



Grouping Smallholder Cocoa Farmers Project Summary

Farmgate Cocoa Alliance

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Empowering farmers through grouping and training

95% of cocoa farmers are remote, unorganized cocoa farmers who are producing on a small scale, with few prospects for the future. These farmers are facing multiple challenges that have a severe impact on their community, as well as the cocoa value chain. Farmgate Cocoa Alliance, with the support of its consortium aims to tackle these problems directly using a Bottom-Up RoadMap, leading to the implementation of this farmer grouping and training project.

Key Info

- 95% cocoa produced by small-holders
- Farmers receiving less than 5% of cocoa market price
- High social insecurity in cocoa communities
- Increasing rates of urban migration, particularly of young people
- Risk of climate change with severe impact on cocoa farming
- Inter-generational poverty in cocoa communities



Project Scope

Farmgate Cocoa Alliance proposes the identification, grouping, training, capacity building and empowerment of cocoa farmers using a community-based approach. The project will focus on Ghana, Ivory Coast and Cameroon, with an experimental phase in Ghana.

Within five years, the project is proposed to reach and group 500,000 farmers in each of the countries listed above with the use of Community Field Agents (CFAs). Farmers will be allocated to groups that will operate either as independent Cooperatives (>5000 farmers) or Farmer Business Groups (>100 farmers). At least 1 CFA will be allocated per 50 cocoa farmers.

Independent cooperatives will manage themselves, with guidance from Farmgate Cocoa Alliance representatives, and will arrange their own sustainability activities. Farmer Business Groups will receive long term support from Farmgate Cocoa Alliance in their management and sustainability activities.



Project Objectives

To effectively create change in the cocoa value chain, we must address problems at farmer level, whereby initiatives often fail to have long-term effect. FCA has developed the following objectives that take key problems into consideration and aim to overcome challenges with long-term efficacy.

Key Objectives

Empowering small-holders

Through education, capacity building and resource access, farmers can be empowered, leading to entrepreneurship and engagement with the value chain, and encouragement of youth involvement.

Cocoa Farming Professionalisation

To secure a sustainable supply of cocoa that has positive sustainability impact, professionalisation of cocoa farming is required to stimulate business independence and growth among cocoa farmers

Increasing sustainable cocoa production

To secure the value chain, sustainable cocoa production is required in terms of economics, environment and social aspects, beginning with farmers.

Improve traceability

By identifying, grouping and training farmers and providing direct market access, cocoa can be sourced directly from farmers, with key traceability data available.

Integrate transparency and accountability

To create a transparent value chain, we must begin with farmers and continue upwards. By linking farmers with other stakeholders, we can initiate a transparent, responsible and accountable chain.

Eradicate child and forced labour

Cocoa farms must be free from the use of child or forced labour to allow for social development in terms of education for children and improved social stability.

Overcome gender inequality

Professionalised cocoa farming should actively include women by providing them with opportunities to access training, resources and banking services so that they can become independent business women.



Implementation

Farmgate Cocoa Alliance has developed a community-based strategy to group farmers and provide them with vital training, capacity building and access to services and resources. With the support of our consortium, FCA can work to make real change at farm and farmer-level.

1. Identification, Grouping & Categorization of Farmers

CFAs will work within their communities to identify interested cocoa farmers and group them dependent on their location into independent cooperatives or farmer business groups. Farmers will then be registered with the CFA, providing basic data about their production. Farmers will then be categorized depending on their potential as a professional cocoa farmer.

Category 1 - Farmers with potential to increase production to 2-3 tons on existing land
Category 2 - Farmers with limited cocoa production potential (<1 ton)

2. Farmer Training & Capacity Building

Category 1 farmers who have potential to become professional cocoa farmers will be eligible for training and capacity building via their CFA or cooperative. Topics covered include: GAPs, climate change mitigation, business skills, advocacy and sustainability practices.

Category 2 farmers who have low potential in cocoa farming will be advised on alternative livelihood and farming options.

3. Farmer Entrepreneurship / Service Access

To stimulate professionalisation of cocoa, trained farmers will be encouraged to register their cocoa farm as a business so that they can access bank accounts, financial services and farming resources to improve their farm.

Bank accounts will also facilitate direct transactions between cocoa buyers and farmers, as well as loan, pension and savings options.





Organizational Model

Based on the key steps described previously, the grouping project will be largely implemented by CFAs, based on support from the NCP and NCWG. In addition, monitoring/supervisory teams will be set up to ensure transparency in all activities at farmer level, with annual reports released to all stakeholders and consumers.

These CFAs are themselves members of cocoa farming communities and will bridge the gap between information available via FCA and other partners, and cocoa farmers in remote communities. As local farmers themselves, CFAs are able to remain in cocoa farming communities for the long-term, providing comprehensive and continuous support to cocoa farmers. By using this long-term structure, farmers can access information and support at all times, and the necessary monitoring can be carried out among farmers using a continuous approach.

This community-based method of training, capacity building and monitoring facilitates long term development in cocoa farming communities. This long-term approach facilitates the improvements and maintenance of sustainable cocoa farming, stabilising the cocoa value chain through a traceable, high quality and sustainable supply of cocoa beans.

- ✓ Identify and group unorganised smallholder farmers
- ✓ Disseminate knowledge and information via local Community Field Agents
- ✓ Provide long-term support and engagement with grouped cocoa farmers
- ✓ Carry out long-term monitoring and supervisory activities
- ✓ Develop sustainable, traceable and professional cocoa farming

Community Supervisory Teams also include specialist units that focus on a specific topic, for example, child and forced labour. The Community Supervisory Team will then communicate with the National Supervisory Team active in the relevant country to discuss progress, feedback and points for improvement. Relevant information can then be fed back to the NCWG and NCP to develop new initiatives and to improve existing ones.





Stakeholder Value

By implementing grouping, training and capacity building at farm and farmer level, as well as facilitating access to services such as bank accounts, farmers can improve their production for the long term, with young men and women being encouraged to join the profession as successful entrepreneurs.

This empowerment of farmers has direct impact up the value chain for all pertinent stakeholders to create a transparent, stable and prosperous cocoa value chain from bean to bar.

Actor	Benefits
Farmers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Improved income and living standards▪ Inclusion of women and eradication of child/forced labour▪ Increased yields due to pest/disease management and climate change mitigation
Governments Producing Countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Improved income and living standards for farmers leading to improved economic activity and social stability▪ Taxation revenue opportunities on cocoa exports▪ Reduced rates of urbanization & stabilisation of cocoa communities▪ Elimination of social issues related to gender and labour▪ Environmental and resource preservation
Governments Consuming Countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Access to fully traceable cocoa products▪ Access to fully certified sustainable cocoa products▪ Value chain transparency and accountability as expected by consumers▪ Known contribution to alleviation of poverty, social issues and environmental damage in cocoa communities.
Chocolate Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Access to stable supply of sustainable and traceable cocoa beans▪ Direct market access to reduce costs and improve transparency▪ Access to certified sustainable cocoa▪ Improved reputation as known contributor to transparency and elimination of social and environmental issues in farming communities.

