

Feasibility study for a cross-company grievance mechanism in the cocoa sector in Côte d'Ivoire

Final report

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Feasibility study for a cross-company grievance mechanism in the cocoa sector in Côte d'Ivoire

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The study was coordinated through a Steering Committee consisting of representatives of the following organisations: Inkota-Netzwerk, Rainforest Alliance, Fairtrade Deutschland e.V., Hamburger Stiftung für Wirtschaftsethik, International Cocoa Initiative (ICI), Nestlé Deutschland AG, Mondelēz Europe GmbH, Ferrero Deutschland, German Cocoa and Chocolate Foundation.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Context & Methodology

From June 2023 through March 2024, the RISOME-Audace Institut Afrique (AIA) consortium was commissioned by the Due Diligence Fund (DDF) and some members of the German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa (GISCO) to assess the **feasibility of a cross-company grievance mechanism in the cocoa sector in Côte d'Ivoire**.

The study was initiated to help companies comply with recent legal obligations and corporate commitments. Indeed:

- On January 1st, 2023, the **German law on Corporate Due Diligence** came into force. Aiming to improve human rights compliance (including the prohibition of child and forced labor) and environmental standards in global supply chains, it requires German companies with more than 1,000 employees to meet certain “**due diligence**” obligations in their supply chains, to prevent or minimize human rights and environmental risks. Specifically, paragraph 8 of the German Act **obliges companies to set up a grievance mechanism** for anyone likely to be affected by violations.
- Additionally, GISCO members are committed to demanding compliance with human rights and environmental aspects in the cocoa supply chain, in particular through the respect of the United Nations **Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights**.

GISCO has been supporting companies from the cocoa industry in that perspective. As a first step, SÜDWIND Institute released a guide to conducting a risk analysis in the cocoa sector in 2021. To go further, RISOME and Audace Institut Afrique (AIA) were then selected to lead the feasibility study, which was composed of 3 main phases:

- From July through September 2023: a review of the SÜDWIND study to provide a comprehensive **overview of the human and environmental risks inherent to the cocoa sector in Côte d'Ivoire**;
- From October through December 2023: **the development of a proposal for a cross-company grievance mechanism**;
- From January through March 2024: **the review and validation** of this mechanism with representatives of the different stakeholders of the cocoa value chain.

The methodology of the study relied on a combination of:

- Thorough **documentation review**;
- 30 **interviews** with industry players, existing or under-construction grievance mechanisms, and technology solutions;
- 4 **field studies**: workshops, group and individual interviews with numerous stakeholders in 3 regions of Côte d'Ivoire (Loh-Djiboua in the Center, Cavally in the East and Indénié-Djuablin in the West), aiming to represent a diversity of sociological contexts.

The **participatory and iterative** approach allowed to solicit feedback from all stakeholders of the cocoa value chains, at the different steps of the study. The **final concept of grievance mechanism was presented on February 29th in Abidjan** during a full-day workshop.

Proposed grievance mechanism: key objectives, principles & setup

The main objectives of the consortium were to seek:

- **Additionality** to existing grievance mechanism systems in Côte d'Ivoire. In particular, village chiefs are the cornerstone of conflict resolution at the local level. The proposed mechanism will thus strongly rely on them, and favor **amicable resolution**;
- **Complementarity with other grievance mechanisms** (ex: existing schemes at cooperative level) by redirecting complaints to the latter when appropriate;
- **Relevance** by guaranteeing a culturally appropriate approach building on existing practices;
- **Continuous learning** by opting first for a pilot before scaling nationwide.

Also, the analysis of the regulatory framework as well as the interviews and workshops enabled to identify a couple of **principles that are critical for the proposed mechanism to be legitimate, trustworthy, and efficient**:

- **Prompt, gradual, and efficient remediation** by decentralizing conflict resolution and providing clear timeframes for addressing grievances;
- **Accessibility** by proposing multiple channels and options for farmers to complain considering their constraints (ex: geographical remoteness, illiteracy);
- **Predictability** by displaying a clear process and sharing regular updates to complainants once a grievance has been filed;
- **Anonymity and confidentiality**;
- **Transparency**.

The proposed grievance mechanism is presented below:

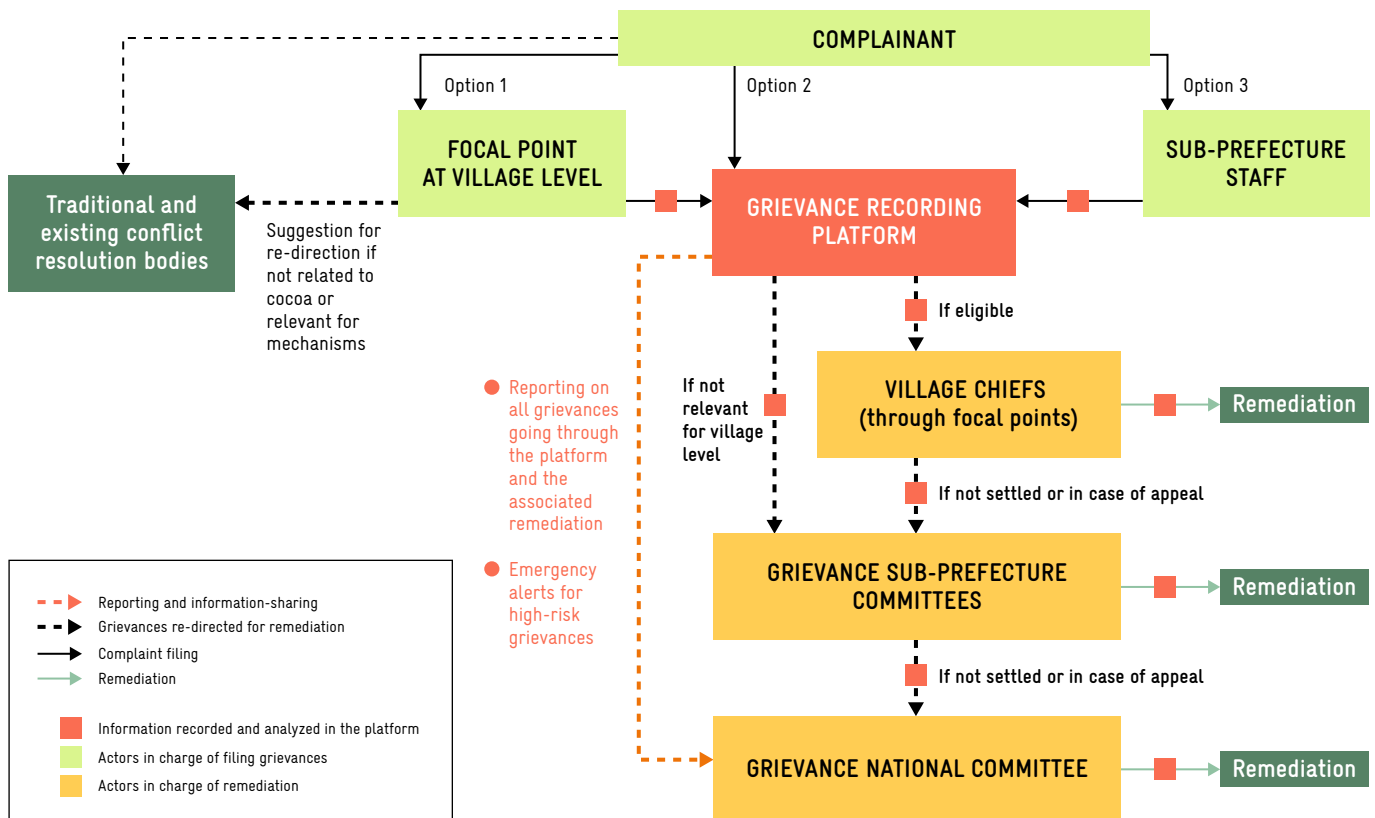


Figure 1: Cross-company grievance mechanism remediation system at village, sub-prefecture and national level

Grievances can be filed in three main ways: direct complaints on the platform, through focal points in each village, or through trained sub-prefecture agents. **While favoring remediation as close to the source as possible, grievances can be escalated up to the national level.**

Remediation should be gradual and can occur at three different levels:

- **Village level:** facilitation of the registration and settlement process through a focal point and resolution by village chiefs – organized upon reception of a grievance;
- **Sub-prefecture level:** resolution by a Sub-prefecture Grievance Committee, coordinated by an independent secretary (to be hired by the hosting organization and in charge of all sub-prefecture committees in his or her CCC delegation) – scheduled monthly;
- **National level:** a National Committee, aiming at (1) discussing remediation to grievances for which no remediation was provided at the village or sub-prefecture level and (2) reviewing reports on all the grievances (whether settled or not) recorded in the Grievance Recording Platform – meeting regularly (e.g. quarterly).

It is important to emphasize that **the proposed cross-company grievance mechanism is non-judicial.**

Technological & governance aspects

The grievance mechanism would rely on a technological platform that allows to:

- **Record:** both grievance registration (through several channels) and settlement;
- **Generate** emergency alerts and automated reports;
- **Sort:** analyze eligibility of complaint, redirect to the most appropriate level of grievance resolution (ex: village chiefs);
- **Analyze:** grievances and their resolution at all steps.

The platform should be accessible by a diversity of stakeholders with differentiated rights of access, depending on stakeholder alignment and applicable legislation. Three relevant organizations were identified as technical partners and interviewed. A preliminary analysis on their fitness to serve as a provider was done, but it is recommended to evaluate the different structures further and request financial and technical offers.

The proposed governance for the pilot relies on the combination of an international steering structure responsible for coordination, and a national state technical structure for hosting and managing the grievance mechanism platform and operations. It is summarized in the figure below:

Steering Structure

- Receive the funds for the pilot and channel them to the technical structure, the lawyer and the panel of experts
- Hire the Project Manager (PM) who will
 - Coordinate and organize the National Committee
 - Coordinate requests to the legal counsel and contracting
 - Coordinate requests to the panel of experts and contracting
 - Coordinate with the technical structure
 - Report on pilot implementation to project donors

Technical Structure

- Hiring the Two technical Experts in charge of case management within the Grievance Recording platform (evaluation, triage, re-direction, production of reports etc...) as well as management and liaison with the 13 secretaries
- Hiring the 13 secretaries in charge of a specific area within which they will organize the sub-prefecture committees
- Collaborating with the PM to report on local implementation
- Managing budgets for sub-prefecture committees (per diems, remediation, investigation) and workshops/trainings

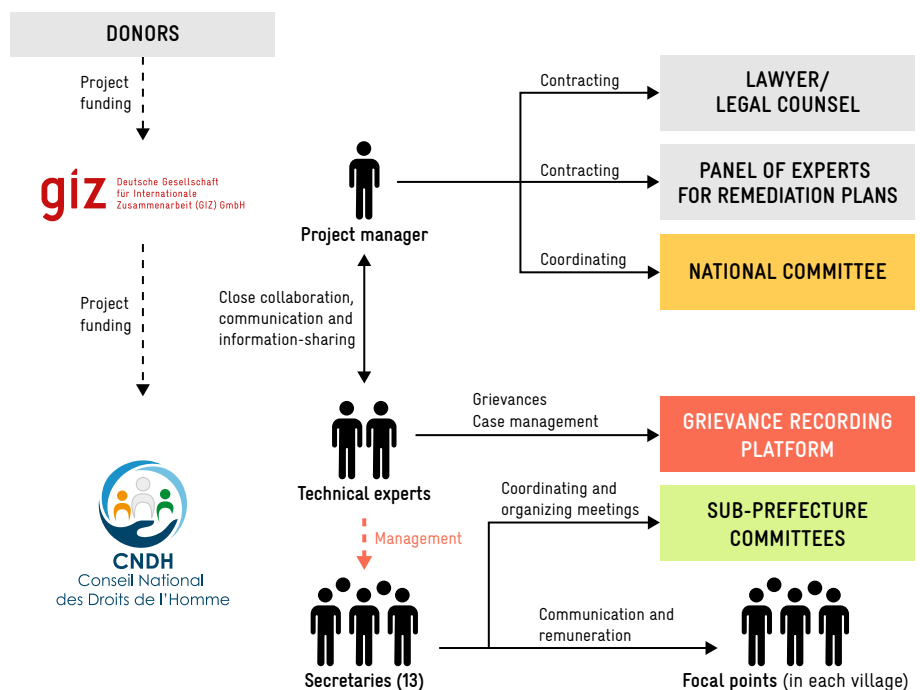


Figure 2: Cross-company grievance mechanism: proposed governance scheme and organizations involved for the pilot



Points of attention & next steps

A cross-company grievance mechanism:

- **Shall not be at the expense of risk prevention;**
- Is unlikely to identify certain risks that may not be perceived as such by victims, or because there are a number of barriers to making an official complaint;
- Requires a **comprehensive communication and training strategy** to be designed and implemented to:
 - » Inform beneficiaries of the mechanism;
 - » Train focal points and secretaries on grievance sorting, recording, management, and settlement.

The present study has shown that a cross-company grievance mechanism in the cocoa sector would be **relevant and feasible**, it recommends testing the proposed setup through a **24-month pilot** in 5 villages belonging to the same sub-prefecture. A couple of topics should be addressed **before the pilot launch** as they are critical to its design. In particular, industry players need to discuss and align on:

- **Traceability of complaints:**
 - » **To what extent are individual companies willing and able to share traceability information?** While participating companies in principle agreed to share traceability information up to cooperative level (which is already public in some cases), it remains unclear how to manage grievances that are not fully traceable – for example, when the farmer does not belong to a cooperative or when the grievance arises from another type of complainant such as a farm worker.

- » **How should grievances be remediated when complaints are not traceable?** Involving more companies sourcing from the pilot regions would help trace grievances back to the latter but it is likely some will remain untraced.
- **Scope of remediation:** how do companies want to be involved in grievance remediation? Is joint prevention and/or remediation an option?

Additional topics will require alignment but could be clarified **during the pilot:**

- **Governance:** what are companies' expectations and will to contribute to the National Committee? To what extent would they agree to discuss escalated complaints with other companies / CSOs? How do CSOs expect to be represented within the National Committee?
- **Additionality to existing grievance mechanisms:** what should be the link(s) with companies' grievance mechanisms (dual system? transparency of grievances received through internal mechanism?)?
- **Formalization of a risk eligibility policy:** which risks should be considered serious violations? Also, SOPs should be written for stakeholders receiving complaints, and describe precise considerations and processes to follow for each type of risk.

In the months following the completion of this report, discussions have taken place with several companies from the cocoa industry (GISCO members and outside) to present the mechanism and evaluate their willingness to participate in the pilot. At the time of publication of this report, these discussions are still ongoing.



I. INTRODUCTION

1. Background of the study

Côte d'Ivoire is the world's leading cocoa producer, with over 40% of global production. The cocoa sector is a major contributor to government revenue and employs nearly a million farmers. It remains one of the pillars of the Ivorian economy and is by far the main source of foreign currency, accounting for almost 40% of the country's merchandise exports.

However, despite its weight in the Ivorian economy and society, the cocoa sector is not fully playing its role as a driver of economic, social, and environmental development. It faces many challenges, including widespread poverty in cocoa-growing regions, low productivity, and child labor. In addition, the expansion of cultivated areas over recent decades, which has come at the cost of destroying the country's forests – generating major biodiversity losses – poses significant environmental issues.

All stakeholders in the industry agree that collective action is needed, and numerous initiatives have been developed over the past decade. These include the Cocoa and Forest Initiative, zero-deforestation agriculture, “Cacao Ami de la Forêt”, and the introduction of the Living Income Differential (LID). Despite these interventions, many social and environmental problems remain in the sector.

