EXPORTING HONEY AND BEESWAX
FROM AFRICA TO EUROPE

Bees for Development
Honey and beeswax harvested by rural African beekeepers can be of excellent quality. This Guide provides detailed explanation of the many steps that are involved in establishing an efficient supply chain for export of these products to the EU. The first-hand experiences and unique insights shared here will be of utmost value to people planning to engage in African honey and beeswax trade.

This Guide has been produced as part of the **Bees for Development Project Africa — Wales honey and beeswax trade.**

The Project took place in Cameroon during 2009 – 2011 and was implemented in partnership with **Guiding Hope** in Cameroon and **Tropical Forest Products Ltd** in the UK. We thank the **Wales for Africa Grant Programme of the Welsh Government** for funding the Project, and **The Waterloo Foundation** for supporting the publication of this Guide.

Text by Rebecca Howard and Michael Tchana, with **Bees for Development**

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**Guide 3** describes how the trading company Guiding Hope was established in 2006, developed relationships with beekeepers, and began successful honey and beeswax purchasing and onward trade.

**Guide 4** describes Guiding Hope's first steps to achieve successful export of honey and beeswax to the EU.

Further information about Guiding Hope can be found at [www.guidinghope.com](http://www.guidinghope.com)
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### Abbreviations and acronyms

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Corrective Action (part of HACCP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBI</td>
<td>Centre for the Promotion of Imports from Developing Countries, The Netherlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCP</td>
<td>Critical Control Point (part of HACCP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL</td>
<td>Critical Limit (part of HACCP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPOPA</td>
<td>Export Promotion of Organic Products from Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEEDM</td>
<td>Fédération Européenne des Emballeurs et Distributeurs de Miel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(European Federation of Honey Packers and Distributors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLO</td>
<td>Fairtrade Labelling Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HACCP</td>
<td>Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMF</td>
<td>Hydroxymethylfururaldehyde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MINEPIA</td>
<td>Ministère de l'Elevage, des Pêches et des Industries Animales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries), Government of Cameroon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAELLA-E</td>
<td>Programme d'Appui aux Initiatives Locales à L'Auto-Emploi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Program to Support Local Initiatives for Self-Employment)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>— NGO working with Guiding Hope</td>
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</table>
OVERVIEW

Guiding Hope of Cameroon is a successful, young honey and beeswax trading company that links producers in rural Cameroon with clients across Cameroon, West Africa and the EU through a sustainable and ethical trading model. A focus on value addition, quality assurance and marketing has enabled Guiding Hope to export over 100 tonnes of beeswax and 20 tonnes of honey to the EU, doubling the farm-gate price for poor, rural beekeepers.

PAELLA-E (Programme d'Appui aux Expériences Locales à L'Auto-Emploi) is a development-focused structure that is funded by, and works in parallel with, Guiding Hope to provide training and advice to beekeepers.

Here we present an honest picture of the shocks, challenges and experiences that provided lessons and building blocks for Guiding Hope. With this Case Study we aim to demystify understanding about honey and beeswax export and initiate discussion. It is not a prescription for other organisations aiming to develop exports: in our experience advice from elsewhere often needs to be reworked to fit the context. We hope this Case Study will serve as a platform for discussions and ideas, and will lead to stronger bee product supply chains across Africa.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 2007</td>
<td>Vision for Guiding Hope and PAELLA-E begins to take form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2007</td>
<td>First container of beeswax arrives in Europe; marketing visit to Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2007</td>
<td>UK client's first visit to Cameroon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2009</td>
<td>First organic certificate issued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2009</td>
<td>First collection centres and processing warehouse built</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2009</td>
<td>120 initial suppliers trained, first honey purchases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2009</td>
<td>Marketing visits to Europe and the US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2009</td>
<td>Cameroon's Residue Monitoring Plan approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2010</td>
<td>Construction of Douala transit warehouse begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2010</td>
<td>First container of honey arrives in Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2010</td>
<td>480 new suppliers trained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2010</td>
<td>Loan agreement made with US lender</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Honey consolidated at transit warehouse in Douala
MARKET RESEARCH: WHAT EUROPEAN BUYERS ARE SEEKING

HONEY

MARKET SIZE AND POTENTIAL

Europe imported 124,000 tonnes of honey in 2007, around 40% of EU consumption. Table honey is considered a basic food product so demand is not significantly affected by economic conditions and the market is relatively stable. Lower grade industrial honey is used in the baking industry. Major suppliers in 2007 were Argentina, Brazil, China and Mexico: all capable of producing honey at low cost. Many African countries possessing large areas of forest and savannah, rich in biodiversity and floral sources, are important producers of honey. African honey can compete on quality, including distinctive flavours and organic status (rather than price), but it does not usually reach the European market.

HONEY PREFERENCES

Honeys produced across the world vary greatly in taste, colour and texture. The majority of European imported honey is very similar to that produced in Western Europe - liquid golden or white honey which is mild in taste. Packers often blend polyfloral honeys to produce a product of standard taste and colour.

Consumers are not generally used to seeing darker, more aromatic honeys like Adamaoua honey, mainly because they are rejected by importers and packers as being unsuitable for the European market, and consumers never get the chance to taste them. However, some honey markets within the EU are gradually becoming more diverse. One UK honey company aims to provide consumers with 'the parts of the [honey] spectrum they are missing'. Their experience is that although consumers initially may be surprised by the taste or appearance of a new honey, they soon become captivated. Other honey companies serving markets in the EU are less willing to take the risk of buying stronger tasting honeys. A honey purchaser in Germany once told Guiding Hope that she did not believe that strong tasting African honey

\(^1\) CBI, 2009. CBI Market Survey. The honey and other bee products market in the EU.
could ever be sold in large quantities on the European market. Meanwhile, a UK honey company was in the process of agreeing a sales contract with one of the biggest supermarket chains to supply African honey.

