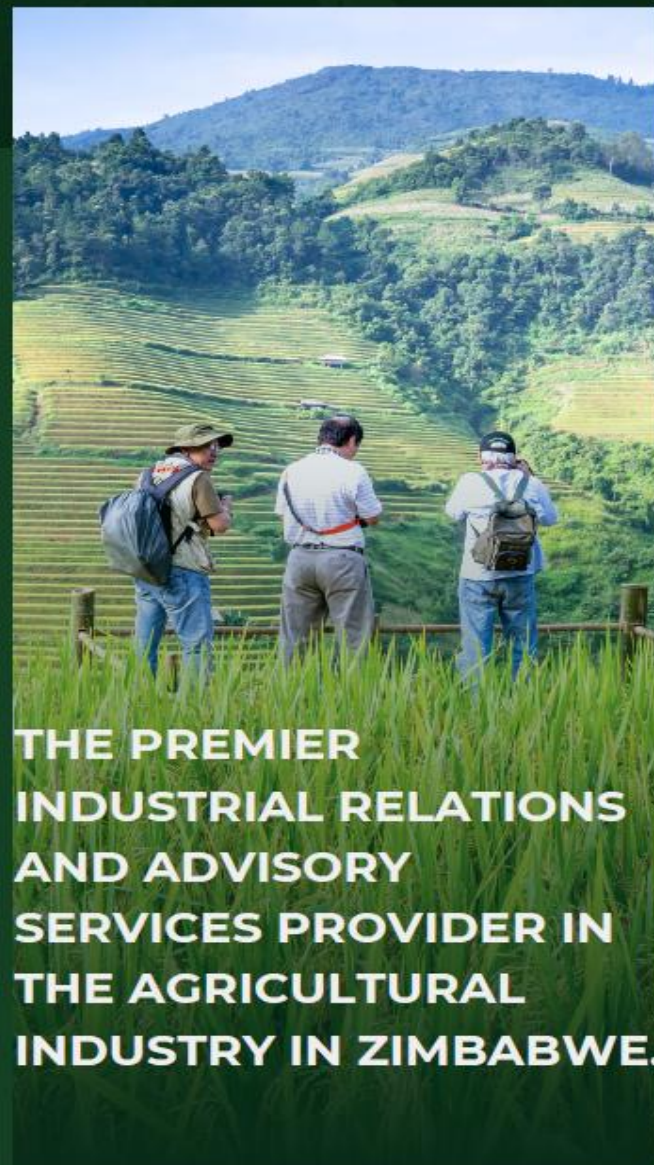




NEC AGRICULTURE

NEWSLETTER

Successful VoIP Implementation at
NEC Agriculture
Skills Audit to NEC Agriculture Staff
Members
Remuneration And Deductions From
Remuneration
NEC Agriculture at a glance – Crucial
player in the Agricultural Industry in
Zimbabwe
National Employment Council of
Agriculture Expands Fleet with
Addition of Two New Vehicles



**THE PREMIER
INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
AND ADVISORY
SERVICES PROVIDER IN
THE AGRICULTURAL
INDUSTRY IN ZIMBABWE.**

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CEO's Foreword



I greet you, dear reader, with the greetings of a new season. As the rains return and the grip of the El Niño-induced drought begins to loosen, we find ourselves once again reminded of the enduring spirit of this industry—its capacity to innovate in adversity, to remain resilient under pressure, and to commit unwaveringly to collective progress.

In this first edition of our quarterly publication for 2025, we mark the beginning of implementation of the Council's new five-year Strategic Plan. We do so against a challenging backdrop, yet with quiet confidence—buoyed by early successes that speak to our renewed sense of purpose and preparedness.

Among these achievements is the acquisition of two vehicles to support inspections and outreach work across the country. In a constrained economic environment, this is no modest development; it is a meaningful investment in strengthening our service delivery and operational footprint. We have also upgraded our communications infrastructure through the installation of a Voice-over-IP (VoIP) system—bringing all our offices onto a single platform and improving efficiency.

