

COFFEE AS A NATURE-BASED SOLUTION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

SUSTAINABLE COFFEE CHALLENGE LEADS THE WAY TOWARDS 2025 GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY TARGETS THAT WILL BENEFIT PEOPLE AND NATURE.

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**SUSTAINABLE
COFFEE
CHALLENGE**

#SUSTAINCOFFEE
Learn more at sustaincoffee.org

With a vision of making coffee the world's first sustainable agricultural product, the **Sustainable Coffee Challenge** was launched in December 2015. Convened and facilitated by Conservation International, the Challenge brings together a coalition of more than 140 like-minded partners including companies, governments, nonprofits, trade associations, research institutions and others.

Over the past five years, the Challenge sparked a movement that has increased transparency of sustainability commitments made across industry and has accelerated collective action among its partners to scale up sustainable sourcing, renovate and rehabilitate coffee farms, improve labor practices and

As a tree crop farmed by millions, coffee has the potential to be a sustainable, 'natural climate solution'

supply and map and monitor coffee and forests. In addition, the coalition has aligned the sector around a common Sustainability Framework¹ and created a wide range of tools and resources to promote alignment and guide partners in their sustainability efforts.

New and Even Greater Challenges

However, the world has changed significantly over the past five years, as has coffee. In a recent report² from the World Economic Forum (WEF), the organization emphasizes that

1- Co-developed with the Global Coffee Platform

2- Global Risk Report 2020

environmental risks – climate action failure, extreme weather, biodiversity loss, natural disasters and human-made environmental disasters – now present the greatest risk to economic stability and social cohesion. Despite significant strides made by the coffee industry – through the Sustainable Coffee Challenge and many other initiatives – these risks pose new and even greater challenges.

Climate change is reducing the area suitable for coffee production, pushing high-quality arabica into higher altitudes and threatening the last remaining intact forest areas. At the same time, low commodity prices make coffee production less profitable for farmers in the vast majority of producing countries, creating conditions where farmers seek economic alternatives for their livelihoods.

In Africa alone, challenges like these have caused coffee productivity to decline by about 40% since the 1970s, resulting in a significant decrease in net-production and global exports of coffee across Africa. At the same time, the global demand for coffee will likely double or triple by 2050 as independently projected by World Coffee Research and Conservation International. How can the coffee industry maintain a diversified supply of coffee to meet growing demand while ensuring improved *livelihoods throughout the value chain? How can we leverage coffee's potential to be a solution (rather than contribute) to climate change?*

Meeting the Challenge

Coffee has the potential to be a sustainable commodity that provides tremendous climate benefits, meaning that coffee can serve as is

a 'natural climate solution' (*see text box*).

If the sector can double, or even triple, productivity on the existing 10 million hectares of coffee lands over the next 25 years, we can conserve up to 20M hectares of forest and avoid up to 3.3GT of carbon emissions³.

For instance, expansion of coffee production into forests currently poses a threat in Ethiopia and Uganda. In these countries, there is a tremendous need to significantly increase yields while avoiding extension of the current coffee footprint beyond degraded lands. A recent study commissioned by the Sustainable Coffee Challenge found that more than 25% of the global need for renovation and rehabilitation lies in four countries across East Africa – Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania. A concerted effort to renovate and rehabilitate smallholder farms across these countries could increase coffee production by over 129,000 ton / 2.1 million bags. Unlocking this potential would avoid the clearing of 218,000 hectares of forest and the release of at least 35 million tons of carbon, while also improving farmer incomes by increasing productivity and quality⁴.

Globally, there is the potential to increase tree cover on more than 40% of all coffee lands, which would store at least an additional 25M tons of carbon⁵. Planting additional trees on farms – whether it be via shade or other interventions like windbreaks, live fencing or other practices – not only increases climate resilience of coffee production, but also has the potential to increase farm income and improve the livelihoods of farmers.

What are 'natural climate solutions'?

Nature is good for our climate: By absorbing and storing carbon from the atmosphere, forests and other high-carbon ecosystems can help to forestall climate change. Any action that conserves, restores or improves the use or management of these ecosystems — while, and this is important, increasing carbon storage and/or avoiding greenhouse gas emissions — can be considered a “natural” climate solution. The scientific community overwhelmingly agrees that the climate is in crisis and we've got about 10 years to drastically cut our carbon emissions, or humanity will suffer devastating consequences.

These efforts will require unprecedented investments in renovation and rehabilitation of coffee farms coupled with technical assistance and forest conservation incentives and safeguards.

Join the movement!

Coffee can serve as a natural solution to a changing climate. In the coming months, the Sustainable Coffee Challenge will roll out a new 5-year strategy that includes an ambitious global target to secure 100 million tons of carbon by 2025 and drive

3- In calculating the potential carbon savings from avoiding coffee expansion, Conservation International assumed that a hectare of tropical forest stores 165 tons of carbon.

4- These calculations assume a 25% implantation success of the total potential within the respective countries

5- Research by Jha et al 2012 estimates that 41% of coffee area has no shade production. In addition, Rikxoort et al 2014 estimates the carbon in different coffee production systems. Conservation International combined these figures to estimate the carbon potential from improved shade management.

investments in nature-based climate solutions that benefit people and our planet. This strategy will include enacting of sector-wide pledges to address the challenges and meet these targets. By transitioning coffee supply chains to sustainable sources, the Challenge sends strong demand signals for supply chain transparency, living income and adoption of better agronomic, social and environmental practices.

The Challenge will continue to convene partners through its Collective Action Networks to act on joint priorities and opportunities, provide resources and drive investments – individual and sector wide – in four key areas: sustainable

sourcing, living income for farmers and workers, climate adaptation, and forest conservation and restoration. To track the coffee sector's progress against its goals and to promote transparency, the Challenge will urge partners to make new and more ambitious commitments via its Commitments Hub <<https://www.sustaincoffee.org/commitments/>>. To learn more about the Sustainable Coffee Challenge, please visit www.sustaincoffee.org or reach out to scc@conservation.org.

Scan the QR-codes below to get download two new and useful resources from the Sustainable Coffee Challenge:

2019 Commitments
Hub Report



Sustainability
Framework Brochure
"What If... All Coffee
Was Sustainable"



SUCAFINA



During AFCA 2020 Spikes Estate from Kiambu County, Kenya, won the regional Taste of Harvest competition and from the 10 national Kenyan finalists, Sucafina has the pleasure of being the chosen service provider for four winning farms and cooperatives. We would like to thank the farmers for their continued support and for our buyer's willingness to support the African smallholder farmer.

