

**A communicative approach towards an understanding of  
multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration as an issue field:  
Perspectives from sustainable seafood supply chain initiatives  
in an emerging market**

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## Declaration

I, Gillian Mary Bogie, declare that the entire body of work contained in this research is my own original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), and that I have not previously, in its entirety or in part, submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

GM Bogie

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## Abstract

The complexities of social and environmental issues are shared by many at every level of society, by governments, communities, business and individuals. These issues are often described as systemic problems (Waddock, 2013) or as systems of problems in a “turbulent field” (Trist, 1983; Emery & Trist, 1965), or as wicked problems (Dentoni, Bitzer & Pascucci, 2016; Waddock, Meszoely, Waddell & Dentoni, 2015). One particular approach that is adopted to engage with these systemic challenges is cross-sector collaboration (Van Tulder, Seitanidi, Crane & Brammer, 2016; Crane & Seitanidi, 2014; Glasbergen, 2007; Bryson, Crosby & Stone, 2006). It is a collective approach to addressing issues that are beyond the ability of any one organisation to solve acting alone (Huxham & Vangen, 2000a; Wood & Gray, 1991).

For business, efforts to address sustainability challenges have been directed towards establishing the business case (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a) in order to determine the benefits or value derived from engaging in sustainability and to answer the question: why collaborate? The question of how to collaborate to create change at a systemic level has not been fully explored in the literature (Senge, Lichtenstein, Kaeufer, Bradbury & Carroll, 2007).

The research opportunity here is to develop a greater understanding of how organisations from different sectors engage with multiple stakeholders so that the collaborative interactions and relationships create value and mutual benefits for all stakeholders and for the sustainability issue; and how continuity of the value creation process is sustained and developed. The study examined the experience of those individuals and organisations that are already achieving some success in working collaboratively to address sustainability issues.

The setting for the research was multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration (MsCsC) directed towards sustainable seafood. MsCsC is conceived as an issue field, which is defined as “an organisational field that forms around a central issue” (Hoffman, 1999). This differs from the dominant focus in the literature where there is a partnership entity or organisation.

Applying a communicative theoretical lens, an adapted interpretative phenomenological analysis was used to conduct the research analysis and present a conceptual framework of value creation in MsCsC. The research contribution is a refinement of a pre-existing theoretical approach to value creation, where cross-sector partnership is conceived as a separate organisational entity. The research outcome is a new framework of value creation that has been adapted and extended to the context of MsCsC as an issue field.

The research shows that there is a key difference in the process of value creation in these two contexts. The difference relates to a specific component of the framework of value creation, which is collective identity. In the case of MsCsC, there is no separate partnership entity and therefore no collective identity. As an alternative, the concept of identification applies, in which stakeholders identify with the narrative of the sustainability issue at a general level. They become stakeholders

in the sustainability issue and responsible collectively for the social construction of the narrative of the sustainability issue. At a more particular level, those stakeholders who commit to working together for the benefit of the sustainability issue, then interact in conversations to negotiate specific areas where their respective goals and objectives intersect. It is negotiation, as conversational interactions among the stakeholders that establishes the direction to be taken and drives action so that the goals and objectives are a consequence of a shared understanding of the issue. At these areas of intersection or interdependency, collaborative activities offer the potential for mutual benefit and the capacity to create value for the sustainability issue.

Other extensions to the framework include recognising multiple agencies, such as nonhuman and textual agents; adding emotional elements to build and invest in relationships; and articulating the impact of the collaborative activities for a wider constituency beyond the stakeholders.

**Key words:** multi-stakeholder; cross-sector; collaboration; partnerships; issue field; sustainability; supply chain; value chain; conversation; narrative.

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## List of acronyms and abbreviations

<b>AT</b>	authoritative text
<b>CCO</b>	communicative constitution of organisation
<b>CSR</b>	corporate social responsibility
<b>FACTS</b>	Food and Allergy Consulting and Testing Services
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
<b>GAN</b>	global action network
<b>IODSA</b>	Institute of Directors South Africa
<b>IOR</b>	inter- organizational relations (or relationships)
<b>IPA</b>	interpretative phenomenological analysis
<b>ISSF</b>	International Seafood Sustainability Foundation
<b>JSE</b>	Johannesburg Stock Exchange
<b>MSC</b>	Marine Stewardship Council
<b>MsCsC</b>	multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration
<b>MSI</b>	multi-stakeholder initiative
<b>MSP</b>	multi-stakeholder partnership
<b>NGO</b>	non-governmental organisation
<b>NPO</b>	nonprofit organisation
<b>USB</b>	University of Stellenbosch Business School
<b>WSSD</b>	World Summit on Sustainable Development
<b>WWF</b>	World Wide Fund for Nature (with reference to the International organisation)
<b>WWF-SA</b>	WWF South Africa
<b>WWF-SASSI</b>	WWF South African Sustainable Seafood Initiative
<b>XSP</b>	cross-sector partnership

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 THE RESEARCH PHENOMENON

The complexities of social and environmental issues are shared by many at every level of society, by governments, communities, business and individuals. These issues are often described as systemic problems (Waddock, 2013) or as systems of problems in a “turbulent field” (Trist, 1983; Emery & Trist, 1965), or as wicked problems (Dentoni, Bitzer & Pascucci, 2016; Waddock, Meszoely, Waddell & Dentoni, 2015). Crane and Seitanidi (2014) described such problems as “serious challenges facing society”. They are characterised by their complexity at a societal level, they are not easy to define, there is no clear end point or solution so that they are “relentless” (Rittel & Webber, 1973), “intractable” (ibid) and “unpredictable” (Emery & Trist, 1965). According to Dentoni and Bitzer (2015) they also involve high levels of uncertainty and are constantly evolving; they are unstructured with many interconnected issues and interdependencies so that they have a “dynamic complexity” that cannot be addressed by traditional problem-solving methods.

Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum recently commented on this complex environment and said:

*Across every sector of society, decision-makers are struggling to cope with heightened complexity and uncertainty resulting from the world’s highly interconnected nature and the increasing speed of change (WEF, 2015: 6).*

These complex problems cannot be solved so they need to be managed (Rittel & Webber, 1973); they require large scale systems change (Waddell, 2016: 6%; Waddock *et al.*, 2015), which is adaptive and transformational (Senge *et al.*, 2007). The need for transformation is directed by a desire to create a better future for all (WCED, 1987) and a more sustainable world (Waddock, 2013). The term sustainability encompasses a range of systemic social, economic and environmental problems (Googins, Mirvis & Rochlin, 2007: 20).

One particular approach that is adopted to engage with these systemic challenges is collaboration and more specifically cross-sector collaboration (Van Tulder *et al.*, 2016; Crane & Seitanidi, 2014; Glasbergen, 2007; Bryson *et al.*, 2006) or facilitating collaboration across organisational boundaries between the sectors (Weber & Khademian, 2008).

Cross-sector collaboration is a collective approach to addressing issues that are beyond the ability of any one organisation to solve acting alone (Huxham & Vangen, 2000a; Wood & Gray, 1991). Kanter (2012) claimed that collaboration “produces efficiencies and multiplier effects” and is needed to create innovative solutions to address the “ecosystem challenges” of business and society.

However, while much has been written about these complex problems and cross-sector collaboration has been put forward as a means for business, nonprofits and the public sector to work together (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a; Austin, 2010; IODSA, 2009), there is still much to be done. There is a call for business to do more (United Nations, 2015b) and for government and nonprofits to find new ways to work with business.

The research opportunity here is to develop a greater understanding of the processes of value creation by cross-sector collaboration where value is sought for all stakeholders individually and collectively, including the sustainability issue. The study has examined the experience of those individuals and organisations that are already achieving some success in working collaboratively to address sustainability issues.

For business, efforts to address sustainability challenges have been directed towards establishing the business case; for nonprofits there has been a shift from a confrontational approach to business towards finding common ground (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a). The focus has therefore been more on why to work together, than on how to work together to address the complex challenges. The business case identifies the benefits or value derived from engaging in sustainability. While nonprofits may focus on conservation objectives and the public sector on governance and policy, the business sector directs attention at gaining competitive advantage, cost and risk reduction, legitimacy and reputation management. The question of why organisations engage in cross-sector collaboration is explored in the literature on the business case for value creation (Kurucz, Colbert & Wheeler, 2008). In addition to the instrumental or political motives for each stakeholder to seek value directly for their own benefit, there are also situations where the stakeholders pursue mutual benefit and seek to create value in multiple ways (ibid). This is expressed by Austin and Seitanidi (2014: 4) as collaborative value, which they defined as “the transitory and enduring multidimensional benefits” that the partners derive from the collaborative interactions as well as the benefits for society.

The question that has not been fully explored in the research is not the why question, but the how question and how value is created for stakeholders individually and collectively. Senge *et al.* (2007) argued that the need for collaboration is growing but “it is exceedingly difficult to engage a diverse group of partners in successful collaborative systemic change” and “cross-sector collaboration at this scale is largely unexplored”. Austin and Seitanidi (2012a) explained that it is at the more advanced and complex stages of collaboration, directed towards integration and transformation, that the focus shifts to processes of innovation with the potential to build a “virtuous cycle” of value at a societal level. It is at these stages where process becomes integrated and institutionalised into the values, strategies and operations of the partners. This aligns with Austin’s (2010) assertion that value creation is “at the heart of effective collaboration”.

## 1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND OPPORTUNITY

From this background, the need that has been addressed by this research study is towards a greater understanding of how cross-sector collaboration is applied to address complex sustainability challenges. The interest is in understanding the processes of collaboration and collaborative activities; in how collaboration creates value, rather than why it should be done.

This research study has explored cross-sector collaboration directed towards sustainability challenges and more specifically a form of cross-sector collaboration described as multi-stakeholder (Dentoni *et al.*, 2016; Pinkse & Kolk, 2012; Van Huijstee & Glasbergen, 2010). Multi-stakeholder refers to the context in which interactions take place and indicates that there are multiple stakeholders, stakeholder organisations and stakeholder groups that are concerned with an issue or issue field (Van Huijstee & Glasbergen, 2010). Selsky and Parker (2010) described this societal context as “an issue-based stakeholder environment” and Hoffman (1999) and Wooten and Hoffman (2008) used the term “organisational field” which is defined in terms of the issues and collective interests of stakeholders.

Selsky and Parker (2010) explained that a partnership logic is future oriented and can lead to social innovation in order “to adapt to complexity, volatility and turbulence”. They said that current theory tends to “neglect the embeddedness of social processes” and “processes of nonlinear emergence” and they advocated for further research on “micro issues” (Selsky & Parker, 2005). They also highlighted the need for researchers to consider “the messiness of partnership practice in more complex models”.

Addressing the opportunity presented by the complexity of sustainability challenges, this research has explored a multi-stakeholder issue field and has adopted a relational approach so that it focuses on the collaborative processes and relationships rather the structures and governance mechanisms. These choices are set out in the positioning statement at the beginning of Chapter 2 below.

## 1.3 RELEVANCE OF CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Two main areas of literature are pertinent to the subject of this research. First, the business literature dealing with collaboration and second the literature on cross-sector collaboration. In the latter case, the literature draws from a number of different disciplines including management, micro-economics, organisation studies, institutional theory, network theory and the nonprofit sector (Branzei & Janzen Le Ber, 2014; Gray & Stites, 2013).

The business literature has focused primarily on strategic partnerships and alliances (Seitanidi, 2010: 13; Rondinelli & London, 2003), which are directed towards gaining competitive advantage and stakeholder theory (Freeman, Harrison, Wicks, Parmar & De Colle, 2010), which are directed towards creating value for all stakeholders. In both cases the unit of analysis is the focal firm (Le Ber & Branzei, 2010b).

Beyond the literature on strategic alliances, there are very few published articles on cross-sector collaboration. Nidumolu, Ellison, Whalen and Billman (2014) described four models of collaboration to drive systemic change but despite the focus on complex systemic challenges, the models reflect alternative strategies for corporate business. Peloza and Falkenberg (2009) took this a step further and differentiated between single firm collaboration strategies and multi-firm strategies. Senge *et al.* (2007) appear to be lone voices in the business literature in which they argued for cross-sector collaboration at a systemic level directed towards a sustainability agenda. At the time, they concluded that cross-sector collaboration directed towards systemic change had not been explored in any depth. In the years since then, it appears that the topic remains under-represented in the business literature as research has continued to grow in the collaboration literature.

The collaboration literature recognises the strategic use of partnerships (Seitanidi, 2010: 28; Austin, 2000a). Van Huijstee, Francken and Leroy (2007) also identified two major perspectives in the literature on intersectoral partnerships but in this case, they highlight a conceptual distinction. They described the first as an institutional perspective that “looks at partnerships as new arrangements in the environmental governance regime” dealing with global and societal issues. The institutional literature on collaboration introduces discussions on governance and governance structures and in this view, collaboration is seen as a hybrid form of governance (Crane, 2010; Backstrand, 2006).

The second is a perspective that “frames partnerships as possible strategic instruments for the goal achievement and problem solving of individual actors”. This so-called actor view directs attention at the focal organisation and explores how partnerships are used as “strategic devices” for accessing resources or scaling up activities; for obtaining expertise, knowledge or capabilities. It corresponds with the business literature on strategic alliances and is known in the collaboration literature as “inter-organisational relations” (Cropper, Ebers, Huxham & Smith Ring, 2010a). Gray and Stites (2013) recognised this actor view in the collaboration literature based on micro-economic theory such as the resource based view, agency theory and exchange theory. This literature explores value creation from the perspective of a focal organisation (Le Ber & Branzei, 2010b).

Both of these perspectives are well-represented in the literature. Beyond these conceptualisations of collaboration there is another theoretical approach that explores multi-dimensional relationships and this approach is less common in the literature.

Multi-stakeholder arrangements come in a number of forms. Where the partnership that can be identified as a distinct entity, the most common forms are the multi-stakeholder partnership (MSP) and the multi-stakeholder initiative (MSI). MSPs are one form of multi-stakeholder collaboration, which applies to multilateral public private partnerships typically initiated by national governments. They came to prominence after the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in

Johannesburg (Backstrand, 2006). MSIs are another form of multi-party partnership involving private governance initiatives and voluntary regulatory organisations that have emerged in areas where government regulation is seen to be lacking (Van Huijstee, 2012). Examples include certification organisations such as the Marine Stewardship Council, fair trade and ethical trading initiatives, roundtables such as those for soy and palm oil, and association such as fair labour. There is a growing body of literature in these two subject areas.

Another alternative is to consider that collaborative interactions may occur at a systems level with a focus on a sustainability issue; in other words multi-stakeholder collaboration in the context of an issue field. An issue field is described by Hoffman (1999) as “an organisational field that forms around a central issue – such as the protection of the natural environment” rather than around other structures such as markets, institutions or technologies. The issue field is described as a negotiated space that brings together diverse and competing interests, a problem domain (Trist, 1983), a space in which sustainability issues are addressed (Van Tulder & Pfisterer, 2014) or a network (Waddell, 2011: 25). “Membership is defined through social interaction patterns” rather than a network structure as the issue field displays greater complexity and continues to evolve.

With no focal organisation, attention may be directed towards the relationships and interactions among the stakeholders and to value at multiple levels from the partner organisations individually, to mutual benefits and to the value for the sustainability issue. This view is currently under-represented in the literature.

In summary, there are three reasons why this study is relevant.

- i) Multi-stakeholder issue field: The context of this research study is a multi-stakeholder issue field that includes multiple levels and multiple cross-sector interactions. The majority of research focuses on dyadic relationships (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a; Cropper, Ebers, Huxham & Smith Ring, 2010b) related to corporate social responsibility initiatives in business. In exploring multiple relationships, this study explores an issue field (Hoffman, 1999) rather than a focal organisation. More complex, multi-dimensional relationships are under-represented in the current body of literature and there is an opportunity to learn more about how collaboration works in more complex relationships. This leads to the first research question below.
- ii) Value creation: This study was driven from a business perspective that no longer assumes the widely held view of business as having responsibility to shareholders only, to maximising short-term profitability; nor indeed those businesses that engage with stakeholders where there is immediate economic benefit. However, according to Austin and Seitanidi (2014: 4), current research on cross-sector collaboration lacks understanding of the dynamics of collaborative processes (or “pathways”) that create value. There is a need for research about the process of collaborative value creation; or how to collaborate

so that there is mutual benefit for all stakeholders, remains an under-represented area of research. This leads to the second research question below.

- iii) Sustaining the process of value creation: This study has dealt primarily with existing and established relationships as opposed to the earlier stages of partnership formation and selection as described by Austin and Seitanidi (2012b). Austin and Seitanidi (2012a) remarked that the research on relationships that reach more integrated levels and those where transformation is achieved are less common. They stated that there is a need for studies to explore how the value creation process works, how it is sustained and how it grows. Value creation as an ongoing process and the inquiry regarding how this is done is contained in the third research question.

Within the scope of a multi-dimensional issue field, this study has explored the relationships, the interactions and the collaborative processes that create value.

#### **1.4 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In the previous paragraphs, the complexity of the sustainability challenges has been outlined, the problem statement and opportunity have been described, and research opportunities have been highlighted. Drawing from this introduction, the following research questions were explored for this study.

- i) How do organisations from different sectors interact with multiple stakeholders in a multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration when conceived as an issue field?
- ii) How do the collaborative interactions and relationships create value and mutual benefits for all stakeholders and for the sustainability issue?
- iii) How is the continuity of the value creation process sustained and developed?

These questions guided the literature review and the research design. The research analysis explored the questions in detail using a theoretical framework for value creation, which is introduced in Chapter 3 at Paragraph 3.22.

#### **1.5 WHY ARE THESE ISSUES OF THEORETICAL IMPORTANCE?**

Exploring cross-sector partnerships connects the social and environmental agenda with core business strategy. Bendell and Lake (2000) reflected that there is a need for business “to scale up their work from specific environmental or social goals to consider the frameworks within which all businesses operate” and for business to work at a more strategic level by “raising transparency and accountability as key aspects of business practice”.

While many partnerships do involve bilateral relationships, the more complex the issue, the greater likelihood that there will be more than two parties involved. Within a context of greater interdependence, the interactions between individuals and organisations become more varied and more complex. Waddell commented that “networks are taking on new meaning and importance”

(Waddell, 2011: 1). He defined multi-stakeholder, multi-level cross-sectoral collaborations as “global action networks” that focus on transformational change and work for the greater public good. Austin and Seitanidi (2014: 113) said that in order to achieve transformational change “collaborations need to be correspondingly broader and more complicated. Larger scale change dictates expanded engagement”. Pelozo and Falkenberg (2009) concluded that “relatively little attention has been paid to the relationships that include multiple firms and/or multiple NGOs”.

In addition, the study was situated in South Africa, which is an interesting context of economic, social and environmental challenges that combines uniquely South African issues while at the same time also including issues common to other countries around the world. Some case study research on cross-sector collaborations has been conducted in Southern Africa on specific issues including sustainable development challenges addressed by responsible competitiveness clusters (Hamann, Kambalame, De Cleene & Ndlovu, 2008), leadership factors of cross-sector partnerships (Hamann, Pienaar, Boulogne & Kranz, 2010), institutional factors impacting cotton farming (Bitzer & Glasbergen, 2010), food insecurity (Hamann, Giamporcaro, Johnston & Yachkaschi, 2011) and how varying degrees of statehood affect how partnerships are designed and implemented (Hamann, 2014).

## **1.6 THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research method was informed by an ontology of complexity and an epistemology of social constructionism. The design adopted a phenomenological approach to the research questions so that the lived experience of key individuals was explored in relation to the research phenomenon of cross-sector collaborative interactions directed towards a sustainability issue.

A fieldwork design of narrative inquiry was chosen to align with these assumptions and this was complemented by an adapted interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach for the analysis and interpretation phase of the research.

## **1.7 IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY TO PRACTICE STANDARDS**

Kurucz *et al.* (2008) identified that the dominant types of business case for corporate social responsibility are economic (cost and risk reduction and competitive advantage) or political (legitimacy and reputation management). They identified another type that recognises the social role of business in which value is created for multiple stakeholders and noted that this is an emerging idea that is outside of traditional business models; it is a more holistic view and a more pragmatic approach. As an emerging model, the integration of the sustainability agenda into core business strategy remains the exception rather than the rule; the most common way for business to support social and environmental issues continues to be through philanthropy and corporate social responsibility (CSR). The more recent call for the sustainability agenda to be integrated into the core strategy of business indicates the need for practice standards to be extended (IODSA, 2009: 24).

The South African context is relevant in the following ways. The King Report of 2009 (IODSA, 2009) sets the required standard for all companies listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) and advocates a collaborative approach to sustainability challenges. Beyond South Africa, a recent publication (IODSA & ALCRL, 2013) commented that “the King codes of governance have set international standards of best practice since the first King Code was published in 1994”. Lord Cadbury is quoted as saying that the King Report (ibid) sets “the future of corporate governance” (Malan, 2010). While not all countries have adopted the inclusive stakeholder approach that is central to the King Report philosophy, nonetheless it may be argued that its ideas are persuasive in moving the debate towards the broader responsibilities of business.

## **1.8 AIMS AND INTENDED CONTRIBUTION OF THE RESEARCH**

A key aim of the research was to learn from the experiences of those individuals and organisations that are already achieving some success in integrating sustainability issues into their core business strategy and may be considered to be exemplars.

The practical aim of learning about success and effectiveness translates into a theoretical interest in value or benefit. At a theoretical level, this study aimed to deepen the understanding of the value creation process of cross-sector collaboration by refining an existing theoretical approach to cross-sector collaboration that applies a communicative approach.

There are three specific areas where it aims to add new insights and understanding. First, to add insight and understanding to theoretical constructs and concepts related to the interactions in a multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration as an issue field. Second, to add to the conceptual understanding of how these collaborative interactions can create value at multiple levels including the sustainability issue. Lastly to understand how collaborative interactions in an issue field are sustained and developed.

The key deliverables from the research study are a conceptual framework of collaborative value creation in a multi-stakeholder issue field that identifies the key components of the process of value creation as expressed in terms of communicative practices. The conceptual framework is supported by a set of propositions that set out the possible relationships between the main components of the value creation process.

The intention is for this research to make the following contributions:

- i) academically, to contribute to the academic debates in the business and management and the cross-sector collaboration literature. The aim is to offer new insights and understanding of how cross-sector collaboration for sustainability creates value in order to refine current conceptual understanding of this phenomenon based on a rigorous research process that explores a conceptualisation of cross-sector collaboration that has, to date, received limited attention in the literature.

- ii) in practice, to contribute more generally to the strategic conversation on how business can actively contribute to the sustainability agenda by actively engaging in cross-sector collaboration with multiple partners and multiple partnerships. The aim is to offer new insights that are useful and relevant so that the research outcomes may be applied in practice.

## 1.9 OUTLINE OF THE DISSERTATION

An outline of each of the ten chapters of the dissertation is described next.

- i) The introductory Chapter 1 provides an overview to situate and position the research. It sets the tone for the research in terms of the exploratory nature of the research questions and a preliminary motivation of the research in relation to the theoretical interest in cross-sector collaborations and their practical relevance.
- ii) Chapter 2 sets the background for the research and introduces the global context of complexity and the issue of sustainable seafood. The relevance of South Africa as an emerging market is positioned from a practical and a theoretical point of view.
- iii) Chapter 3 explores the extant literature on collaboration and cross-sector collaboration and identifies that current theoretical thinking may be considered from many different perspectives. The discussion begins from theories of collaboration and then focuses on cross-sector collaborations and partnerships with a specific emphasis on the sustainability agenda. This is followed with a discussion of the literature on collaborative value creation and multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration. From the range of existing theories on collaboration, the research decision to use a communicative theory is then presented.
- iv) Chapter 4 is a bridging chapter between the literature and the methodology chapters in which the philosophical foundations, the role of theory and the theoretical options are discussed. This chapter includes a discussion on the key research design decisions for the research fieldwork and the research analysis and interpretation as well as a discussion on the theoretical lens adopted for the research, which is a communicative approach.
- v) Chapter 5 then follows with a description of the research design.
- vi) The results of the fieldwork are presented in Chapter 6.
- vii) Based on these findings Chapter 7 then presents some additional literature.
- viii) The findings are then discussed in Chapter 8 with a more in-depth and critical review of the research outcomes in relation to the extant literature.
- ix) Finally, drawing from the fieldwork results and the discussion of the theoretical implications of the research, a conceptual framework of value creation for multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration is presented in Chapter 9. The framework is derived from the existing

theoretical constructs of cross-sector collaboration and communication theory but presents a new perspective directed at a multi-stakeholder context.

- x) The dissertation then draws to a conclusion in Chapter 10 with a self-assessment of the research process. The limitations of the research are noted and ideas for further research are proposed.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **BACKGROUND: FRAMING THE RESEARCH**

#### **2.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW**

This chapter acts as a bridge between the broad research interest in cross-sector collaboration and the specific issue of sustainability that is considered in this research study. It provides context for the literature review and provides a more detailed explanation of the research background.

First, it offers context to the research subject by way of a brief positioning statement and then establishes the characteristics of the global business environment that are described as complex and interconnected.

It then includes an explanation of the issues around sustainable seafood and the sustainable seafood supply chain, both globally and in South Africa. South Africa as an emerging market is positioned within the broader global context.

Other material also included in this chapter are the definitions of key concepts, the role of the researcher, and how an audit trail of evidence is maintained.

All of this background provides a frame for the research study and is aimed at giving the reader an overview of the context within which the research is situated.

#### **2.2 POSITIONING STATEMENT AND DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS**

The research adopted an appreciative stance so that the sustainability challenges are seen, not as a problem to be solved, but as an opportunity to learn. It therefore aimed to gain an understanding of multi-stakeholder collaboration from exemplar organisations that have already achieved some success in working collaboratively to address sustainability issues.

In order to explore the collaborative interactions in a multi-stakeholder context, an appropriate setting was required. The setting was selected based on a set of predefined criteria, which guided this important research choice.

First, criteria were used to identify potential candidate organisations that could act as an entry point to a suitable research setting. Two South African corporate businesses were identified as exemplars of pursuing sustainability issues using multiple partnerships and one of these organisations agreed to provide access for the research study. The access point is a large retailer called Woolworths.

Using a further set of criteria, a partnership project that was considered to be successful by the various partners in progressing a key sustainability issue, was selected as the setting for the study. The selected sustainability issue is sustainable seafood and the partnership activities are the various initiatives directed towards this issue that are pursued in partnership with multiple

stakeholders. These partnerships activities are collectively referred to by the partners as the South African sustainable seafood initiatives.

### **2.2.1 A multi-stakeholder context: South African sustainable seafood initiatives**

The aim of these initiatives is to support activities directed towards improving the status of a wide range of seafood species in the ocean ecosystems around South Africa and across the world. There are no geographic boundaries to these activities as South Africa is a producer, consumer, exporter and importer of various seafood species. Business and nonprofits, geographically located in South Africa, are actively engaged in supporting responsible fishing practices, responsible production and procurement decisions in the supply chain and responsible consumer choices. A distinction is made between the sustainability of the natural resources that are the fish, and the responsible choices made by people across the supply chain regarding how the ocean ecology is managed and conserved, how the fish are caught, processed, sold and consumed. Further detail is provided in various publications by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF-SA, 2014a) and by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO, 2014).

### **2.2.2 The stakeholders in seafood sustainability**

The overall context of sustainable seafood includes business, nonprofits and government as well as consumers and local communities such as small-scale fishing communities who are all stakeholders in the issue of seafood sustainability.

There are local South African organisations and international organisations working together. Some of the collaborative activities are formally structured by way of contracts of varying duration, such as those between retailers and their suppliers or in some cases between businesses and nonprofits. Some collaborative activities are not formally structured and yet the stakeholders work together from time to time to pursue projects of varying complexity, scope and duration. Given the complexity of the sustainability issue and its lack of geographic boundaries, there is no single partnership organisation that encompasses all or even a significant proportion of the sustainable seafood partnering 'space'<sup>1</sup>.

The fish as the natural resource, as well as other ocean birds and mammals and the ecosystem of the oceans, are also stakeholders. Without a voice of their own, it is other stakeholders that may be said to 'speak on their behalf'. On this basis, it is assumed in this research that seafood as the sustainability issue, is a key stakeholder.

### **2.2.3 The boundaries of the research study**

Given the complexity and scope of the collaborative initiatives that comprise the sustainable seafood space, predefined criteria were used to demarcate the boundaries of the research. The

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<sup>1</sup> The idea of a "partnering space" is from Van Tulder and Pfisterer (2014).

boundaries for this research were set as those organisations that have people and resources allocated to working directly on the South African sustainable seafood initiatives, that are involved in partnership activities and that are connected with the supply chain of the retailer Woolworths.

Based on these criteria, the research included seven organisations, of which two are businesses, three are nonprofits and two are research institutions (one academic and one government). The names of these organisations and the acronyms used in the dissertation are:

- i) Woolworths – the retailer
- ii) Three Streams Holdings(TSH) – a supplier of sustainable seafood to Woolworths
- iii) Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) – an international non-profit
- iv) World Wildlife Fund (WWF) – the international nonprofit and its South African member organisation, WWF-SA
- v) International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF) – an international nonprofit supporting the sustainability of the fish species, tuna
- vi) Research scientist - University of Stellenbosch
- vii) Research scientist – South African Government Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

#### **2.2.4 Defining the multi-stakeholder context as an issue field**

As explored and explained in the literature review in Chapter 3, the multi-stakeholder sustainable seafood partnering space is conceptualised as an issue field (Hoffman, 1999) rather than a problem domain (Gray, 1989) (Trist, 1983) or network (Powell, 1990). An issue field is a complex, multi-dimensional, multi-stakeholder partnering space, where each of the stakeholders, individually and collectively, in different ways, at different times, is working towards creating a better future for the sustainability issue.

The research context is therefore an issue field and the research phenomenon is collaborative processes and collaborative interactions that function within this issue field.

#### **2.2.5 Focus on value creation**

The research questions also focused on how cross-sector collaboration can be effective in delivering or creating value for the partners and also have influence or impact on a wider constituency and ultimately for the greater good of the sustainability issue, in this case the sustainability of fish stocks.

#### **2.2.6 Clarifying terminology**

As is explained in more detail in the definitions section of Chapter 2, the literature uses many different names to describe cross-sector collaborations for sustainability. Partnership is a term that

is commonly used as an alternative to collaboration and this dissertation applies the words collaboration and partnership interchangeably. The term inter-organisational relationships or relations is also frequently found in the literature.

Different names are given to these cross-sector collaborations including cross-sector social partnerships (Austin & Seitanidi, 2014); social partnerships (Waddock, 1988); and more broadly cross-sector partnerships (Branzei & Janzen Le Ber, 2014; Seitanidi, 2009: 13).

### **2.2.7 Overview of research assumptions and key research design choices**

The research is phenomenological and explored the lived experience of key individuals (Stake, 2010: 57) or “knowledge agents” (Dentoni & Bitzer, 2015) in relation to the research phenomenon. The study was therefore idiographic and assumed a social constructionist perspective.

Based on these assumptions the research design applied narrative inquiry for the fieldwork and the data analysis adopted an adapted interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). The IPA method was adapted by replacing the theoretical lens, which in the standard IPA method is a psychological lens. In the adapted IPA method used in this study an alternative communicative lens is used.

### **2.2.8 Choice of theoretical lens for the research analysis**

The communicative lens selected for the research analysis is based on a theoretical approach known as the communicative constitution of organisation or CCO. The communicative lens was used to facilitate the research analysis so that each of the three research questions was explored in a systematic manner. This research choice not only recognised that collaboration is a specific form of organising, but it also aligned with the research choice to explore and learn from key individuals who have knowledge and experience of the research phenomenon. The communicative approach focuses attention on the collaborative interactions and the relationships of stakeholders and expresses these processes in communicative practices that can be recognised by verbs such as engaging, participating and articulating and practices such as conversation, narrative and written texts.

## **2.3 SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD: SOUTH AFRICA WITHIN THE GLOBAL MARKET**

The research was conducted in South Africa, an emerging market but the sustainable seafood initiatives that are discussed are global and include fishing activities in both developing and developed countries, in North America and Europe as well as Asia and Africa. The challenge of sustainable seafood has no boundaries, it is a challenge at economic, environmental and social levels and it affects a multitude of countries across the world. South Africa is one of many countries facing similar challenges, but it also has unique characteristics.

The global background is described below, followed by some specific details about the challenges South Africa faces.

### 2.3.1 The global issue of sustainable fish stocks

A recent report commissioned by WWF International (Hoegh-Guldberg, 2015) explains that there are many issues that are currently threatening the oceans, a vast ecosystem that is taken for granted. But the once abundant resources of the oceans are being overexploited and destroyed. Declining fish stocks, arising from overfishing and unsustainable fishing practices are a major contributor to this significant global problem.

According to a recent report by WWF International, “the future of humanity is dependent on the health of the ocean, and its ability to deliver goods and services” (Hoegh-Guldberg, 2015). As a major contributor to the global economy, the destruction of the ocean ecosystems is not only an environmental problem but also an economic and a social issue.

According to the 2014 Report on the State of World Fisheries by the FAO (Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations) (FAO, 2014), fish is one of the most-traded commodities worldwide and hundreds of millions of people depend on fish for food and on fishing to support their livelihoods. Globally, food security for the future is dependent on sustainable fish stocks and responsible fishing practices. This is a multi-faceted concern and it is also connected to global poverty alleviation. Particularly in developing countries, many local communities are dependent on fishing as a source of income as well as food. The FAO report explains how local fishing communities and small-scale fisheries contribute towards global poverty alleviation, and this is over and above the impact of large-scale wild caught fish and aquaculture activities.

The FAO reports that “global fish production continues to outpace world population growth, and aquaculture remains one of the fastest-growing food producing sectors”. Aquaculture, or farmed fish, currently provides almost half of all fish for human consumption. Some further facts and figures from the FAO report (ibid) are provided at Appendix I.

The challenges at a global level are manifold and include illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, harmful fishing practices that damage the ocean and other species, including seabirds, turtles and dolphins. There are also major issues of wastage, poor management and inadequate governance.

According to the FAO, these challenges may be overcome with the right political will and with “strategic partnerships and fuller engagement with civil society and the private sector” (FAO, 2014: iv). A partnership approach is also one of the key actions recommended by the WWF, which says that a range of cross-sector partnerships is needed to share the responsibility for developing sustainable fishing practices, to work together to access the necessary resources and to sustain the well-being of the ecosystems, communities and business (Hoegh-Guldberg, 2015: 9).

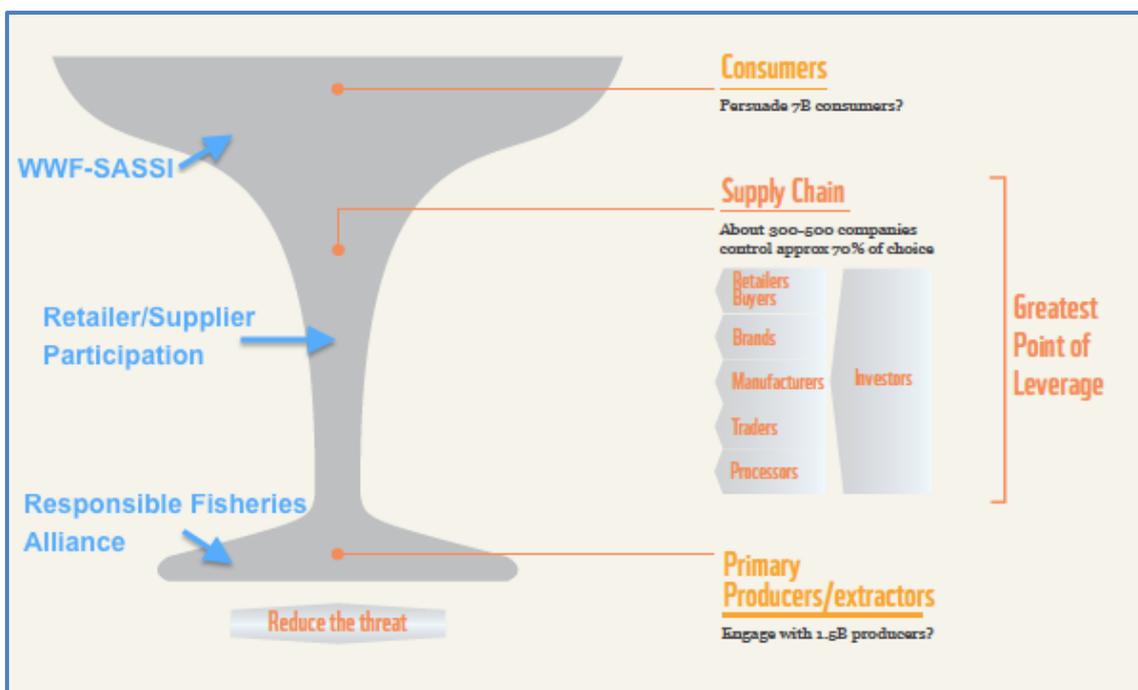
## 2.4 THE MARKET DYNAMICS AND SUPPLY CHAIN FOR SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD

### 2.4.1 Food commodity and market dynamics

A model of the market dynamics and supply chain for seafood is presented below at Figure 2.1. It provides a point of reference for the subsequent discussions in the research findings and discussion that follow in later chapters.

The diagram shows that, according to WWF International (2015a), the supply chain for food and agricultural commodities includes a very large number of producers (1,5 billion), an even greater number of consumers (7 billion) but a much more limited number of companies in the supply chain that includes retailers, manufacturers, traders and processors. It estimates that there are up to 500 companies that control approximately 70 percent of the choice available in the market.

The WWF strategy is therefore directed towards the companies in the supply chain who lie between the primary producer and the consumer, as it identifies these companies as being the points of greatest leverage in the markets. In South Africa, this is called the retailer/supplier participation scheme. Other activities include WWF-SASSI, which is a collaborative programme that targets the consumer market and the responsible fisheries alliance, which is a collaboration of primary producers and nonprofit organisations (NPOs).



**Figure 2.1: Diagram of the food commodity market**

Source: Adapted from WWF (2012; 2015a).

### 2.4.2 Sustainability initiatives in the supply chain

The sustainability of fish stocks requires that everybody in the seafood supply chain, the fishers, the producers, the buyers, the marketers and the consumers, make responsible choices and act

responsibly towards seafood resources. There are various initiatives to encourage and incentivise responsible choices and adopting responsible practices, whether this is a sourcing or buying decision or a production decision or encouraging consumers to make responsible choices. The supply chain is seen as an important point of leverage and is used to drive change in the market for sustainable seafood.

The MSC (2011) also harnesses market forces to drive change in the supply chain, creating markets for sustainable seafood by using a certification and ecolabelling system to differentiate sustainable fisheries and products that are responsibly sourced. Products that are processed and have traceability to certified sustainable stocks may also obtain the MSC Chain of Custody ecolabel.

In a different way, the ISSF also uses the market dynamics to influence the supply chain dynamics for tuna fish, but it engages not only with producers, traders and marketers but also vessel owners. Further, the ISSF adopts science-based management measures for tuna stocks and their ecosystem and engages with scientists who conduct research. The ISSF also cooperates with Regional Fishery Management Organisations (RFMOs), which are governing bodies comprising various member nations working together for the conservation of tuna stocks (ISSF, 2013).

In each case, these initiatives involve multiple stakeholders in the global supply chain of sustainable seafood products.

### **2.4.3 Sustainable seafood initiatives in South Africa**

In South Africa, the transformation of markets for sustainable seafood follows a similar approach as applied internationally and involves multiple stakeholders but the role of WWF-SA is more prominent. Sustainable seafood initiatives are directed towards supporting sustainable fisheries within South Africa and South African waters, both wild caught and farmed fish. WWF South Africa works with the major national retailers and others to use market mechanisms to drive transformation in key fisheries and claims that this is playing a role in “changing the landscape of the local seafood industry” (WWF-SA, 2015c). In Figure 2.1, the initiatives in South Africa that are coordinated by WWF-SA are marked in blue at the left hand side and this indicates that there are activities at all points in the supply chain.

Both the MSC and the ISSF are also active in South Africa and work together with WWF-SA to support the market for sustainable seafood. Following the dynamics of the food commodity markets, the WWF-SA Sustainable Fisheries programme (WWF-SA, 2014b) is involved in market initiatives directed at each stage of the supply chain. This includes consumer engagement through WWF-SASSI (formed in 2004); working together with fishing companies in the Responsible Fisheries Alliance (formed in 2009); and involvement with retailers and suppliers in a participation scheme (formed in 2008) to support responsible sourcing of seafood products.

The South African sustainable seafood initiatives, while having some unique features, do nonetheless display similar dynamics to the international market. These are all multi-party, multi-dimensional initiatives.

## **2.5 THE NATURE OF SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD INITIATIVES IN SOUTH AFRICA**

### **2.5.1 Describing global supply chains as networks**

Research on sustainable global supply chains for commodities has been extended beyond the chain metaphor to also include a network metaphor (Bush, Oosterveer, Bailey & Mol, 2014).

Henderson, Dicken, Hess, Coe and Wai-Chung Yeung (2002) explained that the concept of a network is a useful way to understand the complexity of the global economy and they describe the concept of a global production network as a dynamic and relational approach that goes beyond the linear conceptualisation of supply chains, value chains and commodity chains.

The market mechanisms in the supply chain are often, but not always applied. A broader concept of multi-stakeholder initiatives, called global action networks or GANs (Waddell, 2011), are directed towards protecting and conserving the global commons or the production of global public goods. GANs are multi-stakeholder, multi-level and multi-sector processes directed towards systemic change (Glasbergen, 2010).

### **2.5.2 Supply chain transformation and collaboration**

The market dynamics involve multiple stakeholders and so the interactions amongst stakeholders involve collaboration and partnerships as well as transactional, contractual and other market mechanisms.

At a global level, WWF International works towards transforming commodity markets, and explains that the way they work is to “forge collaborations with major work with their supply chains” to change the markets (WWF International, 2015a).

In South Africa, WWF-SA explains how sustainable business practices are driven through bilateral partnerships that “deliver direct conservation results on key issues” by changing practices in business operations and value chains. (WWF-SA, 2015a).

More specifically regarding sustainable seafood initiatives, WWF South Africa recognises that a “holistic approach to creating sustainable fisheries goes beyond focusing on individual supply chain components and requires engagement of the broader seafood industry” (WWF-SA, 2015b). WWF-SASSI (2015) also engages with key national retailers and “collaborates with these companies to develop and implement solutions to address the key seafood sustainability challenges that they are faced with”.

As a retail partner of WWF-SA, the retailer Woolworths describes its partnership with WWF-SA as “driving collaboration across the supply chain towards greater sustainability in sourcing and consumption” (WHL, 2014).

In addition to these WWF-SA activities, MSC in South Africa is part of their developing world programme (MSC, 2015b). MSC reports that half of the world's traded seafood comes from developing countries and MSC works "collaboratively with the fishing industry, seafood business sector, governments, scientific community, environmental groups and others to give retailers, restaurants and consumers an opportunity to choose and reward sustainable fishing through their seafood purchasing choices" (MSC, 2011).

ISSF, as an international non-governmental organisation (NGO) focused on tuna sustainability, explains that "to achieve our mission, ISSF works collaboratively with engaged stakeholders with whom we share common goals and interests" (ISSF, 2014).

These examples illustrate that all of these key organisations involved in sustainable seafood initiatives in South Africa, use descriptions that highlight how partnerships and collaboration are part of the way they work.

### **2.5.3 Describing the research setting**

Based on this high-level overview of sustainable seafood initiatives internationally and in South Africa, the research setting may be described as a multi-stakeholder context involving cross-sector collaboration and same sector collaboration in the supply chain for sustainable seafood.

The various concepts used to describe the setting are defined in Paragraph 2.7 below.

## **2.6 RELEVANCE OF SOUTH AFRICA AS AN EMERGING MARKET**

In order to position the research from a theoretical perspective and from a practical perspective, it is necessary to explain the relevance of South Africa as an emerging market to both theory and practice.

In research and in business, the distinction between the developed countries of Europe and North America is generally distinguished from the developing countries of Asia, Africa and South America. In economic and demographic terms, countries that are growing and developing are referred to as emerging markets. South Africa is identified as part of the developing world in Africa and as an emerging market. It has regional importance as one of the largest economies in Africa, with strong trading and political links around the world and has a unique profile with the juxtaposition of a well-developed financial and business sector and the social problems of a developing country including poverty, unemployment, health, education and food insecurity.

Some ways in which research conducted in South Africa is relevant, include the following:

- i) Relevance to business best practice in terms of governance standards as illustrated by the King Report, which says:

*Sustainability is the primary moral and economic imperative of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is one of the most important sources of both opportunities and risks for businesses. Nature, society, and business are interconnected in complex ways that should be understood by decision-makers.*

*Most importantly, current incremental changes towards sustainability are not sufficient – we need a fundamental shift in the way companies and directors act and organise themselves (IODSA, 2009: 11).*

- ii) Relevance in relation to sustainability and collaboration as illustrated by the setting of the research in which the influence of the South African retailer and its partners are not bounded by the South African location. They are working together in an unbounded space of interdependencies and interconnectedness that is shared by people across the world, in developed and developing markets.
- iii) Relevance to developed markets and developing markets is highlighted in a report issued by the World Economic Forum (WEF, 2011), which recognised retailer Woolworths from South Africa as one of 16 companies based in emerging markets that were creating innovative and profitable business opportunities that were also having a positive influence on regional and global sustainability.
- iv) Relevance at a theoretical level is the common theoretical endeavour of sustainability as a global issue for researchers and is not bounded by physical or national borders. However, in academia, it is countries, universities and business schools in North America and Europe that dominate the research space. There is therefore a limited amount of research that is conducted from an emerging market perspective on issues that are of global concern, practically and theoretically.

## **2.7 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS**

There are conceptual definitions that establish the scope and context of the research and these research choices frame the research. Clarification is also needed on other concepts that were applied in the research process.

The context of the research is framed by the terms sustainability and responsibility, specifically as these concepts relate to business. These words not only have general meaning but are also used in specific ways in certain contexts. The meaning and usage in a business context is highlighted to avoid confusion with these terms used elsewhere. The subject of the research is collaboration and again, as a word with general meaning, its use in this research context is explained and compared to the word partnership. Other terms such as value and experience are also defined.

- i) Sustainability and Responsibility
- ii) Collaboration and Partnerships
- iii) Multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration
- iv) Value and value creation
- v) Agency
- vi) Experience

### 2.7.1 Sustainability

The use of the word sustainability has developed in many contexts over the past 30 years. From global geo-political issues, economic matters, environmental concerns, ecosystems and natural resources to national politics, policies, research institutions and business organisations. It is also an issue for people at a local level and in local communities. The concept of sustainability has no clear or consistent definition in the literature. An appropriate meaning has therefore been identified and applied throughout this dissertation. The logic behind this research choice is discussed briefly below.

One of the first and now the most common use of the term sustainability is derived from the so-called Brundtland Report of 1987 with reference to the agreed action proposals of the member countries of the World Commission on Environment and Development. Sustainable development is defined as “an approach to progress which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987).

This report was not a commitment of organisations or businesses or individuals but a commitment of nation states, of national governments responsible for socio-economic development to a “global agenda for change” (WCED, 1987). Given this context, there may be a question as to whether sustainable development is an appropriate concept for business. Roome (2006) put forward a cogent argument. He asserted that after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio in 1992, business began to recognise the need to “operate economically within the carrying capacity of the planet while taking into account the contribution firms can make to social cohesion and wellbeing”. However, he further stated that “firms acting alone cannot become sustainable in an economic, environmental and social sense as they merely contribute to more sustainable patterns of production and consumption within society”. He argued that sustainable development is a societal goal but the idea of corporate responsibility enables the connection of corporate practices to this goal and companies can “reduce their environmental impacts and contribute to the improvement of social conditions beyond their legal obligations”. So Roome made the distinction between a societal goal and a business commitment based on corporate responsibility.

As an alternative, taking an environmental rather than a socio-political view, there is research in organisation theory that develops the concept of ecological sustainability and ecologically sustainable organisations (Jennings & Zandbergen, 1995; Starik & Rands, 1995), the role of organisations in ecological sustainability (Shrivastava, 1995) and also the motivations for adopting ecological initiatives (Bansal & Roth, 2000). This conceptualisation seeks to reconcile an economic view with an ecological view such that “ecologically sustainable organisations are those that can survive and profit over the long run in both economic and natural environments” (Jennings & Zandbergen, 1995).

Gladwin, Kennelly and Krause (1995) had an inclusive view and discussed three major worldviews or paradigms that shape the definitions of sustainable development. These range from the technocentric model of the efficient machine of free market economies to the ecocentric model of the organic, holistic web of life. They admitted that diversity may be expected when dealing with a “topic at a rather high level of abstraction”.

Googins, Mirvis and Rochlin (2007: 20) noted that “models of sustainability were developed in the arena of environmental studies but the concept has been expanded to include social sustainability or the welfare of people on the planet”. Their research indicates that companies use a variety of terms to describe these wider activities and find that they “cluster under the themes of responsibility, accountability, sustainability and corporate citizenship” (Googins *et al.*, 2007: 2).

From this background, it is evident that there are multiple definitions and perspectives and this understanding forms the basis for selecting definitions that are used in this dissertation, which are as follows:

- i) Sustainability is a broad concept related to the carrying capacity of the planet, the environment and its natural resources.
- ii) The adjective sustainable is used to describe natural resources, environmental assets or other naturally occurring phenomenon of the planet. Other than as noted below, in this dissertation the word is not applied to any man-made creation, process or construct. The most common usage of the adjective in the context of this research study is in respect to seafood or fish stocks, as an example of a global natural resource that is currently under severe threat.
- iii) Sustainable development is a societal goal that pursues development concurrently with sustainability. It is a concept to which business may make a contribution but cannot pursue alone.
- iv) The sustainability agenda of business is a phrase that makes reference to the role of business in supporting sustainability and contributing to sustainable development. It is non-specific and allows for a variety of interpretations and contextually appropriate responses by business to the broad concept of sustainability.

It should also be noted that sustainability is closely associated with another concept, which is corporate social responsibility. Gray and Stites (2013) have concluded that the terms are used interchangeably as “both refer to the way in which businesses take account of and manage economic, social and environmental issues and are responsive to stakeholders”. However, in this research, a distinction is made between sustainability and responsibility. This distinction is made to clarify that what needs to be sustainable is the planet’s natural resources and it is people who are responsible for taking action to achieve this.

## 2.7.2 Responsibility

Responsibility is a concept that has broad meaning in general usage but there is an existing body of literature on corporate social responsibility and more recently a growing body of literature on responsible leadership in the business and management literature.

These are different but related terms and there is a variety of terms with similar meaning to responsible leadership, such as corporate social responsibility, corporate social investment, corporate responsibility and corporate citizenship. In some cases, these terms may be used interchangeably, but elsewhere they are defined more specifically, as for example corporate citizenship (Matten & Crane, 2005; Waddock & Smith, 2000), corporate social responsibility (Carroll, 1999; Carroll, 1979) and responsible leadership (Pless, Maak & Waldman, 2012; Maak & Pless, 2006; Doh & Stumpf, 2005).

The history of 20<sup>th</sup> century corporate social responsibility is documented by Carroll (1999) and the period from the 1950s is described as the modern era of corporate social responsibility. Marinetto (1999: 4) described how organisations and publications in the 1950s and 60s proposed that “companies are responsible to a wider constituency of interests than just their shareholders”. He noted that the current interest in corporate social responsibility derived from the late 1970s and the political developments of the 1980s and the construct differs according to the social and political context. Carroll (1979: 497) said that “by the mid-1950s discussions on the social responsibilities of businesses had become so widespread” but “there was a lack of a consensus on what the concept really meant”.

Today, there continues to be a variety of related concepts and theories. Pless described responsible leadership as a construct that draws from various disciplines including business ethics, stakeholder theory and systems theory (Pless, 2007). It is “about building and sustaining trustful relationships to all relevant stakeholders” (Maak & Pless, 2006: 50) and about businesses being “willing to accept their responsibilities as businesses in society” (Maak, 2007). Pless, Maak and Waldman (2012: 52) confirmed that responsible leadership is dependent on context with different understandings of roles and responsibilities within the business and within society. These differences “represent alternative beliefs, values and perceptual processes pertaining to the meaning of responsibility”.

In the South African context, the King III Report states that “responsible leadership is characterized by the ethical values of responsibility, accountability, fairness and transparency” (IODSA, 2009: 20). It is about building “sustainable businesses by having regard to the company’s economic, social and environmental impact on the community in which it operates” and about both short-term and long-term impacts. Responsible leaders “do not compromise the natural environment and the livelihood of future generations” and “embrace a shared future” with all stakeholders.

Given this background and the diversity of theory and practice, choices had to be made on the terms that are relevant and appropriate for this research study. These topics were not the direct focus of the study and were needed only to frame the research. A detailed literature review of these concepts is therefore not included here.

In this dissertation, the following terms and meanings are used consistently throughout:

- i) Responsibility is a construct related to business agency and decision making, directed by business ethics. Business and business leaders make conscious decisions about how to behave and how to operate and such choices are directed by certain values or assumptions. Business is considered to be responsible when it exercises these choices in a manner that contributes in a positive way to economic, environmental and social conditions.
- ii) The adjective responsible is applied to any man-made creation, process or construct that is aimed at the sustainability agenda of business and its positive contribution towards economic, environmental and social conditions. Used in this way, this dissertation refers to responsible fishing practices, or responsible sourcing of seafood by retailers and consumers making responsible choices when purchasing seafood.
- iii) Responsible leadership is a multifold construct; it is about the responsibility of businesses and business leaders towards various stakeholders. It requires business to be accountable for economic, social and environmental impacts within the context of the communities in which the business operates, on a short-term and long-term basis.

### **2.7.3 Collaboration and Partnerships**

In common usage, the words partnership and collaboration have similar meanings. There is a variety of similar words including alliances, associations, cooperatives, coalitions, cooperation agreements and joint ventures, to name a few (Cropper *et al.*, 2010a).

According to Seitanidi and Crane (2009), partnerships are “new emergent institutions that exist as flexible forms of organising with little or no legal status, and demonstrate virtual structures across organisational boundaries and countries”.

It is recognised that some research makes a distinction between partnerships and collaboration (Gray & Stites, 2013) (Geddes, 2010) and highlights specific characteristics of collaboration. However, for the purposes of this dissertation, it is useful to include both terms as they are both commonly applied in the context of sustainability and corporate responsibility. In addition, the nouns partnership and collaboration are used to describe an entity or structure; the verbs collaborate and partner are used to recognise an activity or process.

The definition of collaboration for the purposes of this research is one presented by Wood and Gray (1991) in which “collaboration occurs when a group of autonomous stakeholders of a problem domain engage in an interactive process, using shared rules, norms, and structures, to act or

decide on issues related to that domain” and is “designed to achieve desired ends that no single organization can achieve acting unilaterally”.

#### **2.7.4 Multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration**

The definition of multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration involves three related concepts. Collaboration has already been defined above. Cross-sector refers to the involvement of organisations from two or more market sectors, that is, the public sector, the private sector and the nonprofit sector (Seitanidi & Crane, 2009). To understand the meaning of multi-stakeholder collaboration, it is pertinent to define what is meant by a stakeholder.

Stakeholder theory developed as an approach to business that challenged the dominant economic model (Freeman *et al.*, 2010: 3-6) and it therefore is commonly applied to a focal organisation and the actions of managers (Freeman, Wicks & Parmar, 2004). However, it is also a view that encourages a “pragmatic and pluralistic approach” (ibid).

The concept of a stakeholder is now widely used in other contexts in relation to collaboration (Gray, 1989: 5), corporate citizenship (Waddock & Smith, 2000), governance and public policy (Ansell & Gash, 2008), or cross-sector social partnerships (Selsky & Parker, 2010).

Gray (1989: 5) provided a definition of stakeholders in relation to a difficult societal problem or problem domain, which is “all individuals, groups, or organisations that are directly influenced by actions others take to solve the problem”.

The two levels of analysis that are evident in the literature are discussed by Selsky and Parker (2010) who made a distinction between the stakeholder model of a focal firm and stakeholders who focus attention on a specific social issue or problem domain. In the case of the latter, they explained that while there may not be a focal firm, nonetheless “powerful actors may strive to shape and frame the issue or arena”. Multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration may be defined in the second of these two configurations.

According to Van Huijstee and Glasbergen (2010), multi-stakeholder refers to the context in which interactions take place and indicates that there are multiple stakeholder groups that are concerned with an issue or issue field. However, while they explored multiple, rather than dyadic relationships, this study still directs attention at a focal firm.

For the purposes of this study, the definition of partnerships, as described by Seitanidi and Crane (2009), is combined with a multi-stakeholder context, as described by Van Huijstee and Glasbergen (2010). Multi-stakeholder collaboration is therefore defined as a flexible form of organising in which multiple stakeholders interact towards a specific social issue, sustainability issue, problem domain or issue field. Furthermore, in this dissertation the term multi-stakeholder is used specifically within the context of collaborative activities that include multiple stakeholders in both cross-sector and same sector supply chain interactions and that are directed towards a

sustainability issue. The term multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration and the acronym MsCsC is used throughout this dissertation.

While dyadic relationships may also be categorised as multi-stakeholder, the above definition assumes multiple organisations and multiple relationships. Further, MsCsC should be distinguished from two other forms of multi-stakeholder organisations. First, MSI is a term generally applied to private governance initiatives and voluntary regulatory organisations that may be viewed as “a form of civil regulation in the absence of government regulation” (Van Huijstee, 2012). Second, MSP is a term, which is applied to multilateral public private partnerships typically initiated by national governments (Backstrand, 2006).

### **2.7.5 Value and value creation**

Value is defined in many ways according to the context and for the purposes of this research, it is defined in the context of cross-sector collaboration. Value creation is connected to stakeholders and is “at the heart of effective collaboration” (Austin, 2010). According to Freeman *et al.* (2004), the idea of “value creation and trade is intimately connected to the idea of creating value for stakeholders”.

Austin (2010) defined value as “the expected benefits” or the “benefits accruing to the respective partners”. He recognised that multiple benefits are possible as there are multiple sources of value; that benefits are different for each partner. Furthermore, he explained that there may be both quantitative and qualitative benefits and since “value is in the eye of the beholder”, the benefits “must be deemed useful and convincing to the relevant stakeholders” (*ibid.*). Finally, Austin noted that value is more than just benefits, so that the related costs, both direct costs and opportunity costs, and the risks need to be considered.

In the context of collaboration, value creation means the value that is produced together; what Austin and Seitanidi (2012b) described as “collaborative value creation” or what is co-created by the partners. According to Janzen Le Ber and Branzei (2014), more value is created when cross-sector partnerships are successful. It is recognised that value is not only determined in economic terms but also relates to social value (Austin, 2010), the public good and to “the value of ecological and social issues” (Glasbergen, 2011).

In some research, value creation includes outcomes such as influence and higher-order effects (Koschmann, Kuhn & Pfarrer, 2012); while in other research, value creation is seen as related to, but distinct from impact making (Janzen Le Ber & Branzei, 2014), which goes beyond value creation.

For the purposes of this research, the definition of value was drawn from Austin (2010) as noted above. Value is the expected and/or accrued benefits for each partner or stakeholder, according to whatever each party considers to be useful or effective. The sustainability issue is considered to be a stakeholder and so value also includes the benefits for the issue.

### **2.7.6 Agency**

Agency is implied in the subject rather than directly stated; it underlies the concept of collaboration. The concept of agency is used in different ways in different disciplines and very specific usage in some business contexts. In the context of this study, the following definitions are applied.

Agency is broadly understood as “the ability or capacity to act” (OED, 2015) and in this dissertation, it is not limited to human agency and the nature of the act or action is not restricted.

A particular form of agency, defined as “a person or organisation acting on behalf another” (ibid) is also included in some of the discussions.

In this case, the person or organisation that acts is referred to as the agent. Related to the word agent is the word actor, which means “a thing which, or person who performs or takes part in an action; a doer, an agent” (ibid).

Based on the OED (2015) meaning of the word collective, collective agency, in this study, is also broadly defined as agency exercised by a group of people together or as something done by people acting as a group or taken as a whole.

Where other, more specific conceptual definitions are used in the literature, these are highlighted, where possible, but nonetheless still fall within the broad definitions provided here. Terms such as social action and collective action have particular meanings in sociology and the social sciences and when used in the literature, the meaning of these terms should be considered in relation to the context of the text.

### **2.7.7 Experience**

The concept of experience as understood in this research is derived from a background in philosophical phenomenology but as the definitions below indicate, it is a ‘common sense’ definition (Berger & Luckmann, 1966: 34) that is appropriate to a business context.

Experience, in this sense, is the experience of everyday life or lived experience. It is the direct and subjective experience of individuals and intersubjective experience that is shared with others. The world makes sense to us; the world is coherent because our everyday experience is meaningful to us.

According to Berger and Luckmann (1966: 33-42), the experience of everyday life is self-evident and does not need to be verified because it is compelling and is seen as common sense. However, lived experience is complex and has multiple layers or realities; it is subjective as we experience things directly as individuals; it is intersubjective because we share experiences with others; and it is structured spatially and temporally so that we experience everyday life within a context.

The world of everyday experience is “the lived world – the world of things, people, relationships and language” (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009: 16). The study of experience is about “things that

matter to us, and which constitute our lived world” and “thinking about how we might come to understand what our experiences of the world are like” (ibid: 11).

Studies of lived experience are interested in understanding a phenomenon or situation in which “individuals have first-hand experiences they can describe as they actually took place in the life” (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008). This includes the context in which the phenomenon is experienced.

Given that the research context is business, reference is also made to a pragmatic view, based on Dewey’s work on experience. This incorporates the different dimensions of lived experience as described above and translates them into a more structured form. This structured form was used as a basis to guide the fieldwork design of the research process. According to Dewey, “an experience is always what it is because of a transaction taking place between an individual and what, at the time, constitutes his environment” (Dewey, 1981: 519). The transaction or interaction is the interplay of external conditions (the environment) and the internal conditions of the individual. There is also a temporal dimension or sense of continuity that connects what has gone before with future experiences and Dewey said that “every experience is a moving force. Its value can be judged only on the ground of what it moves towards and into” (Dewey, 1981: 515).

## **2.8 DECLARING THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER**

In qualitative research, the researcher is considered to be the primary research instrument (Merriam, 2009: 15; Creswell, 2013: 45; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2011: 57). This means that the researcher holds a certain authority in the research process and has the power to make research choices that have a significant impact on the research process and outcomes. Creswell (2013) indicated that it is important to clarify “researcher bias from the outset” so that “the reader understands the researcher’s position and any biases or assumptions that impact the inquiry”.

Yardley (2008) argued that “the researcher *inevitably* influences the production of knowledge” and that any attempt to “eliminate the influence of the researcher would make it very difficult to retain the benefits of qualitative research” and specifically subjective experiences of a phenomenon as described by participants in an interview situation. She recommended reflexivity as a means to demonstrate transparency so reflexivity provides “explicit consideration” of ways in which the researcher may have influenced the study.

Reflexivity is not only about keeping an open mind during the fieldwork, but also during the literature review, the research design and the research analysis and discussion. At all stages, an open mind allows for the outcomes to emerge from the research process rather than from the researcher’s own prior experience. Reflexivity helps to maintain a balanced view and an awareness of researcher bias; to constantly consider and reflect on how to address these biases.

Reflexivity and transparency provide a counterbalance to the power of the researcher to make choices that direct and focus the research. It is recognised that the researcher has a personal interest in the subject matter and the choice of question derives from a personal interest of the

researcher in the role of corporate business in the sustainability agenda. Through the literature review, the researcher continues to develop their own knowledge and understanding of the subject matter, which further impacts the research process. Further detail is provided at Paragraph at 5.7.

The research design allowed the participants to play an active role in the research; so for example, in data gathering there were narrative interviews in which open-ended questions allowed participants to have the freedom to interpret the questions as they related to their experiences and their context. The research findings are presented in a way that respects the experiences as expressed in the words of the participants so that it is their understanding of the research phenomenon that drove the research analysis and interpretation. According to Josselson (2013: 27), research requires the researcher to recognise their “assumptions or preconceived ideas about the person or narratives” that they encounter. It requires a conscious effort to put aside one’s own beliefs so that the experiences of the participant can come to the foreground and be given full attention. This idea is expressed by Heron and Reason (2006) who advocated that research should be connected to the people actually involved in the research so that the participants are “active agents” rather than passive informants. This means that “research is conducted *with* people rather than *on* people”.

## **2.9 BUILDING AN AUDIT TRAIL OF EVIDENCE**

In each of the Chapters 3 to 8, there are one or more researcher notes, which are shown as endnotes in Appendix U. They are part of the research process and describe certain choices made by the researcher. The intention of these notes is to acknowledge that certain choices have been directed by the thinking and understanding of the researcher and to recognise that another researcher in a different context may have made a different choice.

The notes form part of the audit trail of evidence that explains the research process with the aim of offering clarity and open disclosure so that the logic may be scrutinised. At every stage of the research, the choices were carefully considered and every effort was made to ensure that the research process was aligned with the research questions, the ontology and epistemology. The researcher notes support the quality criterion of reliability and should therefore be considered in relation to the research method and processes described in Chapter 5.

The notes form part of what may be called the ‘back story’ of the research process and they also help to frame the research and provide context. In addition, at specific times in the course of the research process, a research journal was used to record research ideas and questions. The research journal is however not included in the final dissertation but an example of a journal posting is included at Appendix P.

## **2.10 CHAPTER CONCLUSION**

In this chapter the overview of the research context and the definition of concepts provide a frame of reference for the literature review that follows in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 3

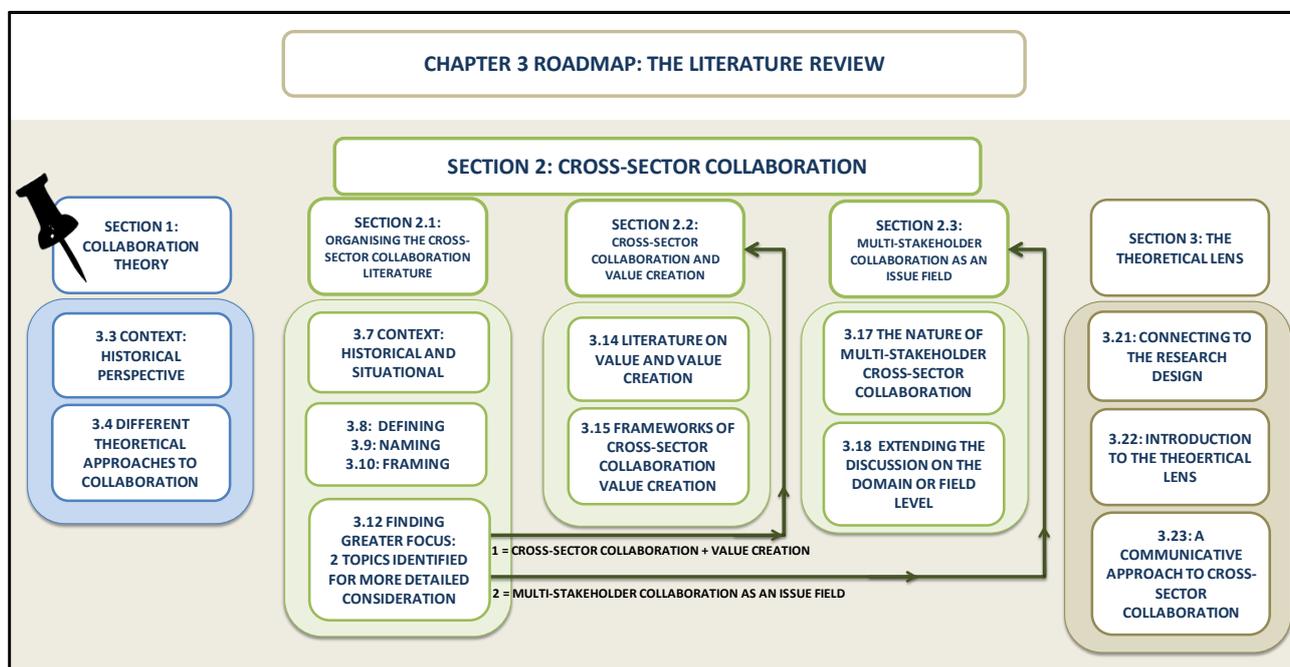
### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 3.1 CHAPTER OUTLINE

A roadmap of this chapter is set out in Figure 3.1. There are three sections in this chapter and each includes a number of discussion topics.

The first section on collaboration theory starts below and is therefore marked in the figure with a pin to highlight the current position. The pin will move from section to section as the chapter progresses. The roadmap will be labelled as Figure 3.1 throughout the chapter to avoid confusion with successive numbering.

The arrows indicate two topics that are highlighted for more specific consideration. These are cross-sector collaboration and value creation, discussed in Section 2.2; and multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration as an issue field, discussed in Section 2.3.



**Figure 3.1: Chapter 3 Roadmap**

Source: Author's compilation.

#### 3.1.1 Researcher note: Structuring the literature review<sup>1</sup>

See endnote 3.1 in Appendix U.

## CHAPTER 3: SECTION 1

### COLLABORATION THEORY

#### 3.2 INTRODUCTION TO COLLABORATION THEORY

Two primary streams of research are evident in the literature. Both of these involve multiple dimensions, a variety of disciplinary perspectives and different sectors. In the literature, the term collaboration is applied to research based on both of these traditions.

The first focuses on the concept of “inter-organizational relations” as defined by William Evan (1965). Inter-organisational relations (IOR) take the unit of analysis as the focal organisation and how it interacts with the network of organisations in its environment. It is the basis for much of the literature on strategic alliances.

The other focuses more specifically on the concept of collaboration applied in this research (refer Paragraph 2.7.3), in which collaboration occurs among stakeholders in a problem domain (Wood & Gray, 1991). This approach to collaboration is derived from the work of Trist and is directed at “inter-organisational domains” (Trist, 1983) or fields that engage “with a set of problems or a societal problem area, which constitutes a domain of common concern for its members”. Further, Trist (1983) said that “inter-organisational domains are functional social systems that occupy a position in social space between the society as a whole and the single organisation”.

Gray (1989: 233) acknowledged the contribution of research on IORs but suggested “the need for a more dynamic, process-oriented model of inter-organisational relations ... focusing on how and why coalitions mobilise and the negotiation processes that lead to collective action”.

##### 3.2.1 Different ways to conceptualise collaboration

In the IOR literature, Cropper *et al.* (2010a) explained that inter-organisational relationships (IORs) are “based on mutual interest”; they are cooperative and collaborative rather than competitive or in conflict; and are relatively long-term arrangements. The key dimensions of IORs that are highlighted include the relationships, which may be dyadic, multiple, or networks and may be characterised by their content, structure or governance mechanisms. The context or level of analysis ranges from individuals (micro level) to institutional environments (macro level). Structure (density, distribution and frequency) and process (phases, learning, sense making) characteristics are also defined.

From a domain perspective, Gray (1989: 15) said that “collaboration is essentially an emergent process rather than a prescribed state or organization. By viewing collaboration as a process, it becomes possible to describe its origins and development as well as how its organization changes over time”. There is emphasis here on “the dynamic and evolutionary character” of collaboration rather than a static phenomenon; and how “collaboration can be thought of as a temporary and evolving forum for addressing a problem”.

Huxham and Vangen (2000b) also offered a perspective that recognises the dynamic nature of collaboration and combines process and structure. They commented that “collaborative structures need to be understood as ambiguous, complex and dynamic”.

### **3.3 CONTEXT: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON COLLABORATION THEORIES**

The development of collaboration theory in the literature dates back to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and research that developed from the 1950s onwards. Both of the research streams discussed are derived from a similar time period, with similar influencing factors, particularly systems theory, but from different disciplinary backgrounds, with different levels of analysis and different units of analysis.

#### **3.3.1 Origins of research on inter-organisational relations**

IORs are “concerned with understanding the character and pattern, origins, rationale and consequences” of interactions between organisations. The organisations can be “public, business or nonprofit and the relationships can range from dyadic, involving just two organisations, to multiplicities, involving huge networks of many organisations” (Cropper *et al.*, 2010a).

Cropper *et al.* (2010b) reflected on the variety of theoretical approaches and the growth of scholarly work over a 50-year period. They concluded that even with the proliferation of research, there continued to be opportunity for “the application of concepts and methods originating in other disciplines” to contribute to further knowledge of IORs.

#### **3.3.2 Origins of theories of domain level collaboration**

The other stream of research derived from the work of Fred Emery and Eric Trist in the 1950s and 60s (Trist, 1977). Their research was influenced by cybernetics (Emery & Trist, 1965); it was about interdependencies and connectedness; about changing organisational environments that were becoming increasingly complex and turbulent. Trist argued that to “be able to cope with new levels of interdependence, complexity and uncertainty”, a basic requirement for building success is collaboration (Trist, 1977).

Trist talked about an environment “characterized by much higher levels of interdependence and complexity” and called this “the turbulent field” (Trist, 1983). Further, that “a negotiated order will need to be founded on collaboration rather than competition, collaboration being the value base appropriate for the adaptive cultivation of interdependence” (Trist, 1983). More specifically, he said that “both internally and externally, relations will be founded on collaboration. Competition will be reserved for the marketplace” (Trist, 1977). Negotiated order is a theory of social order and organisational order and views organisations as “complex and highly fragile social constructions of reality, which are subject to the numerous temporal, spatial and situational events occurring both internally and externally” (Day & Day, 1977). Gray developed a theory of collaboration derived from negotiated order theory (Gray, 1989: 228).

### 3.3.3 Key themes in the IOR literature

Galaskiewicz (1985) and Oliver (1990) described the IOR literature as extensive but highly fragmented. Galaskiewicz identified key areas of research as political advocacy and organisational legitimation and recognised that research ranges from dyadic to network levels. Taking a different approach, Oliver (1990) explored the types and determinants of IORs as the basis for integrating the literature on theories of IORs. Oliver focused specifically on the causes and conditions related to the formation of IORs and presented different theoretical approaches including resource dependence, exchange theory and institutional theory. Legitimacy is a key theme in the IOR literature and was described by Oliver (1990) as a motive for an organisation “to demonstrate or improve its reputation, image, prestige, or congruence with prevailing norms in its institutional environment” and a key example is its social responsibility and charitable activities. Much of the IOR literature considers same sector organisations and there is little evidence of cross-sector examples. In addition, according to Oliver, a large proportion of the IOR literature placed an emphasis on “cooperation, collaboration, and coordination among organisations, rather than domination, power and control”. This is an interesting insight that indicates contrasting themes in the literature, one of confrontation and one of cooperation. Oliver indicated that where relationships are characterised by asymmetry then power dynamics is a key focus with confrontation as a factor. Applying this distinction, it would appear that Oliver was suggesting that collaboration would be a specific case of cooperative relationship dynamics between organisations.

### 3.3.4 Key themes in the domain level collaboration literature

Wood and Gray (1991) considered how theories deal with environmental complexity, to reduce uncertainty and manage interdependencies. They concluded that the benefits of collaboration lie beyond “a simple reduction in complexity and turbulence” and that the basic assumptions about the concepts of control and complexity need to be reconsidered. The dominant conception of control is grounded in the “primacy of the individual” and the focal organisation. “The alternative to individual control is shared control or joint governance”. They argued that “the process of building joint appreciation enables all stakeholders to increase their understanding of the problem by learning the desired and intended actions of others” so that agreements can be reached and stakeholders can “purposefully coordinate their activities”.

Trist (1983) had a particular interest in turbulent domains and said that adaption is not an adequate response to turbulent environments, which need an additional response that recognises the interdependencies, uncertainties and complexity at the domain level (Emery & Trist, 1965). He argued that these environments are not something to be managed or controlled by the actions of a single organisation. Gray and Wood (1991) asserted that there was a need to adjust the unit of analysis in organisation theory and proposed that “the focus of theorizing must shift from the individual organization to the inter-organisational domain” and for research questions to shift from questions at the firm level to questions at the collective level and societal level.

Gray (1989: 1) incorporated both cooperation and confrontation into the subject of collaboration and focused on interdependence as a motivating factor. She declared that “constructive approaches for confronting difficult societal problems are essential to managing our global future”. Collaboration is then “a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their limited vision of what is possible” (ibid: 5). This perspective therefore welcomes differences “to create a richer, more comprehensive appreciation of the problem among the stakeholders” and building a common understanding.

### **3.3.5 Insights from the discussion on historical context**

The initial positioning of the body of literature indicates a rich history of theoretical perspectives, differing views and conceptual ideas. The one approach directs attention at the inter-organisational *domain* and the other at the inter-organisational *relationships*.

A distinction is made between research directed towards a focal organisation and research at the domain or field level. The field level research considers environmental complexity, uncertainty and interdependencies and how a collaborative form of organising can shift attention to the collective and societal level.

This broad introduction now provides the background to considering some specific theoretical approaches to collaboration. The discussion continues within the context of collaboration as a general concept rather than cross-sector collaboration more specifically, which is addressed in the next section of the literature review.

## **3.4 DIFFERENT THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO COLLABORATION**

The current literature on collaboration includes different theoretical approaches. Some of the literature adopts a macro or institutional perspective and deals with issues of power (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), governance (Powell, 1990), corporate social responsibility (Carroll, 1999), social justice (Cornelius & Wallace, 2010), and collective action (Ostrom, 1998). Other literature focuses on micro interactions and theories of social order and social action (Astley & Van de Ven, 1983; Gray, 1989).

There are theories that direct attention at the meso level of the organisation and deal with stakeholder relationships (Freeman *et al.*, 2010), relationships of exchange (Cook, 1977), and resource dependence (Galaskiewicz, 1985; Hillman, Withers & Collins, 2009). Other theories take focus on the micro level of individual decision making and these include transaction cost economics (Williamson, 1979) or agency theory (Smith-Ring & Van de Ven, 1992). Yet other theories focus attention on networks (Provan, Fish & Sydow, 2007; Brass, Galaskiewicz, Grieve & Tsai, 2004; Wasserman & Faust, 1994).

### **3.4.1 Seeking a theoretical understanding of collaboration in a multi-stakeholder context**

From the various macro, meso and micro theoretical perspectives, those concerned with multiple sectors and a multi-stakeholder context were explored further so that the theoretical background is directed towards the needs of the research questions and the research setting.

These included stakeholder theory, collection action theories, and various network theories. In addition, two other approaches were considered that question theory based on rational individual choice.

### **3.4.2 Stakeholder theory**

Stakeholder theory explores the broader responsibilities of organisations and is widely acknowledged in the literature and practice of business management. However, it may be challenged on the basis that as a collective endeavour, it nonetheless derives a view from a focal organisation and therefore may hold a limited or parochial view.

According to Freeman *et al.* (2010: 4-5), stakeholder theory was developed to counter the dominant assumptions of stability, control and equilibrium in modern 20<sup>th</sup> century economics. It aimed to address the challenge of understanding business in an environment of turbulence and offer an alternative approach to value creation and trade. Freeman *et al.* made reference to the theories of Eric Trist and also mentioned Russell Ackoff as early research that influenced the development of stakeholder theory. They recognised the possibility that “an increased interest in understanding how capitalism, ethics, sustainability and social responsibility can be forged into new ways of thinking about business”.

The concept of a stakeholder was used frequently by Gray (1989: 14; 1984) who referenced the work of Freeman in relation to collaboration. These theoretical positions therefore appear to be related. Further, stakeholder theory focuses on relationship building and this relational view of collaboration is an alternative perspective to those dealing with formal structures and agreements. Indeed, Gray and Stites identified stakeholder theory as one of three theoretical frameworks that is today most commonly used to understand partnerships and collaboration (Gray & Stites, 2013).

Stakeholder theory also addresses issues of value creation and Freeman *et al.* (2004) said that it “encourages managers to articulate the shared sense of the value they create, and what brings its core stakeholders together”.

#### ***3.4.2.1 Key insights from stakeholder theory***

The conclusion on stakeholder theories is that they are relevant to a multi-stakeholder environment and to the process of value creation but may tend towards the context of a focal firm or entity and its dyadic relationships with its stakeholders. Stakeholder theories may or may not involve cross-sectoral interactions.

### **3.4.3 Collective action theories**

Collective action theories derive from the common assumption that the individual is the source of change. These theories are directed at how action at the micro level can effect change at a social level. There is a range of work that may be categorised as collective action. Those that appear to relate to the research interest are discussed briefly below.

#### ***3.4.3.1 The collective action view***

Astley and Van de Ven (1983) defined a “collective-action view” as related to a community or population of organisations with a “voluntaristic orientation” meaning that “individuals and their created institutions are autonomous, proactive, self-directing agents; individuals are seen as the basic unit of analysis and source of change in organizational life”. This is a distinctly Weberian view of social change and is also reflected in other work by Van de Ven (1976), which is recognised as foundational in the IOR literature. It differs from the deterministic view derived from the philosophy of Durkheim “that focuses not on individuals, but on the structural properties of the context within which action unfolds” (Astley & Van de Ven, 1983). They described the collective-action view as “guided and constructed by collective purpose”.

The typology of Astley and Van de Ven (ibid) serves as a high-level overview of organisation theory and identifies four different perspectives with their underlying assumptions. The voluntaristic view is noted as being aligned with the idea of learning from key individuals and their experience of the research phenomenon of cross-sector collaboration.

#### ***3.4.3.2 Negotiated order theory***

Negotiated order theory was proposed by Trist (1983) as a basis for a theory of collaboration and discussed further by Gray (1989: 227), who argued for “a more dynamic, process oriented theory of how organizations interact” and presented negotiated order theory as the basis for a theoretical approach to collaboration.

“Negotiated order refers to a social context in which relationships are negotiated and renegotiated” (Gray, 1989: 228) in which “individuals in organisations play an active, self-conscious role in the shaping of the social order” (Day & Day, 1977). The theory focuses on social processes and “the fluid, continuously emerging qualities of the organisation, the changing web of interactions” (Day & Day, 1977). Organisations are viewed as “complex and highly fragile social constructions of reality”. Gray said that negotiated order requires “joint appreciation” as defined by Vickers (1968: 137) which means that there is “a sense of positively correlated fate” that allows the stakeholders to agree on how to “regulate future interactions” and “correlate their activities”.

According to Gray (1989: 230), collaborations involve strategies that are “collectively constructed by the stakeholders” through “dynamic negotiations” which typify their “imprecise, emergent, exploratory, developmental character”. She explained that while organisation theory typically focuses on individual organisations, negotiated order theory is applied at the domain level; it

recognises the complex and turbulent environment that causes higher levels of interdependence amongst stakeholders.

Negotiation as defined by Gray (1989: 25) refers to the “conversational interactions among collaborating parties as they try to define a problem, agree on recommendations, or design action steps”. This approach therefore connects the idea of individuals as source of change in organisational life (from the voluntaristic view above), with the subject of collaboration.

While Gray described the aims and concept of negotiated order theory, there is a paucity of examples in the published literature, with the exception of a study conducted by Nathan and Mitroff (1991). In this case, they applied negotiated order theory in an inter-organisational context in which three food manufacturers engaged in a cooperative strategy to develop a crisis management response related to food tampering. The study highlighted the interdependence of organisations in a field and how the stakeholders developed a shared understanding of the issues. It demonstrated that negotiated order could be applied in a business context.

### ***3.4.3.3 Key insights from collective action theories***

Both of these theoretical views contain key assumptions that the researcher considered to be useful to inform this research study. Of particular note is the role of individuals as the source of change and the process of negotiation and conversational interactions that is at the core of negotiated order theory. Organisation is viewed as a dynamic process of social construction, rather than as fixed systems or structures; the focus of organising is on the interactions and interdependence of stakeholders.

### **3.4.4 Network theories**

Given the research setting, network theories also offered a theoretical background to inform the research study. There is a variety of network theories that deal with inter-organisational relationships. By their nature, these suggest a multi-stakeholder context. However, theoretical approaches vary and some of the main themes in the literature are introduced here as they pertain to the subject of collaboration.

- i) Social network theory: Brass *et al.* (2004) highlighted that in the network perspective the focus is “on relations rather than attributes, on structured patterns of interaction rather than isolated individual actors”. At the inter-organisational level, they focused on the formation of networks according to the motives and conditions that facilitate cooperation.
- ii) Social network analysis: The use of social network analysis methods is described as an approach that connects “social theory and application with formal mathematical, statistical and computing methodology” (Wasserman & Faust, 1994: 3-11). Social network analysis involves the development and testing of models, using both descriptive and statistical analyses of multi-relational systems, often using specially designed computer programmes.

- iii) Networks in the organisational literature: Borgatti and Foster (2003) explained that networks may be classified in terms of structural mechanisms or in terms of connectionist mechanisms. These reflect the debate in organisation theory between structure and agency.
- iv) Whole networks: Provan *et al.* (2007) highlighted the difference between research-focused on egocentric (actor level) networks and collective or network level theories. With network level analysis, the focus is “on explaining properties and characteristics of the network as a whole” and “the key consideration is outcomes at the network level rather than for the individual organizations”. According to Provan *et al.*, the literature on the network level of organising is under-represented in the literature. They used the term “whole networks” to describe this network level, but their definition of the unit of analysis bears some similarities with the idea of a domain as described above under negotiated order theory.
- v) Actor-network theory: Actor-network theory is a specific approach that recognises “the important role of material objects as actors along with human beings” (Gray & Stites, 2013). Latour (1996) explained that “actors are not conceived as fixed entities” so that actor-network theory is about associations and connections of entities and the network is the trajectory or movement.

#### **3.4.4.1 Key insights from network theories**

The literature on networks focuses on relationships and interactions. Social network analysis is a very specialised and formal statistical analysis of multiple relationships but is a key source of network concepts and understanding of network structures. In the organisational literature, network theories adopt relational and systemic approaches with some directed towards structural explanations and others directed towards agency and change. The literature on whole networks focuses on outcomes at the network level. Actor network theory introduces the idea of nonhuman agency that operates together with human agency. The concepts that align with the research context here are those that focus on the whole system and the relational view that is directed at connections and interactions.

#### **3.4.5 Approaches that question rational individual choice**

There are theoretical approaches to collaboration that are based on economic theories such as the resource-based view or transaction cost economics (Gray & Stites, 2013) and these apply the logic of rational individual choice. Two approaches that question this assumption are now considered. These are Ostrom’s alternative behaviourist theory of collective action and Hardy and Phillips’ social constructionist perspective.

##### **3.4.5.1 Ostrom: Dilemmas of a common resource pool**

Ostrom’s (1998) work has potential relevance to this study as her focus was on the sustainability of complex social ecological systems (Ostrom, 2009) and on specific situations where there is a

common resource pool. It is a theory located within institutional theory but it draws from a behaviourist approach and has specific focus on decision making where there is a dilemma between individual interests and the common good.

Her work challenges conventional theories of collective action (Ostrom, 2010) and the logic that “resource users will never self-organise to maintain their resources and that governments must impose solutions” (Ostrom, 2009). She argued that conventional collective action theory assumes that decisions are made independently by individuals but “outcomes jointly affect everyone involved” and that the rational choice of each individual is to put self-interest ahead of collective interests and to maximise short-term material benefits (op cit.).

Ostrom argued that groups facing collective action problems do cooperate and that theory of collective action needs to be updated to recognise the importance of context and contextual factors. The theoretical framework identifies a “common set of potentially relevant variables” and factors and shows how these may be organised to increase the probability that users will engage in collective action to self-organise (Ostrom, 2009).

However Ostrom’s focus is on the governance of the scarce resource rather than on the collaborative interactions. The underlying principle that people can form self-organising collectives is nevertheless instructive.

#### ***3.4.5.2 A social constructionist approach to collaboration***

Hardy and Phillips (1998) questioned some of the key assumptions underlying studies of inter-organisational collaboration and they theorised an inter-organisational domain as “a process of social construction that enables stakeholders to communicate, to be identified and legitimated”.

They contended that much of the research fails to recognise that “collaboration is only one of several possible strategies of engagement” in the inter-organisational domain. They explored four strategies involving different forms of cooperation (collaboration or compliance) and conflict (contention or contestation).

Hardy and Phillips concluded that inter-organisational domains involve more complex dynamics of authority, control and legitimacy. They compared formal authority and discursive legitimacy. The former is the “recognised, legitimate right to make a decision” and the latter is the ability of an organisation “to influence the process of social construction that forms the domain” regardless of whether they possess formal authority or have control over critical resources. Control of critical or scarce resources is regarded as source of power and may be concentrated or dispersed, creating different levels of dependency between organisations.

Given the focus on learning from individual lived experience, it is the social constructionist literature that offers a dynamic and complex perspective on the subject of collaborative relationships.

### 3.5 SECTION SUMMARY: KEY POINTS IN THE LITERATURE

Exploring the early literature on theoretical approaches to domain level collaboration and IORs indicates that there are many approaches that have been extensively researched over a period of time. The variety demonstrates that each approach is by its nature a partial view. Indeed, Gray and Wood (1991) concluded that “no single theoretical perspective can serve as the foundation for a general theory of collaboration”.

The literature on collaboration theory provides context. It establishes the diversity and origins of the theoretical approaches to collaboration. It raises awareness of the foundations and underlying philosophical assumptions behind different theories.

A summary of the various references used in this section is included in Table 3.1 below. The first is stakeholder theory, followed by collective action theories, network theories and other perspectives offered by Ostrom’s complex social ecological systems and finally the social constructionist view presented by Hardy and Phillips.

**Table 3.1: Collaboration theory: Summary of key points in the literature**

Category	Theoretical view	Theoretical interest	References
1. Stakeholder theory	Relational view	Focal firm	Freeman <i>et al.</i> (2010)
		Problem domain	Gray (1984) Wood and Gray (1991) Gray and Stites (2013)
2. Collective action theories	Collective action view	Individuals as autonomous, proactive, self-directed agents	Astley and Van de Ven (1983)
	Negotiated order theory	Social context in which relationships are negotiated	Trist (1983) Gray (1989: 227-234) Day and Day (1977)
3. Network theories	Social network theory	Relations rather than attributes; structure rather than individual actors	Brass <i>et al.</i> (2004)
	Social Network Analysis	Actors and the ties among them – network structure	Wasserman and Faust (1994)
	Networks in organisation theory	A typology from individual to relational to systemic – structural and connectionist approaches	Borgatti and Foster (2003)
	Whole networks	Network	Provan <i>et al.</i> (2007)
	Actor-Network theory	Social relations and connections of actors and entities	Latour (1996)
4. Other perspectives	Institutional and behavioural and complex social ecological systems	A common resource pool: dilemmas between individual interests and the common good	Ostrom (1998)
	Social constructionist	Inter-organisational domains	Hardy and Phillips (1998)

Source: Author’s compilation.

**3.5.1 Researcher note: Further notes on the relevance of various theoretical approaches<sup>2</sup>**

See endnote 3.2 in Appendix U.

**3.5.2 Researcher note: Making sense of the literature and theoretical options<sup>3</sup>**

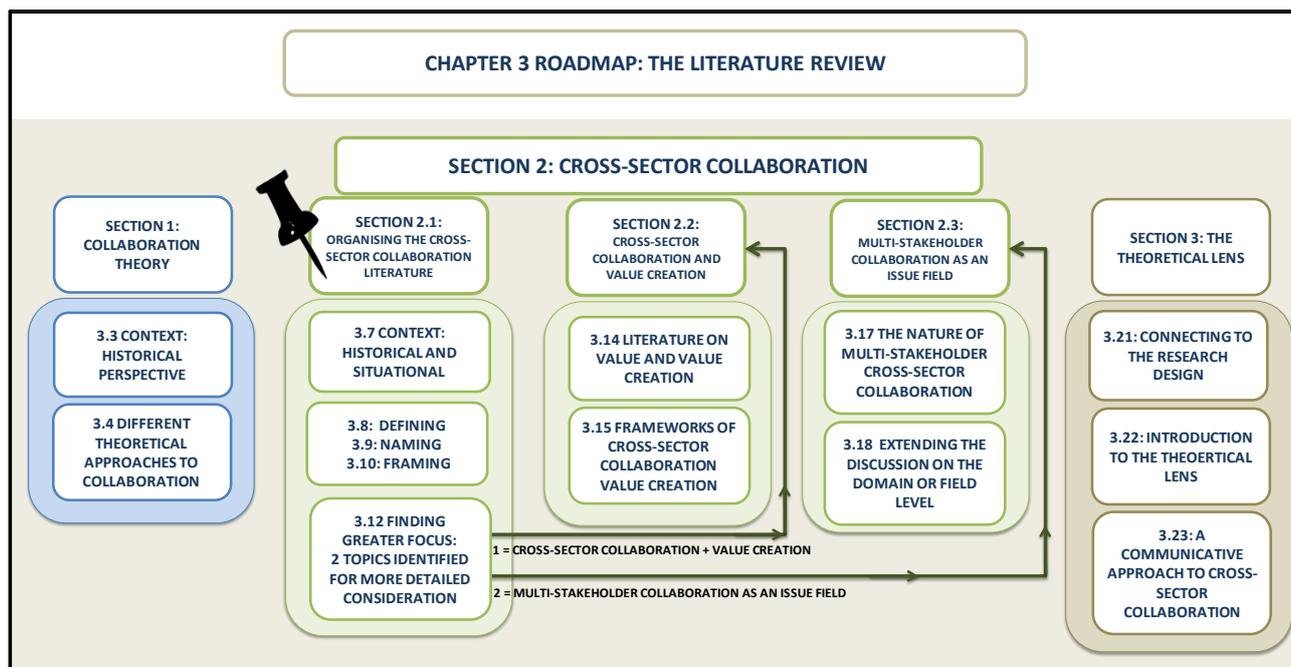
See endnote 3.3 in Appendix U.

## CHAPTER 3: SECTION 2.1

### CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION: ORGANISING THE LITERATURE

#### 3.6 SECTION INTRODUCTION

There are three parts to literature on cross-sector collaboration. The first part of this section provides background context and organises the literature. There are then two other parts that deal with specific areas of the literature and these are value creation and multi-stakeholder collaboration as an issue field. Figure 3.1 shows the roadmap and indicates that each of the subject areas is addressed in turn.



**Figure 3.1: Chapter 3 Roadmap**

Source: Author's compilation.

#### 3.7 CONTEXT: HISTORICAL AND SITUATIONAL

The literature review focuses on cross-sector collaborations specifically as they are applied to address sustainability issues as already defined at Paragraph 2.7.1. Collaboration is not the only way in which sustainability challenges may be addressed and Hardy and Phillips (1998) argued that “collaboration is only one of several possible strategies of engagement used by organisations as they try to manage the inter-organisational domain in which they operate”. However, they also recognised that “collaborative strategies have been attracting increasing attention as a means to address problems that range from deregulation, to globalisation, to sustainable development”.

### 3.7.1 Partnerships for sustainability

More recently, Gray and Stites (2013) said that “in the last 15 years, there has been an exponential increase in the use of cross-sector partnerships to address sustainability across the globe”. This positions partnerships for sustainability as a global phenomenon.

It is also a subject connected to South Africa, as highlighted by Hamann, Acutt and Kapelus (2003) who provided a historical view on the subject of cross-sector partnerships and an analysis that connects South Africa and the global debate on the role of business in sustainable development. The analysis was conducted ahead of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in Johannesburg in 2002 at which partnerships were widely debated as a “key implementation mechanism for sustainable development”. Two opposing views are described for accountability on the one hand and responsibility on the other. Hamann *et al.* presented evidence to demonstrate that before and during the WSSD these strongly held positions typified the debates on sustainable development at the time.

The case for accountability is cited as a position held by some NGOs in which business is seen as “a key cause of environmental and social deterioration and should be subject to strict government control” with NGOs playing the role of “watchdogs” for both business and government. The alternative case for responsibility considers business to be “a voluntary, active agent for sustainable development” requiring a “limited regulatory framework” and NGOs as potential partners. The proposal put forward by Hamann *et al.* (2003) combines these opposing views into an approach that views business as “both a voluntary, active agent for sustainable development and a source of social and environmental problems” so that “greater emphasis is placed on tri-sector negotiation” and structures for stakeholder engagement and decision making.

Ten years later, Hamann (2012) presented an update ahead of the Rio+20 Summit in 2012 in which he submitted that the debates are still controversial but “there is something of a rapprochement between protagonists of a constructive, proactive role for business” and “a realisation that voluntary business action and state regulation are both required and are often complementary”. He argued that the entrenched arguments for free-market capitalism have diminished since the global economic crisis of 2008.

These two papers not only describe a context of opposing forces in the debates globally on the responsibilities of business, nonprofit organisations (NPOs) and government, but the WSSD in South Africa is positioned as a key platform for progressing the debate on partnerships for sustainable development. Kolk, Van Tulder and Kostwinder (2008) acknowledged that “since the 2002 World Summit of Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, cross-sector partnerships have become important instruments for addressing problems of global development”.

Collaboration between sectors is not a new phenomenon and some researchers recognise the long history of cross-sector partnerships in countries such as the USA and the UK (Seitanidi, 2010:

26; Galaskiewicz & Sinclair Colman, 2006). Partnerships with a sustainability agenda have shown a rapid growth over the last few decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Van Huijstee *et al.*, 2007; Selsky & Parker, 2005; Googins & Rochlin, 2000; Waddock, 1988; Gray, 1984) and more specifically from the late 1990s (Seitanidi, 2010: 13; Kolk *et al.*, 2008).

This growth may be attributed to factors such as the growth in public private partnerships, the growing prominence of corporate social responsibility as well as the gradual empowerment of civil society organisations. (Seitanidi, 2010: 13). Other factors include growing turbulence and “problems which are bigger than any single organisation acting alone can solve” (Gray, 1984) as well as “external pressures from interest groups and public opinion” (Selsky & Parker, 2005). Seitanidi (2010: 16) also cited global forces including the changing role of nation states, globalisation and consumerism.

Other influences may also be present. For example in South Africa, The King III Report (IODSA, 2009) advocates for all entities in the public, private and nonprofit sectors to apply its principles. One of these principles is “to engage in collaborative responses to sustainability challenges” in recognition of the “limits to what single companies acting by themselves can achieve”.

### **3.7.2 Concluding remarks on context**

The historical background is relevant as it sets the context within which cross-sector partnerships have developed and continued to develop in South Africa and elsewhere in the world. The literature demonstrates that the context varies considerably according to a range of factors from the global environment to country-specific governance structures.

Of specific note for this study, is that South Africa is one of many countries where there is research being conducted on cross-sector collaboration for sustainability. Bitzer and Glasbergen (2010) made reference to the so-called North/South divide, which suggests that South Africa, as a developing country may differ from developed countries. However, there may also be areas of commonality with other developing countries or commonalities with developed countries. What is important therefore is to explore ideas beyond the constraints of local legislation and local conditions.

Further, by positioning partnerships as an alternative to an adversarial approach to addressing social and environmental issues, this background gives credence to the research focus on exploring what works well. It does not suggest that partnerships will avoid experiencing tensions or conflicting views, but rather it may be expected that partners will work together constructively to manage differences in a spirit of shared responsibility.

The literature on cross-sector collaboration is extensive and diverse; there are multiple terms used to describe the concept and multiple perspectives or frames to position different ways of understanding the concept. This section deals with what the literature says about framing, naming and defining cross-sector collaboration.

### 3.7.3 Researcher note: Why is South Africa relevant as a research setting?<sup>4</sup>

See endnote 3.4 in Appendix U.

## 3.8 DEFINING CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION

In order to understand a concept, it is useful to know how it is defined in the literature. The definitions provided here extend the basic definition of collaboration provided at Paragraph 2.7.3 in which the aim is to achieve outcomes that no single organisation could achieve acting alone.

Cross-sector collaboration means collaboration where the partners include organisations from the public sector (GOV), nonprofit organisations (NPOs) and the private sector (BUS). In some cases the focus is on only two sectors such as public-private partnerships, or NPO-BUS partnerships (Seitanidi, 2010: 10) and in other cases the focus may be multi-sectoral.

Definitions of cross-sector collaboration are numerous and there are distinct differences within different areas of the literature. A selection of these is presented below.

- i) Mutual benefit: The focus on mutual benefits or collaborative advantage (Huxham & Vangen, 2005) tends to be at an organisational level, where each partner organisation is seeking benefit.
- ii) Social agenda: Social partnerships address “issues that extend beyond organisational boundaries and traditional goals and lie within the traditional realm of public policy - that is, in the social arena” (Waddock, 1988).
- iii) Environmental agenda: Van Huijstee *et al.* (2007) defined intersectoral partnerships for sustainable development as “collaborative arrangements in which actors from two or more spheres of society (state, market and civil society) are involved in a non-hierarchical process, and through which these actors strive for a sustainability goal”.
- iv) Public sector agenda: The definition of cross-sector collaboration here is directed towards public policy, political and societal issues (Glasbergen, 2011) and is described as collaborative governance (Gray & Stites, 2013). Ansell and Gash (2008) defined collaborative governance as bringing “multiple stakeholders together in common forums with public agencies to engage in consensus-oriented decision making”.

The conceptualisation of cross-sector collaboration that aligns with the context of this research study, an MsCsC as an issue field, is presented by Lawrence, Phillips and Hardy (1999) and Phillips *et al.* (2000). They viewed inter-organisational collaboration as “negotiated in an ongoing communicative process”. This definition distinguishes collaboration from other organisational activity as it occurs “between organisations rather than at individual or organisational level” and it is a departure from the literature that is directed at a focal organisation (Lawrence *et al.*, 1999).

Lawrence *et al.* (1999) said that this approach “connects processes of social construction and negotiation with the social context in which they are embedded”. It is a discursive view that

focuses on “the dynamics of collaboration, the relation of collaboration to its broader institutional context, and the management and facilitation of collaborative activity as a communicative process”.

The definitions from Lawrence *et al.* (1999) connect back to the general definitions of collaboration in the first section of this chapter. Gray (1989: 244) defined collaborations as “negotiated inter-organisational orders created by the stakeholders”.

### 3.9 NAMING: DIFFERENT WAYS TO DESCRIBE CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION

In the literature, cross-sector collaborations are frequently referred to as cross-sector partnerships and by the acronym XSP (Koschmann *et al.*, 2012). Many other terms are used in the literature and the language tends to vary according to the subject area. Again, to make sense of the literature, the diversity of terminology needs to be recognised and examples are provided below.

- i) The business literature: The generic term partnership is commonly used (Porter & Kramer, 2011) or strategic alliances (Austin, 2000b), multi-sector alliances (Googins *et al.*, 2007: 214), extended collaborations (Nidumolu *et al.*, 2014); and partnerships for sustainability (Hartman, Hofman & Stafford, 1999).
- ii) A social agenda: Various terms include cross-sector social partnership (Seitanidi & Crane, 2009; Selsky & Parker, 2005), an intersectoral partnership (Waddell & Brown, 1997), a social partnership (Crane & Seitanidi, 2014; Waddock, 1988), cross-sector collaboration (Bryson *et al.*, 2006), cause-based partnerships (Parker & Selsky, 2004), cross-sector social interactions (Seitanidi & Lindgreen, 2010) and multi-stakeholder partnerships (Zadek, 2008).
- iii) An environmental agenda: Generic descriptions are used such as partnership (Fowler & Heap, 2000; Waddell, 2000), cooperation (King, 2007), business-NGO collaboration (Crane, 2000), cross-sector alliances and collaborations (Rondinelli & London, 2003) and intersectoral partnerships (Van Huijstee *et al.*, 2007). There are also more specific descriptions such as environmental collaborations (Wassmer, Paquin & Sharma, 2014), environmental management alliances (Rondinelli & London, 2003), corporate-NPO environmental collaborations (*ibid.*), partnerships for sustainable development (Van Huijstee *et al.*, 2007) and environmental business-NGO partnerships (Plante & Bendell, 2000).
- iv) An institutional view: Broad terms such as intersectoral and inter-organisational collaboration are used (Lawrence, Hardy & Phillips, 2002; Phillips, Lawrence & Hardy, 2000; Hardy & Phillips, 1998). The most commonly used term in the public sector is the public private partnership or more generally they may be referred to as multi-stakeholder partnerships or multi-sectoral partnerships (Backstrand, 2006).
- v) Literature in South Africa and Africa: Hamann *et al.* (2011) applied the term cross-sector collaboration. In research conducted elsewhere in Africa, Bitzer and Glasbergen (2010) explored “intersectoral partnerships” and this is a term that appears to be used in

connection with projects directed at agricultural product supply chains such as coffee, cocoa and cotton where there are multiple organisations from the same sector and across sectors.

The range of different terms is extensive and highly variable. There is a distinct contrast between those that use general designations and those that are more parochial so that the name serves to reinforce a specific frame of reference.

Given the variety of terms that exist in the literature, for the purposes of this research, the term cross-sector collaboration is used in the main. However, as the term cross-sector partnership is used extensively in the literature, and the word partnership is used in practice, it is inevitable that this term is also frequently mentioned in the dissertation.

### **3.10 FRAMING CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION**

Understanding how concepts are defined and named and the frames of reference provides important contextual understanding (Pettigrew, 1987). Frames include underlying assumptions, which are often not articulated. Le Ber and Branzei (2010a) said that “frames refer to individual interpretations which inform and guide their actions” with reference to Goffman (1986). Also that “frames are collectively negotiated understandings”.

A discussion of frames ensures that these underlying assumptions are made visible. Organising the literature is a process of making sense of the variety of terms and concepts applied in different research studies.

There are different ways in which the literature describes these different views. Selsky and Parker (2010; 2005) talked about conceptual platforms; Kolk, Van Dolen and Vock (2010) called them motivational levels; and Glasbergen (2011) used the word perspectives.

#### **3.10.1 Making sense of the frames described in the literature**

Table 3.2 summarises the various frames in the literature in a table format and includes the literature reference, the names and a brief description of each frame and its primary focus. An overview of each reference is provided below.

##### ***3.10.1.1 Recognising two frames***

Gray and Stites (2013) identified two dominant areas of focus in the literature on multi-sector collaborative partnerships. The first deals with partnerships involving the public sector, public administration and policy and may be called “collaborative governance” (Zadek, 2008; Ansell & Gash, 2008). Collaborative governance is defined as “a governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programs or assets” (Ansell & Gash, 2008). The second focuses on the management literature on partnerships involving NGOs and business.

Van Huijstee *et al.* (2007) also identified two major perspectives in the literature on intersectoral partnerships but in this case, they highlight a conceptual distinction. They described the first as an institutional perspective that “looks at partnerships as new arrangements in the environmental governance regime” dealing with global and societal issues. The second they identified as the actor perspective that “frames partnerships as possible strategic instruments for the goal achievement and problem solving of individual actors”. This view explores how partnerships are used as “strategic devices” for accessing resources or scaling up activities; for obtaining expertise, knowledge or capabilities; for gaining insight and learning or gaining legitimacy or credibility. The actor perspective they describe applies to business or to NPOs.

**Table 3.2: Tabulating the frames described in the literature**

Reference	Frame 1 Description	Frame 2 Description	Frame3 Description
Gray and Stites (2013) 2 dominant areas of focus	Collaborative governance Public sector engages non-state stakeholders in collective decision making and public policy.	NGO and business partnerships Focus on a variety of issues.	N/A
Van Huijstee <i>et al.</i> (2007) 2 perspectives	Institutional perspective New arrangements in the environmental governance dealing with global and societal issues.	Actor perspective Partnerships as strategic instruments or devices for goal achievement and problem solving.	N/A
Selsky and Parker (2005) 3 conceptual platforms	From organisational literature: Resource dependence – focus on organisational needs and solving organisational problems. Instrumental focus on self-interest. Transactional – seeking mutual benefit of partners.	From organisational literature: Social issues – focus on institutional fields, social issues or policy sectors – focus on stakeholder issues – working towards a single common end. External focus – stakeholders are interdependent.	Other disciplines: Societal sector – new relationships between governments, businesses, and civil society – blurring the boundaries between sectors. External focus – stakeholders are interdependent.
Glasbergen (2011) 3 perspectives	From organisation studies: Single collaborative arrangements to meet shared objectives. An internal organisational view.	From policy studies: Partnerships as tools for societal change. An external organisational view.	From political science: Societal governance systems and collective responsibility for sustainable development. A societal view.
Kolk <i>et al.</i> (2010) 3 levels of analysis	Micro – individual level	Meso - organisational level	Macro – societal level
Phillips <i>et al.</i> (2000) Lawrence <i>et al.</i> (2002)	Collective strategy – businesses cooperate to improve strategic performance. Economic cooperation between firms.	Policy making involving different sectors – technology transfer.	Institutional fields – inter-organisational domains – mutual problems are resolved collectively. Social order is socially constructed in negotiation.

Source: Author’s compilation.

### **3.10.1.2 Recognising three or more frames**

Some of the literature identifies three or more streams of research (Kolk, 2014; Glasbergen, 2011; Selsky & Parker, 2005; Waddock, 1991).

Selsky and Parker (2005) in their analysis of the literature on cross-sector social partnerships highlighted three different conceptual platforms that they described as resource dependence, social issues and societal sector. They identified that the first two categories are addressed in the organisational literature while research in the third category is in other disciplines. Research categorised within the resource dependence platform focuses on “meeting organisational needs or solving organisational problems” by acquiring expertise or accessing resources and to address stakeholder demands. At this level, partnerships are viewed in “a narrow, instrumental and short-term way” with a focus on self-interest. The literature in the social issues category focuses on “institutional fields, social issues or policy sectors” with a focus on stakeholder issues rather than organisational issues. The third societal sector platform describes “new relationships between governments, businesses, and civil society organisations” that “are blurring the boundaries between sectors”.

Selsky and Parker (2010) expanded their analysis and provided further descriptions. The platforms are presented as “prospective sense making devices” or mental models (Selsky & Parker, 2010) to “envision a partnership project, frame it, and make it meaningful and sensible”.

Glasbergen (2011) presented three perspectives, each derived from a different discipline and these appear to combine some aspects of the descriptions noted above. Glasbergen argued the need for a combination of perspectives and their model “connects the micro perspective with the macro one”. The first perspective is from organisation studies, providing an internal focus on single collaborative arrangements; the second is from policy studies and directs attention to the external effects of partnerships, where partnerships are seen as tools for societal change. Lastly, there are perspectives from political science, which take a broader view on societal governance systems and institutionalising the “collective responsibility for sustainable development”.

Kolk *et al.* (2010) draw on the three platforms described by Selsky and Parker (2005) and also discussed interactions at multiple levels of analysis, distinguishing between macro (societal), meso (organisational) and micro (individual) levels. The macro level appears to equate to the institutional and societal view, whereas the meso and micro levels are both required for the actor perspective of Van Huijstee *et al.* (2007) or the resource dependence platform of Selsky and Parker (2005) to operate.

### **3.10.1.3 A social constructionist view and field-level inquiry**

While the research discussed so far is directed primarily from organisation studies, organisation theory and the management literature, a social constructionist view was adopted by Lawrence *et*

*al.* (2002) and Phillips *et al.* (2000), who offered an alternative that considers how collaboration is connected to institutional fields.

Phillips *et al.* acknowledged and identified four current approaches to collaboration. One they called “collective strategy, where businesses co-operate rather than compete” to improve “strategic performance” to manage risk, share resources or access knowledge, markets or assets. A third brings together different sectors for the purpose of policy making. Finally, they described inter-organisational domains where “mutual problems can be resolved collectively” and collaborative processes where social order is socially constructed through negotiation. They concluded that while these four approaches are different, they are all “relatively unstructured” and involve negotiation so that this creates a “common dynamic”.

Phillips *et al.* (2000) offered an alternative but inclusive definition of collaboration as “a co-operative relationship among organisations that relies on neither market nor hierarchical mechanisms of control”. This approach is not concerned with instrumental outcomes for the member organisations but rather whether there are changes in the institutional field.

### **3.10.2 Concluding the discussion on the frames in the literature**

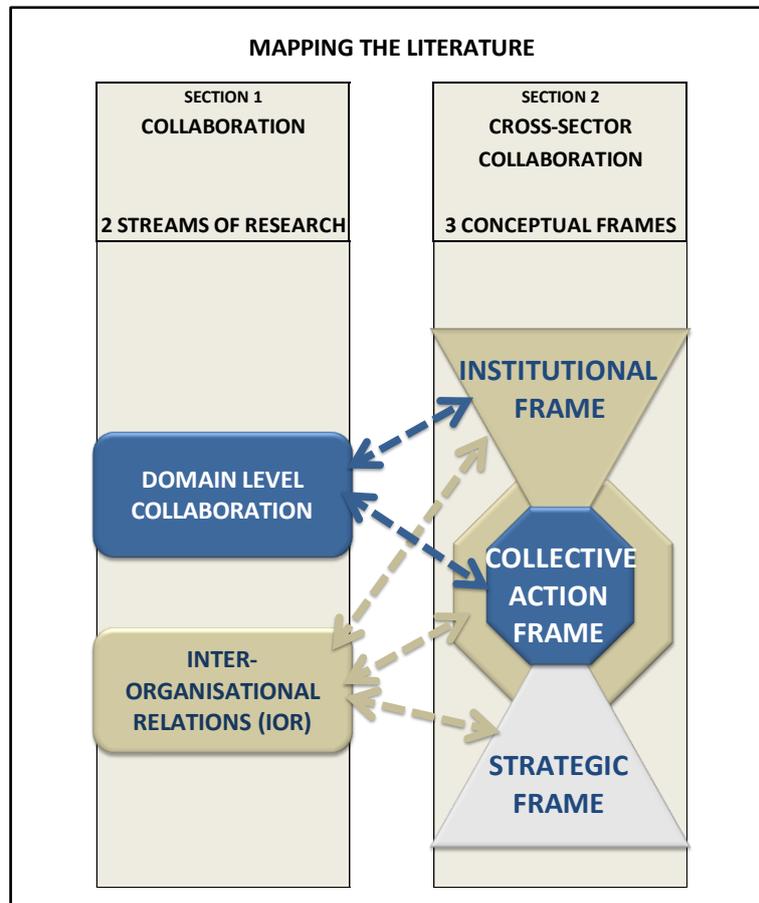
While different perspectives are provided in the literature on cross-sector collaboration, there are similarities evident from the descriptions provided above and these are shown by the shaded boxes in Table 3.2 above. The pale grey shading highlights those that deal with policy making and institutional perspectives, while the pale brown shading highlights organisational views dealing with strategy and problem solving that is collective but remains instrumental and focused on meeting the needs of individual stakeholders. The dark blue shading highlights those that reflect the interdependent perspectives of multiple stakeholders directed at social and societal issues or fields. Boxes that are not shaded are categorised in a different way and do not fit these three conceptual frames.

In conclusion, the three frames of cross-sector collaboration that can be discerned from the literature are as follows:

- i) The institutional frame: Collaborative governance
- ii) The collective action frame: Societal change
- iii) The strategic frame: Collaborative advantage

Figure 3.2 below shows how the three frames may be related to the two streams of research identified in the previous section. Domain level collaboration does not map onto the strategic frame, which focuses on the organisational level only; rather, at the domain level the focus is on the collective action and institutional frames. The IOR research however encompasses each of the three frames, although there is a predominance of literature directed towards the strategic frame.

The frames are deliberately shown as overlapping as the boundaries between them are blurred. As Selsky and Parker (2005) noted, “new relationships between governments, businesses, and civil society organisations are blurring the boundaries between sectors”. It is also noted that research done in different sectors is seldom combined. Wassmer *et al.* (2014) cautioned that the “research landscape remains fragmented” and a literature review that offers insights into cross-sector social partnerships may provide “little on partnerships with an environmental scope”. However, with this caution, the purpose of Figure 3.2 is to draw together the areas of similarity as a means of making sense of the literature.



**Figure 3.2: Three conceptual frames in cross-sector collaboration**

Source: Author's compilation.

The institutional frame of collaboration is about new forms of governance and institutionalising societal responsibilities and society as a whole; it is at a national or global level and may be described as “collaborative governance” (Donahue & Zeckhauser, 2011; Ansell & Gash, 2008). This is the macro view; it is a societal view.

The strategic perspective may be described as “collaborative advantage” (Glasbergen, 2011; Huxham & Vangen, 2005). Given the focus on the focal organisation, this may be seen as a micro-level view; at a theoretical level, the underlying assumptions tend to be related to rational choices and decision making by individuals.

A third frame is evident from the literature but its characteristics are more difficult to discern, although it can be distinguished from the macro and micro levels. To make a clear distinction with the strategic and the institutional level, the label 'collective action' is used to describe the third frame. Glasbergen (2011) talked about external effects in the third frame; Selsky and Parker (2005) distinguished the social issues level and the societal level; while Kolk *et al.* (2010) talked about the meso level. Phillips *et al.* (2000) recognised a process of social construction where social order is negotiated. There appear to be differences in the unit of analysis adopted in these various perspectives. This may reflect back on the differences highlighted in Section 1 of the literature review between the underlying assumptions of the IOR literature and domain level collaboration. In the IOR literature, the unit of analysis is the focal organisation; in the other it is directed towards the domain or inter-organisational field.

### **3.10.3 Relating the frames in the literature to the research study**

Given the multi-stakeholder context of the research setting of sustainable seafood initiatives, it is the collective action frame that directs attention at the domain or field level and that deals with multiple levels and multiple perspectives rather than a focal organisation.

It is the collective frame that aligns with the research context for this study, with its focus on collaborations at a domain or field level. The literature on cross-sector collaboration as a domain or field is discussed in more detail in Section 2.3 of this chapter.

### **3.10.4 Researcher note: Frames<sup>5</sup>**

See endnote 3.5 in Appendix U.

### **3.10.5 Researcher note: Context matters<sup>6</sup>**

See endnote 3.6 in Appendix U.

## **3.11 SUMMARISING THE DIMENSIONS OF CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION**

Table 3.3 summarises the key points made in this section so far and the dimensions covered include different ways of framing, naming and defining cross-sector collaboration.

Cross-sector collaboration in the institutional frame is characterised by its macro-level focus directed towards collaborative governance. In the strategic frame the focus is at a micro or meso level and the benefits for a focal organisation. The collective frame shifts the focus to the domain level, towards an issue rather than a specific organisation.

Cross-sector collaboration is defined in different ways in the different literatures related to each of the three frames.

**Table 3.3: Cross-sector collaboration: Key points in the literature**

Dimension	Summary of key points in the literature		
<b>Framing</b>	Three frames identified: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The institutional frame - collaborative governance</li> <li>2. The collective action frame – societal change – collective action</li> <li>3. The strategic frame – collaborative advantage</li> </ol>		
<b>Naming</b>	An institutional view: inter-organisational collaboration, public-private partnerships A social agenda: cross-sector social partnerships, social partnerships, cross-sector social interactions, multi-stakeholder partnerships An environmental agenda: cooperation, cross-sector alliances, intersectoral partnerships, partnerships for sustainable development, environmental management alliances A business agenda: strategic alliances, multi-sector alliances, partnerships for sustainability, inter-organisational collaboration		
<b>Defining</b>	Institutional: New forms of governance – collaborative governance - public sector and institutional literature – related to policy making – public private partnerships may include funding arrangements	Collective action: Social and societal issues – social order is negotiated – multiple organisations working together as stakeholders in an issue – inter-organisational networks	Strategic: Organisations retain autonomy – collaborative advantage focuses on needs, goals and problems – an instrumental view focusing on mutual benefit

Source: Author's compilation.

### 3.12 FINDING GREATER FOCUS IN THE LITERATURE

#### 3.12.1 Aligning the literature review with the research questions

The growth in the literature on cross-sector partnerships reflects the ongoing development of cross-sector interactions in practice. Crane and Seitanidi (2014) characterised the academic field as emergent and in its “relatively early stages”. It is evident from the discussion so far that while this is an emerging field, the extant literature on cross-sector collaboration is extensive and diverse.

The literature review now proceeds to examine

- i) areas of the literature that are under-represented and that have a theoretical approach that could be applied in the research analysis, and
- ii) areas of the literature that particularly inform the research questions.

In order to do this and to ensure that the literature was considered systematically and thoroughly, this section of the literature review draws on previously published meta-reviews.

#### 3.12.2 Theoretical approaches in the literature

There are meta-reviews of the literature by Branzei and Le Ber (2014), by Gray and Stites (2013), by Bryson *et al.* (2006), by Selsky and Parker (2005) and by Wassmer *et al.* (2014). There are

also useful taxonomies that illustrate how XSPs are examined in the literature including Austin and Seitanidi (2014) and Crane and Seitanidi (2014).

Together these provide a thorough analysis of the literature on cross-sector social partnerships and environmental partnerships. These, as well as sources from other disciplines, were explored to identify evidence of theoretical approaches used to explore cross-sector collaboration.

### **3.12.3 Researcher note: Meta-reviews in the literature<sup>Z</sup>**

See endnote 3.7 in Appendix U.

### **3.12.4 Consideration of research opportunities**

Selsky and Parker (2005) highlighted pertinent areas that were given careful consideration. They commented that much of the research on the process of collaboration assumes a basic input-output model and they recommend that alternatives be explored that consider the embeddedness of social processes and the nonlinear and emergent nature of partnership interactions. They recommended institutional theory or complexity theory to explore the impact of partnerships or large-scale social systems. Pursuing the idea of complexity, they asked for research that explores the practice of partnerships; they suggested new ways of engaging with process so that micro issues may be explored including how partners learn. Other proposals include research addressing global issues that is conducted from the perspective of other national cultures and more longitudinal studies on large-scale social issues.

What stands out from these recommendations is exploring the process of cross-sector collaboration in different ways and adopting a micro perspective.

Bryson *et al.* (2006) examined the literature on cross-sector collaborations addressing complex public problems. They provided conclusions on their extensive review and organisation of the literature and commented in turn on research directed at structural issues on the one hand and process studies on the other hand. They noted that in the case of the former, the process dimensions need to be considered including the dynamic nature of collaboration. In the case of process studies, Bryson *et al.* acknowledged the interest for practice but highlighted the need for more theoretically grounded research. They concluded that the research needs to capture the complexity of cross-sector collaboration and should incorporate both structural and process aspects. Finally, they also expressed the need for research to be more aware of the contextual environment in which collaborative interactions are situated.

Again, these recommendations highlight complexity and it is the combination of structure, process and context that is needed.

Wassmer *et al.* (2014), in a more recent review, explored the literature on environmental collaborations involving business over an extended period of almost 25 years from the year 1989. They have many recommendations for further research and those of specific interest to this

research context are noted here. First, they highlighted that research should consider the benefits of collaborations beyond the immediate benefits for the partners so that “public benefits that accrue to stakeholders beyond organisational boundaries” are considered. Second, they advocated for research that is more theoretically rigorous which repeats the point made by Bryson *et al.* above. They also recommended further research opportunities organised under the categories of antecedents, consequences and contingencies. One interesting option that they proposed is for research to go beyond stand-alone transactions so that multiple collaborative interactions, with multiple partners are considered. These are labelled as “a collaborative portfolio” and Wassmer *et al.* reported that current research on environmental collaborations tends to ignore such portfolios. They also considered ways in which research may be extended by taking a “field-level view” and issues such as legitimacy, collaborative action and impact are suggested as research opportunities as well as developing greater understanding of how deeper collaborative relationships may develop over time. Other proposals by Wassmer *et al.* include a deeper understanding of the outcomes of collaboration to include benefits such as social performance, reputation, legitimacy, environmental impact as well as broader societal impacts.

From these many recommendations, a number of these are aligned with the research interest here so that the call for research to explore the idea of a “collaborative portfolio”, to consider benefits “beyond organisational boundaries” and the wider impact of collaborative interactions are all potentially relevant.

Finally, another recent review by Branzei and Le Ber (2014) analysed the existing literature systematically and comprehensively cover a 15-year period from 1997 to 2012 and concluded that there is “little overall consistency in either theoretical lenses or methods”. According to Branzei and Le Ber, “there are a few precedents for theorising relationality” and these include a critical view taken by Le Ber and Branzei (2010b) and a communicative view explored by Koschmann *et al.* (2012). They concluded that each of these offer “a promising beginning for theory elaboration”.

The recommendations by Branzei and Le Ber go beyond highlighting topics for further research, as described by other scholars; and they identified existing frameworks that have the potential for further theoretical refinement. These will be discussed further below at Paragraph 3.15. Then, at Paragraph 3.20, the theoretical lens selected for the research analysis is presented in more detail.

### **3.12.5 Concluding the discussion on research opportunities**

The various literature scans discussed above, provided in-depth insights into research opportunities in the emerging field of cross-sector collaboration. This not only helped to refine the research questions and improve the positioning of the research aims and contribution, but it directly informed the research design.

The consideration of the theoretical approaches in the literature confirmed the research choices already presented in the positioning statements in Chapters 1 and 2 and asking the question: how

do multiple stakeholders engage to create value for all stakeholders and for the sustainability issues? and also the question: how is the continuity of the value creation process sustained and developed? The following aspects of the research are aligned with several of the recommendations made in the various literature scans and these include:

- i) Adopting a process view.
- ii) Exploring value beyond the collaborative interactions to include the wider value for the sustainability issue.
- iii) Exploring a collaboration that is complex and has multiple stakeholders and multiple dimensions and that is directed towards a sustainability issue.

Based on the review of the literature on cross-sector collaboration, it is clear that there is a great diversity of different subjects and there is a need to focus on the specific areas of the literature on cross-sector collaboration that pertain to the research questions directly. These are incorporated into the following two subjects for further discussion in the next part of the literature review.

- i) Cross-sector collaboration and value creation.
- ii) Cross-sector collaboration as a multi-stakeholder issue field.

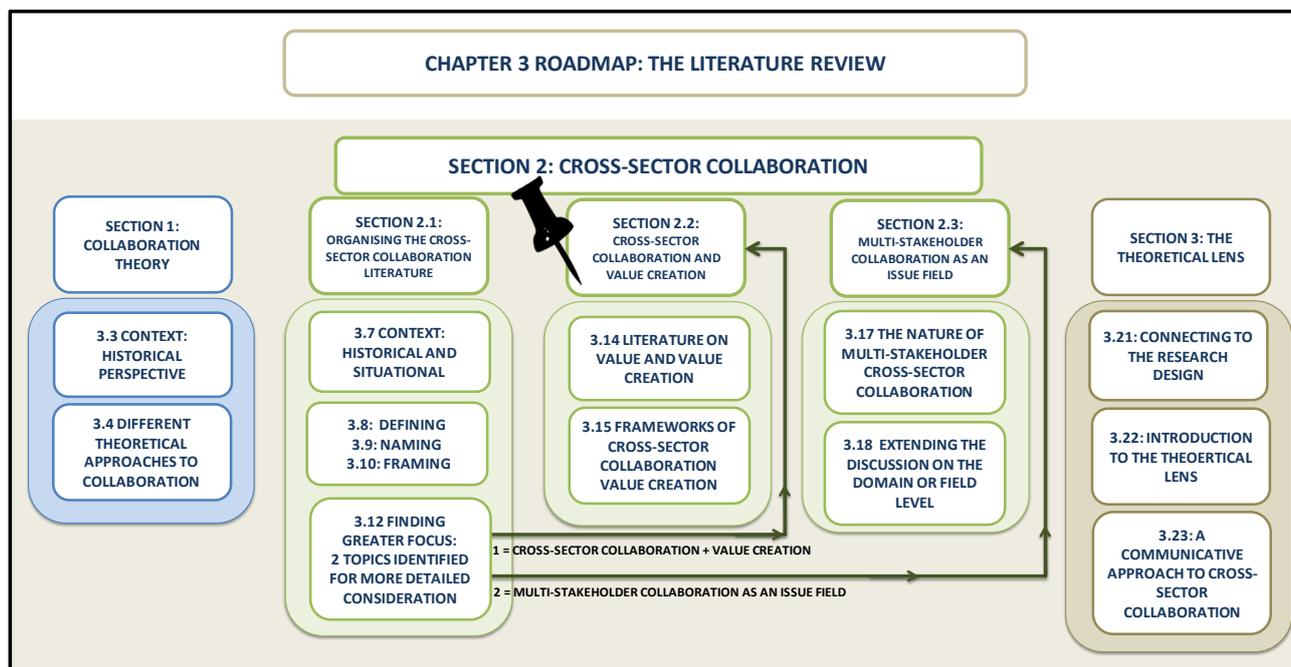
Each of these is now dealt with in the next two parts of the literature review.

## CHAPTER 3: SECTION 2.2

### CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION AND VALUE CREATION

#### 3.13 SECTION INTRODUCTION

The next part of the discussion progresses to the first of the two specific areas of focus in the literature and as indicated in Figure 3.1, the discussion now deals with cross-sector collaboration and the process of value creation.



**Figure 3.1: Chapter 3 Roadmap**

Source: Author's compilation.

The discussion now progresses to the first of the specific topics, which is cross-sector collaboration and value creation.

As discussed in Chapter 2 at Paragraph 2.7.5, value in this research study is defined broadly as the expected or accrued benefits for each partner or stakeholder according to what each considers to be useful or effective.

Value creation is then the process or activities that produce, generate or build value.

#### 3.13.1 Value as benefits that are useful and effective

There is a variety of research that addresses value and value creation in different ways. There are studies dealing with guidelines for success (Austin, 2000b), pre-conditions for success (Van Tulder, Hoekstra & De Wal, 2011), success factors (Hamann *et al.*, 2010; Googins & Rochlin, 2000), and conditions for success (Seitanidi & Ryan, 2007; Bryson *et al.*, 2006; Glasbergen & Groeneberg, 2001).

Other studies explore partnership effectiveness (Rondinelli & London, 2003; Hardy, Hudson & Waddington, 2003), effective solutions to social problems (Le Ber & Branzei, 2010c), benefits (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012b), impacts (Kolk, 2014), value (Koschmann *et al.*, 2012) and value creation (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012b; Austin, 2010). Wassmer *et al.* (2014) discussed the consequences of environmental collaboration as competitive advantage, societal benefits and performance.

From the environmental perspective, Glasbergen and Groenenberg (2001) described the conditions that determine success as those that “are crucial to the attainment of the stated goals”.

### **3.13.2 Value as influence and impact**

Influence and impact are intentions directed primarily at achieving benefits for others. However Janzen Le Ber and Branzei (2014) said that there is a need to achieve balance so that benefit to the partners is achieved at the same time as a broader positive impact beyond the partnership.

Influence involves two parties, one who exerts influence and the other who is being influenced. Assessing influence is therefore about considering how value is experienced by other stakeholders or communities. Austin and Seitanidi (2012a) defined impact as “large-scale transformational benefit that accrues either to a significant segment of society or to society at large”. Being more specific, they said that impact is “the interrelated set of multi-level consequences that partners envision, articulate and choose to pursue across time and relationships to enhance the greater good”.

Value as influence and impact is therefore a form of value where it is the experience of others that is relevant so that there is benefit beyond the partnership towards a greater good.

#### ***3.13.2.1 Negative impact***

Influence and impact may be good indicators of value when there is a positive influence or a positive impact but Kolk (2014) highlighted that partnerships may have negative side effects so that influence and impact may be negative. In such cases, value would be taken away rather than created or added.

This research study focused on positive impact but it is noted that this may not always be the case. It adopts an appreciative stance as it looks to the future and how to create a better, more sustainable world. The aim of the study was to learn from exemplars, from those that are already being successful in working together on sustainability issues and collaborative activities that create value. The focus on positive influence and impact is deliberate.

## **3.14 THE LITERATURE ON VALUE AND VALUE CREATION**

The question of how partnerships create value, have a positive influence or impact, bring benefit to or work well for the stakeholders is discussed in different ways according to the nature of the partnership and so this question is now discussed under the headings of the three frames already

identified in the literature on cross-sector collaboration. The business literature is covered under the heading of the strategic frame although one of the studies adopts a systemic view.

In addition, research conducted in South Africa is separately considered.

### **3.14.1 The strategic frame**

The strategic frame was introduced earlier at Paragraph 3.10. In this section the discussion is directed at how value is addressed in this literature and language such as mutual benefits, outcomes and change indicate the concept of value.

#### ***3.14.1.1 Mutual benefit***

In a review of the literature on NPO-BUS partnerships, Seitanidi (2010: 28-30) said that one of the most common areas of research is to explore the “strategic use” of partnerships, which gives attention to strategies that work well to use, build and develop successful partnerships. Seitanidi said this literature “responds to the demand for the promising mutual benefit relationship that partnership can deliver”. It has an organisation focus and deals with strategies and goals for each partner organisation rather than joint or collective needs or expectations. The language corresponds with the various literature sources noted above and also aligns with the strategic perspective described earlier, where the majority of the organisational and management literature is directed.

#### ***3.14.1.2 A process view***

On closer analysis, there is a process view of cross-sector collaboration within and beyond the strategic perspective. Senge *et al.* (2007) highlighted the need for systemic change to meet the sustainability challenge and contended that “cross-sector collaboration at this scale is unexplored”. One of the conclusions from their research over a six year period was that “the sustainability challenge is fundamentally a learning challenge” and a process of change.

A common approach to studying process is the developmental stage model (or maturity model) to describe partnership activities over time (Seitanidi & Crane, 2009). Examples include Austin’s collaboration continuum (Austin, 2000b), the later extension of the model by Austin and Seitanidi (2012a), Waddell and Brown (1997) and Clarke and Fuller (2010). In various forms these models deal with three primary phases of partnerships, namely formation, implementing (process, structure, governance) and outcomes. They are high-level process models identifying general phases of partnership activity.

Seitanidi and Crane (2009: 414) commented that “the ways that BUS-NPO partnerships can and should be implemented are not well understood”. To overcome the limitations of the stage model approach, they suggested a need to “unpack these different stages to reveal the components that make up the stages of implementation” so that “a more refined process model of partnership implementation ... could inform theory and practice”. In assessing other literature on

implementation processes they concluded that there is a need to address “the micro-process level of detail that is required to deepen our understanding” and deal with “the dynamics between different organisational actors”.

Seitanidi and Ryan (2007: 261) argued that there is a need to actively pursue an “emphasis on the process of interaction rather than simply the outcomes”. Kolk *et al.* (2010: 123-124) responded to this call and gave attention to the micro perspective defined as “individual interactions between and within organisations related to partnerships” to help fill a gap in the research. They explored how social interactions “spread and evolve” and how “diffusion mechanisms” or processes create “trickle effects” and multiple connections between the macro, meso and micro levels. After reviewing relevant literature, they suggested that there was a connection between these diffusion mechanisms and “active engagement in partnership-related conversations” (ibid: 129). Conceptually, they concluded that such positive interactions at the micro level “may extend to the meso and macro levels” and create “multiple benefits of cross-sector partnerships as agents of change” (ibid: 134).

### ***3.14.1.3 A business perspective on value creation in cross-sector collaboration***

A business perspective is represented by various economic theories and more recently by stakeholder theory as discussed at Paragraph 3.4.2 of this chapter. Austin and Seitanidi (2014) focused attention on NPO-BUS collaborations and business is therefore within the scope covered by their analysis. Rondinelli and London (2003: 62) explored the business management literature and submitted that theoretical approaches “tend to focus on intra-sector collaborations between two corporate partners”. These include alliance theory (strategic alliances), the knowledge-based view of the firm (knowledge transfer) and resource-based theory.

Literature presented in the top business journals such as Harvard Business Review, MIT Sloan Management review and the California Management Review tend to be directed towards practical application rather than a theoretical discussion. However, pertinent material includes a discussion by Senge *et al.* (2007) who addressed cross-sector collaboration at a systemic level directed towards a sustainability agenda, Nidumolu *et al.* (2014) who proposed a model of value creation and systemic change, and Pelozo and Falkenberg (2009) who offered a framework that expands the view of collaboration from a one firm one/NGO model to a multi-firm/multi-NGO model. All of these consider multiple stakeholders, but all adopt a perspective that is directed by the strategy of a focal firm. Each of these considers how collaboration can be more successful, more effective and create more value or benefit for the firm and for stakeholders.

Of these three sources in the business literature, only Senge *et al.* (2007) provided a conceptual discussion on the complex nature of the sustainability agenda and the worldviews that support different approaches to sustainability. It provides an instructive view in relation to the value creation process in cross-sector partnerships and the success of approaches that focus on the quality of relationships and those that are action oriented.

A different approach is taken by Porter and Kramer (2011: 64), who described shared value, which entails “creating economic value in a way that also creates value for society” so that there are benefits for the company and for the community. While this may require business to partner with NGOs, government agencies, communities and others, the strategy described by Porter and Kramer is not specifically directed towards cross-sector collaboration but is more focused on innovation, growth and new ways for businesses to compete and to be profitable. In a similar way, Nidumolu *et al.* (2014: 77) applied the idea of shared value to focus on partnership models that “protect the environment and create value for everyone”. The approach aims to create healthy competition, which supports shared goals so that business value or self-interest fulfils shared interests. While broader than the economic definition of value, shared value appears to be a restricted understanding of value.

### **3.14.2 The collective action frame**

The collective action frame was introduced earlier at Paragraph 3.10. In this section the discussion is directed at how value is addressed in this literature and language such as mutual benefits, effectiveness indicate the concept of value.

#### ***3.14.2.1 Connecting micro and macro perspectives***

An alternative approach is taken by Glasbergen (2011) who presented a stage model with a difference that “connects the micro perspective with the macro one”. He called this the “ladder of partnership activity”. It regards partnering as a process that focuses on collaborative interactions. Each level of activity builds on the previous but over time the focus of attention moves from the interests of each partner organisation to the mutual benefits of partnering and then to the potential external effects on the market and even in some cases to a change in the political order, at a societal level.

Hardy, Lawrence and Grant (2005: 59), who adopted a communicative or discursive approach, explained that effective collaboration requires that “cooperation and innovation be achieved, but the interests of those organisations represented in the collaboration must also be met”. They explored the relationship between collective identity and effective collaboration and argued that “discursive processes produce collective identities, which lead to various forms of collective action, potentially including effective collaboration” (ibid: 61). Effective collaboration “(1) leverages the differences among the participants to produce innovative, synergistic solutions and (2) balances divergent stakeholder concerns” (ibid: 58). Further, they indicated that both organisational and collective interests must be achieved at the same time, rather than one or the other.

Koschmann *et al.* (2012: 333) said that “the empirical evidence of XSPs’ effectiveness is scarce” and that value is difficult to assess. They concluded that within the existing literature, there is no “single best way to assess the value of XSPs” but there is a commonality to the variety of measures reported. In their view, the consensus in the literature was “the existence of a single

organisational entity that has the capacity to act, to exhibit agency, or to otherwise “make a difference” for the participants involved, their member organisations, and the broader communities and problem domains in which XSPs exist”. As well as value to individual members, they contended that value should be recognised at the collective level of the XSP itself. They argued that “the overall value of XSPs is not merely in connecting interested parties but, rather, in the ability to *act* - to substantially influence the people and issues within their problem domain”.

Koschmann (2013: 62) did not explore effectiveness in detail but commented that “quality and effectiveness of IOCs depends on people’s willingness to work together voluntarily, to share resources, and to take action in the absence of formal authority or market incentives”. The emphasis on willingness to act voluntarily is the key point here.

### **3.14.3 The institutional frame**

The institutional frame was introduced earlier at Paragraph 3.10. In this section the discussion is directed at how value is addressed in this literature and language such as success and effectiveness indicates the concept of value.

Bryson *et al.* (2006) proposed various factors and conditions that are needed so that cross-sector collaborations are more likely to succeed and these include a combination of environmental factors and strategic factors. They did not specifically define what success or effectiveness means. However, with reference to Huxham and Vangen (2005), they commented that “success depends on leadership” in the sense of “making things happen”. Further that this is a challenge that requires “aligning initial conditions, processes, structures, governance, contingencies and constraints, outcomes, and accountabilities such that good things happen in a sustained way over time - indeed, so that public value can be created” (ibid: 52).

Based on an extensive review of the literature on collaborative governance, Ansell and Gash (2008: 543) discussed critical variables that influence its success and factors that are crucial to the collaborative process. They concluded that “a virtuous cycle of collaboration tends to develop when collaborative forums focus on *small wins* that deepen trust, commitment and shared understanding”. However, they recognised that collaborative governance is not inherently good or bad but success is a matter of degree; it may be more or less effective. Ansell and Gash advocated a contingency approach that considers contextual conditions of which time, trust and interdependence are highlighted as being prominent.

### **3.14.4 Research in South Africa on success factors**

Hamann *et al.* (2010) conducted a comparative case exercise of ten cross-sector partnerships in South Africa to identify success factors. The study confirmed various criteria for success and factors for success from the existing literature. It also suggested three new themes related to successful partnering. The findings place an emphasis on the relational aspects of partnerships, which they categorise as social capital. This includes getting the right people involved, building

relationships and trust, accountability through informal mechanisms and the need for dialogue. They also concluded that successful partners understand and manage the tension between the structured and formal arrangements of the partnership and the more flexible interactions, roles and responsibilities. Success factors and criteria are combined with some relational elements so that there is a combination of interactions (process) and structure.

#### **3.14.5 Concluding remarks on the literature on value creation**

The literature on collaborations and value creation offers different perspectives on effectiveness and success and as well as other outcomes such as benefits, impact and value creation.

The strategic frame offers arguments of mutual benefit and a process view; the collective frame suggests ways that connect micro and macro perspectives; and the institutional frame considers the conditions and factors that support a successful outcome. A study in South Africa highlighted the relational aspects of partnerships as a key consideration.

What appears to be of particular interest for cross-sector and multi-stakeholder collaboration is the idea of connecting the micro and macro perspectives and this is highlighted by Glasbergen (2011), Koschmann *et al.* (2012) and Hardy *et al.* (2005). A key factor here appears to be the willingness to act voluntarily.

The process view includes a temporal dimension in the developmental stage model, but another process alternative suggested by Kolk *et al.* (2010) introduces a discussion on scale and connecting micro, meso and macro levels through mechanisms such as active conversations.

The systemic view adopted by Senge *et al.* (2007) in the business literature deviates from the more common focus on the focal firm and they consider a range of different worldviews or ways of thinking about sustainability.

Each of the above ideas has some connection to the context of this research study and this confirms that value creation is addressed in a number of different ways in the literature and that a process view may include not only a temporal dimension but also the idea of scale so that micro process activities may connect with macro processes and conversation is one way that this may be achieved.

### **3.15 FRAMEWORKS OF CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION VALUE CREATION**

From the literature, several frameworks of value creation were identified and are now discussed.

Two of these are relational approaches to value creation and these were introduced in the earlier discussion at Paragraph 3.12.3. The first considers social value creation as a relational process of frame fusion; the second considers value creation as a communicative approach.

The third is a framework based on a series of impact loops that assess value at four levels. This framework is based on the practice-oriented work of Van Tulder (2008) and extended into a more recently published paper discussing the impact of cross-sector partnerships (Van Tulder *et al.*,

2016). Rather than a relational view, the focus in this case is more on the process pathways that can facilitate the assessment of impact.

These three frameworks are highlighted for three reasons. First because they offer insights into cross-sector collaboration value creation and they do so by adopting a process approach. In the case of the third option, multiple levels are highlighted and impact goes beyond the partner organisations and considers the value-added to the social issue. Second, in each case a process framework is proposed that goes beyond the more common organising mechanism of antecedents, process and structural dimensions, contingencies and outcomes (see Van de Ven, 1976, Bryson *et al.*, 2006 and Wassmer *et al.*, 2014).

Last, they offer potential theoretical underpinnings for the research design and the requirements for this is discussed further in the Section 3 of the literature review when the choice of theoretical lens for the research analysis is made.

Each of the three frameworks of value creation through cross-sector collaboration is now briefly described.

### **3.15.1 Frame fusion in cross-sector interactions**

Le Ber and Branzei (2010a) combined the research on “dynamic framing processes in multi-organisational fields” with “social value creation in cross-sector interactions”. In doing so, they explored relational processes of value and introduced the concept of “frame fusion” which involves overcoming differences and the negotiation of shared understandings.

Adopting a critical perspective, Le Ber and Branzei (2010b) explored the role of the beneficiary in value creation and how beneficiary voice may be used to explain “how marginalised, disenfranchised or vulnerable segments of society choose to engage in cross-sector partnerships which focus on addressing their needs”.

### **3.15.2 A communicative approach to value creation in cross-sector partnerships**

Koschmann *et al.* (2012) applied a communicative approach called the communicative constitution of organisation or CCO approach, to explore the process of value creation for XSPs. They described this as “an alternative conception of organisational constitution” that explores “organisational forms that are distinct from their members and that display *collective* agency - the capacity to influence a host of relevant outcomes beyond what individual organisations can do on their own”. They acknowledged theoretical approaches from institutional theory, stakeholder theory and economic theory but contended that these all focus on the focal organisation as the unit of analysis and do not “account for XSPs as distinct organisational forms”. Further they argued that there is a need for “an alternative theoretical perspective capable of explaining XSP’s ability to demonstrate collective agency” and positioned a CCO approach as a means to meet this need to understand value at the collective or partnership level as “the capacity to influence a host of relevant outcomes beyond what individual organisations could do on their own”.

### 3.15.3 Value creation as impact

The framework for assessing impact as explained by Van Tulder *et al.* (2016) is presented as “an impact value chain”. This value chain has four elements and these are the social issue, the resources available to the partnership, the activities of the partners including partnership roles and structures, and lastly the outputs that are measured and assessed. The framework then attributes different levels of impact to each of these four elements and explains that there are four process loops that may be considered. Efficiency is described as internal value added where impact at the first level deals with internal operational value and impact at the second level deals with project performance towards organisational level goals. Effectiveness, on the other hand is described as external value-added where impact at the third level deals with strategic performance and mutual benefit at the partnership level. Lastly, impact at the fourth level deals with longer-term change for the issue at a systemic level.

### 3.15.4 Concluding remarks on frameworks of cross-sector collaboration value creation

In the first framework, while the relational processes and negotiating shared understandings are relevant to this research, the focus on marginalised actors is not pertinent and is not pursued.

The communicative approach offers an interesting perspective that explores collective agency and creates value beyond the partner level. The impact value chain is also interesting as it explores value at multiple levels including the social issue.

These frameworks are pursued further in two ways. First they are considered as options for the theoretical lens needed for the research analysis. Second, they are considered in the discussion at Chapter 8 in which the findings are considered in relation to the extant literature.

## 3.16 SECTION SUMMARY: THE LITERATURE ON CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION AND VALUE CREATION

**Table 3.4: Cross-sector collaboration and value creation: Key points in the literature**

Dimension	Summary of key points in the literature
<b>The literature on value creation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Various definitions: success, success factors, conditions for success, partnership effectiveness, effective solutions, benefits, impacts and value creation.</li> <li>ii) Strategic frame: mutual benefit, a process of change, learning. A business perspective that considers conceptual worldviews towards sustainability.</li> <li>iii) Collective action frame: innovation, synergistic solutions, balances divergent stakeholder concerns, value at a collective level, willingness to work together voluntarily, external effects on the market and on society (the political order).</li> <li>iv) Institutional frame: public value, managing tensions between structure and relational interactions and process.</li> <li>v) South African research on success factors.</li> </ul>
<b>Frameworks of value creation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Frame fusion</li> <li>ii) A communicative approach to value in cross-sector partnerships</li> <li>iii) Impact value chain – four process loops</li> </ul>

Source: Author's compilation.

Table 3.4 above summarises the key points made in this section.

First, there is the literature on value creation and different ways that value is explained according to the institutional, the collective action and the strategic frames. The literature is also considered in terms of the underlying theoretical approaches applied to cross-sector collaboration as highlighted in the literature scans already conducted by in recent years.