A skills audit of the secretariat is currently underway, forming the basis for targeted capacity building. This is a crucial step in aligning our human resources with the ambitions of the Strategic Plan. Meanwhile, the technical work of Council has continued with diligence, including the review of minimum wages in the Timber Subsector and focused awareness-raising around unlawful deductions.

These gains, though achieved quietly and with due humility, are significant. They are the fruit of focused effort, shared resolve, and the trust of our social partners. I thank you sincerely for your continued commitment to the work of the Council.

As the year unfolds, may we move forward with unity and determination, always anchoring our work in service to the industry and the broader national good.

I thank you, and I wish you a prosperous 2025.

Regards,

DAVID MADYAUSIKU

Advancing Communication: Successful VoIP Implementation at NEC Agriculture

Yvonne T Masea and Deliwe Makota

We are excited to announce significant progress in enhancing our communication systems across the organization! In the first quarter of 2025, we successfully implemented a robust Voice-over-IP (VoIP) infrastructure designed to improve connectivity for all departments and regional offices throughout Zimbabwe.

The project began with configuring our IP PBX and gateways to support internet-based voice communication. We then set up and optimized IP phones for clear and reliable interactions. A key milestone was extending Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) capabilities to our regional offices, enabling teams nationwide to collaborate efficiently over the internet. Each user has been assigned a dedicated extension number, streamlining internal work calls.

To ensure seamless operations, we implemented regular backups of VoIP configurations and user data as part of our maintenance routine. This upgrade not only modernizes internal communication but also positions NEC Agriculture at the forefront of cost-effective, scalable technology, making NEC Agriculture branches reachable without a hassle.

Automatic Response Line:

- +263 242 334473

Calls are automatically redirected to the nearest regional office.

For direct contact, use the numbers below:

- +263 242 334472
- +263 242 303669
- +263 242 339890

We are thrilled about this advancement and look forward to empowering the Agricultural Industry in Zimbabwe with continued innovation and making reaching our services even easier!



Stay connected, stay ahead—with NEC Agriculture.

Yvonne T Masea is the Head of Technology at NEC Agriculture based at Head Office and Deliwe Makota is a Designated Agent at NEC Agriculture stationed at Chinhoyi branch

Skills Audit to NEC Agriculture Staff Members

Deliwe Makota

The National Employment Council (NEC) for Agriculture embarked on a skills audit exercise in January 2025 for the entire secretariat staff in every region. The Skills Audit started with a conscientisation session which was facilitated by the independent consultant online to all employees on 21 January 2025. The purpose of the session was to create awareness to all concerned employees about the Skills Audit process. The independent consultants conducted physical branch visits and also interviewed staff at the Head Office.

The primary objective of the Skills Audit exercise was to identify the current skills gaps and future skills requirements for all staff members in the secretariat. This enables the NEC Agriculture to develop targeted training programs, ensuring that employees possess the necessary skills to drive growth and innovation in the industry.

The skills audit exercise covered all concepts on NEC Agriculture staff which included academic qualifications, professional qualifications, work experience and the current skills that one possesses. The audit employed a multi-faceted approach, incorporating methods such as surveys and questionnaires, Interviews with every employee, personal file verification and certificate verification of every employee.

The Skills Audit is a critical initiative dictated by our 2025-2030 strategic plan that enables the NEC Agriculture Industry in Zimbabwe develop evidence-based strategies for enhancing the productivity and competitiveness of the agricultural sector. By identifying skills gaps and developing targeted training programs and identifying suitable and relevant candidates to place in strategically important positions, NEC Agriculture aims to drive growth and innovation in the industry, ultimately contributing to the country's economic development.

Deliwe Makota is a Designated Agent at NEC Agriculture stationed at Chinhoyi branch

Remuneration And Deductions From Remuneration

Sydney Mutasa

Remuneration refers to the total compensation an employee receives for the work or services rendered to the employer. It includes both monetary and non-monetary benefits. Deductions are amounts subtracted from an employee's earnings by an employer before final payment. These can be statutory (mandatory by law) or voluntary (agreed by the employee). Statutory deductions include among others NEC monthly dues, NSSA, and PAYE (Pay As You Earn). Employers are obliged to remit these deducted monies to the relevant bodies monthly to avoid litigation and garnishing.

