



**Cocoa &  
Forests  
Initiative**



**TOUTON**

**Progress Report 2024  
Côte d'Ivoire & Ghana**



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# Key Figures

EFFICIENT SYSTEMS | TRANSPARENT CHAINS | ENGAGED PEOPLE



**767 290** Improved cocoa seedlings distributed in Ghana

**685 925** Multi-purpose trees distributed for on-farm planting



**112 070** Farmers sensitised, trained, and consulted on forest policy, protection and restoration

**308 471** Area within the direct supply chain with DRAs completed (ha)

**113 740** Farmers trained on climate smart cocoa curricula and reduction & removal of carbon emissions



**723** VSLA groups in the current year

**705 100** Individuals benefiting from member sustainability programmes

**112 353** Farms mapped within direct supply chain

NOTE: Figures above are for Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire for 2024.  
Please see the Tracking Tables in Annex for the split between Touton and clients and between Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire.

# What is the 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.

The [World Cocoa Foundation](#) (WCF); [IDH, the Sustainable Trade Initiative](#); and the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana drive the Cocoa & Forests Initiative. The Prince of Wales (now King Charles III) launched the Initiative in March 2017.

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.

A comprehensive analysis is required to determine the exact contribution of cocoa production to deforestation. WCF, CFI members, and partners are working together on science-based methods to determine the share of cocoa production to overall deforestation rates with a high level of accuracy in cocoa producing countries. Data reliability and a good knowledge of the cause and location of deforestation is essential to develop effective and adequate mitigation measures and ensure that WCF members and partners are compliant with regulations such as the EUDR.

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.



To learn more, follow [#cocoaandforests](#) on social media, or visit [Cocoa & Forests Initiative](#)

# What are the main CFI Commitments?

# Cocoa & Forests Initiative activities proceed from three priorities

## Priority 1: Protect and restore degraded forests

To this end, the governments and companies have pledged no further conversion of forest land for cocoa production and have committed to the phased elimination of illegal cocoa production and sourcing in protected areas.

Both countries are introducing a differentiated approach for improved management of forest reserves, based on the level of degradation of forests. In 2019, the government of Côte d'Ivoire adopted and published a new forest code which, among other things, put forth policies for the promotion of cocoa agroforestry to restore degraded land, improve forest cover, and promote sustainable livelihoods and agriculture in the classified forests and rural zones. Both governments have shared maps on forest cover and land-use, and continue to update the maps, including socio-economic data on cocoa farmers, to inform private sector investments. Companies have made significant investments in the promotion of cocoa agroforestry and the restoration of degraded forests.

To ensure effective implementation and monitoring of these commitments, companies have pledged to develop traceability from farm to the first purchase point for their own purchases of cocoa. They also work with governments to ensure an effective national framework for traceability encompassing all traders in the supply chain and to anticipate forthcoming due diligence legislation. The companies will similarly share information with the national satellite monitoring platforms to effectively monitor progress on CFI, as well as proactively address threats of new deforestation.

## Priority 2: Sustainable agricultural production and increased farmer incomes

These are essential pre-requisites for reducing pressure for agricultural encroachment into forests and strengthening the resilience of cocoa farmers to climate change.

The governments and companies are accelerating investment in long-term productivity of cocoa in order to grow “more cocoa on less land.” Key actions include provision of planting materials for the promotion of cocoa agroforestry, training in good agricultural practices, soil fertility, land tenure reform, and capacity building of farmers’ organisations.

Sustainable livelihoods and income diversification for cocoa farmers are being accelerated through food crop diversification, agricultural inter-cropping, and development of mixed agroforestry systems and shade-grown cocoa.

## **Priority 3: Community engagement & social inclusion, focus women & youth**

The governments and companies have committed to full and effective consultation and participation of cocoa farmers in the design and implementation of key actions, and promotion of community-based management models for forest protection and restoration.

The governments have adopted social and environmental safeguards and are assessing and mitigating the social impacts and risks of any proposed land-use changes on affected communities.





# Cocoa & Forests Initiative Results

## 1. Protect and restore degraded forests





RESILIENT FARMING  
SUSTAINABLE LAND USE  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
STEWARDSHIP

As last season came to a close, we completed over 300,000 DRA (Deforestation Risk Assessments) across our direct cocoa supply-chain in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, while efforts continued relentlessly across our cocoa and coffee supply-chains in other origins.

Working alongside Satelligence we have refined our analyses of future deforestation risk based on data we have been collecting since 2021, which in turn allow us to prioritise monitoring frequency in geographical areas.

This acceleration in our traceability processes was prompted not only in view of the EU's forthcoming Regulation on Imported Deforestation (EUDR), but also because it is essential to fulfil our global commitment to Zero Deforestation by 2025.

Beyond compliance and regulation, forest conservation, and the ability to halt land conversion, is vital to preserving existing carbon stocks in biomass and soils, and to avoiding Green House Gas (GHG) emissions linked to deforestation.

It also forms an integral part of our climate strategy, in line with our science-based targets (SBT) and in particular the SBT-FLAG (FLAG = Forest Land and Agriculture) initiative.



