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# APRA brochure: Zimbabwe



Agricultural Policy Research in Africa

The Agricultural Policy Research in Africa (APRA) programme is a five-year research consortium that is working to **identify the most effective pathways to agricultural commercialisation** that empower women, reduce rural poverty, and improve food and nutrition security in sub-Saharan Africa.

## What is agricultural commercialisation?

We define commercialisation as a process occurring when farmers increasingly engage with the market, either to procure inputs and resources (such as fertiliser, seeds, hired labour, formal credit, rented land), or to process and sell their produce. Commercialisation may occur through either external investment or market specialisation and farm consolidation, or a combination of the two.

Commercialisation is successful if more people are *'stepping up'*, *'stepping out'* and *'stepping in'*, and fewer people are *'hanging in'* or *'dropping out'* of productive agriculture.

## What will APRA do?

APRA researchers are examining how African farmers engage with four different types of commercial agriculture (estate/plantation, medium-scale commercial agriculture, contract farming, smallholder commercialisation) and the effects this has on the livelihoods of rural people, particularly women and young people. The aim is to help inform future policy and investment decisions to promote more inclusive forms of agricultural commercialisation in sub-Saharan Africa.

### APRA's goals

- Generate high-quality evidence on pathways to agricultural commercialisation in Africa.
- Undertake policy research on agricultural commercialisation to fill key evidence gaps and define policy options.
- Ensure the sharing and uptake of research by a diverse range of stakeholders.
- Strengthen the capacity of the research team, and associated partner institutions, to deliver high-quality research and advice.

### Analysing five livelihood trajectories through agricultural commercialisation

1. *'Stepping in'* – returning/moving into commercial agriculture from a non-farm base, rise of medium-scale farmers.
2. *'Stepping out'* – accumulating, diversifying and creating alternative, non-farm economic activities.
3. *'Stepping up'* – improving and investing in existing agricultural activities.
4. *'Hanging in'* – maintaining subsistence level.
5. *'Dropping out'* – moving away or slipping into destitution due to shocks and stresses.



## APRA in Zimbabwe

APRA is working in Zimbabwe (as one of its focus countries) to conduct quantitative and qualitative research to:

1. **Analyse the effects of different forms of agricultural commercialisation** on poverty, food and nutrition security, and women's empowerment;
2. **Explore how different pathways of agricultural commercialisation have evolved over time** to assess the dynamics of agrarian change, and how these have influenced the livelihood opportunities and outcomes for rural men and women;
3. **Analyse how agricultural mechanisation is being promoted in Zimbabwe**, and what the effects of this have been on the development of commercialisation pathways and processes of agrarian change;
4. **Explore the different pathways young people use to establish themselves** in farming or associated economic activities in areas where agriculture is already highly commercialised.

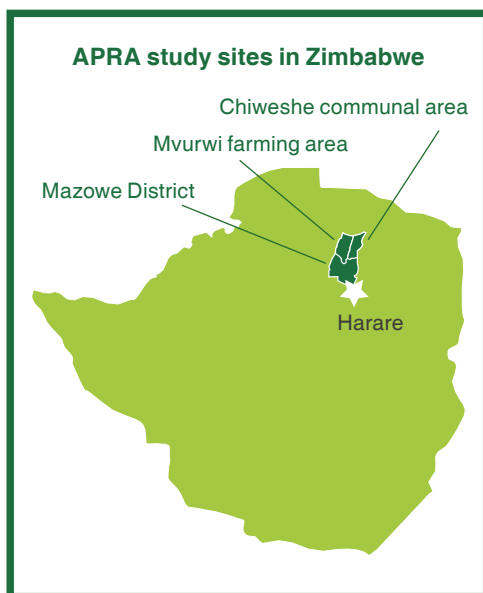


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## Pathways and outcomes of agricultural commercialisation in Zimbabwe

### Research objective

To analyse the effects of different forms of agricultural commercialisation on poverty, food and nutrition security, and women's empowerment over time in the Mvurwi farming area in Zimbabwe.

### Study questions

- Does crop selection and the marketing of crops change over time due to external factors, such as price changes, government incentives and the availability of contracting deals?
- Does the abandonment of tobacco cultivation result in declines in income, food security and employment?
- What effect does a greater reliance on contracting by rural farmers have on income security and employment? How does contracting empower or disempower women?

### Methodology

- i. The study will involve two rounds of surveys, with 450 farmers from 11 A1 smallholder resettlements (i.e. post-2000 land reform smallholder subdivisions of 5 ha) in a tobacco farming 'hotspot' in Mazowe district; and with 200 farmers from seven A1 schemes in a tobacco farming 'cold spot' in the same district;
- ii. The surveys will collect key impact indicator variables, including income, household food security, nutrition, and hired employment generation related to cropping mixes and marketing channels adopted by sampled farmers. The study team will explore the relationship between enterprise and marketing channel choice and household characteristics.

