

Background

Ethiopia has long been recognized for its rich biodiversity and substantial potential in honey production. However, the lack of a standardized traceability system has created significant challenges in ensuring the quality and safety of honey, particularly when seeking access to international markets. Within the framework of **the Global Market Access Programme (GMAP)**, under the project *Ethiopia: Strengthening the Quality Compliance Capacity of the Honey Value Chain for Greater Market Access*, the **United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)** identified the need for such a system during the project's inception phase.

Although companies exporting to the European Union (EU) had individually implemented traceability systems, there was no unified standard, leading to inconsistencies and difficulties in ensuring accurate traceability across the entire value chain. To address these challenges, the project developed a traceability system that harmonizes data collection practices used by exporting companies. This system was validated during a series of meetings and training sessions conducted in June and July 2024 in Ethiopia.

The traceability forms and protocols created through this initiative will be piloted within the EU export value chain, with the support of the Ethiopian Apiculture Development Association (EADA). Initially, the system will focus on the registration of beekeepers and other economic operators involved in honey exports, ensuring thorough tracking of each critical stage—harvesting, transportation, processing, and sales.

At present, the system will be implemented using paper-based forms, with future plans for digitization as capacity develops. In the meantime, emphasis will be placed on the detailed use of written documentation. These forms and procedures were created through close collaboration with key stakeholders, including the Ethiopian Agriculture Authority (EAA), the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), EADA, as well as exporters and processors, during a series of consultative meetings and training sessions.

This publication introduces the newly developed traceability system forms, marking a significant step forward in improving transparency, quality assurance, and market access for Ethiopian honey in international markets. By establishing this system, the project aims to enhance the competitiveness of Ethiopian honey and ensure its compliance with both national and international standards.

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Traceability Implementation

A Short Guideline for the Honey Value Chain

What is Traceability?

The traceability of food and ingredients along the food chain is an essential factor to ensure food safety. According to Regulation (EC) No. 178/2002, traceability is defined “as the possibility of finding and following the trace, throughout all stages of production, transformation and distribution, of a food”. In turn, the Codex Alimentarius describes it “as the ability to follow the movement of a food along the specific steps of production, process and distribution”. In addition, traceability is required by local authorities as part of GBP compliance.

Who is responsible for implementing Traceability?

Traceability must be ensured in each of the steps of the honey supply chain. The information must be able to be transmitted in a clear and simple way between the different actors. Beekeepers must accurately record harvested honey. They must clearly indicate the date and extraction site, as well as other relevant data such as botanical origin and humidity. The collectors must be able to identify each of the buckets or containers that they collect and ensure that each of them is properly labelled. Processors must control traceability documentation upon product reception, but they must also document processed and dispatched batches. Packers must ensure that they include all relevant information on product labels and implement reliable product recall systems.

The following table includes the different forms proposed for traceability in the honey sector and the economic operators responsible for implementing them.

NO.	NAME OF FORM	RESPONSIBLE ECONOMIC OPERATOR
1	Honey Apiculture Registration	ALL
2	Honey Harvest	BEEKEEPERS
3	Honey Sale and Transfer	BEEKEEPERS, COLLECTORS
4	Use of Veterinary Drugs	BEEKEEPERS
5	Honey Reception Collection	COLLECTORS, FACTORIES
6	Honey Processing	FACTORIES
7	Honey Final Sale	FACTORIES, EXPORTERS