

Improving Smallholder Coffee Quality and Incomes : Experience from Mbinga District, Tanzania

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SUMMARY

Mbinga District in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania produces some of the finest mild Arabica coffee that accounts for 20-25% of the total Tanzania Arabica coffee production. This entire production is by 42,000 smallholders on 32,000 ha of land. Germany is the major market of the Mbinga coffee.

One of the major objectives of the new Tanzania Coffee Research Institute (TaCRI) is to improve smallholder incomes by improving coffee productivity and quality, and marketing. TaCRI has put emphasis in organizing these smallholder coffee growers into farmer groups, each group consisting of 25-30 members, since 2002. We have organized the groups around production and primary processing to improve productivity and quality and eventually assist each group to auction its coffee directly at the coffee exchange. Results have been very encouraging. Productivity and quality have improved; auctioning directly at the coffee exchange has reduced charges by intermediaries. These two interventions have increased growers incomes by 57-188%. This has acted as a catalyst for the formation of more farmer groups and as an incentive for greater attention to quality benefiting both producers and consumers.