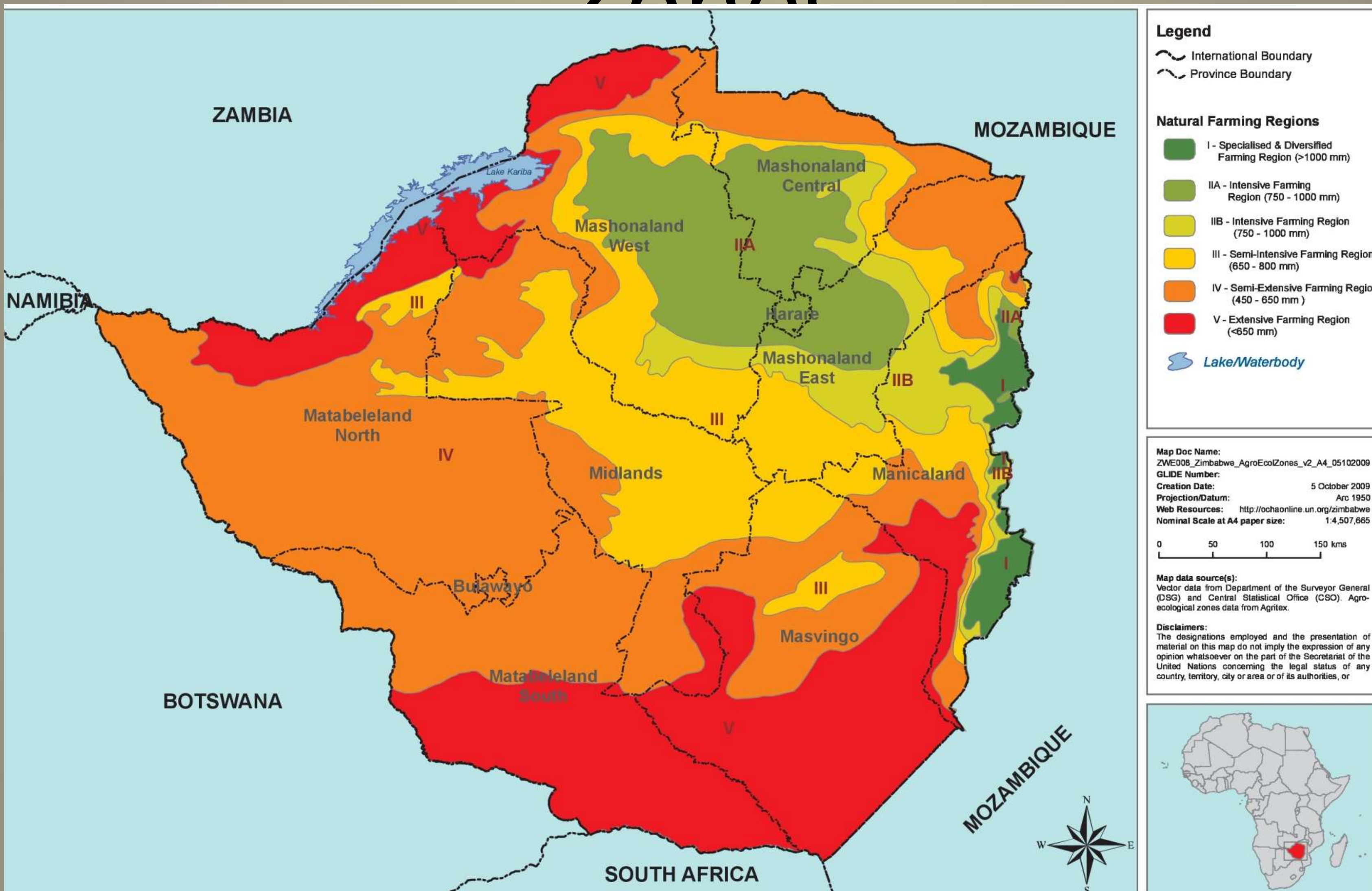
Restoring Degraded Ecosystems by Unlocking Domestic Organic Market Potential: Case study from Zimbabwe (2009-15)

George McAllister

Zimbabwe Agro-ecological Zones



Political Instability

Hyperinflation

Poverty & food insecurity

Situation Overview

- Agriculture remains the primary livelihood means for 75% of Zimbabweans.
- Promotional drives and drought relief packages have resulted in a shift to maize cultivation.
- Predominance of maize monocropping (ave yield 73 kgs p/ha)
- Annual ploughing and soluble fertilisers destroy the soil organic matter.
- Rate of land degradation - estimated at 46%.
- Majority of smallholders struggle to attain subsistence level productivity.
- HIV/AIDS further complicates food security for vulnerable households
- Loss of indigenous knowledge systems.
- Average life expectancy for women is 34.
- Chronic malnutrition averaging 30%.

