



Recently planted Dynamic Agroforestry plot in the Sankofa landscape project in Ghana

Final Report

**Mid-term and Impact Evaluation (MTE)  
of the  
Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa (SWISSCO)**

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## CONTENT INDEX

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	iv
1. Introduction .....	1
2. Description of the context and development intervention .....	2
3. Methodology .....	3
4. Key findings, Conclusions and Recommendations .....	6
4.1 Accountability & Transparency .....	6
4.2 Networking & Knowledge Exchange .....	9
4.3 International Collaboration & Policy Dialogue .....	11
4.4 Financing Windows (Public-private Partnership Projects) .....	13
a. Overall .....	13
b. Landscape .....	16
c. Innovation .....	19
d. Peer Learning and Collaboration .....	20
4.5 Intervention Mix for Sustainability Transformations in the Cocoa Sector .....	21
4.6 Institutional Governance of SWISSCO .....	23
5. Concluding Remarks .....	26
Annexes .....	27
Annex 1: List of stakeholders consulted .....	28
Annex 2: Detailed quantitative results from the online survey .....	30
a. Results on Accountability and Transparency .....	30
b. Results on Networking & Knowledge Exchange .....	31
c. Results on Policy Dialogue and International Collaboration .....	33
d. Results on Financing Windows (Public-private Partnership Projects) .....	33
e. Results on Intervention Mix for Sustainability Transformations in the Cocoa Sector ....	34
f. Results on Institutional Governance .....	35
Annex 3: Detailed Theory of Change of the Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa (SWISSCO) ...	36
Annex 4: Terms of Reference .....	41
Annex 5: Questionnaire of the online survey .....	45

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## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

CDE = Centre for Development and Environment, University of Berne

CH = Switzerland

CHIS = Cocoa Household Income Study

CIV = Côte d'Ivoire

CLMRS = Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation Systems

CRIG = Cocoa Research Institute Ghana

CSSVD = Cocoa Swollen Shoot Virus Disease

DAF = Dynamic Agroforestry

FTE = Full-time Equivalent

GCCP = Ghana Civil Society Cocoa Platform

KKFU = Kuapa Kokoo Farmers Union

ICCO = International Cocoa Organization

ICI = International Cocoa Initiative

ISCOs = Initiatives for Sustainable Cocoa (Belgium, France, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland)

ITC = International Trade Centre

MTE = Mid-term and impact evaluation

MoU = Memorandum of Understanding

NCRC = Nature Conservation Research Centre (Ghana)

NGO = Non-Governmental Organization

SECO = Swiss State Secretariat of Economic Affairs

SME = Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises

SSCP = Swiss Sustainable Coffee Platform

SWISSCO = Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa

ToC = Theory of Change

ToR = Terms of Reference

UNICEF = United Nations Children's Fund

WCF = World Cocoa Foundation

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Mid-term and Impact Evaluation (MTE) assesses the performance, outcomes, and strategic relevance of the Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa (SWISSCO), particularly in the context of support provided by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO). It covers the second SECO-supported phase (2022–2026), with CHF 13 million in funding, and focuses on SWISSCO's contribution to sustainability transformations in the cocoa sector through a multi-stakeholder approach.

The evaluation was conducted jointly by Como Consult and the Centre for Development and Environment (CDE) of the University of Bern between November 2024 and June 2025. It reviews the SWISSCO Roadmap 2030, which was approved in 2021. The evaluation involved a document review, 33 interviews, a field visit to Ghana, and an online member survey (n=51 completed responses). The analysis is structured along SWISSCO's Theory of Change, responds to 25 evaluation questions defined by SECO and contributed to revise the SWISSCO Roadmap in 2025.

### Key Findings and Conclusions

Overall, the existence of SWISSCO is seen very positive by a large majority of stakeholders. SWISSCO found its role very well and complements what already exists. Yet, the evaluation also revealed that – naturally – a multistakeholder platform like SWISSCO has its limits, and additional efforts are needed to reap the full potential to drive sustainability transformations in the cocoa sector.

#### 1. Accountability and Transparency

More than 70% of survey respondents affirm that SWISSCO promotes accountability through participatory target-setting and enhancing sector-wide transparency. While regulatory developments are being seen as the most significant factor influencing the level of sustainability commitment by individual members, SWISSCO contributes to sustainability transformations in the cocoa sector by fostering peer support, mutually reinforcing commitments of member organisations, and sector-wide guidance, and it also creates co-ownership of joint sustainability targets among all member organisations.

A concern is the potential for free riding: companies can benefit reputationally without significantly contributing. Many members feel the reporting requirements are too lenient, and only 14% of survey respondents believe all members contribute appropriately to SWISSCO's Roadmap 2030 targets.

#### 2. Networking and Knowledge Exchange

SWISSCO has successfully created a platform for knowledge sharing and trust-building. Around 59% of respondents reported increased collaboration with other members due to SWISSCO's learning and networking events, and over two thirds gained useful knowledge through the platform. Members appreciate the opportunity to connect with diverse actors, particularly SMEs, who benefit from each other's shared practices.

In-person events like the Annual General Meeting and issue-specific briefs were found highly effective. Members also expressed interest in deeper, more detailed case studies and more interaction with stakeholders from cocoa-producing countries. There is substantial progress on method harmonization, notably with ISCO and ICI standards, although reporting requirements could be further harmonised with EU regulations and the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF).

### 3. International Collaboration and Policy Dialogue

SWISSCO enhances Switzerland's visibility and credibility in sustainable cocoa, especially in Ghana, where a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and local representation have advanced relationships with COCOBOD and CRIG. Although well on track in Ghana, policy dialogue is an underutilized but promising lever. While SWISSCO facilitates engagement, especially when embassies are well-informed and active (like in Ghana), most members expect more tactical influence on origin governments, with the CH Embassies in the lead where feasible, and in collaboration with other relevant players like the World Cocoa Foundation, the World Bank or other ISCOs. Thus, there is potential to strengthen policy advocacy in other producer countries beyond Ghana.

Collaboration with other ISCOs is seen as valuable, and the partnership with SWISSCO is appreciated by others. The joint thematic ISCO working groups for members are currently seen as rather inefficient due to large, fragmented groups. A leaner, more action-oriented ISCO structure could increase effectiveness, particularly in coordinated policy dialogue.

### 4. Financing Windows (Public-Private Partnership Projects)

**Overall:** SWISSCO's PPP co-funding mechanism is widely appreciated. 88% of respondents agree that PPPs are key to accelerating innovation and learning. However, criteria for funding are partially viewed as vague, and the additionality of member funding needs to be questioned. Members cite some confusion over funding windows and suggest clearer guidelines, increased transparency, and an even stronger focus on results and systemic change.

**Landscape Projects:** Critical for systemic change towards sustainability and better livelihoods, landscape approaches require long-term commitment and coordination. Ghana's Sankofa and UNICEF projects, as well as Côte d'Ivoire's Cavally project are very promising. In general, though, members hesitate to contribute funding beyond their supply chains, and their funding is often comprised of pre-existing commercial expenses rather than new investments into the sustainable management and resilience of the landscapes. Such additional investments will materialise only if members see their long-term economic benefit, and when costs are shared with competitors that source from the same landscape in a fair way.

**Innovation Projects:** Many funded initiatives are driven by business cases for such innovations, which is needed in order to scale their use in the future. Nevertheless, some funded projects are perceived as business development rather than true innovation. Although some contribute meaningfully to SWISSCO goals, members call for clearer criteria and more transparency around the expected results. Also, strategies for rolling out and scaling up proven innovations are required.

**Peer Learning and Collaboration:** This window is least known among members, with only a few referencing concrete outputs beyond the Cocoa Household Income Study (CHIS). Members seek more joint impact assessments and meta-studies, especially SMEs that lack internal capacity. Thus, this window can be considered to have a lot of potential, especially as it is linked to the learning and knowledge exchange component of SWISSCO.

### 5. Intervention Mix and Sustainability Transformation

76% of survey respondents consider SWISSCO's mix of interventions—accountability and transparency, networking and knowledge exchange, international collaboration and policy dialogue, and financing PPPs—to be coherent, and two thirds deem it effective for achieving the roadmap targets. Two thirds of survey respondents agree that SWISSCO contributes to consolidating and speeding up sustainable practices. Positive synergies exist between the interventions (e.g., linking projects to knowledge-sharing formats), but other elements needed for sustainability transformation like consumer-country activities and access to transition finance to upscale sustainable practices are missing.

In sum, a sustainability transformation of the cocoa sector requires individual and collective efforts by all SWISSCO members, facilitated by the Secretariat, creating incentives for higher performance, shifting norms of (un)sustainable practices, communicating about unsustainable practices, building mechanisms to bridge action across projects, getting access to finance for scaling sustainability approaches, and expanding policy dialogue. Enhancing complementarity and long-term impact also depends on tailoring interventions to origin-specific contexts, engaging local actors more deeply, and upscaling proven approaches. While this suggests a demanding approach, parts of the SECO funding could be used to make it happen.

## 6. Institutional Governance

80% of survey respondents feel heard by SWISSCO’s board and office and consider the office to work effectively and efficiently. Although 57% of respondents consider that the various actors of the cocoa sector are appropriately represented in the SWISSCO governance structure (board, general assembly), most board members are viewed as representing own views and interests, and not those of the sector as a whole. In addition, NGO members criticise insufficient representation of origin/producer views in the governance structure.

SWISSCO is a public-private partnership in itself, as both sides are co-financing it. The core functions of the Secretariat are covered by membership fees, while SECO's contributions mainly finance the PPP project windows. The potential exists to tap into additional financing sources from the green finance and impact investment sector, especially for landscape projects and agroforestry schemes. Increasing contributions to landscape projects would allow to increase the impacts of Switzerland’s cocoa sector in origin landscapes through collective action, accountability and policy dialogue.

Finally, enhancing the governance of SWISSCO shall empower the platform further to act as a credible convener and facilitator—advancing sustainability transformation not only through consensus, but through clear expectations, support mechanisms, and accountability structures.

## Summary of recommendations

Overall, we recommend SECO to continue supporting and engaging in SWISSCO. To address the challenges and opportunities identified through this evaluation, we recommend the following:

Aspect	Recommendations
<b>Accountability &amp; Transparency</b>	We recommend addressing the issues of potential free-riding and promoting accountability for sustainability outcomes by developing stricter procedures for non-reporting members, continuing 1:1 engagement with underperforming companies and further strengthening outcome measurement.
<b>Networking &amp; Knowledge Exchange</b>	We recommend maintaining the high-quality opportunities for networking and knowledge exchange. To further increase their effectiveness, we recommend encouraging members to share more detailed case studies of solutions that work and how difficulties have been overcome. In addition, joint project visits in origin countries and smaller, focused meeting opportunities would accelerate the co-creation of solutions.  We also recommend exploring ways to increase the representation of farmer perspectives in learning events, alongside inviting critical expert voices to challenge members.
<b>International Collaboration &amp; Policy Dialogue</b>	We recommend strengthening policy dialogue both in producer countries and in Switzerland, working closely with Swiss embassies, other ISCOs and multilateral organizations such as the World Bank.

	<p>Furthermore, SWISSCO should continue to revisit the ISCO working group model to ensure relevance and effectiveness—potentially by forming smaller, focused groups or integrating into more dynamic formats like the Cacao Tertulia.</p>
<p><b>Financing Windows</b></p>	<p>We recommend SECO to continue funding PPPs, also beyond the current credit note, as they serve as the backbone for learning, collaboration between members and policy dialogue. The funding sources, types of projects, as well as SWISSCO’s role in the development, coordination and alignment of projects should evolve over time. We further recommend placing more emphasis on outcome criteria and increasing transparency in the approval process.</p> <p>Landscape projects should transition to origin-based and locally embedded multi-stakeholder initiatives, with a strengthened role of the CH embassies in enhancing policy dialogue where this is feasible. The design of projects should consider plug-ins for SME participation. The public funding should be used for beyond supply chain activities only. The contribution to business development in innovation projects needs to be clarified, while alternative funding sources and models for upscaling proven approaches should be explored. Projects for peer learning and collaboration should be further fostered, especially if they reduce the costs of assessments, monitoring and evaluation.</p>
<p><b>Intervention Mix for Sustainability Transformations in the Cocoa Sector</b></p>	<p>We recommend shifting SWISSCO’s projects and activities even more towards systemic change and bolstering sustainability transformation in the cocoa sector. Specifically, this would mean shifting resources (e.g. from supply chain/innovation projects) to promoting local governance and transition financing models that help upscale proven sustainability approaches, and to policy dialogue with origin countries that improves framework conditions for the whole sector.</p>
<p><b>Institutional Governance of SWISSCO</b></p>	<p>We recommend further fostering the institutional governance of SWISSCO by establishing processes for board members to effectively represent their entire sectors (following the example of the NGO and research sectors), including a dedicated representation for SMEs (traders and manufacturers), and carving out service providers and consultants in a new (associated) membership category. Representation in origins should be strengthened (based on the example of Ghana), and, in turn, structures to include origin views and voices in SWISSCO’s governance and events need to be promoted. The emerging closer dialogue between Chocosuisse and SWISSCO should lead to clear, mutually reinforcing roles for greater sustainability in the sector.</p>

## 1. Introduction

The State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) has been supporting the Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa (SWISSCO) since its official launch in 2018; in the first phase (2018-2022) with a total contribution of CHF 9 million, and in the second phase (2022-2026) with a contribution of CHF 13 million. While the first phase was more about building and strengthening the institution, the focus of the second phase is on enabling projects under the three different funding windows peer learning & exchange, innovation and landscapes. The projects are embedded in a multi-stakeholder approach that aims at a sector transformation towards sustainable cocoa along the SWISSCO Roadmap 2030.

The aim of the mid-term and impact evaluation (MTE) was:

- (a) to examine the extent to which SECO's support has enabled SWISSCO to create added value for the various stakeholder groups in Switzerland, but above all also for the actors in the producer countries, and
- (b) to generate evidence on the mechanisms of action of SWISSCO's multi-stakeholder approach and to identify good practices and potential for improvement in this regard.

SECO assigned Como Consult and the Centre for Development and Environment (CDE) of the University of Bern to conduct this evaluation, while both parties were responsible for distinct components:

Evaluation components	Methods used	Responsible
Mid-term evaluation of the second SECO-supported programme of the Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa (SWISSCO)	Document review, interviews, field visit to Ghana, member survey	Como Consult, support from CDE
Scientific analysis of the mechanisms of action of the SWISSCO multi-stakeholder approach	Document review, member survey, (follow-up) interviews	CDE, support from Como Consult

Como Consult and CDE collaborated closely together along the process, in order to create alignment around key findings and recommendations, as well as to ensure that interlinkages between the components are properly considered. The MTE focused on the Roadmap in the version approved by SWISSCO membership in 2021. In parallel, the SWISSCO Office and the extended Board revised the SWISSCO Roadmap 2030, incorporating preliminary findings from the evaluation to inform the revision process.

In the terms of reference, SECO defined 25 structured questions to guide the evaluation. When preparing the data collection, these questions were restructured in line with SWISSCO's Theory of Change. The primary data collection was carried out between January and March 2025. It contained a field visit in Ghana, 33 semi-structured interviews with SWISSCO members and external stakeholders, as well as an online survey among SWISSCO members (n=51 completed responses, n=14 additional, partially completed responses) along SWISSCO's Theory of Change. Annexes 1-6 provide further details on the evaluation process and methods.

The report is structured as follows: section 2 provides an overview of SWISSCO's intervention logic, section 3 describes the methodology used for the MTE, whereafter section 4 contains our main findings, conclusions and recommendations divided into six subsections. The first four subsections are dedicated to SWISSCO's four intervention areas (4.1. Accountability and transparency, 4.2. Networking and knowledge exchange, 4.3. Policy dialogue and international collaboration and 4.4. Financing windows for public-private partnership projects). Thereafter, subsection 4.5. examines the interplay between these four areas of intervention and their potential contribution to sustainability transformation in the Swiss cocoa and chocolate sector. Lastly, subsection 4.6. presents results on the institutional governance of the platform and section 5 provides concluding remarks.

## 2. Description of the context and development intervention

When Switzerland signed the Global Cocoa Agenda at the World Cocoa Conference in Abidjan in November 2012, it committed itself to follow a roadmap towards a sustainable world cocoa economy. By launching the **Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa (SWISSCO)** as an association in January 2018, Swiss chocolate manufacturers, cocoa traders, food retailers, non-profit organizations, research institutions, and the federal government, represented by SECO, established a multi-stakeholder platform to work towards said objective. SWISSCO is dedicated to strengthening social, environmental, and economic sustainability across the entire cocoa value chain.

For over 20 years already, the cocoa and chocolate sector is under public scrutiny, mainly due to child and forced labour in West Africa, as well as deforestation globally. While systemic issues, and the relationships between causes and effects are complex, the root causes relate to typical challenges in agricultural settings that are dominated by smallholder farmers in developing/emerging countries, as well as the concentrated power at private sector and cocoa growing origin level.<sup>1</sup> While the cocoa sector is heavily state controlled in Côte d'Ivoire (CIV) and Ghana, it is largely liberalized everywhere else. These two countries are further threatened by the Cocoa Swollen Shoot Virus Disease (CSSVD), which, together with effects of climate change and low farm investments, lead to very low overall production, resulting in the recent cocoa price surge. While farmers outside Ghana and CIV benefit from the much higher farm-gate prices, farmers in CIV and Ghana do not, as farm-gate prices are defined by the governments. For companies operating in the sector, the current situation usually leads to lower margins unless the market can absorb price increases.

At the same time, regulation targeting sustainable business conduct emerged over the last years, mainly in the EU. Together with the lower margins, this leads to the current situation where investments into, and resources for, activities “beyond compliance” are reduced, which is widely perceived to lower the time and willingness for real collaboration, particularly in landscape projects. Under these circumstances and dynamics, it can be considered a challenge to navigate a platform based on voluntary action.

In this context, SWISSCO focuses on four key areas of intervention:

1. **Accountability and Transparency:** SWISSCO defines targets for sustainable cocoa in its Roadmap 2030 and conducts monitoring, evaluation and learning about their achievement. The Platform encourages its member companies to report on the share of certified or verified cocoa in their total imports into Switzerland. It also promotes participation in joint monitoring efforts with the European Initiatives on Sustainable Cocoa (ISCOS).
2. **Networking and Knowledge Exchange:** The platform fosters peer learning and knowledge sharing in a pre-competitive environment. This is promoted through in-person and online events, publications, newsletters, and engagement via LinkedIn.
3. **Policy Dialogue and International Collaboration:** SWISSCO promotes dialogue with local authorities and organizations in cocoa-producing countries and aligns its efforts with like-minded national and international initiatives, such as the European ISCO platforms.
4. **Financing Public-Private Partnership Projects:** Through co-financed projects with its members and SECO, SWISSCO supports practical sustainability initiatives in cocoa-producing countries and in Switzerland.

The intervention areas are expected to promote more sustainable cocoa through various impact pathways. A detailed theory of change (Annex 3) has been articulated as part of this mandate. It contains specific hypotheses on how the four intervention areas are expected to trigger behavioral and systemic change at the level of SWISSCO members for more sustainable cocoa. The SWISSCO membership is organized in five sectors: Traders and manufacturers (Sector A), Food retailers (Sector B), Public sector (Sector C), Non-profit organizations (Sector D), Research institutes and consultancies (Sector E).

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<sup>1</sup> For further details, see Staritz, C., Tröster, B., Grumiller, J., & Maile, F. (2022). Price-setting power in global value chains: The cases of price stabilization in the cocoa sectors in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. *The European journal of development research*, 1. and Bensch, G., Kaestner, K., Vance, C. (2023). Pass-through of cocoa prices along the supply chain: What's left for farmers in Côte D'Ivoire? *Ruhr Economic Papers*, No. 1035, ISBN 978-3-96973-204-5, RWI - Leibniz-Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung, Essen.

### 3. Methodology

This mid-term and impact evaluation used a mixed-method design, guided by **Theory of Change** and **process-tracing**<sup>2</sup>, which has been defined as “the systematic study of the link between an outcome of interest and an explanation based on the rigorous assessing and weighting of evidence for and against causal inference”.<sup>3</sup> It is theory-based (deductive) as it hypothesised and assessed the causal links between the outputs and outcomes of SWISSCO’s theory of change (see Annex 3). The evaluators chose this method since it is well-suited to identifying likely pathways of change of development interventions, especially in complex settings where multiple mechanisms of action could potentially influence the outcome.<sup>4</sup> In addition, it can be used in the absence of a control group<sup>5</sup>, which would be extremely challenging, if not impossible, to establish in the case of SWISSCO due to the selection bias of its members and its sector-wide nature.

To gather evidence in favour and against the hypothesised links, the evaluation team used four data collection tools: a document review, a field trip to Ghana, key informant interviews and an online member survey.

