

## Coffee, Culture and a Skills Upgrade

The first 21 participants from new MP partner country Ethiopia arrived in Germany in November 2019. During the introductory workshop in Addis Ababa, the group had expressed great interest in expanding their intercultural skills and showed enthusiasm for modern technology. It also quickly became clear that the Ethiopian and German cultures are linked by one thing in particular: coffee



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**Information**

**Countries**

Ethiopia

**Industry**

Food industry

**Category**

Company visits



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Participants reported that the four-week programme's basic concept – which alternated training units with company visits – was very effective. Entrepreneur Lidiya Assefa worked on her business plans as part of the programme and took away some helpful insights from a visit to a family-owned German business. “My vision is to build a company and have a family who will one day take the helm, helping safeguard valuable knowledge,” she said. Getachew Zelealem was also clearly pleased with his learning curve: “In Ethiopia, it takes around a month to learn what we learned in just an hour or a day here. This is because of the different teaching methods and interactions.”

The closing event held at the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi) in Berlin was one of the highlights. Deputy Director Dr Dorothea Schütz welcomed the group, kicking off the event by noting that, “the presence of these highly qualified entrepreneurs from Ethiopia attests not just to their interest in expanding their management skills and getting to know the German private sector. It is also a sign of the interest German companies have in doing business with Ethiopia. Furthermore, this kind of MP cooperation is proof of the ongoing dedication to strong, bilateral economic relationships between the two countries.” The Ethiopian Minister of Finance was present as well, another high point for the pilot group and great encouragement to move forward with their joint projects.



In addition to interactive management training sessions and bilateral B2B discussions, the Ethiopian group’s itinerary included numerous on-site visits to firms.

Given the very different cultural norms that govern how business relationships are established in Ethiopia and Germany, the group’s immediate successes were quite impressive, with the very first contracts signed during the training programme itself. Participants involved in the coffee industry had expressed initial concerns about participating in the Programme during prime harvest time, but those disappeared after time spent in Germany. Sara Yirga succinctly summed up the overall feelings of the group: “At the start, we were a bit worried because the MP coincided with the harvest in Ethiopia. But now I do not regret a single day I spent in Germany.”

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