CAOBISCO
Chocolate, Biscuits and Confectionery of Europe

Farm to Fork Strategy – Sante.DDG2.D.1
Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE)
European Commission
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CAOBISCO's pledge to follow the EU Code of Conduct on Responsible Food Business and Marketing Practices and application of CAOBISCO sectoral contributions

CAOBISCO is the Association of the Chocolate, Biscuit and Confectionery Industries of Europe, composed of 12 National Associations and 7 Direct Member Companies. We represent 13,350 companies in Europe, of which 99% are Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), employing more than 289,000 people and totalling a production of more than 14,000,000 tons per year. We are also one of the major users of wheat, sugar and milk products and we use around 50% of the world's cocoa production. We are thus a major player in the EU's economy.

Sustainability is a topic of ever-increasing importance for us and has been central in company's strategies over many years. We warmly welcome the Farm to Fork Strategy and by extension, the creation of the EU Code of Conduct on Responsible Food Business and Marketing Practices and hereby pledge to follow the code as detailed in section 1.4[1]. Due to the broad spectrum of our membership and the multitude of individual private initiatives and programmes of our companies, we would like to come forward with sectoral aspirations and contributions towards more sustainable food systems in the future.

CAOBISCO is member of FoodDrinkEurope and therefore is already covered by the 7 aspirational objectives submitted by our umbrella association. In addition, we would like to submit specific contributions that are related to current projects CAOBISCO is involved in. CAOBISCO is adopting a progressive approach to the Code of Conduct: we are indeed planning to submit additional contributions also in the future, aligned with health sustainability of food systems among other, and in order to readjust current contributions based on future projects and project outcomes.

The hereby submitted contributions are based on 2 different CAOBISCO-related activities:

- The *Integrated Model for the Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labour in Seasonal Agriculture in Hazelnut Harvesting in Turkey* – project. Public-private Partnership with ILO under 1. of the present letter.

- The Joint Cocoa Research Fund, research areas and associated projects, as listed under 2. of the present letter.

[1] Outline of the Code of Conduct

1. Public-Private-Partnership with ILO Turkey

One of the initiatives is the *Integrated Model for the Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labour in Seasonal Agriculture in Hazelnut Harvesting in Turkey* – project, a Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO). The overall objective is to contribute to the elimination of worst forms of child labour (WFCL) in seasonal agriculture in Turkey, one of our most important hazelnut origin countries.

We believe that the project can contribute to the Code as follows:

Social sustainability:

- It is the first Public-Private Partnership project for ILO Turkey – started in 2013 – that has the ambition to improve labour conditions in Turkish hazelnut sector;
- The partnership between CAOBISCO and ILO contributes to overall policy advocacy and implementation, the expansion of knowledge base and improvement of institutional capacity for the elimination of child labour in seasonal agriculture;
- It is aligned with existing Turkish national policies and strategies and national ownership, that is to support national and local stakeholders for the effective and practical implementation of "National Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (2017-2023)" issued by the Turkish Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MoLSS), "Circular (2017/6) on Seasonal Agricultural Workers" issued by the Turkish Prime Ministry, and "Circular (2016/5) on Access to Education of Children of Seasonal Agricultural Workers and Nomadic or Semi-Nomadic People" issued by the Turkish Ministry of National Education (MoNE), as well as ongoing and planned social-sector initiatives such as the Turkish National Employment Strategy (2014-2023);
- Capacity and knowledge of national and local institutions in the five targeted provinces[2] is improved in planning, managing, coordinating, monitoring, and implementing activities for the elimination of WFCL in seasonal agriculture in hazelnut harvesting[3] (monitoring system, handbook, technical support);
- Direct intervention with the withdrawal and prevention of children from child labour in agriculture season through referral and protection services[4] (e.g., social support services, trainings of agricultural intermediaries and family members, needs assessments);
- Awareness raising on the elimination of child labour in seasonal agriculture within national and local stakeholders and all actors involved in the harvesting process, including the use of media to enhance advocacy, public awareness, and policy dialogue (communication plan, collaboration across supply chains and knowledge exchange among other). The project promotes the maximization of collective learning opportunities among the stakeholders;
- Development of a multi-structural intervention model to eliminate the worst forms of child labour in hazelnut harvesting by involving a broad range of actors and resources, ensuring prominent level of national commitment and willingness to tackle child labour;
- In 2021, ILO and CAOBISCO agreed to continue their efforts with the extension of the PPP project "An Integrated Model for Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL) in Seasonal Agriculture in Hazelnut Harvesting in Turkey" to other regions, until end of 2023;
- There are current discussions on an eventual continuation of the project after 2023.

