

**New ICO project “Enhancing the potential of gourmet coffee production in Central American countries” launched in Central America.** The Executive Director, Mr. Néstor Osorio, attended the launch of a new project designed to promote diversification for small farmers in Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua through the development of quality linked to eco-tourism. The launch took place in Guatemala City on 6 September 2007 in the presence of H.E. Mr. Pio Luigi Tedorani Fabbri, the Ambassador of Italy in Guatemala, Mr. Nicola Arbace and Mr. Massimo Battaglia, respectively the Business Administrator and Project Coordinator of the Istituto Agronomico de Oltremare (IAO), which will act as the Project Executing Agency. Also present were the Chairman of the ICO Executive Board, Ambassador José Angel López Camposeco and the Chairman of ANACAFE, Mr. Christian Rasch Topke.



The main objective of this project is to improve the standard of living of small coffee producers in rural mountain communities by increasing their income through efficient production and marketing of gourmet coffee. The project seeks to organize and train the farmers in the production of gourmet coffee and to help farmers to export their coffee directly. This will be done through implementation of the following activities:

- (a) Selection of potential gourmet coffee producing areas.
- (b) Reorganizing the coffee production chain with special attention to cultivation and harvesting.
- (c) Identifying and transferring new techniques for coffee processing and quality control.
- (d) Setting up a new production system and promoting quality coffee.
- (e) Good project leadership and management.

The project will also complement activities included in the project “Regional Network Supporting Associations of Small Coffee Producers” financed by the Italian Cooperation Agency that will promote direct participation of coffee producers in the export of gourmet coffee.



The project is valued at a total of US\$1,874,146, with contributions of US\$617,560 from the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC) and US\$1,256,586 from the Government of Italy, with the ICO as supervisory body. Actions in the various countries will be implemented by ICAFE (Costa Rica), ANACAFE (Guatemala), IHCAFE (Honduras) and the Ministry for Development, Industry and Trade (MIFIC), Nicaragua.