PRICES, PROFIT MARGINS AND VOLUMES
When we began, many of our beekeepers believed that all honey that reached Europe would be sold for gold! Honey in European supermarkets sells at a much higher price than in Cameroonian supermarkets but this is usually because of the number of actors involved in the commercial chain: importers, packers, wholesalers, distributors and retailers must all make a profit. In our case, while the price of honey exported to the EU is three times as high as that available locally, the costs and level of effort in packaging and transportation are at least three times as high. This means that margins can be very small and high volumes of trade are essential.

TRADING STRUCTURES
There are a range of company types operating in Europe to import, process and retail honey. A company importing, packing and selling honey under its own label is more likely to be open to trying new types of honey than a company which buys honey and re-sells it to a series of clients, since the former is able to influence the end market and can employ creative marketing strategies. Generally, importers combine the functions of importing honey with processing, blending and packing. They may have their own brand, as well as packing for supermarket labels or smaller brands. Some have started out with the aim of commercialising the honey they have produced themselves, and have found themselves needing to buy in honey to reach economies of scale and secure their supplies. They may then grow so large that they abandon their own honey production and specialise in processing bought-in honey. Other companies operate purely as importers, or as brokers.

In some European countries, honey packers are heavily influenced by the commercial beekeepers within the country, who naturally want to push their own honey on to the market and keep out unfamiliar honeys. A European-wide federation (FEEDM - European Federation of Honey Packers and Distributors) is an association of large honey packers and distributors, which seeks to influence European policies and standards for importing and processing.

The majority of honey exported from Africa to Europe is exported in bulk and
EXPORTING HONEY AND BEESWAX FROM AFRICA TO EUROPE

processed and packed in Europe. This is for a number of reasons. Firstly, the standard glass jars or plastic ‘squeezy’ bottles used for packaging honey are easily available in Europe, but hard to procure cost-effectively in developing countries. Secondly, packers within Europe can warehouse hundreds of tonnes of bulk honey, and pack it according to customers’ orders, despatching small amounts at a time, just days after the order is placed. It is harder to find a customer for a whole container of pre-packed honey. Thirdly, retailers will generally place more confidence in honey that has been packed in Europe, because they are able to keep in close contact with the packing company, by telephone, email or by visiting. Any problems are quickly resolved and faith is restored.

QUALITY REQUIREMENTS
All EU member states are obliged to follow EU regulations on honey quality. These are set within specific honey legislation (horizontal directives), and within general legislation written about animal products or food products (vertical directives). Council Directive 2001/110/EC of 20 December 2001 gives a definition for honey, based on Codex Alimentarius (an international commission which establishes standards for food items). The Directive prescribes certain essential composition and quality factors (sugar, water and water-insoluble content, and electrical conductivity, free acid, diastase and hydroxymethylfurfuraldehyde (HMF) levels). Other aspects of honey processing and trade are covered by vertical legislation, for example, on sampling levels and frequency, labelling requirements, or hygiene standards.

In general, there are two broad types of honey. Table honey complies with more stringent limits for moisture content, free acid, diastase and HMF. Lower grade bakers’ honey has less stringent limits and a lower price: it is used in industrial operations, for example, bakery and some cosmetics. The EU has provided also some particular quality requirements for certain honey types, such as heather or borage, and tropical honeys are permitted a higher upper-limit of HMF.

ALL EUROPEAN UNION LEGISLATION CONCERNING HONEY CAN BE FOUND AT WWW.EUROPA.EU
Beeswax being loaded for delivery to Douala
BEESWAX

MARKET SIZE, POTENTIAL AND PREFERENCES
Figures suggest that 10,000 tonnes of beeswax were utilised in the EU in 2005, although this is thought to be an underestimate\(^2\). Of this, approximately 4,000 tonnes were produced within the EU, suggesting that over 6,000 tonnes were imported. The market for beeswax is fairly stable, since it is a standard ingredient in many cosmetics and pharmaceutical preparations; although at times of short supply it may be replaced by artificial waxes. It is used also for beeswax candles and to make foundation sheets for beekeeping. Much of the beeswax produced in Europe is contaminated by residues from medicines that beekeepers use to treat pathogens in honey bee colonies. This contamination problem has led to an increase in demand for residue-free and organic beeswax for use in cosmetics and apiculture.

Beeswax is imported into the EU from diverse origins. China and African countries provide the bulk of the supply, along with New Zealand and Australia.

PRICES
Based on official data, our own research, and discussions with clients, prices varied considerably between 2005 and 2010. This variation depended on origin and quality of beeswax, availability of supply, fluctuating demands for organic beeswax, cost savings during the economic crisis, and fluctuations in currency value. Chinese beeswax is sold towards the lower end of the price scale. New Zealand and Australian beeswax fetch the higher prices. These are good quality and more professionally presented than most of the African and Chinese beeswax. African beeswax is generally expected to be unadulterated, but beeswax from some origins is often turned down as being too smoky and dark. Beeswax from Ethiopia and Zambia generally fetch higher prices than beeswax from Nigeria and Cameroon.

TRADING STRUCTURES
Beeswax is imported by agents who sell to refiners. Many of the refining companies are well-established businesses with a track record of more than a hundred years. Their job is to remove impurities in the beeswax and supply customers according to their needs. Customers generally ask for pellets, granules or sheets of beeswax,

\(^2\) CBI, 2009. CBI Market Survey. The honey and other bee products market in the EU.
making orders of between a few kilograms and several hundred kilograms. Once the beeswax reaches them, it is usually bleached and odourless. Refiniers are specialised in their work, and have gained a good degree of credibility amongst their client base. At one point we considered trying to refine our beeswax in Cameroon to attain a higher value per kilogram, but eventually we decided that it made little sense to try to compete with the specialised refiners.

**QUALITY REQUIREMENTS**

Since beeswax is often processed to render it colourless and odourless, raw beeswax is generally considered to be of higher quality if it is pale in colour, does not smell strongly and is not contaminated by dirt, smoke or soot. Factors which make the refining process easier and less costly add value to the beeswax. During pre-sale analyses, the buyer checks samples for physical properties, colour, odour, cleanliness and possible adulteration.

