



**Forum Nachhaltiger Kakao**  
German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa

# General Meeting 2021 of the German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa

**„Strategies to increase the incomes of smallholder farmers  
in the cocoa sector“**



## DOCUMENTATION

9th General Meeting of the  
German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa

5 May 2021 | Virtual Event

## 9th General Meeting

Moderator: Prof. Dr. Christian Thorun (ConPolicy Institute for Consumer Policy)

### WELCOMING



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**Wolf Kropp-Büttner, Chairman of the Board of the German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa (GISCO)**, welcomed the participants of the General Meeting, in particular the Federal Minister of Food and Agriculture, Ms. Julia Klöckner, the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Mr. Dr. Gerd Müller, as well as H.E. Mr. Abou Dosso, Ambassador of Côte d'Ivoire in Belgium, Luxembourg and before the European Union. Kropp-Büttner thanked for the numerous participation at

the now-second virtually organized General Meeting of GISCO.

By way of introduction, he explained that the ninth General Meeting with the topic "Strategies to increase incomes of smallholder farmers in the cocoa sector" was another focus point of GISCO's annual theme for 2021, "How can we achieve living incomes for cocoa farmers?" in addition to previous insights provided in the initiative's online seminar in April. "The complexity and interconnectedness of the problems – cocoa farmer poverty, child labor and deforestation in producer countries – are well known. However, effective solutions that will bring about change on a systemic basis across the board are unfortunately still lacking, even though the commitment of business and society has increased significantly," Kropp-Büttner clarified. In order to solve the complex problems, an interplay of strategies is needed that simultaneously address different levels.

Kropp-Büttner also accentuated some of last year's highlights of GISCO. In addition to the signing of the **Memorandum of Understanding** between the national initiatives for sustainable cocoa in Germany (GISCO), Belgium (Beyond Chocolate), the Netherlands (Dutch Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa) and Switzerland (Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa), the recently developed monitoring system is of particular importance. After the pilot phase at the end of 2020, the results of which will be presented in a **monitoring report**, the **first joint monitoring round** with Beyond Chocolate started in April 2021. Wolf Kropp Büttner informed that according to a board resolution all forum members are obliged to participate in this monitoring. Other highlights of the past fiscal year, said Kropp-Büttner, were the launch of the second phase of PRO-PLANTEURS in close cooperation with the Ivorian Conseil du Café-Cacao and the achievement by Forum members of 83% of cocoa certified or independently verified according to sustainability standards in confectionery sold in Germany. "This represents an increase of almost ten percentage points compared to the previous year and it all looks like we will reach our target of 85% for 2025 sooner. A nice success and thanks to all members who contributed to this!" he honored. "This strong increase shows that our member companies are increasingly committed to a sustainable cocoa sector."

Finally, Wolf Kropp-Büttner announced that after seven years as a member of GISCO's Board, he would not stand for re-election to this position. Since the founding of the association in 2014, he had accompanied, helped shape and watched GISCO grow as Chairman of the Board. "We have been able to achieve visible successes and I am particularly pleased that during my term of office the foundation has been laid for us to now be able to measure this progress and make it visible," Kropp-Büttner was

pleased, referring to the new monitoring system. At the same time, however, he emphasized that the road to a sustainable cocoa sector is still long. A combination of strategies and reform processes as well as the cooperation of all relevant actors is necessary. Kropp-Büttner concluded by expressing his thanks for the work done, but also with specific wishes for the various groups of actors to continue to advance the common goal of a sustainable cocoa sector.

**The complete recording of the General Meeting is only available to members of GISCO (speech by Wolf Kropp-Büttner from minute 07:38).**

### OPENING



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In his video message, **Dr. Gerd Müller, German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development**, highlighted the success of the German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa during its nine-year existence. For example, 83 percent of the cocoa produced by GISCO's members last year was certified according to sustainability standards. Ten years ago, the figure was only 3 percent, Müller said. The goal, however, must of course be 100 percent. Despite the existence of initiatives in the

cocoa sector for 20 years, most of the five million cocoa farmers still earn too little to live on. "The pandemic is exacerbating this trend in an extreme way. We are connected by global supply chains and the plight of these people. Thus, it is our responsibility to end hunger, child labor and degradation of cocoa supply chains and make globalization fair."

