



**WEST AFRICA**

**COCOA PROGRAMME**

**EVALUATION**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

*afriqinsights*

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## Afriqinsights ([www.afriqinsights.com](http://www.afriqinsights.com))

is a Pan-African market research and consulting firm aiming to address the knowledge gap challenge that many decision-makers (public and private sector organizations) are facing across the continent, currently specialized in providing bespoke leading-edge data and insights.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY











The West Africa Cocoa Programme (WACP) was launched in 2016 by Fairtrade International and Fairtrade Africa (FTA). Since then, there has been a rapid growth in sales of Fairtrade cocoa and in the number of Fairtrade Small-scale Producer Organizations (SPOs) in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. These increases, as well as this being the fourth year since the programme launch, means that the time is ripe for a programme evaluation.

Fairtrade International commissioned Afriqinsights, a pan-African primary market research and consulting firm to carry out an

independent evaluation of the WACP programme covering the period from 2016-2020. The evaluation study seeks to assess and understand how and in what ways the project interventions have achieved WACP's intended outcomes according to the Theory of Change (ToC).

The purpose of the evaluation is to make recommendations which will feed into the WACP implementation strategy from 2021 onwards and ensure that the WACP is having the impact that has been envisioned through the programme's Theory of Change (ToC).





## EVALUATION RESULTS

<i>Activities / Assessment</i>	<i>Evaluation Result<sup>1</sup></i>
1. Progress towards outcomes, intermediate and long-term impacts	
2. Relevance of activities	
3. Approach and context of main interventions	
4. SPO stratification criteria	
5. Effectiveness of WACP implementation	
6. Changes to WACP Theory of Change/MEL KPIs	
7. Effectiveness of FTA Implementation Team	
8. NFOs' understanding of WACP	
9. Roles of key stakeholders	
10. Cost effectiveness of WACP	

<sup>1</sup> Evaluation Results (Key). Green: Clear and consistent evidence that stakeholders believe WACP is aligned to its ToC. Minor suggestions and improvements to be made to enhance the programme. Yellow: Some evidence to support WACP's alignment to its ToC or "mixed results". Attention and improvements required to strengthen and foster alignment to the programme's ToC. Red: Limited evidence to support WACP's alignment to its ToC. Encompasses major challenges and constraints. Special attention is required. Substantial improvements to be made

## KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS


### 1. Progress towards outcomes, intermediate and long-term impacts

Area Assessed	Key Findings	Evaluation Result
1. Progress towards outcomes, intermediate and long-term impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is strong evidence that the outcomes (i.e., SPOs being more effective and resilient as businesses and responsive to member needs) in the Theory of Change (ToC) are being achieved, but more limited evidence for the intermediate and long-term impacts. The West Africa Cocoa Programme (WACP) has yielded some promising results in a number of areas in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire.</li> </ul>	
1.1. Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a consensus across stakeholders that SPOs are now stronger, more effective and resilient as businesses and responsive to their members' needs. The greatest progress has been organizational and in the professionalization of the SPOs.</li> <li>SPOs under the WACP prefer the trainings received under WACP versus that of other SPO-strengthening programmes such as UTZ and Rainforest Alliance, believing it to better build their resilience and strength as training partners</li> </ul>	
1.2. Intermediate impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some advancement has been made in terms of facilitating market access for SPOs. However, sustained access to Fairtrade cocoa markets is yet to be unlocked for most SPOs in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire.</li> </ul>	
1.3. Long-term impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SPO members in both countries now earn income from cocoa and diversification activities. However, there is not enough direct evidence collected as part of this evaluation to determine whether households have increased their incomes from farming and are making economic progress towards living incomes.</li> </ul>	

### Recommendations

- Connect SPOs with chocolatiers to negotiate contracts directly and promote networking activities: For example, by organizing activities such as forums for direct exchange with chocolate manufacturers to conclude sales contracts without going through export intermediaries. Expected benefit: Gain additional involvement in the distribution of markets to increase quotas for exporters and processors.
- Support and encourage farmers to increase yield in a sustainable manner: For example, through crop diversification, proper use of agrochemicals and rejuvenation of old farms. Expected benefit: Contribute towards reducing the gap between current income and living income.
- Encourage consumer brands and retailers to pay the Fairtrade Living Income Reference Price plus the Fairtrade Premium leading to a higher farm gate price: For example, National Fairtrade Organizations (NFOs) through FTA could set up a commercial directory where FTA and NFOs could develop a market strategy to attract consumer retailers and brands. Expected benefit: Make progress towards achieving sustained markets for Fairtrade cocoa for SPOs and promoting better living conditions for farmers.

