

UNCTAD Research Partnership Platform
6th Meeting
Geneva, Friday 10th July 2015



INCORPORATING SUSTAINABILITY INTO CONSUMER PROTECTION POLICIES

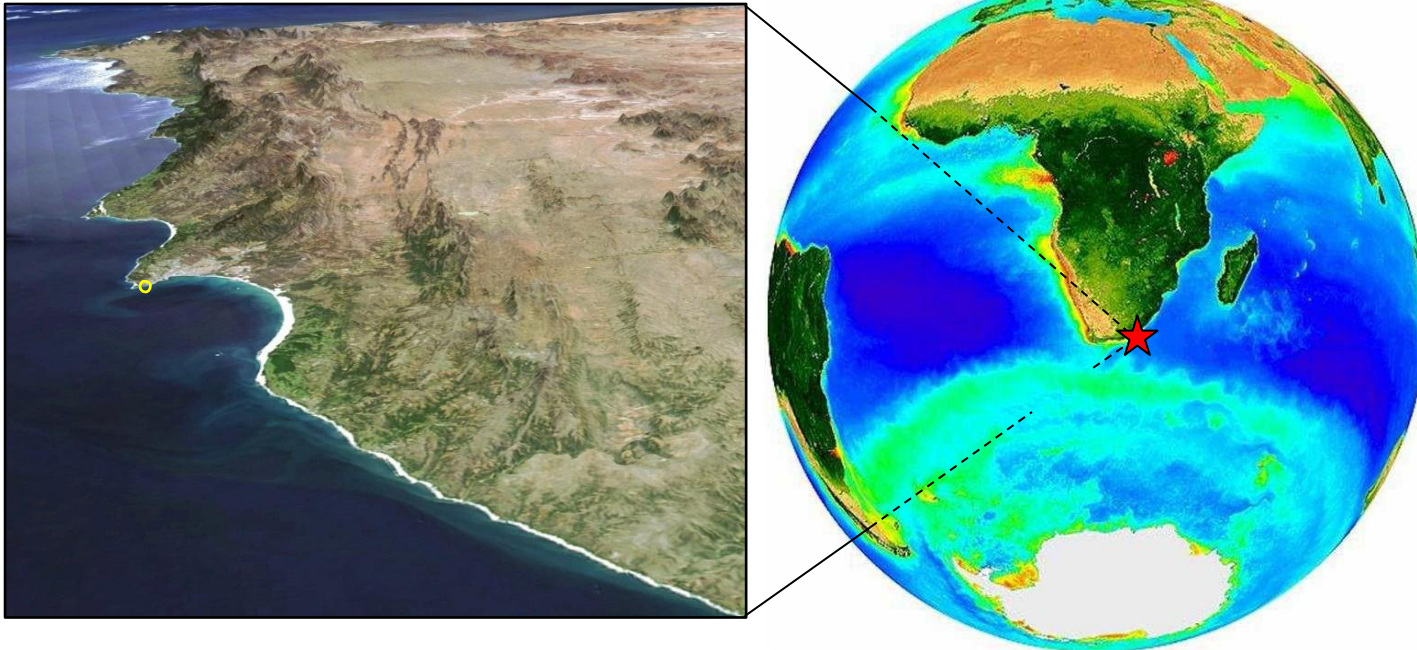
Laura Best



The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of UNCTAD

INTRODUCTION

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University Nelson Mandela Bay – Port Elizabeth South Africa



INTRODUCTION

Member:

National Consumer Tribunal

Members are appointed by the President of South Africa in terms of S26 and S28 of the National Credit Act (34 of 2005) by virtue of their expertise and knowledge of consumer rights issues.

Doctoral Study

PhD Research

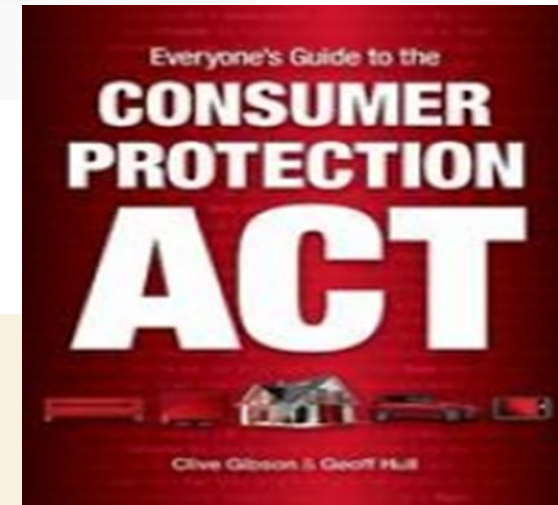
Nelson Mandela University



PROBLEM STATEMENT

Post-introduction of sustainable consumption into UN Guidelines in 1999, marked global shift, particularly among economically developed countries to incorporate sustainability into national policies

