

Inspiring practices in corporate social responsibility

Guidelines for commercial agriculture in Ethiopia



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Foreword

The commercialisation of agriculture is a top priority for Ethiopia. It is therefore encouraging to have seen a rapid development of the commercial agriculture sector in recent years. This is especially the case for the horticulture sector.

Entrepreneurs, government and other stakeholders share the opinion that commercial agriculture can be successful only when it is done on a sustainable footing. It is widely acknowledged that although the entrepreneur has prime responsibility in this respect, he or she cannot do it alone. Developing sustainable agriculture requires an exchange of knowledge and experience among business, government and civil societal organisations. The Code of Practice developed by and for the Ethiopian floriculture sector is a good example of such a process.

Working on sustainability by entrepreneurs is generally referred to as corporate social responsibility (CSR). In practice it entails constantly working on improving the three P's (people, planet and profit) in a balanced manner. Most entrepreneurs involved in commercial agriculture in Ethiopia are motivated to work on CSR. As a result, a wide variety of good practices have evolved in recent years. A need was felt to make some of these good practices available to the agribusiness community, accompanied by basic guidelines for developing a company strategy towards CSR within an Ethiopian business context.

We are happy and proud to present to you this booklet on CSR for Ethiopian-based commercial agriculture. It should be considered an initial step in supporting and stimulating agri-entrepreneurs in their efforts to continuously improve the sustainability performance of their farms.

We should like to thank the entrepreneurs who voluntarily made information available about the CSR practice they have developed. We should also like to thank the authors for presenting the general concepts and approaches in a compact and comprehensive manner.



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Introduction

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is an approach that will make your company more sustainable. It will ensure that you work in a balanced manner on economic, social and environmental aspects within your company and in interaction with interested parties outside your company. CSR will strengthen your company's market and societal position.

Improving your market position

The CSR approach has become well accepted within the international business community. It has increasingly developed into a necessity in high-value markets such as Europe and the USA – not only because of moral values and responsibilities regarding sustainability, but also because of the need for responsiveness towards stakeholders.

Furthermore, pressure groups, media, the state and other public bodies are pressing companies to become more socially and environmentally responsible. This makes companies more susceptible to reputation damage: rumours of child labour or the careless use of pesticides can seriously damage their image – and thus their market position.

1

Sustainability

The Brundtland Commission, an institution established by the United Nations, defines sustainability as *'meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'*. The commission views sustainable development as a change process in which the use of resources, direction of investments, orientation of technological development and institutional change must all be in harmony. Furthermore, these activities should not jeopardise the present or future potential to fulfil human needs and desires.



Developing a strategy

It is becoming more important for companies to develop a strategy for integrated sustainability that includes people, planet and profit. Complying with voluntary standards combined with independent auditing and having market labels, for instance, will enable you, as a company, to 'prove' or 'guarantee' that you do what you say you do. Furthermore, CSR can be worked on at sector level. A good example is the development and implementation of the Code of Practice for floriculture by the Ethiopian Horticulture Producers and Exporters Association (EHPEA). The aim of this code is to build a reputation and create visibility for the sector that supports its objective of sustainability and credibility (see section 3).

Concluding remarks: towards an optimal approach

Finding the right approach to CSR can be a time-consuming process that needs to be well thought through. It requires, for example, consultation with stakeholders and a search process in order to strike a good balance in progressing the three P's (people, planet and profit), which are the focus of sections 3, 4 and 5. In the following section, we look into the main questions you should ask yourself when developing a CSR strategy.

Business 'licences'

Terms 'licence to sell', 'licence to operate' and 'licence to exist' are used quite often in discussions about CSR. These are informal licences that (like the acceptance or approval of your product) can be regarded as preconditions for your business: without them, your company is liable to be in a difficult and risky position.

The term 'licence to sell' is about your relationship with buyers and consumers

of your products. For a sustainable business, not only should the quality of the product be perfect: it is also important for it to be produced in a responsible manner. 'Licence to operate' is about the acceptance and appreciation by the 'social environment' of your farm: government officials, community stakeholders, workers and other stakeholders in your environment have to approve of and support your company. This is a precondition for you

to build up a business. 'Licence to exist' (or 'licence to be supported and exist') is related to public pressure: there is an increasing need for accountability to civil society.



A sustainable approach

Introducing socially and environmentally friendly approaches in commercial agriculture sometimes requires a courageous attitude and great perseverance. Such was the case with the introduction of integrated pest management (IPM) at ET Highland rose farm. IPM is a mainly biological method and is considered a sustainable alternative to the use of chemical pesticides. Emebet Tesfaye, farm manager at ET Highland, says that especially the first three months were worrisome:

I had sleepless nights due to the probability of loss of production. We knew we were taking a risk: changing from regular calendar spraying with chemicals to IPM can cost considerable production. The first phase of IPM indeed caused ET Highland a significant loss. Now, however, the crop looks healthier than ever, with full green leaves and colourful rose buds, thanks to IPM. We have therefore implemented IPM in all our other greenhouses and we wouldn't want anything else. The risk, in the end, was well worth it.

The case of ET Highland (which is further examined in section 3) is a good example of the benefits (and dilemmas) of CSR. The farm management strove for an environmentally and socially sustainable approach, but knew that pioneering IPM meant taking a risk. The management took the risk and eventually appeared to be successful. The introduction of IPM had an additional benefit: it improved the company's position in the world market.

FARM POLICY ON HARASSMENT

Notice to all Farm Employees


The following types of behaviors are not allowed under the Farm Policy on Harassment:

- Sexual Harassment
- Retaliation
- Discrimination
- Harassment based on race, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, or religion

Examples of Harassment:

- Sexual Harassment: Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.
- Retaliation: Adverse actions taken against an employee for reporting harassment or participating in an investigation.
- Discrimination: Treating an employee differently because of their race, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, or religion.
- Harassment based on race, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, or religion: Unwelcome actions based on these characteristics.

Employees should report harassment to their supervisor or the Farm Policy on Harassment Coordinator.



Hygiene Day



Let's and

From intention to practice

CSR is a very broad concept. It has almost unlimited potential to embrace important issues and to promote work on improvement of the three P's (people, planet and profit). In discussion with your stakeholders, many relevant issues and suggestions will be raised to work on.

At the same time, we know that working on CSR requires consultations, for instance with other companies in the sector, and a careful step-by-step approach that is aimed at continuous improvement. Also mentioned in section 1, it can be helpful to start with a sector code and/or a market label.

