

# SYMBOLS OF HOPE



An Editorial Case Study in National Unity  
& Identity Design



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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# A labor of love

## A note from the Creators

This endeavour has been a labor of love, with copious hours dedicated to crafting a visual identity that truly reflects the heart and soul of Zimbabwe. Over a period of a year, we have invested three months in the meticulous process of research, design, and refinement, ensuring that every element resonates with the nation's values and aspirations.



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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.**

# 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.

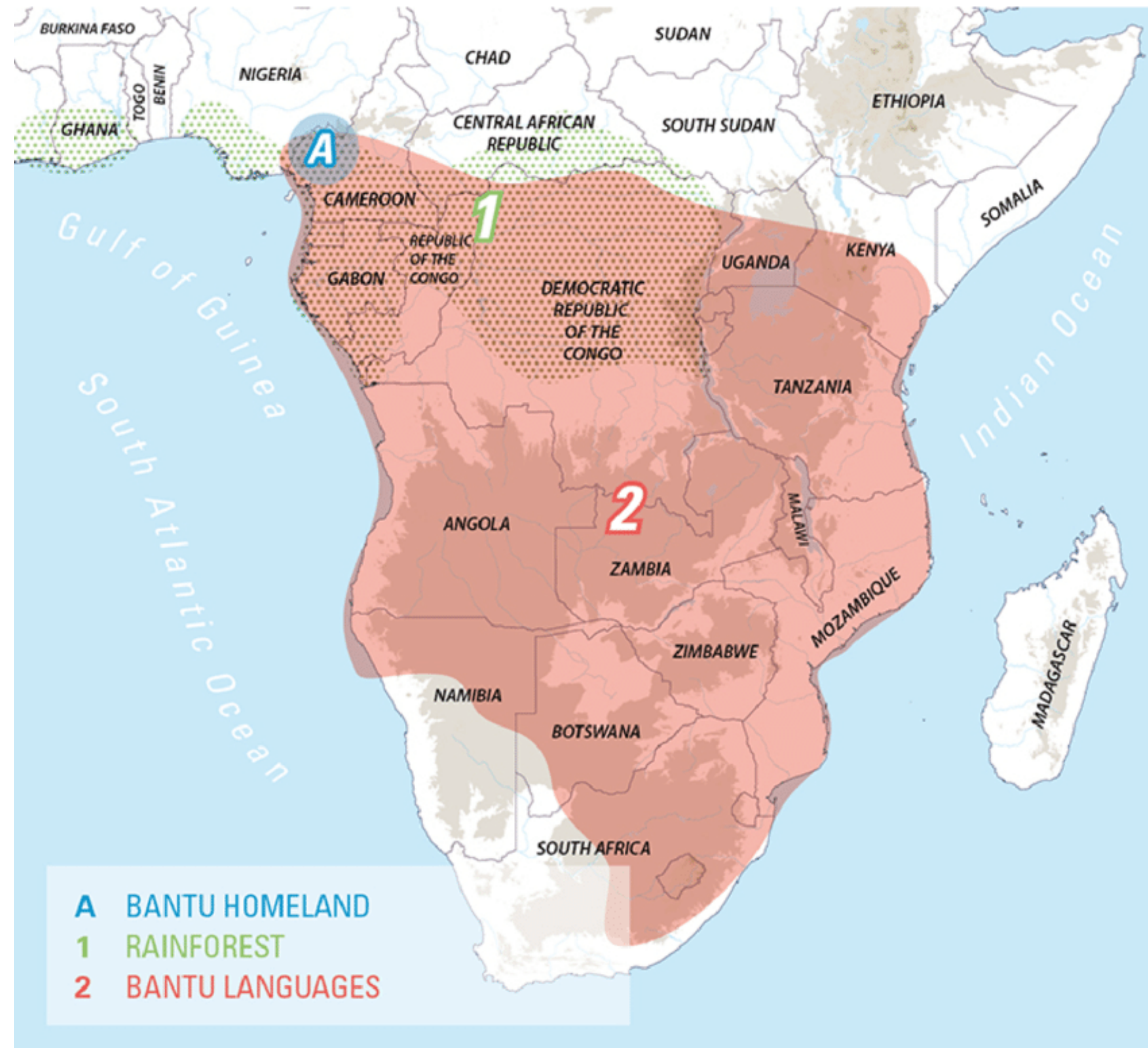


Image Credit: Koen Bostoën | Moritz Zauleck

Sources: [ResearchGate](#)

