

## The Cocoa & Forests Initiative: Collective Action to End Cocoa-Related Deforestation

The governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana and 36 leading cocoa and chocolate companies, representing 85% of global cocoa usage, joined together in the [Cocoa & Forests Initiative](#) to 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 delivers on Sustainable Development Goal 13 (Climate Action) and 15 (Life on Land).

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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.

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

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 and reviewed implementation progress in November 2018.

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. [Côte d'Ivoire](#) and [Ghana](#) respectively lost 26% and 9.3% of their humid primary forest between 2002 and 2020, with a significant portion of deforestation 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 which will come into application in 2025.

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.

**The first priority is the protection and restoration of forests that have been degraded.** 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.

**The next critical priority is 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’ organizations. 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.

**The final area of focus is strong community engagement and social inclusion, with a particular focus on women and 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.

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## General Mills 2024 Progress Report

In 2017, General Mills became one of only two non-confectionary manufacturer signatories to the Cocoa and Forests Initiative (CFI) to address deforestation in the cocoa supply chain, to reinforce our sustainable sourcing commitment for cocoa, and to help drive progress towards our science-based greenhouse gas emissions target.

At General Mills, our business is rooted in the earth and has the power to help restore it. Threats to natural resources impact our business, the livelihoods of farmers and communities, and our ability to feed a growing population. We recognize that eliminating deforestation and preserving natural ecosystems are essential to meet our climate goals and building a resilient future.

As our approach to eliminating deforestation evolves with a continuous improvement lens, CFI remains a steadfast pillar in which we bring these values to life. Through our ongoing engagements in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, we continue our support of the CFI into its next chapter and champion its results.

### **Côte d'Ivoire:**

Through our CFI commitment to end deforestation and forest degradation in the cocoa sector in Côte d'Ivoire, General Mills achieved the following progress in 2024.

Number	Indicator	2024 Annual Progress
ENV-02	Directly sourced cocoa traceable from farm to first point of purchase	12843
CC-06	Volume of cocoa beans sourced from the direct supply chain	13868
	Traceability to Farm	85%
CC-04	Farmers in Direct Supply Chain	25287
ENV-09	Multi-purpose trees distributed for on-farm planting	122690
ENV-05	Farmers provided with technical assistance to adopt and expand agroforestry	1655
CFI-a	Farms mapped within direct supply chain	21094
CFI-e	Members of Village Savings and Loan Associations in the current year	6541
CL-01	Households covered by a CLMRS or comparable system	12319

### **Ghana**

Through our CFI commitment to end deforestation and forest degradation in the Ghanaian cocoa sector, General Mills achieved the following progress in 2024.

Number	Indicator	2024 Progress
ENV-02	Directly sourced cocoa traceable from farm to first point of purchase	3296
CC-06	Volume of cocoa beans sourced from the direct supply chain	3420
	Traceability to Farm	85%
CC-04	Farmers in Direct Supply Chain	10136
ENV-09	Multi-purpose trees distributed for on-farm planting	75099

CFI-b	Improved Cocoa Seedlings Distributed in Ghana	111580
ENV-05	Farmers provided with technical assistance to adopt and expand agroforestry	464
CFI-a	Farms mapped within direct supply chain	6434
CFI-e	Members of Village Savings and Loan Associations in the current year	3410

## Côte d'Ivoire Detailed Narrative

Since 2018, General Mills has been working through our suppliers and partners to deliver on the core commitments set out under the CFI, in Côte d'Ivoire. Highlights of our 2024 progress include:

### Environment:

- **85% traceability to farm:** One of our priorities has been to ensure we understand the origin of the cocoa used in our products to ensure our sourcing contributes to our Forest Positive agenda. In 2024, 85% of our cocoa volumes were traceable from the farm to the first purchase point in Côte d'Ivoire. We continue to work with our suppliers to understand the barriers and challenges to closing the last 15%.
- **122,690 multi-purpose trees distributed for on-farm planting:** This program focused on the co-benefits of non-cocoa trees on farm plots, such as increasing moisture and shade. Taking advantage of a change in local law that solidified tree tenure and incentivized the upkeep of these trees, the program was able to distribute 122,690 seedlings and help farmers realize these benefits for their land, along with an additional 16,645 trees for off-farm planting.

