

Overview: Research

Futures of Agricultural Employment 2035

2021



Client need

The services of the Institute for Futures Research at Stellenbosch Business School were retained to explore the futures of work in the agricultural sector of South Africa. This was a comprehensive project, spanning 10 months in duration and involving a number of stakeholders. These included government, industry, and interest groups. To formulate a robust and multi-faceted futures perspective, the IFR employed a selection of futures methodologies to analyse and crystallise this problem, with the purpose of constructing alternative scenarios of agricultural employment for South Africa toward 2035.

The **two pivotal uncertainties**, are:

- **The composition of the market:** The extent to which there is a balance between mega, small and subsistence farmers and other enterprises within the agri sector.
- **Appropriate skills:** The extent to which potential and current participants possess relevant knowledge and proven abilities. It also includes extent to which knowledge transfer is appropriate and successful.

Design

Strategic Research Briefing

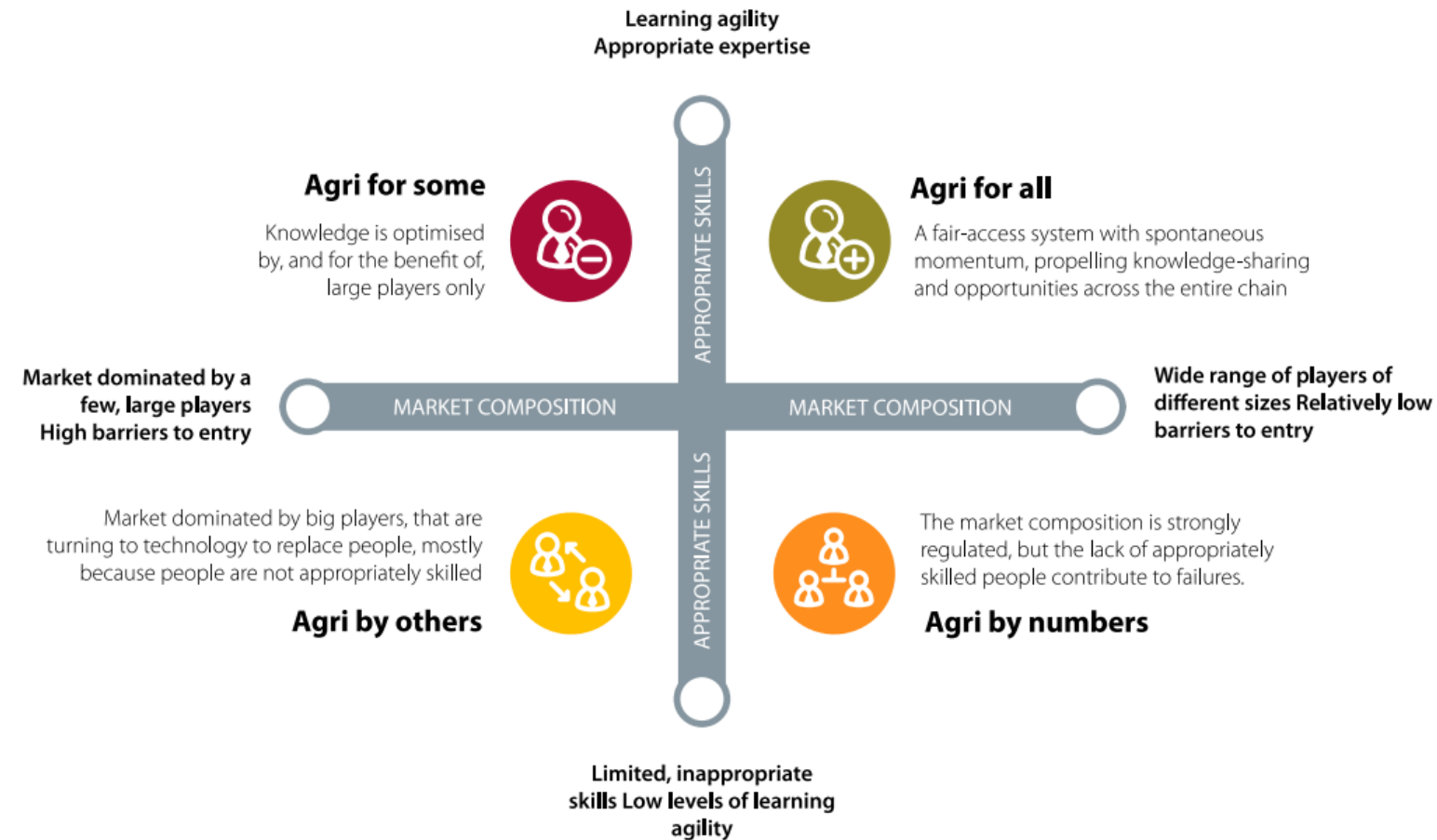
Desktop research

Research colloquium workshop

Scenario crafting session

Write up of Scenario stories and final report

Brief overview of the scenarios



Agriculture skills for the future could be categorised as follows:

- Soft skills: collaboration/teamwork, communication, customer service, business principles, and sales.
- Systems thinking (design thinking, critical thinking, exponential thinking, process, project management, problem solving).
- Technology integration (low tech and high tech, engineering and analysis).
- Data management (storage, analysis, collection, security).
- Basic natural sciences (soil, biology, plant, animal).

Brief overview of the scenarios

- **Five mini-scenarios** add richness to the report, and may help users to ‘see’ potential futures:
 - How aquaculture became a sector leader in South African agriculture
 - Urban farmers taking the lead
 - Land philosophy – how efficient usage finally trumped the political agenda
 - How agri became cool
 - Filling the missing middle