

SECOND INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON COCOA CERTIFICATION 6-7 MARCH 2014, ZURICH, SWITZERLAND

The International Workshop on Cocoa Certification was organized by the International Cocoa Organization (ICCO) in close cooperation with the United Nations Forum on Sustainable Standards (UNFSS). The event was held at Radisson Blu in Zurich, Switzerland, from 6-7 March 2014.

The main objective of the workshop is to assist existing and emerging national and international sustainability-related standards to develop using a set of commonly agreed pre-competitive, minimum requirements, up to a threshold level, beyond which individual standards are free to compete with one another based on their unique specific requirements, taking into account the demands of individual consumer market segments.

The workshop brought together over 70 participants from Europe, the United States, Africa, Latin America and South-East Asia, representing cocoa producers, governments from cocoa exporting and importing countries, the cocoa and chocolate industry, certification bodies, civil society and international agencies.

It was conducted in an interactive manner involving a combination of presentations, interviews, panel discussions. For the very first time, a cocoa forum type session was introduced where the participants were invited to participate in five groups comprising twelve members each and being represented by a cross section of stakeholders moderated by a chairman, assisted by a rapporteur. There was tremendous energy generated by this forum with very positive participation and results.

Aimee Russillo, the consultant presented the working document, providing the broad outline upon which the key cocoa stakeholders along the value chain began to consider and agree to begin the process of creating a reference framework of commonalities for sustainable cocoa.

There was a broad range of topics discussed but the focus was on finding common grounds that participants can build on to move forward. Related issues such as providing mutual recognition, harmonizing training modules, audit, verification, sharing of resources, expertise and exploring ways to work together to find commonalities among the different initiatives were also explored. Additionally, engaging the public sector, governments and local institutions with the view to strengthening cocoa farmers to a level that is able to meet the requirements of new standards in the context of PPPs in a transparent, participatory and inclusive process was discussed in order to find the best approach to move the process forward.

At the end of the workshop on 7 March 2014, the participants agreed that there are benefits for all stakeholders along the cocoa value chain to begin the process to achieve the common framework for cocoa sustainability. The workshop recognized the added value as follows:

- Common language
- Reference point and guide
- Prioritization of actions and strategies for all stakeholders
- Transparency about roles and actions of involved stakeholders
- Transparency about progress on key issues
- Flexibility/Scalability/Accessibility
- Affordability

- Comparable KPI for impact assessment/measurements
- Reducing auditing procedures and costs

In order to start the process, participants agree that it is critical to go back to basics as the best way forward in the journey towards achieving long term sustainability in the cocoa sector in a step-wise “continuous improvement” manner to bring the unorganized farmers (estimated at 80%) into the mainstream certified market (estimated at 20%).

For this to happen, participants agree that the way forward is as follows:

1. Sustainability in the cocoa value chain is a shared responsibility between all stakeholders.
2. Sustainable certification is a tool within a toolbox of interventions that supports the sustainable development of the cocoa sector. It requires other tools including interventions by other stakeholders such as adequate investments in the sector particularly in farmers, the weakest link in the supply chain in order to address the production or supply side for sustainable production.
3. Therefore, investment in farmers; capacity building in sustainable production and business development (entrepreneurship) is absolutely a necessary but certainly not sufficient condition.
4. This has to be complemented by investment in sustainable trade and non-monetized, public good infrastructure.
5. Stakeholder cooperation in the framework of National Platforms for Public Private Partnerships (PPPs). Therefore strong commitment by all stakeholders to support the PPPs is a highly critical success factor in the KPIs.
6. Strategy for Continuous Improvement through – PPPs, in the framework of the ICCO Global Cocoa Agenda adopted in March 2013
7. Standards/Certification to be a component addressed in the framework of the National Cocoa Plans and PPPs, using the Common Framework as a guide.
8. To ensure continuous improvement in the process, key impact indicators to monitor and evaluate actions are necessary for the common framework to make step-wise progress. Hence there must be information transparency and data available must be shared at all levels.
9. The ICCO and the UNFSS will continue to support and facilitate the development of the common framework for cocoa sustainability, in particular the gaps identified by participants of the workshop in the economic pillar.

The UNFSS and the ICCO expressed their appreciation for the valuable contribution by all participants and output derived from the workshop. On behalf of the participants, the ICCO thanked the Switzerland government for hosting the workshop.