

Ghana and Cocoa & Chocolate Companies

Forge Partnership to Protect and Restore Forests

- The Partnership will accelerate the delivery of public and private sector Cocoa & Forests Initiative commitments
- The Cocoa & Forests Initiative is now fully aligned with the Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Program

Accra – April 14, 2021 – Ghana and cocoa and chocolate companies announced an agreement today to accelerate collaboration to protect and restore forests in cocoa-growing areas. With this agreement, the [World Cocoa Foundation](#) (WCF) and the [Forestry Commission of Ghana](#) (GFC) are building a partnership to further align the [Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Program](#) (GCFRP) and the [Cocoa & Forests Initiative](#) to achieve no deforestation commitments.

The [Memorandum of Understanding](#), signed by GFC and WCF, commits the parties to working together in six regions where the government of Ghana has made action to protect and restore forests a priority. The work in these Hotspot Intervention Areas has already started, with active engagements in the Asunafo-Asutifi, Bia-Juaboso, Kakum and Sefwi-Bibiani landscapes. It is aligned with commitments spelled out in the Ghana [framework for action](#) signed in November 2017 for the landmark Cocoa & Forests Initiative, a unique partnership of 35 companies, governments and cocoa-growing communities.

As part of the Memorandum of Understanding, GFC will facilitate the development of strategic initiatives, collaborate on protocols for data collection and ensure stronger monitoring on social and environmental issues. WCF is responsible for facilitating the coordination and convening the actions of the [35 cocoa and chocolate companies](#) that have signed the Cocoa & Forests Initiative. WCF will also support monitoring and evaluation, innovation and private-public learning.

In his remarks, the Chief Executive of the GFC, John Allotey said *“this partnership represents a phenomenal collaboration with the private sector to ambitiously contribute to real and verifiable emission reductions in Ghana’s precious forest landscapes which are home to diverse forms of wildlife and also provide important livelihood options for rural dwellers. The GCFRP is already achieving significant impacts with inclusive governance arrangements and the GFC encourages other like-minded institutions to strategically partner with the program for visible impact at scale.”*

“With our partner GFC, we aim to accelerate our journey towards forest positive cocoa,” said Richard Scobey, WCF’s President. *“Ending cocoa-related deforestation requires all stakeholders to work together. Today, WCF and cocoa and chocolate companies are strengthening our collaboration with the government of Ghana.”*

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On the Cocoa & Forests Initiative (CFI):

The Cocoa & Forests is a public-private partnership to end cocoa-related deforestation and forest degradation and promote forest restoration. 35 cocoa and chocolate companies and governments collaborate within the framework of CFI with other stakeholders such as NGOs, farmer organizations and civil society organizations on the development and implementation of business-driven solutions.

In 2020, cocoa and chocolate companies [announced](#) major strides towards 2022 Cocoa & Forests Initiative targets with, for example, more than 4 million tree seedlings distributed to farmers to establish agroforestry systems and reforest degraded forests in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana.

The Cocoa & Forests Initiative contributes to Sustainable Development Goals 13 (Climate Action) and 15 (Life on Land) and is aligned with the Paris Climate Agreement.

On the Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Program (GCFRP):

The GFC and the Ghana Cocoa Board led in the design and development of the world's first commodity-driven emission reductions program - the Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Program (GCFRP). The program covers 5.9 million hectares of the cocoa-forest mosaic landscape. The goal is to significantly reduce deforestation and forest degradation over a twenty-year period in a phased implementation approach by promoting climate-smart cocoa production, lower risk cocoa farming, landscape level land-use planning, strategic tree tenure reforms and forest rehabilitation interventions. The program will significantly deliver enhancements in ecosystem resilience, increase in farmers' yields, and generate multiple livelihood benefits underpinned by robust, transparent and inclusive governance structures.

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