International Labour Organization

Evaluation Office

i-eval Discovery

Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change for the Elimination of Child Labour in Cocoa-Producing Areas in Ghana

ILO DC/SYMBOL: GHA/24/02/JPN

Type of Evaluation: Project

Evaluation timing: Final

Evaluation nature: Independent

Project countries: Ghana

P&B Outcome(s): P&B 2024-25: Output 1.4

SDG(s): SDG 8.7, as well as SDGs 1 and 4.

Date when the evaluation was completed by the evaluator: 05 April 2026

Date when evaluation was approved by EVAL: 08 April 2026

ILO Administrative Office: CO-Abuja

ILO Technical Office(s): ROAF

Joint evaluation agencies: N/a

Project duration: March 2025 – March 2026

Donor and budget: Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1,500,000 USD

Name of consultant(s): Loes van der Graaf

Name of Evaluation Manager: Abderrahim El Moulat, REO

Evaluation Office oversight: Ricardo Furman

Evaluation budget: 16,051 USD

Key Words: Agriculture, child labour, income-generating activities, local economic development, poverty alleviation, training.

Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

List of Acronyms and abbreviations

ACCEL	Accelerating action for the elimination of child labour in supply chains in Africa
ACE	Action against Child Exploitation
CCPC	Community Child Protection Committee
CLFZ	Child Labour Free Zone
CRADA	Child Research for Action and Development Agency
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GAAPACL	Ghana Accelerated Action Plan Against Child Labour
GALAB	Global Accelerator Lab
GCLMS	Ghana Child Labour Monitoring System
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ILS	International Labour Standards
IP	Implementing Partners
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NPC	National Project Coordinator
NPO	National Project Officer
NSCCL	National Steering Committee on Child Labour
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
ROAF	Regional Office for Africa (of ILO)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SMC	School Management Committee
TICAD	Tokyo International Conference on African Development
UN	United Nations
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

Executive Summary

Background of the project and its objectives

West African communities are among the populations most exposed to the consequences of climate change, despite contributing least to global emissions. In Ghana, shifting weather patterns — marked by unpredictable rainfall and prolonged droughts — have destabilised cocoa production and undermined the livelihoods of farming families. With agriculture accounting for roughly 22% of Ghana's GDP and employing nearly 40% of its workforce, declining crop yields directly threaten household income and food security. The resulting poverty is a well-documented driver of child labour: when families cannot afford school fees, uniforms, or learning materials, children are put to work rather than sent to school. According to UNICEF, approximately 21% of Ghanaian children aged 5 to 17 are involved in child labour, a rate twice as high in rural areas.

Building on the progress made by the ILO's ACCEL Africa project in raising awareness of child labour, the Climate Cocoa project (formally titled *Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change for the Elimination of Child Labour in Cocoa Producing Areas in Ghana*) was designed to address gaps that remained. Funded by the Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (budget: USD 1,500,000) and implemented over twelve months (March 2025 to March 2026), the project pursued one outcome: strengthened systems for identifying, preventing, and addressing child labour. The outcome was expected to be achieved through three outputs: strengthening the Child Labour Free Zone (CLFZ) mechanism in Bibiani Ahwiaso Bekwai District; improving the livelihoods of 300 cocoa farming families through the introduction of biochar as green technology; and systematically documenting and sharing knowledge on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through biochar.

Purpose, objectives, and scope of the evaluation

This final evaluation was commissioned by the ILO and serves both accountability and learning purposes for the Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ILO country and regional offices, national government institutions, and implementing partners. It covers the full project lifetime and all activity areas across the Bibiani Ahwiaso Bekwai District, with additional perspectives gathered from national-level stakeholders. Its findings are intended to inform the design of future ILO projects on climate resilience, child labour, and green agriculture, and to provide evidence of Japan's leadership in sustainable development.

The evaluation was structured around the six OECD/DAC criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability, with cross-cutting attention to gender equality and non-discrimination, environmental sustainability, social dialogue, and international labour standards. A total of 26 evaluation questions were developed and operationalised into sub-questions, data

Evaluation methodology

The evaluation applied a theory-based approach, assessing the extent to which planned activities were translated into outputs and whether stakeholders utilised these outputs to create outcomes. The evaluation tested the validity of the project's Theory of Change and explored whether results followed its internal logic. Data collection used mixed methods, combining desk research (project documents, implementing partner reports, national strategies, and Output 3 knowledge products) with 18 stakeholder interviews at national and international level, ten focus group discussions with 80 beneficiaries across five communities, a stakeholder validation workshop, and field observations at biochar production and demonstration sites.

Key limitations included the short project timeline, which constrained visible impact on long-term crops, and the difficulty of attributing results exclusively to Climate Cocoa where ACCEL Africa was working in parallel.

Key findings

Relevance

The project was largely relevant to the needs of its beneficiaries, responding to well-documented challenges at the intersection of climate change and child labour. The introduction of biochar addressed farmers' need to strengthen crop resilience in an affordable and sustainable way, and the remediation packages for vulnerable children addressed a recognised barrier to school attendance.

The project designed activities in response to identified gaps in community and district capacity to meet CLFZ criteria. It was also aligned with the Ghana Accelerated Action Plan Against Child Labour (GAAPACL) and national SDG commitments, including SDG 8.7 on eliminating child labour, SDG 1 on poverty reduction, and SDG 13 on climate action. However, the project did not explicitly assess and address women's specific needs (limiting gender mainstreaming to participation targets).

Coherence

Climate Cocoa was closely aligned with ACCEL Africa in terms of geographic focus, community structures, and project staff. The shared team enabled smooth coordination and mutual reinforcement between the two projects, for example through CCPC members from Output 1 being recommended to receive biochar training under Output 2. Coordination with UNICEF, including quarterly meetings and intervention mapping, was a notable good practice that ensured complementarity without overlap.

The project's Theory of Change was more logically coherent than the project's logframe, which did not fully capture the contribution of all three outputs to the overall outcome. Within the project, the connection between Output 2 (biochar production) and Output 3 (knowledge documentation) was strong, while the link between Output 1 and Output 3 was more tenuous.

Effectiveness

Under Output 1, the project made visible progress in building capacity at district and community level towards CLFZ criteria, particularly in child labour monitoring, referral, and multi-actor collaboration. All five communities had functioning CCPCs and SMCs with clear roles and strengthened capacity by the time of the evaluation. The awareness-raising activities reached 199 participants, and several stakeholders perceived the Bibiani District to be close to achieving formal CLFZ status.

Under Output 2, 300 community members attended biochar workshops and 53 were trained in production. Preliminary results from demonstration farms were positive: biochar-enriched seedlings showed stronger root development, broader stems, and greater robustness than untreated plants. Beneficiaries and district stakeholders observed the differences and expressed strong interest in adopting and purchasing biochar. However, this component also faced numerous challenges, which were generally addressed or mitigated by the project team.

Under Output 3, practical manuals on biochar production, its use in cocoa farming systems, and carbon credit generation were produced and submitted for government validation. CERES certification for carbon credit generation was pending at the time of the evaluation, with a first audit completed and identified gaps subsequently addressed.

Efficiency

The project was largely efficient given its constrained one-year timeline and shared staff arrangements. The dual-project workload for staff was perceived as heavy, and a twelve-month timeframe was considered too short for an agricultural project requiring observable results across full growing cycles. The M&E framework was proportional and fit for purpose, though the risk register was found to identify existing challenges rather than forward-looking risks and was not regularly updated.

Implementation faced several challenges, namely changes in rainfall patterns, destruction of demonstration plots by livestock, and recruitment difficulties due to competition from higher-paying illegal mining sites, which delayed some activities. However, ILO and implementing partners

responded adaptively, increasing community engagement efforts and replicating a model biochar production site across all five communities.

Impact

By strengthening community and district-level structures, reinforcing behavioural change, and introducing a promising agricultural technology, the project is likely to contribute to the reduction and elimination of child labour in Bibiani over the medium term, particularly in combination with ACCEL Africa. Preliminary biochar results suggest improved crop resilience and potential for income generation, which could reduce the poverty that drives child labour.

The project's impact extends beyond directly trained beneficiaries: non-participating farmers were aware of the demonstration farms, had observed results, and were actively interested in purchasing biochar. At national level, the government's validation of the biochar manual opens the possibility of replication across Ghana. The project's environmentally friendly approach also positions it as a contribution to carbon emission reduction. A notable limitation is the project's short timeline, which did not allow for evidence of long-term biochar effects on mature cocoa plants.

Sustainability

The biochar component is among the most sustainable aspects of the project. Producers and farmers demonstrated strong motivation to continue and upscale production, and there is clear community demand for the product. Key enabling conditions such as production sites, trained producers, practical manuals, and the regulatory pathway to carbon credits are in place.

The sustainability of community-level child labour structures is more uncertain. CCPCs and SMCs are active and well-capacitated at present, but their voluntary nature makes their long-term continuity dependent on motivation and external support. Precedent from a previous UNICEF initiative in Bibiani showed that similarly strengthened SMCs had become inactive over time without sustained follow-up. The lack of transport resources for district officials poses a further risk to the continuation of community oversight.

Conclusions

The Climate Cocoa project was an innovative and valuable contribution to the Bibiani District and five of its cocoa communities. It addressed a genuine and evidence-based problem through a well-integrated, multi-output approach that connected local farming communities with international standards, technologies, and knowledge networks. Despite significant implementation challenges, including a non-extendable twelve-month timeline, competing incentives from illegal mining, and weather-related setbacks, the project delivered concrete results and created foundations for continued progress.

The evaluation concludes that the combined effect of Climate Cocoa and ACCEL Africa is likely to contribute meaningfully to the eradication of child labour in Bibiani, and that the biochar component has clear potential to be replicated and scaled across Ghana and beyond.

