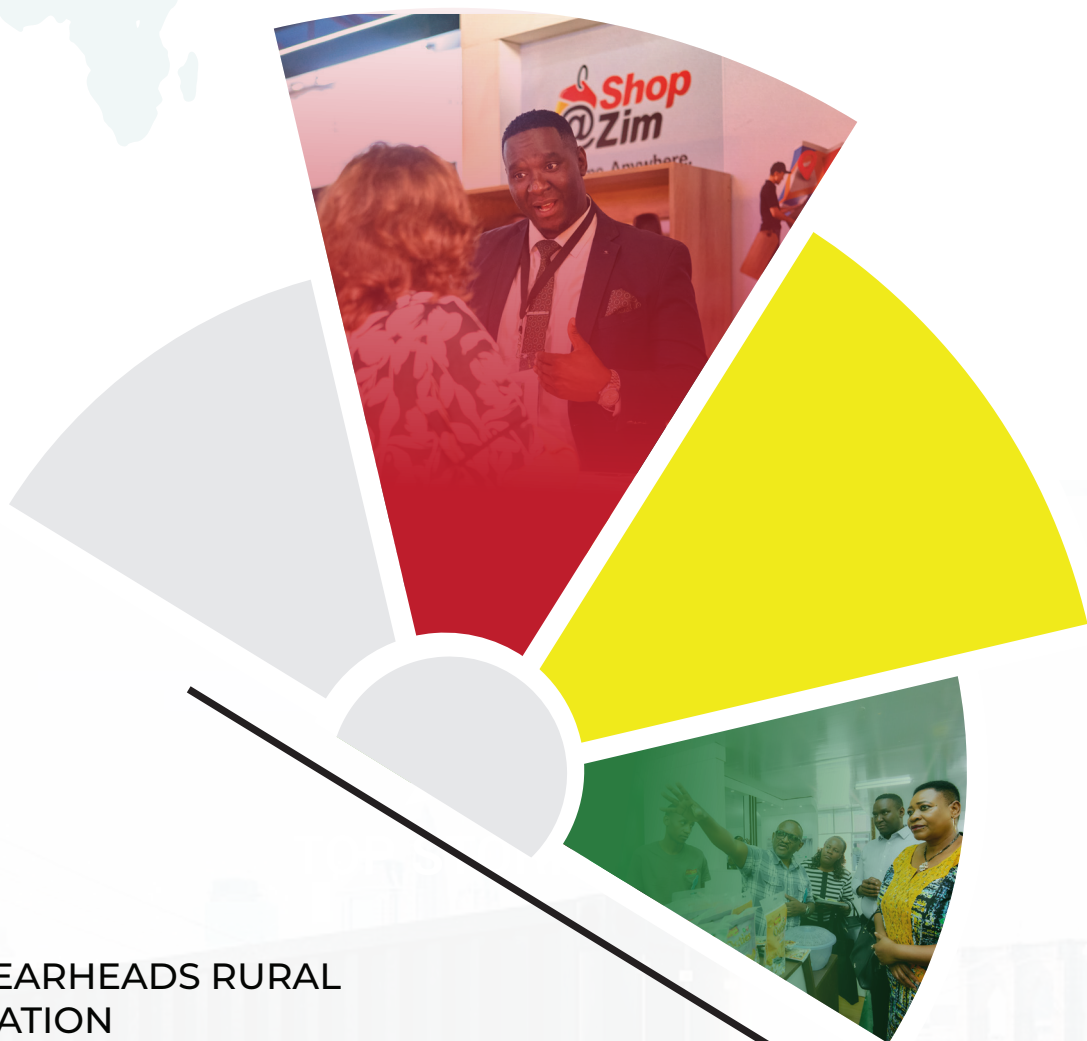
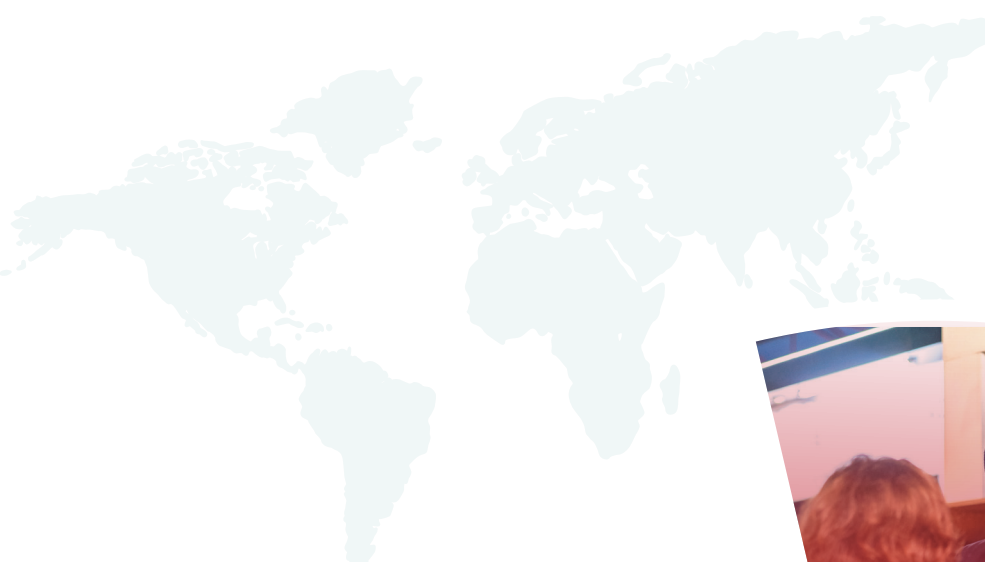




