

Strengthening the pluralistic  
agricultural extension system:  
*a Zimbabwean case study*



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**IP**

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## Preface and acknowledgement

The **Integrated Support to Sustainable Development and Food Security Programme (IP)** is a programme of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The IP seeks to promote multidisciplinary collaboration within FAO and with the public sector and civil society in order to enhance sustainable development and food security.

From its inception in 1998 until the end of Phase-I in the spring of 2002 more than 27 national protocols were implemented in the partner countries, Namibia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. One of the activities the IP carried out in Zimbabwe in Phase-I was a research on the pluralistic agricultural extension systems in the country, with funding from the Governments of Norway and Finland. The study was conducted in 2001 for the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) and other national partners under the auspices of the IP. The principle draft research report was prepared by B.T. Hanyani-Mlambo.

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## Acronyms

AGRITEX	Department of Agricultural, Technical and Extension Services
ARC	Agricultural Research Council
CAMPFIRE	Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources
CIMMYT	International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center
DR&SS	Department of Research and Specialist Services
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FSRE	farming systems research and extension
GDA	group development area
GTZ	German Agency for Technical Cooperation
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ITDG	Intermediate Technology Development Group
LDT	Livestock Development Trust
NGO	non-governmental organization
PCC	Project Coordination Committee
RAAKS	rapid appraisal of agricultural knowledge systems
RLG	radio listening group
SAFIRE	Southern Alliance for Indigenous Resources
SWOT	strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (analysis)
T&V	training and visit

## Executive summary

*In Zimbabwe, pluralism and lack of coordination among extension service providers at the grassroots level are causing lower outputs and confusion at farmers' expense. This calls for coordination and collaboration to improve effectiveness and avoid the duplication and wastage of scarce resources. This study examines the current status of Zimbabwe's local extension system, and aims to develop a collaborative strategy to ensure its efficiency. The study uses the rapid appraisal of agricultural knowledge systems (RAAKS) methodology, complemented by qualitative research techniques such as key informant (stakeholder) interviews and discussions.*

*The Department of Agricultural, Technical and Extension Services (AGRITEX) is the Zimbabwean government's principal extension agency and the largest public rural intervention agency with representatives at the national, provincial, district and village levels. AGRITEX offers a blanket public good service, which farmers are expected to use. However, while large-scale commercial farmers perceive AGRITEX as generally not competent to provide advisory services to their subsector, the smallholder sector's adoption of available technologies has not reached expected levels. Among the other organizations providing agricultural services to large-scale and smallholder farmers are public community development and agricultural extension service providers, public research-cum-extension organizations, donor-supported rural development programmes, international and private research centres, farmers' associations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and bilateral donors, private agrochemical input suppliers, commodity processors and what has been conceptualized as "bat" actors.*

*There is great diversity among organizations in terms of their organizational mandates, motivation for extension work, major extension approaches used, extension or community development programmes implemented, sources of funding, sustainability of that funding, geographic areas covered, profiles of target populations or beneficiaries, coverage, mobility capacity, and effectiveness on the ground. Among the agricultural extension approaches that have been tried in pre- and post-independence Zimbabwe are the group development area (GDA) approach, master farmer training schemes, the radio listening group (RLG) approach, the training and visit (T&V) system, the farming systems research and extension (FSRE) methodology and the commodity-based approach. Some of these approaches have been abandoned for various reasons, while others are still in use.*

*A strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis was conducted to analyse the various SWOTs within both organizations and the agricultural extension system as a whole. This study also carried out an additional SWOT analysis at the category level, which focused on categories of extension service providers. As expected, different organizations and categories of agricultural extension service providers had different SWOTs. The qualifications, competence and experience of personnel have improved over the years. Understanding of community needs has improved greatly, while the empowerment of communities has led to an increased demand for services. However, technical knowledge in a number of new enterprises, such as ostrich and crocodile farming is still scarce. In addition, financial support is limited for the majority of organizations, and most lack an integrated approach to agricultural extension, despite the rhetoric of recent years.*

*Opportunities exist in various fields, and the need for interventions has grown over the years. Despite the threat of donor fatigue and the withdrawal of major donors as a result of various socio-politico-economic factors, some donors are still interested in funding programmes that are well designed and have a demonstrated impact. There are also excellent opportunities for government agencies and NGOs to establish strategic alliances (collaboration arrangements) with the local private companies that have stakes in various sectors. However, the system is still threatened by factors that include donor fatigue, HIV/AIDS and natural disasters.*

*Formal institutional linkages and informal networks emerge as a result of particular interventions. Both are characterized by joint planning, joint implementation (including field visits), division of tasks, and sharing of information and resources. Both also tend to be more pronounced at the district and local levels (the operation levels) than at the head office or provincial levels, but there are a few formal linkages at the*

administrative (head office) level. Conceptually, formal linkages differ markedly from informal networks. Formal linkages are very institutional in nature and have written and laid down goals and procedures. Informal networks depend more on individual efforts to network than on organizational mandates or initiatives. In formal linkages, organizations are represented on the boards of other collaborating institutions. Informal linkages or networks depend on personal contact and cooperation among the members of different state agencies, NGOs, international organizations and groups of farmers and tend to be developed when there is a need for such collaboration. Informal networks can sometimes be based on the objective of a reciprocal exchange of information and favours in which the emphasis is on a one-to-one networking effort, as opposed to the organizational culture that characterizes most formal linkages.

One of this study's major findings is that many stakeholders perceive no clear-cut lines between what can be considered a formal linkage and what an informal network; they see linkages and networks as a single concept in collaboration efforts. Discussions with informants also revealed that formal linkages among agricultural extension service providers are weak because they tend to be more personalized than institutional.

The local agricultural extension system is also characterized by numerous interfaces, which arise from the context of a multitude of different actors, backgrounds, mandates and experiences, and the resultant diversity of world-views, perceptions, real objectives, practices and strategies. Several factors are usually at work: **political factors** refer to institutional politics and the interest groups that play a role within them; **technical factors** are the methods and activities that are associated specifically with the development and dissemination of agricultural technology; and **organizational factors** include the division of tasks, resources and authority among different organizations and individuals, and the internal management and informal dynamics of each organization and its components.

Perceptions of which attributes indicate the success or failure of an intervention tend to be as diverse as the backgrounds of the key informants. However, the majority of informants highlighted that a successful project has to have a positive impact on the ground, evidence of ripple effects outside the project area and sustainability within and outside that area. Those who had a different perspective argued that regardless of whether a project is conceived as a success or a failure, there are always useful lessons and experiences to be gained from it. Thus, according to some stakeholders, all interventions are, in some way, positive. In addition, the researcher's opinion is that some interventions were not judged fairly and should be looked at more closely.

There is a need to strengthen and expand existing linkages through including more actors and injecting more funds, because linkages are costly. In addition, linkages should also be established where they are not already in place. This report considers several alternatives, including umbrella strategies at the national level and more specific strategies designed to coordinate activities at the operational level (e.g. at the district level). Specific recommended collaboration strategies include using project coordination committees, utilizing and strengthening the coordination functions of rural district councils, establishing coordination platforms, creating a coordination function within the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) and strengthening informal farmer networks. Several geographic locations were suggested as possible pilot study areas: the Chinyika Resettlement Scheme, the Gokwe Dairy Development Programme project and the Mkwesine Sugar Estate Out-grower Scheme.

In practical terms, ensuring that recommended strategies remain effective may be a difficult task. There is a need for a thorough understanding of institutional politics because organizations have several – sometimes divergent – agendas, some of which remain hidden. Several issues are at play where intervention contexts are characterized by a multiplicity of actors. Under such settings, reaching consensus requires much patience and initiative. Thus, a thorough understanding of institutional and organizational politics is essential if the goal of establishing effective linkages and sustainable development is to be achieved.

## Introduction

### Background

Agricultural extension plays an important catalytic role in agricultural and rural development. It brings the farming community information and new technologies that can be adopted to improve production, incomes and standards of living. Agricultural extension provides a channel through which farmers' problems can be identified for research and for the modification of agricultural policies to the benefit of rural communities. The extension system also provides a framework through which farmers are organized into functional groups in order to gain access to production resources such as credit, inputs, marketing services and information on government development programmes.

In Zimbabwe, there are numerous extension service providers, including, especially: public-funded institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), commodity processors, farmers' associations, and private agrochemical input suppliers. Smallholder farmers rely heavily on public extension systems, which are experiencing increasing operational difficulties as a result of dwindling resources. On the other hand, NGOs have better financial resources, but service only small clienteles and deal with only limited numbers of commodities. Various grassroots-level extension providers operate with specific objectives and outputs that are of little significance to productivity and sustainable agricultural development. Pluralism in agricultural extension allows farmers to choose among alternatives because the various extension providers offer different services. However, the levels of pluralism and uncoordinated extension services at the grassroots level are resulting in lower outputs and confusion, at farmers' expense. This calls for the facilitation of coordination and collaboration among both public and private extension providers in order to ensure a unified service and to avoid duplication and wastage of scarce resources. Based on this justification, this study seeks to examine the current status of the local extension system and aims to develop a collaborative strategy to ensure its effectiveness and efficiency. The study is an input to an all-stakeholder workshop and pilot programme for the recommended collaborative extension strategies.

### Study objectives

Within the main objectives of examining the current status of the local extension system and developing a collaborative strategy to ensure its effectiveness and efficiency, the specific objectives and Terms of Reference were:

- i) to carry out a critical analysis of the current extension system;
- ii) to highlight the conventional approaches to agricultural extension;
- iii) to develop a picture of who is providing what kind of extension service for community development;
- iv) to identify current and potential partnerships among service providers within the country;
- v) to identify successful experiences in improving smallholder livelihoods;
- vi) to assess the individual and collective strengths and weaknesses of the service providers;
- vii) to recommend cases for further documentation;
- viii) to recommend collaborative extension strategies;
- ix) to identify, recommend and justify three potential pilot areas.

## Methodology

The basic research approach used was the rapid appraisal of agricultural knowledge systems (RAAKS) methodology, adapted from Engel and Salomon (1993). The RAAKS methodology is characterized by the active participation of all actors in problem definition, situation analysis and the identification of

constraints to, and opportunities for, improvement. Complementary research methodologies include qualitative research techniques such as key informant (stakeholder) interviews, as well as formal and informal discussions with selected informants. Through this methodology, the study critically analysed systems' capacities, constraints, strengths and weaknesses; individual organizations' roles, perceptions, resource endowments and collaborating partners; and the profiles and extension needs of beneficiaries. Information from desk studies was also used. The target population for the study was defined as consisting primarily of all stakeholders within the public and private extension systems. Interviewed key informants included farmers, technical officers in farmers' organizations, senior extension staff at the head office and provincial levels, field extension agents, NGO representatives and the heads of both private and public extension service providers. Provincial centres visited included Marondera, Gweru and Masvingo, while the rural districts visited included Wedza, Gokwe and Chivi. The Beatrice large-scale commercial farming area acted as the source area for interviews with commercial farmers. Annex 1 contains a guide for key informant interviews.



## The agricultural extension system in Zimbabwe

### Historical and organizational background

In Zimbabwe, agricultural extension was introduced in 1927 by Emory D. Alvord, who started with nine agricultural demonstration workers. Later, the Department of Conservation and Extension (Conex) and the Department of Agricultural Development (Devag) were established. The former had the institutional mandate to provide advisory services to white large-scale commercial farmers, while the latter was meant to service native smallholder farming communities. At independence in 1980, the Department of Agricultural, Technical and Extension Services (AGRITEX) was formed as an amalgamation of Conex and Devag.

Particularly in its early days, AGRITEX faced some fairly serious problems, especially the loss of experienced staff between 1981 and 1985. As a result, both institutional memory and technical expertise in dealing with farmers (particularly large-scale commercial farmers) were lost. This was compounded by the arrival of new staff who had limited practical knowledge of dealing with farmers and providing technical expert advice. In addition, given that AGRITEX was a product of two organizations with different philosophies and experiences in dealing with farmers from different socio-economic backgrounds, it spent much of the past 20 years experimenting and establishing itself as a service for all farmers, but especially smallholder farmers.

### Agricultural extension approaches used in Zimbabwe

#### ***The group development area approach***

This approach was used throughout the 1960s and most of the 1970s, when a large number of group development areas (GDAs) were established in Mashonaland East Province, particularly in Murewa and Mutoko Districts. The GDA approach was based on area and project development through community participation in which, in some cases, the local people provided labour while government or donors provided the necessary inputs. The GDA concept allowed the extension service to penetrate difficult areas and introduce agricultural extension technology, as well as making it easier to introduce other development initiatives closely related to agriculture. The main drawbacks were: it was usually difficult to direct services to the needy; the focus on a particular individual or group could preclude support and services for other deserving clientele; a heavy reliance on government and donors made projects vulnerable in the event of government deficit or donor weariness; and the approach assumed that all farmers faced similar problems and operated in a homogenous environment.

#### ***Master farmer training schemes***

A more widely adopted approach was the master farmer training scheme, which originated in the 1930s as a way to develop competent farmers (Chipika, 1985; Pazvakavambwa, 1994). In pre-independence Zimbabwe, most extension agents' efforts to improve smallholder agriculture followed this approach. The objective of master farmer training was to spread modern, scientific farming techniques in communal areas. Master farmer certificates and badges were awarded to communal farmers who adopted and practised improved methods. This extension approach was based on the "trickle-down" theory of extension, in which a few progressive farmers receive extension and information, which they are expected to pass on to other farmers through farmer-to-farmer dissemination and demonstration. One of the successes of these schemes was the high adoption rate of very visible innovations such as hybrid maize (Billing, cited in, Hemmes and Vissers, 1988). However, the programme failed to produce notable yield increases in many African crops because the marketing of surplus crops was difficult.

After independence AGRITEX upgraded the master farmer training scheme to include an Advanced Master Farmer Training Programme. In spite of accusations that the scheme benefits only better-off farmers, excludes the bulk of communal farmers and has little contact with other target groups, thereby actually increasing existing income differentials among social groups, it remains at the core of AGRITEX's work (Mutimba, 1997).

### ***The radio listening group approach***

The radio listening group (RLG) approach is widely used in developing countries, including Zimbabwe, where it has been tried in Chimhanda and Nswazi communal areas (Mudiwa, 1997). This approach involves gathering farmers together in groups to listen to radio programmes that address either specific geographic areas or the whole nation, depending on the heterogeneity of the farming regions. The farmer groups then discuss the extension issues raised in the programmes, and help each other to overcome any difficulties of understanding before applying any of the programmes' messages or technologies that are relevant or useful. The RLG approach helps farmers to learn about what other farmers are doing elsewhere. In addition, it creates awareness and interest at a relatively low cost per capita. On the other hand, most radio programmes provide only a one-way flow of information and lack feedback facilities. Furthermore, many African countries have only one central transmitter, which broadcasts to the whole country, so local and regional news items are often regarded as irrelevant. For example, Zimbabwean RLGs found lessons on coffee, potato, tobacco and caster bean production irrelevant to their needs (Mudiwa, 1997). Broadcasts on inconvenient week days or at busy times of day can also have a negative influence on the effectiveness and usefulness of this approach.

### ***The training and visit system***

The training and visit (T&V) system is an extension management system that was developed for the World Bank by Daniel Benor (Benor and Harrison, 1977). It was aimed at upgrading the technical content of field extension activities, while making agents' activities more predictable – and thus more accessible – to farmers. The idea was to increase the effectiveness of agricultural extension services through comprehensively structured training, delivery and administrative systems. In the approach, “proven agricultural practices”, usually from international and national research centres, are translated into packages of practice recommendations. These are then passed down the extension organization's hierarchy from subject matter specialists to agricultural extension officers, who adapt recommendations to their specific areas before passing them on to village-level extension workers. Extension workers then pass the recommendations to contact farmers, who diffuse them to other farmers. In Zimbabwe, the system was modified to use extension groups instead of contact farmers. The T&V extension schedule works on a fortnightly cycle: the first week is for training and the second for visiting (evaluating progress). Subject matter specialists act as a link between research and extension, while regular training and visits are designed to facilitate linkages between extension and farmers.

T&V proved to be an excellent extension management system in irrigation projects, which follow strict timetables, but had only limited success in dryland farming. In the Midlands and Mashonaland West provinces, it contributed to increased cash crop production by smallholder farmers. The T&V system was abandoned after ten years, when evaluations found it inappropriate for a nation where resources are limited, farmers are generalists in their activities and the biophysical environment makes it impossible to follow a strict timetable (Hanyani-Mlambo, 1995). Limited farmer participation caused it to follow a top-down orientation, resulting in inappropriate and irrelevant technologies; the flow of information frequently stopped at the contact farmer/group level; and only a small proportion of farming families benefited, leading to inequalities. The rural poor who really need help were not being reached. The system was also criticized for being too mechanical in its implementation and for lacking the flexibility to make it more relevant to the needs and environment of smallholder farmers (Pazvakavambwa, 1994).

### ***Farming systems research and extension***

The farming systems research and extension (FSRE) methodology was developed as a direct response to the failure of various prescriptive agricultural development models and the realization that many recommended technologies, although technically sound, were not relevant to the objectives and socio-economic circumstances of smallholder farmers or were inappropriate to the agro-ecological conditions (Mettrick, 1993). The FSRE methodology is centred on problem solving, and is systems-oriented, interdisciplinary, farmer-oriented and iterative. It emphasizes the role of constraint diagnosis and on-farm trials as a way of facilitating linkages among the farmers, researchers and extension workers. In Zimbabwe, FSRE has largely been championed by the Farming Systems Research Unit within the Department of Research and Specialist Services (DR&SS), while AGRITEX has been more active at the grassroots level where extension workers identify trial farmers and monitor on-farm trials.

