



General Mills, Inc. – Initial Company Action Plan to End Deforestation and Promote Forest Restoration and Protection in the Cocoa Supply Chain

I. BOLD PUBLIC-PRIVATE ACTION: THE COCOA & FORESTS INITIATIVE

The governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana and the world's leading cocoa and chocolate companies [signed landmark agreements](#) in November 2017 to end deforestation and promote forest restoration and protection in the cocoa supply chain.

This new public-private partnership – called the [Cocoa & Forests Initiative \(CFI\)](#) – has been organized by the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF), IDH - the Sustainable Trade Initiative, and The Prince of Wales's International Sustainability Unit (ISU). The Prince of Wales [launched CFI](#) in March 2017 in London.

The Frameworks for Action for [Côte d'Ivoire](#) and [Ghana](#) define core commitments, verifiable actions, and timebound targets required for a deforestation-free and forest-positive supply chain.

The Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana play a critical leadership role in establishing the national strategy, enabling policy environment, and governance structure for CFI implementation. They ensure that CFI is linked to similar initiatives with other commodities, and fully aligned with the national REDD+ Strategy and other relevant national strategies and plans. They provide key operational guidance, and baseline economic, environmental, and social data, to help companies identify and plan the most effective and efficient private investment activities for CFI.

The Governments have prepared comprehensive national implementation plans ([Côte d'Ivoire](#), [Ghana](#)) that outline key public sector priorities, actions and timelines, following extensive consultation with all stakeholders. During the first year of CFI, the Governments have launched work on the key building blocks for successful CFI implementation, including important revisions to the legal framework for sustainable forest management, preparation of up-to-date boundary maps of protected areas, and collection of socio-economic and land use data for the priority investment areas.

Thirty-three companies¹, accounting for about 85% of global cocoa usage, have now joined CFI. Each company has agreed to prepare a detailed individual action plan that spells out the specific actions it will take in 2018-2022 to deliver the commitments set out in the Framework. Each company will decide for itself how to best support the achievement of the Framework objectives, based on their role in the supply chain, their corporate strategic priorities, and their cocoa sustainability goals.

Almost all companies have now completed initial action plans. These initial plans will be updated and finalized in 2019 after the governments have completed the ongoing legal and operational policy changes, the mapping of protected areas, baseline data collection, and other building blocks needed for full investment programming.²

Given their unique role in the cocoa supply chain, the three retailer companies collaborated on the development of a [common action plan](#). They agreed on collective actions to deliver on their CFI commitments through their engagement with trading partners and suppliers.

CFI has been supported by several global development partners, including the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, the World Bank, the International Finance Corporation, the Global Environment Facility, and the Green Commodities Program of the United Nations Development Program.

CFI is coordinated closely with a wide range of global and local environmental organizations and partnerships, including the Tropical Forest Alliance 2020, Amsterdam Declaration Partnership, Partnerships for Forests, the Rainforest Alliance, and World Resources Institute.

¹ Arysta Callivoire, Barry Callebaut, Blommer Chocolate Company, Cargill Cocoa and Chocolate, Cémoi, Chocolats Halba, Cocoanect, Cococo Chocolatiers, ECOM Group, Fazer, Ferrero, General Mills Inc., Godiva Chocolatier Inc., Guittard Chocolate Company, The Hershey Company, Indcresa, Lindt & Sprüngli Group, Marks & Spencer Food, Mars Wrigley Confectionery, Meiji Co. Ltd., Mondelēz International, Nestlé, Olam Cocoa, PBC Limited, Sainsbury's, SIAT, Tesco, Toms Group, Touton, Tree Global, Unilever, Valrhona, and J.H. Whittaker & Sons

² The actions pending further information are marked "to be determined" in the initial company action plans

II. WHAT ARE THE KEY COMMITMENTS IN CFI?

The Frameworks are structured around three critical themes of (1) forest protection and restoration, (2) sustainable production and farmers' livelihoods, and (3) community engagement and social inclusion.

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. Up-to-date maps on forest cover and land-use, socio-economic data on cocoa farmers, and detailed operational guidelines covering forest management and land-use are being developed and will be publicly disclosed.

