



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



## Boosting Community Forestry and Agroforestry Businesses

Field lessons learned for improving and upscaling returns from FFPO initiatives in Africa



*Eastern Province Deputy Permanent Secretary (3<sup>rd</sup> from right) and Forestry Director (1<sup>st</sup> from left) with the FFF delegates during the exchange in Chipata, 29 November 2024*

**A report of the FFF Regional Field Exchange in  
Eastern Province of Zambia from (28-31 October 2024)**

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## Acknowledgments

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# 1. Introduction

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## 1.1 Background: the problem and questions on stakeholders' mind

Increasing climate change challenges hit smallholder forest and farm producers the hardest with greater climate variability which makes sowing and planting times unpredictable, reduces crop yields and leads uncertainties in harvest. Extreme climate events like floods and droughts sometimes wipe out production altogether. Yet still, it is not just climate change that these producers face, but accelerating technological, market and political upheaval, particularly in the arena of global value chains that are characterized with the increasing inequality and changing market demands and shocks (see Kaplinsky, 2000). An integrated response is required – one that both adapts to and mitigates climate change to give climate resilience, but which also works in a complex uncertain world. Community forestry and agroforestry (CF and AF) can offer that integrated response on communal land (CF) and individual smallholder farms (AF) by expanding inclusive economic and climate adaptation options through the sale of timber and non-timber forest products if other agricultural crops fail; helping climate change mitigation by sequestering carbon in wood products, standing trees and more fertile soils; building climate resilience by enriching agroecological systems that can better withstand climate change while offering diversifying livelihood options.

Although the benefits of CF and AF land use is widely known over decades, but uptake has been limited for various reasons, including poor perceptions of land or land tenure insecurities that work against slow-to-establish forest or agroforestry systems; complexities of CF and AF land management systems; lack of seed for lessor known CF or AF components; socio-economic uncertainties about value chains, markets and marketing of CF or AF products; labor and time shortages for CF or AF management; and lack of technical support. Yet as the impacts of climate change bite, forest and farm producer organizations (FFPOs) are increasingly seeking to incorporate CF and AF know-how into their organizational skillsets that enhances the response ability of their members and communities. FFPOs offer many advantages over isolated smallholders – allowing sharing of knowledge and useful contacts, aggregation of products and pooling of investment finances, and strength in numbers when negotiating with traders or land use decision-makers. FFPOs also create scales of production that make business sense and can attract external investors. But the sort of investor partnerships that FFPOs need are not unequal and extractive, profit-hunters, but fairly distributive, regenerative, wealthy co-creators. Such 'pioneer investors' understand and are prepared to invest into the complexity of group business based on integrated CF and AF systems. *Do such models exist? What can be done to expand them? What are existing lessons that can be learned and replicated for upscaling?* These were the pressing questions on the minds of Africa regional stakeholders, including FFPOs themselves and their support partners (see Annex 3) who joined this regional field exchange organized by the Forest and Farm Facility (FFF)<sup>1</sup> programme in Zambia in collaboration with FAO Zambia and the Government of Zambia.

## 1.2 Context: why Zambia and FFF sites

Zambia provides an intriguing context in finding answers to the questions. Forests are an important component of a country's natural capital and provide benefits that are critical for rural populations, urban areas, the national economy, and the global community. As estimated by UNEP in 2015, the Forest Ecosystem in Zambia generates several benefits: (i) the value of wood production (industrial roundwood and fuel wood) is estimated to be US\$396 million per annum, (ii) value of non-wood forest was estimated to be US\$135.8 million per annum (iii) the value of carbon can be estimated to be US\$15 million per annum and a further estimate of the carbon stocks in Zambian forests are potentially worth about US\$150 per ha (hectare) on average but range up to US\$745 per ha for intact forests, and (iv) Forests are estimated to make a direct contribution equivalent to about 4.7% of gross domestic product (GDP) or US\$957.5 million (using 2010 figures). Out of the country's total land area of 75.3 million hectares (ha), the remaining forest is estimated to range from 39 million ha (CSO 2013) to 50 million ha (Kalinda et al. 2008) or 53 million ha (ZFD, 2000).

Despite value of forest and productive lands of Zambia, deforestation and land degradation remain a challenge. Zambia has the second highest per capita deforestation rate in Africa and the fifth highest in the world (Aongola et al. 2009). Estimates of annual deforestation rates range from 113,000 ha in 2012 by Global Forest Watch 2 to 167,000 ha per year in FAO's Global Forest Resource Assessment (FAO 2010) and 250,000 ha per year (ILUA study) to even over

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<sup>1</sup> More information on FFF and its partner countries: <https://www.fao.org/forest-farm-facility/en/>

850,000 ha per year (FAO 2001, Jumbe et al. 2008; GRZ 2006a). The main direct drivers of deforestation and land degradation are monoculture agriculture expansion, demand for wood fuel energy, human-settlement expansion, and illegal exploitation of timber. Most forests are under customary system led by traditional leaders although all trees are vested in the hands of the President according to the constitution of Zambia. In line with the Zambia Forest policy of 2014 and Forest Act number 4 of 2015, the Government of Zambia introduced community forestry management (CFM) with the rationale of increasing collective community participation in the management of the forest estate and to increase local economic returns from the sustainable utilization of the forest by these communities who depend on the forest for their livelihoods. Agroforestry (AF) is further promoted as agriculture that incorporates the cultivation of trees - to improve agricultural productivity and reduce tree cover loss. Agroforestry as a climate smart Agricultural practice is nationally recognized as practical and low-cost means of implementing many forms of integrated land management – include shade grown cash crops, trees in pasture, tree protection planting (to avoid wind damage or soil erosion), diverse home gardens, and tree woodlots. These generally improve soil fertility, water retention, ecological functionality and contribute to a green economy by promoting long-term, sustainable, tree-based production systems, that are inclusive or easily accessible to smallholder producers.

In support, the FFF programme has been working in Zambia since 2015 with active footprints in the Southern, North-Western and Eastern Provinces of the country where it uses the principles of improving FFPO governance and business development to upscale sustainable community forestry and agroforestry by working with institutions at the landscape level to achieve sustainable land use and maximize the benefits from forest ecosystem services. In Eastern Province (EP), where FFF's engagement started in 2019, FFF collaborates closely with Global Environment Facility (GEF) cycle 7 funded project (Livelihoods diversification project in Forest and Agriculture mosaic landscapes) supported through FAO to advance its core principle in strengthening forest and farm producer groups as agents of change for climate change adaptation and building resilient landscapes. This collaboration enhances the acceleration of acquiring community rights under the Community Forestry guidelines and promotes agroforestry and businesses in improving degraded areas. Furthermore, FFF works closely with organizations like Biocarbon partners, COMACO and the Government Zambia Forest Integrated Programme that is now transitioning into the Eastern Province Jurisdictional Sustainable Landscape Programme (EP-JSLP) a results-based Government initiative developed to reduce emissions coming from unsustainable land management practices. The programme aims to incentivize and reward climate change mitigation and adaptation actions at scale for maximum benefits to accrue to communities. These partnerships are mainly achieved through the Nyimba District Farmers Association, Cotton Association of Zambia and the Zambia National Forest Commodities Associations supported by the FFF to engage landscape players in climate change mitigation and adaptation projects. The exchange also illustrated that several partnerships developed with support from FFF supported the FFPOs to integrate in markets and carbon trading. The Forest and Farm Facility's programme uses the principles of improving FFPO governance and business development to upscale sustainable community forestry and agroforestry as key nature-based solutions to the deforestation and land degradation problems and consequence on rural livelihoods. Working with the Zambia Forest Commodities Association, significant strides have been made in connecting community forest user groups to high value markets for forest and AF value chain development and markets. This progress also marks far reaching results with scalable lessons that were yet to be shared with African peers with similar context and FFF-supported actions already ongoing.

In the African context are an estimated thirty-three million smallholder farmers who manage over 60 % of the land using customary systems and contribute up to 70 per cent of the food supply. Africa needs 'pioneer investors' that are sympathetic to the African context and begin to explore business partnerships with FFPOs that recognize the complex and integrated objectives services that those FFPOs pursue for their local communities and smallholder members. The regional exchange in Zambia provided an opportunity to develop knowledge on models that can enhance Community Forestry (CF) and Agroforestry and related benefits all around Africa.

## **1.3 Aim and objectives**

### **1.3.1 Objectives achieved at the regional field training and experience**

The aim of the of the regional field exchange in Zambia was to provide a technical training and field learning opportunity on the role and advances being made in promoting locally controlled forest and AF based business and related value chains, markets and finance. Specifically, the exchange allowed the participants to (i) develop technical knowledge on opportunities of FFPOs pioneer investments in CF and AF including related carbon financing schemes, and nationally (ii) combined this knowledge with field experience through field visits and discussions with FFPOs with

the subject related initiatives on the ground. At the end of the exchange, the participants had increased knowledge on CF, AF and generally nature-based investment models suitable for FFPOs across Africa. Moreover, the participants were able to exchange knowledge and share perspectives on what this means for building FFPOs capacity to upscale such models and related partnership among FFPOs, starting with the network of FFF-supported FFPOs in Africa and beyond.

### 1.3.2 Focus and structure of this report

This mainly synthesizes the outcome of the regional exchange including technical training, sites visited and the related immediate feedback from participants to derive key messages and general lessons (instead of returning an account of daily happenings in the program presented in Annex 1). Yet, the flow of the program is apparent in the synthesis and the structure. With regards to the latter, **Chapter 2** presents the key outcomes from the opening and the technical training sessions and related discussions that prepared the participants for the field exchange in, following the introduction (**Chapter 1**). **Chapter 3** focuses on the sites visited for each day synthesized with the related lessons learned derived from the participants' feedback on the last day, while **Chapter 4** concludes with key messages and participants plans for actions that were deduced from the feedback session.

The report serves as a reference for the participants to dive-back on their experience in the field exchange while providing a new learning material for non-participants on the vital roles of FFPOs in advancing nature-based business related to CF and AF with key lessons for upscaling.



## 2. Setting the scene to commence the field exchange

### 2.1 Solidarity statements towards strengthening commitment in the context

The first day of the peer-to-peer exchange in Zambia marks a significant occasion to reflect on the milestone in achievements that has attracted the stakeholders to Zambia. It also represents an instance for renewed commitment for the upscaling of the FFF programme.

In this light, the Permanent Secretary (PS) of the Eastern Province, Dr. Lewis Mwape expressed the government's appreciation to the Forest and Farm Facility Programme during a session that set the scene for the next days of the field exchange. As acknowledged by the PS, the FFF programme together with FAO Zambia has been a source of constant cooperation and solidarity with the government, leading to us bringing significant development, particularly in the Nyimba and Petauke districts of the Eastern Province. As a result, there is the need for upscaling of the programme to other districts of Eastern Province and beyond.



*Plate 1. Eastern Province Deputy Permanent Secretary, Dr. Lewis Mwape delivering speech during the official opening of the workshop in Chipata*

The appreciated achievements of the FFF programme were elaborated by Ms. Suze Percy Filippini, the FAOR of FAO Zambia

who first highlighted the role of FAO as the key implementer of the FFF programme. FAO, through the FFF programme has been committed to supporting Zambia's sustainable and inclusive rural development agenda. The success of the programme is evident in Southern, North-Western and Eastern Provinces with over 150,000 direct and indirect beneficiaries. The FAOR also appreciated the Ministry of Green Economy and Environment and the FFF partners including IIED, IUCN, AgriCord and the Forestry Department of Zambia, as well as the donors who together have been a constant source of trust, support and solidarity to FAO and its FFF programme in reaching key achievements. These achievements include strengthening local producer organizations, building climate resilience through agroforestry and rendering policy support and advocacy, to mention a few. In a concluding response to the call for upscaling, the FAOR emphasised renewed commitment of the FAO and its partners to expanding the reach of the FFF programme, scaling up its impact and deepening collaborations and partnerships with key stakeholders.



*Plate 2. Mr Vincent Ziba the National Forest and Farm Facilitator reading opening remarks on behalf of the FAO Representative in Zambia*

## 2.2 Putting the field exchange into strategic technical and practical thinking

### 2.2.1 Technical training

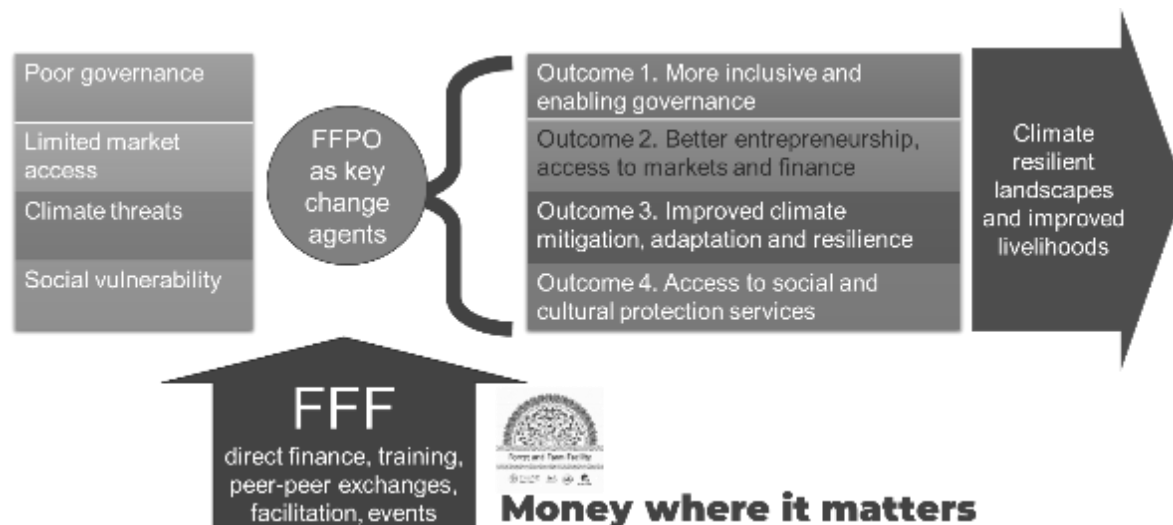
#### 2.2.1.1 Development of business unusual technical knowledge of CF and AF business

The first day of the exchange also sat the stakeholders together in Chipata, the city and administrative centre of the Eastern Province of Zambia. In addition to the account on the FFF milestone and renewed commitment (presented in section 2.1), this field forward-looking session allowed the stakeholders to conceptualize their thinking on CF and AF businesses from a more strategic and practical perspectives prior visiting the relevant sites. The meeting combined two approaches: (i) a technical training session with modules, group exercise and panel discussion to develop strong and common technical understanding of subject for the field visits, (ii) panel discussions that shared light on practical experiences from relevant initiatives by FFPOs, government, climate fund, development agencies and ZFILP-jurisdictional programs/projects. The outcome of and related feedback of the former synthesized in the following paragraph of this section. The latter is presented in the next sections (2.2.2).