Making global supply chains fair requires a focus on four structural areas: First, higher market prices and premiums must be created for cocoa producers. Secondly, there must be opportunities for diversification and greater value creation locally in the growing countries. Thirdly, there must be uniform minimum standards and statutory due diligence requirements in all sectors. The fourth element includes coordinated bilateral and multilateral development cooperation for living incomes. The upcoming due diligence regulations (in Germany and at the EU level) and the Living Income Differential initiated by the governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, Müller concluded, would currently provide a political boost that must be used consistently to stop child labor and deforestation and to enable people at the beginning of global supply chains to live a dignified life and earn a living wage.



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"Our agriculture achieves a great deal and must be adequately remunerated for its performance," emphasized **Julia Klöckner, Federal Minister of Food and Agriculture (BMEL)**, in her welcoming address. This must also apply to cocoa farmers around the world, she said: "Just as we are standing up for farmers here in Germany, we are also focusing on those who work under much more difficult conditions," Klöckner said. In Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, almost 95% of cocoa cultivation is done by small

farmers and is often the only source of income for the family, she said. A life below the poverty line is therefore a reality for many cocoa-producing households.

The German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa, which was co-founded by the BMEL, is also working specifically to improve the living conditions of people in the producing countries. Klöckner stressed that Germany in particular, which is the primary buyer of almost ten percent of the world's cocoa harvest, must be a role model in promoting sustainable cocoa cultivation. She praised GISCO for the fact that 77% of the cocoa used in confectionery in Germany comes from sustainable cultivation. The PRO-PLANTEURS project in Côte d'Ivoire also received special recognition. Klöckner pointed out that consumers can also contribute to sustainability and higher incomes by consciously buying food from sustainable cultivation and spending a few cents more, if the money is sure to arrive where it is needed: with the farming families.

**The complete recording of the General Meeting is only available to members of GISCO (speech by Dr. Gerd Müller from minute 25:50, speech by Julia Klöckner from minute 29:34).**

**INTRODUCTORY LECTURE:** Holistic strategies to achieve living incomes in the cocoa sector



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**Beate Weiskopf, Executive Director of the German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa**, introduced the concept of a living income and the strategic framework for achieving a living income in the cocoa sector developed within the Alliance on Living Income in Cocoa (ALICO). The understanding of this strategy framework is that comprehensive and holistic work must be done on all strategies on the part of the different actors in order to achieve a living income.

In a second step, Beate Weiskopf placed the goals of GISCO in the strategic framework. "With many of our goals, not only with goal one, which explicitly addresses livelihood incomes, we contribute to achieving livelihood incomes," she explained. Through targets and indicators, GISCO is implementing the strategies in concrete terms, for example in the PRO-PLANTEURS project. The implementation is also checked by the new monitoring system and the results are analyzed.

Weiskopf emphasized that the initiatives of the member companies in the producer countries could only be successful and have a broad impact if conducive framework conditions in the cocoa-producing countries supported this development. "The responsibility of our member companies to shape a sustainable supply chain, for which concrete and detailed recommendations for action have been developed by GISCO, must be complemented by transformation processes in the producer countries," Weiskopf said. Important reforms on forest conservation, agroforestry or cocoa traceability have already been initiated or implemented by producer countries, often in close cooperation with the private sector. The increasing commitment at the EU level would also suggest coordinated support for these initiatives together with the member countries within the framework of bilateral and multilateral development cooperation.

**Beate Weiskopf's presentation can be found [here](#) on GISCO's website. The complete recording of the General Meeting is only available to members of GISCO (presentation by Beate Weiskopf from minute 35:03).**

**SHORT PRESENTATIONS:** Strategies to increase the incomes of smallholder farmers in the cocoa sector

In five keynote speeches, different strategies for increasing the income of smallholder farmers in the cocoa sector were presented. Afterwards, the participants met again in five thematically related working groups to discuss the different approaches in detail.

