SYMBOLS OF HOPE

ZIMBABWE'S NATIONAL IDENTITY SYSTEM



JOHN MURINYE | ZARURA CREATIVE | JUNE 2026 | VERSION 2.3

This document presents a proposed redesign of Zimbabwe's national visual identity, including the Zimbabwe Bird, the Flag, and the Coat of Arms. The concepts and designs presented herein are purely speculative and intended for illustrative purposes only.

This project is undertaken with the intention of promoting national unity and inclusivity, and it is not affiliated with any political agenda. Nor does it represent any official endorsement or policy of the Zimbabwean government or any political party.

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from the Creators

This project represents a meticulous process of research, strategy, design, and refinement, ensuring that every element resonates with the market's values and aspirations.

This case study is the **first** in a series of four concept projects designed to showcase the power and versatility of our Zarura Brand Operating System (BOS). Each study tackles a distinct strategic challenge:

1. **Symbols of Hope** – Reframing a national identity from its heritage to its horizon.
2. **Eat n' Lick** – Building emotional velocity in a competitive fast-food market.
3. **Omari** – Aligning institutional credibility with challenger ambition.
4. **Chicken Inn** – Modernising a national icon to defend its dominance.

We hope this work sparks meaningful dialogue and demonstrates what is possible when deep strategic thinking meets bold creativity.

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Can a new national symbol help unite a nation?

Despite its immensely rich heritage and natural beauty, Zimbabwe faces complex challenges; economically, politically and socially — which all in turn have eroded national confidence, and fractured the sense of shared identity.

Reimagining Zimbabwe's national visual identity may seem, a frivolous pursuit, and a distraction from more pressing concerns. However, we argue that a renewed visual identity is not merely cosmetic; it is a crucial step towards fostering a shared sense of hope, unity, and national pride.

This visual identity isn't just about creating a logo nor is it about glossing over the past and or current difficulties.

It's about reclaiming our narrative and shaping its future. It's about creating a visual identity that reflects the resilience, creativity, and hope that define the Zimbabwean spirit.

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Humanity is not static.

Zimbabwe's story is one of dynamism and exchange, a testament to the enduring spirit of its people.

The ancestors of today's diverse communities, including the Shona and Ndebele, trace their roots back to the remarkable Bantu expansion that shaped much of sub-Saharan Africa. Originating in West-Central Africa millennia ago, Bantu-speaking peoples embarked on a transformative migration, introducing agriculture, ironworking, and their languages to the region.

This legacy of movement and interaction is echoed in the fluidity of human connections throughout Zimbabwe's history.

Just as the ancestors forged new paths and embraced change, so too does modern Zimbabwe seek to evolve. The nation's visual identity, like the ancient cave drawings that adorned the land, serves as a powerful symbol of this ongoing journey. By reimagining these symbols, Zimbabwe embraces its heritage of progress, unity, and growth, signifying a nation poised for a brighter future.

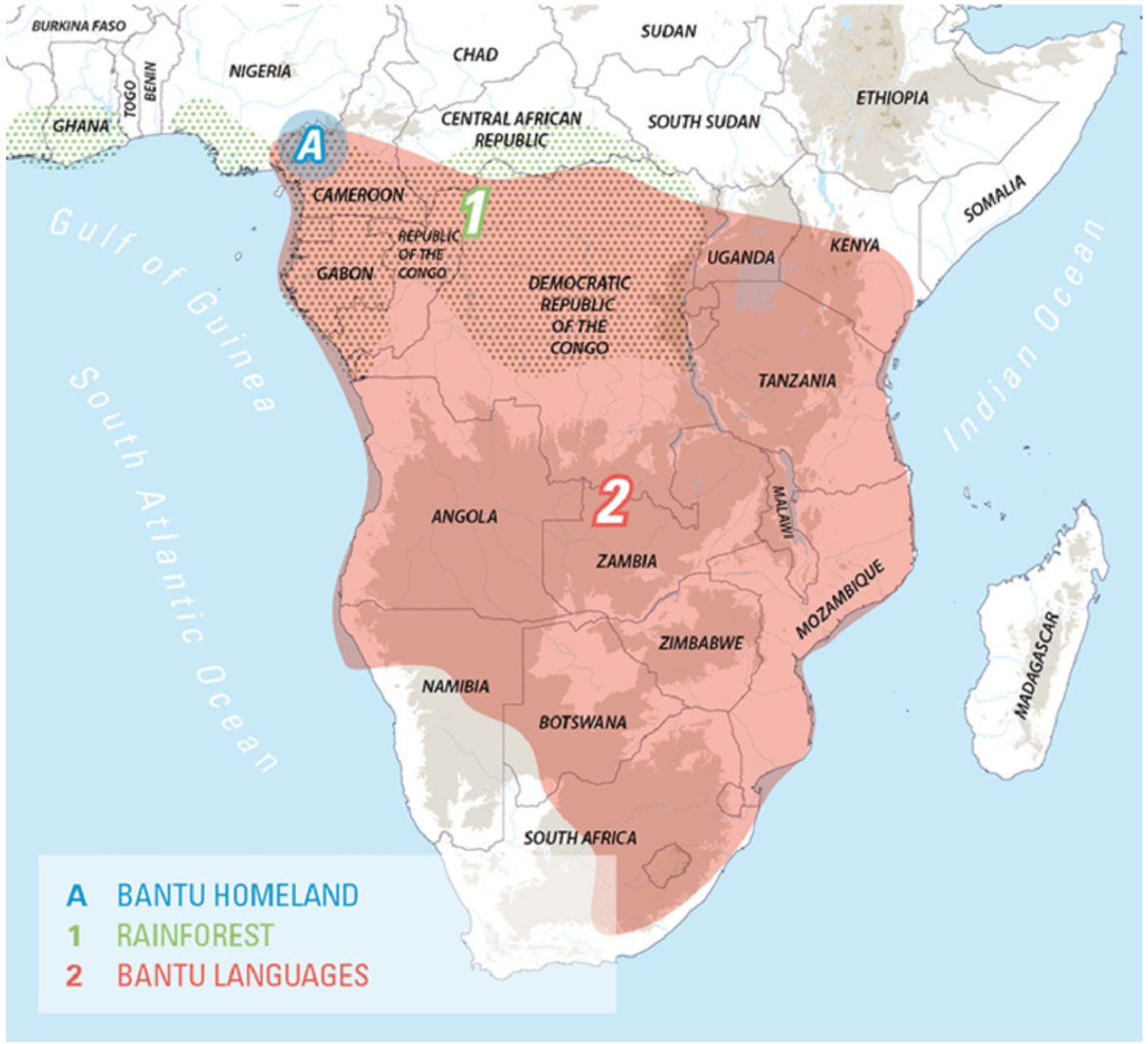


Image Credit: Koen Bostoen | Moritz Zauleck

Sources: ResearchGate

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Diverse Heritage. One Nation.

Bantu



Image Credit: **Worldatlas** | Source

Originated from West-Central Africa

Migration
3,000 years ago. Gradual migration across sub-Saharan Africa.

Impact
Introduced new technologies; ironworking, agriculture, and languages and culture.

Shona



Image Credit: **RhinoAfrica** | Source

Part of the Southern Bantu family

Migration
Migrated into present-day Zimbabwe between the 5th and 10th centuries AD.

Impact
Established farming communities and gradually developed distinct culture and identity.

Ndebele



Image Credit: **Worldatlas** | Source

Nguni closely related to Sotho-Tswana

Migration
Early 19th century, under Mzilikazi, from South Africa during the Mfecane.

Impact
Brought their Nguni heritage, including language and traditions, enriching Zimbabwe's cultural diversity.

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Evolving to a shared future

When approaching the redesign of our national symbols, we were uniquely inspired by the cave paintings that captured the ancient artistic heritage of the Bantu people.

The artwork features elegant lines and minimalistic forms that distill the spirit of the people of Zimbabwe and speak of freedom, aspiration, and a soaring national spirit.

Our design honours the past while embracing the future, carrying the legacy of Zimbabwe's ancestors into a new era of progress and national pride.



Image Credit: **Singita** | Source



Image Credit: **World Pilgrimage Guide** | Source

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The Zimbabwe Bird

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The Power of Symbolism

A nation's visual identity, encompassing its flag, coat of arms, and national symbols, embodies its aspirations and values. It serves as a powerful tool for:

Promoting National Pride: A visually appealing and inspiring national identity fosters a sense of belonging and ownership among citizens, regardless of their background or political affiliation.

Instilling Hope: A renewed visual identity can serve as a powerful symbol of hope and renewal, inspiring citizens to believe in a brighter future for their country.

Inspire confidence: Alongside economical and political reforms, a modern and unified visual identity can project an image of a nation that is forward-looking and ready for investment.

Unifying Communication: A consistent visual language across government departments, institutions, and public communication channels enhances clarity, trust, and efficiency.

We reimagined all of these visual elements — pursuing a more unified, modern and refined solution that functions well across various mediums – digital, print, and physical applications.

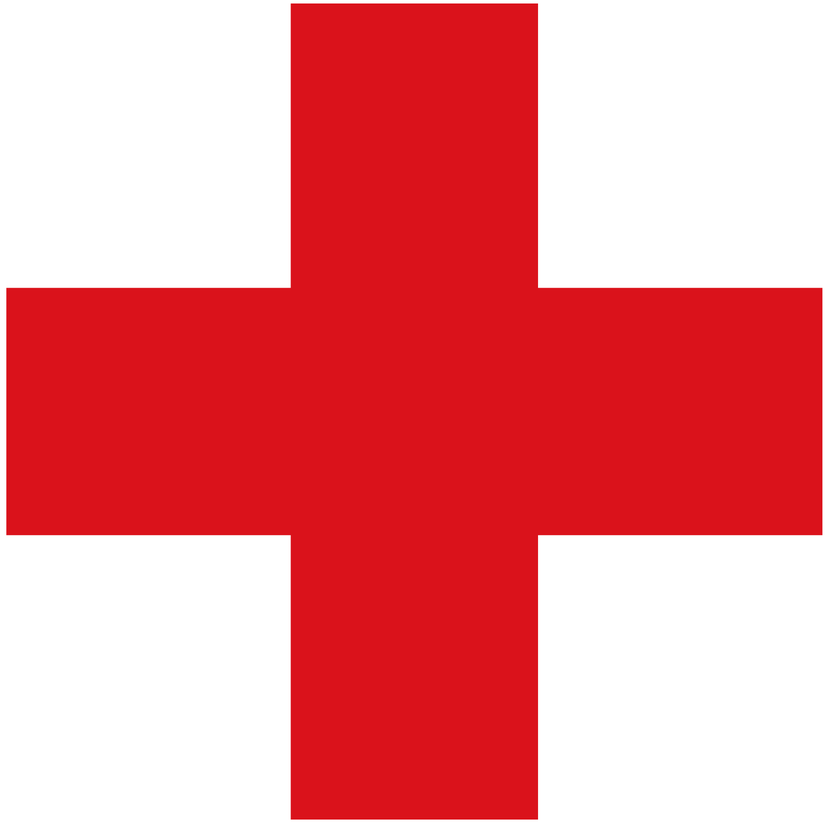
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Symbol of Hope in darkness

The Red Cross emblem, a simple red cross on a white background, is one of the most globally recognised symbols of humanitarian aid, compassion, and unity.