# 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.

# 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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# Zimbabwe

09

# Bird



# 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.

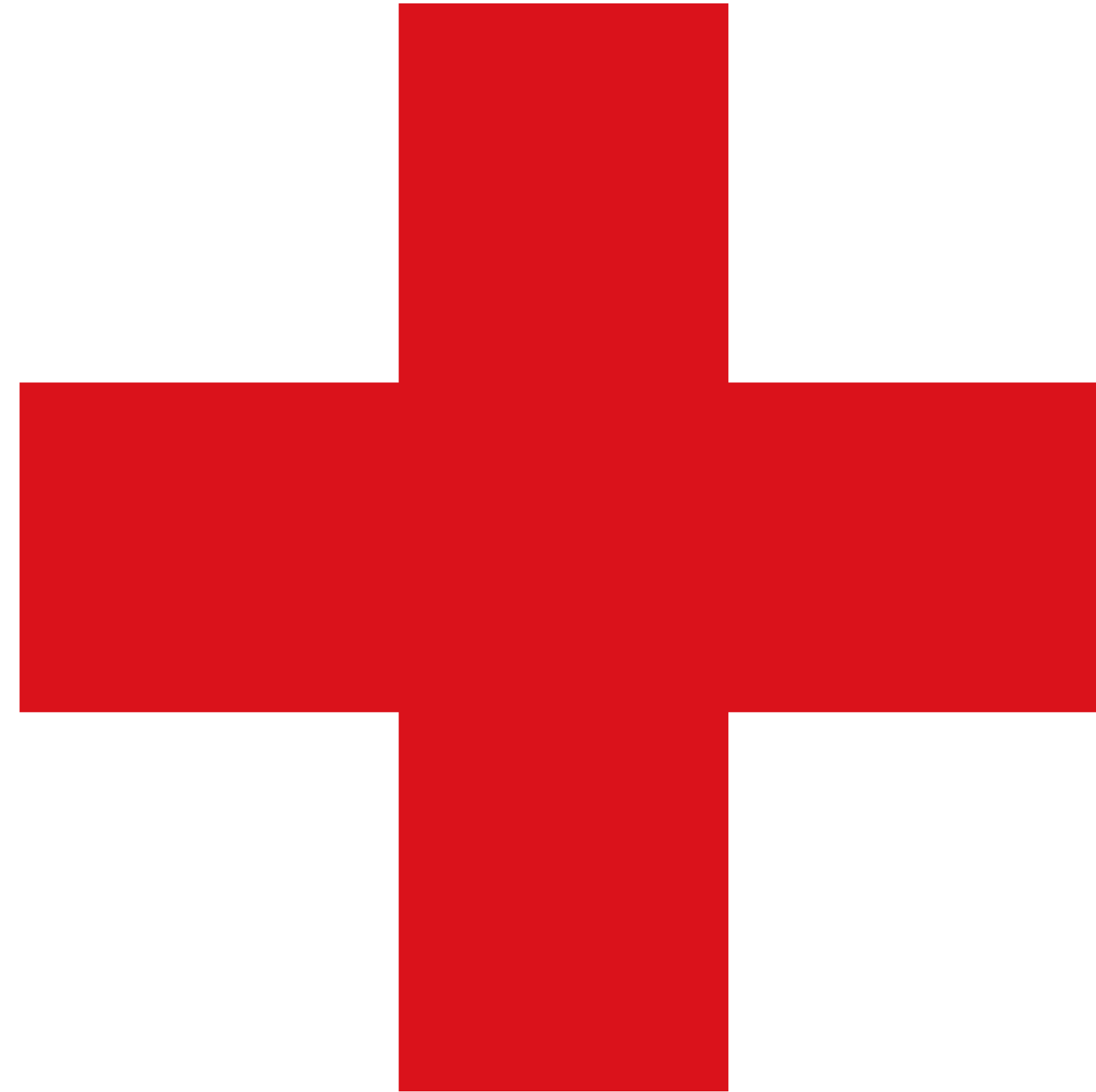
We reimagined all of these visual elements – pursuing a more unified, modern and refined solution that functions well across various mediums – digital, print, and physical applications.

# 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

# 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

# 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

# Current Zimbabwe Bird

## Complexity restricts

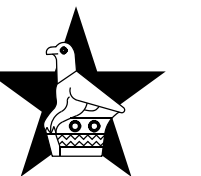
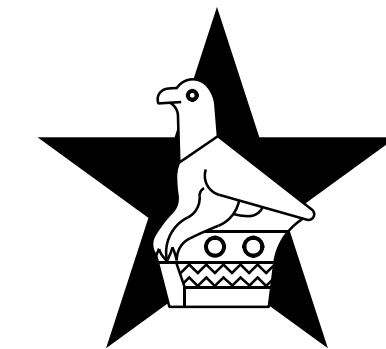
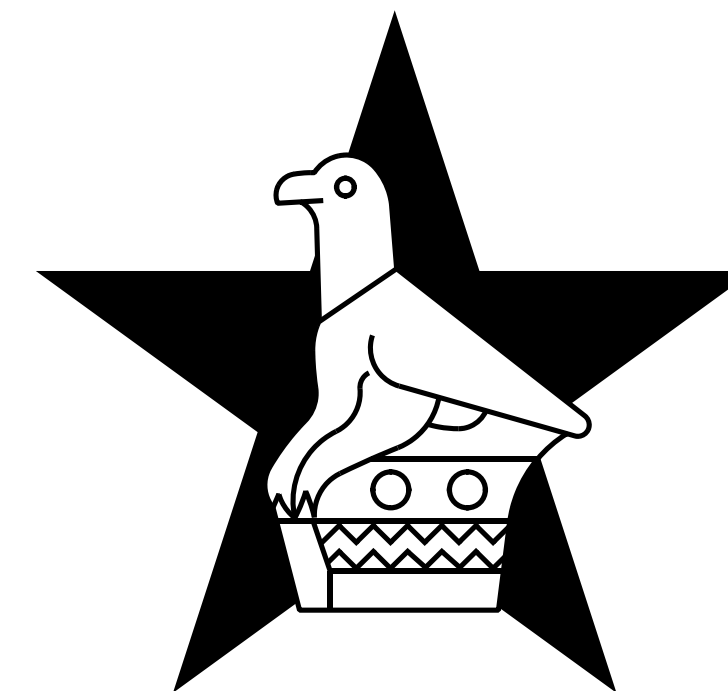
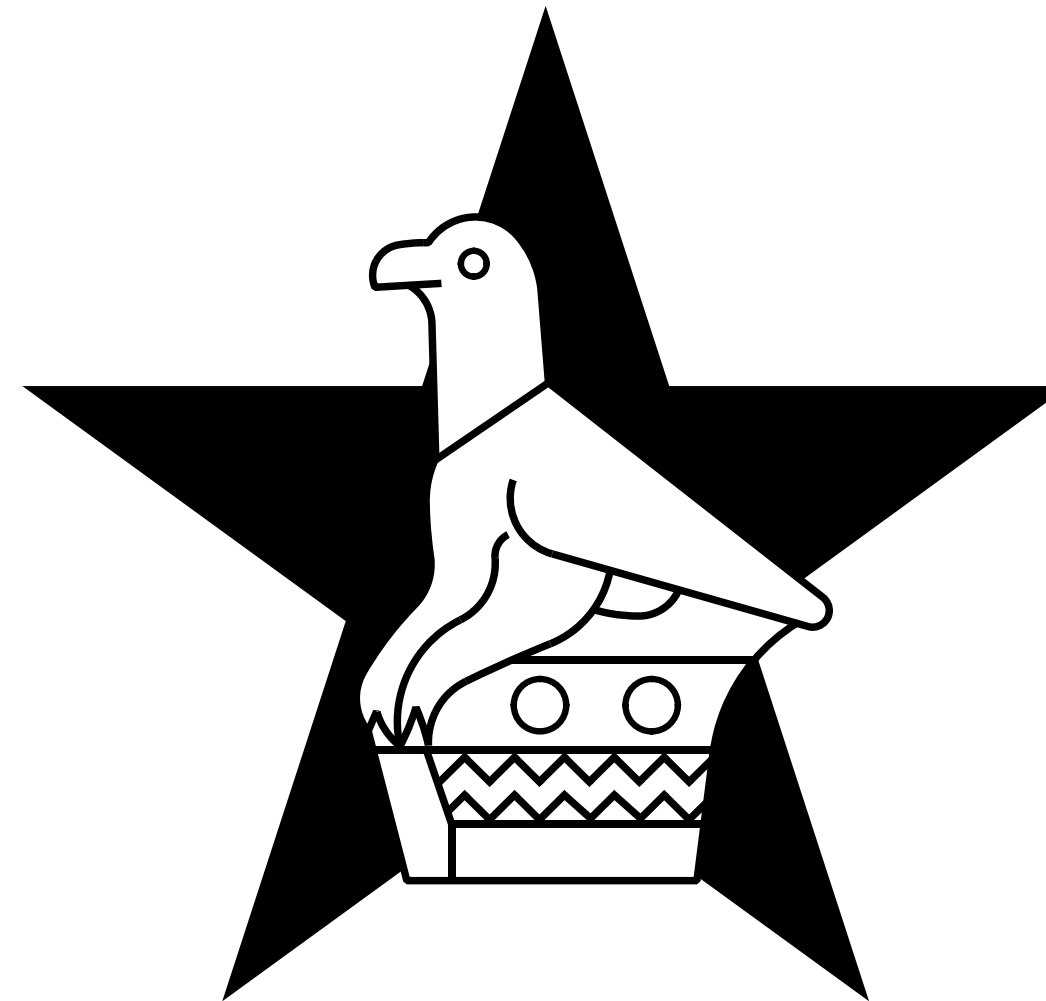
Limits use in more creative and modern applications. It also makes it challenging and expensive to embroider or print accurately, particularly on fabrics or small items.