### Farmer Livelihoods:

- **14,000 Farmers provided with technical assistance to adopt and expand agroforestry:** Investment in the long-term productivity and quality of cocoa/farms in our supply base is a priority for General Mills, as this limits the need for cocoa farm expansion into protected areas.
- **6,541 farmers participated in VSLA groups:** Village savings and loan associations (VSLAs) have demonstrated themselves to be a highly successful sustainable livelihood intervention in Côte d'Ivoire, particularly for empowering women who become leaders in their household, businesses, and communities. By the end of 2024, our programs and partnerships had enabled 6,541 farmers to participate in 244 VSLA groups.

### Child Labor

- **Child protection:** Through supplier partnerships and our partnership with CARE, we continued to support community capacity building on issues related to the fight against child labor. In 2024, 12,319 households were covered by a Child Labor Monitoring and Remediation system (CLMRS) or similar system that assesses and tackles proximate and root causes of child labor.

## Ghana Detailed Narrative

Since 2018, General Mills has been working through our suppliers and partners to deliver on the core commitments set out under the CFI in Ghana. Highlights of our 2024 progress include:

### Environment

- **85% traceable to farm:** One of our priorities has been to ensure we understand the origin of the cocoa used in our products to ensure our sourcing is not driving deforestation. In 2024, 85% of our cocoa volumes were traceable from the farm to the first purchase point. We continue to work with our suppliers to understand the barriers and challenges to closing the last 15%.
- **75,099 multi-purpose trees distributed for on-farm planting:** Working through our suppliers and partners, General Mills contributed to the distribution and planting of multi-purpose trees for on-farm restoration via agroforestry. Over 75,099 multi-purpose trees were distributed for on-farm planting. These seedlings will contribute to long-term farmer livelihoods and improved cocoa quality and yields.

### Farmer Livelihoods

- **464 Farmers provided with technical assistance to adopt and expand agroforestry:** Investment in the long-term productivity and quality of cocoa/farms in our supply base is a priority for General Mills, as this limits the need for cocoa farm expansion into protected areas.

## LOOKING FORWARD

Since 2018, signatory companies have been working to fulfill their commitments to end deforestation and restore degraded forests in the cocoa sector. As we advance to the next chapter of the Cocoa and Forests Initiative, we continue to strive towards reaching our goal of 100% traceability to origin, and support advancements in remote polygon mapping and smallholder engagement. This work will be aided by the European Union Deforestation Regulation and other voluntary climate commitments, such as the Forest, Land and Agriculture (FLAG) Guidance from the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi). In 2024, in alignment with FLAG Guidance from SBTi, General Mills committed across its primary deforestation-linked commodities —including cocoa —with a target date of December 31, 2025.

As the next chapter of CFI continues, the focus is on continuing momentum: strengthening data collection, identifying further opportunities for landscape level collective action, as well as maintaining close ties across industry stakeholders to drive forest positive impact on the ground.

**Looking ahead, General Mills sees several priorities for its CFI activities in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana:**

- Continue to advance towards goal of 100% traceability to farm.

- Continue to advance progress and maintain our commitment to No Deforestation, in alignment with SBTi FLAG guidance.
- Support sectoral efforts to establish a robust and credible deforestation monitoring system as well as ensuring that 100% of our cocoa sourcing is covered by deforestation monitoring systems.
- Continue to integrate CFI lessons within broader context of climate initiatives and commitments, notably SBTi, furthering evolution to forest- and people-positive approaches to reduce emissions from land-use change.
- Continue investments in community development and agroforestry programs working with our implementation partner PUR— see below “Ecosystems and Livelihoods Program”.
- Continue delivery of our suppliers’ sustainable volume program, with a focus on forest protection and restoration, CLMRS, and improving smallholder farmer livelihoods.
- Continue the delivery of our “Cocoa Sustainability Initiative” program with CARE, targeting community development and prevention of child labor.

### ***Ecosystems and Livelihoods Program***

In order to amplify our support for forest protection and restoration efforts in Côte d’Ivoire, and in partnership with agroforestry program developer, PUR, we have implemented the Cocoa Ecosystems and Livelihood Program, beginning in January 2020 in the Kakum HIA region of Ghana and the Mont Peko region of Côte d’Ivoire.

The initiative, encompassing regenerative principles, incorporates agroforestry and land tenure support, awareness-raising activities, and the implementation of cookstoves and beehives. These activities will support farmer livelihoods and promote vital ecosystem restoration and protection. Through this work in Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana, General Mills and PUR have achieved in 2024:

**Community-based agroforestry in both Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire:** 197,789 seedlings were distributed to 15 different communities between both countries to apply and practice agroforestry techniques. Community nurseries have played a significant role in providing both income and seedlings for farmers.

