

10 tips to go digital in the coffee sector

Last updated:

23 December 2022

From the farm to the market, more and more companies and organisations are starting to use technology in the coffee value chain. By integrating digital tools in your business, you can collect data, monitor your performance and evaluate your operations' activities for easier and better decision-making. If you are new to digitalisation, these tips can support you in the first steps of going digital. For those already using digital tools, these tips can give you additional information on the latest trends.

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1. Understand how digitalisation can boost your operations in the coffee sector

European coffee buyers are demanding more and more information about the origin of the product. They want assurance that the coffee they buy is consistent in quality and meets traceability and transparency requirements. Buyers also want assurance that the coffee is ethically and sustainably sourced. By integrating digital tools in your business, you can provide buyers with a digital guarantee that you can meet these demands.

In addition, you can use digital tools to monitor internal processes. By collecting accurate information about your business, you can track activities on the farm, control the internal management system, connect with producers and producers' groups, as well as monitor sales and accounting practices. With digitalisation and digital tools, you can also connect and compare information from different business areas to identify which areas need improvement.

Going digital can speed up your work, provided you know what you want to achieve. Identifying a clear objective is at the backbone of a successful digital transformation. You need to determine your priorities and define the challenges you want to tackle. Then you need to assess whether a digital tool can help you reach your intended goal. Going digital without a clear objective and strategy can lead to hurdles and more complexity moving forward. It is better to start small and reach short-term objectives based on a consolidated strategy, than to go fast without a clear path.

Tips:

Stay informed on the latest developments to be competitive in the sector. This is key, as digitalisation is an ongoing process and new tools are developed every day.

Find out what tools and opportunities exist in the coffee sector to determine the best fit for your company. Check Reuters Event's article explaining [why the digital data revolution in coffee \(and cocoa\) can lead to increased sustainability](#) or read Safe Platform's article on [technology and digital agriculture transforming coffee](#).

Navigate the [Digital Coffee Future YouTube channel](#) for different perspectives and lessons learned by coffee organisations in developing and implementing digital tools. Some content is available in English and some content in Spanish.

Understand your needs and capacity gaps before going digital. Run your due diligence before choosing off-the-shelf tools or develop your own, tailor-made, digital solution. Check these [Lessons for Sustainability](#) by the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) for tips on finding the right technology for your needs. Although not targeting coffee exporters specifically, these lessons apply very well to the coffee value chain.

Read this article from Perfect Daily Grind to learn [how digitalisation can improve profitability on coffee farms](#).

2. Gather, analyse and apply data

Data are the foundation of any digitalisation process. Data give you quantitative information that can be used to analyse facts, present numbers and visualise related results. Collecting and analysing data allows you to better control your activities. For example, you can monitor the production level for the harvest season, the quality of your coffee, the financials of your purchases and sales, your coffee inventory and the C price. You can have a dashboard that monitors your various different business activities and signals issues when they arise. This identifies risks, while giving you the right tools to transform challenges into practical solutions.

It is only by collecting data that digital tools can function. The data you collect need to be complete and correct to achieve the most accurate analysis. You can collect digital data via tablets or smartphones using a dedicated app. Once the data are collected, the software automatically aggregates and analyses them according to the metrics and the objectives identified. Then, the information is visualised in the form of graphs and reports.

Examples of digital solutions for data collection and analysis include:

- [KoBo Toolbox](#) is a solution that can collect data both online and offline via smartphone, tablet or web platform. It also allows for data collection by the user through a survey system.
- [iFormBuilder](#) by Zerion is a powerful data collection tool for agriculture. The system can easily be linked to other platforms or applications and is very customisable. Users can create lists, collect pictures, record GPS data and more.
- [CommCare](#) by Dimagi lets you build your own digital app with no need for IT support or coding expertise. It can be used to collect data, store information and monitor the information you want. The tool also lets you send notifications to your field teams, guide them in collecting data and communicate any data errors.

In Latin America, [Aragro](#) is an example of a comprehensive internal operations support platform for SMEs at origin. The platform offers digital services for internal monitoring of inventory activities, accounting, employee performance, machinery status, customer relationship management and workflow at smallholder farmers. [Sispro Coffee](#) offers similar inventory and operations monitoring services, including features for post-harvesting inputs and data. This platform is used mostly in Peru, but may be available in other countries.