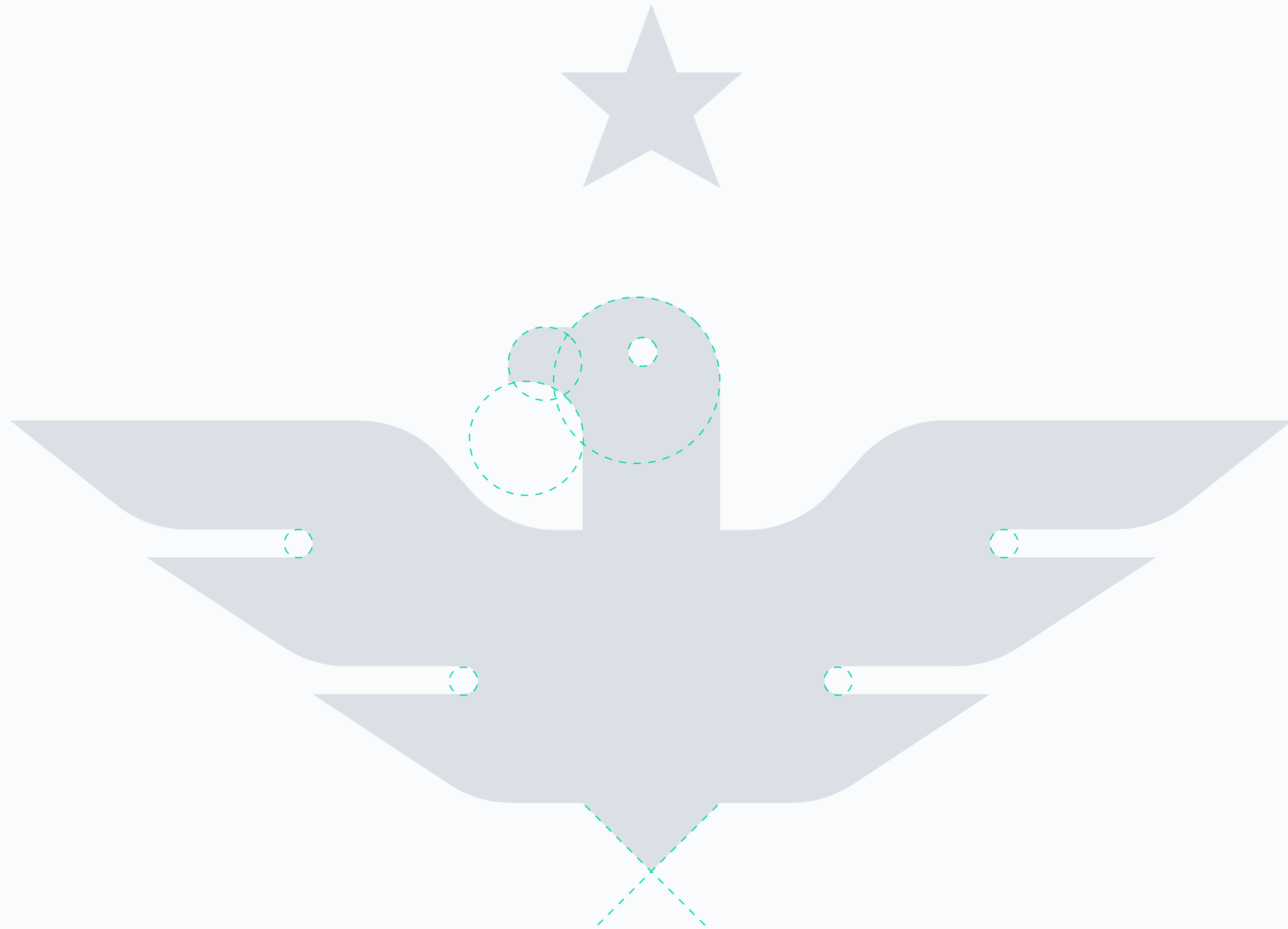
## Bird's posture

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.





