

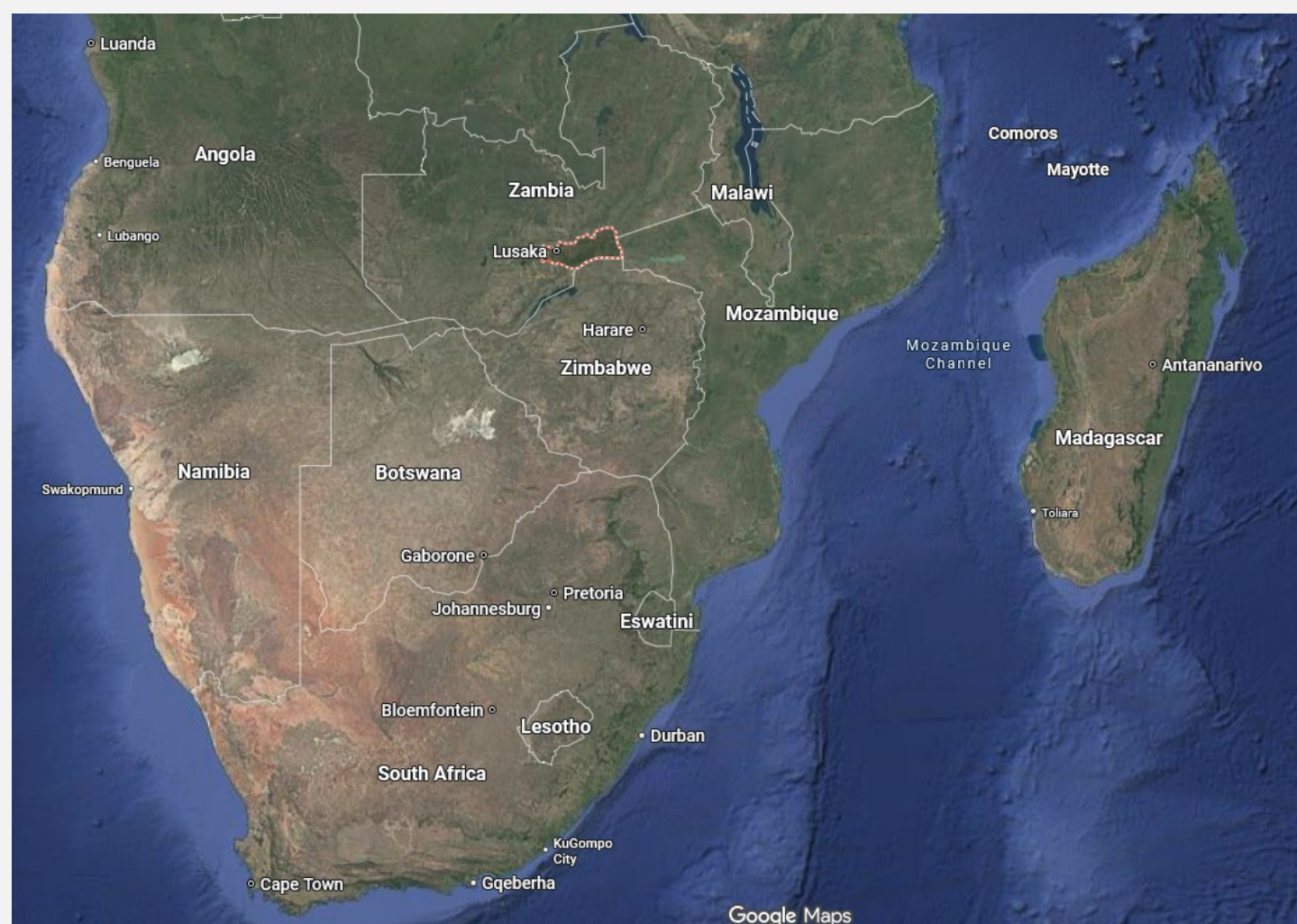
# Participatory Guarantee Systems and Market Access for Organic Products: A Mixed-method Case Study in Lusaka Province, Zambia

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- The organic sector in Zambia is underdeveloped and has been declining over the last few years [1]
- Third-Party Certification is very expensive, and Zambia lacks its own national certification bodies [2]
- Participatory Guarantee Systems offer an alternative and could improve market access for organic farmers [3]



Source: Google Maps

- Research Questions:**
  - Challenges and benefits with the existing market options for:
    - Uncertified Organic Farmers (UOF)**
    - PGS Certified Farmers (PCF)**
  - How are organic products perceived by customers, shopkeepers and supermarkets in Lusaka Province?
  - Which socio-technical changes are needed to improve market access for organic farmers in Lusaka Province?

## 2. METHODS

- Study design:** Mixed-methods embedded case study in Lusaka Province
- Conceptual framework:** Multi-Level Perspective on socio-technical transitions
- Data sources:**
  - 79 farmers:** 74 uncertified organic farmers, 5 PGS-certified farmers
  - 135 customers** from rural villages, malls, and one organic store
  - 30 shopkeepers** at open-air markets
  - Supermarket procurement officers**
  - 11 organic-sector experts**

„PGS are locally focused quality assurance systems. They certify producers based on active participation of stakeholders and are built on a foundation of trust, social networks and knowledge exchange“ – IFOAM Organics International

