

Cocoa Fertilizer Forum

October 13, 2014

Copenhagen

report



Attendants

ADM	Gilbert Sindjou	GeoTraceability	Fabio Scappaticci	OLAM	Andrew Brooks
ADM	Michiel Hendriksz	Guittard	Ed Seguine	OLAM	Gerry Manley
Barry Callebaut	Nicko Debenham	Hersheys	Raymond Major	Swisscontact	Anders Saxboel
CCC	Nguessan Edouard	IDH	Joost Oorthuizen	WCF	Sone Ebai
CCC	Rosemarie Tanoe	IDH	Jonas Mva Mva	WCF	Suzanne Ngo-Eyok
CIRAD	François Ruf	IDH	Renske Aarnoudse	WCF	Bart van der Linden
ECOM	Rahul Gopinath	IITA	Richard Asare	WCF	Paul Macek
ECOM	David Rosenberg	LDC	David Malard		
GeoTraceability	Matthieu Guemas	Nestlé	Pascal Chapot		

Opening by Conseil du Café Cacao

On behalf of Mme Toure Litse, the chairperson of the Cocoa Fertilizer Initiative, Mr Edouard Nguessan, Deputy General Director of the Conseil Café Cacao in Côte d'Ivoire, opened the Fertilizer Forum. Mr Nguessan emphasized the importance of the collaboration between the public and private partners in the cocoa sector. The PPP platform in Côte d'Ivoire was cited as an important vehicle for these collaborations. The Conseil Café Cacao actively supports, amongst others with financial means, the approach of the Cocoa Fertilizer Initiative to reach out to well-trained farmers whom are ready to apply fertilizer. All members of the Initiative, being members of WCF, the fertilizer industry and IDH, were thanked for their contributions towards a more sustainable cocoa sector.

Welcome by World Cocoa Foundation and IDH

Anti-trust statement was read.

On behalf of the WCF Bart van der Linden welcomed all participants and explained that the purpose of the Fertilizer Forum is to share information, to exchange experiences and to create space for open discussion. A close collaboration has been established between the Cocoa Fertilizer Initiative, which started in 2012, and CocoaAction which is in place since May 2014. For this reason WCF is also pleased to welcome this Fertilizer Forum during the week of the WCF Partnership Meetings.

The Cocoa Fertilizer Initiative is governed by the Supervisory Committee which is being chaired by Mme Toure Litse, the Director General of the Conseil Café Cacao. The Scientific Committee and Country Committee serve as advisory committees and report into the Supervisory Committee.

For more details please see presentation attached.

Progress – fertilizer training

As part of a process by le Conseil Café-Cacao, aligned with the 2QC strategy and in collaboration with consultants of FIRCA, the Cocoa Fertilizer Initiative contributed to the production and presentation of new cocoa manuals for farmers and for trainers in Côte d'Ivoire. With input from more than 20 partners from the cocoa sector and from fertilizer companies, conditions and recommendations for fertilizer use have been established. This will support clear and joint messaging on fertilizer use to both farmers and trainers.

Currently the manual is with CNRA for its final review after ANADER extension agents will be trained based on this manual. The first official version will be made available to all partners in the cocoa sector by end-October. After this upcoming season there will also be ample opportunity to provide further feedback to optimize the training manual.

Progress – fertilizer research

The Scientific Committee, chaired by prof. Ken Giller, met for the first time on August 8, 2014. During this meeting the committee's mandate was finalized and approved. Next to that recommendations were formulated for the research work of CIRAD and CNRA.

For the fertilizer testing research of CIRAD two more testing quadrats will be added on each plot such that it will include two fertilizer formulas as well as nitrorbor (control, 0-15-15, 0-15-15 + nitrorbor, 0-23-19). In CNRA's soil sampling research foliar analysis will be included and triangulation of wet chemistry analysis with NIRS analysis will take place.

For more details please see presentation attached.

Sneak preview fertilizer testing report season 2013/2014 by CIRAD

As expected, initial yield response is low. However notable differences between West and East are observed, in the period from April-August a clear impact is seen for the West but not (yet) the East. At this stage an important explanatory factor for this seems to be the acidity of the soils. In the West, where the soils have always been perceived as less suitable for cocoa production due to high acidity, the yield shows a faster response to the application of fertilizer than in the East where the soils are less acid. A more detailed analysis taking into account the multitude of factors will continue to take place.

For more details please see presentation attached.

Questions/suggestions

- What % in yield increase is needed for the farmer to see a Return on Investments?
 - In the first place this dependent on ratio between the cocoa and fertilizer price. As it stands now it seems that an increase of at least 200-250 kg is needed to cover the costs of fertilizer as well as the costs of the risks involved. It should however also be noted that, besides yield increase, an important objective of farmers to apply fertilizer is to maintain the production of specific trees.
- Has an impact been observed on the pod size and/or occurrence of black pod?
 - In some regions variance is observed on this, more detailed analysis is required. Currently the most important factor still seems to be the pruning practices.
- Is the cost of labor taken into account when looking at the investments costs?
 - Some data is collected on labor costs but the focus is not on this aspect.
- Will yield, next to the number of pods harvest, also be presented in weight of beans (kg)?
 - This should certainly be included. Steps are already taken to have scales available at the level of enumerators, next to that collaboration will take place with other research institutions to be able to convert number of harvested pods to bean weight.

- This point also shows that working on farmers' plots comes with challenges such as the need to convince farmers to keep the wet beans from the research plot separate for the purpose of weighing.
- A suggestion was made to not only install fertilizer testing on farmers' plots but also on research plots where all other factors are controlled and for the Scientific Committee to continue its critical review of the methodologies and reports.
 - Before fertilizer formulas are recommended for the cocoa sector CNRA does a thorough field testing of the formulas. Next to that fertilizer companies have ongoing fertilizer testing research in controlled environments. The Initiative will look into the possibilities to further build on this existing knowledge.

Planning – upcoming six months

	Next steps Q4 2014	Next steps Q1 2015
Côte d'Ivoire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Start training ANADER, coordinated by WCF, with new CCC approved manuals ● First report fertilizer testing research from CIRAD available in November 2014 ● Alignment on fertilizer training approach CocoaAction companies ● Finalize Company Action Plans (with stepwise approach) of all CocoaAction companies ● Further scoping of development of agro dealer network & test of the risk sharing mechanism with AFAP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Start implementation of Company Action Plans (with targeted farmers) ● Signing of the agreements with funding partners CCC and fertilizer suppliers
Ghana		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Defining CocoaAction strategy with COCOBOD ● Explore potential collaboration with existing programs
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● New IDH staff in Abidjan, as of November ● Country Committee meeting, first week November ● Steering Committee meeting, November 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Next Scientific Committee meeting
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Online resource platform to be launched end October ● Regular updates to all Initiative partners as of end October 	

Closure by WCF and IDH

The work in the Cocoa Fertilizer Initiative is ongoing for two years now and things are moving in the right direction and that is encouraging to see. At this moment we are together able to take the step from strategy to action:

- Robust governance is in place with the Conseil Café Cacao as chair of the Initiative.
- The recommendations from the Scientific Committee have been valuable and right now the challenge is to bring together all the different sources of knowledge and to further build on the research investments of CIRAD and CNRA.
- On a regular basis the Country Committee will be brought together for all partners to exchange on the on progress and planning of the activities on the ground.
- The CocoaAction companies have committed to 2015 action plans and the challenge will be to put effective and efficient fertilizer distribution mechanisms in place