The most important innovation of FSRE is its focus on the smallholder farmer. Research and extension programmes are no longer determined exclusively by the priorities of research stations and extension organizations but by the needs of the farmers and their specific farming systems. The farming systems perspective also involves far greater concern for local resource utilization, including the use of traditional knowledge. However, traditional FSRE has tended to be more extractive than participatory, resulting in a failure to start the research and dissemination process at the farmer level. Past and current FSRE efforts have also tended to emphasize traditional cropping systems, and paid little attention to livestock components or systems. It has been criticized for its weaknesses in drawing extension considerations from practice and in incorporating its findings into the extension system.

### ***Commodity-based approach***

The commodity-based approach in agricultural extension is generally organized through parastatal organizations or private firms and is very important for cash crops or export crops. In Zimbabwe, the major cash crops are tobacco, cotton, sugar cane and a diversity of horticultural commodities. For tobacco, the commodity-based approach has not yet been very successful owing to poor attendance. On the other hand, the cotton production sector has been greatly helped by a crop research programme supported by effective commodity-based extension, which has also established some successful out-grower schemes. Smallholder farmer participation in sugar cane production has risen as a result of the commodity-based approach in which private companies offer extension and processing facilities. In horticulture, the approach has been widely used to establish out-grower schemes and provide research, extension and input credit services to interested farmers.

Despite an illustrious history and remarkable achievements, the commodity-based extension approach has drawbacks. It often gives monopoly power to the parastatals and/or crop processing or marketing companies, thus enabling them to make excess profits at the expense of struggling, and at times poverty-stricken, farmers. In addition, poor management or changes to terms of trade and pricing can result in poor returns to farmers. The approach focuses on one crop, sometimes at the expense of a local area's specific needs. Furthermore, it retains characteristics of the conventional top-down extension approach, which does not give freedom to farmers and stifles their initiatives.

### Effectiveness of current agricultural extension services

Within AGRITEX, there is little information on how many farmers it is actually reaching and servicing. The extension agency offers a blanket public good service, which farmers are expected to use. Large-scale commercial farmers perceive AGRITEX as generally not competent to provide advisory services to their subsector. The majority of these farmers rely on support services from private agro-based companies. Within the smallholder sector, farm households have adopted fully the use of maize hybrid seed, but the adoption and use of supportive technologies, such as fertilizers, pesticides and recommended agronomic management practices, is generally well below 40 percent across the country (Mudimu, 1998).

AGRITEX is only able to recommend technologies that were made available 15 to 20 years ago. The problems of inappropriate technology are most serious in the low-rainfall and marginal agro-ecological zones (i.e. agro-ecological regions III to V). Most farmers indicated that, where they have not adopted recommended technologies, they use either technologies from their own informal experiments or modifications of recommended technologies. AGRITEX has neither systematically identified farmer-developed technologies that work nor adapted these for extension to other farmers in other wards, districts or provinces. This problem has been compounded by an ever-dwindling operating budget and lack of transport, which have also severely limited extension agents' contact with farmers. According to one key informant, "AGRITEX's financial woes and the government's expectations are like trying to milk a cow without feeding it", a scenario reflected by too many demands and insufficient financial backing.

Several other organizations provide agricultural services to large-scale and smallholder farmers. These services range from NGO-funded, community-based, production-oriented projects, which are aimed at income generation and improved family health and welfare, to the provision of agroservices by private companies. The current relationship between AGRITEX and NGOs is that AGRITEX is used as a technical service to back-up NGO-funded projects. AGRITEX mobilizes the farmers, helps to organize them so they can receive the service and, working hand-in-hand with project staff, provides advisory services to both project staff and farmers. All private sector agroservice companies work with AGRITEX when extending their commercial services to agricultural producers. AGRITEX personnel mobilize and organize the farming community to facilitate the commercial activities of these private sector companies. In addition, AGRITEX services are used to provide farmers with technical backup and advice on utilizing the technologies. The heavy reliance on AGRITEX makes it a principal actor in the local extension system. Its weaknesses and the constraints it faces have repercussions throughout the local extension system.

Achievements of the last 20 years include: increased production of crops such as maize and cotton by communal farmers; national development through participation in and the initiation of rural development projects; and restored confidence in professional and technical extension services. AGRITEX has also countered the damage caused by loss of experienced personnel by embarking on a staff development programme, which has strengthened its professional image. In rural areas, the agricultural extension system provides more than extension. It has also played a major role in rural people's development efforts through rural development projects that are planned, initiated and facilitated by AGRITEX; this has been the agency's most significant achievement since independence. AGRITEX has been disbanded under recent restructuring within the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement, thereby placing research and extension functions under the same directorate.

### New agricultural extension approaches

A number of relatively new agricultural extension approaches have emerged, including: participatory extension approaches, participatory learning approaches, participatory rural appraisals, rapid rural appraisals, participatory technology development, farmer field schools, innovative farmer workshops, and look-and-learn tours. In other new and emerging extension approaches – farmer-first, farmer-back-to-farmer, farmer-to-farmer extension and facilitation – extension agents respond to farmers' requests and programmes and visit farmers only when required. These bottom-up approaches enable farmers to take the initiative, make decisions and choose among different service providers, based on an organization's ability to deliver appropriate services. AGRITEX has also been experimenting with project-based extension, in which a group of farmers work on a project, such as pig production, while learning the production aspects that will allow them to implement that project on their own. Although AGRITEX and some of its innovative agricultural extension agents have already begun experimenting with some of these new approaches, they are still in their trial stages and have not yet been fully adopted at the operational level.

## Experiences of improving smallholder farmers' livelihoods

### Perceptions of success and failure

Perceptions on the attributes that indicate success or failure tend to be as diverse as the backgrounds of the key informants. However, the majority of informants highlighted that for a project to be regarded as a success it had to have the following attributes:

- i) a positive impact on the ground, e.g. improvement in community welfare;
- ii) transformation of people's lives, i.e. improves local livelihoods;
- iii) evidence of ripple effects outside the project area;
- iv) improvements in people's perceptions, attitudes and self-confidence, e.g. project committee members vying for councillor's post;
- v) an external organization's investment in infrastructure;
- vi) provision of a lasting solution to local problems;
- vii) sustainability within and outside the project area, so that local people can manage the project after donors, interventionists, etc. have withdrawn.

Based on the projects that informants cited as failures, project failure can be the result of:

- i) failure to influence people's perceptions;
- ii) donor-dependency, in which people wait for donors and government to provide initiatives and the means to initiate and sustain them;
- iii) poor project identification, in which local communities are not involved or projects are not financially viable;
- iv) lack of capacity building of local groups;
- v) lack of management expertise;
- vi) initiatives that are seen as unnecessary within the context of the intervention;
- vii) failure to develop good interpersonal relationships among collaborating institutions or between interventionists and target communities

The donor-dependency syndrome is a vicious circle because, while a few initiatives are designed to help local communities through self-help projects, many donors and/or projects continue merely to hand out donations. Examples include boreholes and agricultural input packages that are acquired and distributed with international donor funding. Supply-led donor programmes have also resulted in projects where detailed reports or documents, rather than results on the ground, are regarded as the ultimate products or outputs. In other cases, donors withdraw prematurely because participatory approaches take longer to implement than top-down approaches.

Regardless of whether a project is perceived as a success or a failure, there are always lessons to be learned from it. More important, whatever the results, the experiences are always useful for the primary beneficiaries of a project. Thus there is always something positive about a project.

### Examples of success stories

According to sources in AGRITEX, the Biotechnology Trust of Zimbabwe has made inroads within the agricultural technology system. The trust implements eight projects on mushroom production, indigenous fruits, drought-tolerant and disease-free maize production, disease-free sweet potato production, biological nitrogen fixation, livestock feed, goat and pig production, and molecular disease diagnosis. To date, the trust, together with collaborating institutions, has developed and made available to farmers numerous cultivars of several crops. In another development, the Biotechnology Trust provided farmers with veterinary kits and training in their use, thereby enabling the farmers to diagnose livestock diseases. The Farmers' Development Trust's intervention in smallholder tobacco production witnessed an increase in yields from about 500 kg to about 2 000 kg per hectare. This

increase is significant, and remarkable, given that yields in areas outside the intervention communities are still about 900 kg per hectare.

In Marange, the Manicaland Development Association implemented a very successful water-harvesting project called the Nyachityu Project. This project is multi-faceted and includes natural resource conservation. In Honde Valley, the Catholic Agency for Development initiated a smallholder irrigation project, in which women practise vibrant horticulture. Another success story is an International Liaison Committee on Food Crops Production project, which established several irrigation systems in Wedza District. The project pulled out about six years ago, but irrigation projects are still running perfectly. In Gokwe South District, the Dairy Development Programme project has witnessed increased milk productivity, while maintaining costs at a minimum owing to the introduction of home-based rations that utilize crushed maize, sunflower cake and a vitamin–mineral mix. The same project won two National Dairy Farmer of the Year Awards and one runner-up between 1995 and 1998.

### ***The ITDG/GTZ Chivi Food Security Project***

The Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG)/German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) Chivi Food Security Project was initiated in response to localized chronic food insecurity in pockets of semi-arid areas of Zimbabwe and the need to ensure that communities are self-sufficient in food supply. The project aimed at understanding the constraints to household food security and addressing these, with the objective of enhancing food security at the grassroots level. A major finding of the initial study was the need to develop individual households' technological capacity to improve production in their very arid and very erratic environments. To achieve this, in 1991, a pilot project with an emphasis on soil and water conservation was set up in Wards 21 and 25 of Chivi District. The project area is characterized by hilly terrain, and the major income-generating activity is horticulture that is based on the local water system, which is why the project focused on soil and water conservation.

The project was implemented within the framework of participatory research and extension approaches in which farmers organized themselves into groups of 70 to 80. The groups were involved in project identification, planning and the elaboration of action plans. The objective was to empower farmers and improve the adoption of technologies. Farmers were exposed to soil and water conservation technologies from areas outside the project area, including infiltration pits and *fanyajuu*. The latter are inverted contour ridges that are designed to retain water on the land, as opposed to the conventional contours used in Zimbabwe, which draw water away from the field and are therefore inappropriate to semi-arid regions, where fields are normally dry because of the prevailing conditions. Another project component was the identification of indigenous soil and water conservation technologies for promotion within the project area. Farmers selected the practices that they preferred, and tried these. They met periodically to discuss the results and any problems encountered, make other observations and suggest possible solutions among themselves. Information was also shared during field days, evaluation meetings, field visits, competitions and, when funds permitted, look-and-learn tours. In the project, farmers adapted technologies and tested their own adaptations. Another interesting feature of the project is that farmers did not adopt whole technologies but bits and pieces of technologies (step-wise adoption of technologies).

The project was a success both in Chivi District itself and, in terms of ripple effects, in Chimedza and Mukaro Wards of Gutu District and various areas of Zaka District. The indicators of success include:

- € the unusually wide range of technologies that farmers in these areas have tried and adopted;
- € people's improved socio-economic conditions, e.g. some originally very poor farmers are now buying their own cattle;
- € local farmers' increased organization and demand for services;
- € the establishment of local farmer institutions as a way of making farmers' demands effective (institutional capacity building);
- € successful capacity building efforts from support institutions.

Extension agents involved in the project tend to be more professional, use participatory approaches in their work and have a different perception of extension and intervention projects. These extension agents view themselves as facilitators in the rural development process rather than providers of technical solutions. An extension worker in

Gutu District was voted the National Extension Worker of the Year and was runner-up for the same award the following season. Other extension staff have already left AGRITEX and joined top NGOs, having been approached without even applying for positions.

Another indicator of success is the initiative's influence on other intervention programmes. Lessons from the pilot project were synthesized to provide guidance for other projects. For example, the Chivi project led to a review of GTZ's work on conservation tillage in Masvingo, and this became known as the Kuturaya Project. The initiative has also influenced AGRITEX's management and training of extension workers, notably in its Agricultural Services Management Programme. All the extension workers in this programme were trained along the lines of the ITDG/GTZ project, which emphasizes the use of participatory approaches. In addition to being a resounding success on the ground, the ITDG/GTZ Chivi Food Security Project also provides an excellent example for nationwide interventions because of the publicity and extensive documentation it received. Project outputs include numerous articles in international journals, books, a joint manual on participatory extension approaches, a video and pamphlets.

The project's success was based mainly on its use of participatory approaches, its addressing of a pressing livelihood need and its acknowledgement of local indigenous knowledge. The project also strengthened the ways in which communities share information, as well as strengthening support from external institutions such as AGRITEX and linking that support to local demand. The project succeeded also because it strengthened various institutions, including traditional leadership. However, as with any initiative, the approach used in the Chivi project presented some constraints, which would need to be solved before it could be used in other projects. The major constraint is the need for extension service providers to reorient their thinking so that they can appreciate their own role as facilitators and not the providers of technical solutions. Such a reorientation requires much time and many resources, and it could encounter resistance from both extension agents and farmers who are used to supply-led extension.

### Examples of failures

Despite the efforts of government, international donors and NGOs, recent years have witnessed an increasing number of failed community irrigation schemes. Most such schemes were designed to enable members of local communities to produce and market horticultural produce to improve their own livelihoods. However, some schemes have ground to a halt as a result of minor technical problems that community groups could have solved. Examples include cases where pump engines broke down and were not repaired or replaced for four or five years. Model B resettlement schemes, which were designed to run as cooperatives, were failures countrywide. In these schemes, groups of farmers were allocated land and jointly managed the production from that land. However, for example, in Mutungagore-Tsamvi in Mount Darwin District, 13 out of 15 cooperatives accumulated huge debts and had to disband. Among other factors, political problems and misconceptions within the groups resulted in minimum efforts being put into joint plots, despite thriving enterprises on subdivided individual plots.

In Wedza, the African Development Fund (ADF) initiated a paprika production and marketing project. To start with, ADF carried out a pilot project in three sites and provided funds (in the form of partial loans and grants) for paprika production, while AGRITEX provided extension services. Buyers and intermediaries were the target market, in which several buyers were to buy the product based on competitive prices. Rather than providing supplementary funds to already established systems such as AGRITEX, the project hired individual consultants who were not only very expensive but also rarely seen on the project site. The hired consultants also absorbed most of the paprika product in bulk and at very low prices for resale. At AGRITEX headquarters in Harare, the project was seen as a success because of the number of farmers who took up paprika production. However, this view was not shared by local evaluations of the project, which were confirmed by the Zimbabwe Farmers' Union's assessment that the intervention had failed because, countrywide, most farmers had stopped producing paprika after failing to establish a market for the crop. A Farmers' Union representative also noted the

unethical trading practices whereby farmers were paid only Z\$115 of the Z\$700 per kilogram realized on export markets.

***The GTZ CARD Programme***

According to several informants, agricultural research and extension interventions in Zimbabwe have generally failed. A typical failure cited by several informants was the Coordinated Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD) Programme, which was initiated and funded by GTZ. This programme was implemented in Gutu District, emphasized land management and concentrated on land-use planning and utilization, crop improvement, livestock development and agroforestry. Millions of dollars were spent on the programme but, when it was phased out in 1994, it seemed not to have had any impact on the ground. According to informants, there is still no evidence of the grazing schemes that were supposed to have been established.

The reasons for the project's failure include donor pressure and the use of top-down approaches. Programme identification and implementation were both based on very top-down approaches: planning was carried out in offices on the assumption that expatriate "experts" understood the local people's problems. This was partly the result of the donor-driven nature of the project. Owing to the nature and source of funding, there was an urgency to meet deadlines, long-term time frames and expected outputs within specific periods. This meant that there was no time to establish community involvement, which could have enabled them to continue with the project (thereby ensuring project sustainability) after the withdrawal of funding. In other words, the programme was affected by donor pressure and failed to involve local communities in project identification, preparation and active participation during implementation. The programme was also a victim of the "touch and vanish" *modus operandi* of some NGOs, whose projects tend to be characterized by very short life spans, which are not long enough to have a tangible impact on the ground. The project has since been redesigned on the basis of participatory approaches – influenced by the successes of the ITDG/GTZ Chivi Food Security Project – and relaunched as the GTZ Integrated Rural Development Project.



## Actors in the pluralistic agricultural extension system

Studies that seek to analyse the collaborations among various individuals, groups and organizations must always identify the different actors that are directly and indirectly involved in the collaboration processes. This is important for: creating a picture of who and what is involved; establishing individual actors' perceptions and how these affect intervention approaches; and highlighting the various strategies and resources that actors mobilize to achieve their individual objectives. Identifying the actors and looking at individual actors' perceptions, strategies, resources and interactions are now acknowledged as critical for the deconstruction of intervention and rural development processes.

The broadest categorization of actors is the classification of all agricultural extension service providers as interventionists. However, successful in-depth analysis requires a more detailed differentiation of categories. A local agricultural extension system presents a multi-actor, multiple-objective scenario from which various actor categories emerge. These include public community development and agricultural extension service providers, public research-cum-extension organizations, donor-supported rural development programmes, international and private research centres, farmers' associations, NGOs and bilateral donors, private agrochemical input suppliers, commodity processors, and "bat" actors. These categories and the actors falling within them are highlighted in the following and discussed in more detail in later sections.

### ***Public community development and agricultural extension service providers***

This category includes all conventional public agricultural and other rural development extension providers.

