **1.16 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

In a qualitative study, the size of the sample is often small and the findings cannot therefore be generalised over a larger population (Queiros et al., 2017, p. 379). The final sample for this study consisted of nine participants, and so the results of this study cannot be generalised.

As described further in section 3.10 of Chapter 3, the researcher experienced certain practical difficulties and limitations in scheduling appointments for the interviews, and in encouraging the participants to talk freely. There were aspects of their experiences as land reform beneficiaries that they were reluctant to speak about openly, even with assurances of privacy and anonymity.

## **1.17 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has introduced the foundational elements of this study, which aimed to assess the impact of the Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) on the development of emerging black farmers in Mpofana Local Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The background to the study has been described, against which the motivation for the study, its aims and objectives, and the research questions have been articulated. The important elements of the qualitative research design have been described, such as the research setting, the sampling strategy, and the data collection and analysis. The researcher's attempts to strengthen the validity and reliability of the study, and the ethical considerations taken into account by the researcher, have been alluded to. Finally, some of the limitations of this study were described. Many of these points are elaborated on in more detail in Chapter 3.

The following chapter presents a review of some of the literature relevant to this study, focusing on the difficulty with defining land reform, different examples of land reform in the global context, and examples of land reform in the African context. The implementation of land reform policies in South Africa are described in detail, as the broad setting for this study.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents a review of some of the existing academic literature relevant to this study, which aimed to assess the impact of the Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) on the development of emerging black farmers in Mpfana Local Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

After beginning with a brief discussion of the problem of adequately defining land reform, various examples of how land reform has been implemented in the global context are presented, focusing on land reform programmes in Greece, Mexico, Russia, Japan, South Vietnam and New Zealand. Land reform in the African context is then examined, focusing on experiences of land reform in Egypt, in Kenya, and then in South Africa, which constitutes the setting for this study.

The chapter concludes with an in-depth discussion of land reform policy implementation in South Africa.

### **2.2 DEFINING LAND REFORM**

It is impossible to settle on a universal definition of land reform that is relevant to all situations (Kgobe & Makalela, 2019, p. 236; Tuma, 1963a, p. 265–266), as each situation presents a unique rationale for introducing land reform (Tuma, 1979, p. 17). This is reflected in the various reasons that can be found for introducing land reform in different countries, and in the different historical trajectories of their land reform processes.

The following sections examine the various reasons for the introduction of the land policies, and the ways in which these policies have performed in different countries. The discussion centres around the successes and failures of the policy in the wider global context, and then specifically focuses on the African context, and the South African context in particular.

## **2.3 LAND REFORM IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT**

A common denominator in land policy throughout the world is that it involves the redistribution of land from those who currently own it, to those who are poorer, landless, vulnerable or impoverished. Even where state land is transferred, the beneficiaries are usually those who are economically marginalised (Tuma, 1979, p. 18).

### **2.3.1 Greece**

In 1830, Greece introduced a land policy that saw the redistribution of pieces of land among the peasants to create small-scale landowners. This land was expropriated from the Ottoman Empire after an uprising that had begun in 1821 and lasted nine years (Aroni-Tsichli, 2014, p. 47). This uprising was characterised by landless poor rural communities revolting against poverty and poor living conditions (Aroni-Tsichli, 2014, p. 44).

The tensions between the Ottoman Empire and the peasants grew from a period of economic instability produced by the economic transition from a bartering economy to a trade economy. This economic transition benefited the landlords of the Ottoman Empire, who accumulated wealth through agricultural exports produced through the labour of the landless Greek peasants who worked their land (Tuma, 1963b, p. 18).

The living conditions of the Greek peasants deteriorated until they began challenging their economic exclusion based on their lack of land ownership. The question of landlessness evolved into a political crisis that instigated the Greek War of Independence against the Ottoman Empire. After the overthrow of the Ottomans, land was distributed to Greek peasants who had participated in the war.

### **2.3.2 Mexico**

The Mexican Revolution began in 1910, prompted by, among other causes, dissatisfaction with land ownership in Mexico, which saw 96% of land ownership concentrated in 1% of the

population. The peasant revolt called for equitable distribution of land and wealth (Luers et al., 2006, p. 437). After the revolution, a policy of land reform was introduced to address the challenges of landlessness and poverty (Albertus et al., 2016, p. 155).

Mexico's land reform policy relieved peasants from poverty, but it also confined them to dependence on the state for survival (Albertus et al., 2016, p. 154). The Mexican state provided investment, support and subsidies where land was collectively owned (Albertus et al. 2016, p. 156–157). However, as a condition, beneficiaries were not allowed to leave their land, and land that was not properly managed, was expropriated by the state (Luers et al., 2006, p. 437). Rural people who agreed to be incorporated into political coalitions received land parcels, but these were in exchange for political loyalty to the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) government (Albertus et al., 2016, p. 156). Any failure to support the PRI during elections meant losing agricultural subsidies needed for survival. Millions of hectares were distributed in this way during elections (Albertus et al., 2016, p. 166).

Mexico's land reform programme ended in 1990, when an amendment to the constitution ended government control of land ownership, allowing the beneficiaries of land reform to convert their land into private property that could be bought and sold. Private investment in land and agriculture finally enabled Mexico to increase its agricultural productivity and efficiency (Luers et al., 2006, p. 436–437).

### **2.3.3 Russia**

Russia has also had a history of using land reform as a political strategy during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, mainly due to government fears that unregulated land would create new social groups and classes that would influence Russia's political system (Barnes, 1998, p. 849). After the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, land was nationalised and only the state could buy land. Stalinist policies implemented in 1929 and 1930 intensified state control, and imposed collective farms that destroyed the livelihoods of independent peasants (Lerman & Shagaida, 2007, p. 15). The possibility of acquiring agricultural land for commercial purpose was shattered (Wegren, 1997, p. 970).

After the Soviet Union was disbanded in 1991, Boris Yeltsin abolished collective farming, allowing farmers to buy and sell land with certain conditions (Wegren, 1997, p. 959). Private land ownership of agricultural land was also protected (Lerman & Shagaida, 2007, p. 150). To ensure that land remained in agricultural use, people could sell agricultural land to other small-scale farmers. The fear was that if land were unregulated, urban dwellers would buy most of the land, thus depriving rural people of access to land (Wegren, 1997, p. 959).

These restrictions were intended to prevent uncontrolled social and economic transformation, and to maintain the dominance of the state in rural areas (Barnes, 1998, p. 853). Land restrictions ensured that a small portion of the land could be distributed to people and enterprises outside the structures of state land and collective farming (Wegren, 1997, p. 968–970). In 1995, 87% of Russian agricultural land was still in the hands of the state and collective farms. In 1996, 22 million collective garden plots were in the land reform register, while only 280 000 private farms were registered.

### **2.3.4 Japan**

Japan's post-World War II land reform policy is regarded as one of the most successful constitutionally driven land reform policies, and has had a far-reaching impact (Ouchi, 1966, p. 129). Japan's approach removed economic obstacles and the oppressive practices of landlords, thereby eradicating what was previously a feudal system, and transforming the country's rural economy in positive ways.

When Japan introduced land reform in 1945, the aim was to liberate tenant farmers from a feudal system within which they were exploited by landlords, in order to transform the economy of rural villages and to convert tenant farmers into landowners, to enable them to enjoy the benefits of their labour. Land owned by absent landlords, land in excess of the specified retention, company land that did not contribute directly to the work of the company, and land that was capable of reclamation was targeted for redistribution (Trewartha, 1950, p. 382; Williamson, 1951, p. 171).

The envisaged timeline for the realisation of their land reform policy was five years (Williamson, 1951, p. 170). However, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) felt that five

years was too long, and suggested that the policy be implemented within two years (Grad, 1948, p. 119), by the 31<sup>st</sup> of December, 1948 (Grad, 1948, p. 131).

The Japanese government bought land and sold it to the tenant farmers, who were given first option to buy the land they were already cultivating. Tenant farmers with additional labour were allowed to purchase more land (Grad, 1948, p. 126). Land purchased by the government was paid for by the new owners in small instalments over a period of 24 years at 3.36% interest (Williamson, 1951, p. 173). Land was also paid for at 5% of the annual yield (Ouchi, 1966, p. 131).

There were certain challenges to the accomplishment of Japan's land reform policy. Scattered pieces of land had to be consolidated, and purchasing and reselling these scattered pieces of land was time consuming and challenging. Landlords also formed unions to collectively resist land reform. They challenged the constitutionality of the policy in the courts, claiming that the policy contravened their right to private property (Ouchi, 1966, p. 132).

Nevertheless, millions of acres were bought between 1946 and 1950, at a cost of ¥13 480 600. Of the total budget, ¥9 061 130 was allocated to the Local Land Commission, which was responsible for policy implementation ((Williamson, 1951, p. 174). Thirty million parcels of land were transferred to new owners during the first phase (Trewartha, 1950, p. 383; Williamson, 1951, p. 173).

By March 1948, the Japanese government had purchased 1 342 764 *cho* from landlords (Grad, 1948, p. 131), and within the envisaged two-year period, the ownership of more than 2 million *cho* of paddy and uplands fields was transferred to tenant farmers, thus reducing the proportion of tenant farmers from 28% to 5% (Kawano, 1965, p. 143).

The land policy programme continued, and in 1950, of the 4 759 798 acres of cultivated land bought by the Japanese government, 4 673 751 acres was sold to new owners (Trewartha, 1950, p. 383). Of the 899 760 acres that was purchased for pasture, 645 735 was distributed (Williamson, 1951, p. 173).

Japan's land reform programme produced increased agricultural growth, facilitated the development of agricultural research and the manufacture of agricultural chemicals, and decreased the price of agriculture machinery. This growth in the agricultural sector also created employment

opportunities and growth outside of the agriculture sector (Ouchi, 1966, p. 134–139). The import of agriculture products grew from \$800 000 000 to \$1 800 000 000 in 1964, and \$2 000 000 000 in 1965 (Ouchi, 1966, p. 147).

### **2.3.5 South Vietnam**

Before Vietnam's colonisation by France in the mid-1800s, which replaced the Chinese feudal system, 60% of the Vietnamese depended on the land for their livelihood. The fertile soil of the southern region, the Cochinchina, was dedicated to rice. Its yield increased four times between 1880 and 1930 (Prosterman, 1969, p. 327).

By the 1930s, 57% of the population of Cochinchina had no land, and seven out of ten families in the Delta were dependent on tenant farming. Only 257 000 of the 1 175 000 households owned the land they were tilling. The majority of households rented between one and four acres of land (Prosterman, 1970, p. 752). Thirty-four percent (34%) of their crops was paid to the landlord as rent. These crops received as rent were exported, instead of being used to assist poor communities who were starving (Prosterman, 1969, p. 327). Rent was due even if there was a crop failure, and tenant farmers would be left with no surplus to sell (Prosterman, 1970, p. 753). Tenants had no security of tenure, and could be ejected at will (Prosterman, 1972, p. 133).

After Vietnam's declared their independence from France on 2 September 1945, the French returned to reclaim its Vietnamese territory in 1946. The resistance continued until 1954, when France was defeated at the battle of Dien Bien Phu. Vietnam was split into two in terms of the 1954 Geneva Accords, with the North supported by the Soviet Bloc and the South supported by the United States. The country officially became the Socialist Republic of Vietnam after its victory over the United States army in the South (Trinh, 2018, p. 70–71). The resistance was supported by the peasant militia, who later elected radical reformers in Vietnam (Prosterman, 1972, p. 131). These radical reformers set about the task of implementing a land reform policy.

Land reform was introduced to Southern Vietnam between 1954 and 1955, accompanied by violence directed towards landlords and ex-officials, who were forced to flee (Prosterman, 1972, p. 131). Absent landlords were unable to collect rent. Land redistribution transformed the social

structure in villages. Land belonging to the French, to landlords, to rich peasants and to traitors was confiscated and redistributed to peasants and agricultural workers (Prosterman, 1970, p. 754; Prosterman, 1972, p. 131). Limitations were imposed on rent, and penalties were instituted against those who owned land beyond these limitations (Prosterman, 1970, p. 754; Prosterman, 1972, p. 133).

President Thien stopped the land evictions in 1968, and accelerated the distribution of free land in 1969. 450 000 acres of French land was distributed to 120 000 former tenant families for free (Prosterman, 1972, p. 134). When the Land-to-the-Tiller Bill was passed in 1969, private tenant land and government land was redistributed to its present tillers (Prosterman, 1972, p. 135). Landlords were paid a fair price for the value of their land in cash and bonds. At the end of 1971, 375 000 titles were issued for over 1 145 000 acres of land. The acquisition cost was paid by the beneficiaries to the Vietnamese government in instalments over a period of ten years.

### **2.3.6 New Zealand**

In New Zealand, the traditional Maori principle of working the land created a moral right and a social ideal of land ownership. Holders of grazing rights and farmers who were farming public land held the traditional principle that the land belongs to them. When Britain colonised New Zealand in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, colonisers bought land from local chiefs and signed treaties. The Treaty of Waitangi, signed by the Maori chiefs and the British Crown in 1840, allowed the Crown to purchase land from the local chiefs (Swaffield & Brower, 2009, p. 163).

Land occupation and the establishment of the British system of government and land tenure continued until it was formalised by the Land Act of 1948. Section 66 of the 1948 Land Act authorised the Commissioner of Crown Lands to issue pastoral leases that were renewed in perpetuity every 33 years. If a lease was revoked, farmers were compensated (Brower, 2007, p. 437). The leases gave private farmers exclusive rights to use state land for pastoral grazing. But the Crown held the title right to develop, charge rent and issue directives on what could and could not be done on the land (Brower et al., 2010, p. 467–468; Swaffield & Brower, 2009, p. 163).

The largest and most controversial purchase was the Kemp's Deed purchase of Canterbury in 1848, for which the Ngai Tahu nation received compensation at the Waitangi Tribunal in 1998 (Brower, 2007, p. 436). The Tribunal confirmed the traditional principle of ownership, and the British government apologised to the Ngai Tahu nation and paid compensation for the land that was taken away from them (Swaffield & Brower, 2009, p. 163–168).

#### *2.3.6.1 Land tenure*

The introduction of tenant farming by Britain drove economic growth in New Zealand between 1950 and 1960 (Swaffield & Brower, 2009, p. 165). Agriculture supported industrial development and the urban economy of Europe. The United Kingdom was New Zealand's major export of agricultural food products until the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Swaffield & Brower, 2009, p. 165). Agriculture growth was confirmed by studies undertaken in England, France and North Germany. Studies also confirmed the relationship between tenant farming and economic growth (Tuma, 1963b, p. 269). Farming increased New Zealand standard of living to among the high ranking in the developed countries.

The success of the tenant farming was not well received by the conservation advocacy group or the environmentalist (Swaffield & Brower, 2009, p. 168). The contention was that land and wealth was given to private tenant farmers. They described land tenure as the privatisation of public land and the transfer of wealth to the farmers. The group wanted to stop what they referred to as the "multiple abuse and state sponsored vandalism or the privatisation of public land" (Swaffield & Brower, 2009, p. 168). They wanted land that was previously under the grazing leasehold to be transferred back to state control.

Farmers on the other hand saw what was being proposed as nationalisation, land theft and a violation of human rights (Swaffield & Brower, 2009, p. 168). They argued that more land should be privatised because what was good for farmers was good for the country.

#### *2.3.6.2 Land tenure review*

After New Zealand's 1984 election, economic, public and environmental legislation was radically transformed. Agriculture was deregulated, subsidies were removed, and multiple land management was abolished. These changes negatively affected agricultural production. Some farms were abandoned, while others diversified into tourism and recreation, and a few transformed into viticulture. Only farms that relied on conservative family businesses were able to survive the changes (Swaffield & Brower, 2009, p. 165–166).

Following the promulgation of the Crown Pastoral Land (CPLA) Act of 1998 (Brower, 2007, p. 436; Brower, et al. 2020, p. 1), millions of New Zealand dollars changed hands between farmers and the Crown during the tenure review, as compensation for the purchase of their land (Swaffield & Brower, 2009, p. 170). The CPLA Act of 1998 gave commercial farmers freehold rights on land they were using for farming and grazing, eventually transferring the best land to private ownerships.

The land not being used by farmers was given back to the Crown (Swaffield & Brower, 2009, p. 168). Between 1992 and 2008, 58% of leasehold land was privatised, and 42% was returned to the Crown and transferred to public conservation (Brower, 2007, p. 437; Swaffield & Brower, 2009, p. 168–170).

Farmers paid NZ\$18.5 million for 58% of the economically viable and productive land that was privatised. They also received NZ\$36.7 million for the unproductive land that was returned to the Crown (Brower, 2007, p. 437). Farmers further subdivided their land and made NZ\$160 million profit (Swaffield & Brower, 2009, p. 170). The Crown transferred title deeds for 436 652 hectares of land for NZ\$65.2 million. Twenty percent of the land was further subdivided and sold by new owners for NZ\$275 million (Brower et al., 2020, p. 4). Leaseholders who did not have cash requested an affordable way of converting their leasehold to no-cost deals (Brower et al., 2010, p. 476–478). Some deals were concluded without the minister's knowledge (Swaffield & Brower, 2009, p. 172).