The German Initiative for Sustainable Cocoa (GISCO) is a multi-stakeholder initiative in Germany whose aim is to achieve a sustainable cocoa sector. Germany passed a law on corporate due diligence in supply chains, which came into force on January 1, 2023. It aims to improve human rights compliance (including the prohibition of child and forced labor) and environmental standards (e.g. about mercury or waste management) in global supply chains. German companies with more than 1,000 employees must meet certain “**human rights due diligence**” obligations in their supply chains, to prevent or minimize human rights and environmental risks.

Human Rights Due Diligence

The processes through which enterprises can identify, assess, cease, prevent and mitigate potential and actual adverse human rights impacts (OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises, chapter II – general policies, para. 10). Due diligence can be included within broader enterprise risk management systems, provided that it goes beyond simply identifying and managing material risks to the enterprise itself, to include the risks of harm related to matters covered by the guidelines ([OECD due diligence guidance for responsible business conduct – draft 2.1, p. 8](#)).

This means that **companies must check whether their business activities could lead to human rights violations or environmental damage within their supply chains**. They must take measures to prevent, mitigate or end violations. In addition to the prevention of human rights violations and the establishment of human rights-compliant working and living conditions, the possibility of lodging a complaint and access to an effective remedy is playing an increasingly important role. Indeed, Section 8 of the German Act **obliges companies to set up a grievance mechanism** for anyone likely to be affected by violations.

The **Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD)**, which was just approved by the European Council, also requires companies (with more than 1,000 employees and annual turnover of 450 million EUR) to establish grievance mechanisms to address complaints and concerns raised by stakeholders, including workers, consumers, and communities impacted by their operations. It will enter into force in the following years and strengthen this **growing compliance pressure on due diligence obligations** for European companies.

In addition, GISCO members are committed to¹ demanding respect of human rights and environmental aspects in the cocoa supply chain, in particular through the respect of the United Nations **Guiding Principles (UNGP) on Business and Human Rights**.

The latter require companies to identify and analyze risks in their supply chain. With this in mind, SÜDWIND Institute released a guide to conducting a risk analysis in the cocoa sector. It was discussed with GISCO members of the Human Rights Due Diligence working group. The guide underlines that human rights violations in cocoa-producing communities (child labor, worst forms of child labor including hazardous labor, use in illicit activities, sexual exploitation, trafficking, slavery, etc.) are numerous and undetected/reported. In addition, it notes that members of smallholder farming communities do not have access to effective grievance mechanisms (absence, lack of information, gender inequality, lack of independence, technically inaccessible, etc.).

Building on these results, GISCO has embarked on the topic of grievance mechanisms. A project team of 8 GISCO members and 5 cooperating partners obtained funding in October 2022 from the new “Due Diligence Fund” to carry out a feasibility study of a cross-company grievance mechanism in the cocoa sector in Côte d’Ivoire.

This feasibility study, entrusted to RISOME and Audace Institut Afrique (AIA), was divided into three phases:

1. An analysis of the human and environmental risks inherent to the cocoa sector in Côte d’Ivoire (*July-September 2023*): this phase included a series of interviews with relevant stakeholders, desk review and a field mission in the Loh-Djiboua region (around Divo) to meet with communities and local stakeholders.

- 2. The development of a proposal for a cross-company grievance mechanism capable of effectively collecting and processing complaints from small producers** (*October-December 2023*): this phase included a workshop organized in Divo with representatives of communities, cooperatives, civil society organizations and local authorities, as well as additional interviews and desk review.
- 3. The review and validation of this mechanism with the various stakeholders** (*January-March 2024*): this phase included two field missions in the Indénié-Djuablin (around Abengourou) and Cavally (around Bloléquin) regions to present the proposed mechanism to communities and local authorities and collect their feedback, an extensive benchmark of other grievance mechanisms as well as additional interviews. It was finalized with a workshop organized in Abidjan to present the mechanism to local stakeholders and collect final feedback.

The detailed timeline of the study can be found in *Annexes (1)*.

This report, finalized in March 2024, is the **final deliverable of the feasibility study**, following two previous deliverables: the risk analysis and the draft report. It aims at informing the feasibility of such a mechanism, presenting a proposal and providing suggestions and ideas for future implementation. However, a number of questions will remain to be discussed especially by companies before starting implementation (*see section VIII*).

This report was shared with Project steering committee members, and the proposal of grievance mechanism was presented to several cocoa companies since April 2024, in order to evaluate their willingness to participate in a pilot and their potential financial contribution.

¹ See objective 8 <https://www.kakaoforum.de/en/about-us/our-goals/>

2. Key conclusions of the risk analysis

The first phase of the study provided an exhaustive overview of human, social and environmental risks in the cocoa sector in Côte d'Ivoire. A risk level analysis was then conducted, assessing potential impact and occurrence of each risk, and provided valuable insights for the second phase. Indeed, it allowed to identify the risks that would most likely arise. This helped to frame the requirements of a robust grievance mechanism and the design of a draft concept, which could be further explored in the workshop with local stakeholders.

The risk analysis also provided valuable insights on actors to be involved at different levels (e.g. village, prefecture, national). For example, the importance of village chiefs was very obvious, and confirmed during the workshop organized with local stakeholders in Divo. It led to the conclusion that **village chiefs need to be involved in any efficient and relevant grievance mechanism** for rural communities, as their importance and legitimacy remain very strong.

Furthermore, the analysis pointed out that the **grievance mechanism will not be sufficient to identify, record, and deal with certain risks**, since these risks may not be perceived as such by victims, or because there are a number of barriers to making an official complaint.

Even if the grievance mechanism is open to all complaints, and its use encouraged, it is crucial for the cocoa industry to **explore complementary tools to be aware and address these extremely important risks** in their sector: prevention, advocacy, awareness-raising, monitoring and evaluation, complementary projects, and so on.

Finally, the risk analysis highlighted critical pending questions, that RISOME and AIA address to the best extent in this final proposal:

- Can the grievance mechanism be used to lodge a complaint about a grievance relating to an action or inaction by the administration?
- Who is responsible for handling complaints, once they have been registered, when they concern a sovereign domain?
- Should the grievance mechanism be aimed solely or primarily at producers, or should it be opened up to NGOs or third parties, for example?
- How relevant is it to include risks already covered by other grievance mechanisms or procedures managed by the authorities (e.g. land disputes)?
- How can an ad hoc grievance mechanism fit effectively into existing traditional complaint and conflict management structures (particularly at the village level)?

3. Overall principles of the proposal based on existing frameworks and regulations

This study has been primarily initiated to help companies comply with legal obligations and especially the German Act, as well as some frameworks they committed to by becoming members of the GISCO. These different frameworks encompass various principles and criteria that have been used as a basis to develop the proposal of cross-company grievance mechanism.

A. German Act Criteria

The German Act on Corporate Due Diligence obligations in Supply Chains is the basis of this feasibility study as it introduces obligations for companies in Germany, including grievance management. In particular, Section 8 details the obligations that companies must meet and that drove the design of the proposed cross-company grievance mechanism:

- enabling people to report human right and environment-related risks and violations of obligations as a result of the economic actions of an enterprise;
- receipt of the reported information must be confirmed to the person reporting the information;
- the facts must be discussed with the person having reported the information;
- a procedure for amicable settlement may be offered;
- enterprises may participate in an external complaints procedure meeting the following criteria:
 - » rules of procedure in text form are publicly available;
 - » guarantee of impartiality, independence and secrecy;
 - » clear and comprehensible information on accessibility and responsibility, as well as the implementation of the procedure are publicly available;
 - » the procedure must be accessible to parties involved, maintain confidentiality of identity and ensure affection protection against disadvantage or punishment;
 - » the effectiveness of the complaint procedure must be reviewed at least once a year and on an ad hoc basis if necessary.



B. United Nations Guiding Principles on Business & Human Rights

Looking at the categorization of grievance mechanisms developed in the UNGP on Business and Human Rights, it is important to emphasize that the **proposed cross-company grievance mechanism in this report is non-judicial**. Indeed, the idea is to provide early-stage recourse and resolution, even if this mechanism would still be part of a wider system of remedy which also includes legal recourse. Right holders will always have the opportunity to seek legal remedy, but a non-judicial and operational-level grievance mechanism aims at providing efficiency and prompt remedy. It also favors amicable resolution which is generally the way communities in Côte d'Ivoire try to address issues primarily. Judicial remedy is not always required and there may be gaps in the way judicial systems address violations of rights. As such, non-judicial grievance mechanisms can play a key role.

Following the classification of the UNGP, the proposed cross-company mechanism is also non-State-based, even if it seeks to rely on existing State structures, and integrate the existing functioning for better effectiveness and relevance.

Article 31 of the UNGP on Business and Human Rights details criteria for effective non-judicial and operational-level grievance mechanisms, that the consortium sought to abide by in the proposed mechanism:

Legitimate:

The grievance mechanism enables the trust of the users for whom they are intended and are accountable for the fair conduct of grievance processes.

Accessible:

The grievance mechanism is known and accessible to all potential users and offer adequate support to those who may face barriers to access.

Predictable:

Providing a clear and known procedure with an indicative time frame for each stage, and clarity on the types of process and outcome available and means of monitoring implementation.

Equitable:

Users have reasonable access to information, advice and expertise. They can participate in a grievance process in a fair, informed and respectful way.

Transparent:

The grievance mechanism keeps the parties to a grievance informed about progress and provide sufficient information about the performance of the grievance mechanism.

Rights-compatible:

The grievance mechanism ensures that the outcomes and remedies comply with internationally recognized human rights.

Based on continuous learning:

Relevant measures are in place to identify lessons for improving the mechanism and preventing future grievances and harms.

Based on dialogue:

Individuals or groups for whom the grievance mechanism is intended are involved in the development and performance of the grievance mechanism. Dialogue is used as the means to address and resolve grievances.



II. PROPOSAL OF CROSS-COMPANY GRIEVANCE MECHANISM

This section focuses on the presentation of the proposed grievance mechanism:

- learning from the study and their incorporation in the proposal;
- main operations and processes;
- focus on key stakeholders involved;
- proposed governance scheme including recommendations for potential mechanism hosting organizations.

1. Key learnings from the study and their incorporation in the proposal

In addition to ensuring the proposed mechanism meets the criteria of the UNGP and the German Act, the study identified critical objectives to build a grievance mechanism adapted to field realities in Côte d'Ivoire. These objectives are the results of learning from the study, experience from other grievance mechanisms, and build on RISOME and AIA's experience in Côte d'Ivoire, especially the understanding of rural communities' dynamics and traditional structures, in order to build a **realistic and relevant proposal**:

A. Leverage existing mechanisms and ensure additionality

In general, most conflicts and grievances are addressed at the community level through traditional authorities (families, community chiefs) or existing structures and grievance mechanisms (cooperatives' grievance mechanisms, certification bodies' mechanisms, villages committees such as Land Tenure Management (LTM) Village Committees or Child Protection Committees). These already provide pathways for communities to

complain; many grievances will likely still be addressed by these bodies and not integrate a new grievance mechanism. For example, Rainforest Alliance and Fairtrade standards already include grievance mechanisms as part of their certification requirements and provide themselves options for grievances.

Existing mechanisms should still be favored for filing grievances related to their purpose (ex: land tenure conflicts should be addressed by LTM Village Committees). However, the field study and consultation of local stakeholders (in the field and during workshops) highlighted that these mechanisms, in particular at the cooperative level, are not always effective, functional and accessible for communities².

The goal is to be **additional to these structures and provide other ways and an opportunity to complain for farmers who cannot or do not want to use these channels, or to compensate for their shortcomings**. Consequently, the proposed grievance mechanism does not aim at capturing each and every grievance in communities, as some of them should still be addressed, when possible, by existing mechanisms.

2 This was also confirmed in a documentation review. See ICI Update on Forced Labour Pilot or Ergon Report "A study on the implementation of grievance mechanisms – Reviewing practice across RA-certified farms and groups"

B. Guarantee a culturally appropriate approach building on existing practices

It is critical to avoid creating an ad hoc mechanism disconnected from existing conflict-resolution structures and traditions. As a result, the proposal shall:

- Favor **amicable resolution** as it already exists in villages where traditional leaders manage most conflicts this way. This would also allow to **solve conflicts as promptly as possible**, which is a major expectation from local stakeholders.
- Provide **remediation in a gradual and decentralized way** as much as possible based on three progressive levels of intervention³: **local** (village/community), **sub-regional** (sub-prefecture⁴) and **national** level. This is based on the existing system, which is commonly used by rural populations to resolve grievances. Indeed, community and/or village chiefs are the first and most common referents when wanting to place a grievance, and village chiefs are very often holders of **legitimacy and trust** in villages. If unsuccessful or for other reasons (ex: grievance referring to a larger territorial scale than the village, village chief unable to solve the issue in a satisfactory way for the complainant or due to confidentiality), the complainant would go to the sub-prefecture (still for amicable resolution). This system runs in parallel to the judicial system which is not commonly used and trusted by communities.

- Finally, grievances should be escalated for remediation at the national level and require the intervention of the cocoa industry only if they cannot be solved earlier in the process⁵. The national level remains the decision-making level for more complex issues that require industry intervention and alignment, and the most appropriate one to connect to companies' supply chains.

Bringing the complaint management bodies as close as possible to the communities by using villages and sub-prefectures seems like the best option to facilitate **accessibility** and **fast remediation**.

C. Ensure multiple channels are available to file a grievance

The study has identified the need to **multiply channels and options to complain** to take into account the constraints of rural communities: geographical remoteness, **illiteracy**, **traditions in terms of trust and community authority holders** and need to provide **anonymity and confidentiality** if necessary. Options must build upon the importance and legitimacy of village chiefs, while still providing alternatives (like the sub-prefecture) in case they are considered too biased/inefficient or if the topic is deemed too sensitive/could affect social cohesion. The multiplicity of channels will however not be contradictory with a gradual process for remediation, starting at the village level if relevant.



³ During the workshop in Divo (October 2023), the option of adding a regional level (prefecture) was discussed and eventually set aside. Indeed, participants aligned on the need to favor promptness and efficiency of remediation, and thus avoid the multiplication of grievance settlements levels. Since subprefectures are generally accountable for grievance settlements in case they cannot be handled by village/community chiefs, they should be able to solve most grievances.

⁴ Sub-prefectures are the fourth-level administrative subdivisions of the country (below: district, region, department). There are currently 510 sub-prefectures, one can be in charge of 5 to 40 villages.

⁵ This is valid only for remediation as ALL grievances will be anyway escalated to industry members for information.

