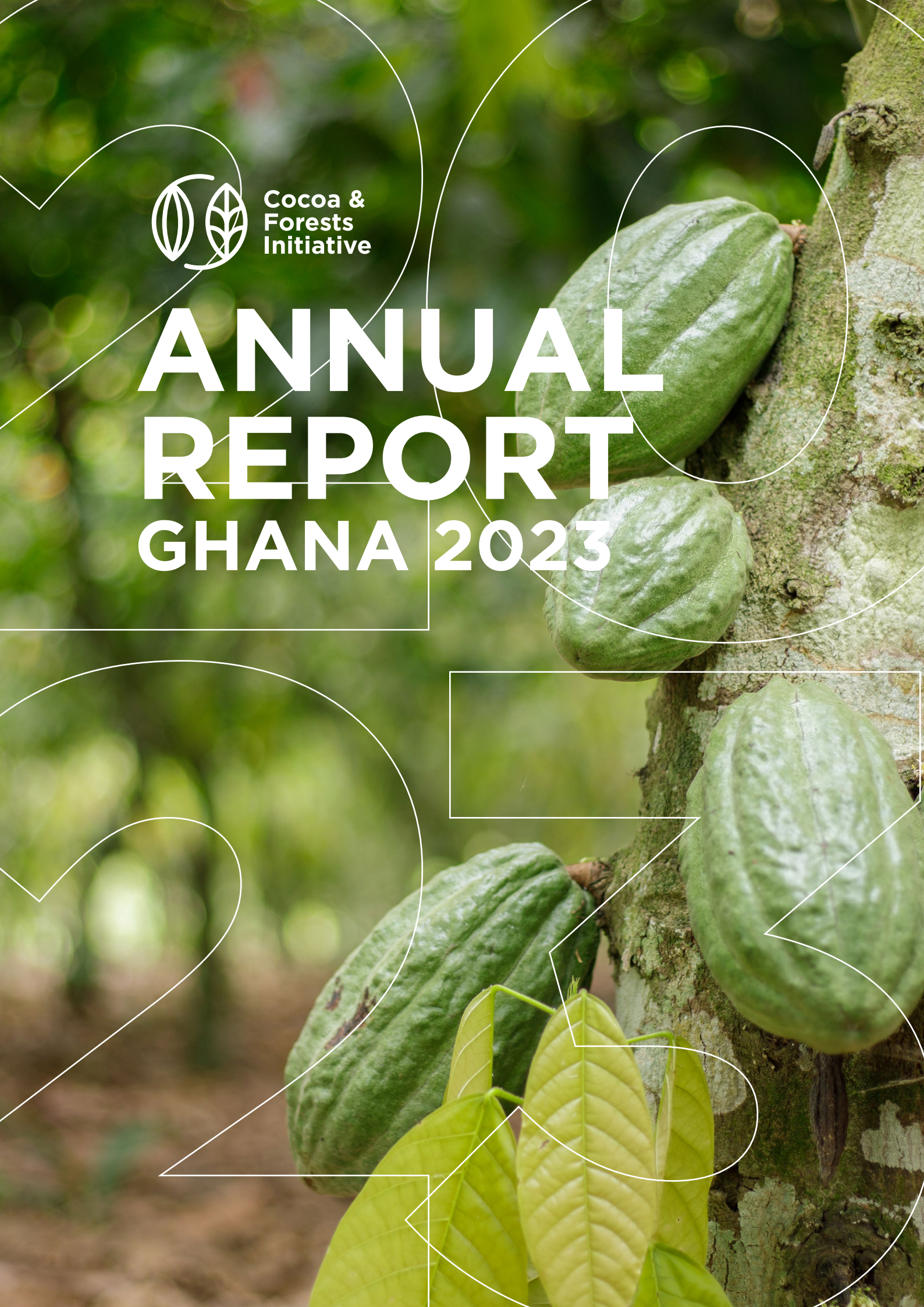




Cocoa &
Forests
Initiative

ANNUAL REPORT GHANA 2023





CONTENTS

List of Abbreviations	4
Executive Summary	5
Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources	6
World Cocoa Foundation	7
IDH	8
Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)	9
Introduction	10
Initiative Impact / Benchmark Summary	12
Forest Protection and Restoration	14
Collaborative Efforts Drive Progress In Landscape Investments	16
Green Ghana Collaboration	18
Public Policy Development and Enforcement Related to Forest Management	20
Landuse and Landcover Changes in CFI Priority Areas	22
Sustainable Cocoa Production	28
African Regional Standards for Sustainable Cocoa	30
Cocoa Traceability	33
Women in Cocoa Human Rights Due Diligence Club	34
Collaboration with ADP	34
Community Engagement And Social Inclusion	36
Trees Registration Interactive Radio Program	38
CFI Governance in 2023	40
Steering Committee meeting	40
Taskforces	41
COP28 Event	44
CFI Priorities in 2024	45

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADP	Amsterdam Declarations Partnership	GSA	Ghana Standards Authority
AFR	African Forest Landscape Restoration	GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
ARS	African Regional Standard	Ha	Hectare
ARSO	African Organisation for Standardisation	Hon.	Honourable
CEO	Chief Executive Officer	HRDD	Human Right Due Diligence
CFI	Cocoa and Forests Initiative	HIA	Hotspot Intervention Area
CIC	Community Information Centers	IDH	Stitching IDH
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora	ICI	International Cocoa Initiative
CMS	Cocoa Management System	ISCOs	European Initiatives on Sustainable Cocoa
CO₂	Carbon Dioxide	ISO	International Organization for Standardization
COCOBOD	Ghana Cocoa Board	KNUST	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
COP	Conference of the Parties	LBCs	License buying Companies
CREMA	Community Resource Management Areas	LI	Legislative Instrument
CSA	Climate-Smart Agriculture	MLNR	Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations	MTS	Modified Taungya System
CSSVD	Cocoa Swollen Shoot Virus Disease	NCRC	Nature Conservation Research Centre
DAF	Dynamic Agroforestry	NGOs	Non-governmental Organizations
DRM	Deforestation Risk Monitoring	NIG	National Implementation Guide
EFI	European Forest Institute	PES	Payment of Ecosystem Services
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency	REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
EU	European Union	RMSC	Resource Management Support Centre
EUDR	European Union Regulation for Deforestation-Free Cocoa	SECO	Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization	SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
FORIG	Forestry Research Institute of Ghana	SWISSCO	Swiss Sustainable Cocoa Platform
FRI	Farm Radio International	TTB	Timber Tending Benefit
GAF	Ghana Armed Forces	UNFCCC	United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change
GAP	Good Agricultural Practices	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
GCFRP	Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Programme	USD	United States Dollar
GCTS	Ghana Cocoa Traceability System	WCF	World Cocoa Foundation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Cocoa & Forests Initiative (CFI) continues to drive impactful change in Ghana's cocoa sector. Its focus remains on halting deforestation, restoring degraded landscapes, and ensuring sustainable cocoa production. Established in 2017 through a collaboration between major cocoa and chocolate companies, alongside the governments of Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire, CFI addresses key drivers of deforestation, including cocoa expansion into protected areas. By promoting investments in sustainable cocoa farming, CFI enhances livelihoods and economic well-being among farmers. In 2023, CFI embarked on its second implementation phase, marking a year of significant achievements across three main pillars: forest protection and restoration, sustainable cocoa and farmer livelihoods, and community engagement and social inclusion. This annual report showcases the impact achieved under these pillars while reflecting on major milestones ahead.

From 2021 to 2023, signatory companies have demonstrated a strong commitment, investing \$73 million to support CFI's objectives in Ghana. A notable milestone has been the launch of the Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape Programme, signaling CFI Phase 2.0's dedication to forest conservation and livelihood enhancement. This collaborative initiative focuses on addressing the key drivers of deforestation within the landscape by strengthening governance and rehabilitating farms and degraded land.

CFI has intensified public-private collaboration, with great commitment from all partners, including the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, Ghana COCOBOD, the Forestry Commission, civil society organizations, and key chocolate companies. Through this collaboration, CFI had a number of major accomplishments in the last year. WCF and member companies worked with COCOBOD to complete and pilot its Cocoa Monitoring System (CMS) and develop the implementation guide for Ghana under the ARS-1000 (African Regional Standard). In 2023, a significant number of new cocoa farmers were

registered on the cocoa management system to operationalize the national traceability system, with 83% of signatory companies' direct supply chains now traceable to the plot level.

CFI has played a vital role in enhancing the economic well-being of farmers. In 2023, CFI established 35,824.69ha of new cocoa agroforestry and provided technical assistance to 100,607 individuals, enabling them to increase their income from non-cocoa sources. Additionally, 45,668 trees were registered under various sustainability programs. The initiative engaged 17,560 farmers through an interactive radio campaign, which aimed to raise awareness about the importance of tree registration, significantly exceeding the target. Furthermore, 7,197 farmers were supported in obtaining land tenure agreements, fostering a more secure and equitable farming environment.

Key outcomes from CFI's governance under the Steering Committee in 2023 included recommendations to expedite the tree registration process and the development of a Tree Registration Manual. The committee also emphasized the need for long-term financing and the establishment of strategic partnerships to ensure the sustainability of CFI's initiatives.

Looking ahead to 2024, CFI's priorities include advancing actionable collaborations to make further progress on the critical issue of forest protection and improved landscape investments. The initiative will also continue to support the development of the national traceability system while finalizing the Tree Registration Manual, advocating for tree registration in cocoa farms, promoting sustainable agroforestry practices, and developing sustainable cocoa production strategies. CFI encourages public-private collaboration in the cocoa supply chain to harness the full potential of the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) and transition towards a deforestation-free cocoa supply chain with improved livelihoods for farmers.



Hon. Samuel A. Jinapor
Minister for Lands and Natural Resources

Since its inception in 2017, the Cocoa and Forest Initiative (CFI) has contributed immensely to Natural Resource and Environmental Governance and the fight against climate change. This unique and workable partnership between the Governments of the Republic of Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire and over thirty-five (35) multinational cocoa and chocolate producing companies has become one of the major levers for tackling deforestation and forest degradation, while improving the livelihoods of cocoa farmers.

Over the years, this special platform has offered equal opportunities for key players in the natural resource and Cocoa space to discuss key issues including cocoa traceability, tree resgitation, landscape restoration, European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), African Regional Standards for sustainable cocoa (ARS 1000), and National Forest Monitoring System, with significant progress in these key areas.

It is refreshing to note that CFI has now been globally embraced by partners from various backgrounds. Indeed, since 2021, the CFI Forum has been mainstreamed into the Conference of Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and in all three editions of the Conference, the CFI Event at the Ghana Pavilion has been highly anticipated and received high-level participation from Governments, industry players and civil society organisations. This is evidence, not only of the commitment by the Governments of Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire and the private sector to the CFI process, but, also, a recognition by the global community of CFI's contribution in addressing pressing issues of climate change and improving the livelihoods of farmers in the two leading cocoa producing countries in the world.

