

The Cocoa & Forests Initiative: Collective Action to End Cocoa-Related Deforestation

The governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana and 36 leading cocoa and chocolate companies, representing 85% of global cocoa usage, joined together in the [Cocoa & Forests Initiative](#) to end deforestation and restore forest areas.

Their combined actions play a crucial role in protecting and restoring biodiversity, sequestering carbon stocks in West African forests, and addressing climate change in line with the Paris Climate Agreement. The Cocoa & Forests Initiative delivers on Sustainable Development Goal 13 (Climate Action) and 15 (Life on Land).

The Cocoa & Forests Initiative is a public private partnership based on frameworks for action ([Côte d'Ivoire](#) and [Ghana](#)) and action plans for the private sector ([Côte d'Ivoire](#) and [Ghana](#)) and public sector ([Côte d'Ivoire](#) and [Ghana](#)) that spell out commitments to:

- protect and restore forests,
- promote sustainable cocoa production and farmers' livelihoods,
- engage communities and boost social inclusion.

To learn more, follow #CocoaAndForests on social media, or visit [Cocoa & Forests Initiative](#).

The [World Cocoa Foundation](#) (WCF); [IDH, the Sustainable Trade Initiative](#); and the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana **drive the** Cocoa & Forests Initiative. The Prince of Wales (now King Charles III) launched the Initiative in March 2017 and reviewed implementation progress in November 2018.

Deforestation of tropical rainforests is a major issue in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, which together produce nearly two-thirds of the world's supply of cocoa, the main ingredient in chocolate. [Côte d'Ivoire](#) and [Ghana](#) respectively lost 26% and 9.3% of their humid primary forest between 2002 and 2020, with a significant portion of deforestation attributable to cocoa farming expansion.

A comprehensive analysis is required to determine the exact contribution of cocoa production to deforestation. WCF, CFI members, and partners are working together on science-based methods to determine the share of cocoa production to overall deforestation rates with a high level of accuracy in cocoa producing countries. Data reliability and a good knowledge of the cause and location of deforestation is essential to develop effective and adequate mitigation measures and ensure that WCF members and partners are compliant with regulations such as the EUDR which will come into application in 2025.

Cocoa provides crucial income to communities in rural West Africa, but farmers are too often faced with poverty. Poverty is one of the causes of deforestation. Accelerating a transition to sustainable livelihoods is essential for farmers' economic security and a healthy planet.



The first priority is the protection and restoration of forests that have been degraded. To this end, the governments and companies have pledged no further conversion of forest land for cocoa production and have committed to the phased elimination of illegal cocoa production and sourcing in protected areas.

Both countries are introducing a differentiated approach for improved management of forest reserves, based on the level of degradation of forests. In 2019, the government of Côte d'Ivoire adopted and published a new forest code which, among other things, put forth policies for the promotion of cocoa agroforestry to restore degraded land, improve forest cover, and promote sustainable livelihoods and agriculture in the classified forests and rural zones. Both governments have shared maps on forest cover and land-use, and continue to update the maps, including socio-economic data on cocoa farmers, to inform private sector investments. Companies have made significant investments in the promotion of cocoa agroforestry and the restoration of degraded forests.

To ensure effective implementation and monitoring of these commitments, companies have pledged to develop traceability from farm to the first purchase point for their own purchases of cocoa. They also work with governments to ensure an effective national framework for traceability encompassing all traders in the supply chain and to anticipate forthcoming due diligence legislation. The companies will similarly share information with the national satellite monitoring platforms to effectively monitor progress on CFI, as well as proactively address threats of new deforestation.

The next critical priority is sustainable agricultural production and increased farmer incomes. These are essential pre-requisites for reducing pressure for agricultural encroachment into forests and strengthening the resilience of cocoa farmers to climate change.

The governments and companies are accelerating investment in long-term productivity of cocoa in order to grow “more cocoa on less land.” Key actions include provision of planting materials for the promotion of cocoa agroforestry, training in good agricultural practices, soil fertility, land tenure reform, and capacity building of farmers’ organizations. Sustainable livelihoods and income diversification for cocoa farmers are being accelerated through food crop diversification, agricultural inter-cropping, and development of mixed agroforestry systems and shade-grown cocoa.

The final area of focus is strong community engagement and social inclusion, with a particular focus on women and youth. The governments and companies have committed to full and effective consultation and participation of cocoa farmers in the design and implementation of key actions, and promotion of community-based management models for forest protection and restoration. The governments have adopted social and environmental safeguards and are assessing and mitigating the social impacts and risks of any proposed land-use changes on affected communities.