Fragility compounded by:

- Brain Drain
- Urban migration
- Asset bartering
- Limited inputs
- Dependence of food aid
- Changing climate
- Population pressures
- Land & food used as a political tool

A likely environment for domestic organic demand?

Growth of a status conscious middle class

Gradual return of a more socially & environmentally conscious diaspora

A growing expat population with an interest in healthy organic food

Health concerns of chronically underpaid, professional class

Prevailing Market Situation

- Organic shelves in supermarkets consistently outsell their non-organic counterparts.
- Organic demand serviced by imports from South Africa.
- Zim smallholders net recipients of food aid.
- Wealthiest 10% account for 40% of HH consumption (20% of which is food-based).
- No national organic standards in place
- *No premium paid for fully certified organics*

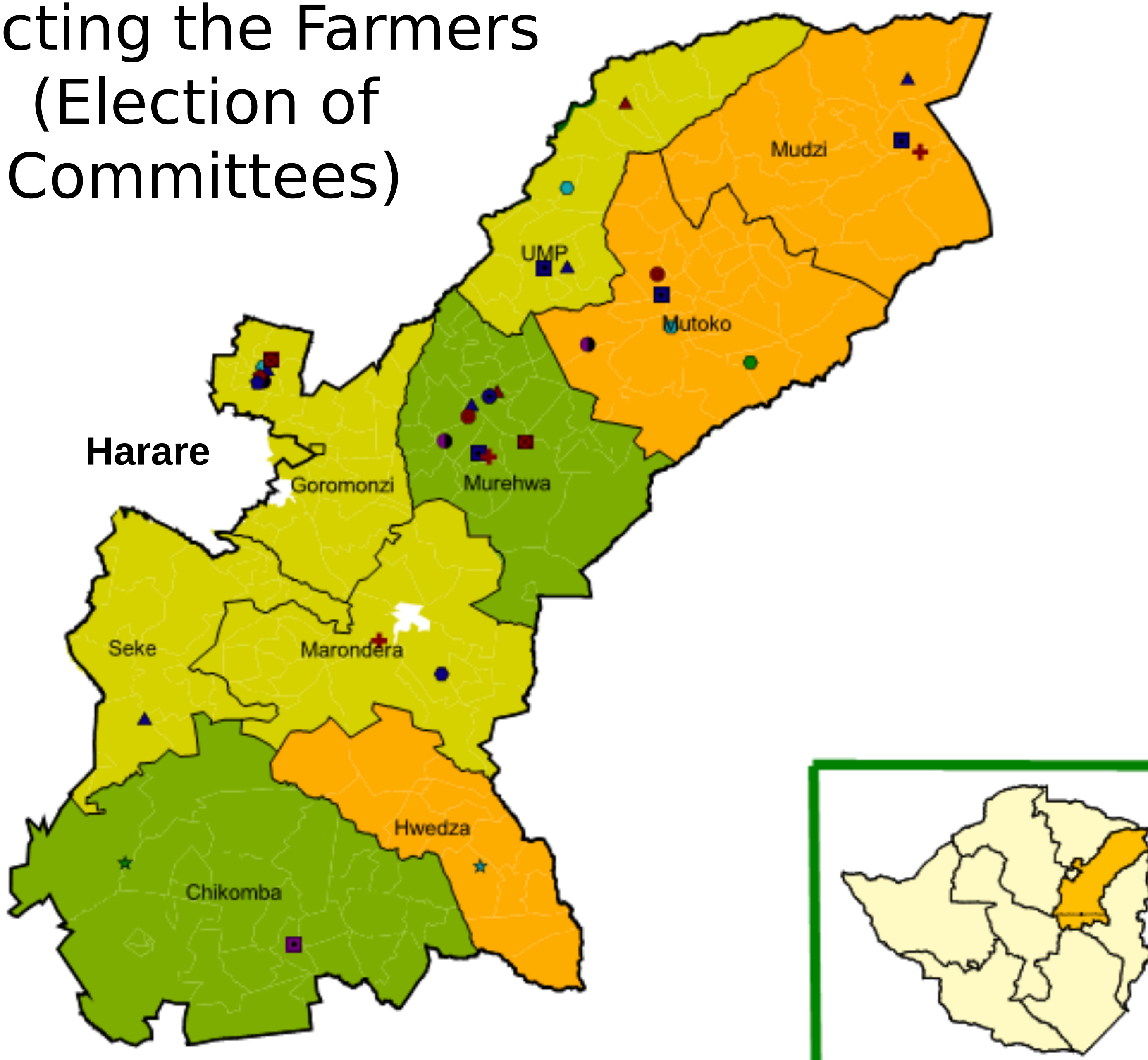
HYPOTHESIS

Creating lucrative & accessible routes to market would increase the income & status of Permaculture producers, & attract more farmers in to agroecological production, thus increasing food & livelihood security.

Methodology – Permaculture Practices & Ethics

Market Mechanism – Organic

Selecting the Farmers (Election of Committees)



Peer Selection

Directly Participating Farmers

Phase 1 (2009-11: 18 months)

