



COCOA FARMERS' SUPPORT PROGRAMME

End of Programme Report



AUGUST 1, 2024

GOLD FIELDS GHANA FOUNDATION

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Executive Summary

Since 2004, the Gold Fields Ghana Foundation has invested over US\$100 million in various development projects, including more than US\$6.9 million specifically allocated to agriculture. Among the Foundation's key agricultural initiatives is the Cocoa Farmers' Support Programme (CoFaS Programme), which was launched in 2018. This programme was designed to address the challenges faced by cocoa farmers by providing essential fertilizers, agrochemicals, and equipment to improve cocoa production. The Foundation has invested over US\$280,000.00 in the Cocoa Farmers' Support programme.

Cocoa, a critical cash crop for Ghana, plays a vital role in the country's economy, supporting over one million farmers and contributing significantly to foreign exchange and government revenue. Despite its importance, cocoa production has faced declines in recent years, underscoring the need for effective interventions. Cocoa Farmers' Support Programme was introduced as a response to these challenges, with the objective of boosting cocoa yields and enhancing the livelihoods of farmers in the host communities.

Over the five years of its implementation, CoFaS Programme has provided substantial support to 600 farmers, offering each participant fertilizers and pesticides for three consecutive years. This comprehensive support has led to a remarkable 77% increase in average cocoa yields, with farmers' production rising from 9-10 bags per year to 16 bags per year. Additionally, the programme has significantly improved farmers' incomes, with over half of the beneficiary's experiencing income increases of more than 40%. This success highlights the programme's effectiveness in improving productivity, livelihood and demonstrates that mining activities can coexist with agriculture, contributing positively to the local economy.

However, the programme has encountered some challenges. Some farmers reported that, they received insufficient quantities of inputs, particularly those managing larger farms. There were also issues with the timing of input distribution, as well as difficulties in transporting inputs to remote areas by farmers. Additionally, the limited number of farmers selected for the programme were seen as a constraint, given the larger number of potential beneficiaries in the community.

To address these challenges, it is recommended that the programme adjust the allocation of inputs to better match farm sizes, ensuring that larger farms receive adequate support. Optimizing the timing of input distribution to align with critical application periods will also enhance effectiveness. It is recommended to extend the project to include the Tarkwa host communities.

1.0 Introduction

Gold Fields Ghana Foundation since inception in 2002 has huge investments in its host communities with the aim of improving living standards of the people. To date, the Gold Fields Ghana Foundation has invested over US\$100m in development projects and programmes since 2004, over US\$6.9M (representing 7%) of its resources to the development of the agriculture sector. These ranges from livestock production, support production of vegetables under the SEED programme, Community Oil Palm Project, organic vegetable production under the Youth in Organic Horticulture Production (YouHoP) programme and the Cocoa Farmer' support programme.

1.1 Background

Cocoa, scientifically known as *Theobroma cacao*, is one of the important cash crops cultivated in Ghana. The crop has widely been described as the mainstay of Ghana's economy in view of its continuous contribution to strengthening Ghana's gross foreign exchange reserves. Even though, the agricultural sector is the predominant source of employment in Ghana, the cocoa subsector alone accounts for the livelihoods of over one million farmers (COCOBOD, 2024). The saying 'Cocoa is Ghana; Ghana is Cocoa' portrays the important role cocoa plays in the economy of Ghana. The crop generates about \$2 billion in foreign exchange annually and is a major contributor to Government Revenue and GDP.

Despite its importance, cocoa production has faced a decline in recent years, raising concerns and highlighting the need for interventions to bridge the gap between estimated production yields and actual harvests. In response to this challenge, the Ghanaian government launched a free cocoa fertilizer support programme in 2014, aiming to increase the yields of approximately 75% of farmers in the cocoa industry from below 10 bags of cocoa per hectare to 19 bags per hectare.