## 2. Relevance of activities

Key Findings	Evaluation Result
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Overall, the WACP training was relevant to the intended outcomes set out in the Theory of Change.</b></li> <li>• The main themes for capacity building trainings focused on Financial Management, Governance, Child Labour and Gender Issues, Environment and Biodiversity, Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) as well as training on the Fairtrade Standards. FTA capacity building and certification support activities saw a growth in trained participants from 16,050 to 32,8045.</li> <li>• When it comes to awareness and sustainability practices, WACP SPOs and their members have better policies dealing with child labour, forced labour and gender-based violence than farmers who are not yet certified. However, the baseline is unable to provide information on compliance with such policies and most cooperatives are still in the early phases of implementation. It may take some time for effective implementation of policies in these areas.</li> </ul>	

## Recommendations

• Boost collaboration to develop robust remediation systems for child labour, deforestation and environmental issues by, for example:

◊ Developing database systems for tracking households and family life so SPOs can better identify children who could be easily exploited in child labour situations. Expected benefits: More refined plans developed.

◊ Conducting follow-up engagements to see what activities and life choices/styles children are engaged in. Expected benefits: Deeper insights gathered.

◊ Establishing reward systems for anonymous whistleblowers who alert project agencies about child labour and other sustainability non-compliance measures such as encroachment on forests and illegal logging/mining, etc. Expected benefits: Deterrent effect.

• For future activities, WACP should continue to work on strengthening the SPOs, making sure the basics are in place and laying more emphasis on the prevention of child labour and deforestation and addressing poverty issues.

### 3. Approach and context of main interventions

Key Findings	Evaluation Result
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall, SPOs have a better understanding of Fairtrade cocoa and certification Standards; better management of Fairtrade Premium funds through strategic investments; fewer non-conformities around the management of the Fairtrade Premium.</li> <li>• During our interviews, SPOs in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire consistently expressed their appreciation of the training support received from Fairtrade Africa while also stressing that more is needed across a variety of topics, such as prevention of child labour, gender and women's leadership, tax and labour laws, leadership, climate change (with emphasis on agroforestry) and sustainability.</li> </ul>	

### Recommendations


- Embed a gender and youth mainstreaming approach at all levels under WACP: For example, by:

◊ Developing an explicit gender policy supporting a more integrated approach (e.g., updating M&E frameworks so that they look at the achievement of programme outcomes and impacts by gender and committing to publishing a gender mainstreaming policy and plan and reporting on it on a yearly basis for accountability purposes). Expected benefits: Provide the required guidance in planning and implementation of specific gender activities and gender mainstreaming across other interventions.

◊ Scaling up the WACP Women's School of Leadership programme to Ghana. Expected benefits: Help address traditional gender roles and entrenched expectations.

◊ Develop an explicit youth policy and find ways to attract the youth back to cocoa farms given the aging profile of cocoa farmers in both Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire.

## 4. SPO stratification criteria

Key Findings	Evaluation Result
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From our findings, it was clear that the stratification criteria proved very effective for FTA in delivering its training and increasing the impact the training content had on SPOs. The Scope Assessment is a great tool which needs to be used often in determining the training needs, assessment and graduation of the SPOs from the programme.</li> <li>Benefits observed from the stratification strategy:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◊ Ability to tailor content to better reflect the actual needs of the SPOs.</li> <li>◊ Puts FTA in a better position to organize and use its internal resources, ensuring alignment of FTA's resources to the most pressing issues and its fiscal responsibilities.</li> </ul> </li> <li>WACP training modules are addressing SPOs' most important training needs. However, there are different perceptions upon graduation about readiness to move to other stratification levels.</li> </ul>	

## Recommendations


- Leverage SCOPE Assessment to identify custom SPO training needs and readiness for graduation: For example, after receiving the recommended trainings based on the Scope Assessment result, SPOs should be re-evaluated using the same criteria. If the SPO achieves a higher score using the same scoring system, then that SPO should be permitted to graduate from the WACP.