- 2011 - 591 (68% women)

Phase 2 (2012 – 15: 24 months)

- 2015 - 1,189 (58% women)

Phase 3 (in application – 2016-19)

- *2019 – 2,948 (calculated projection)*

Training government extension officers

Traditional Authorities

- Recognising the value of biodiversity restoration for community health & livelihoods.
- Support for long-term resource investment – security of land tenure.
- Allocation of prime virgin land close to key resources
- Mediation between farmers, local value chain actors & officials.
- Advocating agroecology and OA to others to scale up initiatives for ecosystems

Live & Recycled Fencing

Soil Fertility & Conservation

Deep Trench Beds

Sheet Mulching

Dryland Crops

Seed Selection & Storage

Companions

Propagatio
n

Natural Pest Management

Water Conservation

Bee Keeping & Organic Honey Production

Small livestock integration

Processing & Value Addition

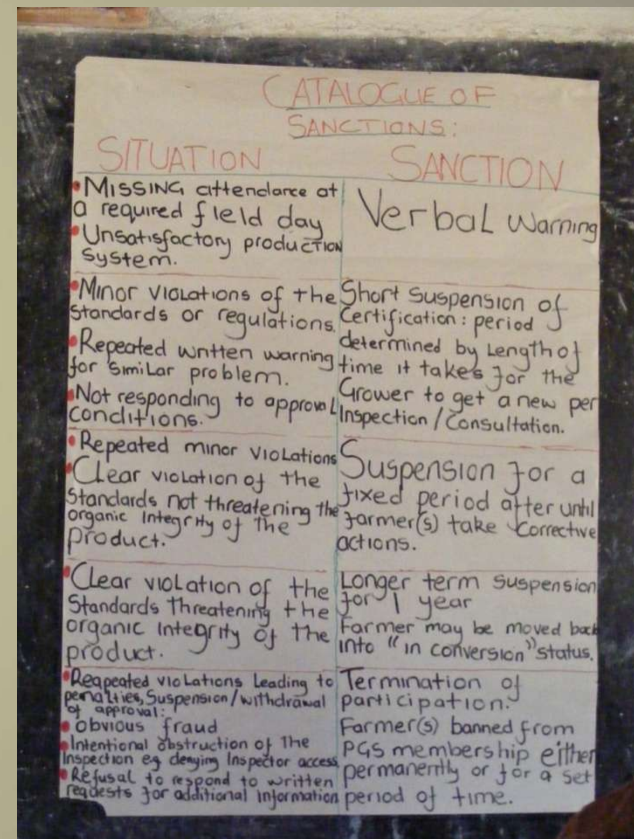
Revolving Loans

ORGANIC STANDARDS

Organic Standards

- Consulted existing organic stakeholders (3rd party) on a set of national standards.
- Developed comprehensive standards based on the participatory guarantee scheme (PGS).
- Standards successfully incorporated in to the Standards Association of Zimbabwe (SAZ).
- Assessment of standards by IFOAM to

Applying Local Standards



CATALOGUE OF SANCTIONS:

