



Joint Framework for Action **Ghana**

1. Preamble

Recognizing the vital role of the cocoa sector in Ghana in bringing jobs and wealth to local communities, while at the same time seeking to be environmentally and socially sustainable and striving to protect Ghana's forests;

Noting the importance of the cocoa sector in national social and economic development, the reduction of rural poverty, and in accelerating the transition to sustainable livelihoods for the almost one million smallholder farmers who grow cocoa;

Emphasizing the critical role of tropical rainforests, biodiversity and conservation in addressing global climate change, regulating the local and regional climate, and providing other critical ecosystem services that underpin the resilience of the cocoa sector and local livelihoods;

Acknowledging the role of agricultural commodity development, including the cocoa sector, illegal mining (galamsey), logging, and bushfires, as drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, and recognizing the strong positive contribution that the cocoa sector can make in Ghana to the restoration of forests and resilient landscapes;

Understanding the importance of public-private partnerships in sustainable and inclusive economic development, and our commitment to support the achievement of the New York Declaration on Forests, the Bonn Challenge, the Paris Climate Agreement, and the Sustainable Development Goals; and

Conscious of the need to promote, foster and accelerate the economic and social development of Ghana, in order to improve living standards and people's well-being;

We, the Government of Ghana – through the Minister of Land & Natural Resources - and undersigned companies, commit to work together to end deforestation and promote forest protection and restoration in the cocoa supply chain in Ghana through this Joint Framework for Action.

The Framework builds on the [Statement of Intent](#) launched at a High-Level Meeting in London hosted by HRH The Prince of Wales in March 2017. It defines core commitments, verifiable actions, and timebound targets required for a deforestation-free and forest positive cocoa supply chain in Ghana.

The Framework was developed through a multi-stakeholder process that brought together government, private sector, farmers and farmers' organizations, national and international civil society organizations, development partners, and other stakeholders in Ghana and at the global level. It is structured around the following three themes:

- **Forest protection and restoration:** this covers the conservation and rehabilitation of National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Wildlife Resource Reserves, Forest Reserves, and unprotected off-reserve forest lands,
- **Sustainable production and farmers' livelihood:** this covers sustainable intensification and diversification of production in order to increase farmers' yields and income and to reduce pressure on forests; and

- **Community engagement and social inclusion:** this covers social safeguards through civil society and community engagement.

2. [Core Commitments](#)

By signing the Framework, Government and signatory companies agree to eight core commitments:

1. **Prohibit and prevent activities that cause or contribute to any further deforestation or forest degradation** in the cocoa sector;
2. **Respect the rights of cocoa farmers**, including identifying and mitigating social risks, and sequencing the implementation of actions to minimize potential adverse social and economic impacts;
3. **Promote the effective restoration and long-term conservation of** National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Wildlife Resource Reserves, Forest Reserves, and unprotected off-reserve forest lands;
4. **Strengthen supply chain mapping**, with the end goal of full traceability at the farm-level;
5. **Implement verifiable actions and timebound targets** on the basis of sound data, robust and credible methodologies, stakeholder consultation, and realistic timeframes;
6. **Implement agreed actions in the context of a broader landscape-level approach**, with strong links with similar initiatives in other commodities, and full alignment with the national REDD+ strategy, new Ghana Cocoa Sector Development Strategy II, and other relevant national strategies and plans;
7. **Embrace shared responsibility to implement the Framework actions**, including continued engagement in a multi-stakeholder process for dialogue on key issues, development of effective implementation plans, and joint learning and knowledge sharing; and
8. **Provide effective monitoring and reporting on progress** on commitments and actions to ensure transparency and accountability.

3. [Actions for Forest Protection and Restoration](#)

Signatories recognize the critical importance of protecting Ghana forests and of restoring forests that have been previously degraded. They commit to the following:

- A. There will be no further conversion of any forest land (as defined under national regulations and using methodologies such as High Carbon Stock (HCS) and High Conservation Value (HCV) approach) for cocoa production as of 1 January 2018.
- B. There will be no production and sourcing of cocoa from National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, and Wildlife Resource Reserves, except from farms with existing legal status, as of 1 January 2018.
- C. A differentiated approach for Forest Reserves will be adopted by Government by 31 December 2018. It will be based on the following categories and will specify the number of hectares, timeline, roles and responsibilities, budget and fund-mobilization strategy for each category:
 - **Category 1:** The less degraded Forest Reserves (classified as condition 1, 2, and 3 in the national system) will be managed under a strict protection status by 31 December 2019, which will exclude cocoa production and sourcing, timber extraction, or other types of productive and extractive activities. Signatory companies will stop sourcing cocoa from these forests as of 31 December 2019.
 - **Category 2:** In the more degraded Forest Reserves (classified as condition 4 and 5 in the national system), cocoa production and sourcing will continue for a period up to 25 years

(the cocoa tree lifecycle) through the Modified Taungya System (MTS)¹. Government will sign contracts with farmers that include tree benefit sharing arrangements, targeted restoration and reforestation programs with the end goal of progressively restoring the forest to a healthy intact state, and cessation of cocoa farming (but allowing some sustainable economic use of the forest, including non-timber forest products).

- D. In highly degraded off reserve forest lands (which are held under the customary land ownership sector), cocoa production and sourcing will continue, supported by substantial investment and adoption of best practices in climate smart cocoa and MTS.
- E. In all these areas, a multi-stakeholder landscape approach will form the basis for the interventions, with an initial focus on the six Climate-Smart Cocoa Hotspot Intervention Areas (HIAs) as defined under the Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Program (GCFRP). The process starts with establishment of consortiums of key stakeholders, followed by development and implementation of integrated landscape management plans with a strong focus on climate-smart cocoa initiatives.

These commitments will be supported by the following actions:

- A. Up-to-date maps on forest cover and land-use for these areas, socio-economic data on cocoa farmers and their communities in these areas, and detailed operational guidelines covering forest management in Category 1 Forest Reserve, and the mixed-use approach in Category 2 Forest Reserve, will all be developed and publicly disclosed by Government by 31 December 2018, with input as relevant from the private sector, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders. In particular, this will include the development of a national registry of any farms with legal status in Forest Reserves.
- B. Land and tree tenure reforms, and benefit sharing arrangement to incentivize land owners and users to retain naturally regenerated trees on off-reserve farmlands and in the farming landscape of MTS will be accelerated by Government. This will include approval of the Community Resource Management Area (CREMA) mechanism, which will help secure land owners and users' rights to manage and derive economic benefits from forest resources.
- C. Public sector forest law enforcement and governance will be strengthened, including awareness raising campaigns, capacity building of forest institutions and community policing, stronger surveillance and monitoring, and application of stronger sanctions for infringement, covering forest encroachment and degradation from agriculture, logging and galamsey, as of 1 January 2018.
- D. Public-private collaboration to mobilize new sources of funding for forest protection and restoration, and to incentivize farmers adoption of environmentally sustainable cocoa production will be developed. Key opportunities include *inter alia*, support for innovative financial mechanisms (such as payments for environmental services, carbon finance, and public-private trust funds), implementation of MTS and phased approach to land-use change, alternative livelihoods for cocoa farmers affected by land-use change, development of shade-grown cocoa systems, climate-smart cocoa production.
- E. Public-private collaboration, in partnership with local and global experts, will be enhanced to identify good practices and technical guidance for forest conservation and restoration, shade grown cocoa, and MTS in Forest Reserves.

¹ The Modified Taungya System (MTS) is an agroforestry system under which farmers receive land to grow food crops alongside the planted cocoa trees during the early years of plantation development. The legally binding arrangement stipulates that the benefits must be shared between the Forestry Commission, the farmers, the traditional landowners, and the forest-adjacent community.

4. Actions towards Sustainable Production and Farmers' Livelihoods

Signatories recognize that sustainable agricultural intensification in environmentally suitable areas and increased farmer income are essential pre-requisites for reducing pressure for agricultural encroachment into forests, and strengthening the resilience of cocoa farming to climate change. They commit to the following joint actions:

- A. Promote investment in long-term productivity of high quality cocoa in environmentally sustainable manner and grow “more cocoa on less land,” through intensification of farming practices, provision of improved planting materials, introduction of yield-enhancing methods, training in good agricultural practices, crop protection, and crop nutrition and soil fertility. Continued land tenure reform to strengthen farmers’ land and property rights, and development and capacity building of farmers’ organizations, are critical enabling factors for sustainable agriculture development.
- B. Develop implementation plans, including mapping of exact areas to intensify establishment of shaded cocoa landscapes in line with the Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Programme (GCFRP), with the promotion of Climate Smart Cocoa and the national Climate Smart Cocoa Standard in environmentally suitable areas, with a first focus on Climate Smart Cocoa Hotspot Intervention Areas (CSC HIAs).
- C. Promote sustainable livelihoods and income diversification for cocoa farmers, including diversification, agricultural inter-cropping, development of shade-grown cocoa, and other income generating activities designed to boost and diversify household income.
- D. Promote financial inclusion and innovation to deepen farmers’ access to working capital and investment funds required for production and cocoa farm rehabilitation and renovation.
- E. Improve supply chain mapping, with 100% of cocoa sourcing traceable from farm to first purchase point by 31 December 2019. Private sector and Government will develop a joint action plan that maps out key principles, steps, and milestones to achieve this step, encompassing all national and international traders, by 30 June 2018. Government will adopt regulations that require verifiable traceability from farm to first purchase point by end-2019, and ensure compliance by national and international traders thereafter. Signatory companies are putting in place verifiable monitoring systems for traceability from farm to first purchase point, operational policies and control systems that effectively monitor the associated risks, including high quality verification, by 31 December 2019.

5. Actions for Community Engagement and Social Inclusion

Signatories recognize that effective engagement and empowerment of cocoa-growing communities, with a particular focus on women and youth, and civil society organizations in the Framework for Action process is essential to end deforestation and forest degradation in Ghana. They commit to the following:

- A. Full and effective information sharing, consultation, and informed participation of cocoa farmers and their communities who are affected by proposed land-use changes under the Framework.
- B. Promote community-based management models for forest protection and restoration, including engagement of local communities and farmers in awareness raising campaigns on the status of protected areas and the critical role that forest plays in climate regulation.
- C. Development of action plans for forest protection and restoration, and sustainable agricultural intensification that are gender and youth sensitive.
- D. For the approach in Forest Reserves, Government will assess and mitigate the social impacts and risks of proposed land-use changes on affected cocoa farmers and their communities, and ensure provision of alternative livelihoods and restoration of standard of living of affected parties, in line with global standards.

- E. Government will prepare operational guidelines covering resettlement and livelihood restoration of any affected parties by 30 June 2018, with input as relevant from private sector, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders, in line with global standards.

6. Measurement and Monitoring

Measurement and monitoring of progress at national and landscape level will be critical to ensure accountability and transparency, and promote learning and mid-course corrections.

A transparent and credible process will be developed, in line with Ghana's national forest monitoring system, to measure and monitor progress Framework actions no later than 31 December 2018. This will include:

- Adoption of a transparent satellite-based monitoring system, the results of which are independently validated, and which provide a deforestation alert, complemented with ground-truthing, as soon as possible upon signature of this Framework, which will be made publicly available for all stakeholders to measure and monitor progress on the overall deforestation target.
- Adoption of a set of high-level and verified land use, environmental, socio-economic indicators, building on the indicators and indices developed for the Climate-Smart Cocoa Standard and the national Safeguards Information Systems.
- Annual publicly disclosed reporting by signatory companies and Government on progress and outcomes related to the implementation of their specific actions in the Framework.

7. Implementation and Governance

The Government and signatory companies agree to implement the Framework actions in the context of a broader landscape-level approach that takes into account all drivers of deforestation, links with similar initiatives in other commodities, and alignment with the Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Programme and other relevant national strategies and plans.

Each Signatory company will prepare an individual action plan by 31 December 2018 for public disclosure that spells out the specific actions it will take to deliver the commitments set out in the Framework, including, in particular, indicative technical and financial support for forest protection and restoration, and sustainable production and farmers livelihoods. The draft action plans will be shared with Government for feedback before being finalized.

The Cocoa and Forests Initiative governance set up to support the development of this joint Framework for Action will continue operating after its signature, and will have the mandate to provide strategic guidance on the implementation of the plan.

The National REDD+ Secretariat will review progress and provide practical guidance on the implementation of the Framework, based on recommendations of Technical Working Groups, bringing together public, private and civil society experts. The Technical Working Groups will be formed to develop guidance on key questions that are critical to the framework implementation.

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