Expected benefits: Keeping know-how. Leveraging existing tools – knowledge already “in-house”.

- Alternatively, develop an evaluation criteria similar to those of the SCOPE Assessment.

Expected benefits: More refined assessment criteria. Creating similar criteria, which are well-founded on the individual needs of each SPO and help assess their training needs, progress and readiness for graduation.

## 5. Effectiveness of WACP implementation

Key Findings	Evaluation Result
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is mixed evidence of effectiveness across intervention areas:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regarding outcomes, there is clear evidence of strengthened SPOs (as illustrated by the case studies from the field) related to more transparent financial management, improved governance, and business management as well as adherence to the Fairtrade Standards.</li> <li>However, there is mixed evidence on the effectiveness of implementation in other areas, such as achieving the intermediate and long-term impacts, gender and youth empowerment, or child labour.</li> </ul> </li> <li>The WACP's effectiveness was also measured by comparing it to other rival programmes that SPOs are part of. Our findings show a clear preference for the WACP programme compared to the other SPO-strengthening programmes (from UTZ and Rainforest Alliance). The main variables evaluated and compared across programmes were (a) content, (b) approach, and (c) resources available.</li> </ul>	

## Recommendations

• Bridge identified implementation challenges to even out WACP effectiveness across the intervention areas by, for example:


◊ Producing and sharing lean and targeted reporting for NFOs to share with partners, focusing on just a few key insights and statistics which show value for money and can be shared with consumer brands and retailers. Expected benefits: Help address intermediate impact challenges by easing reporting requirements and improving communication and transparency between key actors in the cocoa supply chain.

◊ Advocating for commercial partners to source semi-processed cocoa products from local processors in Ghana as part of their percentage of cocoa sourced. Expected benefits: Help address long-term impact challenges identified.

◊ Providing financial support to allow the selection and training of internal trainers to facilitate cascading of knowledge to community level with the support of FTA staff. Expected benefits: Improve cascading training and raise awareness at community level.

◊ It is recommended that the training of trainers activity for cascading training received from FTA to other farmers within the different 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade organizations is complemented by a budget from FTA that helps the SPOs to effectively implement the activity.

## 6. Changes to WACP Theory of Change/Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) KPI's

Key Findings	Evaluation Result
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The current WACP MEL system provides several output indicators at the SPO level and outcome indicators, such as household income or productivity. However, it lacks some preferred indicators required to assess WACP's impact at the intermediate and long-term level, such as increase in sales, turnover or profitability of SPO enterprises or increase in enterprises and capital received from the bank. Thus far, we can conclude the WACP has taken a rather minimalist approach. WACP should invest in building those systems at SPO level to record these indicators and link them with MEL data collection. Basic M&amp;E systems have to be developed with all SPOs under WACP.</li> <li>Overall, the MEL reporting includes limited baseline and outcome data at the level of the supported SPOs. Consequently, WACP could present a clearer view of results at intermediate and long-term level. The information system could be better linked to commercial partners' goals and take better account of systematic tracking and monitoring of key indicators in line with the action plans and targets agreed upon with the commercial partners.</li> </ul>	


### Recommendations

- Revamp the Theory of Change by including indicators for tracking the intermediate impact and long-term impact. For example, the following recommended KPIs:
  - ◊ Presence of sustained farming techniques (observation).
  - ◊ Percentage of farmers who reported improved access to services (extension services, inputs, credit, etc.).
  - ◊ Change in capital received from financial institutions.
  - ◊ Change in turnover (revenue) and profitability of other business enterprises.

Expected benefits: Help validate the Theory of Change and corresponding interventions by the WACP and support tracking of the WACP's long-term impact.

