## 2024 Progress Report



**COCOA & FOREST INITIATIVE: COLLECTIVE EFFORTS TO ELIMINATE DEFORESTATION** LINKED TO COCOA











## **Table Of Content**

The Cocoa & Forests Initiative: Collective Efforts to Eliminate     Deforestation Linked to Cocoa	2
2. The Three Pillars of CFI	_
II. FOREST PROTECTION AND RESTORATION	6
III. SUSTAINABILITY COCOA PRODUCTION AND FARMERS LIVELIHOODS	12
IV. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION	15
ANNEX 1: TRACKING TABLE	19
ANNEX 2: RESULT STORIES	21



### I. INTRODUCTION

### 1. The Cocoa & Forests Initiative: Collective Efforts to Eliminate Deforestation Linked to Cocoa

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 (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.



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.





#### 2. The Three Pillars of CFI

## 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.



## II. FOREST PROTECTION AND RESTORATION

#### TRACING & MONITORING SUPPLY

2023/24 Target: Deploy traceability tools and technology to ensure that 100% of directly sourced cocoa in our selected supply chain is traceable from farm to purchase point, with no cocoa originating from forest areas.

For all cocoa purchases within our CFI direct supply chains, we have implemented traceability tools to track cocoa from the farm to the first purchase point.

Each farmer is assigned a unique ID and an updated profile containing key details such as farm size, number of plots, and estimated yield. This farmer ID is linked to a corresponding farm ID, ensuring clear identification of the cocoa's origin. Additionally, each farm has a yield estimate, which determines the maximum quantity a farmer is authorized to sell. Monitoring these quotas is essential to mitigating deforestation risks.

During the 2023/24 crop season, we traced 19,953 MT of cocoa sourced under our CFI direct investment, representing 100% of our directly sourced cocoa. This ensures that all cocoa we purchase comes from registered farmers who comply with the assigned quotas.











19,953 MT
OF OUR PURCHASES
OF COCOA UNDER
OUR CFI DIRECT
COCOA
INVESTMENT WERE
TRACEABLE IN 23/24

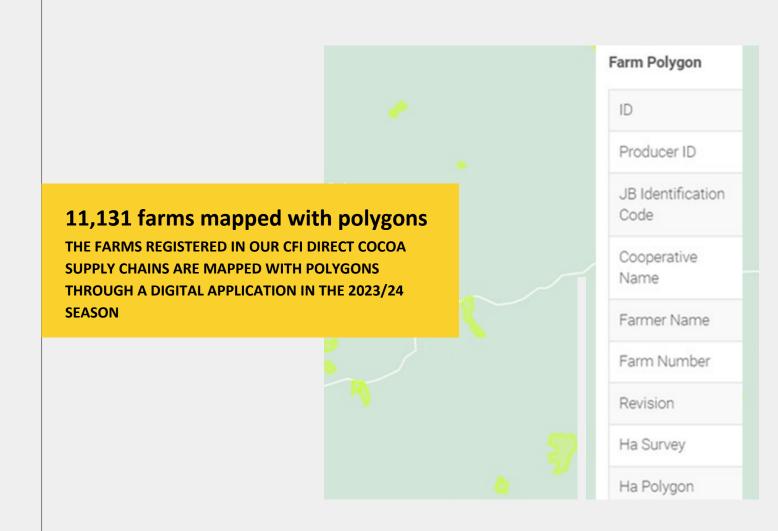
COCOA TRACEABILITY AND FARMER QUOTAS ARE THE MOST EFFECTIVE INDICATORS TO VERIFY WHEN SOURCING COCOA, ENSURING THE BEANS' ORIGIN AND PREVENTING PROCUREMENT FROM DEFORESTED AREAS.



## 2023/24 Target: Complete farm polygon mapping for 100% of the farms within our selected direct supply chain.

All farms registered in our CFI direct cocoa supply chains are mapped using polygon data through a digital application that has been in use since 2021 in Côte d'Ivoire. The mapped polygons are displayed on the web platform of our software, where they undergo verification and approval by our Monitoring, Evaluation & Verification department.

Combining our direct investments with those made on behalf of our customers, we have achieved 100% traceability of our cocoa from the farm to the first purchase point within our direct supply chain for the 2023/24 season.