SITUATION	SANCTION
• Missing attendance at a required field day • Unsatisfactory production system.	Verbal warning
• Minor violations of the standards or regulations. • Repeated written warning for similar problem. • Not responding to approval conditions.	Short suspension of certification: period determined by length of time it takes for the grower to get a new per inspection / consultation.
• Repeated minor violations • Clear violation of the standards not threatening the organic integrity of the product.	Suspension for a fixed period after until farmer(s) take corrective actions.
• Clear violation of the standards threatening the organic integrity of the product.	Longer term suspension for 1 year Farmer may be moved back into "in conversion" status.
• Reapeated violations leading to penalties, suspension / withdrawal of approval: • obvious fraud • Intentional obstruction of the inspection eg. denying inspector access • Refusal to respond to written requests for additional information	Termination of participation. Farmer(s) banned from PGS membership either permanently or for a set period of time.

Premium product / price

ZIM organic®

(for the status conscious elite)

Comparatively priced alternative

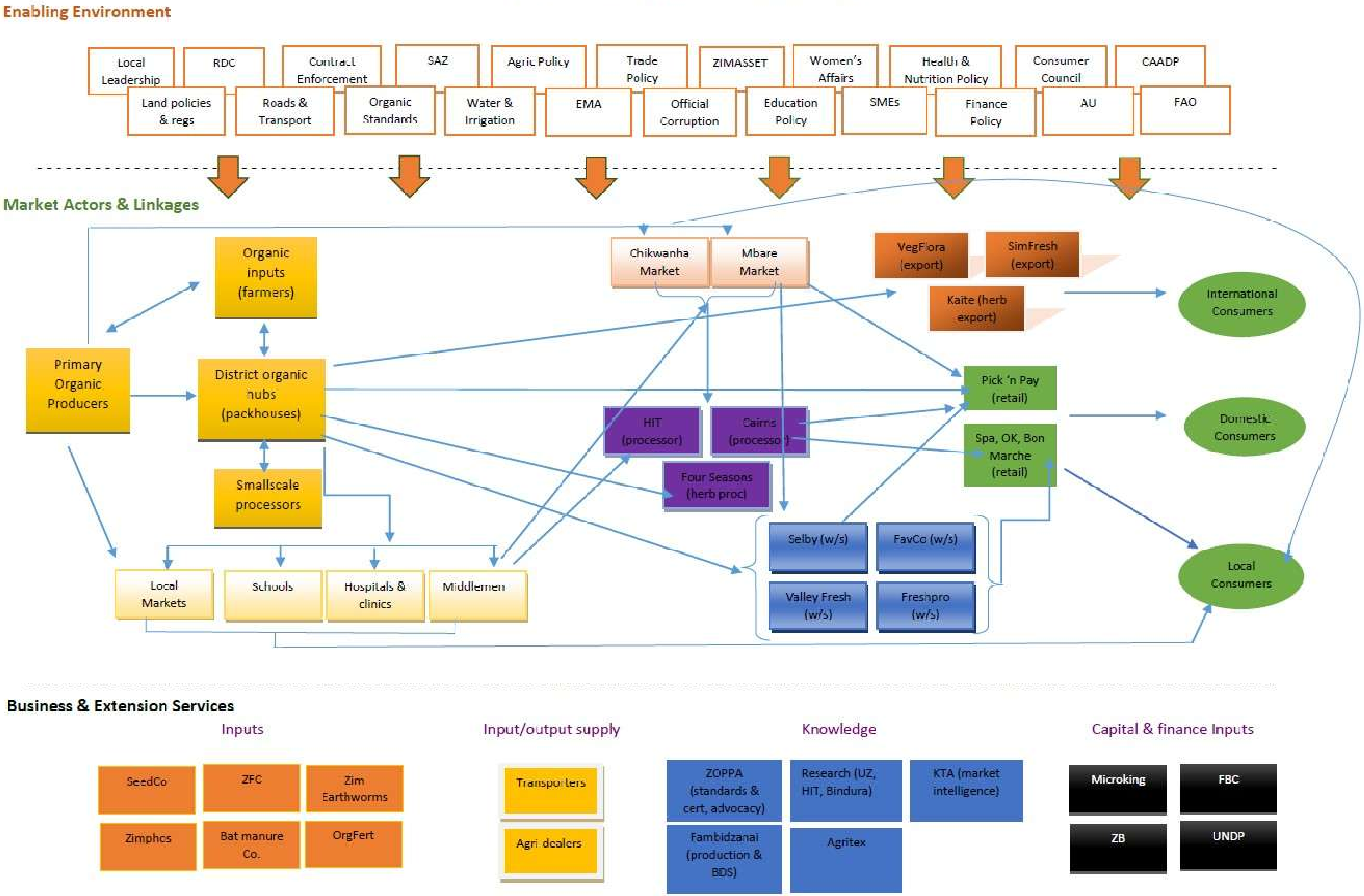
ZIM natural

Free from synthetic chemicals

(for the conscientious consumer on a budget)

Markets

Living National Organic Market Map (OCA2-3)



