



ZIMCONSERVE SOCIAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PLAN

BACKGROUND

Zimconserve (PVO 31/12), a local Zimbabwean organisation formed to promote sustainable Agroforestry and Permaculture methodologies, a community participatory strategy that builds community social capital to foster community ownership, community control, increased community responsibility and community accountability towards community development. The strategy was designed to start with community Agroforestry and Permaculture promotion as an entry point to community development followed by income generation activities and community social responsibility.

From foundation in 2012 the organisation was sustained on external as well as internal well-wishers support but owing to socio-economic melt down that ravaged the country over the last decade, our local sponsors, have involuntarily withdrawn. With the previous support, we have managed to establish quite a number of projects that are running successfully to date in various schools and communities.

Six years down the line, the organisation is proposing a transition in order to survive the ever shrinking funding window. To that end two pathways have been proposed. The first is the continued training of farmers, clubs, schools and institutions for a small fee and the other is to establish its own income-generation projects at its plot availed to it by the government of Zimbabwe.

National roll out

While maintaining a presence in Harare and Mashonaland East province, where it was originated Zimconserve, is on a national roll out to all the ten provinces of the country. However, that shall only be possible following the establishment of the proposed site, with its projects running full swing.

Sustainability strategy

While the organisation was founded as a social enterprise it has the potential to generate a blend of economic, social and environmental value by adopting and settling at a plot in the Seke district where it will run the income generation activities as a training school for community development. Income generating activities run as demonstration at the centre will sustain the organisation as well as supporting the social business in the host district and across the country. Appropriate staff will be engaged to run the economic business side of the organization in order to maximize on outputs.

This strategy will see Zimconserve run a self supply community corporate social responsibility by generating resources for organisational sustainability and self funded projects.

Empowerment Strategies

Zimconserve will also promote local communities perception towards the Environment in general and Agroforestry and Permaculture industries in particular, by initiating income generation co-operative societies amongst themselves.

In the long run, Zimconserve will reach out to communities using locally generated resources and in the process sustain the organisation while achieving its founding principles of community conservation, improvement and empowerment.

Adopting Mashonaland East (Seke District) as Home Province

Zimconserve has been availed a (5 hectare) plot in Mashonaland East (Seke District). It has an area of 2,637 km² and a population of approximately 100,756 (2012 census) Marondera is the capital of the province. Already the Provincial leadership has granted Zimconserve permission to work in the 9 Districts of the Province. We could adopt the province as our home starting with holistic programs in Seke District and taking up any developmental issues across the province. Seke has the strategic advantage of being half way between Harare the capital, Chitungwiza the third largest city in Zimbabwe in terms of population and Marondera the Provincial capital.

The proposal

1. Introduction

Zimconserve is proposing to establish and settle permanently at a plot to be known as the Zimconserve Permaculture resource centre secured therein. At the plot several income generation ventures will be started including mushroom farming, vegetable production, poultry, fisheries, nursery/orchard and greenhouse to raise capital for the organisation's sustenance while serving as a demonstration centre for community development. The proceeds will be used to pay core staff, run the organisational overheads and to start the income saving and lending schemes to communities.

2. Vision

An empowered self supporting organisation that reaches out to capacitate communities.

3. Mission

To set up a model self supporting organisation that will enable government, agencies and NGOs to roll out sustainable development programmes at Seke through institutionalization of the Community Permaculture and Agroforestry projects so as to increase food security, alleviate poverty and conserve the environment.

4. Objectives

To evolve into a self sustaining organisation by generating income that enables the discharge of our founding principles of community conservation, improvement and empowerment through Agroforestry promotion, embodied

within the four cardinal points that are: To be leaders, protect God's creation, implement training to up skill other farmers, and to disseminate their knowledge.

- ❖ To establish a permanent home for Zimconserve that enables us to run with or without external funding.
- ❖ To establish a practical demonstration site for our community development theory.
- ❖ To ground break the long term vision of a national resource and research for community development in Zimbabwe.

5. Source and funds required

This project is a big investment. We have applied and got land from the government. We are now appealing to donors and partners to help us implement those income generation activities.

6. Strategic Operational Plan

Zimconserve banks on the technical skill of its staff that have experience in both Agroforestry and Permaculture industries. Building materials such as granite stones will be sourced locally in Seke and local manpower will be harnessed in setting up the structures. Since this shall be a community project everyone shall be involved from the beginning to the end.

