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 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.

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.

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.

General Mills 2025 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 2025.

Number	Indicator	2025 Annual Progress
ENV-02	Directly sourced cocoa traceable from farm to first point of purchase	8494
CC-06	Volume of cocoa beans sourced from the direct supply chain	8535
	Traceability to Farm	88%
CC-04	Farmers in Direct Supply Chain	14952
ENV-09	Multi-purpose trees distributed for on-farm planting	33680
ENV-05	Farmers provided with technical assistance to adopt and expand agroforestry	1025
CFI-a	Farms mapped within direct supply chain	15468
CFI-e	Members of Village Savings and Loan Associations in the current year	1114
CL-01	Households covered by a CLMRS or comparable system	9012

Ghana

Through our CFI commitment to end deforestation and forest degradation in the Ghanaian cocoa sector, General Mills achieved the following progress in 2025.

Number	Indicator	2025 Progress
ENV-02	Directly sourced cocoa traceable from farm to first point of purchase	1527
CC-06	Volume of cocoa beans sourced from the direct supply chain	1527
	Traceability to Farm	88%
CC-04	Farmers in Direct Supply Chain	2663
ENV-09	Multi-purpose trees distributed for on-farm planting	9756

CFI-b	Improved Cocoa Seedlings Distributed in Ghana	26595
ENV-05	Farmers provided with technical assistance to adopt and expand agroforestry	134
CFI-a	Farms mapped within direct supply chain	2752
CFI-e	Members of Village Savings and Loan Associations in the current year	468

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 2025 progress include:

Environment:

- **88% 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 2025, 88% 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 12%.

- **33,680 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 33,680 seedlings and help farmers realize these benefits for their land.

Farmer Livelihoods:

- **1,025 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.

- **1,114 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 2025, our programs and partnerships had enabled 1,114 farmers to participate in 41 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 2025, 9,012 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 2025 progress include:

Environment

- **88% 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 2025, 88% 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 12%.

- **9,756 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 9,756 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

- **134 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 since 2020:

Community-based agroforestry in both Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire: 193,684 seedlings were distributed to 36 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. Since 2020, 510 hives have been distributed and constructed in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana.

Improved Cookstoves to Reduce Timber Reliance: Since 2020, 1,624 improved cookstoves have been 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

Hawa Adamu, a VSLA member from Nkwanta Eshiem, is a 50-year-old widow and mother of four. After losing her husband, she faced the difficult reality of managing both farming and caregiving alone. Income was unpredictable, and meeting her children's basic needs, especially school fees and food, became increasingly challenging. "Taking care of the children… has been a struggle with my small income," she shared. As part of CSI IV's support for women's livelihoods, Hawa participated in poultry rearing and feed formulation training and received 60 poultry birds as start-up support. Applying the improved practices she learned, along with careful record-keeping, Hawa steadily expanded her enterprise across three production cycles. "I currently have 100 birds after two annual sales of about 130 birds and some crates of eggs. My excitement is in my ability to sustain the poultry after three years and even add goats," she said. Hawa now keeps records tracking her costs, sales, and profits, helping her make informed decisions about reinvestment and expansion. She has adopted improved housing and feeding practices, increasing the health and productivity of her poultry. To ensure continuity beyond CSI IV, CARE facilitated linkages between poultry producers and the Department of Food and Agriculture, giving Hawa access to veterinary services, disease prevention support, and ongoing technical guidance. With these systems in place, she is planning to scale her poultry business. The impact on Hawa's household has been profound. "I am now able to properly cater for my children's education and feeding," she said. With her increased income, she has also acquired a piece of land and is working toward her goal of building a permanent home for her family. Reflecting on her journey, Hawa attributes her progress to the skills, confidence, and opportunities gained through CSI IV. Hawa's story illustrates how targeted livelihood support, paired with training, ongoing technical linkages, and women's leadership, can create lasting economic empowerment for women.

ANNEX 2: RESULTS STORIES

"They say timing is everything. Standing here in early January, a period when finances are usually tight for farmers, I am holding the tangible results of my partnership with PUR. While many hesitated, I took the initiative to integrate trees into my cocoa farm, and today I am seeing the rewards. This moment is historic for me: it is the first time I have been paid to plant trees that I truly own, supported by a legal contract. This incentive is more than a payment; it is an opportunity for growth. I will use it to hire farm labour to improve my cocoa farm and set aside a small portion to celebrate this achievement. I am grateful to the PUR team for keeping their word, and I am committed to maintaining these seedlings to the highest standards as we prepare for the next monitoring phase and future benefits from this endeavour."

