



Forum Nachhaltiger Kakao
German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa



Members Information July 2026

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News from the German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa

Review of the GISCOs 14th General Assembly

Berlin, 20. & 21 May 2026

On 20 and 21 May 2026, more than 90 representatives from the private sector, government, academia, civil society, and producer organizations gathered at the **Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)** in Berlin for the 2026 Annual General Meeting of the **German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa (GISCO)**.

Under the theme "Shaping the Future Together: Resilient Cocoa Supply Chains for People and the Environment," members and experts discussed strategies to advance Living Income and environmental protection strategies, with a particular focus on agroforestry systems.

The panel discussion, "Living Income Meets Environmental Protection," featured contributions from Nicko Debenham (Sustainability Solutions), Alina Tremmel (**Lidl International**), Wendy Arenas (**ALISOS**), and José Andrés Morales Barreto (Comicacao Cooperative, Colombia). The discussion emphasized that lasting transformation can only be achieved through collective action across the entire cocoa value chain and requires commitment that extends beyond individual projects.

Participants then joined interactive working groups to discuss **GISCO's** formats and approaches for advancing its strategic objectives on living income and agroforestry.

As part of the evening programme, cocoa expert Dr. Kristy Leissle and Andrea Durry from the **Chocolate Museum Cologne** explored the topic of colonial continuities in the cocoa chain with participants.

During the General Meeting, members also reelected and confirmed the Executive Board members and the Treasurer. We congratulate Aldo Cristiano (Member Group B), Florian Schütze (Member Group C), Evelyn Bahn (Member Group D), and Dr. Torben Erbrath (Treasurer) on their reelection. We would also like to thank all members, speakers, and participants for the constructive exchange and valuable impulses that will continue to shape our joint work.

Further impressions and information are available in the [photo documentation](#), the [LinkedIn](#) post and the [press release](#) (German).



Photo © GISCO

Recap of the Board Meeting and election of the Board Chair

Online, 25 June 2025

On 25 June 2026, the second Board meeting of the year took place online. During the meeting, the Chair of the Board as well as the Deputy Chairs were elected. We look forward to continuing our collaboration on the Board with Aldo Cristiano (Member Group B) as Chair of the Board, as well as with Evelyn Bahn (Member Group D) and Florian Schütze (Member Group C) in their roles as Deputy Chairs.

Following this, Ms. Keller (**Schwarz Group**) delivered a guest presentation on the EU Directive on Empowering Consumers for the Green Transition (EmpCo). She outlined the regulatory framework of the directive and provided a general assessment of its potential implications for GISCO. It was decided to commission a legal review to assess the extent to which EmpCo compliance may be relevant for the Forum's activities. Furthermore, the organization of a one-day joint meeting of the Task Forces and the Board at the end of 2026 was approved. The aim is to jointly develop a strategic plan for tasks and objectives for 2027.

[Read the Press release \(GER\)](#)

Announcement of the submission of roadmap progress reports by 31 December 2026

Bonn, 25 June 2026

By 31 December 2026, members are invited to submit updated progress reports on their existing commitments in the areas of traceability, certification and company programmes, deforestation and agroforestry, child labour, and living income. As part of the upcoming roadmap reporting cycle, existing commitments under these focus areas may also be revised and updated. The Secretariat will distribute the updated reporting template together with an information package to all members in September. Members are encouraged to begin reviewing the progress achieved since the end of 2024 and to consider any necessary updates to their commitments well in advance of the submission deadline. If you have any questions about the reporting process or require support in revising your commitments, please do not hesitate to contact [Johanna Colley](#).

Introducing our new member ECOTOP

Bonn, 19 June 2026

We are pleased to welcome **ECOTOP** as a new supporting member of GISCO. With more than 30 years of experience in the development and implementation of biodiversity-rich agroforestry systems, **ECOTOP** brings extensive expertise to the partnership. In the cocoa sector, the organization works closely with producer organisations, companies, research institutions, and development organisations to advance sustainable and regenerative landuse systems.



Figure © ECOTOP

[More information](#)

A promotional graphic for a webinar. The top section has a dark background with a cocoa pod and the text 'Webinar Recap' and '07 July 2026 Online'. Below this, the title 'African Regional Standard for Sustainable Cocoa (ARS-1000)' is prominently displayed, followed by the subtitle 'How can the ARS standard make the cocoa sector more sustainable?'. The middle section features four logos: the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), Le Conseil du Café-Cacao, RASSO SCOOPS, and Tony's Open Chain. Below each logo is the name of a speaker and their affiliation. The bottom section features the logo for Forum Nachhaltiger Kakao (German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa).

Figure © GISCO

Review: Webinar on the African Regional Standard for Sustainable Cocoa (ARS-1000)

Online, 7 July 2026

On 7 July 2026, GISCO hosted a webinar featuring Nana Nketiah Yawson from the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), Josiane Flean Epse Assande from the **Conseil du Café-Cacao (CCC)** in Côte d'Ivoire, Alida N'Takpe-Coulibaly from the Ivorian cooperative SCOOP-RASSO, as well as Belinda Borck and Kim van't Pad Bosch from Tony's Open Chain. The speakers discussed the African Regional Standard for Sustainable Cocoa (ARS-1000). Developed by the [African Organisation for Standardisation \(ARSO\)](#), the standard aims to strengthen more

sustainable cocoa production, improve traceability, and promote environmental and social standards. The contributions highlighted different perspectives on the implementation of the standard: COCOBOD presented its national implementation strategy, **CCC** shared initial progress, and SCOOP-RASSO provided practical insights from a pilot project at cooperative level. Tony's Open Chain emphasised the potential of the standard to drive systemic change within the cocoa sector.