Lessons learned

Two key lessons emerged from the evaluation.

- First, projects targeting agricultural systems that are explicitly designed to address climate change impacts should identify within their risk registers how climate change may itself affect project implementation: in this case, unexpected changes in rainfall patterns damaged demonstration crops at a critical moment. Mitigation measures such as irrigation options should be considered from the outset.

- Second, in communities where illegal mining or other informal income opportunities compete with project activities, community engagement and awareness-raising must be systematic, commence immediately, and be backed by clear communication of longer-term benefits. The competition from mining affected the recruitment of both biochar producers and community enumerators and required reactive measures that could have been anticipated

Good practices

Three good practices were identified.

- First, the strong coordination framework among ILO, UNICEF, and JICA in the Bibiani District, through which the three organisations mapped their interventions, avoided overlaps, and actively exchanged lessons learned.
- The second is the effective use of international knowledge and technologies to enhance environmental sustainability: by connecting rural farmers in a single district with Planboo, CERES, and Japanese research institutions, the project enabled communities to access state-of-the-art biochar technologies and to participate in international carbon credit systems, demonstrating that even remote communities can play a leading role in environmental sustainability.
- The third is the involvement of research institutions whose participation ensured scientific rigour in documenting biochar results and increased the credibility and replicability of the project's findings with government and donors.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Build a case study of the biochar component for scaling up across other ILO agricultural projects, in possible combination with entrepreneurship/financial literacy trainings.

Addressed to:	When:	Priority:	Resources:
ILO Ghana and Abidjan teams	During the next year (March 2026-2027)	Medium	Some resources needed to conduct additional research or develop materials to share with ILO HQ

Recommendation 2: Support the national and local governments to identify solutions to the illegal mining site in Bibiani.

Addressed to:	When:	Priority:	Resources:
ILO Ghana, Abuja, and Abidjan teams, as well as ILO specialists (OSH, FUNDAMENTALS, etc). In close cooperation with constituents	During the next years as this may require a longer term engagement	High	This may require an additional project with technical support. Fundraising may be necessary.

Recommendation 3: Integrate follow-up mechanisms with SMCs and CCPCs into ACCEL activities.

Addressed to:	When:	Priority:	Resources:
ILO Ghana and Abidjan, in close cooperation with constituents	Until the closure of ACCEL	High	Low, to be integrated in ACCEL activities as much as possible

Recommendation 4: Ensure that each community-level project has a dedicated strategy for community engagement, including female community members.

Addressed to:	When:	Priority:	Resources:
ILO Ghana, Abuja and Abidjan	For future projects	Medium	Low, some staff time to be dedicated to identifying or developing such guidelines

Recommendation 5: Adjust the design of risk registers to be living documents that focus on potential events rather than existing challenges.

Addressed to:	When:	Priority:	Resources:
ILO Ghana, Abuja and Abidjan	For future projects	Medium	Low, some staff time to be dedicated to developing the risk register and discussing it in meetings.

1. Description of the Project

1.1. Context and background

Despite contributing the least to global emissions, West African communities are on the front lines of the **climate crisis**. In Ghana, rising temperatures and extreme weather are already destabilizing the economy and disrupting daily life through unpredictable rainfall. These environmental shifts present a dual threat: annual flooding affects roughly 45,000 citizens, while droughts impact approximately 13% of the total population.[1]

In 2023, **agriculture** accounted for approximately 22% of Ghana's GDP and employed 39% of Ghanaians. Its economy is highly dependent on the export of primary commodities such as gold, cocoa, and oil, and is vulnerable to slowdowns in the global economy and commodity price shocks.[2] Changes in weather patterns affect agricultural production and can therefore deeply affect the Ghanaian economy and livelihoods of farming communities. Wageningen University warns that cocoa production is affected by climate change and notes that "*there is significant potential for improvement: Better soil management and targeted fertilization could help bridge this gap* [between current yields and soil potential."[3]

Cocoa farmers in Ghana are vulnerable to an unstable income. Farmers today receive about 6% of the value of a chocolate bar and earn less than one dollar per day (below the global poverty line).[4] Their situation is exacerbated by climate change, scarcity of land, food insecurity, limited access to quality education, lack of access to drinking water and inadequate health services.

The combination of decline in agricultural productivity due to climate change, and other factors such as limited availability of alternative income sources, lack of access to quality education, and insufficient social safety nets, all enhance the reliance of Ghanaian rural communities on **child labour**. The use of child labour is perceived as necessity to keep prices competitive, but may also result if schools are far away and/or if parents are unaware of the harm of child labour. ILO staff noted poverty as the main driver of child labour, which is supported by OECD research noting that "*child labour is more prevalent in countries with high poverty levels*".[5] Poverty also hinders parents from being able to afford school-related expenses, which further increases child labour risks.[6]

According to UNICEF, about 21 per cent of children aged 5-17 in Ghana are involved in child labour and 14 per cent are engaged in hazardous forms of labour. This is twice as common in rural areas.[7] The Cocoa Initiative estimates that 45% of children living in cocoa-growing households in Ghana work on family cocoa farms, alongside their parents and other relatives.[8] In its 2024 Child Labour Brief, the United States Department of Labour estimated for Ghana that 4.1% of children aged 5-14 were in child labour and 15.6% of children age 15-17 were in hazardous child labour. 63.5% of working children work in the agriculture sector.[9]

---

[1] https://www.climaterealityproject.org/blog/how-climate-crisis-impacting-ghana
[2] https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/ghana-market-overview
[3] https://www.wur.nl/en/news/climate-change-puts-african-cocoa-production-under-pressure
[4] Food Empowerment Project (2022). Child Labor and Slavery in the Chocolate Industry. Retrieved from Food Empowerment Project at https://foodispower.org/human-labor-slavery/slavery-chocolate/
[5] Thévenon, Olivier, & Eric Edmonds (2019) "Child labour: causes, consequences and policies to tackle it." OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers, No. 235
[6] Interviews with ILO staff. ILO (2025) Development Cooperation Project Document: "Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change for the Elimination of Child Labour in Cocoa Producing Areas in Ghana. A project towards advancing Child Labour Free Zones and Enhancing Income through Biochar Technology in Cocoa-Producing Areas". CO-Abuja, 10 January 2025 (Hereafter: PRODOC).
[7] https://www.unicef.org/ghana/prevention-child-labour
[8] https://www.cocoainitiative.org/issues/child-labour-cocoa
[9] ICI (2025) Briefing: USDOL Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labour 2024. https://www.cocoainitiative.org/sites/default/files/resources/ici_brifing-on-usdol-findings-on-the-worst-forms-of-child-labour-2024_oct2025.pdf

Child workers are vulnerable to unregulated work, with no social security or other safety nets. Furthermore, child labour in the cocoa farms involves carrying heavy loads, exposure to pesticides, operating dangerous equipment, as well as long working hours and low pay.[10] The prevalence of child labour is related to the impact of climate change on agricultural productivity. ILO reported in 2023 that "*climate change is multiplying the incidence of child labour, particularly in agriculture where 70 per cent of all child labour is found*".[11]

The Government of Ghana has adopted various **actions plans and strategies** in recent years to combat child labour, for example the *Ghana Accelerated Action Plan Against Child Labour 2023-2027*, and by ratifying international conventions such as the ILO *Minimum Age Convention* (No. 138) and the *Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention* (No. 182). The 2017-2021 National Action Plan mentioned the need for the government to work towards achieving communities where child labour interventions are holistic, well-integrated, consistent and high yielding over a given period. The National Steering Committee on Child Labour (NSCCL) was mandated to design, draft and present to Government, Protocols and Guidelines on **Child Labour Free Zones** (CLFZs), with a view to piloting the policy and programmes in selected localities as models of interventions which if successful, will be replicated and scaled up across the country.[12]

The **ILO** has worked with Ghanaian stakeholders to eliminate child labour through various projects, most recently through ACCEL Africa, the Global Accelerator Lab (GALAB, cancelled due to the cancellation of US funding), the Accelerator Lab 8.7., and the Trade for Decent Work project. The different projects are largely complementary and the ACCEL and Accelerator initiatives fall under the global Accelerator Lab 8.7. umbrella.

However, the ILO noted that certain key drivers of child labour -namely climate change – and some indicators of the Child Labour Free Zones were not fully addressed by the ongoing efforts. For example, the ACCEL Africa project focuses on cooperation with cooperatives, creating space for an additional initiative that targeted the climate dimension of child labour, increasing the resilience of communities.[13]

1.2. Project description

In collaboration with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the **Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change for the Elimination of Child Labour in Cocoa Producing Areas in Ghana** seeks to create a sustainable environment where children are protected from labour exploitation and families are empowered to pursue better livelihoods. The project had a duration of 12 months (starting March 2025), with no possibility of extension under the grant rules of JICA. The project received a budget of 1,500,000 USD, of which USD 1,485,148 is for the ILO project and USD 14,852 is for UN Levy.

The project had one expected outcome, namely "*Strengthened systems for identifying, preventing, and addressing child labour at both the institutional and community levels*". The outcome is to be achieved through three separate outputs[14]:

- *Output 1.1:* Child Labour Free Zone Mechanism strengthened in Bibiani Ahwiaso Bekwai District
- *Output 1.2:* Livelihoods of 300 cocoa farming families improved through the introduction of green technology (biochar)

[10] Ying Shan, L. (2023). "Chocolate is set to get more expensive as cocoa prices soar to seven-year highs." CNBC. 12 June 2023. https://www.cnbc.com/2023/06/13/chocolate-is-set-to-get-more-expensive-as-cocoa-prices-soar-to-seven-year-highs.html.
[11] ILO (2023) Issue Paper on child labour and climate change https://www.ilo.org/publications/issue-paper-child-labour-and-climate-change
[12] Ministry of Employment and Labour of Ghana (2023) Guidelines and Protocols for Establishing Child Labour Free Zones (CLFZs) in Ghana. https://www.melr.gov.gh/files/publications/Establishing_Child_Labour_Free_Zones_(CLFZs)_in_Ghana.pdf
[13] Inception Interview
[14] PRODOC

- *Output 1.3* Knowledge on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through biochar technology systematically documented and widely shared.

