BAFWAC

Manos al Agua – Intelligent Water Management

a Nestle case study

November 2017

Company details

Headquartered in Switzerland, Nestle has been the largest food company in the world (measured by revenues and other metrics) since 2014.

http://www.nestle.com

Summary of action

Nestlé's subsidiary companies, Nescafé and Nespresso, depend on Columbian suppliers for raw materials. Many of these suppliers are smallholders whose crops are dependent on local weather conditions. In the face of a changing climate, both Nestlé and its Columbian coffee suppliers need a reinforced environmental resilience. For this reason, Nestlé has partnered with multiple other organizations to formulate an Intelligent Water Management (IWM) plan – specifically the Manos al Agua framework.

Program rationale

Colombia is one of the major coffee producing countries where Nestlé sources its green beans, meaning that climate- and water-related challenges facing the Colombian coffee sector have a direct impact on its sourcing of raw materials. The problems faced in Colombia are complex; the region endures a dual water challenge with both shortage and excess, with 23% of the population facing problems accessing water during dry years and close to 10% affected by intense rain. This water imbalance has a strong negative effect on the productivity of farms, with harvest drops of up to 40%.

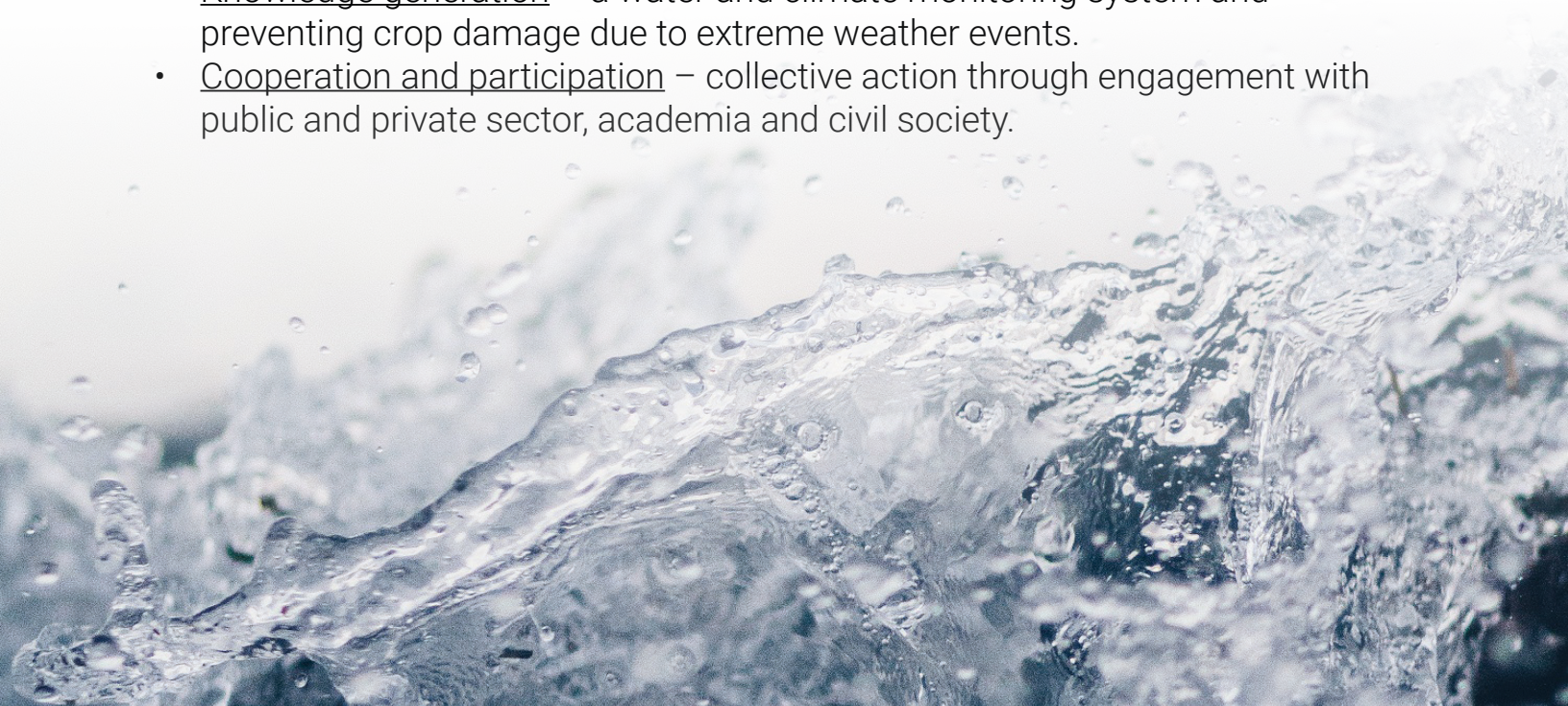
Program approach

Public-private partnership involving the Colombian Ministry of Rural Development, the Colombian Federation of Coffee Growers, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Wageningen University and Research Centre, the Nestle (Nescafe and Nespresso).

The regional Intelligent Water Management project seeks to make the Colombian coffee sector more resilient to the effects of climate change and water scarcity through improved environmental performance at the farm and watershed level.

The program focuses on 4 areas:

- Clean technology transfer – water conservation/treatment post-coffee washing process.
- Healthy ecosystems – agroforestry and bioengineering to minimize soil erosion and conserve important water areas.
- Knowledge generation – a water and climate monitoring system and preventing crop damage due to extreme weather events.
- Cooperation and participation – collective action through engagement with public and private sector, academia and civil society.



Results & Benefits

- Training on the economic management of farms has been given to hundreds of participating coffee producers.
- 10 pioneering water-reuse systems have been constructed.
- Roughly 160 sites were selected for reforestation/agroforestry projects. Coffee plantlets were distributed to farmers to create nurseries. 15 sites prone to landslides were selected for specific bioengineering restoration projects.
- 27 local Manos al Agua community participation groups were set up, focusing on training farmers and implementing actions in 25 river basins (reforesting, bioengineering activities, and the installation of climate monitoring stations).

Lessons learned

- By partnering with academic and public bodies, Nestlé could achieve far more than it would alone in the same timeframe.
- Even simple behavioral changes implemented by the Manos al Agua program, such as using basins of water to wash coffee beans rather than leaving the tap running, have cut water consumption in half, so the information generated at the top of the scheme (Wageningen University) has already proven useful. The challenges then are related to the dissemination of this knowledge.

What next?

To meet Nestlé's goal of implementing all action plans defined for improved water management in their upstream supply chains for coffee in high-priority areas by 2020, Nestlé intends to continue to support the good work of the Manos al Agua community participation groups.

Source:
http://manosalagua.com/en/about

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BAFWAC was jointly launched by CDP, CEO Water Mandate, SUEZ, and World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) in December 2015. The initiative commits companies to analyze and report water-and-climate-related risks and impacts, and to implement collaborative response strategies along the value chain.

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