



Case Study

Global Coffee Platform

Championing agroforestry for a climate resilient and smallholder focused East African coffee sector

June 2023



Testing of the revised NSC trainings in Tanzania with smallholder farmers

The Global Coffee Platform (GCP) is a multi-stakeholder membership association that brings together key stakeholders in the coffee sector to work collectively towards a thriving, sustainable coffee sector for generations to come. With the support of Partnerships for Forests (P4F), the GCP has integrated agroforestry components into policies and processes in Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania. The aim of this initiative is to enhance the climate resilience of coffee production, promote biodiversity, and improve the livelihoods of coffee farmers.

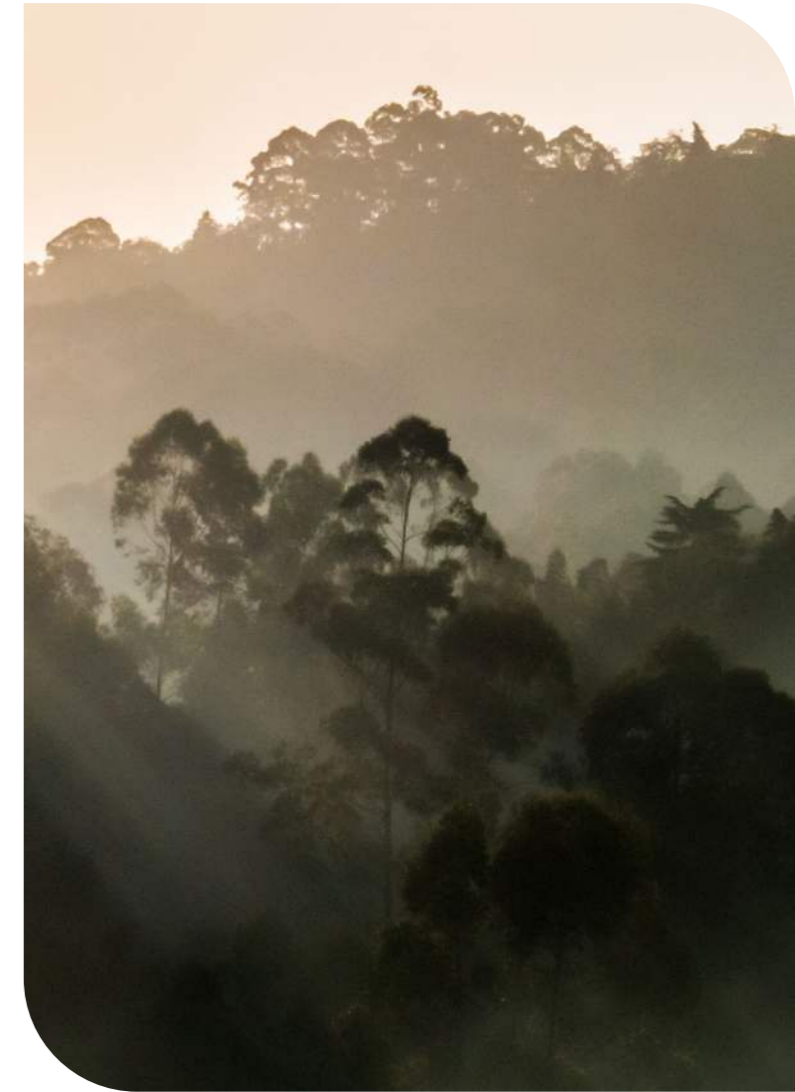
The need for environmental and social action in the coffee sector

Coffee is one of the most traded commodities in the world, with approximately 10% of the global supply coming from Africa. Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania produce more than 80% of the continent's crop, and income from coffee exports represents significant portions of revenue for many of these countries. It is a livelihood source for more than 125 million people globally, including the millions of smallholders who are responsible for 95% of coffee production in Africa.