# Evolution

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

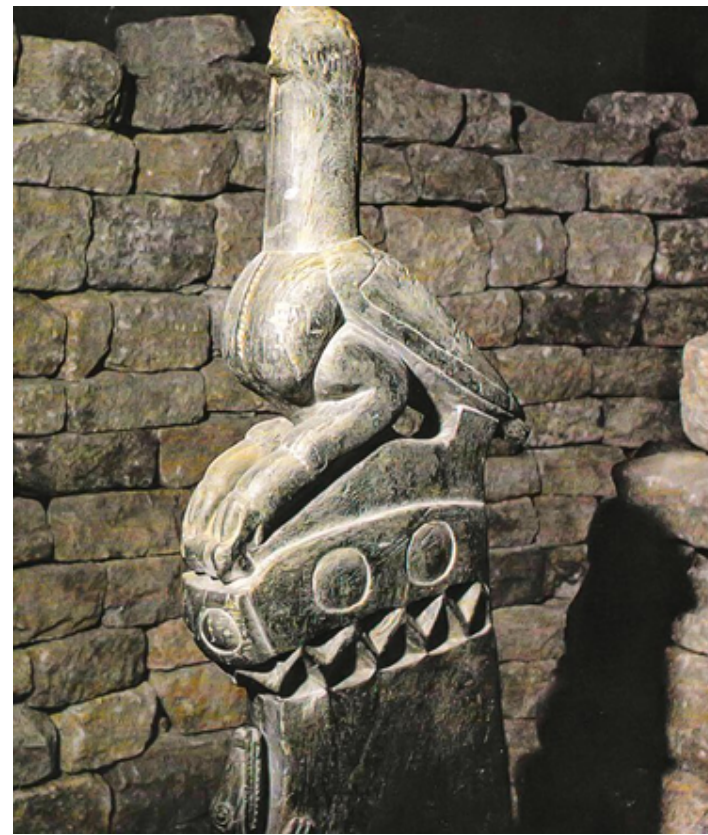


Image credit: zim.gov.zw





# 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.



# New Zimbabwe Bird

## Removal of intricate details

Makes the bird more visually impactful and easier to reproduce across different mediums.

## Scales well

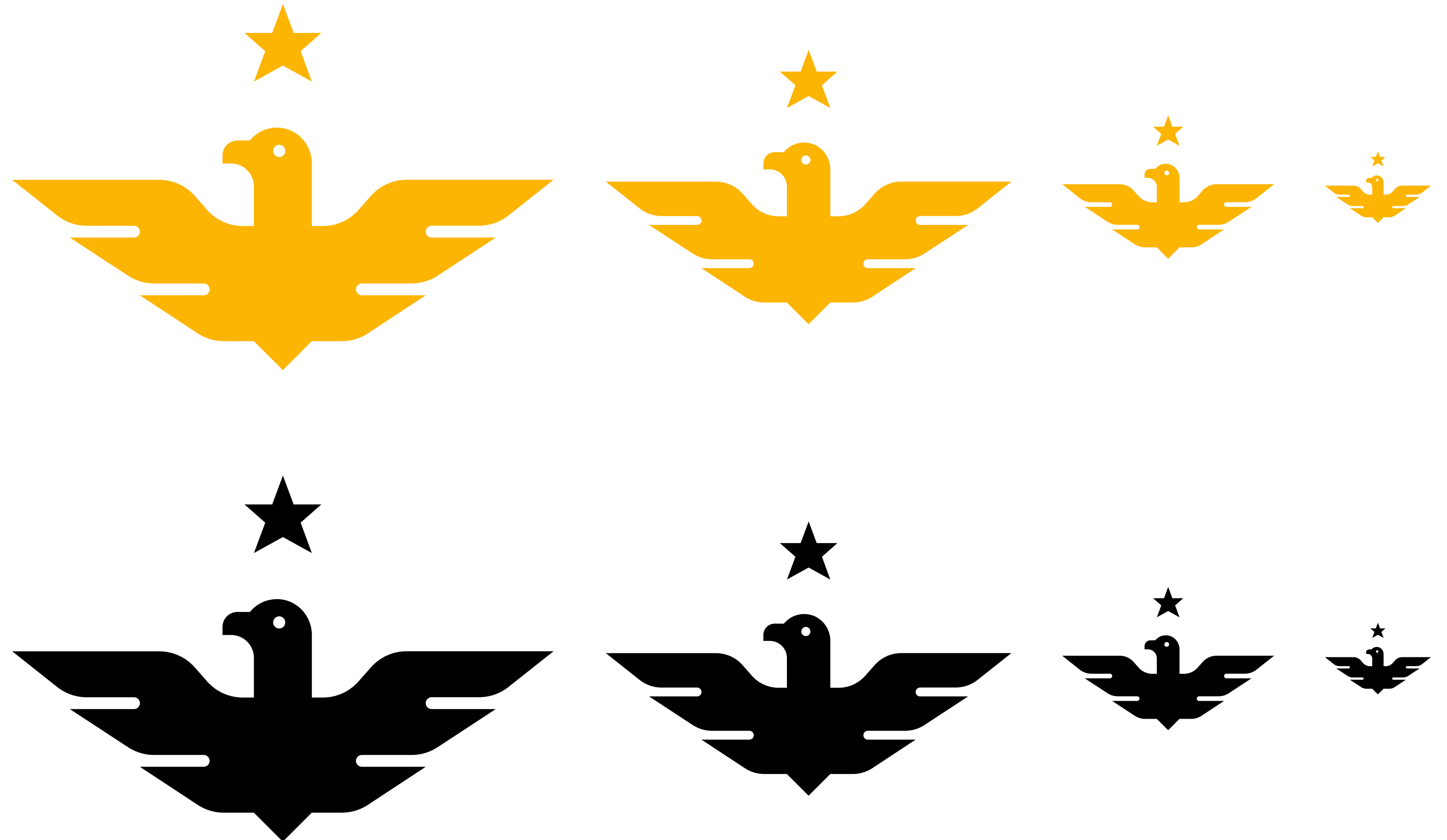
The bird remains recognisable and legible in various sizes, from small digital icons to large-scale applications.

## 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.









ZIMBABWE CRICKET



# Zimbabwe

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# Flag



## 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.

# 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



# 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



# 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](#)

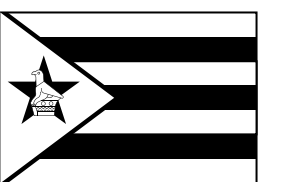
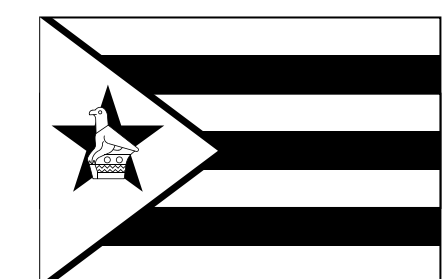
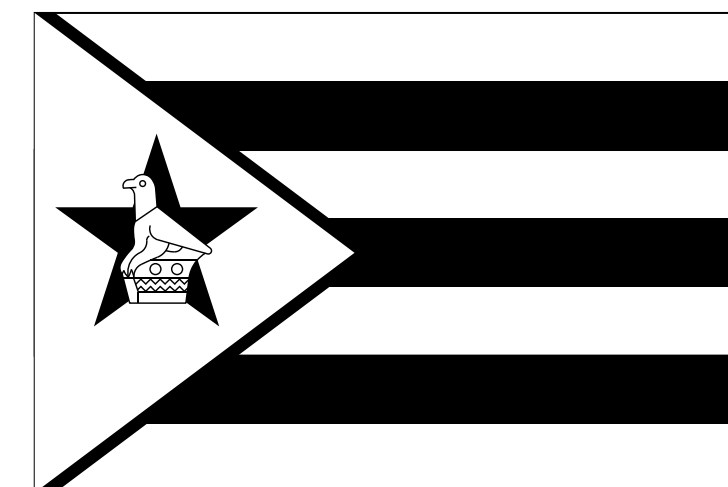
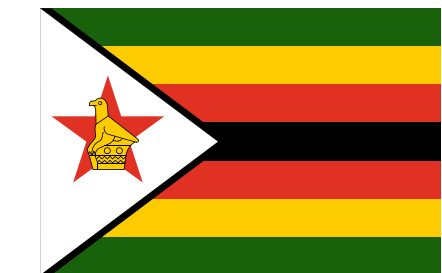
**Designed by**  
Richard Hove, Cedric Herbert, March 1980