In 2017, the management of the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) reinstated the Subsidized Fertilizer Programme after evidence surfaced of widespread theft, nepotism, favouritism, diversion, and smuggling under the previous 'Free Fertilizer Programme.' The situation placed some strain on farmers in the acquisition of farm inputs for their farming.

Recognizing these ongoing challenges, Gold Fields Ghana Foundation, initiated the Cocoa Farmers' Support Programme (CoFaS) to support cocoa farmers in its host communities. This initiative, piloted in 2018 with 120 farmers, aims to provide fertilizers and other agricultural inputs to enhance cocoa production in its catchment communities. The programme since inception in

2018 has been implemented in collaboration with the Huni Valley Cocoa Farmers Association of the Ghana Cocoa Coffee Shea nut Farmers' Association, the Damang Mine Consultative Farmers Association (DMCFA) and COCOBOD Huni Valley Division and has invested over USD 280,000.00.

1.1.1 Objectives of the Programme

- i. To assist at least 100 farmers each year to acquire COCOBOD approved fertilizers and agrochemicals for their cocoa farms.
- ii. To boost annual cocoa production in the host communities by 10% in three years
- iii. To help create and sustain employment in the area of cocoa production
- iv. To establish the fact that mining can coexist with farming
- v. To strengthen our social license

2.0 Project Overview

2.1 Selection of Farmers

The selection of farmers was done in partnership with the Huni Valley Cocoa Farmers Association of the Ghana Cocoa Coffee Shea-nut Farmers Association. Series of announcements were disseminated across all host communities to notify cocoa farmers about the program.

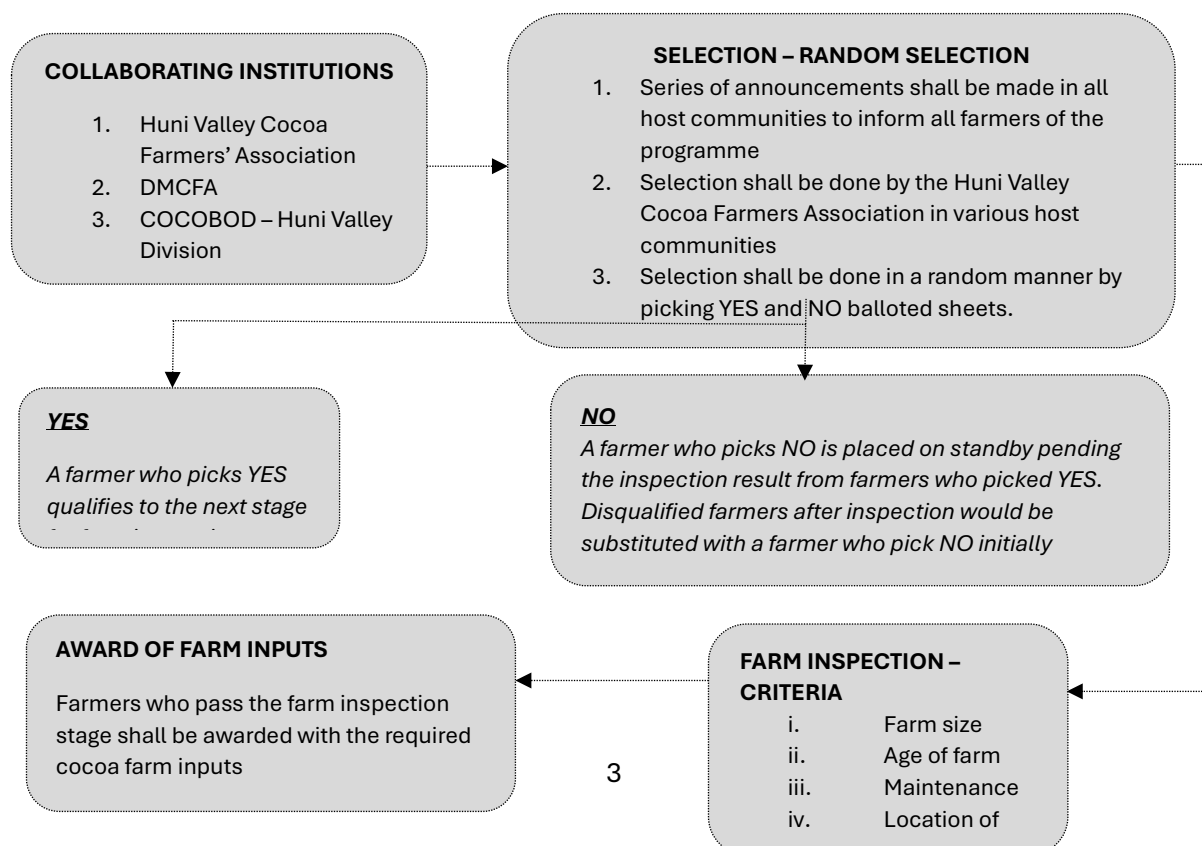
The Farmers' Association conducted the selection during their meetings in the various communities. To ensure fairness, beneficiaries were selected randomly during these meetings, providing each attending farmer an equal chance of being chosen.

