



Conservation Agriculture in Zambia – case for replication?

Farmer Input Support Response Initiative
(FISRI)



CA Context in Zambia

- Promoted mainly by NGOs for over 20 years esp. Conservation Farming Unit of ZNFU and lately GRZ
- Mainly funded by EU and the Royal Norwegian Government
- Current reach estimate is 250,000 farmers out of 1,200,000 small scale & emergent farmers
- Issues with crop production: **low yields**, poor management, **soil erosion**, poor marketing for inputs and produce, unpredictable policies



Why CA in Zambia

- **Potential to increase crop yields while improving soil conditions - organic matter, water holding capacity, soil fertility, microbial activity, etc**
- Inherently capable of enhancing adoption of **crop diversification** (in line with GRZ policy) since CA demands continuous crop rotations/associations
- Potential to involve the private sector and increased economic activities in rural areas



FISRI Projects Brief

- **Objective:** *to contribute to reduced hunger, improved food security and promote sustainable use of natural resources in Zambia.*
- **Purpose:** *to increase food production through improved access to agricultural inputs and the promotion of CA principles*
- **Expected Results:** *Capacity of MAL to implement CA built and the e-voucher piloted*
- **Activities:** *140 extension staff, 19,600 Lead Farmers and 293,600 follower farmers trained*
- **Budget:** *€16.9million (2009-2012)*



Innovations of FISRI Project

- E-voucher system for smart input provision
- **Agronomic principles – minimum tillage, continuous soil cover and crop rotations/associations**
- Private sector involvement as agro-dealers, agro-entrepreneurs
- Involvement of the government's extension service in implementation and the Lead Farmer approach



Achievements of the FISRI Project

- **Maize yield increases from 1.3 to 3.2 metric tons per hectare in three cropping seasons**
- Private sector participation as agro-dealers, agro-entrepreneurs and mobile transactions providers in the sector
- Farmers participating in extension delivery at local level
- Government now taking up some of the innovations such as e-voucher scheme & Lead Farmer approach into its mainstream activities



CA Challenges in Zambia

- Varied understanding of CA among stakeholders
- Reluctance of GRZ to financially support CA
- **CA management challenges such as weed control, land preparation and conflict between soil cover on fields and livestock for crop residues**
- Limited area under CA per farmer



Way Forward with CA

- EU to continue supporting CA through an €11.1million project from 2013
- Work with GRZ to incorporate the use of e-voucher for input subsidy provision for its programme (pilot to be done in 10 out of more than 80 districts)
- Work with GRZ to start financially supporting CA nation-wide
- Harmonize the understanding and mode operandi of CA activities among stakeholders
- Promote CA mechanization