**Topic: African Regional Standard on Sustainable Cocoa, ARS 1000 and its contribution to higher incomes**



**Rosemarie Tanoé, Head of Gender Promotion, Certification and Sustainability Standards at the Conseil du Café-Cacao**, presented the African Regional Standard for Sustainable Cocoa, ARS 1000 and its contribution to higher incomes for male and female cocoa producers to the members of GISCO. According to Ms Tanoé, the African regional standard is the core element of the implementation approach of the Ivorian Conseil du Café-Cacao (CCC) and the Ghanaian COCOBOD, with the help of which the cocoa sector is to be shaped towards more sustainability. She went on to explain that this was being done against the background that existing implementation strategies of standard-setting organisations and the industry had so far not shown the effects that

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were necessary to guarantee cocoa farmers a good standard of living. To achieve this, she said, the standard aims to achieve the following goals:

- Establish a robust and efficient traceability system.
- Strengthening of cooperatives towards well-organized enterprises.
- Strengthening the members of these cooperatives to become professional producers.
- Increasing the income of producers through a compulsory premium.

According to Ms Tanoé, the following aspects of the implementation of the standard are of importance:

- The regulatory authorities in the producing countries (CCC and COCOBOD) are the owners of the standard and can thus ensure the stable financing of the standard and drive the agro-ecological transformation towards a sustainable cocoa sector.
- The standard aims to strengthen cooperatives and train them to become strong actors in the cocoa sector.
- The standard also addresses diversification in the cocoa sector and ensures that producers are familiarized with diversification options and that marketing options are examined.

In the subsequent working group, Ms Tanoé explained further details of the standard, which is to be published in June of this year.

**The complete recording of the General Meeting is only available to members of GISCO (presentation by Rosemarie Tanoé from minute 51:46).**

**Results from working group 1**

African Regional Standard on Sustainable Cocoa, ARS 1000 and its contribution to higher incomes

Ms Tanoé gave the participants of working group 1 further insights into the specificities of the African Regional Standard (ARS) and answered the participants' questions. Among other things, Ms Tanoé explained in detail the differences between the ISO/CEN standard and the African Regional Standard:

According to Ms Tanoé, these ranged from different cut-off dates for deforestation (2018 for ISO/CEN vs. 2020/21 for ARS), to differences in the anchoring of premium payments, to the fact that the property rights of the ARS lie with the local government authority in Côte d'Ivoire (Conseil du Café-Cacao / CCC). In particular, Tanoé emphasized the mandatory payment of premiums (in-cash), which ARS provides for, as a particularly important element of the regional standard that distinguishes it from the ISO/CEN standard. According to Tanoé, the premium payments would be made in addition to other premium payments - e.g. within the framework of a voluntary certification. In addition, there would be a special focus on the creation of transparency and the independence of an advisory committee on the standard that is yet to be established. The vice-president of the ARS advisory committee should be elected from the private sector and the CCC itself should not be represented in the advisory committee.

Especially in view of the upcoming consultation process with international stakeholders, the working group discussed how GISCO and its members can contribute to the success of the regional standard. At the time of the publication of the standard in June 2021 and the guideline for implementation in December 2021, the working group suggested, the standard could be discussed with the members of GISCO in Germany and possible support measures could be considered together. The CCC is already in talks with the EU Commission at the national level and via the Ivorian ambassador in Brussels to consider the ARS as an important complementary instrument to the upcoming legislative regulation at EU level.

In addition, through closer cooperation between GISCO (and PRO-PLANTEURS) and the ARS Committee, guidelines could be developed to support co-operatives in their development into functioning, independent "enterprises" with access to funding. Ms. Tanoé indicated that meetings will be organized with the cocoa and chocolate industry abroad to have them buy-in the standard and will therefore also meet with the members of GISCO in Germany.

