Guidelines on
Best Known Practices
in the Cocoa Value Chain

Dr. Jean-Marc Anga
Director, Economics and Statistics Division

ICCO
London, UK
Applying Best Known Practices in the cocoa value chain

- High physical quality cocoa beans, including traceability;

- Meet international food safety requirements;

- Produced and used in accordance with economic, social and environmental requirements, i.e. sustainable cocoa.
1. Establishment of the cocoa farm

- Agro-climatically suitable regions;
- Where required, land tenure issues must be resolved;
- Avoid new farms on forest land;
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- Adopt appropriate procedures for cocoa farms in high conservation value forests areas;
- Provide adequate shade trees;
- Encourage cocoa agro-forestry;
- Adopt proper land tillage.
2. Cocoa Farm maintenance and crop husbandry

- Improve and maintain soil organic matter through manure application.
- Adopt cultivation techniques to minimize soil erosion.
- Encourage efficient use of farm resources.
- Optimize labour use.
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• Apply management practices that minimize nutrient loss.

• Where relevant, use efficient irrigation technologies and water management to minimize wastage.

• Adopt appropriate weed control measures.

• Use appropriate pruning and shade methods.
3. Cocoa crop protection

- Implement recommended strategies, including Integrated Pest Management (IPM) to control pests and diseases;

- Where required, apply recommended pesticides safely, at appropriate dosage, period and time using the appropriate equipment.
4. Cocoa Harvest, Post harvest, on-farm processing and storage

- Harvest pods as soon as they are ripe;

- Use a sharp cocoa hook on a stick or “secateurs” for pods within reach;

- During pod-breaking, avoid damage and contamination to the beans.

- Extract beans straight away.
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Fermentation and drying

• Ferment beans either in heaps in banana/plantain leaves or in approved fermenting boxes, turning once a day.

• After fermentation, the beans must be spread on a recommended surface to dry preferably under direct natural sunlight.

• Excessive drying will result in brittle beans and must be avoided.
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- Incorrect artificial drying with poorly maintained driers will cause smoke contamination.

- On drying bed, beans must be turned several times a day so that beans are evenly dried.

- When completely dry, the beans must be sorted to remove the flat, shrivelled, black, mouldy, small or double beans as well as beans with insect damage.
Packaging and storing

• Pack in clean bags which are sufficiently strong, properly sewn or sealed.

• Bags should be made of non-toxic materials, preferably food grade hydrocarbon free bags.

• Store bags in weatherproof sheds, well aired, free from damp and insect pests and away from smoke and other smells.

• Keep bags above ground level away from walls.

• Deal with any infestation with proper fumigation.

Quality control

• Check the quality of the beans before the cocoa is sold.

• Beans must fulfil criteria agreed in contract.
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Transportation and shipping practices

• Cocoa beans should be well prepared, free from infestation and off-flavours, loaded in food grade bags or adequately prepared for bulk shipping.

• In the ship, cocoa beans should be stored, segregated from other cargoes.

• Containers for shipping cocoa should be clean, free from residue of previous cargo and well ventilated.
Cocoa food safety issues

- Cocoa beans should be traceable along the supply chain.

- All stakeholders must be aware of prevailing rules and regulations governing food safety and hygiene issues.

- International Standard ISO 22000 on Food Safety Management Systems provides information, plans, principles and recommendations to work towards greater food safety in the cocoa supply chain.
5. Human welfare, health and safety of cocoa producers

- Adopt practices to achieve optimal balance between economic, social and environmental goals respecting rights enshrined in international conventions and national laws.

- All relevant stakeholders must ensure that cocoa production provide adequate income and food security to producers.

- All stakeholders must adhere to safe working procedures.

- Reasonable wages must be paid to all hired labour.

- No forced, bonded, trafficked or otherwise involuntary labour should be used.
6. Farm record keeping

Comprehensive record keeping system in which all essential elements of cocoa production are captured.
Conclusions

Next Steps:

ICCO Consultative Board meeting in June 2009 in Moscow for further discussions and recommendations to ICCO Council

ICCO Council for adoption.

Release of final document on ICCO website (www.icco.org) for public use.

Countries can adapt the Guidelines to suit local specifications and requirements.
The End

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