Progress report

Progress will be reported on an annual basis, aligned with the CAOBISCO ILO PPP Annual Progress Report - based on the activities of the previous year - submitted to CAOBISCO in March/April every year and by the project newsletters.

[2] Düzce, Giresun, Ordu, and Sakarya and Samsun since 2020

[3] E.g., during phase 3 of the Project, a E-METİP system (an electronic system for the registration of seasonal agricultural workers) was put in place in the targeted provinces; a number of 488 (composed of teachers and members of Province/District Boards for Monitoring the Children of Seasonal Agricultural Workers) in 2018 and 2019 benefitted from trainings on child labour monitoring, among other.

[4] E.g., during phase 3 of the Project: 2.406 children (1.183 girls and 1.223 boys) were withdrawn or prevented from work through provision of education services in 2018/2019. In 2020, 1042 children benefitted from training activities in Saraycık, Kırlı, Fatsa and Ünye districts of Ordu province. In the period 2018-2020, 280 agricultural intermediaries were trained. Additionally in 2021, 1456 children was reached, and withdrawn or prevented from work through provision of education services, and benefited from other services.

2. The CAOBISCO-ECA Joint Cocoa Research Fund

The Joint Cocoa Research Fund (JRF) finances applied research projects aiming at the development of innovative solutions to current and upcoming key challenges of the cocoa sector. The transfer of the research results to the user group, e.g., the farmers, is a key element of all JRF projects. The Fund hereby helps increasing economic, social, and environmental sustainability of cocoa production. CAOBISCO administers the JRF jointly with the European Cocoa Association (ECA). It has currently 14 international member companies.

The research strategy of the JRF covers three areas:

- **Cocoa Bean Quality and Food Safety:** The research work is committed to the development of innovative tools allowing full conformity with regulations also in the future, with a focus on heavy metals, crop protection product and mineral oil residues, mycotoxins and acrylamide. Work on the International Standards for the Assessment of Cocoa Bean Quality is part of the strategy as well.
- **Integrated Pest and Disease Management:** follows a three-component approach. First, the prevention of pest and disease spreading. Second, monitoring of pest and disease levels and detection of emerging diseases. Third, reduction of the dependency on chemical crop protection and development of integrated biological approaches for priority pests and diseases.
- **Resilient cropping systems**. Erratic weather and climate change, combined with degradation of natural resources including soils, pose a major threat to cocoa production and the livelihoods of cocoa farming communities. Building resilience requires a range of interventions, such as the adoption of climate smart practices, crop diversification including agroforestry and conservation and restoration of natural resources. Therefore, the strategy does focus on three main areas: resilient agronomy, weather-informed agro-advisories as well as enhanced natural resources and ecosystem services.

Completed projects

- Cocoa Beans: Chocolate & Cocoa Industry Quality Requirements (2018): The manual describes the cocoa bean quality requirements of the industry. Making relevant information more accessible, it is a key tool for communication with all stakeholders. The manual covers food safety aspects, cocoa bean and butter quality and sensory quality amongst others. Freely available in English, Spanish and French, and can be downloaded from the JRF homepage https://jointcocoaresearchfund.eu/
- Understanding the extent of molecular diversity of the complex of viral species responsible for Cacao swollen shoot disease in order to improve cacao swollen shoot virus (CSSV) detection and identify genuine alternative host plants (2015-2017 – Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria). The project provided enhanced understanding of the genetic diversity of the disease and a molecular tool for CSSV detection to help monitoring spreading. Barrier crops to reduce spreading to unaffected areas were identified.
- Collaborative Framework for Cacao Evaluation (CFCE) (2018-2020, West Africa). The main objective was to promote a better use of cacao genetic diversity to tackle the issues of climate change and low productivity. The project provided i) a set of traits to breed for climate change resilience, ii) a platform for scientists to share data, knowledge, and experiences, and iii) a set of elements to define a map of suitable areas for cacao production. As a next step, traits protocol and platform should be integrated into the work of the in COCOA groups https://incocoa.org/
- Mineral oil hydrocarbons (MOH) (2017-2019, West Africa). Jute bags were identified as an important source of contamination. Ring tests provided the necessity to still improve the methods for the determination of MOSH and MOAH and of the chosen markers for assessing the contamination. A communication strategy to inform about the findings was developed. Workshops with stakeholders, jointly organized with ECA and ICCO, are in preparation for spring and summer 2022.

