

Sustainable Cocoa Committee in Cameroon *Infos*



Newsletter of the Sustainable Cocoa Committee in Cameroon, N0 001, February 2025



SUSTAINABLE COCOA COMMITTEE (PLATFORM) IN CAMEROON

PRESENTATION OF 2023 - 2025 NATIONAL ACTION PLAN



H.E. Paul BIYA

President of the Republic of Cameroon

« The land never betrays. Don't be afraid to take the plunge, be the agricultural entrepreneurs that Cameroon needs. It is a noble and remunerative profession in what is known as the real economy »

H.E. Paul BIYA on 10 February 2016. Speech to the Youth.



Dr Joseph Dion Ngute
Prime Minister Head of the Government



Mr. Gabriel Mbairobe

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development



Mr. Luc Magloire Mbarga Atangana

Minister of Trade



Quality cocoa, just income, preserved forest

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**Elie Bertrand MUTNGI**

Coordinator of the Technical Secretariat of the Sustainable Cocoa Committee in Cameroon

Dear readers,

Welcome to the first issue of our newsletter, «Sustainable Cocoa Committee in Cameroon Infos.» We are delighted to have you with us and to present this publication, which aims to be a communication tool to inform and engage all stakeholders in the cocoa sector in Cameroon.

This newsletter aims to keep you updated on the actions and interventions of the Sustainable Cocoa Committee, particularly the progress made in implementing our 2023-2025 National Action Plan.

Established by joint decision No. 0390/MINADER/MINCOMMERCE on November 21, 2022, the Sustainable Cocoa Committee's mission is to coordinate the efforts of public partners, the private sector, technical and financial partners and civil society engaged in the cocoa value chain.

Our objective is to ensure that cocoa production and marketing in Cameroon are sustainable while promoting

quality, fair income, and forest preservation. We firmly believe that the success of our mission relies on close collaboration and constructive exchanges.

The Sustainable Cocoa Committee in Cameroon is co-chaired by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Minister of Commerce. Its Technical Secretariat (TS) is coordinated by the National Cocoa and Coffee Board (NCCB), with IDH as co-facilitator.

We hope this first issue will provide you with useful information and inspire you to

closely follow future editions.

We thank you for your interest and support in this collective adventure. Together,

We can ensure that Cameroonian cocoa becomes a model of sustainability while contributing to the protection of our environment and the well-being of our producers.

Sustainable Cocoa Committee in Cameroon: Quality cocoa, just income, preserved forests.

Enjoy your reading !

The 2023-2025 National Action Plan of the Sustainable Cocoa Committee in Cameroon Officially Presented

- *This plan includes 11 main actions and 42 activities, supported by financial and technical partnerships, notably the European Union and IDH.*
- *The ceremony was presided over by Gabriel Mbairobé, the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in the presence of the Minister of Trade and the Minister of Forestry and Wildlife.*
- *This plan confirms Cameroon's commitment to becoming a model of sustainability in cocoa production while preserving its forests and ensuring fair incomes for producers.*



SUSTAINABLE COCOA COMMITTEE (PLATFORM) IN CAMEROON

2023-2025 NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

In a context where deforestation and economic inequalities threaten the cocoa sector, Cameroon reaffirms its commitment to sustainable production.



The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development presided over the official presentation ceremony of the 2023-2025 National Action Plan of the Sustainable Cocoa Committee on September 20, 2024, in Yaoundé. The event brought together producers, private stakeholders, international and financial partners, as well as the government.

This plan consists of eleven key actions and forty-two activities divided into five key themes, with each theme led by a government Ministry.

“This National Action Plan for Cameroon is an ambitious plan whose aimed at creating an enabling environment for the consolidation of sustainable cocoa

production and marketing,” stated Gabriel Mbairobé, the Cameroonian Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development who presided over the ceremony.