The Red Cross is universally understood and respected, evoking a shared commitment to providing care and assistance in times of crisis.

Its presence serves as a beacon of hope, reminding us that, even in the darkest moments, collective action and compassion can unite humanity in the pursuit of relief and healing.



Sources:
IFRC
Nobel Prize

Designed by
Henri Dunant, August 1864

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Barack Obama ’08 Campaign

Barack Obama's 2008 campaign logo became a symbol of unity and change, transcending political boundaries to rally a diverse nation around a shared cause.

The simple, modern design captured the collective imagination and provided a visual shorthand for a message of hope, resonating deeply with voters seeking a break from the past and a path toward a brighter future.

The Obama logo demonstrates that powerful symbols, even in politically charged contexts, can help individuals from varying backgrounds find common ground.



Sources:
Wikipedia

Designed by
Sender LLC, February 2007

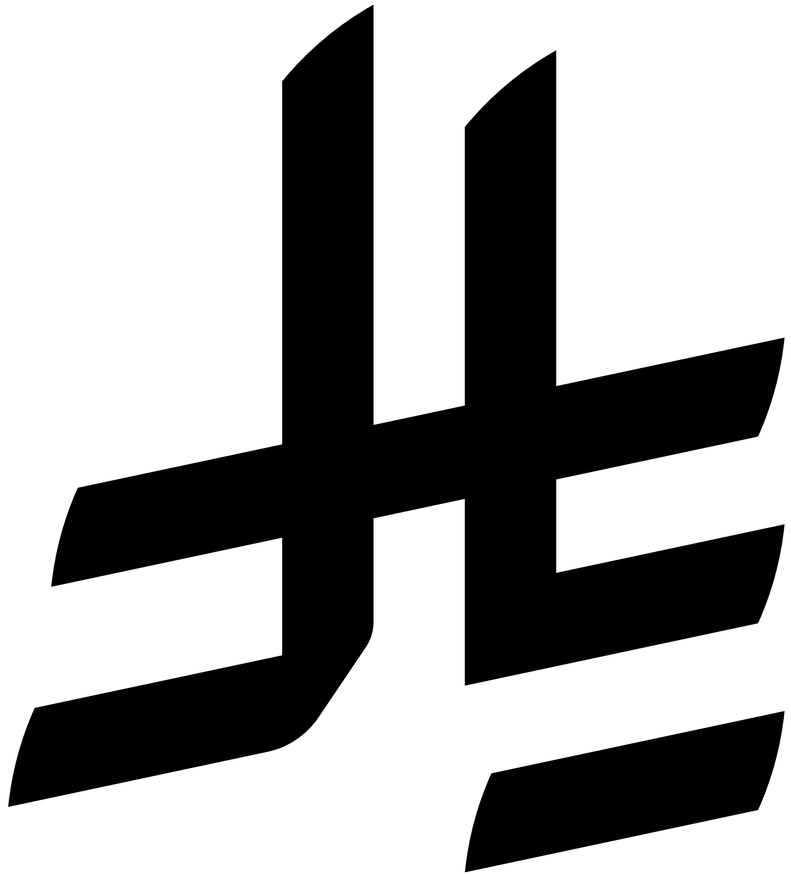
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The new Saudi Riyal symbol

On February 20, 2025, the Saudi Central Bank announced that King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud approved a new symbol for the Saudi riyal. This aims to boost global recognition by aligning it with major currencies like the dollar ($), euro (€), yen (¥), and pound (£).

The symbol blends Arabic script with modern design, preserving cultural identity while ensuring a clear, standardized look for financial transactions.

Beyond usability, it reinforces confidence in the Riyal, strengthening its stability and presence in global markets.



Sources:
Bloomberg | Semafor

Designed by
Committee, February 2025

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New Czechia Visual Identity

On July 16, 2025, Czechia launched its first unified state identity, replacing decades of fragmented government logos with a single recognisable face.

The system, by Studio Najbrt, follows global leaders like the UK and Sweden, showing that in governance, clarity equals credibility.

Six months earlier, our Symbols of Hope framework anticipated this shift — proposing Zimbabwe's Bird as the adaptable engine of a modern, unified identity system.



Sources:
Czech Gov

Designed by
Studio Najbrt, July 2025

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Majestic Legacy in Stone

The Zimbabwe Bird, a majestic figure steeped in history and legend, has long been a symbol of the nation's strength, courage, and resilience.

Inspired by the African Fish Eagle, the stone-carved national emblem embodies the spirit of Zimbabwe, its unwavering strength a testament to the nation's ability to overcome challenges and strive for greatness.

However, the intricate details of the original carving, while beautiful, limits its versatility in the modern world.



Designed by
Unknown

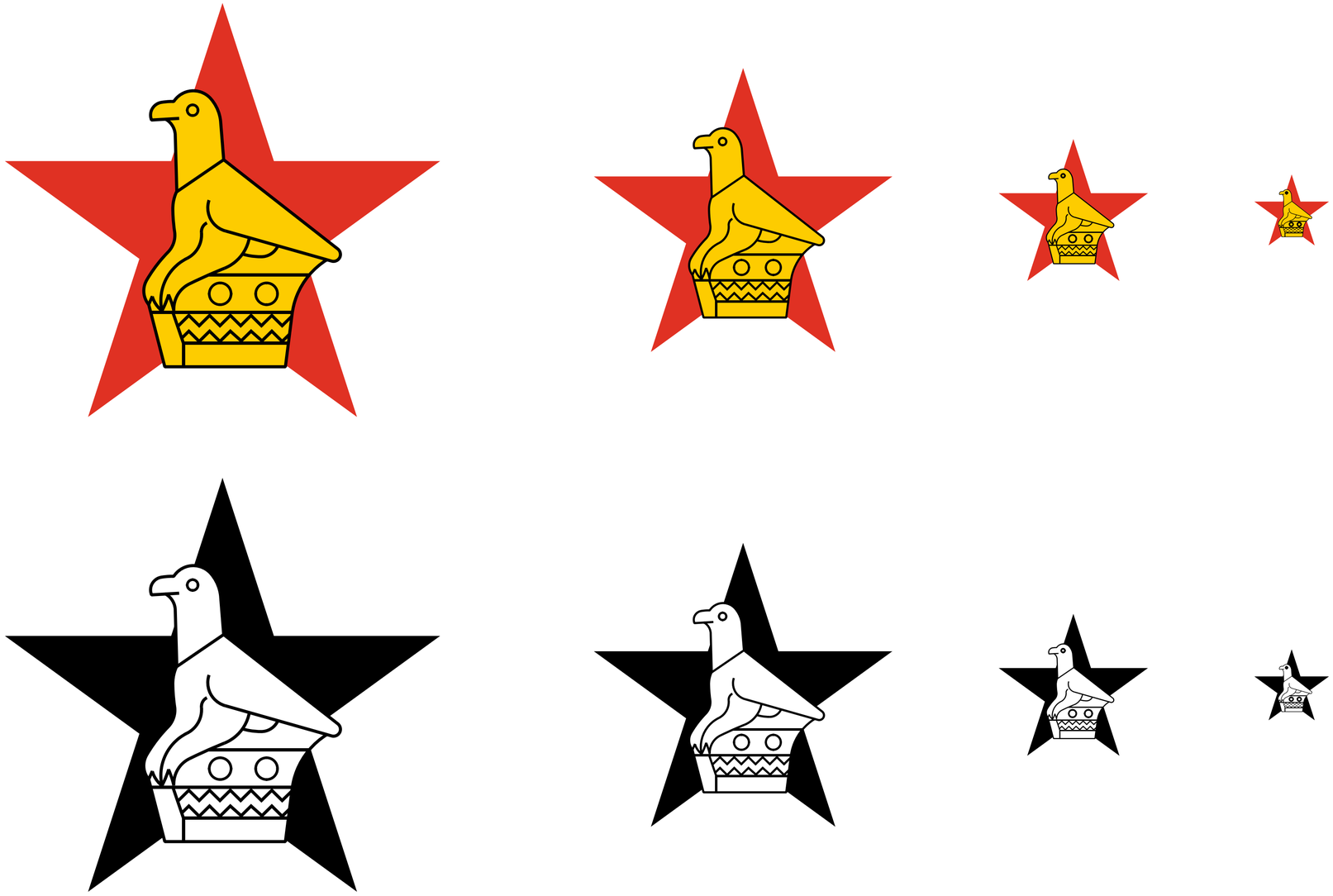
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Current Zimbabwe Bird

