Virtual Irrigation Academy

a journey from Monitoring to Learning to Governance

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• Two minutes on the VIA
• Four minutes on how we got here
• Three minutes on the journey from Monitoring to Learning to Governance
How did we get here?
“tertiary education responsible for the training of extension staff and managers, agricultural research institutions responsible for innovation in smallholder irrigation, and public extension responsible to guide and support farmer development, have all fallen short of fulfilling their mandates”

W van Averbeke, J Denison and PNS Mnkeni (2011)
• Unclear ownership and roles
• Unsustainable plot sizes
• Incomprehensible participatory approaches
• Unbearable cycles of failure and rehabilitation
PEOPLE CENTRED LEARNING

• guided, practical, field-based investigations through which farmers learn for themselves

• identify ways of addressing their challenges through observation, testing and monitoring

• share findings through common interest groups
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>VIA R&amp;D project commissioned</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>other projects wanted our gear</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>set up a production facility in Pretoria</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>20 countries</td>
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<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Started phase 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>tens of thousands of sensors deployed</td>
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<td>2021</td>
<td>over 3700 users / user groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>set up a not-for-profit company</td>
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<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>funding ends – new journey begins</td>
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from Monitoring to Learning to Governance
The roots go deeper than I thought. Soil looks dry but there is sufficient water below. Too much water leaches the nutrients. We don’t need to fight over water.
I must apply less fertiliser more often

Why is the crop so green when the nitrate is so low?

How do you get rid of salinity?

Manure stays longer in the soil
Governance

Come and see us at booth 8