Although international demand for coffee increases by around 2% per year, most smallholder coffee farmers are still unable to earn adequate income. This is mainly due to price shocks, high production costs, inadequate market access, poor infrastructure and lack of public resourcing for the implementation and enforcement of existing regulations¹. The impact of climate change can also affect the income of traditional smallholder coffee farmers, with studies showing that both Arabica and Robusta coffee are amongst the most vulnerable to climate change, with rising temperatures and increasingly erratic rainfall patterns meaning a greater likelihood of pests and diseases².

Examples from Kenya and Uganda show that coffee production is also far below its potential due to farmers' lack of knowledge of good agricultural practices, high input costs, a labour-intensive production system, and inadequate funding for coffee research and government extension services, such as localised training.

Although there have been institutional and project-based initiatives to promote sustainable coffee production launched by industry, NGOs and governments, they have had limited impact due to a lack of consistency and collaborative action. There is, therefore, a need for an international, multi-stakeholder mechanism that develops clear, transparent and adaptable sustainability criteria and improves the coffee sector through the integration of economic, social and environmental sustainability.



Bonga forest, Ethiopia

1. International Trade Centre (2020). **More from the cup: Better returns for East African coffee producers.**
2. USAID (2013). Uganda vulnerability assessment report. **African and Latin American Resilience to Climate Change Project.**
3. Krishnan, Sarada (2017). **Sustainable Coffee Production.** <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199389414.013.224>



Collaborating for reform—the Global Coffee Platform

Realising the need for a collaborative approach to scaling sustainable coffee production, the Global Coffee Platform (GCP) was established as a multi-stakeholder membership association in 2016. It has more than 120 members across the coffee value chain, including coffee producers, roasters, retailers, traders, governments, associations, donors and NGOs. By enhancing collaboration, GCP aims to multiply efforts, collectively act on local issues, and scale successful initiatives to ensure the long-term viability of the sector, conserve and restore nature and improve farmer wellbeing.

GCP is working with its members through global and national initiatives:

- As the issues faced by coffee farmers vary from country to country and sustainability efforts are often overlapping or fragmented,
- Collective Action Initiatives bring together private sector actors such as roasters and traders to find solutions to identified and prioritised sustainability challenges that need to be tackled collaboratively.

GCP facilitates discussions and joint action on local priorities, the effective allocation of resources, and influencing policy towards a conducive enabling environment by supporting a network of ten Country Platforms. They ensure the participation of all key actors, including smallholder farmers, in each country and provide an opportunity to share learning. Country Platforms are also in charge of developing National Sustainability Curricula (NSC), which adapt globally recognized sustainability practices to the local context and are used for training farmers and other stakeholders on best practices.

“GCP’s vision is to build a thriving and sustainable coffee sector. To achieve this, GCP has a new goal for 2030, which is to increase smallholders’ prosperity by closing at least 25% of the living income gap for more than 1,000,000 smallholder farmers in more than 10 countries. We’ll achieve this goal through holistic support for sustainable coffee production, climate adaptation and mitigation, and workers’ wellbeing.”