We began implementation of the second Phase of CFI, and at COP28 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE), we launched the Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape Programme, to enhance forest conservation, landscape restoration and support livelihoods in one of the most prominent cocoa cultivating areas in our country. Already, this Programme, and several others being implemented under the second Phase of CFI are having great impact in these communities.

This Report gives an overview of the progress of implementation of CFI under the three main pillars, from both public and private sectors within last year.

Deforestation and climate change are common enemies that must be fought through a collaborative approach. The Government of Ghana remains fully committed to the CFI process, and we are happy that the private sector is equally committed to advance the objectives of this noble Initiative. The progress made so far, with the support of all the signatories of the Joint Framework of Action, gives us confidence that we can halt deforestation associated with cocoa production, and improve the livelihoods of cocoa famers and their dependants.

Let us continue to maintain the momentum, scale up efforts and investments, and support the National Secretariat to realise the goals of this consequential Initiative.



Chris Vincent
President, World Cocoa Foundation

As the largest public-private partnership in the cocoa sector, the Cocoa & Forests Initiative (CFI) is a groundbreaking approach to solving the systemic challenges of deforestation linked to cocoa and the restoration of degraded forests. The World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) and our signatory members in the cocoa and chocolate industry, are proud to work alongside government partners, like Ghana's Ministry for Lands and Natural Resources and the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), and leaders in cocoa-growing communities to address these challenges.

Through this collaboration, we have seen important achievements on a number of fronts in Ghana last year. WCF and our members worked with COCOBOD as it completed and piloted its Cocoa Monitoring System (CMS). This included establishing a working group so companies could provide technical input in establishing the system. We also assisted in driving progress on the ARS-1000 (African Regional Standard) series by helping develop an implementation guide for Ghana and collaborating with COCOBOD to operationalise the guidelines. To integrate sustainable land management and conservation across diverse ecosystems, we moved towards a landscape approach centred on collective action that will achieve tangible outcomes for ecological, economic and social goals by directing finance into areas that are currently underserved. Specifically, we have made progress in the Asunafo-Asutifi landscape, where we have defined a land management plan with our partners and are working towards scaling up interventions.

Across the country's cocoa sector, CFI is having a meaningful impact on forest protection and restoration as well as improving farmer livelihoods and community inclusion. From 2021 to 2023, signatory companies invested \$73 million in Ghana on projects that support CFI's objectives. 83% of those companies' direct supply chains are now traceable to the plot level in the country and, in the last year, 426,000 Ghanaian farmers received technical assistance to professionalise and optimise cocoa-farming practices. Of these, 98,000 received agroforestry training and 3.7 million multipurpose trees were distributed to help them adopt agroforestry practices. Separately, to increase forest cover, 457,000 trees were distributed for off-farm restoration efforts in 2023.

Going forward, the CFI partnership will enable the sector to make further progress on the crucial issues of forest protection and restoration whilst strengthening farmer livelihoods and improving the resilience of the cocoa supply chain. WCF looks forward to continuing to work with our partners to drive that progress.



Daan Wensing
CEO - IDH

As the second phase of the Cocoa & Forests Initiative takes further shape, it is important to reflect on our collaborative action leading to positive change in terms of forest restoration, preservation, and sustainable cocoa production. In the past year, CFI has intensified public-private collaboration at the landscape level with great commitment from all partners, including the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, Ghana COCOBOD, the Forestry Commission as well as key chocolate companies and civil society organizations. This actionable collaboration has led to milestones such as the launch of the Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape Programme and a successful tree registration campaign.

As we acknowledge the hard work, we also realize that there is still a long road ahead. Deforestation is ongoing in Ghana in a time of economic crisis and growing effects of climate change the risks are high. If we want to counter these risks, each actor needs to take responsibility and put plans into action.

In the coming years, IDH will intensify efforts to increase transparency and accountability within the initiative. As conveners, we aim to promote proactive measures to contribute to sustainable cocoa production and forest protection. In 2023, we worked closely with the CFI National Secretariat and Forestry Commission to publish the first CFI forest monitoring report. This report provided data to complement the CFI monitoring and evaluation system to ensure the management and reporting of performance results and to track progress towards the CFI targets.

While we are at a time of high risks, we are also seeing big opportunities. The development of legislative frameworks such as the EUDR, CS3D and ARS1000 create a level playing field, pushing the sector towards 100% traceability and collective forest monitoring. As a multi-stakeholder initiative, CFI can leverage these policies to push for collective action and shared responsibility, increasing the level of ambition beyond compliance. IDH encourages public-private collaboration in the cocoa supply chain to realize the full potential of the EUDR as a tool to transition towards a deforestation-free cocoa supply chain with improved livelihoods for farmers. Considerable work is being carried out under the African Regional Standard for Sustainable Cocoa (ARS 1000) which is aimed at achieving economic, social, and environmental sustainability and traceability of cocoa to the plot level. The ARS 1000 is expected to contribute to improve communities, increase cocoa production, high income levels, and increase the adoption of climate smart agriculture systems, among others. This is in line with CFI objectives under sustainable cocoa production.

IDH will continue to put actionable collaboration central to deepen and scale our collective impact towards environmental protection and improved livelihoods in the Ghanaian cocoa sector.



Magdalena Wuest
Deputy Head of Cooperation, Embassy of
Switzerland

The collaboration between SECO and IDH has increasingly been strengthened both globally and at the national level. SECO's funding support to IDH is aimed at improving the institutional and governance arrangement of the Cocoa & Forests Initiative (CFI). In 2023, we are happy to note signatory partners of CFI have reaffirmed their commitment to focus on the priority actions to halt deforestation and promote sustainable cocoa production. However, the success of these efforts hinges on the inclusion of cocoa communities and the majority of smallholder cocoa farmers.

Throughout 2023, the fruitful collaboration between IDH and SECO, including joint field missions, meetings and knowledge-sharing events, further strengthened our working relationships. SECO values the mutual opportunity to gain insights into sustainable landscape approaches adopted by IDH and its CFI partners and sharing experiences with the Swiss Sustainable Cocoa Platform (SWISSCO) to build a resilient cocoa sector.

Switzerland emphasizes the need for collaborative efforts and inclusive partnerships to transform both present and future cocoa sectors.

This involves widening the scope of the key stakeholders beyond the CFI signatory partners. Leveraging on traditional authorities and the local governance structures are crucial in tackling the complex challenges regarding tree tenure reforms. Notable progress has been made in finalizing the tree registration manual pending approval by Forestry Commission. Additionally, awareness has been raised among approximately 20,000 smallholder farmers and selected private sector partners have been trained to integrate tree registration into their supply chain operations.

Operationalizing the tree registration manual has a huge potential of job opportunities in the cocoa value chain for the youth and to prepare cocoa farming communities for carbon investments, ultimately improving farmers' incomes through payment of Ecosystem Service Payment (PES). We therefore urge relevant stakeholders to come on board to approve the manual and documentation for the benefit of smallholder farmers in Ghana. I would like to express my gratitude to the partners of CFI and IDH for their dedication and commitment.

Introduction

Cocoa, predominantly produced by smallholder farmers, supports over 850,000 farm families in Ghana, with each farmer typically managing an average farm size of 2-3 hectares (COCOBOD, 2022). In West Africa, majority of smallholder farmers often depend on the crop for 60% to 90% of their income (FAO, 2015). In 2023, merchandise exports for cocoa beans and products contributed \$227.88 million to Ghana's GDP (GCB, 2023). The economic significance transcends mere statistics, it intertwines with Ghana's national identity, social history, and environmental future.

Prior to the introduction of Cocoa & Forests Initiative (CFI), the quest for increased cocoa production spurred practices such as encroaching into forested areas, cutting down trees on farms to create more agricultural space. These actions, coupled with the broader challenges of climate change, rendered the future of cocoa productivity unsustainable and significantly accelerated deforestation. Particularly in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, which collectively produce nearly two-thirds of the world's cocoa, deforestation rates were alarming. Between 2001 and 2015, Côte d'Ivoire lost 22% of its primary forests and Ghana lost 9.3%, largely attributed to the expansion of cocoa farming (FAO STAT, 2015).

In response to these challenges, the CFI was launched in 2017 at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 23), marking a collaborative effort between the governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, along with leading chocolate and cocoa companies. This unique

public-private partnership aims to achieve zero deforestation and restore degraded forests within the cocoa supply chain. Recognizing the interconnectedness of deforestation and farmers' livelihoods, the CFI emphasizes the importance of providing farmers with viable alternatives to improve cocoa yields on less land. Moreover, it commits to the engagement of cocoa farmers, their communities and other key stakeholders to ensure social inclusion and equitable participation in the initiative.

Thus, the CFI operates under three thematic pillars: (i) Forest Protection and Restoration, (ii) Sustainable Production and Farmers' livelihoods, and (iii) Community Engagement and Social Inclusion. The initiative's Phase Two National Implementation Plan (2021-2025) builds upon the achievements of the first NIP, outlining actions, activities, and timelines for various commitments.