Update from the Pro-Planteurs Working Group

Berlin, 20 May 2026

As part of the Annual General Meeting, a physical meeting of the **Pro-Planteurs** Working Group took place on 20 May 2026. Dr. Johannes Agbahey presented the report on sustainable procurement practices by Tree Consulting. The short version of the report can be found [here](#). Dr. Johannes Agbahey also provided an overview of the six models developed in the report. In addition to these six models, **Solidaridad**, **Elucid**, **the Landbanking Group**, **ECOTOP**, and **Cocoa Fibre** (a start-up from the United States) presented proposals for sustainable procurement models. The models developed are intended to pilot the **ISCO** principles on sustainable procurement practices within the framework of **Pro-Planteurs** III.

The Secretariat and **Pro-Planteurs** are currently conducting bilateral discussions with members to further advance the practical implementation of the sustainable procurement component. For further information, please contact [Johanna Colley](#).

[View the Procurement practices](#)

Updates from the Task Force Living Income

Bonn, 12 June 2026

The Task Force Living Income has been actively working on two streams since March 2026: firstly, on the political dialogue on living income, and secondly on the implementation of living income strategies, including sustainable procurement practices. Sandra Brück (**Fairtrade**) presented initial interim results from both workstreams at this year's Annual General Meeting. At the most recent meeting on 12 June 2026, the focus was on members' individual roadmaps and the planned harmonisation of these roadmaps with the action plans of the Dutch platform **DISCO**. Members of the Monitoring Task Force also participated in the meeting.

[View the presentation](#)

Monitoring 2026: Thank you for your submission

Bonn, 03 June 2026

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all members for participating in this year's monitoring round. We especially appreciate the timely submission of the questionnaires and your strong commitment to compiling the required data. In the coming weeks, we will review, clean, and analyse the submitted information in more detail. As usual, the results will be presented in the Monitoring Report in autumn this year. The Task Force Monitoring & Roadmaps will accompany and support this process.



Pro-Planteurs and GISCO in Côte d'Ivoire

Pro-Planteurs Workshop on Sustainable Procurement Models

Abidjan, 5 & 6 June 2026

On 5 and 6 May 2026, the **Pro-Planteurs** team organised a workshop in Abidjan to present the findings of the study conducted by Tree Consulting on **sustainable procurement models** (see also the article from the Working Group Pro-Planteurs). The event brought together representatives of cooperatives and member companies of **GISCO** Côte d'Ivoire.



Photo © GISCO Côte d'Ivoire

The study was generally well received by participants. However, discussions with Tree Consulting highlighted that some aspects require further in-depth analysis. Participants emphasised that certain elements, such as mechanisms for the distribution of premium payments, can vary significantly depending on sustainability programmes and business models. The recommendation to extend contract durations to at least three years was also discussed in depth. While some participants questioned its practical feasibility, the majority supported a multi-year framework contract complemented by annual agreements. These could define key commercial conditions such as volumes, producer prices, and support measures. As a next step, **Pro-Planteurs** will continue bilateral discussions with companies and cooperatives to identify common approaches and further develop the proposed procurement models.



Photo © ISEAL Alliance

systems, and improved alignment between voluntary sustainability standards, national initiatives, and European requirements such as the EUDR. Participants also emphasised that improved incomes for producers are a key prerequisite for long-term forest protection and resilient supply chains. In addition, Karidja Konaté used the opportunity to engage with **SWISSCO**, **SWISSCONTACT**, and **GIZ** Ghana to strengthen existing collaborations and identify new avenues for cooperation in the cocoa sector.

GISCO Côte d'Ivoire strengthens dialogue on Sustainable Supply Chains at the ISEAL Global Sustainability Symposium

Accra, 8 und 9 June 2026

On 8 and 9 June 2026, GISCO Côte d'Ivoire representative Karidja Konaté participated in the **ISEAL Global Sustainability Symposium** in Accra. More than 100 representatives from government, the private sector, civil society, and producer organisations from the Ghanaian cocoa and timber sectors discussed the importance of transparency and reliable data, the further development of national traceability



Photo © ISEAL Alliance



Photo © GISCO Côte d'Ivoire

Pro-Planteurs Technical

Coordination Committee meets in Abengourou: Practical Focus and Strategic Direction

Abengourou, 16 und 17 June 2026

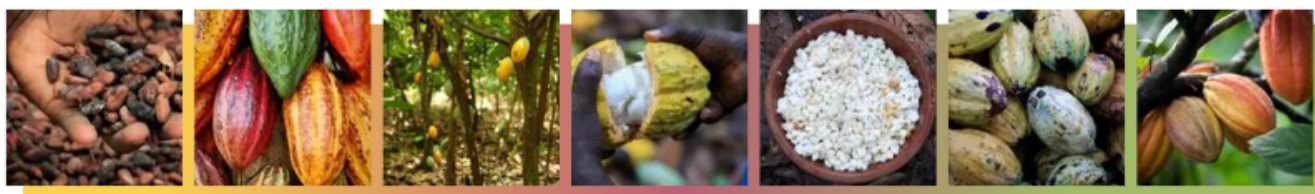
On 16 and 17 June 2026, the **Pro-Planteurs** Technical Coordination Committee (TCC) held its quarterly meeting in Abengourou. Participants included representatives of the **Conseil du Café-Cacao (CCC)**, the cooperatives ECAESB and ANONKLON, as well as the **Initiatives for the Development of Local Communities and Forest Conservation (IDEF)** and **Pro-Planteurs**.