Michael Ndoping, the Director General of the National Cocoa and Coffee Board (NCCB), who presented the plan to the public, emphasized the importance of collaboration among all industry stakeholders. “Producers have been involved in the development of the Action Plan. We have been working on it for some time. It is a consensual document among producers, buyers, exporters, and public authorities. We have even included civil society because cocoa concerns everyone”, said Michael Ndoping.



Jérôme Pons, Head of Cooperation at the European Union office in Cameroon, who attended the ceremony, reaffirmed the EU’s support for achieving the sustainability goals of Cameroonian cocoa. “Our support is both financial and technical. The European Union

is a major consumer of chocolate and the largest buyer of cocoa on the planet. Therefore, it is really important for us to work with the countries that produce cocoa, including Cameroon. Our aim is to support the development of a cocoa sector that is fair, that remunerates producers, and that respects the environment and forests,” stated the diplomat.

The Sustainable Cocoa Committee in Cameroon has the mission of leading consultations with public partners and the private sector involved in the cocoa value chain, in order to implement the commitments made by Cameroon regarding sustainable cocoa production and marketing. The Committee is co-chaired by the Minister of Agriculture

and Rural Development and the Minister of Trade. Its Technical Secretariat is coordinated by the National Cocoa and Coffee Board (NCCB), with IDH as co-facilitator.

“IDH plays the role of facilitator by bringing together businesses, the government, and civil society organizations to agree on the common vision of eliminating deforestation and strengthening sustainability in the cocoa sector through the development of plans, frameworks, policies, etc.,” explains Ngwa Elvis Suh A., Program Manager Sustainable Cocoa at IDH Cameroon and co-facilitator of the Sustainable Cocoa Committee.



Family photo after the public presentation of the 2023-2025 National Action Plan

The 2023-2025 National Action Plan takes into consideration the EU SCI Cocoa Actions. The implementation of its activities began in 2023. By the end of 2025, a more elaborate action plan for 2026-2030 will be developed based on the activities already implemented.

Fourth Session of the Sustainable Cocoa Committee in Cameroon

Discussions focused on communication, resource mobilization and monitoring of activities.

The fourth session of the Sustainable Cocoa Committee in Cameroon was held on September 20, 2024 in Yaoundé, under the Co-chairmanship of Mr. Foudama, Director of Agricultural Development at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MINADER) and Mr. Olinga Narcisse, Deputy Director of Trade at the Ministry of Trade (MINCOMMERCE).

The agenda of this session included six (06) items, namely:

1. Presentation and adoption of the agenda;
2. Presentation of the Committee's communication plan;
3. Resource mobilization;
4. Cameroon's level of preparedness in relation to the EUDR;
5. Monitoring and reporting on the progress of the Committee's activities;
6. Others

First Session 2024 of the Technical Secretariat of the Sustainable Cocoa Committee

There were exchanges on the communication plan and the planning and preparation of the official presentation of the 2023-2025 National Action Plan.

The first meeting of the Technical Secretariat of the Sustainable Cocoa Committee for the year 2024 took place on July 26, 2024 in Yaoundé. The objectives of the meeting were:

1. Discuss the development and implementation of the communication plan
2. Plan Committee events for the period of July to December 2024
3. Propose a revision of the number and composition of Thematic Working Groups (TWGs)
4. Prepare the publication and dissemination of the 2023-2025 National Action Plan.
5. Prepare the 4th ordinary session of the Sustainable Cocoa Committee.



Family photo after the meeting

Presentation of the EU Regulation on Deforestation-free Products (EUDR)

The European Union Regulation on Deforestation-free Products (EUDR) is a European initiative to limit the environmental impact of global supply chains by prohibiting the entry into the European market of certain agricultural products linked to illegal deforestation and forest degradation. According to research¹ conducted by Pendrill et al (2020), “seven commodities are responsible for most deforestation: oil palm (34.0%), soybeans (32.8%), timber (8.6%), cocoa (7.5%), coffee (7.0%), cattle (5.0%) and rubber (3.4%)”.

