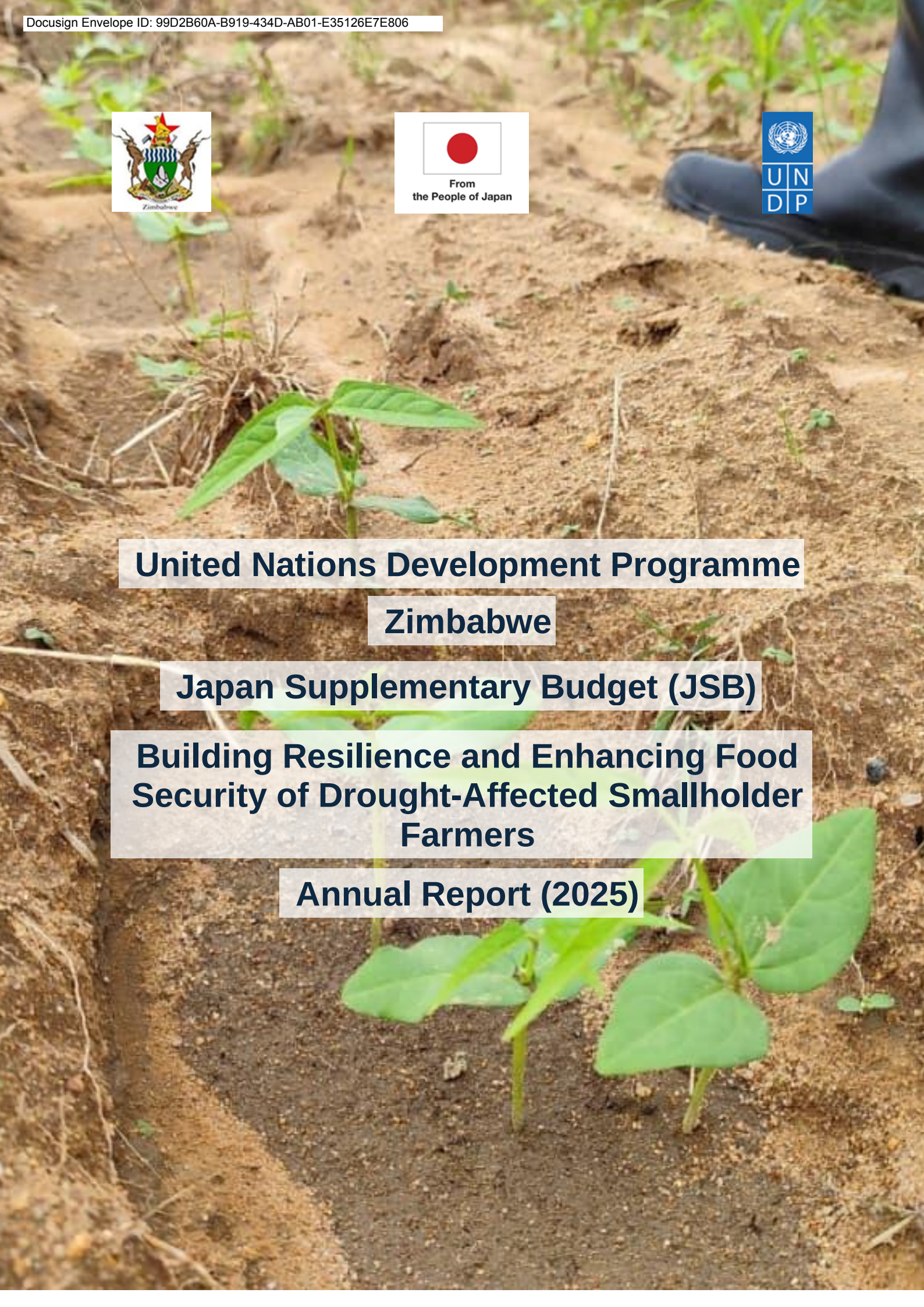
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United Nations Development Programme

Zimbabwe

Japan Supplementary Budget (JSB)

Building Resilience and Enhancing Food Security of Drought-Affected Smallholder Farmers

Annual Report (2025)

Docusign Envelope ID: 99D2B60A-B919-434D-AB01-E35126E7E806

Reporting Period:	01 March 2025 – December 31 2025
Development Partners:	Donor: The Government of Japan-Japan Supplementary Budget Implementing Partner(s): Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development (MLAFWRD), Care and Pegara.
Project Numbers & Title:	**UNDP Reference** ZWE1004007 **Donor Reference** 000141 Building Resilience and Enhancing Food Security of Drought-Affected Smallholder Farmers.

Project Objective/impact	Enhance the resilience and food security of smallholder farmers by promoting climate-smart agricultural practices that reduce crop losses, improve productivity and nutrition, and leverage innovative technologies such as drones to address climate-related challenges.
UNDP CPD outcome	Outcome 2: By 2026, all people in Zimbabwe, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised, benefit from greater environmental stability and robust food systems in support of healthy lives and equitable, sustainable and resilient livelihoods.
UNDP CPD Outputs	OUTPUT 2.1. Enhanced resilience and livelihoods of vulnerable people, communities, and regions. OUTPUT 2.2. Tools and mechanisms applied to enable evidence-based, risk-informed planning, prevention and preparedness to climate hazards by smallholder farmers and supporting institutions. OUTPUT 2.3. Solutions scaled up for sustainable management of natural resources, ecosystem services, chemicals and waste management.

Project Budget (US$)	Total Project expenses (US$)	Annual Budget (US$)	Delivery Rate (% of total budget)
1094000	580,225.88	1.500.000	53%

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1. Executive Summary

The *Building Resilience and Enhancing Food Security of Drought-Affected Smallholder Farmers Project (JSB)*, funded by the Government of Japan through the Japan Supplementary Budget and implemented by UNDP Zimbabwe in partnership with the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development (MLAFWRD), made substantial progress throughout 2025 in strengthening the resilience and food security of smallholder farmers in Chivi and Mwenezi. Working closely with CARE International Zimbabwe and other government departments, the project focused on promoting climate-smart agriculture, innovative pest-management solutions, and inclusive livelihood development.

The year marked the transition from project inception to full implementation. Foundational steps included the signing of the Responsible Party Agreement with CARE International Zimbabwe, appointment of national and district MLAFWRD focal points, and the establishment of clear coordination, reporting, and monitoring mechanisms. Inception meetings at provincial, district, and ward levels clarified project objectives and activity sequencing while enabling communities and youth representatives to contribute insights on drought-tolerant seed preferences and vocational training needs.

A Call for Proposals was launched to identify a Responsible Party to implement Outputs 1 and 3, Care Zimbabwe was successfully engaged. The project advanced preparatory work to implement Output 2 with Pegara Japan. Pegara submitted its Annual Work Plan and conducted a technical field mission in Middle Sabi—together with UNDP, ZimParks, and MLAFWRD, to validate drone technology for quelea bird control. The mission confirmed strong potential for drone-based pest-management solutions, while government partners recommended drone remediation to function well, suite local conditions, integrating the innovation with traditional practices and community knowledge systems to ensure broad adoption. A joint engagement with the Embassy of Japan reaffirmed alignment on the Output 2 pillars: drone deployment, early warning systems, and community knowledge-sharing.