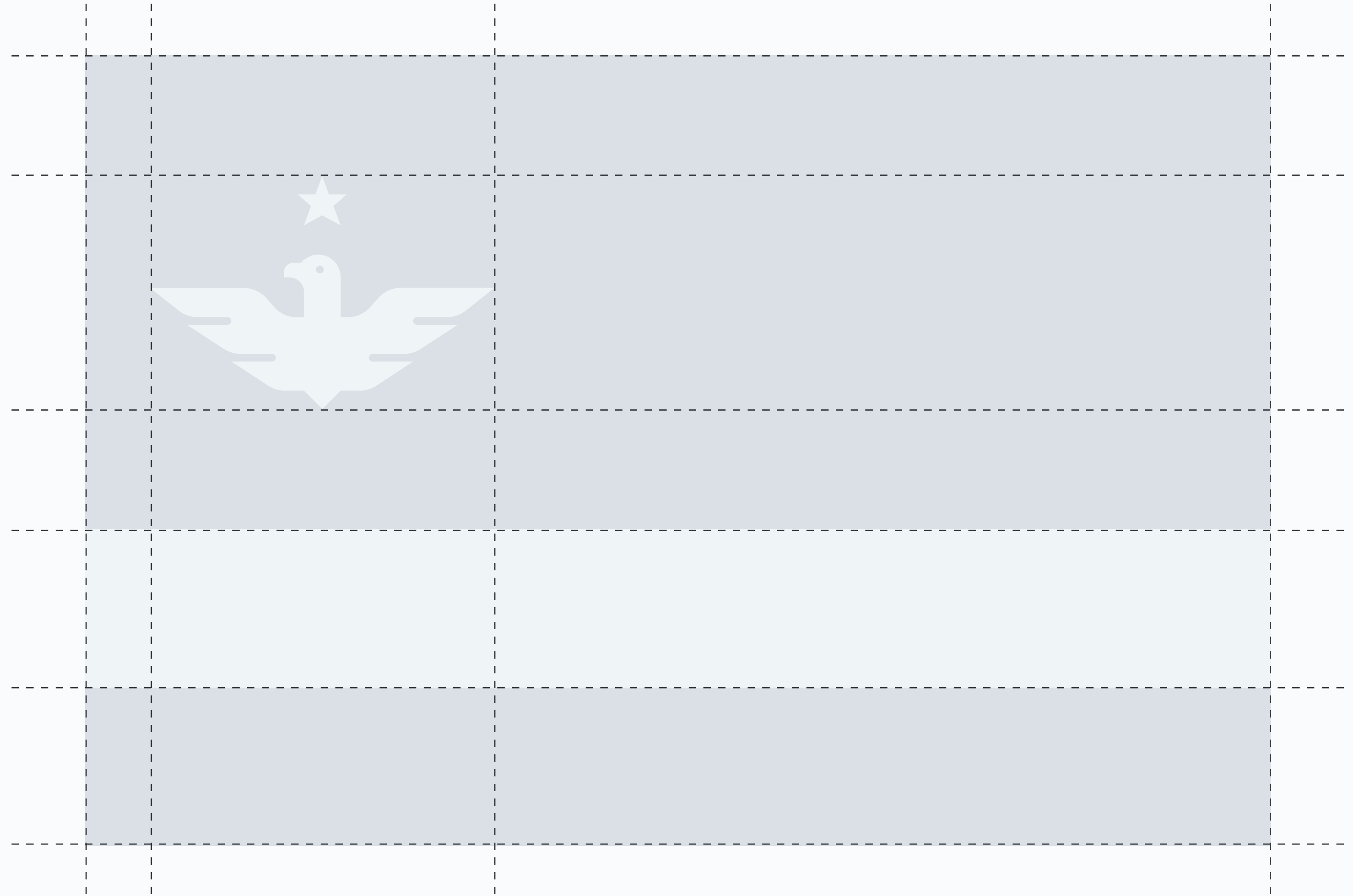
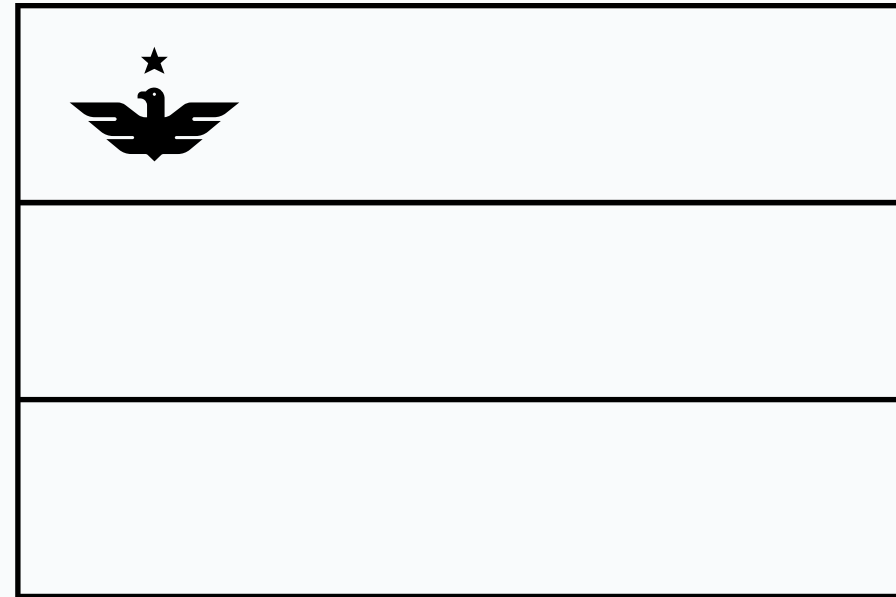
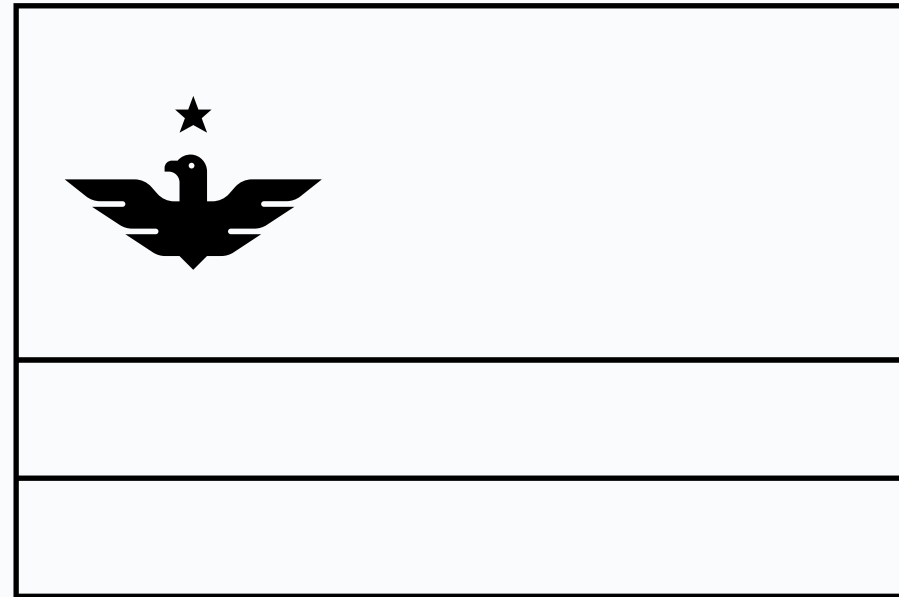