First, Como and CDE screened the most important SWISSCO and SECO documents, namely:

- SWISSCO Roadmap 2030 from 2021, MEL Framework 2022 and project MEL sheet, Baseline Assessment 2022, Mid-Line Assessment 2025, 1st Draft Revised Version 10 March 2025
- Credit Proposals of the SECO support programme Phase 1 & 2
- SWISSCO annual reports 2022 and 2023 and Joint ISCO Monitoring Briefs 2022 and 2023
- SWISSCO project calls 2023, project proposals, “Unlocking Innovation” Learning Report 2023
- SWISSCO Website (ongoing projects)
- MoU with Ghana + Annex Cocoa Work Programme and Meeting minutes
- Report SWISSCO Board Mission to Ghana 2023 and Report Mission to Togo and Ghana 2024
- Ghana Cocoa Household Income Study

Based on this **document review as well as scientific literature**<sup>6</sup> on multi-stakeholder platforms, the evaluation team formulated SWISSCO’s theory of change along its four areas of intervention. After consultation with the SWISSCO office team, the theory of change was used as a basis for preparing the field trip, the interview guide and the questionnaire for the online member survey.

During her **field trip to Ghana** from January 13 to 17, 2025, Piera Waibel met various SWISSCO partners and members in Accra (Swiss Embassy, COCOBOD, CRIG, Ghana Ministry of Labour, Jobs and Employment, UNICEF, ICI) and visited the Sankofa 2.0 landscape project in Goaso. The Sankofa 2.0 project was selected because of its maturity (it has been running since 2018), which made it possible to assess its medium-term impact. The final plan for the field trip was made in consultation with SWISSCO’s Ghana Country Lead, Josep Bandanaa, and SECO.

Between January 6 and February 28, 2025, Como conducted 32 **phone interviews** with key informants, including members of the platform and external sector experts. The purposefully selected interview partners are representative of the different sectors of the SWISSCO membership (traders and manufacturers, retail,

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<sup>2</sup> Beach, D., & Pedersen, R. B. (2019). Process-tracing methods: Foundations and guidelines. *University of Michigan Press*.

<sup>3</sup> Ricks, J. & Liu, A. (2018). Process-Tracing Research Designs: A Practical Guide. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 51(4), 842-846. doi:10.1017/S1049096518000975

<sup>4</sup> Befani, B., & Mayne, J. (2014). Process tracing and contribution analysis: A combined approach to generative causal inference for impact evaluation. *IDS bulletin*, 45(6), 17-36.

<sup>5</sup> Punton, M., & Welle, K. (2015). Straws-in-the-wind, hoops and smoking guns: what can process tracing offer to impact evaluation? *CDI Practice Paper*.

<sup>6</sup> Jens Newig et al., ‘The Environmental Performance of Participatory and Collaborative Governance: A Framework of Causal Mechanisms’, *Policy Studies Journal* 46, no. 2 (May 2018): 269–97, <https://doi.org/10.1111/psj.12209>.

David P. M. Lam et al., ‘Scaling the Impact of Sustainability Initiatives: A Typology of Amplification Processes’, *Urban Transformations* 2, no. 1 (December 2020): 3, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42854-020-00007-9>.

Brouwer, H., Woodhill, J., Hemmati, M., Verhoosel, K., & Van Vugt, S. (2019). *The MSP guide: How to design and facilitate multi-stakeholder partnerships*. Practical Action Publishing.

MacDonald, A., Clarke, A., & Huang, L. (2018). Multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainability: Designing decision-making processes for partnership capacity. In *Business and the ethical implications of technology* (pp. 103-120). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.

NGO, research and public sector). Based on our knowledge of the cocoa sector and in consultation with SWISSCO and SECO, we prioritised stakeholders with a strong knowledge of SWISSCO to obtain more in-depth information on the hypothesised causal mechanisms. To gain insights into a broad range of PPP projects, we interviewed project leads or partners from all six landscape projects (the largest funding window), from eight of the eleven innovation projects and from three of the seven peer learning and collaboration projects (the smallest funding window). Moreover, we made a conscious effort to identify and include five critical voices from NGOs and companies which did not receive any funding from the SWISSCO PPP facility or are not members of SWISSCO.

The anonymous **online member survey** assessed the Theory of Change from the perspectives of SWISSCO members.<sup>7</sup> In order to obtain information on all the hypothesised causal mechanisms while keeping survey length manageable for respondents, the questionnaire focused on statements about the hypothesised causal mechanisms, asking respondents how much they disagree or agree with them (on a centred and labelled five-point Likert scale to reduce confirmation bias, and offering the option for comments). A question on the relative importance of SWISSCO compared to other factors influencing the level and efficiency of sustainability efforts served to put the responses to the other questions into perspective. The survey was implemented with EFS Tivian software and launched on January 30, 2025, after including feedback from the SWISSCO office team and pre-testing with two (former) members of the platform. The survey was sent out via email by the SWISSCO office team to all (associated) members of SWISSCO and ran until March 6. 65 out of the platform's 100 members started the survey and 51 completed it, with a median response time of 28 minutes. The survey sample is representative of the membership with respect to stakeholder composition. CDE conducted one follow-up interview with a member who requested it in the survey.

The gathered qualitative and quantitative data (i.e. field notes, interview notes, survey responses) were analysed to dis/confirm the hypothesized links in SWISSCO's theory of change. The findings from each data source were triangulated with those from the other two sources to validate or relativise them, and to arrive at corroborated results. Over the course of two virtual meetings and several rounds of written feedback, Como and CDE distilled their main results and identified key recommendations for SWISSCO and SECO.

Our causal identification strategy assumes that SWISSCO members and external partners can accurately estimate how SWISSCO influenced the level and effectiveness of their efforts towards sustainable cocoa. In process-tracing terms, this assumption turns interviews and the survey into "doubly decisive" tests of the causal mechanisms.<sup>8</sup> Since all our interview partners and most of our survey respondents have multiple years of professional experience in sustainable cocoa, it is reasonable to assume that they are well-placed to estimate how ambitious and effective their sustainability commitments would have been in the absence of SWISSCO (the counterfactual) and to compare this to the status quo. Moreover, 12 out of our 33 interview partners had already been working on sustainable cocoa for several years prior to the foundation of SWISSCO in 2018, enabling them to make a pre/post-comparison.<sup>9</sup> Lastly, the evaluators used their own multi-year experience in development cooperation and sustainable cocoa to gauge the plausibility of the accounts of interviewees and survey respondents, either validating or relativising them. Nevertheless, process-tracing does not allow us to verify or falsify the hypothesised causal mechanisms with 100% certainty. Rather, it provides evidence to update our level of confidence in the existence/absence of these mechanisms, since "confirmation is a matter of degree".<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Jon A. Krosnick, 'Questionnaire Design', in *The Palgrave Handbook of Survey Research*, ed. David L. Vannette and Jon A. Krosnick (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 439–55, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-54395-6\\_53](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-54395-6_53).

Shofiqur Rahman Chowdhury, Mohammad Ali Oakkas, and Faisal Ahmmed, 'Survey Questionnaire', in *Principles of Social Research Methodology*, ed. M. Rezaul Islam, Niaz Ahmed Khan, and Rajendra Baikady (Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore, 2022), 181–205, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-5441-2\\_13](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-5441-2_13).

<sup>8</sup> Beach, D., & Pedersen, R. B. (2019). Process-tracing methods: Foundations and guidelines. *University of Michigan Press*, p. 104.

<sup>9</sup> Because the survey was anonymous, we do not have precise information about how much professional experience our survey respondents have in sustainable cocoa.

<sup>10</sup> Beach, D., & Pedersen, R. B. (2019). Process-tracing methods: Foundations and guidelines. *University of Michigan Press*, p. 85.

This study assessed perceptions of SWISSCO members and stakeholders; it used a qualitative, case-based design for causal analysis<sup>11</sup> rather than quantitative, (quasi-)experimental methods to assess impacts. Consequently, the main limitation of this evaluation is that it cannot quantify the impact of SWISSCO's outputs on the level and efficiency of the sustainability efforts of SWISSCO members. Furthermore, it was not possible to assess the outcome indicators of the logframe of SECO's second support programme to SWISSCO since the co-funded projects have not finished yet and evaluation reports are forthcoming.

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<sup>11</sup> Raimondo, Estelle. 2023. *The Rigor of Case-Based Causal Analysis: Busting Myths through a Demonstration*. IEG Methods and Evaluation Capacity Development Working Paper Series. Independent Evaluation Group. Washington, DC: World Bank.

## 4. Key findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter presents the evaluation team's findings, conclusions, and recommendations, structured along SWISSCO's Theory of Change and guided by the questions set out in SECO's Terms of Reference.

### 4.1 Accountability & Transparency

#### Findings & Conclusions

**ToR question:** To what extent has SWISSCO contributed to strengthening the sustainability commitment of the various Swiss actors in the cocoa value chain?

**SWISSCO sets sector-wide commitments; it facilitates collective action and peer-learning to support members to implement their individual commitments; and it provides a tailwind for the sustainability officers within their respective organizations. However, the platform directly increases the level of ambition in individual sustainability commitments for only a minority of members.** Most companies stated that they make individual sustainability commitments for other reasons. About 76% of survey respondents self-report that they would be equally engaged towards sustainable cocoa if SWISSCO did not exist, while 16% would be somewhat less engaged and 5% much less.<sup>12</sup>

**Evidence on the underlying mechanisms** to strengthen accountability and transparency shows:

- 1) **Social control and (peer-)pressure from SWISSCO and SWISSCO members** incentivized 29% of respondents to deliver on the roadmap targets, 32% are neutral, and 31% were not incentivized by social control.<sup>13</sup>
- 2) 38% of respondents believe that their organization's commitment to the SWISSCO Roadmap 2030 **encourages other members to adopt more sustainable practices**, 34% are neutral and 15% disagree.<sup>14</sup>
- 3) **Being part of SWISSCO seems to empower most member representatives within their organisation:** two thirds of survey respondents agree that belonging to a peer group of sustainability representatives strengthens their credibility and support to promote sustainability in their respective organisation, 22% are neutral and 6% disagree. A few SME interviewees self-report having increased their commitments, as they feel more comfortable with SWISSCO and its knowledge.

**Risks** related to accountability and transparency:

- 1) SWISSCO improves the **image of the whole cocoa sector in CH, which also benefits laggards/inactive companies**, allowing them to 'hide' behind SWISSCO. From the perspective of outsiders, commitments therefore seem to be strengthened, and this collective image protects inaction by some members. **A minority** of survey respondents (14%) **agree that all SWISSCO member organizations contribute appropriately to the achievement of the roadmap targets**, 31% are neutral, 45% disagree and 11% did not respond.<sup>15</sup>
- 2) About 38% of survey respondents consider that some members may use their participation in SWISSCO as an **argument for opposing stricter sustainability regulation**, while 31% are neutral and 23% do not perceive this as a relevant risk.
- 3) Almost all interviewees mentioned that **requirements for members could be higher**. Both interviewees and survey respondents **criticized that too many members still see certification as a finish line**, which is also part of SWISSCO's **verification of 'sustainable' cocoa**. In this context, one mid-sized manufacturer pointed out that the requirements of different third-party certification schemes and company-owned sustainability programs

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<sup>12</sup> When looking only at the survey responses from the private sector (member categories A and B), 70% (n=21/30) would be equally engaged, 23% (n=7) somewhat less engaged and 3% (n=1) much less engaged.

<sup>13</sup> When looking only at the survey responses from the private sector (member categories A and B), social control and (peer-)pressure from SWISSCO and SWISSCO members has incentivized 35% of respondents (n=11/31) to deliver on the roadmap targets, 39% (n=12) are neutral and 26% (n=8) were not incentivized by social control.

<sup>14</sup> When looking only at the survey responses from the private sector (member categories A and B), 48% (n=15/31) agree, 23% (n=7) are neutral and 16% (n=5) disagree.

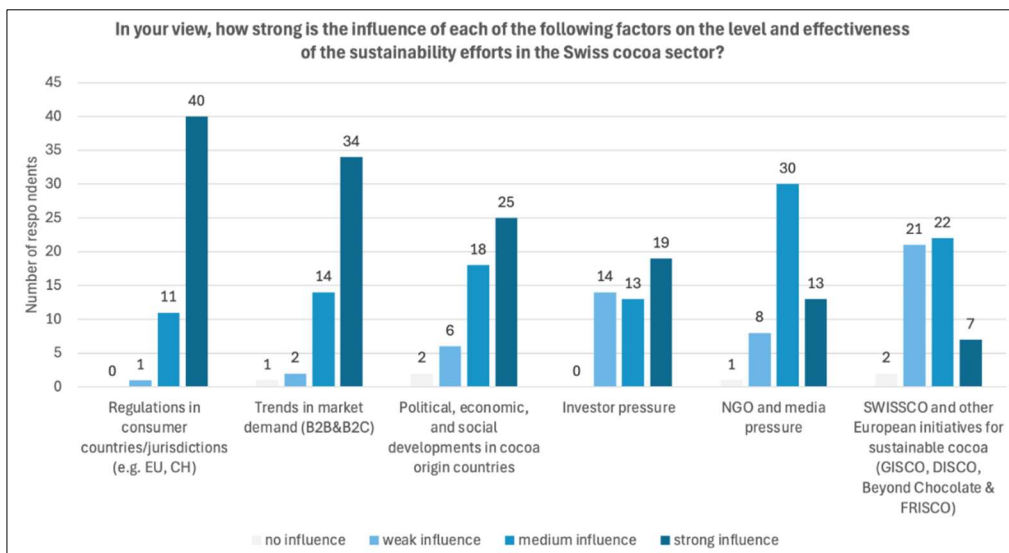
<sup>15</sup> When looking only at the survey responses from the private sector (member categories A and B), 10% (n=3/31) agree, 39% (n=12) are neutral, 42% (n=13) disagree and 10% (n=3) did not respond.

are very different (e.g. with respect to the amount of farmer premiums), but they are classified as equally 'sustainable' in SWISSCO's sourcing statistics.

Based on these insights, the evaluation team appreciates the current revision of the roadmap and encourages SWISSCO to promote participation in the joint ISCO monitoring, as they both go beyond this verification of 'sustainable' cocoa.

Survey respondents shared their perspectives on the extent to which various **factors influence the level and effectiveness of the sustainability commitment** in the Swiss cocoa sector (see Figure 1):

- 1) They consider **regulations in consumer countries to have the largest influence**. Other influential factors include, in descending order: Trends in market demand (B2B&B2C), political, economic, and social developments in cocoa origin countries, investor pressure as well as NGO and media pressure.
- 2) Meanwhile, most survey respondents perceive that **SWISSCO and the other European initiatives for sustainable cocoa have medium (42%) or weak (40%) influence on the level and effectiveness of the sustainability efforts** in the Swiss cocoa sector. An NGO representative commented that SWISSCO's impact seems less relevant than the shifting landscape in legal sustainability requirements impacting the cocoa value chain. According to the representative, this does not necessarily mean that SWISSCO loses its relevance, but that **its mandate could shift in the current changes of the regulatory landscape**, for example by supporting members' compliance (e.g. focusing on SMEs), facilitating the translation of EU legislation into Swiss law, following implementation along the value chain including producing regions, or ensuring that compliance is going beyond mere tick-boxing without sustainability impact.



**Figure 1. Perceived influences on the level and effectiveness of sustainability efforts in the Swiss cocoa sector** (source: member survey, n=52 responses).

In summary, it can be concluded that additional measures are needed to increase the sustainability commitments and efforts of individual members and the Swiss cocoa sector as a whole.

**ToR question:** To what extent does the MEL approach and the interactive formats of SWISSCO promote transparency and (individual/collective) accountability for sustainability goals?

Overall, 72% of survey respondents affirm that **SWISSCO enhanced transparency in sustainable cocoa sourcing in Switzerland**, while 17% are neutral and 11% disagree. However, SWISSCO could be more explicit about the importance of Côte d'Ivoire (CIV) for the CH chocolate sector. Currently, CIV is invisible as an origin country of cocoa beans imported into Switzerland in the form of cocoa butter (which flows mostly via the Netherlands) as data is readily available only on the origins of unprocessed cocoa beans, but not on the origins of cocoa beans transformed into derivatives (see SWISSCO sourcing statistics [online](#) figure "Imports of cocoa beans into Switzerland").

The **participatory approach to setting sustainability targets** for the Swiss cocoa sector is appreciated but faces challenges. The targets of SWISSCO's initial roadmap were defined in a participatory process in 2021 in the board and general assembly, and each new member must commit to them. Survey results show:

- 1) **The roadmap targets provide guidance on sustainable cocoa for a large majority of members:** 75% of survey respondents agree, 8% are neutral, and 12% disagree.
- 2) 69% of respondents consider that this participatory target-setting process leads to a **prioritization of shared sustainability goals over self-interest**, allowing logical arguments to prevail over power relations.
- 3) 55% agree that SWISSCO's participatory target-setting process effectively enhances their organizations' **co-ownership of the targets**.
- 4) However, the evaluation team considers that the sustainability goals of the original 2021 Roadmap were also broadly endorsed because they are **aligned with the self-imposed goals of most members** anyway.
- 5) 58% think that setting ambitious roadmap targets is harder as membership grows, leading to outcomes based on the **lowest common denominator**.

Concerning the **ambitiousness of the 2021 roadmap targets**, the survey revealed qualitatively diverging perspectives. For example, one retailer argued that ambitions and actions among the members differ widely, while a small trader highlighted that there was a risk of becoming too harmonious and **consensual** to the detriment of **credibility**. In order to avoid this problem, they suggested excluding members who prevent the adoption of an ambitious roadmap. Alternatively, the representative of a labelling organization reported that strong industry voices limit the level of ambition and action and argued for **bringing in external experts and stakeholders to challenge the status quo**. Other members emphasized that it is less a question of level of ambition and more the need to **tackle root causes of unsustainable practices** within particular producing regions.

Meanwhile, several respondents stressed that **roadmap targets should be proportionate to members' capacities**. One medium-sized trader argued that ambitious roadmap targets can be designed so that the smallest and least well-equipped members can adapt and contribute according to their size without jeopardizing the achievement of the target. They also stressed that **targets should take into account the diversity of sizes, business models and structures of members, and require each member to make efforts commensurate with its capacity**. This is also important in order not to lose SME members (as happened in DISCO). One SME manufacturer claimed that NGOs, universities and companies whose business model is to implement sustainability for others have too much weight in the platform, leading to very ambitious targets that are not feasible or achievable for SMEs in the manufacturing sector. In contrast, one SME trader felt that **SWISSCO was doing a 'good job' being sufficiently transparent and somewhat ambitious, while remaining humble and realistic**. The trader stressed that SWISSCO should continue to allow room for disagreement (as it does today), because the mere fact that companies meet is valuable, which does not mean that they must agree on all content and objectives.

Based on this feedback, the evaluation team endorses the approach of the SWISSCO office and board to push for more ambitious targets while allowing companies to adapt them to their individual capacities.

Interviewees underscore that **SWISSCO's MEL approach promotes transparency and accountability at collective level, but not at individual level**. Several interviewees, including from the private sector, mentioned that **public benchmarking of individual companies** (instead of publishing aggregated data) **would put more pressure on laggards/free riders** (especially those that are not covered by regulations). Only the SWISSCO secretariat (not even the board) sees individual figures and knows which members do not report. As participation in the joint ISCO monitoring is not mandatory, some companies do not report, which is seen as negative by most interviewees. There are rumors among members about which companies do not report, but no one is sure. This lack of transparency impedes collaboration. Two NGO representatives emphasized that one of the original mandates of the Cocoa Platform was the transparent processing of data from the Swiss chocolate sector. SWISSCO has started a 1-on-1 engagement with laggards/non-reporters, which is seen as positive. However, **most of them think that SWISSCO could be stricter with non-reporters**. Various even state that companies (member categories A and B) that do not report should not be in SWISSCO, calling for mechanisms that oblige companies to share their data. Moreover, it is crucial that the indicators provided by companies are properly **validated** (at least through plausibility checks), since they are often considered low quality.

In general, interviewees consider the MEL framework as important because it allows for consistency in reporting between different actors. Even by (most) smaller companies, **the required monitoring is not seen as burdensome**, especially compared to the reporting required by regulations and other platforms/ organisations. Furthermore,

MEL motivates (especially SMEs) to work on improving the quality of indicators. However, various interviewees mention that MEL should be more risk-/context-/problem-based per origin rather than applying the same set of indicators to all origins.

While SWISSCO's interactive events are highly appreciated and considered relevant and useful for interviewees and survey respondents (see chapter 4.2), their contribution to fostering transparency/ accountability is assessed as rather weak, because discussions normally remain at the meta level.

It can thus be concluded that some adjustments need to be undertaken to further increase accountability and transparency that lead to ever more efforts to enhance the sustainability performance and related sector transformation contributions of individual companies and that of the sector as a whole.

**ToR question:** How does SWISSCO membership help stakeholders to signal a credible commitment to sustainability?

The existence of SWISSCO promotes the commitment of the entire sector to sustainability. It is also very helpful to Chocosuisse for the overall image of the Swiss chocolate sector. Interviews show that SWISSCO membership (among other memberships, e.g. WCF, CFI and other ISCOs) helps stakeholders to signal a commitment to sustainability. However, **the credibility of this commitment is rather low, as membership does not guarantee increased sustainability efforts.**

#### **Recommendations on Accountability and Transparency**

Tackling the issues of free-riding and non-reporting members as well as collective *and* individual accountability for sustainability outcomes (rather than activities) we recommend:

1. To SWISSCO: Develop and enforce **stricter procedures for non-reporting companies, NGO and research members** and make reporting mandatory to remain a member of the platform, as is the case with GISCO. IDH has a procedure for this which could be used. As a minimum, companies receiving SECO funding should be required to provide MEL data. Consider informing members about non-reporting companies.
2. To SWISSCO: Consider **individual public disclosure of indicators** reported by companies and other sector members to SWISSCO. A softer solution would be to require only the members getting PPP funds to report publicly. This would not entail a higher reporting burden, as they already report these numbers to SWISSCO anyway.
3. To SWISSCO: Continue **1:1 engagement with underperforming companies**. Potentially develop additional measures to encourage them to progress/move. As a first step, understand why they are not reporting and whether they need support (especially for SMEs).
4. To SWISSCO: Consider enhanced reporting of **outcome indicators**, potentially linked to **collective impact assessments**.
5. To SWISSCO: Consider **plausibility checks on the reported indicators** to ensure data quality.

