



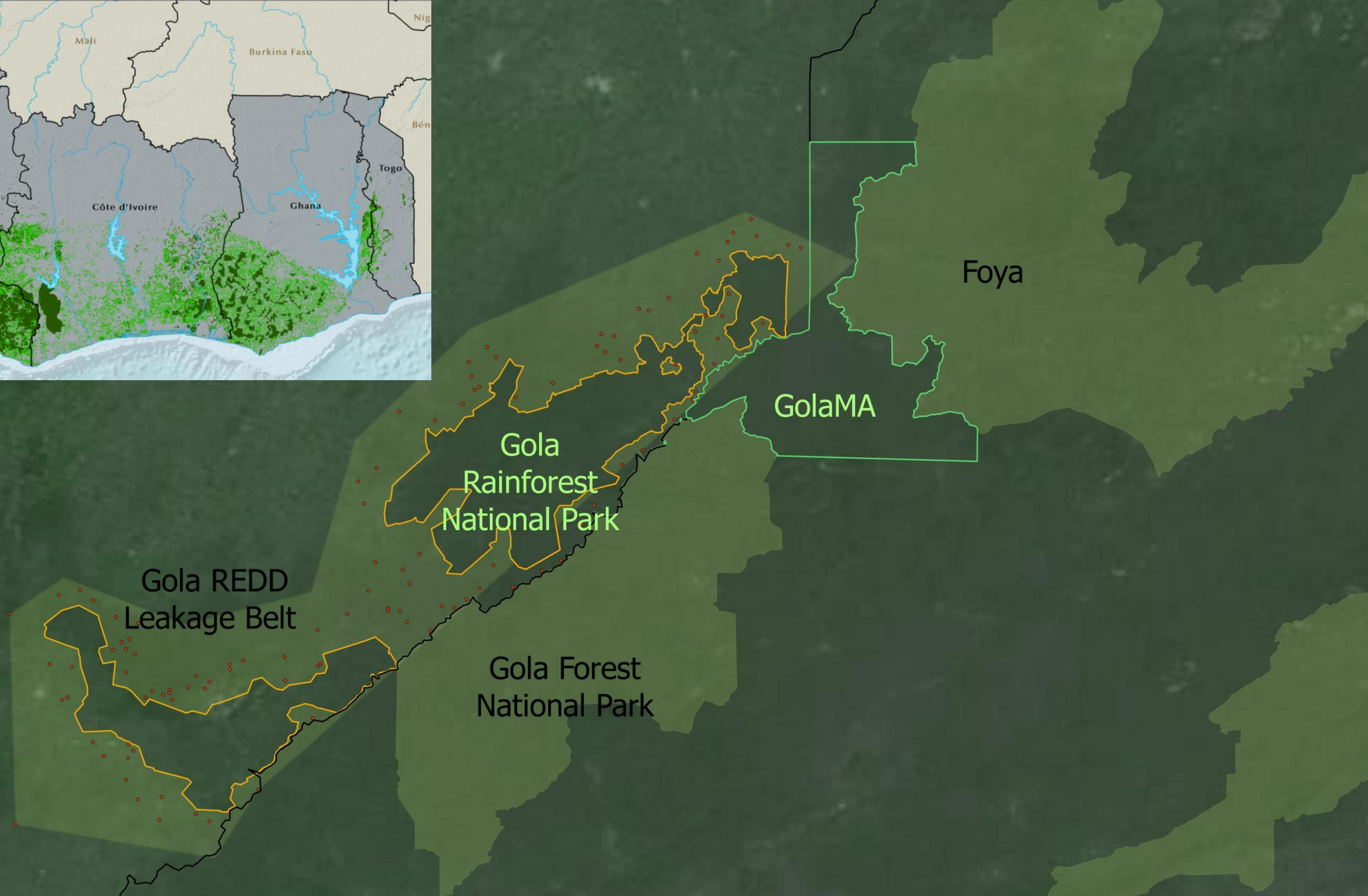
Sustainable Cocoa in the Gola Landscape of Sierra Leone

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Greater Gola Landscape –Why is it special?