Implementation of field activities began under Outputs 1 and 3 during the last quarter of 2025. 26 (females 11; males 15) MLAFWRD extension officers in Chivi and Mwenezi received training on Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA), Integrated Pest Management using the SHEAP approach, and hydrogel technology. 6717 (3800 females & 2917 males) farmers have received Sorghum, Pearl Millet and African Pea seeds for the 2025/2026 farming season with drought-tolerant varieties appropriate for local conditions. To support production, the project distributed 35 MT of sorghum, 17.5 MT of pearl millet, and 21 MT of African peas to households in Chivi and Mwenezi, significantly boosting access to drought-tolerant seed varieties. Additionally, 3 MT of hydrogels were delivered and distributed to 1,000 farmers. With an average estimated cultivated plot size of 0.3 ha per farmer, the estimated area under production reached 2,015 ha Extension officers cascaded CSA training to a total of 304(females 188; males 116) Lead Farmers across wards, strengthening local capacity for improved agricultural practices.

Overall, the implementation under Outputs 1 and 3 is strongly aligned with baseline findings, directly addressing gaps such as low CSA adoption, limited extension capacity, and inadequate access to drought-tolerant seeds. At baseline, only 66.5% of farmers in Chivi and 38.1% in Mwenezi were applying at least three CSA practices, but early implementation strengthened capacity by training 26 MLAFWRD officers and cascading knowledge to 304 Lead Farmers, including 188 women. Access to inputs—identified by 36% of farmers as a major barrier—has significantly improved through distribution of 35 MT of sorghum, 17.5 MT of pearl millet, 21 MT of African peas, and 3 MT of hydrogels to over 6,700 farmers, expanding production to an estimated 2,015 ha compared to baseline average land sizes of 0.23–1.4 ha. With baseline yields extremely low (0.19–0.29 MT/ha for grains), this input support directly targets productivity constraints. The strong inclusion of women, who made 45.4% of crop-production decisions at baseline, reflects intentional gender-responsive programming. Collectively, these results demonstrate clear, evidence-informed progress toward improved agricultural capacity, resilience, and gender-inclusive outcomes.

To enhance off-farm incomes, the project registered 204 (140 females; 64 males) youths from 10 wards in vocational training programmes including baking, welding, and hotel and catering, with training commencing in December 2025. These initiatives are designed to diversify household incomes and reduce vulnerability to climate-related shocks.

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With rains being well received in Chivi and Mwenezi, the 2025/2026 agricultural season shows strong promise. This favourable outlook, combined with the project's investments in climate-smart techniques, pest-management innovations, and youth livelihood development, positions communities to achieve improved productivity, resilience, and food security in the coming year.

b) Lessons Learnt

Early administrative readiness, covering RPA finalization, FACE form processing, and timely recruitment, is essential to prevent implementation delays. Technology piloting, such as drone-based quelea control, requires iterative field testing and careful alignment with existing farmer practices to ensure practical adoption. Inclusive, district-led planning proved critical in accelerating buy-in, strengthening coordination, and promoting equitable beneficiary targeting. Robust community sensitization also emerged as a key success factor, helping to de-risk the introduction of new technologies and build trust at community level. There was a deliberate integration of women and socially excluded groups into planning, training, and technology testing not only improved inclusivity but significantly enhanced uptake, ownership, and sustainability of interventions.

c) Budget Summary

For 2025, the annual budget was US$1,500,000, and total expenditure amounted to US$580,225.88, resulting in a delivery rate of 38.69%.

Expenditure by component was as follows:

Output 1: US$ 363,006.33
Output 2: US$0.00
Output 3: US$ 34,891.67
Project Management / Operations: US$ 182,327.88
Total Expenditure: US$ 580,225.88

Available total for 2026: USD$ 919,774.12

2. Background

Zimbabwe continues to face recurrent climate-induced droughts and erratic rainfall patterns that have significantly weakened agricultural productivity, depleted water resources, and heightened food insecurity in rural areas. Rain-fed smallholder agriculture remains the backbone of rural livelihoods, yet increasing climate variability has eroded household resilience. National assessments highlight the severity of the situation: the Zimbabwe Livelihoods Assessment Committee (ZimLAC) (2025) reported that over 50% of rural households faced cereal insecurity during the 2024/25 season, with many resorting to negative coping mechanisms such as reducing meals or selling productive assets. Projections indicate that food security challenges are likely to persist up to March 2026, while the 2024/25 Second Round Crops, Livestock and Fisheries Assessment (CLAFA-2) suggests that most rural households' cereal stocks would be depleted by November–December 2025, further exposing them to hunger.

Against this backdrop, the Japan Supplementary Budget (JSB) Project – Building Resilience and Enhancing Food Security of Drought-Affected Smallholder Farmers was established to strengthen household food security and climate resilience in two chronically vulnerable districts, Chivi and Mwenezi in Masvingo Province. These areas fall within Agro-ecological Regions IV and V, where low rainfall, recurrent droughts, and poor soils severely constrain agricultural productivity and increase the need for targeted, climate-resilient interventions. The project is implemented by UNDP, CARE Zimbabwe, and Pegara onboarding in Q1 of 2026, in partnership with the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development (MLAFWRD) and local government structures. It targets 10,000 drought-affected smallholder farmers, including56.6% women, youth (68.6% women), and vulnerable groups including PWD households, especially those dependent on rain-fed staple and small-grain production and who are disproportionately affected by climatic shocks.

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Anchored under UNDP CPD Outcome 2, the JSB Project directly supports Zimbabwe's national development priorities as articulated in the National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1), the National Climate Change Response Strategy (NCCRS), the National Gender and Climate Change Action Plan 2023) and the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2022–2026). The project's overall aim is to address chronic food insecurity by enhancing the adaptive capacity of vulnerable households and strengthening the resilience of local food systems. To achieve this, the project promotes a strategic mix of climate-smart agriculture (CSA) practices and technologies, including the production of drought-tolerant traditional grains, soil-moisture retention solutions such as hydrogels, and innovative, environmentally friendly drone-based systems for managing Quelea birds, an invasive migratory pest responsible for up to 40% loss of small-grain harvests annually. The drone component also strengthens early-warning systems, data collection, and community information flows. Complementary interventions include the training of extension officers, post-harvest loss reduction, youth and women livelihood diversification, and enhanced communication strategies to promote sustainable pest management and agricultural practices.

The project's design also ensures alignment with ongoing development partner initiatives in Masvingo, including resilience building, climate adaptation, and food-system strengthening programmes. Through collaboration with AGRITEX, local authorities, and community leadership, the JSB Project addresses critical capacity gaps in agronomic extension, climate-risk management, and technology adoption. Several adaptive changes were incorporated during implementation, including the refinement of drone importation and registration procedures, expanded farmer field school engagement, and adjusted agronomic guidance due to excessive rainfall in the 2025/26 season. Overall, the project provides a timely and integrated response to Zimbabwe's worsening food-security context by combining climate-resilient production, pest-control innovation, and livelihood strengthening to protect vulnerable rural households and contribute to national resilience-building priorities.

3. Achievements

Progress towards Development Results[1]

Section 1: Overall progress against the CPD outcome *(which the project falls under)*

CPD Outcome 2: By 2026, all people in Zimbabwe, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, benefit from greater environmental stability and robust food systems in support of healthy lives and equitable, sustainable and resilient livelihoods.