Touton has been supporting and implementing landscape approaches for many years, notably in Ghana with the Partnership for Productivity, Protection and Resilience in Cocoa Landscapes (3PRCL) project, in Côte d'Ivoire with the Cavally Forest protection project, and in other cocoa production countries (outside of the CFI scope) such as the Sambirano Valley landscape project in Madagascar.

At a time where we all strive to adapt to new regulatory and reporting requirements it is essential we continue to invest time and resources in understanding and addressing all the factors that are affecting cocoa yields and farmer income, from changing meteorological patterns, to depleted soils and spread of disease. More than ever, we need to ensure farmers receive the help they need, including intensive backstopping on Good Agricultural & Environmental Practices, access to affordable skilled labour and inputs, and support to access finance.

This year's report features an update on the Nestlé/Earthworm Foundation-led Cavally Project, that we joined in 2023. This exemplary project brings together all the necessary actions required to deliver dividends for the planet, for farmers and for other actors in the supply-chain.

We also come back on the efforts underway in terms of traceability and mapping, which have considerably increased over the past years.

# Success story

Efficiency of landscape and collaborative approaches: the case of the Cavally Forest protection and restoration project, phase 2

**Côte d'Ivoire**

## Cavally Forest protection and restoration project Phase 2

Last year we proudly announced our decision to join and contribute to Phase 2 of the multi-stakeholder project initiated by Nestle with Earthworm Foundation and the Ivorian authorities (SODEFOR and MINEF) in the Cavally Landscape.

Together with other actors (Cocoasource and Barry Callebaut, as well as the Swiss government and the rubber industry) we committed to expanding the scale and depth of the project in terms of preventing deforestation, restoring degraded land, diversifying farmers' incomes and improving the traceability of agricultural products, while combating forced child labour.

Soon after, the status of the Cavally Forest (spanning over 67 000 Ha) was revised from that of 'Classified Forest' to 'Forest Nature Reserve', effectively increasing its level of protection. As a consequence, the Ivorian Office of Parks and Reserves (OIPR) and the Ministry of the Environment, Sustainable Development and Ecological Transition (MINNEDTE) have taken over its management.

Audrey Lagauche, Director of Cocoa Sustainability for the Touton group:

*"We were partnering with cooperatives near the Cavally reserve before the landscape project was rolled out. As such, we had already started raising awareness on forest protection and restoration meaning that we were able, from the very first year, to fast-track our performance in implementing actions and contribute to the project's objectives."*



Activities conducted collectively during the 2023/24 cocoa season have led to significant progress on many fronts as confirmed by data from Starling, the satellite monitoring solution, which shows a significant drop in deforestation rates.

Among the coordinated actions that made the difference was the deployment of a large forest protection patrol mobilising over 100 people, the majority of whom were OIPR agents, but also soldiers, Earthworm Foundation collaborators and more than 30 members of the local communities. A total of 15 patrol units covered the entire reserve to take stock of the situation, document sites where illegal activities were taking place and apprehend poachers, trespassers and illegal gold miners.



Other key actions contributed to the success of the forest protection activities including:

- The adoption of a new reference map;
- The destruction of more than 1,600 hectares of illegal cocoa plantations with the help of the local population;
- The production of 150,000 tree seedlings by eight local community groups, including 16 endemic species, feeding into a reforestation plan covering more than 1,000 hectares;
- Project to closely monitor biodiversity in the reforested zones, planned for 2025.

While the Cavally project focuses primarily on cocoa production it also seeks to ensure rubber production in the area is conducted responsibly. The recent commitment of the Asia Africa Rubber Industry (ASAF) to the project is an essential step forward in ensuring its sustainability.

### **Traceable and transparent cocoa supply chains**

Implementation partners have deployed important efforts to map plantations around the nature reserve, which account for a significant portion of cocoa production in the area. Additionally, they have developed a collaborative approach to detecting, investigating and responding to deforestation alerts in the Cavally peripheral zone.

For Touton, the effort represents close to 8500 hectares of mapped plantations, as well as surveillance measures combining satellite images and field visits by Touton sustainability teams.



### **Last year, we registered notable progress in strengthening farmers' resilience collectively**

Touton actively contributed to the overall effort on the field, in close partnerships with the producing cocoa communities:

Over 2,200 farmers were supported by our agronomists with training on the benefits of pruning and natural composting, as well as on the key role played by the forest and surrounding ecosystems to maintain the climate stability, soil quality and humidity levels of their plots.

David N'DRI ANGBRA, Touton agronomist in the Cavally area explains *"Our teams' reforestation efforts have resulted in the planting of more than 8,000 shade trees, including many popular local species such as Petit cola, Akpi, Kplé, Fraké and Poiure long, on more than 180 hectares, in line with the agroforestry criteria of the Cocoa & Forests Initiative (CFI).*



*We also offer producers various agroforestry technical itineraries, with tree density levels adapted to their needs and constraints. Today, 89 male and 2 female farmers are practising agroforestry under this programme."*

Following awareness-raising campaigns to encourage the financial inclusion of women and promote the economic stability of households, Touton set-up 11 Village Savings & Loans Associations or VSLA (out of a total of 35) through which communities are supported in establishing governance and tools for monitoring fundraising and managing savings.

