



# Coffee Innovation Fund – Kenya

Supporting innovative and scalable solutions to increase profitability and market access of small-holder coffee farmers

## Diversifying coffee farm income through modern bee farming

Coffee production in Kenya has declined in recent years. Production has been constrained by many factors, including use of inappropriate technologies and low coffee production knowledge of coffee farmers – especially women. Producers face multiple financial challenges that lead to unstable incomes and household financial stress, including: delayed payments, high interest rates that are passed down to farmers, untimely financial requirements for farm inputs and harvesting costs, and fluctuating prices.

Mt. Kenya West Women in Coffee was formed by a group of women in Kenya who recognized that there is strength in creating networks to strengthen their coffee businesses. Its mission is to provide subsidized coffee consultancy services on production and marketing, network platforms, coffee financing, and coffee diversification programs. Through this project, Mt. Kenya West will initiate integrated bee farming techniques into coffee production to provide a financial cushion to farmers.

### A second income for coffee farmers

Bees play a crucial role in farming ecosystems, as the main pollinating agents. Due to the sensitive environmental requirements of beekeeping – such as shade, plant diversity, and water resources – coffee grown within a bee integrated ecosystem achieves increased quality, resulting in premium specialty coffee grading and higher prices.

The project will reach 300 smallholder coffee farmers in Kenya who are organized into coffee farming groups and societies. A minimum of six apiaries will be installed, and the project will oversee the training of 15 apiary management teams to ensure they are fully equipped to manage the apiaries and train women and youth farmers in beekeeping.

Farmers participating in this project are expected to increase income from coffee sales resulting from improved coffee quality. Furthermore, income generation from honey and its by products will relieve financial stress on farmers, improve access to finance, and reduce food insecurity.



Photograph: Mt. Kenya West

## Project overview

Term: 2021-2022  
Region: Ruiru, Kenya  
Partner: Mt. Kenya West Women in Coffee  
Volume: EUR 50,000 (supported by the Fund)  
EUR 100,400 (total volume)

## Goals

- ❖ Integrate modern bee apiaries with smallholder coffee farming, enabling coffee farmers to earn additional income from honey and secure a financial cushion against delayed coffee payments and fluctuating coffee prices.
- ❖ Build capacity amongst coffee farmers to employ good coffee farming practices to increase coffee cherry yield per tree from 2kg to 5kg.
- ❖ Optimize farm production through initiation of new tree planting, while ensuring climate smart techniques and safeguarding bees and other ecologically friendly species.