EU import requirements are less stringent for beeswax than for honey because beeswax is not a food. However, a requirement for producers to register has recently been introduced and this increases the costs for businesses exporting into the EU. Beeswax import is not always straightforward!
ESTABLISHING A RESIDUE MONITORING PLAN

The most important legislation relevant to the export of honey to the European Union is the Residue Monitoring Plan (RMP) (Commission Decision 2001/700/EC). The RMP is a process which ensures that the contamination risks related to chemical residues in honey are managed. Residues are traces of any contaminants that should not be present in the honey. There are three main groups of contaminants targeted for examination: banned veterinary substances (such as chloramphenicol), authorised veterinary substances (but found in excess of their authorised limits, such as antibiotics and miticides), and environmental pollutants (such as pesticides or heavy metals).

All countries intending to export their honey to the EU must develop an RMP. Once the RMP has been accepted by the EU it serves as assurance that the country will not export honey that is contaminated by dangerous levels of chemical residues, and that future monitoring of honey production, processing and trading within the country will continue to meet safety guidelines. The RMP must be resubmitted every year. This system is not intended to block countries from exporting their honey to the EU, but it presents an obstacle for those who lack information about setting one up.

**NOTE** Beeswax for industrial purposes and propolis are not subject to a Residue Monitoring Plan. However, organisations wishing to export beeswax for apicultural purposes to the EU must first gain authorisation and registration from the European Commission via their governments.

Once a country has an approved RMP it is listed as a so-called *third country*, authorised by the European Commission to export honey to the EU. The list is regularly updated and can be found in the Official Journal of the European Union as a Commission Decision amending Decision 2004/432/EC on the approval of Residue Monitoring Plans submitted by *third countries* in accordance with Council Directive 96/23/EC. Honey is one of many food products listed. Residue Monitoring Plans apply not to individual structures but to a whole country,
African beeswax and honey is sought after by cosmetic companies because it is free from chemical contamination.
so they must be submitted by national governments. In Cameroon, as in many African countries, beekeeping is an undervalued sector, sitting within the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries (MINEPIA)\textsuperscript{3}. Our role was to work with NGO partners to make the government aware of the potential of the beekeeping sector and to explain the need for a RMP. We provided all the explanatory documents which we downloaded from the European Commission website (http://europa.eu). After this, the procedure followed its course. A focal point was nominated within MINEPIA, and gradually, things moved forward. Three years after discussions about a RMP for Cameroon began, Cameroon was added to the list of third countries.

**TIME FRAME FOR THE PROCESS OF RMP APPROVAL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>November</td>
<td>Summary document circulated to interested parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>July</td>
<td>First meeting with a MINEPIA official</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>October</td>
<td>First exporters’ meeting, organised by NGO partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>April</td>
<td>Second exporters’ meeting, organised by NGO partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>August</td>
<td>Focal point within MINEPIA is officially appointed by the Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>October</td>
<td>Official sample collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>February</td>
<td>RMP submitted by MINEPIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>October</td>
<td>Commission Decision published!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{3}MINEPIA is the ministry within the government of Cameroon which supports animal production, health protection and breeding of various livestock, fisheries and animal industries.
A sample of honey is taken from a consignment for testing
ADDING VALUE THROUGH CERTIFICATION

Organic and fair trade markets represent real opportunities for African countries to enter the European Union

NICHE MARKETS FOR HONEY AND BEESWAX

The demand in Europe for organic honey is increasing. To be certified organic, honey must be produced by bees foraging in areas free from pollution and agro-chemical application. Treating bee colonies with chemical medicines and out of season sugar feeding (common practices in Europe, America and the large producing countries where bee diseases are widespread) are also forbidden in organic honey production. In 2006 it was estimated that the total market for organic honey in Europe was 6,500 tonnes per year, with Germany, the Netherlands and the UK being the largest markets.

Demand for fair trade products is also increasing in Europe. The Fairtrade certificate assures consumers that producers have received a fair price and are not being exploited by more powerful participants in the market chain. Honey is an important product in the fair trade sector. In 2006, 14% of all honey retailed in the EU was certified Fairtrade. Currently, there are no African suppliers of Fairtrade honey to the European market: the majority comes from Latin America. Many European fair trade and organic buyers are interested in sourcing African honey, but they struggle to find suppliers with sufficient volumes available.

Organic beeswax is of interest to some cosmetics companies and candle-makers. When we began sales of beeswax, the organic beeswax market in Europe was increasing, and was expected to continue in this way over the years to come. In 2006, supplies of organic beeswax were limited and the principal suppliers in Australia and New Zealand were not able to meet demand. One buyer told us that African suppliers could potentially fill the gap by supplying cheaper organic beeswax, but that many suppliers were unable to meet certifiers’ requirements for traceability. Since then, the EU economy slowed and China began supplying organic beeswax. Some of the companies we had begun talking to claimed that they could no longer afford organic

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4 Export Promotion of Organic Products from Africa (EPOPA) 2006
5 Fairtrade is an accreditation, labelling system which certifies that products bearing the Fairtrade Mark meet a range of specific criteria. Fair trade is a generic vision of trade with strong social and ethical benefits.
beeswax. In the meantime, we obtained organic certification for Guiding Hope’s beeswax and honey, hoping to penetrate the market when demand picked up.

MORE ABOUT FAIRTRADE CERTIFICATION

Since the inception of Guiding Hope, we had always kept Fairtrade certification in mind, but we were deterred by stories from across Africa of producers that were struggling to get registered by the Fairtrade Labelling Organisation (FLO), and others that were being de-listed.

