

INNOVATIONS SERIES

BUSINESS PROFILE



PERISHA AGRO AND PACKING ENTERPRISE
LIKUNI LILONGWE, MALAWI
[WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/PERISHAAGRO/](https://www.facebook.com/perishaagro/)

ABOUT PERISHA AGRO AND PACKING ENTERPRISE

- Company status: Sole proprietorship
- Year of registration: 2012
- Number of employees: 14 full time employees, of whom 8 are women and 6 are men.



**Fannie Perisha Gondwe,
Founder & Executive Director**

Fannie holds a MBA from Eastern and Southern Africa Institute of Management (ESAMI), Tanzania. Prior to creating Perisha Agro and Packing Enterprise (Perisha

Agro), she has worked with several organisations, including from 2003 to 2014 with World Agroforestry Centre Southern Africa Region (SADC-ICRAF) as the Regional Finance and Administration Manager; Family Health International (FHI) and National AIDS Control Program - Strategic Planning Unit.

Fannie has won several awards as an agripreneur, including HIVOS Most Impactful Business, Graca Marcel Outstanding business, a Laureate of Women in Africa (WIA54) and the Female Biosciences Business Acceleration award.

BUSINESS MODEL

Mission: To enhance agriculture production and value addition through growing and processing of nutritious crops.

Vision: To help in fighting malnutrition in Malawi and across Africa especially amongst women and children under 5 through healthy, nutritious produce and products.

Business sector: Processing nutritional agricultural products

It is estimated that 25% of Malawi's population is undernourished, while 50% of the country's population reports facing difficulties to access food. Malawi has a higher rate of stunted children under 5 years compared to other countries in the Southern Africa region with 37.1% and 29.3% respectively (FAO (2017). *Food Security Indicators*). Against this background, Perisha Agro was registered in 2012 and started its operations in 2015 as an agri-business enterprise aiming at fighting malnutrition, undernourishment and stunting in Malawi and throughout Africa.



Funded by
the European Union

The company started with seed multiplication of Orange Fleshed Sweet Potato (OFSP), a bio-fortified crop, rich in beta-carotene and vitamin A that is drought-tolerant and traditionally grows in Malawi.

Since its creation, Perisha Agro has broadened its scope of activities that nowadays includes

processing a wide range of biofortified crops into nutrient-rich products.

Perisha Agro is a leading company in Malawi in producing biofortified and highly nutritious products made from local crops.

STRONG RELATIONSHIP WITH SMALLHOLDERS, COOPERATIVES,...

Perisha Agro works with local farmers through contract farming: the company distributes agricultural inputs to the farmers, and in return, they produce raw materials that Perisha Agro purchases to process into value added products. To ensure a sustainable supply chain of raw materials, the company works with development partners

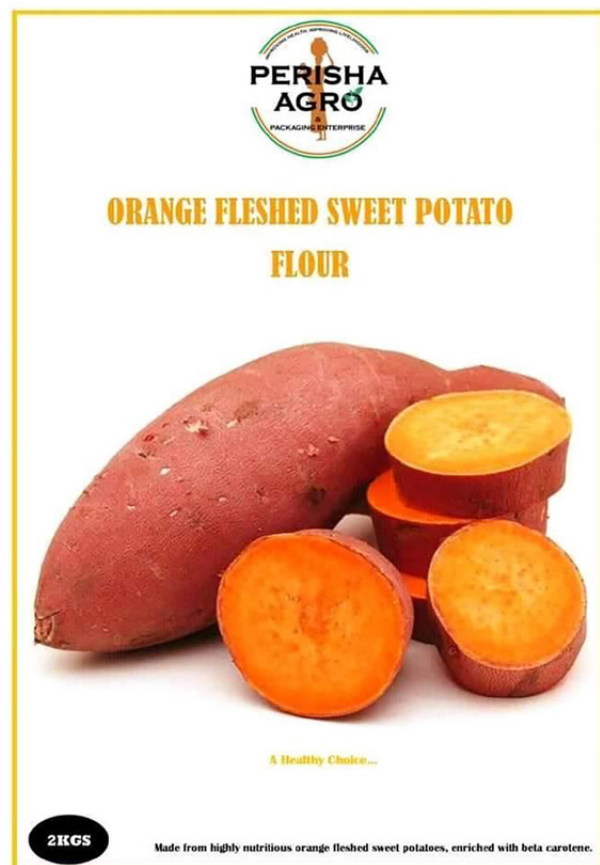
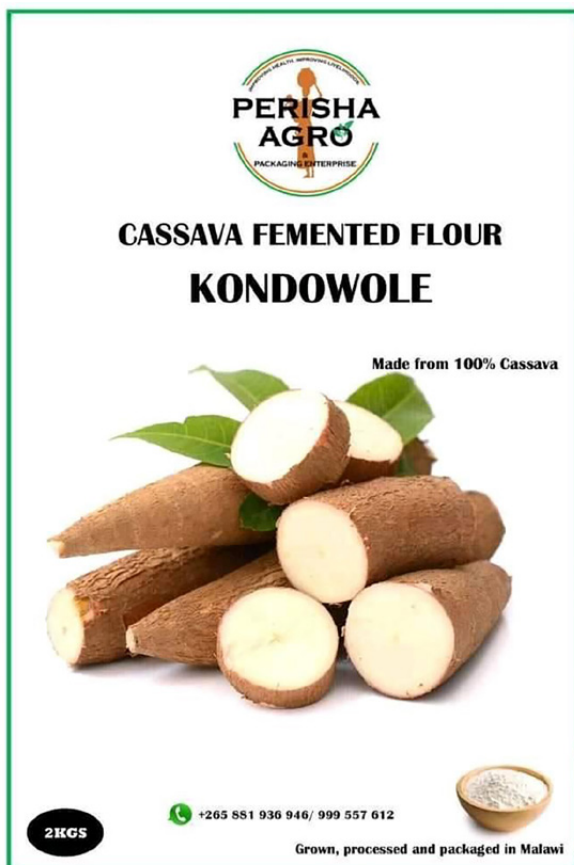
and banks to support its farmers with technical assistance and infrastructure development.