It is important, especially at the beginning, not to overload your agenda. It is better not to put too many things on your plate: concentrate on the most relevant concerns of your business. To help get a focus on these, start by asking yourself *'what?', 'why?'* and *'for whom?'*. This will assist you in defining your CSR ambitions: what is our concern, why do we want to do something about it and for whom is it intended?

Four angles

Asking yourself questions about your ambitions, goals and objectives is an effective way to get a clear picture of the CSR concerns you want to work with. When asking the *'why, what and for whom'* questions, it can be helpful to choose several points of view, or *'angles'*:

2

Working together

'I see many opportunities to improve things in Ethiopia, in regard to both production and good animal care. To really make things better, I think it is essential and beneficial for farmers to share knowledge and work together.'

Gert van Putten, agricultural entrepreneur in Europe and Ethiopia.

A first, and obvious angle concerns legislation.

‘What do I need to do to comply with the laws and regulations?’ One could say that this is the starting point for CSR, since CSR is about continuous improvements, driven by the private sector, that go beyond legal requirements.

The search for these improvements helps to create a better balance, both inside the company and with contacts outside it. It is advisable to consider both the national laws and regulations and the frameworks established by multilateral organisations – such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) or the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (section 3 provides more examples of these kinds of frameworks that are relevant to the Ethiopian context).

A second angle is to find out what kind of initial ideas you and your senior staff have regarding the CSR concerns.

What needs to be addressed? And what can be done about it?



Stakeholder dialogue

Good relations with and the active involvement of stakeholders are crucial in making a business successful. A stakeholder is a person, group or organisation that has a direct or indirect 'stake' in an organisation, because he, she or it can affect or be affected by the organisation's actions, objectives and policies. Key stakeholders in an organisation include its creditors, customers, employees, directors, owners

(shareholders), local, regional and national government, the neighbourhood, suppliers, unions and the community from which the business draws its resources. Your contact and relationship with workers and the local community can especially benefit from an organised dialogue. A 'stakeholder dialogue' is a crucial tool for communicating and interacting with workers and

communities. It enables you to constructively address specific problems related to competing interests and competing views. You can assess CSR needs and opportunities together and create a sense of ownership. It is important in stakeholder dialogue to have an open attitude, a sincere involvement in the interests of the stakeholders and a commitment to make positive changes.

The issue of 'what can we do?' means looking at the specific competences and preferences within your company or individual staff members. Perhaps a farm manager has wide experience and keen interest in organising good medical care – then this might be a good starting activity.

A third angle is to more objectively assess relevant 'planet' and 'people' issues. For this purpose, you could conduct an environmental impact assessment and a social audit.

A final angle is to consult stakeholders in order to get a clear picture of their concerns, interests and ideas.

In this way, the stakeholders will have an opportunity to give you input. If, for example, the community has water problems, it would be good to discuss with them the specific issue and define the opportunities for improving the situation. It is also important to have a clear idea about how you want to interact: with whom and with what purpose. This will enable you to 'manage expectations'. For example, it is important to make it clear at the start of a meeting whether your intention is to consult stakeholders or would like them to participate in the decision-making (see the boxed text).



CSR business models

A multitude of CSR concepts and business models have been introduced over the years. It has proven useful from both an analytical and a practical perspective to distinguish four approaches to CSR:

- The *inactive approach* reflects the notion that the only responsibility that companies have (or indeed, can have) is to generate profits. This is a fundamentally inward-looking perspective, focused on being efficient and competitive in the immediate market environment. Entrepreneurs are particularly concerned with 'doing things right'. In this goal-oriented approach, CSR is about maximizing profit, sales and

return on investment.

- In the case of the *reactive approach* entrepreneurs are socially responsive and respond to the actions of external actors that could damage their reputation. In this case, managers only react when competitors do the same.
- An *active approach* to CSR represents a very strong ethical orientation. Entrepreneurs who pursue this approach are explicitly inspired by ethical values and virtues (or 'positive duties'), on the basis of which company objectives are formulated. They often serve as a positive 'business case' showing how ethical entrepreneurship is possible. Companies with a strong focus on ethical aspects sometimes overlook

the need to organise the business in an efficient manner.

- Entrepreneurs with a *proactive approach* interact intensively with external stakeholders and take on board the stakeholders' societal concerns and issues right from the beginning. They aim for medium-term profitability and longer-term sustainability, not only for themselves, but also for the whole sector and sometimes even the whole economy (adding a welfare orientation to the company's aims.)

Van Tulder, R. with A. van der Zwart, 2006, International Business-Society Management: Linking Corporate Responsibility and Globalisation, Routledge, London.

Achieving your ambitions

Once you are fairly clear about what you want to achieve, the next question is: through what means are we going to realise it? For this, 'how?', 'by whom?' and 'when?' are helpful leading questions. You can ask yourselves: how are we going to do it? You can then raise the question: who is going to do it? What are the specific tasks of general management, the human resource manager, the workers...? Finally, you can ask: when are we going to start doing it? And: how are we going to sequence the required activities? What will be the timelines?

Moreover, in getting CSR concrete and operational it is good to pose a more fundamental question: *why am I working on CSR and what are my motives and ambitions from a strategic point of view?* The boxed text 'CSR business models' describes four approaches. This set of approaches might help you to think through what your overall approach to CSR should be.

Concluding remarks: people, planet and profit

The three P's of people, planet and profit are guiding themes throughout the process, from the initial questioning to realizing your ambitions. Without people, a business can't make profit. Without the ecological context of the planet, people and profit would not even exist. Without profit, there is no economic basis for a company and its employees to survive. Achieving harmony between the three P's is the core aim in CSR. They are therefore the central topics in the following sections (3, 4 and 5). By reading the steps, issues and examples, you will get ideas about how you can harmonise them.

CSR is voluntary and entails activities that go beyond legal requirements. It is based on the principle of dialogue and is committed to the improvement of the three P's: people, planet and profit.



'Without people, a business can't make profit'



3

People

As explained in the previous two sections, it is crucial to find the right balance between the three P's (people, planet and profit). To apply a good CSR policy, you need to care about people.

Your employees are indispensable for your business operation; therefore their well-being is fundamental to the sustainability of your business. From a business point of view as well as a moral one, good employee conditions are thus essential. Furthermore, it is important for your company to have a good relationship with the community. This section touches on a number of frameworks, guidelines and examples related to working with employees and the community.

