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FARMGATE COCOA ALLIANCE
BOTTOM UP-APPROACH
COCOA SUSTAINABILITY
PROJECT



SUMMARY:
GROUPING UNORGANIZED SMALLHOLDER
COCOA FARMERS-PROJECT

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Farmgate Cocoa Alliance (FCA), developed this project in order to professionalize small-scale cocoa farming business, so smallholder farmers can become cocoa entrepreneurs. The project is part of Farmgate Cocoa Alliance, Bottom Up Road-Map that aims at attaining a cocoa sector that is inclusive, transparent, traceable and sustainable from the farmer to the final consumer.

The goal is to empower, and improve the living standards of millions of cocoa farmers, with focus on smallholders, who together accounts for 98% of global cocoa beans production. Activities will include, grouping, training, and capacity building of 1 million unorganized smallholder cocoa farmers, in cocoa growing communities in Ivory Coast, Ghana and Cameroon by 2030.

Through this project we will identify, and train young educated men and women who are inhabitants in cocoa growing communities to become FCA's Community Field Agents (CFAs). Their role is to identify, and form groups of unorganized smallholders' farmers in their communities, and to train and build their capacity, so they acquire the skills and knowledge needed to manage their cocoa farms as a business.

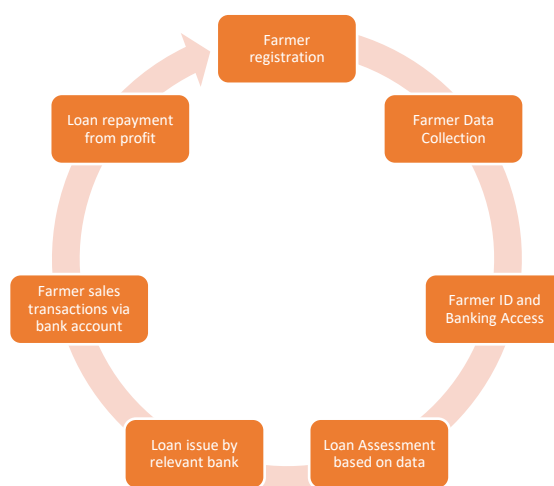
The CFAs play and will continue playing a significant role in promoting cocoa sustainability in the sector, through farmers empowerment. CFAs are the eyes and ears for farmers, partners and the cocoa sector at large now, and the future.

1. SOME CHALLENGES

Smallholder cocoa farmers particularly in west and central Africa, continues to face challenges in their profession as cocoa entrepreneur, including low income, climate change, deforestation and lack of bargaining power.

The following challenges, can only be addressed when cocoa farming is recognized as a profession, and farmers are independent entrepreneurs.

- Widespread of poverty among cocoa farmers and farm workers
- Lack of better farming knowledge on GAPs and human rights
- Lack of farm resources like inputs, hybrid seed, fertilizers, herbicides, irrigation and farm management
- Zero access to financial loan, pension benefits and sustainable income.
- limited value addition to cocoa products and risk benefits
- Insufficient cocoa farming manpower and skills
- Diseases and pests
- Limited access to sustainable and quality input and output markets
- Marginalization and lack of capacity for women cocoa farmers
- Emerging threats such as, climate change and deforestation as a result of poverty



These coupled with bad infrastructure, weak representation at national and international levels, zero involvement in research, poor access to innovative farming skills, low productivity, lack of income to invest or reinvest in farm, and the unbalanced cocoa policy at national and international levels.

2. IMPLEMENTATION

Phase 1 – Train Community Field Agents (CFAs)

To be able to successfully implement this project we will identify and train educated and ambitious young men and women (focus priority) who are locals in cocoa growing communities to become Community Field Agents (CFAs). They will be trained by FCA national secretariat trainer of trainers. Newly-qualified CFAs will be trained on the job with the support of experienced colleagues. There will be constant expansion in the areas of training and continuous professional and capacity development.

Phase 2 – Groups Formation

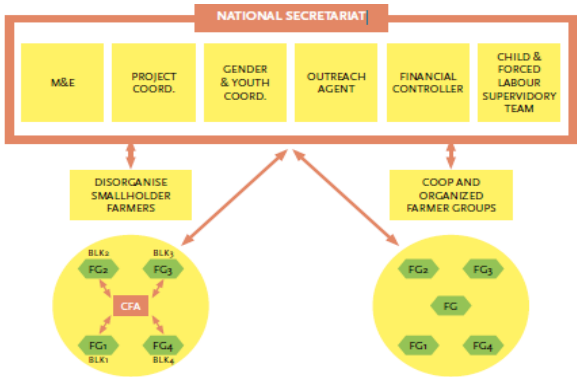


Figure 1 Community Block Farming Method (CBFM)

The role of the CFAs is to identify and group unorganized smallholders within cocoa growing community into sizeable groups using FCA-model of Community Block Farming Method (CBFM) (see figure 1). This is use for grouped farmers who farm in the same area and share boundaries.