Lauren Weiss, Program Manager Countries and Partnerships at GCP



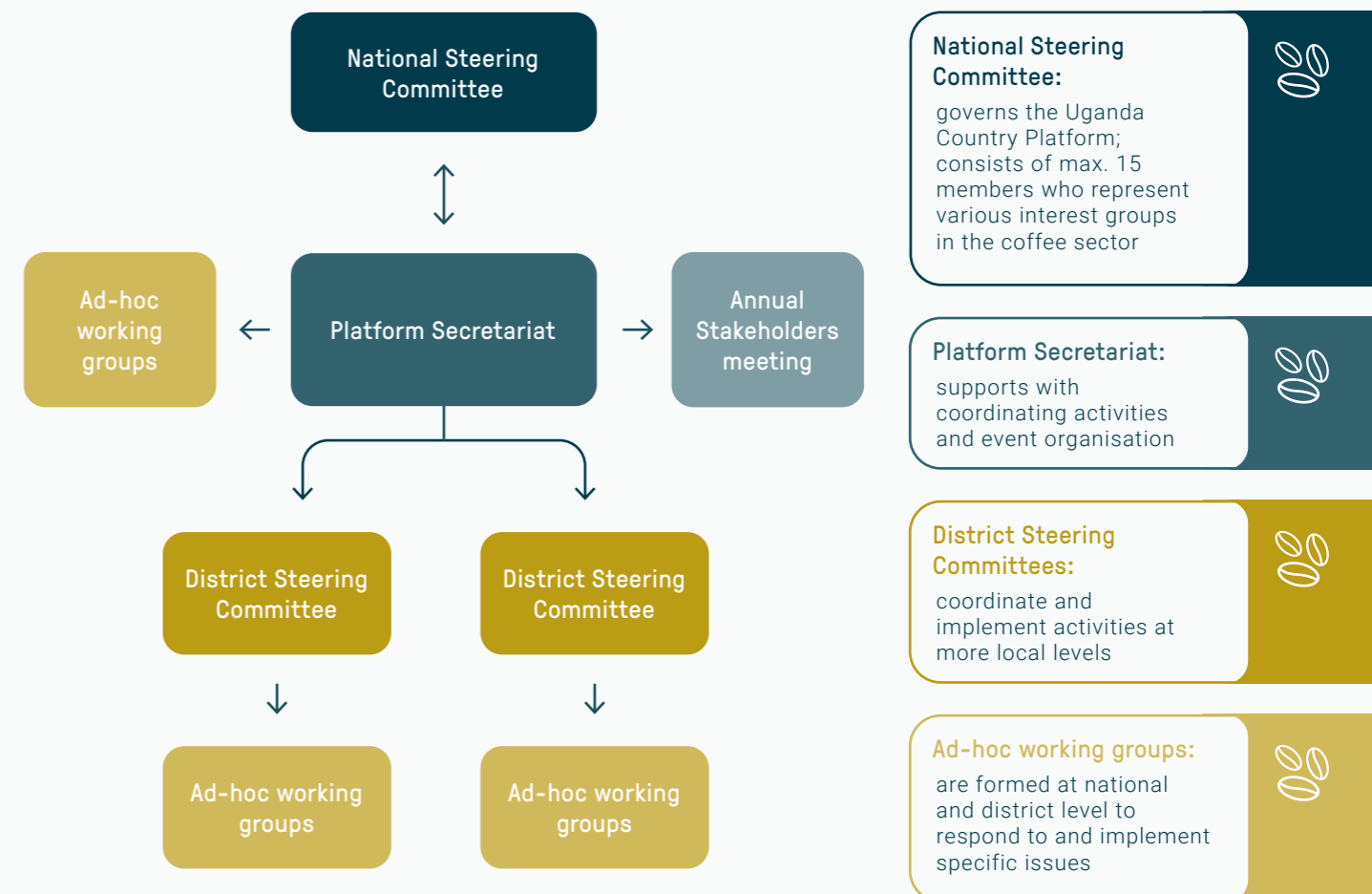
GCP in East Africa

In East Africa, there are three GCP - affiliated Country Platforms in Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya. Café Africa—a not-for-profit organization involved in promoting Africa’s coffee sector and a downstream partner for GCP in East Africa—is facilitating the Country Platforms in Uganda and Tanzania, while the Kenyan platform is directly facilitated by GCP. In order to improve productivity, reduce production costs, build climate resilience and foster transparency across the supply chain and so benefit farmer livelihoods, these Country Platforms focus on addressing precompetitive issues such as coffee production, regulations, access to information and the effects of climate change. They ensure that stakeholders come together to find solutions to

the challenges in the industry and help to avoid duplication or counterproductive efforts.

The Country Platforms engage stakeholders at different levels. General meetings are held annually or bi-annually with representation from all stakeholders in the value chain. These include government representatives, farmers, exporters, roasters, research organizations, civil society organizations and NGOs. National steering committees are formed in each country and meet regularly to address any issues arising between the annual meetings. The Country Platforms may also form regional and district committees to deal with specific local issues.