In 2023, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union therefore adopted the EUDR², a process that began in 2020.

This regulation, which aims to create a “zero deforestation” market in Europe and around the world, prohibits the placing on the market or export from the EU market of products that have contributed to deforestation or forest degradation after 31 December 2020.

This regulation was supposed to take effect from 1 January 2025, but in October 2024, the Commission proposed a 12 months delay before the entering into force of the EUDR.

If approved by the European Parliament and the Council, the Regulation would become applicable on 30 December 2025 for large enterprises and on 30 June 2026 for micro and small enterprises.

In a press release published on its website, the Commission says that “an additional 12 months to set up the system is a balanced solution that will help operators around the world ensure a smooth implementation from the start”³.

In other words, as soon as this regulation comes into force, all oil palm, soya, timber, cocoa, coffee, cattle and rubber that enter the European Union must have documents proving that its production has complied with certain environmental standards, including deforestation.



Implications for Cameroon's cocoa farmers

For cocoa farmers in Cameroon, the EUDR represents both a challenge and an opportunity. On the one hand, they must adapt their agricultural practices to meet the new requirements of sustainability. This could require investments in environmentally friendly cultivation techniques, as well as efforts to obtain sustainability certifications. Producers could also face additional costs related to the establishment of traceability and control systems.

On the other hand, the implementation of the EUDR could open up new market prospects.

Producers who can prove that their co-

coa is sustainable and deforestation-free can benefit from better access to European markets, where demand for ethical and sustainable products is rising sharply.

In Cameroon, the Sustainable Cocoa Committee was created with the mission to lead consultations with public partners, the private sector, technical and financial partners and the civil society involved in the cocoa value chain. This is aimed at implementing the commitments made by Cameroon in terms of sustainable cocoa production and marketing.

The 2023-2025 National Action Plan of the Committee takes into consideration the European Union Sustainable Cocoa Initiative (SCI) Cocoa Actions.

Initially, there were the Cocoa Talks, which are multi-stakeholder dialogues between the European Union and the national parties.

These Cocoa Talks took place from November 2021 to June 2023 and led to the development of six themes: prices, traceability, agroforestry and sustainable practices, forest cover monitoring, child labor and national standards. These themes resulted in the development of 12 recommendations that were translated into actions, later called Cocoa Actions. All Cocoa Actions are funded by the European Union to support the Sustainable Cocoa Committee in Cameroon.



In this interview, Aurélien Goufack, Technical Advisor of the Sustainable Cocoa Initiative (SCI) Support Program at GIZ, discusses the actions developed by GIZ with funding from the European Union and the impacts of these actions on cocoa producers in Cameroon.

Question: Can we revisit the key activities carried out by GIZ to support the Sustainable Cocoa Committee in Cameroon ?

Aurélien Goufack:

Under the funding from the European Union, GIZ is implementing four actions: the identification of producers and geolocation, the digitization of commercial data from NCCB, the development of an agroforestry manual, and raising awareness among producers about the EUDR.

Question: What can producers expect from these activities ?

Aurélien Goufack:

We are working to regulate the sector at the national level and among stakeholders. Regarding producers, our mandate is to identify 22,700 producers and their plots.

That is to say, we identify the producers, geolocate their plots, and the data is made available to the Interprofessional Council of Cocoa and Coffee (CICC) to facilitate operations. This is a direct benefit for the producers. We are also developing an agroforestry manual to harmonize cocoa production under the agroforestry system. We have created an image box to facilitate awareness among producers about the new European Union regulation.

At the institutional level, we are developing the digitization of production files for the cocoa sector through support to the NCCB, the regulator of the sector. We are collaborating with various national and international actors to establish a unique production and agroforestry system in the Congo Basin.

Anne Nzouankeu

Our Focus section talks about testimonies, portraits or interviews of influential personalities in the cocoa sector. They can be producers or any other actor in the production chain such as farmers, industry, etc.

In this issue, we met a leader of a producer cooperative and a professional from the sector.