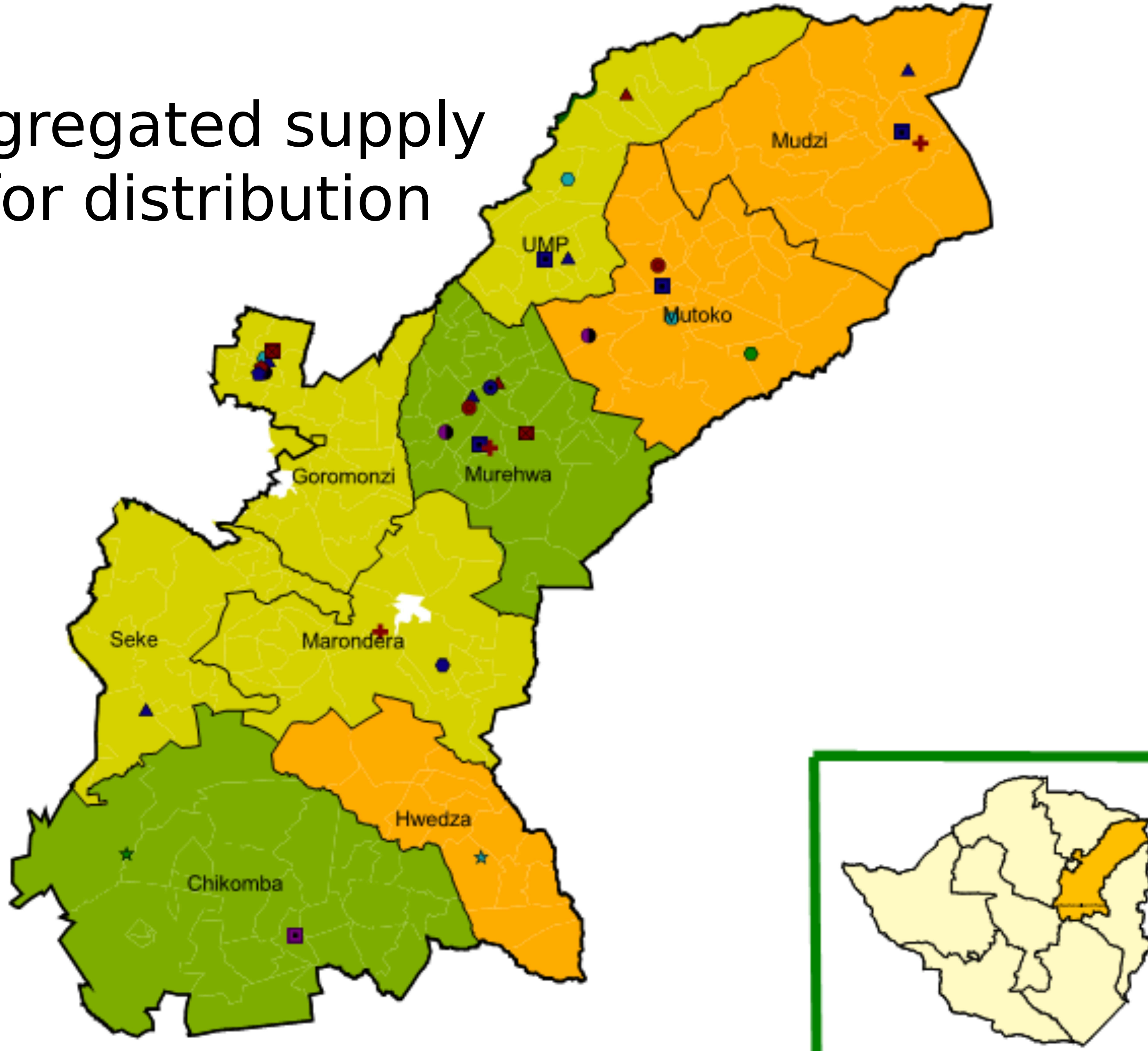
Demand for Organic Produce

- The market wants diversity too! 17 primary product lines.
- Exclusive relationship with up-market supermarket chain – supply agreement for 7 Harare stores = 4,088 tons p/a.
- Request to convert all 50 nation-wide stores to organic = further est 25,112 tons p/a (pointing to ops well beyond OCA project farmers).
- Distributors/wholesalers requesting increased organic lines & volumes calculated at 492 tons p/a (other supermarkets, hotels, food outlets).
- Local schools, hospitals & colleges ordering

4 zero-energy cooled packsheds

… ORGANIC HUBS

Aggregated supply for distribution



Policies affecting organic value chain actors

..... Disincentives for investment in land & natural resource management

AGRICULTLURE

Exclusion of OA in agriculture policy leads to a lack of:

- Plural, demand-driven extension provision which includes agroecological
  farming in tertiary curriculum (extension)
