



The Pathway to Sustainable Cocoa Production in Ghana

Ghana's cocoa sector has reached an historic juncture in transforming itself onto a more sustainable pathway. This juncture was not arrived at overnight – it reflects a 20-year journey which when understood reveals the magnitude of the work already accomplished as well as some of the challenges that undoubtedly lie ahead. This table summarizes many of the key initiatives, programs and activities which have marked the journey of moving the cocoa sector forward towards a future desired state of sustainability.

Table: Key initiatives and programs that led to landscape activities and climate-smart cocoa in Ghana

Date	Initiative / Programme	Brief Description
1999	"Conservation Cocoa" initiated around Kakum	Building off of bird-friendly initiatives in coffee and cocoa sectors in Central America, Conservation International started Conservation Cocoa activities in the buffer areas of Kakum National Park. This work kicked off discussions about the overall impact of cocoa on biodiversity in the high forest zone.
2002	Sustainable Tree Crops Program	STCP was a public-private partnership and innovation platform focused on improving incomes among tree crop farmers in an environmentally and socially responsible manner in West / Central Africa. With a very strong focus on cocoa production in Ghana, it was one of the early efforts to introducing innovations to enhance productivity, increase marketing efficiency, diversify farmer income, and strengthen the institutional and policy environment. It ran from 2002-2012.
2005	"Cocoa Biodiversity" research project (2005-2010)	Cadbury plc, Reading University, Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana, Earthwatch Institute UK and NCRC collaborated on a pioneering research project to document the impact of cocoa farming in Ghana. Dramatic research results kicked off a chain of subsequent work.
2007	Cocoa Carbon Analysis	Building on the Cocoa Biodiversity research above, Reading University researchers and NCRC initiated the 1 st study to accurately document the amount of carbon stored across the spectrum of different cocoa farming regimes. The results catalyzed questions about the possibility of doing a REDD+ carbon project in cocoa farming systems.
2008	REDD+ Readiness Plan Idea Note—R-PIN	2008 marked the beginning of REDD+ with the submission of Ghana's Readiness Plan Idea Note (R-PIN) to the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF). This was submitted under the leadership of the Forestry Commission's (then) Climate Change Unit).
	Cocoa Carbon REDD+ project process initiated	Following from the Biodiversity and Carbon results above, NCRC and Forest Trends, with support from Cadbury, The Rockefeller Foundation and NORAD began trying to design a cocoa carbon project in Ghana. This work moved made good progress in conceptualizing REDD+ in Ghana and supporting early REDD+ readiness efforts. However, it generally concluded that a project-based REDD+ approach would not work in Ghana's cocoa sector.

	Cocoa certification expands into Ghana	Rainforest Alliance followed by UTZ expanded their cocoa farm certification schemes into Ghana's cocoa sector, seeking to improve sustainability. Prior to this point, only Fair Trade cocoa had been operating in the country.
2010	Ghana REDD+ Readiness Preparation Plan (R-PP) accepted	Ghana's Readiness Preparation Plan (R-PP) was accepted by the FCPF in 2010, triggering the release of funding and technical support for REDD+ readiness.
2011	20-Year Climate Smart Cocoa Pathway Plan	By 2010 international discussions started on the links between climate-smart agriculture and REDD+. In Ghana, NCRC, the FC-CCU and Forest Trends facilitated the formation of a Climate-Smart Cocoa Working Group. This Working Group, which included participants from the private sector, government, research institutions, and civil society organizations over spent 12 months achieving consensus on a 20 Year Vision for Ghana's Cocoa Sector. The resulting report formed the intellectual foundation of the Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Programme.
2012	Early CSC being piloted under FIP	Ghana's Forest Investment Program (FIP), which was supported by the World Bank's Strategic Climate Fund (SCF) within the Climate Investment Fund (CIF) provided the government with over USD 30 million in support to improve forest and tree management practices by cocoa farmers, CREMA communities and forest reserve managers to reduce forest loss and degradation in selected landscapes (former Western Region and Brong Ahafo Region) in Ghana's High Forest Zone. Implemented by the MLNR, in partnership with Ghana's FC, Cocoa Board, MoFA, the overall goal of the FIP financed activities is to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from deforestation and forest degradation while reducing poverty and conserving biodiversity.
	Tree tenure policy reforms initiated	IUCN Ghana begins efforts on tree tenure reform and tree passports in the high forest zone. This work continues and has had significant impact on awareness and thinking about the disconnect between land and tree tenure in the country. In 2014 it was integrated in government FIP work and consultations and pilots followed.
2013	Adapting CREMA for application to cocoa landscapes initiated— HIA and Sub-HIAs	IUCN NL, NCRC, A-Rocha and Tropenbos undertook a series of studies and dialogues about how CREMA could be adapted to focus on issues beyond wildlife management, including climate smart agriculture, cocoa and REDD+. This work produced early ideas which ultimately ended up in the HIA and Sub-HIA structures being implemented under GCFRP.
2014	Cocoa emission reductions program initiated	Ghana conceptualized and presented its concept for a Cocoa Emissions Reduction Programme for the High Forest Zone, with co-leadership by Forestry Commission and Cocobod. The programme was accepted into the World Bank's Carbon Fund pipeline, which support programme developmnt. This program built off the CSC 20 Year Plan, articulated in 2011 and ultimately resulted in the GCFRP.
	Start of long-term socio-ecological research projects in cocoa landscape	University of Oxford, University of Reading, the Zoological Society of London, University of Leeds, FORIG and NCRC collaborated on a series of long-term multi-disciplinary socio-ecological-climate research studies in cocoa/oil palm landscapes around Kakum National Park (Assin North & South District, Central Region). These projects assessed ecosystem services and functions of tree crop landscapes with