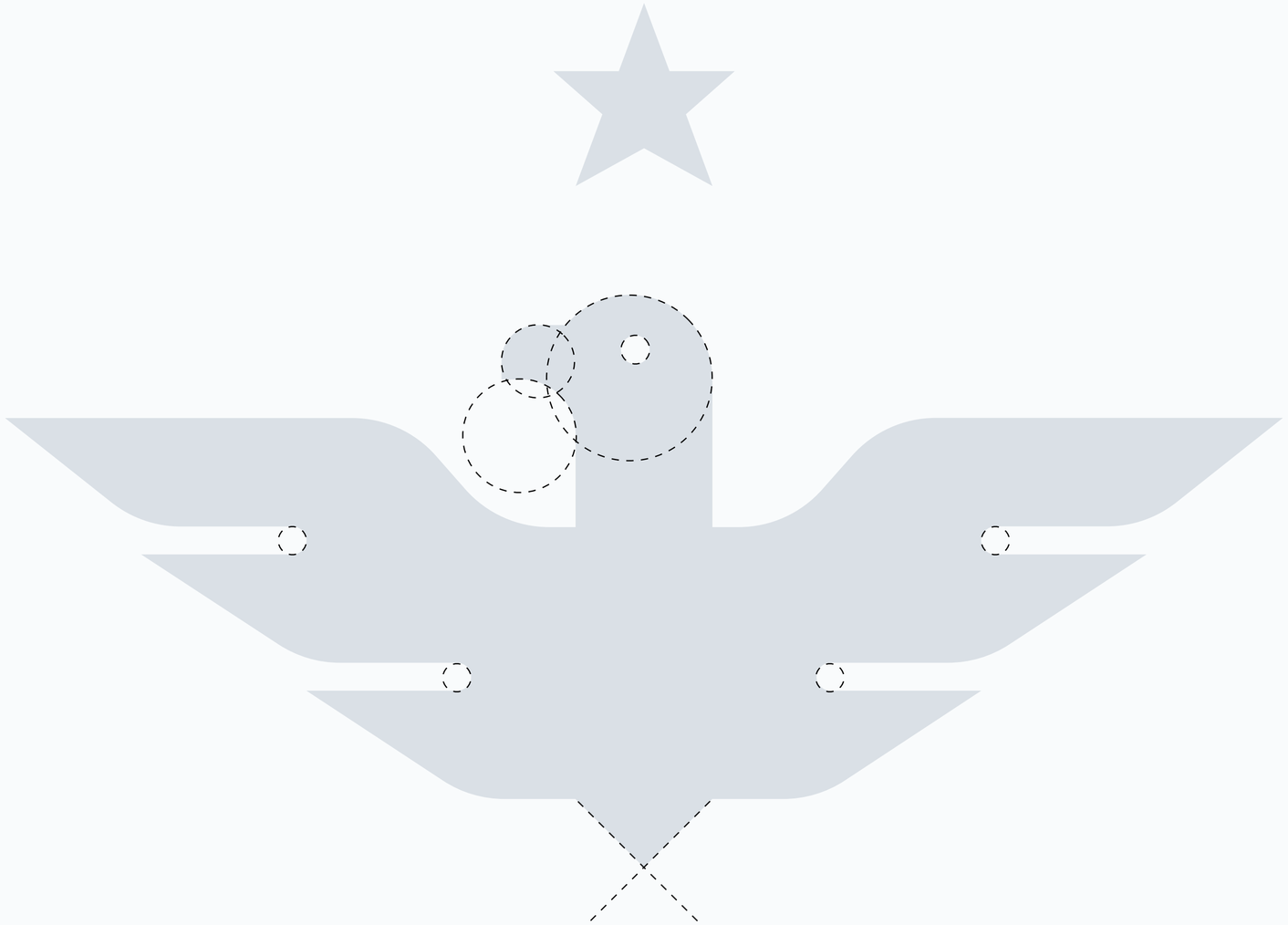
Complexity restricts
Limits use in more creative and modern applications. It also makes it challenging and expensive to embroider or print accurately, particularly on fabrics or small items.

Bird's posture
Whilst potentially signifying stability, the bird is static and somewhat lacking the dynamism and energy that would better represent a nation striving for progress.

Fine details lost
When reproduced at small sizes, such as on websites, social media icons, or promotional materials. This hinders its effectiveness in digital applications.



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Evolution. A Legacy that Soars.

To unleash its full potential, we reimagined the bird in flight, its wings outstretched, symbolising the nation's journey towards progress and prosperity.

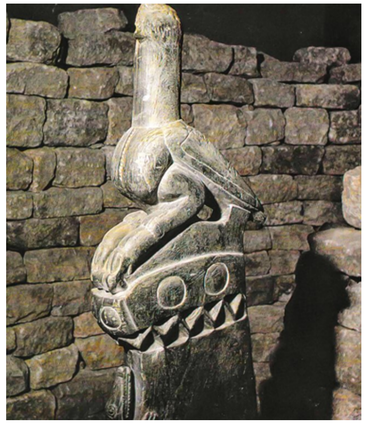
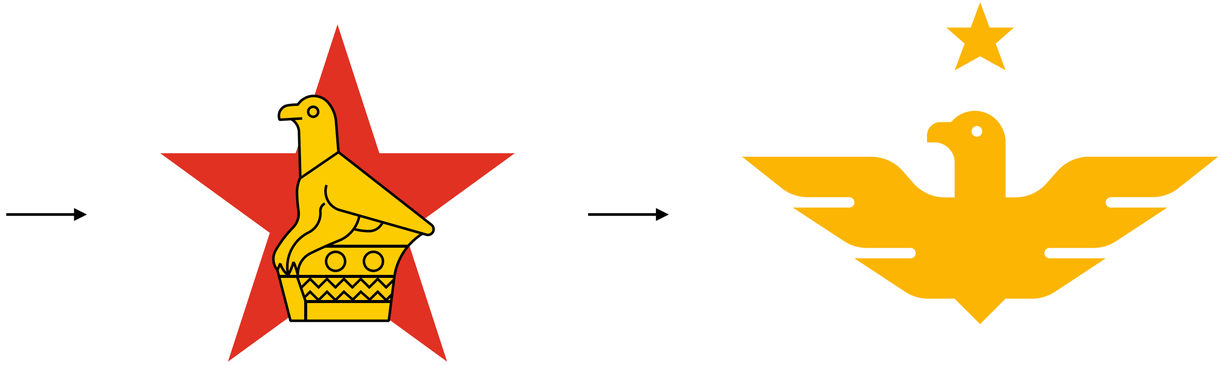


Image credit: **zim.gov.zw**



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New Zimbabwe Bird

This simplified form, rendered in a bold single colour, represents unity and adaptability.

Just as the eagle navigates the skies with grace and power, so too does Zimbabwe seek to overcome obstacles and reach new heights.

The streamlined design ensures the bird remains recognisable and impactful across all mediums, from digital platforms to embroidered emblems, carrying the spirit of Zimbabwe to every corner of the nation and the world.



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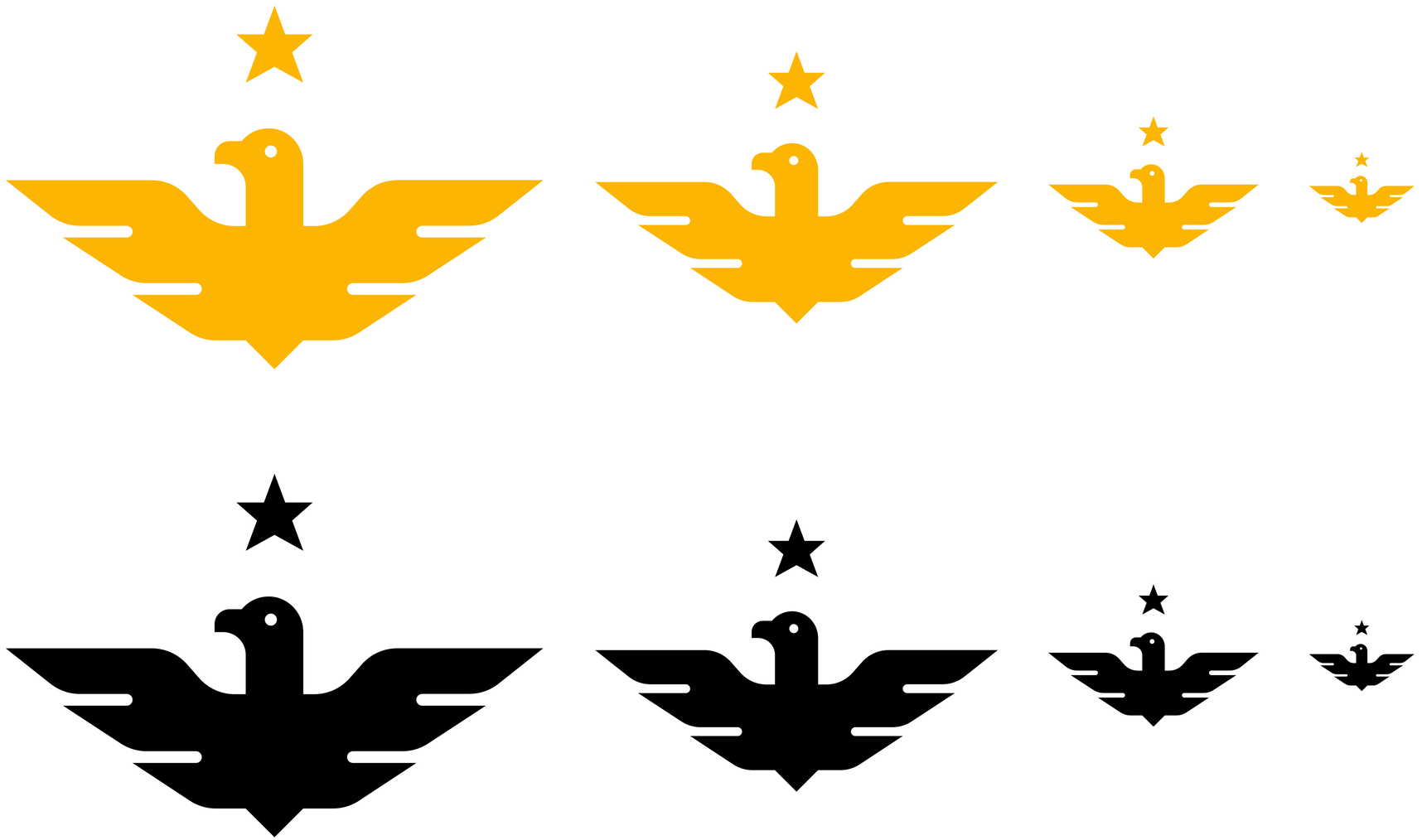
New Zimbabwe Bird

Removal of intricate details
Makes the bird more visually impactful and easier to reproduce across different mediums.

Scales well
The bird remains recognisable and legible in various sizes, from small digital icons to large-scale applications.

New posture
More dynamic, conveying a sense of aspiration, and flight towards the future.

Easier integration
Blends well with other design elements, making it more versatile for creating a cohesive visual identity system.



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Zimbabwe Flag

24

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Embracing Change: Evolution of a Flag

Flags are powerful symbols that bring people together. They help us feel connected to our country and each other, even when we're different. During special occasions, flags make us feel like we're all in this together and inspire us to work together for the good of our nation.

Throughout history, nations have evolved, and their flags have evolved with them. A flag is not merely a static emblem; it's a living symbol that reflects a nation's journey, its values, and its aspirations.

As societies change, so too can their flags, adapting to new eras and embracing fresh perspectives while honouring the past.

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A New Dawn: The Rwanda Flag

In 2001, Rwanda embraced a bold new flag as a defining step toward unity and renewal.

The striking blue, yellow, and green palette encapsulates the nation’s aspirations. The rising sun symbolises national unity, transparency, and enlightenment — illuminating the path toward progress.

Like South Africa’s post-apartheid flag, it became a beacon of hope, proving that national symbols can embody transformation and shape a country’s future.