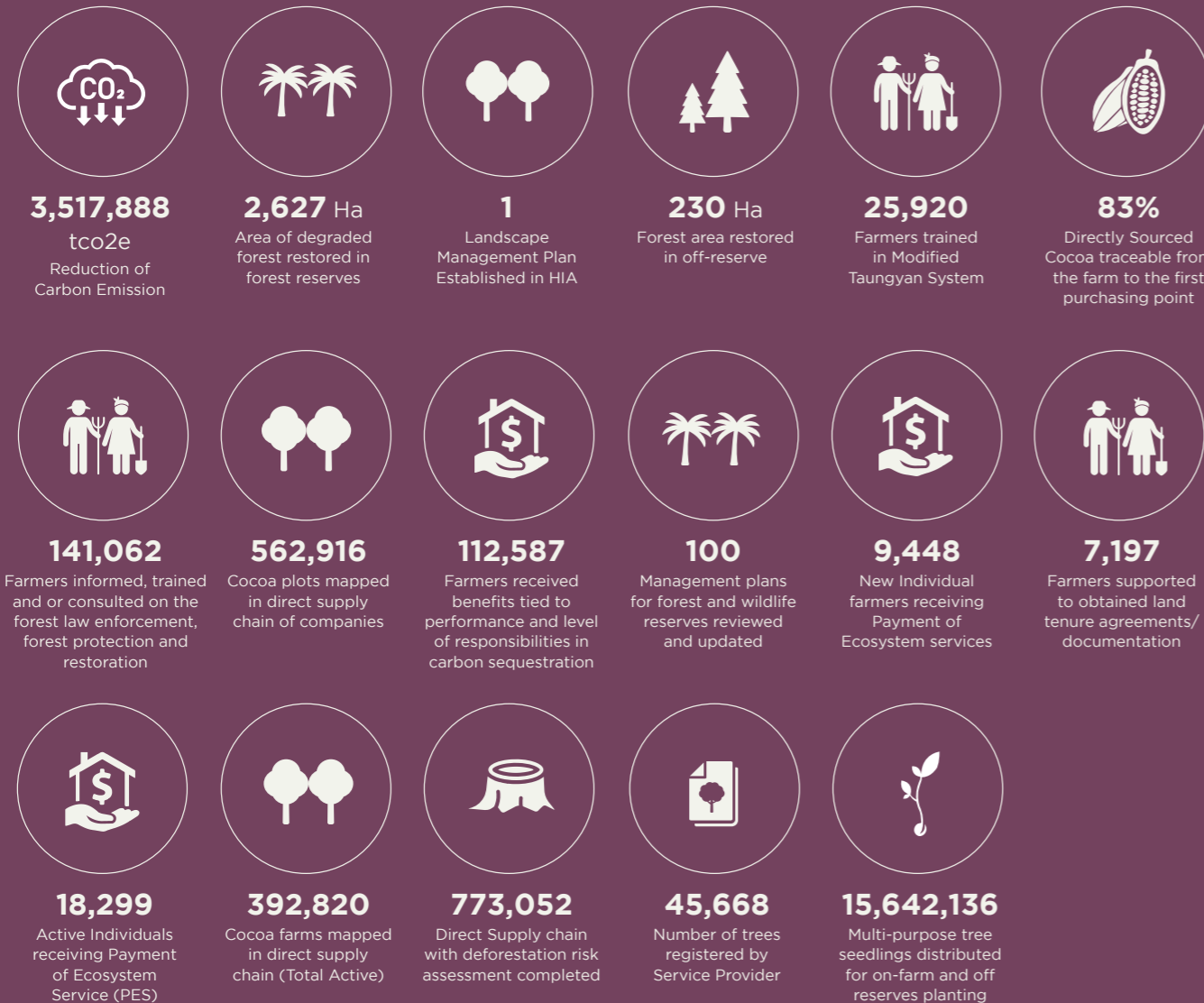
CFI represents a significant step towards reimagining cocoa production and combating deforestation. The initiative demonstrates the potential of public-private partnerships in addressing complex global issues. This report chronicles the progress of the CFI in 2023, highlighting the strides made through collaborative efforts and outlining priorities for the future, marking a pivotal moment in the journey to protect forests and sustainably manage the global cocoa supply chain.



Initiative Impact/Benchmark Summary



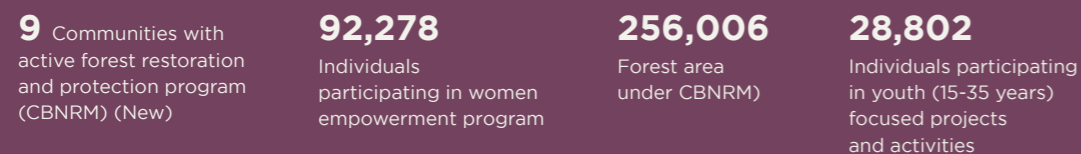
Forest Protection & Restoration



Sustainable Cocoa Production And Farmer Livelihoods



Social Inclusion And Community





Forest Protection And Restoration

The CFI seeks to halt further conversion of forest land for cocoa production. It contributes to the protection and restoration of forest areas, including protected forests, off-reserve forests, and promotion of agroforestry. Further, the initiative promotes sustainable cocoa production practices to reduce pressure on forests. In 2023, implementation of the Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape Program exemplifies the commitment to forest restoration. This program encompasses critical activities, including the restoration of degraded lands, enhancement of community livelihoods, and the development of comprehensive management plans for sustainable forest use.

Another significant effort under this pillar has been the Green Ghana Project, which successfully planted over forty million trees in a span of three years. The introduction of the Ghana Wildlife Resource Management Act, 2023, has also bolstered legal frameworks, reinforcing the protection of wildlife and forest resources. This legislation, alongside initiatives like the Community Resource Management Areas (CREMAs), provides the necessary legal backing for community-based forest management and the conservation of biodiversity. The combined efforts of public and private stakeholders in CFI are crucial in achieving the ambitious goal of halting deforestation and forest degradation, thereby contributing to global environmental conservation efforts.



Collaborative Efforts Drive Progress In Landscape Investments

Signatory companies, government, NGOs, and CSOs are actively supporting the Cocoa and Forests Initiative, particularly in priority intervention areas. Here's a closer look at recent achievements:

Asunafo-Asutifi Hotspot Intervention Area: From Plans to Action

With the support of Partnerships for Forests and the World Bank, WCF started building collaboration in the Asunafo-Asutifi Hotspot Intervention Area (HIA), a priority cocoa landscape under the Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Program. Bringing together an initial group of cocoa and chocolate companies, including Cargill, Ecom, Lindt & Sprungli, Mars, Mondel z, Olam, Sucden, and Touton, WCF commissioned Proforest for a comprehensive baseline assessment of the HIA which led to the development of the landscape management plan through a participatory multi-stakeholder process involving government, companies, and landscape actors.

The objectives of the management plan are:

1. reduce deforestation on and off reserve
2. rehabilitate degraded land and forests
3. increase climate smart cocoa production with a focus on cocoa agroforestry
4. improve land and tree tenure
5. improve livelihoods
6. improve governance.

Subsequently, four areas have been prioritized for collaborative action. These include forest restoration, agroforestry, community livelihoods enhancement and improved governance and awareness creation.

WCF and Proforest, with support from the Walmart Foundation, initiated activities in 2023 based on the management plan to build the capacity of local governance structures and to start other restoration and conservation activities, and are currently engaging with CFI companies to scale up activities.

Key 2023 Achievements in Asunafo Asutifi HIA:

- **Restoration Progress:** Proforest successfully restored 85 hectares of degraded forest, contributing to the overall target of 250 hectares.
- **On-Farm Tree Planting:** 50,000 multipurpose tree seedlings were distributed to cocoa farmers, promoting tree cover within cocoa farms.
- **Carbon Assessments and Monitoring:** Proforest, WCF, and the Walmart Foundation collaborated on carbon assessments, private sector engagement, and a monitoring and evaluation framework for the landscape.

Company-Led Initiatives

CFI companies are implementing innovative approaches to forest protection and restoration:

- **Modified Taungya System:** Mondelez is using MTS to restore 195 hectares within the Ayum Forest Reserve, providing benefits to both the forest and local communities.
- **Carbon Booster Project:** Mondelez's Carbon Booster project encourages farmers to plant more than 50 trees per hectare on cocoa farms, significantly exceeding the usual 18 trees per hectare. In 2023, this project covered 2,000 hectares of cocoa farms.

Strengthening Governance: CREMAs as a Cornerstone

Collaborative efforts are strengthening CREMA governance structures across various HIA landscapes. In the Asunafo-Asutifi landscape:

- **Constitutional Review:** The CREMA constitution and bylaws are under review for potential amendments.
- **Rural Service Center:** Proforest is constructing a CREMA complex to enhance agricultural service delivery to farmers.



The CFI is making significant strides towards its goals through strong partnerships, innovative approaches, and a commitment to sustainable cocoa production. The collaborative efforts highlighted demonstrate the power of collective action in protecting forests and improving livelihoods.

CFI/SECO Consultative Meeting with Stakeholders in Ahafo Region

CFI Ghana held a consultative engagement on May 10, 2023, in Goaso, Ahafo Region, to address tree ownership registration for cocoa farmers. The event brought together over 100 stakeholders, comprising government agencies, traditional leaders, local communities, CSOs/NGOs, private cocoa companies including Barry Callebaut and Nestle, as well as delegates from the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the Swiss Embassy to Ghana.

The aim was to empower farmers to secure their tree ownership rights, benefit from sustainable timber use, and combat deforestation. Key discussions revolved around operationalizing tree registration and ownership, raising awareness about cocoa farmers' role in deforestation, and the importance of a national tree database. The event highlighted the commitment of various stakeholders to collaborate on creating a more sustainable and equitable cocoa sector in Ghana.

Civil society organizations like Meridia shared their experience in helping Ghanaian farmers secure land and tree ownership documentation. The event facilitated dialogue between stakeholders, addressing concerns about tree registration policies and advocating for farmers' full ownership rights to trees on their land. A field trip to a Dynamic Agroforestry project in Dadiesoaba, a community within the Asunafo-Asutifi HIA, showcased sustainable cocoa cultivation practices, aligning with CFI's goals of promoting climate-smart agriculture and farmer empowerment.

Green Ghana Collaboration

National Green Ghana Day

In 2021, the Ghana government introduced the Green Ghana Day initiative through the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MLNR). The initiative is part of an aggressive national afforestation and reforestation programme to restore Ghana's lost forest cover and contribute to the global effort to mitigate climate change.

The first strategy of the Green Ghana Day is to plant trees in degraded forest reserve compartments across the country. The second strategy is to plant outside forest reserves — agricultural landscapes, watershed areas, road medians, compounds of homes, schools, churches, offices, etc. and recreational areas. It is in line with the Ghana Forest Plantation Strategy (2016 - 2040) and other initiatives like the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100). Among other benefits, the Green Ghana Day initiative contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by:

- Creating national awareness of the necessity of collective action towards restoration of degraded landscapes in the country;
- Enhancing livelihoods for rural communities through their engagement in the production of tree seedlings;
- Inculcating the values of planting and nurturing trees and its associated benefits amongst the youth; and
- Mitigating climate change..

The Green Ghana Initiative was developed by the government of Ghana in 2021 as an aggressive national afforestation and reforestation program to restore the country's lost forest cover, improve rural livelihoods and fight national and global climate change. The MLNR organises the Green Ghana Day in June each year. The Ministry sets the planting target for the year and makes seedlings available at the Ministry, the district offices of the Forestry Commission, and at designated locations for collection and planting on the Green Ghana Day.

Many individuals and organisations have supported the Green Ghana Day initiative in various ways, including planting of seedlings (of timber and ornamental species, cash crops and fruits) and supply of seedlings. This includes traditional leaders, religious and faith-based organisations, state agencies, public and civil servants, health workers, private sector organisations, nongovernmental organisations, civil society organisations, schools, members of the diplomatic corps, and development partners. The MLNR is implementing various strategies to encourage stakeholder participation, including opportunity for corporate institutions and private sector organisations to adopt compartments in forest reserves to plant trees and have the compartments branded with their name and logo.

So far, a total of 41 million seedlings have been planted nationwide. At the inception year, seven million seedlings were planted with 81 percent survival rate, exceeding the MLNR target of five million seedlings. Following this success, the target for the 2022 edition of the Green Ghana Day was raised to 20 million seedlings. This target was exceeded by 4 million seedlings. However, the survival rate reduced to 72 percent. External factors such as rainfall patterns, wildfires and soil fertility have accounted for the losses.