CPD Outcome Indicator	Actual Value of the Indicator as of the time of Reporting	Status *On-track, Off-track, Achieved, Partially Achieved, Not Achieved*
2.1.1 Number of vulnerable people benefiting from diversified climate-resilient livelihood options (agro-based)	Total People Reached: 6717 (3800 Females & 2917 Males) 6717 (3800 Females & 2917 Males) farmers have received Sorghum, Pearl Millet and African Pea seeds for the 2025/2026 farming season.	On Track
2.1.2 Number of people whose resilience has been improved	6717 (3800 Females & 2917 Males) farmers have received	On Track

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as a result of resilience-building support	Sorghum, Pearl Millet and African Pea seeds enhancing resilience.	
2.1.3 Land area under active sustainable natural resources management	3,368 ha under Sorghum 1,819 ha under Pearl Millet 1,561 ha under Cow Peas (African Peas) 6,717 farmers reached (3,800 women; 2,917 men)	On track
	Overall	**On track**

Section 2: Progress against CPD Outputs *(Refer to the CPD)*

CPD Output Indicator 2022-2026	**Actual Value of the Indicator as of the time of Reporting**	**Status** *On-track, Off-track, Achieved, Partially Achieved, Not Achieved*
2.1 Enhanced resilience and livelihoods of vulnerable people, communities and regions	Total People Reached: 6717 (3800 Females & 2917 Males) 6717 (3800 Females & 2917 Males) farmers have received Sorghum, Pearl Millet and African Pea seeds.	On Track
2.2 Tools and mechanisms applied to enable evidence-based, risk-informed planning, prevention and preparedness to climate hazards by smallholder farmers and supporting institutions	Three (3) inception meetings conducted (Masvingo Province, Chivi District, Mwenezi District). Established a shared understanding of climate risks, project objectives, implementation arrangements, and coordination mechanisms among smallholder farmers, extension services, and partners, enabling coordinated and risk-informed planning from project onset. One Training of Trainers (ToT) for MLAFWRD Extension Officers (CSA, IPM, Hydrogel Application): Strengthened the technical capacity of MLAFWRD extension officers to support climate-resilient farming practices, enabling informed decision-making on crop selection, input use, pest management, and drought mitigation, and facilitating the cascading of CSA knowledge to lead farmers. Baseline Survey: baseline survey conducted and findings being documented.	On track

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	Generated evidence on resilience levels, food security status, and knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to CSA, traditional grains, and quelea bird management, providing a data foundation for targeted, risk-informed planning, monitoring, and adaptive management. **Gender, Social Inclusion and GBV Risk Analysis:-***One (1 Gender, Social Inclusion and GBV Risk Analysis conducted and recommendations integrated into project implementation)* Informed inclusive and risk-sensitive planning by identifying gendered and intersectional vulnerabilities, gaps in access to productive resources and climate information among women, men, youth and persons with disabilities, as well as GBV risks, and guided the integration of safeguards and equitable participation measures in climate preparedness and response interventions. The Gender, Social Inclusion and GBV Risk Analysis informed practical safeguards that have been integrated into implementation. These safeguards strengthened equitable participation by ensuring women's increased access to training and leadership, reflected in their 68.6% representation among Lead Farmers (188/304) and 56.6% share of seed beneficiaries (3,800/6,717). Baseline constraints, including women's lower access to land, livestock and equipment, and the 36% farmer reported input gap, were addressed through targeted inputs, CSA training and improved extension access. GBV sensitive measures were applied to reduce risks linked to women's disproportionate care and labour burden, ensuring safe training schedules, mobility considerations and confidential feedback channels.	

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	Inclusive communication mechanisms, including community leaders, WhatsApp, SMS and suggestion boxes- were strengthened in line with baseline preferences. Overall, these safeguards enhanced equitable participation, strengthened protection, and increased women's agency in climate resilient agriculture.	
2.3 Solutions scaled up for sustainable management of natural resources, ecosystem services, chemicals and waste management	Trained 26 (Females 11; Males 15) MLAFRWD ward based extension staff on Climate Smart Agriculture and Integrated Pest Management. Training extension staff on Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) equips them with practical knowledge and skills to promote sustainable farming practices that conserve soil, water, and biodiversity. By adopting CSA techniques, farmers reduce reliance on harmful chemicals, improve soil health, and enhance resilience to climate shocks, while IPM minimizes pesticide use through biological and cultural controls, reducing chemical pollution and safeguarding ecosystem services	On track
Overall status		**On track**

Section 3: Progress against Project Outputs *(Derived from the ProDoc)*

Project Output Indicator	**Actual Value of the Indicator as of the time of Reporting**	**Status** *On-track, Off-track, Achieved, Partially Achieved, Not Achieved*
1.Increased production of drought-tolerant crop varieties for improved yields and nutrition	• 3,368 ha under Sorghum • 1,819 ha under Pearl Millet • 1,561 ha under Cow Peas (African Peas) 6,717 farmers reached (3,800 women; 2,917 men)	On track
1.1 Area under production with traditional grains and other drought tolerant crops	• 3,368 ha under Sorghum	On track

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	• 1,819 ha under Pearl Millet • 1,561 ha under Cow Peas (African Peas) • 6,717 farmers reached (3,800 women; 2,917 men)	
1.2 Average yield per ha (by crop type|)	• Baseline (ProDoc): • 0.30 MT/ha (average across targeted drought-tolerant crops) • Actual Baseline (JSB Baseline Survey 2025): • Sorghum: 0.19 MT/ha • Pearl Millet: 0.29 MT/ha • African Peas (Cowpeas): 0.087 MT/ha → All three crops were below the ProDoc baseline of 0.30 MT/ha. -Project Target (Endline): ≥ 0.50 MT/ha -Yield improvements will only be measurable at harvest.	On track
1.3 Uptake rates and application of innovative technologies	- 26 MLAFWRD extension officers trained - 304 Lead Farmers trained (188 women; 116 men) - 3,000 farmers received hydrogels (from 3 MT distributed) - 6,717 farmers accessed drought-tolerant seed varieties - 56.6% of beneficiaries were women (3,800 of 6,717) - 68.6% of Lead Farmers were women (188 of 304) - Target: 10,000 farmers; Progress: 67% reached	On track

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2. Enhanced application of innovative automatic drone technology to reduce crop damage caused by quelea birds	CARE and UNDP have laid the groundwork for the indicator having conducted Project Inception meetings at Provincial and District Levels, trained 26 (11 Females & 15 Males) in IPM and drone technology, and conducted ward sensitization meeting.	On track
2.1 Hectarage of field crops covered by drone technology by March 2026	0	Off track
2.2. Number of early warning systems for forecasting bird movement successfully introduced to the Ministry of Agriculture.	0	Off track
2.3 Percentage of farmers and extension workers actively utilizing information dissemination systems and digital technologies for informed response and decision-making,	0	Off track
3.Enhanced capacities and skills for on-farm and off-farm activities, ensuring increased income generation opportunities for women and youth	Training of 204 (140 Females & 64 Males) youths in TVET skills for increased off-farm income commenced on 8 December 2025---- with expected – changes to the lives of women and youth.	On track
3.1Number of farmers trained on climate-smart agriculture, nutrition-sensitive agriculture, good agriculture practices, post-harvest handling and processing	Extension officers commenced two (2) day Lead Farmer training on 16 December 2025. These trainings are meant to cascade CSA, IPM and hydrogel application training to Lead farmers. A total of 304(Females 188; Males 116) Lead Farmers were trained. The trained lead farmers re expected to cascade the information and training to their respective farmer groups.	On Track
3.2 Number of farmers engaged in profitable on farm and off farm initiatives supported by the project.	Preparatory work has been completed for the four (1 Mwenezi and 3 Chivi) irrigation schemes, to promote improved agricultural productivity and household income generation. These schemes will focus on high-value crops such as sugar beans and butternuts, with potential to enhance profitability and nutrition for farmers. To complement this initiative, market linkage trainings are planned for the next quarter to	On track

