SUCDEN

2023-2024

Cocoa and Forests Initiative

PROGRESS REPORT AND ACTION PLAN

Cocoa & Forests Initiative:
Collective Action to End Cocoa-Related Deforestation

The governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana and 35 leading cocoa and chocolate companies, representing 85% of global cocoa usage, joined together in the Cocoa & Forests Initiative to help end deforestation and restore forest areas. Their combined actions play a crucial role in protecting and restoring biodiversity, sequestering carbon stocks in West African forests, and addressing climate change in line with the Paris Climate Agreement. The Cocoa & Forests Initiative contributes to Sustainable Development Goal 13 (Climate Action) and 15 (Life on Land).

The Cocoa & Forests Initiative is a public private partnership based on frameworks for action (Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana) and action plans for the private sector (Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana) and public sector (Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana) that spell out commitments to:

- protect and restore forests,
- promote sustainable cocoa production and farmers' livelihoods,
- engage communities and boost social inclusion.

To learn more, follow #CocoaAndForests on social media, or visit Cocoa & Forests Initiative.



Deforestation of tropical rainforests is a major issue in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, which together produce nearly two-thirds of the world's supply of cocoa, the main ingredient in chocolate. According to Global Forest Watch, between 2002 and 2023, Côte d'Ivoire lost 28% and Ghana 13% of their humid primary forest, with a large portion of this loss attributable to cocoa farming expansion.

Cocoa provides crucial income to communities in rural West Africa, but farmers are too often faced with poverty. Poverty is one of the causes of deforestation. Accelerating a transition to sustainable livelihoods is essential for farmers' economic security and a healthy planet

Sucden's Achievements: 23/24 Season

Collaborative multi-stakeholder initiatives can help drive impact to advance the global climate agenda, including forest protection, deforestation mitigation, carbon emission reduction, support for vulnerable communities, and farmer resilience building. The Cocoa and Forests Initiative stands as a pivotal platform for industry leaders such as Sucden to actively contribute towards these essential objectives. Throughout 2023-24, Sucden continued its commitments, aligning efforts with the pillars of the Cocoa and Forests Initiative and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Within the '**Protect and Restore Forests**' pillar, Sucden:

- Expanded **polygon mapping** cocoa farms to better monitor for deforestation risk
- Supported the establishment of **community nurseries**
- Increased seedling distribution for **agroforestry** development
- Grew off-farm **restoration** efforts
- Pursued efforts to support farmers secure **land certificates**

Within the '**Promote Sustainable Cocoa Production and Farmers**' Livelihoods' pillar, Sucden:

- Reached a greater number of farmers through **Good Agricultural Practices** training than in previous seasons
- Built on lessons learned and further developed direct farmer **coaching** efforts
- Expanded the **Climate Smart Agriculture training** to include regenerative agriculture techniques

Within the '**Engage Communities and Boost Social Inclusion**' pillar, Sucden:

- Extended the reach of **Village Savings and Loans Associations** to support more women
- Increased participation in **Income Generating Activities**
- Trained a greater number of women on **business practices and financial literacy** than in previous seasons

COTE D'IVOIRE

Forest Protection and Restoration

Farm Mapping and Deforestation Risk Assessment

In our commitment to provide trustworthy cocoa to our clients, we maintain rigorous traceability practices, tracking all cocoa from the farm to the final client. In 2024, we expanded our efforts, supporting the mapping and verification of a total of 19,813 farmers in Côte d'Ivoire. Sucden also continued deforestation risk assessments by verifying polygon quality and ensuring no overlap or proximity with protected areas. In total, we assessed 154,307 hectares in Cote d'Ivoire and 47,483 hectares in Ghana during the 23/24 season. With this information, Sucden is able to reduce the risk of encroachment of farms into primary forests and High Carbon Stock and High Conservation Value areas, contributing to the prevention of illegal deforestation and to the protection of biodiversity.

Off-Farm Restoration

In the third year of our Climate and Restoration Project, Sucden made significant strides towards advancing our impact in five cooperatives. Under the guidance of Sucden's Forest Protection Officer, our implementation partner spearheaded the execution of the second wave of agroforestry and restoration projects in five regions. For the restoration component of the project, **56,125 seedlings were planted on 85 hectares owned by 15 community members**, at a density of 660 trees per hectare. The distribution of Payment for Environmental Services for individuals who participated in the project last year was completed.