The second output, in particular, aimed to contribute to the work of ACCEL by adding a livelihood component to the efforts to prevent child labour. The production of biochar was meant to be an innovative and environmentally friendly approach to increase agricultural yields.

What is biochar?

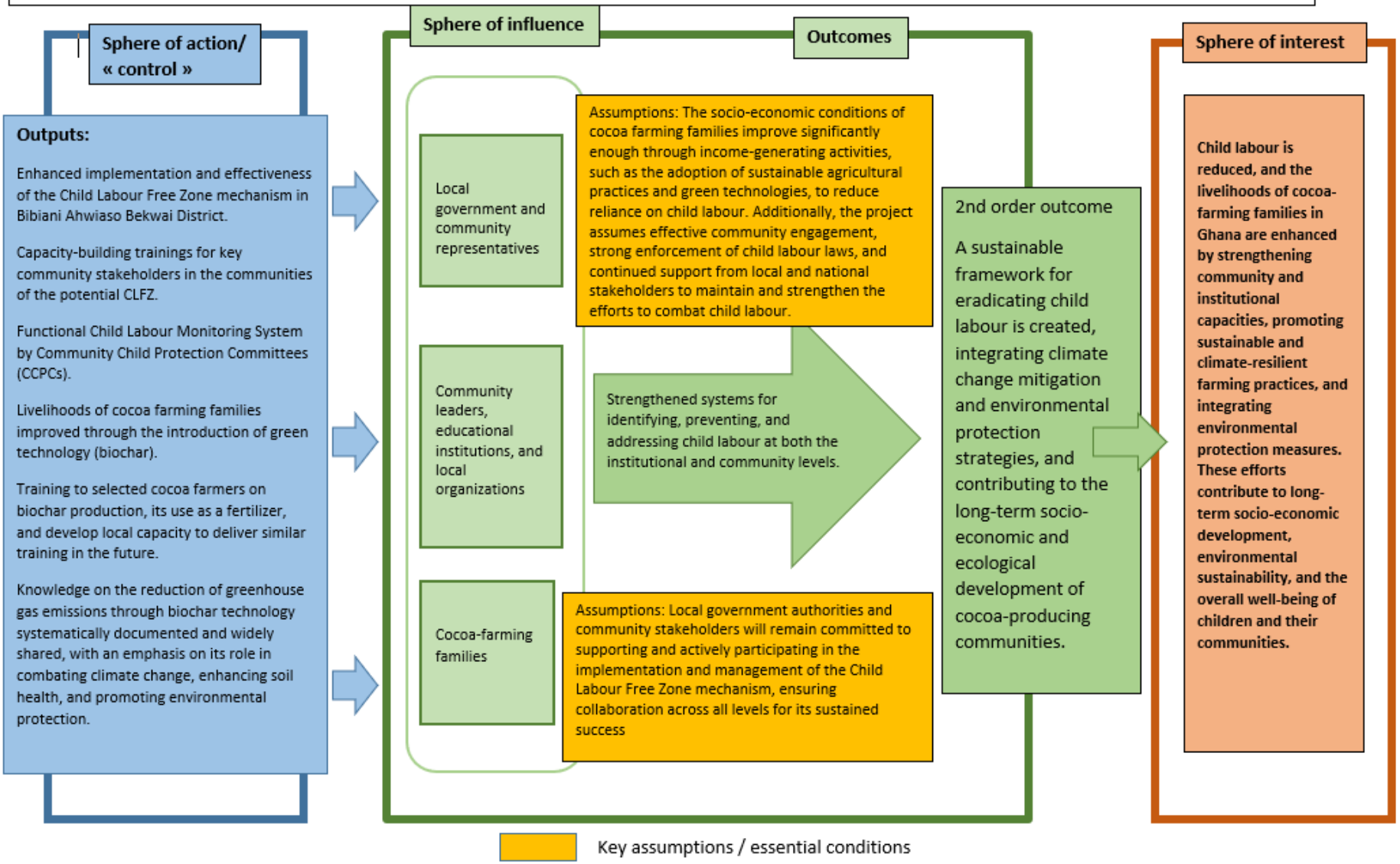
Biochar is created when agricultural waste is converted into a soil enhancer that can hold carbon, boost food security, and increase soil biodiversity, and discourage deforestation. The result is a fine-grained, highly porous charcoal that helps soils retain nutrients and water.[15] In this project, biochar production included retrieving waste (cocoa pods) from the cocoa farms, drying them, and cooking them, which turns the cocoa pods into cocoa biochar that can be used to support the growth of new cocoa plans. The use of biochar is harmless, climate friendly, and cheaper than the use of traditional fertilisers.[16]

The three outputs were meant to be achieved through the following activities:

Output 1 activities	Output 2 activities	Output 3 activities
Activity 1.1.1: Carry out a joint public event to commemorate World Day Against Child Labour with the collaboration of the key partners working in the target district. Activity 1.1.2: Conduct a series of capacity-building trainings for key community stakeholders in the communities of the potential CLFZ. Activity 1.1.3: Set up a functional Child Labour Monitoring System by Community Child Protection Committees (CCPCs) to identify child labour and at risk children Activity 1.1.4: Activate School Management Committee (SMC) to improve learning conditions at schools Activity 1.1.5: Provide remediation package to the identified vulnerable children and families to ensure children's regular attendance to school	Activity 1.2.1: Organize local stakeholder meeting (local government and community representatives) to discuss and define beneficiary selection criteria. Activity 1.2.2: Provide training on biochar production to the selected cocoa farmers. Activity 1.2.3: Provide training on the use of biochar as fertilizer. Activity 1.2.4: Build local capacity for conducting training on biochar production and its use as fertilizer.	Activity 1.3.1: Conduct a study on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the improvement of soil quality/productivity through biochar technology. Activity 1.3.2: Organize a side event during TICAD 9 to share knowledge generated by the project. Activity 1.3.3: Propose a carbon emission trading mechanism to create an additional source of income for the beneficiaries of the project.

[15] https://biochar-international.org/about-biochar/
[16] FGDs with biochar producers, interviews with stakeholders

The aim of the project is to enhance the resilience of cocoa-producing communities in Ghana to the impacts of climate change while simultaneously addressing the root causes of child labour by promoting sustainable livelihoods and fostering equitable development.



Aligned with the ToC and outputs, the project team designed a logical framework with intended results and their indicators and targets for measurement.

In the project document, the ILO team emphasized the importance of **stakeholder engagement** throughout its implementation, following the structures and responsibilities described in the CLFZ protocols. The project envisaged the active involvement of all relevant stakeholders—government bodies, cocoa farmers, community leaders, educational institutions, and local organizations—to ensure that interventions are aligned with local needs and are sustainable beyond the project's duration.

The Climate Cocoa project was designed with the aim to ensure its **alignment** with the ACCEL Africa project, through the targeting of the same communities and the sharing of project staff. Some coordination with FAIR III took place as related to the labour migration dimension. Less direct coordination took place with GALAB since that project targeted the fishing sector. At the same time, the ILO team had quarterly meetings with UNICEF who had a project in one of the Climate Cocoa communities, to coordinate efforts.[17]

The Climate Cocoa project was **managed** by one ILO Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) based in Abidjan, supported by one technical specialist on social financing, and implemented by four staff members based in Ghana. All team members were shared with the ACCEL project and therefore balanced their availability between the projects. In Ghana, the following resources were funded by JICA:

- Two work months (WM) for the National Project Coordinator (NPC) based in Accra
- Ten WM for the National Project Officer (NPO)
- Six WM for the Financial and Administrative Assistant
- Six WM for the Driver

[17] Inception interview

2. Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

ILO considers evaluation as an integral part of the implementation of any projects and interventions. The evaluations are conducted to achieve accountability, improve management and foster learning to support the knowledge base. As an integral part of Japan's development cooperation framework also, the evaluation of this project serves multiple strategic purposes for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA). It is not merely a procedural requirement, but a vital mechanism to ensure that Japan's international interventions deliver meaningful, measurable, and sustainable results.

The evaluation of this project serves as a strategic instrument to ensure that development cooperation efforts are impactful, accountable, and aligned with Japan's foreign policy priorities. The **specific objectives** were:

1. Assess Relevance
To determine the extent to which the project's design and interventions respond to the needs of cocoa-producing communities in Ghana, particularly in relation to child labour elimination, climate resilience, and livelihood improvement.

2. Measure Effectiveness
To evaluate whether the project has achieved its intended outcomes, including:

- The establishment of Child Labour Free Zones (CLFZs).
- The adoption of biochar technology by cocoa farmers.
- Improved access to education and social protection for children.

3. Evaluate Efficiency
To assess the optimal use of financial, human, and technical resources in delivering project results, and to identify any bottlenecks or areas for improved resource allocation.

4. Determine Impact
To analyze the broader developmental effects of the project, including its contribution to:

- Reducing child labour.
- Enhancing household income and food security.
- Promoting climate-smart agriculture and environmental sustainability.

5. Ensure Sustainability
To examine the likelihood that the project's benefits will be maintained beyond its duration, through institutional capacity building, community ownership, and integration into national policies and frameworks.

6. Promote Learning and Knowledge Sharing
To generate actionable insights, lessons learned, and best practices that can inform future Japanese-funded interventions in Africa and globally, especially in the areas of ethical supply chains, green technologies, and child protection.

