



NATIONAL COFFEE PLATFORMS

PUBLIC / PRIVATE ALIGNMENT FOR A
SUSTAINABLE COFFEE SECTOR

October 2016

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INTRODUCTION

THRIVING THROUGH COLLABORATION

The global landscape of sustainable coffee production is evolving. Just a few short years ago, the coffee sector lacked a clear collective developmental vision. In 2013, only 15-20% of the total global trade in coffee was verified / certified as sustainable. Supply chain actors rarely spoke to each other about the challenges they faced. And there were very few examples of collaborations that led to a collective benefit and action. At the same time, international industry and trade were looking for opportunities to better engage with the governments, extension services, and producers within coffee-producing countries. To effect a true, systemic change in the way coffee production was organized at a country level, structured public/private dialogue forums were needed.

The Sustainable Coffee Program (SCP), a joint initiative with coffee-sector stakeholders, was launched in 2013. Its collective vision: to address the sustainability issues faced by smallholder coffee producers, to organize production in ways that truly benefit the farmer, and, by benefiting the farmer, increase the quality and reliability of production for roasters and traders. Systemic issues facing coffee production are quite different from country to country, so the SCP engaged with the national public/private framework of six countries: Brazil, Colombia, Indonesia, Tanzania, Uganda, and Vietnam. In several of these countries National Coffee Platforms (in the form of public/private dialogue forums) existed prior to the involvement of the SCP. In others, there was little, or no, trust or dialogue between the public and private sector. The SCP provided support to the platforms that already existed, helping to create conditions in which their growth could be accelerated or strengthened. In cases where there was no formal platform, the SCP has helped to create one.

The National Coffee Platforms today are important for their ability to foster coffee-specific dialogue between public and private sectors. They bring together government representatives, policy makers, producers, and trade-, industry-, and knowledge-leaders. They create an environment in which common goals are recognized, and common visions are shared. With National Coffee Platforms in place, countries have the potential to access shared tools and resources, which can influence the ability of smallholder coffee

producers to produce coffee in a way that is more beneficial to themselves, their communities, the environment, and the economy.

In 2016, the SCP merged with the 4C Association (a membership organization with 300-plus members including roasters, NGOs, and other engaged actors) to create the **Global Coffee Platform** (GCP). The GCP is a multi-stakeholder membership association with a shared vision to improve the livelihoods and resilience of coffee farmers—and the resilience and profitability of the sector as a whole.

COLLECTIVE ACTION

The National Coffee Platforms are one of the keys to organizing collective action in coffee-producing countries. They are a conduit for discussing and influencing policy, and for defining necessary levels of training. They create a forum in which the voices of stakeholders are not just heard, but listened to. And they can be used to achieve more supportive legislative proposals for sustainable production, acting as a springboard for collective action.

Each platform has a secretariat, a role that is sometimes filled by an SCP (now the GCP) National Coordinator (NC). The secretariat's role is a fluid one, which differs in requirement and responsibility from country to country. Broadly, the secretariat facilitates communication and provides mediatory functions between stakeholders who may not previously have been willing or able to collaborate.

In all countries, it is critical to have the support of government. In most cases, this includes the ministries of both agriculture and trade, with mandates to influence law at local and national levels. The role of the private sector is also crucial, and challenging. In order to work towards a common vision and improve the sector for all stakeholders (in particular the producers), local and international trade and industry need to be on board. Their participation strengthens the ability of the National Coffee Platforms to connect with the market and gain international recognition.

INTRODUCTION

THE NATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY CURRICULA

One of the tangible outcomes supporting sustainable production is the development of a National Sustainability Curriculum (NSC). The NSC is a set of common training materials that addresses the key production and processing issues in a sector, as agreed by both public and private stakeholders. It typically contains a minimum set of good practices agreed by the entire sector, which is subsequently disseminated via public and private extension services.

The NSC is completely adaptable, and drawn up entirely through consultation with and between the stakeholders in a coffee-producing country. It can link to existing national structures, as is the case with the Coffee Sustainability Curriculum in Brazil, or it can create entirely new processes for managing coffee production within a country (as is the case with the NSC in Tanzania). Its function is to perform, within the country to which it applies, in the manner best suited to the needs of that country. In Colombia, for example, good practice materials are purposefully designed to be flexible. Key sector actors interested in a specific sustainability issue can then develop the materials accordingly.

THE GLOBAL COFFEE PLATFORM AND VISION 2020

The GCP builds on the strengths of the SCP's activities, and the multi-stakeholder environment of the 4C Association, to create a stronger, more balanced sustainability platform. Its members are committed, in terms of both human and financial resources, to working on production issues collectively—and in co-operation with government. A conduit between farmers and the global coffee sector, the GCP's goal is to give coffee producers a presence where they have often been unheard.

Vision 2020 is one avenue through which the GCP realizes its goals. Vision 2020 is a global agenda-setting process in the coffee sector, driven by the International Coffee Organization (ICO), the Global Coffee Platform (GCP), and many other initiatives and organizations at local, regional, and global levels. It works towards a more sustainable and resilient coffee sector in which public and private coffee sector stakeholders can progress towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In order to

help achieve this, the GCP is developing the Global Progress Framework (GPF). Designed to enable all coffee stakeholders to share and monitor data, this framework creates a common way to measure progress, leading to a more united coffee sector. Impact will be more transparently revealed, and the risk of duplicated investment will diminish.

Everything the GCP does is aimed at bringing stakeholders together. By facilitating dialogue between the private and public sectors, and supporting each coffee-producing country to develop tools that can help shape its own destiny, the GCP is creating real change. It is driving towards more effective platforms, more engaged stakeholders, more meaningful activities, and more effective extension services. This is where facilitation happens. It is where knowledge-sharing and encouragement happen. And in fostering an environment in which all these things are possible, the GCP brings international demand closer to the National Coffee Platforms.

PAVING THE WAY

This booklet reflects on the growth of the National Coffee Platforms in Brazil, Colombia, Indonesia, Tanzania, Uganda, and Vietnam. Each country chapter maps the processes and challenges by which the platforms have been developed (with and for a multi-stakeholder approach), and considers the lessons learned. Key outtakes include:

BRAZIL

Combining perspectives. The National Advisory Board (part of Brazil's NCP) is the first Brazilian coffee-sector initiative to include government, private-sector entities, and foreign roasters in the same board. By combining the perspectives of producers, technical services, industrials, and exporters, the board has been able to identify solutions to shared problems, and to advance its mission to embed sustainability in national strategies and institutions in the Brazilian coffee sector.

COLOMBIA

Transcending boundaries. Key members of nine organizations help to organize the Sustainable Trade Platform (Colombia's NCP). This creates a strong team of stakeholders working together to define and achieve

INTRODUCTION

common goals: a team that transcends the normal boundaries of competition. By working together, benefits are shared and problems are collectively solved.

INDONESIA

Bringing farm and policy together. The Sustainable Coffee Platform of Indonesia (Indonesia's NCP) works at both farm and policy levels. It has a clear link with government, and its NSC is being implemented by multiple Indonesian governments, private sectors, NGOs, and other stakeholders. Sustainability is an issue that is attracting attention, and the platform's members are making it their own.

TANZANIA

United is better than divided. Farmers, who cannot fight for change in isolation, are more likely to be heard by government when represented in a multi-stakeholder organization working at national level. The National Coffee Stakeholder Committee (Tanzania's NCP) has experienced structural changes, but still gives farmers strength and a voice. And all stakeholders have collectively developed a strategic sector plan that will create benefit from the field level up.

UGANDA

Establishing a reputation. The Uganda Coffee Platform (Uganda's NCP) has helped turn coffee into a reputable sector with the strongest governance and organization in Uganda. Currently, the coffee sector serves as an example against which other sectors are often benchmarked, with many government and enterprise representatives frequently referring to the platform.

VIETNAM

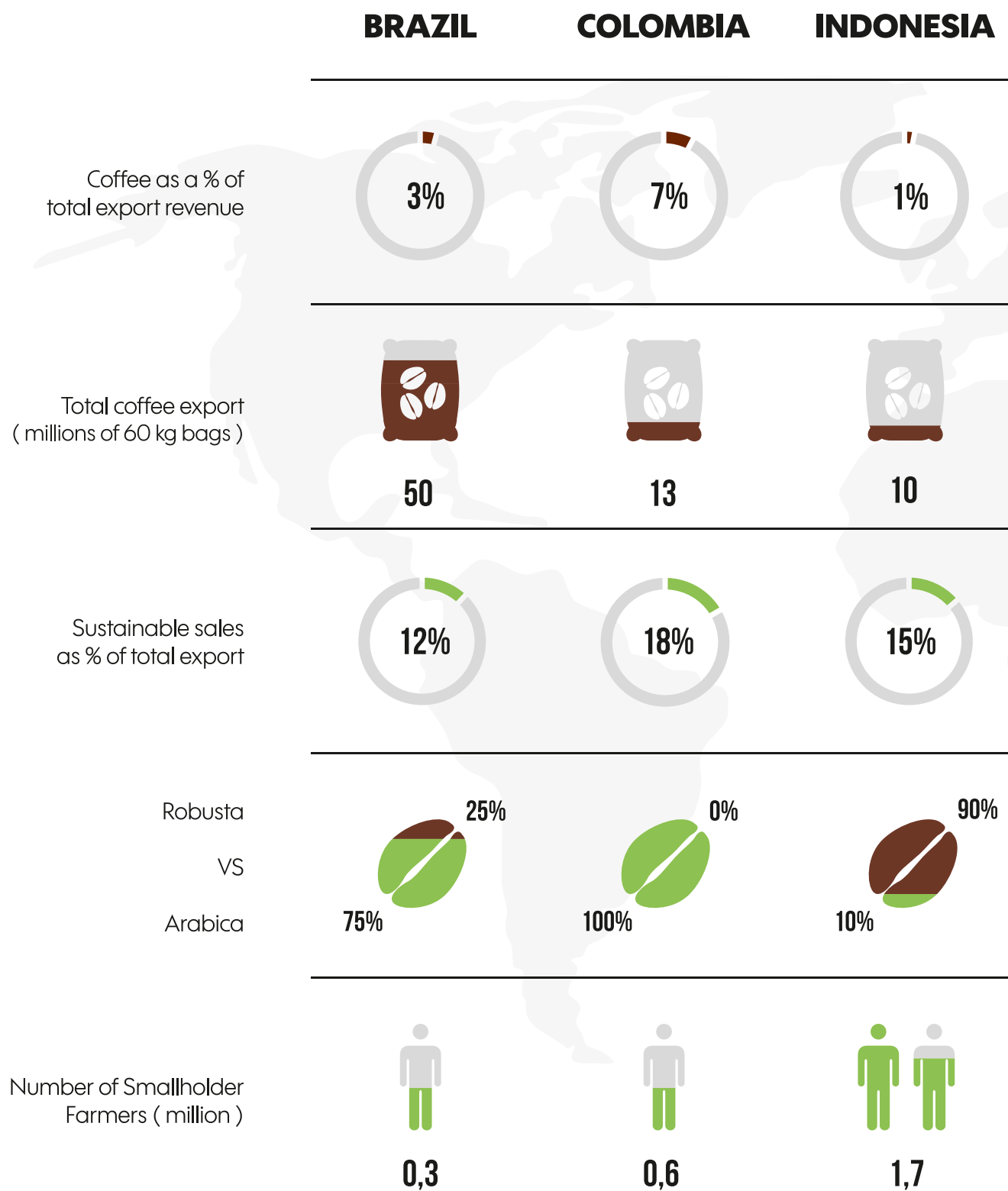
Creating a voice through unity. The creation of the Vietnam Coffee Coordination Board (Vietnam's NCP) has ushered in a new era in the Vietnamese coffee sector. The board has been praised for strengthening the voices of various stakeholders, from foreign companies to local farmers. Many departments within the Vietnamese government welcome the board's contributions and policy advice.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

Public sector or private sector, this booklet is for you. If you are participating in, supporting, or working towards developing, a National Coffee Platform, you can use the case studies contained here to identify similarities and differences between your country and others. You'll find examples of how platforms are already working within individual country contexts. You'll see how government commitment is vital, and learn key lessons about the engagement of policy makers and government representatives: what works, how it works, and what to watch out for. You'll also gain insight into the organizational processes that make a National Coffee Platform happen: the meetings, the follow-ups, and the roles of facilitators and of all stakeholders.