The FLO model for producer organisations demands that producers are well organised, with democratic governance structures. In Africa, the majority of honey producers are small-scale farmers spread across large, remote areas, often with a limited road network. Many of them are illiterate, and are usually interested in selling their honey for cash, and using the money immediately for other activities, rather than taking a more long term interest in how their honey is marketed. In contrast, in Latin America (from where most of the Fairtrade honey comes) producers are often organised into large and powerful cooperatives. We realised that meeting the FLO model for producer organisations was unrealistic in our context. Certification is costly, and so we preferred to work for organic certification in the short term, and leave Fairtrade certification for a later date.

ORGANIC HONEY AND BEESWAX PRODUCTION STANDARDS

Africa has a number of comparative advantages when it comes to achieving organic honey and beeswax production.

1. Africa’s honey bees are healthy and beekeepers do not need to apply medicines to their colonies. By contrast, European beekeepers use many medicines, some of which may contravene organic regulations.

2. Excessive sugar-feeding contravenes the organic regulations, and yet this is the norm in cold climates, with short flowering seasons. African beekeepers do not feed sugar to their bees.

3. For any production area to be certified organic, the bees must be able to forage for a radius of 3km (this is the minimum) on organically-certified vegetation. This is hard to achieve in many parts of the world, but can be achieved in Africa.
The table below shows a selection of standards set by the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movement (IFOAM) for organic beekeeping. The analysis shows that the region of Adamaoua, Guiding Hope's supply area, stands very favourably against these standards.

**THE APPLICABILITY OF IFOAM ORGANIC STANDARDS IN ADAMAOUA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IFOAM organic standard</th>
<th>SMALL RISK</th>
<th>VIRTUALLY NO RISK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.9.1: Hives shall be situated in organically managed fields and/or wild natural areas. Hives may be placed in an area that ensures access to sources of honeydew, nectar and pollen that meet organic crop production requirements sufficient to supply all of the bees’ nutritional needs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>There are still vast expanses of virgin forest and vegetation free from the use of pesticides. Land is otherwise occupied by free-range cattle and small subsistence farms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.9.2: The operator shall not place hives within foraging distance of fields or other areas with a high contamination risk.</td>
<td></td>
<td>No chemicals are used on fields. There are no major roads, industries or large urban centres in the part of Adamaoua where beekeeping takes place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.9.3: At the end of the production season, hives shall be left with reserves of honey and pollen sufficient for the colony to survive the dormancy period. Any supplementary feeding shall be carried out only between the last honey harvest and the start of the next nectar or honeydew flow period. In such cases, organic honey or sugar shall be used.</td>
<td></td>
<td>No feeding of bees takes place. Flowers are available most of the year and once the colder season begins, bees are left to feed on the honey within their hives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.9.4: Bee colonies may be converted to organic production. Introduced bees shall come from organic production units when available. Bee products may be sold as organically produced when the requirements of these Standards have been complied with for at least one year. During the conversion period, the beeswax shall be replaced by organically produced beeswax [...]</td>
<td>Hives are inhabited by wild colonies that have foraged on wild/uncultivated plants so they are a priori organic colonies. No beeswax is introduced into the hive.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.9.5: Each beehive shall primarily consist of natural materials. Use of construction materials with potentially toxic effects is prohibited.</td>
<td>Hives are made entirely of natural materials found in the local environment (straw, raffia, leaves and rattan).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.9.6: For pest and disease control the following are permitted: a. lactic, formic acid; b. oxalic, acetic acid; c. sulphur; d. natural essential oils (e.g. menthol, eucalyptol, camphor); e. Bacillus thuringiensis; f. steam, direct flame and caustic soda for hive disinfection.</td>
<td>Nothing whatsoever is applied in the hive to control pests and diseases as honey bees in Adamaoua show no symptoms of bee diseases. The way in which beekeeping is practised means that this is likely to remain the case</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.9.7: Where preventative measures fail, veterinary medicinal products may be used.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.9.8: The health and welfare of the colony shall be primarily achieved by hygiene and hive management.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
ORGANIC CERTIFICATION

Having completed the analysis above we felt confident that our beekeepers were practising organic beekeeping. But this was not enough. Certification by an independent body was essential to back up our claims and to provide credible evidence to buyers in distant markets.

For honey and beeswax to be sold under an organic label in the EU they must have been produced, inspected and certified in accordance with the requirements detailed by European law. The same requirement applies whether the bee products are produced within the EU, or outside. The determining factor is where it is sold. If it is sold in the EU as organic, then the EU rules must be applied.

Each EU country has one or more approved organic certifiers, for example the Soil Association in the UK, Ecocert in France, EMU and Öko in Germany and SKAL in
The Netherlands. Some of these certifiers have an agreement to cross-inspect and certify for each other's standards. There are some organic certifiers in non-EU countries that are recognised as equivalent to EU certifiers, but there are none in Cameroon. We had to pay a certifier from outside Cameroon to inspect our production units and products. Since our products were initially aimed at the UK market we selected the Soil Association as our certifier. This UK company is one of the oldest and most acclaimed certification bodies.

During an inspection, the certifying body needs to check that all the honey or beeswax claimed to be organic meet the organic standards. The inspector asks questions: does it come from an organic zone? From a registered organic producer? Has it been processed according to organic standards? The main method of inspecting is by examining purchasing, processing and sales records, which should demonstrate the origin and movement of all organic products, and show that they cannot get mixed up with non-organic products. The inspector will need to see records for cleaning and hygiene. The production unit should be able to demonstrate that between inspections, internal control is taking place, so that any problems are identified quickly, and corrected. The inspector needs to see written evidence of internal control.

Record keeping is of utmost importance for organic certification.