- Research in organic or agroecological farming
- Investment in knowledge & skills (on-farm)
- Availability of appropriate inputs through agro-dealer networks

TRADE & FINANCE

Exclusion of organics in national trade figures:

- No division of products in markets / on shelves
- Lack of incentives for investment in organic VCs or green economy
- Exclusion of organic farmers from the formal economy

Farmers & their production

Farmers (production)

- 44 fully certified organic associations (948 farmers – 185 ha)
- 10 more associations (241 farmers) undergoing ‘conversion’ through locally trained farmer standards trainers.
- 122% increase in agro/biodiversity on-farm, improving resilience, access to food, medicine, fuel … and markets
- Improved yields by 290%, despite 50% lower rainfall than expected.
- 44% increase in value addition resulting in improved food preservation for food security, &

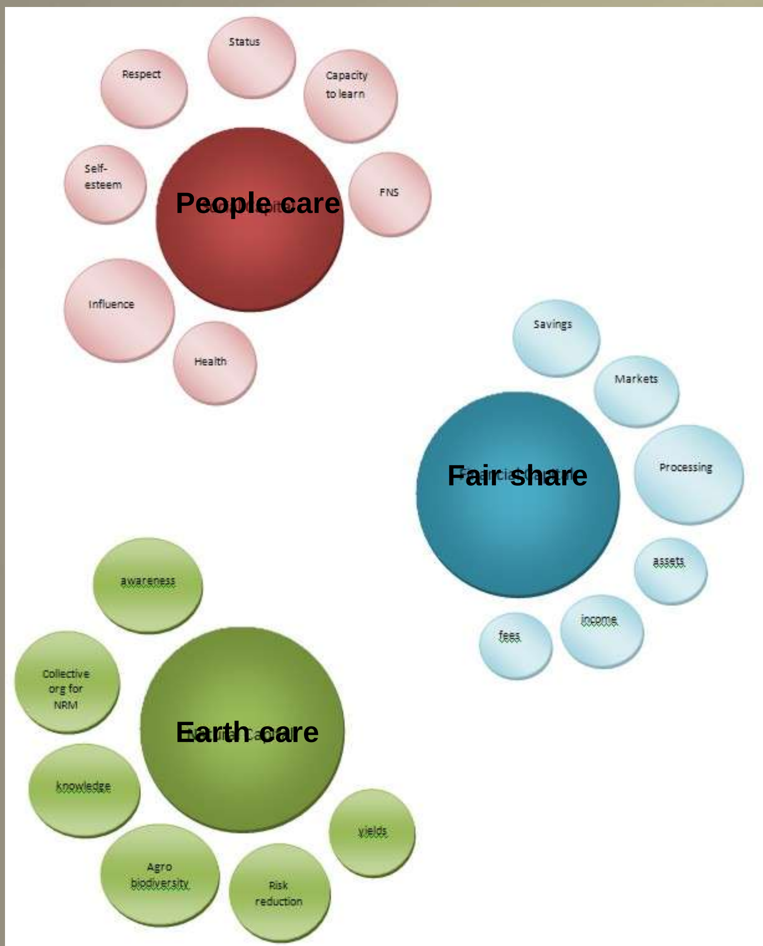
Farmers (& their markets)