Towards a good human resource policy

You will encounter some challenges when you set about creating good employment conditions in Ethiopian agribusiness. Various regulations and conditions concerning employees that are common in the West do not exist in the Ethiopian context. The Ethiopian Labour Proclamation Act (ELPA) defines a number of basic workers' rights that should be complied with. These regulations are obligatory for the commercial agriculture sector, but in many cases farm managers have difficulty interpreting them for their own context.

Outgrowers

One of the ways to actively engage the community in your agribusiness is by giving farmers in your area an opportunity to become outgrowers. An example is africaJUICE, a fruit-processing farm in Arsi Zone. This company aims to have 1,500 outgrowers by 2015. The outgrowers are small-scale farmers who will supply the company with fruits. In turn, africaJUICE will provide the seedlings, fertilisers, pesticides, training and technical advice. The company is also going to support the certification of the farmers.

This has implications for your farm management: you will have to be innovative and be prepared to invest in creating good human resource policies. At the same time, you will have to build up staff capacities. Always keep in mind that the best way to find adequate solutions is to use a step-by-step approach. You will not be able to formulate the best employee conditions within a few weeks: as mentioned, CSR is a continuous process of improvement.



The issue of land

One of the concerns related to the community is land. When an investor is interested in acquiring land that is held and used by farmers, there are two possible procedures. The first is to present a request to the regional government. The regional government then holds discussions with local farmers about transferring a certain amount of land they hold to the investor, and about the compensation the investor should pay. The second possibility is for the investor to approach and negotiate

directly with farmers, without the close involvement of the government. Unemployment of former landowners and their families is a common problem after land transfers. As they no longer have any land, these people may find it difficult to get new employment. In most cases, investors make it a point to offer employment opportunities to the families who have provided their land. Making such efforts will contribute to establishing good relations with your social environment.



Guiding frameworks

You can use several national and international frameworks and guidelines to help guarantee the rights and conditions that will ensure the well-being of your employees. *Basic human rights* are among the most fundamental values. They are proclaimed by, for instance, the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and leading human rights organisations. These rights should be operationalised on your farm. For example, gender equality, zero tolerance of physical, psychological or verbal violence, and the abolition of religious, ethnic and HIV/AIDS-related discrimination.

There are also several international frameworks that have been designed to guarantee the labour rights and occupational health of employees. The most important of these are:

- *International labour standards.* The Ethiopian government has ratified 23 International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions and most of them have been translated into national laws. For the floricultural sector it is useful to know that these standards are included in the Code of Practice designed by the Ethiopian Horticulture Producers and Exporters Association (EHPEA).



- *Various human rights and labour standards* decreed by, for example, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF).
- *Significant international sector initiatives* like EUREPGAP and MPS.
- *Voluntary standards that support social labels* set by civil society organisations (e.g. Max Havelaar and The Ethical Trading Initiative) or by the sector working together with NGOs (e.g. Fair Flower Fair Plant).

Employee conditions in practice

When establishing employee conditions, it is best to start by assuring the basic worker conditions. These are fundamental and comprise several issues. First of all it is important to respect the minimum age of workers. For commercial farms, this is 18, although one is allowed to employ youngsters from the age of 16 to do light tasks on the farm (however be aware that this must not stop them from attending school). In rural areas, age is often difficult to prove, since most people lack a birth certificate or identification papers.

Good conditions of employment at Red Fox

Red Fox is a multinational company specialised in ornamental young plants. The management at their Ethiopian farm (which is in Koka) aims for a high CSR standard. Their conditions of employment reflect this standard. All workers obtain a written contract upon commencing work and, after a 3- to 6-month probation period, an annual contract is given. Based on a benchmark of comparable companies in the region, the Red Fox management knows that their employees' wages are the same

as or higher than those of the other companies' employees. Besides their basic wage, employees receive complimentary health care, sick leave, the official vacation days (starting with 14 days the first year), maternity leave according to the Ethiopian Labour Law, complimentary bread for lunch each day (1.2 birr per person) and a provident fund. People who have been working for more than 1 year and earn above a certain threshold receive medical insurance.

The entire company is covered by workers' compensation insurance. In 2006, a workers' representative council was founded and an independent union established. Almost 80% of the workers have joined the union.

The second fundamental issue is salary. The ELPA does not specify an exact amount for the minimum wage in the agriculture sector. A common practice at farms is to establish a local benchmark of wages paid for comparable labour activities. The usual practice is for workers to be rewarded with a wage increase after their first weeks of training. The wage is adjusted periodically and also depends on the worker's performance. Some farms also apply a bonus system. Inflation has to be taken into account too; many farms have biannual wage adjustments that are based on inflation. Working hours are a third basic condition. Workers should not work more than 8 hours a day and not more than 48 hours a week. Employees may work overtime only under special circumstances (such as the harvest for the Valentine's Day peak) and overtime hours must be paid.

A highly important third issue in working conditions is safety at work. In this respect it is important to focus on, for instance, the use of personal protective devices (PPDs), which are also known as personal protective equipment (PPE). This is a basic requirement, and one that is compulsory for workers who apply agrochemicals. PPDs





are made abroad and can be obtained through local distributors. When buying the devices, their quality needs to be checked carefully as it varies a lot. A major challenge for many farm managers is to convince employees to use PPDs. Supervisors really have to stress to sprayers how important it is to use the protection equipment. This sometimes even requires the use of sanctions for spraying without the proper equipment. Farm managers in the horticultural sector can obtain the help of an EHPEA (Ethiopian Horticulture Producers and Exporters Association) training team to create awareness and train their people in the appropriate use of the devices. As well as concerns regarding agrochemicals, there is the issue of construction site safety. In the horticultural sector, a crucial concern is with greenhouse construction: when fixing the polyethylene cover to a completed frame structure, workers often need to work at heights. This can lead to severe accidents. Management should provide clear instructions and install safety equipment in the construction area to prevent accidents.

Another important issue is security of employment. Until recently most workers were employed without a written contract. This meant they were working without formal security of employment. Only farm managers, production managers, and some office workers and supervisors were under contract. This situation is rapidly changing, stimulated by pressure in the local labour market and the growing trend for compliance with local and international CSR standards. Understanding the rights and obligations of contractual agreements is a new challenge for farm management as

well as workers. For example, it can be a challenge to convince workers to turn up for work every day. A written agreement sometimes helps to bind the worker to the farm.

