

Press Release on The Occasion of Signature to MMSP Agreements on 11 July 2013

The supply of improved planting materials to farmers is a vital component in ensuring the sustainability of cocoa production. A public/private partnership between Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Ghana, GCGRA and its sister organisation CR(UK) Ltd, Mars and Mondelēz International was signed today which will contribute over €4million to the continuation of a major breeding programme, the Mabang Megakarya Selection Programme (MMSP) over the next four years. MMSP's work will lead to Ghana's seed gardens supplying farmers with new varieties which have been tested for their performance in an area affected by the devastating Megakarya form of Black Pod disease. In the longer term it will also develop improved clonal varieties which will be at the heart of the modernisation of cocoa production.

The Mabang Megakarya Selection Programme (MMSP) was established in 2005 as a joint programme in cocoa breeding between the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (or "CRIG" - a Division of the Ghana Cocoa Board) and the Ghana Cocoa Growing Research Association Ltd ("GCGRA"). A Memorandum of Understanding between CRIG and GCGRA was agreed to cover the initial fifteen years of the project, including a four year Establishment Phase which was co-funded by The Netherlands Ministerie van Landbouw, Natuur en Voedselkwaliteit (LNV), COCOBOD/CRIG and GCGRA. The programme is based at CRIG's Acherensua-Mabang Plantation on the border of the Ashanti and Brong-Ahafo Regions of Ghana. The MMSP currently has 18 permanent staff headed by Mr Enoch Nsiah (CRIG Plant Breeder) with guidance from Dr. Rob Lockwood (Consultant Technical Director). The programme has led to numerous employment opportunities for the people of Mabang village, bringing enormous benefit to the whole village.

The MMSP has three objectives:

- Selection of pollen parents for use in Ghana's seed gardens
- A long term programme to identify clones that are high yielding in the presence of black pod disease and have the quality characteristics of the best Ghanaian cocoa, and can be used for further breeding
- Improving the efficiency of cocoa breeding methodology

MMSP is closely involved with another initiative between COCOBOD's Seed Production Unit and Mondelēz International which will enable the seed gardens to produce the recommended varieties.

Many years of commitment, sustained research effort and investment will be required to identify and recommend the varieties which will play an important role in increasing the productivity and profitability of cocoa farms. During this Consolidation Phase, the MMSP site will be developed enabling it to maintain and evaluate the trials already underway and set up the new trials which will confirm promising selections and introduce new materials for testing. The close involvement of farmers and industry throughout will ensure that the varieties developed will meet expectations both in terms of their field performance and the quality of the beans they produce. Mr. Anthony Fofie, Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board, said "this partnership between COCOBOD, the cocoa industry and the Dutch government allowing continuous development of better varieties is a giant stride towards the sustainability of Ghana's cocoa industry and millions of rural livelihoods".

Background Information On The Partners



The Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) was established in 1947. The mission of the Board is to encourage and facilitate the production, processing and marketing of good quality cocoa, coffee and sheanut in all forms in the most efficient and cost effective manner, and maintain the best mutual industrial relation with its objectives. One of its objectives is to purchase, market and export cocoa and cocoa products produced in Ghana which is graded under the Cocoa Industry (Regulations) (Consolidation) Decree, 1968 NLCD 278, or any other enactment as suitable for export. The Board is governed by a Board of Directors composed of bankers, economists, workers' representatives and cocoa farmers. It oversees the following Divisions: Cocoa Marketing Company (Ghana) Ltd., Quality Control Division, Cocoa Swollen Shoot Virus Disease (CSSV) Control Unit (CSSVDCU), Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG) and Seed Production Unit (SPU).

COCOA RESEARCH

INSTITUTE OF GHANA

CRIG undertakes research into all aspects of the production, processing and utilisation of cocoa and other mandated crops. Its aim is to develop sustainable, demand-driven, commercially oriented, cost-effective, socially and environmentally acceptable technologies for the cocoa industry. The Institute was founded in 1938 and is now funded principally by the National Government and is under the Management of the Ghana Cocoa Board. CRIG has 33 research grade staff, 112 technical grade staff and 800 other staff working at the main centre at New Tafo-Akim and its three major stations at Bunso, Afosu and Bole, together with the new station at Mabang and two other ones.

Cocoa Research(UK)Ltd



Cocoa Research (UK) Ltd, (CRUK), was established in 1996 to promote UK based research on cocoa which will benefit the cocoa community as a whole. CRUK is managed by representatives of the UK chocolate industry, cocoa trade and UK's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). It has supported a number of collaborative research projects involving CRIG and research institutes in the UK which include studies on the design and analysis of breeding trials, pheromones and new spray techniques for improved pest control, CSSV diagnostics and the effects of the environment and diseases on cocoa growth at the whole plant and molecular level.

Ghana Cocoa Growing Research Association



The Ghana Cocoa Growing Research Association Ltd. (GCGRA) is a fund set up in 1973 by the late John Cadbury to support cocoa research that has special relevance to cocoa growing in West Africa. Its Board now consists of representatives from the UK chocolate manufacturers and the Overseas Office of the Universities of Ghana. GCGRA's research programme is closely aligned to that of its sister organisation, The Cocoa Research Association Ltd. (CRA Ltd.) which has recently taken over the UK industry cocoa research programme from the BCCCA (the former trade association for UK manufacturers of biscuits, cakes, chocolate and sugar confectionery). The UK chocolate industry has a long tradition of support for cocoa research and has been working with partners in both cocoa producing countries and Europe for over 50 years. GCGRA has supported research on capsid control, CSSV diagnosis, and tissue culture and is focussed on developing skills in the Ghanaian cocoa sector.



Mars takes very seriously its responsibility to the cocoa farming families who provide it with this important ingredient. Mars privately owned company's heritage is based on a genuine commitment to the communities that are touched by the business. Driven by that commitment, Mars has taken a leadership role in the industry's efforts to ensure a sustainable future for the family farms where the products begin, for the children who live on those farms, for the communities that rely on those farms and for the ecosystems in which those farms play an important role. Mars' efforts seek to raise overall farmer incomes and encourage sustainable cocoa cultivation.

Through its Sustainable Cocoa Initiative, Mars Chocolate invests tens of millions of dollars annually in cocoa-focused agricultural research, technology transfer programs to increase yields and income for farmers in Africa and Asia, and certification programs to promote acceptable conditions for farmers in its supply chain. Mars guiding principle is to put 'Farmers First,' by prioritizing activities through which farmers will achieve higher yields and larger incomes that will in turn support broader social development and better environmental protection.



Mondelēz is the world's biggest chocolate company and uses around 11% of the world's total cocoa crop. Cadbury, one of Mondelez's major chocolate brands, has had an active presence in Ghana for more than 30 years. In 2008 Cadbury launched the Cadbury Cocoa Partnership to secure the economic, social and environmental sustainability of cocoa farmers and their communities. This is a long term commitment from Cadbury to improve farmer livelihoods and communities by working with NGO partners and national governments. The company has recently extended its commitment to cocoa sustainability by expanding the program to incorporate a research track; recognising the need for increased cocoa productivity through improved planting material and farming practice whilst continuing to enhancing the lives and livelihoods of farmers and ensuring their human rights are protected.



Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands focuses in Ghana on agricultural modernisation as the driving force for increased production of improved products and improved livelihoods. At the same time increased productivity should be achieved in a sustainable way. The Embassy believes that an effective way to achieve these goals is through public private partnerships and therefore supports these partnerships in its programmes. The support to this project is part of a broader range of initiatives that the Netherlands government intends to support over the years in the cocoa sector.