#### 2023/24 Target: Conduct a deforestation risk assessment in our sourcing areas.

After verifying data consistency—including the number of plots, polygons, duplicate farms, overlaps, and shapes—we carry out a Deforestation Risk Assessment (DRA). This process involves cross-referencing farm polygon data with Côte d'Ivoire's national forest cover and land-use maps. Additionally, we utilize various maps, indexes, and tools such as Global Forest Watch to enhance accuracy.

Beyond our internal verification system, all our direct programs in Côte d'Ivoire are Rainforest Alliance-certified and undergo an additional DRA based on the Rainforest Alliance methodology.

For the 2023/24 supply chain, we mapped a total of 11,131 farms and conducted a Deforestation Risk Assessment for 39,353 hectares under our direct investment.

Combining our direct investments with those made on behalf of our customers, a total of 11,131 farms have been mapped using polygons, and 39,353 hectares have undergone a Deforestation Risk Assessment within our CFI direct cocoa supply chain in the 2023/24 season.

11,131 farms & 39,353 hectares

WITH A DEFORESTATION RISK ASSESSMENT (DRA) CONDUCTED



Bringing together our direct investments and the investments made on behalf of our customers: 9,156 farmers have been trained on forest policy, forest protection & forest restoration in 2023/24.

#### **FOREST LAWS AND POLICIES**

2023/24 Target: Promote and actively participate in awareness-raising campaigns and training sessions on forest law and related policies, aiming to reach 1,100 farmers. Additionally, we sought to support the government in developing adaptive management plans for various forest areas to enhance the livelihoods of cocoa-farming communities dependent on these forests. We also contributed to land-use planning initiatives to promote sustainable agricultural practices.

To achieve this, we partnered with an international NGO specializing in sustainable cocoa supply chains. With its expertise, the NGO supported JB Cocoa in empowering farmers with essential knowledge about their rights and responsibilities when cultivating cocoa, particularly near forested areas.

As part of this initiative, we conducted awareness-raising campaigns on Côte d'Ivoire's New Forest Code, providing training on land tenure security and tree ownership across 11 communities in the regions of Agneby-Tiassa, Nawa, Cavally, Guémon, Tonkpi, and Touba.

#### **Key Achievements:**

- 455 farmers trained within our CFI direct cocoa supply chain and through direct investments.
- Farmers were engaged through evening video projections in local languages, ensuring effective understanding.
- 30 cooperative staff received specialized training and mentorship in andragogical methods, enabling them to replicate the training for farmers in their communities.

Besides, JB Cocoa remains committed to actively participating in initiatives that enhance traceability at the national level while proactively preparing for the forthcoming European Deforestation Regulation.



#### 11 COMMUNITIES

WERE REACH IN OUR CFI DIRECT COCOA SUPPLY CHAIN

#### **AGROFORESTY AND DEVELOPMENT**

2023/24 Target: To support the distribution and planting of 12,000 multipurpose tree seedlings for on-farm restoration through mixed agroforestry, in collaboration with 1,100 farmers, ensuring a minimum density of 12 trees per hectare.

Through a partnership with an international NGO, we raised awareness among farmers about forest protection and agroforestry. As part of this initiative, we conducted awareness-raising campaigns on agroforestry, using evening video projections in local languages to effectively engage communities.

#### **Key Achievements**

- Trainings conducted in 11 communities across the regions of Agneby-Tiassa, Nawa, Cavally, Guémon, Tonkpi, and Touba.
- 455 farmers trained within our CFI direct cocoa supply chain.
- 20,200 multipurpose tree seedlings distributed to farmers, surpassing our target.
- Farmers were educated on the benefits of agroforestry and trained on how to implement agroforestry systems on their farms. Key topics included:
  - Integrating cocoa trees with forest or fruit trees.
  - Best practices for maintaining agroforestry farms.

Additionally, 30 cooperative staff members participated in the training sessions, receiving mentorship in andragogical methods to effectively replicate the training for farmers within their respective cooperatives.

Through these efforts, we have reinforced our commitment to sustainable cocoa farming, forest conservation, and farmer capacity-building.

The agroforestry demonstration plots established in the previous year have been actively maintained throughout the reporting season. To enhance farmer engagement and knowledge transfer, peer learning visits were organized on these demo plots, allowing selected farmers to receive hands-on training in the field.

