

1.2 Zimbabwe Regulatory Departments & Quality Control

There are several governmental organisations empowered in regulatory activities that guide the conduct and activities of all entities in Zimbabwe. For purposes of the LCA, the regulatory organisations highlighted herein are those that are in line with humanitarian activities and their mandates range in line with their mandates. Such regulatory bodies include customs & tax revenue, civil protection department, control & quality assurance, food quality, shipment inspections, regional organisations such as trade agreements to be adhered to and many more as listed in the attached document: [Additional Zimbabwe Regulatory Departments Information](#)

Governments and humanitarian organisations have invested time and financial resources in contingency planning but the challenge has been in establishing conclusive evidence of the relation between contingency planning and effective response. In its fulfilment of the primary role of protecting its citizens' life during disasters, Government through the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Planning's Department of Civil Protection (DCP), Government ministries, UN Agencies and various Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), developed a National Contingency Plan that is updated annually to reflect the evolving hazard profile of the country. This plan is part of an important disaster preparedness process which allows Government and its partners to plan for disasters with the aim of minimizing damage to property and loss of life.

Zimbabwe has capacities which include the availability of legal frame works and instruments. Of note is the reform of the Disaster Risk Management (DRM) framework guided by the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015. Another notable capacity is the existence of a functional national platform with a wide cross sectional representation from Government, UN agencies as well as local and international NGOs. This is complemented by relatively functional Civil Protection Committees both at Provincial and District levels. The National Platform, in form of the National Civil Protection Committee meets regularly to create consensus on issues that require intervention. In addition, there is a dedicated Government department, the Department of Civil Protection under the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development, which has the overall responsibility of disaster risk management. Partners such as the UN System and NGOs (local and international) have been providing emergency preparedness and response (EPR), assessments and early recovery assistance to the Government of Zimbabwe.

Food control is even more important for Zimbabwe with an agro-based economy providing livelihood for over 70% of the population. WHO, FAO and WTO have produced guidelines and recommendations for strengthening national food control systems. The major components of a food control system,

1. Policy, planning, legislation and standards settings,
2. Inspection/monitoring and surveillance,
3. Scientific testing and analysis,
4. Compliance and intervention, must be connected, work as one holistic system with all its operations based on sound scientific information.

The monitoring and surveillance through inspections/sampling programmes remain under various ministries' departments and agencies. The major players are ministries of 1. Health, 2. Agriculture, 3. Industry and Trade, and 4. Local Governments 5. The Standards Association of Zimbabwe.

The Ministry of Health and Child Welfare is the overall regulatory agency through the Environmental Health Officers at Provincial, District and Ward levels. They carry out inspections and sampling activities responding to any food safety challenges and out-breaks. They are the vigilante's checking on adherences to legislation. This involves monitoring of food at retail outlets, abattoirs in their areas. They can, if necessary confiscate or destroy unsafe food as required by legislation. The Ministry's environmental health officers are responsible for ensuring that all food items imported into the country meet the safety standards and regulations at ports of entry.

The Ministry Responsible for Agriculture is charged with food safety from the farming processes to harvesting. In the case where food is consumed after harvest without any further processing, this Ministry ensures that it is safe for consumption as it is, or after cooking. For food needing further processing, however, safety concerns end at delivery to the processors/manufacturers etc. The Ministry is responsible for crop and meat safety from farming. The Agricultural Research and Extension Services (AREX) deals with safety of crops while the Veterinary Services Department (VSD) deals with safety of animal products i.e. meat, poultry, fish and milk. This department, through its meat hygiene units, inspects and certifies abattoirs.

The Ministry Responsible for Industry and Trade deals with food exports/imports and food trade in general through their food and beverage section. It issues import/export licenses and generally promotes food trade. It is responsible for trade measures and voluntary standards through the Standards Association of Zimbabwe. The Ministry bases its certification processes for exports etc. on laboratory evaluation and analysis of products. Some Local Authorities such as Harare, Bulawayo, Mutare, Gweru and Masvingo have their own inspection systems. Under the Food and Food Standards Act, they are delegated authority to be food inspectors. Besides enforcing the national food standards, they have by-laws for their areas of operation, which must not conflict with the national laws. The Standards Association of Zimbabwe (SAZ) has a standards certification system for its members. SAZ monitors its members through inspections and audits. Some private food concerns have quality control programmes, which involve self-monitoring.

Scientific Testing and Analysis

The Government Analyst Laboratory is the main Ministry of Health food control testing and analysis facility. It analyses samples submitted by the Ministry's Environmental Health Officers nationwide as well as from other government departments, local authorities and private sector. Public health laboratories at various hospitals particularly with regards to microbiological analysis complement the Government Analyst services. In addition, certain Local Authorities such as Harare, Bulawayo, Masvingo, have laboratory facilities capable of some analytical services. Under the Ministry responsible for Agriculture there are the Research and Specialist Service Laboratory and the Veterinary Services Laboratory with complementary services provided by the Dairy Services Laboratory. Non-governmental institution that provide food analysis include SAZ (quite extensive capacity), Kutsaga Tobacco Research and private concerns Laboratories.

Compliance and Interventions

Each of the regulatory service agencies provide the compliance and intervention administration programmes. These act as 'mini – food control' systems. In the Ministry of Health and CW this is done primarily by the Provincial Medical Directors' office involving the concerned districts (and port Health if applicable) and the Government Analyst Laboratory. The Disease Control Unit is involved in all cases of national interventions to crises. Ordinarily the PMD's environmental health officers with the support of GA are sufficient. In the Ministry responsible for Agriculture, the administration of compliance and intervention programmes are under AREX or the Veterinary Services depending on whether it is plant or animal related. It should be noted that there are in fact several 'food regulatory systems' i.e. 8 in the Ministry of Health, 16 Ministry of Agriculture, and more than 4 local authorities. These in practice act as independent entities except when there is a national challenge. There are no clear ties between the various administrative structures and their operations.

For more information on standards and regulatory bodies, please see the following attachment: [Additional Zimbabwe Regulatory Departments Information](#)

For more information on contact details, please see the following links:

[4.1 Zimbabwe Government Contact List](#)

[Zimbabwe ASTI Data](#)

[Zimbabwe University of Minnesota Information](#)