ZIMTRADING

Post



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JULY
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1 GOLDEN OPPORTUNITIES AT IATF 2025 FOR ZIMBABWEAN BUSINESSES

By Karen Bvurere

ZIMBABWEAN COMPANIES are set to strengthen their presence across the African market as momentum builds toward the 4th Intra-Africa Trade Fair (IATF2025), which will take place in Algiers, Algeria, from 4 to 10 September 2025.

This major continental trade and investment event presents a huge opportunity for Zimbabwean businesses looking to increase their visibility and business activity under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

To support this process, ZimTrade is coordinating efforts to ensure that Zimbabwean businesses are ready to participate meaningfully in the trade fair.

As part of this work, ZimTrade hosted a breakfast meeting in Bulawayo on 5 June 2025, focused on sharing practical guidance and relevant updates to help businesses understand how they can benefit from engaging at IATF2025.

Speaking at the meeting, ZimTrade Chief Executive Officer Allan Majuru, who also serves as a designated ambassador for the event, highlighted the interest in Zimbabwean products across African countries.

He noted that IATF2025 offers a valuable setting for companies to develop commercial relationships

and expand their reach while learning how to take advantage of the AfCFTA framework.

“The IATF has proven that this ambition is within reach. “Over its past three editions, Zimbabwean businesses have recorded over US\$54,1 million in confirmed trade deals.

“These are real contracts, real deliveries, and real growth. But what makes this platform powerful is not just the figures, it is the partnerships forged, and the long-term opportunities created.”

The business meeting in Bulawayo also featured presentations from Afreximbank officials and key government departments.

Attendees received information about the specific features of IATF2025 and were guided on how to prepare effectively for the event, including time-lines, registration procedures, and documentation requirements.

Zimbabwe has participated in previous editions of the Intra-Africa Trade Fair with measurable success.

Local companies have signed trade agreements valued at more than US\$20 million at the previous fair held in Egypt.

This outcome reflects the competitiveness of

Zimbabwean products and services in regional markets.

With AfCFTA now in operation, the event in Algeria is expected to create even more favourable conditions for businesses to enter new markets, benefit from harmonised trade systems, and improve their export capacity.

The Intra-Africa Trade Fair is organised by the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank), together with the African Union and the AfCFTA Secretariat.

The 2025 edition is expected to bring together more than 2,000 exhibitors representing at least 75 countries.

The event will offer a structured environment for commercial discussions, investment promotion, and business networking at multiple levels.

For Zimbabwean companies, participation in IATF2025 offers several practical advantages.

The fair creates an opportunity to present goods and services directly to a wide audience that

includes buyers, investors, government representatives, and trade professionals from across the continent.

It also supports the formation of business relationships that can lead to long-term contracts and joint ventures. In addition, the fair allows participants to learn more about evolving trade trends, sector-specific developments, and regulatory issues that may impact cross-border commerce.

The event also provides a platform to deepen understanding of the AfCFTA and how companies can benefit from its provisions.

With a combined market of over 1.3 billion people and a gross domestic product estimated at more than US\$3.5 trillion, the agreement opens new prospects for value-added exports, scale-driven production, and regional economic integration.