### ***Public research-cum-extension organizations***

This category comprises traditional public agricultural research establishments that are directly or indirectly involved in agricultural extension as a result of their mandates, the nature of their work at the grassroots level and/or the transformation and evolution of research and extension models towards approaches that are more farmer-participatory.

### ***Donor-supported rural development programmes***

Unlike many government-instituted rural development programmes, donor-initiated and -supported rural development programmes have been highlighted as actors in agricultural and rural development processes. Stakeholders say that this is because such initiatives are usually well-defined vehicles of agricultural extension and other rural development information.

### ***International and private research centres***

A number of international and local private research centres have also been identified as active players in the local agricultural extension system. As is the case with local public research establishments, these institutions are directly or indirectly involved in agricultural extension work for a number of reasons: the need to achieve their objective, which is a wider adoption of developed technologies, owing to the nature of their work at the grassroots level; and/or the transformation and evolution of research and extension approaches.

### ***Farmers' associations***

Farmers' unions and associations emerge as actors not only because they represent their members on the economic and political fronts, but also because they are active in policy advocacy, capacity building programmes and the dissemination of production and marketing information. Two of the four farmers' associations identified represent the two broad categories of farmers in Zimbabwe – commercial and smallholder farmers. The other two are based on a strategic alliance and specific farmer interests.

### ***NGOs and bilateral donors***

For various reasons, NGOs represent some of the more pronounced actors in all rural development contexts. NGOs are known for being relatively well endowed with financial resources for their programmes, their great mobility and their drive for bottom-up approaches. In some sectors, NGOs are associated with great strides in rural development. On the other hand, they have also been accused of promoting donor-dependency, and their rural development programmes have been criticized for lack of sustainability.

### ***Private agrochemical input suppliers***

For virtually all of the private companies that supply agrochemical inputs, direct or indirect involvement in agricultural extension is part of a marketing strategy to increase farmers' awareness of products, achieve a competitive edge and increase market share. Subcategories of these actors include seed houses, fertilizer manufacturers, pesticide and herbicide companies, and credit institutions.

### ***Commodity processors and exporters***

This group of actors is on the periphery of agricultural extension providers, mainly because they are only partially involved in such efforts. Their involvement normally stems from: i) the need to provide information about specific technical production aspects to the groups of farmers who produce on a contract basis on their behalf; and ii) for the same groups of farmers, commodity processors and exporters have also been known to disseminate information on quality and other standards that make either processing easier or exports acceptable.

### ***Bat actors***

The term "bat actors" derives from the animal of that name. Bat actors are intermediaries between agricultural extension service providers (interventionists) and the farmers who are the target groups or the intended beneficiaries of interventionist programmes (local actors). Bat actors are normally used as vehicles in interventionist programmes that involve agricultural extension, rural reforestation and natural resources conservation.

Profiles of various public and non-public providers of extension services are given in Annex 2.

## SWOT analysis of extension service providers

A SWOT analysis makes it possible to assess the various strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOTs) within an organization, or within the agricultural extension system as a whole. In this study, a SWOT analysis was carried out at the category level, and focused on the categories of extension service providers. The following table outlines the findings of that analysis.

Category	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<b>Public agricultural extension service providers and public research organizations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Highly qualified, competent and experienced personnel.</li> <li>- Good in-house training programmes have produced credible staff.</li> <li>- Extensive grassroots coverage with district- and/or village-level representation.</li> <li>- Amalgamation of DR&amp;SS and AGRITEX ensures collaboration between technology generators and disseminators.</li> <li>- Public research system has a broad spectrum of researchers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited financial resources: more than 75 percent of budget goes on salaries; very little left for operational costs.</li> <li>- Poor logistical support: no transport and equipment.</li> <li>- Lagging technical knowledge in new enterprises (e.g. ostrich/crocodile farming).</li> <li>- Bureaucracy and long channels of communication.</li> <li>- Conflicts between line ministries and departments at the expense of rural development programmes and intended beneficiaries.</li> <li>- Lack of self-discipline: few can work without supervision.</li> <li>- High staff turnover leaves some projects/programmes unfinished.</li> <li>- Politically aligned line ministries (e.g. Ministry of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation) are viewed suspiciously.</li> <li>- Counterproductive policies (e.g. technical papers used for career promotion, no consideration of the ground-level impact).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved collaboration and efficiency through department mergers.</li> <li>- Collaboration opportunities among line ministries, departments and other system actors.</li> <li>- Potential for improved effectiveness and efficiency through transformations (e.g. commercialization and cost recovery programmes).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inadequate budgets are declining in real terms (inflation).</li> <li>- Prevailing economic situation: unlikely that government will increase budgetary allocations.</li> <li>- Unstable macroeconomic and political environment.</li> <li>- Donors are withdrawing or scaling down.</li> <li>- Retrenchments usually start at the bottom with the community service providers.</li> </ul>
<b>International and private research centres</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Highly qualified personnel.</li> <li>- Abundant financial resources.</li> <li>- Better logistical support (transport and equipment).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Programmes that are too short to have much impact.</li> <li>- Programmes that are too narrow (sector-focused) to have much impact.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Excellent opportunities for collaboration with public research and extension organizations, private companies and NGOs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Donor fatigue and withdrawal of investments.</li> </ul>
<b>Farmers' associations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Grassroots representation.</li> <li>- More grassroots contact: more aware of farmers' needs.</li> <li>- Member-based (district- and village-level), so effective two-way communication.</li> <li>- Specific interest groups provide</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inadequate budgets (despite donor support).</li> <li>- Technical weaknesses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Better services and more tangible benefits for members would improve the membership base.</li> <li>- Could be self-funding if membership base is improved.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Most are likely to be affected by donor fatigue and investment withdrawal (but not the Commercial Farmers' Union).</li> </ul>

Category	specific, relevant information to clients.	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<b>NGOs and donor-supported rural development programmes</b>	<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Abundant financial resources.</li> <li>- Better logistical support (transport and equipment).</li> <li>- Use multidisciplinary teams and more holistic approaches.</li> <li>- Good networking skills.</li> <li>- Use of participatory and bottom-up approaches ensures effective grassroots and community participation.</li> <li>- Provide training, extension and finance from one source.</li> <li>- Greatly improved understanding of community needs (through accountability and demonstration of impact to donors).</li> <li>- Small independent decision-making units facilitate quick decision-making and greater flexibility in project and programme implementation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Thin on the ground, so very limited coverage.</li> <li>- Lack integrated approach (despite the rhetoric).</li> <li>- Lack information and technical expertise.</li> <li>- Lagging technical knowledge in new enterprises (e.g. ostrich/crocodile farming).</li> <li>- Exist for financial benefits: are dollar-driven.</li> <li>- Funds abused or not passed to the rightful beneficiaries.</li> <li>- Work is too localized.</li> <li>- Programmes that are too short to have much impact.</li> <li>- Programmes that are too narrow (sector-focused) to have much impact.</li> <li>- Ineffective umbrella body: the National Association of NGOs (NANGO).</li> <li>- Overdependence on external financial resources and expatriate technical assistance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Potential for effective programme implementation: cooperative NGOs involve everyone.</li> <li>- Donors will fund well-designed programmes with demonstrated impact.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unstable sociopolitical environment not conducive to normal operations.</li> <li>- Donor fatigue and investment withdrawal.</li> <li>- Political pressure to extend programmes or projects beyond the available resources.</li> <li>- Programmes may be overwhelmed as economic decline and retrenchment lead more and more beneficiaries to seek involvement.</li> <li>- Political pressure may force closures (e.g. NGOs accused of supporting opposition and banned from holding meetings in some areas).</li> </ul>
<b>Private agrochemical input suppliers and commodity processors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Abundant financial resources.</li> <li>- Tend to be collaborative: desire to maximize profits.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Weak in-service training.</li> <li>- Numerous but uncoordinated interventions resulting from scramble for clients.</li> <li>- Poor grassroots representation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved impact on the ground through greater comprehensiveness (e.g. including input credit schemes in on-going programmes).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unfavourable socio-economic environment threatens operations and survival.</li> </ul>
<b>Bat actors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Least-cost option for dissemination and accomplishment of extension objectives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Outdated communication methods (e.g. announcements at schools or shouting from hills) prevent messages from reaching intended receivers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Great opportunities for collaboration with all stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unstable socio-political-economic environment.</li> </ul>
<b>Pluralistic agricultural</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved personnel qualifications, competence and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lagging technical knowledge in new enterprises (e.g. ostrich/crocodile farming).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Greater need for interventions.</li> <li>- Empowered communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Withdrawal of investments (donor fatigue).</li> </ul>

<p><b>extension system</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- experience.</li> <li>- Strong in-service training.</li> <li>- Understand need for rural development: work to improve rural communities.</li> <li>- Improved understanding of community needs.</li> <li>- Empowered communities demand fewer services.</li> <li>- Improved coverage in rural areas.</li> <li>- More officers working at grassroots level: better-articulated community needs; programmes adjusted to changing needs and environmental factors.</li> <li>- Zimbabwe's comparatively high literacy levels.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Time wasting.</li> <li>- Limited financial support.</li> <li>- Lack integrated approach (despite the rhetoric).</li> <li>- Duplication and repetition of failed projects.</li> <li>- Channels of communication are too long to be effective.</li> <li>- Inadequate extension (particularly for emergent farmers).</li> <li>- Lack of collaboration: little effective community development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- demand more services.</li> <li>- Donors will fund well-designed programmes with demonstrated impact.</li> <li>- Opportunities for collaboration among all actors in the pluralistic extension system.</li> <li>- Room to involve local communities in most intervention issues.</li> <li>- Excellent opportunities for strategic government agency/NGO alliances (collaboration arrangements) with local private companies in various sectors, despite threat of donor fatigue and withdrawal (e.g. CAMPFIRE's partnership with local private safari operators).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HIV/AIDS is wiping out gains already made.</li> <li>- Farmers' loss of faith in agricultural extension service providers.</li> <li>- Political pressure to extend the geographic range of interventions designed for specific locations creates problems for programme management and sustainability.</li> <li>- New skills may never be used because of lacking capital.</li> <li>- Erratic fuel supplies can cripple operations.</li> <li>- Natural disasters (e.g. Cyclone Eline) threaten effective and sustainable rural development.</li> </ul>
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## Formal institutional linkages and informal networks among extension service providers

In some districts, intervention has been characterized by much duplication and wastage of resources. In some cases, intervening actors have noticed this problem and have started to collaborate with each other in their intervention processes. Established formal institutional linkages and informal networks have emerged around particular interventions. Some collaboration initiatives have tended to be geographic, and others sectoral or discipline-specific. For these reasons, some linkages have also tended to be departmentalized within certain organizations. For example, in AGRITEX, the management branch collaborates more with NGOs that are involved in socio-economic issues, while the crop and livestock branches collaborate more with actors with whom they have common areas of interest, such as Seed-Co. and Agrifoods. Both formal institutional linkages and informal networks are characterized by joint planning, joint implementation (including field visits), division of tasks, and sharing of information and resources. Established linkages and networks have also tended to manifest themselves in other departments and common areas of interest. Another general finding is that linkages and networks are more pronounced at the district and local levels (the operation levels) than at the head office or provincial levels. Thus, arrangements are usually made at the operational (usually the district) level. A few formal linkages characterize relationships at the administrative (head office) level, where informal networks are almost non-existent.

Conceptually, formal linkages differ markedly from informal networks. Formal linkages are very institutional in nature, and have written and laid down goals and procedures. Informal networks depend more on individual efforts to network than on organizational mandates or initiatives. The perception of formal linkages is that everything is formalized and laid down, and that all participants know their own and other actors' responsibilities. Organizations are represented on the boards of other collaborating institutions or organizations. Informal linkages or networks depend on personal contact among the members of different organizations, tend to be determined by need and are developed when required.

Informal networks usually emerge from mutual accommodation and cooperation among and within various state agencies, NGOs, international organizations and groups of farmers. These networks are characterized by the generation or development of knowledge and the exchange of information and resources through regular interaction or informal contacts among different actors. The main difference between informal networks and formal institutional linkages lies in the initiatives and efforts of different organizations, individuals and local communities to create and maintain them. Informal networks can sometimes be based on the objective of a reciprocal exchange of information and favours. Again, the emphasis is on a one-to-one networking effort, as opposed to the organizational culture that characterizes most formal linkages.

This study has produced a conceptual discourse. One of its major findings is that many stakeholders perceive no clear-cut lines between what can be considered a formal linkage and what can be considered an informal network. Several key informants acting as the representatives of various agricultural extension service providers pointed out that they perceive linkages and networks as a single concept in collaboration efforts. Various informal discussions with informants during interviews also revealed the weakness of formal linkages among agricultural extension service providers – established linkages tend to be more personalized than institutional.

This section provides an insight into various formal institutional linkages and informal networks by highlighting a few selected and exceptional examples of existing linkages and networks that were encountered during the study. Much effort was put into covering as many collaboration initiatives as possible. However, for reasons of time, space and resources, not all collaboration initiatives are

described. This section provides an insight into the various organizations, their *modus operandi* and the existing and potential linkages/networks among different actors by reviewing a selection of collaboration initiatives encountered during the period of the study.

## Linkages and networks around various extension service providers

### **AGRITEX**

According to sources at AGRITEX, linkages with organizations such as DR&SS, the Department of Veterinary Services and the Livestock Development Trust (LDT) are formalized. For example, in on-farm trials, DR&SS conduct the trials, while AGRITEX field staff mobilize local communities, identify collaborating farmers, introduce researchers and monitor experiments. In addition, AGRITEX is represented on the boards of both the Dairy Development Programme and LDT. A similar formal arrangement exists between AGRITEX and some donor-funded rural development programmes.

However, there are aspects of informal networking within what are classified as formal linkages. For example, the informal networks between AGRITEX personnel and the personnel of other donor-funded rural development programmes probably arise because these programmes are often headed by former AGRITEX personnel. There are similar informal relationships between AGRITEX and several NGOs because AGRITEX is a favourite “training and hunting ground” for NGOs. AGRITEX informants hold that networks are more pronounced at the district level, where the operating environment and the need to achieve objectives force the various actors to collaborate. For example, AGRITEX has informal linkages with rural district councils: it works with local agricultural project coordinators and is represented on local councils’ agricultural and natural resources subcommittees.

AGRITEX also enjoys symbiotic relationships with various other agricultural extension service providers, from which both parties stand to benefit. Examples include the joint field days and competitions organized by AGRITEX and private seed houses and animal feed companies. AGRITEX uses these joint activities as platforms for the dissemination of information and to encourage the adoption of new technologies, while private companies use them for marketing purposes: AGRITEX mobilizes farmers and the private agrochemical companies pay for the occasions.

Similar strategic alliances with NGOs allow AGRITEX to mobilize local communities and train farmers in return for better access to the resources that it needs (vehicles, technical assistance and financing). NGOs benefit from AGRITEX’s extension expertise and wide representation on the ground to ensure maximum outreach for their activities. Established linkages and networks have also manifested themselves in other departments and common areas of interest. For example, when a number of organizations involved in link-up programmes became aware that AGRITEX’s engineering division manufactures farm equipment, they started to use that equipment in their projects. However, most linkages with NGOs are based on short-term projects, and so tend not to be very sustainable.

Informal linkages and networks also exist between AGRITEX and the University of Zimbabwe (based on mutual exchange of information), the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare (based on interactions during activities of common concern such as nutrition gardens and supplementary feeding schemes, which both rely on AGRITEX field staff) and many other line ministries (which rely on AGRITEX because their own coverage is very thin).

### ***The Gokwe Dairy Development Programme project***

The Gokwe Dairy Development Programme project is an example of linkages and networks at the district or operation level. The project presents a multiple-actor scenario, which directly or indirectly involves several different actors. The Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC), before its

transformation into Agribank, provided start-up capital to individual farmers. The Dairy Development Programme is the major player in the project, which it established in 1994 in response to local demands. Its main activities comprise: mobilizing farmers to join the project; taking interested farmers to commercial dairy farms to acquire animals; facilitating the group transportation of purchased animals; and general financial support.

Collaboration between the Dairy Development Programme and other actors in the project included:

- € The University of Zimbabwe introduced a three-year research project in Gokwe South District, which was designed to improve research–extension–farmer linkages using the local smallholder dairy project as a research context.
- € Local smallholder dairy farmers were taken on visits to DR&SS research stations specializing in dairy research and in grasses and forage production. DR&SS's Dairy Services Department also tests local milk samples for bacteria counts and to ensure that hygienic standards are maintained.
- € The Ministry of Health and Child Welfare acts as the local quality assurance mechanism and as part of a committee on smallholder dairying in the district.
- € The programme, the Department of Veterinary Services and AGRITEX hold joint training courses. The Department of Veterinary Services is also responsible for disease diagnosis and dipping of non-dairy herds. AGRITEX provides extension advice. The Farmers' Union sources donor funds and enrolls AGRITEX and the Dairy Development Programme in targeted rural development projects.
- € Dairy farmer of the year competitions, field days and master farmer training programmes attract private agrochemical companies and NGOs. Informal networks also exist between agricultural extension agents and farmers, often as a result of long working relationships and mutual trust. Extension agents sometimes act as intermediaries between farmers and commercial concerns in the marketing of agricultural produce.

### ***CAMPFIRE***

The Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) works with rural district councils, which are granted appropriate authority status through the Ministry of Local Government, which also deals with local governance issues such as approval of by-laws. Extension staff of the CAMPFIRE units of rural district councils carry out most of the extension work. The programme is the overall coordinator and a source of expertise for the councils.