## **4.2 Networking & Knowledge Exchange**

### **Findings & Conclusions**

**ToR question:** Has the initiative helped to strengthen trust and cooperation between stakeholders?

**SWISSCO appears to have a positive effect on trust, although not for all members:**

- 1) About 47% of survey respondents agree that SWISSCO's **various learning and networking events** have strengthened their trust in other members, 36% are neutral, 14% disagree.
- 2) Interviewees highly appreciate the opportunities for exchange with various stakeholders and reported that SWISSCO makes **exchanges easier between companies and NGOs**. In addition, SWISSCO allows for **in-depth conversations** which are usually not taking place otherwise.
- 3) Yet a representative of the research sector highlighted that different members have different policies and rationales for acting and that personal relationships and the resulting mutual trust **cannot overcome the**

**political economy of the cocoa sector**, which requires structural change as well. Some interviewees also point out that **people might get a bit too close/part of a bubble**, so that they all feel **too comfortable to take further steps** and move out of their comfort zone.

About 59% of survey respondents agree that SWISSCO's various learning and networking events have stimulated their collaboration with other members, 29% are neutral and 10% disagree. When prompted, 57% of survey respondents cited one or more examples of collaborations that emerged out of SWISSCO. Many respondents mentioned that they collaborated with other members based on relationships built through the landscape and other PPP projects. SWISSCO events and staff also helped members accelerate business talks. Members collaborated on joint agronomic studies, traceability projects, digital solutions for sustainability targets, and discussions on regulatory requirements like the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) and EU Forced Labor Regulation (EUFLR). For service providers, SWISSCO offers access to the whole sector to present offers and share content without needing to go into individual sales pitches. Various service providers mention that they got relevant contacts through the platform and could boost their business. The interviews confirm these statements.

It can thus be concluded that **SWISSCO has facilitated and strengthened collaborations between members that would not have emerged otherwise**, allowing them to explore project opportunities, secure funding, and advocate for shared interests.

**ToR question:** To what extent have SWISSCO events contributed to (pre-competitive) peer learning?

**69% of survey respondents agree that SWISSCO's various learning and networking events have provided them with useful knowledge on successful strategies and interventions aimed at achieving the roadmap targets.** The same share of members thinks that SWISSCO's various learning and networking events have been an effective channel to share their organization's activities and insights on sustainable cocoa. Most interviewees also consider this the **most valuable element of SWISSCO**, particularly for SME which do not have large sustainability teams – to exchange with others in similar situations and benefit from larger companies sharing their approaches, e.g. for Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation Systems (CLMRS). Both in interviews and survey comments, SWISSCO events were described as 'very useful, insightful and very well organized'. While peer learning also happens beyond SWISSCO events, they foster exchange and allow members to get to know each other and see who is doing what to then approach them separately for more details.

Generally, the thematic selection of events is considered highly relevant, and the tools that are presented help members with concrete implementation. Interviewees underlined that **insights from learning formats are much more valuable if there is also communication about difficulties and failures**. The topic-specific events were deemed particularly valuable to **connect thematic staff across organizations**, allowing for a much more **transparent exchange than between the commercial staff**. The understanding and connections between the different stakeholder groups along and outside the supply chain have increased through events. In 2024, members based in Suisse Romande appreciated that one event was organized in this part of the country, encouraging their participation.

Survey respondents provided feedback on the **different learning and networking formats** of SWISSCO to share or access knowledge on strategies and interventions for meeting the roadmap targets.

- 1) **Frequency of use of the formats:** The Annual General Meeting was used most frequently for this purpose, followed by (in descending order) Newsletters, Issue Briefs, In-person events (co-)organized by SWISSCO, Webinars (co-)organized by SWISSCO and other publications (co-)authored or (co-)funded by SWISSCO. According to respondent's self-reports, the LinkedIn profile and ISCO thematic working groups were used less frequently and were also considered less effective (see chapter 4.3). These survey self-reports differ clearly from the marked increase of numbers of LinkedIn followers and reactions, including from less than 5'000 to more than 12'000 followers in the last two years.
- 2) **Perceived effectiveness of the formats:** The most effective channels were (in descending order) in-person events (co-)organized by SWISSCO, Annual General Meeting, Webinars (co-)organized by SWISSCO, Newsletters, Issue Briefs, other publications (co-)authored or (co-)funded by SWISSCO. Generally, publications were appreciated as they consolidate knowledge and foster a common understanding/ground, e.g. with respect to farm-gate price benchmarking (issue brief on price).

When prompted, a third of survey respondents cited one or more examples of **specific insight(s) from SWISSCO's learning and networking formats** that they implemented in their organisation. These included the adoption of the landscape approach, benchmarking value chains, dynamic agroforestry, deforestation-free policies, purchasing practices, satellite imagery for traceability proof/EUDR verification, and carbon sequestration/climate finance.

Survey respondents also **suggested specific topics, improvements or additions** to these information and exchange channels/formats: **They would appreciate more detailed case studies of solutions that work** (including challenges and how they were tackled), **more quality time to engage in the co-creation of new solutions among practitioners, and more joint, sector-wide initiatives, pilots and investments**. A representative from an SME manufacturer suggested SWISSCO to coordinate human rights and environmental risk assessments in shared sourcing regions to provide more granular data to convince management to increase sustainability efforts. Interviewees specified that peer learning should not only happen in CH/at a theoretical level but could also be fostered through peer-learning travel visits, whereby companies visit each other's projects and learn from them on the ground. Thematically, there is an interest in learning more about how to address child labour outside of West Africa, as well as forced labour and illegal mining in different origins. In addition, **several interviewees and survey respondents miss the origin perspective in SWISSCO events**, as Swiss NGOs are not considered to adequately represent origin views.

In general, though, it can be concluded that **SWISSCO events did contribute to** (pre-competitive) **peer learning. This is a key feature for any trust-based multi-stakeholder process and considered a valuable element of the platform.**

**ToR question:** To what extent are methods being harmonized (e.g. impact assessment, income measurement, etc.)?

**58% of survey respondents agree that SWISSCO has significantly contributed to the harmonization of methods**, e.g. for impact assessment or making credible sustainability claims, while 17% disagree. **However, 63% also agree that without publishing data gathered through harmonized methods** (e.g., on child labor prevalence), **harmonization will not drive SWISSCO members to increase efforts** for sustainable cocoa (see section 4.1). It is appreciated that methods are harmonized between ISCOs and the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI) and that a large majority of indicators is now aligned with the other ISCOs, such that companies being part of various ISCOs only need to use one reporting tool. However, there are still a lot of different reporting requirements outside the ISCOs, such as from the World Cocoa Foundation and regulations.

It can thus be concluded that, while important progress has been made, **further harmonization efforts are needed.**

#### **Recommendations on Networking and Knowledge Exchange**

1. To SWISSCO: **Maintain and ensure continued quality** of the widely appreciated offerings for networking and knowledge exchange. Continue to prioritize in-person events over virtual meetings.
2. To SWISSCO: Encourage members to share more **detailed case studies of solutions that work as well as of failures or encountered difficulties** and how they were addressed.
3. To SWISSCO: Foster exchange/learning through **origin/project visits**. Create **smaller, focused meeting opportunities** for the co-creation of solutions.
4. To SWISSCO: Envisage **further reporting alignment** beyond ISCOs and ICI, i.e. with the WCF and the current regulatory requirements.
5. To SWISSCO: Explore ways to enhance the **representation of producer country/farmer views** in learning events.
6. To SWISSCO: To tackle the challenge of a comfort zone/bubble, **actively invite critical perspectives** e.g. to Annual Reports or events, in addition to **enhanced accountability** mechanisms (Section 4.1).

### **4.3 International Collaboration & Policy Dialogue**

#### **Findings & Conclusions**

**ToR question:** To what extent does SWISSCO strengthen Switzerland's role in its intergovernmental policy dialogue on sustainable cocoa?

**The opinions of interviewees on the role of SWISSCO in Switzerland’s intergovernmental policy dialogue on sustainable cocoa are mixed. Policy dialogue is generally seen as an underutilized lever, yet one that is crucial for driving substantial change.** Putting in all the weight of CH-based companies’ sourcing rather than just physical imports into CH would help for this purpose, alongside a more active role of SECO. While companies appreciate easier access to local government institutions through SWISSCO, it is mainly the local embassies who make this connection (not SWISSCO). However, embassies can play a more active role in policy dialogue when they are thematically well-briefed by SWISSCO staff, as is the case in Ghana.

In Ghana, the embassy’s good relationship with COCOBOD helps SWISSCO members to establish a relationship with the authorities. **Most interviewees see the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Ghana and SECO/SWISSCO as positive for their local partnerships and collaborations.** Some however think that more should be done to push COCOBOD/CMC to changes. In the same vein, some interviewees voiced their wishes that SWISSCO (through CH embassies) would lobby more for their interests in producer countries (e.g. higher farm gate prices in Ghana/CIV, lower pesticide use in Peru). However, this demand seems a bit unrealistic given the overall stake and influence of CH in these countries (as compared to, for example, the World Bank). A stepwise convening and collaborative approach, as it is currently pursued in Ghana, seems more feasible.

**In parallel, Swiss embassies and SWISSCO could seek closer alignment and cooperation with more influential multilateral organisations** to encourage producer-country governments to take further action on social and environmental sustainability in their cocoa sectors. Switzerland’s weight in policy dialogue could also be increased by collaborating with other ISCOs and their respective local embassies. Besides, some interviewees mentioned that SWISSCO could play its policy dialogue role more tactically and go beyond what SECO/CH embassies can do in this regard. According to them, SWISSCO could address politically sensitive issues such as financial mismanagement and corruption inside COCOBOD or the risks of poor implementation of EU sustainability legislation. Moreover, policy dialogue could further be fostered through visits of origin partners to CH. Finally, several members, particularly also from sectors A and B, would also appreciate if SWISSCO engaged in policy dialogue in Switzerland, advocating for the adoption of the EUDR and (later) CSDDD.

**53% of survey respondents believe that SWISSCO has supported international collaboration between their respective organization and organizations in cocoa origins.** According to interview partners, this occurs through different mechanisms: (a) SWISSCO gives its members more **visibility and credibility towards origin-based organizations.** (b) SWISSCO reinforces the **link between members and Swiss embassies** and (c) it prompts international collaboration through its **funding windows.** (d) 23% of survey respondents see a positive effect of SWISSCO’s **policy dialogue** on their collaborations with origin-country organizations. Two cited examples of this policy-dialogue mechanism are the collaboration between ETH, Halba and two Ghanaian universities around Dynamic Agroforestry (DAF) and the collaboration of FiBL and HAFL with Ghanaian research partners for the CHIS. Besides, particularly members from Sector A and B highlighted that they would value an expansion of policy dialogue to other important cocoa origin country such as Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador and Peru.

**Ghana spotlight:**

Policy dialogue with producing countries’ governments through SWISSCO is most advanced in Ghana. The following factors seem to lead to an increased and improved policy dialogue:

- Strong CH Embassy staff (including the SECO representative) with motivation and drive to actually change and improve things
- Access to and connections with high-level staff from other development partners (e.g. African Development Bank, EU, World Bank, active other embassies, International Monetary Fund)
- Close collaboration between SWISSCO and CH embassy to align on objectives, roles and positions
- Local SWISSCO representative (Joseph Bandanaa) with well establish network in governmental institutions
- MoU in place, regular meetings held. Next step should be that collaboration is more formalized to ensure high-level participation in meetings and ability to take decisions
- SWISSCO projects on the ground that are aligned with government priorities, enabling close and reality-based collaboration as well as concrete action under the roof of the MoU

In conclusion, **SWISSCO helps position Switzerland as a key player in sustainable cocoa**, and its projects enhance the credibility in policy dialogue in cocoa origin countries by grounding it in practical, real-world experience. With additional efforts to influence policy making in sourcing countries, including through collaboration with other key actors, Switzerland could make use of its role as an important player in the cocoa sector to further drive transformative change.

**ToR question:** To what extent has cooperation between the various platforms at the European level been strengthened (e.g. in the context of joint thematic working groups)? What additional measures would be needed to promote this cooperation? (Please note that, in the ToR, this question is under “Financing windows / Peer learning and collaboration (PLC)”. However, as the platforms’ collaboration, including the working groups, are not co-funded by SECO anymore since 2023 and are borne by the SWISSCO secretariat itself, we moved the question to this chapter, where we think it fits better.)

**The collaboration between SWISSCO and the other ISCOs is positively perceived and could be further strengthened, particularly for policy dialogue, which requires a discussion on focus countries for each ISCO.** There seems to be a high commitment to working together, despite the different structures and objectives, and SWISSCO is considered a valuable sparring partner. Many members would appreciate more alignment and collaboration of the ISCOs for origin country policy dialogue and advocacy, especially where systemic issues are perceived as high risk (i.e. farm gate prices in Ghana and CIV, pesticide use in Peru).

Overall, **SWISSCO members valued the (former) SWISSCO-led working groups more than the joint thematic working groups at ISCO level.** Most interviewees stated that they were more involved when SWISSCO managed its own working groups. The ISCO working groups are not well known. Updates and information are not shared. The ones that attended working group events state that there is no real participation and actual “working together”, and that they do not bring an added value to SWISSCO-level exchanges and discussions. Groups are seen as too large, and conversations dominated by GIZ and IDH with their specific agendas. Interviewees from NGOs perceive benefits of attending as low, and as they don’t have budgets for attending, they simply don’t. IDH, which manages the Belgian and Dutch platforms, aims at a higher action orientation of the working groups, but this has not been achieved so far. They are thinking about creating smaller task forces, but resources for this are lacking.

In **conclusion**, and in light of the shrinking role of the World Cocoa Foundation (FTE have been halved in the last years) **in origin policy dialogue, the spot would be free for ISCOs to take up a stronger role.** SWISSCO could take the lead on this in certain origins, i.e. Ghana, where relationships to relevant Government institutions are already well established and perceived very strong (other embassies in Ghana are already leaning on the CH embassy now). A lean, overarching ISCO structure could help coordinate efforts for targeted action and impact.

#### **Recommendations on International Collaboration and Policy Dialogue:**

1. To SWISSCO and SECO: Strengthen policy dialogue in other origin countries besides Ghana, where appropriate together with other ISCOs, multilateral organizations and Swiss embassies/EDA. .
2. To SWISSCO: Foster a lean and fit-for-purpose ISCO structure, facilitating alignment, collaboration and complementarity between the ISCOs in consumer and origin countries.
3. To SWISSCO: Continue to rethink working group approach together with other ISCOs, and, if maintained, align on purpose of these and handle/resource adequately.
4. To SWISSCO: Consider creating smaller working groups—or integrating into existing formats like the Cacao Tertulia approach—that enable genuine dialogue and exchange.
5. To SWISSCO: Ensure that CH SME, NGO and research organizations also have a place and voice there to leverage Swiss expertise in these sectors (other ISCOs are more focused on large companies only).

## **4.4 Financing Windows (Public-private Partnership Projects)**

### **a. Overall**

Please note that no in-depth assessments of projects have been made. As part of the document review, all project descriptions (ongoing) on the SWISSCO website have been reviewed. The field visit in Ghana allowed a deeper view on selected projects, whereby others were only covered in interviews. However, not all projects have been covered in interviews, and even if covered, not all owners and partners in projects have been interviewed. For details, please see Annexes 1&2.

## **Findings & Conclusions**

Overall, **the co-funding opportunities are highly appreciated and seen as positive** by a large majority of interviewees. They consider projects important to attract members, for SWISSCO to set impulses, and be taken seriously also outside the platform as they allow practical and reality-based experiences and learning. Likewise, 88% of survey respondents agree that PPPs are an essential part of SWISSCO's multi-stakeholder approach as they accelerate innovation, collaboration, and learning. Half of survey respondents self-report having shared results and learnings from PPPs through the SWISSCO platform, and 36% state that their organisation has taken up results and learnings from PPPs of other members<sup>16</sup>. The funding facility is also seen as pragmatic and flexible as compared to other donors. Some members openly admit that co-funding is the main motivator to be part of SWISSCO (-> link to Institutional Governance).

So far, projects have **a strong focus on origin countries and, to some extent, on the supply chains of individual companies**. Various stakeholders would like to see more consideration given to general procurement changes and requirements for members<sup>17</sup>, as well as a greater focus on areas beyond individual supply chain activities, particularly the enabling environment and overarching needs. This would help to stay true to the SWISSCO motto, "Tackling challenges together". In this context, some stakeholders also question why supply chain sustainability activities mandated by regulations and farmer premiums related to competitive positioning are counted as private sector co-funding. Yet, it has to be mentioned that SECO and SWISSCO were aiming at higher funding (in total CHF 10 million) beyond individual supply chain activities (through landscape projects), which could not be materialized due to the low willingness of companies to co-fund these efforts (see further information in landscape chapter) and/or the low co-funding from SECO for these projects (25%).

Various **SME** (traders and manufacturers) consider it difficult to apply for co-funding due to a lack of time resources. But especially by SME, project funding is seen as important. Some mention they would otherwise not do certain projects. Projects also give them the opportunity to learn for, and get into MEL reporting.

It is also appreciated that funding goes beyond **SECO focus countries**, enabling activities based on cocoa demand. Various voices would opt for more efforts in important origins like CIV and Ecuador, and less efforts in SECO focus countries that are not relevant cocoa origins (i.e. Colombia).

The **difference between the financing windows is mostly not properly understood**, besides the different funding amounts. Many interviewees also don't see the sense in having different windows, as applicants just adjust proposals (with the same project behind) to fit into a window, including in the landscape projects that are not really landscape projects (admitted by various applicants/funding receivers themselves as well). One interview partner further mentioned that SWISSCO could focus more on scaling interventions that already work well, instead of small-scale innovation. This does not necessarily have to be through higher funding, but through the creation of an enabling environment and establishing partnerships with financing institutions to fund at scale (e.g. by taking some form of risks – blended finance). Some interview partners criticised the **high number of unrelated projects**<sup>18</sup> in certain origins. In the same sense, projects are sometimes seen as **member/top down driven, and not origin/bottom up driven**, not taking local perspectives and voices into account sufficiently already during project development. This is seen to impede policy dialogue with origins (-> link to policy dialogue/governance). Positively mentioned were the developments in Ghana, where active collaboration with (not just participation of) COCOBOD and CRIG is fostered in projects (i.e. Sankofa, CHIS), which in turn fosters ownership immensely.

The **5% project management fee** for the SWISSCO office is seen as a smart move to fund the secretariat without base funding of SECO, but by various applicants, the fee is seen as too high, and, indirectly, SECO covers these fees anyways, as budgets are just "blown up" to accommodate the 5%.

Even though first thoughts are made about alternative funding sources, **all interviewees see a need and duty for continued funding from SECO**. This is mainly due to the public relevance of SWISSCO (based on the Global Cocoa Agenda signed by the CH Government), and due to the necessary "beyond supply chain" activities. A few voices

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<sup>16</sup> Considering that 69% of survey respondents reported acquiring useful knowledge in SWISSCO's learning and networking formats (see chapter 4.2), some might not be aware that part of this knowledge stems from PPP projects.

<sup>17</sup> IDH is working on this, see their [Procurement Practices Position Paper](#) elaborated in the frame of the Dutch Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa (DISCO).

<sup>18</sup> Even projects in one origin from same member are sometimes not related (e.g. ICI Ghana).

even wish SECO to resume the base funding of the SWISSCO secretariat, as this would avoid the risk of admitting too many members for the membership fees to cover the costs.

**Additional income streams for SWISSCO related projects beyond SECO so far are untapped.** Interviewees see opportunities in carbon related payments, and at a later stage also biodiversity related funding vehicles. Individual companies (even large ones) are not able to tap into these funds, so a role for SWISSCO in this would be appreciated. Interviewees pointed out though that the work required for this should not be underestimated, requiring respective qualifications of the SWISSCO staff and cooperation with partners from the green finance and impact investment sectors.

In conclusion, the **funding windows are a key and important element of SWISSCO** which should be maintained, with some **possible adjustments to further increase the effectiveness of the projects and further increase the level of impact beyond supply chains** of individual companies.

**ToR question:** To what extent does SECO's support help to ensure that the objectives of the SWISSCO Roadmap 2030 can be achieved?