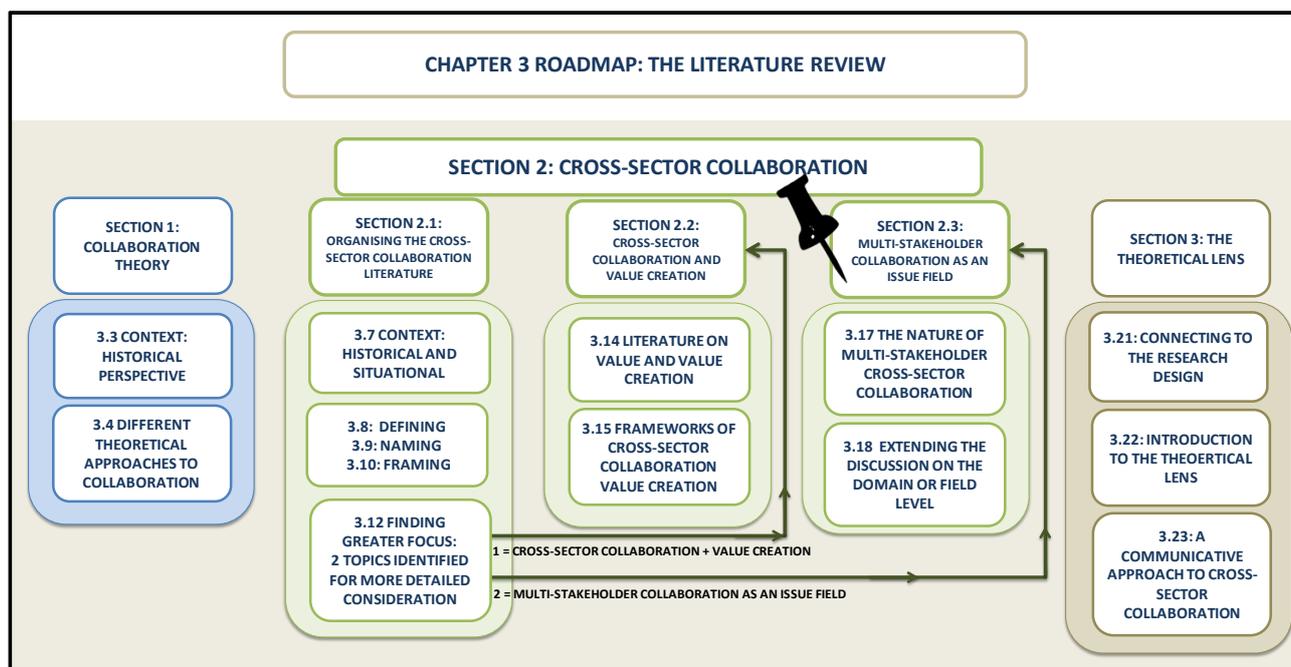
Three frameworks of value creation are discussed, each focusing on different process views of value creation as negotiating shared understanding, a communicative view and an impact value chain.

## CHAPTER 3: SECTION 2.3

### CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION AS A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ISSUE FIELD

#### 3.17 SECTION INTRODUCTION

The second of the two additional topics is now addressed, as shown on the roadmap at Figure 3.1. The multi-stakeholder context was introduced in Chapter 2 at Paragraph 2.7.4 and further literature is now explored.



**Figure 3.1: Chapter 3 Roadmap**

Source: Author's compilation.

A specific form of cross-sector collaboration that aligns with the setting of this research and the research questions is multi-stakeholder collaboration at the domain or field level. This section connects the literature at the domain level and field level, which has been introduced as the collective frame with the literature on multi-stakeholder collaboration

The prior discussions on the collective frame at Paragraphs 3.10 and 3.14.5.2 refer.

The prior discussions on stakeholder theory at Paragraph 3.4.2 and network theories at Paragraph 3.4.4 refer.

The literature on a multi-stakeholder issue field extends the literature on stakeholder theory already introduced.

The discussion is also extended to include literature on multi-stakeholder forms of collaboration including global action networks. A supply chain view is considered with reference to research on cross-sector collaboration in the value chains of food commodities.

### **3.17.1 Connecting with the prior discussion**

Two levels of analysis are evident in the literature on stakeholder theory. Selsky and Parker (2010) made a distinction between the stakeholder model of a focal firm and stakeholders who focus attention on a specific social issue or problem domain. In the case of the latter, they explained that while there may not be a focal firm, nonetheless “powerful actors may strive to shape and frame the issue or arena”. Multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration may be defined in the second of these two configurations.

According to Van Huijstee and Glasbergen (2010), multi-stakeholder refers to the context in which interactions take place and indicates that there are multiple stakeholder groups that are concerned with an issue or issue field.

For the purposes of this study, the definition of partnerships, as described by Seitanidi and Crane (2009), is combined with a multi-stakeholder context, as described by Van Huijstee and Glasbergen (2010). Multi-stakeholder collaboration is therefore defined as a flexible form of organising in which multiple stakeholders interact towards a specific social issue, sustainability issue, problem domain or issue field. While dyadic relationships may also be categorised as multi-stakeholder, the above definition assumes multiple organisations and multiple relationships.

### **3.17.2 The nature of multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration**

Multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration is a description given here to include approaches to cross-sector collaboration that may be considered to be systemic. This includes Global Action Networks or GANs as described by Waddell (2011) and other multi-stakeholder partnerships directed towards sustainability issues, both social and environmental. Multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration is characterised by multiple relationships, multiple partnership activities at multiple levels. A focal organisation is not essential.

Glasbergen (2010) described the qualities of these “multi-stakeholder and multi-sector” arrangements as inter-organisational networks of systemic change.

#### ***3.17.2.1 Global action networks***

Also focused on action, Waddell (2011: 1) introduced the global action network or GAN as a strategy to address global challenges and they are described by Glasbergen (2010) as multi-stakeholder initiatives aimed at “the protection of the global commons or the production of global public goods”.

Waddell (2011: 25) distinguished between inter-organisational partnerships as highly controlled entities that are focused on a particular task and well-defined objectives and inter-organisational

networks that include many participating organisations, many partnerships and many people who are all moving in a certain coherent direction. Waddell then distinguished between networks that have a degree of organisation such as a central node or secretariat from those that lack a clear “organising focus”. Waddell described the first type of inter-organisational network as a GAN or global action network and provided examples such as the Forest Stewardship Council and the Marine Stewardship Council.

In the case of this research where the Marine Stewardship Council is part of a larger network of partnerships, so that rather than a GAN, this research setting would fit the type that lacks an organising focus so that the system is very diverse and diffuse. Waddell did not give a name to this latter type but the characteristics he described correspond with a domain or field level perspective.

### ***3.17.2.2 A specific case: partnerships in global value chains***

The literature on partnerships in global supply chains for food commodities is a particular view on multi-stakeholder partnerships that involve cross-sector collaboration between business and NGOs and includes case study examples of how such partnerships have the potential to bring about “sustainable change” (Bitzer & Glasbergen, 2015). By adding sustainability to the supply chain, it becomes a value chain so that the products may be distinguished from basic commodities as they have additional attributes that provide market differentiation.

The nature of these partnerships varies but they are described as “new forms of global governance” (Bitzer, Glasbergen & Leroy, 2012), including “meta-governance” structures (Derckx & Glasbergen, 2014), and as network or hybrid forms of governance (Backstrand, 2006).

These partnerships have a variety of purposes ranging from certification partnerships (Glasbergen, 2013), and setting standards for sustainable production (Bitzer & Glasbergen, 2010) to promoting socially responsible behaviour (Muller, Vermeulen & Glasbergen, 2012). They may take the form of a central autonomous agency or as a network of partnerships (Bitzer *et al.*, 2012).

## **3.18 EXTENDING THE DISCUSSION ON THE DOMAIN OR FIELD LEVEL**

Organising at the domain or field level is introduced first in terms of the network approach and then the literature on domains and fields is considered.

### **3.18.1 Cross-sector collaboration as a domain or field**

Connecting to the earlier discussion on social constructionist theories at Paragraph 3.4.5.2, Gray (1989: 5-11) said that collaboration “involves building a common understanding” or “comprehensive appreciation” of a problem domain among the stakeholders and is directed towards advancing “the collective good of the stakeholders involved” (*ibid*: 8). She defined stakeholders as “all individuals, groups, or organizations that are directly influenced by actions

others take to solve the problem” and “an important ingredient of collaboration is interdependence among the stakeholders”.

The view adopted by Gray in a collaborative context therefore includes multiple interdependent stakeholders who share an appreciation or interest in a problem domain and pursue that interest for the collective good. This approach therefore connects stakeholder theory with a broader agenda of inter-organisational collaboration related to social and environmental issues.

An inter-organisational domain was defined by Trist (1983) as a “field related organisational population” and he argued that “an organisational population becomes field related when it engages with a set of problems, or a societal problem area, which constitutes a domain of common concern for its members”. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) defined an organisational field as “those organisations that, in aggregate, constitute a recognised area in institutional life” so that it includes “the totality of relevant actors”. With a focus on structure, this definition assumes that “fields only exist to the extent that they are institutionally defined”. While still widely cited, this definition does not capture the dynamic evolutionary character of collaboration described by Gray as noted above.

The definition of an organisational field by Trist (1983) provides a point of reference, in which he advocated for the domain to be the unit of analysis rather than a focal organisation. Domains engage “with a set of problems, or a societal problem area, which constitutes a domain of common concern for its members”. These problems are too complex for any single organisation to address on their own. It is Trist’s concept of a problem domain that was adopted by Gray (1989: 5) to define collaboration.

Lawrence *et al.* (1999) explored the case of a whale-watching community where they conceptualise the community as an organisational field that “is characterised by many different kinds of collaboration between many different kinds of organisations” and “a complex web of informal and formal collaborations”. They directed attention at the “inter-organisational problem domain” rather than at a focal organisation. Collaboration is defined as a phenomenon that “occurs between organisations rather than at the individual or organizational level”. They claimed that to study collaboration one must focus “at the aggregate level”.

This view has already been introduced at Paragraph 3.8 in the definitions of cross-sector collaboration and at Paragraph 3.10.1.3 as a social constructionist frame as it connects well with the research interest of this study.

### **3.18.2 An issue field**

The approach offered by Hoffman (1999) introduces a definition of an organisational field that “forms around a central issue – such as the protection of the natural environment – rather than a central technology or market” so that fields centre around the debate and negotiation of the issue. As defined by Hoffman, “a field is formed around issues that become important to the interests and

objectives of a specific collective of organisations” so that “issues define what the field is” and “membership is defined through social interaction patterns”.

One of the aims of this approach is to focus on social change. The field is a community that brings together members with different perspectives and different objectives and becomes “the centre of common channels of dialogue” so that it is socially constructed. Hoffman recognised that this is a departure from the dominant view in the literature at that time, which was that the organisations in a field became homogeneous (Wooten & Hoffman, 2008) or isomorphic (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

He also noted the distinction between the organisational field and the populations, or classes of organisations, within it and he argued that the structure of the field is not only evident in tangible patterns of behaviour but also in increased interactions, information sharing, and mutual awareness of the issue. This approach describes “the social dynamics by which field-level debate forms around defining the meaning” of the issue and how the debate evolves over time.

The concept of an “issue-based field” as defined by Hoffman has relevance in the context of this research study as it not only pertains to sustainability issues but it also recognises the role of dialogue and interaction and how events are socially constructed.

Reflecting a similar view, Hardy and Phillips (1998) distinguished inter-organisational relationships from inter-organisational domains, in which organisations “perceive themselves to be connected to common issues” and they highlighted that these domains are not predefined structures but “*processes of social construction*” in which meaning and order are negotiated. They also described how stakeholders have a shared vision and appreciation of the issues.

Phillips *et al.* (2000) explored how collaboration and institutional fields are connected, in that the field provides the “rules and resources upon which collaboration is constructed”. Ansari, Wijen and Gray (2009) described transnational commons such as oceans that are overfished, as “a specific type of institutional field”.

### **3.18.3 Concluding the discussion on cross-sector collaboration as an issue field**

Cross-sector collaboration as multi-stakeholder collaborative activities is directed towards global issues such as sustainability that involve systemic change and require multiple sectors, organisations and other stakeholders to work together towards protecting the common good and addressing social and societal problems.

Some multi-stakeholder partnerships take the form of an autonomous central partnership organisation and there are also networks of organisations or global action networks with a central organising body.

Another form is the networks of partnerships and organisations that have no clear organising structure. Where the organisations and partnerships form around a specific social or sustainability

issue then an issue field may be evident. Hoffman defined an issue field as a collective of organisations where membership is defined by their social interactions and the field is defined by the issue.

The existing literature covers this range of alternatives both at a conceptual level and in the literature on global value chains, there are practical case study examples.

Given the different forms of multi-stakeholder collaboration, the definition that best matches this research context is the issue field. The reasons for this are as follows:

- i) Sustainable seafood is the issue that connects all the stakeholders and all activities are directed towards this issue.
- ii) Sustainable seafood is a societal issue rather than an objective or goal; it is a complex and wicked problem as previously described; and it is systemic.
- iii) There is no visible structure but there are patterns of interaction. Hoffman's description of the collaborative activities as "events that are socially constructed" appears to be an apt way to describe the multiple activities undertaken by the various stakeholders to work together in different ways at different times.
- iv) There is no focal organisation and there is no central organising body or secretariat.
- v) There are multiple organisations and multiple partnerships involved in the sustainable seafood initiatives.
- vi) Stakeholders may be said to have a common appreciation of the issue, but this is not the same as having shared or common objectives that are agreed.
- vii) Ansari *et al.* (2009) described the oceans and fish stocks as a transnational commons, which is a type of institutional field.

The sustainable seafood initiatives that formed the setting of this research are described in the balance of this dissertation as multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration as an issue field to distinguish it from other forms of multi-stakeholder collaboration. The acronym MsCsC or MsCsC as an issue field is used to distinguish this form of cross-sector collaboration from other multi-stakeholder forms such as MSPs and MSIs.

### **3.19 SECTION SUMMARY**

Table 3.5 provides a summary of the key points in this section. Multi-stakeholder collaboration is characterised by a multiple dimensions, levels and organisational forms. In relation to this research study, it is the field level that corresponds with the research setting.

Literature on partnerships in global value chains is also included.

**Table 3.5: Multi-stakeholder collaboration as an issue field: Key points in the literature**

Dimension	Summary of key points in the literature
<b>Multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple relationships, multiple partnership activities, at multiple levels; multiple sectors, multiple stakeholders;</li> <li>• May range from autonomous partnership structures to inter-organisational networks of systemic change;</li> <li>• Focus on global issues that are systemic such as sustainability; protecting the common good; addressing social and societal issues; and</li> <li>• Partnerships in global value chains are seen as new forms of governance or hybrid forms of governance. Purposes include certification, standards for sustainable production and promoting social responsible behaviour.</li> </ul>
<b>Multi-stakeholder collaboration as an issue field level</b>	<p>An issue field defined by Hoffman as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• forming around an issue;</li> <li>• no evident structure but there are patterns of interaction among the stakeholders;</li> <li>• the field is socially constructed; meaning is negotiated in the interactions; and</li> <li>• stakeholders have shared appreciation of the issue, rather than common objectives.</li> </ul>

Source: Author's compilation.

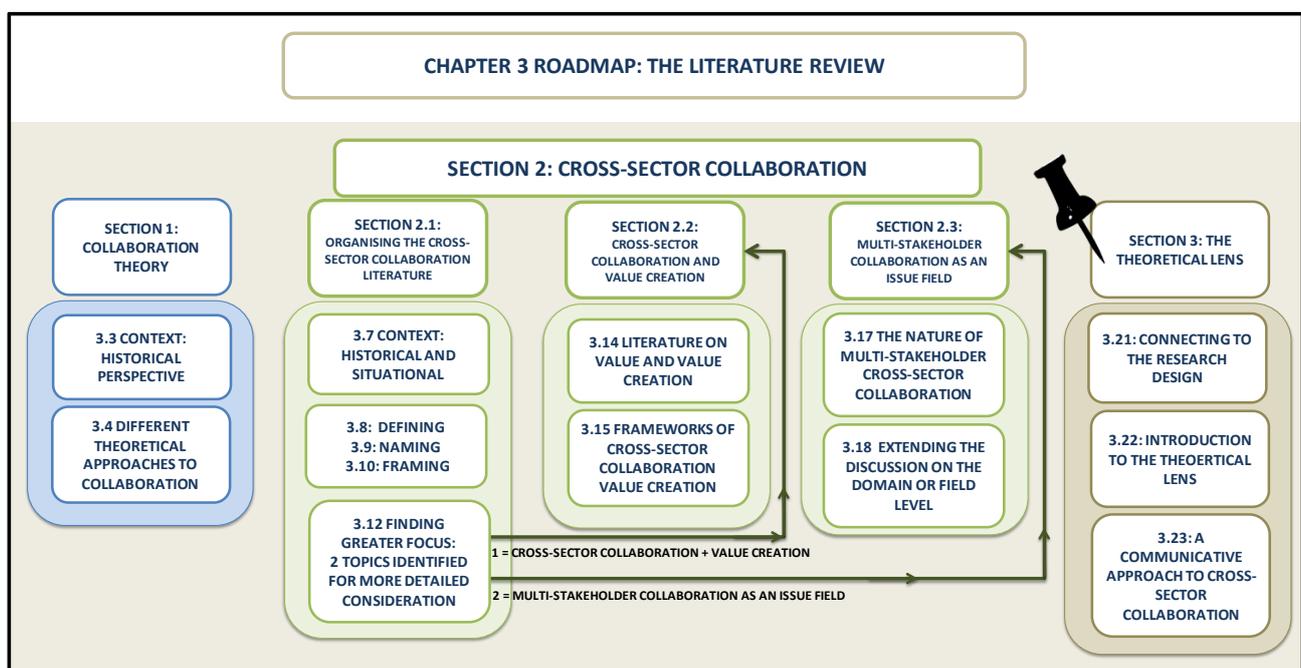
## CHAPTER 3: SECTION 3

### THE THEORETICAL LENS

#### 3.20 SECTION INTRODUCTION

In the first two sections of the literature, the topics of collaboration and cross-sector collaboration have been explored in detail and the specific topics of value creation and multi-stakeholder collaboration as an issue field were discussed. In these sections the choice of topic is directed by the research interest.

The third and final section of the literature review deals with the theoretical lens that is used in the research analysis. This section of the literature review has a specific purpose that involves two steps. First, the selection of the theoretical lens is explained, followed by an introduction to the literature on the selected theoretical framework.



**Figure 3.1: Chapter 3 Roadmap**

Source: Author's compilation.

#### 3.21 CONNECTING THE LITERATURE REVIEW TO THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The detailed justification for the various research choices is described in Chapter 4 at Paragraph 4.12 in respect to the research analysis and interpretation.

In order to pursue the research questions, a specific theoretical framework is needed to organise and direct the research analysis. The preferred method for the analysis is an adapted IPA method, where IPA means interpretative phenomenological analysis. The reasons for the choice of IPA are explained in Chapter 4.

What is pertinent here is that the IPA analysis applies a theoretical lens to organise and interpret the fieldwork findings. What is sought in the literature is a 'collaborative lens' for this purpose; it is an existing theoretical or conceptual framework or model in the literature that is related to the research interest and incorporates the key dimensions of cross-sector collaboration, value creation and a sustainability issue.

### **3.21.1 Selecting the theoretical lens**

The literature discussed in Sections 1 and 2 of this chapter has been carefully considered, in particular the three frameworks of value creation described at Paragraph 3.15.

#### ***3.21.1.1 Initial options considered***

Some preliminary analyses were done to test possible options. A complexity lens derived from the work of Cilliers (1998), Stacey (2011) and Snowden and Boone (2007) was considered. This was not an existing framework but a combination of characteristics of complex systems as described by these scholars. It was rejected due to the concern of potential circularity of arguments.

Another option was based on a theoretical framework of inter-organisational relationships by Van de Ven (1976), in which he viewed organised collective action as a "social action system". The framework comprised a number of dimensions including structure, process and outcomes, as well as "situational factors that explain why and how inter-agency relationships develop". While this had potential as a structured option for the research analysis, it did not specifically focus on value creation or the context of cross-sector collaboration. It was considered in an early attempt at analysis but it did not yield results and was discontinued.

Another alternative was considered based on a paper by Van Tulder (2008) as previously noted at Paragraph 3.15. However, at the time of the review, it appeared to the researcher that this was a linear input-output model. The later publication by Van Tulder *et al.* (2016) explained the model in more detail so that the dynamic process was more clearly understood. In hindsight, this could have served as theoretical lens, but at the time of the research design, it was rejected.

#### ***3.21.1.2 Final selection***

Further consideration was given to the two frameworks proposed by Branzei and Le Ber (2014) as both of these options are aligned with the research questions of this study

The two options are frame fusion in cross-sector interactions by Le Ber and Branzei (2010a) and a communicative approach to value creation in cross-sector partnerships by Koschmann *et al.* (2012). Both develop new theoretical frameworks and they are both relational perspectives that address value creation.

While both offer interesting new ways to explore cross-sector collaboration, the communicative approach was selected for the following reasons:

- i) The communicative approach is a process approach and focuses on the interactions between individuals as a means to create action collectively. This aligns with the research question that asks how is value created in a collaborative interactions.
- ii) CCO is an idiographic approach and this aligns with the research aim to learn from the lived experience of key individuals.
- iii) CCO also aligns with the philosophical foundation discussed further in Chapter 4, which is a social constructionist view.
- iv) The communicative approach is based on an existing body of literature in organisational communication studies that is rich and has already been explored in-depth so that it forms a strong foundation for the research analysis.
- v) The literature on the approach known as the communication as constitutive of organisation (CCO) is extensive and provides detailed analysis of key concepts.
- vi) The CCO approach is a departure from the main body of literature on value creation.
- vii) The literature review reveals that there is an opportunity for further research that combines cross-sector collaboration theories with communication theory, and specifically the CCO literature. There is currently a very limited amount of literature that explores this theoretical combination. There are some earlier articles that apply a CCO approach in the context of inter-organisational interactions and alliances and this indicates that the approach may be applied to a range of collaborative contexts.

The choice was both theoretical and practical. The framework of cross-sector partnership value creation aligned with the research interest, it offered a different theoretical perspective and at the same time there was considerable literature to support the framework and the various concepts that it presented. An important factor was that the framework was theoretically well-grounded, with sufficient detail and structure so that it could be used as the theoretical lens for the IPA analysis.

### **3.21.2 Researcher note: Finding the connections<sup>8</sup>**

See endnote 3.8 in Appendix U.

## **3.22 INTRODUCTION TO THE THEORETICAL LENS**

This section now continues with an introduction to the theoretical framework and this includes some background and context to the approach known as the communicative constitution of organisation (CCO) followed by a review of the extant literature that applies a CCO approach to explore cross-sector collaboration or other forms of inter-organisational relationships such as coalitions.

A discussion of the framework of cross-sector partnership value that is presented by Koschmann *et al.* (2012) is included in Chapter 4 at Section 3.

### 3.22.1 Different schools of CCO thinking

It should be noted at the outset, that one of the consequences of choosing the framework of cross-sector partnership as presented by Koschmann *et al.* (ibid), is that the version of CCO that was used for this research is the one that is used by them.

The principle of the communicative constitution of organising (CCO) is used by different scholars in different ways theoretically and so there are distinct and different schools of CCO thinking. These are described and compared by Schoeneborn, Blaschke, Cooren, McPhee, Seidl and Taylor (2014) in a discussion involving scholars from each of the three main schools of CCO thinking. These three schools or streams of CCO thinking are as follows:

- i) The four flows method (McPhee & Zaugg, 2000) based on the Anthony Giddens's structuration theory (Giddens, 1986).
- ii) The Montreal School derived from speech act theory and developed by scholars such as Taylor, Cooren, Giroux and Robichaud (1996). The Montreal School conceptualises organisation as being constituted in the relational interactions of conversation and text.
- iii) A more recent approach to organisation as communication based on Luhmann's social system theory (Luhmann, 2006) as explained by Schoeneborn (2011).

While there is literature on each of these streams of research, only one of these is discussed in this dissertation and this is the Montreal School approach because it is the approach applied by Koschmann *et al.* (ibid) and is the basis of their framework of cross-sector partnership value.

Unless otherwise noted, all references to CCO thinking in this dissertation refer to the Montreal School.

### 3.22.2 Presenting the CCO literature

This chapter positions CCO thinking with the field of organisational communication studies and provides a brief historical background.

This is then followed by the literature that combines cross-sector collaboration with the CCO literature and related discursive literature that adopts the concepts of conversation and text as the basis of organisation.

In Chapter 4 there is a further discussion on the theoretical framework of cross-sector collaboration and value creation. This theoretical discussion also introduces the basic concepts of the Montreal School of CCO thinking.

### 3.22.3 The collaborative turn in organisational communication studies

In considering future avenues for organisational communication studies, Deetz and Eger (2014) identified "the collaborative turn" as an issue that could "direct the future of organisational

communication studies". They described this as "a concern with collaborative and emergent forms of decision making based on quite different models and motives for human interaction".

They contended that the current interest in more "polycentric organisational forms and various modes of collaborative and stakeholder-based decision making" was already highlighted by Habermas' distinction between strategic and communicative action. Further, they concluded that "the role of collaborative organising could continue to become more consequential in organisational communication research in future decades". Deetz and Eger offered an example of a paper by Koschmann, Lewis and Isbell (2011: 4) in which it is suggested that "there is a need for new forms of knowledge about collaboration" since communication is a fundamental aspect of collaborative activity. Koschmann *et al.* (2011: 5) also highlighted that much of the research on collaboration relies on the transmission view of communication, which "fails to account for the emergent potential of communication as a complex process of meaning construction and negotiation that constitutes our social world". They suggested that new models of communication and collaboration are needed, in particular, to deal with "the complex meta-problems that confront our society in the twenty-first century".

In addition to Koschmann *et al.* (2011), Deetz and Eger also drew attention to recent research on cross-sector collaboration published in the Harvard Business Review (Nidumolu *et al.*, 2014) and by Elinor Ostrom (Poteete, Janssen & Ostrom, 2010). They concluded that it is an area that could become more consequential.

#### **3.22.4 A communicative approach to cross-sector collaboration**

Hardy and Phillips (1998) and Lawrence *et al.* (1999) presented a communicative perspective on inter-organisational collaboration that they described as discursive. This work connects with the literature already presented, such as Trist (1983) and Gray (1989), and is developed further towards a discursive perspective, which introduces collaboration as a communicative process situated within a social or institutional context.

The discursive approach depends on three critical concepts, namely conversation, text and discourse (Hardy *et al.*, 2005), where discourse is a set of interrelated texts. The theoretical foundation of the discursive approach connects "processes of social construction and negotiation with the social contexts in which they are embedded" and it "highlights the role of context in the ongoing production of collaboration and the effect of collaboration on its context" (Lawrence *et al.*, 1999: 480). Furthermore, the unit of analysis is the inter-organisational domain or organisational field and it also explores inter-organisational collaboration as an institutional field (Phillips *et al.*, 2000).

The connection between collaboration and discourse is further developed by exploring collaboration as a process, which highlights the role of conversation and language. Hardy *et al.* (2005: 59) argued that "a discursive approach facilitates the development of theory and research

that attend to the multiple levels on which collaboration occurs” including individuals and organisations while drawing on “discourses operating at organisational and societal levels”. This theoretical approach is “attuned to the complex interrelationships among these levels”.

The discursive approach presented here views collaboration as a communicative process (Hardy *et al.*, 2005; Lawrence *et al.*, 2002; Lawrence *et al.*, 1999). As a communicative approach, Hardy *et al.* (2005) connected discourse and organisation theory with communication theory; and more specifically they connected the research on conversation and text to the so-called Montreal School of CCO thinking.

The communicative approach adopted by Koschmann *et al.* (2012) has similar assumptions regarding the role of conversation in creating collective agency and/or value creation. It is also based on the Montreal School of CCO and the work of Taylor and colleagues, who explored the theoretical foundation of organisation and organising in the generative processes of communication (Taylor *et al.*, 1996). The CCO approach extends the underlying constructionist thinking to include textual agency or how texts can be active agents in organising.

### **3.23 A CCO APPROACH TO CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION**

The CCO approach is applied to different organisational settings, but for the purposes of this research the focus of attention is towards the use of CCO thinking to theorise about collaboration and cross-sector interactions and alliances.

The earliest literature that consciously applies CCO to cross-sector interactions appears to be Cooren (2001) and subsequently, Kuhn (2008). Cooren described various coalitions arising from a controversy between a local community and a power utility but he does not specifically use the term cross-sector collaboration. Kuhn explored extra-organisational relationships and explored collaboration as a form of “interfirm textual saturation”.

Brummans, Cooren, Robichaud and Taylor (2014) discussed current research that is influenced by the Montreal model and they specifically highlighted the work of Koschmann *et al.* (2012) on cross-sector partnerships. Koschmann *et al.* (2012) explored the development of a framework of cross-sector collaboration value based on a CCO approach derived primarily from the Montreal School approach combined with ideas drawn from the work of Kuhn (2008). They introduced the various concepts and constructs described above and use these to develop a conceptual framework of XSP value.

Koschmann *et al.* (2012) concluded that CCO offers “a promising alternative because it grounds the constitution of XSPs within communicative processes”. Further because “XSPs that address complex social issues are vitally important sites of organising”, there is a need for organisational theories capable of explaining these forms of organisation.

These references are indications that collaboration as a subject has been explored using a CCO approach, but also that existing literature on the subject is limited. The available literature will now be considered.

### **3.23.1 Exploring the literature on CCO and cross-sector collaboration**

There are a limited number of published journal articles that specifically apply the Montreal School model of CCO to explore cross-sector interactions. The settings in each case are cross-sector but in one, the process is described as a coalition (Cooren, 2001); in another, the discussion focuses on extra-organisational relationships and “interfirm textual saturation” (Kuhn, 2008) and others used the term inter-organisational collaboration (Koschmann, 2013) or cross-sector partnership (Koschmann *et al.*, 2012). These are now discussed in turn.

### **3.23.2 A note on terminology**

The term “coalition” is used by Cooren to describe a context of multiple stakeholders working together in a variety of partnering activities related to a specific issue. The context is similar to what has been defined here as a multi-stakeholder issue field. Kuhn used the term “extra-organisational relationships” and did not distinguish the nature of the relationship or whether they are cross-sector. His research interest is also a focal and specifically a firm. Koschmann used the terms partnership and collaboration interchangeably and both are cross-sector contexts.

Other terminology is introduced in this discussion and these are communicative terms that are specific to the CCO approach. Two key concepts are noted here which are fundamental to the CCO approach. They are explained in detail in the later section on the CCO approach that is provided in Chapter 4. These terms are as follows:

- i) An authoritative text is explained at Chapter 4, Paragraph 4.23. It is an abstract concept used to describe an organisation such as a firm or a partnership that has ‘authority to act’ so that it represents the agency of a collective, which is an actor that stands separate from its members. As an abstract concept based on communicative practices, CCO views the organisation as a text or collective narrative that is created through the interactions of its members. In addition there are members who represent the collective narrative and speak or act on its behalf. It is through the combination of the collective narrative and the representations of its members that the organisation has agency. This is not dissimilar to agency theory in the business and management literature, but the underlying processes are based on speech act theory and the agency of conversation and narrative as communicative practices.
- ii) Metaconversation is explained in Chapter 4 at Paragraph 4.23.3. It is an abstract term to describe a form of organising that means a layering of conversations within other conversations so that there are multiple related conversations. While the conversations are directed towards a common interest, agency is not attributed to the collective.

### 3.23.3 Cooren and coalitions

Cooren (2001) presented the case of an ecological controversy involving a local community and a large power utility. He explored the “associations” and organising properties of coalitions by adopting a CCO approach combined with narrative analysis; he directed attention at the processes of translation that are required to build a coalition. He used narrative to make sense of the conflict and to identify “points of articulation” between the different objectives of the parties in order to take their different agendas and make them compatible. Other key points are illustrated here and these may be equally relevant in cases where there is no conflict.

Cooren said that “there is no need for shared meaning to constitute a coalition” but rather what is needed is a unified voice and common action. One example in this case was where different communities created a Grand Council that not only provided a unified voice but also, as an organisation, it acted on behalf of the communities to serve a court injunction.

On the subject of multiple interests and common goals, Cooren said that “any collective endeavour presupposes different translations of the different actions” so shared goals or shared meaning are not required but the parties do need to align their actions. However, alignment, in some cases, may be temporary.

The mobilisation of actors may include individuals, organisations and nonhuman actors. Cooren said that activities depend on “associations ... established between human and nonhuman actors”.

He illustrated with examples of a legal agreement and an environmental review that both have a key role in the controversy. He also showed how other nonhuman actors may be mobilised, that include the natural and environmental world, in this case rivers, fish and roads.

Another key point in this case is that a coalition may form by the actions of helpers and followers. Here, a range of other organisations became involved when the narrative of the controversy moved in a new direction that involved wider issues that impacted many more parties. These multiple interests then aligned with one side in the conflict. Cooren said that a “rallying point” created an association between the various parties and “enabled the different parties to fulfil their respective objectives”.

**Key points:** Cooren labelled this case as a coalition but it appears to have the main elements of a metaconversation, and indeed over time in this complex case, several narratives are involved. The coalition that is described does not become an organisation in an organisation-as-actor form separate from its members, but rather the “simple network of alliances” developed a common narrative that created alignment. There are also other forms of organisation illustrated in this case including a possible example of an authoritative text. The Grand Council was formally established and named in order that it might formally act on behalf of the communities.

### 3.23.4 Kuhn and saturation

Kuhn (2008) explored “extra-organisational relationships” and what he described as interactions with other groups or external stakeholders. He introduced the concept of “saturation” which he defined as “the means by which firms bridge boundaries”. He talked about “interfirm relationships” in which he included a variety of alliances, collaborations, mergers and acquisitions. In addition to formal factors such as economic capital, legal structures and ownership models, he explored other relational factors such as the strength and openness of relationships, the narrative of the interfirm relationship and opportunities to develop social capital.

Kuhn said that this communicative view offers a different view of stakeholder engagement so that interdependence is considered to be an opportunity for innovation. However, he said this is not just about more dialogue and that models of collaboration and dialogue should draw on “complex conceptions of communication”. This perspective portrays firms as “complex social systems that incorporate a variety of interests”.

Kuhn introduced the idea of an “authoritative text” as abstract official representations of the firm that project structure and responsibility and is central to the communicative view of the firm. At this point in the analysis, Kuhn dealt only with the focal organisation and only later extended the conceptual arguments to what he called “extra-organisational interactions”.

According to Kuhn, an authoritative text is an actor because other actors speak in its name; and it “links people and practices through conversation” which are “necessary components of coorientation”. To remain relatively stable and coherent it needs “a narrative of the firm’s progression into the future”, what Kuhn called “the trajectory of the firm”.

It is through the narrative of the authoritative text that individual actors “connect personal identities and biographical narratives to the firm”. It is also through this process that firms “marshal consent” and “attract varying types of capital”; not just economic capital but also social, cultural and symbolic. He argued that these forms of capital do not have causal power but they frame the conversations that induce consent.

He applied the concepts of the authoritative text to extra-organisational interactions. Following a communicative view, he viewed stakeholder communication as coorientation and highlighted some key issues that need to be addressed in order to heighten the process of collaboration. These include:

- i) confronting values-based conflicts;
- ii) seeking representation of interests, so that “personal interests are subordinated to the collective good”;
- iii) the role of interaction in creating identities; and
- iv) valuing creative outcomes for finding common ground or consensus.

He commented that the common view of stakeholder relationships is that they need to be managed. The alternative communicative view takes a more complex approach by engaging a multiplicity of stakeholders to draw on “a repertoire” of conversations that express multiple perspectives to expand the network of connections. He argued that this increased complexity can lead to innovation and change.

**Key points:** The role of the authoritative text in the coorientation of interests is central to defining the narrative of the firm and managing multiple interests within the firm and in extra-firm stakeholder relationships. The idea of saturation introduces the concept of bridging boundaries. Coorientation is the process that connects stakeholder interests but the narrative of the authoritative text also directs attention towards collective interests, creates stability and coherence and attracts different forms of capital. Kuhn argued that the communicative view of collaboration is useful to explain organising processes and the effectiveness of inter-organisational relationships in complex settings.

### **3.23.5 Koschmann and the collective identity of inter-organisational collaborations**

Koschmann (2013) conceived of the collective identity of an inter-organisational collaboration as an authoritative text in order to explore the achievement of collective action. This alternative construct is conceived from a communication perspective, so that collective identity emerges from “processes of coorientation, abstraction, and reification”. He argued that this differs from more traditional theories of organisational identity, derived from the field of psychology.

Koschmann’s interest in collective identity is its potential to induce voluntary collective action. His specific focus is on collective action in the “absence of formal authority or market incentives” where the effectiveness of the inter-organisational collaboration depends on “people’s willingness to work together voluntarily”.

Koschmann explored the case of a collaboration that operated initially as an informal network of several government agencies and later grew into a formal partnership that worked with other agencies, nonprofits and private enterprises. He applied the construct of an authoritative text to interpret the partnership’s struggle to define its collective identity, which was needed to guide its actions. He showed how a metaphor (or abstract idea) was appropriated by the members and became a means to understand their collective identity so that it became a catalyst for action. He compared this to a process of coorientation. Koschmann described how the metaphor became instrumental to the partnership; it enabled roles and responsibilities to be defined; it characterised the partnership and offered an official conception of what it was and how it functioned.

**Key points:** The case presented provides evidence of coorientation in a collective setting and the need for the abstraction of a common narrative or identity. It demonstrates, in a practical case, some of the key concepts of CCO such as coorientation, abstraction, reification and authority. It also emphasises how IOCs accomplish voluntary collective action.

### 3.23.6 Koschmann *et al.* and cross-sector partnership (XSP) value

Koschmann *et al.* (2012) developed a framework of value for XSPs applying a CCO approach. They drew attention directly to combining CCO concepts with research on cross-sector collaboration and contended that it is the ability to act that defines XSP value; the ability to “substantially influence the people and issues within their problem domain”; influence that extends “beyond what individual organisations could do on their own”. They argued that it is through certain communication processes that this ability emerges.

The framework draws directly on the Montreal model but also on the work of Kuhn (2008) who extended the concept of authority as the basis for creating the identity of an organisation towards what is called “an authoritative text”. The framework explains how an XSP as an authoritative text is produced through a process of coorientation; how this “represents the collective agency and trajectory of the XSP”; how it attracts capital and marshals the consent of relevant parties inside and outside the XSP. Other sources are applied, such as Bourdieu’s (1986) work on different forms of capital (including social capital) and theorising on whole networks (Provan *et al.*, 2007).

**Key points:** The conceptual framework develops the idea of cross-sector partnership as an authoritative text. Koschmann *et al.* set out propositions for value potential and for value delivery that connect the literature on cross-sector partnerships with the literature on CCO. Key concepts that are emphasised include coorientation, trajectory, collective agency and XSP value as the ability to act; to influence people and issues in their problem domain.

### 3.24 SECTION SUMMARY: A COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH TO CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION

This section of the literature review has provided an overview of a communicative approach to cross-sector collaboration. The literature discussed above indicates that there is a small group of researchers that has connected the communicative approach to theorising about cross-sector collaboration. From these we can see that different perspectives are applied as summarised in Table 3.6 below.

Each of the four articles discussed in this section is relevant to the research study for the following reasons:

- i) The discussion by Cooren (2001) on coalitions is a multi-stakeholder context and in a specific geographic region, the stakeholders are aligned around a specific ecological issue. It is not a global issue, but does have some elements of the multi-stakeholder issue field. In CCO terms it may be described as a metaconversation.
- ii) The discussions by Kuhn (2008) and Koschmann (2013) both illustrate how CCO concepts can be used to conceptualise inter-organisational collaboration.

- iii) A framework of XSP value is presented by Koschmann *et al.* (2012). In this case, cross-sector partnership is conceptualised as an authoritative text. However, this framework combines CCO concepts with value creation in cross-sector collaboration and provides the basis for a comparison of value creation as seen by a focal organisation (the authoritative text) with value creation in the context of a multi-stakeholder issue field (research setting of sustainable seafood).

As already noted at the beginning of this section, it is this framework that was used in the research analysis and the research design is discussed in detail at Section 3 of Chapter 4.

**Table 3.6: Cross-sector collaboration and CCO: Key points in the literature**

Reference	Key points
<b>Cooren (2001)</b>	Metaconversation Narrative analysis of an ecological controversy Multiple interests aligned around a rallying point – or association of interests Points of articulation where different agendas are compatible so that there is alignment of actions (rather than goals) A common narrative – a unified voice Role of human and nonhuman actors – of individuals and collective entities
<b>Kuhn (2008)</b>	Saturation as bridging boundaries Stakeholder engagement and interdependence as an opportunity for innovation Authoritative text – a narrative with a trajectory and collective identity Marshalling consent; attracting capital Coorientation of multiple interests
<b>Koschmann (2013)</b>	Authoritative text - common narrative or identity Coorientation Abstraction, reification of the narrative Voluntary collective action – willingness of people to act together
<b>Koschmann <i>et al.</i> (2012)</b>	Value of XSP as the ability to act and influence issues in a problem domain Authoritative text – trajectory Coorientation – marshalling consent; attracting capital Value potential; Value delivery

Source: Author's compilation.

### 3.25 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

The main literature review that informs the research design is now complete.

From the review of the literature on collaboration, two streams of research were identified that on the one hand focused on domain level collaboration, where the domain is a set of problems of

common concern; and on the other hand focused on inter-organisational relations, which favour the perspective of a focal organisation.

The review of the literature on cross-sector collaboration identified three frames that were used to organise the literature. The first is the institutional frame in which the focus of cross-sector collaboration is on collaborative governance and public private partnerships. The second is the strategic frame, which seeks collaborative advantage for each organisation. The third is the collective action frame, which incorporates ideas from both domain level collaboration and focuses on mutual benefit.

Two additional subjects were covered in separate sections. The one addressed the literature on cross-sector collaboration and value creation; and the other considered multi-stakeholder collaboration as an issue field.

The final section of the chapter dealt the choice of the theoretical lens used in the research analysis. This is a communicative approach known as the communicative constitution of organisation. An overview of the literature that applies CCO thinking to explore cross-sector collaboration is presented.

### **3.26 CHECKPOINT: END OF CHAPTER 3**

The main literature review has now been completed.

Chapter 4 now follows as a bridging chapter providing background and context to the various research choices in the methodology and design, which then follows in Chapter 5. It includes discussions on the theoretical background to CCO thinking and the concepts used in the framework of cross-sector partnership value creation.

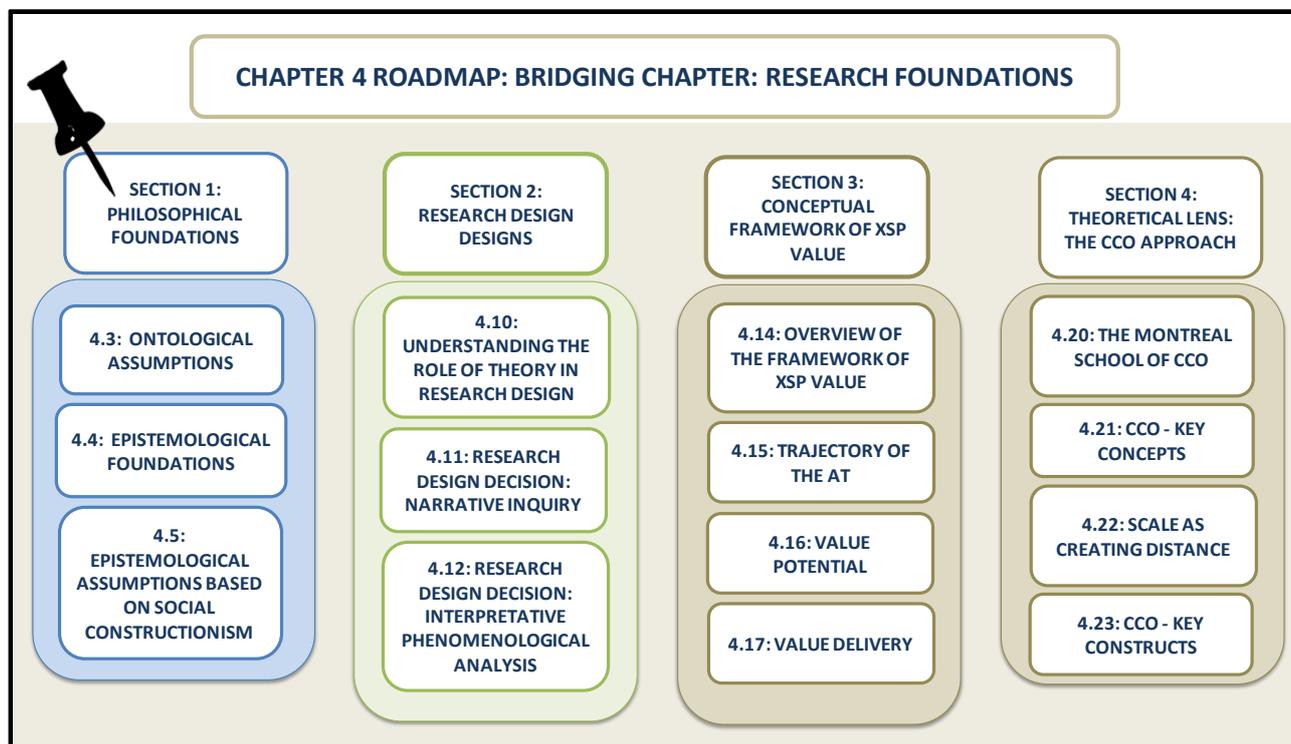
## CHAPTER 4

### BRIDGING CHAPTER: RESEARCH FOUNDATIONS

#### 4.1 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 4 has four main sections as shown in Figure 4.1 below. In the first, the research foundations are explained so that the ontological and epistemological assumptions are clearly articulated. The assumptions are informed by the research questions and the aims of the research as described in Chapter 1.

In turn, these foundations, along with the literature review, inform the research design decisions that are set out in the second section, which deals with various theoretical choices for the research. In turn these decisions lead to the third and fourth sections, which present an explanation of the theoretical lens that was used for the analysis. This comprises two parts, namely the framework of cross-sector partnership value and the theoretical lens known as the CCO approach.



**Figure 4.1: Chapter 4 Roadmap**

Source: Author's compilation.

## CHAPTER 4: SECTION 1

### PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS

#### 4.2 ALIGNING ASSUMPTIONS WITH THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

##### 4.2.1 Why assumptions need to be articulated

The research questions take cognisance of the ontological assumptions and in turn inform the epistemological assumptions and the literature review. While this is described here in a sequential manner, the process was iterative and developed over a period of time as the literature review progressed and methodological options were identified.

A key reason for providing this background is that it establishes the basis from which research choices were made throughout the research study including the research fieldwork, analysis and interpretation, discussion and final arguments. Setting out the underlying assumptions means that the internal validity or coherence of the research and research claims may be assessed on completion of the study in relation to these stated aims and assumptions.

The intention here is to be transparent and to avoid potential misunderstanding that may arise in relation to alternative ways of tackling the research questions based on alternative assumptions. It is recognised that there are different ways in which a research study may be designed, each with its own merits. The purpose here is not to debate these different positions, but rather to present the underlying assumptions adopted for this research in a coherent manner.

##### 4.2.2 Researcher note: An iterative process of alignment<sup>9</sup>

See endnote 4.1 in Appendix U.

#### 4.3 ONTOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS

As described in Chapter 1, the research study was situated within the context of complex systemic problems and sustainability issues. Complexity is the reality within which the research was conducted and the reality of the participants, individual and organisational as they work together and engage with the issues of sustainable seafood.

The ontological basis of this research is complexity. It is not a research choice itself but rather a logical consequence of the subject matter. The reality of complexity is a key factor in making further research choices and the research design.

##### 4.3.1 The meaning of complexity

According to Cilliers (1998: 2) the concept of complexity is elusive rendering definition difficult. He explained that “complex social systems “are made up of a multitude of non-linear interactions that cannot be simplified”. The complexity of the system is a result of the interactions. Cilliers explained that it is not the components of the system that are complex, but rather the combination

of a large number of elements and the non-linear interactions, which generate emergent properties rather than predictable or predefined outcomes.

Cilliers (2010) also argued that “the complexity of a system is not simply a function of the interactions between components, but of their organisation”; they are dynamic and constantly transforming. He explained that the dynamic properties of the system are derived from its diversity and that difference, rather than similarity, is required to establish meaning. Cilliers said that “the richness of the system is a function of the differences it contains” and “if we want a rich understanding of the world and of each other (i.e. a lot of meaning), if we want resilient and dynamic organisations, then we need an abundance of differences”.

The nature of complexity and complex systems means that only characteristics can be identified and any perspective adopted will inevitably be partial, local and temporary. (Flood, 1999: 92). While it was not possible to incorporate all the characteristics of complex systems into this study, Table 4.1 sets out the key characteristics derived from Cilliers (2010), Snowden and Boone (2007), Stacey (2011: 252) and Stacey, Griffin and Shaw (2000: 196).

**Table 4.1: Characteristics of complex systems**

<b>Characteristics of complex systems</b>	<b>Consequences</b>
Multiple components that interact in multiple non-linear ways Emergent properties – not predictable Dynamic – constantly transforming - evolving	Uncertain and unpredictable Interaction is fundamental Change is constant
Diversity and difference – difference as a function of relationships – a network of relationships Meaning – richness; rich understanding Heterogeneous and asymmetrical	Interactions and relationships are key Diversity and difference is unavoidable
Patterns of activity Capacity to self-organise	The complex system evolves rather than adapts Patterns are evidence of organising and structure
Open systems interact with their environment but require constraints such as structure and boundaries.	Context is relevant Interaction is fundamental
Time – a history, a past that is co-responsible for present behaviour	Continuity is relevant Complex systems evolve through time

Source: Author's compilation.

These characteristics provide a guide towards making research choices on the epistemological assumptions and methodological options required to create a research design that aligns with the research questions and the ontology of complexity. In particular, it highlights the need for the design to incorporate diversity and difference but also recognise patterns of activity or areas of similarity. Characteristics such as time and context are also relevant. The dominant feature highlighted here is that interactions are central to the understanding of complexity and the research

design should give prominence to interactions. The various research choices will be explained with reference to the characteristics of complexity described above.

#### **4.4 EPISTEMOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS**

Before presenting on the research design and research process, it is necessary to clarify the underlying assumptions that directed and informed the research study. These are research choices that needed to be aligned with the ontological assumptions and the research questions.

A definition of experience has already been introduced in Chapter 2 in Paragraph 2.7.7. It is a definition based on a phenomenological view. Social constructionism aligns with this view, indeed it is founded on the phenomenology of Schutz (Berger & Luckmann, 1966: 27). The following discussion explains why this view was adopted.

##### **4.4.1 Positioning the research study**

It is important that epistemological and methodological assumptions are clearly stated. As Deetz (1996) pointed out, the aim is not to argue alternatives that profess in some way to be better or to be right nor should it suggest that a diversity of views would lead to everyone finding alternatives interesting or useful. Rather, he argued, it is important to be clear about the grounds on which research claims are made and how the claims are related to the research procedures so that there is an appreciation of why different choices are made.

It should be noted that none of the discussions cited adopt a direct comparison between quantitative and qualitative methods as this reduces the discussion to a methodological choice rather than a discussion of the underlying research philosophy and assumptions. Applying a qualitative method is an outcome arising from the underlying epistemological assumptions rather than a choice made in advance.

There are several ways in which broad research categories or paradigms are described. These are all heuristics to clarify different perspectives that may be adopted in conducting research within the social sciences and sociology. Each of these perspectives espouses different underlying assumptions or beliefs and represents different approaches to studying social science and sociology. While not directed specifically at business studies, nonetheless these debates are relevant to business, management and organisation studies.

##### **4.4.2 Research paradigms and discourses**

There are different ways in which different research paradigms are described. One of the most commonly cited is the taxonomy of Burrell and Morgan (1979), who offered a critical assessment of the various philosophical debates within the social sciences and the assumptions about the nature of society. They presented a taxonomy of four sociological paradigms and it generated much debate in the academic community. Deetz (1996) acknowledged its value in identifying alternatives to the “dominant functionalist tradition” but countered by offering his own alternative

taxonomy directed at describing research discourses related to organisation studies. His aim was to highlight the main differences among research approaches rather than differences at the level of social theory.

What is of interest in both these discussions is the consideration of some of the key choices. Burrell and Morgan highlighted the subject/object debate. Does the research adopt a position that assumes that reality is objective and external to the individual, or a belief that reality is subjective and the product of human consciousness and human cognition? In the former, the focus of research is directed at searching for general or universal laws or nomothetic approach; whereas in the latter, studies focus on understanding “what is unique and particular to the individual” or an idiographic approach. There is also the debate that contrasts a deterministic view, which holds that human beings respond to the external world and are products of their environment, with a voluntarist view that assumes human beings are creative and exercise free will and are responsible for creating their environment.

Other issues raised by Deetz consider the origin of concepts in the research process and the nature of research practices. With regards to research process, Deetz distinguished between working with predefined problems and working with emergent ideas. In the former, the subject is defined by the researcher and directed by existing theory. In the latter, new theoretical ideas may be developed during the research process, and generated from the particular, locally situated circumstances of the research itself. In relation to research practices, Deetz contrasted a consensus view seeking similarities and integration with a dissensus approach that challenges the dominant discourse and seeks to explore difference, conflict and tensions.

While Deetz offered an alternative to Burrell and Morgan’s taxonomy, there are nonetheless areas of similarity between the two classifications. One of the differences is that Burrell and Morgan positioned the four categories as mutually exclusive paradigms, whereas Deetz positioned the four discourses as orientations so that the boundaries are more fluid. In this respect, Deetz allowed for a more open debate. Both, however, provided a similar description of the interpretive approach as voluntarist and idiographic with an interest in people as subjects rather than objects and understanding subjective experiences of everyday life. Burrell and Morgan (1979: 30) described it as a way of understanding the social world as an emergent process derived from “intersubjectively shared meanings”. Deetz also highlighted the emergent nature of interpretive research that incorporates situated practical knowledge and the narratives of the research participants. He said it is a means to explore the complexity and creativity of life rather than an instrumental view and that phenomenology and hermeneutics are both methodological approaches that align with the interpretive philosophy.

#### 4.4.3 Highlighting key research assumptions

These are both interesting ways to categorise different research paradigms and based on these, the assumptions that align with the research interest in the lived experience of key individuals and the ontology of this research are as follows:

- i) A subjective view is relevant since it is the lived experience of individuals that is the research interest. It is therefore an idiographic view, with an interest in the particular and unique aspects of individual experience.
- ii) The ontology of complexity suggest that a voluntarist perspective would match the research context, rather than a deterministic view that assumes an external environment that provides a degree of stability, control and predictability.
- iii) Based on the assumption of an idiographic and voluntarist approach as well as the ontology of complexity, an appropriate research approach would also allow for the emergence of research ideas from locally situated research material.
- iv) With regards to the research practices, the options proposed by Deetz are either consensus seeking or exploring difference. However, rather than choosing only one of these practices, another option would be to use both together as a means to highlight new insights and understanding. While exploring difference and diversity would align with complexity, research outcomes also need to be considered and this means that there needs to be a sense of cohesion so that a conceptual framework and conclusions may be drawn. It would therefore seem appropriate to balance these divergent options and design an approach that could, in some way, accommodate both of these apparently opposing requirements. This would suggest a research design that seeks a diversity of perspectives in the fieldwork from which areas of similarity may be sought in the analysis. These areas of similarity may then form the basis of a conceptual framework, while still highlighting areas of difference.

Overall, these assumptions would place the research study within an interpretive frame. The assumptions noted above align with the interest in learning from the lived experience of key individuals.

#### 4.4.4 Postmodern characteristics

The inclusion of multiple perspectives and an interest in difference as well as similarity suggest a tendency towards the postmodern.

Postmodernism does not have a standard meaning (Alvesson, 2002: 19) and definitions are controversial (Grbich, 2004: 17). However, Lyotard (1984: xxiii - xxv) defined the term postmodern with reference to the term 'modern', which he described as science that legitimises itself through a "grand narrative" or "metadiscourse". In comparison, he describes postmodernism as "the

incredulity toward metanarratives”, so that postmodernism questions, challenges or provides alternatives to the dominant metanarratives.

Lyotard described the characteristics of the postmodern condition and highlighted aspects including:

- i) the recognition of the important role of language;
- ii) how narrative knowledge exists in addition to scientific knowledge;
- iii) knowledge is legitimised not only as scientific knowledge, which adopts a discourse of consensus and assumes the need for rational argument; but also that dissension and difference is an important means to stimulate innovation and new knowledge.

This research study reflects some of these broad attributes of the postmodern condition. First, the subject matter of sustainability is a grand narrative that challenges the dominant narrative of unlimited growth (Meadows, Randers & Meadows, 2004). This is particularly relevant in the context of a business supply chain where resources are consumed. Second, the research phenomenon is collaboration and this differs from the dominant narrative in business, that of competition.

Third, the research design explores the micro-level narratives of the lived experience of key individuals. This allows for a diversity of perspectives to be presented, from micro (personal level) to meso (organisational level) and macro level issues. This combination of different levels of narrative supports the contention that the research is postmodern.

Finally, the ontology of complexity reflects postmodern characteristics. Cilliers (1998: 119-122), presented a detailed comparison of the characteristics of complexity, as described previously, and those of the postmodern condition as conceptualised by Lyotard. Based on this comparison and the other arguments presented above, it may be concluded that this research study has postmodern characteristics.

#### **4.4.5 Perspectives on the sociology of organisations**

Going beyond the philosophical discussion of Burrell and Morgan and the discourses of Deetz, a more current perspective is also explored, which provides some further background in the context of organisation studies.

Godwyn and Gittell (2012) also approached the discussion of research paradigms from the perspective of organisation studies. They said that sociological paradigms were “worldviews” derived from basic assumptions about human nature. The dimensions highlight contrasting perspectives from which people are seen as fundamentally competitive or cooperative; and people are seen to act as individuals or as collectives. They are described as rational, interactionist, conflict and functionalist. This classification is of particular interest to this study as it highlights

cooperative approaches, which may be related to the subject of collaboration. It also introduces a further dualist debate between individual and collective or micro and macro levels.

It is the interactionist view that is of particular interest here and it is sometimes called a micro-interactionist view (Knorr-Cetina, 1981). This is described by Godwyn and Gittell as a relational perspective that considers how people derive meaning from the associations they form in organisations; it is through interaction and negotiation that reality emerges. They indicated that research applying this view tends to favour a qualitative approach that explores “textual rather than numerical data”; it is a dynamic view that focuses on “the subjective experiences of actors”. The social context is also highlighted.

The interactionist view supports a socially constructed reality, which is achieved through a process of interaction with others. As a research approach, Godwyn and Gittell said that it is about theorising how “people make sense of their individual subjective experience in the shared objective world” so that “social reality mediates these two worlds”. This aligns with the description of social constructionism as described by Berger and Luckmann (1966: 30) who explored how “subjective meanings *become* objective facticities”. According to Godwyn and Gittell, the interactionist perspective is derived from pragmatism, symbolic interactionism and social psychology. Although not specifically mentioned by Godwyn and Gittell, social constructionism shares these philosophical roots and draws from these same sources.

The interactionist perspective has a focus on relational processes that mediate between the subjective world of individual meaning and the objective world of shared meaning. Organisations are seen to be “a set of ongoing interactions and emerging relationships” in which people negotiate and construct an understanding of the world (Godwyn & Gittell, 2012).

#### **4.4.6 Mapping research perspectives to the characteristics of complexity**

Table 4.2 below maps the characteristics of complexity with the descriptions of the research paradigms and discourses in order to indicate how the epistemological positioning for the research was identified in relation to the ontology of complexity. The first column is taken from Table 4.1 and the additional column in relation to the epistemological assumptions is added along with the related references as discussed in Paragraph 4.4.3 above.

Assumptions that need to be incorporated into the research design include the idiographic view as well as an interactionist, relational approach and again difference is highlighted. The time dimension should also be recognised in the design; assumptions about change and how systems adapt also require consideration.

**Table 4.2: Relating complexity to epistemological assumptions**

<b>Characteristics of complex systems</b>	<b>Epistemological assumptions aligned with the research interest in lived experience</b>	<b>References</b>
Multiple components that interact in multiple non-linear ways Emergent properties – not predictable Dynamic – constantly transforming - evolving	Local; Emergent; Voluntaristic Idiographic – particular and situated Interactionist – continually constructed through interaction Relational; Dynamic	Deetz (1996) Burrell & Morgan (1979) Godwyn & Gittell (2012)
Diversity and difference – difference as a function of relationships – a network of relationships Meaning – richness; rich understanding Heterogeneous and asymmetrical	Dissensus or difference	Deetz (1996) Godwyn & Gittell (2012)
A network of feedback loops Patterns of activity Capacity to self-organise	Dynamic Transforming	Godwyn & Gittell (2012) Deetz (1996)
Open systems interact with their environment but require constraints such as structure and boundaries	Socially constructed	Deetz (1996) Godwyn & Gittell (2012)
Time – a history, a past that is co-responsible for present behaviour	Narrative Transforming	Deetz (1996)

Source: Author's compilation.

The epistemological position that incorporates both interpretive and interactionist characteristics, along with these various dimensions, is social constructionism and this is therefore described in more detail below.

## **4.5 EPISTEMOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS BASED ON SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM**

### **4.5.1 Introduction to social constructionism as an epistemology**

Gergen and Gergen (2008: 31) explained that Western culture is characterised by its individualist orientation so that meaning is seen to “reside in the heads of individuals”. However, a constructionist view assumes that rather than individuals, it is relationships that “constitute the foundation of society” and meaning is created in relationships; in the process of relating. It is an intersubjective and relational view of knowledge creation. They described social constructionism as “an umbrella under which all traditions of meaning and action are sheltered” (ibid: 23).

It is an inclusive and pluralistic way of thinking so that many viewpoints are considered rather than the more conventional dualistic opposition of ideas. As we communicate, so we create meaning; “as we communicate with each other we construct the world in which we live” (Gergen & Gergen, 2008: 11). Further, that meaning is co-created in coordinated action and collaborative action so

that “meaning is always in motion” (Gergen, 2009: 98). This highlights the role of communication and collaboration in a dynamic process of constructing meaning or knowledge.

According to Schwandt (2000), social constructionism challenges the idea that meaning is fixed and independent of the interpreter. It assumes that meaning is constructed or created; that knowledge is not discovered but rather it is actively derived through some form of interpretation by human beings and that interpretations are constructed “against a backdrop of shared understandings, practices, language, and so forth” (Schwandt, 2007: 38).

Schwandt (2000) closely scrutinised social constructionism and interpretivism as epistemologies and acknowledged that they share certain assumptions. He concluded however that they are different. He distinguished different forms of interpretivism and discussed how the underlying assumptions concerning claims of objective knowledge differ from the epistemological assumptions of social constructionism. So while social constructionism requires an interpretive approach, according to Schwandt, it is not equivalent to interpretivism.

It should be noted that the term constructivism is sometimes found in the literature (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). Constructivism focuses on how an individual creates meaning, whereas constructionism focuses on collective meaning making (Patton, 2002: 97; Gergen & Gergen, 2008: 8; Creswell, 2013: 24). Constructivism therefore highlights the individual, subjective view. Similarly, Schwandt (2007: 38) distinguished between psychological constructionism with a focus on individual cognition, and social constructionism with a focus on “what constitutes a public body of knowledge”. Based on these distinctions, the terms constructionism and social constructionism are applied for the purposes of this dissertation, which aligns with the research interest in collaborative interactions.

#### **4.5.2 Historical background to social constructionism**

Best (2008) described how social constructionism was adopted within the discipline of sociology and later spread into the other social sciences. Increasing attention was given to the role of social context in understanding how individuals make sense of their experiences. Social constructionism also highlighted the contingent nature of social activity and the need to question “taken-for-granted assumptions”. The publication of Berger and Luckmann’s treatise on the sociology of knowledge in 1966 generated a revival of interest on social constructionist thinking.

#### **4.5.3 Key features of social constructionism**

Berger and Luckmann (1966: 31) described the “foundations of knowledge in everyday life”, its meaning and the intersubjective processes by which it is constructed. They described the knowledge of everyday life as “common-sense knowledge rather than ideas”; it is not purely conceptual. It is distributed knowledge that is relevant in a specific social (including economic) environment and historical situation.

They question the process of how “subjective meanings *become* objective facticities<sup>1</sup>” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966: 30). In other words, how do subjective meanings come to exist in the world as objective facts; what is the process by which social reality is constructed? This is what they called “the sociology of knowledge; it “is concerned with the relationship between human thought and the social context within which it arises”.

Their discussion drew upon the phenomenology of Alfred Schutz (ibid: 27) and the symbolic interactionism of George Herbert Mead (ibid: 29). They also recognised its “intellectual antecedents” in the work of Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber as well as Wilhelm Dilthey (ibid: 18-19).

The key features of the social constructionist view of knowledge are best described by Berger and Luckmann themselves<sup>2</sup>. Some of these are summarised below in point form with references to the original text (Berger & Luckmann, 1966: 35-53).

- i) Multiple realities: “I am conscious of the world consisting of multiple realities”, with “various layers of experience and structures of meaning”.
- ii) Socially distributed: “I encounter knowledge in everyday life as socially distributed, that is, as possessed differently by different individuals and types of individuals”; this introduces a complexity to everyday life.
- iii) Continuity: “all my existence in the world is continuously ordered by time”; “the world of everyday life is structured both spatially and temporally”; it has a history but it is also “extremely complex” as intersubjectivity involves many different levels.
- iv) Intersubjective: “the reality of everyday life further presents itself to me as an intersubjective world, a world I share with others”; while other perspectives are not identical with mine; they do not fully overlap; they differ and may even conflict.
- v) Communication and interaction: “I cannot exist in everyday life without continually interacting and communicating with others”.
- vi) Language: language “marks the coordinates of my life in society and fills that life with meaningful objects”; “an understanding of language is thus essential for any understanding of the reality of everyday life”; language allows me “to objectify a great variety of experiences”.
- vii) Relevance: “my knowledge of everyday life is structured in terms of relevances”; “some of these are determined by immediate pragmatic interests”; “my relevance structures

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<sup>1</sup> According to the OED (2015), a facticity is “the property of being a fact” or “the fact of existing in the world”.

<sup>2</sup> They write in the first person to indicate the “ordinary self-consciousness of everyday life” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966: 34).

intersect with the relevance structures of others at many points, as a result of which we have 'interesting' things to say to each other".

- viii) Context: the process "takes place in an interrelationship with an environment"; "this environment is both a natural and a human one"; "a specific cultural and social order".

#### 4.5.4 Highlighting different aspects of social constructionism in the literature

Gergen focused on intersubjective meaning, or the relational aspects. He contended that relationships, rather than individuals are the foundation of society and the "world becomes meaningful in relationships" (Gergen, 2009: 97) so that it is "through relationships that we construct worlds" (Gergen, 2009: 3). He argued that "if we wish to see a better world, it is in relationships that we should invest our energies" (Gergen, 2009: 107).

Schwandt (2007: 161) concurred with Gergen and explained that the ways in which we make sense of experience are not simply subjective (personal perspectives), but rather we create shared or common interpretations with others (interpretations are socially constituted) and this is an intersubjective process. There is a sense of continuity in this future-oriented view expressed by Gergen. Context is another aspect that is highlighted. Schwandt (2007: 39) said the core focus of social constructionism is the social process and interaction, including the "specific linguistic, social, and historical contexts".

Stacey (2011: 215) explained that social constructionist thinking gives primacy to social, rather than individual agency so that "the future is under perpetual construction in the detail of interaction between persons". These interactions occur at a local level, in a particular context and they generate meaningful action that is socially constructed. Gergen (2009: 98) called this coordinated or collaborative action.

Communication, interaction and language are also highlighted in the literature. Gergen (2009: 11) said that "language is a major ingredient of our worlds of action". In considering practices in organisations, Gergen (2009: 145) contended that it is "useful to view organisation as a *field of conversation*" because when people are conversing "they are co-constructing meaning". He argued that conversation can mobilise collective meaning. Foster and Bochner (2008) explained that "communication is the process and relationships are the context within which knowledge emerges" and so there is a need to give attention to "the quality and patterns of interaction".

Given the focus on communication and language, Deetz (2003) discussed the linguistic turn in organisation studies as a derivation of social constructionism. Discourse theory therefore also holds that meaning is socially constructed (Schwandt, 2007: 74).

Some forms of social construction assume the need for a consensus view (Grbich, 2013: 7; Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011; Creswell, 2013: 36). However, taking a broader view (dialogic as described by Deetz (1996) or interactionist as described by Godwyn and Gittell (2012)), there is

scope within the social constructionist paradigm for dissensus. Indeed, Berger and Luckmann (1966: 37) acknowledged that perspectives may differ and conflict.

Comparing social constructionism with the interactionist view described by Godwyn and Gittell, reveals that there is much that they have in common. In this dissertation, the description socially constructed is used in preference to interactionist, which appears to be a somewhat broader standpoint.

#### **4.5.5 Social constructionism and the meaning of lived experience**

The definition of experience used in this dissertation (see Paragraph 2.7.7) is aligned with a social constructionist view, which is founded on the phenomenology of Schutz (Berger & Luckmann, 1966: 27).

However, according to Schwandt (2007: 100-102), there are different ways of conceptualising human lived experience. This means that the selected definition needs to be explained relative to other possible conceptions, to avoid any misunderstanding about the assumptions adopted here.

In certain empirical studies there may be a focus on objectifying experience as a standardised conceptualisation that can be validated. Schwandt says that certain scientific or empirical views of experience have been challenged as they ignore its dynamic character. Deetz (2003) indicated that in psychology, research aimed at objectively studying human experience needs to be questioned. This would include studies of perception in cognitive psychology. Neither of these views of experience are suited to this research study as they do not align with the ontology of complexity and the epistemology of social constructionism.

Schwandt (2007: 100) explained that when exploring human lived experience, the interactions, intentions and the meanings related to the actions of people are the object of study. As noted above, where the research interest is in understanding the meaning of experience, the focus is on intersubjective sense making rather than objective explanation. It is the intersubjective process of sense making and meaning making that mediates between the subjective experience of the individual and shared experience that may be objectified.

According to Schwandt (2007: 101), experience is a dynamic, intersubjective process and may be viewed as both an ongoing everyday practice of sense making and it may be viewed as discursively constituted through language and speech. Both of these conceptualisations of experience (pragmatic and discursive) are aligned with a social constructionist view, which is fundamentally a phenomenological view.

#### **4.5.6 Summarising the epistemology of this research study**

With this background on the different philosophical backgrounds of various perspectives and different assumptions regarding knowledge, it is now possible to summarise how the epistemology aligns with the research ontology and the research interest.

The research interest is in the experiences of key individuals who work in collaborative cross-sector relationships. Experience here is not conceptual; it may be called the everyday experience of people in organisations, who work collaboratively. The research explores these experiences in order to understand the relationships and processes of collaborative interactions that work well or, in theoretical terms, collaborative processes that create value.

Table 4.3 below is a further extension of Table 4.2 and now incorporates a further column for the features of a social constructionist epistemology. In comparing the features of social constructionism with the characteristics of complexity as described above, some specific similarities are evident. The complexity arising from multiple relationships and interactions is particularly notable, as is the recognition of the social and temporal context. The detail is not repeated here, but is drawn from the descriptions already provided.

Based on this mapping and the high degree of correspondence between the features of social constructionism and complexity, the choice of social constructionism as the epistemology is demonstrated.

**Table 4.3: Relating social constructionism to the characteristics of complexity**

<b>Characteristics of complex systems</b> <b>(See Paragraph 4.3.1)</b>	<b>Epistemological assumptions aligned with the research interest in lived experience</b> <b>(See Paragraph 4.4.5)</b>	<b>Features of the social construction of knowledge</b> <b>(See Paragraph 4.5.3)</b>
Multiple components that interact in multiple non-linear ways Emergent properties – not predictable Dynamic – constantly transforming - evolving	Local; Emergent Voluntaristic Idiographic – particular and situated Interactionist – continually constructed through interaction Relational; Dynamic	Multiple realities Layers Interaction with others Social and cultural context Continual construction of meaning through interaction Relational
Diversity and difference – difference as a function of relationships – a network of relationships Meaning – richness; rich understanding Heterogeneous and asymmetrical	Dissensus or difference	Intersubjective Continual interaction and communication with others Views overlap but may conflict
A network of feedback loops Patterns of activity Capacity to self-organise	Dynamic Transforming	Knowledge is socially distributed Language is an essential part of the process
Open systems interact with their environment but require constraints such as structure and boundaries.	Socially constructed	An interrelationship with the environment
Time – a history, a past that is co-responsible for present behaviour	Narrative Transforming	Structured temporally and spatially There is continuity

Source: Author's compilation.

It should be noted that social constructionism may be viewed as either an ontology or an epistemology. The original work of Berger and Luckmann (1966), while best known for its short title, “The Social Construction of Reality”, is actually positioned as a “treatise on the sociology of knowledge”. In this research, social construction is used to describe a way of understanding and knowledge creation and is therefore used to describe the epistemological basis of the research.

#### **4.6 OTHER EPISTEMOLOGICAL ATTITUDES ADOPTED IN THIS STUDY**

There are two other epistemological positions taken in this research, which align with the social constructionist view. These are an appreciative attitude and a pragmatic stance and are described below.

##### **4.6.1 An appreciative attitude**

This research adopted an appreciative attitude in two respects. First, it took a positive, aspirational view on the subject of sustainability. Second, it recognised that appreciation is not only about positive value but also about exercising judgment regarding the facts of a situation and assessing its significance.

###### ***4.6.1.1 Appreciative – seeing a positive, aspirational future of opportunities***

Before embarking on the research itself, there was a key research choice that led to other related research decisions. Sustainability is a complex subject and means many things to many people. An appreciative view has a lot to do with the future and looking at alternatives and possibilities; it is about our uniquely human aspirations and hopes for the better future. It involves appreciative thinking rather than deficit thinking; it is about new ideas, creativity and innovation; appreciating what is good and positive about the world.

The appreciative approach is well grounded in research and theory, most notably in psychology and the work of Martin Seligman (2000). Founded on positive psychology, there is a new area of research in business called positive organisational scholarship. The research on positive organisational scholarship (Cameron, Dutton & Quinn, 2003) argues that strategies built on the concept of positive performance and optimism enable extraordinarily positive outcomes. Cameron (2008: xi) advocated that “a focus on the positive is life-giving for individuals and organizations”. Other research on the subject of positive psychology in business has also been done by Waddock (2005) and Csikszentmihalyi (2004).

Sekerka and Fredrickson (2007) discussed the role of positive emotions in influencing transformative cooperation, which they described as a unique collaborative process. They argued that emotions are a core aspect of social interactions and influence how people relate to each other so that positive emotions can evoke positive change in an organisational setting. They explored an appreciative approach that focuses on the strengths of relationships when people work together with enthusiasm, interest and positive energy. These arguments are applied within a

context of organisational cooperation and change and directed at generating benefit, making a contribution and improving effectiveness. They concluded that an appreciative approach helps to seek out value, to build relationships and social capital and in doing so may “generate outcomes that are boundaryless and that reverberate outward, beyond the confines of the organisation”.

It is submitted that it is appropriate to apply these arguments to the research process so that it aligns with the research subject of collaboration by adopting an appreciative stance. For this reason, the research questions focus on value creation and the benefits of collaboration, rather than on problems. The research focuses on what is effective and on leveraging or building on past successes.

The selection of a company (or companies) as an exemplar as a point of access to the research setting is also derived from this appreciative stance. The research sought to learn from those organisations that are already recognised as successful, and the research design therefore focused on identifying companies who may be considered to be exemplars of successful collaboration in the sustainability space.

#### ***4.6.1.2 Appreciative – seeing and valuing a situation***

In addition to that described above, appreciation is given a somewhat different meaning by Vickers (1983: 36-40) in which he defined appreciation as a circular process involving a dynamic balance. Appreciation is about making judgments about the facts of a situation or the “state of the system” (what Vickers called reality judgments) and then assessing the significance of these facts relative to a given norm or standard (what Vickers called value judgments). Appreciation in this sense is about recognising an optimal or acceptable solution to a situation within a given context and in relation to a set of quantitative standards or qualitative norms that may, or may not be, specified. Vickers talked about “an endless dialogue between appreciative and instrumental judgment” to test solutions “until an acceptable one is found”. This suggests that an instrumental judgement or decision on how to execute or manage a situation, requires first that the situation is ‘appreciated’ in order to change the way it is seen (the reality judgment) and valued (the value judgment). Vickers explained that greater attention needs to be given to the appreciative process, rather than the instrumental process.

#### ***4.6.1.3 Aligning an appreciative approach to the research subject and research questions***

This study deliberately adopted an appreciative stance in two respects. First, viewing the future not as a problem to be solved but as an opportunity to create a better world. It does not advocate that this is a better approach and does not reject other approaches; it assumed a different approach and a different perspective in order to explore aspects of the subject of cross-sector collaboration that may not have already been explored in the literature. The focus was on what generates positive outcomes or in simple language ‘what works’ in collaborative interactions; it focused on positive experiences of success.

Second, applying Vicker's logic, the aim of this project was to gain 'an appreciation' of the subject of cross-sector collaboration rather than to examine the related instrumental management or decision-making activities. It is in gaining a greater appreciation of the subject that this research hopes to make a contribution to the academic literature on cross-sector collaboration. It is noted that Seitanidi (2010: 28) contended that the literature on cross-sector partnerships already explores strategies for building successful partners but this appears to be directed at the instrumental aspects of the subject.

This research study explored how cross-sector collaboration is experienced by key individuals; about how they 'appreciate' cross-sector collaboration as a positive experience and about how they 'appreciate' it as a way of working together with others. The experiences of cross-sector collaboration were explored as narratives of 'what works'. It is also the participants' interpretation of success that was explored; and what they consider to be of value. The focus on positive experience allows for multiple meanings and appreciation in more than one sense of the word.

#### **4.6.2 A pragmatic stance**

A pragmatic view is recognised by Berger and Luckmann (1966: 36) who said that the attention of everyday life is "dominated by the pragmatic motive", by "what I am doing, have done or plan to do". They described a pragmatic interest as a zone that focuses on the "here and now", rather than more remote or indirect areas of interest.

Weinberg (2008) described pragmatism as a philosophical perspective, which considers the value of knowledge within "its wider ramifications for the good of the individual and society". Pragmatism deals with practical contexts and deals with human problems. According to Weinberg, it is concerned with "the relationship between understanding the social world and actively changing it for the better".

According to William James, who wrote a series of lectures on pragmatism between 1906 and 1907 (James, 2012), pragmatism is an empiricist philosophy that gives emphasis to facts rather than abstract ideas, which is the focus of rationalist philosophy (ibid: 4). More specifically, he said that the principles of the pragmatic method are dealing in practical consequences and applying ideas to concrete cases and towards action (ibid: 21-25). It deals in particular situations rather than intellectual abstractions and it emphasises the practical aspects of a problem or idea.

The research questions were directed towards addressing sustainability as complex social challenges and understanding how this may be achieved through collaboration and the benefits and value of doing so. The research aims to be both theoretically relevant and useful in practice. This aligns with the understanding of pragmatism described by Weinberg and the principles of the pragmatic method described by James. Indeed, as will be described below, the methods adopted in the research fieldwork are directed by a conceptualisation of experience derived from John Dewey, a dominant influence in pragmatic thinking (Dewey, 1981: 515-520).

## **4.7 OTHER CONCEPTUAL ISSUES**

### **4.7.1 Methodological choices**

Methods have evolved over time. For example, the conventional rules of grounded theory are now applied in a new way with constructionist methods, such as those used by Charmaz (2006). Many methods are rooted in positivist assumptions and many adopt an interpretive approach and others are described as postmodern.

One of the challenges is to select methods and tools that not only align with the research aims and questions but also with each other. Choices need to be coherent and the critical dimensions of the decisions that are relevant to the research are outlined below.

### **4.7.2 Empirical but not empiricist**

An understanding of the term empirical is relevant as the fieldwork aspects of this research explored the 'experiences' of key individuals and used empirical material.

Empiricism as an epistemology should not be confused with the use of empirical data. As Schwandt (2007: 85) explained, all forms of qualitative research generate empirical data from the research process. The empirical data is the evidence that supports the research claims but an empirical inquiry or research does not necessarily adopt an empiricist epistemology.

An empirical epistemology asserts that knowledge is experiential and derived from sense experience. Schwandt (ibid: 83) asserted that empiricist research makes knowledge claims based on sense perceptions and observations. The data from observations or experiments require no interpretation and the researcher is an objective observer.

These distinctions are noted so that a research design may adopt empirical methods of data collection and analysis, but this does not necessarily mean that it holds an empiricist philosophy.

### **4.7.3 Escaping the subject object debate**

A subject object dualism is evident in certain research philosophies. As noted above, Burrell and Morgan separated and defined objective and subjective dimensions. The objective, external world 'out there' assumes regularity, certainty and universal laws that explain reality. The subjective, internal world of individual experience is concerned with understanding the way in which "the individual creates, modifies and interprets the world" (Burrell & Morgan, 1979: 3).

Deetz (1996) challenged this dualism as "faulty logic" and says that it constrains the way in which science is conceived. He argued that it is widely disputed in Western philosophy (he cites Husserl, Heidegger and Wittgenstein) and is no longer meaningful or credible<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> It is the dualism that is untenable rather than either of the positions taken on their own.

He posited that social constructionism and more specifically ‘the linguistic turn’ in the social sciences avoids this dualism and offers a different approach with an interest in different phenomena, in which the individual subject is not taken as the unit of analysis (Deetz, 2003). A focus on relationships directs attention to the interaction between individuals, which is intersubjective.

Arguing from this perspective, Deetz said that the researcher cannot explore the personal subjective world of others. Also, the researcher does not present a “personal point of view or a subjective impression” but rather, the researcher engages with the world.

This research study focused on relational experiences of individuals that work together collaboratively. The research design acknowledges the intersubjective role of the researcher in that the researcher interacts with both the participants and with the phenomena of the study. The researcher role is discussed in more detail below in the methodology chapter at Paragraph 5.7.

#### 4.8 SUMMARY OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH

Table 4.4 summarises the key positions adopted in this research as already discussed above.

**Table 4.4: Summarising the key philosophical assumptions for this research**

<b>Research area</b>	<b>Assumptions aligned with the research questions</b>	<b>Alternatives that do <u>not</u> align with the research questions</b>
Ontology	Complexity	
Epistemology	Social constructionist	Interactionist
Other epistemological attitudes	Appreciative Pragmatic	Problem solving Limited to theoretical
Key concepts	Intersubjective Lived (everyday) experience	Subjective Limited to perception or sensory experience Limited to objective forms of experience
Methodological approaches	Empirical methods of data collection Interpretative analysis Qualitative methods	Interpretivism Quantitative

Source: Author’s compilation.

The ontology of complexity is aligned with the epistemology of social constructionism, as well as the appreciative and pragmatic stances. The key concepts of intersubjectivity and lived experience are highlighted and also the key methodological choices. For clarity, other options that were not selected are noted to confirm that they do not align with the research questions and are not included in the design.

Adopting a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experience of key individuals aligns with the philosophical assumptions of social constructionism. The appreciative and pragmatic attitude has already been discussed. From a methodological perspective, a research design of empirical data collection with an interpretative analysis aligns with these background assumptions.

An interpretative analysis is a qualitative rather than a quantitative approach. This is a consequence or outcome of the philosophical assumptions, rather than a choice that was pre-determined.

As a conscious research choice, this research adopted an epistemological position that is very broadly defined and it applied methodological choices that allow for multiple perspectives to be considered. It is a deliberate research choice and this does not render other research approaches inappropriate or incorrect; it simply declares that this research has adopted a different approach.

Given the various options described in the literature, and those that support or may be aligned with the notion of a complex reality, the epistemology espoused in this research is a social constructionist view. Methodologically this translates into a qualitative research approach.

#### **4.8.1 Researcher note: Why qualitative research?<sup>10</sup>**

See endnote 4.2 in Appendix U.

#### **4.8.2 Researcher note: Exploring qualitative research<sup>11</sup>**

See endnote 4.3 in Appendix U.

## CHAPTER 4: SECTION 2

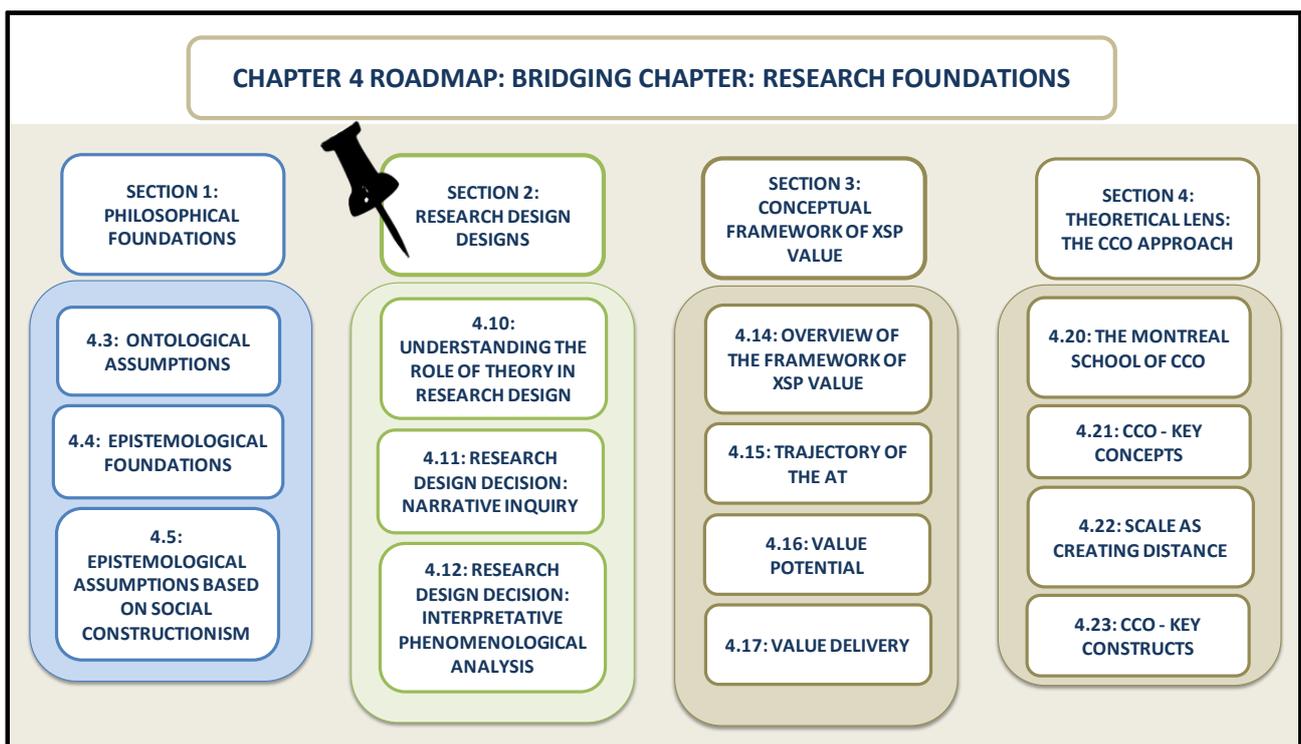
### RESEARCH DESIGN DECISIONS

#### 4.9 SECTION INTRODUCTION

This section is positioned immediately after the philosophical foundations because it applies the ontological and epistemological assumptions to key research decisions related to the role theory in the research design.

As shown in Figure 4.1, the section starts with a discussion on the role of theory in research design and then the research decisions regarding methodological choices are discussed.

These discussions are required before the specific details of the research design can be described in Chapter 5.



**Figure 4.1: Chapter 4 Roadmap**

Source: Author's compilation.

#### 4.10 UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF THEORY IN RESEARCH DESIGN

##### 4.10.1 Introduction

In this section the focus turns to how theory was used for this study in order to make a contribution to the body of literature.

The role of theory for this study evolved over time from a more general awareness of an inductive process to a research design that included a specific theoretical lens to facilitate the analysis. At

an early stage in the analysis, it became evident that, in certain respects, the existing framework did not fit well with the MsCsC context. This highlighted an opportunity to refine the existing framework by adapting it to the context of MsCsC as an issue field.

As already noted, adopting a qualitative approach is the consequence of the research questions that are posed, rather than a choice in and of itself.

#### **4.10.2 The role of theory in qualitative research design**

Delport, Fouche and Schurink (2011) contended that “although there is increasing agreement that theory has a place in qualitative research, there is currently no consensus as to the best usage of it”. The role of theory is therefore determined by the epistemological and methodological choices so that theory may be applied in different ways according to the needs of the research. A short summary of these alternatives is provided, as the role of theory for this study was not evident at the outset. Different theoretical options were carefully considered before finalising the design of the research.

Maxwell (2013: 48) described theory as “a set of concepts and ideas and the proposed relationships among these”. Grbich (2013: 292) described theory as “abstract knowledge which has been developed as an account regarding a group of facts or phenomena” and that explores the phenomena, concepts and their interrelationships so that “an explanatory framework can be developed”.

A traditional view of theory presents a systematic set of variables that offers a causal explanation of a phenomenon in terms of its relationship to the variables. Certain hypotheses are then derived from the theory and the aim of research is to test the hypotheses. This approach assumes a deductive model of explanation, where a general proposition is tested with specific data; it is commonly used in quantitative analysis but can also be applied in case study research and other empirical studies.

##### ***4.10.2.1 Different types of theory***

Qualitative research, is used mainly for theory generation or discovery rather than theory testing. It is here that an inductive approach may be applied, where specific data are used to derive concepts and theoretical ideas so that specific cases or situations may be generalised to a wider population. Different approaches to explanation and reasoning may be combined, so that both deductive and inductive reasoning can be used at different times during a research study. Some studies apply an abductive approach, which is an iterative process of reasoning that would argue the plausibility of a case or theory (Schwandt, 2007: 1). Grounded theory is a specific form of inductive theory development with its own specific language, methods and tools in which the data is systematically analysed and coded to develop theoretical ideas.

In addition to the different modes of explanation, Grbich (2013: 292) described different levels of theory. In its simplest form, theory comprises concepts and how they are related so that a theory

provides a model or map of something and also tells the story of what is happening and why so that it provides new insights and a broader understanding of the phenomenon (Maxwell, 2013: 49).

According to Merriam (1988: 57), at a specific level, there is substantive theory, which is related to particular settings or issues and derived from practice settings. An example would be the work of James Austin on cross-sector collaboration and the collaboration continuum that he has developed (Austin, 2000a); another would be negotiated order theory (Day & Day, 1977).

Middle-range theory generates a higher level of abstraction and may be related to a particular academic discipline. For example, different disciplines have theories on what systems are and how they work from general systems theory to open systems and cybernetics, from systems dynamics to soft systems and critical systems thinking, and from complex adaptive systems to complex responsive systems and complexity science (Flood, 1999; Stacey, 2011).

Grand theory provides an abstract overview, which may be widely known, consistent and stable (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2011: 41) and is common in the natural sciences (Merriam, 1988: 56). Examples would be Einstein's theory of relativity, the law of thermodynamics or the law of gravity.

#### ***4.10.2.2 The role of theory in qualitative research***

According to Crane, Husted & Matten (2016), there are three ways in which theory can be used to make a theoretical contribution. These are "developing, refining, or testing theory". Developing theory is about generating new theory; refining theory means adapting or extending existing theory. The aim of theory testing is to test an existing theory by proving or falsifying one or more hypotheses.

In qualitative research the role of theory may vary according to the research design. For example, in grounded theory, the process of analysis is inductive and designed to generate substantive theory (Grbich, 2013: 295). For an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) research approach, existing theoretical understanding is used in the analysis and interpretation process (Smith, 2004) and this involves applying a disciplinary lens. Other methods such as narrative analysis, ethnography and case study each invoke existing theory in different ways, including the option to use a specific theoretical lens to inform the study (Creswell, 2013: 63). The design of the research analysis and interpretation process in a qualitative study is most commonly directed towards generating or refining theory rather than testing hypotheses. However, in some cases, qualitative analysis may also be combined with a quantitative approach for theory testing.

Maxwell (2013: 49-52) explained how existing theory may be used in a research design as a "spotlight" to draw attention to certain events or activities or matters of interest. However, he offered a caution that existing theory may also limit thinking and create blindspots and so it is important to discuss possible limitations and to challenge the theories that are used. He contended that in qualitative research there is inevitably a tension between applying existing theory

and failing to use it productively. The way to address this tension is to remain alert and to deliberately seek alternative ways of making sense of the data.

#### ***4.10.2.3 Refining existing theory as adapting and extending***

Specifically directed at management research, Gulati (2007) explored the debate on research rigour and relevance and noted “researchers should try to ground ideas in existing theory or clearly articulate new theories” in order to make a clear contribution to the body of knowledge. Further, he said that “theory building is a cumulative enterprise”.

Crane *et al.* (2016) explained that refining theory includes adapting an existing theory to a different setting and extending the understanding of the phenomena. They offered examples of how exploring an existing theory in a different country context or setting could highlight new conceptual dimensions or new ways of looking at existing concepts. In this way, a new study may add new understanding to the way a phenomenon is theorised.

#### ***4.10.2.4 What it means to apply a disciplinary or theoretical lens***

Underlying all research there is a theoretical framework (Merriam, 2009: 66) and related assumptions that provide the structure that frames the research, but it is often assumed rather than explicitly presented. Patton (2002: 131) argued that the researcher should articulate the theoretical framework.

A theoretical framework is drawn from a disciplinary orientation so that it is the theoretical lens through which the world is viewed (Merriam, 2009: 67). A research study draws on this theoretical lens in terms of the concepts used, the literature applied and the research design that is adopted and executed so that it acts to frame the research. Referencing Wolcott, Merriam (*ibid*: 70) explained that there is a “need for every researcher to be able to place his or her work within some broader context” and the theoretical lens is the broader context. It also delimits the study as was noted above by Maxwell so that the researcher needs to remain aware of its limitations.

Merriam (*ibid*: 70) explained further that “most qualitative research inherently shapes or modifies existing theory” because the research data is analysed and interpreted within the frame of an existing theoretical orientation and the research findings are discussed in relation to the extant literature. The research process, whether inductive or deductive, is designed to expand upon previous work.

The theoretical framework is sometimes called the conceptual framework (Merriam, 2009: 66), however, the conceptual framework may also be a more specific model or framework within the broader disciplinary context. This indicates that there may be more than one level of conceptual thinking that is applied.

Different levels are also reflected by Grbich (2013: 291) who explained that theorising involves considering the research findings through “the lens or frame of one or several theoretical or

conceptual positions” and distinguished the broad theoretical lens from a more specific conceptual position or model within the broader lens. She said that the researcher may “call upon the huge variety of conceptual models and theoretical ideas” available.

As an example, Smith *et al.* (2009) explained that the IPA method may engage with a particular model or theory so that the analysis is more direct and targeted without claiming to test the existing model.

#### **4.10.3 The role of theory as applied to this research study**

This study was exploratory in nature and from the three options presented by Crane *et al.* (2016), this then eliminates the testing of theory as a research so the design choice is reduced to either generating theory or refining existing theory.

The analysis method, and the way it is used, has consequences for the role of theory. The method adopted is interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) and this may be used either to generate theory using a grounded approach or to refine theory by applying a particular conceptual lens. It is the latter approach that was adopted for this study as an existing conceptual framework of value creation in cross-sector partnerships was highlighted in the literature and acted as a point of reference.

The choice of analysis methods and options considered are discussed in more detail at Paragraph 4.12 below. At this point, the discussion is confined to explaining the theoretical lens used for the IPA analysis.

IPA requires a theoretical lens with which to analyse the field texts or data.

Theory was used at two levels in this analysis. The first is at a disciplinary level that frames the overall analysis, and the second is at a more specific level that introduces specific concepts and a conceptual model related to the research interest.

In its original form, IPA was developed within the discipline of psychology. However, for the purposes of this research, an alternative theoretical lens was needed to align with the research context and the research questions. This meant that the IPA method needed to be adapted.

After careful consideration, the use of theory in the research design was directed towards a specific theoretical lens in organisation studies (a communicative lens) combined with a particular conceptual framework (a framework of cross-sector partnership value). While the theoretical lens frames the research and confirms the underlying epistemological assumptions, the conceptual framework is used in a specific way to organise the research analysis phase.

The theoretical framework is based on the extensive literature and theorising on CCO. Using CCO therefore has a strong theoretical foundation, while also allowing for new insights and theoretical ideas to be considered in relation to the specific subject of cross-sector collaboration.

The literature review in Chapter 3 at Paragraph 3.15 highlights a range of theoretical frameworks that support the literature on cross-sector collaboration value creation and it was the literature review that informed the choice of the theoretical lens and the conceptual framework. The theoretical lens selected is described in detail later in this chapter at Section 3 and the conceptual framework at Section 4 of this chapter. The theoretical lens is a communicative approach known as the communicative constitution of organisation (CCO) and it is from a branch of organisation studies known as organisational communication studies. Within the CCO literature, it was identified that there was a specific conceptual framework that applied a CCO approach to explore the process of value creation in cross-sector partnerships (XSPs).

#### **4.10.4 Researcher note: Understanding the role of theory<sup>12</sup>**

See endnote 4.4 in Appendix U.

### **4.11 RESEARCH DESIGN DECISION: NARRATIVE INQUIRY**

#### **4.11.1 Introduction**

Narrative inquiry was the chosen research approach for the fieldwork design because it aligns with the research interest in lived experience.

Narrative is also a choice that works in a business or organisational context where case study is a dominant research method, because narrative is itself a case-based approach (Riessman, 2008: 12). Narrative approaches in organisation studies have been pioneered by Czarniawska (1998) and by Boje (2001). As the basis for knowledge creation, Czarniawska (1998: vii) argued that narratives are “the main carriers of knowledge in modern societies” and narrative inquiry offers an alternative to more traditional research methods.

#### **4.11.2 How narrative inquiry aligns with the research interest**

##### ***4.11.2.1 Narrative inquiry and lived experience***

The primary reason for selecting narrative inquiry is the strong association with the research interest in lived experience. According to Josselson (2007) “narrative research consists of obtaining and then reflecting on people’s lived experience” and she says that, in contrast to other forms of research, it is a relational activity. Clandinin (2013: 9) described narrative inquiry as “both a view and a methodology for studying experience”.

For Clandinin and Connelly (2000: 17), narrative is about representing and understanding human experience; the continuity and wholeness of individual life experiences. They argued that “experience happens narratively” and to use narrative inquiry as a research method is in itself an experience. Experience and narrative are interrelated. More directly, Clandinin (2013: 17) said that narrative inquiry is “a way of honouring lived experience as a source of important knowledge and understanding”. She argued that it is a pragmatic approach and is essentially relational in that it explores experience across the dimensions of time and place and through interactions and

relationships. Stories facilitate thinking in multiple ways and multiple dimensions. Attention is given to details so that “particularities and context come to the fore” (Riessman, 2008: 13) and allows many individual perspectives to be included.

#### ***4.11.2.2 Narrative and learning***

Another aim of the research is to learn from the experiences of others who are already proving successful at using collaboration. Given this objective, narrative is again a suitable choice. According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000: 8), “narrative allows us all to learn”. They explain that for learning to occur, there needs to be some ambiguity, dissonance or difference so that assumptions and beliefs may be challenged. Narrative engages with ambiguity and difference and allows learning to happen.

#### **4.11.3 Why narrative?**

The examples above serve to substantiate the choice of narrative and demonstrate how narrative aligns with or supports the research aims and assumptions. Narrative also aligns with the ontology of complexity.

##### ***4.11.3.1 Connecting the ontology of complexity to narrative inquiry***

As already noted, the study assumed an ontology of complexity to align with the research context. The research design therefore sought to avoid an approach that is reductionist and mechanistic. What was required was a process that is systematic but avoids reducing the fieldwork texts to unrelated parts.

The narrative space is a complex space, filled with ambiguity and uncertainty (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000: 55). In narrative, the wholeness of the story itself, situated within a context and the ongoing interaction of parts and the relationships of the characters, are all sustained simultaneously. The parts and the whole co-exist and are interdependent; it is the way people make sense of the story to see it as a dynamic whole together with its interacting parts. It aligns well with the characteristics of complexity.

Riessman (2008: 12) said that “narrative study relies on extended accounts that are preserved and treated analytically as units, rather than fragmented into thematic categories as is customary in other forms of qualitative analysis, such as grounded theory”. Josselson (2013: 6) adopted the hermeneutic tradition of deriving meaning from the whole including the context and requires understanding of the relationships between the whole and the parts together.

Context is important in narrative (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000: 27) and makes a difference to how an experience is understood. Contextual elements such as time (past, present and future) and place or situation are as essential to our ability to make sense of an experience as are the interactions and the things that actually happen or that are the subject of the experience.

#### **4.11.4 Alternatives considered**

Various research alternative methods were investigated. In particular a case study approach was considered at length, and indeed the research approach adopted does resemble a case study design in some respects. A case study could have explored a phenomenon such as an entity or a process or a project as each case is investigated as a specific entity (Stake, 2006: 2). However, given that the research interest was to explore the lived experience of key individuals, rather than the organisation level, the case study approach was not the preferred option.

#### **4.11.5 Researcher note: Case study or narrative inquiry?** <sup>13</sup>

Refer to endnote 4.5 in Appendix U.

#### **4.11.6 Narrative inquiry: Design considerations for the research fieldwork**

##### ***4.11.6.1 Adopting a narrative approach that aligns with the research context***

According to Boje (2001: 8-9), there is a need in organisation studies for research to focus on “multi-stranded stories of experiences that lack collective consensus” and for case studies to become “polyvocal tapestries”. He argued that there are multiple storylines and fragments of stories with multiple voices and varying audiences so that narratives in organisational settings recognise this diversity.

It is these principles that are pursued in this research so that multiple perspectives are presented.

##### ***4.11.6.2 Adopting research language appropriate to the research context***

Adopting a narrative approach means, among other things, giving attention to language. Language is important because, in qualitative research, words are often used that are more appropriate to traditional research methods. While it is not necessarily incorrect to use the same language, nonetheless a narrative design that respects complexity and difference, should also give some consideration to the language used.

A different language is already evident in the discussion about quality criteria so that some argue that the words validity and reliability are inappropriate and that credibility and dependability are preferable. The issue of generalisation has already been mentioned so that in qualitative studies, transferability is the preferred criterion. These examples show that it is not just the words in themselves but their meaning that is at issue and whether the meaning is relevant in the given research context.

Other words that are problematic in a context of narrative inquiry, include terms such as data, sampling, informant and findings. The terminology depends on the specific research design adopted.

For narrative inquiry, Clandinin (2013: 46) recommended alternative terms so that ‘data’ is replaced by ‘field texts’ and ‘informants’ or ‘respondents’ become ‘participants’. She argued that

what is generated from the interactions with participants is “experiential, intersubjective texts rather than objective texts” or data (ibid: 46). She also extended this idea, so that once the field texts have been interpreted they become research texts (ibid: 47).

Van Manen (1990: 53) concurred and said it is misleading to talk about data in the human sciences, especially when participants are recalling or relating their experiences. Certainly, the individuals who engage with the researcher do still provide information but it is not objective, factual material. In this dissertation, the word data will in most instances be replaced by field texts.

For this study, the word participant conveys a better indication of the role of the key individuals, so that they may make other contributions and have the freedom to add their interpretations within the interview process. A participant does more than merely respond to a question; they contribute narrative accounts of their experiences.

Sampling is another awkward term and Josselson (2013: 15) recommends the term recruitment rather than sampling, according to the research needs. This is particularly appropriate when individual experts are engaged through a process of networking. Again, the word networking differs from the traditional language of sampling.

Other research vocabulary has also been carefully considered. While the research primarily adopted an interpretive approach, it is recognised that analysis was still required to organise, and manage the field texts and the research texts. Analysis was used deliberately to reflect those aspects of the research that required this way of thinking, but in general the dissertation talks about analysis and interpretation of the field texts as a recursive process that includes both aspects.

#### ***4.11.6.3 Defining experience for the purposes of structuring the fieldwork design***

The definition of experience used in this dissertation is based on the phenomenological concept of lived experience and attention is directed towards the research phenomenon as experienced in everyday life and within the context that it happens. It is this concept of experience that underpins the social constructionism view that guided this research.

A pragmatic view of experience from John Dewey aligns with this concept and expands on the underlying nature of experience, as noted in the definitions at Paragraph 2.7.7. According to Dewey, an experience is an interaction that occurs within a specific context and it also has a time dimension (Clandinin, 2013: 16). The design of the research fieldwork made use of these dimensions to create a coherent structure for the interview process. First is the dimension of continuity; an experience has a past, a present and a future. Second is interaction; and how the inward and the outward conditions, the personal and the social aspects interact within the situation or context of the experience itself, which is the third dimension.

These three aspects, interaction, continuity and context, were incorporated into the fieldwork design. They were specifically addressed in the interview questions. It should also be noted that

these aspects were also considered for the dissertation itself so that the dissertation as an experience of the researcher and for the reader, contains these three dimensions.

#### **4.11.7 Design considerations: narrative interviewing**

##### ***4.11.7.1 What is narrative interviewing?***

The term 'narrative interviewing' has been used to describe a form of interviewing that aims to elicit narrative accounts of personal experiences from participants (Josselson, 2013: x-xii). It is a form of interviewing that is designed to allow the participant to participate and play an active role in the interpretation of the interview questions and the content of responses. The interview is "a special kind of conversation" (ibid), but it is not completely unstructured as the researcher still creates a framework by setting the context of the interview and the topics to be discussed. Both the researcher and the participant have important roles and together they generate the interview outcomes so that they are jointly produced. The approach therefore supports a social constructionist philosophy.

Although this is not the same as action research, this study included certain characteristics that are similar to those set out by Peter Reason (2006). Making allowance for the participants to interpret the interview questions and respond freely in their own way means that they are involved in the research process and the narrative interview is an emergent process. Reason argued that "one cannot study and improve practice without deep involvement of those engaged in that practice". The study incorporated the principles of participation and it may be described as research that was done collaboratively (Herr & Anderson, 2005: 42).

The term narrative interview was adopted from Josselson (2013: 7) who recommended an approach that she described as relational. She said that interviewing is about relationships; it is a process rather than a procedure and involves interactions with people. In her view, the interview is a dynamic intersubjective process that may be viewed as a collaboration or partnership so that the participant is empowered rather than objectified.

There is a variety of different interview methods that adopt similar assumptions. Various names are used in the literature such as active interviewing (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995; 2003), postmodern interviewing (Fontana, 2003) or responsive interviewing (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Fontana and Frey (2005) argued that unstructured interviewing is a description generally given to more conventional qualitative or ethnographic interviews. They explained that interviewing is not only about the interview situation itself but also about what is done with the interview material and how it is interpreted. They described postmodern interviewing as polyphonic in that it presents multiple perspectives rather than amalgamating the interview material into a single interpretation given by the researcher.

Riessman (2008: 23) called interviews "narrative occasions" in which participants can present narrative accounts. She suggested that narrative inquiry works better with a less structured form of

interviewing; an approach she attributed to Mishler and described as closer to a conversation, in which both the researcher and the participant are actively involved. According to Mishler (1986: 36), his approach to interviewing is not an interrogation of multiple questions and answers, which he argued is based on a stimulus-response model from behavioural psychology. Fontana and Frey (2005) agreed and argued that interviewing is not “the neutral exchange of asking questions and getting answers”.

Mishler argued instead for a less structured approach that is discursive and which allows for the “joint construction of meaning” between the participant and the researcher so that “meaning is negotiated” (ibid: 59). The discursive approach provides a balance of power, rather than a dominance of power by the researcher (ibid: 54). The aim here is not for the interpretive framework of the researcher to be assumed as self-evident; nor is it for ‘respondents’ to provide precise or factual answers to questions whose meaning agrees with the researcher’s point of view. Rather, narrative accounts allow for “problems and possibilities” to come to the fore, which would not happen in a survey or formal question-answer discussion (ibid: 67).

#### ***4.11.7.2 Interviews and conversation***

Interviews that are less formally structured may be compared with conversation. Josselson (2013: x) described the narrative interview as a “special kind of conversation”. According to Bjerke (2007), the needs of the research directs the approach taken. He argued that if objective factual data is being sought then an interview is the best way to describe the interaction. Alternatively, if the aim is to obtain subjective accounts and to access the world as experienced by people, then this may be achieved through conversation.

When an interview adopts a narrative approach it does not lack structure but the structure is less formal and not completely predetermined by the researcher. A more conversational form may be adopted, but there is still the requirement to gather data, texts or narrative material that may be used for research purposes. An interview in a conversational form is not everyday conversation or discussion in which both people take turns to talk. It does remain a two-way exchange, but as Josselson (2013: 65-66) explained, the researcher needs to focus on listening actively, responding and showing interest and where appropriate, also allowing for silences.

Van Manen (1990: 66-67) described what he calls “conversational interviewing” as “a means for exploring and gathering experiential narrative material that may serve as a resource for developing a richer and deeper understanding of a human phenomenon” and the interview is a “vehicle to develop a conversational relation with a partner (interviewee) about the meaning of an experience”. He cautioned that the interview still requires discipline and needs to be oriented towards the research questions and needs to stay close to “experience as lived” so that the participant thinks about a specific instance or situation and explores it fully. Further, he advised to limit the number of questions asked.

A narrative approach is therefore less formal and it is more conversational, but the term narrative interview suggests a balance. Some structure is necessary so that the discussion remains directed towards the research objectives. But at the same time, there is also an invitation to the participant to engage in thinking more deeply about the research subject. A narrative form is designed to give the participants the opportunity to contribute their experiences and interpretations of the research subject. It encourages participants to relate their experiences as stories rather than factual accounts or reports, offering more detail to be shared with the researcher. It is through narrative that more detail is shared with the researcher and there is greater depth in the explanations. Narratives provide context, they demonstrate causal relationships; they convey meaning; they highlight what is important.

However, as Chase (1995) explained, the researcher needs to pose questions that are aimed at eliciting stories rather than reports. This requires careful attention to the wording of questions so that they invite narratives and they “shift the weight of responsibility” towards the participant in a way that affords them the opportunity to relate narrative accounts of their experiences. This is not always achieved and not all participants respond as hoped, but carefully crafted questions, or invitations (Josselson, 2013: 63) set the tone.

#### **4.11.8 Concluding remarks on narrative inquiry**

The application of the principles of narrative inquiry and narrative interviewing, as set out in the above discussion, are included in the fieldwork design and more specifically, the interview design, which is presented below at Paragraph 5.12.

### **4.12 RESEARCH DESIGN DECISION: INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS**

#### **4.12.1 Options considered for the research analysis**

Two options were considered for the analysis and interpretation phase of the research. The first was narrative inquiry, following the advice of Riessman (2008) and Clandinin (2013). Riessman presented four examples of narrative analysis including thematic, structural, performative and visual and explained that these may adapted or combined. Thematic analysis is particularly relevant and she explained how it works to keep the wholeness of the narratives rather than only parts (ibid: 53). It may also be presented in different ways depending on the nature of the inquiry, and the context. There is little specific guidance on how to identify themes, analyse them, map them or categorise them, but she did draw attention to the importance of context. Clandinin took a different approach and used narrative not only in the inquiry but also in constructing and reporting the outcomes. Her approach is to create a final research report that is a composite narrative drawn from the “resonant threads or patterns” discerned by a team of researchers working in collaboration (ibid: 132).

While a narrative analysis appeared at first to be an obvious choice given the fieldwork design, the need for a systematic process and a clear audit trail to meet research quality requirements was a key consideration. An alternative method of analysis known as interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) provided the opportunity to interrogate the narrative material from the fieldwork, while at the same time offering a robust and structured audit trail template. It was for this reason that IPA was selected rather than narrative analysis.

However, Smith *et al.* (2009: 196-197) acknowledged the strong connection with narrative analysis, given that both are interested in understanding lived experience and that IPA “subscribes to social constructionism”. In addition to the close alignment with the underlying assumptions of this research, it was the quality considerations that facilitated the research choice. The literature on IPA (Smith, 2004; Smith & Osborn, 2008; Smith *et al.*, 2009; Smith & Eatough, 2012) provides examples, guidance and suggested worksheets.

#### **4.12.2 Why IPA?**

The assumptions of IPA have much in common with the epistemology of the research. Smith *et al.* (2009: 11-39) discussed how the theoretical roots of IPA are phenomenology and hermeneutics. IPA has some distinguishing features that are suited to certain types of research study and it is best used in studies that are idiographic and inductive and explore the life or lived experiences of individuals. It is a method that balances the idiographic view of a particular individual with a more general analysis of a group of participants and so it is capable of offering insights at more than one level of analysis.

Another advantage of the IPA method is that there are documented examples of worksheets and the analysis method is explained in detail by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (Smith *et al.*, 2009), Smith and Osborn (2008) and by Huff, Smith, Jesiek, Zoltowski, Graziano and Oakes (2014). The IPA worksheets ensure that the analysis is conducted systematically, thoroughly and in a structured manner. Each transcript is analysed in turn and then a cross-case analysis is conducted. The IPA worksheets provide an audit trail of evidence that demonstrates how the research findings are reached from the interview transcripts. An example of an IPA worksheet from this research study is included at Paragraph 4.12.4 below.

IPA is directed by a primary research question that is exploratory, open-ended, and addresses big or significant issues (Smith & Eatough, 2012). According to Smith and Osborn (2008), IPA is “especially useful when one is concerned with complexity, process or novelty”. Since this study has an interest in complexity and process and hopes to offer some novel insights about the ‘big issue’ of sustainability, it appears that IPA would support these conditions.

Smith *et al.* (2009: 196) declared that “IPA subscribes to social constructionism” and that it has a “strong intellectual connection with various forms of narrative analysis”. They acknowledged that

narrative shares the same objective as IPA, which is meaning making or sense making and understanding life experience.

While IPA was used only in the analysis phase of the research, the literature on IPA (Smith & Osborn, 2008; Smith *et al.*, 2009; Smith & Eatough, 2012) described the full research process including the fieldwork. This confirms that the fieldwork design already described for this research, the open research questions, the purposive selection of the setting, the purposive recruitment of participants and the semi-structured narrative interviews, all align with the IPA approach.

#### **4.12.3 An overview of the IPA approach**

IPA explores both the particular and a more general view. Insights are first drawn from the particular, situated experience of each individual participant. The analysis of the particular is balanced with a more general level of abstraction based on the disciplinary lens applied and a comparative analysis of a group of participants. Giorgi (1975) explained that while these abstractions may not apply universally, they are no longer particular or situated; he describes them as “trans-situational”. The comparative analysis, or cross-case analysis as it is called in IPA, allows similarities and differences to be identified. Smith (2004) called this convergence and divergence.

The balance between the particular and the general also demonstrates attention given by IPA to both the parts and to the whole, to the detail and to the bigger picture. IPA explores the whole account of each participant, followed by a comparative analysis of different accounts; it then uses extracts as illustrations. It begins with the particular, moves towards shared experiences and then illustrates with extracts from specific accounts. It moves between these levels. This means that narrative accounts may be considered without reducing them to a process of fragmentation. Giorgi (2012) explained that a phenomenological approach is “both rigorous and non-reductionistic”.

There is also a complex dynamic between the researcher and the participant that Smith (2007) described as “an intense attentiveness to and engagement with the participant” during the interview. This is followed by an ongoing interaction with each participant’s account as transcribed into the field texts used during the analysis. It is a dynamic, recursive process and Smith compared it to the hermeneutic circle of interpretation. He explained however, that while hermeneutic theory is pertinent, in a research context, practical issues also need to be considered.

In broad terms, the focus of IPA on understanding lived experience is derived from phenomenology and the interpretive stance is derived from hermeneutics.

IPA is best suited when the data or texts are generated in one-on-one interviews or other autobiographical texts, rather than focus groups or other types of evidence (Smith, 2004). IPA is typically used as a method to develop thematic analysis, with illustrations provided by verbatim extracts. It is an analysis that retains the narratives of the field texts, rather than fragmenting them in a process of coding (Huff *et al.*, 2014).

#### 4.12.4 An example of an IPA worksheet

An extract of an IPA worksheet from the research fieldwork is shown below at Table 4.5, illustrating the first level descriptive extracts and a second level that is interpretative based on the conceptual dimensions of the conceptual framework that is used to organise the analysis. More detailed illustrative examples of working papers used for this study are included at Appendices L, M and N.

**Table 4.5: Example of IPA worksheet**

Extract of transcript	1st level analysis: Description of experience	Conceptual dimension	2nd level of analysis Interpretation
<p><b>Participant:</b> we often get asked whether we've seen changes in the way that our resources are being managed and how our resources are doing in terms of their stock status and things - and we've seen positive signs but it's also in the grand scheme of things - SASSIs only been going for about 9 years now - and when it comes to science - you need 20 years to be able to see whether a stock is recovering - probably a 100 years you know the Atlantic salmon - they put a moratorium - I think it was the 90s or something - early 2000s - and that stock still hasn't recovered - you know -</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> Yes -</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> - but people want results today - especially if they're putting money into a programme - they want to see results - at the end of their financial year - you know - which makes it difficult</p>	<p>we often get asked whether we've seen changes in the way that our resources are being managed and how our resources are doing in terms of their stock status and things</p> <p>we've seen positive signs</p> <p>but it's also in the grand scheme of things - SASSIs only been going for about 9 years now - and when it comes to science - you need 20 years</p> <p>people want results today - especially if they're putting money into a programme -</p> <p>they want to see results - at the end of their financial year - you know - which makes it difficult</p>	<p>THE SUSTAINABILITY ISSUE</p> <p>RESOURCES</p> <p>TRAJECTORY</p> <p>CONTEXT</p> <p>TIME DIMENSION</p> <p>VALUE DELIVERY</p> <p>TIME DIMENSION</p> <p>RESOURCES</p> <p>TENSIONS</p>	<p>we get asked whether we've seen change in the stock status</p> <p>how resources are being managed (this is natural resources)</p> <p>positive signs (of change)</p> <p>bigger scheme of things</p> <p>temporal dimension that is long term</p> <p>people want to see results today</p> <p>if they have put money into the programme (this is economic resources)</p> <p>which makes it difficult (relationship issue)</p>

Source: Author's compilation.

There are several dimensions included here from the conceptual framework of value creation. In this example the issue of the stock status of the seafood is noted and the sustainability issue is being discussed in the context of the timescale in which signs of change have been seen but also the bigger context of what the science says is the time needed for stock recovery. So this reflects the conceptual dimension of trajectory. There is also the conceptual dimension of value delivery and how this relates to resources (in this case economic resources) that have been invested. And finally, the conceptual dimension of tensions, expressed as difficulties, which suggests a relationship issue to be considered.

From the individual worksheets of each participant, the conceptual dimensions were then incorporated into a cross-case analysis to identify areas of similarity and difference between the experiences of the participants.

#### 4.12.5 Using theory in IPA

Smith (2004) discussed how theory is used in IPA and how it may be applied in several ways. First, there is the overall theoretical paradigm, which is psychology in the case of a standard IPA

method. This is the theoretical lens. Smith explained that it is the general psychological interest that is first applied to the field texts to generate a level of abstraction beyond the descriptions and actual words of the participant. As is described in more detail below, the IPA method first annotates the content of the field texts and then highlights themes at a more conceptual level. It is the underlying theoretical lens that informs the way that the initial themes are identified. Themes are then explored further using the theoretical lens to build greater depth in the conceptual analysis (Smith, 2004; Smith *et al.*, 2009: 91).

Smith (2004) explained that there is another option used occasionally, where a further level of analysis may be introduced by applying a particular extant theory to the participant's accounts. This goes beyond a general theoretical lens so that the analysis is influenced by a "specific pre-existing formal theoretical position". A theoretical model or framework is therefore applied during the analysis stage.

IPA researchers "do not attempt to verify or negate specific hypothesis established on the basis of extant literature; rather they construct broader research questions" (Smith, 2004). IPA is not used to test theory by developing hypotheses (Smith & Osborn, 2008; Smith & Eatough, 2012). However, it may apply theory towards understanding the research questions and in doing so, the analysis may engage with a specific theory, model or framework (Smith *et al.*, 2009: 48).

The use of theory in the analysis is explained further by Smith *et al.* (2009: 47-48), who said that the primary research question in IPA research deliberately avoids imposing predefined theoretical constructs but does situate the question within a specific context. However, theory may be introduced at a later stage so the analysis may "use the data as a lever to evaluate existing theories and models". They explained that this involves engaging with an extant theory but does not mean actually testing it; and while the analysis in this study has been organised and structured by theory, it does not introduce hypotheses.

Finally, once the detailed analysis had been completed of each participant's account as well as the cross-case analysis, only then were the fieldwork outcomes considered in relation to the extant literature in order to identify connections and issues for further discussion.

#### ***4.12.5.1 Declaring how theory is used in the research analysis***

IPA engages with theory towards create an understanding of the research questions and in doing so, the analysis may engage with a specific theory, model or framework (Smith *et al.*, 2009: 48).

This research was exploratory. While the question is open-ended, it is bounded by the theoretical lens, which is communicative, and this is declared as a means to frame the primary research question. However, no predefined theory was tested, and no hypotheses were established to direct the research.

However, as the IPA literature makes clear, it is possible to introduce an existing model or framework at the analysis stage of the research and this was done during this research with the

use of the framework of cross-sector partnership (XSP) value. The conceptual framework of XSP value was applied in the analysis of the field texts.

The conceptual framework was used to organise the research analysis in a systematic manner. It also structured the analysis so that the experience of the phenomenon for each participant was explored and a cross-case analysis could be undertaken. In this way, the analysis facilitated two levels of analysis. The first was to assess areas of similarity and difference between the conceptual framework and the individual participant accounts from the fieldwork. The second was the cross-case analysis in which the findings of each participant were compared against other participants.

The outcome of the analysis concluded on areas of similarity and difference, including differences by omission. It was where areas of difference were found that there was an opportunity to refine the existing conceptual framework and these refinements could either be adaptations or extensions as described by Crane *et al.* (2016) .

#### **4.12.5.2 Avoiding selective bias**

What is important here is how the disciplinary lens and the conceptual framework were used so that concerns about the risk of selective bias could be avoided. The IPA method addresses this risk directly.

In the case of the disciplinary lens, this research is no different from any other in that at this level, the lens frames the research and demarcates the broad theoretical thinking. It is the disciplinary lens that directs the design of the fieldwork rather than specific findings. So for example, it means that rather than ask interview questions on governance structures, in this research, interview questions were directed toward relationships and collaborative interactions.

In using an existing conceptual framework, the IPA method does not simply seek consensus with existing ideas, but instead considers areas of similarity and difference. It seeks a balanced view. Yardley (2008) said that the search for disconfirming evidence gives reassurance to the reader that the researcher has not selected outcomes arbitrarily or been selectively biased and it lends credibility and plausibility to the research process and the outcomes. The IPA method provides a means to systematically identify areas of difference, including areas of omission.

A key control over selective bias is the cross-case analysis so that none of the individual cases is seen in isolation. In particular, areas of difference are carefully scrutinised to find further corroborating evidence or alternatively, to confirm that the evidence supports the assessment of a unique perspective. The comparison allows areas of similarity to be assessed, differences to be scrutinised and omissions to be highlighted.

In addition, to ensure that the analysis process is rigorous and upholds quality requirements, the IPA audit trail ensures transparency by making the process open to scrutiny.

#### 4.12.6 Researcher note: Reflecting on the theoretical lens<sup>14</sup>

See endnote 4.6 in Appendix U.

#### 4.12.7 An adapted IPA method

Table 4.6 summarises the adjustments made to the IPA method. There is one major change made to the IPA method and that is the substitution of the theoretical frame of cognitive psychology for a communicative frame, specifically a CCO approach to organisational communication theory.

**Table 4.6: Adapted IPA method: Summarising the changes to the standard method**

	Standard method	Adapted method	Comments
<b>Major adaption of standard IPA method</b>			
<b>Theoretical lens</b>	Psychological theory – a cognitive approach	Communicative theory –communication as constitutive of organisation (CCO) approach	Psychological lens cannot be justified here. An alternative is identified from the literature. This could potentially be offered as an extension to existing methods.
<b>Other adjustments made in accordance with IPA guidelines</b>			
<b>Use of pre-existing theory</b>	Used occasionally	Applies the conceptual framework of XSP value to support and structure the IPA analysis	The selected framework pertains directly to the primary research question regarding value-creation.
<b>Number of participants</b>	Recommends 3 to 6 participants	14 participants. A deliberate research choice to ensure diversity	The consequence is greater breadth than depth. This supports the ontology of complexity and highlights multiple perspectives.

Source: Author's compilation.

The other adjustments are options discussed in the guidance to the IPA. The use of a pre-existing conceptual framework is recognised as an appropriate option, but is not commonly used; it was nonetheless adopted for this research design as a deliberate choice to connect with a framework that has been proposed fairly recently in the literature on cross-sector partnerships addressing complex social issues such as sustainability.

The second design issue that is highlighted in Table 4.6 is the number of participants recruited. The IPA literature recommends an optimal number of three participants and a maximum of six so that the analysis can be done in depth for each case and for the cross-case analysis. This research had 14 participants as diversity was a key factor in the design so that differences and similarities could be explored. Smith *et al.* (2009: 106) explained that with a larger sample size, the analysis of each account will not be so detailed but this is weighed against the greater scope for assessing what emerges from the accounts of all the participants taken together. It was a deliberate research choice to include more participants in this study due to the complexity of the context and the research subject as well as the aim to explore a diversity of perspectives.

#### **4.12.8 Assessing the impact of the adaptations**

The change in the theoretical framework retained the key principles of IPA, which are that it is ideographic, it aligns with a social constructionist and a narrative approach, it works with the complexity of the interactions and relational issues covered in the fieldwork material. Finally, it also works at different levels of scale from the individual to the individual within groups and other forms of organising.

It also has an advantage over the standard disciplinary lens since psychology focuses on individual meaning, whereas the communicative approach is an intersubjective approach that focuses on the interactions between individuals, so that it aligns with the research interest. However, the advantages were weighed against what the standard approach achieves in terms of exploring the subjective meaning of the experience to the participants. This was not overlooked and one of the interview questions directly enquires about the meaning of the sustainability issue to each participant.

#### **4.12.9 Retaining the IPA name: Applying an adapted IPA method**

The name IPA refers to its theoretical foundations as described by Smith *et al.* (2009: 11-39) and the use of interpretive, hermeneutic and phenomenological concepts.

The study of lived experience is associated with phenomenological methods. However, there is a variety of ways that this can be done and only some studies apply traditional Husserlian phenomenology. This study did not attempt to apply a traditional approach but rather to explore the underlying meaning or interpretation of a phenomenon in a broader sense; it applied the approach recommended by Smith *et al.*, who connected phenomenology with a hermeneutical sensibility that they attribute to Heidegger (Smith *et al.*, 2009: 23; Smith, 2007).

Further, the social constructionist epistemology adopted is based on Berger and Luckmann (1966) and this draws upon the existential phenomenology of Alfred Schutz. As already noted, the methods adopted in this study are interpretive but the epistemology is not interpretivist. Similarly, IPA is interpretative rather than interpretivist. IPA aligns with the assumptions of this study and so the name IPA has been retained.

#### **4.12.10 Researcher note: Other challenges with IPA<sup>15</sup>**

See endnote 4.7 in Appendix U.

#### **4.12.11 Researcher note: Making appropriate choices for the research design<sup>16</sup>**

See endnote 4.8 in Appendix U.

#### **4.12.12 Challenges in applying an IPA approach: The theoretical lens:**

Several challenges were considered and addressed before the IPA method could be adopted. The main challenge is described here in relation to the theoretical lens

The primary challenge was to assess whether IPA may be used in a discipline other than psychology. In this case, the research study is within the discipline of business and management studies, and more specifically organisation studies.

Smith and Eatough (2012) located IPA within the discipline of psychology and specifically “the dominant cognitive paradigm in contemporary psychology” which they argued is a “compelling theoretical alliance”. Smith (2004) recognised that IPA may be used in other areas of psychology and confirmed that it can be used “to conduct studies in a wide array of areas”, but he did not seem to specifically consider crossing disciplinary boundaries.

However, Smith *et al.* (2009) connected IPA with other forms of phenomenological analysis. They acknowledged the work of Giorgi as being closely related to IPA and the longest established phenomenological method in psychology (Smith & Eatough, 2012). It is also noted that IPA “draws from a wider corpus of phenomenology and is not attempting to operationalise a specific version of it” (Smith *et al.*, 2009: 200).

On this basis, reference is made to the views of Giorgi in relation to whether the phenomenological method should be limited to the discipline of psychology. Giorgi (2012) declared that:

*I want to make clear that the phenomenological method is generic enough to be applied to any human or social science – sociology, anthropology, pedagogy, etc. The only difference is that one assumes the attitude of the discipline within which one is working: pedagogical if it is pedagogy, sociological if sociology, etc. instead of a psychological attitude. One would then have a pedagogical or sociological phenomenological method.*

Giorgi offered the option of applying the method in other disciplines and it is on this basis that IPA was adapted by substituting an alternative theoretical lens more appropriate to this study.

#### **4.12.13 The theoretical lens: Two levels of analysis**

At Chapter 3 Paragraph 3.21.1, the choice of theoretical lens was made. The discussion above explains how and why the IPA method of analysis for this study needs to be adapted.

The theoretical lens at a disciplinary level is from organisational communication studies and is the communicative approach known as the communicative constitution of organisation or CCO approach and specifically the theoretical approach developed by the Montreal School. As noted previously, it was the choice of the framework of cross-sector partnership value that led to the Montreal School of CCO being the theoretical lens, rather than the choice of the communicative lens driving the choice of framework.

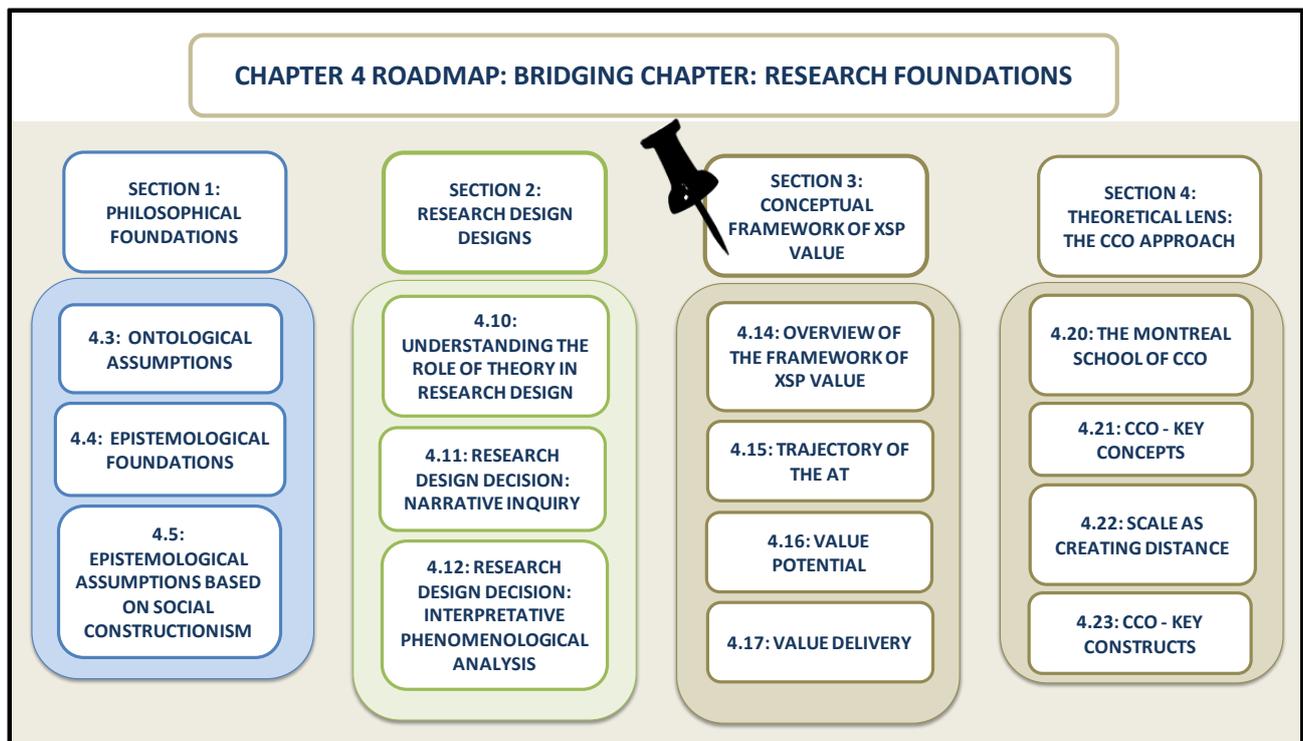
Some background is now provided on both of these levels. First, the framework of cross-sector partnership is introduced in the next section, followed by a brief overview of the key concepts of the CCO approach. A more detailed review of the development of CCO and the Montreal School literature has been completed in order to present the research analysis but only the overview is included here in the dissertation. The more detailed analysis is available if required.

## CHAPTER 4: SECTION 3

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF XSP VALUE

#### 4.13 SECTION INTRODUCTION

As shown in Figure 4.1, this section introduces the framework of XSP value and explains the underlying concepts and key components. The summary at the end of the chapter was used as a reference guide throughout the analysis so that the main components of the framework were clear and accessible.



**Figure 4.1: Chapter 4 Roadmap**

Source: Author's compilation.

#### 4.14 OVERVIEW OF THE FRAMEWORK OF XSP VALUE

The source of the conceptual framework of XSP value is from Koschmann, Kuhn and Pfarrer (2012) who put forward a framework that applies a CCO approach to cross-sector partnerships (XSPs). Their preferred terminology is the XSP and this term is used in this dissertation with direct reference to this framework. The framework draws on other work on cross-sector collaboration and the Montreal School of CCO. One of its key sources is Kuhn's (2008) work on authoritative texts. It also draws extensively on the literature on cross-sector social partnerships and the CCO literature. The main sources have already been discussed in the literature review in Chapter 3 and are not repeated here.

The aim of this section is to present the background assumptions and definitions used in the framework of XSP value and its key features. It also explains how the framework is connected to the research question, in order to substantiate its choice in the research analysis.

#### **4.14.1 Connecting the framework of XSP value with the research question**

There are two ways in which this framework connects with the research questions. The first is the focus on cross-sector partnerships and specifically XSPs with “the potential to address society’s most complex problems” (2012). Since sustainability issues, including sustainable seafood, are considered to be complex, global concerns, it is evident that the subject matter is aligned.

The second is the focus on value creation, including value at the partnership level as well as for partner organisations.

Koschmann *et al.* stated that “questions of value are always preceded by ontological considerations: the value of something depends on what it is”. Following this logic, and on the assumption that XSPs are constituted through communication, then the value of an XSP is related to the communication processes from which it is constituted. The definition of value used in the XSP framework is therefore broadly stated and is directed at the value of the XSP, as a distinct organisational form, rather than value for individual member organisations.

While the extant literature on XSP value is acknowledged by Koschmann *et al.*, they concluded that the majority of current research is directed at single organisations and is based on other assumptions. Their framework therefore offers a different view and one that is appropriate to the selected setting of this research, which is a multi-dimensional network of organisations supporting sustainable seafood initiatives, as described in Chapter 2 at Paragraph 2.5.3.

#### **4.14.2 The definition of value adopted by the XSP framework**

According to the XSP framework, value at the partnership level is explained in terms of collective agency. Rather than a unidimensional definition, Koschmann *et al.* offered a multi-dimensional framework of XSP value that is collectively and collaboratively constructed by the members of the XSP. Conceptually, this aligns with the assumptions of this research.

The definition of value applied in the framework is determined by the ability of the XSP to act meaningfully; it is about making a difference; and it means “the ability to “substantially influence the people and issues within their problem domain”. According to Koschmann *et al.*, the assessment of value can be considered in terms of how the XSP “secures the legitimate right to continue to appropriate the capital of the individuals and collectives associated with it”. This allows for a wide range of factors to be considered and assessments from different perspectives. It is aligned with the fieldwork design and demonstrates that the XSP framework was an appropriate choice for the research analysis.

Based on this conception of value, collective agency is defined as “the capacity to produce value” beyond that which individual organisations would be able to do on their own. This interpretation calls to mind the general definition of collaboration by Gray (1989: 5). Further, collective agency is an emergent property, it is a higher-order quality, rather than a structure or a process. According to CCO theorising, it is communication processes that facilitate the emergence of systems with the capacity for collective agency.

#### **4.14.3 Key components of the framework**

The framework may be explained with reference to its key components. These are:

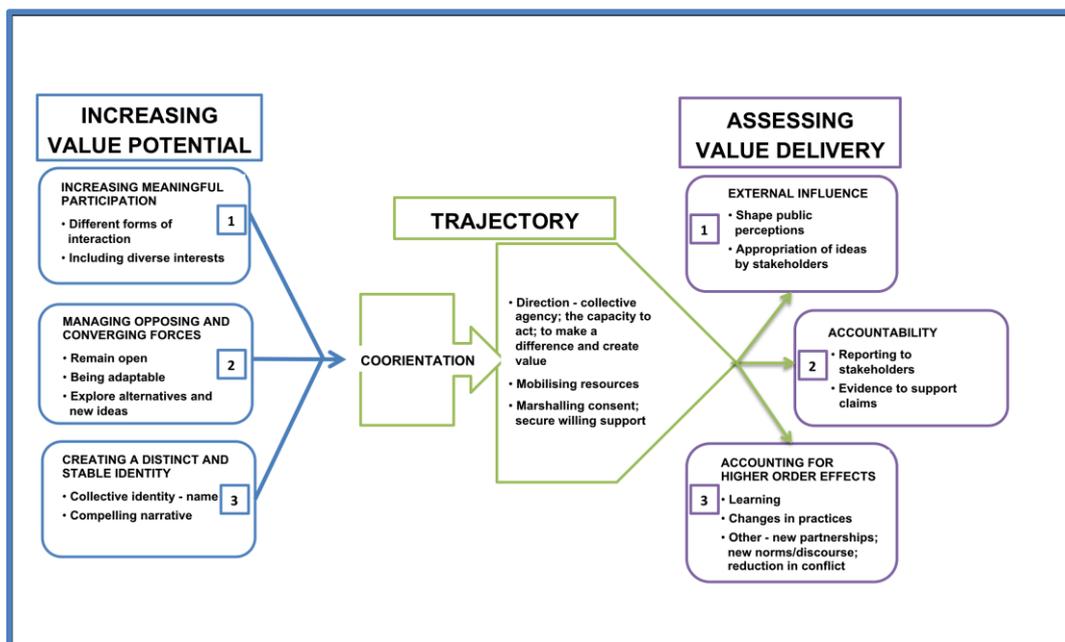
- i) the trajectory of the authoritative text;
- ii) three communicative practices as empirical indicators for increasing value potential; and
- iii) two communicative practices as empirical indicators for assessing value delivery.

The various communicative practices are described as empirical indicators. In their discussion on how to assess XSP value, Koschmann *et al.* referenced Gray (2000), in which she discussed how different theoretical approaches require different criteria for judging success or failure. The evidence used to assess the degree to which the criteria or key outcomes have been achieved are called indicators.

The concept of an authoritative text has already been introduced in the literature review in Chapter 3 at Paragraph 3.23.2. It is a higher-order system that emerges as an organisational form constituted by the communicative practices of its members. It is ‘authored’ by its members, there are people who represent it, who have the ‘authority’ to act on its behalf. This gives it the capacity to act collectively. It is a form of organising that assumes that there is an organisational actor and hence Kuhn (2008) referred to it as a ‘text’ rather than a process of organising. The authoritative text may be named, it may have an identity and a narrative that defines what it is, why it exists, who is involved and what it is trying to achieve. For ease of reference, the term authoritative text will be referred to with the acronym AT.

The key components of the framework are now described as depicted in Figure 4.2. It should be noted that the relationships between these components are not causal in terms of a linear ‘if-then’ type of causality (known as efficient cause). These components are interconnected through the interactions of members and value is not an outcome caused by certain actions or activities; rather, value is an emergent property from a complex system of interactions and communicative practices as explained by CCO theorising.

All references in the following descriptions are taken from Koschmann *et al.* (2012), unless otherwise noted.



**Figure 4.2: Communicative practices: Key components of the framework of XSP value**

Source: Derived from Koschmann *et al.* (2012).

#### 4.15 KEY COMPONENT: TRAJECTORY OF THE AT

Collective agency is found in the trajectory of the AT and to be successful, it needs two essential and interconnected elements. These elements are defined as the ability of the XSP “to influence efforts to attract capital and marshal the consent of relevant parties”.

Trajectory is a term used to denote the general direction and whatever it is trying to accomplish, with the assumption that it is ‘on track’ and is moving in its intended direction. It is important to note that language such as plans, goals, aims or objectives is deliberately avoided so that it is communicative processes that are recognised and not instrumental or strategic intentions.

The first element is the ability to attract capital and this is not restricted to economic capital, but also includes social, cultural and symbolic capital; terms derived from the work of Bourdieu (1986). It is therefore about attracting and mobilising resources of various kinds and from various sources.

The second element is described as “marshalling consent” and it is about persuading others to participate voluntarily, so that they, in turn may also help in mobilising further resources. Securing the willing consent of participants is a key idea and relates to the CCO concept of coorientation, which is discussed in Section 4 of this chapter. Coorientation occurs when people willingly interact with each other towards an object of common interest.

Applying the concept of coorientation, for collective agency to be successful, for it to work, interactions between people need to be aligned towards a common interest, but also they direct attention towards mobilising resources and persuading others to participate in that common interest.

According to Koschmann *et al.*, it is through the trajectory that personal interests and identities and organisational interests and identities are able to connect to the XSP. The capacity for collective agency, and therefore the capacity to create value, is situated within the trajectory of the AT.

#### **4.15.1 Collective agency and authority to act**

The capacity to act of an XSP, is described by Koschmann *et al.* (2012) as “making a difference” and they described collective agency as “the capacity to influence a host of relevant outcomes beyond what individual organisations could do on their own”. This definition assumes the idea of acting at a distance as described above, including human, material and textual agency. However, Koschmann *et al.* did not explicitly address these forms of agency in the framework of value creation. These ideas are considered in the next section on the CCO approach.

#### **4.15.2 Forms of capital**

The framework of XSP value (Koschmann *et al.*, 2012) depends on collective agency, the capacity of the partnership to act, and as noted above, this means attracting and mobilising resources. Resources refer to various forms of capital and Kuhn (2008) referenced this conceptualisation to the work of Bourdieu.

Bourdieu (1986) identified three primary forms of capital and defined these as economic, cultural and social capital and each of these may also function as symbolic capital. Bourdieu explained that the social world functions with capital in all of these forms and not only economic capital.

Bourdieu acknowledged economic capital as the dominant form of capital and defined it as that which is “immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalised in the form of property rights”. Economic capital would include physical assets, products and services and other materials used in the market economy.

Cultural capital relates to the knowledge, skills and capabilities of people and in its institutionalised form it refers to educational qualifications. Bourdieu explained that cultural capital can be acquired over time. It is also tied to cultural tradition and heritage and in this respect it may also function as symbolic capital.

According to Bourdieu, “social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” and membership of groups. Social capital depends on the network of connections that can be mobilised and other forms of capital that may be brought to bear so that social capital is not separate or independent from economic and cultural capital.

From this brief introduction, it is evident that the different forms of capital are inter-related and as conceived by Bourdieu, they are recognised in various institutional forms.

According to Koschmann *et al.* (2012), an XSP as a process of organising, not only involves coorientation but also the ability to secure and apply the different forms of capital. It is the different

forms of capital and their ongoing accumulation and exchange that provide the resources to support the value creation process. The willing consent to participate is also a necessary factor. The trajectory of the XSP incorporates each of these components, which in combination generate its collective agency or capacity to act.

#### **4.15.3 More on social capital, action and value creation**

Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) argued that there is no clear definition of social capital. However, there is agreement on “the significance of relationships as a resource for social action”. It is this attention to action at a collective level that connects the concept of social capital with collaboration.

According to Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998), some approaches to social capital focus on the structure of relationships in a network, while others focus on the relational resources that can be accessed.

Coleman (1988) incorporated both structure and resources into a concept of social capital as a “resource for action” and a means to explain social action, so that social capital is not only about relationships and connections but about how those connections lead to collective or social action. He discussed the attributes or resources of social capital that may be considered to be useful such as obligations, trustworthiness, norms and sanctions and the structures that facilitate social capital such as whether there is an open or closed community and whether resources are appropriated from one community to another.

Coleman proposed a theoretical approach to social capital that combined two streams of research on social action. The one is characterised by “social norms, rules, and obligations” and how action is “shaped, constrained, and redirected by the social context”. The other assumes an independent, rational actor who acts in their own self-interest to maximise utility and is known as a theory of rational action. In order to combine these different conceptualisations of social action, Coleman devised the concept of social capital, which he distinguished from physical capital and human capital. While physical capital is tangible and “embodied in observable material form”, such as “tools, machines, and other productive equipment”, human capital relates to the skills and capabilities of an individual person. Coleman characterised social capital in terms of “the relations among persons that facilitate action”. He explained that each form of capital, physical, human and social, “facilitate productive activity”. These are not distinct from, but yet have some similarities with Bourdieu’s concepts of economic, cultural and social capital.

Coleman further explained that the value of social capital is in its ability to offer resources that can be used to pursue the interests of participants and to achieve various outcomes. It acts as an indicator “that something of value has been produced” and “the value depends on social organisation”. Social capital may therefore be connected to value creation.

Coleman concluded that social capital is different from other forms of capital because the person who devotes time and resources into building it, does not necessarily experience the benefits of the actions and consequent value that it brings.

This is different from other forms of capital. Coleman (ibid) explained that there are certain property rights attributed to physical capital, as a private good, and this means that the person who invests in physical capital is usually the person who obtains the fruits of that investment. In contrast, Coleman related social capital with public goods and he asserted that a direct input-output connection generally does not apply. Rather, in the case of social capital, there is a collective benefit to a wider community and those that invest time and resources in a social endeavour may only receive an indirect benefit and they share the benefits with others.

Other more recent research has built on these early conceptualisations of social capital by Bourdieu and Coleman and appropriated the idea for application in other contexts. Kwon and Adler (2014) noted that social capital has “matured from a concept into a whole field of research”, while Portes and Vickstrom (2011) expressed the view that the concept of social capital as written by Bourdieu now has little in common with its use today.

#### **4.16 KEY COMPONENT: VALUE POTENTIAL**

The potential for value creation depends on the strength of the coorientation processes and other communicative practices. Koschmann *et al.* presented a framework of related communicative practices with the capacity to create value.

The first is increasing meaningful participation by paying attention to how people interact and having a variety of forms of interaction. Another is the diversity of interests participating in decision making. Interactions are meaningful if the communicative processes of coorientation are happening. There is ongoing interaction as interests change over time and members may expect their interests to be acknowledged; there may also be deeply held values that need to be made visible.

The second is about managing opposing and converging forces between the interests of the member organisations and collective interests. Koschmann *et al.* explained that it is not about resolving these tensions but rather about managing them by remaining flexible and being adaptable. At times, the energy will draw people together and at other times, the energy will separate and divide people. It is important to remain open to managing the issues rather than avoiding them; to be willing to explore alternatives and to consider new ideas.

Last, there are processes that help to create a stable identity for the XSP as an AT and these include naming the XSP and constructing a coherent and compelling narrative collaboratively.