The outcome of the land tenure review demonstrated that policy can produce outcomes that are not anticipated. The conservation group that argued for the land tenure review were not happy with the outcome, and demanded the amendment of the Crown Pastoral Land Act (CPLA) of 1998 (Brower et al., 2020, p. 5). They argued that wealth was handed to the farmers through this Act,

and asked why government was paying to release productive and economically viable land, while acquiring land that lacked value (Swaffield & Brower, 2009, p. 173).

Another reason for the call to review the CPLA was that government had failed to process 1.2 million hectares of the 2.4 million earmarked for land tenure review (Brower et al., 2010, p. 467). A lack of common understanding and different interpretations of the relevant legislation created confusion within the government (Brower et al., 2020, p. 3). Cabinet called for a fair financial return or fair price for the privatised land, but officials gave the instruction that money should not constrain their negotiations with the farmers.

There were no incentives to encourage government agents and contractors to negotiate for a better price because they were paid on completing several tasks and making measurable progress and concluded deals (Brower et al. 2020, p. 3). They received final payment when a deal has been closed (Brower et al., 2010, p. 469). Therefore, closing a deal was more important to the agents than getting a fair price. However, before 1998, bureaucrats were able to conclude government favourable deals with less budget (Brower et al., 2010, p. 476–478).

The failure of the CPLA was acknowledged by Land Information New Zealand. Contributing factors were that there was no monitoring; that the Act was ambiguous, vague, poorly defined and intended to please everybody; and that the Act could not be enforced (Brower et al., 2020, p. 3).

## **2.4 THE AFRICAN CONTEXT**

On achieving their independence, many African countries believed that land reform would address the challenges created by colonialism. The sections below examine the implementation of land reform in Egypt, Kenya, and South Africa.

### **2.4.1 Egypt**

Prior to the adoption of Egypt's land reform programme in the early 1950s, the wealthy Egyptian royal household and the landlords owned 65% of the arable land, but constituted just 6% of the

population. The majority of the population (94%) owned only 35% of the arable land, and the country's 1.5 million farm labourers had no ownership of the land, and therefore struggled to support their families (Albaun, 1966, p. 222; Warriner, 1953, pp. 1–2).

Following Egypt's military coup on 23 July 1952, the military junta introduced a land policy process, the objective of which was to break the stranglehold on government exercised by the royal household and the landlords, who formed a strong economic group that controlled political and economic power. Through their majority in parliament, they resisted government reform initiatives and made sure that government decisions benefited them (Al-qazzaz, 1971, p. 161).

The military junta announced that land reform was a problem that required immediate attention, and two months after the coup, on 7 September 1952, a land reform process was adopted. Within five years, a new class of landowners was established. Egypt's land reform policy restricted private land ownership to 200 feddans (a feddan being just over one acre). Any private land above that limit was expropriated by the state and distributed among the landless peasants. The permitted size of private land was further reduced to 50 feddans in 1969 (Forte, 1978, p. 275).

Land that had formerly belonged to the royal families, landlords and government officials was redistributed, rented or sold to the peasants, with conditions. The royal households were compensated with monthly living allowances, and homes were also provided to those who needed the support (Margold, 1957, p. 9).

Egypt's agrarian reforms have been described as decisive and drastic, and were enforced with some degree of dictatorship (Warriner, 1953, p. 8). But the military junta received support from the peasants. Within five years, 10% of the land was transferred to tenant farmers who had livestock and the mechanisation to till the land (Warriner, 1953, p. 5). The agrarian reforms saw 550 000 feddans being redistributed to peasants in 1957 (Margold, 1957, p. 9). Land owned by foreigners and 15 000 individuals was also expropriated in 1963 (Forte, 1978, p. 275–276).

The change in the distribution of Egyptian land was verified by the agricultural census of 1982, which showed an increase in the number of landholders owning less than 1 feddan from 434 200 in 1961 to 1 458 800 in 1977 (Springborg, 1990, p. 28).

The political objective of breaking the political power of the landlords and the rich, and breaking their influence and resistance to government reform, was achieved in Egypt. Land was expropriated and redistributed to the poor within five years. According to Al-qazzaz (1971, p. 165), 150 000 families who had no land became landowners. Each of these families owned a piece of land ranging from 2–5 acres, depending on the fertility of the land.

A ceiling was also introduced on rentals for agricultural land, benefiting four million tenants who were able to bring more income into their families. Cooperatives were established, supported and properly managed. They became a force for social and economic advancement that created a new class of small landowners. The living conditions of agricultural workers also improved (Al-qazzaz, 1971, p. 165).

## **2.4.2 Kenya**

At the time of Kenya's independence in 1963, the country adopted an agricultural development policy that centred on land reform, and that was regarded as a model for a new Africa. Kenya's land reform policy was meant to transfer land to the landless, and to consolidate rural property into land ownership by formally recognising the individual rights to land ownership which already existed in customary tenure. Kenya's director of settlement, J.W. Maina, described the purpose of the country's land reform policy as seeking to create land ownership and stable rural communities with improved social status, rights and privileges (Wasserman, 1973, p. 141).

### *2.4.2.1 Transforming the tribal system of land tenure*

A process of consolidation and registration transformed Kenya's system of land tenure through converting rural property held through customary tenure into formal land ownership. Land ownership was acquired through adjudication and consolidation, which led to the registration of individual ownership through titles.

In 1966, 1 630 577 acres of land were submitted for registration, and four years later, 2 696 000 acres of land were adjudicated and registered (Rogers, 1973, p. 57).

#### *2.4.2.2 Settlement schemes*

In 1960, Kenya's Secretary for Agriculture argued that the survival of European farmers was dependent on the inclusion of African farmers, and that a land reform programme should also transfer big farms to Africans, in order to boost the economy and to reward followers and leaders (Wasserman, 1973, p. 140).

Fearing that European farms would be invaded after the release of 60 000 Mau detainees who needed land in Kenya's Kikuyu Central Region at the dawn of independence, Mzee Kenyatta ordered that settlement schemes be completed before independence to calm the situation (Wasserman, 1973, p. 139). The programme was poorly planned and wasteful, but was necessary for the new government to calm people down and to partially meet their demand for land.

The minister for Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, Bruce Makenzie introduced the Kikuyu Settlement, popularly known as the Million Acre Scheme, in 1962 to address the demand for land by the Kikuyu tribe. In return, Kikuyu leaders agreed to remove illegal squatters to prevent the unpopular anti-squatter military operations. Tribal leaders also agreed not to make further demands for land while the settlements were being built. However, they were unable to monitor the movement of the people, while others continue to promise people free access to land (Wasserman, 1973, p. 138).

The first settlement failed to meet the demand for land and the minister recommended a second settlement scheme in 1963. This recommendation was supported by government and by European farmers, who feared political repercussions if the scheme were not implemented. In 1964, the Kenyan government promised to purchase appropriate abandoned and semi-abandoned farms in Kalou and Nyandurua, and some people were promised settlements in forest areas.

To defuse rural unrest among the Kikuyu peasants, about 12 000 people were settled in the Nyandarua Region, displacing 6 000 farm labourers who squatted on the land and created a security risk in the region. This raised concerns for the Settlement Fund Trustees and the Ministers of Lands and Settlement (Wasserman, 1973, p. 138). Another complication was that non-Kikuyu tribes were also settled in the region in order to win their support for the African Party.

A request for assistance from the British government in implementing land reform was unsuccessful, because the British High Commissioner and the opposition party did not support the Kenyan government's land reform plans. The failure of the settlement scheme ultimately forced the Kenyan government to announce that land would no longer be free (Wasserman, 1973, p. 139).

The mission report of 1965 raised concerns about the effects of transferring European farms and of the settlement schemes on the development of Kenya. Government was seen to be feeding a white elephant at a high cost (Wasserman, 1973, p. 142). The report concluded that government was preoccupied with farming areas, and that the settlement proposals were contrary with the government's stated African Socialist priorities. The reallocation of land from the wealthy to the poor as envisaged in Kenya's constitution was therefore not realised (Manji, 2012, p. 124).

Subsequent efforts to revive Kenya's land reform policy since independence culminated in the promulgation of the Land Act, the Land Registration Act, and the National Land Commission Act in 2012. However, this legislation was processed in a hurry, and was criticised for its limitations and ambiguity. It was also not deemed to be in line with Kenya's new 2010 constitution, which replaced the country's independence constitution. It was not the type of land reform that was pursued and envisioned by the land reform activists and the people of Kenya (Boone et al., 2019, p. 223). The Chairperson of the Constitution argued that the 2012 land reform policies would be too difficult to implement, as they were not clear on how the people of Kenya would acquire land (Boone et al., 2019. p. 224).

### **2.4.3 Land reform in South Africa**

South Africa's history of colonialism, land dispossession, and apartheid legislation — in particular the Native Land Act of 1913 and the Native Land and Trust Act 8 of 1936 — resulted in 87% of the land being allocated to the white minority, leaving the colonised black majority occupying just 13% of the land, mostly in homelands (Makombe, 2018, p. 1401). Land ownership in South Africa created a divided and unequal society (Tuma, 1963b, p. 47–52).

Land ownership was at the centre of the struggle for democracy, and created tension between the rich and poor. Land reform dominated the negotiated settlement achieved at the Convention for a

Democratic South Africa (CODESA), and was later enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, and in the White Paper on South African Land Policy that followed in 1997 (Mukovhe & Moyo, 2019, p. 68).

In addition to placing an obligation on the state to guarantee that black people have access to land, South Africa's 1996 constitution upheld property rights through a 'property clause' that acknowledged and protected existing property rights (Hall, 2004, p. 214). This clause prescribed the "willing-buyer willing-seller" principle, which was originally formulated by R.J.M. Swynnerton in Kenya in 1954, and which was approved by the British government and the World Bank when they committed to funding land reform in Kenya (Claxton, 2003, p. 539).

The objectives of South Africa's land reform policy were to review the inequality inherent in land ownership brought about by segregation and apartheid, to promote national reconciliation and stability, and to alleviate poverty and support economic growth (Mukovhe & Moyo, 2019, p. 68). The target for the policy was that 30% of agricultural land owned by white farmers would be transferred to black people within five years. This amounted to 24.5 million hectares of the 82 million hectares owned by white farmers (Sebola & Tsheola, 2014, p. 114; Sikor & Muller, 2009, p. 1308–9). The target was in line with World Bank advice that 6% of agricultural land should be transferred each year (Hall, 2004, p. 214). However, in 2012, only 26% of the 24.5 million hectares of land had been transferred to black people (Binswanger-Mkhize, 2014, p. 255).

#### *2.4.3.1 Land reform policy*

South Africa's Constitution provides for three types of land reform: land restitution, land tenure reform, and redistribution (Binswanger-Mkhize, 2014, p. 254). The land reform process is guided by Section 25 (5) of the Constitution, which compels government to ensure that black people have access to land (Kgobe & Makalela, 2019, p. 240).

The objective of land restitution was to return the land taken away from black people by the Native Land Act of 1913 and the Native Trust Act No. 8 of 1936. Land tenure reform sought to change tenure based on land occupation into formal landholding (Kgobe & Makalela, 2019; Makombe, 2018, p. 1403; Sikor & Muller, 2009, p. 239). Land redistribution sought to use government

processes to increase the number of black people who owned land. These three types of land reform were implemented simultaneously but separately under Section 25 (5) of the Constitution (Sebola & Tsheola, 2014, p. 114).

#### *2.4.3.2 Restitution*

South Africa's Restitution and Reform Laws Amendment Act 63 of 1997 and Section 25 (7) of its Constitution entitles any person or community to restitution or equitable redress. This therefore includes people who were dispossessed of land or property by the Native Land Act of 1913 and the Native and Trust Act No. 8 of 1936 (de Villiers, 2003, p. 53). Community restitutions are addressed through the Communal Property Association Act 28 of 1996 and the Tenure Framework (Atuahene, 2011, p. 123; Atuahene, 2014, p. 903; van der Walt, 1999, p. 272). Potential applicants were given three years to lodge their claims with the Land Claims Commission, which was later extended to 31 December 1998 to give people more time to submit their claims (de Villiers, 2003, p. 53; van der Walt, 1999, p. 270–272).

The long distances that claimants sometimes had to travel to government offices proved to be an obstacle to the claims process, meaning that some applicants were not able to take up the opportunity for redress (Atuahene, 2014, p. 921–924). Communication with government officials was a huge problem, and the timeline for submitting claims for restitution was deemed to be insufficient. During the opening of parliament in 2001, former President Thabo Mbeki commented that three years was unrealistic time period for submitting land claims, and recommended that ten years would be more realistic (de Villiers, 2003, p. 56; Atuahene, 2014, p. 915).

Many successful land restitution claims were urban claims where only money changed hands to provide restitution, not land (Atuahene, 2014, p. 914). However, in many instances it was felt that the financial compensation was not fair. The varying amounts were insufficient for restoring the losses black people had incurred, and were not sufficient for buying another similar piece of land. In Milnerton, for example, compensation ranged from R25 000 – R60 000 (Atuahene, 2014, p. 927). Between 1995 and 2008, 70% of land restitution claimants still had no land because they

received financial compensation which was not linked to the market value of the property they lost (Atuahene, 2011, p. 124).

The compensation provided to achieve restitution for past dispossession and discriminatory laws was funded by taxpayers in South Africa. Whereas in Kenya where the willing buyer willing seller principle was first adopted in 1954, Section 40 (6) of the constitution excluded protection of land that was acquired unlawfully (Manji, 2012, p. 118).

#### *2.4.3.3 Tenure reform*

South Africa's Land Reform (Labour Tenants) Act 3 of 1996 and Extension of Security of Tenure Act (ESTA) 62 of 1997 were promulgated to cover redistribution and tenure (de Villiers, 2003, p. 49). These Acts were aimed at protecting the rights of farm workers by providing secure tenure for labour tenants.

Farm workers who did not have land prior to 1993 and still did not have land were entitled to apply for tenure using the Land Reform (Labour Tenants) Act (van der Walt 1999, p. 272). The ESTA was passed to protect people living on farms, whether they were employed on the farm or not. In terms of the Act, these people had a protected right to live on and use the land they occupied. Occupiers were entitled to apply to the DARDRL for settlement grants to buy the land individually or collectively (Hall et al., 2001, p. 3). Land tenure applicants were given four years to apply for tenure of land they were entitled to occupy (van der Walt, 1999, p. 279–280). The expectation was that about four million farm workers would benefit from the programme.

There were many challenges influencing the effective implementation of the ESTA, including the justice system where police and magistrates do not regard illegal eviction as crime (Hall, 2001, p. 4), the resistance of farmers to tenure reform, and gender bias as single women struggle to access employment and housing on farms (Hall, 2001, p. 5). The ESTA regulated the processes that needed to be followed by farm owners if they wished to evict occupiers. Although contravening the ESTA was a criminal offence, illegal evictions continued with few convictions (Hall et al., 2001, p. 3).

#### *2.4.3.4 Settlement/Land Acquisition Grant (SLAG)*

The Settlement/Land Acquisition Grant (SLAG) was implemented between 1995 and 1999 under the Provision of Assistance Act of 1993 (de Villiers, 2003, p. 50). The programme allowed people to pool their grants of R16 000 to purchase land for residential purposes as a group, thus enabling them to purchase land that would be too expensive for individual and household grants (Mukovhe & Moyo, 2019, p. 71). The main critique of SLAG was that the resulting residential settlements were overcrowded, unmanageable, and produced social ills.

In 1999, the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform, and Rural Development issued a moratorium on the programme and demanded a review of the criticisms, citing the failure of SLAG to achieve its primary goal of promoting agricultural production by increasing the amount of land people could acquire (Mukovhe & Moyo, 2019, p. 71). Land Restitution for Agricultural Development (LRAD) was announced by the Minister in August 2001 as the new policy direction.

#### *2.4.3.5 Land Restitution for Agricultural Development (LRAD)*

The Land Restitution for Agricultural Development programme (LRAD) was introduced as a flagship project intended to address the challenges created by SLAG. The objective of LRAD was to facilitate the transfer of agricultural land to black people who had no land, but who had the resources and experience to become commercial farmers (de Villiers, 2003, p. 50). Under the new programme, land reform applicants had to make a financial contribution. When LRAD was introduced in 2001, the time frame for transferring 30% of the agricultural land to black people was extended from five years to 15 years (Hall, 2004, p. 216).

The LRAD programme was criticised for excluding the poor and benefiting the rich. Only those with existing financial resources, and those who could secure the necessary financial contribution, were able to benefit. In addition, the challenges that had already arisen under SLAG, associated with post-settlement support and with developing the necessary associated infrastructure, had not been resolved (Hall, 2004, p. 217). Instead, there was a change in policy direction towards the

development of black commercial farmers through the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP). Both LRAD and SLAG transferred only one million hectares of land between 1995 and 2001 (de Villiers, 2003, p. 50).

#### *2.4.3.6 Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP)*

The Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP) was launched in May 2004 to provide support to land reform beneficiaries and other small farmers who had secured their land through private means (Hall & Aliber, 2010, p. 9; Mafukata, 2016, p. 3). The programme was managed by the national Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF), and implemented and coordinated by the provincial Departments of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) (Hall & Aliber, 2010, p. 9). The CASP was funded by the National Treasury in line with the Division of Revenue Act (DORA).