2. Proposed Mechanism: basic principles

A. Filing a grievance

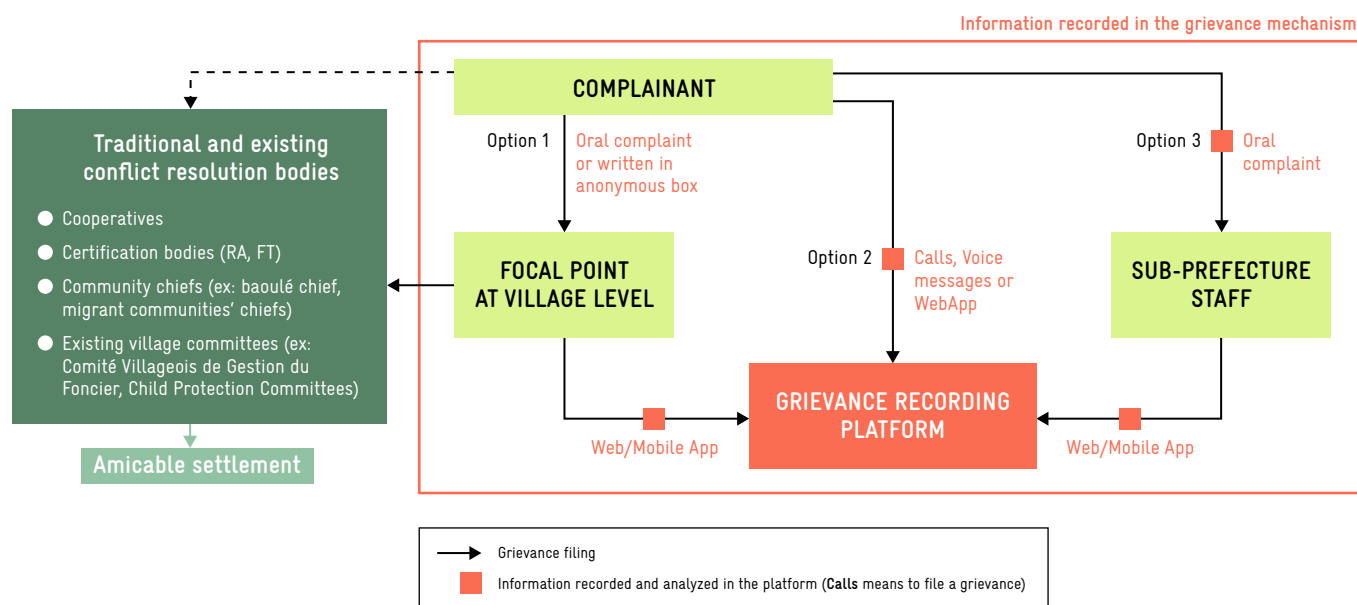


Figure 3: Cross-company grievance mechanism system for filing and recording grievances

Three main options will be available for filing grievances and can be used by complainants (*see Figure 3 above*):

- Focal points⁶** in each village will be trained and in charge of filing grievances through a grievance form in a **Mobile App/web app**. They will receive grievances either **orally** or directly by community members, or in **written form** through boxes available at village level. The form will be available in several local languages.
- Direct complaints** will be possible through calls to a dedicated number, Voice messages to this same number or filing the complaint directly in a dedicated web app or website through an Internet browser (also available in several languages). Other options such as a chatbot on Whatsapp, USSD or SMS have been studied and could be technically possible. From a cost consideration and based on tech companies' feedback, it was however decided not to consider those options.

- Some **sub-prefecture agents** will also be trained and in charge of filing grievances through a grievance form in a **Mobile/WebApp**. Indeed, community members might want to avoid going through the chief for different reasons, and tend to go to the sub-prefecture if they do not find satisfaction at village level. This possibility will thus be offered for grievance filing.

Grievances can be filled by victims themselves, by third parties or by NGOs (who can also represent victims if they want to stay anonymous) and civil society representatives on behalf of victims.

⁶ It has been decided to avoid proposing additional committees at village level because of the multiplicity of existing committees and the difficulties to make them sustainable. It was considered more efficient to have a focal point specifically trained for this project.

B. Recording, triaging and redirecting grievances

All grievances, whether registered in the Mobile/Web App by focal points/sub-prefecture agents or received directly by Calls/Voice Messages/Web Browser will end up in the **Grievance Recording Platform**⁷ (see Figure 4) which will centralize all grievances.

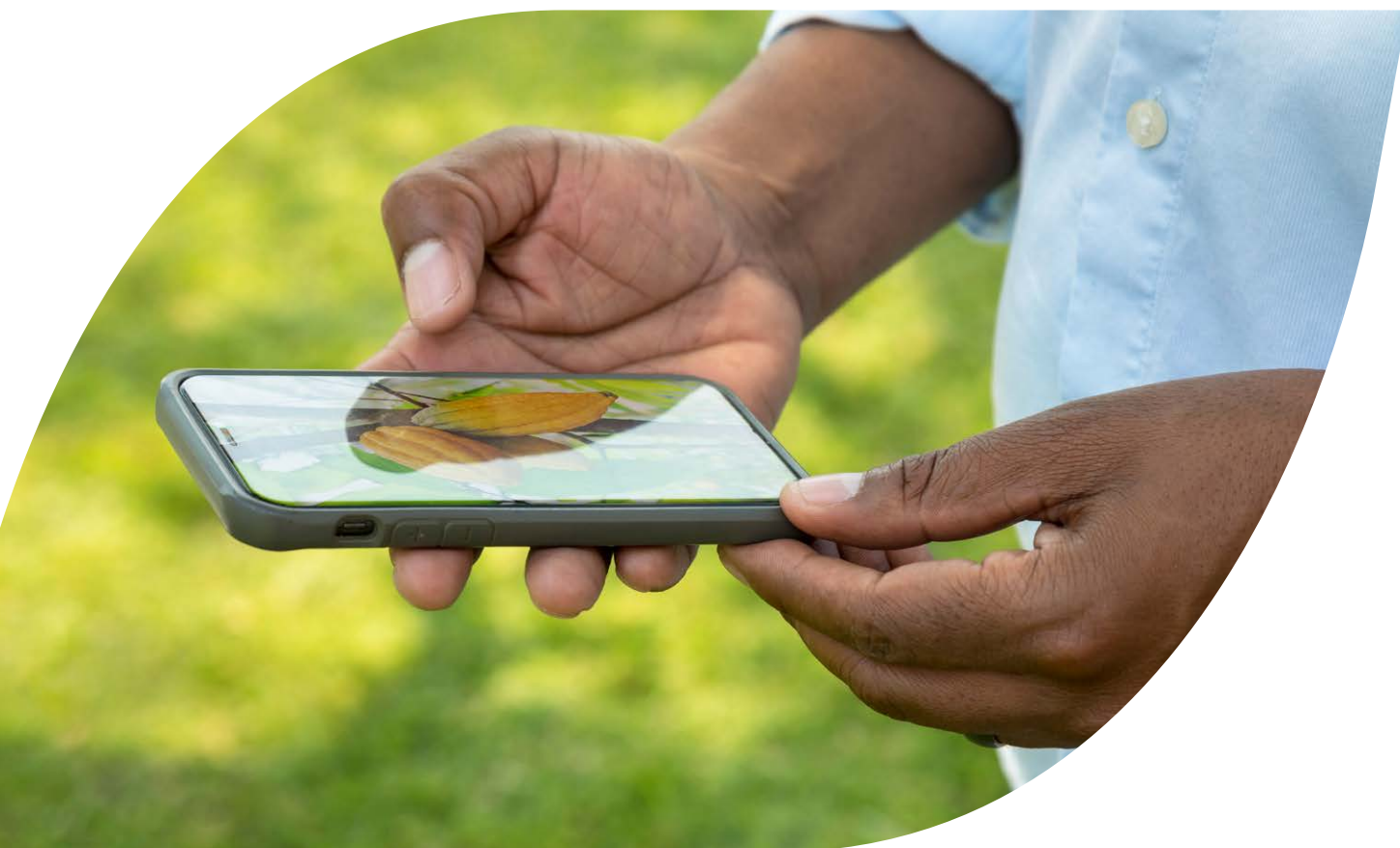
A specific team will be in charge of managing the platform and especially the sorting and re-direction at each step of the process. They will be in charge of:

4. **Analyzing the eligibility** of the grievance (see section II.4.a);
5. **Choosing the appropriate level to re-direct** the grievance (preference to always start at village level when feasible) based on categorization;
6. **Re-directing the grievance to another level in case of appeal or inability** to solve the grievance.

Through the platform, they will generate reports and a list of grievances to be addressed by the different stakeholders (villages, sub-prefecture committees, national committee).

Cocoa industry members participating in the cross-company mechanism should be able to log into the Platform and access some information related to grievances in general and in their supply chains (with specific levels of access and permissions). The platform will also generate dashboards and analytics on grievances.

Finally, the platform will include an **emergency alert system**. The team in charge of the platform will be able to rate the risk of each grievance (low/medium/high) and thus start a protocol for immediate notification to companies for a high-risk grievance (for example severe human rights violations). A specific policy to define the risk level criteria should be developed at the beginning of implementation and included within a wider eligibility policy (see section II.4.a).



⁷ It shall be noted that on top of the platform, workshop participants recommended having a complaints registry at village level to keep a physical record.

C. Treatment and remediation: a gradual process based on existing structures

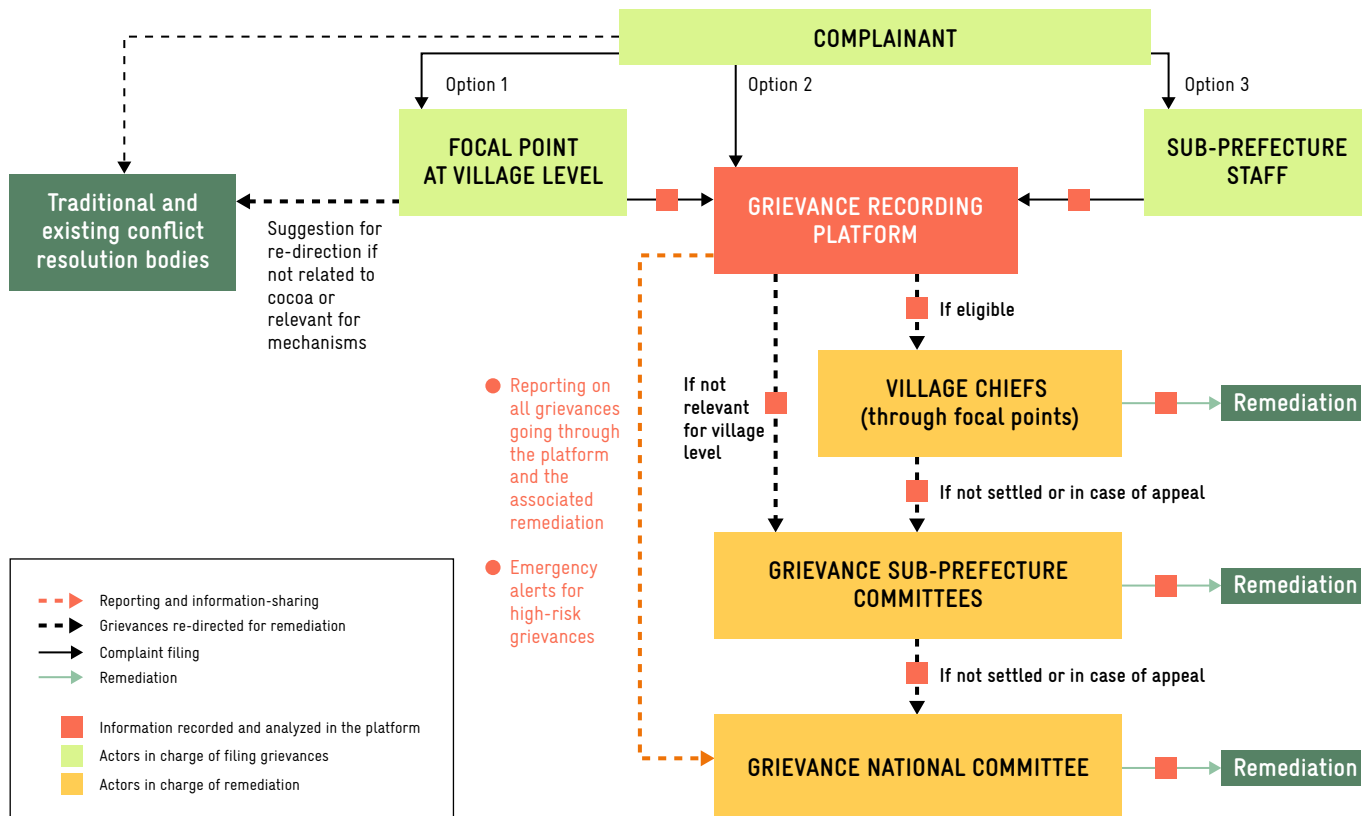


Figure 4: Cross-company grievance mechanism remediation system at village, sub-prefecture and national level

Even if complainants will have access to multiple channels to file a complaint, the centralization through the grievance recording platform will then allow to ensure a gradual process for treatment and remediation of grievances.

At village level

Focal points will record all grievances in the platform, whether remediation is provided at the local level or not. As a result, they can provide remediation at the village level directly, with the chief, but shall still record it in the platform. As such, the grievance form will provide the option to note if the grievance has been resolved at the village level, so that the industry can be informed of all grievances even if they have been resolved at the village level. Village chiefs, through the focal points, will also receive grievances to be addressed from the grievance recording platform when filed directly by complainants in the platform or through the sub-prefecture.

At sub-prefecture committee level

Grievances will only go to the sub-prefecture level for remediation if they cannot be solved at village level⁸, if the complainant appeals the decision at the village level or if the team managing the platform considered the grievance should be addressed directly at the sub-prefecture level. The team coordinating the platform will create reports of grievances to be addressed, for each sub-prefecture committee, sorted by location (*see details on committees in section II.3*)

- » If remediation is provided at the sub-prefecture committee level and there is no appeal, the information is recorded in the platform, and later shared as a closed case with the national committee with all the remediation details.
- » If remediation is not provided at the sub-prefecture committee level or the complainant appeals the remediation decision, the information is recorded in the platform and the grievance re-directed to the National Committee for action/remediation.

⁸ In parallel, as village chiefs directly report to the sub-prefect ("sous-préfet"), they will most likely still contact them informally for grievances. However, if properly trained, they should also be able to record grievances in the platform.

■ At National Level

If remediation has not been provided at the sub-prefecture committee level, it will be recorded in the platform and shared with the **National Grievance Committee** (*see details on committees in section II.3*) for remediation. All grievances that have been recorded in the platform and already settled at the village or sub-prefecture level will also be shared with the National Committee for information. Reports will be shared and discussed collectively. Members of the National Committee will also be able to receive alerts for high-risk grievances entered into the system.

3. Stakeholders and committees

A. Focal points

Focal points will be the key stakeholders of the grievance mechanisms at the village level. They shall be endorsed by the chief in order to rely on their traditional leadership and authority in most communities.

In terms of **selection**, in order to avoid disturbing traditional structures and foster community recognition and adoption, it is suggested to ask the village chief to propose a list of maximum 3 people that could take the role of focal points based on the **following criteria**: literacy, basic computer/digital skills, sensitivity to human rights issues, existing experience with committees or using online forms. On top of that, to maximize representativity, each focal point should ideally speak the local language (for natives) and another language for foreign communities (like dioula/bambara).

At the same time, the following criteria shall be considered a **factor of incompatibility** with the focal point role: being accused of any violation to human rights, having a criminal record or having participated in disturbing public order.

Among the list proposed by village chiefs, the independent secretary (*see section 3.b Sub-Prefecture Grievance Committees*) should have the final choice based on a short phone call to assess motivation and skills.

Each focal point will receive training in order to fulfill its **role**:

- raise awareness in the village about the existence of the grievance mechanism;
- know how to fill a grievance form and upload the data on the platform;
- re-direct people to existing or traditional mechanisms when more relevant;
- receive information from the secretary if a grievance needs to be addressed at the village level and share it with village chiefs.

They will receive instructions and refer to the independent secretary of their area.

Regarding **remuneration**, it is suggested to have a fixed part (to incentivize participation) and a variable part based on the number of grievances registered and effectively considered as eligible by the platform⁹. Each independent secretary will be in charge of validating the remuneration of the focal points, who should receive their payments through mobile money for better traceability. An appropriate financial compensation has been clearly identified as a key criterion for success, functioning, and sustainability of the mechanism.

