



Customer Testimonial: **CPWE, Ethiopia**

CPWE boosts coffee processing efficiency by 75% with Sortex solutions

Coffee plays a crucial role in generating foreign currency to Ethiopia's national economy. With a 26% annual market share of all processed coffee for national export, CPWE is the largest coffee processing unit in Ethiopia, facilitating over 100 exporters every year.

The company maintains a thriving relationship with food processing specialist Bühler, exclusively using Sortex sorters in all of its coffee processing operations. As such, the company has been able to overcome four big hurdles in coffee processing: product quality, operational efficiency, export standards and stability.

Established in 1994, the Coffee Processing and Warehouse



Enterprise (CPWE) processes and stores export-standard, washed and natural Arabica coffee beans grown all around Ethiopia. The Enterprise operates from a 50,683 square meter coffee processing plant located in the nation's capital, Addis Ababa, with around 400 permanent and contract employees.

Three export coffee processing lines are able to collectively process 15 metric tons of coffee per hour. The company also boasts a storage capacity of up to 30,000 tons and processes approximately 50,000 tons of Arabica coffee every year.

Improving product quality and operational efficiency

Most processing plants across Ethiopia use handpicking as a primary means of sorting coffee beans. Getaw Yalew, General Manager at CPWE says, “Before investing in the Sortex machines, we were relying heavily on handpicking and admittedly the quality control of our coffee was not great. The efficiency was poor, output per hour was low and costs were high.”

In order to ensure a superior and more consistent quality of coffee, the company turned to Bühler. With a portfolio of solutions responsible for processing around 75% of all Arabica beans exported from Ethiopia each year, Bühler was able to meet CPWE’s sorting requirements.

Today, across each of its three lines, CPWE has two Sortex color sorters running back-to-back at the last stage before packing. The SORTEX Z+ Bichro sorter, the SORTEX A ColorVision and the SORTEX B MultiVision machines have all been installed for primary sorting as well as re-sorting, for an added layer of quality assurance.

So much time has been saved by using our Sortex machines.

– **Getaw Yalew**
General Manager at CPWE

“Since investing in the Sortex machines, we have reduced our dependency on handpicking,” Yalew states. As a result, the company has noticed a vast improvement in the quality of their coffee beans, with easier removal of sour, vinegar, immature and discolored beans, in addition to insect damaged and broca beans. “The Sortex color sorters really do provide an unmatched product quality,” Yalew affirms.

However, most significantly, CPWE has seen a huge improvement in efficiency, “So much time has been saved by using our Sortex machines. What would have taken five minutes, now takes just two minutes to handpick,” Yalew says. “Overall our sorting efficiency, up to and including the final bagging stage, has increased by 75%. For us, that is outstanding!”



Satisfying export standards

Every year over 100 exporters, consisting of agricultural cooperatives and private coffee exporters, use CPWE’s facilities for warehousing and processing. They also make use of the company’s export services to foreign markets such as Europe, Asia and the United States.

“The first thing we always show our international buyers are our Sortex color sorters, as a guarantee that we have a superior quality of coffee. And they are always very impressed,” Yalew says.

Export requirements for coffee beans in Ethiopia are of the highest criteria, with a 99.9% accept quality as standard. If the input quality is poor, a second pass is often required in sorting.

“Thanks to their simultaneous re-sorting functionality, we can count on our Sortex sorters to ensure that we continue to meet the toughest export requirements,” Yalew says.



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Providing stability

By exclusively using Sortex machines in all of its coffee processing operations, Yalew says “CPWE has seen the market constantly grow in terms of volume. We have been able to supply our products at a consistent quality standard, with markets now perceiving us as a reliable supplier of high-quality coffee.”

As the only coffee processor in Ethiopia that has two Sortex sorters running in series on each of its lines, CPWE is confident that its valued customers are satisfied and this in turn allows business to remain stable.



Another factor that provides stability for the company is the reliable after-care service provided by Bühler’s local sales channel partner in Ethiopia, Sol-Pro Engineering & Trade PLC. “It is a very good relationship,” Yalew says. “I have been with CPWE for 15 years and Sol-Pro Engineering has always provided us with quality customer service when we need it. Particularly when it comes to spare parts, we put in a request and receive them very quickly.”

Indeed, as an integral cog in Ethiopia’s coffee export market, a quick turnaround is not something that CPWE can compromise on and fortunately with Bühler, they don’t have to. Solomon Belachew, Manager at Sol-Pro Engineering and Sales Manager for Bühler products says, “We supply efficient machinery that is reliable and stable with a complete solution in coffee processing, from bean to cup.

“It makes us extremely proud to say that CPWE’s Bühler machinery-powered plant continues to lead the market in high-quality coffee processing.

“What is so great about our relationship with CPWE is that they are very proactive. They always approach us directly to discuss our latest solutions. This is the result of a strong bond based on trust and mutual respect, which will be nurtured for years to come.”

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