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	build farmers' capacity in establishing connections with input suppliers and output market players. 204 TVETs students were trained on off farm activities.	
	Overall status	**On track**

Description

Output 1: Increased production of drought-tolerant crop varieties for improved yields and nutrition
Target: 10,000 people

Indicator 1.1 – Area under production with traditional grains and other drought-tolerant crops

- Baseline: 0
- Target (March 2026): 600 ha
- Annual Progress (2025): The project supported widespread uptake of drought-tolerant crops through the distribution of sorghum (Marcia), pearl millet (Okashana), and African peas to a total of 6,717 farmers (3,800 females; 2,917 males). With an average cultivated plot size of 0.3 ha per farmer, the estimated area under production reached 2,015 ha,

Indicator 1.2 – Average yield per hectare (by crop type)

- Baseline: 0.3 t/ha
- Target (March 2026): 0.5 t/ha
- Annual Progress: Farmers in Chivi and Mwenezi successfully planted sorghum, pearl millet, and African peas; however, yield measurements will only be available at harvest.

Indicator 1.3 – Uptake of innovative technologies (drought-tolerant varieties, hydrogels)

- Baseline: 0
- Target (March 2026): 70%
- Annual Progress: The project distributed 3 tonnes of hydrogels to 1,000 lead farmers and trained extension workers and farmers on hydrogel application. Uptake data will be measured in Q1 2026 through follow-up surveys and demonstrations, noting that wet soil conditions delayed widespread application.

Key Activities Completed Under Output 1 (2025)
The project strengthened frontline agricultural capacity through a series of coordinated interventions. A total of 26 Agriculture Extension Officers (15 male; 11 female) were trained through a Training of Trainers (ToT) programme covering climate-smart agriculture (CSA), integrated pest management (IPM), hydrogel application, drone-assisted quelea control, and the SHEP market-oriented approach, after which they began cascading these skills to ward-level farmers. Building on this foundation, 304 Lead Farmers (188 female; 116 male) received training in CSA, IPM and hydrogel use and are now disseminating these practices across communities to help reach the 10,000 targeted farmers by March 2026. To support production, the project distributed 35 MT of sorghum, 17.5 MT of pearl millet, and 21 MT of African peas to households in Chivi and Mwenezi, significantly boosting access to drought-tolerant seed varieties despite compressed planting windows. Additionally, 3 MT of hydrogels were delivered and distributed to 1,000 farmers, enhancing soil-moisture retention for improved crop establishment in the semi-arid conditions.

The baseline confirmed low CSA adoption (38–49%), limited extension coverage, chronic input shortages, low yields (0.19–0.29 MT/ha), and major quelea-related losses of up to 30%. Output 1 interventions directly addressed these gaps by training 26 extension officers and 304 Lead Farmers, distributing over 73 MT of drought-tolerant seed, and providing 3 MT of hydrogels to reduce moisture stress. These activities enabled farmers to establish over 6,700 ha of sorghum, pearl millet and African peas, far above baseline production levels, positioning the project to significantly improve yields, climate-resilient practices, and overall household food security.

Output 2: Enhanced application of innovative automatic drone technology to reduce crop damage caused by Quelea birds

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Indicator 2.1 – Hectarage protected by drone technology

- Baseline: 0
- Target (March 2026): 200 ha
- Annual Progress (2025): No field deployment occurred in 2025 due to technical adjustments required for the drone technology and outstanding regulatory approvals. Pegara is addressing recommendations from MLAFWRD and ZimParks. Deployment is scheduled for Q1 2026.

Indicator 2.2 – Early warning system for forecasting bird movement introduced to MLAFWRD

- Baseline: 0
- Target (March 2026): 1 system
- Annual Progress: Preparatory work completed; system development will advance once Pegara is formally onboarded in Q1 2026.

Indicator 2.3 – Percentage of farmers and extension workers actively using digital technologies

- Baseline: 0%
- Target (March 2026): 70%
- Annual Progress: Extensive sensitization was conducted at provincial, district and ward levels to ensure communities understand the drone's agricultural purpose, privacy safeguards, and quelea-control functions. Engagement sessions have generated strong community acceptance and readiness for deployment. Usage data to be collected after system roll-out in 2026.

Baseline results confirmed that 65.7% of farmers experienced quelea attacks, resulting in an average 30% crop loss, making automated pest-control a critical intervention for sorghum and millet production. Although no drone deployment occurred in 2025 due to technical refinements and pending regulatory approvals, substantial progress has been made in strengthening system readiness, with Pegara now integrating recommendations from MLAFWRD and ZimParks. Deployment is scheduled for Q1 2026, positioning the project to begin protecting up to 200 ha in the next season. Once operational, the drone technology is expected to significantly reduce pest-related losses, improve yields, and lessen the labour burden—especially for women—thereby transforming productivity and resilience in targeted communities.

Output 3: Enhanced capacities and skills for on-farm and off-farm activities ensuring increased income generation for women and youth

Indicator 3.1 – Number of farmers trained in CSA and related practices

- Baseline: 0
- Target (March 2026): 10,000 farmers
- Annual Progress: A total of 304 Lead Farmers (188 female; 116 male) were trained. Each Lead Farmer is now cascading training to community farmers, placing the project on track to reach the 10,000-farmer target by March 2026.

Indicator 3.2 – Number of farmers engaged in profitable on-farm/off-farm initiatives

- Baseline: 0
- Target (March 2026): 200 farmers
- Annual Progress: The project supported 204 young people (140 female; 64 male) through skills development programs such as tailoring, baking, welding, hairdressing, catering and building. This surpasses the annual target.

Baseline results showed that CSA adoption was low, 49% in Chivi and 38% in Mwenezi, despite moderate knowledge levels. Under Output 3, the project trained 304 Lead Farmers, the majority women (68.6%), who are now cascading knowledge to community farmers. With each Lead Farmer expected to train 30–35 farmers through farmer Field Schools., the project is on track to reach the 10,000-farmer target by March 2026. This approach directly addresses the baseline gaps in extension coverage, CSA adoption, and yield performance, and strengthens district-level capacities to drive on-farm resilience and climate-smart production.

Key Activities Completed Under Output 3.2 (2025)

The project strengthened youth and women's economic participation through targeted capacity-building initiatives. A total of 15 district and ward-based extension officers (7 female; 8 male) from MYEDVT and

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MWACSMED received Entrepreneurship and Business Development Training of Trainers (ToT), equipping them with skills in business formalization, VSAL strengthening, marketing, costing, financial literacy, and enterprise development, and resulting in a jointly developed action plan to train 400 youths in Q1 2026. Youth registration for TVET programmes was completed with 204 verified beneficiaries, and training centres were decentralized to ward level to increase accessibility and support higher female participation, with modular training scheduled for delivery by Chivi Mhandamabwe Vocational Training Centre in Q1 2026. In parallel, MWACSMED led the VSAL mapping exercise, which will guide tailored training and support packages for savings groups based on identified needs--. Baseline results showed extremely limited opportunities for women and youth to access skills training and income-generating activities, alongside low household incomes and gendered constraints in mobility, assets, and decision-making. Output 3.2 has already shifted this reality by enrolling 204 youths (68.6% women) in decentralised TVET training, capacitating 15 extension officers as ToTs, and strengthening VSAL structures for women. These activities directly address baseline gaps and are positioning women and youth for improved income generation, increased economic agency, and stronger participation in local markets and entrepreneurial spaces.