B. Sub-Prefecture Grievance Committees

Following the objectives detailed at the beginning of this study, RISOME and AIA propose to establish Grievance Management Committees at the level of sub-prefectures. There are approximately 500 sub-prefectures in Côte d'Ivoire, with approximately 320 of them located in cocoa-producing areas. The creation of the sub-prefecture grievance committees would require a decree ("arrêté") from the General Directorate of Territorial Administration (Direction Générale de l'Administration du Territoire – DGAT).

Sub-Prefecture Grievance Committees will have **monthly meetings**¹⁰ **only if** there are grievances to address in the sub-prefecture (based on information sent by the Grievance Recording Platform which will perform triage and redirection of grievances at the right level). The Committee could also be gathered exceptionally for emergency cases (*to be defined*). Finally, if no grievances are received in a sub-prefecture, it is still suggested to organize committee meetings twice a year to discuss the possible barriers to receiving grievances.

⁹ Only grievances effectively considered eligible by the platform should be considered in the variable remuneration part, in order to avoid receiving multiple "fake" complaints

¹⁰ There was a lot of discussion regarding the frequency of meetings with local stakeholders. Many of them considered monthly meetings to be too heavy. We suggest to trial this aspect during the pilot and adjust accordingly

Each Sub-Prefecture Committee will be composed of:

- The sub-prefect, chairing the meeting;
- The independent secretary, organizing and coordinating the meeting;
- Local technical representatives of relevant ministries and administration – sub-prefect, Conseil café-Cacao (CCC), Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Water and Forests, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Women and Family, ANADER etc.
- They will be invited by the independent secretary only if the grievances to be addressed are relevant to their scope of intervention;
- Local representatives of relevant NGOs – ICI for example (2 civil society representatives maximum per meeting on a rolling basis);
- Cocoa cooperatives on a voluntary basis and if linked to a grievance;
- Villages chiefs that are linked to the grievances to be addressed at each meeting, except if they are the object of the complaint.

If not anonymous, **complainants** will be offered a chance to **explain their case** to the committee before the latter starts discussing remediation.

Total **number of participants** for each meeting shall be **limited to 12**.

The Sub-Prefecture committees will be organized and coordinated by **an independent secretary**. There will be one secretary per CCC delegation (13 in total in Côte d'Ivoire), and **each one will be in charge of all Sub-prefecture Committees in his/her delegation (20 to 40 sub-prefectures per delegation)**.

The secretaries will be responsible for organizing the Sub-prefecture grievance committees' meetings, receiving grievances to be treated in each committee from the Grievance Recording Platform, recording minutes and remediation, and reporting it in the Grievance Recording Platform.

Secretaries will receive a monthly **remuneration** for this full-time job, while people participating in the committees will receive compensation under the form of per-diems to cover for transportation and participation costs.

Regarding **decision-making for remediation**, as Sub-Prefecture Committees will be composed of ministries and administration representatives, it is suggested to develop rules of procedure at the beginning of the pilot.

C. National Grievance Committee

One National Grievance Committee will be established as the highest-level body of the grievance mechanism.

The National Committee will gather for **in-person meetings twice a year** (if representatives are based in Côte d'Ivoire) but will gather for **quarterly online meetings** or more frequently depending on the volume of grievances and their level of risks.

The **role** of the National Grievance Committee is to:

1. **Discuss remediation pathways** for grievances for which no remediation was provided at the village or sub-prefecture level;
2. **Collectively discuss the reports** on all the grievances (whether settled or not) recorded in the Grievance Recording Platform. This will provide a venue for the industry to discuss key human rights and environmental risks in the supply chain and potential actions/advocacy topics. It will also allow them to prove that effective remediation was provided in line with compliance obligations;
3. **Learn**, in line with UNGP principle of continuous improvement, to prevent future grievances but also improve the effectiveness of the mechanism and potential improvements needed.

The National Grievance Committee will be composed of:

- 6 representatives of the cocoa industry: it is suggested to have a mix of industry organizations representatives (such as WCF or GEPEX, with a mix of representatives by topic such as human rights, environment or living income) and individual companies (maximum 2) on a rolling basis;
- 6 representatives of the civil society: 4 representatives of national civil society organizations and certification bodies (one by topic) and 2 representatives of international civil society organizations to ensure independence and neutrality regarding national stakes;
- It will be organized and coordinated by the **Project Management Team** (*see details in section II.3.d*).

Apart from the meetings, companies will receive automated reports from the platform, to be kept informed regularly about grievances entering the platform. Options for individual logging of each company into the platform and access to individual supply chain information can also be discussed but will require further alignment on the level of traceability and willingness for information sharing (*see section VIII on questions to be addressed by companies*). Also, an **additional legal analysis regarding data protection** should be conducted to assess to what extent data from grievances can be communicated, and to which stakeholders.

Remediation at national level should be done according to the following process:

- Reception of the grievances to be addressed by the Project Management Team;
- **Evaluation by a lawyer or legal counsel** regarding the eligibility of the complaint and company responsibility (taking into account European regulations, German law and Ivorian law);
- Vote on **individual or collective process for remediation** (based on traceability level);

- If collective remediation is chosen, the possibility to request for support among the panel of experts recruited at the beginning of implementation (based on the specific topic) to **develop the remediation plan (including budget required and actions) will be open but not mandatory** (in case of alignment on the remediation plan);
- **Validation of the remediation plan** by the National Committee.

D. Project Management Team

The Project Management Team will be in charge of steering the whole mechanism and composed of the following members:

- One Project Manager (PM), in charge of coordinating the National Committee, requesting support of the lawyer/legal counsel for evaluation and contracting the panel of experts for remediation at the national level (*see details in section above*). The PM will be responsible for making sure the process for remediation at the national level is happening and follows the recommended pathway;
- Two Technical Experts, in charge of managing the Grievance Recording Platform (triage, management, re-direction, production of reports, etc.) as well as liaising with the 13 secretaries in charge of the sub-prefecture committees.

The PM and Technical Experts will be closely collaborating for the effectiveness of the mechanism. The PM will also be in charge of reporting to project donors on the progress of the mechanism and will produce a report twice a year. The report will include data on the volume of complaints, the topics, the status in terms of treatment and remediation, and cocoa companies involved. We suggest this report to be public, in order to ensure transparency of the mechanism, while still respecting confidentiality requirements of some data.

4. Detailed parameters of functioning

A. Review of complaint eligibility

An **eligibility policy** should be developed just before implementation (during the pilot phase) in order to have a document detailing the basic criteria for a grievance to be eligible.

The **risk analysis** (see Annex 5) performed at the beginning of the feasibility study could constitute a **relevant basis for this eligibility criteria**. However, complaint eligibility criteria should also be further discussed by cocoa industry players based on how they define their responsibility and scope of action. The work to define an eligibility policy should **include a risk level criteria for each topic** in order to **create emergency alerts** and reduce delays when necessary.

Finally, the eligibility policy should include a **categorization of grievances per topic** (for example Cocoa Sales, Premium, Environment, Land Tenure, etc.), to be reflected in the grievance form, which will facilitate analysis and triage of the different grievances but also facilitate communication and advocacy with the relevant structures in charge of these topics in the country.

Several stakeholders will then be involved in assessing the eligibility of the complaint and if it can be handled by the cross-company grievance mechanism:

- **At village and sub-prefecture levels**, focal points and sub-prefecture staff in charge of grievance filing will be responsible for a **first level of sorting**. They shall be trained prior to implementation based on the Eligibility Policy;
- A **second level of sorting and eligibility review** will be performed by the **Technical Experts managing the Grievance Recording Platform**. The grievance form itself will allow filtering according to a set of criteria, and the technical experts should also be trained to perform additional filtering based on the eligibility criteria. If the grievance is rejected and considered not eligible, the complainant will be informed through an SMS sent automatically by the platform based on the change of status of the grievance;

- Finally, if the grievance reaches the National Committee level (and was thus considered eligible previously) a **final level of eligibility review** will be performed by the **lawyer or legal counsel** and will be this time linked to **companies' willingness and/or obligation to take responsibility for remediation**. If the grievance is rejected and considered not eligible, the complainant will be informed through an SMS sent automatically by the platform based on the change of status of the grievance.

B. Delays

The mechanism should set in place precise delays to acknowledge a grievance and kick-start the remediation process, but still allow for flexibility based on the type of grievance to be addressed. We would recommend the following:

- A **notification of reception** of the grievance in the system should be sent to the complainant (if a contact number was registered while filing the grievance) **within 24 hours**;
- If the grievance is treated at **village level**, a **maximum of 15 days** to address it;
- If the grievance is directed to the **sub-prefecture level**, a **maximum of 30 days** to address it (during a Sub-prefecture committee meeting);
- If the grievance is directed to the **National Committee** and not considered urgent, a **maximum of 90 days** to address it. During these 90 days, preparatory work including legal review, choice of individual or collective remediation and potential mobilization of experts for a remediation plan shall be done.

These delays will be **reduced in case of "high risk" grievance** as defined in the Eligibility Policy.

C. Information and notification system

The cross-company grievance mechanism shall include a proper, efficient and realistic **reporting system** for complainants to be informed regularly throughout the process and within reasonable delay about the status of their grievance.

They need to receive a notification/acknowledgment of receipt at various stages:

- when the complaint is recorded in the platform (within 24hrs);
- if the complaint is not eligible and why;
- each time there is a change of status of the complaint or redirection towards another level: village, sub-prefecture, national.

Some of the notifications could be automatic (for example when the complaint is recorded in the platform, through an automatic SMS if an individual phone number is recorded), and others will need to be communicated to farmers by focal points in villages. The notification recipient will depend on the **contact entered in the form when filing the complaint**. In case of an anonymous complaint, it seems challenging to have a system of notification and acknowledgment of receipt.

D. Investigation

Depending on the seriousness of the complaint or the complexity of the case, the village chief or the sub-prefecture committee may request an in-depth investigation to analyze the complaint, determine the causes, consequences and possible remediation. This may generate delays which should be notified to the complainant. The independent secretaries will be in charge of organizing the investigation in their respective areas.

E. Closing and archiving grievances

The procedure will be closed and the remediation of the complaint recorded if the complainant is satisfied with the solution and there is no appeal. Once a resolution has been agreed, or a decision to close the case has been made, the final step will be to close and archive the complaint.

The Grievance Recording Platform will **centralize all this information and record cases** that will be shared with people having access to the platform (with different levels of permissions). **All documents used in the settlement process will be recorded** in each file created on behalf of the complainants. The filing system will provide access to information on complaints received and the dates on which they were received, solutions found, remediation accepted or not, and unresolved complaints requiring further action.

The Grievance Recording Platform will also allow for **data analytics and data visualization** through its parameters (for example providing information on the number of cases per type of risk, per location, etc.).



5. Governance scheme proposal

In order to be created and functional, the cross-company mechanism will require defining a governance scheme, identifying the stakeholders and organizations involved in Côte d'Ivoire and abroad, and aligning on their respective roles and responsibilities. The governance scheme should also define who will be responsible for hiring the different stakeholders, coordinating the committees and managing the operating costs of the grievance mechanism.

Several options for the organizations and structures to be involved have been studied along with their strengths and weaknesses. The topic was also discussed during the workshop with local stakeholders in Abidjan, as well as with other projects and structures that have put in place cross-company mechanisms in other countries or other sectors.

The following conclusions were drawn:

- For legitimacy purposes, it would be preferable to have a **national state structure involved and steering the mechanism locally**, but ideally with a certain level of **autonomy and independence, as well as external evaluation**¹¹;
- Structures with **experience in human rights topics** shall be preferred for the technical part of evaluating and sorting grievances;

- There is a need to **involve an international structure** that could steer and push forward the mechanism **during the pilot phase**, and play a **coordinating role between international and national structures and stakeholders**, and make sure the whole structure is working. Later in implementation, a **full transition to a national structure** could be envisioned;
- Fund management should ideally not be centralized within one single organization;
- For efficiency purposes, part of the fund should be managed locally in order to facilitate prompt disbursement;
- For a national mechanism, it would be ideal to involve a structure that already has a **decentralized setup and representation in regions**;
- Civil Society Organizations** should be able to participate in committees, raise awareness among beneficiaries, monitor the implementation of remediation measures and make independent observations, but shall not host the mechanism.

Based on the different discussions and these conclusions, the following structure is suggested for the pilot phase (with associated roles and responsibilities):

Steering Structure

- Receive the funds for the pilot and channel them to the technical structure, the lawyer and the panel of experts
- Hire the Project Manager (PM) who will
 - Coordinate and organize the National Committee
 - Coordinate requests to the legal counsel and contracting
 - Coordinate requests to the panel of experts and contracting
 - Coordinate with the technical structure
 - Report on pilot implementation to project donors

Technical Structure

- Hiring the Two technical Experts in charge of case management within the Grievance Recording platform (evaluation, triage, re-direction, production of reports etc...) as well as management and liaison with the 13 secretaries
- Hiring the 13 secretaries in charge of a specific area within which they will organize the sub-prefecture committees
- Collaborating with the PM to report on local implementation
- Managing budgets for sub-prefecture committees (per diems, remediation, investigation) and workshops/trainings

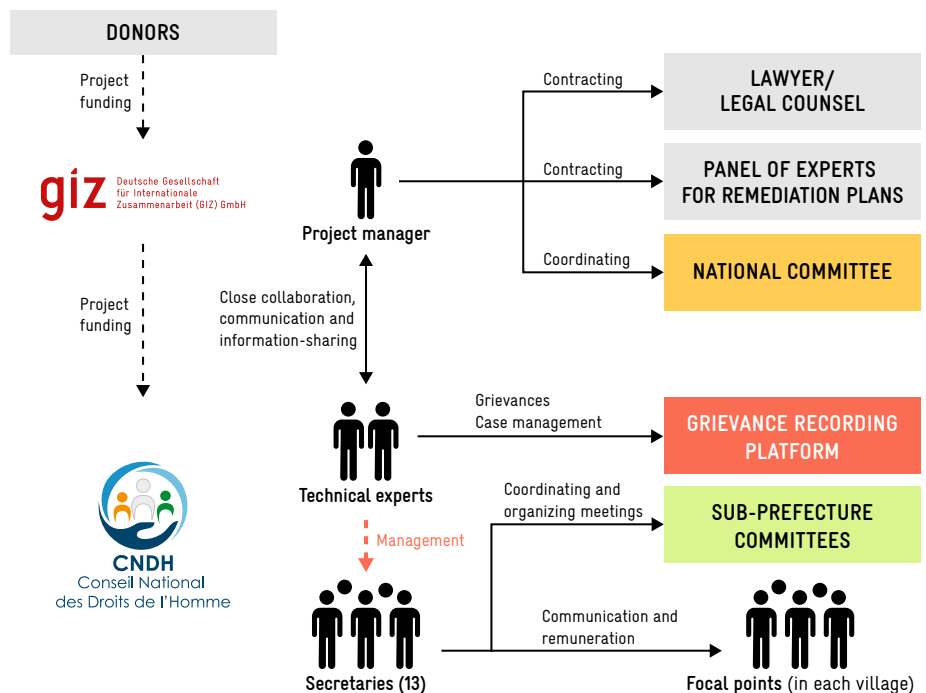


Figure 4: Cross-company grievance mechanism: proposed governance scheme and organizations involved for the pilot

¹¹ CNDH is a state institution but not a governmental structure. It is also evaluated by international independent experts.



III. SUCCESS FACTORS FOR ADOPTION

Beyond a relevant and well-designed structure and functioning, the study identified some key success factors through community consultation and discussion with various stakeholders. Indeed, some steps will be decisive not only for a better **appropriation of the mechanism by the stakeholders** but above all for its **adoption** by the populations of cocoa-growing areas.

