

# ZAKIS

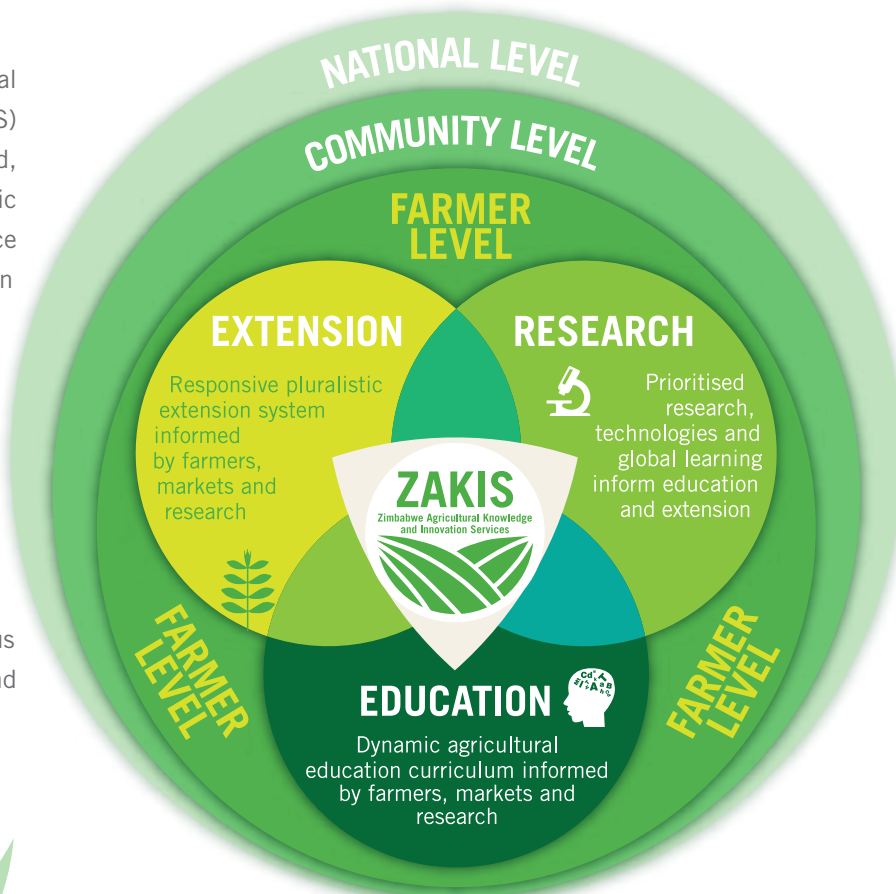
Zimbabwe Agricultural Knowledge  
and Innovation Services

*Two physical sites that connect, showcase and disseminate cutting edge research and dynamic agricultural education, linked directly into extension, farmer field trials and feedback systems.*

## Zimbabwe Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Services

The goal of the Zimbabwe Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Services (ZAKIS) project is to establish an integrated, dynamic, market oriented, and farmer centric agricultural knowledge and innovation service system that meets the needs of modern agriculture in Zimbabwe.

ZAKIS recognizes and promotes the essential interconnectivity of agricultural education, research and extension, ensuring that relevant and up-to-date knowledge and innovation permeates the system at all levels, with continual feedback from farmers to inform and refine the focus and direction of agricultural services and systems.



**Infographic:** An Overview of ZAKIS

The first year of the **ZAKIS Initiative** is focused on establishing common understanding and vision for the future of agricultural research, extension and training for Zimbabwe through a series of interconnected processes:



## FUTURE SEARCH

*Establishes a common focus and direction for agricultural research, education and extension*



## EDUCATION

- Multi-stakeholder institutional development review
- Curriculum review



## RESEARCH

- Multi-stakeholder value chain oriented needs-assessment
- Participatory research priority setting



## EXTENSION

- Appreciative Inquiry
- Pluralistic Extension tools



The ZAKIS project, working with the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Water, Climate and Rural Resettlement (MLAWCRR), will establish two fully equipped centres Agriculture Centres of Excellence: one serving the north of the country and prioritizing crop, horticultural and relevant livestock value chains; the other serving the south of the country and prioritizing large and small livestock value chains and drought tolerant small grains.

ACE centres will act as focal points to organize innovation platforms, field days and farmer training workshops, bringing together all actors along the prioritized value chain, including government and NGO extension workers, researchers, agriculture lecturers and students, farmers, financial service providers and agri-businesses. ACE will leverage the best practice knowledge base to drive agricultural education that is relevant and responsive to the specific needs of farmers and value chain actors for profitable, market driven agricultural production.

Each ACE will link directly to farmers through two

neighbouring District Crop and Livestock (DC&L) offices, which will be capacitated as District Agriculture Centres of Excellence (DACEs). As well as being the district extension hubs, these will serve as the functional link between education and research at the farmer level. These district centres will take the lead in demonstrating emerging technologies and coordinating value chain driven pluralistic extension networks through capacitated extension staff.