**If objectives of co-funded projects align with SWISSCO roadmap objectives, SECO helps achieving them.** However, it is questioned by various stakeholders if objectives wouldn't (have) be(en) reached also without SECO support, particularly when they are related to objectives of due diligence regulation. Mainly also because most of the private sector is under pressure from various other angles and would carry out the projects also without SECO funding. **Additionality is therefore questioned in several projects.** Various interviewees mention that **SECO support should focus more on fostering an enabling environment for companies to accelerate contribution to roadmap objectives<sup>19</sup>**, and not directly contribute to reaching objectives with co-funded projects themselves (which is the responsibility of the companies).

It can thus be concluded that enabling more effectiveness/efficiency/smarter investments from the private sector through the coverage of necessary "overhead"/coordination efforts through the public sector could be the way forward. This is what particularly landscape projects are already aiming at (see more on this in landscape section).

#### **Overall recommendations on the three funding windows**

1. To SECO: Continue project funding, also beyond the current credit note.
2. To SWISSCO and SECO: Build partnerships with financial institutions and design blended-financing instruments that lower the risk for the private sector to upscale sustainability efforts like DAF.
3. To SWISSCO and SECO: Remain with the SWISSCO motto "tackling challenges together" in project funding, focusing fully on beyond supply chain activities and ensuring additionality<sup>20</sup> is demonstrated in project proposals.
4. To SECO and SWISSCO: Ensure project funding is linked to overarching objectives (dialogue, peer-learning, scaling, fostering an enabling environment etc.).
5. To SWISSCO: Ensure projects per country are coordinated with each other, enabling mutual learning, complementarity, leverage and impact. Maybe consolidate and reduce the number of projects per origin where needed (i.e. Ghana).
6. To SECO and SWISSCO: Drive at least some project development by SWISSCO itself, together with CH embassies in origin countries where feasible, with ISCOs and locally emerging platforms for projects to become more bottom-up driven (-> Link to Governance).
7. To SECO and SWISSCO: Efforts could be made to further foster project applications by SME, maybe even together. There could also be a % of funds set aside for SME. However, Chocosuisse (or its foundation) could also play a stronger role here and maybe even co-fund in this area.

<sup>19</sup> The UNICEF/ICI project is a very good example for this, as it creates the enabling environment for supply chain actors to report child labor cases. The planned Agroforestry Training Centre in Ghana could also become such an element.

<sup>20</sup> A useful resource from the Donor Committee for Enterprise Development (DCED) can be found [here](#).

## b. Landscape

### **Findings & Conclusions**

The **landscape approach is seen as innovative and the right way to go**. Several interviewees from the private sector though do not really see the added value of landscape approaches, as it doesn't affect their business in short/medium term. However, those that have a more development/ international collaboration focused background (incl. from the private sector) see the need to go beyond supply chain activities and the benefits over the longer-term for their cocoa needs. Yet, it is also widely acknowledged that **progress is usually slow and a long-term effort, with funding and consistent presence needed** for actual impact. There are a lot of examples (also outside SWISSCO) of landscape projects not having the desired impacts due to minimalistic/too fast implementation caused by too low and short-term budgets.

The **opinions on the different landscape projects are mixed**. While some landscape projects seem to be true landscape projects and go well (Cavally, Madagascar), some perform well but are not considered real landscape projects (UNICEF/ICI, Sankofa), and two are considered as performing less well, at the core remaining supply chain projects, and being "forced" (Colombia, Peru)

The **SECO support in this financing window allows activities beyond companies' value chains, which they normally would not do or fund otherwise**. At the same time, it is very rare (exception Cavally) that SECO funding is actually leveraged through the private sector. The private sector contributions usually only consist of the expenses they would have had anyways for the projects in their supply chains. Nevertheless, SECO funding in some cases attracts funding from other actors (e.g. Agence France de Development and Fairtrade Finland in Sankofa; Singapore based rubber company in Cavally), which is positive.

The **landscape definition in the SWISSCO call for proposals is considered weak and not state-of-the-art, as it does not specify the focus on actual ecosystems and landscape management**.<sup>21</sup> In combination with "forced partnerships", the landscape elements in the projects even get more diluted. It was also mentioned that SWISSCO might overestimate its power to bring actors together in these projects, as (financial) incentives are too small (SECO funding usually goes to landscape leads only), and longer-term benefits are not properly understood. And even though SWISSCO tried its best to motivate members to form true landscape projects, due to (perceived) lack of follow ups, especially the Peru landscape project remains a fragmented sum of supply chain projects, which would have been done already anyways, also without SECO support.

Most interviewees do not understand the **low (25%) proportion from SECO for these projects**, as it leads to applicants putting in any type of funding, including farmer premiums, which are commercial and have nothing to do with sustainability programs. Also, as some mention, funding from companies should be proportionally in line with the volume they source from a given landscape. It is criticized that some companies contribute low amounts but then communicate a lot about it. Rules for attribution claims are missing. It was noticed that willingness of companies to co-fund the actual landscape (beyond supply chain) aspects in these projects is currently rather low.

**ToR question:** Have the landscape projects demonstrably promoted cooperation and coordination between various Swiss (and possibly international) actors in clearly defined geographical areas?

**Some landscape projects have demonstrably promoted cooperation and coordination between actors, particularly at local actors' level and not (yet) at Swiss actors' level**. Examples are the Bunso Cocoa College, CRIG and COCOBOD in Sankofa; the Ministry of Labour, Jobs and Employment of Ghana and ICI members in the UNICEF/ICI landscape project; or two additional local traders in the Madagascar project. There are also more Swiss actors in projects that would not be part of them without the "SWISSCO push", which is generally seen as positive, but partnerships at Swiss actors' level are often seen as "forced", on paper only, without true collaboration and additional value. It is probably too early to tell if these could still unfold their potential.

**ToR question:** Have the projects contributed to strengthening local governance mechanisms between the stakeholder groups?

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<sup>21</sup> For a more complete/targeted definition and criteria, please see, e.g. here: <https://www.pnas.org/doi/full/10.1073/pnas.1210595110>

**Projects contributed to strengthening local governance mechanisms, but not necessarily between the stakeholder groups.** The ICI/UNICEF project is a good example for this, as the local governance mechanisms for child labour registration (SWIMS) is now used a lot more by companies and NGOs working on the subject in Ghana. Also Cavally is a good example, as the Ministry is now in the driving seat of the project. International partners now “only” support to get things done. Most projects also include some form of multi-stakeholder meetings, fostering dialogue and understanding between the stakeholders. A hindering factor for the strengthening aspect was the gap in funding for these activities (up to one year between Phase 1 and Phase 2), which caused a loss in momentum, which is especially crucial for local governance systems and processes (e.g. Madagascar). In Peru, to get local authorities on board and get their buy-in, the project adapted the approach by not creating new / additional levers of governance but rather using existing governance platforms for sustainable local economic development. This is how the project should have been planned from the start.

**ToR question:** Is the long-term relevance and the prospect of (short-term) results sufficient to ensure the long-term commitment of the various stakeholder groups?

**The long-term commitment heavily depends on the type and objectives of the projects.** Yet, a long-term commitment does not necessarily mean that sufficient funding would be available to continue. **Without continued funding from SECO, company-driven projects would reduce the “beyond value chain” elements (e.g. Sankofa), while NGO-driven projects might simply cease to exist.**

**If problems to be solved and objectives are in line/aligned with needs of local stakeholders, a continuation can be expected beyond project duration.** This is only possible by involving local stakeholders early on and actually have them participate in or even lead project development. **Yet, also in these cases, funding needs can surpass the resources available.** Generally, **if solutions are seen as beneficial, local actors take them up and scale on their own, if resources allow to do so.** Scale might happen in an adapted form (e.g. DAF version of CRIG), but still with impact being leveraged.

#### **Ghana spotlight Landscape projects:**

1. Sankofa: KKFU significantly increased ownership, capacities and capabilities through project. Outlook very positive that they will continue promoting DAF also beyond Sankofa project farmers/region, as there is a high demand from farmers. However, it will be very difficult for them to fund scaling, as margins are too low within current cocoa system dominated by the Government (-> Link to policy dialogue). A part can be funded though, as they could increase fair trade volumes and premiums, also from other customers, also due to their good reputation thanks to Sankofa project.
2. UNICEF/ICI: The base for companies to use the official systems SWIMS is established now, and companies also benefit from the official remediation structures. Yet, the remediation structures would need considerably more funding, which could be orchestrated locally with a remediation fund. This would, however, make accountability a key requirement (-> link to policy dialogue).

**ToR question:** What is the added value of SECO’s involvement? What is needed to generate sustainable change beyond SECO’s support?

**The involvement of SECO in the landscape projects adds value in various ways.** First, and as already mentioned earlier, most landscape projects would not exist at all without the co-funding from SECO, as the projects would not go beyond supply chain activities. Also, SECO’s (and SWISSCO’s) involvement is seen very positively for the reputation of the projects locally (it’s like a “quality stamp”) and allows the projects to be taken more seriously by clients, governments and other partners. Consequently, the reputation of the involved companies and organizations is fostered. Additionally, when CH embassies are engaged, like it is the case in Ghana, access to relevant origin Government institutions is facilitated. In countries where the CH Government doesn’t have a strong presence, like e.g. in Madagascar, this “quality stamp” is considered less important, and local appropriation and ownership becomes more important instead. The SWISSCO/SECO “stamp” also attracts companies and partners beyond the cocoa value chain (e.g. in Cavally, the engagement from the rubber company from Singapore would have probably not been possible without). Yet, it was **further** mentioned that this quality stamp could also be reached without financial support from SECO, but through other methods, e.g. a “SECO/SWISSCO approved” mark would be sufficient. But it is questionable whether SECO/SWISSCO would provide such a stamp without being properly involved in the projects, as this holds potential reputational risks.

**Sustainable change beyond SECO's support is generated through factors related to company behaviour and the way projects are developed and implemented.** A clear and long-term commitment from the companies sourcing their cocoa (and other raw materials) from these landscapes, as well as a better understanding of the companies about the relevance of root causes for cocoa sustainability beyond their supply chains are key. Already from the beginning, in the project development phase, embedment in local priorities, strategies and structures should be ensured. If international landscape leading organizations are needed at all, they need to think about exit strategies early on, handing over ownership and responsibility to local organizations step by step. Currently, **all landscape projects are led by organizations from the North with very little involvement of local grass-root organizations**, which reduces the chance of continuation beyond project duration.

Where possible, inclusive market system development approaches can be used, to remove the economic barriers as much as possible and make financial sustainability feasible. A good example are the youth groups fostered in the Sankofa project, which are starting to become independent (and profitable) service providers for pruning or the seedling provision in DAF systems, already benefitting farmers beyond the Sankofa project. This impact would further be accelerated if farmers had sufficiently high farm-gate prices (-> link to policy dialogue). Local governments, organizations, businesses and farmers need to appropriate the project activities and solutions. For that to happen, they also need to be given the freedom to adapt activities and solutions to their needs and context. Dogmatic and top-down approaches need to be avoided. In this sense, the Center of Excellence envisaged by Sankofa could become a good example with lasting impact, replication and scale.

#### **Ghana spotlight Sankofa & DAF:**

- Without SECO's support, it would never have been possible to leverage DAF so much in Ghana. Access to Cocobod/CRIG was key. The support of SECO/SWISSCO lends credibility to the DAF approach. SECO funding also allowed local multi-stakeholder meetings to be organized, which greatly helped with understanding and replicating DAF.
- CRIG is taking up elements of DAF, and tests adapted versions that are feasible to implement for farmers and in line with other recommendations from CRIG. Adapted elements of DAF will find entry in official Cocoa Rehabilitation Manual.
- With a few exceptions, the private sector so far does not seem to be willing to actually invest in DAF. For scale, the big question is who pays investments for farm-set up.
- The World Bank plans to invest in farm rehabilitation, but is so far not yet really fond of agroforestry systems.
- Agroforestry congress organized in fall 2024 was highly appreciated by everyone, especially also by CRIG, as there is a "wild west" of agroforestry system promotion (usually developed top down without the involvement of farmers and their realities), in many cases not aligned with CRIG recommendations, and CRIG has no overview -> same recommended for CIV (with CCC, Anader, CNRA etc.).
- Also the World Cocoa Foundation mentioned that CH companies are seen as pioneers when it comes to agroforestry(+) systems.
- ➔ To leverage SECO's investments already made into agroforestry, a dialogue platform focused on agroforestry systems could be institutionalized in Ghana (and possibly in CIV later on). This would be welcomed and appreciated by key actors like CRIG, Cocobod and the World Cocoa Foundation. And it would signal the importance of agroforestry to the World Bank, to find entry into their rehabilitation fund.

It can be concluded that **it was a good decision to invest into landscape (or multi-stakeholder sustainability) projects and that these efforts are worthwhile continuing**, with more emphasis on attracting green finance or impact investments to roll out good practices and on achieving embeddedness into local governance structures and policies.

#### **Recommendations on Landscape projects**

1. To SECO: **Acknowledge long-term nature of (high quality) landscape projects and** avoid funding gaps to keep momentum and commitments.
2. To SWISSCO: **To ensure companies actually start co-investing into landscape approaches beyond their already existing supply chain activities**, more efforts need to be made by SWISSCO to make them

understand their importance for tackling the root causes of unsustainability in the focal landscapes and related problems in the supply chains. This could happen through events, business cases<sup>22</sup> or studies.

3. To SECO: **Review 25% co-funding offer** and increase percentage if partners actually contribute their funding to the “beyond supply chain” activities. Generally, review what type of co-funding is acceptable and what not (i.e. farmer premiums).
4. To SWISSCO: Require project developers/leads to **work more according to bottom-up approaches together with local government entities and environmental organizations** and request exit strategies for handing over full responsibility to local organizations step by step,
5. To SECO and SWISSCO: Another option could be not to do call for proposals, but instead (a) contribute to/leverage already existing landscape projects (e.g., in Ghana, those from the Nature Conservation Research Centre NCRC), (b) support sustainability projects by local grass-root organizations and build more upon structures already in place. And/or (c) develop something locally from scratch and then ask companies to contribute to the landscape part beyond their supply chains. **To SECO and SWISSCO: Establish partnerships with financing institutions / climate and biodiversity funding sources** as key elements of landscape projects to finance the sustainability efforts.
6. To SWISSCO: **Continue broadly respected work on agroforestry in Ghana**, including peer-learning and exchange/dialogue platforms. This is highly appreciated and considered a game changer, as currently most is done top down and at small scale, and CRIG has no overview. Be open for different approaches (not only Halba’s DAF), aligning closely with CRIG/CHED needs. Accordingly, the planned Center of Excellence needs to accommodate different systems and views, and further foster exchange, including farmer/bottom-up involvement for contextualisation.

### c. Innovation

#### Findings & Conclusions

**ToR question:** Have the initiatives under the financing window promoted innovative approaches (or at least have potential to do so)?

From what the evaluation team has seen and heard, **the approaches promoted by SWISSCO are often innovative and something new / not done elsewhere, or have the potential to become innovative.** SWISSCO in general is seen as innovative, possibly to a large extent due to the projects funded under this window.

However, **some projects are considered value chain projects** (particularly in the SME space), revealing the need to communicate more actively about the actual innovations fostered, or develop another window around SME and their supply chains. **Some projects, particularly in this window, are and can also be considered “business development”**, and, subsequently, some interviewees question SECO’s financial support. The start-ups we talked to confirm that SECO funding helps them a lot for their credibility, acceptance and increased sales. Likewise, 41% of survey respondents agree that PPPs may attract actors to the platform that are unwilling to share innovation results with other members, thus creating unfairness as the publicly supported innovations are supposed to be shared openly.

**ToR question:** Are these innovations having the desired effect? (or have good perspectives to have the desired effects)

**Most innovations can be related to a (current or future) contribution to the objectives of the SWISSCO roadmap**, especially when applied at scale. Several interviewees would appreciate if indicators in these projects would go beyond the SWISSCO MEL, and proof outcomes and impact (not just inputs and outputs).

**ToR question:** How could innovation and its impact be increased in the future?

The best option at hand is to **increase impact through wider use of the innovations** (scaling). For this to happen, funding recipients need to be willing to share results in sufficient detail. This might not always be the case, and innovations are or will be considered trade/business secrets, particularly with a view on business development.

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<sup>22</sup> Good example from NCRC in Ghana: Sub-HIA allocated to each contributing company with clear communication/marketing rules that work well for attributional claims/requests.

Some innovations can only be scaled if more actors use them and pay accordingly. Unfortunately, though, various interviewees mentioned that **they don't really reap the benefits of innovation projects**, that they are not informed in sufficient detail about results and outcomes, and that there is generally a **lack of transparency** in this window. Combined with the fact that replication would come with costs, scaling the impact seems difficult.

Impact could further be increased by properly **linking and aligning innovation projects to other projects taking place in the origin countries**, ensuring complementarity and acceleration potential. To further increase impact, **innovations developed by origin-based organizations could be supported, e.g. through supporting an innovation award**.

It can be concluded that **without innovations and the scaling up of successfully tested approaches, sustainability issues of the sector will not be solved**. It is therefore **important to continue investing into innovations** with corresponding modifications in the funding window to address the mentioned concerns.

#### **Recommendations on Innovation projects**

1. To SECO and SWISSCO: Develop **clear and transparent criteria to decide about business development funding**, and require (mandatory) in-depth results sharing.
2. To SECO and SWISSCO: Think about **other methods than grants** to support these innovations (e.g. "accredited by SWISSCO/SECO" or a revolving credit fund), based on clear criteria. Potentially work together with others that are very experienced in these processes (e.g. Elea Foundation).
3. To SWISSCO: Ensure **innovation projects are aligned with other projects in origin countries** for mutual acceleration and evaluate opportunities to **support origin-based organizations' innovations**.
4. To SWISSCO: **ensure that project proposals contain a scaling up plan** in case the innovation proves successful.
5. To SWISSCO: Engage with **Swiss Food Research's Cocoa Innovation Group** (funded by members and Innosuisse) to see if there are overlaps and opportunities to sharpen each organizations' role and maybe even benefit from (co-)funding.

#### **d. Peer Learning and Collaboration**

##### **Findings & Conclusions**

**Projects in this funding window are the least known**, and views usually were only received when prompted. Interviewees stated that they have never used or learned something from projects funded under this window. An **exception is the Cocoa Household Income Study**, which was well known and received. Generally, members mentioned that **more collaborative studies, baseline or impact assessments**, covering their own projects, could be fostered, as they reduce costs per company. This would also allow having comparable data between programs/initiatives (-> link to the harmonization of methods) and foster the "learning by doing" aspect in assessments. Going beyond impact assessments, members expressed an interest in real peer-learning formats.

**Even though there are a lot of studies made already on sustainable cocoa, it is seen as very beneficial if SWISSCO enables them as well**, ideally including examples from CH companies, as this attracts more interest, and companies feel more that studies actually need to be considered by them (like in CHIS). Particularly SME would appreciate **more meta-studies**, as they are not able to digest the vast amount of information provided in the sustainable cocoa space.

**ToR question:** Have the initiatives supported under this window contributed to strengthening knowledge and mutual exchange between the actors?

**Apart from the CHIS, the strengthening of knowledge and mutual exchange amongst SWISSCO members through this window were perceived as rather limited by interviewees, which may be partially explained by the relative recency of projects under this window (most of them started in 2024)**. However, CHIS fostered learning and exchange also beyond SWISSCO members, particularly with COCOBOD. It was also the project that SWISSCO communicated most proactively about.

It can thus be concluded that peer-learning is **an important element that potentially enriches collaboration within the platform and makes it more attractive, especially for SME**. Focussing on issues where sector knowledge and data are still weak, e.g. the business case of sustainable approaches, could be a way forward.

### **Recommendations on Peer Learning and Collaboration projects**

1. To SWISSCO: **Explain members** better what these projects are for and why they are/have been supported.
2. To SWISSCO: **Ensure peer-learning and exchange can actually happen** with all projects under this window, for example by facilitating project ideation, improved methodologies for transdisciplinary peer-learning and enhancing project communication beyond the CHIS.
3. To SWISSCO and SECO: **Further foster studies/assessments initiated collectively by SWISSCO members.** Ideally with local partners in the (co-)lead and with SWISSCO member examples being assessed/included (increases relevance). Resources for rather costly baseline/impact assessments can be pooled through SWISSCO. SECO could co-fund, particularly for SME to be covered as well.

## **4.5 Intervention Mix for Sustainability Transformations in the Cocoa Sector**

### **Findings & Conclusions**

**ToR question:** To what extent does the SWISSCO portfolio represent a smart mix of intervention strategies that allows transformation paths for more sustainable cocoa to be pursued coherently? Which elements are particularly important, which are missing?

As noted, SWISSCO's mix of intervention strategies consists of accountability and transparency; networking and knowledge exchange; international collaboration and policy dialogue; and public-private partnership projects.

**76% of survey respondents consider SWISSCO's mix of intervention areas to be coherent, and two thirds deem it effective for achieving the roadmap targets.** Several private sector and NGO representatives highlighted the importance of PPPs in SWISSCO's intervention mix, to gain know-how and positive examples that inspire other actors. One manufacturer explained that, by ensuring that available funds are directed to the most effective projects, SWISSCO plays a crucial role in identifying, assessing, and filtering potential sustainability projects.

**However, the positive synergies between SWISSCO's activities are less strongly perceived:** about 40% of survey respondents believe that SWISSCO's overall impact exceeds the sum of its impacts in the four intervention areas, 44% are neutral or did not respond and 15% disagree. This could be because a minority of members has (consciously) taken up learnings from PPPs of other members (see chapter 4.4a) and the mechanisms are too weak to lead to significant upscaling of PPP innovations.

