

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.

Annex 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 2018) |
|--|---------------------------------|--|---|--|
| FOREST PROTECTION AND RESTORATION | | | | |
| # of farms mapped in direct supply chain: Total Active | 51 335 | 18 132 | 6 546 | |
| # of hectares in the direct supply chain with deforestation risk assessments completed | 31 021 | 15 316 | 17 354 | |
| % of directly sourced cocoa traceable from the farm to the first purchase point (target is 100%) | | 100% | | |
| # hectares restored in Forest Reserve / Forêts Classée | 0 | | 0 | |
| # trees registered | 0 | | 0 | |
| # of farmers with land tenure agreements/documentation obtained via company support | 0 | | 0 | |
| # farmers informed, trained, and / or consulted on the new Forest Code, forest policy, law enforcement, forest protection, and restoration | 2 466 | | 4 147 | |
| # Individuals receiving incentives to protect and restore forests and / or adopt agroforestry (e.g., PES): New | 0 | | 0 | |
| # Individuals receiving incentives to protect and restore forests and / or adopt agroforestry (e.g., PES): Total Active | 0 | | 0 | |
| # farmers applying agroforestry: New | | 3 464 | 1 676 | |
| # farmers applying agroforestry: Total Active | | 8 828 | 3 266 | |
| # farmers provided with technical assistance to adopt and expand agroforestry | 450 | 8 828 | 3 266 | |
| # multi-purpose trees distributed for on-farm planting | 13 000 | 61 231 | 55 888 | 61 231 |
| # hectares cocoa agroforestry: New | 450 | 5 114 | 9 084 | 5 114 |
| # hectares cocoa agroforestry: Total Active | | 9 178 | 10 674 | |
| # of trees distributed for off-farm planting | 1 000 | 5 960 | 0 | 5 960 |
| # hectares of forest area restored off-reserve / in rural zone | 20 | | 0 | |
| # farmers provided with technical assistance to be more resilient to climate change and reduce and remove carbon emissions on farm (e.g., CSC) | 2 466 | | 0 | |
| # of farmers trained in Modified Taungya System (MTS) | | | | |

| | | | |
|---|--------|--------|-------|
| # farmers provided with technical assistance (based on plans) to professionalize & optimize cocoa farming practices | 10 385 | 10 628 | 4 147 |
| # individuals participating in additional Income Generating Activities (IGA's) | | 2 329 | 1 090 |
| # individuals provided with technical assistance (based on plans) to increase income from non-cocoa sources / IGA's | 1 400 | 5 910 | 2 990 |
| # Individuals provided with technical assistance to save money and access finance | 300 | 3 414 | 2 129 |
| # of members of VSLA groups in the current year | 1 400 | 1 285 | 2 129 |
| # of VSLA groups in the current year | 75 | 59 | 74 |
| SOCIAL INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY | | | |
| # of cocoa communities with active forest restoration and protection program (CBNRM): New | 0 | | 0 |
| # of cocoa communities with active forest restoration and protection program (CBNRM): Total Active | | | 0 |
| # hectares under CBNRM | 0 | | 0 |
| # of individuals participating in women's empowerment projects and activities | 200 | 665 | 1 020 |
| # of individuals participating in youth focused projects and activities (15-35 years old) | 0 | 1 204 | 0 |

Annex 2:

Result Stories – Guidelines

In cocoa fields of Côte d'Ivoire, Nagalo Awa Yvette from Petit Ouelle (near Meagui) and Kouamé Kouakou from BouBoudi (Divo) are two cocoa farmers whose journeys illuminate the path toward resilience in the face of environmental challenges. Both members of their respective cooperatives, ECAM and Socoopacdi, have embraced agroforestry under the Cocoa & Forests Initiative, showcasing the transformative power of combining traditional agriculture with environmental stewardship.

