

## From knowledge to action: ZEF's way of sustainable research

The Center for Development Research (ZEF) of the University of Bonn initiates founding of a non-governmental organisation (NGO) in Ethiopia

**The Ethiopian Coffee Forest Forum (ECFF) was officially registered as an NGO by the end of 2005. This initiative is a direct outcome of the research project "Conservation and use of wild coffee in the montane rain forests of Ethiopia". The project is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and is being carried out under the leadership of ZEF in close cooperation with several research partners from Ethiopia and the University of Bonn. The private sector is involved as well.**

"ZEF has made sustainability of its research projects a major goal", says Manfred Denich, leader of the project on wild coffee at ZEF, "therefore, we are explicitly interested in implementing our research results on the spot. But as we all know by experience, it is not easy to put science into real practice, especially not in the fields of agriculture and nature conservation".

"The developing countries we are working in, especially young democracies, often lack the personnel and institutional capacities to go through the quite lengthy and demanding process of transferring research results to development implementation policies successfully", explains Franz Gatzweiler, institutional economist at ZEF. "That's why one of our major project goals is the creation of structures that enable us to put our research results into practice instead of leaving them on paper only".

"We explicitly welcome the founding of the Ethiopian Coffee Forest Forum (ECFF)", says Dr. Aberra Deressa, Ethiopian State Minister and member of the Executive Board of ECFF. "We consider this Forum as a mediator between science, policy and civil society", Aberra sets out. "The political, academic, and civil levels of society have to cooperate closely in order to achieve our common goal of conserving and using the wild coffee populations in the montane rain forests of Ethiopia in a sustainable way. The ECFF, whose Executive Board consists of government representatives, university professors, and the director of our national institute for biodiversity research, offers the right context for such a cooperation", concludes Aberra.

ECFF's role is not only to provide a platform for cooperation between various interest groups, but also build up further projects and raise funds for those. "We intend to strengthen ECFF's capacities gradually in the forthcoming years, so the project 'Conservation and use of wild coffee in the montane rain forests of Ethiopia' can be carried on under local lead in the long run", explains project leader Manfred Denich. "Actually, we want our local partners to do without the support of the German project in the future. At some point, the conservation and sustainable use of wild coffee and of the montane rain forests should be completely and independently in Ethiopian hands".

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The worldwide highly appreciated Arabica coffee originally comes from the South-West of Ethiopia, where it is still growing in its montane rain forests. This so-called wild coffee is not only being used by the local population, but it also forms an important genetic resource for international coffee cultivation.

**For more information on the wild coffee project see at  
<http://www.coffee.uni-bonn.de/>**

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