

New technologies key to transforming SA's agriculture sector

Agriculture industry stakeholders in the Western Cape recently met to discuss ways in which local and global development in the fourth industrial revolution (4IR) could be tracked and monitored. "The industry needs to be able to recognise trends and they need to be responsible about adopting new technologies within the context of local realities," Dirk Troskie, director of business planning and strategy in the Western Cape Department of Agriculture said at the workshop, held in Stellenbosch.



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Troskie pointed out that discussions, such as the debate facilitated by the workshop, are key in driving change and recognition.

"This forum was important in that, for the first time, we had key stakeholders together to strategise a way forward with clear reporting mechanisms," he explained. "During this workshop, we asked a number of questions which facilitated discussion on a wide spectrum of trends and technologies that underpin 4IR."

During the workshop, facilitated by WorkInProgress – an Absa innovation lab – stakeholders debated the principles which should inform an environmental scanning process, including how the scanning process such be conducted, who the target groups are, and how the results are communicated.

While the detailed format will be finalised in due course, it was agreed that the results of the scanning process will be communicated to stakeholders succinctly at appropriate intervals.

Wessel Lemmer, Absa Group senior agricultural economist, said: "We are confident that continuously innovating and working together as a collective to manage the outcome-based implementation of technologies will not only benefit the sector but broadly impact the South African economy to maintain its competitiveness on the global stage."

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