

THE E-VOUCHER RESTRUCTURING: SMART 2018/19 FARMING SEASON

INFOGRAPHIC

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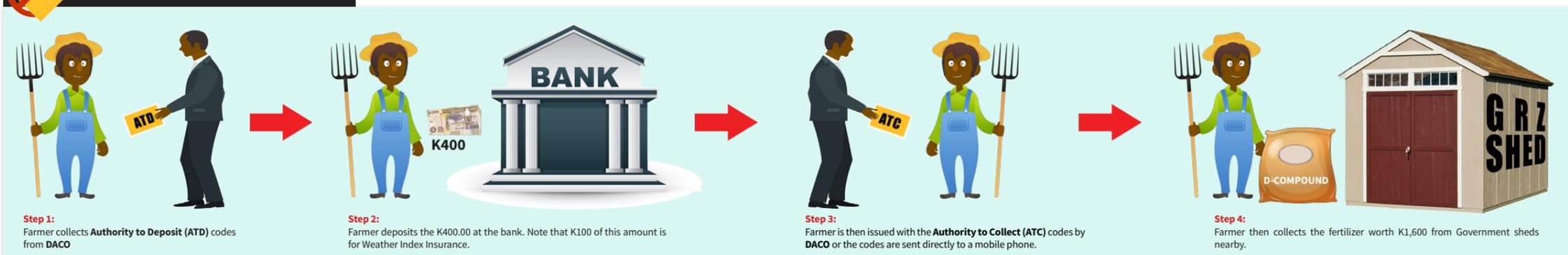
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According to the **Seventh National Development Plan (7NDP)**, the agriculture sector is the fourth largest contributor to GDP (8.7 percent) and the largest contributor to employment (70 percent). The sector is critical for **achieving diversification, economic growth and wealth creation** in Zambia. One major component of the agriculture sector is the e-Voucher programme which was introduced in the 2016/17 farming season after a successful pilot season in 2015/2016 farming season.

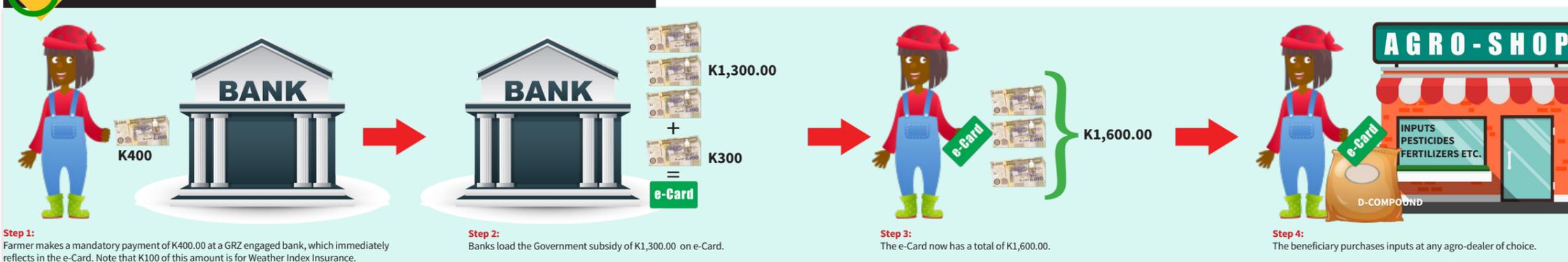
The Government in June, 2018 announced that some farmers would be reverted to the conventional **Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP)** this farming season of 2018/19 to enable Government resolve challenges associated with e-Voucher administration. About 55 districts are earmarked to be captured. Some of the challenges faced in the 2017/2018 farming season in the administration of e-Voucher especially in rural parts of the country included among others: **poor network connectivity, delayed card activation, lack of capacity by agro-dealers** to stock enough inputs to meet demand and **long distances covered by farmers** to reach the nearest agro-dealer.

Smart Zambia Institute has indicated that three (3) modes of administering the **Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP)** will be used. These are:

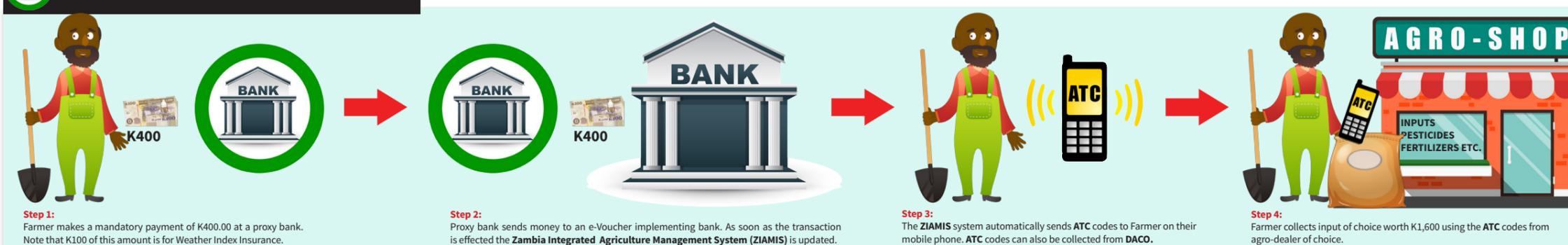
E-VOUCHER CARD-LESS MODE



E-VOUCHER CARD MODE WITH A GOVERNMENT ENGAGED BANK



E-VOUCHER CARD WITH A PROXY BANK



MEASURES

- PMRC urges Government to continuously monitor the entire e-Voucher implementation system to ensure that the new measures are **cost effective to administer, promote crop diversification, improve timeliness in inputs distribution, improve the quality of inputs, build private sector capacity in inputs marketing and distribution**. In addition, provide means to easily introduce farm risk mitigation measures and ultimately improve household and national food security as well as farm incomes for small-holder farmers.
- PMRC implores Government to monitor banks to ensure that they promptly upload e-cards as soon as Government gives authorization. One of the several problems faced in the 2017/2018 farming season, was that banks were not uploading money as soon as Government released funds. Consequently, farmers received inputs late and this contributed to poor crop yields.
- PMRC urges Government to set aside adequate funds for programme **sensitization, training** of stakeholders and **monitoring** of the implementation process.
- Government is urged to release funds meant for the e-Voucher on time to avoid delays in card activations and uploading of farmer's cards.
- PMRC also urges Government to ensure that all financial institutions fully integrate with the **Zambia Integrated Agriculture Management System** platform to ensure that data is harmonized.
- PMRC encourages Government to ensure that all participating financial institutions decentralize e-Voucher related services to improve problem solving and response time. Generally, there was delayed response to programme queries by participating financial institutions in the 2017/2018 farming season because of centralization.