### **Topic: The Fairtrade strategy to achieve living incomes in cocoa farming**



**Dr. Bettina von Reden, Head of Policy and Development at TransFair e.V. - Fairtrade Germany**, presented the Fairtrade strategy for living incomes in cocoa farming developed in 2018. The starting point for the approach was, among other aspects, a household survey conducted by Fairtrade in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana in 2017: While it had been possible to establish that Fairtrade minimum prices and premiums had a wide range of positive effects, these were not yet sufficient for many smallholder

© *German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa* farmers to achieve a living income. "As long as this is the case, as civil society rightly emphasizes time and again, we cannot speak of sustainable cultivation," von Reden emphasized.

The Fairtrade strategy for living incomes is therefore a combination of approaches, such as advisory services, organizational development, training, advocacy work for better framework conditions and the Fairtrade differential price. The latter is based on achieving certain target values in terms of land size, hectare productivity, cost efficiency and alternative incomes in order to enable cocoa households to operate economically. Von Reden clarified: "Costs of investments, of child protection, of forest and biodiversity protection must be part of the normal costs of cocoa. We call this the 'true cost'. Without sharing

these costs for necessary measures fairly in the supply chain, all promises to fight child labor or deforestation are of no use." Her appeal therefore went out to all of GISCO's member groups: companies should look at holistic approaches that include price components and they should also commit to a holistic approach, including paying at least the Fairtrade cocoa reference price for living incomes, for all the cocoa they need. Shaping an effective supply chain law, where unfair competition no longer puts pressure on pioneering companies, is in turn up to policy representatives, she said. "Yes, we are in a competitive environment," von Reden said, "but competition must not be fought on the backs of producers or the environment." Finally, von Reden appealed that it was setbacks such as the current price reduction in Côte d'Ivoire that undid years of development. GISCO's members should therefore take a clear position and not accept such price drops, while at the same time confectionery companies operating in Germany reported profits for the past 2020 despite the Covid 19 pandemic.

**The complete recording of the General Meeting is only available to members of GISCO (presentation by Dr. Bettina von Reden from minute 1:08:14).**

### **Results from working group 2**

#### The Fairtrade strategy to achieve living incomes in cocoa farming

In working group number 2, more detailed reference was made to the Fairtrade strategy for achieving living incomes in the cocoa sector presented by Dr. Bettina von Reden. On the one hand, it was discussed how standard-setting organizations can contribute beyond the initiatives already implemented to enable smallholder farmers to earn a living income. The group discussion revealed that it cannot be a solution for small and medium-sized enterprises and other individual actors to initiate their own approaches and projects based on a wide variety of approaches. Here, standard-setting organizations could work harder to bring broad-based implementation and the guarantee of minimum standards to fruition and to promote collaborative approaches. In addition, the reference price was seen as an important point of reference, as it allows an exact difference analysis of the prices currently paid by companies compared to the necessary price and should therefore be a fixed part of companies' purchasing practices. Regarding the reference price, the participants wanted more information and transparency on its payment, in order to ensure the payment of the price to the producers and cooperatives, and in a second step, an implementation of holistic measures based on impact measurements.

On the other hand, with regard to the needed support and actions of other stakeholders in the cocoa sector to embed the approaches of the standard-setting organizations in a holistic approach, it emerged in the group that all member groups of GISCO can contribute in this regard: Industry as well as retailers should expand demand for certified products and be willing to pay higher prices. In addition, their pilot projects are a starting point, but the approaches should be tested and scaled up gradually. The retail sector could also play a supporting role by aligning procurement practices with sustainability. Non-governmental organizations, for their part, should provide more information about what standards for sustainable cocoa cultivation can achieve. Furthermore, it is up to the governments of cocoa-growing countries to create the right framework conditions for a living wage in the cocoa sector, while governments of cocoa-consuming countries must transform the competitive environment and create more transparency in the supply chain through due diligence laws and education.