The CASP supported the following themes: on-farm and off-farm infrastructure; information and knowledge management; training and capacity building; technical and advisory services; and finance, marketing and business development (Mafukata, 2016, p. 3). The funding guidelines specified that 70% of the funding should be designated to support the development of land reform farms, and 30% to support food security (Xaba & Dlamini, 2015, p. 154). However, provinces were allowed to adjust these percentages. Limpopo, for example, adjusted their designation to 75% and 25% respectively (with 10% of the food security designation being allocated for household food production, 5% for animal health, and 10% for training, mentorship and education).

Although the budget of R750 million was allocated for the first three years of the CASP, it had a very limited impact. Assessments of the CASP recorded that 61 000 people benefited annually, and that 2 500 people received loans from the Micro Agricultural Financial Institutional Scheme of South Africa (MAFISA) (Hall & Aliber, 2010, p. 8).

Gauteng province reported problems with non-participation and a lack of interest from the people who were the intended beneficiaries of the CASP (Mafukata, 2016, p. 3). In Limpopo, R31.2 million was spent on training over four years, and 1 260 people benefited (Xaba & Dlamini, 2015, p. 154). Only 63% of the total national budget was spent over the first two years. However,

provinces continued to request more funding, and claimed that the intended beneficiaries were not receiving support (Hall & Aliber, 2010, p. 10).

A review of the CASP revealed bureaucratic challenges, insufficient support to applicants, and the inability of government officials to implement the programme (Sebola, 2018, p. 4). Hall and Aliber (2010, p. 11) found that funding was not accessible, priorities were inconsistent across the provinces, and support was biased towards infrastructure over other priorities. Xaba and Dlamini, (2015, p. 156) found that there was no improved agricultural production in the provinces that received funding.

#### *2.4.3.7 Recapitalisation and Agricultural Development Programme (RECAP)*

The Recapitalisation and Agricultural Development Programme (RECAP) was adopted in 2009 to support land reform projects that had failed to deliver the desired outcomes under CASP (Sebola & Tsheola, 2014, p. 119). RECAP innovated by introducing strategic partners who would manage the land reform project, train beneficiaries, transfer skills and develop an exit strategy (Binswanger-Mkhize, 2014, p. 258).

However, RECAP failed to produce positive results. The intended beneficiaries felt that their mentors had simply been there for the money, and that no skills transfer had taken place before their contracts expired. Very few applicants received support from RECAP, although the supporting grant was increased (Hall, 2004, p. 215).

#### *2.4.3.8 Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS)*

The Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) was introduced in 2006 to promote the development of emerging black farmers incrementally towards commercial production (Mukovhe & Moyo, 2019, p. 71).

When the programme was introduced, the participating farmers were given a five-year lease contract. If the farm was assessed to have shown progress, the lease would be extended to 30-year

lease contract with an option to buy (Binswanger-Mkhize, 2014, p. 260). Ownership could only be attained if the lessor offered to buy the farm from the government after the termination of the five-year lease agreement (DRDLR, 2006, p. 16). Rental was set at one percent of the land value, and was discounted by 75% to 25% of the land value from the first to the third year of the agreement (DRDLR, 2006, p.12).

The beneficiaries of the PLAS faced numerous challenges that were similar to those experienced in other programmes. Once government indicated their intention to buy a farm, farm owners would halt investment and production on the farm. Delays in the implementation of the PLAS included prolonged negotiation, evaluation, and adjudication processes, before the eventual conclusion of agreements and handover of the farms (Binswanger-Mkhize, 2014, p. 260–261). This negatively affected the beneficiaries, who had no resources and lacked the skills and the experience to manage what had now become a neglected farm. This was complicated further by the separate application process for RECAP.

Lack of capacity among the beneficiaries negatively affect the PLAS. At times, business plans used to secure the farms were written by consultants, with limited participation from the applicants. The beneficiaries' lack of familiarity with the content of their business plans would then negatively affected implementation (Binswanger-Mkhize, 2014, p. 262).

The top-down approach demonstrated by government officials also affected the relationship between officials and beneficiaries, as a lack of meaningful consultation and communication compromised the beneficiaries' needs (Mukovhe & Moyo, 2019, p. 72).

## **2.5 LAND REFORM POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The slow pace of the restitution, land redistribution, equity, and tenure reform programmes outlined above has been widely criticised. In the first eight years of South Africa's land reform process, only 1.2% of the agricultural land was transferred (de Villiers, 2003, p. 50), leaving the process way off the envisaged target of transferring 30% of the agricultural land under white ownership by 2015. According to the Department of Land Affairs, as of 31 August 2002, only 445 248 hectares had been settled on a national scale (de Villiers, 2003, p. 65). In 2008, ten years after

the adoption of land reform policy, 70% of the land restitution claimants still had no land (Atuahene, 2011, p. 124). This reflected generally poor performance by the South African government in its efforts to redistribute land.

Of the three types of land reform implemented in South Africa, restitution has performed better than land tenure reform and land redistribution. However, the wider impact of restitution is limited, as beneficiaries receive financial compensation but still do not own land (Tuma, 1963b, p. 68). The compensation offered through the restitution process was faster and quicker in urban areas where applicants had no chance of getting their land back (Makombe, 2018, p. 1404). However, the compensation offered was often criticised for being inadequate for restoring the losses that black people had incurred. With compensation of between R25 000 and R60 000, it was impossible for beneficiaries to buy another piece of land (Atuahene, 2014, p. 927).

Numerous studies have suggested that land reform in South Africa has been unable to achieve its desired objectives (Atuahene, 2011, 2014; Beyers & Fay, 2015; Binswanger-Mkhize, 2014; Hall, 2004; Kgobe & Makalela, 2019; Makombe, 2018; Sebola & Tsheola, 2014). A case in point is the community of Popela in Limpopo, who had to approach the Constitutional Court to ensure its members were not excluded from the restitution process in 2007, as described by Atuahene (2011, p. 128). The Commission on Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR) was instructed by the Constitutional Court to buy land for the claimants; however, four years later the land had not been purchased for the claimants because the Commission had no budget to buy the land (Atuahene, 2011, p. 128).

Other studies have concluded that the rate of land transfer did not meet expectations, and deviated from the envisaged policy timelines (Makombe, 2018, p. 1403). Sebola and Tsheola (2014, p. 115) concluded that land reform is a failure, and that the DRDLR required more time to redistribute land.

The market-driven willing-buyer willing-seller principle is at times cited as the reason for the slow pace of land reform in South Africa. Some researchers argue that it is often used as an obstruction by opponents of land reform, and is thus a hindrance (Sebola & Tsheola, 2014, p. 115; Kgobe & Makalela, 2019, p. 238). At times, where the Constitution is not interpreted correctly under Section 25 (3), this argument can be construed as illogical.

The principle of willing-buyer willing-seller was first introduced in relation to land reform in Kenya in 1954, but more than four decades later the principle is still cited as a problem. This suggests clear problems with the principles of land reform in South Africa. Other researchers argue that affordability is the biggest challenge to effective land reform. Government cannot afford the market value of many high-value properties, and also cannot afford to compromise the agricultural productivity of these properties (Sebola & Tsheola, 2014, p. 115–119).

The opportunity costs arising from investing in high-value agricultural land include ignoring other urgent government priorities, such as the delivery of basic public services, reducing unemployment through job creation, and improving the quality of basic education and health services. Government's failure to deliver these basic services is already responsible for violent service-delivery protests, and so government's responsibility to provide these services and reduce dissatisfaction and unrest competes very seriously with its responsibility to implement land reform. These competing priorities within a declining economy to some extent explain why the South African government cannot address the process of land reform adequately (Sebola & Tsheola, 2014, p. 115).

De Villiers (2003, p. 51) has argued that the target of transferring 30% of the medium- to high-quality white-owned farms by 2015, with a budget of approximately R1 billion a year, was too optimistic. To illustrate, one claim from 1 200 households in the Ntambanana community in Richards Bay was approximately one third of the total national budget at R375 million (de Villiers, 2003, p. 65).

As concluded by a study commissioned by the DRDLR between 2001 and 2008 (Sebola & Tsheola, 2014, p. 113 & 120), problems facing land reform beneficiaries have included the lack of capacity to manage farms, a lack of the required skills and experience, and insufficient resources and government support. Training and technical support have emerged as significant elements required by beneficiaries, because even if they previously worked on the farm, they often do not have the specific experience that would enable them to make independent entrepreneurial decisions (Deininger & Binswanger, 1999, p. 257).

When land claims are instituted on productive commercial farms, these farms often collapse because the new owners do not have the capacity and the resources to work the farm in the way

that is required. Losses with broad implications are incurred, not only in terms of the wasted national fiscal revenue spent buying the land in a country with serious fiscal limitations (Hall, 2004, p. 219), but also in terms of the loss of productivity and revenue in the agricultural sector, which damages national business and economic capabilities (Sebola & Tsheola, 2014, p. 119–120). Such deep losses require even more resources to remedy.

At times, land has been distributed to those who are politically connected, rather than to the poorest of the poor (Deininger & Binswanger, 1999, p. 257).

Despite these challenges, there have been some land reform success stories in South Africa. Studies in the Vhembe district in Limpopo, for example, found that there were families that had experienced an improvement in their quality of lives as a result of a successful land restitution process (Mukovhe & Moyo, 2019, p. 71).

### **2.5.1 LAND REFORM IN KWAZULU-NATAL**

During the Mandela administration in 1995, the focus of land reform policy was pro-poor, subsistence farmers and multiple beneficiaries (Byamugisha, 2014, p. 37). The policy shifts towards emerging farmers who wanted to migrate towards commercialisation or productive objective started during President Thabo Mbeki's administration. Subsistence and poor farmers became the responsibility of Non-Government Organisations (Adey, Kotze & Rijkenberg, (2004, p. 210). The approach was successfully implemented in Chile in 1967 and government invested in land reform and developed policies that promoted production at farm level. Productive focused land redistribution was heavily criticized in Zimbabwe because land was acquired and distributed to politicians, officials and military personnel to garner political support (Shabangu, et al. 2021, p. 92).

The policy shift that introduced the PLAS started what Mtero, Gumede and Ramantsima (2023, p. 2) refer to as elite capture perpetrated by a policy bias that natured “agrarian capitalists” (Mtero, Gumede and Ramantsima (2023, p. 15). These black capitalists use their political connections,

corrupt government officials and government appointed accountants to access state funding multiple times for their agriculture businesses and their selfish accumulation egos and seize production support meant for emerging farmers (Mtero, Gumede & Ramantsima (2023, p. 17-18). Farmers Associations and government facilitated structures like District Land Reform Committees (DLRCs) provides platform for agriculture capitalists to lobby state for support and a privilege opportunity to influence policy processes.

The PLAS programme introduced in 2005-2006 was the most remarkable change since 1994 and became the major programme in terms of budget and land acquisition. Forty- nine percent (49%) of total land acquired in 2007/08 was through the PLAS (Byamugisha, 2024, p. 37). The State Land Lease and Disposal Policy (SLLDP) identified commercially inclined small holders in communal and private land for land redistribution. Most of the small holders were in three provinces, Eastern Cape, Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal. The three provinces constitute 61% of small holders, (Zantsi, 2019, p. 136-137)). Only 22% of these emerging small holders nationally had contract arrangements to supply their produce to the market. KwaZulu-Natal had contracts mainly in sugar cane (Gandidzanwa, Verschoor & Sacolo, 2021, p. 2).

#### **2.5.1.2 REDISTRIBUTION IN KWAZULU-NATAL**

KwaZulu-Natal had 5.3 million hectares of land available for redistribution. In 1995 only 0.09% of the total figure was transferred to disadvantaged black Africans. From 1995-1997, approximately 38 400 hectares was transferred to disadvantaged people (Graham & Lyne, 2008, p. 440). The number increased to 2.3% or 121 484 hectares between 1997 and 2001 (Lyne & Darrock, 2004, p. 11). At Uthungulu and Ilembe districts there were more than 30 land redistribution between 2002 and 2006 (Mbatha, Antrobus & van Rooyen, 2010, p. 237).

Of the 905 land reform transaction between 1997-2001, only 89 were government financed. The rest were financed through mortgage or cash. Government support declined from 32 in 1999 to 9

in 2000 and increase to 22 when the moratorium was lifted in 2001 (Lyne & Darrock, 2004, p. 12-13). This confirms the concern that the policy shift was biased towards the rich who had cash and access to finance to make financial contribution required by the PLAS programme.

In KwaZulu-Natal big private sugarcane growers sold their land to smallholders who benefited from the PLAS. They receive support from private companies like Tongaat-Hulett and KwaZulu-Natal government (Beinart, 2024, p. 202). Sugarcane companies like Illovo Sugar developed anticipatory strategies. They sold their sugarcane farms to small holders to invest in more profitable mills and processing activities (Graham & Lyne, 2008, p. 437). Small holders signed 20 year's contract agreement to supply their sugar cane to Illovo and to keep 90% of their farms under sugarcane. However, infrastructure such as the workshops were excluded from the sale but used by the small holders at a cost (Cochet & Anseeuw, 2020, p. 274).

### **2.5.1.2 SUGARCANE SMALL GROWERS**

The South African Sugar Association sponsored about 50 000 African small growers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, in 2018/19, 18 885 small growers were registered and 12076 were productive because subsidies declined leading to contraction (Beinart & Delius, 2019, p. 6). In Zululand small holders declined from 4 million tons to 1.8million tons. (Beinart, 2024, p. 202). In 2021 sugar cane production stabilize at 19 million tons valued R11 billion small growers contributing 11%.

### **2.5.1.3 FINANCE**

Tongaat Hullet in partnership with KwaZulu-Natal government through KwaZulu-Natal Finance and Investment Corporation (KFC) facilitated the land transaction (Graham & Lyne, 2008, p. 437). When small holders failed to raise equity contribution for the land, Illovo discounted their land price by 18% which was invested with Ithala. Ithala used the money to lower their interest rate over time. Interest rate of 16.5% was reduced to 10% for the first year and decline to zero on the sixth year. The annual interest rate of 16.5% was paid for the remaining 14 years of the bond

(Lyne & Darrock, 2004, p. 12). Government spent R13.5 million acquiring land and R31.7 million was from the mortgage (Graham & Lyne, 2008, p. 441).

#### **2.5.1.4 PERFORMANCE OF SUGARCANE FARMS**

Initially, sugarcane farms purchased by African small-cane growers was smaller but also of poor quality compared to farms bought by white farmers. The practice changed in 2000 and 2001 when the land quality gap was lessened (Lyne & Darrock, 2004, p. 12). The habit confirmed widespread reports suggesting that land made available for land reform purposes was of inferior quality (Byamugisha, 2014, p. 36).

Emerging farmers were mere lease holders with supply agreement to sugar companies. They had no control of the market and price. Some acquired farms that were not good condition from the agronomic and investment perspective and were affordable by black elite who could afford or had access to finance (Cochet & Wardy, 2020, p. 275).

Some of the small holders who acquired land from Illovo Sugar strategy were confronted with many challenges. They lack capital, farming experience and could not afford increased input costs which force them to inactivity. Others sold their farms and some leased their farms to white farmers (Cochet & Wardy, 2020, p. 275).

Lack of basic skills is regarded as a major contributor to their failure because such knowledge cannot be taught but is acquired through practice (Zantsi & Nongovhela, 2022, p. 166-167). Other factors that hampered the transition of small sugarcane growers to migrate to commercial level was the lack of production capacity, poor marketing, limited support, access to finance, lack of skills and expertise, insufficient post settlement support were among the factors that limited successful farming (Gandidzanwa, Verschoor & Sacolo, 2021, p. 2). They receive small farms (Graham & Lyne, 2008, p. 440) which limited opportunities for transition to commercialisation.

These factors combine affected the quality and quantity of produce. Sugarcane production dropped by 20% between 2015 and 2019 from 21.5million tons limiting their ability to compete internationally (Beinart, 2024, p. 202).

Crop farming is exposed to many challenges from input cost, markets, environment issues and climate change and the tilling of arable land has weakened in the last two decades. KwaZulu-Natal endured the same experience. Land reform farms around Weenen have become cattle and goat farms. Few farms are cultivating crops and are becoming bush encroachment due to climate change (Beinart, 2024, p. 195-197).

Agricultural extension is defined as “the entire set of organization that support and facilitate people engaged in agricultural production to solve problems and to obtain information, skills and technologies to improve their livelihood” (Zantsi, 2019, p. 137). Small holders rely on government extension services and there is a general agreement that public extension services are weak, incompetent and very few. Their approach of training and visit (Zantsi, 2019, p. 138-139) could not rescue small holders from their predicament.

## **2.6 CONCLUSION**

The experiences of Greece, Mexico, Russia, Japan, South Vietnam and New Zealand discussed in this chapter show that, in general, land reform has been introduced to address the needs of poor, vulnerable citizens who have been politically and economically excluded from owning land. However, land reform has often also been used as a political strategy by feuding parties, particularly in countries like Mexico and Russia, to mobilise political support from the poor in order for revolutions to succeed and for governments to retain power.