Farmers (& their markets)

- Eight associations producing for wholesalers & supermarkets.
- Twelve associations producing to order for local schools, colleges and hospitals
- Forty are producing for local markets / traders
- Four producing for seed houses – increasing access to organic seed and diversified varieties.
- Eight associations producing worms for new org fert company
- Aggregated supply to market (x 8 districts) = 246 tons in 2014 yielding $132,000
- Ave income of participating farmers increased by 265%

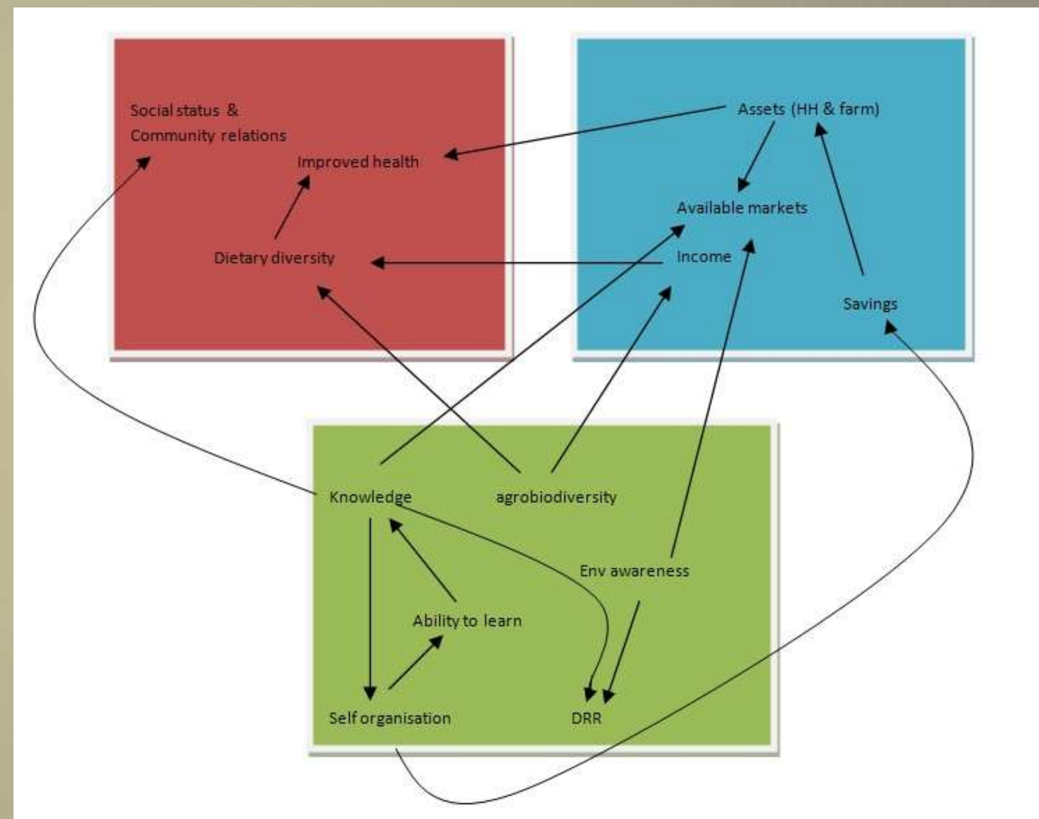
As a result of the OCA production & market gains, a total of 8,104 farmers nationally are now entering our national certification, with 440 ha already locally certified

‘Most Significant Changes’ as articulated by participating farmers



Social Change

Economic Change



NRM Changes

Learning

Cascading approach to knowledge ‘transfer’ less effective for knowledge accumulation at group level.

Building farmer confidence/agency is critical for engaging leaders & negotiating change (CBNRM for adaptation, policies/regs, prices).