Grouping will identify two categories of unorganized smallholder cocoa farmers, and to distinguish between the unorganised

farmers who produce three tons and those who produce not lesser than one ton, and with the potential to increase capacity to at least two tons, or more if supported.

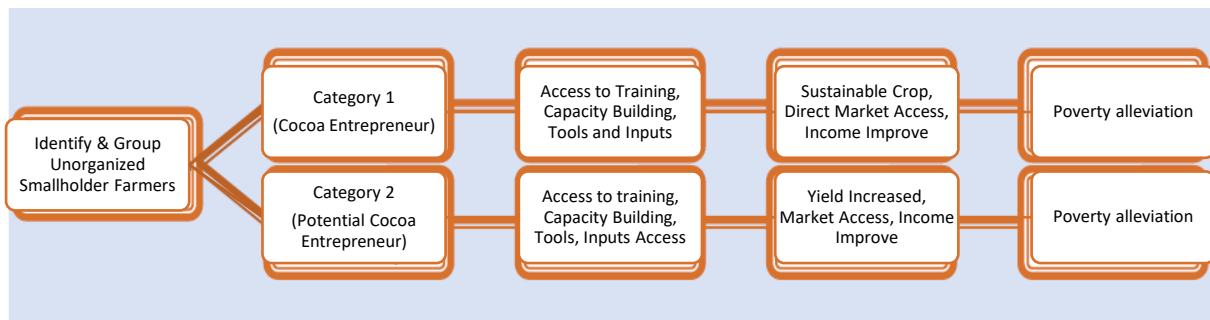
Category 1

Category 1 farmers are farmers whose farm produce 3 tons at the time of grouping. Such farmers are considered “cocoa entrepreneurs”, and will directly benefit from the grouping purpose. These farmers may also have the potential to increase yields on the same farm if provided with the necessary training and support.

Category 2

Category 2 farmers are farmers whose farm can produce 1-2 tons, and with the potential to increase yields using the same piece of land if being trained and supported. Such farmers have the potential to become “cocoa entrepreneur”. These farmers will also benefit from this project, as the farmer will provided with the necessary support to become a sustainable cocoa entrepreneur.

The grouped cocoa farmers in categories 1 and 2 will, after grouping, continue to have access to training on GAPs, tools, inputs provision. They will have access to directly sell their cocoa crop, and can have financial loan to invest in their farm and increase annual production, leading to a sustainable income and pave the way for poverty alleviation.



NOTE Farmers whom farms can only produce few kilo’s and there is no potential to increase yields at the same piece of land, even if being supported, will not be considered as cocoa entrepreneurs, and will be advised to switch to alternative farming profession, like cassava, yam and plantain and or to sell their farm to a producer of category 1 or 2.

Community Field Agents (CFAs) will also encourage youths to become next generation cocoa entrepreneurs and to replace the ageing generation. Fostering and facilitating cocoa farming business with the aims to tackle chronic poverty in cocoa growing communities, and boost cocoa entrepreneurship.

Phase 3 – Training and capacity building

The grouped farmers (in category 1 and 2) will receive training and capacity building from our Community Field Agents (CFAs). Training will include: key education on GAPs, advance production techniques and proper business management skills, so they have the tools and knowledge to manage a successful and sustainable farming business. Continues training and capacity building will be organized once a month.

NOTE Practical Literacy and Basic Business Skills are some of the major obstacle preventing farmers to be able to manage successful businesses and is thus impacting on the social and economic capacity of farmers particularly the smallholders. As such we focus on building farmers literacy, numeracy and basic business skills for cocoa farmers who are engage in our activities skills through our comprehensive training programmes. This will enhance their capacity to independently manage their farms as a business.

3. SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

Mapping & data collection

During the grouping CFAs will collect data on farmers household, farm activities (farm size, cultural practices, yield etc) and mapping of individual farms. Data collected will constantly be updated by the CFAs, to efficiently and effectively manage our real-time database platform.