Land reform has sometimes resulted in unintended consequences, for example in New Zealand, where the Crown Pastoral Land Act of 1998 ultimately resulted in land and wealth being transferred to commercial farmers instead of back to the Crown. Kenya’s concerted attempts to consolidate rural property into land ownership were hindered after Britain refused to fund the programme.

Japan’s implementation of its land reform policy is regarded as the most successful constitution-driven land reform in the world, and has had a far-reaching impact. Japan’s experience demonstrates that a clear, time bound, well-resourced land reform policy can produce the desired outcomes.

Egypt's land reform programme, although drastic and spearheaded by a military regime, also achieved a great deal of success, successfully breaking the stranglehold of landlords and rich royal households within five years of its inception. Poor people formed a new class of landowners, and cooperatives supported by government became a force for social and economic advancement. However, the success of Egypt should be understood within the context of the size of its arable land.

After six post-apartheid government administrations, land reform remains a subject of debate in South Africa, and calls for further land reform continue to be a popular political slogan during elections. Targets continue to shift from one land reform programme to the next, without addressing the challenges that affected the previous programme.

The absence of a practical smallholder development programme, resource mobilization, timely post settlement support, the opportunity for emerging farmers in KZN to migrate to commercial level were limited as evidenced in the whole country. There is an argument that land reform does not lack legislation but the challenge is insufficient capacity to implement legislation (Beinart & Delius, 2019, p. 10). However, there is a need for appropriate policies that will enable land reform to work (Byamugisha, 2014, p. 8).

The following chapter describes the research methodology employed in this study: the qualitative research design, research setting, sampling strategy, data collection and data analysis. The researcher's efforts to strengthen the validity and reliability of the study are also outlined, as well as the measures taken to ensure that the study was conducted in an ethical manner. Finally, the limitations of the study are presented.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This study aimed to assess the impact of the Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) on the development of emerging black farmers in Mpofana Local Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

The specific research questions formulated for this study were as follows:

1. What processes were followed in leasing the farms to emerging black farmers in Mpofana Local Municipality?
2. What support did the South African government provide to the emerging farmers in Mpofana Local Municipality?
3. What is the current condition of the leased farms in comparison to their condition at the time of handover?
4. What are the skills levels of the land reform beneficiaries?

The researcher used these research questions to conduct a qualitative case study to assess the support provided to these emerging farmers by government to realise the PLAS objectives, and to formulate suggestions on what could be done to improve the realisation of these objectives. Using in-depth, in-person interviews, document analysis, and observation as the primary data collection methods, the researcher enabled beneficiaries and policy implementers to present their personal experiences. The researcher then performed a content analysis of the data to address the research questions.

The specific details of the research methodology employed in this study are described in the sections below, beginning with a discussion of the qualitative research design, research setting, sampling strategy, data collection and data analysis. The researcher's efforts to strengthen the validity and reliability of the study are then outlined, as well as the measures taken to ensure that the study was conducted in an ethical manner. Finally, the limitations of the study are presented.

### **3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH**

A qualitative approach informed how the researcher collected and analysed the data that informed this study. Qualitative methodologies rely primarily on using participants' words rather than numerical or statistical information to understand a situation in a particular context (Phillip, 1998, p. 266).

The advantages of a qualitative approach are that it can serve many objectives, and focuses attention on the research participants' personal experiences (Maree, 2016, p. 82). It is investigative, interactive and humanistic, and allows for the generation of detailed information. In a qualitative study, the researcher is the primary instrument through which data is collected (Merriam, 2002, p. 8).

For this particular study, which sought to evaluate the effect of aspects of the South African government's land reform policy, a qualitative approach allowed for critical information on the implementation of the policy, and on the beneficiaries' attitude towards the policy, to be gathered (Hossain, 2011, p. 114). The researcher realised from the outset that such in-depth information would be difficult to obtain through quantitative methods involving statistical or numerical evaluation (Hoepfl, 1997, p. 48–49).

Using an interpretive and descriptive methodology (Alase, 2017, p. 11) enabled the researcher to investigate in detail and in depth the experiences of a few participants, and to present the meaning that the participants assigned to their experiences (Tuffour, 2017, p. 1), which were described as far as possible in terms of how they were presented by the research participants themselves (Asenahabi, 2019, p. 83).

Since engaging with such personal, human perspectives has potential shortcomings and biases, the researcher was careful to remain alert to these. As discussed in sections 3.7 and 3.8, the researcher took measures to strengthen the trustworthiness of the study and the validity and reliability of the study, in order to ensure that these potential shortcomings and biases had a minimal impact on the collection and the interpretation of data.

### **3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Informed by the qualitative approach adopted, a qualitative research design was applied during the study. The research design is defined by Maree (2016, p. 72) as a plan that describes how the research participants are selected, the methods used to collect data, and the processes followed when analysing the data (Asenahabi, 2019, p. 77–78). As a strategy, an appropriately selected research design ensures logic and coherence during an investigation (Rowley, 2002, p. 18), and also ensures that the procedures followed confirm the validity and accuracy of the study (Van Wyk & Taole, 2015, p. 166).

A descriptive, case study research design was deemed suitable for this investigation, as it would allow for the sort of in-depth, detailed investigation required to answer the research questions about processes, government support, the conditions of the leased farms, and the skill levels of the participants (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 545; Rowley, 2002, p. 16). Case studies enable a researcher to describe the real-life context in which an intervention has occurred, to describe the intervention itself, and to evaluate the outcomes of the intervention (Tellis, 1997, p. 3).

A descriptive, inductive case study methodology was applied during the study (Levy, 2008, p. 4) to enable the researcher to potentially use different sources of information, such as in-depth interviews, documents and observation, in order to elicit more detailed information than a historical study would be able to provide (Sandelowski, 2000, p. 338). The researcher used purposive sampling to identify participants who could be interviewed using in-depth, unstructured open-ended interviews and observations to collect data (Asenahabi, 2019, p. 81; Choy & Lee, 2014, p. 99).

While the number of participants in a qualitative case study is usually small, the format enables a researcher to probe deeply to elicit the detailed information required to address the study's research questions. The researcher usually asks participants standard questions from a pre-prepared interview schedule, and then develops subsequent follow-up questions based on the participant's answers (Rutberg & Bouikidis, 2018, p. 211).

The strength of using a case study research design was its ability to allow the participants to describe and provide their own experience of the PLAS, and to probe their answers further

(Dempsey et al., 2014, p. 101; Ganesha & Aithal, 2022, p. 26; Yüksel & Yildirim, 2015, p. 2). According to Van Wyk and Taole (2015, p. 175), case studies are appropriate for investigating policy implementation, as they enable researchers to determine the level of support provided for a policy, and the challenges experienced in its implementation. Such case studies can be used to determine the efficiency of a programme, or to test whether the objectives of a programme have been achieved (Zainal, 2007, p. 1). Creswell (2009, p. 13) describes case studies as a form of strategic inquiry, where a researcher explores a programme, event, activity, or process in detail.

To compile case studies, the researcher elected to conduct one-on-one, in-person, in-depth interviews with participants, and to perform document analysis and observation.

### 3.4 RESEARCH SETTING

The researcher aimed to assess the impact of the Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) on the development of emerging black farmers, and so Mpofana Local Municipality was selected as an appropriate research setting for a number of reasons.

Mpofana Local Municipality is 98.37% farmland, and less than one percent (1.63%) is urban (as illustrated in the map in Figure 3.1 below).

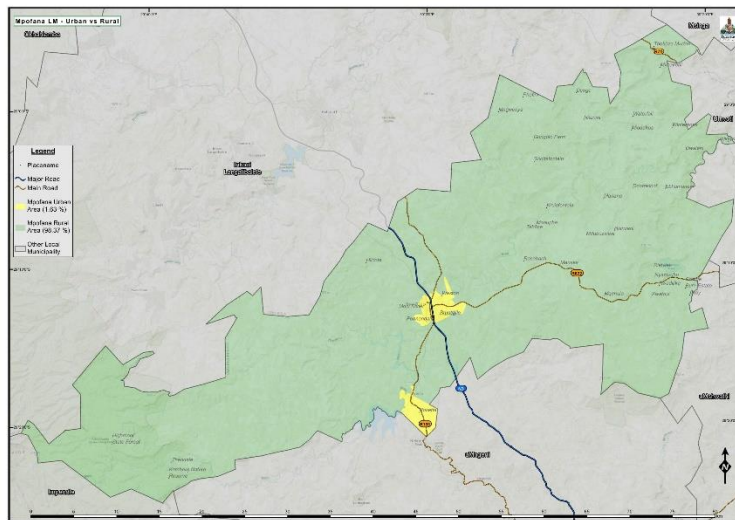


Figure 1: Urban vs rural portions of Mpofana Local Municipality

The area does not have Ingonyama Trust land, or any area that falls under a Traditional Authority. As a rural municipality, employment opportunities are very limited in Mpofana, and the Gross Value Add (GVA) for the municipality shows agriculture to be the third leading sector in employment creation after community services and trade. However, agriculture has been declining for the past ten years.

In Mpofana Local Municipality the DRDLR has transferred 57 farms through restitution, land tenure, and redistribution. The objective was to ensure that these rural communities, whose livelihoods depend on farming, had access to land ownership to sustain their livelihoods and to contribute towards job creation.

According to the 2022 census, Mpofana Local Municipality has a population of 33 382 people, which has decreased from 38 103 in 2016. The population composition is 92% black African and 5.2% white, with the remainder coloured and Indian (StatsSA, 2022). The average annual income of Mpofana is R15 000, while the unemployment level is estimated at 67% (StatsSA, 2022), and 60.23% of the population lives below the poverty line (StatsSA, 2016).

### **3.5 SAMPLING**

The sampling strategy of a research study defines the population of the study, thereby setting limits on participation in a study that enable a researcher to manage the study more effectively (Kekeya, 2021, p. 31). The sampling process involves selecting appropriate research participants who will be able to provide relevant information that addresses the research problem and answers the research questions (Oppong, 2013, p. 203).

The sampling process starts with identifying eligible and suitable participants who can provide this information, in order to constitute the sample frame (Rutberg & Bouikidis, 2018, p. 211). Careful consideration of the research purpose and the research questions assists in defining suitable candidates (Rowley, 2002, p. 19). Erlingsson and Brystewicz (2013, p. 94) advise selecting participants who have information, knowledge and experience of the particular issue being investigated, and who are able to share this.

### **3.5.1 Population**

The sample frame (or population) consisted of owners of farms in Mpofana Local Municipality that had been transferred to individuals, families, community trusts, or private companies through the DARDLR's land restitution, land tenure reform and land redistribution programmes. The DARD compiled a report on these farms in 2020 (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2020).

The total sample population of the study consisted of the owners of 57 farms in Mpofana Local Municipality that had been transferred through different land reform programmes prior to 2016, as well as PLAS farms that had been transferred after 2016.

### **3.5.2 Sample selection**

There are two important considerations for choosing the elements of a sample: participants must have the relevant knowledge to provide a full description of the experience under investigation, and an appropriate sampling method must be applied (Anderson, 2010, p. 4; Fossey et al., 2002, p. 726).

Purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique that is often applied in qualitative studies (Bryman, 2012, p. 418; Maree, 2016, p. 123), was used to select suitable participants who had the experience and information that the researcher required to participate in in-depth interviews (Lopez & Whitehead, 2013, p. 125). Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to select information-rich participants (Subedi, 2021, p. 5).

The researcher's criteria for including a participant were that the participant had to be a land reform beneficiary of the PLAS or a government official involved in implementing the PLAS, and had to be willing to participate and available to be interviewed. Participants were excluded if they were not a land reform beneficiary of the PLAS, if they did not have knowledge relevant to the study, or if they were unwilling to participate or were unavailable for interviews.

Formal permission was sought from the relevant gatekeepers before the process of recruiting participants began. Letters granting formal permission to contact the potential research participants

were obtained from the DARDLR and DARD, and from the Mpofana African Farmers Association (MAFA).

Potential participants were recruited by telephone. During the initial conversation, the researcher afforded the potential participants with information on the objectives of the study, and details on how the envisaged interviews would be conducted, such as the location and length of the interviews, in order for the participant to make an informed decision on whether to participate (Dempsey et al., 2014, p. 486). During this conversation, the prospective participants were advised that their participation would be completely voluntary, that there would be no remuneration for participating in the study, and that they would be requested to sign a consent form. Appointments were arranged with the participants who agreed to participate.

Fifteen potential participants who met the criteria for inclusion were identified, and nine participants were ultimately interviewed during the study: six beneficiaries of the PLAS, and three government officials. The researcher believed that these nine individuals warranted inclusion because they were knowledgeable about the phenomenon of land reform under the PLAS and would provide valuable information (Taherdoost, 2016, p. 23). The participants' experiences qualified them to provide information on the research questions (Korstjens & Moser, 2018, p. 11).

### **3.5.3 Sample size**

Qualitative studies do not begin with a pre-determined sample size, because unlike quantitative approaches, qualitative approaches do not have set criteria for determining sample size (Lopez & Whitehead, 2013, p. 127). Instead, qualitative research designs allow for flexibility as the research progresses (Mthuli et al., 2021, p. 2), and sample size is determined by the purpose of the study, what is at stake, what would constitute a credible sample size, and what can be done with the available time, resources and information required (Marshall et al., 2013, p. 12).

Deciding on the number of participants was therefore a challenge (Subedi, 2021, p. 1). According to Mthuli et al. (2021, p. 4), an appropriate sample size for a qualitative study is one that sufficiently answers the research questions. Subedi (2021, p. 5) recommends that an appropriate sample size is also one that is manageable while offering enough data to provide an understanding

of the experience being investigated. A basic principle is that there should be sufficient participants to provide enough information to meet the objectives of the study (Malterud et al., 2015, p. 1). However, care must be taken to ensure that the sample size is adequate for the study (Oppong, 2013, p. 207).

Qualitative case studies generally focus on small sample sets, where the sample cases do not have to be representative, but instead follow a clear rationale for inclusion (Taherdoost, 2016, p. 22). Mohajan (2018, p. 11) defined sample cases as a single case, or at most a small number of cases, that fits well with the research study, where the quality of the data has more weight than the number of participants.

### **3.6 DATA COLLECTION**

As the sole researcher, the investigator used in-depth, in-person interviews as the primary data collection instrument (Merriam, 2002, p. 8). Since qualitative studies benefit from multiple sources of data (Creswell, 2009, p. 179–180; Merriam, 2002, p. 12), the researcher supplemented the information gathered during the interviews with document analysis and observation. These sources of information were all important, as they provided different insights during triangulation (Rowley, 2002, p. 24). The researcher used various strategies to improve the quality of the data obtained, including funnelling, probing, and paraphrasing (Lopez & Whitehead, 2013, p. 130), and using multiple data sources (Oppong, 2013, p. 208).

#### **3.6.1 In-depth interviews**

Interviews with the department officials took place at their place of work to enable easy access to documents. The land reform beneficiaries were interviewed on their farms, in an interview setting that was comfortable and natural for them.

Before each interview began, the investigator introduced himself to the research participants and explained the purpose of the study. The ethical clearance documentation from the researcher's institution of study was shown to the participants, and the researcher provided a rough estimate of

how long the interview was expected to take. The participants were reassured that they did not have to answer any questions they did not feel comfortable answering, and were reminded that they had the right to withdraw from the interview at any time, and for any reason, without suffering any penalty. They were also reassured that their identity would remain confidential unless they wished otherwise (Hossain, 2011, p. 150).

Before the interviews began, the participants were given an opportunity to ask questions. After all housekeeping matters had been addressed, the participants were asked to consent to the interview being recorded, and to formally sign a consent form.

The interviews started after the participants indicated their readiness for the interview. The interviews took the form of a conversation, and the researcher was careful to frame open-ended questions at all times during the interviews (Sorrel & Redmong, 1995, p. 1120). In case studies, data collection and data analysis sometimes take place at the same time (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 554) to make sure that the opportunity to gather more reliable and valid data is not lost (Merriam, 2002, p. 14). This practice allowed the researcher to make adjustments during the interviews by probing details as they emerged, encouraging the participants to elaborate and seeking clarification from the participants (Maree, 2016, p. 94). The researcher also took time after each question to take notes before moving on to the next question, and these notes were used to ask additional questions at the end of the interview. There were some standard questions and the principle of data saturation determined the length of the interview (Fusch & Ness, 2015, p. 1408). Participants were interviewed until the researcher believed that no new information relevant to the research questions was being revealed (Hennink et al., 2017, p. 591; Trotter, 2012, p. 399).

At the end of each interview the researcher thanked the participant and advised them that the transcript would be sent to them for corroboration. The participants were also advised that the final research report would be made available to them (Hossain, 2011, p. 149). The researcher thanked the participants once more, and left.

After each interview, the researcher listened to the audio recording, reviewed his notes, reflected on the interview by looking for any gaps in information that required follow up, and prepared the transcript for analysis (Maree, 2016, p. 94).