Zimbabwean businesses interested in exploring new trade possibilities in Africa are encouraged to engage with ZimTrade and begin preparing to participate in IATF2025.



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2 ZIMTRADE SPEARHEADS RURAL INDUSTRIALISATION

By Runyararo Mukahanana

ZIMTRADE IS supporting rural communities across Zimbabwe by helping them build export-ready enterprises through a structured cluster development model that improves production, strengthens value chains, and opens access to international markets.

This approach was showcased at the Rural Industrialization Conference held in Kadoma from 25 to 28 June 2025, where ZimTrade presented how its community-based initiatives are contributing to inclusive industrial growth by empowering local producers and bridging the rural-urban divide.

At the core of this strategy is the development of rural production clusters.

These clusters bring together small-scale producers, artisans, and entrepreneurs working in similar sectors and regions.

Each group receives technical assistance, export readiness training, and business development support tailored to their specific needs.

The goal is to increase production volumes, enhance product quality, and prepare businesses to meet international standards.

Unlike one-off interventions, the cluster model provides holistic, long-term support that covers every stage of the value chain.

From improving production methods and packaging to branding, market access, and regulatory

compliance, rural enterprises are guided through each step required to operate competitively and sustainably in global markets.

The growing interest in natural, ethically sourced, and culturally distinctive products in global markets gives Zimbabwean clusters a clear advantage.

Rural producers are well-positioned to meet this demand using indigenous resources, traditional knowledge, and increasingly sophisticated production systems.

Currently, ZimTrade supports more than 22 provincial clusters across Zimbabwe, each aligned with sector trends and export potential.

At the conference, several clusters were highlighted for their strong performance and development impact.

For example, the Midlands Peas Cluster is producing high-quality green peas that have attracted attention from export buyers.

In Matabeleland North, the Arts and Crafts Cluster focuses on traditional handmade goods, creating opportunities for cultural preservation and tourism-linked trade.

The Mudzi Baobab Cluster processes baobab fruit into powders, oils, and pulp with growing demand in wellness markets.

In Mashonaland East, the Chikomba Honey Cluster is promoting modern beekeeping and value-

added honey products.

The Pahasha Banana Cluster is helping farmers strengthen post-harvest practices and access formal markets.

In Buhera, the Arts and Craft Cluster is producing authentic handcrafts inspired by local culture.



Other clusters mentioned include the Harare Leather Cluster, Usafi Marula Oil producers, Ndiyaadzo Pineapple Cluster, Mashava Arts Centre, and the Masvingo Marula Cluster. Each of these demonstrates how, when equipped with the right knowledge and resources, rural communities can become active participants in both national and international trade.

ZimTrade's technical interventions focus on areas such as increasing production and creating viable commercial pathways.

Assistance includes improving production standards, ensuring compliance with export regulations, upgrading packaging and branding, and connecting producers with regional and international buyers.

As a result, many of these clusters are now exporting finished products rather than raw materials.

Partnerships with tertiary institutions and universities have further strengthened this model.

Through collaboration with research and academic institutions, ZimTrade is helping clusters incorporate innovation, technical expertise, and sustainability into their operations.

These partnerships are vital in ensuring rural enterprises apply modern production methods while maintaining their authenticity and local character.

This focus on practical innovation is also addressing broader development goals.

As value chains emerge around locally available products like baobab, marula, honey, and citrus, communities are reporting increased household incomes, new entrepreneurial ventures, and a growing culture of productivity.

A key outcome of the cluster approach is its emphasis on value addition.

Products that were once sold raw or unprocessed are now reaching the market as export-ready goods.

Baobab juice, marula-based skincare items, and processed honey products are examples of how rural activities have been transformed into high-value, branded commodities with regional and global appeal.

This shift aligns with Zimbabwe's economic vision to become an upper-middle-income economy by 2030 and increase the share of value-added exports.

Moving away from dependence on raw commodities such as tobacco and minerals, allows the country to diversify its trade base and building competitiveness in sectors that offer long-term sustainability.

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3 ZAMBIA FAIR TO STRENGTHEN **TRADE WITH ZIMBABWE**

By Velile Dube

ZIMBABWE IS strengthening its trade engagement with Zambia through participation in the 97th Zambia Agricultural and Commercial Show (ZACS), which will take place in Lusaka from 30 July to 4 August 2025.

Marking its appearance at Zambia's largest multi-sectoral trade platform, Zimbabwe is once again using the event to expand its regional commercial presence and deepen its long-standing economic ties with its northern neighbour.

