

# Press Release



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For further information, call 011-130-7033  
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## USAID EQUIPS ECX COFFEE CERTIFICATION LABS TO EXPAND SPECIALTY MARKETS

### Certification Vital to Expanding Exports and Increasing Smallholder Farmer Incomes

**Hawassa, SNNPR, Ethiopia, October 7, 2014** – The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Agribusiness Market Development (AGP-AMDe) project provided new tools and instruments to equip Ethiopian Commodity Exchange coffee certification laboratories in Hawassa, Jimma and Dilla required for Specialty Coffee Association of American (SCAA) Certification.

Coffee is the number one export earner for Ethiopia and the Government of Ethiopia strategy is to increase export volume and value. To support the expansion of the coffee market, the U.S. Government invested \$175,000 USD (3.3 million birr) in new quality testing and grading instruments for the ECX labs. The tools and instruments, including coffee grinding and roasting machines, are those used for measuring moisture, grading the coffee, preparing tasting samples, and others needed for operating the facility to international standards. USAID AMDe also supported some refurbishing of the laboratory buildings to be SCAA compliant.

Equipping these labs and facilitating certification by the SCAA will ensure the international coffee industry's confidence in the ECX laboratories' operation with recognized best practices and quality standards. Buyers working directly with cooperatives will have greater certainty in the coffee grading. As a result, the cooperatives are also expected to secure higher prices, which will result in higher incomes for member smallholder farmers.

Ethiopia is the third largest producer of Arabica coffee in the world and was the first country in Africa to have a SCAA certified lab as of 2013. This year, five certified labs will support the increased quantities of higher quality coffee graded by ECX for export.

USAID works closely with the Ministries of Trade and Agriculture as well as with the Ethiopia Commodity Exchange to implement initiatives that support farmers' cooperative unions and smallholder farmers.

*Agribusiness Market Development (AMDe) is a flagship activity of the [U.S. Feed the Future initiative](#) in Ethiopia and represents one of USAID's largest contributions to the Government of Ethiopia's Agricultural Growth Program.*