



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Coordination Role in Zimbabwe

Central provider of agricultural information

FAO's Emergency and Rehabilitation Coordination Unit (ERCU) has been a central provider of agricultural information and technical advice for the humanitarian community in Zimbabwe since 2002. Through the ERCU, FAO contributes to the production and dissemination of a wide range of informational material covering issues related to seasonal developments and performance, availability of inputs, humanitarian interventions in agriculture, food security and gap analysis. This information is used by stakeholders as a basis for programming interventions, establishing benchmarks to measure the impact of interventions and inform policy.

Support for national assessments and surveys

FAO supports and participates in major national agricultural assessments and surveys, such as:

- national crop assessments in collaboration with AGRITEX - Department of Agricultural Research and Extension Services (Ministry of Agriculture);
- FAO/World Food Programme (WFP) Food and Crop Supply Assessment;
- rural and urban Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment (ZimVAC) food security assessments; and
- Agriculture and Food Security Monitoring System.

Standardization of approaches and guidelines

FAO encourages the standardization of sound approaches among stakeholders implementing agricultural humanitarian and recovery activities. Through the development of sectoral strategies, FAO informs policy- and decision-makers on approaches, priorities and recommended ways forward.

Piloting, assessment and promotion of new technologies

FAO is at the forefront of innovative and sustainable agricultural technologies in Zimbabwe, which aim to improve the livelihoods of vulnerable farming households. New ideas are discussed in relevant working groups and then tested on a pilot basis. Following independent documentation of processes and impact, if considered appropriate, the technology will be promoted among a wider group for uptake. Examples of such technologies are insurance schemes for restocking agro-inputs, seed growing schemes, vermi-culture, agroforestry integration, and intensified agriculture in urban areas.

FAO and the Agricultural Coordination Working Group (ACWG)

One aspect of FAO's coordination work in Zimbabwe is to act as Chair of the Agricultural Coordination Working Group (ACWG). The ACWG brings together key players in the agriculture sector in Zimbabwe to share information and plans and learn about new developments. This includes Government representatives, such as the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Early Warning Unit, farmers' unions, non-governmental organizations, United Nations (UN) agencies, research institutes, private sector and others. On average, well over 100 people attend these monthly meetings. FAO also chairs subworking groups covering seeds, gardens, livestock, conservation agriculture and markets.

FAO produces an ACWG Journal on a monthly basis that reports news, assessment results, price watches, project updates, innovative concepts and other relevant information. The journal is distributed to more than 500 addressees. FAO also makes ACWG presentations and information available to the agricultural community through a Web site. To reach national audiences, FAO and Government counterparts travel on a quarterly basis to every province of the country to share agricultural and other pertinent information.



Projects in technical areas

While coordination and information production are the core of FAO's emergency activities in Zimbabwe, the Unit also works in the following technical areas:

- 1) agricultural input assistance to vulnerable smallholder farmers;
- 2) support to extension services;
- 3) support for seed production;
- 4) enhancement of productivity for communal farmers in Zimbabwe through advanced land use and land management practices (e.g. conservation agriculture);
- 5) poultry vaccination (Newcastle disease) and surveillance (e.g. avian influenza);
- 6) vaccination against foot-and-mouth disease, anthrax and rabies;
- 7) training on nutritional aspects of agriculture (dietary diversification, vegetable garden production, food preservation and cooking methods); and
- 8) HIV and AIDS and nutrition mainstreaming.

Policy support

FAO works toward implementing policies and strategies that promote sustainable initiatives around food and livelihood security and social protection. Whenever possible, FAO facilitates discussion around policy changes. FAO assisted the Government to design a HIV strategy for the agriculture sector and is supporting its implementation. FAO is also working toward strengthening the integration of conservation agriculture in Government structures, the development of livelihood-based social protection frameworks and the institutionalization of nutrition guidelines.

Zimbabwe emergency smallholder support programme 2009 – 2010

The ACWG has been instrumental in developing this year's emergency smallholder crop production support programme 2009 – 2010. This programme has been jointly developed by the three Rome-based UN agencies, FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, WFP and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), in response to a request for assistance from the Government of Zimbabwe. The programme is expected to support the production of over 600 000 tonnes of cereal, nearly half of Zimbabwe's annual human requirement, during the forthcoming cropping season, with an estimated budget of USD 142 million.

Support for FAO's coordination work in Zimbabwe

The following donors are currently or have in the recent past funded FAO's coordination efforts in Zimbabwe:

- European Commission
- United States Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance
- United Kingdom's Department for International Development
- Government of South Africa
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
- Irish Aid
- Government of Japan
- Government of Spain
- Government of the Netherlands
- Government of Norway
- Australian Aid

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