The challenge

The last remaining mountain rainforests in the Kaffa and Sheka regions in south-western Ethiopia are regarded as a biodiversity hot spot and play a key role in global climate change mitigation. The region is also the birthplace of Coffea Arabica, which still grows wild in Kaffa. Alongside coffee, this unique ecosystem also produces honey and spices. Yet despite its natural riches, it provides very few income opportunities for local smallholder families. Up to now, they have been practising subsistence farming.

A variety of initiatives undertaken between 2003 and 2010 by the company Original Food GmbH and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, together with other partners, have already enabled more than 60,000 people in Kaffa to make a living thanks to the income they earn from selling wild coffee. In addition to strengthening the local economy, the main aim of the project was to preserve the biological diversity of the Ethiopian mountain rainforests and at the same time conserve the wild coffee plant population. One of the greatest achievements for the Kaffa region was the establishment of a UNESCO biosphere reserve in the scope of the project in 2010.

Despite the good results attained by the end of the project in 2010, it was still necessary to sustainably consolidate the achievements of the development partnerships that had been established up to that point:

- The project was to be extended to cover neighbouring regions in order to increase the effectiveness of the initiatives and so they stay competitive in the long term.
- Investors and local structures were promoting cultivated coffee, especially the variant known as garden coffee, and plantation coffee. This was threatening to displace the wild coffee and harm the ecosystem.

The solution

In order to overcome these challenges, Original Food and GIZ entered into a development partnership in 2010 as part of the develoPPP.de programme.

With develoPPP.de, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) promotes the sustainable engagement of companies in developing countries and emerging economies. GIZ is implementing the programme on behalf of the BMZ.

‘With our innovative approach we aim to help preserve Ethiopia’s forests while creating economic opportunities for the local population. develoPPP.de is the perfect partner for this.’

Florian Hammerstein, Managing Director at Original Food GmbH
Original Food and GIZ aimed to integrate further smallholders into the supply chains for certified organic agricultural products from Ethiopia. In 2015, they formed a strategic alliance aimed at strengthening the project work already carried out in Kaffa and extending it to the Sheka region. As well as improving the quality of the wild coffee, the export volumes also increased, with further suppliers and smallholders being integrated into the supply chains.

The smallholders also received help on the path to organic and Fairtrade certification so they could achieve higher market prices. This led to a significant increase in average income and also helps conserve local biodiversity.

**Our services**

As the majority of smallholders in Kaffa are organised in cooperatives of the Kaffa Forest Coffee Union (KFCU), the project partners worked closely with the KFCU in order to establish a quality assurance system for the existing supply chains. This was the only way to ensure compliance with the certification criteria for wild coffee in the long term. The smallholders received training so they can carry out their respective tasks along the value chain: from harvesting, processing and sorting, through to transporting the wild coffee.

GIZ has also supported them in developing supply chains for other certified agricultural products, such as honey. The project enables the cooperatives to build up sustainable value chains for agricultural products independently and to manage them efficiently up to export.

**Impacts and results**

- More than 130,000 people now benefit from the sustainable economic development of the Kaffa and Sheka regions based on sales of agricultural products.
- International companies that trade in certified wild coffee and other agricultural products from the Kaffa region can rely on the fact that the supply chains are in line with the corresponding sustainability criteria. This increases competitiveness at international level and offers smallholders income opportunities.
- Sustainable agriculture helps preserve the biological diversity of the mountain rainforests.

**At a glance**

| Duration               | 1 June 2010 – 30 September 2014  
|                       | 1 April 2015 – 31 March 2018      |
| Country               | Ethiopia                         |
| Objective             | The creation and consolidation of the value chain for certified wild coffee in partnership with small farmers increase the income of the local population. At the same time, the biological diversity of the mountain rainforests is preserved for the long-term. |
| Partners              | Original Food and GIZ            |
| Results               | • Preserving the number of wild coffee plants and local biodiversity.  
|                       | • Generating and increasing the incomes of more than 130,000 people in Kaffa and Sheka.  
|                       | • Strengthening national and international supply chains for certified organic agricultural products from the Kaffa and Sheka regions. |