



Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management Collaborative Research Support Program

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Trip Report: Zambia June 16, 2006 – July 12, 2006

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Purpose of Trip: Assess COMACO financial condition and progress toward economic self-sufficiency; Assess general business operations and help document a strategic 5 year plan

Sites Visited: Lusaka – WCS Zambian HQ, Lundazi – COMACO Regional Trading Centre, Mfuwe – COMACO Regional Trading Centre, Chifunda & Chikwa COMACO Bush Camps, many local producer depots

Description of activities, technical observations made:

In order to study COMACO as a business entity and research its potential to be economically self-sufficient, I first met with WCS/COMACO Lusaka Staff to gain better understanding of their central business operations, and next traveled to Lundazi to assess the main trading center's activities and gauge progress from our prior site visit during the planning award. I was pleased to see the implementation of several of the recommendations we had made then and new recommendations we have continued to make, especially regarding the production and marketing of value-added food products. In addition to the generation of value-added food products, COMACO is also attempting to leverage improvements in biodiversity conservation into economic benefits. I therefore next visited bush camps being prepared for the tourism season, and evaluated their status. Research indicated that the historical absence of tourism industry for these communities left them poorly-prepared for their business venture. I therefore advised and trained the staff regarding camp preparation and the expectations of tourists. I next observed and performed an analysis of the Mfuwe trading center to assess their operations. Currently, they are in "start-up mode," being more similar to Lundazi in 2005. Future analysis should show the development of this CTC in comparison to the more developed CTC at Lundazi. Next I went to Nyamaluma to assess the African College of Community Based Natural Resource Management as a potential training center and to work on a document detailing a strategic 5 year plan with Dale Lewis. This document incorporates our business economic findings and highlights the importance of specific areas found to be profit centers. Finally, I traveled back to Lusaka to work with HQ office staff to help them prepare to obtain contracts for products generated at the Regional Trading Centres and marketing the bush camps.

A list of work produced is as follows:

- We sourced and facilitated initial discussions with potential COMACO product buyer – Gorji (particularly interested in broken rice).
- We secured and negotiated a deal with supplier of Treadle Pumps (KickStart); COMACO has placed an order for 10 pumps
- We researched the market for soy products and secured a quote for a Vita Cow from Malnutrition Matters
- Based on my analyses, and those from collaborators at the Haas School of Business, I assisted Dale Lewis in creating Strategic Five Year Document, which has been distributed to all Senior WCS Staff in the US.
- I assisted in preparation of Chifunda and Chikwa bushcamps for visits by travel journalists. I helped to train staff on serving of meals, preparing of camps and expectations of tourists.
- Created marketing document to be used for garnering contracts to sell COMACO products, document focus was for High Energy Protein Supplement (HEPS; a key need for the treatment of patients with HIV/AIDS) but has been adapted for all COMACO Products
- Assisted in preparing a request for funding of the bushcamps through Tourism Cares
- Helped to create marketing materials for bushcamps to be distributed to all NGOs and businesses in Lusaka via email or hard copy.
- Analyzed financial viability of COMACO and path to financial sustainability

Progress in Meeting Objectives:

We have met all business Objectives as described in the work plan for Year 1. The rapid scaling up and progress in the Lundazi Regional Trading Centre has dramatically hastened new needs (particularly with regard to marketing, procurement of business contracts). We—and COMACO—therefore are ahead of schedule.

Suggestions and Recommendations:

Continue to build market based approach by securing contracts for conservation based commodities before the crop has been produced to further influence crop mix and farming techniques in target areas.

List of Contacts Made:

Name	Title/Organization	Contact Info (address, phone, email)
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