		significant forest patches resulting in key findings which fed into GCFRP design and articulation of CSC.
2015	Ghana's National REDD+ Strategy published	Ghana's National REDD+ Strategy was published, outlining the key processes, systems and frameworks to effectively implement the REDD+ mechanism. It included a thorough assessment of the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, and an articulation of the nesting of eco-zone/commodity sub-national REDD+ programmes within an overall national framework. The strategy highlighted the top priority of the GCFRP.
2017	GCFRP formally accepted into Carbon Fund pipeline	The GCFRP emission reductions programme was one of the first countries, globally, to be accepted into the WB Carbon Fund portfolio, which put Ghana on track to sign an Emission Reductions Purchase Agreement (ERPA) with the Carbon Fund.
	LandScale design underway	The design phase of LandScale (LS) was launched to be a tool to drive landscape-scale sustainability. It provides a standardized approach for monitoring, communicating, and improving the sustainability performance of landscapes. LandScale distils the complexity of landscapes into reliable and comparable information about the state of ecosystems, human well-being, governance, and production. LandScale is now testing the assessment framework in five major commodity-production countries, including in Ghana for cocoa.
	Cocoa & Forest Initiative commitment formally agreed at COP 25	Top cocoa producing countries Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, together with the leading chocolate and cocoa companies, launched the Cocoa & Forests Initiative (CFI); an unprecedented commitment to a no-deforestation supply chain for nearly two-thirds of the global supply of cocoa. The CFI Frameworks for Action pledges no further conversion of any forest land for cocoa production. The companies and governments pledged to eliminate illegal cocoa production in national parks, in line with stronger enforcement of national forest policies and development of alternative livelihoods for affected farmers.
2018	Piloting HIA and Sub-HIA landscape governance institutions	Implementation of the early HIA landscapes under GCFRP began in Western North and Central regions with support of P4F, AFD, and corporate partners Touton and Hershey. Critically important in this early process was the formal adaptation of CREMA mechanism to the HIA context. This built on the earlier work undertaken in 2013.
2019	NTPF botanical income diversification	The 1 st commercial sales of botanical forest products from CSC farms were completed in Central Region involving kombo nuts. This is key to the evolution of enhancing farm household income from managing the landscape in a more sustainable manner.
	Cocoa HIA monitoring and evaluation system development	NCRC and partners began the design and testing of an HIA-level monitoring and evaluation system to gather data on ecological, sustainable production, farmer well-being and landscape governance indicators. The project, supported by Lindt Cocoa Foundation, incorporates the successful and relevant elements from these various initiatives for the purpose of monitoring climate-smart cocoa CREMAs and Sub-HIAs in Hotspot Intervention Areas (HIAs) in cocoa landscapes.
	GCFRP ERPA executed	In 2019 the Government of Ghana and the World Bank Carbon Fund signed an agreement for the Carbon Fund to purchase USD50 million of

		verified carbon emission reduction credits resulting from the successful implementation of the GCFRP. This is the 1 st purchase agreement from a commodity carbon program in the world.
2019	CFI individual company action plans	Following the sector's commitment to a no-deforestation supply chain in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, each signatory company also shared its individual action plans on; i) forest protection and restoration, ii) sustainable production and livelihoods, iii) community engagement and social inclusion.
2020	Signing of ERPA	The Government of Ghana and the Carbon Fund signed an historic Emission Reductions Purchase Agreement (ERPA) for USD\$ 50 in which Ghana will produce 10 million tons of emission reductions in the GCFRP landscape.
	Validation of Ghana's Climate Smart Cocoa Standard	After more than two years of drafting and deliberations, Ghana's Cocoa Board held a stakeholder workshop to validate Ghana's CSC Standard, marking the first time that a cocoa production country has taken steps to standardize farm-level and landscape-level interventions to support cocoa production, forest protection and improved cocoa livelihoods.