- John Mensah Agbo, 48

“I believe agroforestry is beneficial because planting trees in our cocoa fields helps us combat drought. The trees help bring back the rains as they used to, cool the climate, and extend the lifespan of our plantations. It is a natural and sustainable solution for improving our production and protecting our environment.”

- Victorine Guile, 44

Cooperative: COOPADI

Village: Michelkro

Region: Guemon

Country: Côte d’Ivoire

ANNEX 3: DATA TABLES – GHANA

Description	Target (2025)	# Through direct investment (2025)	# Through direct investment (Since 2023)	# Through direct investment (Since 2018)
FOREST PROTECTION AND RESTORATION				
# of farms mapped in direct supply chain: Total Active	7,300	2,599		
# of hectares in the direct supply chain with deforestation risk assessments completed	18,000	308		
# metric tons of directly sourced cocoa traceable from the farm to the first purchase point (target is 100%)		1		
# hectares restored in Forest Reserve / Forêts Classée	0	0		
# trees registered	0	0		
# of farmers with land tenure agreements/documentation obtained via company support	100	0		93
# farmers informed, trained, and / or consulted on the new Forest Code, forest policy, law enforcement, forest protection, and restoration	180	1,908		
# Individuals receiving incentives to protect and restore forests and / or adopt agroforestry (e.g., PES): New	200	25	411	1,038
# Individuals receiving incentives to protect and restore forests and / or adopt agroforestry (e.g., PES): Total Active	1,215	102		
# farmers applying agroforestry: New		26		
# farmers applying agroforestry: Total Active		108		
# farmers provided with technical assistance to adopt and expand agroforestry	300	134		
# multi-purpose trees distributed for on-farm planting	225,000	9,756	135,417	580,309
# hectares cocoa agroforestry: New	1,250	124	1,265	4,712
# hectares cocoa agroforestry: Total Active		311		
# of trees distributed for off-farm planting	1,250	0	2,262	4,815

# 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)	700	108		
SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AND FARMERS' LIVELIHOOD				
# improved cocoa seedlings distributed to farmers	150,000	26,595	218,790	902,587
# farmers provided with technical assistance (based on plans) to professionalize & optimize cocoa farming practices	8,000	1,819		
# individuals participating in additional Income Generating Activities (IGA's)		14		
# individuals provided with technical assistance (based on plans) to increase income from non-cocoa sources / IGA's	950	14		
# Individuals provided with technical assistance to save money and access finance	1,580	999		
# of members of VSLA groups in the current year	2,700	468		
# of VSLA groups in the current year	125	17		
SOCIAL INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY				
# of cocoa communities with active forest restoration and protection program (CBNRM): New	6	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	468		
# of individuals participating in youth focused projects and activities (15-35 years old)	190	0		

ANNEX 4: DATA TABLES – COTE D'IVOIRE

Description	Target (2025)	# Through direct investment (2025)	# Through direct investment (Since 2023)	# Through direct investment (Since 2018)
FOREST PROTECTION AND RESTORATION				
# of farms mapped in direct supply chain: Total Active	7,200	13,351		
# of hectares in the direct supply chain with deforestation risk assessments completed	21,900	24,700		
# metric tons of directly sourced cocoa traceable from the farm to the first purchase point (target is 100%)		1		
# 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	14	0		10
# farmers informed, trained, and / or consulted on the new Forest Code, forest policy, law enforcement, forest protection, and restoration	2,900	3,250		
# Individuals receiving incentives to protect and restore forests and / or adopt agroforestry (e.g., PES): New	170	350	1,686	1,780
# Individuals receiving incentives to protect and restore forests and / or adopt agroforestry (e.g., PES): Total Active	1,200	913		
# farmers applying agroforestry: New		216		
# farmers applying agroforestry: Total Active		1,025		
# farmers provided with technical assistance to adopt and expand agroforestry	950	1,025		
# multi-purpose trees distributed for on-farm planting	7,000	33,680	231,522	524,170
# hectares cocoa agroforestry: New	730	329	2,937	5,744
# hectares cocoa agroforestry: Total Active		1,716		

# of trees distributed for off-farm planting	7,500	3,195	26,570	39,271
# 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)	5,000	9,394		
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	6,800	7,985		
# individuals participating in additional Income Generating Activities (IGA's)		202		
# individuals provided with technical assistance (based on plans) to increase income from non-cocoa sources / IGA's	2,400	1,972		
# Individuals provided with technical assistance to save money and access finance	2,400	3,170		
# of members of VSLA groups in the current year	5,300	1,114		
# of VSLA groups in the current year	210	41		
SOCIAL INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY				
# of cocoa communities with active forest restoration and protection program (CBNRM): New	7	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	6,300	1,114		
# of individuals participating in youth focused projects and activities (15-35 years old)	2,300	27		