



# GRAINS PRODUCTION

**OVERVIEW**

## For grains producers, the BIF project found that

- Farmers use limited amounts of productivity-enhancing inputs and employ poor agronomical practices which affects their productivity.
- Farmers have weak knowledge of modern farming practices due to poor public provision of extension services and the lack of private alternatives.
- Farmers have limited access to fertiliser and other inputs as distribution of affordable small pack sizes is unreliable and geographically narrow.
- Subsidised inputs are not reaching farmers in sufficient quantities
- Limited outreach of contract farming arrangements, and existing arrangements do not always provide embedded extension services.
- Farmers are not producing the quality or varieties of grains demanded by industrial processors.
  - Farmers lack access to improved varieties of seed; seed multipliers are not producing sufficient quantities of these seeds as the business case is unclear.
  - Farmers do not see the benefit in investing in improved seed varieties and therefore use lower-yielding saved seeds.
  - Farmers have weak linkages to industrial producers and are unable to access price premiums for improved maize.
- Farmers have poor post-harvest handling practices which result in high post-harvest losses.
  - Farmers do not have appropriate knowledge and/or equipment for post-harvest handling.
  - Farmers do not have access to good storage facilities.



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Low income producers typically do not know that using good inputs in the right mix for a specific soil type and following good practices for growing the crops, all other things being equal, would achieve productivity levels closer to the genetic potential of a given seed. On the BIF programme we proved that using the right inputs, planting the right varieties and knowing good agricultural practices helps them achieve improved incomes. This was true irrespective of gender and we were able to show that women could increase their incomes in much the same way as the men could. Getting this combination (bundled service) in the hands of an ever-increasing number of low-income producers is one problem we now seek to address.