In terms of section 12A of the Labour Act [28:01], all remuneration shall be accompanied by a written statement showing the name of the employer and employee; the amount of remuneration and the period paid for; the component of any bonus or allowance; any deductions and the net amount paid.

Section 12A of the Labour Act and section 12 of SI 41 of 2022 prohibit any deduction from any remuneration except where an employee is absent from work on days other than industrial holidays or days of leave; any amounts which an employer is compelled by law to pay on behalf of an employee (statutory deductions); where an employee has received an advance of remuneration due; by written stop-order for contributions to insurance policies, pension funds, medical aid societies, building societies, burial societies and registered trade unions; by written consent of an employee (voluntary deductions), for repayment of money lent by the employer on terms that have been mutually agreed by the parties concerned; and an amount recovered for payments made in error.

Upon termination of contract, an employer is permitted to deduct an amount equal to any balance which may be due to him under permissible deductions.



Deductions can be either in ZWG, USD or both currencies per month depending on the legal provision for such deduction.

Key Considerations

- Deductions must be permissible by law and shall not exceed 25% of an employee's gross remuneration for that interval.
- Except for statutory deductions, employers cannot make arbitrary deductions without employee consent. Any arbitrary deductions will culminate in claims for unlawful deductions against the employer.
- Employees should receive a pay slip detailing all remuneration and deductions to reduce some claims for non-payments and underpayments resulting from lack of information.
- Employers are obliged to remit the deducted statutory and voluntary monies to avoid litigation by the bodies concerned. Three percent (3%) of the total basic pay per month must be remitted to NEC Agriculture in the currency of the wage paid in terms of SI 96 of 2024, of which 1.5% is a contribution by the employer, and 1.5% is a lawful deduction from the wage of the employee.

Sydney Mutasa is a Designated Agent at NEC Agriculture stationed in Mutare.

NEC Agriculture at a glance – Crucial player in the Agricultural Industry in Zimbabwe

Cain Kagoro

The National Employment Council for the Agricultural Industry in Zimbabwe plays a crucial role in promoting and supporting farming activities in Zimbabwe.

Here are the key roles:

Advocacy and representation

We represent the interests of farmers, agricultural workers, and other stakeholders in the Agricultural Sector. We further advocate for policies and programmes that promote agricultural development, job creation, and improved working conditions.

Dispute resolution and labour administration

We are responsible for administering labour laws and regulations in the agricultural sector. We also provide guidance on labour related issues, such as contracts, wages, and working conditions and our mandate is to resolve disputes between farmers and agricultural workers.

Training and capacity building.

We provide training and capacity building programs for farmers, agricultural workers, and other stakeholders. Our programs focus on improving agricultural productivity, enhancing business management skills and promoting best practices in farming.

Research and development

We conduct research and development activities aimed at improving agricultural productivity and competitiveness. Moreover, we work with development partners to identify and address key challenges bedeviling the agricultural sector in Zimbabwe.

Policy and regulatory framework

We contribute to the development of policies and regulations that govern the agricultural sector. We work with government agencies, employers' organisations and trade unions, as well as with other stakeholders to ensure that policies and regulations are supportive of agricultural development, employment creation, harmony, and productivity in the industry.

Monitoring and evaluation

We monitor and evaluate the impact of our programs and activities in the agricultural sector. We use the information gathered to improve service delivery.

Cain Kagoro is the Senior Accounts Analyst at NEC Agriculture based in Chinhoyi

National Employment Council of Agriculture Expands Fleet with Addition of Two New Vehicles

Patience Ngirazi

The National Employment Council of Agriculture has bolstered its fleet with the addition of two new vehicles, aimed at enhancing its operational efficiency and effectiveness. These vehicles will play a vital role in supporting the Council's responsibilities, including farm inspections and other essential activities across the region. This strategic investment underscores NEC Agriculture's commitment to high efficiency and ensuring speedy and convenient services to its clients.

