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Newsletter | 06

A Word from the DISCO Steering Committee

In each DISCO newsletter, a Steering Committee member will share some words with the partnership. In this newsletter, the word is given to Susanne Boetekees from Fairtrade Netherlands. The representative of the sub sector certification organizations:

“True sustainability includes the ‘P’ of price. When farmers are trapped in poverty, they can’t afford to invest in more efficient or productive farming methods to improve their income. They can’t pay their workers a decent wage, or worse, they may resort to using children for cheap labour. Some may turn to illegally clearing forests or growing illicit crops in an attempt to earn more. Higher farm gate prices are a ‘conditio sine qua non’ for farmers to be able to earn a living income and for cocoa to become a sustainable commodity.



I’ve always been (and continue to be!) excited that amongst all sector wide commitments across Europe, the DISCO partnership leads by example, clearly recognizing the role of farm gate prices as part of a wider mix of interventions. DISCO brings us an ambitious commitment, that raises the bar for similar initiatives across Europe. It is promising that during the very first ISCONference earlier this month the importance of better prices for farmers resonated with virtually all actors in the supply chain.

Yet, as always, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. With the topic of price being more explicit on the sustainability agenda, it is high time for action. Again, I count on DISCO to lead the way, to promote collaboration between actors, increase transparency on ongoing efforts and reach a higher scale of - joint - investments. In the next few months our focus will be on jointly developing a price session to help partners develop - and implement - real impact driving activities to fast track and scale impact in precisely this area. I look forward to continue this journey together and make concrete action happen.”

As a reminder, the Steering Committee is comprised of the following members:

- Arjen Boekhold – Independent chair
- Eric Nederhand – Olam Food Ingredients (representative ‘traders/processors’)
- Roel Govers – Mars (representative ‘manufacturers/brands’)
- Laura Jungmann – Albert Heijn (representative ‘retailers’)
- Steven Collet – Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (representative ‘government’)
- Susanne Boetekees – Fairtrade Nederland (representative ‘certification organizations’)
- Boukje Theeuwes – Solidaridad (representative ‘civil society’)

**The subsector ‘service providers & knowledge institutes’ is represented by Susanne Boetekees and Boukje Theeuwes.*

DISCO Annual General Assembly

Save the date, and invitation

We are delighted to invite you to the Dutch Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa (DISCO)’s third annual General Assembly on December 1st, 2022. A moment where we want to reflect on our progress towards the DISCO ambition but also to look ahead, and work towards more impact, both an individual basis, and from the partnership perspective.

In the afternoon, we will cover different topics, ranging from monitoring results, the priorities and action points for 2023 to articulate where DISCO can make a difference. The afternoon will also allow for discussions on the role of the partnership.

For those interested, the day will start with an optional visit to a cocoa storage facility, followed by a networking-lunch meant to increase connections between the different signatories of the partnership. The Port of Amsterdam will be our host for the day and will facilitate the cocoa storage facility visit.

Please make sure you register to indicate your availability, using the following [link](#). The event is open to all DISCO signatories, with a maximum of 2 people per organization. In case more people from your organization want to attend, please reach out to Marlene Hoekstra, hoekstra@idhtrade.org.

Debrief from the ISConference

Reflections

On September 1st, 2022, the first physical gathering of the ISCOs took place in Brussels during the ISConference. This event was the opportunity to have meaningful and inspiring exchanges amongst members of the different platforms and allowed the participants to strengthen the European network. Having these transparent and open discussions in the precompetitive space is crucial to move towards a more sustainable chocolate sector.

The different podium discussions and learning sessions at the ISConference all concluded that there is a need to accelerate learnings and translate them into action. But also, that the ISCOs play a crucial role in creating a level playing field in the sector; the ISCOs should indeed ensure that companies are not competing when it comes to sustainability but raise the bar together. The learnings from the ISConference will be used to formulate the actions within the ISCOs in the upcoming period.

Should you want to relive the morning panels which focused on efficient and coherent multi-stakeholder collaboration to reaching a living income, openly discussing the topics of procurement and pricing or the afternoon break-out sessions on traceability, child labour and deforestation, please use the following links: [Morning & Break-out traceability](#), [Break-out on child labour](#), [Break-out on deforestation](#).

President Akufo-Addo from Ghana visits the Dutch cocoa sector

Summary of the visit

The Ghanaian president Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo came to the Netherlands for a work visit early September. He was interested to learn more about cocoa storage and processing in the Netherlands and therefore a visit to Cargill's facilities was organized. After this visit, a lunch with important stakeholders from the Dutch cocoa sector was organized by the Port of Amsterdam and the municipality of Zaanstad.

During this lunch, a pitching session was facilitated by IDH during which the various stakeholders from the Dutch cocoa sector reflected on cocoa trade, market conditions and farmer income as part of the broader debate on sustainable cocoa, and how Dutch and Ghanaian trade partners can work together towards sustainable livelihoods of cocoa farming families. Some key reflections during the pitching sessions included the roles the various players have towards a sustainable cocoa sector, the value distribution between origin countries and the cocoa industry in destination countries, opportunities for local processing and how living income is put central as a way towards addressing climate change.