This year's edition is being held under the theme "Adapting to Climate Change," a timely call to action that resonates with the priorities of both countries as they work to build climate-resilient industries.

ZimTrade is leading Zimbabwe's participation by coordinating the exhibition of 25 export-ready companies.

These businesses represent a range of sectors including agricultural inputs and equipment,

fast-moving consumer goods, industrial machinery, and mining supplies.

Their presence at ZACS demonstrates Zimbabwe's intention to showcase its competitive products, explore regional opportunities, and contribute to cross-border collaboration in industrial development.

The relationship between Zimbabwe and Zambia is among the strongest within the region.

Zambia remains one of Zimbabwe's largest trading partner within the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and ranks fourth among partners in the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

This trade partnership is supported not only by geographic proximity, but also by shared policy goals, infrastructure, and business cultures that continue to foster mutual growth.

Zimbabwe's participation in ZACS is part of a broader strategy to use regional platforms to expand its trade footprint.

Over the past few years appearing at the fair, Zimbabwe has built a track record of consistency at ZACS.

This long-term engagement reflects a deliberate approach to maintaining visibility in key markets and nurturing bilateral trade relationships that can support long-term export growth.

Speaking ahead of the show, ZimTrade Operations Director, Mr. Similo Nkala reaffirmed the organisation's commitment to ensuring that local businesses access regional markets through structured platforms.

"We want to give Zimbabwean products and services opportunities to market themselves beyond our borders.

"ZACS 2025 represents one of those opportunities, an opening into a regional marketplace where there is strong demand for our offerings," he noted.

The Zambia Agricultural and Commercial Show has earned a reputation as a dynamic space for regional engagement.

The 96th edition in 2024 drew wide participation from both government ministries and private sector players.



Its role in promoting trade and industrial cooperation continues to grow, with exhibitions that span sectors such as renewable energy, agro-processing, ICT, mechanisation, and climate-smart agriculture.

For Zimbabwean businesses, the show has become a platform to engage new customers, gather insights, explore distribution partnerships, and enhance product visibility across regional markets.

Past participation has yielded concrete commercial results.

Several Zimbabwean firms have established distribution networks within Zambia, with some even opening permanent operations in Lusaka and Copperbelt towns.

These partnerships have supported the flow of goods and services across the border while reinforcing Zimbabwe's reputation as a reliable source of industrial and consumer products.

Businesses that have previously exhibited at ZACS have shared positive experiences that highlight the value of the event.

A Zimbabwean AgriTech exporter who attended the 2022 edition reflected on the reach of their innovations.

"ZACS gave us a platform to showcase our solar-powered irrigation systems to a regional audience.

"We secured three major leads from Zambia and Malawi, which have since turned into active business conversations."

Another testimonial from an FMCG manufacturer who participated in 2023 emphasised the quality of the interactions.

"The diversity of exhibitors and depth of engagement at ZACS was unmatched.

"We left with not just contacts, but actual contracts."

Beyond commercial outcomes, the event is also a learning opportunity.

A Zimbabwean agro-processor who attended in 2024 noted how the show influenced business decisions.

"It was inspiring to see how other African companies are adapting to climate change. We've since adopted new packaging solutions we discovered at the show."

Participation in events like ZACS allows Zimbabwean firms to keep pace with market demands and adapt their products to meet evolving consumer preferences.

The theme for this year's show "Adapting to Climate Change" adds particular relevance, as businesses across the continent are being called upon to develop sustainable production methods, climate-smart solutions, and innovative responses to shifting environmental conditions.



4 ZIMBABWE TRADE PERFORMANCE PROMISING

By Archford Mabuka

ZIMBABWE'S trade in the first half of 2025 reflects a promising note, with exports surging by 11.4 percent to US\$3.14 billion in the first five months, while the trade deficit narrowed by 12 percent to US\$887 million.

This upward trajectory signals growing economic resilience and presents lucrative opportunities for businesses, particularly in mining, agro-processing, and manufacturing.

However, some sectors, such as processed foods and pharmaceuticals have recorded a downward trend.

Mining Sector

The standout performer remains Zimbabwe's mining sector, which contributed a staggering US\$2.51 billion taking up 80 percent of total exports which is a 17.4 percent increase from the same period in 2024.

Gold exports nearly doubled, jumping from US\$739 million to US\$1.43 billion, driven by higher global prices and increased production.