4. Cross-cutting Issues

4.1 Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment, and Social Inclusion

Gender results	Evidence
Women Women-headed households constituted 57% of seed recipients (3,674 HHs), improving access to drought-tolerant inputs and participation in CSA/IPM and hydrogel training. Of the 304 Lead Farmers, 188 were women, strengthening women's technical leadership and diffusion of? practices at community level. Women also comprised 63% of the 204 TVET enrolees, widening pathways to off-farm income and reducing negative coping strategies- contributing to women empowerment -beneficial to the women themselves, their families, communities and the nation. **Men** Men were strongly engaged in delivery and household-level adoption: 116 male Lead Farmers and trained male extension officers supported CSA uptake, joint decision-making on input use and farm planning, and wider community sensitization on safeguarding—critical for sustained practice adoption and norm shifts. **Youth** 204 youth (63% female) enrolled in decentralized, ward-level TVET, lowering barriers to attendance and increasing young women's participation in marketable trades. An Entrepreneurship/Business Development ToT (15 officers) established a pipeline to train 400 youth in early 2026, linking skills development to enterprise start-up and complementing household CSA gains. **Indicator alignment (what we measured vs. what's missing)** Measured in 2025 (access & participation). We tracked gender disaggregated reach for inputs (seeds, hydrogels) and trainings (CSA/IPM, TVET) and documented the gender profile of Lead Farmers and women-headed households among beneficiaries. This confirms who accessed services and where inclusion gains are occurring. To add in 2026 (impact & transformation). In 2026, the programme will consolidate gains and drive measurable, equitable results through a focused package of actions. We will operationalize minimum quotas (≥50% women- as	**Gender Analysis Report.** **JSB Project Consideration document. Activity Registers and Reports.** **Distribution Lists** **TVET registers** **Activity Reports, Pictures, Gender Considerations Document.**

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aligned to Zimbabwe National Gender Policy (2017–2022) and the Zimbabwe Constitution (2013)
---, ≥30% youth, ≥1 person with disabilities per committee) across input/technology access and local governance bodies, with GALS-style household gender dialogues to strengthen joint decision-making and control over resources. Training will expand via women-only and youth-friendly CSA and business modules, supported by low-literacy materials and delivery at accessible venues/times making sure women have more time for care work to raise completion and real-world adoption. To ensure safe, do-no-harm delivery, all implementation sites undergo gender discrimination and GBV risk assessments before activities; safe-disclosure and referral pathways will be reinforced with local partners, and cases supported will be tracked. Economic empowerment will be advanced through gender-responsive TVET as also aligned to the Broad-Based Women Economic Empowerment Framework, including non-traditional trades for young women, plus mentorship and start-up packages, with 3–6-month enterprise outcomes (new/expanded income and profitability) tracked by gender. For institutional change, we will apply community scorecards to monitor equitable benefit-sharing, enforce representation thresholds in ward structures, and promote co-chairing roles for young women and youth, embedding inclusive decision-making and accountability. Sustainability beyond 31 March 2026 (project end date) will be secured by formally handing over the refined gender indicators and data collection tools to MLAFWRD/AGRITEX and district gender offices that the project is already working with , integrating them into routine ward reporting and planning cycles; community structures (ward committees, VSLAs, youth hubs) will continue tracking adoption, Gender discrimination and GBV safeguards, governance representation, and enterprise outcomes, with quarterly reviews led by district authorities and community focal points to maintain momentum and ensure that inclusive results are owned, measured, and acted upon by government and local stakeholders.

- *A functioning gender mainstreaming strategy is in place and delivering inclusion results. In 2026, the project will sharpen impact-level gender indicators, institutionalize quotas and GBV safeguards, and complete a government/community take-over of gender tracking and response to sustain outcomes beyond the project's end date.*

4.2 Capacity Development and Sustainability

In 2025, the JSB project prioritized sub-national technical readiness to scale climate-smart agriculture (CSA), introduce innovations such as hydrogels and foundational drone concepts for quelea management, and strengthen entrepreneurship pathways for youth and women. UNDP and Care jointly delivered targeted capacity development for government extension services while leading risk-informed preparations for Output 2 (drones), aligned with environmental and safety requirements.

The project contributed directly to institutional and systems performance across three fronts. First, MLAFWRD/AGRITEX strengthened agricultural advisory capacity as 26 Agri-Business Advisory Officers (ABAOs) completed Training of Trainers on CSA, Integrated Pest Management (IPM), hydrogel application, the SHEP market-oriented approach, and an introductory -training on drone-assisted quelea control; officers have begun cascading these trainings to ward-level farmer groups, embedding CSA/IPM in routine extension. Second, MWACSMED and the Ministry of Youth enhanced enterprise support functions through an Entrepreneurship & Business Development ToT (business formalization, VSLA strengthening, costing/marketing, financial literacy), establishing a government-led pipeline to train 400 youth in early 2026 and to integrate enterprise coaching into regular youth and women's

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programming. Third, a joint field mission to Middle Sabi consolidated Output 2 institutional readiness, validating operational protocols, ecological sensitivity considerations, and safety measures; orienting stakeholders on selective drone use, operator training requirements, and civil aviation compliance; and laying the groundwork for a safe, government-led deployment model in 2026.

Evidence of capacity built includes standardized CSA/IPM/hydrogel curricula and job-aids now used by district trainers; trainee lists and session outputs retained by district structures; ward-level cascading plans aligned to seasonal advisory calendars; and mission SOPs (environmental safeguards, operator competencies, site selection criteria, incident-reporting lines) referenced in 2026 district workplans. Systemically, mainstreaming CSA/IPM/hydrogel practices within AGRITEX accelerates diffusion beyond direct beneficiaries; integrating enterprise coaching into government youth/women services links production gains to market-driven livelihoods; and agreed drone protocols (environmental screening, aviation compliance, operator training) create a repeatable public-sector process for future seasons and districts.

Sustainability is anchored in four areas. Institutionalization ensures training content, tools, and schedules are housed with MLAFWRD/AGRITEX and MWACSMED/Youth, enabling cadres to continue CSA/IPM and enterprise support from April 2026 within existing mandates, independent of project funds. Operational safeguards for drones, risk-based SOPs, environmental considerations, and aviation compliance steps, are now owned by government counterparts, supporting safe, selective, and compliant deployment beyond the project. Community-level continuity is supported through lead-farmer networks, ward committees, VSLAs, and youth groups that will maintain practice adoption, peer learning, and basic monitoring (attendance and adoption checks), with district officer support. Finally, a handover of measurement will transfer refined, gender-responsive indicators (adoption, decision-making, enterprise outcomes, safeguarding, inclusive governance) and simple data tools to district structures for routine quarterly reviews beyond 31 March 2026.