### **3.6.2 Document analysis**

Document analysis is a systematic procedure of evaluating printed and electronic documents to elicit information that can assist the researcher in addressing the research questions being investigated. Document analysis involves, skimming, reading and interpretation (Bowen, 2009, p. 27). Document analysis complemented the interviews by providing additional information that could inform questions that needed to be asked in the interviews, and by alerting the researcher to phenomena that could be observed during the study. Document analysis is therefore more useful when it can be conducted before the interviews (Owen, 2014, p. 8). The types of documents that were evaluated by the researcher were advertisements, applications, reports, and miscellaneous other documents related to the topic of the impact of the PLAS on the development of emerging black farmers in Mpofana Local Municipality.

### **3.6.3 Observation**

Observation in qualitative studies involves the systematic recording of observable phenomena in the natural study setting. Researchers may detail their observations in the form of field notes, or in theoretical notes where the researcher attaches meaning to their observations (Baker, 2006, p. 173, 183). Observation assists researchers in their understanding of a situation, and in contextualising their responses to the phenomena of interest (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018, p. 385).

Observation was used in this study to complement the other research instruments used (the in-person interviews and document analysis) (Merriam, 2002, p. 12–13). While observations may be considered extremely subjective, and therefore a less valued method of gathering trustworthy data (Urquhart, 2015, p. 3), they provide the researcher with an opportunity for critical reflection on what is said during interviews (Barrett & Twycross, 2018, p. 64). Observations also provide first-hand information about the phenomena of interest, instead of the mediated account obtained in an interview (Merriam, 2002, p. 13).

The researcher used a camera to digitally record his observations and to extend his observational abilities by allowing repeated viewing in conjunction with field notes (Baker, 2006, p. 184; Barrett & Twycross, 2018, p. 64). Consent was sought from the participants (Phillippi & Lauderdale,

2018, p. 383) to digitally observe areas of interest, such as the condition of the farms, activities on the farms, the source of water, what was grown, the type and condition of the cattle if the farm was a livestock farm, the level of mechanisation, and so on.

### **3.7 DATA ANALYSIS**

Maree (2016, p. 110) argues that qualitative data analysis requires creativity, discipline, and a systematic approach guided by the research questions that must be answered. In qualitative studies, data analysis often begins during the data collection process (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 554) to make sure that opportunities to gather more specific, more reliable and more valid data are not lost (Merriam, 2002, p. 14). The researcher often goes through large volumes of data, moving back and forth sorting information into themes and categories (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013, p. 96; Leedy & Ormrod, 2014, p. 160).

There are several methods for conducting qualitative data analysis. These steps overlap in terms of methods, procedures and techniques, and none of them can be regarded as more important than the other (Lacey & Luff, 2009, p. 9; Maree, 2016, p. 110). They share the same goal of understanding the phenomenon from the participant's point of view, and their similarities are therefore more important than their differences (Vaismorandi et al., 2013, p. 402).

To analyse the qualitative data generated, the researcher chose to employ content analysis, which is a popular strategy for analysing qualitative descriptive data (Maree, 2016, p. 111). Content analysis is a systematic, replicable technique for compressing the large quantities of text in interview transcripts that require interpretation into fewer content categories, based on a process of systematic coding and categorisation on the basis of identified trends and patterns (Choy & Lee, 2014, p. 4).

Content analysis requires organising and preparing the data for analysis; reading through all the data; developing codes; using these codes to generate descriptive themes and categories; using narratives to convey the findings of the analysis; and making an interpretation or meaning of the data (Creswell, 2009, p. 185–189). Interpretations and notes taken during the interview are used as narratives during the process (Creswell, 2009, p. 184).

Some of the codes are pre-determined, while others emerge directly from the data. Codes may identify topics that the researcher expected to find, unexpected themes that emerged, or ideas that resonate with or reflect the theoretical aspects of the research topic. Pre-determined codes can emanate from prior relevant research. These codes are developed using a qualitative codebook (Creswell, 2009, p. 187).

The researcher followed several steps during the data analysis phase of the study. Formal analysis started with the transcription of the interviews. The transcripts were then analysed to identify broad themes that would provide an initial overview of the responses (Tustin et al., 2005). The next step involved capturing and categorising the responses in more detail. The final step involved comparing and contrasting the themes and responses, to identify common responses and divergent responses from the different participants (Akinyonde & Khan, 2018, p. 167).

The researcher adhered to four main principles during the process of analysis: all relevant information was considered; rival interpretations were considered and explored; the significant aspects of the case study were addressed; and the researcher endeavoured to draw from his knowledge of the case in an unbiased manner.

### **3.8 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY**

#### **3.8.1 Validity**

According to Noble & Smith (2014, p. 3), validity in a study refers to the overall integrity or trustworthiness of the study in terms of how the research methods have been applied, and in terms of how accurately the findings reflect the data. Qualitative validity refers to the measures that are taken by the researcher to ensure that the findings are valid. Procedures to strengthen the validity of a study are implemented throughout a study, and the validity of the findings is achieved by documenting these processes and procedures carefully (Creswell, 2009, p. 190).

Qualitative research does not have the clear definition of validity that quantitative research does (Leech & Onwuegbuzle, 2007, p. 233), but instead relies on some general principles to ensure that the trustworthiness of a study is strengthened as much as possible. Qualitative researchers therefore

need to consider whether their data supports their research findings, whether their conclusions are logical, and whether they have conducted their research in an open and transparent manner. A number of aspects are therefore considered by qualitative researchers to strengthen the trustworthiness of their research and establish confidence in its validity (Golashani, 2003, p. 602), and these include confirmability, dependability, credibility, trustworthiness, and transparency. They are briefly explained below.

Confirmability is strengthened when a study has been correctly presented without bias, and all the necessary requirements have been followed from start to finish. Dependability and transferability are interdependent. Dependability ensures that the findings have value and that other researchers can refer to them. Transferability means that the findings can be generally applied in a similar context and setting, and are therefore useful to others (Kekeya, 2021, p. 32).

Messner et al. (2017, p. 455) refer to credibility as the extent to which the research findings convince the reader. The credibility of qualitative research rests on the techniques and methods used to collect quality information that is carefully analysed, and on the credibility of the researcher in relation to his or her experience and training, and the manner in which he or she presents the findings (Patton, 1999, p. 1190).

A credible researcher is consistent, systematic and conscious during research design, data collection, interpretation, and communication (Mays & Pope, 1995, p. 110). Consistency enables the researcher to account for the methods used and the data collected, and provide assurance that the findings could confidently be applied by another researcher, who would come to the same conclusions based on an analysis of the same data in a similar context.

Credibility is also an assurance that the correct guidelines and approaches have been considered and applied by the researcher during data collection, data analysis, and reporting of the findings. The researcher followed Bryman's (2012) six steps of qualitative methodology: the formulation of general research questions; the selection of participants; data collection; interpretation of data; collection of additional information; and deriving the research findings and conclusion (Bryman, 2012, p. 384).

Triangulation involves examining the data from different perspectives to reduce the researcher's potential bias or misinterpretations and thus improve the credibility of the findings. The researcher encouraged the participants to review and verify the data transcripts, as well as the researcher's interpretation of the findings in the final report, as suggested by Bryman (2012, p. 405) and Kekeya (2021, p. 32). The findings were shared with the participants to confirm their accuracy, thus strengthening the transparency and openness of the research process.

Credibility is supported by authenticity and authentic writing. An authentic researcher infers findings that are convincing to the reader, based on a deep understanding of the phenomena under investigation, and communicates these findings effectively to the reader.

Trustworthiness is generally upheld if the overall process applied during the study shows truthfulness, validity, and reliability (Kekeya, 2021, p. 29). The trustworthiness of the processes of sampling and data collection are important to ensure the validity of a study (Elo et al., 2014, p. 3). Truthfulness requires the consideration of the whole research process — the research design, methodology, data collection strategies, analysis techniques, ethics, and findings of the study (Kekeya, 2021, p. 32), and can be increased through triangulation.

The researcher also endeavoured to conduct the study as ethically as possible, as outlined in section 3.9, in order to improve the acceptability of the findings (Bryman, 2012, p. 390–391).

### **3.8.2 Reliability**

The reliability of a qualitative study can be determined in relation to the appropriation of the methods selected, the consistent application of those methods, the level of consistency applied during the data analysis, and the integrity of the conclusion (Noble & Smith, 2014, pp. 2–3). To strengthen the reliability of the study, the researcher carefully ordered and retained the initial transcripts and the coded transcripts, so that they could be checked for any obvious mistakes that could have occurred during transcription or coding. When all the coding and interpretation tasks are performed by a single researcher, as is often the case in qualitative research, Creswell (2009, pp. 190–191) advises that the transcripts be cross-checked against the definition of codes, and that the researcher keep a personal research diary to track the interpretive process.

### **3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Since qualitative research involves human participants, and since its success depends on the honest disclosures and goodwill of these participants, a careful consideration of the ethics adhered to by the researcher is an integral part of qualitative research practice. Creswell (2009, p. 73) writes that a consideration of ethical issues should begin during the initial research proposal, and should continue through every phase of the study. Tustin et al. (2005, p. 44) concur that conscious decisions about the ethics of a research study should begin when researchers choose their topics and research methodology (Tustin et al., 2005, p. 44). Participants in a qualitative study should not be exposed to any risk or be deceived about the purpose of the research, and their confidentiality and anonymity should be protected (Creswell, 2009, pp. 88–89).

The researcher strove for a high level of ethical professionalism, and therefore scheduled interviews so that they did not greatly disrupt the participants' lives. The nature and purpose of the study was very clearly described to the participants, both during the first phone call with them and again at the time of the interview, and the researcher clearly explained the voluntary nature of their participation, and that they could withdraw from the study at any time, and for any reason, without any negative consequences for them. They were also not deceived about the length of the interview (Leedy & Ormrod 2014, p. 107; Tustin et al., 2005, pp. 46–47).

While emerging farmers are not generally classified as vulnerable persons, the participants in this study did have some level of vulnerability since they were participants in a government programme but were not yet beneficiaries of that programme in the real sense. It was not clear whether any criticisms of the programme would directly or indirectly result in negative consequences. This vulnerability was considered during the study by carefully ensuring that the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants was protected.

It was the researcher's responsibility to keep the identity of participants confidential, and the interview transcripts were therefore accessible to the researcher only. The research participants were given pseudonyms (Saunders et al., 2015, p. 620), and the coded transcripts and the final research report were edited carefully to ensure the participants' anonymity prior to submission of the report for examination and publication (Dempsey et al., 2014, p. 487).

Corti (2006, p. 115) advises that the data collected during a study be kept in confidence for a reasonable period of 5–10 years, after which it should be destroyed to ensure that the data does not fall into wrong hands and run the risk of being misinterpreted, and to ensure the ongoing privacy and anonymity of the participants. The researcher has elected to ensure that the hard copies of the data be destroyed after five years. Because the study has a small sample of fewer than twenty interviews, and because the associated data is being thoroughly analysed in this final report, the data has limited re-use value.

While writing up this final report, the researcher strove to avoid language that could contain racial, gender or sexual orientation bias, and anyone who contributed to the study was acknowledged.

### **3.10 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

In a qualitative study, the size of the sample is often small and the findings cannot therefore be generalised over a larger population (Queiros et al., 2017, p. 379). The final sample for this study consisted of nine participants, and so the results of this study cannot be generalised.

When working with a small sample group, it is difficult to replace participants who withdraw from the study, and the quality of the data can be brought into question if some participants are not that articulate or insightful (Creswell, 2009, p. 179). The researcher found that some of the beneficiaries were reluctant to respond to certain questions while they were being recorded. Some even requested that the recording be stopped when the researcher probed their answers in order to expand on a particular topic, particularly when they spoke about controversial situations they had witnessed.

Other participants avoided responding to certain questions completely, and there were specific issues that the land reform participants were reluctant to talk about. The government officials were also very careful with their responses. However, these participants would then surprise the researcher by reverting back to those same questions once the formal interview had finished. On the other hand, participants who had acquired their farms as people living under insecure tenure rights were very open and at ease during the interviews.

The most successful participant was very reluctant to share information. He said that cattle were the secret of the business, and that his children would never be impoverished again, but refused to give even an estimate of how many cattle he had.

As observed by Rutberg and Bouikidis (2018, p. 211), qualitative research can be time consuming, as the process of collecting and analysing data is very labour intensive. The researcher found this to be the case, and encountered a number of practical challenges during the study. Even though the researcher travelled long distances in areas with poor network connection to conduct interviews with the participants, appointments were frequently not honoured and had to be rescheduled. The transcripts had to physically be taken back to participants for corroboration, because there was no other means of sending them to participants. Many commercial farmers did not live on their farms, and so the researcher was unable to observe contextual factors related to their farm.

### **3.11 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has described the specific details of the research methodology employed in this study: the qualitative research design, Mpofana Local Municipality as the research setting, the purposive sampling strategy, the data collection instruments (in-person interviews, document analysis and observation) and procedures, and the content analysis employed to analyse the data. The researcher's efforts to strengthen the validity and reliability of the study have also been described, as well as the measures taken to ensure that the study was conducted in an ethical manner and the limitations of the study.

The following chapter presents the data and findings of the study.

## **CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF DATA AND FINDINGS**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

To assess the impact of the Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) on the development of emerging black farmers in Mpofana Local Municipality, the following specific research questions guided the study:

1. What processes were followed in leasing the farms to emerging black farmers in Mpofana Local Municipality?
2. What support did the South African government provide to the emerging farmers in Mpofana Local Municipality?
3. What is the current condition of the leased farms in comparison to their condition at the time of handover?
4. What are the skills levels of the land reform beneficiaries?

The researcher used these research questions to conduct a qualitative case study to assess the support provided to these emerging farmers by government to realise the PLAS objectives, and to formulate suggestions on what could be done to improve the realisation of these objectives. Using in-depth, in-person interviews, document analysis, and observation as the primary data collection methods, the researcher enabled beneficiaries and policy implementers to present their personal experiences. The researcher then performed a content analysis of the data to address the research questions.

This chapter presents the data and the findings from the researcher's in-person interviews with the participants. The profile of the participants is presented, and the background of the PLAS is discussed, after which the types of land acquisition relevant to the participants are described. Data related to the study's research questions is then presented: the processes of farm acquisition and farm allocation, the types of support received by the land reform beneficiaries, the condition of the participants' farms, and the skills level of the participants.

## **4.2 PROFILE OF THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS**

The final research sample of twelve beneficiaries and three officials, nine participants was comprised of six land reform beneficiaries and three government officials. Six of the participants were male and three were female. Four of the participants were aged 36–50 years, and five were aged 51–65 years.

Four of the six land reform beneficiary participants had grown up on their farm, had attended school on the farm, and had worked on the farm during their school holidays. Three had completed high school outside Mpofana, because there were no high schools on the farms. One participant was a university dropout.

One participant had completed a short course in agriculture after matriculating, and had attended workshops organised by the DARD and the DARDLR, Mpofana Local Municipality, and non-government organisations (NGOs) that assisted farm owners. None of them had experience nor assisted in managing a farm.

The three government officials (two females and one male) combined experience in their respective departments was more than 60 years in the Strategic Land Acquisition, the Enterprise Development Unit, and the Extension Services Unit.

Five of the six land reform beneficiaries were interviewed on their farms, and one was interviewed in a place that was convenient for him away from his farm. The three government officials were interviewed at their offices.

## **4.3 THE BACKGROUND OF THE PROACTIVE LAND ACQUISITION STRATEGY (PLAS)**

The Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) is a government-driven land redistribution approach. As outlined in section 2.4.3 in Chapter 2, the PLAS followed various beneficiary-driven land redistribution methods attempted by the South African government. The PLAS was approved in 2003, was announced during the Land Summit in 2005, and came into effect in 2006.

The PLAS was presented by the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development as a strategy that would contribute towards the country's growth path, through job creation and equity by 2014. The PLAS was introduced as a strategy that would accelerate land redistribution by ensuring that government acquired land in nodal areas, with high agricultural potential and in identified agriculture corridors.

Government would then improve the identification and selection of beneficiaries to whom the land could be transferred, and would ensure maximum productive use of the land acquired, thus contributing towards the decongestion of communal areas and creating sustainable livelihoods.

The Provision of Land and Assistance Act. No. 126 of 1993 Section 10(1) (a) gave legal effect to the proactive acquisition of land. Section 11 of the Act specifies the transfer, disposal and lease methods. The Act authorises the Minister to sell, exchange, donate or lease the land acquired through the Act. The Minister also determines the terms and conditions for granting Provincial Chief Directors permission to dispose of land acquired through the Act without following the state land disposal policy.

Target groups for the PLAS were Africans, Coloureds and Indians living on communal land, and black people living in urban areas who had the necessary skills. The pro-poor policy prioritised people living under insecure tenure rights, emergent and commercial farmers, women, youth, people with disabilities, and military veterans as defined in the Military Veterans Act, 2011 (Act No. 18 of 2011).

#### **4.4 TYPES OF LAND ACQUISITION**

The PLAS prescribes five different methods of acquiring land: willing-buyer willing-seller, strategic acquisition, prospective beneficiary, expropriation, and auction. For the purposes of this study, the willing-buyer willing-seller, proactive acquisition and prospective beneficiary methods of land acquisition will be discussed.