#### **4.16.1 Rational and relational aspects of collaboration**

Some of the language and concepts used in the framework were drawn from game theory (Kuhn, 2008), which is a form of rational choice theory (Ostrom, 1998), specifically the ideas of marshalling willing consent, attracting capital and mobilising resources. Relational aspects are recognised at the same time so that “XSPs (and their members) are situated within broader relational contexts” (Koschmann *et al.*, 2012).

In adopting a CCO approach, Koschmann *et al.* also recognised that “communication is a complex process of meaning negotiation and construction”. While they did not expand on the idea of negotiation, they did talk about a process of dialogue in which “meaning, identities, and agendas are always constructed and open to re-construction” and discussed how narratives are constructed collaboratively.

Kuhn (2008) recognised that organisations may be conceived as negotiated orders that are “continually modified in communicative practice” and “rules are internally and provisionally negotiated” so that the process of organising is “an ecology of infinite game playing”.

The processes of negotiation are not discussed in detail in either of the abovementioned journal articles, which form the basis of the framework of XSP value. Nonetheless, at a conceptual level, these ideas connect the framework of XSP value with other literature that views collaboration as a socially constructed, negotiated order (Gray, 1989: 228-234).

#### **4.16.2 Managing tensions**

While some research assumes that collaboration requires shared goals, consensus and cooperation, there is another view that recognises that both conflict and cooperation are necessary in collaborative relationships (Phillips *et al.*, 2000). According to Hardy, Lawrence and Phillips (2006), even when successful, collaborative relationships will encounter disagreement and difference including some degree of discord, dissent or conflict. They explained that managing tensions is key to a successful partnership and argued that while trust and communication are important in a collaborative relationship, power and conflict are also needed. In conclusion, they said that differences do not always have a negative effect and can have positive implications and create opportunities for change and innovation.

Relational aspects also involve tensions, conflict and power and these aspects are explored by Hardy and Phillips (1998) and Hardy *et al.* (2006). Gray (1989: 273) advocated for conflict to be channelled so that it can “expand, rather than reduce, our capacity to act”.

##### ***4.16.2.1 Collaborative relationships, power, politics and negotiation***

Gray (1989: 119-130) argued that collaboration requires shared power and that relationships are inevitably political. However, she explained that to achieve power sharing, partners need to negotiate and make conscious choices about how power is exercised. She advocated a

theoretical approach to collaboration based on negotiated order theory, which directs attention at micro-level interactions and relationships between individuals within a particular social context. Gray explained that the dynamics of power shift over time according to the different phases as the partnership progresses.

According to Hardy *et al.* (2005), collaboration involves “a complex set of ongoing communicative processes” so that to be effective it depends on relationships rather than on market or hierarchical structures. The discursive approach adopted by Lawrence *et al.* (1999) assumes that collaboration is a socially constructed process that involves the negotiation of roles and responsibilities and highlights the role of context. According to Lawrence *et al.* (1999), collaborative relationships require agreement on three key dimensions and these are the issue to be addressed, the interests to be represented and who will represent the agreed interests.

They explained that negotiation is necessary as “collaborative issues are highly political” so they require “some sense of intersection of purpose” to determine mutual benefits. Collaboration requires an ongoing process of negotiation of meaning so that the participants establish “sufficient agreement on issues, interests, and representations to allow the collaboration to move forward”.

#### ***4.16.2.2 Managing tensions: convergence and divergence***

Hardy *et al.* (2006) discussed two types of tension in multi-sector collaboration, so that although multiple parties may all have a stake or connection with the problem or issue, there are ways in which various stakeholders may converge around the issue, and ways in which they may diverge from each other.

The one tension arises because different organisations see the problem differently or favour their own solutions or interests rather than developing something together. So the tension in the first case is between the partners that are working together. The other tension is at a broader level and is between the collaboration and the wider stakeholder community that may be affected by the issue. In the latter situation, the goals agreed by the partners may differ from needs and expectations at a broader level.

According to Hardy *et al.* (ibid), where there is divergence and a lack of coherence, then confusion is a barrier to communication; whereas greater conformity and coherence can lead to understanding so that communication is much easier. They cautioned that greater conformity may also lead to a lack of creativity as the diversity and difference between the parties is diminished. They encouraged a balance between diverse perspectives while still achieving a level of coherence to facilitate understanding and communication amongst the partners. They concluded that both convergence (conformity) and divergence (confusion) are needed to create the potential for innovative ideas to emerge from collaborative activities.

Hardy *et al.* (2005) concurred with this assessment and argued for an ongoing tension between divergence and convergence, between ambiguity and clarity in the collaborative conversations.

They argued that effective collaboration generates innovation only when ambiguity is viewed as an opportunity and is applied productively to challenge and question the status quo.

#### **4.17 KEY COMPONENT: VALUE DELIVERY**

The potential for value delivery depends on communicative practices that have external influence and can contribute to public perceptions. This may go beyond reputation issues and responding to public pressure and could involve an extended form of corporate citizenship.

XSP members must also be able to account to their own organisations and demonstrate the value that the XSP delivers. This may not be objectively measured but it is the value that secures the XSP the “legitimate right to continue to appropriate the capital of the individuals and the collectives associated with it”. The delivery of value confirms the ongoing allocation of resources by various stakeholders from individuals, organisations, governments and civil society. It is about reporting and producing evidence of value not only to member organisations and direct stakeholders but also to “other relevant parties”.

Other evidence that the XSP is capable of delivering value is where higher-order effects are discerned such as the formation of new partnerships, learning that extends to others, and changes to practices. It may include new norms, new conversations and the reduction in conflict that is negative in favour of more constructive engagement on differences.

##### **4.17.1 Value delivery: accountability and influence**

According to the framework of XSP value, there are two communicative practices that indicate value delivery and these are external influence and accountability. The descriptions below are based on Koschmann *et al.* (2012).

From a communicative perspective, reporting by the XSP or partner organisations is an obvious starting point to assess value and may include a range of indicators of value delivery. These tend to focus largely on the activities of the XSP or partner organisations and yet there is also a need to determine how value has been experienced by other stakeholders and other communities. Communicative practices in this case would focus on the actions of others and this is more difficult to ascertain. In this instance, evidence would be sought that demonstrates or articulates ways in which the actions or behaviour of others have changed.

Austin and Seitanidi (2012a) distinguished between benefits to partner organisations, which they described as “first-order direct benefits” or “second order associational benefits” and benefits that accrue beyond the partner organisations at a societal level. The latter appear to be similar to what Koschmann *et al.* (2012) referred to as higher-order effects.

##### **4.17.1.1 Accountability**

Accountability, or in the words of Koschmann *et al.* “accounts of capital transformation” are “justifications for conduct” and these may be made to other XSP members or to external

organisations. Accounts may go further than reporting and could include what they called “higher-order effects” such as evidence of action taken, learning that has taken place, new partnerships, or new norms and discourses.

While reporting may provide evidence of value created by the XSP itself, higher-order effects may be activities that involve others and may extend into a broader community.

#### **4.17.1.2 Influence**

Influence is defined by Koschmann *et al.* (2012) quite specifically in relation to how members or external stakeholders “appropriate or reproduce elements of an XSPs authoritative text in some meaningful fashion”. There are three components here. First, who is involved? It is the actions of parties considered to be outside of the XSP that would provide evidence that they had been influenced, whether this was a partner organisation, a stakeholder or even the general public. Second, how are they affected? It needs to be something meaningful but this is very broad and requires the interpretation of the other party. Third, in what way do they respond? Koschmann *et al.* described the response as to “appropriate and reproduce”. Essentially if the actions of any of external parties indicate that they have copied, taken up, used or acted upon something that emanated from the XSP, then it may be argued that the XSP has had an influence on them.

Evidence of influence may be displayed in various ways and some examples provided by Koschmann *et al.* include generating social impact, contributing to public perceptions or more specifically shaping the strategic direction of a partner organisation. They also mention altering practices, rules or systems and reports created by the XSP that are used by others.

### **4.18 CONCLUDING REMARKS ON THE FRAMEWORK OF XSP VALUE**

Koschmann *et al.* acknowledged “the foreignness of our vocabulary to some management readers” but argued that it is warranted in order to address the complexity of the issues in which XSPs engage and to “extend thinking on other forms of inter-organisational collaboration”.

The language of the framework does present a barrier to business understanding but it also presents an opportunity to develop the framework.

Based on the descriptions of the various components of the framework a summary table was compiled and a checklist of the key components prepared, which is set out in Table 4.7 below.

The language in this table corresponds with the descriptions provided by Koschmann *et al.* with a few exceptions where the language has been simplified. For example, the phrase ‘managing centripetal and centrifugal forces’ has been changed to ‘managing opposing and converging forces’; the words ‘external intertextual influence’ is shown as ‘external influence’; and ‘accounts of capital transformation’ has been changed to ‘accountability’.

**Table 4.7: Framework of XSP Value: Summary checklist**

<b>SUMMARY CHECKLIST of the VALUE OF AN XSP when conceived as an AUTHORITATIVE TEXT</b>	
<b>Trajectory: an active, ongoing process of coorientation - a recursive process</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General direction; what it is 'on track' to accomplish</li> <li>• Value = the capacity to act - to make a difference and create value; potential for collective agency</li> <li>• Ability to secure subsequent efforts internally and externally:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobilising resources /capital - <i>economic, social and other</i></li> <li>• Marshalling consent of others - <i>secure willing continued support</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>Increasing Value Potential: a process of coorientation that shapes the trajectory - a recursive process</b>	<b>Assessing Value Delivery: assessing the value produced and ongoing contribution across time and place - a recursive process</b>
<b>Increasing meaningful participation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different forms of interaction</li> <li>• Including diverse interests in decision making</li> </ul>	<b>External Influence:</b> <i>(External intertextual influence)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shaping public perceptions</li> <li>• Appropriation of ideas by stakeholders</li> </ul>
<b>Managing opposing and converging forces</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remaining open - avoid early closure</li> <li>• Being adaptable</li> <li>• Willing to explore alternatives and new ideas.</li> </ul>	<b>Accountability</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reporting - to stakeholders</li> <li>• Producing evidence to support claims</li> </ul>
<b>Creating a distinct and stable Identity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collective identity - name - a distinct entity</li> <li>• Compelling narrative</li> </ul>	<b>Accounting for higher order effects</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning</li> <li>• Changes in practices</li> <li>• Other: New partnerships; new norms and discourses; reduction in conflict</li> </ul>

Source: Author's compilation.

The amended wording from the original text is highlighted in grey. The changes were made so that the framework is somewhat more accessible and easier to use in the research analysis. A detailed mapping to the original terms used by Koschmann *et al.* is set out in Appendix H.

## CHAPTER 4: SECTION 4

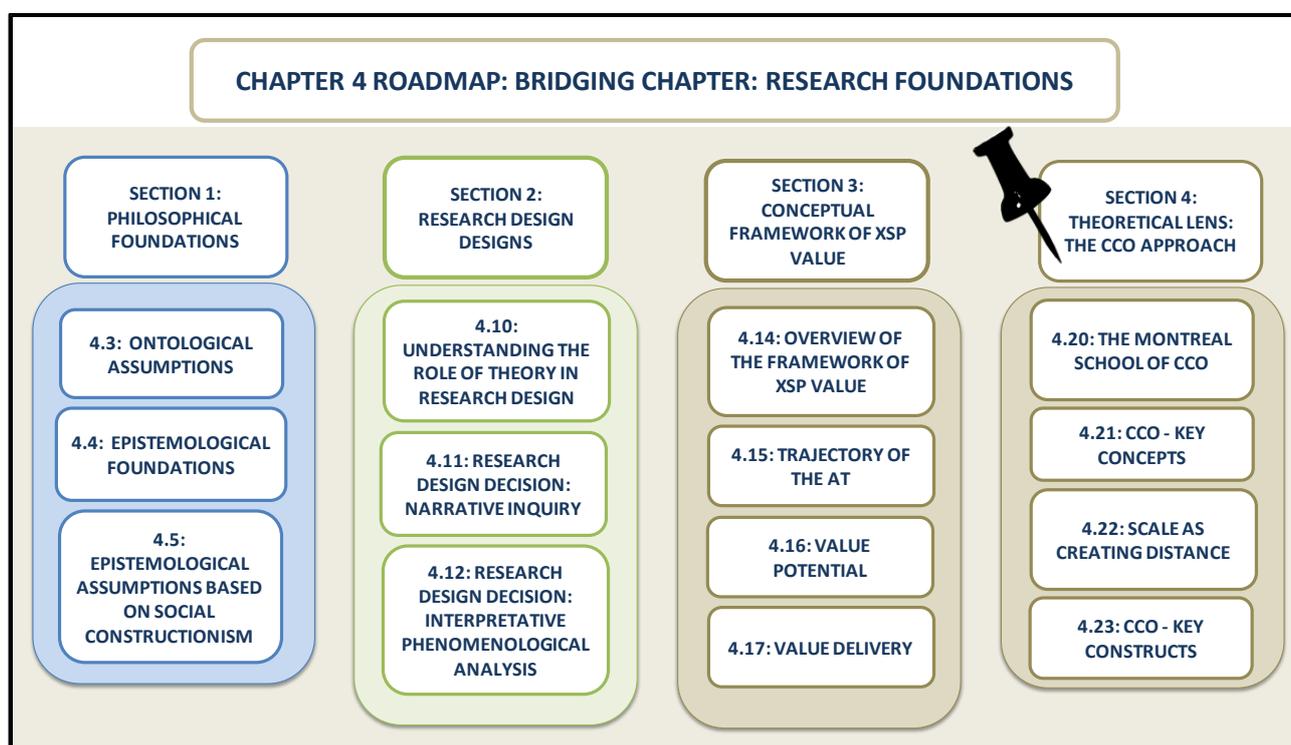
### THEORETICAL LENS: THE CCO APPROACH

#### 4.19 SECTION INTRODUCTION

This section introduces the literature on the theoretical approach known as the communicative constitution of organisations (CCO) and specifically the Montreal School of CCO theorising. This is an overview only so that the main terms and concepts are introduced.

As introduced in the literature review chapter at Chapter 3 Paragraph 3.22, the CCO approach is a theoretical approach within the field of organisational communication studies.

This section sets out the various concepts and constructs that are used by the Montreal School of CCO. It is a highly theoretical discussion and each of the concepts and constructs is used in the later research analysis, discussion and conceptual framework.



**Figure 4.1: Chapter 4 Roadmap**

Source: Author's compilation.

There are three main parts to the discussion in this section. First, the basic organising principles of the CCO approach are described from the literature and these are coorientation, conversation and text. The CCO approach is based on the premise that these are the fundamental building blocks of all forms of organising and organisation. Using these concepts, the second part deals with how coorientation, conversation and text at a locally situated level with only two or more people can 'scale-up' to larger and more complex forms or modes of organising such as small groups and

communities of practice, including but not limited to organisations-as-actors or entities. The idea of 'scale' is conceptualised in terms of creating distance over time from the originating conversations. Concepts such as 'abstraction', 'objectification' and 'material agency' are introduced. Finally, in the third part, the various forms of organisation are defined in the communicative terms used by the Montreal School. While these are abstract terms, they are needed to understand the framework of XSP value as summarised in the previous section.

#### **4.20 BACKGROUND TO THE MONTREAL SCHOOL CCO APPROACH**

Rather than a single theory, CCO has been described as an idea or a heterogeneous theoretical endeavour or paradigm (Schoeneborn *et al.*, 2014), a collective of perspectives or a body of work (Putnam & Nicotera, 2010), a principle or a meta-model (Ashcraft, Kuhn & Cooren, 2009), an orientation (Putnam & McPhee, 2009) or a field of inquiry (Brummans *et al.*, 2014). There is therefore no overarching CCO model and the various concepts and constructs all derive from the basic organising principles of coorientation, conversation and text as described below at Paragraph 4.21.

CCO as a theoretical approach is a relatively new phenomenon and is described as an emerging debate (Schoeneborn & Sandhu, 2013), as an early-stage theoretical paradigm (Schoeneborn *et al.*, 2014) and as a relative newcomer (Putnam & Mumby, 2014).

A central and ongoing aspect in the social sciences is the so-called 'linguistic turn'. Deetz (2003) explained how the interest in language and discourse was conceptualised in the 1930s to offer an alternative approach that challenged the ubiquitous subject/object dualism debate. It then developed further with the growth of social constructionism. By the 1980s the 'linguistic turn' was what Deetz called "the most radical and completed developed way of critically engaging" in the debates in organisation studies that challenged the mainstream managerial approaches.

While this is no longer a radical or central debate in organisation studies, one of the lasting effects has been the growth in organisational communication studies. Ashcraft *et al.* (2009) contended that the idea of communication as "the building block of organisation has been a central focus of the field for the past thirty years". It is identified as one of the new research agendas that embraced the emergent areas of interpretive and critical theory and challenged the dominant functionalist paradigm (Putnam & Mumby, 2014).

#### **4.21 PART 1: CCO - KEY CONCEPTS**

The key concepts are fairly abstract; however, this overview highlights some of the key literature to provide some basic insights into the concepts that are applied to CCO thinking. The definitions are those that pertain to the Montreal School of CCO and may not correspond to usage in other literature.

What characterises the Montreal School is the construct of coorientation. It is the building block for all other theorising about CCO. There is no overall model or framework but various other concepts

and constructs of organising and organisation have developed from the building block of coorientation.

The following concepts are included in the discussion below:

- i) Coorientation as the basic process of organising.
- ii) Conversation and text (also referred to as narrative).

#### 4.21.1 Coorientation

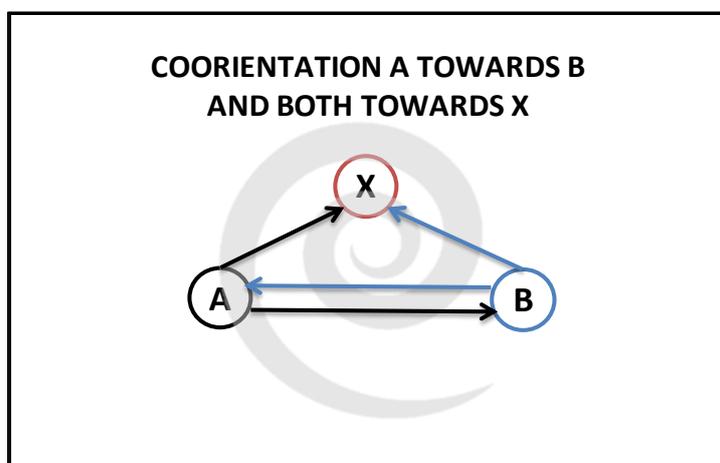
##### 4.21.1.1 Coorientation as the basic process of organising

Taylor and Robichaud (2004) proposed that organising “is accomplished through coorientation”. The basic unit of organising is the triad and it is in a triad that coorientation takes place. It offers an alternative conceptualisation to the prevalent dualist thinking.

Taylor explained (2001a) that the triad is a relationship between two subjects linked together or mediated by an object, and the subjects or parties have a “common orientation to some object” so that they have an interest in the object or a collective concern regarding the object and the object is “that on which our attention is focused, and which constitutes the purpose of our action”. He noted that the object need not be in material form.

Coorientation is an activity or process rather than a state or product. The triad as the foundation means that it is not the individual that is the basic unit of analysis (Taylor, 2013).

Figure 4.3 below depicts the elements of the coorientation process of two people, A and B towards X, the object of interest. It is redrawn from the original schematic by Newcomb (1953), from whom the concept was derived.



**Figure 4.3: Coorientation towards the object of interest**

Source: Adapted from Newcomb (1953).

Both A and B bring with them a personal worldview or perspective (their own goals and interests). X is the object of interest that is negotiated and established interactively.

The object of interest “refers to the practical world of joint activities” in which the people actively engage. It is also important that the two people have an interest not only in the object but are also interested in each other’s orientation toward the object (McPhee & Iverson, 2013). Taylor (2005) said the two people must both be oriented to the same object, but may have different perspectives. So while the object is common, their perspectives may, or may not be the same. Taylor (2005) explained that each of the actors brings with them their own “worldview” and their “contextual embedding” is different.

#### ***4.21.1.2 Context***

Coorientation takes place within a relational context (McPhee & Iverson, 2013). They described the context as the “situatedness of the communication” which is a milieu of other relations, activities and groups. Taylor and Robichaud (2004) described the context as both material-social and within the language context of conversation.

Taylor (2005) discussed that while people coorientate towards a common object, each brings a different perspective or worldview to the interaction because their “contextual embedding” is different, even if they are part of the same organisation.

#### ***4.21.1.3 Coorientation as a dynamic recursive process***

Taylor and Robichaud (2004) highlighted that coorientation is a dynamic, rather than static concept; they said that the object “is inherently negotiable and must be established interactively”. The recursive nature of the process means that the relationships between the two actors and their orientations towards an object of interest are active, ongoing and constantly changing. This iterative process is difficult to convey but is represented by the spiral in Figure 4.3 above.

#### **4.21.2 Communicative practices of conversation and text**

Coorientation is negotiating a relationship; and it is the basic unit of organising and coordinating at a collective level. Taylor and Robichaud (2004) said that “organisation is the struggle to attain coorientation, not merely a by-product of it”.

Since organising happens through the relational process of coorientation, then it is necessary to explore the underlying communicative processes of conversation and text.

The interaction between conversation and text is a circular or recursive process where meaning emerges from the interpretation of texts and these provide the basis for conversation, which is an active process that generates further texts. Conversation and text may be considered as separate but inseparable concepts.

Coorientation takes place through conversation, which is mediated by text and also produces text.

#### **4.21.2.1 Conversation**

The word itself is derived from the Latin meaning “to turn over together” and at a basic level this indicates a dynamic and active process. It is a process of interaction.

According to Taylor and Robichaud (2004), a conversation can be distinguished by the “coordination of actions” that it accomplishes; and it is “an instrument of organisational action”. This means that not all conversations are pertinent here; it is only those conversations that are action oriented. Taylor and Robichaud claimed that the core event in a conversation with a focus on action is coorientation; the outcome of conversation is the achievement or accomplishment of coorientation.

Conversation as defined in this way is therefore not casual talk; it is a specific form of talk and similar to that described by Boden (1994: 8) who claimed that talk “is the lifeblood of all organisations”. Boden asserted that it is “in interaction that human agency is displayed, enacted and reacted to by human beings” so that “when people talk they are simultaneously and reflexively talking their relationships, organisations, and whole institutions into action” (ibid: 14).

Conversation that is action oriented is a process in which agency and text are produced. It is in conversation that there is both coorientation and action, which are both necessary conditions for organising to ensue. Conversation is where organising happens; it has a fundamental organising property or what Taylor and Robichaud (2004) called “organizing-ness”.

A further aspect of conversation is that it is a “situated, circumstanced interaction” (Taylor, 1999) and “conversation is invariably associated with specific circumstances of time, place, occasion, identity of the participants, history and purpose”. It occurs in an identifiable context.

For the purposes of this research, all references to conversation mean an action-oriented, locally situated interaction between two or more actors.

#### **4.21.2.2 Text**

Taylor and Robichaud (2004) claimed that when people interact they generate a text. Text is what is said; it is the content of conversation (Taylor *et al.*, 1996). It is also “a manifestation of human sense making” (Taylor & Robichaud, 2004).

Text is constructed with the tools of language; it is “language that is functional” which means that it performs “some job in some context”. Text has more than one function; it takes place in conversation so that it mediates conversation. It is also produced in conversation in various forms. It may exist as speech (the spoken word) or it may be mediated by other means such as in writing, in a voice or video recording, or electronically (Taylor & Robichaud, 2004).

In this mediated form, text has the “capacity to transcend the local” and it can exist independently of the conversation or circumstances in which it was produced (Taylor, 1999). This is particularly important for the purposes of communication beyond the immediate conversational situation.

Taylor *et al.* (1996) described how “the events of the conversation are turned into a narrative representation” through a process of interpretation that creates meaning. The text produced by the conversation may therefore be recognised as having a narrative form.

Ricoeur (2008) identified with the case of text as narrative. He said that “text is any discourse fixed by writing” (ibid: 101) and a narrative is a text that has a narrative structure in the form of an intelligible plot. Further, since Ricoeur described the plot as an “arrangement of events” that contribute to “the progress of the story” (ibid: 4), this suggests that text as narrative is action oriented.

In the context of conversations that are action oriented, one may conceive of text as action oriented and apply Ricoeur’s concept of text as narrative. In this respect, narrative may be conceived as text that is embodied in practices of speaking and writing and that focuses on “the eventful character of conversation and interaction” (Cooren, 2015: 7-11).

Not all texts are narratives as narrative may be considered to be a specific form of text as noted above. Further, not all narratives are the focus of attention in this research and unless specified, narrative does not include ‘grand narratives’ pertaining to socio-political discourses.

Based on the above literature, the terms text and narrative are both used in this dissertation.

#### ***4.21.2.3 Conversation and text are self-organising***

Conversation and text are inter-related in the recursive process of coorientation, so that conversation is mediated by text but also produces text.

Both conversation and text are bound by certain conventions and rules of procedure (Taylor, 1999) that make the interactions intelligible. In the case of text, Taylor (2005) said that language “is a system that conforms to an internal logic” and an example would be the sentence structure. Text as narrative has a conventional structure typically recognised by a beginning, middle and end. In the case of conversation, interactions are organised according to agreed conventions such as taking turns to speak and to listen or respond. This means that both text and conversation have self-organising properties.

The process of coorientation is self-organising and as the foundational concept of the CCO approach, this means that the concepts and constructs that are based on coorientation, are also by their nature self-organising.

#### ***4.21.2.4 Conversation and text as process and structure***

According to Taylor (1999), the literature that favours conversation places emphasis on the situational and contextual aspects of interaction; while emphasis on text gives more attention to language and structure.

The combination of process and structure is important in understanding different forms of organising and organisation. Taylor (2011) discussed various challenges with conceptualising

organisation-as-communication. He made a distinction between organisation and an organisation; organisation as a process of organising and organisation as an entity or actor with a collective identity. An identity, separate from other actors, is what distinguishes the organisation-as-actor (ibid) and this is achieved through a process of creating distance or degrees of separation (Nicotera, 2013; Taylor *et al.*, 1996) between the originating conversation that authored the narrative and the collective entity that emerges. Cooren (2006) noted that creating distance is both spatial and temporal, as well as distance from the speakers or authors of the originating discourse (Ricoeur, 2008).

These different concepts are now explored further.

## **4.22 PART 2: SCALE AS CREATING DISTANCE**

### **4.22.1 Why is scale important in this research?**

The communicative processes and practices of coorientation, conversation and text occur in specific, contextualised interactions such as meetings and email correspondence. However, collaboration and cross-sector collaboration, which are the subject of this research occur across a range of different relationships involving multiple stakeholders. There is a difference in the scale here between local situated interactions and wider multi-stakeholder interactions. This is what Taylor and Cooren (1997) referred to as a process of amplification; in which the scale of organising is extended to a broader audience or community.

The CCO literature addresses these more complex forms of organising and organisation.

The various concepts introduced here were all incorporated into the research analysis as they form part of the framework of XSP value. They are then included in the discussion of the findings in relation to the extant literature.

### **4.22.2 Scale and degrees of distance**

Taylor (2011) distinguished between organising that is locally situated (small entities) from larger, extended organisations and formal organisations. However, he said that the same logic applies to both, whatever the scale, but different modes of communication are required. An example provided by Taylor compares face-to-face conversation, in which communication relies on speech and tone of voice and non-verbal expressions, with communication in larger groups, which relies more on “exchanges of text supplemented from time to time by face-to-face meetings of representatives”.

Scaling up is the description given to the communicative processes in which coorientation, through conversation and text, moves from a locally situated activity between two or more people and develops into more complex forms of organising in groups, communities and organisations. It is a process of moving from specific interactions to more general interactions and vice versa. Taylor (2011) also referred to this process as “zooming in and out” and he explained that while the mode

of communication may differ between small and large organisations, the underlying logic of organising remains the same at all times.

Nicolini (2009) explained that to understand locally situated practice as “what is actually done in the doing of work” requires that the researcher ‘zooms in’ on the detail of “its discursive and material accomplishment”. On the other hand, he argued that by ‘zooming out’, one can understand the conditions within which practice is accomplished as well as the broader landscape and how practice is connected with action. According to Nicolini, zooming in and out implies “choosing different angles for observation and interpretation frameworks” without favouring any one view. This means that multiple perspectives can be recognised and by zooming in and zooming out, different forms or modes of organising and organisation may be explored using the same concepts and theoretical constructs.

Conceptually, scale is about the “degree of distance” in time and space, between the originating conversations and broader conversations with more people over time. As conversations ‘scale-up’, several things change. First, conversations become embedded in subsequent conversations; then modes of communication become more abstract and more objectified through texts and narratives; and other material objects are also introduced.

This progression is explained in the following concepts that are used by CCO to explain different modes of organising:

- i) Embeddedness
- ii) Creating distance
- iii) Degrees of distance: Objectification
- iv) Degrees of distance: Material and textual agency
- v) Degrees of distance: Representation, legitimisation and recognition

A summary of each of these concepts is provided below.

#### **4.22.3 Embeddedness: Going beyond coorientation**

The first concept introduced here is embeddedness or imbrication (Taylor, 2001a).

McPhee and Iverson (2013) explained that coorientation is the baseline model and “the ground-level communicative processes that are involved in the everyday actions of activity coordination”. In order to understand the process of organising beyond this baseline, and to understand the ongoing and “active patterning of relationships”. The concept of embeddedness achieves this and incorporates both process and structure.

Taylor *et al.* (1996) showed that there is a successive embedding of conversations, of text in conversation or layered discourse. Taylor and Van Every (2011: 123) claimed that this recursive process, which they call imbrication is “the building block of any organisation that transcends the

bounds of local practice”. Taylor (2001a) compared the idea of imbrication to tiles on a roof, foliage on a tree or scales on a fish, and he compared it to geological patterns of sedimentation; and described it as fractal in character. However, beyond the image of one layer upon another, the recursive process of organising means that one layer becomes embedded into a complex, multi-level, interconnected infrastructure (Taylor, 2001a) or network of embedded relationships (Taylor, 2005).

#### 4.22.4 Creating distance

As already noted, to achieve a scale of organisation that is described by Taylor (2011) as an organisation-as-actor with an identity that is separate from other actors, there are various stages or degrees of separation (Nicotera, 2013; Taylor *et al.*, 1996) from locally situated interactions.

They are also called degrees of distance by Ricoeur (2008), who coined the term “distanciation”. Cooren (2006) noted that creating distance is both spatial and temporal, so that there is distance from the speakers or authors of the originating discourse (Ricoeur, 2008).

The following descriptions are adapted from Nicotera (2013) and Taylor *et al.* (1996) but with reference to Ricoeur, which is the original source of these conceptual ideas; they have also been deliberately simplified and examples have been added.

Table 4.8 summarises the degrees of distance and provides descriptions of each, with examples.

**Table 4.8: Degrees of distance**

Degree	Label	Description	Examples
1st	<b>Objectification</b>	From the originating conversation, the intention of the speaker is translated into a meaningful account or narrative of the experience.	As one person speaks, so the person or persons hearing or listening responds and together they establish an understanding; they create meaning; they generate a narrative of the exchange.
2nd	<b>Interpretation</b>	The narrative is inscribed or transcribed, written or stored in a form that is more permanent and this is a process of interpretation. The distance from the initial conversation becomes greater.	Notes or minutes of a meeting.
3rd	<b>Appropriation</b>	Ricoeur (2008) used the term ‘appropriation’ to describe the reader’s interpretation, understanding and application of the text to their own present situation.	A manager reads the minutes of a meeting to generate their own understanding and make their own determination of required actions.
4th	<b>Abstraction</b>	The development of a specialised or abstract language or set of conventions, which could be related to a professional, disciplinary or other community of practice (Taylor <i>et al.</i> , 1996).	A company establishes policies, procedures and standards for their own internal use.
5th	<b>Materialisation</b>	Narratives that are “transformed into material and physical frames” or the creation of artefacts (Nicotera, 2013).	Emails, product manuals; also buildings and offices.  In the case of an email, the sender of the communication may be in a different geographical location and time zone and yet the message can be communicated to one or multiple other people simultaneously.

**Table 4.8: Degrees of distance (continued)**

6th	<b>Representation</b>	Representation is where an agent “acts or speaks on behalf (or in the name) of a principal” and it also means “making others present” by acting in their name (Cooren, 2006).	Appointment of officers of the company, use of business cards. A person who invokes a company policy as being the source of authority for setting procedural requirements.
7th	<b>Legitimation and Recognition</b>	The process of representation requires validation; which is achieved through the legitimation and recognition of the agent so that they are recognised as a legitimate spokesperson” (Taylor <i>et al.</i> , 1996). This may be achieved when a standardised form of communication is “disseminated and diffused to a broader public” external to the organisational boundaries (Nicotera, 2013). At this point, the organisation is recognised as an independent entity with authority to act.	Corporate ID, website, media reports, brand.

Source: Author’s compilation.

#### **4.22.4.1 Degrees of distance : Objectification**

The first four stages in Table 4.8 are described here as objectification as they all involve different degrees of objectification of the original spoken conversation. They are objectification, interpretation, appropriation and abstraction and examples of each are provided so that the progression from one stage to the next can be distinguished.

Each of these stages creates new forms of text and narrative that extend the reach of original communication. Going beyond these basic stages of objectification to reach more complex forms of organisation, requires additional stages, described below as material agency and representation.

#### **4.22.4.2 Degrees of distance: Material and textual agency**

The fifth stage shown in Table 4.8 introduces the idea of material and textual agency. Material agency is a concept that incorporates nonhuman actors as agents and in the case of CCO, it extends to include textual agency. The idea is derived from the work of Callon (1986) and Latour (1996) in the field of sociology. Incorporating material and textual agency takes CCO beyond social constructionism (Phillips & Oswick, 2012). These authors contended that ignoring material agency means taking a partial or incomplete view and “constrains the formation of innovative approaches”.

Cooren and Taylor (1997) acknowledged Latour’s contribution to agency theory by giving recognition to “the central role of objects in the creation of agency”. However, they said that restricting objects to physical or material things only, is a limitation. Cooren and Taylor then proposed a different interpretation of “an object” such that it also includes language objects, such as texts.

Cooren (2004) explored the idea of “textual agency” and showed how it is possible “to ascribe to texts the capacity of doing something”. With reference to Smith (2001), Cooren applied his arguments to texts that exist “in materially replicable form” and he argued that “texts, on their own, also make a difference” and make an active contribution to organisational processes because they perform something. Smith (2001) argued that “texts are essential to the objectification of organizations and institutions and how they exist as such”. She explained that texts provide “standardised recognisability” within the organisation and also in order to coordinate activities across multiple sites and across time and space.

Cooren (2004) cautioned that “ascribing agency to texts *never* means that humans completely disappear from the picture”. He also pointed out that there are limitations to what texts or objects can and cannot do since there are some human activities that cannot be attributed to texts or objects. While one may say that the email *communicates* a message, one cannot say that the email *accepts* the consequences if the message is misunderstood.

Things do not always have agency and Cooren, Thompson, Canestraro & Bodor (2006) explained that a general property of agency or action applies to all forms of actor or agents, which is that “others have to proceed”. For example, if there is a noticeboard in the foyer of a building, it has agency to the extent that people read it and decide where in the building they wish to go. The sign *informs* people, when they read it, but if it is not read then the noticeboard cannot *do* anything.

Further, Cooren (Schoeneborn *et al.*, 2014) said that it is very difficult to separate human and nonhuman things as both display agency and both “communicate how an organisation is perceived and experienced”. He emphasised that it is human actors who attribute agency to a nonhuman object; it is a human who “mobilises” the text or the object and who “makes it say something”.

The concept of material and textual agency as the agency of nonhuman actors may now be combined with the more general idea of agency to explain the nature of the concept of representation.

#### **4.22.4.3 Degrees of distance: Representation, legitimisation and recognition**

Cooren (Schoeneborn *et al.*, 2014) extended the concept of agency to include representation so that agents may be described as those that “speak for” or “act on behalf of” an organisation. Cooren (2006) said that “acting in the name of others amounts to making these others present”.

It is another way in which agents can operate at a distance in time and space and it extends and works together with material and textual agency. Cooren (op. cit.) extended the description of material and textual agency to include “what or even who stands under the organisation” and this could be a person such as a spokesperson, an employee or a manager but it could also be something physical such as a building, company logos or texts. He said that “all of these things and persons act and communicate on behalf of the organisation; they embody or materialise it”.

A final degree is recognised that extends representation so that a distinct organisational entity emerges (Nicotera, 2013). According to Taylor *et al.* (1996), the process of representation requires validation; which is achieved through the legitimisation and recognition of the agent so that they are recognised as a legitimate spokesperson. Nicotera (2013) said the organisation is “incarnated by an individual or collective agent acting on its behalf” where incarnation indicates that a separate entity can now be discerned or recognised. Taylor *et al.* (1996) suggested that at this point, the organisation has “a recognised voice”.

#### **4.22.4.4 Note on terminology: Communicative action**

Although the CCO approach to organisation is founded on the process of communication and it also conceptualises action and agency as key attributes of communication, the term communicative action is seldom used in the CCO literature. This concept is specific to Habermas (1981) and is not used in CCO thinking

### **4.23 PART 3: CCO - KEY CONSTRUCTS**

The constructs introduced here build on some or all of the concepts described so far. The concepts and constructs provide the basis from which to describe the nature of organisations and the processes by which they are constituted in communicative practices. The various CCO constructs discussed here are as follows:

- i) Communities of practice
- ii) Metaconversation
- iii) Authoritative text and organisation-as-actor
- iv) Hypertext and hyperconversation

#### **4.23.1 Organising and organisation: Different ways to frame organisation**

Brummans *et al.* (2014) described the dynamic processes of organising and organisation and they highlighted four different views of organising or organisation. These four perspectives are described by Brummans *et al.* (2014) as follows:

- i) Organising as a network of locally situated practices within patterns of conversational activity. These may be described as communities of practice (Taylor, 2011) where individuals become members of a group working together; ‘I’ translates to ‘we’.
- ii) Organising as a collective of multiple communities of practice translated into a larger collective with a collective identity; ‘we’ translates to ‘all of us’. Rochichaud *et al.* (2004) called this the metaconversation.
- iii) An organisation that is objectified and authored where a separate identity can be discerned; a collective actor emerges, no longer limited to a local context or to specific conversations; ‘all of us’ translates to ‘it’.

- iv) An organisation that formally represents a collectivity of others; that acts through its agents who represent it and interact with other entities; that is enabled to act as a collective entity; 'it' becomes enabled to act. The organisation-as-actor emerges. Kuhn (2008) called this "an authoritative text".

Each of these perspectives is now discussed with reference to the literature.

#### **4.23.2 Perspective 1: Organising as process: Communities of practice**

At a local level of activity, Taylor said that a few individuals who collectively get together to get something done over a period of time, will organise and will display organisation. He called this a working group or a community of practice (Taylor, 2011). He said that the organisation relies on "the locally situated community of practice to get its work done".

Taylor (2009) described a community of practice as the coorientation of a group of people who are "regularly focused on a common object"; so that there are "recurrent patterns of interaction". He said that such contexts favour learning how to do things in patterned ways so that work is embedded in social practice; a community of practice exhibits the "inherently socially negotiated character of meaning".

The term used by The Montreal School appears to be a more general idea related to the process of organising when compared to the concept developed by Etienne Wenger. Wenger and Snyder (2000) called a community of practice a new organisational form that promises to "galvanise knowledge sharing, learning, and change". They defined it as "groups of people informally bound together by shared expertise and passion for a joint enterprise" and in this form, it is more focused on the knowledge content and outcomes than the actual process of organising itself.

#### **4.23.3 Perspective 2: Organising as process: Metaconversation**

Robichaud, Giroux and Taylor (2004) described the idea of organisation as a metaconversation, or a conversation of conversations, as "the distributed - even fragmented - character of organisation as a more or less interconnected multiverse of communities". It is multiple communities of practice. Taylor (2011) described a metaconversation as a gathering or "a congeries" of communities of practice.

Metaconversation "is a conversation that embeds, recursively, another conversation". The recursive processes of organising creates a "conversation in which a collective identity is constituted that is larger than that of the smaller communities of practice" (Robichaud *et al.*, 2004). They showed how organisation occurs in metaconversation in which a metanarrative is produced. The collective identity is basically a metanarrative that is negotiated collectively and through a recursive process of imbrication, it becomes embedded in the ongoing layers of conversation.

#### 4.23.4 Perspectives 3 and 4: Organisation as actor: The authoritative text

Perspectives 3 and 4 are both related to organisations as entities but Brummans *et al.* (2014) distinguished between the organisation emerging from the reification or ‘authoring’ of the organisational narrative and an organisational entity that has the representation of agents with the ‘authority to act’ on its behalf or in its name. This latter is the concept of the organisation-as-actor or “authoritative text” (Kuhn, 2008).

The process involves creating the organisational narrative but also establishing a voice by invoking human, nonhuman, textual and collective agents to materialise and present the organisation (Benoit-Barne & Cooren, 2009).

#### 4.23.5 A further progression: Hypertext and Hyperconversation

Taylor and Van Every (1993: 204) introduced the metaphor of hypertext as a model of organisation. With reference to Morgan (2006: 4), they defined metaphor as an image that implies “a way of thinking and a way of seeing that pervade how we understand our world” (ibid: 75). The hypertext metaphor is a perspective that goes beyond the metaconversation and beyond the authoritative text and Taylor and Van Every described it as a multi-dimensional reality (ibid: 209).

“A hypertext model would visualise organisation not as a fixed, unyielding structure but as a set of alternative possible transactional arrangements” (ibid: 205) so that organisation would emerge out of the process of communication. Taylor and van Every explained that while hypertext can represent a conventional, fixed, hierarchical structure, it is not limited to or constrained by a static view. It is not a single thing but rather it is a composition of multiple images; it considers the organisation “as a virtual, not a fixed physical network” (ibid: 207). The organisation is not monolithic but “simultaneously multiple and constantly evolving”.

In a hypertext world, they contended that value is created through a process of negotiation. There is a dynamic of ongoing interaction, transaction and negotiation. Taylor (2000) used the terms hypertext and hyperconversation interchangeably.

#### 4.23.6 A model of four rationalities

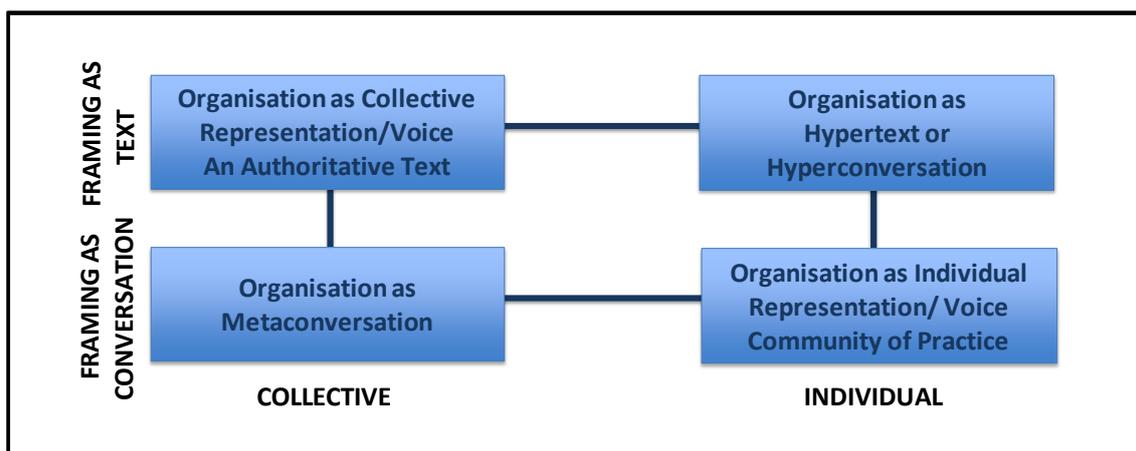
Taylor (2000) presented an alternative schematic of four rationalities that depicts each of these modes of organising and organisation. These are shown in Figure 4.4 below. He extended the options beyond the community of practice, metaconversation and authoritative text, to include hypertext and hyperconversation.

He compared the different communicative perspectives of organisation. The one he called “the organisation-as-actor” that is enabled to speak with a single voice<sup>4</sup> and identity; he said it is a “realized text”. This corresponds with the authoritative text as already described. The other he

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<sup>4</sup> Taylor (2000) attributed a very broad meaning to the notion of voice.

called “the organisation-as-network” which he described as a “layered hypertext of perspectives” where there are many conversations; he talked about this as hypertext, “a superimposition of many virtual texts” or a “lamination of conversations” and “intersections of conversations”.



**Figure 4.4: Organisation as a dynamic interaction of rationalities**

Source: Adapted from Taylor (2001b).

Taylor (2001b) expanded this discussion in a subsequent article and explained that the one perspective is essentially the framing of organisation as conversation (bottom row) and the other is the framing of organisation as text (top row). He then distinguished between the individual (right-hand side) and the collective (left-hand side) so that he represents what he called four “rationalities”. Taylor emphasised that the individual and the group are separate but mutually interdependent. Just as conversation and text are mutually constituted, Taylor (ibid) argued that “the identity of the group and the identity of its members are mutually conditional on the existence of each other”. This created a four quadrant model as shown in Figure 4.4 above.

These four ‘rationalities’ or perspectives of collective action co-exist. Starting at the bottom right quadrant, Taylor (2001b) explained that the basic work of an organisation is performed by individuals in locally situated communities of practice and ongoing conversations of a like-minded group of individuals in which individuals are represented and have a voice.

Moving to the bottom left quadrant takes us to a position in which a collective has become organised as metaconversation, multiple conversations with a common narrative that gives it a collective identity.

At top left, he depicted the organisation as a collective that is represented and has a single voice as a single actor; and what Taylor called the “organisation-as-actor”; it is organisation as an authoritative text.

Lastly at top right, Taylor identified what he called “hyperconversation” or hypertext which he described as multiple conversations that are “flexibly linked to each other through the activities of individual members, who either migrate from one conversation to another or intercommunicate” in

some mediated form such as by email or phone. Individual members act as representatives by giving voice to the organisation and by speaking on its behalf to others.

Taylor said there is a distinction between metaconversation and hyperconversation but the boundaries are fluid; he said that the difference is in the content of the conversations. He distinguished metaconversation as conversation about other conversations, so that conversations become embedded to the point of creating a common narrative. In the case of hyperconversation, the organisation-as-actor is able, as an actor itself, through its representatives, to engage in a multiplicity of conversations.

#### **4.24 CONCLUDING REMARKS ON CCO CONCEPTS AND CONSTRUCTS**

The basic organising principles of coorientation have been introduced as well as the communicative elements of conversation and text.

The basic principles were then developed further to explain how locally situated conversations scale up to more complex forms of organising and organisation. This takes place in processes described as embeddedness and creating distance. There are various degrees of distance, from objectification to material and textual agency to representation.

The primary constructs of organising and organisation that were explored are communities of practice (organising), metaconversation (organisation) and the entitative view of an organisation as a separate actor or authoritative text. There are also the additional constructs of hypertext and hyperconversation as multi-dimensional realities that are negotiated dynamically.

#### **4.25 CHECKPOINT: END OF CHAPTER 4**

The overview of the concepts from the Montreal School of CCO theorising marks the end of the discussion in Chapter 4 in which the research foundations have been set out and key research design decisions have been discussed and explained.

The research decision to use an adapted IPA method for the research analysis meant that the theoretical lens, in this case a communicative lens, needed to be explained. There were two parts to the theoretical lens. The more detailed framework of XSP value was introduced first, followed by an overview of some of the key concepts and constructs of CCO thinking.

The next chapter presents the research methodology and design.

## CHAPTER 5

### METHODOLOGY

#### 5.1 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 5 includes four sections as shown in Figure 5.1 below. The first section deals with ethical considerations, validity and quality control issues. In the second section, some general issues of the research design are discussed such as the research population and unit of analysis. This is followed in Section 3 by the detailed fieldwork design and in Section 4, by the analysis and interpretation design.

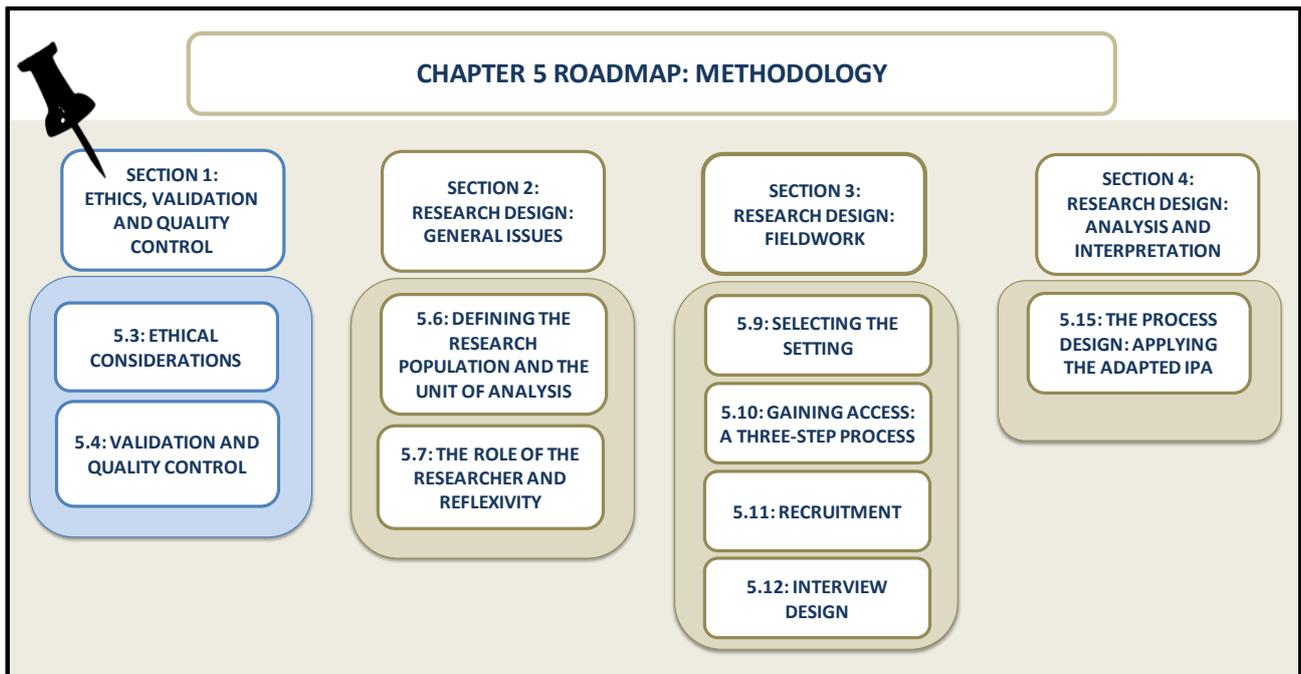


Figure 5.1: Chapter 5 Roadmap

Source: Author's compilation.

## **CHAPTER 5: SECTION 1**

### **ETHICS, VALIDATION AND QUALITY CONTROL**

#### **5.2 BACKGROUND TO RESEARCH DESIGN**

A research design cannot be created without understanding the ethical considerations that must be incorporated and the way in which the quality of the research process and research outcomes should be managed.

While ethics and quality are related issues they are generally discussed separately, but with the understanding that the entire research process has ethical implications (Josselson, 2007) and quality needs to be taken into account at all stages of the research process (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009: 48).

#### **5.3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

##### **5.3.1 Introduction to research ethics**

Ethics is about relationships. A qualitative research study in a business context has a number of key relationships within the academy and the business and/or other organisations that comprise the research setting (Josselson, 2007). In both cases, there are organisational aspects such as the institutional standards or company specific requirements and there are individual relationships with the research supervisor, members of faculty and individual research participants. It follows that there are ethical considerations relating to each and every relationship that is connected with the research. Josselson explained that research requires an ethical attitude; it requires responsibility rather than rules.

Ethical considerations may be discussed as general principles, which apply at all times throughout the research. These general principles may then be extended to include specific considerations that are determined by the specific research design. So in the case of research that uses interviewing as a method, the ethical considerations may differ at a detailed level from those required for a survey method. In the one, there is direct face-to-face contact with research participants, whereas in the other, participants remain anonymous. The relationship in each case is different and the ethical considerations therefore differ.

It should be noted that the more common situations encountered in research settings are, by and large, covered at a procedural level in either the ethical clearance process or in the recommended procedures that are abundant in the literature on research ethics.

As with any ethical matter, the more difficult ethical situations are those that are not anticipated and do not have preventative procedures. These are often situation specific and quite commonly there is more than one course of action that may be followed. Often described as ethical dilemmas, these difficult situations need to be recognised and then carefully considered so that a suitable

response may be actioned in order to rectify the potential risk or minimise the impact of the risk if already incurred.

Ethical matters that arose during the design phase of the research are noted below. Those that arose during the execution of the research process are considered in Chapter 10 at the end of the dissertation, along with a self-assessment of the other validation and quality controls.

### **5.3.2 General principles**

The overall principle for all research is to avoid harm to any participant or stakeholders in the research (Lincoln & Guba, 2013: 74-75; Smith & Osborn, 2008: 53; Josselson, 2007). Other general principles include respecting all stakeholders in the research process and ensuring that all professional obligations and responsibilities of the researcher as a representative of the academic community have been upheld.

Further, there are principles related to the dissertation, its content, claims and disclosures. The work of others must be respected and all direct quotations must be fully acknowledged and referenced to avoid any actual or perceived plagiarism. In addition, it is prudent to adopt an open and transparent approach so that there is disclosure of underlying research assumptions, the role of the researcher and researcher biases (Merriam, 2009: 230). According to Josselson (2007: 549), this requires researcher reflexivity which means being open, honest and authentic (Lincoln, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 76). This advice was adopted and incorporated into the research process.

### **5.3.3 Ethical issues required by the academic community**

The academy, as represented by the institution that is sponsoring the research, has certain established standards that are formalised.

All procedures were followed in accordance with the University of Stellenbosch Business School (USB) requirements. A copy of the signed approval is provided at Appendix A.

### **5.3.4 Ethical issues specific to the research design**

The choice of using interviews as the primary method of data collection means that there are research participants and ethical duties towards the participants.

#### ***5.3.4.1 Informed consent***

In addition to the general ethical responsibilities noted above, the specific undertakings towards the research participants are set out in the informed consent form, a copy of which is included in Appendix B. The consent form used for the research included the Stellenbosch University standard requirements with some adjustments so that it could be included on one page for ease of communication with the participants. The undertakings in the informed consent were discussed with each participant before the first interview and this included a discussion of the rights of the participant. The informed consent includes the following undertakings:

- i) Information on the context and purpose of the research and expected requirements of the participants.
- ii) Non-disclosure of personal identity or source of statements, i.e. participant anonymity.
- iii) Permission to make an audio recording.
- iv) Disclosure of any potential risks to the participants; in this case there are none.
- v) Voluntary consent to participate and right to withdraw.

All participants confirmed their understanding and agreement with these terms. Signed original consent forms for all participants are held on file and each participant was given a copy for their records. These are the only documents that retain the name of the participant and in the interests of anonymity, all references in the research texts apply a coded initial for each participant.

#### ***5.3.4.2 Confidentiality undertaking***

As is common in business studies where there may be sensitive strategic or competitive information included in the content of interviews, the retail organisation that provided the access to the research setting requested that a confidentiality undertaking be signed. After researching the requirements of the participating organisation and discussing the requirements of the university, a short confidentiality undertaking was prepared. The head of the PhD programme at USB confirmed that the undertaking was between the researcher and the company so that there were no restrictions placed on the university.

The wording was approved by the participating organisation and was signed by the researcher and by a representative of the company. All the participants were provided with a copy of the confidentiality agreement. The confidentiality restrictions were carefully worded to cover sensitive company information without unduly limiting the scope of the research. A copy of the signed confidentiality agreement is included in Appendix C.

#### ***5.3.4.3 Disclosures – transparency and reflexivity***

A further ethical matter that is fundamental to the research process is the attitude of transparency required of the researcher, including but not limited to, the disclosure of role of the researcher. It is an ethical issue because the researcher's role defines the relationships with other stakeholders, particularly the participants, and it is therefore a central consideration in making ethical choices.

In addition, it is the research choices that have a significant impact on the validity and reliability of the research, as is discussed in detail below, and that direct the research arguments and outcomes. It is only through appropriate disclosures that the reader can fully assess the coherence and credibility of the research arguments and understand the research claims.

Details of the researcher role are provided at Paragraph 5.7 below.

## 5.4 VALIDATION AND QUALITY CONTROL

Validation “permeates the entire research process” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009: 248) and requires continual checks and ongoing attention so that it is embedded in every stage of the inquiry (ibid: 253).

There are various ways in which to address quality control standards and to evaluate and assess the validity and reliability of qualitative research. Erikson and Kovalainen (2011: 291) wrote about qualitative methods for business research and suggested three options. These include adopting classic criteria that are derived from quantitative studies; adopting alternative criteria that may be applied to all qualitative research; or identifying criteria suitable to the nature of the specific research study.

These options are discussed briefly in order to explain the choice of the criteria that were considered appropriate for this research. An extended discussion is provided in Appendix D.

The traditional criteria are validity, reliability and generalisability (sometimes called external validity), and objectivity (Patton, 2002: 544; Denzin, 2010: 47). Traditional research assumes an objective stance; a neutral researcher and neutral conditions. Validity, in these circumstances, is about the accuracy of the data and the ‘truth’ of the findings, often supported by evidence of causal relationships and other arguments as well as the rigour of testing procedures and the extent to which they may be proved or otherwise falsified. Reliability assumes that the research process is stable, consistent and predictable and can therefore be replicated or repeated under similar conditions with the same or similar outcomes. Lastly, generalisability assumes that the findings, based on a representative statistical sample in the research data, may logically apply to a broader, more generalised population.

While these standards are based on certain research assumptions that do not apply to this research, the terminology is nonetheless useful and easy to understand. It is not possible to achieve objectivity (neutrality) or generalisability and so these two criteria need to be replaced. However, the concepts of validity and reliability still have relevance, although to be useful a less parochial view needs to be adopted. The idea of ‘truth’ is a narrowly defined concept, and not appropriate in many forms of qualitative inquiry. However, validity in a wider sense means “well founded on fact or established on sound principles and thoroughly applicable to the case or circumstances” (OED, 2015). In this sense, validity is also a suitable criterion for qualitative studies.

### 5.4.1 General criteria for qualitative inquiry

Lincoln and Guba (1985: 290) and Denzin and Lincoln (2005: 24) are frequently cited on general criteria for qualitative studies. They recommended a set of common criteria for qualitative research that may be used as a substitute for the traditional criteria. They suggested that the overall aim is

to demonstrate 'trustworthiness' and that this has several aspects including credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity), dependability (or consistency) and confirmability

#### **5.4.2 Specific criteria**

Beyond the general criteria noted above, there are various discussions about criteria that may be applied to a specific method of qualitative inquiry. Examples that are of interest to this research include criteria for social constructionist research (Patton, 2002: 544), narrative inquiry (Riessman, 2008: 184), case study (Merriam, 2009: 210), interviewing (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009: 244), phenomenology (Grbich, 2013: 100) and interpretative phenomenological analysis (Yardley, 2008).

#### **5.4.3 Other criteria**

The debate on validation and quality is ongoing and there are many other interesting perspectives in the literature. Two further issues are raised by Kvale and Brinkmann who wrote about research interviewing, which is therefore relevant to this study. The first is "pragmatic validity" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009: 257), which is pertinent in the context of business research; the second is "communicative validity" (ibid: 253).

Kvale and Brinkmann argued that pragmatic validation is achieved when knowledge supports action and desired results or supports improvement to practices. In respect to communicative validity, Kvale and Brinkmann (2009: 254) contended that interpretation may remain open to further questions and further debate and the dissertation aims "to advance sensible discussion". In this case, further learning is anticipated through ongoing conversation where the research is viewed as persuasive and "sufficiently trustworthy for other investigators to rely upon in their own work". While this may not be the only aim of the research and it is indeed a retrospective form of validation, it is nonetheless relevant to the position of any research study within the broader academic community and the intention to advance further learning. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009: 256), the reliance on others, including the reader, to validate research claims, should not imply a lack of responsibility on the part of the researcher.

#### **5.4.4 Summary of criteria proposed for the evaluation of this research**

A set of criteria is proposed here that informs the research design and the execution of the research process. In Chapter 10, a self-assessment will be conducted using these criteria to consider the extent to which these aims have been achieved and substantiated in the dissertation.

Following the advice of Denzin (2010: 48), there is still value in the common criteria but there is also the need to acknowledge unique criteria for different types of qualitative work. Based on this advice, the criteria that have been used to guide this are a combination of the general criteria and criteria specific to the research design.

Table 5.1 sets out a summary of the validation criteria that were applied for this research study and that are included in the research design. The structure of the table was informed by the guidance

offered by Dixon-Woods, Shaw, Agarwal and Smith (2004) who advised that there is a distinction between issues related to the “auditability and transparency of reporting and those that are concerned with the quality of process and analysis”. Schurink (2009) also emphasised the need for transparency and recommended strategies such as the audit trail and researcher reflexivity.

**Table 5.1: Summary of validation criteria**

	<b>Validation criteria</b>	<b>Fieldwork</b>	<b>Analysis and Interpretation</b>	<b>Reporting</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Validity and credibility</b>  <b>Commitment and rigour</b>  <b>Coherence and transparency</b>	Multiple perspectives (Crystallisation) Respecting and presenting participants' perspectives in a prominent manner; Active listening; accuracy of transcripts Systematic process	Understand the underlying epistemological assumptions Multiple perspectives (Crystallisation) Systematic process; attention to detail Logical connection between the data and the conclusions Search for alternatives and different perspectives	Disclose and discuss the underlying epistemological assumptions Multiple perspectives (Crystallisation) Research choices substantiated Structured arguments with supporting evidence; logical flow of arguments Attention to the use of language
<b>2</b>	<b>Reliability and consistency</b>  <b>Balanced view</b>  <b>Transparency</b>	Systematic process; research plan, interview protocols; semi-structured interviews  Audit trail, interview notes; interview summaries.	Systematic process Audit trail, analysis working papers, tables and summaries  Role of the researcher Reflexivity; Research Journal  Balanced and fair	Role of the researcher declared Reflexivity; Researcher notes Balanced and fair reporting Disclosure of research choices Consistency of data and arguments
<b>3</b>	<b>Transferability</b>	Contextual description of setting and participants	Search for alternatives and different perspectives	Motivating contextual similarity (rich description)
<b>4</b>	<b>Sensitivity to context</b>	Describing the setting and the participants  Declaring the role of the researcher	Role of the researcher Perspectives of the participants profiled with extracts	The literature review and discussion of extant theory
<b>5</b>	<b>Pragmatic validity</b>  <b>Impact and importance of outcomes</b>  <b>( is the research useful, relevant or influential?)</b>	Interview questions directed at actions taken, successful outcomes and measurement of success	Perspectives of the participants profiled with extracts	No direct measure.  The hope is that the research may initiate further discussion on improving practice standards in the academic and/or business community
<b>6</b>	<b>Communicative validity</b>  <b>Persuasive and plausible</b>	Trustworthy Active listening to elicit participant narratives Accuracy of transcriptions	Trustworthy Arguments supported with evidence Use of extracts to profile participant accounts Audit trial	Outcomes and arguments supported by evidence  Research has the capacity to initiate ongoing conversation

Source: Author's compilation.

For each criterion, the methods or tools included in the research design are noted. There are six proposed criteria, including three general criteria (validity, transferability and reliability) and three specific criteria (sensitivity to context, pragmatic and communicative validity). The overall aim here is to establish the trustworthiness of the research and the dissertation. Originally proposed as a guide by Lincoln and Guba (1985: 290), trustworthiness is seen by some as an outdated concept (Creswell, 2013: 250). However, there are still those who advocate that creating trust is the overall goal of research work (Denzin, 2010: 48) and this requires “a plurality of perspectives”.

The various methods and tools noted in Table 5.1 are described in the following paragraphs. As can be seen, some methods meet more than one criterion or meet the validation needs in more than one phase of the research work. While the multiple dimensions may appear to create too much detail, this is aimed at assessing the quality of the research in depth. It is an acknowledgement of the responsibility of the researcher to incorporate quality controls and rigour into the design and execution of the research work and for the researcher to be accountable at the conclusion of the research. It is part of establishing the reliability of the research.

#### **5.4.5 Tools and methods to manage quality**

Some important tools or techniques for demonstrating the quality of the research are discussed briefly, including neutrality (for overall trustworthiness), triangulation (for validity), search for alternatives (for validity) and audit trail (for reliability). An outline of these is provided below and more detail may be found at Appendix D.

##### ***5.4.5.1 Neutrality***

Patton (2002: 51) took a pragmatic approach and argued that since qualitative research cannot be objective in the traditional sense, it can adopt a neutral stance. While acknowledging the challenges that this poses, he outlined various ways in which neutrality may be demonstrated. He said that it requires balance and fairness in order to achieve credibility.

Neutrality does not mean being disinterested or avoiding biases but rather that the researcher is aware that biases are inevitable. From this awareness, the researcher then needs to reflect on the impact of preconceived ideas and assumptions, address them appropriately and be open and transparent by reporting on the implications for the research. This may be achieved by way of a research journal, reflective notes and appropriate disclosures in the dissertation.

The term ‘balanced’ is used in this research, rather than neutral. The discussion on the role of the researcher at Paragraph 5.7 aims to create and demonstrate a balanced view towards the research subject.

##### ***5.4.5.2 Triangulation***

Triangulation is a metaphor commonly applied to mean the use of multiple methods as a means to confirm specific outcomes or fixed points of reference. However, as noted in Lincoln and Guba

(1985: 305), triangulation could apply to the use of multiple methods, but also multiple sources, investigators or theories. Further, they explained that multiple sources may mean multiple instances of *one type* of source (such as different interview participants) or multiple sources of the *same type* of information (such as obtaining documentary evidence to corroborate participant statements). Research sometimes assumes the latter rather than the former.

For the purposes of this research, multiple sources of data were sought from the same source, namely interview participants. In adopting a design that depends on the participant interviews as a single type of source, the strength of the design lies in the diversity of participants rather than in alternative methods or alternative data sources.

Given that multiple sources were used for this research, an alternative metaphor is more apposite as proposed by Richardson (2000) and also cited by Etherington (2004: 148) and by Denzin and Lincoln (2005: 6). As Richardson argued, there are more than three ways to view the world and she suggested the metaphor of a crystal and crystallisation as a validity claim. This denotes ideas such as variety, multiple dimensions and directions, different patterns, ongoing change and growth, and yet also represents structure and process simultaneously

#### ***5.4.5.3 Search for alternatives and different perspectives***

In traditional research methods, it is an accepted approach to test a theory by falsification as argued by Karl Popper (2005). Different methods apply in qualitative research to assess validity. Rather than aiming to prove or disprove a hypothesis as a means to determine truth or accuracy, in this case, to make a claim that is considered to be valid means demonstrating that alternative perspectives or alternative explanations have been systematically sought out.

As a means to establish credibility, Patton (2002: 553-554) suggested a process for systematically searching for “alternative themes, divergent patterns and rival explanations enhances credibility”. The consideration of validity would apply at all stages of the research design and execution.

#### ***5.4.5.4 Audit trail***

The audit trail or paper trail of evidence is an important way to demonstrate reliability by providing a transparent record of how the research has been conducted. It may contain various notes, journals, schedules, working papers and other materials that provide a log or record of the research process. It provides reassurance that the study has been conducted systematically and thoroughly and that the process could be replicated.

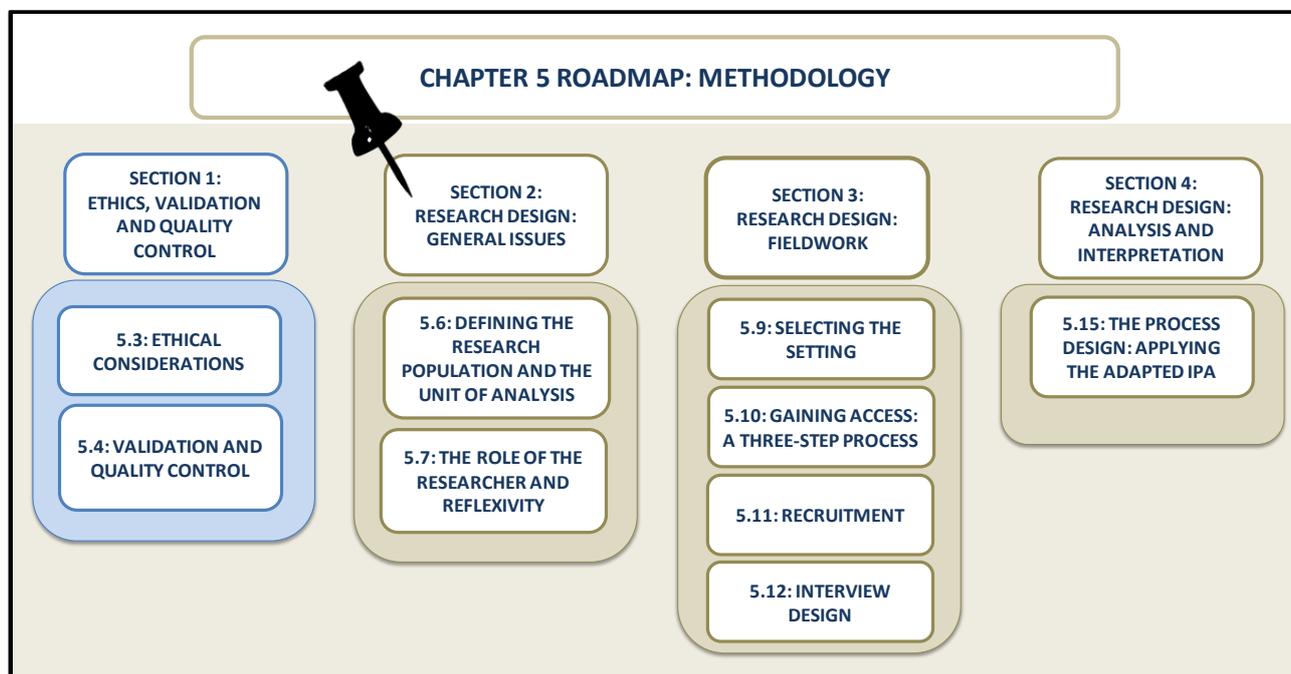
Yardley explained that “the paper trail cannot be published, but should be available to other researchers” if required. The audit trail is not the same as an external audit which is an optional review advocated by Lincoln and Guba (1985: 319) that would independently assess the audit trail.

## CHAPTER 5: SECTION 2

### RESEARCH DESIGN: GENERAL ISSUES

#### 5.5 OUTLINE OF RESEARCH DESIGN

The roadmap for Chapter 5 in Figure 5.1 provides a checkpoint and the next section discusses some general issues related to the research design.

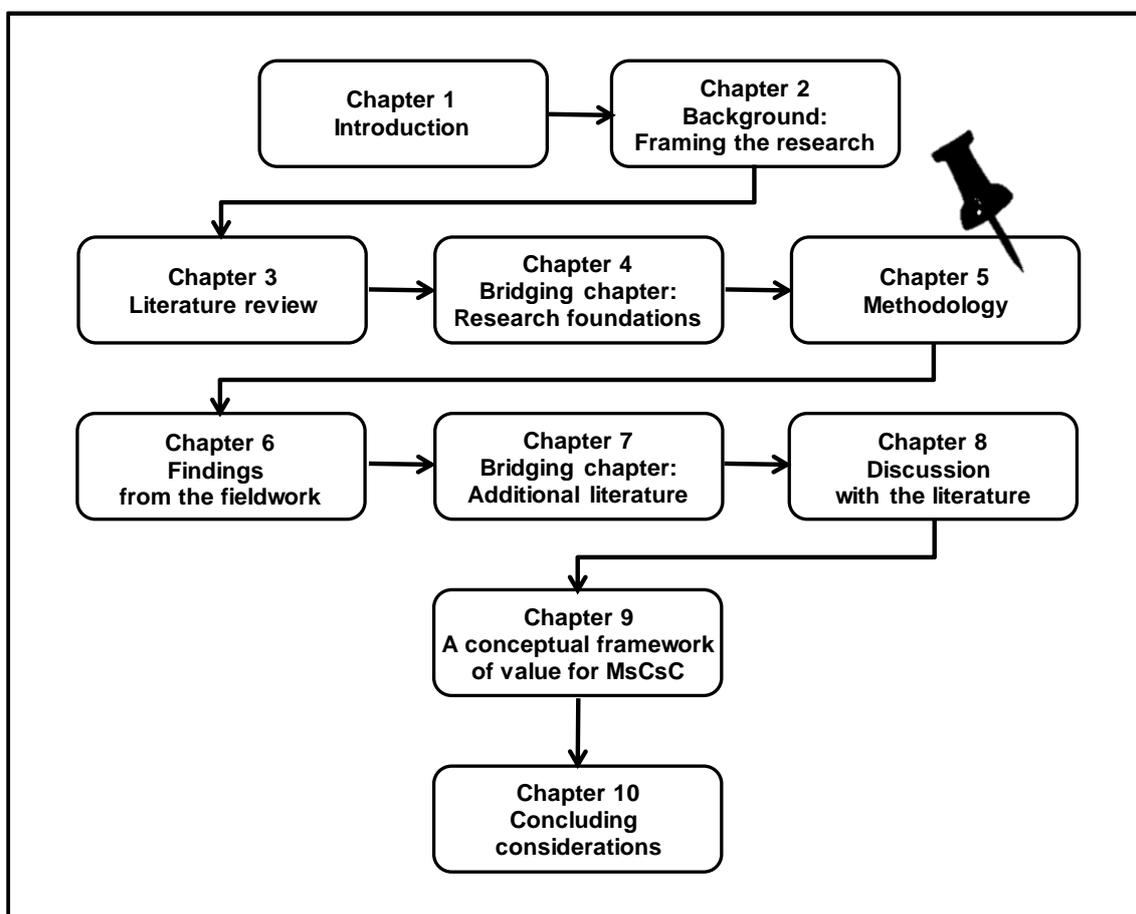


**Figure 5.1: Chapter 5 Roadmap**

Source: Author's compilation.

Figure 5.2 below also provides an overview of the design and the different stages of the research to facilitate the discussion of the research design and to connect it with the various chapter in the dissertation.

There are a number of aspects covered in each chapter and this diagram provides a guide to the contents of each chapter. Throughout this dissertation, Figure 5.2 is used as a guide and in order to avoid confusion, the name and figure number is the same throughout.



**Figure 5.2: Research design**

Source: Author's compilation.

## 5.6 DEFINING THE RESEARCH POPULATION AND THE UNIT OF ANALYSIS

### 5.6.1 Defining the research population

Within the context of South African business, the research population is defined more specifically as companies listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE). The research was directed by a practical challenge set by the King Report (2009: 23-24) to incorporate sustainability into core business strategy and the proposal that collaboration is a means to achieve this integration. While the King Report applies to many organisations in South Africa, it is a specific requirement of the JSE listing requirements for all companies listed in South Africa. The research population was therefore identified as the population of listed companies, which comprises almost 400 companies (JSE, 2014).

This wide population was then narrowed to those South African companies that are promoting sustainability practices to support core strategy and using collaboration to do so. The detailed selection of these specific companies is described in more detail below in Paragraph 5.10.

### 5.6.2 Defining the term: key individual

The term key individual is particularly important for recruiting participants so that people with the appropriate experience are identified.

Key individuals are people who have regular and ongoing experience of the research phenomenon in the workplace. These people are specific (hence the term key individuals), in that they have a direct responsibility for partnership activities with other organisations. Stake (2010: 57) called these key individuals “people with special experience” who have personal knowledge of the phenomenon, rather than theoretical knowledge or second-hand knowledge. He said that such people often understand things better than people with theoretical knowledge. Josselson (2013: 15) described the people recruited for interviews as experts in relation to the phenomenon being studied.

In the context of this research, a key individual is a person with direct, everyday experience of the phenomenon of cross-sector collaboration supporting a sustainability agenda. Further, that the role of the person in their organisation means that they have a specific responsibility for progressing sustainable seafood objectives<sup>5</sup> and that they are directly involved in the collaborative activities that support this. Both the sustainability agenda (in this case sustainable seafood) and collaboration are core aspects of the work that the individual does on a day-to-day basis.

### 5.6.3 Defining the unit of analysis

The unit of analysis was not immediately evident and required careful consideration. A research design could only be pursued once there was clarity on the unit of analysis.

Smith et al. (2009: 195) explained that in a phenomenological study, the topic of the research is experience (or how a person is related to a given phenomenon) and the unit of analysis is “the individual and their meanings” in respect to the experience of the phenomenon.

#### 5.6.3.1 *Connecting the research interest with the unit of analysis*

The research interest is in the lived experience of a specific phenomenon, which is cross-sector collaborations that support a sustainability agenda. To be precise, the actual phenomenon that is explored is the collaborative interactions and relationships supporting sustainable seafood initiatives in South Africa. The phenomenon is an issue supported by a network of activities and relationships described as a multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration. The phenomenon is not an entity; indeed it is not a process or a project but a collectivity of many projects, many processes and many entities involving many people.

The nature of the research interest was the key to determining how this could be explored and in turn this would define the unit of analysis. This study chose to learn from the experiences of key

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<sup>5</sup> The choice of setting is described in Chapter 2.

individuals who were directly involved in a collaborative activity that was considered to be a success. It was this choice that defined the unit of analysis. The research interest is in the lived experience of key individuals and this is therefore the unit of analysis. While in hindsight this may appear to be fairly obvious, the decision was not taken lightly and only made sense once various other research choices had been clarified.

### **5.6.3.2 Other considerations in relation to the unit of analysis**

As the research explored cross-sector collaboration, another option would have been to take the organisation as the unit of analysis. However, organisations or entities do not have lived experience, which is a human phenomenon. An entity or organisation only exists through individuals and it is individuals who have experiences. While an organisation or a project or an activity may have other attributes, they do not have experiences.

## **5.7 THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER AND REFLEXIVITY**

In qualitative research, the researcher is considered to be the primary research instrument (Merriam, 2009: 15; Creswell, 2013: 45; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2011: 57). This means that the researcher holds a certain authority in the research process and has the power to make research choices that have a significant impact on the research process and outcomes.

Yardley (2008) argued that “the researcher *inevitably* influences the production of knowledge” and that any attempt to “eliminate the influence of the researcher would make it very difficult to retain the benefits of qualitative research” and specifically subjective experiences of a phenomenon as described by participants in an interview situation. She recommended reflexivity as a means to demonstrate transparency.

In recognition of this inevitable influence, Patton (2002: 51) advised the researcher to adopt a neutral stance and Josselson (2007) advocated an ethical attitude. A neutral stance does not mean avoiding bias but rather that the researcher has an awareness of inevitable prior assumptions and existing ideas of the subject matter. Further, it means that the researcher reflects on the impact of such biases so that they can be addressed in the research process.

Appropriate ways to address bias is to include reflection or reflexivity, disclosures and balanced reporting. An ethical attitude may be demonstrated in the nature of the disclosures and the honesty and authenticity with which they are discussed and addressed.

### **5.7.1 Reflexivity**

Yardley (2008) said that reflexivity requires “explicit consideration” of ways in which the researcher may have influenced the study. According to Josselson (2013: 27) “reflexivity involves an attempt to recognise your own assumptions or preconceived ideas about the person or narratives that you are about to encounter”. In the interview process, it requires an open and receptive attitude, a focus on listening and thoughtful use of language, words, tone and gestures, with an awareness of

how they may be perceived. It requires a conscious effort to put aside one's own beliefs so that the experiences of the participant can come to the foreground and be given full attention.

Reflexivity is not only about keeping an open mind during the fieldwork, but also during the literature review, the research design and the research analysis and discussion. At all stages, an open mind allows for the outcomes to emerge from the research process rather than from the researcher's own prior experience. Reflexivity helps to maintain a balanced view and an awareness of researcher bias; to constantly consider and reflect on how to address these biases.

It is common for researchers to maintain a research journal to record reflective notes and document various research experiences throughout the research process, including the development of conceptual thinking. Reflexivity is about thoughtfulness and awareness and while this may be a mental activity, it is also necessary to provide evidence of the learning process and the evolving research direction. It is for this reason that a research journal and other written accounts are essential. In turn, this written material may be retained as part of the audit trail evidence. It may also be referenced and discussed in the final dissertation to facilitate the reader's understanding.

For the purposes of this research, different written records were used at different times of the research process. During the early stages of exploring the research topic, detailed notes were kept of various research meetings. In the design phases, the researcher created diagrams and tables to summarise thoughts and wrote diary notes on subjects such as theory and research tools and concepts such as complexity. Throughout the fieldwork, detailed interview notes were written immediately after each interview. A research journal was kept for a period during the design of the analysis phase. The papers submitted to conferences during 2014 also focused attention on articulating the reasons for design choices. There are therefore quite extensive written notes that have been collated and organised as a research record of supporting evidence and are available as part of the research audit trail. Examples of this material are included in Appendices P and Q.

### **5.7.2 The dual role of the researcher**

The researcher has relationships with the academy, the participants and the reader. Given that the reader of an academic report would also be a member of the academy, the researcher is sometimes said to have a dual role (Josselson, 2007; Smith *et al.*, 2009: 35). First, there is a responsibility to the academic community to conduct and present the research in an ethical manner according to the required standards of the academy. Second, there is the responsibility to the participants, to develop and maintain a respectful relationship and to be respectful of the material, the narratives or data that the participants contribute.

The researcher may assume one of two positions (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2011: 57) regarding their relationship with the participants and/or the organisations in which the research is conducted. A researcher may be considered to be an 'insider' or an 'outsider' with respect to these

relationships, and so an insider would have an existing relationship with the organisation and/or participants. Both positions have advantages and disadvantages. In either case, the nature of the relationships should be declared and discussed in terms of the possible bias that may be introduced.

### **5.7.3 An alternative view of the role of the researcher**

Another way of considering the role of the researcher is to recognise that at times it is necessary to take a neutral stance as advised by Patton (2002: 51). At other times, the researcher may be required to assume the role of an expert; and on other occasions, the researcher will need to step back and allow the participants or others to be the experts (Josselson, 2013: 28). It appears that there is a need for different roles at different times, which requires a balanced approach.

Some key points are made in the discussion below and a more detailed discussion is included in the researcher note that follows.

### **5.7.4 A balanced approach**

The language of insider and outsider seems to relate to more traditional methods where participants are called informants and attention is given to creating the impression that the researcher acts as an objective observer. An alternative view is that in any research, the researcher holds the power and the authority to make research choices that impact the research process and therefore it is not possible to retain an objective stance in qualitative research towards the research subject or research process. Adopting Patton's advice, it seems preferable to consider the researcher's role in relation to a position of neutrality, rather than a position inside or outside the research setting, which is only one aspect of the research process, so that a balanced position is adopted.

At times, this may mean avoiding a bias towards the participants' or the organisational perspectives; at other times it may mean avoiding bias towards a particular research interest or theoretical position. Positionality in this case means either a balanced view or a biased view, rather than an inside or an outside view. The balanced stance tries to achieve a position between the two so that undeclared vested interests on either side are avoided.

### **5.7.5 A balanced view in the research design and execution**

The research design influences neutrality. Where interviews are used as a primary source of research material (or data), it is the participants' experiences that are sought and it is their perspective that needs to be highlighted. Josselson (2013: 28) explained that ideally it should be recognised that the participant is "the expert on his or her own experience" and that the aim of the interview is to "understand the participants' experiences as fully as possible". In this respect, participants may be considered to be co-producers of the research with the researcher.

Interviews were deliberately structured to allow the participants to talk at length on the subject from their considerable experience. The interview design limited the number of questions and limits probing or clarifying questions, in order to focus on listening attentively (without the distraction of writing notes) and allowing for the inevitable pauses that occurred from time to time.

A narrative style was adopted purposefully to elicit details of their experiences rather than basic factual information. The aim was to foreground and focus attention on the narratives of the participants. While this was not achieved for all participants or for all questions, a large proportion of the interview responses was in a narrative form and did contain very detailed accounts and storied examples.

An example of where a narrative response was not obtained was in reply to the question regarding collaborative relationships. In one case a participant initially responded very factually with a high-level overview distinguishing between internal and external relationships and talked about supplier and customer relationships in general. Further probing questions were needed to elicit further detail on specific partnership relationships.

However, as explained further by Josselson (2007), where the aim of the research is to represent the narratives of the participants or to express the voices of the participants, then the power of the researcher is still considerable. Within the fieldwork design in its entirety, the focus on the participants' narrative during the interviews is balanced by the control exercised by the researcher in setting up the interview process and protocols. The balance is deliberately managed.

For the analysis phase, the balance was deliberately shifted. The interview material was applied in the IPA analysis and this did not require further interaction between the researcher and the participants. At this stage, the interpretation of the interview material was done at a theoretical level and was not co-created. There was no longer a balance between the participants and the researcher, but rather the researcher's role became more pronounced.

#### **5.7.6 Researcher and participant relationships at different stages of the research**

Eriksson and Kovalainen (2011: 58) explained that the relationship between the researcher and the participants develops and changes over the duration of the research process. It is important for the researcher to actively manage the relationship building but at the same time the relationships remains formal at all times.

Initial meetings were necessary to present a persuasive case to prospective organisations that their time and effort would be valued and applied to a worthwhile project. It is interesting to note in this situation that the balance of control is not with the researcher and it is the choice of the prospective organisation whether or not to agree to support the research. The researcher here must remain impartial towards the organisation but must nonetheless clearly communicate the aims and objectives of the research and explain what the research process entails.

The meetings provided the opportunity to learn about the research setting, who was involved and their experience in relation to the subject of cross-sector collaboration and sustainability. These initial contacts provided important contextual information for the research, but it was equally important in establishing the basis for the research relationships going forward.

The relationship between the researcher and the participants was limited to the interactions in the fieldwork phase of the research. This included email or telephone contact to set up the interviews and then two interviews of one hour each with each participant. The only other direct interaction with the participants was to seek their permission to use the selected quotes.

In the analysis and interpretation phase, there was no direct involvement of the participants. Rather, through the IPA process, the researcher was deeply engaged with the narratives of the participants as presented in the fieldwork material. This was no longer a person-to-person interaction but an interaction with the texts.

#### **5.7.7 Researcher note: The role of the researcher<sup>17</sup>**

See endnote 5.1 in Appendix U.

#### **5.7.8 Researcher note: Further discussion on building relationships<sup>18</sup>**

See endnote 5.2 in Appendix U.

#### **5.7.9 Researcher note: Example of interview notes<sup>19</sup>**

See endnote 5.3 in Appendix U for two examples from the interview notes.

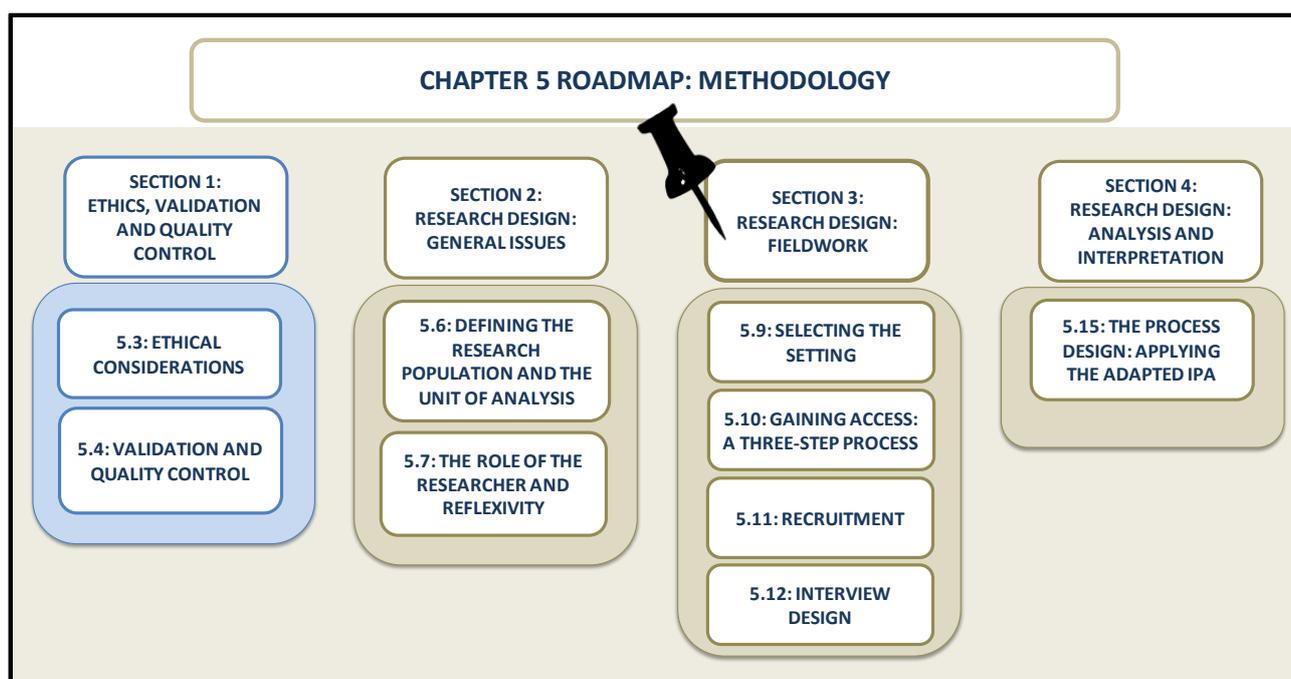
## CHAPTER 5: SECTION 3

### RESEARCH DESIGN: FIELDWORK

#### 5.8 INTRODUCTION TO FIELDWORK DESIGN

The fieldwork design is narrative inquiry and applies narrative interviews as the basis for gathering field texts for subsequent analysis and interpretation.

Some flexibility in the research design was retained until the fieldwork had commenced. It was only after the research setting had been agreed and the early stages of the fieldwork had commenced, that the design was finalised so that it aligned with the research questions and the research setting.



**Figure 5.1: Chapter 5 Roadmap**

Source: Author's compilation.

#### 5.9 SELECTING THE SETTING

This subject matter of the study has two key elements. First, the research subject is cross-sector collaboration but more specifically, the focus of the study is cross-sector collaboration as it pertains to the sustainability agenda and the contribution of business to the sustainability agenda.

The research population comprised companies listed on the JSE. This wide population was then narrowed to those South African companies that, at the time the study was scoped in late 2012, were embedding sustainable business practices into core strategy. More specifically, the research focus was on those companies that could be regarded as exemplars of the research phenomenon, which was cross-sector collaboration that supports a sustainability agenda.

### 5.9.1 Selection criteria for the entry point: the search for an exemplar

Selection criteria were used to identify potential candidates for conducting the research and these are shown in Table 5.2 below. These criteria were chosen based on the subject matter of the study and in addition included a means to assess which companies could be considered as exemplars.

**Table 5.2: Requirements and selection criteria**

Step	Requirement	Selection criteria	Publically sourced information
<b>Step 1</b>	<b>All South African listed companies</b>		
1	South African listed companies (including companies with dual listings)	The JSE list of companies	<a href="http://www.jse.co.za">www.jse.co.za</a>
<b>Step 2</b>	<b>Evidence of sustainability: external recognition and integration into core strategy</b>		
<b>2 (a)</b>	Companies recognised by the JSE as being top performers on the SRI index	Ranked as a best performer on the JSE SRI index 2011	<a href="http://www.jse.co.za">www.jse.co.za</a>
<b>2(b)</b>	and have received public recognition for their sustainability activities	Internet search for awards and accolades, including review of company websites and annual/integrated reports	A wide range of accolades were considered and actively sought including international awards in which South African companies had been recognised
<b>2 (c)</b>	and also demonstrated that they have integrated sustainability into its core strategy	Review of company annual reports	
<b>Step 3</b>	<b>Evidence of use of partnerships to support sustainability strategies</b>		
3	Evidence that the companies have used partnerships to support their sustainability activities in relation to core strategy	Internet search on company websites, especially the annual/integrated report and descriptions of the core strategy of the business	Websites of all companies on the shortlist at the end of stage 2

Source: Author's compilation.

The definition of an exemplar was taken from a research paper on responsible leadership orientations by Pless, Maak and Waldman (2012). An exemplar is considered to be a company that adopts a broad approach to sustainability responsibilities and integrates sustainability (responsible leadership) with its business strategy, creating long-term value for multiple stakeholders and collaborating with stakeholders (Pless *et al.*, 2012).

The above definition, combined with the focus of the research subject, was translated into a set of selection criteria. The aim was to identify companies that met all of the requirements in Table 5.2 above. By using a set of criteria, the selection was done in a systematic and structured manner.

This table should be read sequentially as the selection was done in a stepwise manner. Those companies that met the criterion in step1 were considered for step 2; those companies that met all aspects in step 2 were considered for step 3.

In defining the criteria, it was necessary to be aware of the information that was available in the public domain<sup>6</sup> so that the identification of candidate companies was practically achievable.

The starting point was the total number of listed companies on the JSE, which is around 400 (JSE, 2014). In the second step, there were multiple parts aimed at identifying companies that have been externally recognised for their sustainability activities and identifying whether company disclosures position sustainability as a component of core business strategy. The JSE SRI index for 2011<sup>7</sup> was used to narrow the population of all South African listed companies to a list of the best performers, as recognised by the JSE, according to the various dimensions of responsibility in the JSE SRI index, including social, environmental and governance (JSE SRI Criteria, 2011). The reduced list of 22 companies was then explored in more detail. A detailed search was done of awards and recognition given to South African companies for various successes with regards to sustainability during the year to November 2012. While integrated reporting awards were considered, reporting was not taken as a factor in its own right for demonstrating that sustainability was integrated into core business strategy.

A consistency check was also included at this stage, and from this it was noted that there were some potential omissions where companies that had received sustainability awards were not in the initial list of JSE SRI top performers. This was explained in the case of three of the companies as they did not meet one of the governance criteria requiring an independent chairman. Four additional candidates were therefore considered as a result.

A list of 26 potential candidates was then assessed in more detail and the remaining criteria applied. Appendix E provides a summary of the evidence that was used to achieve this assessment.

The final short list of candidates was reduced to two companies, a beverage company and a retailer, also referred to as Woolworths. These companies were assessed as meeting all the criteria and therefore the preferred research candidates.

### **5.9.2 Researcher note: The selection process<sup>20</sup>**

Refer to endnote 5.4 in Appendix U.

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<sup>6</sup> It should be noted that the selection was done based on information available in November 2012.

<sup>7</sup> The 2012 index was later issued in December 2012 with a reduced number of companies and no additional best performers.

## **5.10 GAINING ACCESS: A THREE-STEP PROCESS**

### **5.10.1 Step 1: Access to the point of entry**

With the assistance of one of the professors at USB, contact was made with both prospective organisations in early March 2013. One of the companies, Woolworths, agreed to participate in the study. The other company was unable to do so.

### **5.10.2 Step 2: Access to the research setting**

It was with Woolworths that a suitable research setting was selected. The primary requirement for the research was a collaborative or partnership activity that met the following criteria:

- i) A sustainability initiative.
- ii) The initiative must be part of and/or directly support core business strategy.
- iii) Recognition by the company as being successful, with measurable evidence.

These requirements were discussed at the initial meeting at Woolworths and while other options were considered, sustainable seafood was identified as a partnership initiative that met these criteria. The success of the sustainable fishing campaign in 2012 was noted. In addition, there was a limited number of people directly involved in sustainable seafood and the partnership activities in which Woolworths was involved. As a research site this offered the potential for all of the key individuals to be invited to participate in the research.

The main partners involved were the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), and the South African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (WWF-SASSI), a project within WWF-SA, but other organisations were also involved.

Before potential participants could be contacted, introductory meetings were required at these partner organisations. Introductions were arranged at Woolworths, MSC and WWF-SASSI for the purpose of presenting the research proposal and explaining the research requirements. While the involvement could not be assured, nonetheless the support of Woolworths was the key factor that facilitated the access required and all agreed to support the research.

### **5.10.3 Step 3: Access to key individuals: recruiting participants**

After the introductory meetings, the recruitment of participants could commence. There were a group of people who had full-time responsibility for sustainable seafood initiatives and had been instrumental in the success of the 2012 project. This group is referred to as the core group.

In addition to the core group, additional participants were also recruited.

#### ***5.10.3.1 Recruiting the core group***

Initially, there were four individuals in the core group of participants. Three other key individuals were subsequently identified that met the required criteria and who agreed to participate. In total

there were seven key individuals in the core group, but one of these people later resigned from the company and was therefore withdrawn from the study. This left six participants in the core group.

### **5.10.3.2 Recruiting other key individuals**

As part of the first interview, the core group related stories of successful projects. From these narratives, a further eight individuals were identified. Referrals were obtained so that they could be contacted directly. These eight individuals also agreed to participate in the research. Two of these were categorised as having strategic responsibility for sustainability as a core business strategy, but both also had specific involvement in sustainable seafood initiatives.

In total, 14 key individuals agreed to participate.

### **5.10.4 Timeline**

The introductory meetings at Woolworths and the main partners took several months and the process is described in the researcher notes. The initial contact was made in early March 2013 and the initial meeting with Woolworths took place in the same month. Other introductory meetings took place in April and May 2013 and the first interviews with participants then commenced in August 2013.

### **5.10.5 Researcher note: Introductory meetings<sup>21</sup>**

See endnote 5.5 in Appendix U.

### **5.10.6 Confidentiality undertaking**

Before any research activities could commence, a signed confidentiality undertaking had to be approved by Woolworths and signed by myself as the researcher and by the company. The undertaking covered competitive and /or other sensitive information of a strategic nature. A signed copy is included at Appendix C. A copy of this undertaking was given to each participant before the commencement of the first interview.

## **5.11 RECRUITMENT**

### **5.11.1 Diversity of participants**

The research design has not used sampling procedures as a representative sample was not required. Rather, by exploring an exemplar, what was valued was the unique or unusual characteristics of the research setting and so, a diversity of participants was sought. In sampling terminology this may be called a purposive sample with maximum variation (Patton, 2002: 235).

Further, the process of identifying participants is sometimes called a snowball technique. For this research, contact was made by personal referrals. Josselson (2013: 15) suggested that recruitment is a preferable term when participants are engaged through a networking process such as was the case for this research.

And so, for this research, it was a recruitment process that was employed and it is the diversity of participants that offered the potential of generating a variety or breadth of ideas. However, the diversity was balanced with purpose so that each recruit met specified requirements that supported the research questions.

Recruitment then needs to be complemented by meaningful interview questions and productive interviews, in order to provide the required depth of interview material or field texts.

### **5.11.2 Criteria for recruiting key individuals**

The definition of a key individual acted as the criteria to facilitate the choice of participants and provide a logical basis for recruitment.

### **5.11.3 Number of participants and boundary cases**

There is no right or wrong answer regarding the number of research participants in a qualitative study. In grounded theory, the decision is guided by the process of theoretical sampling, which continues until data saturation can be argued, which means that no new insights are being generated with additional participants.

However, in the case of narrative inquiry, the logic of theoretical sampling does not apply. An alternative logic was needed and there is very little guidance in the literature. There are various recommendations about the need for rich or thick description of the research phenomenon as espoused by Geertz (1973), but this does not provide a direct answer. Smith *et al.* (2009: 49-51) recommended small samples sizes of between three and six participants for an IPA analysis. They advised that there are practical issues to consider, in terms of accessibility and in terms of the volume of material that can reasonably be managed. They advocated for the richness of the field texts rather than for volume.

For this research, criteria were defined to direct the recruitment process and yet diversity of participants was also sought. In sampling terms, Patton (2002: 235) described this as purposive sampling with maximum variation. Recruitment followed a referral process from the gatekeepers so that the core group of recruits was referred. Further recruits were derived from the success stories related in the first interviews of the core group. The process was systematically pursued until boundary cases could be identified.

The definition of key individual helped to define a boundary for the recruitment process. Two of the participants from the additional group only met one of the defined criteria and so these two participants are regarded as 'boundary cases'. They both had the potential to contribute to the research subject, but the one had limited involvement in sustainable seafood and the other had limited involvement with Woolworths. Both had considerable experience in cross-sector collaboration and for this reason they were included in the interview process.

#### **5.11.4 Researcher note: Number of participants<sup>22</sup>**

See endnote 5.6 in Appendix U.

#### **5.11.5 Researcher note: Getting appointments<sup>23</sup>**

See endnote 5.7 in Appendix U.

#### **5.11.6 Summary of research participants**

The recruitment process accomplished two important outcomes. It established the similarity and the diversity of the participants. First, it included a high percentage of key individuals involved in sustainable seafood initiatives and connected to Woolworths. This established what the participants had in common. Second, it established the diversity of the participants who were from seven different organisations, held a variety of functional responsibilities, and a range of skills and experience. A summary of participants recruited is provided at Appendix F.

### **5.12 INTERVIEW DESIGN**

#### **5.12.1 Interviews as the primary research tool**

Interviews are used as the primary research tool for the fieldwork phase of the research.

The research interest is in the lived experience of key individuals and this requires an intersubjective design so that the key individuals convey their experiences directly to the researcher in the interview situation. It is possible that these accounts could have been written rather than verbal and this option was considered as an alternative, in the event that interviews could not be arranged. However, this was not necessary and the participants all agreed to the interview process. The interviews are therefore multiple sources of the same type of material, namely interview texts. As noted in the section on validation, reliability is achieved through multiple sources of the same type of information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 305) and adopts the metaphor of crystallisation (rather than triangulation).

No other types of text or material were used in the fieldwork. There are no other reports, documents or other fieldwork sources. Other types of material cannot convey the personal experiences of the participants; they are not intersubjective.

This does not preclude reports, documents, articles and accounts from websites being used to establish the research context. In any event, the participants encouraged this and some offered recommendations for further reading. A range of resources were explored to provide important background information in order to understand the issue of sustainable seafood. This background is discussed under the heading research setting in Section 6 of this chapter.

#### **5.12.2 Narrative interviewing**

The term narrative interview was adopted from Josselson (2013: 7) who recommended an approach that she described as relational. She said that interviewing is about relationships; it is a

process rather than a procedure and involves interactions with people. In her view, the interview is a dynamic intersubjective process that may be viewed as a collaboration or partnership so that the participant is empowered rather than objectified. Further detail has already been provided in Chapter 4 at Paragraph 4.11.7.

This research adopted narrative interviewing as an approach as it aligned with the needs of the research and the social constructionist view. The term narrative interviewing is preferred rather than unstructured, active, responsive or postmodern. There are aspects of these methods that are relevant and were considered; but this research study is different in the way that it has combined the various tools available. The design was guided by various sources in the literature but primarily by Josselson (2013).

### **5.12.3 Detailed design of the interviews**

Some key design considerations are noted here. Details of the interview protocols are included at Appendix G.

The interview design aimed to balance structure with openness. The limited structure was not intended to imply that the interviews were informal. As the research context was in business, an expected degree of formality was required so that the participants work situation was respected.

Inevitably, in a business environment with limited time and people with busy schedules, coupled with specific research objectives, structure was also equally important. The interview design needed to accommodate both; a degree of formality and a degree of openness. As Josselson (2013: 13) explained, interviewing is a relational process and requires “an ethical attitude” that is sensitive and respectful to the participants.

Other tools were used to achieve balance. There was a question in each interview that required the participant to draw a diagram to support their narratives. This was aimed at breaking out of the standard question and answer format and allowing the participant a free-format space to engage with the question.

In the first interview the question on relationships was supported by a diagram drawn by the participant to supplement their verbal descriptions. In the second interview a diagram was used as a form of ‘ice-breaker’ to re-establish the connection with the research subject and ensure that the participant was focused and attentive. This interview aid was adapted from Josselson (2013: 185) who described it as “relational space mapping”. It is a means to engage the participant more actively in the interview and also provides some visual material that may be used to supplement the research analysis.

#### ***5.12.3.1 Interview protocols: Structuring the interview design***

Interview protocols were prepared as a guide. They were very helpful in the design phase as different options and questions were explored. The protocols set out the interview objectives, the

questions and the planned process. They were reviewed and revised several times between October 2012 and July 2013 when a pilot interview was conducted.

Structure was necessary to respect the business context, in which participants expected clarity on the time allocated and the interview requirements; it was also needed so that best use was made of the limited time available and so that relevant material relating to the research questions was balanced with a limited number of interview questions.

Time was limited to one hour for each of two interviews and this included introductions and wrap up. The same set of questions was used in each of the two interviews, for each participant.

Each of the two interviews focused on a different objective, representing two 'levels of analysis'. The first was aimed at understanding the perspectives of the individual and the second was directed more specifically at an organisational level, as understood by the individual. Given that a research design based on interviews is often aimed at understanding organisational perspectives, this research was designed to distinguish the organisational questions from the more personal questions. Given that the participants were all selected according to the definition of key individuals, it is argued that they could all present an organisational perspective, based on their role in the organisation and their experiences in that role. Initially, a third interview was considered as an option, in the event that certain issues needed to be clarified, but in the end, this was not required.

#### ***5.12.3.2 The interview design: Balancing structure with time to talk***

The interview questions were open ended and broadly stated in order to explore the research phenomenon of successful relationships and collaborative interactions in partnerships for sustainability.

The structure of each interview was informed by the definition of experience already noted and the dimensions of continuity, interactions and context. Each interview had a question aimed at establishing context; each interview had a question aimed at continuity; and where possible these were combined in a single question. The primary questions focused on experiences of successful partnerships for sustainable seafood.

In each interview situation, the format and process of the interview were explained to each participant, including:

- i) the informed consent,
- ii) the aim to elicit stories of their experiences, and
- iii) the role of the researcher, which is to listen and limit interjections and questions.

**Table 5.3: Interview structure**

<b>Interview</b> ----- <b>Subject</b>	<b>Interview 1</b> <b>Individual perspective</b>	<b>Interview 2</b> <b>Organisational perspective</b>
<b>Context:</b>	Personal story: How did you get involved in sustainable seafood?	Please describe your role in sustainable seafood. Please describe the role of the organisation in relation to sustainable seafood. What is the organisational strategy related to sustainable seafood?
<b>Interaction:</b> Experience of the research phenomenon: Describing relationships	Describe the key relationships with the people and organisations that you partner with in supporting sustainable seafood.	
<b>Interaction:</b> Experience of the research phenomenon: Collaboration that works well	Describe your experience of a successful collaborative project relating to sustainable seafood.	What is the collaborative approach adopted by the company in relating to sustainable seafood and what is needed so that it works well? How is the success of sustainability and collaboration measured or assessed? How do you know when it is working well?
<b>Continuity:</b>	Past: Personal story Ongoing: What does this mean to you?	Past: Connecting back to the first interview. Future: What needs more attention?

Source: Author's compilation.

The structure of the interviews is summarised in Table 5.3, which shows that there are questions in both interviews that focused on the different aspects of experience, namely context, interaction and continuity. In both interviews, there were four main questions and these were in most cases, asked in the same sequence. On a few occasions, the sequence of the questions was adjusted to accommodate the flow of the discussion.

As can be seen from this summary, the questions about interactions are focused on partnering and collaboration. Equally important in a phenomenological study, is the inclusion of contextual detail and so questions were included relating to personal context and organisational background.

While the interview protocols provided a plan and structure, there is a balance between the structured elements and open questions. This was supported in the following ways:

- i) Highlighting upfront that there were only four questions.
- ii) Giving focused and deliberate attention to listening.
- iii) The use of diagrams, as previously noted.

The focus on listening required a deliberate effort and was a conscious choice to avoid the appearance of normal conversation. While the interview was a two-way communication, the role of

the researcher was to listen, to acknowledge and encourage. At times, this required consciously allowing for pauses, which gave space for further insights.

### ***5.12.3.3 Interview questions***

Following the advice in the literature, a limited number of interview questions was used. The questions are carefully worded to meet the following objectives:

- i) Avoid leading questions that suggest a predetermined answer.
- ii) Include open questions to allow the participant to answer freely.
- iii) Each question has a specific purpose related to the research objectives.

Several types of questions were included. In each interview there was an introductory question and a closing question, aimed at establishing context and continuity. The main interview questions addressed the research interest and were directed at experiences of successful collaborative relationships and interactions.

While there were four primary questions for each interview, additional questions were prepared in the expectation that at times it would be necessary to probe further (a probing question) or to ask for clarification (a clarifying question). These types of questions did not explore a new subject area but were directed at greater understanding of one of the primary questions.

### ***5.12.3.4 Other contextual factors***

While there is much to prepare in advance of the interview, other contextual factors also intervene and in a business environment the available meeting space can have an impact. The appearance of the researcher, the initial interactions before the interview, how the interview is introduced and the first question are all important factors in setting the tone.

These require careful consideration and some may be managed by the researcher, but they cannot all be planned and controlled. There is a difficult balance here that requires the attention and awareness of the researcher. Managing some of these issues can help to create a friendly environment in which the participant is willing to engage. This is essential if they are going to share their personal experiences. But in business research, indeed any research, certain formalities are also necessary. There needs to be some flexibility so that a balance is achieved that is responsive to each individual and the specific and immediate environment encountered in the interview situation.

For this research, advice was taken from many sources in the literature but the lessons learnt in actually conducting the research interviews were most valuable. Some observations and reflections are provided in the researcher notes below.

### **5.12.4 Researcher note: Narrative accounts or reports?<sup>24</sup>**

See endnote 5.8 in Appendix U.

### **5.12.5 Researcher note: Interview experiences<sup>25</sup>**

See endnote 5.9 in Appendix U.

### **5.12.6 Other tools used during the fieldwork phase**

#### ***5.12.6.1 Preparatory background on the issue and the primary organisations***

A balance is required here. While some background is required to establish a context, too much creates the risk of preconceived ideas. This was more a concern for the second interview, which was directed at the organisation, rather than for the first interview, which was directed at personal experiences.

These contextual reviews were conducted as a desktop web search; and they helped to identify the language of each organisation and its overall objectives. In order to achieve the required balance, only a preliminary review was conducted before the interviews. Inevitably, as more interviews were completed, so knowledge and understanding developed of the people, the organisations and the various relationships. However, the interview questions, combined with attentive listening, helped to keep each interview focused.

#### ***5.12.6.2 Interview notes taken after each interview***

Interview notes were written within 24 hours of completion of each interview. These were very useful as a tool for reflection. Following the advice of Schurink (2009), a standard format was adopted. The interview notes included the initial insights and other observations about the interview context and the interview experience. These notes gave some structure to thinking about what had happened at each interview and about the ideas and issues highlighted by the participants. The structure also means that the notes are accessible for further reference and for the audit trail of evidence. An example is provided at Appendix Q.

#### ***5.12.6.3 Ongoing contextual material***

Reading on the subject matter and organisations continued throughout the interview process and was guided by recommendations made by the participants. It included reports and other publically available material provided by or recommended by the participants. For example, where mention was made of a research report on seabird bycatch or seafood labelling, then those reports were obtained.

Reading material was used for background information only in order to understand the context of the participants' experiences. None of this material in itself offers insights into the personal experience and it is not used to support the arguments and outcomes of the research. However, inevitably this material expanded the researcher's understanding and therefore had an influence on the understanding of the material from the research interviews.

Context is helpful for understanding some of the technical terms and issues that the participants talked about. It prevented interruptions during the interviews to ask for clarification. One could

argue that probing and exploratory questions could introduce a bias into the interview in terms of the researcher identifying areas to be explored in more detail. This is a valid concern; however, in the majority of interviews, with a few notable exceptions, there were very few exploratory questions needed as the participants generally found the questions provided an opportunity for them to talk freely and in detail about their experiences.

#### ***5.12.6.4 Technology support***

Various technology tools were used to provide essential support to the interview process. Some key objectives were to avoid handwritten notes, to keep journal notes and records in an orderly fashion and keep back-up copies regularly.

#### **5.12.7 Researcher note: Technology support<sup>26</sup>**

See endnote 5.10 in Appendix U.

##### ***5.12.7.1 Transcripts***

With a few exceptions, transcripts were done within a week of completing each interview. It was important to the researcher that all the interviews were transcribed personally and in full. In effect, the transcriptions were the first detailed review of the interview material; it was an opportunity to become immersed in the detailed narratives. While it is fair to say that interpretative thinking starts with the first interview and is a continuous process throughout the fieldwork, the first opportunity to consider the detail of the interview content was in doing the transcriptions. This was then the connection to the initial stages of the analysis phase as described in the next section.

There was limited guidance in the literature about how to write up the transcripts. Other than in conversation analysis and discourse analysis, which appear to have very specific conventions for annotating verbal and non-verbal expressions, pauses and other events, there was no standard format. Mishler (1986: 48) warned that in any event, recordings and transcriptions are only “partial representations of what ‘actually’ occurred” and should be recognised as such.

For the purposes of this study, the research did not require the conventions of CA and DA. However, a standard approach was established with some basic notations for pauses and non-verbal expressions and times were noted at each minute for easy reference. These notations were then used throughout. The focus was mainly on the words, on what was said, rather than how it was said.

The quality of the transcript was determined in terms of the accuracy of the words as articulated in the research interview. It is acknowledged that in some research there is other important information conveyed during the interview, such as non-verbal indicators, gestures and expressions. This level of detail was not required as CCO is directed towards the organising properties of communication in the conversations and narratives and does not explore non-verbal communication. However, the contextual factors, the tone and other aspects of the interaction

during the interview were captured in the interview notes immediately after each interview to be used, if necessary, to facilitate the researcher's recollection of the interview experience.

Based on the research aims, there are two reasons why the transcripts were not validated with the participants, a control often called member checking. First, the quality of recording was excellent and by doing the transcript a short time after the interview, the researcher had confidence in the accuracy of words included in the transcribed version. Second, the interview material is used for theorising to support the conceptual outcomes of the research; it is not used to represent or 'give voice' to the participants' personal stories, which would require that the transcripts were checked for the accuracy of the words and for the message that was conveyed. Josselson (2007) explained that this type of research does not generally involve the participants after the interview stage. In this case, the quality focus was on the accuracy of the words and this was secured with the high quality recording.

#### **5.12.8 Researcher note: Transcription experiences<sup>27</sup>**

See endnote 5.11 in Appendix U.

### **5.13 FIELDWORK: SUMMARY OF DESIGN**

#### **5.13.1 Key milestones in the fieldwork process**

The key research activities in the fieldwork are summarised in Table 5.4 below.

This table shows how the design developed dynamically as research activities were executed. The conclusion of one step led to research choices in the next step. The agreement of Woolworths to participate led to the selection of sustainable seafood initiatives as the setting. In turn, this led to the recruitment of key individuals connected to sustainable seafood and/or Woolworths. This resulted in 14 participants and seven organisations being included in the study.

**Table 5.4: Key milestones in the fieldwork process**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>1</b>	Defining the research population and identifying exemplars as preferred candidates for conducting the research.  Exemplars integrate sustainability into core business strategy and use partnerships to support that strategy.	The research population is South African listed companies.  Woolworths agreed to participate in the research.  Woolworths became the entry point to the research setting; it is the case; it is not the unit of analysis.
<b>2</b>	Identifying an appropriate setting for the research.	Sustainable seafood initiatives in South Africa.  A multi-dimensional, global network of partnership activity.
<b>3</b>	Defining the unit of analysis.	Individuals and their lived experiences of collaborative and/or partnership activities supporting sustainable seafood initiatives.

**Table 5.4: Key milestones in the fieldwork process (continued)**

<b>4</b>	Levels of analysis.	Individual and organisational (as understood by key individuals who represent the organisations).
<b>5</b>	Selection of methods and tools for the fieldwork appropriate to exploring lived experience of key individuals.	Narrative inquiry and narrative interviews Lived experience may be explored intersubjectively from verbal or written accounts of key individuals. The choice is interviews. It is not appropriate to use reports and other documents, other than for background context.
<b>6</b>	Recruitment of key individuals, defined as people with a key role in sustainable seafood and working directly in partnership activities with Woolworths.  Boundaries for recruitment are defined in terms of connection to Woolworths and/or sustainable seafood.	15 participants recruited (1 person resigned from the company and was withdrawn). 14 participants included in the study.  7 organisations represented - 2 businesses; 3 NPOs; 1 government department and 1 research organisation.  29 interviews conducted ; 27 hours of interview material.

Source: Author's compilation.

The setting is a multi-dimensional network of individuals and organisations; it is global; its boundaries are fluid and undefined; timelines are not specified; there is no single, common objective. However, there is an issue that connects everyone; that is a point of commonality amongst all the organisations and individuals. The issue is sustainable seafood stocks supported by responsible fishing practices, responsible sourcing practices and responsible buying choices. The setting in turn allowed the research choices regarding methods to be finalised, which then allowed for the recruitment process to proceed.

### **5.13.2 Next phase in the research design**

From the initial design stages in 2012 to completion of the interviews in 2014, the fieldwork was one of the main phases of the research work.

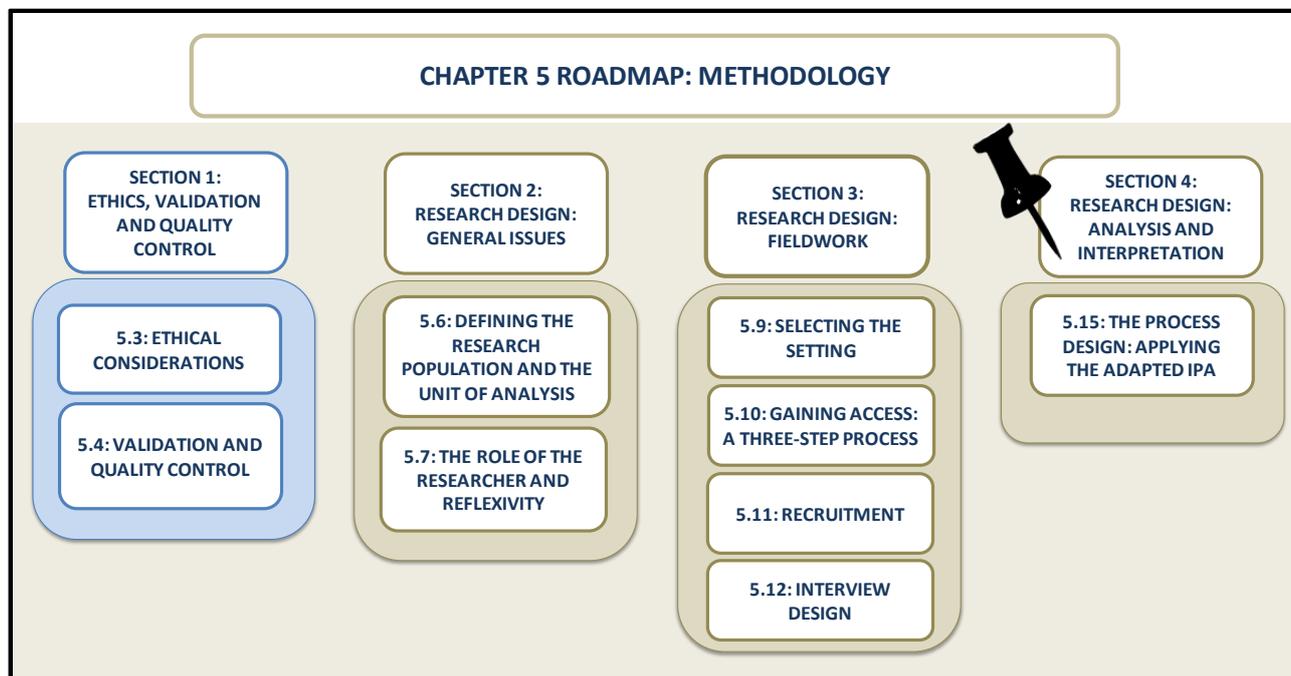
The following section deals with the design of the research analysis and interpretation.

## CHAPTER 5: SECTION 4

### RESEARCH DESIGN ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 5.14 SECTION INTRODUCTION

This section discusses the design adopted to analyse and interpret the field texts.



**Figure 5.1: Chapter 5 Roadmap**

Source: Author's compilation.

The design includes elements of inductive logic, which tends to be interpretive and analysis, which tends towards deductive logic. However, given the epistemology of social constructionism, the nature of the research process is constructionist, the outcomes are jointly produced by the various stakeholders in the research, including the researcher, the participants and the reader. The research outcomes depend on all of these people at different times, in different ways; all play a role in the interpretive process that is needed to develop insights and greater understanding of the research phenomenon.

Although the analysis and interpretation, as a phase of the research process, primarily involves the researcher engaging with the field texts, this is not an isolated activity. It requires that the researcher reflect deeply on the narratives of the participants as inscribed in the field texts, the context of the participant as described in the narratives, their experiences of the research phenomenon as they recall and relate their experiences. The researcher can recall the experience within the context of each interview situation and within the context of the research process. It is an interactive experience as the researcher interacts with the field texts and recalls the face-to-face interactions of the interview.

The researcher is also interacting with the reader, throughout the writing of the dissertation. There is an assumed audience to whom the dissertation is addressed.

Seen in this way, the research outcomes are jointly produced. All of the stakeholders together, have a role to play in the process of interpretation and analysis.

## **5.15 THE PROCESS DESIGN: APPLYING THE ADAPTED IPA METHOD**

### **5.15.1 Describing the adapted IPA method**

Guidelines are provided in several texts with regards to the actual tools and techniques to be adopted to conduct an IPA analysis. The approach adopted for this study was drawn from several sources including Smith and Eatough (2012), Smith and Osborn (2008) and Smith *et al.* (2009: 79-107).

The main strategies described in these sources were used to structure the analysis and interpretation<sup>8</sup> phase of this research. The guidance in the literature does not follow a uniform method, but there are common principles. The steps or stages noted in Table 5.5 below have been given descriptions by the researcher, but the detailed procedures are taken from the guidance. While distinct stages are shown here, they are not numbered because the process is iterative and in actuality, it is not neatly contained within clearly defined boundaries. Items that are underlined indicate where the design applies a process that differs from the standard IPA guidance. The main adjustments are explained below.

IPA is described as a thematic analysis, so that key ideas are highlighted in the field texts and then a description (in everyday language and/or in abstract language) is given to each separately identifiable idea. Then the ideas are clustered, patterns are highlighted so that clusters start to emerge as themes or patterns of ideas. As the themes emerge, so a more abstract description is allocated based on the theoretical lens and the conceptual ideas begin to emerge. Both the descriptive and the conceptual ideas are described as themes in the IPA literature. However, Smith *et al.* (2009: 80) said there is no correct way to do an IPA analysis and they encouraged researchers to be innovative. They view the step-by-step guidance as a heuristic rather than a fixed process.

For this research, the process was adjusted to make best use of the existing framework of XSP value that is introduced in addition to the communicative theoretical lens. As a consequence, there were existing concepts to be considered. This means that the ideas noted in the field texts are directly related to existing concepts and the immediate analysis focuses on identifying similarities and differences between these concepts and the ideas that are evident in the field texts. In this way, the process of identifying areas of a conceptual interest was guided by the framework

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<sup>8</sup> The process involves both analysis and interpretation. However, where the term analysis is used in this section, it should be understood as analysis and interpretation.

of XSP value and this directly relates to the research topic. It is similar to a thematic analysis but the comparison is not only between participant accounts but also between the participant accounts and the conceptual framework.

The conceptual framework structured the analysis so that the clustering of concepts highlighted areas of commonality and areas of difference. These are summarised and shown in the various summary tables in Chapter 6, where examples are provided that support the concepts in the framework and other examples are provided that extend or amend the framework. The summary at Table 6.10 shows the areas of difference that are highlighted in bold red type and the discussion also provides evidence of each of the concepts shown in black type.

**Table 5.5: The IPA process of analysis and interpretation**

	<b>IPA guidance</b>	<b>Research design</b>
<b>Getting started</b>	<p>Read the texts thoroughly more than once.</p> <p>Annotate the texts with comments related to context (descriptive), the use of language and areas of initial conceptual interest.</p>	<p><u>The first detailed reading is during the transcriptions.</u></p> <p>Thereafter the texts are read several times and annotated more than once. The first annotation is to highlight content. Different narratives are also highlighted.</p>
<b>Main analysis Part 1: Individual accounts</b>	<p>Transform the initial notes into themes and combine individual descriptions with an initial level of abstraction based on the theoretical lens.</p> <p>Optional: apply a pre-existing theoretical model or framework to explore abstract concepts in more detail.</p> <p>Themes are organised and clustered; Patterns are identified; themes are mapped into categories and then super-ordinate themes at a higher level.</p> <p>Consider oppositional relationships, context and different levels of interpretation. Look for areas of divergence and convergence.</p> <p>Systematically repeat for each of the participant accounts.</p>	<p>Conceptual issues are included at this stage and annotated in relation to the basic concepts of the communicative lens, CCO.</p> <p>The framework of XSP value is introduced for a second level of conceptual analysis.</p> <p>The framework also provides a means to organise the themes and/or concepts into categories.</p> <p>The super-ordinate themes derived from the framework of XSP value are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• value potential,</li> <li>• trajectory, and</li> <li>• value delivery.</li> </ul> <p>There is also scope for identifying additional ideas and for contradictory evidence.</p> <p><u>A summary analysis is prepared for each interview that highlights the ideas and discussion points.</u></p> <p><u>Questions are raised and discussed at a conceptual level. Reflections noted.</u></p> <p>Completed for each of the participant accounts – in total 29 interviews.</p>
<b>Main analysis Part 2: Comparative analysis</b>	<p>Look for patterns across cases – a comparative analysis.</p> <p>Consider areas of similarity and difference; individual uniqueness and shared higher-order qualities.</p> <p>Where possible, take the analysis to a deeper level - dig deeper - question the analysis.</p>	<p>Comparative analysis between participants in different organisations (7 organisations).</p> <p>Comparative analysis between individuals in the same organisation (7 individuals in Woolworths).</p> <p>Questions and conceptual discussion continue throughout the analysis process, mainly within individual accounts.</p>

**Table 5.5: The IPA process (continued)**

<p><b>Achieving balance:</b></p> <p>Combining the research outcomes with illustrations from detailed extracts</p>	<p>Consider the whole – the themes – may be illustrated by the particular.</p> <p>Compile extracts to illuminate the themes with the detail.</p> <p>For larger samples, identify recurrent themes and show the interconnections - constantly negotiate the balance between convergence and divergence.</p> <p>Systematic search for disconfirming evidence.</p> <p>Prepare a “master table” of themes at a summary level.</p>	<p>Extracts compiled to support the main themes.</p> <p>Extracts drawn from a variety of different sources.</p> <p>The framework of XSP value highlights recurrent themes. These are subjected to review to highlight alternative ideas and contradictory ideas.</p> <p>Systematic search for evidence of unique experiences.</p> <p><u>Actively identified evidence of tensions in relationships and explored in more detail.</u></p> <p><u>A cross-case analysis worksheet used to summarise areas of commonality and difference.</u></p>
<p><b>Reporting</b></p>	<p>Various options are available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a composite narrative account</li> <li>• a report format with tables and summaries of the themes.</li> </ul> <p>A large proportion of the report should be constituted of transcript extracts.</p> <p>Finally, the outcomes should be discussed in relation to the extant literature.</p>	<p>Report format used rather than a narrative.</p> <p>Extensive use of extracts to illustrate the themes and concepts. These are highlighted during the analysis process of each interview.</p> <p>Extracts are later reviewed and assessed in order to select those that best illustrate the fieldwork outcomes.</p> <p>Discussion with the literature is done in a separate chapter and reported separately.</p>

Source: Author’s compilation.

An IPA analysis includes both inductive and deductive logic, while generally favouring an inductive stance (Smith, 2004). The design of this study relied less on inductive logic and more on a process of comparative analysis and interpretation that it is systematic and thorough. In adopting the existing framework, this adjusted process made best use of the existing framework, while respecting the individual participant accounts. This means that similarities and differences could be identified between the existing framework and the findings as well as similarities and differences within and between participant accounts, which was achieved in the cross-case analysis.

### **5.15.2 Highlighting key aspects of the analysis process**

From Table 5.5 some important aspects of the analysis process can be highlighted.

#### ***5.15.2.1 Working with the whole text***

The IPA analysis uses the whole text and no particular section is given attention over others. At the same time, not every passage will contribute to a theme or conceptual idea. The IPA process considers the ideas and themes within the context of the whole interview in which they are presented.

#### ***5.15.2.2 Different levels of analysis to interpret the narrative accounts***

IPA allows for analysis and interpretation at two levels. The first focuses attention on the individual accounts and the unique or particular aspects specific to each individual. The analysis is completed in detail for each individual and the accounts are explored for insights from each

individual. The process is repeated for each participant. An example of an individual worksheet is provided at Appendix L.

Then a further level of analysis is introduced through what may be called a cross-case comparison in which the individual accounts are compared with each other so that areas of convergence and divergence, similarity and difference, may be explored. Where there is convergence, it is possible to identify themes that are shared by the participants (Smith, 2004) or where they describe similar experiences. At the same time, the cross-case comparison highlights areas where a participant has a unique point of view or an experience that is different from others. An example of a section of this worksheet is provided at Appendix M.

The IPA literature does not describe IPA as a thematic analysis; however, Smith *et al.* (2009: 79) described one of the steps in the analysis as the identification of patterns or themes and Smith and Osborn (2008: 67-70) talked about “looking for themes” and “connecting the themes” to identify clusters. The IPA analysis goes beyond finding areas of commonality, so that differences, nuances and areas of variation and divergence are also sought (Smith *et al.*, 2009: 38).

#### ***5.15.2.3 Actively seeking difference and alternative perspectives***

Smith *et al.* (2009: 97-98) offered suggestions for exploring “oppositional relationships between emergent themes” and this may be done within an individual account or in the comparative analysis. As explained by Yardley (2008), the search for disconfirming evidence needs to be done systematically and thoroughly. She argued that this is an important quality control procedure.

Throughout the analysis process, but particularly in the analysis of the individual accounts, evidence of tensions was explored. Notes were made and discussed in the summary sections of each interview analysis. These were then reviewed and compared in the comparative analysis to identify areas of similarity (convergence) or difference (divergence).

In addition, work sheets created for the cross-case comparison provide evidence that the analysis of similarity and difference was undertaken systematically and rigorously. See Appendix M.

#### ***5.15.2.4 Highlighting extracts to illustrate the fieldwork outcomes***

A key component of the final report is the choice of extracts used to illustrate the themes and concepts. Extracts were highlighted during the detailed analysis of each interview transcript. They were later reviewed and assessed so that a careful selection of the extracts was made to illustrate the fieldwork findings.

### **5.16 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION: SUMMARY OF DESIGN**

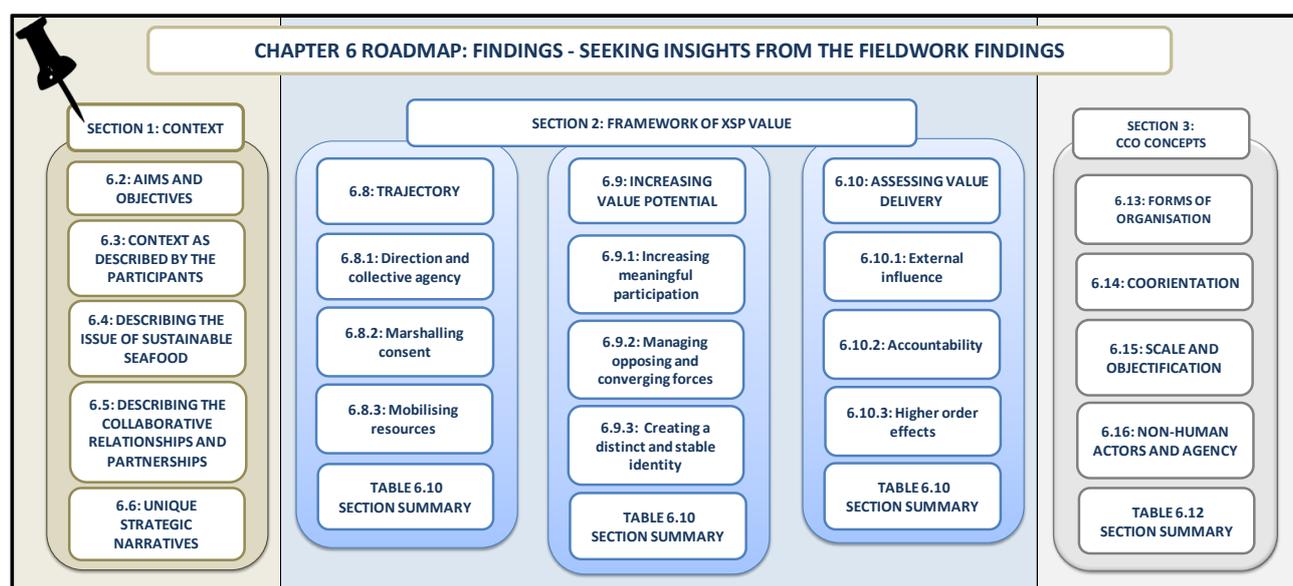
This section discussed and explained the choice of an adapted IPA method for the analysis and interpretation phase of the research. It set out how the communicative theoretical lens was applied and the systematic approach taken to conduct the research analysis. Some of the key aspects of the analysis process were highlighted, including the systematic analysis to identify areas of similarity and difference.

## CHAPTER 6

### FINDINGS: SEEKING INSIGHTS FROM THE FIELDWORK

#### 6.1 ORGANISING THE CHAPTER

This chapter has four main sections in which context is established, followed by the main discussion on the findings in relation to the framework of XSP value, and a discussion on CCO concepts. A short section at the end of the chapter considers quality control issues and the how the evidence of similarities and differences was explored.



**Figure 6.1: Chapter 6 Roadmap**

Source: Author's compilation.

Figure 6.1 above provides a 'roadmap' of the chapter and is used at the end of each section to check what ground has been covered and what is still to be explored.

The roadmap is labelled as Figure 6.1 throughout the chapter to avoid confusion with successive numbering.

#### 6.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

##### 6.2.1 A focus on the participants' perspectives

The chapter has been compiled from the experiences of cross-sector collaboration as described by the research participants and uses quotations from the participants to discuss each topic and present the evidence from the fieldwork.

The focus of the chapter is to present the input of the participants from the research interviews and the details provided in this chapter are confined to the perspectives of the participants. Quotations from the interviews are used as illustrations of key insights; they are shown in bold italic type and where possible these have been highlighted in separate text boxes for easier reading.

### **6.2.2 A systematic approach to identifying similarity and difference**

Each of the participants was selected as a key individual on the basis that they would have a unique perspective on the subject matter. They are people with special experience and so individually what they have to say about the subject of cross-sector collaboration is potentially relevant, whether or not there are others with the same view. But at the same time, one of the selection criteria was that every participant would have a specific involvement with sustainable seafood, so there is also a common factor that connects the participants.

However, the aim of the analysis is not towards identifying consensus views. Rather, the analysis aims to find similarities with the conceptual framework; or on the other hand to find accounts that suggest an alternative view. It is not consensus amongst the participant accounts that is sought but rather similarities and differences of each participant account with the conceptual framework of XSP value.

In both cases, similarity and difference, it is the evidence that determines how something is described. Evidence is presented by way of the participant quotations followed by the initial commentary and insights discussed in each section of this chapter.

### **6.2.3 The main analysis**

There are several levels of analysis designed to seek similarity and difference as the basis for highlighting and validating areas of insight and new understanding of cross-sector collaboration.

One of the reasons for choosing the IPA method is its ability to systematically highlight similarity and difference. The IPA method, in this case an adapted IPA method, achieves this in at least two ways. The first is that the IPA worksheets allow for each transcript to be analysed through the selected theoretical lens and, in this study, also in relation to the conceptual framework of XSP value. Each worksheet, for each transcript, is therefore a systematic analysis that highlights where each participant account provides evidence that either supports the conceptual framework or suggests another alternative. In other words, the worksheet highlights similarities and differences between the participant accounts and the conceptual framework of XSP value.

In the second instance, a further analysis that combines the IPA worksheets into a 'cross-case' comparison then allows for similarities and differences between participant accounts to be highlighted and how these supported the existing conceptual framework or suggested a different perspective shared by two or more participants. The aim in this second part of the analysis is to highlight subject areas where more than one participant expressed a similar view and conversely, to highlight where a specific participant account stands out as being particularly distinctive.

The adapted IPA method is the main analysis of the research and the insights from this process form the main subject matter of this findings chapter. A summary of the evidence from the findings on XSP value is presented at the end of the chapter in Tables 6.10 and 6.12.

Evidence was found to support each of the dimensions of the existing framework of XSP value. In addition, some of the findings indicated that these dimensions could be extended and other evidence suggested additional perspectives. Omissions were also highlighted as areas of difference.

The entire analysis and interpretation process could be described as a systematic analysis of similarity and difference.

#### **6.2.4 Researcher note: Working with the field texts<sup>28</sup>**

See endnote 6.1 in Appendix U.

#### **6.2.5 Researcher note: Maintaining balance: the audit trail and the narratives<sup>29</sup>**

See endnote 6.2 in Appendix U.

#### **6.2.6 Researcher note: Research choices: Selecting quotations<sup>30</sup>**

See endnote 6.3 in Appendix U.

#### **6.2.7 Organising the field texts**

At this stage, the field texts are organised and analysed and some preliminary interpretation is evident, but only to the extent that it is necessary for the purposes of organising the material. While the descriptions are drawn from a significant portion of the interview material, those aspects of the field texts that do not deal with the sustainable seafood supply chain have been excluded. For example, certain participants offered narratives relating to badger friendly honey or free-range eggs and while these offer insights into collaborative activities in more general terms, the material has been excluded from the discussion here.

The interview material from the fieldwork has been organised into three sections. First, the descriptive material on the subject matter is presented, including some key strategic narratives relating to sustainable seafood initiatives and the nature of collaborative interactions and partnership. Second, the main elements of the framework of XSP value are presented as indicated in the fieldwork material. Lastly, some of the key concepts of the CCO approach are discussed in terms of the evidence from the fieldwork interviews.

Other than the use of the framework and the key concepts as an organising mechanism, there are no other references either to the literature or to further interpretations of the researcher. These further interpretations are presented in the discussion in Chapter 8.

This chapter is therefore primarily descriptive and the material presented is drawn, in the main, from the actual words used by the participants. However, in order to present these outcomes in a coherent manner, the concepts from the framework of XSP value provide a common language and a structure for presenting the fieldwork results. Some discussion is therefore included in order to connect the descriptions made by the participants with the conceptual framework.

### **6.2.8 Detailed analysis worksheets**

Detailed worksheets were used for the purposes of organising the field texts and these provide an audit trail between the transcripts and the organisation of the material in this chapter. Certain tables are provided within the chapter to facilitate the communication of the research outcomes and examples of the more detailed worksheets are contained in Appendices L, M and N. The full detail is retained in the audit trail material retained by the researcher.

## **6.3 FINDINGS SECTION 1: CONTEXT AS DESCRIBED BY THE PARTICIPANTS**

The experiences of the research participants are framed by the way in which they understand the research subject of sustainable seafood, how they are connected to the issue of sustainable seafood and how they describe the organisations involved in the partnership activities.

### **6.3.1 Experiences that are unique and those that are shared by several participants**

The participants represent seven different organisations from different market sectors. The issue of sustainable seafood is therefore described from these different perspectives.

The diversity of experiences was put to work in the research analysis using the IPA worksheets. First, each participant account was analysed against the theoretical framework of XSP value and the underlying CCO concepts. At this point the findings indicate the extent to which each participant account has similarities or differences when compared to the existing conceptual framework. Second, all of the participant accounts were consolidated and summarised according to each of the main dimensions of the theoretical framework in order to highlight unique experiences from those that were shared by two or more participants, in which case these were highlighted.

Both situations are included in the analysis in the pursuit of evidence of similarity and difference with the existing conceptual framework of XSP value. Where the accounts of several participants are identified, these may add depth to an idea, concept or subject area. In other cases, a unique perspective may add breadth and new insights in a different way.

Direct quotations are used as illustrations and all statements made here may be traced back to the interview material through the audit trail worksheets that were created to support the research analysis as described in the previous chapter. In this section, these participant quotations are shown in inverted commas in bold type, but are not attributed specifically to any individual as this does not add to the meaning of the statements. Elsewhere in this chapter quotations are given a participant code and the numbers following each participant code references the interview number and page location in the transcript working papers.

### **6.3.2 Context: Describing the people and the organisations**

Each of the participants described how they became involved in sustainable seafood and how they are connected with the subject. They also described the organisations involved. These

descriptions are the source of the extracts used to describe the context of the research study in terms of why individuals and organisations are involved in the issue of sustainable seafood.

### ***6.3.2.1 The participants' connection to sustainable seafood***

A short overview of each participants' connection to sustainable seafood is provided in Appendix J. The descriptions are selected quotations from the fieldwork interviews with participants.

Although there is diversity in the group of participants, there are some similarities in their stories. The narratives include having a connection (to the ocean, fish or conservation) since childhood; family background; studying at university or getting involved because of work-related activities. Participants spoke about having a deep conviction; of doing the right thing; they talked about ethics and values; and how they have developed greater awareness through learning about sustainable seafood. They talked about how their work makes them passionate, proud, humbled, and inspired; and how challenging it can be. Some spoke about making a difference and driving change; others expressed how they feel it is a privilege to work with amazing people.

### ***6.3.2.2 Introducing the organisations***

Descriptions of each of the organisations are provided at Appendix K and again these are selected quotations from the fieldwork interviews with participants.

The descriptions of the organisation offer a unique perspective on each of the organisations and while some provide quite a strategic account of the business, others indicate a more personal view. The variety of goals and objectives is evident and yet the common threads are conservation and a commitment to sustainable seafood and responsible business practices.

### **6.3.3 Context: Describing the issue of sustainable seafood**

As a high-level overview for contextual purposes, a simple word search of the interview transcripts was done using the key words 'seafood' and 'strategy'. The findings are set out in Paragraph 6.4 below.

From these word searches, extracts were identified and transposed into summary worksheets that referenced the source of each quotation to the interview transcripts.

### **6.3.4 Context: Describing the nature of collaborative relationships and types of partnerships**

A further word search of the interview transcripts using the key words 'partner', 'partnerships', 'collaborate' and 'collaboration' identified descriptive material on the nature of partnership relationships.

The findings are set out in Paragraph 6.5 below.

### **6.3.5 Researcher note: Declaring the researcher context<sup>31</sup>**

See endnote 6.4 in Appendix U.

## 6.4 FINDINGS SECTION 1 CONTEXT: DESCRIBING THE ISSUE OF SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD

The descriptions provided by participants regarding sustainable seafood related to three main narratives including change and improvement in practices and management, the market and supply chain and issues around traceability and credibility. Each of these is noted below.

### 6.4.1 Narrative: Change and improvement to practices and management

A key narrative that is identified in the descriptions of sustainable seafood is directed towards change and improvement in practices and management.

The change is described at a very broad level by the WWF-SASSI and MSC strategies and both highlight the global nature of sustainable seafood and its connection with the ocean ecology.

At WWF-SASSI, the description is about delivering “**positive change on the water**” and there is an emphasis on action and bringing about improvements that go beyond awareness and beyond advocacy. At MSC, the strategy is “**to change the way the world’s oceans are fished**”.

Alternatively, in some instances the descriptions of areas of improvement are more specific. The ISSF strategy is directed at improving the sustainability of global tuna stocks. This is global but it is focused on only one species. At Woolworths, efforts are directed towards specific projects aimed at responsible sourcing of seafood and improving the way their supply chain is managed and this involves managing supplier relationships and making public commitments towards sustainable seafood targets.

One participant pointed out that they are “**a relatively small retailer in the world space so the impact we have on the oceans and the seafood – the stock situation – the seafood situation out there – is minimal**”. However, they also recognise that even as a small retailer they can “**drive a bigger impact**” because by requiring their suppliers to meet certain standards, these standards also “**affect how they deal with other retailers**” and has led to consultations with other large retailers in other countries, such as Canada.

Illustrative example: “**WWF is less focused on raising the issues and by raising them hoping that change will happen – they are far more focused on delivering the change – and to do that you need to collaborate with those stakeholders where you want to see that change happen**”.

Whether broadly stated or more specific, the focus of change and improvement is directed towards practices and management. This includes fishing practices, which directly impact the sustainability of fish stocks, and indirect change to production practices and procurement practices. The management of fish stocks is about fisheries management and includes various assessment processes by different organisations including government scientists and NPOs.

One participant explains that they need “**a very clear indication of where improvement is needed – where the impact is and what needs to be done to mitigate that impact or improve practice or strengthen management processes**”.

Illustrative examples:

The aim at WWF: ***“with sustainable seafood it’s all about the production practices – businesses utilising better and more responsible production practices”***.

The work of ISSF involves: ***“developing verifiable science based practices, commitments as well as international management measures”***.

#### 6.4.2 Narrative: The market, the supply chain and consumers

Inevitably, since the research is about the supply chain for sustainable seafood, this is apparent in the participant narratives, which describe a variety of activities. Some activities involve all stakeholders in the supply chain and others target specific areas only; some organisations go beyond the supply chain and engage with other stakeholders involved in sustainable seafood; some are local initiatives and others are global.

WWF-SA is a local initiative that engages the whole supply chain but with a strong focus on consumers.

One of the participants explains that ***“we’ve got interventions throughout the seafood supply chain from the consumer all the way back to the fishery itself”*** and it is described as ***“a holistic approach making sure that all the critical stakeholders are engaged”***. More specifically at WWF-SASSI, the objective is ***“around mobilising consumers”*** so that they are ***“empowered to hold the retailer partners accountable to very clear commitments”*** regarding seafood sustainability.

The ISSF focuses entirely on tuna stocks but in doing so, it engages across the supply chain internationally and in addition they work beyond the supply chain with scientists, researchers and policy makers.

At the MSC, the vision is ***“to effect the global market to drive sustainability”*** and to create markets for sustainable seafood. It is an international operation but limits its scope to the supply chain.

Illustrative example: Talking about Woolworths: ***“we’re fortunate because of the DNA of Woolworths is also a big part of making it work - there is a retailer who has studied the issue – engaged with the supply chain - set up monitoring programmes to manage [the] supply chain”***

#### 6.4.3 Narrative: Traceable, verifiable, ethical, responsible and credible

In order to achieve the overall objective of seafood sustainability, the fishermen need to adopt responsible fishing practices, producers need to show the traceability of their product, buyers need to make responsible procurement decisions, retailers need responsible sourcing strategies and consumers need to make responsible choices in what they buy. Responsibility is a key word but is not enough. Throughout the supply chain, the market expects that the product can be traced back to the source fishery; that the process, at all stages, can be verified; and that business is conducted in an ethical manner. All of these together are part of the same narrative of credibility,

which is about having evidence to support claims of responsible business behaviour and responsible decision making; and also subjecting the evidence to independent assessment and/or audit in order to confirm that it is all credible.

Illustrative examples:

MSC: *“they’ve developed seafood traceability – so they are able to trace from can to vessel basically – they meet the highest benchmark for credible certification and ecolabelling”*

Woolworths: *“we know our consumers trust us so we take on the responsibility and the accountability for how we trade and what we trade in – so it’s just a natural thing for us to do”*

#### **6.4.4 Commentary and initial insights on the sustainability issues**

The experiences described by the participants are primarily directed towards delivering improvement and change in the management and practices in the supply chain for sustainable seafood and how this is achieved through collaborative initiatives. Given that there is a wide range of environmental and social issues around ocean ecology and the threat to fish stocks, it is important to confirm the main narratives around sustainable seafood that are within the scope of the participants’ experiences.

