



SNAPSHOT

Renewable Technologies Help Improve Coffee Quality

With assistance from USAID-ACCESO, smallholder coffee farmer installs a solar dryer, improving both the yield and quality of his crop.



Photo by Fintrac Inc.

The solar dryer in Jose Antonio Pérez's home is helping him save time and money, improve the quality of his product, and increase his income.

“The results are better. I can dry my coffee in two or three days.”

*José Antonio Pérez,
Coffee producer.*

Telling Our Story
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José Antonio Pérez is a coffee farmer in the small community of Camalote, Copán. He supports his family of five on his limited coffee income.

Five months ago, Pérez became involved with USAID-ACCESO after a project technician visited his community. The project is providing technical assistance and training to Pérez in order to improve both the yield and quality of his coffee. By introducing good agricultural practices such as raised bed planting, irrigation, and fertilization, Pérez has already noticed significant improvements in the quality of his coffee trees.

Another key component of USAID-ACCESO's approach is to provide training in postharvest practices. Through the project, Pérez learned about the benefits of solar drying. For his recent harvest, following USAID-ACCESO's recommendations, Pérez installed his own solar dryer to ensure a high-quality product. The dryer is more efficient, less labor-intensive, and requires fewer expensive materials.

“The results are better,” he said. “I can dry my coffee in two or three days.”

Quicker drying times make coffee production more efficient and less vulnerable to weather or pests. Pérez is saving significant time and money in the critical drying process, while also ensuring improved quality, all of which means a higher income for Pérez and his family.

With coordination from the project, Pérez also benefitted from lower prices for his fertilizer and technical assistance on its use. In addition, he was introduced to a local buyer who paid higher prices for his coffee, which is now being exported.

A respected member of the community and president of the local rural savings bank, Pérez is an important link for transferring the knowledge he learned from USAID-ACCESO.

The project is now promoting the use of solar dryers with other growers in the area and has already installed 15 demonstration solar coffee dryers, impacting the lives of 94 project clients.

USAID-ACCESO is currently working with more than 4,300 coffee farmers on a total production area of 4,800 hectares. The farmers are receiving technical support in value-added processing, farm certification, market linkages, cupping quality, waste management. The project will assist more than 30,000 client households over four years.