A group of organizations under CAMPFIRE act as service providers:

- € The Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management deals with policy issues regarding the programme.
- € The Department of Natural Resources harmonizes natural resources management legislation.
- € The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) deals with technical issues such as ecological surveys and quota setting.
- € The University of Zimbabwe conducts socio-economic research on behalf of the programme.
- € NGOs provide training, monitoring and evaluation, participatory rural appraisals, extension, and international lobbying and advocacy.
- € The Forestry Commission promotes the conservation of forest resources within CAMPFIRE districts.

In addition to existing partnerships and the resulting informal networks, formal linkages could be established between CAMPFIRE and various other actors, including the University of Zimbabwe's Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension and Department of Mining Engineering, as well as corporate organizations.



### ***Smallholder-targeted tobacco research and extension***

The Zimbabwe Tobacco Association and the Farmers' Development Trust are the major players in tobacco research and extension programmes. Through the Tobacco Research Board, the Tobacco Association conducts research on tobacco and acts as the source of technical information, which is relayed to farmers through the Farmers' Development Trust. However, because it is very thin on the ground, the trust relies on AGRITEX for wider dissemination of information. In the joint programme, the trust trains AGRITEX's field-level extension workers, and then takes advantage of AGRITEX's extension expertise and representation on the ground to ensure wide coverage of the areas they are working in. AGRITEX and these other organizations all share resources and carry out joint activities to promote smallholder tobacco production.

Collaboration in this area includes:

- € Input suppliers and commodity processors carry out extension work as a way of marketing their products and also provide financial assistance to tobacco farmers, usually in the form of loans for inputs.
- € The Agricultural Development Assistance Fund (ADAF), a branch of Agribank, also assists farmers with finance.
- € The Farmers' Development Trust identifies loan recipients and selects deserving farmers.
- € The Tobacco Association, the Zimbabwe Farmers' Union and the Indigenous Commercial Farmers' Union mobilize farmers for intervention programmes, demonstrations and field days; act as mentors to smallholder tobacco farmers by providing production and marketing advice; and facilitate the acquisition of important equipment.

### ***The Cotton Research and Extension Programme***

Cotton is an increasingly important cash crop and a potential major earner of foreign currency in Zimbabwe, especially since lobbying for an international tobacco ban. DR&SS's Cotton Research Institute is the key player in cotton research, while AGRITEX remains the key facilitator in cotton technology uptake. AGRITEX identifies farmers for on-farm trials and monitors the trials, while the research institute provides inputs. Breeders work with cotton marketing companies (for both local and export markets) in order to keep in touch with cotton marketing requirements, such as fibre strength and varieties suitable for weaving and spinning.

Cotton marketing companies collaborate with cotton research by:

- € multiplying new seeds for sale to farmers;
- € taking part in field days and other joint activities;
- € providing loans and extension officers;
- € initiating and sponsoring tours to enable interested farmers from new cotton growing regions to visit the Cotton Research Institute;
- € offering training, research facilities and trial sites at the Cotton Training Centre, a private institute, which is owned by the Cotton Growers' Association, has particularly supportive links to the Cotton Research Institute and also offers training to smallholder farmers.

### ***The Wedza Social Forestry Programme***

The Social Forestry Project in Wedza District is a rural development programme initiated and funded by the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ). The main backbone of the Social Forestry Programme is comprised of the Forestry Commission and AGRITEX, who are also members of the district social forestry committee under the auspices of the Wedza Rural District Council. AGRITEX conducts 80 percent of the training, and the Forestry Commission handles the rest. The commission also works with local authorities, notably rural district councils, and is a member of the council subcommittee on natural resources. The Department for Natural Resources and the Natural Resources Board are the state organs responsible for natural resources management. Their main role

is in raising environmental awareness and enforcing natural resource regulations, including the Forestry Act.

The Forestry Commission holds training workshops for teachers and officers from the line ministries. These workshops involve AGRITEX extension workers, local government officers stationed in districts, field officers from the Department of Natural Resources, village community workers from the Ministry of Local Government and the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare, and members of collaborating NGOs. Other actors include politicians and traditional leaders, who are important components because of the great respect they given by local people.

The Forestry Commission relies on networking to reach its target populations. Networking entails joint planning and the sharing of information and resources for the following activities:

- € A tree planting project – the Managing our Indigenous Tree Inheritance Project – with a local NGO that establishes nurseries, helps communities to establish woodlots and joint organizes look-and-learn tours.
- € Another NGO provides the Forestry Commission with training services for all the stakeholders involved in the Social Forestry Programme.
- € The Farmers' Union and AGRITEX identify farmers for training and arrange their own training sessions, field days and meetings in which the Forestry Commission participates.
- € The Department of Veterinary Services' involvement is based on the role of agroforestry systems in improving soil quality and providing animal fodder.
- € The International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF) has established demonstration woodlots, which are used as field schools in joint forestry extension efforts with the Forestry Commission.

Local people participate in natural resources management through the Village Development Committees of the Ministry of Local Government. These committees mobilize villagers in communal development activities such as woodlot establishment and are also used as vehicles of extension.

The Forestry Commission uses schools as centres for the dissemination of knowledge and information about forestry conservation. The Community Outreach Programme uses students as a vehicle for reaching a wider audience with their extension messages. Extension work in schools is centred on woodlot projects and the Schools Tree Growing and Tree Care Programme, which has annual competitions with awards and judging from private companies.

### Networks around rural district councils

Rural district councils are key actors in the rural development process because, at the district level, all rural development projects pass through the rural district council. Although District Administrator offices are officially responsible for coordinating activities at the district level, they are so underfunded that they lack the resources and power to carry out their responsibilities. This leaves rural district councils as the coordinators of local social change processes.

Subcommittees within the Rural District Development Committee include: the Agriculture and Water Supplies Committee (chaired by AGRITEX), the District Agriculture and Natural Resources Subcommittee (chaired by the Natural Resources Board), and the District Social Forestry Subcommittee (which includes the Forestry Commission and AGRITEX). Other committees handle planning, finance, social services, administration, and roads and works. The planning committee is responsible for all of the coordination activities handled by the council. All organizations implementing rural development programmes come through and report to the planning committee. Among the rural development

programmes that are coordinated by rural district councils is CARE International's Small Dams Rehabilitation Programme, which also involves AGRITEX, the Natural Resources Board, the Forestry Commission, and the Ministry of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation.

As well as their coordination role, rural district councils are also directly involved in implementing rural development programmes. Together with the Ministry of Local Government, rural district councils implement the Poverty Alleviation Action Programme, which seeks to build communities' capacity to develop. This programme funds community development projects that are identified by the communities themselves with the help of AGRITEX. Other actors in the programme are the Ministry of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation (through its ward coordinators and village community workers), the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare (through environmental health officers), the Ministry of Education (through its network of schools), the Department of Veterinary Services and the District Development Fund (through community dip tanks and bore-holes).

### Informal farmer knowledge networks

Smallholder farmers are the holders of rich and diverse indigenous knowledge that is critical for sustained agricultural production. For example, they know which local plant species can be used as animal feed or medicine, and they traditionally practise mixed and intercropping as strategies for diversifying and spreading harvests, ensuring food security, protecting soil and saving moisture. Extension workers discouraged this practice, until they realized its benefits and reintroduced it.

Technology development through trial-and-error experimentation and the integration of new knowledge has always been a necessary part of local farmers' work. Informal experiments by farmers are a result of need, a desire to improve livelihoods, general inquisitiveness, and/or curiosity to verify ideas observed elsewhere (Hanyani-Mlambo, 1995). Farmers also experiment in order to minimize risk, adapt technical recommendations to local conditions, solve specific problems, test existing technologies or ideas (Rhoades and Bebbington, 1988) and adjust to changing climatic and socio-economic conditions. Research also suggests that experiments increase in number and complexity after a crisis.

Trial-and-error experimentation and informal networks have also been sources and vehicles of information in the large-scale commercial farming sector. For example, a large-scale commercial dairy farmer in the Beatrice commercial farming area successfully transformed a high-input commercial dairy enterprise into a holistic low-input dairy system through informal networking and trial-and-error experimentation. Holistic dairy farming is a fairly new concept, which does not rely on traditional extension service providers but on informal networks of farmers who already use the system or who are in the process of adopting it.

Both locally and externally generated technologies are disseminated through farmer-to-farmer interaction. Informal linkages and networks include the exchange and sharing of information, knowledge, agricultural equipment, materials such as seed, inputs and facilities for transporting agricultural produce to market. Farmers also consult each other about the problems they encounter and interact in agricultural extension and other interest groups. Farmer-to-farmer linkages and informal networks tend to be strongest among farmers with common interests and agendas, such as a new crop. Gender- or age-based groups include the male-dominated domain of cattle fattening, youth- and women-oriented activities such as poultry production, and more gender-neutral crop production enterprises such as maize production.

## Interface analysis

In intervention programmes, the multitude of actors with different backgrounds, mandates and experiences, and the resultant differential viewpoints, perceptions, objectives, practices and strategies, often produce interfaces (struggles, negotiations and accommodations) at various points of interaction. These interfaces occur among intervening, bat and local actors and among the various intervening agencies themselves. The situation is exacerbated by the complex interactions among specific practices/interventions on one hand, and the many actors and their strategies on the other. The result is not one, single intervener–local actor interface, but a far more complex situation in which there is a hierarchy of many different interfaces. Such emergent interfaces complicate the implementation of intervention programmes, and result in programme implementation and programme outcomes that are different from those originally expected. In other words, interfaces partially explain the “failure” of interventionist programmes such as agricultural extension. Several factors are usually at work: political, technical and organizational.

### Political factors

Political factors refer to institutional politics and the interest groups that play a role in them. An example is pressure from policy-makers, foreign agencies and farmers’ organizations and its effects on the values, rewards and sanctions that are created to inhibit or facilitate collaboration among various actors.

A number of researchers attribute the lack of collaboration to professionalism. According to Chambers (1986), normal professionalism refers to the thinking, values, methods and behaviour that are dominant in a profession or discipline. Lack of collaboration and interfaces therefore develop because professionals have developed negative attitudes towards actors at the lower levels of a calibrated science–practice continuum. For example, researchers doubt the competence and motivation of extension workers, who in turn look down on farmers and consider them less knowledgeable. There is also the problem of undervaluing farmers’ indigenous knowledge and their potential contribution to the technology dissemination process.

Related to the paradigm of professionalism are disciplinary bias and professional jealousy. Because of their technical training, researchers tend to focus on high-powered technical-oriented research (much of which is inappropriate to most smallholder farmer circumstances) and the production of equally technical scientific publications, through which they hope to win promotion. The more researchers write technical publications, the less extension workers are interested in them. At times, power struggles and individualism within organizations have resulted in poor working relationships among those organizations. Committee meetings, which are meant to bring all stakeholders together, have often been a failure because of poor attendance, non-representation of some organizations or a lack of patience and commitment on the part of attending members. Some informants reported a tendency for people to cooperate when they stand to benefit, but not when the sacrifices outweigh their own individual benefits. Common excuses are “we are busy”, “we are short of staff” and “we would like to, but we do not have the resources”.

### Technical factors

Technical factors are the methods and activities that are associated specifically with the development and dissemination of agricultural technology to different environments and target groups.

Use of the group extension approach and good farming competitions has significantly improved the linkages among extension service providers. Seed houses and private agrochemical companies sponsor competitions on good methods of farming. This approach enables extension organizations to share resources and take advantage of economies of scale by working with large numbers of farmers to ensure a far wider coverage in a smaller time span (cost-effectiveness).

However, intervening organizations and the individuals within them are often very rigid in their approach. The tendency has been to favour disciplinary specialization and actions that are “according to the book” rather than for the good of intended beneficiaries. The use of diffusionist approaches has tended to worsen this situation, as has the recent introduction of World Bank-initiated economic reforms. The Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), introduced in 1991, had the objectives of increasing exports, improving balances of payments, and reducing the national budget deficit by cutting government spending. However, the budget cuts for public-funded agricultural extension service providers, who are traditionally already poorly funded, has crippled field operations to disastrous effect. This is a great concern, especially because collaboration requires financial resources if it is to be sustainable.

### Organizational factors

Organizational factors include the division of tasks, resources and authority among different organizations and individuals, and the internal management and informal dynamics of each organization and its components.

The perception within some sectors is that there is insufficient cooperation among agricultural extension service providers (despite their common ultimate goals) because these services are established without built-in complementarity. An example is DR&SS, the Department of Veterinary Services and AGRITEX, which fall under the same ministry but under different directives. Only recently have there been initiatives to amalgamate DR&SS and AGRITEX into a single entity. On the other hand, the University of Zimbabwe falls under the jurisdiction of a totally different ministry. The location of various supposedly collaborating organizations in different administrative structures/institutions tends to worsen the interaction and communication among those organizations.

Different administrative structures and organizations also entail differences in institutional mandates and organizational cultures. Each organization is restricted by its set official mandate, i.e. what that organization was set up to achieve. On the other hand, organizational culture is basically a set of organizational norms and taboos (the “dos” and “don’ts”), which individuals learn through attachments, induction courses and/or in-house training programmes. Not surprisingly, differences also occur in the values and priorities that govern organizations in their setting of targets and strategies for their staffs.

Rigid mandates and the compartmentalization of duties and responsibilities within and among different organizations have also meant a duplication of duties among organizations. Although set mandates make a clear distinction of duties among research and extension organizations, the distinction of duties within the group of various research and extension service providers is not very clear. In several cases, parallel service delivery systems are in place. Inevitably, there are overlaps among the available services. However, it seems farmers recognize that the services are not identical and take advantage of the situation by applying different strategies to gain access to and utilize them.

Governments in developing countries have always struggled to allocate scarce resources among competing choices. Given collapsing economies and even tighter budgets, governments have been forced to cut spending on, sometimes essential, services. In most cases, this has led to supposedly

collaborating partners fighting for scarce resources (empire building). Bureaucracy and long hierarchical lines of communication have not only tended to delay the communication process, but have also weakened linkages within and among intervening organizations.

Over the years, most organizations, including private players in the local extension system, have maintained a policy of frequent lateral transfers for their field staff. The resultant high turnover of extension agents presents one of the major causes of rather weak institutional linkages. This high turnover has led to the failure of extension personnel in some organizations to understand the local context thoroughly, the failure of organizations to gain each other's trust (a failure to enter each others' circles of confidence) and, ultimately, a failure to establish sustainable linkages among extension service providers.

## Recommendations and conclusions for collaborative extension delivery strategies

### Recommendations

#### ***Why collaboration is essential***

Collaboration and networking enable organizations to extend, and thereby improve, their outreach abilities in order to serve as many target groups and individual beneficiaries as possible. Lack of collaboration entails the duplication and repetition of projects that have already failed. For virtually all public-funded providers of extension services, collaboration is a strategic alliance that ensures their financial survival, especially given the current socio-economic environment and dwindling operating budgets. Thus, involvement in donor-funded projects could be a major source of operational funds for government departments. Given the present worldwide scarcity of resources and the resultant need for organizations to limit their spending, joint projects and programmes entail the sharing and more effective use of available resources. Collaboration is therefore important for ensuring more efficient use of resources and more effective intervention programmes. For example, organizations can share transport during joint field days or for field visits.

Some programmes are too narrow or too sector-focused to have much of an impact. In such programmes an integrated approach, which does not dilute the sectoral excellence, is important. A unified and well-coordinated agricultural extension service also enables various stakeholders' resources, skills, expertise and experience to be utilized, thereby ensuring the more effective use of resources. On the other hand, lack of coordination can confuse farmers and result in the failure of interventions.

#### ***Constraints to collaboration***

This report discusses in full the technical, political and organizational factors that cause interfaces where collaboration is supposed to take place. In addition to these, there are various constraints to collaboration at both the administrative and the operational levels. As already mentioned, some implemented programmes tend to be too short-lived to have an impact, both on the ground and in terms of collaboration efforts. Some programmes are also too narrow, i.e. too sector-focused, to have much of an impact. Examples in this regard are NGO-implemented rural development programmes, which focus on specific geographic locations and run on the basis of three- or five-year projects whose time frames are not usually extended. Collaboration with other permanent establishments, such as government agencies or long-term programmes, then becomes difficult, ineffective and unsustainable.

According to various stakeholders, institutional coordination and networking is very expensive. This is because every organization has its own core business to represent in shared activities. Thus, budgeting for coordination platforms, such as field days, may have to include the costs for collaborating organizations that have no or few financial resources of their own (e.g. AGRITEX). Currently, the shortage of resources is leading some organizations to shift their attention from shared activities to concentrate on their core business, and this presents a threat to established linkages/networks. Some key informants highlighted cases in which officers within line ministries claimed travel and subsistence allowances from, for example, rural district councils. When such expenses were not met, collaborating line ministries were unwilling to continue the established linkages. There is also a tendency for people to choose where to go depending on the daily allowances given by the funding organization.

Some of the organizations/institutions that were established for coordination purposes have failed to fulfil this role. For example, the National Agency for Non-Governmental Organizations (NANGO) has been largely ineffective and is on the brink of collapse. A more serious criticism is the suggestion that

collaboration efforts have been more supply-led (donor- and dollar-driven) than demand-driven (in response to the efforts of the organizations involved). Different organizations have also tended to use different field extension approaches and strategies. Examples of this include the use of top-down versus participatory approaches and the use or non-use of subsidized inputs earmarked for collaborating farmers in intervention programmes. Such differences in approaches and on-the-ground strategies have also tended to make collaboration difficult.