Yet not explicitly included in South African consumer protection legislation drafted 10 years later in 2008



RESEARCH QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE

- Have countries developed and implemented consumer protection policies?
- Which countries and regions have incorporated sustainability into their respective consumer protection policy frameworks?
- How have sustainability and sustainable consumption been defined and in what ways is this reflected in consumer protection policy?
- How does South African consumer policy deal with sustainability, if at all?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE

- What amendments to South African consumer protection policy can be proposed so that sustainability is incorporated into the policy framework?
- What best practice guidelines can be developed for the African context in general and South Africa in particular, based on a content analysis of how sustainability has been incorporated into consumer protection policies in other parts of the world?
- What should business do in response to the proposed guidelines for best practices in consumer protection policies?

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

To develop best practice guidelines to incorporate sustainability into South African consumer protection policy



SCOPE OF STUDY

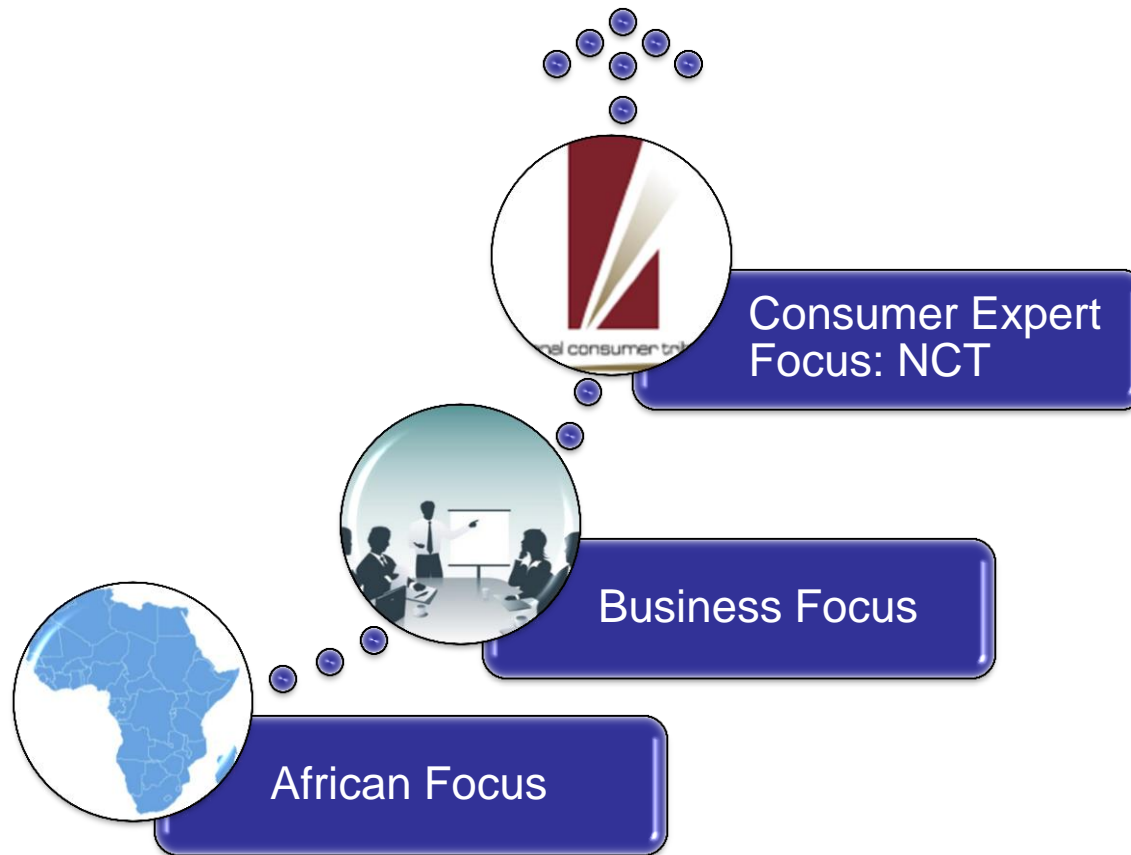
Develop best practice guidelines for South Africa only



Propose issues for consideration in incorporating sustainability into consumer protection policy in the African context

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Best Practice Guidelines for South Africa