#### **4.4.1 Willing-buyer willing-seller**

The willing-buyer willing-seller method of land acquisition involves land owners approaching the Provincial or National Department of Rural Development and Land Reform to indicate their willingness to make their land available for redistribution. This approach is often used to acquire land if the land is not under claim.

#### **4.4.2 Strategic acquisition**

The strategic acquisition method of land acquisition involves the DARDLR, guided by the Provincial Agriculture and Agro-Processing Master Plan, identifying agricultural corridors, nodes and local commodities. If the DARDLR wishes to acquire land, officials consult with farmers' organisations and farmers' associations and advise them of their intention to purchase property in a particular area. The Department extends an invitation to farmers who might want to sell their properties to engage with the Department. However, "in my 15 years with the DARDLR Pietermaritzburg Office, this option has never been used, we mostly use the willing buyer willing seller where farmers come to the department with the farms".

#### **4.4.3 Prospective beneficiary**

The prospective beneficiary approach to land acquisition involves prospective beneficiaries approaching landowners to establish whether the landowners would be willing to sell the farm to them. If farmers are willing, they provide the prospective beneficiary with a willing-seller letter. The prospective beneficiary then takes the letter to the DARDLR and asks the Department to buy the land on his behalf.

## **4.5 STRATEGIC ACQUISITION UNIT**

### **4.5.1 Farm acquisition**

Once a farm has been identified through one of the three approaches outlined above, the next step is to assess the condition of the farm. The DARDLR requests the DARD to undertake the process. The evaluation process considers the infrastructure, the condition of the farm, and the potential of the farm. If the assessment report is positive, the process of acquiring the farm commences. The assessment report, together with the internal memorandum requesting the funding to conduct an independent evaluation, is submitted to the Director for Strategic Land Acquisition. The director signs evaluation requests up to the value of R100 000.00. Requisitions above R100 000.00 are signed by the Provincial Chief Director.

If the District Office has the budget, an independent evaluator is appointed through the office's Supply Chain Management system. The evaluator is given three weeks to complete the evaluation, and the evaluator's report is then uploaded onto the Office of the Evaluator General's system with the owner's letter confirming his or her willingness to sell the farm. If the farm is owned by a company, a resolution signed by all the directors of the company is attached.

The Office of the Evaluator General then conducts another evaluation through their accredited evaluators. On completion of this evaluation, the evaluator negotiates with the farm owner on the asking price, using the evaluation report as a benchmark. If the farm owner does not agree with the evaluation price, the farmer is requested to submit reasons against the evaluation report. These reasons could include investments or renovations made after the assessment. These negotiations continue until the sale price is agreed upon by the two parties.

On reaching this agreement, but before the finalisation of the deal, a team from the Property Management unit which manages all DARDLR assets visits the farm to check if everything is in order and is in line with the assessment conducted.

At times the team may discover discrepancies. For example, a water pump that was previously there may have been replaced with a smaller one, or an air conditioner may have been replaced with a different brand, or the house is dilapidated because of neglect, or a tractor that was there has disappeared. In these instances, the farmer is requested to fix whatever is not correct.

Sometimes the Department accepts certain infrastructural discrepancies if they are not going to have a significant impact on the functioning of the farm. They also take into consideration the time at which the assessment was done. The Property Management report finalises the deal, and money is transferred to the farm owner. Farmers usually do not vacate their farms until the money is transferred into their account.

In terms of the PLAS, the land acquisition process should take six months. However, there are numerous challenges that causes delays. The most common challenges are a lack of available funds from the Pietermaritzburg district office for conducting evaluations, delays in the office of the evaluator general, a lack of sufficient budget to buy farms, and delays in the acceptance of the offer caused by negotiations between the evaluator and the farm owner.

For these reasons, acquisition of land often takes longer than the prescribed time, and can sometimes take years. Evaluations routinely remain in the office of the evaluator general for more than five months, because there are very few evaluators. It is not unusual to find that one evaluator is tasked with evaluations over three provinces. Court orders compelling the Department to buy land for labour tenants also take priority over willing-buyer willing-seller agreements.

#### **4.5.2 Farm allocation**

Farm allocation to a beneficiary usually takes place after a farm has been bought, but sometimes allocation takes place before the acquisition deal is concluded. Particular procedures must be followed to dispose of government land, but at the Minister discretion the provincial Chief Directors may dispose of land without following the usual land disposal procedures.

Farms are usually disposed of through an open process. The DARDLR advertises the farm locally, through the municipality, in community halls, at shopping centres, and through the Department's social media. If the required budget is available, the Department will also advertise in local newspapers. Prospective beneficiaries are invited to apply for selection.

The selection process includes a compulsory briefing on site, where the existing farm owner is given an opportunity to talk about the farm and its productivity. Attendance is compulsory and an

attendance register is signed. If the farm has labour tenants, the Department explains the process of subdivision that would be followed to give a portion of the land to the labour tenants or farm dwellers.

The District Beneficiary Selection Committee (DBSC) then convenes to start the selection process, and creates a short list of candidates by conducting interviews using the District DARDLR evaluation criteria. A successful candidate is then recommended to the Provincial Committee, which conducts further assessments. The Provincial Committee returns a report to the DBSC, either declining the recommendation or approving the recommendation, and sends it to the National Land Allocation Committee (NLAC), which makes the final decision. On receipt of a positive decision from the NLAC, the Department advises the farm owner and the conveyancing process is initiated. Some farm owners need one month's notice to vacate their farm, while others wait until the settlement is transferred into their account before they vacate their farm.

While the policy stipulates six months as the timeline for the acquisition process, the experience of the research participants varied. Participant E received his lease agreement relatively quickly, after almost five years (four years and eight months). However, it took eight years for Participant C to receive his lease agreement, and ten years for Participants A, B, D, and F to receive theirs.

Participant E, who received his lease the fastest, was categorised as a commercial farmer. He obtained his lease through the prospective beneficiary process, which is not required to follow the usual land and lease disposal policy procedure. His initial occupation after eight months was deemed illegal following a dispute with the Department, which wanted to make the farm available through an open allocation process. He was eventually granted a twelve-month caretaker lease agreement, which was extended to a thirty-year lease.

Participant F acquired his farm by registering on the DARDLR database. He explained that after registering, successful candidates were called by the Department if there were farms available. They were then invited to visit these farms and indicate their preferences. They were asked simple questions, like what they would do on the farm, and when they could move in. They would then wait for the Department to tell them whether they were successful or not. Participant F received his lease agreement after eight years. This first lease agreement was for five years, and after an assessment this was later extended to thirty years.

Both Participant E and Participant F had their initial lease agreements extended to thirty years, but their circumstances were quite different. Participant F has become one of the most successful livestock farmers in Mpofana Local Municipality, after moving onto his farm with just 15 head of cattle, some of which he bought after he was allocated the farm. He has not received government support since 2008. Participant E, however, received his lease in 2019, along with 78 cattle bought through the Recapitalisation and Development Programme (RECAP).

The following section examines the nature and the extent of the support the participants received from the DARDLR and the DARD.

#### **4.6 FARM SUPPORT**

All of the participants expressed their sense of excitement on being allocated land, as they had believed that land ownership would end their lives of struggle. At the time of the land transfer, they were aware that they had very little except for the land that government had been able to buy for them. But they believed that the government, being pro-poor, would continue to assist them, particularly because the government had secured the land for them because they had been living under insecure tenure rights.

However, when reality hit home in their first year of occupying the land, their sense of excitement and hope change to misery. They were no longer paid employees, but were now employers who were responsible for providing jobs to unemployed and hungry farm dwellers. Their frustration and sadness escalated as the number of people around their farms who needed jobs increased. This was the beginning of their journey as emerging black farmers.

None of the participants received support during the first three years of their lease. Three of the participants, whose farms were transferred in 2008, 2009 and 2018, had never received support from government since the land was handed over to them. The irony of the situation was that when the PLAS was introduced in 2006, it was introduced as a pro-poor policy that would ensure maximum productive use of the land acquired by government in order to create sustainable livelihoods.

Participant C was aware of the lack of government support provided to beneficiaries whose farms had been transferred before theirs, and was also aware that they did not have the required experience to manage the farm correctly. Participant C therefore asked the previous farm owner to stay for at least two years to mentor them while they waited for support from the DARDLR. The previous owner agreed, and permission was sought from the DARDLR, which agreed to fund the arrangement.

The arrangement included funding to cover the cost of the seedlings and other inputs the farmer would need to use during the mentorship period. However, this arrangement did not materialise because the DARDLR would not finalise a contract with the previous owner. To this day, no explanation has ever been provided for why the DARDLR did not honour its original agreement. After no progress after months of waiting, the previous farm owner, who was still on the farm, told the beneficiaries that he could not sit on the farm and do nothing. He decided to leave, because the DARDLR would not even communicate with him. The DARDLR was made aware of this development, but did not respond.

Before the farmer left, he told Participant C that there was a commercial farmer who was willing to lease the farm while they waited for government support. The commercial farmer approached the beneficiaries, they agreed on terms, and the farm was leased to the commercial farmer. The farmer bought the seedlings and input meant for training by the previous owner and started working the farm.

This arrangement was interrupted five years later in 2013, when the DARD and the DARDLR finally offered mentorship proposals to six farms in the Middelrus area.

#### **4.6.1 The mentorship programme**

A mentorship programme was proposed by the DARD and the DARDLR to six crop farmers in the Middelrus area. Participant C and Participant D were part of this mentorship programme. The proposal was well received by the beneficiaries, and reignited their hopes, since it was the first time they had received government support since their farms had been handed over to them in 2008 and 2010 respectively.

Six land reform beneficiaries formed a company called Siyathuthuka (Pty) Ltd, and each farm contributed 10 hectares of land to the programme, which was fenced. Siyathuthuka entered into a joint venture with Gezubuso, a company that was owned by the mentor, a full-time commercial farmer who was appointed by the Free State province DARDLR. Siyathuthuka held a 70% share in the joint venture, and Gezubuso a 30% share, and the mentor was the director of the joint venture. The DARDLR set aside a budget of R5 million through the Provincial Agribusiness Development Agency (ADA) for the mentorship.

The mentorship began in 2013 and collapsed in 2015. The arrangement was that if you had 60 hectares of land, 10 hectares would go to the joint venture and the remaining 50 hectares would be leased to the mentor. This happened on all six crop farms, where any land outside the 10 hectares allocated for the joint venture would be leased by the mentor. The mentor came on site with all his farming equipment and hired two beneficiaries, one as a Liaison Officer and one as a Human Resources Officer.

Various issues caused the land reform beneficiaries to start asking questions about the mentorship programme. No mentorship or training was taking place, because the mentor was busy with his leased farms. The mentor would first prepare for planting all the portions he leased from the six farms, and only once this was done would he prepare the joint venture portions. The joint venture portions were the last to receive his attention, and sometimes preparation for planting for the joint venture would be too late. His leased portions were very productive, while the 60 hectares within the joint venture portion stagnated and showed no signs of progress.

When farmers started to ask questions about this lack of attention to the joint venture, and about the lack of mentorship, the mentor said he was being attacked. The DARDLR was not available to address the concerns of the beneficiaries, and the situation escalated because there was no monitoring. Even the beneficiaries who were hired by the mentor were not happy with what was happening. They were also blamed by the other beneficiaries because they were working for the mentor.

It also emerged that the six participating beneficiaries were not receiving equal shares in the 70% shareholding allocated to Siyathuthuka. One of the farms, which belonged to Participant C, was the hub of the operation, as it had a storage facility, a cold room for the vegetables, and was the

most productive of the six farms. However, it was allocated only 2% of the 70%, instead of 11.6%, which would have constituted an equal share for all beneficiaries. This allocation of 2% was confirmed by the researcher on investigating the shares certificate.

The joint venture failed to resolve this issue of share allocation, and the aggrieved Participant C asked to be excused from the joint venture. This implied that access to their pack house and cold room facilities for vegetables would come to an end for the joint venture. Finally, Participant C asked the mentor to leave their farm.

When the DARDLR finally tried to intervene, it was too late. Lawyers had become involved and the joint venture collapsed. Siyathuthuka was dissolved, and the equipment that had been bought for the joint venture (four small tractors and a van) were split among the farms. 150 people lost their jobs.

The beneficiaries concluded that the mentorship programme had never been intended to assist them, but to enrich the mentor (Hall, 2004, p. 215), as there was nothing to show for the R5 million that had been invested in the mentorship programme for almost two years.

Of the six beneficiaries who had participated in the joint venture, the mentor sued Participant C for breach of contract. Lawyers came to the farm and attached Participant C's equipment. Participant C could not raise money to defend their case and finally went to the DARDLR to plead for legal assistance against the mentor. The DARDLR appointed lawyers to defend Participant C, and the matter was resolved amicably in the end.

## **4.6.2 Participant D**

### *4.6.2.1 Lucerne farming*

Following the dissolution of Siyathuthuka, Participant D applied for a loan from Ithala Bank. This transaction is mentioned because Ithala is an agency of the Provincial Department of Economic Development Tourism and Environmental Affairs (EDTEA), which supports emerging business. It is therefore an extension of government, as opposed to a commercial bank, because a portion of the loan consists of grant funding.

Before their application was approved, they had to prove that they had customers to buy their produce through an offtake agreement. A potential buyer provided letters to that effect, and the loan was approved in 2018. The farm planted lucerne, and when it was ready, two truckloads of 240 square bales each was collected by the company, whose name cannot be mentioned.

Payment for the produce was not received, and Participant D inquired about the non-payment. The company refused to pay, claiming that the produce was of a poor quality. The company instructed Participant D to organise transport to collect the produce within two days, failing which the company would destroy the produce. This non-payment was a heavy blow to the emerging farm. They could not pay their employees and could not pay for electricity, and Ithala Bank was demanding the repayment of their loan. The matter was closed after the company disclosed to Ithala Bank that the company did not pay for the feed because the produce was of poor quality. That marked the end of the lucerne project.

After the failure of two projects, Participant D decided to stop crop farming because of the challenges crop farmers have to deal with, and decided instead to shift to livestock farming.

#### *4.6.2.2 Livestock farming*

Participant D applied for funding from the DARD for his livestock project under the Recapitalisation and Agricultural Development Programme (RECAP). The application was approved in 2019, and the farm received fifty (50) head of cattle from the RECAP. Before the cattle were purchased, Participant D, together with government officials, visited the farm from which the cattle would be bought. He chose the cattle he wanted, and was assured by the farm owner that the cattle were pregnant, and that pregnancy had been confirmed by the veterinarian.

However, when the livestock were delivered, Participant D received the shock of a lifetime. The cattle were not the livestock stock he had chosen. He realised that he should have taken pictures of the cattle when he visited the farm, and the situation was a brutal lesson about the shenanigans of livestock farming. The delivery included calves he had not chosen, and some of them had died. Participant D claimed that he subsequently saw most of the cattle he had actually chosen at an

auction sale, and most of the cattle had calves with them. He also knew who was selling the cattle with their calves, something unfamiliar in farming.

Currently Participant D's farm raises cattle, and they continue to plant lucerne in small quantities to feed their own cattle. They continue to sell lucerne to local community members who have livestock. The market for their livestock is the auction sale at the Mooi River Farmers Association.

### **4.6.3 Participant C**

#### *4.6.3.1 Potato farming*

After the failure of the mentorship programme, Participant C's farm received funding support from the DARD in 2019/20 to the value of R3 million. This funding covered the replacement of asbestos pipes in the irrigation system with PVC pipes, the purchase of a potato planter, and inputs, manure and seedlings for 48 hectares. They also received a tractor from the DARDLR meant for the Farmer Production Support Unit, which did not materialise.

This support was welcomed by Participant C, but with reservations. Government officials had organised this support without communicating with or consulting Participant C, and this affected the successful use of the support.

Problems started when potato seedlings for 48 hectares were delivered in very large quantities that were unmanageable. A request to have the seedlings delivered every two weeks failed. When the DARDLR failed to listen to the request, Participant C approached the nursery, only to find that the nursery had raised the same concern on receipt of the tender. However, the nursery was instructed to follow the DARDLR's instructions on the timeline provided to deliver the seedlings. This demonstrate what Mukovhe and Moyo (2019, p. 720) referred to as a top-down approach by government officials.

Because there was not enough preparation, some of the seedlings were damaged because Participant C did not have the necessary time or capacity to plant them properly. Planting vegetables requires labour that need to be paid, and the farm did not have the money to employ more labour to assist during planting. With limited capacity they had to weed 48 hectares manually

and had no chemicals to spray, and this affected the project badly. Participant C concluded that the seedlings had been dumped on them as a solution to someone else's problem, and had never truly been intended to support the farm.

More problems occurred when the potatoes were ready to harvest and sell. Transport costs and packaging had not been factored into the budget, and the produce therefore had to be delivered to the Durban market without the proper transport. The produce would have to be transported in a van covered with plastic. When the produce reached Durban, which is about 200 km away from the farm, some of the produce would have been damaged by heat, which would be a great loss to the farm. Attempts to minimise this damage by transporting the produce late in the afternoon reduced the impact, but it was still costly to the farm because none of the transport and packaging costs had been anticipated, and the driver of the van returned late in the evening.

