



AICCRA
Accelerating Impacts of CGIAR
Climate Research for Africa



ZAMBIA ACCELERATOR PROGRAM

Call for Applications

Cohort 2

June 2024



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Launched in February 2022, the science-driven AICCRA Zambia Accelerator Program offers a win-win solution for SMEs and investors alike - showing how science can be used to catalyze finance into climate-smart agriculture for meaningful change in businesses, through value chains, and with farmers and communities on the ground.

AICCRA and partners have worked closely with the first cohort of 14 Zambian agribusinesses. Grouped into five innovation partnership 'bundles', each focused on scaling a combination of climate-smart agriculture (CSA) and climate information service (CIS) innovations in Zambia.

With additional financing for the AICCRA project from the World Bank, AICCRA Zambia is launching another call for applications for a second cohort of the Accelerator grant.

Under the Additional Financing (AF), there is an explicit effort to focus efforts on promoting access to and use of technologies and practices to reach 300,000 farmers, while further scaling along established impact pathways from 2024.

To achieve these targets, the Accelerator program will contribute to de-risk private sector partners in scaling activities and identify suitable candidates through an open call for applications.

The call for applications will be launched on the 19th of June and remain open until the 19th of July. Winners will be announced in August 2024.

The proposed projects are anticipated to begin in September 2024 and continue until December 2025. Proposals must deliver a commercially sustainable business case for the involved partners that has the potential to run beyond the end of the project period.

Applicants can submit questions through July 15th, 2024, to:

Winnie Kasoma-Pele at iwmi-aiccrzambia@cgiar.org

or +260 963 828438 (WhatsApp)

A short video on the project can be found here: <https://youtu.be/fcfdWb0PUaE>

ABOUT AICCRA



AICCRA
Accelerating Impacts of CGIAR
Climate Research for Africa



Accelerating Impacts of CGIAR Climate Research for Africa (AICCRA) is a project that helps deliver a climate-smart African future driven by science and innovation in agriculture. It is led by the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT and supported by a grant from the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank. Explore our work at aicra.cgiar.org

INTRODUCTION

AICCRA Zambia seeks small and medium enterprise (SME) partnerships to scale bundles of climate-smart agriculture innovations (digital innovations, finance innovations, social innovations, technological innovations, services etc) in Zambia. Proposing partnerships should present activities that ensure use of such innovations while improving gender and youth inclusivity and supporting environmental sustainability. Locally registered for-profit businesses and social enterprises are invited to contribute to an application as partnerships. We encourage proposals that include multiple components and present a cohesive market systems approach.

Successful partnerships should be able to:

- Work collaboratively in a partnership model to co-implement and scale market-system based solutions in climate-smart agriculture.
- Implement, scale, and refine sustainable finance mechanism(s) as part of the partnership's scaling strategy.
- Integrate digital innovations into the design of the partnership's scaling strategy.
- Provide evidence of impact and innovation users reached within a one-year period.
- Contribute to capacity development of food producers, women, youth and other marginalized groups in relevant topics directly related to activity.
- Implement a series of activities directly addressing the needs of women and youth.

ABOUT THE ACCELERATOR GRANT

There will be one grant issued for each of the following CSA Bundles:

1. **CSA/CIS Bundle 1: Agriculture Water Management** – Improving bio-physical water productivity (BWP), social water productivity (SWP), and economic water productivity (EWP) through scale-appropriate and contextual water use interventions/technologies/innovations for smallholder farmers in key-value chains e.g. irrigation, soil moisture technologies, water storage innovations etc.
2. **CSA/CIS Bundle 2: Integrated Aquaculture-Agriculture Systems** – Promote integrated management and use of aquaculture, agriculture, and livestock & provide access to improved/quality and resilient fish seed by linking farmers to trained seed producers in their communities.
3. **CSA/CIS Bundle 3: Addressing Drought through Climate Smart Seed Varieties** – Improve access to multi-stress tolerate varieties in partnership with a wide range of actors along the seed value chain.



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4. **CSA/CIS Bundle 4: Mechanization** – Promote smallholder mechanization to improve productivity and profitability and reduce drudgery in crop production.