Most importantly, you'll be empowered to begin—or to continue. In just a few short years the National Coffee Platforms contained within this booklet have blazed a trail that any committed group of stakeholders can follow. There are ways to find a common vision, and align around it. You can use this booklet to discover a recipe for a National Coffee Platform that works: organized, informed, and functioning for the benefit of all.

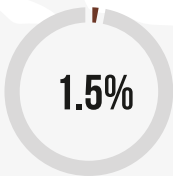
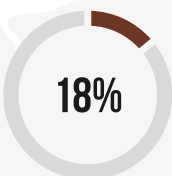
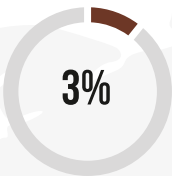




TANZANIA

UGANDA

VIETNAM



Coffee as a % of total export revenue



1

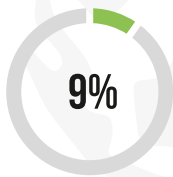
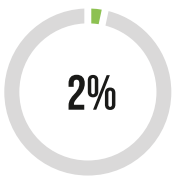


4



28

Total coffee export (millions of 60 kg bags)



Sustainable sales as % of total export



50%

50%



75%

25%



95%

5%

Robusta
VS
Arabica



0,45



0,7



0,5

Number of Smallholder Farmers (million)

Sources:

USDA; Technoserve Analysis, 2012
International Coffee Organization, April 2015
International Trade Center, 2011

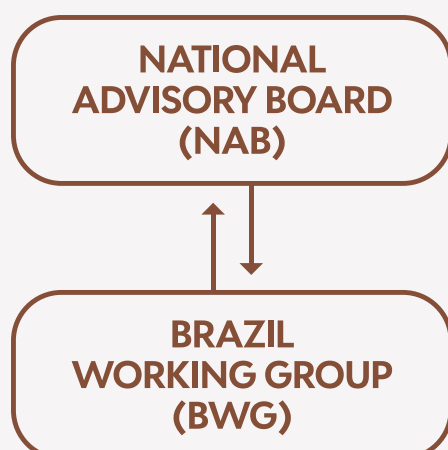


BRAZIL

THE NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD AND BRAZIL WORKING GROUP

- **Geographic location:** Brazil, meeting locations vary but are usually Sao Paulo for NAB and alternate states for BWG
- **Inception:** NAB: 2014, BWG: 2013
- **Platform focus areas:** advisory function for both boards; advancement of sustainability in the Brazilian coffee sector by developing awareness, ownership, and high-level guidance at its top decision-making level; and farm-level projects
- **National Sustainability Curriculum:** the Coffee Sustainability Curriculum (CSC)
- **Chair:** none appointed
- **Platform (National) Coordinator:** P&A Marketing
- **Meeting frequency:** The NAB meets twice a year in person, and a third time via conference call. The BWG meets three times a year in person

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE / ORGANIZATION CHART



NAB Members

Public sector: Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Food Supply (MAPA)

Private sector

Institutions: National Agriculture Confederation (CNA), National Coffee Council (CNC), Brazilian Coffee Exporters Council (CeCafé), Brazilian Coffee Industry Association (ABIC), and Brazilian Soluble Coffee Industry Association (ABICS)

Private sector: Nestlé, Jacobs Douwe Egbert (JDE), Tchibo, Olam

BWG members

State extension services:

Empresa de Assistência Técnica e Extensão Rural de Minas Gerais (EMATER-MG), Incaper-ES, Coordenadoria de Assistência Técnica Integral (CATI-SP), EMATER-PR, EMATER-RO, and MAPA

Sustainability standards (international and local)

International roasters (technical representatives)

SEBRAE and SENAR, starting in 2016

NAB technical representatives (ad hoc)

Brazil: a global coffee leader

Brazil is quite different from other coffee-producing countries. Its coffee sector is much larger than the sector average of other countries. Brazilian smallholder farms comprise the majority (72%) of growers in Brazil, but even these smallholder farms, on average seven hectares, exceed the average number of hectares for smallholder farms in other countries (defined as under five hectares elsewhere). The country's land mass and highly diverse coffee-production system (Arabica and Robusta) represents all combinations of farm size, technology usage, best-practice implementation, technical-assistance access, productivity, and profitability.

As the world's largest exporter and second-largest consumer of coffee, Brazil has boasted an extensively organized coffee industry for the past 50 years. Currently, the industry's highest governing body is the Coffee Policy Deliberative Council (CDPC as per the Portuguese name Conselho Deliberativo de Política do Café). The CDPC falls under the Brazilian government, specifically the Ministry of Agriculture (MAPA), but with strong private-sector participation. It has a political, regulatory, and financial agenda. The need for a sustainability platform in Brazil stems from the fact that existing institutions, such as the CDPC, have many priorities in organizing the coffee sector and sustainability has so far been secondary. Nevertheless, Brazil is the world's largest producer and exporter of sustainable coffee, proving that sustainability has been on the agenda. However, most sustainable coffee is still produced by medium-size and large farmers. Furthermore, there is a lot of work going on to support coffee farming, from research and extension services to financing. Some of these activities may address sustainability issues but this is seldom explicitly mentioned. Large companies have focused their efforts on certifying coffee as sustainable and communicating certification to their consumers, but they have yet to address the bedrock upon which true sustainability can be built. Certification and verification grew significantly in Brazil over the last 15 years but mainly among large and medium-to-large farms, which today are almost all certified by one or more certification labels, such as UTZ or Rainforest Alliance. The Brazil Working Group (BWG) and National Advisory Board (NAB)—acting together as Brazil's as-yet-informal National Sustainability Platform (NSP)—bring sustainability to the fore by influencing existing organizations to

embrace it and by ensuring that smallholders are included.

The BWG and NAB

Sustainability was already present in Brazil in the actions of many coffee entities and organizations, but not in a centralized way, and without equal importance and engagement. It was previously possible to identify several sustainability activities within the federal and state governments and private-sector initiatives, but the number and focus of preexisting organizational structures presented their own challenges. Analyzing the complex structure of the Brazilian coffee sector, P&A Marketing and the Sustainable Coffee Platform (SCP) concluded that the best way to increase the country's concerns regarding sustainability was to create two advisory boards—the BWG and NAB. These boards can focus fully on sustainability, acting to increase awareness about and goodwill towards this topic within the existing bodies and institutions governing the Brazilian coffee sector. Initiated in 2013 and 2014 respectively, the BWG and NAB facilitate and advance the organization and prioritization of sustainability in an advisory capacity. Their main objective is to make sustainability a CDPC priority, and perhaps be eventually absorbed by the CDPC in the form of a Sustainable Committee.

The NAB operates at decision-making, strategic, and political levels and is supported technically by the BWG. The BWG focuses on extension services, production, research, and sustainability standards, which position it much closer to field level.

The NAB's mission is to embed sustainability in national sector strategies and existing institutions in the Brazilian coffee sector. Its members include private-sector institutions, private companies, and representatives of MAPA. The private-sector members of the NAB are also CDPC members. However, the NAB is the first Brazilian coffee-sector initiative to include government and private-sector entities and foreign roasters in the same board. It is also the first initiative focusing solely on sustainability. In fact, sustainability is the NAB's only remit.

Value within inclusiveness:

"By combining the perspectives of producers, technical services, industrials, and exporters,

we are able to identify the best strategies and solutions to our shared problems. It's different from when I, as a production representative, try to find a solution on my own." (National Coffee Council, CNC)

The BWG also includes public state extension services with a specific focus on smallholder coffee farms and non-NAB NGOs such as certification and verification organizations. These sustainability standards have played an important role in the development of Brazil's sustainable coffee production, stimulating coffee-grower certification and sustainable practices and providing technical expertise that has helped make Brazil the world's largest producer of sustainable coffee.

Some stakeholders hold seats in both the NAB and BWG. In such cases, they assign representatives with technical expertise (agronomists, etc.) to the BWG, and decision makers or director-level staff to the NAB.

The NAB and BWG are sometimes jointly and informally referred to as the National Sustainability Platform (NSP). It is unclear what the future holds for the NAB and BWG, and whether they will be formalized as a joint entity with a legislative mandate, or whether they will indeed be merged into a Sustainable Committee within the CDPC. However, according to P&A, "the plan is to make the initiative live on its own and not depend on SCP coordination; that is part of the exit strategy."

P&A provides the secretariat for both the NAB and BWG, for which no chairs are appointed. P&A is in an excellent position to organize these two advisory boards. Carlos Brando, who leads P&A, has more than 30 years' experience in the coffee sector and has access to a wide network. His colleagues Pedro Ronca and Sylvio Padilha are agronomists with considerable experience in fieldwork on coffee: they are also coffee farmers themselves, and thus have valuable technical knowledge to share. This combination is key to NAB and BWG success:

"[P&A] also has thorough knowledge of the field so they can go to a meeting in the agriculture ministry and be effective. And at the same time, they can hold a workshop with farmers on a very basic level and speak their language." (Nestlé)

Achievements

The NAB and BWG are still maturing. Even so, they have achieved early successes, as outlined below:

1. **A gradual increase in the participation and quality of the representatives.** Since the inception of NAB and BWG, 80% meeting attendance has been achieved thanks to extensive efforts in organizing, inviting, insisting, and confirming. P&A's credibility as facilitator has also been a factor. However, the NAB and BWG have gradually observed that member participation confirmation requires less effort and insistence. Furthermore, participation during the meetings has become more interactive, with a significant increase in questions, comments, and suggestions over time. The profile of representatives has also increased: recent meetings were mainly attended by the most-senior leaders of each member organization. For example, the March 2016 NAB meeting included the top leaders of almost all entities as well as some CEOs. This was a result of multiple factors increasing the legitimacy of the platform: P&A's coffee-sector network, a relevant agenda, the success of previous meetings, and the presence of IDH top directors.
2. **Increased communication and coordination with regard to sustainability via the NAB.** An example of this is the collective NAB response to DanWatch (an independent media and research center), which published a report in early 2016 criticizing the Brazilian coffee sector. The NAB called an urgent, special meeting to discuss the issue and response.
3. **The implementation of the Coffee Sustainability Curriculum (CSC).** Building the CSC has been a very democratic process. As the NAB and BWG member CNC's Technical Advisor points out: "It brought together many different visions: those of NGOs, which can sometimes be more extreme, and those of the farmers, and we were able to find consensus." The joint-enterprise nature of the CSC's development reflects favorably on the degree to which the NSP has been adopted. The CSC has been supported by the extension services of all relevant coffee-producing states, which is rather unique because states have different strategies for supporting their coffee farmers.

Collaborative testing of a collective technical-assistance model has also begun, demonstrating that the NAB is having a material effect. This model provides a cost-efficient solution for reaching more farmers with the same number of technicians. If this model works, it will pave the way for many more CSC-compliant farmers.

- 4. Increased recognition of the CSC by political leaders.** The CSC has become CNC's as well as the Brazilian Coffee Exporters Council's (CeCafé) reference for sustainability, and will also be embraced by the Brazilian Coffee Industry Association (ABIC). This is evidence that the program is gaining credibility.