The meeting focused on current project progress and future priorities. Representatives of the **CCC** discussed the implementation of key topics together with cooperatives and other participating organisations, including the African Regional Standard for Sustainable Cocoa (ARS-1000), agroforestry, and the management of swollen shoot disease. In addition, the next steps for the rollout of the ARS-1000 standard among approximately 300 cooperatives were discussed, as well as the implications of the newly mandatory national traceability system. Field visits to cooperatives enabled direct exchange on challenges such as disease pressure, regulatory changes, supply chain bottlenecks, and declining producer prices between the **CCC**, cooperatives, and other stakeholders. Furthermore, it was decided that, that every second TCC meeting will be held in a project region. This aims to strengthen exchange with local stakeholders and ensure that strategic decisions are more closely aligned with local conditions and realities on the ground.

Journée Pro-Planteurs to strengthen local exchange

Yamoussoukro, 19 und 20 August 2026

The **Pro-Planteurs** Technical Coordination Committee (TCC) has announced the next “Journée **Pro-Planteurs**”, which will take place on 19 and 20 August 2026. The event will be held under the theme “Innovation and Partnerships for Sustainable, Resilient and Fair Cocoa”. The Journée **Pro-Planteurs** is the project's annual flagship event, bringing together cooperatives, technical partners, and other key stakeholders. It provides a platform to celebrate progress, share lessons learned, and discuss future priorities for more sustainable cocoa production. The two-day programme features panel discussions, working groups, storytelling sessions, plenary exchanges, and cultural activities, fostering dialogue and collaboration across the cocoa sector.



Reports from Côte d'Ivoire and the region

This section was created in collaboration with SWISSCO



Figure © ICCO

ICCO Quarterly Report: Updated Estimates for the 2024/25 Cocoa Balance

Abidjan, 29 May 2026

The International Cocoa Organization (ICCO) has released its updated estimates for the 2024/2025 cocoa year, covering global production, grindings, and stock levels. The data are included in the Quarterly Bulletin of Cocoa Statistics, Issue No. 2 – Volume LII (cocoa year 2025/26) and are based on information

available up to early May 2026. According to the latest figures, only minor adjustments have been made to the global cocoa balance. The projected global surplus for the season has been revised from 75,000 to 48,000 tonnes. World cocoa production is now estimated at 4.723 million tonnes, while global grindings are projected at 4.628 million tonnes.

[Read the report](#)

EU approves 2022 amendments to the International Cocoa Agreement

Brussels 15 June 2026

The Council of the European Union has approved the amendments to the 2010 International Cocoa Agreement, as amended in 2022, through Council Decision (EU) 2026/1199 of 11 May 2026.

[Read the International Cocoa Agreement](#)

Côte d'Ivoire responds to protests over unsold cocoa beans and payment delays

Côte d'Ivoire, 20 May 2026

In 20 May 2026, dissatisfaction among cocoa producers has been increasing across several cocoa-growing regions in Côte d'Ivoire. The situation is driven by large volumes of unsold cocoa beans and outstanding payments, despite the existence of a state-backed repurchase programme. In the M'Batto region, recent protests and road blockades have been reported. Many producers state that only part of their stocks have been purchased and that previous deliveries have not yet been fully paid. Producer associations and organisations are now calling for swift measures to ease liquidity constraints and to prevent disruption to the upcoming harvest season.

[Read the article](#)

[Read the article \(FR\)](#)

Côte d'Ivoire reduces cocoa sales amid El Niño risks and tight supply conditions

Abidjan, 2 June 2026

Côte d'Ivoire has begun slowing down forward sales of cocoa for the 2026/27 season amid rising uncertainty linked to potential El Niño weather conditions, which are weighing on harvest prospects. Export contracts have already been secured for approximately one million tonnes, while further sales are being managed more cautiously. The **Conseil du Café-Cacao (CCC)** is responding to expectations of a tighter global supply situation and to climatic risks across West and Central Africa, which could lead to drought and yield reductions. At the same time, premiums on new export contracts have been increased, reflecting strong demand in a context of tightening supply. Overall, these developments point to an increasingly strained cocoa market environment for 2026/27, with Côte d'Ivoire adopting a more cautious marketing strategy aimed at price stabilisation.

[Read the article](#)

Côte d'Ivoire introduces mandatory producer card for coffee and cocoa sales

Abidjan, 15 June 2026

Starting on 1 September 2026, Côte d'Ivoire will make the producer card mandatory for all coffee and cocoa transactions. The measure is part of efforts by the **Conseil du Café-Cacao (CCC)** to strengthen traceability along the supply chain and comply with international requirements. Through the National Traceability System (SNT), coffee and cocoa will be traceable from the farm level to the export market. It is expected to help ensure secure payments, compliance with the guaranteed producer price, and access to the state health insurance scheme. Representatives of traders, exporters, and cooperatives have welcomed the introduction of the system, viewing it as an important step towards a more transparent, competitive, and sustainable coffee and cocoa value chain.

