

Request to diarize the date for the launch of the Rain for Africa (R4A) Project

You are kindly invited to diarize the date of **23 November 2016, Pretoria, South Africa** for the launch of the Rain for Africa (R4A) project.

The R4A project will make a significant contribution to empowering the most important actors in the food production chain: the farmers. The project aims at providing the correct information at the right moment to food producers, to help improve the quality and quantity of food production in a sustainable manner, thereby ensuring local food security. Information from in situ monitoring, earth observations with satellites, geo-data and modelling will be translated into agricultural advice for farmers. This will be accessible via the web and mobile technologies (computers, cell phones and tablets) to facilitate higher crop yields and more efficient use of inputs such as seed, water, pesticides and fertilizer.

R4A envisions one central access point for all historical, actual and forecast weather information in Africa through a portal supported by an operational data stream, with straightforward connections to any meteorological data source such as weather radars, satellites and weather stations. Applications for integrating weather data with expert agricultural knowledge will be developed and made accessible at an affordable price to farmers, national weather services, added value providers and other potential clients in southern Africa.

The project's aim is to meet the information needs of a number of different users, including national weather services, local commercial and smallholder farmers, input suppliers and financial service providers. Applications will be tailored to provide user specified information to these diverse groups and the R4A platform will be customized to meet the requirements of the specific applications to be developed. Smallholder farmers will be engaged via a participatory model and will receive data and information for free. The target of the project is to reach 125 000 smallholder farmers within southern Africa, to increase their income by 10% and to decrease their input costs by 10%.

Confirmation of the venue and programme will follow soon.

We are looking forward to meeting you at the launch of this exciting and cutting-edge project.

Contact Terry Newby, terry@arc.agric.za, for an invitation letter.