

Using Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) to formulate National Cocoa Plans

Background

The uncertainty regarding future production (and demand) of cocoa, the dearth of information on cocoa resources, the lack of co-ordination of initiatives originating from the public and private sector as well as from various development partners at national, regional and international levels, have raised questions with regard to the sustainability of the cocoa economy. Consequently, the need for countries to develop their own national cocoa plans, in coherence with other strategic initiatives formulated, such as national plans aiming to develop the agricultural sector and the local industry, the Poverty Reduction Strategic Papers and other national strategic documents, has become very crucial.

To formulate an effective national plan, it is crucial to take into consideration the needs of all relevant stakeholders in the cocoa supply chain. Therefore, the process in its formulation is equally important as the tool itself to ensure that it is transparent, comprehensive and participatory. The *Global Cocoa Agenda* (<http://icco.org/home/world-cocoa-conference-2012.html>) which was adopted at the first World Cocoa Conference in 2012, advocated this process in its key recommendation to encourage both cocoa exporting and importing countries to institute a strategic action plan to achieve a sustainable world cocoa economy.

Objective of national cocoa plan

The objective of a national cocoa plan is to achieve a sustainable cocoa economy, in particular for the benefit of smallholder farmers, who are considered to be the weakest link in the supply chain. This is also in line with the mandate provided in the *International Cocoa Agreement, 2010* wherein the definition of a sustainable cocoa economy implies an integrated value chain in which all stakeholders develop and promote appropriate policies to achieve levels of production, processing and consumption that are economically viable, environmentally sound and socially responsible, for the benefit of present and future generations, with the aim of improving productivity and profitability in the cocoa value chain for all stakeholders concerned, in particular for the smallholder producers.

Such a plan is necessary for the simple strategic reason that the country needs to continue to reap the benefits from cocoa cultivation in the future, as well as to raise the incomes of farmers, alleviate poverty, and address the increasing challenges facing cocoa smallholder farmers, which include food security, climate change, declining yields, losses due to pests and diseases, and the ageing population of farmers. There is a need for better co-ordination of efforts, both at national, regional and at international level, through public, private and civil society partnerships in order to mobilize the scarce resources available and work together to drive the cocoa sector to greater heights.

Definition of a national plan

A national cocoa plan can be broadly defined as a document which outlines the vision, mission statement, values and strategy to bring about a successful sustainable cocoa sector. It implies, as a requirement, to understand the current position of the sector and the possible

avenues through which it can pursue a particular course of action. The target is set with clearly defined goals and/or objectives, followed by the path/action plan or the road map, with clear milestones to mark the route to the goals/objectives. Among the most useful tools used for strategic planning is a SWOT analysis.

Elements of a national plan

The strategy combines analyses, processes, and required actions, and usually involves the following elements:

- i. A snapshot of the current status of the cocoa sector, which may involve a new economic and value chain analysis, including innovative business farm models;
- ii. A national vision of the cocoa sector within the given time-frame;
- iii. A diagnosis of the key constraints that prevent the cocoa sector from achieving its vision, and an analysis of the main opportunities, inevitably requiring new analytical studies and likely involving modelling of growth processes; and
- iv. Action plans for implementing the vision, including assignment of responsibilities and estimation of costs, and a comprehensive programme of monitoring and evaluation to measure the costs and benefits and to understand any required revisions.

Effective processes for preparing a national cocoa plan rely on intensive fact-finding; diagnostic studies; systematic analyses collaborated with relevant data; programme monitoring; evaluation and impact assessment. There is recognition that the development of the cocoa sector should involve the wider responsibilities of multiple ministries and agencies, and this gives rise to potential problems, such as co-ordination of efforts and dilution of focus in analyses and programme planning. Hence the benefits of pursuing a national cocoa plan are obvious, in order to synergize and engender unity of actions, in a targeted approach, to achieve the jointly set targets.

The plan has to be supported by carrying out an inventory of cocoa resources where meaningful analysis can be made and the tools use to draft a national cocoa development plan. Built-in mechanism for monitoring the progress and evaluation taking into account changes to the environment, economic and social climate will make the plan more relevant and provide greater impact to the development of the sector.

Hallmarks of a successful plan

Some hallmarks in the development of a successful national plan are as follows:

Strong political and administrative leadership at central and local levels

A platform (PPPs) for national consultation to build consensus and ownership of a vision for cocoa development

A strategic document identifying the desired outcomes of decentralized cocoa development programmes specifying timetables, budgets and responsibilities, built upon sound knowledge and analyses of cocoa resources

Mobilization of institutions and partnerships at different levels and in different sectors to ensure coherence in the implementation of the Cocoa Development Strategy

Broad local participation in regular monitoring, and an understanding of the likely impact on those who will benefit and those who may lose

Leading countries having national plans

It is laudable to note that the world's largest leading cocoa producing countries, namely Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Indonesia are actively engaged with key stakeholders in their respective countries in this regard. Others such as Cameroon, Nigeria and Ecuador are following suit. It is noteworthy too, that cocoa importing countries such as the Netherlands and Germany are doing likewise to complement the efforts of their exporting counterparts.

Aim of this blog

It is the aim of this blog to provide a platform to stimulate and share ideas in particular on how the public private partnerships platform can be mobilized towards achieving a common objective to improve the livelihoods of the cocoa farming communities. Having the PPPs as a platform is only one of many pre-requisites as many challenges lie ahead for it to be an effective vehicle to fulfil its objectives efficiently. They include among others, good governance, staffed with well-qualified personnel to ensure trust and buy-in by all stakeholders, transparency and accountability taking on-board the various interests of all actors and a clear distribution of responsibilities among the partners, ensuring that everyone plays a part, openness, etc. In summary, it requires having the "right" people asking the "right" questions, thus identifying the "real issues" on the ground to enable the policy-makers find the "best" solutions to address these issues. The results from this blog will be taken into consideration in the preparations leading towards the second edition of the World Cocoa Conference to be held in Amsterdam, the Netherlands from 9-13 June 2014. We welcome all interested parties to register and participate in this blog. Your views are highly appreciated and will contribute to the efforts to make a difference in improving the livelihoods of cocoa farmers in the world.