



**Report of the Core Group on the
Consultative Forum on the meeting held on
5 March 2015**

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1. The Core Group, chaired by the Vice-Chairperson, Ms Amy Diggs of the USA, met in London, United Kingdom on 5 March 2015.

Item 1: Adoption of the Agenda

2. The Core Group adopted the draft Agenda contained in document [CG-23/14 Rev. 1](#).

Item 2: Report of the last meeting of the Core Group

3. The Core Group took note of the report of the 6th meeting of the Core Group contained in document [CG-22/14](#).

Item 3: 5th Consultative Forum on Coffee Sector Finance

4. The Vice-Chairperson of the Core Group reported that the 5th Consultative Forum on Coffee Sector Finance was held on 3 March. It was designed to be a follow up to the 4th Consultative Forum that took place in September 2014 under the title “Bridging the gap between farmers and finance”. The aim of the 5th Forum was to provide producing countries with the practical steps necessary to apply for funding from not only the various development banks but also social lenders, bilateral organisations and commodity funds.

5. Ten different organisations gave interesting and informative presentations highlighting the areas in which they are working, the challenges the sector is facing and possible ideas for the future. They also outlined the project cycle along with the practical steps necessary for obtaining finance. Many speakers also gave concrete examples of projects which they had funded and the impact that such projects have had.

6. In response to the Chairperson’s request for ideas on how to follow up to this event and disseminate the information, the Head of Operations said that discussions had already begun with the World Bank to make sure that the findings from the Forum and more specifically the joint study prepared by the World Bank and the ICO, are disseminated through a series of interactive webinars. The hope is to hold a webinar every two to three months so that Members can have real-time discussions without having to travel. The ICO hopes to hold the first trial webinar in May. Members will of course receive all the necessary information such as the focus of the webinar, background reading and technical requirements in advance through the newsletter.

7. With regards to following up with the organizations that were represented at the 5th Forum, the Head of Operations said that the ICO had already been in touch with the Inter-American Development Bank about the ConnectAmericas platform which is a very promising initiative that could be used by the ICO to find funding for projects.

8. One Member asked whether the ICO had considered involving other institutions, such as the European Investment Bank and the European Investment Fund. The Head of Operations replied that these institutions had not as yet been approached but that it was definitely an avenue that could be explored. The Executive Director confirmed this and stated that the Secretariat was always looking to involve more institutions, so these plus the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development could all be contacted. The Head of Operations commented that the ICO had learnt a great deal from this and previous Forums and that it would like in the near future to be able to provide Members with technical expertise and advice on how to prepare a project proposal to secure financing.

9. The Core Group took note of this information.

Item 4: 6th Consultative Forum on Coffee Sector Finance

10. The Core Group noted that there would not be enough time to hold the 6th Consultative Forum in either Milan in September 2015 or Ethiopia in 2016. It would therefore be held in London in September 2016. With this in mind, detailed discussions of the arrangements for the 6th Forum were saved for the next meeting. Core Group Members were, however, invited to submit ideas for the theme and speakers to the Secretariat by 30th August 2015.

Item 5: Study on risk and finance in the coffee sector

11. The Head of Operations presented the jointly produced World Bank and ICO report entitled 'Risk and Finance in the Coffee Sector: A Compendium of Case Studies on Related to Improving Risk Management and Access to Finance in the Coffee Sector'. The ICO facilitated the contacts whilst the World Bank put together the study and carried out the analytical work. The report is a very good example of how two organizations can effectively work together. The Head of Operations reported that the compendium had already been used as the basis for a whole day's workshop at the recent African Fine Coffees Association (AFCA) conference. The workshop concentrated on the obstacles farmers face in accessing finance and the lessons that can be learnt from these case studies in terms of organizing farmers and managing risk. It was a very successful workshop and it was very encouraging to see that the report was being used so soon after it had been published. Details of the AFCA workshop, which could serve as a benchmark for Members, are available on the ICO's blog.

12. The report consists of four initial chapters which summarise the lessons to have emerged from the case studies. The lessons focus initially on the topic of risk and then on the idea that smallholder coffee farmers are the most vulnerable in the supply chain and what can be done to help these farmers. The Head of Operations encouraged Members to get involved in planning and hosting the forthcoming series of webinars to disseminate the lessons learnt from the case-studies.

13. The representative of Switzerland, as co-sponsor of the report, expressed his satisfaction with the report and encouraged the ICO to disseminate it as widely as possible and to use the work invested in it to create additional value around the world. The Executive Director thanked the Governments of Switzerland and The Netherlands for their contribution to the funding of the study. The Group took note of the report and the additional information provided by the Head of Operations.

Item 6: Other business

14. No other business was raised.

Item 7: Date of next meeting

15. The Core Group noted that the next meeting of the Core Group would take place during the 115th Session of the Council to be held in Milan, Italy from 28 September to 2 October.