This reinforces Zimbabwe's position as a key player in the global minerals market.

For businesses, this growth underscores the importance of investing in mining operations, refining, and export logistics to capitalize on sustained international demand.

Tobacco and Leather sectors

While raw tobacco exports declined by 12.8 percent, processed tobacco shipments rose by 22.9 percent, indicating progress in local value addition.

Similarly, the hides and skins sector saw a remarkable 54.5 percent surge, though it remains dominated by raw exports.

This presents a clear opportunity for businesses to expand into leather processing and finished goods manufacturing, which offer higher profit margins.

With the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) opening new markets, Zimbabwean firms must prioritize quality control, branding, and supply chain efficiency to compete regionally.

Building and Construction Materials Sector

Another bright spot was the 23 percent growth in construction material exports, including tiles and timber, fuelled by infrastructure demand in Southern Africa.

As regional development projects accelerate, Zimbabwean manufacturers should focus on scaling production, improving standards, and optimizing logistics to secure a larger market share.

ZimTrade is already capitalising on this opportunity by conducting building and construction services

Local businesses can take advantage of other promotional activities by ZimTrade within the region to expand to regional markets.

Arts and Crafts Sector

The creative sector continues to shine, with arts and crafts exports increasing by 14.2 percent to US\$5.9 million.

Zimbabwe's globally admired sculptural artistry and unique cultural heritage underpin this growth. Products such as zoological collectibles and original statuary contributed significantly.

This sector not only offers foreign currency earnings but also promotes cultural diplomacy.

ZimTrade is spearheading the expansion of artisan training and international market linkages through various clusters in the southern and eastern regions of the country.

Processed Foods and Pharmaceuticals

Not all sectors fared well. Processed food exports dropped by 25.2 percent, mainly due to declining sugar shipments.

Similarly, pharmaceutical exports fell by 28.6 percent, highlighting gaps in local production capacity.

To revive these sectors, businesses must invest in modern processing technologies, cost-efficient production, and regional trade partnerships.

Export Markets

A striking development in 2025 is the United Arab Emirates (UAE) overtaking South Africa and China as Zimbabwe's largest export destination, accounting for 46 percent of total exports (up from 29.5 percent).

This shift is largely due to gold sales, demonstrating the UAE's growing role as a strategic trade partner.

Meanwhile, exports to South Africa and China declined by 14.2 percent and 15.9 percent, respectively, signalling a need for market diversification.

Notably, exports to the Netherlands more than doubled, suggesting untapped potential in Europe for horticulture and crafts.

Businesses should explore new trade agreements and marketing strategies in these emerging markets.

EDITORIAL TEAM

Danai Majaha,
Shepherd Chisada,
Tenson Wunganai,
Prosper Nzembe (Graphic Designer)
Karen Bvurere,

Runyararo Mukahanana ,
Velile Dube ,
Archford Mabuka,
Maxmillan Chikwati,
Gugulethu Mpofu



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5 ZIMTRADE AND PUM TRANSFORM ZIMBABWE'S FLORICULTURE

ZimTrade, in partnership with PUM, a Netherlands based organisation, is making significant progress in transforming Zimbabwe's floriculture sector into a vibrant and export ready industry.

The latest intervention under this longstanding partnership was marked by the visit of seasoned floriculture expert, Mr. Nicolas van Ruiten, who was in Zimbabwe from 7 to 18 July 2025, delivering hands-on technical support to small- and medium-scale flower growers.

During the visit the PUM experts conducted intensive technical intervention sessions that addressed a wide range of critical areas.

These included pest and disease management, value chain and marketing management, post-harvest handling, principles of sustainable growing, water and climate management and soil structure optimization.

The sessions were designed to improve farmers' technical knowledge, enhance operational efficiency, and align local flower production with the requirements of international markets.

As part of the learning experience, participants also took part in a guided tour of a floriculture exporting company based in Nyanga.

This visit offered valuable insights into the operational realities of export-oriented flower production, from grading and packaging to logistics.

The programme concluded with a feedback session, where Mr. van Ruiten presented his observations and recommendations, setting a clear path forward for the group to continue improving and scaling their operations.

The strategic collaboration between Dutch

technical experts and Zimbabwean farmers is proving to be a powerful driver of growth, combining world-class horticultural knowledge with the country's favourable agro-climatic conditions and motivated growers.

