



INITIATIVE ON  
NEXUS Gains

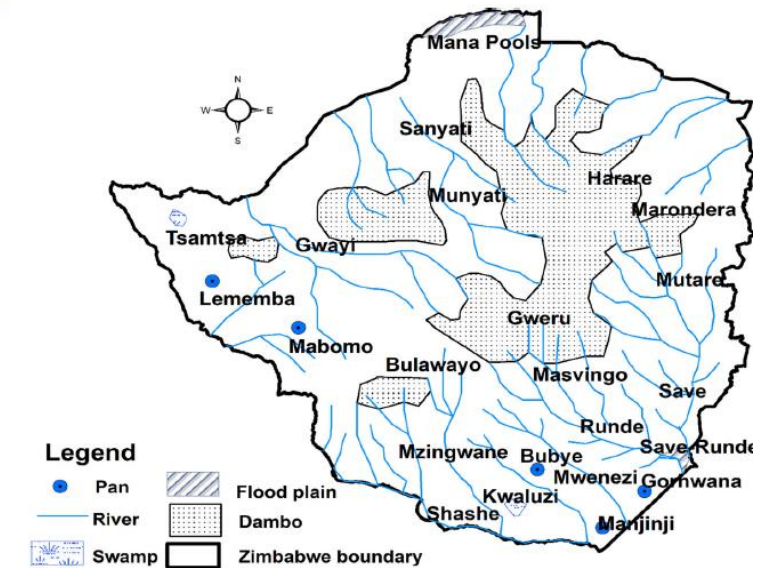
# **Wetlands and agriculture in Zimbabwe: Trade-offs dilemma**

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# Introduction/Context

- Wetlands cover 3% of Zimbabwe total area
- Natural wetlands - **dambos, floodplains, pans & swamps**
- 21% are classified as stable, 18 % severely degraded & 61% moderately degraded
- 42% of wetlands in communal areas & 28% resettlement areas
- Major use – **agriculture**



# Livelihoods, drivers & regulation

- Benefits – food security, income generation etc.
- Wetland agriculture drivers:
  - Moist conditions
  - Fertile soils
  - Population growth
  - Macro-economic challenges
  - Climate change (frequent droughts) etc.
- Laws and policies for sustainable wetland agriculture – **EMA Act, Policy and Management Guidelines**
- Lack of comprehensive and updated **wetlands inventory**





# Wetland agriculture – practices and threats

- Wetland threats ranking – 1<sup>st</sup> cultivation & 2<sup>nd</sup> livestock grazing
- Cultivation methods - ox-drawn ploughs???, ridges & furrows
- Degradation – draining, increased levels of nutrients and pollutant loads, increased water abstraction, gullies, etc.
- Shift towards sustainable wetland agriculture
  - conservation farming practices -infiltration pits, sand traps, crop rotation, vegetation strips, animal and green manure and composting, botanical pesticides, removal of invasive species, etc.



Absence of comprehensive data on the extent of wetland loss attributed to agriculture

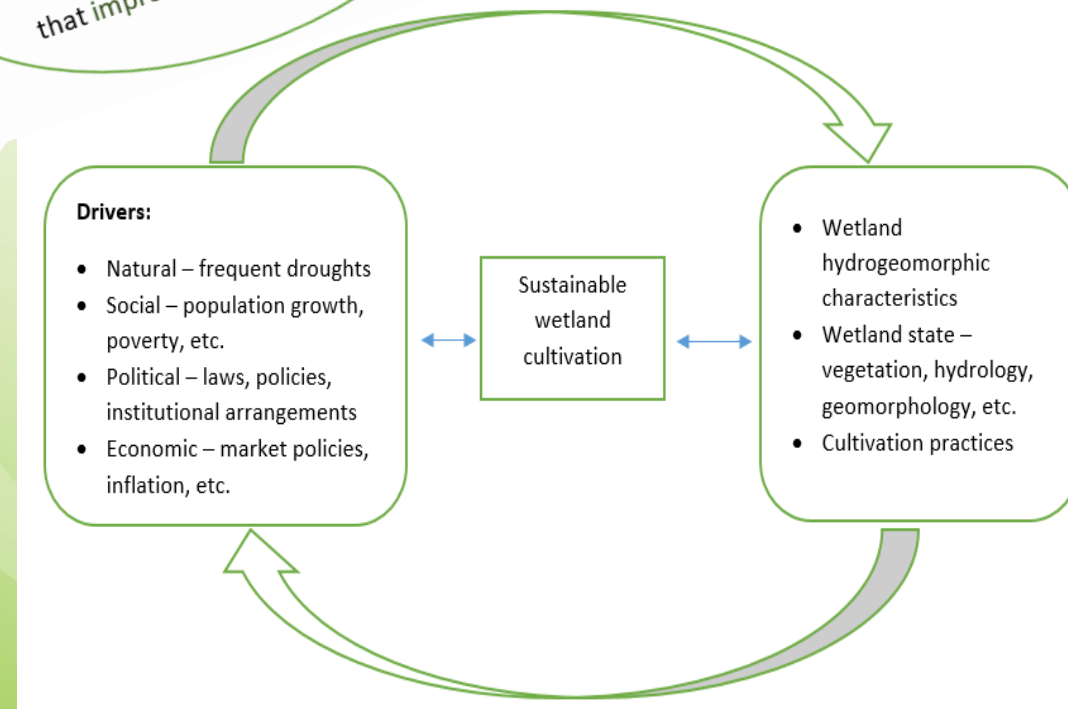


# Future of wetlands and agriculture

- Understand and balance trade-offs
  - Assess suitability of farming practices wetlands with different hydrogeomorphic characteristics
  - Strengthening local and indigenous knowledge systems
  - Comprehensive wetlands inventory information
  - Integration of near real time EO based wetland monitoring and assessment platforms, e.g. WeMAST for timely interventions
  - Strengthening enforcement of laws and policies

Success of wetland-based agriculture and food security projects relies on the adoption of **sustainable, human-centred local strategies** that improve livelihood benefits

**The question is not "whether or not" the wetlands should be used, but "how" they should be used**



**Thank you!**



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