### Topic: Landscape Approach and Income Diversification



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In his presentation on landscape approaches and income diversification, **Christian Mensah, Director, Strategic Projects for the African Region at Rainforest Alliance**, presented three main messages to the audience. To achieve sustainable income improvement for cocoa farmers in West Africa, he explained, it is important to combine different approaches. In addition to increasing prices and productivity, premiums for farmers and cost-saving strategies play an important role. Diversification, for example, is also a key factor in increasing incomes. Beyond all this, Rainforest Alliance also designs projects at community and landscape level to enable more diversified systems. Therefore, secondly, Mensah called for thinking about how cocoa farmers could be enabled to diversify their income. "We are not trying to reinvent the wheel with our landscape approach," Mensah said. Rainforest Alliance, he said, seeks to identify, support, and develop farmers' capacities based on the diversified system they are already managing: "We become a facilitator of the process rather than imposing our own views." In addition, he said, it is important to realize that the challenges are still great. Mensah explained that diversification requires a lot of initial capital from cocoa farmers and their farms, and that it takes a long time for them to become profitable. "Only one in three farms manages to reach the ten-year mark," he said. As a third message, Mensah urged people to look beyond the financial indicator of success and instead look at the intended impacts. "Let us look at a holistic global picture of how we can empower smallholder farmers to be more resilient," he concluded.

**The complete recording of the General Meeting is only available to members of GISCO (presentation by Christian Mensah from minute 1:09:45).**

#### **Results from working group 3:**

##### Landscape Approach and Income Diversification

Working group 3 dealt with the landscape approach presented by Christian Mensah and the income diversification of cocoa farmers. The first issue discussed was the role of local actors in the implementation of sustainable landscape approaches. The government and public agencies at national and regional levels set the policy and legal framework for sustainable development of the selected region, often provide financial resources as incentives for sustainable development (e.g. through projects) and offer technical advice and support through public services (e.g. extension services). The private sector secures purchasing and market access for products from the region and promotes sustainability through investments and specialized services. It also undertakes to comply with sustainability-relevant requirements as part of its economic activities (e.g. through sustainability programs). Civil society often takes on tasks of mediation between actors and supports facilitation, coordination and awareness-raising. Through fundraising and services, they can promote sustainability approaches in areas such as education and health. Other groups of actors were identified, such as the traditional authorities (local chiefs), the local markets, development projects and the inhabitants of the regions. Furthermore, it was discussed which success factors can lead to an increase in income for cocoa farmers through the landscape approach. First, good framework conditions with an appropriate mix of laws, public strategies (policies) and incentives in a region were named as crucial. Cross-sectoral coordination of the different actors active in the region, based on permanent dialogue, is essential. Another success factor

mentioned was the commitment of the actors to a common sustainability goal in the region. In addition, the participants discussed a strong sustainability-oriented demand and markets as well as organizations that can represent and negotiate the wishes and needs of the local population and farmers at the local level as factors that promote success.

### **Topic: Increasing and Diversifying cocoa farmer's incomes through payments for environmental services (PES)**



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In his presentation, Sebastiaan van der Hoek, Forest Advisor at Cargill, presented to the audience Cargill's approach to diversification in the cocoa sector through Payments for Environmental Services (PES). He explained that PES can be one of the means to increase incomes for cocoa farmers and to mobilize and reward them for contributing to sustainable landscapes. PES are incentives such as premiums or in-kind services offered to farmers in exchange for managing their land while providing an environmental service. The three environmental services commonly linked to PES are biodiversity conservation, including the preservation of critical habitats, watershed services and, perhaps most commonly, climate change mitigation, for example through carbon sequestration in agricultural landscapes. Cargill is supporting cocoa producers with the establishment of diverse agroforestry systems, through technical support, capacity building, and inputs, and are rewarded according to individual agreements for the annual survival rates of their trees planted on the farm. PES linked to agroforestry development is said to be a promising approach that can be used in cocoa supply chains to support restoration and carbon sequestration in commodity supply chains while making a difference to families' household incomes. However, there are still some risks and bottlenecks for both investors and farmers. These include, for example, lack of land rights, lack of harmonized minimum standards for legal land use and enforcement, and on the investment side, a need for long-term investment. Finally, the broad potential of PES could be further exploited in the future through improvements in agricultural and digital infrastructure, which are currently still associated with high transaction costs.

