



## Amkeni AMCOS

## Kilimanjaro, Northern Tanzania, Tanzania

**Partner since:** 2016

**Traceable to:** 40 Members

**Altitude:** 1725 MASL

**Varietals:** Bourbon, Jackson  
Bourbon

**Processing:** Cherries are brought to a central pulper where they are floated using raised channels, soaked over night and set out to dry on raised beds

**Harvest:** July August September November December January

**Booking:** October November December February March April

**Arrivals:** February March April May June



The Amkeni coffee cooperatives was founded in 2001 and was the consequence of several smallholder farmers deciding to market their coffees together so that they could control the quality of the product and try and achieve a better market for their coffee. The group now has approximately 40 member farmers. The group runs a central washing station which uses a Penagos pulping machine. The group is located in the village of Mwika which is close to the larger village of Marangu in the

Rombo district of the KilimRombo District, where coffee was first planted in the Kilimanjaro region back in 1898 by Catholic missionaries. The tribal people from this region are called Chaggas and they are well renowned for being good businessmen. Now, they are applying that to be serious about their coffee.



Tanzania is a country rich in history, culture and resources. In East Africa, only Kenya has more wealth. But these numbers hide the incredible disparity you see between rich and poor, north and south, estates and smallholders.

Only 7% of Tanzania's harvest makes to the US – compared to 37% which go to Japan – and most of what arrives is in the form of block lot 'Tanzania AA' or 'PB'.

Block lots are bought from auction and blended to customer specification; 75% of Tanzania's coffee is sold through auction in this way. The alternative to the auction is the Direct Export Channel, which came under fire from recent (2018) governmental reforms.

The reforms were aimed at eliminating the grey area between three parties: farmers – organized into Agricultural Marketing Co-Operative Societies (AMCOS), mills, and exporters who are confined to operate at the auction level. In practice this cut off investment, cut short agricultural extension programs, cut out the direct export channel – reducing options for farmers and buyers alike.

So, after 9 months these reforms were reversed, and the direct export channel is open again. But this is just the most recent in a decade-long roller-coaster that's hampered Tanzania's ability to compete for larger parts of the US specialty coffee menu.

Lower production, aging plants, lack of irrigation, dwindling markets all sparked the TechnoServe-backed KiliCafe organization; an association of northern smallholder groups founded in 2001. The KiliCafe effort is credited with turning around coffee in this area, and it has successfully reinvigorated quality. But political forces, including corruption, caused this to collapse right around the time Crop to Cup started sourcing in the area.

In the South we are looking primarily at Mbeya and Mbinga. Both are two-days drive from the capital

and port city of Dar es Salaam. Both are large, rugged areas dominated by smallholding coffee farmers. And both are in a fluorescence.

In the early 2000's cuppers started noticing the variety of flavors coming out of the South. Compared to the North, where volumes are dominated by large estates, the South is home to diverse terroirs and profiles. Over the next two decades this interest has encouraged AMCOSs and exporters alike to get more involved, increasing both quality and production.