**The members interviewed highlighted mainly four elements which they consider insufficiently addressed through SWISSCO's mix of interventions:**

- 1) Several NGO interviewees, but also a few private sector members argued that the mandatory part is missing in SWISSCO's intervention mix, pointing out that SWISSCO has the **lowest requirements towards its members of all ISCOs** (except for FRISCO).
- 2) The platform should further address the topic of **transition finance towards full sustainability in the sector**, harnessing the strength and innovative capacity of Switzerland's financial sector, by
  - a. building a Transition Finance Taskforce within SWISSCO to design finance instruments and mobilization strategies to enable members to tap into impact investing and green finance funds.
  - b. allocating a portion of SECO's financial contribution to SWISSCO towards a blended finance mechanism that de-risks private investments in sustainable cocoa initiatives. This approach would leverage limited public funds to unlock private capital, ensuring the ongoing transition to an environmentally and socially responsible cocoa sector.
- 3) Some members perceive a strong focus on producer countries at the expense of **consumer-country activities like procurement and commodity trading transparency rules, consumer sensitization and margins** (in line with Article 2, paragraph 2 c) of the bylaws). These themes represent an additional, currently underused lever for sustainability transformations in the cocoa sector. However, other members argued that SWISSCO activities should be aligned more with **on-the-ground realities in producer countries**.
- 4) Other ISCOs are seen to **work more on systemic change/at a higher level** and focus less on projects "as there are already a lot anyways". Thus, SWISSCO activities could shift, at least partly, more to influencing systemic

change/sustainability transformation, with some members suggesting that SWISSCO could take a stance in advocating for Swiss regulation in line with EU.

**ToR question:** To what extent is SWISSCO's mix of intervention strategies suitable for addressing the underlying causes of unsustainable cocoa production and trade?

**46% of survey respondents agree that SWISSCO's intervention mix tackles the underlying causes of unsustainability in the cocoa sector, while 19% are neutral and 30% disagree.** The evaluation team considers that although transparency and knowledge sharing are key and have certainly created positive synergies, the level of ambition needs to be increased to tackle the underlying causes of unsustainable practices in the cocoa industry. This might imply situational analysis of root causes in a producer region (e.g. low farm-gate prices in Ghana/CIV due to government regulations) as well as interventions that are not specific to cocoa (e.g. addressing illegal and / or unsustainable gold mining or creating alternative income opportunities).

**ToR question:** To what extent are successful strategies for more sustainable cocoa being upscaled/diffused in the cocoa sector?

**Two thirds of survey respondents agree that SWISSCO contributes to consolidating and speeding up sustainable practices.** To further enhance scaling up, a manufacturer recommended thinking more in market terms about the implementation of SWISSCO's indicators. For this purpose, **more hard facts and figures about the business case of sustainable practices are required.**

Roughly half of respondents think that SWISSCO contributes to replicating and adapting sustainable practices to other regions/countries. DISCO and Beyond Chocolate see scaling through other ISCOs as their main scaling mechanism. SWISSCO could also seek to use this mechanism to scale beyond its members. Other ISCOs would be highly interested in learning from SWISSCO and use learnings for their work.

**ToR question:** To what extent does SWISSCO influence typical levers of sustainability transformation (narratives, norms, feedback loops)?

Two thirds of survey respondents believe that **SWISSCO contributes to a shared definition of sustainable cocoa**, and a similar share thinks that it **contributes to making sustainable cocoa the norm**. While 63% of respondents also agree that **SWISSCO contributes to policy debate in Switzerland**, 37% consider that it contributes to policy debate in cocoa origin countries. Several survey respondents voiced their interest in obtaining more information on how SWISSCO is contributing to the policy debate in Switzerland and what this means more concretely.

It can thus be concluded that the mix of intervention strategies is well chosen and that – with certain adjustments and new priorities – the positive impact of the multi-stakeholder initiative can be further enhanced, reaching a situation where the three different entry points for achieving sustainability in the sector (good policies and regulations by government – both in Switzerland and in producing countries – , voluntary commitment and engagement of companies, and awareness and sustainable consumption habits of consumers) are well balanced and complement each other.

#### **Recommendations on the intervention mix for sustainability transformations in the cocoa sector:**

1. To SECO and SWISSCO: **Shift project funding even more towards creating systemic change and facilitating sustainability transformation in the cocoa sector:**
2. To SECO and SWISSCO: To allow this to happen, put more emphasis on the topic of **transition** by e.g. building a Transition Finance Taskforce within SWISSCO to design finance instruments and mobilization strategies to enable members to tap into impact investing and green finance funds.
3. To SWISSCO: Facilitate quantitative studies on the **business case for sustainability approaches**. This would help to gain the ear of sourcing people, not just sustainability people, by proving that these approaches make supply chains more resilient and less risky.
4. To SWISSCO: Add activities to make **Switzerland** a more sustainable **consumer country** of cocoa (procurement rules, consumer sensitization, margins).
5. To SWISSCO and SECO: **Expand policy dialogue** to include broader rural development issues in cocoa-growing regions which would help secure long-term sourcing opportunities for members and improve livelihoods of farmers, their families and communities

## 4.6 Institutional Governance of SWISSCO

### Findings & Conclusions

*Interview questions around this section prompted several answers and inputs beyond the questions mentioned in the ToR, which we think make sense to share.*

**The division of roles and responsibilities between SWISSCO and Chocosuisse seems unclear, and the view among members prevails that Chocosuisse does not contribute its fair share**, especially among companies that are members of both. SWISSCO is seen as better placed than Chocosuisse to address cocoa sustainability in the sector, although most stakeholders believe that this is the role and responsibility of Chocosuisse. Chocosuisse is seen as “free-riding” on SWISSCO. The dialogue between Chocosuisse and SWISSCO has improved with the new director. SWISSCO is invited to meetings of Chocosuisse’s Sustainability Committee, and “regulation readiness workshops” are jointly planned. This is a very good basis for further involvement and support (also financial) of Chocosuisse for SWISSCO.

**Many interviewees criticise the current membership categories.** Various companies in Category A are not manufacturers or traders, some members in the category “NGO” are not considered NGO, and company foundations are seen as belonging to sector A. It is proposed that **a new member category “Service Providers & Consultants”** is created, without a board seat but with higher membership fees, as SWISSCO clearly serves as acquisition platform for them.

Although it has improved in recent years, interviewees (including board members) say that there are still **prejudices and misunderstandings between different categories of members**. Some express their wish to foster dialogue between board members, based on facts/issue briefs to create a common ground for understanding.

**ToR question:** Are the various actors appropriately represented in the SWISSCO governance structure? Can they voice their concerns and ensure they are heard?

**According to the member survey, 57% of respondents consider that the various actors of the cocoa sector are appropriately represented** in the SWISSCO governance structure (board, general assembly), 15% are neutral and 17% disagree. **Roughly 80% agree that SWISSCO members can share their views and ensure they are heard by the board and office**, 9% are neutral and 2% disagree.

Interviewees offered different views: Some NGOs voice concern that the private sector is overrepresented with three seats compared to one seat for NGOs, which is different in the Swiss Platform for Sustainable Coffee. Additionally, SECO is seen as representing mostly an economic/private sector view, and it would be welcomed if the voices of other government departments (i.e. DEZA and BAFU) could be heard as well. In contrast, two SME survey respondents claimed that the NGO and research sectors are too influential, leading to overly ambitious targets which are unrealistic to meet for SMEs unless adapted to their capacities.

**The considerable influence of the NGO sector might be explained by its excellent coordination.** They meet regularly to align positions in CH but also at the European level (orchestrated by a dedicated position in the VOICE network). They also make efforts to include views of origin countries’ civil society organizations by fostering their platforms in Ghana<sup>23</sup> and CIV, as well as the exchange between the two. **However, NGO interviewees see the consideration of origin views through Swiss civil society organizations as insufficient.**

Interviewees stated that the **research sector is also well-organised** and holds several meetings each year to exchange and coordinate positions. However, this sector feels that, despite improvements in recent years, the significant potential rooted in the strong knowledge, methodological excellence and transformative literacy of Swiss research organizations is not yet fully exploited. Likewise, the research sector currently is rather absent from public communications about sustainable cocoa.

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<sup>23</sup> According to Joseph Bandanaa, origin civil society platforms do not want to be part of the ISCO boards. They see their roles stronger locally and feel represented “in the north” through consumer-country NGOs.

This **position alignment is completely missing in the other member categories**. More progressive manufacturers do not feel represented by Chocosuisse, traders not by Barry Callebaut<sup>24</sup>, and SME (both manufacturers and traders) do not feel represented at all. It is questioned whether Chocosuisse and Barry Callebaut should have permanent seats in the board. That Halba represents the retail sector is not understood at all, while the retail sector (even though its role is seen as key) is absent. Some members do not even know who is supposed to represent them in the board. One interviewee asked for a clearer nomination procedure of candidates per sector for the board elections, and a limit on the cumulative term of office (also with breaks).

Subsequently, **most board members are viewed as representing own views and interests, and not those of the sector as a whole**. Additionally, members seem to have no information about the discussions and decisions in the Board and there is no formal consultation. Meeting minutes are not shared, not even in a condensed form, and in some cases not even with deputies. This **lack of transparency** is of concern for various interviewees.

**ToR question:** What are the companies' main reasons for being a member of SWISSCO and paying contributions? What is the motivation for other stakeholder groups to join the initiative?

For companies active in the cocoa and chocolate sector it seems "natural" to be part of SWISSCO. The main reasons given in the interviews were **networking, events, learning and exchange of information**. Other stakeholders such as NGOs also see participation as **part of their mission**, while for service providers it is seen as a **good acquisition platform** that reduces the need for individual sales pitches. For all, the **co-funding opportunities are seen as an additional attraction, but for most they do not seem to be the main reason for participating anymore**. Some said that this was more of a reason to join in the beginning, but now the other benefits are convincing.

According to survey results, **for manufacturers and traders, peer learning was the main reason** for joining SWISSCO, followed by facilitated collaboration with other members. Meanwhile, **the aspect of committing to shared targets, while being the least relevant motivation across stakeholder groups**, is relatively more important for the retail than for the manufacturing and trading sectors. For **NGOs and consulting companies, peer learning is less important and collaboration with other members and access to funding relatively more relevant**. For **research and retail sector members, all four main reasons are about equally important**.

**ToR question:** What role does the secretariat play? Is it set up effectively and efficiently in terms of its contribution to the roadmap and its role in managing the initiatives supported by the financing windows, also in comparison to other cocoa platforms in Europe? Would the secretariat be able to finance itself sustainably without a SECO contribution?

**Stakeholders interviewed were full of compliments about the SWISSCO secretariat**. Overall, the office is seen as professional (even more so in recent years), pragmatic, effective and efficient, specifically also in comparison with other ISCOs. The secretariat is seen as very supportive and accessible when needed, with fast response times. This is particularly valued by SMEs not having peers within their own organization to consult. Christian Robin is seen as a good leader, moving things forward, while the whole team is considered well selected, capable, very committed and motivated. These insights from the interviews are confirmed by the survey, in which **83% of survey respondents confirmed that the SWISSCO office works effectively and efficiently**, 11% were neutral and only 2% disagreed.

**SWISSCO is seen as having a private sector thinking and behaviour**, as opposed to other ISCOs driven more by NGOs or governments. This is appreciated by private sector members, but less by NGOs. A few interviewees voiced concerns regarding the rapid FTE growth (and consequent staff cost), which will be difficult to sustain in case project funding (and the associated 5% fee for the office) from SECO is reduced.

**The secretariat already finances itself without SECO contribution**, except for project support, as the 5% charged often come indirectly from SECO as well (see further above; some budgets are adjusted/blown up to accommodate the 5%, not all project applicants pay this fee "on top"). It is not known to what extent project ideas are not pursued due to the project support fee. Many argue that **SECO should pay these 5% directly to SWISSCO** (together with the 5% that SECO already pays to SWISSCO), **under the condition that SWISSCO staff actually contributes to**

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<sup>24</sup> It was also criticized several times that Barry Callebaut has a permanent seat since the beginning. Traders feel more represented by Cocosource as deputy.

**project success.** This is sometimes questioned, as the SWISSCO staff currently seems to lack cocoa- or cocoa origin-related field experience. Even though some interviewees mention that membership fees could be increased, there is also a risk that certain members would leave if the cost/benefit ratio were not attractive for them anymore.

#### **Ghana spotlight:**

The new role of the Ghana Country Lead Joseph Bandanaa is highly appreciated. Yet it was also mentioned that the role needs to be further sharpened and more properly defined. A focus on “beyond value chains”; dialogue/collaboration/supporting the Embassy content-wise is proposed, as his support in project implementation is sometimes seen as too technical/research-heavy and not based on the (business) reality on the ground.

It can thus be concluded that **the internal governance structure of SWISSCO and its operation are working well, but adjustments are needed to accommodate the concerns** of members. Also, **with certain adjustments in its external relations and cooperation mechanisms, the organization can further enhance its impact.**

#### **Recommendations on the Institutional Governance of SWISSCO**

1. To SWISSCO: **Continue fostering the emerging closer dialogue between Chocosuisse and SWISSCO**, try establishing a Reward & Recognition agreement or MoU between SWISSCO and Chocosuisse. Aim for Chocosuisse to, step by step, play a bigger role (or contribute to SWISSCO for playing their role).
2. To SWISSCO: **Consider establishing a new member category “Service Providers & Consultants”** (without board seat and possibly higher membership fees).
3. To SWISSCO: Foster **membership** (in the new category “Service Providers & Consultants”)/**participation of organizations from the finance sector** that would potentially be important partners for scaling sustainability initiatives and approaches.
4. To SWISSCO: Seek to increase the representation and engagement of **retailers**. For that to happen, topics might have to be expanded to issues located in CH in alignment with the Global Cocoa Agenda.
5. To SWISSCO: Taking the example of the NGOs and the research sector, motivate (or if possible, request) board members to **establish processes for better representation of their whole sectors**.
6. To SWISSCO and SECO: Think about **similar position/role like that of Ghana Country Lead in other key origins**, i.e. CIV and Ecuador. This would allow anchoring SWISSCO in key origin countries and build more **collaborative links with multi-stakeholder groups in origin countries**.
7. To SWISSCO: **Increase transparency of the Board’s work** (e.g. by sharing meeting minutes more proactively).
8. To SWISSCO: Consider a dedicated representation of **SME** (manufacturers and traders).
9. To SWISSCO: Consider the creation of an **Origin Sounding Board**, similar to the Swiss Sustainable Coffee Platform (SSCP), to **represent perspectives of cocoa producers** on strategic matters in a structured way.

## 5. Concluding Remarks

Overall, the **existence of SWISSCO is seen very positive** by a large majority of stakeholders. SWISSCO found its role very well and complements what already exists. Also, members noted a professionalization and continuous improvement since its establishment in 2018. The membership has been expanded continuously, and SWISSCO was able to weave a good network for dialogue and exchange. This is of particular interest for SME, as SWISSCO provides them with a meeting opportunity without needing to travel to further away conferences and events.

**Of all the European cocoa sustainability platforms and initiatives (ISCOs), SWISSCO is widely seen as the most successful**, also by external stakeholders. Members positively mentioned its concrete impact with activities and projects on the ground, as well as the direct link to the Swiss Government through SECO. SWISSCO is also viewed as very proactive, constantly and pragmatically taking into account actual developments in the sector and emerging innovations.

Yet, the evaluation also revealed that **SWISSCO has its limits, and further developments are necessary to reap the full potential to drive sustainability transformations in the cocoa sector**. While SWISSCO can foster more sustainable cocoa sourcing, motivate and support actors to accelerate efforts, the platform is not seen as leading to substantial behaviour change among its members. More importance by most interviewees and survey respondents is placed on regulations, market dynamics (i.e. current price increase and consumer demand), as well as reputational risks. In that sense, SWISSCO is seen as the ISCO with the least ambitious objectives and lowest requirements for members. The most frequently cited reason for this is a low level of involvement of advocacy NGOs and, on the other hand, the high weight given to the interests of those private sector actors that have an insufficient focus on sustainability. A different reason for this is that sustainable practices are not (yet) enough a competitive advantage for SWISSCO members. A multi-stakeholder platform like SWISSCO cannot easily internalise the external costs of 'cheap' chocolate that stem from unsustainable practices (underpaid farmers, child labour, environmental degradation). However, such an internalisation of costs would be necessary to effectively incentivise the industry and consumers to favour sustainably sourced cocoa.<sup>25</sup>

By many stakeholders, including in cocoa origins, **SWISSCO is seen as a governmental initiative**, or a government-initiated multi-stakeholder initiative, based on CH signing the [Global Cocoa Agenda](#) at the World Cocoa Conference organized by ICCO in 2012 in Abidjan. The demand is therefore that SWISSCO (in close collaboration and alignment with the competent CH government entities) should be more active at the policy level – in the cocoa origins and in Switzerland itself. Likewise, more action is required related to the value distribution in the sector, including consumer awareness and buy-in. Currently, the focus lies on activities in producing countries.

More leverage would also be possible by following the current paths in corporate sustainability (i.e. due diligence), **looking at entire value chains of companies, and not only the imported volumes**. With many large traders and manufacturers based in CH, SWISSCO could leverage CH's weight and importance in the value chain, including in origin country policy dialogue.<sup>26</sup>

Many stakeholders are convinced that SWISSCO could further leverage its impact on the required sustainability transformations by **focusing more on creating an enabling environment** (including with project (co-)funding) for other actors to be able to reach more impact at scale in a more efficient way. This does not mean that origin co-funded projects become redundant, but that SECO's stake should gradually shift towards more overarching activities, emphasizing a more transformative and political role. For that shift to happen, **roles between the CH government, SECO, other departments/sections of the CH government, SWISSCO and Chocosuisse should be further clarified**, and each actor held accountable for its role to play.

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<sup>25</sup> For cocoa from Côte d'Ivoire, the external cost was estimated at €5.75/kg, which is 1.7 times higher than the current (record-high) farmgate price of €3.35/kg (FCFA 2'200/kg) for the mid-crop of 2024/2025 ([True Price and IDH 2016: 3](#)).

