



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

COMPETE
The Competitiveness and Trade Expansion Program

**SUSTAINABLE
HARVEST**
at Origin AFRICA

The Relationship Information Tracking System (RITS): Building Simple Applications to Improve Coffee Traceability, Transparency and Quality

Quarter 2 Activity Report July 15, 2010



Name of Organization:	Sustainable Harvest
Mailing Address:	P.O. Box 6890, Moshi, Tanzania
Physical Location:	Rose Garden Road, Majengo, Moshi, Tanzania
Phone:	+255 272753619
Fax:	
Email:	sara@sustainableharvest.com
Organization's Contact Person:	Sara Morrocchi
P F Tracking Number:	SHC-STA-009-010
Title of Activity:	The Relationship Information Tracking System (RITS): Building Simple Applications to Improve Coffee Traceability, Transparency and Quality
Start Date of Reporting Period:	April 1, 2010
End Date of Report:	June 30, 2010
Date Report Submitted:	July 15, 2010

Objectives

During the months April-June 2010, Sustainable Harvest staff focused on the tasks

Implementation of RITS and Test Phase Data Collection :

- * **Task 1: Implementation of RITS** – During the beginning of the year, Sustainable Harvest will finalize its RITS and iPhone application technology for use at coffee washing stations. The company will then pilot this technology with Kilicafe, monitoring the success and any challenges that might be encountered with cooperative members using cell phone technology, RFID tags, and the new RITS database. In order to implement this technology, Sustainable Harvest will conduct a series of trainings with the cooperative members to insure proper adoption and use.
- * **Task 2: Test Phase Data Collection** – Sustainable Harvest will then work with Kilicafe to track their 2010 harvest using this system. As a result of RITS, Kilicafe will be better able to bulk and sell their specialty quality coffee to roasters at high price premiums, and Sustainable Harvest will be able to better track the impacts of quality improvement programs on overall coffee quality.

Our objectives during the first quarter were to:

- **Continue technology skills transfer**
- **Launch the RITS database for Kilicafe washing stations**
- **Monitor the harvest and coffee data collection**

Narrative Summary

In the first quarter of 2010, Sustainable Harvest staff focused on introducing RITS to stakeholders and project beneficiaries, with the result that the Tanzania Coffee Board, Kilicafe management, and four farmers groups were eager to begin implementation of the program. In the second quarter of 2010, Sustainable Harvest launched RITS at three washing stations after several weeks of intense training in basic computer skills, and has begun to monitor the 2010 harvest.



In June the Mesengarony, Singisi, and Ngyani Meru Farmers Groups began harvesting their flycrop, a short, low-yield harvest before the main harvest sets in. Training sessions focused on leaders at these two stations, to ensure that they could run RITS without the need for daily supervision. The workshops took place both at the Sustainable Harvest office with the four beneficiary groups, and one-on-one with each farmer group at their washing station. Staff was able to focus closely on the sixteen individuals who will operate RITS, and after two months they had mastered the



basics of computer and iphone use.

While the training was taking place, Sustainable Harvest staff also worked with a group of developers in the USA, and Sustainable Harvest staff in Portland, USA and Oaxaca, Mexico to further adapt the system to the Kilicafe context. This included translating the system into Swahili, creating a Swahili-language users manual, and making slight changes to the system. These changes sprang from comments that washing station managers themselves made, including formatting the dashboard for easier viewing, and functions like calculating a farmer's total delivery. After two months of preparation and training, the program was ready to launch as the first cherries ripened on farmers' trees.

