

Practical **ACTION**



ZIMBABWE

Capacity Statement 2026

About PRACTICAL ACTION

We are an international development organisation taking practical action against poverty and today's environmental crises. Across Africa, Asia and Latin America we partner with people experiencing these challenges, especially those who are unheard and excluded. Our approach is to identify what works on a local level, then adapt and amplify it across different regions, countries and continents.

All of Practical Action's work is focused on two connected areas for action - livelihoods and climate resilience - and we're working to deliver three big, global changes: Big change on food - produced sustainably and sold fairly; big change on energy - clean and accessible for everyone; and big change on climate risk - for safer lives, and stronger livelihoods

We have offices in 13 countries across Asia, Africa, Latin America and the UK. Practical Action has over 450 staff globally, supported by a vast network of consultants and academic partners through Practical Action Consulting.



Practical Action in Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, Practical Action has over 35 years of experience advancing climate resilience through integrated mitigation and adaptation strategies.

We work across agriculture, energy, water and markets to support the transition towards regenerative, climate-positive farming systems that strengthen livelihoods while restoring natural resources. Our partnerships with communities, government and the private sector are designed to deliver practical solutions that influence policy, unlock market opportunities and enable scalable systems level change.

Our energy, livelihoods and resilience programming focuses on expanding inclusive access to decentralised renewable energy, productive water use and green enterprise development. By linking infrastructure investments with enterprise development and institutional engagement, we drive sustainable local economic growth, particularly for women and young people, while contributing to Zimbabwe's broader climate and development priorities. Practical Action Zimbabwe is registered as a local Private Voluntary Organisation (PVO) in line with Zimbabwe's Private Voluntary Organisations Act.

Average annual budget over the last three years: US\$1,300,000



WHERE WE WORK



Our ambition in Zimbabwe

01

Demonstrate and scale regenerative agriculture models that influence policy and support the transition to regenerative agriculture among farmers, agribusinesses, corporate and government.

02

Promote increased access to renewable energy for productive use, creating employment opportunities combined with regenerative agriculture, skills training and market development interventions.

03

Build resilient, inclusive and sustainable urban systems that boost livelihoods, strengthen governance and enhance climate resilience, directly benefiting urban poor communities, with at least 50% participation from women and marginalized groups.

Food Systems

Our food systems work focuses on developing employment and income-generating opportunities for women and youth, promoting markets for regenerative agriculture, advancing the circular waste economy and strengthening nutrition in local food markets. We also develop Productive Use of Energy (PUE) models for agricultural production and processing. Community-based extension services are a core approach in delivering this work.

Pillars of Our Food Systems Work

Transitioning Farmers to Regenerative Agriculture

We promote climate-resilient farming systems grounded in agroecology and regenerative agriculture principles. These enable smallholder farmers to earn a decent living while protecting the environment and rebuilding natural resources. We develop practical, viable and market-oriented rural agricultural communities, using community-based approaches and Farmer Field Schools to drive knowledge sharing and scale proven technologies and practices.

Driving Policy and Systemic Change

We work closely with the Ministry of Agriculture to advocate for policy reforms that support resilient farming systems. Through policy briefs, workshops and field visits for policymakers, we promote evidence-based approaches that enable systemic transition towards regenerative agriculture.

Market Systems Development

Using Participatory Market Systems Development (PMSD), we work with market actors to strengthen business models and value chains that support climate-smart practices and the transition to regenerative agriculture, while delivering affordable, safe and nutritious food for consumers.

Renewable Energy (PUE) for Production, Processing and Storage

We establish solar-powered irrigation schemes and gardens to transition communities from food insecurity towards farming as a business. These interventions strengthen climate adaptability in areas affected by water shortages. We also establish solar-powered processing and storage facilities for value addition, improving product quality, reducing post-harvest losses and increasing farmer incomes.

Energy For the Hardest to Reach

Through our energy programming, Practical Action Zimbabwe demonstrates that clean, productive and inclusive energy systems are central to poverty reduction, climate resilience and sustainable livelihoods.

Pillars of Energy For the Hardest to Reach Work

Transforming Energy Access for Last-Mile Communities

We act as a systems orchestrator in the renewable energy sector, ensuring that the energy transition does not leave vulnerable communities behind. Our work feeds into national energy discourse while enabling the scale-up of viable business models that improve rural livelihoods.

Enabling Access to Productive Uses of Energy

We deploy decentralised solar-powered irrigation and PUE solutions to support nutrition gardens and climate-resilient livelihoods in water-stressed areas. With over 52 solar irrigation sites installed in Zimbabwe, the agriculture-energy nexus has enabled communities to transition from food insecurity to farming as a business while strengthening climate adaptability. Through innovative solar harvesting technology, farmers are able to diversify income-generating activities using excess energy from water pumping systems.

Mini-Grids

Practical Action has implemented more than 10 hydro mini-grids in Manicaland and developed the first rural solar mini-grid in Mashaba, Gwanda. These pilot sites demonstrated how decentralised energy systems can transform rural livelihoods and generated learning for government, UN agencies and private sector actors. These projects were pivotal in shaping Zimbabwe's renewable energy policy and have since been replicated. The Mashaba mini-grid remains a learning hub for multiple stakeholders.

Gender and Inclusion

Our energy work is rooted in locally led initiatives that address the material needs of marginalised communities while ensuring meaningful participation. Women and youth are at the centre of our programming, supported through energy service centres, technical training, enterprise development and market systems strengthening. We also support multifunctional energy centres integrating energy and waste solutions, contributing to reduced emissions, improved service delivery and inclusive urban development.

Climate Resilience

We empower farmers through climate information and advisory services that support adaptation to changing weather patterns. We combine research and innovation, last-mile early warning systems and stakeholder engagement to deliver inclusive resilience solutions.

