



# **Evaluation of Commercialization of Smallholder Rural Farmers in Zimbabwe**

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- Zimbabwe Agricultural Incomes and Employment Development (Zim-AIED) is a 5 years projected funded by USAID and implemented by Fintrac Inc.
- The programme started on October 1, 2010 and will run through September 2015.
- The overall goal of the program is to increase rural family households incomes and increasing food production among vulnerable-but-commercially-viable farmers.



# Geographical Location of Programme



## Key Tenants of the Programme

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- ***Increased Agricultural Production***

change in total production (income and quantities), yields (productivity), and changes in product mix (diversification)

- ***Expanded Market Access***

change in volume and value of agricultural sales at household level of targeted commodities; integration of farmers into out grower and contract farming schemes.

- ***Enhanced Value Addition***

change in farm sales of semi-processed products and crops for processing; new employment generation in added value products



## Program Theory of Change

**If** farmers are trained in good agricultural practices, supported to adopt these practices and provided with agricultural inputs on time

**And** linked to commercial buyers who provide them credit to boost agricultural productivity and offer better commodity prices

**Then** farmers will increase production and productivity and get better returns on farming activities resulting in increased incomes and food security to the farming households



## Purpose of Evaluation

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The defining theme of process evaluation is a focus on the enacted programme itself – its operations, activities, functions, performance, component parts, resources and so forth (Rossi et al, 2004).





- This was a process evaluation of Zim-AIED programme which provided very useful insight of programme performance.
- In addition, the evaluation also provided useful insights on immediate outcomes of the programme.
- The evaluation provided Fintrac Inc. and other implementing partners the basis of strengthening and improving the design and implementation of the programme during the last year of implementation.





A mixed methods research design is defined as a procedure for collecting, analysing, and “mixing” both quantitative and qualitative research methods in a single study to understand a research problem. (Criswell 2003).







Use of structured interviews usually seeks results which can be quantified and form the basis of generalizations. In this case quantification was done on yields, trainings, area under improved technologies, gross margin, sales volume and values etc





### Focus Group Discussion Guide

- Morgan (1988) states that FGDs give breadth to the figures which come from structured household interviews; the group interaction is likely to produce the richness that individual interviews could not provide
- The use of FGDs was also informed by research questions such as those on the reasons for adoption or non adoption of improved technologies.





- Out of a total of over 2,000 households benefiting from the programme in selected areas only 52 households were interviewed.
- The reasons for adopting a small sample size were time and financial resources constraints which hindered the evaluator from taking a big sample for the study. However, it must be noted that households were randomly selected to participate in the survey.



## Beneficiaries' understanding of programme

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- *I heard from our neighbour that there was going to be a meeting at the irrigation scheme. I first thought that it was one of our usual meetings with the Irrigation Management Committee. It was at the meeting that I realised that there was a donor who wanted to **work with us in rehabilitating our irrigation scheme and teaching us on how to plant bananas...***
- *They said they were going to **help us grow sugar beans in a profitable manner and it's not everyone who was going to benefit. Only serious and committed farmers who had a good track record of farming and paying loans were going to benefit...***



## Beneficiaries' Expectations

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- *I was very excited that finally a donor was coming to help us in our area.*
- *We were all excited that in Mutema area , finally we are having a donor willing to assist us and also provide us with free handouts, like what happens in other rural areas.*

The name donor is synonymous with 'free hand-out'. This proved to be a challenge as farmers who did not receive input loans were not keen to come for trainings as they felt like they were not really benefiting much from the programme.



## Was implementation done according to the initial project design?

- Production of various value chains was demand driven--- Identification of private sector company as the partner was the first stage , followed by engagement of the farmers to grow the specified crop.
- This was achieved only for bananas, due to the declining private sector activity in the country, it ended up being supply driven.
- Access to finance was one of the key components of the design of the programme , limited capital inflow were realised by farmers . Banks and MFIs reluctance to lend to smallholder farmers resulted in very low numbers of farmers accessing formal financing.