This Floriculture Development Program forms part of a broader capacity development initiative aimed at revitalizing Zimbabwe's horticultural export sector.

The program was launched following fact-finding missions conducted across the country by PUM experts.

These missions focused on major floriculture-producing regions, including Manicaland, and provided valuable insights into the existing production landscape, challenges, and opportunities within the sector.

Findings from the missions revealed significant untapped potential for high-quality flower production, particularly in areas with favourable agro-climatic conditions.

They also underscored critical gaps in technical knowledge, production capacity, post-harvest handling, and market readiness that were limiting the sector's ability to compete on the international stage.

These insights formed the foundation for a structured intervention aimed at equipping Zimbabwean growers with the practical skills, modern practices, and export-oriented strategies needed to align with global standards.

The program was launched with a primary focus on Zimbabwe's Eastern Highlands, renowned for its cool climate, rich soils, and high-altitude conditions that are ideal for producing premium quality cut flowers.

Nyanga and Vumba, located within this zone, became the initial focal points for the program due to their natural advantages and existing grower activity.

However, the measurable success of the initiative in these areas has sparked widespread interest and participation from other parts of the country, including Chinhoyi, Ruwa, and Gwebi.

This growing engagement highlights the scalability of the program, and also its national relevance in unlocking the full potential of Zimbabwe's floriculture sector.

As the programme expand its reach, it continues to empower more farmers with skills and knowledge needed to enhance productivity, improve flower quality, and gain access to lucrative export markets.

ZimTrade remains committed to providing ongoing support, fostering innovation, and facilitating market access for Zimbabwean flower growers.

With the continued collaboration of PUM and the dedication of local farmers, Zimbabwe is steadily positioning itself as a key player in the international flower trade.



6 MARKET FOCUS: EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Equatorial Guinea, a nation with a GDP of approximately US\$10,2 billion in 2024, presents a burgeoning yet largely untapped market for Zimbabwean exporters.

Historically reliant on hydrocarbon resources, the country is actively diversifying its economy, shifting focus towards agriculture, agro-processing, and light manufacturing.

This strategic recalibration, coupled with Equatorial Guinea's status as a net importer of consumer goods, creates significant avenues for Zimbabwean businesses, particularly within the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), horticulture, and leather sectors.

The market scan, conducted in May 2025 by ZimTrade, identified key opportunities and strategic entry points for Zimbabwean products.

The fieldwork concentrated on Malabo and Bata, the country's main urban and commercial centers, offering insights into consumer behavior, distribution networks, and potential partnerships.

The FMCG Sector

Equatorial Guinea's FMCG sector is remarkably import-dependent, with over 95 percent of products in both formal and informal markets originating from abroad, primarily Spain, the USA, France, China, Côte d'Ivoire, and Vietnam.

This high reliance on imports, coupled with limited local manufacturing capacity, creates a substantial demand for processed foods, snacks, beverages, and personal care items. Zimbabwean exporters are well-positioned to capitalize on this demand by emphasizing quality, reliability, and affordability.

Key opportunities within the FMCG sector include:

•**Peanut Butter and Groundnut-Based Products:** Peanut butter is a dietary staple, yet local production is limited, presenting a significant opportunity for Zimbabwean exporters.

•**Canned and Dried Foods:** There is a consistent demand for these products.

•**Processed Meat Products:** With a heavy reliance on meat imports, particularly from Brazil, opportunities exist for Zimbabwean companies to explore strategic investments in cold storage, meat processing, or abattoirs.

•**Basic Staples:** Maize meal, flour, and rice alternatives are consistently imported.

•**Cosmetics and Personal Care:** This sector, currently dominated by European and Asian imports, offers an opening for African-made natural products.

Engagements with major retailers and distributors like revealed strong interest in Zimbabwean products and potential collaboration opportunities, including distribution agreements, product listing, and co-investment in processing facilities.'

Horticulture and Leather

The horticulture market in Equatorial Guinea is predominantly supplied by local small-scale farmers and imports from Cameroon.

There's a growing demand for higher-quality and diversified fresh produce in urban centers, although cold chain logistics remain a challenge and an area for potential Zimbabwean expertise.

Products commonly found include pineapples, citrus fruits, avocados, bananas, tea, coffee, and assorted nuts.

The leather and leather products market is a niche segment, heavily influenced by established European luxury brands.

Affluent consumers often prefer direct purchases from Europe due to perceived superior quality and brand prestige.