### ***Recommended collaboration strategies***

As previously highlighted, several formal and informal collaboration arrangements already exist. There is, however, a need to strengthen and expand these existing linkages by bringing in more actors and injecting more funds, because linkages are costly. There is also a need to establish new linkages where none yet exist. Several alternatives are considered in the following paragraphs. According to some informants, effective coordination can be ensured if the collaborative strategies implemented are directed at different administrative levels: for example, umbrella strategies at the national level and more specific strategies to coordinate activities at the operational level (e.g. the district level). All recommended collaboration strategies could be pilot tested to evaluate their effectiveness and to adapt them to suit conditions at the administrative and operational levels.

### ***Project Coordinating Committees (stakeholder fora)***

The Project Coordinating Committee (PCC) collaboration strategy is a project-specific and localized strategy for ensuring the smooth and effective implementation of rural development projects that involve a number of intervening actors and communities. PCCs are run on the same basis as stakeholder fora, in which a project or programme is coordinated by a committee of representatives from all the stakeholder groups involved. The PCC strategy is already on the ground, having been adopted by a number of rural development projects, including the CARE International projects in Masvingo and the Dairy Development Programme project in Gokwe South District. Although relative success has been reported, to date no detailed studies have been conducted as to how effective this strategy has been. However, the initiative could be extended to benefit many other similar intervention scenarios nationwide. For this reason, the PCC collaboration strategy is a worthwhile initiative to pilot test.

### ***Utilizing and strengthening the coordination functions of rural district councils***

As already highlighted, initially the District Administrator had the power to control all sector ministries but, owing to the shortage of resources, the District Administrator is now just a figurehead. This leaves rural district councils to assume a key role in the coordination of rural development processes, which they manage through well-established structures or systems of committees. At present, all district-level government agencies and all NGOs design individual plans, which are input into a single and unified district development plan, e.g. for a particular year or period. All the line ministries and NGOs involved in rural development programmes are attached and report to various district development subcommittees within the rural district councils. For example, AGRITEX and the Forestry Commission (under the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement) report to the Subcommittee on Agriculture and Natural Resources; and the Ministry of Health reports to the Subcommittee on Social Services (because of its involvement in the delivery of health services) and the Subcommittee on Agriculture and Natural Resources (because of its involvement in nutrition gardens, an initiative aimed at reducing malnutrition in rural areas). As well as district development plans, districts' needs and priorities could also be identified in rural district council documents. However, despite their critical coordination role, at present rural district councils have no influence over what happens within individual intervention scenarios or projects because each organization has its own power structure, which determines that organization's priorities, what is to be done and when.

In addition to current formal and informal structures within the frameworks of rural district councils, there is much scope for them to monitor and evaluate activities at the district level. Based on these



additional functions, the level of collaboration among various actors can also be used as a variable for the monitoring and evaluation of progress in ongoing and concluded programmes. To expand this role, there is a need to ensure that all government agencies, NGOs and private companies with a stake in the agriculture sector are represented on various subcommittees at the district level. Therefore, it may be necessary to build the capacity of local rural district council officials through training and the utilization of existing structures to coordinate the various rural development programmes at the grassroots level. The coordination role of rural district councils can also be improved through strengthening their subcommittees, facilitating joint planning at the district level (where there are district development plans) and genuine decentralization that gives power to rural district councils.

Because of their experience and existing structures, rural district councils present the most cost-effective way to coordinate such initiatives. Coordinating extension activities through rural district councils also enables the sharing of experiences among the different organizations working within a particular district. A database of organizations working in a particular district, detailing their main areas of focus and activities, could help in this effort. Progress reports and periodic coordination meetings involving various service providers can also provide feedback to the design of new programmes. However, currently, local rural district councils tend to be weak, understaffed and underfunded, and their coordination impact is weak. This further justifies the need to build the capacity of and these structures and to empower them.

### ***Establishing coordination platforms***

Another worthwhile collaboration strategy is the setting up of coordination platforms whose role is to facilitate the establishment, maintenance and strengthening of linkages among various actors in the local agricultural extension system. Coordination platforms can include all-stakeholder workshops, think tank workshops and coordination committees. Such platforms can be designed to analyse the existing extension system and chart a way forward, through setting priorities for extension intervention and facilitating the implementation of joint extension programmes involving several service providers. This also entails more coordinated intervention activities, such as joint meetings, joint field days and joint field visits. By combining field activities:

- i) agricultural extension service providers would speak with one voice, thereby eradicating parallel structures within an intervention context and reducing the chances of confusing farmers;
- ii) the current duplication of efforts among NGOs and government agencies, and within line ministries or NGOs themselves, could be reduced;
- iii) the number of meetings and the time spent with farmers would be reduced – in the worst cases, farmers spend 75 percent of their time attending meetings;
- iv) the element of competition would be reduced and a sense of complementarity within service providers would be cultivated.

Coordination at the planning level enables different organizations to direct their efforts to different geographic areas, thereby improving the efficiency of resource allocation. Based on a centralized coordination of efforts, different actors could team up to implement joint intervention programmes. Again, this would ensure a more efficient use of the available resources and more effective intervention programmes.

Strategic alliances could also be formed with private companies and financial institutions, which in some cases are stakeholders because of their role as providers of agrochemical inputs and agricultural loans. Such alliances could ensure the injection of much-needed financial resources, given the strain on publicly funded extension service providers, donor fatigue and the withdrawal of investments for NGOs, as well as the fact that coordination tends to be expensive. A number of stakeholders perceive this as being particularly important, because they regard the availability of adequate resources to ensure effective collaboration as the main issue in collaboration. For example, AGRITEX has the infrastructure

but no resources, while some NGOs have the resources but different, and sometimes questionable, agendas. According to these stakeholders, private companies tend to be more cooperative because they have a clearer and more straightforward agenda – to market their products.

Such funding can also enable a number of research-cum-extension service providers, such as DR&SS and the University of Zimbabwe, to be more active in research and extension activities at the grassroots level, thereby putting them in a position in which established linkages with traditional service providers (such as AGRITEX) can be more sustainable and more effective. Given their better research capacity, the involvement of such organizations in research and extension activities at the grassroots level also improves their linkages with target communities and ensures that the technologies generated are more appropriate and the intervention programmes more effective.

### ***Creating a coordination function within the Agricultural Research Council***

The Agricultural Research Council (ARC) presents promising potential and has an unquestionable role in coordination. At present, ARC has been largely dormant. However, given its mandate and position within the local agricultural system, and its experience in coordinating agricultural research, ARC could play a pivotal role in coordinating the service delivery of various agricultural extension service providers (some of whom are key players in agricultural research and already work with ARC).

ARC could utilize several coordination strategies. Where possible, all the organizations involved in agricultural research and extension could be listed in a directory, which includes their names, addresses, telephone numbers and core functions or activities. ARC could also coordinate an exchange programme involving personnel from various service providers. For example, extension officers from AGRITEX and the Farmers' Development Trust could be attached to the Tobacco Research Board, or extension officers from AGRITEX and interested NGOs could be attached to the Cotton Research Institute to familiarize them with new production aspects. Extension services could thereby be improved and technology adoption increased. ARC could also be instrumental in coordinating short- and long-term collaborative programmes involving several service providers.

Alternatively, such a national coordination function could be created within a combined DR&SS and AGRITEX, given their mandates, roles and massive contributions to agricultural research and extension. International donors could also have a role and responsibility in coordinating the institutions or activities that they fund. However, the objectiveness and effectiveness of this remain questionable, given that various intervention programmes within certain geographic areas are funded by different donors, some programmes or activities are funded by various donors, and collaboration efforts could become more supply-led than demand-driven.

### ***Strengthening informal farmer networks***

Whatever collaboration strategy is selected, it should also take account of the importance of farmer-to-farmer dissemination of information by strengthening the way in which various individuals and communities share information. This emphasizes the issue of strengthening informal farmer networks through meetings (field days) at strategically selected local farms, group discussions focused on common problems, innovative farmer workshops and technical feedback workshops, in a context in which extension agents become the facilitators of informal farmer-to-farmer dissemination of innovations. Such networks could act as platforms for participants to discuss and share their experiences, as well as enhancing the interactions of actors within the technology development and dissemination system. Such platforms also provide participants with first-hand experience, broaden perspectives, are a foundation for new learning, consolidate existing knowledge, skills and attitudes, create enthusiasm, and can improve the diffusion of innovations.

### ***Pilot study areas***

Several geographic locations were suggested as possible pilot study areas, including the Chinyika Resettlement Scheme, the Gokwe Dairy Development Programme project, and the Mkwesine Sugar Estate Outgrower Scheme.

The Chinyika Resettlement Scheme was suggested for several reasons: it is the first and largest resettlement scheme in Zimbabwe; farmers in the scheme are involved in the production of numerous crops, including maize, tobacco and paprika; and the scheme presents the perfect setting for a collaboration study and intervention project, given the many organizations involved in the area, such as the Farmers' Development Trust, AGRITEX, Zimbabwe Leaf Tobacco and a host of private input suppliers. Successful coordination of rural development programmes in Chinyika, even at the pilot project stage, could also create a solid base for the government's current resettlement drive. Once successful, this initiative could become a blueprint and adaptable strategy for project designs in the ongoing resettlement programme.

The Dairy Development Programme project in Gokwe South District offers a different geophysical and socio-economic setting, but its use as a pilot study is for more or less the same reasons. As is the case with Chinyika Resettlement Area, the dairy project presents a multiple-actor and multiple-objective scenario that makes coordination essential. On the other hand, selection of the Mkwesine Sugar Estate Outgrower Scheme as a pilot study is based on a number of very different justifications: the scheme utilizes a totally different extension arrangement in which estate extension officers provide the principal extension service, with other organizations playing a complementary role; and, as an outgrower scheme, Mkwesine presents a different type of farmer – i.e. cash crops – intervention context.

During the feedback workshop, discussions produced the following criteria for selection of pilot study sites:

- i) representativeness of the agro-ecological regions;
- ii) diversity of farming contexts, e.g. communal, resettlement, small-scale, etc.;
- iii) diversity of farming systems, i.e. numbers and types of enterprises;
- iv) community acceptability and individual farmers' willingness;
- v) infrastructure and accessibility;
- vi) marketing scenario;
- vii) diversity of players;
- viii) potential for snowballing, i.e. multiplier effect through farmer-to-farmer extension;
- ix) prevailing socio-politico-economic environment;
- x) availability of resources.

### ***Roles of government institutions, farmers' unions and NGOs***

For a long time, apart from its indirect involvement through the ministry and departments involved in research and extension, the government's role in coordinating research and extension activities has remained unclear. This study recommends strategic coordination roles for identified key players in the extension process. It is therefore of paramount importance that the state should take centre stage in facilitating these coordination functions through legislative, mandatory, financial and other tools. The government, together with farmers' organizations and NGOs, needs to address farmers' concerns *vis-à-vis* marketing agricultural commodities, establishing reasonable pricing policies and disseminating research results for implementation. There is also a need for a thorough orientation programme for all stakeholders at all levels in order to generate sufficient awareness and appreciation of the issues.

In addition, workshop participants highlighted the need for government institutions, farmers' organizations and NGOs to execute the following functions:

- i) establishing an inventory/database or profiles of all the stakeholders, highlighting their roles, what they do, and their mandates, missions, beneficiaries, etc.;
- ii) revamping policy initiatives;
- iii) ensuring that farmers are not short-changed;
- iv) protecting farmers' interests;
- v) addressing non-technical issues such as the marketing of commodities;
- vi) mobilizing and empowering farmer groups;
- vii) building the capacity of institutions;
- viii) providing funding for the facilitation and coordination of activities.

Furthermore, government institutions, farmers' organizations and NGOs have an important role to play as units outside the provincial or district development committees (coordination platforms) that are empowered to take and implement decisions, i.e. call meetings and coordinate the service providers.

### Conclusion

This study's major objectives were to examine the current status of the local extension system and to develop a collaborative strategy to ensure that it is effective and efficient. The study establishes that the agricultural extension system in Zimbabwe is a multi-actor and multiple-objective scenario. Identified actors include public community development and agricultural extension service providers, public research-cum-extension organizations, donor-supported rural development programmes, international and private research centres, farmers' associations, NGOs, private agrochemical input suppliers, commodity processors and "bat" actors. The only difference among these is their degree of involvement, whereby some actors are more directly involved while the contributions of others tend to be more peripheral.

The study also establishes that various linkages and networks already exist. Some of these linkages are very formalized, while others tend to be very informal. Conceptually, formal linkages differ markedly from informal networks. However, according to the perceptions of most stakeholders, there are no clear-cut boundaries between formal linkages and the networks that are created among extension service providers. The researcher's observation is that networks tend to be more pronounced than formal institutional linkages. In addition, linkages and informal networks also tend to be more pronounced at the district and/or operational level than at the provincial or head office levels. Established institutional linkages and networks also tend to be built (or rather developed) around particular interventions.

Recommended collaborative extension strategies include using project coordination committees (stakeholder fora), utilizing and strengthening the coordination functions of rural district councils, establishing coordination platforms, creating a coordination function within ARC, and strengthening informal farmer networks. Further research efforts could focus on identifying and characterizing more actors within Zimbabwe's pluralistic extension system, a detailed study of more intervention scenarios and accommodation (collaboration) arrangements that are in place, and gaining an in-depth understanding of the institutional politics that are in play under such circumstances.

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## Annex 1: Key informant interviews: Discussion guide

**N.B.** This is a checklist, implying that the researcher chooses questions depending on the flow of discussion and may not necessarily ask all questions.

### **1. Data on key informant/organization**

- Name of informant.
- Name of organization.
- Organizational mandate – community development roles and obligations.
- Organizational mission and specific objectives.
- Type of extension service *vis-à-vis* community development, and in what areas:
  - ☛ topical – intervention programmes and specific issues;
  - ☛ geographic – location and natural region.
- Organizational approach and strategies.
- Extent to which organizational approach and strategies are oriented towards collaboration.
- Organizational culture – norms, beliefs and taboos.
- Perceptions on problem of uncoordinated extension.
- Perceptions/perspectives on benefits of coordinated extension.
- Organizational structure.
- Staff complement at various levels.
- Outreach indicators:
  - ☛ distribution of staff and offices in the country and by region;
  - ☛ current farmer to community development officer ratio;
  - ☛ current farmer to community development worker ratio;
  - ☛ dates when ratios were established.
- Resource endowments.
- Profile of beneficiaries:
  - ☛ geographic location;
  - ☛ numbers and percentages of target clientele currently serviced;
  - ☛ gender (percentage male and percentage female);
  - ☛ major source of income and economic activity;
  - ☛ extension needs and services provided.

### **2. SWOT analysis of service providers (institutional/organizational level)**

- Strengths and capacities.
- Weaknesses and constraints.
- Opportunities.
- Threats.

### **3. Actor analysis of the pluralistic extension system in community development**

- Major categories of actors involved in public and private extension systems.
- Actors involved in each category.
- Other “peripheral” service providers (including informal farmer-to-farmer extension).
- Brief analysis of type of service provided by each actor.

### **4. Formal partnerships and institutional linkages among extension service providers**

- Existing formal partnerships with other organizations.
- Actors involved – collaborating partners.
- Types and forms of partnerships:
  - ☛ division of tasks, resources and authority among different organizations;
  - ☛ joint decision-making, programmes, activities and sharing of resources;
  - ☛ examples of collaborative work, joint ventures, combined meetings and resource sharing;
  - ☛ other forms of partnership;
  - ☛ levels of coordination, collaboration, communication and resource sharing among organizations;

- ☛ impact and evidence of improved coordination, collaboration, communication and resource sharing;
- ☛ constraints to effective coordination, collaboration, communication and resource sharing;
- ☛ opportunities for improved coordination, collaboration, communication and resource sharing.
- Why and how the various partnerships were initiated.
- Where applicable, funding and level of funding for partnerships.
- Communication among organizations:
  - ☛ code of communication used;
  - ☛ mode/channels of communication;
  - ☛ flow and direction of communication;
  - ☛ level(s) at which communication takes place;
  - ☛ constraints to effective communication;
  - ☛ opportunities/suggestions for improving interorganizational communication.
- Areas of community development where potential partnerships exist:
  - ☛ topical – intervention programmes and specific issues;
  - ☛ geographic – location and natural region.
- Potential partners – actors that can be involved in specific partnerships.
- Why identified potential partners are not yet partners.

### **5. Network analysis**

- Informal collaboration programmes/projects/initiatives that are already in place.
- Initiators and sources of funding of such programmes/projects/initiatives.
- Logistics of the programmes/projects/initiatives.
- Actors involved in the programmes/projects/initiatives.
- Post and level of contact person within each involved organization.
- Types and forms of networks:
  - ☛ division of tasks, resources and authority among different organizations;
  - ☛ joint decision-making, activities and sharing of resources;
  - ☛ other forms of partnership.
- Contributions of individual actors/organizations:
  - ☛ financial (monetary);
  - ☛ other resources;
  - ☛ specific tasks.
- Communication among network components.
- Benefits accruing from the existing networks.

### **6. Interface analysis**

- Interfaces within and among organizations.
- Actors involved.
- Causes: *Political factors*:
  - ☛ institutional politics;
  - ☛ interest groups that play a role in institutional politics.
- Causes: *Technical factors*:
  - ☛ individual or collective organizational strategies associated with community development programmes;
  - ☛ methods and activities associated with community development programmes.
- Causes: *Organizational factors*:
  - ☛ division of tasks, resources and authority among different organizations;
  - ☛ internal management and informal dynamics of each organization and its components.
- Other causes of various interfaces.
- Programmes/initiatives affected by various interfaces.
- Suggestions for improvement.