FIGURE 1 | Uganda Country Platform structure





“By working together and combining expertise and resources we aim for a standardised, holistic approach to more effectively address the varied and complex challenges in the communities and landscapes. The overall goal for the initiative in Uganda is to achieve the common objectives and obtain large-scale changes and positive impact.”

Wouter De Smet - Green Coffee Farmer Connect Manager - Asia, Oceania and Africa at Nestlé (GCP member)



Enhancing coffee resilience and farmer livelihoods through agroforestry

Climate change has been one of the key coffee production challenges in the past decade, with unexpected weather events, such as droughts and floods, and rising global temperatures increasing risks to coffee farmers' livelihoods. In East Africa, rapidly expanding coffee production threatens forest resources, which are crucial to farmers' long-term prosperity. Agroforestry is one way to mitigate this challenge.

Integrating other tree species within coffee farms creates a microclimate that increases biodiversity, enriches soils, reduces erosion and water pollution, and improves carbon storage. Improved soil health, the commercialisation of crops intercropped with coffee, such as banana and avocado, and beekeeping also bring social benefits through increased productivity. Agroforestry also means that forest communities can get their fuel wood on-farm, without encroaching nearby forests. Partnerships for Forests (P4F) has provided GCP with funding to embed regenerative agroforestry practices into the coffee value chain, strengthen forest protection, and enhance the relevant governance structures at the national level, by leveraging GCP Country Platforms in East Africa.

P4F funding was used to:

- Analyse the existing agroforestry and forest protection policies and legislation in Uganda and Kenya and develop policy recommendations on incorporating agroforestry practices for increasing coffee productivity and ensuring environmental sustainability. The recommendations were shared with national coffee stakeholders, including the government, with the aim of informing national policy changes and coffee buyers' sourcing policies.
- Use the analysis to adjust the governance structures of the Country Platforms in Uganda and Kenya to include workstreams on regenerative agriculture and sustainable

landscape management and embed regenerative agriculture in the Tanzania and Kenya Coffee Platforms' National Sustainability Curriculum.