Income generating activities funded by these payments began, supporting the cultivation of additional crops such as cassava, maize, and other garden crops. Due to planting efforts in 2022 and 2023, an estimated **8,666 metric tons of CO_2 have been removed from the atmosphere** in the past year. The restoration initiative encompasses a community development facet. Sucden disburses Payment for Environmental Services based on tree survival, with a portion allocated to the community. These funds are utilized to finance gender-sensitive forest restoration and protection initiatives, including the establishment of tree nurseries managed by women's groups and distribution schemes for clean cookstoves. In total, 1,162 participants benefited from the payments.

COTE D'IVOIRE

Forest Protection and Restoration

Agroforestry

In our ongoing commitment to sustainable development, Sucden continues to make significant strides in promoting agroforestry and reforestation initiatives in Cote d'Ivoire. In partnership with our local expert implementer, Sucden has contributed to the establishment of **9,795 hectares of agroforestry**. In total, we distributed over 381,316 multipurpose trees to support 8,845 farmers in applying agroforestry. After farmers received their seedlings, one of our agroforestry partners provided on-farm planting assistance to train farmers on best practice.

COTE D'IVOIRE

Forest Protection and Restoration Story

Koffi Daniel, a 47-year-old cocoa farmer from Topkakro, Côte d'Ivoire, has spent over two decades cultivating cocoa on his 2.5-hectare farm. He delivers his harvest to Cocoofem, a local cooperative in Bouaflé, to support his wife and six children. However, in recent years, Koffi has struggled with declining yields, leaving him uncertain about his farm's future. "The soil has become dry because of the low rains, and the cocoa trees are drying out because of the high heat" Koffi explains. "We are starting to feel that our farming efforts are in vain".

His fears were confirmed when Sucden organized awareness sessions at Cocoofem. Through these sessions, Koffi learned that the absence of shade trees on his farm was accelerating soil degradation and harming his cocoa trees. Determined to take action, Koffi joined an agroforestry project. As part of the initiative, he received 30 shade trees. Brigadiers planted the trees across one hectare of his land and provided ongoing supervision and agricultural advice to help Koffi nurture the new trees alongside his cocoa crops.

Koffi reports that the presence of field agents and supervision has allowed him to properly monitor the trees planted in his field and to get agricultural advice. This support has given him hope. ***"I am reassured and convinced that in the years to come, my field will be able to survive and even produce sustainably,"*** he says. For Koffi, the impact goes beyond short-term relief—it represents a long-term solution. The newly planted trees are helping to restore soil fertility, regulate temperature, and create a more resilient environment for his cocoa farm. Koffi's story is just one example of how agroforestry initiatives are transforming cocoa farming communities. By integrating trees into their fields, farmers are not only improving productivity but also contributing to the broader goal of forest protection and restoration.

Koffi Daniel

COTE D'IVOIRE

Sustainable Production and Farmers Livelihoods

Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) Training and Farmer's Coaching

Sucden's farmer training program is robust and multifaceted. In addition to farmer field schools, we collaborate closely with selected farmers who express interest in enhancing their farms and crafting farm rehabilitation plans. This effort is facilitated through Adoption Observation work conducted by trained farmer coaches, who use specialized software to track 21 key farm indicators regularly. These observations showcase progress to the farmers, aiding in farm care and productivity enhancement.

Integrated pest management and agrochemical training are integral parts of our training sessions. These approaches can lead to better insect, cocoa disease, and weed management while reducing pesticide usage. Through collaborative efforts between farmers and coaches, tailored actions for improvement are identified, culminating in the creation and execution of personalized, long-term farm improvement plans.

Throughout the 23/24 season, our collaboration with local partners continued in training farmers to embrace sustainable agricultural practices. Working hand in hand, we conducted Farmer Field Schools (FFS) as group sessions, reaching 33,329 farmers, 3,000 more farmers than last year. Additionally, tailored individual coaching was provided through farm development plans. The training sessions encompassed educating farmers on the ramifications of climate change on cocoa production. 11,738 farmers received training specifically on enhancing climate resilience and reducing emissions on their farms.

To adopt new practices for current climate conditions, trainers coached me through the identification of problems in my field and helped me put their agricultural advice into practice."

- Oulai Mester, one-on-one coaching participant

Oulai Mester

COTE D'IVOIRE

Social Inclusion and Community Engagement

Women's Empowerment and Income Generating Activities

In 2024, our dedication to empowering women in cocoa-growing communities in Côte d'Ivoire continued through collaborative efforts with experts to devise and execute projects aimed at bolstering women's financial and entrepreneurial capabilities. These projects facilitate the development and expansion of income-generating activities (IGAs) among women.