[Read the article](#)

Review of the decline in the cocoa producer price at the beginning of the year in Ghana

Ghana, 14 April 2026

In February 2026, Ghana reduced the guaranteed producer price for cocoa by 28.6%, from GH¢58,000 to GH¢41,392 per tonne. In an article, a former COCOBOD employee and current researcher at the CSIR-College of Science and Technology (CCST) in Ghana analyses the background to this decision. Falling world market prices are cited as the immediate trigger. In addition, the author points to COCOBOD's strained financial situation, including high liabilities and losses from earlier marketing contracts. The state pricing system, exchange rate developments, and volatility in international markets also play an important role in price formation.

[Read the article](#)

„Women for Chocolate“: New Support for Ghana's Cocoa Farmers

Abesewa, 14 May 2026

The “Women for Chocolate” initiative is entering its next phase: a partnership between the Seattle Chocolate Company, Specialty Cocoa & Chocolate Associates, African Cocoa Marketplace, Three Mountains Cocoa, and Rikolto Ghana is investing in strengthening women in Ghana's cocoa sector. The first project phase already delivered concrete improvements for participating communities. Key needs identified included access to clean water and high-quality planting material. In response, new wells were constructed and

nurseries for cocoa seedlings were established. In the second phase, the focus is on expanding knowledge and skills. Seattle Chocolate is co-financing, together with Rikolto Ghana, an innovative programme aimed at training and empowering women cocoa farmers.

[Read the article](#)

Ghana to Host the World Cocoa Foundation Partnership Meeting 2027

Accra, 22 May 2026

From 16 to 18 March 2027, Accra will become an international meeting point for the cocoa and chocolate industry as the **World Cocoa Foundation (WCF)** Partnership Meeting is held in Ghana for the first time. Under the theme “From Origin to Global Resilience,” representatives from governments, companies, producer organisations, financial institutions, and civil society will come together to discuss key challenges facing the sector. The focus will be on issues such as climate resilience, crop diseases, living incomes, supply security, and sustainable value chains. Ghana’s selection as host country highlights the importance of cocoa-producing origins and cocoa farmers for the future of the global cocoa sector. At the same time, the Cocoa Marketing Board (COCOBOD) will celebrate its 80th anniversary as part of the event. The meeting aims to strengthen dialogue between producing and consuming markets and to advance joint solutions for a more resilient and sustainable cocoa sector.

[Read the article](#)

Ghana Cocoa Marketing Board takes a stand against child labour in the cocoa sector

Accra, 12 June 2026

On the occasion of World Day Against Child Labour on 12 June 2026, the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) reaffirmed its commitment to a cocoa sector free of child labour. Under this year’s theme, “Red Card to Child Labour: Fair Play for Children, Decent Work for Adults,” the organisation emphasised that protecting children and ensuring living incomes for families must go hand in hand. In recent years, cooperation between government, companies, civil society, and communities has led to important progress, including stronger child protection measures, improved access to education, and increased awareness in cocoa-growing areas. COCOBOD is focusing on training, education support, traceability systems, and income enhancement programmes for cocoa farmers. Considering emerging sustainability requirements such as the EUDR, COCOBOD also reiterated its commitment to further strengthening environmental, social, and human rights standards in the sector.

[Read the press release](#)

Ghana stabilises cocoa prices despite falling global market prices

Accra, 12 June 2026

The Ghanaian government is keeping the producer price for cocoa unchanged during the 2025/26 mid-crop season, despite declining world market prices. As announced by the Cocoa Marketing Board (COCOBOD), procurement of the new harvest will begin on 18 June 2026. Cocoa farmers will continue to receive 2,587 GH¢ per 64-kg bag or 41,392 GH¢ per tonne. The decision aims to protect farmers’ incomes and livelihoods

by providing stability amid volatile market conditions. Maintaining price levels is also intended to strengthen confidence in the sector and ensure a smooth start to the new harvest season.

[Read the press release](#)

Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire join forces against cocoa swollen shoot virus disease

Abidjan, 17 April 2026

The spread of Cocoa Swollen Shoot Virus Disease (CSSVD) is increasingly threatening cocoa harvests in West Africa. To jointly address this challenge, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire have adopted a regional action plan under the Côte d'Ivoire–Ghana Cocoa Initiative (CIGCI). At a workshop in Abidjan supported by the FAO and the EU, representatives from government, research institutions, the private sector, and development cooperation agreed on a shared strategy for the period 2026 to 2031. The focus is on rehabilitating affected farms, updating disease mapping, raising awareness among cocoa farmers, strengthening monitoring systems, and advancing joint research on disease-resistant cocoa varieties. The overall goal is to contain the spread of the disease and to safeguard productivity and livelihoods for millions of cocoa farmers in the region in the long term.