The company also works with over 300 seasonal workers each year, of whom 220 are women and 80 are men, and offers internship positions to train young professionals.

PRODUCTS AND MARKETS

Perisha Agro produces bio-fortified food products from locally produced crops, including OFSP, orange maize and NUA-bean. Some of their other nutritious products are made with cassava, soya and rice. The company transforms these crops into various products, such as:

- Flour: Kodowole (High Quality Cassava Flour, HQCF), OFSP, orange maize, NUA-bean, rice and soya
- Puree: OFSP
- Starch: cassava
- Poultry feed



Perisha Agro sells its products locally to supermarkets, and regionally to markets in Zimbabwe and South Africa. The company also sells to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the Malawian government that distributes the

seeds to rural populations to support nutritional improvement.

Perisha Agro is certified by the Malawi Bureau of Standards.



INNOVATIONS: MILESTONES AND EXPANSION PLANS

Perisha Agro has evolved into a vertical value chain enterprise. It began as a horticulture farm specialising on primary production, notably commercial seed and vine multiplication. By 2019, the company included agro-processing and value addition as part of its business model. Since then, it has continuously worked on developing new nutritional products and started to produce in 2020 bio-fortified OFSP flour and in 2022 OFSP puree.

In terms of its sustainability impact, Perisha Agro has innovated to transform the waste produced by its production processes, notably OSFP and cassava peels, to create a formula for poultry feed.

Considering an estimated market size for bio-fortified products in Africa of about \$60 million, Perisha Agro's goal is to reach 2% of the market share by 2027. To do so, the company is working to diversify its product range and to distribute its products on regional and international markets.



SUCCESS FACTORS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Perisha Agro contributes to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically to SDG 1 (no poverty); SDG 2 (zero hunger); SDG 3 (health and well-being) and SDG 5 (gender equality). Perisha Agro is among the 2022 Top 50 African Business Heroes under Jack Ma ABH competition.

Perisha Agro is committed to fighting stunting in Malawi and, more largely, in Africa, including through working with the Malawian Government. Since its creation, it has reached over 600,000 households and is aiming at increasing the number of beneficiaries to over 1,300,000 by 2023.

The company strives to ensure gender equality, including by offering job opportunities to women in positions that are culturally reserved for men, such as machine and equipment operations, driving and logistics. Women comprises of 60% of the company's staff.

Based on an environmentally friendly business model, the company promotes the growing and consumption of local, drought tolerant roots and tubers crops such as OFSP and cassava. Perisha Agro also encourages the intercropping of crops with agroforestry trees, for example, orange maize with tephrosia (fertilizer trees) to mitigate land degradation and soil erosion. This improves soil fertility and consequently the crop productivity and income generated by the increased production volumes. The company further advances the use of solar drip irrigation systems and contributes to circular economy by processing its side-products (OFSP and cassava peels and waste) into poultry feed.

The competitive advantage of Perisha Agro comprises of several factors that include having reliable staff members; operating in its own processing factory with its own equipment; having established strong network with governments and NGOs and the central localisation of its business in the outskirts of Lilongwe city.



The company **engaged** with local and global partners all along the value chain. Its innovative product development has been supported by key partnerships with various stakeholders such as the Seed Services Unit under the Department of Agricultural Research Services in the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development (MAIWD); the International Potato Centre (CIP); the National Orange Fleshed Sweet Potato Association (NOFSPA); the National Cassava Processing Association (NCPA); and the Scaling-Up Nutrition (SUN) Business Network which is co-convened by the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and World Food Program (WFP); Harvest Plus; CIAT; Feed the Future; GIZ; Academia and Research Institutions.

Perisha Agro has further **develop** its network through fellowships, trainings, accelerator, competitions and mentorship programmes. The company works with organisations that provide financial support for infrastructure development, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Agricultural Transformation Initiative (ATI) and KfW (German Development Bank).

Skills in business development with a growth plan and specific targets, as well as in presentation and pitching are key to communicate with partners, including investors and banks. Fannie has won 3 matching grants through investor pitch competitions and also secured bank loans for her business.



This business profile has been developed as part of the PAFO-COLEAD Innovations series supported by the Fit For Market Plus programme. Fit For Market Plus is implemented by COLEAD within the framework of development cooperation between the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) and the European Union (EU).

This publication has been produced with the financial support of the EU and the OACPS. Its contents are the sole responsibility of COLEAD and PAFO and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the EU or the OACPS.