



Riches of the forest – wild coffee and honey

Sustainably protecting and promoting rare Ethiopian forests



The challenge

Deforestation threatens the last remaining mountain rainforests in the Kafa and Sheka regions of southwestern Ethiopia. These unique ecosystems play an important role in mitigating global climate change. They are also biodiversity hotspots, where swarms of healthy forest bees produce wild honey and where wild coffee flourishes. In fact, the birthplace of *Coffea Arabica* is now the last place on earth where it still grows wild.

However, as the local population grows — and with it, the search for more farmland — the threat of irreversible deforestation looms large. Most local families survive on subsistence farming and on products from the surrounding forests but despite the natural riches, farmers have few income opportunities.

The sale of local non-timber forest products would thus improve local peoples' livelihoods while also providing a major incentive to preserve the forests. Two factors add weight to this sustainable development strategy: local smallholders already harvest naturally grown wild coffee and forest honey. Meanwhile in Europe, specialty, organic products are increasingly in demand.

'Original Food wants to conserve the Ethiopian forests through creating local income opportunities. develoPPP.de enables a close cooperation with local farmers, which is essential for the idea to flourish.'

Florian Hammerstein, Managing Director, Original Food GmbH

The solution

Promoting local forest products to prevent further biodiversity loss, German companies Original Food GmbH and Tuchel & Sohn GmbH have initiated a joint project with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH under the develoPPP.de programme. With the develoPPP.de programme, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) promotes companies' commitment to sustainable investment in developing countries and emerging economies.

Under the same programme, Original Food previously assisted some 5,000 individuals and their families in Kafa to successfully earn a livelihood from wild coffee sales. Implemented from 2003 to 2014, the main aim of the earlier project was to strengthen the local economy while preserving the biological diversity of Ethiopian mountain rainforests, including wild coffee stocks. One of the project's greatest achievements to this end was the establishment of a UNESCO biosphere reserve in 2010 in the Kafa region.

In contrast to the wild coffee, local honey production is still in its infancy, with smallholders currently only meeting local market demand. Quality checks, proper processing, packaging and transportation, and overall export logistics are all lacking. The current joint project thus sees one of Germany's biggest honey importers, Tuchel & Sohn, supporting the honey farmers in value chain development for export. The company's aim is to establish a long-term supply relationship with Ethiopia's beekeepers.



Contact Information

**Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH**
Stipanka Stanic
T + 49 (0) 6196 79-4118
E stipanka.stanic@giz.de
I www.develoPPP.de

Original Food GmbH
Julia Schmidt
T + 49 (0) 761 2828920
E schmidt@originalfood.de
I www.originalfood.de

Tuchel & Sohn GmbH
Peter Tuchel
T + 49 (0) 40) 63 90 07 0
E tuchel@tuchel-com.de
I www.tuchel-sohn.net

Our services

The objective of this joint project is twofold: 1) to increase the income of smallholders from honey production and wild coffee collection, processing and export; and 2) to contribute to forest protection in two Kafa and Sheka biosphere reserves. To this end, the project will increase capacity of local farmer unions and cooperatives, ensuring they are better equipped to guide and follow up on production, quality assurance and processing of forest products as well as on export procedures.

In the Kafa Biosphere Reserve, 18 smallholder cooperatives are already involved in the wild coffee trade. The Kafa Forest Coffee Farmers' Union has become a reliable business partner over the past 10 years. It organises wild coffee processing and export, as well as the certification of wild, organic and fair trade coffee. The project will continue its support for the Kafa Union while transferring its best practices to new regions.

To develop the honey value chain, the project is supporting local farmers in learning how to harvest, package and transport honey to achieve the quality required by EU markets. Smallholders receive equipment, packaging materials, and continuous training and guidance on honey processing. By selling to the EU market, smallholders can double their earnings per kg of processed honey. They also can sell wax as a beekeeping by-product, further increasing their profits.

The partners promote forest protection throughout the processes described. Forest management user groups participate in all wild coffee and honey trade activities, meaning that the smallholders most engaged with forest protection are directly benefiting from its

products. Forest protection is also a prerequisite for the organic and wild certifications, which are vital export and marketing criteria.

Intended impacts and results

- The number of farmers involved and profiting from wild coffee collection will increase from 5,000 to 8,000.
- Coffee collection, processing and export are introduced to at least one new region.
- Upwards of 1,300 local beekeepers benefit from trainings on honey production and are thus able to double their annual income from honey export.
- The forest area utilised under sustainable forest management for wild coffee and honey collection is preserved.

At a glance

Duration	1 April 2015 – 31 December 2017
Country	Ethiopia
Objective	To secure and increase the income of smallholders and their families from honey and wild coffee processing and export, and thereby contribute to forest conservation.
Partners	Original Food, Tuchel & Sohn and GIZ
Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The number of beneficiaries from wild coffee collection increases from 5,000 to 8,000.• More wild coffee is exported from Ethiopia to Germany.• More than 1,000 local beekeepers benefit from deeper knowledge on producing quality honey.• Honey from the Kafa and Sheka Biosphere Reserves is exported to the EU.

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Registered Offices: Bonn and Eschborn, Germany
develoPPP.de
Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1-5
65760 Eschborn
Germany
T + 49 (0) 61 96 79-73 77
F + 49 (0) 61 96 79-11 15
E develoPPP@giz.de
I www.giz.de

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