

New ICO project “Reconversion of small coffee farms into self-sustainable agricultural family units” launched in Ecuador on 15 September 2007. The project is designed to provide alternative production and development options to alleviate the poverty of coffee-growing families through the introduction, in coffee farms, of new profitable agricultural activities that guarantee higher income levels, greater food security and preservation of natural resources.

The launch took place in Manta on 15 September 2007 in the presence of H.E. Ambassador Mr. Ali Mchumo, Managing Director of the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC), Mr. Roberto Vera Moreira, representative of the Ministry of Agriculture and Mr. Miguel Camino Solórzano, representative of the Mayor of Manta. Also present were Mrs. Lilian Volcan, ICO Economist, Mr. Caleb Dengu, First Project Manager of the CFC, Mr. Juan Alberto Vera Zambrano, President and Executive Director of COFENAC, which will act as the Project Executing Agency, Mr. Jorge Salcedo, President of ANECAFE and representatives of the cooperatives participating in the project.

The main objective of the project to strengthen the management capacity of producer organisations and bodies involved in the project areas. The project seeks to reconvert 1,200 coffee farms into self-sustaining agricultural units through diversification of their agricultural production systems. The project will also promote the processing of primary commodities and the development of co-operative marketing channels for the local market. The results of the project will also be disseminated to Cuba, Guatemala and Honduras.

The project is valued at a total of US\$3,198,635, with contributions of US\$61,117,640 from the CFC as a grant and US\$1,651,912 from COFENAC and in-kind contributions from farmers, with the ICO as supervisory body. Dissemination activities in the various countries will be implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture (Cuba), ANACAFE (Guatemala) and IHCAFE (Honduras).

For more information visit the ICO webpage: <http://www.ico.org/projects/decuador.htm>.