



Forum Nachhaltiger Kakao
German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa



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April 2026

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News from the German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa

Invitation to the 14th GISCO General Assembly in Berlin

Berlin, 20 & 21 May 2026

We are pleased to invite you to this year's GISCOs General Assembly. The event will take place on 20 and 21 May 2026 at the **Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)** in Berlin.

On Wednesday, 20 May 2026, the [internal session](#) of the association will begin at 3:30 p.m., including resolutions and board elections. From 7:00 p.m., the evening reception will commence with a welcome address by the Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Dr. Bärbel Kofler. This will be followed by a session on the topic “Why chocolate has a colonial history,” along with an opportunity for exchange and networking.

Under the title “Shaping the Future Together: Resilient Cocoa Supply Chains for People and the Environment,” the [public part](#) of the General Assembly will take place on 21 May 2026.

Please register until today. Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

[Registration](#)

Webinar – From Buying Bulk to Quality Cocoa: Is Decommoditisation a Way Forward for the Cocoa Sector?

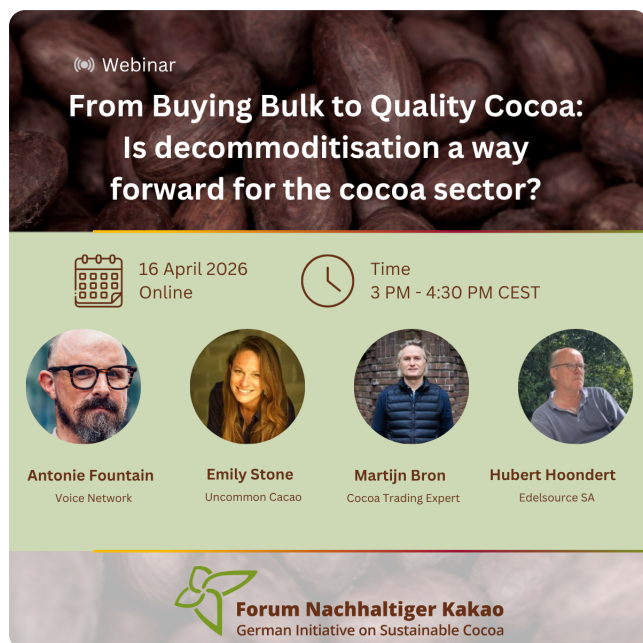


Figure © Forum Nachhaltiger Kakao e.V.

Online, 16 April 2026

On 16 April 2026, GISCO hosted an online seminar on the topic “From Buying Bulk to Quality Cocoa: Is Decommoditisation a Way Forward for the Cocoa Sector?”. The discussion brought together diverse perspectives from practice, trade, and civil society, featuring Emily Stone (Uncommon Cacao), Antonie Fountain (Voice Network), Martijn Bron (Cocoa Trading Expert), and Hubert Hoondert (Edelsource SA).

The speakers highlighted both the opportunities and the limitations of increased differentiation of cocoa in global trade. A key challenge emerged: while commodity markets efficiently manage supply, demand, and risk, they fail to reflect the true value of cocoa, including its social and environmental costs.

The subsequent discussion also underscored that futures markets remain indispensable for the bulk cocoa sector. According to the experts, the main challenges lie in structural inequalities, limited access to trade and financial instruments, and governance gaps in producing countries. The presentation of the event can be found [here](#).

[Watch the recording](#)

ISCO Monitoring 2026: Deadline and Guidelines

Online, 13 April 2026

This year’s monitoring round started on 13 April 2026. Data entry in the ISCO Monitoring Tool is open until 13 May 2026. As participation in the monitoring is mandatory for all members (exception: <100 tons processing or trade), we kindly ask you to complete your submission on time and sincerely thank you for your cooperation.

If you have any questions, please contact [Katharina Münster](#). The monitoring documents relevant for 2026 are linked here for your reference: [ISCO Guidelines Monitoring Tool](#), [ISCO Overview of Monitoring Data Points](#) and the [Monitoring Mastering](#) for GISCO members.

[Watch the recording](#)

Staff Change in the Secretariat



Figure © Private

Bonn, 1 April 2026

We are very pleased to welcome Juliane Lutze back to the GISCO team after seven months of parental leave. Over the coming months, she will be working reduced hours, with a particular focus on supporting the Task Force Environment. She is looking forward to reconnecting with many of you in the coming weeks, as well as at the General Assembly, and to continuing and strengthening the exchange.