Guiding Hope has dual roles: we buy honey and beeswax from producers and carry out processing. This means that we must have both a producer licence and a processor licence, and this in turn means two separate inspections (during the same visit) and two separate licence fees. In addition to the licence fees, Guiding Hope incurs heavy costs associated with training, internal control, strict record keeping, and the expert advice from PAELLA-E. All of these costs are essential if we are to maintain the licence, and yet without an organic licence our honey stands little chance of being noticed on the European market. If our beeswax is sold as organic we can attract higher prices and our buyers are more interested in signing long term sales contracts. All in all, organic certification is expensive, but for us, it is worthwhile.
SETTING UP A TRACEABILITY SYSTEM

Organic certification demands full traceability. This means that we need to know the origin of all honey and beeswax that we handle and sell. At first glance this seems a huge challenge. Staff at the processing unit may work for several days filtering honey before rendering a large amount of beeswax comb into blocks. They may produce 100kg of beeswax at a time, which comes from about 2 tonnes of honey sourced from up to 100 different people. Each of those beekeepers may have 60 colonies scattered in the forest. Yet traceability demands that the journey of each bucket of honeycomb can be traced from the hive where it was harvested to the block of beeswax or tank of honey where it finally ends up.

INTRODUCTION TO TRACEABILITY

Traceability is not necessarily about tracing every drop of honey back to its source, but about ensuring that when a bucket of honey is bought, there are clear records of where it came from. This way any problems can be minimised, and if they do occur, the source of the problem can be identified and solved. The advantages of a traceability system, are:

a) quality is controlled at every point in the chain - before a beekeeper’s honey is mixed with other honey in a sack; before a sack of honey is mixed with other sacks of honey during filtration; before liquid honey is transferred into sacks, or into export containers.

b) stock records and processing records are kept at every stage, allowing us to double check actual quantities against registered quantities.

STEPS TO ACHIEVE TRACEABILITY

Here we explain how we manage traceability to achieve organic certification.

☑ We need to verify that all the forage surrounding our beekeepers’ hives is organic. This is achieved by asking beekeepers and by making physical checks.

☑ The beekeepers must have been trained to organic standards and have a signed supplier contract with Guiding Hope.
At this stage, we can conclude that all honey supplied to a collection centre from any one of the registered beekeepers, is in principle, organic.

☐ As each bucket is brought in to a collection centre, it is registered in the supplier’s record book and in the stock entry book.

☐ At the end of the day, all the buckets of honey that have been delivered are transferred into sacks, each containing 3 buckets. If 3 suppliers have each brought 3 buckets, their 9 buckets will be transferred into 3 sacks. If 5 suppliers have between them brought 16 buckets, 15 of them will be transferred into 5 sacks and one bucket will be left aside until two more buckets of honey have come in.

At this point it is already getting difficult to decipher whose bucket of honey has gone into exactly which sack!

☐ At the end of each day, the sacks of honey that have been filled are labelled with the date, the name of the collection centre, and a number: all of this information forms the sack code and so every sack has a different code.

At the end of any one day, we have a certain number of sacks and a list of people who have delivered honey that day.

☐ When the sacks of honey reach the central processing warehouse, they are stored according to their origin: that is, all the sacks from one particular collection centre are stored in one place, separately from those from other collection centres.

☐ Honey is then filtered in batches, according to from which collection centre it came. A batch is complete when all the sacks from one origin have been filtered.

☐ The honey within one batch is transferred into sacks and given a code denoting the collection centre, the day the sack was filled, and the number within the batch.

All the honey from one collection centre is classified within the same batch and kept separate from the honey from all the other origins. We know that it has come from a fixed number of producers, but we can no longer tell whose honey is in which sack.

☐ The sacks of honey are later transferred into export containers, which will contain between 3 and 9 sacks. Again, the origins of honey are not mixed.

☐ Information concerning the origin is marked on the export containers and is used by the client when the honey reaches its destination.
This information is sufficient to guarantee the organic nature of our products.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS OF TRACEABILITY

Traceability must apply also to samples sent for analysis or for prospective clients to test. We have often made the mistake of grabbing any random bottle of honey to send, via someone who is travelling, to a laboratory for analysis, or to a client. When the results come back showing something negative, like a high HMF (hydroxymethylfurfuldehyde) level, we are incapable of saying why this might be, because we no longer know exactly where the honey came from and how it was handled and stored. Similarly, when the potential client calls back saying ‘I liked the first sample of honey I received, but the second one tasted completely different... Sorry I don’t want to buy your honey after all!’, we are at a loss as to what to say.

If it is possible to trace honey back to the area where it has been harvested, then you can use information about the forage sources as marketing information. This is another advantage of traceability. This does not mean following every bee, but by learning the types of flowering plants in an area.
Beeswax maintains its quality provided that it is not over-heated during processing.
WRITING A HACCP PLAN

This is not a step-by-step guide to writing a HACCP plan since up-to-date, honey-relevant information is readily available on the internet. Instead, we introduce the approach we took when we wrote our own HACCP plan.

HACCP (usually pronounced 'hassap') stands for Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points. It is an internationally recognised working tool, which has now been adopted by many institutions and integrated into some of the European Commission's directives. Its purpose is to serve as a preventative safety system that ensures the production of risk-free foods. It is a powerful method to eradicate potential hazards regarding foods, and enables the application of science-based controls. It is relevant across the whole food production chain, from raw material to finished product.

HACCP methodology is required by law for all food products sold within the EU (see EC Regulation 852/2004; EC Regulation 853/2004; EC Regulation 854/2004). The only exception is for some small enterprises, where it is accepted that good hygiene practice may replace a HACCP plan.
ELEMENTS INCLUDED IN A HACCP PLAN

Here we introduce the seven stages of a HACCP plan, with particular reference to honey processing in Cameroon.

