

## Outcome mapping is a new and evolving methodology for assessing cocoa and forest initiatives

To the extent that recent forest-based interventions have yielded relevant outcomes complementarily, they have also been marked by threads of inadequate data sharing which most often result in missed opportunities for cooperation and outcome integration in geographic and contextual scopes.

Random Outcome Mapping (ROM) as a locally adaptive approach lends itself particularly well to forests interventions under the Cocoa and Forest Initiative (CFI), Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA), Accountability Framework Initiative (AFi), etc.



In recent years, there have been massive structural changes in policy, legislation and institutional arrangements in the forest sector. However, participation, coordination and joint optimization remain unsatisfactory. Ground verification, validation and reporting of illegal and non-sustainable forest operations and its impacts on local communities, forest-based industries and other stakeholders have been disjointed and inconsistent.

***The IVVR Interregional Framework on Forests seeks to strengthen independent forest monitoring through Integrated Verification, Validation and Reporting (IVVR) on Forest Governance processes in West and Central Africa***

## **OUTCOME MAPPING; A NEW AND EVOLVING METHODOLOGY FOR ASSESSING COCOA AND FOREST INITIATIVES**

### **THE IVVR INTERREGIONAL FRAMEWORK ON FORESTS**

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Research indicates that about 90% of cocoa produced the world over comes from smallholder farms varying in size up to 5 hectares.<sup>1</sup> The situation is no different in Ghana making the commodity an instrumental vehicle for lowering poverty incidence in the cocoa growing areas and providing employment for a fairly wide range of skilled and unskilled labour. However, the exact impact of cocoa on poverty reduction has always been approximated due to the complex interrelations that exist between various interventions and their

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<sup>1</sup> Smallholder yields: Average 350kg/hectare (ranges from 200kg in Ecuador to 1,500kg for smallholders in Sulawesi, Indonesia. (Ghana 300kg, Cote d'Ivoire 450kg)

expected results. This unknown has often resulted in missed opportunities of complementarity and joint optimization.

The political economy of cocoa surpasses that of any other commodity Ghana is exploiting. Six out of the ten regions of Ghana grow cocoa. For the larger majority of households in Ghana, cocoa constitute the fundamental capital base for income and employment. Therefore the measurability of intervention outcomes in this sector is absolutely crucial. As such, the key question that this brief seeks to address is how intervention outcomes are measured in the cocoa sector. What are the appropriate tools for measuring these intervention outcomes and how effectively are local communities engaged in measuring intervention outcomes.

In this brief, we refer to two independent cases with significant potential for complementarity.

As part of its objective of reducing poverty through sustainable environmental programme in Tafi Agome and Mador communities, ARDO implemented the **Weto Range**

**Conservation Project**<sup>2</sup>. The project sought to enhance the biodiversity of the Tafi Agome and Mador portions of the Weto landscape, through the conservation of watersheds, sacred groves and wildlife habitats. The project also sought to strengthen institutional capacities at the landscape level while promoting integrating conservation and sustainable livelihoods in the management of the targeted landscape.

In order to achieve its goal, the project sensitized local communities and formed two farmer groups namely; Dunenyo in Agome comprising 16 members and Hope for Better Life in Mador with 24 members. Under this project, cocoa pods, Ofram, Prekese and Grains of Paradise (GoP) seeds were supplied. The following quantities of seedlings were raised and transplanted over the period of two years:

- 23,000 cocoa seedlings
- 3,000 ofram seedlings
- 1000 prekese seedlings and
- 30,000 grains of paradise

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<sup>2</sup> Field interviews with Accelerated Rural Development Organization (ARDO)

Under the project, COCOBOD also supplied with 18,000 cocoa seedlings cocoa farmer group members now nursed seedlings for sale. Honey production was also introduced cocoa farmer groups.

Other stakeholders including government and private sector actors have also been providing support to strengthening the techno-economic as well as environmental governance gaps in the cocoa sector. As a result, several siloed outputs have been delivered from several actors in several different and sometimes the same communities.

A complementary intervention case study in this brief is the Next Generation Cocoa Youth Programme referred to as “**MASO**”. The consortium partners include Solidaridad, Ashesi University, Fidelity Bank, Aflatoun, Opportunity International Savings and Loans and COCOBOD.<sup>3</sup> MASO seeks to empower the youth as a catalyst for the transformation of the cocoa sector, so it remains a vital and growing part of the Ghanaian economy, by employing more

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<sup>3</sup> The MASO programme is intended to equip the youth, aged 18 to 25, with the requisite skills and knowledge for them to function effectively as cocoa farmers. See: <https://www.solidaridadnetwork.org/news/solidaridad-and-mastercard-support-next-generation-of-cocoa-farmers>

youth as business minded farmers and cocoa value chain entrepreneurs. This project cover among others the following districts; Sefwi –Wiaso, Bia West, Asunafo North, Adansi South, Assin North, Hohoe and spreads across Western, Central, Ashanti, Brong Ahafo and Volta Regions. In all these regions, the project is mobilizing and incubating out-of-school youth through the incubator method, combining training, coaching support, a youth network and access to land, finance and markets along with a reduction of barriers to success.

These are two examples of several cocoa and forest focused interventions with overlapping geographic and contextual and conceptual latitudes.

To the extent that both these two interventions and other interventions have yielded relevant outcomes complimentary, it has also been marked by threads of inadequate data sharing which most often result in missed opportunities for cooperation and outcome integration in geographic and contextual scopes. These concerns call for an outcome mapping of cocoa sector development interventions as a precondition for determining alternate scenarios that could improve both the

conservation and poverty reduction learning curves in Ghana.

In order to avoid duplication redundancy, there is a need to map out the outcomes of cocoa related projects as a means of assessing the collective as well as individual contributions such innovative interventions make to the achievement of significant and lasting changes (outcomes) among key stakeholders and boundary partners. Outcome Mapping is a new and evolving methodology. It is a tool that can be used to assess the contributions that development initiatives make to the achievement of significant and lasting changes (outcomes) in its boundary partners.<sup>4</sup> Random Outcome Mapping (ROM) as a locally adaptive approach therefore lends itself particularly well to forests interventions such under the Cocoa and Forest Initiative (CFI), Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA), Accountability

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<sup>4</sup> Outcome Mapping: Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs. Ottawa, Canada: International Development Research Centre. (*Boundary partners include those individuals, groups or organizations with whom the initiative interacts directly and with whom the initiative can anticipate some opportunities for influence. Outcomes are defined as changes in behaviour, relationships, activities and/or actions that the initiative was instrumental in bringing about. See Earl, S., Carden, F. and Smutylo, T., 2001.*)

Framework Initiative (AFi), etc. By focusing on the change in behaviour and accomplishments of boundary partners, ROM is able to measure the results that forests interventions have achieved within its sphere of influence and provide feedback about its efforts so as to improve future performance. ROM could be essential to CSOs, private sector actors and government departments in areas where it is important to reduce duplication of efforts and encourage joint optimization. As an adaptive tool, ROM relevance of ROM could be buoyed through inter/intra project or programme data sharing to eliminate the disconnection between decision makers, resource users and capacity development projects and also advance Integrated Landscape Management Processes. Ground observations indicate that poor data sharing or the complete lack of it has a tendency to dictate the success or failure of forest interventions over the long-term.

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