

# The Upcocoa project in Cameroon

## Professional and sustainable cocoa business



The Upcocoa Project in Cameroon started in October 2006. It is a four-year project that focuses on upgrading the upstream cocoa chain. The Upcocoa Project aims at creating a professional and sustainable cocoa business. It addresses problems in areas such as marketing, institutional and social capacities, quality management, productivity, and sustainable agriculture. The project will (initially) work with eight cooperatives, comprising of about 1600 farmers.

The main goal is to improve the farmers' capacities from an entrepreneurial point of view. Improvement lies in the way the cocoa cooperatives are organised and work together. The learning experiences from this project will be available to the Cameroonian cacao sector and the wider business community.

[www.iscom.nl/upcocoa](http://www.iscom.nl/upcocoa)

The project is financed by a subsidy from the Cocoa Buffer Fund of the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture (LNV) and by in-kind contributions of ADM Cocoa B.V., Masterfoods B.V./Mars Inc. and IITA/STCP. For more information about the partners in the project, please see the back of this fact sheet.

### Sustainable chain management

The project is based on the belief that partnerships between farmer organisations and other companies in the cocoa chain are key to change the dismal situation the small-scale farmers are in today. Often, farmers have no other option but to sell their product to middleman directly after harvesting. In need of money while lacking alternative financial resources, farmers also take loans from middlemen. In this way farmers may become disproportionately dependent on them. Their predicament can be improved if farmers organise themselves in efficient cooperatives that facilitate their members in bringing products on the market and acquire financing from a professional financier.

Necessary changes:

Economy	Ecology	Social
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Improving quality and product value</li> <li>➤ Improving Productivity</li> <li>➤ Domestic marketing</li> <li>➤ Trade diversification</li> <li>➤ Organisational professionalism including accountability</li> <li>➤ Saving and credit schemes</li> <li>➤ Efficiency in logistics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Crop diversification</li> <li>➤ Multi-cropping</li> <li>➤ Conservation &amp; Biodiversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Health &amp; safety</li> <li>➤ Education</li> <li>➤ Gender Issues</li> <li>➤ Community development</li> <li>➤ Involvement of children</li> </ul>

### A four-year trajectory

The Upcocoa project entails the development of an improvement programme and the implementation of that programme. The activities involved will need a period of three years to be carried out. These activities will have direct beneficial effects for the farmers and the farmer organisations participating in the project: increased yields and product quality, better logistics, better earning capacity and creditworthiness. The fourth year of the project is a period of harvesting and further dissemination. The uptake and continuation of the implemented methods and programmes will be monitored and selectively supported. Dissemination will focus on finding ways to transfer the results to other farmers. The fourth year will also provide an opportunity to establish an innovation support facility for all cooperatives of cocoa farmers in Cameroon and could possibly contribute to developing a sustainability standard for the mainstream cocoa trade.

## The companies in the project

The Upcocoa Project is a multi-stakeholder project with participants from throughout the cocoa value chain. Different companies and organisations with different roles are working together aiming for successful project results.

### ADM Cocoa B.V.

Archer Daniels Midland Company (ADM) is one of the world's largest agricultural processors of soybeans, corn, wheat and cocoa. They work with farmers across the world. In the Upcocoa Project ADM Cocoa will advise the farmer organisations as to the development of effective marketing and logistics. Furthermore, ADM Cocoa will participate in the training of the cooperatives in areas such as product quality. [www.admworld.com](http://www.admworld.com)

### Institute for Sustainable Commodities (ISCOM)

ISCOM has – together with ADM Cocoa – initiated the project and has written the project proposal. ISCOM is the project's administrator and contributes to the execution of the project. The latter particularly involves project coordination, development of a Quality Management Handbook and writing of a few (scientific) articles. In April 2008 ISCOM handed over the project management to RIAS. [www.iscom.nl](http://www.iscom.nl)

### International Institute of Tropical Agriculture/ Sustainable Tree Crop Program (IITA/STCP)

The IITA/STCP already had been active in the cocoa sector. It started farmer field schools to train farmers how to run a good cocoa farm and increase productivity. The Upcocoa Project will benefit from this experience as well as from its present networks in Cameroon. Besides this, IITA/STCP has a wider interest in the way the farmers are organised and develop as effective organisations. [www.treecrops.org](http://www.treecrops.org)

### Masterfoods B.V./ Mars Inc.

As a maker of final cocoa products Masterfoods is close to the end-user market. In this way Masterfoods represents a major link in the cocoa chain. Masterfoods/Mars Inc. will share expertise in the field of sustainable production methods based on research in different countries, as well as its experience and research in the field of quality improvement. [www.masterfoods.com](http://www.masterfoods.com)

### Rabo International Advisory Services (RIAS)

RIAS is very experienced in the field of rural banking, cooperative development and agricultural chain development. Starting from April 2008 RIAS is the new project manager of the Upcocoa project. Besides that RIAS is the main adviser in the field of the institutional build-up of the farmer organisations. RIAS will also design and support the setting up a credit system for the cooperatives. [www.rabobank.com/rias/index.htm](http://www.rabobank.com/rias/index.htm)

### UPCOCOA Consortium of Cocoa Cooperatives in Cameroon (UCCC)

The UCCC consists of representatives of all cooperatives that take part in the Upcocoa project. Through the UCCC the farmer organisations will participate in the project's decision-making.