By equipping its team with the necessary resources, NEC Agriculture ensures that farm visits and engagement with farmers and their employees are conducted promptly, facilitating crucial tasks and fostering stronger connections.



Despite the challenging economic climate, the NEC Agriculture has demonstrated foresight and resourcefulness, recognizing that these investments are not merely assets for the balance sheet, but resources in the service of the industry, increasing the Council's visibility and mobility in all areas of Zimbabwe.

This achievement is also a testament to the NEC's unwavering commitment to its long-term vision, as outlined in the Vision 2030 framework.

The addition of these vehicles will significantly enhance the NEC's operational efficiency and effectiveness, allowing the organization to make steady progress toward its objectives. This strategic expansion of the NEC's resources marks a significant milestone in the Council's ongoing efforts to enhance its services, strengthen its operations, and deliver exceptional support to its stakeholders."

Patience Ngirazi is a Receptionist at NEC Agriculture based at Chinhoyi branch.

Timber Subsector Wages

Nobukhosi Mkwananzi

There are innumerable benefits to being a member of NEC Agriculture and this includes minimum wages for the different sectors in the agricultural industry being negotiated and fixed at NEC Agriculture. The social parties to the Timber Subsector have agreed on new minimum wages for the first quarter of 2025. The agreement is effective 1 January 2025 and maintains a dual currency wage structure of USD and ZWG across all the grades.

Breakdown of the New Wage Structure

The new wage schedule consists of the following:

- A fixed component of USD\$14.00 payable in the Zimbabwe Gold currency (ZWG).
- And additional USD\$128.00 component paid in United States Dollars (USD).
- The Zimbabwe Gold currency portion is determined based on the interbank bank exchange rate applicable on the 20th of each month when wages are processed.

Exemptions/Reviews

Establishments or employees may apply in writing to the National Employment Council for exemption or partial exemption/review from paying wages as set up in the above schedule stating the reasons why that application should be considered within 14 days of the date of the agreement.

Wage adjustment by grade

Grade A1: USD142 up from USD135

Grade B1: USD179 up from USD170

Grade C1: USD264 up from USD251

Negotiations are an ongoing process in all other subsectors of the agricultural industry. To keep updated on the latest schedules for all subsector minimum wages and allowances please visit our website www.necagriculture.co.zw

Nobukhosi Mkwananzi is a Front Office Administrator based in Mutare.

Collective Bargaining Process At The Workplace

Sydney Mutasa and Joseph Chingwe

Collective bargaining at workplace refers to a negotiation process between an employer and employees or workers committee representatives. The process is usually aimed at reaching an agreement on issues that affect the organisation and employees in the workplace. The issues that may come up during collective bargaining include working conditions, productivity, wages, working hours, and benefits. This is one of the core functions of a works council, hence it is important for employers in the agriculture industry to have a functional workers committee in place.

STAGES

Generally, the process includes the following stages:

Preparation

The negotiators should: -

- Consult principals or their constituency.
- Have an obligation to negotiate in good faith.
- Get mandate to negotiate, issues to negotiate, and be a team with a leader.
- Disclose all relevant information to expedite the negotiation process.

Mandate

- Negotiators should have a mandate from principals
- Negotiators should prioritize issues.
- Mandate should not be exceeded during bargaining.

Negotiations

- Negotiators should not exceed their given mandate.
- The negotiation team should have negotiation skills and information on the topics to be discussed.
- Negotiators should understand the other party and how to convince him.
- Negotiators should be flexible and establish areas they can compromise.
- Negotiators can ask for adjournment where necessary.

Implementation

- Agreements should be clear and understood by both parties.
- The agreements should be in writing.

- There might be a need to monitor and evaluate progress on some agreements for the purposes of improvement.

Importance of collective bargaining

Collective bargaining is a tool that both the employer and employees in the agriculture industry can use to address productivity and profitability issues and request wage increments, benefits or improved workplace conditions.

Sydney Mutasa is a Designated Agent at NEC Agriculture based at Mutare branch and Joseph Chingwe is an Account Analyst based in Mutare.



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