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China-Zimbabwe Partnership on “Demonstration in Africa by Africans”

Summary

To address the root causes of vulnerability and increase the productivity and market access of smallholder farmers, the Government of Zimbabwe requested China’s support. China’s experience on **empowering smallholder farmers, post-harvest loss management and rural transformation** are highly relevant for Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe will be the first pilot country of WFP China’s **“Demonstration in Africa by Africans” programme** which aims at extending China’s affordable and applicable agricultural technologies to aspirational lead farmers in Africa.

Challenge

Zimbabwe is a low-income country. Agriculture accounts for 20% of the national GDP, and 98 percent of farmers are smallholders who work 73% of the land¹.

Challenges for **smallholder farmers** in Zimbabwe include low productivity, limited access to markets and a lack of competitiveness. Limited extension services, frequent adverse weather conditions and poor access to finance and inputs exacerbate the situation.

To address the root causes of vulnerability and increase the productivity and market access of smallholder farmers, the Government of Zimbabwe requested China’s support. China’s experience in empowering smallholder farmers, post-harvest loss management and rural transformation is highly relevant for Zimbabwe.

The **WFP China Centre of Excellence** coordinated a guided tour and ministerial dialogue in 2016 for Zimbabwean and Chinese senior officials. As a result, the first pilot of an innovative, Chinese-supported South-South Cooperation programme called **“Demonstration in Africa by Africans”** is being designed and expected to be launched in 2018.

Solution

Over the past 35 years, China has experienced a **significant economic transformation** and made remarkable progress in **poverty reduction and social development**. Using nine percent of the world’s arable land, China has been able to **feed more than 20 percent of the world’s population**².



Photo: WFP/Carola Kenngott

Modern technology – machinery, fertilizer and irrigation – and policy changes have been credited as fundamental drivers of China’s agricultural growth over the past three decades.

The **“Demonstration in Africa by Africans”** programme aims at extending China’s affordable and applicable agricultural technologies to smallholder farmers in Africa through technical demonstrations. It will

SDG Targets



End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.



Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

support smallholder farmers through in-field technical demonstrations to **improve their business practices and foster a new generation of lead farmers.**

Stakeholders and Partners

The “**Demonstration in Africa by Africans**” programme targets young smallholder farmers and core members of farmers’ organizations who are educated, aspirational and willing to improve their skills. They will join training sessions in China to learn about effective technologies and agricultural business management.



The programme will target **5 demonstration sites and 10 young leading smallholder farmers per partner country.**

The **main partners** envisioned to participate in the **pilot of the “Demonstration in Africa by Africans” programme** in Zimbabwe include:

- the China Ministry of Agriculture;
- the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences;
- the Nanjing Research Institute for Agricultural Mechanization of the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture;
- the Women’s University in Africa;
- the Anhui or Hunan Provincial Agriculture Committee;
- the Zimbabwe Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanization and Irrigation Development;
- the Zimbabwe Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare;
- the WFP China Center of Excellence,
- the WFP Zimbabwe Country Office.

Methodology

The “Demonstration in Africa by Africans” programme will focus on **(1)** developing local agricultural value chains; **(2)** applying emerging information technology; **(3)** sharing modern management techniques for agricultural business and markets, and **(4)** setting up short-cycled, effective and efficient agriculture businesses for smallholders based on local resources.

The programme equips aspirational lead farmers to transfer their newly acquired knowledge and help fellow farmers increase their production and incomes, by applying a “**train-the-trainer**” approach:

- 1) Selected African farmers receive **in-field training (on-job coaching)** for one production season in China;
- 2) Necessary **agricultural inputs or seed funds are provided to lead farmers.** They will also receive support to establish their demonstration households;
- 3) **Chinese agricultural experts** are deployed to the selected partnering host countries to **conduct on-site instruction.** Chinese experts will provide support to enable a local farming culture and carry out technical demonstrations and trainings;
- 4) The trained lead farmers share their new expertise with farmers in their communities and regions through the “**train-the-trainer**” approach. This way, they pass access to adapted agricultural technology and good management practices, including marketing skills for small-holder farmers for selected value chains.

South-South Cooperation

The “Demonstration in Africa by Africans” programme **fosters the cross-country transfer of technological solutions** and best practices for smallholder farmers through **on-site trainings and experts deployment.**

In the specific case of Zimbabwe, smallholder farmers receive on-site training in China and Chinese experts will then be deployed to Zimbabwe to support the practical application of China's solutions on the ground.

Sustainability

In the case of Zimbabwe, the following aspects of the programme enhance the potential for long-lasting and sustainable effects for smallholder farmers:

- The “Demonstration in Africa by Africans” programme strategically targets lead farmers, who have the ability to transfer their acquired knowledge to their surrounding communities. By strengthening the **capacity of young lead farmers in Zimbabwe**, they are better prepared to help their fellow farmers to **move from subsistence agriculture to market-oriented agriculture** business. This will help to lift more smallholder farmers in Zimbabwe out of poverty and hunger.
- The program will **leverage pre-existing partnerships** and evolving networks. “Demonstration in Africa by Africans” is supported by the Government of Zimbabwe and by the WFP Zimbabwe Country Office.
- **Linkage with ongoing operations.** The existing China-aid Agricultural Technology Demonstration Centre in Zimbabwe and other agricultural investment initiatives could reinforce the programme implementation.
- The chosen project districts align with the priority areas for WFP's food assistance operations in Zimbabwe as per the [Zimbabwe Country Strategic Plan 2017-2021](#).
- The initiative contributes to **China's Belt and Road Initiative**



Photo: WFP/China

and is aligned with the objectives of China's 3 billion USD South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund.

Replicability

The “Demonstration in Africa by Africans” programme is a **newly initiated modality for South-South Cooperation** that will be supported by the WFP China Centre of Excellence. The following conditions should be in place for a country to be able to engage with the WFP China Centre of Excellence through this programme:

- Collaboration with the WFP China Centre of Excellence should be **demand-driven**;
- The partner country should demonstrate **ownership** and commitment to realize this initiative in partnership with China.
- Local conditions should be conducive to adopt China's technology.

References

¹WFP, 2017. [Zimbabwe Country Strategic Plan \(2017-2021\)](#).

²WFP, 2017. [China Country Strategic Plan \(2017-2021\)](#).

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