**Stage 1 – Prerequisites**
There are a number of prerequisites (shown in the table below) which form the foundation of a HACCP plan. In our case, most of these prerequisites were already in place as they formed also part of our compliance with organic certification.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prerequisite</th>
<th>Step taken to ensure compliance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning and sanitation</td>
<td>Guiding Hope has written rules and procedures for cleaning and sanitation which are shown clearly on posters in each collection and processing centre. The rules are explained during training at all stages of the production process, monitored during internal control and documented in internal control reports.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pest control</td>
<td>Guiding Hope has written rules and procedures for pest control, which are communicated to all suppliers and employees during training. Pest control registers are maintained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval of suppliers</td>
<td>All Guiding Hope’s suppliers are registered, and we have signed contracts in place with them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal hygiene</td>
<td>All aspects of personal hygiene are emphasised during supplier and employee training, for example, finger nails should be kept short; ill people should not come to work; hands should always be washed, rinsed and dried before handling honey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water control</td>
<td>We have no capacity to carry out analysis of water samples. We rely on the principle that water which is deemed by local people as being safe to drink, can be used to clean equipment or buckets. As an extra measure of safety, all water used in cleaning is boiled before use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>As part of our internal control, we carry out regular checks on the condition of equipment and buildings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product specifications</td>
<td>All Guiding Hope’s products have Information Sheets containing technical data (for example, origin, pollen sources, and microbiological, chemical and physical characteristics). These provide a standard to which we agree that all our products should conform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product storage control</td>
<td>Guiding Hope’s collection centres were originally designed to keep honey cool. However, we later realised that the design was not sufficient to protect honey from increases in HMF. We have now introduced thermometers and seek to minimise the time that the honey spends at each storage site.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*This chapter is based on a presentation HACCP and hygiene in honey production Buenos Aires, October/November 2005*
Stage 2 – HACCP team

The HACCP team are those who work together to write the HACCP plan. The team must include different players. For example, a beekeeper will be able to identify hazards in the apiary, a collection centre manager will tell you the reasons why they may refuse a bucket of honey, a transporter will tell you if the vehicle broke down whilst transporting the honey and whether the honey was exposed to excessive heat, while a processor will tell you if they find any foreign bodies in the honey such as bits of hair, packaging or stones. The manager and the employees may not have the same idea of what is realistic and feasible to accept. Staff occupied full time in processing may agree to fill in forms which document their work, but in reality, may never get round to it. It may be necessary to employ someone to fill in the appropriate documentation, and somebody else to control and monitor all quality and hygiene practices.

Stage 3 - Hazard identification

Writing a description of the product and processes enables identification of the types of hazards involved in producing the food item. Hazards may be of three types: physical, chemical and biological. They should be analysed according to their likelihood and severity. The following table shows some of the hazards we identified:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of processing</th>
<th>Hazard contamination</th>
<th>Type of hazard</th>
<th>Severity</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Control measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At the collection centre</td>
<td>Buckets which have not been properly dried could contaminate contents creating fermentation, or leave honey with an unpleasant odour.</td>
<td>Biological</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Unlikely, since buckets are left to dry upside down and checked for cleanliness before being sent out to beekeepers.</td>
<td>Collection centre managers should be properly trained. Buckets should be checked during internal control inspections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the processing warehouse</td>
<td>Traces of soap remaining on equipment which has not been rinsed could contaminate honey, tainting its taste.</td>
<td>Chemical</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Very unlikely since soap is not used to clean equipment.</td>
<td>Cleaning records are kept describing the type and frequency of cleaning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stage 4 — Critical control point  
After identifying the hazards, it was necessary to then set a Critical Control Point (CCP) for each one. This is a step where control can be applied, and which is essential in preventing, eradicating or reducing a hazard to an acceptable level. The Table in Stage 5 shows an example of the CCPs we identified for the problem of heat exposure. Each CCP should also correspond to a Critical Limit (CL). This is a criterion which separates the acceptable from the unacceptable. In the case of HMF, the limits are set initially by the EU under Council Directive 2001/110/EC. However, a separate limit may be set with a client, and if on arrival the honey has reached HMF levels which are higher than the agreed limit, the honey may be refused or a lower price may be paid. To ensure that our honey falls easily within the limits set by the EU, or by the client if lower, we must have our own limits relevant to each control point.

Stage 5 — Monitoring and corrective action procedures  
Each CCP must be monitored. This means carrying out checks to ensure that instructions and corrective procedures are well implemented. It is necessary to identify who is responsible, what they must look for, and how often. Monitoring allows us to recognise when it is necessary to introduce Corrective Action (CA). When CLs are in danger of being exceeded, it is necessary either to influence the product or the process, or to destroy the product or sell on a market which is not covered by the HACCP plan. The example in the table below demonstrates how we dealt with the issue of HMF, but the same methodology must be used for all the hazards identified.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In the shipping container</th>
<th>Exposure to excessive heat is likely to increase HMF levels of honey, making it unfit for use as table honey according to EU directives - financial losses incurred.</th>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Large</th>
<th>Very probable, since containers generally take at least two weeks to leave the port after loading.</th>
<th>Take temperatures in the container using a data logger, arrange rapid despatch of container, and if necessary use a refrigerated container.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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CCP management for HMF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CL Number</th>
<th>Critical Control Point</th>
<th>Critical Limit</th>
<th>Monitoring Methods</th>
<th>Corrective Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Temperatures should be taken in all storage sites where honey is kept.</td>
<td>Temperatures should not exceed 25°C.</td>
<td>Temperatures reached during the hottest point of the day should be recorded by storage site managers.</td>
<td>If temperatures exceed 25°C the honey should be removed as quickly as possible. Packing lists should signal that honey has been stored in conditions above 25°C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Honey should be processed and despatched as quickly as possible.</td>
<td>Honey should be shipped within 5 months of being harvested.</td>
<td>Harvesting dates, stock entry, goods processing and goods despatch records must be kept at all stages of the process by collection centre staff.</td>
<td>Honey which has been stored for more than 5 months should be sold on the national market unless sample results show that HMF still falls below the limits set in CL No. 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Samples should be analysed for HMF when honey arrives at processing site, before departure, and on arrival at destination port.</td>
<td>HMF level should not be above 5ppm when the honey arrives at the processing site, above 15ppm before departure, and above 25ppm on arrival.</td>
<td>Sample results should be kept by the quality control (QC) officer in an archive which denotes clearly the traceability information in relation to stock.</td>
<td>If HMF is higher than the critical limit before departure, it should be sold on the national market, or if exported, a lower sales price will be agreed with the client.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stage 6 - Verification procedures