Tips:

Ensure that any information you collect is accurate and verified/verifiable. If you input incorrect information

into your system, the results provided by the software will be faulty. As such, it is important to have a quality control system integrated into your data-input and data-processing activities.

For many exporters, the first step to going digital is collecting data using digital forms and storing these data in Excel. This can be a good start. First, you learn about what you need and then you proceed with bigger investments in more sophisticated software. It is very important in this case to check the quality of the data collected and make sure there are no inconsistencies.

Communicate the project properly to your team. Also, train your staff on how to use the platform adequately. It is important that they are aware of the value of the process and understand why accuracy is one of the main priorities to guarantee success.

Comply with data privacy policy, for instance when your buyers and partners ask you to share the data you gathered from them. Today, international regulations are still not consistent, and laws vary from country to country. Keep that in mind before sharing your information. Use the [Digital Farmers Profiles: Reimagining Smallholder Agriculture](#) report from USAID as a guideline. This report provides some generic information about data sharing (page 37). CTA's [Review of Codes of Conduct, Voluntary Guidelines and Principles Relevant for Farm Data Sharing](#) shares insights about different codes of conduct by comparing EU, New Zealand and USA principles.

3. Use digital platforms to optimise coffee sales

Selling and purchasing coffee online is a big part of coffee digitalisation. By using digital platforms, buyers and final consumers can purchase coffee directly on the internet choosing from a wide range of options. Online selling comprises two different channels: Business-to-business (B2B) online trading and Business-to-consumers (B2C) e-commerce.

B2B online trading involves selling your green coffee from origin directly to international buyers. You upload the information of your current/future coffee offer on the platform and inform buyers. This trading system can give you access to new potential buyers who might be difficult to reach using more traditional sales channels. Information typically needs to include the country of origin and specific region, quantity, price, cooperative's name (if applicable), process, grade, screen size, cupping score and affiliation to a certification scheme. B2B online trading requires you to always keep the information of your coffee offers updated. For exporters, it requires time investment and swift engagement with buyers.

Examples of some of these platforms active in Europe are: [Algrano](#), [Almacena Platform](#) (focused on African coffees), [MyTrabocca](#), [V-Hub](#), [TYPICA](#) and [Beyco](#). At the producing country level, [Guatemalan Coffees](#) is a web platform where Guatemalan producers can upload their coffee offers online. The platform does not allow for direct online purchases but acts as a digital promotion system. It facilitates a connection between sellers and buyers. For micro-lots and high-quality specialty coffees, [m-cultivo](#) has developed a marketplace where producers can offer their coffee through dedicated auctions. The company also partners with Cup of Excellence.

A platform like Algrano can also assist with [logistical and warehousing services](#). Through their platform suppliers can find shipping solutions; small volumes are shipped to Europe in consolidated containers, shared by several suppliers / roasters, while larger volumes are shipped in own full containers. The platform allows exporters to easily calculate shipping costs. Algrano works with warehouses in Bremen and Hamburg (Germany), Basel (Switzerland), Bury Saint Edmunds (United Kingdom), Antwerp (Belgium) and Rotterdam (the Netherlands).

B2C e-commerce involves roasters (and retailers), at origin or in the consuming markets, selling roasted coffee online. In this type of e-commerce, the roasted coffee is offered directly to final consumers via different web platforms. During the COVID-19 pandemic, e-commerce sales grew particularly in Europe due to the rise of at-home consumption. Local and specialty roasters, large premium roasters and high-quality retailers offered their coffee bags on their websites so consumers could get their favourite coffees delivered directly to their homes. Today, consumer interest in buying roasted coffee online continues. Examples of e-commerce platforms that sell

quality retail coffee are [Shipsbeans](#) and [CoffeeDesk](#). Other examples of online specialty coffee subscription models are [Dutch Coffee Dealer](#), [Kaffebox](#), [Bean Portal](#) and [The Coffeevine](#). B2C e-commerce usually does not involve exporters directly. However, it is still an opportunity for consumers to learn about your coffee by buying from roasters and retailers.

Tips:

Explore the members' lists and buyer databases of B2B online trading platforms. Study the profile of these buyers and assess whether they are or can be an interesting fit with you.

If you think B2B online trading is a good fit for your business, explore your possibilities and assess your potential. These platforms can provide you with a bigger set of potential buyers, compared to your normal partners.