Annexe 1: CFI tracking table

Description	Target (Current reporting year)	# Through direct investment (Current reporting year)	# On behalf of clients (Current reporting year)	# Through direct investment (Since 2023)	# Through direct investment (Since 2018)
FOREST PROTECTION AND RESTORATION					
# of farms mapped in direct supply chain: Total Active	1 145 999	1 465 300			
# of hectares in the direct supply chain with deforestation risk assessments completed	1 883 616	3 436 887			
# metric tons of directly sourced cocoa traceable from the farm to the first purchase point (target is 100%)		1 029 774			
# hectares restored in Forest Reserve / Forêts Classée	1 125	614		1 018	44 823
# trees registered	121 101	285 545		341 813	712 529
# of farmers with land tenure agreements/documentation obtained via company support	6 763	6 828		14 846	27 341
# farmers informed, trained, and / or consulted on the new Forest Code, forest policy, law enforcement, forest protection, and restoration	247 066	519 970			
# individuals receiving incentives to protect and restore forests and / or adopt agroforestry (e.g., PES): New	44 175	44 090		68 506	108 116
# individuals receiving incentives to protect and restore forests and / or adopt agroforestry (e.g., PES): Total Active	77 855	102 789			
# farmers applying agroforestry: New		142 103			
# farmers applying agroforestry: Total Active		452 164			
# farmers provided with technical assistance to adopt and expand agroforestry	193 910	424 233			
# multi-purpose trees distributed for on-farm planting	9 196 609	10 667 327		20 794 694	53 980 729
# hectares cocoa agroforestry: New	178 020	294 118		423 973	1 306 033
# hectares cocoa agroforestry: Total Active		880 240			
# of trees distributed for off-farm planting	866 200	997 888		2 217 723	6 335 659
# hectares of forest area restored off-reserve / in rural zone	1 073	361		16 552	44 027
# farmers provided with technical assistance to be more resilient to climate change and reduce and remove carbon emissions on farm (e.g., CSC)	348 745	561 577			
# of farmers trained in Modified Taungya System (MTS)	5 507	2 111			
\$ contributed to fund		0		1 250	1 250
SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AND FARMERS' LIVELIHOOD					
# improved cocoa seedlings distributed to farmers	4 294 143	4 361 530		9 270 979	43 838 861
# farmers provided with technical assistance (based on plans) to professionalize & optimize cocoa farming practices	595 630	1 120 665			
# individuals participating in additional Income Generating Activities (IGA's)		258 073			
# individuals provided with technical assistance (based on plans) to increase income from non-cocoa sources / IGA's	153 449	274 331			
# individuals provided with technical assistance to save money and access finance	379 515	801 172			
# of members of VSLA groups in the current year	235 263	378 838			
# of VSLA groups in the current year	9 948	15 514			
SOCIAL INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY					
# of cocoa communities with active forest restoration and protection program (CBNRM): New	752	207		408	4 196
# of cocoa communities with active forest restoration and protection program (CBNRM): Total Active		1 230			
# hectares under CBNRM	14 228	194 863		470 027	1 373 032
# of individuals participating in women's empowerment projects and activities	142 153	298 114			
# of individuals participating in youth focused projects and activities (15-35 years old)	33 573	43 276			
Filtres appliqués : Description n'est pas (Vide) ou # of farms mapped in direct supply chain: New Year est 2024					

Annex 2:

Result Stories – Guidelines

Restoring Land and Building Climate Resilience through Forest Islands and Agroforestry

ECAM Cooperative – Côte d'Ivoire, 2024–2025

In the heart of South-West Côte d'Ivoire, cocoa farmers from the ECAM cooperative continue to transform their farming practices by integrating environmental stewardship into cocoa production. Building on past efforts under the Cocoa & Forests Initiative, the 2024–2025 campaign focused on consolidating gains through sustained monitoring of forest islands and scaling up cocoa agroforestry.

Forest Islands: Bringing Trees Back to the Land

During the 2024–2025 campaign, ECAM supported the creation and follow-up of 11 forest islands in the communities of Kakadjekro, Nouveau Quartier, and Gnangomiankro. These small forest patches, established on fallow land, are part of a broader effort to reverse land degradation and protect biodiversity.

With the guidance of the cooperative, 11 volunteer farmers received a total of 5,650 trees, out of which 4,513 were successfully planted, restoring 4 hectares of land. The selected sites were carefully identified, and each farmer committed to reforesting a portion of their land.

“When we plant trees, the land becomes more alive again,” shared one of the participating farmers. *“It brings back freshness, and our cocoa trees do better too.”*

These forest islands also serve as demonstration plots for the wider community, showing that it's possible to restore nature while keeping cocoa farming productive. ECAM teams conducted awareness sessions on forest protection, the role of trees in fighting climate change, and the long-term benefits of reforestation. The initiative didn't aim to expand the number of new islands this year, but rather focused on maintaining and monitoring those already in place—ensuring survival of young trees and reinforcing farmer engagement.

Agroforestry for resilient cocoa farms

In parallel, ECAM scaled up its agroforestry efforts, supporting 520 cocoa producers across the cooperative network. These farmers received and planted 13,855 shade trees on approximately 513 hectares of cocoa farms.



Before any trees were distributed, ECAM teams carried out detailed field diagnostics to understand the specific needs of each producer and their plot. Farmers participated in information sessions and hands-on training covering topics like tree spacing, planting techniques, and how to care for young seedlings during dry periods.

The shade trees distributed, chosen for their adaptability and benefits to the cocoa ecosystem, are expected to improve soil fertility, increase moisture retention, and help protect cocoa trees from extreme heat and erratic rainfall. As one cooperative leader explained, “When the trees grow, they protect our cocoa from the sun. It’s like giving shade to the future.”

To ensure long-term tracking and follow-up, more than 5,000 trees have already been registered in ECAM’s digital monitoring system. This tool helps teams record where trees are planted, how many survived, and what kind of support each farmer might need in the coming months.



For many ECAM farmers, the shift toward agroforestry and forest restoration is more than trees, it’s about resilience. In a region where rainfall patterns are becoming unpredictable and soil fertility is declining; these actions are helping communities adapt.

The work also creates new local dynamics. Community tree nurseries have become places of learning and collaboration, and producers are beginning to see the value of long-term planning and land stewardship. Women and youth groups are also increasingly involved, especially in nursery work and sensitization campaigns.

The ECAM cooperative plans to continue investing in agroforestry and forest islands, strengthening farmer training, and ensuring that past efforts are supported through regular follow-up. With each campaign, the goal remains the same: to grow cocoa in harmony with the forest, and to empower producers to become champions of sustainability in their communities.