Sources:
Government of Rwanda
CIA.GOV

Designed by
Alphonse Kirimobenecyo, December 2001

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Unity and reconciliation

South Africa's transition to a new flag in 1994, following the end of apartheid, is a particularly poignant example.

The new flag, with its vibrant colours and converging lines, symbolises unity, reconciliation, and the dawn of a new era.

It serves as a powerful reminder that a flag can embody the hopes and aspirations of a nation striving to overcome its past and build a more inclusive future.



Source:
Government of South Africa
BBC Article

Designed by
Fred Brownell, April 1994

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The Canadian Maple Leaf flag

Canada's adoption of the Maple Leaf flag in 1964 is a prime example of how a new flag can galvanise a nation and become a cherished symbol of identity.

Similarly, Australia's flag, with its prominent Commonwealth Star, reflects its history as a federation and its place within the Commonwealth of Nations.

These examples demonstrate that flag updates can be successful in modernising a nation's image while retaining core values and historical connections.



Sources:
Government of Canada
The Canadian Encyclopedia

Designed by
George Stanley, October 1964

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Beyond Stripes: A Symbol of Unity and Progress

Zimbabwe, like these nations, has a unique opportunity to reimagine its flag for the 21st century.

The Zimbabwean flag, with its vibrant colours and iconic emblem, has served as a powerful symbol of national identity for nearly half a century.



Source:
Government of Zimbabwe

Designed by
Richard Hove, Cedric Herbert, March 1980

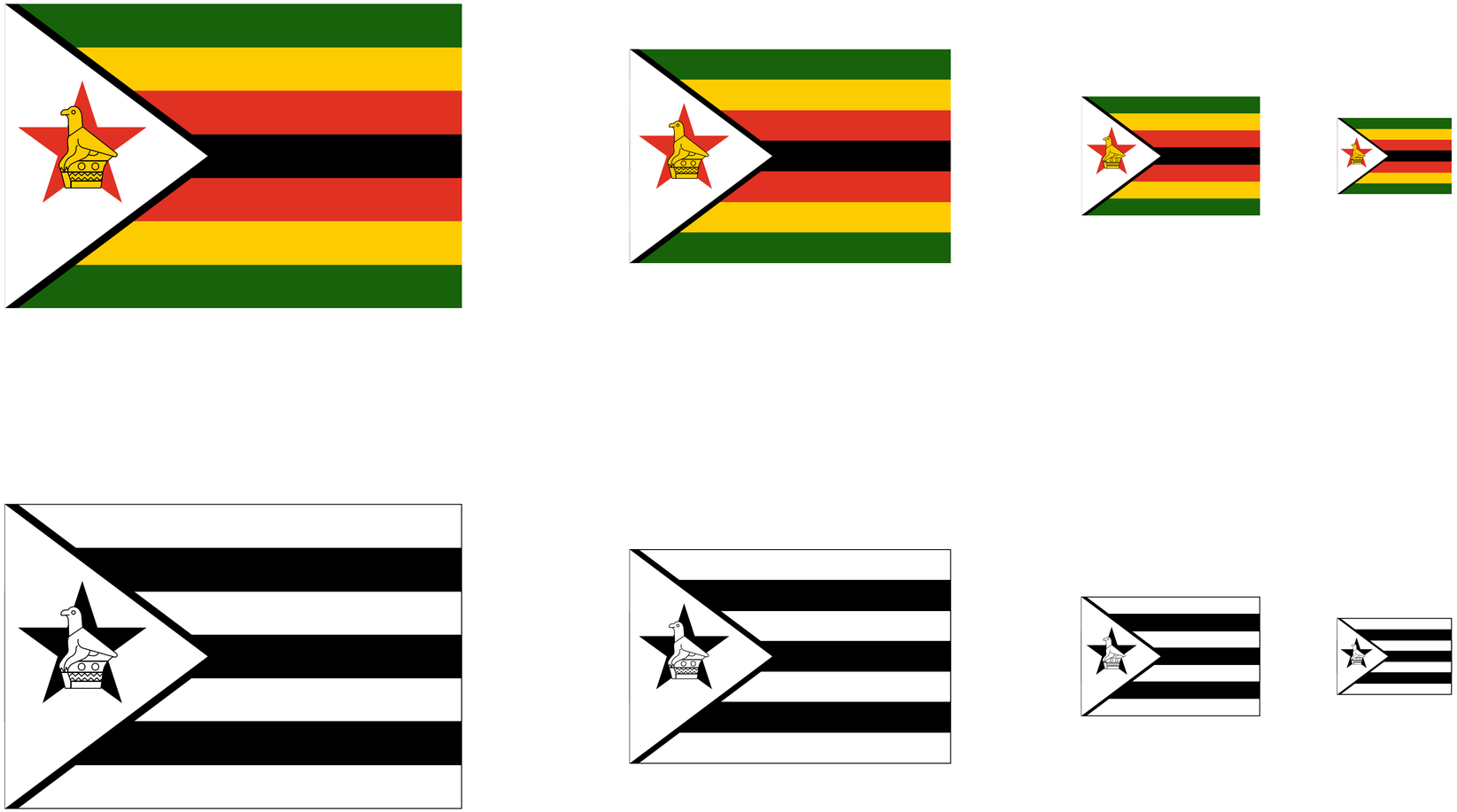
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Current Zimbabwe Bird

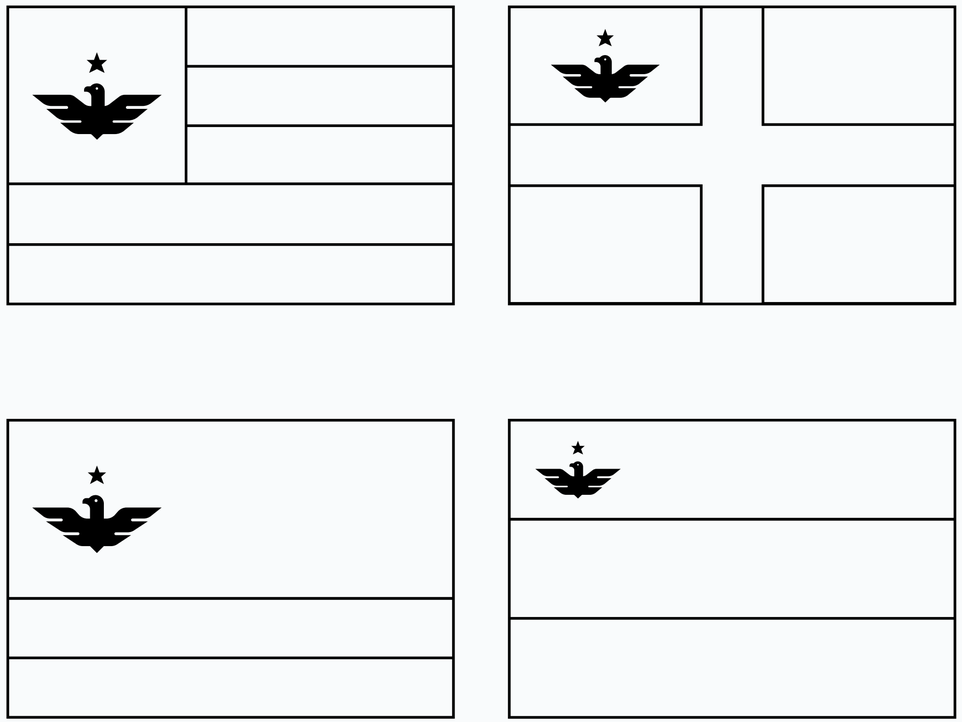
The current flag incorporates numerous elements – seven stripes, two triangles, a bird, a star, and intricate details within the bird – resulting in visual complexity that can make it less memorable.

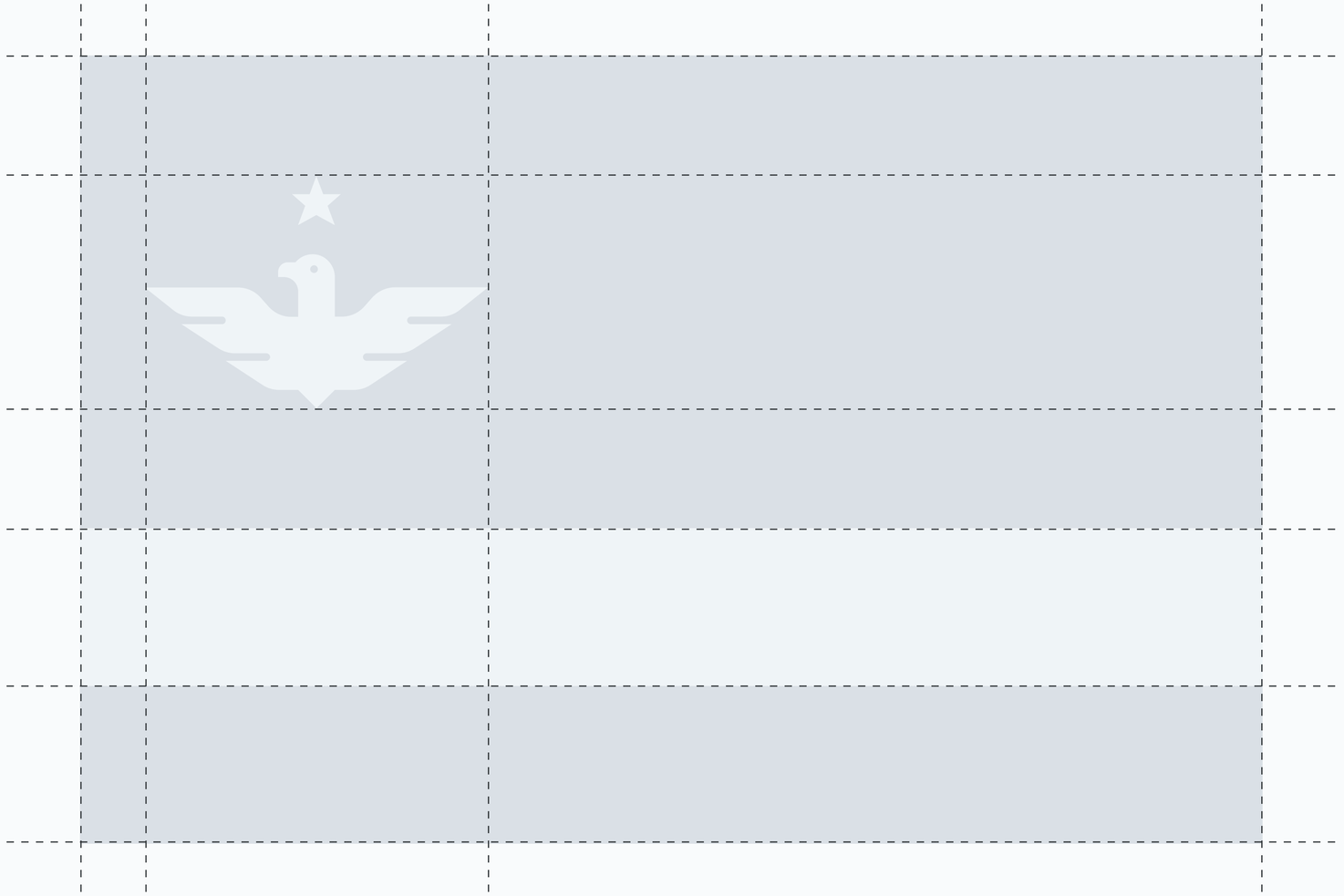
The small size and intricate details of the Zimbabwe Bird within the white triangle make it less prominent and harder to discern, especially from a distance. This diminishes its symbolic power as the national emblem.