In this research, it is not only the business organisations that focus on change in the supply chain, but also the NPOs and some of the research work. These narratives also show that change is being sought through collaborative initiatives that require complementary contributions. Different roles are evident within the supply chain itself, from the fisheries to the retailers and the consumers; different responsibilities are evident from those that are able to effect changes, to those that manage the process and those that verify or assess the process.

The activities are not only about the business transactions in the supply chain that are conventionally characterised as a linear or sequential process. Rather there are other related processes, some that precede the supply chain such as certification of the fishery; others that are concurrent, such as recording and accounting for the product as required by the MSC standard; and some, such as the independent audits that may occur subsequently. There is greater interconnectedness here as the verification processes are integrated into the accounting processes and verification is done internally and externally. The various parties working together are creating the change and it requires different parties to make a contribution towards the issue of sustainable seafood.

These observations are supported in the following descriptions around the type of partnership interactions that are experienced in this research setting.

## 6.5 FINDINGS SECTION 1 CONTEXT: DESCRIBING THE COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS AND PARTNERSHIPS

The descriptions provided by participants regarding the nature of collaborative relationships may be directed towards three main narratives including the need to work together, having common interests and adding value. Each of these is noted below.

This discussion also includes some key narratives around collaborative relationships and also some descriptions around the nature and configuration of these relationships.

### 6.5.1 Narrative: Working together

In describing how partnerships work, some of the participants highlighted that working together was necessary to achieve the desired outcomes.

One commented that *“we work in collaboration with our key stakeholders to ensure that our goal is met”* because they *“couldn’t have done this without the stakeholders”*. Another said that *“the base is really the science – making it work is where the collaboration comes in”*.

For one programme, everything is based on collaboration because *“if it wasn’t for that I don’t think we’d be anywhere near where we are right now”*. Further, that *“it has to be collaboration - it has to feel like both parties are coming to the table - we’re both invested and we will both put the time and effort in making something happen”*.

This narrative is perhaps best illustrated by the participant who said that *“there’s only so much you can do yourself but if you use a credible third party or partner to help endorse your brand or to help you drive innovation - to help with key experience and skills in particular areas - that’s something that can really bolster your organisational strength as well and you can do it in a way that you’re not having to add massive capacity internally”*.

### 6.5.2 Narrative: Having clear objectives or common interests

The comments in this paragraph illustrate how participants see the need for partnerships to have clear objectives. This is not simply about each partner having agreed objectives or about partners agreeing on roles and responsibilities. There may also be an interest at the partnership level and each of the partners understand the different perspectives that each brings to the partnership.

One comments that *“it is important that our partners know what our strategy and what our objective is and then to understand to from their side as well”*. Another makes a similar remark that *“it was good partnership with the MSC because we really had to look at what made sense in terms of what our priorities were as well as their priorities”*.

Another says that *“it’s important to establish a common vision – a common objective for the partnership”*. When there is a contract, there can be *“agreement in terms of what the issues are [we’re] focusing on – what each person’s role is”*.

In addition, there is the issue of values, so that ***“if the values aren’t the same you can’t collaborate – and because Woolworths has instilled those values deeply in the business and it attracted the right people – that’s the secret of it all”***.

### 6.5.3 Narrative: Adding value

Some participants highlighted that partnerships add value.

A comment from one participant was that ***“the collaboration is really underpinned through us being able to add value so before you can collaborate effectively we do need to be knowledgeable”*** and ***“we do need to bring something to the partnership”***.

Another said that ***“with the partners that we work with I think it’s a two-way street - it’s value add from both sides - so I need to make sure that I am adding value to whatever the relationship is”***. In another organisation, ***“we need a strong business case for why partnerships can and should add value to what we’re trying to do”***.

In another case, ***“many of the partnerships will be because we have access to the resource – to the fish on a regular basis”*** and ***“it’s a win-win situation”***.

### 6.5.4 Describing the partnerships

Descriptions of the nature of partnership relationships were obtained by asking participants to describe the key relationships with people and organisations that were important to them in their work with sustainable seafood and to depict the relationships in a diagram. An analysis of these responses provides a range of different perspectives and these are summarised in Table 6.1 below. The participant code or ID is referenced in the left-hand column and the names of the organisations that they described as the main relationships are shown in the right-hand column.

**Table 6.1: Describing relationships in the sustainable seafood initiatives**

COL	Nature of relationships			Configuration			7	8
	1	2	3	4	5	6		
ID	Cross-sector	Own supply chain	Market forces	Dyad	Triads <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> & Multiples $\phi$	Network	Diagram	Key connections
KT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			Dyads	MSC; WWF
UN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			-	WWF
NC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	$\phi$		Multiple	WWF-SASSI; MSC; Research
HD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		$\phi$		-	ISSF; MSC; WWF; WWF-SASSI
KD		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			-	Suppliers
NB	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> $\phi$		Dyads	MSC; WWF-SASSI
ML		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Triad	Suppliers
ND	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> $\phi$	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Multiple	WW; WWF; WWF-SASSI
HT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	$\phi$		-	WWF-SASSI; ASC; MSC
DL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> $\phi$		Multiple	WW; ISSF; MSC
KC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		$\phi$	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	-	Various
NN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Multiple	WW; retailers; supply chain
TL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				$\phi$	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Multiple	WWF-SASSI; SANBI; Research
ED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dyads	WW; WWF-SASSI; MSC

Source: Author’s compilation.

These various descriptions are now discussed in more detail, to present evidence on the nature of cross-sector interactions and their configuration as dyads, multiple parties or as networks. In this section, quotations are identified by means of the participant code as this facilitates reference to the summary in Table 6.1.

- i) The first discussion at Paragraph 6.5.4.1 considers the nature of the relationships described by the participants and these may be either cross-sector and same sector interactions. The participants who described their relationships in this way are noted in columns 1 to 3 of Table 6.1. The same sector interactions may be described in the supply chain or as broader market forces.
- ii) A discussion of the configuration of the relationships and these may be dyadic (Paragraph 6.5.4.2) or as triads and multiples (Paragraph 6.5.4.3 and Paragraph 6.5.4.4) as reflected in columns 4 and 5.
- iii) Configurations are described as networks (Paragraph 6.5.4.5) as indicated in column 6.
- iv) The key connections described by each participant as noted in column 8.

Table 6.1 was compiled from the descriptions given in the interviews and these were then compared to the diagrams completed by participants during the interview process (as explained in the methodology Chapter 5 at Paragraph 5.12.3.2) as shown in the noted in column 7.

#### **6.5.4.1 Cross-sector interactions and same sector**

The analysis shows that the majority of the participants described what may be called cross-sector collaborations, although this term is used by the researcher, rather than the participants. The majority of participants described both cross-sector and market-driven relationships, which in some cases are also same sector. There are two participants whose descriptions are limited to supply chain interactions and therefore address same sector interactions only.

The key connections are primarily between the private sector and NPOs but there are also relationships with scientists in the research community, including government scientists and Universities and so multiple sectors are involved.

There is no evidence that partnerships exist with organisations in other sectors in preference to entities within the supply chain and same sector. Both are evident in the fieldwork material. The reasons for this are not explored at this stage but are covered later in the chapter as evidence is presented.

The description in the column with the heading 'diagram' refers to the type of configuration depicted by the participants when asked to provide a visual rather than a verbal description of their relationships. An illustration is provided at Figure 6.2 below at Paragraph 6.5 4.3.

#### **6.5.4.2 Dyadic relationships**

The dyadic relationships described in the findings are mainly in areas such as funding and marketing.

For example, funding arrangements in this setting are dyadic and may be provided by one of the parties such as the retailer or by the NPO. There is a formal corporate partnership with WWF that involves funding by Woolworths related to **“joint strategy work – a portion of which is the sustainable seafood side”** (KT 1:4). Specific funding may also be applied and KD (2:7) gave the example of how Woolworths may provide universities with funding for research on aquaculture practices.

From an NPO perspective, there are also examples of cross-sector funding. ED (1:11) indicated that WWF-SASSI provides funding support to research studies such as development of standard protocols and the assessment of seafood mislabelling. ISSF also funds scientific studies that focus on the application of science through actionable practices (ND 2:3).

Other examples involving funding are same sector, within the supply chain, and may be linked to Enterprise Development initiatives that support black owned businesses.

An example is the local hake fisherman (ML 1:9) where funding was part of a larger support initiative that included **“technical capacity building”** (ML 1:7) and a procurement opportunity with a firm order book and assistance to build the business case (ML 1:8) to support the funding application. KD (2:9) explained that while funding is important it does not happen in isolation because people need to understand why sustainability matters.

Funding may be arranged by Woolworths rather than as a direct loan or as grant funding. There may also be joint funding and the example here is one of the key success stories described by several participants, involving a cross-sector collaboration. It was a project initiated by MSC and involved funding by both MSC and Woolworths for a joint marketing campaign. For Woolworths it created awareness of the availability of a wide range of MSC certified products and MSC gave credibility to the campaign (NB 1:5).

NN (1:8) confirmed the objective **“to raise the environmental credentials of that brand and at the same time raise awareness of the MSC”**. There were some restrictions in terms of how the funding could be utilised but KT (1:9) explained that working together to understand these limitations meant that they had **“regular engagement around what those limitations were”** and how the funds could be used. This **“helped to strengthen our relationship to the point where they did want to repeat the process”**.

Marketing is another area in which dyadic relationships were evident, such as the MSC and Woolworths campaign or the work between Woolworths and WWF-SASSI. In the latter case,

marketing activities would profile the SASSI brand as well as partner brands under the overall theme of sustainable seafood.

DL (1:6) explained that marketing is **“generally one of the first things that gets picked up in these relationships”** due to the focus on consumers and so that is **“obviously the initial focus”**.

Marketing aligns with the consumer engagement of WWF-SASSI and with the marketing objectives of the retailer and they can align the messaging about sustainable seafood. |

#### **6.5.4.3 Partnership activities beyond dyads – triads and multiples**

Marketing activities may also involve multiple parties. KC described two campaigns involving multiple partners that, among other things, showcased sustainable seafood and the SASSI brand. Both were successful for the partners and have become annual events. One is called Trailblazers and involves top chefs using sustainable seafood in their food creations; the other is called Wavescape and involves the surfing community as well as DJs from local radio stations who are advocates for sustainable seafood.

KC (2:11) explained that **“we can really make even a small investment go really really far and with the added benefit of supporting conservation goals”**.

There are a number examples of other partnerships activities with specific objectives related to sustainable seafood that were not directly about funding or marketing. Each of these was described as successful by at least one of the participants. In each case, the narrative involves cross-sector interactions.

Table 6.2 below provides a short description of these five examples of collaborative activities. The purpose here is not to explore the narratives in detail but to demonstrate the variety of subject matter and the range of different partners that may be involved, including international connections.

There is a core group of organisations involved in several of these initiatives. WWF-SASSI features in four of the five narratives and Woolworths in three, while MSC, ISSF and researchers/scientists each feature in two. Item 1 is a once-off project that established a baseline for further activities, including the narratives in items 2 and 3. Items 2 to 5 are described in more detail in Paragraph 6.6 below.

There is no single organisation that drives all of the initiatives and no single organisation that appears to play a more dominant role than others. From the main parties involved, those that appear to drive each initiative are marked in bold. The dominant partner appears to vary according to the specific activity that is being pursued.

These examples demonstrate that partnerships supporting sustainable seafood initiatives involve multiple parties and involve a range of activities beyond funding and marketing.

**Table 6.2: Examples of cross-sector interactions**

Item	Ref	Description	Main parties involved
1	NC 2:10; HD 2:4 KT 2:4	Procurement list of every product in every department and the status of every species	<b>Woolworths; WWF-SASSI;</b> Suppliers; ISSF; MSC
2	HD 2:7/8 ND 2:11 DL 1:10	Tuna work plan with actions and timelines – rigorous concrete step-wise improvement - a collaboration with retailers and brands globally and through the supply chain (importer, canner, vessels) and key stakeholders WWF International and ISSF	<b>Woolworths; WWF-SA; WWF</b> International; ISSF; Suppliers; MSC
3	HT 2:9 HT 1:12 NC 1:9	Green listing of trout – working together to make sure that local trout was listed as green on the SASSI list – one of the main issues was that the fish meal should come from sustainable sources	<b>Woolworths; TSSH;</b> Western Cape Trout Farmers; fish meal companies; WWF-SASSI
4	ED 1:3 ED 1:11	Seafood mislabelling – developing a DNA database of fish species in South Africa and testing products being sold to consumers	<b>Research; WWF-SASSI;</b> other scientists; Woolworths
5	TL 1:14	Using the line fishery database to prove that creating a marine protected area and the right management practices could improve catch rates	<b>Government scientists;</b> university scientists and researchers; fishers; international research journals

Source: Author's compilation.

#### **6.5.4.4 Beyond dyadic relationships to multiple relationships**

None of the participants spoke of only one relationship. Several of the participants depicted their relationships with multiple others.

DL (1:4) said ***“my experience was always one of collaboration, with SASSI – WWF – everyone that I came into contact with”***.

Some participants provided examples of working with a particular individual or a specific organisation that indicate dyadic relationships. Indeed, several participants created a diagram that depicted multiple one-on-one relationships and yet described activities that included multiple organisations at the same time. Three notable examples are the narratives of MSC chain of custody project, the green listing of local trout and the tuna supply chain. All of these involved varying degrees of same sector and cross-sector collaboration with multiple parties.

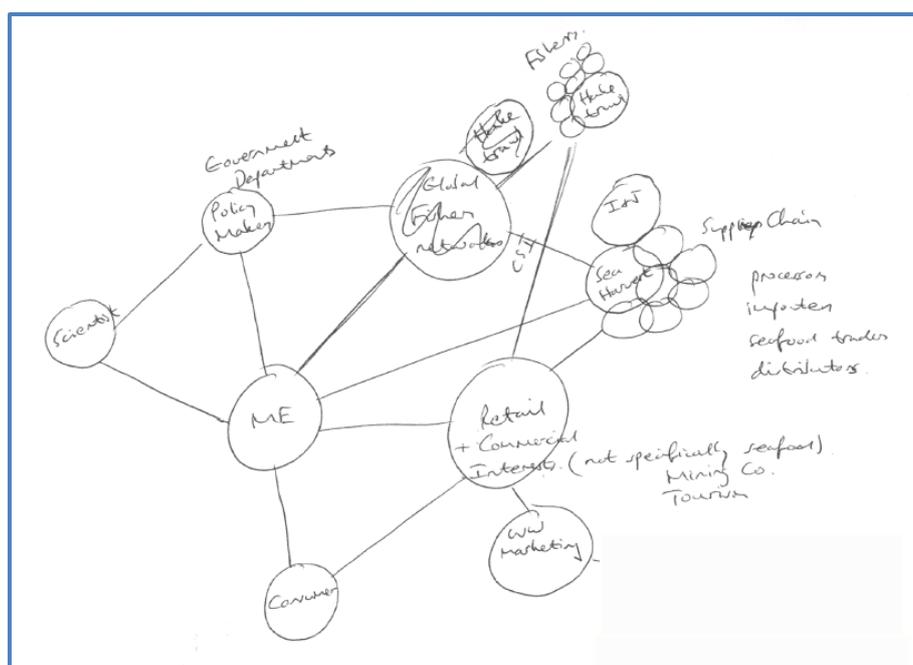
The MSC chain of custody example is predominantly about collaboration in the sustainable seafood supply chain (same sector) as described by HT (2:8). The supply chain companies do not operate alone and they need to arrange independent audits and they need to apply the MSC standards, which may involve consulting with the MSC for advice and guidance.

The story of the trout farmers was described from different perspectives by two participants and both identified multiple parties. There is the private sector that includes the farmers, the producer and the retailer and also the producers of fish-meal. The story also includes WWF-SASSI as the NPO and the research community who test whether the fish-meal is from sustainable sources.

The tuna story was described by three of the participants who talked about multiple parties being involved from the supply chain (same sector) and across sector with several NPOs. In this initiative, there appears to be a core relationship between Woolworths, WWF-SASSI and ISSF but there are also key relationships between Woolworths and their suppliers, between WWF-SA and WWF International, and between ISSF and its members. This is a more complex set of relationships that is perhaps better described as a network.

#### 6.5.4.5 Beyond multiple parties to networks

The diagrams drawn by some of the participants depicted the relationships concerning sustainable seafood as a network and some participants used the word network to describe relationships. From these, one example is shown in Figure 6.2 below, to highlight how relationships are experienced as a network.



**Figure 6.2: Example of a relationship diagram**

Source: Prepared by research participant.

This relationship diagram shows that while relationships with organisations and individuals are mostly connected to the individual participant (the circle labelled 'me') they are also connected to each other, independently of the participant. The participant is connected to retail and commercial interests but also directly connected to fishers, to consumers, and to producers in the supply chain. The supply chain is shown as a grouping of processors, importers, traders and distributors.

Further, while the participant is connected to policymakers and scientists, the retail and commercial interests are not shown as having relationships with these people. While some organisations are identified, such as the main fishing companies, other relationships are shown more generally with groups of people such as scientists or fishers or consumers. Names of individuals are also

included, but these have been hidden to retain anonymity. The relationship diagram therefore includes organisations, groups and individuals with some named connections but other more general connections.

In the interview material, several participants talk about networks.

Describing relationships, KC (1:2) said ***“we’ve always had a network partnering approach from the very beginning”***. At a broader level KC (1:9) explained that ***“within the WWF network no other office engages with consumers the way that we do in South Africa”***.

NN described MSC and said that ***“the network that developed is a lot bigger than the MSC – the MSC is basically carried by a huge global movement”***. ND (2:6) said that at ISSF ***“we have a network of collaborations but limited resources”***.

According to KT (1:8), a good relationship means ***“being willing to create engagement opportunities with them – with other parties as well – bringing your network into it – and then to show that you’re willing to work with them on the ground on projects as well”***.

In the scientific community, TL said ***“we really form a network of quite a lot of people from quite different backgrounds”***

These extracts are drawn from different organisations. While KC, KT and TL described relationships between people as networks; the network narrative is also attributed to organisations, with WWF and ISSF provided as examples. In the case of MSC, the network is described as going beyond the organisation. These examples indicate that a network may exist at different levels, in the relationship between individuals, in the nature of the organisation and beyond the organisation.

#### ***6.5.4.6 Various types of entities***

Taking a network view rather than focusing on specific organisations, the variety of relationships becomes evident. None of the participants grouped individuals or entities into sectors or made a distinction between a business relationship and a relationship with an NPO. The descriptions of participants do indicate that the nature of each organisation is different but it is the value or contribution of the organisation that they speak about rather than its sector.

Indeed, it is difficult to categorise some organisations and it is possible that the word organisation does not apply to all of the partners that are described.

As noted above, ISSF is described as ***“a network of collaborations”***.

According to KC (2:4) WWF-SASSI is ***“a bit of an anomaly within the conservation space”*** and ***“it requires you to think outside the box and social media is very amorphous – it’s not something that fits neatly within a box – and it’s not something that fits neatly within a scientific pragmatic way of thinking so it requires you to be a little bit more flexible and quick thinking”*** (KC 1:9).

WWF-SASSI is interesting as it is part of the local South African organisation that is known as WWF-SA, which is part of a network of local offices that make up the global organisation that is WWF International (WWF International, 2015b). WWF-SASSI is not a separate entity or actor but is described as a sub-brand of WWF.

So ***“we’re talking to a very specific target audience with SASSI – and about a very specific conservation goal”*** (KC 2:9), which is sustainable seafood.

MSC is another example. The legal status of MSC is an international nonprofit organisation (MSC, 2015a) just as the legal status of Woolworths is a company listed on the stock exchange. While Woolworths has shareholders and a board of directors, MSC has a board of trustees.

However, NN (2:16) commented that MSC has ***“been a very successful business model”*** and while it still requires some grant funding, the majority<sup>1</sup> of its income comes from licencing of the MSC ecolabel. Also, as noted above, MSC is part of a much bigger network and that ***“although we’re a charity, we’re not an activist organisation – we’re also not an industrial body”*** so that ***“the understanding of what MSC actually is and [what] our role is in sustainable seafood arena - is not always fully understood by all parties”*** (NN 2:7). ***“Essentially what the MSC is at the heart is a marketing tool”*** (NN 1:7).

These descriptions indicate that while MSC, WWF, WWF-SA and ISSF are recognised by their names and/or by their legal status they are not always a single entity or structure on their own. There is something that goes beyond the entity, that is the network or the community that is directing their attention towards sustainable seafood.

This could be a brand and in some cases a wider network associated with the brand.

KC (1:6) said that ***“when you hear networking partners speak about SASSI – you get a real sense that they feel like they’re part of a community – they feel like they’re part of the brand”***. NN (1:8) said that MSC may partner with a retailer or a brand in order to ***“raise the credentials of that brand”***. The brand is not an organisation, nor it is a structure but it is recognised by its name and what it stands for. NC (2:3) said that ***“the trust thing in our brand is very important – we know our consumers trust us so we take on the responsibility and the accountability”***. DL (2:6) talked about building integrity into the brand and KT(1:5) said that ***“the willingness to invest in sustainable seafood as a differentiator from a brand perspective”*** has been important.

At this point, these various descriptions highlight the diversity of ways that an organisation may be viewed and that there may be something other than the idea of an organisation as a single actor or structure. This will be explored further in the subsequent discussion on CCO concepts, later in this chapter.

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<sup>1</sup> According to the MSC website (MSC, 2015a), in the year ended 31 March 2014, 72% of revenues came from logo licensing and 25% from charitable grants.

#### **6.5.4.7 Partnerships are not always formal arrangements; nor are they always entities**

Pursuing the network description, the participants described collaborative activities and partnerships in a variety of ways.

There are some formal partnership arrangements such as the formal contract between WWF-SA and Woolworths.

KT (1:4) said there is **“an overall corporate relationship with WWF”** and described it as a **“very specific relationship agreement” with “a range of objectives”**. Further, that WWF have got **“a very clear contract and agreement in terms of what the issues are”**. NC (2:10) talked about the **“partnership agreement with WWF – so if you partner with them then you have to track your progress in terms of seafood sustainability”**.

There is also a formal contract and service level agreement between Woolworths and one of the research organisations (ED 2:3 and 2:13). These may not be the only cases where formal contracts exist, but they are the only ones related to the main participants in this study.

KT (1:4) explained that with the certification agencies the relationships are different to avoid **“compromising their independence – but we still work closely with them”**. NN (2:12) confirmed that **“there would be no formal partnership in place in terms of any legal or binding understanding”**. But there are still some formalities so that there is an agreed way of working together. KT said that messaging needs to be agreed so that **“we literally sign off everything that goes out with our partners”** (KT1:5) and in the case of the jointly funded marketing campaign **“there was quite a few limitations around how their funding could be used”** (KT 1:9). Nonetheless, NN (2:12) confirmed that it is a close working relationship.

Other relationships are described as more transactional.

KT (1:3) said sometimes relationships are **“based on effort-in effort-out”**. NN (2:15) concurred and said that relationships are **“perceived as give and take – if we both put in – we’re both going to get something out and that’s what we try and promote”**.

Given these various ways in which cross-sector collaborative activities may be conducted, it is evident that there are some formal contracts and indeed, there are formalities, but in other situations it is on the case-by-case basis of an exchange relationship.

In the interview material, there are no examples of cross-sector partnerships as separate and distinct partnership entities. ISSF is an interesting case that bases its work on partnership activities and yet the entity itself is not a partnership, it is an entity registered as a nonprofit organisation (ISSF, 2015). Described as **“a network of collaborations”** (ND 2:6), it has a wide range of members that have agreed voluntarily to engage in collaborative activities directed towards tuna sustainability. The members are not bound by contractual or formal partnership agreement but rather they are bound by their commitment to the issue of tuna sustainability.

HD (2:3) described ISSF as a **“global partnership of leading marine scientists – the tuna industry as a whole – from vessels to fisheries - to canners to the traders – as well as WWF”**.

It is a cross-sector partnership but the entity that is ISSF has a Board of Directors, various formal committees and limited resources with a very small staff that operate from various locations (ND 2: 7 and 2:18). The main activities of the ISSF extend beyond the entity and they are collaborative in nature, not just internally in the formal entity, but in the network of member organisations, associates and partners. The collaborative activities are facilitated by ISSF and take place in the network that is beyond the entity of ISSF. Through the scientific advisory committee, the environmental stakeholder committee, the vessel committee and the bycatch project steering committee, a wide range of stakeholders from different constituencies are engaged together and work together under the governance of a strategic plan, common objectives and the voluntary agreement to comply with a set of resolutions on conservation measures and fishing practices (ISSF, 2015).

ND (2:18) said that **“there’s an incredible amount of time that’s spent in collaboration and facilitation”**.

#### **6.5.4.8 Different perspectives in the supply chain**

The nature of supply chain relationships was described in various ways. The private sector, as may be expected, described relationships within their own supply chain but some talked about how market forces beyond their own supply chain are also a factor in the overall dynamics of sustainable seafood. This is particularly evident where participants talked about relationships with customers or with consumers in more general terms. Some participants made reference to the public commitments made by Woolworths in 2013, which set out specific, measurable and time-bound targets for sourcing wild caught and farmed fish.

KT (1:6) indicated that the commitments helped to **“make sure we had clarity on where we stand”**.

While the commitments are made in terms of a partnership agreement with WWF (NC 2:10), they are not directed to WWF but to the public at large, to consumers in general and are the subject of a formal press release by the company.

The commitments also provide a basis for communication both internally and externally.

KT (2:5) said that getting agreement internally on the targets was **“a negotiation space”** that required a degree of compromise and agreement on a longer time-frame for delivery of aquaculture targets.

According to NC (1:12), being measured by WWF provides leverage internally to get the buy-in and performance needed to deliver on the targets. KT (1:6) said that setting the targets means they can communicate progress externally as well.

At Woolworths, NC (2:9) said that the commitments needed to be something that **“stretches us but is factual and achievable and is in tune with what we want to achieve”** but that **“we really wanna be sure before we release something”**. This suggests that there was some tension between publishing the commitments and establishing targets that were significant but could still be achievable. NC (2:4) further commented that **“there will be a lot of work to do – luckily we’ve done a lot of work already – but I think there’s gonna be an exponential amount of work that needs to be done before 2015”**. KT (1:6) said that **“about two thirds of our seafood sourcing meets our targets already”**. Talking about a joint exercise with WWF-SASSI to build a detailed procurement list of all seafood products, KT (1:6) said that **“it’s been good to have a very clear and quite verified view particularly with the WWF team on that prior to us putting targets out there”**.

The role of the suppliers is recognised and one participant commented that **“we wouldn’t have been able to achieve this if it wasn’t for our supplier base”** (NC 1:13). KT acknowledged that working with WWF-SASSI on the procurement list supported the process of committing to future targets. It not only gathered significant information about the supply of seafood products but according to KT (1:11), it was also a learning opportunity that helped to develop an understanding of the sustainability of the supply chain and highlight the challenges. It also engaged the various internal departments so that they were working together and could see the value that partners such as WWF could bring to the retail environment.

But KT (1:11) also described the exercise as a **“bit of a wake-up call”** that highlighted opportunities in the supply chain but also the need to **“put significant pressure on their existing suppliers to now commit to improvement projects”**. So while KT described it as **“a very successful process”**, it is clear that there was pressure both internally and on suppliers to deliver improvement.

The NPOs are also highly active in the supply chain and particularly aware of the operation of market forces. A number of participants described the sustainable seafood supply chain at a general level and how a theory of change is based on the market dynamics for food commodities. The model is described in Chapter 2 at Figure 2.1.

#### **6.5.4.9 Commentary and initial insights on descriptions of partnerships**

There is a variety of insights from these descriptions of the nature of collaborative relationships and partnering activities. The narratives related to objectives, common interests and adding value are all explored in more detail in the next section that describes the findings around the framework of XSP value.

At this point, what is particularly noteworthy is the nature and configuration of partnering activities. While the activities described by participants are mostly related to the supply chain or related to market activities, it is notable that the majority of participants, whether from business or from NPOs, related their experiences in working with other individuals and other organisations from

different business sectors, rather than the same sector. The term 'cross-sector' was not used by participants to describe these collaborative interactions.

There are only two formal partnership agreements that were directly discussed by the participants and where formal contractual arrangements exist. In many cases, there are ongoing relationships that display certain formalities, but these are not of a contractual nature. Further, none of the partnership initiatives could be described as a separate actor or entity, as such. Several of the organisations included in the research have characteristics that are not commonly found elsewhere, according to the accounts given by the participants.

While there is evidence of many activities involving at least two parties, there is also plentiful evidence of multiple parties working together. Indeed, the idea of a network configuration was noted by participants from business and NPOs.

## 6.6 FINDINGS SECTION 1 CONTEXT: UNIQUE STRATEGIC NARRATIVES

Within the accounts of the experiences of the research participants, there are narratives that present unique and pioneering experiences. These are all collaborative initiatives. There is an indication that some of these may be unique at a global level in relation to the sustainable seafood industry; others may be pioneering initiatives in South Africa.

These are briefly introduced here and more detail is provided in Appendix O based on the descriptions provided by the participants. Where possible, evidence from other participants is provided so that the stories are told in different ways. Table 6.3 below summarises some of the key aspects of each of these narratives.

These pioneering strategies are organised according to the sector from which they emanate, namely NPO, business and research. Each of these narratives was chosen as a way to illustrate how collaborative initiatives in the sustainable seafood supply chain in South Africa have worked well. While six narratives and seven organisations participated in the research, all of these are included in one or more of the narratives.

**Table 6.3: Key features of unique strategic narratives**

Narrative description	Key features
<p><b>NPO Pioneer:</b> <b>WWF-SASSI model of engagement</b></p>	<p>Developing market model of change that targets consumers first to incentivise retailers to act. It is unique globally and differs from the dominant thinking. The approach was developed in South Africa and is described as an anomaly; and alternative pathway; something that is different and working. It evolved rather than being a planned design or strategy.</p>
<p><b>NPO Pioneer:</b> <b>ISSF model of engagement</b></p>	<p>The ISSF approach is called collaborative engagement enables a small group of people to convene and support initiatives at multiple levels on a global scale. In the supply chain it adopts an indirect approach to gain access to buyers, which involves working to build relationships by leveraging existing channels. ISSF offers very targeted support and expertise.</p>

**Table 6.3: Key features of unique strategic narratives (continued)**

<b>Business Pioneer:</b> <b>The tuna supply chain</b>	Working with the tuna supply chain is described as active participation involving multiple stakeholders. The tuna work plan is a risk mitigation tool and supports advocacy to drive change. It is not only innovative but unique at a global level with the potential to impact other retailers in other parts of the world.
<b>Business Pioneer:</b> <b>The producer who pioneered a new market</b>	Pioneered the market for sustainable seafood in South Africa. Played a leading role in collaborative activities that achieved the green listing of local trout and the MSC certification of a range of imported seafood products. Now working towards ASC certification for trout, which would be a first in Africa. A unique business philosophy combining sustainability and product quality.
<b>Research Pioneer:</b> <b>The Line Fishery Database</b>	The world's biggest references fisheries database in the world with 27 years of data and daily records for over 400 boats. Successfully used in research on a Marine Protected Area to demonstrate the rehabilitation of fish stocks. Applied a new research tool for stock assessment that is now internationally published, recognised and applied.
<b>Research Pioneer:</b> <b>The DNA Database</b>	Development of the first and only database of South African fish species that has been used for research studies on the mislabelling of seafood in the South African market. A new service for testing the authentication of species has developed from this research.

Source: Author's compilation.

### 6.6.1 NPO pioneers:

From the fieldwork interviews, two of the NPO narratives stand out as different. In the first narrative, from WWF-SASSI, the model of engagement in the supply chain for sustainable seafood is presented as being unique at a global level within the WWF network internationally. In the second narrative, the model of engagement used for market outreach at ISSF is an indirect approach and this also differs from the more dominant outreach model applied internationally by both WWF and MSC, two of the most prominent NPO organisations in sustainable seafood.

### 6.6.2 Business pioneers:

Two business organisations were included in the research. One is a retailer and the other is a producer of a range of sustainable seafood products and also involved in fish farming. Both described some pioneering activities in the sustainable seafood supply chain where collaboration is used effectively to achieve innovation in the supply chain for sustainable seafood.

### 6.6.3 Research pioneers

There were two participants who work in a research environment; the one at a university and the other in a government department. Both have pioneered new scientific research that supports seafood sustainability. In one case, the work done by South African researchers has potential relevance internationally; in the other case, the research is specific to South African fish species, but is the first of its kind in South Africa, while using DNA methods that are applied elsewhere.

#### **6.6.4 Commentary and initial insights on the narratives**

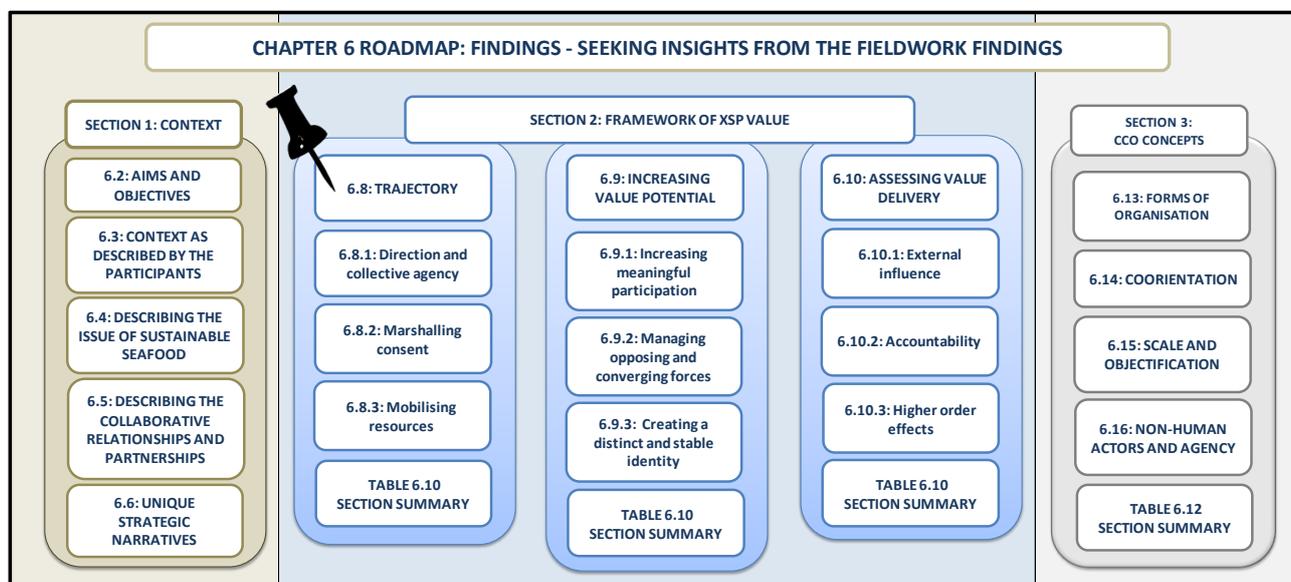
The six narratives all offer different perspectives and address different aspects of seafood sustainability. They all involve cross-sector collaboration with multiple parties.

A point of interest that is evident in at least two of these narratives is that an indirect approach was taken. In the case of WWF-SASSI, a different approach, working with consumers is taken as the conventional approach of working with retailers was not supported at the time. This alternative took time to develop; it is an approach rather than a strategy as it developed and evolved organically rather than by design; and it is described as an anomaly. In the case of ISSF, progress was more rapid and the choice of working through established relationships between buyers and NGOs or buyers and suppliers, was deliberate and targeted. It is an indirect way to establish a relationship with buyers and it still requires building relationships with other related parties. It is a strategy that leverages specific expertise, recognising that ISSF is a specialist in the broader supply chain for sustainable products.

This collection of narratives comprises the context for the theoretical analysis of XSP value that now follows in the next section of this chapter.

## 6.7 FINDINGS SECTION 2 : ANALYSIS OF XSP VALUE: INTRODUCTION

The descriptions provided in the section above establish the context for the main analysis of the fieldwork material, which now follows. The discussion now progresses to the first dimension of the framework, which is trajectory; and within trajectory there are three elements and these will be discussed in turn.



**Figure 6.1: Chapter 6 Roadmap**

Source: Author's compilation.

In this section, the findings from the analysis are presented, as related by the participants based on their experiences in working in partnerships and collaborative initiatives related to the sustainable seafood supply chain. Using the XSP framework of value as a guide for the IPA worksheets, the main dimensions of XSP value were highlighted in the fieldwork texts and these dimensions were used to structure the IPA analysis. The findings are set out below under the headings that are taken from the framework of XSP value as described in Table 4.7 in Chapter 4 at Paragraph 4.18.

- i) Trajectory
- ii) Value potential
- iii) Value delivery

Within these dimensions, there are various communication practices that comprise the detail of the framework of XSP value. The practices and narratives as described by the research participants are presented here. This provides evidence for the research analysis to confirm the existing framework of XSP value but also to question certain aspects, to identify areas for possible extension to the framework and to challenge it.

At this point, the material is primarily descriptive in order to highlight the participants' perspectives. Some interpretation has been necessary in the choice of organising and presenting the material

but this is necessary and supported by the detailed IPA worksheets used to conduct the analysis. Some initial insights are highlighted and a short commentary is provided in each dimension to summarise the key points. These commentaries are then summarised into a table format to draw attention to the main points. This table in turn will lead to further discussion with the literature in the next chapter, followed thereafter by some proposals to challenge and change the conceptual framework.

## 6.8 FINDINGS SECTION 2: THE TRAJECTORY OF CROSS-SECTOR INTERACTIONS

Table 6.4 provides a summary of the communicative practices in the framework of XSP value, as they relate to the dimension trajectory. Each of these is discussed in the following paragraphs and additional insights are added based on the fieldwork findings. Note that the table deliberately leaves space to allow for additional practices to be incorporated. An updated table is presented at the end of the discussion at Table 6.5 in Paragraph 6.8.4 below.

**Table 6.4: Participant perspectives of XSP value: Trajectory**

COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICES: TRAJECTORY				
<b>Direction and collective agency</b>		Change and Improvement; collective agency	Directional movement and process: driving, working towards	
<b>Marshalling consent</b>	Securing willing participation			
<b>Mobilising resources</b>	Economic capital	Cultural capital	Social capital	

Source: Author's compilation.

The trajectory is the direction of change as well as evidence of action or agency. From the framework of XSP value there are three key dimensions of trajectory. The first is the general direction of the partnership activity, which includes evidence of agency, the potential to act or change, which is also described as "to make a difference" (Koschmann *et al.*, 2012). According to Koschmann *et al.* (2012), it is in the trajectory that value is created and the two dimensions that support the trajectory are marshalling consent and mobilising resources. Each of these dimensions is now considered based on the descriptions by the participants, followed by a commentary and initial insights.

### 6.8.1 Practices 1: Direction and collective agency

The analysis indicates the descriptions of direction, agency and potential to act, as presented in the fieldwork texts, and may be summarised into three main clusters or narratives, which are described below.

### 6.8.1.1 *Business language: Describing the potential to act*

The first cluster is characterised by the business-oriented language, where participants used words such as strategy, business case and targets and talk about leading and being leaders. There is evidence that this terminology is used by business and NPOs alike and nine of the participants, from five organisations, applied this type of description. Some examples are provided here. In response to the interview question regarding the strategy to support sustainable seafood, participants talked about the strategy for their own organisation, rather than for partnering activities as a whole. In talking about the sustainability issue itself, participants appeared to use words indicating a long-term view, such as commitment and journey.

The business case and business strategy are described and provide an example of trajectory as expressed in business language.

The business case for the organisation was explained by KT (2:6), who said ***“you need to create a strong business case for why partnerships can and should add value to what you’re trying to do”*** and further that ***“the first step was really being clear about what the business case was for sustainability for our organisation - so proving the financial benefits – the brand differentiation – the investment proposition – all of those different elements”***.

From an NPO perspective, DL described the strategy of the organisation as well as the strategy for engagement with partners and how both require work to ensure that there is value in the partnership. As an organisation, ***“before we can collaborate effectively we do need to be knowledgeable – we need to be science based and we need to have interrogated the issues and developed a strategy on how we can improve so that we then are of real value to the partners that we are looking to work with”*** (DL 2:4). Further, that this understanding is necessary ***“to make sure that we remain relevant and of value to them”***. This illustrates a connection between strategy and value at an organisational level.

At a collective level, there is a need for understanding by each partner so that ***“our partners know what our strategy and what our objective is - to make very clear why we’re working with them – what we aim to achieve - and then to understand it from their side as well – and once they know what we’re trying to leverage out of the partnership in terms of driving positive change on the water – it becomes far easier for them to work with us to achieve positive change on the water”*** (DL 2:5). DL described a process in which ***“we built a very strong strategy – we built understanding – there was buy-in the further it went up and as it filtered back down then the implementation of that strategy had to be tailored”*** (DL 1:10).

Trajectory is discussed in the following paragraphs in terms of milestones and commitments, so that the action orientation is directed towards something that is clearly defined such as a goal or a target.

Describing fisheries improvement projects, NN (2:5) explained that this is when a fishery ***“puts into place an action plan towards MSC ultimately and where they have fixed milestones and fixed goals in place so that ultimately they’d be at a standard that they could pass MSC”***. Achieving the MSC standard would mean meeting a globally recognised standard for sustainable fishing and the milestones set the path or trajectory towards achieving that recognition. For WWF, ***“we actually want to see change happening – we want to see things improving – not just saying that people are thinking about working towards it – certainly we would want to see clear targets met”*** (DL 1:7). Describing the way that the business strategy developed in phases, KT (2:3) explained that ***“there’s been a lot of focus around creating the right partnerships externally with our suppliers to try and make sure that we can set a coherent range of future targets which are now in place through to 2015 2020 for the wild caught and aquaculture sides”***.

One of the ways that WWF influences the direction of partnership activities is to require retail partners to make public commitments, which is another form of milestone or target.

Talking about retailers, DL (1:8) explained that ***“one of our requirements is for them to make a public statement on sustainable seafood targets that have the potential to influence the commercial aspect of their business – it’s not just a decision to support something – it’s a decision to transform – to change”***. From a retailer perspective, KT (1:11 and 1:12) explained the need ***“to be clear that everybody understands what the future commitments are and that being part of an improvement project is part of that process”*** so that ***“we were able to get everybody to the stage where we could publically commit to our future targets - so I think that was a very successful process”***.

While internal targets are common tool for performance measurement, external commitments tend to be at a broader level. Making specific targets public establishes a different set of challenges for business to account for their performance.

Describing the long-term aspirations of Woolworths, NC (2:4) said: ***“firstly we’ve got the commitments that came out – that we publically announced last year and so there will be a lot of work for us to do”***. This is a new phase where ***“we can actually formally track it now and that is gonna be publically communicated in our Good Business Journey”***.

While the public commitments provide clear and measurable targets to track future progress, they also articulate a business risk so that consumers may hold the retailer accountable should the targets not be met. While based on a contractual agreement, the commitments are made to the public rather than to the contractual partner.

Building consumer trust does require careful management but KT (2:4 and 2:5) talked about challenges rather than risks and acknowledged that ***“there’s a fair amount of uncertainty there and that’s probably the more challenging bit at the moment”*** and ***“it’s not always the most comfortable space for a lot of people”***. So taking a conservative view, they would ***“have an idea how they’re gonna get somewhere and probably be most of the way there before they communicate about a commitment or target”***.

NC (2:9) confirmed this caution but explains that being careful is a balance because ***“we really wanna be sure before we release something and that can be to our detriment – so we’re not always the quickest with these things”***.

Risk management is discussed in more detail in a subsequent paragraph dealing with the communicative practices around managing tensions.

Trajectory is also evident when a time dimension is introduced in relation to targets.

KT (1:11) commented that ***“it really helped to push us to being able to actually commit to our future targets and really engage with very specific examples of where the challenges were going to be”***. NC (2:6) talked about investing in aquaculture projects ***“because we think that it’s strategically important for us – so I think that’s a very strong example of how dedicated we are and that’s a long-term future thing that we’re looking at”***. HT (2:8 and 2:15) also highlighted that things took a long time and that ***“we had to build this market so it took much longer”***. ***“Because we believe in a sustainable business – rather slower but it’ll be there for a long time – so it’s been key in our business from the word go – from 20 years ago” and “it’s been the vision of where it can and should go and hopefully it’s there for generations”*** (HT 1:20 and 1:30).

Several participants related the work they are doing as leaders and this was expressed with reference to the organisation they work for rather than in their individual capacity.

HD (2:2 and 2:3) described the MSC as ***“the world’s leading certification and ecolabelling programme for sustainable seafood and the ISSF as “a global partnership of leading marine scientists [and] the tuna industry as a whole ... as well as WWF”***. NN (1:10) commented that Woolworths ***“has always been a leader” and “are certainly leading in terms of the variety of [MSC] labelled product”***. According to ND (2:10), ***“Woolworths is a recognised sustainability leader – they’ve got the business management processes in place to control their supply chain”***. NC (2:3) said that ***“we’ve always been at the forefront of innovation and market leading concepts”*** although NB (2:4) admitted that being a leader creates pressure and ***“always being the leader and - always thinking out the box – always trying to be one step ahead of the competitor ... makes it difficult to be the leader”***. However, ND (2:10) commented that ***“if you get a sustainable leading organisation and you get something published then that’s gonna have a lot of influence – and reflect well on the organisation for being a leader”***.

Describing the business of being a leading producer and supplier of sustainable product, HT (2:14 and 1:24)) said ***“it’s played a leading role in the whole supply chain” and “we wanted to be market leaders at taking product to Woolies that was MSC approved so again it was leading the field in that little niche”***. Further, ***“we play a very close and leading role with our farms in terms of supply – in terms of technology transfer – the information we get from overseas – the studies that we’ve done to enhance the industry and create best practice”*** (HT 1:9).

### 6.8.1.2 *Change and improvement: Describing collective agency*

Another set of narratives is characterised by the focus on change and improvement and these topics are highlighted by participants in business and NPOs alike. Strategic narratives were introduced at Paragraph 6.4.1 and further detail on processes of change are included here. The theory of change was introduced at Chapter 2 Paragraph 2.4.1.

Talking about sustainable seafood as a key priority area and **“an issue from both a global and a South African perspective”**, KT (1:1) said it has been a process of **“learning and realising we’ve had to improve our management of the issue – our supplier relationships and the work that we do there”**. Further, that the process involves working in partnership and looking **“at where the opportunities for improvements are and how we can make it happen with partners like the MSC and SASSI and others”** (KT 2:4). Others talked about the need to change and adapt (NB 2:6); or to advocate for change in the market (ND 1:2). DL (2:4; 2:8 and 1:8) talked about **“delivering the change” and “the change we want to see” and says “it’s the decision to transform - to change”** rather than just supporting something.

Some talked about a theory of change. KC (1:4) explained **“our theory of change – the way we work with moving consumers from a point of just basic awareness of a challenge to fundamentally shifting their behaviour”**; it is sometimes called the martini glass theory of change (KC 1:10). When consumers **“ask questions of retailers and hold them accountable to their commitments - retailers and suppliers are motivated to change their procurement practices”**. DL (2:3) said there is a need to work with economies of scale so **“we can create the vacuum where the rest of the industry can move into”**. Similarly, the MSC standard is used as a benchmark (HD 2:9) that has the effect of **“dragging fisheries up”** (NN 2:16) so that even if the MSC standard is not achieved, it nonetheless acts as model to drive improvement and change.

Fisheries improvement is a key narrative.

HD (2:2) explained how the improvement plan for tuna is needed to support the retailer’s seafood commitments and emphasises the importance of sourcing from **“fisheries that are undertaking credible time bound improvement projects”**. So in this case the improvement is directed towards the source fishery and the role of the retailer is to manage the supply chain in order to procure product from the fisheries. HD explained that this requires **“active participation rather than pushing down the responsibility to the poor guy that catches the fish”** (HD 1:11).

ND (2:11) gave credit to the retailer for their part in making the process work because **“they’ve engaged and developed partnerships and built relationships to improve things over time”**.

### 6.8.1.3 *Directional movement and process*

The third narrative concerning trajectory is about driving, pushing and working towards something, which is another way of describing direction and movement. A few participants talked about the

journey, which is a reflection of the retailer's overall sustainability strategy, the Good Business Journey.

Fisheries improvement is about driving change.

Pursuing the discussion on fisheries improvement, HD (2:15) explained that ***“our plan is not just to target the specific vessels and only work with them because they practice sustainability – we actually want to drive change - we want those guys that have not been on this journey to join us – that’s where the improvement comes in”***. This is achieved this through actively monitoring every consignment and communicating with the vessel owners by sending advocacy letters requesting improvement in specific fishing practices.

Clarity on current position and future commitments is needed to drive things forward.

KT (1:6 and 1:7) explained that areas ***“where it was quite specific that we wanted to make an improvement [compared] to where our current position was – and set quite clear targets going forward – just meant it was a priority area”***. And further that ***“we had clarity on where we stand – [we] were able to put the commitments in place and now work towards achieving those as well and being able to communicate that as we go along”***. In another example, talking about the MSC marketing campaign, KT (1:9) said ***“it allowed us to push sustainable seafood”*** and ***“it helped to actually push the WWF partnership we wanted as well going forward”*** so ***“it was quite a good bit of leverage that helped our overall programme go forward as well”***.

NB (2:6) explained that ***“sustainability is one of the key drivers for us – so we need to breathe eat sleep [it] – it’s even on all our scorecards”***. HD (1:14) indicated that the seafood commitments are ***“something that we are working towards”***.

The philosophy may be the driving force.

The philosophy of ***“do it right and take longer but it’s still there for tomorrow”*** is the vision for the supplier business and HT (1:30) said ***“that’s been the driving force through this thing from the beginning”***. This illustrates that the time dimension is also relevant. Describing the collaborative initiative to have local trout green-listed by SASSI, HT (2:9) described the project as ***“quite a major drive that the local trout industry”*** undertook.

The process of engagement in the supply chain adopted by WWF was described by ND (1:11 and 1:17) is consistent with the ISSF philosophy.

The model is ***“to drive improvement”*** and is directed towards ***“responsible sourcing that drives tuna fishing improvements”***. Talking about consumers, KC (1:8) explained that ***“we seem to be seeing shifts in the way that people are engaging”*** and ***“they’re owning their right to know what it is they they’re going to be eating or consuming or even purchasing and taking that right forward and actually actively driving change”***.

The narrative of driving change is about making a difference.

HD (2:8 and 2:9) explained that the ***“strategy is dependent on this work plan to then drive this process down to vessel level” and “that’s going to drive the change”***. The work plan transforms the conservation measures so that ***“we as the retailer and importers will do our part to drive change” but “we don’t want to check if you’re doing what you’re supposed to do – we actually want to drive change – that’s the difference”***. HD connected the personal assertion that ***“I can make a difference”*** with the bigger organisational and global agenda and said that ***“this piece of work that I am busy with is not just from a retailer point of view but it also drives change globally and this is my piece of change that I want to drive within our universe and within our world”*** (HD 1:16 and 1:17).

***“I am driving to get the right thing done – and I’m defining it and I’m giving timelines because that is the strategy” and “that’s my responsibility in the supply chain”*** (HD 1: 10). HD (2:12 and 2:14) reaffirmed that ***“we remain deeply committed to procuring sustainable seafood – it’s part of our values and how we conduct our business – we raise awareness of issues and we help our customers make informed choices – we demonstrate leadership in the industry and we strengthen transparency and credibility of our supply chain – therefore driving improvement and managing the risks” and “we’ll support advocacy to drive change”***.

It should be noted that while these examples are about the supply chain, these are nonetheless all examples of cross-sector collaboration because there are several NPOs working with business to progress and drive these initiatives.

Other examples that indicate direction were evident from participants’ accounts of what they would replicate and amplify in the future. There was a variety of ideas that included extensions to additional local sources of supply or geographically into other regions of Africa; the possibility of extending to other sustainable initiatives in other supply chains such as wine was suggested; and traceability studies were already being extended to other animal species.

Communication was noted as an important challenge and while this included communicating on the science, other areas were also highlighted such as building relationships with a broader constituency, and a greater focus on sharing stories.

Communicating scientifically is seen as important so that ***“the big stories and the challenges that we face at the moment – I would say that probably the single biggest thing ... is communicating to the scientific sector”***

KC (1:15 and 1:16) noted how important it is to ***“build relationships that are broadening our constituencies” and getting “the message of sustainability across to a constituency that we haven’t really engaged with before”***.

NB (2: 23) said that ***“my overall objective – or my personal goal – is to shout more about our key stories and to get the maximum reach” so that “the awareness about sustainability is getting to those people’s ears”***.

ML (2: 16) said ***“I would do more of that – it’s to tell the story – not just the story – also share how it’s done”, because “we can’t do it alone”***. ML also advised that you don’t want to be too theoretical as ***“it doesn’t sing in people’s minds” but “if you start to tell it by story and say – this is how it happened – and by the way this is your colleague - this is what we did – tell them in the language that they understand” then “you’re getting more buy-in”***.

#### ***6.8.1.4 Commentary and initial insights on direction***

The business goals and strategies are described at an organisational level, rather than at a collective level, reflecting, in part, the way in which the interview questions were asked. Nonetheless, there is also evidence of a collective responsibility towards the overall sustainability issue that was being pursued, in addition to the organisational goals and the importance of partners having an understanding of each other’s objectives.

Business language uses words such as strategy, business case and targets to describe trajectory and reflect the idea of direction and movement towards something. The metaphor of targets and milestones setting a “pathway” is an interesting way to reflect on trajectory. The longer-term time dimension that is pertinent to sustainability matters is also highlighted.

While setting targets is not in itself unusual, for a business to make public commitments to specific and measurable future targets, sets direction in a different way. In this case, a longer-term view is taken and targets are described as future targets.

KT (2:5) explained that ***“we’re looking at broader targets towards 2020 for the whole business but obviously the seafood work was a little bit ahead of the curve and it is a little bit outside the norm in terms of the normal time frames that people operate within – the nature of sustainability is to try and make us all think a little bit more long-term so that’s definitely a good thing”***.

The public commitments also entail a risk to be managed, again another business term. It is the NPO that raises the issue of managing risk related to consumers.

DL (1:7) explained that the first area of risk is to make sure that ***“the consumer awareness is aligned with the marketing risk”*** of the retailer.

As the examples indicate, the narratives around the public commitments are about trust, brand, transparency, accountability and responsibility.

Change and improvement are at the heart of sustainable seafood initiatives and this is a thread that runs through various descriptions in this dissertation as already noted in Paragraph 6.4.1 above. There are multiple dimensions to this narrative, which includes change at different levels from a personal to an organisational and to a global agenda. There is a long-term view described as a vision as well as more immediate and specific timelines and work plans. At a broad level, there is an overall theory of change that is articulated and understood by the participants, although

variations are highlighted that apply to the developing market context and that offer the potential for some unique insights.

Different degrees of action are highlighted in the participant accounts from creating awareness, advocacy and supporting change, to active participation and driving change, through to delivering change, adapting and transforming.

There are also different areas where change is targeted in the supply chain, from improvement in fisheries practices to creating awareness so that consumers can make informed choices.

One of the narratives that the organisations in this research described relates to being leaders and playing a leading role in change and in doing so they are driving, or aim to drive change and improvement; there is a driving force or there are key drivers. A time dimension is also evident in the case of a vision for the future as a metaphor for establishing direction. It is mainly in the language that the message of the direction is conveyed and this language indicates that it is a strongly asserted direction that is being pursued.

#### **6.8.1.5 Summary: Direction and collective agency**

From these insights, Table 6.4 may now be updated with areas of similarity and difference as noted in Table 6.4(a) in the bold red type.

Introducing commonly used business language is a suggested improvement. Terms such as strategy, the business case and targets are already reflected in way that trajectory is defined as the directional movement and a sense of working towards something. However, the language does make the model more accessible in a business context and may be considered as an enhancement to the framework.

The multiple dimensions of change, the different levels, degrees of action and areas of activity provide more depth to the understanding of collective agency and therefore indicate similarities and differences with the current framework. The language used to describe the direction of movement supports the concept of trajectory as already defined.

**Table 6.4(a): Participant perspectives of XSP value: Trajectory**

COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICES: TRAJECTORY					
Direction and collective agency	<b>Use of business language: strategy, business case, targets</b>	Change and Improvement; collective agency	Directional movement and process: driving, working towards <b>Use of language</b>	<b>Collective agency – multi-dimensional nature. It works at different levels, degrees of action and areas of responsibility operating at the same time</b>	
Marshalling consent	Securing willing participation				
Mobilising resources	Economic capital	Cultural capital	Social capital		

Source: Author's compilation.

## 6.8.2 Practices 2: Marshalling consent

Marshalling consent is described as “willing participation or consent” (Kuhn, 2008). This description references Barnard (1968: 83-85), who explained that “the willingness of persons to contribute efforts to the cooperative system is indispensable”. Koschmann *et al.* (2012) described this dimension as “securing the willing participation of others for the subsequent accumulation and appropriation of capital”. The key factor here is that participation is voluntary and willing, rather than negotiated or induced by incentives (Kuhn, 2008).

Since this research study explored existing partnerships rather than establishing new relationships, the interview material, in the main, describes ongoing consensual participation of the various parties. The analysis indicates the description of marshalling consent may be summarised into three main clusters or narratives, which are described below. These reflect the definitions noted above but also introduce some additional, but related, communicative practices that may be considered.

### 6.8.2.1 Willing participation: Getting buy-in

Willing participation may be expressed in words that are more familiar in a business context. Both businesses and NPOs appear to adopt this language.

Talking about how WWF-SASSI was first established, DL (1:2) noted that **“there is a limited amount that WWF could do to put the message out there – we needed buy-in from organisations that were close to the seafood trade to make it relevant to their consumers and then built the base of engaged consumers ... and give it the necessary momentum”**.

This suggests that getting buy-in could accelerate or extend the capacity to act. Others also talk about getting buy-in and getting people involved.

In another example, DL (1:9 and 1:10) talked about getting buy-in from the retailer to **“raise the relevance of the issue”**. Further, that **“we built a very strong strategy – we built understanding – there was buy-in the further it went up and as it filtered back down then the implementation of that strategy had to be tailored”**. Talking about learning experiences with partnerships, KT (2:8) said that **“making sure that you’ve got broader buy-in beyond one or two people”** in the partnership is really important. These examples indicate that buy-in is needed at different levels in the organisation.

The collaborative process of securing the green listing of local trout required a process of getting people together, discussing things and getting buy-in, so **“there were decisions that had to be made within the group in the meetings and then you get people’s opinions and you have to sort of win them over” so it’s “getting people’s opinions together and solutions – finding solutions around the table”** (NC 1:10).

Getting involved may mean different things to different people.

Relating the story of a joint marketing initiative, NN(1:8) confirmed that **“to get buy-in from a retailer is very important – the fact that they are actually putting money into it and that they are driven to do something like that – says more than what the figures at the end are reflecting”**. KC (2:8) also talked about the need for **“a sense of ownership” and “a sense of shared vision” so that “there’s buy-in and there’s support”** and when something needs to be done it is immediate; **“that’s the intangible stuff”**.

Another dimension here is involving consumers and customers.

NB (2: 6) said that **“we have to change as a business in order to appeal and attract those customers and bring them on the journey”**. KC (1:4) explained that the WWF-SASSI theory of change is **“the way we work with moving consumers from a point of just basic awareness of a challenge to fundamentally shifting their behaviour”**.

### **6.8.2.2 A variety of relationships: From contracts to reciprocity**

There are different types of relationships included in the partnership activities.

Some of these are contractual such as the **“corporate relationship with WWF”** (KT 1:4).

With reference to the product quality and responsible sourcing, HT (1:4) confirmed that **“you wouldn’t be able to do deal with Woolworths if you didn’t have these things”**.

However, others such as the relationships between Woolworths and ISSF, Woolworths and MSC and between MSC and WWF, for example, are not contractual.

KT (1:4) described the arrangements as **“complementary but the way they work and the nature of the relationship do end up being different”** because one must avoid compromising their independence. They are nonetheless key partners.

KT (1:3) indicated that some relationships are based on mutual exchange and describes the relationships with external advisory groups as **“based on effort in effort out”**. NN (2:15) described a similar approach at MSC, which does not have formal agreements in the region and relationships are **“perceived as give and take– if we both put in – we’re both going to get something out and that’s what we try and promote”**. KC (1:13) concurred and said that with **“the partners that we work with – it’s a two way street – it’s a value add from both sides”**.

TL (2:9) also described research relationships with reciprocity so that **“you help that unit out” and “then when you require staff on a survey then that’s a team that will help you out for technical staff”**.

KC (1:11) explained that it is important to work with partners who want to be involved and says that **“it has to be a collaboration – it has to feel like both parties are coming to the table – we’re both invested – and we both put the time and effort in making something happen”**. NN (2:14 and 2:15) said that the relationship with fisheries is **“not a binding collaboration” and “we try and keep them in the loop and in turn they will support us” so that “it’s perceived as give and take”**. UN (2:10) explained that WWF **“were doing it out of goodwill and it was common values at work”**.

These various descriptions indicate that the involvement in many cases is voluntary and that discretionary effort is an important aspect of working with partners. Relationships that depend on reciprocity also require trust.

UN (2: 10) asserted that ***“if you do the right thing people trust you and so the relationship grows”***. Pursuing the discussion on the two-way relationship with partners, KC (1:13 and 1:14) commented that ***“we might not agree on everything but there’s trust and there’s honesty in the relationship”*** and ***“what it comes down to is trust”***. DL (1:3) talked about the importance of getting to know people and described this process as building ***“a level of trust in the relationship that enables you to start seeing the mutual benefits of working together”***.

NN (1:5) explained the importance of individual relationships and said ***“it’s very much about an individual relationship – you need someone within any organisation who is prepared to drive it”*** and ***“who sees the potential”***. ND (2:16 and 2:19) explained that ***“there’s collaboration with the environmental organisations and building relationships there and within those organisations”***. Further, that it’s about ***“providing them with tools and resources to assist moving this thing forward and a lot of it’s about relationships and building relationships”***.

In these two examples, the relationship is based on reciprocity and there are no contractual arrangements or obligations.

Involving customers involves a relationship with another form of reciprocity and again trust is a key factor.

Talking about building credibility for the sustainability programme as a whole, KT (2:4) explained: ***“some of our commitments and programmes are more customer facing than others and more product related”*** so that they are ***“more accessible to customers and really help to build that consumer trust”***. According to NC (2:3) ***“the trust thing in our brand is very important – we know our consumers trust us so we take responsibility and the accountability for how we trade”***.

### ***6.8.2.3 The persuasion of market mechanisms***

In addition to voluntary commitments and contractual obligations, there may also be factors at work involving the persuasion of market mechanisms, which may also be directed towards marshalling consent.

The examples noted below rely on standards being created and recognised in the market. These standards do not directly involve contractual arrangements or legal structures but operate through persuasion, rather than negotiation or overt inducement. These persuasive factors may also hold parties accountable.

In this context, these are considered to be voluntary factors, notwithstanding the degree of persuasion that market forces, such as consumer sentiment or reputation, may bring to bear. In

each case, these examples support the theory of change previously described in Chapter 2 Figure 2.1 in which the market dynamics of food commodities is depicted.

The example of the public commitments already noted above, is a case in point where there is a contractual undertaking but that agreement requires making an undertaking to other parties, in this case consumers, who are not parties to the contract. There is a degree of discretion in the nature and timing of the commitments and so the contractual elements work in conjunction with the voluntary elements.

KC (2:4) described the strategy so that ***“consumers are then mobilised and empowered to hold retail partners accountable to very clear commitments that they put out to seafood sustainability”***.

The role of the retailer in bringing about change is acknowledged by UN who confirmed that in the supply chain ***“the pressure point was retail and we could make a big difference on retail so we almost volunteered for that”***. He explained that with sustainable seafood, ***“we organically just put it forward – we sort of had a mind map of these are the steps we need to take”*** (UN 2:12 and 2:13).

An example is provided by DL (2:3) who explained working with economies of scale has the effect of ***“creating a vacuum where the rest of the industry can move into”***. The market pull that is created is described as a ***“pathway to sustainability for the source fisheries and aquaculture operations”*** (DL 2:3).

The MSC standard establishes a benchmark (HD 2:3) for retailers and fisheries alike. It is particularly important in the case of fisheries improvement projects (FIPs) which are voluntary initiatives.

Another, more specific example, was offered by HD (1:13), who explained that one of the initiatives in the tuna supply chain is the proactive vessel register. This is a voluntary initiative and means that the owner is ***“offering [their] vessel to improvements”*** and they are making commitments to accept observers who monitor a variety of fishing practices.

#### ***6.8.2.4 Commentary and initial insights on marshalling consent***

The business language related to willing consent is expressed by some as getting buy-in and this is also expressed as getting people involved and bringing them on the journey. These support the definitions already included in the framework.

While the evidence presented supports the contention that there needs to be willing participation, the interactions appear to have multiple dimensions so that voluntary interactions take place alongside those that are more obligatory. Contractual arrangements exist but there are also relationships that are described as complementary, which are not contractual and depend on mutual exchange, reciprocity and trust, which also indicates the importance of personal relationships. A particular example of the relationship of trust between an organisation and its customers is noted in terms of upholding commitments made publically. This builds credibility and

consumer trust. The various contractual and complementary relationships appear separately or in a combination; so that there is a variety of relationships and forms of interaction around voluntary or willing consent.

The example of the public commitments illustrates that willing consent may work together with contractual obligations. While a legal contract is the dominant model of business, the public nature of the seafood commitments contains a discretionary or voluntary aspect. Applying the language of contracts, these commitments may be conceptualised as a 'social contract' with consumers towards the sustainability issue, since consumers hold the retailer accountable and yet the contractual obligation is with a third party and not the consumers.

There appear to be multiple dimensions at work, which suggests a degree of complexity. Another example of this complexity that may be at work is the MSC ecolabel and similar standards in the market that establish a pathway for improvement, indicating that a preferred route exists. These standards operate through market mechanisms and so there is the assumption of freedom of choice. These mechanisms, while not obligatory may nonetheless be persuasive as indicated in the phrase 'market pull'. However, some retailers or producers may use the MSC as a requirement in procurement contracts so that voluntary standards become inducements or the subject of negotiation. Participants confirm, however, that in a partnership, there needs to be willing participation so that both parties are actively involved and are making a contribution.

The experiences of the participants confirm that willing consent is needed, but there is also an indication that, in this context, there may be some persuasion involved and voluntary commitments may sit alongside other obligatory or contractual commitments. These suggest possible extensions to the framework.

#### 6.8.2.5 Summary: Marshalling willing consent

**Table 6.4(b) : Participant perspectives of XSP value: Trajectory**

COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICES: TRAJECTORY					
Direction and collective agency	Use of business language: strategy, business case, targets	Change and Improvement; collective agency	Directional movement and process: driving, working towards Use of language	Collective agency – multi-dimensional nature. It works at different levels, degrees of action and areas of responsibility operating at the same time	
Marshalling consent	Securing willing participation	Use of business language: getting buy-in	Multiple processes: A combination of voluntary and obligatory commitments plus the use of persuasion	Voluntary mechanisms	Market mechanisms can be both persuasive as well as obligatory
Mobilising resources	Economic capital	Cultural capital	Social capital		

Source: Author's compilation.

From these insights Table 6.4 may now be updated with areas of similarity and difference.

Buy-in is not a new concept but a familiar term in business language; it is already reflected in the definition of marshalling consent as securing willing participation and therefore supports and enhances the concepts.

Another insight that may be considered as a possible extension is the juxtaposition of voluntary and obligatory commitments and how these may work together. There may also be the further addition of persuasive factors created by standards recognised in the market.

### 6.8.3 Practices 3: Mobilising resources

Mobilising resources involves attracting capital and “efforts to acquire the necessary resources (economic, social, cultural and symbolic) for operation” (Koschmann *et al.*, 2012). These are not defined in detail but are referenced to Bourdieu (1986), which is included in the literature review at Paragraph 4.15.2. Kuhn (2008), made the connection between capital and value and asserted that “value, as capital, takes many forms” which “represent capacities to influence action – to coordinate and control activity”. These definitions (see Chapter 4 Section 3) provide guidance to organising the material for the field texts as it pertains to mobilising resources.

The analysis of the field texts indicates that the practices around mobilising resources may be summarised into three main narratives, namely economic, cultural and social and each of these is described below.

#### 6.8.3.1 Economic capital: Economic and market forces

Funding and financial resources are identified by several participants as the various partnership activities require funding.

NN (1:8) offered the example of a joint campaign between MSC and Woolworths, which was part funded by MSC.

KT (1:8) explained that this was an opportunity where MSC had **“funding from their global office” and this “made it a nice joint project in terms of matching funding”**. However, there were **“a few limitations around how their funding could be used”**. In another example, KT (1:4) said that the formal corporate relationships with WWF **“involves quite a bit of funding” and “quite a bit of joint strategy work – a portion of which is the sustainable seafood side”**.

According to HT, financial capital and profit require a long-term view and need to be balanced against other important factors.

HT (1:20) remarked that **“we have to be profitable – so that’s always been a challenge”** but qualified this and said that **“I’ve always had the philosophy of building a solid foundation and not looking at short-term success or profit”**. However, **“if it’s only profit driven - it’s a difficult one because I’ve gotta balance that – building something for the future with all these ethical things in it – yet sacrificing profit”** (HT 2:5 and 2:13).

There are examples where product is the resource in question. HT provided examples of where collaboration was needed to secure the sourcing (i.e. mobilising) of sustainable product and the process may require some pressure or persuasion.

In the case of imported product, HT (2:8) said that initially the trading houses were against supplying certified product but then ***“we put pressure back down onto them” and said “if you don’t have the chain of custody we can’t buy the raw material from you – so very quickly they’ve all turned around and done it”***. Pressure and collaboration were involved here.

In the case of the supply of local trout, it ***“was a major collaboration between ourselves – the Western Cape Trout Farmers Association and the SASSI group to get it moved onto the green list”*** and it also required collaborating with the feed companies so that they understood the importance of tracing the fishmeal to sustainable sources (HT 1:9 and 1:13). Persuasion through research and understanding was required ***“so the feed companies had to actually buy into [it] because of the strategy – not because it made any financial sense for them”*** (HT 1:13).

As already noted, the approach adopted to change and improve fishing practices makes use of market forces and the dynamics of the supply chain (KC 1:4 and 1:10; NN 1:4; DL 2:3).

These are all examples of collaborative initiatives in which the free-market economic model of resource dependence and cost/benefit trade-offs applies. However, the examples indicate that in addition to financing and product supply, there are other factors involved at the same time such as the credibility of the product (the certification), building for the future and ethical issues. Also, where there is no immediate financial case, then persuasion may be needed to mobilise the required economic resources.

### **6.8.3.2 Cultural capital: Skills, knowledge, expertise and capacity**

Capacity is a factor for any enterprise and was highlighted by participants. The resources that an individual or organisation may bring to the partnership or may seek from a partner, include knowledge, expertise and skills, which fall within the definition of cultural capital.

DL (2:4) explained that ***“the collaboration is really underpinned by us being able to add value – so before we can collaborate effectively we do need to be knowledgeable – we need to be science based – we need to have interrogated the issues”***.

Another example was provided by NC (2: 6) who described centres of excellence as collaborative activities involving specialists and that aim to generate innovation. ***“We would work closely with them to get information and to share information” but “we can’t have all the experts in-house” so “it’s sort of a mutual benefit thing for everybody”***.

The sharing of information for mutual benefit suggests reciprocity as a basis for partnerships, as previously noted. Other examples indicate that the partners may be dependent on each other for

resources or may be a source of complementary resources. For WWF-SASSI, one of the reasons for collaborating is related to resources.

KC (1:2) explained that ***“everything that we do with SASSI is based on collaboration [because] we have very very few resources and capacity which is innate in the nature of the work that we do”***.

Adopting a network partnering approach provides a means to achieve their objectives.

At the same time their partners ***“just don’t have the resource and capacity to be able to roll with everything”*** and so ***“for this to work I need all of these networks”*** (KC 1:14). KT (2:6) explained that ***“there’s only so much you can do yourself but if you use a credible third party or partner to help endorse your brand or to help drive innovation - to help with key experience and skills in particular areas – that’s something that can really bolster your organisational strength and you can do it in way that you’re not having to add massive capacity internally”***.

This highlights the importance of relational aspects such as credibility combined with more specific needs for skills and experience.

Discussing the reasons for collaborating, DL (2:6) said it may be ***“to build integrity into their brand or to access the skills and expertise that are existent within that NGO”***. Alternatively, it may be ***“bringing in the necessary expertise that was needed – the necessary guidance”*** which may include technical expertise (DL 1:10). DL (1: 11) explained how retail partners need ***“to incorporate the systems required for them to be able to manage [seafood sustainability] risks”*** so that ***“they build the capacity – the knowhow – the relevance within their organisation and they can carry on and they can really just use us as a resource”***.

The different types of resources are not necessarily separate and may be combined.

ND (2:19) said that collaborating successfully is about combining resources and relationship so that it means ***“providing them with tools and resources to assist moving this thing forward and a lot of it’s about relationships and building relationships”***.

Further examples of relational resources are noted in the following section on social capital but it is evident that the relational aspects are also connected to skills and expertise.

### ***6.8.3.3 Social capital: Engaging people and building relationships***

Participants from both business and NPOs highlighted the importance of investing in (i.e. mobilising) relationships, which are the basis of social capital.

First, there may be a process of engagement with willing partners.

DL (2:2 and 2:3) explained the importance of ***“making sure that all the critical stakeholders are engaged in the most effective and strategic way”*** and working with retailers who ***“are willing to engage with us”*** so that rather than being reactive to consumer trends, they are ***“more proactive in dealing with the risk they are exposed to in their seafood supply chains”***.

The engagement process is carefully planned.

DL (1:6) explained that **“we’ve put a lot of thought into the strategy behind the engagement”** so that when there is an opportunity **“you need to be able to take that opportunity”**. Sometimes, stakeholders **“may not want to work with you directly – you may have to develop tools to be able to engage with them”** so you need **“the right kind of strategy and tools to complement that strategy”** which **“gives you a mandate”** to work with them.

This suggests the need for complementary resources, such as strategy, tools and engagement.

The process may also be described as investing in relationships. The example below indicates that there are multiple resources including the need to invest in or cultivate relationships.

KC (1:16) explained how a successful collaboration relies on relationships. **“For me that was a success ‘cos - you spend so much time investing resources and capacity into relationships – for me it felt like a lot of these relationships came together in a very cohesive manner”**.

In some cases there may be existing relationships (KT 1:6) and (UN 1:4 and 1:7); in other cases it may be necessary to build relationships.

It means **“providing tools and resources to assist moving this thing forward and a lot of it is about relationships and building relationships”** (ND 2:15 and 2:19). KC (1:15) also talked about cultivating relationships and **“wanting to build relationships that are broadening our constituencies so we’re not always talking to the same people”**.

It may also mean adding value and a bringing a sense of momentum, which reflects the agency that relationships entail.

KC (1:13 and 2:9) spoke about adding value to the relationship so that **“with the partners that we work with – it’s a two way street – it’s a value add from both sides”** and also noted that **“we would not have the traction that we do if it wasn’t for the relationships that we hold”**.

An action orientation is evident.

ND (2:21) spoke about opportunities for improvement in which Woolworths **“invest time and energy – they’ve got a relationship”** and they are **“addressing it in a productive way”**.

Another approach to mobilising people is to use some leverage.

NC (1:12) said there are various points of leverage that may be used. The first is values so that with sustainability as **“one of our key values then that just adds to the whole thing and puts critical weight to it”** so **“you can use that as backing and leverage”**. There are also the values of the partners so **“we have people from the outside driving this as well”** and NC said **“I can use that as leverage as well”** so **“it’s not just me – WWF wants it as well – they are measuring us on this”**. Finally, **“as soon as you get measured then people want to start performing”** and **“you have to use those [as] leverage as well”**.

While planning and leverage may be important to some, others talk about a less formal approach.

Relating the story of the local trout farmers, NC (1:9 and 1:10) said ***“it’s about awareness – understanding and bringing people together”*** and ***“there’s a handful of people that farm with trout and it’s small informal operations”***.

In another example, the theory of change used by WWF-SASSI and already described above, is directed towards engaging specific consumers.

KC (2:4) talked about ***“mobilising consumers”*** so that they are ***“empowered to hold our retail partners accountable to very clear commitments”***. KC (1:4) explained that this entails ***“an inordinate amount of research in terms of consumers and we are very clear in terms of our strategy of engagement so we know who our target audience is”***. The theory of change presents a progression from engagement to action and the aim as described by KC (1:4) is ***“moving consumers from a point of just basic awareness of a challenge to fundamentally shifting their behaviour”*** so that ***“retailers and suppliers will be motivated to change their procurement practices”***.

There is agency at all points in the supply chain, but in the case of WWF-SASSI, the point of initiation is consumer engagement and is based on the relationship with consumers.

#### ***6.8.3.4 Commentary and initial insights on mobilising resources***

In each of the dimensions, economic, cultural and social, the experiences of the participants describe collaborative practices as they relate to sustainable seafood. The focus of economic capital, in this context, is directed towards the market dynamics in the supply chain. Cultural capital is evident in the skills and expertise as well as sharing knowledge and information. Social capital focuses on relationships, engaging with people and building relationships.

Under economic capital, funding of collaborative initiatives is a key factor but there are also issues around sourcing certified product. However, these immediate needs exist at the same time as other needs such as building for the future and ethical considerations, so that short-term and long-term factors are both considered. Further, if there is no immediate or clear financial case, then persuasion may be needed to mobilise the required economic resources.

Cultural capital includes knowledge, skills and expertise and in a partnership context the focus is on sharing information and on complementary resources. The interactions are mainly described as “a mutual benefit thing” rather than a contractual arrangement to engage the services of another organisation. There is also the issue of credibility so that the skills and expertise of the partner must add value and be credible.

Use of language such as ‘add value’ and ‘mutual benefit’ suggests a connection between skills and expertise as cultural capital and its instrumental value within the economic domain. There also appears to be close connections between cultural capital and social capital so that collaborating

means a combination of providing resources and relationship building. Relationships are the domain of social capital.

Relationship activities, as described by the participants, involve a process of engagement and on an ongoing basis, descriptions such as building relationships and investing in relationships are used. A process of engagement is described that is proactive, planned and involves a strategy. Investing in relationships takes time and energy and means both parties must add value; building relationships means reaching a broader constituency. The language of investing suggests a connection between the social and economic domains.

In some cases, relationship activities are planned and in other cases, they develop without much formality and bringing people together and getting to know people is a part of the process. Planned and unplanned processes seem to co-exist, but both may have certain formalities. As noted at Paragraph 6.5.4.7, contracts do exist, but the relationships also work on the basis of reciprocity and that while these are not formalised by way of contract, there is nonetheless a degree of formality in the way that the relationships are conducted.

There is also evidence that relationships sometimes involve the use of leverage such as values or measurement or persuasion.

The different resources, economic, cultural and social, are not always in separate categories and the evidence from practice indicates that they may interact together and in combination. There are examples of partners being dependent on resources from other partners, not necessarily for economic capital, products or assets but for skills and experience (cultural capital) and for relational attributes such as credibility (social capital). While resource dependency is evident, it appears to be more than an exchange transaction based on the market dynamics and economic forces. These market dynamics are exploited as the theory of change explains, but there are other dynamics that operate at the same time as illustrated in these examples, which indicate the role of cultural and social capitals as well. There is a sense of the combination and complementarity of economic, cultural and social capitals; it is about sharing resources such as information rather than trading or exchanging physical things and the outcome is mutual benefit rather than consumption or use.

Engagement is described as a process that requires a strategy and tools as well as developing a relationship, again a combination of resources. There is also the sense that relationships are active, that they have momentum, and there needs to be time invested to build them. In the case of the seafood supply chain, there is engagement at all points in the supply chain so that in the case of WWF-SASSI the focus is first on consumers and then on retailers and suppliers; whereas in the case of the producer, the engagement is with the traders and the source fisheries.

The points of engagement may be planned or unplanned, but in each case there is a specific purpose and the purpose is about sustainable product, whether it be sourcing, procuring or

consuming sustainable seafood. The focus on mobilising resources, whether people, knowledge and expertise or funding, is directed towards the sustainability issue.

### 6.8.3.5 Summary: Mobilising resources

The use of business language to talk about adding value, mutual benefit and investing in relationships is a further indication of how the economic, cultural and social domains are interconnected.

Insights that may be considered as potential extensions include the combination and interconnection of the economic, cultural and social domains in the partnership activities and the combination of complementary processes such as planned and unplanned, immediate needs and the needs of the future. There is also further evidence of persuasion as a means to mobilising resources. There is also the need for partners to add value and also be credible.

These are now included in the summary table which is shown below in Table 6.5.

## 6.8.4 Summary of dimension: Trajectory

**Table 6.5: Participant perspectives of XSP value: Trajectory – Extended**

COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICES: TRAJECTORY					
Direction and collective agency	Use of business language: strategy, business case, targets	Change and Improvement; collective agency	Directional movement and process: driving, working towards Use of language	Collective agency – multi-dimensional nature. It works at different levels, degrees of action and areas of responsibility operating at the same time	
Marshalling consent	Securing willing participation	Use of business language: getting buy-in	Multiple processes: A combination of voluntary and obligatory commitments plus the use of persuasion	Voluntary mechanisms	Market mechanisms can be both persuasive as well as obligatory
Mobilising resources	Economic capital Supply chain dynamics – funding and certified product – product needs to be credible	Cultural capital Partners skills and expertise need to be credible	Social capital Planned and unplanned; contractual and reciprocity and persuasion (leverage)	Use of business language: investing in relationships; mutual benefit	Economic, cultural and social are interconnected and work together and in combination

Source: Author's compilation.

Each of the communicative practices supporting the dimension of trajectory, including direction, marshalling consent and mobilising resources, has now been discussed. The starting point at Table 6.4 has now been updated with the evidence presented in each of the sections.

Table 6.5 now summarises the various areas of similarity and difference and adjustments made accordingly. Additional practices have been added in bold red type that indicate similarities and differences with the framework of XSP value. In some cases, the differences are about the language used as is noted in the case of business language. In other cases, there is a difference in emphasis so that the descriptions of economic, cultural and social capital may be expanded. The wording is drawn from the participant accounts and from the preceding discussion.

Table 6.5 is carried forward to the end of this section, where it is consolidated into a summary at Table 6.10. The discussion now moves on to the next dimension, which is increasing value potential.

6.9 FINDINGS SECTION 2: INCREASING VALUE POTENTIAL

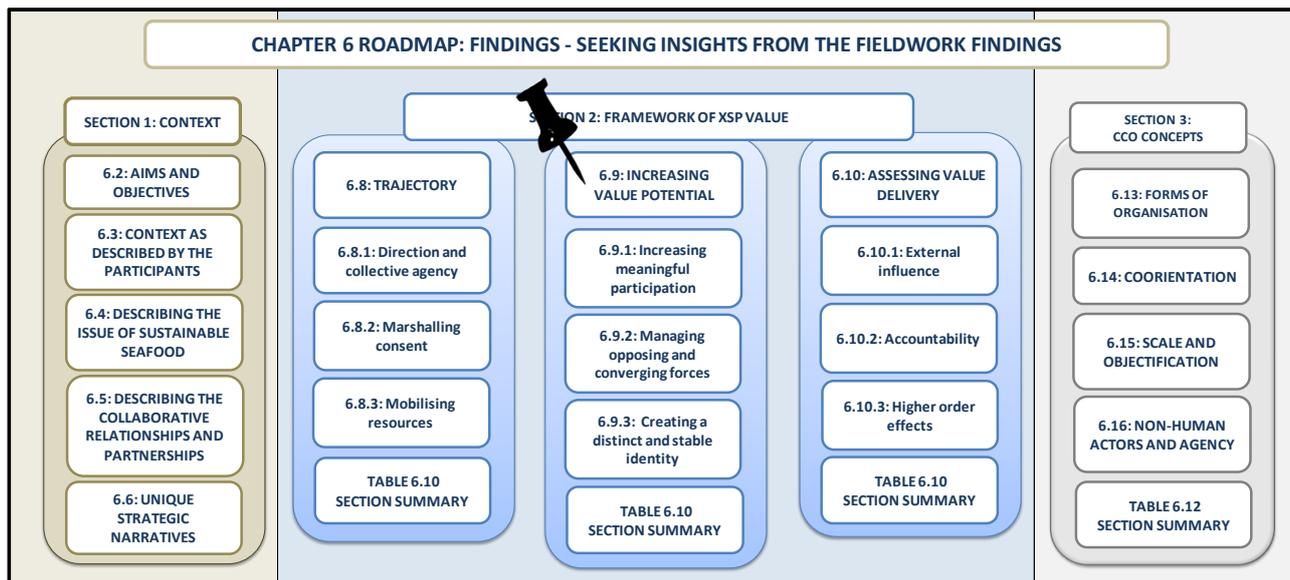


Figure 6.1: Chapter 6 Roadmap

Source: Author’s compilation.

A summary of the main elements in this dimension is provided in Table 6.6 below, which sets out the communicative practices in the framework of XSP value, as they relate to the dimension increasing value potential. Note that the table deliberately leaves space to allow for additional practices to be incorporated. An updated table is presented at the end of the discussion at table 6.7 in Paragraph 6.9.4 below.

Table 6.6: Participant perspectives of XSP value: Increasing value potential

COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICES: INCREASING VALUE POTENTIAL				
Increasing participation		Different ways of interacting	Including diverse interests	
Managing opposing and converging forces	Remain open – avoid early closure	Willing to explore alternatives and being receptive to new ideas	Being adaptable	
Creating a distinct and stable identity	Name - a distinct collective identity	Coherent narrative – constructed collaboratively		

Source: Author’s compilation.

These various dimensions are included in Chapter 4 at Paragraph 4.16. Each of these is discussed in the following paragraphs.

Value potential is about increasing the potential or the opportunity for value in the XSP or collaborative interactions. The framework of XSP identifies three elements here, which are increasing meaningful participation, managing opposing forces and creating a distinct identity. The communicative practices related to each of these is discussed below based on the evidence from the fieldwork interviews.

### 6.9.1 Practices 1: Increasing meaningful participation

Increasing meaningful participation is the description of communication practices that serve to increase potential XSP value. According to Koschmann *et al.* (2012), meaning is not only private and internal but “a more richly communicative conception” that is based on the idea of “productive dialogue” discussed by Tsoukas (2009). In this sense, meaningful participation produces “the creative, integrative and legitimate solutions participants seek” as the interests of multiple parties are included. There are two indicators of value in the framework, namely a variety of forms of interaction and a diversity of interests in decision-making processes. Evidence from the field texts that support these practices are discussed below.

The issue of what is meaningful is discussed in relation to the quality of the interactions or the strength of the relationships in the collaboration. The framework of XSP value aims to include “diverse interests in decision-making processes” (Koschmann *et al.*, 2012).

In addition to the practices in the existing framework, there is evidence in the field texts of other practices that may be relevant and these are included in the discussion below. They are:

- i) open and transparent communication
- ii) interacting with diverse stakeholders
- iii) ongoing effort, described as investing in the relationship.

#### 6.9.1.1 Open and transparent communication

Participants spoke about being open, transparent, adaptable or flexible and these are attributes that are desirable in relationships and communication between partners.

During the joint marketing campaign with MSC, KT (1:9) said that **“there was regular communication and regular feedback and quite quick feedback from both sides all the time” so that “there was a very open communication the whole time”**.

ED (1:11) also highlighted the importance of having **“really good open”** relationships with various partners.

This indicates that in addition to openness, there is also the quality of the relationship or the strength of the relationship. The quality of the relationship may be indicative of whether it is meaningful.

Transparency is also relevant at a broader level, not only in communications between the partners but also to a wider audience. It may therefore be about integrity in the market.

ED (2:4) explained that **“my main aim is to ensure market integrity and fairness”** and it is also **“to promote fair trade – authenticity again and brand integrity”**.

However, this is not without difficulty and may be controversial so transparency is needed.

ED (1:19) said ***“it’s all about transparency on the market”***. HD (2:12) also reflected on this broader responsibility and declared that ***“we demonstrate leadership in the industry and we strengthen transparency and credibility of our supply chain therefore driving improvement and managing the risks”***.

The issue of transparency involves companies making public commitments to comply with new practices are adopting a transparent approach towards improving sustainability.

ND (2:3) explained that this involves being transparent about compliance and about progress and being ***“transparent about where we are in that – what we have learned – what we know – what we don’t know”***. In this case, it also means that there will be ***“a public registry that’ll be audited by a third party for compliance with those practices”*** and this record will be publically available.

In these examples, transparency is expressed as something to aim for to establish integrity, as leadership, or as a commitment. In this sense, it may be regarded as value potential. However, to the extent that these intentions are achieved and improvement is achieved, then transparency may lead to value delivery. The inter-relatedness of value potential and value delivery is a matter for further discussion below.

#### **6.9.1.2 Different ways of interacting**

The descriptions from the field texts indicate that there are different approaches to working with partners and there is evidence that there are different ways of interacting. In some cases, participants referred to this as engaging.

Talking about the collaborative process to manage the tuna supply chain, HD (1:16) made it clear that ***“there’ll be a lot of interactions – so it’s not something that we are just pushing out there and leaving them to do – so we’ll have our frequent visits – we’ll have our conference calls – we’ll have our audits”***.

Some of the participants described how engagement with stakeholders is an active and planned process.

In discussing the variety of partners, KC (2: 10) explained that the approach with each partner is tailored, as is the communication so that ***“the way that we engage with them has to be different – has to be tailor made”*** according their various objectives. Similarly, DL(1:8 and 1:4) explained that ***“it’s different with each engagement”*** and there is a need to be clear on the objectives and strategy for engaging. Further, that to be effective ***“I had to understand what the priorities were”*** and ***“what the aspirations were within those organisations and how I could assist them to achieve their goals”***. DL called this ***“finding the intersects”***.

Further examples are provided in the section on CCO concepts and the discussion on coorientation at Paragraph 6.12 below.

ND (2:14 to 2:16) also described different ways of engaging with partners and potential partners and explains how an indirect approach is adopted. Rather than approaching buyers or retailers directly, the initial engagement is made through an environmental NGO that has an existing relationship.

Another indirect approach would be to ***“network through their supplier who is an ISSF participating company”***. ND (2:14) explained that ***“I have not been able to meet with a company that I targeted on a cold call – they’re connected either into somebody else that’s engaged – whether it’s an environmental organisation or a company – a supplier – so that’s my two ways in”***.

Alternatively, for other stakeholders where there is a policy agenda, the approach at ISSF is to work through committees such as the scientific or the environmental committee.

### **6.9.1.3 Including diverse interests**

There is evidence that people with different views are included and communication between the partners accommodates and welcomes alternative points of view. Including diverse interests requires an understanding that stakeholders may have different objectives.

Diversity is evident in the range of different organisations involved in this study, all of whom work together in different ways to support sustainable seafood initiatives.

Describing the relationship with WWF, KT (1:4) said ***“there are a range of objectives that have been put in place as part of that agreement across a number of different issues”***.

Diversity is illustrated in the description of ISSF, which was founded by marine scientists, tuna producers, and WWF International and also engages more widely with fishing vessels, policymakers and retailers.

ND (1:2 and 1:4) remarked that it is interesting ***“how these different influences were coming together”***. There are diverse stakeholders in this space with different needs in different markets and different dynamics, which means having an understanding of ***“the opportunities and the risks for different choices that you may make”***. ND (1:7; 1:14 and 1:15) said that ***“we’re very inclusive”*** and remarks that ***“it is quite a complex management but it’s done that way because there are a lot of commercial and conservation interests of different countries involved”***.

It is also challenging to get ***“the message through to different people in different cultures – the different cultures of a fisherman versus a scientist versus [a person] in industry who’s dealing with a lot of quarterly profits”***.

Diverse stakeholders appear to be a feature of the collaborative context.

ND concluded that it works because it is collaborative and the ***“experience [is] just fascinating and it’s great to be part of that dynamic and to see it working – so it’s nice to be in that collaboration space”***.

In another case, TL (1:2 and 1:4) described the collaboration in the research space, where **“we form a network of quite a lot of people from quite different backgrounds”**. Improving the management of fish stocks **“involves a lot of liaison with a lot of different people – and trade-offs – [so] everybody has to integrate and come together and talk and collaborate”**.

Diversity has the potential to create value, but as ND and TL indicated, there needs to be collaboration, people need to work together.

Reflecting on a specific project, KC (1: 16) explained that it was **“random people that are involved in SASSI in one way of another but coming together in a very cohesive way to get the message of sustainability across to a constituency that we haven’t really engaged before and it was a success”**.

WWF-SASSI also displays diversity and a range of relationships at multiple points in the supply chain for sustainable seafood and there are networks with whom they engage. KC (1:5 to 1:10) explained that this includes producers, suppliers and retailers and consumers in the supply chain. WWF-SASSI also has network partners who are advocates or ambassadors for sustainable seafood such as zoos and aquaria, chefs and foodbloggers. It is through this network that the message of sustainability is conveyed to consumers.

#### **6.9.1.4 Making and keeping it relevant**

Connected to the idea of meaningful participation, and specifically what is meaningful, is the idea of relevance. The idea of relevance was discussed in detail by one participant who presented a detailed account in a way that involves the different stakeholders in partnership activities.

As a means to initiate engagement, DL (2:3) explained that WWF needs to have relevance to the retailers **“to really give us a mandate”** and to create **“an incentive for them to play their role”**. **“If it wasn’t relevant to them ...then there was no interest”** (DL 1:4) so that **“you have to raise the relevance of the issue”** (DL 1:9).

This is a prospective view that indicates value potential. It suggests that there needs to be relevance at the broader level with the issue itself that is of common interest and at this level, there is opportunity or value potential.

DL (2:5) also explained that **“you need to remain relevant to each other”** and that this can require compromise. DL (1:10 to 1:12) offered the example of working on the tuna supply chain because it was commercially important to Woolworths and a priority for WWF internationally but not a focus area for WWF in South Africa and **“not core to what we are trying to achieve”**. DL (2:5) explained that **“working on canned tuna is a trade-off for remaining relevant to our partners – it’s of value to them”**.

This example indicates that it was a specific project and action area that was identified, where the partners found common ground. This is relevance at a more specific level and it is at this level that there is an action orientation and a focus on value delivery.

Progressing this idea, KC (2:8) connected relevance with the value of relationships.

KC said that ***“the relationships that we hold are adding value not only to SASSI as an organisation and WWF as an organisation but [it’s] very fundamentally for me that it adds value to whoever the relationship is [with]”*** because ***“otherwise they won’t see relevance in it and they won’t continue the relationship”***.

This suggests that once value has been delivered, then the relevance needs to continue to ensure ongoing value. Relevance needs to be ongoing to deliver an outcome that has value.

DL (2:4 and 2:14) said that ***“remaining relevant to our stakeholders – that’s extremely important”*** and continuing to be of value to them. The outcome or value delivery is ***“to be able to achieve the change that we want to see”***.

Being relevant is an indicator of value as KC illustrated.

First, talking about the relationships of SASSI with its various partners, KC (1:8) said they need to make sure that it adds value to the partners, ***“otherwise they won’t see the relevance in it and they won’t continue the relationship”***. Then, also describing WWF-SASSI, as a programme, as ***“something that was relevant”***; ***“something to be proud of”***; and ***“the jewel in the crown of WWF”*** (KC 2:7 to 2:9).

Relevance means understanding the roles of different stakeholders.

DL (2:14) said that it requires that ***“both parties know exactly what it is the other is trying to achieve – then they are much clearer in what their role in that processes is”***.

Relevance here is also about being useful and being applied.

According to DL (2:9), the advice or issue needs to be ***“understandable and implementable”*** and have value in practice, since it is improvement and changes to practice, to ***“change on the water”***, that is the value that is sought. DL (2:10) explained that the outcomes must be ***“robust – defensible – and science based”***. ND (2:23) concurred and focused on the objective of ***“becoming understood and relevant and practically applied”***.

These accounts suggest that relevance may mean different things for different stakeholders. The word itself and the examples suggest that relevance may be a way to express the connection between specific organisational objectives and the broader issue or common interest. Therefore, relevance may relate to something bigger that connects the change with a higher level contribution towards the common interest or sustainability issue and this may also bring an emotional connection such as pride or achievement.

It may also be specific to something that adds value at a practical level by meeting the objectives of each partner, whether this is change or improvement in practices or procuring sustainable product.

As described here, as a process, there is first the need to make the subject matter relevant and then to keep it relevant.

#### **6.9.1.5 Invested and investing in relationships**

Another perspective that suggests both an outcome and an ongoing trajectory is the idea of being invested. In this context, it is not investment in an economic sense but rather about being invested in an emotional sense and in a relationship. Investment also suggests a time factor that is more long-term.

In one example KC (1:11) talked about working with networking partners and said that for it to work, ***“it has to be a collaboration – it has to feel like both parties are coming to the table – we’re both invested – and we both put the time and effort in making something happen”***. Further, KC (1:16 and 1:17) explained that ***“you spend so much time investing resources and capacity into relationships”*** and in this collaborative experience, the time ***“spent in cultivating the relationships came together”*** and made an impact. In conclusion KC said: ***“I feel like we are investing in the future of this country – I think there’s much more that we can do but I feel passionately about the fact that it’s something that’s relevant”*** so that ***“if we reach that objective we will change the face of the seafood industry in South Africa”***.

This sense of being invested is also reflected in the idea of ownership, again not in an economic sense but in a relational way.

KC (2:8 and 2:9) said ***“we also try to create a community of ownership”*** and offers evidence at a meeting where ***“all of the networking partners that belong to their own organisations have their own organisational mandates and objectives but they were talking about SASSI as if it belonged to them”***.

Trust is a factor here.

There also needs to be ***“a sense of trust and a sense of collaboration”***. KC concluded that ***“it’s through things like that where I feel like it comes through in the relationships and it’s not a tangible thing”*** but ***“I feel positive about the fact that when there’s a sense of ownership and there’s a sense of shared vision”*** and ***“there’s buy-in and there’s support”*** then it feels like ***“we’re on track”***.

A similar sentiment was expressed by ND (2:21) who said that Woolworths ***“invests time and energy - they’ve got a relationship in addressing the opportunity and I think that’s addressing it in a productive way”***. DL (1:3 to 1:5) talked about ***“building trust in relationships so that we could gain insights to achieve our and their goals”*** and that took time. ***“The most effective thing is really getting to know people”*** and ***“then it becomes far easier to collaborate because you build a level of trust in the relationship that enables you to start seeing the mutual benefits of working together”***. However, DL also said ***“you have to keep working at [it]”*** and ***“you start very small and just start working together”***.

Others also talked about trust. UN (2:9 and 2:10) remarked on the initial **“period of building trust with each other”** and **“if you do the right thing people trust you and so the relationship grows”**. ND (2:20) talked about building relationships and **“building credibility in the people I engage with”**.

The strength or quality of relationships was indicated by several participants in the way they described how they work together with partners.

KC (1:5) talked about the relationship with network partners as having **“more strength and more power if it’s built like there’s a sense of co-ownership”**. Descriptions such as **“a really good open relationship”** or **“a very strong relationship”** and **“they are like a pillar of support”** (ED 1:11; 1:14 and 1:22) are indicative of the quality of the relationship.

### **6.9.1.6 Active participation**

Managing the multiplicity of perspectives is what effective collaboration requires so that people are working together, not just communicating, not just talking together.

HD (1:10) referred to it as **“active participation”**. DL (1:6) pointed out, **“we actually want to see the change happening – we want to see things improving – not just saying that people are thinking about working towards it”**.

ND (2:24) talked about **“collaborative engagement”** with buyers and retailers in order to **“start becoming understood and relevant and practically applied”**.

### **6.9.1.7 Commentary and initial insights on increasing meaningful participation**

The participant accounts support the practices in the framework of XSP and highlight some further aspects such open and transparent communication and an expression of the quality of the relationship. Transparency is not only towards the partners but also to a wider audience such as the market, the supply chain, the industry and the public in general.

There is evidence to support the elements described as different forms of interacting and including diverse interests. However, each of these may be extended with different language and with further detail on the nature of the process.

The descriptions of engagement indicate the diversity of interactions that exist in the research setting and that yet there is a process here. This appears to align with the idea of investing in relationships, as previously discussed under mobilising resources. Again a process view indicates an active and planned process that requires effort to attain a level at which the relationship works. It requires that partners understand each other and find areas where their respective goals ‘intersect’. Engagement may also require an indirect approach through another party such as an NGO or a supplier company.

Engaging with different stakeholders requires an understanding that there are partnership activities to address common challenges (DL 1:4) but that also means understanding the different objectives

and priorities of each of the partners. Hence, there are common interests or what may be called “intersects”, but not necessarily shared goals or shared objectives. There is more on the subject of common interests in the section on CCO concepts and specifically on the topic of coorientation.

Rather than viewing engagement as a completed activity, it may be seen as an ongoing process of investing in relationships, where the metaphor of investing conveys the meaning of an emotional commitment rather than an economic one. It is not tangible and involves time and energy; it involves building trust and a sense of ownership in the collaborative activities. While already noted under social capital as a means to mobilise resources, the process of investing in relationships is about increasing and maintaining relationships and increasing participation.

On the issue of different ways of interacting and diversity, it is apparent that participants used the word engagement in two ways. In a general sense, engaging appears to have a similar meaning to the word interacting; in a more specific sense it appears to be used to describe a deliberate process (ND 2:10), (DL 1:4) and (KC 1:4). In the latter case, the process precedes deliberations and interactions of a more collaborative or participative nature and involves understanding that there are different objectives and identifying the “intersects” or areas of common interest. The process of engagement is followed by the collaborative interactions such as participation, decision making and actively working together. It is a process of active participation so that participation leads to change; or collaborative engagement so that advice on conservation measures gets practically applied. As noted in the discussion on collective agency, there appear to be different degrees of action.

The examples indicate that there are multiple levels of diversity (diverse interactions and diverse interests) and multiple dimensions in collaborative activities. Including diverse interests is demonstrated in the variety of different organisations and stakeholders and people from different backgrounds; how an inclusive approach is adopted by those working in sustainable seafood initiatives. But it is not just variety, it is also about people working together in a cohesive way that is successful.

Another issue highlighted here, is about being relevant and this process may also have multiple aspects. Relevance may relate to something that connects change with a higher level contribution towards the common interest or sustainability issue and this may also bring an emotional connection such as pride or achievement. It may also be specific to something that adds value at a practical level by meeting the objectives of each partner, whether this is change or improvement in practices or procuring sustainable product. As described here, at whatever level, there is first the need to make the subject matter relevant and then to keep it relevant.

### **6.9.1.8 Initial insights on the interconnectedness of value potential and value delivery**

Active participation expresses the idea of a collaborative engagement that leads to change and seeing things get better. There are other examples here that indicate a connection between value potential and value delivery.

Devoting ongoing time and effort to the relationship itself and developing trust are identified as necessary conditions to achieve positive outcomes for all. The process appears to have a circularity, so it is difficult to distinguish the value potential from the value delivery. At a point in time, trust may develop through working together and yet it also builds a positive context for further action. Trust is one element in an ongoing process in which effort is required at a relational level. There are other indications that value potential and value delivery may be interconnected, where intention has been translated into an outcome that had value.

Transparency and credibility are key factors.

This is expressed by ND (2:15) who explained that being transparent has **“been incredibly valuable (a) to build awareness” and it “has been incredibly valuable that they understand and (b) it’s added to the credibility of the organisation”**. HD (2:12) also reflected on this broader responsibility and declared that **“we demonstrate leadership in the industry and we strengthen transparency and credibility of our supply chain therefore driving improvement and managing the risks”**. According to KC (1:4; 1:8 and 2:4), a public commitment means that consumers are empowered to hold **“organisations and retailers accountable for their actions”** and to their commitments. Similarly, NN (1:7) explained that a standard **“that is credible, transparent, everyone recognises that and it’s held up and it’s held accountable”** to its stakeholders.

These examples illustrate how value potential in the form of transparency and credibility is directed towards an intended outcome such as managing risks or accountability. There is also an indication that delivery at one point may become potential at another. So being a leader may suggest value potential where it strengthens transparency and credibility; and being a leader may also suggest value delivery where it drives improvement.

The dimensions of the framework of XSP value are not as discrete as they may appear; they are connected and display a circularity. The recursive nature of the process of value creation is briefly mentioned in the framework of XSP as a process of influence that is evident in successive deliberations of XSP members (Koschmann *et al.*, 2012: 344). However, what is evident in the examples is that it is not just a process that is repeated, rather there is a circularity that, in the context of a forward trajectory and an action orientation, suggests more of a process that has upward or outward momentum.

### 6.9.1.9 Summary: Increasing meaningful participation

From these insights, Table 6.6 may now be updated with areas of similarity and difference. The evidence provides support to the ideas of diversity of interactions and diversity of interests, to which open and transparent communication is highlighted as an additional emphasis. It is also noted that there needs to be more than diverse interests; the various stakeholders need to come together in a cohesive way. In the case of different types of interaction, the idea of engagement extends the basic idea to include an active process that involves finding aligned objectives or ‘intersects’. Another alternative is to adopt an indirect approach and work through a third party.

**Table 6.6(a) : Participant perspectives of XSP value: Increasing value potential**

	COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICES: INCREASING VALUE POTENTIAL				
Increasing meaningful participation	Open and transparent communication at different levels	Different ways of interacting A process of engagement Finding the intersects Indirect approaches	Including diverse interests Coming together in a cohesive way	Making it and keeping it relevant Different levels – from the broader issue to something specific	Investing in and cultivating relationships – introducing intangible and emotional elements Degrees of action – interacting; deliberation, and active participation
Managing opposing and converging forces of identity and interests	Remain open – avoid early closure	Willing to explore alternatives and being receptive to new ideas	Being adaptable		
Creating a distinct and stable identity	Name - a distinct collective identity for the partnership	Coherent narrative – constructed collaboratively			

Source: Author’s compilation.

A possible extension to the basic elements of increasing participation is that there appear to be different levels and degrees of action - so that transparent communication applies not only to the partners but also to a wider audience and the process of engagement includes interacting, deliberation and active participation. Another extension is the idea of investing in and cultivating relationships as a more active process than participating; it involves more deliberate planning and also introduces intangible and emotional elements.

The idea of active participation appears to go beyond value potential towards value delivery in that it means going beyond thinking and talking and working towards the change and seeing it happen.

### 6.9.2 Practices 2: Managing opposing and converging forces

Managing diversity also means differences need to be harnessed and used effectively. Koschmann *et al.* (2012) referred to this as managing opposing and converging forces and highlighted three practices. They focused on managing rather than resolving tensions, on remaining open to new ideas and alternatives and being adaptable. These and other tensions are discussed here.

### 6.9.2.1 *Remain open – be persistent*

When difficulties or obstacles are encountered it may be necessary to explore other alternatives; it means reaching a level of understanding on the issue, rather than discarding ideas too quickly. In this case, it is not about open communication but about persistence and remaining open to new ideas.

Evidence in the field texts includes in the one instance advice regarding a situation if the partners should reach an impasse; and in another much bigger scale, in relation to the process by which WWF-SASSI was created and developed into a unique model of change through trial and error and persistence.

In the first instance, DL (2:6) advised that ***“it’s important not to abandon the issue too quickly – to rather understand why we’ve reached that point”***. Beyond this, the majority of evidence deals with exploring alternatives.

Regarding the early beginnings of WWF-SASSI, KC (1:10) explained that when the conventional approach of working with retailers did not work initially and so ***“that’s when SASSI changed its tack and started targeting consumers”***. It was a different approach, which ***“evolved organically”*** and ***“we only figured this out through trial and error”*** rather than by design.

KC concluded that ***“there isn’t a one size fits all in every context – you have to take the context into consideration”*** and you have to keep trying. This approach is ***“now recognised within the network as being different and working”*** but that it is still regarded as ***“a bit of an anomaly within the conservation space”***.

### 6.9.2.2 *Willing to explore alternatives and being receptive to new ideas*

This practice is about being willing and receptive and does not mean that change will happen but rather that allowance is made for new potential and opportunity. However, the examples all illustrate collaborative activities that have translated innovative or creative thinking into successful outcomes. Nonetheless, these illustrate this practice and how innovations have been made in the sustainable seafood space. Some participants talked about pursuing new opportunities.

In an exceptional case, there is the participant who related how he created a new niche industry for sustainable seafood in South Africa. What these examples have in common is that, through collaborating and working with others, new initiatives and improvements are pursued.

HT (1:1 to 1:4) related that in 1990 aquaculture was a new industry and so ***“to make a success in the industry we had to create a market – so that’s how we got into processing – and it’s taken almost 20 years to build the market”***. At the start, ***“I put up a few tanks and started experimenting with it – and learned very quickly that it is quite a complex thing – particularly the business side of it”***. However, ***“now we’re farming trout – we’re experimenting with salmon – salmon is more tricky in South Africa”*** and it is challenging.

HT (1:1 to 1:4) explained that they needed to develop the technology and the standards and “**when we started in the early days we put best practice in place right from the beginning and although there was no standard in this country**”, they applied best practice from other countries such as Scotland. Now, in a more recent initiative, HT (2:9 and 1:5) explained that “**what we are working on now – aiming towards it - is the Aquaculture Stewardship Council approval for our project in Lesotho**” and the vision is “**to be the first to do it in Africa**”.

The ISSF approach is also innovative.

ND (1:2) described the ISSF model as “**a better way to encourage development**” in comparison to an aid approach because it is “**more business oriented**” and provides a “**framework [for] accountability and more commitment of the participants**” and links the market to the conservation effort. Further, that “**this idea of connecting the market to development or in this case improvement of fishing practices – was a really powerful concept**”.

Again, this is an example of adopting an alternative approach. Further, since ISSF was only founded in 2009 and is a unique combination of business, science and conservation, this NGO represents a new way of addressing the sustainability of tuna as a species (ND 1:2).

From innovation at a business level to innovation through improvement, there are also examples of more specific projects where alternatives have been pursued.

KT (1:12) explained that after the initial project to analyse the species in the supply chain and create the procurement list, “**there was more research and more work done to try and look at how we work with suppliers within the framework of something like ISSF**”. In this example, alternatives involving cross-sector collaboration were considered and this was to find opportunities for improvement. KT (2:4) said that this involved “**interrogating our procurement lists and looking at where the opportunities for improvements are and how we can make it happen with partners such as MSC and SASSI and others**”. For sustainability issues, KT (2:5) said that “**we need input from a whole lot of different teams to really solve these big challenges or make big opportunities happen**”. So in this case, exploring opportunities also means including diverse interests. Further, “**that so many of the key issues we’re working with are way beyond the capability of a single organisation to deal with**” and so partnerships and collaboration are important in creating solutions that are scalable and replicable.

NC (2:6) described how a process of innovation, using partnerships with experts, is actively pursued. NC said that “**one of the things we are actually measured on**” is identifying centres of excellence and making “**a connection with them and to work together with them to bring innovation to the table**”.

From a research perspective innovative approaches are needed due to the limited resources available.

TL (2:13) explained that ***“as [a] marine science community – we are up there with the best”*** because ***“we have to be more creative – it’s actually good for us – [and] good research – good knowledge generation happens on the fringes – it never happens in the centre”***. If ***“you are a bit on the fringes then you get other ideas – you become creative in a different way and I think that’s something that now plays to our advantage here”***.

These examples may be more action oriented than the model suggests and may illustrate value delivery as well as value potential. However, in each case, the starting point is an idea or an experiment or finding opportunities for improvement and the examples demonstrate how initiating something small or at a project level can grow into something more. There is the matter of degree from thinking to doing, from being innovative to innovation. The evidence indicates that the level of innovation and creativity within the sustainable seafood initiatives is high and is found within the business, research and nonprofit sectors. The new initiatives range from specific projects to new ventures.

### ***6.9.2.3 Being adaptable***

Being adaptable was noted by several participants and some also talked about evolving, learning and think differently.

NC (1:2 and 1:3) talked about ***“personal awareness – learning about the issues – thinking differently”*** and ***“when I fish now I really think differently – so in the past - you didn’t think twice about catch and release – it was just one of the rules – now you actually realise why you are doing it and what’s behind it”***. With awareness and knowledge, there is a change so that ***“things interest me now that never interested me”*** and ***“you need to take care now – it becomes a responsibility – you need to take care of the resource because you know more”*** and ***“if you know that you’re not doing it – then you are actively not doing it”***.

In this case, NC showed how being more involved at a personal level with the issue of sustainable seafood, changed individual behaviour and sense of responsibility.

This was also expressed by KC (1:2), who explained how being involved in sustainable seafood developed; ***“it just sort of organically happened but now when I look back at it – it all seems very interconnected”***.

Being adaptable is important when working with others.

DL (1:12) explained that ***“you do need to have an idea of where you are going but the most important thing is to remain adaptable”*** because ***“you can’t always see how things are going to turn out or what you’ll learn and how that will change your strategy”***.

DL (2:12 and 2:14) also talked about being adaptable in order to work with different retailers so that while there are common tools, ***“you need to be able to adapt”*** because each retailer is different. Further, that ***“you need to be able to measure progress – to continually check and evolve your strategy”***.

Adapting is not a planned process but it is about evolving and learning.

Discussing the unique approach at WWF-SASSI, KC said (1:10 and 1:13) that ***“we only figured this out through trial and error – it wasn’t something we started strategically thinking about eight years ago – it kind of evolved organically”***. KC declared that working together is about learning and evolving and ***“I always tell my team this - we don’t always have to know more – we know enough to act now – and then we learn – we learn as we go – we evolve”***.

Being adaptable may mean giving up control and this may require a change in behaviour, which allows other people to be more involved.

NB (2:25) expressed this by saying ***“it’s about control but at the same time also letting go and giving space to people to do whatever they’re needing to do”*** although ***“it comes with time”***.

#### ***6.9.2.4 Risk management***

Risk is business language for a threat or exposure to a problem and could be a factor in whether partners working together either pull together or push apart; risk may draw partners together or it may cause potential partners to avoid each other. It is a factor considered by several participants, both from the business and the nonprofit sectors. Risk management is addressed here where there are implications for the relationships between partners, and which may therefore be categorised as communicative practices. Other processes for managing organisational risk more generally are not included.

In one sense, risk may suggest avoidance.

For an NPO there is a risk of being associated with business which is called greenwashing and ***“to manage the NGOs risk of engaging the corporate sector - the danger is always of being perceived as greenwashing - or simply aligning brands - or purposes other than actually bringing about positive change on the water”*** (DL 1:3). KC (1:6) said that ***“there is a big brand risk for us associated with that”***. NN (2:13) also highlighted the issue of greenwashing and explains that ***“we need to ensure that they’re not greenwashing”*** but ***“we don’t want to turn companies away from MSC”*** but rather ***“explain how they can use it legitimately”***.

While greenwashing may be a concern of an NPO, activism may be a concern of business. NN (2:6) emphasised that ***“we walk a middle ground - although we’re a charity – we’re not an activist organisation”*** and ***“we have sometimes run into trouble because the understanding of what MSC actually is and our role in the sustainable seafood arena is not always fully understood by all parties”***. KC (2:12) described the tension, so that ***“if we are a little bit too [much] in the activist space you can really ruin those relationships but at the same time we should be highlighting where improvement is necessary – so there is a constant two way battle that we have in our thinking”***.

In another sense, risk may a factor that acts as an incentive to engage with partners.

ND (2:11) commented that *“more often than not what drives companies to change is risk – fear and competition – rather than I wanna do the right thing – it’s I wanna avoid a problem”*. DL (2:3 and 2:4) explained that the retailers *“that are willing to engage with us”* are *“more proactive regarding the risk they are exposed to in their seafood supply chains – looking at how seafood sustainability affects their business”*. DL also explained that *“instead of telling fisheries that they are doing something wrong – we are working with them to better understand their operations and identify areas of improvement– and instead of telling retailers that they should stop selling certain brands of tuna – we’re working with them to help them understand why that’s a risk to their business and what the possible benefit to them is of engaging far more in seafood sustainability”*.

While there are risks in working with partners, KC (1:12) explained why it is preferable to manage it.

KC said that although *“there is a lot of criticism”* and *it can be difficult*, *“I’d rather have honesty and still have passion”*.

Managing the risk in the supply chain for sustainable seafood is another area given attention.

HD (2:8; 2:16 and 2:20) explained that the *“work plan is basically just a risk mitigation tool”* and *“we’re making sure that the process is followed end to end until it’s airtight – because it’s one thing to say you’re going to partner to do the right thing – it’s another thing if no-one is actually assessing you”*. So *“we now understand that there’s a huge risk out there that is dependent on – not us but a cannery or our supplier and their supplier – so therefore we’ll have to risk mitigate”* and now *“we want to be able to follow this work plan all the way through”*.

While this example deals mainly with managing the process, it is fundamental to the overall success of the collaborative interactions and the relationships these entail.

### **6.9.2.5 Managing other tensions**

While the framework of XSP value directs attention to centripetal and centrifugal forces (which are referred to in this discussion as opposing and converging forces), there are other sources of tensions that the participants identified.

While none of the interview questions specifically inquired about problem areas, nonetheless, most of the participants raised issues that could be described as tensions. Risk management as noted above, was only one of a range of issues that was highlighted. From this range of issues, experiences that are shared by several participants, were identified and are noted below as illustrations. Some of these are directly related to communicative (or relational) processes, but others are more general organisational pressures.

Relational tensions may involve power dynamics between organisational objectives and the overall direction of the partnership activities directed at sustainable seafood. Issues such as reputation, credibility, trust and confidentiality were noted, as well as several mentions of conflict, criticism,

disagreement, resistance, difficulties and challenges. Some of these related to communication, understanding and dealing with perceptions.

Concerns were raised about market dynamics, either related to competitors or about consumers or products. Funding and resource limitations were mentioned on several occasions. Challenges were identified relating to processes such as compliance, measurement or controls.

Managing tensions is not the key focus of this enquiry, but it is nonetheless an aspect of the framework of XSP value. The focus is towards managing rather than resolving tensions so that, as a process, it contributes in a positive way to the relationships. A notable example is therefore mentioned here, not as something experienced by several participants, but as a unique experience and a unique narrative.

It relates to two separate episodes that were significant industry-wide controversies around food mislabelling. The first concerned seafood mislabelling, the fish scandal, and the second was the so-called meat scandal, which was around two years later.

ED (1:4 to 1:5) reported that there was a lot of media attention at the time the first study was published and ***“there was a lot of resistance from the industry”***. Correct labelling is crucial to the retailers and DNA testing is necessary to confirm the authenticity of the labelling. While there has been some subsequent improvement in labelling practices, there continues to be fraudsters in the industry (ED 2:18). The meat scandal was a much bigger controversy, fuelled by the attention towards the issue internationally. ED (1:19) explained that ***“it really damaged our relationship”*** with a lot of the retailers as research data and test results were forcibly made public, due to a regulatory requirement. This happened even where the results were not bad because the media attention was embarrassing and ***“they [the retailers] didn’t want to be involved”***.

The key point of this story is that despite the damage done, it was through this adversity that the relationship with Woolworths and the research laboratory became stronger.

ED (1:20 and 1:23) explained that ***“the whole fish story happened first and strengthened our relationships – and thank goodness because if the meat thing [had] happened first we wouldn’t have ever had [such a] strong relationship”***. ***“They had a need for the work that I was doing and they were supporting me and using the methods that I’d developed”***.

Further, despite the negative consequences, ED (1:12) reported on the positive impact on consumer awareness and seafood sustainability.

#### ***6.9.2.6 Commentary and initial insights on managing opposing and converging forces***

An alternative way of expressing the idea of avoiding early closure is to be persistent and this may involve trial and error and a process of evolving rather than by design.

A means to manage opposing and converging forces is to be open to new ideas and to seek alternatives. The examples provided are more about successfully completed collaborative activities

that resulted from innovative or creative thinking. There is evidence of this in practices such as adapting, risk management and to a lesser extent in the participant accounts, dealing with conflict. Seeking alternatives is connected with innovation, creativity and new ideas. There are accounts that relate to innovation at a business level and more specifically at a project level. Being innovative and creative is value potential but the examples illustrate value delivery when results are achieved.

The participant accounts suggest that being adaptable may be a practice that helps to change behaviour at a personal level and also to extend the participation of others, in which case it is also relevant for managing relationships. Adapting also starts with awareness and new knowledge that leads to thinking differently; and it involves learning and in this respect adapting may also be seen as value delivery. Another example of adapting is letting go and giving up control.

There appears to be a circularity in the concepts of innovation and adaptability. The evidence suggests that there is value potential where being adaptable or being innovative is about being open to alternatives. There is also evidence of adapting as value delivery in the sense of learning and evolving; and innovation as value delivery in the sense of a concluding a successful new project or product. The practices are not necessarily discrete and may be seen in combination.

Risk management is a factor that is discussed in the interview material and it involves some interesting dynamics within the context of opposing and converging forces. It is also a familiar business term and relevant consideration for any organisation, whatever the sector. Risk management as a communicative practice may involve avoidance behaviour that is directed towards avoiding a problem, such as risk to a brand or to a relationship. Alternatively, risk may be an incentive that initiates proactive behaviour directed towards understanding and engaging in order to improve something and do the right thing. One approach to managing risk that is described here as risk mitigation, is a control mechanism that supports a positive approach to improvement but is also designed to avoid or minimise negative consequences. The accounts show that managing risk can be about understanding and engaging to improve the situation, rather than focusing on the negatives.

The examples presented here on tensions indicate that, while the primary focus of the research was towards things that work well, inevitably experiences involve both positive and negative aspects. Relational tensions may involve power dynamics, issues such as reputation, credibility, trust and confidentiality as well as conflict, criticism, disagreement, resistance, difficulties and challenges. Concerns were raised about market dynamics, either related to competitors, consumers or products, and also funding and resource limitations. Managing tensions directs attention towards managing rather than resolving tensions, so that as a process it contributes in a positive way to the relationships. The negative aspects are illustrated in one narrative, which shows how a very negative situation may strengthen a relationship. On the other hand, it also

illustrates how tenuous relationships may be at a time of adversity, when business reputation and credibility are negatively impacted.

### 6.9.2.7 Summary: Managing opposing and converging forces

From these insights, Table 6.6 may now be updated with areas of similarity and difference.

The evidence supports the practices described as remaining open but calling this persistence may be more easily understood than avoiding premature closure. The practices of being willing and open to new ideas and seeking alternatives are also supported by the evidence. Examples provided relate to being innovative and being adaptable. The evidence supports the existing conceptualisation of managing rather than resolving conflict and there are examples of various tensions, relationship issues and market dynamics.

**Table 6.6(b) : Participant perspectives of XSP value: Increasing value potential**

COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICES: INCREASING VALUE POTENTIAL					
Increasing meaningful participation	Open and transparent communication at different levels	Different ways of interacting A process of engagement Finding the intersects Indirect approaches	Including diverse interests Coming together in a cohesive way	Making it and keeping it relevant Different levels – from the broader issue to something specific	Investing in and cultivating relationships – introducing intangible and emotional elements Degrees of action – interacting; deliberation, and active participation
Managing opposing and converging forces of identity and interests	Remain open – avoid early closure Persistence Context matters – there is no one size fits all	Willing to explore alternatives and being receptive to new ideas Different approaches – from experimenting and design to innovation	Being adaptable Awareness – thinking differently Learning Letting go	Risk management Avoidance of a problem or an incentive to engage and do the right thing Risk mitigation is a control mechanism and a positive approach to managing negative consequences	Managing rather than resolving tensions – Other areas of tension: relational issues and market dynamics
Creating a distinct and stable identity	Name - a distinct collective identity for the partnership	Coherent narrative – constructed collaboratively			

Source: Author's compilation.

Risk management is introduced as both an example and an extension of this dimension and includes the introduction of common business language. Risk management may be an avoidance of a problem or an incentive to engage, drive change and do the right thing. Risk mitigation is a tool supporting the process of risk management.

### 6.9.3 Practices 3: Creating a distinct and stable identity

Name, narrative and identity are interrelated and this is already highlighted by Koschmann *et al.* (2012), who discussed these elements in relation to the organisation-as-actor view that they adopted to collaboration in which they conceptualised a cross-sector partnership as “an authoritative text” and a distinct organisational form. This element is specifically described by Koschmann *et al.* as creating a distinct and stable identity so that while the narrative may provide a distinct identity, the name provides a distinct identity and stability as an “agreed upon existence and assumed internal unity”.

This discussion draws from the participant experiences as noted below, but also draws on the unique strategic narratives already presented in Paragraph 6.6 and as detailed in Appendix O, where further participant quotations are provided. In doing so, these quotations are not repeated and so in this section, the presentation deviates somewhat from the style adopted elsewhere so that there may appear to be fewer participant quotations. This is not the case and the descriptions provided here are all drawn from the fieldwork material.

Each of the organisations directly involved in this research have a collective identity that is distinguishable by name. WWF, ISSF, MSC, TSSH and Woolworths are used as the main examples and are considered in relation to name, narrative and distinct identity. Each of these has different characteristics, over and above the fact that three are NPOs, all with international affiliations, one is a family owned business and one is a South African listed company.

### **6.9.3.1 Partnership as a separate identity**

As already noted in the literature review at Paragraph 3.23.5, Koschmann (2013) explored the nature of collective identity and Koschmann *et al.* (2012) highlighted the importance of “creating a recognisable and distinct identity as a partnership” and so it is not about individual cognition and a collective identity but it is an identity related to the partnership activities.

In this section, it is not possible to explore this conceptualisation of identity because there is no single partnership that can be identified as a separate actor and collective identity. There is only evidence of one example of a partnership structure and that is a contractual partnership between WWF and Woolworths (KT 1:4), which is referred to as an “**overall corporate relationship**”. It therefore has the formality of a contract but there is no evidence that a collective identity could be attributed to it by means of a name and narrative as conceptualised by Koschmann *et al.*

It appears that this is an area of difference with the framework as described by Koschmann *et al.* in that there is no evidence in this multi-stakeholder setting of a partnership as a separate actor with a name. This multi-stakeholder context differs from the concept of a cross-sector partnership as an authoritative text as conceived by Koschmann *et al.* This does not mean that such an actor or entity could not exist in a multi-stakeholder context, only that it is not evident in this particular setting. This is a significant difference between the evidence from this research and framework of XSP value as presented by Koschmann *et al.* and the theoretical implications of this can only be considered by means of a discussion with the extant literature. This will be done in the next chapter.

However, there is evidence of other forms of collective identity related to collaborative activities and this suggests alternative ways that narrative, name and identity may be related. Consequently, the balance of the findings on identity, will be presented but without further comment of how the evidence compares with the existing theoretical framework. That discussion will be deferred to the next chapter.

Given the deferral of the discussion on the theoretical concept of identity, the balance of the analysis here focuses on other aspects of the framework including name, narrative, values, roles and emotional elements.

### **6.9.3.2 Name and collective identity**

There are several examples of collective identity in relation to the partner organisations and these can be distinguished by name, whether the name relates to an entity or actor such as an organisation (Woolworths, WWF, MSC, TSSH and ISSF) or to a brand (Woolworths, GBJ, WWF, WWF-SASSI, MSC). In this research setting, as already noted, these various partner organisations work collaboratively and are cooriented towards the issue of sustainable seafood.

There is evidence in the fieldwork material of collective identity in relation to a material agent or object with a distinct name, such as the MSC ecolabel. The findings are discussed under CCO concepts in Paragraph 6.13 below. Essentially it means that human attributes and actions are given to nonhuman or material objects so that the ecolabel can be promoted or marketed (NN 1:9); the ecolabel is the mark of MSC certification and communicates or represents the MSC sustainability standard. As an object the ecolabel 'does things' and performs functions and in this way it is considered to be an actor or active agent in the collaborative activities related to sustainable seafood, indeed it is a key 'player' in the market dynamics.

### **6.9.3.3 Narrative and collective identity**

There are narratives related to the various organisational entities and brands noted above and these are discussed elsewhere as already noted.

There are also narratives related to sustainable seafood and examples are noted below.

Other strong narratives that imply a separate identity include the line fishery database that is unique to South Africa, the DNA database of South African fish species, the tuna work plan to manage the complexity of the tuna supply chain and small-scale fisheries improvement programmes. These narratives are separately identifiable and there is collaborative activity related to each. This is known from the descriptions provided by the participants, which are included at Appendix O. They are not separate organisational entities. Some of them are identifiable objects such as the database or the work plan, but the narrative related to the object itself suggests that the identity of the database or the work plan goes beyond the physical object and includes the processes that use or are connected to the object.

In the case of two of these, the narratives are noted in Paragraph 6.6 under unique narratives; in the case of the tuna work plan, there are other references to this narrative within this chapter.

The narrative of small-scale fisheries is a focus area for improvement and is mainly in developing countries.

NN (2:4) explained that **“there’s now a mindset shift towards more work with small scale [fisheries]”**. TL (2:5) said that **“everybody talks about small scale fishing – small scale fisheries policy – so that was a big focus of the department – and there’s a lot of stakeholder engagement”**.

ISSF displays an interesting combination of narratives related to the organisation that is ISF and the broader network that is connected to ISSF. As noted above, ISSF is an organisational entity, but only at its core. ISSF is described as a **“network of collaborations”** (ND 2:6); it is multi-dimensional and what is known as ISSF (what may be called its identity) spans a far wider community than the core organisational entity. This appears to be because the narrative of sustainable tuna fisheries, which is the issue that ISSF represents, extends beyond ISSF as an organisation and includes other organisations and activities. In addition, the ISSF identity is connected with the name and the narrative and yet it is not a brand. In this case, the narrative is not the story of ISSF itself, but rather it is the narrative of tuna sustainability. The various collaborative activities support the issue of tuna sustainability and they are co-oriented towards this common interest. This co-orientation means that the collaborative activities are directed towards tuna sustainability and may be said to identify with the narrative of sustainable tuna.

#### **6.9.3.4 Identity and values**

In addition to name and narrative, identity is also evident in the way participants attribute values to the collective. The importance of credibility is highlighted by several participants.

First in relation to specific organisations or entities, KT (1:4 and 2:6) described WWF as **“a credible source of information”** and **“if you use a credible third party or partner to help endorse your brand or to help drive innovation”** then **“that can really bolster your organisational strength”**. ND (1:10) described the association with WWF as hugely important because of the credibility of WWF in the marketplace.

Credibility may also apply to a process or a programme.

HD (2: 2) explained the focus towards **“credible time bound improvement projects”** and said that the word credible **“is very powerful in this”**. HD (2:3) explained that MSC certification sets the standard for improvement because it is regarded as **“the highest benchmark for credible certification and ecolabelling”**. KT (1:5 and 1:6) explained the need to work with MSC and WWF **“to make sure that we also have credibility in what we’re communicating”** and **“it was very clear that we needed their involvement and support in giving credibility to the process”**.

In the supply chain for sustainable seafood, credibility involves traceability (HT 2: 8). Traceability is the basis of the MSC chain of custody certification and confirms that the fish is from sustainable sources (NN 1: 6 to 1:9). The MSC certification is the international standard that is recognised as credible and transparent. Traceability was also highlighted by HD (1:5) as a **“prerequisite”** for supplying product to Woolworths.

Participants also referred to the importance of organisational values and ethics in sustainability and in working together in partnerships. These were expressed in a way that indicates that values are an important part of what the organisation stands for and in making things work. This indicates the value of organisational values where these are the same, similar to or common with the values of partner organisations. It should be noted that the participants did not, however, speak of shared values.

NC (1:4) noted that ***“we’ve identified sustainability as one of our key pillars within Woolworths”***. UN (1:8) explained the importance of being a values-led business and how ***“Woolworths has instilled those values deeply in the business”***. Values are important in working with partners and UN (1:8) contended that ***“if the values aren’t the same you can’t collaborate”***. In establishing a relationship with WWF, UN explained that ***“common values were at work”***. In another context, HT (1:4 and 1:15) talked about ***“an ethic in the company that runs deep”*** that is about sustainability, doing business in a responsible and ethical manner and doing it the right way. NN (1:10) said that the relationship with Woolworths works well because ***“we have very similar ideals”*** and ***“what we do fits very well with their vision”***. ED (2:5) asserted that ***“we stand for authenticity and integrity [and] sustainability is a natural spin off of that”***.

Expressed differently, ND (1:12) explained that engaging with suppliers is part of the DNA of Woolworths and is ***“very aligned with their responsible sourcing and sustainability improvement objectives”***. Talking about working together with Woolworths on improving tuna sustainability, ND (2:11) said that ***“we’re very fortunate because of the DNA of Woolworths [which] is also a big part of making it work”***. ***“They’ve engaged and developed partnerships and built relationships to improve things over time – based on rigorous concrete step-wise improvement and application of responsible practices and procurement requirements”***.

#### ***6.9.3.5 Identity as collective roles***

In addition to name and narrative, collective identity is also evident in the way participants described the role of an organisation as a collective and how that role is related to the issue of sustainable seafood. Examples of some of the roles that were described are provided here, with a focus on collective roles that are collaborative. Since this research did not include any partnerships that can be described as separate entities, there are no examples where partnership activities are attributed with a role. The roles described here vary from management in the case of ISSF and advocacy in the case of Woolworths. They work with other organisations to fulfil these roles. TSSH has multiple roles including educating, facilitating, advising and technology transfer, which all involve working with others and this is in addition to the core business of fish farming and seafood importing.

Describing the role of ISSF:

ND (1:6) explained that ISSF is ***“not a consumer facing organisation – we aren’t an ecolabel – we’re actually working in the same space of tuna improvement on the supply chain”*** but ***“the management side of things at a global level and regional level”***.

Describing the role of TSSH:

HT described the leading role of TSSH and recognises that the business operates in ***“a tiny niche market”*** and yet ***“we play a very close and leading role with our farms in terms of the supply – in terms of technology transfer”*** in respect to the locally and sustainably farmed trout (HT 1:9). The business also took a leading role in the supply chain by facilitating the MSC chain of custody certification for imported product (HT 1:24), another niche area. They are also playing a leading role in experimenting with other species of farmed fish, such as salmon (HT 2:15). Other roles attributed to the business include facilitation (HT2:8), responsibility and sustainability (HT1:4) as well as to educate and advise (HT 1:9).

HT(2:14) also talked about the role of aquaculture, or fish farming, and explains that as a food source it ***“is a major industry that is going to globally still play such a massive role”*** and ***“it’s the fastest growing food business”***.

Advocacy is a role assumed by Woolworths in the management of the tuna supply chain.

HD (2:15) said that ***“we’ll support advocacy to drive change”***.

### ***6.9.3.6 Emotional elements***

Related to values, but with a distinct affective emphasis, some participants expressed emotional elements that are connected to identity. While the emotions were held at an individual level, the emotions were expressed either towards a collective activity or entity or used to describe how someone identifies personally with the activities of the collective. Descriptions such as inspiring, passionate, excitement and pride were mentioned.

The emotional elements appear to reflect how the issue of sustainable seafood connects at an individual level so that people ***“feel invested”*** (KC 1:11), passionate (KT 2:13) or inspired (KC 1:17). An example of the emotional expression of collective identity was given by KC (1:12 and 1:7), who says that at WWF-SASSI, it is intended ***“that the message is brought across in a way that isn’t heavy and is much more inspirational”*** and that the work is ***“more inspirational and creative and innovation and inspiring”***. KC (2:3 and 2:12) made a distinction between the WWF values which are pragmatic, science based and knowledgeable but explained that SASSI goes beyond that and ***“we are inspiring and empowering”*** and ***“the inspirational side of things”*** is ***“integral to what SASSI is about”***. KC (1:11) also talked about working with people where ***“we’re both invested”*** and ***“it feels like both parties are coming to the table”***.

Explaining a key contract that the business was awarded, ED (2: 4) asserted that **“we pride ourselves on the fact that we produce accurate results”**. Explaining what a marketing campaign for sustainability entails, NB (2:2 and 2:17) said **“when we start an amazing initiative like sustainable fishing as an example – I have to gear up excitement – amongst everybody else who will help me make it happen”** and you have **“to get people on board – get them excited – keep them motivated – get them on the same page”**.

At a personal level, KC (1:17) said **“it blows my mind on a daily basis – I’m constantly inspired by the work that we do and what I’m privileged to be involved with”**. Talking about measuring progress, KT (2:13) said that **“we’re quite passionate about it as a team”** and **“you have to play multiple roles in the process of trying to achieve the targets”**. UN (1:15) said **“I’m a coordinator with passion”**. Talking about what it means personally, ED (1:24) said **“my heart tells me I should go into the fisheries because that’s where I can make a difference”**.

### **6.9.3.7 Commentary and initial insights on creating a distinct identity**

There is no evidence in the findings of the partnership activities having a separate name or identity and this is noted as a key difference from the existing framework. Identity as described in the framework can be attributed to partner organisation or to brands but not to the partnership activities as a whole. This appears to be a key point of difference with the existing framework and is highlighted for further discussion in the following chapters.

Related to this point, since there is no partnership entity, the narratives in the findings are either related to the partner organisation, its brand or related to sustainable seafood. The narratives about sustainable seafood range from the general messaging about why it is important (as told in the joint marketing campaign) or to specific situations such as the narrative of the line fishery or small scale fisheries or the tuna supply chain.

These differences are highlighted in the Table 6.7 below and underlined for emphasis.

There is evidence in the findings of other factors that relate to the collaborative activities, such as values, roles and emotional elements. Values are closely related to the identity at an organisational level, but participants make the point that partners need to have the same or similar values for collaboration to work well.

The roles of partner organisations are described in various ways in relation to sustainable seafood. In these examples, roles are used to describe what an organisation stands for and what it does; and appear to be another way of describing identity.

Emotional elements are related to values but introduce another layer of meaning. They appear to show how individuals identify with the collaborative activities.

### 6.9.3.8 Summary: Creating a distinct and stable identity

As already noted, the evidence presented here differs at a conceptual level with the framework of XSP value as defined by Koschmann *et al.* Further discussion is deferred to the next chapter so that reference may be made to the literature in order to consider the conceptual implications of this difference.

The evidence from the fieldwork, as presented by the participants, is now included in the summary table which is shown below in Table 6.7 in the section summary.

### 6.9.4 Summary of dimension: Increasing value potential

Table 6.7 now summarises the various areas of similarity and difference and adjustments made and accordingly it summarises the communicative practices supporting the dimension of increasing value potential.

Two particular areas are underlined as evidence of these dimensions **not being found** in the fieldwork material. In the first instance, no distinct and separate partnership identity exists for sustainable seafood. Related to this, there is no partnership narrative but there is evidence of narratives related to the issue of sustainable seafood.

Each of the communicative practices supporting the dimension of increasing value has now been discussed, namely increasing meaningful participation, managing opposing and converging forces and creating a distinct and stable identity. The starting point at Table 6.6 has now been updated with the additional input from the evidence presented in each of the sections.

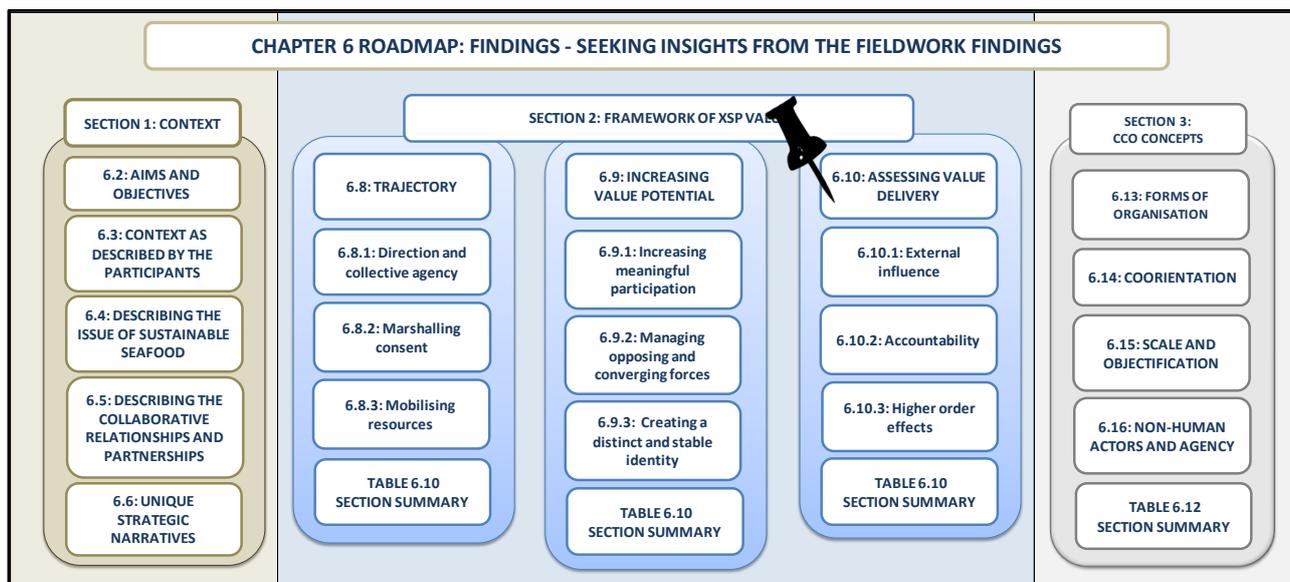
**Table 6.7: Participant perspectives of XSP value: Increasing value potential – Extended**

COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICES: INCREASING VALUE POTENTIAL					
Increasing meaningful participation	Open and transparent communication at different levels	Different ways of interacting A process of engagement Finding the intersects Indirect approaches	Including diverse interests Coming together in a cohesive way	Making it and keeping it relevant Different levels – from the broader issue to something specific	Investing in and cultivating relationships – introducing intangible and emotional elements Degrees of action – interacting; deliberation, and active participation
Managing opposing and converging forces of identity and interests	Remain open – avoid early closure Persistence Context matters – there is no one size fits all	Willing to explore alternatives and being receptive to new ideas Different approaches – from experimenting and design to innovation	Being adaptable Awareness – thinking differently Learning Letting go	Risk management Avoidance of a problem or an incentive to engage and do the right thing Risk mitigation is a control mechanism and a positive approach to managing negative consequences	Managing rather than resolving tensions – Other areas of tension: relational issues and market dynamics
Creating a distinct and stable identity	Name - a distinct collective identity for the partnership <b>THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF A SEPARATE IDENTITY</b>	Coherent narrative – constructed collaboratively <b>THERE ARE NARRATIVES ABOUT SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD BUT NOT ABOUT A SEPARATE PARTNERSHIP ENTITY</b>	Organisational values- similar, the same or common but not shared Credibility and traceability – essential requirements when working with third parties in the supply chain for sustainable product	Collective roles – in relation to the issue of sustainable seafood	Emotional elements – how individuals identify with the collaborative activities

Source: Author's compilation.

## 6.10 FINDINGS SECTION 2: ASSESSING VALUE DELIVERY

The dimension of increasing value potential has now been completed and the discussion moves to the next dimension of assessing value delivery and the various elements related to assessing value delivery.



**Figure 6.1: Chapter 6 Roadmap**

Source: Author’s compilation.

A summary of the main elements in this dimension is provided in Table 6.8 below.

**Table 6.8: Participant perspectives of XSP value: Assessing value delivery**

COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICES: ASSESING VALUE DELIVERY					
<b>External Influence</b> [Influence means to appropriate, replicate or reproduce]	Influence on public perceptions	Influence on stakeholders			
<b>Accountability</b>	Reporting to stakeholders	Evidence to support claims of value delivery			
<b>Higher order effects</b>	Learning that extends into the community	Changes in practices and perceptions	Other effects: • New partnerships • New norms and discourse • Reducing conflict		

Source: Author’s compilation.

The table sets out the communicative practices in the framework of XSP value, as they relate to the dimension assessing value delivery. Note that the table deliberately leaves space to allow for additional practices to be incorporated. An updated table is presented at the end of the discussion at Table 6.9 in Paragraph 6.10.4.

Value delivery concerns the assessment of the outcomes of the XSP interactions and how these deliver value to stakeholders and to a broader audience. The framework of XSP identifies three

elements, which are external influences, accountability and higher-order effects. These are all communicative practices so it is the process of assessing and accounting for value delivery that is being considered here, rather than simply the stated outcome. Each of these elements is discussed below based on the evidence from the fieldwork interviews.

### **6.10.1 Practices 1: External influence**

The framework of XSP value highlights two practices that focus on assessing external influence as a means to assess value delivery. As described by Koschmann *et al.* (2012), the first considers public perceptions that may be influenced by activities that extend beyond reputation and that may be considered within the scope of an extended form of corporate citizenship. The second considers how stakeholders in the partner organisations may be influenced. These practices and other evidence of external influence that is apparent in the interview material are now discussed.

At this point it is noted that the term external suggests a boundary between what is within the partnership activities and what may be outside the partnership. This appears to be a potential point of difference between the current framework of XSP value and this research setting. This may arise from the same difference as already noted in the paragraph above on identity. If a separate identity is assumed, then a boundary between internal and external may make sense. However, whether this applies in the multi-stakeholder context of this research requires further discussion with the extant literature and this will be included in the next chapter. Here, it is the descriptions from the fieldwork material that are presented as they are related in this research context.

#### ***6.10.1.1 Influence as appropriation and replication***

Influence as used in the framework of XSP value, indicates that something has been appropriated or reproduced by an external stakeholder (Koschmann *et al.*, 2012). Influence is not used in a more common sense of having power, control or authority. Influence in this sense is action oriented so that an idea or an action that is appropriated is then repeated or replicated.

At a general level, an example was provided by KT (2:8), who explained that the partnership approach with WWF “***who’ve got a clear contract – and agreement in terms of what the issues [we] are focusing on – what each person’s role is – all of that - has been a good lesson and model for some of the more recent partnerships we’ve got***”. In a separate example, ND (2:6) expressed the view that “***there is an interest in looking at ISSF as a model beyond***” and asked: “***could we approach other challenges – seafood sustainability challenges with the same kind of approach?***”

Elsewhere, HT (2:15) talked about farming fresh water tilapia as a “***model that will be replicated throughout Africa over the next 20 years***” and “***there will be no doubt that production of tilapia in Africa will explode in the next 20 years***” as “***the demand in Africa alone is there***”.

The fish species DNA testing has been successfully replicated and ED (1:25 and 1:18) explained that ***“I have this great model to work with”***. It ***“forms the basis of everything I do now – and the model that they use for – whether it be fisheries or bush meat or whatever the case is”***.

### ***6.10.1.2 Influence on the public***

Influence, in the sense of appropriation, may be indicated through a change in public perceptions or more directly in public actions. Public perceptions are assumed to include consumers who may individually be considered as stakeholders where they are a customer, but in a more general sense, consumers are the public.

An example of public influence was offered by several participants who talked about the public announcement by Woolworths of their seafood commitments. As already noted, while there are contractual requirements to set and publish targets, the nature and extent of the targets is a voluntary commitment. Indeed the contract with WWF, which is directed towards sustainability, and includes seafood sustainability, was entered into voluntarily. Therefore, this example has both contractual and voluntary elements but the choice to commit to sustainability targets in this way was essentially voluntary. Consequently, the act of setting and publically announcing the targets could be seen as an action going beyond building reputation and aimed at a broader corporate responsibility. Further, to go beyond intentions and demonstrate an outcome, there needs to be evidence of the actions taken beyond the public announcement.

DL (1:8) explained that because ***“one of our requirements is for them to make a public recognition of firm seafood sustainability targets - they have the potential to influence the commercial aspect of their business”***. Further, ***“it’s not just a decision to support something – it’s a decision to transform – to change”***.

This indicates that it is the actions beyond the commitment that reflect the level of influence.

The process of influence involves the consumers, the retailer and the fishing industry. The outcome, and therefore the value delivery, is a change in practices.