Keep your coffee offers updated, engage with online buyers, and make your profile on online sales platforms interesting and attractive. Remember that ongoing active engagement in these platforms requires time and energy. Be sure you can make the effort before you embark on this selling strategy.

Do not only use online channels to sell your coffee. Keep investing in other sales channels such as trade shows, trade missions and other channels to maximise your reach and sales opportunities.

4. Create digital experiences to buyers and increase your market attractiveness

Especially in the (post-)COVID-19 world, marketing strategies are likely to shift to more hybrid forms. Although some buyers will continue to purchase coffee as they did before, others will move to digital solutions. These allow them to connect with their suppliers via online platforms, virtual coffee tours and digital cupping sessions. It is important to consider offering such digital experiences if you want to connect with international buyers.

To facilitate these online connections, B2B online trading platforms play a big role in creating virtual experiences between sellers and buyers. [Algrano](#) is one of them and is particularly active in using social media such as Instagram and LinkedIn to promote their coffee offers to their online community. Specialty coffee importer [Nordic Approach](#) (Norway) has also been creating virtual experiences to increase the visibility of their coffees. They offer virtual cupping sessions, publish interviews with producers on social media and have enhanced their online presence to promote their coffees.

After 2022, the earlier growth of virtual events stabilised. Some events, such as the [Producer & Roaster Forum](#), were held fully online in 2021 and moved back to an onsite venue in 2022. Others, such as the [Congreso de la Caficultura](#) organised by Anacafé, and the Specialty Coffee Association's [Re:co Symposium](#), opted for a hybrid format where attendees could participate in person or watch sessions online.

However, the availability of fully virtual events, which grew considerably in 2020 and 2021, is also here to stay. The [Green Coffee Summit](#) and [High Density by Barista League](#) are now in their second virtual editions. It is also worth noting that participation in these events costs less than for onsite events. If you prepare well and are proactive in reaching out to companies, they can still help you find buyers. Keep in mind that at digital events, samples cannot be seen, smelled, or touched, meaning that you will need high-quality pictures and to possibly ship samples directly to potential buyers.

Check [World Coffee Events](#), the [Specialty Coffee Association Calendar](#) and the [Daily Coffee News: Events](#) to get updates about future (digital) events in the coffee sector.

Digital marketing is growing exponentially in coffee as well. More and more organisations use social media, websites, newsletters and other forms of digital promotion to inform their past, current and potential buyers about their offers. For example, [La Finca](#) (Nicaragua), [Origin Coffee Lab](#) (Peru) and [Muraho Trading](#) (Rwanda)

have been particularly active on social media. Their Instagram pages share information on new coffee offers, their suppliers and their operations. Also, check out the company introduction videos of all the coffee SMEs that are part of the [CBI Connecting Central America program](#). Keep in mind that digital marketing requires investments in terms of time, energy and money, especially if this is new to your company.

Figure 1: Video still from the virtual farm and company tour of Café Rivense del Chirripó from Costa Rica



Source: [CBI Connecting Central America](#)

Tips:

If you are interested in starting digital marketing, determine what your usual buyers might be interested in. Before starting to invest, make sure you understand which solution is most valuable for your partners and your business.

Learn from the digital marketing of other companies. Find out whether the strategy and tools they use are a good fit for your company.

Learn from [Grounds for Empowerment](#), which offers online workshops to help female producers in Latin America create their own digital stories.

Consider participating in virtual events. Before participating, research the event to determine if it fits your business in terms of size, market, product range, target audience and digital programme. Determine the investments needed for participation and assess what outcomes you can expect from your participation.

If you participate in virtual trade events or platforms, make sure you can ship your samples to interested buyers in time. Promote your free available samples at your online exhibitor profile and offer samples proactively to contacts generated at the event. Follow up and continue to engage with potential buyers also after the event.

Consult the [CBI 10 tips for finding European Coffee Buyers](#) for more information about using digital tools to find potential buyers in Europe.

5. Improve climate resilience through the use of digital tools

Digitalisation can help businesses mitigate the risks associated with global warming. Due to climate change, the

weather is becoming increasingly unpredictable, and coffee production and producers are increasingly vulnerable. By using digital tools, you can improve your climate resilience by monitoring weather forecasts, making calculations on the correct use of fertilisers, tracking your carbon emissions and preventing and identifying the spread of pests and diseases.