2024 General Assembly of CONAPROCAM. Photo: CONAPROCAM

Interview with Mr. Jérémie Sidjoka Megnang, Chairman of COOPROZOCKI COOP-CA.

Q: Could you please introduce yourself?

A: I am Mr. Jérémie Sidjoka Megnang, a cocoa producer and Chairman of the cooperative COOPROZOCKI COOP-CA, which is a Cooperative Society with a Board of Cocoa Producers from Zock-Kidoung. I am also a member of the executive board of CONAPROCAM, the National Confederation of Cocoa and Coffee Producers of Cameroon, and a member of the Sustainable Cocoa Committee in Cameroon.

Q: What do you know about the Sustainable Cocoa Committee in Cameroon?

A: The Sustainable Cocoa Committee in Cameroon is a platform created by ministerial decree to address the issues in the cocoa sector. Its objective is to sustainably enhance this sector and defend the interests of all stakeholders in the chain. The committee comprises several members, including the government, in-

dustries, CSOs/NGOs, technical and financial partners, and producer organizations.

The committee has developed several activities grouped around themes such as sustainable production, sustainable marketing, forest protection and restoration, community engagement and social inclusion, and environmental sustainability.

A 2023–2025 National Action Plan has been developed, and we expect an intensification of the implementation of these activities.

Q: What are your expectations as a producer regarding the committee's initiatives?

A: We have noticed that discussions often focus on deforestation-free cocoa. As producers, we would like the committee to also consider producers living in forest areas and the necessary compensation measures. Here are some points we would like to see addressed:

- **Cocoa selling price:** It is crucial that the issue of the selling price is brought to the table so that producers no longer receive only a residual price. The cocoa producer must make a living from his profession in order to have a decent income that will help to enhance the value of this sector and motivate young people to engage sustainably.
- **Community awareness:** Outreach should be organized to explain to communities themes such as deforestation, climate change, and the new European Union regulation. Cooperatives like CONAPROCAM should be involved as they work directly with producers.
- **Cocoa traceability:** It is necessary to resolve the issue of cocoa traceability to reduce theft and recognize and value producers who produce quality cocoa.
- **Georeferencing of plots:** Georeferencing of plots should be done for all producers, with data provided to them and not kept by others.
- **Sustainable production guides:** Guides on sustainable cocoa production and the new EU regulation should be produced and distributed to producers.

- **Recognition of cocoa in agroforestry:** Cocoa produced in agroforestry should be valued, with bonuses for producers who conserve trees and preserve biodiversity.
- **Producer training:** Emphasis should be placed on training producers in production techniques, including the regeneration of old cocoa plantations.

In general, we are expecting concrete actions from the committee on the ground. These actions should contribute to increasing cocoa production, encourage producers to continue this activity, and allow them to live decently, like in other professions.

We also hope that these efforts will compensate those who do not destroy the forest and place human concerns at the center, valuing the initiatives of producer organizations.

Interview with Joel Owona, Program Manager, Green Commodity Landscape Program IDH (GCLP)

In this interview, Joel Owono, Program Manager of the Green Commodity Landscape Program IDH, who has been working with the cocoa industry in Cameroon for over a decade, provides insights into the involvement of these industries in the actions of the Sustainable Cocoa Committee in Cameroon.

How are industries engaged with the Committee ?

Joel Owona:

Through the Green Commodity Landscape Program, companies are driving commitments from the Roadmap for Deforestation-Free Cocoa, translating international initiatives into concrete actions at the local level.

These collective efforts aim to build a sustainable and traceable cocoa value chain while improving the livelihoods of producers and preserving local ecosystems.

