

# Sustainable Tree Crops Program



**Program Dates:** Pilot Phase 2003-2006; Phase II 2007-2011

**Countries:** Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia and Nigeria

**Core-Funders:** US Agency for International Development (USAID), World Cocoa Foundation and global cocoa industry, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

**Manager:** International Institute of Tropical Agriculture

**Partnership Platform:** Farmers and producer organizations, the global chocolate/cocoa industry and trade, donors and development agencies, policymakers, national governments, and research institutes.

## Overview

In recent years, widespread recognition among African governments and their development partners of the strong role agriculture in general, and tree crops in particular, can play in the fight against poverty and in promoting rural economic growth has led to a renewed commitment to promoting agriculture development. As a primary source of export earnings and foreign exchange for many African countries, perennial tree crops play a vital role in the region's economic landscape. West and Central Africa alone provide nearly 70% of global exports of cocoa, by far Africa's most important tree crop. The Sustainable Tree Crops Program is an innovation platform that aims to improve the economic and social well being of tree crop farmers and the environmental sustainability of their systems in West and Central Africa. During the Pilot Phase, which focused on cocoa, a first set of technology transfer, marketing, and institutional innovations were introduced and validated in the field (see next page). Phase II of the program will build upon the successes of the pilot and address additional production, marketing and policy opportunities, while strengthening local capacity.

## Program Objectives

To achieve sustained rural income growth, the Sustainable Tree Crops Program focuses on the achievement of five strategic results and their related specific objectives through the introduction of new tools, methods, approaches, and policies together with public and private partners:

- **Enhanced productivity of cocoa farms through intensification:** increase gross margins by 25-30% across farms participating in productivity enhancing innovations.
  - 125,000 farmers participate in innovations to increase productivity, and safety/efficiency of labor
  - Increase the capacity of 2 local production service providers per country
  - Establish 1 new institutional arrangement to facilitate access to inputs and services per country
  - Regional production research network functions
- **Enhanced marketing efficiency in the cocoa sector:** reduce marketing margins by 5-15% between farmgate and FoB pricing among farmers and the local private sector participating in market efficiency enhancing innovations.
  - 40 marketing firms, such as cooperatives and licensed buying companies, participate in marketing efficiency enhancing innovations
  - Increase the capacity of 2 local business support service providers per country
  - Establish one new institutional arrangement to increase marketing efficiency per country
- **Income alternatives in cocoa farming communities and agro-ecologies for equitable growth:** increase gross margins by 50% across farms participating in income enhancing alternatives.
  - 25,000 farmers participate in income increasing alternatives to cocoa production through farm level diversification
  - Increase the capacity of 2 local production service providers per country
- **Improved policy environment to enable rural transformation in cocoa communities and agro-ecologies:** increase productivity growth by 6% in the cocoa belt.
  - Analyze regional and national policy issues and formulate recommendations
  - Hold public debate and stakeholder consultations on policy issues
  - Establish a regional innovation network for the cocoa sector

In addition, as opportunities arise, STCP will endeavor to scale out core program knowledge and expertise to tree crops in other agro-ecologies in support of similar productivity growth.

## Illustrative Successes to Date

Working with partners, STCP has completed its first set of pilot activities. Some key successes have already been achieved:

- The STCP partnership has been identified as an important innovation “from which all stakeholders derive value. This unique partnership has never before existed for the cocoa sector, which is the most important tree-based commodity in West Africa.” (External Review, 2005)
- Bringing together national, regional, and international expertise, a high-quality, inexpensive and relevant farmer training approach was developed building on a farmer field school (FFS) based discovery learning concept. FFS on cocoa integrated crop, pest, diseases and quality management has been successful validated for West Africa with 33,000 farmers in 5 countries over five years. An additional 69,000 farmers have indirectly benefited through farmer-to-farmer diffusion of knowledge. In fields of FFS farmers, cocoa yields were on average 15 to 40% higher, while requiring 10 to 20% less pesticides.
- STCP has been testing approaches to improve the effectiveness of farmer organizations as a mechanism to better integrate farmers with markets and to increase farmer income. This is being done in partnership with cooperative-like structures through training and technical support. Results show that through group sales, and more transparent and direct transactions, farmers received 5-15% higher farm-gate prices. For example, organizations directly associated with this program in 2007 marketed 4,900 MT of cocoa and generated US\$4.14 million in revenue.
- The combination of improved production and marketing skills can lead to significant improvements in farmer remuneration. Studies show that the increase in household cocoa income in 2004, as a combined result of production and marketing interventions, was on average between 23 and 55% higher.
- STCP conducted studies in 4 countries and concluded in 2002 that children can potentially be exposed to hazardous forms of labour on cocoa farms. By combining social and technical messages, farmers have been sensitized on child labour in the farmer field schools. Studies in Ghana, for example, show that for every 1,000 farmers trained, 210 children are voluntarily removed from hazardous forms of work.
- National organizations/institutions have expressed great eagerness for integrating these innovations into their programs. For example, the farmer field school approach has been declared by the National Cocoa Development Committee as the primary cocoa extension mechanism for Nigeria and is implementing a national plan to this end with the backstopping of STCP.
- STCP is also an emerging platform for regional collaboration on research to address the genetic basis for improved cocoa plants, pest and disease management, and the rehabilitation and diversification of cocoa farms. At the same time, local research capacity is being developed across the region.

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Funding sources of the Sustainable Tree Crops Program and its contributing partners 2003-2008:

World Cocoa Foundation  
Global cocoa/chocolate industry partners  
United States Agency for International Development (USAID)  
European Union (EU)  
United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)  
Federal Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development/National Cocoa Development Committee (Nigeria)  
Fonds de Développement & de Promotion des activités des producteurs de café et de cacao (Côte d'Ivoire)  
SOCODEVI/Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)  
Forest and Landscape Denmark/Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA)  
International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)  
Centre for International Migration and Development (CIM Germany)  
Department for International Development (UK)  
Dutch Ministry of Agriculture  
Associates in Rural Development (ARD USA)  
TransFair USA

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