Delivered by the FFF partner International Institute for Environmental Development (IIED), the technical training focused on developing business unusual technical knowledge on what investable business from diversified AF and CF means for conceptualize thinning from a strategic viewpoint and good governance audit. The training was organized in 3 sessions that are reported below.

#### Training session 1 – Strategy and tips for making a business of diversified agroforestry and community forestry

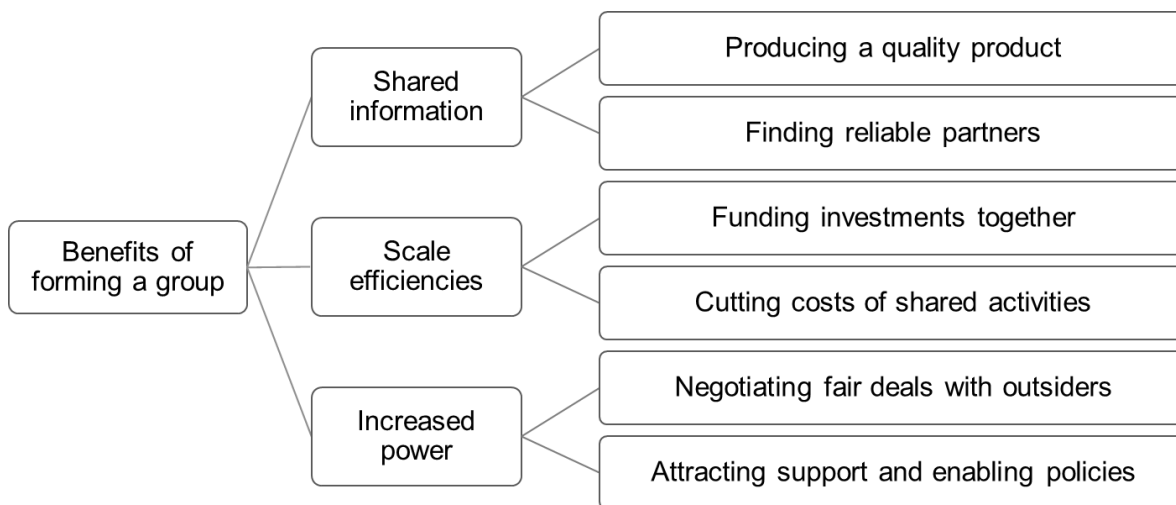
This session began with a quick introduction to 12 years of knowledge co-production through technical training, exchanges/conferences and coaching/facilitation combined direct financial support by the Forest and Farm Facility (FFF) which tackles four entry points for four main outcomes towards achieving climate resilient landscapes and improved livelihoods (see *Figure 1*). summarised below. Extensive learning has led to a strategy for agroforestry (AF) and community forestry (CF) business development.



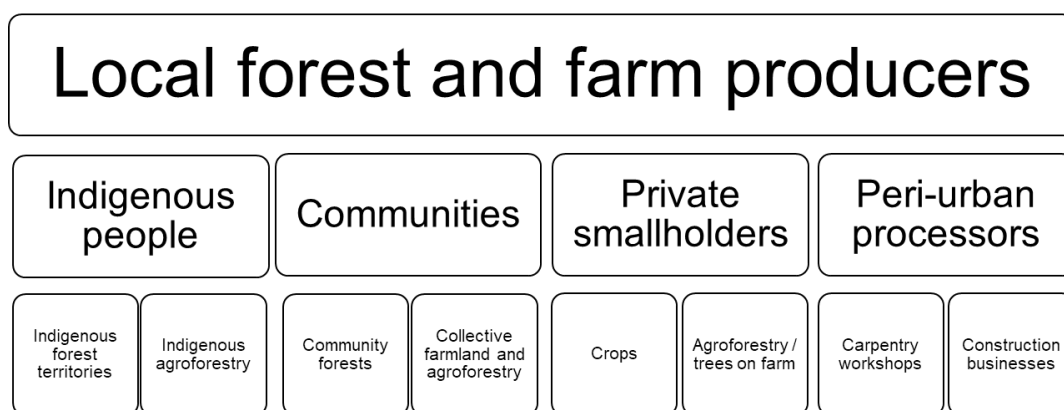
*Figure 1. Entry points and four main outcomes through which FFF learning led to strategy for agroforestry (AF) and community forestry (CF) business development*

A range of research has spanned each of the four main outcomes including recent guidance on forest business incubation (see Macqueen and Bolin, 2018, Bolin et al., 2018) business risk management (Bolin and Macqueen, 2016, Bolin et al, 2016) climate resilience (Macqueen 2021, and FFD n.d) advancing agrobiodiversity (Macqueen 2024) using shared labels to make equity and sustainability claims (Andaya et al., 2022) and mobilising internal finance (Núñez et al, 2024) among many others. In light with the upscaling agenda, the FFF partners committed to a just rural transition that reverses a negative cycle of insecure rights, low capabilities and exploitation into a virtuous cycle of strong organizations that can secure rights and build business and technical capabilities. This has been called 'Investing in Locally Controlled Forestry' about which more can be read here (Elson 2012). For FFF, the start point is not securing tenure, or business development, or technical support. Rather FFF starts by strengthening local organizations that can

then work as a group for the benefits presented in *Figure 2* below. Group businesses have emerged in a very wide range of contexts (see examples from Macqueen et al., 2015) to deliver benefits to their members in key activities, as shown in *Figure 3*.



*Figure 2. The benefits of working together as a group as sought by the FFF support framework*



*Figure 3. Group business construction gained through forest and farm producers across different grassroots stakeholders*

While each individual business may be small, research has shown that together, these businesses make up the largest private sector (see IUCN, 2018). In other words, it is worth investing in myriad small AF and CF businesses that together can shape entire landscapes. FFF research has shown that no single AF or CF value chain can deliver all that is needed by local communities and the global public. So, country programme must pursue a diversified set of AF and CF businesses if they want to deliver balanced landscapes that meet everyone’s needs. Diversification across the landscape and within individual AF and CF areas is vital for inclusive climate resilience (see Macqueen et al, 2014 and Hou Jones and Macqueen, 2019), and for maintaining biodiversity, nutrition and food security (see Macqueen 2023). Currently just 3 crops (rice-wheat-corn) make up 50% of global calories – and this over-reliance on industrial monoculture production of very few crops is putting planetary food security at risk. AF and CF business is an alternative more secure pathway. Smallholder forest and farm producers are collectively the world’s largest climate investors – putting in US\$ 368 billion annually on forced climate adaptation (see Hou Jones and Sorsby, 2023). They are spending their money on a range of vital adaptation actions (see *Figure 4*).

Much of the money for such adaptation finance is coming not from international climate or development finance, but from the 82,000+ predominantly agricultural credit unions that have assets of US\$ 3.6 trillion. So, helping local AF and CF groups to mobilize internal finance is a vital step in helping them develop resilient businesses (see Núñez 2024b).

Internally mobilized finance, and locally controlled AF and CF businesses go hand in hand. As a result, the FFF approach to AF and CF business is to strengthen producer organizations that can assess their own risks (Bolin et al 2016) learn and teach business to their members by installing business incubation units into apex level producer organizations (Bolin et al., 2018) and gradually diversify the value chains. The challenge for each value chain is to develop a business aggregator (preferably owned cooperatively by the local producers) that can pull together, process and market products from multiple producers. Making a business of diverse agroforestry (AF) and community forestry (CF) has diverse benefits (see *Figure 5*). An approach should adopt some key elements or tips such as:

1. Promote the benefits of AF and CF business as unusually beneficial
2. Broaden know-how of AF and CF structures, species and layout
3. Use multiple species to maintain natural fertility and ecosystem services
4. Design AF and CF systems suited to ecological context and production preferences
5. Focus on building aggregators that market first one and ultimately many products
6. Encourage entrepreneurs to research markets, production, technologies, legality, and social inclusion and acceptability
7. Make sure you work out a value proposition that is profitable (see *Figure 4*)
8. Try to make business out of inputs (seedlings, fertilisers, biopesticides) and wastes (composts, substrate for mushrooms etc)
9. Use risk management to identify and solve priority challenges
10. Use shared labels to make credible market claims around equity and sustainability

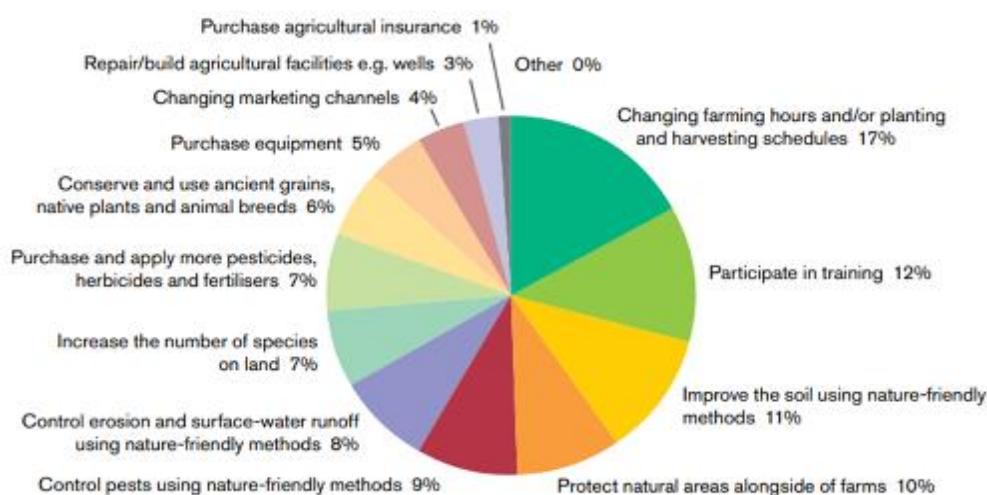


Figure 4. Why smallholder forest and farm producers are collectively the world's largest climate investors for climate adaption actions

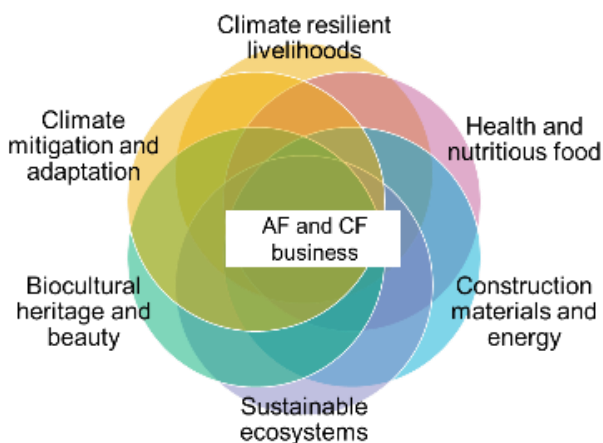


Figure 5. Benefits from FFPOs business of diverse agroforestry (AF) and community forestry (CF)

## Training session 2 – Tips on internal governance to manage agroforestry and community forest business

This session covered (i) Introduction to the ‘Internal governance’, (ii) identifying the main principles and elements of internal governance (ii) Tools for assessing internal governance and (iii) break-out groups – practice session.

Internal governance refers to the **structures, systems, and practices** within an organization that are designed to ensure effective decision-making in pursuit of its goals. It is about who decides what in an organization (rather than in society as a whole). Structures refer to, “relations between the components of an organized whole” (Ahmandy et al., 2016). Structures refer to how the staff, departments and processes that determine how an organization operates are laid out. Systems involve sets of interacting or inter-related elements that are joined together to achieve common goals. In practice, organizational systems are multiple e.g. constitutional, membership, leadership, decision-making etc. Practices can be defined as “how actions transpire in reality - rather than through policies or conceptual ideas”. Practices refer to the ways of applying a policy, idea, belief, or method, as opposed to theories relating to it. Good internal governance is important for these reasons: (i) Enhances belonging and trust (ii) Leads to efficient performance, ethical behaviour and responsible stewardship, and (iii) Delivers effectiveness against purpose. Principles of good internal governance can be depicted in three main pillars as explained in *Figure 6*. In AF and CF businesses involving many smallholder producers, there is a need to align members of a group behind a common purpose. Alignment needs leadership skills to establish a leadership group to drive things forward, engage with the broader membership (Listen to them, be positive about their contributions, but also be honest and direct), delegate using clear instructions, appreciate and be positive about people’s effort, help find opportunities to build their skills, praise in public – correct in private – and never raise your voice. Building members trust is an ongoing task that can be achieved by putting in place some institutional basics (see *Figure 7*).