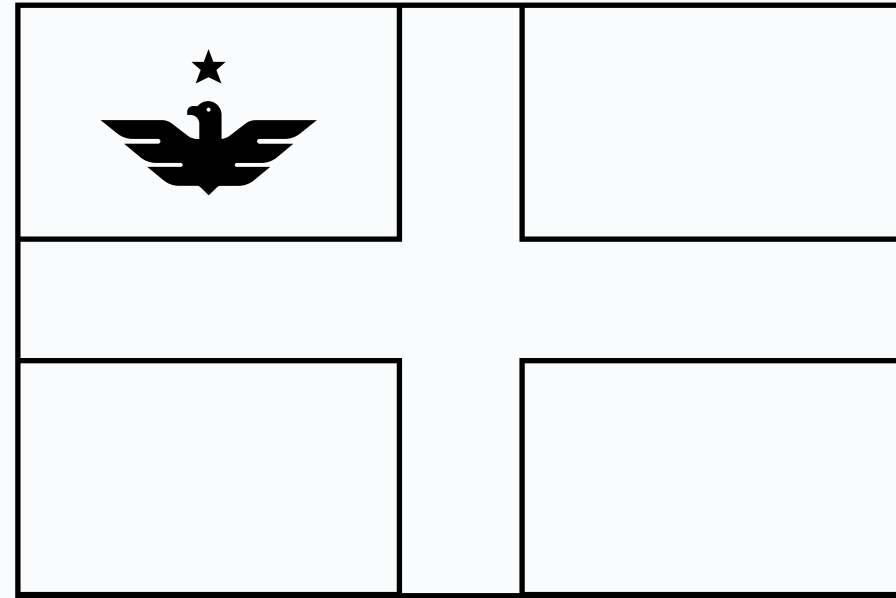
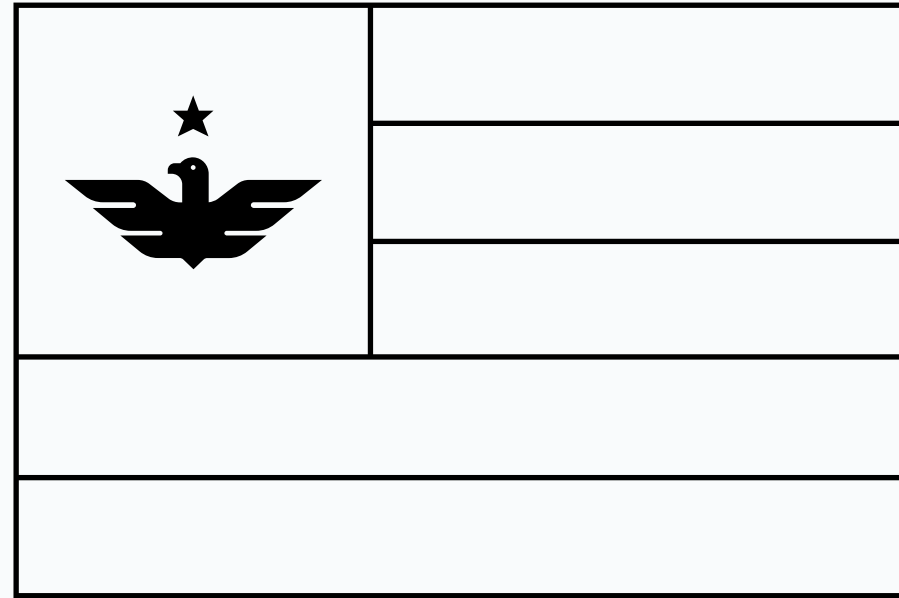
# Current Zimbabwe Bird