The use of dedicated farm management apps can offer you greater resilience and better guidance on farm management practices. Through these digital tools, you can upload information about your farm location and get access to different services that inform you on the current conditions of your farm. Some of these apps are connected with sensors located in the same area, which can capture information on weather, for instance, and transmit it to your communication system. This information can be delivered through app on a smartphone, but also via SMS, IVR (interactive voice response) on feature phones or WhatsApp.

Examples of such digital tools include:

- [SmartFarm](#) by Cropin, which offers information about the risk of pest infestation and weather forecasts internationally, and is applicable on a larger scale. A similar service is provided by [Plantix](#), which identifies pests and diseases and gives producers best practice information on various different crops, including coffee.
- [GeoFarmer](#) by the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT). This app lets farmers, field operators and other users ask questions and share agricultural best practices. The system offers extension services thanks to continuous interaction and exchange within the farming community. The application has been tested in various countries and is available worldwide.
- The [Cool Farm Tool](#) is a cost-free digital calculator for greenhouse gas, water and biodiversity with which producers can track and check their carbon footprint. Thanks to [collaborations with Coop Coffees and other partners](#), this tool has now been piloted and perfected for coffee production areas. You can sign up and use it on your farm.

Tips:

Read Digital Coffee Future's article on [Three case studies in which coffee digitalisation helps us fight climate change](#) for more information about climate-smart applications.

Check out the [coffee&climate toolbox](#) for additional knowledge and best practices to tackle climate change. Some sources listed in the toolbox also include climate-smart applications and practices.

Refer to [Global Coffee Platform](#) for insights on technology solutions that are relevant for agriculture. Information includes blog posts, programme updates and technical tips.

Check farm management solutions that match your needs based on where you are located, as some apps only offer these services within a specific region or country. For example, [CR-CAFE](#) by Icafe only offers their services to suppliers in Costa Rica.

Ask within your network about which tools others use and assess if they could be useful for you.

6. Monitor and improve quality

Quality is an important buyer requirement on the European market. Buyers demand quality and consistency over time and expect to receive representative samples; that is, samples that represent the coffee that will be shipped. A crucial step that affects the final quality of coffee is the post-harvest process employed. Processing the cherries to parchment, milling, grading, and sorting has an important role in determining the quality of your coffee, and the price you will be paid for it. The offer of digital tools to help with improving and monitoring coffee quality throughout the post-harvest process is growing. These tools guide you to maintain a high quality of your product.

The tools below are relevant regardless of the type of coffee you produce. Monitoring quality is always key to assessing your product and setting the right price for it. Some examples of such tools are:

- [Flowins](#) is a Brazilian start-up that specifically targets small coffee suppliers to digitally guide them through the post-harvest process. The team also conducts physical and sensory reports on coffee samples received from suppliers. The service is currently available only in Brazil, but the company is planning to expand to other countries as well.
- [Agrivero.ai](#) is a German start-up that offers a green quality control service. By taking a picture of the coffee sample and inputting the information in their AI software solution, the tool scans the beans and provides a report about physical quality. Sellers and buyers receive a small hardware kit to take the picture and access to the software. Different actors in the same value chain can also share quality information with this service.
- [Oritain](#) is mostly used by buyers. Buyers can use this tool to compare different samples. The company uses a combination of forensic science and statistics to turn data into a fingerprint for each authentic coffee origin. This service does not only monitor quality, but especially quality consistency.
- [Tastify](#) offers a quality evaluation service. The software allows cuppers to input the information of each coffee they test. The software stores sensory reports in the database of all the samples cupped. By keeping these records, you can compare information between your different coffees over time. You can also share results directly with your buyers. Some buyers, such as the Dutch specialty coffee importer [This Side Up Coffees](#), publish Tastify's cupping notes results on their websites to inform clients about the coffees they have on offer.
- [Cropster Origin](#) is a digital tool where you can input information about different processing methods, divide coffee into different batches, monitor the environmental conditions during the whole post-harvest process, identify and keep track of the quality of different coffee samples. The tool allows you to share information with your buyers as well.

Figure 2: Example of Tastify cupping notes published by importer This Side Up Coffees

Source: [This Side Up Coffees](#)

Tips:

Identify your data collection needs and relate those needs to the digital tools available on the market to assess their suitability to your business.

Start by identifying which exact data to collect. The first attempt can be done on Excel, so edits are simple and easy to make.