The position of pregnant women is a key issue to look at. The legislation regarding pregnancy leave is of a general nature and quite unclear. Contract workers should formally be given paid maternity leave, consisting of 1 month before and 2 months after delivery.

Freedom of organisation is something that needs to be respected. There are no federal labour unions for the agricultural sector in Ethiopia. However, the Code of Practice of the Ethiopian Horticultural Producers and Exporters Association (EHPEA), for instance, encourages its members to allow employees to organise themselves and register a workers union. A recent survey by the ILO showed that almost 80% of the horticultural sector has a workers union.

Health care is an important way to safeguard the well-being of your employees.

The organisation of medical services varies from farm to farm. Most companies have a basic medical service on site, where workers can obtain basic medical check-ups and first aid after accidents.

Farms close to urban areas usually have special arrangements with nearby hospitals so that workers can go there for check-ups and to obtain medicines. In the Ziway region, for example, the Sher Company has built a hospital that can be used not only by the workers but also by other members of the community.

A free medical service is likely to create a tendency towards ‘over-consumption’, as some workers will consult the physician with unnecessary frequency. This is an issue to be aware of when thinking through what services you want to provide, to whom and under what conditions.

Consider other issues to work on

Besides these basic employee conditions, there are several other issues to consider when creating a good human resource policy. For example: the provision of education for your workers and management, and the organisation of childcare for workers’ children. Further aims of your organisation might be the creation of ownership with your employees and to work on building up corporate spirit.



‘Most of the villagers live far below the poverty line; they cannot afford medical services or educational fees for their children. Therefore, I believe it is my duty to support the community.’

Gerrit Barnhoorn, director of Sher, explains why his company built both a large school and a state-of-the-art hospital for employees and the community in the southern town of Ziway.



People, poverty and the export business

Hunger and extreme poverty in Ethiopia has brought about a public discussion on the role of new, intensive, export-oriented agricultural businesses. Critics say that the use of land by the export-oriented horticulture sector is ethically wrong. There are strong reasons in favour of the export business, however. For any country's economy to function properly, exports are needed so that essential items – fuel and construction materials, for example – can be imported. Agricultural export generates foreign exchange. It also provides direct and indirect employment, plus on-the-job training of new skills and competences.

Looking around in your area and assessing the needs of the workers can give you ideas. Awareness of HIV/Aids might be such a need. There are few facilities, especially in rural areas, for treating existing infections and preventing new ones. In some areas, farms develop private initiatives to create awareness. Some also provide special work conditions for infected employees and help for orphans. Florensis – a cut flower farm in Koka – organises an activity day for employees three times a year to create workers' awareness of HIV/AIDS. For this they have worked with a popular local theatre group from Debre Zeit. They are now starting to work with the local NGO (KULICH) to organise other types of awareness-building activities at the site. Also consider the need to empower people with fewer chances, for example those with disabilities. Especially in developing countries, the empowerment of people with fewer abilities is a concern that demands attention. At Freesia Ethiopia Plc, the farm manager made contact with a local NGO in Addis Ababa. The NGO helped set up a school to teach and train deaf people, and now some of its ex-students are working in various positions for the business. They appear to be very good employees, performing so well that 11 of them have joined the permanent staff. Other farms, such as Ethioplants Plc, have now followed this example.

Invest in community relations

Besides caring for the well-being of your employees, it is important to invest in your relationship with the community, since this creates the conditions for having a 'licence to operate', as explained in section 1.

It is advisable to get together with community stakeholders to discuss sensitive issues, such as water and land use and the handling of waste. The earlier mentioned 'stakeholder dialogue' is a valuable tool for such communication. For example, you can try to get a notion of what issues are important to the community by talking to community leaders. In addition to opening a good dialogue, good relationships can be created by supporting the community or one of its institutions. Operating in rural areas of Ethiopia affords opportunities: with relatively small means, you can achieve fundamental improvements for many people.

Support and involvement are generally highly appreciated by the community, and will help to ensure that your company becomes well embedded in the local society and gains a good reputation. Examples include providing clean drinking water, supporting local schools or medical centres, helping new entrepreneurs or contributing to

HIV/AIDS programmes, for instance by developing a HIV/AIDS awareness-building programme for the local community, or by helping children who have lost their parents due to HIV/AIDS.

Concluding remarks

A good relationship with the people around you will create a sustainable foundation for your company. In working with employees and stakeholders, as well as in keeping a good relationship with the community, there are several guiding frameworks and leading principles that can and often must be used. When getting things started, it is fundamental to look at the needs of the people involved; this should be a guiding motive in defining your strategy.

Sector initiative: the Code of Practice for the Ethiopian floriculture sector

In addition to international labour regulations, national labour legislation and international sector initiatives, there is the EHPEA Code of Practice (CoP) drawn up by the Ethiopian Horticulture Producers and Exporters Association (EHPEA) as a national sector initiative. The main objective of the EHPEA – which was established in 2002 and now has 80 members – is to promote the sustainable growth of Ethiopia's export-oriented horticulture sector. The CoP is one of the instruments the EHPEA uses to pursue this goal. The CoP was officially launched in June 2007. The code, which was developed under the guidance of experts at Wageningen University and Research,

sets out a framework for sustainable horticultural practices within Ethiopian farms. It defines elements for the development of best practices within the sector that are essential in order to compete at international market level? The main objective is to provide a mechanism for the Ethiopian horticulture sector to achieve the highest performance standards by continuous improvement and sustainable development, thereby improving the competitive position in the market. This will ensure:

- Long-term economic viability of the sector
- Implementation of sustainable working practices and procedures

- Development of skills at all levels of employment
- Enhancement of the implementation of safe working practices to maintain the well-being of the workforce
- Continuous and responsible management of the environment
- Implementation of at least the minimum labour conditions in accordance with the national law and the promotion of healthy industrial relations
- Active contribution to the local community
- Enhancement of consumer health and safety.



4

Planet

Environmental concerns are crucial to a CSR approach in commercial agriculture: without a suitable environment it would be impossible for you to exist, as an individual or company.

A number of issues that are typically highly relevant, such as pesticide use and waste disposal, are discussed here. The section is divided into two parts: the first considers the life-cycle management of products, while the second part is about natural resources.