KC (2:4) explained that it is the consumers who are ***“empowered to hold our retailer partners accountable to very clear commitments that they put out to seafood sustainability”*** and in turn if ***“retailers are shifted in terms of their practices – we believe they will then motivate the fishing industry to change their production practices”***.

The public commitments are described as a milestone and this reflects an action orientation, which can be measured and progress can be publically reported.

KT (2:10 and 1:6) said that the commitments can be tracked on a regular basis and ***“[we can] now work towards achieving those - and being able to communicate that as we go along”***.

NC (2:4 and 2:9) said that ***“there will be a lot of work for us to do”*** and explained that the commitments mark a different phase in which all the building blocks are in place. So, ***“now we will be measuring things”*** and ***“we can literally track the movement now year on year”*** and communicate the improvements.

HD (2:2) described how the process of developing a work plan, to support a credible improvement plan for tuna, was pursued in order to comply with the seafood commitments. As discussed elsewhere, this plan involves all the key stakeholders in the Woolworths supply chain for sourcing tuna and involves specific, measurable action steps. The work plan demonstrates that action has been taken to implement the public commitments.

In a separate, but related, example, consumer awareness in the market has influence.

According to NN (2:9), awareness helps supply chain companies with ***“expanding their demand for MSC products”*** so that ***“we can grow awareness in South Africa that will eventually overflow into other African countries – because the retailers are starting to spread their influence into the rest of Africa”***.

The retail process in South Africa is therefore expected to be replicated elsewhere in Africa so that South African retailers will be influencing the sale of sustainable product in other countries.

### ***6.10.1.3 Influence on stakeholders***

Stakeholders here include the partner organisations as well as other parties with an interest in the partnership activities. Based on the definition above, evidence that stakeholders had been influenced would be that they were prepared to repeat an activity or that they would extend existing activities further or that new stakeholders joined the action. Examples are provided below.

KT (1:9) provided an example of the joint marketing campaign with MSC and concluded that ***“they were very happy with the outcomes as well so it helped to strengthen our relationship to the point where they did want to repeat the process”***.

The success of the project also had other outcomes and KT (1:10) explained the success with MSC also impacted the relationship with WWF in that ***“it helped to actually push the WWF partnership that we wanted as well going forward”***.

Another example is where solutions that are scalable or replicable are discussed in relation to partnerships more generally as they support sustainability initiatives and not only sustainable seafood.

KT (2:5 and 2:6) said that ***“so many of the key issues we’re working with are way beyond the capability of a single organisation to deal with so we do need our suppliers or our customers or NGOs or government – other partners – other corporates”***.

Further, this requires an understanding of ***“where people can bring their skills together”***.

This indicates the importance of using partnerships as a means to influence other stakeholders and the need for understanding.

Economies of scale can be achieved.

DL (2:3) took this further and explained why they work with retailers and suppliers where there are economies of scale **“because that’s where we can create a vacuum where the rest of the industry can move into - so we try and focus on the main retailers in South Africa and some of the important supply chain components”**. According to DL, this approach **“really creates the pathway to sustainability for the source fisheries and aquaculture operations”** which involves an assessment process that gives **“a very clear indication of where improvement is needed – where the impact is and what’s needed to be done”**.

The process or pathway is therefore oriented towards change in two ways. First, it is a process established with the main retailers that can be copied by others. Second, the process involves an assessment that identifies areas for improvement that can then be addressed.

Influence as replication is described as leading by example.

The influence of the MSC chain of custody process and the leading role of TSSH was related by HT (1:24), who explained **“we’re very proud of the fact that we managed” to get the seafood traders “on board and get them MSC approved”**. **“We had to persuade those guys” and so “we first had to get our factory audited” and then “they all suddenly were doing it”** and other companies too, **“they’ve copied us”**. This example of replication indicates that influence is exercised through leading by example and HT concluded that **“we played a leading role”**.

The MSC standard has influence on fisheries that are not yet certified.

Highlighting another example, NN (2:16) looked at how change happens when the MSC standard is used to track fisheries improvement and **“we have a theory of change that looks pre-MSC – how we’re dragging those other fisheries up – even if they’re not there yet”**. NN (2:7) described the MSC standard as **“a tool that NGOs can use to benchmark the fisheries that they’re working with” and “use the assessment as a template for improvements”**. HD (2:15) explained that the improvement happens because the plan does not target only specific vessels that are already using sustainable practices but **“we actually want to drive change – we want those guys that have not been on this journey to join us with this”**.

The standards and improvement programmes aim to encourage new participants to join the drive towards more sustainable practices.

A more progressive approach is to adopt a policy and to encourage change or what HD (2:11) called **“supporting advocacy”**. This would involve direct communication with the partner who is not compliant with the recommended ISSF practices and ISSF resolutions and giving specific feedback

on the steps that need to be taken to support sustainable practices. This is indeed influence on stakeholders that involves the replication of established and agreed practice standards.

There is evidence that the assessment process to establish a procurement list of seafood species in the supply chain delivered value in different ways.

One of these was described by KT (2:10) as an *“interim milestone”* where one of the internal teams *“found a more sustainable sourcing strategy or brought a supplier on board or worked with the supplier to improve the sourcing strategy”*.

This example indicates that there was a direct influence on other stakeholders, the suppliers. In addition, this suggests value delivery related to the improved sourcing strategy, specifically one that is more sustainable.

Another interesting example of appropriation was noted by NB (2:9), who described how the campaigns for marketing sustainable seafood are now being used as a benchmark or guide internally for other areas of the business to raise awareness about sustainability.

Commenting on the success of the seafood campaign, NB said that *“they need to replicate that in the clothing space”*.

#### **6.10.1.4 Market influence on stakeholders and the public**

The market dynamics internationally for sustainable seafood was discussed by several participants although it was given various names such as the egg timer (UN 2:13), the martini glass theory of change (KC 1:10), or simply a theory of change (DL 2:14). It is an approach that uses market mechanisms (NN 1:2) and it has already been described in Paragraph 2.4 in Chapter 2.

As a so-called theory of change it identifies all the parties in the supply chain for sustainable seafood (or indeed any food commodity), including consumers, retailers and suppliers and primary producers. The model therefore includes multiple stakeholders in the supply chain and the broader public and describes the market dynamics and interactions between the various parties.

According to NN (1:2), it is retailers that drive consumer purchasing behaviour; it is the retailers raising the awareness of environmental conscious choices and that then drives the consumer so that the retailer is the *“fulcrum position”* (KC (1:4).

When retailers and suppliers *“shift their behaviour - that will influence fisheries to change their practices - and then will ultimately result in positive change on the water”* (KC 1:4).

As already noted, in South Africa the approach of working with consumers is different. There is evidence of a different model of change that is directed at consumers (the public) so that public opinion then drives the private sector stakeholders. The additional influence on other NGOs is a further layer of influence in this case.

KC (1:4 and 1:10) explained how WWF-SASSI moves “**consumers from a point of just basic awareness of a challenge to fundamentally shifting their behaviour**” to drive the retailers. It “**is recognised within the network as being different and working and now there are other developing world WWFs that want to start up a consumer programme**”.

In another example of market influence, ISSF has a model of change that focuses on influencing policy and the market.

ND (2:3) explained that one of the three pillars of the ISSF strategy is “**about exercising policy and market influence**”. It is directed at multiple stakeholders using market mechanisms in the supply chain. ND (1:3 and 1:4) described how retailers can “**contribute to the improvement of tuna sustainability – to make responsible choices and use their market influence - to exercise their market influence to engage with their supply chain to improve**”. However, this depends on “**the market and the level of strategic commitment and the level of awareness and the level of competitive activity in this space – and the level of environmental activism in this space**”.

The MSC builds on the basic model of market dynamics so that the process that permits the use of the MSC ecolabel on certified products creates product differentiation.

“**Essentially what the MSC is at the heart is a marketing tool**” (NN 1:7) and “**the consumer will preferentially procure**” products with the ecolabel.

Influence through the supply chain can be geographically spread and NN (2:9) noted that “**the retailers are starting to spread their influence into the rest of Africa**” and “**we’re also trying to match local exporters up to foreign markets**”. Further, that “**there is an indication that the MSC is starting to have influence in those [areas] where it’s not purely just driven by developed world markets**” (NN 2:17).

The influence in this case is not just the retailer and the consumer, there is also the impact of the ecolabel and what it represents. As an object, the ecolabel plays a role in the market. It is therefore an object with agency and this is discussed further in a subsequent paragraph under CCO concepts.

These various illustrations indicate that the various stakeholders in the supply chain for sustainable seafood have influence with a wide constituency, not just sectorally but also geographically.

#### **6.10.1.5 Making a difference**

At a more general level, change may be expressed as ‘making a difference’. As previously noted, Koschmann *et al.* (2012) convey the meaning of this phrase as “the capacity to act, to exhibit agency, or to otherwise ‘make a difference’ for the participants involved, their member organisations, and the broader communities and problem domains in which XSPs exist”. While one could argue that this point may be positioned under the discussion on trajectory, these examples all suggest that making a difference is an outcome or something already delivered not

only the direction of ongoing movement. It is a sentiment that is expressed by a number of the participants, who describe how sustainable seafood initiatives are influencing stakeholders and a wider community.

KT (1:13) explained that it's ***"knowing that we're making a difference in terms of how we manage quite a scarce resource is probably the best and biggest thing for me" and "putting pressure on the rest of the industry as well to keep improving" and "creating broader change"***. KC (1:17) described what it means in various ways and said ***"I feel we're making a difference – and it's not just the big blue sky difference that we're making – I feel like we're making differences in the small incremental things like the people that we get to engage with – and at the same time I'm changing"***. EC (1:4) commented on the work that SASSI is doing and said ***"they've done awesome – great work in the industry and you can really start to see the difference" and "it does look a lot better which is encouraging"***. At a more personal level, ED (1:24) declared that ***"I should go into the fisheries because that's where I can make a difference"*** and have an influence conservation through the work on the authentication of species.

Describing the importance of communicating the value of MSC and what it does, NN (2:19 and 2:20) recognised the need ***"to make it very clear what our position is – what our role is and that we are actually starting to make a difference" and "to be very clear on what the strengths of the MSC are" because "it's got to be credible"***.

NN explained that this requires communicating through scientific publications because scientific support will lead to social support and continued market support, which are required for the MSC certification process to be effective. This example is interesting as it indicates the circularity of the process of influence and the interconnectedness of the organisation with its stakeholders and social community. The model of change aims to influence stakeholders and consumers and in turn, the continued support of the market is needed to maintain that influence.

The potential to influence even a complex industry is highlighted by HD (2:9) who stated that ***"it's such a complex industry and it's such a huge fishery – it is a bit difficult to manage – but I think this small difference that we make by committing to improvements on the water is where it should start and everything else will follow"***. There is recognition here that even a small difference can have influence and DL (1:11 and 1:12) explained how a producer in South East Asia was made aware of its responsibilities by a retailer in South Africa. It was ***"through this direct engagement ... that raised the relevance of them being an ISSF member which forced them to formulate for the first time a strategy and a work plan" and "it was incredible" that "we can influence the way tuna is fished half a world away"***.

This illustrates that influence is not limited by distance or size but can be felt by key stakeholders in other parts of the world, in this case the producer.

An extension to this is the influence on other retailers and HD provided the example of a Canadian retailer that is pursuing conversations with Woolworths.

HD (2:16) described the opportunity as a giant move where ***“two retailers out of different parts of the world can actually influence the one cannery which we’re working with to drive change all the way down onto the vessel level”***.

Individuals can make also a difference.

At a personal level, HD (2:17) concluded that ***“we can’t sit back and assume that people are doing what they are supposed to do – we actually need to drive it” and “I can make a difference therefore I will be part of this collaboration and I will drive change”***.

Again, this illustrates different levels of influence at an individual, an organisational and a stakeholder level, working together towards creating change for the issue of sustainable seafood.

#### ***6.10.1.6 Commentary and initial insights on external influence***

Influence as appropriation is an action-oriented concept and is illustrated from examples in the field texts. Influence is discussed at three levels, on the public, on stakeholders and more broadly having an influence on both, in terms of market influence.

Influence on the public is illustrated with the example of the public commitments to seafood sustainability and this explains that influence requires more than the commitments; influence involves the active process of progressing towards or implementing the commitments. A process of public communication of commitments is described followed by public reporting of progress, so that there is evidence of the action taken.

With stakeholders, influence is described in various ways including leading by example, establishing standards and advocacy. Persuasion is evident in each of these options and is also mentioned specifically as the means to achieve action.

Influence is also described as a process that is scalable and replicable, so that there are economies of scale and stakeholders working together can extend their capability beyond that of a single partner organisation. The process becomes a pathway that may be established by the dominant retailers and supply chain components that then guides others who follow.

Influence may be evident internally within a partner organisation, so that successful initiatives become a standard or benchmark for others to copy. In this case, the success of the sustainable seafood marketing campaign is seen as a guide for other sustainability initiatives in other areas.

The market dynamics and the influences on and by each of the components in the seafood supply chain are encompassed in a theory of change that is described by several participants. While it is a general model of market dynamics, it is used specifically to progress from creating awareness to driving change towards more responsible choices and sustainable practices. Of particular note is how the model has been adapted in South Africa and may now have an influence in other developing markets. So there are multiple ways in which influence may create positive outcomes.

Other areas that demonstrate external influence are discussed as making a difference. Making a difference is a more general way of expressing change and may refer to influence at different levels from a wider community, an industry level, an organisational level or an individual level. A small difference can have an influence and need not be limited by either distance or size.

### 6.10.1.7 Summary: External influence

From these insights, Table 6.8 may now be updated with areas of similarity and difference. The insights that may be considered as potential extensions relate to scalable solutions and how the dynamics of the market can be applied at different levels. Other extensions may relate to the multi-dimensional nature of the processes of influence from persuasion to changing behaviour; in different sectors and different geographies.

**Table 6.8(a): Participant perspectives of XSP value: Assessing value delivery**

	COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICES:		ASSESSING VALUE DELIVERY	
<b>External Influence</b> [Influence means to appropriate, replicate or reproduce]	Influence on public perceptions A process of public communication Action orientation Public reporting as evidence	Influence on stakeholders <b>Persuasion</b> – advocacy, leading by example, successes create standards or a benchmark for others to copy <b>Scaleable solutions</b> – creating a pathway for others to follow	<b>Market influence</b> – a model of change reaching multiple stakeholders and the wider public at the same time <b>Multiple ways for influence to create positive outcomes</b> (a) Different levels from awareness to changing behaviour (b) Different sectors and (c) different geographies	<b>Making a difference</b> Different levels of influence – big and small – personal and industry practices – local and global
<b>Accountability</b>	Reporting to stakeholders	Evidence to support claims of value delivery		
<b>Higher order effects</b>	Learning that extends into the community	Changes in practices and perceptions	Other effects: • New partnerships • New norms and discourse • Reducing conflict	

Source: Author's compilation.

## 6.10.2 Practices 2: Accountability

There are practices that provide evidence of accountability and these range from measurement and reporting to validation and verification. The experiences of participants are included in this section, particularly in response to the interview question on measuring what works well. The question was broadly stated and not all participants responded by describing measurement mechanisms and there was an interesting range of responses. The discussion starts with the more direct issues of reporting and measurement, which includes both specific, within a partner organisation) and more broadly, accountability to stakeholders and a wider audience. It then continues with consideration of other practices such as verification and validation that are directed more at a wider accountability related to credibility and traceability.

### 6.10.2.1 Measurement and reporting

The examples here show measurement as a means to communicate outcomes and report progress and this is one component of accountability.

Measurement of a collaborative initiative, the joint marketing campaign with MSC, included customer research before and after the campaign (KT 1:8 to 1:10), but also other clear measurables. The outcome “**showed quite a high growth in awareness**” as well as customer comprehension of the campaign. These may be described as higher-order effects and are discussed further below. There were also financial measures so that “**it was very successful with probably not a huge level of investment**”.

There is an extensive range of over 200 targets across the business on a variety of sustainability initiatives (KT 2:10). These are metrics that are tracked every six months and include percentage of product that meets target.

Many of the measures are tracked against a benchmark as a means of “**external validation**”. There is also the need for internal validation and KT explained that “**proper measurements of and management of energy and water and waste have been really key**” and a momentum builder for other activities such as seafood.

So within a specific partner organisation, measurement and management work together. Validation is a factor and involves both internal and external considerations.

Attention is also given to both compliance targets and meeting more challenging milestones and this balance is being questioned for the future.

KT (2:13 and 2:14) explained that measures have been used since 2007 and “**there’s a good level of integration**” so that now “**we’re fundamentally changing some of the ways that we operate**”.

The outcome of changing practices is also considered to be a higher-order effect. This example shows that accountability is not an end in itself, but it leads to something more.

According to DL (2:8), having a clear strategy and a good reporting structure are important so that you know “**what it is that you’d want to see change**” and are then able to identify the changes that would be needed. To be effective, “**the objectives that we’re looking to achieve at a global level are linked to the work that’s actually happening on the ground**” so that the work is directed in the right place and the measures are geared to assess the work that matters.

The emphasis here is on the changes in practice that are needed and then identifying the actions that can be employed to effect the required improvements.

DL (2:9 and 2:10) related the story of seabird mortality in the trawling industry and the impact on endangered and threatened seabird species, such as albatross. A new practice was identified to mitigate the impact using bird scaring lines and it was then necessary to train the fisherman. The key was to make the idea work in practice and so, initially at least, the measurable activity was the training, “**to make sure everyone attended**”. Thereafter, the focus shifted to measuring “**the change on the water**” and this was conducted as independent research (Maree, Wanless, Fairweather, Sullivan & Yates, 2014), which found a reduction of over 90% in annual mortality rates of seabird

species over a five year period. The broader accountability is mentioned here again in that ***“the important thing to understand is that all of this is based on sound science” and “a lot of our partners look to us to do that”***.

One of the key drivers in the model of change in the supply chain is that of consumer demand.

It is the consumers that are ***“mobilised and empowered to hold our retailer partners accountable to very clear commitments that they put out to seafood sustainability”*** (KC 2:4). The end goal is a shift in practices by the retailer and by the producers and by the fishing industry. The measurement used by WWF-SASSI is ***“to have 80% of our target audience aware of SASSI and utilising their purchasing pattern or behaviour to drive change through the seafood supply chain”*** (KC 2:5 and 2:6).

Measures may be intangible; others require very long timescales.

While there is a specific measure, KC admitted that ***“it’s all very intangible”*** and ***“we’re still learning”*** and while tangible measures have been used in the past, ***“we can’t use those in isolation”*** and the indicators also include qualitative aspects. There is a combination of tangible measures and other indicators but it remains difficult to ***“get a measure on whether it’s actually fundamentally shifting in terms of the way that people view the sea” and “how they make their choices in seafood”***. Linking the indicators to the end goal takes time and yet ***“people want results today”***. KC concluded that ***“we’ve seen positive signs” but “when it comes to science you need 20 years to be able to see whether a stock is recovering – probably 100 years”***.

ED (2:13 to 2:15) addressed measurement in relation to the provision of services but said it is difficult and ***“there is no concrete test you can do to see if you’re doing it right” and “there’s no real tangible thing that you can do”***. While results can be checked for accuracy, ***“the measure that we use – is [whether] the client is satisfied with our service”***. ***“I’d normally ask whoever I’m dealing with for feedback – but it’s all communication based so I would phone” and ask “were you happy”***.

These examples make several points about measurement; that there are both tangible and intangible indicators; that linking the indicators to the end goal is difficult; that it is a learning process, and it takes time to determine results scientifically. There is a need to combine specific measurements with other indicators. More specifically, in the case above, the assessment of satisfaction is achieved through communication. Feedback in this way would also suggest openness and transparency as mentioned above at Paragraph 6.9.1.1.

Examples of measures that combine qualitative and quantitative elements were provided by NB and these may be related to specific customer campaigns (NB 1:8;1:9 and 2:10). In this case, measurement informs future action. The internal accountability is reinforced through individual, team and business unit scorecards (NB 2:11).

NB described mechanisms such as “**research focus groups done in terms of pre and post the campaign**”. There is also wider half-yearly research on sustainability which measures “**whether the work we’re doing over a period of time is working or not**”. The research would be analysed to “**give constructive feedback which will guide us going forward**”.

On the quantitative side, “**it’s about sales – so the ROF<sup>2</sup> – we always measure that**”.

NC (2:9 and 2:10) said that for sustainable seafood, formal measurement is quite a new experience, and the various tasks that were set internally, such as getting agreement on a seafood policy, setting up the seafood workgroups and other internal structures, were an initial phase of getting “**the building blocks**” in place.

NC described the public commitments as a different phase where improvements can be tracked by species and “**we can actually formally track it now and that is gonna be publically communicated**”.

This conveys the sense that the public commitments have initiated a new level of measurement and tracking but also a new level of reporting, which will be broader as well as specific. It is the public scrutiny that is a new experience.

UN (2: 14 and 2:15) explained how measurement at a product level is made possible by defining and tracking product attributes or characteristics specifically for sustainability.

UN said that “**by 2020 every product will have one sustainability attribute**” and these are defined and agreed collaboratively. Attributes could relate to the sourcing, the production or the packaging of the product and are used in performance scorecards. UN (2:12) said “**it’s been a good driver so far and they do end up driving the right behaviour at a specific target level**”.

Beyond the measures that are formally reported internally, NB highlighted another factor that gives evidence of intangible factors at a broader level.

NB (2:13 and 2:14) called this “**talkability – whether it’s within Woolworths**” or from others. It means “**internal people talking about it and saying – hey this is an amazing campaign – well done**” but also feedback from suppliers, from strategic partners such as MSC and WWF-SASSI, and other key stakeholders in the industry.

On social media, the sustainable seafood campaign went viral.

These examples show that there are communicative practices that may be used as measures or indicators and they also suggest that the outcomes have influence with specific or broader audiences.

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<sup>2</sup> ROI is Return on Investment.

### **6.10.2.2 Verification and validation: Credibility and traceability**

The practices here are described as verification and validation and include processes such as auditing, review and assessment. The outcome of these practices is towards claiming that activities are credible, processes are traceable or have integrity. This is another form of accountability.

The process of making the public commitments is directed toward a wider audience, and it also had another outcome.

KT (1:11) concluded that the process of establishing the targets ***“was a very successful process and a good example of how we work together with partners like WWF-SASSI and what value they bring to us”***. It provided ***“a third party view on our own supply chain which was important”***.

This suggests that the outcome of the process preceding the commitments was to establish accountability internally. Not only did this create a detailed procurement list for all seafood species in the supply chain, but the list was verified at the same time through the involvement of WWF-SASSI so that the baseline data was established and verified, giving further weight to the standard of accountability.

Verification is important in the tuna supply chain.

Verification is built into the work plan for tuna and HD (2:9) explained that ***“we need to verify the process by doing traceability studies and independent audits at vessel level and at the canneries because our part of the process is basically for due diligence”***. This verification process is ***“where we ensure that we as the retailers and importers will do our part to drive change”***. ***“In our process traceability is key”*** and strengthens credibility. ND (1:12) explained how this approach differs from a separate ***“bolt-on” audit because it is very practical, it is science based and “very aligned with their responsible sourcing and sustainability improvement objectives”***.

The credibility of the process is affirmed independently so that the work plan ***“was approved by our partners WWF as a credible improvement plan”*** (HD 2:5). HD (2:12) said that when ***“we demonstrate leadership in the industry and we strengthen transparency and credibility of our supply chain”***, it drives improvement and manages risk. The verification processes are therefore action oriented and linked directly to the process of change.

Finally, the detailed work plan process has also been recognised as a success and ISSF ***“has stated we’re one of the few retailers that have actually gone to this kind of detail when it comes to tuna”*** and this is at an international level (HD 2:15). ND (2:10 and 1:9) confirmed this contention, saying that ***“Woolworths is a recognised sustainability leader” and that “as far as I’m aware there are no other organisations in the world that have that all the way through their supply chain at the moment”***.

Credibility can also be achieved by working with MSC, since the MSC standard and certification confirms the traceability of the product.

NN (1:8) said that together with a retailer, **“we use MSC to raise the environmental credentials of that brand”**. In turn, the MSC standard is based on science, which gives it credibility; it is a single global standard **“that is credible, transparent – everyone recognises that and it’s held up and it’s held accountable ... it’s accountable to its stakeholders”** (NN1:7).

A measure of wider accountability is evident in the use of the MSC ecolabel and NN (1:9) described the MSC standard as a differentiator in the market. The standard represents sustainable sources and credibility.

Achieving the MSC chain of custody standard for imported product was cited by HT (1:24 and 1:25) as an example of a successful sustainability initiative because of the credibility that it brought and the extent of the collaboration required.

The credibility comes from traceability that is audited so that **“the supply chain has to show 100% traceability – so your auditing process needs to be set up – your accounting process needs to be set up to trace it”** and **“we had to get everybody in the chain of custody approved”**.

For farmed fish, traceability is also a critical requirement for the fish and **“we are able to trace everything back basically to egg”** (HT 1:15). For the fish feed, it is about the **“amount of wild fish that is converted into fishmeal”** and **“we’ve had to demonstrate that the feed we use – produced locally in South Africa – the fishmeal that we’re using is traceable back to the boats that its caught from and it falls within the South African total allowable catch”** (HT 1:11 to 1:13). These were the standards required for the local trout to be green-listed by WWF-SASSI.

As an NPO, ISSF is also committed to accountability and transparency and auditing.

According to ND (2:19 and 2:20), ISSF has made public their commitments to which all participating companies must comply and **“there’s a third party auditor who audits the companies for compliance”** and **“that assessment will be made public”**. Further, at a vessel level, compliance is recorded **“on a public registry that will be audited”** so that practices will be **“transparent and publically available”**.

These examples show that both business and NPO organisations are demonstrating accountability for compliance with their commitments by being transparent and making progress reports available for public scrutiny. They are also aware that such reports need to be credible and are therefore calling for independent audits as a means to verify the outcomes. These examples show that the idea of value has multiple facets. It is not only reporting, but public reporting and transparency; it is not only transparency, but also credibility achieved through independent verification.

### **6.10.2.3 Commentary and initial insights on accountability**

Accountability may be exercised for a specific partner organisation or for a wider constituency and at different levels. Specific practices are connected to measurement and reporting; more broadly they may also include reporting that extends to verification and validation. It is the latter form that is particularly pertinent in the supply chain for sustainable seafood because it is independent validation that confirms the traceability of the product to sustainable sources and this then supports the credibility of the sustainability claims.

The examples indicate that measurement within a specific organisation works together with the process of management and this suggests an action orientation. Further, that specific and wider accountability may work together to achieve the desired outcomes and that validation activities are proactive. An example of this is the case with the before and after customer focus groups, which were conducted by the retailer but sought feedback on customer awareness.

There is also measurement at a collaborative level and the example of the reduction of seabird mortality is a case in point. Here, the point is made that there is a need to measure the right things, which are those that are directed towards the change in practice. The action orientation is again evident.

Measurement requires specific compliance targets as well as more general milestones that track progress and these need to be integrated into business processes. There may also be a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures, which may be more intangible and the term indicator was used by participants to describe these. One example at a specific level on performance scorecards, is tracking sustainability attributes on products. As another example, an interesting indicator of success that is intangible was described as “*talkability*”. This is a measure of the level of communication, both specific and more broadly, that is generated around a specific campaign. In digital media, it is the equivalent of a communication that goes viral. As a communicative practice it is very intangible and difficult to assess but can nonetheless be recognised within the stakeholder community. Indicators are used as well as other more tangible measures.

The time factor is pertinent when dealing in sustainability issues. In this case, the recovery of seafood stocks is a long-term endeavour and measuring results in the short-term may have limited value.

Accountability in the form of measurement is not an end in itself but leads to something more, a higher-order effect. While it may appear to be self-evident, the point is made that what is measured needs to be related to the things that matter at a practice level, in the areas where change is needed. Measurement is also described as a learning process.

Reporting takes place both within specific partner organisations as well as for collaborative activities and both may report either to the stakeholders involved or to a wider audience. With both

specific and wider reporting it is the public scrutiny that establishes expectations and the need for additional validation and verification of claims aimed at confirming accountability.

From the examples here, it appears that some practices may have the outcome of delivering value in more than one way. The publically announced seafood commitments not only had an influence with the public and with stakeholders, but also as part of the process, accountability was established for a specific partner organisation and the baseline data was independently verified. The procurement list process influenced suppliers but also generated more sustainable sourcing strategies; again indicating value delivery in more than one way.

One of the practices described here is a process of verification that results in an outcome of credibility or traceability within the supply chain. Credibility has already been mentioned as an attribute that supports value potential. It also appears to be connected to value delivery to the extent that the independent audits and assessments verify the traceability of the product. The verification process is action oriented and linked to the process of change so that the confirmation of traceability has value to the stakeholders, at a specific organisational level or within the supply chain.

It may also have value in the broader public arena and a further level of accountability may be achieved when the product traceability is declared to the public through the use of the ecolabel. Traceability is also declared publically in the case of tuna fishing by way of the pro-active vessel register. Credibility is achieved not only from the verification process but also the open and transparent communication of the results.

It is not only measurement and reporting, but public reporting and transparency, that deliver value; it is not only transparency, but also credibility achieved through independent verification and the public declaration of traceability that delivers value. It is the combination of these different aspects of accountability together, that creates value for the stakeholders.

#### ***6.10.2.4 Summary: Accountability***

From these insights, Table 6.8 may now be updated with areas of similarity and difference.

Potential extensions include how measurement, reporting and management work together at different levels and together create an action orientation. There is also the point that there are different factors involved from tangible to intangible; from specific to wide. Regarding verification and validation, there is a similar point made that this may deliver value at different levels to a specific organisation, to the supply chain, or to a wider public audience.

**Table 6.8(b): Participant perspectives of XSP value: Assessing value delivery**

	COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICES:		ASSESSING VALUE DELIVERY	
<b>External Influence</b> [Influence means to appropriate, replicate or reproduce]	Influence on public perceptions A process of public communication Action orientation Public reporting as evidence	Influence on stakeholders <b>Persuasion</b> – advocacy, leading by example, successes create standards or a benchmark for others to copy <b>Scaleable solutions</b> – creating a pathway for others to follow	<b>Market influence</b> – a model of change reaching multiple stakeholders and the wider public at the same time <b>Multiple ways for influence to create positive outcomes</b> (a) Different levels from awareness to changing behaviour (b) Different sectors and (c) different geographies	<b>Making a difference</b> Different levels of influence – big and small – personal and industry practices – local and global
<b>Accountability</b>	Reporting to stakeholders <b>Measurement, reporting and management work together and at different levels</b> – specific partner organisations and a broader constituency; measuring organisational and collaborative activities <b>Together these processes create an action orientation towards change at a practice level</b>	Evidence to support claims of value delivery <b>Independent validation and verification</b> – <b>At different levels</b> - adds credibility at specific organisational level, within the supply chain and for a wider public constituency	<b>Different factors involved</b> - Quantitative and qualitative – tangible and intangible – a time factor – specific targets and broader milestones <b>Indicators and attributes</b>	<b>Accountability as an action oriented activity</b> – leading to changes in practice or to learning
<b>Higher order effects</b>	Learning that extends into the community	Changes in practices and perceptions	Other effects: • New partnerships • New norms and discourse • Reducing conflict	

Source: Author's compilation.

### 6.10.3 Practices 3: Higher-order effects

There are higher-order effects and these range from direct or immediate impacts to indirect and longer-term impacts. Four narratives can be distinguished from the fieldwork material and these are discussed in turn.

In the case of reducing conflict there is very limited evidence, which may be expected given the focus of the interview questions towards positive outcomes. In addition, while there is evidence of partnerships that have recently developed, such as the relationships with ISSF, and also evidence of ongoing partnerships, there is limited evidence of new partnerships being formed. One example is provided of a potential new relationship but this is only briefly mentioned.

#### 6.10.3.1 Awareness and understanding

Awareness and understanding precede action or choice.

NC (1:3) explained the need for awareness in basic terms and said that ***“if you don't know anything then you're not going to do anything. But as soon as you become aware of something – then you have to take that responsibility on – to start looking after it”***. Expanding on this, NC also said that ***“if you become aware of something [and] if you don't do something [then] you know that you're not doing it – then you're actively not doing it – so there's a difference there”*** between not knowing and knowing.

According to KT (2:2), sustainable seafood is a focus area for retailers because it is a key biodiversity risk for food sourcing and there is a lot of consumer awareness around WWF-SASSI.

KT explained how this created a focus on ***“trying to understand what our sourcing footprint was and then to try and mould that into a range of more sustainable choices”***. KT (2:15) also reported the progress in ***“driving the training and awareness and understanding”*** which helps people to engage around the Good Business Journey.

These examples suggest a progression from awareness to understanding can lead to specific work activity around sustainability.

Understanding may be facilitated through the use of stories.

NB (1:10) explained that ***“understanding what sustainable seafood is all about”*** is quite complicated and so ***“you need to break it down into layman’s terms so that the next person can understand but at the same time communicate the benefits”***. The marketing campaigns with MSC and WWF-SASSI were considered a success in terms of achieving this aim (KT 1:8) and (NN 1:8). They created awareness around sustainability by ***“telling those beautiful stories and converting our existing customers to be more conscious about these beautiful milestones we’ve accomplished and obviously to purchase the sustainable products”*** (NB 1:2). HT (2:8) reinforced the need to have a range of MSC certified product available to create the market and said ***“it was strategically important to have it in the market place to create awareness”***.

Education is another way to raise awareness.

A similar sentiment was expressed by HD (2:12), who highlighted that Woolworths aims to ***“raise awareness of issues and we help our customers make informed choices”***. HD (2:3) explained how WWF-SASSI promotes compliance ***“through education and awareness”*** to ***“shift the consumer demand away from overexploited species into more sustainable options”*** and ***“they create awareness around the marine conservation issues”***.

Awareness is not only about consumers, but can also be an influence elsewhere in the supply chain. DL (1:7) explained that as sustainability becomes more integrated into the supply chain, there is greater understanding and that brings with it an awareness of the external factors that can influence the supply chain so that the core risks can be addressed.

One of the functions of the ISSF market outreach is to support retailers and ND (1:11 to 1:13) related how this involves helping them ***“understand what resources ISSF has actually enabled them – for canned tuna – [to] make that engagement very practical”*** and very aligned with their sustainability objectives. For change to happen, understanding must precede the work activity. It is important ***“to understand the complexity – understand the dynamics”*** in order to make informed choices and implement appropriate due diligence procedures. ND said this awareness avoids misrepresenting the sourcing and traceability of products to consumers and it is therefore ***“good for consumer transparency and trust”***. Understanding and awareness are therefore essential for making informed decisions.

ND (2:23) said the objective is to become **“understood and relevant and practically applied”** and reaffirms the connection between understanding and action. It is action that is collectively achieved in the collaboration between the retailer and ISSF.

Collective awareness and understanding is highlighted as something deeper that can be related to change.

Another collaborative experience is the initiative to secure the green listing of local trout, and NC (1:9) said that it worked well for reasons such as including **“awareness, understanding and bringing people together”**.

Collective interactions may go to a deeper level of understanding and KC (1:9) explained that at WWF-SASSI **“there’s a conversation that’s cultivated and through our strategy – it’s where those kind of dialogues happen – where consciousness is shifted – so you get to a point where you’re not just superficially aware of it – it builds a deeper understanding – which will fundamentally and ultimately lead to a shift in your behaviour”**. NN (2:4) spoke about a shift in thinking (or a mind-shift) and said now **“we need to get the small scale fisheries – we need to get the developing world very much into the programme – so there’s a shift” and this also means “there’s a move towards accepting what they call fisheries improvement projects”**.

This suggests that a deeper understanding is needed for change to happen and this leads us to consider effects at a higher level, such as learning and adapting. NC (1:2) also connected awareness and learning and said that this means thinking differently.

### **6.10.3.2 Learning and adapting**

Learning and adapting go further than awareness and understanding. Learning may be experienced at different levels and in different ways and was expressed in a range of examples by participants. Adaption has already been discussed as value potential where there is an openness to alternatives and yet it may also deliver value once a change has been made.

The interrelatedness between adaption and learning, between value potential and value delivery, was expressed by DL.

DL (1:12) commented that **“you have to be able to adapt – because you can’t always see how things are going to turn out or what you will learn and how that will change your strategy”**.

WWF-SASSI is an example of this, so that the strategy was not planned and implemented but rather it developed over time as a learning process.

KC (2:4) explained that **“the SASSI strategy evolved [and] it was only really last year that we put a firm strategy in place”**. Further, KC (1:13) said that **“we’ve been very fortunate with the way things have evolved – we learn as we go”**. Part of that learning process was realising **“that we had to take on much more of a marketing approach” so that “it’s now a conservation programme that’s taking on a marketing and communications role”** (KC 2:4).

According to DL (1:8), change comes from learning and learning happens through collaboration so that as **“we start to collaborate more and more then there are feedback loops back to our organisations – so WWF grows and transforms itself by learning from these organisations”**. The learning affects both partner organisations and the same would happen in Woolworths, **“so that through these engagements their seafood business is essentially changed”**.

Collaboration involves learning.

This was confirmed by KT (2:14 and 2:15), who claimed that the **“collaboration side has been one of the really big learnings and achievements to date and it’s allowed us to obviously make a lot of progress on a range of the different objectives we’ve got as a business”** related to external impacts. NC (2:6) talked about collaborating with specialists **“to work on projects or just to share information so that we can become a market leader”**.

An experience shared by HT (1:2) illustrates that there may be a time factor between the learning and the outcome.

So that **“[we] learnt very quickly that to make a success in the industry we had to create a market” but “it’s taken almost 20 years to build the market”**. Fish farming requires learning so that **“now we’re farming with trout we’re experimenting with salmon”** but it is challenging and **“I started with a group of guys – it’s probably 8 years ago”**. With another species, kabeljou, **“we spent the better part of 6 years learning how to spawn them”**.

On a different initiative, KT (2:13) also emphasised the experience of learning over time and described the process of setting targets to measure and report progress for the Good Business Journey, which he called **“a huge learning issue”**. The first round of targets was set on a top-down approach and lacked a process of negotiation. Several years later, the targets were reset and this time the process involved more negotiation but tended to lack the aspiration and challenge of the first round. With the third round of targets, **“we’re trying to hopefully find a balance between those two learning points”**.

### **6.10.3.3 Improvement and change in practices: Applying the learning**

Taking the effect to another level, improvement and change may ensue from learning when it is applied on practice.

One way this may happen is through innovation.

KT (2:6) explained that this requires is one of the benefits of collaboration because **“there is only so much you can do yourself but if you use a credible third part or partner to endorse your brand or help drive innovation to help with key experience and skills in particular areas – that’s something that can really bolster your organisational strength as well”**.

NC (2:6) also related innovation with partnership activities and explained that working together with specialists in different fields **“to bring innovation to the table or to work on projects or just to share information so that we can become a market leader”**.

Change may involve multiple practices including understanding, learning, adaption and innovation.

An example related by DL (2:9) describes how finding a way to address seabird bycatch **“required some collaboration and some innovation”**. This involved learning and developing a solution using bird scaring devices called tori lines. It also needed the implementation of improvements to practice and so **“our role within that was to develop the appropriate training for those fishers and to assist in the roll out to industry which is something that we did”**. It was essential that the training was **“relevant and understandable and implementable”**.

In this case, the value delivery had multiple components including learning, innovation, training that was relevant, and understanding so that change in practice was achieved.

Further, the emphasis on relevant training is noted and this is also evident in other accounts that draw attention to the need for outcomes to be useful or applied.

DL (2:4 and 2:5) asserted that when working in a partnership **“it’s an opportunity to learn about those stakeholders”** and to understand in order to **“make sure that we remain relevant and of value to them”** but also that **“you need to remain relevant to each other”**. Taking this further, DL (2:7) explained that in the retail sector this requires having **“someone that can improve communication and understand the issues and then make the conservation work relevant – someone who can connect the dots”**. In the case of fishing communities, it means having **“someone who understands how these communities function – what the social impact is”** and that what is generated **“needs to be relevant if you want to see changes”**.

Being relevant and useful was also highlighted by ED (1:1) who explained that in pursuing a research agenda, **“it was really important for me that I did something that was really relevant”** and that it got used. ND (2:22 and 2:23) similarly explained that a successful engagement is reflected in the application of conservation measures so that **“we start becoming understood and relevant and practically applied in the way that they run their business”**.

According to ND (2:25), giving attention to the science, with learning that is applied and being more active to drive change are activities requiring continued attention. ND also talked about the need for learning to be applied and the importance of being practical as a prerequisite for action.

ND (2:24 and 2:25) said that **“getting traction in some respects is about being practical”** so it is important to find the issues that are important to the retailer and where practical support can be offered by ISSF and this differs from country to country.

ND (1:12) highlighted the need for tools and resources to support an approach that is **“science based – practical continued improvement”** that engages the supply chain so that change is more likely to happen.

Being solutions oriented is another way of expressing an action orientation.

WWF also holds a similar view about being **“pragmatic and solutions oriented”** (KC 1:13) and **“not harp on so much on the negative”**. **“With SASSI we are lucky ... because we present a challenge and then we present a very clear pathway for anyone to do something about it”**. So with SASSI, **“the message is clear – you have a choice – make it green – and in that way you will be contributing”** and people **“feel like that they can do something about it”**.

#### **6.10.3.4 Having an impact**

Impact was not specifically defined by the participants but is an outcome that was discussed by some. This subject is separately highlighted and appears to be related to change in practice. It may also be related to influence in so far as this means a change in behaviour. The idea of impact will be considered further in a following chapter in the discussion with the extant literature.

NC (2:4) reflected that as a **“relatively small retailer in the world space”**, **“the impact that we have on the oceans and the seafood – the stock situation - the seafood situation out there - is minimal”**. However, **“we can drive a bigger impact that just us”** because by demanding a product from a supplier that is responsibly sourced means the supplier then has product available to supply other retailers as well. DL (1:12) concurred with this view but used the word influence rather than impact and said that **“it was incredible ... we can influence the way tuna is fished half a world away”**.

This was further illustrated as described by HD (2:15), where MSC has connected Woolworths with a large Canadian retailer that sources product from the same tuna cannery. In this case, the impact is external in that the market for responsibly sourced product is expanded beyond that of the organisation itself.

The difficulties of measuring impact are discussed.

KC (2:5) talked about how impact is difficult to measure and said that **“it’s been difficult in terms of indicators that we’ve used to measure any sort of impact over the last few years”** and further that **“you don’t actually know how that fundamentally translates into them making a sustainable choice”**.

NN (2:15 and 2:16) related that MSC has started to report impacts because just using quantitative measures **“is not an indication of where we are in terms of achieving our overall goals – are we actually changing fishing practices in the world – and that’s something that we’re trying now to measure”**.

Measuring specific outputs or metrics has always been done at MSC and will continue but **“that is not an accurate reflection of success necessarily”**.

NN explained that it is very difficult to measure impact but MSC is starting by exploring the stories of fisheries that are in the programme and the nature of the changes that have taken place and then publishing those in a report. So that ***“looking forward it’s a much better indication of success – looking at the big picture – is the programme being successful rather than is the business being successful”***. Further, that while the business model has been effective, ***“going forward we need to measure ourselves in terms of the impact we’re having”***.

This is an interesting example where it is the impact of the MSC programme that is considered and this requires broader indicators beyond the existing metrics; it takes a more long-term and forward looking view; and is directed towards positive change that is happening in practice. In this example, measuring impacts means trying to gauge success beyond the organisational level; it reflects the need to gauge the success of actions and the impact of actions on the issue of sustainable seafood

Impact is associated with improvement in practice.

Sustainable seafood work is ***“a key focus of the organisation at a global level”*** and ***“fisheries and aquaculture are relatively high impact”*** (DL 2:2 and 2:3). DL related impact with improvement and explained that using an assessment process ***“we can have a very clear indication of where improvement is needed – where the impact is and what’s needed to be done to mitigate that impact or improve practice or strengthen management processes”***. In this case, the impact appears to be a negative factor that needs a response. This is confirmed by DL (2:8 and 2:9), so that an assessment process of key fisheries and fishing activities in South Africa identified ***“the critical impacts which are having a negative environmental outcome and from that what was identified was that there needed to be a change in practice”***. The process involved ***“identifying what the impact was - determining the scale - and then how to mitigate that impact”*** (DL 2:14).

Again, the focus here is a change in practice and in this case, it is directed towards decreasing a negative impact on the environment or on fish or other species or in the case of a positive impact, it means scaling up to achieve even greater impacts.

#### ***6.10.3.5 Other effects: New partnerships; new norms and discourses; reducing conflict***

A final dimension of the framework considers other effects and some examples are noted here briefly.

An example of a new relationship is provided as a brief illustration. It is not yet a collaboration but there appears to be potential in the future.

Arising from the work on the tuna supply chain, HD (2:15) explained that one of the potential areas for improvement is the ***“opportunity to include other retailers which are not in South Africa [but] globally”***. In progressing this opportunity, Woolworths is working with a retailer in Canada (KT 1:2).

A new discourse that is mentioned by some participants relates to small scale fisheries. What appears to be new here is the level of attention being given to this type of fishery and the complexity of the narrative, which involves not only fish species, but importantly also the fishing communities, the social impacts and local food source that these provide.

TL (1:3 and 1:5) explained that “*everybody talks about small scale fishing – small scale fisheries policy*” and “*there’s a lot of stakeholder engagement*”. NC (1:11) said that “*the small scale fisheries policy – that will have a great effect on fishers – on the lives of fisherman and communities*”.

This discourse is growing internationally, particularly in the developing world and it is also an important local discourse in South Africa.

These examples are contextual and the discourse and standards are part of the overall environment in which the sustainable seafood supply chain operates.

### **6.10.3.6 Commentary and initial insights on higher-order effects**

Higher-order effects have varying consequences for moving in the direction of the trajectory. Any movement, at whatever level, implies a degree of action. So higher-order effects are action oriented.

At a basic level, it may start with awareness and the evidence suggests that there is a progression from awareness to understanding that can, in due course, lead to specific work activity around sustainability. Understanding is highlighted so that decisions are well informed and actions are made consciously. It may be argued that this is a ‘first-order effect’ rather than a ‘higher-order effect’ in which case it may be categorised having an influence. However, in the examples given, awareness and understanding lead to something further such as a deeper understanding, informed choice or informed decision making, practical application or a change in behaviour. Awareness alone may lead to responsibility and action.

Awareness and understanding are achieved through carefully crafted communication, cultivating conversations, telling stories that illustrate what sustainability means, what the risk are and what is needed at a practical level. These are collaborative activities so that the action that ensues is collective action, as illustrated in the examples.

Learning is suggested as an alternative to a strategy that is planned. Learning and adapting go further than awareness and understanding and support the direction of change in ways that cannot be planned or designed but are allowed to evolve and develop over time. Learning in this context is collaborative so that it affects all the partners. Learning, in the case of seafood sustainability also involves the science. Not only understanding the science but being able to apply the science. This means that the research and science need to be relevant in practice. Being practical is a prerequisite for action.

To be effective, learning needs to be applied and this takes the action to another level, to practical application. For this to happen, the learning must be relevant and the issue must be important; and other tools and resources should be available to engage and support stakeholders and facilitate implementation.

Change may not be immediate and in some cases it may take time to effect change, there may be an extended period of learning, and given the nature of sustainability issues, this may happen over a period of years. Learning may be an ongoing process so that actions are adjusted as new understanding is developed and so adaption is also continuous. As one participant described it, there needs to be a “clear pathway” so that people know what it is they need to do.

Adaption has already been discussed as value potential where there is an openness to alternatives and yet it may also deliver value as action is taken and changes are made. So there is a balance and a circularity and interconnectedness in the learning process that starts with awareness and understanding and leads to action and adaption.

Improvements and action ensue from the learning process. Innovation is another possible outcome so that innovation may arise from a process of learning that is applied and that leads to action or adaption. There is no clear distinction made in the participant accounts between innovation and adaption. Both are associated with collaboration and both involve taking what has been learnt and applying it to new or improved behaviours and practices.

Communication is an important aspect of the process in order “**to connect the dots**” and make the connections between what is understood, what has been learnt and what is relevant and useful in a practical context. Implementation may require various tools and resources to support the change process and ongoing improvement as well as a clear message that articulates the way.

Impact is discussed and is identified as a higher level effect where the change that is made may be amplified beyond the immediate stakeholders. The descriptions suggest that an action can have leverage to effect change in a wider community and may therefore “**drive a bigger impact**”. Impact is also seen as an effect that involves qualitative factors as well as quantified results and both are needed to accurately reflect successful outcomes and “**the bigger picture**”. This means reflecting success beyond the organisational level and looking at the outcomes related to the issue of sustainable seafood. Impact as described here is about change and improvement for sustainable seafood, rather than for an organisation. Impacts may be both positive and negative so that a negative impact requires actions that mitigate the impact; whereas a positive impact requires action to scale up and to amplify the change.

The various practices described here do not happen in discrete steps. The illustrations demonstrate the interconnectedness and the circularity of the process of understanding, learning, adapting, innovating and improvement. However, they also show how active management is

needed to support the process, using communication, conversation, stories, tools and other resources.

#### **6.10.3.7 Summary: Higher-order effects**

From these insights, Table 6.8 may now be updated with areas of similarity and difference.

Those insights that may be considered as potential extensions relate to the influence of market dynamics and the different levels at which positive outcomes may ensue and effects may be immediate or longer term, direct or indirect. There is an indication that measurement and reporting work together with validation and verification that accountability is a process of managing and communicating outcomes that are seen to be credible. Accounting for higher-order effects focuses attention first on awareness and understanding, followed by learning and adaption, where learning ensues from collaborative activities. Learning is positioned as an alternative to a planned strategy. This may involve innovation and also requires active management so that what is learnt is relevant, and there are tools and resources available that support a clear message that articulates the way forward. To be effective, learning needs to be applied. The process suggests an inherent circularity from value potential to value delivery to forward direction. Impact is an indicator of change at a broader level beyond the immediate stakeholders.

#### **6.10.4 Summary of dimension: Assessing value delivery**

Each of the communicative practices supporting the dimension of assessing value delivery has now been discussed. The starting point at Table 6.8 has now been updated in Table 6.9 with the additional input from the evidence presented in each of the sections on increasing value potential, namely increasing participation, managing opposing and converging forces and creating identity.

Table 6.9 below summarises the various areas of similarity and difference and adjustments are made accordingly to the communicative practices supporting the dimension of assessing value delivery.

Based on the evidence presented above, additional practices have been added in bold red type that indicate similarities and differences with the framework of XSP value. In some cases, there is a difference in language so that evidence to support claims is expressed as verification and validation. In other cases, the differences are a matter of emphasis so that the description of influence on stakeholders may be extended to include a wider model of market influences; reporting is extended to include measurement; and changes in practices include improvements.

The evidence also suggests that there may be other practices to be considered such as making a difference, awareness and understanding and impact. The wording used is drawn from the participant accounts and from the preceding discussion.

**Table 6.9: Participant perspectives of XSP value: Assessing value delivery - Extended**

	COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICES: ASSESSING VALUE DELIVERY				
<b>External Influence</b> [Influence means to appropriate, replicate or reproduce]	Influence on public perceptions A process of public communication Action orientation Public reporting as evidence	Influence on stakeholders <b>Persuasion</b> – advocacy, leading by example, successes create standards or a benchmark for others to copy <b>Scaleable solutions</b> – creating a pathway for others to follow	<b>Market influence</b> – a model of change reaching multiple stakeholders and the wider public at the same time <b>Multiple ways for influence to create positive outcomes</b> (a) Different levels from awareness to changing behaviour (b) Different sectors and (c) different geographies	<b>Making a difference</b> Different levels of influence – big and small – personal and industry practices – local and global	
<b>Accountability</b>	Reporting to stakeholders <b>Measurement, reporting and management work together and at different levels</b> – specific partner organisations and a broader constituency; measuring organisational and collaborative activities <b>Together these processes create an action orientation towards change at a practice level</b>	Evidence to support claims of value delivery <b>Independent validation and verification</b> – <b>At different levels</b> - adds credibility at specific organisational level, within the supply chain and for a wider public constituency	<b>Different factors involved</b> - Quantitative and qualitative – tangible and intangible – a time factor – specific targets and broader milestones <b>Indicators and attributes</b>	<b>Accountability as an action oriented activity</b> – leading to changes in practice or to learning	
<b>Higher order effects</b> Effects may be direct and immediate; longer term; and also indirect. Effect does not necessarily indicate cause and effect.	Learning that extends into the community <b>Learning as an alternative to a planned strategy</b> <b>Learning happens through collaboration</b> <b>Being practical</b> is a prerequisite to action <b>Learning takes time</b> and is ongoing	Changes in practices and perceptions <b>Change may be planned or it may evolve</b> – indicating adaptation <b>Change happens when learning is applied</b> <b>Learning must be relevant</b> if it is to be applied <b>Learning and adaption are interconnected, mediated by innovation</b> <b>Active management is required</b> - tools and resources are needed; and a clear message	Other effects: • New partnerships • New norms and discourse • Reducing conflict <b>New opportunities</b>	<b>Awareness and understanding</b> Making informed choices and informed decisions	<b>Impact</b> – and effect that goes beyond the immediate stakeholders to a wider community – may involve qualitative factors as well as quantitative – to effect change at a broader scale <b>Impact may be positive or negative</b> – amplify the positive; mitigate the negative

Source: Author's compilation.

These and other preliminary comments on the evidence have been discussed in the various commentaries in the previous paragraphs. The evidence of similarities and differences is summarised below and is then carried forward into Chapter 8 to allow for further discussion in relation to the extant literature. It is then through this further discussion that some conclusions are reached on whether and to what extent, the evidence from the fieldwork may support certain propositions or claims to confirm, challenge or change the framework of XSP value.

## 6.11 FINDINGS SECTION 2 SUMMARY: XSP VALUE

This section has presented the main dimensions of the framework of XSP value based on the research fieldwork and interviews. Key communication practices and narratives have been used to illustrate the participants' perspectives and experiences.

Table 6.10 below provides a summary of the entire section on the framework of XSP value; it is a consolidated table of each of the dimensions discussed. It shows the communicative practices of the framework of XSP value with the extensions and additional practices shown in bold red type.

Each of the dimensions in this table will be carried forward to Chapter 8 where the implications of these findings will be discussed in relation to the extant literature.

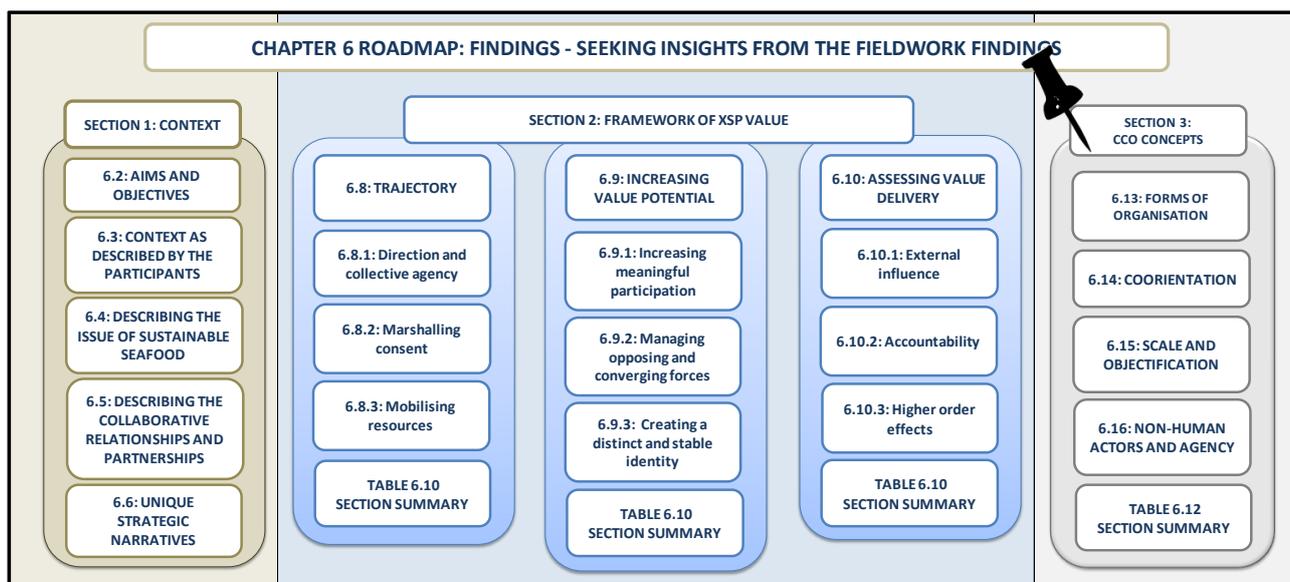
Table 6.10: Participant perspectives of XSP value: Consolidated and extended

COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICES: TRAJECTORY					
Direction and collective agency	Use of business language: strategy, business case, targets	Change and Improvement; collective agency	Directional movement and process: driving, working towards Use of language	Collective agency – multi-dimensional nature. It works at different levels, degrees of action and areas of responsibility operating at the same time	
Marshalling consent	Securing willing participation	Use of business language: getting buy-in	Multiple processes: A combination of voluntary and obligatory commitments plus the use of persuasion	Voluntary mechanisms	Market mechanisms can be both persuasive as well as obligatory
Mobilising resources	Economic capital Supply chain dynamics – funding and certified product – product needs to be credible	Cultural capital Partners skills and expertise need to be credible	Social capital Planned and unplanned; contractual and reciprocity and persuasion (leverage)	Use of business language: investing in relationships; mutual benefit	Economic, cultural and social are interconnected and work together and in combination
COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICES: INCREASING VALUE POTENTIAL					
Increasing meaningful participation	Open and transparent communication at different levels	Different ways of interacting A process of engagement Finding the intersects Indirect approaches	Including diverse interests Coming together in a cohesive way	Making it and keeping it relevant Different levels – from the broader issue to something specific	Investing in and cultivating relationships – introducing intangible and emotional elements Degrees of action – interacting; deliberation, and active participation
Managing opposing and converging forces of identity and interests	Remain open – avoid early closure Persistence Context matters – there is no one size fits all	Willing to explore alternatives and being receptive to new ideas Different approaches – from experimenting and design to innovation	Being adaptable Awareness – thinking differently Learning Letting go	Risk management Avoidance of a problem or an incentive to engage and do the right thing Risk mitigation is a control mechanism and a positive approach to managing negative consequences	Managing rather than resolving tensions – Other areas of tension: relational issues and market dynamics
Creating a distinct and stable identity	Name - a distinct collective identity for the partnership <b>THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF A SEPARATE IDENTITY</b>	Coherent narrative – constructed collaboratively <b>THERE ARE NARRATIVES ABOUT SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD BUT NOT ABOUT A SEPARATE PARTNERSHIP ENTITY</b>	Organisational values- similar, the same or common but not shared <b>Credibility and traceability</b> – essential requirements when working with third parties in the supply chain for sustainable product	Collective roles – in relation to the issue of sustainable seafood	Emotional elements – how individuals identify with the collaborative activities
COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICES: ASSESSING VALUE DELIVERY					
External Influence [Influence means to appropriate, replicate or reproduce]	Influence on public perceptions A process of public communication Action orientation Public reporting as evidence	Influence on stakeholders <b>Persuasion</b> – advocacy, leading by example, successes create standards or a benchmark for others to copy <b>Scaleable solutions</b> – creating a pathway for others to follow	<b>Market influence</b> – a model of change reaching multiple stakeholders and the wider public at the same time <b>Multiple ways for influence to create positive outcomes</b> (a) Different levels from awareness to changing behaviour (b) Different sectors and (c) different geographies	<b>Making a difference</b> Different levels of influence – big and small – personal and industry practices – local and global	
Accountability	Reporting to stakeholders <b>Measurement, reporting and management work together and at different levels</b> – specific partner organisations and a broader constituency; measuring organisational and collaborative activities <b>Together these processes create an action orientation towards change at a practice level</b>	Evidence to support claims of value delivery <b>Independent validation and verification</b> – At different levels - adds credibility at specific organisational level, within the supply chain and for a wider public constituency	<b>Different factors involved</b> - Quantitative and qualitative – tangible and intangible – a time factor – specific targets and broader milestones <b>Indicators and attributes</b>	<b>Accountability as an action oriented activity</b> – leading to changes in practice or to learning	
Higher order effects Effects may be direct and immediate; longer term; and also indirect. Effect does not necessarily indicate cause and effect.	Learning that extends into the community <b>Learning as an alternative to a planned strategy</b> <b>Learning happens through collaboration</b> Being practical is a prerequisite to action <b>Learning takes time</b> and is ongoing	Changes in practices and perceptions Change may be <b>planned or it may evolve</b> – indicating adaption <b>Change happens when learning is applied</b> <b>Learning must be relevant</b> if it is to be applied <b>Learning and adaption are interconnected, mediated by innovation</b> <b>Active management is required</b> - tools and resources are needed; and a clear message	Other effects: • New partnerships • New norms and discourse • Reducing conflict <b>New opportunities</b>	<b>Awareness and understanding</b> Making informed choices and informed decisions	<b>Impact</b> – and effect that goes beyond the immediate stakeholders to a wider community – may involve qualitative factors as well as quantitative – to effect change at a broader scale <b>Impact may be positive or negative</b> – amplify the positive; mitigate the negative

Source: Author's compilation.

## 6.12 FINDINGS SECTION 3: CCO CONCEPTS INTRODUCTION

The discussion now moves to the next section dealing with CCO concepts and the various elements related to CCO concepts.



**Figure 6.1: Chapter 6 Roadmap**

Source: Author’s compilation.

### 6.12.1 Section outline: CCO concepts

This section starts with a discussion on forms of organisation. Using the concepts from the CCO approach, the various collaborations and collaborative activities that are evident in the fieldwork are discussed.

After this discussion, some of the key concepts of the CCO approach that are highlighted in the fieldwork texts are considered in relation to the evidence presented in the fieldwork. These include coorientation, issues of scale and objectification and the role of nonhuman actors and agency. This discussion is intended to provide evidence of these concepts in the field texts and to illustrate how they are applied in the context of cross-sector partnerships in the sustainable seafood supply chain.

**Table 6.11: Participant perspectives: CCO concepts**

CCO CONCEPTS				
Coorientation	Common interest			
Scale and objectification	Scaling up – zooming out; zooming in	Levels of abstraction		
Nonhuman actors and agency	Materiality	Representation		

Source: Author’s compilation.

A summary of the discussion that follows is provided in Table 6.11 above as a plan to guide the reader. Each of the elements, namely coorientation, scale and objectification and nonhuman actors and agency, are discussed in turn, followed by an initial commentary on insights. Evidence from the fieldwork is discussed that reflects some similarities and differences with the CCO approach.

Note that the table deliberately leaves space to allow for additional practices to be incorporated. An updated table, Table 6.12, is presented at the end of the discussion to provide a summary of the findings.

### **6.13 FINDINGS SECTION 3: FORMS OF ORGANISATION**

The discussion in this section explores the various organisations, entities and other forms of organising that are evidence in the fieldwork material.

#### **6.13.1 Forms of organisation**

Evidence is presented here to show that there are different types of organisation that can be discerned from the research interviews and some remarks are noted here based on the participant descriptions.

There are three types or forms of organising that can be identified from the participant descriptions. The first is an organisation, which can be distinguished as a separate entity or actor, such as WWF or Woolworths. Another is an office or branch of a larger organisation, which can be recognised by its separate physical presence, such as the Cape Town office of MSC. Lastly, there is a brand, which is neither an entity, nor a separate physical presence, but does have an identity in the form of a name and a distinct narrative, such as WWF-SASSI. The role of collaboration in relation to these three different forms of organising is considered to illustrate how collaboration is connected with narrative, name and identity.

Each of the organisations directly involved in this research has a collective identity that is distinguishable by name. WWF, ISSF, MSC, TSSH and Woolworths are used as the main examples. Each of these has different characteristics, over and above the fact that three are NPOs, all with international affiliations, one is a family owned business and one is a South African listed company. Beyond the obvious sectoral distinction, there are other factors related to name and narrative, that makes each quite distinct. The illustrations below indicate how different identities may be discerned from various combinations of name and narrative.

##### ***6.13.1.1 An organisation-as-actor: An international brand and a local brand***

WWF is a member of the international network of WWF associates. WWF is also an international brand name and in South Africa, there is a unique sub-brand called SASSI (KC 2:9) that is part of WWF South Africa. WWF-SASSI is not a separate entity. SASSI has its own narrative around

sustainable seafood and this sits within the bigger conservation narrative of WWF-SA and within the global WWF conservation narrative (KC 2:3 and 2:4).

Collaboration is strongly connected with the SASSI brand and KC (1:2) declared that **“everything we do with SASSI is based on collaboration”** and **“we’ve had a networking partnering approach from the very beginning”**.

The SASSI brand is an interesting case as it is talked about as if it were a separate and yet, it is a brand with an identity based on its name and narrative.

KC (1:5) talked about **“cultivating a sense of co-ownership of SASSI”**. According to KC (2:7 to 2:9) SASSI is **“the jewel in the crown of WWF”** and it was recognised through an international peer review process as something to be proud of and **“it was seen as something that was relevant”**.

### **6.13.1.2 An organisation-as-actor: An international brand and an ecolabel**

MSC in South Africa is a regional office of the international organisation and the South African office was described by NN (1: 1) as a regional outreach office and part of the developing world programme of the MSC.

MSC is also a brand name used to identify the international sustainability standard for fisheries as represented by the MSC ecolabel. NN (1:9) described the ecolabel as the MSC product that denotes credibility and creates differentiation in the market. The brand has a distinct name and narrative and in the form of the ecolabel, it has agency and a separate identity. The identity of MSC, locally and internationally, is predominantly about the brand and the ecolabel and NN highlighted how it needs to be identified as a neutral party, while still being able to collaborate.

In relation to collaboration, NN (2:11 and 2:12) explained that **“MSC has to maintain neutrality so although we collaborate – we collaborate up the supply chain – down the supply chain – we collaborate with NGOs and with industry – so there’s no restriction”**. However, **“there would be no formal partnership in place in terms of any legal or binding agreement”** and **“the collaboration is largely in terms of communicating our message”**.

This highlights that the identity of MSC is based on its neutrality so that the partnerships are important and used extensively to promote the brand identity, but within the boundaries necessary to maintain its neutrality.

### **6.13.1.3 A narrative supported by multiple collaborative activities**

ISSF is an organisation and is a legally registered entity, but it has no physical office presence and has only a very small staff contingent (ND 2:7). ISSF has not been established as a brand, nor is it an ecolabel. The entity does not articulate its identity, which is more to do with what it stands for and what it does. Its identity is represented by a strong narrative about a key issue, namely sustainable tuna fishing.

ISSF is highly collaborative and the network is extensive and diverse. There are different initiatives supporting the strategy of the ISSF narrative. There are various stakeholder groups that support the ISSF strategy; some operate through the various stakeholder committees and others operate through the market outreach programme and a process of collaborative engagement (ND 2:24). While there are activities governed by the market dynamics of the supply chain, the majority of collaborative activity appears to be on a voluntary basis.

ND (2:14) said that ***“I’m not gonna ask you to sign a contract – we don’t operate that way”***.

#### ***6.13.1.4 An organisation-as-actor and multiple brands***

Woolworths is more than an organisational entity or actor; it is also a brand with clearly defined values (HD 2:2). Its corporate strategy and sustainability strategy are integrated through what is called the Good Business Journey (GBJ), a programme that is an integral part of the Woolworths brand. GBJ carries a strong narrative about sustainability.

NB (1:2 and 2:23) talked about ***“building the brand”*** for GBJ and said ***“it’s about telling those beautiful stories”*** and the overall objective is to ***“shout more about our key stories”*** to build the awareness about sustainability and make people more conscious about it.

There are also related narratives including Fishing for the Future, which is the Woolworths branding for sustainable seafood (NB1:9) and (NC 1:5).

Woolworths is very actively involved in a wide variety of initiatives involving partnerships and collaboration, particularly in the sustainability space, because ***“so many of the key issues we’re working with are way beyond the capability of single organisation to deal with”***.

They partner with suppliers and customers, with experts, NGOs and with other corporates (KT 2:5). Collaboration is essential as a support to the business strategy, particularly those aspects related to sustainability. Branding (the narratives supporting the corporate identity) is directed towards the issue of sustainability, including sustainable seafood, with partnerships as the means by which this is achieved. Partnerships feature strongly in the brand messaging since there are activities including joint branding with WWF and MSC (KT 1:4 and 1:8) and (NN 1:8).

#### ***6.13.1.5 A group of companies with a unique narrative***

TSSH is a business comprising a holding company and multiple subsidiaries involved in farming, importing, production and marketing of sustainable seafood (HT 1:4). It therefore has multiple identities related to its various trading names and these are known in the industry but are not used as brands.

The identity of the business as a whole is closely connected to the philosophy and ethics of the founder and the narrative of its history.

HT (1:4) described the philosophy as *“if we can farm fish in a – we like to call it a responsible manner – it helps with sustainability of seafood – you’re taking pressure off the resource”*. TH (1:4) explained that the approach *“certainly set us apart from the competition” and was “rather [to] create a better quality product with a story behind it - and the philosophy too there - was that would also give you a market advantage – which it has in the long run”*.

There is also a separate identity in the product branding that has been created for a specific business venture; what HT (1:10) calls a provenance brand with brand integrity. This brand articulates the narrative of its unique fish farming operation in Lesotho and the brand is exclusively marketed through its customer Woolworths (HT 2:9). The brand identity is therefore also strongly connected to Woolworths and appears as a Woolworths’ brand.

If name defines identity then this example indicates multiple identities. However, if narrative defines identity then this example has a single narrative connected to the philosophy of the business. Based on this example, name appears to be more connected to the actor or entity, such as a company; and narrative appears to provide a different sense of identity, that is broader and less specific.

#### **6.13.1.6 A partnership arrangement**

While various partnership activities are noted as they relate to the various entities, brands and narratives, there is only one formal partnership relating to sustainable seafood that is described in the field texts. This is a corporate partnership between WWF and Woolworths that KT (1:4) described as *“an overall corporate relationship with WWF”* that includes sustainable seafood. It is a separately identifiable arrangement and it involves joint activities. However, while it has a description, it does not have a name as a collective; there is no separate brand name for the partnership or its activities, only for the partner organisations. This is a case of a partnership that is formally recognised and has legal standing, but it does not have a separate identity in the form of a name.

Another indication that this partnership does not have a distinct identity of its own, is that there is no evidence of either people acting as agents or material agents<sup>3</sup> acting on its behalf. In all the other cases of identity noted above, human or material agents act on behalf of or represent the entity, the brand or, in the case of ISSF, the issue. The subject of agency or representation is noted here but is discussed further in the next section on CCO concepts at paragraph 6.16.

Further, this formal partnership may not have a name, but it has a narrative. It is a partnership about sustainability. KT (1:4) said that there are a range of objectives and issues, including sustainable seafood, and each of these issues has a rich narrative.

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<sup>3</sup> A material agent is a material or nonhuman object, such as an ecolabel, that is attributed with agency. It is more fully defined and explained in paragraph 6.16 below.

### **6.13.1.7 An issue - a narrative without a name but a common interest**

Beyond the formal partnership of WWF and Woolworths, the various partnership initiatives that are included in this study are collectively identified by the issue of sustainable seafood, which has a narrative rather than a specific name. There is a network of partnership activity supporting sustainable seafood, rather than a single entity or organisation-as-actor.

There is, however, a single focus. The various partners are cooriented towards the issue of sustainable seafood and its narrative; the issue is the common interest. Evidence of coorientation is more fully discussed in the section on CCO concepts that follows in Paragraph 6.14 below.

### **6.13.2 Commentary and initial insights on different forms of organisation**

The evidence presented above illustrates different forms of organising and organisation. The forms differ, some are more formal than others, some are separate legal entities, some are brands, and some have names but others do not. It is not only their differences that may be noted; it is also what they appear to have in common. In each case, there is a narrative, and the narrative may be linked to the brand or to partnership activity or to the issue of sustainable seafood.

## **6.14 FINDINGS SECTION3: CCO CONCEPTS: COORIENTATION**

The trajectory, as discussed above, establishes the general direction of the partnership activities. Conceptually, the basic process of the CCO approach is coorientation. The trajectory reflects this coorientation process so that the narratives and conversations of the partnership activities are directed towards a common interest, in this case sustainable seafood.

It is the common interest that is discussed here as described in the evidence from the fieldwork. There are two aspects that are identified. The first is evident in words and phrases such as sharing a common understanding or goal, alignment, and intersects. The second is relevance, which has already been introduced in the discussion on increasing meaningful participation as an element of increasing the value potential of XSPs. It is identified here as a way of expressing why the common interest is important to each partner and the way in which it appears to connect specific organisational objectives to the broader issue.

### **6.14.1 Common interests, intersects and aligned objectives**

There are various ways that participants articulate common interests.

KC (1:13 and 1:14) talked about “*having a common understanding*” and “*a common objective for the partnership*” but also highlights the need “*to spend time with each other*”.

According to ED (2:17), working together successfully is all about having a good relationship so that it “*builds ties and it builds trust*” and there is a common goal and what ED described as “*a lot of similarities – synergies between the two of us*”.

ED (1:20 and 1:22) also talked about having a common interest and the same goal, which is ***“that they are trying to do the best for every single fish on a nonprofit basis” and “I’m trying to do the same” and so “everything that we do is in common”***.

Although described as a goal, it is something very broad; it is not a specific organisational goal, rather it is expressed as a very wide, aspirational intention.

Another collaborative process that was directed by a broad idea pertains to the founding of ISSF.

ND (1:2) explained how ISSF was founded and said that leading scientists, WWF International and tuna companies got together ***“to address the future of the tuna resource and the conservation of that resource to ensure the sustainable use of the resource in the future ... that was quite a dramatic and visionary step”***.

Alignment is another description that is used, but this is more than aligning objectives.

KC (1:6 and 1:11) talked about the partners aligning with the principles and ***“the key messages”*** and said that ***“there’s overlap”***.

Pursuing a similar idea, DL (2:4 and 2:5) spoke about ***“finding the intersects”*** which would be ***“the common objective”*** which is place where a conservation objective has commercial relevance so that it is something that is relevant to both partners. It starts from working together on the first intersect so that ***“both organisations can deliver on their objectives”*** and then the partnership develops from there and the relationship deepens. Further, DL (2:12) said ***“what we find is common areas of priority”*** and that is ***“where the work jumps forward every time” and “as you progress you’ll start to see more and more intersects”***. The intersects may be quite specific and DL (1:4 and 1:5) explained that ***“if you look for all of them to start with - I think people get overwhelmed”*** and so he recommended that ***“you start very small and just start working together and as you find more points of intersection then generally it moves forward”***. DL (1:8) said that as they find the intersects, then ***“we start to collaborate”***.

These intersects are also described as ***“aligned objectives”*** (DL 1:6). According to KC (2:9 and 2:10), collaboration requires ***“a sense of shared vision”*** but this is ***“not necessarily that we have the same objectives – it’s not about that – but it’s about a feeling that we’re moving towards something that we share – so it can be quite broad”***. The sense of shared vision also needs to be related to ***“a shared sense of adding value”*** and making a contribution.

Describing the factors that making a collaboration work well, NN (1:10) explained that it is about having a good fit.

NN said that ***“we have very similar ideals” and “what we do – just fits very well with their vision”***.

Further, that ***“they have to make their environmental ideals fit with what they need to achieve from selling products”*** but ***“they want to be able to offer sustainable products and they want to ensure that it’s traceable”*** and so the MSC label ***“fulfils everything that Woolworths is trying to achieve”***. ***“It’s just a very good fit with what their business is trying to achieve anyway”***.

NN also emphasised that this is an ongoing process, so they can ***“tell their consumers that they are moving in that direction”***.

These examples indicate that there are things in common at a fairly specific level as well as at a broader level. At a very broad level, there appears to be something towards which the partners can work together and contribute towards and a recognition of having similar ideals. The idea of working towards something also indicates that the focus is on the future, rather than something more immediate so there is a sense of a common vision. Based on the examples given, the broader issue in this case is about sustainable seafood and related conservation issues.

There may also be things in common at a more specific level and these are described in different ways as intersects or areas of common priority and aligned objectives. Further, these areas of common interest may develop over time and in doing so the relationship between the partners deepens. The intersects are therefore at the heart of the collaborative relationship and working together on these areas of common interest is an ongoing process of collaboration.

#### **6.14.2 Relevance: The issue as the common interest and adding value**

Relevance may be an expression of the connection between specific organisational objectives and the broader issue or common interest and how these connections are negotiated.

As a means to initiate engagement, DL (2:3) explained that WWF needs to have relevance to the retailers ***“to really give us a mandate”*** and to create ***“an incentive for them to play their role”***. ***“If it wasn’t relevant to them ...then there was no interest”*** (DL 1:4) so that ***“you have to raise the relevance of the issue”*** (DL 1:9) but at the same time ***“remaining relevant in terms of commercial aspects”***.

Finding common ground is described as a process of negotiation priorities.

DL (1:10 to 1:12) explained how priorities may be negotiated and gave the example of working on the tuna supply chain because it was commercially important to Woolworths and a priority for WWF internationally but not a focus area for WWF in South Africa and ***“not core to what we are trying to achieve”***. DL (2:5) explained that ***“working with canned tuna is a trade-off for remaining relevant to our partners – it’s of value to them”***.

DL (2:14) said that it is possible to be effective ***“if both parties know exactly what it is that the other is trying to achieve”***.

### 6.14.3 Other indicators of coorientation

Values may provide an indicator of coorientation.

HD (2:12) confirmed the undertaking to the common interest and declared that ***“we remain deeply committed to procuring sustainable seafood – it’s part of our values and how we conduct our business”***. This declaration indicates the significance of the commitments and the alignment with the core business. NC (2:3) also expressed the importance of taking ***“responsibility and accountability for how we trade and what we trade in”*** and says that ***“it’s just such a natural thing for us to do”***.

A declaration or public announcement is a very clear way to make one’s interests known. On the basis that the commitments have emanated from a partnership interaction, then these may be connected with interests that are also relevant to the other partners. The example here is the public seafood commitments made by Woolworths, which articulate specific, measurable targets as well as the undertaking to support the overall issue of sustainable seafood.

KT (2:3) described these as ***“a coherent range of future targets”*** and yet NB (1:4) referred to them as milestones and KC (1:6) explained that the retailers and producers ***“put out commitments to seafood sustainability”***. HD (2:2) provided the wording that suggests that the commitments connect the bigger issue of seafood sustainability with a measurable time-bound undertaking. For example, ***“by the end of 2015 all of our wild caught seafood will either be caught from MSC certified fisheries”***.

### 6.14.4 Commentary and initial insights on coorientation

Coorientation is reflected in the way that participants talk about what they have in common. One of the key points that is made in these accounts is that coorientation occurs at different levels from the broad level of the issue to the more specific level of a particular initiative.

At a very broad level, there appears to be something towards which the partners can work together and contribute towards and a recognition of having similar ideals. The idea of working towards something also indicates that the focus is on the future, rather than something more immediate so there is a sense of a common vision. Based on the examples given, the broader issue in this case is about sustainable seafood and related conservation issues.

As described here, the description of intersects appears that each organisation or individual retains their own objectives but there are areas where these align or intersect with the objectives of other organisations. There is recognition that the primary objective of an NPO may be conservation and the primary objective of a retailer may be commercial, but there are nonetheless areas of common interest that may be pursued together. It is these intersects that are the specific areas where the partners are able to actually work together in a way that will add value to each partner individually but also that will make a contribution towards the broader issue at the same time. The intersects are therefore at the heart of the collaborative relationship and working together on these areas of

common interest is an ongoing process of collaboration. It is at the intersects that the partners can work together in a small way so that as they work together, things move forward.

There may be also be intermediate levels. Specific initiatives such as the green listing of local trout and intermediate milestones as established by the public seafood commitments, support the broader interest in sustainable seafood, but each represent an intermediate milestone towards the bigger issue.

Other indicators of coorientation are values and public commitments. The commitments translate intentions towards sustainable seafood into specific, time bound future targets. They are not only internal targets but also a commitment to customers. So, while sustainable seafood is the issue of common interest, the commitments are the actionable and measurable targets that support the sustainability issue. It is the targets that articulate what needs to be done to support the sustainability issue; the targets provide a focus for action at all levels including collective action. So in effect, the targets translate the common interest, the issue of sustainable seafood, into actionable work for the retailer. The issue of sustainable seafood is the common interest that the partners are cooriented towards collectively.

Relevance appears to be related to coorientation as an indicator of interest and how the interests of the partners may be connected; also that there may be some negotiation or trade-off required so that there is value for each partner and there is understanding of what each is trying to achieve.

#### 6.14.5 Summary of dimension: Coorientation

Table 6.11(a) now summarises the various areas of similarity and difference with the defined elements of coorientation.

**Table 6.11(a): Participant perspectives: CCO concepts**

CCO CONCEPTS				
<b>Coorientation</b>	Common interest <b>Different levels</b> Specific – intersects – areas of common priority - aligned objectives – common goal – similarities and synergies Broader – common understanding – sense of shared vision – similar ideals – common objective for the partnership	<b>Relevance as an indicator of interest</b>		
<b>Scale and objectification</b>	Scaling up – zooming out; zooming in	Levels of abstraction		
<b>Nonhuman actors and agency</b>	Materiality	Representation		

Source: Author's compilation.

#### 6.15 CCO CONCEPTS: ISSUES OF SCALE AND OBJECTIFICATION

Issues of scale and objectification relate to a CCO process defined in which different degrees of separation or distance may be discerned. Distance refers to the degree to which a subject is separated or removed from its point of origin such as the initiating conversation or text.

The discussion first addresses issues of scale, followed by some examples of objectification and the different levels of abstraction that are evident in the field texts.

### 6.15.1 Scale

Scale is an indicator of the level of objectification and there is evidence of scale in the accounts given by the participants.

Evidence of scale is found in the language used, so words such as leverage indicate a movement towards something larger. Second, there is the concept of influence as appropriation and replication. It suggests that as other stakeholders are influenced to act, so they add something more by continuing or progressing an activity. Third, there is the model of change that is used to describe the market dynamics of the sustainable seafood supply chain. This model relies on the principles of leverage and influence to direct change towards a larger population.

#### ***6.15.1.1 The language of scale: Leverage***

First, the language of leverage may apply in a specific case to a project or within an organisation or it may apply at a more general level to the market dynamics of the seafood supply chain.

NC (1:12 and 1:13) talked about how values can be used as “***backing and leverage***” so that having seafood sustainability as a value then “***adds to the whole thing and puts critical weight to it***”. In addition, where partners are also driving the same issue and there is accountability to report progress, then that also acts as leverage. Measurement acts as leverage and NC confirmed that “***as soon as you get measured to something then people want to start performing***”. These are all factors that help an individual (NC) to get buy-in and deliver so that “***it’s not just me***”.

KT (1:10) highlighted how a specific initiative can maintain momentum but the language used indicates that this is not just continuing at a specific level, but there is progression beyond the initiative to other areas. Talking about a specific collaboration with MSC, KT concluded that “***it was quite a good bit of leverage that helped our overall programme go forward as well***”.

To be effective, leverage needs to be applied to progress the direction and scale of the collaborative activities and to be directed towards value delivery. Examples now follow.

#### ***6.15.1.2 The language of scale: Filter up and filter down***

Scale is not only about size and attaining greater size but may also be related to position or level within an organisational structure. It may also be about extending which suggests greater scope or breadth; and scale may also be about scaling down or scaling back and reducing size, or reducing scope. The direction of change may be up or out or back. Some examples of these practices are found in the descriptions by participants.

Scale as position within a hierarchical organisational structure is evident in the description of the MSC. NN (2:4 and 2:5) distinguished between MSC as a whole, and its regional offices all around

the world as well as several global programmes that include the developing world programme. The South African office fits within the developing world team and is described as “**a very small programme that works with the developing world in MSC**”, which is also a regional outreach office.

KC (1:5 and 1:15) talked about expanding to a wider audience geographically and broadening to other constituencies “**so we are not always talking to the same people – we need to be broadening the people that we speak to**”. NB(2:23) aims “**to get the maximum reach**” and to create a greater awareness about sustainability and make people more conscious about it.

DL (1:9 and 1:10) explained that the communication process with retailers involves communication up to the appropriate decision-making authorities and then back down to the operational areas where decisions are executed. While there may be a key contact person in an organisation, it is important to capacitate them by providing the “**necessary information from our perspective to raise the relevance of this issue further up the organisation structure – so that you can get the required buy in**”. So “**then what happens is that it generally filters back down to where you need to actually make the changes**”. According to DL, to get buy-in you need understanding and that needs to go further up in the organisation to raise the relevance before it filters back down to inform specific work activities.

NB (1:3) explained that once the leadership team got involved in the Good Business Journey and owning it, it “**then trickled down to everybody else**” because everybody shares the responsibility. NB (2:7) confirmed that this approach works and says that the business strategy “**filters down to the marketing strategy**” and then “**it gets filtered onto our scorecards**” at an individual level.

Another example of where the broader strategy moves to a more specific level was highlighted by HD (2:13) who explained that the three strategic pillars of ISSF and the objective for the tuna industry as a whole, “**then filters down to fifteen resolutions**” then to thirty three actions at vessel level.

### **6.15.1.3 Influence as appropriation**

The second area that reflects scale is influence, where influence is defined as appropriation and means that an activity or behaviour is replicated and reproduced. This has been already been discussed as a means to assess value delivery. A notable example of appropriation and scale is the engagement by Woolworths in the tuna supply chain, working with tuna fishing in South East Asia.

HD (2:15) explained that “**to drive change – we want those guys that have not been on this journey to join us – that’s where the improvement comes in**” and DL (1:12) remarked that “**it was incredible**” that “**we can influence the way tuna is fished half a world away**”. Therefore, influence not only helps to take something to greater scale but it is also not limited by distance or size.

This story also illustrates that influence can be extended in unforeseen ways so that the extension of influence to other retailers such as the Canadian retailer has the potential **“to drive change all the way down onto the vessel level”** (HD 2:16). This example illustrates the idea of ‘scaling up’ involving more people and organisations, but also scaling back as the influence goes back down the supply chain all the way to the source fishery and fishing vessels.

ND (2:19) concluded that the work of ISSF and moving it forward is **“about relationships and building relationships”** and **“it’s such a complex supply chain and it’s a complex management mechanism – there’s an incredible amount of time that’s spent in collaboration and facilitation”**.

#### **6.15.1.4 The theory of change: applying leverage and influence**

In the wider context of the supply chain, the recognised theory of change for food commodities and more specifically sustainable seafood products, applies both leverage and influence.

The theory of change applies the market dynamics of the sustainable seafood supply chain. It is based on the idea of scale so that attention is focused on the point in the supply chain where there are fewer numbers. There are several accounts by participants of how the market dynamics are exploited and some of these have already been identified. Several participants referred to this model and it has already been described. This model assumes that through the point of leverage, change can be taken to a greater scale. The additional examples provided here, focus specifically on the aspects of leverage and influence.

KC (1:4) explained how this approach is understood by WWF and how market dynamics operate so that there is a **“fulcrum position”** in the supply chain. This position is held by the retailers and the producers, who are few in number relative to the fishers who supply them or the consumers to whom they sell. The theory is that once the retailers and producers shift their behaviour then the fishers, who are greater in number will be influenced to change their practices. The influence of a few towards the many is therefore a means to achieve a greater scale of change.

DL (1:6) explained the approach with retailers and in the first instance, it is the marketing area that they work with because **“there’s a large consumer awareness focus with SASSI – so that’s the initial focus”** and **“you’d obviously want to align yourself with that”**. So the marketing message is aligned with the consumer awareness and initially that is one of the main drivers of change.

ISSF market outreach is an example of how, with very few resources and working with market mechanisms, an NGO can work towards the goal of improving the sustainability of tuna stocks.

Market influence is one of the three strategic pillars on which the ISSF strategy is based (ND 2:3) and it provides information, resources and tools to **“encourage buyers to have – adopted a science based approach to continued improvement of tuna stocks and use our conservation measures”** (ND 1:10).

ISSF also collaborates extensively with other NGOs, the tuna producers, the fisheries and policy makers (ND 2:3) to effect change. While there are regulations and government policy in different countries to control fishing and various aspects of the supply chain, the ISSF initiatives are voluntary and apply market influence to bring about change as already discussed elsewhere.

So tools and resources available are leveraged and influence is effected by changing the behaviours of buyers, who in turn place demands on producers and fishing companies. The influence extends further as ISSF participating companies set new standards of practice that others may follow.

### 6.15.2 Objectification and abstraction

The concept of objectification is another CCO concept. Beyond coorientation, there is a process described as embeddedness, in which narratives are objectified. This is described in Chapter 4 at Paragraph 4.22.4. This may occur in the ways as discussed below.

#### 6.15.2.1 Give it a name

Giving a name to an object or process, identifies it as something distinct and specific and this further defines the object and creates a greater degree of abstraction.

A very specific example was related by NB (1:18), who talked about understanding the Woolworths brand and *“the words you use – the language you use – the way you approach it”*. NB explained the need to take a creative concept relating to Good Business Journey or sustainability and *“Woolify it”*. This means *“to ensure that we are on par with the brand”*. Not only is there a Woolworths brand but the process of making an idea fit the brand look and feel is also objectified in the name *“Woolify”*.

#### 6.15.2.2 Recognition and publication

Recognition and publication are two forms of objectification and abstraction.

An interesting case of awareness was described by NB (2:11 to 2:14) in which the marketing campaign for sustainable seafood went ‘viral’. This is a specific example and it is highlighted here because of the different language used to describe its success and its use of social media.

NB explained that the success could be assessed in terms of *“talkability”* by which means *“internal people talking about it”*. *“A lot of people came up to me and said – well done on an amazing campaign”* and there was *“feedback via suppliers in the industry”* and from *“MSC our strategic partners – WWF-SASSI – our raw material supplier”* and *“key stakeholders in the industry”*. There was also consumer feedback from customer research groups.

The success of the outcome, in this case, is not measured in terms of metrics but in terms of the communication that the campaign generated and which expressed the recognition of stakeholders

and customers. Recognition is also about objectification and scale and this is discussed further in the subsequent paragraph under CCO concepts.

Publication is another form of objectification and several examples were provided by the participants. There is the example of the international publication of the research Marine Protected Areas based on the line fishery database (TL 1:14), which led to further recognition in the international academic community. There is also the research on seafood mislabelling published in South Africa, described by ED (1:4; 1:5 and 1:12), and the media attention that it generated.

The seafood commitments were publically announced and communicated which is a form of publication. These have been described in more detail elsewhere. In terms of objectification, the public announcement translates the internal targets into something beyond mere performance measures. Once published, they become more abstracted so that the retail partners are held accountable to their commitments (KC 1:4 and 2:4) and they represent a promise to consumers that is credible and that provides “clarity on where we stand” (KT 1:6).

### 6.15.3 Commentary and initial insights on scale and objectification

Communication and activities that exhibit greater scale may be described as leverage; activities that reach a wider audience that also involve action may be described as having influence. The market dynamics of the sustainable seafood supply chain indicate that both leverage and influence are exercised.

Scale is not only about greater size, it may also be about extending outwards and upwards. The language used also includes terms such as filter down, trickle down or scaling back. Objectification and abstraction may be achieved through giving something a name and other means of recognition and publication of a text or narrative. As the examples provided indicate, there are some interesting examples of these concepts provided in the fieldwork material.

### 6.15.4 Summary of dimension: Scale and objectification

Table 6.11(b) below now summarises the various areas of similarity and difference with the defined elements of scale and objectification.

**Table 6.11(b): Participant perspectives: CCO concepts**

CCO CONCEPTS				
<b>Coorientation</b>	Common interest <b>Different levels</b> <b>Specific</b> – intersects – areas of common priority - aligned objectives – common goal – similarities and synergies <b>Broader</b> – common understanding – sense of shared vision – similar ideals – common objective for the partnership	<b>Relevance as an indicator of interest</b>		
<b>Scale and objectification</b>	Scaling up – zooming out; zooming in <b>Language</b> – leverage - filter up and filter down – trickle down - expand, broaden and extend	Levels of abstraction Give it a name Recognition and publication	<b>Influence as appropriation</b>	<b>Theory of change:</b> using market dynamics to apply leverage and influence
<b>Nonhuman actors and agency</b>	Materiality	Representation		

Source: Author’s compilation.

## 6.16 CCO CONCEPTS: NONHUMAN ACTORS AND AGENCY

### 6.16.1 Representation, nonhuman actors and agency

These concepts have already been defined in the literature review in Chapter 4 at Paragraph 4.22.4 as they pertain to the CCO approach. To recap, Cooren (2006) said that representation is where an agent “acts or speaks on behalf (or in the name) of a principal”. Taylor *et al.* (1996) argued that becoming an agent of the organisation needs to be achieved and validated so that the agent is recognised as the legitimate spokesperson so that the organisation has “a recognised voice”. A principal need not be a person but could include material and textual agents. Cooren and Taylor (1997) acknowledged “the central role of objects in the creation of agency”. However, Cooren (2004) also explored the idea of “textual agency” and showed how it is possible “to ascribe to texts the capacity of doing something”.

From this theoretical background, evidence of these concepts is now considered from the fieldwork texts. The discussion is presented in two parts. First, in relation to specific objects, both physical and natural; and then in relation to more complex texts or narratives that have been objectified.

### 6.16.2 Examples: Nonhuman actors as objects with agency

From a range of options, the following examples are chosen as illustrations of the variety of objects that may be attributed with agency. This is evident in the language used, but also that individuals and organisations are acting on behalf of the object and may be said to represent it. Two of these are physical objects (the fish feed and the vessels), two are natural objects (tuna and trout), one is an online resource (the proactive vessel register or PVR) and one is a specific text or document (the work plan).

#### i) Fish feed

The story of fish feed is a key aspect of securing the green listing of local trout. Without fish feed being traceable to a sustainable source, the trout would not be assessed as sustainable.

HT (1:12): *“the fishmeal that they’re using is traceable back to the boats that its caught from and it falls within the South African total allowable catch”.*

#### ii) Vessels and the vessel register or PVR

The PVR is a tool that is a key element in determining whether the tuna is caught using fishing practices that comply with the sustainability standards agreed by ISSF participating companies.

ND (2:20): *“this proactive vessel register where there’re certain practices – science based responsible practices- that the vessels will have to comply with”.*

ND (1:10): *“a science based approach to continued improvement of tuna stocks and use our conservation measures as validated by vessel participation on the PVR as a minimum benchmark”.*

HD (1:8): ***“the supplier is now actively progressing towards achieving full compliance with these measures and is working with source fishing vessels to ensure that their practices on the water are aligned with these objectives”. “This entails the source fishing vessels registering on the ISSF proactive vessel register which will provide validated information to tuna purchasers”.***

iii) Tuna and trout

As natural objects, tuna and trout are key actors in the sustainability narratives related by the participants.

NC (1:9): Talking about the Western Cape Trout Farmers and WWF ***‘representing’ trout: “when the reassessment took place they had things in place to get trout on the green list”.***

HT (2:9): ***“originally SASSI when they came out with their lists they had trout on orange – so it was quite a major drive that the local trout industry [had] ... to get it moved onto the green list”.*** The trout was first ‘represented’ by SASSI and then by the local trout industry.

HT (1:4): The Aquaculture Stewardship Council ‘represents’ trout in terms of its sustainability status so that ***“they’ve only just approved the first round of guidelines to be audited against – for trout”.***

HT: (2:9): Trout is ‘represented’ in the brand and ***“we’ve got a brand called Royale Highlands trout that’s sold exclusively to Woolworths”.***

ND (2:3): ***“conservation measures which are directed towards improving global tuna sustainability”***

ND (2:4): ***“which is both an indication of the degree - the complexity of this particular tuna because it’s highly migratory and you’re dealing with fish that crosses multi-national regions”.***

ND (1:6): ***“so a single stock of tuna can travel thousands of miles”.***

iv) The work plan

The work plan is ***“a risk mitigation tool”*** (HD 2:8) that is described as ***“a tangible effective work plan with actions and timelines”*** (HD 2:7).

HD (2:11): ***“we’re expecting our first work plan to come back from the supplier completed for each and every vessel”.***

HD (2:19 and 2:20): ***“the work plan is a mitigation tool to manage risks in the industry”*** and ***“we want to be able to follow this work plan all the way through”.***

Validating the status of the work plan, HD (2:19) said that ***“the work plan has been approved by our partner WWF-SASSI as a credible improvement project”.***

### 6.16.3 Examples: Nonhuman actors as texts or narratives with agency

Nonhuman actors may also be associated with a narrative and there are examples of broader narratives that illustrate the role and/or identity of material agents, which is more than a simple passive function. The material object (or objects) may be associated with a name (MSC ecolabel), a recognised description (the seafood commitments) or a narrative (SASSI green listing of trout).

From a range of options, examples of strategic narratives are noted below. The details are not repeated here but reference may be made to Paragraph 6.6 earlier in this chapter. Some references are provided to illustrate the role or identity of the material object in each narrative.

#### i) Seafood commitments

The seafood commitments are at the centre of key narrative that is directing the activities of various sustainable seafood initiatives that all involve collaborative activities. In each case, while delivering product to the retailer through the supply chain, there is also a focus on improving seafood sustainability.

HD (2:2): ***“Woolworths launched a set of seafood commitments last year that stated that by the end of 2015 all of our wild caught seafood will either be caught from MSC certified fisheries ... either be green listed by WWF-SASSI ... or we source from fisheries that are undertaking credible time bound improvement projects”.***

KT (1:4): ***“the more progress we make around seafood sourcing and getting close to reaching those commitments – the more we can talk about it to customers” and “the more progress you make – the more it helps to build credibility for the whole programme”.***

#### ii) Line fishery database

The line fishery database holds a key role in the research conducted on marine protected areas and the various fish species in the line fishery in South Africa. The research is recognised internationally.

TL (1:14): ***The “most successful project was when we looked at our database and we looked at a marine protected area” and “we could actually prove using our own data that the fishers provided us with” that “when the marine protected area was implemented – very soon the catch rates around this area started to come up”.***

TL (2:14): ***“we’ve got very good data – over a very long time from that fishery – so based on those data we’ve developed a method – where we can track abundance of individual species in a multi-species fishery”.*** And there has been ***“world wide application - and so international stock assessment gurus – they have taken up that method”.***

## iii) DNA database

DNA testing to identify and authenticate fish species and reduce or prevent fish mislabelling in the industry is dependent on the research database of fish species DNA.

ED (1: 2): The focus of the project was ***“on developing a database to be able to identify all the main fish species on the market”***.

ED (2:17 and 2:18): ***“the area of growth is DNA testing and forensic kind of work – it started for me with the fish species identification – and as soon as I saw that there was a need for that – it kind of spilled over into all kind of fields”. So “basically it’s the field of authenticity but the use of DNA to ensure authenticity”***.

## iv) MSC ecolabel and the MSC standard

The MSC ecolabel has a significant role in making the MSC standard effective as it is a unique identifier of product from sustainable sources that is recognised in the seafood supply chain.

NN (1:7): ***“so essentially what the MSC is at heart is a marketing tool”. “You are saying to a fisherman – if he employs best practice – he can put a label on that and the consumer will preferentially procure his product”***.

NN (1:9): ***“we are out there promoting our own product – promoting the ecolabel – explaining why it is credible – explaining the importance of sourcing from sustainable sources”***.

NN (2:7): ***“we are creating a standard that they can use or not use – it’s up to them – it becomes a tool that they can use to promote their product – it becomes a tool that NGOs can use to benchmark the fisheries”***.

## v) SASSI green listing of trout

The collaborative effort to have local trout accredited as sustainable and recognised by WWF-SASSI, illustrates the importance of the so-called green list. It also illustrates how the listing can direct actions towards more sustainable practices and involve the supply chain as a whole.

NC (1:9): ***“WWF brought to our attention that they are gonna start including trout on their listing and that the outcomes are indicating that – from their previous assessments – that it’s going to be orange listed”***.

NC (1:9): ***“they started realising that it’s not just about them and farming practices and feed and getting trout to a specific size in a specific time – it’s about the customer and what the customer wants – about the retailer – what the retailer wants for their customers” so “it’s about awareness – understanding and bringing people together”***.

HT (2:9): ***“so it was a major drive [for] the local trout industry” and for them “to sit down with SASSI and say ok how do we work together with you to make sure that it’s a green on the list – so that was a major collaboration between ourselves – the Western Cape Trout Farmers Association and the SASSI group to get it moved onto the green list”***.

#### 6.16.4 Commentary and initial insights on nonhuman agents and agency

The various illustrations highlight the different ways in which a material object may have a role in sustainability initiatives. The language used may indicate that the object itself has agency, so that vessels comply or the work plan manages.

Alternatively, there may be a representative, either a person or an organisation, that acts on its behalf as is the case with trout.

There are also narratives that demonstrate that the material objects play a role in the storyline and in achieving the desired outcomes.

#### 6.17 FINDINGS SECTION 3 SUMMARY: CCO CONCEPTS

Table 6.12 below provides a summary of the application of certain CCO concepts that are evident in the fieldwork texts, including coorientation, scale and objectification, and nonhuman actors and agency.

**Table 6.12: Participant perspectives: CCO concepts - Extended**

CCO CONCEPTS				
Coorientation	Common interest Different levels Specific – intersects – areas of common priority - aligned objectives – common goal – similarities and synergies Broader – common understanding – sense of shared vision – similar ideals – common objective for the partnership	Relevance as an indicator of interest		
Scale and objectification	Scaling up – zooming out; zooming in Language – leverage - filter up and filter down – trickle down - expand, broaden and extend	Levels of abstraction Give it a name Recognition and publication	Influence as appropriation	Theory of change: using market dynamics to apply leverage and influence
Nonhuman actors and agency	Materiality Objects with agency Texts or narratives with agency	Representation		

Source: Author's compilation.

Supporting the concept of coorientation, terms such as intersects and aligned objectives are used, and the idea of relevance suggests that the common interest needs to add value to the partners. There is also some evidence that coorientation may occur at different levels, from a specific level to a broader level. At a broader level, the common interest may be the sustainability issue, in this case sustainable seafood and this carries with it a rich narrative.

In relation to scale there is evidence that scale has several dimensions. Scale may also be evident in the degree of objectification or abstraction and examples of naming, recognition and publication are noted. Language such as leverage and influence are also indicative of scale. The market and the food commodity supply chain display the dynamics of scale, with leverage being brought to bear by consumers and by retailers to influence the practices of source fisheries.

The illustrations of how material objects are represented or how they may have an active role in a narrative demonstrate that language is important in how ideas are conveyed and how they have agency or are attributed with agency.

The implications of these findings are discussed in relation to the extant literature in Chapter 8 with the aim of highlighting areas of new understanding.

## **6.18 FINDINGS SECTION 4: EVIDENCE OF SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE**

The main discussion and presentation of the evidence from the fieldwork have been set out in the preceding three sections of this chapter. As noted in the aims and objectives at the beginning of the chapter, the purpose of the analysis is to explore similarity and difference and identity areas for further discussion. Exploring similarity and difference is an integral part of the research analysis and is achieved through the use of the IPA worksheets. It is neither a separate process nor a subsequent analysis.

The various tables that are presented to summarise each of the sections of this chapter are constructed to highlight similarity and difference. Omissions are highlighted as a specific form of difference as highlighted in the discussion on collective identity at Paragraph 6.9.3.

It is from these summaries that further discussion ensues in the next chapter and it is these areas of similarity and difference that are used as the basis of the discussion with the extant literature. From this discussion with the literature in Chapter 8, the initial insights from the findings are subjected to further scrutiny to consider whether and to what extent they adapt or extend the existing theoretical framework of XSP value.

### **6.18.1 Specific issues highlighted for further discussion**

The main analysis of the findings is summarised in two tables in this chapter and these are:

- i) Table 6.10: Participant perspectives on XSP value; and
- ii) Table 6.12: Participant perspectives on CCO concepts.

From these tables, one further step is taken to organise the findings into a suitable format in order to continue the discussion with the extant literature. Rather than continue with the structure provided by the framework of XSP value that was applied as a lens for the purposes of the analysis and interpretation and the presentation of the findings, the discussion in Chapter 8 is organised around topics that connect back to the research questions.

The differences have been transferred from Tables 6.10 and 6.12 into two subject areas that align with the research questions and 10 topics as now shown in Table 6.13 below.

References are provided to create an audit trail to the discussion in Chapter 8 and to the further exploration of literature in Chapter 7. Where there is no reference to Chapter 7, then the discussion in Chapter 8 proceeds on the basis of the literature already discussed at Chapters 3 and 4.

The first subject area addresses the context of MsCsC as an issue field. The discussion topics deal with multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration as an issue field and identification with the issue



From the discussion in Chapter 8, the research outcomes are then summarised in Chapter 9 into an adapted and extended conceptual framework of value creation in the context of MsCsC as an issue field.

### 6.19 FINDINGS CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has presented the research findings in three sections. The first section provides context with descriptions of the sustainability issues and the nature of collaborative relationships.

The main section of the chapter presents the fieldwork material and organises it according to the main dimensions of the framework of XSP value as presented by Koschmann *et al.* (2012). To conclude the descriptions in each section, there is a summary of the key points made and these introduce some initial insights on the evidence, in which similarities and differences are presented. The summary tables in each section, highlight those dimensions of the framework of XSP value that are supported by the fieldwork material as well as other evidence that indicates some possible extensions or ideas that may challenge the framework.

Finally, a section on CCO concepts concludes the chapter with evidence of similarities and differences with some key aspects of the CCO approach.

### 6.20 CHECKPOINT: END OF CHAPTER 6

Figure 5.2 again provides an orientation before proceeding to the next chapter.

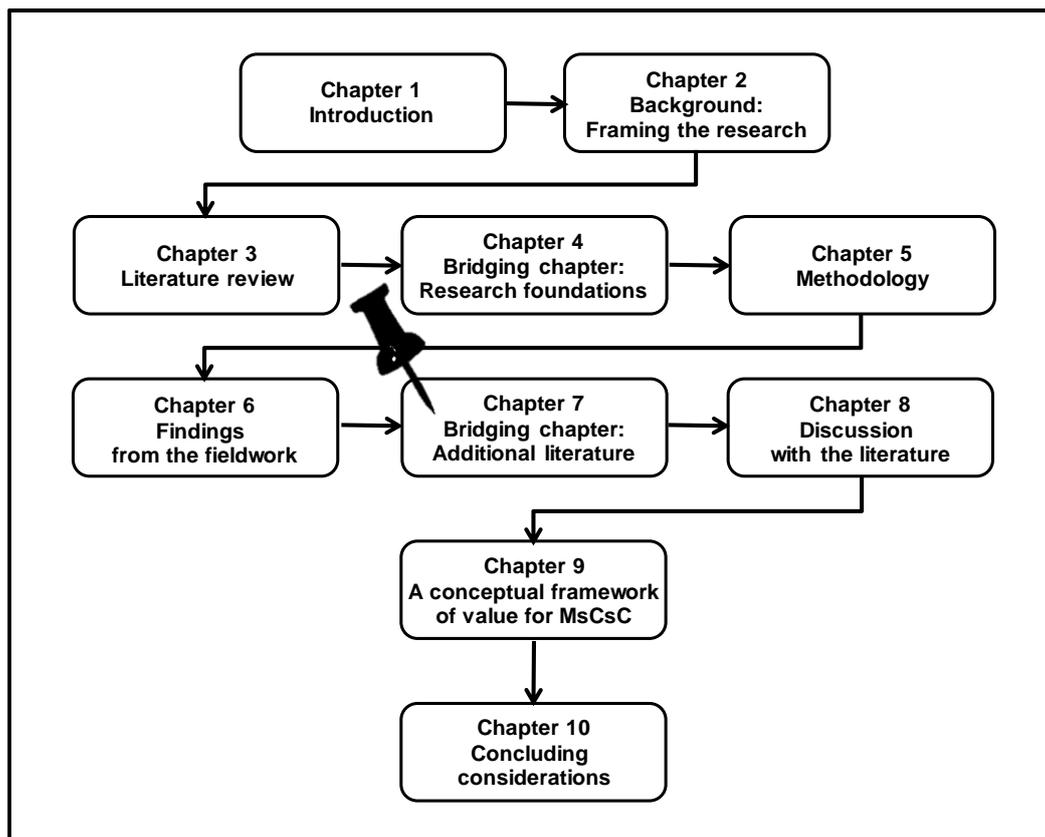


Figure 5.2: Research design

Source: Author's compilation.

## CHAPTER 7

### BRIDGING CHAPTER: ADDITIONAL LITERATURE

#### 7.1 BACKGROUND TO CHAPTER 7

The literature review presented in Chapters 3 and 4 on collaboration and cross-sector collaboration and the communicative approach did not anticipate all the conceptual issues that would arise from the research findings and which would be brought to the fore. In order to enter the discussion between the literature and the findings, some additional exploration of the literature is necessary to explore these additional conceptual issues.

As previously noted in Chapter 3 Paragraph 3.23, there is limited literature that applies a communicative approach to cross-sector collaboration.

This additional exploration of the literature serves as a bridging chapter before the discussion in Chapter 8.

**Table 7.1: References to the literature**

Subject area	Reference to literature	Component in the framework of value creation	Reference to findings	Reference
1. Collective identity and identification	4.16 – identity included in the framework of XSP value but not highlighted as a specific area requiring more depth of understanding than other areas.	Coorientation	Para 6.9.3	Para 7.3
2. Coorientation at different levels: common interests	4.15 - the findings indicate that there is more than one level of common interest	Coorientation	Para 6.14	Para 7.4
3. Credibility, legitimacy, and authority	The framework of XSP has limited reference to legitimacy, but the findings make various references to credibility in multiple dimensions	Coorientation as a self-organising process	Para 6.8.3 Para 6.9.1.5 Para 6.9.3.4 Para 6.10.2	Para 7.5
5. Relationships: emotional elements	4.16.1 – the framework of XSP value makes no mention of emotional elements. The findings indicate that it emotion that leads to more active participation.	Cycle of value creation	Para 6.9.3.6	Para 7.6
7. Value delivery as impact	4.17. Impact is not specifically defined in the framework of XSP value. The findings suggest this is a separate and relevant topic that requires further attention.	Value delivery	Para 6.10.3.4	Para 7.7

Source: Author's compilation.

In order to remain focused on the communicative approach, the literature presented here has been directed towards the CCO literature and the organisational literature that pertains to communicative

practices such as conversation and discourse. The subjects covered in this chapter are set out in Table 7.1 above, which provides references to the prior discussion on the framework of XSP value at Chapter 4 Section 3 and Section 4. The table also provides a short explanation of what is addressed by the existing framework of XSP value and the attention given to the subject in the findings that highlighted the need for further conceptual understanding.

Each of these subjects is brought forward from Table 6.13 and will be used in the discussion in Chapter 8.

## **7.2 NEW CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF MsCsC AS AN ISSUE FIELD**

The findings highlighted a key difference between the conceptualisation of an XSP as an authoritative text or organisation-as-actor and the partnership context of an MsCsC as an issue field. This point of difference was noted at Paragraph 6.9.4 and carried forward to Table 6.7 and again at Table 6.10. In the existing framework the XSP is associated with a distinct identity and narrative. In the findings, there is no evidence of a separate partnership identity with a compelling narrative of the XSP. Rather, there is evidence that participants identify with the issue of sustainable seafood and there are narratives about sustainable seafood. In the findings, it is the issue that is the focus and not the partnership itself.

Arising from this difference, the concepts of collective identity and a related concept, identification, are now explored to understand the implications of this finding for the framework of value creation.

## **7.3 COLLECTIVE IDENTITY AND IDENTIFICATION**

This paragraph explores the construct of collective identity applied from the perspective of the organisation-as-actor and the alternative concept of identification, which is a broader process and systemic view of organisation. The difference between these two separate but related concepts is a key point of difference in the nature of the partnership envisaged in the framework of XSP value, as defined by Koschmann *et al.* (2012), and the collaborative activities in this research.

In the former, the partnership was assumed to be an authoritative text (refer to Chapter 4 at Paragraph 3.23.2) so that the XSP is viewed as an actor with a collective identity. Where the partnership cannot be described in terms of an authoritative text, then an alternative construct applies. The literature on the related but separate concept of identification is explored here as an alternative. The literature on identification is compared to the literature on identity and collective identity and from this review, the concept of identification is identified as being more suited to the MsCsC context of this study.

While there is literature in different disciplines on identity, the focus here is on collective identity as conceptualised in the organisational literature and the organisational communication literature.

Hardy *et al.* (2005) discussed how the construct of collective identity is connected to collective agency, through communicative practices. They explained that effective inter-organisational

collaboration involves a two-stage process that depends on conversation and other discursive practices, where discourse is defined as “a set of interrelated texts” (Hardy *et al.*, 2005) or narrative. They argued that in the first stage, through discourse, a collective identity is constructed, and through further conversations, the identity is translated into collective and innovative action. Effective collaboration, collective identity and agency are connected through conversation and narrative.

This section presents the literature on collective identity and also introduces the concept of identification as an alternative, but related idea.

### **7.3.1 Literature from sociology on collective identity**

The concept of collective identity is grounded in classic sociological thinking including Durkheim, Marx and Weber and it deals with how a group addresses the quality of ‘we-ness’. Early conceptual thinking could be categorised as “essentialist” thinking, with a focus on a “unified, singular social experience” (Cerulo, 1997). Beech and Huxham (2003) noted that the essentialist view assumes that identity is a static phenomenon that is “stable and resistant to change” and with theories such as social identity theory, individuals can align themselves with a particular group identity and can be categorised accordingly. This alignment or social identification derives from perceptions of “similarity, proximity, shared goals, and common perceived enemies or threats” (Salk & Shenkar, 2001).

Alternative conceptions include the social constructionist view that explores how identity is formed in social interaction (Czarniawska, 1997: 44). From a social constructionist perspective, Berger and Luckmann (1966: 194-195) described identity as a “phenomenon that emerges from the dialectic between individual and society” and is “formed by social processes”. Further, they claimed that “theories of identity are always embedded in a more general interpretation of reality” so that socio-cultural context needs to be considered. Beech and Huxham (2003) explained that the social constructionist view questions the idea of a stable identity, so that identity is considered to be dynamic.

### **7.3.2 The literature in organisation studies on identity and identification**

#### ***7.3.2.1 Identity as narrative***

Czarniawska (1997: 49) adopted a narrative approach to identity and described it as “a continuous process of narration” involving the individual and how they relate to others. This is a view of individual identity rather than a collective view. However, Hardy, Lawrence and Phillips (1998) explained that a sense of “common membership” or collective identity emerges through conversation so that “identity extends beyond the individual”. This is a social constructionist, rather than an essentialist view of identity in which meaning is “continuously created and re-created through conversation and narrative”; it is not stable over time (Maguire, Phillips & Hardy, 2001). (Maguire *et al.*, 2001).

Identity, as viewed in this way, is a narrative or “a continuous process of narration” and is “co-constructed with others” from many interactions. Maguire *et al.* (2001) described it as “fragmented, ambiguous, multiple and changeable in nature”. In this view, there is no single, stable or shared identity but there is shared meaning which is constructed in conversation. This is a communicative conceptualisation of identity, as a narrative (or text), that is socially constructed.

### **7.3.2.2 Collective identity**

The organisational literature contains debates on the nature of organisational identity and identification and while it relates mainly to organisational settings, the concepts may be considered in a collaborative setting. It is Hardy *et al.* (2005) who explored the idea of connections and associations and took the discussion beyond the individual and the organisation and into the inter-organisational domain.

The relationship between collective identity and effective collaboration is explored by Hardy *et al.* (2005) who argued that collective identity is not sufficient on its own to make collaboration effective. They found that in organisation studies, collective identity is explained as the “convergent beliefs about the central, enduring, and distinctive characteristics” of the organisation and tends towards finding consensus. Hardy *et al.* (2005) argued that in a collaborative setting there was an alternative, more inclusive approach that explored collective identity beyond the consensus approach. This view focuses on communicative practices and it assumes a constructionist rather than an essentialist stance so that the participants construct the collective identity themselves. Collective identity is considered as something “produced in and through conversations”, so that people view themselves as a collective, rather than as a group of separate individuals; recognising that collective identity is not simply an aggregate of individual identities.

### **7.3.2.3 Identification and generalised ties**

Pursuing this alternative view of collective identity in the context of inter-organisational collaboration, Hardy *et al.* (2005) argued that it is a specific form of collective identity in which two specific types of conversation facilitate the emergence of collective identity. These are conversations that produce generalised ties and those that produce particularised ties<sup>4</sup> and these are defined with reference to Collins (1981). According to Collins, conversational topics that address events at an abstract level and that are remote from the local situation may be described as generalised and they create a community of people who share similar beliefs about a topic. On the other hand, Collins described particularised conversations as those that relate to “specific persons, places and things”.

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<sup>4</sup> This is conceptually different from the idea of weak ties and strong ties (Granovetter, 1983) in which network density is assessed with respect to the relational ties of an individual with friends and acquaintances.

From these ideas, Hardy *et al.* (2005) defined generalised ties as those that connect people “to a common issue around which the collaboration is organised”; they are the conversations in which the issue itself is constructed. They explained that it is through generalised ties that people “can identify an issue as relevant” and can “identify themselves as interested or affected by it”. At this general level there is not yet a collective identity but there is an issue that stakeholders can identify with. Generalised ties highlight identification rather than identity.

The subject of identification is discussed further by Hardy *et al.* (2006), and specifically how organisations identify with partners. They claimed that there is an inherent tension for the people working in a collaborative setting, between their responsibilities towards their own organisation and their responsibilities to the collective. Four aspects of conversation are needed in order to manage these tensions and these include interest, identification, coherence and contribution. Identification, is discussed as an activity achieved in conversation between partners.

While partners may have a particularised tie or to a specific issue, Hardy *et al.* (2006) contended that while this is important, unless partners also identify with the partnership goals, then they will fail to pursue collective interests and will focus on their own self-interests. Hardy *et al.* (2006) claimed that stakeholders who are interested in an issue and also identify with each other, will be able to engage with each other in conversation and together and that both of these conditions are necessary for the collaboration to realise its potential.

#### **7.3.2.4 Collaboration and identity**

Beech and Huxham (2003) explored identity in relation to inter-organisational collaboration and argued that it involves various dynamics due to the complex nature of collaborative settings where tensions are pervasive. They found that there were arguments for both stable and dynamic concepts of identity and discussed how stability could be related to issues of trust, where predictability and consistency were important; while a dynamic view was evident where adaptability and developing relationships were seen as important.

They explored the tension between these two apparently opposing views and concluded that both were important to theorising about collaboration. Their conclusion was that identities could be relatively stable or relatively dynamic at different times or at the same time when considered from the perspective of different parties.

In addition, they highlighted that in a collaborative context, with multiple participants, there are a “multiplicity of interlocking cycles” of identity formation. This creates complex interactions so that identity is constantly being reformulated in collaborative activities such as goal negotiation, building trust, managing power, and other interactions that require mutual understanding.

#### **7.3.2.5 Identification: Finding similarities rather than differences**

While the concept of identity focuses on what is unique about an individual or an organisational actor and how it is different from others, the idea of identification is about identifying with

something or someone else; it is about finding similarities with others, rather than differences. Czarniawska (1997: 62) said it is about how “they are like us”. However, the concepts of identity and identification are closely related.

According to Ricoeur (1991), there are two fundamentally different ways in which the concept of identity is used but he explained that there is a “zone” where they overlap. In the one case, there is the idea of “identity as self” and it is this concept that is used in the literature on individual identity and collective identity in which the unity or uniqueness of an identity is highlighted. The alternative is the idea of “identity as sameness” in which resemblance and similarity are highlighted.

### **7.3.2.6 Identification as an emergent process**

While seeking an identity, as a sense of uniqueness, tends towards a degree of stability but also separateness, identification may be seen as an emergent process of seeking connections and meaning.

In the organisational communication literature, the article by Scott, Corman and Cheney (1998) is seen as foundational (Larson & Pepper, 2003) in that it integrates various streams of research. They recognised the multiple dimensions of identity; as a structure with a set of rules and as something dynamic that “is constantly being produced, reproduced and altered”. In the latter sense, they defined identification as the emergent process by which identity is negotiated in interaction; it is the ongoing construction and adaption of the “linkages between persons and groups” and a “system-level construct” that signifies “a degree of attachment to various social collectives or other targets”.

Morgan, Reynolds, Nelson, Johanningmeier, Griffin and Andrade (2004) explained that research on identification adopts metaphors so that identification may be viewed as a *target* or deliberate, rational choice; alternatively it may be viewed as a *resource* from which meaning may be extracted. They further explained that identification is related to concepts of attachment such as loyalty and commitment and they all work together. The approach adopted by Morgan *et al.* regards identification as a *source* in order to convey the image of the “organic, intuitive connections people make with their organisations”; to illustrate the multiplicity of attachments that may be formed; and to imply that identification is a force that integrates rather than fragments.

Morgan *et al.* adopted the view that identification has two *directions*. The one they described as an inward focus “toward self-identity construction” and the other as an outward focus “toward the organisation or other social group”. It is this outward view of identification that implies that the concept may be applied in a collaborative setting where individuals identify with a social group, issue or problem domain.

A communicative view was adopted by Larson and Pepper (2003), who explored the discursive strategies used to manage multiple identifications and the process by which “people construct and

negotiate meanings regarding the organisation and organisational issues". They defined identification as a process of negotiation through which "individuals either align themselves with or distance themselves from" different sources of identity. They explained that "identity represents the structural component consisting of rules and resources" while identification "is the agency component" or acts of communicating.

The literature highlighted above provides a broad understanding for the purposes of this research, and the literature review provided by Morgan *et al.* noted that there is much debate around the concept and there are various ways to explain and define identification. What is evident from the literature is that identification is dynamic; it is an ongoing adaptive process in which linkages, attachments and meanings are constructed, negotiated and adapted in interaction with others.

### **7.3.3 Identification in the CCO literature**

#### ***7.3.3.1 Identification as basis for collective action***

While the organisational literature explains the nature of connections and how they are formed in conversation and interaction, the CCO literature argues how identification, as a communicative process, can lead to collective action.

Organisational identification is a recurrent theme in the organisational communication literature and in management and organisation studies (Chaput, Brummans & Cooren, 2011). They explained that the research interest in identification developed from the work of Burke (1969) to whom they attributed the idea of identification.

Adopting a CCO approach, Chaput *et al.* discussed how the process of identification works through the "interconnecting actions of different agents" where agents may be people, texts or things. They developed the view of identification as a "communicative process through which people develop a common basis for collective action". They highlighted that to understand what identification means, also requires establishing areas of difference, which they called *dis-identification* and *mis-identification* so that there is clarity on the substance of the organisation. Chaput *et al.* explored the case of an organisation, and they applied a process view to show that the substance of the organisation is "always under construction".

This appears to have similarities to the view taken by Hardy *et al.* (2005) regarding connections being established in conversation and the dynamic process of negotiating meaning. However, the additional aspects that the CCO approach includes is the focus on collective agency that involves people, texts and other objects. Material and textual agency are discussed elsewhere (refer Paragraph 4.22.4) but the connection to the process of identification is noted here. Another key point here is that to understand sameness, simultaneously means recognising difference.

### **7.3.3.2 The authoritative text: Connecting identities**

The work of Kuhn (2008) forms the conceptual base for theorising XSPs as an authoritative text (AT) (Koschmann *et al.*, 2012). Kuhn conceives of the AT as complex and he argued that this complexity can create “identity flexibility”, however as a textual representation, the complexity is condensed “into a relatively coherent conception of identity and intention”. For the AT to remain “relatively stable and coherent”, it requires a narrative of its path into the future and to persist, it needs to build relations with others. It is the path or trajectory that allows individuals and other actors to connect their own identities and narratives with the identity of the AT so that they agree willingly to participate in the collective activities.

Koschmann *et al.* (2012) made specific note of how the trajectory connects the interests and identities of the various partner organisations of an XSP. However, they also recognised that the identities and agendas are “always constructed and open to reconstruction” so that while the drive to “create a shared identity can be strong and compelling”, there are ongoing tensions with the separate interests of the partners. They perceived the need for partners to “be flexible with their interests and identities” and they posited that this was one way to increase the potential of the XSP to create value.

At the same time, they argued that the XSP itself, needed to develop a “distinct and stable identity”, separate from the partner organisations. Koschmann *et al.* (2012) highlighted that much of the organisational literature on identity is derived from a cognitive view of a single organisation and that collective identity as a communicative construct is different. Further, they argued that to be successful the XSP needs first to be seen as legitimate and legitimacy requires a “recognisable and distinct identity”.

As explained by Koschmann *et al.* (2012), creating an identity involves two communicative practices of naming and narrative construction. Naming provides a means of recognition and a means of distinguishing the XSP from other groups or collectives. The narratives create stability; they are “textual vehicles for coorientation and for the constitution of a relatively stable authoritative text”.

Collective identity as an authoritative text is also theorised by Koschmann (2013), where collective identity is discussed, not as an organisation-as-actor but as a “communal property” or “collective’s sense of itself” or “we-ness”.

### **7.3.3.3 Organisation-as-actor: Collective identity and collective agency**

According to Koschmann *et al.*, the practices of naming and narrative construction depend on the principle of agency as argued by Taylor and Cooren (1997) that “when a collective agency finds expression in an identifiable actor, and the actor is recognised by the community as a legitimate expression of such agency” then “collective identities (such as an organisation) come into being” and the separate voice of the organisation may be discerned. The principle of agency concerns

the situation of an agent acting for a principal, representing another or acting on behalf of or in the name of another. Their contention is that when “one acts for another, an organisational link is on its way to being created” and “when the other is a collective other, an organisation is thereby constituted as an entity”.

#### ***7.3.3.4 Collective identity and collective representations***

While Taylor and Cooren argued how an organisation is constituted as an actor, they offered supporting arguments referenced to Durkheim’s discussion on the nature of society and religion. They argued that “society has no voice of its own” and yet it is a form of organisation. This may therefore provide an insight into agency or representation where there is a narrative, that is recognised and legitimate, even in the absence of an entity.

Translating from Durkheim’s original French, they explained that “it is society that speaks in the words of those who are affirming the representations” so that “the voice of all has a ring to it that no single voice could ever have”. The shared representations, or collective opinion, have credibility that comes through collective interaction and “the individual who wishes to speak for the community as a whole is the one who, either by tradition or skill, best exemplifies the collective opinion”. Further, the collective representations are sustained and given energy through shared and repeated expression, a process that, according to Taylor and Cooren, Durkheim called “amplification”.

#### **7.3.4 Concluding remarks on identity and identification**

Identification is a dynamic communicative process of negotiation in which meanings and connections are established to others or to an issue. The nature of connections may be described as generalised ties in which people “can identify an issue as relevant” and can “identify themselves as interested or affected by it”.

#### **7.3.5 Researcher note: Thinking about identity<sup>32</sup>**

See endnote 7.1 in Appendix U.

#### **7.3.6 Implications for other key concepts**

The view of MsCsC as an issue field introduces some conceptual considerations that are different from the organisation-as-actor view. Already discussed in the previous paragraph are the related concepts of collective identity and identification.

As noted above, where collective identity is conceived as the uniqueness of an organisation, it is seen as a stable or structural factor. Identification is a more fluid concept with multiple dimensions and focus on process, rather than structure and it aligns with a social constructionist view.

As the focus on identification was highlighted as a key difference in the framework of XSP value, some further consideration is now given to whether and to what extent this may have implications

for other key organisation concepts. This additional conceptual understanding will then allow for a more in-depth discussion in Chapter 8.

The first is that in the findings, the common interest was found to have multiple levels and the evidence indicated that the partner organisations established common interests and intersects through a process of interaction and negotiation so that at these intersects the partners directed attention not only towards their own objectives but also towards the sustainability issue.

The second is that in the absence of a structural component in the form of the collective identity of the authoritative text, in which authority is vested, there was evidence in the findings of other forms of authority based on voluntary mechanisms and credibility that is established through other means such as independent verification and validation. The multiple references in the findings to credibility indicate the areas in which legitimacy is sought in the MsCsC context. From Table 6.10 of the findings, credibility is highlighted in respect to each of the three components of the framework of value creation. The credibility of resources such as product, skills and expertise is seen as an important means to create capacity. For outcomes, credibility is sought through the independent verification of the validity of reports and claims and the traceability of the product. To create value potential, credibility is associated with open and transparent communication and with organisational values.

Credibility is the description used in the findings and this relates to the theoretical concept of legitimacy, which is the concept explored in the literature.

Based on the differences noted in the findings, the following concepts are now explored in more detail in the context of an issue field:

- i) Coorientation at different levels.
- ii) The related concepts of credibility, legitimacy and authority.

## **7.4 COORIENTATION AT DIFFERENT LEVELS**

It was highlighted in the findings at Paragraph 6.14 that the common interest in the issue may be articulated in different ways. At a specific level, participants spoke about aligned objectives or common priorities and they also talked about contributing towards something at a broader level.

This paragraph explores the construct of goals and goal attainment, which is commonly assumed in organisation studies (Weick, 1979: 18). Alternative concepts of common ground and common interests are introduced which are described in the findings as areas of overlap or intersection.

### **7.4.1 Coorientation and an object of value**

Applying a CCO approach to organisation places emphasis on the common interest of the parties; it is the object towards which they are cooriented as described in Chapter 4 at Paragraph 4.21.1.

Koschmann *et al.* (2012) described coorientation as aligning actions to a common objective and the framework of value therefore conveys this meaning. But there is some ambiguity here and they also made reference to “the XSP’s objectives in relation to the problem” and to “the XSPs past and future positions in relation to the problem domain”. At the same time, they defined the trajectory at a very broad level as “its general direction and what it is *on track* to accomplish”.

The original reference in this case, Taylor and Van Every (2000: 46), described coorientation as an action orientation or attitude directed towards “an object of value” or an object of common concern; so that there is an object rather than an objective. Taylor and Robichaud (2004) also highlighted that the object is a dynamic, rather than static concept; they said that it “is inherently negotiable and must be established interactively”.

#### **7.4.2 Collaboration: Common ground and common interests**

Extending the discussion to the broader literature on collaboration, in some cases there may be a common goal or common objective, but this is not always the case. Collaboration also happens in cases where there are conflicting goals (Phillips *et al.*, 2000); but as Lawrence *et al.* (1999) highlighted, each party retains their own specific organisational or personal goals for working together.

Rather than requiring a common objective, Gray (1989: 58) explained that for collaboration to be successful, a common understanding of the problem is required; it is common ground that is sought and this is where the interdependence of the parties is established. She recognised that each stakeholder retains their own interests and Wood and Gray (1991) explained that stakeholders “may have both common and differing interests”. Hardy and Phillips (1998) talked about stakeholders being connected to common issues where they “share a vision of the issues” so that there is a “shared appreciation” of what constitutes the problem domain.

On the subject of interests, self-interest and shared interests, Wood and Gray (1991) asked: “what are the relationships between the self-interests of individual participants and the collective interests of the stakeholders of the problem domain?” They identified that they are “not as easy to separate as they first appear” and “the interests of any one participant may or may not be identical to or shared with the interests of any other stakeholders”. Three types of interests are discussed, namely shared, opposing and differing where “differing interests are self-interests based on differential valuations that do not interfere with one another”.

In the case of large-scale collaborative initiatives directed towards transnational commons where “widely distributed actors and diverse interests” are involved, Ansari *et al.* (2009) argued that it is difficult to determine shared interests. However, they explained that while there may be different interpretations of the issue, the stakeholders may explore “common ground” so that an awareness of interdependencies is created and “shared interests may emerge”. Gray (1989: 58) talked about finding common ground and “finding some overlap in how the parties define the major issues of

concern". She explained that "the common problem definition around which parties can unite is rooted in their interdependence" and that it may be necessary to define the problem in a "sufficiently broad or ambiguous" way as a "superordinate goal" in order to include the multiple stakeholder needs.

#### **7.4.3 Collaboration: Multiple dimensions of goals**

More detailed analysis by Vangen and Huxham (2012) identified the complexity and dynamic nature of multiple levels and different dimensions of goals. They conducted an extensive study on the role of goals in collaborative settings and they noted that goals are used in various ways to explain why collaborations are established and what they are trying to achieve. They argued that goals are paradoxical so that the evidence in the literature suggests that successful collaboration requires goal congruence (or similarity) but that it also requires goal divergence (diversity or difference). Their analysis indicated that there is a tension between these apparently different views and this may be better understood if multiple dimensions and a variety of perspectives are recognised.

From the six dimensions discussed by Vangen and Huxham, which include level, origin, authenticity, relevance, content and overtness, two are briefly noted here. First, goals exist at different levels, so that individuals and organisations have different goals, and the collaboration also has separate goals related to "what partners aspire to achieve together". The collaboration goals may be very broad and ambitious (what Hardy *et al.* (2005) called generalised ties) or may be quite specific activities (described as particularised ties by Hardy *et al.* (2005)). Second, relevance is an indicator that differentiates those organisational goals that may be pursued through collaboration from those that may be pursued by the organisation on its own. Vangen and Huxham described these as dependent and independent goals respectively and found that the distinction is not always obvious as there are multiple goals, they are inter-connected, they are ambiguous and they change over time so that there is "a dynamic tangled web of goals".

They concluded that there are both positive and negative consequences of both goal congruence and goal diversity and that rather than viewing these in opposition as a state of tension, it may be more appropriate to consider how they might work in combination. Other insights include the need to manage conflicts carefully where there are different goals and expectations and the acceptance of the paradox rather than seeking resolution.

##### ***7.4.3.1 Organising: Pursuing different objectives but common process***

From the organisational literature, Weick introduced the distinction between means and ends. Weick (1979: 18) explained that it is common in organisation studies to assume that organising requires there to be a specified or common goal and that the attainment of the goal is the reason that people organise. Weick posited a different argument in which "goal statements are retrospective rather than prospective".

When people organise there is a distinction between individuals goals and the goals that may be attributed to the collective and Weick (1979: 91) argued that “people don’t have to agree on goals to act collectively. They can pursue quite different ends for quite different reasons”. He explained how people may use the same process or means and so they may work together, but do not necessarily need to share a common goal or objective in order to do so.

He explained this further as an issue of convergence where people get together in the first instance because they want to achieve something that they cannot do on their own; they seek a means rather than an end. The model of convergence posited by Weick (1979: 91) starts with diverse ends seeking a common means; and only later do common ends emerge.

#### ***7.4.3.2 Interests: A process of negotiation to find intersects and interdependencies***

Lawrence *et al.* (1999) explained that while parties retain their own goals, collaboration still requires “some sense of intersection of purpose” in relation to the issue and they said that this is a political process that involves negotiation of mutual benefits. It is the benefits that establish the interests or reasons for action and they argued that the interests are constructed within a context and they emerge out of a discursive process as the parties engage. In this sense interests appear to be similar to ends as discussed by Weick in that, according to Lawrence *et al.*, interests are negotiated, they are emergent and they are a consequence of the discourse amongst the parties rather than a defined in advance.

#### **7.4.4 Concluding remarks on common ground and common interests**

Rather than having common goals, people work together as a means to achieve their own goals so they need to create a shared appreciation of the problem domain and negotiate the areas of intersection. The interests of stakeholders may be shared, opposing or differing. A distinction is made between the interests of individual stakeholders and areas of overlap or intersection, with common ground that is defined at a broader level in relation to some overarching issue. It is in the common ground that stakeholders become aware of their interdependencies.

### **7.5 CREDIBILITY, LEGITIMACY AND AUTHORITY**

This paragraph explores various constructs related to credibility, which was highlighted at multiple dimensions in the findings. These included the credibility of resources such as the product, skills and expertise (Paragraph 6.8.3.2) and the need for the verification and validation of reporting outcomes (Paragraph 6.10.2). Credibility was also raised in the discussion of relationships (Paragraph 6.8.3.3) so that having the same or similar values as partner organisations is seen as important.

Another term used as an alternative to credibility is legitimacy and an example of where the terms are used interchangeably in the literature is in a discussion of global supply chains (Glasbergen,

2013). Much of the literature uses the term legitimacy and therefore the discussion focuses on how this concept is considered in the literature.

Authority is a related concept. Taylor and Van Every (2014: xiii-xxi) explored the concept of authority in the management literature and said that it is generally assumed that authority is related to legitimacy.

The different ways of conceptualising legitimacy in the literature, and how it is related to the concept of authority are now discussed, followed by a brief overview of the related concept of governance.

### **7.5.1 The concept of legitimacy**

The literature on legitimacy is extensive and covers a range of topics including the legitimacy of governance structures, organisational legitimacy, stakeholder legitimacy and the legitimacy of sustainability as a consideration in strategic decision making.

Legitimacy is commonly used to mean being in agreement with “established legal norms and requirements, or conforming to recognised principles or accepted rules and standards of behaviour” (Bierman & Gupta, 2011). A core element of the concept is “the acceptance and justification of authority” (ibid).

Suchman (1995) described legitimacy as multi-dimensional and held that it can be understood from a pragmatic, moral or cognitive stance. The first two address whether the organisation is desirable, which he described as “proper or appropriate” in relation to a set of values, norms or beliefs. The third considers whether the existence of the organisation can be explained. Taking a pragmatic view, the legitimacy of an organisation is about justifying its right to exist. From a moral perspective, legitimacy is about conforming to cultural norms and congruence with social values. At a cognitive level, legitimacy is based on whether the organisation can be understood.

#### ***7.5.1.1 Legitimacy in a multi-stakeholder context***

Other literature on legitimacy considers how legitimacy is established and maintained in inter-organisational networks (Human & Provan, 2000); how legitimacy is evaluated in multi-stakeholder partnerships (Backstrand, 2006); legitimacy criteria for multi-stakeholder initiatives (Mena & Palazzo, 2012); and how legitimacy is dependent on the construction of a persuasive narrative (Golant & Sillince, 2007). A very specific case of legitimacy that is pertinent to the setting of this research, considers the legitimacy of certification partnerships (Glasbergen, 2013).

Human and Provan (2000) defined legitimacy, in keeping with Suchman’s analysis, in terms of whether “the actions, activities, and structure of a network are desirable and appropriate”. They considered legitimacy in relation to the “status and credibility of the network and network activities” and how these were viewed internally by the partners and externally by other stakeholders. They concluded that for the network to be effective, it needed to be accepted as a legitimate form of

organising; it needed to develop a recognisable identity that was perceived as legitimate internally and externally; and it needed to establish and sustain multiple relationships.

Backstrand (2006) explored multilateral global partnerships and in this context she defined legitimacy as “the quality of the particular social and political order” and her research examined two aspects of legitimacy. The first, input legitimacy, relates to the processes and procedures and whether these are properly executed and *perform* as required; the second, output legitimacy, relates to the effectiveness of the system and its ability to *deliver* the required results. Legitimacy may be assessed only if there is transparency and accountability.

The study by Golant and Sillince (2007) combines the evaluative and cognitive dimensions of legitimacy as defined by Suchman (1995). They argued the need for legitimacy in new or developing organisations so that they may “recruit key constituencies in order to mobilise the resources necessary” for their development and address the concerns of stakeholders regarding future uncertainties. Their approach recognises the instrumental role of “narrative as a stabilising process” that can be used to establish a social context and project a plausible, tangible and reliable view of the organisation so that it is seen as legitimate. They argued that narrative provides a “prospective justification” that aligns the organisation with the interests of its key stakeholders. While the research was directed towards new organisations, rather than established organisations, the approach is directed towards engaging new stakeholders and this has relevance to the framework of XSP value.

#### **7.5.1.2 Legitimacy in the supply chain or value chain**

As the certification of product for sustainable seafood is a specific form of recognition in which the product source needs to be validated against an internationally recognised standard, this is discussed separately from more general concepts of legitimacy.

The idea of input and output legitimacy is pursued by Mena and Palazzo (2012) and they extended this discussion to MSIs. The nature of these organisations involves a transfer of power from government to private self-regulatory authorities and their legitimacy is therefore a key issue. Mena and Palazzo (2012) identified various criteria by which legitimacy of MSIs may be assessed and these include procedural fairness, transparency, efficacy and enforcement. The relevance to this study is that global value chains and global food commodity chains such as sustainable seafood, depend in part on organisations such as the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), which is considered to be an MSI. The legitimacy of the certified product depends in turn on the legitimacy or credibility of the MSC.

Glasbergen (2013) discussed certification partnerships as a form of governance where it is the legitimacy of “an authoritative multi-actor arrangement whose rules are accepted as appropriate in an issue area”. Legitimacy, in this case, relates to their processes and practices. He argued that the input and output legitimacy model is primarily evaluative and therefore it does not facilitate an

understanding of practices because it is directed towards a set of circumstances that can be assessed. In contrast, Glasbergen's analysis focused on legitimacy as a process, the drivers of the process and the criteria applied in the process. He criticised current approaches as being directed towards formal public sector requirements, rather than the needs of the private sector, for being too static and for neglecting to include different stakeholder perspectives. Rather than focus on normative expectations derived from the dominant view of what *should* be used to justify an activity, his approach considers the challenges that are being experienced in order to consider what this might mean in terms of theory and practice.

Glasbergen distinguished between internal and external legitimacy (rather than input and output), where internal relates to the partners directly involved in the partnerships and external means the wider acceptance in the market of the system of rules adopted by the partnership. He concluded that beyond the current focus on the market dynamics in the supply chain, there are also drivers at a broader level such as changes in cultural and social norms and expectations regarding the role of business, the role of markets and the broader economic system, the role of NGOs and understanding the interdependencies of a wide range of stakeholders. He concluded that there are multiple drivers of legitimacy at different levels; they do not operate in isolation and there is an ongoing process that is likely to change. Internal legitimacy does not necessarily secure external legitimacy, so that an organisation with a high level of legitimacy in a specific context may have a low level of legitimacy in a broader context.

#### ***7.5.1.3 Legitimacy as conceived in the framework of XSP value***

In the framework of XSP value, Koschmann *et al.* (2012) introduced legitimacy in three ways. First, there is the legitimacy of the XSP itself and its right to exist. With reference to Human and Provan (2000), they asserted that the success, and therefore the value, of XSPs depends on "their legitimacy as distinct organisational entities" that exist beyond the separate partner organisations. Legitimacy of the XSP is enhanced as it establishes a distinct and stable identity, which may be achieved through a process of naming and creating a coherent narrative. This is an entity view of partnerships and aligns with the conceptualisation of XSPs as an authoritative text, which does not assume that authority is a central structure but rather that it emerges in the interactions among XSP members. As members' activities converge towards a degree of unity, so a collective authority is created. Legitimacy and authority become attributes of the authoritative text and they are related.

Second, is the legitimacy of the process of engagement and whether it is doing the right things. To increase value potential, Koschmann *et al.* argued that opposing views and alternative perspectives should be accepted as legitimate, so that in turn the commitment to participate is willingly made and meaningful so that collective solutions are seen to be legitimate. In this way, legitimacy appears to mean that the process of engagement with stakeholders is acceptable, so that participants "consent to the dictates" of the XSP. The language again indicates the link

between legitimacy and authority, which is also extended to include the moral authority or legitimacy of communication practices, so that engagement requires a deep dialogue that explores deeply held beliefs and ideas.

Third, is the legitimacy of partnership outcomes or value delivery by the XSP, which reinforce its continued right to exist or licence to operate, to attract resources and to affirm its legal authority. Koschmann *et al.* asserted that the XSP must demonstrate value delivery; it must account to stakeholders and justify its conduct.

Although legitimacy is highlighted in these different ways, the framework of value creation does not appear to incorporate legitimacy as a component of the framework of XSP value and it is not included in any of the related propositions.

#### **7.5.1.4 Concluding remarks on legitimacy**

Legitimacy is discussed in the literature in multiple ways and in multiple dimensions and these will be considered in the discussion in Chapter 8 that follows.

Transparency and accountability are important in assessing legitimacy and a persuasive narrative may have a stabilising effect that helps to engage stakeholders by establishing the legitimacy of an organisation.

In the supply chain, an alternative approach directs attention towards legitimacy as process and practice. It considers internal legitimacy as the rules within a partnership and external legitimacy as the social and cultural norms of the broader market.

Legitimacy is closely connected with processes of authority and governance, and these topics are now discussed in turn.

#### **7.5.2 The construct of authority**

To recap, Kuhn (2008) described an authoritative text as “an authoritative system for cooriented and distributed action”; it is validated by those who interact with it and its power and legitimacy are reinforced through its activities and conversations. Kuhn described it as “the official firm”.

The framework of XSP value presented by Koschmann *et al.* (2012) is based on a conceptualisation of an XSP as an authoritative text. They explained that an authoritative text has authority in two ways. In the first instance, it has authority in the conventional sense of having the power to act, which it does through those who act in its name; in the second instance it has a collective voice and it may be said to be ‘authored’ by those who speak in its name.

This highlights that the issue of authority (and authorship) is a key aspect of the framework of XSP value when the XSP is conceived to be an organisation-as-actor.

### 7.5.2.1 *Different ways to conceptualise authority*

Hardy and Phillips (1998) highlighted the issue of formal authority and related it to legitimacy. They defined authority as the “recognised, legitimate right to make a decision” and explained that as a form of power, it may be held by an organisation, it may be shared or it may be dispersed.

However, if authority is a form of power, then Latour (1986) argued that “power is not something you may possess” so that it depends on the actions of others and can only be explained in terms of the actions of others.

Barnard (1968: 163) argued that “authority is the character of a communication order in a formal organisation”. While authority may be viewed as based on hierarchical position or power, which assumes that authority is vested in the person giving an order, Barnard explained that authority is in effect attributed by the person receiving an order. According to Barnard, it is only when the order is accepted, that the authority is actually established. This requires not only that the recipient assent to the instruction, but also that they understand it, that they consider it to be in their interests to comply and that they are able to comply with it.

Taylor and Van Every (2014: xiii-xxi) identified that concepts of authority typically recognise authority related to position in a hierarchical structure or to skill and expertise and these may be viewed as vertical and horizontal authority respectively. Taylor and Van Every noted that there is a greater emphasis on vertical authority than there is on horizontal (ibid: 3-5) so that the hierarchical view of authority tends to dominate.

Taking an alternative approach, Taylor and Van Every expounded the view that authority is a “property of communication” and it is their contention that “authority is negotiated in communication” (ibid: xv) and it is “a property of relationships” (ibid: 20). Applying CCO thinking, Taylor and Van Every explained how authority emerges from a process of interaction, through conversation and text. Through conversation the parties negotiate the *rules of a transaction* and these rules are then inscribed in a text (either in writing or as tacitly understood) and it is the text that forms “the basis of shared sense making”. They further explained that once “the rights and duties of each party” are established in the text, then these can be adopted in practice and in doing so the rules and roles agreed by the parties become legitimised and authority is established. The process is ongoing and recursive as continued conversations between the parties may be said to *author* the texts on which further actions ensue and every conversation, every text and every action becomes “imbricated” and layered into a “web of transactions” (ibid: 199).

Based on this argument that implies that authority is socially constructed, Taylor and Every (2014: 198) then concluded that authority “is the basis of all human collaboration”. They further deduced that nobody has authority, “it is not *possessed* by someone”. Rather, “it governs a *relationship*”.

Benoit-Barné and Cooren (2009) used a CCO approach to explore authority in a dispersed or distributed form. Following Taylor and Van Every, they asserted that authority “is a fundamental

feature of our human capacity to act in concert". They noted that in organisation studies authority is "primarily linked to organisational stability" and as "a legitimate form of power" and an "act of influence". Its influence is related to established "roles, rules, practices and beliefs".