[Read the press release](#)

Ghana und Côte d'Ivoire: COCOBOD calls for a stronger cocoa alliance

Abidjan, 15 June 2026

At a meeting of the Côte d'Ivoire–Ghana Cocoa Initiative (CIGCI), the Director of the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), Dr Randy Abbey, called for greater trust, transparency, and closer cooperation between the world's two largest cocoa producers. Together, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire account for more than 60% of global cocoa production, giving them significant influence over the global market. Dr Abbey stressed that a coordinated approach, particularly in pricing policies, is necessary to strengthen bargaining power, improve cocoa farmers' incomes, and ensure sector stability. He warned that fragmented approaches weaken the position of producers.

[Read the article](#)

Ghana und Côte d'Ivoire push for a joint cocoa pricing strategy

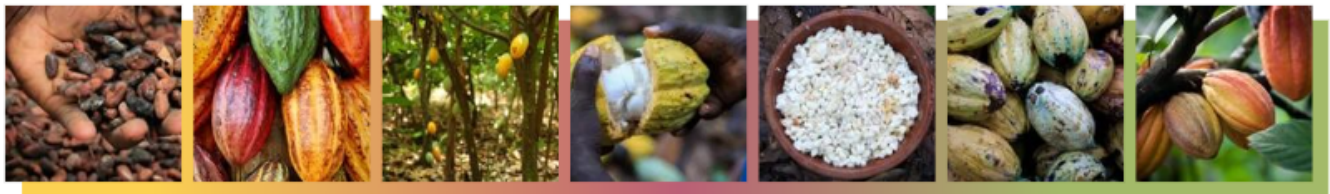
Accra, 15 June 2026

Ghana's Finance Minister, Dr Cassiel Ato Forson, has called for stronger coordination of cocoa prices between Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. At a meeting of the Côte d'Ivoire–Ghana Cocoa Initiative (CIGCI) in Abidjan, he stressed that price differences between the two countries encourage cross-border cocoa smuggling and threaten farmers' incomes. Harmonising producer prices is intended to curb illegal trade flows and strengthen cooperation between the world's two largest cocoa-producing countries. Together, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire account for more than 60% of global cocoa production and therefore hold significant influence over the world market. Forson also announced further measures to protect cocoa-growing areas from illegal mining. The initiative underscores both countries' shared goal of strengthening sector sustainability and improving prospects for cocoa farmers.

Joint Declaration of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana on the cocoa economy

Abidjan, 17 June 2026

At the Côte d'Ivoire–Ghana High-Level Summit on 16 June 2026 in Abidjan, Presidents Alassane Ouattara and John Dramani Mahama reaffirmed their commitment to a sustainable cocoa economy. The focus is on fair incomes for cocoa farmers and a stronger role for producing countries in governance and value creation. Agreements were reached on harmonising producer prices, premiums, and seasonal calendars, as well as on measures to stabilise the market. Further priorities include combating Cocoa Swollen Shoot Virus Disease, expanding local processing, promoting regional consumption, and extending the Côte d'Ivoire–Ghana Cocoa Initiative to additional African countries. The Abidjan Declaration of 2018 continues to serve as the foundation for cooperation.

[Read the press release](#)

Cooperation at European level

ISCO Board Chair Meeting

Online, 23 June 2026

On 23 June, the Board Chairs of the European cocoa platforms (**ISCOs**) met online to jointly discuss priorities and resources for **ISCO** cooperation. The discussion was based on the work plan for the implementation of the ISCO 2.0 process submitted by the **ISCO** Secretariats. The Board Chairs acknowledged that most **ISCO** Secretariats have very limited resources and that cooperation should therefore be further streamlined and focused. There was consensus that key areas of cooperation should include accountability and monitoring, as well as the implementation of **ISCO** principles for sustainable procurement practices. A follow-up meeting is planned for after the publication of the ISCO Monitoring Brief towards the end of the year.

FRISCO

Paris, 1 April 2026

This spring, **FRISCO** reached an important milestone by publishing two significant communications. First, the Mabi-Yaya project was officially presented through a [press release](#), formalising the partnership and reaffirming **FRISCO**'s commitment to deforestation-free cocoa and sustainable local development in the Mé region of Côte d'Ivoire.

Second, **FRISCO** published its [2025 Scorecard](#) based on 2024 data. It provides a consolidated overview of member progress as well as key indicators. The aim of the Scorecard is to strengthen transparency and enable regular monitoring of developments and improvements within the membership. In parallel, **FRISCO** continues its work on the governance structures of its new association. Roles, decision-making processes, and coordination mechanisms are currently being defined and formalised to best support the initiative's long-term goals and ambitions.

Bern, April until May 2026

In April, **SWISSCO** and the Swiss Sustainable Coffee Platform (SSCP) welcomed Orlando Mejia as an advisor for Central America and global specialist in Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL). The Honduran-born expert brings extensive experience in MEL, agricultural value chains, and data-driven decision-making, thereby strengthening the platforms' capacity for evidence-based action and learning.

On 28 April 2026, **SWISSCO** supported the launch of Ghana's National Compendium of Indicators on Child Labour in Accra. Co-financed by the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) through SWISSCO and developed with partners such as the International Cocoa Initiative and UNICEF, the compendium provides a shared framework for collecting and using child labour data and strengthens Ghana's national monitoring system.

On 6 May 2026, **SWISSCO** and SSCP hosted a joint event in Zurich on innovative financing approaches for sustainable cocoa and coffee value chains. Experts from investment, entrepreneurship, supplier development, and social finance sectors came together to discuss emerging models.