Collect and store data on the physical and sensorial analyses of your coffees. This helps monitor quality over time and tracks changes in your coffee quality season after season. Once information is stored digitally, you can analyse whether variations in the quality of a specific lot were the result of changes in fermentation, drying or other practices.

7. Build a digital sustainability record for your coffee origins

The demand for sustainable and certified coffees on the European market continues to rise. It helps green coffee buyers guarantee that their purchase is complying with certain international standards. For suppliers, manual data recording (with pen and paper) is often a long, complex and challenging process. Using digital tools may improve the efficiency, accuracy and storage of the data collection and reporting on sustainability indicators.

Digital tools that have been developed and may be useful for you include: [Mergdata](#) by Farmerline (Ghana), [Koltiva](#) (Indonesia) and [DataGreen](#) by SourceTrace (USA). Also, [CertiCafé](#) (Brazil) is an example of a start-up that offers digital services to facilitate the certification process for SMEs. They assess current farm status and report back to farm level with specific adjustments that are needed to obtain the certification.

Tips:

When introducing digital tools, make sure you have the capacities, resources and partners to make this work. Communicate the goal and benefits to your team, train field agents on how to use the software and collect data efficiently, coordinate with your partners and buyers and make sure the value of this process is perceived by your own suppliers and producers.

Assess which digital solutions are best for your needs. Make sure you have identified a concrete problem for which digital tools can provide a solution. When assessing different options, think about who is going to collect the information and how (using which device).

Make sure you check which features each system offers and if they work in your local context. In the majority of cases, you will need a digital solution that can collect data not only online, but especially offline.

Conduct an in-depth analysis prior to choosing a specific software, as not all tools offer the same features, services and processes. Consider asking other suppliers that have already been through this digitalisation process for specific recommendations and suggestions.

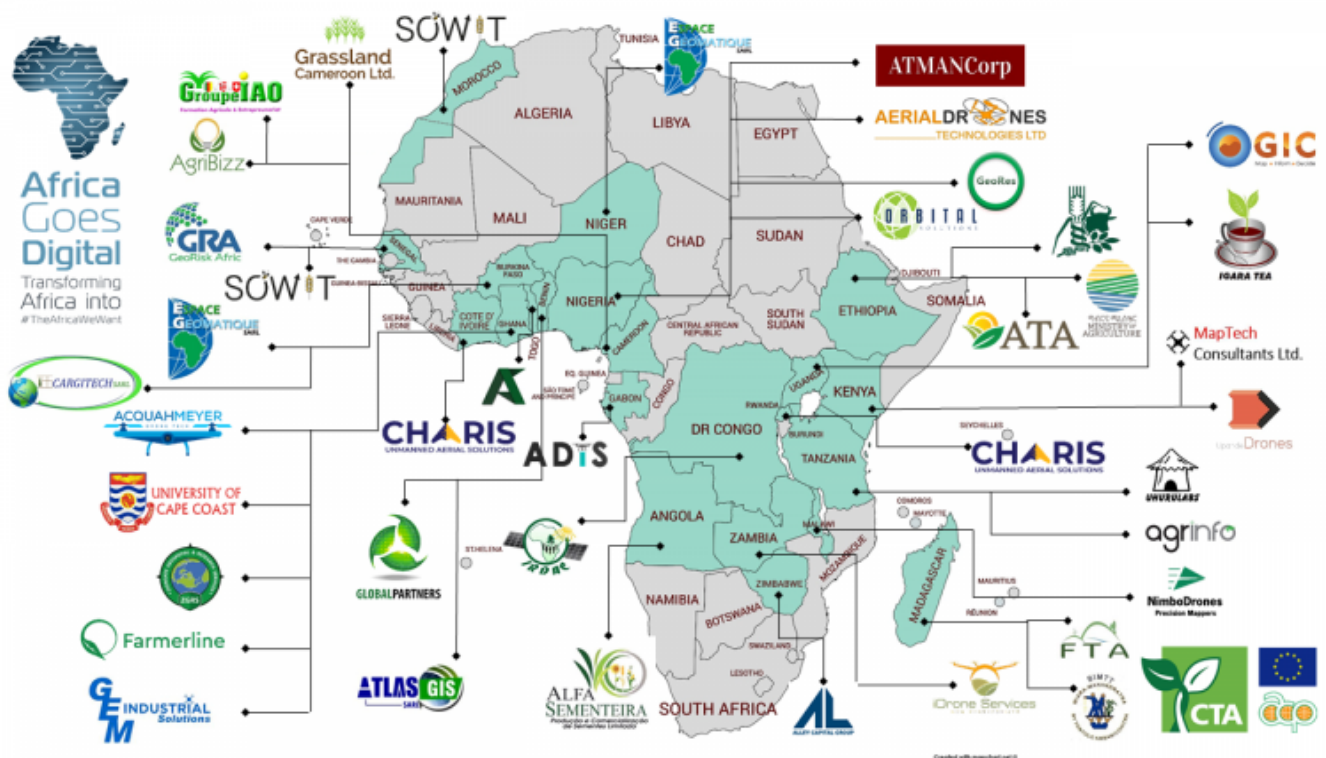
8. Collaborate with organisations that can assist you in your digitalisation journey