With Juliane Lutze's return, Christian Dohse's parental leave cover assignment has come to an end. He has since taken up a new professional role outside GISCO.

GIZ Cocoa Days 2026



Figure © Forum Nachhaltiger Kakao e.V.

Bonn, 25 March 2026

In March, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) organised the Sustainable Cocoa Initiative (SCI) Cocoa Days 2026. During the event, Evelyn Bahn, Deputy Chair of the GISCO Board, participated in a panel discussion, engaging in dialogue with the European Commission, **the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)**, and civil society representatives from Germany and Côte d'Ivoire.

It became clear that GISCO and the Sustainable Cocoa Initiative (SCI) share common objectives and are strengthening dialogue along the value chain, particularly through greater inclusion of stakeholders from producing countries. Concrete projects such as **Pro-Planteurs** demonstrate how collaboration can be effectively implemented and how sustainable sourcing approaches can be advanced. Looking ahead, it remains essential to further strengthen policy frameworks and to strategically leverage synergies between existing initiatives.

[View LinkedIn Post](#)

Updates from the Board Meeting

Neckarsulm, 18 March 2026

On 18 March 2026, the first Board meeting of the year took place at the **Schwarz Group** in Neckarsulm. During the meeting, the Board discussed, among other topics, administrative matters of the association as well as the upcoming General Assembly.

A key decision concerned the adoption of the Procurement Practices indicators for the monitoring system. In addition, the Board approved the rollout of the "Reporting Back" approach, which will enable members to access their monitoring data and compare it with their peer groups in the future.

Introduction of our new member KOA Germany GmbH



Figure © KOA Germany GmbH

[More information](#)

Cologne, 18 March 2026

We are pleased to welcome **KOA Germany GmbH** as a new member. The company processes the previously unused pulp of the cocoa fruit into high-quality ingredients and end products. In doing so, it creates additional income opportunities for cocoa farmers in West Africa, while at the same time reducing food losses and strengthening more sustainable value chains.

Introduction of our new advisory member Coopérative Amkeni Mkulima

DRC, 18 March 2026

We are pleased to welcome Coopérative Amkeni Mkulima as a new advisory member. Through its close collaboration with cocoa farmers and communities in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, the cooperative brings valuable practical experience.

The cooperative is active in North and South Kivu and is engaged in agroforestry and permaculture systems, particularly in cocoa cultivation. With its focus on sustainable livelihoods and locally anchored value creation, Coopérative Amkeni Mkulima makes an important contribution to strengthening rural communities.

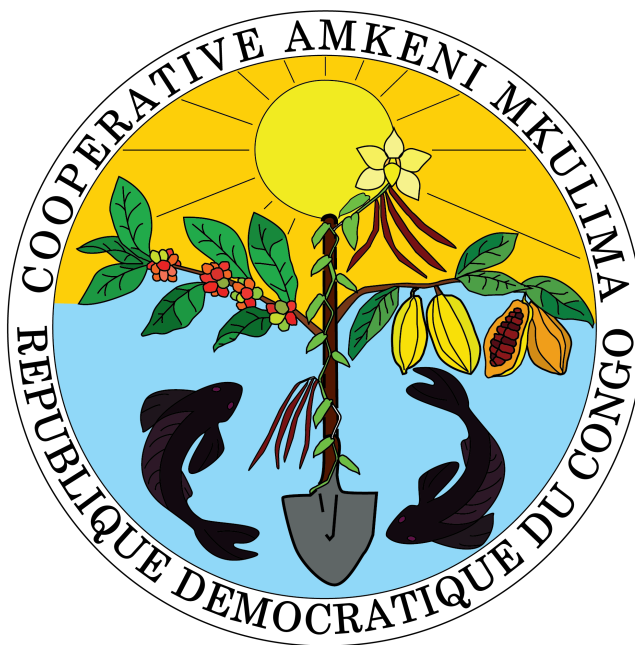
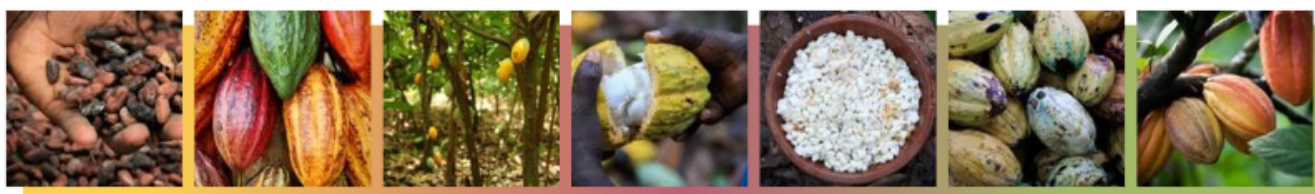