Organized workshops

Every three months CFAs’ will organize workshops in every community. Workshops will consist of two parts: 1) Continue with sensitization of grouped farmers on issues like: climate change, deforestation, child labour and inequality. 2) Educate farmers on the need to fully implement prescribed GAPs practices, and to continue with building their capacity including provision of farm needs. During workshops we will also carry unexpected farm inspection. Farm inspection is to make sure farmers are properly implementing their responsibilities such

as; eliminating child labour in farms, best environmental practice, zero-deforestation and respect workers' rights.

4. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring - Scope

FCA's community field agents will constantly monitor the project progress (see table 2) in order to measure the project outcomes. At the same time monitoring will let the project staff on the ground know how well they implements the project and what improvement they can bring to the work they will be doing in the field. Monitoring will take place 2 times a year (on unspecified timetable).

CONCEPT	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
Activities	Have planned activities been completed on time and within budget? What unplanned activities have been completed?	FCA, trained CFA's, in cocoa communities, CFAs implement, plan, sensitization activities and workshops?
Outputs	What direct tangible services has the project delivered as a result of activities.	Farmers work directly with CFA's. Farmers will freely and continuously receive needed support in their community.
Outcomes	What changes have occurred as a result of the outputs and to what extent are these likely to contribute towards the project propose and desired impact.	1) Unorganized farmers are grouped. 2) Farmers have the skills to become sustainable farmers. 3) Cocoa farming is recognised as a business. 4) Generate efficient Real-Time Database. 5) Bridge the gap between farmers and industry. 5) Ensure inclusion, transparency and accountability.
Impact	To what extant has the project contributed towards its longer terms goals? Why or why not? What unanticipated positive or negative consequences did the project have? Why did they arise?	1) Significantly increase sustainable cocoa beans. 2) Significantly improve traceability from famer to end consumer. 3) Reduce poverty among smallholders. 4) Address child labour. 5) Address deforestations. 6) improve livelihoods, ensure lasting sustainable cocoa sector.

Figure 2 Monitor progress of project

Evaluation



Evaluation is an integral part of our project. Through the implementation of this project, we will collect data on an on-going basis, and use these data to continuously improve our project.

The evaluation will address the specific goals and objectives of our project. It will take diverse viewpoints into account. Evaluation will take place for several purposes (see table 3): internal learning lessons, communicate data with partners, other stakeholders, media and incorporation of annual report. We will draw out key lessons for internal use, converted the data into graphs, pie charts, etc. Data will also be used as background document to give people who want to know what we do.

After evaluation the information will be integrated to FCA real-time database platform with the purpose to be used to improve sector activities for farmers and industry.

Type of in	Lessons learned	Analyzed data	Conclusion	All information
Type of evaluation	Share with internal staff	Share with partner, stakeholders	Data stored in FCA, Real-time Data Platform	FCA Real-time database platform
	Needs assessment	Impact evaluation	Data are used to improve farm & industry activities	Outcome evaluation

Figure 3 Progress monitoring activities during the project

5. ADDITIONAL SKILLS

Since FCA is committed to make smallholders cocoa farming a vibrant business, we encourage and support grouped farmers to adopt additional skills that are designed to give farmers alternative opportunities to improve their living standards as cocoa entrepreneurs.

This will also encourage unemployed young men and women in cocoa growing communities to embrace cocoa farming and become the next generation cocoa entrepreneurs, so they can build a sustainable livelihoods for themselves, family, and their communities.

Strengthening Leadership and Governance

We train individual cocoa farmers, cooperative, association, unions and organise groups to uphold and implement democratic values in their management activities. we also deliver regular training and updates to leaders of cooperatives, association and organise groups to ensure a genuine representation and voice of their members.

Variety of cocoa

FCA believe that by using divers varieties of cocoa production such as, organic and fine flavour can be an emerging way to increase income for cocoa farmers in Africa. That is why we provide training to grouped farmers on how to grow organic or fine flavour cocoa.

Areas of training: Organic production of cocoa crop, Soil fertility management in organic systems, Soil and water management, weed management in organic Agriculture, Post-harvest handling, conduct unplanned Internal Control and providing training to Internal Quality Management Staffs.

High Skills Trainer of Trainers

We provide high skill specialized trainer(s) using experts from our members and partners organization from leading fine and flavour regions (Caribbean Community and Latin Americans) by such, providing and addressing specific needs in organic cocoa farming from experience team. The training is offered to farmers at free of charge and in some situation on affordable cost.