Furthermore, these IGAs are interconnected with Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs), enabling women to reinvest in their enterprises. VSLAs, self-managed groups pooling savings, provide members with access to loans for various purposes such as starting businesses or covering educational expenses. Through our initiatives and investments in women's empowerment, we facilitated the establishment of **185 VSLAs with 3,579 members**. These VSLAs catalyzed the launch of new income-generating activities, benefiting 790 individuals by diversifying their sources of income.

COTE D'IVOIRE

Social Inclusion and Community Engagement Story

Bado Jacques

Bado Jacques, a 45-year-old cocoa farmer from Belle-Ville, Côte d'Ivoire, has dedicated the past 15 years to cultivating cocoa on his 2.5-hectare farm. He delivers his harvest to the CAPEZ cooperative in ZOUKOUGBEU to support his wife and five children. However, in recent years, he has noticed a decline in his farm's productivity.

"The cocoa trees are dying because of the sun and the soil, which has become poor and dry." Bado explains. Yet, something caught his attention: "I noticed that the cocoa trees next to or under the trees are doing well. I made the same observation in my neighbor's fields who have trees on their farms." This realization led Bado to suspect that the loss of trees and forests was contributing to the decline of his cocoa farm. He had frequently heard about agroforestry on television, the radio, and during awareness sessions—learning that it is a practice encouraged by the government and the Coffee-Cocoa Council to help farmers maintain cocoa production while integrating trees into their fields. This year, he decided to take action and implement agroforestry himself.

Through a project led by Sucden in his cooperative, Bado's beliefs were confirmed: trees provide shade for cocoa plants, protect the soil, and create more sustainable conditions for farming. As part of the initiative, he received 25 trees to plant across one hectare of his farm. Brigadiers planted the trees and provided guidance on their care. ***"With the monitoring they do and my commitment to preserving the trees, I am convinced that within 3 years, the conditions of my field will improve,"*** he says.

The strong involvement of local authorities—including the Sub-Prefects, Water and Forests Department, and village leaders—gave Bado confidence in the project's credibility and long-term success. Bado made the decision to donate part of his land to the project for reforestation, where 660 trees per hectare were planted to restore degraded land. "I donated this land because I now know the importance of forests, and I want to contribute to restoring them," Bado shares. "This project offers me the opportunity to carry out and maintain reforestation and get issued a certificate for free to secure the land." He also reports that by supporting reforestation on his land and planting trees in his fields, he receives payments that help him support his farm and family.

GHANA

Forest Protection and Restoration

Farm Mapping and Deforestation Risk Assessment

As part of our efforts to provide trustworthy cocoa to our clients, we continued to polygon map cocoa farmers in our direct supply chain from the farm level to the client, with a total of 41,536 cocoa plots mapped in 2024. To ensure quality, we verify the accuracy of farm polygons twice.

Sucden compares these plots to maps of Protected Areas to assess deforestation risk by ensuring no overlaps with or encroachment on these protected areas. Sucden assessed 47,483 hectares in 2024 for deforestation risk by analyzing the plot boundaries with Protected Areas, 50% more than in 2023. With this information, Sucden is better able to reduce the risk of encroachment of farms into primary forests and High Carbon Stock and High Conservation Value areas, helping prevent illegal deforestation and protect biodiversity.

"My farm is now home to a variety of shade trees that not only protect the cocoa plants from the scorching heat but also hold future value"

- Kwabena Osei, agroforestry participant

Agroforestry

In Ghana, we continued to facilitate the distribution of multi-purpose tree seedlings to participating farmers for on-farm planting. These seedlings not only offer shade for other plants but also represent a potential additional income stream, depending on the specific tree species involved. Sucden facilitated the distribution of 95,588 multi-purpose tree seedlings in 2024 to establish 13,189 hectares of cocoa agroforestry. A total of 4,186 farmers were beneficiaries of this initiative, receiving six species of shade trees, encompassing varieties of timber and fruit trees. These farmers have been provided with the technical assistance needed to adopt and expand agroforestry in their fields.

Kwabena Osei

GHANA

Sustainable Production and Farmers Livelihoods

Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) Training and Farmer's Coaching

In 2024, our collaborations with Cocoa Abraboba (CCA), Kuapa Kokoo (KKFU), Fludor, Federated Commodities, and Adikanfo were expanded to provide comprehensive training on GAP to 22,717 program farmers. This training's objective was to improve farm productivity per hectare and to advocate for environmentally sustainable farming techniques. Our training sessions, facilitated through Farmer Field Schools, covered a diverse range of topics essential for sustainable cocoa farming. Farmers also received personalized coaching services, focusing on farm diagnostics and adoption observations at the plot level, which aimed to provide tailored support to boost farm production. Training sessions were also provided to teach farmers about the ramifications of climate change on cocoa production. 7,100 farmers received training on specifically enhancing climate resilience and reducing emissions on their farms. To further bolster farmer incomes through increased productivity, strategic partnerships with local partners were instrumental in distributing cocoa seedlings to program participants. Through our partners, Sucden facilitated the successful distribution of a total of 8,000 cocoa seedlings.