Consequently, the 2023 edition had the target reduced to 10 million seedlings to ensure there are adequate resources and attention to the nurturing of the existing 23 million trees planted in the first and second editions to ensure their survival. Based on demand, seedlings supplied for the 2023 edition were mostly cashew, oil palm, coconut, orange and timber species. A total of about 11.5 million seedlings were reported to have been distributed for planting in 12 regions in Ghana. The other four regions — Northern Region, North East Region, Upper East Region and the Savannah Region — were planted after the beginning of the rainy season in those regions.



The fourth edition of the Green Ghana Day initiative has been slated for June 7, 2024. The target is to plant 10 million trees nationwide. The commemorative tree planting ceremony will be hosted by the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) at Burma Camp. The ceremony will be performed by the President, H. E Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, to officially kick off the tree planting exercise. The GAF will provide the logistical support to ensure the effectiveness and success of the 2024 edition.

Green Ghana Initiative

The CFI Secretariat and key partners make it a point to participate in Green Ghana activities each year. This includes the National launch, National event organized in June and in addition, the Secretariat and key partners always have an additional Green Ghana event in the landscape each year. 2023 was no exception, IDH, WCF and other partners attended the launching of the Green Ghana Initiative.

CFI partnered with the government-led initiative to distribute and plant trees in a number of districts and communities in the country. CFI also collaborated

and supported large-scale tree planting campaigns to rehabilitate degraded regions, especially cocoa growing landscapes, in order to maintain and restore forests in the six priority areas. Signatories of CFI came together and supplied cocoa farmers with tree seedlings to integrate on their farms in order to derive all the benefits from agroforestry.

Additionally, Olam Food Ingredients hosted CFI Secretariat for a durbar at Assin Nsuta in the Central Region (not far from the Kankum Hotspot Intervention Area is located) to celebrate the 2023 Green Ghana Day. At the ceremony, various stakeholders including traditional authorities, government officials, religious groups, private organizations, educational institutions were present. WFC distributed 200 watering cans to farmers and community members to help them nurture the tree seedlings planted. Exercise books and other stationeries were donated to students in Assin Nsuta. CFI created awareness among the stakeholders, most importantly farmers, on the importance of tree registration, how to go about the process and how livelihoods will improve through tree planting and registration. CFI again used the opportunity to emphasize on the importance of planting and nurturing trees in our communities.

Public Policy Development and Enforcement Related to Forest Management

The Ghana Wildlife Bill

The Ghana Wildlife Resource Management Act, 2023 (Act 1115) was enacted to consolidate and revise Ghana's laws relating to wildlife and protected areas, incorporate the provisions of various international treaties Ghana has ratified, to incorporate current dynamics of wildlife management. The Act also gives legal backing to the implementation of Community Resource Management Areas (CREMAs) and introduces higher penalties and sanctions for wildlife offences.

Ghana is a signatory to several international treaties aimed at protecting biological resources and the environment. These treaties include:

7. United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity ratified by Ghana in August 1994
8. The African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, 1968 and Revised Africa Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources adopted, July 2013.
9. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES, 1973) ratified by Ghana in February 1976

National Laws regulating wildlife in Ghana include:

1. Wildlife Conservation Regulations, 1971 (L.I. 685), and
2. Wildlife Reserve Regulations, 1971 (L.I. 710).

These laws were enacted over 50 years ago and needed revision to reflect current realities and harmonize with international treaties ratified by Ghana.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are pleased that the new Act recognises and acknowledges communities as good managers of wildlife and have given the necessary legal backing to do so through the CREMAs.

The Concessions Act, 1962 (Act 124) vests trees on stool lands in the President in trust for the Stools. This provision has at best promoted deforestation in the off-reserve areas as it does not provide incentives for farmers to maintain timber trees they have not planted on their farms. They will rather burn them, kill them or cut them down and leave them to rot. Over the last 3 decades, there has been lengthy discussions of the advantages and disadvantages of this provision in the 1962 Concessions Act. Stakeholders have been of the view that this provision is doing more harm than good and is no longer relevant now, if it was then. Logging has gone on in the off-reserve areas for so long, no inventory has been undertaken by the Forestry Commission in the off-reserves since early 2000s, and most of the trees have been destroyed by farmers. Consequently, stakeholders assert that the quantity of nurtured trees in the off-reserve areas might be insignificant and that nurtured trees should be considered planted trees but this has not been acceptable to the Forestry Commission.

Admittedly, there are old timber trees on farms and stakeholders proposed a reference year or age as a cut off point for nurtured trees to be considered as planted trees as the solution to this impasse. A number of studies conducted by the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources and CSOs all arrived at the same conclusion. It was therefore the hope of CSOs and other stakeholders that the Act will emphatically grant communities ownership and management rights of both flora and Fauna to CREMAs to bring finality to the over 3 decades of tree tenure challenges promoting deforestation in Ghana.

The passage of the Wildlife Act and its enforcement is a major step in resolving some of the setbacks that beset the activities of Cocoa and Forest Initiative (CFI) and other forest and agricultural landscape programs in Ghana. Community-based landscape level natural resources management and farm level tree management are fundamental to the CFI approach.



The Hotspot Intervention Areas (HIAs) were designed based on the CREMA governance structure that devolves management rights, including carbon benefits, to communities. The Act gives the needed legal backing to the implementation of the CREMAs which enables the HIAs to function as legal entities. This will boost the legitimacy of the benefit sharing arrangement regime. The CFI Program has been implementing activities aimed at achieving its objective of supporting the conservation and rehabilitation of National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Wildlife Resource Reserves, Forest Reserves, and unprotected off-reserve forest lands.

The Act complements this effort by introducing higher penalties and sanctions for wildlife offences. The provision on artificial propagation of plants provides an opportunity for the implementation of tree tenure initiatives which can motivate farmers to plant and nurture trees on their farms. To this end, the CFI will support the development of operational guidelines for the implementation of the new Act as part of the activities outlined in the CFI National Implementation Plan.

Landuse and Landcover Changes in CFI Priority Areas

CFI efforts are concentrated in six Hotspot Intervention Areas (HIAs) in Ghana; Juaboso-Bia, Ahafo-Ano, Asunafo-Asutifi, Atewa, Kakum and Bibiani. Earth observation data (Sentinel 2 and Landsat 9), digital image processing and analysis and GIS application were adopted to produce 2023 land cover and land cover change maps between 2022 and 2023 in the six priority areas. These maps highlight the extent and distribution of forest cover and other land cover classes in 2023, the changes (increase and decrease) in forest cover between the two time periods and assess the effectiveness of intervention strategies being implemented. The largest area of forest cover (125,731.17 ha) is located in the Asunafo-Asutifi HIA and the least area of 35,384.08 ha located in the Kakum HIA. Overall, there has been a net increase in forest gain between 2022 and 2023 as compared to the previous analysis (See CFI annual report 2022). The annual deforestation rates varied from 0.006 to 0.11%, with the highest rate recorded in the Ahafo-Ano HIA and the lowest in the Bibiani HIA. There has been a substantial reduction in the loss of forest cover in protected areas with about 3.84 and 1.09% in Atewa and Kakum respectively, and no deforestation in protected areas in the other HIAs.

The results produced from this change analysis provide an insight into the dynamics of forest cover in the priority areas. The positive outcomes in forest enhancement and low deforestation rates highlight the effectiveness of current conservation strategies, yet the ongoing threats require sustained efforts to protect the remaining forest cover and biodiversity.

Juaboso-Bia Hotspot Intervention Area

The Juaboso-Bia Hotspot Intervention Area (HIA) currently has a forest cover 107,285.35 ha, contrasting with an initial area of 110,603.45 ha reported for 2022. The HIA has experienced a total forest loss of 3,318.10 ha, maintaining a similar deforestation rate of 0.03% from the previous year. Forest enhancement activities have added 2,891.37 hectares of forest cover, but this has not fully offset the losses, with a net loss of 426.74 Ha. The major driver of deforestation remains food

crop production, with cocoa cultivation accounting for 9.7% of the total deforestation. Deforestation in the Juaboso-Bia HIA is notably high, with 58.6% occurring in off-reserve areas and 40.7% within forest reserves. This pattern has been continuous as off-reserve deforestation in 2023 was also significant. The HIA faces challenges related to high numbers of admitted farms, which tend to expand into settlements, increasing food crop demands. It faces considerable risks due to high deforestation rates and the proximity of large settlements within 2 km of the reserve boundary, which exacerbates the pressure on forested areas.

Ahafo-Ano Hotspot Intervention Area

As of 2023, the Ahafo-Ano Hotspot Intervention Area (HIA) has a forest cover of 105,992.52 ha. This represents a significant reduction in forest cover in the landscape compared to previous assessments which reported 118,718.18 ha. The area has experienced a total forest loss of 12,725.66 Ha. The deforestation rate has increased to 0.11%, up from 0.04% previously observed. This increase reflects a growing rate of forest loss over recent years, driven by various pressures on the land mainly agriculture and recently surface mining. Efforts to counteract forest loss have included forest enhancement activities, which have added 8,520.63 ha of improved forest. Despite these efforts, the area has experienced a net forest loss of 4,205.03 ha. This net loss indicates that, while enhancement activities are ongoing, they have not been sufficient to fully counterbalance the extent of forest loss. The primary driver of deforestation remains food crop production, with cocoa-led deforestation specifically accounting for 2.55% of the total deforestation, though the dominant impact comes from broader agricultural expansion. This deforestation is overwhelmingly concentrated in off-reserve areas, with 93.85% of the loss occurring outside protected areas and forest reserves, similar to the 93% reported for the previous year. The HIA faces high risk factors due to the easy access for agricultural activities, chain sawing, and surface mining. These activities, combined with urban expansion and the high population density near the reserves, contribute significantly to the forest degradation observed in the region.



Asunafo-Asutifi Hotspot Intervention Area

The Asunafo-Asutifi Hotspot Intervention Area (HIA) spans a total area of 365,550 ha, with 125,731.17 ha as forest cover. This represents a critical component of the landscape, which includes major towns and the regional capital, Goaso. The region's strategic location and urbanization trends have led to significant changes in forest cover. The Asunafo-Asutifi HIA has experienced a total forest loss of 12,028.95 ha. This loss translates to a deforestation rate of 0.10%, indicating an ongoing and increasing trend of deforestation and forest degradation compared to the deforestation rate of 0.06 reported for 2022.