Product life-cycle management

You use many and diverse products in your agricultural practices: from construction materials to machines to pesticides. These products can impact and thus jeopardise your ecological surroundings, for instance when they become waste products. It is therefore wise to conduct an impact assessment before starting or expanding your business. Follow this up by developing adequate strategies for handling these products. This is what product life-cycle management is all about.

Waste disposal

Ethiopia's ineffective and environmentally unfriendly waste disposal facilities form one of the major environmental challenges faced by the country's farms. The improvement of this public service is important for farms and a principle condition

How do I dispose of my waste if there is no public waste disposal system? What are the Ethiopian regulations on the use of chemical pesticides? And how do I approach the national concerns of deforestation and erosion? These are all questions to ask when taking into account the 'planet' issue in Ethiopian agribusiness.



for being able to manage non-organic waste – such as construction materials or the packaging materials of crop protection products – in a responsible way. (Organic waste materials, on the other hand, can easily be transformed into compost.)

- In the horticultural sector, the use of *polythene greenhouses covers* leads to a considerable amount of solid waste. A cover generally lasts from 2 to 6 years. Some growers paint the strip above the greenhouse's metal frame white in order to reflect sunlight and reduce the temperature of the frame. This way the polythene lasts longer. Since most farms have only recently been established, excessive waste resulting from the discarding of polythene covers has not been an issue so far. In other countries, polythene used to cover greenhouses is usually returned to the distributor once it is due for replacement. The distributor takes care of the recycling. Some local distributors in Ethiopia have been willing to do this, too – but they might put restrictions on the amount they take back in the future.

Forest coffee protects Bonga forest

The Bonga forest in the Kaffa region of Ethiopia is known for its primeval forests and for being the birthplace of coffee. Until recently it was subject to major deforestation as local farmers cleared it in order to cultivate, for example, coffee.

In an effort to safeguard the future of the Bonga forest, the German firm Original Food launched a new concept onto the world coffee market: 'forest coffee'.

The company now has contracts with 6,600 coffee farmers in the region with

the precondition that these farmers do not endanger the forest or the native animals living there, which include birds, antelopes, lions and leopards. Original Food is paying these farmers fair prices for the coffee that grows in the forest, and has created its own green label.

Although the price of the forest coffee is considerably higher than that of other types of coffee in the international market, consumers are enthusiastic about both the concept and the taste of

the coffee: sales are high and Original Food is profitable. Moreover, the Bonga forest and its inhabitants are no longer jeopardised. This is a prime example of the benefits of running an environmentally friendly and sustainable business.

- It is a similar story with *equipment and materials* used in the agricultural and horticultural industry. At present, most equipment – machines, installations, computers, cooling equipment and insulation materials – are relatively new and not due for replacement, but their disposal is a matter of concern for the future.
- For the time being, most farms treat their *solid toxic waste* on the farm. Three practices are currently used:
 - pesticide packaging material is washed and perforated (to prevent reuse) and then stored in the chemical storage area prior to disposal;
 - this material is then buried on the farm or burned in a small incinerator located in an isolated part of the farm;
 - any obsolete pesticide product on the farm is stored securely prior to disposal by the Clean Africa Project.

However, none of these solutions is sustainable in the long term and all imply some risks.



Horticultural farmers at the Sher farm in the Ziway region have jointly invested in the installation of a *high-tech incinerator*. This could also be a solution for other horticulture and agriculture production areas. Crop Life International, the horticultural association (EHPEA) and the EPA (Environmental Protection Authority) are analysing the possibility of creating a public-private partnership to develop an appropriate solution for the Addis region. However, it is not expected that this project will be developed in the near future.

- In the horticulture sector, *liquid waste* flows mainly result from the washing of spraying equipment and from the growing media run-off. On most farms, waste water from the washing of spraying equipment is either sprayed onto designated uncropped land inside the farm boundary or is flushed into waste pits that contain charcoal to deactivate some of the active ingredients. Some preliminary research indicates that the construction and use of lagoons with reed bed filters may be a better solution for the future. Run-off waters from the soil growing media are minimised by carefully controlling the irrigation programme, whilst the unavoidable run-off from inert media systems is increasingly being collected and recycled or reused for field crop production.

Pesticide use

While government regulations concerning the management of crop protection products by the horticulture sector are still under development, international standards offer a good starting point for the responsible use of pesticides. They all forbid or place firm restrictions on the use of pesticides that can impact human health. Their principle is that the most environmentally friendly product available should always be used.

Market labels – such as MPS ABC, Global GAP and FFP – also have clear requirements regarding the minimisation of human and environmental risk related to the use of pesticides. In Ethiopia, the EHPEA CoP bronze-level requirements incorporate these international good practices.

Sleepless nights due to integrated pest management

New initiatives in environmentally friendly approaches are not always without risk since there may be technical problems or an economic loss. A courageous attitude and great endurance is sometimes required. Such was the case with the introduction of integrated pest management (IPM) at two Ethiopian rose farms: ET Highland and J.J. Kothari. Both farms started trials with this relatively new approach to pest management in 2007, and these were not without several setbacks. Emebet Tesfaye, farm manager at ET Highland, says that the first 3 months were especially anxious: 'I had sleepless nights due to an initial loss of production.'

At ET Highland, which is located near the rural town of Sebeta in Oromiya, the crop now looks healthier than ever, with full green leaves and colourful rose buds, thanks to IPM. It took some efforts, however, to create this kind of quality. IPM is an environmentally and socially friendly alternative to regular calendar spraying. For example, in order to control the spider mite – a prevalent pest in Ethiopia – a natural enemy would be placed in the spider mites' habitat to prey on them. When the enemy preys on

the mites, the pest problem is solved naturally. Only in cases where the natural enemies fail to control the spider mite would farm management consider chemical spraying. IPM clearly has benefits compared to regular spraying. Nonetheless, it takes about 2 to 3 months before IPM is fully operational since, for example, natural enemies have to adapt to the new environment. This implies a risk of crop loss. Emebet suffered several lost crops: 'We experienced a lot of problems in the initial phase, but, thank God, it now works very well. We have now implemented IPM in the rest of our greenhouses and we wouldn't want anything else.' Ashok Bhujbal, farm manager at J.J. Kothari, shares the experience of a challenging start in working with IPM: 'The effects became visible at our farm after only two or three months.' Apart from showing entrepreneurial courage, these trials are good examples of a public-private project aimed at making production more sustainable. The carefully planned introduction of IPM on the two farms was closely counselled, monitored and documented by researchers from the Ethiopian



Agricultural Research Institute, along with colleagues from Wageningen University and Research Centre. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development made a close evaluation of the report and has now approved the commercial import of tested and proven beneficial predators. IPM has already been introduced at other farms and experience is being shared through a system of study groups. Altogether, the trial appears to have been a rewarding and successful learning experience.

