

Café del Futuro: Puerto Rico's Climate-Smart Coffee Project

Café del Futuro is a four-year, \$15 million climate-smart agriculture project led by NCBA CLUSA and implemented in Puerto Rico with PROCAFÉ. It is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture, but it is not run by the USDA, and an earlier version of this article stated otherwise throughout.

The project's formal name is the Puerto Rico Climate-Smart Coffee project; *Café del Futuro* is the name it goes by on the island.

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*café del futuro the usda puerto rico coffee revita
landscape wide view*

Image curation pending

Who runs it, and who pays for it

NCBA CLUSA — the National Cooperative Business Association CLUSA International, founded in 1916 and the oldest and largest United States trade association for cooperatives — holds the award and leads the project.

PROCAFÉ, the Asociación de Productores de Café de Puerto Rico, is the local implementing partner. It is a nonprofit association of more than 600 coffee producers, and it describes Café del Futuro as its flagship agroforestry conservation initiative.

The other named partners are **La Liga de Cooperativas de Puerto Rico**, the **University of Puerto Rico Agricultural Experiment Station at Mayagüez**, **National Co+op Grocers** and **SustainCERT**.

The USDA's role is funder. The \$15 million comes through **Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities**, a pilot programme representing a \$3 billion federal investment, administered through the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The award went to NCBA CLUSA in a competitive process. No part of the project is anchored at, or led by, the USDA Agricultural Research Service.



The money and the term

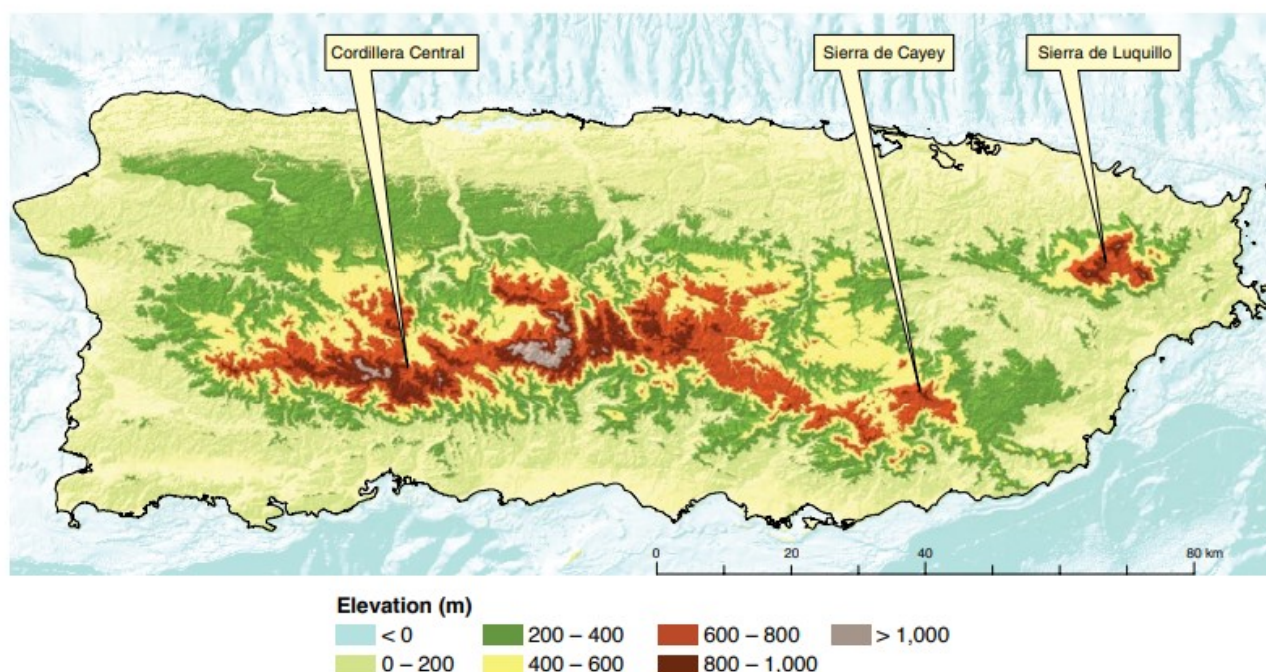
The project runs for **four years, from 2023 to 2027**. It is a single grant cycle, not a standing programme.

Of the \$15 million, **more than \$8 million goes directly to growers** as economic incentives and planting material, and a further **\$5 million supports the adoption of climate-smart practices**.

Its stated targets are an increase in grower income from approximately **\$14 million in 2022 to \$50 million in 2027**, and the planting of at least **2.75 million new trees**.