<sup>26</sup> For CH's main cocoa origin Ghana for instance, the two largest Swiss-based traders Barry Callebaut and ECOM accounted for 24% of Ghana's total cocoa exports in 2019, and SWISSCO member OLAM imported another 12%: <https://trase.earth/explore/supply-chain/ghana/cocoa>

## **Annexes**

1. List of stakeholders consulted
2. Detailed quantitative results from the online survey
3. Detailed Theory of Change of SWISSCO
4. Terms of Reference
5. Questionnaire of the online survey

## Annex 1: List of stakeholders consulted

### Phone interviews

Category/Categories	Organization	Name
Member Manufacturers & Traders, Member NGO, Board Member	Barry Callebaut, Cocoa Horizons Foundation	Tilman Silber
Member Manufacturers & Traders	Caboz	Daniel Stähli
Member Manufacturers & Traders, Landscape project (Peru), Innovation project (Peru)	Chocolat Bernrain / Stella	Manuel Holzer
Member Manufacturers & Traders	Camille Bloch	Jessica Herschkowitz
Member Manufacturers & Traders, Board Member Retail, Landscape projects (Ghana, Peru, Madagascar), Innovation Projects (Honduras, Madagascar)	Halba / Coop	Petra Heid
		Annina Böhlen
Member Manufacturers & Traders, Board Member	Chocosuisse	Roger Wehrli
Member Manufacturers & Traders, Landscape project (CIV/Cavally)	Cocoasource	Renzo Verne
Member Manufacturers & Traders, Innovation project	KOA	Fabien Nizard
Member Manufacturers & Traders	Koltiva	Silvan Ziegler
Member Manufacturers & Traders, Member NGO, Landscape projects (Madagascar, Peru, Ghana/Halba)	Lindt & Sprüngli / Lindt Cocoa Foundation	Nicole Moret
Member Manufacturers & Traders, Landscape project (Peru)	Minka SCS	Gaudenz Pfranger & Stefan Bloch
Member Manufacturers & Traders, Landscape project (CIV/Cavally)	Nestlé	Darrel High
Member Manufacturers & Traders, Landscape project (Madagascar)	Walter Matter	Judith Beyeler
Member Public Sector, Board Member	SECO	Monica Rubiolo & Martin Peter
Member NGO, Landscape Projects (CIV Cavally, Peru, Madagascar)	Earthworm Foundation	Sabrina Bosson
Member NGO	Good Chocolate Hub	Andrea Hüsler
Member NGO, Landscape Projects (Madagascar, Peru)	Helvetas	Maya Wolfensberger
Member NGO, Board Member, Landscape project (Ghana DAF)	Fairtrade Max Havelaar CH	Fabian Waldmeier
		Yannick L'Hommel
Member NGO, Landscape project (Colombia)	Swisscontact	Philippe Schneuwly
Member NGO	WWF	Romain Devèze
Member NGO	Farmstrong Foundation	Michiel Hendriksz
Member Research & Consulting, PLC project (household income study Ghana)	HAFL	Ingrid Fromm
Member Research & Consulting	Clarmondial	Kaspar Baumann
Associated Member, ISCOs	DISCO / IDH	Mark de Ward
Associated Member, ISCOs	GISCO	Martina Gaebler
Associated Member, Landscape project (CIV/Cavally)	World Cocoa Foundation	Michael Matarasso
SWISSCO Office	SWISSCO Executive Director	Christian Robin
Board Member, President	SWISSCO President	Filippo Veglio
Landscape project (Peru)	Helvetas	Nathalie Gil
Other	Public Eye	Silvie Lang
Other	Voice Network	Antonie Fountain

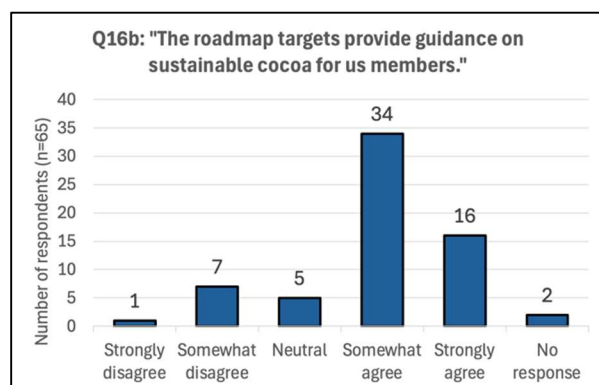
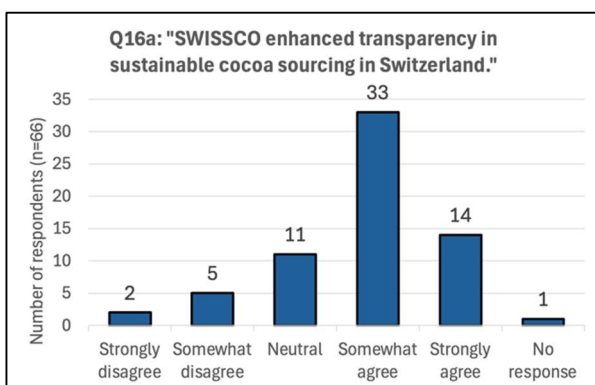
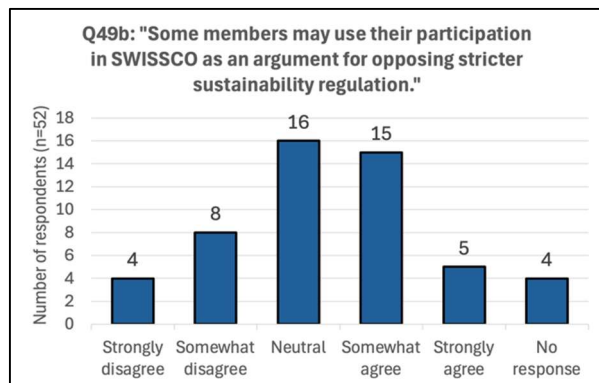
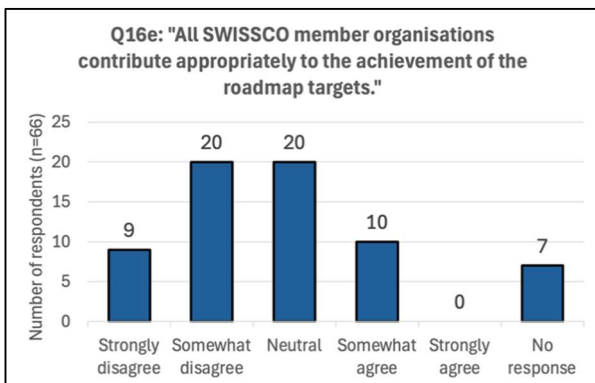
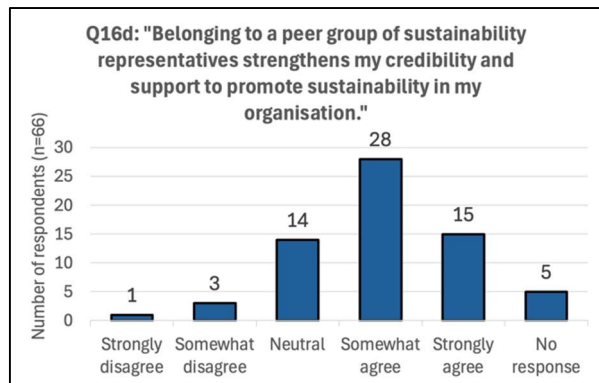
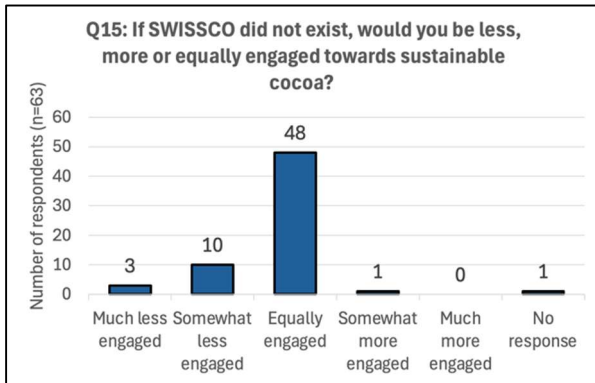
### Field visit Ghana (January 13-17, 2025)

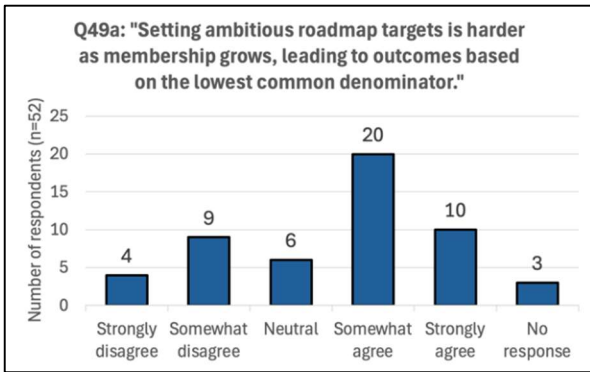
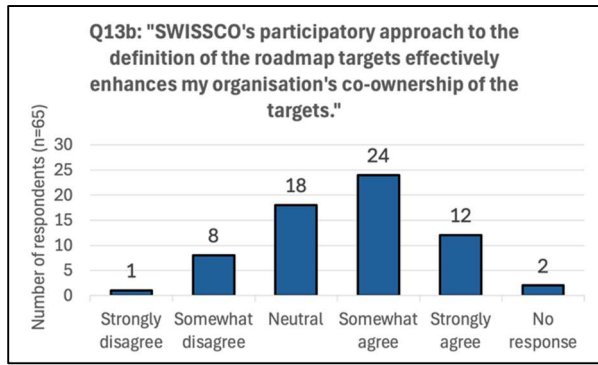
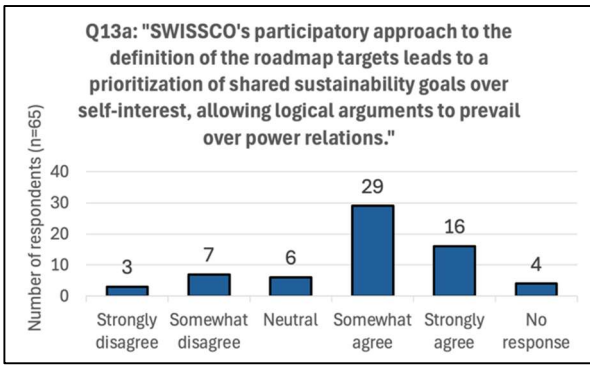
Category	Organization	Name
Landscape project (Halba)	International Trade Centre (ITC)	Lawrence Attipoe, Gottfried Baidoo, Michael Boating
Landscape project (Halba)	Fairtrade Africa	Edward Akapire, Benjamin Asare
Landscape project (Halba)	Kuapa Kokoo Farmers Union (KKFU)	Solomon Boateng, 3 farms, farmer group in Siana community, youth group (farm service providers) and field supervisor
Landscape project (Halba), PLC project (household income study)	COCOBOD Research	Isaac Manu, George Frimpong, Dawud Anning
Landscape project (Halba)	Nature and Development Foundation (NDF) West Africa	Glen Asomaning
Innovation project (CSSVD test kits)	Cocoa Research Institute Ghana (CRIG)	Francis Padi, Richard Adu Acheampong
Member NGO, Landscape project (ICI), PLC projects (Ghana: Alliance for change: Supporting caregivers and helping children thrive; CIV: Haut-Sassandra Landscape Pilot project)	ICI Ghana	Prince Gyamfi, Isadore Nii Atthoh Armah
Landscape project (ICI)	Tony's Open Chain (Tony's Chocolonely Ghana)	Ama Mogyabun, Maame Arko Ababio
Landscape project (ICI)	Ghana Ministry of of Labour, Jobs and Employment	Esther Oforiagyemang
Member NGO, Landscape project (ICI)	UNICEF	Lucia Soleti, Young Joo Lee, Christelle Amerio (CH), Nirav Nitin Shah
Member Manufacturers & Traders, Innovation project (weather index insurance)	Pula	John Buleti, Jacob Acevedo
Member Manufacturers & Traders, Innovation project (CSSVD test kits)	Swiss DeCode	(indirectly via Francis Padi from CRIG)
Associated member, Innovation project (health insurance)	Elucid	Richard Kuffour, Wilhelmina Tetteh
Other	Swiss Embassy	Simone Giger (Ambassador), Magdalena Wüst
SWISSCO office	Country Lead Ghana	Joseph Bandanaa

## Annex 2: Detailed quantitative results from the online survey

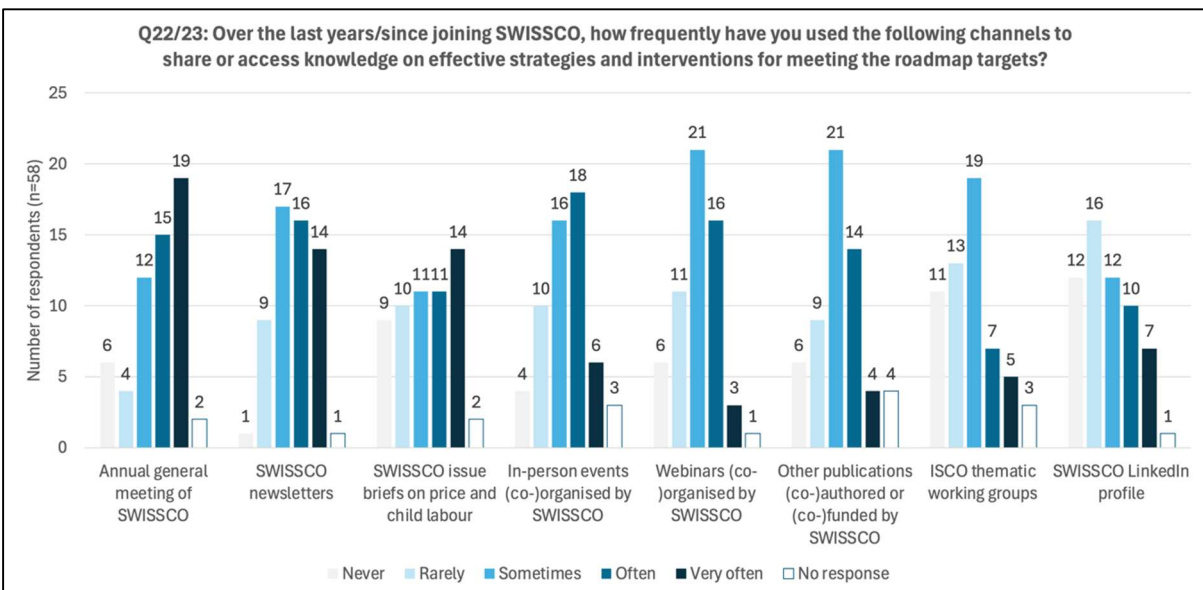
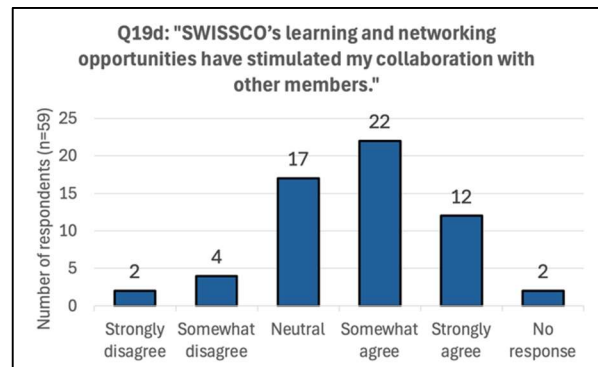
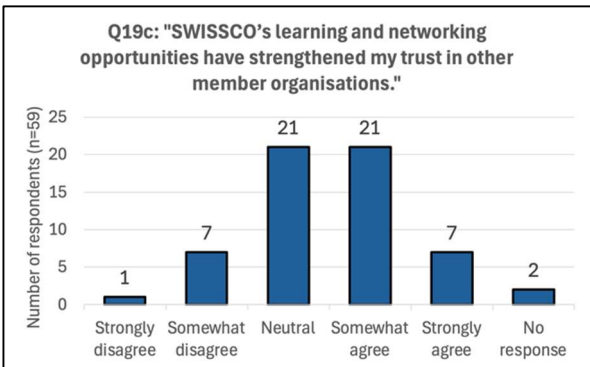
This annex contains all figures from the quantitative results of the online survey. The figures are presented in the same order in which the corresponding data are mentioned in the main report, whereas the questions (Q) are numbered as in the original questionnaire.

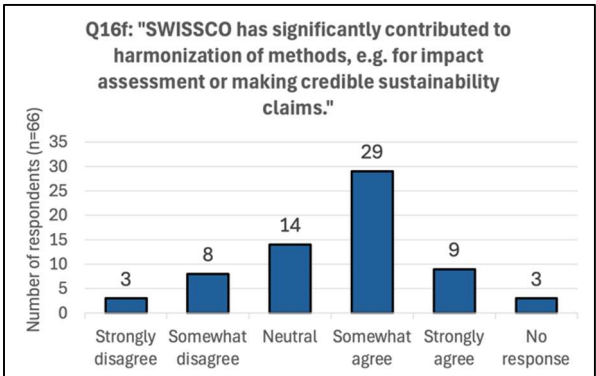
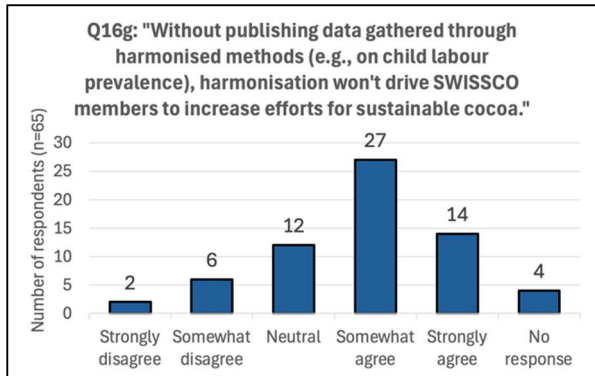
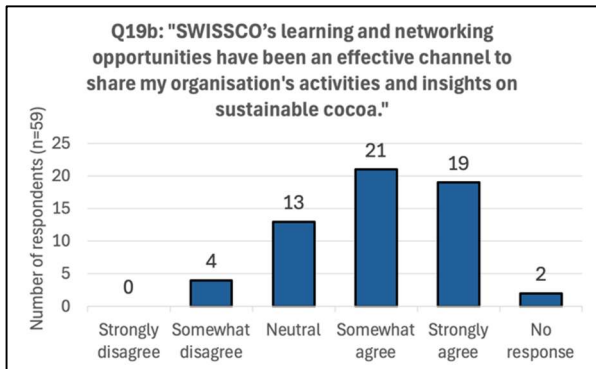
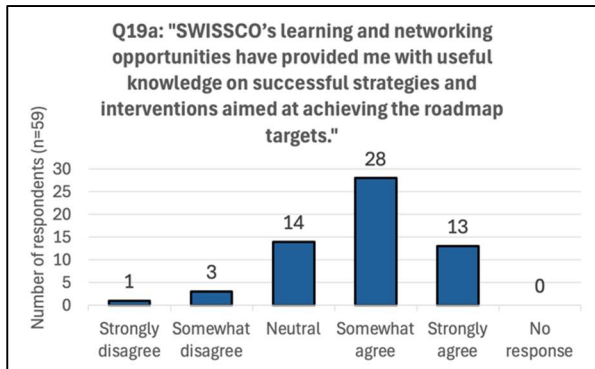
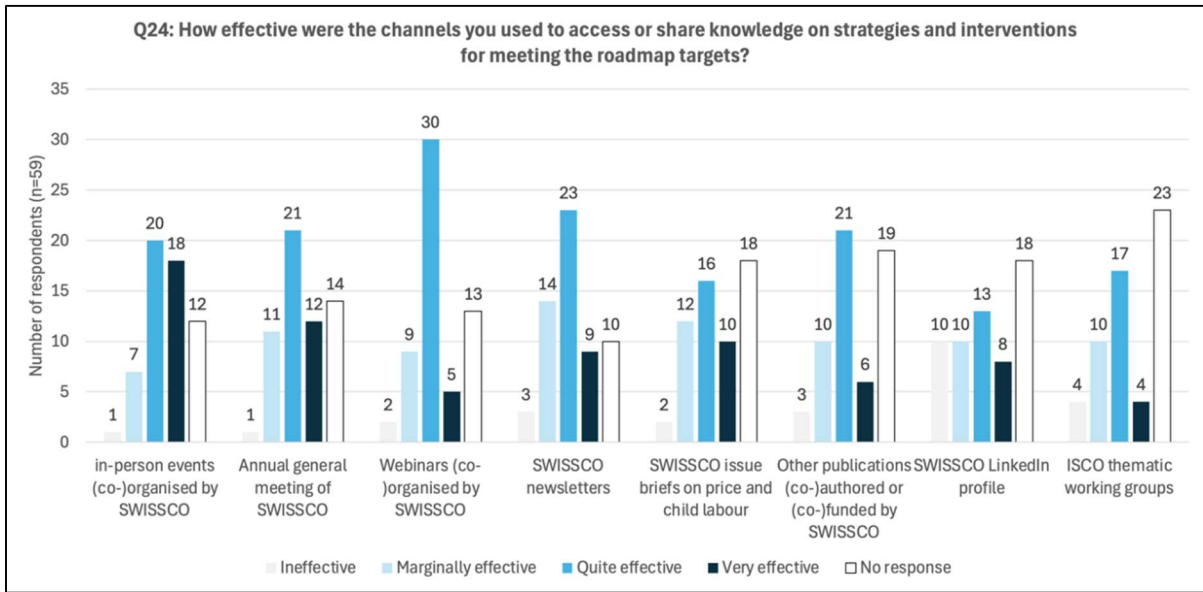
### a. Results on Accountability and Transparency



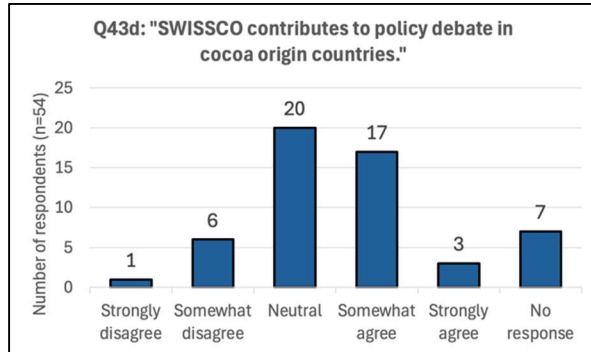
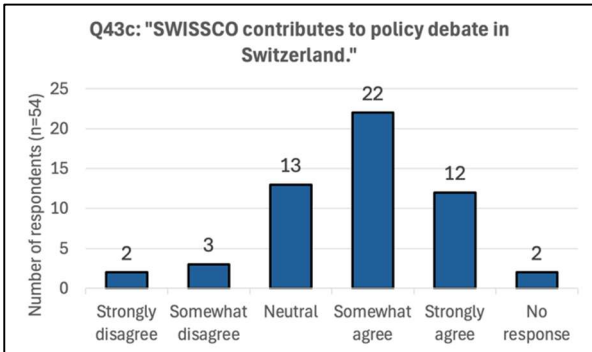
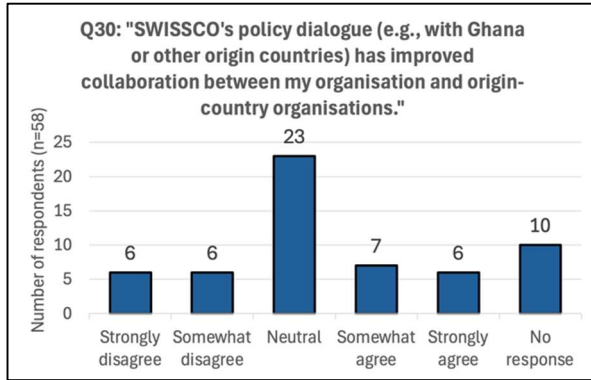
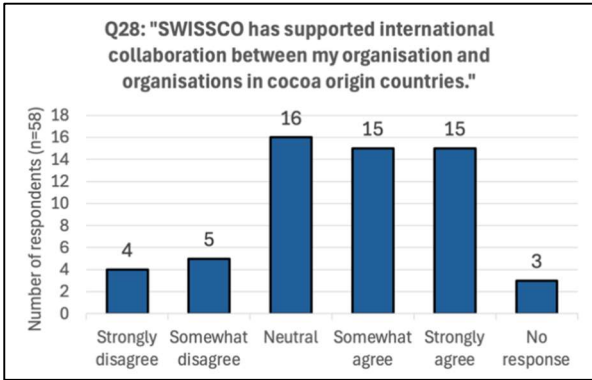