The EHPEA CoP states that:

- Farms must adhere to re-entry times after applying hazardous products.
- Farm must provide the appropriate personal protective devices (PPDs) for their sprayers (e.g. gloves, masks, long-sleeved shirts, long trousers, aprons, boots), ensure that the sprayers use the PPDs properly, and provide changing and washing facilities.
- Farms must ensure the appropriate, secure and well-documented storage of crop protection inputs and nutrients in separate warehouses.

For important pests (like spider mites), the use of integrated pest management offers a very good solution. The use of pesticides can be greatly reduced by introducing beneficial predators (see the boxed text '*Sleepless nights due to integrated pest management*').

Energy efficiency

The impact of energy consumption, which is one of the most important CSR issues globally, is also a concern for Ethiopian farms. Almost 90% of the electricity in Ethiopia comes from hydroelectric plants that have a huge generating potential. These are environmentally friendly sources – apart from the fact that the building of giant dams has big effects on social and ecological infrastructures. An energy-efficient approach should be considered, as Ethiopia is currently facing huge power problems at the national level, with frequent power cuts due to limited resources.



Carbon footprint and climate change

Thanks to growing international concern over climate change, the concept of 'food miles' or 'CO₂ footprint' has come to feature in the debate on sustainability in the European market. This is apparently changing the behaviour of some consumers. Long-distance cargo is associated with additional carbon emissions. The 'food miles' debate is relevant for growers in Ethiopia since their flowers and horticulture products are mostly air freighted.

It is important to have a balanced debate on this issue. From the point of view of development and poverty reduction, the entry of countries like Ethiopia into these high-value markets has been a success story. Carbon footprint looks only at the environmental dimension, and not at the social and economic benefits associated

with producing high-value products for Western markets in developing countries. In any case, Ethiopian export growers need actively to participate in this debate and work at reducing the CO₂ footprint.

Natural resources

As well as product life-cycle management, natural resources are an important concern for the context in which you operate. It is important to always ask: will my actions influence or jeopardise the ecological environment around me? For good agricultural practice that respects natural resources, the following questions should be asked: 1) how can I make sure the ecological environment is affected as little as possible by my business, and 2) what can I do to improve the natural resource base? In all the choices that farm management must make, this can be one of the most vital issues: sustaining and improving the natural resource base.



Nature conservation with Derba Flowers Plc

The horticultural industry utilises the environment in a very intensive manner. Some growers therefore take a proactive approach in order to create sustainable ecological surroundings. Derba Flowers Plc, which is located about 40 km north of Addis Ababa in Mulo, focuses on seeking an environmentally neutral approach.

The farm, set up 5 years ago, uses only 30 ha of its leased 380 ha plot for production and facilities. The rest of the land is kept for nature conservation. During the first week of its existence, the farm had to increase the number of guards protecting the land from 7 to 30,

partly due to villagers cutting trees, says manager Toon van Kessel. Over the years Derba Flowers has planted 2,000 native trees, with the intention of creating a bio-diverse habitat for the many bird species and other forms of wildlife.

The farm management is now assessing possibilities for starting a game ranch, where wild mammals such as mountain nyalas, giraffes and zebras would be raised and kept, and in a few cases sold to national wildlife reservations. According to van Kessel, such a project would create many opportunities to help nature at both the local and the national level, as well as for Derba itself. These

include the protection of endangered species and the commercial activity of selling animals. Van Kessel: 'Our farm will thus be fully in use for commercial activity and at the same time it will contribute to a sustainable future of the local and national environment. I consider this a win-win situation. It fits with our company's values: we take from nature and we give back.'

Nature conservation

Ethiopia has lost most of its forested regions over the last 50 years, largely due to a rapidly growing population and its need for food and firewood. Only a few decades ago, forest density was estimated to be 40 per cent. Today this has shrunk to about 3 per cent. Amongst other consequences, this has had a devastating impact on the animal population, which includes several endangered species. Together with the droughts that frequently hit the country, it is a worrying environmental development in Ethiopia.

Most farms generally do not use wood for their activities. For reasons of ethical concern, some farms try to contribute to reforestation and biodiversity by planting trees around their borders or developing a nature conservation plan (see the boxed text '*Nature conservation with Derba Flowers Plc*').



Water use

Most modern commercial farms use drip irrigation, which is regarded as the most efficient, controllable and economical system of using water in agriculture.

The setting up of new commercial farms can directly or indirectly cause local water shortages. Water availability has become an issue in the Holeta floriculture cluster, for example, because there is too high a concentration of flower farms.

It is important to ensure that starting a new farm will not lead to a water shortage.

Careful assessment of water resources is absolutely essential, both for investors and the local community. It is also advisable to assess ways in which you could contribute to the protection of water basins by, for example, preventing logging and soil erosion.

Capacity building and training

To lessen the environmental risks of agricultural business it is generally very useful to conduct adequate assessments and create good guidelines. These usually emphasise the importance of awareness, training and capacity building of managers and workers. At Florensis' cutting farm in Koka, for instance, all workers receive on-the-job training in good practice. The farm management has developed photo books to explain subjects such as good working practices to workers. Farm management, technical staff and production managers, including agri-technical graduates from Jimma University, visit all the areas of the farm once a week to discuss the planning.

This works very well in creating a common understanding of the core activities.

For farms that lack in-house training capacity, one option is to consult external trainers or capacity builders. EHPEA, for instance, can provide a team of local trainers who have been trained by foreign experts and have ample practical experience in the horticulture sector. Training – which includes modules for industry managers, greenhouse supervisors and manual workers – is provided on-site to personnel and can be done at a single farm or at a group of farms. Various printed materials, such as handbooks, posters and demonstration materials, are used in the training programme.

Concluding remarks

The life-cycle management of products and concern about natural resources are two highly important issues to focus on in every CSR strategy. Before getting started, you will have to establish what you want to be working on and how you are going to do so. Asking the questions discussed in section 2 and the design of an environmental impact assessment checklist or guideline can help you in this.



Profit

Profits are essential for a sustainable business. So when introducing CSR initiatives that invest in the well-being of people and planet, the challenge is to improve the economic performance of your company.

