



World Cocoa
Foundation



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NEW COCOALINK MOBILE TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM TO IMPROVE LIVELIHOODS OF 100,000 COCOA FARMERS IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE

- ***IVORIAN GOVERNMENT AND WORLD COCOA FOUNDATION COLLABORATE TO MODERNIZE COCOA GROWING IN WORLD'S #1 EXPORT MARKET***
- ***COCOALINK PROVIDES KNOWLEDGE AND PRODUCTIVITY TOOLS TO INCREASE COCOA FARMER YIELDS AND INCOMES***

ABIDJAN, May 29, 2013 – The Conseil Café-Cacao (CCC) of Côte d'Ivoire today announced a new mobile phone program called CocoaLink that will create a free information exchange for all Ivorian farmers with mobile phones. The CCC expects 30,000 Ivorians to enroll initially and 100,000 to be in the network by 2016.

About 70 percent of the country's 800,000 cocoa farmers already use mobile phones, with service across all the country's cocoa regions. CocoaLink will provide free weekly SMS and voice messages to farmers based on the cocoa-growing calendar in Côte d'Ivoire, which is the world's leading producer of cocoa.

CocoaLink connects farmers with instant access to agricultural experts who can address questions in real time about disease and pest control or best applications fertilizer. This represents an important step in farmer outreach because many cocoa communities are in isolated regions where agriculture extension services may be limited.

"As an innovative technology platform, CocoaLink shows how companies are working collaboratively and creatively with West African governments to modernize cocoa farming and meet growing global demand for cocoa-based products," said Bill Guyton, president of the World Cocoa Foundation. "We know that applying modern techniques improves cocoa crop yields by more than 30 percent and CocoaLink will accelerate farmer learning and good practices."

Modernizing Cocoa Farming

CocoaLink will use voice and SMS text messages delivered in two local languages and French to farmers. The information exchange will support farming outreach services and help connect farmers to extension agents for personalized information.

Cocoa farmers can also use CocoaLink as an early warning system to identify and respond rapidly to invading pests or diseases. CocoaLink messages are developed by CCC and other cocoa experts based on information requests from farmers.

CocoaLink will complement government initiatives to modernize cocoa farming by creating awareness of the best ways to plant, prune or fertilize cocoa trees. CocoaLink supports safe farming practices based on Côte d'Ivoire national child labor laws as well as health and education information to help cocoa communities develop. The CocoaLink information

exchange will also focus on women and women farmers through farm, financing and social messaging well-being of cocoa households.

Companies Working Together

CocoaLink was formed through a unique public/private partnership that includes the World Cocoa Foundation and Orange, which is providing technical and mobile support for farmers in Côte d'Ivoire. Orange is a world-leading mobile telecoms operator and is the leading mobile operator with the strongest market share and network coverage in Côte d'Ivoire. Orange also has a strong understanding of agricultural services over mobile, in part through its strong presence in remote rural areas with its community phone technology.

CocoaLink company supporters include ADM, Barry Callebaut, Cargill, Nestlé, Olam, Transmar and The Hershey Company, which has provided initial funding for CocoaLink. Other CocoaLink supporters include ANADER (Agence Nationale d'Appui au Développement Rural), World Education, and the Grameen Foundation.

"We are confident that CocoaLink will be a powerful channel for connecting CCC and cocoa farmers to accelerate our sector's transformation," said Massandjé Touré-Litse, Director General of CCC. "Farmers will benefit from convenient information focused on improving their farm practices, increasing cocoa yield and generating greater income. CocoaLink will also provide valuable teaching for parents about protecting their children on family farms."

CocoaLink is a voluntary, opt-in network with farmer privacy protected. Farmer registration and training in CocoaLink will be accelerated through thousands of cocoa farmer organizations in Côte d'Ivoire.

In addition to farming and social messages, CocoaLink will also provide malaria prevention, and business and financial training. Since being introduced in Ghana two years ago, CocoaLink has provided more than 300,000 farmer SMS messages, enrolling 18,000 farmers – 35 percent of whom are women – in 550 rural communities.

Bringing High Technology to Agriculture

By 2016, it is estimated that 50 percent of Côte d'Ivoire cocoa farmers will be using smart phones capable of sending and receiving photos and videos. These will serve as teaching tools while also alerting CCC to unusual weather or crop conditions in real time based on farmer input from across the cocoa regions. In addition, CocoaLink will be an important communications channel to share new information about weather, mobile purchasing and farmer financing.

CocoaLink will begin national operations in September with a SMS short code available to all farmers who have access to a mobile phone.

"Grameen Foundation has demonstrated that smartphone technology can assist smallholder farmers in realizing sweeping advances in rural agriculture and improved livelihoods in their communities," said John Tull, Director of Mobile Agriculture Innovation, Grameen Foundation. "That's why we are pleased to join this unique partnership focused on creating and measuring the adoption of improved practices in the cocoa region of Cote d'Ivoire."

About WCF

The World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) is an international membership foundation of more than 100 companies that promotes a sustainable cocoa economy by providing cocoa farmers with the tools they need to grow more and better cocoa, market it successfully, and make greater profits. WCF's membership includes cocoa and chocolate manufacturers, processors, supply chain managers, and other companies worldwide, representing more than 80% of the global cocoa market. For more information, visit www.worldcocoa.org.

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