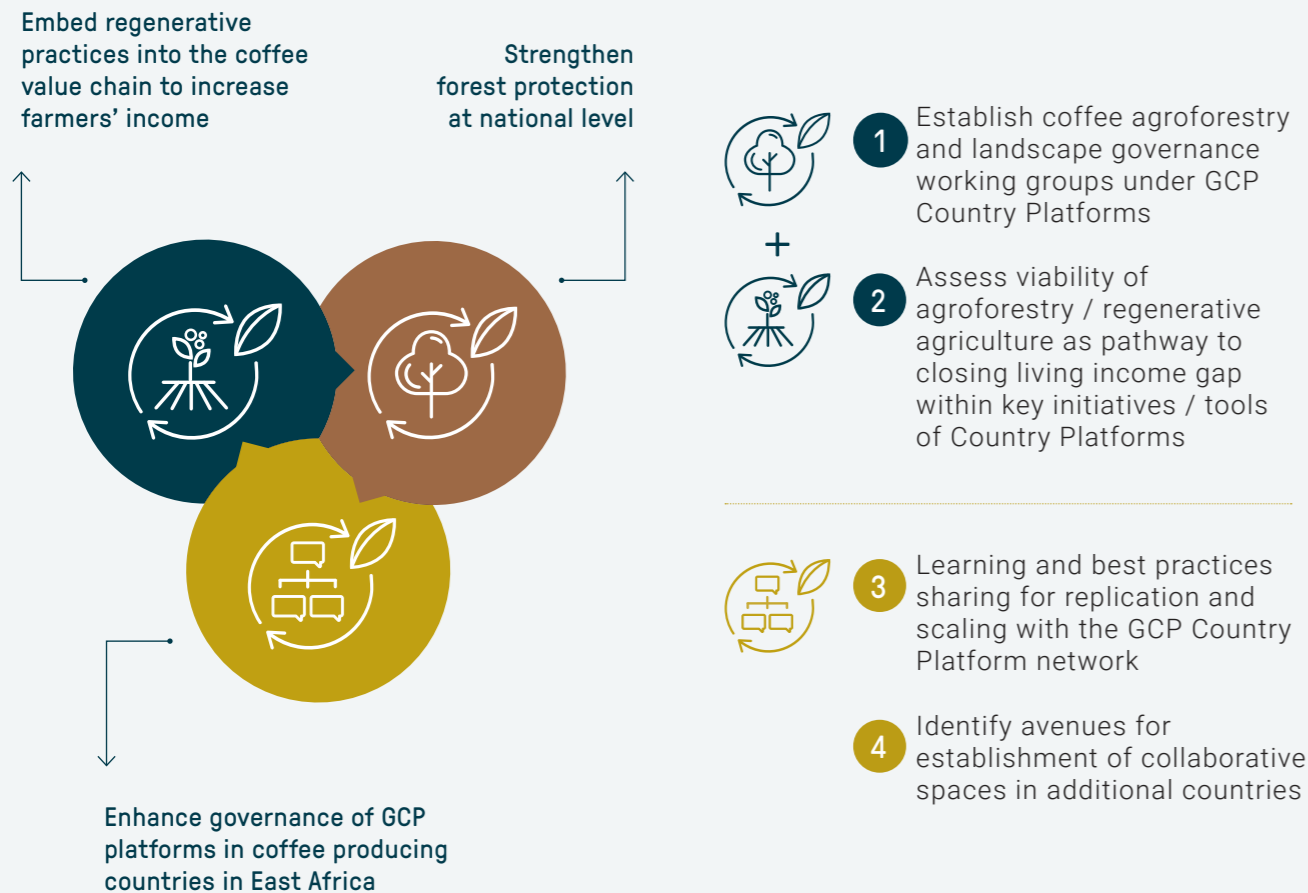
- Share the agroforestry pilots' results, learning and best practice with the wider GCP Country Platform network, for replication and scaling.

“Agroforestry concurrently addresses two of the main issues for coffee farmers. One is climate change - Robusta and Arabica coffee are very susceptible to rising temperatures, the increase in climate shocks from droughts to flooding, heat waves, etc. At the same time, agroforestry helps farmers increase their on-farm income through diversification and being able to then sell additional agricultural products that they grow on the same plot of land. We are partnering with P4F to focus on the intersection between climate resilience and farmer prosperity.”

Lauren Weiss, Program Manager Countries and Partnerships at GCP



FIGURE 2 | Strengthening the multi-stakeholder platform by using regenerative agriculture as a tool to improve farmers' income & livelihoods



Analysis of agroforestry-enabling policies and recommendations

One of the key activities in promoting an agroforestry approach has been the analysis of the current policy environment and recommendations for its improvement. Engaging via the Uganda and Kenya Country Platforms, key stakeholders explored how existing regulations can be improved to support agroforestry and forest protection practices which can contribute to increasing farmers' income and economic prosperity.

In Uganda, the analysis of national policies, laws and regulations on agriculture, environment and forestry recognised the existing enabling environment for agroforestry. It recommended that agroforestry was included in the Uganda Coffee Act—a key guiding document that sets out the Uganda Coffee Development Authority's (UCDA) role and responsibilities in regulating, promoting and overseeing the coffee sector in the country. It also recommended: the provision of local, rather than centralised, agroforestry training for farmers; the provision of incentives for tree growing, such as supplying quality seedlings; and the harmonisation of efforts to implement coffee agroforestry. Stakeholder consultation and validation were conducted with district and local government



officials from the natural resource, environment and forestry departments, Ministry of Agriculture representatives, UCDA, agricultural extension officers (local government officers supporting the implementation of coffee related best practices and regulations) and implementing partners (Uganda Coffee Farmers Alliance, Just Know Your Coffee Cup and Ankole Coffee Producers Cooperative Union). The validation was critical to understanding the practical applicability of forestry and agroforestry approaches in coffee production, and the attitudes and opinions of farmers and other stakeholders in terms of its contribution to yield, quality and income.