In summary, the project delivered targeted, government-owned capacity development that measurably improves the performance of local institutions and systems, while ensuring sustainable continuation through institutionalization of curricula and SOPs, strengthened public service delivery, and community-led continuity and monitoring after project close.

4.3 South-South and Triangular Cooperation

The project advanced triangular cooperation by adapting Japan's drone-based migratory pest management model (Pegara Japan–UNDP–MLAFWRD) to Zimbabwe's context, alongside a CSA package (drought-tolerant crops, hydrogels, market-oriented extension). In 2025, partners agreed on local asset registration, operator competency requirements, environmental safeguards (ecological screening, incident-reporting lines) and civil aviation compliance (CAAZ sequencing), converting an external innovation into a repeatable, government-led process. This created practical, system-level changes, standardized SOPs now referenced in district work plans; drone deployment protocols embedded with extension and conservation authorities; and risk-informed awareness among district stakeholders following the Middle Sabi demonstration/mission work. Looking ahead, the same model positions Zimbabwe to share its localized protocols and operational results with SADC peers, moving from exposure to adoption of tested SOPs (site selection, aviation compliance, operator training, community safeguards). The SSC/TrC value is designed to be sustainable- protocols, tools and roles are owned by Government (MLAFWRD/AGRITEX, ZimParks, aviation authorities) and integrated into routine planning, while inclusive training modalities ensure equitable technology access and scalability.

Country	Type of cooperation
1. Japan	Technical knowledge transfer and adaptive technology testing for migratory pest management
2. Zimbabwe	Transfer and localisation of advanced agricultural technologies and practices, particularly in environmentally sustainable pest management,

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	will strengthen national capacity, improve crop protection, and enhance resilience among smallholder farmers-laying the foundation for scalable innovation and future regional knowledge exchange.

4.4 Partnerships

UNDP led overall coordination, technical assurance, and systems alignment, bringing together its PMU and Programme Management Support units to fast-track operational and financial processes, participate in baseline/PDM missions, and quality-assure delivery across Outputs 1–3. Under UNDP's stewardship, the Responsible Party Agreement (RPA) formalised roles and prevented duplication, CARE International executed last-mile field operations in Chivi and Mwenezi (beneficiary registration; seed and hydrogel distributions; ward sensitizations; Training-of-Trainers cascades; youth registration and decentralised TVET coordination). MLAFWRD/AGRITEX institutionalised CSA/IPM through ToT and district-level Lead Farmer training, embedding content in routine extension cycles. MYEDVT and MWACSMED led Output 3 youth selection and entrepreneurship/TVET scheduling with Chivi Mhandamabwe VTC, expanding young women's access via ward-level delivery. In parallel, UNDP convened Pegara Japan and Government counterparts to advance Output 2 readiness, environmental safeguards and aviation compliance, following Middle Sabi trials.

This UNDP-centred partnership model generated synergistic outcomes without overlap: CSA/IPM/hydrogels scaled through public extension while CARE handled last-mile logistics; entrepreneurship and TVET were embedded in government systems to link production gains with market-oriented livelihoods; and Output 2 advanced under joint UNDP–Government oversight, with Pegara iterating the drone solution (authentic hawk sounds, camera re-configuration, improved battery capacity) before deployment. Partner capacities were reviewed via RPA/FACE, and UNDP backstopped administrative and reporting functions. UNDP provided the strategic backbone and assurance; Government embedded services and systems; CARE delivered field execution; and Pegara advanced a regulated innovation track, collectively strengthening institutional performance and positioning the project for scalable, government-led delivery in 2026 and beyond.

4.5 Environmental Considerations

How environmental considerations are built into planning and implementation.
The project was screened through UNDP's Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) at design, and the Environmental and Social Standards (ESS) were embedded in workplans and field SOPs. During implementation, UNDP and CARE reinforced compliance with Environmental Management Agency (EMA) requirements via joint missions and routine supervision. Good practices were integrated across all activities: soil and water conservation in farmer trainings; Integrated Pest Management (IPM); no distribution of synthetic fertilisers or pesticides; and careful land-use planning to avoid degradation. These safeguards were reflected in beneficiary registration protocols, ToT curricula, lead-farmer cascades, and distribution procedures—treating environmental risk management as part of everyday delivery rather than a standalone task.

Applying UNDP ESS to inform implementation.
SESP screening identified potential risks, biodiversity disturbance from drone operations and soil degradation from expanded cultivation, so proportionate mitigation was put in place before scale-up. For Output 2 (drones), the team agreed a compliance pathway covering operator competencies, ecological sensitivity checks, civil aviation registration/clearance (CAAZ), and incident-reporting lines, sequencing field deployment upon Ministry support and CAAZ clearance. For Outputs 1 and 3, extension packages emphasized CSA/IPM, contouring and mulching, hydrogel-based moisture retention, and safe storage/handling norms. As implementation remained early-stage, no material environmental incidents occurred; ESS requirements functioned as preventive controls, guiding where, when, and how activities could proceed safely, and specifying the evidence to retain (checklists, photos, attendance registers, mission notes).

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Contribution to environmental sustainability.
By avoiding synthetic inputs and prioritizing CSA and IPM, the project reduces chemical load and runoff risks while keeping production safer and more affordable for rural farmers. Hydrogel demonstrations and moisture-saving practices improve water-use efficiency in AEZ IV/V contexts, while soil conservation (mulching, contour ridges, minimum tillage) helps maintain ground cover and reduce erosion. The risk-based drone model, selective use, environmental screening, trained operators, and aviation compliance, targets quelea control while minimizing disturbance to non-target species. Critically, these safeguards are being institutionalized- EMA-aligned field protocols, ESS-informed SOPs, and simple checklists are incorporated into district workplans, enabling government and community structures to carry the standards forward beyond 31 March 2026.

Environmental considerations are integrated by design and in practice; ESS/SESP defines what is permissible and how; and the project's CSA/IPM focus, coupled with risk-managed technology use and government ownership of SOPs, directly advances long-term environmental sustainability.

4.6 Digitalisation

Digital considerations were integrated across both planning and implementation. Under Output 2, the project advanced the digitalization agenda through the testing of an AI-enabled drone system designed for automated quelea bird detection and deterrence. A joint mission to Middle Sabi assessed the drone's performance, sound configuration, battery life, and flight stability, and identified improvements now guiding Pegara's refinements to ensure the technology meets Zimbabwe's operational and environmental requirements. These developments reflect the project's commitment to innovation, responsible technology use, and data-driven pest-management solutions.

At the same time, CARE's Monitoring & Evaluation team strengthened digital data systems for project management and evidence generation. Beneficiary registration and the Baseline Survey were fully digitalized using KOBO Collect, with all data securely stored on CARE's KOBO server to support gender-disaggregated monitoring, real-time validation, and improved data accuracy. The project consortium also leveraged Microsoft Teams for bi-weekly coordination meetings and WhatsApp for rapid field-level communication, enhancing information flow across UNDP, CARE, and district teams. Going forward, all field evidence, including training attendance, distribution records, and monitoring outputs, will continue to be digitalized and centrally stored, ensuring secure access, data quality, and a strong foundation for adaptive management. In summary, digitalization is embedded in both operational processes and technical innovation, enabling efficient data management, coordinated implementation, and responsible testing of advanced technologies with clear pathways for scale-up.

