

# PRESS RELEASE



## Growing Coffee in the Face of Climate Change – Addressing and Mitigating the Impacts

**How is climate change impacting coffee farming families? What can be done to mitigate its effects and adapt to them? How can farming families not only become more resilient to climate change but actually improve their living standard? These were the topics of the keynote speech “Growing Coffee in the Face of Climate Change – Addressing and Mitigating the Impacts” by Michael Opitz, Managing Director at Hanns R. Neumann Stiftung, the foundation that implements the projects of the initiative for coffee&climate.**

Coffee is certainly a crop with specific requirements. That makes it even more susceptible to the alterations climate change poses on tropical regions. The increasing average temperature is turning whole areas unsuitable for coffee cultivation. In many places, rainfall distribution over the year has become less beneficial, leading to insecure water supply or flooding. Seasons have become less distinct and less predictive. This favors the occurrence of pests and diseases and interferes with the flowering and life cycle of the coffee plant.

“Coffee flowering is one of the key aspects during the development cycle of coffee”, explains Michael Opitz. “Flowering usually gets triggered by short rains at the end of the dry period that stimulate the opening of the buds. However, an increase in rainfall during this time leads to weak flowering. Drought and high temperatures thereafter can lead to flower and fruit abortions, increased bean defects, reduced berry growth, and acceleration of ripening – all detrimental to yield and coffee quality.” This is one example. In the seven countries where c&c is active - Indonesia, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Uganda, Brazil, Honduras, and Guatemala, farmers are dealing with different challenges that are being observed and worked on.

## Climate-smart techniques with the benefit of increasing yields

c&c generates knowledge for coffee farming communities to mitigate the impacts of climate change and to better adapt to them. Opitz: “We focus on agronomic practices but with a holistic view on rural livelihoods: We also address income improvement, diversification, food security, gender equality, perspectives for youth, and community-based development beyond the farm level.”

He describes what the cooperation with the farmer families looks like: “Farmers start with assessing climate risks for their region and at their farms. Based on that, we support them in identifying tools that could strengthen their production system.” The farmers absorb training in good agricultural practices, pruning, appropriate use of fertilizers, learn about climate-smart practices such as soil cover, mulching, planting shade trees and improved coffee varieties, and establish diversified agroforestry systems. They start using water trenches to harvest rainwater and drain it in case of heavy rainfalls, bringing out compost, utilizing alternative energy sources, etc. “All these techniques help the farmers to increase their yield in coffee and food crops. This enhances their food security as well as their income. Farmers in the c&c projects have better chances to deal with climate change and escape poverty. The better revenues enable them to invest in their farm and family, for example in education or health care”, says Opitz.

He urges industry and society to become more aware and also points out possibilities to join c&c’s action: “The IPCC Report 2022 was alarming! We at c&c are working with all our forces towards a climate-smart future of coffee farming. But change is happening much faster than we thought and at the worst end of projections.” As an initiative of private and public partners, c&c offers lots of interfaces to work together, such as membership, training, so-called Communities of Practice, or the concept of climate-smart coffee regions. Opitz: “We need to get faster in what we are doing. And we need to be united in our action.”



## ABOUT THE INITIATIVE FOR COFFEE&CLIMATE

The initiative for coffee&climate (c&c) is a pre-competitive partnership of private and public actors. Together they strive to support smallholder coffee farming families and their communities to effectively respond to climate change, increase their resilience and improve their livelihoods.

Since its founding in 2010, c&c has been working in seven regions worldwide: Following a five-step participatory and inclusive approach, smallholder families get access to practical tools and knowledge, allowing them to adapt their farms to climate change, minimize carbon emissions and enhance the carbon storage potential in coffee landscapes.

With more than 92,000 coffee farming households supported to date, c&c is currently in its third phase of implementation and will reach an additional 80,000 families by 2024.

## **MEDIA CONTACT**

---

Anika Nicolaudius  
c&c communication  
[comms@hrnstiftung.org](mailto:comms@hrnstiftung.org)

## **SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER**

---

[coffeeandclimate.org/newsletter](https://coffeeandclimate.org/newsletter)



Visit us on: [www.coffeeandclimate.org](http://www.coffeeandclimate.org)

**coffee & climate**  
*enabling effective response*