

# PARTNERSHIPS FOR AFRICAN COFFEE: ITC'S COFFEE GUIDE AND 'ALLIANCES FOR ACTION'



[Standfirst] ITC's Coffee Guide, fourth edition, is being leveraged as a tool for growth and transformation by coffee producer communities worldwide. Find out more about latest updates, what's in store and how it all connects to ITC-Alliances for Action's wider work in coffee.

**H**ave you heard of the International Trade Centre's Coffee Guide, 4th Edition? For many in the coffee industry, it's a go-to reference. Since it was first published in 1992, it has been a starting block for thousands of producers, traders, roasters and basically anyone wanting to get a foot in the coffee sector. Today, it's also become a tool for Africa's coffee sector.

When it comes to coffee, there's a wealth of literature available. What makes ITC's Coffee Guide stand out is its comprehensive coverage of topics, and its practical approach as a tool and reference. Released in 2022, the latest fourth edition has held onto these qualities while going to new lengths to make it as inclusive as possible of coffee producing communities.

This inclusive approach doesn't just stay on the page. ITC's Alliances for Action initiative is a sustainable agribusiness approach

that leverages partnerships for sustainable food systems. It does this through partnerships that cultivate ethical, climate-smart, sustainable agricultural value chains. The fourth edition of the Coffee Guide was co-created following Alliances for Action's collaborative approach and objective of a sustainable transformation of global food systems.

In coffee, Alliances for Action is working with various donors and regional and local partners in Ethiopia and West and Central Africa to help build a more sustainable coffee industry that adds value at origin and promotes local consumption and the establishment of regional coffee value chains.

## **Making key industry knowledge accessible to the birthplace of Arabica**

'Last year, we earned \$1.4 billion in coffee exports alone, an unprecedented amount. The

backbone of this success is our smallholder coffee farmers, and we must give back to them.' This statement was made by H.E. Dr. Sofia Kassa, State Minister for Ethiopia's Ministry of Agriculture at the launch of the Coffee Guide in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, last month. It explains in a nutshell why ITC partnered with Ethiopia's Coffee and Tea Authority (ECTA) to translate the Coffee Guide into Amharic and make its contents available to a country that is home to approximately 2.2 million coffee farms and more than 120 million coffee consumers.

The coffee sector in Ethiopia represents millions of livelihoods, a quarter of its export earnings and the country consumes half of what it produces. Regional trade, value addition at origin, digitalization, knowledge sharing, and green practices are some of the transformative solutions that we can leverage to help it rise to its rightful place in the global coffee sector. The Coffee Guide explores these



solutions and other crucial sector topics. It offers insights and practical pointers how coffee sector stakeholders can adapt to a rapidly changing sector, increase resilience, build effective business strategies and step towards sustainable growth.

The Amharic translation is a first in the history of ITC's Coffee Guide, and a step towards actively targeting and including coffee stakeholders from across the birthplace of coffee and the world's fifth largest coffee producer. It pays tribute to Ethiopia's coffee sector and will play an active role in education and knowledge sharing there. The ECTA will integrate the Coffee Guide in its capacity building and training curricula, using it as an education tool to increase the competitiveness of smallholder coffee farmers throughout Ethiopia's unions and cooperatives.

This accompanies ITC's work in Ethiopia with its local coffee sector partners in the framework of the Netherlands Trust Fund V

programme, funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. The programme seeks to improve the competitiveness of livelihood farmers and agribusiness small firms in the coffee sector with a focus on digitalization. The agribusiness component is led by ITC's Alliances for Action, with the aim to generate sustainable sourcing partnerships in coffee. The focus is to build alliance platforms for enhanced market linkages and sales, whilst building capacity of small enterprises and producer cooperatives.

### **A collective push for African Robusta and value addition at origin**

We know that smallholder farmers and small firms are the foundation of sustainable food systems in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. Yet many lack the opportunities to diversify, add value and compete in domestic, regional and global markets.

ITC's Alliances for Action offers micro-level interventions through the EU-OACPS funded ACP Business-Friendly Programme, promoting inclusive and sustainable agricultural value chains in areas such as coffee, cocoa, cotton, and kava. Adding value to products and promoting local consumption can help create economies of scale and empower agribusiness communities, allowing farmers and their families to thrive.

The project draws on a holistic approach, working both at the farm level and on building artisan skills like chocolate-making, coffee roasting and even barista techniques. Building up these sustainable production practices will help farmers absorb economic shocks as well as help attract investments.

In coffee, ITC has joined forces with ACRAM, the African agency for the promotion of Robusta coffees from Africa. Together, they aim to

support producers, cooperatives and companies in the sector to promote Robusta coffee as both a viable export product, and a high-quality, differentiated product.