4.7 Communications and Visibility

Communications for the JSB Project adopted a digital-first approach, ensuring timely and consistent information flow across UNDP, CARE, and government partners. Coordination relied on Microsoft Teams, email briefings, and WhatsApp group channels for rapid field-level communication. Public-facing updates and human-interest stories were prepared for the UNDP Zimbabwe website and social media platforms (Twitter/X, Facebook, LinkedIn), strengthening transparency and stakeholder awareness of project progress in Chivi and Mwenezi. Branded materials, including site boards and banners, were used during trainings and distributions to enhance on-site visibility. Communications were closely linked with Monitoring and Evaluation to ensure all external information was evidence-based and gender-responsive. CARE's use of KOBO Collect for digital registration and baseline data enabled quick generation of gender-disaggregated statistics that fed into communication outputs. Verified photos, geo-tagged field notes, and attendance records informed accurate storytelling and results reporting. This integrated approach supported adaptive management and strengthened visibility ahead of expanded outreach planned for 2026.

4.8 Strengthening National Capacity

***Guidance:** Describe national capacity strengthening initiatives and results for the quarter*

Results achieved	Institution	National capacity strengthened
1) Training of 15 (Female 7; Males 8) MLAFWRD ward based extension	MLAFWRD	This has enhanced extension services in Chivi and Mwenezi especially in production of

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	staff on CSA, IPM and Hydrogels.		Sorghum, Pearl Millet and African Peas.
2)	Training of 26 (Females 11; Males 15) MYEDVT and MWACSMED Extension staff on Entrepreneurship and Business Development	MYDVT and MWACSMED	Strengthened technical understanding enterprise development in rural context, livelihoods diversification and strategies for financial inclusion for rural youth and women.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

Key M&E activity (monitoring visit, evaluation, review exercise)	**Key outcomes/ observation**	**Recommendation**	**Action taken**
1) Baseline Survey (HH survey + FGDs/KIIs)	Benchmarked core indicators; **42.1%** acceptable FCS; **53.6%** borderline; **81.7%** experienced some food insecurity; RCI ≈ **39.1 (low)**; constraints: climate shocks, input access, low CSA adoption, quelea losses.	Pair CSA with nutrition education to improve FCS/HDDS; strengthen CSA adoption support.	Baseline Report finalized with recommendations; integrated nutrition messaging and CSA reinforcement into 2026 plans (UNDP/Care).
2) Systems readiness & fiduciary monitoring (RPA/FACE; HACT-informed spot checks)	Delays in RPA/FACE affected rollout; CARE's controls largely met UNDP risk requirements; administrative bottlenecks identified.	Streamline approvals; set escalation timelines; reinforce documentation standards.	Acceleration plan launched; intensified follow-ups with CARE HQ; templates standardized; digital registers deployed (UNDP PMU/CARE).
3) Field monitoring & technical reviews (Middle Sabi drone trials; ward selection validation; ESS reviews)	Drone trials: sound effectiveness, battery life, operating cost concerns; Ward selection needed alignment; ESS/EMA compliance emphasized (soil protection, IPM, no synthetic inputs).	Refine drone specs and re-test; co-plan ward selection with districts; integrate ESS/EMA into field SOPs.	Pegara committed to redesign (sound, camera, battery); joint district consultations completed; ESS measures embedded across interventions (UNDP/MLAFWRD/Pegara).

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Participants & tools. UNDP (PMU & PMSU), CARE MEAL, MLAFWRD/AGRITEX, ZimParks, District Agriculture Offices; tools included **KOBO Collect** (digital registration/baseline), structured checklists, mission notes, attendance registers, geotagged media.

Monitoring & Evaluation – Additional Outputs, Evidence, and Forward Look

In 2025, the MEAL system was fully operationalized and digital first: instruments (registers, report templates) were standardized and uploaded to secure KOBO servers for real time validation and sex/age/disability disaggregated analytics. The team registered and validated 6,921 participants (3,940F; 2,981M) for seed and TVET, streamlining future forms based on field feedback. A Gender Analysis and safeguarding checks-Care oriented staff on PSEAH and embedded inclusion for women, youth, and PWDs. Readiness visits in Chivi and Mwenezi validated ward selections and refined district led targeting and schedules. Baseline results (low FCS/RCI; high food insecurity) confirmed the project logic and prioritized CSA adoption, pest loss reduction (Output 2), and nutrition education to improve FCS/HDDS by endline. ESS reviews recorded no material environmental incidents, confirming implementation of IPM, soil/water conservation, and no synthetic inputs, while KOBO data flows enabled gender responsive communications and management decisions.

Risk management and capacity were addressed through, RPA/FACE reviews, and coordination meetings to tighten administrative controls and reporting. Capacity support included process mapping, simplified templates, and a joint escalation protocol to improve timeliness. Looking ahead to Q1 2026, the plan includes DQA on KOBO datasets, PDM and crop monitoring with MLAFWRD, targeted checks on CSA uptake and nutrition messaging, drone retests with performance logged against SOPs, and full integration of gender disaggregated dashboards for routine reviews. Overall, M&E in 2025 established a strong evidence base, ensured fiduciary readiness, and embedded ESS safeguards, directly informing CSA, nutrition, and technology refinements and positioning the project for measurable outcome tracking in 20

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Human Interest Story



Figure 1: Alan Bovoza - JSB Project Hotel & Catering Trainee

In Neshuro, Mwenezi District, a new wave of opportunity is emerging through the **Building Resilience and Enhancing Food Security of Drought-Affected Smallholder Farmers (Japan Supplementary Budget – JSB) Project**. The one-year initiative, funded by the Government of Japan and implemented by UNDP in partnership with CARE Zimbabwe and the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development, aims to strengthen food security and rural resilience through climate-smart agriculture, vocational skills training, and youth-led enterprises in Chivi and Mwenezi districts.

Among the 200 youths aged 18–35 benefiting from the project is **Alan Bovoza (23)**, a visually impaired young man from Neshuro. Alan's education was repeatedly disrupted by financial hardship, eventually forcing him to drop out of school. With limited opportunities and no formal skills, he migrated to Zvishavane in search of employment. However, compounded by his disability and a difficult economic environment, Alan struggled to sustain himself and returned home feeling uncertain about his future.

In October 2025, Alan's circumstances changed when a community officer from the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Development and Vocational Training referred him to the JSB Project. Through the project, Alan enrolled in **hotel and catering training** at Mandamabwe Technical and Vocational Training Centre, delivered through CARE's partnership with the Ministry. The training reignited his confidence and equipped him with practical skills to pursue self-employment. *"Many people thought I would not amount to anything, but the JSB opportunity has given me hope and a future,"* Alan shared.

Beyond individual transformation, the JSB Project addresses structural drivers of vulnerability by equipping youth, women, and farmers with vocational and income-generating skills, providing start-up equipment, and facilitating market linkages. These interventions enhance household incomes while reducing reliance on rain-fed agriculture in drought-prone areas.

Upon completion of his training, Alan will receive certification and a starter kit to support his entry into the catering sector. His journey illustrates how targeted skills development can restore dignity, expand economic participation, and contribute to community-level resilience. As more youths like Alan transition into sustainable livelihoods, the project is expected to strengthen adaptive capacity and food security across Mwenezi District.