GHANA

Social Inclusion and Community Engagement

Women's Empowerment and Income Generating Activities

Our focus on women's empowerment and community support continued in 2024. Building upon previous efforts, training on IGAs conducted through KKFU highlighted the challenge of limited access to finances needed to launch new ventures. To address this, our four-year VSLA initiatives with Solidaridad continued, establishing **34 VSLAs** across cocoa-growing communities. These community-based finance mechanisms facilitated access to funds for purchasing farm inputs or initiating IGAs, **supporting 466 members** in Ghana. Over 60% of IGA participants were female, giving them opportunities to gain empowerment and new income sources. Overall, 785 women were able to take part in various women's empowerment projects and activities. Additionally, **170 young adults and children** participated in youth focused projects and activities, targeted to individuals between 15-35 years old.

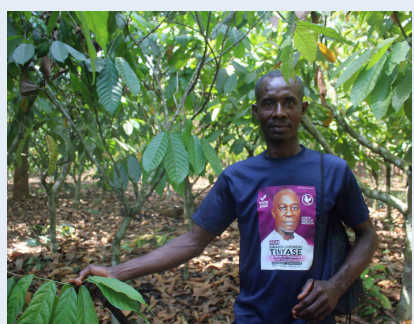
GHANA

Social Inclusion and Community Engagement Story

Kwame Ofori lives in Amoaku, a community in the Eastern region of Ghana. He is a 53-year-old man, married with two daughters and two sons and a 2.5 acre cocoa farm. Kwame has reported changes in the weather and his crop, saying "we are currently in the dry season, so we can see that there are no flowers or cocoa pods developed on the farm." Kwame recently learned about environmental conservation through agroforestry and climate smart training provided in his cooperative. "I know deforestation is cutting down trees without permission, and I understand that deforestation and related misuse of our lands can worsen the already challenging climate situation. Then again, I have always understood the importance of protecting my land," he says.

His farm is home to naturally grown shade trees, including mahogany and wawa, which provide relief for the cocoa trees and even for Kwame during hot afternoons. Managing the farm is quite laborious and capital intensive, so Kwame has considered cutting down some of his shade trees to help with financing farms. However, his shade trees are sacred, so he keeps them on his farm. He says, ***"I was happy to find out that the teachings on good environmental practices align with my beliefs.*** It is good that we are having all these discussions on conserving our environment, especially involving young people. I am a custodian of my father's legacy, standing firm against the forces of climate change and deforestation, hoping my children and other young people will follow suit."

"We need to ensure that the next generation understands the value of our forests and farms." - Kwame Ofori, agroforestry and training participant



