

# ADDING VALUE TO SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PRODUCE



## WHY?

As 70% of the Zimbabwean population are small-scale farmers, agriculture has always offered the biggest contribution to the BNP. For decades, small-scale farmers used external inputs (seeds and chemical fertilisers), and with material and financial support from government, they were able to provide for themselves, and even to produce substantial surpluses. Together with the large commercial farms, they assured Zimbabwe's food security and exported food to the surrounding countries.

Since 2000, the agricultural sector in Zimbabwe has been in disarray. Yes, small-scale farming families have got more land since Mugabe's land reforms. But **government support has disappeared** almost completely. External inputs are very difficult to get, and when available, out of reach for most farmers. The collapse of the agricultural sector has brought huge **food shortages**. One in every 3 Zimbabweans, or about 4 million people, depend on food aid. To add on to this, the ecological degradation is enormous, exacerbating poverty even further.

As a result, with the support of mainly international and also local NGOs, **sustainable agriculture concepts and techniques** have become quite popular in Zimbabwe.

While the sustainable agriculture activities of small-scale farmers of Zimbabwe are rather productive, the produce hardly gets processed. A successful agricultural sector requires adequate attention to all elements in the value chain though, from **production to marketing**.

Farmers generally lack the knowledge and skills, expertise, contacts and resources, to process their agricultural produce, improve the quality of the processed foods and market them. **Adding value and selling processed products offers many opportunities:** an increase in productivity and crop diversification, an increase in the nutritional value of the diets of farming families, the generation of extra income, and the stimulation of the local economy.

## WHAT?

To develop this "missing link" and thus improve the incomes and livelihoods of poor people, Volens is working with a number of local NGOs to **improve their support to small-scale farming families in food processing, value-addition and marketing of sustainable agriculture produce**.

Key aspects that should be addressed in providing support to farmers and to achieve sustainable agribusinesses include **value addition and product diversification, market information, market research, entrepreneurial and business skills training, access to finance, group development, leadership, conflict management, policy support, social awareness with emphasis on gender and HIV and AIDS, and environmental awareness**.

## WHO?

Volens is a Belgian NGO that is supporting partner organisations and networks in 17 countries in Africa and Latin America. It has been working in Zimbabwe **since 1989**.

The NGOs it is supporting in this network are all **local Zimbabwean NGOs**, active in the Mashonaland East, Central and West Provinces and with major sustainable agriculture activities. They are:

- Cluster Agricultural Development Services (CADS),
- Catholic Development Commission (CADEC) Chinhoyi,
- Community Technology Development Trust (CTDT),
- Centre for Total Transformation (CTT),
- Kajiwa Development Coordination Association (KDCA),
- Kufunda Learning Village (KLV),
- Lower Guruve Development Association (LGDA) and
- Zimbabwe Women's Bureau (ZWB).

## HOW?

Volens supports and strengthens the activities of its partner organisations through:

- **Human capacity building:** facilitation of training in Zimbabwe and abroad and of look-and-learn visits for the NGOs' staff, volunteers, contact farmers and beneficiaries in food processing, value-addition and marketing of agricultural produce. The participation in and organisation of fairs is also encouraged.
- **Organisational capacity building:** improving the way organisations operate in the field of organisational building and management, financial management and resource mobilisation.
- **Networking and wider impact:** joint membership in networks and working groups in Zimbabwe and the region around sustainable agriculture, the development of websites and other promotional materials, the development of joint training materials on food processing, the submission of joint proposals.





*Inside images:*

- 1: *Illustration of market failure: farmers trying to sell their produce on an alternate market, a bus stop*
- 2: *Cutting lemons for sweet potato juice, a marketable product, with high nutritional value*

*Outside images:*

- 1: *Workshop participants learn to process sweet potato into fries, an appreciated snack*
- 2: *Processing sunflower seeds into cooking oil*
- 3: *Marketing home processed juices*
- 4: *Processing sweet potatoes into jam*
- 5: *Illustration of market failure: farmers selling their un-processed produce on an alternate market, along the road*
- 6: *Processed and marketable dried fruit*



Volens is a Belgian NGO, financed by both public and private funds. Volens seeks to sustainably empower marginalised groups in the South, who are working towards their inclusion in a creative, innovative and appropriate way. Volens strengthens, stimulates and articulates these initiatives by collaborating with partner organisations and by reinforcing their activities.

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