



## COMACO Profile: An Agricultural Innovation Company for Pro-poor Resilience

### What is COMACO?

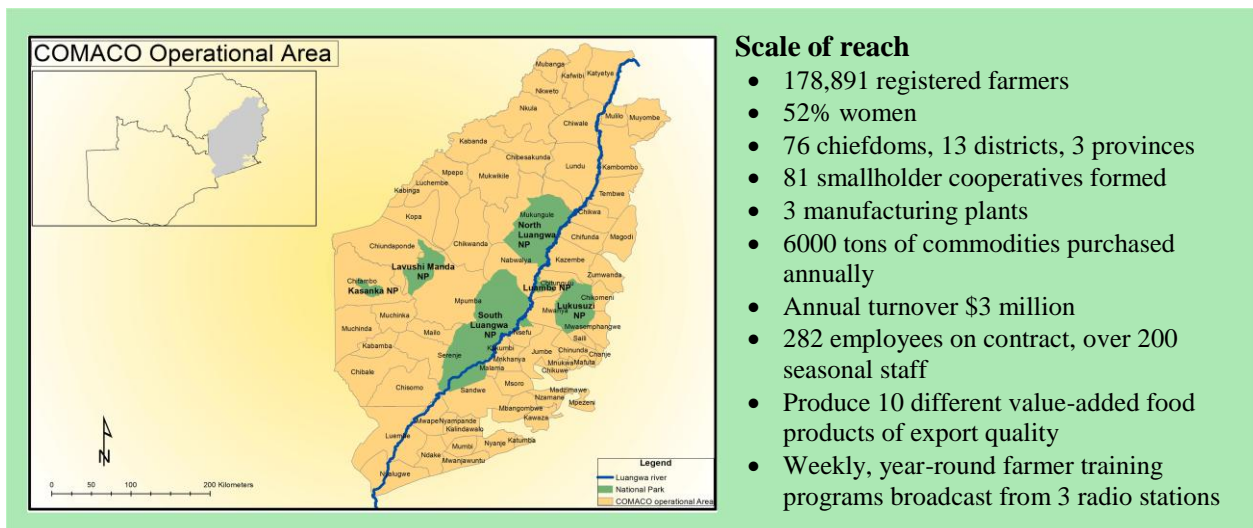
COMACO ([www.itswild.org](http://www.itswild.org)) is a social enterprise that competes in the marketplace on behalf of smallholder farmers who commit to innovative technologies that enhance food production, productivity, and conservation outcomes. These same technologies, tried and tested, regenerate soils, reduce deforestation, and lower farmers input costs and the need for fertilizer subsidies. COMACO sustains its approach through a range of value-added products sold in the region under the brand *It's Wild!* and sourced only from farmers who make this commitment.

Key partners that COMACO engages to achieve synergies and innovations for impacting on the well-being of smallholder farmers and the land they live on:

- Farmer cooperatives to assist farmers improve farming skills and gain increased value from markets for adopting climate smart farming practices
- Public service actors to enhance policies that facilitate positive behavior change for sustainable farming and land care

The intersection of technologies, local leadership, and policies reinforces COMACO's commitment to pay farmers to conserve soils, forests and wildlife with support from consumers who value the cause and quality of *It's Wild!* products. Traditional leaders come on board supporting land stewardship as farmers embrace technologies that allow them to stay sedentary, farming sustainably and profitably. Smallholder farming families who have joined COMACO have on average increased annual incomes by 2-3 fold.

### Scale



### Key value points about the COMACO model

- Equity between players and complementary strengths for promoting technology adoption, environmental sustainability, and market incentives
- Enhancement of Zambia's 7<sup>th</sup> national development plan goals through increased partner collaboration



- A national food brand (*It's Wild!*) that informs consumers about the role of smallholder farmers in bringing healthy, nutritional food products to the table
- A viable, sustainable solution for mitigating drivers of climate change and biodiversity loss

### Actor-based innovations driving pro-poor resilience and a climate-smart economy

COMACO recognizes much of Zambia's economy is tied to its soils, its watersheds, and its smallholder farmers. The following innovations and partnerships needed to grow this kind of economy summarize COMACO's on-going efforts and impact in Zambia:

#### 1. Technologies supported by COMACO

- Large-scale agroforestry systems, planting over 20 million annually, supporting over 68,000 farmers, doubling yields, reducing input costs by 80%
- System for Rice Intensification, supporting over 18,000 farmers, increasing yields 4-fold
- Community self-monitoring climate-smart farming practices with smartphones
- Conservation dividend payment for compliance to conservation standards
- Carbon accounting of soil carbon (SALM) and tree carbon (REDD+)
- Value-added processing of food crops into high-valued, quality assured food products
- Bio-waste processed into fuel briquettes to power dry processing of food products
- Farmer produced, organically-based insect repellents for crops and granary protection
- Village-based oven-dryers used to process wild mushrooms for commercial markets
- Over 80,000 fuel-efficient cookstoves in use and reducing forest degradation, adding 20,000 annually and using off-cuts from agroforestry

#### 2. Farmer cooperatives and traditional leaders

- Capacity to negotiate forward contracts for crop purchases
- Cooperative owned and managed farmer input shops
- Cooperative managed seed banks
- Gender-inclusive, democratically structured cooperatives that support smallholder needs
- Community Conservation Plans (CCPs) adopted and enforced by local chiefs and local courts
- Over 1.2 million hectares of community land put aside for protection under local CCPs
- Cooperative-managed extension staff for training, crop aggregation, and conservation compliance monitoring

#### 3. Public service actors

- Regulatory guidelines to support smallholder seed growers of commercial seeds
- Promotion of open-pollinated seed varieties managed by cooperatives
- Formal approval of CCPs and certification of community forestry guards
- Recognition of community protected areas as potential government-approved game ranches
- Support for revenue sharing of carbon market payments to local communities
- Endorsement of Chiefs Charter for Leadership in Conservation
- Provincial Roundtable to review and support District Conservation Plans