**b. Results on Networking & Knowledge Exchange**

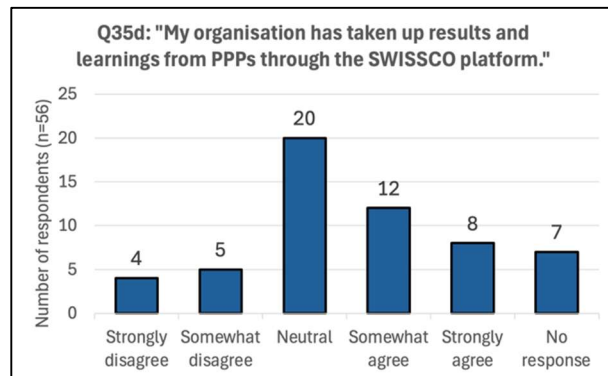
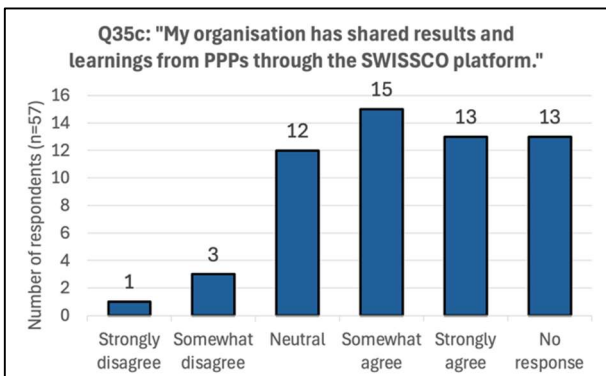
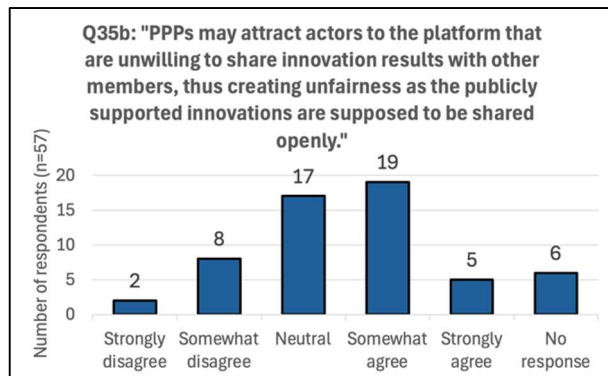
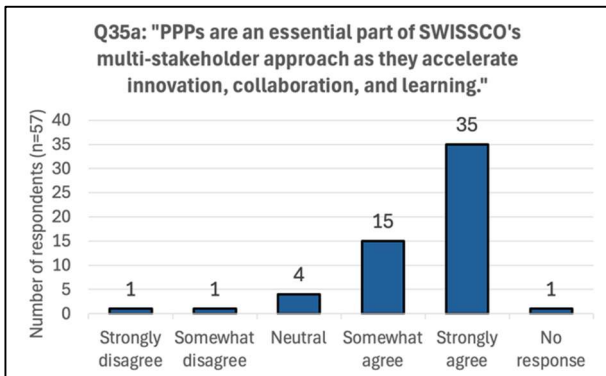




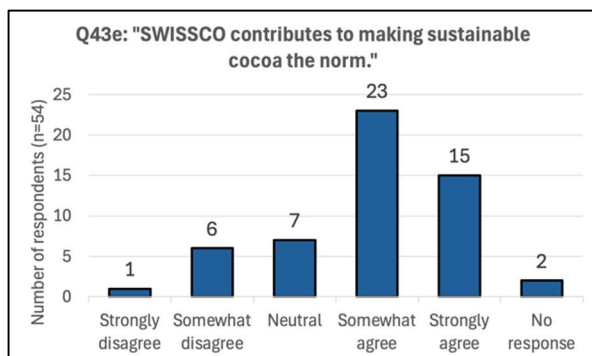
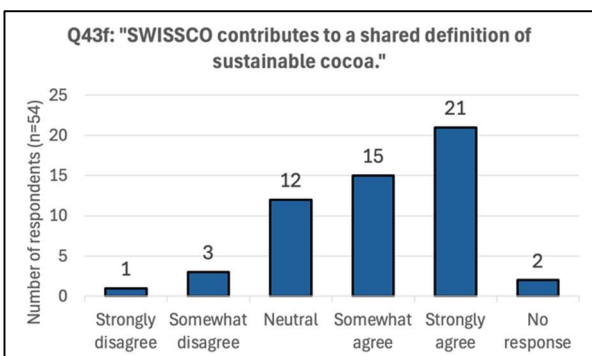
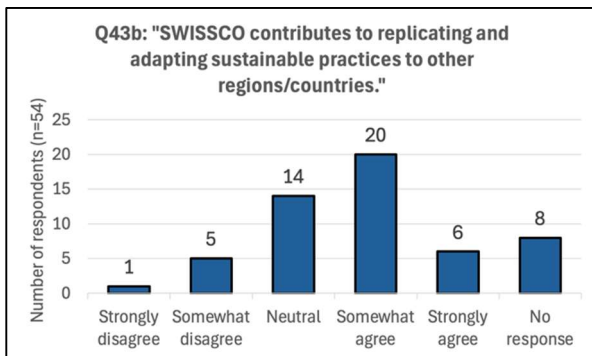
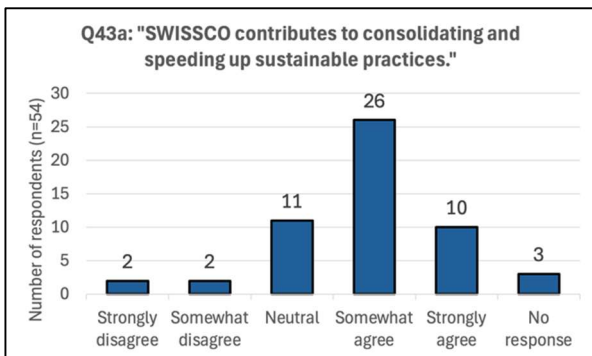
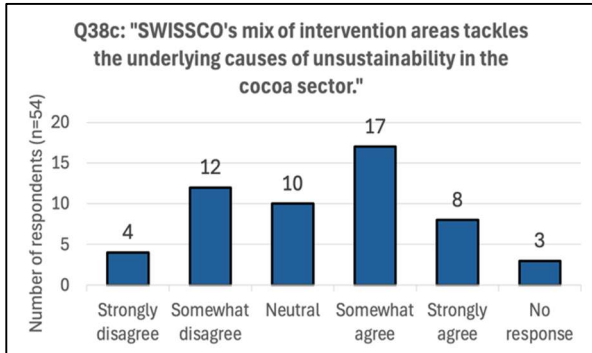
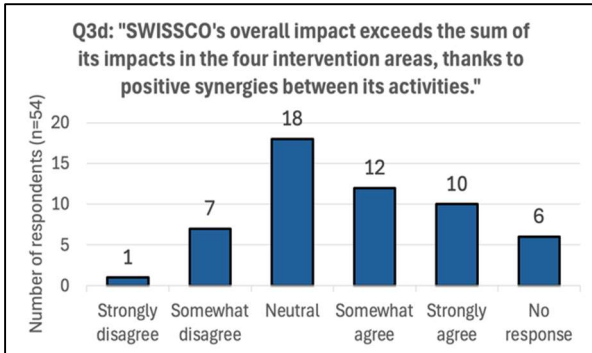
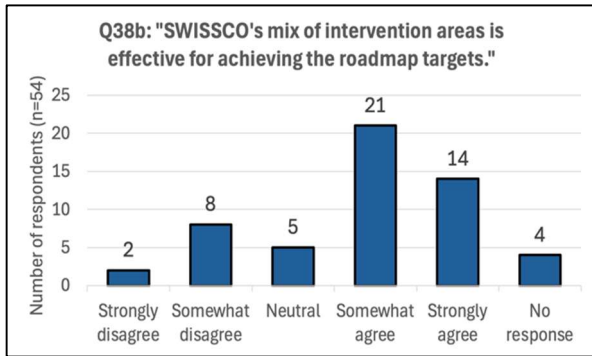
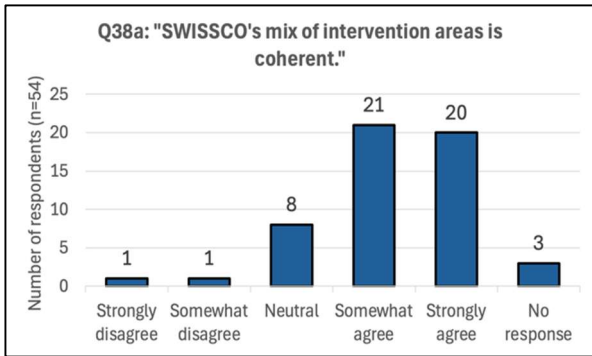
**c. Results on Policy Dialogue and International Collaboration**



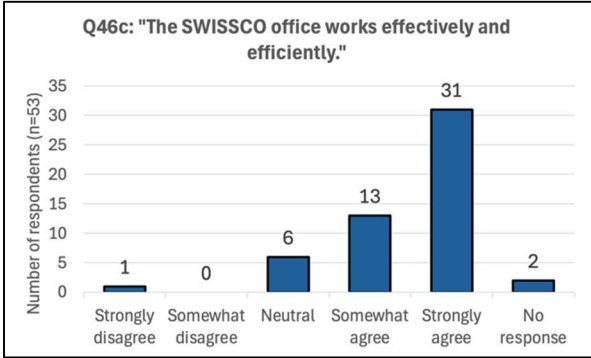
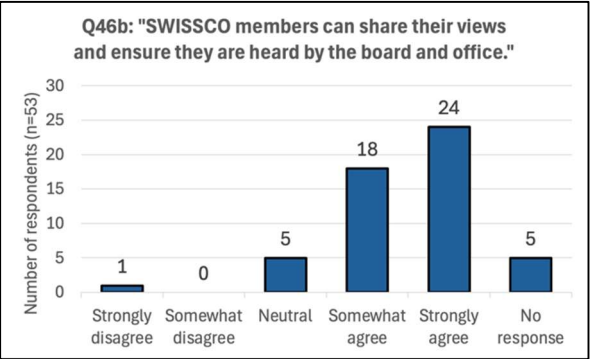
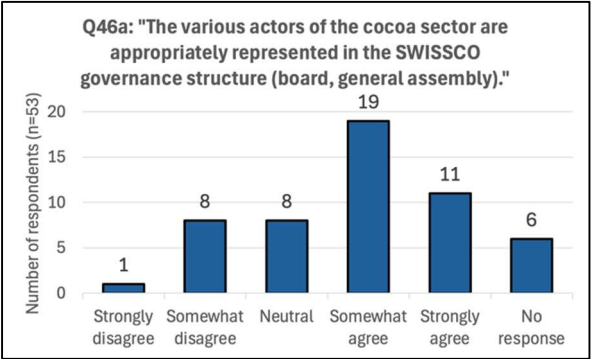
**d. Results on Financing Windows (Public-private Partnership Projects)**



**e. Results on Intervention Mix for Sustainability Transformations in the Cocoa Sector**



**f. Results on Institutional Governance**



### Annex 3: Detailed Theory of Change of the Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa (SWISSCO)<sup>27</sup>

Overarching questions from the ToR of the MTE:

- To what extent has SWISSCO contributed to strengthening the sustainability commitment of the various Swiss actors in the cocoa value chain?
- To what extent does SECO's support help to ensure that the objectives of the SWISSCO Roadmap 2030 can be achieved?

Activities & outputs	Causal mechanisms (hypotheses on the ways in which outputs contribute to outcomes)	Intermediate outcomes	Final outcomes	Impact
<p><b>1 Accountability</b></p> <p>MEL-approach and member interaction within SWISSCO</p>	<p>SWISSCO contributed to strengthening the sustainability commitment of the various Swiss actors in the cocoa value chain in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Target-setting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Participatory target-setting process in a transparent and deliberative context creates a common good orientation, characterized by preferences and justifications which are ‘public-spirited’ in nature, because preferences held on purely self-interested grounds become difficult to defend à most ‘reasonable’ arguments win.</li> <li>○ Possible counter-effects: a) “lowest common denominator” (less ambitious target-setting in order to include all members), b) larger, more powerful actors push through their interests</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Accountability</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Participatory approach to define targets enables co-ownership + acceptance of the sustainability agenda among committed members. Necessary condition: the preferences of negotiating parties in the target-setting process (i.e. board members and attendees of the General Assembly) are representative of the preferences of their respective organisations</li> <li>○ Social control among members and by the public + SECO bolsters the implementation of commitments</li> <li>○ Conflicts between stakeholders can be managed constructively within SWISSCO</li> <li>○ Possible counter-effects: a) “cheap talk” (membership in SWISSCO allows members to make a collective commitment towards sustainability, but individual contributions might remain modest.) b) Chocosuisse might use SWISSCO as an argument for opposing more stringent sustainability regulation and rejecting any responsibility for sustainability issues outside of the platform.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Transparency, trust and (individual/collective) accountability for roadmap target areas</p>	<p>Increased efforts of members in roadmap target areas</p>	<p>Increased social, ecological and economic sustainability in cocoa production and trade in order to substantially improve the living conditions of the cocoa producers and their families in line with the 2030 Agenda and make cocoa production more resilient concerning climate change.</p>

<sup>27</sup> Structure based on [https://naturalsciences.ch/co-producing-knowledge-explained/methods/td-net\\_toolbox/theory\\_of\\_change](https://naturalsciences.ch/co-producing-knowledge-explained/methods/td-net_toolbox/theory_of_change). Content based on SWISSCO Logframe, SECO Credit Proposal SWISSCO II, SWISSCO website, SECO/SWISSCO MTR ToR, and Jens Newig et al., ‘The Environmental Performance of Participatory and Collaborative Governance: A Framework of Causal Mechanisms’, *Policy Studies Journal* 46, no. 2 (May 2018): 269–97, <https://doi.org/10.1111/psj.12209>.

Activities & outputs	Causal mechanisms (hypotheses on the ways in which outputs contribute to outcomes)	Intermediate outcomes	Final outcomes	Impact
	<p>ToR MTE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent does the MEL approach and the interactive formats of SWISSCO promote transparency and (individual/collective) accountability for sustainability goals?</li> <li>How does SWISSCO membership help stakeholders to signal a credible commitment to sustainability?</li> </ul>			
<p><b>2 Networking and knowledge exchange</b> during in-person events, webinars, newsletters and via LinkedIn</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exchange of sustainability-relevant knowledge and concerns across different members of the cocoa-chocolate sector allows for a sector-wide, more legitimate approach to sustainable cocoa</li> <li>Harmonisation and optimisation of methods (e.g., impact assessment, income measurement, conversion factors, issue briefs, income studies) creates a common understanding of key challenges</li> <li><b>Peer-group:</b> Creating a peer group of sustainability representatives across member organizations endows them with the legitimacy and backing needed to push for more sustainability within their respective organisations.</li> <li>Show-casing successful innovation and practices</li> <li>Mutual learning</li> <li>Personal network and trust building between sustainability staff of different companies (conversations "behind the scenes")</li> </ul> <p>ToR MTE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has the initiative helped to strengthen trust and cooperation between stakeholders?</li> <li>To what extent have SWISSCO events contributed to (pre-competitive) peer learning?</li> <li>To what extent are methods being harmonised (e.g. impact assessment, income measurement, etc.)?</li> </ul>	<p>Broader and higher-quality knowledge base to inform strategies and interventions of members</p> <p>Diffusion of successful approaches</p>	<p>More innovative or efficient efforts of members in roadmap target areas</p>	
<p><b>3 International collaboration and policy dialogue</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ghana (intergovernmental policy dialogue on sustainable cocoa): 2023 MoU + workplans, active participation of COCOBOD in steering and advisory committees and engagement in scientific studies ensures buy-in, demand-driven implementation and ownership of COCOBOD for PPP projects; trust basis and frank and open dialogue increasingly allow SWISSCO and COCOBOD to address sensitive topics</li> <li>Other SECO priority origin countries (Peru, Colombia, so far little activity in Indonesia)</li> <li>Non SECO priority origin countries (e.g. Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar, so far little activity in Ecuador, Nigeria and Cameroon)</li> <li>European ISCOs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peer learning, knowledge transfer, and common approaches (incl. growing engagement by members in Working Groups) are fostered at European level</li> <li>Counter-effect: costs of increased coordination</li> </ul> </li> <li>Sector collaboration and member alignment supports implementation (e.g. through access to EUDR databases) and national adoption of EU regulation in CH (e.g. call for adoption on behalf of members)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upscaling of successful PPP approaches by origin country governments (e.g. COCOBOD)</li> <li>Coordination of policies on sustainable cocoa</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Institutionalisation of successful PPP approaches</li> <li>Alignment of public policies on sustainable cocoa between origin and consumer countries</li> </ul>	

Activities & outputs	Causal mechanisms (hypotheses on the ways in which outputs contribute to outcomes)	Intermediate outcomes	Final outcomes	Impact
	<p>ToR MTE: To what extent does SWISSCO strengthen Switzerland's role in its intergovernmental policy dialogue on sustainable cocoa?</p> <p>To what extent has cooperation between the various platforms at the European level been strengthened (e.g. in the context of joint thematic working groups)? What additional measures would be needed to promote this cooperation?</p>			
<p><b>4 PPP projects</b></p> <p>4.1 Sustainable Sourcing Landscapes<sup>28</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jurisdictional buy-in</li> <li>• Collaboration and buy-in of relevant local and international companies</li> <li>• Inclusion of civil society</li> <li>• Multiple sources of financing, comprising company commitments for long-term engagement</li> <li>• Effective, transparent, participatory and accountable governance mechanisms with defined roles, responsibilities and leadership</li> <li>• Agreement on a joint vision and clear, ambitious, tangible, and time-bound (sustainability) targets</li> <li>• Credible measurement, evaluation and learning framework</li> </ul> <p>ToR MTE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have the landscape projects demonstrably promoted cooperation and coordination between various Swiss (and possibly international) actors in clearly defined geographical areas?</li> <li>• Have the projects contributed to strengthening local governance mechanisms between the stakeholder groups?</li> <li>• Is the long-term relevance and the prospect of (short-term) results sufficient to ensure the long-term commitment of the various stakeholder groups?</li> <li>• What is the added value of SECO's involvement? What is needed to generate sustainable change beyond SECO's support?</li> </ul>	<p>Mainstreaming of sustainability in local governmental policies (including the alignment of fiscal resources with the joint development agenda) and in business practices of the private sector</p>	<p>Systemic change within the public and private sectors and civil society in key sourcing landscapes for the Swiss cocoa value chain</p>	
<p>4.2 Innovative Value Chain Projects</p>	<p>New approaches and tools are tested, mostly by start-ups and SMEs, with moderate investments and lean implementing structures to better serve the needs of participating farmers.</p> <p>ToR MTE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have the initiatives under the financing window promoted innovative approaches (or at least have clear potential to do so)?</li> </ul>	<p>Successful innovations are identified and scaled up</p>	<p>More innovative and/or efficient /effective efforts of members in roadmap target areas</p>	

<sup>28</sup> The hypothesised causal mechanisms of the Landscape projects are based on SECO (2023). *SECO's Engagement in Sustainable Landscape Approaches - Beyond a single crop focus*. Position paper.

Activities & outputs	Causal mechanisms (hypotheses on the ways in which outputs contribute to outcomes)	Intermediate outcomes	Final outcomes	Impact
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are these innovations having the desired effect? (To be considered: it might be too early to see the desired effects, but we can assess whether the innovations have good perspectives to have the desired effects.)</li> <li>How could innovation and its impact be increased in the future?</li> </ul>			
4.3 Peer Learning & Collaboration	ToR MTE: Have the initiatives supported under this window contributed to strengthening knowledge and mutual exchange between the actors?	Broader and higher-quality knowledge base to inform strategies and interventions of members  Diffusion of successful approaches	More innovative and/or efficient/effective efforts of members in roadmap target areas	

## 5. Intervention mix and sustainability transformation

- Interventions 1-4 (accountability, network, international collaboration, PPP) reinforce each other; i.e. intervention A contributes to improving outcomes of intervention B.
- SWISSCO interventions 1-4 contribute to amplifying more sustainable practices of SWISSCO members at the expense of less sustainable practices. Particularly, amplification<sup>29</sup> through:
  - Stabilizing and speeding up sustainable practices
  - Replicating sustainable practices in other contexts
  - Scaling up (rules) and scaling deep (narratives/norms/values/feedback loops)

<sup>29</sup> For more detail, see David P. M. Lam et al., 'Scaling the Impact of Sustainability Initiatives: A Typology of Amplification Processes', *Urban Transformations* 2, no. 1 (December 2020): 3, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42854-020-00007-9>.

