



**SUSTAINABLE  
HARVEST**  
*at Origin* AFRICA

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

Quarter 3 Activity Report  
October 15, 2010



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## Objectives

During the months July-September 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 third quarter were to:

- Train Kilicafe users and incorporate Kilicafe-level data into RITS
- Monitor the harvest and coffee data collection
- Create market linkages with specialty coffee roasters

## Narrative Summary

During the third quarter of 2010, RITS users at washing stations grew more expert with computer and iPhone use, so required fewer technical skills training. Instead, third quarter project activities focused on ensuring smooth operation of RITS at the washing stations, incorporating sample collection, cupping, and bulking data into RITS, and monitoring the harvest quality.

In July, August, and September, Kilicafe's northern chapter washing stations begin their harvest in earnest. Increased volume of coffee deliveries meant more work for RITS users, but the previous six months of computer skills training paid off during this busy time. All four washing stations are successfully tracking their coffees through RITS, and have only encountered minor problems. These issues, such as internet connectivity or typos in the batch creation process, have not hindered accurate data collection because Sustainable Harvest staff regularly visits each washing station to check on these problems and find solutions. Field visits are an important step as our team learns how to improve RITS and make it ever more user-friendly.



In August, washing stations began sending samples to be evaluated by Kilicafe cuppers. Integrating cupping scores and bulking information is a critical component of RITS, since the instant relay of information between the washing station and cupping lab has enormous value. Sustainable Harvest staff conducted a workshop with Kilicafe staff and washing station managers to train users in the cupping module of RITS, which includes tracking sample collection, reviewing cupping scores, and understanding bulking instructions. Sustainable Harvest staff continues to work closely with the Kilicafe cupping team as they integrate the new system into their lab.

The success of RITS in the field is due to its intuitive design, the result of close partnership with coffee growers and clear understanding of their needs. Growers often comment that RITS is simple to understand and flows seamlessly into coffee production processes. In August, our collaborative design strategy motivated another visit from Sustainable Harvest IT director Oscar Magro. He traveled to Moshi in order to continue improving the user-centered design of RITS, and to assist local staff as the next level of data collection went live.

Oscar visited each washing station to ask specific questions about their experience with RITS: what they would like to change, and which new features they would like to add. He also visited the dry mill, to better understand the specific path from washing station parchment to exportable green coffee. After this information gathering, Oscar immediately got to work, thinking about ways to incorporate suggestions and observations into the system.



The Sustainable Harvest team also took advantage of Oscar's expertise to maintain transparency with other stakeholders of the project progress. The team met with Adolph Kumburu, Director of the Tanzania Coffee Board, to informally present the project's current status. Mr. Kumburu found the cupping module an especially powerful tool to more efficiently communicate with distant washing stations and more effectively make sales decisions. Our staff also decided to showcase this wide appeal of RITS at the "Let's Talk Coffee Africa" event held in Moshi at the end of August. Sustainable Harvest staff and a representative from the Mesengarony washing station spoke about RITS functionality, benefits to coffee growers, and experience in the field. Producers from all over the region quickly saw the benefits that RITS could have in creating business efficiencies and many were interested in implementing a tracking system themselves.

Also at Let's Talk Coffee Africa, the Sustainable Harvest team facilitated meetings between Kilicafe growers and coffee buyers from the US and Australia. As a result of these direct conversations, the RITS presentation during the event, and also transparent understanding of cup quality, Green Mountain Coffee Roasters has expressed interest in beginning a new relationship with Kilicafe washing stations. Sustainable Harvest will help nurture this relationship in the coming months, which will lead to coffee sales and more secure income for thousands of growers.

**Chart 1: Objective, Activity, and Result**

Objective	Activity	Result
Train Kilicafe users and incorporate Kilicafe-level data into RITS	Conduct training on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RITS system workshop for dry mill managers and cuppers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cupping scores associated with washing station lots, and instantly accessible by growers and Kilicafe staff</li> </ul>
	Collection, bulking cleaning, sorting, drying, storage of RITS tracked coffee at the dry mill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coffee lots better monitored by both washing station staff and Kilicafe staff</li> </ul>
Monitor the harvest and coffee data collection	Procurement of drying and quality control equipments and hermetic cocoons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equipment arrived in Tanzania, soon to be installed at the washing station</li> </ul>
	Cup coffees with Kilicafe to better understand quality profiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainable Harvest staff targets specific problem areas at washing stations</li> </ul>
	Work with developers in USA to track data, troubleshoot problems, and improve the system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>81,034 kg of parchment coffee from 1,000 producers successfully tracked in 305 batches as of September 30, 2010</li> </ul>
Create market linkages with specialty coffee roasters	Link input suppliers with producers and link producers with buyers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>US company Green Mountain Coffee Roasters interested to begin a new relationship with Kilicafe, representing sales contracts in 2010</li> </ul>

### Challenges

One major challenge during the harvest period has been improving coffee quality. Producers tend to be reluctant to increase their investment of labor that specialty coffee best practices require. Without diligent sorting of cherry and parchment, cup quality cannot improve. Luckily, with the incorporation of cupping scores into lot information, washing station managers can easily see the value of stricter quality control. In September, we were pleased to see some

improvements with Singisi group's quality. Our team will continue its training focus on best practices in the final quarter of the year.

In August, the 6-month search for a project Accountant ended with the hiring of Augustine Chambo in the Moshi office. After only a month, we are confident in his ability to succeed. Chambo represents a great improvement in the financial tracking competencies for Sustainable Harvest in Moshi, and will ensure that future activity budgets run more smoothly.