Once the CCPs, CLs, monitoring and CA have been set, the next stage is to establish Verification Procedures to ensure that the HACCP system is performed correctly and effectively. This means asking some questions:

✔ Is the system well suited to the product and process?
✔ Are the procedures specified?
✔ Are corrective actions applied correctly?
Stage 7 - Documentation
The final point about HACCP is that everything must be correctly documented. Without documentation, all the controls and checks are futile, since no back-checking can be done and no lessons can be learnt. HACCP is not necessarily subject to an inspection or an audit, but clients may send their own auditors to check that their supplier is processing their food product according to appropriate and effective hygiene procedures. One of the first things they will want to see is the HACCP file, containing not only the plan but, more importantly, proof of its application.

Every sack emptied in each processing batch needs to be recorded
FINDING AND ENGAGING WITH A CLIENT

Finding a client, and developing a good working relationship with them, is one of the most critical aspects of the export process. It is hard to prescribe how to develop this relationship. Here we give a few tips based on our own experiences.

☑ Before embarking on a marketing trip or contacting clients, try to have a website, and/or some printed marketing material, which contains at least a minimal amount of up-to-date information about your company (who you are, what you do, how you operate, what you offer). This gives confidence to those who do not yet know you.

☑ If phone numbers or contact details change, do not forget to update them on all your marketing materials, website, labels etc. A client who tries to contact you in vain will quickly lose interest.

☑ If client research and liaison is carried out by a team of people, make sure there is near-perfect coordination between them. It is very unprofessional for several people from the same company to contact the same client and say different things.

☑ Some clients are very happy to have the opportunity of a face-to-face meeting with a potential supplier, although this will generally be more fruitful if it has been prepared carefully in advance. Other clients are so busy, stressed or inflexible that they cannot afford the time within their schedule to meet you, even if you have travelled two continents to reach them. Also, if they have given you an appointment, get there on time.

☑ Some clients had no interest in talking to us about buying honey while Cameroon was not authorised by the EU to export honey, even though we knew that it was only a question of months before Cameroon would be added to the list.

☑ Clients may take weeks to reply when you propose a product to them, but they may expect an immediate response from you when they ask for information. When you have already engaged in a sale, it is important to respond quickly and provide all the necessary information. If you know you are going to be out of email contact, set up a contingency plan - provide a phone number or delegate someone who is capable of checking the emails or supplying information.
If you get no response by email, then it is worth picking up the phone to get a direct response from the client.

Make sure you use a reliable method to measure the weight of your goods before shipment and obtain proof of weight. Weight often becomes a matter of dispute between the seller and the buyer, however the buyer usually has the last word when the goods are already in their hands.

Make sure that samples are traceable, and representative of your stock. It will cost you and the client a lot of frustration if the stock turns out to be a lower grade than the sample on which prices were fixed, and the client has the right to lower the price.

Be very careful not to make promises about things that are beyond your control.
EXPORT LOGISTICS AND FORWARDING

Logistics are a major cost when dealing with distant markets. In this chapter, we explain the experiences of Guiding Hope. We started out as novices in the business of export and had to learn the hard way.

When we began preparing our first export, we soon realised that we would require a specialist to transfer our goods. We contacted a number of forwarding agencies based in Douala and explained what we intended to transport. Most of them did not take us seriously, judging by our pitch that we were there to waste their time rather than offering them a good business opportunity. They had no experience of exporting honey or beeswax, and did not seem interested in adapting their services to take on a new product. Generally, each forwarder specialises in a particular domain. However, the most open and welcoming of the forwarders gave us an appointment, or a quotation accompanied by practical details.

One forwarding agent, named Eagle Cameroun, took us seriously, and spent time analysing our situation to help us find the right path. They offered us their services, and explained the vocabulary, demystifying all the trade terms and documents required. That said, it was also Eagle’s first time exporting beeswax or honey, and they had no prior experience. It was necessary to keep in close contact with our client, who had also never imported bee products from Cameroon before, but was able to tell us exactly what documents were needed from us when the goods arrived.

Together with Eagle, we arranged a logistics plan. Step-by-step, our forwarder helped us to coordinate the arrival of the lorry, took responsibility for loading, inspecting and sealing the container, acquired all the various export documents, and finally, arranged for the departure of the container. We learnt from each stage of the process as it unfolded, and tried to meet, as best we could, our targets and deadlines.

FIRST EXPERIENCES OF EXPORTING BEESWAX

In the first nine months of operation in 2007, Guiding Hope succeeded in buying and exporting 20 tonnes of beeswax and mediating the sale and export of a further 20 tonnes supplied by a collaborator.

In early 2007, we secured an order from a British buyer for 10 tonnes of beeswax. Straight away we focussed on establishing administrative procedures, setting up bank
accounts, and arranging the purchase of beeswax. We also entered into discussions with a collaborator - an experienced beeswax trader in Ngaoundal. The agreement was that he would help us to secure 10 tonnes of beeswax from local suppliers for our buyer, and we would help him to sell and export his first container of beeswax to another buyer. All this meant a lot of travelling, since we all lived in ‘bush towns’ with no reliable internet connection, and were situated at least three hours from cities with large banks.

We secured a second buyer for our collaborator, in Germany, but there was some confusion about the terms of payment. The German client required us to send the goods and wait for approval before receiving the payment. We were surprised by this as we had assumed that we would receive payment by letter of credit. A letter of credit is a secure system for the seller (i.e. Guiding Hope) because the payment is transferred to the seller’s bank account simultaneously as the buyer receives the paperwork. However, it is difficult for a first time seller to be awarded this degree of trust.