On 8 May 2026, the two platforms organised their first joint Community of Practice for Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL CoP). Around 40 participants exchanged experiences on measuring progress towards living incomes and discussed the development of a shared MEL framework aligned with the Roadmap 2030.

On 13 May 2026, **SWISSCO** supported the first thematic session of the Gender Equity Learning and Innovation Network (GENLIN). The session focused on practical approaches to building internal structures and strategies to advance gender equality in cocoa and coffee supply chains.

On 19 May 2026, SWISSCO promoted a webinar on outcome-based finance, organised by Swisscontact and the Shamba Centre for Food & Climate. The event explored innovative financing models in which funding is linked to independently verified sustainability outcomes and presented practical examples from the Ghanaian cocoa sector.

[SWISSCO Newsletter](#)

DISCO Reviews Five Years of Partnership

Utrecht, 10 June 2026

On the occasion of **DISCO's** fifth anniversary, IDH (The Sustainable Trade Initiative) has commissioned an independent evaluation of the initiative to assess its progress to date and further develop its strategic direction towards 2030. The study is being carried out by the Amsterdam-based consultancy Partners for Innovation. It analyses how effectively **DISCO's** structures and joint actions have contributed to its core objectives: securing a living income for cocoa farming households, ending deforestation, and eliminating child labour. This is not a performance audit, but a forward-looking learning and reflection process. The evaluation is based on document analysis, interviews with around twelve key stakeholders, and a broader survey among members. The findings will first be validated with **DISCO's** Steering Committee and then consolidated into a final report and management summary, expected to be published in the third or fourth quarter of 2026. The aim is to provide **DISCO** with a clear, evidence-based foundation for its next development phase.



Seventh Edition of the Chocolate Scorecard

Sydney, 7 May 2026

The 7th edition of the Chocolate Scorecard by Be Slavery Free evaluates 49 major chocolate companies that collectively source around 90% of global cocoa. The findings continue to highlight significant structural problems across the supply chain. 94% of companies report cases of child labour within their supply chains, indicating that while monitoring systems have expanded, prevention efforts are lagging behind. The study also points to persistent income gaps in cocoa farming, which have barely narrowed despite many companies having sustainability strategies in place. While transparency and data collection are improving, structural changes in procurement systems remain limited.

[Read the press release](#)

Buyer Mission to Sierra Leone exploring new sourcing opportunities and partnerships in the cocoa sector

Bonn, 25 June 2026

From 7 to 14 November 2026, GIZ, together with development agency [Sequa](#), is organising a one-week trip to the West African country for cocoa buyers. The target group includes chocolate and confectionery producers who are considering sourcing raw materials directly from cocoa producers and establishing new B2B connections in the cocoa sector. The programme includes visits to selected cooperatives that are export-ready. Further details can already be requested from [Florina Kastrati](#) (Sequa).



New studies and reports

Papaya Trees Can Make Cocoa Cultivation More Sustainable

Würzburg, 23 April 2026

A new study from the University of Würzburg shows that leafcutter ants in cocoa farming systems can be understood not only as pests, but also as important components of the ecosystem. While ants can cause significant damage to cocoa trees near their nests, their overall impact on yields is often lower than commonly assumed. A key finding is that the insects strongly prefer plants such as papaya, citrus, or capirona over cocoa. This opens new opportunities for biodiversity-friendly agroforestry systems. Strategic planting of papaya trees, for example, could “divert” ants away from cocoa trees and help reduce damage. The researchers also highlight the importance of intact forest areas surrounding cocoa-growing regions. These areas support natural predators of ants and help regulate their activity. Overall, the findings underline the potential of diversified agroforestry systems for more productive and resilient cocoa farming.

[Read the study](#)

Effective Stakeholder Engagement: A practical guide for companies in the Agrifood Sector

Oxford, 20 May 2026

Oxfam has published a briefing paper designed to support companies in the agrifood sector in strengthening effective stakeholder engagement as part of their human rights and environmental due diligence responsibilities. In complex and often opaque agricultural supply chains, engaging different stakeholders is both challenging and essential. It improves risk identification, strengthens effective mitigation measures, and supports the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), the OECD Guidelines, and the forthcoming EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD).

[Read the Briefing Paper](#)

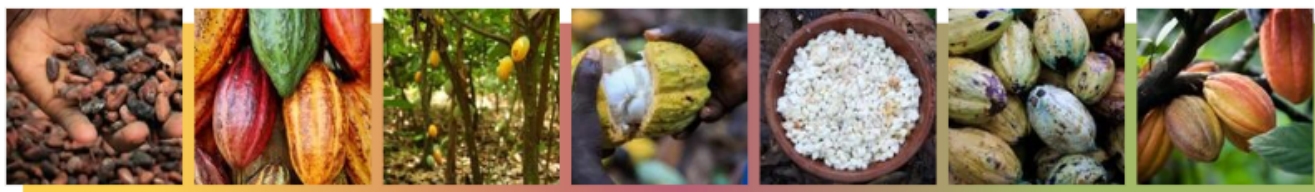
New Study: Closing the income gap for cocoa producers in Cameroon

Luxembourg, 18 June 2026

A new study by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on living incomes in Cameroon's cocoa sector shows that 68% of cocoa farmers earn incomes below the reference value for a living income. The study identifies low productivity and low producer prices as the main drivers of this income gap. It estimates that a minimum price of 3,567 CFA francs (~6,19 USD) per kilogram of cocoa would be required to close the gap. In addition, the study recommends measures to increase productivity, improve agricultural practices, and diversify income sources within and beyond agriculture. The findings are intended to support policymakers and other stakeholders in improving the livelihoods of cocoa farmers and strengthening the long-term economic viability of the sector. The study, commissioned under the EU Sustainable Cocoa Initiative (SCI), is based on data collected in March and April 2024.