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Figure 2: Alan with his fellow classmates, preparing for an evaluation exam

I. Risk Management

Risk (type)	Brief description	Mitigation (what we did)	Status / Effect
Administrative/operational: RPA & FACE delays	Back and forth reviews between UNDP, CARE and HQ delayed field rollout and disbursements.	escalation protocol; document templates standardised; RPA signed late Sept 2025; FACE finalisation fast tracked.	Pipeline unblocked; inception activities initiated; payment readiness improved.
Technical (Output 2 drones)	Middle Sabi trials showed limited sound effectiveness, short battery life, and high operating cost.	Pegara tasked to reconfigure (authentic predator sounds, camera/sensor re tune, battery capacity), retest prior to scale; training plan for district staff.	Re design under way, deployment sequenced to results and compliance.
Targeting/field readiness	Ward selection in Chivi & Mwenezi required further validation with districts.	Joint planning with provincial/district teams; validation completed; ward lists aligned to local priorities.	Equitable targeting strengthened; roll out schedules confirmed.
Fiduciary/compliance (new tech partner)	Due diligence on Pegara's ethics/compliance prior to contracting.	Document review; risk assessment; conditionalities (NCE/ESS/aviation SOPs) set.	Compliance pathway defined; contracting linked to performance and clearance.
Environmental & social	ESS/SESP flagged risks: biodiversity disturbance (drones), soil degradation.	ESS embedded in SOPs; IPM, soil/water conservation; no synthetic inputs; aviation/EMA compliance path set.	No environmental or social incidents recorded to date. Drone operations remain in pre-deployment, ensuring no biodiversity disturbance, while soil and water-conservation measures, including hydrogel use-are reducing early-season

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			moisture stress and erosion risks.

Challenges

During 2025, the project faced several operational and technical challenges that affected the pace of implementation. Delays in the recruitment of the Project Manager and bottlenecks in finalizing the RPA and FACE form slowed decision making, disbursements, and field rollout. In parallel, the first drone pilot in Middle Sabi revealed technical and cost limitations that required redesign before scaling up, while ward selection processes in Chivi and Mwenezi needed deeper district engagement to ensure equitable targeting. These issues were addressed through an acceleration plan, including weekly coordination meetings, escalation protocols, and standardized templates, which successfully recovered lost time, enabling the RPA to be signed and inception activities to begin. Joint district consultations finalised ward selections, and Pegara initiated a technical reconfiguration and retesting process. Although start up delays compressed Q4 delivery, mitigation measures preserved progress under Outputs 1 and 3, while early institutionalisation of ESS/EMA safeguards, district workplans, and digital MEAL tools strengthened sustainability. Ongoing recommendations include maintaining escalation protocols for approvals, enforcing evidence gates for drone deployment, and embedding district led planning through quarterly reviews.

Lessons Learned

Implementation in 2025 generated several strategic lessons critical for future programming. First, administrative preparedness is essential: early alignment on contractual and financial instruments such as the RPA and FACE is key to preventing slippage and safeguarding seasonal delivery windows. Second, innovation requires iterative piloting-the Middle Sabi drone tests demonstrated that technology must meet practical thresholds for effectiveness, endurance, and affordability, reinforcing the need for structured retest–refine–deploy cycles. Third, inclusive, district led planning improves equity and efficiency, as shown through ward selection refinements that strengthened targeting and local ownership. The year also confirmed that acceleration measures work: focused coordination, technical reviews, and administrative streamlining can recover momentum without compromising quality. Additionally, applying safeguards by design, ESS/SESP compliance, IPM adoption, and avoiding synthetic inputs, prevented environmental risks while keeping production safer and more affordable. Lastly, data driven management through KOBO digital tools strengthened real-time decision-making, supported gender responsive reporting, and enhanced transparency.

6. Project Board Meeting Outcomes and Programmatic Revisions

Technical & coordination meetings.

Throughout the reporting period, UNDP (lead), CARE International, and MLAFWRD convened regular technical sessions to harmonize implementation across national, provincial, and district levels. Discussions focused on (i) ward selection and validation, (ii) field facilitation and roles (extension cascades, last-mile logistics, TVET modalities), and (iii) communication protocols to ensure a smooth rollout. Joint inception missions were agreed and conducted to validate sites and finalize operational plans, strengthening district ownership and improving scheduling and resource alignment. Technical consultations on Output 2 (drones) reviewed field-testing results and endorsed operational adjustments, reconfiguration of the sound system (predator calls), improved flight duration (battery), and cost optimization, without requiring formal programmatic changes, keeping the output on a safe, evidence-led track. In addition, the JSB Project Steering Committee reviewed Pegara's implementation constraints and approved a No-Cost Extension (NCE) to December 2026, enabling Pegara to complete the required technical refinements, regulatory clearances and field deployment activities that did not commence in 2025. This decision provides a realistic operational window for Output 2 to be delivered safely, effectively, and in line with evidence-based adjustments.

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Provincial, district, and steering governance.

A Provincial inception meeting (1 Oct 2025) and district-level inception meetings in Chivi (6 Oct) and Mwenezi (9 Oct) formally introduced the project, clarified targeting (districts/wards), and secured a government mandate for implementation through MLAFWRD, thereby improving stakeholder participation and coordination. Operational district meetings, Chivi (20 Oct) and Mwenezi (23 Oct), aligned project activities with local priorities and set programmatic parameters (traditional grain seed varieties, ToT dates, TVET modalities and scheduling). On 12 Dec 2025, the first Project Steering Committee met in Harare at the Ministry of Agriculture offices, chaired by the Ministry and UNDP (secretariat) and attended by CARE, Pegara, and other government/private stakeholders. The Board affirmed the implementation roadmap, took note of drone refinements and compliance steps, and endorsed the continued district-led planning rhythm to sustain alignment and accountability.

Outcomes briefly.

- Implementation harmonized across levels; ward lists validated; roles and protocols agreed.
- Operational decisions concluded at district level (seed varieties, ToT/TVET schedules) to match local contexts.
- Output 2 strengthened through endorsed technical adjustments (sound, battery/endurance, cost control) and a compliance pathway—no formal programmatic revisions required.
- Governance reinforced: Steering Committee and inception platforms provided clear mandates, accelerated coordination, and improved government participation, positioning the project for predictable, government-led delivery in 2025 into 2026.

Financial Summary

Outputs / Activity Result		Annual Budget (US$) (Jan – Dec)	2025 Expenditures	% Expenditure (Cumulative)
		A	D	D/A*100
Establishment of demonstration plots and farmer training will result in 600 hectares under production with drought-tolerant crops by March 2026.	By March 2026, 600 hectares will be under production with traditional grains and other drought-tolerant crops, contributing to improved food security and resilience in targeted communities.	**460000**	**363006.33**	**78.91%**
Delivery of structured training programs will equip 10,000 farmers with skills in climate-smart agriculture, nutrition-sensitive practices, and post-harvest handling.	By March 2026, 10,000 farmers will be trained on climate-smart agriculture, nutrition-sensitive agriculture, good agricultural practices, and post-harvest handling and processing to	**310000**	**34891.67**	**11.26%**

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	improve productivity and resilience.			
Programme Management/Operations		**324000**	**182327.88**	**56.27%**
Grand total		**1,094,000**	**580,225.88**	**53%**

Note: Output 2 (drone/early warning) *registered* ***no expenditure in 2025*** *pending completion of technical refinements, aviation/environmental compliance, and contracting milestones. Spending is programmed for 2026 following re-tests and compliance sign-offs.*

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