This rate of deforestation reflects continued pressures on the forest, despite efforts to manage and mitigate loss. Efforts to enhance forest cover have resulted in 3,995.09 ha gain of forest cover. However, these enhancement activities have not fully offset the forest loss, leading to a net forest loss of 8,033.86 ha. The primary driver of deforestation in Asunafo-Asutifi HIA continues to be food crop cultivation, with cocoa contributing to 5.04% of the total deforestation. This is particularly pronounced in off-reserve areas, where 80% of the deforestation occurs. This is consistent with the value of off-reserve deforestation recorded for 2022. The expansion of agricultural activities, logging and the associated demand for land are major factors in the ongoing forest loss. The area faces challenges from illegal activities such as chain sawing and unauthorized



farming, which exacerbate forest degradation. The high population density within 2 km of the reserve boundary further intensifies these pressures.

Atewa Hotspot Intervention Area

The Atewa Hotspot Intervention Area (HIA) covers a total area of 70,682.79 ha, with a notable portion of this area impacted by agricultural activities. As of 2023, Atewa HIA has experienced a total forest loss of 1,413.66 ha, which represents a substantial reduction compared to the forest loss of 4,233.40 ha recorded in 2022. The deforestation rate remains low at 0.02 which reflects the effectiveness of conservation efforts in the region. Forest enhancement activities have resulted in the improvement of 2,799.17 ha of forest cover. Consequently, the area has achieved a net forest gain of 1,385.52 ha. This positive net gain demonstrates successful stakeholder engagement and effective conservation practices in maintaining and expanding forest cover. The primary drivers of deforestation in Atewa HIA are food crop cultivation and cocoa production. Cocoa-led deforestation accounts for 28.42% of the total deforestation in the HIA.

The impact is significant in off-reserve areas, where 95.01% of deforestation occurs. This is due to high demand for food crops and cocoa, particularly in areas outside protected zones. The Atewa HIA benefits from the presence of well-protected national parks and forest reserves, including the Atewa Range Forest Reserve. These protected areas contribute to the lower deforestation rates by limiting illegal activities such as logging, surface mining and chain sawing. The difficult terrain also acts as a natural barrier to unauthorized access, further aiding in the preservation of the forest. The current data for the Atewa Hotspot Intervention Area showcases a relatively positive trend in forest conservation, with low deforestation rates and a net forest gain. The HIA has made notable progress in forest conservation, but challenges remain, particularly from mining activities.

Kakum Hotspot Intervention Area

The Kakum HIA has experienced a total forest loss of 722.12 ha, a reduction from the 2,453.72 ha of forest loss recorded for 2022 at a deforestation rate of 0.02%. The area has seen a net forest gain of 556.16 Ha due to ongoing forest enhancement activities. Forest enhancement programs have contributed to the gain of 1,278.28 ha in forest cover. The primary drivers



of deforestation in Kakum HIA are food crop cultivation and cocoa production. Cocoa cultivation accounts for 26.46% of the total deforestation. The expansion of farmlands and rising demands for forest products have significantly impacted forest cover.

The Kakum National Park and the Assin Attendanso Resource Reserve, which constitute a substantial portion of the HIA, benefit from effective management by the Wildlife Division. These protected areas are crucial in mitigating deforestation pressures. Limited access to these areas for farming, coupled with restricted timber activities, helps maintain relatively lower deforestation rates. This accounts for the substantial decrease from 39% to 1.09% in deforestation occurring in the protected area. The forest risk in Kakum HIA is moderate, given the well-protected status of the national park and reserve. However, land use pressures from agriculture, especially in areas outside the protected zones, continue to pose challenges. The high proportion of deforestation occurring in off-reserve areas (97%) emphasizes the need for effective management and expansion of conservation efforts beyond protected areas. The data for the Kakum Hotspot Intervention Area reveals a relatively favorable deforestation rate compared to other hotspots, attributed to the strong protection and management of national parks and reserves. The positive net forest gain, despite some forest loss, highlights the success of ongoing forest enhancement programs.

Bibiani Hotspot Intervention Area

The total forest loss recorded in the Bibiani HIA was 365.93 ha. This represents a very low deforestation rate of 0.006%, which is the lowest among the priority hotspots in Ghana. The low deforestation rate indicates that conservation efforts have been relatively effective in mitigating forest loss in this area. Effective forest enhancement measures have led to the improvement of 1,489.25 ha of forest. Consequently, the area has achieved a net forest gain of 1,123.31 ha. Food crop production remains the primary driver of deforestation in Bibiani HIA, with cocoa cultivation contributing to 23.52% of the total forest loss. Most of the deforestation, however, has occurred in the forest reserves (78.06%) while about 20.94% occur in the off-reserve areas.

The limited timber activities and presence of large-scale mining companies, which offer some level of protection, have contributed to the relatively low deforestation rate. The current data for the Bibiani Hotspot Intervention Area demonstrates a strong record in maintaining low deforestation rates and achieving net forest gains. The success in forest enhancement reflects effective conservation strategies and interventions.

REPORTING PERIOD: 2023

DEFORESTATION BY LOCATION

HIA	Forest Cover (ha)	Forest Loss (ha)	Deforestation Rate	Forest Enhancement (ha)	Net Forest Gain / Loss (ha)	Major Drivers of Deforestation	Cocoa Led Deforestation (%)	Protected Area	Forest Reserve	Off-reserve
Juabeso Bia	107,285.35	3,318.10	0.03	2,891.37	-426.74	Food Crop	9.7	0.00%	40.70%	58.61%
Ahafo Ano South / Atwima Mponua / Atwima Nwabiagya	105,992.52	12,725.66	0.11	8,520.63	-4,205.03	Food Crop	2.55	0.00%	6%	93.85%
Asunafo / Asutifi	125,731.17	12,028.95	0.10	3,995.09	-8,033.86	Food Crop	5.04	N/A	20%	80%
Atewa / Denkyembaour / East Akim	69,269.13	1,413.66	0.02	2,799.17	1,385.52	Food Crop	28.42	3.84%	1.11%	95.01%
Kakum	35,384.08	722.12	0.02	1,278.28	556.16	Food Crop	26.46	1.09%	1.09%	97.00%
Bibiani / Anwiaso / Sefwi Wiawso	59,769.30	365.93	0.006	1,489.25	1,123.31	Food Crop	23.52	N/A	78.06%	20.94%

*Source: Resource Management Support Centre of the Forestry Commission.





Sustainable Production Agroforestry & Traceability

To ensure improved cocoa yield on less lands, CFI promotes sustainable intensification of cocoa production on existing farmlands, climate smart cocoa production and agroforestry. It also supports the rehabilitation and replanting of aging cocoa farms to increase productivity while improving farmers' access to inputs, technologies, and training to enhance sustainable cocoa production. To reduce reliance on cocoa, CFI also promotes diversification of farmer incomes. In the year under review, a high number of new cocoa farmers were registered on the cocoa management system to operationalize the national traceability system.

Ghana also made significant strides by drafting the National Implementation Guide (NIG) for ARS 1000 and establishing the African Regional Standards Unit within the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) to oversee its implementation. CFI's collaboration in developing these frameworks underscores its commitment to promoting sustainable cocoa production while enhancing transparency, accountability, and farmer livelihoods. Over 11,000 ha of cocoa farms were rehabilitated with over 110,000 farmers benefiting. Over 16,000 ha of cocoa agroforests were established with many farmers applying to enroll. Over 800,000 farmers have been trained in good agricultural practices and climate smart cocoa production.



African Regional Standards for Sustainable Cocoa

Stakeholders within the cocoa value chain have been implementing various policies, initiatives and programs to resolve some of the economic, social and environmental sustainability challenges associated with cocoa production such as deforestation, child labour, low production, pest and diseases, and low income. Demand-driven initiatives such as development of standards that can be implemented as mandatory or voluntary third-party certification schemes have the potential to eliminate or minimise these challenges. Third party certification schemes have some incentives to drive interest and adoption. Incentives include premium prices, access to niche markets, and attestation that a given product has been produced responsibly by meeting the requirements of a sustainability standard.

Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire, the world's two highest cocoa-producing countries, initiated the development of the African Standard for Sustainable Cocoa (ARS 1000) under the African Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO). The ARS 1000 series was approved by the ARSO council in 2021 as an alternative to the existing proliferation of voluntary sustainability programmes and third-party certification schemes. The ARS 1000 is a series of standards for cocoa aimed at achieving economic, social and environmental sustainability and traceability of cocoa. It is expected to ensure production of sustainable cocoa in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire and further to the African Region.

The standard is divided into three parts. The first part contains the requirements for the Cocoa Farmer or Farmer Group as an entity and Co-operative Management System and Performance. The second part has the requirements on Cocoa Quality and Traceability and the third part contains the Cocoa Certification Scheme requirements. The key environmental requirements of ARS 1000 include the prohibition of deforestation or degradation of the primary forest after June 2021 and secondary forest, unless the land has a legal title, landowner's consent and/or customary land rights, and government permits, and prohibition of farming in protected areas unless it is legal at the national level.

In the first quarter of 2023, Ghana drafted the National Implementation Guide (NIG) for ARS 1000 and established the African Regional Standards Unit at Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) to drive its implementation. In the second quarter of 2023, the NIG was opened for consultation and the cost estimations of Ghana and Ivory Coast were aligned. The main frameworks developed to support the ARS 1000 implementation include a National Traceability System, Framework for Data Collection, Storage and Security, Framework for Supporting Farmers to implement the standard, and a Framework for Verification or Certification.

The ARS 1000 series implementation will commence in October 2024 in Ghana and it will target the farms that are already certified under the voluntary certification schemes, and eventually recruit the rest of the farms. The ARS Unit has teams working on

- Environment and climate change, Gender, social and community development;
- Farmer group formalization and cooperatives development;
- Economic and Farmer Livelihood Support Schemes
- Monitoring, evaluation, and projects; and
- Sustainability integration and compliance.

The ARS Unit has been engaging stakeholders on the implementation, support, and opportunities for collaboration. These stakeholders include the European Forest Institute, LBCs, Lindt Cocoa Foundation, Cocoa and Forests Initiative, World Cocoa Foundation, IDH, Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance, Lindt, ABOCFA, Ghana Cocoa Traceability System, Platform for CSOs in Cocoa, Ghana-Côte d'Ivoire Initiative, GIZ, International Trade Center, Cand others. The existing voluntary schemes are being engaged in the integration of the ARS 1000 series protocols into their programs. Fairtrade International has prepared a plan for integration of the ARS 1000 protocols. The ARS Unit will be engaging Rainforest Alliance and Fair Trade in the areas of collaboration. The Unit will collaborate with the two schemes to pilot the implementation after the integration phase.



In 2023, CFI continued policy engagement on the African Regional Standard on sustainable cocoa and EUDR to form closer interlinkages and contribute to successful roll out of the two interdependent frameworks. This was done in collaboration with ADP, COCOBOD, Ghana Standards Authority and CCC.

The ARS Unit will roll out robust and comprehensive capacity building and training of its team in the six areas of its operation. It will initiate the process to get the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) to certify the Unit so that it can implement its mandate of approving requests from Certification Bodies. ARS Unit expects to contribute to responsible communities, increased cocoa production, increased income levels, and adoption of climate-smart agriculture systems, among others.