A. Information and awareness-raising

Information and awareness-raising will be crucial to inform, convince and reassure rural populations about the existence and use of the grievance mechanism. The aim will be to make the mechanism **accessible through effective and varied means of communication**. During the few months to prepare implementation, a precise communication and awareness-raising strategy should be developed. It should take into account the most effective communication channels in rural areas as well as the characteristics of the targeted populations (literacy level, traditions and beliefs, remoteness, access to internet, authority holders in the communities, etc.). As a result, this strategy will highly depend on the location chosen for the pilot.

According to discussions with local stakeholders, the following channels could be used:

- Radios campaigns in local languages;
- TV spots;
- Posters, flyers and picture boxes;
- Social media and a website.

The following people and organizations should be used as communication relays:

- Focal points;
- NGOs;
- Community leaders and religious leaders (village chiefs, community chief, “*griots*” etc.);
- Community structures and committees;
- Organizations with wide presence in rural areas and many staff in the field (CCC, ANADER, Minader, etc).

B. Training and capacity building needs

High-quality and frequent trainings will be required:

- From a **technological point of view**: focal points in villages and agents of the sub-prefecture will be **trained to use the Web/Mobile App** to record grievances.
- From a **grievance eligibility point of view**: focal points and sub-prefecture staff filing grievances on behalf of right holders should be trained to perform a first level of eligibility evaluation¹².
- From a **grievance management and resolution point of view**: focal points, secretaries and technical experts should receive training on specific risks (ex: forced labor), related regulation and required remediation to make sure the amicable settlement respects national and international regulations. They should be trained to use the emergency alert system as well.

The pilot phase will be the opportunity to **evaluate gaps and training needs among** actors.

12 For example, if Mr. Kouamé in village X comes to the focal point to record a grievance because his phone was stolen, the focal point should re-direct him either to the village chief (without recording the grievance) for amicable settlement, or to the police.

C. Effectiveness and timelines to create trust

All stakeholders have agreed during the study on the fact that the priority should be to **create trust towards the grievance mechanism** if the goal is for it to be effective and functioning. In order to create trust among right-holders, two key elements should be present:

- **Respect of reasonable delays for treatment and remediation:** the importance of being timely informed and seeing grievances addressed with reasonable delays has been stressed extensively by local stakeholders. Communities are generally frustrated by the time taken, especially by administration and public authorities, to address any of their demands. Guaranteeing the respect of reasonable delays will thus be a key criterion for success;
- **Effectiveness:** the mechanism's effectiveness is perceived as its ability to provide lasting responses to cases of rights violations in cocoa-growing communities. In addition, participants in the study stressed the importance of imposing sanctions, but also and above all of making decisions on compensation for damages. These elements will contribute to strengthening the trust of rural communities.

D. Guaranteeing confidentiality and transparency

Confidentiality and transparency are extensively stressed as crucial elements to relevant grievance mechanisms, both in regulations and international frameworks (like UNGPs) as well as in the literature:

- **Confidentiality:** complainants and those affected by a complaint are entitled to confidentiality. This is particularly important to avoid further prejudice and retaliation. Where necessary, the anonymity of complainants should be protected, and measures should be put in place for sensitive complaints. To this end, the system must reassure complainants that the number of people who have access to the information is limited. Files must be kept in a secure place to prevent any inadvertent or unauthorized disclosure of information. Information kept for monitoring purposes should be anonymized wherever possible. It is also suggested to use the pilot phase to **develop an anti-retaliation policy with a safeguarding expert**;
- **Transparency:** stakeholders shall be sufficiently informed about the procedure for accessing the mechanism. To this end, the mechanism establishes an obligation to communicate on its operation and to systematically inform complainants once their complaint has been processed and through the different stages (*through the notification system – see section II.4.C*).

Additionally, and based on the experience of other mechanisms, this feasibility study identified the relevance of **transparency regarding all the grievances entering the system**. While **maintaining confidentiality and protecting personal and sensitive data**, the mechanism could **publish some key information on its activities** (volume of grievances, topic, status, resolution rate, etc.) to be shared with the public. This could be integrated, for example, into the reports developed twice a year by the Project Manager.





IV. MAIN RISKS FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Risk	Description	Mitigation measures
Corruption	Despite significant improvement ¹³ over the past decade, corruption remains a challenge in the country. It persists both in the administration and in traditional authorities, especially when it comes to the management of natural resources.	Mobilization of institutions in charge of good governance
Weak coercive power of traditional authorities' decisions in some areas	In some villages, customary authorities do not (or no longer) have sufficient authority to impose their decisions on individuals.	Peaceful management of complaints (mediation, conciliation, arbitration, etc.) Establishment of a system to monitor implementation of decisions
Non-adoption and endorsement of the mechanism by the State	Implementation of the mechanism remains dependent on the State's willingness to take part in the process, especially in the cocoa sector. Thus, refusal to adopt it and to get involved greatly compromises the chances of its deployment in communities.	Advocacy with state authorities at the highest level (Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of the Interior, CCC)
Development of competing mechanisms	In line with increasingly stringent environmental and social requirements, industry players are developing individual complaint management mechanisms. There is therefore a significant risk of competition and confusion between these mechanisms.	Consultation, involvement and alignment of all players in the cocoa industry
Low community ownership of the mechanism	Evaluations of the implementation of some existing grievance mechanisms in rural communities have revealed the challenge of appropriation by the population.	Mass and local information and awareness-raising Involvement of existing conflict management bodies
Lack of sustainable funding	The implementation of the grievance mechanism requires the use of material and financial resources to carry out its activities. If funding is not forthcoming, the mechanism cannot continue to operate.	Strong commitment from the cocoa industry Mobilizing co-funding and thinking through long-term funding strategy
Lack of alignment within the cocoa industry and reluctance to address grievances collectively	A cross-company grievance mechanism requires a certain level of alignment among companies participating, as well as a willingness to take responsibility collectively, especially when traceability is lacking.	Strong alignment work prior to implementation Continuous work of the steering structure to engage the industry

13 Evolution of the corruption index in Côte d'Ivoire by Transparency International:
<https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/c%C3%B4te-divoire>

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V. TECHNOLOGICAL ASPECTS

The implementation of the cross-company grievance mechanism presented in this report requires identifying a **technological solution or develop it, especially to host the grievance recording platform and allow (1) reception, recording, triage, and re-direction** of grievances by the technical experts **(2) data visualization and access to grievances** for cocoa industry members.

Three organizations that could provide this technological solution and that have been involved in a similar field of expertise have been identified. The three of them confirmed:

- the **overall technical feasibility** of the cross-company grievance mechanism proposed in this report;
- the easiness to **provide data visualization solutions and generate dashboards** for companies to access all the information on grievances;
- the possibility to put in place a **notification and acknowledgment of receipt system**;
- the necessity to address the questions of **servers, data hosting** and **data security/compliance** (GDPR and other regulations), as well as the associated costs.

Three different organizations were interviewed during the study, and an analysis of their strengths and weaknesses was conducted.

Based on this first analysis, **one of the three organizations** appears as a relevant potential partner as they have a very comprehensive understanding of the local context and a strong focus on adoption. However, we recommend asking **the three organizations (and potentially others) for financial and technical offers at the beginning of the pilot.**





VI. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

A **pre-pilot phase** will be necessary to clarify relevant issues, present the output of the study to different actors, align on specific critical topics, and engage cocoa companies for participation and funding of the pilot. This phase will allow to refine the proposal and prepare a proposal for funding application.

The pre-pilot will be followed by a **24-month pilot** in order to test the cross-company grievance mechanism in one sub-prefecture. In this perspective, an implementation plan, including key steps to undertake, was developed.

The pilot would be implemented in **one sub-prefecture and 5 villages**, and divided into **three phases**:

- The first 6 months would be dedicated to recruiting the coordination and technical teams and experts, developing all the necessary documents and policies, the technological solution, and actively engaging with national authorities, cocoa companies and civil society organizations;
- The next 6 months would be dedicated to testing and finetuning the technology, as well as engaging in capacity building, training, awareness raising and local stakeholder engagement to prepare the selected area for roll-out;
- Finally, the second year would correspond to the implementation of the pilot mechanism in the selected area, and end with an evaluation of the pilot's impact, success and challenges.

After this evaluation, a national scale-up could be envisioned and build on lessons learnt from the pilot.



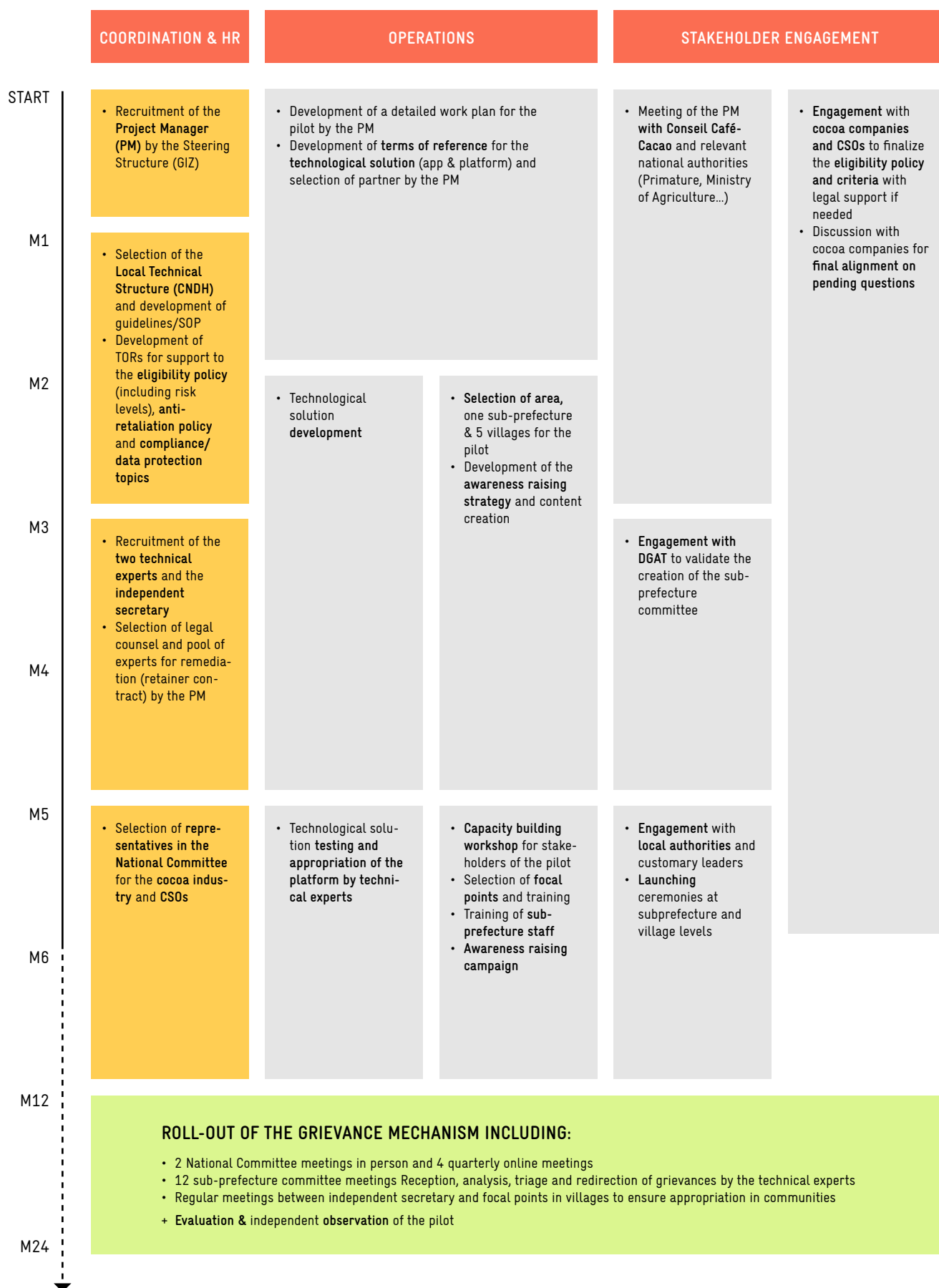


Figure 5: Proposal of roll-out for a 24-months pilot to test the cross-company grievance mechanism

VII. BUDGET ASPECTS

1. Pilot

As part of the feasibility study, it is key to evaluate whether the proposal of a cross-company grievance mechanism would be feasible from a financial point of view. This budget for the **24-month pilot** was drafted based on the implementation plan in section VI.

It is based on conversations with local stakeholders and other grievance mechanisms as well as the consortium's experience and knowledge of costs in Côte d'Ivoire.

Cost category	Main items	Cost (over 24 months)
Project Coordination – Steering Structure	Wages and equipment for Project Manager	111,516 €
Field Missions for Project Manager (5)	Transport, Accommodation, Per diems	3,659 €
External support – Steering Structure	Consulting fees for legal support, pool of experts for remediation and development of policies (eligibility, anti-retaliation)	80,000 €
Project Coordination – Technical Structure	Wages and equipment for the two Technical Experts, accountant support, and independant secretary (1)	149,918 €
Technology, app development & back stopping*	System development, data hosting and servers, SMS for notifications and backstopping for a year	60,522 €
Local stakeholder engagement mission Connecting with local authorities	Car rent, Accommodation, Per-diems	1,616 €
Capacity building workshop	Trainer fees, accommodation/food/transport, room rent, material	10,923 €
Awareness Raising and Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ceremonies at village and sub-prefecture level (rental, transport, food, material, per-diems, translation, sounds) Sensitization material development and printing, Radio campaign 	19,864 €
Operational Costs at village, sub-prefecture and national levels	Tablets, Remuneration of focal points, Communication and transport fees for agents, fees for investigation, logistics in villages, sub-prefecture committee meetings organization (sub-prefecture and national)	29,362 €
Evaluation of the pilot/independant observation	Third-party evaluation of the pilot by consultant and/or CSOs (fees and field costs)	7,340 €
Admin fees/overheads for the steering structure		33,230 €
Admin fees/overheads for the technical structure		21,168 €
Total pilot budget		529,120 €

The detailed budget file is available upon request.

* Costs for technology development vary significantly from one company to another (some of them have the existing technology that will only require adaptations, and others have to develop it). This cost is considered as an average that should be enough for a robust system. It is mainly based on conversations with one interviewed software and service provider.

2. Orders of magnitude for national scale up

After the pilot phase of 24 months, a **scale-up at the national level could be envisioned** and combine private and public funding.

Indeed, scaling the pilot at the country level requires significant initial investment and an annual operating budget since the proposed mechanism relies on a decentralized setup, involving multiple stakeholders. This framework was however unanimously recognized as appropriate, relevant, additional, and highly likely to be considered legitimate and trustworthy by beneficiaries – contrary to most grievance mechanisms in place.

Since it could benefit other supply chains, and the State, **co-funding opportunities should be identified** and discussed during the pilot phase, so that the financial weight on the cocoa industry remains reasonable. Specifically, if the proof of concept has worked, the budget part dedicated to the mechanism at sub-prefecture level could be covered by the State.

The budget of this scale-up has been divided between the **launching phase cost** (with fixed costs) and the **annual cost** after launching. **The launching phase cost** considers that some costs have already been covered during the pilot: technological solution developed, material bought, training content developed, etc. As a result, it only considers additional costs to extend the grievance mechanism to the entire cocoa-production area. Out of the 67 departments, 320 sub-prefectures and 4930 villages in the cocoa-producing area of Côte d'Ivoire, it has been considered for the national scale up that 50 departments, 250 sub-prefectures and 2000 villages would accept to participate to the mechanism and have the level of readiness.

Scaling up to the rest of the country is estimated to cost 8 to 9 million euros for the first year. This rather high cost can be explained by the wide geographical scope, and significant operating costs to ensure a decentralized, efficient and trustworthy system for beneficiaries.