Throughout the past season, Touton continued implementing its Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation System in its two partner cooperatives, located in the periphery zone.

**More than 700 households** were monitored regularly to identify and mitigate child labour risks

Close to 1,200 children benefited from initial remediation measures, including household level sensitisation, facilitated birth certificate acquisition, school kit distribution, and the establishment of Community Service Groups in areas facing labour shortages.



Jean-Luc Baba Gue, Director of Sustainability at Touton Cote d'Ivoire, explains:

*"To improve our impact, we have adjusted our timetable for gathering information from families, giving us a more accurate picture of the realities experienced by children and enabling us to intervene in a more effective way.*

*The set-up of "community service groups" in areas where there is a shortage of labour, also helps to prevent resorting to child labour.*

*Next season will bring additional innovations to this ambitious collective initiative."*



# Success story

Traceability benefits for farmers  
and warehouse managers

**Ghana**

## Traceability Benefits for farmers & warehouse managers

The past years have been marked by the necessary increase in efforts to map our supply chain.

This is required for regulatory reasons but more importantly it is a key process and tool that benefits all actors along the supply chain, from producing country cocoa authorities, to farmers, to trade actors such as Touton, and to our clients and final consumers.

Having an accurate appreciation of farm location, size and configuration is essential to addressing deforestation risk, but also to optimise activities, from pre-harvest maintenance to harvest and post-harvest operations.

It allows farmers to ensure they are not encroaching on forest areas and to understand how their farms sit in the wider ecosystem.

Once cocoa is sold and makes its way to warehouses it allows agents to check volumes and provenance as they conduct necessary quality checks.

### The producer:

Mr. Issifu Salifu Issa, a producer from the Manso Amenfi district, had long relied on traditional farming methods for managing his 3-hectare farm.

His approach involved estimating farm size, guessing planting areas, and hoping for the best yields. Unfortunately, this method often led to inconsistent results, leaving him struggling to make ends meet.

The mapping of his farm was a turning point, allowing Mr. Salifu Issa Issifu to better manage his farm by providing more precise details about the farm's size, shape, and topography.

With this new information, he was able to reduce his use of fertilisers and pesticides by applying them only to specific areas of his farm, rather than uniformly across the entire plot. The mapping also gave Mr. Salifu Issa valuable insights into the farm's potential, allowing him to make more informed decisions about future investments and expansion.





As a result, Mr. Salifu Issa saw improvements in crop yields and a reduction in costs, which led to a significant increase in his income. This success enabled him to better support his family and reinvest in his farm.

*"The mapping and coaching provided allowed me to estimate my yield more accurately, and to ensure my use of inputs, including fertiliser, is appropriate and timely. So far, I have noted an increase of production from 3 to 5 bags."*

Mr. Salifu Issa's story demonstrates how farm mapping can be a game-changer, transforming the livelihoods of farmers by providing them with the tools to make smarter, more sustainable decisions.

#### The warehouse manager:

Once cocoa has been harvested and collected, it is brought to warehouses or depots. Ensuring traceability is preserved at this stage remains key for volume and quality of cocoa checks before it is brought to port for export.

**Samuel Sey, Touton/Eliho's District Warehouse Manager explains:**

*"My role as a district manager is to make sure that farmers procure sustainable cocoa to Touton/Eliho. They deliver the cocoa to purchasing clerks (PC) before it is transported and centralised into our warehouse."*

*We first ensure that every farm that we source cocoa from is mapped. We also register every farmer based on the size of the farm to check that the volumes are in line with potential yield. Every PC must make sure that all the cocoa that they bring is duly registered as we compile farmer delivery sheets.*

*Once the cocoa has been checked for quality and sustainability requirements, it is then prepared for transport to the port with all accompanying documents".*



# Cocoa & Forests Initiative Results

## 2. Sustainable agricultural production & increased farmer incomes





FINANCIAL INCLUSION  
FARMING AS A BUSINESS  
DIVERSIFIED INCOME

At a time where cocoa is scarce and prices are high; it is essential we not only maintain but increase our support to farmers in terms of coaching and back-stopping.

Despite the expertise and the tools at its disposal, the sector is increasingly hard-pressed to anticipate the extent of cocoa deficits. At the same time, however high the price, if farmers' yields do not increase, their livelihoods will not proportionately be impacted by market price as they should.

So, in the midst of our preparations for forthcoming legislation, it behooves us to take a step back and consider how we can pragmatically support farmers in the face of so many challenges.

Post-harvest losses to pests and diseases have always been high in cocoa (reaching up to 30-40% of cocoa production at farm level\*). Pest and disease management is complex. Swollen shoot Virus for example, has been rampant in West Africa over the past two decades and is particularly difficult to detect and to halt.

We need to continue working on the appropriate inputs for plants and regions to prevent spread of pests, while adapting practices as we expand agroforestry and climate smart cocoa practices.

Ultimately, it's about going back to the basics but with a fresh eye. Be it in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, or in some of our other sourcing areas, we need to find innovative solutions to challenges that farmers continue to face today and are likely to face tomorrow.