The current design may not translate well to modern digital platforms and applications, where simplicity and clarity are crucial.



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New Zimbabwe Bird

The proposed new design retains core symbolic elements and keeps the spirit of our history while embracing a modern aesthetic.

By consolidating the meanings of black and white into the yellow, we acknowledge the wealth of the nation is not only in minerals — but also in our people, unity and the diversity that makes us strong.

It aims to unify the nation, inspire hope, and project a confident image to the world.



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New Zimbabwe Bird

Simplified design
Much easier to remember and reproduce, which is crucial for a national symbol.

Draws the viewer
The reduction of intricate details and multiple stripes now draws the viewer’s attention to the Zimbabwe Bird — making it the dominant element.

More harmonious
The use of green, gold, and red maintains a connection to the original flag's symbolism while creating a more harmonious and visually appealing palette.



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JANUARY
2024
MO TU WE TH FR SA SU
01 02 03 04 05 06 07
08 09 10 11 12 13 14
15 16 17 18 19 20 21
22 23 24 25 26 27 28
29 30 31
FEBRUARY
2024
MO TU WE TH FR SA SU
01 02 03 04
05 06 07 08 09 10 11
12 13 14 15 16 17 18
19 20 21 22 23 24 25
26 27 28 29
Bumi Hills Safari Lodge | Lake Kariba Hotels
VISIT ZIMBABWE







Coat Of Arms

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St John’s College, Cambridge

In August 2025, St John’s College unveiled a bold rebrand, redrawing its centuries-old crest for digital and modern use.

Agency SomeOne refined details, simplified the heraldry, and reframed the College as the “home of big ideas.”

Earlier that year, our Symbols of Hope framework advanced the same principle for Zimbabwe’s Coat of Arms: streamline complexity while preserving heritage.

Both prove tradition can adapt without losing its authority.



ST JOHN’S COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Sources:
SomeOne | DesignWeek UK

Designed by
SomeOne London, July 2025

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Heraldic Tapestry of Ages

The Zimbabwe Coat of Arms is a heraldic emblem rich in symbolism, of the nation's history, values, and aspirations.

This intricate emblem, a source of national pride, embodies the spirit of Zimbabwe and its journey through history.

Zimbabwe's reimagined Coat of Arms has the potential to inspire a global evolution in heraldic design, positioning the nation as a pioneer in this field and encouraging other countries to re-evaluate their own symbols.



Source:
Government of Zimbabwe

Designed by
Unknown Committee

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Current Coat Of Arms

The numerous elements and abundant details can make the Coat of Arms appear busy and lack a clear focal point, diminishing its visual impact, especially when reproduced in smaller sizes.

The inclusion of both a hoe and an AK-47, while intended to symbolise the transition from war to peace, can also create a mixed message, potentially associating the nation with violence.

















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Coat of Arms Silhouette

To tackle the complexity of the current coat of arms, we took a first principles approach — redesigning the symbol as a silhouette first.

We prioritised the symbol’s core form and structure, but consolidated the wreath, earth mound and its associated components.

This ensures clarity and recognisability even when reduced to its simplest representation.

Additionally, the silhouette-first design promotes versatility, ensuring the arms translate well across various applications, sizes, and mediums, from digital platforms to physical products.

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Coat of Arms Evolution

Initially we reduced the arms to simple colours (fig 3 and 4), preferring fewer hues so we could enhance the visual contrast.

However, we quickly discovered that the symbol became very dark in stark contrast to the original. And reseeded in applications such as embroidery.

We processed to re-introduce a fuller colour range and continued iterating on the various shades so that the symbol would produce well in multiple reproductions.

Fig 1



Original / Current Design

Fig 2



Reductive colour

Fig 3



Reductive colour with green tones

Fig 4



Re-introducing brown tones

Fig 5



Enhancing brown tones

Fig 6



Final design

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New Coat Of Arms

The core elements of the Coat of Arms remain unchanged. The Great Zimbabwe Monument, the kudus, and the motto still hold their central positions, ensuring continuity with the nation's history and values.

The prominence of the Zimbabwe Bird, promotes a sense of national unity, a shared identity, and transcendence of any political divides.

Subtle refinements to the kudus, shield, and other elements improve the overall clarity and balance of the design. The details are more defined, making the emblem easier to recognise and understand.

















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FREEDOM
WORK
UNITY


FREEDOM
UNITY
WORK






FREEDOM
UNITY
WORK

Unified System

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One unifying symbol to guide them all

Defining a primary visual motif to unify government communications offers significant benefits.

It creates a sense of unity and cohesion across different government departments and agencies, strengthening the overall brand identity.

It enhances public recognition, making it easier for citizens to identify and interact with government services.

This approach draws inspiration from successful examples like the Canadian maple leaf and the gov.uk logo, both of which demonstrate the power of a single, iconic symbol to represent a nation and its values.

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A Hierarchy of Symbols

The Zimbabwe Bird and the Coat of Arms hold significant meaning for the nation, their roles within the visual identity system are distinct.

The Coat of Arms, with its intricate design and heraldic symbolism, should be reserved for formal occasions and high-level government communications. It represents the authority and sovereignty of the state.

The Zimbabwe Bird, on the other hand, offers greater versatility and lends itself to more ubiquitous use. Its simplified form and dynamic symbolism make it an ideal visual motif for a wider range of applications, from everyday government communications and public awareness campaigns to digital platforms and citizen engagement initiatives. This distinction ensures that both symbols retain their unique significance while contributing to a cohesive and impactful national identity.



Coat Of Arms



Zimbabwe Bird

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A Hierarchy of Colour

Green (The State): Used for Ministries, Embassies, and Departments. It represents the land, agriculture, and the operational body of the nation.

Parchment (The Head of State): Reserved exclusively for the Office of the President. It represents the document of the law and the weight of history.

Gold/Blue(The Services): Assigned to security and civil services, denoting protection and excellence.



Green **Parchment** **Gold** **Blue**

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Canadian Maple Leaf

The Canadian maple leaf, instantly recognisable around the world, has become synonymous with Canada itself.

Its simple form, singular bold red colour, and association with the natural beauty of the country have made it a beloved symbol that fosters national unity and pride.

The maple leaf appears on everything from the national flag to postage stamps, military uniforms, and government websites, creating a consistent and instantly recognisable visual identity.



Sources:
Government of Canada
The Canadian Encyclopedia

Designed by
George Stanley, October 1964

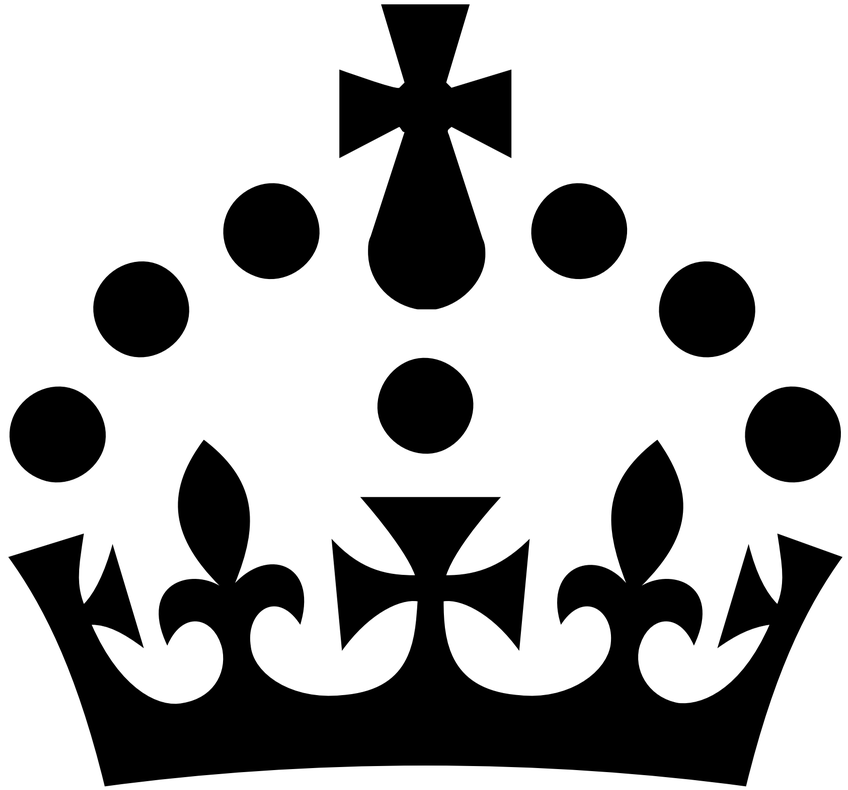
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GOV.UK Logo

The GOV.UK logo, launched in 2012, is a testament to the power of simplicity and clarity in design.

Its clean lines, geometric shapes, and bold use of negative space create a modern and versatile symbol that works effectively across various platforms and applications.

The logo's minimalist aesthetic reflects the UK government's commitment to efficiency and accessibility, while its bold colour palette adds a touch of personality and distinction.



Sources:
Public Digital

Designed by
Ben Terrett & Design Team, 2012

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The National Design Studio

In August 2025, the United States formalised what the UK had demonstrated: that unified design is a matter of national governance.

President Trump's executive order established the National Design Studio to mandate a coherent visual language across all federal services, digital and physical.

The Studio exists to make government both beautiful and functional. Proof that the world's leading nations now treat visual identity as essential infrastructure.



Sources:
Executive Order, Improving Our Nation Through Better Design, The White House

Designed by
National Design Studio, 2025

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Adapting the Zimbabwe Bird

The Zimbabwe Bird, as the unifying symbol of the government identity system, has the potential to become a powerful tool for communication and national pride.