- Despite the limited evidence of progress on the intermediate and long-term impacts, changes in these areas will take time to achieve. It is our recommendation that Fairtrade International continues to collect data around the achievement of these impacts and revisits the relevance of these long-term goals from the ToC in one - two years' time.


## 7. Effectiveness of FTA Implementation Team

Key Findings	Evaluation Result
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall, the FTA implementation team has been effective in helping SPOs gain and maintain their Fairtrade certification. This includes working with SPOs to ensure that they have strong internal communication and governance arrangements.</li> <li>In terms of information, FTA has always provided up-to-date information on WACP activities through quarterly reports. This may also include specific reports on the performance of the SPOs.</li> </ul>	

### Recommendations

- Fairtrade Africa should look at other ways of enhancing the training by making it more practical, flexible and farmer-friendly. The training topic/courses should be built on practical experience using personal experience, past work and knowledge from either the trainers or the participants. The materials for each of the topics should be embedded with visual aids and explained exercises. A wide range of techniques, paces and approaches must be applied throughout the training taking into consideration the different ages of the participants.
- FTA should continue to help SPOs stay conversant with current trends on trade pricing, Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and new market opportunities. This will allow SPOs to better support other farmers in the SPO to take advantage of these opportunities as well as share best practices with them.
- It is recommended that FTA should explore new and better ways of working with cocoa regulators in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire to implement the Fairtrade 2021-2026 strategy and impactful initiatives. FTA should also invite the national governments of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire to hold future initiatives to account and request that they clearly state their role in directly forming and leading partnerships to achieve sustainable livelihoods for farmers.
- FTA should also focus on building country-level networks of producer organizations that can leverage support and policy change through joint action and share best practices.

## 8. NFOs' understanding of WACP

Key Findings	Evaluation Result
<p>How well the national Fairtrade organizations understand the WACP and its results influences whether they can effectively share that information with commercial partners. National Fairtrade Organizations (NFOs) reported that, overall, outputs and outcomes have been achieved but there is more room for improvement.</p> <p>◊ According to the NFOs, SPO capacity has been built in terms of governance, financial management, and creating awareness of child labour. SPOs are responsive to their members' needs and members are involved in the operations of the SPO.</p> <p>However, according to NFO's perceptions, SPOs have not been able to achieve the desired outcomes in certain areas and still have some important topics to address.</p> <p>◊ These include getting close to living incomes; implementing better mechanisms to improve child protection and labour; tackling traditional norms (not sending children to school, gender stereotyping, etc.), and implementing better mechanisms to control deforestation.</p>	

### Recommendations

- NFOs should continue to build the market for Fairtrade cocoa through raising consumer awareness, marketing campaigns and engaging with businesses. If certified SPOs can sell even more of their production volumes as Fairtrade, this will allow them to return more benefits to their members and invest more in their businesses.
- NFOs should intensify their advocacy and campaigning for change in the policies and practices of international trade, including lobbying and campaigning for sustainable cocoa as well as collaborative action with other civil society organizations and commercial partners to promote living incomes, gender equality and the prevention of child labour.
- Fairtrade International should develop a further summarized version of the WACP Monitoring Report or a common reporting template agreed with NFOs.


## 9. Roles of key stakeholders

Key Findings	Evaluation Result
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SPOs enjoy strong relationships with their key stakeholders as a result of their participation in the WACP programme. During our interviews, SPOs expressed satisfaction with the level of support received from FTA especially the interaction with commercial partners and creation of market linkages on their behalf.</li> <li>However, SPOs and NFOs face some limitations in their interaction with key stakeholders. These include the issue of certain commercial partners pulling out of negotiations without giving any tangible reasons.</li> </ul>	

### Recommendations

- WACP should provide key insights and statistics which show value for money: For instance, insights about child labour prevention; agroforestry programmes which are helping to combat deforestation and how SPOs are distributing and allocating Fairtrade Premiums.

## 10. Cost effectiveness of WACP

Key Findings	Evaluation Result
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WACP presents a good picture in terms of value for money. It has provided training and advisory support to more participants (the numbers have doubled since 2017) at a lower cost, thereby increasing cost effectiveness.</li> </ul>	

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