**The complete recording of the General Meeting is only available to members of GISCO (presentation by Sebastiaan van der Hoek from minute 1:18:15).**

#### **Results from working group 4:**

##### Income diversification and enhancement through Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES)

Working group 4 looked at Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) presented by Sebastiaan van der Hoek. The first question discussed was what kind of environmental services could be used to increase the income of cocoa farmers. In the context of carbon sequestration or biomass increase in agricultural systems to sequester carbon in soils and/or trees, participants mentioned the promotion of healthy soils, the application of biochar (plant charcoal), and the planting and maintenance of trees. To conserve and enhance biodiversity, as another possible environmental service, sustainable pesticide man-

agement, potential approaches to beekeeping and general habitat protection were among the possible strategies collected. For all strategies, there was agreement on the need to adapt to farmers' individual situations and local contexts.

The second guiding question dealt with possible obstacles to the establishment of payments for environmental services and related strategies for overcoming them. In this context, the participants dealt above all with the question of monitoring. In particular, the question of the correct recording of the avoidance of deforestation and the people involved in it needed to be clarified. Furthermore, the question of how to permanently guarantee payments for environmental services for agroforestry systems, among others, was important. Finally, it was stressed that in PES projects, the development of strategies to ensure additional income, rather than just covering additional costs, was essential, otherwise there would be no real contribution to a living wage.

Finally, the working group elaborated answers to the question of the necessary framework conditions to successfully increase and diversify farmers' incomes through PES. The group agreed that the often unclear situation of use and ownership rights to land and trees in cocoa-growing regions was a major obstacle to the approach. In terms of stakeholders to be involved, the role of local and international governments (e.g. in financing, benefit-sharing, tax exemption), the role of standard-setting organizations and the legal framework (emissions certification, EU due diligence, African Regional Standard (ARS)) as well as the role of sustainable cocoa platforms as knowledge development institutions (GISCO, CFI) were highlighted..

### **Topic: REWE Group's approach to living incomes in the cocoa sector**

**Julia Renner, Project Manager Sustainability Products at REWE Group**, presented the strategy of REWE Group as an approach of the retail trade for livelihood-securing incomes in the cocoa sector. The retail group had already set the goal years ago to exclusively source certified cocoa for all cocoa-containing products of its private labels. However, since certification alone is not sufficient to solve the problems in the cocoa sector, further initiatives are necessary. Together with Fairtrade and the Sustainable Agricultural Supply Chain Initiative (INA), REWE Group therefore launched a pilot project for living incomes in Ghana in 2019. In addition to the Fairtrade minimum price and premium, REWE Group pays a monetary premium to the cocoa farmers participating in the project, which is based on the Fairtrade reference price for living incomes in the cocoa sector. Furthermore, hands-on training for producers would be provided by partner organizations to help them increase productivity and profitability and generate diversification of income sources.

"As a retail company, we also see another important role in raising awareness among our customers about such issues," Renner said. Therefore, she said, communicating the project to end consumers is an important part of REWE Group's own approach. However, REWE Group also knows that it cannot solve the problems in the cocoa sector on its own, which makes it all the more important to motivate other companies with the pilot project to join the path.