The recommendations were also presented at the 19th African Fine Coffees Association Conference (Kigali, Rwanda, February 2023), where 800 delegates from global public sector, private sector, civil society and certification schemes were present.

“In Uganda, especially Gomba District in central Uganda, smallholder farmers depend on Robusta coffee growing. However, the coffee production per tree is reducing every season due to climate change and irregular rainfall within the region. Coffee agroforestry is the only way to mitigate periods of extreme drought, and diversify farmers' income, among other functions such as carbon sequestration, habitat protection for endangered and threatened bird species, and soil and water conservation.”

Mathias Cyiza, UCDA Regional Coffee Extension Officer



Figure 3: Dissemination of policy recommendations in Uganda



A similar analysis, assessing the agroforestry and forest protection policies for a sustainable coffee sector and identifying implementation gaps, was conducted in Kenya. The analysis showed that a lot of the agroforestry and forest protection policies remained unenforced and that there was a gap in stakeholders' understanding of the policies. The recommended actions include incentivising agroforestry, building farmers' knowledge and enforcing existing regulations.

Establishing Agroforestry Working Committees within Country Platforms

In Kenya, a working group was established within the Country Platform to provide guidance on the policy analysis and recommendations, as well as to ensure the participation of stakeholders in decision-making. In addition, the Kenyan Country Platform initiated an agroforestry pilot project in Nyeri County, which trained 50 youths (ages 18-35) as trainers on agroforestry best practice, with the objective of reaching 500 farmers.

Agroforestry Working Committees were set up in Uganda to raise community awareness and ensure the adoption of the recommended agroforestry actions. Working Committees were formed in three districts in Uganda, with representatives from natural resources offices, environmental officers, youth representatives and UCDA. The committees provide agroforestry quality assurance support services and guidance on agroforestry implementation, coordinate tree seedling distribution and raise awareness. They also contribute to other platform activities, such as policy analysis and public-private engagement.

“The members of the agroforestry working committee were tasked to brainstorm the agroforestry coffee production systems capable of adapting to buffering and mitigating the effects of climate change in Gomba District, central Uganda. One of the interventions put forward was the distribution of indigenous tree species that are commonly used as shade trees in coffee plantations and also to set up a nursery that will generate seedlings for further distribution to farmers. Thanks to Café Africa-Uganda.”

Mathias Cyiza, UCDA Regional Coffee Extension Officer

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Collective Action Initiative “Ugandan Youth for Coffee”

The Uganda Country Platform has progressed from dialogue to action with the formation of a collective action initiative. Launched in January 2022, the ‘Ugandan Youth for Coffee’ initiative creates a business opportunity for young private coffee service providers to deliver renovation and rehabilitation services to coffee farmers, so helping to increase their yields and income. Over the course of five years the initiative aims to reach 30,000 smallholder farmers, treat 1.5 million diseased coffee trees, plant 300,000 shade trees, and support 150 youth business units.

P4F supported the integration of agroforestry in the initiative. By May 2023, more than 8,500 farmers had been registered and surveyed to understand their needs, more than 4,000 farmers had attended training on rehabilitation, renovation



Training youths on agroforestry

and agroforestry, and 72,000 shade and fruit trees had been provided to 2,600 farmers. Ninety youths have been trained and provided with a job in agroforestry and over 500 people participated across three private-public partnership events to create awareness of agroforestry and shade tree management.

“As one of the youths working with Café Africa Uganda, I have received a comprehensive training. This training covered various aspects, such as gaining an understanding of agroforestry systems and practices, identifying suitable tree species for intercropping with coffee, learning about the products and services derived from agroforestry, studying the characteristics of different agroforestry tree species, and acquiring skills in managing coffee agroforestry trees. I will use my knowledge and skills to offer training to farmers and find a job at an agricultural organisation.”