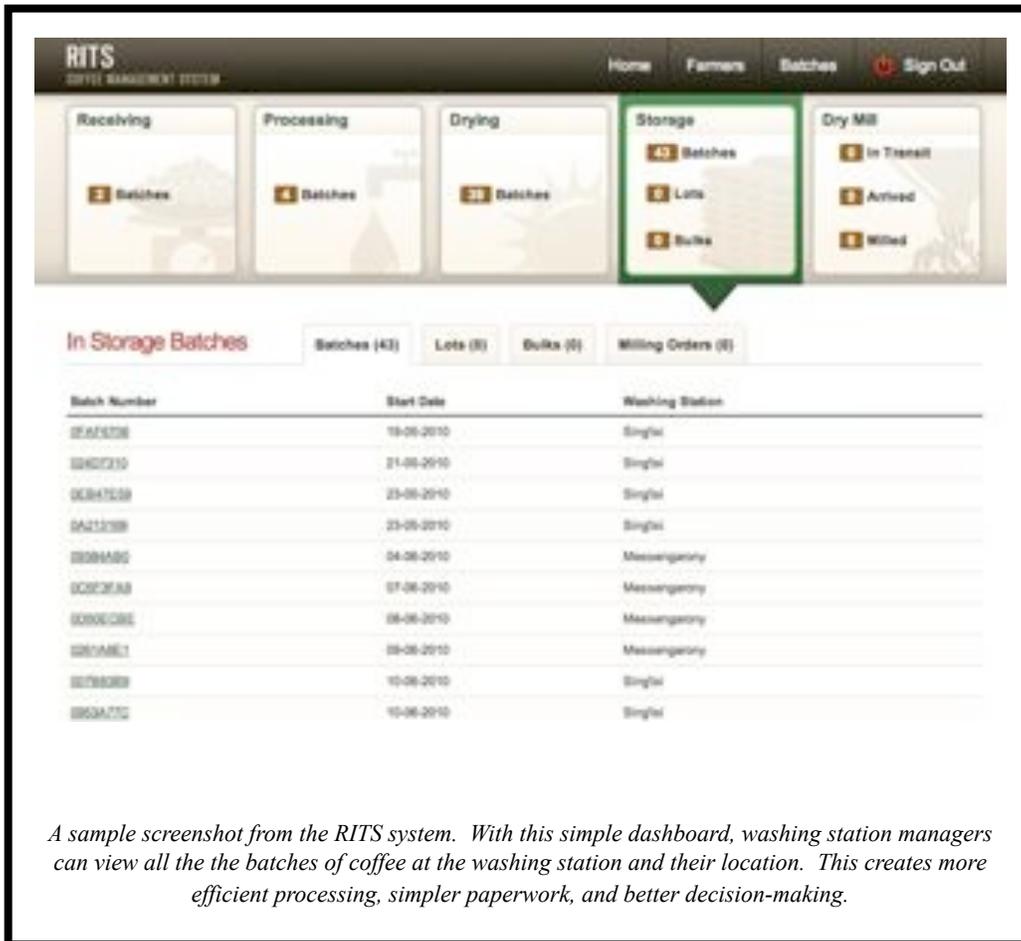


At Mesengarony, Singisi, and Ngyani Meru washing stations, managers were equipped with laptop computers, a 3G internet device, and iphones. As farmers came to the washing stations with bags full of coffee cherries, they weighed and sorted their crop as usual. But instead of the paper ledger book that each would sign to record their delivery, all coffee was entered directly into the RITS system. As a result, the washing station managers are able to immediately know how much coffee they have collected, the cumulative total for each farmer, and the location of each lot within the production chain.



Because RITS is tailored to the Kilicafe context, the switch to a computer-based record system has been relatively seamless. One leader of a farmer group that had been running RITS in his washing station commented that, "we have started using RITS and we have seen how it will reduce paperwork...In working with the system I came to realize it is very simple, all you need is to familiarize yourself with it."

People who have never before used a computer, and who initially were intimidated by the idea of iPhones and the internet, are confident enough to run the system on their own. Successfully bringing RITS technology to the washing stations was often a matter of increasing confidence and comfort. The chairman of Messengarony group commented that "I didn't expect that I'd be able to use a computer, but I have understood very well because of the way I have been trained, and I believe my colleagues have understood too. Once we got the computers and start using, we need very little supervision."



Objective	Activity	Result
Continue technology skills transfer	Conduct training on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • build computer skills at the washing station level • build RITS program skills at the washing station level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Washing station personnel prepared to use RITS during the 2010 harvest
	Develop training materials for trainers, producers, and dry mill personnel on the RITS system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beta RITS harvest training manual complete and distributed to farmer groups
Launch the RITS database for Kilicafe washing stations	Work with developers in the USA to finalize RITS for the Kilicafe context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Kilicafe washing stations begin using RITS
Monitor the harvest and coffee data collection	Conduct training on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality management training workshops • Wet mill management workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Washing station personnel prepared to successfully produce high quality specialty coffee
	Work with developers in USA to track data and troubleshoot problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5714 kg of parchment coffee from 1,000 producers successfully tracked as of June 28, 2010

Chart 1: Objective, Activity, and Result

Challenges

During the second quarter, staff re-evaluated the strategy to hire a replacement Project Assistant and IT Program Manager. The Moshi office is moving forward with the hiring process for a Project Accountant. Rather than replace the IT Program Manager, Sustainable Harvest's global IT Manager Oscar Magro has taken on a direct role as in RITS project.



Logistically, bringing laptop computers and internet to a washing station poses a few challenges. Electricity and cellphone are not reliable. Washing station managers have dealt with these problems as best they can, by creatively searching for means to charge computers and by using multiple cell networks. Because RITS is in the pilot stage, the washing stations must also contend with glitches in the system until the Sustainable Harvest team can make improvements.