**Income Diversification Through Beekeeping:** Beekeeping continues to be a sought-after complementary activity in the communities and draws more farmers to participate in the project. In 2024, 50 hives were distributed and constructed in Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana.

**Improved Cookstoves to Reduce Timber Reliance:** In 2024, 137 improved cookstoves were distributed across Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire. These cookstoves are more efficient, reducing cooking time, pollution, and reliance on local timber harvesting for fuel.



## ANNEX 1: RESULTS STORIES

### Breaking Barriers – March 2025

Isha Amankwa is a cocoa farmer in Ghana, a member of her local Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) in her local Wansabiampa village, and mother of three children. At 46 years old, she manages a diverse agricultural portfolio, cultivating a 3.5-acre cocoa farm alongside vegetables, plantains, oranges, and coconuts.

Through the CARE and General Mills Cocoa Sustainability Initiative (CSI) program, Isha has received extensive training in Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs)—equipping her with the skills needed to improve farm productivity and resilience. This support has helped her refine her farming techniques, allowing her to maximize yields and adopt more sustainable practices in her farming career.



In 2024, during the National Farmers' Day celebration in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa district, Isha was recognized with the Best Female Farmer award as a testament to her dedication and the impact of the training programs she participated in.

*"The size of my farm alone wouldn't have earned me such a prestigious award without the adoption of the right techniques and practices,"* Isha shared. She attributes her success to the knowledge gained from various training programs on raising cocoa nurseries, pruning, farm sanitation, providing adequate shade, and applying recommended agro-inputs.

Beyond enhancing her farming techniques, the initiative's focus on gender inclusion played a crucial role in her journey.



*"I once believed that awards like this were only for men, not women. But today, I stand here honored as a woman, thanks to the support and facilitation from the CARE team in promoting gender equality,"* she said.

Isha's story is a powerful testament to the transformative impact of training, education, and gender empowerment in agriculture. Through the CARE-General Mills Cocoa Sustainability Initiative (CSI) program, she has not only elevated her farming career but also challenged traditional gender norms, paving the way for more women to succeed in Ghana's agricultural sector.

## ANNEX 2: RESULTS STORIES



Victoria Nukafo is a mother of two. She's also a cocoa producer based in the Tawiah Nkwanta community, in the central region of Ghana.

In 2024, Victoria was one of 326 farmers that planted a total of 30,016 trees on the land in and around her cocoa farm. After seeing the benefits of PUR's agroforestry program on her brother's cocoa farm – such as shade, organic fertilizer, green cocoa leaves and optimal yields – she too wished to create multiple benefits on her newly established cocoa farm.

*"I was initially reluctant in accepting to be a part of the agroforestry project," she says. "But my brother is part of the nursery technician team, and he advised me to get involved in the project because of its many benefits."* She initially struggled with planting trees (*"it felt like an uphill task"*), but with determination and the support of PUR facilitators,

she managed to overcome the hurdle and succeeded in planting every single seedling.

*"I received \$6.71 USD (104 Ghana Cedis) as a first round of incentive payments for planting trees, which I deeply appreciated. I used the money to offset some minor debts at home."* But for Victoria, the real reward has been seeing the transformation on her farm, and knowing she is creating a better future for her children. *"This initiative has taught me resilience and shown me that growth is possible, no matter the obstacles. I'm proud to be part of something that not only benefits my family but also nurtures our environment."*

*"Now, in 2024, I'm proud to say none of my seedlings have died. And I look forward to better growth of my cocoa."*