By drawing inspiration from successful examples like the Canadian maple leaf and the gov.uk logo, this approach embraces a modern and effective design strategy that can strengthen the government's image and foster a sense of unity among the people of Zimbabwe.



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GOV·ZW

Flag of Zimbabwe



Flag of Zimbabwe



Office Of The President



Presidential Flag



Embassy Seal



Embassy Flag



Embassy Logo



Zimbabwe Embassy



Zimbabwe Embassy

Embassy Per Country



Zimbabwe Embassy South Africa



Zimbabwe Embassy Russia

City Level



City Of Harare



City Of Bulawayo

Parliament



Public Service



Supreme Court



Police Badge



Police Flag



Defence Forces



Army Badge





Army Rank Stars



Ministry Departments

2 Lines

Ministry of Finance & Economic Development

3 Lines

Ministry of
Finance & Economic Development

4 Lines

Ministry of
Finance & Economic
Development

Coat Of Arms



Sports & Recreation Commission

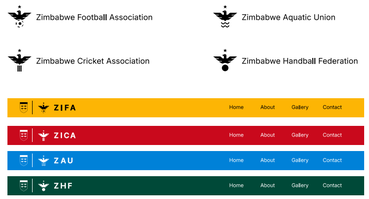


National Team Badge

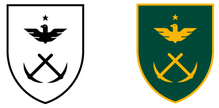


Associations





Miners Association



Proudly Zimbabwean



University Of Zimbabwe



Tourism Association



License Plate

Standard



Commercial



Members Of Parliament



Embassies & Dignitaries



Zimbabwe Republic Police



Zimbabwe Defence Forces



Office Of The President



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Disparity on a Civic Level

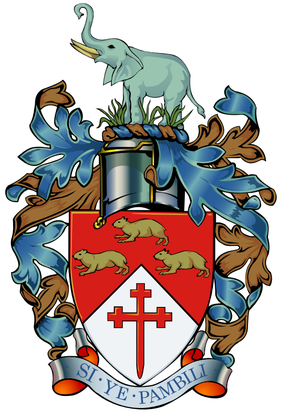
Zimbabwe’s civic identity is fragmented, with each city operating under its own coat of arms.

Harare, Bulawayo, and Mutare share no common style or message, creating “sub-identities” that compete with national unity.

This disunity goes beyond aesthetics; it signals deeper fragmentation, where cities feel separate rather than integral to one cohesive nation.



City Of Harare



City Of Bulawayo



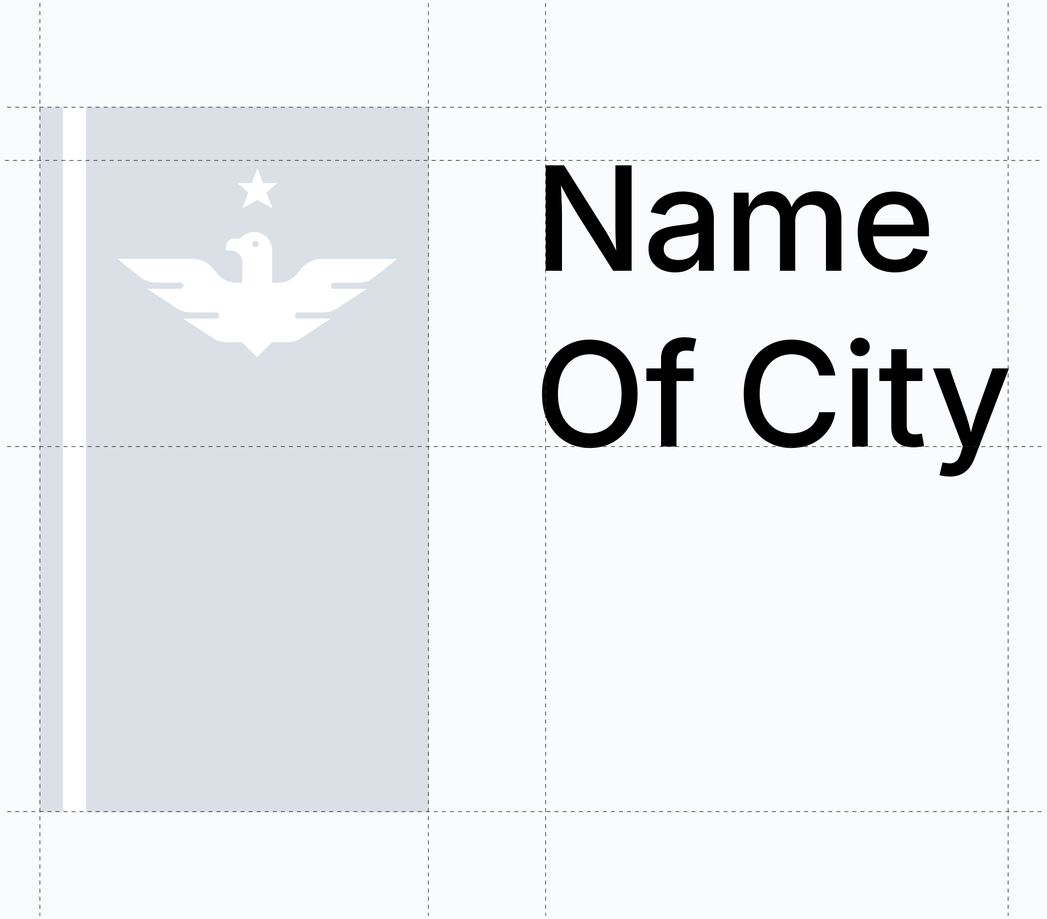
City Of Mutare

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A Pragmatic Path to Unity

We propose a phased, pragmatic approach: introduce a unified city-level identity for everyday use while reserving traditional crests for ceremonial occasions.

This balances respect for heritage with the need for cohesion. By mirroring the national hierarchy, cities gain a clear, consistent identity system that bridges the past and future without abrupt disruption.



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Fostering National Pride

A unified civic identity strengthens belonging, modernises branding, and creates consistency across cities.

It fosters national pride by showing Harare, Bulawayo, and Mutare as parts of one whole.

Over time, this system reduces resistance by retaining ceremonial crests, builds familiarity through daily use, and lays the foundation for modernised crests.



City Of Bulawayo



City Of Harare



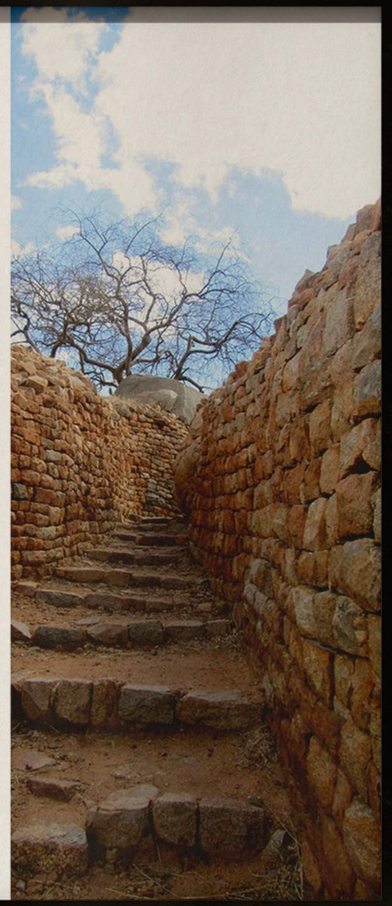
City Of Mutare

Image Credit:
Zimbabwe Tourism

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City Of
Bulawayo

Welcome to Bulawayo



Khami Ruins

Khami is a ruined city located 22 kilometres west of Bulawayo, in Zimbabwe. It was once the capital of the Kingdom of Butua of the Torwa dynasty.


ZIMBABWE
TOURISM
VISIT
ZIMBABWE


Supreme Court
Parliament Reception
SUPREME COURT
PARLIAMENT
ZIMBABWE



ZIMBABWE EMBASSY

SOUTH AFRICA

GOV.ZW Centralised Digital Government

We are further proposing a centralised and unified Government website. The redesign of Zimbabwe’s government website envisions a single, centralised platform aimed at improving usability, accessibility, and efficiency. This ensures a unified experience where all government information follows the same structure, design, and accessibility standards.

By streamlining services and prioritising a search-first approach, citizens and businesses can quickly find critical information without navigating fragmented sites. This transformation not only modernises the government’s digital presence but also fosters transparency, engagement, and ease of use for all Zimbabweans.

Here’s how it works:

- Each department or ministry has a dedicated section within **GOV.ZW**
- These sections function like subpages rather than separate websites, maintaining consistency in navigation and branding.
- The search function spans all departments, making information easy to find.