Last year we featured a story on the natural composting pilot project that was set-up in Côte d'Ivoire. One year on, we wanted to take stock and see whether our initial assumptions were verified and if we needed to course-correct.

Beyond this concrete and detailed case-study we wish to take stock of the different innovations we have been exploring, from participatory 3D mapping, to Rural Service Centres, to weather and crop insurance services all the way to swollen shoot early detection kits, some of which were led through our Corporate capital investment fund for innovation, ResiliAnce.

\*Source: [Central Union](#)

# Success story

Sustainable compost production pilot project.  
One year on, taking stock and moving forward.

**Côte d'Ivoire**



## Sustainable compost production pilot project. One year on, taking stock and moving forward

As part of our climate transition and sustainable sourcing strategy, we launched a cocoa pod composting pilot project in September 2023, within the SOCAET2 cooperative (around 2,000 producers), in partnership with the Ivorian company LONO.

The pilot phase of the project has been extended in order to consolidate the results before considering its longer-term sustainability and scale up. The aim is to produce a natural fertiliser locally, with a view to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The associated objective is also to improve producers' yields thanks to making available local, more affordable compost.

### A stronger technical partnership and advances with adoption

Since the launch of the project, our collaboration with LONO has intensified with the installation of a 100 m<sup>2</sup> composting unit on the cooperative's site. Two full-time technicians were hired to provide maintenance and rigorous technical monitoring, including regular analysis of the compost and temperature control during the fermentation process. This approach not only ensures better quality compost, but also more regular production. Over a one-month period, around 4 tonnes, or more than 80 bags of 50kg, of natural compost were produced.

Stephane Yao, Biomass & Biochar Business Developer for LONO, explains:

*"Compost is produced in two stages, lasting a total of 2 to 4 months, namely fermentation and maturation. Its quality depends on the raw material, which must combine proportionally 2/3 of dry waste (richer in carbon) and 1/3 of wet waste (richer in nitrogen)."*

*"Our operators are trained to monitor the key parameters at each stage: temperature, humidity, appearance of the material and odour. The smooth running of the process depends on this daily rigour."*



Another essential operational aspect handled by the teams in the field is stock management. The challenge is to guarantee constant availability of compost, particularly during the rainy season when demand is highest. This in turn will allow us to increase more widespread adoption by the community's farmers.

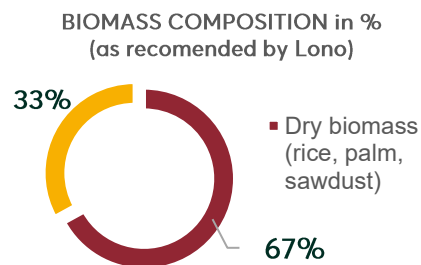


**Joseph Brou, Sustainable Supply Supervisor for Touton in Côte d'Ivoire**, who leads the implementation of the project within the cooperative, highlights the benefits and challenges of composting:

*"This project holds out great hope for our producers. (...) Natural compost has many advantages. On the one hand, it improves soil texture and provides better aeration, permeability and moisture retention.*

*An excellent source of nutrients for plants, it encourages microbial life and stimulates the activity of soil organisms, all of which support soil fertility. It's also a good way of recycling natural waste such as dead leaves, food waste and especially cocoa pods.*

*On the other hand, the composting process requires real rigour. We need to be able to source raw materials and waste easily (...) so a strong*



*commitment from the producers themselves will be essential to guarantee the long-term success of this project".*

Local teams, now trained in advanced composting techniques, have set up several 'demonstration plots' -

i.e. a sample of control plantations where the benefits of applying natural compost can be seen.

This awareness-raising work has generated growing interest among the cooperative's growers, many of whom have already expressed their intention to acquire this natural compost, which is accessible and beneficial for their soils.

**Sankara Souleymane, a cocoa farmer and member of the SOCAET2 cooperative**, is very keen on the idea of producing natural compost locally from cocoa pods. He has recently experienced some of its positive effects:

*"Having already used compost in my field; I was able to see changes in the leaves - they're greener than those where I used chemical fertiliser. It helps to restore the soil. I noticed that the natural fertiliser can also be used in*



*March-April, and then a second time in August-September, during the rainy season. The price is good compared to chemical fertiliser these days, it's cheaper and it saves us money!"*



### Clear objectives to make the project sustainable

One of the main challenges of the project remains its long-term sustainability and the roll-out of the solution to other cooperatives. To achieve it, several objectives have been defined:

- **Stability and affordability:** locally produced natural compost can be a more cost-effective alternative for cocoa farmers, providing further assurance in terms of availability and price stability compared to imported chemical fertilisers. In the current geopolitical context, the price of natural compost is even inferior to chemical fertilisers/hectare.

Furthermore, unlike chemical fertilisers, that only provide temporary nutrition for crops, compost gradually enriches the soil, improving its structure and water retention capacity. In the long term, this approach can also help reduce dependence on external inputs, while ensuring more resilient and sustainable agricultural production.