7. Description of the business

Project title

The development of a model Permaculture Resource Centre for the people of Seke rural and Chitungwiza at a 5 hectare plot. The centre shall have income generation projects to include mushroom farming, Vegetable production, poultry, fisheries, nursery/orchard and a green house.

Structures to be erected at the site include perimeter fencing, a borehole , solar dryers, solar system, an office, a training room, guard room, Warehouse, toilets, a fowl run, and a green house.

8. Organisational structure

The existing staff organogram of the organisation will start up the project.

9. Market

Apart from the local consumers, markets are also nearby in Harare, Chitungwiza and Marondera, whose combined urban population reaches 3 million.

10. Financial statements

Monthly balance sheets will be produced to show the cash flow statements. Annual audits will be done by the board approved auditors.

11. Social Economic Benefits

Owing to low levels of education in Seke rural, the centre shall offer training facilities to the locals in order to make them appreciate the many benefits that can be derived from applying sustainable methods towards their environs. This project will also cushion core staff between projects in terms of cash allowances.

It will serve as a model for community development to government, UN agencies, NGOs and communities. The training centre will offer Food Agriculture and Nutrition (FAN) training venues with practical FAN demonstrations and practice. We will work closely with vocational and technical colleges providing student attachment in FAN, Permaculture, Agroforestry and Community development. Proceeds will be used to sustain organisational project overheads and for corporate social responsibility, where identified communities in Seke and the whole country will be supported with trainings and Permaculture Industry development. The philanthropic building blocks of Zimconserve will be realised at the same time generating income locally to sustain operations.

12. Production Capacity

Starting small and growing with the market, the projects will be carefully developed to suit the needs of the organisation while maintain the social business side of Zimconserve. We will be careful not to completely turn the organization into a for profit entity as we will not lose sight of the founding principles.

13. Risk Management

Even with effective board oversight, good direction and skilful project management risks are always prevalent. To mitigate this, Zimconserve will maintain transparent books of accounts using timely audits. Monthly staff and quarterly board meetings will be done. A risk assessment matrix will be developed to highlight accountability.

14. Wage bill

The wage bill will run at the approval of the board. Any adjustments will be recommended and approved by the board.

15. Conclusion

Zimconserve therefore proposes to take the necessary step towards raising income to sustain its overheads in order to survive the harsh economic climate. Venturing into a social business will maintain the organisation while extending its capacity to serve the social needs of the community. A self sustaining community development Resource and Training Centre will the end result of this effort. A blended value of corporate social responsibility, social enterprise, social investing, strategic philanthropy and sustainable development will be realised. Pursuing this blended value will enable us to capture efficiencies not possible through waiting for donor resources.

Phases for Establishing the Resource Centre

Phase 1: Acquiring of land

Zimconserve has successfully acquired a 5 hectare plot with the able assistance of the government so far. It is a virgin land in Seke District 38km south east of the capital Harare and 5km further from Chitungwiza.

Phase 2: Construction

Phase 2 involves the setting out plans for the centre. This will consist of a solar powered borehole, solar system to power the facility since electricity is expensive, perimeter fencing, solar dryers for preservation of vegetables, ablution facilities, a guard room, training room, a warehouse, a fowl run, an office, mushroom huts and a green house. All solid structures to be designed and built using locally available materials such as granite stones and grass thatch for roofing to give them an ecological feel and as well as a way to promote permaculture and eco-tourism in the area.

The solar dryers shall preserve surplus vegetables in periods of less demand for future sales when supplies of the commodity are scarce which becomes value addition in essence.

Phase 3: Income Generation

This phase follows phase 2. This income generation phase is envisaged to carry the organisational overheads sustain the centre and eventually support local and distant community development programs.

Phase 4: Social Responsibility

Zimconserve is getting into the blended value proposal fully cognisant of the fact that the founding principles were those of improving community livelihoods and value of life. We will plough back into Community Corporate Responsibility as soon as we break even. We will build community capacity for self actualisation by providing skills training for the communal farmers who

have been our biggest participants in our Agroforestry and Permaculture programs. We will provide other organisations with training facilities at affordable cost. The Permaculture Resource centre will become the training and the income generating project ground for Permaculture, Agroforestry and Food and Nutrition(FAN) Clubs across the projects.