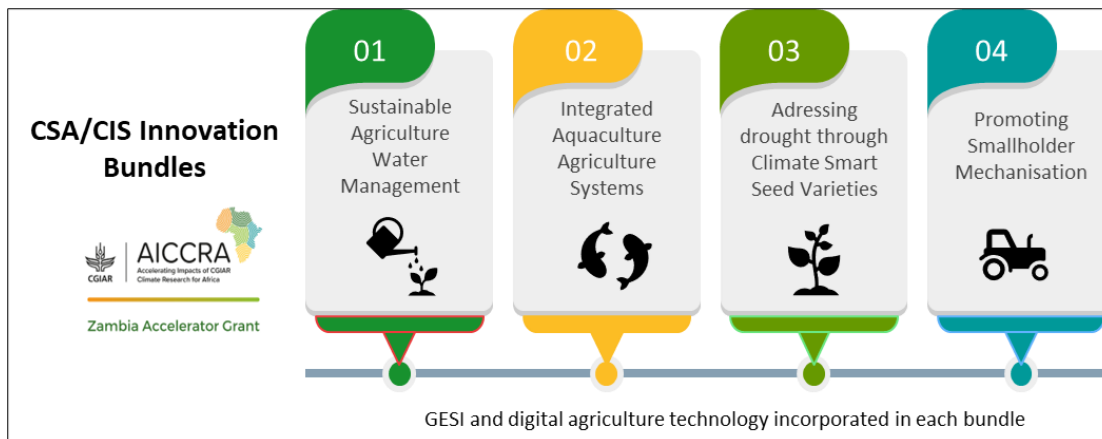


Figure 1: Four climate-smart agriculture innovation bundles

The aim of the Accelerator Grant is to identify partnerships with a for-profit business model that include the interventions presented in the CSA/CIS bundles. Under the second cohort of the accelerator grant, the project will be implemented in the following key value chains and locations.

Key value chains	Regions
<p>AWM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soybean • Horticulture • Aquaculture • Upland rice <p>Aqua</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Livestock: Goat, chicken, etc • Aquaculture <p>Seeds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soybean • Groundnut • Cassava • Maize <p>Mechanization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small stock (goats and chickens) • Groundnuts • Other legumes 	<p>AWM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lusaka Province • Eastern Province • Central Province • Luapula Province <p>Aqua</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Province • Luapula Province • Lusaka Province <p>Seeds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southern Province • Eastern Province • Central Province • Lusaka Province <p>Mechanization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Province • Southern Province • Lusaka Province

Table 1: Key value chains and locations

BUDGET

The total funding for each partnership application is up to USD30,000. A budget sheet should accompany each proposal that contains detailed information to determine the general reasonableness, allowability, and allocability of all costs as well as funding split between partners.

The budget should include:

- Detailed, line-item costs, in US dollars, that include costs that are based on fair, current market prices for proposed services.
- Funds contributed (leveraged) by the applicant at an amount greater than or equal to funding requested from AICCRA. Leveraged funds will be evaluated as an indication of the applicant's commitment to the proposed activity.
- On-going business expenses such as the procurement of commodities from farmers or normal processing and operations expenses are not allowable and should not be included in the budget. The purpose of the funding is to de-risk activities related to scaling the CSA/CIS innovation bundle.

Keep in mind the following points when completing your cost proposal:

- Daily rates should be proposed for all personnel.
- Travel costs should be consistent with fair market prices and the applicant's organizational policies.
- Indirect or overhead rates can be included if applicable but must be supported by financial records. Fee or profit of any kind cannot be budgeted.

ELIGIBILITY

- Each partnership application should include at least one women/youth-led agribusiness partner. Locally-registered SMEs are encourage to apply.
- Applicant businesses should demonstrate commercial viability and relevant experience in the technical areas proposed in the application.
- For-profit businesses that have achieved the following:
 - For a product that retails at less than USD100 per unit, at least 1500-unit sales
 - For a product that retails at more than USD100, at least 500-unit sales



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- Non-government organizations, farmer cooperatives, consulting firms, business/member associations and non-profit entities will not be considered lead applicants but could form part of partnership applications.
- At least two partners may be included in a consortium.
- Each partnership application should have a digital agriculture technology component (with an ag tech company).
- Each partnership application needs to have existing personnel with relevant experience and qualifications to implement the proposed scope of work.
- Each partnership needs to demonstrate experience working in Zambia, including with producers and other market actors, development partners, non-governmental organizations, and government agencies and organizations. All applicants must have a presence and experience in the country and be able to operate legally in Zambia with documented evidence, such as appropriate visas, licenses, permits, local company registration documents etc.
- The proposed partners should demonstrate that they have been working together for at least 9 months prior to the application submission and demonstrate a commitment to continue working together post the Accelerator program where possible.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Prior to the award of contract, AICCRA-Zambia will conduct an environmental and social (E&S) risks due diligence and screening on proposed activities of the applicant and determine whether the applicant has appropriate procedures with corrective actions to mitigate identified negative E&S impacts. Where gaps exist, the applicant will be assisted in developing appropriate procedures to address those gaps in accordance with the World Bank Environmental and Social Framework before commencing project activities.