Nevertheless, Stéphane Yao from Lono points out:

*"The total price of compost, including transport, may remain an obstacle for cocoa farmers with limited purchasing power. Once the price of a bag of compost has been made affordable, financing capacity becomes the second challenge."*



*We need to offer flexible payment methods that are adapted to the realities on the ground."*

- **A model that can be replicated in the long term:** if the results of the pilot project continue to be positive and provide tangible evidence of the economic benefits (reduced costs), agricultural benefits (improved soils and yields) and environmental benefits (reduced greenhouse gas emissions), the Touton group hopes to gradually replicate this model with other partner cooperatives, both in Côte d'Ivoire and in other cocoa-producing regions.



Stephane Yao from Lono :

*"The biggest challenge for natural compost's adoption nowadays actually is the lack of usage of fertilisers: studies show that, on average, more than two-thirds of cocoa farmers in this area do not apply any. Their yields are well below their potential. (...)*

*Commercial composting at cooperative level is a real opportunity to create added value, but it requires a dedicated team and management training."*

### **Towards more resilient agriculture**

The future of natural compost within the SOCAET2 cooperative and across all cocoa plantations looks promising. The project illustrates how innovation and local collaboration can transform environmental challenges into sustainable opportunities for agriculture in Côte d'Ivoire and beyond. Its future development could mark a key step towards a more resilient and sustainable cocoa sector.

Joseph Brou from the Touton team remains positive and convinced of the potential:

*"With well-controlled practices, compost can be a central pillar in more sustainable agriculture, particularly by reducing the carbon footprint of farming practices. It's a personal honour to contribute to an initiative that can make a real difference, not just for today, but for the future of our agriculture."*





# Success story

Looking back on our efforts to support farmers through innovations, large and small

**Côte d'Ivoire  
& Ghana**

## Looking back on our efforts to support farmers through innovations, large and small

Over the past decade, the cocoa sector, and indeed tropical supply chains, have considerably evolved.

We wish to take stock of the different innovations we have been exploring over the years as well as the evolution in terms of processes, investments and human resources to better meet our environmental and social commitments.

As from 2015, Touton started deploying Rural Service Centres across its sourcing areas in Ghana, the **Akuafo Yiedie Fie (Farmers' Well-Being House)** allowed producers to easily access material and learning support.

Each centre offered the services of a team of 4 trained experts: 1 sustainability manager, 1 business development manager, and 2 agronomists. Services included Good Agricultural Practices training and coaching, access to inputs and tools at competitive prices, as well as support for additional livelihoods (diversification, financial literacy and support for access to finance).

Later on, the acquisition of our LBC in Ghana, Eliho, evolved our business model.



As the Cocoa & Forest Initiative prepared to launch, Touton Ghana was setting-up the **Bia-Juabeso Landscape programme** in collaboration with farming communities, implementing partners, and local authorities. Understanding the needs and concerns of all landscape actors, from farm to community to landscape levels, was crucial to identifying where the private sector needed to intervene to reduce deforestation.



**Participatory Three-Dimensional Model Maps (P3DM)** served as an integral tool to engage farmers and local authorities around common objectives. This mapping exercise allowed farmers to visualise their farms' proximity to forests, water sheds and urban agglomerations.

It is a practical visual aid to effective stakeholder engagement .

In 2020 Touton launched its **Innovation investment Fund**, ResiliAance, through which we support start-ups that offer promising innovations and solutions to challenges faced in and around our supply-chains.



Two notable examples of solutions to support farmers in the face of changing conditions are OKO and HDRain.

**OKO develops affordable mobile-based crop insurance products** to provide smallholder farmers with the financial security they need, regardless of unstable climate trends. We partnered with OKO in Uganda in its coffee supply-chain. It started operating in Côte d'Ivoire in 2022 and provides "weather-index crop insurance" to farmers in collaboration with Allianz, starting with the cocoa value chain. In 2023 OKO was awarded first prize in the Ambitious Insurer Award at the 2023 Insurtech Insights Conference in London.

**HD Rain offers high-definition micro-meteorological data** to allow better access to information and therefore resilience to meteorological events. HD rain sensors provide data from the bottom to the top of the atmosphere. A network of HD Rain sensors captures rain in 3D on a slanted line of about 5km. Initially more active in the Mediterranean area, the solution is also being tested together with Touton in Côte d'Ivoire. Ultimately micro-meteorological data can significantly support farmers in tropical supply chains to anticipate extreme weather conditions that may affect growth of crops and post-harvest activities.

Closer to the ground, our teams are also working on addressing pests and diseases. Cocoa Swollen Shoot Virus (CSSV) has been rampant in West Africa during the last two decades, yet it remains extremely difficult to identify before it is too late. It is also one of the root causes of declining crop volumes.

Since 2023, we have invested in **portable CSSV early detection kits called Swissdecode** – that analyse leaf flushings (young leaves) for signs of the virus, even when it is not yet visible to the eye. Tests are run directly by our team, in the field, and results appear within an hour.



By conducting the tests over given areas, it allows our pod counting teams to map how the virus is progressing and better evaluate its impact on future production levels. This information feeds into Touton's market intelligence analysis to improve our collective understanding of crop status and developments, informing our operational, sourcing and trading decision making.

