

## Partnership: Empowering Resilience of Coffee and Cocoa Smallholder Farmers in Eastern DR Congo



Smallholder farmers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) are the unsung heroes of agricultural resilience, particularly in the country's coffee and cocoa sectors. Despite producing some of the world's finest specialty coffee and high-quality cocoa, they often remain overlooked and under-resourced. At WASARU, we believe in changing this narrative.

### A Vision Rooted in Empowerment and Sustainability

Through our Partnership, WASARU is actively supporting smallholder coffee and cocoa farmers in Eastern DRC, starting with our partner, the Kawa Kanzururu Cooperative. Kawa Kanzururu Cooperative was founded in 2014 and has grown from just 423 farmers to over 3000 members by 2025. Located in the scenic yet challenging terrain of the Ruwenzori Mountains, Kawa Kanzururu stands as a beacon of potential in a region yearning for equitable development.

Smallholders Farmers of the DR Congo, like Kawa Kanzururu Cooperative needs and sustainability challenges are multi-dimensional, including:

- **Technical and Agronomic Support** to increase productivity and improve quality.
- **Market Access and Economic Empowerment** by connecting farmers to ethical and profitable markets.
- **Cooperative Management and Governance** strengthening to foster local leadership and sustainability.
- **Value Chain Strengthening** through infrastructure development, equipment, and financial linkages.

Photo: Kawa Kanzururu farmers processing cherries at one of the micro-washing stations



### Challenges That Demand Action

Despite their vital role, DRC's smallholder farmers face enormous challenges:

- Limited access to agronomic training and inputs.
- Weak market access due to poor infrastructure and isolation.
- Low bargaining power and prices for their produce.
- Scarcity of finance and working capital.
- Vulnerability to smuggling and illicit cross-border trade.

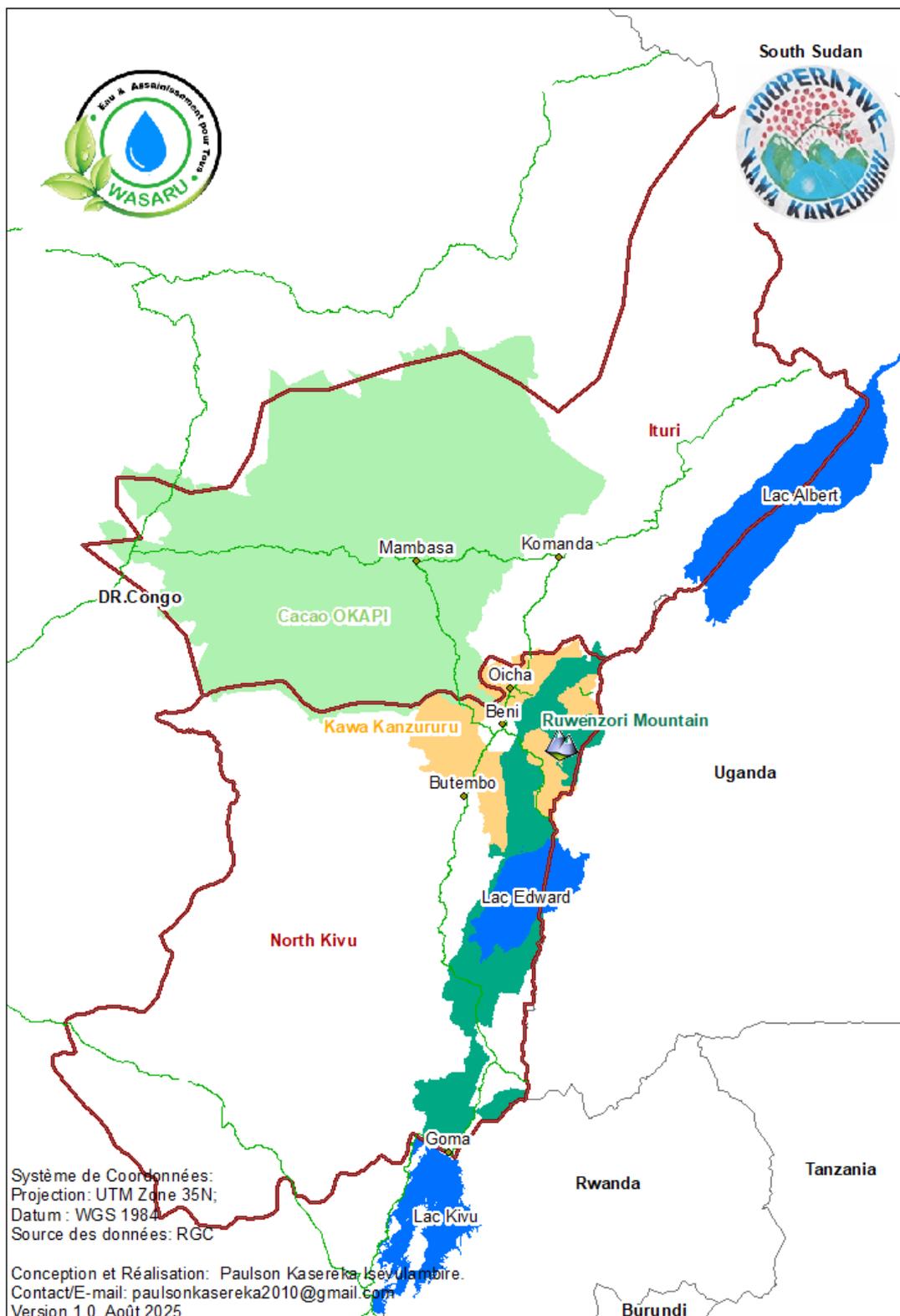
Moreover, smallholder farmers are struggling to meet the stringent requirements of the European Union's new deforestation-free regulation, which demands traceability and proof that production has not contributed to deforestation. Without adequate technical support, digital tools, and financial resources, these farmers risk exclusion from premium export markets, further entrenching poverty and marginalization. Urgent investment and tailored support are needed to help them comply and thrive under the new global sustainability frameworks.