Challenges

Though promising, the NAB and BWG are not yet reliant on their own funding, and must balance the disparate interests of their members while navigating the fluid political landscape of the world's biggest coffee-producing country. Likewise, the relative newness of the NSP brings challenges such as:

- 1. Sustaining stakeholder engagement.** The process of motivating meeting attendance and securing stakeholder commitment has not been easy. P&A's strategy was to plan meetings that were interesting and informative, and which could serve as a valuable and worthwhile resource, not only for leaders but also for the organizations and institutions the leaders represent. A P&A agronomist says: "We prepare meetings very carefully with materials, slides, and information, and try to include elements that are relevant for the stakeholders." Because P&A knows the members, the coffee chain, and the level of discussion that interests the sector, it is able to select meeting topics and approaches that take these aspects into consideration. Additionally, meetings are meant to be efficient and objective, to adhere to the agenda, and to include discussions related to subjects members are familiar with.
- 2. A changing political landscape.** The political crisis in Brazil has seen federal-government representatives regularly replaced since the inception of the NAB and BWG. With each change, a new relationship must be built. This is an especially critical issue at the federal level but also takes place at the state level when growers change.
- 3. Guaranteeing long-term involvement.** At present, secretariat costs for the NAB and BWG are funded by the SCP (IDH). Coordination lies with P&A. The NAB and BWG are expected to continue their activities going forward, though integrated into the Brazilian coffee structure. This is needed in order to guarantee long-term stakeholder involvement and to inspire members to take the lead if IDH and P&A cease their involvement and funding. Planning for resource management, funding, and structuring the boards are all issues that will be dealt with in due course.
- 4. Politics and perception.** The NAB was created within a complex set of established and traditional organizations. Political attention and perception were required in order to avoid resistance. The NAB has prevailed in sensitive political circumstances, under which the work already done by partner organizations has been clearly recognized. But perception is still a problem. Not all NAB members believe in certification as the solution to sustainability issues. The inclusion of foreign roasters and traders has been seen as positive but raises concerns as to how to preserve a national sector organization maintained with federal funds. As the world's largest coffee producer for more than a century, planting locally-created coffee varieties and using locally-developed technology, Brazil is quite sensitive to foreign interventions in its coffee sector.
- 5. Connecting sectors.** Some BWG participants feel that the speed of discussions has diminished since extension services were included. Nestlé noticed the divergent work pace of companies and government. Disparate momentum, points of view, and expectations can frustrate the process of managing sustainability, and strong management is required to bridge gaps.
- 6. Access to farmers.** BWG's primary focus is the farm. However, given that medium-size and large farmers can access knowledge and technical assistance more easily, the focus is now on small farmers. The challenge is to ensure that smallholder coffee farms have access to technical assistance and can implement the sustainable

practices designed to help them.

BWG discussions tend to be rather technical.

Lessons learned

When the NAB and BWG began in Brazil, the country was already the world's main source of sustainable coffee. This was, however, mainly produced by medium-size and large farmers according to foreign sustainability standards as well as a local reference—Certifica Minas Café. In addition, cooperatives and public extension services disseminated good agricultural practices, but without emphasis on their sustainable aspects. The advisory boards first identified the need to reach smallholder coffee farms, state extension services, and cooperatives. Their existing structures were then used as the means to reach them, and the CSC was the primary tool for introducing sustainability through the practices of extension services.

For the organization coordinating sustainability initiatives in Brazil, it is vital to know how the sector is structured, and which entities already exist:

"Respect them and acknowledge their achievements and current initiatives. If you break trust in this process, it's very hard to win it back." (Agronomist, P&A)

1. **Access to a good network is needed.** P&A's network is a decided advantage. However, Brazil's existing coffee sector is so polarized and independently developed that collaboration has been difficult, even with a network. Without a network, it's unlikely the NAB and BWG would have been launched.
2. **Communication is vital.** Brazil's coffee-sector organizations are receptive to politeness and transparency. A prospective member is first proposed to the existing group and is only invited to meetings once the group has accepted the membership request. Communication regarding resources is particularly sensitive. In one instance, misunderstandings arose over IDH funding, which led to unrealistic expectations. Additionally, communication should be targeted to its audience. One reason for the BWG to remain separate is the fact that communication can be very political: not all technical people are equally familiar with this.
3. **Sectors must learn to get along.** For the private sector, it is important to realize that working with a diverse group of stakeholders means accepting that organizations may move towards shared objectives at a different pace. For CNC, "it is very important to know how to listen and understand other points of view that differ from yours, and work with the differences." It is clear that the various agendas must be understood and respected by organizing parties. Nestlé: "You need to understand their agendas very well before you can really get their cooperation." In other words: a bridging agency is vital. Private-sector participants accustomed to the faster pace of private business want to move more quickly. The Brazilian government, wary and often embattled by its own frequent changes of leadership and bureaucracy, moves slowly and cautiously. It is key to have people on board who are able to create a positive conversation between the public and private sectors.
4. **This bridging role is also needed with regard to political discussions and their translation into field -level practices.** P&A has been well positioned for this. CNC also adds that P&A is responsible for making change a democratic process and ensuring that there are equal relations between the various stakeholders in the platform.
5. **Meetings are key in all areas and at all levels of the process.** Companies learn that they face the same issues by discussing them. They subsequently learn that others also have issues, which, as pointed out by P&A, creates trust and mutual understanding.
6. **A 'demonstration effect' is vital.** Proof of the process ultimately lies not in the meeting room but in the field and on the farm. Concrete projects can demonstrate why and how sustainability matters, and as a result, members, producers, and organizations will begin to see how sustainability benefits them. This requires an understanding of what is important to stakeholders, and the ability to highlight positive effects aimed at those needs.



COLOMBIA

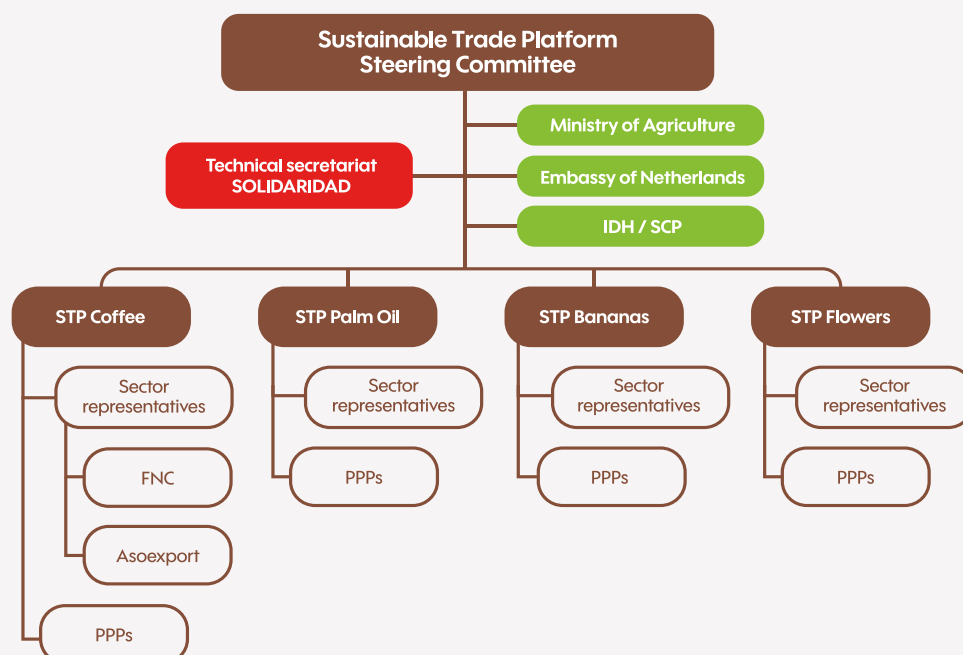


**PLATAFORMA
COMERCIO
SOSTENIBLE**

SUSTAINABLE TRADE PLATFORM COFFEE

- **Geographic location:** Colombia, based in Bogotá
- **Inception:** 2012
- **Platform focus areas:** establishing sustainable production and trade in four commodities (among which coffee) through implementing pilot projects, policy influencing
- **Chair:** Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (Ambassador) chairs the STP
- **Platform (National) Coordinator:** Solidaridad
- **Meeting frequency:** Steering Committee of STP meets once per year, each commodity round table meets three times per year

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE / ORGANIZATION CHART



STP Coffee round table members¹

Public sector: Ministry of Agriculture

Sector associations:

Federación Nacional de Cafeteros de Colombia / Colombian Coffee Growers Federation (FNC), Asoexport (Coffee Exporters Association)

Private companies

(international): Louis Dreyfus Commodities Colombia, Carcafé (Volcafe Group), Olam Agro Colombia (Olam group), SKN Caribecafé (Newman Group), Compañía Colombiana Agroindustrial (member of ECOM group), Supracafe, Caravella

Private companies

(national): Expocafe, Cafexport, Racafe, Mild Coffee Company Huila

Non-profit organizations:

Fundación Natura, Naturacert, Control Union Certifications, Cecodes: Desarrollo Sostenible, Fundación Hanns R. Neumann Stiftung, Cordinadora Colombiana de Comercio Justo, FLO, UTZ certified, 4C, CRECE (Regional Center for Coffee Studies), IDH (SCP)

¹This overview includes only the coffee-sector members of the STP.



Colombia: World Heritage coffee production

The Coffee Cultural Landscape of Colombia is designated a UNESCO World Heritage site, which produced 14.2 million bags of coffee in 2015.

The Colombian coffee sector is relatively autonomous in its organization, with limited government involvement. For example, export tax is collected by its sector farmer's association Federación Nacional de Cafeteros de Colombia/Colombian Coffee Growers Federation (FNC). Despite this relative autonomy, however, initially there was no coordination between the many sustainability initiatives in Colombia's flagship commodities.

In 2011, Solidaridad, an international organization with more than twenty-five years' experience creating sustainable supply chains, joined forces with the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to align Colombia's various sustainability initiatives. The idea was to weave the country's major sustainability efforts into an overarching Sustainable Trade Platform (STP). Of five sectors analyzed for inclusion in the STP, four now benefit from its activities: coffee, bananas, palm oil, and flowers. The STP allows companies active in these sectors to work on sector-specific, country-wide sustainability issues (for example, producer support, market access and climate change), as well as issues faced by individual companies. The platform also aims to provide a mechanism for addressing issues

previously avoided because of competitive concerns.

At this stage, the support of a facilitator such as Solidaridad is essential, as the glue that holds the platform together. STP members consider Solidaridad to be well suited for this facilitating role as it has the technical expertise in coffee production and is familiar with the Colombian coffee sector. Yet it is also positioned outside of the supply chain as an international non-profit, impartial organization, which increases credibility.

Introduction to Colombia's STP

The STP in Colombia works across four commodity sectors—palm oil, banana, flowers, and coffee—to create a neutral space in which stakeholders can discuss strategies that will address sustainability issues, such as higher production costs or climate change. The aim of the platform is generally to avoid the duplication of investments, improve efficiency, and reduce stakeholder isolation in matters of sustainability.

The STP Steering Committee meets once per year and has a rotating chairmanship currently held by the Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. It was previously chaired by the Colombian Minister for Agriculture. Solidaridad is the technical secretariat (TS) for the platform and is in charge of executing the work plan and strategy defined by the STP board, business administration, and communication with stakeholders.

While Solidaridad currently plays the primary role in platform coordination, its goal is to be less involved in the future. “For me, success will be in 2020, if we can take a step aside and the process can continue without us. That is a kind of dream to 2020,” says the Solidaridad Country Manager.

While some of STP’s focus is on sustainability at the level of Colombian agriculture in general, each of the sectors within the STP also works relatively independently, focusing on sector-specific issues. In the Colombian coffee sector, the FNC already plays an important role in coordinating the sector, operating mostly at a policy level. To avoid duplication of efforts, the coffee round table within the STP focuses on improving field-level interventions more than influencing policy, and its objectives are achieved through the facilitation of dialogue between stakeholders, research, and the creation of on-the-ground projects.

The coffee round table meets approximately three times per year. At any given time, several working groups are organized around specific issues. These working groups focus on STP sub-objectives, for example, delivering a tool for aligned certification. The STP coffee round table includes twenty-three member organizations.

Initially, coffee stakeholders were hesitant to collaborate within the STP—they were not accustomed to collaborating in a pre-competitive way (benefitting all members in the supply chain) and some trust-related issues had to be addressed. However, it was clear that certain sustainability issues could not be addressed by individual organizations. The value of the STP in collectively addressing these challenges was soon recognized by its members:

“It is strong. In this context, we are working together and can exchange the good things and the bad things, and can come up with solutions for the bad things. This is good.”
(Sustainability Director, Expocafe)

Achievements

The multi-sector nature of Colombia’s STP is both an achievement and a challenge in itself. Capable of addressing sustainability issues for the country’s four

largest agricultural sectors, the STP has facilitated great early strides. These, however, are initial advances and the hope is that they will lead naturally to a more mature and self-sufficient setup:

1. **Creating neutrality and trust: an open forum for the benefit of all.** Prior to the STP, there was no place where competitors could meet and discuss their common issues. The creation of such a space, and the presence of a neutral party (Solidaridad) to ensure the discussion is only about such issues, enable companies to share information that would otherwise be confidential.
2. **High-quality, jointly developed farmer training materials.** Many respondents proudly mention the ‘technical package’ created by the STP. This consists of a variety of materials on specific sustainability issues (such as certification alignment). These materials can be used and implemented by interested and willing STP members in a flexible way, i.e. they are free to choose which issues to address. Such a package would have been unimaginable without the platform:

“We have involved the best people from nine organizations. No single organization can have a team like this involved in a task or project.” (Coffee Program Manager, Solidaridad).