After this launching phase, which would allow to lay solid foundations, the **annual budget** to run the cross-company mechanism in the whole country is estimated to decrease to **6 to 6.5 million euros**. The main drivers of costs are operational and aim at paying for focal points at the village level and cover for sub-prefecture committee members' per diems.

The pilot will be the opportunity to finetune cost hypothesis, look for cost efficiencies and co-fundings. Also, it could lead to the adaptation of the mechanism itself which could generate additional budget reductions. Finally, other agricultural supply chains could be invited to join the mechanism (ex: coffee, palm oil, rubber) which would further reduce the financial cost for funders.

3. Alternative option for reduced cost

The budget presented above is based on the cross-company grievance mechanism proposal detailed in this report. It reflects a system that was considered most relevant, adapted to local realities while matching the criteria that led to performing this feasibility study.

However, there could be an alternative where it would be decided to only put in place a system with various channels for farmers to complain (App, SMS, Calls), a platform to record the grievances and all grievances re-directed to the cocoa industry. There would be no focal points in villages nor work with the sub-prefecture. All grievances would be addressed to cocoa companies directly. Awareness raising in villages about the existence of the mechanism would still be put in place.

With this alternative option, the **pilot over 24 months** would cost approximately **350,000 EUR**, and national scale-up annual cost would be between **800,000** and **1,000,000 EUR** per year.

RISOME and Audace **do not recommend this option** that would be very similar to existing grievance mechanisms put in place by companies and fail to address their shortcomings. It would also ignore local realities and traditions, and thus not be adapted to the cocoa context in Côte d'Ivoire.



VIII. EXPECTED INDUSTRY ALIGNMENT

This feasibility study aimed at evaluating the possibility of developing a cross-company mechanism in the cocoa sector in Côte d'Ivoire, and this report provides recommendations for implementation (operational, governance and financial aspects). However, **before moving to an implementation phase, a couple of topics will require further alignment** and discussion within the cocoa industry. The latter cannot be addressed solely by external stakeholders as they are linked to individual company strategies and supply chain information/company policies.

These questions have been shared with cocoa companies from the Steering Committee of this feasibility study:

1. Traceability of complaints

A. Context

In order to hold companies accountable, the mechanism would need to link a complaint with a (or a couple of) supply chains.

There seem to be 3 main options (that are complementary):

- Traceability of the complaint up to the farmers: appears complex and not applicable to all cases. Indeed, this would require, obtaining from a complainant's name (or if available, a farmer code) the corresponding buying company. And would be even worse for non-members of cooperatives, workers, family members;
- Traceability of the complaint up to the cooperative: should be feasible when farmers are part of a cooperative. A complaint could thus be linked with one or a few companies sourcing from the cooperative, and facilitate the preservation of anonymity;
- Traceability up to the landscape: it consists of displaying respective areas of sourcing, jointly bearing the responsibility of complaints in such areas, and engaging in joint prevention AND remediation.

B. Questions

- Are companies able and willing to share their traceability data?
- Could georeferencing for EUDR purposes be leveraged?
- What are the legal constraints and possibilities to share data on the companies' side?
- What is the estimated % of untraced volumes? What do companies propose to link with complainants in this case (+ also when complainants are not registered in companies' databases, such as farm workers + when complaints are anonymous)?

While participating companies agreed to share traceability information up to cooperatives (already public in some cases), it remains unclear how to manage grievances that are not traceable – for example, when the farmer does not belong to a cooperative or when the grievance arises from another type of complainant such as a farm worker.

Involving more companies sourcing from the pilot regions will help trace grievances back to the latter but it is likely some will remain untraced.

2. Remediation

A. Context

Building on the above and depending on the degree of alignment on sharing traceability information, companies need to align on a remediation strategy. For example, as part of the cross-company grievance mechanism of the German Coffee Association, companies decide for each case that reaches the National Committee if they want a joint or separate remediation processes.

B. Questions

- Do companies know what is needed to fulfill their HRDD – in terms of remediation? What frameworks are they using within their companies? E.g. Consumer Goods Forum, Accountability Framework, etc.
- What is needed for better common understanding and level playing field:
 - » Across companies;
 - » Within companies (e.g. procurement, sustainability, risk teams).
- To what extent do companies agree to outsource remediation to sub-prefecture¹⁴ committees as a first option (provided it does not involve a financial/material indemnity)? Are there other considerations or conditions?
- If remediation requires funding (ex: compensation of unpaid minimum price or premium), would companies agree to delegate some budget to the hosting organization for remediation at the local level?
- Are there risks that companies want to remediate directly (ex: child labor)? Which ones? Why? How?
- Would companies be willing to engage in joint prevention and/or remediation? In which cases or what would be the decision criteria?

Additional topics will require alignment but could be clarified **during the pilot.**

3. Governance

A. Context

Once the cross-company grievance mechanism is up and running, companies' major involvement would be as part of the National Committee (NC).

While the setup has to be discussed with other stakeholders to make sure all members are comfortable, it would be helpful to better understand the companies' expectations. For example, in other cross-company grievance mechanisms pilots, the ability for companies to dedicate regular time has been challenging.

NC meetings could consist of two in-person (TBC depending on how companies want to be represented) meetings per year, as well as ad hoc meetings in case of serious violations with relevant parties. The NC committee could also mainly be a venue for discussion and collective learning, while remediation is delegated to a panel of experts who will build a remediation plan.

B. Questions

- Representation in the NC:
 - » How do companies want to be represented in the committee: by someone from their HQ and/or someone from Côte d'Ivoire?
 - » Would companies agree to be represented by X representatives of the private sector?
- To what extent would they agree to discuss escalated complaints with other companies and representatives of NGOs and the public sector?
- Would representatives from the private sector be based in Côte d'Ivoire in order to meet physically?
- Frequency of NC meetings: how often would companies be able to meet? Every quarter, semester, annually?

¹⁴ Sub-prefectures are the fourth-level administrative subdivisions of the country (below: district, region, department). There are currently 510 sub-prefectures, one can be in charge of 5 to 40 villages.

4. Additionality with companies' grievance mechanisms

A. Context

Most companies have set up (or are currently working on) a grievance mechanism specific to their supply chain. To facilitate farmers' engagement and the success of the cross-company mechanism, we should ideally avoid having different possibilities for filing a complaint.

B. Questions

- To what extent are companies willing to rely on the cross-company grievance mechanism for collecting grievances? Would they keep their own internal grievance mechanism in parallel?
- If companies maintain their internal grievance mechanism, would companies agree to report on the direct grievances they receive to encourage transparency and collaboration?
- Are there specific needs that should be met by the mechanism to answer potential companies' fears/doubts?

5. Formalization of a risk eligibility policy

A. Context

The cross-company grievance mechanism is based on remediation as close to the source as possible, for efficiency and promptness purposes. It would rely on a clear process that would also involve reporting and escalation (when relevant) to the National Committee where companies would sit. Consequently, companies would receive regular reporting of complaints as well as escalated complaints with some delay, inherent to the mechanism. Companies expressed the need to be informed of serious violations as soon as possible (ex: forced labor).

B. Questions

- Which risks should be considered serious violations?
- To what extent do companies want to be involved in remediating those cases? Direct remediation by companies? Training of focal points to remedy serious violations on behalf of companies?

How to deal with non-traceable farmers/workers? Direct escalation to the National Committee if serious? Management at landscape/regional level if not?

ANNEXES

1. Case Studies for Grievances with the proposed cross-company mechanism

Case 1: Delays in cocoa payment (Remediation at sub-prefecture level)

Context: Mr Koffi is a cocoa farmer from the Babikro village (sub-prefecture of Kouamakan – CCC delegation of Divo), member of COOP-CAB, selling all their cocoa to the trader Kokoaci. For this season, he has collected 4 bags of cocoa, and brought them to the cooperative warehouse already 1 month ago. However, he still has not received payment.

Leveraging existing conflict resolution body: cooperatives	Mr Koffi went to the cooperative PCA (president of the board) to complain, but the PCA told him he could not do anything for the moment as he had not received money from Kokoaci.
In the absence of resolution by the cooperative, soliciting the village focal point	Mr Koffi decides to go to the focal point of Babikro, secretary of the chief. The focal point records Mr Koffi's complaints in the Grievance Recording Platform Mobile App, indicating "no remediation at village level" because the village chief said he could not do anything.
Since the grievance cannot be settled at village level, it is escalated to the sub-prefecture	The week after, the secretary in charge of Divo receives a report from the grievance recording platform indicating 3 grievances to address in the Kouamakan Sub-prefecture (Mr Koffi's one and two others). He scheduled a Kouamakan's sub-prefecture grievance committee meeting the following week. At the committee, COOP-CAB management team, Babikro's village chief and the CCC are invited to deal with Mr Koffi's grievance, as well as himself. During the meeting, COOP-CAB indicates that since Mr Koffi's grievance two weeks ago, they have received money from Kokoaci and they have been able to pay him yesterday, which is confirmed by Mr Koffi. The secretary records remediation and sends the information back to the grievance recording platform.
As the grievance has been recorded in the Platform, it is part of the reporting received by the National Committee Members	Two months later, during the National Grievance Committee, Mr Koffi's grievance is included in the topics to be discussed and Kokoaci is informed about difficulties of cooperatives to pay farmers on time.

Case 2: Forced Labour (Remediation at national committee level)

Context: An anonymous complaint is recorded directly in the platform through a phone call. It highlights several cases of forced labor in two neighboring villages of Kouamakan sub-prefecture.

Triggering of an emergency alert through the platform	As "forced labour" has been identified as an emergency high-risk topic, as soon as the grievance enters the platform, the two technical experts highlight it and all National Committee Members receive an alert. At the same time, the secretary having Kouamakan sub-prefecture in his scope also receives an emergency alert in order to organize a committee meeting ASAP.
Organizing of an emergency sub-prefecture committee meeting	The secretary organizes a sub-prefecture committee meeting during which the cases of forced labour in the two villages are discussed. A local representative of ICI is part of the meeting. However, he mentions that unfortunately ICI does not work in those two villages, nor with the two cooperatives buying cocoa in those villages. As a result, the independent secretary mentions in the platform that the case should be escalated at national level.
The Project Manager organizes the preparation of remediation at National Level	As soon as an emergency alert is received by National Committee members and once it is confirmed that the case could not be solved at sub-prefecture level, the Project Manager decides to organize an emergency online meeting for the National Committee. Cocoa companies representatives decide that there is no need to involve the lawyer to review eligibility as this is a serious violation of human rights, and decide to go for collective remediation as the grievance was anonymous and many of them source cocoa in the area.
Experts are consulted to develop a remediation plan	The project manager consults specific experts on the topic (for example ICI) and ask them to develop a remediation plan that will be funded collectively by companies in the two villages.

2. Interview list

N°	Organization	Date
1	ICI	20/07/2023
2	Fair Trade Germany	25/07/2023
3	Hamburger Stiftung für Wirtschaftsethik	25/07/2023
4	Nestlé Germany	25/07/2023
5	Rainforest Alliance	25/07/2023
6	Rainforest Alliance	25/07/2023
7	Synapci	25/07/2023
8	IDEF	28/07/2023
9	INADES	28/07/2023
10	CNDH	31/07/2023
11	Inkota	09/08/2023
12	ICI	09/08/2023
13	Global Fund to End Modern Slavery	10/08/2023
14	ICCO	08/08/2023
15	Search for Common Ground	22/08/2023
16	Ulula	20/09/2023
17	Ulula	06/10/2023
18	PUR	11/10/2023
19	Solidaridad	13/10/2023
20	Doo!	18/10/2023
21	REDD+	23/10/2023
22	Solidaridad	23/10/2023
23	FairTradeAfrica	24/10/2023
24	ICT4DEV	03/11/2023
25	Mondelez	03/11/2023
26	ICT4DEV	11/01/2024
27	GIZ Human Rights team	19/01/2024
28	Ear4U	22/01/2024
29	Ulula	23/01/2024
30	CNDH	25/01/2024
31	CNDH	02/05/2024
32	SpeakUp	12/03/2024
33	FairTrade Africa	12/03/2024



3. Field missions & Consultation Workshops

Field Mission in Divo – August 2023

The field mission, held from August 1 to 4, 2023, was part of the first phase of the study, which aimed at complementing the risk analysis, as well as identifying the impacts and probability of the most likely risks that could be associated with a grievance mechanism. This mission was performed in the Divo Area, villages of Datta and Bouboudi, and involved consultations with local stakeholders and communities, including local authorities, traditional chiefs, cooperatives, cocoa producers and community representatives.

More precisely, the field mission was organized as follows:

Date	Activities	Location
01/08/2023	Travel from Abidjan to Divo	
	Greetings to the Prefect of the Department	Divo
	Interview with the Director of Agriculture	Divo
	Interview with ANADER officials	Divo
	Interview with Conseil Café Cacao officials	Divo
	Interview with officials of the Regional Human Rights Commission	Divo
02/08/2023	Interviews with traditional chiefs and leaders of lineages	Datta
	Focus group discussion with cocoa producers	Datta
	Focus group discussion with women	Datta
	Interview with youth representatives/ community leaders	Datta
	Interview with the sub-prefect of Divo	Divo
	Interview with CAUD Cooperative leaders	Divo
03/08/2023	Interview with traditional chiefs and lineage chiefs	Bouboudi
	Focus group discussion with cocoa producers	Bouboudi
	Focus group discussion with women	Bouboudi
	Interview with youth representatives/ community leaders	Bouboudi
	Interview with CPACD Cooperative leaders	Hermankono Dies
04/08/2023	Interview with the sub-prefect	Guitry
	Interview with the Director of Agriculture	Guitry
	Travel from Guitry to Abidjan	



Local Stakeholders Workshop in Divo – October 2024

The local stakeholders workshop, held in Divo on October 26, 2023, aimed at consulting local stakeholders to co-design a concept of cross-company grievance mechanism in the cocoa sector. The main objectives were to:

- Test ideas, questions and processes (the roles, interactions and implications) related to grievance mechanisms;
- Co-design a concept based on the strengths and weaknesses of existing grievance/conflict management systems;
- Identify the components of a fair and legitimate grievance mechanism capable of building and maintaining trust;
- Inform, involve and prepare local stakeholders for implementation.

The workshop was attended by 34 participants and organized around three main activities:

- Case studies on current grievance processes and habits with 4 different situations (delay in Cocoa payment, Non-respect of workers' salaries, Illegal tree harvesting in farms and Child labour);
- A brainstorming session on three different themes: recommended means to file grievances; stakeholders to involve at village, sub-prefecture and national level; critical elements required for the success of a grievance mechanism;
- Testing ideas for the grievance mechanism and collecting feedback.

Each of these sessions was followed by either plenary or question-and-answer rounds, where participants had the opportunity to present their group work, raise questions or comment on the mechanism.





Field Mission in Agnibilékrou – January 2024

This field mission took place from January 10th to 12th, 2024 in order to review and validate the proposed mechanism with various stakeholders. Its aim was to:

- present the different elements of the mechanism;
- gather feedback from the various local stakeholders on the feasibility.

Date	Activities
10/01/2024	Travel from Abidjan to Agnibilékrou
	Submission of interview request letters to the Coffee and Cocoa Council, Ministry of Water and Forestry, Agriculture Department
	Meeting with Anonklon cooperative
11/01/2024	Focus Group Discussion with Community leaders and Producers
	Meeting with deputy prefect of Agnibilékrou department
	Meeting with the royal court of indénié djuablin
12/01/2024	Meeting with the Coffee and Cocoa Council as well as the Ministry of Water and Forestry
	Travel back from Agnibilékrou to Abidjan

Field Mission in Bloléquin – January 2024

This field mission took place from January 16th to 19th, 2024 in order to review and validate the proposed mechanism with the various stakeholders. Its aim was to:

- present the different elements of the mechanism;
- gather feedback from the various local stakeholders on the feasibility.