## Poor Partnership with Private Sector

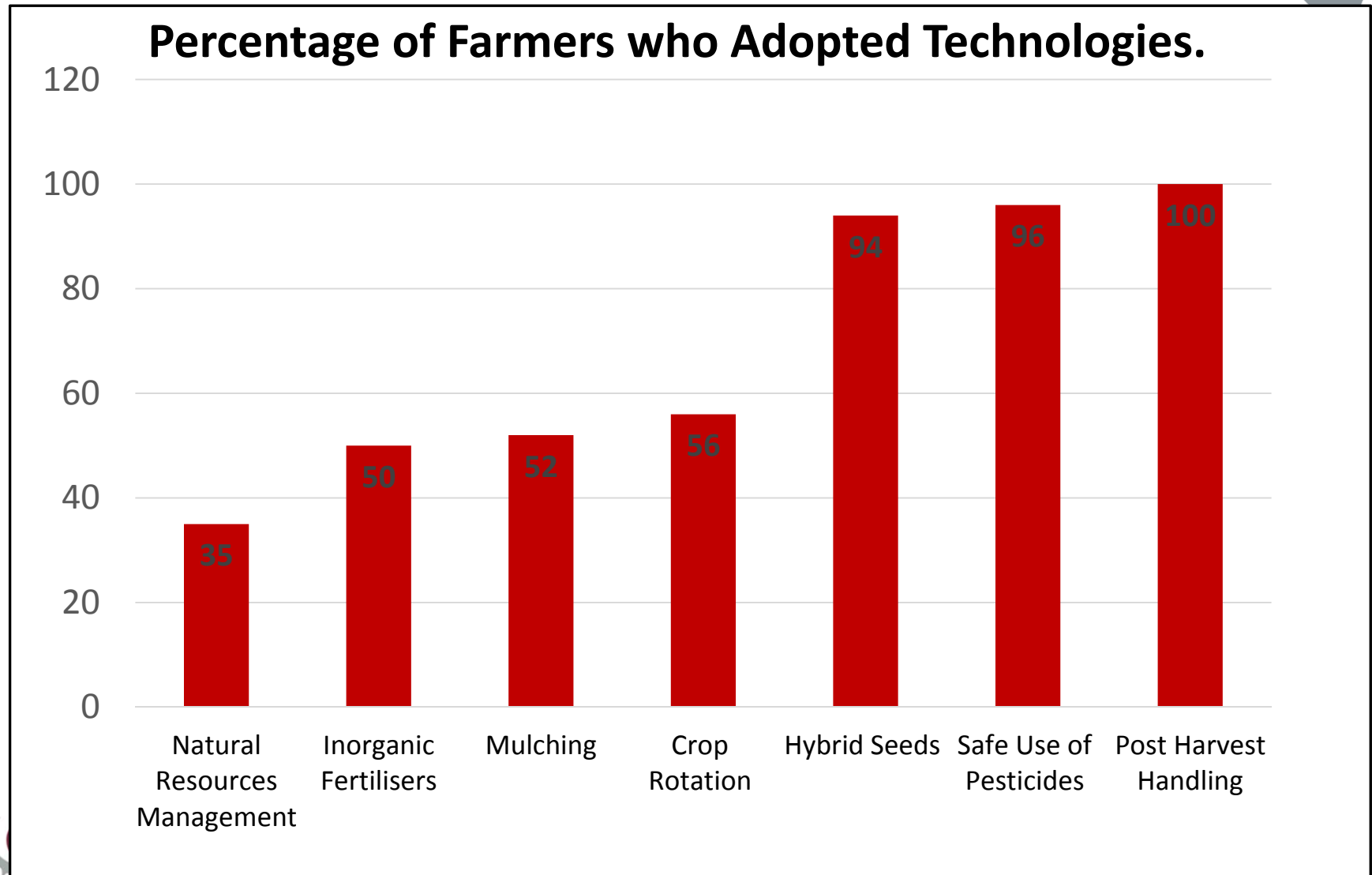


- *“Just like the smallholder farmer’s mentality, the partners were not fully aware of what was their role in the partnership. The moment they heard about USAID, their minds quickly rushed to think of free donor funds, hence did not carefully accessed their capacity to run the projects.*
- *“As a programme on our part, we did not also do a proper vetting of our partners. This is now evident from the current situation where we have only four partners left from the initial nine partners. The sustainability of the commercial buyers partnership is highly questionable based on current trends which we have witnessed. “*