## Annex 4: Terms of Reference

### Mid-term and Impact Evaluation of the Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa (SWISSCO)

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#### List of Contents

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Objective and Scope of the Evaluation
- 3 Evaluation questions related to the mid-term evaluation of the SECO programme (Como)
- 4 Questions for the impact evaluation of the SWISSCO multi-stakeholder approach (CDE)
- 5 Methods and Process
- 6 Deliverables
- 7 Schedule
- 8 Evaluation Team / Qualifications
- 9 Budget

#### Annex: Standard Format for Evaluation Reports

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Prepared by:	Version:	Date:
SECO/WEHU	Draft	28.11.2024

#### 1 Introduction

SECO has been supporting the Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa (SWISSCO) since its official launch in 2018; in the first phase (2018-2022) with a total contribution of CHF 9.0 million, and in the second phase (2023-2028) with a contribution of CHF 13 million. While the first phase was also about building and strengthening the institution, the focus of the second phase is clearly on enabling projects under three different funding windows. The projects are embedded in a multi-stakeholder approach that should enable a sector transformation towards sustainable cocoa along the SWISSCO Roadmap 2030.

#### 2 Objective and Scope of the Evaluation

The aim of the mid-term and impact evaluation (MTE) is (a) to examine the extent to which SECO's support has enabled the institution to create added value for the various stakeholder groups in Switzerland, but above all but also for the actors in the producer countries, and (b) to generate evidence on the mechanisms of action of SWISSCO's multi-stakeholder approach and to identify good practices and potential for improvement in this regard.

These two elements should enable the SWISSCO Board and the General Assembly to discuss the objectives of the SWISSCO Roadmap 2030 on a solid knowledge base and to adapt them as needed.

Como, CDE and the SWISSCO Board are responsible for the three corresponding evaluation components:

- (a) Mid-term evaluation of the second SECO-supported programme of the Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa (SWISSCO) – responsibility of Como, with support from CDE
- (b) Scientific analysis (impact evaluation) of the mechanisms of action of the SWISSCO multi-stakeholder approach – responsibility of CDE, with support from Como
- (c) Discussion and, if necessary, adaptation of the SWISSCO Roadmap 2030 objectives – responsibility of the SWISSCO Board with the support of the Secretariat

### 3 Evaluation questions related to the mid-term evaluation of the SECO programme (Como)

#### Institution/governance

- Are the various actors appropriately represented in the SWISSCO governance structure? Can they voice their concerns and ensure that they are heard?
- To what extent does SECO's support help to ensure that the objectives of the SWISSCO Roadmap 2030 can be achieved?
- What are the companies' main reasons for being a member of SWISSCO and paying contributions? What is the motivation for other stakeholder groups to join the initiative?
- What role does the secretariat play? Is it set up effectively and efficiently in terms of its contribution to the roadmap and its role in managing the initiatives supported by the financing windows, also in comparison to other cocoa platforms in Europe? Would the secretariat be able to finance itself sustainably without a SECO contribution?

#### Financing windows

##### 1. Peer learning and exchange:

- Have the initiatives supported under this window contributed to strengthening knowledge and mutual exchange between the actors?
- To what extent has cooperation between the various platforms at the European level been strengthened (e.g. in the context of joint thematic working groups)? What additional measures would be needed to promote this cooperation?

##### 2. Innovation:

- Have the initiatives under the financing window promoted innovative approaches (or at least have clear potential to do so)?
- Are these innovations having the desired effect?
- How could innovation and its impact be increased in the future?

##### 3. Landscape:

- Have the landscape projects demonstrably promoted cooperation and coordination between various Swiss (and possibly international) actors in clearly defined geographical areas?
- Have the projects contributed to strengthening local governance mechanisms between the stakeholder groups?

- Is long-term relevance and the prospect of (short-term) results sufficient to ensure the long-term commitment of the various stakeholder groups?
- What is the added value of SECO's involvement? What is needed to generate sustainable change beyond SECO's support?

#### 4 Questions for the impact evaluation of the SWISSCO multi-stakeholder approach (CDE)

Guiding question: To what extent and why (or why not) does the SWISSCO multi-stakeholder approach contribute to sector transformation for more sustainable cocoa?

- Engagement
  - To what extent has SWISSCO contributed to strengthening the sustainability commitment of the various Swiss actors in the cocoa value chain?
- Accountability and transparency
  - To what extent does the MEL approach and the interactive formats of SWISSCO promote transparency and (individual/collective) accountability for sustainability goals?
  - How does SWISSCO membership help stakeholders to signal a credible commitment to sustainability?
- Policy dialogue (CDE & Como)
  - To what extent does SWISSCO strengthen Switzerland's role in its intergovernmental policy dialogue on sustainable cocoa?
- Multi-stakeholder network and knowledge
  - Has the initiative helped to strengthen trust and cooperation between stakeholders?
  - To what extent have SWISSCO events contributed to (pre-competitive) peer learning?
  - To what extent are methods being harmonised (e.g. impact assessment, income measurement, etc.)?
- Smart mix and transformation paths
  - To what extent does the SWISSCO portfolio represent a smart mix of intervention strategies that allows transformation paths for more sustainable cocoa to be pursued coherently? Which elements are particularly important, which are missing?
  - To what extent is SWISSCO's mix of intervention strategies suitable for addressing the underlying causes of unsustainable cocoa production and trade?
  - To what extent are successful strategies for more sustainable cocoa being up-scaled/diffused in the cocoa sector?
  - To what extent does SWISSCO influence typical levers of sustainability transformations (narratives, norms, feedback loops)?

#### 5 Methods and Process

The mission will be undertaken through a combination of desk studies, field visit, individual and group consultation and a member survey.

The mission will study the documents provided, but not limited to documents in Annex 3 and other relevant literature review. SECO/SWISSCO will provide these documents to the Consultant before the start of the mandate.

The mission's working program for the field visit will be prepared by the local SWISSCO Consultant in Ghana.

SECO will be responsible for commissioning and managing this assignment.

## 6 Deliverables

The evaluators shall produce the following deliverables in English language:

- **Summary of member survey results**
- **Draft and final evaluation report** including an executive summary and the main report with key findings, conclusions and recommendations. The final evaluation report shall be of max. 25 pages (excluding annexes). Further relevant details may be included to the annex of the report. Before submitting the final evaluation report to SECO, Como will submit the draft version to SECO for comments.

Upon request, the results of this evaluation will be made available to any interested third parties.

## 7 Schedule

The Consultant will undertake this assignment in Q1/2 of 2025. The Consultant will prepare a detailed meeting- and working program for the field mission to Ghana to take place in January 2025. This program will be submitted to SECO for endorsement prior to the commencement. The total duration of the Assignment in working days will be defined in the budget.

15.12.2024 Finalized TOR and preparation of mandate (including Budget)

Jan 2025 Field visit to Ghana of approx. 1 week

30.4.2025 A draft Evaluation Report submitted to SECO

30.6.2025 A final Evaluation Report submitted to SECO

## 8 Evaluation Team / Qualifications

The MTE will be conducted by Como's Piera Waibel (lead) and Thomas Finkel. The impact analysis will be conducted by Christoph Oberlack (lead) and David Bugmann. Como will be appointed from SECO through the signed framework contract. Como will subcontract CDE for 50% of the costs of David Bugmann, the other 50% being directly covered through the SWISSCO Coordination Office.

**Annex 5: Questionnaire of the online survey**

Dear SWISSCO member,

Thank you very much for participating in this member survey, which forms part of the Mid-term Evaluation of the Roadmap 2030 of the Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa (SWISSCO). The survey is conducted by the Centre for Development and Environment (CDE), University of Bern, and aims at investigating the mechanisms of action involved in the platform's multi-stakeholder approach. Your experience with SWISSCO is very valuable for this purpose, as it can help us identify good practices and ways of improving.

Completing the **anonymous** survey takes approximately 15-25 minutes. Participation is **voluntary**, and you can withdraw from the survey at any time by dropping David Bugmann ([david.bugmann@unibe.ch](mailto:david.bugmann@unibe.ch)) a short email. Your data will be treated in accordance with the [Swiss Federal Act on Data Protection](#).

We thank you warmly for your time and participation.

Kind regards,

Christoph Oberlack, David Bugmann, Markus Giger  
Centre for Development and Environment (CDE), University of Bern

## **Nr.: 2 Do you agree to participate in this survey?**

- I voluntarily participate in the survey and agree to the processing of my data in accordance with the above-mentioned information.
- I do not want to participate.

**Nr.: 3 To enhance our interpretation of the survey results, it would be helpful if you could indicate why you prefer not to participate in the survey.**

**Thanks in advance for letting us know!**

- I don't believe that SWISSCO has much room for improving, as it already works effectively enough.
- I don't think it is worth spending time on trying to improve SWISSCO, as this has little impact potential.
- I would be interested in participating, but I don't have time at the moment.
- I'm concerned about confidentiality.
- Other, namely:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Your answers have been saved. We wish you a lovely day!

**Nr.: 5 Which stakeholder group does your organisation belong to?**

- Manufacturers
- Traders
- Retail
- Public sector
- NGOs
- Research
- Consulting
- Associated members
- Other
- Prefer not to say

## Nr.: 6 Why are you a member of SWISSCO?

- Facilitated collaboration with other members
- Peer learning (knowledge exchange between members)
- Commitment to shared targets with a joint accountability and monitoring system
- Access to funding windows
- Other, namely:

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- Other, namely:

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- Other, namely:

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- Prefer not to say

## Nr.: 7 In which year did your organisation join SWISSCO?

- 2017
- 2018
- 2019
- 2020
- 2021
- 2022
- 2023
- 2024
- 2025
- No response

### **Nr.: 8 What is your company's global annual turnover in CHF?**

- < 2 million
- 2-20 million
- 20-100 million
- >100 million
- Prefer not to say

### **Nr.: 9 What is your company's global annual turnover in CHF?**

- <0.5 billion
- 0.5 - 5 billion
- <5 billion
- Prefer not to say

### **Nr.: 10 What is your organisation's global annual revenue in CHF?**

- <1 million
- 1-25 million
- 25-250 million
- <250 million
- Prefer not to say

SWISSCO's approach combines four areas of intervention: 1. Accountability and transparency; 2. Networking and knowledge exchange; 3. International collaboration and policy dialogue; 4. Public-private partnership projects. The following questions are structured according to these four areas of intervention.

**Nr.: 12 How familiar are you with the SWISSCO roadmap targets?**

- Not at all familiar
- Somewhat familiar
- Familiar
- No response

**Nr.: 13**

**The targets of SWISSCO’s roadmap were defined in a participatory process in 2021 in the board and general assembly and each new member commits to them.**

**How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements?**

**This participatory approach...**

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	No response
...leads to a prioritization of shared sustainability goals over self-interest, allowing logical arguments to prevail over power relations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...effectively enhances my organisation’s co-ownership of the targets.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Nr.: 14 Would you like to add any comments on your responses above?**

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## Nr.: 15

**If SWISSCO did not exist, would you be less, more or equally engaged towards sustainable cocoa?**

- Much less engaged
- Somewhat less engaged
- Equally engaged
- Somewhat more engaged
- Much more engaged
- No response

## Nr.: 16 How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	No response
SWISSCO enhanced transparency in sustainable cocoa sourcing in Switzerland.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The roadmap targets provide guidance on sustainable cocoa for us members.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The social control (monitoring, peer pressure) among SWISSCO members incentivizes my organisation to deliver on the roadmap targets.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Belonging to a peer group of sustainability representatives strengthens my credibility and support to promote sustainability in my organisation.

All SWISSCO member organisations contribute appropriately to the achievement of the roadmap targets.

SWISSCO has significantly contributed to harmonization of methods, e.g. for impact assessment or making credible sustainability claims.

Without publishing data gathered through harmonised methods (e.g., on child labour prevalence), harmonisation won't drive SWISSCO members to increase efforts for sustainable cocoa.

My organisation's commitment to the SWISSCO Roadmap 2030 encourages other SWISSCO members to adopt more sustainable practices.

**Nr.: 17 Would you like to add any comments on your responses above?**

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## 2. Networking and knowledge exchange

**Nr.: 19 SWISSCO offers various learning and networking events (e.g. webinars, in-person meetings, annual general meeting) and publications (e.g. newsletter, LinkedIn profile, issue briefs, studies).**

**How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements?**

### SWISSCO's learning and networking opportunities...

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	No response
...have provided me with useful knowledge on successful strategies and interventions aimed at achieving the roadmap targets.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...have been an effective channel to share my organisation's activities and insights on sustainable cocoa.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...have strengthened my trust in other member organisations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...have stimulated my collaboration with other members.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Nr.: 20 Would you like to add any comments on your responses above?**

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**Nr.: 21 Can you provide 1-3 examples of specific collaborations with other organisations that were facilitated by your SWISSCO membership?**

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**Nr.: 22**

**Since joining SWISSCO, how frequently have you used the following channels to share or access knowledge on effective strategies and interventions for meeting the roadmap targets?**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often	No response
Webinars (co-)organised by SWISSCO	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In-person events (co-)organised by SWISSCO	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Annual general meeting of SWISSCO	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ISCO thematic working groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SWISSCO newsletters	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SWISSCO LinkedIn profile	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SWISSCO issue briefs on price and child labour	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other publications (co-)authored or (co-)funded by SWISSCO	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Nr.: 23 Over the last years, how frequently have you used the following channels to share or access knowledge on effective strategies and interventions for meeting the roadmap targets?**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often	No response
Webinars (co-)organised by SWISSCO	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In-person events (co-)organised by SWISSCO	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Annual general meeting of SWISSCO	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ISCO thematic working groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SWISSCO newsletters	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SWISSCO LinkedIn profile	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SWISSCO issue briefs on price and child labour	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other publications (co-)authored or (co-)funded by SWISSCO	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Nr.: 24 How effective were the channels you used to access or share knowledge on strategies and interventions for meeting the roadmap targets?**

	Ineffective	Marginally effective	Quite effective	Very effective	No response
Webinars (co-)organised by SWISSCO	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
in-person events (co-)organised by SWISSCO	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Annual general meeting of SWISSCO	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ISCO thematic working groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SWISSCO newsletters	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SWISSCO LinkedIn profile	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SWISSCO issue briefs on price and child labour	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other publications (co-)authored or (co-)funded by SWISSCO	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Nr.: 25 Can you provide 1-3 examples of specific insight(s) from SWISSCO's information and exchange formats that you implemented in your organisation (e.g. uptake in your strategy, activities, intervention design)?**

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**Nr.: 26 Would you like to suggest specific topics, improvements or additions to any of these information and exchange channels or formats?**

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### **3. International collaboration and policy dialogue**

**Nr.: 28 How much do you disagree or agree with the following statement?**

Strongly disagree    Somewhat disagree    Neutral    Somewhat agree    Strongly agree    No response

SWISSCO has supported international collaboration between my organisation and organisations in cocoa origin countries.

**Nr.: 29 If so, can you provide 1-3 examples of such support?**

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**Nr.: 30 How much do you disagree or agree with the following statement?**

Strongly disagree    Somewhat disagree    Neutral    Somewhat agree    Strongly agree    No response

SWISSCO's policy dialogue (e.g., with Ghana or other origin countries) has improved collaboration between my organisation and origin-country organisations.

○                      ○                      ○                      ○                      ○                      ○

**Nr.: 31 If so, can you provide 1-3 examples?**

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**Nr.: 32 Why didn't SWISSCO's policy dialogue (e.g., with Ghana or other origin countries) improve collaboration between your organisation and origin-country organisations?**

- Because SWISSCO is not (very) active in the same origin countries as my organisation.
- Because SWISSCO's policy dialogue has been ineffective in fostering collaboration between my organisation and origin-country organisations.
- No response
- Other, namely:  

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**4. Public-private partnership projects**

## Nr.: 34

**In its current phase, SWISSCO offers three funding windows for public-private partnership (PPP) projects: Innovation; Landscape; and Peer-learning and collaboration.**

**How familiar are you with these three funding windows?**

- Not familiar at all
- Somewhat familiar
- Familiar
- No response



**Nr.: 35 How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements?**

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	No response
PPPs are an essential part of SWISSCO's multi-stakeholder approach as they accelerate innovation, collaboration, and learning.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
PPPs may attract actors to the platform that are unwilling to share innovation results with other members, thus creating unfairness as the publicly supported innovations are supposed to be shared openly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My organisation has shared results and learnings from PPPs through the SWISSCO platform.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My organisation has taken up results and learnings from PPPs through the SWISSCO platform.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Nr.: 36 Would you like to add any comments on your responses above?**

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# SWISSCO's combination of intervention strategies

**Nr.: 38 How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements?**

**SWISSCO's mix of intervention areas (1. Accountability and transparency, 2. Networking and knowledge exchange, 3. International collaboration and policy dialogue, 4. Public-private partnership projects)...**

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	No response
...is coherent.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...is effective for achieving the roadmap targets.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...tackles the underlying causes of unsustainability in the cocoa sector.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SWISSCO's overall impact exceeds the sum of its impacts in the four intervention areas, thanks to positive synergies between its activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Nr.: 39 If so, can you share 1-2 experiences of such positive synergies?**

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**Nr.: 40 Which of SWISSCO's interventions are particularly important in your view, and why?**

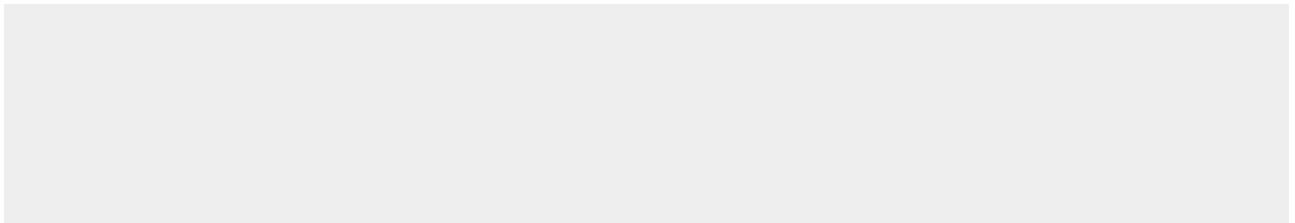
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**Nr.: 41 Can you share 1-3 questions, doubts, or concerns about the mix of intervention strategies?**

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**Nr.: 42 Are there any further activities SWISSCO should pursue to foster sustainability in your view? If so, which one(s)?**

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**Nr.: 43 SWISSCO seeks to amplify sustainable practices across the cocoa value chain.**

**How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements?**

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	No response
SWISSCO contributes to consolidating and speeding up sustainable practices.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SWISSCO contributes to replicating and adapting sustainable practices to other regions/countries.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SWISSCO contributes to policy debate in Switzerland.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SWISSCO contributes to policy debate in cocoa origin countries.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SWISSCO contributes to making sustainable cocoa the norm.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SWISSCO contributes to a shared definition of sustainable cocoa.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Nr.: 44 Would you like to add any comments on your responses above?**

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# Institution and governance

**Nr.: 46 How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements?**

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	No response
The various actors of the cocoa sector are appropriately represented in the SWISSCO governance structure (board, general assembly).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SWISSCO members can share their views and ensure they are heard by the board and office.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The SWISSCO office works effectively and efficiently.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Nr.: 47 Are there important organisations missing amongst the members and/or in the board? If so, which ones?**

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## Risks



## Nr.: 49 How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements?

Strongly disagree    Somewhat disagree    Neutral    Somewhat agree    Strongly agree    No response

Setting ambitious roadmap targets is harder as membership grows, leading to outcomes based on the lowest common denominator.

Some members may use their participation in SWISSCO as an argument for opposing stricter sustainability regulation.

## Nr.: 50 Would you like to add any comments on your responses above?

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## Nr.: 51 In your perspective, what are other risks for SWISSCO's effective functioning?

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## SWISSCO in context

**Nr.: 53 Various factors influence the level and effectiveness of the sustainability efforts in the Swiss cocoa sector.**

**In your view, how strong is the influence of each of these factors?**

	No influence	Weak influence	Medium influence	Strong influence	No response
Trends in market demand (B2B&B2C)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Regulations in consumer countries/jurisdictions (e.g. EU, CH)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Political, economic, and social developments in cocoa origin countries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SWISSCO and other European initiatives for sustainable cocoa (GISCO, DISCO, Beyond Chocolate & FRISCO)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
NGO and media pressure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Investor pressure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, namely: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, namely: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, namely: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Nr.: 54 Would you like to add any comments on your responses above?**

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# Thank you very much for your esteemed participation!

**Nr.: 56**

**You have reached the end of the questionnaire.**

**Do you have any comments on the survey or suggestions for SWISSCO not covered in the questionnaire?**

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**Nr.: 57**

**Would you be available for a follow-up interview?**

- No, thanks.
- I'm available if needed. You can contact me through email:  

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- I would like to further share my thoughts. Please contact me through email:  

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## **Outlook on results sharing**

Anonymized results will be shared at the second SWISSCO roadmap review meeting on 9 May and included in the Mid-term Evaluation report ahead of SWISSCO's General Assembly in June.

For questions and comments, please contact David Bugmann ([david.bugmann@unibe.ch](mailto:david.bugmann@unibe.ch)).

Thank you for sharing your valuable insights!

Kind regards,

Christoph Oberlack, David Bugmann, Markus Giger  
Centre for Development and Environment (CDE), University of Bern

Your answers have been saved. We wish you a lovely day!