Date	Activities
16/01/2024	Travel From Abidjan to Guiglo Submission of interview request letters to the Coffee and Cocoa Council in Duekoué * Attempted interviews with the CCC in Duekoué declined as the CCC's executive director requested that discussions be held with them first.
17/01/2024	Meeting with Ecablo cooperative in Bloléquin, deputy prefect of Bloléquin and Agriculture Department
18/01/2024	Focus Group Discussion with community leaders and Producers in Dépouta Meeting with Ministry of Water and Forest
19/01/2024	Travel back from Guiglo to Abidjan





Workshop in Abidjan for the presentation of the cross-company grievance mechanism – February 2024

This workshop was held in Abidjan on February 29, 2024, as part of the last phase of stakeholder consultation to finalize the proposal. The objectives of this workshop were to:

- Present the mechanism to Ivorian players in the cocoa sector;
- Gather feedback on a few key points of the mechanism;
- Discuss some key issues to make the proposed mechanism feasible;
- Get some initial ideas on how to implement the grievance mechanism.

41 participants attended the workshop, from inland towns such as Guiglo, Divo, Agnibilékrou and others, as well as from

Abidjan and outside the country. It was divided into four main sessions:

- Presentation of the proposed grievance mechanism;
- Comments and feedback on specific aspects of the proposed grievance mechanism through group work on four different themes;
- Brainstorming on key issues to make the proposal feasible with three working groups: Involvement of companies in the mechanism at various levels (sub-prefectoral and national) and in remediation; Interaction with existing complaint resolution systems (within cooperatives, within committees); Involvement of civil society in the mechanism;

- Collective reflection on the potential implementation of the mechanism via the following themes: Hosting structure for the mechanism and stakeholders involved; Awareness and communication strategy for the mechanism; Involvement and commitment of state actors.

Each of these sessions was followed by either plenary or question-and-answer rounds, where participants had the opportunity to present their group work, raise questions or comment on the mechanism.

Deliverables

The following deliverables on the field missions and workshop have been shared with Steering Committee Member and are available for consultation:

- 20230921_Risk_Analysis;
- 20231106_Workshop Divo Report _EN;
- 2402_Steering_Committee_Meeting presentation containing reports on field mission to Agnibilékrou and Bloléquin;
- 240306_Key Takeaways Workshop_EN.

4. Documentation and benchmark

Document Type	Author	Document Name	Year
Legal/regulatory document	Bundestag	Act on Corporate Due Diligence Obligations for the Prevention of Human Rights Violations in Supply Chains	2021
	United Nations	Guiding principles on business and human rights	2011
Study report	SÜDWIND Institute	Guide to conducting risk analyses for cocoa producing countries	2021
	Ergon	A study on the implementation of grievance mechanisms: Reviewing practice across RA-certified farms and groups	2023
	SIADES	Study on the development of a complaints and appeals mechanism for the REDD+ process	2016
	SÜDWIND Institute	Prices in the cocoa value chain – causes and effects	2018
	Mighty Earth	Chocolate's dark secret	2017
	World Bank Group	IN THE CACAO COUNTRY: how to transform Côte d'Ivoire	2019
	GISCO	Child labour in the cocoa sector in West Africa	2022
	UNICEF	Children's rights in the cocoa-growing areas of Côte d'Ivoire	2018
	Customer Earth	Legal and institutional framework for cocoa production and trade in Côte d'Ivoire	2022
Project reports	ICI	Forced Labor Innovation Pilot Project – Lessons from Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana	2022
	ICI	ICI's tested Grievance Mechanism in Ghana – An overview	2023
	ICI	ICI subgroup on forced labour	2023
Working or discussion paper	Inkota	CSO Discussion Paper	2023
	Inkota	Making Grievance Mechanisms Feasible for Smallholder Farming Households	2023
	Rainforest Alliance	Response to the Ergon report	2023
	Inkota	An Effective System for Grievances and Remedy in Transnational Supply Chains	2022



Others mechanisms or specialized guidelines were analyzed as well:

Document/Mechanism Name	Author	Year	Brief content description
A Guide to Designing and Implementing Grievance Mechanisms for Development Projects	The Office of the Compliance Advisor	2008	This document highlights the importance of grievance mechanisms in reducing project risks and providing communities with a reliable means of voicing their concerns about development projects. It describes the four phases of designing and implementing effective grievance mechanisms, namely defining scope and objectives, designing the mechanism, implementing it, and monitoring and learning on an ongoing basis to ensure continuous improvement and effectiveness.
Remedying human rights grievances in the supply chain- Guidance on grievance management for buyers of agricultural commodities	Proforest	2023	This guide focuses on grievance management in agricultural commodity sourcing, and offers recommendations to downstream and midstream companies for dealing with issues upstream of their supply chain, covering basic principles, handling procedures and supplier support.
Cross-Company grievance mechanism in the Automotive Sector in Mexico	GIZ	started in 2021	GIZ has launched a cross-company grievance mechanism in the Mexican automotive sector, mainly involving German companies. It involves a partner organization in Mexico that handles complaints and investigations, a group of experts for complex cases, and GIZ engaging with German companies. A multi-stakeholder steering committee oversees the mechanism and selects the experts.
Ear4U	German Coffee Association	2023	A cross-company grievance mechanism in the coffee sector using GRAS to manage grievances received via the SpeakUp application. Companies have access only to the grievances assigned to them, and decide jointly or separately according to criteria, with a legal check to ensure compliance and recommendations for connecting to national grievance systems.
Palm Grievance Procedure	Cargill	2019	Cargill has a company-specific, RSPO-complaint grievance mechanism for its operations and suppliers, and uses the Ethics Open Line for general complaints. Decisions are made on the basis of public procedures, and the engagement of experts enables grievances to be handled with structured advice on actions and compliance.
Fairwear complaints procedures	FairWear	2018	A membership-based complaints system for workers in major garment-producing countries, ensuring transparency and shared responsibility between member brands and factories. The system includes appeals handled by Fair Wear's Executive Board and measures to protect complainants' anonymity and mitigate retaliation risks.
Accountability Framework Initiatives Access to Remedy	Accountability Framework Initiatives	2019, revised in May 2023	The accountability framework consists of core principles, operational guidance and definitions. The operational guidance documents provided by AFI offers detailed instructions on various topics to help companies effectively implement their ethical supply chain commitments and policies.
Grievance Mechanism Maturity Framework & Guidance	AIM Progress	2022	This document offers companies guidance on implementing grievance mechanisms in four stages aligned with AIM-Progress' human rights maturity levels. It covers governance, establishment, implementation and evaluation, and serves as a reference tool for improving both one's own operations and suppliers' grievance mechanisms.
OHCHR Accountability and Remedy Project (ARP): Meeting the UNGPs' Effectiveness Criteria	United Nations Human Rights Office of the high commissioner	2021	This note provides a simplified version of the ARP guidance, highlighting how private mechanisms, such as operational-level grievance mechanisms, can fulfill the effectiveness criteria outlined in the United Nations Guiding Principles (UNGP).
Non-judicial Grievance Mechanisms in Global Supply Chains Recommendations for Institutionalisation, Implementation and Procedural Design	Ulla Gläßer, Robert Pfeiffer, Dominik Schmitz and Helene Bond (Europa Universität Viadrina Frankfurt)	2021	This summary provides an overview of the objectives, methodological approach and results of a research project commissioned by the Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection. It focuses on the design of non-judicial grievance mechanisms in global supply chains and provides a practical roadmap and suggestions for future research.
ICI Grievance Mechanism Pilot in Ghana	ICI	2023	It aims at enhancing working conditions and sustainability in cocoa production by addressing grievances through traditional dispute resolution systems and engaged committees. Sustainability of the initiative relies on resolving incentive-related challenges.

Case study: REDD+ Grievance Mechanism in Côte d'Ivoire

In a 2016 study, SIADES proposed a grievance mechanism in the context of the REDD+ process in Côte d'Ivoire.

Such a grievance mechanism (*MGP – Mécanisme de Gestion des Plaintes*) was then put in place in some communities. RISOME interviewed the REDD+ team in order to ask for the lessons learned of this implementation and get some feedback on our initial grievance mechanism proposal.

The REDD+ MGP **relied on the traditional conflict management system** at village level and especially village chief and leaders. It created grievance management committees at village level, chaired by the village chief, composed of traditional leaders and representatives of youth and women

They adopted a decentralized system with committees at village, sub-prefecture, departmental and regional levels. When a grievance was not solved at village level, it would be escalated to the next administrative level.

Committees were supposed to gather only when they had grievances to address. Once they agreed upon the admissibility of the grievance (linked to the project), they had 7 days to address it.

Community members could file grievances directly through focal points in villages (*"rapporteur"*). There was no digital system nor platform, everything was **recorded manually**.

Today the MGP committees are supposed to be active but in reality they received very little grievance and people tend to refer directly to SODEFOR or REDD+ representatives.

Key take-aways from this implementation are:

- It is key to favor geographical accessibility for remediation and always rely on existing structures;
- A good archiving system is necessary, with exhaustive recording as well as notification of receipt;
- It is critical to invest sufficient resources in awareness raising and sensitization to make sure right holders are aware of the existence of the mechanism;
- The REDD+ MGP had severe financial issues. Budget was limited thus participation to committees was set on a voluntary basis, hence a very low participation;
- When topics are urgent, people tend to go directly to relevant structures rather than committees, because they fear it will take too much time. The success of a committee depends on its capacity to prove it can address grievances in a timely manner (and thus adequate financial resources for those committees);
- It is crucial to involve authorities in the management of grievances at local level as they are the one who have the power to settle many conflicts and address grievances, and they also have the authority.

Feedback on our proposal:

- Focal points are in charge of recording grievances but should not provide remediation. Focal points should be in permanent contact with communities and proactive (not only wait to receive grievances), they have a recording but also mediation role;
- Sub-prefecture committees will be efficient only if they can meet regularly;
- The delay to address grievances will be a challenge, once a month might create frustrations. A good notification/acknowledgment through a receipt system could address this challenge.

5. Risk Analysis

The first phase of the study led to developing an analysis of the human and environmental risks inherent in the cocoa sector in Côte d'Ivoire. You will find below extracts of this risk analysis.

Overview of sources of risk in the cocoa sector in Côte d'Ivoire

Through documentary resources, interviews with industry players and the field mission, as well as the experience of

RISOME and Audace Institut Afrique, sources of risk not mentioned in the report “*Guide to conducting risk analyses for cocoa producing countries*” (Südwind) were identified or supplemented by contextual aspects. The aim is to identify all threats, i.e. elements with the potential to cause damage or risks.

The table below summarizes the risks identified in the supply chain, specifying those identified by the baseline study and the additional threats identified during this first phase of the study.

Risks related to production

Risk categories	Risks identified in the baseline study ¹⁵	Additional or complementary threats
Sources of human and social risk		
Child labor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than 800,000 children work in difficult conditions on cocoa plantations in Côte d'Ivoire. They are exposed to injuries and pesticides. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of school infrastructure: the remoteness of schools means that children have to work in their parents' fields. Low birth registration hampers school enrolment and encourages child labor
Forced labor and human trafficking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forced labor particularly affects adults in debt. Migrants are particularly hard hit, as are children. The cocoa sector is designated as an industry in which victims of human trafficking are used. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confiscation of identity documents The prevalence factors for forced labor identified by ICI are: migration, poverty, absence of written contracts and absence of birth certificates (unregistered births)
Working conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No employment contract No social protection Low remuneration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers do not have health insurance Non-compliance with remuneration stipulated in the employment contract or defined in an oral agreement. According to the village chief of Bouboudi, there are certain abuses in his village, notably unpaid workers after the harvest. “Sometimes the owner of the field sees that the production is going to be good, so he fires his worker so he doesn't have to give him part of the harvest.” This may be more common in the East of the country, where sharecropping contracts are more widespread.
Malnutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low incomes prevent good nutrition, especially for children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cocoa revenues are not regular, but based on 2 annual harvestings, creating periods of significant financial need that have a considerable impact on household food supplies. Predominant use of land by men for perennial crops such as cocoa, to the detriment of food crops grown mainly by women No school canteens The intensive use of chemical products exhausts the soil and reduces the quantity of food products: “Since there have been chemicals, there are no snails, no mushrooms to eat.” Food crops are no longer successful. Since they started pumping, the land has been destroyed.” Focus group with women from the village of Datta.
Health & Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact of pesticide use Insufficient information and protective equipment against the harmful effects of the pesticides used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several testimonies point to the dangers of chemical products used without the necessary precautions. “There have been cases of people poisoning themselves while pumping” Focus group of young people from the village of Datta. “There are illnesses caused by phytosanitary products. Women have more and more hip problems” Focus group with women from the village of Datta The sale of phytosanitary products that are not registered and/or prohibited Pesticides have an impact on the pollution of drinking water.
Gender-based discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great difficulty in accessing loans, training and inputs. Women plantation workers are paid less than men. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women have difficulty gaining access to land because they are generally denied land rights. Even when they do have access, it's for small areas of land for short periods of time, to be used for food crops. It's hard to get land for perennial crops when you're a woman.

¹⁵ This column recalls the risks identified and formulated as such in the report “Guide to conducting risk analyses for cocoa producing countries” (Südwind).

Risk categories	Risks identified in the baseline study ¹⁵	Additional or complementary threats
Land rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pressure on the land leads to land conflicts that hamper the exercise of certain fundamental rights. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of clarity in previous land tenure agreements: when ancestral agreements between natives and migrants are called into question, farmers become vulnerable, leading to tensions and complicated renegotiations. Unclear land rights (only 2% of rural land is certified) Expansion of perennial crops to the detriment of women's food plots: The boom in perennial crops means that women lack plots of land on which to grow their food crops (Focus group of indigenous women from the village of Bouboudi). Non-respect of land rights by loggers who cut timber species without the farmers' consent. Landless natives: In areas of high migration, it's not uncommon to find villages where natives are a demographic and economic minority. In most cocoa-growing areas, the natives have "sold" or "donated" all their land and no longer benefit from it. With extensive cultivation, cocoa is taking up more and more space. Some natives say they no longer have any plots of land, which is beginning to impact not only on women's food production, but also on young natives who no longer have plots of land available for their own farms. Exclusion of holders of customary land rights from the value chain: While indigenous holders of customary land rights make ancestral lands available to allochthonous and non-indigenous farmers through agreements based on modest sums, it is fair to say that indigenous people play an important role in the cocoa production chain, yet receive nothing. Their inclusion would clearly help reduce tensions between (almost landless) natives and allochthonous farmers. "In most cocoa-growing areas, the natives have made all their land available and no longer benefit from it. With growing unemployment, their children are returning to the village and no longer have any land. This is also the source of conflicts with migrant cocoa farmers. The indigenous people who have made the land available for cocoa cultivation should be taken into account in the value chain. Then, we need to decentralize the levy and dedicate part of it to the natives." Interview with the President of a farmers' union
Preserving protected areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many farmers grow cocoa in protected areas, and sometimes live with their family in these areas. Attempts to evict these populations are accompanied by human rights violations. 	
Productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Destruction of crops by loggers Crop damage by livestock. This type of damage is frequent, according to the village authorities surveyed: "The animals damage the trees and spoil the cocoa. Plantations close to camps suffer damage, especially to young pods, by domestic animals such as goats and goats." Datta chiefdom.
Cultural values and community heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occupation of community forests dedicated to worship for cocoa production "The natives are very attached to the forest, they keep more trees and have many sacred forests, but the non-natives are clearing them for cocoa plantations.
Sources of environmental risk		
1. Deforestation	Deforestation due to extensive cocoa cultivation: Cocoa has been grown on rich land resulting from the deforestation of ecosystem-rich primary forests. As a result of deforestation, changes in climate patterns have already been observed and will impact on the long-term viability of cocoa farming in certain regions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deforestation also leads to soil impoverishment and the disappearance of food sources such as mushrooms, snails, hornbills, squirrels, and other small animals (Focus group farmers from the village of Datta).
2. Weakening biodiversity	Pesticide use has negative impact on biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soil impoverishment due to the use of pesticides without sufficient training and information for users.