While challenging, Zimbabwean businesses can target this market by focusing on unique, hand-crafted products that emphasize artisanal quality, ethical sourcing, or African-inspired designs.

Logistics and Strategic Approaches
Logistics present both challenges and opportunities.

While no direct shipping routes exist between Zimbabwe and Equatorial Guinea, sea freight through South African ports like Durban is the most cost-effective option, with an average transit time of 35-45 days.

For perishables, air freight via Kenya or Ethiopia may be necessary.

Freight forwarding companies in the region can also act as product distributors, offering a strategic advantage for Zimbabwean exporters.

Market entry strategies should consider Equatorial Guinea's largely informal retail landscape, where over 90 percent of trade is informal.

Strategic partnerships with local distributors are crucial for accessing these wide-reaching networks.

Additionally, product customization, particularly labeling in Spanish and culturally relevant branding, is vital for success.



While a formal bilateral trade agreement between Zimbabwe and Equatorial Guinea is absent, opportunities can be leveraged under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Furthermore, establishing local production or assembly facilities could allow Zimbabwean firms to access wider CEMAC and ECCAS regional markets.



7 PEAS

By Maxmillan Chikwati

THE GLOBAL market for peas continues to offer lucrative opportunities for Zimbabwean growers. According to Trade Map, global imports of peas stood at US\$463 million (2024).

The market is expected to grow as consumer preferences in the European and North America markets continue to lean towards plant based and sustainable food sources as well as more healthier food options.

The green revolution, where consumers are now preferring sustainably sourced foods, stems from both health and environmental reasons.

Health-conscious eating has gained prominence world over with peas (Mangetout and Sugar Snap) being sources of fibre, vitamins C and K, and folate, while being low in calories, fat, and sodium.

This nutritional composition makes them a consumer favourite in the United States, Netherlands, Canada, Belgium and the UK. There is also a growing preference for sustainably sourced foods and peas is one of such.

The global market for peas offers diverse opportunities across continents.

Europe remains the major potential customer for peas.

According to Trade Map, European countries imported US\$231,8 million worth of peas, over 50 percent of the global total of US\$ 463 million. Major European markets include Belgium, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Germany and France. Notably, Zimbabwean produce entering Netherlands market enjoy quota free and duty-free

access under the Economic Partnership Agreement ratified under the Eastern and Southern Africa countries and the EU.

In the Middle East, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Palestine represent growing markets with a quite impressive purchasing power.

According to Trade Map, the UAE imported US\$2,83 million worth of peas in 2023.

Market entry

Sugar Snap and Mangetout are the two varieties that command demand and premium prices in the major markets.

These markets value high quality fresh and frozen varieties, however, they have strict certification and chemical residue level standards.

Entry into these lucrative markets is reliant on complying with international standards.

Global Gap Certification is mandatory for premium destinations with requirements on farm management systems, strict compliance to pesticide limits and regular audits by third parties.

The market access and premium prices justify the initial investment on certification. ZimTrade provides trainings on Global Gap Certification to groups of farmers.

The peak harvesting periods for Zimbabwean peas (mangetout and sugar snap) is from May to August.

This enables producers to supply Northern Hemisphere markets during a period when their own production declines. Zimbabwean producers have this as an advantage in the global pea market.

Dealing with losses

Post harvest practices contribute immensely to success in export farming.

There is a need to invest in cold chain facilities which are critical for maintaining freshness of the product from time of harvesting until it reaches the consumer.



Establishing reliable transportation from farm to port/ airport is also crucial to prevent costly delays which may compromise product quality.

Proper sorting and grading systems ensure consistency in product quality and helps the farmer command premium prices.

Another key to success in these markets is packaging which must meet international standards and meet specific market requirements.



THE LATEST ON EU AGRI-FOOD POLICIES IMPACTING LOW- AND MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES

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8 ZIMTRADE, COLEAD LAUNCH INFORMATION PLATFORM

By Luckson Chimundiza

ZimTrade, in partnership with COLEAD, has launched a new online platform called AGRINFO, Zimbabwe Regulatory Digest.

This service is aimed at helping local businesses involved in exporting agricultural and food products to Europe.

The platform, which is updated every three months, provides important and timely updates on new or upcoming European Union (EU) laws that could affect Zimbabwe's key export products.

For anyone exporting to the EU, this digest is a valuable tool to stay informed and remain competitive in international markets.

The EU continues to revise and strengthen its food safety and sustainability regulations.

