



Tony's Choclonely: Promoting cocoa agroforestry in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire

Tony's Choclonely

Tony's Choclonely is a Dutch chocolate producer, working to achieve the sourcing and production of chocolate that does not involve human exploitation or child labour. The company was started in 2005, after Dutch journalist Teun van de Keuken conducted an investigation into child labour in the cocoa sector and decided to launch his own chocolate brand.

Tony's sources cocoa from cooperatives in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire (Figure 1), based on five sourcing principles: traceable cocoa beans, a higher price, strong farmers, long-term commitments, and improved quality and productivity. Part of the revenue is put into the Choclonely Foundation, which funds projects in cocoa-growing communities as well as Tony's research and lobbying activities, which aim to improve the cocoa sector as a whole.

Tony's promotes agroforestry among all the farmers in its supply chain, as part of its "improved quality and productivity" principle. It works to achieve these improvements together with the farmers in the supply chain; the aim is to source 100% of its cocoa from an agroforestry setting. For the 2023–24 cocoa-planting season, the company expects to plant more than 150,000 shade trees as part of this effort.

What is agroforestry and why is it important?

To increase sustainability of farming practices, and diversify income for farmers, Tony's promotes the adoption of agroforestry practices. The aim is to plant 18 shade trees per hectare, of at least 6 different species per plantation, and to achieve approximately 30% shade cover. Tony's deliberately decides to set the number of trees at this level instead of aiming for a more complex and diverse agroforestry system, since the main aim is to sustainably increase the cocoa yields to bring farmers closer to a living income and reduce the likelihood of child labour. Tony's is mindful that agroforestry should not lead to increased demand for labour beyond the capacity of the farmers and cooperatives, since this could result in more children having to work on the farms.

In addition to and part of its agroforestry practices, Tony's also promotes on-farm composting to improve soil quality.

This company case report is an annex to the report "Promoting cocoa agroforestry in West Africa: Experiences from the private sector and opportunities for collaborative action" by Tropenbos International, Tropenbos Ghana and Nitidae.

The opinions and views expressed in this publication are based on the company's input and do not necessarily reflect the views of Tropenbos International, Tropenbos Ghana or Nitidae.



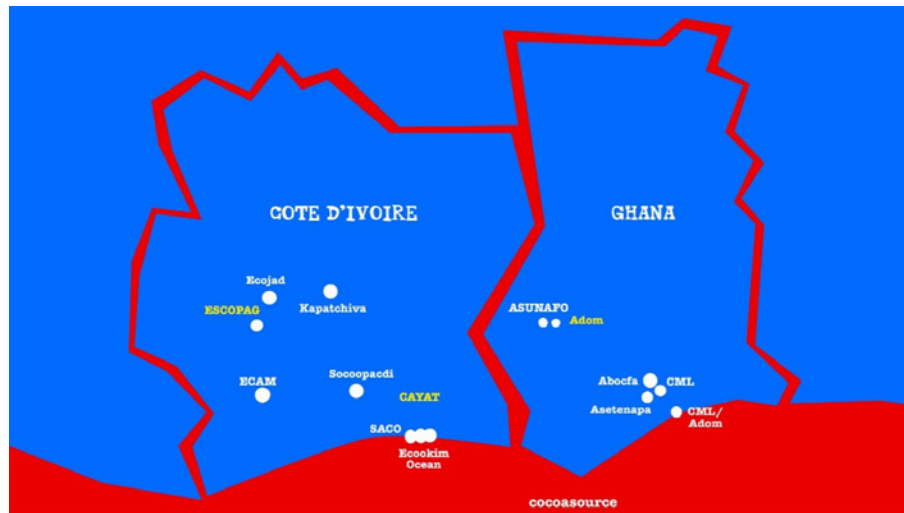


Figure 1. Location of Tony's partner cooperatives

Tony's strategy for promoting agroforestry

Tony's collaborates with local agencies who specialize in agroforestry, and who work together with the cooperatives to raise awareness, train coaches and provide support in setting up the necessary infrastructure. Tony's recently developed an animated movie with a clear and simple explanation of cocoa agroforestry that is used for farmer sensitization and can be shared via social media.