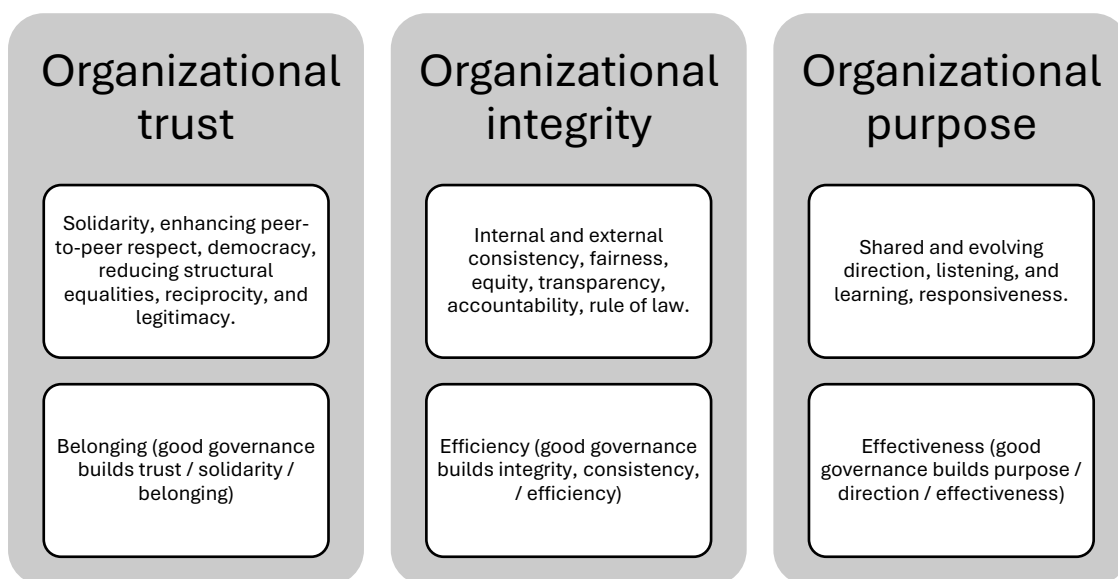


Figure 6. Principles of good internal governance

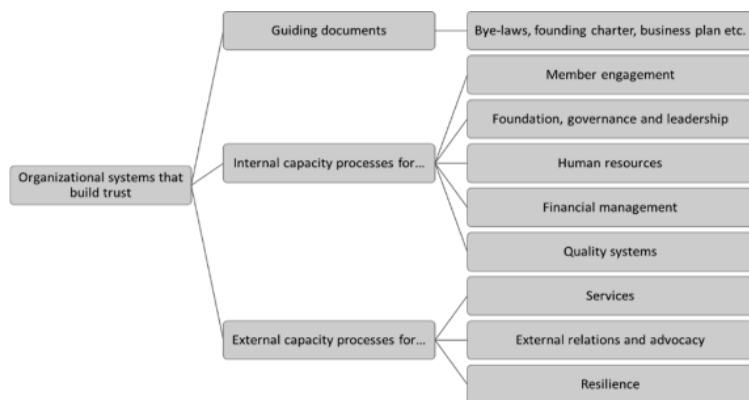


Figure 7. Institutional foundations for building trust in an organization

Building integrity can be achieved by a thorough and participatory approach to develop core organizational byelaws such as (the 5Ms): (i) Motivation – business objectives, value proposition and ethical principles that you will pursue, (ii) Membership – qualifications to join, transferability, termination rules, (iii) Management – positions, required qualifications and conduct, disqualifications, period, re-election process, maximum terms, (iv) Meetings – annual general meetings and other special meetings with notice period, quorum, voting rules, and (v) Minutes – agreed records of business structure, aims, meeting decisions, plans and finances.

A key feature of good internal governance is to check regularly on the relationships within and out with the organizations through a reflective retreat to look at accomplishments, internal harmony, enterprise’s relations, motivations, and goals among others. Drawing on some case studies of excellent FFPO organizational governance, common features that the best-governed organizations always have in place were presented against the three key elements of internal governance (see Table 1). Tools for assessing internal governance have already been developed by the FFF such as an Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCSAT) for producer organizations. OCSAT has 8 key capacity areas that it assesses (5 internal and 3 external ones) and covers governance under internal capacity area 2 of the tool. Many other organisational capacity assessment (OCA) tools are in existence. A survey carried out by William and Flora Hewlett Foundation in partnership with Informing Change in 2017 found nearly 50 different OCA tools<sup>2</sup>. The top five most referenced OCA tools are summarised (see Table 2).

Table 1. Top features of best-governed organizations

Elements of internal governance	Top 10 features of best-governed organizations
Setting up the right structure – top ten tips	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Solid structures guided by a written constitution - mission / vision / values / objective of organization</li> <li>2. Formal registration as a group organization and commitment to legal standards.</li> <li>3. Inclusive general assembly to which Management and board of directors’ report.</li> <li>4. Tiered democratic membership structures balanced at local / regional / national levels.</li> <li>5. Gender balance / quotas on tiered leadership committees up to Board.</li> <li>6. Written organogram with departments for finance / HR / operations / certification.</li> <li>7. Division of operational / technical services to support members</li> <li>8. Various units for extension, business, logistics, communication, MEL, advocacy</li> <li>9. Women’s groups in addition to regular local group meetings</li> <li>10. Digitised financial accounting system that is banked and audited publicly</li> </ol>
Setting up the right systems – top ten	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clear cycle of strategic or business planning with regular progress meetings</li> <li>2. Policy on membership rights, withdrawal, responsibilities (inspections), fees</li> <li>3. Leadership nomination, vetting, election, terms, service periods defined</li> <li>4. Regular cycle of meetings up to and including general assembly</li> <li>5. Bye laws / standards defining requirements of membership participation and checks</li> <li>6. Safeguarding / grievance mechanism and procedures understood by all and enforced</li> <li>7. Written procedures for decision-making at different levels</li> <li>8. Financial procedures, management and accounting policies in place including audits</li> </ol>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.dropbox.com/sc/fo/uk070gkz5plihzvwelym3/AB-2qp0IMwbWz4-ksJadOgE?e=3&preview=Organization+Capacity+Assessment+Tool+Database.xlsx&rlkey=pykibwq6le6dxu93zxnw7mh98&dl=0>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Human resource policy with guidance on recruitment, conditions and wellbeing</li> <li>10. Structured process for encouraging women membership and leadership</li> </ol>
<b>Setting up good practices – top ten tips</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strong mutually agreed sustainability purpose and assessments of progress towards it</li> <li>2. Proactive leadership approach which identifies and pre-empts problems and plans succession</li> <li>3. Clear training and capacity development programmes and peer-to-peer learning</li> <li>4. Emphasis on agroforestry / sustainable forestry as a business - not option of last resort</li> <li>5. Financial compliance including chartered accountant managing digital finance system</li> <li>6. Strong attention to management field visits and communication about decisions at all levels</li> <li>7. Non-discrimination with emphasis on women and youth equality</li> <li>8. Regular meetings between executive committees and employees to improve outcomes</li> <li>9. Emphasis on protecting farmers rights, tenure and tree registration</li> <li>10. Promoting agroforestry and agroecology diversification beyond cash crops for resilience</li> </ol>

Table 2. The top five most referenced OCA tools




SN	Creator	Tool Name	Link	Focus area (s)
1	McKinsey & Company	Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCAT)	<a href="https://mckinseyonsocty.com/ocat/">https://mckinseyonsocty.com/ocat/</a>	Seven organizational capacity areas and their elements (Aspirations, strategy, organizational skills, human resources, systems and infrastructure, organizational structure, and culture)
2	Marguerite Casey Foundation	Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool*	<a href="#">Marguerite Casey Foundation Assessment Tool — 501 Commons</a>	Four Organizational capacity areas (Leadership, adaptive, management, and operational capacity)
3	Social Venture Partners	Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool*	<a href="#">Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (Version 1) - Social Venture Partners International</a>	Ten organizational capacity areas (mission, vision, strategy & planning; program design & evaluation; Human resources; senior management team leadership; IT; Financial management; Fund development; Board leadership; Legal affairs; Marketing, communication & external relations)
4	PACT	Organizational Capacity Assessment	<a href="#">Pact's Organizational Capacity Assessment handbook   Pact (pactworld.org)</a>	Six capacity areas (strategic organization, stakeholders, human resources, assets and offices, admin and finance, core values)
5	Venture Philanthropy Partners	McKinsey Capacity Assessment Grid*	<a href="#">Nonprofit-21.qxd (uconn.edu)</a>	Same as # 1 above

### Training session 3 – Tips on attracting pioneering investors to support agroforestry and community forest business

A recent summary of work on business unusual illustrates several emerging business models that are trying to address the triple crises of inequality, climate change and biodiversity loss (see Hou Jones et al., 1024). Business unusual involves making diversity and equity pay. This is a challenge because economic laws tend to homogenise production in search of scale efficiencies and tend to concentrate wealth in the hands of few people. So, we need pioneers including (i) Business pioneers – alternative ownership enterprises (AOEs) that are more productive, agrobiodiverse and *disperse* (rather than concentrate) wealth, (ii) Finance pioneers – alternative sources of finance built on local knowledge, trust and experimentation to back the above, and (iii) Investor pioneers – business partners who back a just rural transition. For each of these categories, there are existing case studies that illustrate a different way of doing business (see examples in Table 3). For example, there are producer pioneers, who maintain very high levels of agrobiodiversity, and multiple value chains that maintain diverse landscapes. Similarly, research have been conducted on how each of those producer pioneers has mobilised its own internal finance to allow its members to experiment with new crops, production systems or processing equipment (see examples in Table 4). Finally, are examples of external companies that have taken a pioneering approach to investing in these local businesses in ways that affirm their inclusive structure,

biodiverse production systems and climate resilience (see *Table 5*). A series of tips were then presented based on these case studies for AF and CF businesses seeking to attract external investment (see *Figure 8*).

*Table 3. Referable case studies that illustrate new ways of doing business*

#	Country	FFPO name	Description of FFPO and business	Reference
1	 Ecuador	Union of Peasant and Indigenous Organizations of Cotacachi (UNORCAC)	Comprised of 45 grassroots communities with 3,500 households and three enterprise groups (Runa Tupari Native Travel, Sumak Mikuy food, and Sara Mama juice)	Piñán Cajas (2023)
2	 Ghana	Kassena Nankana Baobab Cooperative Union (KANBAOCU)	Comprised of 42 cooperative societies and 173 group baobab and shea businesses that aggregate product from 12,300 women and 500 men members	Sulemana and Awaregya (2020); Adagera and Kuudaar (2023)
3	 Tanzania	Mtandao wa Vikundi vya Wakulima na Wafugaji Mkoa wa Arusha (MVIWAARUSHA).	Comprised of 46 ward-level networks and 446 local groups made up of 12,500 smallholder members with enterprise groups for honey and sunflower oil	Kayombo et al. (2023)

*Table 4. Referable producer pioneers that have mobilised its own internal finance*




Country	FFPO name	Internal finance mechanism	Scale (2022)	Conditions that must be met to access loans	Timescale	Interest rates
 Ecuador	Union of Peasant and Indigenous Organizations of Cotacachi (UNORCAC)	Santa Anita Savings and Credit Cooperative (Carrera Rueda and Vallejo Rojas 2023)	US\$11.3 million loan portfolio  15,000 members	Being a member of the cooperative and providing evidence of a regular income	2–4 years	5–8%
 Ghana	Kassena Nankana Baobab Cooperative Union (KANBAOCU)	Jwa Ngwaane Community Cooperative Credit Union  (Adagera and Kuudaar 2023)	US\$21,994 loan portfolio  6,105 members	Being a member of a VSLA and have its endorsement, and consistent savings for 6 months	1–2 years	2–4%
 Tanzania	Mtandao wa Vikundi vya Wakulima na Wafugaji Mkoa wa Arusha (MVIWAARUSHA)	8 SACCOs	US\$89,147 loan portfolio  4,516 members	Being a member of the SACCO and having savings deposited in an account	3 months to 3 years	1–12%

Table 5. Examples of external companies that have taken a pioneering approach to investing in these local businesses

Company	Products	Region	Revenues
Aduna	Grains, powders, superfood, teas, beauty oils	Sourced from Ghana and Burkina Faso with sales in 18 Countries	Annual revenue of approximately US\$3 million
Tony's Choclonely	Chocolate Cocoa beans	Sourced from Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire with sales to the global market	More than €150 million annual net revenue
Cafédirect	Coffee	Sourced from Latin America and Tanzania with sales to the global market	Revenue £17.5 million turnover in 2022