*Comments from programme staff*



# Progress Towards Attainment of Programme Immediate Outcomes





## Adoption of Good Agricultural Practises



*GAP on banana field - use of mulching and plastic sleeves.*



*Happy farmers displaying a banana bunch approaching maturity*

# Crop Diversification



*A female farmers showcasing a sugar bean crop being applied GAPs - zero tolerance to weeds.*



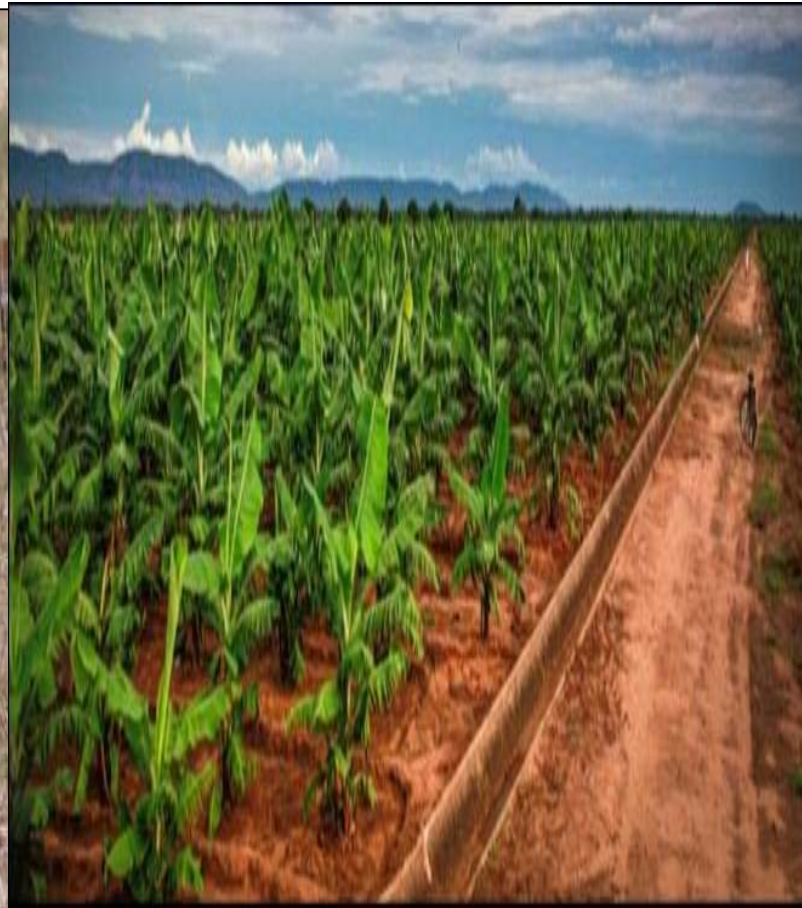