Figure © Coopérative Amkeni Mkulima

[View LinkedIn Page](#)



Pro-Planteurs and GISCO in Côte d'Ivoire

GISCO Côte d'Ivoire sets new impulses with the relaunch of the local member network

Abidjan, 3 March 2026

On 3 March 2026, members and partners of GISCO in Côte d'Ivoire met in Abidjan, including **Barry Callebaut**, **Nestlé**, **Fairtrade International**, **INADES**, **CÉMOI**, and **ProSIC**. As part of the relaunch workshop of the local member network, the strategic orientation for 2026 was defined and strengthened cooperation at country level was jointly further developed.

Danja Bergmann, Head of Development Cooperation at the German Embassy in Abidjan, and Martina Gaebler emphasized the central role of coordinated multistakeholder collaboration for the sustainable transformation of the cocoa sector.

The focus was also on the new phase of **Pro-Planteurs**, as well as key topics such as sustainable sourcing, living incomes, environmentally friendly agriculture, and knowledge exchange. The workshop resulted in clear strategic guidelines, increased member engagement, and concrete proposals for the further development of the local network.

Next steps include the establishment of a local advisory body, the development of an action plan for 2026, and the expansion of coordination and communication structures.



Figure © GISCO Côte d'Ivoire

The Ivorian Cocoa Sector Under Pressure: Entering a phase of accelerated transformation

Côte d'Ivoire, April 2026

Since February 2026, the cocoa sector in Côte d'Ivoire has been facing a significant liquidity crisis across the entire supply chain. Cocoa beans remained unsold at farm level, cooperatives came under financial pressure, and some buyers reduced their purchasing activities. In response, the Ministry of Agriculture, together with the **Conseil du Café-Cacao (CCC)** and the Interprofessional Agricultural Organization for Coffee and Cocoa (Organisation Interprofessionnelle Agricole du Café-Cacao (OIA)), introduced structural adjustments. At the end of February 2026, the government adapted the cocoa marketing calendar to better respond to climate-related shifts in harvest cycles, shorten the marketing period, and improve market liquidity in a strained environment. However, the announced buyback of unsold cocoa stocks by the state remains incomplete. As of early April, the OIA and representatives of producers report that around 60,000 tons still need to be purchased.

In addition, the producer price for the mid-crop season has been more than halved compared to the 2025/2026 main crop season, placing significant pressure on producers. While some producers have signaled their willingness to cooperate with the authorities to stabilize the sector, organizations such as the national agricultural union (Syndicat National Agricole Pour le Progrès en Côte d'Ivoire

(SYNAPCI)) have raised concerns and are calling for the consistent implementation of the announced measures, in particular the purchase of existing stocks at previously agreed prices.

Pro-Planteurs promotes dialogue on agricultural labour shortages in the cocoa sector

Abengourou and Adzopé, 7 until 10 April 2026

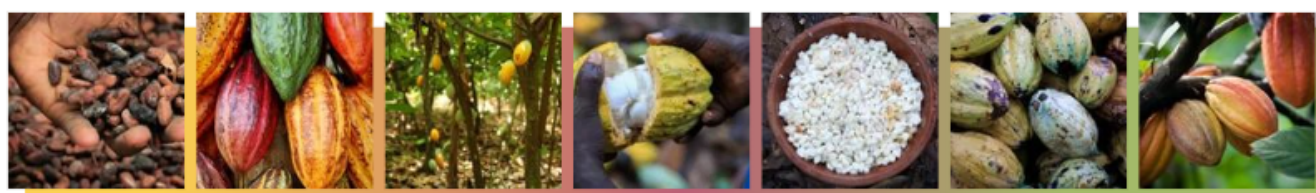
From 7 to 10 April 2026, **Pro-Planteurs** convened public actors, cooperatives, and technical partners in Abengourou and Adzopé to address the growing shortage of agricultural labor in the cocoa sector.