Pillars of Our Climate Resilience Work

User-Centred Climate Information Services (CIS)

We design and deliver actionable weather and climate information tailored to farmers, policymakers and agricultural stakeholders to support informed decision-making and climate-smart agriculture.



Community Flood Resilience Assessment and Action Planning

We apply the Flood Resilience Measurement for Communities (FRMC) tool in flood-prone districts such as Chimanimani. This participatory tool identifies flood risks, vulnerabilities and community capacities, enabling the development of actionable resilience plans.



Driving Policy and Systemic Change

We work with local authorities to strengthen Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) systems by supporting communities to develop and implement ward-level DRR plans. This builds resilience to floods and other climate-related shocks while encouraging investment in community resilience.

Gender Transformative Change

We work with local communities, particularly women and marginalised groups, to unlock their potential and improve livelihoods and future opportunities. We are committed to gender-transformative change, ensuring that interventions address both practical needs and strategic interests, including decision-making power, access to markets, wages, political representation and equitable distribution of household responsibilities. Practical Action applies the Gender Action Learning Systems (GALS) methodology to strengthen women's leadership and participation at household and community levels.



OUR PROJECTS OVER THE LAST 5 YEARS

Harare Sustainable Cities Initiative

Location: Harare – Mabvuku, Tafara, Epworth, Highfield and Belvedere

Timeline: August 2025 – October 2026

Donor: Sida, implemented in partnership with UN Habitat

Budget: USD1,571,000

This initiative is establishing inclusive, locally led clean energy and resource recovery centres that improve urban services, create green jobs and transform waste and energy challenges into sustainable livelihoods. The project aims to train 200,000 urban residents (70% women and youth) in enterprise development around solar installation, clean cooking, waste recycling, brickmaking and business management.

District Regenerative Agriculture Innovation Hubs for Increased Productivity

Location: Mutasa and Makoni Districts in

Manicaland Province Partners: Africa

University, Orgfert, Genesis Fertilizers

Global Solutions and Agritex Timeline:

April 2024 – March 2026 Donor: King

Charles Charitable Fund Budget:

US\$200,000

This project demonstrates a viable, resilient model for strengthening rural economies through regenerative agriculture. It has established 12 Commercial Farmer Innovation Hubs and two Farmer Field School plots. The Regenerative Agriculture Planning and Implementation Diagnostic (RAPID) Tool was piloted to support planning, implementation and monitoring of regenerative transitions. Target value chains include maize, banana, coffee and traditional grains, benefiting 5,000 smallholder farmers.



Greening Humanitarian Response Through Enhanced Solar Energy Harvesting

Location: Gwanda District, Matabeleland South
Partners: International Organisation for Migration, Polytechnique University of Valencia, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)
Timeline: February 2023 – March 2025 Donor: USAID and ECHO through International Organisation for Migration Budget: US\$1,100,000

Practical Action successfully piloted an innovation to harvesting excess energy in solar powered irrigation gardens at five pilot sites. Target communities reported access to energy for productive uses including setting up of an ICT and internet access centre and hair salon which are managed by youths while schools have access to energy for ICT gadgets. Social uses of energy include charging phones, power banks, portable lights and entertainment systems.

Resilience Building for Chimanimani Communities

Location: Chimanimani District, Manicaland Province
Timeline: October 2022 – December 2023
Donor: USAID Budget: US\$1,700,000

This project supported 32,000 people across 11 wards to recover from climate shocks and rebuild resilient livelihoods.

Outcomes included:

- 68% uptake of improved farming practices
- Six solar-powered gardens doubling household incomes
- Expanded irrigation plot sizes
- Increased indigenous poultry ownership

Gender-transformative approaches strengthened inclusive decision-making and financial resilience.



Youth Leading Community-Based Waste Management in Tafara



At 25, Tatenda Chikokoro is part of a growing group of young women helping to reshape how waste is managed in Tafara. Tatenda joined the project five months ago, when the site was first established. Having recently completed her studies in Environmental Science and graduating in August, she was eager to put her knowledge into practice and contribute to solutions that respond to everyday environmental challenges in her community.

Tatenda volunteers at the site in a multifaceted role. She coordinates the sewing initiative that transforms discarded textiles into reusable shopping bags and supports the site manager with administrative responsibilities.

“When I arrived, sewing was completely new to me,” Tatenda explains. “It has been challenging, but I am learning. What excites me is that so much of what we do here connects directly to waste management, sustainability, and development.”

Through the project, Tatenda learned how to sew using old jeans to produce durable shopping bags. These bags are sold locally, offering a practical alternative to plastic carrier bags while creating a modest income stream. The initiative also promotes behaviour change within the community. Residents are encouraged to bring three pairs of old jeans in exchange for a reusable bag, helping reduce both textile and plastic waste while reinforcing the value of reuse.

For Tatenda, these moments of direct engagement are just as important as the production process itself. For her, the project represents more than recycling or learning new skills. It is about demonstrating the role young people can play in driving environmental change and shaping conversations beyond their immediate communities.

“I read that Rwanda banned plastics completely, and I think that would be powerful here too,” she says. “If we can raise our voices and advocate for that across Zimbabwe, that would be a big achievement.”

Tatenda’s experience shows how youth leadership, women’s participation, and environmental action can come together through locally driven initiatives. By combining technical knowledge, hands-on involvement, and community engagement, she is contributing to a practical and people-centred response to waste management challenges that supports livelihoods, environmental sustainability, and civic voice. This work is implemented under the Harare Sustainable Cities Initiative, delivered in partnership with UN-Habitat and funded by Sida, supporting youth-led and community-based waste management initiatives in Zimbabwe



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