The district centres will establish district and ward demonstration sites as living, learning classrooms where practical, on-farm events take place and where new ideas and approaches are tested, showcased and further developed by farmers. District centres will host district level events around demonstration sites, which will be an opportunity to bring the private sector closer to the farmers and facilitate relationships along the value chains. District centres will facilitate farmer feedback mechanisms, ensuring that farmer voices remain at the centre of research, education, and extensions systems.

## Future Search

**Future Search** is an organizational development tool used to establish a shared vision and produce a road-map with clear roles and responsibilities for achieving that vision. Future Search refers to a range of tools used to guide organisational change management processes in a way that is positive and visionary, rather than challenging and threatening.

The ACE Future Search process will establish a common focus and direction for agricultural research, education and extension. This process will probe the motivation and incentives needed for different parts of the agricultural knowledge and innovation system to establish and maintain functional integration through the ZAKIS system and networks. Stakeholders will identify a shared vision for collaboration and complementarity and will come out of the Future Search process with an agreed action plan with specific concrete commitments for driving the ZAKIS project forwards as a catalyst for transforming agriculture in Zimbabwe. Participants will include senior staff and decision makers from the DR&SS, DAEFT/TVET, Crop and Livestock, farmer unions, academia, private sector and other relevant influencers.





ACE will be the central platform for farmer-led transformative integration across the agricultural knowledge and innovation system.

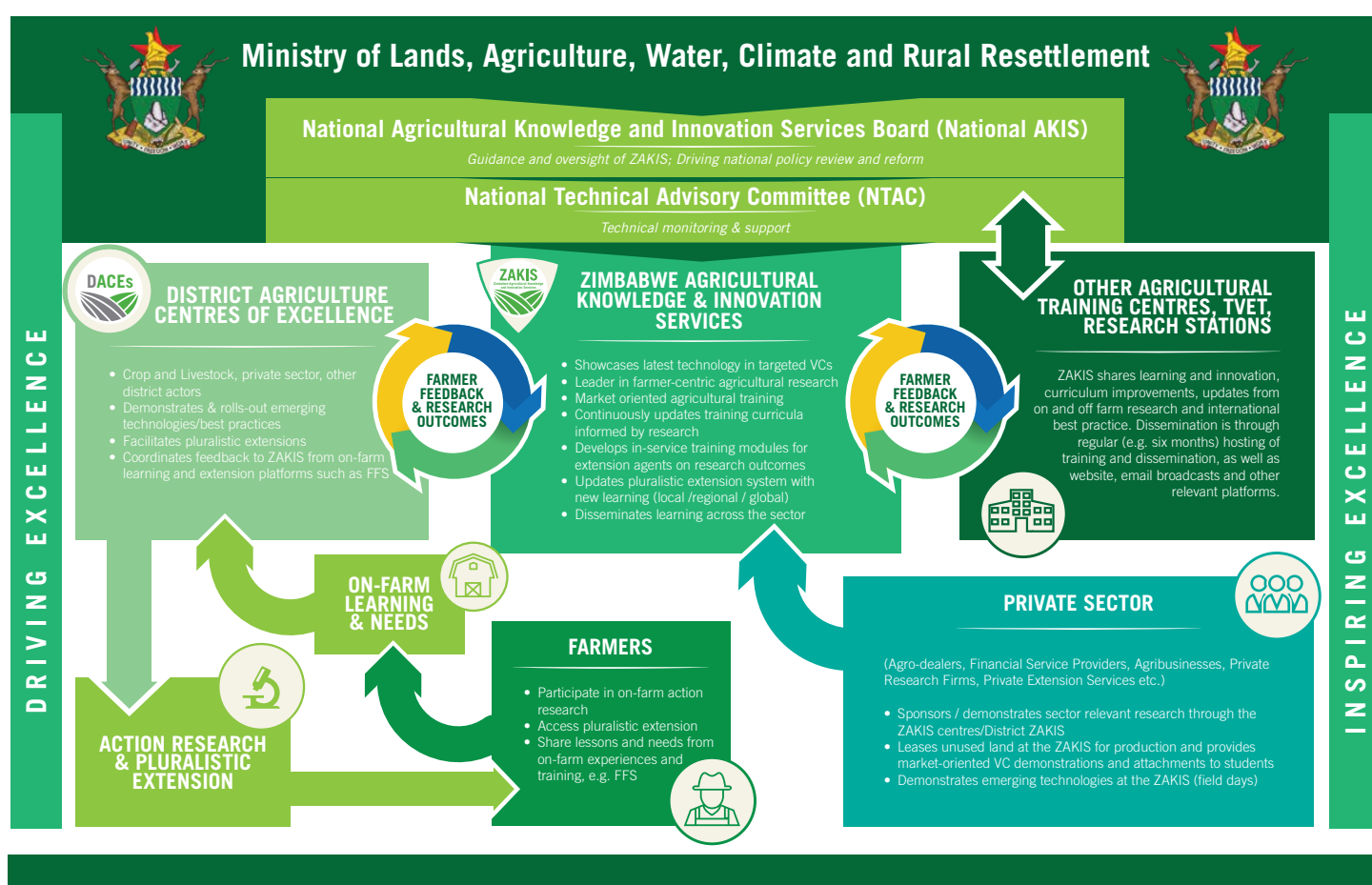
Beyond the two physical ACE sites the system will integrate with the wider agricultural research, education and extension system (i.e., other research stations, universities and agricultural colleges and the national Crop and Livestock networks) as well as establishing a virtual platform

that facilitates increased access to, and sharing of, emerging information and technology for anyone engaged in research, education and extension at all levels of the system.

