

## Case 2: Bale Coffee

### *Journey of Coffee Arabica from Bale Eco-region, Ethiopia to the Global Market*

Author: Forests of the World, 2025

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PROJECT	<b>Title:</b>	Enhance Viability of Participatory Forest Management (EVPFM) in Delo Mena and Harena Buluk District, Bale Zone
	<b>Partner:</b>	FARM Africa
	<b>Country:</b>	Ethiopia
	<b>Period:</b>	Jan 2022 - Ongoing

CHANGE	<p>Three Ethiopian coffee cooperatives in Bale's forest region have broken into the global market by pioneering a trust-based, quality-driven coffee export model. With support from Farm Africa and Forests of the World, farmers enhanced income, revived local economies, and set a new standard for sustainable agroforestry. The initiative demonstrates how rural producer groups can create climate-friendly livelihoods while conserving biodiversity.</p>
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CONTEXT	<p>In Ethiopia's remote Bale Mountains, forest-based coffee farmers face significant barriers to entering high-value markets. Traditional markets and national policies favour quantity over quality, and low-grade coffee dominate the local market. Variations in farming practices, post-harvest handling, and adherence gives varied outputs and producers of high-quality, forest-friendly coffee under shade-grown systems lack the support and systems to sell at premium prices. Cooperatives also lack the business skills, technical capacity and systems to manage international sales and negotiate better prices from buyers. As a result, communities remain economically vulnerable and forest conservation suffers due to short-term pressures.</p>
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CONTRIBUTION	<p>With technical support from Forests of the World, Farm Africa equipped three coffee cooperatives and the Garen Bale PFMC Union with targeted training in agroforestry, cooperative governance, and business strategy. Together, they launched a pioneering service charge model anchored in quality assurance and traceability. 31 trusted farmers selected for their consistent quality were formally engaged in a structured agreement with the PFMC Union to supply export-grade coffee. From the 23,303 kg harvested, 19,200 kg of Grade 2 coffee met export standards and were shipped to Zensho, Japan generating USD 150,673 (ETB 20.4 million), demonstrating the viability of community-led export rooted in transparency and quality.</p>
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## IMAGES



Credit: Tewodros Gezahegn (FA)



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## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### ACTIVITIES

Key activities included:

- Capacity-building for “model farmers” in agroforestry, composting, and quality-focused coffee processing.
  - Establishment of demo plots combining native tree species with coffee and crops.
  - Facilitation of tripartite dialogue between cooperatives, unions, and buyers to streamline transactions.
  - Technical support in business planning, export logistics, and market negotiation.
- These actions helped cooperatives improve organisational capacity, product integrity, and buyer trust—laying the groundwork for scale.

### LESSONS

This case shows how local collaborative effort and innovation can unlock global markets. Locally understood traceability systems improved both accountability and market access. The integrated approach from planting to post-harvest demonstrated that technical knowledge about agroforestry and market alignment can empower poor farmers to influence value chains while protecting the environment. Moreover, combining capacity-building with direct market facilitation proved essential in bypassing systemic trade bottlenecks.

### EVIDENCE

“Before, we felt stuck. Now, working together with the help of Forests of the World through Farm Africa, we see our coffee reach the world. This model gives us pride, profit and hope,” says Abdurahman Kule, a cooperative leader. The initiative introduced three service models: (1) free support for poor farmers with viable buyers, (2) low-cost services under MoUs for small specialty producers, and (3) conventional bulk trade. Export and revenue records confirm the delivery of 19,200 kg of Grade 2 coffee, and documentation shows increased cooperative income. The model has since been replicated by Farm Africa in other districts with larger budgets, demonstrating its scalability.

Ethiopia Supplier (2025), Garen Bale Natural Resource Mgt & P Exp data And Contact-Great Export Import <https://en.52wmb.com/supplier/196577534>

Markos Makiso Urugo [et.al](#) (2025) Ethiopian coffee: Production systems, geographical origin traceability, and European Union deforestation regulation directive compliance <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2666154325000663#bib1>

Jima Degaga (2020), Review on Coffee Production and Marketing in Ethiopia <https://iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JMCR/article/view/52315/54046>

DO MA INS	<b><i>Development strategy priorities:</i></b>	
	<b><i>Changes in the lives of people facing poverty, marginalisation or vulnerability</i></b>	X
	<b><i>Changes in laws, policies and practices that affect people's rights</i></b>	-
	<b><i>Changes in the capacity of organisations and communities to support rights</i></b>	X
	<b><i>Changes in partnerships and collaborations that support people's rights</i></b>	-
	<b><i>Changes in participation of groups facing poverty, marginalisation or vulnerability -</i></b>	
	<b><i>Changes in local leadership of development and humanitarian work</i></b>	X