

WHY COFFEE CARES ABOUT SEED SYSTEM INVESTMENT

The U.S. coffee industry relies on coffee grown largely by smallholders with limited means in low-income areas of the world. WCR is an industry-driven organization that seeks to grow, protect, and enhance supplies of quality coffee while improving the livelihoods of the families who produce it.

COFFEE CARES ABOUT

Diverse sources of supply

Coffee grown in distinct places around the world enables the differentiation, dynamism, and expansion of the U.S. coffee industry. Farmers around the world need improved varieties that work in their production environments to improve productivity, preserve natural resources, and continue growing a diverse array of coffees to fuel the U.S. industry.

Farmer livelihoods & resilience

Extreme weather events and growing production costs make it tough for smallholder coffee growers to stay in business. They need improved coffee varieties and stronger access to them, such as through the right financial tools, to support vibrant agricultural systems that provide a win-win for U.S. businesses and smallholders alike. With access to improved varieties, smallholders can grow their operations with less exposure to risk—a viable path for reducing poverty. Less poverty means greater stability and resilience, stemming migration flows while stabilizing the coffee supplies that the U.S. industry relies on.

HOW WE GET THERE

Key activities are needed to achieve these outcomes. Of these, seed system investments are particularly powerful yet often missing. Strong seed systems connect R&D to farms by getting improved coffee trees into the hands of the smallholders that need them most. Technical assistance complements these investments by providing agronomic insights and training so farmers can make the most of their trees.

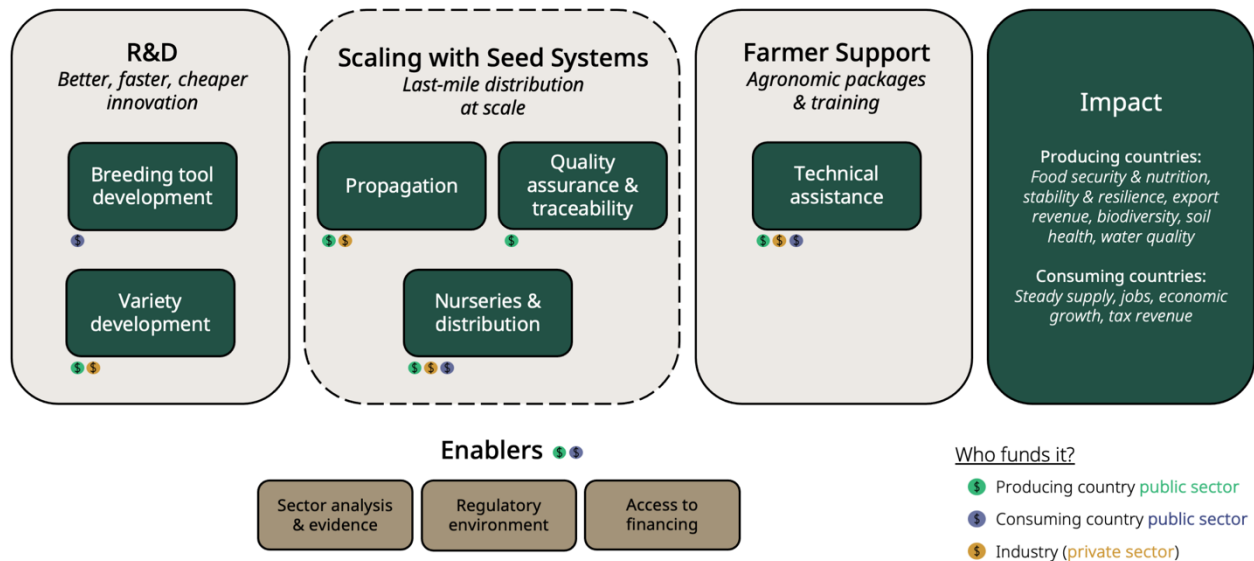
COFFEE'S ECONOMIC IMPACT

- 2.2 million U.S. jobs
- \$343 billion in economic activity and \$38 billion in tax revenue in the U.S.
- 60% of the global coffee supply grown by small-scale producers
- 100 million people rely on coffee for their livelihood

WHAT IS A SEED SYSTEM?

A seed system is a network of organizations and institutions that propagate, distribute, and regulate seeds and planting material. For example, in the coffee seed system, nurseries obtain seeds from seed lot owners; nurseries then grow seeds into seedlings to sell to farmers.

Ensuring long-term sustainability of the coffee sector & its growers



The U.S. government is investing in coffee agricultural R&D to help coffee trees become more resilient to pests, disease, erratic weather, and more. This leverages ongoing U.S. coffee industry investment in global breeding programs for next generation varieties.

Complementary public-private investment is generating an unprecedented pipeline of resilient, high-quality trees that will be available starting in 2030. The timing couldn't be better. Half the world's coffee trees need to be replaced as they're reaching the end of their lifespan. However, innovation is just part of the equation.

The even bigger task will be to get these innovations into the hands of the smallholders who need them most. Seed system improvements are primary to achieving this and ensuring everyone, even marginalized communities, benefit. They also create tremendous opportunity for men-, women-, and youth-run businesses to get involved. Current seed systems have never handled the scale of innovation that is coming – we must invest now to prepare.

The public sector is well-positioned to help increase the capacity of seed systems by supporting enablers like regulatory policies and programs and access to finance. Public support for solving propagation and distribution bottlenecks is critical too, such as improving demand forecasting, a common challenge in tree-crop seed systems.

Industry investment will continue to flow where it can be most catalytic and consequential. Public investments in seed systems, and the enablers that support them, will maximize the impact of this private investment. **Together, public and private investment can ensure a sustainable future for coffee and the people who rely on it for a living.**