[Read the study](#)

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.

Cargill promotes certified cocoa in Indonesia through farmer premiums

Jakarta, 22. April 2026

Cargill has expanded its certified cocoa farming programme in Indonesia and paid out approximately 38.8 billion Indonesian rupiah (~USD 2.16 million USD) in premiums to more than 7,800 cocoa farmers participating in the **Rainforest Alliance** certification scheme.

The premiums supplement income from cocoa sales and are linked to compliance with recognised sustainability standards. In addition to financial incentives, **Cargill** supports farmers through training,

technical assistance, and traceability systems. The aim is to increase yields and quality, improve market access, and promote a more transparent and resilient cocoa supply chain in Indonesia.

[Read the report](#)

COCOBOD und KOA Impact strengthen innovation in the cocoa sector

Achiase, 22 April 2026

How can the full potential of the cocoa fruit be utilised? This question was at the centre of a visit by COCOBOD CEO Dr. Randy Abbey and Swiss Ambassador Simone Giger to **KOA** Impact in Ghana. The focus was on processing cocoa fruit pulp into cocoa juice as an additional income source for producers. The discussion also covered the potential to scale the initiative to other growing regions, as well as the promotion of sustainable farming practices and agroforestry systems.

[Read the article](#)

ICI Guidance for companies: Addressing forced labour in the cocoa supply chain

Chatelaine, 18 May 2026

Tackling forced labour risks in the cocoa sector requires coordinated action across multiple stakeholders, including companies, governments, civil society, and producers. This document provides practical guidance for cocoa and chocolate companies on addressing these risks in cocoa-growing communities, through both individual efforts and collective, area-based approaches.

[Read the Guidelines](#)

ICI Implementation Guide: Setting up community-based grievance mechanisms in cocoa communities

Chatelaine, 21 May 2026

Grievance mechanisms enable individuals to raise complaints about potential human and labour rights abuses in cocoa production, such as withheld wages or unfair working conditions. This guide provides practical, step-by-step guidance on establishing community-based mechanisms to address forced labour risks, drawing on **International Cocoa Initiative's (ICI)** experience in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana.

[Read the implementation guide](#)

ICI Guidelines for grievance management

Chatelaine, 21 May 2026

This practical guide provides step-by-step guidance on managing grievances through community-based grievance mechanisms. Based on the International Cocoa Initiative's (ICI) experience in addressing forced labour risks in cocoa-growing communities in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, it supports stakeholders involved in establishing and operating these mechanisms. The guide explains grievance handling processes and helps implementing partners and grievance committee members manage cases effectively and consistently.

[Read the Guidelines](#)

Cologne Chocolate Museum Re-Certified for ESD (Education for Sustainable Development)

Dortmund, 21 May 2026

On 21 May 2026, 25 Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) certified institutions were honoured at the DASA in Dortmund. The **Chocolate Museum Cologne** was the only institution to receive its second re-certification. Particular recognition was given to its early certification in 2018 and its newly designed permanent exhibition on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.



Photo © Rupert Oberhäuser / NUA

Mars and ofi join forces to promote climate-neutral cocoa in Ecuador

Ecuador, 14 April 2026

Mars and **ofi** have launched a five-year strategic partnership in Ecuador (2025–2029) to scale regenerative agriculture in the cocoa sector and strengthen the long-term resilience of the supply chain. The initiative is aligned with the shared goal of achieving net zero emissions by 2050 as well as Science Based Targets (SBTi). In the first phase, more than 960 producers across the regions of El Oro, Esmeraldas, Guayas, Los Ríos,



Photo © Mars / ofi

Manabí, and Santo Domingo will be supported in transitioning over 9,000 hectares to regenerative practices. These include agroforestry systems, biochar use, crop residue management, and climate-friendly fertilisers. The aim is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase carbon sequestration, improve soil health, and enhance yields. At the same time, the initiative seeks to strengthen producer incomes and reduce barriers to adopting sustainable practices. The programme builds on a long-standing collaboration between **Mars** and **ofi** in Ecuador, incorporating findings from the BMZ-co-funded project “Low Carbon Agriculture For Smallholder Cocoa Farmers In Ecuador” under the **GIZ** Global Programme Sustainable Agricultural Supply Chains.

ECOTOP: Training and practical implementation of dynamic agroforestry systems in Ghana

Ghana, June 2026

ECOTOP is strengthening the practical implementation of Dynamic Agroforestry (DAF) systems in Ghana through recent field activities carried out under the Sankofa 2.0 and **KOA** partnerships.