The due diligence process includes reference checks, a pre-award survey to ensure successful partnerships have the organizational, managerial, and financial systems and controls in place to manage the award, and virtual meetings to evaluate the proposed strategy and verify the potential impact proposed.

Prior experience with World Bank, CGIAR centers is not required. However, if the applicant has received funding from these organization in the past or has a proposal pending, details and purpose of such funding should be noted in the application. Failure to disclose this information will result in disqualification.

Applicants are required to propose leveraged funding in their cost proposals. AICCRA Zambia reserves the right to negotiate the final proportion with successful applicants during negotiations. Proposed contributions must be appropriate and relevant to the proposed activity and will be carefully considered during the evaluation of applications.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS

AICCRA's Additional Finance phase, under which the second Accelerator cohort will be conducted, is set out to be carried out in accordance with relevant standards of the [World Bank Environmental and Social Framework](#).

Based on these standards, the following activities are **not eligible** for funding and should be taken into consideration during proposal development:

- Production or activities involving forced labor
- Production or activities involving child labor
- Cross-border trade in pesticide, waste and waste products, unless compliant to the Basel Convention and the underlying regulations
- Research that may lead to environmentally damaging activities, such as inappropriate use of chemical fertilizers
- Production or trade in any product or activity deemed illegal under Zambia laws or regulations or international conventions and agreements, or subject to international bans, such as pharmaceuticals, pesticides/herbicides, ozone depleting substances, Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs), wildlife or products regulated under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
- Biotechnology application in genetically modified (GM) crops that may involve genetic transformations of the national original crops and/or might generate irreversible environmental impacts
- Activities that could introduce invasive alien species and may impact critical habitats and/or legally protected areas
- Activities that may result in discrimination against vulnerable groups, including on the basis of gender and disability
- Activities involving land acquisition leading to economic or physical displacement
- Activities that affect existing land tenure arrangements or cultural heritage
- Activities carried out by institutions with a record of unresolved occupational, health, and safety incidents or accidents
- Activities carried out by institutions with a record of unresolved sexual exploitation/abuse/sexual harassment incidents
- Any activity in areas that pose security risks to project workers or requires the use of security personnel.



EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals are expected to present the applicants intended focus, predictable results and key preliminary indicators that the project will deliver within the project period. AICCRA aims to reach 300,000 beneficiaries within the project duration. The number of expected beneficiaries reached through the partnership should be reflected in the solicitation. Proposals are expected to indicate timeline to achieve these results. These include:

Innovation of business case

Proposals should present clear product(s) and clear business model(s). The business model(s) should indicate objective(s) for growth of their CSA/CIS solution in the selected supply chain and markets. Market opportunities and constraints should be explained together with activities to work within the specific market setting. Applicants will be evaluated on how the proposed partnership will meet business goals and objectives while engaging and supporting smallholder farmers.

Commercial viability and sustainability

Applicants will be evaluated on the potential for product or service growth in the selected market(s). Confirmation of a long-term commitment to engaging smallholder farmers in business operations should be provided. Applicants will be evaluated on how the product or services will continue to scale after project closure. A sustainability and/or exit strategy should be indicated. Applicants should provide a two-year projection of revenue, costs and net income.

Implementation plan

Applicants should outline their plan for implementation including key activities/milestones to be completed and the timeframe for each. Applicants should discuss other actors and stakeholders (either within a proposed consortium or external to the partnership) that will need to be engaged to support implementation (for example, cooperatives, industry associations, marketing agents, etc.) and describe how and when that engagement will occur.

Applicants not already registered in Zambia must include a plan outlining how this registration or legal presence will be secured prior to award. This plan must include the steps required for registration as well as timelines for completing each step. Applicants should address how this registration process will impact the implementation timeline for proposed activities.

The proposal should indicate the type of evidence or information that will be created for mainstreaming CSA/CIS into country-level agricultural practices and policies, and public and private investment plans. This would include how the applicant approaches resource sustainability.

The proposal must indicate the type of data to be collected, and proposed roles and activities for the data collection and the proposed roles and activities for the data collected. Proposals should also indicate how applicants would collaborate in research during the data collection and through a learning process. The proposals should also indicate how the data and research results/evidence would contribute to scaling the business model and broader partnership impact.