### **7. SWOT analysis of service providers (collective level)**

- Strengths and capacities.

- Weaknesses and constraints.
- Opportunities.
- Threats.

### **8. *Experiences o improving smallholder farmer livelihoods***

- Examples of successful experiences of improving smallholder farmer livelihoods from extension/collaboration efforts:
  - ☛ perception (definition) of success and failure;
  - ☛ programmes;
  - ☛ projects;
  - ☛ other initiatives.
- Period and implementing organization(s).
- Reasons for success.
- Other conducive and contributory factors.
- Examples of failures at improving smallholder farmer livelihoods:
  - ☛ programmes;
  - ☛ projects;
  - ☛ other initiatives.
- Reasons for failure.
- Documentation of successes and failures.
- Examples of exceptional cases that are not well documented.

### **9. *Collaborative extension delivery strategies***

- Existing collaborative extension delivery strategy options:
  - ☛ existing strategies and options fostering strong pluralistic coordination among service providers;
  - ☛ components/facets of the collaborative strategy;
  - ☛ ways in which existing strategies address linkages/collaboration issues.
- Individual recommendations for coordinated and collaborative strategies for effective delivery of extension services:
  - ☛ strategies and approaches;
  - ☛ components/facets of the collaborative strategy;
  - ☛ ways in which recommended strategies address linkages/collaboration issues;
  - ☛ ways in which recommended strategy is different from strategies tried before.
- Suggestions for effective coordination.
- Suggestions for division of responsibilities.
- Areas recommended for pilot study:
  - ☛ topical – intervention programmes and specific issues;
  - ☛ geographic – location and natural region.
- Justifications for recommendations.
- Other opportunities for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of extension intervention.

### **Additional guidelines**

#### **10. *Organization fact file***

- Name of organization.
- Organizational mandate.
- Motive for extension work (e.g. for private companies – profit).
- Major extension approach used.
- Extension and community development programmes.
- Source of funding.
- Sustainability of funding.
- Type of target population/beneficiaries (e.g. cotton growers).
- Numbers in hundreds or thousands.
- Staff compliment:
  - ☛ gender;



- technical qualifications.
- Extension worker to farmer ratios.
- Mobility means and capacity.
- Perceptions at different administrative levels.
- AGRITEX and stakeholders' views about the changes at DR&SS and AGRITEX.

### **11. Swot analysis (category level)**

- Strengths and capacities.
- Weaknesses and constraints.
- Opportunities.
- Threats.

### **12. Linkages**

- Factors hindering the establishment of effective linkages.
- Examples of successful interventions:
  - measurable indicators mentioned by earlier studies as evidence of success.
- Potential role of the government (e.g. collaboration function).

### **13. Chivi project**

- What has been done?
- Project components.
- Linkages with other extension service providers.
- Division of resources, tasks and responsibilities.
- Critical analysis of project (success or failure).
- Elements of success/failure.
- Measurable indicators of impact (success/failure).
- Impact of the project on people outside the project area.
- Empowering the communities: are they given a platform?

### **14. Commercial Farmers' Union/commercial and smallholder farmers**

- Sources of technical information for:
  - commercial farmers;
  - small-scale and resettlement farmers;
  - communal farmers.
- Farmers' linkages with sources of information.
- Sustainability of the links?
- Farmers' perceptions of pluralistic extension:
  - advantages;
  - disadvantages.
- How farmers deal with pluralistic extension.
- Why is the commercial farmers' extension system efficient?
- Interface between commercial farmers and public extension system.
- Are all commercial farmers members of the Commercial Farmers' Union?
- Issues for further research.

## Annex 2: Profiles of providers of agricultural extension services

This annex gives details of important organizations involved in agricultural extension, including their mandates, motivation for extension work, major extension approaches used, extension/community development programmes implemented, sources of funding, sustainability of funding, geographic areas covered, target populations or intended beneficiaries, coverage, mobility capacity, and effectiveness on the ground. The organizations are listed here in alphabetical order.

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### ***Agricultural Research Trust Farm***

A "farmers' farm", established and funded by large-scale commercial farmers through their various commodities. Operates as a private entity, separately constituted and self-funded. Comprises three sections: research and demonstration, farm management, and commercial agricultural production. Has 30 off-station research sites.

**Organizational mandate:** No externally driven mandate. Established as a field laboratory for agricultural research based on on-station research and experiments, and on-farm research and trials. Research section, and a commercial agricultural production section focusing on income generation, most of which is reinvested in the farm's research activities. Charges other organizations for use of its research facilities.

**Motive for extension work:** Generating and disseminating technologies for the benefit of all farmers.

**Major extension approaches used:** Field experiments, demonstrations, field days and discussion group meetings at which sales representatives from seed houses and agrochemical companies talk on new varieties and other innovations. Field days at off-station research sites to extend technologies. Summer and winter trial and experiment results conveyed through periodic reports/publications.

**Extension/community development programmes:** Include a maize variety evaluation programme on behalf of Seed Co, Pioneer, Pannar, Monsanto, National Tested Seeds and CIMMYT; variety trials for sunflowers and other oilseeds; and agronomic trials on irrigation, tillage, etc.

**Sources of funding:** Self-funded by large-scale commercial farmers through their commodities.

**Sustainability of funding:** Depends on the growers' ability to pay or the value of the work undertaken.

**Geographic focus:** The farm is located about 20 km from Harare, in agro-ecological region II. Generated technologies are adapted at off-station research sites throughout other regions, notably the midlands, eastern districts and the lowveld. Most of these sites are in commercial farming areas, and only about four or five in smallholder farming areas.

<b>Target population/beneficiaries:</b> Members and affiliate groups. Large-scale commercial farmers are the prime target clients. Field days and demonstrations also benefit smallholder farmers.
<b>Coverage:</b> Most technology generation and dissemination is on-farm, where research personnel are based. Off-station research sites have extended the coverage considerably, although there is no significant impact in smallholder farming areas as yet.
<b>Mobility capacity:</b> Reasonably good.
<b>Effectiveness:</b> Off-station research sites have generated much interest among smallholder and emergent black commercial farmers. Smallholder farmers' attendance at demonstrations and field days for summer crops has increased, but winter trials are still dominated by large-scale commercial farmers.

<b><i>CARE International</i></b>
The largest non-sectarian, non-governmental development organization in the world. Operates in more than 60 countries to implement humanitarian aid and development programmes. Operational in Zimbabwe since 1992.
<b>Organizational mandate:</b> In Zimbabwe, the focus is on long-term development initiatives in small economic activity development, agriculture and natural resources, and health. Specific objectives include enhancing the household livelihood security of poor people in rural areas, strengthening the capacity of banks and NGO financial institutions to extend credit to microenterprises in the informal sector of the economy, establishing and facilitating market systems for agricultural products in rural areas, and creating jobs by expanding financial services in both rural and urban areas.
<b>Motive for extension work:</b> Facilitating the processes of social change and community and rural development.
<b>Major extension approaches used:</b> Needs assessments, orientation sessions and the training of all involved actors as part of individual or community mobilization and capacity building activities.
<b>Extension/community development programmes:</b> Numerous programmes in three sectors: agriculture and natural resources, small economic activity development, and health and nutrition. The agriculture and natural resources sector implements four programmes: a small dams rehabilitation programme aims at reducing the vulnerability and food-insecurity of drought-prone areas through community management of small dams; an agribusiness entrepreneur network and training programme has the objective of establishing a sustainable network of agribusiness agents in rural communities to facilitate the distribution of agro-inputs and outputs to and from smallholder farmers; a rainwater harvesting project promotes rainwater harvesting as an alternative water supply; and a land reform project supports complementary approaches to equitable and sustainable land reform in the country. Programmes are designed to complement each other.
<b>Sources of funding:</b> International donors.
<b>Sustainability of funding:</b> Not secure; most NGOs and international donors are withdrawing for socio-politico-economic reasons.
<b>Geographic focus:</b> The small dams rehabilitation programme is being implemented in Masvingo and Midlands Provinces; the Agribusiness Entrepreneur Network and Training Programme in Masvingo, Midlands, Mashonaland East, Mashonaland Central and Manicaland Provinces; and the other two programmes are both in Masvingo Province.
<b>Target population/beneficiaries:</b> Poor people in rural areas, the informal sector, rural enterprises in general, and rural microentrepreneurs (particularly women). Farmers are the prime beneficiaries of agriculture and natural resources sector programmes.
<b>Coverage:</b> Poorly represented on the ground, but direct delivery and partnerships with government departments, the private sector and other NGOs reach more than 450 000 people nationwide.
<b>Mobility capacity:</b> Equipped with numerous vehicles, including four-wheel drive motor vehicles.
<b>Effectiveness:</b> Reasonably successful in Zimbabwe, owing to holistic analysis and understanding of households, cross-sectoral integration of complementary interventions, coherent information systems, and use of institutionalized learning processes.

<b><i>Catholic Development Agency</i></b>
A community development agency commissioned by the Catholic Church. Classified as an NGO.
<b>Organizational mandate:</b> Undertaking community development work in rural areas.
<b>Motive for extension work:</b> Facilitating rural development through various intervention programmes.
<b>Major extension approaches used:</b> Group extension methodologies.
<b>Extension/community development programmes:</b> Four major community development programmes: a water development and sanitation programme funds small irrigation schemes, bore-holes and water-harvesting projects at rural schools, using the schools' roofs; a sustainable agriculture programme trains local farmers on sustainable agriculture through the use of organic material from local farm production; a development education programme trains participants in project management, including leadership, conflict resolution, constitution development and record keeping; and a programme on gender and development involves people from surrounding areas in gender sensitization and ensures that all

programmes are implemented in a gender-sensitive way.
<b>Sources of funding:</b> The Catholic Church.
<b>Sustainability of funding:</b> Has a relatively sustainable source of funding.
<b>Geographic focus:</b> Countrywide, but teams in provinces operate as independent units.
<b>Target population/beneficiaries:</b> Rural communities.
<b>Coverage:</b> Operates from the province, working through AGRITEX extension workers in districts. AGRITEX extension workers help monitor the projects and train project beneficiaries.
<b>Mobility capacity:</b> Very good.
<b>Effectiveness:</b> As is the case with most NGOs, the agency is relatively effective largely because it uses community participation approaches.

<b>Commercial Farmers' Union</b> The umbrella body that represents all large-scale commercial farmers and advocates for increased output from the large-scale commercial farming sector. The Agricultural Research Trust Farm is part of this organization.
<b>Organizational mandate:</b> Represents all large-scale commercial farmers, politically, economically and from a technical perspective.
<b>Motive for extension work:</b> Boosting agricultural production and increasing productivity and efficiency in the large-scale commercial farming sector.
<b>Major extension approaches used:</b> Periodic newsletters based on interest, e.g. grain, cereal, coffee and oilseeds; technical publications to disseminate research results; "circuses" where invited speakers disseminate research results through farmers' clubs at two annual events – one for winter and one for summer crops; crop competitions as extension vehicles (e.g. the Maize 10-Tonne Club, the Soybean 4-Tonne Club and the Maize Grower of the Year); and successful farmers (competition winners) host field days, which are held in conjunction with on-farm discussions. The number of field days and discussions varies according to the enterprise (e.g. the Commercial Cotton Growers' Association meets three times each growing season).
<b>Extension/community development programmes:</b> Include research work at the Agricultural Research Trust Farm. Rather than providing a blanket extension service, most extension is in response to specific individual or group requests.
<b>Sources of funding:</b> Self-funded, through membership licences and legislative commodity levies.
<b>Sustainability of funding:</b> Significantly sustainable.
<b>Geographic focus:</b> Countrywide.
<b>Target population/beneficiaries:</b> Large-scale commercial farmers.
<b>Coverage:</b> Based on a technical team at the head office consisting of an agronomist, an entomologist, a plant pathologist, a soils and nutrition expert and a marketing specialist. No technical staff on the ground, but the union is represented by commodity-based committees, e.g. cattle, cotton and grain. Activities such as field days are conducted in conjunction with DR&SS technical staff and marketing agents from various private agrochemical companies.
<b>Mobility capacity:</b> Relatively good.
<b>Effectiveness:</b> Very good, given the remarkable success of the large-scale commercial farming sector (in spite of other factors).

<b>Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE)</b> Established in 1989 by the Government of Zimbabwe through the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management. Basically an NGO that is registered as a welfare organization. Its mother body, the CAMPFIRE Association, is an association of rural district councils involved in CAMPFIRE activities.
<b>Organizational mandate:</b> Focus on community-based management of natural resources; designed to deal with equity and regulatory problems after the realization that communities with natural resources, especially wildlife, were not benefiting from those resources. Initial focus on wildlife has diversified into other natural resources and initiatives such as fisheries, forestry and timber products, mining and ecotourism.
<b>Motive for extension work:</b> Ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources by the communities that live and stand to benefit from them. Ensuring that the benefits from natural resources accrue to the communities that coexist with them.
<b>Major extension approaches used:</b> Group extension activities.
<b>Extension/community development programmes:</b> CAMPFIRE.
<b>Sources of funding:</b> Donors.
<b>Sustainability of funding:</b> Indications that one of the main donors, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) might pull out.
<b>Geographic focus:</b> Countrywide.
<b>Target population/beneficiaries:</b> All rural communities that are guardians of natural resources.
<b>Coverage:</b> Operated in 41 districts in 2000/2001, up from 37 districts in 1999/2000. Appears to be poorly represented at

the grassroots level, but works through ZimTrust officers at the grassroots level. The involvement of rural district councils gives the programme very widespread extension coverage.

**Mobility capacity:** Well equipped and well provided with transport facilities.

**Effectiveness:** A resounding success. Its major strength is community participation.

### ***Dairy Development Programme***

A rural development unit under the Agricultural and Rural Development Authority, which is itself a parastatal under the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement.

**Organizational mandate:** Enhancing rural development through the production and marketing of milk. Grassroots objectives are to develop strong viable business-oriented smallholder dairy groups through adopting more formalized business procedures, mutual support and exchange of ideas, and comparing and contrasting experiences and efforts to develop entrepreneurship among involved farmers. Also includes support, training and initial management of smallholder dairy projects as the basis of a viable smallholder dairy sector.

**Motive for extension work:** Enhancing the development of a viable smallholder dairy sector.

**Major extension approaches used:** The educational approach: agricultural extension and liaison workers attend courses on smallholder dairying and disseminate what they have learned to smallholder dairy farmers. Field days and competitions are used as platforms for farmer-to-farmer dissemination of information.

**Extension/community development programmes:** Dairy Development Programme.

**Sources of funding:** The government through its Public Sector Investment Programme, the Bulk Milk Counterpart Funds and Africa Now (United Kingdom). The Norwegian Development Agency (NORAD) was the major funder for the ten projects under Phase I, with contributions from the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) for one of them. The Zimbabwe European Union Microprojects Programme has provided grant assistance for one project.

**Sustainability of funding:** Funding was guaranteed until 2002.

**Geographic focus:** Mashonaland East, Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland West, Manicaland and Midlands Provinces. Programme expansion to Masvingo and Matebeleland South Provinces.

**Target population/beneficiaries:** Smallholder farmers.

**Coverage:** Personnel at 17 project sites in seven provinces, i.e. covers 17 of Zimbabwe's 57 administrative districts. Each project is staffed by one project officer, one centre attendant and two liaison workers. Local Milk Collection Centres are each staffed by a processing technician, assistants and vendors employed by the local Dairy Farmers' Association. Most extension work in smallholder dairying is conducted through AGRITEX. The official liaison worker to farmer ratio is about 1:60, but liaison workers sometimes work with unregistered, interested farmers who are not counted in these figures.

**Mobility capacity:** Motor cycles and bicycles for officers and liaison workers.

**Effectiveness:** Fairly effective. Success is based on dairying being a fairly new technology that is appropriate to and compatible with local socio-cultural and economic environments. Regular, monthly payments throughout the year make smallholder dairying more appealing than other agricultural activities.

### ***Department of Agricultural, Technical and Extension Services (AGRITEX)***

Under the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement; the principal agricultural extension agency in Zimbabwe throughout the period of the study. (It has since been disbanded under the recent restructuring of the Ministry and the subsequent placing of research and extension under the same directorate.)

**Organizational mandate:** Provision of general agricultural extension services and training for farmers in the use of new technologies. Operational objectives include: creating awareness among all landholders; identifying farmer groups for extension efforts; promoting training schemes, particularly for farmers with limited resources; assisting farmers in solving their own problems; and furthering agricultural development. Other responsibilities include resettlement and land-use planning, conservation and forestry extension in smallholder farming areas.

**Motive for extension work:** Increasing agricultural productivity, while maintaining the sustainability of the agricultural production base. Mandate-driven.

**Major extension approaches used:** In most cases, the group extension approach; occasionally, the project extension approach. The group extension approach includes group development areas (GDAs) comprising general development interest groups and commodity interest groups, master farmer training, trials and demonstrations, radio listening groups (RLGs), competitions, field days and study tours. The project extension approach is based on special interest projects. The training and visit (T&V) extension system was abandoned after evaluations found that it was inappropriate for the local context.

**Extension/community development programmes:** Very general, including a general crop production programme and a livestock development programme.

