



## Western Cape’s roadmap to a smart agricultural sector

**Government:** Western Cape, South Africa

**Region:** Africa

**Sector:** Land use and forests, Resilience

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### Summary

With increasingly frequent droughts and heat waves in South Africa, agriculture is a very vulnerable sector. Between 2003 and 2014, the costs associated with damages caused by extreme weather events in Western Cape amounted to R5 billion (over US\$413 million), and since 2015 the drought has cost R14 billion (more than US\$1.5 billion) in the agricultural sector alone.

The Smart Agriculture for Climate Resilience (SmartAgri) project was a collaboration between the Western Cape Department of Agriculture (DoA), the Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs & Development Planning (DEA&DP), and the University of Cape Town’s African Climate and Development Initiative (ACDI). Its aim was to convene stakeholders from the agricultural sector including farmers, agricultural organizations and governmental agencies, and provide a roadmap for actions to improve the sector’s resilience to a changing climate. The highly collaborative process started in August 2014 and lasted 20 months. It was structured around three main phases: i) a [Status Quo Review of Climate Change and the Agricultural Sector](#), identifying climate trends already affecting the sector and risks for specific commodities/agro-climatic zones; ii) a series of stakeholder workshops to develop a [Climate Change Response Framework for the Agricultural Sector in Western Cape](#) (better known as SmartAgri Plan), launched in May 2016; and iii) regionally focused workshops for districts and municipalities, to strengthen cooperation between the agricultural sector and local government.

Although the main output of the project – the SmartAgri Plan – has been finalized, the Government and other stakeholders involved are now working on making sure its recommendations are implemented.



## Results

The SmartAgri project generated several outputs, including [16 briefs](#) providing guidance on specific commodities and regions, six case studies showcasing best practices to inspire stakeholders and identify drivers for climate change adaptation and mitigation, and the SmartAgri Plan itself. The Plan has been well received by all the involved parties, and there are regular requests from stakeholders for presentations on the Plan and how they can become part of its implementation.

Since June 2017, the DoA publishes the quarterly [SmartAgri Barometer](#) to help drive and energize the collaborative implementation of the SmartAgri Plan. Each issue presents current projects and initiatives contributing towards the implementation and is followed by a quarterly radio panel interview.

The DoA will conduct its first monitoring and evaluation of the project in 2018.

## Enabling conditions

The SmartAgri project builds on the Western Cape Climate Change Response Strategy (WCCCRS 2014) coordinated by the DEA&DP, and is the first sectoral response framework and plan in the province. The DoA and DEA&DP provided R2.85 million (over US\$235,600) initial funding for the development of the SmartAgri Plan. Its implementation is now mostly financed through existing budgets (within the government and the sector) dedicated to resilience projects in line with the recommendations provided.

## Challenges

Limited financing and lack of human capacity have proven challenging throughout the process. There are also competing priorities: while it is essential to make sure that the implementation of the Plan goes beyond short-term, easy to implement actions, it is especially difficult to finance and build momentum around the long-term, more transformative aspects of the Plan.

## Key lessons learned

A few criteria were key to ensure the success of the process, including:

- A combination of a top-down and bottom-up approach, with a **strong drive and buy-in from the government** (through a unique collaborative effort between the DOA and DEA&DP and significant dedicated funding) coupled with continuous **stakeholder engagement and consultation**.
- A **system-based approach**. Workshops were conducted in all the province's districts and covered various sectors (including disaster management and land-use planning), commodities and agro-climatic zones.
- **The SmartAgri Plan** was designed to provide a clear, practical but non-prescriptive roadmap accessible to all stakeholders. It also identified six short and medium-term priority projects to begin the process required for long-term resilience.
- The Plan was supported by a wide range of **communications** products, with clear and impactful branding.

## More information

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**Project website:** [greenagri.org.za/smartagri-2](http://greenagri.org.za/smartagri-2)