Summary Pre-Piloting Activities of the ARS Scheme 2024

	ACTION	DATE	KEY PARTNERS
1	Check-listing the development of documents (policies, plans, procedures, etc) to support the ARS Scheme	June 6	GSA
2	Training of ARS Unit on scheme development and management	June 18-19	GSA, Others
3	Review of draft SoPs for ARS 1000 implementation session 1	June 20-21	GSA, Others
4	Review of draft SoPs for ARS 1000 implementation session 2	June 24 -28	GSA, Others
5	Development of the draft Scheme for ARS implementation	July 1 - 5	GSA, Others
6	Internal review of developed scheme for ARS 1000 in Ghana (Residential)	July 9 - 12	GSA, FT, RA, Key COCOBOD staff
7	Study tour and training on the ARSO EcoMark Sustainability Africa Certification Scheme and Licensing of ARS Unit and Accreditation in Kenya	July 15 -19	ARSO Headquarters, Nairobi
8	Stakeholder engagement and validation on ARS 1000 scheme	July 23 - 24	Various
9	Finalize Integrations of proposals into the Draft Scheme (Residential)	July 24-26	TBD
10	Develop training material for the management of the ARS Scheme (Residential)	July 29 - August 1	TBD
11	Development of training materials for the training of COCOBOD Master Trainers (Residential)	August 11-12	TBD
12	Training of COCOBOD Master Trainers on ARS 1000 and Scheme (Residential)	August 20-22	TBD
13	Sensitization of Management of COCOBOD	August 27	TBD
14	Sensitization of the Management of the LBCs	August 28	TBD
15	Development of Training materials for the training of auditors (Residential)	Sept. 10-13	TBD
16	Residential Training of Auditors on ARS 1000 and Scheme (Residential)	Sept. 17-18	TBD
17	Develop M&E Framework for Farmer Sensitization (Residential)	Sept. 23 - 27	TBD
18	Comprehensive CEA training in selected Districts	Aug. 29 - Sept. 27	COCOBOD Master trainers
19	Sensitization of farmers on the ARS scheme	Sept.16 - 27	CEA

Cocoa Traceability

Ghana has continued its efforts to ensure the traceability and sustainability of cocoa beans, building upon the foundational work laid in previous years. The Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), in collaboration with CFI signatory companies, has been steadfast in improving transparency, accountability, and sustainability in cocoa production.

The Cocoa Management System (CMS), initiated in 2019, remains a pivotal element in Ghana's cocoa traceability endeavors. By 2023, the CMS had successfully mapped 570,439 farms within the direct supply chain, significantly aiding the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of the cocoa sector. Ghana Cocoa Traceability System (GCTS), a component of CMS continues to enhance the management of issues such as deforestation and child labour, supports internal marketing, and promotes effective subsidy administration. In 2023, the CMS saw further advancements through mapping additional 668,730 farms, the integration of additional spatial data and the refinement of its processes. COCOBOD worked closely with the Forestry Commission to develop comprehensive data-sharing protocols, ensuring seamless information flow and improved monitoring capabilities.

The Ghana Cocoa Traceability System (GCTS), a component of CMS, launched by COCOBOD, is designed to trace cocoa beans from plot of land to port of shipment using a unique identification system and blockchain technology. This system has been crucial in tracking the origin of cocoa beans, thereby promoting transparency and sustainability in the supply chain. In 2023, several key developments occurred. COCOBOD conducted a workshop with Geographic Information System (GIS) experts and policymakers to design the Deforestation Risk Monitoring (DRM) methodology as outlined in 2022. The methodology was collaboratively refined using stakeholder feedback gathered via a shared Google Docs platform. Efforts were also made to align Ghana's forest definition with that of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), which is critical for consistent and accurate deforestation risk assessment. Additionally, COCOBOD advanced in overlaying farm polygon data on forest shapefiles, a step vital for identifying and mitigating deforestation risks associated with cocoa farming.

The DRM framework is a significant component of Ghana's cocoa traceability initiative. By overlaying

farm polygons with forest maps, COCOBOD can more effectively assess and address deforestation risks as well provide the relevant data and evidence to meet EUDR requirements. In 2023, the DRM approach was piloted in Assin Fosu using mask forest cover maps, with the next phase involving the use of actual 2020 raster data to refine the model. COCOBOD, supported by the FAO and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), is also developing the 2020 forest cover map, which will be instrumental in the DRM process.

In addition to these technical advancements, COCOBOD developed the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) which was used to train and sensitize up-country actors, including Purchasing Clerks, District Officers, Quality Control Officers, Depot Keepers, and Transporters. This manual ensures that all stakeholders are well-informed about the traceability system and its significance.

Looking ahead, COCOBOD with support from CFI signatory companies aims to:

- Finalize the re-alignment of Ghana's forest definition with FAO standards.
- Complete the development of the 2020 forest cover map.
- Populate the DRM system with spatial data of the forest cover and launch it by October 2024.
- Extend SOP sensitization efforts to Port authorities.
- Operationalize the Ghana Cocoa traceability system in all the cocoa districts as a single trusted source for sustainable, deforestation-free, and child labour-free cocoa beans. This system will meet the mandatory data requirements of the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), positioning Ghana's cocoa industry as a leader in sustainability.

The progress made in 2023 demonstrates Ghana's unwavering commitment to improving cocoa traceability and sustainability. Through the continued development of the CMS, GCTS, and DRM, along with comprehensive training and stakeholder engagement, COCOBOD and CFI signatory companies are paving the way for a more transparent and accountable cocoa sector. These efforts are essential for ensuring that Ghana's cocoa production is both environmentally sustainable and socially responsible.



Women in Cocoa Human Rights Due Diligence Club

Cocoa Mmaa, a women's cocoa cooperative, is an initiative that is spearheading Human Right Due Diligence (HRDD) to advocate against child labor and promote sustainable cocoa farming practices in Ghana. Funded by Rainforest Alliance Ghana and supported by International Cocoa Initiative (ICI), and Solidaridad, (all key partners of CFI Ghana) Cocoa Mmaa conducts extensive Human Rights Due Diligence training. Their workshops educate cocoa communities on identifying, preventing, and addressing child labor, emphasizing the importance of child education and responsible parenting. They extend their outreach through various channels, including schools, churches, and community gatherings.

Cocoa Mmaa's Child Protection Committee actively combats child labor by identifying its root causes and implementing effective solutions. Their Child Labour Protection Fun Club, revitalized in 2023, engages volunteers in this crucial mission. Recognizing the link between economic hardship and child labor, HRDD initiatives also empower women to have alternative income sources. Training programs equip them with skills in soap making, animal husbandry, and cocoa purchasing.

Despite the end of HRDD funding in 2024, Cocoa Mmaa remains dedicated to advocating for farmers' rights, amplifying women's voices, and expanding their impact nationwide to support the growth of a sustainable and ethical cocoa industry in Ghana.

Collaboration with ADP

An important aspect of the CFI approach is to collaborate with various stakeholders in the cocoa and forest sector to contribute to sustainable cocoa production. Consequently, the CFI is collaborating with the Amsterdam Declarations Partnership (ADP) to foster sustainable cocoa production in Ghana. CFI has collaborated with ADP on initiatives in the cocoa sector, including the African Regional Standard for cocoa development. The ADP is an informal alliance between 10 European countries¹ dedicated to support and promote sustainable and deforestation-free agricultural production and trade. The ADP aims to enhance policies for sustainable production and trade, facilitates supply chain partnerships and multi-stakeholder dialogues and stimulate monitoring and transparency in forest risk commodities. The ADP is supported by a secretariat

¹ Member of the ADP are: Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom.

(the Support Unit) to inform and enhance actions by the signatory governments, and facilitate the dialogue with stakeholders (government, companies, civil society)².

The role of ADP holds significance for countries like Ghana, particularly in the context of climate change and deforestation through dialogue and support. Efforts to address deforestation on a global scale are crucial because forests serve as vital carbon sinks, playing a key role in mitigating climate change by absorbing and storing carbon dioxide. Combatting deforestation contributes to the reduction of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, which is especially relevant as the world faces the impacts of climate change, including extreme weather events and shifts in agricultural conditions. ADP members can facilitate access to knowledge, technology, and support necessary for implementing effective strategies in climate change adaptation and reducing deforestation. ADP also contributes with sustainable development perspectives and experiences, influencing the development of global environmental policies. To deepen the ADP Support Unit's understanding of the local cocoa industry and engage stakeholders in discussions on the potential synergies between the European Union Regulation on Deforestation-free products (EUDR), the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD), and the African Regional Standard (ARS 1000) on sustainable cocoa, Thijs Pasmans of the ADP Support Unit conducted a one-week visit to Ghana in October 2023. The trip was organized as part of an ongoing dialogue between the ADP Support Unit, the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), the Ghana Standard Authority (GSA), and IDH which leads CFI.

Key Issues were discussed with stakeholders to navigate the intricacies of sustainable cocoa production. Conversations explored the practical aspects of putting emerging supply chain requirements into action, seeking clarification on what qualifies as credible evidence of compliance within the EUDR, CSDDD, and ARS 1000 frameworks. Additionally, stakeholders considered the creation of a mechanism to facilitate inquiries and responses. The visit also aimed to pinpoint particular areas requiring extra assistance, encouraging joint efforts to tackle challenges and improve the overall sustainability of Ghana's cocoa sector.

Thijs Pasmans had the opportunity to visit and interact with cocoa farmers to appreciate their plight and the realities on the ground. From the visit, questions about actions and plans to support sustainable cocoa were frequent. To provide comprehensive answers to these questions an up-to-date overview of ongoing cocoa support programs in Ghana would be very relevant.

² This article does not reflect the view or position of any ADP country.



Thijs Pasmans, ADP Support Unit

“The first reality is that the majority of cocoa farmers are not able to make a living income from their farms. Sitting down with a farmer and doing some basic ‘farm in, farm out’ calculations makes you understand the farmers’ reality. Labour for picking and breaking cocoa pods, transportation to the drying station, fertiliser and additional labour for manual weeding already make it difficult to break even, let alone all the financial uncertainties during the year. This farmer just made it over the one-dollar threshold, but the abandoned farms and cocoa trees in protected forest we spotted along the way showed me that others do not.”

The latest overview available is from ADP for 2019. Having an up-to-date overview would not only facilitate responding to inquiries but also enable more in-depth discussions on policy coherence, synergy and strategy, and broader impact.