Starting a digitalisation process within your coffee business allows for improved efficiency and accuracy, higher resilience, and better monitoring. Valuable as it may be, taking the step towards digitalisation still requires substantial effort. There are many tools on the market, and not all tools will be a good fit for you. An online trading platform or a farm management system that works great for your neighbour might not work for you.

Digitalisation requires a significant initial investment, both in time and money. You need to start collecting data, to have your whole team on board and train the personnel who will collect the data. Make sure you identify all the pros and cons of a digital system before moving forward.

To find the solution that best matches your needs, you can take advantage of different (inter)national organisations that offer support and guidance in this process. [Root Capital](#), [Rikolto](#) and [Solidaridad](#) all support SMEs in adopting digital solutions. They offer technical assistance and practical guidance and, in some cases, can provide financial support. In addition, the [GIZ Coffee Innovation Fund](#) financially supports projects in Western Africa and South-East Asia that implement the use of technology to increase profitability for coffee farmers. [IDB Lab](#) also offers financial support for digitalisation investments, especially in Latin American countries and the Caribbean. Also, [ANDE](#) is focusing on digitalisation in different agriculture value chains and sometimes organises events to connect suppliers with tech providers. Some involve coffee as well. Lastly, [Digital Coffee Future](#) offers a six-week strategic training course to coffee suppliers in Latin America to help them develop digitalisation plans, as well as tailor-made support for suppliers in other regions.

Figure 3: Digital service providers in Africa



Source: Africa Goes Digital

Tips:

Read the [Knowledge](#) section and listen to the [Podcasts](#) published on Safe Platform to get more tips and information on the implementation of technology solutions in coffee. The majority of resources are available in English and Spanish.

Browse [GSMA's Agritech section](#) to find new resources and updated reports on digital solutions for agriculture. Their reports often give concrete examples of useful digital tools and programmes available in various different countries. They have also developed a [Digital Agriculture Map](#) that provides a general overview of new global trends and opportunities in this sector.

Connect with national coffee organisations (for instance: [Icafe](#) from Costa Rica or [Anacafé](#) from Guatemala) and ask for recommendations from other SMEs currently involved in a digitalisation process. They might be able to give suggestions, feedback or recommendations for the use of a specific digital tool or tech provider.

Contact exporters and buyers to exchange your ideas and perspectives about the potential use of technology. They could themselves become supporters of your digitalisation process.

Identify and contact international organisations that can provide financial or technical support in your digitalisation process. First, reach out to local organisations already in your network to ask whether they are aware of anyone supporting digitalisation efforts in coffee, either as funders or strategic partners. Then, reach out to national organisations which could also connect you with their network. Digitalisation is still a word-of-mouth environment. The majority of information comes from internal connections and direct reach out.

9. Use digital tools to increase access to financial services

Securing loans and accessing financial services is often challenging for smallholder coffee farmers. There are a series of digital tools that aim to help secure finance. Examples of these are:

- **Agri-wallet:** This tool gives farmers, buyers and agro-stores easier access to finance from a global network of lenders. As a farmer, you will receive your income through your digital wallet, and you can use the money to purchase inputs like seeds and fertiliser from participating stores. This means that the money earned through the Agri-wallet can only be spent in the agricultural supply chain. You can also use the wallet for savings; the higher your savings, the higher the chance you are eligible for larger loans.
- **MyAgro** is a tool that helps farmers save money for personal financial goals. Using a dedicated scratch card, each micro-deposit helps them save money for the purchase of fertilisers and other inputs. This service is now available in several African countries.
- **Apollo Agriculture** is a Kenyan start-up with a machine learning-based credit scoring system for producers. Producers are scored on location, crop yields, agronomic conditions and other data and can receive credit based on their score. The system also offers tips on agriculture practices.