- Part of the Upper Guinean Forest of West Africa –biodiversity hotspot
- Over 350,000 hectares of forest
- Home to Western chimpanzee (CR), pygmy hippo (EN), African forest elephant and white-necked picathartes(VU)
- BirdLife partners –**RSPB, Conservation Society of Sierra Leone, Gola Rainforest Conservation** and the local communities

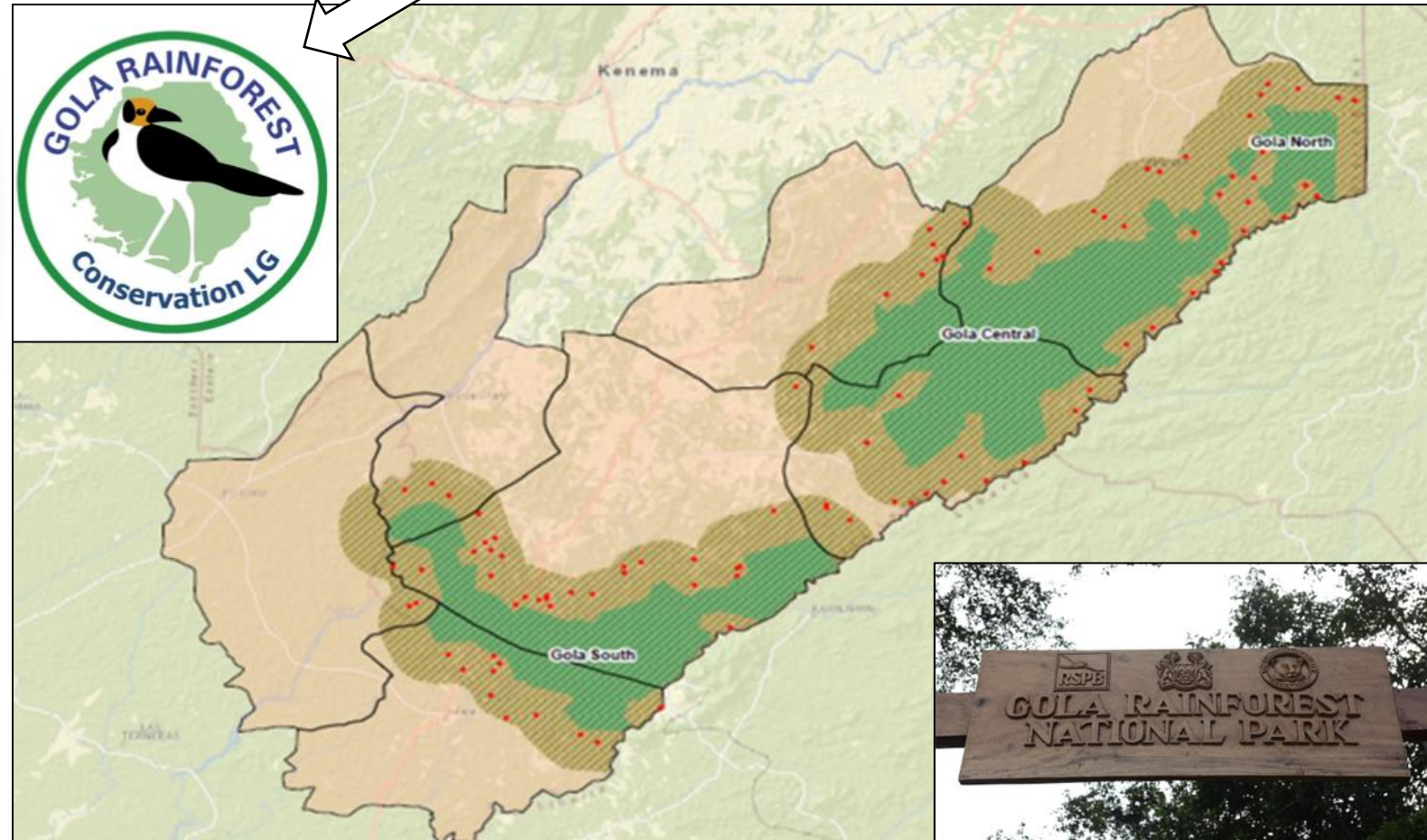



Gola Rainforest National Park

- GRNP (~70,000 ha forest) reduces global emissions annually
- Support to 122 Forest-Edge communities
- Activities include community managed loan schemes, educational opportunities for children and agriculture support to farmers – **cocoa**...
- **4km buffer zone** – the focus of our work