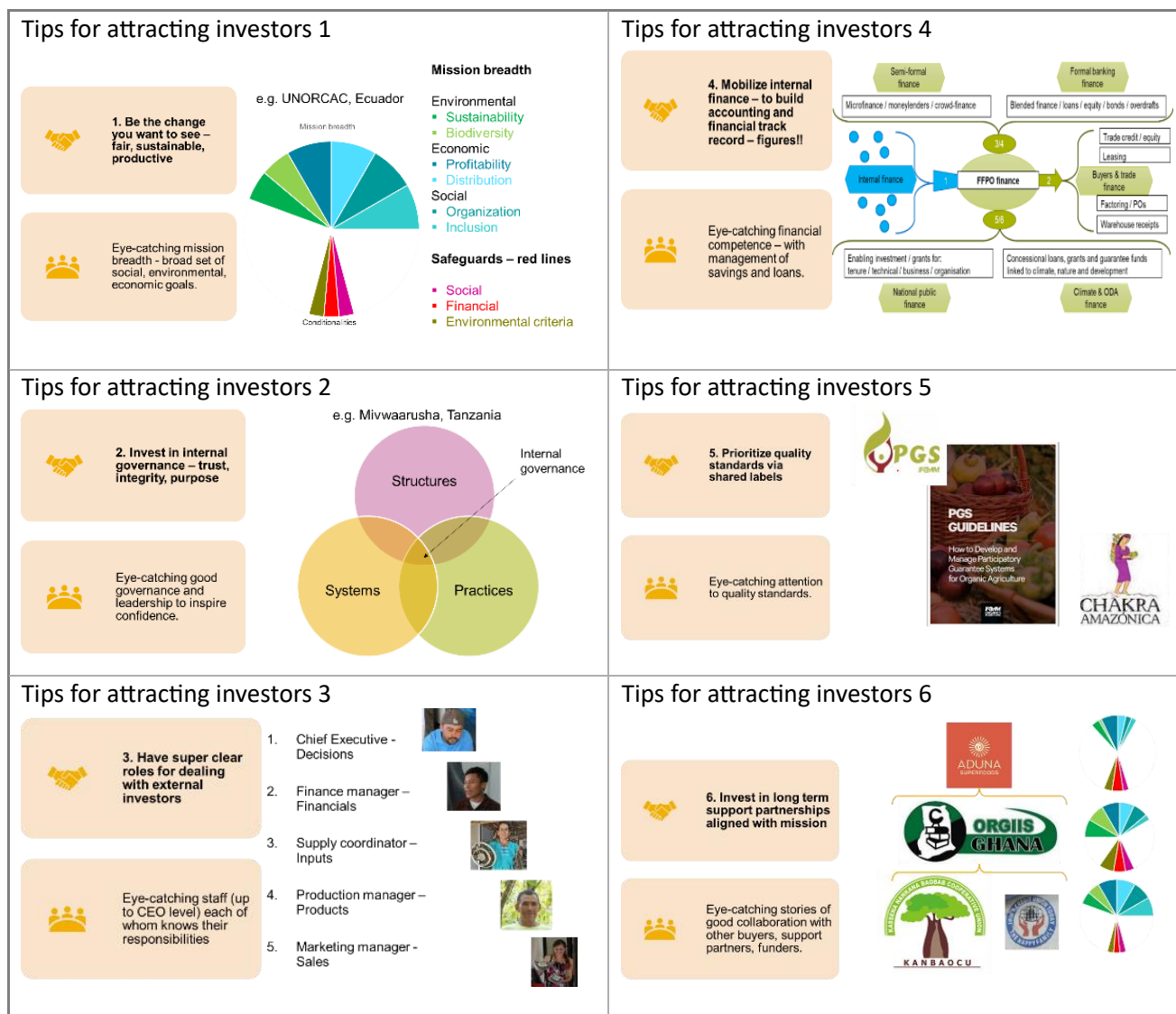


Figure 8. Tips for attracting investors based on these case studies for AF and CF businesses seeking to attract external investment

### 2.2.1.2 Participants feedback and learnings from the training to the fields

Although participants feedback on the training was given on the last day of the exchange, it demonstrates that business unusual thinking were taken with them to the field. This made it easier conceptualize observations in the sites in the field and link to the situation in their home countries. Key notes of learning made by countries are summarised in *Table 6 as the raw notes*.

*Table 6. Comments by countries that reflects learning notes from the technical training combined with field visits observations (raw notes)*

Country	Key notes of learning
Zambia	<p><b>Interesting – especially thinking on mobilising internal finance</b> – Quite interesting for me. IIED description of savings and loans groups. Not just about saving to make money available, but thinking bigger to develop a saving cooperative, or credit union / bank.</p> <p><b>Interesting to hear about other programmes AF challenges.</b> We have been encountering challenges with agroforestry. Good examples such as WeForest agroforestry presentation. Farmers reliant on rain-fed irrigation for tree planting – with many dying. Also interesting to hear of incentives – like free seedlings. But often if they are provided free, they are then left to die. So, it can be better to involve the farmers in free seedlings.</p>
TANZANIA	<p><b>Concerns over apex level strength – but encouraging collaboration of projects.</b> Overall impression. All these member-based organizations under umbrella apex organizations have rather different levels of support. In Tanzania the organizations are capacitated to provide training to the lower member-based groups. Overall, the collaboration between projects was an interesting element.</p>
MALAWI	<p><b>Insightful thinking on mobilizing internal finance and internal governance.</b> Important learning, access to finance is not just a problem to Malawi. It is clear that it is a widespread problem in most countries. Very interesting to hear on the power of mobilizing internal finance. Banks have principles that they cannot break. If we can mobilize finance, we can overcome some of these things. Talk on improving internal governance also very insightful – as sometimes you lose a whole project cycle because the organizations fall apart.</p>
MADAGASCAR	<p><b>Opportunity to learn about ten tips to develop AF and CF business and internal governance.</b> The main problems are the integration of trees on farm and what we have seen here is often pure vegetables or pure trees.</p>
KENYA	<p><b>Difference of context and opportunity to learn from Kenya</b> - Very different from Kenya. Membership of the groups. Access to technology and finance of groups is different. Forests are mostly community forest here and very dispersed. In Kenya people are closer together and better linked to technology. Need a lot of development support. Another challenge we observed was on record keeping / few books brought to the meeting – or finance management. In Kalayi – most of the women only partially schooled. So, need training in record keeping, finance, communication. Zambia is clearly good for beekeeping – and has a high potential – but requires further investment. In Kenya there are many VSLAs that evolve into Savings and Credit Cooperative Organizations (SACCOs) and there could be exchanges to build that capacity.</p>
GHANA	<p><b>Insightful to hear how business unusual AF and CF might fit together.</b> First day presentation focused on AF and CF business models. Insightful to see how AF and CF management fit together – with many good examples from different institutions. In Ghana GhaFFaP groups come together to try and advance as an apex organization – bringing groups together from whole country. Really appreciated the presentation on business unusual – and for AF to integrate response to threats of climate change, biodiversity and food security. We need to implement climate-smart models at community level – with many interesting examples.</p> <p><b>Group exercises next time please!</b> - Needed time to break down into groups to discuss each of the elements of the approach.</p> <p><b>How to aggregate such dispersed groups – including knowledge flows to the ground</b> - In field visits – they saw CF well managed, fire management, water for nurseries and for vegetables development. Honey also being developed. In the second community it was clear that the training for fire management not really preparing them for reality. Was interesting to see how information could flow from the central level down to the field. Another issue was the dispersed communities – how to aggregate their product to link them to markets. Also needed to make more progress on finance.</p>
LIBERIA	<p><b>More practical examples that we can adopt in Liberia please!</b> Presentation was OK and the panel discussion. They wanted to see a more practical discussion of how we can adopt things in Liberia. Wanted to see more FFPOs in the panel discussion from other countries. It makes it better if the FFPOs get a chance to share our own experiences. Saw the passion of the people in the field. Some of the groups were more organized. For example, Chitimba groups was very weak and the honey very susceptible to drought. But the second group Temwani was much better prepared and organized. For several groups we saw on day 2 – the elections need to be held, record keeping strengthened and business model needs to be strengthened.</p> <p><b>Wanted to learn from other countries not just Zambia.</b> Wanted to focus on money managed – how the cash flows are being managed as this is the core to institutional sustainability. Some have survived since 1999 – but slow for us to see the impact.</p> <p>Response – need to reflect on how these groups can be linked into apex groups as they develop – many quite new.</p>

TOGO	<p><b>Key advice appreciated – especially on internal governance to support strong business.</b> First day – some key advice on how to improve the AF and CF – and how the internal governance is used to support the enterprises that are developed.</p> <p><b>Useful field insights – and want to learn more about carbon finance.</b> In the field we learned how the FFPOs were trying to develop their businesses. For example, the first group working on honey and then Temwani group working on cotton and mushrooms. There is a big issue of bush fire control. The BCP project – it helped to understand how the money was flowing from up to down – mostly supply of inputs like seed, or schools, or roofs. Not clear how FFF was connecting to BCP. We want to know more – as BCP is quite new to us. Bamboo site – the processing was advancing – and also building hives, and a bamboo nursery – as they realise that the bamboo is declining and being cut a lot in their area. Interesting to see how bamboo could be an income source with basket weaving and processing – interesting for us.</p> <p>Based on the presentations of Duncan and Stephen – governance of these groups is the cornerstone to provide tangible and meaningful services to members. Based on the resources allocated – what priority is given to governance – or is the emphasis on other things like infrastructure.</p>
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### 2.2.2 Combining the technical knowledge with awareness on initiatives advancing the development of AF and CF businesses

Through two panel discussions in the scene setting session on the first day, the participants further had an opportunity to link the strategic knowledge gained through the training to practical experience in advancing the development of AF and CF business from different programs and projects. This connection was what the participants expected to learn from the field in the next days that focused entirely on field visits. The experience shared on AF and CF business are reported under the corresponding topics below.

#### Latest advances in AF business development (Panel 1):

The second panel explored latest advances being made on AF businesses. The Facilitator, Ms. Elaine Springgay from FAO headquarters set the scene by providing an overview of the global Agroforestry sector highlighting major challenges like limited business models and limited markets but further highlighted the sector growth patterns indicating increased area by more than 5 times between 1999 and 2022. The FAO global Agroforestry program was also highlighted indicating support to sustainable AF systems, AF monitoring and supporting National Agroforestry policies and strategies. The panel discussions provided insights in Zambia Agroforestry works by governments and civil society organisations. The practices shared ranged from AF for soils improvements to carbon credits schemes in Africa and encompass various project types summarized in *Table 7*. The major challenge has been adoption rates of the agroforestry practices; however, carbon markets are now providing incentives increased agroforestry practices.

*Table 7. Existing initiatives on AF business models shared at the Pannel*

Project type	Key actor (implementing agency/donor)	Brief experience shared	Panellist
I. Agroforestry research	Zambia Agriculture Research Institute (ZARI)	ZARI's perspective towards research in agroforestry has been for many years tackling Nitrogen deficiency constraint in farming systems and incorporating livestock feeding. Their target areas have mostly been Eastern Province and Northern Province. During their work to promote agroforestry practices, they noticed that the adoption rate was low. To promote agroforestry, ZARI and its partners have been promoting the addition of high-value trees to systems using three steps, which are community engagement and trainings, support with seeds as well as enlighten farmers on trading in seedlings/ agroforestry products.	Mr Malundu Mwila, Job title, Principal Researcher at ZARI

II. AgriCord	FFD/AgriCord	FFD is part of the AgriCord alliance with AgriCord managing eight programs that are currently ongoing and among the eight is the FFF programme, which is a yearly program support with EUR 91,5K. Several focus areas that FFD projects is focusing on were shared such as forestry, agroforestry and marketing, carbon sequestration, climate resilience and land restoration to mention a few in different countries such as Kenya, Nepal, Tanzania and Vietnam. The approach and experience in supporting the forestry curricular development in countries such as Vietnam was also shared. In addition, their experiences in agroforestry systems such as AF coffee, AF with rubber periodic AF systems and complex AF systems were shared with emphasis on biodiversity, income diversification, food security and transitioning to forest plantations. Furthermore, the challenges faced in agroforestry were highlighted with the biggest challenge being inadequate policies and implementation of policies. In conclusion, they mentioned their different approaches to promoting agroforestry.	Adrian Monge Monge, Job title
III. Agroforestry in Katanino	WeForest	Their agroforestry project in Katanino aims to reach a total of 100,000ha under restoration and conservation at national level by 2025 and plant 525,050 trees on 1132 Ha of land across all five zones in Katanino Joint Forest Reserve by 2026. Their rationale for agroforestry is addressed directly by each key driver of deforestation which are agriculture expansion, fuelwood and timber extraction as well as folder extraction and livelihood grazing. They use the Silvopastoral and Agrisilvicultural agroforestry systems with designs containing 200 <i>Moringa</i> and <i>Leucaena</i> and 200 <i>Gliricidia</i> respectively. Trainings, extension services and subsidies/incentives are some of their approaches for agroforestry uptake. In addition, they have a business model in place and face challenges such as access to quality tree seeds and seedlings, tree competition in the landscape as well as lack of water resources for tree nurseries and seedling establishments.	Borniface Katite, Job title
IV. AFR100	Kenyan Forest Services	Seed collection and nursery establishments supported by the KFS to provide feedstock in afforestation projects.	Viavian Sigel

### Latest advances in CF business development (Panel 2):

This panel discussion was facilitated by Kanimang Camara from Gambia. The accounts of the initiatives shared with the participants encompass various project types briefly presented through the panel discussion (see *Table 8*). Building on the experience of the government support project as an example, key messages can be deduced. Nature-based initiatives with communities like CF requires strong participatory process and planning as illustrated in *Figure 9*. This process according allows the community to take ownership buy-in the concept. It was deduced that sustainability of CF also depends on the existence of management plans developed with the communities that clearly spell out available forest-based livelihoods applicable for each community. It is from these livelihood options that communities take up businesses. In the case of the Zambian CFMG, various forest products are identified that translates into value chain businesses which include but not limited to beekeeping, basketry, indigenous fruit collection and processing as well as collection, processing and sell of non-wood forest products such as mushroom, caterpillars and herbal medicine. It is important to note that businesses for each community depend on the availability of the products in their forest of interest. However, there are also other businesses supported outside forests which include tree seedling production and gardening as other livelihood options. Some practical ways on who to strengthen CFMGs were noted to include the following:

- CFMGs need proper incentives and benefits that rightfully outweigh their investment in management and their limited access to the forests
- More effort needs to be made to find a solution for the financial sustainability of CFMGs
- Sharing of best practices and experiences amongst CFMGs
- Capacity building of CFMGs in various aspects

- Empower CFMGs to make decisions themselves
- Improve market access and market share from Forest Based products from CFMAs
- Sustain partnerships between CFMGs and other partners supporting CFM
- Enhance value addition to products at local level
- Avoid dependency on external material and financial resources, which can undermine sustainability
- Encouraging CFMGs to form an association where numerous CFMGs exist

Table 8. Summary of initiatives shared at the field forward-looking meeting that show CF related business inactivates in practice

Project type	Key actor (implementing agency/donor)	Brief experience shared	Panellist <sup>3</sup>
V. FFPOs initiative	COMACO	COMACO works with farmers who have formed cooperatives. These farmers are forest-based producers while other are farm-based producers. COMACO does not use artificial fertilizers, hence, agroforestry is important in their operations. They are also involved in carbon market of which they have 1.3 tons of carbon verified. Soon, this initiative can be generating significant income for further investment in AF and related businesses.	Dale Lewis, Founder and CEO of COMACO
VI. Government support project	Forestry Department of Zambia (Government)	Backed by the forest policy of 2014 (which is currently under review, CF is a widely recognized in Zambia for promoting sustainable community forest management. Currently, the department has facilitated the formation of 329 Community Forestry Management Groups CFMGs managing over 8 million hectares of forests across the country. Further, the department also promotes other participatory forests management approaches which include joint forest management and private as well as urban forestry. To sustain CF, the forestry department develops management plans which as spell out available forest-based livelihoods applicable for each community.	Thecla Kamfwimbe, Forest Technician and Focal point for CFM and FFF
VII. Environmental/climate fund project	GEF/FAO	As part of theory of change of the GEF-7 project and its operational strategies, it works closely with the communities. It promotes business incubation in communities and helped them go through all the processes to obtain legalized community forests.	Vincent Ziba, FFF Facilitator and FAO-GEF 7 Focal point
VIII. Research project	CIFOR-ICRAF	An approach called the value web approach focuses on bamboo products and provides capacity building and trainings to communities. Experts in marketing are hired to market the products that are produced by the farmers.	Nicholas Hogarth, Senior Scientist CIFOR-ICRAF
IX. Jurisdiction Project	EP-JSLP	The project aims at assisting local communities in managing their forests. This have strengthened community forest enterprises in the jurisdiction	Noel Muchimba, National Coordinator

<sup>3</sup> For more information (e.g. contact): refer to the exchange organizers.