Key underlying causes identified included the migration of young people away from rural areas, high labor intensity, an ageing producer population, and low levels of mechanization. The shortage is already having tangible impacts on harvesting and post-harvest processes as well as on overall productivity, representing a structural challenge to the sector's long-term sustainability.

Priorities highlighted during the discussions included improved organization of labor, increasing the attractiveness of the sector for young people, training and rural entrepreneurship, as well as appropriate mechanization solutions. The outcomes of the dialogue are intended to feed into a roadmap and pilot measures aimed at improving labor availability for cooperatives and their producers.



Figure © GISCO Côte d'Ivoire



Reports from Côte d'Ivoire and the region

This section was created in collaboration with SWISSCO

Price differences increase the risk of cocoa smuggling

Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, 1 March 2026

Price differences in producer prices between the neighbouring countries Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana have created increased incentives for cross-border cocoa smuggling. Market distortions linked to price regulation are identified as the main driver of this development.

[Read the article](#)

Cocoa price shock: Côte d'Ivoire drastically lowers producer price

Abidjan, 4 March 2026

In response to the ongoing crisis in the cocoa sector, the government of Côte d'Ivoire has sharply reduced the producer price to 1,200 CFA/kg (EUR 1.83/kg), representing a decline of more than 57% compared to the main crop season. According to the Minister of Agriculture, Bruno Nabagné Koné, this adjustment reflects declining global market prices and limited scope for state intervention.

The measure is intended to stabilize the market but is resulting in income losses and delayed payments for producers, highlighting the sector's high vulnerability to global price fluctuations.

[Read the article](#)

Hard times for cocoa producers in West Africa: the chocolate market weakens

Suhenso, 9 March 2026

Despite rising chocolate prices, cocoa farmers in West Africa are suffering from falling producer returns, delayed payments, and a lack of buyers, according to a BBC report. Overproduction and declining demand have destabilized the market and triggered existential crises for producers.

[Read the article](#)

Strong rebound in cocoa sales in Côte d'Ivoire

Abidjan, 10 March 2026

Côte d'Ivoire has sold export contracts for 400,000 tons within just ten days for the 2025/2026 mid-crop season, marking a significant recovery after previously weak sales performance.

This increase followed an agreement between regulatory authorities and exporters, as well as a reduction in the state-fixed producer price aimed at improving competitiveness on the global market. Earlier price declines had led to unsold stock levels, but the recent measures accelerated sales and cleared a large share of available volumes.

[Read the article](#)

Côte d'Ivoire considers reform of cocoa marketing system

Abidjan, 12 March 2026

Authorities in Côte d'Ivoire are exploring reforms to their cocoa marketing system, including possible changes to sales mechanisms and a stronger involvement of domestic actors. The discussions follow challenges related to unsold stocks and market volatility.

[Read the article](#)

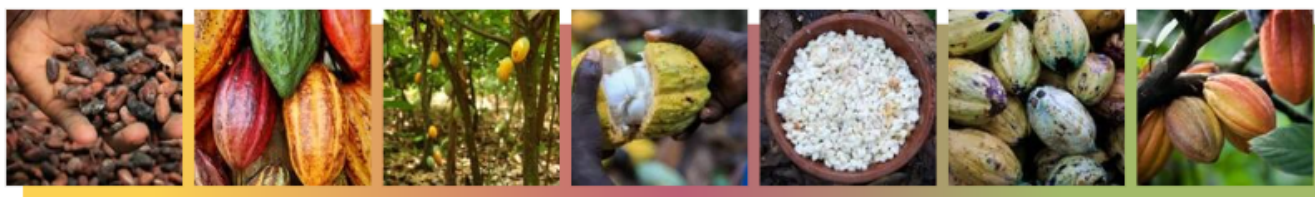
Ghana's cocoa sector under pressure due to falling prices and reforms

Accra, 13 March 2026

Ghana's cocoa sector is under increasing pressure after the Cocoa Marketing Board (COCOBOD) significantly reduced producer prices for the current season. The decision follows declining global market prices and financial constraints within the highly regulated cocoa system.

At the same time, structural challenges such as debt, high production costs, and liquidity constraints are exacerbating the crisis in the sector. The decision has also triggered protests and growing concerns about the livelihoods of producers.

[Read the article](#)



Cooperation at European level

Launch of FRISCO support for the Mabi-Yaya programme

Paris, n.d.