Ongoing projects

- Spatially-explicit recommendations for optimal levels of shade-tree cover for sustainable cocoa production – Shade-tree project (2020-2023, Ghana). The main project objective is to build a tool for the determination of optimal shade tree density. Optimized shade tree levels increase climate change

resilience through stabilization of the micro-climate. Moreover, they function as carbon stock and help mitigate CO_2 levels.

- Mitigation of Cadmium Bioaccumulation (2016-2022, Latin America). The project aims at providing nuanced, locally adapted approaches for farmers to mitigate cadmium bioaccumulation. The approaches comprise: i) management of soil properties to decrease the cadmium bio-availability, ii) nutrient management to decrease the uptake of available cadmium and iii) identification of low cadmium-accumulating rootstock as a long term solution.
- Mitigation of Aluminium contamination (2022-2025, West Africa and Latin America). The project aims are to identify major sources and entry points of aluminium contamination and to develop an effective mitigation strategy.
- Understanding the genetic basis of resistance to Vascular Streak Dieback (VSD) (2018-2022, Asia). The project aims at understanding the genetic basis of resistance among cacao trees that are naturally resistant to VSD in Asia, and develop molecular markers for VSD cacao resistance for future selection and breeding work.
- 4th Version of the Pesticides Manual (2021-2022). The manual contains a Strategic list for key pests, emerging pests and the respective pesticides. It informs about technical aspects of pesticide use, with a focus worker and environmental safety as well as food safety. Information about pesticide regulations and a list of pesticides that must not be used for cocoa are also included.

Communication Strategy - Dissemination of Project Results

To support knowledge transfer and the application of the project outcomes, the JRF disseminates the research results via its homepage www.jointcocoaresearchfund.eu, through manuals such as the one on Cocoa Beans, through presentations at International Symposiums and through workshops with stakeholders e.g. on cadmium mitigation, in producing countries. For 2022, webinars on MOH contamination, Food Safety in general and the developed pesticides manual, are in preparation. They are jointly organised by CAOBISCO, ECA and the ICCO (the International Cocoa Organisation of the United Nations).

Environmental sustainability:

- Helps increase sustainability and climate resilience of cocoa productivity and quality, including via better information on improved, diverse, and locally adapted cocoa varieties;
- Adoption of climate smart practices (CSA), crop diversification including agroforestry and conservation and restoration of natural resources;
- Optimal levels of shade-tree cover for sustainable cocoa production in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, including increased carbon sequestration potential and carbon stocks;
- Genetic basis of resistance to VSD to prevent from plant losses and biodiversity losses;
- Mitigate Cadmium Bioaccumulation, including tools for improved organic matter, nutrient management, and the use of rootstock with low cadmium uptake;
- Genetic, cultural, and soil amelioration strategies to mitigate cadmium bioaccumulation in Theobroma cacao and aluminium.

Economic sustainability:

- Optimal levels of shade-tree cover, agroforestry and other CSA practices lead to economic co-benefits, as a result of stabilised or increased production levels in Ghanaian and Ivorian cocoa farms;
- Applied research leads to reduced economic losses and therefore stabilized incomes for farmers;
- Genetic basis of resistance among cacao trees to VSD and other disease to prevent from seedlings losses and branch losses that threaten yields and incomes;
- Establish weather-informed agro-advisories and other innovative tools contributes to set up resilient cropping systems;

Social sustainability:

- Research works can benefit cocoa producers by supporting the adoption of sustainable practices and innovative tools, and by raising awareness on climate and environmental challenges;
- Increased knowledge of farmers for applying sustainable practices (e.g., optimal shade-tree cover, use of adapted tools and methods) and development of communication materials for information dissemination;
- Inclusive approach and field research for the pilot projects and investigation, with farmers as driver of change;
- The adoption of sustainable practices ensures a sustainable income for farmers, wellbeing and could lead to a reduction of poverty among cocoa producers.

Progress report

Progress will be reported on an annual basis, aligned with the annual progress report of each project submitted annually to the JRF, CAOBISCO and ECA. Additional information will be also available via the JRF website.

Thank you for your attention. We are hopeful that you will consider the 2 contributions as sectoral contributions to the Code. If you have any questions or need further clarifications, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Best regards,

Muriel Korter
Director General, CAOBISCO