Noteworthy projects supported by ADP members related to the discussed topics include:

- GIZ supporting COCOBOD to pilot Ghana's traceability system
- Tropenbos Ghana's work on cocoa agroforestry and governance
- Dialogue on alignment between ARS 1000, UK Environment Act and the EUDR

Three critical observations emerged from the visit. Firstly, the alignment between the EUDR, the UK Environment Act, and the ARS 1000 presents a unique opportunity to enhance traceability and transparency for the cocoa supply chain. Such an alignment, coupled with support for legal compliance, serves as a strategic approach to address the pervasive issue of illegal cocoa farms in forest reserves and combat unlawful deforestation — an initiative currently in progress. Secondly, a comprehensive overview of ongoing country and multi-lateral supported programs in the cocoa sector is imperative. A collective understanding aims to foster discussions that enhance synergy and impact, ultimately benefiting smallholder farmers and the sector as a whole. Lastly, a transparent and inclusive calculation and discussion within the cocoa

sector regarding premiums for sustainability, production costs, and pricing are essential. This approach seeks to improve the livelihoods of producers by determining fair compensation and fostering a sustainable and equitable cocoa industry in Ghana.

After the visit the ADP Support Unit took these insights to its internal coordination meetings and policy briefings. On May 29, 2024 ADP had its annual Multi-Stakeholder Meeting in Madrid which was hosted by the current chair, Spain. The ARS, Ghana and IDH were part of the agenda as ADP aims to drive policies and actions that have brought not just compliance, but also a positive impact on tropical forests and the farmers producing our commodities.

Further collaboration between ADP and CFI will foster sustainable cocoa production and help to address the identified challenges to enhance the overall sustainability of Ghana's cocoa sector. These initiatives signify a collaborative commitment to mitigating environmental impact, particularly in the realm of deforestation within the cocoa supply chain. By aligning efforts towards sustainable practices, stakeholder partnerships aim to ensure the long-term viability of cocoa cultivation in Ghana, simultaneously addressing socio-economic concerns and environmental conservation. Through targeted strategies and cooperative endeavors, the initiatives aspire to create a resilient and ecologically responsible cocoa industry, offering a positive outlook for the future of Ghana's cocoa sector.



Community Engagement And Social Inclusion

Active engagement and participation of farmers and cocoa-growing communities is pivotal to the work of CFI. This pillar focuses on improving livelihoods, promoting gender equity, and enhancing the inclusion of marginalized groups in decision-making processes. The initiative continues to facilitate the formation of Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA) and support various income-generating activities, benefiting over 100,000 individuals. It promotes diversification of income sources, reducing reliance on cocoa farming alone, and thus contribute to the overall economic resilience of cocoa-growing communities

Additionally, in 2023 the CFI has engaged in various educational and awareness-raising activities, including interactive radio campaigns, to inform farmers about crucial issues such as tree registration, climate change adaptation, and legal rights concerning forest and land use. These efforts have reached thousands of farmers and fostered a deeper understanding of sustainable practices, thereby encouraging community participation in environmental stewardship. By empowering local communities, particularly women and youth, and providing access to financial resources and technical assistance, the CFI creates a more inclusive and sustainable cocoa sector.



Trees Registration Interactive Radio Program

The CFI has identified “An interactive radio campaign” as a crucial tool for sensitizing smallholder farmers on tree registration. Recognizing its effectiveness in reaching a wide audience within a short timeframe, this initiative aimed to sensitize 15,000 smallholder farmers on the importance and advantages of tree registration in the Forestry Commission National Tree Registration database. Additionally, it facilitates support from private sector signatories to these farmers. In collaboration with Farm Radio International (FRI), and partner radio stations, the CFI Secretariat has developed and broadcasted a call-to-action program. This program empowers farmers to make informed decisions to navigate challenges related to tree tenure and policies granting ownership rights.



The interactive radio program, initiated in 2023, included five modules developed by the CFI Secretariat and chief farmers. These modules served as a guide for both radio hosts and resource persons. The implementation of the program was divided into three stages: promotional activities, live studio broadcasts, and community-based engagements. Promotional materials such as signature tunes and jingles were utilized to inform potential listeners in advance.

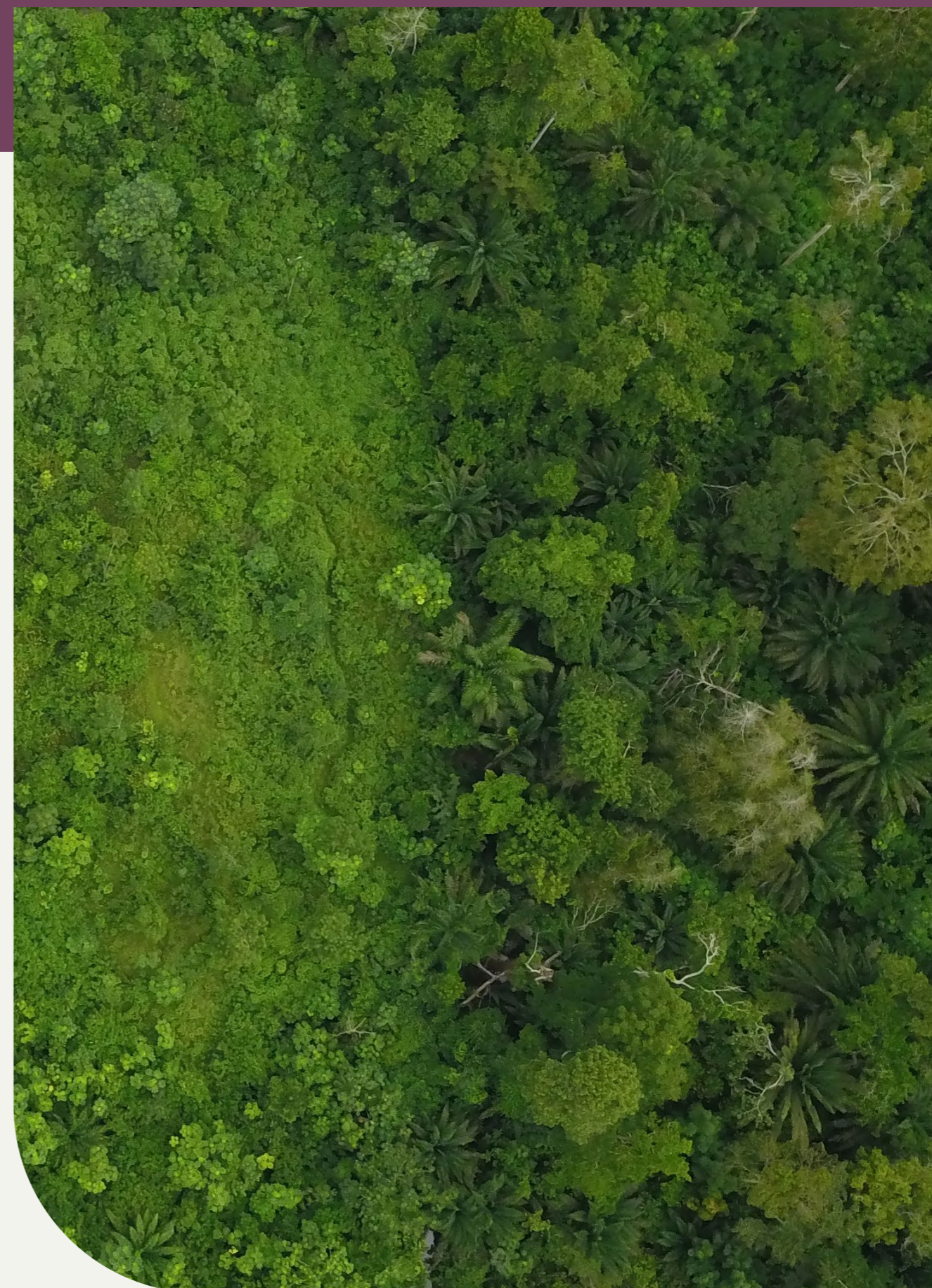
Five editions of the interactive radio program were conducted. The first edition provided an overview, objectives, format, and expectations of the program. In the second edition, farmers were sensitized on climate change, adaptation and mitigation strategies. It provided a platform for farmers to share their experiences and discuss the factors contributing to these changes, along with recommendations for cocoa adaptation. The third edition introduced a community watch program, featuring a live broadcast session in a selected community.

This initiative catered for farming communities with poor mobile network access, offering them an opportunity to participate face-to-face. In the fourth edition, farmers were educated on the processes and opportunities

related to tree registration, including eligibility criteria and the roles of both farmers and supporting companies in the supply chain. The final edition for the year focused on shared learning, drawing from feedback obtained through phone calls, community visits, and farmer interviews, thereby enhancing the program’s effectiveness.

Each edition comprised a two-hour format, with an hour dedicated to discussions led by resource persons and 45 minutes allocated for radio phone-in sessions. Results from the phone-in sessions indicated active participation from 126 callers across 44 different communities. To reach communities with poor telecommunication networks, live feeds were provided through Community Information Centers (CICs) and radio syndication. Additionally, recorded audios were shared via WhatsApp platforms in collaboration with private sector partners.

Overall, the initiative successfully reached 17,560 farmers, including both male (8,956) and female (8,604) participants, with 1,057 farmers engaging in tree registration. Through the interactive radio campaign, the CFI has effectively communicated essential information and empowered smallholder farmers in the cocoa industry.



CFI Governance in 2023



Steering Committee meeting

The Steering Committee is part of the Cocoa & Forests Initiative (CFI) governance structure and has been set up to oversee the implementation of the Joint Framework for Action. The Steering Committee gives strategic guidance to CFI's Coordinating Team and Technical Working Group on the development and implementation of the plan of action, ensuring the validation of the final version of the plan by the Ghana government, and its alignment with public policy formulation.

The thirteenth meeting of the CFI Steering Committee was held at the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) Conference Room on 27th June 2023. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Emmanuel Opoku, the Deputy Chief Executive Officer of COCOBOD, and attended by representatives of private and public sector partners such as Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MLNR), Stitching IDH, World Cocoa Foundation (WCF), and Civil Society Organizations (CSO).

The meeting deliberated on the National Secretariat's updates on CFI progress, impact monitoring and landscape level investment. It also discussed preparations for the upcoming oversight committee meeting.

The National Secretariat's updates on Tree Tenure and Land Title Documentation included stakeholders request for the release of the Tree Registration Manual in 2023, need for funds for fieldwork, Forestry Commission's (FC) plan to prepare tree registration budget so stakeholders will know the cost involved, WCF's plan to assist farmers to register trees at minimum cost, FC's plan to engage private sector to support farmers, 80 FC staff trained on the tree registration process, and FC's plan to train CSOs by end of 2023. The Committee recommended the adoption of the land mapping polygons of the COCOBOD's Cocoa Management

System (CMS) to expedite the tree registration process. Private companies were advised to ensure their farmers are part of the CMS program to enable the use of polygons for tree registration. A private company representative also proposed that companies should be responsible for the cost of tree registration to avoid delays in the process. Discussions on the Tree Registration Manual included the need for stakeholders to review the manual to appreciate its contents and the potential cost of the process. The Committee proposed that the tree registration either begins or the pilot should be ready by June 2024.

