



# CHOCOTHON

ACCRA • GHANA



**I. SHARE KNOWLEDGE**  
January 18th - 20th



**II. CONNECT STAKEHOLDERS**  
January 21st - 22nd



**III. EMPOWER PRODUCER**  
January 23rd - 25th

**Venue:**  
**IMPACT HUB - Accra, Ghana**

This initiative is based on a partnership between the Google Food Lab (GLF) and the Future Food Institute (FFI), the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the Business School Lausanne (BSL).



The Sponsor Partners are Tony's Chocolonely, ISpace, LeanPath.



The Media Partners are Food Inspiration and Food Tech Connect.



The Corporate Knowledge Partners are Googlers Give, Nestlé and Barry Callebaut.



The Technical Partners are Impact Hub Accra and Crowdfunding.



See also:

[www.chocothon.com](http://www.chocothon.com)

[facebook.com/chocothon](https://facebook.com/chocothon)

[@chocothonghana](https://twitter.com/chocothonghana)

[#Chocothon](https://twitter.com/Chocothon)

# I. BACKGROUND

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## WHAT IS THE CHOCOTHON INITIATIVE?

The private sector is increasingly aware that sustainable production and community development need to be at the core of corporate sourcing strategy as well as day-to-day operations. Cocoa is one of the commodities that present a range of significant environmental and social sustainability challenges that could ultimately lead to disruption of global supply. However, not one company, and indeed, not one stakeholder linked to the cocoa value chain can solve these issues on their own.

The CHOCOTHON initiative in Ghana aims to empower and connect cocoa farmers and create new opportunities for them and other value chain stakeholders in cocoa production and to reduce the supply disruption risks.

Based on the imperative that 'true impact' is only achieved through consensus, compromise and cooperation, this initiative is based on a partnership between the Trade for Trade Centre (ITC), the Google Food Lab (GFL), Business School Lausanne (BSL), Future Food Institute and the

Crowdfundingplatform.

The knowledge partners are Googlers Give Global Leadership Program, Google Accra, Nestlé and Barry Callebaut.

And the Media partners: Food Inspiration and Food Tech Connect.

Sustainable Development (T4SD) project of the International

The ambition is to promote a shared value: sustainable cocoa supply chain platform, initially launching a "CHOCOTHON" initiative. The term "Chocothon" is derived from "Hackathon", which is an event in which IT programmers and others involved in software development, including graphic designers, interface designers and project managers, collaborate intensively on software innovation projects. Although one of its objectives is ultimately to envisage software solutions to reduce sustainability challenges, the innovative and collaborative Chocothon initiative has several other objectives:

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### SHARE knowledge



Organize crowdsourcing experiences, share technical expertise, and develop approaches to identifying and solving potential obstacles to achievement of the platform imperative: Shared value within sustainable cocoa supply chains.

Conferences, workshops and meetings will allow the exchange of ideas, identification of challenges as well as the coordination of development and implementation of solutions that will benefit the platform members.

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### CONNECT stakeholders



Bring actors together using cutting edge technology, by developing global public online tools and offline solutions such as applications that tackle obstacles to connect upstream to downstream actors in the cocoa supply chain.

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### EMPOWER producer



The voices of cocoa farmers need to be heard and their interests need to be taken into account. This is a key success factor for companies that wish to secure a network of technically knowledgeable and empowered farmers to supply them with sustainable cocoa. The platform will build trust among the cocoa supply chain by helping to identify suitable farmer profiles for sustainable cocoa production. It will also help farmers to tackle the problems they face by developing customized training and tools that contribute to solving the sustainability challenges they are experiencing.

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## CHOCOTHON's APPROACH

The members of the Chocothon platform have an approach that suggest delivering a combination of focused awareness-raising activities, targeted capacity building of multipliers (training of trainers) as well as capacity development activities to implement sustainable practices by beneficiaries for the Ghanaian cocoa sector, because of its dominance in cocoa production and the significant challenges it faces.

The Chocothon was carried out in two phases:

### Phase I: Strengthen stakeholder platform (including service provider organizations) linked to sustainable practices in the cocoa sector in Ghana

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The objective of this phase was twofold: 1) Raising awareness about the challenges faced among the cocoa supply chain in terms of implementing sustainable practices by communicating to the stakeholders (including service providing organizations) such as buyers, affiliated/identified producer organizations, national institutions and software developers, farming practices and technology available/challenges to make more efficient the implementation of those practices; and 2) Organizing training and support of multipliers to strength the farmers' cooperatives to understand and implement sustainable practices.

Two missions are envisioned as part of phase 1. The first mission was already done from the 18th to 25th of January 2017. The second mission is planned for June/September 2017 aiming to follow up on activities organized during the first mission.

### Phase II: Upstream capacity development related to the implementation of sustainable practices for Ghanaian primary cocoa producers

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Upstream capacity development related to the implementation of sustainable practices for Ghanaian primary cocoa producers. This phase will be offered under circumstances where a cooperating local institution identified in phase 1 will display enough absorptive and logistical capacity to administer the technical assistance to the lower tiers of the supply chain and there is the budget availability to implement the work plan agreed among stakeholders.