In addition to offering subsidized services to farmers and farm workers such as:

- Training in organic cocoa farming
- Project management
- Organic market promotion
- Market linkage
- Designing and developing Internal Control Systems
- Designing and developing Internal quality management
- Training on organic production, processing, and marketing
- Feasibility studies
- Cost benefit analysis
- Value chain development and Training needs assessment

Specialized and tailored made services are also provided to individual groups / companies after an in-depth evaluation of the specific group needs and constraints that may require a tailored response in any of the fields mentioned above.

Training activities include:

- Morden organic production practices
- Technical advice on pest and disease management
- Training and advice on sustainable farm weeding and clearing methods
- How to conduct farm assessment and plan farm activities

Training, Research & Extension

- Farm post-harvest handling
- Awareness creation on standards and certification
- Training on market creation sustenance,
- Development and research
- Developing Internal Control System (ICS)
- Develop Internal Quality Management Systems (IQM)
- Developing training materials
- Conducting field /Exchange visits

6. LIFE AFTER GROUPING

After acquiring range of training and capacity building, farmers will be able to independently manage their farming business. During the training activities, farmers will be encouraged to work together as a way of ensuring sharing of information, experience leading to a sustainable cocoa farming business.

Therefore, the grouped farmers will decide whether they would like to be part of an existing cooperative or larger existing farmers group. If not, the grouped farmers will be supported by the FCA, to register as a Farmer Business Group or Cooperative. To be register as a new Farmer Business Group or Cooperative, size of the members shall not be lesser than 200 (for the start).

Cooperative and Farmers Business Group Management

Step 1 - Established Groups/Cooperatives

The newly established Farmers Business Groups or Cooperatives, shall be govern by democratic guidelines and 100% be managed by the farmers themselves, using the rules and values that protect people, business and environment.

Step 2 - Register at Country chamber of Commerce

After the grouping and registration, which will be done free of charge by FCA, and partner(s) of the project, members of the established Farmers Business Group or Cooperatives shall pay annually a membership fee, which will be use to manage their activities.

Step 3 – Running of Established Groups/Cooperatives

Membership contribution will be use for the day to day upkeep of the organization by an agreed amount by the members through the sale of cocoa bean. This amount shall also be re-invested to pay for other services on farm such as, tools, input, training and building of warehouse to protect crop.

Once groups or cooperatives are established, they will have their capacity build into independent sustainable organizations run by farmers being supervise by CFAs. The CFAs will

then withdraw from active role from the cooperatives, and take up a supervisory role to ensure that these cooperatives are running according to all international value as cooperatives.



Step 4 - Strong & Independent Farmer Voice

Both larger cooperatives and farmer business groups may also look into opportunities such as a collective buying of inputs and equipment that reduces their individual costs as a farmer. And also among larger cooperatives and groups, there will be great potential for expanding their activities towards processing, local chocolate production and experiment new ways to locally consume their crop and create much needed local employment. See figure 4.

	Cooperatives	Farmer Business Groups (FBG)
Size	>500 farmers	>200 farmers
Continuous Activity FCA (CFAs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment OF Coöperatieve Continuous Monitoring of Coöperatieve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of FBG Continuous training & capacity building Continuous monitoring FBG
Mode of Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management board comprised of farmers Activities for training / capacity building managed internally Large cocoa volumes available to buyers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managed by Community Field Agents Activities for training / capacity building managed by CFAs Larger cocoa volumes available to buyers
Training on Financial Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission fee from cocoa sales towards management 	N/A
Capacity Building on Finance Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-time registration fee Annual contribution from management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-time registration fee Annual contribution from farmers for FCA services (e.g. management)

Figure 4 Working together approach overview

7. PROJECT BENEFITS

Smallholder farmers will acquire better knowledge to manage their farms and strengthen their advocacy capacity at community and national level, leading to fairer chances that will help increase their income generation and improve their livelihood. By improving farmer incomes through better production and management, farmer welfare improves alongside the local economy, and eliminates the use of child and forced labour, whilst providing women with equal opportunities in cocoa farming.

The benefits will have positive impact in a wider scale throughout, cocoa communities, including reducing the rates of rural migration and urbanization and thereby, creating jobs among the youths in cocoa growing zones, and also improved gender challenges based on equal opportunities. Additionally, by creating a sustainable and stable supply of traceable and high quality of cocoa bean, the economic situation in cocoa growing countries will improve, as governments can effectively monitor and tax business transaction of cocoa bean from farmer to exporter.

This, in return, creates a traceable and stable environment for cocoa farming and bean export business for all stakeholders which includes, farmers, traders, chocolate manufacturing and of course the government. Securing a traceable and stable farming and export environment for high-quality supply of sustainable cocoa, increasingly demanded by end consumers will significantly benefit everyone.