2.2 Criteria for Selection

Shortlisted farmers will have their farms inspected by a team made up of representatives from Gold Fields Ghana Foundation representative from the DMCFA. Qualification criteria shall include but not limited to:

- i. Farm Size - the farm size shall not be less than two acres.
- ii. Age of the farm - the age of the farm shall not be less than two years.
- iii. Maintenance - the selected farmer must make sure that his or her cocoa farm is well kept, pruned, cleared and there should not be trees in the farm.
- iv. Location of the Farm: Farm shall be located within the host communities of Abosso Gold Fields, or the owner of the farm shall be a resident of any of the company's nine (9) host communities.

2.3 Framework for the Selection criteria of Beneficiaries



These criteria were designed to ensure that farms selected for inspection met specified standards, fostering sustainable cocoa farming practices within the community.

2.4 Beneficiaries

Over the course of five years, the project has provided substantial assistance to a total of 600



Figure 1: A beneficiary receiving her inputs

farmers (120 farmers in each year), with a gender distribution of 32% female and 68% male. Each of these farmers benefited from the program for a continuous period of three years. This long-term, uninterrupted support allowed the farmers to fully implement and benefit from the assistance provided. Each farmer was supported with two (2) acre of cocoa farm inputs.

In the first year, the primary focus was on providing fertilizers, which helped to significantly improve soil fertility and boost crop yields. Recognizing the need for comprehensive agricultural support, the program expanded its offerings in the subsequent years. Agrochemicals, including COCOBOD approved pesticides and fungicides, were supplied to the farmers to protect their crops from pests and diseases. Addition to these inputs, 90 pieces of Cocoa Spraying Machines (Sthil Mist Blower) were supplied to the DMCFA to be used by the farmers. This holistic approach not only improved crop health but also increased overall productivity and profitability for the farmers.

Table 1: Table Showing the number of farmers and their Communities.

s/n	Communities	Number of farmers					
		2018 Batch	2019 Batch	2020 Batch	2021 Batch	2022 Batch	Total
1	Abosso	11	11	11	11	12	56
2	Amoanda	15	15	15	15	14	74
3	Bompieso	20	20	20	20	20	100
4	Damang	18	18	18	18	18	90
5	Huni Valley	20	20	20	20	20	100
6	Koduakrom	12	12	12	12	12	60
7	Kyekyewere	10	10	10	10	10	50
8	Nyamebekyere	6	6	6	6	6	30
9	Subri	8	8	8	8	8	40
	Total	120	120	120	120	120	600

Table 2: Gender Breakdown of Beneficiaries

Batch	Male	Female	Total
2018	86	34	120
2019	94	26	120
2020	83	37	120
2021	68	52	120
2022	80	40	120
Total	411	189	600