With these machines Touton can gain a more refined and quicker understanding of the implication of CSSV on farms, production levels and the risks of its supply chains. A wider use of this technology could support cocoa farmers in Côte d'Ivoire by helping detect diseased trees earlier and remove them to limit their spread. At national level, it would make it easier to monitor plantations and develop strategies to combat the disease.

All of these innovations, small and large, were triggered by local teams' observations and proactive recommendations for solution-based approaches in supporting farmers.



# Cocoa & Forests Initiative Results

## 3. Community engagement & social inclusion







DECENT WORK  
ENVIRONMENT

PROTECTED CHILDREN

EMPOWERED PEOPLE

RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

To help empower cocoa-growing communities, we support the implementation of a range of activities, all adapted and relevant to local needs and the reality of each community. For example, we support the establishment of Forest Protection Committees (FPC) and Cocoa Child Protection Committees (CCPC), which enable farmers to make collective decisions and defend their common interests.

Working in partnership with local cocoa farmer groups, Touton's sustainability team recruits and trains young volunteers to form a brigade of independent agripreneurs who provide agricultural services to cocoa farmers, such as pruning, weeding, and distributing shade trees.

As well as creating paid employment for youth and reducing the rural exodus, this programme is supporting crop yields, improving producers' incomes and discouraging the expansion of plantations in forest areas, while reducing the use of child labour.

We continue to support access to financing and banking services, notably through the creation of Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs). These associations strengthen the role of women in communities and encourage collective reflection on the activities to be financed and developed to improve individual and collective living conditions.

As a trader sourcing cocoa and other products (including coffee, spices, and vanilla) we are supporting cocoa farmers and communities' diversification activities with other crops for which we can facilitate access to market.

These models are currently tried and tested in other cocoa producing areas, such as Madagascar, or indeed in our coffee supply chain. We regularly review successful models across our sourcing departments to see where they can be replicated elsewhere.

By implementing these initiatives, we strive to create an environment conducive to the socio-economic development of cocoa producing communities while reinforcing our commitment to sustainability and social responsibility.

The landscape approach programmes in which we participate (see *Case Study on the Cavally Landscape part 1.*) are also based on the set-up and support of local governance structures which ensure that communities are the ones driving action on the ground.

# Success story

Empowering communities to protect forests, cocoa farming and livelihood with “Forest Protection Committees”

**Ghana**

## Empowering communities to protect forests, cocoa farming and livelihood with "Forest Protection Committees"

In Ghana, cocoa is an integral part of the lives of farming communities. However, increasing deforestation threatens both local ecosystems and the long-term viability of cocoa cultivation. In 2023, a community-based initiative was launched to protect forests while strengthening the resilience of cocoa farming.

At the heart of this approach are the Forest Protection Committees (FPC) — groups of local farmers trained to raise awareness, monitor forest activities to prevent deforestation, and encourage tree planting. Their main goal is to ensure that cocoa production remains deforestation-free by acting as local custodians of the environment.

Each FPC has a minimum of three members and operates within communities selected based on their deforestation risk, level of engagement, and size. The committees raise farmers' awareness, promote agroforestry practices, encourage farmers to maintain buffer zones around water bodies and protected areas, report illegal activities, and support the planting and maintenance of shade trees.



This community-based approach is supported and coordinated in the field by our teams of specialised agronomists, themselves coordinated by our Climate smart cocoa programme leader.

For example, during the past crop season 2023-24, he has been working closely with local communities to promote sustainable farming practices and ensure long-term protection of forest landscapes. His role is to bridge the gap between field realities, Touton's broader sustainability ambitions, and those of the wider sector - such as the Cocoa & Forests Initiative - ensuring that forest conservation becomes a fully integrated part of everyday agricultural practices.



Michael Poku-Marboah, Climate Smart Cocoa Manager at Touton Ghana says:

*"What many people don't realise is that cocoa is a forest crop. Without trees, there's no shade, no moisture, low soil fertility — and therefore, less cocoa. Yet in Ghana, we lose nearly 120 000 hectares of forest every year. If we don't act, the entire value chain is at risk. That is why we set-up the Forest Protection Committees."*

*Since 2023, they've been established in close to 780 communities. Today, over 90 000 hectares of cocoa farms are under their watch. Their work goes far beyond monitoring — it's about building a culture of care and sustainability.*

Beyond environmental protection, the committees also play a vital role in improving producers' livelihoods. By promoting agroforestry and sustainable practices, they help restore degraded ecosystems, increase farm productivity, and raise incomes. This local dynamic enhances resilience to climate change and contributes to a more sustainable cocoa model.