7. Support Strategic Visibility
To provide evidence of Japan's leadership in sustainable development and human rights, and to showcase the project's achievements at international platforms such as TICAD 9.

The **scope of the evaluation** includes the entire project lifetime and all its activities across all its target groups. The evaluation will cover the Bibiani Ahwiaso Bekwai District in Ghana, where the project is implemented, but also interviewees with national-level stakeholders where relevant.

The **primary users of this final evaluation** are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, the ILO Country Office, key implementing partners, National Government of Ghana, as well as and its relevant ministries and institutions, the ILO relevant Technical Units and tri-partite constituents in Ghana, and partner organisations such as UNICEF and JICA.

The final evaluation findings, recommendations and lessons learned will also be used by the ROAF to inform the design and implementation of any future projects and initiatives related to Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change for the Elimination of Child Labour in Cocoa-Producing Areas.

3. Evaluation criteria and questions

The evaluation was structured around the following **evaluation criteria** and questions. Each question has been operationalised into sub-questions, with accompanying data sources and indicators. The full evaluation matrix is presented in Annex 1.

Relevance & Strategic Fit - Is the intervention addressing the right issues?

1. To what extent is the project aligned to the needs and priorities of tripartite stakeholders and beneficiaries identified in the project documents and during implementation?
2. How well do the project support national development commitments, regional priorities, and relevant SDGs?
3. Did the project design reflect a logical, realistic, and purposeful approach toward achieving its objectives in national context?

Coherence - How well does the intervention fit within the broader context?

4. How well does the project complements and aligns with other ongoing ILO programmes in Ghana and across the region?
5. Are there any overlaps, synergies, or potential duplications with other donor-supported projects or national programs?

Effectiveness - Is the intervention achieving his intended results?

6. To what extent is the intervention likely to achieve its intended objectives by the end of the implementation period?
7. Has the intervention been effective in Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change for the Elimination of Child Labour in Cocoa-Producing Areas in Ghana? (*Suggest moving this to impact*)
8. What are the key success factors and challenges encountered in achieving the expected outcomes?
9. Has the intervention followed its Theory of Change, and have the assumptions and development hypotheses been validated by performance data?
10. What unexpected results, both positive and negative, have emerged from the intervention?

Efficiency - Are resources being used optimally?

11. How effective was the technical support and backstopping provided by ILO technical teams?
12. How efficiently have the financial, human, and technical resources been allocated and utilized across the project to achieve its objectives?
13. Have project funds and intervention been delivered in a timely manner, and what were the key bottlenecks encountered in implementation?
14. Has an effective risk management, monitoring, and evaluation system been established and implemented across the intervention?

Impact Orientation - What difference has the project made?

15. How has the intervention contributed to long-term improvements in the lives of beneficiaries, particularly women and youth in Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change for the Elimination of Child Labour in Cocoa-Producing Areas?
16. What tangible changes has the intervention brought at the policy and practice levels in terms of governance, technical capacity on Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change for the Elimination of Child Labour in Cocoa-Producing Areas?

17. What lessons can be drawn from the impact of the project to inform future Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change for the Elimination of Child Labour in Cocoa-Producing Areas interventions?

Sustainability - Will the benefits last beyond intervention's completion?

18. Are the intervention's results structured to ensure long-term sustainability beyond its lifecycle?
19. How effectively has the intervention built local ownership, institutional capacity, and stakeholder commitment to sustain its outcomes and impacts?
20. What are the main risks to the sustainability of the intervention's achievements, and how have these risks been mitigated?
21. To what extent are national institutions and implementing partners prepared to sustain the outcomes without continued ILO support?
22. Have realistic and effective exit strategies been developed and implemented to ensure ongoing benefits for beneficiaries and partners?
23. Will the intervention's beneficiaries, such as Cocoa farming families, Children in cocoa-farming communities and Local community leaders continue to experience improved access to Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change for the Elimination of Child Labour in Cocoa-Producing Areas after the end of ILO support?

Cross-Cutting Issues (in the matrix, these are mainstreamed into the six criteria)

24. To what extent did the intervention mainstream gender equality and non-discrimination principles into its design and implementation?
25. How effectively did the intervention promote strong and independent worker and employer organizations and facilitate constructive social dialogues?
26. Were there any efforts to promote environmentally friendly practices in the context of Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change for the Elimination of Child Labour in Cocoa-Producing Areas?

4. Methodology and limitations

This evaluation was conducted in the context of criteria and approaches for international development assistance as established by the OECD/DAC Evaluation Quality Standard; and the UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System. It was carried out through a mixed methods approach including quantitative and qualitative dimensions.

The evaluation applied a **theory-based approach** measuring to what extent (within the short timeline), the project was able to translate planned activities into outputs and to what extent beneficiaries and stakeholders utilised these outputs to create outcomes. In all instances, the evaluator assessed whether the measured results can be attributed to the Climate Cocoa project and, where needed, try to entangle the Climate Cocoa results from the ACCEL results, or rather identify the impact created by their combined efforts.

The **Theory of Change** presented by ILO in the Project Document was used as the starting point, but its validity was tested during the evaluation, namely by assessing whether the achievement of results indeed followed the ToC logic and assumptions. Furthermore, the evaluator explored whether any unexpected positive or negative results occurred which could be used to influence the design of the ToC of future, similar projects.

4.1. Data collection methods

The evaluation relied on a mixed-methods approach, with extensive consultation of stakeholders and beneficiaries.

4.2.1. Desk Research

The first step of data collection was desk research, which includes a review of all available documentation on the interventions. The desk research will be carried out in two broad stages:

- **Initial desk research:** during the inception stage and before the start of the field work. This facilitated the understanding of the logic and objectives of the project, and subsequently the design of the evaluation methodology and data collection tools.
- **Additional desk research:** during the data collection stage, additional desk research was conducted based on the information gathered. This provided an opportunity to contextualise the data collected through interviews, as well as triangulate the data found. Key data sources included the Implementing Partners' technical progress reports and the reports produced under Output 3.

The evaluator has requested the ILO to submit all relevant data produced under the project scope. The evaluator also conducted additional desk research on national strategies, but also on the project's technologies.

4.2.2. Interviews

To complement desk research, interviews with ILO staff, and stakeholders was conducted at country and global level. The interview programme was implemented in two stages:

- **Four Inception interviews** were conducted online with ILO staff during the Inception Stage to better understand ILO's expectations regarding the evaluation, and to gather initial insights on the areas of interest.
- **In-depth interviews** for data collection were conducted during the data collection stage and will focus on specific evaluation questions. The main respondents are presented in the table below and in Annex 4.

Table 1. interviews

National & International stakeholders	Local stakeholders
• ILO staff (4) • Donor (1) • UNICEF (1) • Child Labour Unit (1) • EN Farmers (1) • Against Against Child Exploitation (1)	• Asaasepa Food Systems Ltd (2) • Child Research for Action and Development Agency (CRADA) (1) • Ghana Education Service (2) • Ministry of Food and Agriculture (2) • Cocoa Health and Expansion Division (1) • Social Welfare Division (1)
Total Interviews = 18 (including 7 women)	

4.2.3. Beneficiary consultations

For consultations with beneficiaries, five communities in the Bibiani district were visited. Besides the above-mentioned interviews, the following group discussions took place:

Table 2. Focus Group Discussions

#	Beneficiary group	# of participants	# of women
1	Biochar producers in Beposo	5	4
2	CCPC members in Beposo	8	4
3	Biochar producers in Nsuontam	8	4
4	Farmers in Nsuontam	8	2
5	Farmers in Aboduabo	14	4
6	Biochar producers in Aboduabo	4	1
7	SMC and school staff in Nkatieso	3	2
8	CCPC members in Nkatieso	5	3
9	Biochar producers in Nkatieso	11	8
10	Biochar producers in Ntakam	6	1
11	Farmers in Ntakam	8	3
	Total	**80**	**36**

4.2.4. Stakeholder validation workshop

Upon completion of the data collection activities, and preliminary analysis of the gathered data, an online stakeholder validation workshop with key staff of ILO and stakeholders was organised to discuss and validate the findings and explore the feasibility and desirability of different recommendations.

4.2. Data analysis and reporting

All data was coded using data collection and coding template in Word. The template was prepared according to the evaluation framework and questions presented in Annex 1. This allows the evaluator to review all data for one question and therefore facilitates analysis and triangulation.

Qualitative data was collected from desk research, and interviews. Interviews were summarised in writing and anonymised. **Quantitative information** was collected through desk research (programme statistical data). **All data collected was triangulated**, meaning that data from different sources will be analysed together and will be used to answer an evaluation question. This helped enhance validity and reliability of the findings as the findings from one data source was tested and validated using data from other sources.

Contribution analysis served to understand whether and how the different intervention activities led to measured outcomes and aims to connect as much as possible the results to the ILO interventions (attribution), while also exploring whether results could have been achieved through other factors that interacted with or complemented the ILO interventions.

4.3. Ethical protocols

This evaluation was guided by the main international ethical considerations applicable to evaluations (e.g., the evaluation applied the ILO EVAL Code of Conduct, United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation, UNEG Guidelines for Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations, UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN system UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation). These considerations were integrated into the design, data collection, and reporting.

Considering the specificities of this evaluation, the main ethical approaches include the guarantee of anonymity of consultations and the protection of personal data of respondents. All approaches to data collection and storage were aligned with the EU's General Data Protection Regulation, given that the evaluator is based in the European Union.

The topic of child labour is sensitive and its definition not always well-understood at local level. Therefore, the interview questions for beneficiaries were formulated without suggestion or accusation that families put their children in harm's way, but rather focused on the specific activities and how they affected the family dynamics in general. The evaluator has applied this approach for other evaluations as well. No minors will be consulted during the evaluation.