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.







# 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.





# New Zimbabwe Bird

## Simplified design

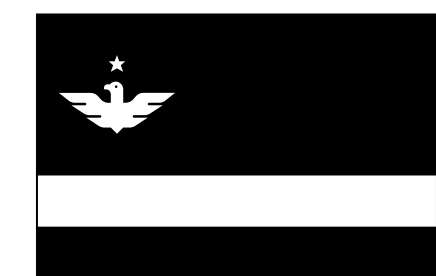
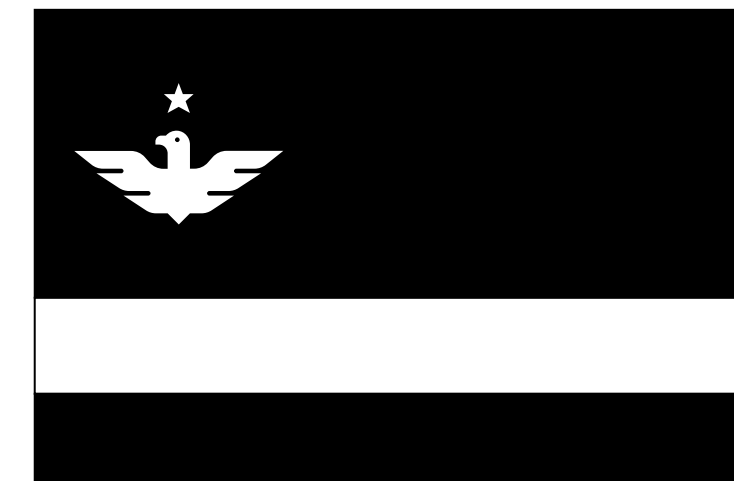
Much easier to remember and reproduce, which is crucial for a national symbol.

## 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.







Bumi Hills Safari Lodge | Lake Kariba Hotels

**VISIT ZIMBABWE**

### 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			







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# Coat Of

34

# Arms



# Simple Revolutionary Symbolism

The French Revolution brought about not only societal shifts but also a new visual language for France.

The Tricolore, with its simple tricolor design, marked a departure from the complex symbolism of the past. This shift towards clarity and directness inspired other nations to embrace a more streamlined approach to flag design.



Source:  
[Wikipedia](#)

**Designed by**  
Jacques-Louis David, 1794

# 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

# 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.



# 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.



# 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

# New Coat Of Arms

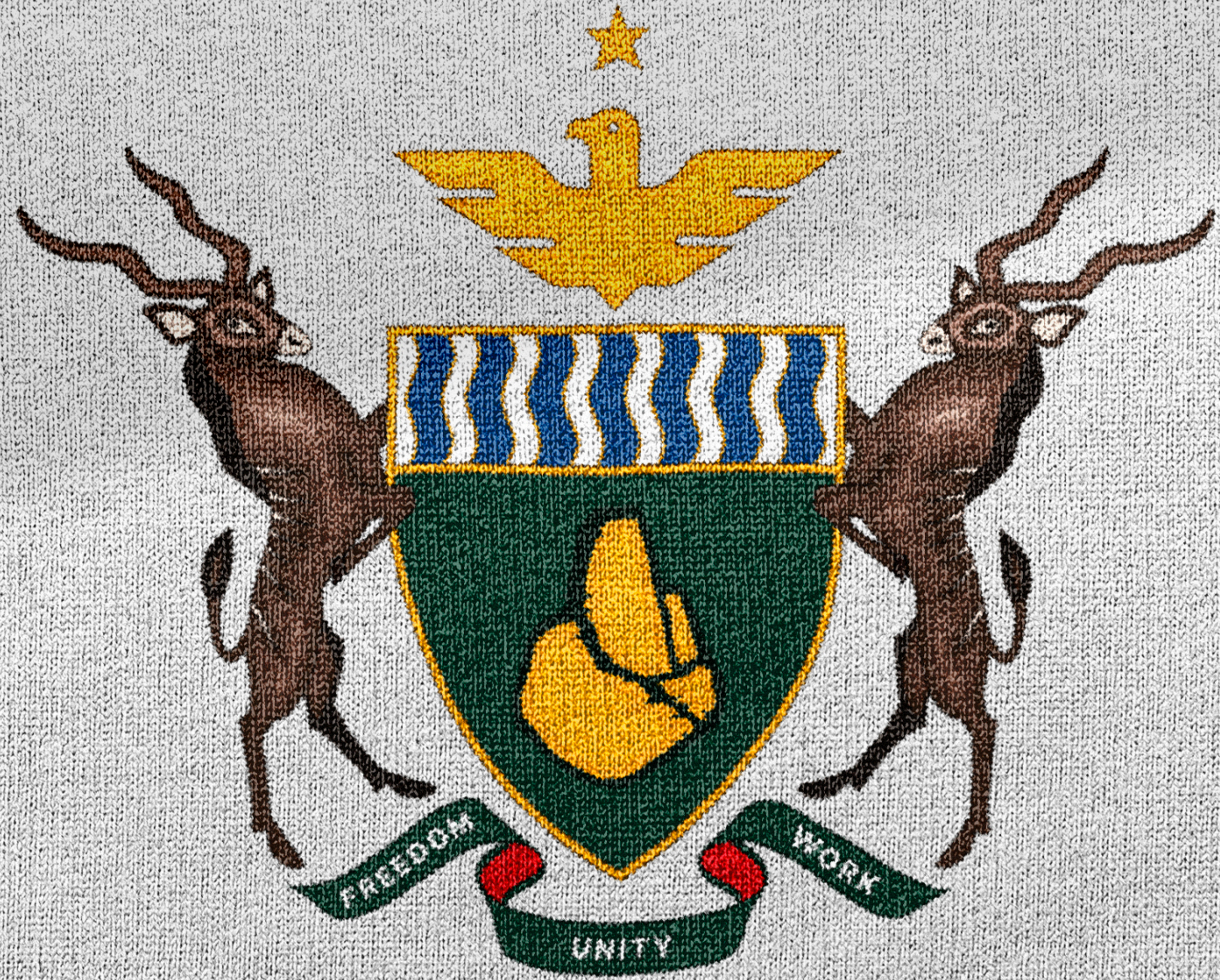
The core elements of the Coat of Arms remain unchanged. The Great Zimbabwe Monument, the kudus, and the motto still hold their central positions, ensuring continuity with the nation's history and values.

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.

