Important foundations of trust were laid during the creation of this technical package. The Country Manager of Solidaridad noted the beneficial effect of working alongside organizations that would ordinarily consider each other to be competitors. As the work progresses, these competitors come to understand that they all face similar issues and they find common ground.

3. **Transparency.** Important sustainability information (for example, the tonnage of sustainable coffee produced and sold) is collected by Solidaridad. This provides insight into the current uptake of sustainable production practices among Colombian coffee producers. Export companies are willing to share this data with Solidaridad because they are not a commercial player in the coffee sector. This sector performance data is therefore visible for the first time. It is

disseminated among other key information through the annual STP cross-commodity learning event, the STP newsletter, and round-table meetings.

4. **Creating a bedrock of support for sustainability projects: from funding to knowledge sharing.**

Success for Colombia's STP is not only about money. The true value of the platform lies in the technical knowledge and support it provides the sector (as was noted by representatives of Expocafe and Carcafe). The high quality of training provided by STP consultants, the practical and realistic project- and fund-management, all combine to push sustainability strategy forward in Colombia.

overlaps in the calculation of total volumes. As much as 38% of the estimated overlap in 2014 figures could be accounted for if farms have double-counted.

3. **Aligning for strength.** The communication challenge strikes at the heart of the Colombian STP's potential. When members learn to speak and act in unison, and to involve the right players and decision-makers in STP projects and processes, the platform's voice could be strengthened at the national level:

"The platform has many members that are stronger individually but are not yet combining their strengths to become one voice."
(Cooperation Projects Coordinator, Carcafe)

Challenges

Colombia's STP has brought coordination on sustainability in the coffee sector. However, some of its strengths also provide challenges. Members that communicate pre-competitively, on shared issues, for the first time may not yet be ready to communicate fully. The system is still evolving and it still faces challenges:

1. **Establishing and maintaining trust between competitors in the coalition.** A key asset of the STP is its diverse membership base, yet this is also a challenge. Trust has grown within the coalition, primarily as a result of positive interactions/joint projects between competitors and thanks to the mediation of Solidaridad. However, managing diverse perspectives represents an ongoing mission for the STP and its facilitator. Solidaridad—or whichever organization takes over the facilitation role in the future—will be under constant pressure to prove its neutrality.
2. **Duplication.** Despite the increased coordination of sustainability within the coffee sector, duplication of efforts and initiatives is still seen in the field. Continuous STP involvement in improving knowledge- and information sharing is needed to avoid this. Likewise, 'double-counting' of the volume of sustainable production is a tangible risk. Many farms participating in the sustainability programs operate under two or even three sustainability standards, which may lead to

4. **Sufficient funding.** Strengthening the STP's economic resources so that its projects can have a wider impact has proven to be a challenge and will likely remain so in the future. Companies contribute to sustainability projects in the field, but there's no cash contribution at the level of platform management. Studies and platform management costs are paid for with donor funding. According to some STP members, funding is insufficient for all relevant projects to be implemented.
5. **Maintaining a results-oriented approach.** The majority of the platform's members are from the private sector and they are also its main beneficiaries. For this stakeholder group, delivery of concrete results and focus on achievements is key to making the platform relevant from a practical perspective and worth the invested time. The challenge for the platform is to avoid getting lost in political processes and conversations, and to maintain a hands-on, results-oriented approach in order to sustain the commitment and enthusiasm of the private sector.

Lessons learned

The STP has had to prove its value to Colombian coffee stakeholders. This proof has been in the successes of early projects (for example, the initiative to provide high-quality training materials to farmers), and the effects of bringing competitors together to work on common goals. Initial suspicions have been assuaged



but the future of this newfound trust is precariously balanced between the ability of the facilitator to remain neutral and the ability of the STP to meet its own stated objectives. The key lessons learned are as follows:

- 1. In facilitation terms, objectivity is key.** While there is disagreement about whether the facilitator should be of Colombian origin or an international organization, all parties agree that the facilitator's neutrality is crucial. Without the leadership of an organization such as Solidaridad (which, as the TS, facilitates the process), Colombia's STP is not likely to survive. As mentioned above, Solidaridad is considered to be the right party to lead the process: it is part of an international organization but is also locally registered (since 2013) as a Colombian organization, with Colombian employees facilitating the STP.
- 2. Trust is a recurring theme** when looking at the story of Colombia's STP. It has been vital that representatives of competing companies have been able to put their conflicts aside and work towards a single goal. For the Colombian STP to deliver the benefits it has pledged, it must be able to convince its members to rely on one another. To achieve this, all members have access to the same information and STP output. Additionally, in meetings or working groups, all participants have the same status. As a result, participants are assured that each member has an equal voice.
- 3. Money is not the only profit.** While financial support is important for the success of individual projects and of the STP as a whole, money is not the only value conferred. The technical skills and support that consultants from multiple organizations glean when collaborating on a joint initiative are equally valuable. Many STP stakeholders consider the volume of learning they experience to be a great benefit.
- 4. Time is the measure of success.** For Colombia's STP, time has been a key factor. Unifying historically competitive and powerful organizations does not happen overnight. Both time and effort were needed for trust to develop.
- 5. Multi-platform initiatives present unique problems.** The holistic nature of the STP is, in part, made possible by its multi-platform focus. However, this wide-ranging mandate has also presented extraordinary problems at the facilitator level, as overseeing multiple product categories simultaneously—each with their own dynamics—makes it challenging to keep simultaneous momentum in each category.

"We have very powerful people from very powerful organizations at the table and they need to know that they have an equal say."
(Country Manager, Solidaridad)

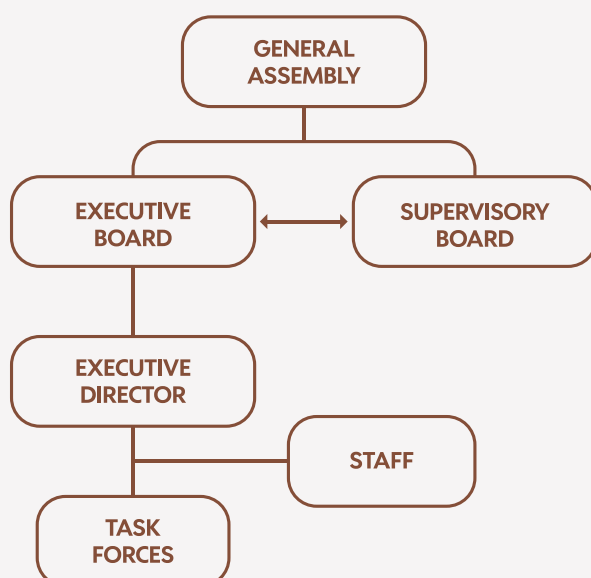
A man and a woman are standing on a large pile of coffee beans that are being dried in the sun. The woman, on the left, is wearing a white t-shirt, blue denim shorts, and a traditional woven conical hat. She is holding a long wooden tool, possibly a rake or a spreader, and is barefoot. The man, on the right, is wearing a red short-sleeved button-down shirt, dark trousers, and a black baseball cap with the word "MALUKA" on it. He is also barefoot. In the background, there are traditional Indonesian houses with tiled roofs and lush greenery. The word "INDONESIA" is written in large, white, bold letters across the middle of the image.

INDONESIA

SUSTAINABLE COFFEE PLATFORM OF INDONESIA (SCOPI)

- **Geographic location:** Jakarta, Indonesia
- **Inception:** 2015
- **Platform focus areas:** supporting and driving sustainability initiatives at farm level, developing and transferring technical expertise to farmers, advising on policy related to coffee production and sustainability
- **Chair:** GAEKI
- **Platform (National) Coordinator:** two people perform secretariat role: an Executive Director and a part-time assistant.
- **Meeting frequency:** The Executive Board meets quarterly, the Supervisory Board meets each semester or as needed, the Annual Members Meeting is held yearly, and the General Assembly Meeting is held once every three years

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE / ORGANIZATION CHART



SCOPI Members

Public sector: District Government of Ogan Komiring Ulu Selatan (OKUS)

Industry / trader / companies: Anomali Coffee, Sucafina, Nestlé Indonesia, Mayora, Javanero, Aneka Coffee Industry, Jacobs Douwe Egberts (JDE), Nedcoffee Indonesia Makmur Jaya, Indocafco, My Kopi O!, Taman Delta Indonesia, Re Mark Asia, Olam Coffee, PT. Asal Jaya

Farmer organizations: GKT Lampung Barat, Kop. Murbeng Puntang, Kop. Gayo Mandiri, Kel. Tani Hujan Mas, Kop. Mitra Malabar

Research institutes: Institute Pertanian Bogor (Dept. Agribisnis FEM IPB)

National NGOs and associations: GAEKI (a national coffee-exporter association), SCAI, World Wide Fund for Nature Indonesia (WWF Indonesia)

Donors/international NGOs: VECO Vredeseilanden Indonesia (VECO Indonesia), Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH), Hivos, SNV, Agriprofocus, Solidaridad, 4C Indonesia, HRNS, Rainforest Alliance, Fairtrade, UTZ

Executive Board: GAEKI, Anomali, Sucafina, Nestlé, SCAI, IDH, VECO, SNV, HIVOS, GKT Lampung Barat, Kop. Murbeng Puntang, Mayora, OKUS

Supervisory Board: Javanero, Sydney University, Lampung University, ICCRI (Puslit Koka) coffee-sector members of the STP.



Indonesia: historic coffee production

Indonesian coffee production dates from the late 17th century, when the Dutch governor of Malabar sent an Arabica seedling to his counterpart in Jakarta. In 1711, Javanese coffee exports were shipped to Europe by the Dutch East India Company.

Today, Indonesia's modern coffee sector is split between the production of two types of beans—Arabica and Robusta. The unique nature of the terrain, an archipelago of multiple islands, has created a diverse and fragmented coffee-production environment. As many as two million smallholders grow coffee beans in the archipelago, often in remote locations.

Sustainability challenges for the Indonesian coffee sector include: the lack of effective organization of farmers; limited access to technology; limited awareness of good agricultural practices, good manufacturing practices, and post-harvest handling; and limited access to finance and agri-inputs. These challenges threaten the continued existence of Indonesian coffee production. Specifically, data shows that the region will suffer a shortage of coffee beans by 2023. As one member (Anomali Coffee) explained, this reason is pressing enough to call for the creation of a sustainability platform. Inspired by the success of the Cocoa Sustainability Partnership (CSP), a model that closely relates to the coffee sector, organization of a

sustainability platform began in earnest in 2014.

Prior to the foundation of the Sustainable Coffee Platform of Indonesia (SCOPI), several attempts were made to establish a similar initiative. The main hurdle to progress was the difficulty stakeholders had deciding who should take the lead in facilitating the platform. In 2015, SCOPI was formed under the facilitation of the Sustainable Trade Initiative's (IDH) Senior Program Manager in Indonesia, who was also heavily involved in the CSP. Although a sustainability initiative called PISagro (working on sustainability in several agri-commodities) already existed, SCOPI became the first organization to successfully and specifically focus on sustainability in Indonesian coffee production, and to include all stakeholders in the coffee chain.

The objective is to establish strong local ownership of SCOPI to a point at which the platform can be less dependent on donor investment. However, the platform is young and will need to mature.

"In the long term, we at IDH would like to see SCOPI really become a stronger platform, owned by the national people, national stakeholders, Indonesian people. To make this happen, the right person to facilitate is not IDH." (National Coordinator, IDH)

SCOPI: the power of active involvement

SCOPI is a membership-based platform focused on sustainability development in Indonesia. It engages all Indonesian coffee stakeholders around collective learning and action. The objectives of SCOPI are mostly focused on sustainability issues in a broad sense: improving farmer livelihoods, creating greater economic opportunities for farmers, food security, and environmental sustainability. The principles of SCOPI are that it is inclusive, participatory, democratic, neutral, and pre-competitive—addressing challenges in the supply chain that benefit all its stakeholders.

SCOPI functions as an independent association, with two employees managing the secretariat. The Executive Board of SCOPI consists of thirteen members and meets four times per year. The Executive Board determines the activities of SCOPI, which are then executed by the SCOPI secretariat.