The Committee reviewed the CFI 2.0 Strategy and long-term financing for CFI. The current areas of funding needs include the CFI secretariat and project support. The Committee emphasized the need to support CFI financially.



Taskforces

The CFI governance structure encompasses taskforces which have been set up to assist the National Secretariat in strengthening the Implementation Plan of the Framework of Action. The Taskforces develop technical work plans which are implemented by the Coordinating Team. The Taskforces include Mapping, Traceability, Agroforestry, Monitoring and Evaluation, Fundraising and Safeguards Taskforces. They form the CFI Technical Working Group. The first task of each Taskforce is to proofread the draft plan and develop recommendations in their expertise area to achieve the goal of full elimination of all cocoa production and sourcing in protected areas in Ghana.

Agroforestry Taskforce

The agroforestry taskforce of the CFI comprises experts from various sectors including private companies, government bodies, and national and international technical partners. Their primary mandate is to develop strategies for identifying best practices and operational guidance for mixed agroforestry systems. Over a span of 5 years, the taskforce aims to:

1. Design diverse agroforestry models tailored to different ecological and socio-economic contexts.
2. Advocate for policies supporting the tree registration in cocoa farms.
3. Develop materials to enhance land tenure documentation in cocoa landscapes.

To achieve these objectives, the taskforce is actively:

- Identifying priority areas for cocoa agroforestry.
- Facilitating access to diverse seeds and seedlings through partnerships with companies like FORIG, Premium Trees, SeedHatch, Tree Hub, Sprigstart, Greenhelbern and Harmony Agro Services.
- Educating cocoa farmers on Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) practices.
- Encouraging information sharing among stakeholders, particularly NGOs.
- Promoting private sector investment in landscape initiatives with viable business models.



In addition, the taskforce is committed to fostering multi-stakeholder engagement and establishing market linkages among various actors in the cocoa landscape, including fruit and lumber companies, governmental agencies, NGOs, Community Resource Management Areas (CREMAs), and research institutions. Shade tree planting in cocoa farms is identified as a critical strategy for mitigating climate change impacts. The taskforce recommends planting 70-80 shade trees per hectare, considering factors such as species compatibility with cocoa, growth rate, maintenance, farmer preferences, and ecosystem services payments.

The taskforce is actively engaged with Initiatives on Sustainable Cocoa in Europe (ISCOS) and conferences like the one in Montpellier to register shade trees in cocoa farms. Promoting agroforestry systems not only addresses climate change but also improves livelihoods.

In 2023, the agroforestry taskforce made significant strides towards promoting sustainable cocoa farming practices. They played a pivotal role in supporting the development of the tree registration manual and the Climate-Smart Cocoa manual/standard. Additionally, the taskforce actively participated in discussions regarding EU regulations on deforestation-free products. Their efforts extended beyond mere discussions; they worked on the ground, supporting farmers in forest reserves to combat deforestation and forest degradation through the establishment of agroforestry farms. They also engaged with the government to devise plans and policies addressing the unintended consequences of farming in forested areas.

Despite progress, challenges persist, such as delays in validating the Climate-Smart Cocoa manual/ standard and finalizing the tree registration manual.

Looking forward to 2024, the taskforce has outlined ambitious goals to further advance their initiatives. They plan to exert pressure on relevant authorities, particularly the RMSC and FSD of Forestry Commission and COCOBOD, to finalize the tree registration manual and validate the Climate-Smart Cocoa manual/standard, respectively. Furthermore, the taskforce aims to intensify their efforts in promoting agroforestry practices among Ghanaian cocoa farmers. This involves capacity building initiatives, collaborative model development with NGOs and researchers, and organizing workshops to align stakeholders on effective agroforestry strategies. Additionally, they will continue their advocacy for shade tree registration in cocoa farms, working closely with organizations like IDH, Agro Eco and Meridia. Also, the taskforce will continue to engage with governmental agencies like Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to advance guidelines on carbon sequestration, furthering their commitment to mitigating climate change and promoting environmental conservation.



Social and Environmental Safeguards Taskforce

The Safeguards Taskforce was established in 2018 primarily to provide guidance on the safeguard aspects of the implementation of the Joint Framework for Action (JFA). Consequently, the first task of the Task Force was to develop the Social and Environmental Safeguards Compliance Guide, which defines a stepwise approach to ensure that CFI activities are implemented to avoid negative consequences on the general environment, flora and fauna, people and their communities. The Guide is the most memorable activity of the Taskforce in 2023.

The Safeguards Taskforce facilitates the implementation of the Social and Environmental Safeguards Compliance Guide. The Taskforce also monitors and evaluates the implementation of the Social and Environmental Safeguards Guide. The Taskforce participates, supports and provides inputs into all engagements by the CFI secretariat and CFI partners towards achieving the objectives of the CFI program.

Since its inception, the Taskforce has:

- Assessed the potential environmental risks associated with CFI activities implementation. The assessment findings informed the development of a Terms of Reference for a consultant to facilitate the drafting of the Social and Environmental Safeguards Guide;
- Successfully engaged with the National REDD+ Secretariat on the alignment of the CFI Social and Environmental Safeguards Guide to the National REDD+ safeguards processes; and
- Met over 10 times to organize and facilitate discussions and information sharing forums to bring all members to the same level of understanding on CFI activities and the roles of the taskforce.

In 2024, the Safeguards Taskforce will seek to increase collaboration with the CFI Secretariat to ensure the creation of synergy of activities among CFI partners towards the achievement of the CFI objectives.

The Taskforce intends to:

- Organize training and capacity building for its members on Social and Environmental Safeguards Compliance Guide by July 2024;
- Engage companies on the CFI Safeguards Framework by August 2024; and
- Monitor the rate and scope of adoption (Communities) from October to December 2024.

To achieve these goals, the Taskforce will:

- Increase communication and information sharing among members.
- Strengthen engagement with the CFI Secretariat on emerging issues.



The Cocoa and Forest Initiative (CFI) hosted an important side event during the UNFCCC 28th Conference of the Parties (COP 28) in Dubai on December 3, 2023. This event marked the official launch of the Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape Programme, signaling the commencement of CFI phase 2.0. The primary objective of this initiative is to bolster forest conservation, promote landscape restoration, and uplift the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities. Under the theme “Accelerating CFI 2.0 by Increasing Investments in Priority Landscapes in Ghana,” the event garnered significant attention.

During the event, the Minister for Lands and Natural Resources, Hon. Samuel Abu Jinapor, passionately called upon both domestic and international stakeholders to forge robust partnerships with Ghana. These partnerships are crucial for amplifying Ghana’s efforts to safeguard its forests. Emphasizing the urgency of the climate crisis and the imperative of collective action, the Minister stressed the need for stakeholders to honor their commitments to ensure the successful implementation of CFI 2.0 and reaffirmed the government’s steadfast commitment to realizing the goals of CFI 2.0 amidst mounting climate challenges.

Hon. Samuel Abu Jinapor, Minister of Lands and Natural Resources, December 2023



With the climate crisis worsening, and the fears that we are gradually approaching global boiling, we must scale up our work on this initiative. We must renew our commitments, and work harder to protect our forests, through the implementation of CFI 2.0. Ghana remains resolute in this regard, and we will continue to adopt and implement policies and programmes that will ensure that the Cocoa and Forest Initiative realizes its goal



Highlighting the Ghanaian government’s initiatives to support cocoa farmers and incentivize their participation in forest protection, the Minister stated that the government is rolling out the Timber Tending Benefit (TTB) program. This program seeks to provide upfront payments to farmers for nurturing and protecting naturally occurring trees on their farms. Additionally, the government has raised the cocoa producer price by an impressive 63.5%, from \$66.60 to \$109 per bag, the highest in West Africa in half a century. This increase aims to promote sustainable farming practices and ensure that farmers receive fair compensation for their produce.

The Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape Program encompasses four critical pillars: forest restoration, reclamation of degraded lands, enhancement of forest community livelihoods, and the establishment of a comprehensive national forest system. Reflecting on the accomplishments of CFI Phase 1.0 (2018-2021), participants celebrated significant milestones. These achievements include the restoration of over 17,000 hectares of degraded forests, distribution of 27 million trees for planting, completion of five Environmental and Social Management Plans, and training of more than 150,000 farmers in climate-smart cocoa practices and 670,000 in Good Agricultural Practices.

The launch of the Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape Programme underscores Ghana’s unwavering commitment to sustainable forest management to address the adverse impact of climate change, setting a formidable example for global environmental conservation efforts. A significant highlight in 2023 was the announcement at COP 28, where private companies, through the CFI secretariat, agreed to commit \$5 million to work within the Hotspot Intervention Areas (HIAs), using the Asunafo-Asutifi HIA as a test case

Cocoa traceability and EUDR

The direction of the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) is to develop a national traceability system which becomes a single source of truth to sell sustainable deforestation free and child labour free cocoa beans. COCOBOD will sell cocoa with all the mandatory data requirements of EUDR at a fee. As part of activities to achieve this goal, COCOBOD will seek to:

- Finalize the re-alignment of Ghana’s definition of forest to that of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the development of the 2020 forest cover map; and then
- Populate the Deforestation Risk Monitoring (DRM) with the data on the farm polygons and then roll out around October 2024; and
- Extend their sensitization on the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) – for training and sensitization on the traceability system – to the port.

Tree registration

- The CFI Steering Committee has recommended the adoption of the land mapping polygons of the COCOBOD’s Cocoa Management System (CMS) to expedite the tree registration process.
- The CFI Steering Committee advised private companies to ensure their farmers are part of the CMS program to enable the use of polygons for tree registration.
- CFI Agroforestry Taskforce will work with the relevant authorities, particularly the RMSC, FSD of Forestry Commission and COCOBOD, to finalize the Tree Registration Manual and validate the Climate-Smart Cocoa manual/standard, respectively.

- The Taskforce will continue their advocacy for shade tree registration in cocoa farms, working closely with organizations like IDH, Agro Eco and Meridia.

Cross country collaboration

- The CFI Agroforestry Taskforce will promote agroforestry practices among Ghanaian cocoa farmers.
- This involves capacity building initiatives, collaborative model development with NGOs and researchers, and organizing workshops to align stakeholders on effective agroforestry strategies.

Advancing Stakeholders Understanding of Carbon in Ghana

Several groups and organizations are active and using different approaches in relation to carbon, but there is a gap in clear understanding on carbon in Ghana. CFI will work with key stakeholders to help improve understanding of carbon in Ghana.

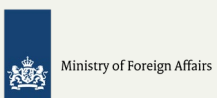
Landscape Level Investment

CFI intends to engage partners to increase landscape level investment in the sector.





Cocoa & Forests Initiative



Report prepared by the CFI National Secretariat of the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, IDH and the World Cocoa Foundation