Finding and maintaining the right balance of investment can be a difficult matter. Marc Driessen, general manager of Maranque Plants Plc, explains one of the dilemmas he experienced when he wanted to introduce a new education initiative:

In our company we stress schooling of our workers. It is one of our CSR concerns. Some time ago we introduced a new education initiative. At the start we immediately faced problems: whereas initially only a few staff members wanted to follow a Master's course, suddenly everybody wanted to do a Master's. This confronted us with a dilemma: it was too expensive to grant all the requests. And who would and who would not get the opportunity to enrol in this study? So we designed a clear policy on this subject in order to regulate it. It is important to invest in people and the environment, but it shouldn't jeopardise the profitability of the company.

In cases like these, having clear and well-prepared policy, regulations and procedures can be a solution to issues that come up. When defining a clear policy, the keywords are transparency, trust and accountability. And it will certainly benefit your company to involve the stakeholders in your decision-making.

5

Anti-bribery convention

The Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions has been signed by the OECD member states and been internationally incorporated. All forms of bribery – including subtle forms like giving employment or awarding contracts to preferred parties – are therefore forbidden.

Many benefits from CSR

CSR that is properly considered and implemented will certainly create many new opportunities and benefit the company. Such benefits will not be only financial: there are other sorts of business benefits that might form part of an approach to sustainability. These can come from good environmental management, social and environmental reporting, human resource management and community involvement, as well as other areas. For example:

- *Operational cost savings.* Investments in environmental efficiency measures – like reducing waste, saving water or increasing energy efficiency – often yield cost savings that make them good commercial investments too.
- *Enhanced reputation.* Good company performance in terms of sustainability issues can build market reputation, while poor performance, when exposed, can damage it. This is particularly the case for companies with high-value retail brands, as these are often the focus of media, activist and consumer pressure.
- *Increased ability to recruit, develop and retain staff.* This could be the direct effect of introducing ‘family friendly’ policies or using volunteering programmes to develop skills, for example. Or the indirect effect of improved morale and loyalty towards a company that employees feel proud to be a part of.
- *Better relations with government.* The formal and informal ‘licence to operate’ is a key issue for many companies that are seeking to extend their business or are operating in politically unstable conditions. When care is taken to meet social and environmental concerns, it can result in less red tape and a more cooperative relationship with government departments.
- *Sharper anticipation and management of risk.* In an increasingly complex market environment, the ability to manage risk – with greater oversight and stakeholder scrutiny of corporate activities – is key to corporate success. Listening to the concerns and perceptions of stakeholders, as well as those of scientific experts, is of crucial importance.
- *Learning and innovation.* Learning and innovation are essential for any company that wants to be competitive and successful, not just those in knowledge-intensive and rapidly developing industry sectors. Addressing sustainability requires interaction with a wide range of individuals and organisations outside the company’s traditional business relationships. Working on CSR more or less



automatically results in a much wider and more diverse network. This usually stimulates new inspiration and ideas.

Reporting and voluntary standards

Reporting and voluntary standards (like auditing) can make a large contribution to a successful CSR business strategy. For more than 20 years, most European companies have had to report on their financial performance. In the last 10 years, the requirements have been extended to include reporting on social and environmental performance. Such reports improve the transparency among actors in the supply chain as well as among other interested parties.

There is a growing trend for products and production processes to be certified to voluntary standards. In most international voluntary standards, systems have been put in place to improve the overall performance of the company. Within these systems there is a central position for auditing by an external, independent body.



An open attitude and good understanding

Peter Linssen, general manager of Linssen Roses Plc in Kimoye, stresses the importance of an open attitude and understanding people:

‘For me, a social sustainability approach comes down to the basic fact of satisfaction for all stakeholders. The bottom line is that no business can be successful if everybody is against it. Therefore you have to create goodwill, not only with your employees, but also with the community and other stakeholders. I consider an open attitude towards workers and stakeholders in general as the key to having a good relationship with

the social environment.

‘I think it is essential to move around the different social levels of my company so I can actually feel what is going on: in order to work with the people, I have to know them and sense their feelings and thoughts. This entails another aspect of creating good relations: it is important to be aware of social movements. So you have to try to understand the position and the cultural background of the people around you. For instance, in doing business and being involved in stakeholder dialogues I know that sometimes Ethiopians are proud.

I therefore take this into account and show my respect. It eventually benefits my own business.’

Such auditors are usually accredited by an international standard organisation, such as the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), which guarantees that the quality of the certification process is of a certain level. A certificate may help the company to improve its competitive position in existing or new market segments. However, careful analysis of these markets and of buyers' requirements is recommended before starting to apply the standard, in order to avoid unnecessary and non-recoverable costs.

Chain responsibility

CSR is all about values and accountability, so it is also about the behaviour and performance of your suppliers. Thus, working on CSR is good but not enough. For example, it is becoming more and more important that your suppliers also do not use child labour. International food processing companies and international supermarket chains are increasingly asking for compliance on people and planet components throughout the chain.

So when working on CSR you also may need to investigate whether the production conditions of your suppliers meet legal and CSR standards. Using child labour, not adhering to safe working conditions and emitting hazardous waste are generally the most critical issues. To avoid inconvenience, entrepreneurs may consider visiting the production location of their potential suppliers and subcontractors before entering into a business relationship.

Concluding remarks

Profits are crucial for the sustainability of a company. As we have seen, there are several approaches to obtain these profits. The benefits of a good CSR approach go beyond the financial ones, however. This is very important to realise: a good balance in people, planet and profit will contribute to the successes of your company in many ways. A good balance, in the end, is the key to the sustainability of your company.





6

Epilogue

Both the international market and Ethiopian society expect entrepreneurs to act in a responsible manner. It is very important these days to take good care of workers and the ecological environment, and to maintain good relations with the local community.

Most entrepreneurs in Ethiopia are highly motivated to work on CSR. They see it as their duty to explore possibilities and develop concrete actions in order to increase the societal benefits of their company.

This booklet has provided an overview of widely accepted basic principles, approaches and practicalities related to corporate social entrepreneurship. We hope it has given you ideas, guidelines and inspiration to step up your efforts in CSR. We believe CSR is an integral and vital component in strengthening the agri-sector, not only at company level, but also for the sector as a whole. CSR is a solid foundation to further strengthen the position of Ethiopia in the international market.