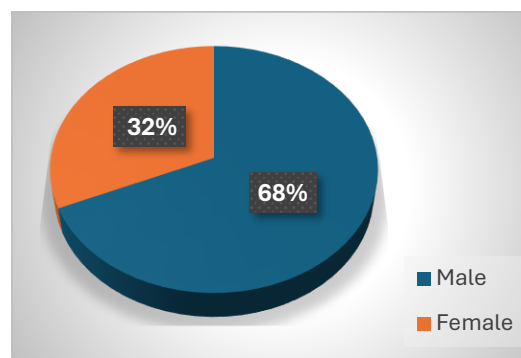


Figure 2: Gender Percentage

2.5 Farm Inspection and Monitoring

Monitoring of each farmer's farm was conducted both before and after the distribution of inputs to ensure optimal utilization and effectiveness of the inputs. Prior to the provision of inputs, inspections were carried out to confirm that the farms were in good condition. This included verifying that the fields were adequately weeded, pruned, and prepared for the application of fertilizer and agrochemicals. These preliminary checks were essential to ensure that the farmers were ready to maximize the benefits of the provided resources.

Following the distribution of fertilizers and agrochemicals, a second round of inspections was performed. These post-distribution inspections were critical to confirm that the farmers had applied the inputs correctly and were following the recommended application. This rigorous monitoring process helped in maintaining high standards of farm management and ensured that the support provided led to improved agricultural productivity and sustainability.



Figure 3: Beneficiary applying pesticide on his cocoa farm during post-distribution inspection

2.6 Economic Benefit of the Programme

A recent study evaluated the impact of the program on the beneficiaries' annual yields. The



Figure 4: A beneficiary Proudly Harvesting Cocoa Pods

results revealed a significant increase in productivity following the implementation of the program. Prior to joining the program, farmers reported an average annual yield of 9 - 10bags of cocoa. This baseline yield served as a critical reference point for assessing the program's effectiveness. However, after benefiting from the project's interventions, these same farmers saw their average annual yield increase

to 16 bags of cocoa. This substantial growth represents a 77% increase in productivity, underscoring the program's effectiveness. This boost in productivity not only enhances the economic stability of the beneficiaries but also contributes to the overall sustainability of cocoa farming in the Huni Valley District of COCOBOD.

The study also highlighted the financial benefits experienced by the farmers. It was found that 51.6% of the beneficiaries increased their income by more than 40%, demonstrating a substantial improvement in their economic stability. Additionally, 35.5% of the farmers reported an income increase of 30-40%, while the remaining farmers saw their income rise by 10-20%.

These findings highlight not only the program's success in boosting cocoa production but also its significant impact on improving the livelihoods of the beneficiaries. The increased income levels among farmers indicate that the program has contributed to greater economic resilience and sustainability.

Moreover, the increased yields and resultant income improvements of the beneficiaries from the program have established that mining can coexist with farming, demonstrating that agricultural activities can thrive even in areas impacted by mining activities.

2.7 Testimonies from some Farmers and the District Cocoa Chief Officer for Huni Valley

Mr. Baaba Sintim

"My name is Baaba Sintim from Bompieso, and I have been a beneficiary of the Cocoa Farmers' Support Program for three years. Before the programme, I struggled to obtain the necessary farm inputs and harvested only 8 to 10 bags from my two-acre farm each season. Since joining the programme, I have received COCOBOD-approved fertilizers, pesticides, and fungicides, which have significantly improved the



Figure 5: Mr. Baaba Sintim inspecting his cocoa pods

health and productivity of my cocoa trees. I now harvest 18 to 20 bags per season, which has greatly enhanced my standard of living and instilled a strong sense of pride and accomplishment."