Forest-edge
communities

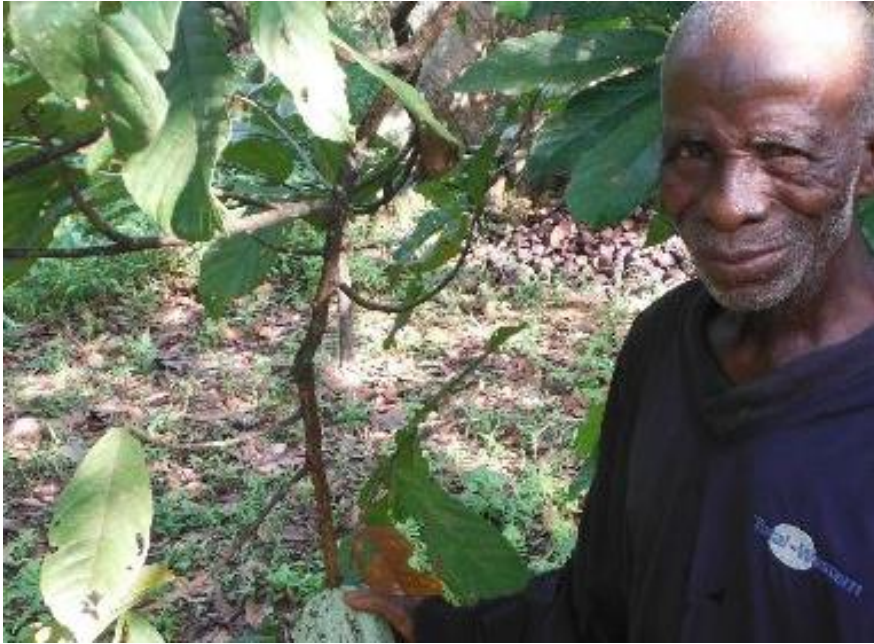


An aerial photograph of a dense tropical forest covering a hillside. The trees are tall and thin, with a thick canopy of green leaves. The forest extends to the top of the hill, where it meets a bright, hazy sky. The overall scene is lush and vibrant, showcasing a healthy ecosystem.

- **Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation of forests (REDD+)**

2. Research & Monitoring to inform management practices





3. Sustainable Livelihood and Enterprise –
Local people become environmental
stewards of the natural resource base that
underpins their livelihoods

The Gola Cocoa Programme



- Involved across the entire value chain – tree/ bean to bar
- Strengthen capacity of local farmers and communities on sustainable agricultural practices
- Establishing nurseries, rehabilitating farms, providing training & equipment
- Improving fermenting, drying, sorting, fumigating
- Implementing certification schemes
- Supporting access to international markets – exporting

Why cocoa?

- Cocoa was a major export of Sierra Leone in the 80s
- Much infrastructure already in place (post-Civil war), although knowledge and skills lacking
- Cocoa is shade tolerant and good for agroforestry
- Forest-edge communities keen to work with cocoa, parents' grandparents were cocoa farmers
- There is **global demand** for more cocoa



Gola Forest-Friendly Cocoa

...an innovative approach enabled by Carbon Finance



Gola Forest-Friendly Cocoa

- The Triple Win:
 - Provide benefits to farmers and improve livelihoods
 - Forest-Like habitat for wildlife, to support biodiversity
 - Build consumer confidence in a sustainable product
- FFPs in 3 parts: 1) Forest; 2) Biodiversity; 3) Incomes
- Version 1 of Principles and Criteria of Forest Friendly Gola Cocoa been produced





1. Forest Protection Principles

- 1. Forest Friendly Gola Cocoa does not cause deforestation in Gola Rainforest National Park (GRNP).*
- 2. Forest Friendly Gola Cocoa does not cause deforestation of primary forest or natural secondary forest in GRNP landscape.*
- 3. Forest Friendly Gola Cocoa does not cause forest degradation in or around GRNP.*

2. Biodiversity Principles

- 1. Forest Friendly Gola Cocoa is grown in an agroforest system*
- 2. Higher levels of local biodiversity within Cocoa agroforests, when compared to other land uses.*
- 3. Cocoa agroforests used as habitat and movement corridor for forest dependent species.*
- 4. Forest Friendly Gola Cocoa does not cause destruction or degradation of waterbodies*



3.

Increasing Income Principles

1. Farmers produce a high-quality cocoa product, with increased yields, maximizing income.

2. Agroforests provide opportunities for income diversification.

3. Farmers receive a bonus for growing a high-quality forest friendly product

4. Social safeguarding protects human rights of cocoa farmers.





What does this mean on the ground?