The peer learning methodology enables trained farmers to become trainers themselves. After receiving instruction on specific agroforestry techniques, they replicate the training for their peers under the supervision of field staff. Once confident, they independently train other farmers, ensuring the scalability and sustainability of agroforestry practices within the community. Each farmer group received an agroforestry guide to support the implementation of existing plots and further expand these sustainable practices.

Additionally, we contributed to on-farm restoration by distributing 20,200 multipurpose tree seedlings to farmers in our CFI direct cocoa supply chain—significantly exceeding our initial target. To ensure successful establishment, JB field staff actively monitored tree distribution and planting to mitigate tree mortality. On average, each farmer received 44 trees to integrate into their farms alongside existing shade trees.

Through these efforts, we continue to promote climate-smart cocoa farming, biodiversity conservation, and resilient agricultural systems.

20, 200
MULTIPURPOSE
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24 AGROFORESTRY
DEMO PLOTS
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MAINTAINED

COMBINING OUR DIRECT INVESTMENTS WITH THOSE MADE ON BEHALF OF OUR CUSTOMERS, A TOTAL OF 129,068 TREES HAVE BEEN DISTRIBUTED.

# III. SUSTAINABLE COCOA PRODUCTION AND FARMER'S LIVELIHOODS

#### **PRODUCTIVITY AND QUALITY**

2023/24 Target: Train 1,100 Farmers provided with technical assistance and support based on plans to professionalize & optimize cocoa farming practices.

A total of 455 farmers have been trained in Good Agricultural Practices, covering essential topics such as pruning, pest and disease management, weed management, shade management, and harvest management. Trainers, who received specialized training from an external consultant on the latest GAPs, utilized the Farmer Field School (FFS) and Peer Learning approaches to educate farmers effectively.

The Farmer Field School (FFS) is a participatory learning approach that brings together small-scale food producers to collaboratively address agricultural challenges through sustainable farming practices. This method fosters hands-on learning, sharpens observational and analytical skills, and enhances decision-making within local communities (FAO, Family Farming Knowledge Platform, 2021).

Peer Learning is an educational strategy that reinforces farmers' knowledge by enabling them to teach one another. This approach involves selecting and training motivated farmers on specific topics, with the goal of equipping them to become trainers themselves. These trained individuals then pass on their knowledge to fellow farmers under the supervision of field staff, ensuring the continuous replication and dissemination of best practices.

#### Farm Development Plan (FDP)

Through a targeted segmentation process, 285 farmers have been selected to participate in the Farm Development Plan (FDP), which provides personalized coaching on Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs). The primary goal of the FDP is to enhance farmers' incomes by sustainably increasing farm productivity.

The FDP integrates multiple technical components, including agriculture, agroforestry, nutritional value, and market access. Trainers visit farmers daily to provide individualized coaching, ensuring each farmer receives guidance tailored to their specific farm profile and needs. Each participant is visited three times a year for ongoing support and progress monitoring. Through this hands-on approach, farmers receive practical advice on techniques best suited to their farming conditions, enabling them to optimize their productivity and long-term sustainability.

COMBINING OUR DIRECT INVESTMENTS WITH THOSE MADE ON BEHALF OF OUR CUSTOMERS, 8,748 FARMERS HAVE RECEIVED TRAINING IN GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES (GAPS), WHILE 1,318 FARMERS IN OUR DIRECT SUPPLY CHAIN HAVE BENEFITED FROM THE FARM DEVELOPMENT PLAN (FDP).



#### **CROP AND INCOME DIVERSIFICATION**

2023/24 Target: Promote sustainable livelihoods and income diversification for cocoa farmers through the distribution and planting of 12,000 multipurpose trees.

To support crop diversification within our CFI direct cocoa supply chains, we have distributed 20,200 multipurpose trees to farmers for on-farm planting. Before distribution, farmers' specific needs regarding tree varieties are assessed, allowing them to select from 12 different species, including both fruit and forest trees. Among the most commonly chosen varieties are Bété and Fraké (forest trees) and Akpi (fruit tree).



