USAID/Zambia ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH ENHANCED (EDGE)

Many Zambian agricultural enterprises struggle to access loans and financing, lack business management and technological resources, or have limited access to economic markets. These limitations significantly hinder their ability to grow and significantly contribute to the nation’s GDP. The Enterprise Development and Growth Enhanced (EDGE) project is a five-year, $14.5 million program aimed at increasing profitability for agricultural small-and-medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in Zambia.

The project will improve the SMEs’ competitiveness and access to finance. Many of these SMEs currently struggle to access financing, often lack business management skills and technology or have limited access to markets. By addressing these issues, EDGE aims to increase participating SMEs’ productivity and ability to create new jobs.

- **Life of Project:** August 2020 - August 2025
- **Geographic Focus:** Central, Eastern, and Lusaka Provinces
- **Partner:** ACDI/VOCA
- **Chief of Party:** Jean-Frederic Beauchesne
- **Total USAID Funding:** $14.5 million
- **USAID Contact:** Mlotha Damaseke - mdamaseke@usaid.gov
Over the next five years, EDGE will boost agricultural SMEs’ competitiveness by addressing these constraints. The EDGE project will use a facilitative approach and work closely with and through local partners to drive lasting systemic changes that create sustainable impact at scale.

EDGE will focus on inclusive market systems approaches, addressing the root causes, rather than the symptoms, of a poorly performing market by:

- Strengthening the ability of financial service providers to serve SMEs,
- Catalyzing growth of non-bank financial institutions,
- Strengthening SMEs’ management and marketing capacity, and
- Improving network input/output relationships.

**Expected Results**

EDGE will identify approximately 120 SMEs during the first year of the project and 450 over the life of the project. Participating SMEs will receive target levels of technical support based on their needs. EDGE will target innovative financial service providers to develop new products, build capacity to increase agricultural lending, strengthen their understanding of risks and returns in the SMEs and value chains in which the SMEs operate, and increase networking in the targeted provinces. It is anticipated that profit for the assisted SMEs will increase by 15 percent above the baseline and another 15 percent from midline to end of project and 2,500 full-time jobs shall be created in the process.