The promotion of agroforestry starts with sensitization for cooperative members, followed by an inventory of the number of farmers who are interested and which species they would like to plant. This information is used to work together with the cooperatives to set up nurseries, which are often led by women.


Farmers then receive training and individual coaching on how to establish and manage an agroforestry system. Farmers are supported by labour brigades. These are groups of young men who work for the cooperatives and support the cooperative members in labour-intensive farming activities, such as pruning and spraying. They also help with other activities related to agroforestry, such as transporting and planting shade trees and setting up composting sites.

Key lessons

Full traceability allows for a commitment to agroforestry throughout the supply chain: Through its Open Chain approach, Tony's has insight into all the aspects of its supply chain and has established long-term commitments with partner cooperatives. This allows the company to commit to sourcing all its cocoa from an agroforestry setting, instead of working on projects with only a selection of farmers.

Paying higher prices to farmers and cooperatives allows for investments in agroforestry: The agroforestry services offered by the cooperatives (e.g., the nurseries and the brigades) are paid for through the cooperative fee and farmer premiums that are paid by Tony's. The rationale is that the price paid by Tony's should be high enough to allow farmers to invest in farm management and to allow cooperatives to have sustainable service delivery models to their members. This way the costs of agroforestry become integrated into the business model of both the farmer and the coop, rather than having to be covered by projects. However, project funding is still needed for the costs of the initial activities, such as training the coaches and establishing the nurseries. In addition, Tony's supports the cooperatives in connecting them to organizations that can provide technical support.

Farmers and cooperatives are committed to agroforestry: Based on the awareness raising carried out by Tony's and many others in the sector, farmers have expressed a clear interest in adopting agroforestry, and cooperatives are committed to supporting this. However, it is important to acknowledge that agroforestry requires investments, and the price that farmers receive for cocoa



needs to be high enough to cover these investments. Only then can cooperatives take ownership of agroforestry commitments and develop their own strategies to support members in the adoption and management of agroforestry systems.

Composting and agroforestry are complementary measures: Since one of the aims of agroforestry is to improve soil conditions, Tony's works on effective composting at the farm level as a complementary measure to help achieve this objective. Moreover, the biomass that comes from the additional trees on agroforestry plots can further improve the quality and quantity of the compost.

Start with the people who are motivated: Tony's approach to agroforestry promotion starts with sensitization, and then supports the farmers who are interested in and committed to shifting to agroforestry. Naturally, there are some farmers who are not initially interested, but since Tony's is committed to sourcing all its cocoa from agroforestry farms, new ways need to be found to motivate these farmers as well.

Monitoring is important: To understand if further actions or support to farmers are needed, it is important to have information about the trees that were planted and their survival rates. This also allows for follow-up in areas where seedling survival rates are low, and to understand what conditions, climate-related or otherwise, may be causing low survival rates and if additional support or alternative planting approaches are needed.

Next steps

Better documentation and monitoring: Tony's and its partner cooperatives use the cloud-based platform FarmForce to track farmer data and interactions with farmers. They are integrating agroforestry modules into this application, which will allow for the registration and monitoring of trees. Tony's is also considering whether this information could eventually be used to calculate carbon stocks, for insetting of the company's emissions.

New cooperatives: Tony's will work with their new partner cooperatives to start up their agroforestry activities, including establishing a nursery and training of coaches and labour brigades.

Accessible agroforestry information: Tony's will continue to prepare materials that can be shared by cooperatives with their members to provide farmers with more accessible information on agroforestry.

Dynamic agroforestry: In 2023, Tony's will start a dynamic agroforestry project in Ghana, together with Asunafo cooperative and Fairtrade. They are also exploring a dynamic agroforestry project in Nawa region in Côte d'Ivoire, to establish highly diverse agroforestry for restoration of degraded and unproductive land.