Report of the Webinar on Food Safety in the cocoa sector:
Current and upcoming regulations in the EU and impacts on the cocoa supply chain

Executive Summary

Key discussions points

➢ The European Commission (DG SANTE) representatives outlined the changes in EU Food Safety policies in the context of a new EU policy framework, i.e. the Farm to Fork strategy and the Green Deal.

➢ Producing countries indicated that they wished to be more closely involved in the EU consultation process in relation to the upcoming and more stringent EU regulations on food and agricultural products:

   o reduction in Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs) of Ochratoxin A (OTA) and pesticides;

   o revision of the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive (SUD); and

   o proposal for a legislative Framework for Sustainable Food Systems (FSFS)

➢ The industry outlined the presence of analytical issues (methodologies, results, detection limits, determination of mineral oil hydrocarbons residues) and the lack of mitigation strategies (e.g., the case of Acrylamide (AA)). The need for more time (grace period) for the industry to adapt to new regulations was emphasised.

➢ Researchers presented crop protection and genomic advances in cocoa and highlighted the challenges faced with regard to the availability, effectiveness, and costs of the proposed bio-pesticides as substitutes to chemical pesticides.

Recommendations

➢ Improve awareness raising on the state of play of EU food and agriculture regulations.

➢ Enhance consultations with cocoa stakeholders to discuss potential mitigation measures.

➢ Provide producers with viable alternatives to chemical pesticides.