Mad. Esther Aggrey

"I am Esther Aggrey from Bompieso, and I am grateful for the Cocoa Farmers' Support Programme. My farm was severely affected by diseases and pests, and I couldn't afford the necessary



Figure 6: Mad. Aggrey in her farm

treatments. I enrolled in the programme in 2022, I received pesticides, fungicides, and fertilizers that revitalized my farm. My harvests have increased from 3-5 bags to over 12 bags, and I now feel hopeful and optimistic about my farm's future. The programme has not only saved my farm but also given me renewed hope and a path to success."

The District Cocoa Chief Officer's Endorsement

"I am Mr. Clement Sarpong, the District Cocoa Chief Officer for Huni Valley District. As the District Cocoa Chief Officer, I am with great pride to acknowledge the exceptional support provided by the Gold Fields Ghana Foundation through its Cocoa Farmers' Support Programme to our cocoa farmers. COCOBOD has been actively monitoring the progress, and we are genuinely pleased with the level of assistance the Foundation has extended. We (COCOBOD) deeply appreciate their contribution, which is making a substantial difference in our farmers' livelihoods and the overall well-being and sustainability of our cocoa sector".

2.8 Effectiveness/Satisfaction of the Programme

The Cocoa Farmers' support programme has garnered a high level of effectiveness as perceived by the majority of the beneficiaries. The study revealed that, a combined total of 97.8% of the beneficiaries rated the programme as either "very effective" or "effective." This indicates strong approval and suggests that the programme met the needs of the beneficiaries.

2.9 Key Concerns/Challenges by the Beneficiaries

1. **Insufficient Quantity of Inputs Supplied:** Some farmers reported that the number of farm inputs received was inadequate for their farms, particularly for larger acreages. This mismatch between the quantity of inputs and farm size can limit the programme's effectiveness in improving yields.

2. **Timing of Inputs Distribution:** Farmers suggested that the distribution of agrochemicals should be aligned with the optimal application period (thus, April – May). Delays in distribution can lead to suboptimal results.
3. **Transportation of the inputs:** Transporting distributed inputs from collection points to farms posed a challenge for some farmers, particularly those with limited transportation options or residing in remote areas. Farmers have suggested that delivering inputs directly to their communities would help alleviate transportation difficulties and improve access.
4. **Limited Number of Farmers.** Additionally, the limited number of selected farmers is seen as a challenge by the farmers, given the larger number of farmers in the community who could benefit from the programme.

3.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

3.1 Conclusion

The Gold Fields Ghana Foundation's Cocoa Farmers' Support Programme has proven to be a highly beneficial initiative for the cocoa farmers in the Huni Valley District. Since its inception in 2018, the programme has significantly contributed to the enhancement of cocoa production and the improvement of farmers' livelihoods. The programme's impact is evident from the substantial increase in cocoa yields, which saw an average rise of 77% among beneficiaries. Financially, the programme has led to considerable income growth, with many farmers experiencing a rise in income by up to 40%. This success has not only demonstrated the viability of mining and farming coexisting but has also reinforced the Foundation's commitment to the sustainable development of its host communities.

3.2 Recommendations

1. **Increase Input Quantities:** To address the challenge of insufficient quantities of inputs, it is recommended that the programme review and adjust the allocation of fertilizers and agrochemicals based on farm size. Ensuring that larger farms receive adequate quantities of inputs will enhance the overall effectiveness of the programme in boosting yields.
2. **Optimize Distribution Timing:** Align the distribution schedule of agrochemicals with the optimal growth stages of cocoa plants, particularly during critical application periods (April – May). This will help in achieving better results and maximizing the benefits of the provided inputs.
3. **Expand Farmer Inclusion:** Given the significant number of cocoa farmers in Tarkwa host communities, it is recommended to extend the project to include these areas.
4. **Introduce Training Programs:** Incorporate training sessions on best agronomic practices in cocoa cultivation, as well as safety training, into the programme. This will equip farmers with the necessary knowledge and skills to optimize their farming practices, improve yields, and ensure safe handling and application of agrochemicals.