Key to SCOPI's early success is its active organization. Every new member is asked to clarify why they want to join SCOPI, what they think their contribution can be, and show that their company is really working on—or has some idea of—the principles of sustainability. Members are required to contribute financially—IDR 5,000,000 (approximately USD 400) per year—and all are required to join a minimum of one task force.

There are currently six task forces in the platform working on different sustainability issues. These are: banned pesticides, transfer technology, access to finance, access to agri-inputs, effective organization of farmers, and sustainability standards and geographic indication. The task forces ensure SCOPI is actively involved in sustainability management: for example, in the development and rollout of the National Sustainability Curriculum (NSC). It also encourages private-sector members to join:

“This is what interests me most. Because with the task force, it becomes a vehicle for us to make the vision happen and explains the primary value of SCOPI, I think.” (Founder/Director, Anomali Coffee)

SCOPI works at both farm and policy levels. It has a clear link with the government. Its NSC, for example,

is being implemented by multiple Indonesian governments, private sectors, NGOs, and other stakeholders.

The secretariat and the IDH Senior Program Manager in Indonesia have facilitated the establishment of SCOPI and are still heavily involved in providing support and direction. However, it is clear from the governance of the platform that SCOPI is an independent organization and not donor led. This, as the National Coordinator points out, is a strength that must be emphasized: “So while IDH was the one to initiate and receive the mandate from stakeholders to facilitate its development until now, we need to stay away from a top-down instruction from the donor to SCOPI.”

In the minds of stakeholders, this evolution is already beginning. The representative of Anomali Coffee, for example, feels “we are agreeing on this sustainability issue, and it is becoming our own issue.” Funding, however, is still a challenge. As the Vredeseilanden Country Office (VECO) Indonesia Regional Representative noted, if SCOPI did not have IDH funding it, it would not be there.

Achievements

SCOPI is young, but the organization has already made significant progress. While the active construction of the platform has caused some members to drop out, unwilling to commit to the demands of a task force or to pay fees, its inaugural year has been marked by successes:

1. Unification and government endorsement.

SCOPI is a big, ambitious project, and it has been created in just one year. Members are optimistic about the future. As the VECO Indonesia Representative says, “There is so much work needed in getting people together, [coming up] with bylaws, [securing] the initial team. So, just the fact that SCOPI has already survived a year is a great achievement.” And as the National Coordinator stated, “To have multiple stakeholders come together in a single sustainability platform and to have the platform endorsed by the government is really very successful.”

2. Developing and rolling out the NSC. The curriculum was launched in cooperation with the

government and this partnership will continue for NSC implementation at district and province levels. The training materials contained in the NSC are available in video, book, or audio formats to ensure a broader outreach and some are still under development. Four provincial governments (South Sumatra, Lampung, East Java, and West Java) are involved in the rollout.

3. **Creating the task forces.** The energy and commitment of the Indonesian sustainability platform is immediately evident in its task forces, and members have responded to the tangible effects created. "You have enough platforms where people just talk and hardly achieve anything, so it is very refreshing to see an organization that is committed to activities and results and providing services to its members," says VECO Indonesia's Regional Representative.
4. **Achieving visibility.** SCOPI has attended a trade expo, a coffee auction, and a specialty coffee promotion at SCAA Atlanta as well as World Expo 2015 in Milan. The organization has enhanced its 'external' visibility with a coherent program of social-media involvement. The effect: a genuine presence in the international coffee landscape, which will be valuable as SCOPI matures.

Challenges

SCOPI's early successes have brought their own breed of challenges. As an organization with an immediate impact on Indonesia's coffee sector, SCOPI is now facing the test of growth:

1. **Remaining focused on agreed objectives.** During SCOPI's short existence, it has been asked to become involved with events and initiatives that are not part of its original plans. For instance, the Indonesian government invited SCOPI to organize a sustainability workshop for World Expo 2015 in Milan, to lead an auction event at SCAA Atlanta, and to lead coffee activities at Trade Expo Indonesia. In many cases, these extracurricular activities are important for SCOPI as they provide opportunities to introduce sustainability at expo events and showcase SCOPI as the leading sustainability platform for coffee in Indonesia. However, they have an impact on the organization's daily operations. Further to this, SCOPI has yet to clearly define its objectives and target areas in a way that will allow it to be held accountable. This requires communication within the organization and a standardization of communication between SCOPI and third parties (for example, the government). Or, as the representative of Anomali Coffee expressed it: "We need to develop a scope for SCOPI." There is also a need to manage the politics of the coffee sector, expressing a recurrent concern that the focus of SCOPI must remain unaffected by external agendas.
2. **Growing organizational capacity.** SCOPI's daily management is in the hands of the Executive Director and one assistant, which are not many human resources for the amount of work that needs to be done. Moving forward, it's vital that SCOPI attracts new staff, so it can grow with its own success. More-robust staffing will also safeguard against future staff and knowledge losses. It's also important to retain the enthusiasm of existing members, without whom the organization ceases to exist, as members comprise the task forces that fuel SCOPI.
3. **Additional funding.** SCOPI is challenged with finding sufficient funds to run itself until 2020. A potential solution for this lies in widening the membership of SCOPI, says Anomali Coffee's Founder/Director. Wider membership would also increase the size of the events and the revenues they generate.
4. **Continuing to impart knowledge at farmer level.** The NSC must be translated into media such as video and audio. This has already happened to a certain extent, however, some online learning tools are still under development, as mentioned. External expertise beyond the technical knowledge imparted by SCOPI members may be required for this. According to the Founder/Director of Anomali Coffee, "We need to collaborate with creative people on how to deliver this to the farmers."
5. **The geography of the region presents its own logistical challenges.** The very mountains whose microclimates encourage the beans to grow are obstacles to unifying the sector. There is a real risk that SCOPI won't be able to reach all farmers. CSP is now organizing sub-platforms in a decentralized



way that would enable true local stakeholder participation. VECO Indonesia has suggested that SCOPI look into a similar approach in order to ensure it can be inclusive and impactful on the level of the farmers.

Lessons learned

SCOPI's rapid growth has taught key lessons regarding sustainability management in Indonesia. Its successes offer important information about the power of on-the-ground projects. Its challenges explain the tests faced by an organization that grows at a faster pace than its own plans had foreseen.

1. **A neutral organization is needed.** "Stakeholders are looking for a neutral organization to lead [their] development," says the National Coordinator. Key to SCOPI so far has been the neutral role of IDH in coordinating the platform. The neutrality of this organization allows members to trust that SCOPI is convened for their mutual benefit, rather than for the benefit of individual players.
2. **The added value of collaboration must be clearly communicated.** If potential member organizations cannot be made to see the benefits of joining SCOPI, they will not join. Clarity of vision and practicality of purpose are highly prized by the stakeholders. Anomali Coffee's Founder/Director puts the communication question in a nutshell: "Coffee needs to be more sustainable. Yes, I agree, but why should I join?" The answer can be found in the practical nature of the task forces, which work on concrete, tangible sustainability challenges.

Each of SCOPI's members is required to join a task force, but is free to choose which one is most aligned with their own organization's focus areas.

3. **From a convener's standpoint, listening is vital.** The National Coordinator explains that SCOPI has been born out of listening to local initiatives, explaining expectations, and trying to "cook these into a common agreement, a common benefit."
4. **A slow approach is best.** Indonesia's fragmented and historic coffee-growing sector needs time to adjust to big changes or to ideas that may fundamentally restructure the ways in which it does business. The National Coordinator references the introduction of the Global Coffee Platform, which requires bilateral meetings to form opinions and common understanding prior to inclusion in a full SCOPI meeting. All stakeholders must feel personally informed.
5. **Convening is key.** The VECO Indonesia Regional Representative says "you need committed people, independent people who can really take this on and carry it through." The convener in Indonesia must be seen as someone independent (from outside the industry) and farmer oriented. However, the role of the Executive Director is also important as she brings expertise in business practice, technical skills, and an understanding and knowledge of the national coffee landscape. Together, the NC and Executive Director have proved to be a very good combination. VECO Indonesia's Regional Representative: "I think that is the type of combination you are looking for, independent and technical, with knowledge of the sector and the commodity, and a good network."

A group of approximately 15 women are sitting on a large, rectangular, woven straw mat on the ground in front of a building. The building has walls made of reddish-brown bricks and a corrugated metal roof. The women are dressed in traditional African clothing, including colorful patterned dresses and shawls. Some are wearing headwraps. They are all looking towards the camera. The background shows lush green trees and a clear sky. The word "TANZANIA" is superimposed in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the middle of the image.

TANZANIA



THE NATIONAL COFFEE STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE (NCSC) AND THE NATIONAL COFFEE CONFERENCE

- **Geographic location:** Tanzania (based in Moshi)
- **Inception:** 2009
- **Platform focus areas:** improving communication between private and public sectors, supporting the implementation of the national strategy, organizing the annual National Coffee Conference (NCC)
- **Chair:** TCB
- **Platform (National) Coordinator:** TCA until 2015: former TCA staff now perform the function
- **Meeting frequency:** NCSC meets every month. The NCC is organized on a yearly basis

NCSC Members

Public sector: Tanzania Coffee Board (TCB), Moshi Rural District Council, TCDF, TaCRI

Private sector institutions: Tanzania Coffee Association (TCA)

Private companies: Louis Dreyfus Ltd., Mambo Coffee Ltd., Rafiki Coffee Ltd., Katagwe Estates Ltd., Mbozi Coffee Curing Company, Mbinga Coffee Curing Company

Producer Cooperatives: G32, KNCU, KCU, Kilicafe

NGOs: DEG, Solidaridad, Café Africa

Other institutions: Kilimanjaro Regional Agricultural Advisor, Tanzania Association of Women in Coffee (TAWOCA).

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE / ORGANIZATION CHART





Tanzania: coffee organization from the ground up

The recent history of coffee production and marketing in Tanzania began in the early 1990s, when the previously government-controlled sector was privatized and the Tanzania Coffee Board (formerly Coffee Authority of Tanzania) was given a mandate to regulate the sector. The TCB regulated and provided a leading role for the Tanzanian coffee sector on a national level for almost 20 years.

In 2009, under the leadership of the TCB, Zonal Stakeholder Committees (ZSCs) were established. The Tanzania Coffee Board led the initiative on the ground, performing stakeholder analysis for each of the eight Tanzanian coffee-production zones. This identified challenges faced within the individual zones—challenges that would be discussed and addressed by the ZSCs for the relevant areas.

That same year, Tanzania's first National Coffee Conference (NCC) was organized to examine these zonal challenges and opportunities and to reach a national consensus as to how they could be addressed. As a result of this conference, a ten year coffee development strategy was prepared, and the National Coffee Stakeholder Committee (NCSC) was born. It grew out of an existing coalition, the Task Force Committee (a conglomeration of players including members of the TCB, the Tanzania Coffee Association [TCA] representing the private-sector organizations, and some NGOs), which was responsible for

organizing the conference. The NCSC was established in response to resolutions made at this conference.

In 2009, the coffee sector introduced a change in the Coffee Industry Act. The regulatory amendment allowed stakeholders in the coffee sector to include 'shared functions' in the coffee-production process: the public and private sectors could now take joint ownership of some processes in the development of the sector. These shared functions are: seedling production and distribution, smallholder financing, research, the provision of extension services, input supply, marketing, and promotion.

Tanzania's NCSC: shared functions on two levels

The coffee sector in Tanzania is organized on two levels: national and zonal. At the national level, the NCSC meets on a monthly basis, and includes representatives of Tanzania's entire coffee value chain. At the zonal level, ZSCs meet regularly to discuss regional issues, which are then brought to the attention of the NCSC.

While the NCSC organizes the 'shared functions' (issues for which both government and private sector have responsibility) of the Tanzanian coffee sector, it is not empowered to discuss purely commercial issues, such as taxation and licensing, with the government. Dialogue of that nature occurs between the TCA and the Government of Tanzania.

TANZANIA

The TCB chairs the NCSC. The TCA provided the secretariat to the NCSC until 2015, at which point the NCSC recruited an individual to fulfill the secretariat function. The NCSC is a voluntary committee and elections for its representatives are organized by the NCC.

There is no decision-making authority within the NCSC. Decisions are only made with the wider coffee community at the NCC, held on a yearly basis.