This evaluation also gave due consideration to the voice and experiences and intentions of **women**. Through ensuring active participation of women in the FGDs, and one women-only follow-up discussions, as well as through the analysis of project monitoring reports. Any differences in results were properly reported.

4.4. Limitations

This evaluation methodology was designed to maximise the methodological and analytical quality of the assignment. However, the evaluation faced some limitations which were mitigated or addressed as much as possible.

- As the evaluation took place, some activities were still ongoing. Furthermore, the project took place for one year. Therefore, the ability of the evaluator to capture impact was limited. The evaluation rather focused on signs of use of biochar, and changes in attitudes that would suggest that impact is likely to take place. The evaluation also explored stakeholder commitment and government initiatives that may support impact.
- Some beneficiaries did not show up given that they were already at the farms at the time of the FGD.
- Various stakeholders at district level also participated in the ACCEL Africa activities and occasionally referred to ACCEL instead of Climate Cocoa, confusing which activity took place under which project. The evaluator closely checked the activity lists in the ProDoc of Climate Cocoa to ensure the evaluation only reports information linked to Climate Cocoa activities.

5. Evaluation Findings

5.1. Relevance

According to the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, "relevance" indicates the extent to which an intervention addresses the needs of the country and its beneficiaries and stakeholders. The following section presents to what extent the project addressed these needs in its design, was realistic and purposeful, and aligned with national and regional development commitments.

To what extent is the project aligned to the needs and priorities of beneficiaries?

As presented in the background chapter of this report, international organisations and literature report that "*It is an undeniable fact that **climate change** has negative effects on cocoa production and has thus led to reduced yields in Ghana*", affecting the living standards of farming communities.[18] Consulted farmers for this evaluation mentioned in particularly that the weather patterns have shifted: "*When we expect rain, it is dry. When we expect sun, there is none*." This affected crop produce and therefore income, and influenced families' livelihoods overall.[19]

In recent years, ACCEL Africa made significant progress in raising awareness of the risks and illegality of child labour. Many consulted farmers and biochar producers, as well as CCPC members, confirmed that this resulted in a significant **decrease in child labour** in the five targeted communities. ILO staff noted, however, that ACCEL and other projects did not have strong components on strengthening livelihoods. Therefore, while parents' willingness to use child labour may have changed, factors related to poverty still influence such decisions.[20]

A particularly persisting challenge in the Nkatieso and Beposo communities is the presence of the mines. Even if parents wish to send their children to school, some children themselves prefer to, or see the need to, go to the mine to earn some fast cash. Various stakeholders also noted that it is difficult to get community engagement (especially youth) because many people see that the mines pay more than the projects.[21]

At the same time, stakeholders and community members described the **direct link between poverty, education attendance, and child labour**. If parents do not have the resources to purchase uniforms, bags, learning materials and food, the child will likely not go to school, but work on the farm instead.[22] Interventions by projects such as ACCEL Africa have made progress in raising awareness on the importance of education, which increased parents' willingness to send children to school. However, the issue of poverty remains.[23]

Certain groups can be considered more vulnerable in the context of climate change, cocoa production and child labour. Ghanaian **women farmers** are facing gender inequality in cocoa production. They often lack economic autonomy and decision-making power within their homes.[24] At the same time, some literature argues that increasing gender equality is a core enabler of productivity.[25]

[18] Afele, John Tennyson, et.al. (2024) "Understanding and addressing climate change impacts on cocoa farming in Ghana". *Environmental Challenges, Volume 14, January 2024.*
[19] FGD with biochar producers.
[20] Interviews with ILO staff, stakeholders, and FGDs with CCPCs, biochar producers and farmers.
[21] Interviews with stakeholders and FGDs with CCPC members.
[22] Interviews with stakeholders and FGDs with CCPCs, SMCs, and farmers.
[23] Interviews with stakeholders, FGDs with CCPC members.
[24] Kaschek, T. S. (2021). Exploring the experiences of female small-scale organic cocoa farmers about gender-based inequality in agency and empowerment in light of the Sustainable Development Goal 5: A case study from rural Ghana.
[25] Danso-Abbeam, G., Baiyegunhi, L. J., & Ojo, T. O. (2020). Gender differentials in technical efficiency of Ghanaian cocoa farms. Heliyon, 6(5).

The project was largely relevant to the needs of beneficiaries by focusing on challenges that were identified under ACCEL. It was particularly relevant for the needs of farmers to strengthen their crop resilience, and for enhancing their capacity to send their children to schools. Some small gaps were identified in relation to gender-sensitive activities and initial community engagement (the latter was partially resolved).

In its efforts to reinforce and expand the work done by ACCEL Africa, the Climate Cocoa project addressed the needs of cocoa farmers and their children in multiple dimensions.

Firstly, the project aimed to **reduce their vulnerability to climate change** in terms of agricultural production and income. The introduction of biochar was planned to enhance fertility, water retention, and reduce nutrient leaching in the cocoa communities. Considering the linkages between the prevalence of child labour, access to education, and climate change-related gaps in cocoa production, the idea of reducing vulnerability to climate change and therefore prevalence to child labour was highly relevant and grounded in science. Consulted stakeholders, biochar producers, and farmers all recognised that biochar would have the potential to improve crop yields.[26]

The Climate Cocoa project largely recognised the importance of **gender equality** and women's empowerment. Activities reports note that women in the cocoa supply chain were identified as specific beneficiaries of the biochar and livelihood interventions.[27] In fact, one IP technical report noted that "*women participated mostly in the field demonstrations. At Beposo and Aboduabo some of the women informed us that they are stronger than the men in the community when it comes to farm work. It was evident when some women took turns in mixing Biochar with the soil*."[28] Consulted female biochar producers were equally satisfied with the biochar training as their male colleagues, and with its relevance to their needs and challenges.[29] The Project also directly took over the Gender Equality strategy of the ACCEL Project.[30]

Besides the relevance for agricultural production, the project's focus on biochar addressed other needs as well. Several consulted biochar producers indicated that they joined this training because they had no other work or source of income. Therefore, the training also aligned with their needs to develop employable skills and engage in work.[31]

Consulted biochar producers were satisfied with the length, content and delivery of the training and understood the relevance of biochar (e.g. as compared to chemicals) for improving agricultural yields. The training was generally easy to understand.[32] Furthermore, biochar producers who were trained on Planboo found the app quite easy to use.[33] While the approach to obtain carbon credits (e.g. the use of the green box, the Planboo app) was based on international practice and (quite) new in Africa, the project was able to make certain adaptations to these tools to ensure they suited the needs of the communities.[34]

Secondly, Climate Cocoa aimed to **remove barriers to education** for children, by offering remediation packages to families, which included essential school supplies like uniforms and bags. CCPC and SMC members, as well as stakeholders, found this useful as they identified the lack of funding for such materials as key barrier to education.[35] CCPC members indicated

[26] Interviews with stakeholders and FGDs with biochar producers and farmers.
[27] Activity Reports of EN FARMERS
[28] EN Farmers & Tachibana International Ghana. First Activity Report covering May 6th – 23rd, 2025
[29] FGD with biochar producers
[30] Interviews with ILO
[31] FGDs with biochar producers.
[32] FGD with biochar producers
[33] FGDs with biochar producers
[34] Interview with a stakeholder and with ILO staff.
[35] FGD with CCPC members, SMC/school staff, interviews with stakeholders

that they provided suggestions on which parents and children are most at risk and in need of the remediation packages.[36]

The project furthermore focused on ensuring that once a child is identified, there is a clear path back to the classroom supported by community advocates. In this regard, the project also built the capacity of schools – through School Management Committees – to track student attendance and engaged teachers in CCPCs to form the bridge between school and community.[37] These activities together provide a holistic approach to school attendance, focusing not only on parents' financial capacity, but also on the capacity of the school system to ensure attendance.

The stronger involvement of **local leaders in CCPCs** was an added value of Climate Cocoa as well, as it focused on strengthening the legitimacy of the CCPCs and raising awareness on the risks of child labour. Project reports noted that advocacy by local leaders is better received by community members than external enforcement.[38] Interviews with stakeholders and consultations with CCPC members confirmed this report.[39]

While the project was objectively relevant in line with international norms and standards on child labour, some community members were **(initially) disinterested**. The reason for this, as explained by stakeholders, was twofold. Firstly, the initial work on the biochar component was heavily focused on concrete implementation (e.g. construction) rather than community engagement. Therefore, during the first half of the project, stakeholders noted that only the biochar producers were engaged, but other community members were not aware of the project. ILO and Implementing Partners (IPs) confirmed that this gap was addressed and the evaluation FGDs with non-trained farmers showed that awareness and interest had increased by the end of the project.[40]

Secondly, some community members did not see the relevance of the project for them personally, as they preferred the offer of immediate cash available in the mines instead of continuing education or working on cocoa farms. This not only affected beneficiaries' interest, but also the project implementation itself – namely the recruitment of biochar producers and enumerators.[41]

To a very small extent, parents still viewed children working on the farm as a necessary part of their upbringing or a required economic contribution to the household. Therefore, some resistance to the child labour monitoring activities was still noted, but had significantly reduced since the introduction of ACCEL. Therefore, the effect of a few remaining resistant families was not impactful on the implementation or results of Climate Cocoa.

The project did not explicitly identify the needs of **women** in the PRODOC or design activities that address gender dynamics and nuances in the communities that may affect child labour, considering that women are traditionally more involved in child rearing. Gender equality in this regard was limited to ensuring equal participation in the activities.