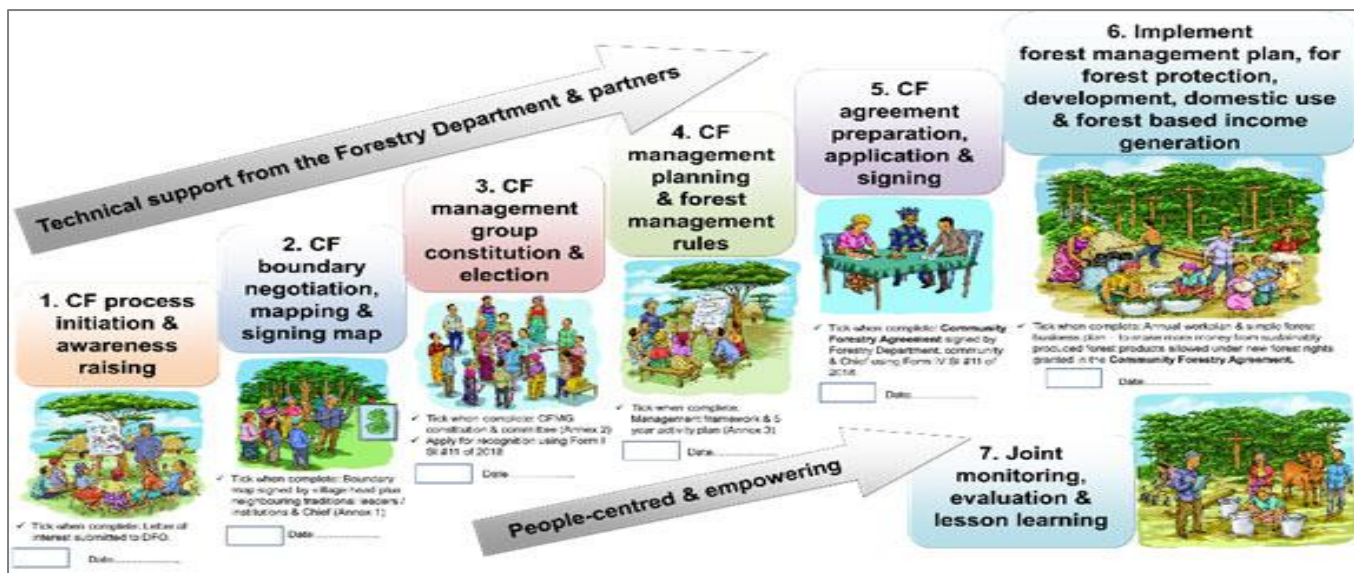


Figure 9. An example of the process required for developing a strong CF that facilitates community ownership (Kamfwimbe T., nd).



## 3. Exchange with the FFPOs in the field

### 3.1 Overview of the field program and emerging lessons

The field visited was organized in groups (Group 1-3) who visited different sites (see Annex 1). This program allowed the overall participants to cover a wide variety of sites that have yield relevant results with scalable experience/lessons to be shared. Following the scene-setting session in day one, the remaining days of the exchange focused on the field which provided the participants with opportunity for learning from the practical experience of the various forms of FFF-supported FFPOs.

In this regard, the next sections (Section 3.2 and Section 3.3) present the description of the sites visited on second day and third day respectively. The sections further synthesis the lessons derived from day-by-day feedback (including learnings) on the entire exchange program that were given by the participants on the fourth – i.e., the final day of exchange.

### 3.2 Sites visited on the day

#### 3.2.1 Multifocal FFPOs advancing CF/AF businesses in Petauke district of Zambia

On the second day of the exchange, the participants were organized into two groups that overall visited four sites comprising the Kampamule Multipurpose Cooperative, Misefi Multipurpose Cooperative Society, Chitimba Farmers' Cooperative and Temwani Weavers Womens Development Club with varying profiles. The brief description of their profile and success stories are presented below, where necessary in connection with their work with the FFF programme.

**The Kampamule Multipurpose Cooperative** was registered on 24 March 2009 with a mission to promote agricultural development and community cooperation. The cooperative consists of 70 individuals (14 women, 16 men and 40 youth) with 40% of the women being part of the twelve executive members. They funded all their activities until 2022 when they received their first grand from the Forest and Farm Facility Programme. The support enhanced their business skills and showed their dedication to reverse degraded land by planting 2000 citrus trees on communal land that had suffered from agricultural degradation. In addition, the cooperative expanded their works on tree planting and identified 20 hectares of land for Community Forest Management (CFM) and integrated beekeeping and agroforestry. In particular, beekeeping emerged as a major activity, not only for income generation but also as a vital component in their efforts to restore land. Through their unwavering dedication and innovative approaches, they have shown how community-driven initiatives can lead to sustainable development and environmental management.



*Plate 2. Integrated beekeeping in agroforestry system as practiced by the Kampamule Multipurpose Cooperative*

**Misefi Multipurpose Cooperative Society** was formed in 1999 and registered within the same year on 29<sup>th</sup> September with the primary aim of easing the purchase of fertilizer from the agriculture department. The cooperative consists of 56 members with 15 women, 16 female youths, 15 male youths and 10 men. The Petauke District Farmers Association (PDFA) supported the cooperative with climate change trainings. PDFA introduced the cooperative to the

Petauke Forest Department (FD) who supported them with trainings in conservation. With the support from both the association and the department, the cooperative formed Misefi Community Forestry Management Group (CFMG). Thereafter, they saw it best to conserve 11,400 Hectors and integrate beekeeping, currently having 273 back hives. Through the earning they got from beekeeping, the cooperative invested in horticulture practices and chicken rearing, of which they currently have 300 broilers. Through the FD Office, the cooperative got to know about FAO and the FFF programme. In 2024, they received their first grant from the FFF programme, which brought development and resources to upscale their beekeeping practices. They are currently making their own modern beehives to shift away from the back hives they have been using in the past. The FFF support also enabled them to build a honey bulking and processing plant and procured materials such as honey pressers and packaging material. In addition, they have also been able to purchase a solar system, which is yet to be installed. This support has contributed to the growth of the cooperative and capacitated them with sustainability practices through the training and skills they are gaining from beehive making and value addition to their raw honey.

**Chitimba Farmers' Cooperative** was established in 1999 with the aim to exploit climate change mitigation and diversify its member's revenue income through sustainable beekeeping practices. The cooperative was registered in 2021 and consists of 30 members, 15 women, 10 youths and 5 men with 10 board members of the executive. Before the District Farmers Association (DFA) identified the cooperative for support, they funded their own activities. In 2023, the DFA introduced the cooperative to FAO to get support from the FFF programme. In 2024, the cooperative received a grant from the FFF programme, which led to expanding the number of beehives from seven to 50 beehives, and initiated the construction of a processing center, which is still in progress. They have also benefited with honey pressers and packaging containers. Additionally, they have been capacitated in sustainable beehive trainings and the importance of value addition to their products.

**Temwani Weavers Womens Development Club** was formed and registered in 2018 by the Registrar of Societies. The club has 18 members, 16 women and 2 men led by 10 leaders who are all women. The Cotton Association of Zambia (CAZ) initiated the club, as a study circle group to promote collective and collaborative learning with a primary focus on cotton farming and CAZ playing a crucial role in educating them about sustainable cotton farming practices through study circle materials. Further, to empower the members, CAZ provided ongoing support through various training sessions and facilitated the creation of village banking systems within the study circle technology. Over the years, the club has honed their skills focusing on cotton value addition through support from the Forest and Farm Facility (FFF) Programme and from this support and CAZ through the lobby and advocacy activities, the club managed to lobby for land from the chief to build a weaving room. They also lobbied for a few funds to enable them to initiate the process of building a small 1 room to house their weaving machine, which was stationed outside a member's house, coupled with the money contributed from the club's own finances, they managed to complete the weaving room with room for future expansion as the business grows.

With support from the FFF small grants, the club managed to purchase a second weaving machine, a significant step that will allow them to expand their business enterprises through increased production. However, the club faces challenges in producing quality materials for the market due to sufficient training for all the members of the club and readily available contractual markets for their woven materials thereby need to conduct a market survey within the district for purposes of finding contractual markets for their woven materials. Recognizing the potential of the abundant local cotton and much of what is sold without value addition, the club is determined to leverage their skills and training to create high-quality woven products aiming to provide to markets such open markets and those into hospitality businesses as well as improve the livelihoods of the members. The club were educated in agroforestry, which led to 15 out of 18 members to integrate agroforestry trees into their farming, promoting sustainability. Additionally, training in lobbying and advocacy has empowered them in community engagement and financial inclusion, further supported by Zambia National Commercial Bank (ZANACO) express money booth provided through the FFF program, enhancing their access to financial services. The FFF programme has also supported them with training in mushroom production focusing on utilizing cotton waste such as cotton husks for the production of mushrooms. Temwani Weavers Women's Development Club aspires to make a meaningful impact in their community through the various activities they are engaging in.



Plate 3. The Temwani Weavers Womens Development Club welcoming the visiting participants

### 3.2.2 Lessons learned

**Good governance and local support, particularly from traditional authority are fundamental:** good internal governance among the FFPOs facilities solidarity not only internally but also is working with support partners. For instance, it was noted that leadership disagreements and internal conflicts among the Petauke District Farmers Association led two rival groups taking each other to court, which consequent termination of FFF support. In contrast, the Kampamule Multipurpose Cooperative showed good governance which led to significant achievements observed in the field including installation of a water tank for irrigation. While they considerably good structure with a chairman, there is still the need to strengthen the overall group engagement, particularly benefit sharing aspect. One of the remarkable features is the involvement of the traditional leaders which makes it easier to request for an extension of their community forest area. On this topic, it was also noted that strong support from traditional leaders allowed the Misefi Multipurpose Cooperative Society to engage with community forest group working together as a strong group which allowed them to get 11,000 hectares forests under their management and benefit. While working with traditional authority is important, a group must establish it autonomy. In the case of the Chitimba Farmers' Cooperative for instance, it was noted that the control of the chief/headman was a bit too strong. Where men and women are in the group, the men always take the floor more than women which calls for the need to man inequality in a group.

**Growing young groups to define vision and integrate in market:** the experience of Chitimba Farmers' Cooperative demonstrates that a very young group – with strong emphasis on the documents. They had established some hives in a small area. Honey had been produced but sold to Indian trader at low value. Need work to consolidate their production and buyers. Also, the group puts overemphasis on 'fighting climate change – because we are cutting too many trees. Reality is that they are not responsible for climate change – and need to have their own vision for developing opportunities for their group (which might also contribute to climate action).

**Linking local groups with higher structures enhance access to market:** while Misefi Multipurpose Cooperative Society have fifty hives with some processing equipment, it was noted that it could be unlikely to be cost-efficient to process honey at that scale without an opportunity to aggregate and process in a more efficient way, especially because the

site is very far from the market. By connecting them with ZNFCA, the group receives support to get honey to high value markets. ZNFCA's role is to aggregate and send to either district or national markets. In terms of accessibility – as a district association, there is the district extension officers and interns who travel frequently to those groups.

**Market development is prerequisite to a strong group business:** the Temwani Weavers Womens Development Club was noted to be a very strong group with support from traditional leaders and CAZ partners like the Kampamule Multipurpose Cooperative and Misefi Multipurpose Cooperative Society. While their cotton weaving and mushrooms production is potential, the idea business aspect is weak. The development of an agroforestry nursery to grow *Gliricidia* for improving soil fertility is encouraging. The Cotton Association of Zambia (CAZ) serves as the apex organization coalescing all the groups to support them on business incubation. The business element is key as the strengthen of the association is dependent on the business strength of the member groups. While mushroom production has only just started with demand is higher than the supply. supermarkets in Petauke and the demand from them is 400kg per week which we cannot met without boosting the production and business. Regarding the fabric market, the Temwani Weavers Womens Development Club are being supported to conduct a market survey with focus on the hotels and other places to where they could supply. They have been surviving by selling to individuals throughout so the market is there but there is the need to be further explore it.

### 3.3 Sites visited on the third day

#### 3.3.1 Nature-based business experience of farmer associations and women groups in Nyimba district

The third day of the exchange was conducted in the Nyimba district of Zambia with the three groups of participants visiting 11 sites in total that are summarised below.