The NCC is a forum for coffee-stakeholder representatives to meet and decide upon proposals submitted by the NCSC. One of the main functions of the NCSC is, therefore, organizing the NCC. Its other primary tasks are to facilitate and implement the resolutions reached at the NCC, to report their progress at the next NCC, and to address issues raised at the zonal level. So while the NCSC is a forum devoted to promoting sustainability in the Tanzanian coffee sector, it also functions as a kind of secretariat to the NCC and a coordinator of ZSC issues, ensuring they are heard at the national meeting.

The connection between the zonal and national levels is considered a crucial part of the Tanzanian dynamic. Café Africa plays an important role in maintaining the link between zonal and national discussions. It supports communication, bringing field-level issues to the national level and helping relay national-level responses back to the production zones.

Currently, the NCSC is working on a Terms of Reference document (ToR), in which its structure and governance will be more clearly outlined. A rotation system is proposed enabling the private sector to provide a leadership role for the NCSC, which would enhance private-sector commitment to the joint stakeholder processes.

Achievements

The Tanzanian NCSC has so far achieved several successes, at field and national levels. These are ideally the foundations for future expansion of the NCSC's remit, and for national uptake of the Tanzanian National Sustainability Curriculum (NSC):

1. **Establishing the ZSCs.** Bringing the Tanzanian coffee discussion into the field has strengthened

the entire sector. The ZSCs, and their excellent participation in national decision making, are a welcome and effective use of new opportunities.

2. **Developing the national strategy.** In 2011, the NCSC/NCC (and by extension the ZSCs) collaborated successfully to develop the Tanzania Coffee Industry Development Strategy 2011/2021. This strategic sector plan is vital to the future development of sustainable coffee production in Tanzania. All stakeholders have collectively developed a document that will create benefit from field level up, and which defines four strategic priorities that will contribute to an increased production target of 100,000 metric tons by 2021:

1. **Increase coffee productivity and overall production**
2. **Improve efficiency of the coffee value chain**
3. **Support overall coffee-quality improvement**
4. **Explore new market opportunities including the development of sustainable coffees**

3. **Developing the NSC.** The needs of Tanzania's eight separate coffee-producing zones were effectively communicated by the NCSC and incorporated into the extension manual document, making it possible to meet the challenge of realizing a curriculum that can be fully accepted and embedded in the sector as whole. The NSC has been approved by the NCC and is now ready for implementation within the Tanzanian sector.

4. **Organizing the NCC.** The National Coffee Conference is a vital platform, from which all decisions affecting the sector originate. Its annual organization is therefore key to the success of the Tanzanian coffee sector, at both national and zonal levels.

Challenges

Tanzania's area and the geographical spread of coffee production around its periphery have created notable challenges for the sector. Creating a cohesive response to a sector comprised of fifty-one coffee-producing districts and involving at least 450,000 smallholder

farmers in different agro-ecological zones requires a very high level of investment, which the coffee sector has not yet managed to secure.

1. **Member engagement.** Many private-sector players have moved their operations to Dar es Salaam, whereas NCSC meetings are organized in Moshi. Therefore, private-sector representatives in the NCSC may no longer be senior management: instead, they are junior representatives whose ability to represent fully in dialogue is questionable.

As the NSCS is a voluntary platform, it can be challenging to achieve good attendance at each meeting. In general, it helps to have clear, direct issues on the agenda to increase the participation rate. The development of the ToR document may also generate more engagement, as it aims to define the NCSC's work and divide its tasks.

2. **Mandating change.** The NCSC is responsible for developing strategy and plays a role in its implementation, but it does not have the authority to monitor the implementation of the strategy directly. The NSC, for example, has been a core achievement for the NCSC. But the platform only has the mandate to coordinate the curriculum's rollout. The NCSC cannot ensure that the sector is adopting it. This may prove to be a limitation to achieving future change in the sector.
3. **Communicating across levels.** To be effective agents of change, national resolutions must be accepted at the zonal level. "If you make a decision that is not acceptable at zonal levels, that decision will never be implemented," says DEG's Senior Advisor. Although formal decision-making lies with the NCC, in preparation of this yearly meeting, the NCSC should regularly consult ZSCs. Communication and consultation are vital, and to provide these credibly, the NCSC must be seen as unbiased. A neutral coordinating role is therefore a key element in the process.

Lessons learned

The experience of organizing the Tanzanian coffee sector has imparted valuable lessons about geography, size, coordination, and communication. These lessons have been learned primarily in the process of reaching consensus on challenging issues between the national and zonal levels in Tanzania, and through ongoing efforts to create a platform that can implement as well as design resources and curricula.

1. **The overarching lesson is that for a country the size of Tanzania, it is vital to organize the sector platform on both national and zonal levels.** To ensure that resolutions are not only made effectively at the national level but are also supported at regional levels, the latter need to be organized. Without regional organization, local stakeholders are left with the feeling that their views are not accounted for, and disenfranchised zonal stakeholders can create an environment in which national decisions are unlikely to be implemented on the ground. Working at both levels further ensures the take-up of zonal-level knowledge and experiences at the national level, as, for example, with the development of the NSC.
2. **Funding is not the only value.** It has been important to recognize that stakeholders in the Tanzanian platform derive value from sources other than money. The opportunity for dialogue and to collaborate on coffee-related issues confers real advantages on member organizations. And the connection the NCSC facilitates—to the wider context of Tanzanian governance—provides the ability to structure coffee policy within the framework of the Tanzanian agriculture sector as a whole.
3. **United is better than divided.** Farmers cannot fight for change in isolation, but when their concerns are represented in a multi-stakeholder organization working at national level, the government is more likely to listen. The NCSC's structure has presented some challenges, but it has also given farmers strength and a voice. The NCSC is able to bring all initiatives together in a sector-wide intervention, rather than having them co-exist without useful collaboration.





UGANDA

UGANDA COFFEE PLATFORM

- **Geographic location:** Uganda, based in Kampala
- **Inception:** 2007
- **Platform focus areas:** supporting and driving sustainability initiatives at farm level, developing and transferring technical expertise to farmers, advising on policy related to coffee production and sustainability
- **Chair:** UCDA
- **Platform (National) Coordinator:** Café Africa Uganda
- **Meeting frequency:** monthly meetings of National Steering Committee (NSC) and Annual Stakeholder Meeting

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE / ORGANIZATION CHART

Ministry of Agriculture,
Animal Industry & Fisheries

Uganda Coffee Development Authority

National Coffee
Platform

National Steering
Committee

National Coffee
Platform

District Steering
Committee

Uganda Coffee Platform Members

Public sector: Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA); Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry, and Fisheries (MAAIF); National Coffee Research Institute (NaCORI); National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS)

Private sector: Uganda Coffee Farmers Alliance (UCFA), NuCAFE, Uganda Coffee Federation (UCF), Uganda National Agro-input Dealers Association (UNADA)

NGOs: International Women's Coffee Alliance Uganda Chapter (IWCA), Hans R. Neumann Stiftung, USAID—Enabling Environments (EEA), USAID—Commodity Production and Marketing (CPM), Café Africa Uganda

Donors: USAID (on behalf of Agricultural Development Partner Group), aBi Trust

Uganda: a liberalized coffee sector

The Ugandan coffee sector was liberalized in 1991, when the 1969 Coffee Marketing Act (which granted a monopoly on coffee export to the Coffee Marketing Board) was repealed. Within a month of liberalization, the ranks of Ugandan coffee exporters swelled from one to more than one hundred. Ten years later, roughly 200 licenses had been granted to exporters.

With liberalization, however, the cooperative structures that supplied services to the farmers broke down. The sector became fragmented and a complex and often shaky infrastructure replaced it. The private sector took a funding and organizational role in some areas, and an act of Parliament saw the Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA) established as a public authority in 1991. Its mandate was to promote and oversee the coffee industry in order to optimize foreign-exchange earnings for the country, and payments to the farmers. Activities included supporting research and promoting production, controlling the quality of coffee, and improving marketing.

In 2006, UCDA and Café Africa Uganda (an NGO supporting multi-stakeholder processes in African coffee sectors) jointly organized several working groups with coffee stakeholders. This resulted in the development of the Uganda Coffee Production Campaign 2006-2015, the aim of which was to increase coffee exports to 4.5 million bags by 2015.

In 2007, the Uganda Coffee Platform (UCP) was established as a result of coffee-stakeholder meetings. A National Steering Committee (NSC) was also set up to coordinate the Uganda Coffee Production Campaign. At first, organization took place at the national level. However, the formation of District Steering Committees (DSCs) to coordinate coffee-specific activities at the district level began soon after: forty-five DSCs (from ninety coffee-growing districts) were established. Today, there is still a great need to support the existing DSCs in developing their capabilities and another forty-five DSCs have yet to be established.

By 2014, the Uganda Coffee Production Campaign was drawing to a close. It was to be replaced by the newly developed National Coffee Policy and Strategy (NCPaS), with a remit that extended beyond

production. At this point, USAID commissioned an independent consultant to evaluate the organization and activities of the UCP (comprising the NSC, the DSCs, and the Annual Stakeholder Meeting (ASM)). The resulting recommendations included, among others: facilitation of greater public/private sector collaboration to reach a larger number of farmers with advice and demonstrations on good agricultural practices; the improvement of linkage between the NSC and established DSCs; encouragement to support and attend annual district coffee shows; a recommendation to conduct regional exchanges to explore regionally specific issues and information needs; and a need to consider where the UCP can offer a broader 'added value' to the sub-sector versus the initial focus on a specific work plan.

A meeting held in October 2014 to review the recommendations concluded that there was a continued need for the UCP to maintain its structure and, indeed, broaden its focus beyond production. "It was felt that the platform was needed just as much, if not more, to ensure coordination with the forthcoming National Coffee Policy and Strategy," says the Café Africa Country Director. Subsequently, Uganda's National Coffee Strategy 2040 Plan for 2016/17–2020/21 was approved by the government of Uganda (GoU) in June 2015 to implement the Uganda Coffee Policy, which was initially drafted in 2013.

Membership of the UCP is voluntary, and members are primarily sector-member associations representing a specific group of stakeholders. For example, the Uganda Coffee Federation (UCF) represents exporters, traders, and other private-sector partners in its membership. While the Uganda National Agro-input Dealers Association (UNADA) represents agro-input dealers. The UCDA chairs the UCP. Café Africa Uganda, as the secretariat, is responsible for provision of administrative and technical support to the UCP's National Steering Committee (NSC).

Through the years, the role and position of the NSC has been reformulated several times, but its mandate to organize the ASM has not changed. These meetings are well received by farmers and play an important role in unifying the Ugandan coffee sector. The monthly NSC meetings are better suited to discussions on content and strategy. Currently, the involvement of UCDA as chair and Café Africa Uganda as secretariat is considered vital. It will take some work before the UCP is able to function independently and attract more-

focused private-sector engagement and involvement.

The UCP: a two-tier approach

The UCP is one of the oldest coffee platforms discussed in this booklet. It brings stakeholders together on a pre-competitive basis to discuss the shared challenges facing the coffee sector, and identifies strategies and initiatives to increase coffee production in a sustainable manner. Since 2015, the UCP's focus has been aligned with Uganda's National Coffee Strategy 2040 Plan for 2016/17–2020/21, as noted above.

The UCP is organized on two levels: the NSC, which meets on a monthly basis in Kampala, and the DSCs, which meet whenever necessary and possible (depending on availability of funding). NSC activities are focused at the level of government, advocating best practices and harmonizing information dissemination. The activities of the DSCs take place at the district level, which encompasses several subsections: smaller counties, parishes, and villages. At this level, more emphasis is placed on impact in the field—for example by coordinating coffee-specific agricultural extension support to farmers. This is primarily done through the dissemination of a set of harmonized coffee-extension materials, which are sent to district GoU staff and private-sector stakeholders working directly with farmers or involved in agronomist training.

The secretariat to the UCP, Café Africa Uganda, plays an important role in keeping the districts aligned with the NSC. As an independent NGO, Café Africa Uganda is able to synchronize various project activities with existing structures. Projects include: training youth in good agricultural practices, offering capacity-building support to the DSCs in sustainable coffee production, engaging youth and women, and adapting to climate change. Café Africa Uganda also maintains strong links at the district level through coordination of the UCP's annual district coffee shows. The Ugandan coffee sector is very proud of these shows, the organization of which is a primary role of the DSCs. Each show provides an excellent networking opportunity for all stakeholders in the coffee sector, particularly the farmers. Without the shows, farmers have limited or no access to coffee-specific extension knowledge and practices.