FRISCO has started its support in 2026 for the Mabi-Yaya programme, which has been implemented since 2016 by the French NGO Nitidae in the Mé region of Côte d'Ivoire. The programme has, over the past ten years, contributed to the protection of the Mabi-Yaya nature reserve and surrounding cocoa-growing areas, involving nearly 25 neighbouring communities across 70,000 hectares of forest.

It promotes sustainable local development through integrated landuse planning, income diversification (including beekeeping, food crops, and rubber), and the promotion of deforestation-free cocoa production. Between 2026 and 2028, the partnership with **FRISCO** will enable the expansion of the programme into new villages, increase sustainable production by an additional 300 hectares, and support pilot solutions to improve farmers' incomes and strengthen the role of women.

A further key priority for **FRISCO** in 2026 is to formally establish its new legal structure as an association by the summer.

SWISCO: Webinar - Improving soil with Biochar

Online, 17 March 2026

On 17 March 2026, **SWISCO**, together with IDH, hosted a "Tertulia" webinar on how biochar can be scaled in cocoa farming systems. The event presented key insights highlighting the potential of biochar in the cocoa sector.

Biochar offers multiple benefits: it can improve soil quality, increase yields, and create additional income opportunities for producers. At the same time, it acts as a carbon sink and contributes to

climate change mitigation. However, a crucial condition for successful adoption is that its use delivers clear and tangible benefits for farmers.

In addition, it was emphasised that biochar can only be effective in a sustainable way if it is integrated into a holistic system. Such systems must be adapted to local conditions, particularly with regard to logistics, agronomic practices, supply chain structures, and ecological contexts.

[View the LinkedIn Post and the presentation](#)

Strategies against CSSVD: First ISCO Learning Network Webinar

Online, 19 March 2026

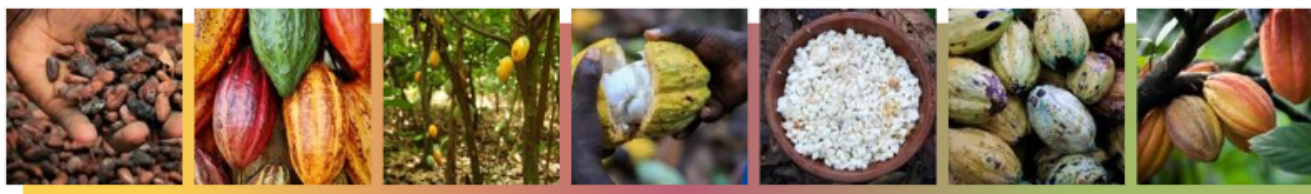
The first webinar of the ISCO Learning Network took place on 19 March 2026. Jointly organised by **GISCO** and **SWISSCO**, the session focused on strategies to combat Cocoa Swollen Shoot Virus Disease (CSSVD). CSSVD represents a severe threat to West African cocoa production and affects approximately 30% of cocoa farms in Ghana alone.

[Watch the recording](#)

Addressing the disease requires coordinated, cross-sectoral action in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. Effective approaches must combine early detection, farm rehabilitation, research into disease-tolerant varieties, and nature-based solutions such as agroforestry systems. At farm level, success critically depends on building trust with farmers and providing timely incentives for rehabilitation. The presentation of the event can be found [here](#).



Figure © Forum Nachhaltiger Kakao e.V.



Sustainability in the cocoa sector

This section was created in collaboration with SWISSCO

Sierra Leone plans establishment of a commodities committee

Freetown, 30 January 2026

Reports indicate that Sierra Leone is planning to establish a national commodities authority, with cocoa identified as a priority sector. The initiative aims to strengthen regulation, traceability, and export coordination within the country's agricultural commodity sectors.

[Read the article](#)

Reflection on the World Cocoa Foundation Partnership Meeting: Collaboration as a Key to Living Incomes

Amsterdam, 4 March 2026

The central message of the World Cocoa Foundation meeting from the 17 to 18 March 2026, was that only rapid, cross-sector collaboration can create long-term value across the cocoa value chain, including living incomes for farmers. Despite decades of sustainability commitments, large-scale investments are still lacking; the actual financing needs are estimated to be in the double-digit billion range.

As an example of pooled efforts, the new Together Cocoa Foundation by major chocolate companies was highlighted, aiming to help close income gaps towards living income levels in West Africa.

