

## Re-designing the approach to development in South Africa

Aart-Jan Verschoor, a manager in the ARC's Sustainable Rural Livelihoods Division, attended an ICRA course in 1995. He was inspired to investigate how economic diversity and cost-reducing mechanisms could be integrated into agricultural development strategies. 'This study represents the culmination of a 9-year journey, which started in 1995, when I was introduced to agricultural development. Participating in an ICRA course changed my professional life, redirecting me to serve the resource-poor farming community of South Africa. I am grateful for the role that ICRA staff played in enlightening me as to the complexities of small-scale agriculture and the uneven playing fields on which smallholders must operate.'



After conducting detailed studies in South Africa's North West Province, Verschoor was able to re-design his research approach in a way that empowers farmers, addresses the diversity of farmers' attitudes and aptitudes, gives them ownership and integrates them into the production

chain. 'This approach is more cost-effective and enables even resource-poor farmers to contribute to economic growth and development.'