Nagalo, a 50-year-old award-winning farmer, recognized early on the toll that climate change was taking on her crops and livelihood. "Climate change is having a major negative impact on crop yields, reducing producers' incomes and bringing imminent difficulties for producers in providing for their families at all levels," she stated. This realization drove her to invest in agroforestry, supported by her cooperative, to combat the adverse effects of climate variability on cocoa production.

Similarly, Kouamé, 58, witnessed the changing patterns of rain and the growing unpredictability of seasons, compelling him to adopt sustainable practices. "The rain seasons are becoming more unpredictable. It makes planning our crops much harder and threatens our livelihoods," he shared. His commitment to agroforestry was born out of a desire to restore his environment while improving the productivity of his plantation.

Both farmers have taken significant steps beyond their own farms, engaging in community-wide initiatives that promote environmental resilience and agricultural productivity. Nagalo has been pivotal in producing shade trees in nurseries and raising awareness among producers about the benefits of agroforestry. Kouamé, on his part, has demonstrated how integrating more trees into cocoa plantations and even on other lands can contribute to restoring natural environments and enhancing crop health.

Their efforts have led to innovative practices, such as the creation of forest islands and the introduction of community-managed tree nurseries, fostering a new era of communal engagement and financial sustainability. Through training provided by the Cocoa & Forests Initiative, Nagalo and Kouamé, along with their communities, have refined their agroforestry practices and embraced innovative program delivery methods, ensuring the long-term sustainability and resilience of cocoa production in Ivory Coast.

Today, Nagalo and Kouamé stand as inspiration in their communities, proving that individual actions can indeed have a significant impact on the environment. Their stories underscore the critical role of sustainable practices in cocoa farming.

The story of Kouakou, practicing agroforestry and implementing forest island.

Kouamé Kouakou, 58 years old, farmer of the local cocoa cooperative "Socoopacdi from the south-west region of Côte d'Ivoire, embodies the spirit of conservation and preservation of the environment through his commitment to the creation of forest islands and agroforestry.

Kouamé has noticed significant changes in weather patterns over the years, with increasingly unpredictable rainy seasons, which directly affect the health of his crops.



"The rainy seasons are becoming more unpredictable. This makes crop planning much more difficult and threatens our livelihoods," shares Kouamé, highlighting the challenges faced."

"By planting trees on my cocoa farm, I'm helping to restore part of our natural environment while improving the health of my crops. It's an investment in the future of generations to come," says Kouamé.

Guided by his new understanding, Kouamé has embarked on reforestation and forest conservation activities in collaboration with his local cooperative. He set about planting trees on his farmland, integrating agroforestry into his farming practices.

Today, Kouamé is a source of inspiration for his community, demonstrating how individual action can have a positive impact on the environment. With every tree he plants, he helps to preserve biodiversity and combat climate change, creating a more sustainable future for generations to come.

The transformation story of NAGALO Awa Yvette, agroforestry promoter.

Nagalo Awa Yvette is a producer in her locality of Pogrégau in the Petit Ouelle section, the largest section of the ECAM cooperative. She was the best national producer at the JNCC in 2020. She promotes agroforestry to ensure sustainable cocoa production.

Nagalo Awa Yvette was made aware of the challenges undermining the agricultural sector and the drop in yields, so she decided to practice climate-smart agriculture. Hence her investment in agroforestry with the support of her cooperative.



"Climate change is having a major negative impact on crop yields. This is reducing producers' incomes. As a result, we are seeing imminent difficulties for producers in providing for their families at all levels.

I use agroforestry to combat climate change, but also to improve the productivity of my plantation. Trees have a number of benefits for my plantation and for the environment."

With the support of the cooperative, Nagalo Awa Yvette is committed to agroforestry. Together with the other members of her VSLA group (Village saving and loan association), she is involved in producing shade trees in nurseries, and in raising awareness among producers of the benefits of agroforestry.

In her locality, Nagalo Awa is seen as a showcase producer. Her actions to protect the environment and her initiatives to diversify crops and sources of income earned her the prize for best national producer in 2020.