The DISCO Steering Committee chair Arjen Boekhold joined the lunch to share the developments made within DISCO. He mentioned the Roadmaps that were developed and the individual action plans formulated as a result. He also argued that stakeholders and companies should align more with initiatives in the EU and West Africa.

Other guests from the Dutch cocoa sector included Cargill Cocoa & Chocolate, Olam Food Ingredients, Mars NL, Nestlé NL, Mondelez, Solidaridad, Port of Amsterdam and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Ghanaian president was amongst others

accompanied by his ministers for Environment, Foreign Affairs and the CEO of COCOBOD Joseph Boahen Aidoo.

Update on DISCO Working Groups

DISCO signatories invited to participate in inception workshop ICE Futures Market to increase their knowledge

The Working Group on the ICE Futures Market will convene in an inception workshop on October 31st in the afternoon. During this workshop, key experts Nicko Debenham (independent consultant) and Toby Brandon (ICE) will help the working group increase their understanding on how cocoa is valued and ICE's role in it, as well as what ICE is doing around traceability and European regulation. Based on this workshop, the working group will be able to further map the features of the ICE Futures Market and its influence on the DISCO goals.

Since the presentation by the key experts could be of interest of other DISCO signatories, the inception workshop is open to the whole partnership. In case you are interested to join, please reach out to Mark de Waard, deWaard@idhtrade.org.

Working Group Consumer Communication will kick off in November

The Working Group on Consumer Communication will hold its kickoff meeting on November 10th. During this meeting, the group will discuss the structure, objectives, and envisioned outputs of this working group as well as the process towards developing a communication plan for DISCO. In a next meeting, the Working Group will further develop the communication plan.

The validation of the recommendations that will be developed through the Working Groups will be done within the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee representatives will inform their subsequent subsectors on those recommendations. The final outputs of the Working Groups will be shared by the Secretariat through the usual DISCO communication channels.

Latest developments in Europe: updates from other ISCOs

On September 1st, during the ISCO conference in Brussels, the ISCOs welcomed one more European Initiative: FRISCO. During the conference, a MoU was signed to increase collaboration and harmonisation across the ISCO to jointly tackle the challenges in the cocoa and chocolate sector.



Update on Beyond Chocolate

On Tuesday October 18th, the Beyond Chocolate partnership organized its fourth General Assembly. About 60 partners joined the live event in Brussels. After a networking breakfast, partners were presented with the Beyond Chocolate 2021 monitoring results. These results reveal that Beyond Chocolate signatories are taking valuable steps towards a more sustainable chocolate sector with 65% of chocolate produced in Belgium now certified and/or covered by a corporate sustainability scheme. However, this positive trend needs to accelerate for the partnership to reach the long-term living income and deforestation goals. More information on the Beyond Chocolate progress can be found in the [Beyond Chocolate 2021 annual report](#) which was published the day of the General Assembly.

During the GA, the Beyond Chocolate Secretariat also announced action points for the following years. These included reviewing the partnership's theory of change with a special focus on strengthening the partnership's child labour and deforestation commitments and getting clarity on the role of the co-financed projects within the broader partnership.

Lastly, Beyond Chocolate welcomed six new signatories: Leonidas, Gudrun Group, Chocolatoa, Manufacture Belge de Chocolat, Silva Cacao, and Envirium Life Science.

Update on the German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa (GISCO)

During this year's general meeting, the members of the German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa decided on the obligatory creation of [individual roadmaps](#) and the annual public reporting on them via yearly progress reports.

The individual roadmaps on the focus topics traceability, certified/independently verified cocoa, deforestation/agroforestry, and child labor are to publicly show how each member aims to contribute to the goals of the German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa and therefore initiate a multi-faceted learning process for GISCO and its members. The individual roadmaps are to be prepared by 31.12.2022. Reporting on implementation is expected from 2024 onwards. More information can be found [here](#).

Update on the Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa (SWISSCO)

Following the launch of the SWISSCO Landscape Call for Proposals, on 30 June, the last months have been busy with reviewing project proposals. Many members have decided to join forces in the context of these SECO co-financed landscape projects. This fulfills one of the main aims of the platform: strengthening the cooperation among supply chain partners to pursue systemic approaches to the challenges in the cocoa sector and promoting cross-sectoral partnerships and the engagement of local organizations.

Furthermore, SWISSCO is currently preparing the Baseline Report 2022 which will inform on the status quo of the members' contributions towards the SWISSCO Roadmap 2030. This report is foreseen to be published towards the end of the year.

DISCO timeline

For the upcoming period, the following meetings, events, and milestones within DISCO are scheduled. Additional meetings will be planned and therefore this overview will be updated within each newsletter.

- October 31st 2022** Inception workshop ICE Futures Market
- November 7th 2022** Steering Committee meeting
- November 10th 2022** Kick-off Working Group Consumer Communication
- December 2022** Publication of DISCO Annual Report
- December 1st 2022** General Assembly DISCO

An overview of ISCO Working Group meetings and learning events can be found in the [overview of 2022 ISCO activities](#).



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DUTCH INITIATIVE ON
SUSTAINABLE COCOA