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World Cocoa Foundation Receives Feed the Future Funding to Support Cellphone Technology Program in West Africa

WASHINGTON, D.C., May 22, 2013 – The World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) has received a grant from Feed the Future Partnering for Innovation, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development. Through the grant, WCF will pilot CocoaLink+ (“CocoaLink Plus”), an innovative information exchange platform in Côte d’Ivoire that utilizes cellphones to provide farmers with information essential for improved cocoa productivity. Côte d’Ivoire is the world’s leading producer of cocoa.

WCF President Bill Guyton said, “We are proud to be a part of this new program and to use its funding to pilot CocoaLink+ services in Côte d’Ivoire. The U.S. government’s support for innovations such as this will help ensure that cocoa farmers take full advantage of technologies, such as mobile phones, that are increasingly a part of their everyday lives, even in the most rural places in West Africa.” He added, “This project will build on successful efforts to strengthen cocoa farmer access to technology that have been tried in neighboring Ghana.”

Funding provided through the award will support efforts to implement low-cost mobile technology and innovative applications to deliver practical agricultural and social information to rural cocoa farms in Côte d’Ivoire. The system will increase farmer use of technology, increase cocoa farmer adoption of good agricultural practices, and improve the quality and quantity of farmer cocoa yields to improve incomes. Two-way mobile phone based communications coupled with specialized services bring needed information to and from farmers about ways to improve crop yields, better care for cocoa trees, and improve the health and the wellbeing of cocoa farming families.

CocoaLink was first launched in Ghana with funding from the Hershey Company in 2011 and has a scheduled completion date of June 2016, when the governments of Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire will assume management of the program in their own countries. Currently it enjoys financial input from WCF members Barry Callebaut, Cargill, Nestlé, Olam Trading, and Transmar and is used by WCF affiliated organizations International Cocoa Initiative, the International Labor Organization, Mondelez’s CocoaLife, and Source Trust. The partnership includes Côte d’Ivoire’s Conseil du Café-Cacao, Grameen Foundation, Orange Telecommunications Company and World Education. A formal announcement of the program in Côte d’Ivoire is slated for May 28.

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.

About Feed the Future Partnering for Innovation

Feed the Future Partnering for Innovation advances technology-centered partnerships for investment and commercial distribution of agricultural technologies across the developing world. Funded by the United States Agency for International Development as part of the US government’s Feed the Future

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initiative and implemented by Fintrac Inc., the program's goal is to put innovative agriculture technologies into the hands of smallholder farmers to quickly and sustainably improve productivity and incomes.

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