### WASARU's Strategic Approach: Visibility, Networking, Capacity Building

WASARU is not only calling for technical assistance. We ensure:

- **Visibility for cooperatives** like Kawa Kanzururu on our platforms and social media.
- **Strategic networking** with local, national, and international partners.
- **Support for building resilient institutions** that empower farmers to lead and grow their cooperatives.

Map: Coffee and cocoa landscapes where WASARU is supporting smallholder farmers.



**Call to Action: A Rally for Collaborative Impact**

We call on key actors in the coffee and cocoa ecosystem to collaborate with WASARU in supporting smallholder farmers in DRC. Together, we can unlock the full potential of Eastern Congo's coffee and cocoa sectors and uplift thousands of families.

*Testimonial: "Thanks to Kawa Kanzururu, the farmers of our cooperative are selling coffee at a fair price and supporting their children's education." – Roger Tata Wamakolo Farmer in Ruwenzori region, and Kawa Kanzururu Cooperative Manager.*

**Integrated Agribusiness and WASH project for Kawa Kanzururu stallholder farmers**



Kawa Kanzururu integrated approach of combining WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) and agribusiness recognizes that these two areas are interconnected. For example, a healthy, well-nourished farmer with access to clean water is more productive and can better manage their farm. Similarly, an increase in a farmer's income from a successful agribusiness can be used to invest in household improvements, including water and sanitation facilities. This integrated model is designed to create a more holistic and sustainable positive impact on Kawa Kanzururu stallholder farmers.

#### **Kawa Kanzururu and WASH: water point construction and provision**



## Kawa Kanzururu and WASH Project for stallholder farmers: women enjoying water supply



### **An Invitation to Fund, Partner, and Grow**

Kawa Kanzururu and WASARU are currently seeking new partnerships and funding to:

- Scale infrastructure (new washing stations and fermentation centers).
- Provide training and equipment.
- Increase farmers' access to finance.
- Expand visibility of farmer cooperatives globally.

We invite NGOs, donors, investors, and coffee/cocoa lovers to stand with us. Support the hard work and dreams of smallholder farmers in the heart of Africa.

Contact

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