Nampijja Patricia, member of Ziobwe coffee farmers' cooperative



Revision of the National Sustainability Curriculum

The National Sustainability Curriculum (NSC) guidelines on good agricultural and sustainability practice inform the materials used by extension services to support coffee farmers' training. The NSC adapts globally recognized sustainability practices—such as the Coffee Sustainability Reference Code standards that GCP members commit to—to the local context. The guidelines are developed in collaboration with key stakeholders and are endorsed by the government.

In 2022-23, the Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda Country Platforms have each overseen the development and rollout of an NSC. As part of this P4F-supported project, the NSCs in Tanzania and Kenya were revised to include sufficient and up-to-date information on how to integrate agroforestry and forest protection into coffee farming. The

revision in Tanzania further ensured that the NSC is aligned with the updated Coffee Sustainability Reference Code that was released in 2022.

The revision in Tanzania also includes alignment with the country's 2020–25 National Coffee Strategy. While the previous NSC was mainly focused on productivity, the revised version expanded upon sustainable agricultural land management practices, resource conservation and biodiversity, and voluntary sustainability standards, which include social and environmental responsibility. A National Steering Committee working group was established to oversee the revision of the NSC, with members from the Tanzania Coffee Board, Tanzania Research Institute, Tanzania Coffee Association, a coffee exporter/marketing expert, an environmental/ agroforestry expert, and a farmers' representative. Newly developed training materials were field tested, and 90 extension workers and lead farmers were trained on the revised NSC, to support the adoption of agroforestry.

“The second edition of the Tanzania NSC is one of the best extension resources available. It has successfully addressed concerns that were overlooked in the previous NSC. Stakeholders had consistently highlighted these issues, specifically the focus on Arabica in the previous curriculum, while Robusta was not included. I’m happy that the new curriculum now incorporates the perspectives of stakeholders on a broader scale. Additionally, the inclusion of new subjects such as agroforestry has modernized the coffee sector, enabling it to meet the demands of the local, national, and global agricultural landscape. As a Chairperson, I am confident in presenting it at the Tanzania National Coffee Conference for its official launch. This curriculum will significantly support our extension officers and coffee farmers in enhancing their knowledge and skills for sustainable coffee farming.”

Kajiru Kisenge, National Coffee Stakeholders Committee (NCSC) Chairperson in Tanzania



In Kenya, a new section on agroforestry and forest protection has been included in the NSC. In addition, the P4F-supported policy analysis is feeding into the current update of the Kenyan Coffee Platform Strategy, which is revised every five years.

Learning and best practice sharing to support replication

Four learning and exchange sessions to share the experiences and encourage replication and scaling of regenerative agriculture practices in the coffee sector were held. The first focused on regenerative agriculture (25th May 2022) with a presentation by the Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH), a GCP member, on their work in East Africa and Vietnam, followed by a discussion between representatives of seven County Platforms in the GCP network and staff from the GCP Secretariat.

The second event focused on sustainable landscape governance and regenerative practices (27th July 2022), with speakers from UGACOF and the German development organisation GIZ. The session was well received by the coordinators and participants..

The GCP-hosted Learning & Exchange Session on Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration (15th November 2022), leveraged learning and experience from similar multi-stakeholder initiatives in West and Central Africa, with the Africa Palm Oil Initiative and the Cocoa & Forests Initiative sharing their knowledge and discussing challenges related to multi-stakeholder collaboration with the wider network of GCP-affiliated platforms.

