

**Project Title:** Production of Sustainable Coffee in the municipalities of Gigante and La Plata, Department of Huila, Colombia

**Location:**

- Municipalities of Gigante and La Plata, Huila
- Production of appr. 1680 t
- Altitude 1,300 – 2000 m
- Arabica
- washed and dry processing

**Project Partners:**

- ACDI/VOCA on behalf of USAID
- Coffee Company Huila Ltda. - COPROAGRO,
- SKN Caribecafé Ltda.
- International Coffee Partners GmbH (ICP)



**Project Duration:** 3 Years; from 09/2005 to 08/2008

**Project Value:** EUR 0,8 mio  
Besides ICP the contributors are ACDI/VOCA (on behalf of USAID), Coffee Company Huila Ltda. - COPROAGRO, SKN Caribecafé Ltda.

**Problem Description:** In the District of Huila 37% of the population live in rural areas. Half of the rural population is unable to satisfy its basic needs and 12% live in absolute poverty. The economies of the two Municipalities of Gigante and La Plata depend almost entirely on agricultural activities. While the natural conditions for growing coffee of high quality are very good, agricultural practices and post-harvesting/processing techniques need to be improved. The coffee is mostly processed in a traditional manner using large quantities of water for the process of depulping and washing. Therefore, one of the biggest challenges is to eliminate contamination of water due to inadequate practice. Large quantities of pulp are produced as a by-product of the processing and are currently not recycled. In addition the plantations are located in areas with high declivity producing serious erosion.

**Project Approach:** The project aims to improve the living conditions of coffee producers in the Municipalities of Gigante and La Plata by promoting competitive and sustainable coffee production. To this end, the project farmers will receive training and technical assistance transferring the know-how required in view of all coffee operations. State-of-the-art sustainable practices will be introduced to optimize production, harvesting and processing. The processing infrastructure will be assessed and improved. Apart from concentrating on quality improvements the farmers will be guided to comply with main requirements of sustainable coffee production opening up innovative marketing opportunities. Establishment of an effective Internal Control System which will address the different shortcomings will further help the farmers to continuously learn and put innovations into practice. One key component of the project will be the strengthening of the farmer

organizations so that these have solid structures and position themselves as reliable commercial partners in the sector directly cooperating with exporters. The sustainable characteristics of the coffee will benefit both the conservation of natural resources and quality coffee production and therefore the living conditions of the farmers and their families.

**Beneficiaries:** About 243 coffee farmers organized in the two associations OCCICAFE in La Plata and El Desarrollo in Gigante and their families will benefit directly from the project while further inhabitants of the target area will benefit mainly through improved marketing channels.

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