**Nyimba District Farmers Association (NDFA):** was formed following a structural change in the Zambia Farmers Union (ZFU) in 2006 to represent small-scale farmers in Nyimba District with a goal to achieve income and food security, fostering a self-sustained and resilient community. District Farmers associations were introduced to represent national union at district level and all affiliated information centres were required to join their respective district associations. Therefore, NDFA strives to help smallholder farmers achieve sustainable livelihoods by advocating and providing them with crucial support and access to funds. NDFA operates under a constitution that defines its governance structure, led by an elected board who serve for two or three teams consisting of five leaders with seven representatives of different departments, which are, Women, Youth, Oil and Cotton Seed, Grains, Livestock, Fruits and Vegetables. The association has undertaken various developmental projects like food processing and tree nurse management focusing on forest resource protection, promoting alternative livelihoods and enhancing income generation for small-scale farmers reducing reliance on traditional farming. The initiatives of the association are funded from membership fees, donor support and revenue-generating activities such as selling of cooking oil, dried fruits, oilcakes and transport hire services (tractors and trucks). Internal funds support the organization's administrative functions. While the association continuously focuses on their income-generating products and promoting environmentally sustainable practices through community-driven initiatives like forest management, they are also encouraging the cultivation and processing of valuable, sustainable products such as medicinal plants, tamarind-based beverages and baobab fruit products to boost farmer incomes and support sustainability.

Since 2021, the association has been working with FAO through the FFF Programme, achieving notable successes such as registering farmer groups and establishing a Ward Development Committee that includes forest and farm producer organizations (FFPOs). The association consists of 84 groups, categorized as information centres, cooperatives, and women's groups with 74 information centres registered to strengthen network and visibility in the district. They have developed Ward Development Plans, gained district recognition, and received FFF funding to enhance the capacity of small-scale farmer groups like Vizimumba, Nyankhasi, Tilimbe, Chimwemwe and Kalayi Women's Group. Additionally, the association has acquired land for Community Forest Management (CFM) and together with Nyimba District Forest Commodities Association with FFF backing; they have secured government recognition for CFM to conserve local forest resources. This funding also established a Climate District Committee led by the District Commissioner (DC), coordinating climate resilience efforts across the district.

Currently, NDFA has 5,789 members (3,473 females and 2,316 males) provided with access to farming inputs such as fertilizers, seeds, groundnuts and trainings provided by extension staff to ensure long-term sustainability and growth. With support from FFF, they are able to conduct business incubation training, empower members to grow their business ventures and enable the Forest Department (FD) to monitor and train FFPOs in sustainable practices. Increased visibility from the FFF project has helped the FFPOs registered with the association access the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and attract new donors like CIFOR-ICRAF who have contributed to advancing Vizimumba Information Center's bamboo project. In addition, the association's partnerships with international organizations have enhanced sustainable agricultural practices and livelihoods. Furthermore, the association has hosted the head of state for the 2023-2024 planting season, which elevated their profile and increased its visibility within the district.

**Cotton Association of Zambia (CAZ):** was established and launched on 25th November 2005, and legally registered with the Registrar of Societies on 19 December 2006, with the CAZ Council as the superior decision-making body in line with the Association's constitution and affiliates to the Zambia National Farmers Union (ZNFU). Their structure is composed of 39-member council which votes for the 7 members to sit in the Board. The Council is responsible for policy decisions, while the board oversees the functions of the Secretariat. The association operates in four regions, namely Eastern, Central, Lusaka and Southern Provinces, which involves about 38 districts and work directly with about 55,000 famers. Within this sector, CAZ's primary role is fourfold:

- Lobby and advocacy on behalf of the cotton producers with ginning companies regarding seed cotton pricing and contractual arrangements.
- Liaison with the Ministry of Agriculture and other Ministries on cotton policies, environmental issues and Tax issues.
- Increased value addition and provision of market links as well as extension services.
- Establishing a more proactive relationship between ginners, farmers and the Government by acting as an honest broker when major issues arise.

The association's vision is to see a prosperous and equitable cotton sector in which all players are winners with a mission to promote an environmentally friendly, financially viable, and sustainable cotton sub-sector through increasing cotton production and productivity, smallholder farmers' income, value addition, rural finance, climate-smart agriculture, and poverty reduction. They promote gender equality, raise awareness of, and mitigates measures for HIV/AIDS among its membership and farmers in the sub-sector.

At the beginning of 2020, the association had 51,000 members scattered across the cotton-growing regions of the country. The organization is based on grassroots membership and democratic structures, such as the DFA representatives. The Association's work has contributed to several aspects in the agricultural sub-sector and given space to numerous areas of learning. The most obvious areas are in strengthening the capacity to provide services to farmers achieved through capacity building of the CAZ Council, Board, and Management. They have also enhanced the adoption and views of study circles as an effective tool for farmer mobilization, information dissemination, formation of Cotton Association Savings and Loans Associations (CASALA), and appreciation of cotton value addition by farmers. In addition, the association initiated the Temwani Weavers Women Development Club in Eastern Province as a study circle group to promote collective and collaborative learning, primary focusing on cotton farming, which is now one of the FFPOs supported by the FFF programme. Value chain development has also begun to take root with handloom skills being learnt and promoted. The growth of the association has been seen through its expanded outreach demonstrated by the employment of field staff across the primary cotton growing regions.

**Zambia National Forestry Commodities Association (ZNFA):** was registered in August 2017 with support from Forest and Farm Facility (FFF) Programme and facilitation from Zambia Farmers Union (ZFU) with support from the Finnish Agri-Agency for Food and Forest Development (FFD) and the Cotton Association of Zambia (CAZ). ZNFA is a membership-based farm forestry and environmental conservation organization was established to promote ecological and sustainable management of forests and farm forestry commodities and farmlands in Zambia by its membership for the benefit of future generations. They seek to achieve this by promoting and safeguarding forestry growth and reducing deforestation, and advancing socially responsive, ecologically sound and economically sustainable forestry

and farm forestry business models in Zambia. The association also seeks to provide a platform for smallholder forestry and farm forestry commodities producers and processors for sustainable livelihoods through lobbying and business development as its core mandate and/or objective.

In 2015, the association was receiving indirect support from FFF while they were still incubated under CAZ; direct support began after their registration. From 2015, the association has received approximately K6,587,610 helping to strengthen its member's resilience to climate change by promoting diversification of livelihoods. The support from FFF has also helped develop their capacity to provide services to FFPOs in developing resilient landscapes and climate change adaptation. ZNFCA has 10 board members (5 males and 5 females) and 5 staff members (3 males and 2 females) that lead the association. With a membership of 132 member groups consisting of 5,331 individual members in five provinces, which include, Eastern, Southern, Central, North-western and Copperbelt provinces. Among the 132 member groups, 7 are women led groups. These member groups have been capacity built through trainings and business incubation. In addition, the association has collaborated with several other institutions such as Policy and Monitoring Research Centre (PMRC) on policy development and advocacy, Agrien who offered capacity building skills to ZNFCA staff and Zambia National Women's Lobby as well as We-Effect who supported with proposal development. Furthermore, ZNFCA have collaborated with Umulyo Foods and Wilder Bee who are offtakers of the products their produce.

**Nyimba District Forest Commodities Association (NDFCA):** started in September 2018 and legalized with legal documents on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020. NDFCA started under the Zambia National Forest Commodities Association after a sensitization meeting on climate change effect that was attended by three cooperatives, namely, Madziko, Utala woman's and Lwiba. These cooperatives sat together, resolved, agreed and saw it fit to sensitize four chiefdoms, namely, Nyaligwe, Lwembe, Mwape and Ndake on climate change resilience and implementation. This was during the 2018 to 2019 fight to reduce charcoal burning and deforestation. Over the years, NDFCA has expanded its support from 16 groups to 97 member groups, which includes a total of 1990 individuals with a proportion of 790 women, 480 men and 720 youths involved in non-timber forest products. The association has partnered with COMACO's Department of Agriculture and livestock, Bio carbon Partners (BCP) and FAO through the Forest Department. They have received support directly and indirectly from FFF in 2021 through capacity building and 2023 through a grant respectively. In 2023, the association received a Three hundred fifty thousand Zambian Kwacha (ZMW 300,000) from FFF to help the association build a processing plant for tamarind and baobab drinks that they are currently doing on a small scale. With the FAO project, Climate Change Resilient and Mosaic Smart Agriculture, through the implementation training in agroforest tree nurseries, exchange service and value chain of product from the forest, the association emphasizes their members to lobby for community forests and get involved in carbon trading.



**Community Market for Conservation (COMACO):** in the 1980s, poaching decimated wildlife populations in Zambia's Luangwa Valley. Thousands of elephants were killed annually, leading to a drop of over 30,000 in the elephant population within twenty years. The black rhino, previously abundant, went extinct. Villagers, facing extreme poverty and hunger, turned to poaching as their only source of income. At that time, the only strategies addressing poaching were punitive. Only a few wildlife rangers identified, arrested, and imprisoned poachers. However, imprisoning a



poacher meant sentencing his family to hunger as well. With the loss of the family's main provider, many women were left vulnerable to exploitation. In the 1980s, at the height of the AIDS epidemic in Zambia, the stakes were very high. Their founder, a wildlife biologist, saw an opportunity and asked what if, instead of imprisoning poachers, they trained them to farm, and provided a market for their crops. In 2003, COMACO started a pilot program working initially with 24 of the most notorious poachers in the Luangwa Valley. Poachers were taught basic practices in soil conservation and drought resistance and supplied with high-quality seeds and basic farming tools. In exchange, they agreed to stop poaching and surrender their guns. Soon, hundreds of poachers were approaching COMACO's field staff offering to surrender their weapons for a similar chance to change their lives for a better life.

Today, COMACO works with over 230,000 farmers across nearly a third of Zambia. COMACO purchases and transports crops such as groundnuts, soya beans, rice and maize from remote regions, where few other buyers reach, and pay premium prices to give farmers the value they deserve. They process the crops into high-quality food products such as yummy soy porridge, peanut butter, and chicken feed among many, and sell them across

Zambia under the brand "It's Wild!" In addition, they also process honey that their farmers harvest. The honey is processed from their processing plant (see pic), which is in Nyimba District of Eastern Province and sold under the "It's Wild" brand. The profits are returned to farmers through continued support and programming of COMACO activities and actual payouts called conservation dividends if compliance with conservation is demonstrated. As a result, food security levels have increased across the region, and slowly but surely, elephant populations are returning to the Luangwa Valley. In over 20 years of operation, COMACO has established and partnered with 112 cooperatives, working with over 230,000 Farmers across 89 chiefdoms and 3 provinces signed the Conservation Pledge. Among the partners, COMACO has collaborated with FFF FFPOs such as Kalai Womens Group in agroforestry practices with *Gliricidia sepium* to fight deforestation and improve livelihoods. Furthermore, COMACO has transformed the lives of 2,114 Poachers and has a cumulative 117,934,868 total of surviving *Gliricidia sepium*.

**Bio Carbon Partners (BCP):** was founded in 2012 with a deep commitment to African conservation, aiming to support this cause through a market-driven approach that enhances Africa's green economy via sustainable conservation finance. Zambia, with its world-class national parks and rapidly disappearing forests, was chosen as the foundation for BCP's operations. Since its inception, BCP has become a leading and multi-award-winning REDD+ developer in Africa, recognized for its consistent verification by the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) for nine consecutive projects. Over the past decade, BCP has set ambitious goals, including the avoidance of 30 million tons of emissions annually by 2030, benefiting 3 million people across 11 million hectares through their carbon offset forestry projects. The management team at BCP comprises 23 individuals heading various departments, reflecting a diverse and robust organizational structure. Since 2013, BCP has invested \$12 million into community development projects, positively impacting 230,000 individuals by improving livelihoods and fostering community growth. Operating across 1.2 million hectares of threatened forests in 17 chiefdoms throughout Zambia, BCP's mission is to make wildlife habitat conservation valuable to local communities. With over 200 employees spread across seven sites in Zambia, BCP is poised for regional expansion, promising to amplify its life-changing impacts and emission reduction efforts in the future.

BCP prioritize trusted REDD+ partnerships, recognizing that climate change is a global issue best addressed through collective efforts. To this end, BCP has categorized its partners based on their focus areas: Climate Change Alliance, Community Partners, Conservation, Policy and Advocacy, Resource Protection and Conservation, and Standards and

Verification. Among their Community Partners, BCP collaborates with FFF's FFPOs such as Nyankhasi Women's Group and apex organizations like the Nyimba District Forest Commodities Association (NDFCA) on initiatives related to carbon credits and carbon trading. These partnerships are crucial in driving forward BCP's mission and amplifying their impact. To date, BCP has successfully reduced 14 million tons of carbon emissions, underscoring their significant contribution to mitigating climate change.

**Msima Community Forest Management Group (CFMG):** government staff from the Forestry Department, with support from FAO-FFF programme under the GEF 7 project implemented by WWF were introduced to Msima and taught them the importance of forest conservation and ran them through the 5 steps series for ownership of a Community Forest Area. After community sensitizations, Msima's Community Forest Management Area (CFMA) was identified and mapped in 2023, total area of 538 hectares. The sensitization included the importance of the community to take ownership of the forest in their areas and benefit from forestry resources while taking responsibility for conserving and managing their ecosystem. The process involved traditional leaders, government departments, private sectors and commodity associations who worked together to support the establishment of the CFMG and attained recognition status. The CFMG have signed an agreement with Director of Forestry and on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023 gained recognition by Forest Department.

The project facilitated elections for the CFMG executive as per forest requirement. The CFMG has 8 male and 3 female executive members, 10 Fire Management Committee members; 7 male and 3 female and 8 Honorary Forestry Officers (HFOs) were elected. The HFOs were trained and await to be gazette by the Government of the Republic of Zambia. The constitution was development and benefit sharing mechanisms for the community forest resources facilitated by the project. The group developed a five-year and Annual Management Plan, and they entered into agreement on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024 with the Government. Various interventions have been implemented such as pumping tests for five (5) existing water points that will be mechanized, training of 26 user groups and other FFPOs in entrepreneurship, and development of 26 business plans based on identified agriculture and forest products value chains. The identified value chains include bee keeping, horticulture, sunflower, cowpeas, Sorghum, groundnuts, Cassava, Baobab, tamarind and small livestock. The farmers were also supported with seeds and fertilizers for various climate resilient crop varieties and training in climate smart agriculture at the farmer field schools. Additionally, three (3) school conservation clubs have been formed to spearhead conservation efforts to youths and-in school pupils as ambassadors of change.