The use of digital tools by financial institutions and lenders

More traditional ways to access finance are for instance through microfinance institutions (MFIs). Examples of MFIs are **Financiera Confianza** (Peru) and **Agronomika** (Philippines). Note that MFIs mainly channel credit to coffee farmers through cooperatives or SMEs.

Many MFIs have embraced the use of digital tools in their financial service offer. For instance, although the MFI **Juhudi Kilimo** (Kenya) still primarily works with access to credit through solidarity groups, it is increasingly transitioning to mobile money loan repayments. **Advans** is digitising their offer of micro-loans and other financial services in nine countries in Africa, the Middle East and Asia by creating a system that allows for digital credit scoring and financial delivery.

Note that some buyers also offer financial services to coffee farmers. An example is **NKG Bloom**, operated by the Neumann Kaffee Gruppe, which provides loans directly to producers through the use of a digital app. NKG Bloom is currently active in Honduras, Mexico, Uganda and Kenya. Through this service, coffee farmers can build their baseline creditworthiness, after which you might access additional or alternative financial services from MFIs.

Tips:

Read the **Digital Financial Services for Agriculture Handbook** by IFC and the Mastercard Foundation, and **Agri DFS: emerging business models to support the financial inclusion of smallholder farmers** by GSMA to get a comprehensive understanding of the current digital financial services landscape, trends and offerings. Note that this is a dynamic environment where digitalisation is still far from perfect, especially in terms of regional reach and product applicability.

Refer to Chapter 8 of the fourth edition of the **Coffee Guide** to learn more about risk and finance in the coffee sector.

If you want to access larger loans, build on your credit worthiness. This requires you to keep correct track of your business records and the agri-data related to your business, have a coherent and robust business plan, have a clear investment plan, provide information on your credit history and your assets, among other things.

10. Learn from success stories in digitalisation

Digitalisation may seem like a big investment, which takes time, money and energy to implement. However, the use of digital tools does provide SMEs with concrete benefits and competitive advantages. Several success stories can be identified where SMEs were able to improve sales opportunities, guarantee digital monitoring of their activities, as well as improve resilience to potential crises.

- [Sol&Café](#) is a cooperative based in Peru that uses several digital tools for internal control and monitoring of management and accounting, inventory system, coffee quality evaluation, harvest projection, etc. They started using one digital system and expanded by integrating more tools in a step-by-step approach. [SISPRO Coffee](#) and [Contasis](#) are two of the digital solutions they use.
- [Aldea Global](#) (Nicaragua) has been using digital tools for the past ten years. The system helps them store contracts, monitor coffee deliveries and quality from members, provide credit to individual producers and monitor risks. They also developed an app for producers to monitor the status of their loans. Aldea global has a dedicated IT team and has developed all of its own digital systems.
- [Great Lakes Coffee](#) is a Uganda-based company sourcing, milling and exporting coffee. To improve their sourcing strategy and guarantee fair prices to their suppliers, they developed [MaxTrace](#). The app verifies the coffee management system, stores the digital trace of coffee purchases, tracks logistics, as well as verifies the application of voluntary sustainability standards. They initially developed the software for internal operations, but now the app is also available for external use.
- [NUCAFE](#) (National Union of Coffee Agribusinesses and Farm Enterprises) in Uganda has profiled all the members of the association to collect GPS location and demographic info. The data is connected with a traceability system that allows the association to sell coffee at a higher price.

Tips:

Research the steps that companies took when digitalising their operations so that you can determine specific lessons learned in the process. Find out whether the tools they use could be useful for you.

Do not simply copy the digitalisation process and tools that other companies use, but rather determine what works best for your company. Determine what fits your company's needs and budget. Understand and own your process before deciding what you want to digitalise.

If somebody you know is using a specific digital tool, always ask for their opinion before deciding to start using it yourself. This can help you confirm your expectations or identify any red flags.

[Expressing Origin](#) and [ProFound – Advisers In Development](#) carried out this study on behalf of CBI.

Please review our [market information disclaimer](#).