These relational networks, and the governance structures of the National Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Services board (National AKIS), are illustrated in **Figure 1** below.



**Figure 1: The ZAKIS activities and relationships**



ACEs will result in an agriculture research, education and extension framework that is farmer centric, integrated and market-oriented with dynamic private sector linkages driving innovative technology choices and value chain priorities that reflect the needs of farmers.

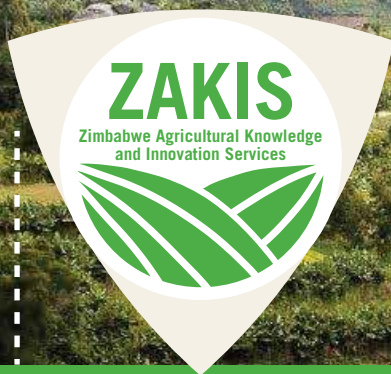
#### Well-functioning ACEs will result in:

**Agriculture Research** being more farmer-centric and market-responsive, informing agricultural education and extension, and closing existing gaps where there are currently no direct linkages between research, education and extension.

**Agricultural Extension** being rapidly modernized through use of ICT platforms to supplement traditional and on-farm extension, capacitated District ACEs and an expanded focus on value addition, reorienting around the most productive value chains.

**Agricultural Education** curricula and systems that are dynamic and responsive, addressing issues of food and nutrition security as well as commercialization, integrating business management and farmer knowledge systems.





## AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

*Dynamic agricultural education curriculum informed by farmers, markets, and global, regional and local research*

### Multi-Stakeholder Institutional Development Review:

DAEFT, supported by CTDO, will coordinate stakeholders, including TVET, Crop and Livestock, Farmers' Unions, academic institutions and private sector, into a participatory review of the existing agricultural education system against the needs of the modern Zimbabwean agricultural sector.

### Curriculum Review:

Informed by the above processes, the ZAKIS project will work with DAEFT/TVET and other stakeholders to review the agricultural education curriculum and develop updated modules that address the real priority needs for sustainable and profitable agricultural production in Zimbabwe.

### Multi-Stakeholder Value Chain Oriented Needs-assessment:

The ZAKIS project will work with the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Water, Climate and Rural Resettlement (MLAWCRR) to conduct a needs assessment against the prioritised VCs for each ACE, bringing together information from producers, farmers' unions, processors, aggregators, off-takers, and other value chain actors, and of youth and women in particular, to identify the information and technology gaps in the VC.

The ZAKIS project focuses on **participatory research priority setting** bringing together farmers and unions, MLAWCRR and private sector service providers and value chain processors and aggregators to determine research priorities for increasing productivity and reducing costs of production and improved disease control across the targeted value chains for each ZAKIS centre.

## AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

*Prioritised primary research and global learning and technologies inform agricultural education and extension*

## AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION

*Responsive pluralistic extension system informed by farmers, markets, and global, regional and local research*

**An Appreciative Inquiry** will build on the process and outcomes from the Future Search using a more focussed approach to hone in specifically on extension. SNV will lead the AI process for re-visioning extension. Key stakeholders (Crop and Livestock, Veterinary Services, LPD, Farmer's Unions, Farmer Association and others) will come together to develop an appreciation of the current and past extension systems and establish commitments towards a shared vision for transforming extension to meet the needs of the current agricultural context of Zimbabwe.

The AI process, as part of the Future Search exercise, will build on the visioning and commitments evolving from the Future Search, focussing in specifically on **the dynamic transformation in the extension service needed to meet the needs of modern men and women farmers** within the structural and financial limitations of public service delivery.

Emerging learning, research and innovation arising from the ZAKIS processes will be shared using a pluralistic extension framework, which uses multiple platforms to deliver extension messages. Pluralistic extension makes use of multiple dissemination platforms and leverages private, public and non-governmental sector networks, with the aim of shifting extension from a top-down approach offering blanket, production-oriented recommendations toward a more interactive learning approach. The pluralistic extension model builds on successful platforms and trusted approaches, such as Farmer Field Schools and demonstration plots, for practical and hands on experiences and also links to new and innovative ways of delivering extension advice and information, such as through apps/mobile phones, podcasts and video tutorials.

## The ZAKIS Project Partner Organisations

**The ZAKIS Project** uniquely brings together strategic actors to partner directly with institutional counterparts aligned to organisational areas of expertise, building on strong current relationships, to work together across each component of the knowledge and innovation systems. **DR&SS** will partner with **ICRISAT** on research, **DAEFT/TVET** with **CTDO** on education, and **WHH** on extension, with cross-cutting institutional capacity and organisational development support from **SNV** and private-public partnership support from **SAT**.



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