To ensure effective implementation and monitoring of these commitments, companies have pledged to develop verifiable monitoring systems for traceability from farm to the first purchase point for their own purchases of cocoa, and to work with governments to ensure an effective national framework for traceability encompassing all traders in the supply chain.

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 have agreed to accelerate investment in long-term productivity of cocoa in order to grow "more cocoa on less land." Key actions include: provision of improved planting materials, training in good agricultural practices, soil fertility, land tenure reform, and capacity building of farmers' organizations. Sustainable livelihoods and income diversification for cocoa farmers will be accelerated through food crop diversification, agricultural inter-cropping, and development of mixed agro-forestry 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 will assess and mitigate the social impacts and risks of any proposed land-use changes on affected communities.

The set of public-private actions represent unprecedented commitments on forest protection and restoration, and sustainable cocoa production and farmer livelihoods. These combined actions, which are aligned with the Paris Climate Agreement, will play a crucial role in sequestering carbon stocks and thereby addressing global and local climate change.

III. GENERAL MILLS INC'S OVERALL VISION FOR THE COCOA & FORESTS INITIATIVE

As part of General Mills' goal to sustainably source 100 percent of our 10 priority ingredients, we are committed to sourcing 100% of our cocoa volumes sustainably by 2020. To achieve this, we have been working closely with our major suppliers to transition our global cocoa volumes to sustainable sourcing programs with a focus on improving smallholder farmer livelihoods, sustainable production and ingredient quality.

Through our General Mills Foundation (GMF), we have also been working with CARE International to support cocoa farming communities through a community-based approach to women's empowerment, food security and prevention of child labor.

In 2017, General Mills became one of only two non-confectionary manufacturer signatories to the Cocoa and Forests Initiative (CFI) in order to address deforestation in the cocoa supply chain, to reinforce our sustainable sourcing commitment for cocoa, and to help drive progress towards our [2025 science-based greenhouse gas emissions target](#). The focus of our CFI activities is West Africa, where ~90% of our cocoa originates.

IV. OVERVIEW OF COMPANY ACTION PLAN

This General Mills action plan represents best current thinking on key activities and investments over the next five years (2018-2022) to fulfill CFI commitments to end deforestation and forest degradation in the cocoa sectors beginning in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. Priorities outlined in the action plan align with the priorities developed in the CFI national implementation plans for Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. Aggregate company action plans were shared with both governments for feedback prior to being finalized and published.

General Mills has been working closely with our supplier partners to develop our action plan, which is focussed on the three core pillars of the CFI frameworks for action: forest protection and restoration; sustainable production and farmers' livelihoods, and community engagement and social inclusion. Highlights of our action plan include:

- **Forest Protection:** where one of our priorities is to ensure we understand the origin of cocoa used in our products, to ensure our sourcing is not driving deforestation. To this end, we are committed to achieving 100% traceability to farm for our cocoa supply chains in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana by 2022.
- **Forest Restoration:** where we see the restoration of areas degraded through cocoa production as a necessary requirement for a sustainable, resilient and productive cocoa sector. With the help of the General Mills Foundation, we are currently working with NGO partners to assess landscape restoration and conservation opportunities for future direct origin investment.

- **Sustainable production and livelihoods:** where, via our suppliers and delivery partners, we will continue to invest in the long-term productivity of cocoa/farms in our supply base through, among other things, the provision of Good Agricultural Practices training to farmers, the distribution of shade trees and the implementation of agroforestry practices.
- **Community engagement and inclusion:** where, via our suppliers and delivery partners, we will undertake community consultations on the CFI Frameworks for Action and continue community-based management models (CBNRM) for forest protection and restoration.

Our action plan should be considered initial, since the governments have not yet provided important background information required by the signatory companies to finalize their individual action plans (such as boundary maps for protected forests and updated operational guidance about land-use in degraded forest areas). Therefore, several activities in these initial action plans are marked “to be determined”. These initial action plans will be finalized in 2019 once the governments have provided the necessary data.