The biggest loss took place in April 2020, when there was a rainstorm and floods in the Mpofana area. The farm lost dry beans, spinach, broccoli, cauliflower and three hectares of butternut, which was not insured.

#### *4.6.3.2 Current activities*

Participant C's farm is currently leased to a commercial farmer who brings equipment to prepare the land and plant it, and then leaves. The commercial farmer pays for electricity, pays for using the storage room and the cold room, and pays a management fee every month. This income is used to hire people who work on the farm. The current arrangement allows the farm to provide minimal work for the local farm dwellers. Another former client of the farm leases two hectares for growing spinach. If it were not for the commercial farmer and the former client, there would be nothing happening on this farm's 60 hectares of fertile soil.

## **4.7 COMMERCIAL LIVESTOCK FARMS**

Livestock farming is a thriving business, and all black commercial farmers in Mpofana are livestock farmers. Most of the farm owners do not live on their farms. The farms are looked after by former farm employees, who do nothing other than look after the farm. There are no agriculture activities taking place on most of these farms. With a few exceptions, most of these commercial farmers have never applied for support.

Two of the participants, Participant E and Participant F, fell into the category of commercial livestock farmers according to the PLAS, and both lived on their farms. Participant E had never received support from government, yet was the most thriving livestock farmer in Mpofana Local Municipality. His situation will be briefly discussed, and then the focus will shift to Participant F, who had received support from government.

### **4.7.1 Participant E**

Participant E had never received support from government. He moved into an empty 235-hectare farm with no infrastructure in 2008, with 15 head of cattle, some of which he bought after he was allocated the farm. His growth was noted by the Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, who visited his farm and recommended that the DARDLR should allocate him another big farm. Participant E went through the initial processes of the PLAS. He completed his first five-year lease without support, and after receiving a positive assessment had this extended to a thirty-year lease. Because he had exceeded the capacity of his 235-hectare farm, Participant E was leasing some of his cattle to neighbouring farms and selling cattle on auction.

### **4.7.2 Participant F**

Participant F was a commercial livestock farmer who lived on his farm and was making steady progress. He received RECAP funding after applying for 250 head of cattle, which was approved under a multi-year funding plan. He received his first batch of livestock, consisting of 75 cattle

and 3 bulls, in 2019. However, his request for the next batch of livestock, in accordance with the multi-year funding agreement, has not been honoured to date.

Currently Participant F has 110 head of cattle that are keeping the farm active. He believes he would have grown bigger had he received at least 150 of the 250 head of cattle he applied for. His progress has been hampered by the RECAP agreement not being honoured as agreed, which has meant that the 78 head of cattle he received in 2019 has been keeping the farm going ever since. He sells stock at auction in order to feed his other animals, to pay his labour, to support his family who do not live on the farm, and to ensure his own survival on the farm. He cannot look after his cattle after they give birth, because feed is expensive. As a result, his progress has been very slow. He was advised by the previous owner that he needs to have at least 250 head of cattle for the farm to be viable, and at the current pace, achieving this target will take longer than anticipated.

#### **4.8 ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT UNIT (EDU)**

The objectives of the Enterprise Development Unit (EDU) are to contribute towards the development of rural areas by supporting existing enterprises, by supporting the development of human resources, and by contributing towards job creation. The EDU focuses on areas of extreme poverty, as determined by Stats SA, and their approach is guided by provincial priorities. The EDU intervenes in such areas to ensure that long-term food production and food security can be created. People are encouraged to produce enough food for themselves and excess food to sell to generate income.

The EDU realised that they could not support each individual farm and so turned their efforts to the development of the Farmer Production Support Unit (FPSU). The FPSU coordinates support for emerging farmers at various central points close to where the farmers are located. One of these points is the Zibuke Trust project being implemented at Craigieburn Farm in Ward 4.

This women-led project was one of the beneficiaries of the 57 farms transferred in Mpofana Local Municipality. They received their land by virtue of being farm dwellers and labour tenants. Like many farm dwellers and labour tenants, they were not recapitalised. Zibuke Trust started as 14 cooperatives collectively working on 800 hectares of land. Each cooperative has its own piece of

land, and they are growing maize, cabbage, spinach, green pepper and other vegetables. The DARDLR supported the Zibuke Trust with a tractor, a van, inputs, implements and diesel for the tractor, because diesel was their biggest cost driver.

This project has changed the lives of the families involved for the better. They are able to send their children to school, their houses have improved (none of them live in mud houses anymore), and they are able to sell their and make a profit from their land. They sell vegetables at informal markets, and people also buy vegetables directly from the farm. They have no ambitions for offtake agreements or to access larger markets, because what they are doing is working well for them. Zibuke Trust is a living example of small-scale producers who are able to grow produce, make a profit, and sustain their livelihoods.

#### **4.9 SUPPORT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (DARD)**

Since 2008, when the participants began receiving land in Mpofana Local Municipality, the DARD has provided support to them and to other land reform beneficiaries. For many reasons, these beneficiaries may not have received the level of support they required and deserved, but some form of support has been provided. This support has included Land Restitution for Agricultural Development (LRAD) beneficiaries, which include Trust farms, Communal Property Associations (CPAs) and communal farms. During dry seasons, the DARD has supported livestock farmers with feed. The PLAS farms in particular have received support, which has included fencing, the building of cattle handling facilities, and feed. However, certain policies and procedures must be followed for farmers to receive support from the DARD, and these are discussed below.

##### **4.9.1 Procedure for accessing Recapitalisation and Agricultural Development Programme funding (RECAP)**

After more than sixteen years working in Mpofana Local Municipality, and more than thirty years working in the DARD, participant G was not at liberty to talk about anything outside the procedure.

Land reform beneficiaries apply to the DARD for RECAP funding after they have been allocated farms. Applications are considered once applicants have submitted proof of ownership or a confirmed lease agreement with the DARDLR.

His view regarding the procedures for accessing RECAP funding is that they are problematic. The DARDLR buys farms with no infrastructure, which is something that needs to be examined first before determining whether a farm is worth buying or not. The participant was of the view that if the DARDLR is confident that a farm without infrastructure is worth buying, then they should provide RECAP to provide the necessary infrastructure.

The problem with the current arrangement is that some of the applications for RECAP support are declined by the DARD for failing its assessment criteria. Applications for support are accompanied by business plans. If the business plans fail to demonstrate that the farm will be viable and make profit, the DARD will decline the application. Land reform beneficiaries who have been allocated land by the DARDLR which does not have the necessary infrastructure for farming will then have their applications for RECAP funding turned down by the DARD precisely because they have no infrastructure and therefore fail the DARD's assessment criteria. This is why many land reform farms collapse.

Another issue is that the DARD has many responsibilities and projects which are not PLAS or LRAD that still need to be included in their budget. The DARD does not have enough budget for all these projects, and can also not budget for projects they are not aware of. Sometimes applications are submitted after the DARD has finalised its budget. In those cases, even if an application passes the assessment criteria, there will not be sufficient budget to support the application, because the budgeting process has already been finalised.

Some land reform beneficiaries receive support and then come back for more, when there are farms that have never received support because of budget constraints. At times the normal procedures do not apply when applications come through the office of the Minister.

#### **4.9.2 DARD support for the 57 farms transferred in Mpofana**

The DARD compiled a report on the 57 farms transferred to beneficiaries in Mpofana in 2020 (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2020). These farms were transferred to communal farms, Trusts, CPA's and PLAS farms. The purpose of the report was to determine the status of these farms, since they were productive before they were handed over, and employed many people. The DARD wanted to intervene to ensure that these farms remained productive and sustained employment opportunities for the farming community of Mpofana.

Twenty-one million rand (R21 million) was set aside to support these farms. Unfortunately, the bulk of the budget was spent on a few individual commercial farms, and the rest did not benefit from the funding. At the same time, most of the commercial farms who did receive funding cannot show how the money was spent.

None of the study participants benefited from this funding, and none of them wanted to talk about the R21 million funding.

#### **4.10 CONDITION OF THE PARTICIPANTS' FARMS**

The condition of some of the participants' farms is very concerning. In 2020, there were floods in the Mpofana area which destroyed all four dams on one of the farms, and the owner cannot afford to repair the dams. Attempts to receive support from the DARDLR have come to nothing. An assessment was conducted and a business plan was submitted, but nothing has happened since 2020. The farm is therefore facing the summer season without a water storage facility. Currently the farm relies on a stream that flows through the farm for water. The farm has a borehole which cannot be used because there is no electricity on the farm. Eskom disconnected their electricity due to non-payment, and will not consider installing prepaid electricity until the debt is paid in full.

During the same floods, this farm also suffered serious soil erosion, and the DARDLR has written to the owner asking him to do something about the erosion. An application for a land care grant was unsuccessful. Soil erosion has destroyed the access road to the farm, to the point where it can

now only be reached with a four-by-four vehicle. Pastures on this farm have been invaded by alien plants, and the farmer insists he cannot afford to remove these plants without support, while he is facing a disastrous summer without a single water storage facility to keep water. The farm does not have a single camp because fencing is almost non-existent. The sheds are also severely dilapidated, to the point where they are almost unusable.

Another farm that experienced even worse damage from the same floods applied for funding to build gabions to stop dongas from expanding and posing a threat to his livestock. The DARD told him that gabions are expensive, and gave him R1.7 million instead between 2019 and 2021 to fence the dongas. Today half of the fences have been stripped by the community, and the dongas continue to expand.

Other than the Zibuke Trust, which is very productive, there is only one crop farm that continues to function in Middelrus. Its continued existence is due to the fact that it is leased by a commercial farmer. If this were not the case, there would be no crop farm in Middelrus.

Two other farms that have never received support have almost collapsed because nothing is happening on these farms. These are large farms of 300 and 824 hectares. A portion of the 824-hectare farm is leased by a successful livestock farmer to keep his livestock. A portion of the 300-hectare farm is also leased by a commercial farmer who keeps his livestock on the farm at R50.00 per cow. The beneficiary does not know how much to charge the commercial farmer per cow. The DARDLR is aware of this situation, and have promised to return to advise the beneficiary. This promise was made in 2023, however, and has not been fulfilled to date.

If many of the farms belonging to the beneficiaries were not being leased out, there would be very little positive to say about the condition of these farms.

#### **4.11 SKILLS LEVEL OF THE LAND REFORM BENEFICIARY PARTICIPANTS**

The skills level of the participants was presented as part of the profile of the participants in section 4.2, showing that one participant had completed a short course in agriculture after matriculating,

and had attended workshops organised by the DARD and the DARDLR, Mpofana Local Municipality, and non-government organisations (NGOs) that assists farm owners.

The experience of the majority of the land reform beneficiary participants therefore consisted of simply working on a farm, and none had ever been given any proper training on how to manage a farm. This is a serious challenge if these farms are to function and create employment as expected. The situation is dire.

#### **4.12 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has presented the data and findings from the researcher's in-person interviews with the participants in relation to the study's primary research questions: the processes of farm acquisition and farm allocation, the types of support received by the land reform beneficiaries, the condition of the participants' farms, and the skills level of the participants.

The following final chapter presents a discussion of the research findings as well as proposed methods for redressing the problems identified, before presenting the researcher's concluding thoughts on the study.

## **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents a discussion of the findings that emerged during the study. These findings are discussed in the context of the primary objective of this study, which was to assess the PLAS programme and its impact on the development of emerging black farmers in Mpofana Local Municipality.

The findings are also discussed in the context of the research questions that guided this study:

1. What processes were followed in leasing the farms to emerging black farmers in Mpofana Local Municipality?
2. What support did the South African government provide to the emerging farmers in Mpofana Local Municipality?
3. What is the current condition of the leased farms in comparison to their condition at the time of handover?
4. What are the skills levels of the land reform beneficiaries?

Areas of proposed redress in order for the PLAS to achieve its intended objectives are discussed, before the researcher's final conclusions are presented.

### **5.2 THE CONTEXT**

Mpofana Local Municipality is a rural municipality, made up of 98.37% farmland and 1.63% urban settlements. Black Africans constitute 92% of the population, the majority of whom live in Bruntville township, located on the N3 highway at the Mooi River Toll Plaza. In 2016, the majority of the 64.16% of people living in poverty in Mpofana, using the upper poverty line definition, were black Africans (IHS Global Insight, 2018, p. 55). Unemployment stood at 17.3% in 2016 (IHS Global Insight, 2018, p. 40) and increased to 23.9% in 2022 (Stats SA, 2022). Agricultural activities are the largest contributor to the total Gross Value Add (GVA) of Mpofana, with its contribution of R540 million accounting for 28% of the GVA, followed by community services at

18.8% and trade at 14.3% (IHS Global Insight, 2018, p. 20). The broad question this study aimed to address is the role played by land reform in Mpofana. This study aimed to assess the impact of the Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) on the development of emerging black farmers in Mpofana Local Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

The personal accounts provided by the study participants raised some disturbing questions about the uneven implementation of the PLAS in Mpofana. Before the 57 farms in Mpofana were transferred, they were productive and provided employment to the people of Mpofana. However, since being transferred to land reform beneficiaries, the lands were no longer as productive. The Department allocated R21 million worth of funding for an intervention to address this decline. The DARD states that the majority of the farms that were transferred were communal farms, Trusts, communal property associations (CPA) and PLAS farms. But most of the R21 million was spent on commercial farms, a particular category of the PLAS, and the rest did not receive support.

As described in section 2.4.3 in Chapter 2, numerous land reform programmes were implemented before PLAS, which was introduced as a government-driven approach as opposed to a beneficiary-driven approach. It is well documented that these previous programmes were replaced without addressing the challenges that had affected them. This pattern suggests that the expenditure of the R21 million earmarked to address the decline in productivity on the 57 farms in Mpofana will also largely go unexamined. It emerged during the study that the commercial farmer beneficiaries could not account for how the money was spent.

What the PLAS states should happen, and what happens on the ground, is difficult to reconcile. One of the study participants who had grown up on a farm and had worked on a farm his whole life, and who therefore had some farming experience, moved onto 824 hectares with only eight head of cattle. This was because he had been a labour tenant, and the farm owner did not allow him to keep large numbers of cattle on his farm. However, he has never received support to increase his cattle in order to make his herd more viable on such a large piece of land. On the other hand, another participant moved onto a 300-hectare farm with 75 cows and three bulls, bought for him by the DARD by virtue of his being regarded as a commercial farmer. However, he did not meet a single one of the criteria for qualifying as a Category 3 farm, as specified in the State Land Lease and Disposal Policy (DRDLR, 2006, p. 10). He was allotted a status he did not deserve, and

therefore received support. This type of confusion and lack of understanding between government and administration echoes the disastrous New Zealand experience (Brower et al., 2020, p. 3) described in section 2.3.6.

### **5.3 ALLOCATION CHALLENGES**

The allocation process for the PLAS seems to be open and fair, since everybody is given an opportunity to apply. However, the process does not ensure that those who are allocated farms actually have the capacity and the resources to ensure that the farm will be productive and functional in line with the policy objectives. The researcher recorded more than one example of a participant having been allocated a farm based on the business plan submitted to the DARDLR, but having then been denied support by the DARD on the basis that the business plan did not in fact demonstrate the viability of the farm. There is clearly a disconnect between how the DARDLR and the DARD interpret the qualifying criteria. This disconnect is leaving certain land reform beneficiaries with farms, but without the resources to work and maintain those farms productively, effectively producing a reduction in agricultural productivity and an increase in unemployment.

One possible reason for this disconnect is political interference, although the officials who participated did not feel comfortable talking about this openly. However, it emerged from the interviews that some PLAS applications come “from the top”, and not through the usual procedures, and that politically connected people are therefore allocated farms. This observation supports Deininger and Binswanger’s findings (1999, p. 257).

Aspects of the PLAS itself contribute to these challenges of allocation, as the policy allows the Minister to determine the terms and conditions under which the provincial Chief Director can dispose of farms. This allows the Minister to circumvent the disposal procedures stated in the PLAS, and exposes the Provincial Chief Directors to political pressure from the Minister, thus opening a window for illegal practices.

Another interesting challenge relates to the “prospective beneficiary” type of land acquisition (explained in section 4.4.2), as related by one of the participants. The prospective beneficiary approached a farm owner who was desperately trying to sell his farm to commercial farmers who

refused to buy the farm because it had farm dwellers. On receipt of the willing-buyer willing-seller letter from the farm owner, and after three years of negotiations, the DARD bought the farm. However, they later tried to put the farm into an open disposal process, which led to a dispute between the DARD and the prospective beneficiary who had initiated the process. Because of the dispute, the prospective beneficiary illegally occupied the farm until the dispute was resolved eight months later. It is problematic that the PLAS does not offer adequate clarity about the prospective beneficiary approach, or adequate protections for the prospective beneficiaries who correctly initiate the process.