# Irrigation Scheme



## Before Zim-AIED



## After Zim-AIED

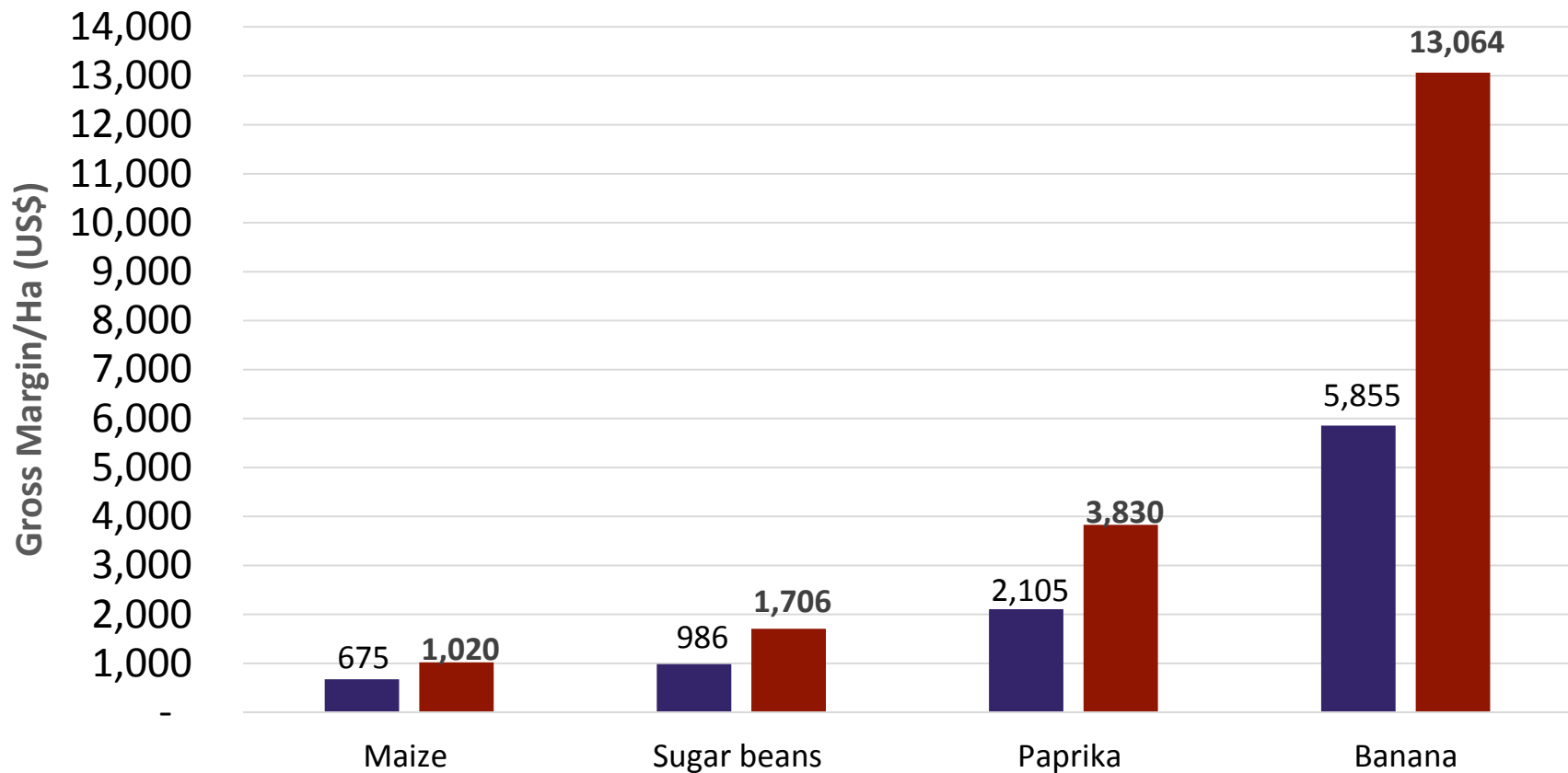


# Gross Income Increases

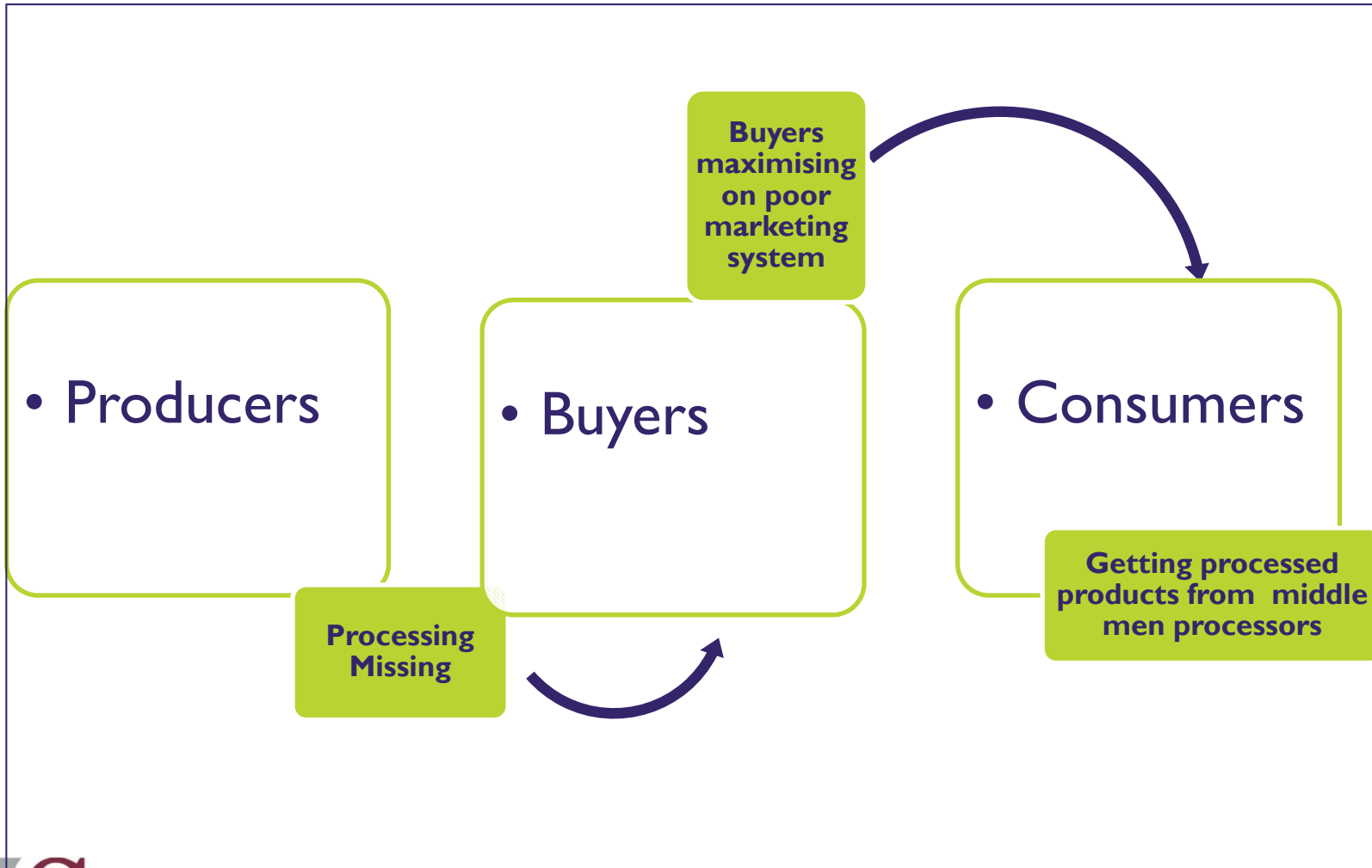


### Baseline and 2014 Year Goss Margin Comparisons

■ Baseline (2012) ■ Current (2014)



# Missing Link on Value Addition



## Recommendations



Commercialisation of smallholder farmers can be achieved through:

- Linking producers to local, national, regional, and international buyers.
- Providing access to credit for financing production
- Raising efficiencies in production systems for an improved combination of cash and food crops
- Training farmers to adopt good agricultural and business practices

### **Sustainability Issues**

- Development agencies and donors need to seriously consider issues of sustainability of projects. Proper structures have to be in place to ensure continuity of the program beyond the funding phase.



# THANK YOU