- 1. Sustainable Intensification of Agroforests following best practices for maximal yield – reducing the need to clear land for new planting*
- 2. Agroforest Composition: Shade cover in cocoa agroforests is actively increased*
- 3. Organic Methods: No chemical fertilizers used - fertilizer is produced using nutrient recycling from the farming system*
- 4. Wildlife Protection: Efficient system which compensates farmers for extensive losses from crop raiding*

What does this mean for Farmers?

1. Farmer Associations administer, monitor and manage Forest Friendly Gola Cocoa Agreements
2. Farmer Associations and Producer Organizations have good financial management and business skills.
3. Farmer Associations managed social safeguarding and whistle-blower system



Gola Cocoa - Facts

- ❑ Active since 2015, engaging more than **2,500** registered smallholder farmers
- ❑ Supported the founding of **Goolla-Ndiamo-Yie Cocoa Farmers Association** – A Farmer Association made up of 4 cooperatives, and still growing
- ❑ More than **150 MT cocoa beans** exported to Europe and America
- ❑ Improved livelihoods – increase yield, price, income and general practices
- ❑ Training on sustainable agroforestry, governance, business management and safeguarding ongoing



The JOA Project

**Cocoa's sweet spot:
Maximising livelihood,
biodiversity and carbon
benefits from cocoa
agroforestry in the Gola
landscape'**

Sep. 2022 – Aug. 2027



Context

JOA Cocoa's Sweet Spot project aims to develop models of cocoa agroforestry that will provide the farmers, their families, and the wider community with a bigger range of products and increased overall income from the current cocoa production farms in the Gola landscape.



Project Sub-Outcomes

The Cocoa Sweet Spot Project is designed to achieve these three sub-outcomes:

- Development and pilot-testing of the cocoa agroforestry models designed in consultation with GRNP Forest-Edge Communities (FECs).
- Capacity building of GRC and Farmer Associations in Malema and Gaura to upscale the successful models.
- Disseminating lessons learnt both regionally and nationally and effective management of the project according to schedule.





Agroforestry encourages the inter-planting of cocoa and other tree crops that provides range of products and income sources for farmers, their families, and the wider community



Strengthen and expand the adoption of forest-friendly sustainable production practices



Ensure forest-like canopy cover following Gola Cocoa Forest Friendly Principles



Provide opportunity for both cocoa and non-cocoa owners to participate in sustainable management practices for cocoa to diversify income and food security options



Upscale throughout the landscape

Why Agroforestry



Who is Involved

- 32 forest-edge communities in Malema (20) & Gaura (12) Chiefdoms
- 128 farmers (91 Male : 37 Female)
- 640 support farmer (vulnerable) group members (372 Male: 268 Female)
- Scale-up potential: 3,000 farmers (>18,000 people) post project