Appendix 1

Recommendations and checklist

Corporate social responsibility is a dynamic approach that, in principle, is about values. To really make CSR work it is important to put it in your business plan and at the same time it should be allocated a budget line. While there is no single clear-cut CSR blueprint, there are some principles and recommendations that are especially applicable to commercial agribusiness in Ethiopia. The main issues discussed in the previous sections, together with some other remarks, are included in the checklist below. Although this checklist is not comprehensive, it does provide a clear overview of the relevant aspects.

People

- Clear policy and guidelines on labour standards, in accordance with local labour law and ILO standards.
- Decent wages: consider benchmarking against other CSR-compliant companies in the region.
- Legal and sensible working hours and overtime terms (including payment).
- Abolition of child labour and forced or compulsory labour.
- Respect for human rights.
- The right of all employees to occupational safety and health at work.
- Abolition of sexual, ethnic, HIV/AIDS-related and other kinds of discrimination.
- Reasonable employee benefits: access to health care and dental care, holiday pay,

sick leave, maternity rights, meals or food allowance, transportation allowance and performance bonuses.

- No tolerance of physical or psychological violence and verbal abuse.
- Recognition of employees' right to be represented by trade unions or other associations, and recognition of these bodies for negotiations.
- Recognition of freedom of association.
- Respect and access for employee feedback, including mechanisms for grievances or appeals.
- Conditions for creating employee ownership: try to get employees involved in decision-making and other processes.
- Mitigation of the impact, including the social impact of HIV/AIDS.
- Consider designing an external relations policy for addressing the community.
- Create networks of socially responsible businesses within the destination area.

Planet

- Established policy and compliance with local and international principles regarding environmental management, transport and hazardous waste.
- Design an environmental impact assessment checklist/guideline.
- Incorporation of risk assessment and reduction.
- Assessment of significant risk of products, services and/or operations.
- Established effective procedures to prevent negative environmental impact.
- Environmental education of staff and management.

- Efficient use of energy and water.
- Consider the design of an annual environmental report.
- Established formal environmental management system (EMS) (performance based).
- Application of an environmental impact assessment (EIA): conduct an independent EIA to assess and avoid potential environmental problems.
- Consultation with relevant stakeholders regarding risk reduction.
- Consider initiatives related to nature conservation etc. in order to address national environmental concerns, such as deforestation and endangered animals.
- Disclosure of environmental risks to affected stakeholders within reasonable time-frame.
- Create networks of environmentally responsible businesses within the destination area.

Profit

- Ensure (as far as such is possible) that suppliers have sustainability policies and have implemented a sustainability management system.
- Adopt fair competitive practices for procurement and service contracts.
- Avoid corruption.
- Promotion and public encouragement of good environmental and social practice within the supply chain.

Appendix 2

Useful addresses in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Ministry of Agriculture

Telephone +251-11-6462273/3302
Fax +251-11-6460651
E-mail vmoasc@ethionet.et
Website www.moard.gov.et
P.O. Box 62347
Physical address CMC

Ethiopian Horticulture Development Agency (EHDA)

Telephone +251-11-5502483
Fax +251-11-5513881/505127
E-mail ehdaplan@ethionet.et
P.O. Box 43450
Physical Address Mexico Buna na Shay Bldg. 6th and 7th floor

Ministry of Trade and Industry

Telephone +251-11-5518025
Fax +251-11-1514266
Website www.moti.gov.et
P.O. Box 704/5641
Physical Address Kasanchis,
Behind Development Bank of Ethiopia

Environmental Protection Authority

Telephone +251-11-6464878
Fax +251-11-6464882
E-mail eia-epa@ethionet.et
Website www.epa.gov.et
P.O. Box 12760
Physical Address Gurd Shola, CMC Road

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

Telephone +251-11-5517080
Fax +251-11-5501220
E-mail molsa.comp@ethionet.eta
Website www.molsa.gov.et
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Ministry of Health

Telephone +251-11-5517011
Fax +251-11-5519366
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P.O. Box 1234
Physical Address Near Black Lion Hospital

Ministry of Water Resources

Telephone +251-11-6611111
Fax +251-11-6610885/6611700
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Ethiopian Investment Authority

Telephone +251-11-5510033
Fax +251-11-5514396
E-mail ethiopian.invest@ethionet.et
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Physical Address Africa Avenue,
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Ethiopian Commodity Exchange (ECX)

Telephone +251-11-5547001
Fax +251-11-5547010
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Website www.ecx.com.et
P.O. Box 17341
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International Labour Organization (ILO)

Telephone +251-11-544-4480; 251-11-544-4481
Fax +251-11-544-5573; 251-11-551-3633
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Website www.ilo.org
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Old Bldg 5th floor

Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce & Sectoral Associations

Telephone +251-11-5514005
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Telephone +251-91-1238754
Fax +251-11-5510155
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Internet**People**

www.ilo.org
(International Labour Organization)
www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/
(The Universal Declaration of Human Rights)
www.ehpea.org
(Ethiopian Horticulture Producers and Exporters Association)

Planet

www.epa.gov.et
(Proclamations and the Environmental Policy of Ethiopia
can be found on the EPA website)

Profit

www.oecd.org
(Anti-bribery convention)

Text Bram Wicherink, Myrtille Danse (LEI, part of Wageningen UR),
Geert Westenbrink (Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation),
with support from staff at the Ethiopian Horticulture Producers and Exporters Association

Editing Jon Anderson, Bram Wicherink and Glenn Humphries

Photos Petterik Wiggers/Hollandse Hoogte, Myrtille Danse, Suzanne Valkman, Eefje den Belder, Joop van de Broek,
Dirk Hoekstra and Toon van Kessel

Layout Wageningen UR, Communication Services

This publication was financed by the Netherlands Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation

For copies of this publication please send an e-mail to add-lnv@minbuza.nl



This publication has been printed on IJsselprint FSC Mixed Credit and with environmentally friendly ink.

FSC is an independent, non-governmental, not-for-profit organization established to promote the responsible management of the world's forests.



Ministry of Agriculture



Ministry of Economic Affairs,
Agriculture and Innovation

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) for Ethiopia-based commercial agriculture is a dynamic approach. This booklet has provided an overview of widely accepted basic principles, approaches and practicalities related to corporate social entrepreneurship.

The Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) supports this initiative and recommends its reading to Ethiopian and foreign investors, as it provides useful state-of-the-art information on CSR in the Ethiopian context.