20,200 MULTIPURPOSE TRESS INCLUDE FRUITS AND FOREST SPECIES WERE PROVIDED TO THE FARMERS

## IV. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION



#### 10,283 HOUSEHOLDS

IN OUR CFI DIRECT SUPPLY CHAIN ARE SUPPORTED BY CHILD LABOR MONITORING AND REMEDIATION SYSTEMS

#### CHILD & FORCED LABOR MONITORING AND REMEDIATION

10,283 households in our CFI direct cocoa supply chain are covered by Child Labor Monitoring and Remediation Systems (CLMRS).

Our staff has received training from a third-party expert on Child Protection and Child Labor Identification. JB Cocoa's field staff are responsible for data collection, farmer training, and community sensitization.

Three types of surveys are carried out to assess risks, identify cases, and monitor progress: community-level, household-level, and child-level surveys. The data gathered is digitally recorded on an application and analyzed by JB Cocoa's Sustainability and Monitoring & Evaluation teams. Monitoring visits are conducted twice a year, with the results presented to the Child Protection Committee to determine the necessary actions when child labor cases are found.

The Committee consists of the farmer groups' administrators, members of the farming communities, the JB Cocoa team, and representatives from a third-party NGO. Each Farmer Group has its own Child Protection Committee. When immediate remediation is needed, the Committee reviews each child labor case and develops an appropriate action plan in collaboration with the community.

As part of our remediation efforts, school kits and materials for agricultural activities, such as "pele bongo" (used for harvesting pods) and wheelbarrows, have been distributed to households with identified child labor cases.

Furthermore, JB Cocoa has developed a Child Safeguarding Policy and a Code of Conduct that outlines our commitment to Human Rights, including the prohibition of Child and Forced Labor.

JB Cocoa also has a Modern Slavery Policy, which is shared with both suppliers and clients. In 2023, some company executives received training from an expert on how to identify indicators of Forced Labor and develop effective monitoring and remediation systems within the cocoa supply chain. As a result of this training, JB Cocoa has extended this knowledge to all its field staff—including sustainability supervisors, field agents, and lead farmers—focusing on Forced Labor risks, identifying relevant indicators, and raising awareness on human trafficking issues. The training was led by an external consultant with expertise in Forced Labor, and some of our groups also received training from the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI). As a result, our staff working directly with farmers and workers were trained throughout 2024.

We have established grievance mechanisms in all our farmer groups, using letterboxes to enable farmers and community members to report cases of forced labor. In 2025, JB Cocoa will further strengthen its forced labor monitoring systems by developing comprehensive Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and systems, aligned with international indicators and Rainforest Alliance guidelines.

COMBINING OUR DIRECT INVESTMENTS WITH THOSE MADE ON BEHALF OF OUR CUSTOMERS, 10,283 HOUSEHOLDS ARE COVERED BY THE CHILD LABOR MONITORING AND REMEDIATION SYSTEMS (CLMRS) APPROACH.



#### **WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT**

In our supply chains, we have introduced Income Generating Activities (IGAs) within the communities. As part of this initiative, 739 individuals, including 591 women and 148 men, have joined groups and engaged in economic activities with their peers, aiming to diversify their sources of income.

Women are trained to assess the activity they wish to pursue, considering factors such as profitability, available internal resources, and external resources required. JB Cocoa field staff support the training and the identification process. Based on the identified needs, each group can choose one or two income-generating activities. In 2023/24, the primary activities implemented by the IGAs within our supply chains included cassava production, beans production, market gardening, and rice production.



591 WOMEN
AND 148 MEN
AND HAVE ENGAGED
WITH VSLAS

#### WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND DIVERSIFICATION

In 2024, JB Cocoa supported farmer groups in 11 communities, focusing on Income Generating Activities (IGAs) by providing materials, equipment, inputs, and training on agricultural techniques tailored to the selected activities. To enhance the impact, these IGAs were linked with Village Saving and Loan Associations (VSLAs) to establish savings groups. A total of 12 VSLAs were formed, benefiting 739 individuals.

#### **ACCESS TO FINANCE**

The 739 members of the VSLA were trained on the VSLA methodology, which covers topics such as the rules of the solidarity fund, share purchasing, credit, and leadership. Additionally, the members worked together to develop internal rules for the VSLA groups, among other activities. In the upcoming period, JB Cocoa and its partner will further support the VSLAs by facilitating connections with microfinance institutions and providing financial literacy training to the members.