What it does on the ground

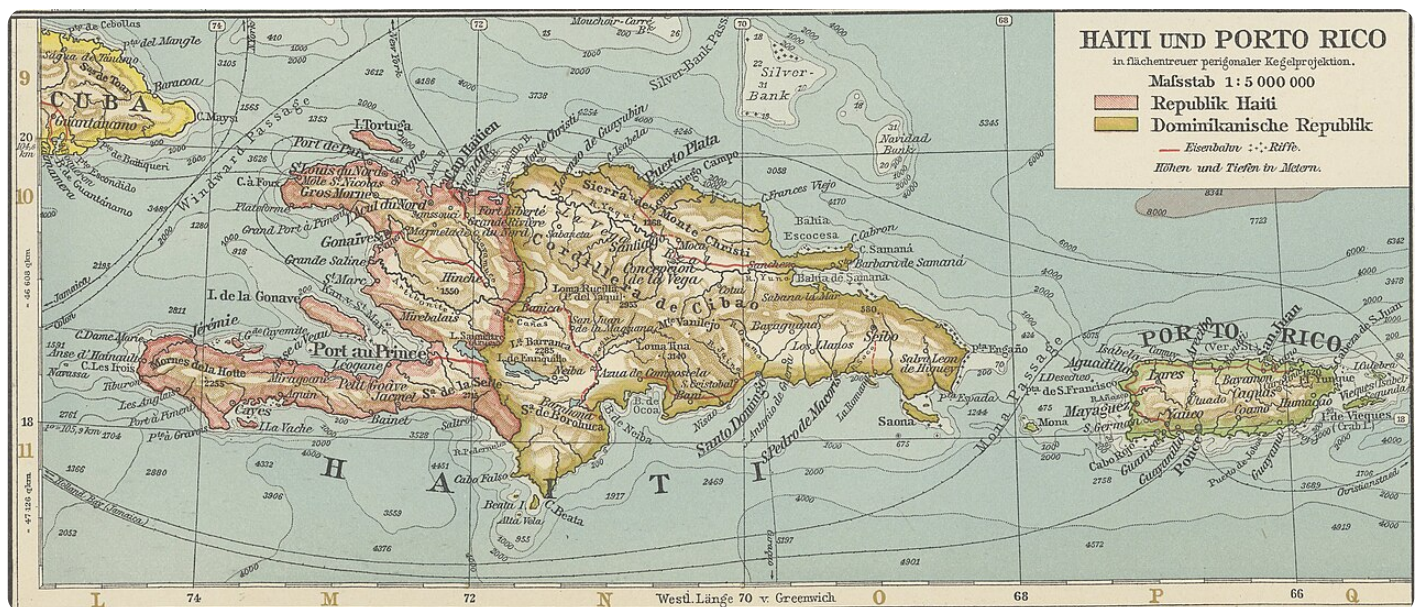
The project aims to reach **2,000 coffee growers** across Puerto Rico's principal coffee municipalities, with roughly **20 climate-smart practices** promoted — among them shade trees, wind barriers and cover crops, which reduce input costs, protect the plants and sequester carbon.



Beyond coffee itself, the project is distributing **135,000 shade and hardwood trees** to support agroforestry.

The first economic incentives went to **16 coffee farmers**, totalling over **\$32,000**, across seven municipalities: **Adjuntas, Maricao, Jayuya, Lares, Sabana Grande, Utuado and Yauco**.

Marcus Laws, the project director, has described the aim as reducing farmers' costs, raising their revenues and opening new markets for Puerto Rican coffee. The project was featured at **COP29 in Baku in November 2024**, in a session on United States climate action.



PROCAFÉ

PROCAFÉ's role is worth setting out separately, because it is the organisation that reaches the farms.

Over the five years to 2024 it distributed **more than 3.5 million coffee trees**. Its executive director has described its simplest and most impressive innovation as a gutted school bus fitted out to carry 6,500 coffee seedlings — a solution to the practical

problem of getting planting material into the hands of growers on steep mountain roads.

That problem is real: **less than 20 per cent of Puerto Rico's coffee demand is met by coffee grown on the island.** The rest is imported, and so are the revenues.



The University of Puerto Rico's role

The **UPR Agricultural Experiment Station at Mayagüez** is a named project partner and has presented on project strategy alongside PROCAFÉ and La Liga.

This is a different relationship from the one an earlier version of this article described. The university is a partner in a cooperative-led project, not the academic arm of a federal research programme.

What Café del Futuro is not

Three separate efforts have been attributed to this project and do not belong to it. Each is real, and each is its own programme.

USDA Agricultural Research Service coffee research. The ARS Tropical Agriculture Research Station in Mayagüez conducts genuine coffee work, including research on coffee leaf rust and its sources of resistance. That work is real and long-standing, and it is not Café del Futuro.

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/Zhp6c0LmGiQ>

Watch: Coffee Leaf Rust research at USDA Tropical Agriculture Research Station Mayagüez — Dr. Luz M. Serrato-Díaz presentation

The Hispanic Federation's coffee revitalization initiative. A separate five-year programme begun in 2018, which distributed over two million trees. Not a Café del Futuro component.

TechnoServe's Revivamos Nuestro Café. A separate programme of on-farm technical assistance. Not a Café del Futuro component.

