



Roadmap to Deforestation-free Cocoa

ROADMAP TO DEFORESTATION-FREE COCOA IN CAMEROON

Cameroonian ministries, together with major cocoa buying companies, chocolate manufacturers and civil society organizations agreed to collaborate through the Roadmap to Deforestation-free Cocoa in Cameroon. In this agreement, facilitated by IDH - The Sustainable Trade Initiative, the signatories commit to working together, both technically and financially, to implement programs on sustainable cocoa production and marketing. The signatories also commit to the preservation and rehabilitation of forests in Cameroon, the inclusion of communities, as well as to mobilizing their respective budgets to carry out these activities.

Cameroon is the 4th largest cocoa producing country in the world and the 3rd largest in Africa with 290,000 MT in the latest cocoa season¹. The nation's ambition is to lift this to 640,000 MT per year by 2030². Cocoa plays an important role in the country's economy as it is the second largest export product². However, over the last two decades, the quality of the Cameroon cocoa decreased due to a lack of sectoral support. As a result, the cocoa from Cameroon can no longer be sold on the premium market - it is now sold for a discounted price on the international conventional market. These developments have made cocoa farming an unattractive occupation, and younger generations are opting out to seek more lucrative employment elsewhere, while remaining cocoa smallholders seek to increase their incomes by expanding cocoa cultivation into forests.

The rainforests in Cameroon cover approximately 46% of the national territory and account for 11% of the Congo Basin forests. Therefore, Cameroon has the 3rd largest forest range in the Congo Basin³. However, the country is grappling with the adverse effects of climate change and with increasing pressure on forests: from 2001 to 2019, Cameroon lost 1.32 million ha of tree cover, equivalent to a 4.2% decrease in tree cover since 2000, and 519Mt of CO₂ emissions⁴. This rate is expected to increase significantly over the coming years due to urbanization and commodity-driven deforestation. The major driver of deforestation is agriculture, particularly the expansion of commercial crops, and especially cocoa. If not well planned, the nation's ambition to lift the cocoa production to 640,000 MT per year may create additional unsustainable pressure on Cameroon's forests.

1. Statista.com <https://www.statista.com/statistics/263855/cocoa-bean-production-worldwide-by-region/>

2. Cible Etudes & Conseil (2020). Etude de faisabilité. Projet d'Appui Au Développement Du Cacao (PAD-CACAO).

3. Cameroon REDD+ Desk. <https://theredddesk.org/countries/cameroon>

4. Global Forest Watch. <https://www.globalforestwatch.org/dashboards/country/CMR>



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To increase production sustainably, protect National Parks and forest areas and help farmers find a sustainable livelihood, partners are collaborating through the Roadmap to Deforestation-free Cocoa. The Roadmap is led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife, Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development, and Ministry of Trade, while IDH facilitates the process. The Roadmap aims to create a competitive advantage for Cameroonian cocoa in the global market by coordinating public-private-civil society efforts to achieve higher and more stable cocoa quality and promoting cocoa sustainability.

A Framework for Action was signed in January 2021 in which government, private sector, civil society organizations, and other important stakeholders agreed to jointly work towards the following objectives:



The conservation and restoration of forests in the permanent and non-permanent forest domain that have been degraded over time by human activities, in particular encroachment by cocoa farming among other factors.



The sustainable production and marketing of cocoa, towards a positive social and economic impact of the cocoa sector in Cameroon, that will support the repositioning and commercialization of Cameroonian origin cocoa on the international market.



Community engagement and social inclusion of cocoa-growing communities, including social safeguards to mitigate potential adverse social impact.

The Roadmap to Deforestation-free Cocoa builds on the Cocoa & Forests Initiative (CFI), jointly facilitated by IDH and the World Cocoa Foundation in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. The strength of the approach is linked to its multi-stakeholder nature, as the complex issue of cocoa-related deforestation can only be solved through an alliance between public, private and civil society stakeholders.



For more information on the Roadmap to Deforestation-free Cocoa in Cameroon visit our website:

www.idhsustainabletrade.com/initiative/roadmap-cameroon/

Reach out to our team:

CAMEROON

Elvis Ngwa

Senior Program Officer, IDH
ngwa@idhtrade.org

GLOBAL

Violaine Berger

Senior Advisor, IDH
berger@idhtrade.org



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