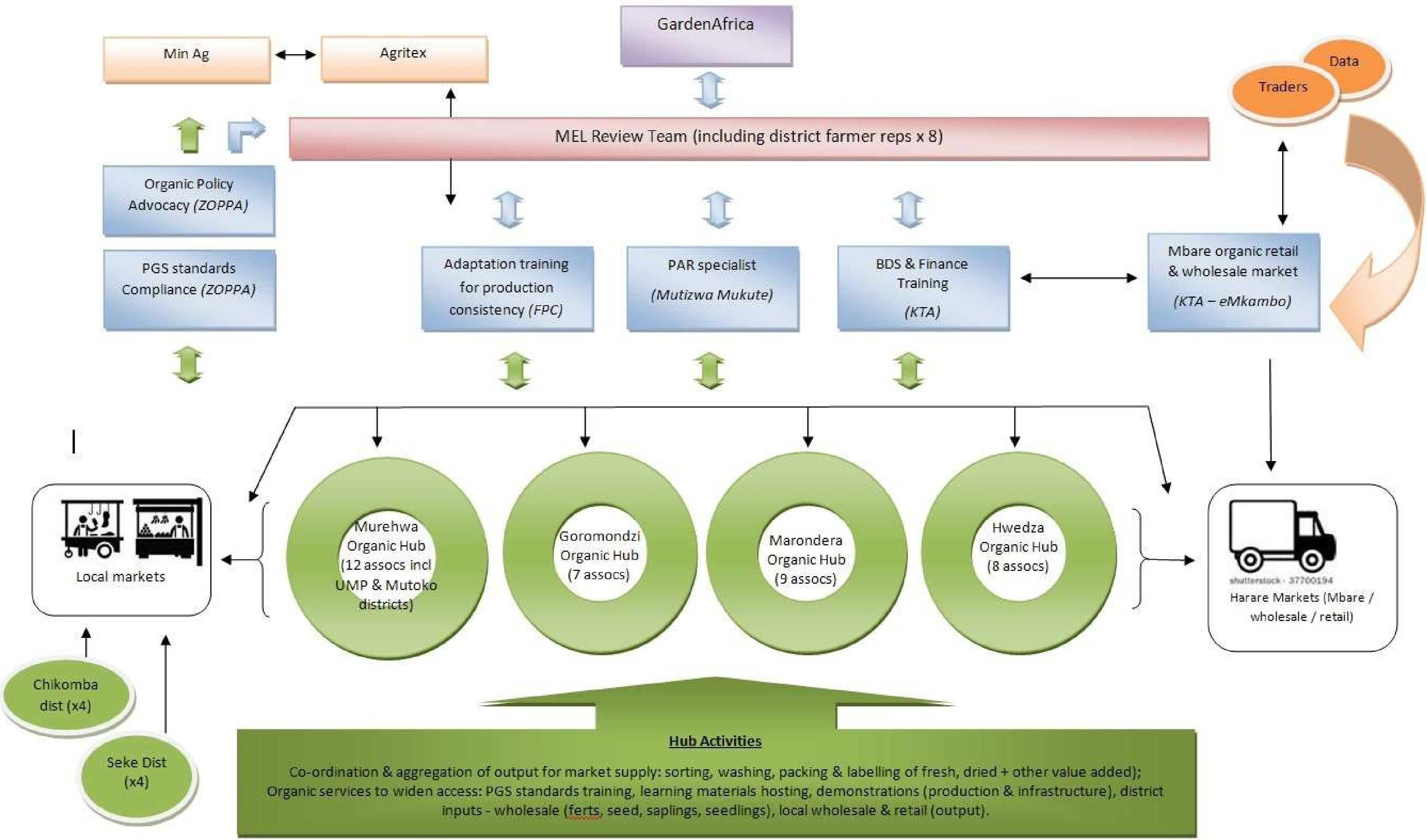
Inclusion of the private sector (manufacturers & existing agri-dealer networks) is essential for opening policy doors to create a supportive environment.

Market info to farmers needs to be rapid &

Strengthening in progress:

- Improved leadership & representation for agency
- Co-ordinated production for supply
- Co-operation between associations to reduce transaction costs (district bulking – hubs).
- Appropriate seed selection & purchasing
- Strategies to further embed learning (skills sharing & exchanges) to build confidence in adaptive capacity
- Improved negotiation, finance & business

Conceptual Framework - OCA 3 (2016-19)



Zimbabwe’s domestic organic market has the potential to represent an equitable, market-based mechanism for income redistribution to Permaculture farmers. It is also proving successful in attracting new farmers to benefit from changing land-use practice.