Olam

Blending coffee with agroforestry for sustainable landscapes

The rationale for the project goes back to this time last year, when these farmers were battling low productivity that still plagues old coffee farms from the dreaded Roya outbreak in 2014. Low yields, combined with current low market prices, brew a dangerous incentive to encroach into protected forest to expand farmland.

Commenting on the partnership, Edgar Gonzalez, Director of Rainforest Alliance in Mexico said:

"Working with Olam as a partner in The Alliance for Sustainable Landscapes and Markets has been and is a great asset in accomplishing the main goals of the initiative. As one of the most important actors in sustainable sourcing around the world, we share the same vision of the implementation of climate smart agriculture in the amazing coffee landscapes of the state of Chiapas to help producers in the mitigation of climate change, the sustainability of the goods that the forests provide them and their access to a responsible market that impacts directly on the wellbeing of their families and communities.

"We are thrilled to work with Olam side by side in creating solutions that involve producers, industry, markets and consumers, taking actions for a sustainable future."

The livelihoods of 100,000 families in this area depend on coffee, making the beautiful, heavily forested Triunfo and La Sepultura national parks vulnerable to deforestation. But this doesn't have to be the case if the farmers can enjoy a profitable and sustainable coffee business on their existing land.

Abelardo Guzman Perez is one farmer learning how to achieve this. "*Last year Olam supported us with 50,000 coffee plants and this year another 15,000 plus the nursery we are making. Today, thanks to them, these 65,000 plants that are already planted, have increased production and thanks to the training of Olam we have the good techniques and tools for good planting. Today we know how to sow. We have increased production and quality of life for our families, and we are giving life to the environment!*"

Half a million coffee saplings have been planted so far, to replace old stock, which, combined with the agronomic training, has already increased the yields of 200 farmers by 60% on average. 40,000 forest trees are also being planted this year. By the end of 2019, more than 1,000 hectares will have been reforested. The target is to reach 4,000 by 2023, contributing to Mexico's goal of zero deforestation by 2030 with a 10mn MT reduction of CO_2 equivalent.