The UCP is very much a Ugandan initiative that still

heavily relies on donor funding. Resources come from the UCDA and international donors, such as USAID, aBi Trust (a local multi-donor entity aimed at developing agribusiness), and IDH. A portion of the funding is channeled through Café Africa Uganda. To be able to function autonomously through donor involvement, steps must be taken towards financial independence.

Achievements

The UCP has had more time than most platforms to show success. Despite a lack of funding or clear definition of membership criteria, it has also created an environment in which Ugandan coffee production is healthier and better organized than it previously was. Its successes are mainly organizational. Given the relatively slow pace of change uptake in Uganda, the UCP has laid the groundwork for future action:

1. The organization of annual coffee shows.

Ugandan districts display great pride in their coffee shows, with good reason: these shows are a fertile training ground for farmers who may be isolated in villages or small parishes for the remainder of the year. At the shows, harmonized coffee-extension materials created by the UCP are introduced to farmers through demonstration plots. Trained agronomists are available to share coffee-specific knowledge. The shows therefore play an important role not just in dissemination of training materials but also in practical illustrations. Likewise, farmers have the opportunity to connect with central and local governments, nursery operators, agro-input dealers, and many other coffee stakeholders.

2. The Annual Stakeholders Meeting.

Seen by many as a key success and an important networking resource, this meeting brings together a broad set of stakeholders, including district-level representatives. It allows the UCP to report on activities that have taken place during the year and gives the government an opportunity to present formal coffee-sector updates. It also plays an important role in disseminating vital training materials. The perceived quality of the meetings is good and seen to be continuously improving.

3. Better quality training materials.

The UCP has been instrumental in harmonizing coffee-specific extension knowledge and training, which

is mentioned as one of the platform's greatest achievements. Materials were disseminated in early 2015 through the UCP member associations: in particular, farmer representative organizations and UCDA regional offices across the country. Materials were also distributed at the last Annual Stakeholders Meeting. Subsequently, six districts have participated in a district coffee-extension pilot, which tested agronomist- and coffee-community-based facilitator training modeled on extension materials. A formal evaluation of these trainings will inform further dialogue between the UCDA and Ministry of Agriculture on whether to apply these training models across all coffee-growing districts in Uganda.

4. **Achieving a unified voice.** By drawing together key players in the coffee sector, the UCP has given the industry a unified voice. Successful lobbying has influenced the NCPaS, and the creation of harmonized extension knowledge for farmers. The UCP has also directly contributed to GoU development of the country's National Coffee Policy 2013 and the National Coffee Strategy 2040 Plan for 2016/17–2020/21.
5. **Establishing a reputation.** Thanks to the activities of the UCP, coffee is considered to be the sector with the strongest governance and organization in Uganda. Coffee serves as an example against which other sectors are often benchmarked: "It is one of the most reputable ... in Uganda. Many government and enterprise representatives frequently refer to the coffee platform," says the UCF's Executive Director.

Challenges

Uganda has a challenging environment for truly organized coffee production. Sustainability management and overall sector management are hampered by a lack of funding and a complex country context in which change happens slowly:

1. **Creating real accountability.** As a voluntary organization, accountability is not yet built into the architecture of the UCP. Its voluntary nature diminishes the ability to create a sense of loyalty among members. Consequently, it is challenging to organize adequately-attended working

groups and create follow-up activities. In order to somewhat formalize roles and responsibilities, revised terms of reference and member-reporting areas were developed in 2015. However, there is still a need for flexibility so that the UCP can adapt and grow in response to the changing environment in Uganda.

2. **Reaching the farmers.** Within each of the ninety-one UCDA-defined coffee-growing districts, there is an average of ten sub-counties per district containing up to ten parishes per sub-county. Each parish incorporates ten villages. With currently only about three extension workers per district, Uganda's extension services cannot begin to reach all of Uganda's farmers. The Ministry of Agriculture is now recruiting with the aim of placing two extension workers per sub-county, plus an additional district-level employee. However, funding remains an issue. Insufficient money is available at the government level to support all activities, so donor and NGO support is still required to make a real impact. Farmer receptiveness is also a problem for outreach. There is no guarantee the farmers will implement the methods recommended in training materials and, as the Executive Director of UCF points out, "you cannot push them." Consequently, there is a need for sustained, long-term strategic support for coffee farmers in Uganda.
3. **Securing sufficient funding.** Available funding is insufficient across the board, not just in agriculture. Concern about this lack of funds is raised repeatedly in the UCP. The ambition to secure proper funding exists: the NCPaS includes the intent to set up a collaborative coffee fund relying on government and private sector input. However, no agreement has been reached on funding mechanisms, nor on the governance of such a fund.
4. **Limited action.** Ugandan sector associations are not as dynamic as they should be in order to drive change within the coffee sector. There is a role for the UCP and Café Africa Uganda in building the high-level commitment and capacity of sector associations, where hard-working people are often restricted by the bureaucratic structures in which they work. The problem, as the Café Africa Country Director puts it, is one of pace: "'Mpola mpola' as we say here, which means 'slowly, slowly', is a

commonly used frame of reference.” To generate action, the Uganda Coffee Platform must first move away from the traditional ‘mpola mpola’ approach and challenge bureaucracy, stimulate dynamic communication, and make people believe that things can change.

5. **Low NSC meeting attendance.** The offices of the Ministry of Agriculture are in Entebbe, while NSC meetings take place in Kampala. Although this distance is only about 40 kilometers, traffic in Uganda can mean hours of travel time. This represents an inconvenience that partly accounts for low attendance. Funding is also an issue. With no funds to draw upon and a need to devote attention to its own operations, a member organization may have insufficient time to allocate to the platform. Of the members who do attend, it is not uncommon to find changes in personnel—different people attending meetings on behalf of a member organization, without proper handover. As a result, the meetings suffer from knowledge drain, and limited or less valuable contributions are made to the dialogue. “We have to accept that we will never realize as much as we are supposed to or as we say we will at the beginning of the year,” says a USAID Senior Agriculture Advisor.

Lessons learned

Uganda’s tiered platform, long history of coffee-sector organization, and slow approach to action have created many lessons. The achievements of the coffee shows and the ASM also carry within them the seeds of the sector’s problems. On the one hand, it is admirable that a country with little staff for so many districts and parishes has organized to the extent that Uganda has. On the other, the difficulty of facilitating action at field level, or maintaining member enthusiasm, speaks to the issues inherent in creating a voluntary organization with scarce funding.

1. **An independent NGO as secretariat is helpful.** Change is hard to direct, particularly when it is so deeply rooted in culture and context. It helps to have an independent and impartial organization leading change efforts. Such an organization can focus on structures, procedures, and mechanisms without having to push a particular agenda.
2. **The UCP has succeeded as a result of strong individuals in key positions.** According to the USAID Senior Agriculture Advisor, the strong chair and secretariat of the UCP have been key factors in its success—they are what differentiate the UCP from other commodity platforms in the country. These are “Dynamic people, who are not afraid to push boundaries, and encourage transparency and good governance,” says Café Africa Uganda’s Country Director. The combination of having the chair from the UCDA and the vice-chair from the UCF is also an asset, maintaining both public and private sector in key positions. In addition, the UCF Executive Director points out that the UCDA’s publication of information is vital for the private sector.
3. **Unity brings success.** It also brings about change with greater speed. For the UCF, the role the UCP has played in exchanging ideas and lobbying over key coffee issues is a revelation. “If you push something as a group, it works much faster than doing it individually,” says the UCF Executive Director.
4. **Strong governance and a clear process are crucial.** Having clear terms of reference gives the UCP more credibility. By defining roles and responsibilities more clearly, the UCP’s terms of reference also create a structure to fall back on should there be disagreement about agenda and purpose.
5. **Without the UCP, there can be no change.** The importance of the UCP cannot be underestimated as a tool for sector change. Its role in advocating for policy and practice improvements, and lobbying for sub-sector investment, is crucial. Without the UCP, it is unlikely that Uganda’s coffee sector will be transformed into a dynamic global player.

A photograph of a middle-aged man with grey hair, smiling, wearing a dark blue raincoat. He is standing next to a coffee plant with green leaves and small white flowers. In the background, there is a forested hill under a clear sky. The word "VIETNAM" is written in large, white, bold letters across the center of the image.

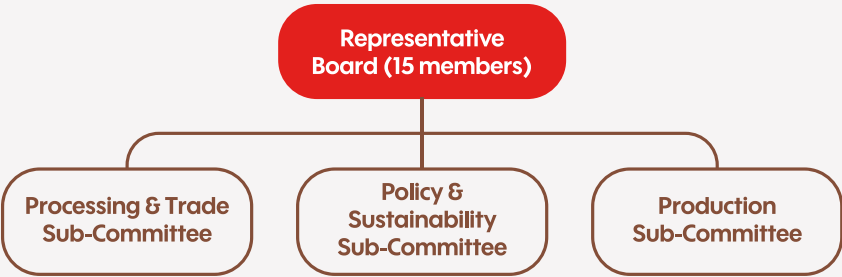
VIETNAM



THE VIETNAM COFFEE COORDINATION BOARD (VCCB)

- **Geographic location:** Vietnam (Hanoi)
- **Inception:** 2013
- **Platform focus areas:** influencing policy, advising the ministries, providing and sharing information, increasing dialogue and communication within the sector, representing Vietnam in the international coffee sector
- **Chair:** Vice-Minister of MARD
- **Platform (National) Coordinator:** IDH
- **Secretariat:** IPSARD and DCP
- **Meeting frequency:** VCCB meets biannually, its sub-committees meet quarterly or prior to the general biannual VCCB meeting. The VCCB meets the larger group of stakeholders annually at a Coffee Forum/Outlook.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE / ORGANIZATION CHART



VCCB Members¹

Public sector: Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development (MARD) including MARD Vice Minister, Department of Crops Production (DCP), Department of Processing and Trade for Agro-Forestry-Fisheries Products and Salt Production, Department of Planning, International Cooperation Department, Lam Dong People's Committee, Dak Lak People's Committee

Strategy institutions: Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agricultural Development (IPSARD)

Private sector: Vietnam Coffee and Cocoa Association (VICOFA), Atlantic Commodities Vietnam Ltd (ACOM), Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH), Intimex, Thang Loi

Farmers: Lam Dong Farmer Representative, Dak Lak Farmer Representative

1. These are only the members of the Vietnam Coffee Coordination Board. The sub-committees have a wider membership.

Vietnam's diverse representation

The Vietnamese coffee sector is distinguished by two things. First, although Vietnam progressed rapidly towards establishing a framework for public/private partnerships, it is still constrained by structural issues. The legal framework does not yet allow the establishment of an independent public/private inter-ministerial body. Such a body is needed to address sector issues that are the shared responsibility of multiple ministries. Secondly, the regulatory landscape of the Vietnamese sector still differentiates between domestic (i.e. Vietnamese) and foreign enterprises. Foreign organizations are not yet allowed to conduct certain activities within the coffee sector, for instance, buying coffee directly from farmers.

Historically, coffee production in Vietnam has been managed by the public sector. Domestic enterprise associations existed but were closely linked to the government and excluded foreign enterprises, so they were not representative of the coffee sector as a whole. True farmer organizations have been difficult to establish, hence farmers have had a limited voice at the policy level. Foreign enterprises were organized in a public/private task force (PPP Task Force): however, this task force included only a few domestic enterprises and no real farmer organizations. In addition, the task force was an informal group established by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD): it was not structured within the government system and consequently was only partially recognized as an important stakeholder by policy makers. Thus, the balance of opinion in the Vietnamese sector has been unevenly weighted. Achieving coherent impact on sustainability, or on coffee production as a whole, has proven to be a challenge.

The Vietnam Coffee and Cocoa Association (VICOFA), an association dominated by domestic enterprises, has represented the Vietnamese coffee sector internationally. For the most part, this representation took place at events where the association represented private-sector coffee stakeholders. It has been challenging for other coffee-sector stakeholders in Vietnam to have their voices heard on the global stage.

