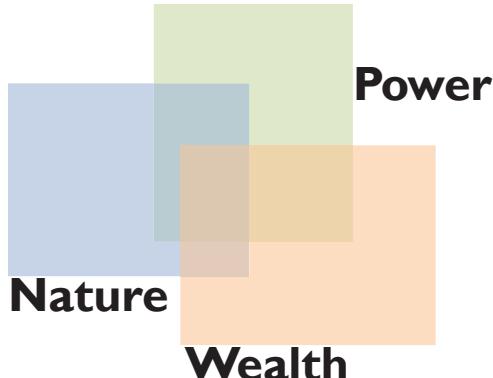




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# TRANSLINKS

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## Community Markets for Conservation (COMACO)

[www.itswild.org](http://www.itswild.org)

COMACO is a model for rural development that supports natural resource management.

### Certified Wildlife Friendly™ Products

COMACO operates through a community-owned trading centre, registered as a non-profit company, called the Conservation Farmer Wildlife Producer Trading Centre. COMACO's Certified Wildlife Friendly™ product line includes:

**Smooth and Crunchy Peanut Butter packaged in 400g bottles** - Chalimbana Peanuts are nutritious and protein-rich grown by farmers throughout much of Luangwa Valley. Products include: Crunchy and Creamy Peanut Butter; Roasted and Plain Peanuts.

**Pure natural organic honey packaged in 500g bottles** - "Its Wild!" Honey is produced entirely from wild, native tree species by registered COMACO producer groups who manage their apiaries with firebreaks to prevent destructive fires and who use modern bee hives to reduce tree destruction.

**Full grain aromatic polished rice named "CHAMA RICE"** - Chama Rice is an aromatic rice produced in rain-fed paddies during the wet season in Luangwa Valley, it is cultivated without fertilizer or pesticides. COMACO offers a variety of rice products including: polished white rice and brown rice, packaged in various sizes such as: 1kg, 2kg, 5kg and 25kg.

**Yummy Soy Fortified Breakfast Food** - Breakfast meal of soy, maize and sugar, fortified with essential minerals and vitamins, packed in 1kg polythene bags and 1.5kg boxes.

**Snarewear Jewelry** - Jewelry made from wires from collected wildlife snares and from seeds collected from local trees. The necklaces, bracelets, earrings and decorative pieces not only make a fashion statement, but a statement for conservation as well.



**Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network:  
Community Markets for Conservation (COMACO)**

## **Conservation Challenge**

Zambia's Luangwa Valley is one of Africa's great but severely threatened wild ecosystems. The black rhinoceros was extirpated in less than a decade during the 1970's and early 1980's. The elephant population was reduced by almost half in the same period. Both were the victims of illegal hunting by people living around the valley. The poor farmers living in Luangwa Valley discovered that using snares to kill wild animals was an effective and easy source of income. Snaring became widespread in the Luangwa Valley and conventional efforts to police against it failed.



With only a nascent tourism industry and no other alternative able to provide residents of the Luangwa Valley a reliable source of income, large-scale agricultural out-grower schemes owned by multi-national companies found a ready workforce to grow cotton and tobacco. This new form of land use dramatically increased land clearing in the valley and saw a huge increase in pesticide use – both of which had adverse impacts on wildlife.

## **Context and Business Model**

Community Markets for Conservation (COMACO) is a model for rural development that offers sustainable livelihoods to people of the Luangwa Valley region. It operates through a community-owned, for profit trading centre, called the Conservation Farmer Wildlife Producer Trading Centre. Structurally, COMACO consists of a network of rural trading depots linked to regional trading centers, called Community Trading Centres or CTCs, where commodities are consolidated, processed, packaged and marketed.

Members benefit from the trading centers by receiving high market value for goods they produce and by having access to affordable inputs and improved agricultural skills training and support. These benefits are provided on the condition that farmers adopt land use practices that help conserve natural resources and wildlife. These required land-use practices include conservation farming to maintain soil fertility, production of crops that reduce demand for new land and limit conflict with wildlife, and commitment to stop wildlife snaring or illegal hunting. COMACO now influences the land use practices of thousands of households across a large landscape containing important wildlife and watershed resources.

<b>New farmers joining COMACO</b>
9,807, 49% Female
Total 30,740 registered COMACO producers
<b>Farmers trained</b>
19,374, 56% Female
Total 40,000 farmers trained
<b>Commodities purchased from farmers</b>
ZMK: 1.2 Billion USD: 350K
88% growth in payments over 2007
<b>Farmer average income</b>
ZMK: 520,922 USD: 149
3.25x increase in income since 2001
3.26x increase in female income since 2001
<b>Poachers converted</b>
62 poachers
Total 661 poachers converted
98.4% success rate

To capture the added value of niche products, COMACO promotes its own distinct brand, Its Wild! These products are marketed throughout Zambia, including large supermarkets, such as Shoprite, in Lusaka. The COMACO business model uses effective marketing to increase consumers' awareness of the conservation story behind the Its Wild! Brand, and to increase demand for quality products with a wildlife conservation co-benefit. Credibility of COMACOs role in supporting a range of social and environmental co-benefits is critical to maintaining consumer loyalty and interest in the "It's Wild!" brand. Its Wild! conveys a clear message: buying these products contributes to long-term solutions to rural livelihood security and the conservation of Zambia's wildlife.

## **Impact and Monitoring**

Since 2003 COMACO has helped over 30,000 farmers increased their income by receiving premium prices for their products in exchange for their compliance with conservation land-uses. The approach not only improves food security and household incomes, but helps people to remain in the same place, farming the same fields over the long term, thus reducing incentives to clear forest for new farmland. COMACO has expanded from a single trading center in Lundazi to three, that will soon grow to six, covering nearly all of Luangwa Valley. Today COMACO manufactures 12 different value-added food products sold all over Zambia.



In 2008, sales rose by over 300%. In 2009-2010 COMACO expects to process over 2,500 tons of commodities, a three-fold increase from the previous year. The economic incentives to engage with COMACO has encouraged thousands of farmers to give up their snares and firearms, saving at least 5,000 wild animals each year in the Luangwa Valley – an important conservation outcome of the COMACO approach.

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