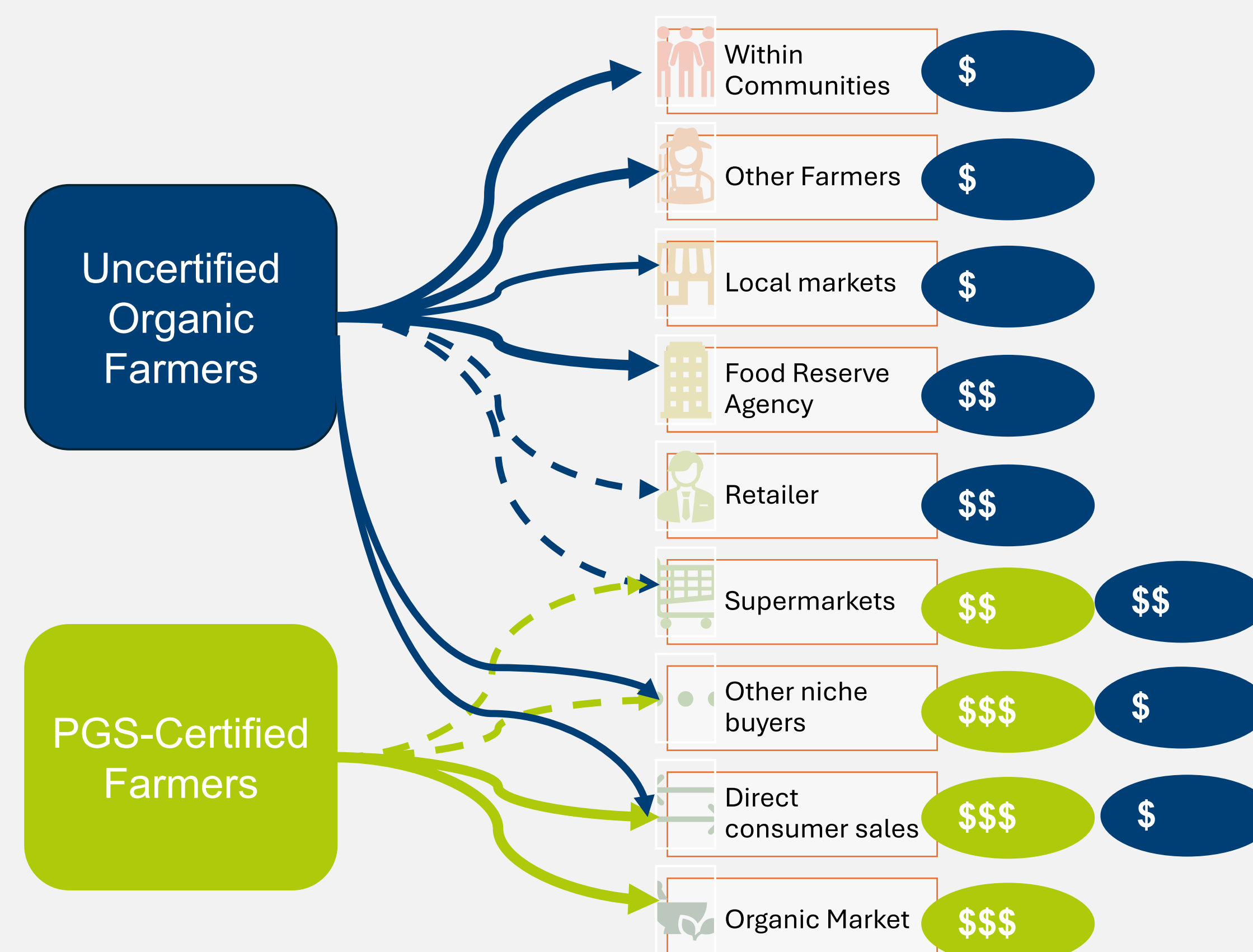
## 3. KEY FINDINGS

### 1. Uncertified organic farmers mainly rely on local and informal markets

- UOF rarely received price premiums
- Long travel distances to markets
- Low Market power
- No distinction between organic and non-organic products
- The cheapest seller determines the price

### 2. PGS offers market advantages but is limited

- PGS-certified farmers appear to have better access to niche markets
- These markets offer better prices leading to higher market satisfaction for farmers
- But buyers often require reliability, consistency, and trust
- PGS depends heavily on external support or donor funding and therefore remains underdeveloped



Market pathways for UOF and PCF in Lusaka Province. Solid arrows indicate commonly used pathways; dashed arrows rare pathways. Dollar signs show relative market opportunity based on reported price premiums and farmer satisfaction, not guaranteed income. Source: own representation

### 3. Consumer awareness is emerging but still limited

- Consumers associate organic products with health, naturalness, and environmental benefits
- Shopkeepers see potential in organic products, but supply and understanding remain limited
- Unclear boundaries between: “organic”, “natural”, and “chemical-free”
- Willingness to pay depends strongly on income, trust, information and product availability
- Price competition in open-air markets hinders organic price premium
- **Consumer education, credible labelling and stronger supply are needed for the organic sector to grow**

### 4. Supermarkets have high potential, but low accessibility

- Supermarkets offer visibility, volume and formal market access
- Strict requirements for consistency, volume, packaging, hygienic standards
- Requirements are a high barrier for smallholder farmers
- Unwillingness to pay price premium for organic products and offer shelf-space and labels for organic products

- **Supermarkets currently act as regime-level lock-ins by favouring established supply chains and maintaining high entry barriers**

### 5. Policy structure reinforces conventional agriculture

- The Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP) subsidizes mainly conventional inputs
- The Food Reserve Agency (FRA) provides an important market, but its maize focus can discourage diversification
- The absence of a strong national organic body and limited recognition of PGS weaken the institutional foundation for organic market development

- **PGS and organic agriculture remain at niche level without institutional support**

## 4. POST THESIS: THE KATC GREEN MARKET



Agricultural Seed Show at KATC, Photo: Peter Reutter

- Market stand for farmers trained at Kasisi Agricultural Training Centre (KATC)
- Response to key gap:
  - Farmers need space for their products to be seen and trusted
- Remaining Questions:

- How dependent is this market on donor funding?
- Functionality and long-term impact → Evaluation needed