

TOBACCO RESEARCH BOARD

MAXIMUM VALUE STRATEGY: 2011-2015

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The economic prosperity of tobacco growers and the tobacco industry is largely spurred by a vibrant, relevant, practical, cost-effective and environmentally sustainable process of insightful research, development and technology transfer. To be relevant the research has to be deliberately designed to meet both the current and perceived future needs of the industry.

The Tobacco Research Board (TRB) has exclusive rights to flue-cured tobacco research in Zimbabwe, in terms of the provisions of the Tobacco Research Act (Chapter 18:21) of 1950. The TRB adopted a systematic strategic planning approach in 2001, at that stage, to meet the requirements of a rapidly transforming industry by developing the "Research and Development Strategy for the Smallholder Sector : 2001-2005." Currently, of the 65 000 growers, more than 80% produce tobacco on one hectare or less (estimated at 15% in 2001).

This "Maximum Value Strategy : 2011-2015" (MVS) is the successor to the "Consolidation, Continuity and Growth Strategy : 2006-2010." The MVS has been purposefully designed to enable tobacco growers to maximise returns from sustainable tobacco production, while facilitating and enabling other major stakeholders, in particular the tobacco trade, to extract utmost value from environmentally and socially responsible tobacco business practices.

The emphasis is on science-based management of tobacco by growers. The TRB's paradigm shift is therefore, from results - to output - orientation, and from output – to impact-based assessment of research success. To ensure this the following broad creativity-based key result areas over the five-year period have been adopted.

1. Development and provision of elite tobacco varieties;
2. Development and provision of innovative value-adding services to tobacco growers and other stakeholders and;
3. Adaptation and provision of value-adding and cost-effective agro-based technologies and products to tobacco growers.

The strategic issues/objectives over the plan period covered by the project years July 2011 to June 2016 are:

1. Plant Breeding to provide superior, high-quality and multi-disease resistant burley, dark-fire, flue-cured and oriental tobacco varieties that maximise grower returns, while optimising trade requirements;
2. Seed Production to satisfy the seed quantity and quality requirements of tobacco growers and merchants;
3. Crop Productivity to develop and disseminate effective, efficient and environmentally sustainable tobacco best management practices;
4. Plant Health Services to provide timely, cost-effective, environmentally benign and sustainable integrated plant protection solutions;
5. Field Services to maximise value from TRB Stations, and to provide practical advice and assistance to growers to improve management of the crop and increase grower returns;
6. Analytical Chemistry to provide world-class value-adding plant and soil chemical and pesticide analysis services;

7. Molecular Biology to provide accurate and rapid diagnostics and characterisation services for pests, diseases and plant genotypes;
8. Statistical Services to provide innovative and accurate data analysis and interpretation from gene to ecosystem level as a basis for recommending new crop management practices;
9. Technology and Climate change to integrate innovations to improve efficiency of tobacco operations while ensuring sustainable and responsible production;
10. Business and Finance to generate revenue to sustain TRB operations while providing attendant, timely and cost-effective financial services;
11. Human Resources to drive and sustain innovations for the provision of novel varieties and value-adding services and products and;
12. Governance and Social Responsibility to ensure accountability, probity, responsibility, transparency and fairness in all TRB operations, and assure social and environmental responsibility.

The estimated cost to fully implement all activities in the Logical Framework Matrix of the MVS is USD8,2 million annually, based on 2010 financial expenditure, but discounting inflation and contingencies. The annual "List of Projects and Performance Agreement" will highlight roles, obligations and responsibilities for the accomplishment of activities contained in the Logical Framework Matrix to enhance monitoring and evaluation while assuring and entrenching flexibility in the implementation of the strategy.

Altogether, over 600 projects/experiments will be carried out over the five-year period. Of these, over 60% will be field-based experiments. Additionally, through active linkages with five local Universities, over 40 projects will be pursued annually to elucidate and provide insights into the fundamental aspects of the science of tobacco production.

Furthermore, annually, over 70 000 growers will receive updated, calendar-based, practical information on tobacco management - as pamphlets, planning diaries, and small-holder field-guides - at various tobacco sales points, where they each will interact with TRB research and extension staff on a "one-to-one basis". This unique and direct "researcher-grower" interaction will inform the TRB of current field trends and grower challenges, while providing an opportunity to gather information on the performance of varieties, and desirability and utility of various services and products. This information translocation process will be complemented by the establishment of 45 Kutsaga Farmer Field Schools annually, where some estimated 7 500 growers, merchants, extension workers and other stakeholders are expected to participate in discussions on best crop management practices. To broaden and deepen these efforts, at least two meetings annually will be held with trade representatives (contractors and merchants) to gather information on international market requirements for varieties and desired tobacco best management practices.

The TRB Board, management and staff will commit themselves to ensure that the government's Corporate Governance Framework provides the minimum business and operating standards. The TRB's proposed Governance and Social Investment Programme for People, Planet and Profit (GOSIP-3Ps) will avail at least 70 000 growers with 1 ha worth of upgraded eucalypt seed, and provide up to 2 million gum seedlings annually for afforestation purposes. This will create enduring economic and societal value for growers.

By the end of the plan period the TRB will emerge as a rejuvenated, productive, efficient, collaborative, accountable and responsible institution with an enviable reputation for the quality

of varieties, services and products it produces and avails to growers and other stakeholders in the tobacco production value chain.