Risks related to commercialization

Risk categories	Risks identified in the baseline study ¹⁶	Additional or complementary threats
1. Farmer income	Cocoa farmers household incomes are inadequate, even below the poverty line.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The guaranteed minimum price for cocoa is too low. This is a point on which all players in the sector agree. There are delays in the payment of cocoa, which makes farmers vulnerable and gives rise to conflicts between workers and producers. Non-payment of production delivered by farmers and/or non-payment or opacity of premium management by cooperatives Problem of a mismatch between available certified volumes and demand for certified cocoa: demand for certified cocoa from export companies does not absorb the production of cooperatives: "Certification is an investment at a loss for cooperatives: more and more requirements but less and less market. Most Fairtrade cooperatives are unable to sell their entire production of certified cocoa" Interview with civil society.
2. Non-compliance with CCC guaranteed minimum price	Not mentioned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The situation, particularly the state of the tracks, makes cocoa collection difficult, leading some trackers to buy cocoa below the guaranteed minimum price. "The state announces the price without any accompanying measures. For example, there are no roads, which means that buyers who go to the camps to buy cocoa have their vehicles damaged. So they offer the price they want to the producers, who have no choice but to accept, given all the risks taken by the buyers". Testimonial from a farmers' union.
3. Lack of collective organization and malfunctions in the cocoa industry	Many farmers do not belong to a union that could defend them. Role of cooperatives limited to buying and selling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No cocoa industry inter-profession Shortcomings of the cooperative system in Côte d'Ivoire: A large number of cooperatives actually operate as private enterprises run by a single individual. Cooperative principles are not respected. "The cooperatives are essentially buying and selling outlets that take the form of cooperatives for tax reasons. There is no redistribution of profits, no respect for decisions taken at general meetings, and they rarely provide services to farmers" ICCO interview. We are also witnessing a fragmentation and multiplicity of cooperatives in the absence of powerful, efficient structures (e.g. South America). Opaque management of cooperatives: Certification premium fraud Testimony of the President of a farmers' union "There's also a form of fraud surrounding premiums linked to cocoa certification. There are collusions and bribes." Cases of late payment and non-payment Cases of detour of phytosanitary products Abuse of farmers by certain cooperatives: According to the CNDH, not only do cooperatives not always play their part, they can also be dishonest with farmers (theft of production – non-payment of premiums – recovery of farmers' land in repayment of loans).
4. Lack of infrastructure	Not mentioned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulty in transporting production due to poor roads. As a result, farmers are regularly subjected to lower prices from trackers, who have difficulty reaching the edge of the field. Testimony of the President of a farmers' union: "There are no roads, so the buyers who go to the camps to buy cocoa have their vehicles damaged. So they offer the price they want to the producers, who have no choice but to accept, given all the risks taken by the buyers."
5. Security	Not mentioned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extortion by security forces – Multiple roadblocks Increase in cases of cocoa theft in the fields, but especially during drying and transport.

¹⁶ This column recalls the risks identified and formulated as such in the report "Guide to conducting risk analyses for cocoa producing countries" (Südwind).

Analysis of identified risks

Once the risks and main threats in the cocoa sector have been identified, they will be analyzed through various criteria. The assessment of these criteria is intended to guide the development phase of the grievance mechanism, by anticipating issues likely to emerge and give rise to complaints. Although the mechanism must be open to all complaints and concerns of those who may have suffered harm (*see UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights – number 28*), it is important for the design phase to have the most common risk subjects in mind, to ensure that the right actors are involved in receiving and handling complaints, and to develop appropriate handling mechanisms. This analysis has therefore been carried out with a view to the second phase of this report, which consists of proposing a grievance management mechanism for the cocoa industry in Côte d'Ivoire.

In the first stage, the analysis criteria selected were **impact and occurrence**. Each criterion is estimated on a scale of 1 to 3.

- **The impact was** estimated using a qualitative approach, by observing the importance of the consequences for individuals, mainly through the prism of the feelings of the people affected themselves in relation to this risk. The feelings of the rights-holders emerged from a compilation of the results of the interviews and the field study.
- As for **occurrence**, this was also estimated using a qualitative approach based on the literature, the recurrence of this risk in interviews and during the field survey, and also including the RISOME and AIA teams' knowledge of the context.

The analysis also indicates **the populations most likely to be exposed to the risk**. Indeed, a risk may affect only part of the population, like women or indigenous people, etc. The aim of this identification is also to gain a better understanding of the populations concerned, and thus to provide input for the design of the mechanism, ensuring that it will be adapted to the populations affected.

Finally, the last column of the table presents **additional comments**, mainly an explanation of the **potential shortages of a complaint mechanism** to identify certain risks, due to cultural barriers, because the victim is not in a position to complain, or because these risks are not perceived as such by the victim populations.

The analysis shows great variability in the impact and occurrence of risks: some risks, although very worrying, appear to be relatively infrequent or came up little in the interviews and during the field mission. This assessment of occurrence is nevertheless impacted by the fact that the field mission was carried out in a single region, as well as by socio-cultural barriers linked to speaking of certain subjects. It also shows the variability of victims' perceptions of the impact and importance of risks: a subject such as child labor will very rarely be raised by the communities themselves, whereas subjects linked to income, cocoa purchasing practices or land rights are very recurrent. This variability will provide food for thought when it comes to the operationalization of a mechanism.

Risks related to production

Risk category	Risks	Impact			Occurrence			Population at risk	Additional comments
		1	2	3	1	2	3		
Human and social risks									
1. Child labor	Child labor			X		X		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Farmers' children• Working-class children	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children are not in a position to complain. They are less literate than adults, so it's difficult for them to access the mechanism, especially as they are vulnerable and not necessarily aware of their conditions.• This is a subject that NGOs and government bodies need to pay particular attention to.
	Insufficient school infrastructure			X			X	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Producers• Producers' children	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The lack of school infrastructure is observed in most communities, which are organizing themselves to build community schools using local materials.
	Low birth registration/ Unregistered births		X				X	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planter households	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents often refuse or are unable to register births. State bodies, school principals and teachers, and NGOs are raising awareness of this situation.

Risk category	Risks	Impact			Occurrence			Population at risk	Additional comments
		1	2	3	1	2	3		
2. Forced labor and human trafficking	Forced labor			X	X			• Farmers and farm workers	• Victims are not always in a position to complain, as they are in a weak position and under constraint and threat. They are illiterate and often lack identity documents. Nevertheless, there are ongoing pilot grievance mechanisms for forced labor, notably led by ICI.
	Confiscation of farm workers' identity documents			X	X			• farmers and farm workers	• In the context of forced labor, identity documents are sometimes confiscated to increase the vulnerability of workers. • The weak capacity of the people concerned to defend themselves makes the intervention of NGOs and state structures particularly important.
3. Working conditions	No employment contract for employees		X				X	• Agricultural employees • farmers	• The absence of a written contract or an oral contract with a witness is the subject of many abuses and complaints.
	No social protection for agricultural workers			X			X		
	Failure to pay agreed wages			X		X			
4. Malnutrition	Predominant use of land by men for perennial crops such as cocoa, to the detriment of food crops grown by women.		X			X		• Women producers	• Women's lack of access to land exacerbates their economic vulnerability and is a real development issue in communities, but because of the major social and cultural constraints, it is rarely the subject of official complaints by women
	The intensive use of chemicals depletes the soil and reduces the quantity of food grown.			X			X	• Village communities	
	No school canteens		X			X		• Children of farmers	
5. Health	Health effects of chemicals			X			X	• Village communities • farmers	• The misuse and mismanagement of pesticides can have a serious impact on the health of populations who are likely to complain if they are well informed. However, under extreme economic pressure, lack of knowledge and cocoa production conditions, farmers tend to want access to phytosanitary products and are unlikely to complain. In addition, it is difficult to establish a causal link and to determine who is to blame.
	Sale of unregistered or prohibited phytosanitary products		X			X		• Farmers • Cooperatives	• These products present a greater risk than registered products. However, farmers, out of ignorance and also attracted by the interesting and more advantageous price, resort to unregistered products or those prohibited within the framework of certification. • It is the duty of NGOs, cooperatives, administrations and companies to warn farmers of the dangers of these products.
	Water pollution by phytosanitary products		X			X		• Village communities • Producers	• The use and management of pesticides is a health and environmental risk that may give rise to complaints from farmers (when they are made aware of the issue), certification standards, NGOs and the CCC.
6. Gender discrimination	Difficulty for women to access loans, training and inputs		X			X		• Rural women	• Given the enormous social constraints, it is highly unlikely that these risks will be the subject of complaints by women who have mentally resigned themselves to their condition, but rather of dedicated advocacy and assistance programs by cooperatives, exporters and NGOs.
	Difficult access to land for women			X			X	• Women wishing to produce perennial crops	• This culturally-induced discrimination is an obstacle to women's long-term farming activities. However, given the lack of information on their rights, fears of undermining their relationship and social and mystical reprisals, women tend not to want to complain officially.

Risk category	Risks	Impact			Occurrence			Population at risk	Additional comments
		1	2	3	1	2	3		
7. Land rights	Growing land pressure			X			X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holders of customary land rights farmers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High land pressure, caused by the absence of land tenure documents (unsecured landholdings/illegal occupations), represents a real risk of conflict between farmers, populations and communities.
	Lack of clarity in previous land tenure agreements			X			X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alloctones Natives Migrant farmers (Allogenes) 	
	Non-respect of land rights by logging companies			X			X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holders of customary land rights Farmers 	
	Landless Natives			X		X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Native communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In most cocoa-producing areas, migration is so high that most of the land is occupied. Given the long lifespan of a cocoa plantation, the land market is frozen, blocking the exploitation of ancestral lands by indigenous people, particularly the new generation. This situation could give rise to complaints, especially as the natives feel frustrated and disempowered.
	Exclusion of customary land rights holders from the value chain			X			X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Native communities 	
8. Preservation of protected areas	Clearance of people infiltrating protected areas			X			X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General population Infiltrated farmers Natives of neighboring villages in the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many families living in these areas are affected by evictions that sometimes fail to respect human rights. Nevertheless, the known illegality of the occupation tends to encourage silence around this type of risk. A grievance mechanism will therefore be insufficient to identify and deal with them.
9. Productivity	• Destruction of crops by loggers		X			X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmers 	
	• Crop damage by livestock			X			X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmers 	
	• Misappropriation of chemical inputs	X			X			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> farmers Cooperatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agricultural inputs are distributed to producers and it is not transparent how beneficiary farmers are selected. There are risks of misappropriation of these products. This is a potential source of complaints.
10. Cultural values and community heritage	• Occupation of private community forests dedicated to religion or beliefs		X		X			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Native communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The subject is a sensitive one, particularly affecting autochtones communities.
Sources of environmental risk									
1. Deforestation	Impact of deforestation on microclimate and long-term cocoa-growing potential			X			X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Native communities General population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tree harvesting in cocoa plantations by loggers and the creation of new plantations are sources of deforestation. Changes in the microclimate have been observed. This situation is the subject of complaints from NGOs, certification standards and government bodies.
	Soil impoverishment			X			X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General population Natives of neighboring villages in the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is unlikely that this risk will be the subject of a direct complaint by farmers, as they lack knowledge of the consequences of deforestation, and are economically constrained to clearing land for their survival. This is a subject where NGOs have a strong role to play in identification and advocacy.
2. Weakening biodiversity	Degradation of biodiversity and consequences for cocoa farming and the living environment			X			X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> farmers Local communities Women farmers General population 	

Risks related to commercialization

Risk category	Risks	Impact			Occurrence			Population at risk	Additional comments
		1	2	3	1	2	3		
1. Farmers income	Farmers' incomes below the poverty line			X			X	• Farmers and their families	• NGOs, trade unions and ICCO can advocate and/or develop income-generating activities for producer households.
	Constantly low guaranteed minimum cocoa prices			X			X		• The low price per kilo of cocoa has been observed for several decades, aggravating the poverty of producers whose incomes are insufficient. A lasting solution can only be found at national level.
	Late payments		X			X		• Farmers	
	Opaque premium management		X			X			
	Mismatch between available certified volumes and demand for certified cocoa		X				X	• Farmers • Cooperatives	• This is a structural problem for the sector, the consequences of which fall not only on the farmers themselves, but primarily on the cooperatives, which are struggling to finance their certification.
2. Non-respect of the minimum price guaranteed by the Conseil Café Cacao	Failure of the Conseil Café Cacao to respect the guaranteed minimum price			X		X		• Farmers	• Non-compliance with the guaranteed minimum price set by the CCC is the subject of complaints from farmers and is attributable to certain cooperative managers, but above all to informal buyers (pisteurs). •
3. Lack of collective organization and industry malfunctions	No interprofessional organization of the cocoa sector			X		X		• Farmers • Cooperatives • Trade unions	
	Shortcomings of the cooperative system in Côte d'Ivoire		X				X	• Farmers • Cooperatives	• The vast majority of cooperatives only have the name but in reality are owned, by a handful of people with little or no management training and limit their activity to buying and selling. On the one hand, the managers of some cooperative are only interested in their own personal interests. • On the other hand, many farmers deliver to different cooperatives at the same time, depending on their interests and the loans they have taken out and not paid.
	Opaque management of cooperatives		X			X		• Farmers	• Farmers' lack of understanding of how premiums are calculated. • Some cooperatives abuse farmers and do not always pay them. Some demand arbitrary percentages of members' production for the running of the cooperative. Others take the liberty of recovering farmers' plantations for non-repayment of loans.
4. Lack of infrastructure	Damaged roads			X			X	• Communities • Farmers • Cooperatives • Buyers	• Producers, cooperatives and communities are lobbying the government about the deterioration of roads.
5. Security	Extortion by security forces			X			X	• Communities • Farmers • Transporters	• Extortion by the forces of law and order, reinforced by the multiplicity of roadblocks, is the subject of complaints from producers, cooperatives and transporters.
	Cocoa theft			X		X		• Farmers & Coops	

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIA	Audace Institut Afrique
ANADER	National Rural Development Support Agency
ARP	Accountability and Remedy Project
CCC	Conseil Café Cacao
CNDH	National Council for Human Rights
CSDDD	Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DDF	Due Diligence Fund
DGAT	General Directorate of Territorial Administration
EUDR	EU Deforestation Regulation
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GEPEX	Professional Group Of Coffee And Cocoa Exporters
GISCO	German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HRDD	Human Rights Due Diligence
HQ	Headquarters
ICCO	International Cocoa Organization
ICI	International Cocoa Initiative
LID	Living Income Differential
LTM	Land Tenure Management
MGP	Complaints Management Mechanism
Minader	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
NC	National Committee
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCA	President of the Board
PM	Project Manager
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation & forest Degradation
SODEFOR	Société de Développement des Forêts
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
UNGP	United Nations Guiding Principles
WCF	World Cocoa Foundation

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