Smallholder and marginalized population impact

The proposals should demonstrate how the business model(s) will meet business goals and objectives while engaging and supporting smallholder farmers and marginalized populations, especially women and youth. The proposals should indicate who are smallholder farmers, women and youth and the number of those target groups the business model(s) intends to reach and how the model can increase their incomes and expand their market access.

Especially, the proposal should demonstrate how the business model(s) will oversee opportunities of and constraints to include women along CSA/CIS scaling pathways, address challenges to existing gender norms and power structures preventing women from adopting CSA/CIS, manage risks of women being left behind in the up-take of labor-saving mechanized irrigation technologies, and contextualize the products and services to the given context where women clients live and to their needs

Organizational, management and technical capacity

Applicants will be evaluated on business, management, and technical qualifications with regard to scaling products or services in smallholder markets. Applicants should articulate the organization’s experience operating in smallholder markets, identify potential capacity gaps in systems or management, and provide solutions for filling those gaps. The proposals should present learning activities and mechanisms to enhance the capacity outcomes for the partners.

THE PROCESS AND TIMELINE

To date, the AICCRA Zambia consortium has followed a participatory design process to co-identify suitable focus value chains and locations. Through a series of information sessions with over 150 SMEs, the CSA/CIS Bundles have been refined to meet the needs of agribusiness SMEs in Zambia today.

In addition, the following figure outlines the process and timeline followed to date.

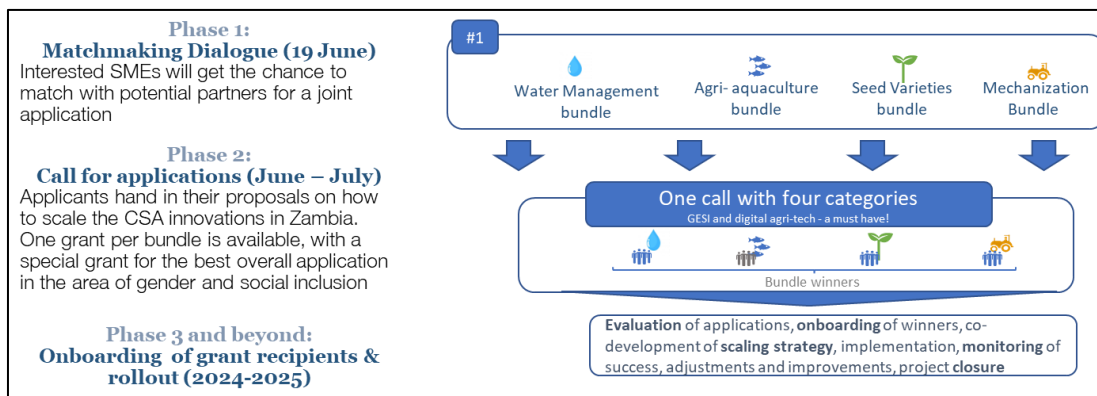


Figure 2: AICCRA-Zambia Accelerator process and timeline



WHAT AICCRA OFFERS TO SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

The below figure illustrates AICCRA’s value proposition to successful applicants.



Figure 3: AICCRA’s value proposition to successful applicants

1. Scaling grant

Successful applicants will be awarded a scaling grant of US\$ 30,000 per bundle, distributed over the course of the project duration according to the proposed budgeting and needs of the applicants. The funds will only be distributed if their purpose is proven to contribute to the proposed scaling activities. Participants are required to periodically produce audited financial statements.

2. Technical assistance

During the active project duration (September 2024 – May 2025), CGIAR partners will provide technical assistance in form of development and implementation of agronomic best practices, commercial/business advisory, scientific assistance, networking opportunities in form of multi-stakeholder dialogues as well as monitoring & evaluation. Participants are expected to work closely with the CGIAR partners.

LAUNCH EVENT

An official Launch Event will be held on the 19th of June in Lusaka. The aim of the event is to bring together high-level dignitaries from the private and public sector, non-government organisations and research institutions to explore possible partnership models with actors from across Zambia’s agricultural ecosystem.

It will be the official start of the Accelerator Grant call for applications on VC4A.com. The agenda will welcome representatives from the AICCRA project, the private sector and the government.