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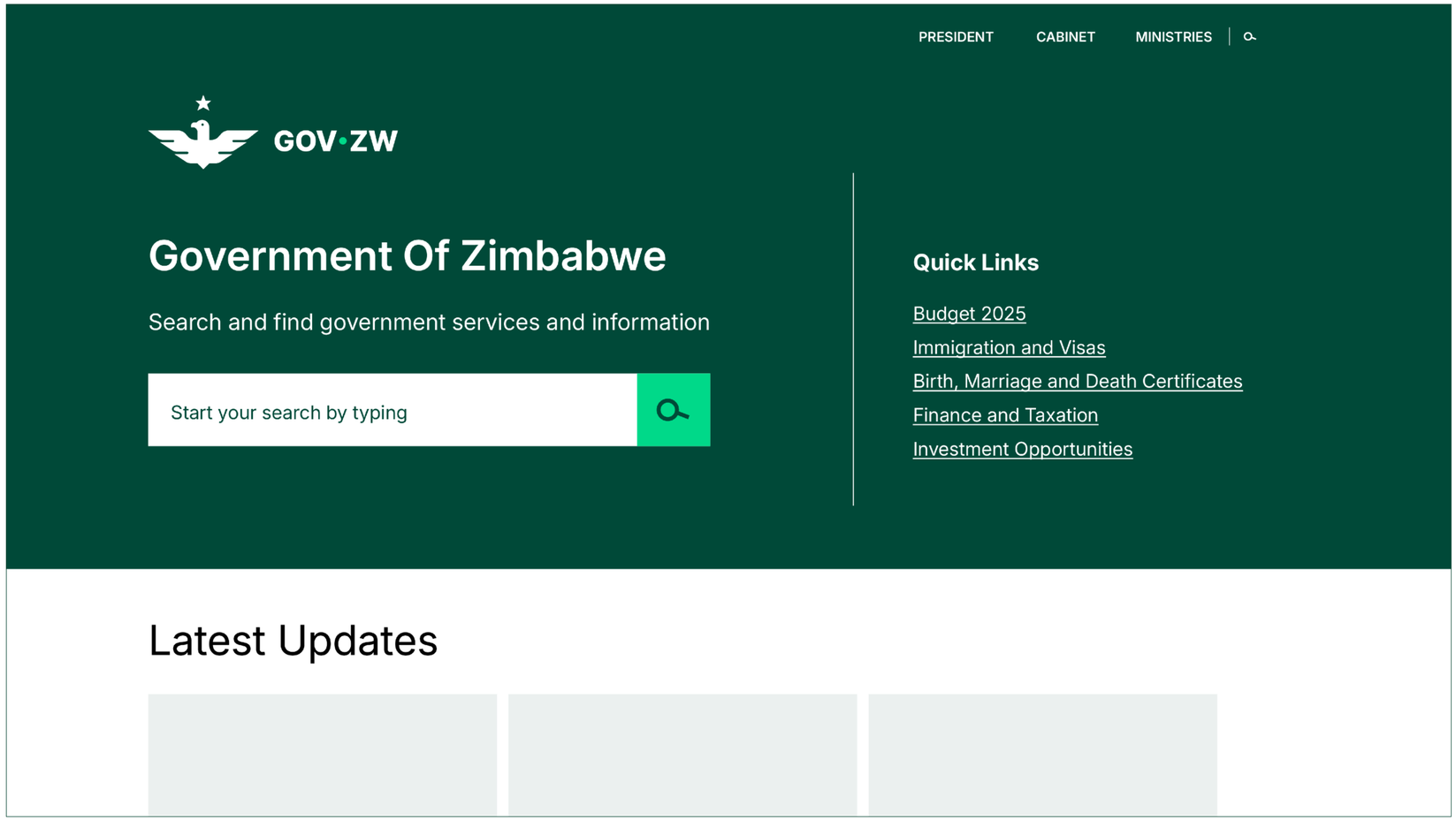
Application





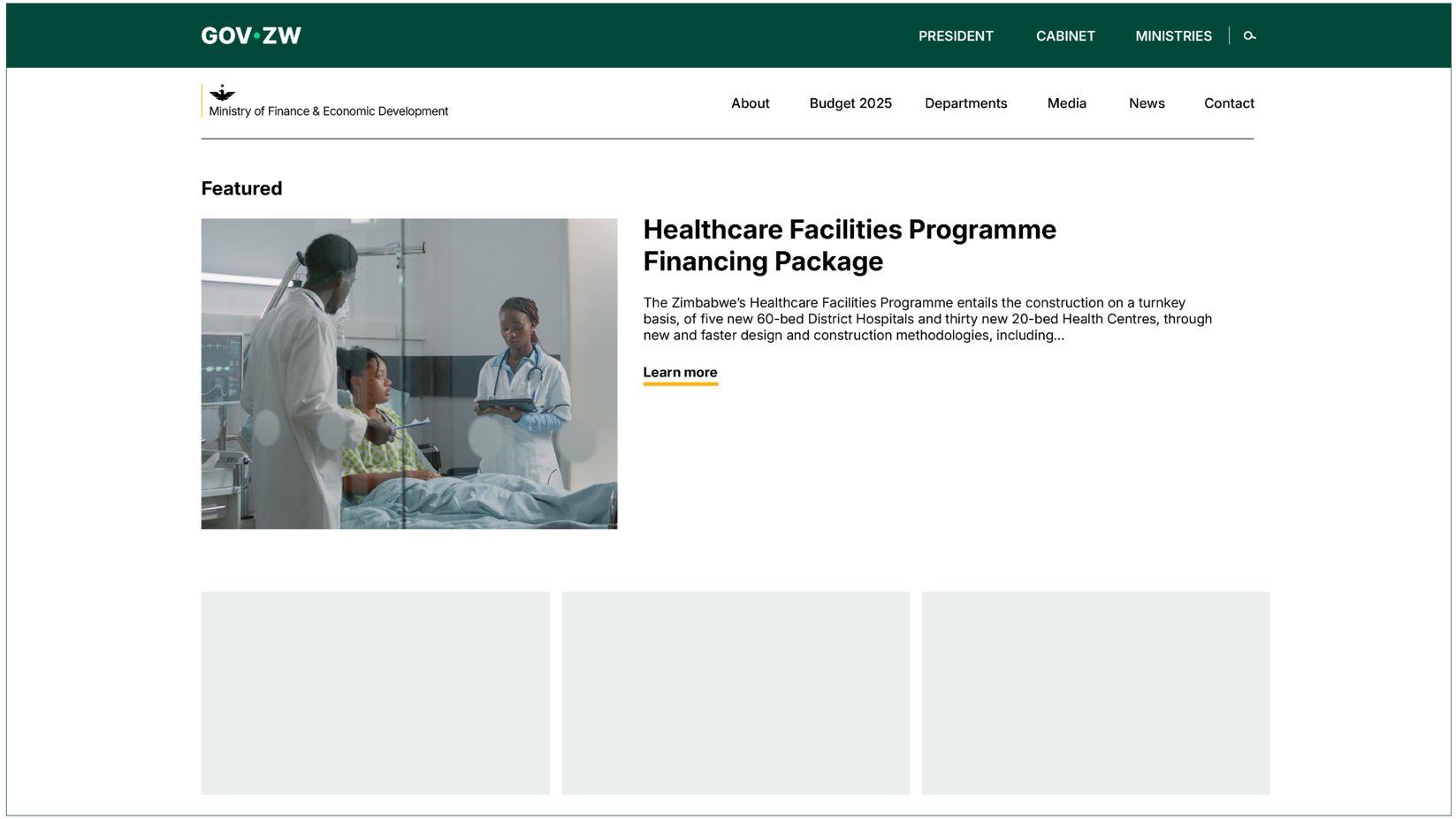
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Main homepage



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Example of a department or ministry’s dedicated section



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Presidential Seal

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Presidential Seal: A Symbol of Leadership

While Zimbabwe has historically not utilised a distinct Presidential Seal, this reimagined identity system introduces one as a symbol of the highest office in the land.

The Presidential Seal serves to represent the authority and leadership of the President, distinguishing official communications and actions from those of other government bodies.



Presidential Seal Full Color



Presidential Seal Silhouette

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Presidential Seal: A Symbol of Leadership

While the State flies Green to represent the land, the Office of the President is grounded on Parchment. This is profound.

The parchment tone is not merely a neutral colour; it is a texture of memory. It echoes the ancient stone surfaces where our ancestors first painted their stories, linking the highest office to the nation’s roots. Functionally, it provides a foundation of clarity, allowing the Coat of Arms to stand with absolute authority. Symbolically, it affirms that this identity does not erase history, but provides a dignified space for it.

The President stands as a neutral custodian of the Constitution.

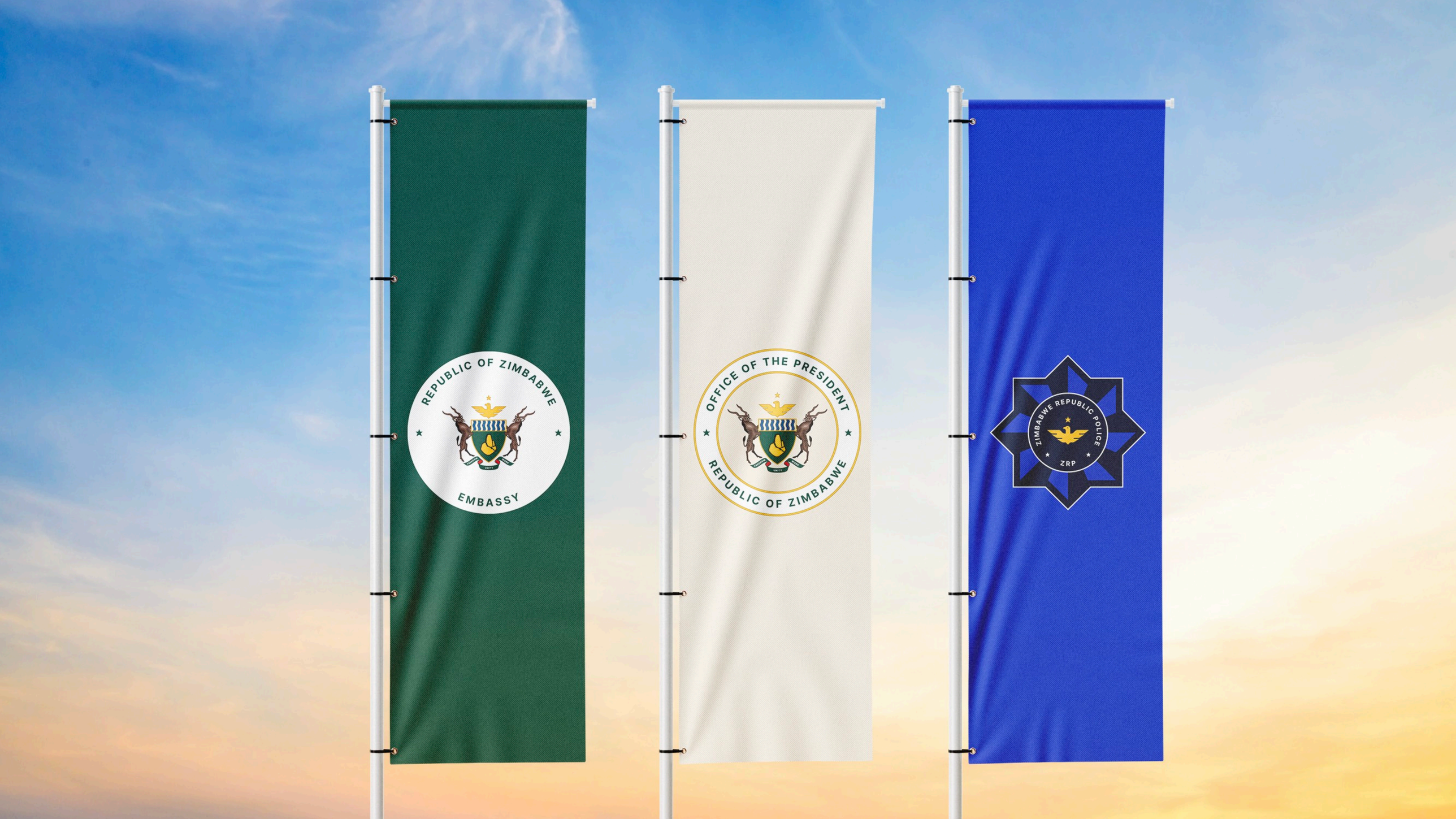


Presidential Flag

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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE
You are cordially invited
to the State House.
Mr President


OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE
PROUDLY ZIMBABWEAN
PROUDLY ZIMBABWEAN


REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE
EMBASSY
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE
ZIMBABWE REPUBLIC POLICE
ZRP

University Of Zimbabwe

75

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Foundation Through Change

Founded in 1952, and shaped by independence, the University of Zimbabwe has remained a constant through decades of national change.