Their research explored the collaborative interactions in a work context and how authority emerges in a process of negotiation and how it endures beyond the interactions that occur at a particular or local level. They recognised two forms of authority. The first is the authority of position, which is hierarchical authority. The other is a conception of authority as constituted in local interactions that require "the consent of those represented". Further, they noted that there are multiple sources of authority, which change over time and authority may be embodied in (rather than held by) organisational members and/or structures and it may also be distributed.

A distributed form of authority may be achieved through material or textual agency, or what Cooren (2006) called a "plenum of agencies" including human, material and textual (refer Paragraph 4.22.4.2). Benoit-Barné and Cooren (2009) identified how authority is achieved and persists and they highlighted three distinct communicative practices. The first is authority that is enabled by "an agent's capacity to speak for or in the name of someone or something"; the second, is where authority is invoked through material objects or texts that represent someone or something; and the third, is where authority may be transferred from one agent to another in the context of a conversational interaction.

In the first instance an example would be a manager speaking on behalf of their employer company when discussing product pricing with a customer and in doing so they would invoke their authority as a sales manager representing the company. In the second case, the manager may refer to the contract terms and conditions during the discussion with the customer and in doing so they would invoke the authority of the contract. An example of the third situation would be when the customer makes a request to vary the contract terms and the sales manager responds by saying that variations would need the approval of his superior, the sales director. In this situation, the authority of another person is invoked.

While each of these is described in relation to an organisation-as-actor, the communicative practices themselves are broadly stated and may be applied equally to the broader views of organisation. The broader views also make use of material and textual agency and involve agents who speak on behalf of something. In this case, that something may be the sustainability issue.

Global issues such as sustainable seafood may be classified as transnational commons, and in such cases Ansari *et al.* (2009) argued that "no overarching authority can induce collaboration". Instead, they adopted a social constructionist perspective in which alternative strategies are used to mobilise stakeholders.

### **7.5.2.2 Concluding remarks on authority**

Authority as a property of communication supports the view that authority may be socially constructed so that it emerges from interaction and negotiation.

### **7.5.3 The construct of governance**

Governance is another construct that is closely associated with the constructs of legitimacy and authority. As noted above, legitimacy is about the rules and norms that determine the right to act; and authority is about the ability to make decisions and the power or capacity to act. Crane (2010) said that governance is about how formal rules and procedures are used to manage and control an organisation or partnership so that it delivers the required performance to its stakeholders. This means that it is through governance structures that authority is exercised through controls that have been agreed as legitimate.

#### **7.5.3.1 Governance as socially constructed and negotiated**

Crane (ibid) asserted that in the literature on cross-sector social partnerships, there is currently a move away from “static and formalised governance” of a hierarchical nature towards hybrid forms of control and coordination that are “more fragmented, emergent, dispersed, situational, and issue-based” so that the rules are formed through “negotiation and practice, and are subject to constant revision and renegotiation”.

Governance that is issue-based would align with the context of MsCsC as an issue field. This is also explored by Ansari *et al.* (2009), who considered collective governance in relation to transnational commons “where no overarching authority can induce collaboration”. Rather than follow the dominant logic of rational choice, they assumed that the field or problem domain is socially constructed by the stakeholders and that strategies to build common ground identify and create awareness of interdependencies. Governance strategies identified by Ansari *et al.* include applying “soft power” which they defined as persuasion and negotiation and “concentrating power” which involves building alliances. In addition, incentive structures may be created and less privileged or “deprived actors” may be given support such as technical assistance to build capacity.

#### **7.5.3.2 Governance as a combination of relationships, hierarchy and market mechanisms**

Hardy *et al.* (2005) argued that collaboration does not rely on the governance and control mechanisms of the markets or hierarchy, but depends on relationships. However, they recognised that the individuals who are working together collaboratively remain accountable to their own organisations, so that collaboration exists alongside hierarchical and market structures.

Other forms of governance that are described as hybrids have emerged in global supply chains and global value chains to regulate sustainability and environmental requirements (Bush *et al.*, 2014). Issues of the credibility (or legitimacy) and authority of these structures are explored as well as the design of schemes that set quality standards. They identified multiple governance

structures and Bush *et al.* described three ideal types as governance *in* chains, governance *of* chains and governance *through* chains. Each of these effects change in a different way and has a different focus so that the first deals with externally defined controls such as certification standards and certification agencies. The second deals with coordinating activities between firms in the chain and this is generally driven by a lead firm in a developed country, who is the buyer and who sets quality standards and conditions for the producers and suppliers in developing countries. The third form of governance deals with how practices can be influenced beyond the chain and targets systemic change. The “growing power of retailers” and greater involvement of NPOs are noted so that “social advocacy is subsumed under market transformation strategies”. Key challenges related to transparency and disclosure are highlighted so that “disclosure is increasingly seen as an act of governance”. Bush *et al.* concluded by directing attention at the increasing expectation for more transparency, creating multiple levels of disclosure (management, regulatory, consumers and the public), which in turn creates the need for greater oversight to confirm the credibility of disclosures. The need for credibility leads to an increasing demand for independent verification of claims and disclosures.

#### **7.5.3.3 Concluding remarks on governance**

This brief overview of governance and cross-sector collaboration confirms the connection with issues of credibility and authority and highlights two key points, namely that:

- i) issue-based governance may be negotiated and socially constructed; and
- ii) in the supply chain, there is a growing demand for transparency, disclosure and validation as governance mechanisms to establish credibility.

## **7.6 RELATIONSHIPS: EMOTIONAL ELEMENTS**

This paragraph covers some specific areas of the literature on relationships, according to the subjects that were highlighted in the field work findings at Paragraph 6.9.3.6.

As noted at the end of Chapter 6 and the summary at Table 6.10, the fieldwork findings highlighted differences around relationships in terms of securing participation and increasing meaningful participation of stakeholders. The subject that is explored here as noted in Table 7.1 at the beginning of this chapter is emotional elements in collaborative relationships. These are not part of the existing framework of XSP value but are evident in the fieldwork findings.

With reference to Table 6.10, the findings indicated that in the MsCsC context, there were multiple ways of interacting, different levels and different degrees of action arising from the interactions; there were different ways to make the issue relevant and different ways to engage or mobilise stakeholders including voluntary mechanisms, persuasion, and creating obligatory commitments. The framework of XSP value describes these relational processes as “marshalling consent” and “securing willing participation” and Koschmann *et al.* (2012) explained that they are necessary for

effective value creation. As already noted at Paragraph 3.23, Koschmann *et al.* drew on the work of Kuhn (2008), who described value as a form of capital. Kuhn referred to the work of Bourdieu, who described three forms of capital as economic, cultural and social, with social capital being associated with the interactions, connections and relationships of groups.

When the findings indicated the multiple dimensions of the collaborative relationships, it became evident that the nature of the relational processes in the framework of XSP value could be explored in more detail. Since the conceptual basis of these processes is the concept of social capital, it is this conceptualisation of relationships that is explored further.

The second subject explored here is emotional elements, as these were highlighted in the findings and noted as a point of difference with the existing framework XSP value. Emotional elements appear to be an additional element in the process of value creation.

### **7.6.1 Emotional elements**

In discussing how conversations generate collective action, Hardy *et al.* (1998) considered three factors, namely identity, skills and emotion. They noted that while the dominant thinking in organisation studies adopts a rational view, a social constructionist view does consider emotions. With reference to Collins (1981), they explained that there are underlying emotional dynamics in conversations, which can produce both positive energy or negative energy. Hardy *et al.* (1998) explained that positive emotion is an important factor in driving action but that three factors work together. In a conversational setting it is skills that provide the ability to act, identity acts as a frame that determines how to act and emotions generate the energy to act. It is a recursive process so that the activities then influence future conversations. The combination of factors suggest that both cultural capital and social capital may be involved.

Quinn, Spreitzer and Lam (2012) conducted a detailed literature review on human energy and while this was not specific to inter-organisational relationships it provides a well-researched base for understanding the key concepts. They explained that human energy is a subject that is covered in a multitude of ways in the organisational literature as a resource for action and a key construct often related to motivation. Of the various definitions of energy identified by Quinn *et al.*, they cited the work of Collins noted above as an example of “emotional energy” or “energetic activation”, which is a concept covered extensively in the literature.

According to Quinn *et al.*, the literature on energetic activation considers energy to be an abundant and positive experience that makes people more inclined to act; it is expressed by emotions such as excitement and enthusiasm; and it can act as a resource to broaden thinking, encourage creativity, build momentum, generate positive action and counteract tensions and negativity. It may also act to facilitate relationship development. They hypothesised energetic activation as a key component of a reinforcing feedback loop in an integrated model of human energy that

influences intrinsic motivation and amplifies the breadth of thought and action. The study confirms the importance of human energy, as defined here, as a driver of innovation and action.

It should be noted that Quinn *et al.* explored a variety of ways in which energy is conceptualised in research approaches to motivation and recognised that these various literatures do not operate separately and can be integrated. Energetic activation, as positive energy may be contrasted with “tense (or negative) activation” that reflects negative moods or energy such as anxiety or fear. Since the findings highlighted positive emotions such as passion, pride and inspiration, this is the focus here.

In an earlier study, Quinn and Dutton (2005) also distinguished a “positive affect” or disposition from a negative affect and specifically explored energy as a positive disposition. What is also pertinent here is that they considered the role of energy in conversation as experienced in the process of coordination, which is conceptually related to organisation. They asserted that limited attention has been given to affective experiences in organisation studies.

They developed their model of coordination based on CCO thinking and introduced energy as an additional construct. Energy is defined as “a reinforcing experience”, a positive effect, and emotional energy, with reference to Collins (1981), and so their definition aligns with the other references noted above.

Quinn and Dutton argued that energy, as a positive affective experience, has a motivational effect so that it has an influence on how people act, the direction of that action and the effort that a person makes or invests in an activity. Accordingly, where the activity is a conversation, energy affects how people engage, the quality of the experience, how the conversation is conducted and in turn, this effects the coordination process. Through conversation, energy becomes a collective experience and Quinn and Dutton asserted that it “enhances the communication process” and how people interact because positive energy facilitates coordination as people “converge affectively”.

For the purposes of this research, it was useful to identify a recognised connection between CCO thinking and the organisational literature on emotional energy. While not a common construct in organisation studies, Quinn and Dutton argued that positive energy has theoretical relevance.

### **7.6.2 Emotion in the collaboration literature**

While Le Ber and Branzei (2010c) recognised that “emotionally laden relational issues” may have an influence in cross-sector partnerships, they did not explore the emotional aspects directly but noted them as a potential area for further study. There appears to be limited reference to emotions in the collaboration literature and this lack of attention to emotions, while not unusual in the context of business and organisation studies within the dominant rational paradigm, is perhaps more notable in theoretical approaches that focus on relational aspects.

While limited, there is some mention of emotions in the literature. As already noted, in the organisational literature, Hardy *et al.* (1998) identified positive emotion as an important factor in

driving action. The relevance of emotion is noted by Weick (1969: 15), who highlighted the role of emotion in the organising process; and how it is emotions or feelings that create connections between people.

In the collaboration literature, Austin (2000b: 174) argued that to be successful, alliances need people to “connect personally and emotionally” with each other and with the social purpose of the collaboration. He also said that “passion is the motivational driver” in cross-sector collaboration and “positive personal chemistry is essential”. In particular, that “social purpose partnerships appear to be motivationally fuelled by the emotional connection” (Austin, 2000a).

Although emotions are not directly discussed, Rondinelli and London (2003) highlighted the difference between “low intensity arm’s length relationships” and “highly intensive” alliances. While they talked about the intensity of the relationship, they described this in terms of the “degree of interaction” and their research focused on objectives and activities rather than the nature of the relationships.

Gray (1989: 13) made mention of how strong emotions can intervene in conflict situations.

### **7.6.3 Emotion and social capital**

The literature on social capital yields few references to emotions. In analysis of the social capital literature, Kwon and Adler (2014) defined social capital in terms of “goodwill” as a “friendly feeling or attitude”. While this definition is expressed in terms of a “feeling”, nonetheless, the literature that they presented deals with approaches that adopt a structural view or a rational perspective such as self-interest. Exploring the concept of motivation they distinguished four sources of motivation as “norms, values, trust and community membership”, but not emotions.

Sorenson and Rogan (2014) explored social capital in an inter-organisational context and recognised that relationships exist at an individual level rather than an organisational level. Individuals make decisions based on three different ways of thinking. Two of these reflect the perspectives discussed by Kwon and Adler; the third introduces a new factor. The first is an instrumental choice based on the interests of the parties and who stands to benefit. The second is based on exchange logic and considers obligations and the norms of reciprocity and when considered from this perspective, they identified trust as an important relational factor. The third orientation recognises the role of emotional elements and Sorenson and Rogan asserted that “fewer studies have addressed the importance of emotional attachments in inter-organisational relationships”. This literature is now considered.

In their analysis of the organisational literature, Sorenson and Rogan (2014) compared the rational dimensions, with the concept of trust and with the emotional or affective elements. They argued that the “logic of affection” differs from the other two logics because decisions in this case are based on “emotional attachment rather than on rational or strategic calculation”. This logic also

connects with the idea of trust so that where there are positive emotions then it can build trust in relationships.

Sorenson and Rogan specifically explored the literature addressing emotional attachment in inter-organisational relationships and they argued that emotional attachment increases the likelihood that individuals will take personal ownership of an inter-organisational relationship. They noted that there are relatively few studies in the inter-organisational literature that address emotional elements and of those that do, the topics covered deal with trust, loyalty, kinship or friendship, perceptions of similarity and shared understanding, the longevity of the relationship and social cohesion.

#### **7.6.4 Active participation and investing in relationships**

The idea of investing in relationships is noted by Austin (2000b: 121) who highlighted how more enduring alliances require a balance of value for the partners and “each partner is actively seeking ways to advance the other’s agenda” and to learn so that value is continually renewed through innovation. Austin (2000b: 121-138) talked about how an effective collaboration depends on “how well the partners manage their interaction” and this depends in turn on how much they invest in the relationship.

He highlighted various relational aspects to be managed and these include organisation, trust, communication, accountability and learning. He described organising in relation to how partners focus their attention, resources and energies towards the partnership and then how they stabilise and embed processes to ensure continuity. Austin described trust as “the essential intangible asset of effective alliance”. He also discussed how communication is central to managing processes and building trust and how accountability fosters confidence that partners will deliver against expectations. Finally, Austin argued that the “ability to learn and innovate is essential to value renewal” and as partners learn more about each other and about the issue or problem being addressed, so they are able to identify new opportunities to work together.

Le Ber and Branzei (2010c) explored the relational processes required for partners to actively manage “their differences and interdependencies” so that they can adapt and “overcome and leverage key differences” in order to accelerate success or reverse setbacks. They concluded that a key driver of success is how the partners calibrate and recalibrate their roles and expectations. Factors such as relational attachment or active engagement, complacency or lack of investment, and disillusionment or reduced confidence have an impact on the degree of success or failure. While it is not uncommon to find references to how relationships are managed, it is noted that Le Ber and Branzei (2010c) also described a more active process, which they referred to as “active engagement”. They said that this involves effort, patience and investment over time and building the intensity of the relationship as the partnership evolves. The development of relational processes are seen as “forward looking investments in crafting social innovations” from which the partners derive value.

### **7.6.5 Concluding remarks on social capital, emotions and relationships**

Emotional elements bring positive human energy to bear as a means to create connections, to facilitate relationship development and to amplify thought and action. Positive emotional energy makes people more inclined to act and counteracts negativity; it is a driver of action and innovation.

Active engagement requires an investment in time and patience and investing in relationships involves trust, communication, learning and accountability.

## **7.7 VALUE DELIVERY AS IMPACT**

The definition of value adopted in this research is noted in Paragraph 2.7.5 and adopts a broad view that defines value as the expected and/or accrued benefits for each partner or stakeholder, according to whatever each party considers to be useful or effective.

Given that the definition of a stakeholder (see Paragraph 2.7.4) is directed towards stakeholders in the problem domain or issue, then value is the benefit that accrues to each of the partners and to the sustainability issue.

The framework of XSP value includes several dimensions directed towards assessing value delivery and these include accountability to stakeholders and influence. Both of these have been discussed in the literature review at Paragraph 4.17.1. The additional concept of impact is discussed here. It is only briefly mentioned in the existing framework of value creation, but it was highlighted in the findings as an outcome that goes beyond the benefits to the partner organisations.

### **7.7.1 Value delivery: Impact**

While Koschmann *et al.* mention social impact, they did not explore its meaning nor did they define it and yet there is literature that addresses this particular concept. Janzen Le Ber and Brnzei (2014) described impact as “a central question for scholars studying organisations and society” and yet they claimed that it is seldom examined.

#### ***7.7.1.1 Assessing the impact of inter-organisational collaboration***

Gray (2000) considered several approaches for assessing the impact of collaboration because no single approach can be adopted as there is a range of different conceptual assumptions that may be adopted. She explained that the focus of transaction cost economics is specific and is directed towards efficiency; while the focus of institutional theory is at a broad level and is directed towards the impact on norms and values.

For each theoretical approach, different criteria are proposed as indicators of partnership effectiveness or success and allowance is made for failure or negative consequences. The following table is derived from the five approaches described by Gray (2000).

**Table 7.2: Assessing partnership effectiveness or impact**

Item	Theoretical focus	Indicator of effectiveness or impact
1	Problem focused	Extent to which the problem is solved.
2	Relational – a social capital perspective	Degree and nature of trust and social capital formation; the extent to which resources may be mobilised through relationships.
3	Cognitive – social construction of shared meaning	Degree to which there is common understanding and interpretation about the problem domain. Joint appreciation of the domain. Socially negotiated order.
4	Structural – a network perspective	Network density and the nature of changes in network relationships.
5	Political – distribution of power	Diversity of contributions and level of active participation; power dynamics and shifts in governance structure; sharing of power among stakeholders.

Source: Adapted from Gray (2000).

Each of these five theoretical stances requires a different means of assessing effectiveness or impact as noted in the table. The indicators range from measures of network density to diversity; from measures of trust to the degree of common understanding; from mobilising resources to solving the problem. Impact is commonly associated with the problem-solving orientation and assessing who is affected and how but equally this approach directs attention towards more specific measures of performance and financial metrics such as ROI, sales and market share.

Given the range of literature on collaboration and cross-sector collaboration as described in Chapter 3, each of these options may apply according to the research context.

### ***7.7.1.2 Impact and transformation***

In conducting a literature review on cross-sector partnerships, Branzei and Le Ber (2014), highlighted studies that focused on transformation and how partnerships “actively (re)shape the context in which they operate and/or the issues they set out to address”. They concluded that studies directed towards transformation, were interested in impact.

Janzen Le Ber and Branzei (2014) explored partnerships directed towards a transformation agenda and with reference to Austin and Seitanidi (2012a), who described collaborations that are directed towards delivery of social innovation and change at a societal level, they defined impact as “large-scale transformational benefit that accrues either to a significant segment of society or to society at large”. Being more specific, they said that impact is “the interrelated set of multi-level consequences that partners envision, articulate and choose to pursue across time and relationships to enhance the greater good”. This appears to be a prospective view of intentions.

While it is commonly assumed that impact is derived from value creation, Janzen Le Ber and Branzei argued that this is not necessarily the case. They defined value from the same source as

that used in this study, so that value is seen to be the temporary and enduring benefits that flow to individuals, organisations and society.

Comparing the concepts, they highlighted the difference between value creation and impact, arguing that there is a “dynamic interplay” and that they are related but separate ideas. They pointed out that while value, as benefit, may indeed reflect a positive impact, there may also be negative impacts that should be recognised. Janzen Le Ber and Branzei then argued that there is a need to balance value and impact so that benefit to the partners is achieved at the same time as a broader positive impact beyond the partnership.

### ***7.7.1.3 Collective impact***

Collective impact was explored by Kania and Kramer (2011) and defined as the “commitment of a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem”. While focusing attention on the social sector rather than business, they highlighted that interventions that are coordinated across sectors tend to be more effective than isolated efforts by a single organisation.

They argued that an individual organisation may achieve an isolated impact with the hope to “grow or replicate to extend their impact more widely”. Collective impact, on the other hand, requires a systemic approach aimed at shared objectives for large-scale change and complex social problems. They presented a framework of five conditions needed to deliver collective impact and a centralised infrastructure and structured process to support the common agenda.

### ***7.7.1.4 Impact at different levels***

Pursuing the subject of addressing complex global problems through partnerships, Kolk (2014) considered how impact may be experienced at different levels. She explained that assessing impact is difficult and that this is in part due to the type of goals pursued, so that broader, systemic change is more difficult to achieve than more specific or limited scope initiatives. Indirect effects are also highlighted as well as “more subtle” ways in which the effects may “trickle” from one level to another, from micro to meso and macro or vice versa. This appears to be a form of replication so that interactions between levels may raise awareness and spread the word, which may then increase the impact of the partnership activities.

Kolk examined the literature related to the different levels. At a macro level, she noted that a distinction is made between output (as an immediate result), outcome (as a targeted change in behaviour), and impact (related to broader structural solutions to the problem). Recognition is given to potential negative effects. At a macro level, Kolk concluded that the majority of studies focus on measuring output.

Studies that are focused on the meso level, focus on organisations and inter-organisational collaboration; it is therefore management and organisation studies that pertain. Kolk concluded that assessing effectiveness or impact depends on whether targets are clearly specified and

whether they are ambitious. Less attention has been given to the micro level and the role of individuals but Kolk noted that there may be “trickle effects to macro impacts” and she cited an example of employees who may affect consumers and create positive public perceptions.

#### ***7.7.1.5 Impact in global value chains***

A lack of understanding of the impacts of partnerships in global value chains and how they promote sustainable change means there is ambiguity and uncertainty around whether and how they contribute to addressing complex social and environmental issues (Bitzer & Glasbergen, 2015). They argued that partnerships are dynamic with uncertain cause and effect relationships so that their contribution is difficult to determine.

They identified that studies reach various conclusions around the effectiveness of standards and many measure impact relative to objectives, which are taken as a given and this means that indirect effects may be overlooked. There is also the risk that only a limited number of standardised approaches and issues are receiving attention.

Bitzer and Glasbergen noted that the role of a compelling narrative is becoming important and “necessary to create legitimacy with external audiences”. They also proposed that rather than assess partnership effectiveness, an alternative would be to assess the issue or problem from the perspective of those directly affected. This may have some similarities with the proposal by Le Ber and Branzei (2010b) that the value of partnerships be considered from the point of view of the beneficiary.

#### ***7.7.1.6 Measuring the impact of global action networks***

Waddell (2011: 159-166) discussed a competency framework for measuring impact. He made a distinction between measuring simple, complicated and complex activities. This has some similarities to the notion of output, outcomes and impact already mentioned, in that at a simple level, the efficiency of existing policies or goals may be measured directly; at a complicated level, the effectiveness of policies and goals may be assessed and alternatives considered; and at a complex level, involving transformation, it is understanding that is evaluated. Waddell equated these three levels to single loop, double loop and triple loop learning respectively.

Some key points include the need for a systems approach and having a clearly defined theory of change; while at the same time paying attention to the detail and diversity of measures that question a range of stakeholder perspectives.

#### ***7.7.1.7 Concluding remarks on influence and impact***

In the literature on cross-sector partnerships, impact is associated with transformation and change and the multi-level consequences of partnership activities. Value may be categorised as outputs, outcomes and impact and this creates a progression from specific, first-order effects to broader,

higher level effects. Impact may be experienced at different levels, including the macro (systemic) level, meso (organisational or partnership) level, and micro (the individual) level.

While the literature indicates that value and impact may be separate, but related concepts, in the case of this research where the focus is towards positive, rather than negative outcomes, value and impact are considered to be aligned. However, value is broadly defined as benefits and so impact is one of a range of benefits that directs attention towards understanding higher-order effects related to transformation and change in the broader community or at a societal level.

## 7.8 CONNECTING BACK TO THE MAIN LITERATURE REVIEW

The five subjects covered in the additional literature review may now be mapped onto the three frames identified in the main literature review on cross-sector collaboration in Chapter 3. At Paragraph 3.10.2, these three frames were identified as the institutional frame, the collective action frame and the strategic frame and these are now shown in Table 7.3.

**Table 7.3: Mapping the additional literature into the three frames**

TOPIC	IDENTIFICATION Para 7.3	COORIENTATION Para 7.4	LEGITIMACY Para 7.5	RELATIONSHIPS Para 7.6	IMPACT Para 7.7
	Social identity	Not discussed	Legitimacy of governance structures Formal authority and power	Not discussed	Macro- level Political distribution of power
	Identification with the issue	Intersects/inter-dependencies are negotiated Generalised / particularised ties Common interest in the sustainability issue	Socially constructed and negotiated in conversational interaction	Emotional connection to the issue Trust and positive emotions that build relationships	Systemic Wider constituency including the sustainability issue Socially constructed shared meaning
	Identity of focal organisation	Mutual benefit Shared value Strategic goals	Hierarchical authority and control – Establishing right to exist Supply chain verification	Rational choice – instrumental or exchange logic Emotional elements not included	Micro and meso level Stakeholders only Problem focus

Source: Author's compilation.

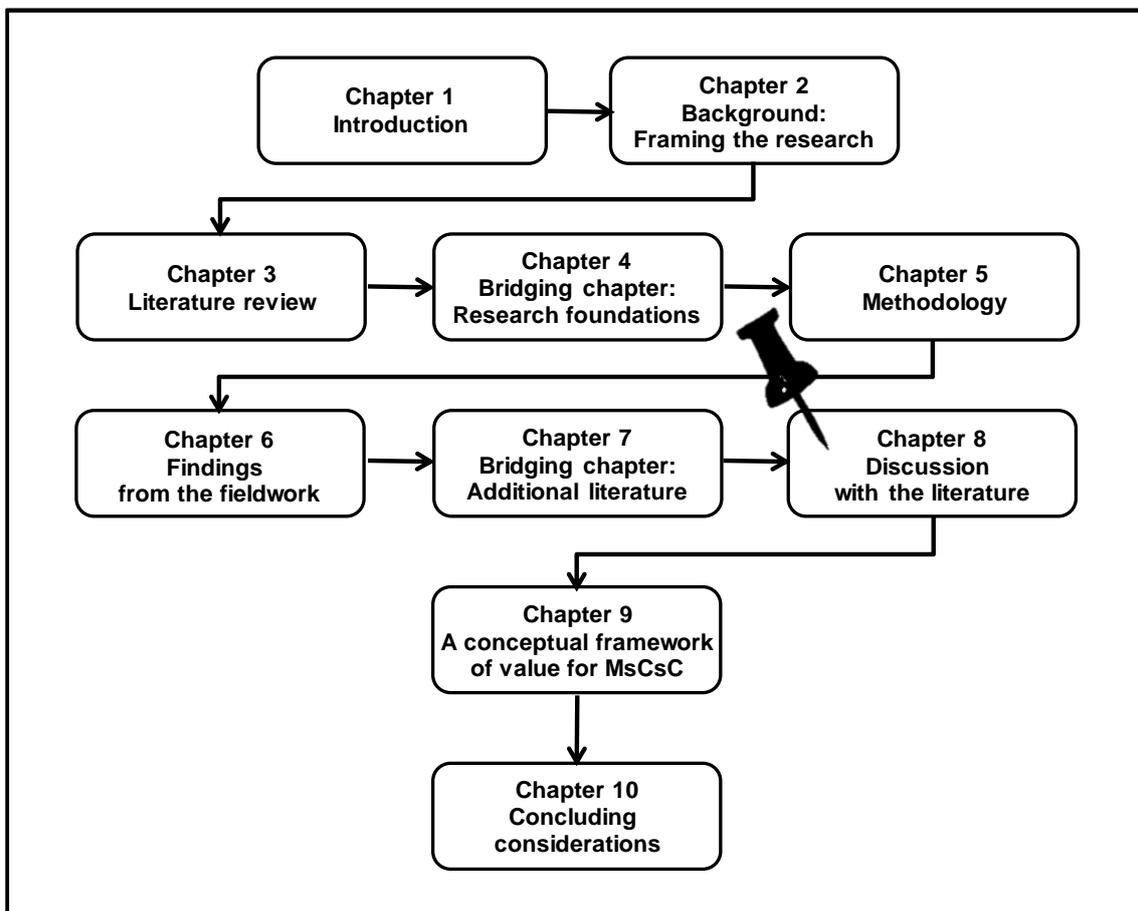
The mapping indicates that in the collective frame, stakeholders identify with the sustainability issue; they negotiate intersects and interdependencies to establish generalised ties and particularised ties with the common interest towards the sustainability issue. In this frame, the stakeholders have an emotional connection to the sustainability issue and positive emotions and trust among stakeholders build and cultivate relationships. Legitimacy and authority are socially

constructed and negotiated in conversational interaction and impact is experienced by a wider constituency, including the sustainability issue so that impact is systemic rather than problem focused or limited to the mutual benefits of the stakeholders.

## 7.9 CHECKPOINT: END OF CHAPTER 7

This concludes the discussion of additional literature and these additional subjects are now applied in the discussion that follows in Chapter 8.

Before moving onto the next chapter, the research design is shown below in Figure 5.2 as an orientation to show that Chapter 8 addresses the discussion of the findings with the literature.



**Figure 5.2: Research design**

Source: Author's compilation.

## CHAPTER 8

### DISCUSSION WITH THE LITERATURE: SEEKING NEW UNDERSTANDING

#### 8.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

Based on the summary at Table 6.13 from Chapter 6, in which the findings were organised into two subject areas, this chapter follows the same structure as shown in Table 8.1 below.

**Table 8.1: Discussion topics highlighted in the findings**

PART	<u>RESEARCH QUESTIONS</u>	<u>DISCUSSION TOPICS</u> FROM THE FINDINGS IN CHAPTER 6 TABLE 6.10 AND 6.12 CARRIED FORWARD TO THE DISCUSSION IN CHAPTER 8	REFERENCE TO DISCUSSION CHAPTER 8
1	<b>THE CONTEXT:</b> Multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration as an issue field	<b>Cross-sector Collaboration as an Issue Field</b> Multiple stakeholders; Multiple dimensions <b>KEY AREA OF DIFFERENCE:</b> Identification with the issue: Collective identity and identification	Para 8.2  Para 8.4
2	<b>RESEARCH QUESTIONS ON VALUE CREATION:</b> In the context of multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration: Applying the communicative concepts of the CCO approach: iv) How do organisations from different sectors interact with multiple stakeholders in a multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration when conceived as an issue field? v) How do the collaborative interactions and relationships create value and mutual benefits for all stakeholders and for the sustainability issue? vi) How is the continuity of the value creation process sustained and developed?	<b>TRAJECTORY</b> Topic 1: Coorientation at different levels: common interests and intersects Topic 2: A recursive process Topic 3: Material and textual agency Topic 4: Forms of capital: Economic, cultural and social capitals <b>VALUE POTENTIAL</b> Topic 5: Building and investing in relationships incorporating emotional elements Topic 6: Credibility, legitimacy, and authority Topic 7: Managing tensions <b>VALUE DELIVERY:</b> Topic 8: Accountability Topic 9: Indicators of influence Topic 10: Indicators of impact	Para 8.7.1 Para 8.7.2 Para 8.7.3 Para 8.7.4  Para 8.8.1 Para 8.8.2 Para 8.8.3  Para 8.9.3 Para 8.9.4 Para 8.9.5

Source: Author's compilation.

The first part of the chapter is a contextual discussion (see shaded area in Table 8.1) and deals with the nature of multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration as an issue field and how the process of value creation differs from the case where there is a distinct partnership entity. This

difference is explored by first discussing the idea of identification and then discussing coorientation at multiple levels.

The second part of the chapter is the main discussion about the process of value creation. It has three parts that deal with the trajectory, value potential and value delivery.

The objective of this chapter is to seek new understanding by discussing the findings and insights arising from the fieldwork in relation to the extant literature.

The chapter concludes with self-assessment check on the completeness of the discussion to ensure that all issues highlighted in the findings chapter have been considered in relation to the extant literature.

## 8.2 CONTEXT: MsCsC AS AN ISSUE FIELD

The findings indicate that MsCsC as an issue field differs from an XSP as a partnership entity, which has also been described in the literature as the organisation-as-actor view.

The literature at Chapter 3 Paragraph 3.17 refers

As noted in Chapter 6 at Paragraph 6.5, there are multiple stakeholders and multiple partnership activities and multiple types of interactions; there is no single focal organisation, but many different stakeholder perspectives.

Applying the literature to the findings, the construct that reflects the multi-dimensional nature of the MsCsC and the focus on the issue of sustainable seafood, is Hoffman's definition of an issue field, which forms around issues that are important to the interests of stakeholders (refer Paragraph 3.18.2).

The findings show that there are also multiple levels working together from the individual, the focal organisation and the collective; there are multiple dimensions from advocacy to action; and there are multiple processes such as voluntary, persuasive, market mechanisms or contractual obligations. Different methods may be adopted from experimenting to design and innovation; there may be different geographies and different timescales.

Multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration may be described as a **fusion** of multiple mechanisms and activities.

Fusion is defined as "the union of blending together of different things" (OED, 2015) rather than hybrid which is defined as "anything derived from heterogeneous sources or composed of different or incongruous elements" (ibid). It is argued that the different mechanisms and activities are not necessarily incongruous but are complementary and work together. On this basis, a fusion of multiple activities appears to be a more apposite description.

### **8.3 CONTEXT: A METAPHOR FOR MsCsC AS HYPERTEXT**

#### **8.3.1 Context: Temporal, spatial and worldviews – reconnecting with the findings**

The temporal dimension is evident in the narratives of the participants and each individual and each organisation has a past history and connection to the issue of sustainable seafood.

The spatial context is both local and global. The findings show that certain activities focused on local initiatives such as the Western Cape trout farmers and others were directed at global value chains such as the narratives of sustainable tuna.

The temporal and spatial aspects are not explored further in this chapter as they have already been detailed in the findings and they are specific to this research setting. However, this serves to recognise that these narratives are a key aspect of the research and that context is relevant to the understanding of a phenomenon.

The worldview of each participant is evident in the narratives that each participant relates about their connection to sustainable seafood, their past experiences, the nature of their work and what it means to them and the organisations they work for.

#### **8.3.2 Different metaphors: Connecting the findings and the CCO literature**

The literature at Chapter 4 at Paragraph 4.23.5 refers. Metaphors are used here as they are applied in the CCO literature. Given that the CCO metaphors are rather abstract, they are translated below into images related to sustainable seafood in order to make them more accessible.

As already noted in the literature at Paragraph 4.21.1, a worldview as applied by Taylor (2005), is characterised by the assumptions underlying a particular perspective and is the contextual embedding of each actor. A worldview may be expressed as a metaphor.

In the existing framework of XSP value, Koschmann *et al.* (2012) described an XSP using the metaphor of an authoritative text. Taylor (2011) has used metaphors such as a community of practice or a metaconversation to describe forms of organising. A CCO metaphor is sought for the MsCsC context.

While the terminology in the CCO literature is somewhat abstract and conveys a theoretical rather than a visual metaphor, it is the theoretical metaphors that are applied here in the first instance. Thereafter, visual images from the sustainable seafood context are proposed to extend and illustrate the CCO metaphors with everyday examples.

Table 8.2 sets out the different forms of organisation according to the CCO approach drawn from the summary in the literature in Chapter 4 at Section 4. Starting with the community of practice at a local level, the CCO metaphors extend to the metaconversation and the authoritative text. Hypertext is proposed as the CCO metaphor for MsCsC as an issue field as it is a negotiated,

constantly evolving, multi-dimensional reality, with a multiplicity of conversations, interactions, texts and entities.

The table is then populated with examples from the fieldwork, distinguishing between those that do not involve collaboration and those that do involve collaboration and this may be same sector or cross-sector collaboration.

**Table 8.2: CCO concepts and different forms of organisation**

CCO concept	Examples in the literature	Examples in the fieldwork	
		No collaboration	Collaboration
Community of practice <a href="#">Swimming in a shoal of fish</a>	Organised collective at a specific practice level; locally situated	Team of food technologists	Western Cape Trout Farmers Centres of Excellence WWF / Woolworths corporate contract
Metaconversation  Multivocal <a href="#">A marine ecological system</a>	A process view of organisation – multiple conversations around a specific subject area. Congeries of communities of practice; multiple CoP; A conversation of conversations; multiple conversations around a common narrative	Small scale fisheries  Fishing for the Future branding by Woolworths	Joint marketing campaign: Hooked on fishing – MSC and Woolworths
Authoritative text  Univocal  <a href="#">A big fish in a small pond</a>  or <a href="#">A small fish in a big pond</a>	Organisation-as-actor view – a distinct and stable identity; the “organisation-as-an-actor” with representatives; acts with a single voice and identity	Woolworths Woolworths brand ISSF as an organisation MSC MSC ecolabel WWF and WWF brand TSSH ISSF as an organisation	MSC Chain of Custody process  WWF-SASSI as a brand
Hypertext  Multi-vocal  Multi-dimensional  <a href="#">The world's oceans teeming with life – today, tomorrow, and in the future</a>	A field view  Multi-dimensional; multi-faceted view; self-organising; relational  Multiple conversations and texts, entities and multiple metaconversations  A multiplicity of conversations; a lamination of conversations, interactions, and transactions; constantly negotiated, evolving, multi-dimensional reality	Woolworths Good Business Journey	In increasing order of size:  The Woolworths' tuna supply chain  ISSF as a global collaborative network for sustainable tuna  Sustainable seafood

Source: Author's compilation.

### 8.3.3 Illustrating the CCO metaphors

The examples from the fieldwork findings that were used to populate Table 8.2 are as follows:

- i) Communities of practice: A community of practice is a working group that is locally situated; it is a small group with an identity that is evident as it enters into transactions or interactions with others (Taylor, 2011). An example from the research findings is the Western Cape Trout Farmers Association as described in one of the unique narratives in Appendix O.
- i) Metaconversation and authoritative texts: Metaconversation, as defined by Robichaud *et al.* (2004), exhibits a distinct narrative but does not claim to be a stable entity. An authoritative text has a distinct and stable identity involving a narrative and a name (Koschmann *et al.*, 2012). An example of a metaconversation that is collaborative is the joint marketing campaign between Woolworths and MSC and an example of an authoritative text that is collaborative is the WWF-SASSI brand.
- ii) Hypertext: The hypertext metaphor represents a multi-dimensional reality and a path that is negotiated and constantly evolving (Taylor & Van Every, 1993: 207-208). There are at least two examples of collaborative activities that could be related to the hypertext metaphor and these are interrelated narratives. They are the tuna supply chain (as described in Appendix O) and the wider narrative of sustainable seafood initiatives.

#### **8.3.4 Metaphors from sustainable seafood**

More accessible metaphors are suggested and are shown in blue italic type and underlined in Table 8.2. These alternative metaphors are expressed in everyday language and provide more illustrative images of the various forms of organisation.

A community of practice may be described metaphorically as “swimming in a shoal of fish”; which means everyone is swimming in the same direction.

A metaconversation may be described as “a marine ecological system”, which means there is biodiversity within a specific marine environment such as a coral reef or coastal area; there are different species, activities and structures all connected to a particular context; it is a complex adaptive system.

An authoritative text may be described as “a big fish in a small pond” or a “small fish in a big pond” which is sometimes used to describe the behaviour of something with a distinct identity within a wider context and the size suggests its relative power within its given context.

Hypertext may be described as “the world’s oceans teeming with life” which is a metaphor derived from the vision of the Marine Stewardship Council in which “the world’s oceans are teeming with life – today, tomorrow, and for generations to come” (MSC, 2015c). It conveys an image of abundance, not only of fish but all other life forms, including human life that depends on the health of the oceans; of a systemic view rather than a specific system; of something enduring rather than temporary; of complex, interconnected, interdependent activities and processes multiple, concurrently with multiple life forms and structures.

## **8.4 A KEY CONCEPT IN AN MsCsC CONTEXT: IDENTITY AND IDENTIFICATION**

In the existing framework, creating a distinct identity is discussed as a factor that supports value potential and it is discussed in the context of an authoritative text. In the findings, identity, or in the context of an MsCsC as an issue field, identification with the issue, was found to be a key area of difference in this research setting.

The discussion below considers how the concepts of collective identity and the related concept of identification may be understood from the findings. Where a collective identity may be recognised by its name and narrative as distinct and separate from its member organisations, in the case of identification it is the issue and more specifically the narratives around the issue that stakeholders identify with.

The CCO literature at Chapter 3 Paragraph 3.23.5 refers.

Additional literature at Chapter 7 Paragraph 7.3 presented more detail on the concepts of identity and identification.

### **8.4.1 Reconnecting with the findings**

On the subject of collective identity, although the sustainable seafood initiatives do not have an identity, there are narratives and stories that convey why the issue is important so that people can identify with the issue, through the narratives. There is a collective identification with the issue in a way that is expressed in the findings as a sense of shared ownership and a sense of shared vision.

It is identification with the issue that is important in the MsCsC context and this appears to be achieved through the narratives around the issue. These narratives are supported and developed by the stakeholders, by the organisations and brands that are part of the issue field. The findings show how the stakeholders align their messaging to ensure that key messages are conveyed to consumers.

Some of these organisations or brands are focused solely on the issue of sustainable seafood, such as ISSF, while others support the issue within a broader agenda, such as Woolworths. A brand such as WWF-SASSI has an identity focused on the issue of sustainable seafood in South Africa and organisations such as MSC and ISSF have an identity that is focused on sustainable seafood globally. The identity of WWF as an organisation is directed towards conservation, but sustainable seafood is one of the issues that it prioritises. The identity of Woolworths is defined by its brand and values of which sustainability and its Good Business Journey are a key part of the identity and sustainable seafood is an issue that is integrated into its sustainability programme.

Two narratives from the findings illustrate how organisations are identified with sustainable seafood. The first is the story of WWF-SASSI as presented in Appendix O as one of the unique narratives, in which they engaged with consumers to establish an awareness in the market for sustainable seafood. The experience of WWF-SASSI was that once consumers identified with the

issue of sustainable seafood, they created a demand for the product and it was this drive that established an awareness for retailers. The consumers and retailers identified with different aspects of the sustainability issue. The message or narrative around sustainable seafood that consumers identified with was around making the right choices to protect endangered species. The message for retailers was that there was a market demand for sustainable seafood that established a business case for them.

The second is the story, noted at Paragraph 6.10.3.1, of how the multi-dimensional marketing campaign launched jointly between Woolworths and MSC, established the recognition of the retailer's commitment to sustainable seafood and how the initiative was seen as successful both internally and externally. The identification with the issue was evident in the level of conversation and interaction generated by the campaign and this was described as "talkability". A key point was that "talkability" around sustainable seafood extended internally throughout the organisation and externally in the supply chain and with partners in the sustainable seafood space. The identification with the issue was established in conversation, through the talk across a wide community.

#### 8.4.2 Collective identity and forms of organisation

Table 8.3 below extends Table 8.2 to show further dimensions of different forms of organisation.

**Table 8.3: Identity and Identification: Name and narrative**

Item	CCO metaphor	Example	Identity or identification	Key elements of the collective
1	Community of practice	Western Cape Trout Farmers	Identity	Narrative and Name Entity in the form of a formally constituted association
2	Community of practice	Food technologists at Woolworths or Research scientists doing fisheries research	Identification	Narrative related to food technology Narrative related to fisheries No name There is a group but not an entity
3	Metaconversation	Small-scale fisheries	Identification with the issue of small-scale fisheries	Narrative No name No entity
4	Authoritative text	MSC ecolabel	Identity	Name Narrative It is a material object and can be described as a separate entity.
5	Authoritative text	Brand: Good Business Journey or Brand: WWF-SASSI	Identity	Name Narrative No entity
6	Authoritative text	Woolworths WWF MSC ISSF (secretariat)	Identity	Name and narrative Entity in the form of a formal organisation and legal structure
7	Hypertext	ISSF as a global network for sustainable tuna or Sustainable seafood	Identification	Narrative No name The ISSF network is not the same as ISSF the organisation; it is not a distinct entity Sustainable seafood is an issue and is not represented or structured around an entity

Source: Author's compilation.

It adds the dimension of identity or identification as a means to distinguish forms of organisation and connects the definition of identity and identification with the examples in the findings. Based on the literature, the choice of identity or identification is explained in terms of whether there is a defined name and narrative in each case.

Table 8.3 shows that the forms of organisation include those that have a distinct and separate identity and those where members identify with an issue such as small-scale fisheries, sustainable tuna or sustainable seafood where it is the concept of identification, rather than identity, that pertains.

Organisations, as separate entities, such as WWF, MSC or Woolworths, each have an identity, name and narrative. In this form the related CCO metaphor is an authoritative text, according to the definition provided by Koschmann *et al.* (2012). At the same time, the brands of these organisations also have a name, narrative and distinct identity, which is related to but not the same as the parent organisation. While a brand is not an organisation in terms of common business usage, nonetheless, it may be a separate authoritative text. The MCS ecolabel may also be viewed as an authoritative text with a name, narrative and distinct identity.

In addition to identity, other examples are distinguished by the way that they identify with a common interest. Here, the CCO metaphor of metaconversation or hypertext applies so that small-scale fisheries may be viewed as multiple conversations on this issue, and at a greater scale, the issue of sustainable seafood may be viewed as hypertext.

Examples 2, 3 and 7 illustrate the concept of identification. A community of practice, such as the specialist food technologists or the research scientists, do not have an identity, their group does not have a specific name but they do have a collective narrative and they identify with their area of speciality. ISSF is an interesting situation as the central organisation that is the ISSF secretariat, has an identity, although the wider collaborative network does not. The stakeholders that form the network identify with the issue of sustainable tuna stocks. It is the issue that has a rich narrative directed towards tuna; but it does not have an identity and the name ISSF belongs to the central secretariat rather than the broader network. The other example is the issue of sustainable seafood; it is the issue that has multiple narratives that are all related and are rich in depth and breadth and variety.

The word entity is used in a broad sense to include not only formal organisations in the legal sense but also something that has a distinct and independent existence (OED, 2015) and it has representatives that speak or act in its name. A brand is a case in point in that it has no legal standing but in CCO terms, it is created in an abstract form and it has representatives who speak and act in its name. The literature at Paragraph 4.22.4.3 refers.

An example from the findings highlighted the need to “Woolify” the messaging for the joint marketing campaign (NB: 1:18) to align it with the Woolworths brand.

The examples from the findings suggest that at the local level of a community of practice, the community may have an identity, or the community may share a common interest and be organised, and yet have no visible or clearly separate organisational form.

There are also differences of scale so that it is possible to identify a metaconversation on small-scale fisheries in South Africa (KT 1:13) and a metaconversation on small-scale fisheries globally (NN: 2.4). Sustainable tuna is a sub-set of sustainable seafood in general.

Various forms of entity may be described as an authoritative text, but in each case there is the stability of both a name and a narrative and a discernible entity. The MSC ecolabel is placed in this category as there is a sense of authority that is created by the credibility and legitimacy of the standard that it represents.

The hypertext is an environment of multiplicity of conversations and texts that identify with an issue and yet there is no entity that is distinct from the various stakeholders. The narrative of the issue is visible and accessible.

To conclude the discussion, the one factor from the findings that applies in all cases, whether there is a separate identity or identification, is the narrative. The relationship of narrative, identity and identification is now discussed further.

#### **8.4.3 A narrative view of collective identity and identification**

A narrative conception of collective identity is consistent with a social constructionist view and when the concept of identification is included then it allows the CCO framework to be extended beyond the authoritative text to include other forms of organisation, such as communities of practice, metaconversations and hypertext.

A narrative view is “a continuous process of narration” that is co-constructed by the stakeholders so that there is no single, stable view but multiple narratives. There need not be consensus but the findings show that the messages or narratives are connected to the common interest, namely the sustainability issue. A narrative view is aligned with social constructionist assumptions underlying the research and the CCO approach adopted in the analysis. Therefore, it makes sense for narrative to be an essential component of collective identity and identification with the common interest, which is the sustainability issue of sustainable seafood. The related ideas of identity and identification both appear to have a narrative focus.

Taking the discussion further, as noted in the literature, the concept of identity has different dimensions so that there is consideration of similarity with others and difference of self. The entity view and the related name and narrative favours the idea of identity as unique and distinct, which implies difference from others; it is the view in the existing framework of XSP value. The coherence is established by the narrative and the uniqueness by the name to distinguish the separateness of the entity or authoritative text.

An alternative that is evident in the findings and combines with the literature is to include both ideas of identity and to acknowledge the multiplicity of forms of organisation. It may be argued that this is the hypertext view, which does not entail a separate entity but includes multiple forms of organising. Coherence is established by the narrative, in this case the narrative of the issue but the focus is on identification with the issue by multiple stakeholders rather than creating a distinct and separate organisation. However, an organisation in the form of a separate entity, such as an authoritative text, is not precluded and also fits within this broader view and in this case the narrative is contained and defined by a name.

Further, given the evidence in the findings, these alternatives do not appear to be contrasting or competing options but rather they are complementary and concurrent so that they work together.

Narrative is a multi-dimensional concept that works well with the MsCsC context. Narrative works with complexity and multiple stakeholder views and different levels so that there are narratives within narratives. Narrative also conveys a sense of continuity and a dynamic, rather than a static process. However, narrative also recognises episodes at specific points in time and this may be pertinent in the subsequent discussion around reporting of value delivery.

#### **8.4.4 Multiple forms of identity and identification**

- i) Complementary and concurrent: working together

Beech and Huxham (2003) presented research that found multiple concepts of identity working together. The findings of this research illustrate multiple forms of identity within the research setting as is illustrated in Table 8.3 above.

- ii) Similarity or difference; sameness or uniqueness; connection or separation?

The literature presents identity and identification as related concepts that reflect complementary and concurrent aspects of identity as sameness or as uniqueness.

In this context of this research, there is evidence of both these views so that a brand is directed towards creating an identity that is distinct and can be recognised as separate from others and that has a unique message. At the same time, as already discussed, the parties involved in sustainable seafood seek connections with others who share a similar interest and by identifying with the issue, they become a collective that directs attention towards the issue and their collaboration becomes a collective agency moving towards the issue.

- iii) Static and dynamic forms

The static view is not only an essentialist perspective but is evident in the pursuit of predictability and consistency that is part of trust building in relationships. The dynamic view is complementary and concurrent and is an action orientation that sees adaptability as a necessary aspect of relationship building.

Both of these are evident in the findings so that building trust is discussed (DL: 1:3)(KC: 1:13)(ED: 1: 12), but it is related to a dynamic process of working together, accommodation, compromise, negotiation and persistence, that builds mutual understanding.

#### **8.4.5 Different levels: Generalised and particularised ties**

The literature explained that collaboration requires partners to identify with the common interest or issue so that they establish generalised ties and they need to identify with each other. In the findings, there is evidence that partners identify with the sustainability issue and they also express the importance of partners having similar values. Identification with the issue and with each other is affirmed as the basis for the collaborative activities.

The findings also provide illustrations of particularised ties that are described as intersects so that they are more specific areas of overlap that are negotiated by the stakeholders. The distinction between the common interest and intersects is discussed in more detail in discussion topic 1 below. This is also the level at which partners may define their roles in relation to a specific action agenda (KT: 2:8)(NC: 2.7 and 13)(HT: 2.8 and 15).

#### **8.4.6 Identification as a process of negotiation**

Negotiation is a process of conversational interaction as described in the collaboration literature (at Paragraph 3.4.3.2), in the definition of an issue field (at Paragraph 3.18.2), with reference to hypertext (at Paragraph 4.23.5), and in the framework of XSP value (at Paragraph 4.16.1).

In the findings, a process of engagement that involves establishing relevance, aligning interests and reaching agreement on intersects (DL: 1. 3), may be seen as a process of negotiation. Although the word is not used directly, descriptions of the collaboration process suggest that the conversations progress towards agreement. The process of collaboration between the trout farmers, WWF-SASSI and Woolworths involved creating awareness, understanding and bringing people together; they got together to discuss common issues, to get people's opinions, to get buy-in and find solutions around the table. The words 'getting buy-in' suggest a process of negotiation and interaction. Another example is the debates (HD: 1.8) that were needed to reach agreement on how to manage the tuna supply chain. Again, a process is described that suggests negotiation rather than instruction or planned design. HD (2.7) said that an extensive process of meetings (HD: 2.7) and involvement of all stakeholders took place and this indicates that specific effort was made to engage and incorporate diverse stakeholder needs.

In each of the illustrations from the findings, the processes described involved interactions around the common interests of the partners and can therefore be related to the concept of identification as described in the literature.

#### **8.4.7 Conclusions on identity and identification**

By combining the literature and the findings, various aspects of the concepts of identity and identification may be understood within the context of MsCsC. The findings and the literature (Beech & Huxham, 2003) both suggest that in a context of complexity, the various forms are complementary and concurrent so that they work together. These include:

- i) different forms of organisation that give attention to identity and identification;
- ii) different ways to conceptualise identity and identification, from similarity to difference, from static to dynamic;
- iii) a narrative view of collective identity and identification; and
- iv) identification as a dynamic process of interaction and negotiation.

In the context of an MsCsC, there are multiple forms of organisation. At a generalised level, stakeholders are cooriented toward the common interest and they identify with the narrative of the common interest, which is the sustainability issue. It is identification with the narrative, conceived as a process of ongoing negotiation and meaning making in conversation, that establishes the direction or trajectory of the MsCsC..

It is now the trajectory that is discussed in the next section.

#### **8.5 PART 1: SECTION SUMMARY: THE NATURE OF MsCsC**

The conclusions reached in this section of the discussion highlight opportunities for the conceptual framework of value creation for MsCsC. These include the following points:

- i) Highlighting the issue field as a fusion of multiple partnership activities and stakeholders.
- ii) Using the metaphor of hypertext to distinguish the issue field from the multiplicity of partnerships activities and stakeholders.
- iii) Conceptualising MsCsC with a focus on a sustainability issue as a dynamic form of organisation in which multiple stakeholders identify with the narrative of the sustainability issue and this identification with the narrative is a dynamic process of interaction and negotiation amongst the stakeholders.

In the next chapter, these conclusions will be incorporated into the adapted and extended conceptual framework that is developed in Chapter 9.

## 8.6 PART 2: THE VALUE CREATION PROCESS

Table 8.1 is repeated below in order to introduce part two of this chapter. As previously noted, each of the ten topics can be traced back to the summary table at the end of the findings in Chapter 6 at Table 6.13 so that there is continuity between the findings and the discussion.

The second part of the chapter directs attention towards the process of value creation. It includes three sections, according to the structure in the existing framework of XSP value, which is retained here.

**Table 8.1: Topics covered in the discussion on value creation**

<b>PART</b>	<b><u>RESEARCH QUESTIONS</u></b>	<b><u>DISCUSSION TOPICS</u></b> <b>FROM THE FINDINGS IN CHAPTER 6 TABLE 6.10 AND 6.12 CARRIED FORWARD TO THE DISCUSSION IN CHAPTER 8</b>	<b>REFERENCE TO DISCUSSION CHAPTER 8</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>THE CONTEXT:</b> Multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration as an issue field	<b>Cross-sector Collaboration as an Issue Field</b>  Multiple stakeholders; Multiple dimensions  <b>KEY AREA OF DIFFERENCE:</b> Identification with the issue: Collective identity and identification	<b>Para 8.2</b>  <b>Para 8.4</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>RESEARCH QUESTIONS ON VALUE CREATION:</b> In the context of multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration:  Applying the communicative concepts of the CCO approach:  i) How do organisations from different sectors interact with multiple stakeholders in a multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration when conceived as an issue field?  ii) How do the collaborative interactions and relationships create value and mutual benefits for all stakeholders and for the sustainability issue?  iii) How is the continuity of the value creation process sustained and developed?	<b>TRAJECTORY</b>  Topic 1: Coorientation at different levels: common interests and intersects  Topic 2: A recursive process  Topic 3: Material and textual agency  Topic 4: Forms of capital: Economic, cultural and social capitals  <b>VALUE POTENTIAL</b>  Topic 5: Building and investing in relationships incorporating emotional elements  Topic 6: Credibility, legitimacy, and authority  Topic 7: Managing tensions  <b>VALUE DELIVERY:</b>  Topic 8: Accountability  Topic 9: Indicators of influence  Topic 10: Indicators of impact	<b>Para 8.7.1</b>  <b>Para 8.7.2</b>  <b>Para 8.7.3</b>  <b>Para 8.7.4</b>  <b>Para 8.8.1</b>  <b>Para 8.8.2</b>  <b>Para 8.8.3</b>  <b>Para 8.9.3</b>  <b>Para 8.9.4</b>  <b>Para 8.9.5</b>

Source: Author's compilation.

## 8.7 VALUE CREATION: TRAJECTORY AS COLLECTIVE AGENCY

The topics covered in this section are shown in the shaded area of Table 8.1. They are coorientation, common interests and intersects, material and textual agency, forms of capital and a

recursive process of learning and adaptation. These topics are related and there are communicative practices to support the trajectory, its direction and capacity to act and to make it effective.

At the end of the section, the underlying communicative practices are distilled from the combined fieldwork findings and the literature and some conclusions are presented which will then form the basis of the conceptual framework presented in the next chapter.

### **8.7.1 Discussion topic 1: Coorientation, common interests and intersects**

The first topic considers coorientation, which is a core concept in the CCO literature, that assumes an object of value or common interest. Coorientation is a dynamic process and the direction or orientation or action is towards the common interest. The common interest indicates the direction of movement or change; it is towards the common interest that the interactions (conversations) and actions are focused. Coorientation is therefore related to trajectory.

The collaboration literature indicates that there are different ways to consider direction. There are those that assume shared goals, so that the partners agree to pursue the same goals; and there are those that assume that organisations pursue their own, different goals but may still be connected to a common issue at a different level.

The existing XSP framework adopts a CCO approach and recognises coorientation, but has some ambiguity by referring to a common objective and a problem domain, rather than a common interest.

In this first topic, connections are made between the findings and the literature in relation to common goals, common interest; dependent goals and interdependent interests, the importance of establishing relevance and the role of negotiation.

The literature at Chapter 7 Paragraph 7.4 refers.

#### ***8.7.1.1 Reconnecting with the findings***

The findings include evidence of multiple perspectives and multiple levels so that there are goals and strategies at an organisational level, but there is also recognition of a collective responsibility for the sustainability issue. Different levels are also evident from the specific level of aligned objectives to an intermediate level of milestones, which are broader, less frequent measures that differ from specific targets, so that the milestones establish a pathway. Similar to the milestones are the public commitments but these are external rather than internal; they are agreed with other partners and represent actionable, time bound future targets; they extend beyond the partners to involve a wider constituency of consumers and the public; and they connect with the sustainability issue of sustainable seafood. Overall, the partners are working together towards the broadest level, the overall common interest in sustainable seafood. The findings therefore indicate several levels, some of which are organisation specific and others that involve partners and at the broadest

level there are also other external stakeholders. Specific goals are described as more immediate and current, whereas the broader milestones and commitments are future oriented and long term.

In the findings, the language used, whether in business or a NPO, is the business language of goals, objectives and targets, with the distinction made with milestones as a pathway to the future, reflecting a direction or trajectory and the commitments towards the sustainability issue.

Evidence in the findings also includes “aligned objectives” so that in addition to the overall interest that is common to the partners, there are also more immediate objectives that the partners may have in common. Other descriptions include “intersects” and areas of overlap.

The findings indicate that there are different levels, different timescales (short-term and long-term) and different dimensions (specific and broad) involved here. It is at the intersects that the partners can work together in a small way so that as they work together, things move forward.

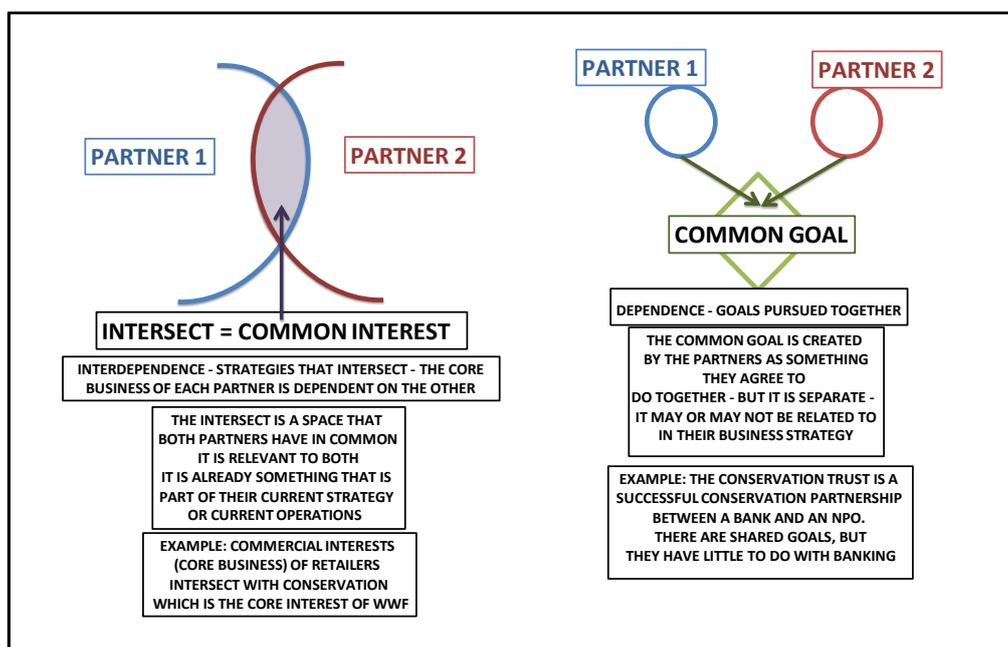
The findings therefore indicate an inclusiveness of multiple levels and multiple dimensions.

Relevance is noted in several ways in the findings and in one instance it is used to describe how the interests of the partners may be connected. Evidence from the fieldwork also highlighted processes of negotiations or trade-offs between partners and this process was related to establishing relevance and finding the intersects between the partners.

#### 8.7.1.2 *Bringing together the findings and the literature*

- i) Multiplicity: multiple concurrent and interconnected levels and dimensions

Drawing together the findings and the literature, Figure 8.1 distinguishes dependent and interdependent goals.



**Figure 8.1: Intersects and shared objectives**

Source: Author's compilation.

At right, a common goal as an agreed objective for collaboration where both partners work together. It is a dependent goal where both partners must contribute but as such, it is shown as separate from the core interests of one or both of the partners. At left is a depiction of an intersection of interests where there is an area of overlap in the core long-term strategies of each partner. This is a common interest and an area of interdependence. Adopting the language of CCO, common ground is shown as common interest in Figure 8.1. While these are shown as dyads, coorientation towards a common interest is not restricted to only two partners.

There is evidence of common goals and common interests at multiple levels in both the findings and the collaboration literature and this goes beyond the idea of coorientation as a common objective that is described in the existing framework of XSP value.

In addition, there is evidence in the findings that multiple levels exist concurrently and in conjunction with multiple dimensions such as broad and specific, long-term and short-term, shared goals and aligned objectives. Concurrent conveys a meaning of running side by side and occurring together (OED, 2015), but the findings indicate that there is more than this, that the different dimensions and levels also interact or work together. This therefore appears to describe the interdependence of these multiple dimensions.

The findings contain evidence of intersects in the strategies of partners with the example of the NPO with conservation as the driver of strategy and the retailer with commercial interests driving their strategy. At the same time there is an example of shared goals in the case of the strategic partnership between the NPO and the retailer in which there is a contractual agreement on specific, time bound objectives. These examples are indicative of what has been defined as generalised ties and particularised ties. They do not appear as independent activities; rather they are concurrent and interconnected. It is the interconnectedness that appears to reflect the interdependencies of the partners.

Vangen and Huxham (2012) confirmed the complexity and interconnectedness of goals in a collaborative setting and described it as an “entanglement” of goals. They also concluded that “any mutual understanding of each other’s goals” and agreement tends to be short lived and so the process is continuous. This is also reflected in the findings where mutual understanding is raised as a factor so that the parties need to understand each other in terms of goals and roles in order to continue to be relevant to each other.

The concurrent and interconnected nature of the different levels and dimensions and the continuity of the process suggests that multiplicity would be an appropriate description. But it is a dynamic process that is described in the findings as an evolving process.

These examples from the findings indicate that different types of goals and interests exist at different levels and in different dimensions and there is literature that supports this view.

## ii) Relevance and interdependence

Level is one of the dimensions of common goals described in the research of Vangen and Huxham (2012). Another is relevance and this has already been noted as a factor discussed in the findings so that it is by “raising the relevance of the issue” that buy-in from partners is achieved and partners build the relevance in their organisations. Relevance appears to be an indicator of interest and where there is relevance for more than one partner, then there is an intersect; and so relevance is an indicator of common interests.

The findings connect relevance with the sustainability issue and the potential for value creation. From an NPO perspective, it is by being relevant that a mandate is established but also there is a need to “remain relevant to each other” which is at a more specific level. The findings suggest that relevance draws attention to areas of common interest related to the common interest in the sustainability issue and also at a more specific level there is a focus on action areas where the partners agree to work together.

It is also noted that one of the features of social construction, as defined by Berger and Luckmann (1966: 43-53) is relevance so that “my relevance structures intersect with the relevance structures of others at many points, as a result of which we have interesting things to say to each other”. Taking this from an individual view to a collective would support the contention that where there is relevance to each partner, then points of intersects will be found and these are where partners identify common interests. It is by staying relevant that the relationship continues to add value so that there is a connection between relevance and value creation.

Based on this evidence, it is suggested that in the case of interdependence, where a common interest is sought, it is those areas that are relevant to the strategic interests of each partner that will highlight the intersects. As a continuous process, the findings indicate that relevance needs to be continually reaffirmed or re-established. Relevance is an indicator of more specific action areas where the partners can work together.

The process of establishing and maintaining relevance, so that the intersects can be established, is described as negotiation.

### iii) Negotiation as conversational interaction

In the findings, the participants’ descriptions indicate how the process involves making trade-offs or getting buy-in or creating incentives; there are explanations of how priorities are negotiated between partners or how targets are negotiated internally.

In the collaboration literature, the social constructionist view assumes that relationships are negotiated on an ongoing basis (Hardy *et al.*, 2005). The concept of negotiation introduces some ambiguity, with different meanings being evident in how it is applied at a theoretical level compared to more common business usage. Negotiation in the context of this research is not the narrow view commonly applied that assumes an oppositional bargaining stance, but a broader view that is characterised by “conversational interactions between collaborating parties” (Gray, 1989: 25).

The concept of negotiation as conversational interactions suggests the willing or voluntary engagement of partners, rather than a process involving opposition, disagreement or difference. However, even as conversational interactions, negotiation would not necessarily be free of power dynamics, but the nature of the dynamics may differ. There is evidence to support this contention and the findings include examples of persuasion and advocacy.

#### iv) Language

Language does not always convey a consistent message across contexts so that words such as goals, objectives and interests are used in different ways in the fieldwork and in the literature and there is no consistency in the literature itself. There is no right answer here, but an appropriate choice needed to be made for this research.

While the words goal and objectives are used in a variety of ways, both the findings and the literature provide evidence of different levels and different timescale. It is these differences that need to be conveyed. The choice of language needs to distinguish these different levels and different timescales. This is set out in Figure 8.2 below.

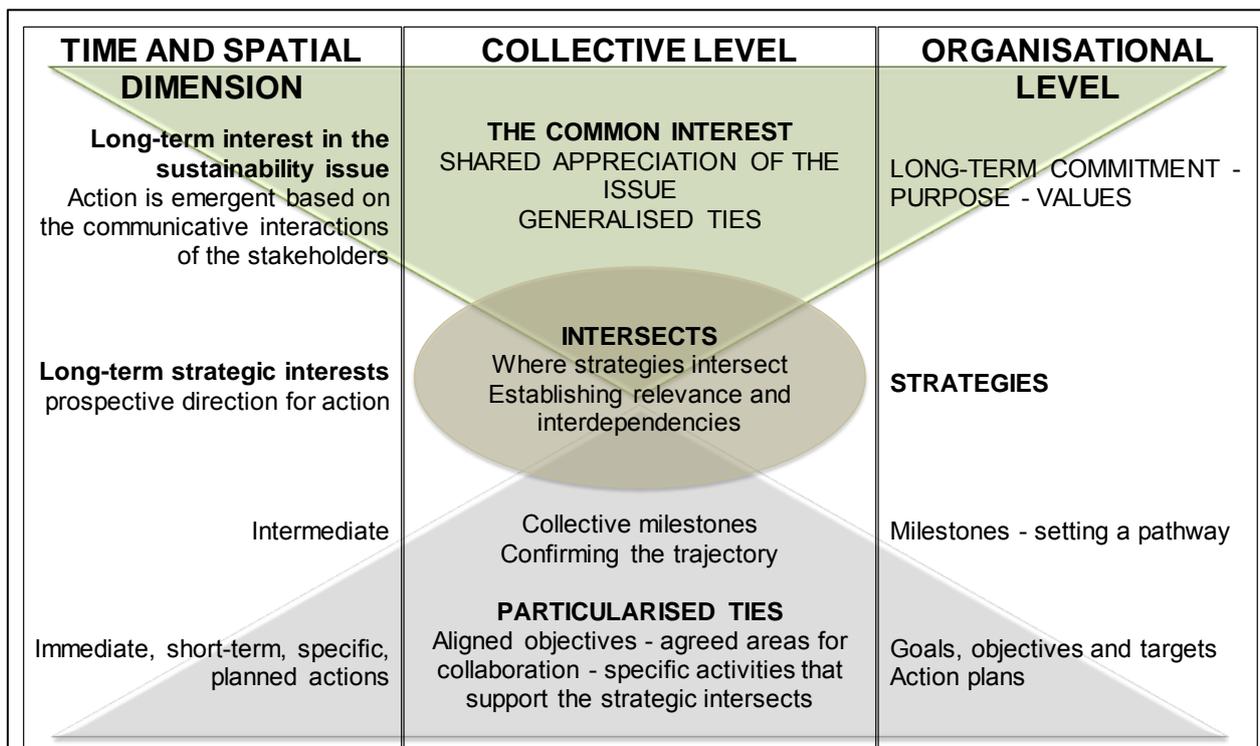
By comparing the findings and the literature, it is possible to distinguish between goals and targets at the organisational level, which are short-term and specific and intermediate level milestones that demarcate the pathways to be followed by organisations so that they keep on track towards their long-term objectives.

#### v) Particularised ties and generalised ties

Lastly there is the common interest, the sustainability issue itself. It is the issue that all the partners and stakeholders have in common. Aligned objectives are specific and action oriented; they may be described as particularised ties between the partners. The common interest or issue is an expression of the shared appreciation of the issue and may be described as the generalised ties between the partners. It is where strategies intersect and interdependencies are established and maintained, that the relevance to each partner and to the sustainability issue converges.

Figure 8.2 below provides a summary of the proposed language for the adapted and extended conceptual framework to distinguish the different dimensions, timescales and levels. In this proposal, intersects and interdependencies are directed towards the long-term so that it is in the strategies of partner organisations where intersects are found; and it is in the intersects that interdependencies are established.

Milestones, as described in the findings, appear to be negotiated with partners, but relate to internal organisational measures of an intermediate nature; they are described as a pathway, which is indicative of direction. It is therefore suggested that milestones may also exist at a collective level to indicate the collective pathway and to confirm the trajectory.



**Figure 8.2: Intersects and common interests**

Source: Author's compilation.

From the intersects, where strategies overlap, and interdependencies are established, there is support for the common interest or sustainability issue by each partner and their joint partnership activities so that particularised ties develop. It is also through the negotiation, common understanding or shared appreciation of the common interest that long-term commitments may be made at organisational level so that generalised ties develop.

The intersects also set the direction for more specific action areas where objectives may be aligned and specific partnership activities may be executed together.

Some caution may be exercised here, as unlike goals and objectives, which may be set prospectively, the trajectory as understood in the CCO literature, is an emergent property of coorientation and is socially constructed in the communicative interactions between the stakeholders. This means that it is the conversational interactions that establish the direction to be taken and drives action so that the goals and objectives are a consequence of the negotiations and shared understanding of the issue, rather than the more common assumption that the goals initiate the process.

### **8.7.1.3 Conclusions: Coorientation, common interests and intersects**

Multiple levels and multiple dimensions exist so that stakeholders are cooriented towards the problem domain or sustainability issue at a broad, long-term level so that the stakeholders have a shared appreciation of the problem domain.

It is where strategies intersect and interdependencies are established and maintained, that the relevance to each partner and to the sustainability issue converges. It is the intersects that inform the shared appreciation of the problem domain or common interest at a broad level, and at the same time, direct the goals and objectives for an action agenda at a more specific level.

The communicative practices therefore need to focus on the conversational interactions that build a shared appreciation of the common interest. Relating back to the discussions in previous paragraphs regarding identification with the issue and co-creating the issue narrative, the communicative practices that build shared appreciation are those that create generalised ties and shared meaning.

Communicative practices also need to have an action orientation so that the partners develop particularised ties around specific, timebound activities.

#### ***8.7.1.4 Conclusions: Negotiation as conversational interaction***

To establish the intersections and interdependencies requires a process of negotiation, as conversational interactions, between the stakeholders and/or partners. This may involve various communicative practices such as persuasion and advocacy, as well as other strategies such as incentives.

### **8.7.2 Discussion topic 2: A recursive process**

The existing framework of XSP is depicted in a linear fashion, although the underlying process of intertextuality is described as recursive so that the influence on internal and external stakeholders is achieved through successive deliberations. The recursive process is implied rather than made explicit. Koschmann *et al.* (2012) described the dialectic between conversation and text as a self-organising loop so that coorientation is “represented by circulating texts and conversations”. This is also acknowledged by Kuhn (2008).

As noted in the literature at Chapter 4 at Section 4, Paragraph 4.21.2, one of the underlying principles of CCO thinking is the recursive nature of conversation and text so that the process of organising is recursive. This aspect of the process of value creation reflects the underlying nature of coorientation as “inherently negotiable” and “established in interaction” and it is an active, ongoing process of change (Taylor & Robichaud, 2004). It is also self-organising (*ibid*).

These three principles of the recursive process (that is it self-organising, it is an ongoing process of change, and that is negotiated through interactions) are now considered in relation to the findings and the literature on collaboration.

#### ***8.7.2.1 Reconnecting with the findings***

The principles of coorientation are reflected in the way that participants describe how they collaborate. This is most evident in four areas of the findings:

- i) Identification with the narrative of the sustainability issue and establishing generalised ties that build a shared appreciation of the issue, as discussed above at Paragraph 8.4.5.
- ii) Establishing particularised ties or intersects as a process of negotiation or conversational interactions, as described above at Paragraph 8.7.1.2.
- iii) Learning and adapting as a process of change, discussed below.
- iv) Establishing credibility and authority, as a process of self-organising, which is discussed at Paragraph 8.8.2.

Given that coorientation is the basic process that underlies all aspects of the framework of value creation, the recursive nature of the process is highlighted in the findings in more than one way. It is the second of these that is discussed here as each of the other areas is discussed elsewhere.

The participants highlighted the principles of repetition and change as implied in words that they used such as adapting, being adaptable and evolving. They also described adapting as a process of learning. Examples include: “we learn as we go – we evolve” (Paragraph 6.10.3.2) and “it evolved organically” through “trial and error” rather than by design (Paragraph 6.9.2.1). Another said that it is important to remain adaptable because “you can’t always see how things are going to turn out or what you’ll learn and how that will change your strategy”.

In addition to the examples of circularity in the participant accounts, the circularity of the value creation framework of value potential and value delivery became evident in the process of organising the findings so that the connections between the different components were noted.

In Chapter 6 at Paragraph 6.9.2.6, an initial comment was made that the concepts of innovation and adaptability appear to have a circularity so that the process of value delivery was not always distinguishable from value potential and *vice versa*. It appeared that adapting may be an outcome but at the same time being innovative may mean being open to new alternatives and being adaptable. Further, that innovation may also be value delivery in the sense of concluding a successful project. So there are the related ideas of being adaptable as potential value and adapting as value delivery; being innovative as potential value and delivering innovation as value delivery. It is therefore difficult to separate the value potential from the value delivery in order to understand the meaning conveyed by the participants. They are related so that the interactions are directed towards an outcome or change.

Another example is the description by a participant who spoke about devoting ongoing time and effort to relationships and developing trust as conditions needed to achieve positive outcomes. However, trust appears to be both an outcome of interaction and working together as well as a context for further interaction.

### **8.7.2.2 *Bringing together the findings and the literature***

As already noted, the literature explains the recursive nature of the communicative process of coorientation. The examples highlighted in the findings focus on outcomes where change is experienced and the process of achieving change is described as learning, innovating, adapting and evolving. These are also indicators of value delivery and as opportunities for further value creation.

It is also possible to discern from the findings that as a cycle, the process may be discerned at different points in time and at different stages in the cycle. So while 'being adaptable' may be a way to managing tensions by being open to alternatives, the actual process of adapting and changing is an outcome and in the framework it is considered to be a higher-order effect. The circularity is evident in that where change is effective, then there is an openness to repeat the process.

Likewise, while being willing to consider alternatives and experimenting may be ways to increase exploring new ideas, learning and innovation are the outcomes of this process. As new things are learnt so the learning is applied again to further activities as expressed by the ideas of "we learn as we go" and through "trial and error" rather than by design (Paragraph 6.9.2.1).

### **8.7.2.3 *Conclusions***

There is an opportunity to present a view of collaboration based on underlying principles of coorientation so that a communicative view of value creation in cross-sector collaboration is presented as a cycle of value creation and as recursive.

This is another aspect of the recursive process highlighted here as learning and adapting; other aspects are presented elsewhere as noted above.

### **8.7.3 Discussion topic 3: Material and textual agency**

The existing framework does not directly address or incorporate the concepts of material and textual agency, but does refer to the concepts of intertextuality and distanciation, which support the idea of acting at a distance. The communication literature explains how acting at a distance allows organisations to 'scale up' or so that action shifts from a micro level to a macro level (Taylor, 2005), a process described as amplification by Taylor and Cooren (Taylor & Cooren, 1997). Koschmann *et al.* (2012) focused on the idea of influence extending beyond localised conversational interactions. Textual agency is also implicit in the construct of an authoritative text.

Material and textual agency are key concepts in CCO thinking as explained by Cooren (2006; 2004). Specifically they are essential to understanding how organising and organisation happens beyond conversational interactions. A communicative framework of value for an MsCsC, as a complex, multi-dimensional and distributed context, would be incomplete without explicitly including material and textual agency.

For further detail on these concepts, the literature at Chapter 4 Paragraph 4.22.4.2 refers.

### ***8.7.3.1 Reconnecting with the findings***

While the conceptual language, expressed here as material and textual agency, is not found in the fieldwork interviews, there are numerous examples where texts and material objects are attributed with agency - as noted at Paragraphs 6.16.2 and 6.16.3 of the findings. Material agents include fish feed, vessels and the vessel register, tuna and trout. Textual agents include the tuna work plan, the seafood commitments, the line fishery database, the DNA database and the MSC ecolabel. In each case, the participants conveyed a story about their experiences of these texts and it is the narrative that highlights their positive contribution towards sustainable seafood.

The role of narrative is also identified by participants as one of the opportunities for further development in the future.

It was also revealed in the findings that distance and scale was not only about extending size from micro to macro, but also extending outwards (broader); there was also reference to scaling back or filtering down.

### ***8.7.3.2 Bringing together the findings and the literature***

The variety of material and textual agents is evident from the fieldwork examples. However, it is also clear that these are central elements in the narratives of sustainable seafood and are connected to the sustainability issue. The narrative of sustainable seafood depends on the nonhuman actors in the natural environment, such as the fish in a similar way to the examples in the literature. The material actors of the fish feed, the vessel register and textual actors such as the DNA database provide further examples. What is also evident from the fieldwork findings is that each of these nonhuman actors can be related to a key narrative about sustainable seafood. In highlighting the role of these nonhuman actors, the narrative of sustainable seafood is also brought to the fore.

For example, as noted at Paragraph 6.16.2, the green listing of trout was dependent on having the fish feed certified from sustainable sources; in the case of sustainable tuna fishing, the vessel register has a central role in the process of control and reporting; the DNA database is used to establish the traceability of fish species; and the MSC ecolabel is aimed at allowing consumers to make informed buying choices.

The role of nonhuman objects is not passive, it is an active role; it is not merely a role in a narrative but a role in the process of making the supply chain for sustainable seafood work. As explained in the literature, material and textual are active agents and they are therefore active in the value creation process for sustainable seafood.

In addition to nonhuman actors, there are illustrative examples in the findings as discussed at Paragraph 6.16.3, where texts as narratives are used to extend activities through communications.

These narratives tell the story of sustainable seafood, they tell the world and spread the message, whether it is to the scientific community, to colleagues, to consumers or a wider constituency. While this may be done through face-to-face conversations, the examples in the findings indicate that texts, as narratives, are used here as such as scientific publications, marketing campaigns and other media.

Issues of scale are closely related to material and textual agency in the literature and these are illustrated in the fieldwork findings. An example is the use of the vessel register of tuna fishing boats in South East Asia, which is available online and can therefore be accessed from around the world. It is also through the work plan that the retailer in South Africa can work together with all the stakeholders in the supply chain to monitor improvements at the source fishery and ensure traceability of the product. Another is the MSC ecolabel that is used by consumers in all parts of the world and conveys the same, consistent message that the seafood has been sustainably sourced. While the findings also emphasise the need for good relationships and for regular meetings and contact with all the people involved, these examples show how the nonhuman actors support and complement the human relationships.

### **8.7.3.3 Conclusions**

As the CCO literature contends and as the fieldwork findings illustrate, material and textual agency are key aspects of the process of value creation. It is the way that collaborative activities are scaled up or amplified. These forms of agency are a useful addition to the framework of value. They are included as part of the trajectory component as they are characterised by agency and they support the narrative or trajectory of MsCsC.

The role of narrative in spreading the message should be acknowledged as it is evident in the findings and in the CCO literature, so that the story of sustainability and sustainable seafood is told to a wider constituency. The CCO literature explains that in face-to-face conversation, the word can be spread, but it is text, as narrative and as a textual agent that allows the message of the sustainability issue to 'act at a distance' so that it is amplified.

The supply chain is managed by combining the relational aspects in the supply chain (as discussed in the next section), with the material and textual agents, so that human agency and nonhuman agency are complementary.

### **8.7.4 Discussion topic 4: Forms of capitals: Economic, cultural and social capital**

Trajectory means more than direction; it also means collective agency. The agency of material and textual objects has already been discussed and other resources are now added that are also required to enable action.

Koschmann *et al.* (2012) described the requirements as attracting capital and marshalling consent and this involves acquiring resources, including economic, cultural, and social capital.

Marshalling consent means securing the willing participation of others and is discussed under topic 5 below, under the heading engaging in relationships.

The literature at Chapter 4 Paragraph 4.15 refers.

#### ***8.7.4.1 Reconnecting with the findings***

The evidence related to mobilising resources in the form of economic, cultural and social capital is noted at Paragraph 6.8.3 of the findings. Examples of economic capital include funding and product. Product in this context has very specific attributes and it needs to be certified and/or from sustainable sources in order to be credible.

The different types of resources are not necessarily separate and may be combined as noted at Paragraph 6.8.3.2. ND (2:19) said that collaborating successfully is about combining resources and relationship so that it means “providing them with tools and resources to assist moving this thing forward and a lot of it’s about relationships and building relationships”.

Cultural capital is used to complement economic capital and the combination of cultural and economic capital allows partners to bring complementary resources to the partnership activities. Examples of funding being used in combination with expertise are provided at Paragraph 6.8.3.2. Partners have different specialist skills and expertise, so that retail skills and marketing may be used to complement scientific knowledge or technical expertise, tools or product knowledge. Information sharing is seen as an advantage and credible third party certification, auditing or other endorsement is regarded as adding value.

These examples show that collaboration involves a combination of social, cultural and economic capital so that successful collaboration requires all three.

#### ***8.7.4.2 Bringing together the findings and the literature***

There are three parts to this discussion. The first highlights multiple forms of agency and how they work together to support the collaborative activities; and the second is to do with the language used to describe collective agency. The third part draws these together to propose a different way to describe collective agency that reflects the underlying concept of coorientation.

#### ***8.7.4.3 Multiple agencies***

It is the variety of resources and how different stakeholders can offer complementary resources that demonstrates the advantage of collaborating so that together the partners can achieve more than they could as separate organisations.

Following the definition of agency as discussed at Paragraph 4.22.4.2 as an act of doing or to make something happen, the resources included here are those that are active, in the sense that they are useful in pursuing the collaborative activities directed at the sustainability issue. It has already been noted in the literature that in the case of material and textual objects, it is not all objects that are active in this sense but only those that are attributed with agency by the people

who use, apply or interact with them. In another sense, some resources may be consumed and may not be active in the sense defined here as material and textual agency. Where resources are not active agents, they do not fall within the scope of this discussion.

The resources or agents that are applied, whether human or nonhuman, whether economic, cultural or social, would be those that have agency and that are actively employed towards the sustainability issue. It is in the combination of human and nonhuman agency that comprises collective agency.

Economic resources, in the form of funding or products, are material agents; cultural and social resources involve people. Texts are created by people and used by people (attributed with agency) and in various forms may be related to economic, cultural and social capital. Examples commonly found in a business context include a contract that facilitates an economic transaction; a degree or training certificate that proves qualifications and skills (cultural resources); and a written testimonial or endorsement from a work colleague that would demonstrate social capital. In the CCO literature, an organisation is conceptualised as an authoritative text, which has an identity and the capacity to act; so organisations are textual agents or macro-actors.

It is the agency of the resources, from whatever source, that is important, and the CCO concepts of material and textual agency explain how they are applied. The literature and the findings agree that human and nonhuman agents, whether as objects or as texts, work together and concurrently. It is another example of interdependence.

#### ***8.7.4.4 Agency as expressed in the language of the framework of XSP value***

As collective agency, or the capacity to act, is one of the three main components of the framework of XSP value, it is important that it incorporates the concept of agency as used in the CCO approach and that the language used to describe agency also corresponds with the CCO approach. The CCO approach to agency is supported by the findings as illustrated in the examples above.

On the first point, there is some evidence in the existing framework that textual agency has been incorporated into the framework defined by Koschmann *et al.* (2012). It is considered at a high level and not explained. Material and textual agency do not appear to be included. The language and the term used to describe agency and the capacity to act are derived from Kuhn (2008), who described textual agency and so the detailed assumptions of the framework may be inferred from this earlier work of Kuhn. As an example, the process of attracting capital and marshalling consent are drawn from Kuhn.

The language used in the model therefore appears to be more instrumental than communicative. And this may be explained with reference directly to Kuhn (2008). As noted in the literature at Paragraph 4.16.1, he used game theory as a means to explore inter-organisational relationships. Game theory can be referenced to the behavioural economic theory of rational choice as described

in the seminal work of Herbert Simon (1955). It is a model of the firm used to explain strategic choices in competitive markets and it assumes rational behaviour and individual self-interest. Rational choice theory is used in the collaboration literature in specific circumstances, but mainly to same sector alliances such as strategic alliances, rather than cross-sector collaboration. The exception here is the work of Elinor Ostrom, who applied a form of rational choice theory to develop a theory of collective action (Ostrom, 1998). However, Ostrom warned against the use of rational choice theory in its basic form in a collaborative setting due to its focus on competitive behaviour. She developed a new version of the theory with additional factors to compensate for short-term competitive interests. Since Kuhn's approach appears to be based on the basic or traditional model of rational choice it, the language appears to reflect this choice.

Terms such as marshalling consent and attracting capital are difficult to understand and do not apply the language of the CCO approach. Attracting capital is not limited to obtaining funding and it includes developing relationships (social capital) and acquiring skills and expertise (cultural capital). These terms do not align with the language in the findings (see Paragraph 6.8.2.1) where terms such as 'getting buy-in', 'persuasion' and 'reciprocity' are used. They do not align with language used in cross-sector collaboration literature, which talks about 'negotiation' or finding 'common ground' (Gray, 1989).

#### ***8.7.4.5 Agency as coorientation***

Given the above observations regarding the existing framework, it is proposed that the process of coorientation provides a more inclusive basis from which to express the nature of the trajectory as collective agency.

Coorientation does not specify or restrict the form of communicative process, so that rational choice may exist alongside other processes such as those described in the findings, including negotiation, buy-in, persuasion, and reciprocity. A more inclusive approach would allow for the agency to be extended beyond human and textual agency to include multiple agencies, including material and textual agency.

A focus on coorientation would mean replacing the focus on attracting capital and marshalling consent with an alternative that reflects the coorientation towards the sustainability issue and the use of multiple forms of agency to scale-up from locally situated activities to multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration.

#### ***8.7.4.6 Conclusions***

The different forms of capital act as resources for partnership activities and the various stakeholders and partners bring different resources so that they are complementary and interdependent. While economic capital is important, cultural capital is highly valued, as indeed is social capital. All forms of capital are important for successful collaboration.

Based on the above discussion, it is also concluded that the resources, whether economic, cultural or social are applied in a combination of human and nonhuman agency in a process of coorientation towards the common interest, which is the sustainability issue. Applying the principles of the CCO approach, it is material and textual (nonhuman) agents that combine with human agents to build and amplify the forward trajectory.

#### **8.7.5 Section summary: Trajectory**

The conclusions reached in this section of the discussion highlight opportunities to refine the conceptual framework of value creation by adapting it for an MsCsC context and extending the existing components of the framework. These include the following points:

- i) Reflecting the trajectory as coorientation towards the sustainability issue and the issue narrative.
- ii) Recognising a multiplicity of interests, intersects and objectives that signify generalised ties and particularised ties between the stakeholders.
- iii) Establishing common interests through negotiation in the form of conversational interaction and a self-organising recursive process.
- iv) Recognising the role of material and textual agency in supporting and building the trajectory and narrative of MsCsC.
- v) Connecting the forms of capital, namely economic, cultural and social so that they are applied concurrently and in combination, rather than as separate resources.

In the next chapter, these conclusions will be incorporated into a new conceptual framework and expressed as communicative practices.

## 8.8 VALUE POTENTIAL

The next component of the framework of value creation is value potential. The topics covered in this section are shown in the shaded area of Table 8.1, which is repeated here for reference purposes.

**Table 8.1: Topics covered in the discussion on value creation**

PART	<u>RESEARCH QUESTIONS</u>	<u>DISCUSSION TOPICS</u> FROM THE FINDINGS IN CHAPTER 6 TABLE 6.10 AND 6.12 CARRIED FORWARD TO THE DISCUSSION IN CHAPTER 8	REFERENCE TO DISCUSSION CHAPTER 8
1	<b>THE CONTEXT:</b> Multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration as an issue field	<b>Cross-sector Collaboration as an Issue Field</b> Multiple stakeholders; Multiple dimensions <b>KEY AREA OF DIFFERENCE:</b> Identification with the issue: Collective identity and identification	Para 8.2  Para 8.4
2	<b>RESEARCH QUESTIONS ON VALUE CREATION:</b> In the context of multi-stakeholder cross- sector collaboration: Applying the communicative concepts of the CCO approach: i) How do organisations from different sectors interact with multiple stakeholders in a multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration when conceived as an issue field? ii) How do the collaborative interactions and relationships create value and mutual benefits for all stakeholders and for the sustainability issue? iii) How is the continuity of the value creation process sustained and developed?	<b>TRAJECTORY</b> Topic 1: Coorientation at different levels: common interests and intersects Topic 2: A recursive process Topic 3: Material and textual agency Topic 4: Forms of capital: Economic, cultural and social capitals <b>VALUE POTENTIAL</b> Topic 5: Building and investing in relationships incorporating emotional elements Topic 6: Credibility, legitimacy, and authority Topic 7: Managing tensions <b>VALUE DELIVERY:</b> Topic 8: Accountability Topic 9: Indicators of influence Topic 10: Indicators of impact	Para 8.7.1 Para 8.7.2 Para 8.7.3 Para 8.7.4  Para 8.8.1 Para 8.8.2 Para 8.8.3  Para 8.9.3 Para 8.9.4 Para 8.9.5

Source: Author's compilation.

There are three topics in this section and each of these deals with relational issues. They are building and investing in relationships, legitimacy, authority and governance and managing the tensions. These topics are all interrelated and they are expressed in terms of communicative practices that support the process of value creation.

While there are many ways to study relationships in a collaboration, the discussion here focuses on those aspects that were noted in the fieldwork findings and how the findings relate to the literature on cross-sector collaboration and inter-organisational collaboration.

At the end of the section, the underlying communicative practices are distilled from the combined fieldwork findings and the literature and some conclusions are presented which will then form the basis of the conceptual framework presented in the next chapter.

### **8.8.1 Discussion topic 5: Building and investing in relationships**

This topic is about investing in and cultivating relationships in addition to managing relationships. The main argument here is that investing and cultivating involve a higher level of involvement than managing alone.

In the findings at Paragraph 6.8.3.3, the participants described how they communicated and worked together. It was noted that there were two ways in which participants spoke about engaging with partners. In the one, the word 'engaging' was used in a similar way to 'interacting' with each other. In the other, engaging was described as a more deliberate process of understanding and getting to know the partners to determine activities where they could work together. In the latter sense, words used to describe the process included participation, active participation, collaborative engagement and making a contribution. Paraphrasing the words of one participant, there needs to be value added to make things happen and that means making a contribution. The apparent progression in the degree of involvement in partner relationships is discussed below.

In the findings, investing in relationships is seen as a more active involvement and includes an emotional component. Being invested in something expresses a sense of connection and effort. This section therefore also incorporates a discussion on emotional elements as an aspect of collaborative relationships.

In the existing framework of XSP value by Koschmann *et al.* (2012), the relational aspects are included under the topics of increasing value potential and include increasing meaningful participation and managing opposing and converging forces. The sub-topics are different ways of interacting and including diverse interests. The focus in the existing framework is towards participation, acknowledging alternative perspectives and going beyond dialogue to include meaningful interactions that involve diverse members.

This section addresses the relational processes and this complements the earlier discussion of social capital. The literature at Chapter 4 Paragraph 4.15.3 and at Chapter 7 Paragraph 7.6.3 refers.

#### ***8.8.1.1 Note on terminology***

The word 'engagement' is used in this discussion in the way that it is expressed in the findings, which focus on collaborative relationships and different ways in which partners interact with each other. Engagement is one of four levels or degrees of involvement that were discerned from the findings. The level of involvement relates to the degree of intensity of the interactions, and the energy that is committed to the relationships. As described in the findings, engagement as

interacting is a low intensity form of involvement and distinguished from more active forms of involvement such as participation and adding value.

The language appears to be similar to the idea of employee engagement in the literature on organisational behaviour. However, in this context the interactions relate to relationships with others in a cross-sector collaboration, rather than relationships internal to an organisation. In the latter case, engagement is discussed in relation to the work activity or roles of employees and the relationship of employees with their employer organisation (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010).

#### ***8.8.1.2 Reconnecting with the findings***

Evidence of the aspects from the existing framework are noted in the research findings at Chapter 6 Paragraph 6.9.1 and 6.9.2. Findings that reinforce and support the existing framework include open and transparent communication and active participation. There is also evidence of marshalling consent at Paragraph 6.8.2.

The findings go beyond engagement and participation so that in the words of the participants there needs to be active participation (HD: 1. 11) and collaborative engagement (ND: 2.24) to actually drive change (HD: 2:15). The distinction between engagement and active engagement was emphasised by HD who described an active process of driving change, creating improvement and this goes beyond engagement.

The findings show that there are ongoing processes beyond engagement and participation so that stakeholders are actively involved and they become invested in relationships and they invest and cultivate relationships. This is expressed as active participation so that everyone is making a contribution; in other words, everyone is adding value. The word 'cultivating' suggests that the relationships need to be nurtured so that they grow and indeed building relationships is another expression in the findings. There is also reference to being adaptable, which is noted as a means of managing relationships in order to think differently, to learning and to change behaviour.

The findings also indicated that emotional elements play a role and therefore participants talked about being passionate, investing time and energy, being inspired and being inspirational, building excitement and keeping motivated. The phrase invest and cultivate relationships, indicates both emotional involvement and growth.

What is demonstrated in the findings is that there are multiple relationship forms at multiple levels. The operation of market mechanisms and how groups such as consumers, retailers and certification agencies engage through market mechanisms has already been discussed above. What the findings show is that different mechanisms operate concurrently so that obligatory mechanisms such as contracts sit alongside voluntary market mechanisms or other forms of engagement. In some instances, engagement is used to mean interacting and in other instances, it implies a more deliberate process that leads in turn to participative and collaborative interactions. Collaboration means working together and is a more action-oriented process than participation.

In relation to mobilising resources, the findings indicate that economic, cultural and social capital work concurrently and are interconnected. Collaboration means a combination of providing resources and relationship building; it also means giving support in the form of skills and expertise.

Additional insights from the findings are highlighted and these include different ways to get buy-in and how a variety of different relationship types are used from contracts to relationships based on reciprocity, trust and persuasion. Different levels are also evident from personal relationships to broader organisational relationships with customers or other public constituencies.

In addition, there are other points to be noted such as recognising the particular needs of stakeholders, being aware of different ways of thinking and different ways of exploring new ideas from experimenting to design to innovation.

### ***8.8.1.3 Bringing together the findings and the literature***

There are three points that stand out in the findings as potential additions to the process of value creation and these are also supported in the literature. Each of these extends the relational aspects of the process of value creation. The literature shows how relationships are related to concepts such as social capital, collaboration and positive emotion and how in combination this can lead to learning and innovation. It is an interesting combination that is supported in both the literature and the fieldwork findings and the addition of emotional energy goes beyond the existing framework of value creation.

The first point addresses the role of relationships and the importance of relationships for effective collaboration. It is not simply the existence of the relationship, but specifically the active engagement and investment in the relationship that is highlighted in the findings and by the literature.

Emphasising the effort required then directs attention to the second point, which is the role of emotions in driving action and facilitating various forms of value creation such as innovation and creativity. The literature provides confirmation of the points made in the findings and shows how inspiration and energy are translated into value delivery. As noted in the literature at Paragraph 4.16.1, the current framework of XSP value draws on rational choice theory. While it recognises that XSPs are situated in the relational contexts, it does not incorporate emotional elements.

The inclusion of emotional elements is not an alternative to rational choice, but rather it is in addition to rational choice, so that they are complementary. Coorientation, as a communicative approach, is inclusive and allows for these ideas to complement each other; it avoids the either/or choice and allows for both.

The third point is the presence of multiple dimensions and these include different levels, namely individual, organisational and the issue or issue field; and different ways of exploring new ideas.

There is also evidence of multiple levels or degrees of involvement in relationships from engagement and participation to more active involvement that include managing and building relationships so that when partners are working together (collaborating), they are expected to make a contribution and to drive and deliver change.

Connecting with the previous point on emotions, it is the emotional elements that bring human energy into the frame and the literature shows that it is this energy that drives action. Human energy therefore puts drive behind the multiple dimensions and the direction is established by the issue itself as discussed under trajectory, so that there is coordinated or directed effort. Combining the descriptions from the findings with words signifying emotional energy, the following Table 8.4 has been prepared to depict the different levels of involvement.

The table is descriptive rather than theoretical, and applies the language from the findings. It describes different levels as follows:

- i) Engaging indicates that people are interacting but either the relationship is only at an initial stage or there is a low or limited commitment to the relationship.
- ii) Participating suggests a moderate level of intensity or commitment to the relationship.
- iii) Meaningful participation, is a phrase used by Koschmann *et al.* (2012) in which meaning is described as intersubjective coordinated or collaborative interaction; it indicates a higher degree of effort, or active engagement, active participation in working together.

**Table 8.4: Degrees of involvement in partnership relationship**

	<b>Description from the findings</b>	<b>Functional description of activities</b>	<b>Degree of commitment to the relationship – adding an emotional element</b>	<b>Degree of commitment: human energy/effort</b>
<b>1</b>	Engagement	Interacting	Initiating a relationship	Low or limited
<b>2</b>	Participation	Participating	Participating in relationships	Moderate
<b>3</b>	Active engagement; active participation; actively working together	Managing and collaborating Meaningful participation	Investing in relationships	High or active
<b>4</b>	Everybody making a contribution; making a difference; driving change	Adding value Contributing	Building or cultivating relationships	Sustained high levels of energy and activity

Source: Author's compilation.

With reference to the findings and to the literature on positive energy, a fourth degree is added and this is described as:

- iv) Building or cultivating relationships in which a sense of growth or development in the relationship is conveyed, which goes beyond managing. This is more than being active and

putting in effort; it indicates a contribution, a change and adding something more. It appears to require a sustained high level of energy and activity.

The degree of commitment, expressed as the level of human energy or effort committed to the relationship is noted in the right-hand column of Table 8.4.

Rather than replicating the approach in the existing framework, which categorises some relational aspects as collective agency and others as increasing value potential, the evidence suggests that these may be considered together as a continuous process of value creation driven by the relationships among the stakeholders.

This seems particularly apt when considering the underlying communicative approach and the recursive nature of the coorientation process. When the value creation process is viewed as a recursive cycle of value creation rather than as separate activities, then the process of engagement, participation, collaboration and contribution described in the findings may be seen as cyclical.

#### ***8.8.1.4 Conclusions: Building relationships, including emotional elements***

Relationships are at the heart of the value creation process and have multiple interconnected dimensions. Emotional energy is incorporated as an important driver of action and is applied to explain how people engage at different levels or with different degrees of commitment to relationships. While engaging and participating involve low levels of human energy, meaningful participation, which may be expressed as managing or investing in relationships, requires the commitment of a higher degree of human energy. A greater degree of human energy builds relationships so that action is amplified and a collective contribution is made and value is added.

In the multi-dimensional context of MsCsC, emotional elements are in addition to rational choices, they are complementary and represent an extension to the framework of value creation.

### **8.8.2 Discussion topic 6: Credibility, legitimacy and authority**

The point of departure is again the framework of XSP value by Koschmann *et al.* (2012) and legitimacy is introduced in three ways. Although legitimacy is highlighted in the different ways, the framework of value creation does not appear to incorporate legitimacy as a component of the framework of XSP value and it is not included in any of the related propositions.

Legitimacy is not the language used in the findings, but credibility is a word used to convey the same meaning and was discussed in a number of ways by participants.

The literature at Chapter 7 Paragraph 7.5 refers.

#### ***8.8.2.1 Reconnecting with the findings: Credibility in multiple dimensions***

Participants speak about how the partner organisations need to be credible so that in the case of the NPOs their credibility is connected with the science. The work at WWF is science based, at

ISSF one of their three strategic pillars is applied science and in the case of the MSC standard, it is credible and transparent and based on science. WWF-SASSI established its credibility in sustainable seafood by working with consumers and creating consumer demand so that they then had a mandate from consumers to work with the retailers (DL: 2:3). The mandate gave WWF-SASSI the credibility and authority to act on behalf of the consumers.

In the research community, the focus is towards confirming the authenticity of fish species through DNA testing to confirm the integrity of fish labelling. From a retailer perspective, credibility is important throughout the value chain, with consumers on the one hand and product and supply on the other. Business reputation and the trust of consumers and customers means that transparency and upholding public commitments are necessary components of credibility in the market. The example of the publically announced seafood commitments is a case of a voluntary commitment that demonstrates leadership and strengthens transparency and credibility. Building trust between partners is also about establishing reliability and credibility.

In addition to credibility with customers, there are also product-related issues and in the supply chain credibility means that the product (in this case the fish and related fish products) are traceable to sustainable sources and this is verified by means of a certification process. Independent validation is a key aspect as is the testing to confirm the identification of the species, a process known as authentication. Evidence is another requirement so transparency is needed to support claims of credibility. An example is the ecolabel that is used to provide evidence of the certification process and public reporting to stakeholders.

A further area where credibility is highlighted is in relation to skills and expertise so that being knowledgeable is seen as a prerequisite to being able to add value. The environmental credentials of an NPO may be complementary to a retailer's knowledge of the market or the skills of a scientific researcher.

These various examples indicate that credibility has various dimensions related to relationships and social capital (trust and transparency), to economic capital (traceability and authenticity of product; tools and other resources); and to cultural capital (skills, expertise and knowledge).

Furthermore, these dimensions do not operate in isolation, but the findings indicate that they function concurrently in a collaborative setting and they are interconnected and complementary so that tools and resources are needed as well as relationships; certified product is needed but equally communication and consumer awareness is required. Credibility is a key aspect of different dimensions that appear to be interdependent.

### ***8.8.2.2 Credibility and circularity***

Another participant account that indicated a recursive process was the description of the market forces that support the MSC ecolabel.

The description in the findings of the market dynamics of the MSC ecolabel indicates that the different stages in the supply chain not only include standards to establish credibility but that there is a feedback loop that reinforces the standards. The circularity of this reinforcing loop is demonstrated in the interconnectedness of the scientific support that confirms the credibility of the MSC standards, which in turn ensures ongoing market support so that the certification process is effective and provides the incentive for fisheries to continue to comply with the MSC standards.

### ***8.8.2.3 Bringing together the findings and the literature***

An MsCsC as an issue field does not appear to have conventional forms of control and governance mechanisms, but there are alternative forms that do not rely on hierarchical controls based on position power but on authority and legitimacy derived from skills and expertise or from the independent verification of claims. The findings show that different partners are valued for different skills, whether this relates to retail knowledge of the customer, conservation expertise, scientific knowledge or access to fisheries. Authority also depends on the strength of relationships so that trust is a factor, but in the findings this tends to be connected with skills and expertise. In addition, risk mitigation processes are evident such as the work plan for the tuna supply chain or the certification processes of the MSC standard or the independent verification of fisheries improvement programmes by WWF. It is also evident from the findings that there is much discussion and negotiation between the various partners and that persuasion and persistence are required. In the words of one of the participants, “a lot of it’s about relationships and building relationships” but it is also about providing tools and resources.

The findings provide a range of illustrations of the concepts of legitimacy described in the literature and how organisations establish their credentials and justify or demonstrate their ability to add value to their partners, to various stakeholders and to a broader audience. The connection between credibility and value is therefore established in the findings. There is evidence of input legitimacy so that the process and product are verified and certified and output legitimacy in terms of delivering value. There is also evidence of internal legitimacy to build trust between partners and external legitimacy by way of transparent reporting to customers and a broader public.

These multiple dimensions connect with the earlier discussion above at Paragraph 8.2 on the multiple dimensions on an MsCsC.

A key focus in the findings is the supply chain legitimacy and the process of certification, authentication and traceability of sustainable product, which is needed to ensure that buyers can trust the claims of its sustainability credentials. It is the claim and delivery of the sustainability credentials that translates the supply chain of a food commodity into a value chain with a product that offers attributes that are differentiated to attract a discerning market that is reflected in the broader social and cultural norms noted by Glasbergen (2013). In the context of sustainability, traceability and transparency are key requirements that establish legitimacy.

Comparing the position adopted by Koschmann *et al.* to the discussion in the literature, it appears that they applied the pragmatic view of legitimacy as the need to justify existence of an XSP. They also incorporated legitimacy concerns that could be categorised as input related (the engagement process) and output related (delivering value); and they included internal and external legitimacy in the reporting requirements to stakeholders and the role of a compelling narrative to support the identity of the XSP.

There are therefore similarities between the existing framework of XSP value and the findings as noted above, but also certain differences. Within the context of the research setting, the findings do not include an XSP as a separate entity with identity and authority, but they do introduce the discussion on value chain legitimacy and how the value add is verified or legitimised. The findings also make an interesting point that when working with partners, economic, cultural and social capital all need to be credible and should be complementary.

#### ***8.8.2.4 Legitimacy and authority in an MsCsC context***

In the case where there is no partnership entity, the issue of legitimacy is not reinforced in the authority of the partnership entity as suggested by the concept of the authoritative text. However, as the fieldwork findings indicate, this does not mean that legitimacy is any less important; indeed, in a value chain context, the findings show that traceability and authenticity, as forms of legitimacy, are significant requirements. In this case, there are explicit processes that are required to support the claims of legitimacy.

Formal structures of authority and position power are not necessarily available, although in the supply chain, there is evidence that some pressure may be brought to bear. In this context, rather than structures of authority, authority may be established in relationships and processes.

These options include persuasion and reciprocity and advocacy, as a means to persuade. These ideas have already been discussed at Paragraph 8.7.1.2 as a process of negotiation in which stakeholders establish their rules of engagement. This process of negotiation is described as conversational interactions that reflect the underlying communicative process of coorientation. Coorientation is a self-organising process and this process of negotiation may therefore be conceived as a self-organising process. In an MsCsC context, a self-organising process, in which legitimacy and authority are negotiated, would then provide an alternative to the governance structures evident in the case of a partnership entity.

It may be argued, with reference to the literature at Paragraph 7.5.2.1, that this is a form of authority that is horizontal rather than vertical, in which agreement to act does not derive from position power but from negotiation and agreement to apply the complementary capabilities of the partners towards common interests. This horizontal form of authority operates from a relational perspective, derived from skills and expertise rather than position.

It is also noted that these other forms of authority do not preclude the use of more conventional or more formal authority mechanisms and these are evident in the findings in the form of contracts and market mechanisms. But there is a variety of mechanisms and they work concurrently and together. There is evidence in the findings of both horizontal and vertical forms of authority. The collaborative activities appear to value skills and expertise and market mechanisms as a means to establish credibility and authority.

#### ***8.8.2.5 Conclusions: Legitimacy, authority and credibility***

In an MsCsC context, it is argued that legitimacy and authority are established in a process of negotiation by the stakeholders. This process of negotiation is a self-organising process of coorientation that pervades all components of the process of value creation.

The horizontal forms of authority that reflect this process of negotiation include advocacy and persuasion, which rely on the strength of relationships. These are used in conjunction with other more conventional forms of authority in the context of the market, such as contracts. In the supply chain there are specific forms of legitimacy and authority established through traceability and transparency.

The self-organising process and the multiple dimensions need to be recognised in the framework of value creation.

### **8.8.3 Discussion topic 7: Managing tensions**

Managing centripetal and centrifugal forces is a key dimension in the framework of XSP value (Koschmann *et al.*, 2012) and is described here as managing opposing and converging forces. The main tension is seen to be the pull away from partnership priorities towards partner organisations and this may be in opposition to the partnership priorities where there is a need to draw together towards common interests. Where an XSP is conceived as a separate entity with its own identity, there is a tension between forces that unite the partners and the forces that divide them. Other tensions in the relationships between partners are not directly addressed in the framework.

The literature at Chapter 4 Paragraph 4.16.2 refers.

#### ***8.8.3.1 Reconnecting with the findings***

The research setting is not an XSP but there is evidence of tensions that suggest a balancing of opposing and converging forces and examples of the different dimensions for increasing value potential, such as remaining open, exploring alternatives, being adaptable, are all included in the findings.

In a specific example described in the findings at Paragraph 6.9.2.5, at a time of adversity, rather than a difficult situation being resolved, it was managed, resulting in a stronger relationship over time. In this case, at the time of the so-called meat scandal, involving the furore over mislabelling

of meat products at an industry level, the relationship between the scientific researchers and the retailers was strained. The specific partnership included in this study depended on the strength of prior experiences of working together through difficult times and the ongoing commitment to the high scientific standards of DNA testing to rebuild the bonds of partnership. According to the participant, the relationship after the scandal became stronger.

In addition, the findings include some tensions that go beyond the push-pull forces between partners. These include tensions in the relationships and related to the broader market context. Issues such as reputation, credibility, trust and confidentiality as well as negative issues such as disagreement, resistance and challenges are mentioned in the findings. Pressures in the market are also noted. There is no information on how these tensions were addressed but there are comments about the importance of being flexible and adaptable.

There is also reference to managing risk or mitigating risk and these are important control mechanisms. Risk management is described as avoidance of a problem or as incentive to improve something. Risk mitigation is seen as an active control mechanism in the absence of direct controls and formal authority.

In respect to managing opposing and converging forces, the findings support the existing framework and confirm the need to be persistent, to explore alternatives and new ideas, and to be adaptable. There is evidence to support the view that tensions should be managed rather than resolved.

#### ***8.8.3.2 Bringing together the findings and the literature***

Managing tensions is not only about opposing and converging forces, although this is a valid issue. Convergence and divergence may be seen in more general terms beyond an oppositional view that suggests a degree of conflict. There are advantages to both of these states of being so that rather than being a constant trade-off, there may also be a means to actively manage both concurrently. Negotiation appears to be an appropriate description of a process that is described in the findings as being flexible and being adaptable.

While the existing framework addresses the tensions arising from divergent and convergent perspectives and this is also noted in the collaboration literature, the findings indicate that there are other types of tension that also need to be managed in collaborative relationships. Examples include the need for risk mitigation procedures where hierarchical control is absent. Others are more broadly stated as challenges or difficulties dealing with reputational issues, criticism and competitive pressures. There is a variety of tensions that are managed, and these go beyond the different forces between partner organisation and the needs of the partnership activities.

#### ***8.8.3.3 Conclusions***

Managing tensions in collaborative relationships, whether they are opposing and converging forces or other more relational issues or more broadly market related issues, appears to be an active

process of negotiation between the partners. Rather than being a separate dimension, managing tensions could be seen as a normal and ongoing part of managing relationships.

In the earlier discussion at Table 8.4, the various levels of involvement in partner relationships are noted. It is possible that managing tensions may be an aspect of partnership relationships that exists at all times, whether partners engage, participate, manage or contribute. Given that relationships are ongoing, the nature of the tensions may change over time according to challenges that are external to the partnership activities that may arise from time to time.

However, as noted in the literature, there are benefits and drawbacks of convergence and divergence and so difference should not be resolved or eliminated in order to focus on stability. Rather the relationships should be managed so that creativity and innovation are fostered as well as clarity and understanding. It is a dynamic process of adaption that is ongoing, rather than a process that seeks stability and this reflects the complex nature of a collaborative context with multiple stakeholders.

#### **8.8.4 Section summary: Value potential**

The conclusions reached in this section of the discussion highlight opportunities for the conceptual framework of value creation for MsCsC. These include the following points:

- i) Incorporating emotional elements and human energy introduces human energy as the positive force that drives action.
- ii) Combining human energy with material and textual agency amplifies collective agency.
- iii) Legitimacy and authority are necessary aspects of collaborative relationships but rather than relying solely on vertical or hierarchical forms of authority, other means of establishing credibility also operate and these may be described as horizontal forms of authority.
- iv) Managing diversity and stability is the underlying aim of managing the tensions of diverging and converging forces; it is a dynamic, adaptive process that seeks the benefits of both and acknowledges the complexity of collaborative relationships.

In conclusion, the multiplicity of the relational processes that support value creation may be depicted as a cycle of value creation, so that its dynamic and evolving nature is recognised.

Giving greater attention to the relational process as a dynamic cycle also highlights the role of key resources and how human energy drives the process forward and how people use material and textual agents to amplify the forward direction of collective agency.

In the next chapter, these conclusions are incorporated into a new conceptual framework and expressed as communicative practices.

#### **8.8.5 Researcher note: Separate and together: Holding on to all three<sup>33</sup>**

See endnote 8.1 in Appendix U.

## 8.9 VALUE DELIVERY

The next component of the framework of value creation is value delivery. The topics covered in this section are shown in the shaded area of Table 8.1, which is repeated here for reference purposes.

**Table 8.1: Topics covered in the discussion on value creation**

PART	<u>RESEARCH QUESTIONS</u>	<u>DISCUSSION TOPICS</u> FROM THE FINDINGS IN CHAPTER 6 TABLE 6.10 AND 6.12 CARRIED FORWARD TO THE DISCUSSION IN CHAPTER 8	REFERENCE TO DISCUSSION CHAPTER 8
1	<b>THE CONTEXT:</b> Multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration as an issue field	<b>Cross-sector Collaboration as an Issue Field</b> Multiple stakeholders; Multiple dimensions <b>KEY AREA OF DIFFERENCE:</b> Identification with the issue: Collective identity and identification	Para 8.2  Para 8.4
2	<b>RESEARCH QUESTIONS ON VALUE CREATION:</b> In the context of multi-stakeholder cross- sector collaboration: Applying the communicative concepts of the CCO approach: i) How do organisations from different sectors interact with multiple stakeholders in a multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration when conceived as an issue field? ii) How do the collaborative interactions and relationships create value and mutual benefits for all stakeholders and for the sustainability issue? iii) How is the continuity of the value creation process sustained and developed?	<b>TRAJECTORY</b> Topic 1: Coorientation at different levels: common interests and intersects Topic 2: A recursive process Topic 3: Material and textual agency Topic : 4Forms of capital: Economic, cultural and social capitals <b>VALUE POTENTIAL</b> Topic 5: Building and investing in relationships incorporating emotional elements Topic 6: Credibility, legitimacy, and authority Topic 7: Managing tensions <b>VALUE DELIVERY:</b> Topic 8: Accountability Topic 9: Indicators of influence Topic 10: Indicators of impact	Para 8.7.1 Para 8.7.2 Para 8.7.3 Para 8.7.4  Para 8.8.1 Para 8.8.2 Para 8.8.3  Para 8.9.3 Para 8.9.4 Para 8.9.5

Source: Author's compilation.

There are three topics in this section and each of these deals with value delivery. They are accountability, and presenting evidence of influence and impact. These topics are all interrelated and they are expressed in terms of communicative practices that support the process of value creation.

At the end of the section, the underlying communicative practices are distilled from the combined fieldwork findings and the literature and some conclusions are presented which will then form the basis of the conceptual framework presented in the next chapter.

### **8.9.1 Multiple levels of value delivery**

There are multiple levels of value delivery and value may be experienced by partners, by other stakeholders who may be involved in the collaborative activities and there may be value delivered towards the sustainability issue or common interest. In addition, value may be experienced by others in a broader constituency or wider audience.

These discussion topics here include accountability, influence and impact. While the first two topics, accountability and influence, may be directed towards stakeholders in the collaborative context or towards a broader constituency, the third topic is experienced in a different way. Impact is about change in behaviour at a broader level.

Each of these topics is now discussed in turn. The first two topics were included in the existing framework of XSP value but the discussion includes further literature and incorporates material from the findings. The third topic extends the discussion based on material from the findings.

### **8.9.2 Communicative practices for value delivery**

Attention needs to be directed towards the communicative practices related to value delivery rather than the nature of the value or benefit. Communicative practices need to articulate or demonstrate value delivery; there needs to be evidence of value.

### **8.9.3 Discussion topic 8: Accountability**

This subject is described by Koschmann *et al.* (2012) as justifying the existence of the XSP and more detail is noted below regarding the nature of these justifications as well by whom and to whom they are made.

They also distinguished between accounting for first-order effects that may be evident in the specific actions of partners and other stakeholders and accounting for higher-order effects. It is in the higher-order effects that evidence may be found to indicate how the partnership activities may have had an influence on a wider community beyond the partner organisations themselves. The higher-order effects, described as impact, are discussed in more detail at Paragraph 8.9.5 below.

The literature at Chapter 4 Paragraph 4.17.1 refers.

#### ***8.9.3.1 Reconnecting with the findings***

There is evidence in the findings of a range of activities to convey accountability ranging from measurement to reporting and verification of claims made. Measurements range from tangible to intangible; from immediate measures such as targets of performance scorecards for individuals to organisational progress towards commitments and medium-term milestones to very broad indicators of success such as talkability and the quality of communications on social media. The time factor is evident in that some accounts are short term and others assess progress over longer periods of time.

Another key finding was that accountability is not an end in itself but measurement and reporting suggests an action orientation. Accountability is not a reactive process limited to corporate accounting reports that meet legal requirements. While meeting these requirements is necessary, there is also a proactive mechanism for partner organisations to voluntarily hold themselves to account, where the focus is on accounting for their contribution towards the sustainable issue. This is best illustrated by the publically announced seafood commitments by the retailer, that includes very specific, time bound measurable objectives. Annual reporting of progress is an expectation of this process and this is done to a broad public audience by the retailer and by way of independent reports by WWF as an NPO partner.

Transparency is a factor so that there is a range of reports and accounts made public by the partner organisations, not only to stakeholders, but also to a wider public audience. The use of public commitments and public reporting, beyond that required by conventional corporate accounting reports, is a feature of the partnership activities with retailers involved in sustainable seafood. The transparency of the pro-active vessel register for tuna fishers is another illustration of transparency.

This is taken further so that some of the accounts are also independently verified and claims that a product is from a sustainable source are supported by documentary evidence and the evidence is independently audited and verified to confirm the traceability of the product. In other cases, the partner organisations look to scientific research to assess the status of progress, particularly in the case of claims that seafood stocks are sustainable.

It was also noted in the findings that some reporting activities appeared to deliver value in more than one way. The procurement list exercise illustrated that the information generated was useful for the retailer internally but also had other implications for suppliers.

### ***8.9.3.2 Bringing together the findings and the literature***

Koschmann *et al.* (2012) focused attention on how partner organisations justify their continued involvement in the partnership and they claimed that these justifications were not objectively determined.

Based on the findings, there is evidence that partner organisations assess their activities in ways that combine tangible and intangible measures. The tangible measures tend to be expressed in quantitative terms, although these are not always direct measures and the use of indicators rather than direct measures was apparent. The intangible elements were difficult to measure and were sometimes only identified in hindsight so that they could be described as emergent factors. A very vivid example of this was provided in the findings as highlighted at Paragraph 6.10.2.3, where a marketing campaign was assessed as successful based on the “talkability” that it generated. Although intangible, the retailer does employ indicators to track outcomes and these are mainly directed towards customer behaviour. Intangible indicators are also employed by the NPOs so that

at WWF indicators are being expanded to include qualitative indicators and at MSC, higher-order effects described as impacts are being assessed. These are discussed further below.

It is evident from the findings that there is a combination of accounting and reporting mechanisms that both are applied in conjunction with one another. Each appears to have a different role so that on the one hand there is the view that what gets measured gets done ; and on the other hand there are indicators that are not easy to define and they are developed through a process of negotiation (such as the example of the sustainability attributes) or they emerge in other ways such as the talkability example above. Illustrations from WWF-SASSI also show that to deliver value, there is not always a design or a plan. In the words of one of the participants who was explaining the business model for WWF-SASSI, “we only figured this out through trial and error” and “it evolved organically” rather than through strategic thinking at the outset (refer Paragraph 6.9.2.1).

The findings also indicated that while partner organisations were accounting for their own progress in relation to a variety of tangible and less tangible indicators, there was also an awareness of the need to understand how these various measures actually connect with the sustainability issue. The model of change in the supply chain for sustainable seafood was described by various participants as a means to understand the role of different parties and to direct attention at the common interest. There is an action orientation and progress indicates movement towards something. Given the previous discussion on common interest and intersects, and given the variety of reporting mechanisms noted above, it would appear evident that there are accounts of progress made towards specific objectives and also progress towards the broader trajectory defined by the common interest.

It was also evident that the partners were committed to communicating a consistent and coherent message to the consumers and the wider public. Specific mention was made of the importance of aligning the messaging in joint activities such as a marketing campaign.

On the issue of verification, this requirement is specific to the supply chain or value chain context and is directed towards the need for credibility as already discussed. Claims of the value added in the supply chain and that the product is sustainably sourced, are credible when they are verified. So value delivery, in this context, requires that the accounts are validated and that there is evidence to support the claims. While this illustration is in a supply chain context, the issue of evidence to support the accounts connects the accounting process with legitimacy and credibility as discussed previously. While accountability and transparency may in themselves have some benefit to certain constituencies, the findings here indicate that there is greater benefit when the accounts are verified. Indeed, in this case, the verification is seen to be essential as credibility is demanded by key stakeholders.

As already noted, traceability is a specific supply chain expectation for sustainable products to establish legitimacy. Accountability and transparency go hand in hand with traceability.

While credibility includes reputational considerations by the partner organisations, it extends beyond this to the wider public audience with the aim of driving consumer behaviour by providing more compelling evidence for consumers to make an informed buying choice.

### **8.9.3.3 Conclusions: Accountability**

The main points from this discussion are the variety of mechanisms and the variety of stakeholders, as well as a broader public constituency. Direct measures are combined with indicators that are developed through a process of negotiation or that emerge in other ways that are not planned or designed.

Accountability is primarily about reporting own progress but includes connecting to the sustainability issue and communicating a consistent and coherent message to a wider audience.

It is not only about justifying the value to partner organisations, but also the value towards the sustainability issue that is the common interest. The issue of credibility is important in demonstrating value so that claims need to be verified in order to provide compelling evidence of value to a wider public audience. This means that in the context of the supply chain for a sustainable product, traceability is an important factor in establishing legitimacy and it is needed together with accountability and transparency.

### **8.9.4 Discussion topic 9: Indicators of influence**

Based on the definition provided by Koschmann *et al.* (2012), influence in this discussion means when a person or organisation (A) has influence on another person or organisation (B), then influence may be seen when B appropriates (takes ownership) or replicates something that they experienced in their interactions with A. This definition indicates that influence has an action orientation and the evidence that influence has been effected, is in the actions of the other person; it is not something that can be seen in one's own actions. Assessing influence is therefore about considering how value is experienced by other stakeholders or communities and this presents some difficulties in terms of articulating the benefits, who communicates and how.

Further, from the definition above, influence may create both positive or negative actions, it may create reinforcing behaviour or avoidance behaviour. In the case of value creation, defined in this study as creating benefits for the stakeholders (refer Paragraph 2.7.5), the focus is on positive outcomes.

In the framework of XSP value, the focus is on the influence of public perceptions, on partner organisations and on other stakeholders and communities. Koschmann *et al.* described this as external constituents on the basis that an XSP as an entity may be able to distinguish between internal and external stakeholders. The issue of boundaries has already been discussed and the distinction between internal and external does not necessarily have a significant bearing on the discussion of influence.

The literature at Chapter 4 Paragraph 4.17.1 refers.

#### ***8.9.4.1 Reconnecting with the findings***

Illustrations of the influence of partnership activity were found at three different levels, including the public, the stakeholders and market influence. These levels are interconnected and yet different audiences.

Influence on the public was illustrated by way of the public seafood commitments, the messaging in the joint marketing campaign and the WWF-SASSI consumer engagement programmes. The aim here is to create awareness and understanding of the sustainability issue, but there are stronger influences involved as the partners work together to convey the desired message to consumers as was evident in the joint marketing campaign with Woolworths and MSC.

Going beyond the messaging and the commitments, the actions taken to deliver on the commitments is a significant point of leverage with other stakeholders involved in the supply chain for sustainable seafood. Influence is described as leading by example, establishing standards and advocacy and involves a process of persuasion.

The supply chain theory of change (see Figure 2.1 at Paragraph 2.4.1) provides a framework that directs activities towards the points at which changes in behaviour are needed and it is at these points that influence is exerted. The findings provide accounts of how this model works and how it is used internationally and there are also accounts of how a different model has emerged in the South African context.

Another key finding is that the supply chain model is aimed at being replicable and achieving scale so that the process becomes a pathway for others to follow. The model relies on market dynamics and there is a range of intended outcomes from creating awareness to driving change towards more responsible choices and sustainable practices throughout the value chain.

Examples range from influencing local producers such as the trout farmers to influencing producers and fishing companies across the world in the case of the tuna supply chain.

There is a similar process of influence with fisheries improvement programmes where fisheries use the MSC standard as a benchmark to establish improvement practices and over time this establishes a higher standard amongst the fishermen. In the findings, this is described as creating a vacuum that drags others up to the higher standard.

In the findings, the word measurement is used but tends to be directed towards quantitative factors. The word indicator is used to refer to a broader range of factors that are monitored by partner organisations, covering activities within the organisation, by stakeholders, consumers and a broader public audience.

There is evidence that partner organisations track a range of indicators of influence including quantitative measures such as product sales and website hits or advertising value equivalent.

Other indicators are the growing interaction on social media and other consumer platforms so that the reach of the message and the “talkability” of the message may be monitored as a means to assess influence. New, less conventional means of conveying influence are used by various partners including communication by “telling those beautiful stories” that build awareness about sustainability and sustainable seafood. The findings include examples from Woolworths, MSC and WWF-SASSI.

#### ***8.9.4.2 Bringing together the findings and the literature***

Influence as defined here has an action orientation and it is the actions of others who chose to appropriate or replicate something they have experienced, that act as an indicator of influence. The examples from the findings show that influence is exerted by one party on another, but it is up to the other party to decide whether and in what way they will respond and what actions they will take.

The process of exerting influence and being influenced appears to connect with issue already discussed such as credibility and authority. Issues of persuasion, pressure and advocacy may be needed on the one side. On the other side, actions may range from awareness to changing behaviour and a range of options are included in the findings and in the literature.

While influence is discussed in the findings in terms of making a difference and expressing a change in behaviour, it is not clear where influence becomes impact as both involved change. In the case of influence the change means taking ownership and copying others, whereas impact, as is discussed below, may involve change at a broader level or for a wider constituency. There is no clear distinction as the process described in the research findings is continuous.

The examples from the findings illustrate activities aimed at exerting influence as well as indicators that others have indeed been influenced. Indicators may include quantitative factors and evidence of a much broader qualitative nature such as the success stories from the supply chain. There are examples of activities directed towards influencing public perceptions and the buying choices of consumers. These include the seafood commitments by the retailer, the joint marketing campaign and the consumer engagement programmes of WWF-SASSI. All of these are directed towards consumers with the intention of creating an awareness and understanding of the issue of sustainable seafood so that consumers are able to make informed buying choices.

The supply chain model of change aligns with the definition of influence in the literature and the findings describe it as a process that can be replicated and is scalable and becomes a pathway for others to follow. This is a description of a process of influence, not just in creating awareness a retailer to only offer products from certified sources, then the buying options for customers are made very clear and indeed when all the major retailers are adopting similar commitments, then customers are given a range of sustainable choices. The recommendations from the participants

is to keep the messaging in the market simple and clear so that informed consumers understand that they have a choice and they can choose to make it green.

There is a circular process here in that the consumer awareness in South Africa was first created through the efforts of WWF-SASSI to the point that they could claim that there was a demand for sustainable seafood. The claim that WWF-SASSI had had an influence by creating consumer awareness was confirmed by the response of retailers who accepted that there was a sufficient market demand to warrant a business case to change their procurement practices. In turn, as is illustrated by the story of the tuna supply chain, the retailers then exerted influence on importers and the producers, who changed their buying practices and in turn exerted influence on the fishing companies to change fishing practices that directly impacted the sustainability of fish stocks, which then is monitored through scientific studies.

The supply chain example indicates that there is a process of exerting influence followed by actions that indicate that others have been influenced. The point of greatest influence is described in various ways as the fulcrum point in the supply chain or as the narrow stem of the martini glass and it is the retailers that are considered to be the key focus of attention in terms of exerting influence and being influenced. However, the model shows how various market sectors are needed to make the process work so that there is influence exerted by one sector on another.

All of the points in the process are described in the findings and in most respects they follow the model in the literature. The one main point of difference in the South African market is that while the retailers are still a key point of influence, the process was initiated by working to create consumer awareness and so the point of initial influence was consumers rather than retailers. Since the market demand in South Africa was created from a zero base, the influence in this case was exerted by WWF-SASSI who created the awareness with consumers and then generated the supply chain cycle. For this reason, the participants hold that the model of change in South Africa is different to developed markets where there was an existing market demand for ethically traded products (refer to the narrative in Appendix O).

The circularity of the process is demonstrated by the evidence that when awareness and understanding changes consumer preferences to create a market demand, then retailers are motivated to change their procurement practices so that they buy sustainable products; and as more product is marketed and sold so the consumer awareness builds and the market demand grows further and amplifies the business case for the retailers, the producers, the farmers and the fishers.

The story of the MSC chain of custody demonstrates that the process of influence does not happen automatically nor does it necessarily generate an immediate positive response but it may require effort, persuasion and even a degree of pressure. To move from exerting influence to others being influenced to change their behaviour appears to require certain conditions and processes,

discussed in the relationship section, so that the process is managed to build credibility and authority in the various supply chain relationships.

A key finding is that influence has no geographic boundaries so that local producers and consumers may be influenced and in the case of the tuna supply chain, there is a global reach and evidence of influence in other parts of the world.

Given the dynamics of the process of exerting influence and being influenced, it is the value or benefits that are experienced that need to be considered here. According to Koschmann *et al.* (2012), partnership activities deliver value to the extent that there is evidence to demonstrate that public perceptions have been influenced or that partner organisations or other stakeholders have been influenced.

Combining these propositions with the findings, suggests that benefit accrues to stakeholders (or other broader audience) when there is evidence that there is a change in their behaviour. Benefit accrues to the sustainability issue when evidence of change can be found in fishing practices and more directly in the status of fish stocks. Where the change is direct it is described in the findings as “change on the water”.

Where the change is ongoing, or where the influence is more extensive such as the case of the tuna supply chain, the value may be more profound and this is addressed in the following paragraph on impact.

Noted in the findings, rather than the literature, influence may be extended through stories and other media in order to get maximum audience reach by telling the key stories about sustainability (NB: 2.23) or sharing stories that “sing in people’s minds” (ML: 2:15). Communication in the media is also described so that there are brand ambassadors for WWF-SASSI (NB: 1:14) who may be chefs or in another case radio DJs who spread the message about sustainable seafood to a broader constituency. This is particularly notable because of the strong focus on extending awareness through multi-media communication campaigns.

#### ***8.9.4.3 Conclusions: Indicators of influence***

The discussion here was directed by the definitions in the literature but it was the rich descriptions in the findings that provided a variety of illustrations in a supply chain context that served to translate those definitions into an understanding of the dynamics involved in exerting influence and in being influenced.

Stories and other social media are used across multiple communication channels to create awareness and extend the influence of the sustainable seafood message.

It is argued that value or benefit is experienced by various stakeholders including the sustainability issue as influence leads to various degrees of change in behaviour from awareness to informed buying choices throughout the supply chain, including changes on the water that affect fish stocks

directly. These broader changes may be classified as impact rather than influence and this is the topic of the next paragraph.

### **8.9.5 Discussion topic 10: Indicators of impact**

Koschmann *et al.* (2012) distinguished between first-order and higher-order effects and discussed accountability and influence, rather than impact. First order effects are more immediate direct actions whereas second order and third order effects develop over time and include learning that extends to a broader community, changes in practices and beyond that to new norms and discourses and even new institutions. It is difficult to ascertain how Koschmann *et al.* considered impact, and indeed whether it was considered.

As a key difference between the existing framework and the findings, impact is discussed here to develop an understanding of what it means in the context of value creation.

The concept of impact is an important consideration in the collaboration literature as noted at Paragraph 7.7. Impact is also raised in the findings as a key area of attention (refer Paragraph 6.10.3.6).

#### ***8.9.5.1 Reconnecting with the findings***

In the findings there is evidence of higher-order effects that include learning, which in turn leads to informed decision making and practical application.

However, the findings highlight that there is a progression, so that before learning can take place, the first-order effects of awareness and understanding need to be in place. There are various communicative practices described in the findings and these include crafted communication, cultivating conversations and telling stories to illustrate what sustainability means, what the risks are and what action is needed. The communication is aimed at understanding so that while awareness is the first step, understanding is needed before learning is achieved.

In the findings learning is suggested as an alternative to a planned strategy for change so that learning and adapting support the direction of change in ways that cannot be planned or designed. In the findings learning is seen as a collaborative process, involving the partners. It also includes research and science that is relevant in practice so that being practical is a prerequisite for action. This highlights that to be effective (i.e. to deliver value), learning needs to be applied. The findings also show it may take time to effect change and there may be an extended period of learning and it is ongoing.

Being adaptable has already been discussed as an element in managing relationships. Actually effecting change, making improvements and adapting behaviour are outcomes of learning and may be classified as higher-order effects. Another higher-order effect noted in the findings is innovation and it is closely associated with learning and adaption so that when learning is applied then it leads to new or improved practices and innovation. The findings indicate that communication is

important to make the connections between what has been learnt and what is useful in a practical context and to convey a clear message that articulates the way forward; implementation also requires tools and resources to support the change process. There is evidence here of active management to move the process forward from understanding to learning, adapting and innovating so that the higher level effects are supported by relational process of communication as well as tools and other resources; they are interconnected.

The findings suggest that outcomes occur at different levels so that while there may be immediate, tangible benefits for stakeholders, it may also be possible to effect change in a wider community. Impact is described as something bigger so that action may have leverage beyond the immediate stakeholders. The tuna supply chain is a case in point and other examples include the work of WWF-SASSI to drive change in consumer behaviour and the MSC chain of custody certification that changed practices in the supply chain of imported product.

Success goes beyond the organisational level and outcomes are related to change and improvement for the issue of sustainable seafood. There is an action orientation related to the descriptions of impact such as “driving a bigger impact”.

Outcomes may be positive or negative. Negative impact requires actions to mitigate the impact, whereas positive impact requires action to scale up or amplify the change.

Participants that spoke of having an impact also spoke about the stories such as those published in a recent MSC report on Global Impacts (MSC, 2015d), or video material on the stories in the developing world such as small scale fishermen (NN: 2.17). In each case, these are stories about stakeholders or other parties who have benefited or experienced positive change in relation to sustainable seafood. While impact is difficult to measure, it can be illustrated through these narratives.

#### ***8.9.5.2 Bringing together the findings and the literature***

Considering the findings in relation to the literature, there are three key points that stand out. The first is to do with learning and this is covered in various ways in the findings that reflect the point made by Waddell that there are different levels of learning. The findings suggest a progression from awareness to understanding to learning and this is described as a process of active management. For learning to be effective it needs to be applied so that it leads to adaption and innovation; being practical is seen to be a prerequisite to action. Adaption and innovation would be higher level effects involving transformation.

The focus on application of learning was not prominently featured in the literature, but the focus on outcomes of change and improvement was noted in both the findings and the literature. This could be an added emphasis that for change to be effective, for impact to be experienced, then learning should be applied. The findings also highlight the interconnectedness of the process so that rather than being linear, there is interaction between the different levels.

A learning approach to change could be compared to the social constructionist view described by Gray (2000) as opposed to a problem-solving view. This distinction is made in the findings so that learning is presented as an alternative to a planned strategy or design for change; learning is seen as a collaborative practice. Through the collaborative activities, action is taken and learning is applied so that change may be effected.

The next point relates to the nature of the outcome or impact. Both the literature and the findings identified that outcomes may be experienced at different levels from the partner organisations to a wider community. The language used by Kolk (2014) makes a useful distinction between outputs, outcomes and impact, whereas in the findings the words 'outcome' and 'impact' are used. The literature also includes the distinction between direct and indirect effects, and while not expressed in this manner, the findings do indicate that measures are not always tangible so that intangible factors need to be acknowledged by reference to indicators or other indirect means.

The last point relates to the scope of the impact or who experiences the value. In the findings, effecting change in a wider community was described as driving a bigger impact so that qualitative factors were needed to reflect the bigger picture.

The literature also acknowledges the wider societal benefit of partnership activities, including the impact on the issue or problem and the beneficiaries. This is a key point in a context where there is no partnership entity and therefore no objectives set at a collective level so that there may be outcomes at different levels for the issue, or common interest, as well as outcomes for the partner organisations. In this case, the issue of sustainable seafood is used as a proxy for the beneficiary, which would be the fish. However, there are partnership activities, specifically in the research space, that assess impact directly on fish stocks. Fish stocks and sustainable seafood both express the intended beneficiary of the partnership activities.

This relates back to the previous discussion on common interests and intersects, where the issue of sustainable seafood is the common interest and the intersects are more direct partnership activities. The impact on the issue is separate and can be separately assessed from the impact or outcome experienced by partner organisations at the intersects.

A final note is about the use of stories as a means to communicate outcomes and illustrate impact where the evidence is intangible but positive change has been experienced by stakeholders and others related to the sustainability issue. As a method of communication, stories are both a means to exert influence in that they are evocative and vivid; and they are also a means to convey evidence of change that has happened so that they complement and extend other more tangible measures that may exist at a more specific level.

Following the point on credibility, stories can convey a compelling message when told in the words of or through the experiences of the beneficiary of change or those directly affected by the change. Stories illustrate one way to convey the impact on beneficiaries as suggested in the literature.

While the word authentic comes to mind, in the case of sustainable seafood, authenticity is a term specifically related to the accuracy of seafood labelling as described by (ED: 2. 18).

### **8.9.5.3 Conclusions: Indicators of impact**

In addition to the points made in the literature, the findings focus attention on applying learning in order to effect change, to innovate and to adapt, so that impact may be related to the application of learning. The interconnectedness of the different outcomes of the process is also noted.

Stories are used as a means to communicate impact, especially when experienced by people outside the partner organisations. As previously noted in the paragraph on reporting, evidence needs to be credible and where stories are presented they need to be credible or authentic.

The findings provide illustrations of outcomes and impact and how the latter means that a wider community experiences a change. This aligns with the literature that argues that impact is about change and transformation, rather than other, more direct outcomes. Different levels are also highlighted so that the partners may benefit but so too does the sustainability issue itself.

### **8.9.6 Section summary: Evidence of change - Articulating value delivery**

The conclusions reached in this section of the discussion highlight opportunities for the conceptual framework of value creation for MsCsC. These include the following:

- i) A variety of mechanisms for accounting and reporting to stakeholders and to a broader public constituency. Direct measures are combined with indicators that are negotiated or that emerge through trial and error.
- ii) Claims need to be verified to provide compelling evidence of the value delivered and to demonstrate credibility.
- iii) Value or benefit may be experienced by various stakeholders including the sustainability issue itself. There is a dynamic between exerting influence and being influenced.
- iv) In order to effect change, learning needs to be applied and impact is related to the application of learning so that a wider community experiences change.
- v) Impact appears to be a matter of degree so that it is associated with change and transformation at a broader, more systemic level, beyond the stakeholders and partners directly involved.
- vi) To exert influence and to convey outcomes and impact, multiple communication channels are used, including stories that illustrate, rather than measure, impact. This may include stories of stakeholders related to the sustainability issue, whether they are partner organisations or other parties.

These conclusions are noted and carried forward to the next chapter where the conceptual framework is presented. The following remarks conclude this section of the discussion.

Articulating value delivery involves a variety of communicative practices such as reporting, verification of evidence, and communications aimed at exerting influence as well as demonstrating that others have been influenced or that change has been effected so that there has been an impact of stakeholders and on the sustainability issue itself. The dimensions proposed by Koschmann *et al.* (2012) provided a relevant structure to organise the discussion and through consideration of the findings and the literature together, some new insights and understanding have emerged as summarised above.

Evidence and the credibility of evidence are key requirements of a communicative approach to understanding value. While communication is an ongoing process, by its nature it describes, demonstrates and articulates an outcome at a point in time. These are specific snapshots or milestones that are communicated. Stories may be used to convey a more dynamic interaction with stakeholders and the sustainability issue as they can illustrate impact and convey how change has happened over a period of time and what it has meant to the people involved. As a method of communication, stories are both a means to exert influence in that they are evocative and vivid; and they are also a means to convey evidence of change that has happened so that they complement and extend other more tangible measures that may exist at a more specific level. Following the point on credibility, stories can convey a compelling message when told in the words of or through the experiences of the beneficiary of change or those directly affected by the change.

#### **8.10 REVIEW: CRITICAL ASSESSMENT AND COMPLETENESS CHECK**

Before concluding this chapter and progressing to the conceptual framework, consideration is given to highlighting any aspect of the research that has not been included in the discussion. This is necessary, as applying an existing framework in the IPA analysis has many advantages in terms of organising the findings and the literature in a way that allows for a structured discussion of the key concepts and constructs. However, in doing so, there is also the risk that some key insight from the fieldwork may not have been given adequate attention or may have been overlooked.

This risk has been addressed in three ways. First, the IPA analysis applied a theoretical lens that had two levels of conceptual thinking, so that the framework of XSP value was applied within the context of the broader CCO thinking. This 'double lens' ensured that CCO concepts that were not highlighted by the framework of XSP value, were still considered. As a result, topics such as coorientation, material and textual agency and context were highlighted and these have been included in the discussion above.

Second, the IPA worksheets were systematically prepared and then summarised into a 'cross-case' comparison that highlighted differences as well as similarities so that unique perspectives were brought to the fore. The unique narratives that derived from this comparison are included in the findings and have been used to enrich the discussion on the nature of MsCsC.

Finally, completeness was tested further by giving specific attention to questions in the fieldwork that were broadly phrased in order to draw out additional ideas that had not been included elsewhere. In particular, attention was given to the responses to the final interview question: what would you amplify and do more of in the future?

This review did not identify any additional topics, but it did highlight the need to give adequate emphasis to a number of subjects. These are tabulated in Table 8.5 below, which provides a checklist to ensure that the discussion chapter does adequately address these issues highlighted by the participants.

**Table 8.5: Completeness review of topics discussed**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Subject raised in the fieldwork texts</b>	<b>Discussion topic</b>	<b>Paragraph reference</b>
<b>1</b>	Relevance Remain relevant to stakeholders; regional relevance within Africa.	Common interests and intersects	8.7.1
<b>2</b>	Authenticity (specific to the traceability of fish species) and credibility	Credibility, legitimacy, and authority	8.8.2
<b>3</b>	Learning	Recursive process	8.7.2
<b>4</b>	Greater engagement with customers and suppliers and internally	Relationships and social capital	8.8.1 8.7.4
<b>5</b>	Interaction with other sectors including government	The nature of MsCsC Relationships and social capital	8.2 8.8.1
<b>6</b>	Replication – various Extending to other products (wine); to small-scale fisheries; other sources; to other regions of Africa; more aquaculture.	Influence	8.9.4
<b>7</b>	Practical application of learning – getting traction is about being practical	Recursive process	8.7.2
<b>8</b>	Focus on the science	Credibility, legitimacy, and authority	8.8.2
<b>9</b>	Communication – communicate the science	Credibility, legitimacy, and authority	8.8.2
<b>10</b>	Telling the stories; tell the world; shout about the stories – making people more conscious about sustainability Spreading the message – communicating externally	Narrative Identification	8.4

Source: Author's compilation.

Subjects included are relevance, authenticity and credibility, learning, and greater engagement with customers, suppliers and internal people to build awareness and understanding. This was also expressed as focusing more on collaborative engagement. Interaction with the public sector and government departments in areas such as aquaculture and small-scale fisheries was

highlighted Replication in other areas in order to extend influence and learning beyond current activities was a response with a variety of areas for extension. These included geographic expansion into Africa or extending activities to other sustainable sources, other products and other initiatives.

Practical application was noted as applying the science and the learning in order to progress. The science was also highlighted in relation to credibility and the need to communicate scientifically in order to remain credible.

All of these subjects had been adequately covered in the discussion and required no further analysis. However, the one topic that was highlighted in this review was the subject of the narrative on the sustainability issue. Narrative is highlighted in the discussion on identification and material and textual agency. The remarks by those participants who expressed the need to amplify the stories was a key reminder to ensure that the narrative of the sustainability issue was given prominence in the conceptual framework.

In the existing framework of XSP value, the name and narrative of the XSP were included in the concept of identity. Unlike the organisation-as-actor view, the key concept in the a broader view is identification, rather than identity. This review provides an apt reminder that the concept of identification also involves a compelling narrative and in the case where the common interest is a sustainability issue, then the key narrative is about the issue around which the MsCsC is organised. The trajectory is therefore directed towards the narrative, which in this case is sustainable seafood. This clarification is applied in the next chapter to support the research choice around where to position the narrative of the issue and the propositions around identification.

## 8.11 SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS FROM THE DISCUSSION

In order to summarise the key points from the discussion and to connect with the next chapter, a summary of the conclusions in this chapter is provided below in Table 8.6. The text is drawn directly from the paragraphs as referenced in the left-hand column and so no further commentary is provided here. Table 8.6 provides a point of reference for developing the conceptual framework in Chapter 9.