[Read the article](#)

Brazil's large-scale cocoa expansion comes to a halt after price crash

São Paulo, 12 March 2026

Several large-scale cocoa cultivation projects in Brazil have been suspended or cancelled following the sharp decline in global cocoa prices in early 2026. The downturn has weakened investor confidence in industrial cocoa production models, which had gained momentum during the price surge between 2024 and 2025.

[Read the article](#)

European Investment Bank and Nigeria's Bank of Industry support cocoa supply chain

Abuja, 23 March 2026

The European Investment Bank (EIB) and Nigeria's Bank of Industry have announced a financing agreement to support sustainable agriculture, including cocoa value chains.

The initiative aims to strengthen private sector investment and sustainability efforts across agricultural supply chains, with a particular focus on improving long-term resilience and development in the cocoa sector.

[Read the article](#)

Cocoa and Coffee Farmers Alliance of Africa presents 3-year plan for cocoa and coffee sector

o.O., 10 April 2026

The Cocoa and Coffee Farmers Alliance of Africa has adopted a three-year plan aimed at strengthening production, incomes, and global competitiveness in the cocoa and coffee sectors.

Key priorities include improved farming practices, access to finance, training, and the development of sustainable value chains.

[Read the article](#)

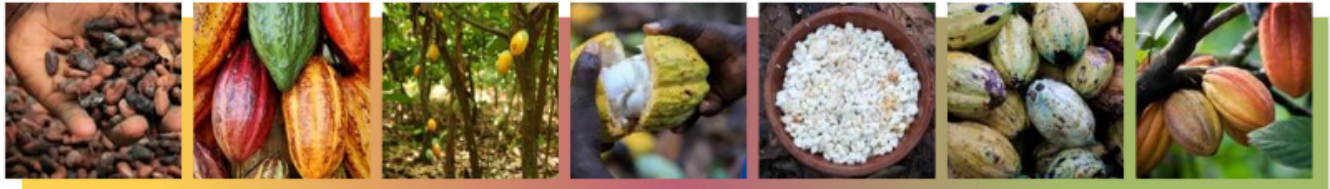
Germany: Decline in cocoa grinding continues

Bonn, 16 April 2026

In the first quarter of 2026, the ten companies in Germany participating in the reporting system of the **Bundesverband der Deutschen Süßwarenindustrie (BDSI)** processed 90,852.1 tonnes of raw cocoa, representing a 6.7% decline compared to the same quarter of the previous year.

Across Europe, cocoa grinding also decreased in the first quarter of 2026, falling by 7.8% to 325,895 tonnes compared to the previous year.

[Read the article](#)



New studies and reports

Insights from the EnRoute Project: Pathways to Living Incomes in the Cocoa Sector

Amstelveen, March 2026

The four-year EnRoute project, funded by the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO) and implemented by ETG Beyond Beans in collaboration with the KIT Institute and Oxfam Novib, presents three different approaches to reducing the income gap toward a living income, along with results for farmers in cocoa supply chains. The analysis highlights persistent challenges in achieving income improvements at the farm level.

[Read the report](#)

Cocoa cultivation as a driver of deforestation: WWF calls for a fundamental transformation of the cocoa sector

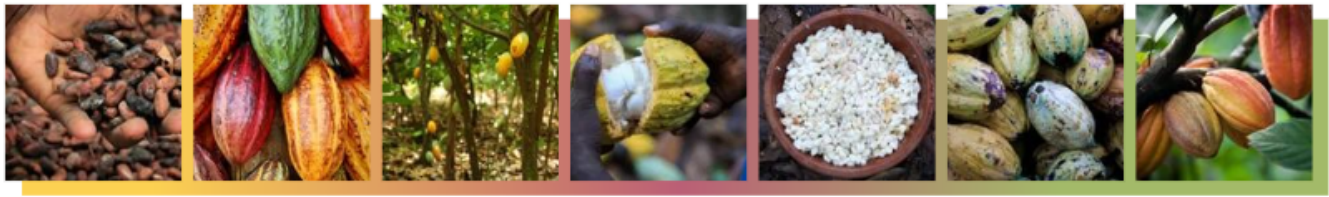
Brussels, 7 April 2026

The analysis by WWF shows that global cocoa cultivation is a significant driver of deforestation, thereby threatening key ecosystems in West and Central Africa. Contributing factors include ageing plantations, monocultures, low incomes, and insecure land tenure, all of which encourage expansion into forest areas. Since 2000, cocoa cultivation has been responsible for more than 60% of agricultural commodity-driven forest loss in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Cameroon. WWF warns of a similar trend emerging in Liberia and the Congo Basin. Climate change and social challenges are further intensifying the pressure.