*No one is forced to take part; the producers are free to choose. But we show them what agroforestry can bring — for their crops, and for their income. We support them in choosing the right species, planting correctly, and most importantly, helping the trees survive."*





Samuel Narh, a Forest Guard at the Forest Reserve and a local FPC member, explains his role in the field:

*"Once the forest boundary is cleared, I make sure farmers respect a minimum 10-metre 'buffer' distance and don't enter the forest to cut wood or hunt.*

*We also raise awareness on their farms: they shouldn't cut trees unnecessarily or sell them. Trees protect cocoa plants during the dry season. We encourage border planting, and we regularly visit farms to ensure those trees are in place. Many farmers plant too late, after the rainy season, which reduces the survival rate of the young trees.*

*My job is to explain why they need to plant at the right time, when there's enough moisture. We can see the difference: the trees grow better, the forest plays its role, and rainfall patterns are maintained — which is essential for producing good-quality cocoa."*



Emmanuel Nyarko, Sustainability Officer at Touton Ghana concludes:

*"This community has greatly benefited from the establishment of the Forest Protection Committee. Through continued sensitisation, residents have developed a deeper understanding of the importance of forest conservation.*

*As a result, the community has actively resisted deforestation and land degradation that could negatively impact their farming activities. For example, when the village elders were approached to grant authorisation to give out their lands for illegal mining activities in the forest and surrounding farmlands, the community firmly rejected the offer.*

*They chose instead to protect their environment and livelihoods. The elders also warned poachers from nearby communities to refrain from entering the forest for any form of illegal activity."*





# Success story

Engaging communities to ensure long-term financial and environmental sustainability

**Ghana**

## Engaging communities to ensure long-term financial and environmental sustainability

For generations, cocoa farming has been the backbone of communities' livelihood in the Twifo Nyinase district, providing sustenance and income. However, in recent years, changing weather patterns and difficulties with transportation have created significant challenges for their cocoa trade.

Emmanuel Oppong is one of them. Father to 3 children, he owns 2 farms and a total of 6.5 acres. Together with several members of the community, he decided to embark on the CLASEN sustainability programme implemented by Touton-Eliho to find solutions.

Mr. Oppong is both the secretary of the local Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA), and a member of the Forest Protection Committee (FPC) set up by the Touton-Eliho team of agronomists and community development experts.

These two organisations are made up of volunteers from the local community to provide collaborative solutions to access finance and improve farming efficiency, while preserving the ecosystems and forests surrounding their cocoa plantations.

Emmanuel Oppong explains:

*"Currently, there are seasons of heavy rainfall for several days and prolonged drought too. This causes black pod disease infestations, wilting and destruction of cocoa trees because of the excessive drought.*

*I noticed a slight decline in my yield. The overall health of my farm is not quite as it used to be because of climate change effects. We manage the effects by planting more trees and adhering to the directives and training from the Touton-Eliho field officers. They teach us a lot during training and coaching.*



*They also introduced a Forest Protection Committee (FPC), engaging with our community and its leaders. The FPC teaches us how to protect trees and forests, and conserve biodiversity. Its formation has resulted in a decline of deforestation in this area. The committee is constantly monitoring the area, which is deterring perpetrators. As a member of this unit, I have a responsibility to protect our trees."*

Further to the environmental protection aspect, these organisations aim to positively impact on the capacity for farming communities to improve their cocoa business and earnings, one of the many ways to mitigate risks of deforestation.

**Mr. Oppong adds:**

*"Field officers and the FPC ensure that shade trees are distributed, planted and nurtured well. We have also been taught about planting more fruit trees on our farms. I gained additional profits from cultivating coconut and orange trees on my farm last year.*

*As Secretary for the Villages Savings and Loan Association (VSLA), I realised that several members of the association had a challenge transporting farm materials to our farms and harvests from our farms. (...)*

*Occasionally, we rented commercial tricycles which came at high costs. We were charged 50GHS (approx. 3 euros) to transport one bag of cocoa from the farm to the house using the commercial tricycles. Once, I spent 3000GHS (approx. 178 euros) on just transporting cocoa to my house !*

To solve the transportation issue, the VSLA decided to invest in a tricycle. In November 2024, a tricycle was purchased at a price of 28,000GHS (approx. 1664 euros) from the social fund. We are very happy with this initiative because we can send materials and produce to, and from, our farms at lower costs.

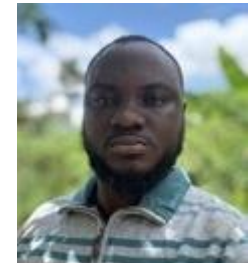


We charge a fee of 20GHS (approx. 1,20 euros) per cocoa bag for VSLA group members and 50GHS (approx. 3 euros) for non-VSLA members. Since the tricycle operations started, the group has gained 10,000GHS (approx. 594 euros) in profits in three months."



Clement Owusu Bempah, Sustainability Officer, Touton Ghana concludes:

*"The VSLA has become a symbol of the community's resilience and cooperation, with its success providing both financial security and a sense of empowerment to the farmers of Opokukrom."*



*By combining financial services together with practical solutions like transportation, the farmers have been able to overcome obstacles that once seemed insurmountable, and they now look to the future with optimism."*

# Annexes





## Touton Progress Report for CÔTE D'IVOIRE

	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)
# multi-purpose trees distributed for on-farm planting	50 000	78 331	373 748	89 131	104 743
# of trees distributed for off-farm planting	0	0	26 000	31 500	31 500
# hectares cocoa agroforestry: New	1 500	353	9 057	569	1 276

