Sustainable Coffee Farming in Burundi (2013)

South-South Facility Development Outcome Story

Improving farmers' livelihoods and reducing land degradation through shade-coffee farming

THE CHALLENGE:

Coffee, Burundi's primary export crop, is the main source of income for more than 600,000 families, or about 30% of the population. Most of the families are small-scale farmers, and among the poorest people in the country. Unsustainable and unregulated coffee production in Burundi has contributed to land degradation, which in turn depresses productivity and increases vulnerability to climate change. Coffee farmers use steep slopes, often eliminating trees on hillsides to grow coffee under full sun, practices that contribute to land degradation and biodiversity loss.

AT-A-GLANCE

CHALLENGE

Burundi's coffee farmers' livelihoods are negatively affected by low coffee productivity, climate change, and land degradation. Coffee production and processing methods contribute to these challenges.

SSF GRANT

US $48,909

KNOWLEDGE RECIPIENT

Burundi

KNOWLEDGE PROVIDER

Colombia

SDGS SUPPORTED

IMPACT

Lessons from the exchange inform over US $104 million investment in Burundi's coffee sector. 1,600 hectares of shade-grown coffee have been planted, enhancing climate-resilient livelihoods and reducing land degradation. Inspired by the Colombian example, an ecological corridor and ecotourism initiative were also developed,

THE EXCHANGE:

In 2013, when the Government of Burundi expressed interest in shade-grown coffee, a World Bank Team reached out to the South-South Facility and TerrAfrica for funds to conduct a knowledge exchange between Colombia and Burundi. Colombia has a centuries-old tradition of growing coffee in the shade. Almost 40 percent of the country's surface area is used for shade-coffee farming, which is more resilient to climate change as coffee plants are better protected from extreme weather, and which also reduces land degradation. Additionally, the plants providing shade (plantains, maize, others) offer alternative sources of income and food to farmers. In 2014, coffee experts from Colombia visited Burundi, and later a Burundian delegation learned first-hand about shade-grown coffee-production in Colombia. Additionally, they witnessed Colombia's experience in eco and agritourism and saw how a biological corridor—trees that connect two forests to preserve the biodiversity of the region—was established and cared for.

THE DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME FOUR YEARS AFTER:

The exchange informed a US $4.2 million, Global Environment Facility (GEF) funded pilot project to promote cultivation of shade-grown coffee in Burundi. The project, which targets 15,000 households, has led to more than 1,600 hectares of shade-grown coffee planted. Lessons from the pilot are also being leveraged through two World Bank projects, which combine to bring more than US$ 100 million of investment to improve Burundi's coffee sector competitiveness and restore degraded lands. A manual for shade-grown coffee, developed together with the Colombian experts in the exchange, will be disseminated country-wide. Additionally, following Colombia's example, an ecological corridor of 2.6 km now connects the Bururi Forest Nature Reserve with Myugaro valley. A community-based eco and agritourism initiative inspired by the exchange is also being developed in Burundi: local farmers will showcase tourists the shade grown coffee production chain, including environmentally friendly techniques for growing and processing coffee. In summary, the South-South knowledge exchange inspired actions that are leading to sustainable land management and land restoration in Burundi while diversifying income options for farmers.