PROGRAMME	
17:30 CAT	Networking
18:00-18:05	Welcome, by MCs – Winnie Kasoma Pele and Lenny Mumbi
18:05-18:10	Opening remarks – Evans Chinembiri, Cluster Lead for AICCRA-Zambia
18:10-18:15	AICCRA-Zambia Accelerator Grant video - Winnie Kasoma Pele
18:15-18:20	The AICCRA-Zambia Accelerator, by Dr Inga Jacobs-Mata, Director of Water, Growth and Inclusion, International Water Management Institute
18:25-18:30	Launch of the AICCRA-Zambia Accelerator, by Honorable Engineer Elias Mubanga, MP, Minister of Small and Medium Enterprises
18:30-18:35	Word of thanks, by Winnie Kasoma-Pele
18:35-19:00	Networking continues – Lenny Mumbi

Figure 5: Programme of the Launch Event

FUTURE TIMELINE

The following figure shows the next steps for the Accelerator Grant from June 2024 onwards. The deadline for submission of an application is the 19th of July.

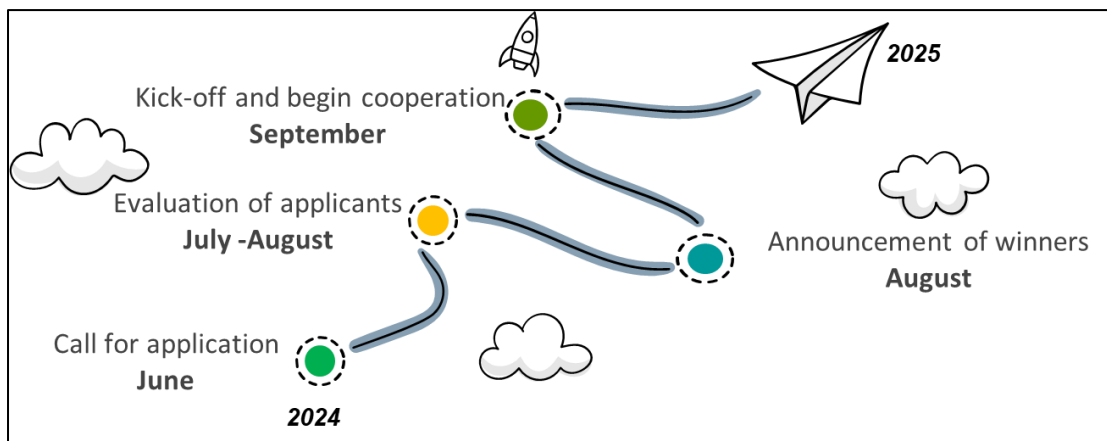


Figure 6: Timeline for the Accelerator Grant

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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In Zambia, the AICCRA program is led by the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) and leverages its strong track record in agribusiness acceleration.

IWMI's Agribusiness Accelerators, notably through the [Peace-and-Stability Accelerator](#) under CGIAR's [Fragility, Conflict and Migration \(FCM\) initiative](#), the [CGIAR Food Systems Accelerator](#), [WE4F Innovation Hub](#) support, and the AICCRA Zambia Acceleration Program, reflect a strategic and interconnected effort. These initiatives collectively aim to transform food systems by strengthening agribusiness ecosystems in place-based contexts. Notably, IWMI has developed a comprehensive, science-based methodology for agribusiness acceleration under the AICCRA and Ukama Ustawi initiatives.

In Zambia, the AICCRA program specifically tailors these methodologies to the local context, accelerating agribusinesses and climate-smart agriculture, thereby reinforcing the stability and resilience of local communities. Collectively, these programs reflect IWMI's strategic and interconnected efforts to strengthen agribusiness ecosystems, promote sustainable food systems, and drive significant economic and environmental benefits across diverse contexts.

Learn more: aiccra.cgiar.org/regions/zambia

ANNEX 1.

Summaries of the 4 CSA/CIS Bundles are provided below:

CSA Bundle 1: Sustainable Agriculture Water Management

IWMI

Improving physical, social and economic water scarcity through scale of appropriate and contextual water use interventions/technologies for smallholder farmers in key value chains

<p>Technologies, products and services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Off-grid solar pump (pump + solar panel + irrigation system) Internet of Things data analysis for pump use (e.g. abstraction) Sustainable finance mechanisms (e.g. pay-as-you-own, blended finance) 	<p>Target groups</p> <p>Smallholder farmers, agri-businesses & farming cooperatives in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soybean Horticulture Aquaculture Upland rice 	<p>Implementation partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agribusinesses with strong local networks Solar pump and irrigation providers with base in Zambia Distributors for effective dissemination Finance players (MFIs, fintechs, ag banks) 	<p>Regions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lusaka Eastern Central Luapula
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Benefits