**Sources of funding:** Mainly government. Donor funding for specific interventionist programmes and projects such as the

T&V system (World Bank), and the Smallholder Dry Areas Resource Management Project (International Fund for Agricultural Development [IFAD]).
<b>Sustainability of funding:</b> Introduction of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in 1991 led to gradual reduction in government spending; subsequent budgetary cuts to AGRITEX had serious implications for its operations: in 1993, 79 percent of its budget went on salaries; and in 1995, it exhausted its transport allocation within the first quarter of the year. Donor funding showing signs of donor fatigue and withdrawals for political and socio-economic reasons.
<b>Geographic focus:</b> Countrywide.
<b>Target population/beneficiaries:</b> Concentrates efforts on agricultural extension services for the smallholder farming sector (small-scale, resettlement and communal-area farmers) as an institutional mandate; services large-scale commercial farmers on request. Offers services free of charge to other government agencies, NGOs and private companies with projects in rural areas.
<b>Coverage:</b> The most extensive in the country; offices at the national, provincial and district levels. Each district staffed by one district agricultural extension officer, about three agricultural extension officers, three agricultural extension supervisors and up to 20 extension workers. Ward- and village-level extension workers make for good AGRITEX representation at the farmer level. Extension worker to farmer ratios vary from 1:50 in irrigation and resettlement schemes to 1:2 000 in remote communal areas, with a national average of 1:800 (Mudimu, 1998).
<b>Mobility capacity:</b> Faces serious transport problems. Halting of World Bank-funded T&V scheme has left a depleted and ageing fleet. Travel and subsistence budget is too small to ensure reasonable coverage of all areas by senior and village-level extension officers and workers.
<b>Effectiveness:</b> Blanket public good service, which farmers are expected to use. Adoption of available technologies has not reached expected levels; farmers suggest there is a shortage of new knowledge or information to transfer to them. Use of top-down extension approaches has reduced the effectiveness of extension services.

<b>Department of Research and Specialist Services (DR&amp;SS)</b> The main body within the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement responsible for carrying out agricultural research in Zimbabwe, comprises: the Crop Breeding Institute; Seed Services; the Plant Protection Unit; the Chemistry and Soil Analysis Department; the Livestock Research Department; and the Dairy Services Department. Also houses the Farming Systems Research Unit, a semi-autonomous body within the research organization.
<b>Organizational mandate:</b> Conducting research and generating technologies to increase agricultural productivity in all agricultural commodities except tobacco, sugar, forest products, fish, pigs and animal diseases. After independence in 1980, the mandate was redefined to include research and generation of technologies to increase agricultural productivity in the smallholder agriculture sector, while maintaining or even increasing production in the large-scale commercial sector. Offers advisory services on agricultural matters to other government departments, private organizations and individuals.
<b>Motive for extension work:</b> Improving the adoption of generated technologies. Mandate-driven.
<b>Major extension approaches used:</b> On-farm trials, field days and look-and-learn tours. AGRITEX carries out most of the extension work regarding new technologies.
<b>Extension/community development programmes:</b> Farming Systems Research Unit research programme, and on-farm trials programme.
<b>Sources of funding:</b> Mainly government. International donors for some research and extension programmes.
<b>Sustainability of funding:</b> Not secure.
<b>Geographic focus:</b> Decentralized structure, research stations located in all agro-ecological regions.
<b>Target population/beneficiaries:</b> The smallholder agriculture and large-scale commercial sectors.
<b>Coverage:</b> Most of the Farming Systems Research Unit's work is carried out in Mangwende and Chivi communal areas. Generally, very thin on the ground at the local level, usually only one research officer per district. District offices established under a decentralization programme initiated in 1984.
<b>Mobility capacity:</b> Relatively poor.
<b>Effectiveness:</b> Badly affected by ESAP-induced budget cuts: fewer and fewer on-farm trials being carried out; greater distances between extensionists and farmers. About 80 percent of budget allocations go on salaries.

<b>Department of Veterinary Services</b> An arm of the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement.
<b>Organizational mandate:</b> Implementing and managing the nationwide Livestock Herd Health Management Programme, involving monitoring and controlling animal diseases through research, enforcing regulations, vaccinations, treatments, dipping, and veterinary extension – mainly advice on animal health.

<b>Motive for extension work:</b> Ensuring a disease-free livestock sector. Mandate-driven.
<b>Major extension approaches used:</b> Veterinary activities are compulsory, resulting in the use of top-down, coercive approaches. Educational approach includes veterinary courses and meetings.
<b>Extension/community development programmes:</b> The nationwide Livestock Herd Health Management Programme encompasses numerous splinter programmes.
<b>Sources of funding:</b> Mainly government for salaries and general operational costs. Donor funding for specific projects/programmes.
<b>Sustainability of funding:</b> Not secure.
<b>Geographic focus:</b> Countrywide.
<b>Target population/beneficiaries:</b> Mainly farmers within the smallholder farming sector.
<b>Coverage:</b> Good district-level coverage by researchers-cum-extensionists: each district entitled to one district veterinary officer, two animal health inspectors, six veterinary extension assistants and one animal health assistant; also orderlies, dip attendants and 56 casual workers. (Some positions unfilled, however.) Average extension assistant to stock owner ratio ranges between 1:1 000 and 1:3 000.
<b>Mobility capacity:</b> Poorly equipped: only one working vehicle often serves an entire district.
<b>Effectiveness:</b> Not secure given the limited resources, personnel and transport facilities.

<b><i>Farmers' Development Trust</i></b> A community-based organization formed through partnerships among organizations.
<b>Organizational mandate:</b> Providing training and extension for emergent and existing tobacco farmers, now expanded to include other high-value commodities and operations where AGRITEX might be lacking, such as paprika, horticulture, cotton and irrigation development. For irrigation development the trust runs a scheme for three years, during which it builds capacity in local communities, and after which the schemes are handed over to AGRITEX. Offers financial brokerage services and advocacy for better services, cheaper inputs and competitive markets.
<b>Motive for extension work:</b> Emphasizing and facilitating the development of smallholder farmers in terms of the production and marketing of lucrative cash crops.
<b>Major extension approaches used:</b> Lectures, practicals and demonstrations.
<b>Extension/community development programmes:</b> Include: i) a ten-month intensive training programme for school leavers; ii) weekly modular courses for practising farmers; iii) an on-farm training programme for busy farmers and pregnant women farmers, which uses AGRITEX extension advisers; and iv) a capacity building programme to provide AGRITEX extension workers with more information so they can become more effective facilitators in the rural development process.
<b>Sources of funding:</b> Mainly donors. Government provides financial resources through established training centres, and large-scale commercial farmers provide seedlings, tillage, etc. to involved farmers.
<b>Sustainability of funding:</b> At risk, if the current socio-politico-economic environment prevails.
<b>Geographic focus:</b> Five farmer training centres: Trelawney in Mashonaland West Province, Dozmery in Mashonaland East, Panorama in Mashonaland Central, and Nyamazura and Nyamazinga in Manicaland.
<b>Target population/beneficiaries:</b> Small-scale, resettlement and communal-area farmers; cooperatives involved in tobacco, paprika, cotton and irrigated-crop production.
<b>Coverage:</b> Serves 10 000 barley tobacco growers, 6 000 flue-cured tobacco producers, and 500 oriental growers, as well as working with cotton farmers. Average of one extension adviser per three administrative districts; i.e. an extension adviser to farmer ratio ranging between 1:20 000 and 1:150 000, depending on the size of the district.
<b>Mobility capacity:</b> Relatively good.
<b>Effectiveness:</b> Sources within the trust claim that its intervention has led to an increase in tobacco yields from 500 kg to 2 000 kg per hectare, compared with an average of 900 kg per hectare in smallholder areas that are not covered by the trust.

<b><i>Forestry Commission</i></b> A parastatal agency within the Ministry of Environment and Tourism; the official agency for implementation of the state-initiated Rural Reforestation Programme.
<b>Organizational mandate:</b> Promoting tree planting and management as an integrated part of farmers' agricultural work; developing and maintaining farmers' awareness of the needs to increase rural wood supplies and conserve indigenous wood resources; and promoting awareness of the need to use wood efficiently.
<b>Motive for extension work:</b> Maintaining existing woodlands and putting trees back on the land. Mandate-driven.
<b>Major extension approaches used:</b> Demonstration woodlots near nurseries show resettlement and communal-area farmers correct methods of establishing, maintaining and exploiting plantations. Awareness campaigns through short courses

and one-day workshops. Most forestry extension work is done through AGRITEX. Wider dissemination of information through schools and farmer-to-farmer extension.
<b>Extension/community development programmes:</b> Rural Reforestation Project, Social Forestry Project, National Tree Planting Day Programme, and Forestry Conservation Awareness Programme.
<b>Sources of funding:</b> Mainly government; also commercial activities and grants from donors (GTZ for the Social Forestry Project).
<b>Sustainability of funding:</b> Sustainable until the late 1990s. Now threatened by stringent budget cuts. Continued donor funding also not secure.
<b>Geographic focus:</b> Countrywide.
<b>Target population/beneficiaries:</b> Farmers in communal and resettlement areas, with emphasis on rural women as the traditional collectors of fuelwood and other forest resources. Master farmers are the main targets for extension, which they are expected to pass on to others.
<b>Coverage:</b> Very thin on the ground: an average of only one forestry extension officer per district at extension worker to farmer ratios of between 1:7 000 and 1:50 000. AGRITEX does most groundwork.
<b>Mobility capacity:</b> One vehicle or motorcycle per district. Severe transport problems in some districts.
<b>Effectiveness:</b> Two potentially conflicting roles (forest enterprise and regulatory body) pose problems in maintaining identity and purpose. Enforces provisions of restrictive legislation such as the Forest Act and encourages farmers to plant trees at the same time, resulting in conflicting regulatory and extension roles and detrimental effects for the conservation forestry programme.

<b>German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ)</b> A German Government agency responsible for planning and implementing development cooperation projects for and on behalf of the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation.
<b>Organizational mandate:</b> Initiating, facilitating and funding rural development projects, as well as supporting capacity building of rural development institutions (government and non-governmental) within developing country contexts.
<b>Motive for extension work:</b> Facilitating processes of social and organizational change to enhance services management and delivery in support of rural communities and rural development.
<b>Major extension approaches used:</b> Since 1995, participatory extension approaches have been developed in Zimbabwe to foster more client-oriented and demand-led responses from extension service providers.
<b>Extension/community development programmes:</b> Involved in community development programmes since 1990: piloted participatory extension approaches in the Integrated Rural Development Project with the Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG) (1995–1998); facilitated AGRITEX's Agricultural Services Management Project (since 1998); and funded the Social Forestry Programme, which it jointly implemented with the Forestry Commission.
<b>Sources of funding:</b> The German Government via the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation.
<b>Sustainability of funding:</b> Long-term involvement in Zimbabwe's rural development. Emphasizes the promotion of sustainability through partners' participation and ownership.
<b>Geographic focus:</b> The Integrated Rural Development Project spans the national, provincial and district (local community) levels; the Agricultural Services Management project is national; and the Social Forestry Programme operates in Hwedza, Hwange, Mwenezi, Gwanda and Muzarabani Districts. A poultry programme is being implemented in Wedza District, and the Participatory Extension Programme in Chivi District. Training in participatory extension approaches has expanded from Masvingo to Matebeleland North and South.
<b>Target population/beneficiaries:</b> Poor and disadvantaged rural communities and the organizations that provide services to them.
<b>Coverage:</b> Serious understaffing results in ineffective coverage of operational areas, but good collaboration and coordination (including monthly meetings) with other organizations – such as AGRITEX and the Forestry Commission, who have better grassroots representation – result in a situation of organizations complementing and depending on each other.
<b>Mobility capacity:</b> Reasonably good.
<b>Effectiveness:</b> The use of participatory extension approaches and the organizational development of government departments have laid the basis for greater self-exploration, learning and accountability among the managers and providers of services for farmers.

<b>Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG)</b> An NGO involved in technology development and dissemination for small-scale producers in agroprocessing, mining, energy, construction, transport and light engineering.
<b>Organizational mandate:</b> Focuses on developing and disseminating appropriate technologies for the production and



marketing of agricultural produce. Emphasis on developing appropriate technologies, developing technology dissemination approaches, and/or finding ways of improving technology dissemination approaches (technology delivery or extension), as well as improving technology adoption, policy formulation and programme development.
<b>Motive for extension work:</b> Strengthening technology and institutional capacity, and improving leverage in the livelihoods of rural communities through promoting technology dissemination and improving technology adaptation and adoption.
<b>Major extension approaches used:</b> Action research, with an emphasis on participatory extension approaches. ITDG facilitation sites are used for pilot programmes that involve small-scale producers and aim to develop and adapt technologies. Research results and experiences are made available to other organizations with wider geographic coverage and are used in policy formulation and programme planning.
<b>Extension/community development programmes:</b> Three programmes: the Food Security Project aims at understanding and addressing constraints to household food security; the General Rural Livelihoods Project is based on the Food Security Project but has a far broader focus and the aim of testing the facilitation approach as a way of addressing such problems as rural poverty and natural resources management; and the Natural Resources Programme recognizes that sustainable natural resources management in Zimbabwe has to follow a community-based approach and currently focuses on trying to understand the communities that ITDG will be working with.
<b>Sources of funding:</b> Donors, mainly from the European Union, particularly the United Kingdom.
<b>Sustainability of funding:</b> Not secure given the current socio-politico-economic environment.
<b>Geographic focus:</b> The Food Security Project is being implemented in Chivi District; the General Rural Livelihoods Project in Nyanga District; and the Natural Resources Programme across a wider area, which includes Chivi, Nyanga, Chimanimani and Gwanda Districts.
<b>Target population/beneficiaries:</b> Small-scale producers in agriculture (and other sectors of ITDG involvement) are the primary targets. Works with other associations and institutions involved with the same target beneficiaries, including the Zimbabwe Farmers' Union, rural district councils and the CAMPFIRE Association.
<b>Coverage:</b> Site facilitators at all pilot programme sites (one officer per area) work with local institutions such as rural district councils, support institutions such as AGRITEX and research institutions in particular districts.
<b>Mobility capacity:</b> Relatively good; all site facilitators use vehicles.
<b>Effectiveness:</b> The Chivi Food Security Project has been a resounding success, and other projects are following in its footsteps. The Nyanga General Livelihoods Project is on course and expected to produce positive lessons. Work in Chimanimani and Gwanda is still in its infancy, so it is difficult to assess its impact. Whether a project is conceived as positive or negative, there are always lessons to be learned and useful experience for the primary beneficiaries of that project.

<b>International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT)</b> An international research institute specializing in maize and wheat research.
<b>Organizational mandate:</b> Improving national and international food security and alleviating poverty through research in maize and wheat, while protecting the natural resources on which future productivity depends. Conducts crop and natural resources management research designed to exploit the full potential of improved seed and to preserve or enhance farmers' soil and water resources.
<b>Motive for extension work:</b> Promoting the widespread and effective use of maize and wheat varieties as a means of ensuring food security in developing countries.
<b>Major extension approaches used:</b> On-station research, on-farm trials, demonstrations and field days.
<b>Extension/community development programmes:</b> Implements, <i>inter alia</i> , four major programmes: conservation of invaluable maize and wheat genetic resources from around the world; research programmes to increase the productivity of maize and wheat within local farming systems, while protecting the natural resources on which future productivity depends; and the economics programme, which generates information for research programmes and provides information for decision-making at the farm level.
<b>Sources of funding:</b> International donors in Australia, Canada, Denmark, the United States, the Netherlands, etc.
<b>Sustainability of funding:</b> Relatively stable and quite sustainable given its international focus.
<b>Geographic focus:</b> Most work is based at the CIMMYT centre about 13 km north of Harare. Off-station and on-farm research sites are spread throughout the country.
<b>Target population/beneficiaries:</b> Only maize research benefits smallholder farmers because wheat production is still in the hands of large-scale commercial farmers.
<b>Coverage:</b> Research staff at the CIMMYT centre, and collaboration with DR&SS research stations in different geographic and agro-ecological regions of the country, which extends the coverage.
<b>Mobility capacity:</b> Reasonably good.
<b>Effectiveness:</b> The maize programme is developing and disseminating streak-resistant varieties and hybrids, developing

locally adapted drought- and low-nitrogen-tolerant maize varieties, and providing maize farmers with alternatives for sustainably managing low-fertility soils. However, the extent to which smallholder farmers (the bulk of local farmers) have adopted these technologies remains open to question.

### ***Ministry of Local Government***

Administrators of local-level development activities through its network of District Administrators.

**Organizational mandate:** Responsible for initiating and implementing development activities; coordinating and monitoring the delivery of advice, extension services and other forms of assistance by government and non-governmental agencies within an integrated project planning and management framework; carrying out surveys and censuses for planning purposes; advising local people about government policy; facilitating community participation in project implementation; and monitoring and evaluating rural development initiatives.

**Motive for extension work:** Not directly involved in agricultural extension programmes, but coordinates the process and helps to mobilize the communities.

**Major extension approaches used:** None.

**Extension/community development programmes:** Community Action Programme, and Poverty Alleviation Action Programme.

**Sources of funding:** Government.

**Sustainability of funding:** Not secure.

**Geographic focus:** Countrywide.

**Target population/beneficiaries:** All rural inhabitants.

**Coverage:** Represented at the district level by District Administrators.

**Mobility capacity:** Relatively good.

**Effectiveness:** Activities concerning the in-house monitoring and evaluation of rural development programmes are not very evident on the ground.

### ***Ministry of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation***

Recently amalgamated new government ministry responsible for tackling issues pertaining to youth, gender and employment creation. Comprises three departments: employment creation, youth development and gender.