**Table 8.6: Summary of the key discussion points**

Ref in Chap 8	Ref in Findings	Topic	Conclusions	Ref in Chap 9
<b>8.2 - 8.4</b>	<b>Understanding the nature of MsCsC</b>			
8.2	Table 6.13 Appendix R Topic 0	MsCsC as an issue field	MsCsC as a fusion of multiple activities by organisations, partnerships and individuals who are cooriented towards and working together towards a common sustainability interest.	9.6.2
8.3		Hypertext as a metaphor for MsCsC	Hypertext is a multi-dimensional reality with a path that is negotiated and constantly evolving.	9.4
8.4	Table 6.13 Appendix R Topic 0	Identity and identification	In a context of an MsCsC, identification is a dynamic process of interaction and negotiation and a narrative view of collective identification applies.  At a generalised level, stakeholders are cooriented toward the common interest and they identify with the narrative of the common interest, which is the sustainability issue. There is a process of ongoing negotiation and meaning making in conversation that establishes the direction or trajectory of the MsCsC.  Stakeholders identify with the sustainability issue and co-create the issue narrative.	9.6.4  9.6.5  9.6.4
<b>8.7</b>	<b>Trajectory as collective agency</b>			
8.7.1	Table 6.13 Appendix R Topic 1	Coorientation, common interests and intersects	Stakeholders have a shared appreciation of the issue. This coorientation is reflected in the trajectory of the MsCsC activities.  Interdependencies are established where strategies intersect; where relevance to each partner or stakeholder and to the sustainability issue converges.  The intersects inform the shared appreciation of the issue at a broad level and at the same time, they direct the goals and objectives for an action agenda at a more specific level.  The communicative practices that build the shared appreciation are those that create the generalized ties and shared meaning. They also have an action orientation so that partners develop particularized ties around specific time-bound activities.	9.6.4  9.6.5
8.7.1		Negotiation as conversational interaction	Intersections and interdependencies are established through a process of negotiation between the stakeholders and include strategies such as persuasion, advocacy and incentives.	9.6.7
8.7.2	Table 6.13 Appendix R Topic 2	A recursive process	A communicative view of value creation is a cyclical and progressive process that is recursive.  Learning is seen as an outcome, but as learning is applied, then it generates new learning. Adapting as change is seen as an outcome but equally being adaptable means being open to further change. A cyclical process is evident.	9.6.7

**Table 8.6: Summary of the key discussion points (continued)**

8.7.3	Table 6.13 Appendix R Topic 3	Material and textual agency	<p>Material and textual agency are key aspects of the process of value creation; they support the narrative or trajectory of the MsCsC. It is text, as narrative and as a textual agent that allows the message of the MsCsC to “act at a distance” so that it is amplified.</p> <p>Human agency and nonhuman agency are complementary and in combination they build and amplify the forward trajectory.</p>	9.7.1
8.7.4	Table 6.13 Appendix R Topic 3	Forms of capital: economic, cultural and social	<p>The different forms of capital are complementary and they are applied concurrently and in combination. All forms are important for successful collaboration.</p> <p>Creating and building a compelling narrative so that people can identify with the issue and willingly participate in the value creation process.</p>	9.7.1
<b>8.8</b>	<b>The cycle of value creation</b>			
8.8.1	Table 6.13 Appendix R Topic 5	Building relationships, incorporating emotional elements	<p>Relationships are at the heart of the value creation process. Emotional energy is a driver of action that explains how people engage at different levels or with different degrees of commitment.</p> <p>There is a variety of relationship structures including hierarchical, market, collaboration and network forms. These work concurrently and in combination and are interconnected rather than separate.</p> <p>In collaborative relationships, the structure is in the relationships so that the issue field is socially constructed. Mechanisms include negotiation, persuasion and reciprocity.</p> <p>Combining human energy with material and textual agency amplifies collective agency.</p>	9.7.3
8.8.2	Table 6.13 Appendix R Topic 6	Credibility, legitimacy, and authority	<p>In an MsCsC context, it is argued that legitimacy and authority are established in a process of negotiation by the stakeholders. This process of negotiation is a self-organising process of coorientation that pervades all components of the process of value creation.</p> <p>The horizontal forms of authority that reflect this process of negotiation include advocacy and persuasion, which rely on the strength of relationships. These are used in conjunction with other more conventional forms of authority in the context of the market, such as contracts. In the supply chain there are specific forms of legitimacy and authority established through traceability and transparency.</p> <p>The self-organising process and the multiple dimensions need to be recognised in the framework of value creation.</p>	9.6.8
8.8.3	Table 6.13 Appendix R Topic 7	Managing tensions	<p>Managing tensions is an active process of negotiation between the partners and is a normal and ongoing part of managing relationships.</p> <p>The nature of tensions may change over time according to the challenges that are external to the partnership activities.</p> <p>Managing diversity and stability is the aim of managing tensions; it is a dynamic, adaptive process that seeks the benefits of both.</p> <p>This reflects the complex nature of a collaborative context with multiple stakeholders.</p>	9.6.7

**Table 8.6: Summary of the key discussion points (continued)**

8.19	Value delivery			
8.9.3	Table 6.13 Appendix R Topic 8	Accountability	<p>A variety of mechanisms for a variety of stakeholders and a broader constituency. Direct measures and indicators that are negotiated or that emerge in ways that are unplanned. Justifying value to the stakeholders and to the sustainability issue.</p> <p>Credibility is important so claims need to be verified in order to provide compelling evidence to a wider public audience. Traceability is an key factor in the supply chain.</p> <p>Accountability focuses on reporting one's own performance and progress.</p>	9.7.5.1
8.9.4	Table 6.13 Appendix R Topic 9	Indicators of influence	<p>Social media and other consumer platforms are used across multiple communication channels to create awareness and extend influence.</p> <p>Influence leads to various degrees of change in behaviour from awareness to informed buying choices and changes that affect fish stocks directly.</p> <p>There is a dynamic between exerting influence and being influenced.</p> <p>Influence is evident in the action of others who appropriate or replicate an experience.</p>	9.7.5.2
8.9.5	Table 6.13 Appendix R Topic 10	Indicators of impact	<p>Learning needs to be applied in order to effect change, to innovate and to adapt. The interconnectedness of outcomes. Impact means that a wider community experiences a change.</p> <p>Impact is a matter of degree and is associated with change and transformation at a broader, more systemic level, beyond the stakeholders and partners directly.</p> <p>Stories are used as a means to communicate impact, including the stories of partners and other stakeholders related to the sustainability issue.</p> <p>Evidence needs to be credible and stories need to be compelling.</p>	9.7.5.3

Source: Author's compilation.

## 8.12 WHAT IS DIFFERENT AND WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

Before proceeding to the next chapter and the development of a conceptual framework to incorporate the various conclusions from the discussion, the key points are scrutinised and assessed to consider what is different about these conclusions and why they matter. This assessment is set out in Table 8.7 below.

This table follows the same 10 topics covered in the discussion and also includes context with the nature of MsCsC and the concepts of collective identity and identification. Two columns are added to highlight areas of new understanding of each topic, what is seen to be different from the extant literature, and a short explanation of why these areas of new understanding are relevant from a theoretical perspective.

Table 8.7 highlights the main points of difference that have been highlighted in the discussion. Each of these is incorporated into the proposed framework presented in the next chapter.

Some points are presented as extensions to the current conceptualisation of XSP value as described by Koschmann *et al.* (2012), for example the extension of the three capitals so that they work together, concurrently and in combination, rather than being seen as distinct and separate resources; the inclusion of multiple agencies, and emotional elements to build and invest in relationships. Impact is another extension. These are shaded in light grey in the table.

The primary points of difference are shaded in dark grey in the table. These are presented as adaptations of the conceptual framework as they have a specific application in an MsCsC context and have not yet been considered in the literature on a communicative approach to collaboration and value creation. These adaptations include the concept of identification with the sustainability issue as the common interest and more specifically the identification with the narrative of the sustainability issue, which is socially constructed. Another addition is the recursive, self-organising process with multiple dimensions in which particularised ties or intersects are negotiated, credibility is established and learning and adapting take place.

These are incorporated into an extended and adapted framework of value creation in Chapter 9.

**Table 8.7: What is revealed by the discussion that is different and why does it matter?**

	<b>Topics</b>	<b>What is different?</b>	<b>Why does this matter?</b>
<b>CONTEXT: THE NATURE OF MsCsC</b>			
	MsCsC and multiplicity	CCO literature on cross-sector collaboration and value creation does not yet include an MsCsC context. MsCsC as an issue field	This research offers a refinement to current theory by adapting an existing conceptual framework to an MsCsC context.  Connecting CCO concepts with MsCsC as an issue field.
	MsCsC as hypertext	A metaphor drawn from the CCO literature that has not yet been used to conceptualise cross-sector collaboration.	A refinement of existing theoretical concepts.
<b>COLLECTIVE IDENTITY AND IDENTIFICATION: KEY CONCEPTS IN A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL VIEW</b>			
	Introducing identification as a complementary construct	Identification has only been used in a limited number of cases in the inter-organisational literature and has not yet been identified in the literature on cross-sector collaboration or in the CCO literature.  Identification with the sustainability issue aligns with the conceptualisation of MsCsC as an issue field.	Identification offers an alternative construct to collective identity that aligns with the context of an MsCsC as an issue field and allows for an adaption of the existing conceptual framework.  Identification with the sustainability issue is a key point of difference in an MsCsC context .
	Collective identification as narrative	Collective identification as narrative has not yet been used when combining CCO concepts and cross-sector collaboration and yet narrative is a foundation of the CCO approach and it supports a social constructionist view of cross-sector collaboration.  Identification with the narrative of the sustainability issue is the key point here and the narrative is socially constructed by the stakeholders.	Narrative provides a focus for a broader conceptualisation of organisational forms that are characterised by collective identification with an issue (and therefore an issue field).  This MsCsC view of identification with the narrative of the sustainability issue is different from the existing CCO literature on cross-sector collaboration.

**Table 8.7: What is revealed that is different and why does it matter? (continued)**

<b>TRAJECTORY: COLLECTIVE AGENCY – MOVING TOWARDS A COMMON INTEREST</b>			
<b>1</b>	Coorientation, common interests and intersects	<p>Generalised ties correspond with the common interest or issue.</p> <p>Particularised ties are intersects that are negotiated between stakeholders working together.</p> <p>The process of negotiation in conversational interaction establishes the intersects and interdependencies so that it is an emergent process, rather than objectives initiating the process.</p>	<p>Different levels are not a new finding but the dominant view assumes a single objective or vision or end, rather than outcomes at different levels. It also assumes that objectives initiate action, whereas here it is interaction that establishes the intersects and interdependencies.</p> <p>This addition is an adaption of the existing framework to recognise multiple levels in an MsCsC context.</p>
<b>2</b>	A recursive process of learning, adaption and value creation	<p>Highlighting the circularity rather than linearity of the process, the dynamic rather than the static.</p> <p>Learning is applied so that further learning takes place. Being adaptable and open to new learning continues the cycle of learning, adapting and change.</p> <p>Process is self-organising and is socially constructed; credibility and authority are negotiated; intersects or particularised ties are negotiated.</p>	<p>Not specifically articulated in the CCO literature on value creation in XSPs and it reflects one of the basic principles of the underlying CCO thinking that ensures the continuity of the communication process.</p>
<b>3</b>	Material and textual agency	<p>The combination of human agency with material and textual agency is argued from the CCO literature as a means to scale up or amplify collaborative activity.</p>	<p>Currently not included in the CCO literature on value creation in XSPs.</p> <p>The represents an extension of the current conceptual framework.</p>
<b>4</b>	Forms of capital: Economic, cultural and social capitals	<p>These are not new concepts but the CCO literature on value creation does not show that they are complementary and concurrent so that they work together.</p> <p>Highlights 'soft power' options of persuasion, advocacy and negotiation working together with hierarchical and market mechanisms.</p>	<p>Recognising that the economic, cultural and social capital are complementary and concurrent so that they work together.</p> <p>The combination is not specifically articulated in the CCO literature on value creation in XSPs and yet it is an important aspect of a multi-dimensional context.</p>
<b>DYNAMIC CYCLE OF VALUE CREATION: MAKING THE PROCESS WORK</b>			
<b>5</b>	Building relationships - investing in and cultivating relationships	<p>What is new is the emphasis on investing and cultivating (in addition to managing) relationships by introducing emotional elements that are not expressed in the existing CCO literature on value creation in XSPs.</p> <p>The emotional elements are a key driver of change and not commonly included in the organisation literature.</p>	<p>Focus on a dynamic cycle of relationship building is not clearly depicted in the existing CCO literature on value creation in XSPs.</p> <p>The introduction of emotional elements and human energy moves the process from managing to building and investing and these are more active relational processes.</p> <p>This allows for an extension of the current framework.</p>
<b>6</b>	Credibility, legitimacy, and authority	<p>These are not new concepts but are introduced at multiple level, including the legitimacy of resources or of accounts of value delivery; and as a key factor in building relationships.</p> <p>Legitimacy as a socially constructed process means that authority is established in a self-organising process. This differs from the dominant view in the literature.</p>	<p>The conceptual framework is extended to recognise the multiple dimensions and self-organising process.</p>

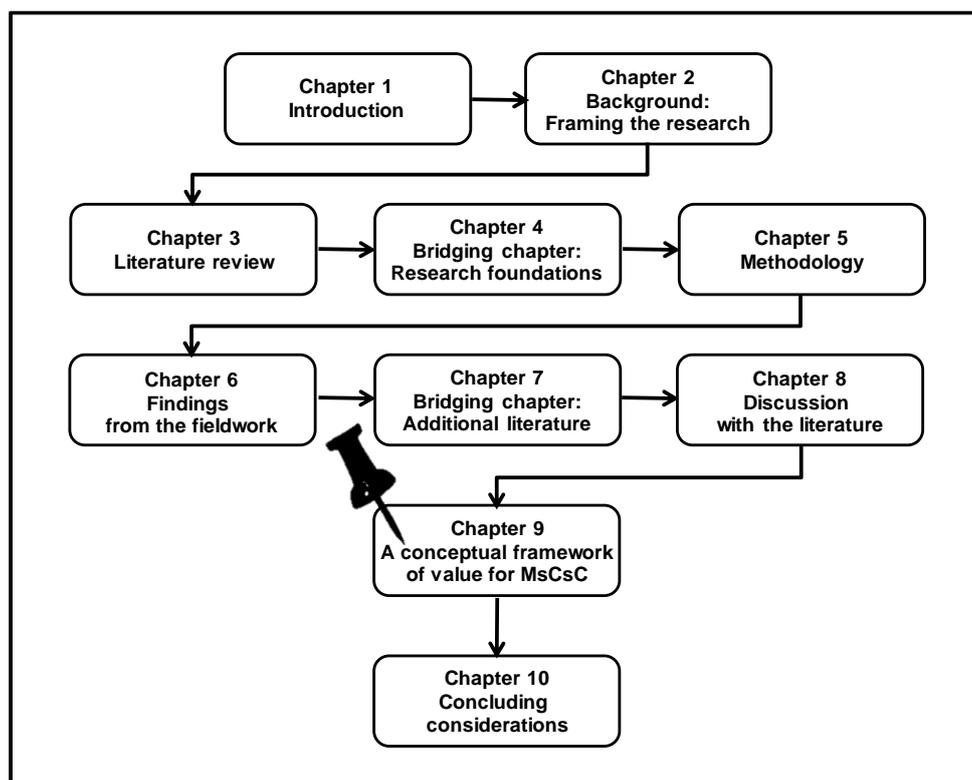
**Table 8.7: What is revealed that is different and why does it matter? (continued)**

7	Managing tensions	Tensions in partnership relationships are not new – but this research extends the discussion on tensions.	A broader view includes risk management and risk mitigation that connects with the business context.
<b>ARTICULATING VALUE DELIVERY: EVIDENCE THAT THE PROCESS WORKS</b>			
8	Accountability	Multiple accounts by multiple stakeholders and not only one organisation.  In the supply chain traceability, accountability and transparency work together.  Persuasive and credible evidence.	Within the CCO framework of value creation, a focus on multiple accounts of own progress.
9	Indicators of influence	Multiple examples such as advocacy and persuasion together with incentives and other direct mechanisms of control.	A broader or extended view.
10	Indicators of impact	The communicative view is extended to include change and transformation as value delivery.  It is where a wider community experiences change and transformation and not only the partner organisations.	Not specified in the existing framework and yet impact is a key construct in the literature on cross-sector collaboration and a broader concept that influence.  An extension of the current framework of value creation.

Source: Author's compilation.

**8.13 CHECKPOINT: END OF CHAPTER 8**

Before moving onto the next chapter, the research design is shown below in Figure 5.2 as an orientation to show that the next chapter will address the conceptual framework.

**Figure 5.2: Research design**

Source: Author's compilation.

## CHAPTER 9

# A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF VALUE FOR MULTI-STAKEHOLDER CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION

### 9.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

The outcome from the findings and the subsequent discussion with the literature indicate that a new conceptual framework is needed that deals with multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration as an issue field and as a fusion of organisation and collaboration.

A new conceptual framework is proposed that is derived from the framework of XSP value as described by Koschmann *et al.* (2012). The new framework offers some refinements to the components of the existing conceptual framework and these refinements consist of both adaptations and extensions to the process of value creation, which are tailored to the MsCsC context.

### 9.2 REVISITING THE RESEARCH AIMS

#### 9.2.1 Refining an existing conceptual framework

As noted in Chapter 4 at Paragraph 4.10.3, the research analysis was guided and structured through the use of a specific theoretical lens and a pre-existing conceptual framework. At an early stage in the research analysis, it was identified that in certain respects, the existing framework did not fit well with the MsCsC context. This highlighted an opportunity to refine the existing framework by adapting it for MsCsC as an issue field.

By applying the communicative approach known as CCO, as a lens to understand MsCsC, it was possible to highlight similarities and differences between the existing conceptualisation of value creation in the case of an XSP as an authoritative text and value creation in the case of an MsCsC as an issue field.

#### 9.2.2 Exploring similarities and differences

##### 9.2.2.1 *Key areas of difference*

While evidence was found to support the majority of the propositions in the existing framework, the one area where there was a notable difference was the conceptualisation of the identity of the XSP. Other differences were also noted in the conclusions in Chapter 8 at Paragraph 8.7.5, Paragraph 8.8.4 and at Paragraph 8.9.6. The key differences are summarised below.

- i) Identification: In the context of MsCsC, identification is a dynamic process of interaction in which stakeholders identify with the narrative of the sustainability issue.
- ii) The narrative of the sustainability issue is socially constructed: Stakeholders identify with the narrative of the sustainability issue so that it is socially constructed by them in a process of negotiation in conversational interaction.

- iii) Multiple dimensions: The fusion of organisation and collaboration in an MsCsC incorporates the organisation-as-actor view and other views of organisation, as it is multi-dimensional.
- iv) Material and textual agency: There are multiple agencies so that material and textual agency act together with human agency to scale up collaborative activities from locally situated actions to a more systemic level involving multiple stakeholders.
- v) Emotional elements: Emotional energy is introduced as a driver of action so that different levels of energy distinguish different degrees of involvement and commitment to the collaborative relationships.
- vi) Impact: Impact is associated with change and transformation at a broader, more systemic level, beyond the stakeholders and partners directly involved and include benefit for the sustainability issue itself.

### **9.2.3 Areas of similarity**

Areas of similarity were found in the fieldwork to support the propositions for increasing value potential and for assessing value delivery. These include a clear direction, attracting resources, increasing participation, diversity, accountability and higher-order effects.

Evidence of these conceptual elements are presented in the findings in Chapter 6, so that notwithstanding the key differences noted above, the existing framework still provided a sound foundation for conceptualising value in the context of an MsCsC.

## **9.3 REFINEMENTS AS ADAPTIONS AND EXTENSIONS**

There are two ways in which this research has refined existing theory based on the discussion in Chapter 8. The first is the proposed changes to the conceptual framework to reflect the MsCsC context as an issue field. These are positioned as adaptations. The second is proposed changes that extend the framework. These processes work together with and in addition to the existing processes of value creation; they scale up or amplify the collaborative activities that create value; they sustain and deepen the relationships that support value creation; and they extend value delivery by recognising that impact is when value is experienced by a wider constituency.

### **9.3.1 Adaptions**

The adaptations to the existing framework explicitly incorporate additional concepts that apply in an MsCsC context, into the framework. The adaptations place greater emphasis on the underlying communication process and the basic CCO concept of coorientation as a process of negotiation in conversational interaction (refer Paragraph 8.7.1.2). They also recognise different levels of coorientation from generalised ties to particularised ties.

Further, by introducing the additional concept of identification, rather than identity, these adaptations highlight the role of narrative. It is the narrative of the sustainability issue that stakeholders identify with so that they become cooriented towards the sustainability issue.

There are three adaptations and these are:

- i) the context;
- ii) identification as a process of coorientation; and
- iii) the recursive, self-organising process of negotiation.

### **9.3.2 Extensions**

The three components in the process of value creation itself are extended. The three extensions are:

- i) applying multiple agencies to achieve scale;
- ii) the addition of emotional elements to the cycle of value creation; and
- iii) impact as an indicator of value delivery, where change and transformation are experienced by a wider community.

## **9.4 CHANGING THE METAPHOR: MsCsC AS HYPERTEXT**

The hypertext metaphor was introduced in the discussion in Chapter 8 at Paragraph 8.3. It is a metaphor drawn from the CCO literature to illustrate a complex, interconnected, multi-dimensional reality.

MsCsC as an issue field is a complex, multi-dimensional space and the hypertext metaphor reflects its dynamic nature. An MsCsC, as hypertext, is an inclusive view that includes a multiplicity of collective communicative forms such as communities of practice, metaconversations and authoritative texts. It is a multi-dimensional reality where everything is interconnected so that it is a complex space; it is self-organising; and it is a negotiated space, a socially constructed space.

A hypertext view is complementary to the organisation-as-actor view and allows for an alternative framework to be considered within the overall context of CCO thinking.

As hypertext, an MsCsC as an issue field is cooriented towards an issue, in this case the sustainability issue of sustainable seafood. Hypertext is a fusion of multiple dimensions of organisation and collaboration that forms the issue field.

## **9.5 THE ADAPTED AND EXTENDED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

### **9.5.1 Overview of the refinements**

The adapted and extended framework of value creation is presented in two parts using the existing framework as a starting point. The adaptations are presented before the extensions as they provide context within which the cycle of value creation operates and the underlying communicative processes on which it relies.

The three components of the existing framework are retained, namely trajectory, value potential and value delivery, but refinements are proposed to the wording of these, as set out in the discussion that follows.

## **9.5.2 Structuring the refinements**

### ***9.5.2.1 Propositions***

For each of the components of the value creation process, propositions are presented. These propositions are expressed as communicative practices and as statements that are capable of being tested by further research.

The propositions from the pre-existing framework of value creation are numbered C1, C2 and C3 to reflect the three components of the existing framework. The propositions related to the adaptations are numbered A1, A2 and A3 and the propositions related to the extensions are numbered from E1, E2 and E3.

### ***9.5.2.2 Note on terminology***

Up to this point of the dissertation, the words text and narrative have both been used (refer Paragraph 4.21.2.2) and text is the more common term used in the CCO literature. For the purposes of the adapted framework, only the word narrative is applied.

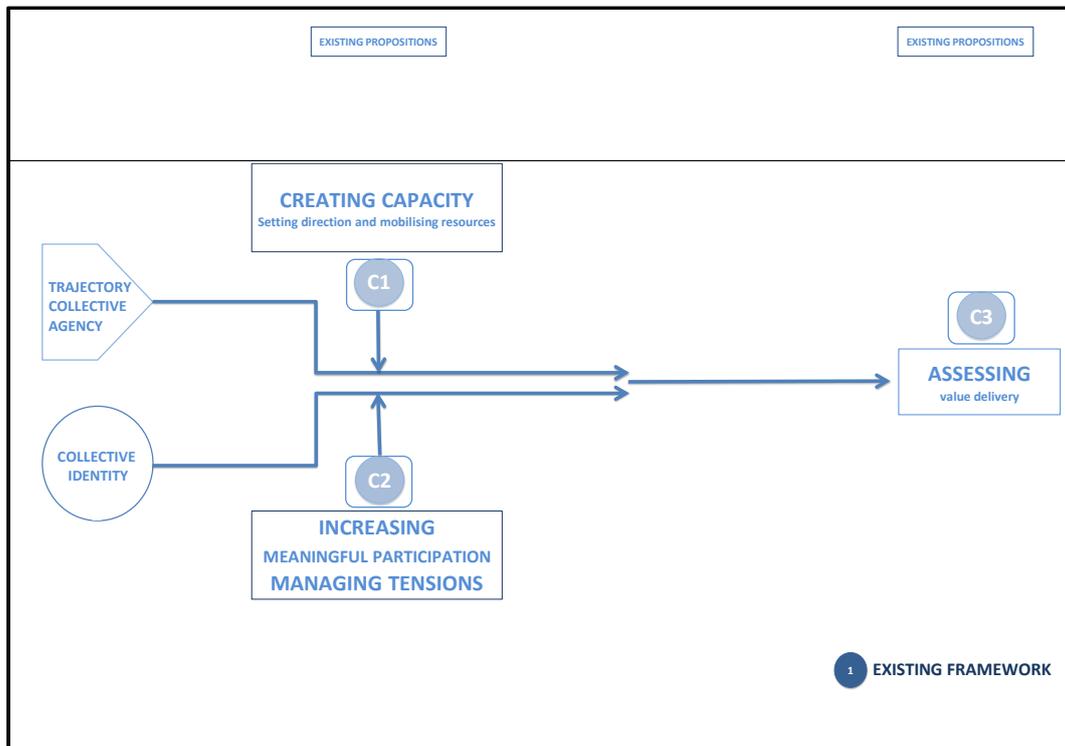
### ***9.5.2.3 Starting point***

The starting point is the existing framework of XSP value that is used for the research analysis. Figure 9.1 below presents the framework in its current form but with a different graphic.

The three components of the framework of value creation are as follows:

- i) Trajectory as creating the capacity to act and collective agency.
- ii) Value potential as increasing meaningful participation.
- iii) Assessing value delivery.

The propositions in each of the three components of the existing framework are noted below. The wording of the propositions has been changed to simplify and summarise the propositions but the wording is derived from the original text. The proposition on identity has been deliberately excluded as a replacement is discussed at Paragraph 9.6.6 below.



**Figure 9.1: The existing framework of XSP value**

Source: Adapted from Koschmann *et al.* (2012).

### 9.5.3 Propositions C1, C2 and C3

#### Propositions C1, C2 and C3: Summarised from the existing framework

<p><b>Component 1: Trajectory as creating capacity to act and collective agency</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The capacity to act is the ability to attract capital and marshal consent.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Component 2: Increasing value potential</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing members' meaningful participation enhances its capacity to create value.</li> <li>Increasing diversity, openness to continued deliberations, willingness to explore alternatives and to adapt will all increase the potential for collective agency and the capacity to create value.</li> <li>The proposition on creating a distinct and stable identity is replaced by adaption A2 below.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Component 3: Assessing value delivery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An XSP will be more likely to be assessed as valuable to the extent that it influences member organisations and other external constituents and influences public perceptions of relevant issues.</li> <li>An XSP will be more likely to be assessed as valuable to the extent that it is able to justify its influence on member organisations and external constituents and account for higher-order effects.</li> </ul>

## 9.6 PART 1: ADAPTIONS TO THE FRAMEWORK

The adaptations in this part are all related to the CCO concept of coorientation as introduced in Chapter 4 at Paragraphs 4.21.1 and 4.21.2. The adaptations are applied to recognise that an MsCsC context as an issue field is different from a partnership as a separate organisational entity.

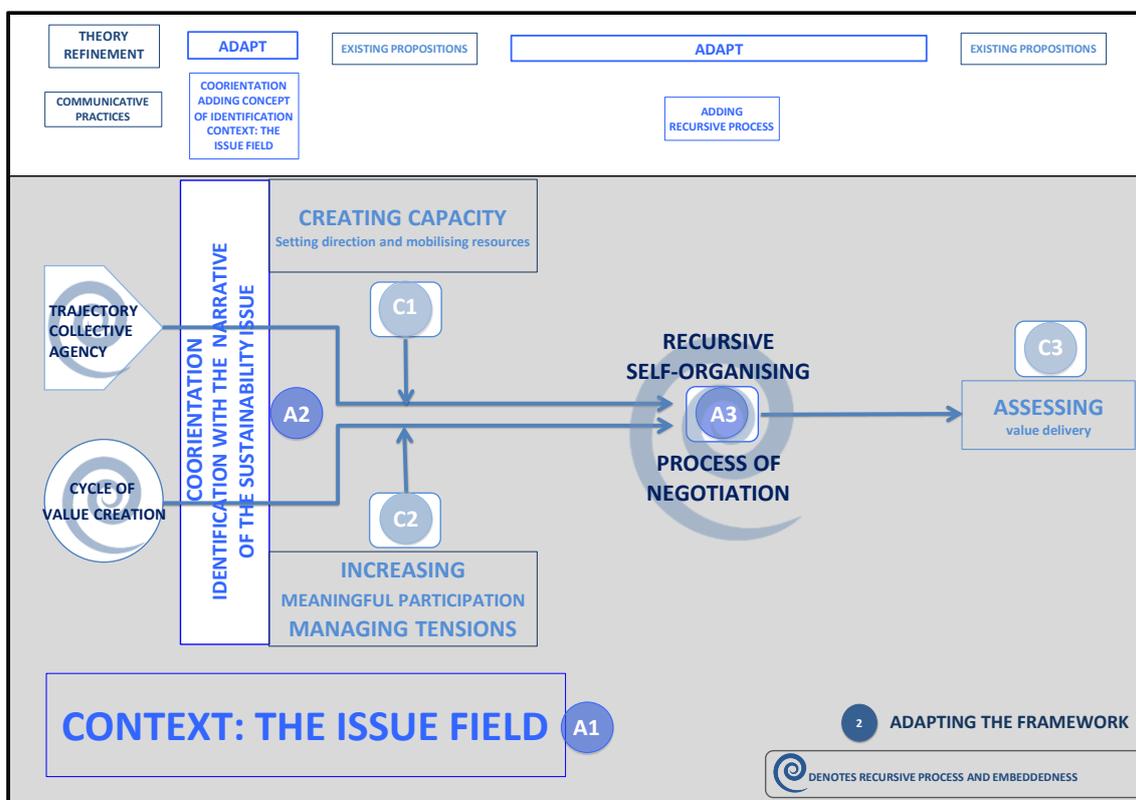
Table 9.1 below summarises the differences between the context of the MsCsC and the XSP.

**Table 9.1: Adapting the framework of value creation**

Existing context	Adapted context
Cross-sector partnership (XSP) as a partnership organisation CCO metaphor: an XSP as an authoritative text	Cross-sector multi-stakeholder collaboration (MsCsC) as an issue field CCO metaphor: MsCsC as an issue field as hypertext
Not specified	Context : The relational context and situatedness of conversational interactions, including spatial and temporal dimensions
A distinct and stable collective identity with a name and a narrative	Identification: Coorientation as identification with the narrative of the sustainability issue
Not specified	Recursive, self-organising: Coorientation as a recursive, self-organising process of negotiation in conversational interaction

Source: Author’s compilation.

These adaptations are now incorporated into the framework as shown in Figure 9.2 below. At the top of the diagram, above the shaded area, there is a description of the refinement to theory that is represented in the section of the figure that sits below it. This highlights the adaptations as the model is built up and in later figures the extensions are highlighted as well.



**Figure 9.2: Adaptions: Adding CCO concepts**

Source: Author’s compilation.

Following a logical sequence, the first adaption is to add context. The context (at A1) in this study is the collaborative activities that form the MsCsC as an issue field. Within this context, the

coorientation (at A2) of the various partners and stakeholders is towards the narrative of the sustainability issue and this is described as identification with the issue. The final adaptation related to coorientation is the recognition of the recursive, self-organising nature of the communicative process (at A3) as a process of negotiation in conversational interaction. This has multiple dimensions as discussed at Paragraph 8.7.2.1.

### ***9.6.1.1 Coorientation as the basic organising principle***

These adaptations are based on the basic communicative concept of coorientation. Although they are discussed separately from the three components in the framework of value creation, which follow in part 2 at Paragraph 9.7, the adaptations apply to the value creation process as a whole. From a communicative perspective, all aspects of the process of value creation are based on the idea of coorientation. This means that the extensions to the framework of value creation in part 2, depend on the adaptations noted here in part 1.

As shown by the arrows, the propositions from the existing framework are connected to the underlying principle of coorientation as a self-organising, recursive process.

### **9.6.2 Context**

The context of the MsCsC is the issue field and its multiplicity of dimensions, is illustrated by the metaphor of hypertext as already noted. Conceptually, context is needed to understand the process of coorientation. It should therefore be clearly articulated and the framework should incorporate the context within which it is set.

Based on the basic principle of CCO thinking, coorientation toward the sustainability issue takes place within a relational context, which is the situatedness of conversational interactions including the spatial and temporal setting of the issue. The spatial dimension is the geographic, societal, social and business context and the temporal dimension recognises the past, present and future of the conversational activities. Another dimension of the context, as defined in the CCO literature, is the worldview of each of the stakeholders.

The context is also defined by the nature of the sustainability issue and it is socially constructed in the narratives of the sustainability issue, that establish timeframes, a sense of place, subject interest, stakeholders and the nature of the relationships between the various dimensions. Context in this case is a multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration directed towards the issue of sustainable seafood and the value creation process is embedded in this context.

The context also reflects that in an MsCsC context, certain aspects of collaboration are multi-dimensional. A key example of this was noted in the discussion at Paragraph 8.8.2, in which credibility and authority were reflected in multiple dimensions in different ways.

The multiple dimensions at a broad level as well as at a more specific level, reflect the key distinguishing feature of the MsCsC context and should be reflected in the framework of value creation.

Figure 9.2 depicts the multi-dimensional context as an issue field by way of the grey shading.

### 9.6.3 Propositions A1: Context: multiple interdependent dimensions

A proposition to reflect the multiple dimensions of the MsCsC context is presented below.

#### Propositions A1: Multiple interdependent dimensions

The MsCsC context is characterised by a fusion of multiple dimensions at different levels. Successful collaboration is **positively associated with** stakeholders who:

- engage with the sustainability issues at multiple levels and in multiple dimensions, and
  - engage in multiple relationships, in different ways, using multiple mechanisms
- to collectively build the credibility and the narrative of the sustainability issue.

As a complex, dynamic, interconnected, multi-dimensional reality, an MsCsC may be viewed in terms of the CCO metaphor of hypertext.

### 9.6.4 Coorientation as identification with the narrative of the sustainability issue

In the adapted framework, the concept of identification is introduced. Based on the discussion in Chapter 8 at Paragraph 8.4, identification is a dynamic process of interaction and negotiation in which the stakeholders jointly create the collective narrative of the sustainability issue so that at a generalised level, the stakeholders are cooriented towards the common interest that is the sustainability issue. Coorientation and identification are not separate but related concepts so that identification may be expressed in the language of CCO thinking.

#### 9.6.4.1 Identification with the narrative of sustainable seafood

As noted in the discussion in Chapter 8, it is the compelling narrative of the sustainability issue, as the common interest, that gives direction and sets the trajectory of collective activity. The narrative is socially constructed through negotiation between the stakeholders in conversational interaction. This allows the stakeholders and a broader constituency of people to identify with the issue in the ongoing conversations and collaborations so that they pursue the issue collectively in multiple ways. In so doing, they work together to create value for the issue, for themselves and for other stakeholders and they continue to build the narrative.

Identification with the narrative of the sustainability issue is much the same as saying coorientation towards the issue as the common interest. In the adapted framework, there is a focus on the identification of stakeholders with the sustainability issue and specifically the narrative of the sustainability issue. The continued building of the narrative is a collective effort as stakeholders actively engage with the issue through further conversation and interaction.

### 9.6.5 Coorientation: The common interest at multiple levels

As identified in the discussion at Chapter 8 in Paragraph 8.7.1, coorientation takes place at different levels.

Coorientation towards the sustainability issue reflects the generalised ties that stakeholders hold, where their strategic interests intersect and interdependencies are established and maintained. It is where the relevance of the sustainability issue to each partner and to each stakeholder converges.

There are also particularised ties that are created between partners who choose to act together and these are more immediate, short-term actions where interdependencies are established in areas where the strategic interests of the partners intersect. These points of intersection emerge from a process of negotiation in conversational interaction rather than initiate the process.

### 9.6.6 Proposition A2: Identification at multiple levels

Each of the above concepts is incorporated into the framework as shown in Figure 9.2 above. In the adapted framework, identification with the narrative of the sustainability issue is reflected. These are included in the detail of the propositions set out below.

#### Propositions A2: Identification as a recursive process of coorientation at different levels

In an MsCsC context, the following communicative practices are **positively associated with** value creation:

- when stakeholders are cooriented towards the sustainability issue, they identify with the narrative of the sustainability issue;
- they develop a shared appreciation of the issue and willingly engage in negotiation with other stakeholders; so that
- collectively, they continue to create and build the narrative together, through their ongoing conversations, interactions and communications.

Multiple stakeholders are **positively associated with** successful collaboration when they have both generalised and particularised ties so that:

- they have a shared appreciation of the issue and have a common long-term strategic interest and commitment to the issue; and
- within the context of the common interest in the issue, specific partners negotiate interdependencies or strategic intersects where they agree to work together on specific activities.

Taken together, generalised ties and particularised ties are **positively associated with** a willingness to put energy and resources into the ongoing conversations and collaborative activities so that strategic intersects are pursued collectively and this **increases the capacity for value creation**.

### 9.6.7 Coorientation as a recursive, self-organising process of negotiation

As noted in Chapter 8 at Paragraph 8.7.2, in an MsCsC context, there are four ways that the recursive process is evident in the findings.

- i) Identification with the narrative of the sustainability issue and establishing generalised ties that build a shared appreciation of the issue.

- ii) Establishing particularised ties at points of interdependency where strategic interests intersect.
- iii) Learning and adapting as a process of change.
- iv) Establishing credibility and authority, as a process of self-organising.

Each of these is incorporated into the framework as an adaption that places the recursive nature of communication at the centre of the value creation process and highlights that there is a cycle of value creation that supports the trajectory towards the sustainability issue.

The cycle of value creation reflects the underlying communicative process of coorientation and is therefore described as a recursive, self-organising process of negotiation in conversational interaction. The recursive process is depicted by means of a spiral graphic in Figure 9.2.

The circularity of the process between conversation and text is the foundation of the conceptual framework and is therefore shown at the centre of the framework with connections to all the components of the process of value creation.

The cycle of activity has forward movement through time and the movement describes the trajectory, direction or path of the activities over time. In accordance with CCO thinking, this path is directed towards the object of common interest, which is the sustainability issue. Other aspects of trajectory are considered in Paragraph 9.7.1 below.

### 9.6.8 Propositions A3: Recursive, self-organising process

The propositions reflect the key aspects highlighted above.

#### Proposition A3: Recursive, self-organising process

In an MsCsC context, the engagement of stakeholders in multiple, ongoing conversational interactions for the benefit of the sustainability issue, and the negotiation of specific areas of intersection or interdependency where they agree to work together, is <b>positively associated with</b> successful collaboration.
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In an MsCsC context, successful collaboration is <b>positively associated with</b> :
--

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• different forms of authority to support claims of legitimacy and credibility;</li> <li>• multiple mechanisms including hierarchical, market and negotiated arrangements; and</li> <li>• multiple factors with legitimacy including the legitimacy of resources, the authenticity of the product, trust and transparency in relationships and the credibility of accounts of value delivery.</li> </ul> |
|---|

In an MsCsC context, successful collaboration is <b>positively associated with</b> an ongoing process of learning and adapting so that learning is applied and stakeholders remain adaptable and open to new ideas, alternative ways of thinking and different perspectives.
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## 9.7 PART 2: EXTENSIONS TO THE FRAMEWORK OF VALUE CREATION

The extensions in this part are related to the three components of the process of value creation as introduced in Chapter 4 at Paragraphs 4.14. Table 9.2 summarises the changes to the descriptions of the components and the main extensions to the process of value creation.

**Table 9.2 Extending the framework of value creation**

<b>Existing description</b>	<b>New description</b>	<b>Extension</b>
Trajectory as the capacity to act and collective agency	Trajectory as amplifying scale	Adding material and textual agency to increase the capacity to act so that collective agency is scaled up through multiple agencies
Increasing value potential	The cycle of value creation – investing in relationships	Adding emotional elements as a driver of action
Assessing value delivery	Articulating value delivery – making a contribution	Adding impact on a broader constituency, in which a wider audience experiences change and transformation

Source: Author's compilation.

The description of trajectory changes to focus how activities are amplified and scaled up through multiple agencies. A new description of the component value potential is a cycle of value creation and it reflects its recursive process. For the value delivery process, the communicative process is now described as articulating value delivery, so that a range of different communicative processes may be considered in addition to assessment.

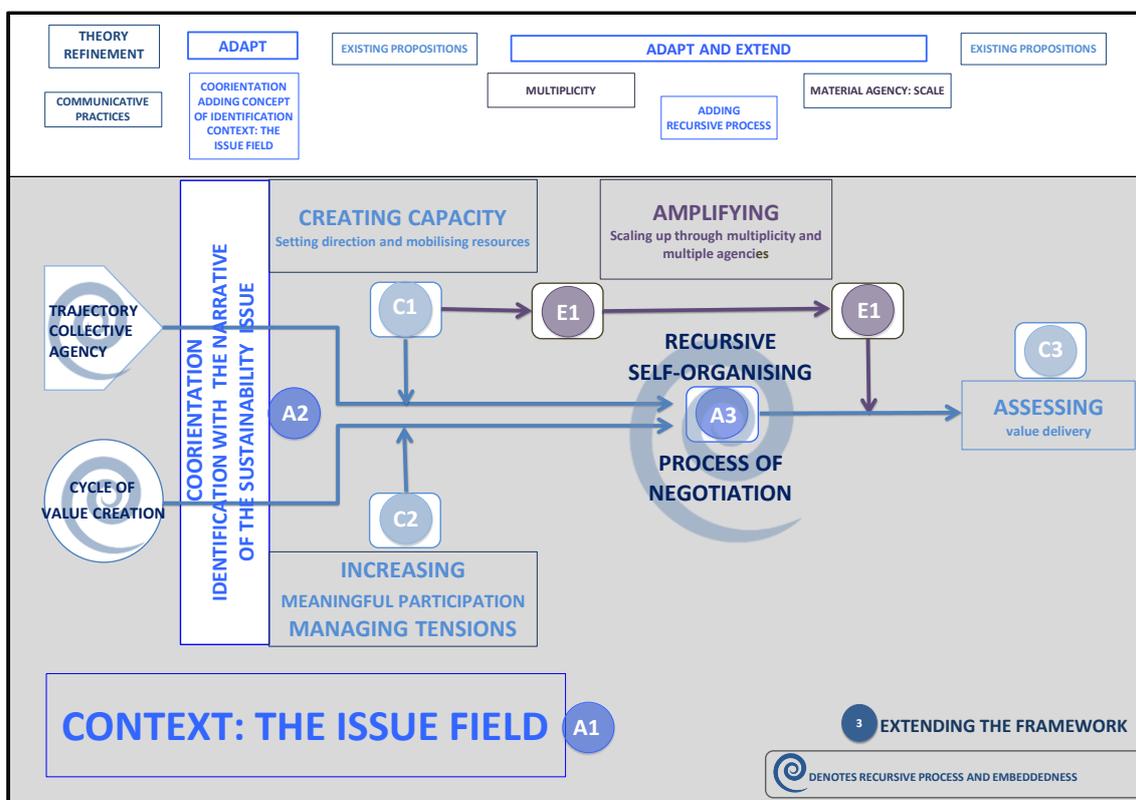
The main extensions are noted in the table and each of these is discussed below. The various topics set out in this section are derived from the discussion in Chapter 8 and the summary at Table 8.6. It is in these areas that differences were identified between the research context as MsCsC and the existing framework of XSP value. The changes proposed in this section are adaptations and extensions of the existing framework to recognise that the MsCsC context is different from the context of the existing framework.

The extended framework includes both dynamic and static communicative practices. The dynamic elements are relational processes that drive the trajectory of collective action and the process of value creation. The static elements are the periodic milestones or checkpoints at which outcomes are articulated and evidence is presented to account for value delivery.

### **9.7.1 Component 1: Trajectory as collective agency**

The change to the description of the trajectory is presented as a refinement to the framework and to incorporate the addition of multiple agencies. The change is shown below.

Trajectory:	
From:	Creating the capacity to act and collective agency (in the existing framework)
To:	Collective agency as scaling up through multiple agencies (in the extended framework)



**Figure 9.3: Trajectory as collective agency: Amplifying and scaling up**

Source: Author's compilation.

Figure 9.3 above depicts the extended concepts of collective agency that include two additional considerations. These are multiplicity and multiple agencies. The combination of these concepts is described as a communicative process of amplifying since this dimension expresses how activities can be scaled-up from micro-level interactions to organisational level and even macro level. It is an idea drawn from the discussion with the CCO literature at Paragraph 8.7.3.

#### **9.7.1.1 Multiple resources in multiple dimensions (multiplicity)**

The concept of trajectory as the capacity to act goes beyond setting direction and mobilising resources as defined in the existing framework. As already discussed, economic, cultural and social capital are resources for value creation and they work concurrently and together and are interdependent.

#### **9.7.1.2 Scale requires multiple agencies**

According to CCO thinking, it is a plenum of agencies, a combination of human, material and textual agencies that allows people and organisations to act at a distance. It is these multiple agencies, human, material and textual, acting at a distance that allow human interactions to scale up to broader forms of organisation, including collaboration and multi-stakeholder collaboration.

The role of material and textual (including narrative) agents is a key underlying concept that makes this happen. While the idea of embeddedness has already been included in the recursive process,

the concepts of material and textual agency should also be articulated in the framework of value creation.

Figure 9.3 depicts the extended component of trajectory as amplification by applying multiple resources in multiple dimensions (multiplicity) and then scaling up through multiple agencies. These are now included in the propositions labelled as E1.

### 9.7.2 Propositions E1: Trajectory as amplifying scale

The following propositions are extensions to the process of value creation in respect to trajectory.

#### Propositions E1: Amplification as scaling up through multiplicity and multiple agencies

Evidence of a deliberate and ongoing cycle of activity, whose trajectory is directed towards an ongoing engagement and participation in conversational exchanges (at multiple levels in the public domain, between partners and within partner organisations) that are cooriented towards the sustainability issue, is **positively associated with** a commitment to making an active contribution to the sustainability issue arising from these interactions and this **then increases the capacity for value creation**.

Multiple human, material and textual agents are **positively associated with** extending the scale of collaborative activities from locally situated actions to a more systemic level that includes partners, stakeholders and a wider constituency and a **greater capacity for value creation**.

### 9.7.3 Component 2: The cycle of value creation

The change to the description of the process is presented as a refinement to the framework. The wording change highlights the cyclical nature of the process of value creation and also the relational nature of the process. The change is shown below.

Value creation:

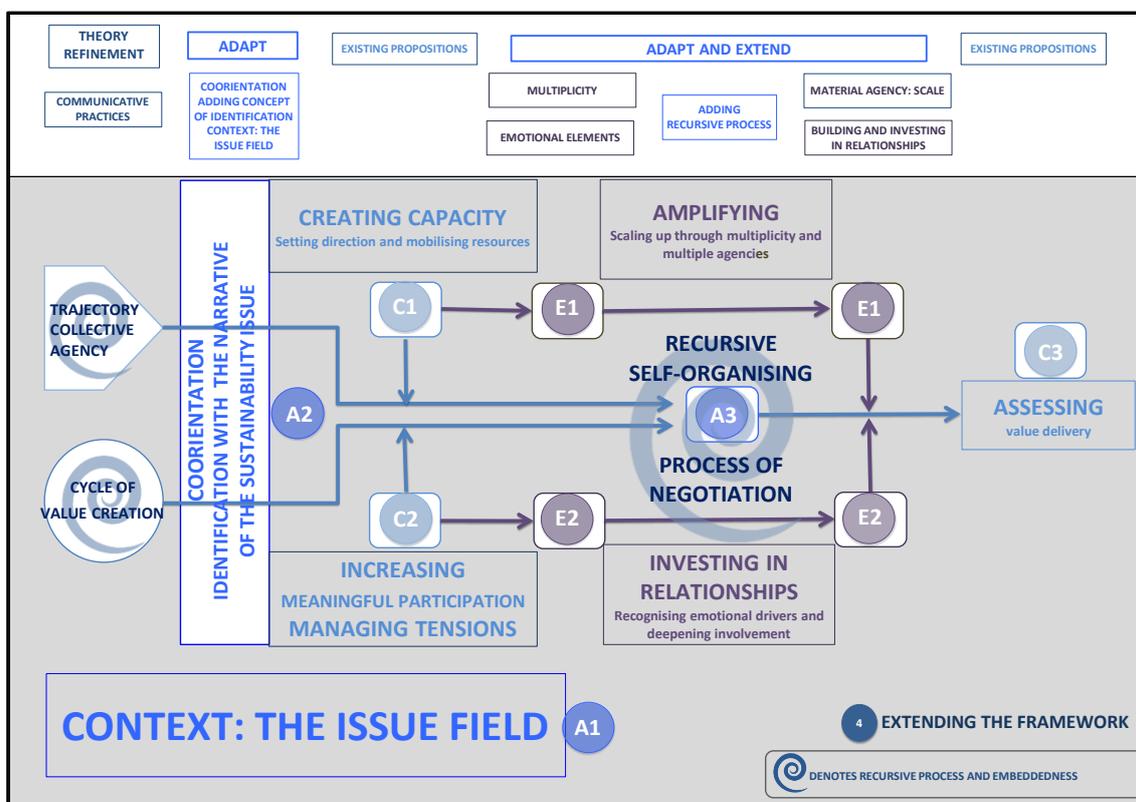
From: Increasing value potential (in the existing framework)

To: The cycle of value creation - investing in relationships (in the extended framework)

The change in the description reflects the underlying recursive cycle that characterises the coorientation process of conversation and interaction, that is at the heart of the process of value creation. It is an ongoing activity and the change in the description clarifies the nature of the process to improve understanding.

The changes that extend the framework introduce the various areas of difference identified from the findings and are used to develop new propositions that relate to an MsCsC context. Figure 9.4 below highlights the extensions and the propositions labelled at E2.

The extension to the cycle of value creation goes beyond meaningful participation. It introduces emotional elements as a driver of change and this energy builds relationships. These relational components complement and work together with the recursive process of self-organising, as already discussed, as relationships are constantly negotiated in conversational interaction.



**Figure 9.4: The cycle of value creation**

Source: Author's compilation.

### 9.7.3.1 Introducing emotional elements

Relationships are at the heart of the value creation process and it is human energy that drives action as people engage in conversation and work together towards the sustainability issue.

### 9.7.3.2 Building and investing in relationships

As discussed in Chapter 8 at Paragraph 8.8.1, people interact at different levels from engagement, and participation to investing and building. The difference between engaging and participating and investing and building is the level of involvement in terms of the degree of energy that is directed towards the collaborative activities, so that in the case of investing and building there is a more active involvement and more emotional energy that drives action.

## 9.7.4 Propositions E2: The cycle of value creation

### Proposition E2: Investing in relationships: Emotional energy

The degree of involvement of each stakeholder in working together with others is **positively associated with** the emotional energy that they have towards the sustainability issue at a general level and the strategic goals and objectives at a particular level, on the basis that the emotional energy is a driver of action.

The degree of involvement is **positively associated with** value creation so the more active the relationship and the more energy devoted to building and investing in relationships, then the more value can be created.

### 9.7.5 Component 3: Articulating value delivery

The change to the description of the value delivery is presented as a refinement to the framework and to incorporate the proposed extensions to the framework. The change is shown below.

Value delivery:  
 From: Assessing value delivery  
 To: Articulating value delivery – making a contribution

The change in the description reflects the need for evidence to support claims of value delivery and the word articulating is better suited to this need than assessing. Assessing would be one of a number of ways to articulate value delivery and so is still included under the broader description of articulating.

Articulating the value and benefits that are created and supporting these claims with evidence that can be substantiated, establishes the legitimacy and credibility of the value created and so connects again with the self-organising process that is central to the process of value creation. The change in the description clarifies the requirements to improve understanding.

Figure 9.5 below shows the further adjustments to extend the framework by introducing changes to the conceptualisation of articulating the outcomes of the value creation process.

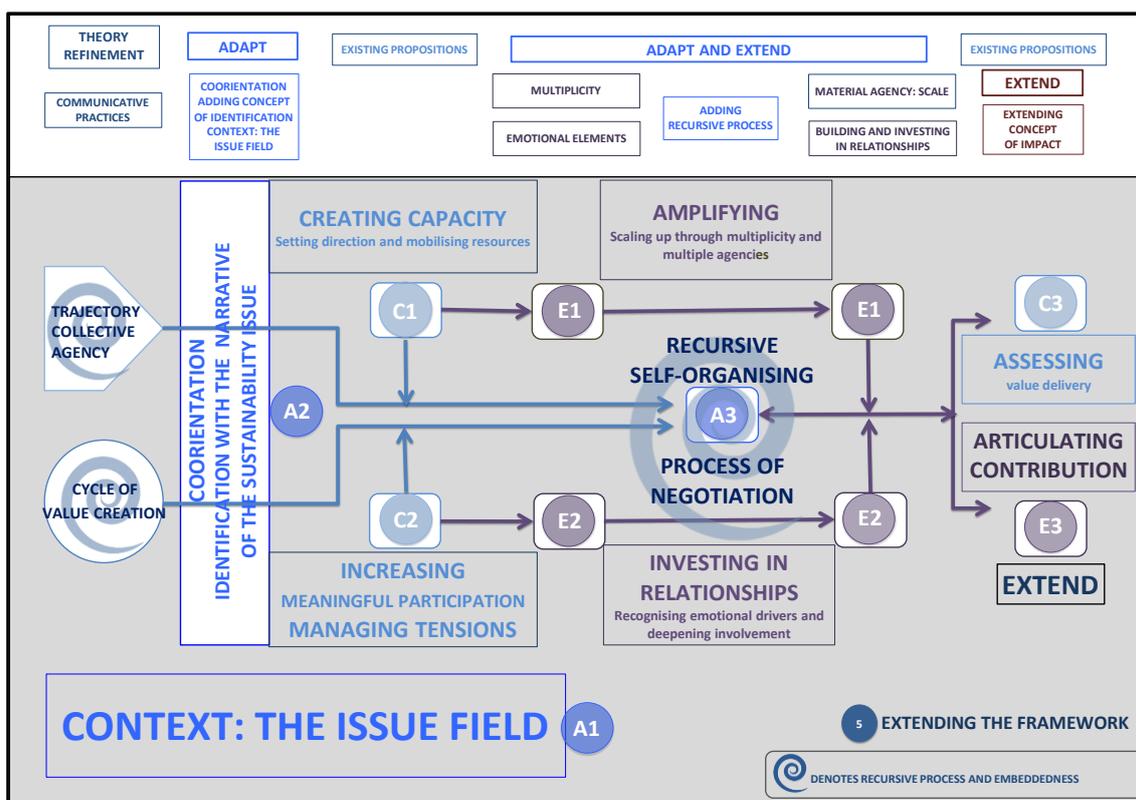


Figure 9.5: The Final Version of the Framework: Articulating Value Delivery

Source: Author's compilation.

The adaptations and extensions to the framework are now complete and Figure 9.5 presents the final version of the framework of value creation in the context of MsCsC as an issue field.

The conceptual issues were noted as areas of difference and included in the summary in Chapter 8 at Table 8.6. These points of difference are now used to extend the framework of value creation and to articulate some new propositions that relate to an MsCsC context. They extend the propositions on accountability and influence and add a separate proposition on indicators of impact.

A summary of each of these is provided below, followed by the additional propositions at E3.

Value delivery is about the value for each of the stakeholders and value for the issue and it is the communicative practices that are identified in the framework. While there is an ongoing dynamic process of value creation, value delivery is articulated and communicated at various checkpoints. These may be reports of past or current performance or successes or benefits achieved or they may be future targets, milestones or commitments.

#### ***9.7.5.1 Accountability: Verified and transparent – multiple measures concurrently***

In an MsCsC context, there is a variety of mechanisms and measures to articulate value delivery and these are directed at partner organisations and other stakeholders as well as a broader, more public audience. Accountability is about the partner organisations and stakeholders providing evidence of their own performance and progress to justify value to the other stakeholders and to the sustainability issue.

The provision of evidence and reporting to a broader public audience is a reflection of the degree of transparency that is achieved in the communication process. The credibility of accounts is a key factor and in many cases statements need to be independently verified in order to provide convincing or compelling evidence.

#### ***9.7.5.2 Indicators of influence***

Influence is not about measuring one's own performance, progress or benefit achieved, which is the primary focus of the accountability dimension noted above. Influence is about articulating evidence that others have acted differently, that there has been a change in their behaviour or actions. Influence is difficult to measure directly and it is indicators of influence that are sought, where an indicator provides evidence of change in the other person or organisation.

It is also difficult to communicate indicators of influence and these need to be credible. Innovative communication mechanisms are needed such as those presented in the findings, which included messaging trends on social media and multiple communication channels. External sources are sought that are open transparent. It is the trends over time that provide indicators of the nature and extent of change.

### 9.7.5.3 Indicators of impact

Learning is described as a higher-order effect and learning needs to be applied in order for change to be take effect. Learning that is applied can translate into impact, which is defined as change and transformation at a broader, more systemic level beyond the stakeholders and partners directly. The difference between influence and impact is a matter of degree so that impact has broader reach, it is more enduring and achieves greater levels of change.

Impact is again difficult to measure because it is about other people and other organisations that cannot be measured directly. As with indicators of influence, it is difficult to communicate impact and so innovative communication mechanisms are needed.

Examples from the research findings include seeking out the credible stories and narratives of changes to those affected by the sustainability issue as well as measures or indicators that the sustainability issue itself has shifted or changed directly. Impact is articulated in the stories of small-scale fishermen and how their work and lives have changed as a consequence of changes in fishing practices. Another example of impact is articulated in scientific studies conducted to assess fish stocks such as the abundance measures in the South African study of a marine protected area. These examples illustrate that indicators of impact may be direct measures of change in the sustainability issue (such as fish stocks) or indirect indicators of changes to fishing practices or to the lives and livelihoods of local fishermen.

The research findings provide evidence of stories being used to relate positive change and transformation for a wider community, beyond the partner organisations.

### 9.7.6 Propositions E3: Articulating value delivery

#### Proposition E3: Articulating value delivery at different levels

<p>Evidence that is credible and transparent and independently verified and accounts that are communicated, not only to the partners and stakeholders but also to a broader public audience, are <b>positively associated with</b> an appreciation of value delivery.</p> <p>Open and transparent communication over time, using multiple indicators to establish credibility are <b>positively associated with</b> an appreciation of value delivery.</p>
<p>Successful MsCsC actively assess and communicate credible evidence that other persons and organisations have been influenced and this includes indicators of changes in the awareness and understanding of the sustainability issue and changes in behaviours towards the issue.</p>
<p>Successful MsCsC actively assess and communicate credible evidence that change has been experienced by the sustainability issue itself.</p>
<p>Successful MsCsC actively assess and communicate credible evidence that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• learning has been applied;</li> <li>• stakeholders have adapted over time; and</li> <li>• change and transformation related to the sustainability issue have been experienced by a broader constituency.</li> </ul>
<p>Credible and compelling stories and narratives that communicate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the experiences of different stakeholders and how their lives have changed, and</li> <li>• the complexity and interconnectedness of change at multiple levels, the contextual factors, the worldviews of different stakeholders and the timescales involved</li> </ul> <p>are <b>positively associated with</b> an appreciation of value delivery.</p>

## 9.8 PROPOSITIONS: SUMMARY

The propositions are summarised below in Table 9.3 and these support the adapted and extended framework of value creation in an MsCsC context as shown in Figure 9.5 above.

**Table 9.3: Summary of propositions**

Item	Propositions	
<b>Existing framework of value creation: Propositions C1 to C3</b>		
1	<b>Pre-existing components</b>	C1: Trajectory as creating the capacity to act and collective agency C2: Increasing value potential as increasing meaningful participation and managing tensions C3: Assessing value delivery as external influence and accountability
<b>Adaptions: Propositions A1 to A3</b>		
2.1	<b>A1: Context – multiple dimensions of MsCsC as an issue field</b>	
	<b>Adaption A1</b>	The MsCsC context is characterised by a fusion of multiple dimensions at different levels. Successful collaboration is <b>positively associated with</b> stakeholders who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>engage with the sustainability issues at multiple levels and in multiple dimensions, and</li> <li>engage in multiple relationships, in different ways, using multiple mechanisms to collectively build the credibility and the narrative of the sustainability issue.</li> </ul>
		As a complex, dynamic, interconnected, multi-dimensional reality, an MsCsC may be viewed in terms of the CCO metaphor of hypertext.
2.2	<b>A2: Coorientation: Context; Identification with the sustainability issue; Recursive, self-organising process; The common interest at multiple levels</b>	
	<b>Adaption A2</b>	In an MsCsC context, the following communicative practices are <b>positively associated with</b> value creation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>when stakeholders are cooriented towards the sustainability issue, they identify with the narrative of the sustainability issue;</li> <li>they develop a shared appreciation of the issue and willingly engage in negotiation with other stakeholders; so that</li> <li>collectively, they continue to create and build the narrative together, through their ongoing conversations, interactions and communications.</li> </ul> <p>Multiple stakeholders are <b>positively associated with</b> successful collaboration when they have both generalised and particularised ties so that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>they have a shared appreciation of the issue and have a common long-term strategic interest and commitment to the issue; and</li> <li>within the context of the common interest in the issue, specific partners negotiate interdependencies or strategic intersects where they agree to work together on specific activities.</li> </ul> <p>Taken together, generalised ties and particularised ties are <b>positively associated with</b> a willingness to put energy and resources into the ongoing conversations and collaborative activities so that strategic intersects are pursued collectively and this <b>increases the capacity for value creation</b>.</p>
2.3	<b>A3: Coorientation as a recursive, self-organising process</b>	
	<b>Adaption A3</b>	In an MsCsC context, the engagement of stakeholders in multiple, ongoing conversational interactions for the benefit of the sustainability issue, and the negotiation of specific areas of intersection or interdependency where they agree to work together, is <b>positively associated with</b> successful collaboration.

**Table 9.3: Summary of propositions (continued)**

	<b>Adaption A3 (continued)</b>	In an MsCsC context, successful collaboration is <b>positively associated with</b> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• different forms of authority to support claims of legitimacy and credibility;</li> <li>• multiple mechanisms including hierarchical, market and negotiated arrangements; and</li> <li>• multiple factors with legitimacy including the legitimacy of resources, the authenticity of the product, trust and transparency in relationships and the credibility of accounts of value delivery.</li> </ul>
		In an MsCsC context, successful collaboration is <b>positively associated with</b> an ongoing process of learning and adapting so that learning is applied and stakeholders remain adaptable and open to new ideas, alternative ways of thinking and different perspectives.
<b>Extensions: Propositions E1 to E3</b>		
<b>Component 1: The value creation process: Trajectory as amplifying scale</b>		
<b>3</b>	<b>Extension E1</b>	Evidence of a deliberate and ongoing cycle of activity, whose trajectory is directed towards an ongoing engagement and participation in conversational exchanges (at multiple levels in the public domain, between partners and within partner organisations) that are cooriented towards the sustainability issue, is <b>positively associated with</b> a commitment to making an active contribution to the sustainability issue arising from these interactions and this <b>then increases the capacity for value creation</b> .
		Multiple human, material and textual agents are <b>positively associated with</b> extending the scale of collaborative activities from locally situated actions to a more systemic level that includes partners, stakeholders and a wider constituency and a <b>greater capacity for value creation</b> .
<b>Component 2: The value creation process: The cycle of value creation – investing in relationships</b>		
<b>4</b>	<b>Extension E2</b>	The degree of involvement of each stakeholder in working together with others is <b>positively associated with</b> the emotional energy that they have towards the sustainability issue at a general level and the strategic goals and objectives at a particular level, on the basis that the emotional energy is a driver of action.  The degree of involvement is <b>positively associated with</b> value creation so the more active the relationship and the more energy devoted to building and investing in relationships, then the more value can be created.
<b>Component 3: The value creation process: Articulating value delivery</b>		
<b>5</b>	<b>Extension E3</b>	Evidence that is credible and transparent and independently verified and accounts that are communicated, not only to the partners and stakeholders but also to a broader public audience, are <b>positively associated with</b> an appreciation of value delivery.  Open and transparent communication over time, using multiple indicators to establish credibility are <b>positively associated with</b> an appreciation of value delivery.  Successful MsCsC actively assess and communicate credible evidence that other persons and organisations have been influenced and this includes indicators of changes in the awareness and understanding of the sustainability issue and changes in behaviours towards the issue.  Successful MsCsC actively assess and communicate credible evidence that change has been experienced by the sustainability issue itself.  Successful MsCsC actively assess and communicate credible evidence that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• learning has been applied;</li> <li>• stakeholders have adapted over time; and</li> <li>• change and transformation related to the sustainability issue have been experienced by a broader constituency.</li> </ul> Credible and compelling stories and narratives that communicate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the experiences of different stakeholders and how their lives have changed, and</li> <li>• the complexity and interconnectedness of change at multiple levels, the contextual factors, the worldviews of different stakeholders and the timescales involved</li> </ul> are <b>positively associated with</b> an appreciation of value delivery.

Source: Author's compilation.

## **9.9 SUMMARY OF THE ADAPTED FRAMEWORK OF VALUE CREATION**

For completeness, the adapted and extended conceptual framework is presented in full in Figure 9.5 above based on the discussion and the propositions presented. A detailed comparison of the propositions of the adapted and extended framework for an MsCsC as an issue field with the existing framework is provided at Appendix S.

The adapted and extended framework assumes a context of cross-sector collaboration for sustainability that is conceived as a multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration and described by the CCO metaphor of hypertext.

Each of the adaptations related to the basic communicative principle of coorientation is reflected in the figure, including the context (the issue field), coorientation as a recursive process at multiple levels, and coorientation as a recursive, self-organising process.

Each component is depicted with the extensions, which include amplification of the trajectory, emotional elements that build and cultivate relationships and impact as change and transformation in a wider constituency.

## **9.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter has taken the conclusions from Chapter 8 and incorporated them into a new adapted and extended framework of value creation that reflects an MsCsC context.

While the adaptations are derived from the underlying CCO concept of coorientation, the key difference with the existing framework arises from the MsCsC context as an issue field or hypertext. This key difference is identification with the narrative of the sustainability issue.

The extensions to the process of value creation were identified in the research findings and further developed from both the CCO literature and the collaboration literature.

This concludes the discussion of the conceptual framework.

## CHAPTER 10

### CONCLUDING CONSIDERATIONS

#### 10.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

The final chapter summarises the research contribution and provides a self-assessment of ethical matters encountered and the quality control of the research process. In addition, research limitations and areas for future research are outlined, followed by some concluding remarks.

#### 10.2 RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION

The research has refined existing theory and the outcome of the research is the articulation of a new model of value creation for an MsCsC context. The new model adapts and extends a pre-existing conceptual framework of value creation.

The primary research contributions are theoretical but contributions to practice are also indicated. A further contribution is offered in terms of the adapted IPA method that was used in the analysis and interpretation of the research data.

##### 10.2.1 Contribution to theory: The conceptual framework

The conceptual framework of value creation for multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration is an adaption and extension of an existing framework and therefore offers a refinement to the existing body of knowledge.

It does this in three ways. First, it explores the process of value creation in an MsCsC context and offers the CCO metaphor of hypertext to depict the multiple, interconnected dimensions and the fusion of conversations, narratives and collaborative activities.

Second, it adapts an existing framework for an MsCsC context as an issue field and in doing so it draws from the underlying principles of coorientation to position the concept of identification. The key conceptual difference in the adapted framework is the idea that stakeholders in an MsCsC identify with the narrative of the sustainability issue.

Third, it extends the existing framework. The first extension is the inclusion of multiple dimensions and material and textual agency to scale up activities to a wider constituency. Second, is the inclusion of emotional energy as a driver of action and to build relationships. Finally there is the extension of evidence of value delivery to include indicators of impact.

##### 10.2.2 Contribution to method: The adapted IPA analysis

The research approach for the analysis and interpretation phase of the research applied an adapted IPA method. The standard IPA approach assumes a disciplinary lens from psychology and it was adapted to use a communicative approach known as CCO (the communicative constitution of organisation). A CCO lens was used for the analysis and interpretation of the

fieldwork data and an extant conceptual framework of XSP value was used as an additional level of analysis that facilitated organising and structuring the analysis process.

The adaption was possible because the underlying research assumptions were aligned with the IPA method, in particular its idiographic focus and social constructionist stance.

### **10.2.3 Contribution to practice**

The primary focus of the dissertation is the conceptual framework and theoretical contribution. However, another important aim of the research is for the outcomes to be relevant and useful for practical application in business. The language used in the framework has been drawn, where possible, from the fieldwork findings and in some cases from the extant literature.

The new model of value creation in an MsCsC context has the potential to inform those involved in multi-stakeholder collaboration as a means to tackle complex, systemic issues. Multi-stakeholder partnerships are becoming increasingly important and are currently in the spotlight as the United Nations highlights with Goal 17 of the Sustainability Goals (United Nations, 2015a), which advocates for a multi-stakeholder partnership approach to “mobilise and share knowledge”.

This research offers some timely alternatives that have practical implications. It has relevance within the dimensions of practice described below.

#### ***10.2.3.1 Multiplicity:***

- i) Adopting a view that directs attention towards the issue in which there are multiple stakeholders and multiple relationships, rather than a view directed only by the interests of a focal organization. This is different from current practices known as stakeholder management in which a focal organisation seeks to interact with stakeholders of or in the organisation. Stakeholders in an issue field exist in a complex space that cannot be managed or controlled.
- ii) Creating value at multiple levels, for all stakeholders and for the issue itself.
- iii) There is a distinction between the common interest (the issue) and the interdependencies or strategic intersects. The stakeholders interact at these different levels, that may be described as generalised ties and particularised ties. The broader, longer term view related to a sustainability issue goes beyond the strategic focus of a specific organisation.
- iv) It is at the strategic intersects that two or more stakeholders negotiate through conversational interactions and agree to act together, within the scope of the broader sustainability issue.

#### ***10.2.3.2 Self-organising rather than managed:***

- i) The interactions among the stakeholders take place in a self-organising recursive process of negotiation in conversational interaction:

- ii) The collaborative space of MsCsC as an issue field is a complex space in which hierarchical authority and control do not apply; legitimacy is based on skills and expertise rather than position; and credibility rather than contracts, although both may still be applied.
- iii) It is an emergent process of collective action directed towards the issue; it is dynamic; and it evolves over time. It is very different from management and control structures that are created by a single organisation and while such structures still remain important, they are only part of a larger, more complex, system.

#### ***10.2.3.3 Collective narrative and collective action:***

- i) There is a jointly created collective narrative that establishes the trajectory or direction of collective action. This narrative is not branding or marketing, although these do still make a contribution. Rather there are multiple narratives that are socially constructed around the sustainability issue.
- ii) The role of conversation and narrative in creating, sustaining and building the trajectory of collective action
- iii) The role of multiple agencies in building scale.

#### ***10.2.3.4 Emotional energy is a driver of action:***

- i) Beyond participation, there are deeper levels of involvement in which emotional energy brings a positive effect and drives action
- ii) Emotion energy introduces active participation in collaborative activities so that the stakeholders become invested in the relationships and in the issue. This reflects that the intensity with which they identify with the issue.

#### ***10.2.3.5 Articulating as well as measuring value creation:***

- i) Multiple levels of value creation for all stakeholders: outcomes, influence and impact. Value extends beyond a specific organisation and is assessed in multiple ways over time.
- ii) Contributing to the collective narrative of positive value for all, including the issue itself.

Each of the dimensions of the new framework may be used to initiate new conversations on sustainability issues and new ways of working together with multiple partners.

### **10.3 SELF-ASSESSMENT OF ETHICS, VALIDATION AND QUALITY CONTROL**

#### **10.3.1 Assessment of ethical issues**

All ethical issues that were identified during the research were addressed and none had any significant impact on the research process. Details are provided in Appendix T.

### **10.3.2 Assessment of validation and quality controls**

Each of the six quality control criteria identified in Chapter 5 at Paragraph 5.4.4 are now assessed based on the completed dissertation. The standards were carefully considered and upheld so that the integrity of the research has been maintained throughout.

#### ***10.3.2.1 Credibility and research rigour: Internal validity***

Credibility and validity are concerned with the quality of the data, evidence and arguments that support the findings and whether the research has been conducted logically and rigorously. The credibility and validity of the research depend upon a number of factors including the underlying ontological and epistemological assumptions and these are disclosed and discussed in Chapter 4. Multiple perspectives are explored in the fieldwork and presented in a prominent manner in the dissertation. There are different perspectives from the various research participants who are engaged in different sectors, have different functional expertise and different experiences of the research phenomenon. In addition, the literature draws from various sources and different disciplines including, among others, sociology, organisation studies and the collaboration literature.

Another important requirement of the research design, execution and reporting is to demonstrate that a rigorous process was followed. This was achieved by active listening during interviews, giving attention to the accuracy of interview transcripts and maintaining a logical connection between the data and the research discussion and conclusions.

The audit trail supports the internal validity at all times. For the fieldwork, evidence is provided in the research recordings and transcripts; and the research analysis is supported in detail by working papers, worksheets and summary tables, examples of which are provided in Appendices L, M and N. The audit trail in the written report is provided in the summary tables at the end of chapters, so that the outcomes from one chapter are then applied in the next. There is a flow of logic from the research questions through the literature review and research design to the findings in Chapter 6 through to the conceptual framework in Chapter 9.

The work sheets and the various tables and summaries presented provide evidence that the research conclusions in the discussion at Chapter 8 have been drawn directly from a synthesis of the findings and the literature. These conclusions, in turn, have been used directly to adapt the conceptual framework and the table summaries at the end of Chapter 8 provide evidence of how this was achieved.

#### ***10.3.2.2 Transferability: External validity***

As an exploratory study, this research did not set out to explain causal relationships that are statistically representative and cannot claim generalisability in the sense that such statistical studies claim.

In the case of an exploratory study, it is the actions of the reader that determine whether a research study may be applied in other settings, whether in abstract thinking or practical application. The research design must therefore present compelling descriptions of the research setting that allow the reader to effect such a transition or transfer to other settings.

#### ***10.3.2.3 Reliability and consistency: A transparent and balanced process***

The requirement of consistency and reliability is to ensure that the process can be replicated. Evidence of this aspect of the research process demonstrates that the research was conducted systematically and this includes the research design and plans, the interview designs and protocols, the various audit trails, journal notes, the analysis worksheets, summaries, tables and completeness checks that support the research.

In addition, the researcher notes in Appendix U present evidence of how various research choices and decisions were made so that these are transparent to the reader.

The organisation and presentation of the findings, the literature and the discussion chapters are all directed by the research questions and all explore different perspectives so that there is evidence that a balance of views has been explored.

The most significant evidence that the research process was transparent is the degree to which quotations from the research participants have been used in the dissertation and in the research analysis so that the research findings highlight the participant perspectives.

#### ***10.3.2.4 Sensitivity to context***

Context has been consciously presented and discussed at each stage of the research. An example of this is the historical and other background provided in each part of the literature review and the methodology section. Elsewhere, the role of the researcher is also presented with the researcher notes offering evidence to support the research choices.

Context has many dimensions and it is the context of multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration as an issue field, directed towards a sustainability issue, that distinguishes this research. The more detailed contextual aspects such as the supply chain setting in an emerging market were relevant in the design phase of the research but became less prominent in the analysis and interpretation. Indeed, they are not specifically presented in the conceptual framework.

The reason for this relates to the nature of CCO thinking and CCO concepts. The fundamental CCO process of coorientation takes place within a relational context as noted at paragraph 4.21 1. Context is therefore an integral element of the conceptual framework.

Context is needed to understand the meaning of specific conversational interactions and the content of the ensuing narratives. However, the context itself does not impact the relational nature of the process of coorientation. It means that the conceptual framework and application of the

CCO concepts are context neutral, in that the CCO concepts apply in any setting in which individuals are coorientated towards a common interest and in which they interact in conversation.

So that while the context has a bearing on the meaning and specific content of the narrative in any given situation, it does not change the nature of the communicative processes that take place. The conceptual framework therefore recognises that context is relevant in any given situation, and in doing so, the framework as a whole can be applied in many different contexts.

#### ***10.3.2.5 Pragmatic validity***

Pragmatic validity is an assessment of whether the research outcomes are useful, relevant and actionable. The research questions include both practical and theoretical considerations and the interview questions deliberately focus on successful outcomes.

Validity in this sense is also supported by extensive use of participant quotations as evidence that the findings reflect experience in practice and the findings are given prominent attention in the discussion and conclusions in Chapter 8.

A discussion to support the claim of pragmatic validity is provided above at paragraph 10.2.3.

#### ***10.3.2.6 Communicative validity***

Evidence of the communicative validity in the fieldwork includes the interview protocols, the accuracy of the recording process and the transcripts. Evidence of active listening can be shown in the transcripts where the interjections and questions by the researcher are kept to a minimum.

In the analysis and interpretation and the reporting phases, evidence of the communicative validity may be found in how effectively the evidence is used to support the discussion, including how well the findings are organised and presented, whether the discussion is clearly articulated and whether the research conclusions are clearly argued from the evidence presented.

The researcher's responsibility is to organise and structure the dissertation, the evidence and the discussion in a logical manner and to write the dissertation in a clear and articulate manner. The final arbiter of communicative validity is the reader and in presenting the dissertation for examination, the researcher has carefully responded to all the feedback from the research supervisors and language editors in order to take account of their independent assessment.

### **10.3.3 Ongoing scholarship**

The conclusion of the self-assessment is that the research contribution is valid in terms of the validation criteria. Further, that the understanding of the research subject has been developed to the extent that a contribution has been made theoretically to the body of knowledge and methodological and practical contributions have been demonstrated.

While these contributions may be validly claimed, there are certain limitations of the research and there are opportunities for greater understanding to be developed through practical application and further academic research.

Reflections on these limitations and opportunities are presented below and demonstrate that the research is part of a greater knowledge and practice development process that is ongoing and continually evolving. Therefore, at any point in time, what is known may be considered to be provisional and subject to further exploration.

#### **10.4 LIMITATIONS AND AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

In any research study, a specific perspective is applied which adopts certain underlying assumptions, attitudes and beliefs, whether or not these are specifically articulated. Any perspective is, by its nature, partial and has inherent limitations in that it is unable to examine or explore all possible ways of knowing. All research is demarcated by the research choices that are made in the research design and by practical considerations such as time, access and availability of resources.

The outcomes of this research study have been explored, analysed, interpreted and reported from a perspective that applied a communicative lens based on CCO thinking; it adopted a social constructionist perspective with an appreciative and pragmatic stance; and it followed an interpretative phenomenological method to the analyse and interpret the research findings.

A critical reflection of the impact of these research choices, highlights a number of limitations that are discussed below.

##### **10.4.1 Limitations**

- i) One of the strengths of the research approach, but also one of its limitations, is the choice of the theoretical lens. This means that the analysis was directed towards communicative practices rather than other perspectives, such as complexity, strategy or innovation.
- ii) The recruitment of diverse participants with experience of the research phenomenon was a specific research strategy to seek different perspectives from multiple organisations. The breadth of the study is both a strength and a weakness; so that what it gains in going broad, may be viewed as sacrificing depth. Rather than favouring the one over the other, the research balances breadth and depth.
- iii) Conflict and disagreement are not addressed in detail, although relationship tensions and how tensions are managed are considered. Because the research adopts an appreciative stance and explores successful collaboration, it does not deal with conflict situations specifically. Although tensions are not ignored, they are not explored in any depth.

- iv) The research is not restricted to a single focal organisation but explores an issue field. This may be a limitation for those that seek a more specific view, but it is a benefit to those that seek a broader perspective.
- v) The context of the research implies limitations in the perspectives considered. The research setting is dominated by supply chain considerations and this is a particular view of an issue field. The South African context has some unique characteristics and interest as a developing country, but there may be limits to its relevance for developed countries or for other developing countries.

#### **10.4.2 Opportunities for future research**

During the course of the study, and emanating from the research conclusions, a number of opportunities for further research may be discerned and these include the following:

- i) Potential for using the framework of MsCsC value creation in other contexts and for other issues.

Multi-stakeholder collaboration is becoming increasingly relevant in tackling many systemic issues, including but not limited to sustainability issues. One of the advantages of using a communicative approach is that the conceptual framework incorporates context and is based on organising processes of conversation and narrative that are universally applied. The model is not constrained by context, process or structure of organisation. MsCsC as a hypertext model is an inclusive approach that incorporates multiple forms of organising and organisation.

While the context of this research is the issue of sustainable seafood, consideration may be given to applying the framework of value creation in an MsCsC context, to other issues with a sustainability agenda or to other types of systemic issue, such as those described in the United Nations Sustainability Goals.

- ii) Potential for using the framework of MsCsC value creation for research in situations where stakeholders may not ordinarily be predisposed to collaboration.

In this research an appreciative approach was applied to explore exemplar organisations in order to learn from those that have already achieved some success in working in the context of MsCsC as an issue field. The focus on positive outcomes did not preclude the need to address tensions and areas of difference and multi-stakeholder issue fields may include situations where there are competing interests, disagreement and difference among stakeholders. Indeed, the framework encourages diversity and divergent perspectives and this is an important aspect of the collaboration literature. As a relational approach, underpinned by conversation and narrative, there is an opportunity for the framework to be applied to explore a multi-stakeholder issue field where stakeholders may not ordinarily be predisposed to collaboration. Such situations would still require that the stakeholders

recognise a common interest in an issue, notwithstanding their differences, so that the issue is the focus of conversational interactions in which the stakeholders willingly engage.

iii) Exploring the use of narrative and conversation.

This research demonstrates that multiple stakeholders with multiple perspectives can work together when they have a common interest in a sustainability issue, when they identify with the narrative of the sustainability issue and when they negotiate areas of interdependency in conversational interactions. Narrative infuses the collaborative interactions in multiple ways. The narrative of the issue is constructed jointly by all stakeholders; narrative brings an emotional dimension to the fore to drive action that creates value for stakeholders and the sustainability issue; and it is compelling stories that convey the impact of collaborative activities on beneficiaries and those directly affected. Future research could extend these ideas using the framework of MsCsC value creation to explore, in more depth, the role of narrative in collaborative value creation.

## 10.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos in early 2016, the United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon (United Nations, 2016), said he is counting on responsible businesses to drive global progress and he advocated that:

*It is so important to make the most of our collective strengths. We all need to work together – across sectors and industries. I hope to forge even more and stronger partnerships that have a real impact on people's lives. As we scale up our work together, we have to be guided by integrity, accountability and transparency. We have to engage with more companies to reach the Sustainable Development Goals.*

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## APPENDIX A

### ETHICAL CLEARANCES

The ethical approval includes the following:

- i) A letter signed and dated on 6 June 2013 followed by an email confirmation from the Head of the PhD programme was received on 10 June 2013.
- ii) A formal letter obtained from USB signed by the Head of the Ethics Committee at USB.

Item i) Confirmation by email on 10 June 2013 before commencement of fieldwork:

  **Ethical clearance**

Raubenheimer Heidi USB

**Sent:** Monday, 10 June 2013 at 9:06 AM

**To:** Jill Bogie

**Cc:** Morrison John Dr. USB; van Zyl Marietjie BPC

 You replied to this message on 2013/06/10, 9:12 AM.

 You forwarded this message on 2014/02/19, 12:01 PM.

 You forwarded this message on 2014/04/17, 3:40 PM.



We expect a  
lot from our  
leaders.

Let  
the USB  
equip them.



Hi Jill

Just to let you know that the ethical clearance for your field work was signed off on Friday.  
All the best with your data collection.

Dr Heidi Raubenheimer CFA  
Head: Phd Program  
University of Stellenbosch Business School  
083 708 1457  
Skype: Heidi.raubenheimer

<p><b>Dr Heidi Raubenheimer</b> Head: PhD programme University of Stellenbosch Business School P O Box 610, Bellville 7535, South Africa Tel: +27 (0)21 918 4346 Fax: +27 (0)21 918 4468 Cell: +27 (0)83 708 1457 Email: <a href="mailto:Heidi.Raubenheimer@usb.ac.za">Heidi.Raubenheimer@usb.ac.za</a> <a href="http://www.usb.ac.za">www.usb.ac.za</a></p>	<p><b>Dr Heidi Raubenheimer</b> Hoof: PhD program Universiteit van Stellenbosch Bestuurskool Posbus 610, Bellville 7535, Suid-Afrika Tel: +27 (0)21 918 4346 Faks: +27 (0)21 918 4468 Sel: +27 (0)83 708 1457 E-pos: <a href="mailto:Heidi.Raubenheimer@usb.ac.za">Heidi.Raubenheimer@usb.ac.za</a> <a href="http://www.usb.ac.za">www.usb.ac.za</a></p>
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Universiteit van Stellenbosch Bestuurskool  
University of Stellenbosch Business School

## Item ii) Formal letter received June 2014 – 2 pages



*Jill Bogie Approved letter*

02 Jun 2014

Dear Jill

**Re: Ethical clearance: Jill Bogie (BD054/Approved)**

**Research title:** Towards an understanding of collaborations for a sustainable world. Narrative perspectives from South African corporate business  
**Supervisor:** Prof Marius Ungerer (with Prof Patricia Hind)

This letter serves to confirm that the Departmental Ethics Screening Committee of the University of Stellenbosch Business School (USB DESC) has approved your application for the above-mentioned research. Your attention is drawn to the following:

- Informed consent principle to be applied throughout for interviews
- Please adhere to the confidentiality agreements and requests from participating organisations

We would like to point out that you, as researcher, are obliged to maintain the ethical integrity of your research, to adhere to the ethical guidelines of Stellenbosch University, and to remain within the scope of your research proposal and supporting evidence as submitted to the USB DESC. Should any aspect of your research change from the information as presented to the USB DESC, which could have an effect on the possibility of harm to any research subject, you are under the obligation to report it immediately to your supervisor. Should there be any uncertainty in this regard, you have to consult with the USB DESC.

University of Stellenbosch Business School  
Address: PO Box 610 Belville 7535 Carl Cronjé Drive Belville 7530  
Tel: +27 (0)21 918 4111 Fax: +27 (0)21 918 4488  
Email: [usbcom@usb.ac.za](mailto:usbcom@usb.ac.za) Website: [www.usb.ac.za](http://www.usb.ac.za)



UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSITY  
jhu ke ekkisekani- your knowledge partner

- 2 -

We wish you success with your research, and trust that it will make a positive contribution to the quest for knowledge at the USB and Stellenbosch University.

Sincerely



**Prof Basil C. Leonard**

Chair: USB Departmental Ethics Screening Committee

021 918 4250

Please note: Should any research subject, participating organisation, or person affected by this research have any query about the research, they should feel free to contact any of the following:

Researcher : [jbogje@iafrica.com](mailto:jbogje@iafrica.com)  
Supervisor : [Marius.Ungerer@usb.ac.za](mailto:Marius.Ungerer@usb.ac.za)  
USB DESC Chair : [Basil.Leonard@usb.ac.za](mailto:Basil.Leonard@usb.ac.za)

.. \jbogje@iafrica.com

## APPENDIX B

### INFORMED CONSENT

Copy of informed consent form (unsigned):

#### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH



#### Collaborations for a Sustainable World

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study about collaborations for a sustainable world. The research interest is in your experiences of collaborations and specifically, your involvement in the sustainable seafood initiative.

The name of the researcher is Jill Bogie, a doctoral student at the University of Stellenbosch Business School. She will be conducting the research as part of her dissertation requirements. Professor Patricia Hind is the research supervisor.

Your participation will entail two interviews, each lasting approximately one hour followed by either a collective conversation or a follow up interview. There may also be a short follow up call or email if there is a need to clarify any of the outcomes to ensure that the researcher gains a thorough understanding of your experiences related to the research subject.

The results of the research will be used for research purposes only and will be published in the PhD dissertation as well as one or more articles in academic journals. Direct quotes from your interviews may be used to support the research conclusions in order to illustrate your experiences and perspectives in the research report. However, where this is required, you will be advised of this in advance and asked to provide a clearance and consent to the specific use of any such quotations. The diagrams used to facilitate the interviews may be used for illustration purposes but no person or participant will be named.

Any information that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will only be disclosed with your permission. The research records will not use your name and a participant code will be allocated to identify the transcription and other interview material for the purposes of the research analysis and research report. The researcher undertakes not to disclose the identity of any of the participants, nor the origin of any of the statements made.

By signing this consent form, you confirm your understanding of the above conditions and you give your permission to allow the researcher to make an audio recording of the interviews and to make written notes.

You also confirm that your participation is voluntary and you understand that you can stop the interview at any time. You may also withdraw from the study during or after your participation, in which case all your details and material will be eliminated from the study and destroyed within 48 hours. No risks are anticipated with your participation in this study.

If you have any questions about this study or your involvement, please ask the researcher before signing this form. Two copies of this informed consent form are provided. Please sign both forms, indicating that you have read and understood its content and agree to participate in this research. Please return one copy to the researcher, and the other you may keep for your own records.

**Name of participant:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print)

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact information:**

Researcher: Jill Bogie  
Tel: 0836751360  
email: [jbogie@iafrica.com](mailto:jbogie@iafrica.com)

Research supervisor: Professor Patricia Hind  
Tel: +44(0)1442 881400  
email: [patricia.hind@ashridge.org.uk](mailto:patricia.hind@ashridge.org.uk)

## APPENDIX C

### CONFIDENTIALITY UNDERTAKING

Copy with my signature but not the client's signature (to maintain anonymity):

#### CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

This serves to confirm that:

1. I am a registered PhD student at the University of Stellenbosch Business School (USB);
2. I acknowledge that during the course of my research studies, certain confidential information relating to Woolworths may be provided to me including but not limited to technical, product or commercial information, data, know-how, financial statements and other reports;
3. Such confidential information is a valuable asset belonging to Woolworths;
4. I will only use the confidential information for the purpose of the PhD research;
5. I will not disclose the confidential information, without prior written consent of a duly authorised representative of Woolworths, to any person other than my supervisor, Professor Patricia Hind of Ashridge Business School; and I will ensure that she will also adhere to the provisions hereof.
6. If required by Woolworths, I will provide you with a draft copy of my draft research report for comment prior to submission as a reassurance that no confidential information is contained therein.
7. This undertaking shall not apply to any confidential information that is, or becomes, public knowledge.

Signed:

  
Jill Bogte, PhD Candidate

Date:

4 July 2013

## APPENDIX D

### VALIDATION CRITERIA

#### **Introduction**

The traditional criteria are validity, reliability and generalisability (sometimes called external validity) and objectivity (Patton, 2002: 544; Denzin, 2010: 47). Traditional research assumes an objective stance; a neutral researcher and neutral conditions. Validity, in these circumstances, is about the accuracy of the data and the 'truth' of the findings, often supported by evidence of causal relationships and other arguments such as the rigour of testing procedures and the extent to which they may be proved or otherwise falsified. Reliability assumes that the research process is stable, consistent and predictable and can therefore be replicated or repeated under similar conditions with the same or similar outcomes. Lastly, generalisability assumes that the findings, based on a representative statistical sample in the research data, may logically apply to a broader, more generalised population.

While these standards are based on certain research assumptions that did not apply to this research, the terminology is nonetheless useful and easy to understand. It was not possible to achieve objectivity (neutrality) or generalisability and so these two criteria needed to be replaced. However, the concepts of validity and reliability still had relevance, although to be useful a less parochial view needed to be adopted. The idea of 'truth' is a narrowly defined concept, and not appropriate in many forms of qualitative inquiry. However, validity in a wider sense means "well founded on fact or established on sound principles and thoroughly applicable to the case or circumstances" (OED, 2015). In this sense, validity is also a suitable criterion for qualitative studies.

An understanding of this background is useful in order to consider proposed criteria that may be applied to qualitative research.

#### **General criteria for qualitative inquiry**

Lincoln and Guba (1985: 290) and Denzin and Lincoln (2005: 24) are frequently cited on general criteria for qualitative studies. They recommended a set of common criteria for qualitative research that may be used as a substitute for the traditional criteria. They suggested that the overall aim is to demonstrate 'trustworthiness' and that this has several aspects including credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity), dependability (or consistency) and confirmability

Validity, in more general terms appropriate to qualitative studies, is an assessment of the credibility of the research data, the research process, the strength of argumentation and whether the research has been conducted in a systematic and rigorous manner to build confidence in the research conclusions. The discussion on demonstrating systematic argumentation in qualitative research can be traced back to earlier debates. Arguing four decades ago, Giorgi (1975: 96) contended that the issue is not whether someone else may be able to adopt an alternative position with regards to the research data, but "whether a reader, adopting the same viewpoint as articulated by the researcher, can also see what the researcher saw, whether or not he agrees with it". Schurink (2009) concurred and argued that the quality of a research study should be assessed in relation to its underlying ontological and epistemological assumptions, which act as a frame or lens, from which the validity of the study may be considered.

Validity is therefore about whether the steps in the research process are “reasonable, defensible and supportive” of the conclusions claimed by the researcher (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009: 249). Validation means checking, questioning and considering the theoretical implications of the field texts, the fieldwork outcomes and discussion in order to substantiate research conclusions (ibid: 253).

The issue of transferability as an alternative to generalisability is an important discussion in qualitative inquiry. For the sake of clarity, the term generalisable is taken in a research context to mean those specific situations where empirical findings are derived from statistically representative samples and applied to a wider population based on assumptions of causal inference.

In cases where this is neither possible nor appropriate, then the term transferable may be used as an alternative concept. However, it means something quite different and applies in a different context. The question is then about how or whether outcomes are transferable either to other subjects or to other relevant contexts or situations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009: 261; Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 297) rather than to a wider population. Lincoln and Guba argued that this requires knowledge of “both sending and receiving contexts” so that the researcher cannot make inferences about transferability since the researcher knows only the sending context. Lincoln and Guba contended that the job of the researcher is to provide sufficient “empirical evidence about contextual similarity” so that judgments on similarity are possible. The degree of transferability is dependent on the judgements of the reader or person who is interested in applying the outcomes in another context.

Smith *et al.* (2009: 51) explained that the key is ‘theoretical transferability’ so that the reader can connect their own experience with the research analysis and conceptual outcomes; it is the reader that makes this evaluation. They argued that this requires the researcher to provide a detailed analysis of the research texts and present compelling arguments based on the accounts of the participants.

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009: 262) concurred with this view and explained how both the researcher and the reader have important roles in the process. It requires “reasoned judgment about the extent to which findings of one study can be used as a guide to what might occur in another situation”. It is the researcher that must offer sound arguments supported by strong evidence and detailed descriptions of the context, so that the reader is able to judge whether and to what extent the outcomes may be transferred. They recommended that the researcher should offer “an analysis of the similarities and differences between the two situations” based on relevant attributes and that this analysis should form the basis for making assertions about the potential for transferability.

Finally, the criterion of reliability remains useful if applied in a general sense as the “ability to be relied on with confidence; trustworthiness” and “to perform in the required manner or produce a desired result consistently” (OED, 2015). The objectives of consistency and evidence that the research may be repeated under similar conditions prevail. As Merriam (2009: 222) pointed out, it is unlikely that similar results will be achieved when a qualitative study is replicated. However, this does not render the study unreliable as consistency requires that the conclusions are consistent with the data presented.

### **Specific criteria**

Beyond the general criteria noted above, there are various discussions about criteria that could be applied to a specific method of qualitative inquiry.

Examples that are of interest to this research include criteria for social constructionist research (Patton, 2002: 544), narrative inquiry (Riessman, 2008: 184), case study (Merriam, 2009: 210), interviewing (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009: 244), phenomenology (Grbich, 2013: 100) and interpretative phenomenological analysis (Yardley, 2008).

Given that the analysis and interpretation of this research study applied an IPA method, it is the criteria discussed by Yardley that were considered. Yardley recommended four broad principles for assessing the quality of research, which she asserted are more appropriate for qualitative research, including an IPA method. She positioned these as guidelines or suggestions for good practice rather than rigid rules, to allow for some flexibility and creativity appropriate to the research situation. These are as follows:

- i) Sensitivity to context
- ii) Commitment and rigour
- iii) Coherence and transparency
- iv) Impact and importance

These guidelines have been highlighted because while they still contain aspects of the traditional criteria of validity and reliability, some new considerations are introduced.

#### **i) Sensitivity to context**

While context is recognised as being an important aspect of qualitative research, it is seldom proposed as an evaluation criterion. Yardley explained that there are various ways in which context is given attention in the research process and these should be highlighted. She contended that ignoring any of these key aspects may indicate a poorly executed study, a concern or a serious deficiency. By implication, demonstrating sensitivity to context can contribute to the quality of the research.

Sensitivity to context is not a once-off consideration at the initial stages of research, but should be demonstrated at each stage of the research process. The setting for the research is a key consideration but is not the only contextual perspective that is important.

The review of extant literature establishes context by drawing from existing sources that may be theoretically relevant to the study. This not only helps to position the study within the current body of knowledge, but also respects existing perspectives.

According to Yardley, it is also important to consider the perspectives of participants. This would mean respecting their needs for privacy and other ethical issues such as protection from harm. Beyond these standard expectations, it also means respecting the input of participants by asking broadly phrased questions that allow them to talk openly with the freedom to offer their own interpretation of the phenomenon. Yardley said the researcher should remain alert to what is not being said, whether responses reflect what may be considered to be socially acceptable and to recognise that there may be “complexities and inconsistencies” in what participants say. In this research study, it is the narratives of the participants that provide the basis for conceptualising the research phenomenon of cross-sector collaboration. This is more about learning from their experiences than it is about making their voices heard; it is not about the emancipation of minority voices. Rather it is about learning from exemplars, who are a minority group, but they represent excellence so that it is the researcher who seeks to gain from the research process, rather than extending value to the participants.

Context also means setting out relevant characteristics of the researcher, including potential biases and prior interests. Examples provided by Yardley suggest that the assessment of sensitivity to context may be as much to do with what is not done, not considered or not reported, as it is about the steps actually taken in conducting the research.

Sensitivity to context is not just a description of the context but also considers its relevance to the research questions. Its influence or impact on the research study should be made clear.

#### **ii) Commitment and rigour**

These criteria appear similar to the issue of internal validity. They are about the depth and breadth of the research analysis; the scope of the fieldwork in conjunction with the depth of the analysis and interpretation; and whether there is sufficient evidence to support the claims of new insights and understanding. The assessment of commitment and rigour may be considered in relation to the research aims, the research questions and the research context.

#### **iii) Coherence and transparency**

Coherence and transparency are also about internal validity and they address the clarity and strength of the arguments presented, whether they are consistent with the research design and methods adopted, and whether the methods are compatible with the theoretical background. Coherence is needed to give credibility to the research arguments and to the research process; it therefore supports the validity and reliability of the research outcomes.

The coherence of the process can only be assessed when the researcher is transparent about various research choices and offers evidence so that the reader can determine what was done and why. The coherence of arguments requires transparency so that sufficient evidence is provided including, in the case of interview research, adequate and appropriate quotations and excerpts from the transcripts.

Coherence is also about the manner of reporting and requires careful attention to the language used, so that the arguments and outcomes are conveyed in an appropriate manner. The examples provided by Yardley are particularly pertinent to this research study and they highlight that it is not appropriate to present accounts of the experiences of participants as facts or as “findings corresponding to reality” (ibid). Care needs to be given to what is reported as factual in order to avoid creating the impression of accuracy, causality or generalisation that is not supported by the evidence.

#### **iv) Impact and importance**

Impact and importance highlight the potential outcomes of the research, which may extend beyond its theoretical contribution. There may be practical implications so that the research is useful or relevant to a particular group or community and it may be influential in developing new thinking or in initiating further action. These criteria address the questions: so what? and: why does this matter? At the end of the day, does the research have value beyond its academic contribution?

These criteria take a pragmatic view and are particularly important in a business context, so that research is not only theoretical but could be applied.

Yardley expressed the view that research is only relevant if it has “the potential to make a difference” and she advocated for research questions that explore things that “matter to people and to society”.

**Other criteria**

The debate on validation and quality is ongoing and there are many other interesting perspectives in the literature. Two further issues are raised by Kvale and Brinkmann who wrote about research interviewing, which is therefore relevant to this study. The first is “pragmatic validity” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009: 257), which is pertinent in the context of business research; the second is “communicative validity” (ibid: 253) and is relevant given the choice of theoretical lens for this research as discussed under the design of the analysis and interpretation phase of the research.

Kvale and Brinkmann argued that pragmatic validation is achieved when knowledge supports action and desired results or supports improvement to practices. It aligns with the requirement expressed by Yardley that research should be relevant and useful. They argued that the aim is to demonstrate that change is initiated by the research process directly or that the research inquiry explores evidence of actions taken by participants that demonstrate successful interventions with regards to the research topic.

While this research was inspired by the need to improve practice standards as articulated in the King III report (IODSA, 2009: 24), the aim of achieving actual change in practice was beyond the scope of the research study. Nonetheless the research inquiry did adopt a pragmatic stance and included questions regarding actions taken by the research participants, what they had achieved and how they measured success.

Communicative validity has some similarities to the above. The first instance is where the research interpretations or conclusions have been directly discussed with the research participants and their input has been incorporated. Similarly, a peer review would be a form of communicative validity where the research design allows for an assessment or input by other scholars.

Neither of these options applied to the current study. However, Kvale and Brinkmann (2009: 254) also contended that interpretation may remain open to further questions and further debate and the dissertation can aim “to advance sensible discussion”. In this case, further learning is anticipated through ongoing conversation where the research outcomes are viewed as persuasive and “sufficiently trustworthy for other investigators to rely upon in their own work”. While this may not be the only aim of the research and it is indeed a retrospective form of validation, it is nonetheless relevant to the position of any research study within the broader academic community and the intention to advance further learning. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009: 256) the reliance on others, including the reader, to validate research claims, should not imply a lack of responsibility on the part of the researcher.

**Summary of criteria used for the evaluation of this research**

A set of criteria is presented out below and these were used to inform the research design and the execution of the research process. In Chapter 10, a self-assessment was conducted using these criteria to consider the extent to which these aims had been achieved and substantiated in the dissertation.

Following the advice of Denzin (2010: 48), there is still value in the common criteria but there is also the need to acknowledge unique criteria for different types of qualitative work. Based on this advice, the criteria that have been used to guide this research study are a combination of the general criteria and criteria specific to the research design.

Table 5.1 in the main body of the dissertation sets out a summary of the validation criteria that were applied for this research study and that were included in the research design. The structure of the table was informed by the guidance offered by Dixon-Woods *et al.* (2004), who advised that there is a distinction between issues related to the “auditability and transparency of reporting and those that are concerned with the quality of process and analysis”. Schurink (2009) also emphasised the need for transparency and recommended strategies such as the audit trail and researcher reflexivity.

For each criterion, the methods or tools included in the research design are noted in the table. There are six proposed criteria, including three general criteria (validity, transferability and reliability) and three specific criteria (sensitivity to context, pragmatic and communicative validity). The overall aim was to establish the trustworthiness of the research and the dissertation. Originally proposed as a guide by Lincoln and Guba (1985: 290), trustworthiness is seen by some as an outdated concept (Creswell, 2013: 250). However, there are still those who advocate that creating trust is the overall goal of research work (Denzin, 2010: 48) and this requires “a plurality of perspectives”.

The various methods and tools noted in Table 5.1 are described in the following paragraphs. As can be seen, some methods relate to more than one criterion or meet the validation needs in more than one phase of the research work. While the multiple dimensions may appear to create too much detail, this approach was aimed at assessing the quality of the research in depth. It acknowledges the responsibility of the researcher to incorporate quality controls and rigour into the design and execution of the research work and for the researcher to be accountable at the conclusion of the research study. It is part of establishing the reliability of the research.

#### **Tools and methods to manage quality**

Some important tools or techniques for demonstrating the quality of the research are discussed briefly, including neutrality (for overall trustworthiness); triangulation (for validity), search for alternatives (for validity) and audit trail (for reliability).

**Neutrality:** Patton (2002: 51) took a pragmatic approach and argued that since qualitative research cannot be objective in the traditional sense, it can adopt a neutral stance. While acknowledging the challenges that this poses, he outlined various ways in which neutrality can be demonstrated. He said that the research process needs balance and fairness in order to achieve credibility.

The researcher should hold no predetermined results, planned outcomes or vested interests that could deliberately distort the research process; they should be open to new insights and the “complexities and multiple perspectives as they emerge”. Further, reporting should be balanced by presenting evidence that confirms and also disconfirms the research outcomes.

Neutrality does not mean being disinterested or avoiding biases but rather that the researcher is aware that biases are inevitable. From this awareness, the researcher then needs to reflect on the impact of preconceived ideas and assumptions, address them appropriately and be open and transparent by reporting on the implications for the research. This may be achieved by way of a research journal, reflective notes and appropriate disclosures in the dissertation.

The term ‘balanced’ is used in this research study, rather than neutral. The discussion on the role of the researcher at Paragraph 5.7 aims to create and demonstrate a balanced view towards the research subject.

**Triangulation:** Triangulation is a metaphor commonly applied to mean the use of multiple methods as a means to confirm specific outcomes or fixed points of reference. However, as noted by Lincoln and Guba (1985: 305), triangulation could apply to the use of multiple methods, but also multiple sources, investigators or theories. Further, they explained that multiple sources may mean multiple instances of *one type* of source (such as different interview participants) or multiple sources of the *same type* of information (such as obtaining documentary evidence to corroborate participant statements). Research sometimes assumes the latter rather than the former.

For the purposes of this research study, multiple sources of data were sought from the same source, namely interview participants. While, the aim in this case was not to confirm a fixed point, there was nonetheless a need to demonstrate similarities and differences. Multiple sources supported this aim and the research design relied on multiple research participants and focused on field texts obtained in interviews. In other words, multiple instances of one type of source.

In adopting a design that depended on the participant interviews as a single type of source, the strength of the design lies in the diversity of participants rather than in alternative methods or alternative data sources. This choice was also consistent with the research interest in the lived experience of key individuals. While the inquiry was pursued through interviews with each participant, which is an intersubjective approach, there is a limited number of ways in which lived experience can be explored. Lived experience cannot be explored using secondary data.

Given that multiple sources were used in this research study, an alternative metaphor is more apposite as proposed by Richardson (2000); also cited by Etherington (2004: 148) and by Denzin and Lincoln (2005: 6). As Richardson argued, there are more than three ways to view the world and she suggested the metaphor of a crystal and crystallisation as a validity claim. This denotes a number of ideas such as variety, multiple dimensions and directions, different patterns, ongoing change and growth, and yet also represents structure and process simultaneously. It is a metaphor of light, which comprises waves and particles, process and structure; where what we see depends on the angle of view and surrounding conditions. Richardson argued that crystallisation “provides us with a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial, understanding”. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005: 6), it is a metaphor that affirms that there is no single correct way or fixed end point.

For the purposes of this research, the metaphor of crystallisation aligns with the subject, the research questions and the research philosophy.

**Search for alternatives and different perspectives:** In traditional research methods, it is an accepted approach to test a theory by falsification as argued by Karl Popper (2005). However, different methods apply in qualitative research to assess validity. Rather than aiming to prove or disprove a hypothesis as a means to determine truth or accuracy, in qualitative research to make a claim that is considered to be valid means demonstrating that alternative perspectives or alternative explanations have been systematically sought out.

The consideration of validity was applied at all stages of the design and execution of this research study. In the fieldwork the focus was on the diversity of participants' perspectives and this was in part achieved through a careful selection of the participants as well as the nature of the questions asked. For example, open questions allowed for participants to respond accordingly; eliciting personal narratives allowed for variation in perspectives.

In the analysis and interpretation phase, the different perspectives were explored by comparing different participant views and by comparison to the extant literature. The analysis was directed towards highlighting both similarity and difference. Finally, in the reporting phase, it was important that different perspectives were highlighted and included in the discussion. It was also important to report on how different sources were sought in the literature and how different research methods were considered.

As various themes, patterns or propositions emerge from the fieldwork analysis and interpretation, so they can be questioned and considered against other possible views. As a means to establish credibility, Patton (2002: 553-554) suggested a process for systematically searching for “alternative themes, divergent patterns and rival explanations enhances credibility”.

The design of this research included such a process, not to confirm a specific assertion but to identify where differences existed, where alternative interpretations could apply or where other perspectives were evident. This search for alternatives aligned with the idea of crystallisation discussed above.

Patton also recommended exploring negative cases. These may be exceptions or elements that do not fit with the dominant patterns or themes. Yardley (2008) called these deviant cases. A related option is to find disconfirming evidence that directly challenges the dominant outcomes. Yardley said that the search for disconfirming evidence gives reassurance to the reader that the researcher has not selected outcomes arbitrarily or been selectively biased. It lends credibility and plausibility to the research process and the outcomes.

**Audit Trail:** The audit trail or paper trail of evidence is an important way to demonstrate reliability by providing a transparent record of how the research has been conducted. It may contain various notes, journals, schedules, working papers and other materials that provide a log or record of the research process. It provides reassurance that the study has been conducted systematically and thoroughly and that the process can be replicated.

Yardley explained that “the paper trail cannot be published, but should be available to other researchers” if required. The audit trail is not the same as an external audit, which is an optional review advocated by Lincoln and Guba (1985: 319) that would independently assess the audit trail.

## APPENDIX E

### SETTING SELECTION

	JSE SRI Best performers 2011 <a href="http://www.jse.co.za">www.jse.co.za</a>	Evidence of other external recognition for sustainability?	Evidence that sustainability is part of core strategy NOTE 2	How verified	Strategic use of partnerships supporting sustainability strategies NOTE 2
1	Arcelor Mittal SA	No	No		
2	Barloworld Ltd	Yes. 2011 Mail & Guardian Greening the Future awards - Commendation for Avis Rent-a-Car	No	Knowledge of business.	No
3	Bidvest Group	No			
4	Massmart Holdings #	No			
5	Old Mutual Plc	No			
6	PPC Ltd	No			
7	Santam	Yes. Climate Change Leadership award of South Africa 2012	No. Carefully considered given partnership activities. Sustainability high profile, but not integrated into core strategy.	Knowledge of business	Yes. ClimateWise collaborations
8	Sappi Ltd	No			
9	Standard Bank #	No			
10	Steinhoff International	No			
11	Anglo American #	Yes: 2012 FT Responsible Business award Platinum ranking for 3 consecutive years. Only mining group to achieve the status	No. Sustainability is high profile with important reputational impact, but not integrated into core strategy as assessed from disclosures by the company.	Annual report.	Limited evidence
12	Anglo Gold Ashanti	No			
13	Exxaro #	No			
14	Gold Fields #	Yes. DJSI Climate Change Leadership award of South Africa 2012	No evidence of integration into core strategy.	Integrated report 2011	
15	Impala Platinum	No			
16	Kumba Iron Ore	No			
17	Lonmin	No			
18	Merafe Resources	No			
19	Mondi	Yes. 2012 IPP Environmental Strategy of the Year award 2012 WWF International Environmental Paper award	Unclear. Not included in core strategy but does feature in operational priorities.	Annual report 2011	Limited evidence
20	Woolworths	Yes. DJSI 2012 Responsible Retailer of the Year (joint with Marks & Spencer) - also 2010 and 2008 years WEF Sustainability Champion - Emerging Markets	Yes. Multi-dimensional initiatives - breadth and depth	Integrated report 2012 Good Business Journey.	Yes. Various. Used extensively.
21	ABSA Group #	No			
22	Vodacom #	No			

Continued below

**Setting selection (continued)**

	Additional 4 companies added: See note 1				
23	Sasol	DJSI	No		
24	SABMiller	2012 Guardian Sustainable Business awards - Categories: Collaboration and Water 2011 Mail & Guardian greening the Future awards - for Water Care and Management	Yes . Multi-dimensional initiatives - breadth and depth	Annual report 2012 Website	Yes. Water Futures Partnership. Across several countries.
25	Pick 'n Pay	2012 Climate Change Leadership awards of South Africa	No evidence that sustainability is integrated into core strategy	Annual report	
26	Nedbank	DJSI FT Sustainable Finance awards - Sustainable Bank of the Year 2012 Regional winner Africa/Middle East	While high profile, there is no evidence that sustainability is integrated into core banking strategy.	Annual report.	Longstanding WWF-SA and Nedbank Green Trust conservation partnership

Source: Author's compilation.

**NOTE 1: Excluded from JSE SRI**

- Sasol: Excluded as removed from JSE SRI due to an environmental violation.
- SABMiller: Excluded on governance issue as Chairman did not meet independent non-executive rules.
- Pick 'n Pay: Excluded on governance issue as Chairman did not meet independent non-executive rules.
- Nedbank: Excluded from on governance issue as Chairman did not meet independent non-executive rules.

**NOTE 2:**

- Assessment of core strategy only done on final shortlist if other criteria already met.
- Assessment of partnership activity only done on final shortlist if all step 2 criteria met.

**NOTE 3:**

- The JSE SRI for 2011 was available at the time of the review. The subsequent 2012 report was published in December 2012 and the best performers was a reduced list of only 10 companies. There were no additions to the list of best performers. No change was therefore made to the analysis.

**Selection process. Based on reports available October and November 2012****Step 1:** JSE listed companies**Step 2:** Recognition for success in integrating sustainability into core strategy

2.1 The 2011 JSE SRI had 74 constituents and 22 best performers. Accessed: 18 June 2015 at <https://www.jse.co.za/services/market-data/indices/socially-responsible-investment-index>

2.2 Additional 4 potential candidates added - 26 candidates assessed.

2.3 External awards and recognition - 9 candidates.

2.4 Sustainability integrated into core strategy - 2 companies – Woolworths and SABMiller.

**Step 3:** Using partnerships to support sustainability

3.1 Partnership approach - 4 companies – but 2 of these companies, Santam and Nedbank did not use partnerships to support core strategy.

**Final selection:**

**2 companies – Woolworths and SABMiller met all criteria.**

## APPENDIX F

### RECRUITMENT OF PARTICIPANTS

#### Participant Summary:

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS							
	Organisation	Functions	Reason for inclusion	Role in Sustainable Seafood	Boundary Criteria		Participant
					Connection to Woolworths	Connection to Sustainable Seafood	
1	WW	Technologist	Core group	F	✓	✓	Yes
2	WW	Technologist	Core group	F	✓	✓	Yes
3	WW	Buyer	Core group*	P	✓	✓	☒
4	WW	Marketing	Core group	F	✓	✓	Yes
5	WW	Buying	Other **	F	✓	✓	Yes
6	WW	Executive	Strategy	P	✓	✓	Yes
7	WW	Executive	Strategy	P	✓	✓	Yes
8	MSC	Market Outreach	Core group	F	✓	✓	Yes
9	MSC	Manager	Other***	F	✓	✓	☒
10	WWF	Market Outreach	Core group	F	✓	✓	Yes
11	WWF	Market Outreach	Core Group	F	✓	✓	Yes
12	ISSF	Market Outreach	Success story	F	✓	✓	Yes
13	TSH	Supplier; Producer; Importer	Success story	F	✓	✓	Yes
14	FACTS	Researcher; Scientist	Success story	F	✓	✓	Yes
15	WW	Executive	Success story	P	✓	☒	Yes
16	Government	Researcher; Scientist	Success story	F	☒	✓	Yes

\* Agreed to participate after seafood buyer resigned  
 \*\* Agreed to participate; completed interview 1; then resigned from company  
 \*\*\* Not in core group but an important contact; agreed to meet for a discussion  
 Role: F=full time; P=part-time

Core Group
Success stories - additional stories of sustainable seafood

Source: Author's compilation.

## APPENDIX G

### INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

#### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS INTERVIEW 1 – August 2013



#### Collaborations for a Sustainable World

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study about collaborations for a sustainable world. My study is about collaborations that work well. Woolworths has kindly allowed me to speak with people involved in projects to do with the sustainable seafood initiative. I am interested in your experiences of this collaboration and your involvement in sustainable seafood.

#### INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

Explain background to the research project.

Complete administration details including **the informed consent** and the biographical details.

---

#### INTRODUCTORY QUESTION:

**Please tell me about how you came to be involved in the sustainable seafood initiative.**

---

#### PRIMARY QUESTION 1: KEY RELATIONSHIPS

I would like you to help me to understand more about the people you work with. Please could you draw a map or diagram for me? This will only take a few minutes and you can add to it later if you want.

Draw circles to show yourself in the middle and the other people and/or organisations that are important to you in the work that you do/did for the sustainable seafood initiative. Draw a bigger circle for people that are most important. By important I mean people that you either work with a lot or that are key to the success of your work and meeting the goals of the sustainable seafood initiatives.

Please also add two other circles.

Draw a “grape” or cluster of circles to represent a group of people, rather than individuals.

In a different colour – draw a dotted circle for other people who matter to your work but are not currently in the network of people that you work with; useful relationships that have not yet been established or that you have been unable to create.

**Please tell me about the relationships that you have depicted in the map/diagram.**

Are there any relationships that are important but that are **NOT on the diagram** – perhaps because they are not yet established or because they are new or whatever.

---

#### QUESTION 2: IN YOUR EXPERIENCE WHAT IS IT LIKE WHEN THINGS WORKS WELL?

Think carefully about a specific project or piece of work that you have done with some of the people you have identified in the relationship map. Identify a project where you were working really well together; when you were working at your best; and were proud of the work you did together.

**Please describe that situation to me. Who were you working with, when was it, where were you, what were you doing? How did you collaborate to get the results you wanted? Describe what it felt like to be part of that project.**

---

#### QUESTION 3: WHAT DOES BEING PART OF THIS COLLABORATION MEAN TO YOU?

Reflect on your work with the seafood initiative. Can you tell me what it means to you personally, to be part of this collaborative initiative?

#### CLOSING THE FIRST INTERVIEW

Do you have anything to add? Do you have any questions to ask me?

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## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS 2nd – NOVEMBER 2013



### Collaborations for a Sustainable World

#### INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

In the first interview I asked about your background and the relationships that are important to you in the work that you do. This interview connects to that conversation, but the focus this time is more at an organisational level, and your experiences of how things work at the MSC. So again it focuses on what works well and what it means to be successful.

---

#### INTRODUCTORY QUESTION: CONNECTING TO THE PRIOR INTERVIEW:

I have a general question just to connect back to the first interview. There are 2 parts to this question:

- A. Please take a minute to think about words that you would use to describe **your role in relation to sustainable seafood** and the work that you do at MSC.

Then could you look at the worksheet please? [No more drawing this time – just a worksheet.]

Some of the words come from the first interview. But consider those words that you would use to describe yourself and either tick those words or else add your own words in one of the shapes.

- B. Next, take a minute to think about words that you would use to describe the organisation you work for and the role it plays, **particularly in regards to sustainable seafood, whether wild-caught or freshwater.**

Again could you look at the worksheet and select words or add words that describe MSC or that you are aware MSC uses to describe itself as an organisation.

---

#### PRIMARY QUESTION 1: LINKING CORE STRATEGY TO THE SUSTAINABILITY AGENDA

So I would like to take these ideas further and talk about the MSC and its work in sustainable seafood.

Could you tell about how sustainable seafood fits with **the overall strategy of the MSC** and why it is of **strategic importance** to the MSC? **Why does it matter** to the MSC?

Can you tell me about **the long-term aspirations** of the MSC in respect to sustainable seafood?

---

#### PRIMARY QUESTION 2: THE COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

The sustainable seafood initiative is a **collaboration with other organisations** – can you tell me about **the collaborative approach** that has been adopted by the MSC and its key partners?

And **what needs to be in place to make the collaboration work well for MSC? What are the key conditions or factors that need to be in place for the collaboration to work well?**

*Possible Clarification* – *how do the members deal with conflict situations or disagreements? Can you provide an example?*

*Possible Clarification* – *how do the members deal with “power differentials”? Can you provide an example?*

#### PRIMARY QUESTION 3: MEASUREMENT OF WHAT WORKS WELL

Given the strategic importance you have described, can you tell me about **how the MSC measures success and how you know when things are working well?**

Can you think of a **situation that illustrates what success means at the MSC?** And can you tell me about it?

*Would it be at all possible for you to provide me with some supporting evidence (perhaps after the interview) that demonstrates this?*

---

#### CLOSING QUESTION: GOING FORWARD – FUTURE PERSPECTIVE –

Going forward, **what does the MSC need to do in order to keep this initiative on track** towards the achieving the strategic goals of the organization that you discussed earlier?

#### Contact information:

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## APPENDIX H

## FRAMEWORK OF XSP VALUE: SUMMARY CHECKLIST

SUMMARY CHECKLIST of the VALUE OF AN XSP when conceived as an AUTHORITATIVE TEXT	
<b>Trajectory:</b> <b>an active, ongoing process of coorientation - a recursive process</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General direction; what it is 'on track' to accomplish</li> <li>• Value = the capacity to act - to make a difference and create value; potential for collective agency</li> <li>• Ability to secure subsequent efforts internally and externally:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobilising resources /capital - <i>economic, social and other</i></li> <li>• Marshalling consent of others - <i>secure the willing continued support</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>Increasing Value Potential:</b> <b>a process of coorientation that shapes the trajectory - a recursive process</b>	<b>Assessing Value Delivery:</b> <b>assessing the value produced and ongoing contribution across time and place - a recursive process</b>
<b>Increasing meaningful participation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different forms of interaction and levels of deliberation</li> <li>• Including diverse interests in decision making - including broader range of interests - different voices - multiple parties - accepting legitimacy of alternative perspectives</li> </ul>	<b>External Influence:</b> <i>(External intertextual influence)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shaping</li> <li>• public perceptions of an issue - beyond reputational issues, towards an "extended" form of corporate citizenship</li> <li>• Appropriation of ideas by stakeholders - member organisations and external constituents</li> </ul>
<b>Managing opposing and converging forces</b> <i>(Managing centripetal and centrifugal forces of identity and interests)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remaining open - avoid early closure</li> <li>• Being adaptable</li> <li>• Willing to explore alternatives and new ideas.</li> </ul>	<b>Accountability:</b> <i>(Accounts of capital transformation - to justify conduct, render action meaningful and reveal discourses)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure the right to continue to appropriate resources</li> <li>• Reporting - to home organisations and other stakeholders</li> <li>• Producing evidence to support claims of value generation</li> </ul>
<b>Creating a distinct and stable Identity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collective identity - name - a distinct entity</li> <li>• Narrative construction - constructed collaboratively and retrospectively - who 'we' are - where we are going - what we are doing - a means of coorientation - includes moral tales portraying cultural rules of the AT</li> </ul>	<b>Accounting for higher order effects</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New partnerships</li> <li>• Learning</li> <li>• Changes in practices and perceptions</li> <li>• Making a difference (agency/change) for a wider community</li> <li>• New norms and discourses</li> <li>• Reduction in conflict; more constructive engagement</li> </ul>
<b>NOTES:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wording in <i>italics</i> is from the original material by Koschmann <i>et al.</i> (2012). Wording that is underlined is not in the original.</li> <li>2. Definitions by Koschmann <i>et al.</i>:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Narratives</u> are "textual vehicles for coorientation"</li> <li>• <u>Accounts</u> are justifications, rather than objective determinations</li> <li>• <u>Influence</u> is "to appropriate or reproduce of elements of an XSP's authoritative text in some meaningful fashion". This has been shortened this to 'appropriation of ideas'. It is a <b>recursive</b> process.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. The word 'stakeholder' is used here to include what Koschmann <i>et al.</i> call "other relevant parties" or "other external constituents" or simply "constituents" and is a term used by them elsewhere.</li> <li>4. In trajectory the definition of 'marshalling consent' is expressed as "continued support" rather than participation to distinguish it from value potential, which is an initial process; marshalling consent is an ongoing process.</li> </ol>	

Source: Compiled by author from Koschmann *et al.* (2012).

## APPENDIX I

### FISH FACTS AND FIGURES

<b>Global facts and figures. Source: (FAO, 2014)</b>	
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Status</b>
Fish stocks Sustainability status	The % of assessed stocks fished within sustainable levels has declined from 90% in 1974 to only 71% in 2011. 29% of fish stocks overfished; and 61% fully fished 10% under fished
Wastage	25% of total catch thrown back – often dead
Tonnes of fish caught (marine and inland )	91.3 million (2012), of which 7 million is tuna. Peak marine caught production was in 1996 and there is a continuing downward trend since then
Tonnes of fish produced (aquaculture)	66.6 million (2012); and growing at a rate of over 6% per annum globally; and over 187 countries are producers
Trade in fish:	Over 200 countries export fish and fish products 10% of total agricultural exports globally Developed countries dominate the import market Developing countries have 54% market share by value and 60% by quantity There are 4.72 million fishing vessels, of which 16% are in Africa Over 58 million people working in the primary fishing sector, of which 10% are in Africa; and 90% of fishers are small-scale Between 10% and 12% of the world's population depend on fishing or aquaculture for their livelihoods Aquaculture in Africa is only 2% of the world tonnage, with Asia producing over 88%; however Africa has the highest annual growth rate at over 11%
Fish production and consumption	86% human consumption ; 14% non-food uses Per capita growth in consumption from 9.9 kg in the 1960s to 19,2 kg in 2012 Fish makes up 17% of the global population's intake of animal protein
Sustainability status Southeast Atlantic (including South African fisheries)	Decreasing trend in catch volumes since the early 1970s Hake is the primary resource and remains fully fished or overfished; but with signs of recovery in the deepwater hake stock off South Africa and shallow-water hake off Namibia due to strict management measures introduced in 2006 South African pilchard has declined to fully fished or overfished levels South African anchovy has improved to a fully fished status
Voluntary International standards	1992: Agenda 21 adopted at the Rio Summit included Chapter 17 dealing with the protection of the oceans, seas, coastal areas and all marine living resources 1995: The Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries was adopted by the United Nations Sustainability of the oceans and marine living resources involves the integration of the ecosystems and socio-economic factors.
Cooperation between Nation States	Many countries share fishery resources, both in inland regions and across the oceans. While there are international agreements, such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982, much depends on voluntary regulation. There are Regional Fishery Bodies in some areas to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and manage fish stocks

Source: Derived from FAO (2014).

## APPENDIX J

### INTRODUCING THE PARTICIPANTS

A narrative description of why each participant is involved in sustainable seafood and what their work means to them is included here as a means to introduce the participants and their stories.

#### ORGANISING THE PARTICIPANT NARRATIVES

There was a diversity of participants from different organisations and backgrounds. However, within this diversity, there were some similarities in their stories.

The first interview question asked each participant: How did you become involved in sustainable seafood? The second interview question asked each participant: What does it mean to you personally to be part of this collaborative initiative?

Together these questions provided a variety of responses including: having a connection (to the ocean, fish or conservation) since childhood; family background; studying at University or getting involved because of work related activities. Participants spoke about having a deep conviction; of doing the right thing; they talked about ethics and values; and how they have developed greater awareness through learning about sustainable seafood. They talked about how their work makes them passionate, proud, humbled, and inspired; and how challenging it could be. Some spoke about making a difference and driving change; others expressed how they felt it is a privilege to work with amazing people.

The narratives of some participants could be included under more than one of these headings. Further consideration of the participant responses suggested that while each narrative was unique, that there were some similar threads within their storylines. These threads were used to cluster the narratives into four storylines; three where there were similarities between two or more participants and one very unique storyline.

#### **Storyline 1: The connection to sustainable seafood is work related**

The first was a storyline that was work related. These participants came from various backgrounds in business, research or the public sector and they had functional expertise in food technology, marketing, buying, food science or public administration. Of this group of six, two were women, they were all graduates; several were specialists in food technology; one held a doctoral degree. This was not a homogenous group but their involvement with sustainable seafood, for each of them, was work related.

While pursuing their work, they were either given a responsibility for or chose a project or work activity that related to sustainable seafood. Prior to this work or research assignment, they had no specific involvement in sustainable seafood, although one enjoyed recreational fishing. For some, this involvement went back over ten years, and for others it was more recent. What they had in common was that it was through work related activities that they became involved with sustainable seafood. And further, they are now all very passionate about sustainable seafood. Each of them indicated that their work with sustainable seafood had had a personal impact on their lives. Some were very humble about what they do, others were very proud of their work and all were very committed to giving continued support for the issue.

While there are quotations that support each of these groupings, only a selection is provided here to serve as illustrations. While each quotation may be traced to a specific participant code in the audit trail documentation, an identifying code is not deemed necessary and has been deliberately omitted.

**Getting involved:**

*“basically my involvement towards sustainability started when I started at Woolworths as a food technologist - it started with the whole sustainable seafood drive within my category”*

*“the Good Business Journey is very complicated and especially in the sustainable seafood space – it’s so confusing and it’s so difficult and it’s just a huge challenge - but I absolutely loved it - and then it kind of led to the whole passion”*

*“It was really important for me that I did something that was really relevant - I focused my whole project on developing a database to be able to identify all the main fish species on the market - and trying to pinpoint how serious the mislabelling actually is”*

*“at the end of the day I’m trying to help them engage in responsible sourcing that drives tuna fishing improvements - so that’s my agenda”*

**What it means personally:**

*“It’s really close to my heart - I can make a difference therefore I will be part of this collaboration and I will drive change so - yah - it’s fantastic to tell people the story – it’s like wow - you did all that - yes I did all that - I want to then say that - tell my kids and my grandkids that I was part of that change”*

*“my heart tells me I should go into the fisheries because that’s where I can make a difference”*

*“these guys have passion - so they live and breathe what they do and that does help - they’re sincere when they come and do their work here - they can be tough as well when they need to - and the same as us - but it helps if that’s really their values - so it makes it believable”*

*“I think this piece of work that I am busy with is not just from a Woolworths’s retailer point of view but it also drives change globally and this is my piece of change that I want to drive within our universe and within our world”*

**Storyline 2: The connection to the sea came from an early age**

The next storyline was about those participants that had a connection to the ocean, to fish and to conservation from an early age. In each case, the stories of these participants started before their working career began. Some spoke of their childhood interest in the ocean or in conservation; and they recalled childhood memories of being near the sea or connected to fishing. They are all now working in conservation or in the sustainable seafood supply chain; three are working with NPOs; one is in fisheries research; and another is the owner of a business involved in farming fish as well as the sourcing, importing and production of sustainable seafood products. These extracts give a sense of how they described their experiences.

**Getting involved:**

*“I’ve just always had a love of the ocean - and it was never anything that I could articulate - and I just always knew that I wanted to do something in the ocean”*

***“seafood was always an interest of mine - so always very much connected to the ocean as well as having an interest in aquaculture”***

***“I spent some time [on a trout farm] as well and got to see that side of fish production too – it’s not just harvesting from the wild but also farming fish for consumption”***

***“I was interested in biology and in particular marine biology”***

***“I had a keen interest in conservation as a kid so I think these things were already sort of going around in my head”***

***“my interest was more on the conservation side – I did biological conservation work for my Masters”***

***“I happened to be good at sciences - and so that’s what I studied - I studied science and I did an honours straight away in marine biology”***

**What it means personally:**

***“I believe in what we’re doing - I believe in this organisation – it’s why I am very proud to be part of this organisation”***

***“I feel like we are investing in the future of this country”***

***“it’s quite humbling - it blows my mind in a lot of ways”***

***“I feel like we’re making a difference - and it’s not just the big blue sky difference that we’re making - I feel like we’re making difference in the small incremental things like the people that we get to engage with - and at the same time I’m changing so I feel like there’s things that touch on my life”***

***“I feel very passionately about the fact that it’s something that’s relevant – it’s something that’s very tangible and people can hold onto”***

***“it’s great to work in a team where people are passionate about what we do”***

***“I am very passionate about the relationships that we’ve fostered - and they’re amazing people - I think the opportunities that we’ve had to engage with new people and new constituencies - it blows my mind on like a daily basis - I’m constantly inspired by the work that we do and what I’m privileged to be involved with”***

***“It’s an amazing place that we work - in the space that we work and the people that we get to work with - I feel very privileged”***

### **Storyline 3: Building the cross-section between work and sustainability**

The third storyline was where participants made the connection to sustainable seafood by being involved in broader issues of sustainability, such as environmental issues, conservation, socio-economic development or managing waste. Each of these participants created the connection to sustainability in their work and chose to build a sustainability agenda into their work activities, not just in a minor way but choosing to integrate and combine their work with sustainability. One has a legal background and has combined an interest in environmental issues with business. Another worked in business in a supply chain function and then got involved in socio-economic development, and now combines both areas of experience into global sustainable seafood activities. The third has been involved in a number of operational functions such as

packaging, which was where they started working on recycling over 20 years ago. This participant then got involved in product issues related to animal welfare (such as badger friendly honey) and free-range eggs and gradually got more involved in a variety of issues from an environmental policy for the business to managing customer queries on product sustainability. They have truly combined their business responsibilities with a commitment to sustainability. These stories are best expressed in their own words.

**Getting involved:**

*“I’ve always been interested in environmental issues - so being able to do that within the corporate space has been a really good opportunity”*

*“it started back in childhood and I was horrified by waste - I saw waste from an early age and I hated it”*

*“so it was quite appealing to be at the cross sections of commerce and conservation as well as science - out of my curiosity I was quite interested in all the things that were going on to improve the world”*

**What it means personally:**

*“I think knowing that we’re making a difference in terms of how we manage quite a scarce resource is probably the best and biggest thing for me”*

*“I think it comes from a deep conviction that I’m doing the right thing”*

*“what it’s all about is ethics and the behaviour - our ethics and Woolworth’s ethics”*

*“I find it just fascinating and challenging to deal with different cultures - the different cultures of a fisherman versus like a scientist versus in industry - the fact that they all come together - I find that experience just fascinating and it’s great to be part of that dynamic and to see it working - so it’s nice to be in that collaboration space”*

*“I have the opportunity to work with some really passionate and quality people - so that’s terrific to get to work with people who are passionate about what they do”*

**Different storylines, similarities in what it means personally**

While reading the words of the participants it is evident that whatever the background narrative, however they became involved with sustainable seafood or a broader sustainability agenda, these people are very passionate about what they do; they are all ‘invested’ at a personal level and they are all very committed to making a contribution or making a difference. By considering their stories, rather than their job functions or their how long they have been working, what can be seen is both the uniqueness of each individual, but also what draws them together towards the issue of sustainable seafood.

**Storyline 4: A notably different perspective - A holistic narrative; a philosophy of life**

Over and above the three narratives identified above, one participant stood out as being different. Their story fits with the second storyline as they had a connection to the sea and to conservation from a very early age. What makes their story different is the time span and the scope; it is very holistic, very philosophical. In time, this story goes back to previous generations, to the great grandfather and it stretches into the future to

envisage a legacy for future generations. In scope, this story demonstrates a highly attuned sense of foresight that was evident from a very young age and at a time before there was even international recognition of the problem of overfishing.

It is a story of strategic foresight and long-term thinking directed towards building a successful business based on the philosophy of a sustainable product of “uncompromising quality”. What is remarkable is that for a long time, there was no market for the product; this participant had to create a market and indeed they have, over many years, built an entire supply chain for sustainable seafood. This person is a very central figure and has had a profound influence both as an individual and in terms of his business activities, on the sustainable seafood supply chain in South Africa. Initially this influence was focused on farmed fish, but more recently the influence of the business has been extended to the global supply chain of certified sustainable seafood available in South Africa.

This storyline may be described as a philosophy of life as well as a business philosophy; it is a philosophy that extends beyond the personal to include future generations. It is also highly collaborative and inclusive. This is a person, who has always been deeply committed to sustainable seafood with a very insightful, long-term, strategic view of what it means to live in a sustainable way and to work together with others to live according to that belief. For this person, and for this business, sustainability is not a goal or an objective, it is a way of life.

#### **Getting involved:**

***“I had a desire to farm with fish and that came out of a background of the family being involved in fishing many years ago - it goes back to my great grandfather”***

***“I had this desire to farm with fish because I had this philosophy that you couldn’t continue just harvesting from the sea - that was from a young age”***

***“even in those days which was in the 70s you would have reports of – I mean you just gotta read things like Cannery Row<sup>1</sup> – and it was before the Grand Banks<sup>2</sup> and all that but I mean you could see that it wasn’t logical that you continue just taking stuff out”***

#### **What it means personally:**

***“the philosophy is in everything that I do - rather do it right and take longer but it’s there for tomorrow still”***

***“I’ve always had the philosophy of building a solid foundation and not looking at short-term success or profit”***

***“I think that’s been a driving force through this thing from the beginning - so it’s been the vision where it can go and should go and hopefully it’s there for generations”***

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<sup>1</sup> Reference to the novel by John Steinbeck, published in 1945 set against the backdrop of the collapse of the sardine fisheries off the coast of Monterey Bay, California in the 1940s.

<sup>2</sup> The Grand Banks is a reference to the abundant fishery in the North Atlantic that collapsed, leading to its closure in 1992. In the wake of the Grand Banks ‘disaster’, the Marine Stewardship Council was formed. It is recognised as one of the primary events that triggered widespread international recognition of the crisis in fisheries worldwide, which continues to this day.