- Off-grid solar pumps and irrigation increase yields and income of farmers & affiliated businesses
- Sustainable finance solutions decreases the investment barrier for implementation partners

CSA Bundle 2: Integrated Aquaculture Agriculture Systems

WorldFish CENTER

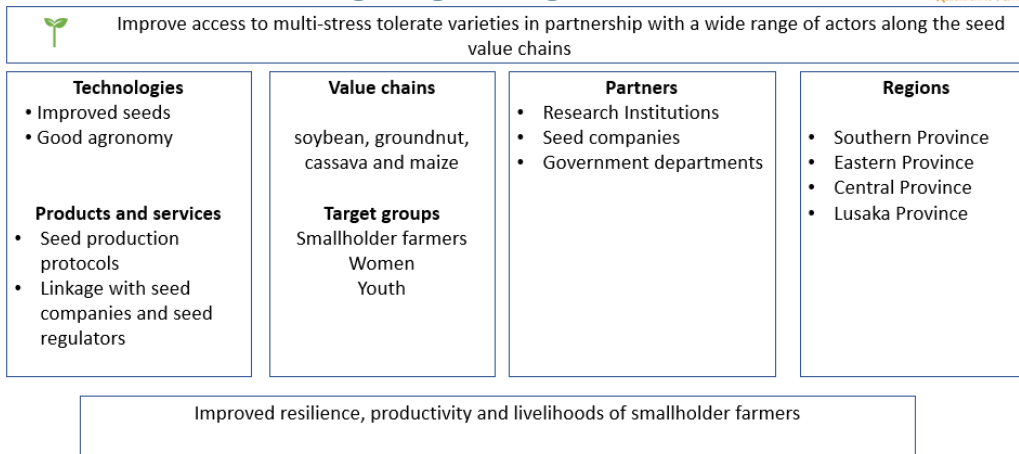
Promote integrated management and use of aquaculture, agriculture and livestock & providing access to improved/quality and resilient fish seed by linking farmers to trained seed producers in their communities

<p>Technologies, Products and services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot nutritious ponds and training Integrated Aquaculture Agriculture Systems Better Management Practices modules for existing hatchery operators Strengthen collaboration with feed companies Link farmers to off-takers Provide CIS data 	<p>Value chains</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aquaculture Livestock: Chickens <p>Target groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smallholder farmers, agri-businesses & farming cooperatives in 	<p>Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Livestock Associations Input suppliers <p>Farms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fish farmers <p>Agri-businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SMEs and Cooperatives (seed, feed and Off-takers) <p>Department of Fisheries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> capacity building service providers 	<p>Regions</p> <p>Northern province Luapula province Lusaka Province</p>
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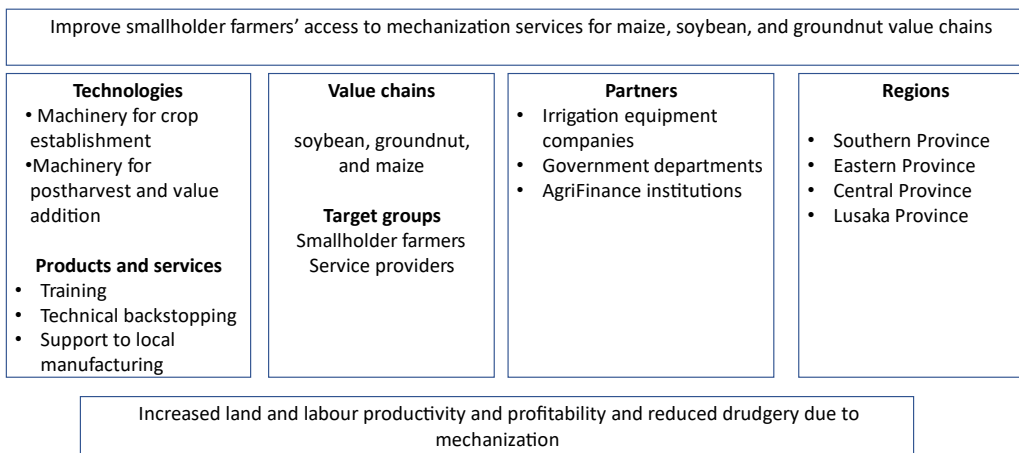
- Improved resilience, productivity and income for fish farmers
- Environmental harm is reduced through implementation sustainable and climate smart aquaculture practices



CSA Bundle 3: Addressing drought through climate smart seed varieties



CSA Bundle 4: Promote mechanization to improve productivity and reduce drudgery





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