



**MINUTES OF THE INDUSTRIAL HEMP STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT
VIRTUAL MEETING HELD ON THE 1ST OF SEPTEMBER 2021 AT 14:30HRS.**

Present at the meeting were:

Mrs J. Manduna	AMA- A/Director (Chairperson)
Mr G. Mashiri	AMA
Ms. A. Chingwe	Commercial Farmers' Union
Dr C. Mujaju	DR&SS- A/Director
Mr E. Mtetwa	DR&SS- A/Head Seed Services
Mr S. Ngirazi	DR&SS
Dr C. Paradzayi	Midlands State University
Dr S. Makombe	Commercial Farmers Union (President)
Mr F. Danckwerts	Wildlife Medicinal Cannabis
Mrs L. Makumbe	Plant Quarantine Services
Mr. N. Mangombe	Plant Quarantine Services
Mr. M. Mlambo	AMA
Mr. M Shamhudzarira	Tobacco Research Board
Mr. N. Mudada	Plant Quarantine Services-Head
Patience Nyakanda	Zimbabwe Seed Association
Dr Z. Maroveke	Founder/CEO _ Zimbabwe Industrial Hemp Trust
Siphelani	ZBC
Mr. B. Malinganisa	
Melisa	

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for Mr C. Isaya who could not attend the inaugural industrial hemp stakeholder engagement platform meeting.

2. INTRODUCTION

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting. She indicated that the purpose of the meeting was to get updates on the 2020/21 marketing season, including the challenges and the areas that needed improvement in the sector. The meeting also sought to ascertain the preparations for the 2021/2022 industrial hemp production season including the issues of licensing. The Chairperson then invited submissions from the stakeholders, and the following are the reports.

3. REPORTS

3.1 Tobacco Research Board (TRB)

- 3.1.1 Mr Shamhudzarira indicated that they were continuing with research experiments and had completed the first inaugural trial with the imported varieties aimed at evaluating agro adaptability of the varieties obtained from China, France and Canada. He informed the meeting that winter trials had started winter trials where they were looking at additional varieties from Italy and other local varieties. The third trial specifically covers CBD and flower production and optimising the processed that can allow these varieties to be adapted better to our environment.
- 3.1.2 He underscored photoperiod sensitivity as the major challenge affecting agronomic production of Industrial hemp in Zimbabwe. The meeting was informed that TRB is working on breeding programmes to identify varieties that are not photoperiod sensitive, whether they are auto flowering or varieties that are already adapted to the country's short-day length.
- 3.1.3 He indicated that TRB had procured a new GCMS testing equipment and the equipment had been successfully installed.

Following the submission from TRB, the following were the comments and questions from the meeting members including the answers thereof.

3.1.4 COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

- 3.1.4.1 Dr Makombe asked about, "The criteria used to identify farmers you are working with for variety release". The meeting was informed that the variety release protocols are clearly laid out by the seed services and are the ones that guide the operations of TRB. No varieties had yet been released and trials were still being done at TRB stations.
- 3.1.4.2 Dr Makombe also enquired on, "How far have you gone in establishing or identifying the markets?" The meeting was informed that the current model allows merchants and contractors registering on behalf of their farmers. They are the ones who have the offtake agreements abroad. We have also received requests from EU markets but currently, our capacity and standards are still low to meet the demands of those markets. The policies that have been put in place gives everyone an opportunity that is even an individual farmer is able to control their market without any merchant involvement. It is not strictly merchants who handles markets, but it just depends on the capabilities of the farmers on whether to involve a merchant or not.
- 3.1.4.3 Antonette asked for some clarification on, "The major difference between industrial hemp and medicinal cannabis? Industrial hemp is a type of cannabis used for fibre, grain and CBD flower. According to the Zimbabwean law, is any cannabis that has a threshold of 0.3% of THC- psycho- active compound and medicinal cannabis is cannabis that has a threshold above 0.3%.

3.2 Midlands State University (MSU)

- 3.2.1 Dr Paradzayi pointed out that this is their first year as a university of being involved in industrial hemp production. He indicated that they have been busy with the process of sorting out their paperwork (licenses and import permits) and importation of some hemp varieties. He reported that he is glad that they were finally granted with the import permits as of Friday last week and therefore they are in the midst of getting the seed varieties in the country.

3.2.2 He also pointed out that they are working with some partners in America who have experience in dealing with this Industrial Hemp, which is an exciting and positive move forward for the University.

3.3 Wildlife Medicinal Cannabis

3.3.1 Mr Danckwerts indicated that although it was their first time to produce industrial hemp, the crop had performed exceptionally well. He informed the meeting that the drying process for industrial hemp had proved to be a meticulous process. Following the success of the first crop, he indicated that they were going to increase their hectareage from the 8000m² that they grew last season to 2 or 3 hectares this coming season. He informed the meeting that work was underway to export their first crop.

3.3.2 Mr Danckwerts applauded the Agricultural Marketing Authority and Plant Quarantine Services for supporting farmers.

3.3.3 Just like the other stakeholders, Mr Danckwerts also spoke about the 0.3% THC levels being a hurdle for many farmers in Zimbabwe. And lastly he advises the Regulators is to look at the model being developed in Switzerland at 1% threshold because a lot of cannabis genetics are going to heat up in our climate so it might be very difficult for farmers to keep up 0.3% threshold.

3.4 Zimbabwe Industrial Hemp Trust (ZIHT)

3.4.1 Dr Maroveke highlighted that the industrial hemp markets were not that stable and cited THC levels as a major challenge to penetrate the European market who pegged their THC levels at 1%. The Zimbabwean threshold is considered too low at 0.3% and hence many investors tend to go to countries like Malawi where the threshold is pegged at 0.7%. The 0.3% threshold remains very difficult to achieve.

3.4.2 She indicated that there was also a knowledge gap, and a lot of research was needed for farmers to clearly understand the production of Industrial hemp.

3.4.3 In terms of value addition, there are plans for value addition for industrial hemp, but stakeholders should understand that this is still an infant industry

in Zimbabwe and value addition and processing of industrial hemp is not easy to do. In general, she pointed out that this is going to take time to see textiles and ropes and other products produced from processing of industrial hemp but of course there are the plans to proceed into value addition.

3.5 DR&SS -Seed Certification Division

3.5.1 Mr. Mtetwa highlighted that they are granting the necessary waivers for a parallel process to do variety research and registration and for those who have got the minimum confidence that the varieties they have are likely to perform, can do a parallel bulk up process while the registration will come just after.

3.5.2 He also indicated that the Seed Services department is there to facilitate the importation for the research material that you are using in terms of the various varieties under research. Once the research process is done, they will then facilitate the registration of the variety and quality assurance.

4. KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- a. The need to have home-grown seed varieties for Industrial Hemp considering seed imports are expensive,
 - b. The need to promote value-addition rather than exporting the hemp in its rawest form,
 - c. The need to consider revision of the SI 218 of 2020 for an upward revision of THC content from the current 0.3% to 1%.
- There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 17:21hrs