For example, in Ntui, Ngoro, and Mbangassina, IDH, in collaboration with two key

players in the cocoa industry, has invested nearly €3.7 million, which will help improve the incomes of approximately 10,000 cocoa producers, geolocate their plots, and enable local communities to integrate into the industry's traceability systems. It is important to note that companies have made efforts by investing, for the first time, in forest protection, specifically in the projects led in Mbam and Kim; this



Joel Owona (in light clothing) participates in planting a tree in Ntui on the occasion of International Tree Day 2023. This was part of the implementation of the ASCOKYB project, co-funded by IDH and Telcar Cocoa Ltd.

will contribute to the protection and restoration of 15,000 hectares of community forests.

Question: What are the industries expectations ?

Joel Owona:

The expectations of the industry are numerous. They are reflected in the commitments they have made, although there are still recurring debates, particularly regarding how the databases—specifically the information related to producers contained within their databases—will be managed. I believe that the industry today would like to have an open dialogue with the government, specifically with the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Commerce, and the National Cocoa and Coffee Board (NCCB), which are all state representatives in terms of data protection and representation of producers.

We believe that this dialogue is also established through the Sustainable Cocoa Committee in Cameroon, where the industry can better present its needs, activities, and actions aimed at making the cocoa sector sustainable in Cameroon.

The “Committee” section, as its name suggests, aims to make the Committee and its Actions known. In this first edition, we will introduce the Committee.

Created by joint decision N°0390/MINADER/MINCOMMERCE/ of 21 November 2022, the Sustainable Cocoa Committee in Cameroon is a multi-stakeholder consultative body for the cocoa sector in Cameroon. Its mission is to lead consultations with public partners, the private sector, technical and financial partners and the civil society involved in the cocoa value chain, with a view to implementing the commitments made by Cameroon in terms of sustainable cocoa production and marketing. The long-term ambition of the Sustainable Cocoa Committee is to make Cameroonian cocoa sustainable, promoting quality cocoa, fair incomes, and preserved forests. This means that full access to all consumer markets is maintained because it will be proven that producers earn a decent income, that the worst forms of child labour are eradicated and that cocoa production is more climate resilient and contributes to the preservation and restoration of forests.



Family photo after the installation of the members of the Committee

The Sustainable Cocoa Committee in Cameroon is co-chaired by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Minister of Trade. Its Technical Secretariat (TS) is coordinated by the National Cocoa and Coffee Board (NCCB), with IDH as co-facilitator.

The slogan of the Sustainable Cocoa Committee in Cameroon is:

Quality cocoa, just income, preserved forests

Anne Nzouankeu



First meeting of the Committee after the installation of the members.

TABLE 1: PRIORITY ACTIONS 2023-2025

Forest protection and restoration	Sustainable environment	Sustainable production of cocoa	Sustainable cocoa marketing and living income of farmers				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take steps towards the development and adoption of a national forest monitoring system 2. Develop investment cases for the protection and restoration of forests with a focus on environmental sustainability 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Develop and implement climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives in cocoa-producing areas. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Implement measures to improve sustainable cocoa production 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Strengthen collaboration between public and private actors to achieve 100% traceability of national cocoa production 6. Develop national guidelines for sustainable cocoa 7. Design and test the national strategy for closing the gap between current incomes and living incomes for farmers 				
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="301 894 526 1013">Community engagement and social inclusion</th> <th data-bbox="529 894 671 1013">Governance</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="301 1017 526 1442"> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Clarify social and environmental safeguard policies through a multi-stakeholder process 9. Raising awareness among farmers and their communities on sustainable cocoa production and marketing 10. Take steps to eliminate child labour in the cocoa value chain through a participatory process. </td> <td data-bbox="529 1017 671 1442"> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Ensure effective management of the Sustainable Cocoa Platform </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Community engagement and social inclusion	Governance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Clarify social and environmental safeguard policies through a multi-stakeholder process 9. Raising awareness among farmers and their communities on sustainable cocoa production and marketing 10. Take steps to eliminate child labour in the cocoa value chain through a participatory process. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Ensure effective management of the Sustainable Cocoa Platform 		
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Sustainable Cocoa Committee in Cameroon: **Quality cocoa, just income, preserved forests**