## II. FIRST MISSION – ACCRA and KUMASI, GHANA

### CHOCOTHON CROWDFUNDING CAMPAIGN

The idea was to crowdfund as much of the programme as possible and create a group of different stakeholders on a pre-competitive level. The Chocothon team designed a reward-based campaign that was suitable for engaging with both organizations as well as individuals.

The Chocothon fundraising campaign was led by the Crowfunding platform and was able to raise a little more than £10,000 to bring it to life. Supporters included individuals that are concern about the future of chocolate and companies such as Tony Chocolonely and LeanPath. Additionally, the Trade for Sustainable Development (T4SD) from ITC financially supported the development of the events/trainings held in Accra and Kumasi.

The Chocothon team reached out to industry influencers, cocoa producers and distributors, small and big chocolate companies and trade associations to organize events to raise awareness about the campaign and creating any possible human connection to get any single individual involved with it. All those efforts allowed the development of a multi-stakeholder platform where different individual/company/organization (s) really felt they were part of the initiative and have contributed either financially or non-financially to make the chocoton happen.



### CHOCOTHON ACCRA -KUMASI

The first event took place on the 18th to the 22nd of January 2017 at the Impact Hub in Accra, Ghana, combining a methodology of “sharing knowledge” among the cocoa community (private, public sector and cocoa farmers) though a three day conference (18th-20th) and “connecting stakeholders” by organising a two-day hackathon (21st-22nd) in which IT programmers and other parties involved in software development, including graphic designers, interface designers and project managers collaborated intensively on software innovation projects.



An additional event took place in Kumasi, from the 23rd to the 25th of January, aimed at training cocoa producer’s, representatives or producers’ coaches in the use of market analysis and sustainability related tools. The objective was to provide better technical assistance on sustainable production practices to producers.

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## SHARE knowledge

5 people attended a three-day event that was aimed at raising awareness and sharing knowledge about three main topics: the current situation in international trade, farming practices in the Ghanaian cocoa sector and the related International Trade Centre (ITC) tools and tech solutions.

A list of key challenges/key messages has been developed among the conclusions of the three-day conference, shared through the summaries of the conference.

### Outcomes:

Buyers, affiliated/identified producer organizations, national institutions and software developers became aware of the challenges faced by all the actors among the cocoa supply chain in terms of implementing sustainable practices.

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## Challenges in the cocoa supply chain

Many challenges faced by all the actors among the cocoa supply chain were mentioned at the conference:

- Inadequate compensation for quality cocoa, low productivity and inadequate farmer income
- Inadequate access to credit, rural development services, diversification.
- Inadequate extension support
- Aging farmers and lack of interest by the youth
- Unfavorable land tenure system
- Lack of conservation and wise use of biodiversity
- Deforestation and forest degradation through non-shade cocoa
- Limited ownership of certification by farmers
- Demand for certified cocoa from Ghana currently limited, premium low
- Farmer groups do not operate together to influence government or private sector
- No national database of all farmers; no clear/few on needs of different types of farmers
- Lack of coordination and collaboration between stakeholders (platform)

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## Some recommendations:

- Cocoa farmers are SMALL holders, with small plots, limited access to smartphones, transport.
- Cocobod is key player, which cannot be ignored
- The cost of implementing the technology must be reasonable for both the tech-entrepreneur and consumer
- A participatory approach must be used in creating and promoting the use of tech solutions (hence the need for a program like the Chocothon)
- Modularity and customization is highly desired
- Factors change overtime therefore iteration of solutions is inevitable



## II. FIRST MISSION – ACCRA and KUMASI, GHANA

### CONNECT stakeholder - HACKATHON

A two-day hackathon gathered 31 people, among them there were developers, economists, cocoa producers and experts in the sector to collaborate intensively on software/APP innovation projects.

The goal of the Chocothon (or hackathon) that took place at Impact Hub Accra, was to identify low-tech solutions to tackle sustainability challenges.

#### Outcomes:

Software developers collected enough information to develop an APP which contributed to solving one of the challenges identified in the conference to be tested in the fields by buyers and farmers between the 1st and 2nd phase of the Chocothon.



Three teams including web developers, social entrepreneurs and agriculturalists participated at the hackathon. They were: Cocoa Sika, Vocoa and Chocobites.

Cocoa Sika was named the winner of the Ghana Chocothon for its innovative solution to address problems in the cocoa supply chain. They won one year of co-working space from Impact Hub Accra, focused its winning entry on production improvement for cocoa farmers. Under the slogan 'Sika pa!' (meaning 'good money'), the team's entry set out how to make it easier for Ghanaian cocoa farmers to access credit. The Cocoa Sika prototype –

A mobile phone and web application – aims to give farmers access to low interest loans and system awarding loyalty bonuses to the farmers. It also suggest to include access to a health insurance scheme.