### ANNEX 3: DATA TABLES – GHANA

Description	Target (2024)	# Through direct investment (2024)	# Through direct investment (Since 2023)	# Through direct investment (Since 2018)
<b>FOREST PROTECTION AND RESTORATION</b>				
# of farms mapped in direct supply chain: Total Active	7,200	5,086		
# of hectares in the direct supply chain with deforestation risk assessments completed	17,500	9,527		
# metric tons of directly sourced cocoa traceable from the farm to the first purchase point (target is 100%)		3,296		
# hectares restored in Forest Reserve / Forêts Classée	0	0		
# trees registered	0	0		
# of farmers with land tenure agreements/documentation obtained via company support	95	0		93
# farmers informed, trained, and / or consulted on the new Forest Code, forest policy, law enforcement, forest protection, and restoration	160	1,494		
# Individuals receiving incentives to protect and restore forests and / or adopt agroforestry (e.g., PES): New	195	346	386	1013
# Individuals receiving incentives to protect and restore forests and / or adopt agroforestry (e.g., PES): Total Active	1,015	733		
# farmers applying agroforestry: New		465		
# farmers applying agroforestry: Total Active		826		
# farmers provided with technical assistance to adopt and expand agroforestry	250	464		
# multi-purpose trees distributed for on-farm planting	220,000	75,099	125,661	570553
# hectares cocoa agroforestry: New	1,200	790	1,141	4588
# hectares cocoa agroforestry: Total Active		1,400		
# of trees distributed for off-farm planting	1,200	0	2,262	4815
# hectares of forest area restored off-reserve / in rural zone	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)	600	464		
# of farmers trained in Modified Taungya System (MTS)				
\$ contributed to fund				
<b>SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AND FARMERS' LIVELIHOOD</b>				
# improved cocoa seedlings distributed to farmers	150,000	111,580	192,195	875992
# farmers provided with technical assistance (based on plans) to professionalize & optimize cocoa farming practices	7,900	7,324		
# individuals participating in additional Income Generating Activities (IGA's)		522		
# individuals provided with technical assistance (based on plans) to increase income from non-cocoa sources / IGA's	850	2,270		
# Individuals provided with technical assistance to save money and access finance	1,500	4,474		
# of members of VSLA groups in the current year	2,600	3,410		
# of VSLA groups in the current year	120	119		
<b>SOCIAL INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY</b>				
# of cocoa communities with active forest restoration and protection program (CBNRM): New	3	0		1
# of cocoa communities with active forest restoration and protection program (CBNRM): Total Active		0		
# hectares under CBNRM	0	0		
# of individuals participating in women's empowerment projects and activities	3,000	3,438		
# of individuals participating in youth focused projects and activities (15-35 years old)	150	365		

**ANNEX 4: DATA TABLES – COTE D’IVOIRE**

Description	Target (2024)	# Through direct investment (2024)	# Through direct investment (Since 2023)	# Through direct investment (Since 2018)
<b>FOREST PROTECTION AND RESTORATION</b>				
# of farms mapped in direct supply chain: Total Active	7,100	19,147		
# of hectares in the direct supply chain with deforestation risk assessments completed	21,800	50,161		
# metric tons of directly sourced cocoa traceable from the farm to the first purchase point (target is 100%)		12,843		
# hectares restored in Forest Reserve / Forêts Classée	0	0		
# trees registered	3,000	0	3,000	3,000
# of farmers with land tenure agreements/documentation obtained via company support	12	0		10
# farmers informed, trained, and / or consulted on the new Forest Code, forest policy, law enforcement, forest protection, and restoration	2,700	3,214		
# Individuals receiving incentives to protect and restore forests and / or adopt agroforestry (e.g., PES): New	170	1,056	1,336	1,430
# Individuals receiving incentives to protect and restore forests and / or adopt agroforestry (e.g., PES): Total Active	1,030	2,061		
# farmers applying agroforestry: New		935		
# farmers applying agroforestry: Total Active		1,923		
# farmers provided with technical assistance to adopt and expand agroforestry	940	1,655		
# multi-purpose trees distributed for on-farm planting	6,500	122,690	197,842	490,490
# hectares cocoa agroforestry: New	720	1,953	2,608	5,415
# hectares cocoa agroforestry: Total Active		3,181		
# of trees distributed for off-farm planting	7,000	16,645	23,375	36,076
# hectares of forest area restored off-reserve / in rural zone	0	0		2

# farmers provided with technical assistance to be more resilient to climate change and reduce and remove carbon emissions on farm (e.g., CSC)	4,700	13,688		
# of farmers trained in Modified Taungya System (MTS)				
\$ contributed to fund				
<b>SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AND FARMERS' LIVELIHOOD</b>				
# improved cocoa seedlings distributed to farmers				
# farmers provided with technical assistance (based on plans) to professionalize & optimize cocoa farming practices	6,500	14,000		
# individuals participating in additional Income Generating Activities (IGA's)		4,928		
# individuals provided with technical assistance (based on plans) to increase income from non-cocoa sources / IGA's	2,300	5,808		
# Individuals provided with technical assistance to save money and access finance	2,300	13,354		
# of members of VSLA groups in the current year	5,200	6,541		
# of VSLA groups in the current year	200	244		
<b>SOCIAL INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY</b>				
# of cocoa communities with active forest restoration and protection program (CBNRM): New	5	0		6
# of cocoa communities with active forest restoration and protection program (CBNRM): Total Active		0		
# hectares under CBNRM	5	0		1,152
# of individuals participating in women's empowerment projects and activities	6,200	4,936		
# of individuals participating in youth focused projects and activities (15-35 years old)	2,200	1,745		