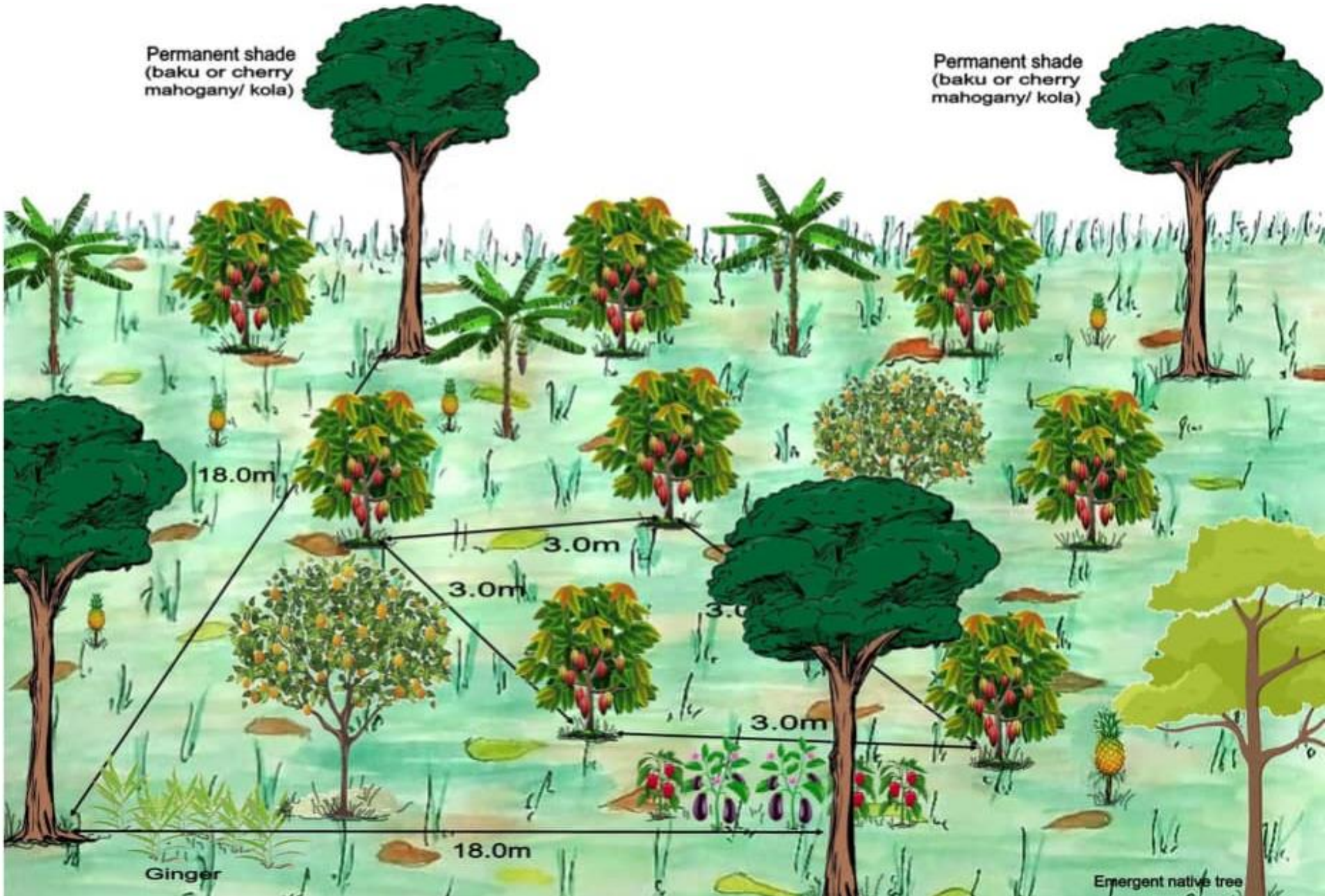


JOA Project Agroforestry Model 3

Model 3
Mature Farm
(Shade = 40%)

matured cocoa trees with pod,
Banana, Plantain,
orange
some medicinal trees
Avocado, vegetables
ginger, Pineapple,

Kakai gblagoina
ah wa, selei,
selei,
maanie, lumbei,
hewii, kpei.
piyei, hakpeisia
kijei, nehsie.
bajii, ngorfeli,
yawui



What Are We Doing?

- Capacity building leading to change in KAP on sustainable agriculture and agroforestry practices
- Provision of farm tools for efficient and effective farm management
- Farm input support – seed nurseries for cocoa and agroforest tree species
- Farm rehabilitation and rejuvenation
- Vegetable production support for income diversification and food security for support (vulnerable) group
- Data collection and analysis to understand the socio-economic issues
- Knowledge exchange and dissemination around the Gola and beyond





Agroforestry - Benefits

- All year-round income source – from cocoa, tree/fruit crops, wood
- Food security – diversified food, vegetable production
- Improved farm sanitation through frequent visits to manage and harvest different products
- Reduced pest and disease attack
- Improved soil fertility through re-integration of organic waste into the farm
- Improved eco-system and environmental conservation
- Reintroduction and conservation of essential medicinal trees previously neglected

Challenges

- Poor literacy level of people in the community making it difficult to adjust to change
- Poor access to water source to support irrigation during the dry season
- Crop damage by pests and livestock
- Poor road network for regular & effective engagement with project participants and monitoring
- High expectation by farmers on the project
- Absence of data: vulnerable people in the Gola.