These changes are being driven by increased consumer demand for traceability, environmental protection, and ethical trade practices.

While these regulations are designed to create a safer and more sustainable food system, they present real and growing challenges for exporters.

For Zimbabwean exporters, adapting to these evolving rules is not optional, but essential.

The bar has been raised, and exporters must stay informed and agile to remain competitive in the EU market.

Missing key updates or failing to comply with new requirements could lead to costly rejections at

ports of entry, loss of market access/share, and reputational damage that is difficult to repair.

One of the most pressing challenges exporters face today is misinformation, or worse, a lack of information altogether.

In an increasingly digital and fast-paced world, exporters are bombarded with conflicting or outdated advice.

Relying on informal sources can result in poor decisions, non-compliance, and missed opportunities.

This is where accurate, timely, and trusted information becomes invaluable.

The AGRINFO, a quarterly digest specifically was designed to keep exporters, up to date on the latest developments in the EU agri-food market.

AGRINFO summarizes key regulatory updates, insights into market trends, and guidance on how to navigate the changing landscape.

Europe is one of Zimbabwe's major export destinations for agricultural produce.

However, due to the premium prices offered by most of Europe, the competition for that market can be harsh.

It is therefore a necessity, that Zimbabwean producers and exporters be well capacitated in order to trade competitively on such a stage.

<https://agrinfo.eu/about-agrinfo/>



9 FROM DREAM TO DISPATCH: NOTES FROM THE ZIMTRADE INQUIRY DESK

By Gugulethu Mpofu (Opinion)

Every week, the ZimTrade inquiry desk welcomes Zimbabwe's most determined entrepreneurs.

Some show up with business plans sketched on scrap paper, others with samples tucked under their arms, and most with the same big question: "How do I turn my product into an export success?" Beneath the drive and hope, we often see gaps between the dream and the reality.

The good news?

A clear path exists, but it is built on practical steps, not just passion.

Let us start with the facts. According to the International Trade Centre, just 5–7 percent of Zimbabwe's small and medium enterprises export beyond the country's borders.

This pattern is common across many developing economies.

The issue is not lack of ambition, it is understanding what works and what does not on the real export journey.

International buyers, value reliability above almost all else.

Europe imported €5.2 billion worth of fresh produce from sub-Saharan Africa in 2022 alone, but buyers are noticeably risk-averse with new suppliers.

Why? Because delayed, incomplete, or spoiled shipments can ruin relationships and reputations. Most buyers favour steady partners: those who can reliably deliver reasonable quantities, consistently, over time not one-off wonders.

Price is important, but predictability wins contracts.

Certification: The Passport

Certifications like Global G.A.P. are more than bureaucratic hurdles, they are often deal-breakers for international buyers.

In fact, about 68 percent of European food importers require suppliers to have such certifications. Achieving these can take time and money, but certification gives your product the credibility and market access needed to go global.

Think of it as your passport for your product.

It is worth noting, going solo in export is tough, working as a group or cluster can help smaller producers shoulder certification costs and processes.

The World Bank notes that small firms working collectively (in clusters, associations, or cooperatives) are 30–60 percent more likely to access export markets.

Kenya's flower industry is a clear regional example, thousands of small-scale growers work together, sharing facilities and coordinating logistics, resulting in a 38 percent share of Europe's rose cut flower market and over \$1 billion in annual revenue.

In Zimbabwe, fruit producers in Manicaland and other areas have similarly started pooling resources for cold storage and transport, enabling them to reach new markets they couldn't access alone.

Start Local, Then Build

The most successful Zimbabwean exporters, across many sectors, almost always master their local market first.

ZimTrade case studies and international best practice consistently show that companies with several years of domestic experience, honing their processes, supply systems, and logistics, are best prepared to transition to export markets.

Getting things right at home lays the foundation for regional and international growth.

One clear trend, that exporters will ask is "What can we produce well and consistently at high quality and competitive prices?", not just, "What is selling overseas?"

Sometimes your best export product is already growing in your fields or is on your workshop table; scaling up capability and reliability is the winning strategy.

Exporting is a long game.

There are no shortcuts, but there is a proven formula: get the basics right locally, consider clustering for scale and shared resources, invest in certification, and use the support structures available.

Most of all, treat every challenge as a learning opportunity.

The journey is demanding, but the rewards are real for those willing to build steadily.

As always, if you need assistance in starting this journey or find you are well on your way don't hesitate to come in and chat.

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