

NAME OF FIRM:	Associate at OABS Development Pty Ltd
NAME OF STAFF:	Jacobus Martin Laubscher
PROFESSION:	Agricultural Economist & Strategist
DATE OF BIRTH	16 May 1951
YEARS WITH FIRM:	2 years
NATIONALITY:	South African

QUALIFICATIONS

- 1973 B Com (Agricultural Economics, Economics & Statistics) - University of the Free State
 - 1974 B Com Hons (Agricultural Economics) - University of the Free State
 - 1976 MS (Agricultural Economics) - University of Illinois, USA
 - 1982 PhD (Agricultural Economics) - University of the Free State
 - 1991 Advanced Executive program - University of South Africa
 - 1998 Developing the Professional Entrepreneur - University of the Witwatersrand, Graduate School of Business
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EXPERIENCE

Kobus Laubscher is an independent agricultural economist and strategist, advising agri-businesses, farmers and government, nationally and internationally. As business leader he is currently involved in various initiatives and projects to make the environment more conducive for sustainable agriculture. The premise is that sustainable rural development can only follow if farming in that particular area is profitable. Emphasis falls on making agriculture better because profits mean money in hand, which in turn decomposes poverty pressure. Various initiatives have to be evaluated towards intent, content, outcome and impact.

Evidently Dr Laubscher is also actively engagement on policy level ensuring that farmers, commercial and emerging, remain pivotal in starting and upholding a growth revolution in rural areas within a policy environment that is collaborative, enabling and engaging. Primarily policy efficacy evaluation is paramount. As the Chairman of the Audit Committee of the Free State Department of Agriculture and Rural Development he has oversight responsibility to empower the agricultural sector through the provisioning and facilitation of efficient agricultural development support and investment solutions in order to ensure rural development, constant economic growth and sustainable livelihoods. He is a renowned and respected Agricultural Economist within South Africa and the wider SADC. This is evident from from current and past positions: Honorary Member of the Agricultural Economics Society of South Africa, member of the Economic Advisory Council of the Free State Province (representing agricultural interests), Member and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the SA National Productivity Institute (representing the agricultural sector interests and as a Fellow of the World Academy of Productivity Science, the first recipient thereof in SA Agriculture), Expert Witness as Forensic Agricultural Economist in different high court cases (exceeding 130 cases), part time Professor at the University of Free State lecturing agricultural economics. Current and past membership of private companies include Farmvision, Agrico, Sustainable Commodity Trading and Bergfoods.

He has 35 years' experience practicing as an agricultural economist –having undertaken more than 50 consulting assignments in the agricultural economics field over the past 15 years. He has a wide knowledge of the total agricultural spectrum – whilst specialising in the livestock and meat industry, he has also undertaken national assignments regarding pricing models and financial structuring for the maize industry, the potato industry, marketing within the agricultural sector at large, etc. He also has extensive knowledge and experience of support rendering to emerging and small-scale farmers and production systems – serving on various task teams. This imperative evolved from a reevaluation of the role agriculture can play in economic development and consequently revolutionary economic growth to improvement of living conditions beyond decreasing food insecurity. Rural development is key and prominence is given in the national development strategies of several countries.

He has had leadership responsibilities towards moving the paradigm of rural development that has traditionally centred on the exploitation of land-intensive natural resources such as agriculture and forestry towards incorporation of changes in global production networks and market requirements. In this regard increased urbanization have changed the character of rural areas, demanding different resource extraction and role for agriculture. Laubscher is leading initiatives, strategically and operational, to put more emphasis on locally produced economic development strategies. His exposure and adherence to corporate governance has earned respect and board level involvement enables networking and negotiations with governments and private sector. Dr Laubscher is also known and respected as an excellent communicator willing and able to engage on a cross-cutting basis, from talking to farmers under a tree to negotiating improved terms of reference with the president of a country.