Nearly as good as the winning bid was the entries by the two runners-up. For its proposal of a mobile phone and web app that gives farmers access to free business, financial tools and a data warehouse, Vocoa won six months' worth of co-working space from Ispace.

Meanwhile, for its proposal for a one-stop shop and pictorial diagnostic tool for farmers to solve problems, Chocobites won US\$ 450.

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## EMPOWER producers - training of trainers & replication of training

In Kumasi, ITC trainers delivered three-day training for 27 cocoa producers, representatives/ producers' coaches in the use of ITC market analysis and sustainability related tools.

On the third day, the attendees got delivered training on the same subject as 60 cocoa producers, members of the Kuapa Kokoo Cooperative Union, who hosted the activity at the town of Kona, in the Agona-Ashanti region.



### Outcomes:

In total, 27 technicians from local organization were trained by ITC experts in the use of ITC market analysis and sustainability related tools, through a process of training of trainers (ToT). Those trained beneficiaries were accredited by ITC as “Trainers on the ITC market analysis and sustainability tools”, so they will be able to replicate training activities and to provide technical assistance to cooperatives of producers.



## II. FIRST MISSION – ACCRA and KUMASI, GHANA

### LESSONS LEARNT



### 1. Crowdfunding

- Sometimes it's very difficult to make corporate executives see things from a different perspective and try different approaches (such as Chocothon) without knowing precisely what are going to be the outcomes. They primarily based their decision on ROI.
- Some of the CEO's of smaller organizations are just not keen to take part of initiatives where also big corporates are involved. They don't want their company to be associated with them and even if an initiative can do well for the industry they expect corporations to do their share to fund these initiatives.
- You can't convince people to try new approaches if they are risk-averse. After more than 6 months worth of chats with different corporations and smaller organizations, we were not able to secure any financial sponsorships—it took one conference call and two email exchanges to get almost 50% of the funding we needed from a small chocolate producer (Tony Chocolonely). People and company culture are the key drivers for taking such decisions.
- Creating a pre-competitive environment is pivotal to develop new ideas and solutions to address issues at grass-roots level.

### 2. Hackathon

When it comes to hack, go to the user. Although it is not an easy task, it is advisable to work where the change sparks and at the place where the solutions are needed.

### 3. Implementation of the solutions

- It is important to partner with local institutions that already have a network of farmer cooperatives that would like to test the applications in coordination with their extension officers/lead farmers.
- It is important to partner with universities such as Kumasi, Asheshi and Lancaster University to assure young people participate actively in the events.

### III. NEXT STEPS

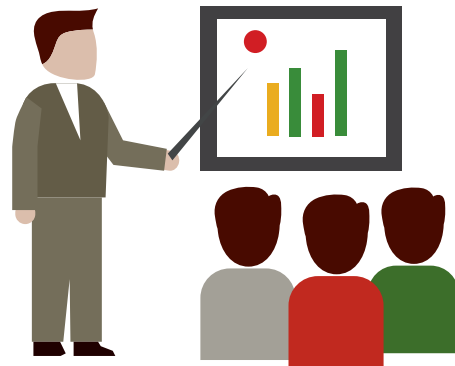
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#### THE OBJECTIVES OF THE SECOND MISSION

The organization offers more training activities that strengthen the cocoa cooperatives, lead farmers and extension officers to understand and implement sustainable practices;

The organization offers more hackathons that strengthen the actors among the cocoa supply chain to understand and implement sustainable practices;

Field-testing with lead-farmers and local producers' associations of the solutions of the hackathon's winning teams (Activity of Mission I).



More information on the CHOCOTHON project can be found here: [www.chocothon.com](http://www.chocothon.com). If your institution/ company would like to partner with the Chocothon team to participate as a speaker/supporter or participate in the second mission of the first phase or second phase, please contact us at [cabrera@intracen.org](mailto:cabrera@intracen.org)

## **Chocothon News - First Mission**

<http://www.thefoodrush.com/news/are-we-running-out-of-chocolate/>

<https://www.threelilchefs.com/single-post/2016/11/29/chocothon>

<https://gharage.com/2017/01/20/chocothon-project-hackathon-cocoa-ghana/>

<http://www.workspace.co.uk/community/homework/business-finance/how-niche-crowdfunding-platforms-are-revolutionisi>

[https://innovazione.diariodelweb.it/innovazione/articolo/?nid=20170120\\_402112](https://innovazione.diariodelweb.it/innovazione/articolo/?nid=20170120_402112)

<http://africaain.org/2017-chocothon-highlights-outstanding-gaps-solutions-for-cocoa-value-chain/>

<https://foodtank.com/news/2017/01/chocothon-initiative-seeks-save-cocoa-production-ghana/>

<https://foodtank.com/news/2017/01/chocothon-initiative-seeks-save-cocoa-production-ghana/the-process-of-making-chocolate/>