### Research contacts

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## Examining the changing pathways and outcomes of agricultural commercialisation in Zimbabwe

### Research objective

To explore how different pathways of agricultural commercialisation associated with small-, medium- and large-scale farms evolve over time in the Mvurwi and Chiweshe farming areas of Zimbabwe.

### Study questions

- What crops have emerged since the colonial period to give greater potential for commercialisation, and with what returns?
- How do changes in farm sizes and scales of production influence patterns of commercialisation, including crop choice and marketing?
- What marketing constraints exist for the expansion of commercial agriculture in different farming sectors that include the Chiweshe communal area, and A1 smallholder farms, A2 small-, medium- and large-scale farms and the remaining large-scale farming estates in the Mvurwi area?
- What employment patterns are emerging in response to changes in cropping patterns, financing and marketing options in Mazowe District, and what are the conditions of employment on different farms and for different groups of people (men, women, children, migrants)?
- How has commercialisation affected food security, poverty and income in the different farming scales and sectors (communal, A1, A2, joint ventures, and remaining large-scale estates) for both farm owners and labourers?

### Methodology

- i. A mixed method approach was undertaken for comparison between past and present patterns of commercialisation in Mazowe District. Quantitative data was collected through household surveys across the different settlement models (A1, A2, communal and estates) while qualitative data was obtained through historical analysis using archival data, and ethnographic in-depth interviews and observations.
- ii. Interviews and observations to evaluate change from a local perspective and aid analysis on unquantifiable impacts on women and girls' empowerment and intra-house gender dynamics.
- iii. A tracker study involving 55 farmers from the Chiweshe communal area and six A1 farmers was undertaken, to analyse how household livelihoods have developed and changed since 1988.

### Research contacts

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# **An analysis of agricultural mechanisation in Zimbabwe**

## **Research objective**

This study aims to explore the widespread uptake of tractor services by smallholder farmers, and the emergence of a significant number of medium-scale farmers using modern inputs and mechanisation in agriculture in Mazowe District, Zimbabwe.

## **Study questions**

- How has agricultural mechanisation developed in post-colonial Zimbabwe, specifically in the context of the recent Fast Track Land Reform Programme and state-business interactions, at both national and international levels?
- What role has recent policy and politics played in the establishment of state-sponsored tractor cooperatives and mechanisation service centres among small- and medium-scale farmers?
- What changes have occurred in the demand and supply of farming machinery, including rental markets and farmer cooperatives?
- How is agricultural mechanisation being promoted in Zimbabwe, what drives the process and what effect is it having on commercialisation pathways, production patterns, capital accumulation, employment patterns and tillage services?

## **Methodology**

- i. Country case study approach, focusing on farmer tractor cooperatives supported by government and aid programmes at four farms in Mazowe District, Zimbabwe;
- ii. Data collection will be carried out using a mixed methods approach. Qualitative data has been collected using documentary analysis of archival and government reports. Two tracking studies of 55 communal areas and six A1 farmers have also been undertaken, consisting of focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with tractor cooperative members, and the remaining large-scale commercial farms. The quantitative component involved a survey of communal family farmers in Chiweshe, medium-scale A2 farmers and small-scale A1 farmers, as well as six joint venture farmers and two large-scale commercial farmers in the Mvurwi farming area.

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# Analysing the pathways young people use to establish themselves in farming in Zimbabwe

## Research objective

This study will investigate the pathways young people use to establish themselves in farming and/or in associated economic activities in areas where agriculture is already highly commercialised. Field sites have been selected in three countries (Ghana, Tanzania and Zimbabwe) as 'hotspots' of agricultural commercialisation. In Zimbabwe, the study area will be Mvurwi farming area.

## Study questions

- What pathways do young people use to establish themselves in farming, and/or associated economic activities, in areas where agriculture is already highly commercialised?
- How do these pathways vary in relation to different crops, commodities and commercialisation models?
- Have these pathways changed over time, and if so, how?
- What are the barriers to young people in accessing pathways of commercialisation, and how do they navigate these barriers? How important are family dynamics in this navigation?
- How are these pathways and outcomes affected by factors of social difference like gender?

## Methodology

- i. Data will be collected via detailed one-to-one interviews with young men and women to document the work histories of those who have been engaged in farming and/or associated employment.

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### For more information

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[www.future-agricultures.org/apra](http://www.future-agricultures.org/apra)



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APRA builds on more than a decade of research and policy engagement work by the Future Agricultures Consortium ([www.future-agricultures.org](http://www.future-agricultures.org)).

