



## Sustainable Tree Crops Program (STCP) A Public-Private Partnership

### 1. Program Overview

The **Sustainable Tree Crops Program (STCP)** builds on an understanding that traditional smallholder tree crop systems, which are part of an export-oriented cash economy, can play an important role in stimulating the rural economy and contribute significantly to increasing welfare by providing a stable platform for new investments and partnerships in the agricultural sector overall. Over the past decades, under-investment in the tree crop sector, combined at times with weak policy support, has meant that this potential has not been realized. The key constraints in these systems have been identified and impact the tree crop sector to varying degrees in West and Central Africa:



- Low yields and little farm-level technical knowledge
- Inadequate access to agricultural inputs
- Poorly organized farmers
  - Limited information and finances for marketing by farmer organizations
  - Inefficient marketing channels
  - Inconsistent quality standards
    - Low farmgate prices
    - Weak supportive policies.

#### An Innovative Partnership

STCP is a public-private partnership that was launched in May 2000 to facilitate the improvement of smallholder agricultural systems based on tree crops in West and Central Africa. New partners have joined the alliance and, today (see Annex I: List of Partners), it unites organizations and entities including:

- Farmers & producer organizations
- The global chocolate industry & cocoa trade
- Donors and development agencies
- The public sector and policymakers
- National governments
- Research institutes

Within the framework of the STCP West African Development Alliance, these partners have shaped a consensus around addressing three common concerns:

1. Promoting the production and marketing of quality cocoa;
2. Improving market access and income for small-scale producers; and
3. Creating systems that are environmentally friendly, socially responsible, and economically sustainable.



## **The Program**

A three-year regional action plan was initiated at a workshop in November 2002 in Accra, Ghana. This included a series of pilot programs building on detailed baseline surveys that were conducted across the region in 2001.

*The goal of STCP is to improve the economic and social well-being of smallholders and the environmental sustainability of tree crop farms of West and Central Africa.*

To achieve its goal of improving the economic and social well being of smallholding farmers, the STCP Development Alliance has been focusing its resources and support on:

- Research and technology support to promote environmentally sustainable farming, and improve farmer incomes;
- Strengthening farmer and community organizations and the private sector;
- Trade and information systems to improve farmer income, and product quality.
- Social systems that promote responsible labor practices and government delivery of social services; and
- Policy change to increase the efficiency of the tree crop sector.

Pilot programs supported by regional expertise are now being implemented in a strategic and integrated manner in Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea and Nigeria by local and international non-governmental organizations, farmer organizations, local governments and civil society organizations. The primary entry point in Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Nigeria has been the cocoa sector, while in Guinea it is cashew.

STCP is managed through the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, and is programmatically guided by country-level national tree crop networks and a regional multi-stakeholder steering committee.

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