The innovative idea to set up a board that would include all stakeholders in Vietnam's coffee sector was inspired by the commodity-organization boards of

Brazil and Colombia. Its execution was complicated by the lack of legal framework for a truly public/private body: this had never been done before in any sector in Vietnam. For a decade, these structural issues meant that it was complicated to find support for this idea at both central and domestic levels.

However, in 2012, the Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development (IPSARD)—an organization with a vision for the future of Vietnamese coffee production—attempted to set up a board with the support of the Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH). The board was to build upon the efforts of the PPP Task Force, and the process found strong support within MARD. Jointly, IDH and IPSARD convened the sector to make stakeholders aware of their ideas about the establishment of an inter-ministerial group. IDH primarily focused on outreach to foreign enterprises. IPSARD focused on government.

Because the legal framework for establishing an independent board has not yet been put in place, it was agreed that the Vietnam Coffee Coordination Board (VCCB) would begin as an advisory body under MARD. Their status as an advisory board was officially established in July 2013, and institutional reform is being encouraged in order to enable this board to effectively advise on coffee-related policies. The ambition is to develop the VCCB into an independent board. Currently, the VCCB is still operating as an advisory group and working actively towards being formally recognized as a policy-making body.

Introducing VCCB: working towards a legal framework

The ambitions of the VCCB are wide-ranging. The board aims to influence and support MARD policy making and policy implementation. It also aims to provide and share information, and link VCCB members to one another. It is geared towards representing the Vietnamese coffee sector internationally, and is recognized as a reference point for the International Coffee Organization (ICO), along with VICOFA.

MARD chairs the VCCB. IPSARD and IDH provide the secretariat. IDH and IPSARD play a big role in driving the agenda of the VCCB, strongly supported by MARD leadership.

The VCCB is focused on all issues related to the coffee sector in Vietnam, and one of its sub-committees has a specific focus on sustainability. There are three sub-committees: (1) Processing and Trade, (2) Policy and Sustainability, and (3) Production.

The VCCB includes 15 members and meets twice per year. Each of its subcommittees includes other members that meet more frequently. Because of the lack of a legal framework for public/private inter-ministerial bodies, the VCCB is still organized under MARD. This position precludes the VCCB from working directly with other ministries, although other ministries are important for achieving its objectives. Due to this complex situation, an inter-ministerial group, with which the VCCB regularly interacts, has been established. This allows the issues raised by the public/private VCCB to be raised with the relevant ministries through a VCCB/MARD representative in the inter-ministerial group. Such an approach can serve to strengthen the ability of the VCCB to influence policies relevant to the coffee sector, but which are managed by ministries other than MARD.

The VCCB is an innovative structure: nothing similar has ever been organized in any agricultural sector in Vietnam. Its very existence means the coffee sector is paving the way for other initiatives. It is a way to bring private-sector voices (including farmers) into the government's decision-making processes. It does so with a voting mechanism designed to give each member an equal voice. However, due to the structural constraints of Vietnam (i.e. lack of a legal framework), the VCCB has not yet reached its true potential.

Achievements

Despite the challenge of the VCCB's legal status, the board has had a visible effect on the landscape of Vietnamese coffee production. Its achievements are, broadly speaking, on two levels—in the field and on the global coffee stage:

1. **Creating a voice through unity.** The creation of the VCCB has ushered in a new era in the Vietnamese coffee sector. Since its inception, recognition of the VCCB's expertise has grown. The board has been praised for strengthening the voices of various stakeholders. Foreign companies

and local farmers have voting rights in the VCCB: by extension, their votes make their voices heard at the policy-making level. Now accepted as the representative of the Vietnamese coffee sector, many departments within the Vietnamese government welcome the VCCB's contributions and policy advice.

Examples of the VCCB's influence on relevant policy include providing input on the 2020 plan for sustainable coffee. The board addressed its concerns to responsible ministries about a fund that was being established, which could make the foreign coffee sector less competitive. It also advised against funding a provincial initiative that would have benefited one province but not the domestic sector as a whole.

2. **The National Sustainability Curriculum (NSC).**

The VCCB enabled the NSC to be developed with input from the private sector. While the NSC does not provide a great deal of new knowledge, it does combine all existing knowledge in a coherent way. In other words, it unifies the voice of experience, creating a single resource for best practices and disseminating a single, clear message to the farmers. The NSC is a document very much owned by the VCCB: it is being used during the implementation of the World Bank Vietnam Sustainable Agriculture Transformation project, which will become the source for training for approximately 62,000 farmers.

3. **Promoting sustainable production.** For example, pushing for rejuvenation of plants and providing credit for this rejuvenation. The VCCB provided comments on the rejuvenation policy, and organized stakeholders to discuss challenges, and how to deal with them. The board works with the director of irrigation to promote water-saving practices, and is promoting intercropping in an effort to develop a landscape approach to sustainable coffee production.

4. **Linking more effectively to international platforms.** Since the VCCB's inception, the way in which Vietnam's coffee sector is internationally represented has changed significantly for the better. There are now three representatives working to promote the interests of Vietnamese coffee producers on the global stage: VICOFA, MARD, and a VCCB member. In line with the VCCB's

mission, this ensures that all voices are heard—also on the international stage.

Challenges

The VCCB faces significant challenges. The relationship to, and commitment from, the government (primarily outside MARD) are recurring themes. The changing landscape of domestic coffee production, which has been altered visibly due to VCCB actions, also presents its own issues:

- 1. Working without a legal framework.** While the VCCB has made clear progress since its inception in 2013, structural constraints have prevented it from growing into a fully effective body. Vietnamese law as yet makes no provision for an independent public/private inter-ministerial body. The need to work around these constraints and try to change them is a lengthy process. Of particular note is the inability to work with multiple ministries. The VCCB's creative solution (to function as an advisor to one ministry, with an inter-ministerial group embedded in the structure) has provided some leeway. However, the fact remains that the current structure is a limitation and ongoing challenge to the impact of the VCCB's work.
- 2. Stakeholder engagement.** Both the National Coordinator (NC) and IPSARD have noted the uneven nature of representation of some segments of the stakeholder profile. While foreign enterprises are often vocal—perhaps because a great deal of effort is put into collating their comments on policy—domestic stakeholders have tended to be less engaged. Domestic enterprises are represented through VICOFA, yet farmers and domestic enterprises outside of the VCCB appear unrepresented, which is potentially due to cultural differences. Domestic members are not experienced in consulting colleagues about their views, and domestic stakeholder engagement may also be harder to maintain because the creation of the VCCB has lessened the influence of domestic enterprises. VICOFA may still need to get used to the new policy landscape, in which external stakeholders now have an equal voice, and still has an important role to play within the VCCB framework

- 3. The absence of smaller traders.** The VCCB includes a variety of stakeholders that had never before come together in a board of this nature. IPSARD has noted that one stakeholder group—the smaller traders—is still absent from the VCCB. Their lack of representation is a problem, as they have significant influence over the Vietnamese coffee industry. Without the membership of these smaller traders, the voice of the VCCB cannot be truly inclusive.
- 4. Maintaining government commitment.** The level of government commitment to the VCCB is fluid. Although MARD provides strong leadership in the organization and development of the VCCB, not all governmental departments have an incentive to participate in discussions. In addition, the state management system in Vietnam does not create incentives to join: government departments are held accountable for their regular work but not for 'extra' work. Consequently, according to an IPSARD researcher, "only those that are very innovative, very aware and very much want to [will] contribute." Moreover, as the VCCB is still an advisory body, governmental participants are not always clear on whether the organization has any power to make decisions. This fluid level of commitment is reflected in governmental participation in VCCB meetings, which can be limited. It is not uncommon for the government to send a different representative each time. This has the potential to limit the effectiveness of the VCCB meetings.

Since the vision is to have the VCCB embedded in the sector and the Vietnamese government, it is important to secure governmental commitment both in terms of participation and funding. As an IPSARD representative notes, there has been no government funding available under MARD: for example, funding would allow the creation of a full-time secretariat for the VCCB. Such support should be established before organizations such as IPSARD/IDH can pull out and allow the VCCB to become truly domestically owned and embedded in the sector.

Lessons learned

Vietnam's unique structural characteristics make its coffee sector one in which ingenuity and dedication are



key to its success. Without the will to organize, and the resolve of IPSARD and others to undertake a ten-year journey towards the eventual creation of a platform, the VCCB would never have gotten off the ground. And without the strong support of MARD, it is unlikely to have survived.

1. The necessity of a public-sector champion.

Both IPSARD and IDH praise the support of MARD leadership in establishing such an innovative link between the interests of the private sector and the opinions of the public sector. MARD's actions have defined the necessary qualities of a public-sector champion: an organization able to push the agenda and convert the thinking of the board into something the public sector will understand.

2. Multiple viewpoints must align.

IPSARD concludes the formula for success in Vietnam has actually been three-way engagement. In addition to MARD's spirited public-sector leadership, which has seen it commit to and support the board, the VCCB would not have been created without the role undertaken by IPSARD. Acting as a facilitator and a neutral support organization, IPSARD has brought its knowledge of institutional reform to the table. It also has the skills, experience, and connections to form a network. IDH has adopted the third role in the triumvirate, supporting from a neutral standpoint and providing weight and leverage to create action, with the backing of key roasters.

3. Timing plays a role. Sometimes, circumstances compel organization where previously not enough interest had been raised. Consider, for example,

the fact that the idea for a coffee platform such as the VCCB had already been around for ten years before its final realization in 2013. Contextual factors—such as an increasing need for organization at sector level—can play a key part in successfully developing an organization of this nature.

4. Communication and equality facilitate positive changes.

Speaking the languages of both the public and private sectors is necessary: it's important to understand what all parties want and why they want it, before coming up with a solution that is palatable to all. In Vietnam, the private sector follows the public sector, so while the public sector should be in the lead, all parties need to believe their interests are equally considered at all times. Or, as the Jacobs Douwe Egberts Sustainability Manager Asia-Pacific notes: there must be equal rights for all stakeholders included in the platform to make it work.

Part of this communication is the creation of action plans and mandates: information that clearly states what the VCCB is responsible for, what it is working on, and what its long-term plans are. It's necessary to update these plans regularly, to keep everyone feeling valued and involved.

To achieve long-term success, government involvement must be maintained and must drive the platform, before any convening party can pull out. The goal in Vietnam is to fully embed the VCCB in the country's coffee-producing infrastructure, with outside funding optional.



CONCLUSION

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A look ahead

The National Coffee Platforms are still maturing, and their initial results have been very encouraging. Local government is participating in coffee production with more quality, and more funding, than ever before. Exporters are working with each other and with the authorities on systemic issues that affect all stakeholders in their sector. Within the six countries included in this booklet, dialogue, discussion, necessary cooperation, and trust between all actors has developed. In addition, more and more stakeholders are defining sustainability more broadly. For example, through implementation of the NSC, coffee farmers in Uganda can expect improvements in income as the coffee sector turns its attention to wider issues. And addressing policy issues means Brazilian coffee is less likely to be exposed to forbidden pesticides.

These are not the only success stories of the National Coffee Platforms. International participation is stretching into the areas that really matter. International trade is starting to see the benefits of country-level organization. Engagement with national stakeholders, and a willingness to invest time and energy in the National Coffee Platforms, has grown, and is starting to deliver real change. The platforms themselves have also developed into a new type of tool: a structure within which the stakeholders in a country can share concerns with their own governments, often for the first time.

The National Coffee Platforms are an important step in changing production in the world's coffee-growing countries. They provide a pathway to a more prosperous coffee sector—a sector that produces the quality and quantity of coffee necessary to create a self-supporting, high-yield industry. A sector that grows and sells ethical, excellent coffee in a way that protects national resources as well as the livelihoods of farmers. The next step is to support country-level improvement in more coffee-producing regions. As the National Coffee Platforms continue to improve each sector through local stakeholders, and those sectors become more resilient and resourceful, the international coffee market will be better served by thriving countries able to create and protect their own industries.

As the effects of these National Platforms are felt at country level and internationally, other coffee-producing countries are also working towards fostering

more public/private dialogue. The GCP will continue to support this journey into the new era of coffee sustainability. The process may look complex and challenging, but an incredible job is already being done in paving the way to a more robust, engaged, and profitable coffee sector.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledgements per country

Brazil

Carlos Brando

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Pedro Ronca

Agronomist, P&A

Antonio Diogo

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Report: Itals

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Editing: Words on Words, Writing Bug, Gillian Evans

Photo Credits:

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