**Kalai Women's Group:** was established on September 11th, 2018, with the goal of promoting natural resource conservation. *Kalai*, means "dangerous place," which comes from a nearby mountain known for its venomous snakes and inaccessibility. Membership fees and community labor, such as harvesting, planting, and applying fertilizer in local fields funded the activities of the group. By the end of 2018, the group officially registered with the Registrar of Societies and opened a bank account with Indo Zambia Bank. Later, the group expanded from an all women group and included men, now consisting of 25 members: 11 women, 4 men, and 10 youths with a leadership team of 11, 9 women and 2 men.

Before shifting to conservation, the group relied on charcoal production, a practice that contributed to deforestation and climate change. To mitigate these impacts and improve their livelihoods, they turned to natural resource conservation and began participating in promoted initiatives by government and NGOs, inclusive of FAO. Kalai supports COMACO by preserving standing trees, resulting to benefits such as roofing sheets, chickens, and beehives that members received. Additionally, they received *Gliricidia sepium* seedlings and established a demonstration plot through agroforestry support from COMACO.

In January 2024, Kalai was awarded a grant from the Constituency Development Fund (CDF), allowing them to launch a piggery project. Initially starting with four pigs, the group saw their livestock grow to fourteen by September 2024, leading to an 80% increase in their cumulative income. This milestone has greatly enhanced the livelihoods of the group's members.

Kalai's progress is further underscored by their involvement with FFF programme, which they joined in 2021 through the Forest Department. With training in business incubation, the group acquired essential equipment for integrated gardening. However, access to water remained a major challenge. In 2024, as FFF direct beneficiaries, Kalai drilled a

borehole to support their integrated gardening efforts. This crucial development has enabled them to establish a tree nursery and grow other crops, marking a transformative step towards improved food security and income generation. In addition to these achievements, the group has benefited from social cash transfers, a result of advocacy by NDFA and support from the Ministry of Community Development. Kalai is a shining example of how strategic support, access to resources, and sustainable agriculture can drive community empowerment and resilience.

**Chimwemwe Group:** was established in 2019 and officially registered in 2020 by the Registrar of societies. With a membership of 26 individuals and managed by 10 leaders consisting of 4 men and 6 women. The group initially focused on producing drinks from forest fruits such as tamarind and baobab locally known as busika and mabuyu respectively. Over time, the group expanded their activities to include basket making and beekeeping, and beekeeping remains as an ongoing activity. In the past year, the group has successfully marketed several of their main products and sold coffee made from buffalo beans for K500, harvested honey for K300, and produced traditional medicines such as nyanganya, mulaysafu, and nyakucha, which brought in K350.

Since establishment, they have engaged with various partners such as Traditional leaders benefiting from the community forest that they use for beekeeping. They have also partnered and received support from Nyimba District Forest Commodities Association (NDFCA), Zambia National Forest Commodities Association (ZNFCFA), Forest Department, Department of Small Medium and Enterprise and Cooperative, Department of Agriculture and FFF programme. The group received support from FFF of Three hundred eight thousand Zambian Kwacha (ZMW 380,000) for strengthening the beekeeping business and processing honey. They have also benefited from COMACO with capacity building activities such as trainings in beekeeping and agroforestry, providing them with knowledge on the importance of managing their forests and engaging in other business plans such as farming. From these partnerships, the group has had access to trainings such as strategic planning, sustainable beekeeping and business incubation.

**Nyankhasi Women's Group:** was formed in 2018 by women of shared interest and registered in 2020 allowing them to pool resources, collaborate on projects, and apply for grants and loans. The group has 38 members, 32 women and 6 men. Among them, 8 women and 4 men form a leadership of 12.

Their early activities included small-scale farming, savings and lending groups among members as well as participating in local community projects. These activities helped them establish a foundation for growth and development. Over time, they began to receive support from various organizations that played a crucial role in their growth. In March 2022, Community Development office supported them, and members benefited from 93 chickens that were provided and distributed among them providing them a source of income and nutrition from eggs produced. In 2023, they received support in October and November from Fertilizer Input Support Program (FISP) and Community Resource Board (CRB) respectively. FISP provided 30 bags of fertilizer and groundnut seeds, which enhanced their agricultural productivity, food security and income generation. While CRB provided them with 25 beehives. NDFA has also supported the group with 5 kg bag of sunflower seeds to diversify their agricultural activities. BCP granted them seven thousand five-hundred-kwacha (ZMW7, 500) carbon credit earnings for their involvement in Community Forest initiatives to reduce carbon emissions and enhance carbon sequestration such as reforestation and conservation agriculture. Additionally, the group received lessons on how to sustain these efforts, further building their capacity in this area. Furthermore, the group has ongoing projects, funded by FFF to enhance their sustainable production and value addition by setting up a honey processing plant with appropriate honey and beeswax equipment. In addition, the group waits for the office of the Chief to legalize the Community Forest Management (CFM) land the village induna/headman gave them for beekeeping purposes.

**Vizimumba Information Center:** was established in 1996 and officially registered in 2022 for better identification by potential funders and created to bridge farming knowledge gaps and facilitate training from entities such as the Ministry of Agriculture. The group raises funds for its activities through membership and joining fees, which support both its members and orphans in the community. Vizimumba operates under written guidelines that regulate its actions and prevent any misuse of authority within the group to ensure the group is equitably governed. The group has grown from 30 members to 72 comprising 15 youth, 27 men, and 30 women. From inception, they actively promoted gender equality within its leadership structure, hence have an executive team of 10, 4 women, 4 youths and

3 men. Vizimumba is rooted in values of cultural organization, self-help initiatives, entrepreneurship, capacity building, advocacy, and policy influence.

Over the years, Vizimumba has established strong partnerships with several key organizations, including NDFA, Forest Department (FD), local governments, FAO-FFF Programme, and CIFOR-ICRAF. These collaborations have been instrumental in providing critical knowledge and support in areas such as productive farming techniques, forest product certification, and group licensing. Since 2021, Vizimumba has indirectly benefited from FFF funding channelled through NDFA. This funding has facilitated business incubation training, empowering the group to diversify its economic activities. Today, Vizimumba successfully operates several business ventures, including poultry farming, bamboo product manufacturing supported by CIFOR-ICRAF. With FFF support, they are preparing to venture in honey production; construction of a honey-processing centre is in progress and beehive making as well as equipment for processing honey procured. These initiatives have not only created jobs but also enhanced the quality of life for its members by promoting value addition and sustainable practices such as the bamboo nursery they have and plantation they plan to start.

Vizimumba's journey is a testament to the power of collaboration, cultural exchange, and continuous support. With the guidance of its partners, the group has embraced environmentally responsible practices, ensuring that its economic growth aligns with sustainable development principles. By leveraging these partnerships and training opportunities, Vizimumba continues to create meaningful, long-lasting impacts for its members and the community.



*Plate 4. A section of tree nursery managed by the Vizimumba Information Center*

### 3.3.2 Lessons learned business groups at different levels of operation and growth

Based on the participants' feedback on the last day, the key observations made from the FFPOs, and their CB/AF business activities visited in the Nyimba district are synthesized to present key lessons and messages – most of which reflect the essence of the elements covered in the training. Yet, reference is made to specific organizations where necessary, without an attempt to mention all the visited sites.

**Strong apex organisation is vital:** it was noticed Nyimba District Farmers Association (NDFA) that functions as a hinger (apex) level FFPOs represents a strong farmers organization. This strength has allowed them to secure their key assets including cars, tractors and building facilities that facilitate the upscaling of their business. Strong membership and many benefits that accrue to them such as diverse and stable prices, seed among other things may have contributed to this remarkable progress. With its role of aggregating and supplying products to the bigger supermarket markets, the NDFA can be congratulated for having produced a diverse range of products. It is important to know the foundation of this diversity (basket of products) is the members with diverse value chain activities covering linked to tree from CF or AF systems. On the flip side the role of the apex organizations.

**Inclusive approach strengthens internal governance and stimulates growth:** from the case of NDFA, it was further noted that good governance allows managing to attract members and to develop business within the association. This is an important aspect that allows a group to grow and the ability to do business is dependent on supply from these members. In this same organization and others, the visibility of the group (including women in policy about gender)

and their participation in national and global level fair, pursuing the markets for their products, and the possession of processing equipment empower the members both socially and economically for collective growth.

**Strong internal governance supports business and visioning:** the case of the Msima CFMG shows that strong internal governance does not only promote CF business but also set the group into momentum in exploring new ideas and visions that could be achieved over time. With its well-established governance structure with executive committees, fire management, security committee, the CFMG has made significant progress including registration of CFs, developed good business incubation systems with 20 business plans lined to AF and community forests. Regarding the latter, the group has existing plans for honey, NTFPs, traditional medicines and timber value chains and the remaining plans focused on agri-food systems including AF. The strong governance structure allows the group to put into vision new business ideas including those lined to sustainable timber extraction and mining which can be pursued over time.

At the Vizimumba Information Center (VIC), it was apparent that strong leadership is fundamental to establishing internal governance structure. Such leadership is the backbone of the group's ability to articulate their visions and the challenges and explore solutions including attracting donors as reflected in the experience of the VIC – the Centre has diverse funding sources (e.g., from FFF and CIFOR) and continues to explore more. With its strong internal governance, strong leadership and visioning, the VIC was noted to be one of the strongest and best of the sites visited.

In contrast, the case of the Nyankhasi Women's Group shows key entry points for strengthening organizational leadership including proper design of the board and management. Participants observed from this group that there is always the need to separate board and management as a critical step to success of a business organisation. It also demonstrates inseparable link between strong leadership and vision setting with clearly defined activities. For instance, the FFPOs trying many businesses in diverse value chains at the same time with the potential consequences of diverting effort, focus and vision with little to not results achieved.

**Growing young groups requires external support, strong governance and visioning:** while groups may be facing several challenges, significant progress can be made with external support which however requires good institutional coordination with clearly defined roles. This was reflected in the case of the Kalai Womens Group (KWG). It was remarkable that the group has progressed just in four years as a group with no business idea to one which now manages 10,000 hectares of forest, secured a borehole, fenced vegetable production systems and planning a tree nursery. The group also have also managed to work with good interns to achieve faster forward in the years ahead. Moreover, they have established institutional relationship with the forestry department to secure more support. Meanwhile, the group could benefit a lot by clearly defining the role of the department in working with the group, either for extension support or enforcement of CF rules. The group could also benefit from support on financial models like the one from SACCOs to increase the financial options available to grow their business.

Not only will external support help young group but also the group themselves requires much work to strengthen internal governance and visioning as observed from the case of the Chimwemwe Group – a similarly new group that combined support received from from FAO. With this support, the group managed strengthen its governance structures and set in place a strategic vision. The latter is demonstrated the groups' by-laws and constitutional review in place which indicates progress in the right direction. Through financial management training and support by CAZ together with the Ministry of small enterprises and the district farmers association – emerging concerns can be addressed in terms of organizational strategic vision.

**Securing support and commitment of local authority is key:** as noted in the lessons from the second day field visit, the support of local authority is imperative to thrive as a legitimate business group. This was manifested in the case of the Nyankhasi Women's Group. It can be deduced that the support of the local authority is an important strength, despite the differences in their own leadership structure. The chieftaincy has been very supportive and have expressed its commitment – a support that all the groups could have tapped into.

**Empowering groups for business that works:** the experience of the Community Market for Conservation (COMACO) demonstrates that business that works without empowerment of member cooperatives is questionable. Although it was positive to see how they aggregate products from nearby farmers, there is the need to pay attention to product

quality from the field to factory. At the same time, the capacity of the production groups themselves is critical. In such well-established network (between COMACO and the production groups), capacity building of both entities is required to strengthen the value chain: (i) directly strengthen the diversity and independence of those cooperatives without entirely relying on the aggregator (COMACO) for support, (ii) work with the COMACO ensure measures for product quality while improving pricing of product to its supplier producer groups. Capacity building for the supplier might focus on how to improve production because without adequate product to sell, there is no business for both the smaller producer groups and COMACO. This applies to VIC and all other groups visited.

**Market analysis and business planning is the masterpiece of CF and AF businesses:** considering all the groups visited – those with business plan, those with poor business planning and those without one at all, it was noted that market analysis of existing value chain activities is crucial step to business planning. Starting to think of business will allow groups to explore where and what the market is (though market analysis) and understand much they must produce next year with clearly designed targets. To do this, it is apparent that the groups need to learn to balance efforts across all levels of the value chain and not only on production. Thinking through the whole value chain before launching any business is critical.

**FFPOs can tap into the carbon market, especially at the jurisdictional level but there are issues to be addressed:** drawing on the story of the Bio Carbon Partners (BCP), several lessons can be derived regarding the engagement in the carbon market. The BCP engaged with management and hoping that the jurisdictional approach will begin, However, the pressing issue has been about benefit sharing. Without alignment with its benefit sharing instruments, there could be the exacerbation unfair structural inequalities in groups and other institutions with different interests. For instance, while traditional leaders will advocate for carbon project because of preferential benefits, Kalaya women's group a local women could each be given a sheet of tin for them rooves – but there was no knowledge of whether this was a fair distribution of benefit, and the traditional leader reveal their benefit. Thus, benefit percentages are not the same everywhere. It varies and there is the need to lobby with the royal highnesses.