Photo © ECOTOP



Photo © ECOTOP

In June 2026, **ECOTOP** trained a total of 80 youth extension workers, Internal Control Officers (ICOs), and supervisors in the principles of Dynamic Agroforestry, participatory training methods, and the practical establishment of agroforestry systems. Two DAF systems were established in Dadiesoaba. The training focused on promoting high species diversity, natural succession processes, biomass cycling, vertical vegetation stratification,

the avoidance of slash-and-burn practices, and reducing dependence on external agricultural inputs. A complementary field mission conducted under the **KOA** partnership in May 2026 focused on the monitoring, management, and further development of so-called DAF islands. Particular emphasis was placed on the importance of sound biomass management, the active participation of farmers, and the availability of suitable planting material. Together, these activities contribute to more resilient cocoa landscapes, strengthened local training capacity, and the practical promotion of biodiversity-friendly production systems.

[Read the article](#)

Nestlé Income Accelerator: Progress Overview

Frankfurt am Main, 16 June 2026

The **Nestlé Income Accelerator** shows measurable impact according to an independent **report by KIT**: higher yields and a significantly increased number of economically empowered women. Overall, participating households' incomes increased by 190%, primarily driven by substantially higher revenues. The programme has been scaled over the years to reach around 45,000 cocoa-farming families today. A new development is strengthened cross-industry collaboration through the TogetherCocoa Foundation. The foundation aims to enhance cooperation to close income gaps and build more resilient supply chains, building on **Nestlé's** cocoa programmes. The **2025 Non-Financial Statement** and the **2025 Impact Report** are available for further reference.

[More information](#)

Stiftung Warentest recommends Fairtrade



Photo © Fairtrade e.V.

Cologne, 29 April 2026

In a recent test on sustainability labels for food products, Stiftung Warentest ranked **Fairtrade** among the best certification schemes. The label was particularly praised for its high level of credibility and transparency: it achieved "good" ratings across all assessed criteria and even a "very good" rating for transparency. The test highlights how strong standards, independent audits, and clearly defined criteria can provide consumers with reliable guidance when making purchasing decisions.

[Read the report](#)

New Fairtrade Reference Prices for Cocoa Published

Cologne, 1 May 2026

Fairtrade International has published new reference prices for living incomes for cocoa from Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. The voluntary Living Income Reference Prices will apply from the 2026 harvest season in autumn. Specifically, they are set at 3.11 US dollars per kilogram of cocoa in Côte d'Ivoire and 3.95 US dollars per kilogram in Ghana. They indicate the price cocoa farmers need to earn from their production to achieve a living income.

[Read the report](#)



Photo © Fairtrade e.V.



Photo © Fairtrade e.V.

[Read the annual report](#)

Fairtrade-Cocoa reaches new record

Cologne, 5 May 2026

Fair wins, even in a challenging market environment: While the overall chocolate confectionery market declined in 2025, sales of **Fairtrade** cocoa in Germany rose by around 3.5% to 92,071 tonnes. Revenue reached a new record of 1.06 billion euros. **Fairtrade** premiums totalling 19.3 million euros were paid to cocoa farmers and their organisations. With increased minimum prices and its Living Income programme, Fairtrade is setting benchmarks for living incomes in the sector.

Fairtrade Awards 2026

Berlin, 18 June 2026

At the 2026 **Fairtrade** Awards, companies, projects and committed initiatives working towards fair trade were honoured for the tenth time. Across seven categories, **Fairtrade** Germany recognised outstanding contributions ranging from innovative products and project partnerships to civil society engagement. The award ceremony took place on 18 June 2026 at the "Wintergarten" venue in Berlin.

[More information](#)

Consultation on the further development of Fairtrade standards launched

Cologne, 26 June 2026

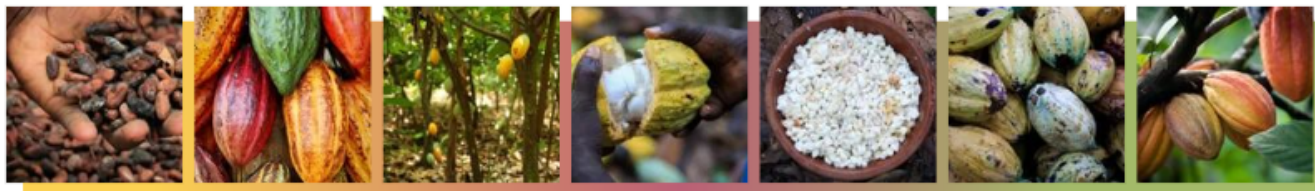
Fairtrade is revising its **standards** to better address current challenges such as climate change, human rights, and rising production costs. The focus is on a risk-based approach, the use of the **Fairtrade Risk Map** and self-assessments, as well as stronger management and due diligence systems. As part of a public consultation, producer organizations and partner companies can share their experiences and feedback. The new standards are scheduled to be published in 2027 and implemented from 2028 onwards. View the [recording here](#).

Fairtrade publishes EUDR information materials

Cologne, June 2026

Within the EU-funded LIFE FairTHRIVE programme, **Fairtrade** has developed practical, sector-specific learning modules to support companies in preparing for the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). The materials translate complex regulatory requirements into clear, actionable steps and are aimed in particular at small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

[More information](#)



Events

Note: Some event titles are linked for further information.



Save the date
GISCO Webinar on
Agroforestry in Cocoa
Cultivation

23 September 2026

Online

GISCO



WG Communication

29 September 2026

Online

GISCO

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

Forum Nachhaltiger Kakao e.V.

c/o Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
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