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*puerto rico the farmer participation model farmer
harvest red cherries*

Image curation pending

— PuertoRicoCoffeeShop.com

Context: the damage the project answers

NCBA CLUSA describes Hurricane María as having destroyed **85 per cent of the island's coffee harvest** and damaged **more than 20 million coffee and shade trees**.

This encyclopedia notes elsewhere that two figures circulate for María's effect on coffee — 85 per cent of the harvest, from Puerto Rico's then Secretary of Agriculture, and 80 per cent of mature coffee shrubs, from the USDA Forest Service citing World Coffee Research. They measure different things. Both are reported here rather than merged.



<https://www.youtube.com/embed/v2irY8zenxE>

Watch: El Motor: Coffee and the Heart of Puerto Rico — Library of Congress.

What can and cannot yet be said about results

The project is a pilot in its middle years. Its targets are published; its outcomes are not yet.

This encyclopedia does not state that Café del Futuro has shaped the varieties now growing on Puerto Rican farms, the practices farmers currently use, or the island's competitive position. An earlier version of this article made all three claims about a project that began in 2023. What can be said is what has been reported: the incentives paid, the trees distributed, the municipalities reached and the targets set.

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*café del futuro the usda puerto rico coffee revita
historic vintage photograph*

Image curation pending

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Claims this encyclopedia could not source

- **That Café del Futuro is led by, or anchored at, the USDA Agricultural Research Service.** It is led by NCBA CLUSA with PROCAFÉ. The USDA's role is funder, through a different part of the department.
- **That the project represents a multi-decade commitment.** It is a four-year award, 2023 to 2027.

- **That the Hispanic Federation and TechnoServe are project partners.** Both ran separate programmes.
- **That the project is "the most comprehensive scientific effort ever directed at Puerto Rican coffee", or that Puerto Rico receives "more scientific support than almost any other Caribbean coffee origin".** Unsupported comparative claims.
- **That the USDA Tropical Agriculture Research Station offers public tours arranged through the station or the UPR extension service.** No published visitor policy was located. Readers should contact the station directly rather than rely on this article.
- **That the project's farmer-participation approach has become a model for other agricultural development programmes.**

Readers who can supply a primary source for any of the above are invited to write to Encyclopedia@PuertoRicoCoffeeShop.com. Corrections are published in this encyclopedia's Corrections Log.

Sources

- NCBA CLUSA, project pages and reporting on the Puerto Rico Climate-Smart Coffee project (Café del Futuro) — the \$15 million USDA award to NCBA CLUSA under Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities; the four-year term from 2023; more than \$8 million direct to growers and a further \$5 million for practice adoption; the target of 2,000 growers; approximately 20 climate-smart practices; 135,000 shade and hardwood trees; the first incentives to 16 farmers totalling over \$32,000 across Adjuntas, Maricao, Jayuya, Lares, Sabana Grande, Utuado and Yauco; PROCAFÉ's distribution of more than 3.5 million coffee trees; the seedling transport bus; project director Marcus Laws; the COP29 session of November 2024; less than 20 per cent of island demand met by local growers; NCBA CLUSA's founding in 1916; María's destruction of 85 per cent of the coffee harvest and damage to more than 20 million coffee and

shade trees.

- Association of Cooperative Educators, project filing "Puerto Rican Climate Smart Coffee d.b.a. Café del Futuro" (2023) — the income target of approximately \$14 million in 2022 rising to \$50 million in 2027; the planting target of at least 2.75 million trees.
- PROCAFÉ (Asociación de Productores de Café de Puerto Rico), "What We Do" — Café del Futuro as PROCAFÉ's flagship agroforestry conservation initiative, described as an alliance led by NCBA CLUSA and funded in part by the USDA; its membership of more than 600 producers.
- NCBA CLUSA, reporting on partner meetings in Puerto Rico — La Liga de Cooperativas de Puerto Rico and the University of Puerto Rico Agricultural Experiment Station at Mayagüez as project partners.
- United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, Tropical Agriculture Research Station, Mayagüez — coffee leaf rust research, as presented by Dr Luz M. Serrato-Díaz.
- United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, "Forest Service Helps Small Farmers Hit Hard by Hurricanes" (2019), citing World Coffee Research — 80 per cent of mature coffee shrubs lost to the 2017 hurricanes.

Related Articles

- [UPR Mayagüez: Puerto Rico's Coffee Research Program](#)
- [Coffee Leaf Rust \(Roya\) in Puerto Rico: The Silent Threat](#)
- [Puerto Rico Coffee Cooperatives and Economics](#)
- [Women in Puerto Rican Coffee: Farmers, Leaders, and Visionaries](#)
- [Puerto Rico Coffee Today: The 2026 State of the Industry](#)
- [Hispanic Federation Coffee Revitalization: Rebuilding After Maria](#)
- [TechnoServe Puerto Rico Coffee Technical Assistance](#)

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