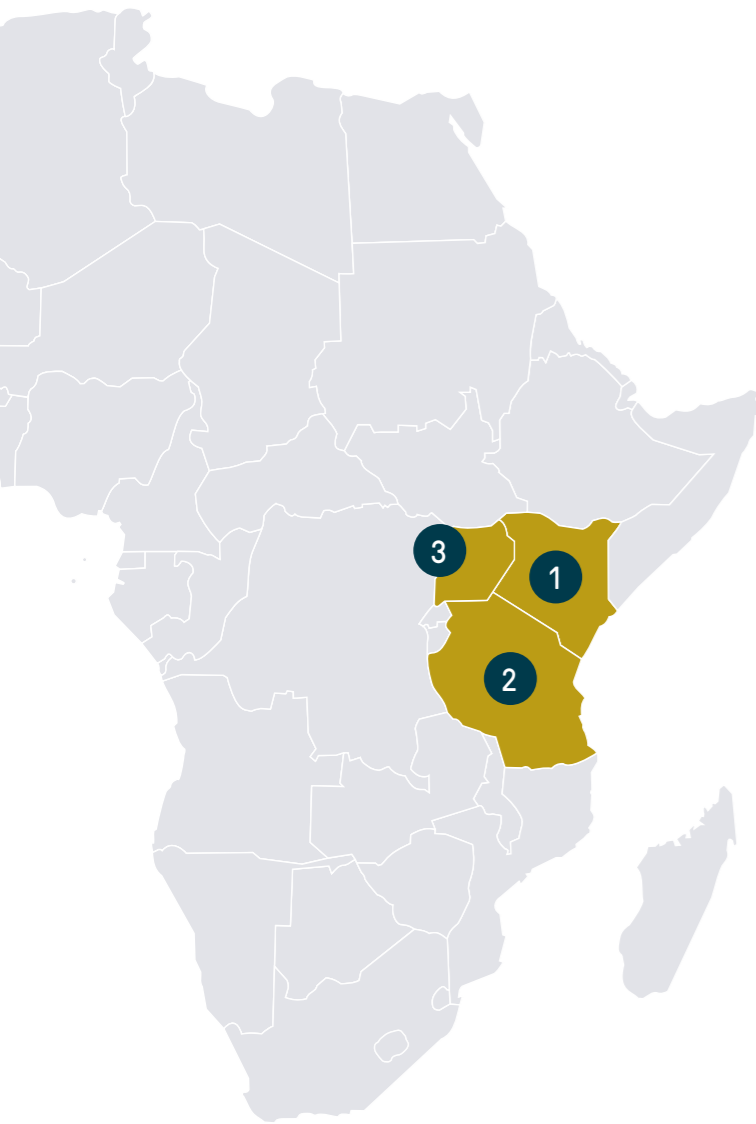
The final session took place on 7th June 2023, and focused on best practices and learnings from the agroforestry work that was part of the P4F-supported project.



Testing of the revised NSC trainings in Tanzania with smallholder farmers



What has been learned from the GCP agroforestry programmes in East Africa



- 1 Kenya: it takes resources, time and funding to kickstart discussions about the policy changes that the Country Platforms seek to achieve and implement. In particular, the dissemination and adoption of the NSC requires the engagement of all stakeholders and for training extension workers to be familiar with the practices.
- 2 Tanzania: coffee agroforestry is not yet common practice in Tanzania, especially the western part of the country. Even where it is practiced, there is a need for capacity building to address the low awareness on which trees can be intercropped with coffee. The Tanzania Coffee Platform also propagates and distributes tree saplings. Tree planting will improve productivity, by incorporating site-specific crops, and contribute to the broader conservation of the landscape. The inclusion of agroforestry in the NSC is likely to increase willingness to adopt agroforestry practices but, to see its adoption at farm level, there may be a need for more engagement work.
- 3 Uganda: there is significant interest in climate change mitigation and adaptation by local government, which was evidenced by the strong contributions made by local government stakeholders during the public-private partnership events.

The lessons from the agroforestry project in East Africa can assist in scaling initiatives within the coffee sector across different regions. These lessons also provide valuable insights for integrating agroforestry into other forest-based farming activities. Key takeaways for multi-stakeholder initiatives include securing sufficient resources, time, and funding for policy discussions and stakeholder engagement, promoting capacity building and offering resources like seedlings for tree planting, and obtaining support from local governments, which often show significant interest in climate change mitigation and adaptation.



References

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