**Organizational mandate:** Facilitating the socio-economic empowerment of communities through advocacy and developing entrepreneurship focused on youth, women and the unemployed. Specific objectives include: developing a policy framework for micro- and small enterprises; analysing policy, i.e. by-laws affecting the informal sector or small business enterprises; developing investment packages for small and microenterprises; designing projects/programmes for employment creation; and developing and operating micro-lending programmes for the informal sector and small and microenterprises (including the smallholder agriculture sector).

**Motive for extension work:** Facilitating and enhancing the socio-economic empowerment of communities through advocacy and entrepreneurship development.

**Major extension approaches used:** Mainly group extension methods.

**Extension/community development programmes:** Training courses for target beneficiaries on improving business management, gender and project planning and management; capacity building programmes for the informal sector through developing participants' lobbying or advocating skills; encompasses farmer training in the management of agribusinesses and small-scale enterprises.

**Sources of funding:** Government and international donors.

**Sustainability of funding:** Not secure.

**Geographic focus:** Countrywide.

**Target population/beneficiaries:** Youth, women and the unemployed, i.e. most community members within the smallholder agriculture sector.

**Coverage:** Collaborates with line ministries and government departments on the ground (e.g. AGRITEX provides technical training). Trains individuals or groups, facilitates established linkages and mobilizes communities.

**Mobility capacity:** Poorly equipped and almost immobile.

**Effectiveness:** Too early to judge.

### ***Natural Resources Board***

An agency and statutory body within the Ministry of Environment and Tourism.

**Organizational mandate:** The public trustee of all natural resources; engaged in the direct supervision of natural resources utilization, including enforcing conservation measures.

<b>Motive for extension work:</b> Conservation of all natural resources. Mandate-driven.
<b>Major extension approaches used:</b> Based on a criminalization policy with regulations. To improve effectiveness, policy has shifted from policing to a more integrated approach using education and extension work to manage natural resources: awareness raising campaigns through workshops, courses, competitions, films and literature. Forms conservation committees, and complements the reforestation drive by working through interest groups such as master farmer groups and schools.
<b>Extension/community development programmes:</b> Enforces the Natural Resources Act (1942), the Forestry Produce Act (1981), the Parks and Wildlife Act, and the Forestry Act (1948, amended 1982); all include penalties for non-compliance. Implements education programmes and awareness raising campaigns.
<b>Sources of funding:</b> Mainly government.
<b>Sustainability of funding:</b> Affected by ESAP and its resultant budget cuts.
<b>Geographic focus:</b> Countrywide.
<b>Target population/beneficiaries:</b> Largely indigenous farmers in small-scale, resettlement and communal areas. Laws and regulations also apply to large-scale commercial farming and urban areas.
<b>Coverage:</b> Very thin on the ground: offices and personnel at the district level only. Education and awareness programmes implemented by AGRITEX. Depends on the unreliable Zimbabwe Republic Police to enforce fines for environmental wrongdoing.
<b>Mobility capacity:</b> Poor transport facilities.
<b>Effectiveness:</b> Effective policing and legislation made difficult by farmers' dislike of coercive conservation (a hangover from the colonial period), resulting in continued destruction of natural resources and limited success for conservation programmes. Change in policy towards education has greatly improved awareness and farmer participation in conservation programmes.

<b>Rural district councils</b> The decentralized administrative arms of the Ministry of Local Government.
<b>Organizational mandate:</b> Spearheading and coordinating development initiatives and administrative issues at the local or district levels.
<b>Motive for extension work:</b> Facilitating rural development. At the operational level, the objective is to improve the living standards of rural people.
<b>Major extension approaches used:</b> Depends on individual programme and collaborating partners.
<b>Extension/community development programmes:</b> Include the Poverty Alleviation Action Programme, which seeks to build the capacity of communities to develop on their own. Also involved in collaborative initiatives such as the Social Forestry Programme and CAMPFIRE.
<b>Sources of funding:</b> Mainly government; other donors fund some specific rural development initiatives/programmes.
<b>Sustainability of funding:</b> Not secure.
<b>Geographic focus:</b> Countrywide.
<b>Target population/beneficiaries:</b> Rural people living in their areas.
<b>Coverage:</b> Thin on the ground: each district contains between 7 000 and 50 000 households. Most programmes are implemented through district-level coordination.
<b>Mobility capacity:</b> Most officers are motorized.
<b>Effectiveness:</b> Relatively effective because of their good conduct and proximity to communities at the grassroots level.

<b>Silveira House</b> Established in 1964 as a forum for addressing the burning issues of the day and galvanizing people into action for change. Transformed into a centre for leadership training and development education. A centre of the Catholic Church and classified as an NGO.
<b>Organizational mandate:</b> Focuses on research, extension and training in various fields, including agriculture, home economics and the development and use of appropriate technologies such as solar dryers for horticultural produce. Four additional priority areas have recently been added: skills training, advocacy work, employment creation and AIDS education. The organizational objective is to promote the sustainable, integrated human development of the poor and marginalized groups to enable them to help themselves.
<b>Motive for extension work:</b> Facilitating the processes of social change, community and rural development.
<b>Major extension approaches used:</b> Short- and long-term courses, workshops, lectures, demonstrations and practicals.
<b>Extension/community development programmes:</b> Programmes in training, research, extension and administration are handled by administrative wings of the same names. Issues addressed include youth, agriculture and farming and income-generating projects.
<b>Sources of funding:</b> The Catholic Church and other donors.

<b>Sustainability of funding:</b> Relatively stable.
<b>Geographic focus:</b> Countrywide, but especially in Mashonaland provinces.
<b>Target population/beneficiaries:</b> Poor and marginalized groups; microenterprise development consultancy (training) services focus on agriculture, and provide individuals and communities at the grassroots level with relevant practical skills for small-scale businesses; school leavers and unemployed youth are also targeted.
<b>Coverage:</b> Very thin on the ground. Collaboration with government agencies (e.g. AGRITEX) and NGOs (e.g. the Farmers' Development Trust) to improve effectiveness.
<b>Mobility Capacity:</b> Relatively good.
<b>Effectiveness:</b> Relatively successful on the ground.

<b>Smallholder Dry Areas Resource Management Programme</b> A government-to-government rural development initiative funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).
<b>Organizational mandate:</b> The overall objective is to provide poorer people in the drier communal areas with enhanced food security and incomes, based on sustainable and drought-tolerant resources management by and for the community. Aims at strengthening communities' capacity to manage and develop their shared resources to the best and lasting advantage (with support from government and non-governmental institutions whose capacities are strengthened by the programme) and at preserving the environment while enhancing improved outputs from better resources management.
<b>Motive for extension work:</b> To ensure food security, improve resources management and strengthen the capacity of rural communities.
<b>Major extension approaches used:</b> Training sessions, participatory rural appraisals, participatory adaptive trials, adaptive research techniques and farmer-to-farmer dissemination of information through exchange visits.
<b>Extension/community development programmes:</b> Splinter programmes include communal resources management projects, the Gully Reclamation and Catchment Area Rehabilitation Project, irrigation development, agricultural development, water harvesting and spreading, and capacity building. Related programmes are the South Eastern Dry Areas Project and the Smallholder Irrigation Support Programme, which are funded by IFAD.
<b>Sources of funding:</b> IFAD.
<b>Sustainability of funding:</b> Relatively sustainable (at least for now).
<b>Geographic focus:</b> The communal areas of six districts in Manicaland Province (Buhera, Chimanimani, Chipinge, Makoni, Mutare and Nyanga), and five districts in Masvingo Province (Bikita, Chiredzi, Chivi, Masvingo and Mwenezi).
<b>Target population/beneficiaries:</b> Poor people living in the drier communal areas of Zimbabwe.
<b>Coverage:</b> Programme coordination by the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement. Implementation on the ground involves a number of players with more extensive coverage (DR&SS, AGRITEX, the Department of Veterinary Services and the Department of Natural Resources).
<b>Mobility capacity:</b> Several vehicles ensure reasonable mobility.
<b>Effectiveness:</b> Too early to judge. The first programme evaluations were under way while this study was being conducted.

<b>Southern Alliance for Indigenous Resources (SAFIRE)</b> An NGO founded in 1994 and drawing heavily on the resources and experiences of its predecessor organization, the Fuelwood Crisis Consortium (FCC).
<b>Organizational mandate:</b> Focuses on facilitating the development and application of innovative approaches aimed at diversifying and improving rural livelihoods and based on the utilization, commercialization and sustainable management of natural resources.
<b>Motive for extension work:</b> Developing the self-sufficiency of rural communities through improving the management and sustainable utilization of indigenous natural resources; supporting and developing the management capabilities of local-level institutions in the sustainable utilization of natural resources; encouraging local efforts and responsibility in participatory natural resources management; assisting the alleviation of environmental degradation in refugee-impact areas; encouraging collaboration among institutions active in indigenous resources management; and advocating for policies that enhance the achievement of these objectives.
<b>Major extension approaches used:</b> Participatory rural appraisals and training courses.
<b>Extension/community development programmes:</b> Directly implements four programmes: the Managing our Indigenous Tree Inheritance Programme; Permaculture in Refugee Settings; Sengwe Women Crafts Project; and the Community Drought Mitigation Project. Supports CAMPFIRE and the Community-Based Natural Resources Management Programme through training and information provision. All programmes are designed to improve rural livelihoods, based on the utilization, commercialization and sustainable management of natural resources.

<b>Sources of funding:</b> International donor agencies.
<b>Sustainability of funding:</b> Not secure.
<b>Geographic focus:</b> The Managing our Indigenous Tree Inheritance Programme is being implemented in Chiredzi, Chipinge, Chimanimani, Nyanga and Rushinga districts; and the other programmes have more extensive coverage (appear to be countrywide).
<b>Target population/beneficiaries:</b> The primary target group is rural communities whose welfare is inextricably linked to the welfare of the environment in which they live. In addition to specially designed intervention programmes, a range of technical support services are provided to community-based organizations, central government agencies, local government authorities, partner NGOs, international organizations and bilateral and multilateral funding agencies.
<b>Coverage:</b> Personnel at head office in Harare, and five sub-offices in Chiredzi, Chipinge, Chimanimani, Nyanga and Rushinga. At the grassroots level, SAFIRE relies on collaboration with government agencies and other NGOs.
<b>Mobility capacity:</b> Relatively good.
<b>Effectiveness:</b> Use of participatory approaches in programmes has ensured relative success in most interventions.

<b>University of Zimbabwe</b> An institute of higher learning (academic institution) and a centre for research. Important units include the Faculty of Agriculture, the Department of Mining Engineering, the Development Technology Centre, the Centre for Applied Social Sciences, and the Institute of Environmental Studies.
<b>Organizational mandate:</b> Undergraduate teaching, postgraduate training, research and involvement in outreach activities. The ultimate objective is to contribute to the national goals of increasing agricultural productivity, ensuring national food security, raising income levels and improving household welfare for the majority of the rural population.
<b>Motive for extension work:</b> Training and research designed to increase the productivity, efficiency, viability and sustainability of agricultural enterprises. Outreach activities are part of community development initiatives and a strategic marketing technique.
<b>Major extension approaches used:</b> On-site studies, workshops, on-farm trials and field days.
<b>Extension/community development programmes:</b> Numerous donor-funded research projects and outreach programmes.
<b>Sources of funding:</b> Government for salaries and general operational costs. International donors for specific projects/programmes.
<b>Sustainability of funding:</b> Fairly stable.
<b>Geographic focus:</b> Countrywide.
<b>Target population/beneficiaries:</b> Research and outreach activities are principally targeted at rural contexts (smallholder farming areas), although research results and other interventions also benefit urban populations (e.g. urban cultivators) and large-scale commercial farmers.
<b>Coverage:</b> Unevenly distributed throughout the country. The presence and number of personnel in a particular province or district depend on specific interventions.
<b>Mobility capacity:</b> Excellent: most projects have at least one or two four-wheel drive vehicles.
<b>Effectiveness:</b> Fairly effective, although many interventions are not sustainable because they are based on three- to five-year projects, which limits their impact at the ground level. Some studies have tended to be donor-driven and/or too academic, with little application to grassroots realities.

<b>Zimbabwe Farmers' Union</b> The umbrella organization that represents all smallholder farmers in Zimbabwe, in all the matters that concern them. These are small-scale, resettlement and communal-area farmers.
<b>Organizational mandate:</b> Liberalization of the economy has led to the union's role shifting from being mainly policy and price negotiation to being facilitation of smallholder agriculture sector development. The changed major drive focuses on improving the market, technical, and general socio-economic position of smallholder farmers. Assists farmers with transporting their produce to markets.
<b>Motive for extension work:</b> Providing technical and market information as a means of improving the welfare of smallholder farmers.
<b>Major extension approaches used:</b> The study group method to provide technical and/or production information; study groups comprise farmers who come together to share ideas, experiences and information about a specific issue in order to meet identified needs, with reference to written self-study materials. Promotes the concept of commodity associations, from the national to the village level, which network with other stakeholders for service delivery. The Market Capacity Building Programme and exchange visits are also used.
<b>Extension/community development programmes:</b> Include the Market Capacity Building Programme, the Study

Group Programme, women and youth development programmes, agroforestry, the Livestock Revolving Fund, and the livestock and crops insurance programmes.
<b>Sources of funding:</b> Member subscriptions, commodity levies and donors such as the Swedish Cooperative Centre, the Fredrich Ebert Foundation, the Kellogg Foundation, ESSOR (France) and DANIDA.
<b>Sustainability of funding:</b> The numbers of smallholder farmers involved and the money generated from crop and livestock production give subscriptions great potential as a long-term funding source. Funding therefore remains sustainable, even in the case of donor withdrawal.
<b>Geographic focus:</b> Countrywide.
<b>Target population/beneficiaries:</b> All smallholder farmers.
<b>Coverage:</b> Offices in 32 of the country's 56 districts are each staffed by a district coordinator and a clerk/typist, although staffing levels vary among districts. Village- and ward-level representation through farmers' clubs and committees established to facilitate communication.
<b>Mobility capacity:</b> Relatively well motorized; at least one four-wheel drive vehicle in most districts.
<b>Effectiveness:</b> Although not all farmers are members, structures represent members from the village to the national level. This effective structure on the ground allows the organization to position itself in important service delivery institutions, such as the Livestock Development Trust (LDT) and input credit schemes. Through study groups and market capacity building initiatives smallholder farmers have pooled resources and formed companies to acquire inputs and to handle and market produce.

<b><i>Zimbabwe Fertilizer Company Private Limited</i></b>
A private entity classified as a private agrochemical input supplier.
<b>Organizational mandate:</b> No externally driven mandate. As an independent private organization, its line of interest is in manufacturing and marketing agricultural chemicals and fertilizers.
<b>Motive for extension work:</b> Increasing farmers' awareness and use of available fertilizers and agrochemicals with the ultimate objective of increasing sales and maximizing profits. Extension programmes are run for business motives: "investing in the extension programme in anticipation of a return".
<b>Major extension approaches used:</b> To improve farmers' awareness and adoption of technologies, group extension methods such as meetings, farmer training, demonstrations and field days. Sponsors competitions such as the commercial and communal areas' Tobacco Grower of the Year.
<b>Extension/community development programmes:</b> Works with the Southern African Development Community (SADC)/International Centre for Research in the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) Matopos Research Station and AGRITEX in a research programme to develop fertilizers for drier regions and boost the agriculture sector in those regions through irrigation schemes. ICRISAT carries out the research, the company provides research material and AGRITEX disseminates the generated technologies. A complementary programme established a nationwide network of company depots to improve the availability and accessibility of fertilizers and agrochemicals to smallholder farmers through reducing transport costs, thereby effectively ensuring that the technology is more affordable to impoverished smallholder farmers.
<b>Sources of funding:</b> Self-funded.
<b>Sustainability of funding:</b> Depends on the company's ability to function, which in turn depends on the operational environment. Affected by the unstable economic environment (e.g. severely declined demand for fertilizer or agrochemicals).
<b>Geographic focus:</b> Countrywide, particularly in Matebeleland South and Midlands Provinces (especially Gwanda, Tsholotsho and Zvishavane Districts).
<b>Target population/beneficiaries:</b> Both large-scale commercial and smallholder farmers, but the research programme is directed to smallholder farmers in drier regions.
<b>Coverage:</b> Very poorly represented on the ground, with only 35 representatives to cover both the commercial and the communal farming sectors. Heavy dependence on AGRITEX for wider dissemination of technologies, and employs trainers to train farmers in the use of company-generated technologies.
<b>Mobility capacity:</b> All representatives are motorized. Sometimes provides AGRITEX with transport to ensure that its programme and work are effective.
<b>Effectiveness:</b> Quite effective, although while farmers have already adopted maize hybrids, they have only partially adopted complementary technologies such as chemical fertilizers (used by only 40 percent of smallholder farmers).



The **Integrated Support to Sustainable Development and Food Security Programme (IP)** is a programme of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The IP seeks to promote multidisciplinary collaboration within FAO and with the public sector and civil society in order to enhance sustainable development and food security.

One of the activities the IP carried out in Zimbabwe in Phase-I (1998-2002) was a research on pluralistic agricultural extension systems in Zimbabwe.

This comprehensive report includes an overview and analysis of all public and private extension service providers, a targeted strategy to enhance co-ordination and collaboration between both public and private extension providers, and a guiding framework for a pilot project to test and promote pluralistic co-ordination among extension service providers.