Interviewed female CCPC members and stakeholders furthermore noted that girls' access to education is hindered by the absence of sanitary products. Therefore, even if the parents wish to send their daughter to school, they have to stay home during their period.[42]

[36] FGD with CCPC members.
[37] Activity reports of ACE.
[38] Activity reports of ACE
[39] Interviews with stakeholders, FGDs with CCPC members
[40] Interviews with ILO, stakeholders, and FGDs with farmers.
[41] Activity reports of ACE
[42] FGD with female CCPC members

To what extent is the project aligned to the needs and priorities of (tripartite) stakeholders?

Various **stakeholders** were targeted by Climate Cocoa as well. While certain structures to combat child labour exist at local level, such as the **CCPC** (first capacitated by ACCEL), IP reports note that they lacked the specific technical knowledge and formal coordination required to achieve Child Labour Free Zone status. CCPC members had a general awareness of child protection but lacked a deep understanding of the specific criteria and indicators required to certify a community as "Child Labour Free." Existing community committees were furthermore "inactive" or lacked a systematic way to track children.[43]

SMCs were also established already in 2009, at the government initiative, but are largely inactive due to a lack of understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and capacity to implement these roles. The voluntary nature of the SMC and the challenges they face in interacting with parents also limit proactiveness of the SMC members.[44]

Similarly, **District-level stakeholders** lacked a unified mechanism to track and certify communities as "Child Labour Free Zones" and experiences gaps in their gaps in coordination, data management, and technical expertise. For example, the Social Welfare and Labour often faced hurdles in providing the necessary "remediation" services, such as legal support or social protection, due to a lack of coordinated protocols.[45] Many stakeholders reported furthermore that they simply lack transport resources to regularly visit communities.[46]

The project designed activities aligned with identified gaps in stakeholders' capacity to eliminate child labour, particularly in terms of transport and monitoring. The project was also relevant considering gaps in their capacity to implement and comply with CLFZ criteria.

The Climate Cocoa project functioned in part to reinforce the work done by ACCEL and was therefore implemented in the same ACCEL communities. The design of the activities followed an initial **assessment** carried out by the IP of the gaps that exist in relation to the CLFZ criteria. The assessment noted particular weaknesses in relation to the CLFZ criteria, namely regarding SMCs' functioning; formalization of community regulations; household data collection, CCPC case referral capacities, and school structures. The main recommendations of the assessment were therefore to focus on strengthening both CCPC and SMC capacity.[47]

Strengthening the CCPCs, particularly with a focus on child labour **monitoring**, was one of the main areas where Climate Cocoa aimed to build on the work of ACCEL. Climate Cocoa's capacity building activities focused especially on systematic monitoring and standardized reporting, and on CCPCs capacity to report serious cases to the District Social Welfare office.

Consulted CCPC members noted that the project was relevant in helping them communicate better with parents about children's rights and in raising awareness on the CLFZ criteria and how to comply with them at community level.[48] The Cocoa Project also addressed the above-mentioned gaps in monitoring, by providing record-keeping books, compiling a community register, and providing training on how to properly monitor child labour. The consulted CCPC members noted that their ability to move around the community was a key need for them to improve their monitoring work. The provision of bicycles was highly valuable in this regard.[49]

[43] Activity reports of ACE
[44] Interviews with stakeholders, FGD with SMC/school staff
[45] Activity reports of ACE
[46] Interviews with stakeholders
[47] Action against Child Exploitation (ACE) First Activity Report covering June – July 2025
[48] FGD with CCPC members
[49] FGD with CCPC members

The stronger involvement of **local leaders in CCPCs** was an added value of Climate Cocoa as well, as it focused on strengthening the legitimacy of the CCPCs and raising awareness on the risks of child labour. Project reports noted that advocacy by local leaders is better received by community members than external enforcement.[50] Consulted CCPC members noted that no instance of child labour so far has escalated to the district level, since Community Leaders always managed to resolve the situation.[51]

Furthermore, CCPC members considered that the re-establishment of the **SMCs** provided added value to their work and some CCPC members were also part of the SMC. This approach was relevant to the strengthening of monitoring by improving information exchange between schools and communities.[52] Stakeholders and SMCs found the training provided by Climate Cocoa relevant, because they addressed exactly this gap in knowledge of SMC members on their responsibilities.[53] The Climate Cocoa project provided concrete added value in this regard, to plug gaps of the ACCEL Africa project, which reduced its focus on education.[54]

Climate Cocoa also aimed to strengthen the **district-level capacity** through various forms of engagement focused on the main challenges listed above. District officials were briefed on the CLFZ criteria, on the legal and policy framework, and on their specific roles in monitoring and enforcement, and received training on how to handle referral cases (e.g. by the CCPC). Experts from the Child Labour Unit provided technical training to ensure district officials could accurately supervise and verify the reports coming from the field.[55]

Across the different stakeholders at district-level, many of them valued in particular the transport opportunities that the project offered. "*Every time CRADA* [the IP] *would go to the field, we could go along and observe. We do not have the resources to go ourselves. We only have one car and no money for fuel*."[56]

The focus on capacity-building of CCPCs and district officials is particularly relevant in ensuring impact and sustainability of the project in the long-term, as it enables them to maintain the project activities independently.

One issue was found in terms of the relevance of the **bicycles** provided to the CCPC members to enhance their outreach. Consulted female CCPC members informed that they do not know how to use a bicycle and therefore do not make use of the bicycles provided by Climate Cocoa. They would have preferred other materials to support the community, for example, sewing machines to fix children's school uniforms.[57]

A second challenge relates to the **absence of computers** in the Social Welfare Department. The project provided support and training on record-keeping, which was deemed highly relevant and valuable. However, the evaluator noted that records were kept on paper and that the office did not have a computer. Reviewing the storage of documentation, the evaluator concluded that the current system does not facilitate easy review and tracking of cases. Therefore, the absence of a digital tool may hinder the relevance of the record-keeping training, if the records are not properly accessible. A stakeholder added the particular risk of breach of privacy and confidentiality of the cases if anyone can enter the offices and access these files, considering that children are in need of particular safeguarding in this regard.[58]

[50] Activity Reports of ACE
[51] FGD with CCPC members
[52] FGD with CCPC members
[53] Interviews with stakeholders, FGD with SMC/school staff
[54] Interview with ILO staff
[55] Activity Reports of ACE
[56] Interview with a stakeholder
[57] FGD with female CCPC members
[58] Interview with a stakeholder

Lastly, the project did not engage **social partners** actively, besides their involvement in the Project Advisory Board. Social dialogue and tripartism were not a means or an objective of the project. This is explained by the local-level orientation of the project and its focus on practical implementation and strengthening of local structures.

How well does the project support national development commitments, regional priorities, and relevant SDGs?

In recent years, Ghana has made significant progress to strengthen **national-level** structures and frameworks to combat child labour. The USDOL noted as particular achievements the signature of *the Child Labour in Cocoa Coordinating Group Framework of Action*, and the adoption of the *Ghana Accelerated Action Plan Against Child Labour* (GAAPACL, 2023-2027), in partnership with international partners, civil society and industry.[59] Other relevant national frameworks include the *National Steering Committee on Child Labour*, responsible to drive all government action on child labour since 2007, and the *Government of Ghana's Education Strategic Plan (2018-2030)*.[60]

The 2017-2021 National Action Plan mandated the NSCCL to design, draft and present to **Government, Protocols and Guidelines on Child Labour Free Zones** (CLFZs), with a view to piloting the policy and programmes in selected localities as models of interventions which if successful, will be replicated and scaled up across the country. A CLFZ is a demarcated geographical area where there are sufficient conditions to ensure that no child is in any form of child labour within a given period set and regulated by a mandated and competent national agency. In this regard, child labour free does not necessarily mean zero child labour, but rather demonstrates the area which has an effective mechanism to address and solve the child labour situation at community level.[61]

The project was designed in line with the government's objective to establish CLFZs and therefore contributed directly to the implementation of its national action plan. It also contributes to local priorities on productivity, as well as to several of the SDGs.

The **GAAPACL** shifts the focus of combating child labour toward integrated, community-led, and multi-sectoral approaches to address root causes. In this regard, the Climate Cocoa project contributes to GAAPACL's objectives in various ways. The main contributions include[62]:

1. Strengthening local governance & monitoring: The GAAPACL aims to implement and roll out the Ghana Child Labour Monitoring System (GCLMS) and ensure its interoperability with private systems. The Climate Cocoa project contributes to this goal by reactivating and training CCPCs to strengthen monitoring systems. At the same time, Climate Cocoa also focused on strengthening District and Community capacity to coordinate actions and referrals.
2. Improving access to quality education: GAAPACL aims to enhance access to education and technical vocational training to reduce the number of out-of-school children. Climate Cocoa contributed to this goal by strengthening SMCs and establishing an Memorandum of Understanding with the Ghana Education Service for school support items (remediation packages).

[59] ICI (2025) Briefing: USDOL Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labour 2024. https://www.cocoainitiative.org/sites/default/files/resources/ici_brifing-on-usdol-findings-on-the-worst-forms-of-child-labour-2024_oct2025.pdf

[60] PRODOC and USDOL (2023) Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor. https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ILAB/child_labor_reports/tda2023/Ghana.pdf

[61] Ministry of Employment and Labour of Ghana (2023) Guidelines and Protocols for Establishing Child Labour Free Zones (CLFZs) in Ghana.

[62] ACE and EN FARMERS activity reports. Republic of Ghana. Ghana Accelerated Action Plan Against Child Labour (National Plan of Action for Elimination of Child Labour). (2023 - 2027). https://www.cocoainitiative.org/sites/default/files/resources/Ghana_Accelerated_Action_Plan_Against_Child_Labour.pdf

3. Enhancing Household Income & Livelihoods (including through women's empowerment): This goal of GAAPACL on cocoa-growing communities' ability to mitigate the poverty that drives child labour. Climate Cocoa supported this goal through its biochar component that can increase cocoa productivity and resilience. As mentioned above, women were an active part of the biochar trainings, which can be considered empowerment, although the effect of training on overall gender equality progress is unclear.