Charts are used to convey honey handling guidelines to non-readers
In June 2007, we started to reprocess and remould the beeswax to minimise the presence of dirt and impurities, and form it into blocks to fit efficiently on pallets in a container. When we calculated the quantities that would fit inside a container, we realised it was inefficient to ship 10 tonnes as we had initially planned, because the container would be half empty. We therefore arranged with our collaborator to supply us with a further 10 tonnes, which he bought on credit from several large producers. We sent samples to the two clients identified and to our surprise received very different feedback. The German client claimed that our sample contained too much honey and sand and they would have to reduce the price, while our British clients said the sample was satisfactory. Our container of beeswax was not only worth a lot of money, but also many years of preparation and hard work. We were determined to see our enterprise through to the end.

Towards the middle of July, when we were still waiting to receive the official purchase orders from both clients, we began to receive doubtful signals from the German client. Meanwhile, our collaborator also began to doubt the sale and began looking for a buyer within Cameroon, but thanks to constant advice from our British client and our forwarding agent, we persevered and finally the official purchase orders and contracts were secured. We also decided to send a representative from Guiding Hope to meet the client in Germany when the goods arrived. We hoped this would ensure a smooth transaction, solidify our relationship, and would facilitate future transactions.

We had several target dates for the departure of the two containers, but every stage of the process seemed to take longer than expected. By the end of August, we were ready to send the beeswax down to the port in Douala. The beeswax was moulded and packed, the clients had sent the orders and were expecting the beeswax to be despatched in the coming days. Our forwarding agent had made a booking for shipment on 14 September 2007. We arranged for a lorry to come from Ngaoundere to transport the beeswax from Ngaoundal to Douala — and paid 70% upfront. We went back to Ngaoundal to wait for the lorry, but three days later it had still not arrived and we could not make contact with the driver. Besides the worry about the money that had been advanced, we had also not made allowances for such delays on the journey. On the fourth day, we were extremely relieved when the lorry turned up in Ngaoundal, but our problems were not over. Unfortunately, the lorry then got stuck in a three day traffic jam along the unmade stretch of the only major road connecting North to South Cameroon. Five lorries had turned over in the mud and in the time it took to
clear them, 500 lorries were waiting in the queue — the event featured on national television. The lorry eventually arrived in Douala at 3am on 13 September 2007 and the two containers were loaded (by hand) before midnight.

Even though the beeswax was loaded by the target date of 14 September, further delays followed. It was not until more than a month later that the two containers left the port of Douala and began their journey to Europe. Our forwarding agent informed us time and again that our containers would be leaving ‘on the next ship’. Meanwhile, we kept in regular contact with the clients to apologise and stay on good terms. Delays can be caused by stormy weather, which can disrupt entire shipping schedules. Priority of ships and container space is also undoubtedly given to bigger companies exporting petrol, rubber etc. that are more significant cash earners for the Cameroon economy.

Our first shipment finally left Douala a month later than our target date. We were then faced with a new difficulty. The vital paperwork, which is needed to receive the goods on arrival, is only supplied after the departure of the boat but must be in the hands of the buyer when the boat arrives, generally 18 days later. When the boat finally departed for Germany there were a series of public holidays in Cameroon before the documents were processed, then followed a five-day strike from Air France, and the internet all across Cameroon crashed for three weeks. Meanwhile, the boat had arrived surprisingly ahead of schedule in Germany and was sitting waiting for its documents. The time that the container was held up in the port was costing us heavily per day.

When the beeswax was eventually tested and confirmed, the payments were made by international bank transfer. Mistakes and misspellings on the international transfer forms further delayed the payment. Finally, at the third attempt, the money was made accessible and we could finally pay back all our debtors and investors.
DEVELOPMENT IMPACT

Beekeepers in Adamaoua are accustomed to huge fluctuations in price. During the honey harvest, the price is lowest as there is a temporary surplus of supply, the price then rises during the off-season. However, most beekeepers are desperate for income as soon as they harvest, and generally sell their honey immediately, when the price is low. Guiding Hope takes a deliberately different approach to prices and always promises a consistent price throughout the year. This is much higher than the harvest season price, and does not increase when honey becomes scarce. The constant price offered by Guiding Hope means no beekeeper is forced to sell at a low price, just because they are desperate to sell quickly, and the predictability of the price means beekeepers can plan ahead. Even if beekeepers choose to sell elsewhere (and not to Guiding Hope) the constant price offered by Guiding Hope increases their bargaining power with other traders.

HONEY PRICES IN ADAMAOUA

Through tontines (village level savings clubs run by women), established by Guiding Hope, beekeepers are encouraged to save some of their earnings. The tontines accept savings of CFA500-5000 per month (equivalent to 15% to 150% of the price of one bucket of honey). Guiding Hope encourages people to use these funds to buy more beehives (generating income for those beekeepers who make hives). The aim is that beekeepers should be enabled to increase the number of beehives: this leads to direct increases in production, trade, and income.

Guiding Hope also organises community mobilisation and training to encourage a new generation of beekeepers. Inter-village football tournaments are organised and combined with hive making training. The football players construct beehives, which are then donated to the village where the match was played.
Attractive products sold in the local market
This case study describes the beginnings of Guiding Hope’s export activities, and since 2007 we have exported several more containers of beeswax, and also honey. Logistical problems are still occurring, and we have come to expect them and incorporate them into delivery and cash flow estimations. African beeswax seems to be easier to sell than African honey. Therefore, we have continued to invest in the development of the beeswax sector, incorporating more suppliers, increasing the value of the product and securing a large enough profit margin to bring back to the producers. The income we earn contributes to the development of the region, as well as providing a working capital for our operations. Our first export of honey took three years to prepare and turned out to be even more complicated than our first export of beeswax, because honey is a much more delicate product and intended for human consumption. However, we have not been discouraged and our roots are now well established. We know that our business is having a growing, beneficial impact on the development and livelihoods of beekeepers in Cameroon.