**The complete recording of the General Meeting is only available to members of GISCO (presentation by Julia Renner from minute 1:25:03).**

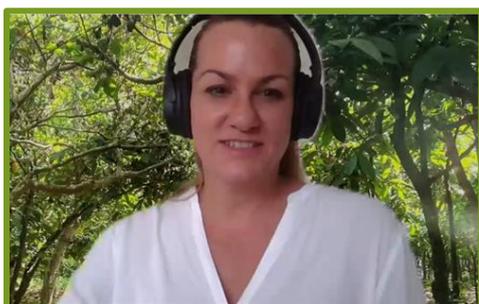
### Results from working group 5:

#### Retail's approach to living incomes in the cocoa sector

Working group 5 took a closer look at REWE Group's approach to living incomes in the cocoa sector. Based on the first key question about the retail sector's ability to influence its suppliers so that they also implement measures to achieve living incomes in the supply chain, the participants came to the conclusion that the retail sector must align the price negotiations for the branded products it sells with sustainability aspects. In addition, long-term commitments between retailers and industry would need to be made. The participants agreed that the existing competitive pressure cannot be completely eliminated, but that each link in the supply chain must live up to its responsibility to make it fair. With regard to retailers' own brands, the small group firmly emphasized that food retailers bear direct responsibility here. In general, the retail trade plays an important role in customer education, as Ms. Renner noted in her keynote speech. In addition, it must clearly advocate for the implementation of a supply chain law and represent a uniform understanding of Living Income in its projects and no light versions of the approach.

On the question about forms of support and actions by other actors that support the establishment of the retail approach in a holistic model, the participants highlighted the importance of partnerships between non-governmental organizations and retailers. It was also noted that governments in cocoa-consuming countries need to ensure transparency in the supply chain with all links and at the European level, and link this to laws on deforestation. The group also saw the potential with these governments to communicate the value of chocolate to end consumers. Finally, governments in cocoa-producing countries should implement effective control mechanisms to ensure that there are no unintended side effects of price increases, such as volume effects or deforestation.

### **PRO-PLANTEURS MATCHING FUND:** Presentation of innovative projects to increase incomes



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**Sonia Lehmann, project leader of PRO-PLANTEURS**, presented the progress of the PRO-PLANTEURS Matching Fund to the participants of the General Meeting. In her presentation, she focused on the third component of the second phase of PRO-PLANTEURS, promoting collaboration among stakeholders in the cocoa supply chain. "The concept for the Matching Fund and for the cooperation with GISCO's co-members was created in the PRO-PLANTEURS working group and was developed together

with a local evaluation committee," Lehmann explained. A total of four projects were selected for the Matching Fund, all of which contribute to the goals of PRO-PLANTEURS, but also to the individual goals of GISCO. Six members of the initiative also participate in the projects' activities. "Each of the four projects is scheduled to run for two to three years, and together they aim to reach a total of 12,000 farmers," Lehmann said. The focus of the projects varies, but ranges from introducing good farming practices in cocoa, to paying for environmental services and improving the resilience of cocoa-producing households, to reducing abusive child labor. Following an evaluation, the progress of the projects will be presented next year.

**The complete recording of the General Meeting is only available to members of GISCO (speech by Sonia Lehmann from minute 2:01:25).**

### CLOSING WORDS



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**Dirk Schattschneider**, Director for Sustainable supply chains; food and rural development; sustainability standards at the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) closed the public part of GISCO's General Meeting and thanked all those present for their participation. Schattschneider praised the extensive contributions and discussions and GISCO itself as a content pioneer and shaper. "Particularly close to our hearts within GISCO is the cross-platform monitoring system," he said,

urging active participation by members.

"An important step toward living incomes is the African Regional Standard. It is important that this process is driven by stakeholders in cocoa-growing countries, but also accepted and supported in consumer countries," Schattschneider said. In addition, one must look beyond the cocoa sector, which is why diversification plays an important role on the way to secure incomes. Finally, Schattschneider classified the planned due diligence regulations as a possible contribution to a living income and offered the companies support and advice from the BMZ. "Due diligence regulation alone will not be enough to achieve more sustainability in the agricultural supply chain. Therefore, the so-called smart mix is also important, as different instruments are needed," he concluded.

**The complete recording of the General Meeting is only available to members of GISCO (speech by Dirk Schattschneider from minute 2:21:52).**

**The program of the General Meeting and the presentations are available on [GISCO's website](#).**

***The minutes of the internal part of the General Meeting were prepared separately and sent to GISCO's members.***



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