



# project results

## IMPROVING THE TRACEABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE COCOA VALUE CHAIN IN UGANDA



### Beneficiary organisation

**AFRICAN TRADE WINDS LIMITED (ATW) was created in March 2013 by Cocosource SA – a commodity trading company - as a platform to source cocoa from Uganda.** Drawing on its experience and knowledge of origin countries, Cocosource has established strong relations with identified suppliers and acts as a link between producers and consumers. Prior to 2021, ATW had only been trading conventional cocoa but, since October 2021, ATW has been supporting Ugandan farmer groups in the process of obtaining Rainforest Alliance (RFA) and Organic certification and started selling certified cocoa. ATW is a relevant player on the Ugandan cocoa market accounting for 15% of exported volumes.

### The challenge

Uganda's cocoa sector is largely informal, with limited farmer organisation into effective cooperatives. ATW works directly with about 20% of smallholder farmers, most of whom operate in groups and sell collectively or through traders. However, **most cocoa is sourced through aggregators and intermediaries who buy from individual farmers or groups. Globally, the cocoa industry has recognised traceability as essential** to addressing structural supply chain challenges. Increasing regulatory requirements on production, environmental, and social practices require all market actors to establish systems that identify, prevent, and mitigate adverse impacts across the value chain. Effective traceability is therefore fundamental to achieving sustainability in the cocoa sector.



### The proposed solution

ATW intends to achieve full traceability across its cocoa supply chain while progressively expanding engagement with certified farmers to build a more sustainable and transparent value chain in Uganda. The company aims to increase the share of certified sales, **encouraging more farmers to join certification programmes** and generate premiums. In addition to certification training, the proposed approach includes precise **farm mapping through polygon mapping and geo-localisation, systematic data collection on farmers and communities, and environmental risk assessments** to prevent deforestation. Each certified farmer's plot is registered and monitored from production to delivery, and certified cocoa is handled separately to avoid commingling with conventional cocoa. All contracted farmers undergo annual internal inspections and, once compliant, are submitted to external audits to verify adherence to certification standards.

### The expected outcomes of the project were:

- 1 The training and certification of **3,599** smallholder farmers on RFA standards.
- 2 The mapping and geo-localisation of **4,099** smallholder farmers suppliers.
- 3 The development and effective implementation of an MIS system.
- 4 The training of 30 ATW staff on the internal Management Information System (MIS) and polygon mapping.

### PRIORITY TOPICS

- Environment and climate change 
- Fair agrifood systems 

### IMPACT INVESTOR



### BENEFICIARY ORGANISATION

**AFRICAN TRADE WINDS LIMITED (ATW)**

Uganda

### NUMBER OF FARMERS REACHED

**20,490**

### AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAIN

Cocoa

### START DATE

September 2023

### END DATE

January 2025

### TOTAL EXPENDITURE

**€ 40,654**  
Including € 19,467 (48%)  
financed by SSNUP





# key results

Traceability

**20,490** smallholder farmers polygon-mapped with an estimated number of over 13,000 ha



**17,830** of them already integrated into the MIS system

Staff trained on MIS system use and App polygon-mapping and inspection

Training & Certification



**2,353** smallholder farmers (re)trained on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)

**9,240** smallholder farmers (re)certified under RFA, Organic and/or Fairtrade following annual training on GAP and audit



Higher sales volumes of certified cocoa with corresponding premiums anticipated for farmers



**1** new farmer group, the PAMOJA cooperative formed and registered audited for RFA and Fairtrade certifications



SDGs supported by the project



- 1. No poverty**  
1.5 Building the resilience of vulnerable people
- 2. Zero hunger**  
2.3 Improving agricultural productivity and increasing smallholder farmers' income  
2.4 Adoption of productive, sustainable and resilient agricultural practices
- 13. Climate action**  
13.1 Strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity to climate change



# lessons learnt

## ✓ Sustainability comes with significant costs and requires strong market linkages

Certification involves substantial audit, logistics, and compliance expenses, which are further compounded by market volatility and rising cocoa prices affecting cash flow. Improving cost efficiency – such as combining audits – and adopting flexible procurement arrangements are essential to maintaining financial viability. At the same time, certification only delivers real benefits when linked to strong market access. Increased sales of certified cocoa generate premiums that strengthen farmer incentives and income prospects, particularly when expanded to additional standards such as Fairtrade.

## ✓ High adoption of digital tools enables rapid scalability

When a digital tool is reliable and adapted to user needs, it spreads quickly across teams and regions. High adoption allows mapping and traceability activities to expand efficiently while maintaining data quality. Digital tools also simplify complex administrative requirements, such as the regulation on deforestation-free products (EUDR) compliance, by automating documentation and reporting. With proper training and support, users can leverage the tool effectively, enabling operations to scale rapidly and consistently.

## ✓ Continuous training strengthens certification readiness and compliance awareness

Ongoing training is essential to sustaining certification standards. Annual GAP training strengthens farmers' readiness for cooperative certification and reinforces compliance requirements. In addition, the spillover of knowledge within communities promotes the wider adoption of improved farming practices beyond directly trained farmers, thereby raising overall awareness and production standards. Training and awareness-raising are also critical for improving understanding of regulatory requirements such as EUDR, where limited awareness remains a key barrier to compliance.

### Outlook

Rainforest Alliance-certified cocoa has already attracted a major U.S. buyer, while Fairtrade-certified cocoa is set to be sold to a Swiss retailer. Additionally, emerging opportunities suggest that more cocoa-producing groups will seek certification to meet the increasing demand. With stronger commercial relationships, **ATW now can develop sustainability programmes that go beyond certification requirements**, and deliver greater benefits to farmers and their communities, potentially serving as a model for other actors in the sector.