Lessons Learned

- Community engagement and awareness campaigns fostered support and participation from communities in the project
- Use of participatory approach in project design and implementation enabling community ownership, trust and commitment
- Integration of vulnerable group members in the project enhancing access to land for own-food production and promote communal work culture
- Agroforestry practice increases farm sanitation through frequent visits to manage and harvest different products
- Better knowledge on cocoa farming & agroforestry, productivity, income, food security through vegetable production
- Medicinal trees previously neglected are being reintroduced



Our Work in the Past Years

- Market analysis
- Flavour and quality analysis
- New supply chain relationship
- Communication materials
- Business plan (2023 – 2028)
- Marketing strategy
- Certification (Fairtrade & organic)
- Piloted local chocolate production
- Governance structure

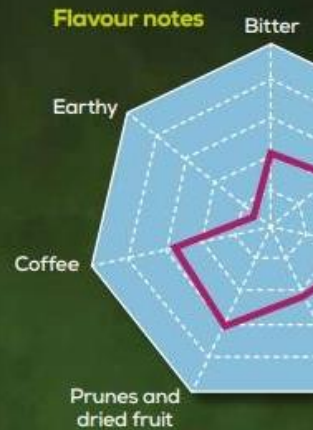
Friendly COCOA



Supporting people

Gola Forest-Friendly cocoa is farmed by Ngoleagorbu – smallholder farmers who live around the Gola Rainforest National Park. With the support of Gola Rainforest Conservation, three farmer associations have been established with 2,177 registered farmers.

They are paid a fair price for their cocoa and given the support they need to farm sustainably. Farmers receive training in Forest-Friendly farming, business management and gender inclusion, as well as support to help with farm rehabilitation to increase their crop yield and income.



Quality assured

• Samples available on request.

Forest-Friendly cocoa supports the rainforest, its wildlife and local communities

Working together for good

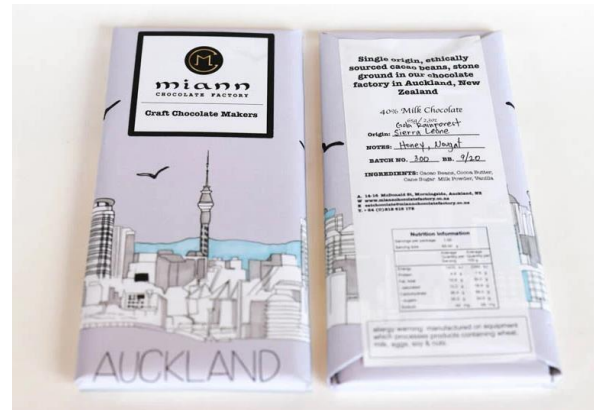
The Gola cocoa program is a partnership, led by Gola Rainforest Conservation. The program aims to reduce deforestation around the Gola Rainforest National Park, through sustainable cocoa farming – providing livelihood opportunities for communities while working towards the long-term protection of the forest landscape and its biodiversity.



The RSPB is a registered charity in England and Wales 207076, in Scotland SC037854. 234-0675-20-21
Gola pictures: RSPB images, Western chimpanzee: Fiona Rogers (naturepic.com) other photos: iStockphoto.com

RSPB chocolate and more...

- RSPB launched a single-origin Chocolate bar from Seirra Leone in 2019 in partnership with Chocolarder
- Chocolarder now producing its own chocolate bars using Gola cocoa
- More than 20,000 bars sold
- Products available in UK, Europe, USA, Japan and even as far as New Zealand!



RSPB GOLA CHOCOLATE SUPPLY CHAIN

Cola Cocoa Farmers



2. Cocoa beans harvested, fermented & dried



1. Forest Friendly (FF) Agroforest cocoa grown in Gola Rainforest Buffer



3. Quality testing in situ before purchase. Farmers receive good price for high quality FF cocoa



4. After purchase cocoa transported to Kenema Warehouse for processing & storage



5. Standardization processing (further drying, sorting, testing, weighing, bagging) & traceability documented



6. Once international buyer found & price agreed, cocoa transported to Freetown for shipping (e.g. to Amsterdam)

Goolla-Ndiamo Yie Cocoa Farmer's Association

\$\$ Cocoa sales to FA, plus bonus payments after export

\$\$ Buying Capital
0% loan

\$\$ Profit from Chocolate Bars

\$\$ International Cocoa Sales

\$\$ Purchase of RSPB beans

GRC-LG



Technical & logistical support, training & resources from GRC provided to farmers and FA's at all stages of process



RSPB

RSPB Financial & technical support given to GRC



9. RSPB Gola Rainforest Chocolate Bars & other chocolate products for sale at RSPB outlets



8. Cocoa for RSPB Chocolate Bar makes its way to Chocolarder - Craft Chocolate Maker- for processing

Cocoa Buyer



7. From destination port (e.g. Amsterdam) beans separated into lots & transported to individual chocolate producers (e.g. RSPB)

Thank you