# 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.

# 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



# 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](#)



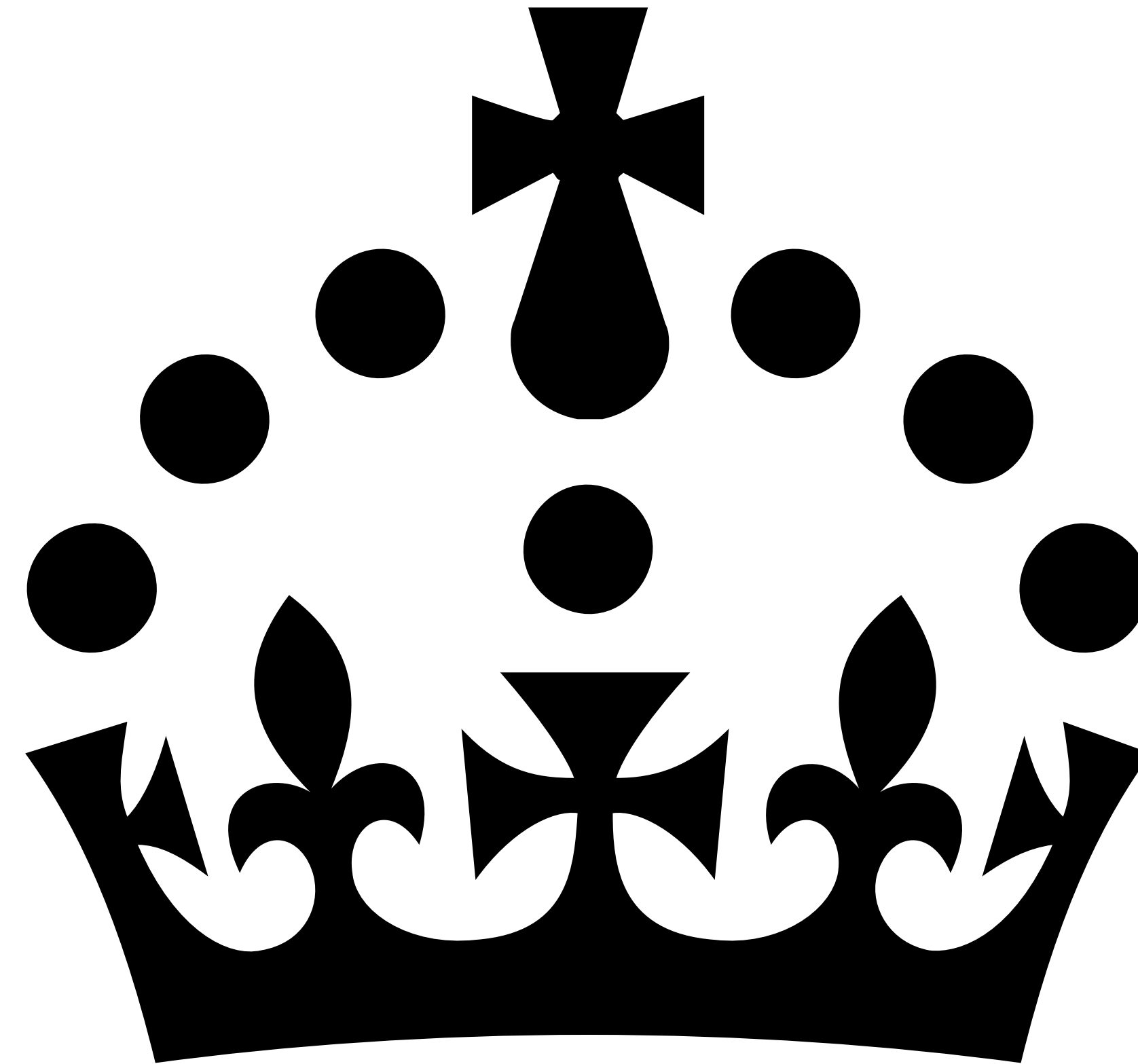
**Designed by**  
George Stanley, October 1964

# 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

# 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.





Flag of Zimbabwe Flag of Zimbabwe



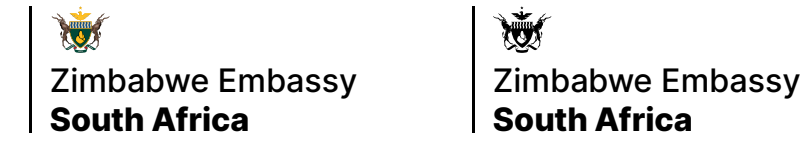
Office Of The President Presidential Flag



Embassy Seal Embassy Flag



Embassy Logo



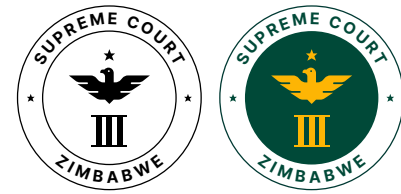
Parliament



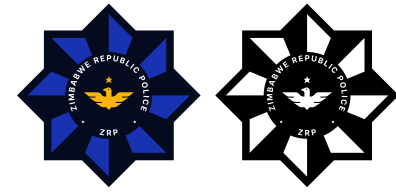
Public Service



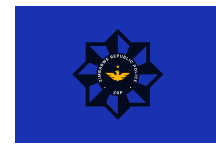
Supreme Court



Police Badge



Police Flag



Defence Forces



Army Badge



Army Rank Stars



Ministry Departments



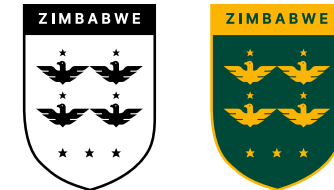
Coat Of Arms



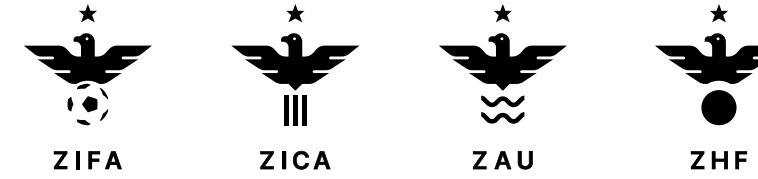
Sports & Recreation Commission



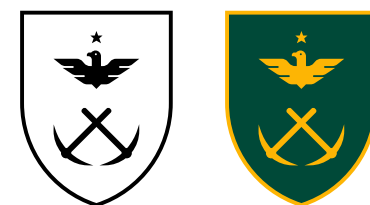
National Team Badge



Associations



Miners Association



Made In Zimbabwe





**Supreme  
Court**

**Parliament  
Reception**









# 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

# Presidential Seal: A Symbol of Leadership

At the heart of the Presidential Seal lies the redesigned Coat of Arms, signifying the President's role as the guardian of the nation's values and aspirations.

The circular format, often associated with wholeness and unity, reinforces the President's position as a unifying figure for the country.



Presidential Flag



*You are cordially invited  
to the State House.*

*Mr President*







# 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.

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**John Murinye**  
Lead Consultant  
Zarura Creative

[john@zarura.co.zw](mailto:john@zarura.co.zw)

