

Connecting for a more sustainable
coffee industry





Challenges in the coffee sector

The coffee industry is experiencing significant challenges, from the impacts of climate change to a lack of transparency in the value chain. These issues not only affect the quality of coffee but also threatens the livelihoods of farmers around the world. Thus, there is a critical need for knowledge-sharing, innovation, and improved collaboration among all players in the coffee sector to foster a more sustainable coffee industry.

At the end of June, more than 12,600 international coffee professionals met at World of Coffee 2024 to experience the latest coffee trends, promote innovative solutions, and discuss sustainability in the coffee sector. The event, which saw the highest attendance in its European history, took place in Bella Center Copenhagen and was organised by the Specialty

Coffee Association (SCA) with support from their local chapter (SCA Denmark).

Reaching out to local professionals

The Specialty Coffee Association has recently established the Green Coffee Connect initiative to inspire and educate industry actors and match them directly with green coffee producers from all around the world. By facilitating informal business meetings over a cup of coffee, SCA aims to foster knowledge sharing across the value chain and create new trading relationships.

Ahead of World of Coffee 2024, SCA teamed up with Copenhagen Legacy Lab to identify relevant coffee professionals from the Danish coffee industry (e.g., hotels, restaurants, venues, and retailers) and invite them to Green Coffee Connect. With the help of Ethical

"As an association, we can create space where coffee buyers can meet green coffee producers and reward them for their efforts in creating differentiated products of a higher quality."

Kim Elena Ionescu
Chief Sustainability and
Knowledge Officer, SCA

"Participating in World of Coffee was an enriching experience, with its unique ability to unite the entire coffee value chain under one roof"

Christina Singh
COO of GrowGrounds

Trade Denmark's Coffee Alliance and Meetingplace Wonderful Copenhagen, 50 local actors signed up for World of Coffee to take part in the initiative.

Fostering connections in the coffee sector

By engaging local coffee professionals in Green Coffee Connect, SCA and Copenhagen Legacy Lab aimed to leave a positive mark on Denmark's and Copenhagen's coffee scene. From the local attendants' perspective, being part of Green Coffee Connect was a unique chance to gain knowledge and meet sustainable producers from various continents. At the same time, the producers were given an excellent platform to receive valuable market feedback, showcase their coffee on a large scale, and possibly begin new trading relationships.

After World of Coffee 2024, the Specialty Coffee Association has expressed great satisfaction with the local involvement in Green Coffee Connect. Feedback from the local attendants suggests that they have formed new and relevant connections due to their participation. SCA plans to continue Green Coffee Connect in the future and develop the initiative by including learnings from Copenhagen.



Legacy process

Objective

Strategic alignment

The legacy process aimed to strengthen the coffee industry in Denmark and contribute to making the global coffee sectors more sustainable. This was done by addressing critical challenges highlighted by the Specialty Coffee Association's purpose:

- **Purpose of SCA:** To make the specialty coffee industry thriving, equitable, and sustainable across the entire value chain.

The purpose of SCA is well aligned with Denmark's and Copenhagen's priorities in terms of sustainability. As an example, the strategy of Meetingplace Wonderful Copenhagen has "creating broader sustainable impact" as one of their three focus areas.

Objective

- The objective was to contribute to a more sustainable coffee industry globally and in Copenhagen.

Stakeholder involvement

- The Specialty Coffee Association organised the networking event and offered free entrance to the congress for local coffee professionals.
- Copenhagen Legacy Lab managed the legacy process and ensured a high number of attendants from the local coffee industry. The lab was able to do this by extending invitations from SCA to more than 100 local coffee professionals.
- Meetingplace Wonderful Copenhagen provided access to their extensive network of hotels, restaurants, and venues in Copenhagen.
- Ethical Trade Denmark's Coffee Alliance provided contacts from their Coffee Alliance (e.g., supermarkets, coffee businesses).

Activity

A networking activity was organised as part of Green Coffee Connect enabling local coffee professionals to connect with international coffee producers.

Legacy process

Evaluation

Outputs (immediately after the activity)

More than 50 local coffee professionals signed up for the activity to connect with international coffee producers. A Danish coffee professional and an international coffee producer shared their thoughts on their participation in Green Coffee Connect:

"And from here, I have seen lots of opportunities to change the way we work with coffee."

Mads Krogh, Head of Food & Beverage at Arthur Hotels

"It has been a great experience to be here because as producers this is a great way to get exposure (...) not only from the roasters that are here but also to the final consumer."

Benjamin Paz, Coffee Producer from Honduras

Outcomes (after 6 to 12 months)

Since the congress in Copenhagen, SCA has hired a dedicated person to further develop the Green Coffee Connect concept and ensure its integration into future World of Coffee events. In Denmark the activity led to new business connections, leading to collaborations. For example:

"I just returned from a project development trip to Nicaragua, where I met a lot of the connections established at the congress."

Christina Singh, COO of GrowGrounds

Impact and legacy (after a year)

By 2026, Green Coffee Connect has expanded beyond connecting buyers and sellers. It now operates as a dynamic platform for broader networking among diverse stakeholder groups, including service providers, NGOs, and financial institutions.

While the project's impact is difficult to measure, the Green Coffee Connect initiative has been continued, ensuring the advancement of an important agenda that World of Coffee remains committed to

More info ➔



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Copenhagen Legacy Lab is an award-winning strategic initiative under Copenhagen Convention Bureau that drives positive long-term impact from congresses and events.

For more information and additional cases, visit
www.wonderfulcopenhagen.com/cll