Kwame Ofori

Annex 1. Côte d'Ivoire
Progress Report Tracking Table 2023– 2024

Description	Target (Current reporting year)	# Through direct investment (Current reporting year)	# On behalf of clients (Current reporting year)	# Through direct investment (Since 2023)	# Through direct investment (Since 2018)
FOREST PROTECTION AND RESTORATION					
# of farms mapped in direct supply chain: Total Active	1,750	10,173	52,285		
# of hectares in the direct supply chain with deforestation risk assessments completed	0	25,477	128,830		
# metric tons of directly sourced cocoa traceable from the farm to the first purchase point (target is 100%)		6,674	46,317		
# hectares restored in Forest Reserve / Forêts Classée	0	24	0	24	24
# trees registered	0	0	56,125		15,000
# of farmers with land tenure agreements/documentation obtained via company support	0	0	4		1,200
restoration	450	4,832	13,776		
# Individuals receiving incentives to protect and restore forests and / or adopt agroforestry (e.g., PES): New	450	567	3,295	2,435	3,751
# Individuals receiving incentives to protect and restore forests and / or adopt agroforestry (e.g., PES): Total Active	450	683	6,161		
# farmers applying agroforestry: New		2,448	6,397		
# farmers applying agroforestry: Total Active		2,966	7,419		
# farmers provided with technical assistance to adopt and expand agroforestry	950	3,061	7,257		
# multi-purpose trees distributed for on-farm planting	23,000	109,762	271,554	222,722	405,463
# hectares cocoa agroforestry: New	950	3,005	6,790	6,421	10,422
# hectares cocoa agroforestry: Total Active		3,704	7,949		
# of trees distributed for off-farm planting	0	38,334	33,675	82,987	118,213
# hectares of forest area restored off-reserve / in rural zone	0	33	51	99	150
# farmers provided with technical assistance to be more resilient to climate change and reduce and remove carbon emissions on farm (e.g., CSC)	10	1,340	10,398		
# of farmers trained in Modified Taungya System (MTS)					
$ contributed to fund		0	0		
SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AND FARMERS' LIVELIHOOD					
# improved cocoa seedlings distributed to farmers					
# farmers provided with technical assistance (based on plans) to professionalize & optimize cocoa farming practices	10	7,462	25,867		
# individuals participating in additional Income Generating Activities (IGA's)		282	508		
# individuals provided with technical assistance (based on plans) to increase income from non-cocoa sources / IGA's	240	158	2,731		
# Individuals provided with technical assistance to save money and access finance	600	665	3,434		
# of members of VSLA groups in the current year	600	700	2,879		
# of VSLA groups in the current year	20	26	159		
SOCIAL INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY					
# of cocoa communities with active forest restoration and protection program (CBNRM): New	0	2	2	7	9
# of cocoa communities with active forest restoration and protection program (CBNRM): Total Active		2	2		
# hectares under CBNRM	0	57	51	123	174
# of individuals participating in women's empowerment projects and activities	450	647	1,293		
# of individuals participating in youth focused projects and activities (15-35 years old)	150	0	205		

Annex 1. Ghana
Progress Report Tracking Table 2023– 2024

Description	Target (Current reporting year)	# Through direct investment (Current reporting year)	# On behalf of clients (Current reporting year)	# Through direct investment (Since 2023)	# Through direct investment (Since 2018)
FOREST PROTECTION AND RESTORATION					
# of farms mapped in direct supply chain: Total Active	6,266	2,633	38,903		
# of hectares in the direct supply chain with deforestation risk assessments completed	13,723	2,274	45,209		
# metric tons of directly sourced cocoa traceable from the farm to the first purchase point (target is 100%)		1,200	15,458		
# hectares restored in Forest Reserve / Forêts Classée	0	0	0		
# trees registered	0	0	0		
# of farmers with land tenure agreements/documentation obtained via company support	0	0	0		
# farmers informed, trained, and / or consulted on the new Forest Code, forest policy, law enforcement, forest protection, and restoration	0	0	9,894		
# Individuals receiving incentives to protect and restore forests and / or adopt agroforestry (e.g., PES): New	0	0	0		
# Individuals receiving incentives to protect and restore forests and / or adopt agroforestry (e.g., PES): Total Active	0	0	0		
# farmers applying agroforestry: New		193	3,993		
# farmers applying agroforestry: Total Active		368	7,613		
# farmers provided with technical assistance to adopt and expand agroforestry	270	193	3,993		
# hectares cocoa agroforestry: Total Active		368	25,748		
# of trees distributed for off-farm planting	0	0	0		
# hectares of forest area restored off-reserve / in rural zone	0	0	0		
# farmers provided with technical assistance to be more resilient to climate change and reduce and remove carbon emissions on farm (e.g., CSC)	786	75	7,025		
# of farmers trained in Modified Taungya System (MTS)	0	0	0		
$ contributed to fund					
SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AND FARMERS' LIVELIHOOD					
# improved cocoa seedlings distributed to farmers	3,650	0	8,000		
# farmers provided with technical assistance (based on plans) to professionalize & optimize cocoa farming practices	5,337	1,881	20,836		
# individuals participating in additional Income Generating Activities (IGA's)		66	400		
# individuals provided with technical assistance (based on plans) to increase income from non-cocoa sources / IGA's	275	62	400		
# Individuals provided with technical assistance to save money and access finance	0	98	638		
# of members of VSLA groups in the current year	355	98	252		
# of VSLA groups in the current year	21	4	30		
SOCIAL INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY					
# of cocoa communities with active forest restoration and protection program (CBNRM): New	0	0	0		
# of cocoa communities with active forest restoration and protection program (CBNRM): Total Active		0	0		
# hectares under CBNRM	0	0	0		
# of individuals participating in women's empowerment projects and activities	100	98	687		
# of individuals participating in youth focused projects and activities (15-35 years old)	0	0	170		
# hectares cocoa agroforestry: New	270	193	12,996	368	368
# multi-purpose trees distributed for on-farm planting	9,500	5,184	90,404	8,684	18,684