

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM FOR ONLINE SURVEYS/QUESTIONNAIRES (ADULTS)

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY: Collecting citizen-generated data from business owners on barriers to investment

PROJECT ID: 34609

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR/RESEARCHER: Foster Lubbe and Gray Manicom

1. INTRODUCTION

This survey makes use of an AI-powered WhatsApp Business chatbot to collect data on policy barriers to investment in South Africa. Your participation helps to inform evidence-based policymaking and contributes to open data initiatives.

2. WHO IS CONDUCTING THIS STUDY?

This research study is co-led by Dr Foster Lubbe and Dr Gray Manicom and supported by Prof Willem Fourie.

These researchers are from the Policy Innovation Lab in the School of Data Science and Computational Thinking at Stellenbosch University who work in collaboration with the Policy and Research Services Branch of the South African Presidency (PRS) to advance the use of responsible AI for transformative policymaking. You can find out more about their work at <https://policyinnovationlab.sun.ac.za/>.

3. VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation is voluntary, and you can reply with 'STOP' at any time to stop a conversation and delete it from our database.

4. WHY DO WE INVITE YOU TO PARTICIPATE?

A cumbersome policy and regulatory environment has been identified as a stumbling block to economic growth in South Africa. All too often policy is written and implemented without considering the perspective of the end-user. As a business representative, you are ideally positioned to provide feedback on which policy mechanisms hinder investment by your business. This will allow the researchers to achieve actionable insights that could lead to improved policymaking.

5. WHAT IS THIS RESEARCH STUDY ABOUT?

The primary aim of this study is to get a granular understanding of the policies and regulations that hinder investment in South Africa and how these policy hindrances are experienced by business owners and representatives. This information is then processed and analysed to provide input to policymakers, enabling the formulation of evidence-based policies that can accelerate economic growth and job creation. The research furthermore gives expression to the central importance of cross-sectoral collaboration in addressing some of the country's most pressing challenges.

6. WHAT WILL BE ASKED OF ME?

If you agree to take part in this citizen-generated data initiative, you will be asked to have a conversation with a chatbot and share information about the policy and regulatory hindrances that you experience as a business owner or representative. You will be asked to share information such as the sector in which you operate, the municipality in which you experience the hindrance, the size of your business, the specific policy or regulation that causes the hindrance, the amount of capital that you have not invested due to the hindrance, and whether you are a local or foreign businessperson.

- This conversation should take approximately 10 minutes.
- All identifiable personal information will be removed from the data.

7. WILL I BENEFIT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS RESEARCH?

The information that you share on policy hindrances to investment will help to improve policymaking and ought to improve the general business environment in South Africa over the medium to long term.

8. ARE THERE ANY RISKS IN MY TAKING PART IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY?

The potential risks involved in participating in this research include that you share sensitive information with us. According to POPIA sensitive information includes things like political or religious views. Note that we do not require you to share any sensitive or personal information with us. If we find sensitive or personal information within the survey responses, we will remove that information. You are not required to answer any question and you can withdraw from the survey at any point. Furthermore, your responses will remain anonymous. Another risk is that completing the survey takes time. This survey is voluntary, and you may exit the survey or skip questions at any time.

While we take efforts to protect your survey data, we are not responsible for data breaches on servers.

9. HOW DO I CONTACT THE RESEARCHERS?

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact the researchers, Foster Lubbe (jfosterlubbe@sun.ac.za) or Gray Manicom (graym@sun.ac.za) and/or Willem Fourie (willemf@sun.ac.za).

10. ETHICS APPROVAL

This study has been approved by the **Research Ethics Committee: Social, Behavioural and Education Research at Stellenbosch University (Project 34609)**.

11. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS:

You have the right to decline answering any questions, and you may exit the survey at any time without providing a reason. Participation is entirely voluntary.

POPIA Compliance – Your Rights:

In accordance with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), you have the right to:

- Be informed about the collection and use of your personal information.
- Access the personal information you have provided.
- Request corrections to any inaccurate or incomplete information.

- The data from your participation may be reviewed by individuals responsible for ensuring ethical research conduct, such as members of the Research Ethics Committee. These individuals are also bound by confidentiality agreements. Your data will not be shared with anyone outside the research team unless you provide explicit permission.
- Your anonymous responses may be used for future research or shared with other researchers without additional consent, but your identity will never be disclosed.

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints regarding your rights as a research participant, or if you wish to exercise your rights under POPIA, please contact the Research Ethics Committee at [applyethics@sun.ac.za; 021 808 9183].

PERMISSION TO HAVE ALL ANONYMOUS DATA SHARED WITH JOURNALS:

Please carefully read the statements below (or have them read to you) and think about your choice. No matter what you decide, it will not affect whether you can be in the research study.

When this study is finished, we would like to publish results of the study in journals. Most journals require us to share your anonymous data with them before they publish the results. Therefore, we would like to obtain your permission to have your anonymous data shared with journals. In accordance with the POPI Act, the researchers will take care to ensure that your data is not identifiable (personal information is not linked to the data shared).

For each statement, please choose YES or NO by CLICKING in the relevant box)

Statement	YES	NO
1. I have read and understand this consent form and choose to participate in this survey.		
2. I agree to have my anonymous data shared with journals during publication of results of this study.		
3. I agree that my information (data) may be stored for future research in a field related to digital transformation in the public sector.		

By STARTING THIS SURVEY you are confirming that you are:

1. **18 years and above;**
2. Have read and understood the above explanation about the study; and
3. You agree to participate.
4. You also understand that your participation in this study is strictly voluntary.

This consent form can be viewed and downloaded [here](#).