

# Colombia

## Specialty Coffee Program (SCP)



ACDI/VOCA began the USAID-funded Colombian Specialty Coffee Program (SCP) in June 2002 to demonstrate that, with the right training and tools, coffee can be an attractive crop for Colombian coca farmers willing to switch to legal crops. The program provides farmers in the Caldas, Cuaca, Huila, Nariño and Tolima regions with the skills and market insight they needed to enhance the quality of their coffee to be marketable as a specialty product. By breaking into premium markets, farmers have realized a higher return for their investment and dramatic increases in income.

Partnering with the Specialty Coffee Association of America (SCAA), Coffee Quality Institute (CQI) and Federación Nacional de Cafeteros de Colombia (FEDERACAFE), ACDI/VOCA provided specialized training in growing, harvesting and post-harvest handling of the crop to create superior-quality beans. The program, which ended in 2007, also supplied processing equipment and storage facilities to participants.

To refine growing techniques and produce the

**“ACDI/VOCA strengthens the specialty coffee value chain in Colombia.”**

best coffee possible, ACDI/VOCA trained local farmers in proper quality-assessment techniques. The program sent 105 cuppers to the headquarters of the SCAA and CQI in Long Beach, Calif., for advanced training in cupping, which is a systematic process of brewing and tasting high-end coffee to grade quality. The participants gained an understanding of how experts evaluate specialty coffee, and in the process, became more discerning coffee drinkers themselves. When the participants returned home, they shared their new cupping skills with farmers to increase others' capacity for developing better grades of coffee.

The program went a step further by ensuring access to specialty markets. Program representatives attended a variety of trade shows and conventions to market the specialty coffees grown by beneficiaries. ACDI/VOCA also provided professional research services to identify and target the most profitable export markets. By increasing the visibility of the coffee produced through the program, SCP ensured that Colombian farmers received a premium price for their premium products.



# Project Profile

ACDI/VOCA provided critical support to Colombian agriculturalists during each step of the process of growing, harvesting, processing, storing and marketing specialty coffee. It made coffee a more valuable commodity, creating a viable alternative to illegal coca and poppy production.

## A Seven-Step Approach

- » renovation of coffee plantations: assisted small producers in planting and caring for recommended varieties
- » improvement of production and processing infrastructure: promoted the production of exportable specialty coffees through the introduction or reinforcement of recommended production, processing, storage and handling practices
- » family food security: introduced production and processing technology appropriate for local subsistence and cash crops to help cover household consumption needs and generate surpluses for sale in local or regional markets
- » quality improvement: promoted cupping, laboratory analysis and improved processing and handling
- » market promotion: designed and implemented an international marketing strategy that includes participation in trade shows and exhibitions, investigation of external markets, distribution of coffee samples, marketing training, creation of brand names and the establishment of a website
- » institutional strengthening of cooperatives and associations: strengthened cooperatives and associations to create agile and sustainable business units that are reliable, active players in the specialty coffee market
- » rotating coffee marketing fund: held capital funding for purchasing coffee from smallholder farmers for resale on the world market

## Highlights

SCP's impressive achievements at project's end include the following:

- » 32,651 total hectares remained free of illicit crop production (600 percent of target objective).



- » 7,391 families with small farms benefited from licit productive activities in coca and poppy areas (300 percent of target objective).
- » 13,686 hectares of licit crops were supported through coffee production and food security (275 percent of target objective).
- » 86 percent of program beneficiary coffee growers saw an increase in production volume.