## Forest protection and restoration

# of farms mapped in direct supply chain: Total Active	19 800	4 797	63 498
# of hectares in the direct supply chain with deforestation risk assessments completed	26 730	11 527	179 686
# metric tons of directly sourced cocoa traceable from the farm to the first purchase point (target is 100%)		7 822	99 730
# hectares restored in Forest Reserve / Forêts Classée	0	0	0
# trees registered			
# 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	1 327	71 609
# Individuals receiving incentives to protect and restore forests and / or adopt agroforestry (e.g., PES): New	0	0	5



## Touton Progress Report for CÔTE D'IVOIRE

	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)
# Individuals receiving incentives to protect and restore forests and / or adopt agroforestry (e.g., PES): Total Active	0	0	70		
# farmers applying agroforestry: New		231	3 329		
# farmers applying agroforestry: Total Active		383	20 617		
# farmers provided with technical assistance to adopt and expand agroforestry	1 500	501	18 388		
# hectares cocoa agroforestry: Total Active		582	43 910		
# 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)	0	1 413	72 224		
# of farmers trained in Modified Taungya System (MTS)					
\$ contributed to fund					

## 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	0	1 413	48 838

## Touton Progress Report for CÔTE D'IVOIRE

	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)
# individuals participating in additional Income Generating Activities (IGA's)		0	4 853		
# individuals provided with technical assistance (based on plans) to increase income from non-cocoa sources / IGA's	0	0	7 682		
# Individuals provided with technical assistance to save money and access finance	15 000	0	14 771		
# of members of VSLA groups in the current year	150	0	8 679		
# of VSLA groups in the current year	10	0	470		

## Social inclusion and community

# of cocoa communities with active forest restoration and protection program (CBNRM): New	16	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		0	9 170		
# of individuals participating in youth focused projects and activities (15-35 years old)	0	8	1 044		



## Touton Progress Report for GHANA

	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)
# hectares under CBNRM	0	0	0	185 248	236 088
# improved cocoa seedlings distributed to farmers	0	217 715	549 575	317 715	547 715
# multi-purpose trees distributed for on-farm planting	0	31 050	202 796	40 487	160 069
# trees registered	0	0	0		67 000
# hectares cocoa agroforestry: New	0	718	6 233	896	3 851
# of cocoa communities with active forest restoration and protection program (CBNRM): New	0	0	0		0

## Forest protection and restoration

# of farms mapped in direct supply chain: Total Active	4 500	9 061	34 997
# of hectares in the direct supply chain with deforestation risk assessments completed	17 100	9 351	107 907
# metric tons of directly sourced cocoa traceable from the farm to the first purchase point (target is 100%)		4 500	38 569
# hectares restored in Forest Reserve / Forêts Classée	0	0	0
# of farmers with land tenure agreements/documentation obtained via company support	0	0	0



## Touton Progress Report for GHANA

	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)
# farmers informed, trained, and / or consulted on the new Forest Code, forest policy, law enforcement, forest protection, and restoration	4 000	6 374	32 760		
# Individuals receiving incentives to protect and restore forests and / or adopt agroforestry (e.g., PES): New	0	0	2 572		
# of farms mapped in direct supply chain: Total Active	4 500	6 278	22 121		
# Individuals receiving incentives to protect and restore forests and / or adopt agroforestry (e.g., PES): Total Active	0	0	2 674		
# farmers applying agroforestry: New		253	2 579		
# farmers applying agroforestry: Total Active		401	8 629		
# farmers provided with technical assistance to adopt and expand agroforestry	0	387	9 115		
# hectares cocoa agroforestry: Total Active		1 167	17 544		
# 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)	400	5 478	34 625		
# of farmers trained in Modified Taungya System (MTS)	0	0	0		



## Sustainable production and farmers' livelihood

	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)
# farmers provided with technical assistance (based on plans) to professionalize & optimize cocoa farming practices	4 000	5 880	34 625		
# individuals participating in additional Income Generating Activities (IGA's)		197	3 171		
# individuals provided with technical assistance (based on plans) to increase income from non-cocoa sources / IGA's	0	3 289	4 694		
# Individuals provided with technical assistance to save money and access finance	0	2 712	12 148		
# of members of VSLA groups in the current year	1 000	3 289	4 587		
# of VSLA groups in the current year	50	77	176		
# farmers provided with technical assistance (based on plans) to professionalize & optimize cocoa farming practices	4 000	5 880	34 625		

## Social inclusion and community

# of cocoa communities with active forest restoration and protection program (CBNRM): Total Active		300	84		
# of individuals participating in women's empowerment projects and activities	0	3 237	11 321		
# of individuals participating in youth focused projects and activities (15-35 years old)	0	0	3 312		

Since 1848, the Touton group has been sourcing, trading, processing and supplying exceptional tropical agricultural products to food manufacturers all over the world, using an approach that is true to its values: ever more sustainable and profoundly human.

Acting as a true link between growers and processors, from the field to the factory, we create responsible supply chains in our areas of expertise: cocoa and its derivatives, green and speciality coffee, vanilla and exotic ingredients.

As field players, we are involved at every level of the value chain to deliver unprecedented quality of service in sourcing, trading, logistics and market intelligence.

Our collective approach is driven by a shared conviction: the performance of our long-term business relations depends on our ability to establish and maintain a bond of shared trust with all our partners.

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