The GAAPACL overall is structured around the ILO conventions and recommendations related to child labour, and on good practices and prior policy support provided by ILO. Therefore, there is overall close alignment between ILO's approaches to combat child labour and the text and objectives of the GAAPACL.[63]

Interviewees confirmed that the project aligned with the GAAPACL and the CLFZ initiative, considering that "*we only approve such projects if they align with our National Action Plan*".[64]

The Climate Cocoa project also aligns with the previous National Action Plan, which formed the foundation for the **CLFZ initiative**. The project was meant to support the CLFZ work of the government by strengthening mechanisms for child labour free zones within the Bibiani Municipal district. This included capacitating community-level structures like the CCPCs to monitor and address child labour, which is a key criterion for a zone to be declared a CLFZ.[65]

ILO staff noted that the project was intentionally situated in a district where other donor interventions (e.g. of JICA and UNICEF) were already active to ensure the area could serve as a successful model for CLFZ interventions.[66] Interviewed stakeholders confirmed that the project provided training on the CLFZ criteria for district and community-level actors and that it enhanced their awareness of the CLFZ criteria.[67]

As mentioned above, the project also focused on strengthening specific gaps in compliance with the CLFZ criteria, such as the monitoring structures. Other challenges faced at district-level included certain gaps in technical capacity, but most prominently the absence of sufficient transportation resources to access the communities and comply with the monitoring requirements.[68]

Lastly, the project contributed to **local priorities** in relation to cocoa production. Stakeholders indicated that it is their goal to enhance cocoa productivity and resilience to climate change, and biochar is clearly a valuable method to achieve this goal.[69]

In its essence, the project complements Ghana's commitment to achieving the **Sustainable Development Goal** (SDG) Target 8.7, which calls for the eradication of child labour in all its forms. The impact expected from Climate Cocoa, together with ACCEL, is to (make progress to) eliminate child labour.

The project also contributes to several other SDGs. The focus on education and improving learning environments through the work of the SMCs is aligned with **SDG 4's** objective to ensure inclusive and quality education. ILO's work on biochar as mechanism to improve crop yields is expected to increase farmers' income and reduce poverty, as expected under **SDG**

[63] Republic of Ghana. Ghana Accelerated Action Plan Against Child Labour (National Plan of Action for Elimination of Child Labour). (2023 - 2027).
[64] Interview with ILO staff and a stakeholder
[65] Ministry of Employment and Labour of Ghana (2023) Guidelines and Protocols for Establishing Child Labour Free Zones (CLFZs) in Ghana.
[66] Interviews with ILO staff.
[67] Interviews with stakeholders
[68] Interviews with stakeholders
[69] Interviews with stakeholders

Lastly, the project's focus on sustainable technologies and obtaining carbon credit aligns with **SDG 13** on combating climate change and its impacts.

5.2. Coherence

According to the OECD/DAC criteria, this evaluation looks at the project's consistency with other projects/initiatives of both ILO and other UN agencies.

To what extent was Climate Cocoa coherent with other ILO and UN initiatives?

At the time of the project's implementation, the only other ILO project implemented in the same sector and district was ACCEL Africa.

Climate Cocoa was closely aligned with ACCEL Africa in terms of its geographic scope, complementary activities, and project management. The set-up of a coordination mechanism with JICA and UNICEF facilitated joint planning and complementarity of interventions in Bibiani.

In its design, Climate Cocoa was meant to be a supporting mechanism for **ILO's ACCEL Africa project**. The project relied on the same ILO staff and worked with some of the same stakeholders as ACCEL. Climate Cocoa specifically aimed to address topics related to child labour that were not (fully) covered by ACCEL. These included in particular the provision of education remediation support and capacity-building for SMCs (reduced under ACCEL) and the specific focus on the CLFZ criteria. In practice, this meant that the Climate Cocoa project enhanced the capacity of the existing CCPC members by focusing on improved monitoring practices (as required by the CLFZ criteria).

Various other UN agencies, NGOs, and private sector organisations are active in the field of child labour in Ghana. To facilitate the **coordination** with UNICEF and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in Bibiani, the three agencies prepared a document to map all ongoing child labour projects in the district; share key insights; and prepare an action plan for Bibiani for 2025.

On 20 March 2024, UNICEF, ICI, ILO, and JICA formally partnered with the Ministry of Labour, Jobs and Employment to jointly launch three coordinated child labour interventions. One year on, the partners agreed to reflect on progress of child labour interventions in Bibiani-Anhwiaso-Bekwai Municipal and assess the benefits of converging efforts in the same geographical area. A joint review meeting was convened on 10 January 2025 between UNICEF, ILO, and JICA to document achievements, share lessons and identify opportunities for deeper collaboration.

The following added value was identified as a result of this coordinated approach:

- Improved coordination and information sharing
- Cost-efficiency and avoiding duplication
- Joint advocacy and influence

The agencies also identified areas for improvement and submitted joint recommendations to the Child Labour Unit.[70]

Overall, the coordination between ILO, UNICEF and JICA was highly important to ensure the complementarity of interventions. An interviewee noted that, across Ghana, so many interventions are taking place, and "*NGOs are coming and going*", that it would be a full-time job for the Child Labour Unit just to keep track of all ongoing work. Another stakeholder

[70] Documentation of Child Labour Projects Implementation by UNICEF, ICI, ILO and JICA in Bibiani/Anhwiaso/Bekwai Municipal Feb 2025

confirmed that the same situation applies to Bibiani. The ILO-UNICEF-JICA coordination takes away some of this coordination burden from the Child Labour Unit.[71]

The Climate Cocoa project collaborated with **UNICEF** primarily through information sharing, strategic feedback, and a coordinated national launch. UNICEF was implementing a parallel project in Bibiani District, which required ILO and UNICEF to coordinate activities. Exchange of information related particularly to the education sector, for example when the Climate Cocoa project shared feedback directly with UNICEF on the specific needs of community schools.[72]

Most stakeholders, as well as local/national implementing partners, indicated that they did not work with any **other international organisations** or UN agencies. In the Bibiani district, one stakeholder indicated that UNICEF had implemented a project focusing on the capacitation of SMCs several years ago, but no collaboration had taken place since.[73] Another stakeholder had a project with JICA on rice production one year ago, which was completely different from the Climate Cocoa project.[74]

One IP noted that they worked with JICA as well, on the topic of CLFZs. They perceived the complementarity of the Climate Cocoa project particularly in the field of education where JICA does not intervene.[75]

One stakeholder confirmed that "*the ILO Climate Cocoa project was unique, because the other projects do not focus on schools, for example on activating the SMCs and providing the remediation packages*."[76]

Did the project design reflect a logical, realistic, and purposeful approach toward achieving its objectives in national context, and was the ToC validated by the achieved results?

The realistic and purposeful approach of the project can be measured based on the logical connection between outputs, outcomes, and expected impact (validated by observed results); based on the interconnectedness and reinforcement among outcomes to jointly create impact; and based on the extent to which the project design is based on evidence of effectiveness, for example through lessons learned from previous projects.

The logic within and between the outputs was largely proven by the results and relied on realistic, chronological achievements. However, the difference between Outcome 1 and Output 1 is unclear. The Theory of Change (ToC), in this regard, provided a more logical connection between outputs, outcomes and expected impact.

The connection between the activities within each output and the overall output has been largely confirmed by the effectiveness chapter, although the project timeline is too short to already identify concrete evidence. Regarding **Output 1,** the project design was realistic and purposeful as it followed the GAAPACL's CLFZ criteria, demonstrating that an integrated approach can strengthen systems to detect, address and eliminate child labour. Particularly the importance of jointly addressing community structures and schools was proven by the project as child labour monitoring systems rely on close engagement by both capacitated CCPCs and capacitated SMCs, and their shared awareness of the division of roles. CCPC members confirmed that they work closely with SMCs and vice versa.[77]

[71] Interview with a stakeholder
[72] Interviews with ILO staff
[73] Interview with a stakeholder
[74] Interview with a stakeholder
[75] Interview with a stakeholder
[76] Interview with a stakeholder
[77] FGDs with CCPC members and with SMC/School staff.

At the same time, the strengthening of referral systems relies on strengthened capacity at both district and community levels, ensuring that both sides are aware of which cases should be resolved at community level and which at district level. Respondents from both groups confirmed that the project strengthened their knowledge of the referral system and that the CCPC → Community Leader → Social Welfare Department system of escalation is functioning well as a result of both ACCEL and Climate Cocoa efforts.[78] One stakeholder noted, however, that the project should have made this connection stronger by engaging CCPC members in district-level training (i.e. making the process more community-led), ensuring that both groups are trained together.[79]

Output 2 activities linked to their output in a more chronological way, focusing on the step-by-step process of awareness-raising, recruitment of biochar producers and construction of sites, training and subsequent production of biochar for farmers as free opportunity to test it. This approach is likely to enable the achievement of the output results (increasing livelihoods of 300 farmers) although the timeline is too short to conclude this result. Namely, the biochar trial was successful, but the actual selling of biochar to those 300 farmers for their regular use has not yet taken place. Therefore, while the foundation is there, the livelihoods of the farmers have not yet been sustainably improved at the end of the project.

In parallel, the project established demonstration sites to demonstrate the effectiveness of biochar on different crops. The demonstration sites support the achievement of the output by sensitizing the community and creating a market for the subsequent biochar sales. The Climate Cocoa project proved that the demonstration sites are ineffective unless there is a consistent focus on community engagement.[80] Therefore, the causal links of the ToC, from activity to output, were strengthened by the IP's enhanced focus on community engagement.