[Read the report](#)

[Read the summary of the report](#)

An overview of studies on the cocoa sector, organised by topic, can be found here on the [GISCO website](#).



Member News

Note: The following paragraphs are excerpts from contributions made by member companies, who are responsible for their contents.

WWF Conference on Cocoa & Biodiversity

Berlin, 19 May 2026

The **WWF** is hosting a conference on biodiversity in cocoa cultivation on 19 May 2026 from 12:00 to 18:00 in Berlin, titled "From Conservation to a Business Case."

The conference will provide an overview of how biodiversity in cocoa cultivation can be effectively promoted, ranging from international policy frameworks and financing approaches to the perspectives of farmers. It will also offer insights into the progress of **WWF's** cocoa project in Colombia and discuss key challenges and potential solutions. We are looking forward for your registration.

[Registration](#)

Rainforest Alliance – Empowering Consumers Directive

New York, 1 April 2026

The Empowering Consumers Directive (EmpCo) is about to be implemented, in Germany through the Act Against Unfair Competition (UWG). Companies are currently reviewing their claims, labels, and packaging texts to ensure compliance with the requirements by 27 September 2026.

The **Rainforest Alliance** falls under the category of a certification scheme as defined by EmpCo and is prepared to support the compliant use of its seal and related claims. Corresponding guidelines are available to help companies implement the requirements in practice. Further information can be found [here](#).



Figure © Rainforest Alliance

[Information about the guide](#)

Elucid: Health as a Key to Resilient Supply Chains



Figure © Elucid

Amsterdam, 27 February 2026

During Amsterdam Cocoa Week, **Elucid** hosted the third Social Club, "Measuring What Matters." Experts, cooperatives, and investors discussed how impact measurement can strengthen the health of farmers.

In addition, a **Learning Brief** by the **KIT Royal Tropical Institute** was presented, highlighting health as a structural factor for resilient supply chains.

[More information about the event](#)

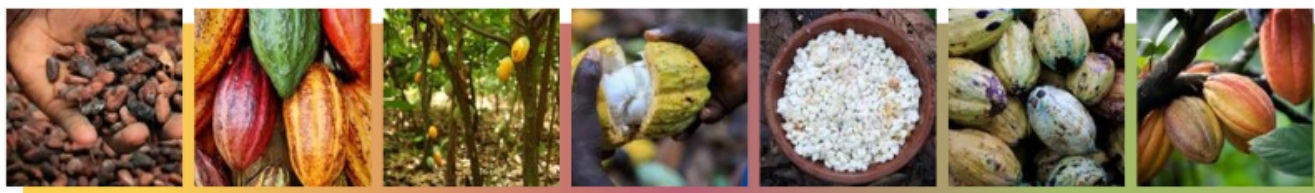
Fairtrade calls for joint action by policymakers and the private sector to protect the incomes of cocoa farmers

Cologne, 10 March 2026

Declining and highly volatile cocoa prices are putting the incomes of cocoa farmers worldwide at risk. **Fairtrade** warns of the consequences for food security, education, and healthcare, and calls for joint action by governments and the private sector. The aim is to establish long-term partnerships and stable prices that enable a living income.

At the same time, **Fairtrade** urges companies to ensure at least the **Fairtrade** Minimum Price as well as the premium as key safety nets. Initial progress can be seen in programs such as "Grow Further", but significantly stronger engagement across the supply chain is still needed.

[Read the statement](#)



Events

Note: Some event titles are linked for further information.



Working Group
Pro-Planteurs

20 May 2026

Berlin
GISCO



General Assembly

20 - 21 May 2026

BMZ Berlin
GISCO



Working Group
Communication

02 June 2026

Online
GISCO

[Link](#)

[Link](#)

[Link](#)



Save the date Webinar

24 June 2026

Online

Webinar on the African
Regional Standard ARS
1000
GISCO



Board Meeting

25 June 2026

Online

GISCO

[Link](#)

We will keep you informed about further events on our [Webseite](#).

Forum Nachhaltiger Kakao e.V.

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