More than the country’s oldest university, it helped establish the foundations of modern higher education in Zimbabwe. Many of today’s public institutions trace their origins, standards, or structures to UZ.

Through periods of uncertainty, it continued to produce leaders, researchers, doctors, and innovators, building far more than graduates.

UZ helped build the system itself.



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Exploring the Big Idea

The University of Zimbabwe's crest has served the institution for over four decades. Yet its complexity made it difficult to scale, recognise, and reproduce consistently in a modern environment.

Having explored evolution, rather than refining individual elements, we returned to a simpler premise: what best represents UZ today?

The answer became clear. The Zimbabwe Bird was not merely one symbol among many, but the big idea connecting them all.

From that insight, the exploration shifted from preserving forms to a more radical evolution that expresses purpose with greater clarity.



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A Symbol of Continuity

The new mark draws inspiration from the story of the University of Zimbabwe itself. Like the institution, it bridges heritage and progress, honouring the past while looking to the future.

Its simplified form strengthens recognition while preserving the ideas that matter most: **heritage**, **resilience**, and **excellence**.

More than a visual identity, it represents continuity. A reminder that enduring institutions help shape enduring nations, carrying their purpose forward from one generation to the next.



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UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE
UZ
FOUNDED 1952


UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE
UZ
FOUNDED 1952


UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE
UZ
UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE
UZ

Number Plate System

82

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The Number Plate System

Very few identity touch-points reach more people, more consistently, than the number plate. Plates reach everyone. Every driver, every passenger, every pedestrian. More citizens will encounter a number plate in a single day than any government publication, campaign, or public interface.

Number plates operate across every province, institution, and social class simultaneously. They are functional infrastructure and identity infrastructure at the same time.

This system treats the plate not as a vehicle classifier, but as a canvas for the country to make itself legible at volume and speed.



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Four Elements On Every Plate

Every plate in the system carries four shared elements. These remain constant.

The **ZW** country identifier anchors Zimbabwe's international code.

The National Designation, '**Republic of Zimbabwe**', as constitutional assertion.

The **digital signature** provides a layer of verification and authentication.

The symbol completes the panel.

The **Zimbabwe Bird** for standard and commercial plates.

The **Coat of Arms** for diplomatic, security, government and presidential.



Diplomatic Number Plate



Standard Number Plate

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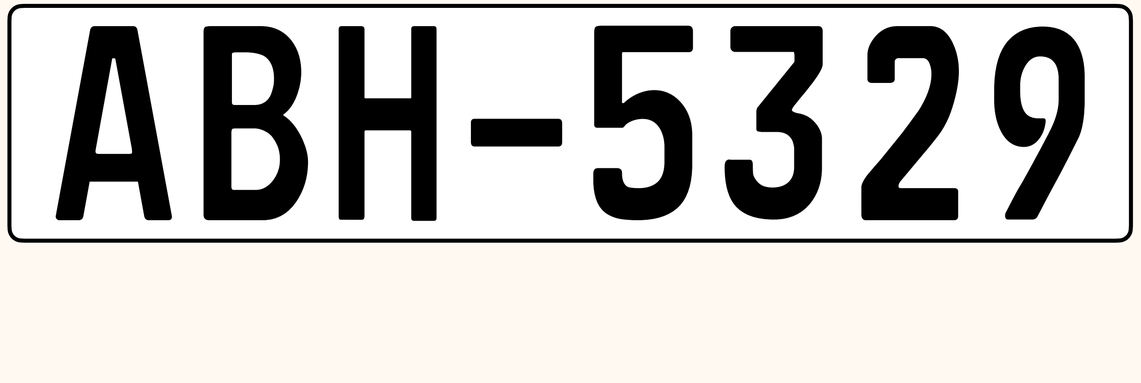
From FE-Schrift to D-DIN Bold

FE-Schrift, the anti-tampering typeface developed in Germany in the 1980s, solved a physical security problem through deliberate visual distortion. It worked by making characters harder to alter by hand.

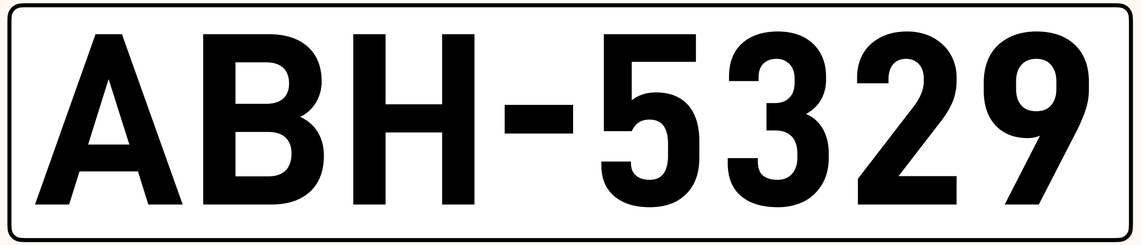
Modern plate security has moved beyond that: encrypted verification, AI-driven ANPR, tamper-evident substrates. Security no longer needs to live in the font.

We selected D-DIN Bold because the font can now do what fonts are for — legibility and readability at speed, manufacturing consistency, and a national visual identity that reads as contemporary and intentional.

FE-SCHRIFT



D-DIN Bold



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Design & Specifications

The wide-format plate runs 440mm across by 110mm tall. The identity panel occupies the left 50mm, housing the national symbol, ZW country identifier, and digital signature in a structured vertical column.

The registration field takes the remaining 390mm, with the National Designation set above in a consistent position across all categories.

Character height runs 60mm. Typeface is D-DIN Bold throughout. Every dimension is fixed.



Wide Format



Stacked Format

UNITS IN MILLIMETRES (MM)

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Institutional Hierarchy in Colour

Colour functions as institutional language within the system.

Standard vehicles use black on yellow. Commercial vehicles use red on white.

The Police use blue on white. The Zimbabwe Defence Forces exclusively use black plates with white text.

Legislature uses green on white. Diplomats use black on white.

Each category is identifiable instantly, even at distance or speed.



Standard Vehicles



Commercial Vehicles



Police Vehicles



Zimbabwe Defence Forces Vehicles



Legislature Vehicles



Diplomats Vehicles

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The Head of State: PREZIM

PREZIM is the standout decision in the system. A constitutional mnemonic in the tradition of PM and POTUS. It names the office, not the occupant. It carries the authority of the presidency while remaining immediately readable by every Zimbabwean on the street.

In a system where colour communicates category and numbers communicate identity, PREZIM communicates permanence.

The Office of the President sits apart from every other category. Parchment fill, black text. The colour of constitutional documents and weight, made visible on a moving vehicle.



The Office of the President

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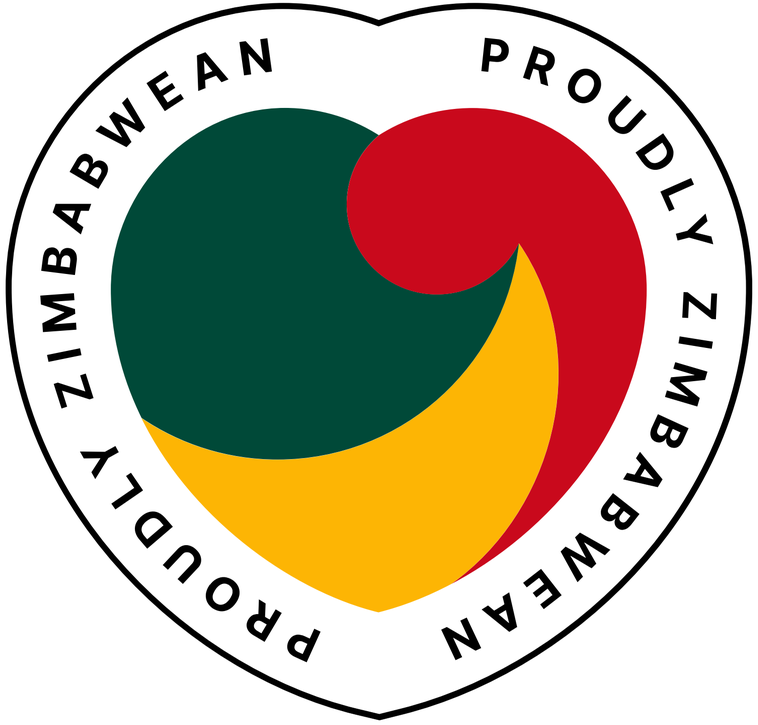
Proudly Zimbabwean

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Proudly Label:
A Symbol of National Excellence

The Proudly Zimbabwean label is a mark of quality, authenticity, and national pride. It represents products and services that reflect Zimbabwe's craftsmanship, resilience, and ingenuity.

More than just a label, it reinforces local enterprise, strengthens national identity, and signals Zimbabwe's ability to compete confidently on the global stage while inspiring citizens to support homegrown excellence.



Proudly Zimbabwean — Full Color



Proudly Zimbabwean — Silhouette

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Proudly Label:

Defining a Standard of Pride

The label embodies:

- **Authenticity** – Products made with local resources and expertise.
- **Excellence** – High standards that showcase Zimbabwean quality.
- **National Unity** – A shared commitment to uplifting local enterprise.
- **Global Recognition** – Positioning Zimbabwean goods with international credibility.

By adopting this label, Zimbabweans invest in their future, elevate national craftsmanship, and reinforce a legacy of pride, innovation, and self-reliance.



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ZIMBABWE
LIMITED EDITION
U$2


ZIMBABWE
PROUDLY ZIMBABWEAN
PROUDLY ZIMBABWEAN
LIMITED EDITION
U$1


PROUDLY ZIMBABWEAN
PROUDLY ZIMBABWEAN


PROUDLY ZIMBABWEAN
PROUDLY ZIMBABWEAN

Conclusion

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A Vision for Unity

This reimagined visual identity system for Zimbabwe is undoubtedly a bold step towards a future where the nation's symbols can help inspire a greater sense of unity and patriotism, despite all our political affiliations and persuasions.

My deep desire is that this exercise would, at the very least, spark a meaningful and thoughtful dialogue. And at best, ignite a shared sense of national pride within each reader.

John Murinye
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Zarura Creative

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