There is also the need for a harmonized voice among different stakeholders an approach. Without harmony between these approaches and languages – the sector will struggle, and the basis of carbon funding will be undermined. BCP supporting flow of carbon into Zambian communities but unclear how some of it functions. In Liberia, the issues are constitution that governs carbon rights while in Zambia it is unclear how the carbon trade looks like. While huge funds are being given, the question is how beneficiaries come to receive what they are receiving. In this regard, government is working on transparency of benefit sharing and to integrate fire management across the chiefdoms – with rules and regulations that people understand and abide by. BCP carbon is for profit that is primarily looking at buyers of carbon – not at the impacts on local communities. The payments for agroforestry are very small compared to conventional returns from farming. So, in an area like Kalayi – even with a CF of 10,000 hectares the amount of carbon finance is very small. Some of what was seen was slightly incongruous. For example, widespread cutting and burning in areas receiving funds for carbon payments – and demo plots for restoration amongst large areas of burnt forest. Where are we going? Are we destroying the forest to get funds to restore it? The hard truth is that there are decrease in donor funding, therefore collaborating between projects remain a pathway to the overall optimize effort and impact.

## 4. Concluding remarks: plans for action

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The regional exchange was to provide a technical training and field learning opportunity to the participants on the role and advances being made in developing and advancing CF and AF business models with the main aim of deriving their own lessons that can be applied in the diverse contexts they were coming from. Yet, a key message from all the sites visited is that there is no model that can be applied universally. This is apparent from the comprehensive look at the diverse history, extent of growth, success stories and challenges of the various FFPOs who exchanged their practical experience in their context. In this sense, the technical knowledge gained through the initial training should allow participants to conceptualize individual observations for lessons that can facilitate the design of models that can be tested and adapted to varying contexts and operating levels of FFPOs. It is apparent that the efforts for improving and upscaling returns from CF and AF business initiatives does not end with the individual lessons learned. It starts with the sharing and application of such lessons in different contexts – and the synthesis presented in this report could be the starting point. The syntheses could further enrich participants' knowledge on which specific FFPOs to visit, where necessary, for future bilateral exchange depending on the activities or lessons being replicated.

Another key output of the exchange is the stock taken of FFPOs capacity needs from a combination of the observations from the field visit and collective feedback (assessment and related recommendations) from the participants on the last day (*Annex 5*). This comprehensive stock taking exercise led to the planning of several actions that can be pursued in the context (see *Annex 2*). While these actions are derived from a single context, it holds implication for understanding the holistic needs of the network of FFF-supported FFPOs around CF and AF business.

It important to note that the field exchange visit happened during the longest dry-spell Zambia<sup>4</sup> has experienced in 40 years which were notable when driving through burned landscapes and visiting the fields of the farmer groups. The increasing climate change that hits smallholder farmers the hardest were real challenges, particularly in the agricultural activities of the FFPOs visited who had lost most of their harvests of staple food crops (e.g. corn and soya). It was apparent that those FFPOs that had diversified in other produce (e.g., honey, bamboo processing, agroforestry nurseries, local fruits and vegetables), had co-invested in water installations and/or had set up a village savings and loans system were more resilient than those groups that just had started with diversification or other infrastructure like bulking centers. It shows the importance of diversification of income sources – a principal approach to economically empower FFPOs and ensure the stability of FFPOs-led AF and CF businesses and related benefits for their members and communities. Such approaches require strong support from donors and investors to improve and upscale AF and CF business in Africa.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1157977/?iso3=ZMB>  
[https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC\\_Zambia\\_Acute\\_Food\\_Insecurity\\_Jul2024\\_Mar2025\\_Report.pdf](https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Zambia_Acute_Food_Insecurity_Jul2024_Mar2025_Report.pdf)

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# Annexes

## Annex 1. Final agenda of the regional including the field visit program

Day/Date	Activity	Time	Responsibilities & groupings
<b>Pre-exchange preparations</b>			
Pre-exchange day 27-28 Oct 2024	Arrival of international guests in Lusaka at Holiday Inn hotel		Participants
	Local flight to Chipata Protea Hotel via Mfuwe airport	10:30	Kampamba Makwaya
	Cultural exchange and dances	19:00	FFF Zambia
<b>The field forward-looking meeting and training</b>			
Day 1 29 Oct 2024	Introductions	08:00-08:10	Vincent Ziba
	Welcoming remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FAOR</li> <li>• Provincial Permanent Secretary</li> <li>• Director Forestry</li> <li>• Provincial Permanent Secretary</li> <li>• Group photograph</li> </ul>	08:10-08:30	Mukaba Mukaba
	MODULE 1 Tips for making a business of diversified agroforestry and community forestry	08.30-09.00	Duncan Macqueen
	MODULE 2 Tips on internal governance to manage agroforestry and community business	09.00-10.00	Stephen Mwangi
	Coffee	10.00-10.30	
	MODULE 3 Tips on pioneering or innovative investor approaches to support agroforestry and community forestry businesses	10.30-11.30	Duncan Macqueen
	Group exercise on attracting pioneering investors	11.30-12.30	
	Lunch	12.30-14.00	
	Pannel – Latest advances in agroforestry business development <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. GRZ Agroforestry research: Mr Malundu Mwila</li> <li>2. Adrian Monge Monge, Agricord</li> <li>3. Borniface Katite, WeForest,</li> <li>4. Vivian Sigei-Kenya Forest Service Extension officer</li> </ol>	14.00-15.30 (5 speakers of 10 minutes each plus half hour discussion at the end)	Moderator: Elaine Springgaye
	Tea	15.30-16.00	
	Pannel 2 – Latest advances in community forest business <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dr Dale Lewis, CAMACO (TBC)</li> <li>2. Mrs Thecla Kafwimbe, Government</li> <li>3. Biston Mbewe-GEF 7 project example</li> <li>4. Dr Nicholas Hogarth-CIFOR-ICRAF</li> </ol>	16.00-17.30 (5 speakers of 10 minutes each plus half hour discussion at the end)	Moderator: Kanimang Camara -The Gambia National Facilitator
<b>The field exchange program</b>			
Day 2 30 Oct 2024	Traveling to Petauke	07:00-09:00	Agness Bwalya
	Petauke Hotel checking Chimwemwe	09:00-09:30	
	Courtesy call with DC Petauke	09:30-10:00	
	Field visit to Kampamule /Misefi	09:30-16:00	Group 1
	Field mission Temwani /Chitukuke CFG	09:30-16:00	Group 2
Day 3 31 Oct 2024	Travel to Nyimba	07:00-08:00	FAO ZM
	DC Courtesy call	08:00-08:30	FFF Facilitator
	DFA/CAZ/ZNFCA/NDFCA	08:00-10:00	Group 1
	COMACO	08:00-10:00	Group 2
	Bio Carbon partners	08:00-10:00	Group 3
	Travel to Kalayi women group/Kaselekete CFG	10:00-16:00	Group 1
	Chimwemwe /Musima CFM	10:00-16:00	Group 2
	Travel Nyakhasi/Vizimumba/CIFOR	10:00-16:00	Group 3

	Travel back to Petauke for accommodation	16:00	FAOZM
Day 4 1 Nov 2024	Recap and action planning in Petauke	08:00-12:00	FFF
	Lunch	12:00-13:00	
	Travel back to Lusaka and departure	13:00 to Mfuwe airport (Flights at 18:25)	FAOZM

## Annex 2. Raw data on the action plans emerging the stock taken of FFPOs capacity needs during the field exchange

### General action plans

- Train the FFPOs in local language on how to make a business plan and let them draft one themselves
- ZNFCA and CAZ to develop business plans for the groups by end of November 2024 using the WWF-GEF 7 business model. These business plans must have a marketing section and structure of who will lead which activity among within the group. Prioritize the businesses, as FFPOs do not need too many business plans
- Mentor the interns on the business plans and interns should ensure the business plans are put to good use.
- Make small committees within the FFPOs to manage the business plan; this is to ensure they have an independent body from the main committee
- ZNFCA as the apex organization should lead and work with ComDev to audit Nyimba and Petauke FFPOs by 1<sup>st</sup> December 2024. This audit should be based on the constitutions and governance structures
- DFA will facilitate more trainings and create groups for clear activities

### Thematic action plans

#### 1. Finance

- Financial management trainings
- Associations to create a work plan around mobilizing their groups and look internally on membership as well as interact with the Kenyan team on more guidance
- Learn from Kenya how they manage to organize internal finance systems, gain interest, lend and run their credit unions. Kenya to facilitate with the regulations and rules that can be put in place
- Plan for a district saving and lending associations for 2025 with Nyimba as the pilot area and DFA facilitating the savings and lending group at district level

#### 2. Community Forest Management

**Concerns:** Community Forest structures do not look strong and there seems to be poor management.

**Insightful information from government through the Forest Department (FD):** FD is still in process of reviewing the forest policy and almost finalizing it. By the time the forest Act is reviewed, they will do some amendments to the community forestry regulation because there are many things that people have come up with through group and letter submissions on how the process should be done. Among the discussions, they are coming up with an association for CFM because they have realized that the CRBs are taking led and want to scope the CFMG into their own as CRBs. CRBs are more inclined to the provision of the wildlife Act, hence, FD want their own to have a reflection in the forest Act so that it would have a lot of power and people can have a voice. FD asked FFPOs present, that they would like to hear their contributions when FD begins to do reviews of the legislation.

Discussion with Liberia; agreed to share notes, explained how their CFMG are now in their community forest board.

Tanzania discussion: differences between Tanzania and Zambia to see how we can improve on our end and gather guidance. Tanzania wants to improve on their CFM and see what Zambia is doing hoping to learn from the Zambian act

**Action Plan:** Form a CFM association that will support all CFMGs and manage them to ensure the forests are managed and safeguarded well.

### 3. Agroforestry

**Concerns:** Agroforestry systems are not fully understood because agroforestry is mainly associated with soil improvement and very little on agroforestry for folder, boundaries and citrus fruits. There is need for clarity on the purpose of agroforestry systems practiced. Looks like agroforestry sector is not well set up, our systems look mixed up and has no proper support. Adoption rate has been low.

Definitions that surround agroforestry are not fully understood by many. Most people only know of maize and *Gliricidia*. There is need to expand the delimitations and let people know the various forms of engagement when it comes to agroforestry. Adoption rates would be high if people understood what agroforestry is.

**Suggestions:**

- In cooperate fruit trees in the system because most farmers align agroforestry with nitrogen fixing trees. Hence, in cooperating fruit tree species to increase the adoption rate.
- Sensitization should be strengthened.

**Current actions:** FPO Eastern - Orchards and nurseries in Nyimba, Petauke and Lusangazi have been sited out for the AF project. The orchards will have various fruit trees and will be used by forestry and conservation school clubs in collaboration with Wildlife Conservation Society of Zambia. Local communities will also access these nurseries. A few agroforestry tree species will be grown as the FD is not giving up on agroforestry.

**Action Plans:** CTNA – advocating for government to make it a mandate for them to include agroforestry tree species in the input packs they give farmers.

- Have better communication packages; strengthen ComDev strategies that were learnt from the ComDev trainings
- Behaviour change trainings in line with agroforestry should come on board by involving the behaviour change project
- In cooperate agriculture and ZARI as there is a model on AF and agriculture that farmers will pick what they want to use
- National exchange visits to discuss different AF practices that are being practiced in different parts of the countries
- Engage stakeholders to provide the right AF tree species in schools to support the agroforestry sector in schools that has been introduced by government schools. Identify zoono areas that have schools and communities with water to promote AF species and not only soil improvement trees but also fruit trees for nutrition in school and communities
- Safeguard our systems by fencing
- CAZ has been delegated to develop content for CTNA’s advocacy to lobby for agroforestry

### Annex 3. Additional references: presentations, background and outreach reports

Reference material	Link
Opening presentations and training materials:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1btessTz6H106l1gXAZ4mLt2Mkn71L7Oi?usp=share_link">https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1btessTz6H106l1gXAZ4mLt2Mkn71L7Oi?usp=share_link</a></li> </ul>
Background papers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See cited training materials</li> </ul>
Outreach:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://www.iied.org/strengthening-climate-resilience-through-agroforestry-community-forestry">https://www.iied.org/strengthening-climate-resilience-through-agroforestry-community-forestry</a></li> </ul>

## Annex 4. Participants' assessment of the exchange

Question	Percentage of respondents	Recommendation
What aspects of the workshop did you find most valuable?	13% = Carbon aspect 19% = CF 19% = AF 6% = Exchange and discussions 6% = Lessons from other countries 37% = Visiting FFPOs in their local communities	FFPOs need to identify means of sustainability
Were there any topics or areas you felt were missing or needed more focus?	13% = Apex and FFPOs not on panel discussions 6% = Financial management and record keeping 19% = Carbon credits, carbon benefits of CFMA and AF models 6% = Business model of cooperatives 6% = General practices in AF and CFM 13% = Tree nurseries 6% = Sustainability of forestry-based enterprise 6% = Restoration of deforested areas 13% = Governance structures 6% = Luck of projects complementing 6% = Trainings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beekeepers need to look at area suitability</li> <li>• Need for apex organizations and FFPOs to be part of the panel discussions to hear their experiences</li> <li>• Tree planting areas need more emphasis</li> <li>• Strengthening community governance specifically leadership tenure and financial management including benefits sharing</li> <li>• More on complementariness with other projects</li> </ul>
Do you have any other comments or suggestions to improve future workshops?	67% = Time 33% = Host province	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Going forward, more time should be allocated to panel presentations and field visits to discuss technical issues</li> <li>• Increase duration and these workshops should be conducted between August and October</li> <li>• Preferred Southern Province as there are more developed and matured FFPOs</li> <li>• Have few sites to visit to have enough time to learn.</li> <li>• Contest of current drought should have been mentioned as a central impact in the field as this really has affected the communities</li> <li>• The typical miombo landscape is not known by other countries and this time of year trees look dead</li> <li>• Structure the sessions well to avoid finishing late</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The concept of AF is a very good component that needs to be practical and actualized</li><li>• Think about translator for the French participants</li><li>• Need for clearer communications in terms of logistics and timing</li><li>• Idea of having a workshop in Eastern Province was awesome</li><li>• Need more of such engagements and if possible, track participants in this workshop and ensure that they are involved in the next visit to other regions.</li><li>• Need to share the presentations with the participants</li><li>• Happy that the WhatsApp group was created, and this should be highly utilized by sharing experiences in areas of operation including FFPOs and challenges faced.</li></ul>
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