Global Context: Countries that have Incorporated Sustainability

CONTRIBUTION OF STUDY

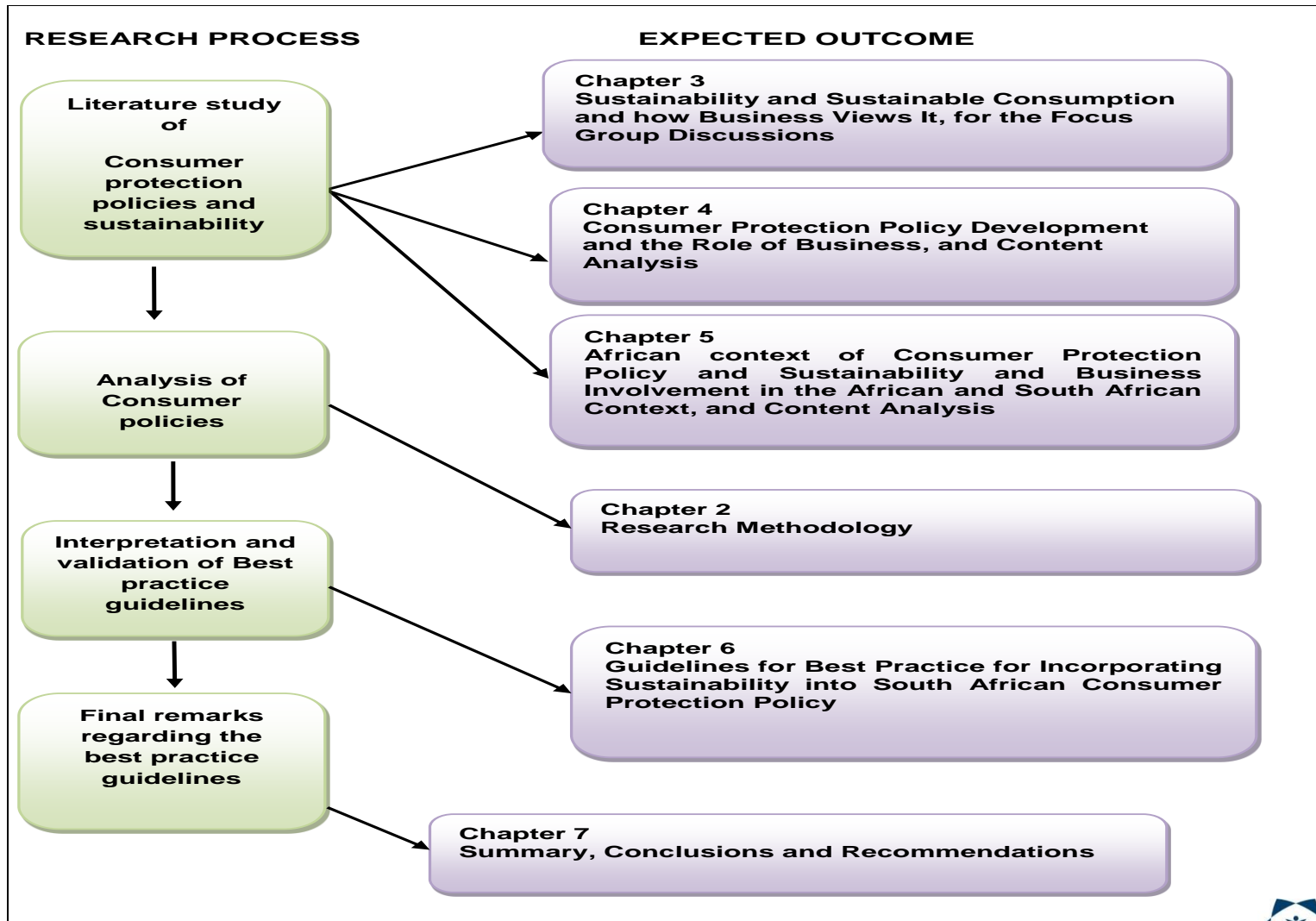
- ❑ How sustainability can be incorporated into consumer protection policies in South Africa, given that currently no such guidelines exist
- ❑ Offer best practice guidelines to Government, and suggest issues for consideration for the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union (AU), for incorporating sustainability into consumer protection policies

CONTRIBUTION OF STUDY

- ❑ Provide best practice guidelines to business so as to respond and implement it
- ❑ Contribute to the academic knowledge of consumer protection and sustainability literature
- ❑ Contribute to the debate on sustainable consumption, in a policy arena with a natural tension between consumer protection policies and sustainability policies

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of the Research Process



Source: Researcher's own construct

The study will draw on international guidelines, noting that consumer protection policy should evolve uniquely for South Africa, shaped by internal political, social, and economic factors within the country as well as by external forces such as globalisation

International agencies should continue to convene global processes to produce guidelines and frameworks for plans of action for incorporating sustainability into consumer protection, to encourage countries to continue this work



Request to draw on expertise of meeting participants to strengthen the research and to share information of policy examples from respective countries of how sustainability has been incorporated into consumer protection



THANK YOU