There is an intentional focus on engaging youth to renew the workforce in Africa's coffee sector. The joint work supports the integration of young people into coffee growing through programmes that allow young people to set up a coffee farm of three hectares in three years. Trainings on sustainable production and post-harvest processing methods are also being rolled out, to improve both productivity and quality in an efficient way.

Alongside this farm-level approach, there is a big focus on promoting value addition and local consumption. This involves training young people on coffee roasting, barista skills and coffee business management, and participating in international trade fairs and coffee events to enable new market linkages. An important objective is to build regional value chains and markets to place African products in Africa, as well as internationally.

### **The Coffee Guide explained**

Peter Giuliano, Executive Director of SCA's Coffee Science Foundation, recently endorsed the Coffee Guide with an encouraging vote of confidence:

"Now in its fourth edition, the guide gives a comprehensive, detailed overview of coffee trading, in an easy-to-read format. It's absolutely essential to have on the bookshelf for any coffee producer, miller, trader, buyer, or roaster. And, since it's available in so many languages, it really helps give coffee producers market information, which is a powerful thing."

Concretely, the Guide will enable you to:

- Access latest coffee data, trends and policy perspectives
- Dig deeper into the coffee sustainability framework
- Understand the complex world of futures in trading
- Explore the nuances of coffee quality from seed to cup
- Have most information about coffee in one place, online
- Own a reference publication informed by industry experts
- Own a useful and free industry tool in a choice of 4 languages

Its contents are now available in Amharic, English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. These are languages that represent communities from coffee growing countries across Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, and soon also Ethiopia. This is a milestone in terms of making coffee knowledge accessible to coffee producers worldwide.

The Coffee Guide builds on the collaboration with more than 70 coffee industry experts and organizations from across the globe, from seed to cup. Vanusia Nogueira, Executive Director of the International Coffee Organization, personally contributed to it during her time as Executive Director of the Brazil Specialty Coffee Association, and continues to endorse it today:

“For ICO, it’s very important to be included in inclusive initiatives. From producers to consumers, people need to be educated. For this guide, we changed the name and removed the word ‘exporters.’ The guide is accessible to everybody, across the value chain, and we’re proud to be a part of that.”

Translations have been facilitated through global partnerships for knowledge sharing with international, regional and national coffee actors such as the Latin American and Caribbean Network of Fair Trade Small Producers and Workers (CLAC), the International

Coffee Organization (ICO), the Brazil Specialty Coffee Association (BSCA), the Agency for African and Malagasy Robusta Coffee (ACRAM) and Ethiopia’s Coffee and Tea Authority (ECTA).

### What’s next?

To build upon the collaborative, co-creation process of the fourth edition of the Coffee Guide, ITC formed the Coffee Guide Network, convening the global network of contributors to the Coffee Guide to deepen and advance knowledge. The Coffee Guide Network exists to share and forward current knowledge within the coffee sector to help it move forward sustainably.

The Coffee Guide Network is focused on three research initiatives in 2023.

First, in collaboration with members of the ICO Coffee Public-Private Task Force (CPPTF) and with support of the European Commission DG INTPA F3 and ITC Trust Fund donors, it’s working on a public, web-based tool that maps the current sustainability initiatives in the coffee sector. This interactive tool will allow users to see who is doing what and where, in relation to sustainability investments in the coffee sector. The map will help decision-makers understand overlaps, gaps, and opportunities in investment to allow for a better focus of future investment, open opportunities for collaboration, co-investment, and knowledge sharing. You can add your organization’s sustainability investments by completing the form

at this link: <https://form.jotform.com/230542717349054>

Second, a Circular Economy Working Group is currently operating to understand and promote the concept of circularity in the coffee sector. A Circular Economy model for the coffee sector implies a systemic and humanity-centered approach aiming to deliberately maximize value creation throughout the coffee value chain processes. In collaboration with Lavazza, ICO, and the Italian university Politecnico di Torino, the working group is gathering case studies and proposing a definition of Circular Economy for the coffee sector.

Finally, the network is updating the market data that was a valuable highlight in the Coffee Guide. The aim is to produce reliable, neutral statistics for historical crop years reflecting how coffee is traded today. The Coffee Guide, fourth edition, proposes three market segments: standard, premium, and specialized. This allows for cross comparison by country, region, and globally. The data will be published annually at ITC, and will enable informed trade, commercial, investment, funding, and policy decision-making with market insights based on historical data.

The results of all these initiatives will be accessible on a digital Coffee Guide space – coming soon. You can get in touch with ITC’s Coffee Guide Network Coordinator, Katherine Oglietti: [KOglietti@intracen.org](mailto:KOglietti@intracen.org).



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