COMBINING OUR DIRECT INVESTMENTS WITH THOSE MADE ON BEHALF OF OUR CUSTOMERS, WE SUPPORT 19 INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITY GROUPS AND 71 VSLAS, BENEFITING A TOTAL OF 1,938 MEMBERS (1,426 WOMEN).

## **ANNEX 1: TRACKING TABLE**

Description	Target (Current reporting year)	# Through direct investment (Current reporting year)	# Through direct investment (Since 2018)
FOREST PROTECTION AND RESTORATION			
# of farms mapped in direct supply chain: Total Active	1,800	11,131	14,139
# of hectares in the direct supply chain with deforestation risk assessments completed	3,700	39,353	43,431
# metric tons of directly sourced cocoa traceable from the farm to the first purchase point (target is 100%)	100%	100%	100%
# farmers informed, trained, and / or consulted on the new Forest Code, forest policy, law enforcement, forest protection, and restoration	1,100	455	1,901
# farmers applying agroforestry: New	0	45	45
# farmers applying agroforestry: Total Active	1,100	455	455
# farmers provided with technical assistance to adopt and expand agroforestry	1,100	455	1,049
# hectares cocoa agroforestry: Total Active	0	455	455
# farmers provided with technical assistance to be more resilient to climate change and reduce and remove carbon emissions on farm (e.g., CSC)	1,100	455	1,901

## **ANNEX 1: TRACKING TABLE**

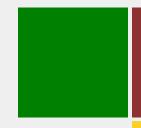
Description	Target (Current reporting year)	# Through direct investment (Current reporting year)	# Through direct investment (Since 2018)
# farmers provided with technical assistance (based on plans) to professionalize & optimize cocoa farming practices	1,100	455	1,938
# individuals participating in additional Income Generating Activities (IGA's)	0	739	739
# individuals provided with technical assistance (based on plans) to increase income from non-cocoa sources / IGA's	0	455	455
# Individuals provided with technical assistance to save money and access finance	0	739	739
# of members of VSLA groups in the current year	0	396	993
# of VSLA groups in the current year	0	12	31
SOCIAL INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY			
# of individuals participating in women's empowerment projects and activities	0	372	372
# hectares cocoa agroforestry: New	0	45	45
# multi-purpose trees distributed for on-farm planting	12,000	20,200	47,901

### **ANNEX 2: RESULT STORIES**

My name is Kaboré Nongdo, and I am a member of the SCOOPEN cooperative, code MA-295. Initially, I was hesitant when asked to use my plantation for a demonstration plot. However, after seeing the results, I am glad I agreed. In 2021-2022, my two-hectare plantation (MA-295) produced 860 kg of cocoa over the entire year. This year, after maintenance and the application of good farming practices recommended by JB's agronomist, my production has increased to 996 kg. The use of good agricultural practices has thus helped me boost both my cocoa production and my income.

I am very satisfied with the professionalism shown by the JB Cocoa agent, and I am committed to becoming an ambassador for Good Agricultural Practices in the 2023-2024 season. Moreover, I will no longer hesitate to invest in activities like pruning on my plantation.





### **ANNEX 2: RESULT STORIES**

I am a member of the AVEC group called DJOLO, located in Gragbazo. I am grateful to be part of this sharing ceremony, as AVEC has helped me tremendously.

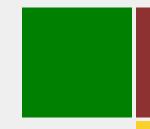
Since my husband passed away, I have been raising my children, who are attending school. Thanks to AVEC, I was able to take out a loan to start a food business. I buy food from women in the village and neighboring camps, and I sell it in Soubré to customers who distribute it in Abidjan.

In the second year, I took out another loan to expand the business, which allows me to send my children to school and cover other household expenses. Our main challenge right now is the poor condition of the road, which makes transporting our goods difficult. We would greatly appreciate assistance from the authorities to improve the road.

I would like to thank the SOCAZM cooperative, its PCA, as well as JB COCOA and its field agents for their daily presence at our side.

It is thanks to JB's sustainability programme that we have received this training and supervision. It is thanks to them that we were able to form AVEC and receive so much help.





## 2024 Progress Report



## THANK YOU









