

The Character of Emerging Biofuel Value Chains: Focus on the Chisumbanje Sugarcane Bio-ethanol Chain in Zimbabwe

Cuthbert Kambanje¹ and Abenet Belete

*University of Limpopo, Faculty of Science and Agriculture, School of Agriculture and
Environmental Sciences, Department of Agricultural Economics and Animal Production,
South Africa*

¹Cell: 00277 84 857 5640, ¹E-mail: ckambanje@gmail.com

KEYWORDS Land Investments. Value Chain Governance. Political Economy. Supply Utilisation Accounts. Monopoly

ABSTRACT The investments in large scale sugarcane production for processing into ethanol fuel that have occurred in Zimbabwe have generated debate in the media and the public in general. This paper characterises the typology and key elements of the emerging Chisumbanje sugarcane bio-ethanol value chain using empirical data on supply utilisation accounts (SUA) and value chain governance. It is concluded that the value chain is characterised by the pervasiveness of monopolistic tendencies and dominance of powerful private corporates being supported by government. Legislative changes and involvement of powerful Government and political institutions has created strong opportunities for rent seeking as the investor lobbies powerful players in pursuance of high private economic benefits. The value chain systematically excludes the smallholder farming community from directly participating in the productive aspects of the chain. Production systems have changed for the local communities that have been displaced and there are indications of losses of traditional livelihood sources.