

Fairtrade Cocoa and the Environment



Working with small-scale producer organizations is at the core of Fairtrade's approach to improving the livelihoods of Fairtrade cocoa farmers. Through the [Fairtrade West Africa Cocoa Program \(WACP\)](#), cooperatives are becoming stronger organizations, responsive to their members' and business partners' needs and beneficial to their communities. Our long-term aim is a sustainable relationship for all stakeholders in the cocoa supply chain.

Climate change has an impact on cocoa production. Irregular weather patterns affect harvests causing income insecurity for cocoa farmers.¹ This income insecurity increases pressure on the environment. Falling yields, poverty, the lack of money for fertilizers, and low knowledge of how to sustain productivity all drive cocoa farmers to clear forest land to create new fertile cocoa plots. As a consequence, deforestation rates across West Africa are amongst the highest in the world.²

Fairtrade promotes sustainability in the cocoa industry via:

- **Environmental protection standards**
- **Supporting farmers and workers to build their resilience and capacity to adapt to climate change**

To sell Fairtrade products, farmers must improve soil and water quality, manage pests, avoid using harmful chemicals, manage waste, reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, and protect biodiversity.



To support cooperatives and help their members map their own deforestation risk, Fairtrade partnered with Earthworm Foundation to use Starling, a satellite monitoring tool developed by Earthworm Foundation and Airbus. The pilot project aims to capture critical deforestation data within Fairtrade cooperatives and their smallholder cocoa farmers in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire.³

Fairtrade's Environmental Standards



Fairtrade Standards include around **40 requirements** related to the environment. Complying with them allows farmers to develop nutrient-rich soils which support healthy plants, use wildlife to help control pests and diseases, and protect their own health.

Our standards prohibit the use of certain agrochemicals that are harmful to the environment. They also prohibit particularly toxic pesticides and require farmers to be trained in the safe handling of agrochemical inputs.

Fairtrade cooperatives and their members are required to protect biodiversity and water supplies. Farmers must not deforest and must respect protected areas. And all Fairtrade cooperatives must have a procedure to ensure these requirements are met.

Dynamic Agroforestry (DAF)

Fairtrade supports dynamic agroforestry projects which combine agriculture and forestry to remedy the impact of poverty-driven deforestation and climate change.

Under dynamic agroforestry, farmers cultivate a mix of cocoa, fruit and high-grade timber trees to improve land quality and productivity. This imitates the original habitat of cocoa in the rainforest, allowing it to thrive and produce higher yields.

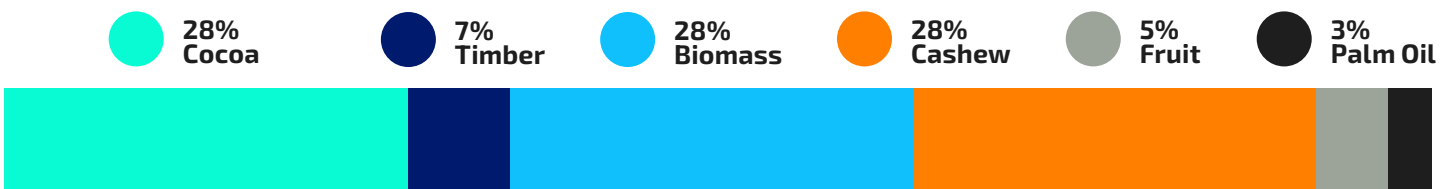


Applying Dynamic Agroforestry: The Sankofa Project in Ghana⁴

In 2019, we (as part of a consortium) launched a four-year initiative to enable 400 cocoa farmers from the Kuapa Kokoo cooperative to establish dynamic agroforestry practices.

- 44.25 hectares of unproductive cocoa plots have been transformed into **healthy, highly diversified cocoa-producing DAF plots**.
- A **mixture of trees** has been planted in each plot (see Figure 1).
- **131 local farmers were trained in DAF** and began harvesting table food from their plots within 6 months.
- Technical agricultural experts spent **300 days training local officers** on the principles and advanced practices of DAF, and climate-smart cropping systems.
- **1,147 farmers**, over 4 in 10 of whom were women, directly benefited by increasing transaction value from the same land.
- **6,882 members of farmers' households** are indirectly benefiting from DAF and Climate Smart Cropping System (CSCS).

Figure 1: Mix of trees planted on dynamic agroforestry plots



¹Fairtrade (2021) Fairtrade and climate change: Systematic review, hotspot analysis and survey.

²Climate Focus North America Inc. (2017) Eliminating deforestation from the cocoa supply chain. [↗](#)

³Fairtrade (2021) Fairtrade and Earthworm Foundation Join Forces in 'Landmark' Partnership to Combat Deforestation. [↗](#)

⁴SECO Innovative Value Chain Projects Private Sector Co-Financing Facility for the Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa (2020) 'Sankofa Project. Empowered by Alliances for Action. Progress Report 2020'.

⁵Sellare, J., Meemken, E., Qaim, M. (2020) Fairtrade, Agrochemical Input Use, and Effects on Human Health and the Environment, *Ecological Economics*, 176. [↗](#)

Fair is working together

Fairtrade offers multiple ways that cocoa companies and brands can put their values into action. Work with us to transform your supply chain and discover what is fair. To learn more about the programs, policies, and projects Fairtrade is working on to address climate breakdown, visit: fairtrade.ca/issues/climate or contact: license@fairtrade.ca.