## APPENDIX K

### INTRODUCING THE PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

A description of each organisation in the words of the participants:

#### Organisation 1: Woolworths

*“the business is actually built on principles rather than on strategy and then the principles that you have actually drive your strategic direction - so its principles first - then use your principles to drive strategy”*

*“so strategically we call it the Good Business Journey - our Good Business Journey has always been there - we never marketed it as a big thing - I think there’s just been more focus on how we send that message out”*

*“the fishing side was one of the key biodiversity risks that were identified from a food sourcing perspective so it was quite a big focus area - there’d been quite a lot of consumer awareness work done by people like the SASSI programme in South Africa”*

*“the focus was trying to understand what our sourcing footprint was and then try and mould that into a range of more sustainable choices and there’s been a lot of focus then around creating the right partnerships externally with our suppliers to try and make sure that we can set a coherent range of future targets which are now in place through to 2015 2020 for the wild caught and aquaculture side”*

*“Woolworths launched a set of seafood commitments last year - that stated by the end of 2015 all of our wild caught seafood would be either caught from MSC certified fisheries and - either be green listed by WWF-SASSI which is our sustainability partner - or we source from fisheries that are undertaking credible time bound improvement projects”*

#### Organisation 2: WWF

*“we exist with a clear conservation objective and the strap line really says it best – which is that we try and work towards a place where humans can live in harmony with nature”*

*“we’ve then developed tools and mechanism to be able to deliver the changes that we’d like to see in those fisheries and to do that we’ve got interventions throughout the supply chain – so from the consumer all the way back to the fishery itself and it is really quite a holistic approach – making sure that all the critical stakeholders are engaged in the most effective and strategic way to be able to deliver our objective of positive change on the water”*

#### Organisation 3: ISSF

*“the goal of the organisation is to improve the sustainability of global tuna stocks and their ecosystem to meet the certification criteria of the Marine Stewardship Council - MSC - and to do so through science based verifiable - by developing verifiable science based measures and conservation commitments and initiatives to achieve that goal and to measure progress - and then there’s three strategic pillars for that objective”*

**Organisations 4: MSC**

*“the MSC has a very clear vision and that is to affect the global market to drive sustainability - so to change the way the world’s oceans are fished by creating markets for sustainable seafood and essentially what that means is that the markets will preferentially support fisheries that can demonstrate their sustainability”*

**Organisation 5: FACTS**

*“authenticity is the single - it kind of wraps up everything that I’m trying to build within FACTS and it’s crucial for Woolworths as well”*

*“the way that it actually works is because we do authenticity testing - that a spin-off of that is sustainability because I do the species identification - because we stand for authenticity and integrity [so] that sustainability is a natural spin off of that”*

**Organisation 6: Fisheries Research**

*“Resources research is really to find out how much fish is out there - how much was there - how much will be there - so it’s a very narrow focus”*

*“we give advice to the Minister in the form of total allowable catch or total allowable effort recommendations*

*“at the moment it’s concerned about poor people so it looks towards the small scale subsistence fisheries – the focus is heavily on social problems”*

**Organisation 7: TSSH**

*“we’ve got this whole value chain that’s going with I think there’s 7 companies in the value chain – and the philosophy being that if we can farm fish in a – we like to call it a responsible manner – it helps with sustainability of seafood”*

*“when we started in the early days we put best practice in place right from the beginning - rather create a better quality product with a story behind it and the philosophy there too - was that would also give you a market advantage – which it has in the long run - it took a long time but it certainly has set us apart from the competition in that way - you wouldn’t be able to deal with Woolworths if you didn’t have these things”*

APPENDIX L

EXAMPLE OF WORKSHEET LEVEL 1: INDIVIDUAL

<p>KC: Ok – so – the way that we work - at the moment is that <u>we have this so-called Seafood Supply Chain where we have the fisheries – we have – em – retailers – and suppliers – restaurants and chefs – and we've got the consumers –</u></p>	<p>Seafood supply chain</p>	<p><b>XSP</b></p>	
<p>JB: Right</p>			
<p>KC: - and <u>we work across that - this entire - scale</u> – so the work that I'm involved with is these – these kind of three – [circles all but the fisheries on the diagram] - and – em – its interesting because we've got – we've got – eh – [9 minutes] - <u>very different ways of engaging with each one of these components</u> and so obviously the – the focus that I have – this is mostly what <u>works on – and he's got a little bit of a foot in there as well – [points to the diagram] - but – em – when it comes to communicating the milestones</u> - that the retailers make in terms of their – <u>their progress towards commitments</u> that they've put out to seafood sustainability that's when I come in – so <u>does all the hard work and I do all the fun work – that's how I always explain it – [laughs] –</u></p>	<p>We work across this entire scale very different ways of engaging with each one of these components</p> <p>communicating milestones commitments</p>	<p><b>SCALE BASIC ELEMENTS</b></p> <p><b>VALUE DELIVERY</b></p>	<p><b>ENGAGING</b> Different ways with each component (or group)</p> <p><b>Milestones Commitments</b></p>
<p>JB: Ok</p>			
<p>KC: - but ok – I just quickly want to concentrate on – on this component - so we have been – <u>we have done an inordinate amount of research in terms of our consumers and we are very clear in terms of our strategy of engagement</u> – so we know - who we're targeting - <u>we know who our target audience is – we know what their demographics are</u> – we know - em – you know in terms of their living standard measures - how much they earn – we know their – where they're living in the metropolises etc etc –</p>	<p>we have done an inordinate amount of research in terms of our consumers and we are very clear in terms of our strategy of engagement</p> <p>we know who our target audience is – we know what their demographics are</p>	<p><b>XSP</b></p> <p><b>TRAJECTORY</b></p>	<p><b>Working with consumers</b> <b>NOTE:</b> this is "cross-sector" - but not in the conventional sense as consumers are not necessarily an "organized" entity BUT IT IS COLLECTIVE AGENCY Target audience</p>
<p>JB: Right</p>			
<p>KC: - and then the way we wanna reach them – [10 minutes] - <u>we have a very clear target that we're trying to attain</u> – so you know we've got – em - a measure of that by 2014 - this year – we wanna have 60% of our target audience that is aware of SASSI and – <u>and fundamentally shifting their behaviour because we believe that consumers when they are motivated to – to ask questions of retailers and hold them accountable to their commitments – retailers and suppliers will be motivated to change their procurement practices</u> – this is where we believe the <u>fulcrum position</u> in the chain is – [points to the retailers and suppliers box on the diagram] - and <u>all the work we do on this side of things is to motivate retailers and suppliers to shift their behaviour – we believe once they shift their behaviour that will influence fisheries to change their practices and then will ultimately result in positive change on the water -</u></p>	<p>we have a clear target fundamentally shifting behaviour because we believe that consumers when they are motivated to – to ask questions of retailers and hold them accountable to their commitments – retailers and suppliers will be motivated to change their procurement practices</p> <p>the fulcrum position - all the work we do on this side of things is to motivate retailers and suppliers to shift their behaviour once they shift their behaviour that will influence fisheries to change their practices and then will ultimately result in positive change on the water</p>	<p><b>TRAJECTORY</b></p> <p><b>COLLECTIVE AGENCY</b></p> <p><b>COLLECTIVE AGENCY</b></p> <p><b>THE ISSUE</b></p>	<p>Targets This may be more about a "meta conversation" than "collaboration" in a conventional sense <b>DISCUSS WHETHER THIS IS META CONVERSATION as COLLABORATIVE AGENCY - going beyond collective agency</b></p> <p><b>MOBILISING MARKET FORCES</b> <b>POSITIVE CHANGE ON THE WATER</b></p>
<p>JB: Right</p>			
<p>KC: <u>So that's our theory of change</u> – em – so – the way we work with – <u>with moving consumers from a point of just basic - awareness of – of a challenge to fundamentally shifting their behaviour – that's where we employ our networks of support and - we have – [11 minutes] - our target audience</u> – and that's our target audience – very specific consumers that consume seafood once a month or more often – fresh seafood – and then we have what we call the broader seafood loving community – does that make sense –</p>	<p>that's our theory of change – so the way we work with moving consumers from a point of just basic awareness of a challenge to fundamentally shifting their behaviour – that's where we employ our networks of support</p>	<p><b>COLLECTIVE AGENCY</b></p> <p><b>TRAJECTORY</b></p>	<p><b>Theory of change</b> <b>STRATEGY - directed and coordinated action</b></p>
<p>JB: Yah – I'm - getting this –</p>			
<p>KC: Ok – ok - and <u>we have very specific ways of – of engaging with the target audience and we've got very specific ways of engaging with our seafood loving community</u> – so the target audience we know what they read we know what their – you know what their social habits are – we know – em - where they're buying their seafood – <u>we know that they they're buying seafood from Pick n Pay – from Woolworths – those are the two main retail outlets –</u></p>	<p>Target audience = specific consumers who consume seafood regularly And also = broader seafood loving community We know they are buying from PicknPay and Woolworths - also Checkers -</p>	<p><b>TRAJECTORY</b></p> <p><b>BASIC ELEMENTS</b></p>	<p><b>TARGET AUDIENCE</b></p> <p><b>ENGAGING</b></p>
<p>JB: Ok</p>			
<p>KC: - at Checkers – em – and so - its – <u>it helps us understand that we are actually doing – we're engaging with the right people</u> when it comes to the retailers and suppliers – 'cos we're speaking to – the retailers that our target audience is buying their fish at – ok – so - back to – our seafood loving community and our target audience –</p>	<p>It helps us understand that we are engaging with the right people - the retailers where our target audience is buying their fish</p>	<p><b>BASIC ELEMENTS</b></p>	<p><b>Engaging with the right people</b></p>
<p>JB: Right</p>			
<p>KC: - we work with - <u>networking partners</u> and these are – [12 minutes] – <u>partners that have – em – organisations that have a similar educational mandate to what we have – so the zoos and the aquarias –</u></p>	<p>We work with networking partners - partners that have organisations that have a similar educational mandate to what we have</p>	<p><b>XSP</b></p> <p><b>TRAJECTORY</b></p>	<p><b>SAME SECTOR AND CROSS-SECTOR</b> Not only NGOs - also educational institutions - research organization - some may be private sector?</p>
<p>JB: Ok</p>			
<p>KC: - <u>across the country</u> – so we work – Cape Town – we work in Cape Town – Joburg – and Durban to a lesser extent – <u>we're wanting to expand – at the moment Cape Town has the biggest footprint in terms of – understanding and awareness of SASSI just by virtue of the fact that we are based here –</u></p>	<p>we're wanting to expand Cape Town has the biggest footprint in terms of – understanding and awareness of SASSI just by virtue of the fact that we are based here</p>	<p><b>VALUE DELIVERY</b></p>	<p><b>EXPAND – SCALE</b> <b>UNDERSTANDING AND AWARENESS</b></p>
<p>JB: Ok</p>			
<p>KC: - Joburg not so much – Durban not so much – and then <u>the context within these 2 metropolises is also very very different – so Durban - there's a very high level of illegal activity that happens in terms of illegal fish that is being sold and that's an ignorance of – to the – the Marine Living Resources Act – and Joburg is just – its – highest – the province of Gauteng is the highest levels of seafood that's consumed in the whole country – its interesting 'cos its landlocked – so – em – there's a – a huge disconnectivity of people living in Joburg to the – to the sea and so to address that you would need to – [13 minutes] - <u>utilise very different mechanisms and platforms –</u></u></p>	<p>the context within these 2 metropolises is also very very different Durban - there's a very high level of illegal activity that happens in terms of illegal fish that is being sold and that's an ignorance Joburg – the province of Gauteng is the highest levels of seafood that's consumed in the whole country – its interesting 'cos its landlocked - a huge disconnectivity of people living in Joburg to the sea Need to utilise very different mechanisms and platforms</p>	<p><b>VALUE POTENTIAL (DIVERSITY)</b></p> <p><b>TENSIONS</b></p> <p><b>VALUE POTENTIAL (DIVERSITY)</b></p>	<p>Different CONTEXTS</p> <p><b>IGNORANCE - the narrative in Durban</b> <b>DISCONNECTIVITY - the narrative in Joburg</b></p> <p>Need to utilise very different mechanisms and platforms - MULTIPLE</p>
<p>JB: Ok</p>			
<p>KC: - so that's where we're moving to in future – em – ok - so – the networking partners the zoos and aquarias – we've got – we work with Two Oceans Aquarium in Cape Town and we work with uShaka in Durban and we're working with EWT and the Joburg Zoo in Joburg –</p>	<p>that's where we're moving to in future</p>	<p><b>TRAJECTORY AGENCY</b></p>	<p><b>MOVING TO IN FUTURE</b> <b>COMPLEMENTARY EXPERTISE</b> - also covered in existing collaboration theory - based on micro-economic theory - either resource dependency or exchange theory? <b>CO-OWNERSHIP</b> - indicates collaboration rather than cooperation - its more than just collective</p>
<p>JB: Ok</p>			
<p>KC: - and – so that's – that's educational mandate – and also they speak to kids which we – <u>its not our expertise and its – its not really what we're good at – so we – in a sense we sort of outsource that to them – we provide them with materials – we provide them with information and they incorporate that into what they do as an organization – we also – its very important for me as the manager of the programme – to make sure that with the networking partners we're cultivating a sense of co-ownership of SASSI – so SASSI is not something that belongs to WWF – it was started by WWF – yes – and its – em – overseen by WWF but the message and the intention of it I feel has more strength and more power if it – if its built like there's a sense of co-ownership –</u></p>	<p>its not our expertise and its not really what we're good at – in a sense we sort of outsource that to them - we provide them with materials – we provide them with information <b>its very important for me as the manager of the programme to make sure that with the networking partners we're cultivating a sense of co-ownership of SASSI</b> so SASSI is not something that belongs to WWF – it was started by WWF – overseen by WWF but the message and the intention of it I feel has more strength and more power if it – if its built like there's a sense of co-ownership</p>	<p><b>TRAJECTORY RESOURCES</b></p> <p><b>XSP</b></p> <p><b>COLLABORATIVE AGENCY</b></p> <p><b>VALUE POTENTIAL SCALE MATERIALS</b></p> <p><b>BASIC ELEMENTS</b></p> <p><b>VALUE DELIVERY</b></p>	<p><b>CO-OWNERSHIP</b></p> <p><b>POWER</b> <b>NOTE:</b> Power not as a "tension" - but power in a positive sense <b>OWNERSHIP - DEPTH OF INVOLVEMENT</b></p>
<p>JB: Right</p>			
<p>KC: - so that's what I try to cultivate with our networking partners – [14 minutes] – and then the way that we do that is we have – we – well constant contact with them – <u>so we're constantly providing them with information and materials</u> – whenever they need pop cards we send that out to them – <u>we have an annual networking partners workshop</u> where we bring – we fly them in and we – we sit with them and we find out what they've been doing and how they've been incorporating SASSI into their – into what they do on a daily basis – and then <u>we brainstorm for the next year</u> and we say – so for the next year <u>what are our interventions and how can we support you better</u> – so that team – that's working really really well – <u>that's now been 4 years</u></p>	<p>the way that we do that is we have - well constant contact with them – so we're constantly providing them with information and materials</p> <p>we have an annual networking partners workshop</p> <p>that's now been 4 years and we feel its at a point where its running smoothly - it runs really really well</p>	<p><b>VALUE POTENTIAL SCALE MATERIALS</b></p> <p><b>BASIC ELEMENTS</b></p> <p><b>VALUE DELIVERY</b></p>	<p><b>CONSTANT CONTACT</b> <b>"NON HUMAN ACTORS"</b> - information and materials are part of the process of constant contact - <b>MATERIALISATION</b> Annual networking - <b>ALSO TIME DIMENSION</b> - WE BRAINSTORM FOR NEXT YEAR Running really well</p>

APPENDIX M

EXAMPLE OF WORKSHEET LEVEL 2: CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS – 3 CASES

CASE 1: TRAJECTORY - FROM INDIVIDUAL WORKSHEET	COMMENTS ON CASE 1	REF	REF	CASE 2: TRAJECTORY - FROM INDIVIDUAL WORKSHEET	COMMENTS ON CASE 2	REF	REF	CASE 3: TRAJECTORY - INDIVIDUAL WORKSHEET	COMMENTS ON CASE 3	REF	REF
COORIENTATION - and FUTURE DIRECTION - we need to get together to address the future of the tuna resource and its conservation - dramatic and visionary step		1	2	TIME PERIOD - leading role over 20 years - local trout farming- farmers profile TSSH with market ready fish - TSSH then "produce" final product	Rather go slower and be there for a long time	1	10 and 20	Good personal relationships with WWF - worked with them for a long time	Good RELATIONSHIPS	1	6
Conservation - to advocate for change in the market - using the market to direct action - AGENCY - applied science - AGENCY		1	2	ASC accreditation is long process - so although not achieved - there are milestones along the way such as the agreement of specifications - audits being performed	end goal not yet achieved but PROGRESS is being made - MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION towards ASC accreditation - AIM is to be the first in Africa for ASC and trout	1	5 and 9	Leverage going forward - the MSC campaign pushed the WWF relationship	This also about SCALE	1	9
Working with existing RELATIONSHIPS - partnering with other NGOs and the - LEVERAGE	Existing relationship NGO to NGO and existing relationships eNGO and retailer - it's LEVERAGE	1	5	MSC chain of custody certification - approval for the TSSH production operation. "The drive to be one of the first in South Africa - apart from hake - to be MSC approved - other than hake there were no other species - we wanted to be market leaders at taking product to Woolies	For product responsibility sourced - imported product such as herring, Portuguese sardines, scallops and salmon	1	24	The project process - pushed us - commit to future targets - engage with the challenges	DIRECTION - the future - where the challenges were going to be - ENGAGE	1	11
Existing relationships - connecting ISSF and Woolworths through WWF-SA	Including WWF International	1	5	MOBILISING RESOURCES - MSC chain of custody - getting the traders on board	PERSUASION - "we had to persuade these guys" - "just join us on this journey"	1	24	Public COMMITMENT to future targets	FUTURE TARGETS - PUBLIC COMMITMENTS SCALE	1	
MOBILISING RESOURCES - reaching out to WWF Europe - they are "more on the train now"	Important to CREDIBILITY - for example when dealing with M&S	1	11	MOBILISING RESOURCES - if we don't have a product we don't have a business - if we don't have a market we don't have a business. SASSI listing is based on WWF standards - a key issue was the fish feed	Product is sustainable - either SASSI green or MSC certified. So product has to have CREDIBILITY - its not just an outcome - it's a necessary part of the product offering	1	7; 9; 11 and 12	Pushing sourcing strategies - pushing the teams to knowing - knowing they have future targets	Targets - DIRECTION	1	
DRIVING CHANGE - WWF model of engagement -		1	11	MOBILISING RESOURCES - the challenge of sourcing fish meal from sustainable sources - needed the score for the green listing assessment "a lot of work - a lot of collaboration"	SASSI was involved - the trout farmers - and the fish meal companies - it was a lot of work - no financial benefit - feed TRACEABLE back to the boats - to the South African TAC - total allowable catch. An approved source	1	13	We needed to IMPROVE PRACTICES	The outcomes / values that are sought - IMPROVEMENT TO OUR PRACTICES - its an internal goal rather than the goal of the XSP	2	5
ALIGNS with ISSF - this means COORIENTATION		1	11	MOBILISING RESOURCES - to progress the ASC standards for the Katse Dam trout farm - issues about specifications - issues about auditors - also issues about cost. All the audits are fantastic - bringing us closer to being able to do the ASC	Katse project since 2007 - (2: 11) - for 2 years it was just meetings meetings - ASC accreditation - cannot put a time scale on that - but hope it is within 2 years (2: 9)	1	10 and 13	Tracking % of targets being met - interim milestones	DIRECTION - also suggests agency as there is action/AGENCY here towards ongoing improvement, suppliers brought on board, new strategies and there is a future target.	2	10
Collaboration with Woolworths - VERY ALIGNED with their sustainable sourcing and improvement objectives. It's LINED UP with their approach - its practical improvement -	ALIGNMENT AND DIRECTION - TRAJECTORY. Incorporated into supplier engagement plan in advance of it being in their policies. Its setting up a "credible fisheries improvement plan" - which connects to the Woolworths commitments	1	12	MOBILISING RESOURCES - staying profitable is always a challenge		1	20	Interrogating the procurement list (project with WWF- SASSI and MSC) - opportunities for improvement - how can we make it happen - its about EXECUTION	AGENCY - making it happen - opportunities for improvement - this project includes more than one partner so there is also DIVERSITY	2	4
Market outreach strategy - focus on organisations with big volume or leaders in sustainability - "biggest bang from the time that I have" TENSIONS - big volume - if not willing then find LEVERAGE - 2 ways in from other relationships - eNGO or a supplier who is an ISSF member - but need to BUILD that relationship so its MOBILISING RESOURCES - so LEVERAGE is about MOBILISING	WORKING WITH THE WILLING - willing to ACT/ TO WORK. This seems to be more than POTENTIAL - more than WILLING TO ENGAGE or PARTICIPATE Its about MOBILISING - TAKING ACTION. But big volume may not be willing - so need to leverage another relationship - MOBILISING RESOURCES. This method is COLLECTIVE AGENCY - involves several relationships	2	10 15	LEVERAGING MARKET FORCES - it is a business model - TSSH with quality sustainable product - CERTIFIED product either MSC or SASSI green listing - leveraging the CREDIBILITY AND TRACEABILITY (not SASSI is about the former) - the ecolabel indicates traceability	Market forces are also a challenge - story about pricing of Norwegian salmon; story about sourcing fishmeal form sustainable sources which is not about making money. NOTE - its not all ecolabel - in South Africa the SASSI listing is recognised (similar to Monterey system in the USA)	1	7	Tracking the % that meets the future commitments	DIRECTION - tracking	2	10
RELATIONSHIP BUILDING - with eNGOs and with suppliers who are ISSF members - this is TRAJECTORY but also INCREASING PARTICIPATION - so its also VALUE POTENTIAL	WORKING WITH THE WILLING - (my wording) - big volume not interested in doing the right thing they're busy people - so work with other relationships - 2 ways: (a) with the eNGO or (b) with a supplier who is an ISSF member. BUT need to build those relationships	2	15 24	Other retailers are starting to change - but its reactionary - they don't know how to do it yet		2	7	STRONG BUSINESS CASE for partnerships - why and where they add value. The BUSINESS CASE FOR SUSTAINABILITY - proving the financial benefits - the brand differentiation - the INVESTMENT PROPOSITION	This is beyond potential - it's the AGREED DIRECTION. Proving financial benefits is also JUSTIFICATION - which is VALUE DELIVERY - and brand differentiation	2	6
Working through a supplier - an ISSF member	NETWORKING - value is AWARENESS and ADDS CREDIBILITY: NOTE - circularity again as this is value and its increasing future value - it shows the momentum of the trajectory	2	15 16	GOING FORWARD - experimenting with salmon and other fish		2	15	Credible third party - with key experience and skills - bolster strength without adding massive interal capacity	CAPABILITY - RESOURCES - MOBILISING "capital" -	2	6
RELATIONSHIP BUILDING - "moving this thing forward is about relationships and relationship building. There is also the outreach with RFMOs - done by another person - so ISSF is about the market outreach and the policymakers	Also about providing TOOLS and RESOURCES to assist. Its also MULTIDIMENSIONAL - so there is the science - and there is outreach with RFMOs as well - country representatives with access to policymakers	2	19					FUNDING - financial capital - for the partnership - not a donation - but selling it at different levels in the organisation. This is about MOBILISING SOCIAL CAPITAL as well as financial capital.	FINANCIAL CAPITAL AND SOCIAL CAPITAL - building a model of external funding -for "a partnership way"	2	7

APPENDIX M

APPENDIX M (continued)

EXAMPLE OF WORKSHEET LEVEL 2: CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS – FURTHER 3 CASES

CASE 4: TRAJECTORY - FROM INDIVIDUAL WORKSHEET	COMMENTS ON CASE 4	REF	REF	CASE 5: TRAJECTORY - FROM INDIVIDUAL WORKSHEET	COMMENTS ON CASE 5	REF	REF	CASE 6: TRAJECTORY - FROM INDIVIDUAL WORKSHEET	COMMENTS ON CASE 6	REF	REF
Fishing for the Future Workgroup - we make decisions together. About 8 to 10 people. Different internal departments - technologists, buyers, product development, marketing. Decisions such as a new policy or new packaging or statements/messaging.	COLLECTIVE AGENCY - looking for consensus on the best way forward - its an action group - we think differently - it's a balanced view. Includes some key partners such as WWF-SASSI and MSC.	5	and 6	Consultations with suppliers - we identified that the tuna was both orange and green listed species. We worked on better understanding our risk - and investigating the positive role that Woolworths could play to address those risks	Same sector - working with suppliers - supply chain Agency - actions taken - consult- identify - understand - investigate	1	3	MSC - Woolworths marketing campaign - joint funding = MOBILISING CAPITAL		1	8
Trout farmers - talking led to planning - a work plan - how to address those things - what needs to be done - we went away and did it.	COLLECTIVE AGENCY	1	9	The traceability study done with suppliers - to the cannery, the producer, the fisheries (more than one) and to the vessel. Its complex. We wanted to UNDERSTAND. It was about 52 vessels.	No details - but other interviews indicate that WWF was involved and also ISSF. So this was a same sector and cross-sector exercise	1	5 and 6	The purpose of what we do is to get fishing practices changed in the water -		1	3
It was about getting opinions - and finding solutions around the table - that's how they achieved it	COLLECTIVE AGENCY	1	10	Explains how ISSF and MSC are different and how tuna is migratory and does not fit MSC definitions. ISSF was formed by a group of canneries getting together to work on the sustainability of tuna. ISSF (as an NGO formed in 2009) was therefore an important aspect of making this work - hence shown in Value Potential.	ISSF as an essential partner in this project. ISSF works with the species and by region (whereas MSC works with defined fisheries) - so its not the same as a FIP (per MSC). This is therefore about MOBILISING RESOURCES	1	7	Its about SCALE - linking the fishery and the retailer. But South Africa is not a very big market - not a lot of labeled products - Germany is quite substantial	SCALE - discussion switches between MSC Globally and MSC in South Africa - so BOTH are discussed together	1	4
SCALE - we did some research - we put the SEAFOOD POLICY in place - and in 2013 it was replaced with the SEAFOOD COMMITMENTS (more specific time bound improvement targets)	Also OBJECTIFICATION Woolworths worked with WWF to do this - the formal partnership with WWF.	1	1	The improvement plan - We have done A FORMAL WORK PLAN - it aligns with the 15 resolutions of ISSF. There are measures, timelines and action points for the suppliers - to drive the strategy.	The work plan is for the supply chain. But it aligns with the ISSF resolutions - it was done in consultation with ISSF and other NPOs. It was a cross-sector effort - and COLLECTIVE AGENCY - now ACTIVELY PROGRESSING towards achieving full compliance with these measures designed to improve responsible practices for tuna fishing	1	8	EMOTIONAL ENERGY - we were excited about it -	Note this is MSC response - for Woolworths response - they were also "excited"	1	8
VARIOUS EXAMPLES: Internally - product development, buyers, food technologists - getting buy-in - the Workgroup Trout farmers - getting them together - CONVENING - the Chairman played a role in that Woolworths VALUES - sustainability as a value - it adds weight to it - you can use that as BACKING and LEVERAGE	MOBILISING RESOURCES	1	7 and 10	It's everyone in the supply chain - not just the guy catching the fish - it's the cannery - the importer and the retailer selling the fish	DUE DILIGENCE - its about MOBILISING RESOURCES - the "right" or responsible resources	1	9	Getting that BUY-IN from a retailer is very important - they were putting money into it	MOBILISING RESOURCES - financial and other - BUY-IN	1	8
We have people form the OUTSIDE DRIVING THIS AS WELL - I can use that as LEVERAGE AS WELL. This is an interesting dynamic. So the formal partnership with WWF requires public commitments - so cross-sector with NGO becomes an extended cross-sector including CONSUMERS	LEVERAGE as movement - trajectory	1	12	We discovered that our cannery took it for granted - (responsible fishing) - I trust you because you have done business for decades Today its about DUE DILIGENCE - you can just say I trust you	STRATEGY - to do the RIGHT thing - act RESPONSIBLY	1	9	MESSAGING - the ecolabel says the product is from SUSTAINABLE SOURCES	CHECKING THE MESSAGING - THAT ITS FACTUALLY CORRECT - AND IN LINE WITH WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE WITH OUT JOINT MARKETING STRATEGY	1	9
We've always been at the forefront of INNOVATION - MARKET LEADING - We look at the customer and the environment - and also animal welfare The natural step for us was to do - and its newer and more complex - sustainable seafood - its a cultural thing	LEVERAGE as movement - DRIVING - movement / trajectory. This is cross-sector - nit just NGOs but since the public commitments - it's the customers and consumers as well	1	12	They (the importer) are driving it. I am driving to get the RIGHT thing done. Defining it - giving timelines - that is the STRATEGY	NOTE: First interview was still before the plan had been fully approved and finalised - it was prepared but not yet agreed at the detailed level. See changes by the time of the second interview	1	10	ABLE to offer sustainable products and ensure its TRACEABLE - THEY ARE MOVING IN THAT DIRECTION TRACEABILITY IS A VERY COMPLEX PROCESS - ITS COMPLICATED - TRICKY - with MSC its all done for them - it takes all the admin out. It's probably why we have such a good relationship with them Woolworths are leading in terms of the variety of labeled product	SUSTAINABILITY AND TRACEABILITY LEADER - that is where they have positioned themselves with the South African consumer -	1	10
We started the whole thing before the consumers were bothered with sustainable seafood - that must come from the inside - its our culture	NOTE: This is the company, rather than the XSP itself. This is POTENTIAL for the company and also for the XSP - its developing the STRATEGY for Woolworths - the INTEREST ON SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD	2	3	We need to break it down - make it more UNDERSTANDABLE. Also deal with LANGUAGE issues - they don't all speak English	COLLECTIVE AGENCY - ACTIVE PARTICIPATION - rather than pushing down to the guy catching the fish	1	10	To have a sustainable business you need a sustainable supply of what you're selling. MSC is essentially a marketing tool - it adopts best practice - to enable preferential procurement. It is a single standard	What sustainability means in a business. Business needs a sustainable supply of product and a market	1	7
WWF-SASSI - have an alternative view that none of the retailers were interested initially. Its about different views and TIMING of priorities	WE do not want to push the responsibility back to the vessel only - then no-one is taking responsibility - there needs to be ACTIVE PARTICIPATION - we /they need to keep up with new research - regular meetings with ISSF - we'll meet to see that the work plan is up to speed - so we'll have conference calls	2	4	BLT we do not want to push the responsibility back to the vessel only - then no-one is taking responsibility - there needs to be ACTIVE PARTICIPATION - we /they need to keep up with new research - regular meetings with ISSF - we'll meet to see that the work plan is up to speed - so we'll have conference calls	Its a COMMITMENT TO ACTION - to CHANGE PRACTICES - as specified by the ISSF. They are independently tracked by observers.	1	13	Future direction - 1. connecting with CSI initiatives of commercial interests such as mining 2. small scale fishers - lack of cohesion - they need to implement improvements - you need buy-in from that sector - as a whole - but there is also social issues - and the need for job creation. 3. Tourism opportunities - more at a regional level No formal partnerships in place - nothing legally binding - but we have a CLOSE WORKING RELATIONSHIP with most of the companies that promote MSC product	NOTE - fisheries improvements projects are beyond MSC - which sets the standard - but does not actually get involved in the specifics	1	12
TIMING OF WORK TO BE DONE - we've done a lot already - but there's an exponential amount of work to be done by 2015 - and then 2017 is the next one	SEAFOOD COMMITMENTS - PROGRESS TOWARDS DELIVERY - announced in 2013 - targets for 2015 - then 2017 for wild caught and 2020 for aquaculture	2	4	The proactive vessel register - VOLUNTARY COMMITMENT at a vessel level to responsible practices as defined by ISSF	It works because of the collaboration Example: visit by the category manager to the cannery to talk about the strategy - commercial impact on availability and prices - and technical compliance and sustainability	1	14	AGENCY - but not really collective agency		2	and 13
The DRIVE TOWARDS AQUACULTURE - still reliance on wild caught (for the feed and breeding stock)	More cross-sector - more with Government needed. Also potential for Enterprise Development initiatives - in aquaculture	2	4 and 5	We are working TOWARDS this for 2015 - its our 3rd seafood commitment	AGENCY - but this is the actions of the retailer in terms of their intentions. It needs to be "translated" into collective action	1	16 and 17	Also by pushing MSC - we actively go out - we are then also supporting those partners. So there is also agency here. It's all about PUSHING CERTIFIED PRODUCT		2	12

## APPENDIX N

### EXAMPLE OF WORKSHEET LEVEL3: TOPIC SUMMARY

#### Example: Trajectory – 2 dimensions - Coorientation and Mobilising Resources

##### Key quotes: Coorientation

ID:	Ref:	Key words	Summary of point made (Detailed quotes to follow)
ED	1:20 1:22	Common interest	We have the same goal ; I trust the motives of SASSI - trying to do the best for every single fish - I'm trying to do the same - everything we do is in common; a common interest with us
ED	1:13	interest	An interest in research on stock populations
ED	2:16 2:17	similarities	We have a common goal - a lot of similarities and synergies
NC	1:5 1:6	Consensus together	Fishing for the Future workgroup - looking for consensus on the best way forward Make decisions together
DL	1:9 1:10	relevance	Raising the relevance; building relevance
DL	1:6	Aligning together	What is done together - alignment of messaging - aligned with the marketing risk - aligned objectives; trying to find those; maximise opportunities What is done together Messaging is aligned
DL	1:4 1:5 1:8	intersects	Finding the intersects; as you progress you start to see more and more intersects; the points that cross - and so it moves forward; It needs to be relevant
DL	2:4	The why	To be very clear on why we are working with those people
DL	2:12	Joint priority	We find areas of joint priority
DL	2:14	relevant	To remain relevant to stakeholders
KC	1:12	Common understanding	A common understanding;
KC	2:9 2:10	Something that we share	Moving towards something that we share - that they are contributing Vision is tailored for each network partner
KC	1:6	align	Chefs align with SASSI
ND	1:2	Get together	We need to get together
ND	1:11	aligns	Aligns with ISSF
ND	1:12	aligned	Collaboration with Woolworths - very aligned with their sustainable sourcing and improvement objectives
UN	2:9	Worked together	So Woolworths and WWF worked on a goodwill basis - worked together
UN	1:8	together	We wrote the charter together
NB	1:13 1:14	Work together	We work together and collaborate in terms of the messaging (internal)
KT	1:11	Working together	Working together with partners such as WWF
KT	1:5	Working together	Technologists and buyers working together with suppliers
HT	1:13	Working together	Working together to find an auditor
NB	2:22	Work together	As we work together we get to know each other more

##### Key quotes: Mobilising resources

ID:	Ref:	Key words	Summary of point made (Detailed quotes to follow)
KT	2:6	capacity	Credible third party with key experience and skills - adding massive internal capacity
KT	2:7	Financial	Financial capital for the partnership
KT	2:7	Social cap	Selling it at different levels in the organisation over time
UN	1:8	Social People values	Getting the right people involved - people with the right values <b>Note:</b> if it's about relationships and people then it is labelled as "social capital" - but there may also be symbolic and cultural elements
UN	2:9	Social cap goodwill	WWF and Woolworths worked on a goodwill basis - they talked - they worked together - WWF educated us (no contract; no funding) - they supported and advised
ND	1:5	Social cap relationships	Using existing relationships - connecting ISSF and Woolworths through WWF

ND	1:11	Social cap Reaching out	Reaching out to WWF Europe - they are more on the train now
ND	2: 10 2:15	Social cap relationships	Using leverage from other relationships
HT	1:24	Social cap Persuade	Getting the traders on board; we had to persuade these guys
HT	1:7; 9;11;12	Product market	If we don't have a product we don't have a business; if we don't have a market we don't have a business
HT	1:13	Sustainable sources	Challenge of sourcing fish meal that is from sustainable sources - it was a lot of work <b>Note:</b> Cultural capital - sustainable sources could be argued as a cultural representation?
HT	1: 10; 13	Standards	Progressing ASC standards for Lesotho trout farm - it's about auditors and standards <b>Note:</b> Cultural - the standards of best practice
HT	1:20	Profitable	Staying profitable is always a challenge
DL	1:9 1:10	Social Buy-in Relationships connections	Bringing in the ISSF. Getting the necessary expertise (cultural capital) Build understanding - getting buy-in at the right level - suggests some leverage? Working with existing relationships with MSC - developing the ISSF connection
DL	1:6	Leverage consumers	Leverage consumer awareness
DL	2:3	Leverage	Working with retailers and suppliers with most leverage - creates a vacuum
DL	2:10 2:11	engagement	Initial engagement with retailers - needed a tool - the assessment tool Needed to be relevant
KC	1:9 1:10	leverage	Internationally consumer outreach to leverage the retailers
KC	1:4	consumers	Mobilise consumers - consumers provide the motivation for retailers to make changes
KC	1:2	capacity	Limited capacity - so we work collaboratively
KC	1:4	Economic market	Motivated to change procurement practices - using market forces
NN	1:8	funding	Joint funding
NN	1:8	Buy-in Money	Buy-in from retailer is important They were putting money into it
NN	2:16	standards	Dragging them up (to a higher standard)- fisheries improvement
TL	2:11 2:12	skills	Identify the experts and different skills you need
NC	1:7	Buy-in	Getting buy-in internally from product development, buyers, food technologists
NC	1:10	convening	Getting the trout farmers together - convening
NC	1:12	leverage	It adds weight - you can use that as backing - as leverage
HD	1:7	partner	ISSF as an essential partner
HD	1:9	Everyone	Its everyone in the supply chain Including the cannery who took it (responsible fishing) for granted
HD	2:4	partnered	Partnered with the importer
KD	2:6 2:7	Funding cultural	Funding of enterprise development Also about education ; or technical collaboration (cultural capital)
KD	2:12	performance	Performance targets at team level
KD	2:13	Pulled in	If a person is not ready, they automatically get pulled in
ED	1:6	involved	We want to get the industry involved
ED	2:8	linked	FACTS is linked to an academic institution
ED	2:10 2:12	network	I use my network at the University It gives us credibility
NB	1:1 1:2 1:3	Driving shouting	I shout at the top of my voice they started driving from the top and owning GBJ
NB	1:7 1:8	Resources	We pulled together all our resources
NB	2:6	appeal	To create more appeal - to capitalise on younger audience - and the older female audience
NB	2:8	resources	They are putting resources into it - people and money (the denim campaign)
NB	2:18 2:19	I need them	I need to get their commitment; I need to whip them into gear
NB	2:22 2:23	I need you	Crack the whip - I need to get you to deliver
ML	1:8 1:9	Funding capacity	Funding options Woolworths offers technical and capacity building

## APPENDIX O

### UNIQUE NARRATIVES

These narratives are referenced to the research worksheets, so that a reference to KC 1:10 is the participant code KC, interview 1, page 10.

#### 1. NPO pioneers

From the fieldwork interviews, two of the NPO narratives stood out as different. In the first narrative, from WWF-SASSI, the model of engagement in the supply chain for sustainable seafood is presented as being unique at a global level within the WWF network internationally. In the second narrative, the model of engagement used for market outreach at ISSF is an indirect approach and this also differs from the more dominant outreach model applied internationally by both WWF and MSC, two of the most prominent NPO organisations in the sustainable seafood industry.

##### 1.1 WWF-SASSI model of engagement

The dominant model of change in the supply chain of food commodities is described in Chapter 2 at Paragraph 2.4 and concerns the market dynamics. This is described by participant KC (1:10) as the *“the martini glass theory of change”* in which *“WWF internationally has always believed that your biggest bang for your buck would come by intervening with suppliers just because there are fewer suppliers and you’ll have a greater impact”*. This model is based on the experience from the developed markets in North America and Europe where there is already consumer demand for ethically traded or responsibly sourced products from well-informed, sophisticated consumers. In these markets, engagement with consumers is described as consumer outreach and it is the retailers, rather than the consumers that are the leverage point of the change model.

In South Africa, the conventional model was considered at the outset when WWF-SA founded its sustainable seafood programme in 2004 and initially the retailers were approached. However, at that time, KC (1:10) explained that *“none of them said they wanted to get involved – they said our consumers are not demanding more sustainable products – so why would we do the hard work of changing our practices when there’s going to be no payoff at the end of the day”*.

And so, in South Africa, a different approach was adopted that targeted consumers first. KC (1:9) described the approach as *“a bit of an anomaly within the network”* and explained that *“no other office engages consumers the way that we do here in South Africa”*.

By targeting consumers, the retailers are now *“motivated to change because consumers are asking for more sustainable products”*. However, KC (1:10) noted that *“this isn’t how the network operates”* and engaging with consumers is a unique approach at a global level that is attributed to the developing world context. In the absence of pre-existing consumer demand in South Africa,

consumers needed to become more informed and more knowledgeable about sustainable seafood.

According to another participant (DL 1:2 and 2:3), the strategic targeting of consumers with the messaging of sustainable seafood made use of a simple tool to communicate the issues. This was the so-called traffic-light system of listing fish species as red, orange, or green. The tool itself is not unique and is used in other countries but it was one of the ways that WWF-SA worked with consumers to give WWF-SASSI “**a mandate to work with retailers**”. It provided the necessary momentum and created the incentive for retailers to play a role so that they now consider that sustainable seafood is relevant to them and they are willing to engage and become “**more proactive in dealing with the risk they are exposed to in their seafood supply chains**”.

WWF-SASSI developed their approach over a ten-year period, in which they created a multi-faceted programme for sustainable seafood that is described as “**a conservation programme that’s taking on a marketing and communications role**”. According to KC (1:10), the approach “**evolved organically**” through “**trial and error**” and it is now “**recognised within the network as being different and working and now there are other developing world WWFs – like in Mexico and Fiji – that want to start up a consumer programme as well**”. KC (2:4) explained that WWF-SA now has a “**very very clear strategy in place and our objective is around mobilising consumers – it’s a very specific component of consumers**”.

From being an isolated case that did not fit the conventional international model, KC (2:7) explained that it is ironical that now “**SASSI is seen in our CEO’s words as the jewel in the crown of WWF**” and yet it remains a paradox and its success “**doesn’t feature in our balanced scorecard**”.

The WWF-SASSI model is unique globally and demonstrates that approaches may differ from the dominant thinking and still be successful; they can also work well in contexts that do not share the same market dynamics. It is a model that adopts an indirect or oblique approach so that in order to engage with retailers, WWF-SASSI identified that they needed to engage first with consumers. To achieve the intended objective, they had to find an alternative “**pathway**”<sup>1</sup>. DL described it as a “**mandate to work with retailers**” (DL 2:11), so it is not a point of leverage as exists with the dominant model, but rather an alternative approach. It is also a collaborative approach involving multiple sectors including NGOs, business, consumers and the research community.

## 1.2 ISSF model of engagement

ISSF was founded in 2009 as a global conservation partnership. It is a relatively new organisation with a very small full-time staff of only six or seven people, who all reside in different cities and

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<sup>1</sup> The word pathway was used by participant DL to describe the dynamics of the market model and hence it is noted in inverted commas.

operate very independently without a home-office base (ND 2:7). They adopt communication and advocacy mechanisms to leverage their limited resources.

ND (2:3) described the three main pillars of the work of the ISSF as applied science, the compliance of participating companies to conservation commitments and exercising policy and market influence. To support this third pillar, a market or retail outreach programme has been developed with the objective of engaging **“with the buyers so that they can be informed and empowered to contribute to the improvement of tuna sustainability – to make responsible choices and - to exercise their market influence to engage with their supply chain to improve tuna stocks”** (ND 1:3).

ND (2:14) described how this operates by targeting existing relationships between large retailers and other environmental organisations or conservation NGOs or a supplier who is already an ISSF participating company. ND (2:24) called this approach **“collaborative engagement”** and said that ISSF works **“as a specialist in support of organisations”** such as the WWF **“for key clients – on key issues”**. ND offered Woolworths as an example where the introduction to ISSF **“came through WWF which was their environmental partner”** (ND 1:5).

ND (1:6) explained that this is not only about leveraging existing relationships, but it is about building relationships first with the gatekeeper organisation. ND said **“there is collaboration with the environmental organisations and building relationships there and within those organisations”** so that **“internal networking is important”** (ND 2:16 and 2:17). It is important first to **“earn the credibility and the confidence of that NGO partner”** (ND 2:13).

At the first instance the support provided by ISSF is to the NGO in order to gain access through the NGO to the buyer or retailer with whom he ultimately seeks to engage. ISSF provides very specific support; it is a specialist area on a single species that focuses on science-based practices aimed at tuna fishery improvement. ND emphasised that it not a consulting role and that they provide support on specific issues and the support needs to be practical so that it is relevant and applied (ND 2:23 and 24).

There are multiple parties involved, including the retailer or buyer organisation and their supplier as well as the environmental NGO supported by ISSF as a specialist NGO. It is also an indirect or oblique approach. The role of ISSF is to support other organisations and to build a relationship first within the organisation that has the existing relationship with the retailer or buyer organisation, before engaging at a very specific, specialised and practical level with the buyer or retailer.

This multi-party, indirect approach is focused on engagement and advocacy; it is collaborative and relies on building strong relationships coordinated by a very small core group. Credibility and confidence is established in the specialist role of ISSF that is based on science-based practices.

The approach appears to be somewhat unusual in a business context where transactions tend towards dyadic exchanges even for specialist services and where an organisation also tends to be

associated with a specific place or office location. In this case, communication is a central principle of the ISSF strategy, which is directed at engagement and advocacy. But it does this without a conventional organisation structure. While there is no evidence that this model is unique, it does have some interesting characteristics that appear to be worthy of attention and it is a collaborative model that is working effectively in a highly complex space.

## 2. Business pioneers

There are two business organisations included in the research study. One is a retailer and the other is a producer of a range of sustainable seafood products and is also involved in fish farming. Both describe some pioneering activities in the sustainable seafood supply chain where collaboration is used effectively to achieve innovation in the supply chain for sustainable seafood.

### 2.1 Woolworths tuna supply chain

The story of the tuna supply chain at Woolworths is highlighted by several of the participants and is described as “complex” (HD 1:6 and 1:9). DL (2:10) described the engagement as ‘technical’ and explained how various different organisations were involved. This includes the international NGOs such as MSC, ISSF and WWF International (HD 1:4) as well as the local partner, WWF-SA. According to HD (2:7), it also involved a collaboration with “**retailers and brands globally and through the supply chain**”

HD explained that Woolworths has developed a work plan in collaboration with the various stakeholders in the tuna supply chain in order to be able to trace the source of the tuna directly to the vessel that caught the fish. The “**plan is not to just say we’re going to target specific vessels and only work with them because they practice sustainability – we want to actually drive change – we want those guys that have not been on this journey to join us – that’s where the improvement comes in**”. The improvement comes from drawing new fishing vessels into the network and getting them to make commitments to responsible fishing practices.

However, HD (1: 11) made the point that the Woolworths work plan requires “**active participation rather than pushing down responsibility to the poor guy that catches the fish**”. It is a “**risk mitigation tool**” so that Woolworths is “**making sure that the process is followed end to end and it’s airtight**”. HD (1:15) explained that this means that Woolworths will “**support advocacy to drive change**” and the work plan “**will be tracked and ticked off with every consignment of tuna**”.

Referring to the supplier in South East Asia, DL (1:11) explained that “**it was through this direct engagement – that raised the relevance of them being an ISSF member - which forced them to formulate for the first time a strategy and a work plan to ensure that they comply with the resolutions required to remain a member - something they hadn’t implemented before and didn’t have available before**”. This is confirmation that the interactions with Woolworths initiated a process of action and implementation of practices in the supply chain for tuna in another part of the world.

DL described the collaboration as **“a very real victory for this partnership”** and **“one of the stand out achievements”**. **“It was incredible and now through our work ... we can influence the way tuna is fished half a world away and so that to me was proof that the strategy could work beyond South Africa”** (DL 1:11 and 1:12).

ND (1:12) explained that Woolworths is **“using those tools as conservation measures and the proactive vessel register as a way of engaging with their supply chain”**. ND (2:10 and 2:11) described the collaboration as **“a real success story”** and says that **“the DNA of Woolworths is also a big part of making it work”** and they have **“engaged and developed partnerships and built relationships to improve things over time based on rigorous step-wise improvement and application of responsible practices and procurement requirements”**.

What is of particular note is that, according to HD (2:15), **“ISSF has stated we’re one of the few retailers that have actually gone to this kind of detail when it comes to tuna”**. Further, that **“there is an opportunity to include other retailers which are not in South Africa – globally for example in Canada – to join this journey because they use the same supplier that we use”**. Woolworths has therefore attracted the attention of a very large Canadian retailer that uses the same canner. HD (2: 16) commented that they will **“see how we together as two retailers out of different parts of the world can actually influence the one cannery which we’re working with to drive change all the way down to the vessel level”**.

In addition, HD (2:19) reported that the **“work plan has been approved by our partner WWF-SASSI as a credible improvement project”** so that **“canned tuna is so far on track - in line with our seafood commitments”** by meeting the required standard of an independent assessment by WWF.

The narrative of the Woolworths tuna supply chain is highlighted for a variety of reasons. It is reported by three of the participants as a successful multi-dimensional collaboration involving a complex supply chain for sustainable seafood. It adopts an approach to fisheries improvement that tracks and traces the supply chain for tuna to the vessel that caught the fish and this is being facilitated by the retailer, rather than an independent certification agency. In order to achieve this, Woolworths has established a process of active participation to monitor the supply chain; and the process has been approved by the WWF as a credible improvement plan. Based on these accounts, it would appear that this initiative is not only innovative but it is unique at a global level. It is the story of a South African retailer, that adopts a partnership approach, both locally and internationally, and in doing so, they have been able to influence fishing practices across the world. It is a multi-sector collaboration involving business, NGOs, scientists and researchers.

## **2.2 The producer who pioneered a new market**

One of the research participants is a businessman who has pioneered fish farming in South Africa and applies sustainable farming practices. It has been a lifelong endeavour. Explaining the production of trout, HT (2:14) said it has taken over 20 years and now **“we’re using close to 1000**

**tons in our factory alone where in our first year of processing in 1992 or something [it] was 7 tons in a year – so that's dramatic growth”.**

It is not the growth alone that is noteworthy, but rather that in applying best practice and **“building a product of uncompromising quality”** (HT: 2:13), he also follows a philosophy that by farming fish **“in a responsible manner it helps with sustainability of seafood – you're taking pressure off the resource”** (HT 1:4). The business strategy of combining sustainability and quality offers a competitive advantage and HT (1:4) said that **“it certainly has set us apart from the competition [and] you wouldn't be able to deal with Woolworths if you didn't have these things”.**

With this background, he has played a leading role in a number of innovations in the South African market for sustainable seafood and these have been achieved through collaborative activities that he has facilitated. HT said he has **“always had the philosophy of building a solid foundation and not looking at short-term success or profit”** and says that the company has **“played a leading role in the whole supply chain”.** There are three specific initiatives that HT highlighted as successful collaborations. The first two projects are pioneering for South Africa and were achieved within the past 3 years but are ongoing; the third aims to be a first in Africa and is still in progress.

In South Africa, the trout farmed in the Western Cape is green listed by WWF-SASSI and assessed as being from sustainable sources. NC (1:10) said that the Chairman of the trout farmers association played a key role and HT (2:9) acknowledged that his business was instrumental in the drive to achieve this recognition. The other South African initiative was to obtain MSC accreditation for the supply of imported sustainable seafood products. HT (2:8) explained that **“all the major trading houses now have got MSC chain of custody so they can sell the MSC product through into the market place”.** He said that **“we played a major role in that – [the] facilitation and collaboration to do that”** and acknowledges that **“the collaboration that we've had with somebody like Woolworths has been instrumental”** from a retail perspective.

While standards for local trout have been assessed to meet WWF-SASSI sustainability requirements, the next goal is to meet international aquaculture standards. The current project aims to be the first ASC (Aquaculture Stewardship Council) certified trout farm in Africa and the business is already working towards this goal.

This story is multi-faceted and involves multiple collaborations and different sectors. It is pioneering in South Africa but also compares favourably with global initiatives. In the aquaculture industry, Scotland is acknowledged as world leaders in marine farming (HT 2:10) but HT commented that when he visited Scotland he found that **“they've got nothing nearly as comprehensive”** in relation to the documentation on traceability, audits and environmental issues compared to the business in South Africa.

### 3. Research pioneers

There are two participants who work in a research environment; the one at a University and the other in a government department. Both have pioneered new scientific research that supports seafood sustainability. In one case, the work done by South African researchers has potential relevance internationally; in the other case, the research is specific to South African fish species, but is the first of its kind in South Africa, using DNA methods that are similar to those applied elsewhere.

#### 3.1 Line fishery database

There is a database of research information on one of the main fisheries in South Africa, namely the line fishery. TL (1:7) explained that the South African Department of Fisheries is “**housing what is now the - worldwide biggest referenced fisheries database in the world**”. It has “**27 years of data for the line fishery**” at a very detailed level of daily records for over 400 boats and covering 50 different species. TL said that “**we’re sitting on one of the best datasets in the world**”.

The dataset itself is only valuable if it is analysed and used and TL gave an account of a very successful research study in a marine protected area. TL described the project as a long-term collaboration with colleagues from various Universities and with the fisherman. It was successful both at a practical level for the fisherman and from an academic level but TL said it was also very relevant at an individual level for his work as a government scientist. TL (1:15) described it as “**unusual and valuable**”.

The research used the data provided by the fishers themselves to demonstrate to the local fisherman that by putting “the right management in place [it] helps you to fish sustainably. It proved that “**when the marine protected area was implemented – very soon the catch rates around this area started to come up and double and stay at a very high level**” (TL 1:14). TL (2:14) concluded that “**most of the other countries - they won’t be able to show that because they don’t have that kind of data**”.

Academically, TL said that the research was published internationally in a high ranked scientific journal and explains that “**based on those data – we’ve developed a method where we can track abundance of individual species in a multi-species fishery**” (TL 2:14). Further, the new method has been adopted “**for worldwide application now – and so international stock assessment gurus have taken up that method**”.

TL believed that “**we are very much under-valued in South Africa as a fisheries science community or marine science community – I think we are up there with the best**” (TL 2:13). However, with limited resources TL said they “**have to be more creative – it’s actually good for us - or good research – good knowledge generation happens on the fringes – it never happens in the centre**”. TL concluded that sometimes it helps because “**you can get other ideas and become creative in a different way**” and think of things that have not been done elsewhere.

This is a story of research work in South Africa that is relevant internationally; it deals directly with the issue of management practices aimed at sustainable fish stocks and it is a collaboration of multiple parties, from the research community and from the fishing community, therefore it is also a cross-sector collaboration involving government, universities and producers.

### 3.2 DNA database for fish species

The second research pioneer created the first DNA database of South African fish species. While the original aim of the study was to create “**a method to detect fish cross-contamination in the industry**” (ED 1:2), it became a larger and more far reaching project that today supports an expanding area of research and various business applications where DNA testing is used to ensure species authenticity.

The database identifies “**all the main fish species on the market**” and the original research used the database to assess the degree to which fish species were mislabelled in the South African marketplace and therefore the degree of misinformation provided to consumers. The findings were that “**31% of fish species were mislabelled in retail outlets**”. According to ED, elsewhere in the world the figures are between 20% and 30%. ED (1:4) said that a follow up study has now been done three years later and the latest result “**has shown quite a nice improvement**” (ED 1:6)<sup>2</sup>.

The impact of seafood mislabelling is significant and according to ED, it is directly related to the sustainability of fish stocks. ED explained that when fish is incorrectly labelled consumers are unaware that they may be buying an endangered or overexploited species or fish that has been illegally caught. This is “**undermining the efforts of the sustainable seafood initiatives**” (ED 2:3).

Authenticity testing using the DNA database provides assurance of the integrity of the product and provides fairness and transparency in the market. The process involves various parties including the retailers or other businesses that send their product for testing and the scientists that do the testing. WWF-SASSI is also now involved in pursuing the research on mislabelling and ED explained they have worked “**quite intensively on making a protocol that we can repeat every three years**” (ED 1:4). The work therefore involves cross-sector collaboration.

The development of the DNA database is pioneering work as it was ahead of other studies in Europe. The research on fish has led to further work on fish species such as origin testing and also work in other areas such as red meat (ED 2:6). While some of this work may be specific to South Africa, this is a very topical area of research globally.

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<sup>2</sup> The latest study was published in 2015 and showed that the misrepresentation rates in retail outlets had dropped to 19% (Cawthorn, Duncan, Kastern, Francis, & Hoffman, 2015).

## APPENDIX P

### AUDIT TRAIL: EXAMPLE OF RESEARCH JOURNAL

#### RESEARCH JOURNAL 17 MAY 2014

##### Influence – what is this concept?

Posted on May 17, 2014

So I have thought about: measurable outcome – value – impact – and discussed that in a separate post.

And then there is influence – what is that and where does it fit this picture?

Influence is indicative of a relationship – I influence you or I am influenced by you. It is not the same as cause and effect – its more indirect than that – there is no guarantee that the other will act accordingly.

Does influence only work with people or can a thing influence another thing? In the complexity space maybe that is possible – I don't know if influence would be the right word – perhaps with 'things' – even in the complexity space – one would talk about an indirect impact.

I think influence is about people – where there is an indirect impact of one person on another. Again so many concepts here. Influence and impact.

Impact needs to be defined – can you claim impact only if the behaviour of another person changes or is there impact even if you change their thinking? Is change a necessary aspect of measuring impact? Can you measure impact? Impact is a word used a lot in the sustainability space. It's used a lot in my interviews. I need to define it in an academic way. And how are impact and change related – and influence and change?

So assuming that impact is change related – behaviour or thinking or feeling – short-term or long-term – all of these.

Then influence may also be change related – behaviour or thinking or feeling – short-term or long-term – all of these.

I need to find some academic work that defines these things in a way that would relate to my research subject or to individual or organisational behaviour.

Then here is a proposition – influence is what happens in the relationship and interaction between 2 people – and the impact is felt by the person being influenced.

So if value is a measure of benefit to a particular individual or organisation – the influence is in the interaction – and influence leads to impact – it's an indirect process leading to an indirect outcome.

So we have: I guess this could be called a conceptual model

- Specific defined action – direct measurable outcome – example profit
- Synergy arising from the relationship – the idea of more than the sum of the parts
- Leading to added-value or value – which goes beyond the measurable outcome and depends on the
- expectations or needs or context of the individual or organisation that are interacting with each other
- Then there is influence – which is indirect
- Leading to impact – which is also specific to the context, the individual, the organisation and what they value, what matters to them.

There are loads of concepts here – and I would need to find these in existing theory or derived from the evidence in my research field texts – I cannot just make it up! It's not about my ideas so much as it is about the evidence from my research.

It goes from the interaction being direct to indirect and it goes from actions being defined and measurable to non-specific and context dependant. There is also a time dimension from immediate to long-term and /or indeterminate timescale. From quantitative to more qualitative.

I need to define 'value' and 'add-value' and 'impact' and 'influence'

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This entry was posted in Insights, Interpretation and tagged add-value, impact, influence, value. Bookmark the permalink.

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## APPENDIX Q

### AUDIT TRAIL: EXAMPLE OF INTERVIEW NOTES

#### REFLECTION ON INTERVIEW 24 JANUARY 2014

##### Preparation and General

I prepared all my materials the day before and was organised with recharging the recorder and iPad. I also did a bit of preparation by watching the Carte Blanche programme on the allocation of fishing rights just in case it was mentioned. I also read a report issued on 22 Jan on small scale fisheries (i.e. hot off the press) and the fisheries improvement programme.

I left Hout Bay early so was over in *location* with lots of time to spare and was at the offices early. Again the lady at reception was very friendly and there were some more publications that I could read and take a copy including the 2013 review report.

##### Interview Notes:

PAT came to reception and welcomed me with a lovely smile. We chatted a bit as we walked along the corridor – the long corridor to the other end of the building where the meeting rooms are. PAT asked if I would like tea or coffee but I said I had some water with me - I said something about feeling guilty that I had bottled water with me – and PAT said we can't all do the right things all the time and that 7/10 was still good.

We got to the meeting room and although the room at the end (room 1) had been booked there was someone working there so we went to the room next door. PAT then commented that PAT was going to put the aircon on as it was very hot outside so not good to have the window open – I said that was fine and my recorder would be fine with the background noise.

We only spent a couple of minutes settling into the interview and I asked if there was anything PAT wanted to ask before we got started and PAT said no.

PAT was a very easy person to talk to and there was a good rapport between us throughout. I also focused hard on not interrupting and limiting my extra questions and interjections. I did focus on ensuring that any interjections were about clarifying or extending the discussion – and this proved very useful. I did divert at only one point but this resulted in a very interesting extension of the discussion. When PAT spoke about Foodbloggers I asked about the impact of Masterchef (since it was a foodblogger than won Masterchef SA last year) – it was very interesting how this developed into a more indepth discussion on social media and this was an important perspective.

I also realize how my own questions and prompts clearly impact the flow and content of the interview. I was very aware of this at the beginning of the interview. I asked the first question and PAT answered this with a very nice story but the answer was fairly short. PAT paused and came to the end of the story – I thought about leaving it at that point – and then it just seemed appropriate to reflect back using PAT last words – about the story going back a long time – and it was very interesting that PAT picked up on that thought and PAT then progressed it further. I was quite delighted but also amazed as I had not expected that the remark (basically a repetition of PAT own words) – would result in PAT expanding and developing a new line of the story – it was great and I look forward to hearing the story again when doing the transcript. A good lesson in interview technique. I have tried it and used it before – but since I was so conscious of not interjecting with my own comments or adding an opinion, this was a deliberate reflection using PAT words – and I think it was a much more powerful way to generate a further aspect of PAT story. I think it brings a richness and depth to the story as it added a further dimension.

I was also more aware of emphasizing 2 issues in the phrasing of the questions. After reflecting on the listening to and doing the transcripts of the last 3 interviews, I thought that I could improve the focus of the questions. In question 1 I introduced the words “your story” – so rather than just asking “tell me about ....” – I phrased it instead “please tell me your story about how you .....” This was great and emphasized the narrative nature of the question.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> question I emphasised that in exploring relationships I was interested in the collaborative relationships – working together with other people and other organisations – and I emphasized the interest in what was working well.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> question I also focused on collaboration – asking directly about a project that involved a collaboration.

This focus on the wording of the questions did improve the interaction and perhaps reverted to how I had originally prepared the questions to connect directly with the research questions. I think I may have missed making that connection explicit in a couple of the recent interviews and so this was a good redirect.

I would also mentioned that after 20 minutes we got interrupted by someone who had booked the room – I had to switch off the recorder and we sorted out the double booking situation before continuing. It was a little disconcerting but I did double check that I had the recordings on again after we restarted. What I discovered was that I had 2 separate recordings of the session – 1 before and 1 after the break – so I am not sure how you pause a recording – but in any case stopping and starting a new one worked fine and did the job.

Time wise I finished promptly after an hour. We chatted a bit about academic research as we walked back to reception. I then asked about the follow up interview and PAT volunteered that it would be best if we met soon before PAT schedule started to get really busy so I have the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview scheduled already for early February – which is great. PAT also said that it had been a lot of fun. Yeah – some positive reinforcement for me!

### **Research notes and some initial research insights:**

#### Strong connections between personal and organisational perspectives

Although the first question set the scene and initiated the conversation at a personal level – the question about relationships generated a very structured business perspective on the key relationships. However, in the conversation it was clear that the business relationships were very dependent on personal interactions and personal commitment to the purpose and goals of *organisation*. The juxtaposition and intermingling of personal and organisational “identities” is very interesting – it appears to have different intensities – but again it was evident in this interview.

#### Building relationships – spending time with people

It seems obvious and sounds simple – but this is a recurring message. Perhaps from a business perspective we might say “invest in time with other people” – whatever the words this is a recurring reply to the question of what is needed to make the relationship work.

I think it also goes beyond that and other factors are also relevant –see further notes below. And perhaps you can have the other factors in place – but if you don’t invest the time – then you cannot build the relationship.

#### Work with people who are already committed or ready to commit

These words were not used today – but the stories included how in the initial years of *organisation*, the retailers – none of them – were prepared to commit – none of them was motivated to take action – they all asked “why should we do this?” Related to this was the comment about the chefs and PAT said they worked with those chefs that were inspired to do something and support sustainability – rather than trying to convince those that were not willing.

#### Be inspiring – rather than convey the negative message

This positive approach is part of the *organisation* approach – to inspire change rather than try to instil change through fear and negative consequences or the “big stick” – an appreciative approach (my words)

#### Obliquity (my word)

The explanation of how the conventional approach in the supply chain was to try and leverage the retailer (refer to the cocktail glass theory diagram) – after trying that approach, *organisation* took a different approach and worked at communicating with consumers and once consumers started demanding products and set new expectations of the retailers – then the retailers saw the value in committing resources to work on the sustainable seafood agenda. PAT suggested that this worked in South Africa as a developing country – I wonder if it was more of a timing issue – it was the right time and place and context – both locally and internationally. It’s difficult to say and there is no clear answer but PAT is currently doing research and a paper on how the process worked through consumer expectations and why this was different to the conventional market wisdom.

#### Work with what you have – with who you have

This is my thought linking back to complexity theory (David Snowden) – work with relevant interventions – amplify what works and discard what doesn’t work.

PAT talked about working with the chefs that already supported sustainability – rather than those that were not motivated; PAT commented on working with consumers, when the retailers were not motivated; PAT talked about working with people and organisations that had influence and a passion for *organisation* and its objectives.

#### Approach is different for different people

There is not a one-size fits all approach. PAT talked about how engaging with different stakeholders required different strategies – so working with network partners was different from chefs and restaurants; working with the restaurant chains was different from working with individual restaurants and waiters; working with the “target market” was different from working with the broader community.

#### Know your consumer – the Target Audience

PAT placed a lot of emphasis on the knowledge needed and the research done to get to know the target audience of consumers and the wider community – having good information meant being very specific about the message being conveyed – to whom – where, when and how.

#### It’s interconnected

Having started with the retailers and not gained support; *organisation* then progressed the message with consumers and this did generate a change in expectations; this then in turn came back to the retailers who then understood there was a reason for them to take action. The market expectations took time to change and derived from a wide range of different initiatives.

I wonder whether I can conclude that this is indicative of the complexity and interconnectedness of the different stakeholders or the different players?

#### Question on language

Are there more suitable words than stakeholders and players – words that would reflect the complex interactions between many people – rather than pursuing the metaphors of competitive games and governance.

What other words or metaphors could be used to convey a different message? What about “fellow citizens” (more political) or what about the journey metaphor or the metaphor of water or the sea?

We always collaborate – the only way we work is to collaborate

A very different view from corporate business – if it’s worth doing we do it ourselves – we need to protect our competitive position – its confidential – etc. etc.

PAT started off with the general observation that everything that *organisation* does is about collaboration. They could not achieve the outcomes they do without collaboration.

Importance of social media

Some interesting input on how social media is growing as a means of communication and generating consumer feedback and conversation – creating 2-way conversation.

Also how this impacts on retailer reputation – in how they respond and how they interact with the social media such as Twitter. It is now being used as a key aspect of communication with consumers and how this then provides evidence to retailers as to market sentiment and consumer expectations.

I can connect this strong positioning with the mention of social media in another interview.

Other general matters:

PAT agreed to meet again in 2 weeks’ time for the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview as PAT said things were still relatively quiet. A 2<sup>nd</sup> interview is already arranged for 6 February.

**NOTE:** For anonymity PAT is the participant and the word *organisation* is substituted for the actual name.

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## APPENDIX R

### AUDIT TRAIL: MAPPING THE FINDINGS TO THE DISCUSSION

Numbers refer to the discussion topics in the summary at the end of Chapter 6 at Table 6.13

#### TRAJECTORY:

COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICES: TRAJECTORY					
Direction and collective agency	Use of business language: strategy, business case, targets	Change and Improvement; collective agency	Directional movement and process: driving, working towards Use of language	Collective agency – multi-dimensional nature. It works at different levels, degrees of action and areas of responsibility operate at the same time	0
Marshalling consent	Securing willing participation	Use of business language: getting buy-in	Multiple processes: A combination of voluntary and obligatory commitment plus the use of persuasion	Voluntary mechanisms	6
Mobilising resources	Economic capital Supply chain dynamism funding and certified product – product needs to be credible	Cultural capital Partners skills and expertise need to be credible	Social capital Planned and unplanned contractual and reciprocity and persuasion (leverage)	Use of business language: investing in relationships; mutual benefit	4

#### VALUE POTENTIAL:

COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICES: INCREASING VALUE POTENTIAL					
Increasing meaningful participation	Open and transparent communication at different levels	Different ways of interacting A process of engagement Finding the intersects Indirect approaches	Including diverse interests Coming together in a cohesive way	Making it and keeping it relevant Different levels – from the broader issue to something specific	Investing in and cultivating relationships – introducing intangible and emotional elements Degrees of action – interacting; deliberation and active participation
Managing opposing and converging forces of identity and interests	Remain open – avoid early closure Persistence Context matters – there is no one size fits all	Willing to explore alternatives and being receptive to new ideas Different approaches – from experimenting and design to innovation	Being adaptable Awareness – thinking differently Learning Letting go	Risk management Avoidance of a problem or an incentive to engage and do the right thing Risk mitigation is a control mechanism and a positive approach to managing negative consequences	Managing rather than resolving tensions – Other areas of tension: relational issues and market dynamics
Creating a distinct and stable identity	Name - a distinct collective identity for the partnership <b>NO EVIDENCE OF A SEPARATE IDENTITY</b>	Coherent narrative – constructed collaboratively <b>NARRATIVES ABOUT SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD BUT NOT ABOUT A SEPARATE PARTNERSHIP ENTITY</b>	Organisational values- similar, the same or common but not shared <b>Credibility and traceability</b> – essential requirements when working with third parties in the supply chain for sustainable products	Collective roles – in relation to the issue of sustainable seafood	Emotional elements – how individuals identify with the collaborative activities

#### NOTES ON SYMBOLS:



Triangle denotes use of business language



Zero indicates discussion under topic of MsCsC

Topics 1 to 10 refer to the discussion in Chapter 8



Red square means not in the findings - Included in discussion on identification

**VALUE DELIVERY:**

COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICES: ASSESSING VALUE DELIVERY					
<b>External Influence</b> [Influence means to appropriate, replicate or reproduce]	Influence on public perceptions A process of public communication Action orientation Public reporting as evidence	Influence on stakeholders <b>Persuasion</b> – advocacy, leading by example, successes create standards or a benchmark for others to copy <b>Scaleable solutions</b> – creating a pathway for others to follow	<b>Market influence</b> – a model of change reaching multiple stakeholders and the wider public at the same time <b>Multiple ways for influence to create positive outcomes</b> (a) Different levels from awareness to changing behaviour (b) Different sectors and (c) different geographies	<b>Making a difference</b> Different levels of influence – big and small – personal and industry practices – local and global	
<b>Accountability</b>	Reporting to stakeholders <b>Measurement, reporting and management work together and at different levels</b> – specific partner organisations and a broader constituency; measuring organisational and collaborative activities <b>Together these processes create an action orientation towards change at a practice level</b>	Evidence to support claims of value delivery <b>Independent validation and verification</b> – <b>At different levels</b> - adds credibility at specific organisational level, within the supply chain and for wider public constituencies	<b>Different factors involved</b> - Quantitative and qualitative – tangible and intangible – a time factor – specific targets and broader milestones <b>Indicators and attributes</b>	<b>Accountability as an action oriented activity</b> – leading to changes in practice or to learning	
<b>Higher order effects</b> Effects may be direct and immediate; longer term; and also indirect. Effect does not necessarily indicate cause and effect.	Learning that extends into the community <b>Learning as an alternative to a planned strategy</b> <b>Learning happens through collaboration</b> <b>Being practical</b> is a prerequisite to action <b>Learning takes time</b> and is ongoing	Changes in practices and perceptions Change may be <b>planned or it may evolve</b> – indicating adaption <b>Change happens when learning is applied</b> <b>Learning must be relevant</b> if it is to be applied <b>Learning and adaption are interconnected, mediated by innovation</b> <b>Active management is required</b> - tools and resources are needed a clear message	Other effects: • New partnerships • New norms and discourse • Reducing conflict <b>New opportunities as a higher order effect</b>	<b>Awareness and understanding</b> Making informed choices and informed decisions	<b>Impact</b> – and effect that goes beyond the immediate stakeholders to a wider community – may involve qualitative factors as well as quantitative – to effect change at a broader scale <b>Impact may be positive or negative</b> – amplify the positive; mitigate the negative
<p>NOTE: Learning as an outcome =10 Learning as an ongoing process = 4</p>					

**CCO CONCEPTS:**

CCO CONCEPTS				
<b>Coorientation</b>	Common interest <b>Different levels</b> <b>Specific</b> – intersects – areas of common priority - aligned objectives – common goal – similarities and synergies <b>Broader</b> – common understanding – sense of shared vision – similar ideals – common objective for the partnership	<b>Relevance as an indicator of interest</b>		
<b>Scale and objectification</b>	Scaling up – zooming out; zooming in <b>Language</b> – leverage - filter and filter down – trickle down, expand, broaden and extend	Levels of abstraction Give it a name Recognition and publication	<b>Influence as appropriation</b>	<b>Theory of change:</b> using market dynamics to apply leverage and influence
<b>Nonhuman actors and agency</b>	Materiality <b>Objects with agency</b> <b>Texts or narratives with agency</b>	Representation		

## APPENDIX S

### COMPARING THE PROPOSITIONS

The table below compares the dimensions and the propositions in the existing framework of XSP value with the new framework adapted and extended for an MsCsC as an issue field.

#### Comparing the existing framework to the new framework

	Topic	Existing framework of XSP value (XSP is conceived as an authoritative text or AT)	New framework for value creation in MsCsC (an MsCsC is conceived as hypertext)
<b>CONTEXT: THE NATURE OF MsCsC – HYPERTEXT METAPHOR</b>			
			<p>The MsCsC context is characterised by a fusion of multiple dimensions at different levels. Successful collaboration is <b>positively associated with</b> stakeholders who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>engage with the sustainability issues at multiple levels and in multiple dimensions, and</li> <li>engage in multiple relationships, in different ways, using multiple mechanisms</li> </ul> <p>to collectively build the credibility and the narrative of the sustainability issue.</p>
<b>IDENTIFICATION AS A KEY CONCEPTS IN A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL VIEW</b>			
	Introducing identification as a complementary construct		<p>In an MsCsC context, the following communicative practices are <b>positively associated with</b> value creation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>when stakeholders are cooriented towards the sustainability issue, they identify with the narrative of the sustainability issue;</li> <li>they develop a shared appreciation of the issue and willingly engage in negotiation with other stakeholders; so that</li> <li>collectively, they continue to create and build the narrative together, through their ongoing conversations, interactions and communications.</li> </ul>
	Identity of the authoritative text	<p><b>Creating a distinct and stable identity</b></p> <p>3a: A process of naming that aligns with an XSP's mission increases the distinctiveness and stability of its identity, thereby increasing the potential of an XSP's AT for collective agency and capacity to create value.</p> <p>3b: A coherent narrative increases the distinctiveness and stability of an XSP's identity, thereby increasing the potential of an XSP's AT for collective agency and capacity to create value.</p>	
<b>TRAJECTORY: COLLECTIVE AGENCY – MOVING TOWARDS A COMMON INTEREST – AMPLIFYING SCALE</b>			
1	Coorientation, common interests and intersects		<p>Multiple stakeholders are <b>positively associated with</b> successful collaboration when they have both generalised and particularised ties so that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>they have a shared appreciation of the issue and have a common long-term strategic interest and commitment to the issue; and</li> <li>within the context of the common interest in the issue, specific partners negotiate interdependencies or strategic intersects where they agree to work together on specific activities.</li> </ul>

**Comparing the existing framework to the new framework (continued)**

1	Coorientation , common interests and intersects (continued)		Taken together, generalised ties and particularised ties are <b><u>positively associated with</u></b> a willingness to put energy and resources into the ongoing conversations and collaborative activities so that strategic intersects are pursued collectively and this <b>increases the capacity for value creation</b> .
2	Material and textual agency		Multiple human, material and textual agents are <b><u>positively associated with</u></b> extending the scale of collaborative activities from locally situated actions to a more systemic level that includes partners, stakeholders and a wider constituency and a greater capacity for value creation.
3	Forms of capital: Economic, cultural and social capitals		Evidence of a deliberate and ongoing cycle of activity, whose trajectory is directed towards an ongoing engagement and participation in conversational exchanges (at multiple levels in the public domain, between partners and within partner organisations) that are cooriented towards the sustainability issue, <b>is <u>positively associated with</u></b> a commitment to making an active contribution to the sustainability issue arising from these interactions and this then <b>increases the capacity</b> for value creation.
4	A recursive, self-organising process: Generalised and particularised ties		In an MsCsC context, the engagement of stakeholders in multiple, ongoing conversational interactions for the benefit of the sustainability issue, and the negotiation of specific areas of intersection or interdependency where they agree to work together, is <b><u>positively associated with</u></b> successful collaboration.
	A recursive, self-organising process: Credibility and legitimacy		In an MsCsC context, successful collaboration is <b><u>positively associated with</u></b> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• different forms of authority to support claims of legitimacy and credibility;</li> <li>• multiple mechanisms including hierarchical, market and negotiated arrangements; and</li> <li>• multiple factors with legitimacy including the legitimacy of resources, the authenticity of the product, trust and transparency in relationships and the credibility of accounts of value delivery.</li> </ul>
	A recursive, self-organising process: Learning and adapting		In an MsCsC context, successful collaboration is <b><u>positively associated with</u></b> an ongoing process of learning and adapting so that learning is applied and stakeholders remain adaptable and open to new ideas, alternative ways of thinking and different perspectives.
<b>DYNAMIC CYCLE OF VALUE CREATION: MAKING THE PROCESS WORK</b>			
5	Building relationships - investing in and cultivating relationships	<b>Increasing meaningful participation:</b> 1: Increasing members' meaningful participation in authoring an XSP's AT enhances its potential for collective agency and its capacity to create value	The degree of involvement of each stakeholder in working together with others is <b><u>positively associated with</u></b> the emotional energy that they have towards the sustainability issue at a general level and the strategic goals and objectives at a particular level, on the basis that the emotional energy is a driver of action.
			The degree of involvement is <b><u>positively associated with</u></b> value creation so the more active the relationship and the more energy devoted to building and investing in relationships, then the more value can be created.
6	Legitimacy, authority and credibility		See above under recursive, self-organising process
7	Managing tensions	<b>Managing opposing and converging forces:</b> 2a: Decreasing opposition to premature closure in XSP conversations will increase an AT's potential for collective agency and its capacity to create value.	

**Comparing the existing framework to the new framework (continued)**

7	Managing tensions (continued)	<p>2b: Increasing the flexibility of members' interests and identities will increase an AT's potential for collective agency and its capacity to create value.</p> <p>2c: Increasing the intertextual receptivity of an XSP's AT will increase its potential for collective agency and its capacity to create value.</p>	
<b>ARTICULATING VALUE DELIVERY: EVIDENCE THAT THE PROCESS WORKS</b>			
8	Accountability	<p><b>Accounts of capital transformation:</b></p> <p>5a: An XSP will be more likely to be assessed as valuable to the extent its AT influences justifications for its existence to members, home organisations, or external constituents.</p>	<p>Evidence that is credible and transparent and independently verified and accounts that are communicated, not only to the partners and stakeholders but also to a broader public audience, are <b>positively associated with</b> an appreciation of value delivery.</p> <p>Open and transparent communication over time, using multiple indicators to establish credibility are <b>positively associated with</b> an appreciation of value delivery.</p>
9	Indicators of influence	<p><b>External intertextual influence:</b></p> <p>4a: An XSP will be more likely to be assessed as valuable to the extent its AT influences public perceptions of relevant issues.</p> <p>4b: An XSP will be more likely to be assessed as valuable to the extent that its AT influences the ATs of member organisations and other external constituents.</p>	<p>Successful MsCsC actively assess and communicate credible evidence that other persons and organisations have been influenced and this includes indicators of changes in the awareness and understanding of the sustainability issue and changes in behaviours towards the issue.</p> <p>Successful MsCsC actively assess and communicate credible evidence that change has been experienced by the sustainability issue itself.</p>
10	Indicators of impact	<p>5b: An XSP will be more likely to be assessed as valuable to the extent that its AT influences accounts of higher-order effects.</p>	<p>Successful MsCsC actively assess and communicate credible evidence that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• learning has been applied;</li> <li>• stakeholders have adapted over time; and</li> <li>• change and transformation related to the sustainability issue have been experienced by a broader constituency.</li> </ul>
			<p>Credible and compelling stories and narratives that communicate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the experiences of different stakeholders and how their lives have changed, and</li> <li>• the complexity and interconnectedness of change at multiple levels, the contextual factors, the worldviews of different stakeholders and the timescales involved</li> </ul> <p>are <b>positively associated with</b> an appreciation of value delivery.</p>

Source: Author's compilation.

## APPENDIX T

### ASSESSMENT OF ETHICAL ISSUES

The following issues arose during the course of the research. Each of these situations was carefully considered and appropriately addressed without impact on the research process.

#### **Item 1: Wording of the informed consent form - anonymity**

Situation: The informed consent form followed approved wording and was cleared with the research supervisor before proceeding. It was only identified after completion of the fieldwork, during the ongoing literature review, that the wording incorrectly used the term confidentiality, rather than anonymity. A separate confidentiality undertaking was signed in respect to sensitive strategic information of the company and this was clearly a separate issue. The undertaking to the participants was intended to ensure that no personal information would be used or disclosed that would identify them. Anonymity is described but the wording in the consent form is ambiguous.

Conclusion: No further action was taken on this issue, other than to consider it carefully, ensure that the intended controls were applied, and to disclose the matter as an ethical consideration.

#### **Item 2: Wording of informed consent form – permission to use quotations**

Situation: The informed consent advised participants that “direct quotes from your interviews may be used to support research conclusions” and participants were made aware that the purpose of the interview was to use the interview material. However, in a late amendment to the wording, a phrase was added advising participants that “where this is required, you will be advised of this in advance and asked to provide a clearance”. The change to the informed consent forms was done in good faith based on the understanding that participants should be kept informed and that a form of member checking was an appropriate quality control. On reflection, there are practical and ethical considerations rising from this undertaking.

Risk assessment: The risk of making such an undertaking is that some of the interview data may not be usable in the final dissertation. The worst case scenario for the research data is the case of a participant withholding their consent. The two priorities here were to ensure the quality of the research and to uphold the undertaking made to participants.

Conclusion: The quotations for each participant were extracted from the findings chapter and summarised. Each participant was contacted and sent an email asking them to review the quotations and to confirm that the material could be included in the final dissertation. They were given eight weeks to respond, after which time their approval was assumed. The process was completed with positive confirmation received from eight of the fourteen participants; two with a confirmation of receipt; and four whose acknowledgement was assumed after the elapsed period. One participant raised some questions and asked for some information regarding the context in which the quotations were used and after a meeting to address these questions, consent was given. The process of obtaining consent was fulfilled without any change to the findings.

**Item 3: A small community**

Situation: Each of the participants works quite closely with each other. Many of the participants spoke about who they worked with and they named other participants during the interviews. Anonymity and confidentiality were the issues that needed to be properly managed.

Conclusion: Although this was quite challenging at times, confidentiality and anonymity were upheld throughout the fieldwork process. A participant code was allocated to each person and was used throughout all documentation related to the interview transcripts, in the analysis and in the dissertation. The names of other people in the transcripts were blanked out. .

**Item 4: LinkedIn connections**

Included in the final dissertation is a declaration that the researcher maintained independence throughout the process and this was achieved. However, this required a confirmation that there was no prior or current relationship with any of the research participants. It is appropriate to declare here that in order to establish contact with some participants to arrange interviews, the researcher did connect with three of the participants on LinkedIn. This was strictly professional and in the public domain and the contact was limited to an invitation to connect and view profiles. There was no other correspondence with these individuals other than to conduct the research interviews and therefore no impact on the research study.

## **APPENDIX U**

### **RESEARCHER NOTES**

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#### **<sup>1</sup> RESEARCHER NOTE 3.1: STRUCTURING THE LITERATURE REVIEW**

In structuring the literature review, it makes sense to me to consider context, both situational and temporal. To make sense of the present and consider possibilities for the future, it is useful to know something about the past. This is about framing the research ideas so that the connections between concepts may be better understood within temporal and spatial circumstances.

The idea of contextual conditions is contained in the conceptualisation of experience by John Dewey (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Clandinin argued that experience is a multi-dimensional construct of situation, continuity and interaction. All experience has a temporal dimension; it is connected to the past; it has a history. All experience has a current situational context in spatial terms, its location and place. All experience is about interaction; it is transactional and continuous at the personal, social and material levels (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007).

Based on this conceptualisation of experience, I find it useful to explore the historical and situational background of a subject in order to understand a concept when I am learning about a new idea or exploring something unfamiliar. In presenting the literature review, I have therefore provided some context by including references to earlier research material. This is then the foundation and context within which the more current thinking and research material could be considered.

#### **<sup>2</sup> RESEARCHER NOTE 3.2: FURTHER NOTES ON THE RELEVANCE OF VARIOUS THEORETICAL APPROACHES**

Institutional theories: As a research study directed at organisation theory for business, with an interest in outcomes relevant to business practice, this research did not explore societal-level theory. However, it is recognised that organisation theory does contain certain underlying assumptions that are debated in sociology, such as structure and agency. The societal level is the backdrop or context within which organisations exist and the macro level of analysis cannot be ignored. Further, some institutional theories that focus on relational aspects such as dialogue may provide insight into collaborative interactions.

The research remains open to theoretical approaches dealing with certain aspects of institutional theory but does not specifically pursue this level of analysis. Ostrom's work is by its nature cross-sectoral and I have given it careful consideration but it has not been specifically applied in this research. Its focus on governance does not align with the research interest.

I read some literature on stakeholder theory, collective action theories, negotiated order theory and a variety of micro-economic theories and network theories in order to gauge how and whether they

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may be used to inform this research and specifically to identify an opportunity to address a theoretical gap. I looked at relational theories such as relational contracting as described by Smith-Ring and Van de Ven (1992) and at supply chain strategies such as Galaskiewicz (1985).

All of these different options provided a useful introduction to the range of theoretical approaches in the collaboration literature.

### **<sup>3</sup> RESEARCHER NOTE 3.3: MAKING SENSE OF THE LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL OPTIONS**

There is an abundance of literature at various levels of analysis from the micro-level decision exchange and transaction theories to organisation theories and macro theories at institutional level and the socio-political level. There are also theories that attempt to operate across levels, but this seems to be less common. In sociology, there is a theoretical divide between the micro level and the macro level. This is the dialectical debate that sets agency against structure and creates the context for many theoretical approaches in organisation theory. It is less common to find an inclusive approach that avoids or reconciles different levels of analysis.

I wanted to explore ways to avoid the dialectical debate between individual and collective but it is difficult to avoid; it is portrayed as if there is only a choice between the one and the other. Perhaps there is research that explores how both the individual and collective co-exist? I think that recognising the possibility that different levels of analysis co-exist reflects an acknowledgement of the complexity of collaboration as a subject matter.

The theories that I did not select for this research are those based on the dominant thinking of micro-economics that focus on individual choice, control and the self-interests of a focal organisation. While not rejecting the importance of these theories in business and to business strategy, my research interest was in a more complex space, a more multi-dimensional space.

With an initial understanding of the variety of theoretical approaches to collaboration as a construct, I was able to focus more specifically on a reduced number of theoretical approaches.

### **<sup>4</sup> RESEARCHER NOTE 3.4: WHY IS SOUTH AFRICA RELEVANT AS A RESEARCH SETTING?**

There are two points that stand out for me from this historical background. The first is that partnerships are presented as an alternative to an adversarial approach.

Second, the literature indicates that there is a range of contextual factors that provide opportunities for cross-sector partnerships to contribute to the sustainability agenda.

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I also noted that in some of the literature on sustainable development (see Bitzer and Glasbergen (2010), there is reference to the North/South divide. I am not sure if this is a European or American construct, whether or indeed how it is actually experienced by people 'in the south'.

What is important therefore is to explore ideas beyond the constraints of context. My interest is in process-related issues and aspects of cross-sector collaboration that have not yet been explored in detail in the current literature and yet may be relevant to other studies or other contexts. This is the theoretical interest that I needed to focus on.

### <sup>5</sup> **RESEARCHER NOTE 3.5: FRAMES**

I gave careful thought to the description of the conceptual frames and considered the terminology of various researchers.

The strategic frame and the institutional frame are named in the literature. Glasbergen (2011) talked about external effects in the third frame; Selsky and Parker (2005) distinguished the social level and the societal level; Kolk *et al.* (2010) talked about the meso level. In my view, none of these descriptions was really helping to distinguish the 'middle' level. Based on the characteristics of this section and to make a clear distinction with the strategic and the institutional level, I chose the label 'collective action'.

### <sup>6</sup> **RESEARCHER NOTE 3.6: CONTEXT MATTERS**

I have understood that there are different levels of analysis from micro to macro and different disciplinary perspectives. As a research study with an interest in complexity theory and how business deal with complex issues, my attention was drawn to interactions and on processes.

The research design is directed by the concept of experience, including the phenomenological definition of lived experience, which combines well with the pragmatic definition from John Dewey where experience is a multi-dimensional concept that includes context, continuity and interaction. This view of experience recognises that for a situation to be described as an experience, it involves both context and interaction; it also has a sense of continuity in time and space.

And so, context is relevant to the research and is included in the design of the fieldwork and in the research writing. The context establishes how the particular experience relates to other local or global situations at a point in time. The context therefore helps to establish the particular and the general and to connect the two and the context facilitates the process of sense making.

### <sup>7</sup> **RESEARCHER NOTE 3.7: META-REVIEWS IN THE LITERATURE**

I made a choice not to categorise the literature in this section according to sector but I did consciously try to find different perspectives. Once the different frames had been explored in more detail, it became clearer that this was an appropriate organising mechanism.

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There is so much on social partnerships, which is primarily an NPO view and there are some excellent and very detailed literature reviews, especially Seitanidi (2010) and Branzei and Le Ber (2014) who covered a 15-year period from 1997 to 2012; also earlier Selsky and Parker (2005).

I wanted a balance with other views as well. From an environmental perspective Wassmer *et al.* (2014) was very comprehensive covering a period from 1989 to 2012; from the public sector there is Bryson *et al.* (2006) who referenced material mainly from the 1990s onwards.

A business perspective was more difficult to find but Senge *et al.* (2007) provided a relevant research perspective. I did not find a specific literature scan on the business literature but the review by Branzei and Le Ber (2014) did include a category of literature from the for-profit sector. Gray and Stites (2013) also distinguished between management journals and public administration and policy journals.

Literature published in South Africa is limited. The South African study on successful cross-sector collaboration included a standard literature review drawing from research in Europe and North America. It is a working paper presented at a workshop but not published. It was however a very detailed research study and quite extensive which is why I chose to include it in the discussion.

#### <sup>8</sup> **RESEARCHER NOTE 3.8: FINDING THE CONNECTIONS**

After being introduced to CCO theory and XSPs in the article by Koschmann *et al.* (2012) and doing extensive reading on CCO theory, it was only much later that I identified a clear connection to the body of literature on XSPs. I had the one connection from Koschmann *et al.* (2012) and I knew that was derived from the work of Kuhn (2008). But for a long time I sat with a body of literature on XSPs and a body of literature on CCO theory with only the single link.

It was only after I had started cross checking the literature reviews and mapping the connections that I identified the existing body of work by Hardy, Phillips and Lawrence going back to 1998. The article that is cited in both literatures is the 2005 AMR article by Hardy *et al.* (2005) and this gave me an important point of connection.

It took time to see how the different bodies of literature were connected. Diagrams and trawling the references was needed to see the bigger picture.

#### <sup>9</sup> **RESEARCHER NOTE 4.1: AN ITERATIVE PROCESS OF ALIGNMENT**

Although the research questions are stated in Chapter 1, as if they were defined in detail at the beginning of the study, the reality of the research process was that the questions were originally very broadly stated. At a practical level, directed by the King III principles, I was interested in understanding how to make collaboration 'work well' and how to learn from people who were already successful at doing that.

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From a theoretical perspective, the questions were refined during the course of the research design. More specifically, at the point where the interview questions were finalised in the fieldwork design, clarity was needed at a detailed level before entering the field. It was at this stage, that the research questions were made more specific and adjustments were made to ensure that the research process was aligned with questions of a theoretical interest. The questions and design therefore evolved with a growing understanding of the literature, an awareness of potential gaps in the literature and greater clarity on different research methods and methodological assumptions.

The research questions evolved in several steps. The appreciative stance, the ontology and epistemology and the multiple dimensions were evident in the research interest from an early stage. However, the subject matter and the research methods were not clear at the outset. A key decision on the subject was to narrow the focus to direct attention towards cross-sector collaborations that supported sustainability, which was a subject highlighted in the King III report. It was also directed by an interest in exploring a subject that aligned with the ontology of complexity. Given the centrality of interactions as a characteristic of complex systems (Cilliers, 1998), it was the relationships and interactions of collaborative interactions that became my focus of interest.

The research choice with regards to research method was made in conjunction with the process of narrowing the research subject. One of the first research methods that was explored was appreciative inquiry and this was incorporated into the initial research proposal. This initial idea proved quite difficult to translate into a workable research design, primarily due to issues of accessibility. It did however direct attention towards qualitative inquiry. Before embarking on this course of action, a lengthy investigation into the literature on research methods was required so that an appropriate approach was adopted and could be confidently explained in relation to the research questions and applied at a practical level.

The choice of narrative inquiry took many months of consideration and it was a lengthy and rather circuitous process of considering the research subject, the research questions and the research methods until an alignment emerged. It was particularly difficult to identify a research method that would align with the ontology of complexity. In hindsight it seems obvious but I tried to assess the choices systematically. The research method had to meet certain criteria derived from the ontology and epistemology. This was primarily about achieving balance between different research requirements and these are:

- i) accommodating multiple perspectives;
- ii) balancing the need to conduct a detailed analysis without losing sight of the big picture, the context and the 'wholeness' of the fieldwork as a collectivity of empirical material;
- iii) avoiding the fragmentation of empirical material that was designed to explore connections;

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- iv) in the spirit of social constructionism, a method that allowed the participants some freedom of choice in how they explored their experiences;
  - v) managing practical issues such as accessibility which precluded a longitudinal study or an action research approach or approaches involving lengthy periods of observation in the field; and
  - vi) adopting a research design that could be confidently explained and managed in terms of the validity and quality of the method and research outcomes.

In making important design choices, one of the objectives was to align the research method with the research subject. So, the concepts of interaction, lived experience and intersubjectivity were not only the subject of the research but they also became evident in the research process itself.

After considering a range of research methods from action research to phenomenology, from grounded theory to case study, the choice of design was finally brought together by the very practical necessity of articulating the interview questions. What were the interview questions that I, as the researcher, was actually going to ask? Asking about the experiences of the people I was to interview made sense, and I came to understand that theoretically this was quite different from asking about opinions or perceptions or strategies.

It was only after considerable thought and assessment of different options that a final research design came together as a coherent process. It was an ongoing learning process that required an understanding of how to align research methods and research questions.

#### <sup>10</sup> **RESEARCHER NOTE 4.2: WHY QUALITATIVE RESEARCH?**

I did not embark on the research with any intention of using qualitative methods. Indeed, I was not even aware that there was such a category of research, and I certainly had no knowledge of the huge debates and discussion in the academic world.

My first introduction to qualitative methods occurred in 2009 and 2010 when I embarked upon my Masters in Futures Studies. Methods used in this field may be quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods, but I was not aware of these distinctions at the time. In preparing for the PhD programme, I had selected a subject area, sustainability and responsible leadership and was reading about research methods. Then around April 2011, I remember sitting in the office of the professor who was then head of the PhD programme and I asked him whether I could use conversation as a research method. I was very interested in the idea of using Appreciative Inquiry at the time. He did not answer my question but he referred me to the expert, a professor from Pretoria. I then contacted this professor and he very kindly agreed to meet with me. I spent almost a whole day with him as he very generously gave me a personal lesson in qualitative research. It was overwhelming but it was the start of a huge process of learning.

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By the time I attended the doctoral training in September 2011, I knew that I would use a qualitative approach. But I still knew very little and my research question, while more directed was still very broad.

It did not take me long to realise that Appreciative Inquiry (AI), and indeed action research methods in general, while very suitable for research in practice, was not an easy approach to adopt for a PhD. I began to look for other alternatives. Through many twists and turns, I considered grounded theory; I explored phenomenology, and did a great deal of reading on case study methods, which are commonly used in business studies.

Throughout I retained an interest in social constructionist approaches (which would align with AI) but I found other methods that could be used in this context. At the end of the day, I selected a method that is associated with case study approaches; which is narrative inquiry. The choice of narrative inquiry brought me to the choices of interviewing approach and I explored postmodern interviewing methods (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003; Bjerke, 2007) and various texts on interviewing before finding a most helpful book on interviewing by Ruthellen Josselson, which I then used to guide my research design. I bought the book at the international qualitative research conference in Illinois and Professor Josselson personally signed my copy.

And so my choices remained within the context of social constructionism and the fieldwork was guided by narrative inquiry using interviews as the primary research tool. Things then came full circle as I explored designs for the analysis and interpretation phase of the work. Initially I had intended to use a narrative analysis, perhaps using thematic analysis along with exploring ante-narratives (Boje, 2001). However, my attention was drawn to the IPA (interpretative phenomenological analysis) method (Smith & Osborn, 2008) which aligned well with narrative material and social constructionism, since IPA is also derived from phenomenology and hermeneutics. This later led to the choice of a communicative lens for the IPA analysis. In hindsight this appears planned but it was more like synchronicity. I was attracted to the CCO approach because it was connected with the subject of cross-sector partnerships but the choice as the theoretical lens was almost inevitable when I found that CCO is founded on conversation. It was not planned, but my starting point now came full circle. I have not used conversation as a method but conversation is the basis of the theoretical lens used in the research analysis. It seemed very apt, but it also aligned well with all my other research choices and it connected my research subject with a theoretical perspective that was not commonly used.

This has been a process of learning. I did not choose the destination, nor did I plan the path in advance. I came across qualitative research early in the journey and have stayed the course so that I am now fully committed to qualitative work as a path to new ways of exploring research subjects in business.

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A qualitative approach fitted with the questions I wanted to explore. And indeed I later found a book that expressed the exact question I wanted to ask. It was a book by Robert Stake entitled “Qualitative Research. Studying How Things Work” (Stake, 2010). It confirmed that I was on the right track, that I had been making the right choices for the right reasons and my research question, however broadly stated, was valid. It also confirmed that using qualitative research was inevitable and the appropriate choice given the question I had posed. There is a circularity here that makes total sense to me.

### **<sup>11</sup> RESEARCHER NOTE 4.3: EXPLORING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

Learning about qualitative research involves a great deal of work and is ongoing. As a research option it requires some knowledge of the history and foundations of qualitative research in the social sciences, and developing some knowledge of philosophical ideas beyond modern scientific thinking. It also requires an understanding of the variety of qualitative methods that may be applied and how these are related to various ontological and epistemological assumptions that may be traced to their philosophical roots.

There is no agreement on how to categorise the different points of view or whether they should be labelled paradigms, discourses or perspectives. There are many labels and different perspectives. Different disciplinary perspectives add further complexity within the social sciences so that research in sociology may be isolated from research in psychology or anthropology or social psychology and at all times there are ongoing critical arguments and philosophical debates. There is mention of the linguistic turn or the discursive turn as new perspectives have been introduced. Research is said to have postmodern tendencies and different research paradigms are argued and debated. Tools such as interviewing are used in many ways according to the aims of the research and may range from very structured usage to very unstructured and open conversations. Validation and quality control are discussed at length. It is all a veritable minefield of academic debate.

And within the midst all these different ideas is the area of organisation theory and business studies. And it is further complicated by the different historical development of academic disciplines in Europe and North America.

There is so much diversity and choices are plentiful. The connections are not always clearly explained in the literature and sometimes research does not specify its underlying assumptions and assumes a general qualitative mantle.

I have enjoyed the challenge of learning and continue to do so. In May 2013, I attended the ninth International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana. I met people working on projects that were far more adventurous than mine, such as visual, performative and participatory methods. I listened to the keynote speakers such as Laurel

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Richardson and Norman Denzin and I met people such as Yvonna Lincoln and Ruthellen Josselson. I found myself in good company and it gave me confidence and direction. It was a huge step for me and my research study and I continued to network throughout the research process.

Another highlight for me was attending and presenting a developmental paper at the International Cross-Sector Partnerships Symposium (CSSI) in Boston, USA in May 2014. Two years later I presented again at the following CSSI conference in Toronto, Canada in April 2016.

I have also attended and presented at conferences in South Africa including the Business of Social and Environmental Innovation (BSEI) conference at the Graduate School of Business, Cape Town. in October 2014 and the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Responsible Leadership at the University of Pretoria in November 2014.

## **<sup>12</sup> RESEARCHER NOTE 4.4: UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF THEORY**

In order to determine the role of theory in the detailed design of the analysis and interpretation phase, a more specific understanding of theory development and how theory would inform the outcomes of the research was required. This understanding was refined over time and the research design really only came together as I started the analysis process. It took me over two years to really get to grips with how theory and method worked together and what would work best for this research.

Narrative was a good choice for the data collection and the fieldwork design and I explored that for the analysis side to generate a conceptual model but I could not get to grips with the methods of analysis and what a thematic analysis actually entailed. I had some interesting guidance from books by Clandinin and from Riessman, but I did not get a good feel for what thematic analysis involved. I tried using Adele Clarke's visual models and situational models but did not really make the connection between the interview data and the modelling process. Case study was a strong option but I had some challenges here including how to define the case and I was concerned about criticisms of having a single case. This turned out to be easily counter-argued but I remained aware of the distinction between the research setting, the unit of analysis and the definition of a case in case study research and indeed, the design I chose, still has case study elements.

However there was a key difference in the choice to focus on the lived experience of key individuals and this was formed from the early interest at a practical level to learn from people who already had experience of successful collaborations. A case study would consider multiple sources of data from interviews to reports and documents, both internal and external and also observation. And this is a key point. There was the focus on lived experience and you cannot study that by looking at documents, reports or by observation. And in case study there is also the scope of the case. In this research, there is not one organisation but many; it is not one

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partnership, but many; it is not one project but many. While all of these are connected under the umbrella of sustainable seafood, I found it difficult to incorporate boundaries of a case study into a research design for the purposes of a PhD study. Sustainable seafood is a setting rather than the case.

Given the focus on lived experience, I considered research methods that applied traditional phenomenological methods, but I found those hard to understand with terminology such as essences, bracketing and epoche. I was looking for a method for the design that would produce theoretical outcomes without using grounded theory; something that would align with the ontology of complexity. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) research approach seemed to strike the right chord in that it is a well-established method with reference material I could use and the assumptions aligned with the ontology and epistemology. It worked with the narrative design of the fieldwork data, and there were examples in the literature that gave guidance on how to conduct the analysis, including some worksheet examples. It took me a long time, but I found in IPA, a method that worked with the research subject and context and that followed a rigorous and systematic process to generate theoretical insights.

The issue of the disciplinary lens was a potential stumbling block, but a theoretical lens is quite common and I think being clear about the theoretical lens is actually a positive aspect of the research design that strengthens its theoretical value. Creswell (2013: 63) explained that other methods such as narrative analysis, ethnography and case study each invoke existing theory in different ways, including the option to use a specific theoretical lens to inform the study.

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) as a method requires the selection of a theoretical lens with which to analyse the field texts or data. In its original form, IPA was developed within the discipline of psychology and it is this disciplinary lens that frames the analysis process. However, for the purposes of this research, an alternative theoretical lens needed to align with the research context and the research questions. The choice of a theoretical frame was a further process of learning and so the preliminary ideas that adopted a broad theoretical approach were later refined towards a more specific theory and conceptual framework.

Initially a conceptual framework using the characteristics of complexity was considered. This was rejected to avoid the potential for circular argument where the ontological assumptions would define the theoretical framework and in turn be used to confirm the ontology. Then, several frameworks were designed using the characteristics of collaboration, but these did not yield productive results when tested and were also rejected.

The search for a suitable theoretical framework took time and was a process of ongoing learning. This learning process was supported by the ongoing literature review, which became more directed

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towards identifying underlying theories in the literature on collaboration, rather than the content and findings described in the literature.

Once identified and tested, the theoretical framework selected adopts a communicative approach (specifically CCO) towards understanding cross-sector partnerships. It is a recent conceptual framework based on the extensive literature and theorising on CCO. Using CCO therefore has a strong theoretical foundation, while also allowing for new insights and theoretical ideas to be considered in relation to the specific subject of cross-sector collaboration.

It was interesting to see how subject, method and theory are all related and in choosing a research design I had to make sure that all three worked together. I know now that I could have used a different design, that if I had persevered I could have made a case study work, I could have found a way to use narrative analysis or I could have used situational analysis. But the design that I used was the one that made most sense to me at the time and that connected all the elements together so that I could confidently demonstrate that the research process was rigorous and systematic and met the required quality criteria.

At the end of the day, all the choices were about the quality and rigour of the research process and since I needed to execute the process, I needed to be confident of the design choices. I needed to understand the role of theory in the whole process, not in isolation but as it connects with method and subject and also the nature and implications of the underlying assumptions.

### <sup>13</sup> **RESEARCHER NOTE 4.5: CASE STUDY OR NARRATIVE INQUIRY?**

At the time of selecting the setting, the choice of narrative inquiry had been made and the initial design of the research interviews had been commenced. First drafts of the interview protocols had been prepared.

However, the question over whether the design was a case study was still being considered. One option was to consider exploring two projects, one in each of the two companies identified as exemplars. Under this option, the selected projects would be considered as cases and a comparative analysis could be used for the analysis phase of the research. Another option would be to identify two projects within the same organisation and treat these as comparative cases.

As things developed, neither of these two options worked out as practical considerations intervened. First, only one of the two companies agreed to participate in the research. Second, the project selected at Woolworths proved to be a complex multi-dimensional network involving several partner organisations. It was a rich setting offered considerable scope for a diversity of perspectives around a common issue of sustainable seafood.

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From a practical point of view, the scope of the selected setting was quite broad; the work was time consuming and resource intensive. As I progressed it became evident that the unit of analysis was the experiences of individuals and the IPA actually included a detailed 'cross-case' analysis.

#### <sup>14</sup> **RESEARCHER NOTE 4.6: REFLECTING ON THE THEORETICAL LENS**

The standard disciplinary lens for the IPA method is psychology. However, in this case, the study is in the business and management discipline, rather than in the psychology discipline; and my experience is in business, rather than in psychology. An alternative lens was needed that was suited to this research study; a lens appropriate to the context of business or organisation studies and one that I could learn and apply.

After consideration of other options such as a complexity lens, a research choice was made to adopt a lens based on CCO as a communicative approach that is connected to the existing literature on cross-sector partnerships. The choice is explained in the literature chapter. The CCO approach is a well-founded theoretical approach and there was a wide choice of literature to draw from and learn more about the concepts and constructs.

The design of the IPA method requires careful attention to the role of theory. A distinction is made here from the following uses of theory. Crane *et al.* (2016) explained that there are three ways that theory may be used and these are to test theory, to generate theory or to refine theory. It is the last option that I applied and it had the following two parts:

- i) A theoretical lens - in this case CCO as a communicative lens – as an overall frame for the research. In a standard IPA approach this would be the psychological lens.
- ii) A specific model or framework to facilitate the analysis of the field texts or data. It is used to highlight areas where the field texts indicate areas of similarity and difference from which a new framework may be proposed.

This allowed for a design that aimed to refine existing theory, or conceptual model, based on the analysis.

While I have confidence that IPA was a good choice of method for the analysis and interpretation and there is a good match with the research questions and the underlying epistemological assumptions, I have one concern that I think requires some reflection. Where, in the IPA literature is there support for the choice of adopting a different theoretical lens? Where is the argument to support the substitution of the psychological lens for a communicative lens? And what would be a suitable alternative?

I noted that the theoretical lens was very important when I first encountered IPA. This was identified in an article by Giorgi, explaining a phenomenological method similar to IPA. I am aware that Giorgi and Smith do not always agree (Smith, 2010), and Giorgi adopted a more traditional

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phenomenological approach. In an early article, Giorgi (1975) explained that the interpretation and understanding derived in a phenomenological analysis, is predicated on the perspective adopted by the researcher. Giorgi explained that it is important that this perspective is proclaimed so that the reader, whether or not they agree with the view taken, can relate to the interpretation offered by the researcher.

Further clarity on the use of theory was provided by Smith *et al.* (2009: 48) and by Smith (2004). There is a difference between CCO as the underlying theoretical approach used as the theoretical lens as a substitute for the psychological perspective; and the more specific use of the framework of XSP value as proposed by Koschmann *et al.* (2012). The latter is a pre-existing model or framework, rather than a theory but it is used to direct the analysis so that the analysis is not entirely inductive. At this level the framework acts as an organising mechanism

To clarify, CCO as a communicative approach is used as an interpretive lens in an exploratory study regarding cross-sector collaboration. The specific framework of XSP value proposed by Koschmann *et al.* (2012) is used as a guide to inform and organise the IPA analysis.

#### <sup>15</sup> **RESEARCHER NOTE 4.7: OTHER CHALLENGES WITH IPA**

There were some additional challenges to be addressed with the IPA method. These include:

**Learning experience:** Applying the IPA analysis was a learning experience and I was guided by the IPA literature but also had to apply my own judgment on how to build a coherent process. In many respects I was learning by doing.

**Psychology discipline versus business and management discipline:** A key research choice was the theoretical lens and this has a significant impact on the research design and therefore needed to be carefully considered.

**Terminology:** Terminology is an issue especially with terms from phenomenology such as bracketing and phenomenological reduction. I tried to understand these without claiming to apply them in any detail. This became easier as I continued to read but I cannot profess to being able to explain the terms nor to understand more than the basics of the philosophical background to phenomenology and hermeneutics. I consider my level of understanding to be enough for the needs of the research but I still have much to learn in relation to the philosophical foundations. As I progressed, I learnt more and I actually experienced a process of putting aside prior assumptions as I became very immersed in the analysis. I think that while it is difficult to explain how it happens, and difficult to predict when it happens, I did have the experience of feeling totally connected with the analysis and being able to focus on what was 'in the data' quite separate from my own ideas and opinions. This awareness, which I equate with bracketing, allowed me to report the participant perspectives while consciously ignoring my own ideas and consciously blocking

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thoughts that made connections to my own experiences. My assessment is that the use of the framework facilitated this process and kept the analysis 'on track'.

**Review process:** One of the quality control procedures suggested for IPA is a review of the validity of the analysis process. Smith *et al.* (2009: 184) suggested a review by the supervisor of a study, such as a mini-audit. They recommended a review of at least one of the interview worksheets with annotations, categories and themes.

This quality check was applied but it was not a detailed review. The first four worksheets were submitted to my supervisor for review and comment. This gave me some pointers and adjustments to consider that I continued to apply for the balance of the work. It also highlighted the importance of the conceptual framework to guide the analysis.

#### <sup>16</sup> **RESEARCHER NOTE 4.8: MAKING APPROPRIATE CHOICES FOR THE RESEARCH DESIGN**

This post is a short reflection on the challenges of aligning the various aspects of the design. I was very aware that in making those choices that I needed to be able to draw on the literature for justification. I made choices that were well-founded in the guidance on qualitative methods; that were described in detail and where possible I would draw from several sources. I looked for critical reviews and alternatives before making a final choice.

In the case of IPA, I found that the work of Giorgi (2012) offered a useful alternative from which to consider the work of Smith and colleagues. Some of the issues were very philosophical but it was important to try and grasp what the issues were in order to better understand how IPA could be used, especially since I was not planning to use it in a standard manner.

I was very aware of this as I was writing this section on the design of the analysis and interpretation. Although a narrative thematic analysis would have worked, it seemed to be a very loosely defined process and I wanted something with more structure. I like to visualise the steps and I want to know what to do next; what do I actually do when I sit down with the transcripts.

I decided that IPA was a good choice and a good fit. But getting the details right took a lot of work. I needed to learn a lot about CCO before I could use it and that was also many months work reading the literature and making sense of the concepts.

The specific framework of XSP value is very specific to the subject of cross-sector collaboration. This is more than a lens; it is, as described in the IPA literature, a pre-existing theoretical model or framework. In IPA, a thematic analysis is the main aspect of the analysis phase of work.

One of the reasons for choosing the framework was to provide a structure to follow and specific concepts to work with. The structure was very useful and it helped to organise the themes in the

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transcripts as well as provide a base for discussion on areas of disagreement or alternative ideas. And so it was a good choice in the design.

The process of writing is full of learning. It requires careful consideration in order to present the design logically, while also arguing the choices from the literature, rather than simply saying: I did this or that. So, I find that I constantly check my statements to avoid obvious errors in logic. There will always be alternative ways, but I need to always ensure that whatever position I use is well-founded in the literature.

### <sup>17</sup> **RESEARCHER NOTE 5.1: THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER**

**A balanced approach:** Rather than a neutral position, my goal as the researcher is to take a balanced view. The language of insider and outsider seems to relate to more traditional methods where participants are called informants and attention is given to creating the impression that the researcher acts as an objective observer. I subscribe to the view that in any research, the researcher holds the power and the authority to make research choices that impact the research process and therefore it is not possible to retain an objective stance in qualitative research towards the research subject or research process. Adopting Patton's advice, it seems preferable to consider the researcher's role in relation to a position of neutrality, rather than a position inside or outside the research setting, which is only one aspect of the research process.

The balanced stance does not ignore bias but seeks to declare partial or vested interests. An apparently biased view may become more balanced when the researcher is transparent, discloses potential issues and indicates how these have been considered and addressed. Further, where a particular or partial stance is warranted for the benefit of the research process, then awareness and disclosure facilitates understanding. I would argue that balance is not required at all times and explain this further below.

**Situations where balance is not required:** Where interviews are used as a primary source of research material (or data), it is the participants' experiences that are sought and it is their perspective that needs to be highlighted. However, it should be noted that within the interview design, the focus on the participants' narrative during the interviews may be balanced by the control that I exercise as the researcher in setting up the interview process and protocols. When the fieldwork is viewed in its entirety, this balance is a deliberate choice that I have made. Even the choice of language that I use during the interview conveys whether a participant in the research process is afforded the opportunity to make some choices with regards to their contribution. In contrast, it may be assumed that where the language favours the idea of an informant, that their contribution would be more structured and controlled.

**A neutral position in respect to the research setting:** As is described elsewhere, the research setting for this research was selected by applying certain defined selection criteria and considering

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all companies within a given population as potential candidates. Two possible candidate organisations for the research were identified and either would have been equally appropriate as a research setting, although very different. I had no prior business relationship with the selected organisation nor any prior relationship with any employee or participant. Indeed, in order to secure an introduction to the organisation, the initial contact and request for access was made by a member of faculty on my behalf. As noted in the discussion of ethical issues, my connection with the participants and organisations is limited to the research study. My role in relation to the organisations is therefore neutral.

**A balanced view of the research subject:** Inevitably I have some prior knowledge of the research subject and therefore cannot be neutral in this regard. However, I can be open to new ideas and new insights and remain open to what emerges in the research process. Inevitably, the prior knowledge of the subject matter will direct the literature review, what is and is not included, how it is structured and what is highlighted and how it is interpreted. However, this is balanced by my efforts to read extensively and to continue the literature review throughout the research process. In relation to the research subject, my role may be assessed as being uninformed at the outset but then as the research work progressed I became better informed and more knowledgeable.

Given this context, to present a balanced view requires the disclosure of key research choices with explanations and motivations. So that while my biases cannot be avoided, transparency and disclosure serves to redress the balance.

**A balanced view in the research design and execution:** In relation to the research analysis, there was a bias towards the theoretical position rather than the practical. To redress the balance, the theoretical positions had to be fully supported by the evidence from the fieldwork. Examples and quotations from the research interviews had to be used as evidence to argue the outcomes. In this way, a balance could be achieved between conceptual thinking and knowledge derived from practical or lived experience.

**A balanced view in the interview process:** Josselson (2013: 29) explained that the aim of the interview is to “understand the participants’ experiences as fully as possible”.

In this research, I found it preferable to limit the number of questions, to limit probing or clarifying questions, to focus on listening attentively (without the distraction of writing notes) and to be comfortable with the inevitable pauses that occurred from time to time. I found it interesting to apply these simple (but not always easy) techniques and to experience the impact they had on the interaction. Indeed, it meant that this was not a highly structured interview, and yet it was not a conversation either. It was deliberately designed to allow the participant to talk at length on the subject from their considerable experience.

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As is described in more detail elsewhere, the interview design intentionally gave some discretion to the participants with regards to the interpretation of the interview questions and the freedom to choose the content and level of detail of their responses. A narrative style was adopted purposefully to elicit details of their experiences rather than basic factual information. The aim was to foreground and focus attention on the narratives of the participants. While this was not achieved for all participants or for all questions, a large proportion of the interview responses was in a narrative form and did contain very detailed accounts and storied examples.

Since this freedom was a deliberate aspect of the design, inevitably it did not work as expected in all cases. There was at least one occasion where the participant found a question too broad and difficult to answer and asked for clarification. In one case, the participant gave such detailed responses that I was unable to include the final question within the allotted interview time. Of the 14 participants, there was only one who had a preference for short factual responses. The interview still yielded some very interesting insights but I found the interaction was awkward and although further probing questions were introduced, the interview felt to me to be notably different from the others.

**Building the relationship with participants over time:** My relationship with the participants developed over the duration of the research fieldwork.

This has been evident over the course of 18 months from the initial introductory correspondence to completion of the final interview. The first four months were required to establish the necessary arrangements and introductions with the key contact people in the three main organisations involved in the sustainable seafood initiative and other formalities such as the confidentiality agreement with Woolworths. These four contact people were essentially the gatekeepers to their respective organisations and were also key figures in the research process, although at the outset it was not clear whether they would agree to participate. I was very fortunate and very grateful to be allowed access to all the organisations that were recommended during the course of the research.

The relationship at all times remained very formal. It is fair to say that as I gained some experience of interviewing and conducting fieldwork research developed, my confidence increased not only in the research process but also in the interactions with the research participants. The initial meetings gave me the opportunity to introduce the aims and expectations of the research and while in principle, there was a willingness to support the research, I needed to present a convincing case that their time and effort would be valued and applied to a worthwhile project. -

#### <sup>18</sup> **RESEARCHER NOTE 5.2: FURTHER DISCUSSION ON BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS**

The process of recruiting participants is discussed in the fieldwork design, but in terms of relationships, it was a process with each potential participant that started with the initial contact and

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in this respect it was mainly 'cold calling'. Certainly once I had managed to establish a contact, I was able to provide a referral from one of the gatekeepers, and this was my proverbial foot in the door. The process was facilitated by the exchange of various introductory phone calls and/or emails. Initially, with the intention of making a personal introduction, I tried to contact people by phone. After four months, this proved to be very slow and a rather ineffective way to contact people. I therefore switched to an email introduction followed by a personal phone conversation and this proved to be more successful.

It should also be said that over this period I tried various different ways of writing a short motivation and introduction to the research study. In effect, all of these efforts were aimed at relationship building and my confidence also grew with each positive response. While I had to remain politely persistent throughout the process, and at times the lack of response and the delays were very disheartening, I was very fortunate that not one of the people I approached declined my invitation. Each potential participant that I approached, very kindly gave up their time to meet with me for two interviews. I think that while my research 'pitch' did improve over time, the response had more to do with the generous support of the participants, rather than my selling skills.

Other aspects of the research relationships are recorded in my various interview notes and are not discussed in detail here. The process was different with each individual and it required careful attention to the practical issues of making appointments in advance, diary confirmations, email reminders and organising venues, as well as personalised emails after each interview to say thank you and to establish the next steps. The interview notes I prepared after each interview were directed not only at research insights but also at the interview context and this included observations and notes about the relationships with each person, both positive comments and any areas of concern. I used a standard format as recommended by Schurink (2009) to give some structure to my thoughts and I recorded some notes on the meeting preparations, the interview setting and interactions as well as initial research insights and finally other action items and next steps.

### <sup>19</sup> **RESEARCHER NOTE 5.3: EXAMPLE OF INTERVIEW NOTES**

**Example 1:** From the notes of an interview on 11 April 2014 under the interview notes I wrote: "I started with my usual connector exercise and this was really interesting – rather than write, this participant just started talking – it was great but I did want him to focus and so I did redirect him. Again he preferred just to talk. It was fine and I found an opening into my first question on strategy. An interesting dynamic. At a later stage in the conversation he just wanted to draw a diagram – of the bugle effect – and he just used the paper – so it was useful but just not in the way I had planned! Interesting."

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This indicated that even with the interview structure that I had planned, which was broadly around four questions for each one hour interview, flexibility was essential to maintain the momentum and allow the participant the room to express what he wanted to say. It was my intention to provide enough structure so that each interview met the research objectives and could be compared with other interview content if required. At the same, there needed to be enough flexibility to allow the participants some freedom in how they chose to respond to my questions.

**Example 2:** From the notes of an interview on 15 November 2013 under the interview notes I wrote: “I arrived 5 minutes early and as I knocked and went into the office, I was feeling much more comfortable this time and I think he was too. It was windy outside and I remarked on it and that I thought a storm was brewing. He said he hoped not as he had to mow the lawn in his garden at the weekend. We chatted a little as we sat down at the table. It was the same place as before. I had water with me so I declined an offer of coffee. I think this also helped to get us settled as the last time I felt a little awkward filling the time at the beginning as he was making coffee. It worked better this time. But mainly this was because we knew each other a little this time – we were more comfortable with each other. As they say, it takes time to build a relationship and this happens even with the small connections of sending emails and setting up appointments. So this time the ‘small talk’ was easier and I enjoyed the chat.”

This excerpt indicated that I was very aware of the tentative nature of the research relationship and how little things mattered a lot. I also remembered that in every interview time was very limited and with only one hour to get started and to do a full interview, there was very little time for introductions or the opportunity to know the participant and establish the tone of the interview.

## <sup>20</sup> **RESEARCHER NOTE 5.4: THE SELECTION PROCESS**

There are three considerations that I think may be clarified in respect to the selection process.

### (a) Selection required interpretation, despite the systematic process

The first is that on reflection, as I document the process I followed in 2012, it is interesting to see that while I tried to establish a systematic process for the selection, in hindsight it is evident that there is nonetheless interpretation required in making judgements about which companies to exclude and include and why.

Writing the dissertation allowed me to review the choices made and check the evidence I had used at the time. Based on this review in hindsight, it is possible that I could have considered investigating some candidates in more detail at the time, had further information been available. Nonetheless, I am happy that this would not have changed the final choice of only two candidates. And as is noted under the section on accessibility, at the end of the day I was unable to get an appointment to meet with the one company and so the research was conducted with the support of Woolworths.

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(b) The criterion related to core strategy

The criterion of embeddedness of sustainability in core strategy and evidence of integration into core strategy is interesting as it dominated the early work of the study but was later subsumed by the focus on cross-sector collaboration. What this means is that integration into core strategy was a key aspect of the selection of the research setting and was essential in identifying exemplars. So an exemplar means not only being successful at collaboration or partnerships for sustainability but also integration of sustainability into core strategy.

The criteria here were directed from two sources. The first, as already mentioned, was the recommendation of the King Report (IODSA, 2009) to incorporate sustainability into core strategy and to actively engage in collaboration in order to achieve this. It should be noted that in the early days of the research, the term responsible leadership dominated the early literature review. While the terms responsibility and sustainability are related, it was only later that the distinction between responsible practices and sustainable sourcing was made.

The second source that directed the selection criteria was research on responsible leadership orientations by Pless, Maak and Waldman (2012). They identified the “integrators” as those individuals or organisations that hold a “broader perspective on business responsibilities” that extends beyond legal and economic concerns and beyond both philanthropic and reactive CSR approaches towards proactive engagement in social and environmental responsibilities and accountability to a wide range of stakeholders. Based on the characteristics of leaders identified as integrators, I then specified the selection criteria used to identify South African listed companies that were exemplars of this integrator approach, which included the use of partnerships.

(c) An alternative idea using stakeholder theory

Another option was considered based on stakeholder theory but this was rejected in favour of the selection process applied. An attempt was made to identify potential research candidates based on different stakeholder groups and a stakeholder mapping exercise with the dimensions of influence and interest. While this was an interesting idea, I could not find a suitable way to develop it into the research design and so the idea was rejected.

<sup>21</sup> **RESEARCHER NOTE 5.5: INTRODUCTORY MEETINGS**

After initial enquiries about available contacts at USB, in January 2013 I asked a professor to provide assistance with introductions, which he kindly agreed to do. He also reviewed the introductory letters explaining the background and purpose of the research study. I discussed and confirmed the proposed fieldwork plan with my supervisor in February 2013.

Once the selection process had been set up and the fieldwork design completed, it then took several months to organise the initial contacts and introductory meetings. This went very well in

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the one company, but not the other. The practical issue of gaining access was an interesting but quite stressful process. It was a different experience at each of the two companies. I had a very quick response from the one company, but had difficulties with the other. The process at each company is noted below and I have maintained a diary of events for the introductions as a record.

(a) Access issues at Company X

It proved quite difficult to make contact at Company X with the Head of Sustainable Development in South Africa. The professor had previously met the Head of Sustainable Development and after several attempts to contact him in early March, he managed to speak with him briefly to ask for support with the research. There was no further word during March and April, despite several follow up calls and emails. I had a discussion with both the professor and my supervisor about how best to proceed and the research plan was adjusted on two occasions to try and retain Company X as a potential candidate in the research study. But this was not to be.

Fortunately, as things turned out, the inclusion of Company X did not hold back the research process and the research design evolved without it. By the end of 2013, the way ahead was clear and no further efforts were made to pursue Company X.

(b) Successful introductions at Woolworths

The initial email contact was sent by the professor on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2013 to Woolworths and he received an immediate response. Within the same day I had direct contact with the Head of Sustainability at Woolworths and I had an agreed appointment to meet him. He is the key contact person at Woolworths and I needed to convince him that the research was worth supporting.

That first introductory meeting was an important one as I had some key objectives to meet. First, I needed to introduce myself and the research, give him confidence that the research was worth supporting and establish an initial working relationship at Woolworths. At the same time, I had to negotiate for a suitable project that would meet the research requirements. It was a lot to establish in just less than an hour.

Clearly it takes more than one meeting to establish a relationship, but it was a start and some success was achieved in the other objectives and of particular importance was the selection of a research study. The sustainable seafood initiatives met the criteria I had set out.

We also established the next steps to progress the research. I was to provide him with an introductory memorandum explaining the background and purpose of the research and he agreed to forward this to the main partners, recommending that they support the research. He also suggested I do some background research based on publically available information so that I could get to know the background to the sustainable seafood initiatives.

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(c) Sustainable seafood

As I soon learnt, WWF-SASSI is a key part of the narrative for sustainable fishing but many other people and organisations are also involved in the many wide ranging activities that would fall under the umbrella of sustainable seafood initiatives in South Africa. And so the scope of the project that was proposed was not only collaborations between Woolworths and WWF-SASSI, but also many other activities relating in more general terms to sustainable seafood, responsible fishing practices and responsible sourcing of seafood products in the retail supply chain.

(d) Further introductions

I had to follow up with the Head of Sustainability a few weeks later to progress the introductions. I also realised by then that my introductory memo was too lengthy and I prepared a short one pager to try and improve the communication. I continued to work on how best to create a short but clear introduction to the research, but this was ongoing throughout the recruitment process and I found that some people preferred more information and some less, some people were happy with a telephone conversation and other wanted something in writing. Recruitment is a process that requires persistence.

After the follow up, the Head of Sustainability then sent an email introduction to the four people that he said were the key participants at Woolworths, MSC and WWF-SA. Within a few days I had appointments with three of the four and in each of the organisations. The next step was to have introductory meetings in each of these organisations and these meetings took place in late April and early May 2013. The introductory meetings were all very positive and both MSC and WWF-SA agreed to support the research.

(e) Recruiting participants

The key individual at Woolworths was also the gatekeeper to meeting other people at Woolworths and he agreed to introduce me to three other key individuals. In total, there were eight key individuals that I have called the core group and seven of them agreed to participate. They all had full time responsibility for sustainable seafood initiatives. After the introductions, I was fortunate to have all seven of these key individuals agree to participate in the study. It took several months and persistence but all of these individuals were very generous in giving me their time and sharing their experiences with me.

It was from this core group that I then recruited additional key individuals, who were recommended to me by one of the core group. There were three reasons for adding these other individuals. The first was because they featured prominently in a success story related by one of the core group; the second was because they have a prominent role at a strategic level in sustainable seafood initiatives. The last reason was because one of the core group resigned from the company during the research period and his manager very kindly stepped in and agreed to participate in the study

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as a substitute. Each of these additional people has a responsibility for sustainable seafood, but this was only part of a broader portfolio of responsibilities. Overall, I therefore recruited 15 key individuals, with only one person dropping out of the study.

## <sup>22</sup> **RESEARCHER NOTE 5.6: NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS**

Criteria were specified to direct the recruitment process and diversity of participants was also sought. Recruitment followed a systematic process so that the core group of participants was referred by the gatekeepers. Further recruits were derived from the success stories related in the first interviews of the core group.

It was then identified that two of the recruits met one but not both of the criteria. It was at this point that the boundary of recruitment was reached. Consideration was given to whether there were other potential participants and this was balanced against the practical issues of the volume of material, time and research resources.

A research choice was made at the point when 14 participants had been recruited, including two boundary cases. This was considered to be a sufficient number and could be justified based on the process and criteria used. One other person was introduced and declined to participate but did agree to meet for a discussion. Three or four others were identified who had had prior involvement in various initiatives but were not directly involved currently. Finally, one further recruit was added, because one of the participants resigned from the company and the manager agreed to participate as a substitute for the person who had left. The final number of participants was 15, of whom one resigned, not from the research, but from the company.

A research decision was taken not to approach any further individuals on the basis that all the key individuals already identified and currently involved had already been approached. After a discussion with my supervisor about the recruitment process and current status of progress, I took a considered research decision not to recruit further participants. I already had an abundance of narrative material from the 14 participants.

## <sup>23</sup> **RESEARCHER NOTE 5.7: GETTING APPOINTMENTS**

Identifying key individuals and obtaining referrals from the core group was not particularly difficult once I established criteria to define who was a key individual or expert in relation to the research subject.

What took a great deal of time and persistence was getting appointments. My busiest month was January 2014 with eight out of the total 29 interviews done in that month alone, whereas it had taken four months for the first eight interviews and it took a further four months to complete the balance. And there was one appointment that kept being postponed and I eventually got that final interview in August 2014. I found it kept me motivated to keep statistics and track my progress.

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Once I got over the half way stage, it felt a little easier and getting the appointments for the second interviews was generally much easier than the first interviews.

From the initial contact in March 2013, it took five months before the first interview on 16 August 2013 and it took a full year before all the interviews were completed on 6 August 2014. I had many experiences along the way and at times it seemed that I would never finish; there were times when I made very slow progress and other times when I had two interviews in one day. I had appointments cancelled and I had a no-show; I rescheduled some appointments several times; with one participant there was a gap of 45 weeks between the first interview and the second.

While it was quite an ordeal, I expect that it was not significantly different from the experiences of many other researchers. I really only got into full swing in January 2014 and for a five month period I was working constantly on interviews and transcriptions. It was pretty intense but very satisfying once completed.

#### <sup>24</sup> **RESEARCHER NOTE 5.8: NARRATIVE ACCOUNTS OR REPORTS?**

While every effort was made to invite narrative accounts, this did not always work. I had two main strategies for eliciting stories. First, I explained at the start of the interview that I was interested in the stories of their experiences. Second, the interview questions were phrased carefully. For example, the first question asks: Please tell me about how you got involved in sustainable seafood. Another question asks: Please think about a successful project that you have experienced. Can you describe the situation to me, who were you working with, when was it, where were you and what did it feel like to be part of that project?

My experience from the interviews was mixed, but the majority of participants did offer stories, some more than others. While doing the transcriptions, the stories became evident. There were accounts that provided a timeline, identified who was involved and the details of what happened (the plot).

There are some wonderfully detailed stories such as a music and seafood festival in Muizenberg; growing up near the sea in Knysna and how Western Cape trout farmers achieved the green listing for locally farmed trout. There are stories of how businesses were built on the principle of sustainably sourced product and a sustainable market demand; stories of building the credibility of the sustainable seafood story in South Africa; and building the capacity to source and market seafood products responsibly.

I found that one particular question was answered in different ways and it was clear that the question did not always elicit a narrative response. It was the question on relationships. In some cases, this generated multiple stories and in others the response was a list of names or even an organogram.

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In each interview, there were times when the responses were quite factual, but sometimes it was in response to the strategy question and other times, it was in response to the measurement question. It varied. There was only one participant that seemed to find the narrative approach difficult to work with. Their answers were short and to the point and mostly very factual. During the interview this was awkward and in the second interview, I abandoned any hope of limiting the discussion to four questions and it ended up very much like a business discussion. It was only afterwards, while doing the transcripts that I could discern a few short narratives. The interview still generated some very interesting insights, but just not in a narrative form.

## <sup>25</sup> **RESEARCHER NOTE 5.9: INTERVIEW EXPERIENCES**

The fieldwork was a learning experience. I have done many interviews in my business career but the research interview is very different from interviewing prospective employees. The issue of control is an obvious one but very relevant. As the researcher, certain things were in my control but many things were not. While traditional research assumes that the researcher adopts an objective stance and the informants answer factually, this is not the case here. These are not appropriate assumptions for this research and I was very aware that I had some control but there was also a degree of uncertainty. I planned to limit my control of the interview by limiting the number of questions and allowing as much time as possible for the participants to respond. I was aware that, while I could not manage the participants, and I could not plan for every eventuality, I could encourage them to tell their stories. I needed the right questions to do that, I needed to set the right context and I needed to steer the process as best I could.

There are tools and techniques to do this and I incorporated some of these into the interview design, where possible. I asked open questions such as “tell me about how you got involved”. In most cases, this worked very well to achieve a number of objectives. It established the interest at a personal level, it suggested a narrative form and it provided context. I also used diagrams on two occasions and these worked for most but not for all. For those participants more accustomed to formal questions and factual answers, the vagueness of the diagrams was a little awkward. I used a connecting question at the beginning of the second interview to act as a bridge between the two interviews and connect the subject matter. I used a mix of questions, but tried to keep a logical flow to the conversation and in some cases I changed the order of the questions where it made more sense. This required quite a lot of juggling, so I was very grateful for my prior experience with interviews, albeit in a different context. I also had to manage the time as in most cases, I had only one hour. Some people gave me more time and they were very generous but most had other appointments. In only one case, I had to end an interview with one question not covered.

Overall, the fieldwork was very satisfying. I also developed a good rapport with most of the participants. There were only two cases, which were a little awkward and both participants responded in a way that suggested they were more accustomed to a formal process. In the one,

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an initial awkward moment was short lived and the balance of the interview went smoothly. In the other case, the first interview was awkward and despite planning ahead and attempting a different strategy, the second interview was equally awkward. For the second interview I came prepared with extra questions but even then I ended up having to ask further probing and clarifying questions just to keep the momentum going. My initial impression was that it had gone badly but after reviewing the transcripts I realised that there was a lot of very insightful comments and material I could use.

Other experiences with the open format of the questions was interesting. I was asked by some for an agenda and I had a few participants come to the interview with prepared notes, reports and other material. I was asked on one occasion to clarify what I meant by measuring success and while at first I struggled to rephrase this without imposing a definition, at the end of the day this participant gave me a very different view on measuring success, which I consider to be one of the highlights of the interview process. On another occasion I was a little worried about long pauses until I found what amazing comments could arise from a pause. It was another highlight.

And so I can conclude that I did not control the interview participants but I did steer the process. And the main tools I had were the limited number of questions, the wording of the questions and very conscious listening.

I had flagged listening as an important behaviour for me to maintain. Listening was probably the single most important factor in distinguishing the interview process from a normal conversation. Despite this awareness, I did slip up on a few occasions and had to rein in my enthusiasm as I allowed the interaction to descend into conversation. Listening did not mean I gave no reaction. I got better and better at nodding and acknowledging and punctuating the interchange with words such as “yes” and “ok” expressions such as “uh-huh” and “mmm”. In order to listen as attentively as possible, I deliberately chose not to take notes. This choice was confirmed in the very first interview. I had a notebook with me at all times, but during the first interview, I opened the notebook and wrote a few words. I realised immediately that I had broken the flow of attention. I never did it again. This strategy was entirely dependent on my voice recordings and with the right equipment this worked very well. I had the high quality recording from my Olympus voice recorder and my back up was a recording on my iPad. Although I never used the latter, it was still an essential part of the process.

There were two sub-questions that I had prepared that would have been interesting but did not work out in the allotted time. I could have adjusted other questions to accommodate them but chose not to do so. One sub-question asked whether there was anything that the participant wanted to add. This was at the end of the first interview but I had generally run out of time at that point. In any event, the question on personal meaning was almost always a high point of the interview and a good place to end.

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I also had another sub-question that extended the relationships question, where I planned to ask if there was anything that was not included or appeared to be missing. In most cases, the relationships question generated such a long answer that I tended to move directly onto the next question about a successful collaborative project to avoid overrunning the interview time.

Lastly, a comment on creating context. I was aware of this as a means for establishing rapport. This was necessary but difficult. It was necessary because the research was about their personal experiences. It was difficult for many reasons. Other than the people with whom I had introductory meetings, in every case the interview was the first time I had met the person. The interviews were typically held in a small meeting room or an office. On two occasions, the interview was in an open plan area.

## <sup>26</sup> **RESEARCHER NOTE 5.10: TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT**

I made some personal choices here based on the need for quality and ease of use.

I used an Olympus DM-670 digital voice recorder with the related Sonority software. The recorder is very lightweight, small and very discrete. This gave high quality recordings with three microphones to pick up stereo recordings. The software programme allowed easy downloads to my laptop computer, created back-up copies and slow speed playback facilities that helped with the transcriptions.

I also used an Apple iPad with a free app called QuickVoice and this was a second, back-up recording of each interview. I also used the Apple iPad and an app called Notability on many occasions after interviews (and at other meetings related to the research) to make notes. I then sent these notes directly to my computer by email attachment. I used an Apple Macbook Air laptop and the easy to use TimeMachine backup is very quick so that at times during the transcription process, I took back-ups more than once a day.

I kept all my notes related to the research and reading material on the iPad and the Macbook. Another app that I used extensively is PDF Expert. I read numerous research articles using this app, which allows text to be highlighted and notes to be added. Back-ups were also easy to do on the iPad. Another application that I used was Dropbox, which was mainly for sharing articles with colleagues and other students

Wordpress is another tool that I used, which is a free site for websites and blogs. Its functionality makes an excellent choice for a research journal. While I did not keep a journal throughout, I did keep notes regularly. The Wordpress journal is one of the ways in which I recorded ideas and thoughts as I was grappling with the research material, particularly during the early stages of the analysis phase before I had a clearly structured process. Some of my notes related to the research are better organised than others. The majority are in electronic format so that they can be included in the trail of evidence that supports the final research dissertation. I still needed my

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handwritten scribbles and diagrams but as these were developed further, they were translated into one or other form of electronic document that I have subsequently collated and organised for reference purposes.

I could not have done this research without daily online access to the USB library, which was an amazing resource. Internet searches using Google Scholar also helped to locate additional reading material and key references and allowed me to check citations.

My supervisor works at Ashridge College in the UK. I visited Ashridge three times during the study period, and she visited South Africa on two occasions, but the majority of our interactions and conversations were conducted using Skype calls.

My camera has also been well used. One of the professors encouraged me to take a photo diary during my research and while I was initially reluctant to do so, I now have a collection of research photos, which I do appreciate. I did create a photo diary with a detailed narrative to describe the experiences of the early stages of the research experience and my first visit to Ashridge in May 2013. These are included with the audit trail documentation that I have maintained.

Finally, the dissertation is written on an Apple iMac. It took the power of the iMac to keep the automatic referencing working as the dissertation developed.

## <sup>27</sup> **RESEARCHER NOTE 5.11: TRANSCRIPTION EXPERIENCES**

Doing accurate transcripts needs a high quality recording. It is essential so you have a good chance of a good quality transcript and to capture as much of the interview as possible. From a technology point of view, the high quality Olympus recorder was essential. It saved the day where there was a lot of background noise, even if it was just the airconditioner in the meeting room or the traffic noise outside. I got an excellent recording for every interview. Even the interviews in the open plan area that could have been ruined with the loud background noise. I was safe in the hands of the Olympus and it was worth the investment. I also did all the transcriptions myself and so with the exception of only a few isolated words, I have a very accurate record of all of the interviews.

There is then the issue of whether to outsource the transcripts or do them yourself. Again it probably depends on what you need and what research you are doing. For a PhD, I found that doing my own transcripts was a huge advantage and it is not difficult, just long. It took me about nine hours to do an hour-long interview. Transcriptions are certainly quite an arduous process but also very rewarding. It gave the first in-depth review of the interview material and this alerted me to things I had missed during the interview or that I had misunderstood or forgotten. It was essentially the first part of my analysis and a requirement of the IPA method that the researcher needs to be familiar with the interview material.

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I did not find much in the literature about transcripts. I did establish that transcripts are done in different ways according to the research needs. So for conversation analysis or discourse analysis, the interest is in more than just the words. There are pauses and other expressions. They use very detailed conventions and these need to be followed very carefully. For my purposes, it was more about the words and content of the interview. I did not adopt any of the formal conventions, but once I established some basic notations for pauses and non-verbal expressions, I tried to keep to the same notations throughout. Mostly I focused on the words.

I also kept back-up copies all the time, several times an hour, many times a day. Once you have done a section, you do not want to do it again.

I also kept to a routine and other than the case of the first few interviews, I scheduled to complete each transcript within a week of the interview. This meant that the actual interview was very fresh in my mind and I could visualise and recall the experience. This was helpful in cases where the words were unclear.

Some transcriptions were easier than others. I used the 50% speed on the playback, but even with that, one interview in particular was very hard going as the person spoke so fast and tended to truncate sentences. The strange thing was that during the interview I thought I had understood him well, and once the transcript was complete, it made sense; but getting it all done accurately was slow going. Each interview was different. Some people spoke with long uninterrupted narratives; others spoke in short sentences interspersed with phrases such as “you know” or “yah”; or “um” or “uh”. Some people deviated a bit from the questions; others gave me more than one story.

I kept a record of statistics for all the interviews and a running total of the interview times. In total, I have 29 interviews of an average of 55 minutes each; the longest is 83 minutes and the shortest is 41 minutes. That amounts to almost 27 hours of interviews. With an average of nine hours to transcribe one hour of interview material, that is approximately 243 hours of work or 30 days of continuous work assuming an eight-hour working day. It was a lot of work, but of all the different challenges during the course of the research, this required discipline but was not actually difficult. And contrary to popular belief, while it was tiring, it was not boring. In many respects it was a very productive and interesting process.

## <sup>28</sup> RESEARCHER NOTE 6:1: WORKING WITH THE FIELD TEXTS

This note is about organising the findings chapter. It was a mammoth task and a process that required a great deal of careful consideration. What made sense at an early stage was to use the framework of XSP value to organise the chapter.

The IPA worksheets were effective in achieving this and I had already spent many weeks completing this analysis. I had also created summaries of each worksheet to try and highlight the

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key narratives within each interview and to focus on those that dealt specifically with collaborative activities. However, there was a huge volume of material from the IPA worksheets and although I had already done many hours of analysis using the XSP framework to analyse the interview transcripts, I needed still more analysis before I could write the chapter.

To write, what I needed was a way to draw together the various participant accounts. I use the words 'draw together' because this was about organising the material. It was a type of cross-case analysis but the purpose was not to identify areas of consensus but also areas of difference. The participant selection already reflected both similarity and difference. I expected to find common factors in the interview material; I already knew that several participants covered narratives about the same subject such as the tuna supply chain or the green listing of trout. But I was not looking for consensus views. Rather, the analysis aimed to find both similarities and alternative views. It was also about finding similarities and differences in the participant account when compared to the conceptual framework of XSP value.

Basically, I need to summarise the material from each participant in relation to each of the three areas in the framework. So all key points on trajectory, on value potential, and then on value delivery. I also had summary sections on types of partnership and the key narratives.

This became a huge cross-case analysis as I drew together all the key points from each of the participant IPA worksheets. Each point was cross referenced to the interview transcripts by page number and was labelled according to the various concepts such as diverse interests, tensions, identity and higher-order effects. An example is shown in Appendix M. In some cases, I still had to prepare summary sheets to make sure that I was being consistent and systematic about the process and also keeping an audit trail. This was another big piece of work and an example is shown in Appendix N.

This whole process acted as a type of quality control so that where new ideas are identified; the worksheets show how these were derived. Sometimes I thought there was a strong point made by a participant only to find that I had extended a fairly small point into a long discussion in my own notes and the emphasis was not warranted based on the participant account.

The systematic process made me focus on the evidence from the participants. It also made me check that I had considered every account. I even did some word searches to make sure I was not overlooking a comment or material that might support the discussion. For example, I wrote a paragraph from the account of a specific participant on the subject of relevance and I also did a word search to check whether others had also discussed the term.

There were several times when I thought a subject was derived from the field texts, only to find that in checking through the audit trail, that either the words used or the idea was not well supported from the evidence. Examples include ideas about boundary spaces or leveraging prior

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relationships. These things seemed like good ideas and connected with the framework. I had made journal notes on them but there was not enough evidence within the fieldwork texts. They were examples of where I had made interpretive notes on the IPA worksheets, but I had extended the discussion beyond what was actually in evidence.

The cross-case analysis was not only the analysis; it was the audit trail and the quality control.

There were challenges in writing this chapter. Once I had the material organised, the writing was a long process. I used direct quotations from the participants and paraphrased where appropriate. The aim was to highlight the evidence from the research interviews. Interpretation is limited as far as possible to organising the material. However, in each section I added a summary of initial insights. These summaries highlight the key points and they are used to connect to the discussion chapter, which follows. I also summarised the key points in a table format at the end of the chapter. This became the start of the process of connecting the findings with the discussion and then with the conceptual model and the research conclusions.

Another challenge was to focus on communicative practices as this is a communicative model. This was not difficult where there was evidence that supported a concept already defined in the original framework by Koschmann *et al.* (2012). It was more difficult when there was something that was different to the framework. So for example, there was a lot of material on strategy, partly because one of the interview questions asked about strategy but also because it is a common term used in business. However, strategy was a business concept rather than a communicative concept and I was interested in the communicative interactions that supported the strategy rather than the strategy itself. So I was constantly aware of remaining focused on the interactions and relationships and process aspects rather than on material that supported descriptions of characteristics.

The writing process was an iterative process; it was a process constantly moving from the transcripts to the writing and from the writing back to the transcripts. I sat with two computers so I had one for the writing and had the other with the IPA worksheets and transcripts. I also had hard copies of the worksheets with various notes and annotations in different colours. I worked from each of these sources, back and forth all the time. I worked methodically from one section to the next. I even did word searches to check that I was considering all the available material and had not overlooked an important viewpoint.

What I hope to achieve through being methodical in the analysis and writing process, is to have presented a balanced and fair account of the fieldwork evidence. I sincerely believe that I have achieved that but I continue to be fascinated by the depth of insight that is contained within the research interview material and the research setting.

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**<sup>29</sup> RESEARCHER NOTE 6.2: MAINTAINING BALANCE: THE AUDIT TRAIL AND THE NARRATIVES**

In the previous note, I described the various worksheets that I used. One of the reasons for selecting and adapting the IPA method was the use of worksheets that facilitated the analysis and created an audit trail at the same time. I had not realised until I was in the midst of the analysis that this would need a number of iterations and several stages of analysis.

My concern at each stage was to do a thorough analysis of the evidence and yet at the same time to avoid fragmenting the material and losing the narratives. I was concerned about this at several points, particularly when the analysis directed me towards a specific concept of which there are many. I wanted to balance the detail with the narratives. I wanted to ensure that the narratives were used in a useful way and that the detail could be connected at all times to the key narratives.

I was also conscious of trying to connect the accounts of several participants when they spoke about the same subject. There was an opportunity here to create a composite narrative from a variety of perspectives. This was possible with a select few of the narratives and these have been highlighted in what I have called the unique narratives, positioned in Appendix O. An example is the narrative of the tuna supply chain.

There was an ongoing tension in my head between the detail and the broader narratives. At first I was very anxious about losing the bigger narratives, but as I continued to write there were ongoing references to the accounts of the participants, and despite the detail, the bigger narratives remained visible.

The audit trail was always top of mind. Every time I started a new section and sat with the worksheets, the summaries and the colour coded notes, I focused on drawing from the evidence and making sure it was in the working papers. At first I thought I could do everything in soft copy but I found it much easier at the most detailed level to work with hard copies that I then colour coded. While the hard copies are not always neatly annotated, they all have detailed references.

**<sup>30</sup> RESEARCHER NOTE 6.3: RESEARCH CHOICES: SELECTING QUOTATIONS**

The selection of quotations was done systematically by drawing up a table for the relevant research questions. In the interviews, there were two context questions for individuals and two for organisations. I went through both interview transcripts for each participant to extract quotations that illustrated their context; their background and how they described the organisational strategy.

I was aware that contextual information is included in other responses, but in the main, extracts from these specific questions were accessible. In only one or two cases, the responses to these questions were of limited use. One of these was a boundary case and so this was to be expected.

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I tabulated the responses and grouped the participants into three broad categories, which I called wise philosophers, dedicated ambassadors and passionate newcomers. I then made some notes to summarise the areas of similarity that I could identify. For example, several people referred to a childhood interest, while others spoke about what they studied at university, and yet others spoke of their work experience. And so, I collated the quotations into themes. It was not an in-depth thematic analysis, but the worksheets provide an audit trail that demonstrates how I identified the three categories. The organising mechanism was the existing conceptual framework and the interview material was organised according to that structure, while highlighting similarities and differences. So other themes were identified but positioned in relation to the existing framework.

The full tables are available in the audit trail documentation and examples are provided at Appendices L, M and N. From the tabulated worksheets, I then extracted the most vivid quotes in each theme heading and for each organisation. These were then included in the text of the dissertation. The inclusion of the context as expressed by the participants is in keeping with the research question, which is interested in the experiences of these key individuals. The research does not draw from other external sources or reports in order to understand context. While this would be an obvious choice for a case study approach, in the phenomenological narrative design, external or secondary 'data' is not of immediate relevance.

The tabulation of the quotations was done methodically, but the final selection was a researcher choice and a considered judgment on those quotes that best illustrated the diversity but also areas of similarity in the participants' backgrounds.

### <sup>31</sup> **RESEARCHER NOTE 6.4: DECLARING THE RESEARCHER CONTEXT**

Each participant described how they got involved in sustainable seafood and my experience as the researcher should also be declared. My first introduction to sustainable seafood was a result of the selection of the setting for the research. The only previous connection with the issue was when a friend of mine did voluntary work at the MSC and she told me about some of the challenges. However, my interest in sustainability goes back to November 2008 after I had registered to do a Masters in Futures Studies and had started to do some initial reading. I remember watching a news clip about the financial crisis and how different people were starting small businesses. One story was about two friends who had started a business sourcing ethical products from India, products made by local women and they were selling the products online. It started me thinking about ethical sourcing and ethical trading and I even did a project on organic and artisan products such as chocolate, tea and coffee. During my Masters, in each assignment I selected a topic related to sustainability and so I continued to learn. I looked at solar energy and issues about energy storage; I explored energy regulation in South Africa and I read about new business models such as conscious capitalism and the circular economy. After completing my Masters studies I decided to explore the possibility of a PhD and the main idea was to research a subject that

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explored the contribution of business to the sustainability agenda. And so I continued to read and study and network and I have been engaged with the subject of sustainability ever since and I have been engaged with this subject for around eight years now.

### <sup>32</sup> **RESEARCHER NOTE 7.1: THINKING ABOUT IDENTITY**

The topic of identity became the pivot point in the research argument and a distinguishing feature of the research setting. I knew there was something important here when I first wrote the findings section but it was only when I started to engage in the discussion chapter that I started to realise that it was the subject of identity that explained a significant difference in the research setting from the majority of the literature that I had found.

It took a question from my supervisor to get me thinking about how best to explain what the difference was and what the implications were. And was it an important difference or was it just one of several? My supervisor said that this section of the findings seemed to be very interpretive and I saw that this was a valid comment. I did not want to deviate from the objective of organising the material for the findings chapter, so the discussion and interpretation is provided in Chapter 8.

I needed to be guided by the literature to determine what was different about this aspect of the findings. It was clear that I needed to know more about collective identity. I had not covered this in the main literature review.

The additional literature review was quite extensive and I found that the implications of this area of difference were significant. After much careful consideration, I decided to create another bridging chapter to include more literature.

So much literature; I was getting swamped. But I was also concerned about those that were going to read the dissertation. Could someone else make sense of it all? I had to make this work. I needed to distinguish the extra subject matter on collective identity and the other constructs that were impacted by the understanding of identity.

The majority of the literature was about identity, as some sort of stable state or entity. I had a more dynamic setting and needed a different view. I explored the literature again and found other studies that addressed a multi-stakeholder setting. In doing so, I came across the concept of identification rather than identity.

Thinking more about identity, revealed that this was indeed one of the biggest, indeed the main, difference between the research setting in my research and the research setting in the existing framework. The latter adopted an organisation-as-actor view, as an authoritative text but the setting here was about sustainable seafood initiatives where there was no separate actor or entity. The context here is a multi-dimensional issue field. In this case there is no collective actor and no

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separate identity. The key concept in the organisation-as-actor view, which is its collective identity, does not apply.

But there was a clear point of focus both theoretically and in the fieldwork findings. A key concept of the CCO approach is coorientation and the findings indicated that the participants were all cooriented towards the issue of sustainable seafood. They all identified with the issue of sustainable seafood.

I located a key reference in Hardy *et al.* (2006). Their setting was described as a collaborative initiative. They talked about an interest in an issue and identification with other participants. It seemed to fit and it was similar to the setting in this research. Their framework showed that collaboration was not always about collective identity. I had a hook to the literature and a good journal article to work from. It was also described as a social constructionist view, so it really started to connect with my research. I found more journal articles on collective identity with different theoretical positions and I began to see how to use the literature to connect with the research findings.

There are other important subjects for discussion in Chapter 8 but this was a big one that really helped to understand the nature of the multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration that was the setting of the research. It also had an impact on other concepts that were relevant such as legitimacy and authority. These then started to make sense within the context of the collective identity/identification debate and again the differences between my research setting and other research started to make more sense.

### <sup>33</sup> **RESEARCHER NOTE 8.1: SEPARATE AND TOGETHER: HOLDING ALL THREE**

There have been several times during the course of the research study that I have had to remind myself to keep a balanced perspective. It is one of the validation criteria I set for the study and it is an interesting one. It is mostly about having a balanced argument or presenting a balanced argument. But I have also found it means more than that.

The idea of balance – is not just of two things but of three – as I am resolved to try and avoid getting stuck in too many dualist debates, although it is inevitable. I remind myself that between two issues it is always possible to find at least one more perspective, even if it is simply both. Sometimes it is more complicated than that, but trying to find at least a third view is always interesting.

The first time I struggled with this was in the design phase. Having chosen narrative inquiry and embarked in narrative interviews, the design of the analysis phase needed to respect the narratives. So many designs were very reductionist and would not have achieved that and it is one of the reasons I selected IPA.

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However, inevitably as I started the initial analysis phase, as I was trying to make sense of the transcripts and doing the first IPA worksheets, I found that I was immersed in the detail of words and phrases. After several days, I could not see the proverbial wood for the trees; I was so stuck in the detail, I could not see the bigger picture. I remember having to consciously think about how to work differently, to try and see the narratives at the same time as the detail. Not either/or, but all at the same time.

Again, as I was working with the discussion chapter I realised I was again, in a different way, working with juggling the detail and the bigger picture of how everything works together. I needed to do both in order to end up with more. So I had to explore the literature on specific topics such as legitimacy and impact, but I also needed to think about how they work together, rather than in isolation. After all, that is one of the insights that I highlighted in the findings, so I had to follow through in the research process itself.

But as systems thinking tells us, taking the separate things and bringing them together is not just a sum of the parts and setting them next to each other. I have had to present the material in a linear format as the reader has to be able to work through each chapter sequentially and from one point to the next. But there is a circular process at work, not surprisingly; the writing process is actually recursive. What I work with today continues to build on what I had yesterday, I learn and I progress.

In a simple way, I have tried to reflect this so that I bring related subjects together. It is only in combination that I could formulate some propositions. This became clear as I wrote the section on relational issues. I needed to include a discussion on several topics separately, but I also needed to draw them together in order to see what is conceptually useful and what is actually different from the extant literature. Trying to do this on an isolated subject left too much 'hanging in the air' and these things needed to be connected up.

So that is ongoing learning for me and something I revert to from time to time. It means getting my head into a different space. It seems to be inevitable that the process requires getting lost in the detail for a period of time and then at a point in time, the detail starts to make more sense and I find that I can lift up my head and see how things are connected. It is a cycle and it makes sense but it is also disconcerting as it cannot be planned (I was going to say difficult to plan but actually there is no plan). It only really makes sense in retrospect. But then that is what Karl Weick said all along so my experience is not new. But it is interesting that I find it surprising and yet it makes sense and I keep finding new insights along the way.