#### **5.4 LOCATION OF THE FARMS**

The location of most of the farms sold to government in Mpofana Local Municipality raises a number of questions about the reasons for selling and buying these farms. Many of them do not have infrastructure, and were not developed by their previous owners. They have poor fencing, if fencing exists at all. Most of them are on the northern side of the Greytown Road (the R622), which is a hot, dry bushveld area with low rainfall, is far from town and the market, and has poor road infrastructure. It is unrealistic to expect poor black farmers who lack farm management experience, and who are receiving no support from government, to thrive and create jobs in this harsh farming environment, on farms that were already lacking infrastructure at the time of handover. It became clear to the researcher that in this context it is impossible to realise the PLAS objectives without additional government support.

#### **5.5 EXTENSION SERVICES**

The interviews revealed contrasting opinions from those participants who were crop farmers and those who were livestock farmers on the topic of extension services. The crop farmers stated that when the DARD is busy implementing a project, extension officers visit them every week. However, if there is no DARD project underway, they do not receive meaningful extension support. The extension officers pay a cursory visit every three months, as if they are complying with a box-checking exercise.

The livestock farmers, on the other hand, had a completely different perception of the extension officers, with whom they seemed to have a good working relationship. Although the extension officers had little concrete practical support to offer on their visits, they did try to advise them on the support they needed, and the participants believed that the extension officers did try to provide feedback from farmers to the DARD through reports to their superiors. The participants believed that the extension officers did not receive support from their superiors, and that as junior staff members there was little they could do to remedy the situation. The participants did not therefore blame the extension officers for the lack of practical support.

While it was difficult for the researcher to verify the identities of the extension officers, it appeared as if the crop extension officers and livestock extension officers were different people. Most of the active land reform farms in Mpofana Local Municipality are livestock farms, and it is possible that the livestock extension officer therefore has more reason to be actively involved, and has had the opportunity to develop a good working relationship with the livestock farmers. On the other hand, most of the land reform crop farms have collapsed in the Middelrus area, with the only land reform crop farm still in operation being leased to a commercial farmer. It is understandable that an extension officer would see little point in visiting this farm, as the extension service is intended for farmers who are land reform beneficiaries, and not for private commercial farmers.

However, the experiences related by Participant D about the lucerne project raise questions about the extension services, and support the observation that extension officers only visit if the DARD is implementing a project. Since the lucerne project was a private initiative by the farmer, there was no commitment from the DARD to support the farmer. One wonders what would have happened had the extension services provided the farmer with the correct practical guidance on how to ensure the quality of the produce.

## **5.6 THE EXPERIENCES OF EMERGING BLACK FARMERS**

Some of the land reform beneficiaries have not recovered from the shock, misery and disbelief they have experienced since the handover of their farms. Some of the participants were allocated their farms when the Recapitalisation and Agricultural Development Programme (RECAP) was

part of the allocation process, yet the support they were promised at that time has still not materialised. They have been trying to farm ever since without the necessary knowledge and support.

It is important to note that some of these beneficiaries do not have the capacity to develop viable business plans, even though a business plan was a requirement for support. Some of the crop farms have collapsed because of high electricity costs. Eskom has disconnected their electricity due to non-payment, and they cannot therefore currently irrigate their fields with powered pumps and boreholes. Installing solar panel arrays to power boreholes is beyond the financial capacity of these poor beneficiaries.

When farms cease to function, farm workers lose their jobs and unemployment increases in the region. People become desperate when they lose their jobs, and can sometimes respond negatively. Some of these farms have been vandalised, and this damage makes it even more difficult to revive their productivity. The unfortunate situation is that these farms often end up being leased back to the very same people who sold them to the government in the first place, thus defeating the policy objectives of the land reform programme. Commercial farmers who received money from the sale of their farms are now making more money farming the very same farms they sold. This challenge seems to be very similar to the predicament faced by the New Zealand government, whose Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 was accused of ultimately excessively enriching the original farmers rather than the intended beneficiaries (Brower et al., 2020, p. 5).

## **5.7 CORRUPTION IN THE FORM OF FRONTING**

Livestock is a thriving business, and the interview participants expressed serious concerns about what they perceive to be a conflict of interest: government officials enriching themselves through the land reform programme.

Land reform beneficiary farmers are required work closely with government officials, who have a responsibility for facilitating their growth. However, some of the participants expressed their feelings of confusion and suspicion when they observed the very same officials who are supposed to facilitate their growth competing with them at auction sales. These officials were not hobby

farmers selling five or ten head of cattle, but were highly invested and highly capitalised farmers sell herds of cattle. Some of the participants even mentioned borrowing bulls from these officials when they wanted to cross breed.

The participants also stated that while it is very rare to see small-scale farmers selling cows with calves, government officials in Mpofana do this, suggesting that they are large scale farmers and are big players in the livestock industry.

The participants suspected that these government officials have herds of cattle hidden on these poor, unsupported land reform farms through middlemen who lease space for their ill-gotten livestock. According to Mtero et al. (2019, p. 65), public resources are often diverted in this way to benefit the elite at the expense of the poor. Fronting takes place in livestock farming where people form small companies that front for rich people who do not live on these farms (Mtero et al., 2019, p. 68). The participants saw this type of corruption as one of the reasons for why they do not believe that their situation will change.

One of the participants related the story of a farmer in Mpofana who was allocated RECAP but did not receive it. He was then declared deceased by the Department of Home Affairs, and the DRDLR advertised his farm. Fortunately, the deception was uncovered, and officials were prevented from continuing with the sale by a court order on their way to a site briefing. The official involved in the saga was simply moved to the Eastern Cape Province, where he is still working now, suggesting that those involved in such fraud are politically protected.

Such stories confirm the participants' suspicions about the corrupt activities of the officials and big players behind the scene. The allocation process needs to be reviewed and revised to reduce the opportunities for such fraud.

## **5.8 PROPOSED REDRESS**

As shown with the various problems outlined above, there are a number of areas that need to be addressed in order for land reform to realise its stated objective — to mitigate the effects of poverty and economic and political exclusion. The review should begin at broad policy level before taking

into account the particular details of the implementation programme. If the reasons for the current failures of implementation are not addressed at the policy level, the damage being done will compound, and could take generations to fix.

### **5.8.1 Policy**

It runs counter to the objectives of South Africa's decades-long land reform programme to concentrate government resources on commercial farmers, particularly livestock farmers who do not contribute much to job creation, at the expense of small-scale producers, farm labourers and labour tenant. Crop farms provide far more opportunities for job creation, and land reform crop farms therefore need to be adequately developed. The current policy breeds social ills into the farming community, which could further destroy land reform farms. The current prioritisation of commercial farms over farm dwellers, labour tenants, communal property associations, communal farms, Trusts, and NGOs does not align with the government's claimed commitment to developing sustainable livelihoods.

The Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) was originally used to buy farms and to recapitalise them. Currently, however, the PLAS only recapitalises commercial farmers through the DARD. The bias towards commercial farmers who are already wealthy should not be allowed to continue when millions of farm dwellers and labour tenants remained unemployed. Government cannot expect everyone to be highly commercialised. Farmers fall into different categories, as acknowledged by the State Land Lease and Disposal Policy (DRDLR, 2006), and farmer support should not therefore be directed towards one category. Not all farms have the capacity for mass production, and small-scale farmers, down to one-home one-garden farmers, must also be supported. Smaller-scale farms are manageable and are generally low on infrastructure demand, but service many people.

The separate processes for applying for farms and for the recapitalisation of farms need to be reviewed. In the past, applicants were allocated farms and received RECAP through one process. Currently, prospective beneficiaries have to deal with two departments with different assessment criteria that do not complement each other. The arrangement is problematic, and needs to be

addressed. The DARDLR and the DARD should be working closely with each other, with each department playing its role clearly. The current landscape for applications and recapitalisation is not clear, is producing outcomes that are destructive for land reform, employment and food security, and should therefore be reviewed.

Policy issues related to subdivisions also contribute to the current predicament of farm dwellers and labour tenants. Under a land reform process, it takes years for title deeds to be issued to labour tenants and farm dwellers. They are therefore forced to rely on government support that often does not materialise. They cannot seek private loans or support because they do not have the proof of land ownership that is required by banks or funders. One of the study participants whose portion of a farm was divided in 2017, still did not have their title deed in October 2024. The processes of finalising subdivisions and issuing title deeds must therefore be accelerated.

### **5.8.2 Training**

The study indicated that none of the participants had a formal agriculture qualification. Five participants had farming experience by virtue of growing up on a farm and working on the farm, but the gap between their level of experience and what was expected of them was very large, as their role as a farm owner was completely different and demanded different capabilities.

Land reform beneficiaries require the specific appropriate training that will enable them to manage their farms effectively and successfully. They need to be capacitated in the technical aspects of managing livestock and crops, as well as in financial management, budgeting, marketing and other business skills required by business owners.

The behaviour of the livestock farmers indicated a critical skills gap. After receiving their farm allocation, they quickly submitted applications for livestock. But as their experience developed and they learned about other breeds, they would return to the DARD and request the breed they had learned about, claiming that they had not been properly advised. They also tried to experiment with cross breeding, without ensuring that the breeds were suitable for this.

Both the crop and livestock farmers need to be educated about the market. Livestock farmers rely on auctions, even if they are not happy with the prices they get. They do not have options, as they are not knowledgeable about other sale options. Crop farmers, on the other hand, are pressured to focus on offtake agreements, even though emerging farmers are seldom experienced enough to effectively implement all of the aspects of such agreements. Until they have this experience, they should market their produce in settings where they are able to meet the standards and procedural requirements, and make a profit. As long as they are making a profit, they will grow gradually if they want to, and will be better prepared for the next stages in their development after having gained experience.

None of the participants indicated that they had ever been trained in financial management. The negative consequences of this were apparent in how the support they received, no matter how large or how small, did not seem to make a difference to their operations. It is logical that any assistance should make some sort of difference in proportion to its size. A contributing factor was the lack of predictability in the support promised, as some of the participants related stories of support being haphazardly offered, with promises of continuity not being fulfilled. The challenges facing farmers in general, and land reform farmers in particular, require them to behave like business entrepreneurs, and to exhibit the types of mental and technical skills and preparation that are in short supply in South Africa.

The researcher noted an element of entitlement on the part of the participants, who expect government funding and assistance in order to run their farms profitably. While the economy is performing very badly, there are still many pressures and demands on the South African government, all of which require financial resources to address. With its fiscal shortcomings, government will never be able to provide everything the land reform farmers need, and the farmers themselves need to proactively seek their own paths to success.

### **5.8 3 Farmer Production Support Units (FPSU)**

Government cannot afford to fund, monitor, manage and sustain individual farms, particularly when the intention of the land reform process is to secure private, independent ownership and

management. Decentralised farmer production support services are a solution for providing these services in a way that capacitates emerging and small-scale farmers.

Service centres need to be owned, managed and maintained by government with all the necessary equipment needed by emerging farmers. In that way, emerging farmers do not immediately need to find the capital required to purchase their own equipment. As farmers develop their farms, their ability to afford their own equipment will also develop.

The participants explained that an attempt to build a Farmer Production Support Unit (FPSU) in Mpfana started, but failed to materialise. The concept needs to be revisited, because the emerging farmers in Mpfana need these services in order to grow. Government support resources are best invested in these decentralised, accessible support units.

#### **5.8.4 Combating corruption**

Livestock farming is a lucrative business, and it emerged from the data that there are serious abnormalities taking place in the allocation of commercial farms. Politically connected people, with no resources and without the necessary skills to manage farms, are often allocated land reform farms. Government is buying farms for wealthy absentee farmers who are not engaging in farming.

The Department should consider revoking lease agreements with absentee farmers, in favour of people who will work the land and create employment opportunities for farm dwellers and labour tenants. The corrupt practice of benefiting wealthy absentee farmers defeats the objectives of land reform, and is a waste of limited government resources that will be difficult to recover (Hall, 2004, p. 219; Sebola & Tsheola, 2014, p. 119–120). The Department should also consider conducting a lifestyle audit of its staff members, in order to identify those who are engaging in these corrupt activities.

## 5.9 CONCLUSION

Facilitating land ownership for the poor and formerly disenfranchised, in order to stimulate their economic inclusion, has been one of the main reasons for introducing land reform throughout the world. The situation in Mpofana Local Municipality is a fairly typical one. More than 99% of the municipal area consists of agricultural land. There is no Tribal Authority, and under the former apartheid administration black Africans constituted 92% of the population while owning roughly 1% of the land, mostly in Bruntville township. The reality justified the need for land reform in Mpofana.

This study sought to assess the impact of the Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) on the development of emerging black farmers in Mpofana Local Municipality. The researcher did so by investigating the processes followed in leasing farms to emerging black farmers, the support offered by the South African government to these farmers, the current condition of the farms in comparison to their condition at the time of handover, and the skills levels of the land reform beneficiaries.

It was found that the processes involved in land reform applications and recapitalisation need to be reviewed and revised. The separate processes for applying for farms from the DARDLR and for the recapitalisation of farms from the DARD have contradictory assessment criteria for financial viability. In addition, the RECAP that was introduced to support projects that had failed to achieve the desired outcome resulted in very few applicants actually receiving financial support. The current landscape for applications and recapitalisation is not clear, is producing outcomes that are destructive for land reform, employment and food security, and should therefore be reviewed.

Eighteen years after the introduction of the PLAS, the government has failed to provide the necessary financial or technical support required by the beneficiaries of land reform, and most of the land reform farms in Mpofana have collapsed due to this lack of support. Some of the farms that are still functional are being leased out to the very commercial farmers from whom the land was originally bought, defeating the purpose of the broad project of land reform.

Support is urgently needed to bridge the critical skills gap identified in the land reform beneficiary emergent farmers. None of the participants had formal agricultural training, and all of them

desperately needed education on accessing markets and on financial management. It is unrealistic to expect former farm workers to have the necessary technical, financial and management skills to make independent entrepreneurial decisions (Deininger & Binswanger, 1999, p. 6). The failed mentorship programmes in Mpofana and the poor monitoring from government need to be reviewed and reconfigured.

The collapse of the majority of the land reform farms in Mpofana Local Municipality represents an indictment of the processes involved in land reform applications and recapitalisation, of the lack of appropriate support provided to the beneficiaries, and of the corrupt activities that are taking place. The situation is dire, and represents a failure to achieve the stated purpose of land reform — to mitigate the effects of poverty and economic and political exclusion. Redistribution alone does not achieve the objectives of land reform policy.

Nonetheless, there are pockets of hope, and with the correct political will, black emergent farmers can be productively brought into the agricultural economy of Mpofana Local Municipality, through supporting sustainable, functional farms that increase agricultural production, strengthen food security, and create much-needed employment.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

#### SECTION 1: Land beneficiaries

1. Observe and tick

Male	
Female	

2. In which age group do you fall under?

21 – 35 years	
36 – 50 years	
51 – 65 years	
65+	

3. Please tell me who you are and some things you would like me to know about you?
4. Can you step by step tell me how did you acquire the farm?
5. When was the farm handed over to you?
5. Did you have the experience of managing a farm during the land transfer?
6. How would you describe your first year on the farm?
7. What have you been producing on the farm since you moved into the farm?
8. What support did you receive from government in your first year?
9. Have you ever applied for support from government and what kind of support did you apply for?
10. What is your agriculture experience or qualification?
11. How often do you meet with the extension officer from DARD?
12. What support did you received from government?
13. How has been your working relationship with DARDLR after the transfer?
14. What support have you received from government in the past five years?
15. What challenges are you faced with?

16. What do you think need to be done to resolve your challenges?
17. Is there anything else you feel is important for others to know about managing a farm?
18. Do you have a comment to make before we close the interview?

## **SECTION 2: Department of Agriculture and Rural Development**

1. How long have you been working in the department?
2. When did you start working in Mpofana?
3. What services does your department provide in Mpofana?
4. What support has your department provided to PLAS farms in Mpofana?
5. What is your working relationship with DARDLR on farmer support?
6. Your department compiled a report on 57 land reform farms in Mpofana, what was the objective?
7. What has been done about the report?
8. From your experience of interacting with these farmers, are they progressing, if not why?
9. What could be done better to support these farmers?

## **SECTION 3: Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Reform**

### **A: Land acquisition**

1. Your unit is responsible for farm acquisition how long have you been working in this unit?
2. Can you take me through the process of acquisition, who identify the farms and how?
3. On average, how long does the acquisition process take and what could be the reasons?
4. Do you monitor the farm during the acquisition process?
5. Take me through the process of disposal and hand over once the farm has been acquired?
6. How long does it take to dispose the farm and why?
7. Can you explain the sequence between acquisition, disposal and time lines?
8. How would you describe the process and why?
9. What can you say about the condition of the farm you identify and the farm you hand over?
10. Is there anything else you think is important to know?

### **B: Enterprise development**

1. What are the objectives of the enterprise development unit and how do you achieve those goals?
2. How are those objectives linked to the development plans for emerging black farmers in Mpofana?
3. How do you integrate the policy objectives, the development plans for emerging black farmers and the resources necessary to achieve the objectives?
4. Can you describe the nature of support you provided to PLAS beneficiaries in the past five years?
5. How would you describe the support you give to PLAS beneficiaries in relation to the policy objective?
6. In your opinion, what should be done to develop emerging black farmers to realise the objectives of PLAS?
7. How would you describe PLAS from your unit point of view?
8. Is there any information or challenges you would like to share regarding the development of emerging black farmers?