The **Output 3** had three distinct types of activities, namely 1) the side-event to an international conference[81] to promote the Ghanaian experience with biochar; 2) the production of a report on child labour and migration; and 3) the production of manuals on biochar production. The three activities were implemented separately and contributed independently to "systematically documenting and sharing knowledge on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through biochar technology".

While the three activities each individually contributed to enhanced knowledge, the production of three knowledge-sharing products cannot truly be classified as "systematic documentation" and there is also no evidence to suggest that the project enhanced the systematic data collection by other actors. One of the outputs, namely on child labour and migration, also does not relate to the output's focus on reduced greenhouse gas emissions and biochar.

At a higher level, some **connections are found between the three outputs** in their effort to achieve strengthened systems for identifying, preventing, and addressing child labour at both the institutional and community levels.

Stakeholders mentioned that Output 1 and 2 were implemented rather separately, but some examples of mutual reinforcement were found. For example, the activities related to biochar production worked with farmers and community members most vulnerable to poverty. Therefore, the IPs of Output 2 recommended those most vulnerable farmers to the IPs of Output 1 to receive the education remediation packages. At the same time, the project aimed to engage one or two CCPC members per community in the biochar training to gather community support and raise awareness.[82]

[78] Interviews with stakeholders, FGDs with CCPC members
[79] Interview with a stakeholder
[80] Interviews with ILO staff and stakeholders
[81] Ninth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 9)
[82] Interviews with stakeholders

The connection between Output 2 and 3 was stronger as the results of the Output 2 demonstration farms and experiences informed the development of research products and manuals produced under Output 3.

The Output 1 activities were most directly related to the text of the project Outcome, as it focused on building child labour identification, prevention and action systems. The Output 2 and 3 results are valuable for preventing child labour by enhancing agricultural yields, but that does not quality as "strengthened system for child labour prevention". It rather means addressing the root causes of child labour as related to poverty.

Furthermore, the difference between Output 1 and the Outcome is not clear. The output aims to strengthen CLFZ mechanisms, while outcome 1 focuses on strengthened systems to identify, prevent, and address child labour. Considering that the CLFZ criteria are already of high level in the Ghanaian policy framework, it is not clear how the strengthened systems would be an improvement above the CLFZ.

Interestingly, the design of the **Theory of Change** (see section 1.2.) is more logical considering the above-listed weaknesses. It shows a causal chain of results not through the three outputs, but rather through results expected at farm, at community, and at local government level, which together aim to create "*a sustainable framework for eradication child labour is created, integrating climate change mitigation and environmental strategies, and contributing to the long-term socio-economic and ecological development of cocoa-producing communities*." The impact chapter of this evaluation also demonstrates that this impact formulation is better suited to capturing all three outputs compared to the Outcome 1 formulation.

Lastly, the project design relied on **a mix of existing ILO knowledge and experience, and on new approaches**. Through its work on ACCEL Africa, the project team was already aware of the challenges and opportunities in the Bibiani district, allowing the team to design a proposal that is grounded in recent experiences.

The project is also grounded in the Ghana GAAPACL and CLFZ criteria which were established with the technical input from ILO (through other projects). The project's design was therefore purposeful in contributing to the GAAPACL and in aligning with approaches identified in the GAAPACL.

The biochar component was rather new in the ILO portfolio. However, the project still ensured the validity of the project design by engaging respected national and international research institutions with up-to-date knowledge on the functioning of biochar. Similarly, the project relied on international standards (CERES[83]) and tools (Planboo) to guide the process, while adapting certain tools and approaches (e.g. the green box) to the reality of the Ghanaian context.[84]

One potential challenge was identified regarding the alignment of the education component with ILO's **mandate**, which was also identified in the final evaluation of the first ACCEL Africa project. Namely, some ILO staff (ACCEL evaluation) and stakeholders (Climate Cocoa evaluation) noted that such educational support overlaps with the mandates of other organisations such as UNICEF and is not a core area of work of ILO.[85]

[83] CERES is an international inspection and certification body for organic food, organic & sustainable textiles, food sustainability, and climate and environmental standards. CERES designed the European Biochar Certificate (EBC) for the production of biochar and its processing and use. The EBC guarantees that biomass feedstock is sustainably procured and produced, emissions limits are adhered to and storage procedures are environmentally sound.
[84] Interview with a stakeholder
[85] Interview with ILO staff for the ACCEL Africa evaluation, and with a stakeholder

5.3 Effectiveness

According to the OECD/DAC criteria, the evaluation of effectiveness reports on whether the intervention achieved its intended objectives. The following section examines the extent to which Climate Cocoa project was able to achieve its expected outputs and outcomes, and whether the results vary across different groups. This section also analyses the main influencing factors that determine the effectiveness towards the project's outputs.

The project comprised three outputs, focusing on the CLFZs, on biochar production, and on distribution of knowledge on greenhouse gases and biochar.

To what extent has the project made progress towards Output 1: Strengthening Child Labour Free Zone Mechanisms in Bibiani Ahwiaso Bekwai District

The first output included various activities, which were designed to address key gaps in communities' progress to meet CLFZ criteria. This output was implemented in Beposo and Nkatieso, as well as at the Bibiani District level.

The project made visible progress in building capacity at district and community level towards the criteria and obligations of the CLFZ, particularly in the field of monitoring and referral. Some challenges hindered the implementation of the activities.

A key component of Output 1 focused on **capacity building** at district and community level, focused on referral and remediation, children's rights, child labour identification and impacts, CCPC formation, monitoring activities, and overall alignment with CLFZ criteria. IP participation sheets show a gender balance among the participants.[86]

IP reports noted that in each community, two new members, a teacher and a mining representative, were appointed as members of CCPC with community approval. This increased the CCPC membership from 9 to 11.[87] Consulted CCPC staff confirmed that teachers are part of the CCPC. They did not mention that the mining representative was "part of the CCPC" but confirmed that regular meetings with mining representatives took place and that cooperation with them has been good and resulting in reduced child labour.[88]

The Climate Cocoa project also focused on strengthening engagement of community leaders. One FGD shared how the Climate Cocoa project helped them to gain more respect from the community:

> *"Before the Climate Cocoa project, we also had the CCPC, but we had less involvement from the community leaders, and we did not have identification such as identification cards or t-shirts. Often, when we went into the communities, farmers and parents would insult us and did not respect us as the CCPC.*
>
> *During the Climate Cocoa project, we learned how to speak with parents, we received the ID badges and shirts, and we built relations with the community leaders. The community leaders officially introduced us as CCPC and explained our work to the community. Since then, we have received respect from parents during our monitoring, and we do not receive insults anymore. Parents seem to better understand what we do."*[89]

[86] Action against Child Exploitation (ACE) First Activity Report covering June – July 2025
[87] Action against Child Exploitation (ACE) Second Activity Report covering August – 10 October 2025
[88] FGD with CCPC members
[89] FGD with CCPC members

CCPC members also explained that they already knew that child labour was illegal and harmful, but that Climate Cocoa increased their understanding of the long-term impact of harmful child labour on children and the community as a whole.[90]

CCPC members furthermore received **monitoring sheets** and "Child and Family Profile" sheets to keep records of monitoring and follow-ups on the identified cases of child labour as well as practical guidance on completing these forms during actual monitoring activities.[91] CCPC members confirmed that they received a "record book" to keep track of children's school absence and use this book as basis for meetings (including with SMCs).[92]

Consulted CCPC members explained that they are fully aware of how the monitoring and referral system works. In fact, they reported that most cases are resolved either by the CCPC or by the Community Leaders. Female CCPC members also felt equally capable of resolving instances of child labour.[93]

> "*CCPC training focused heavily on how to communicate with parents and children. For example, if you identify a child not in school, they often run away or start making jokes. But when you sit down, at their eye-level, and ask them how they feel and what they want, they sometimes start crying because nobody asked this before. And then stories come out about divorce or the need for the child to support the household. Similarly with parents. It is easy to say it is illegal that you don't send children to school. You are sending kids to workplace. But we try to understand the situation and create relationships. This way, we see that parents start to come to school to talk with the teachers about child upbringing, even if the child is not in school*."[94]

In addition to training, the IP carried out **awareness-raising activities** to explain the CLFZ criteria to community members through practical exercises, case studies, and scenario-based learning. The activities reached 199 participants (75 women).[95] Consulted CCPC members confirmed that they now understood the CLFZ mechanism and could explain the criteria. "*We know how a Child Labour Free Zone can be created and what we should do and should not do to receive this status*."[96]

At the **school level**, IP reports, as well as consulted CCPC members and SMC members confirmed that the Climate Cocoa project provided training on strengthening the SMC system and clarifying roles and responsibilities.[97] SMC staff explained that they learned more about engaging with parents and particularly "*that the wellbeing of children in school is a responsibility of the whole community*."[98]

Both SMC and CCPC staff perceive that both entities work "hand-in-hand" and regularly exchange information.[99] For example, some CCPC members noted that the SMC will call them if a child is not attending school so that the CCPC can investigate.[100] In both communities, the CCPC and SMC hold regular meetings and some persons are part of both the CCPC and SMC to facilitate cooperation.[101] SMC members also noted that parents are increasing their understanding of the SMC, particularly that they exist to help and not to report parents to the police.[102]

---

[90] FGD with CCPC members
[91] Action against Child Exploitation (ACE) Second Activity Report covering August – 10 October 2025
[92] FGD with CCPC members
[93] FGDs with CCPC members
[94] Interview with a stakeholder
[95] Action against Child Exploitation (ACE) First Activity Report covering June – July 2025
[96] FGD with CCPC members
[97] Action against Child Exploitation (ACE) Second Activity Report covering August – 10 October 2025
[98] FGD with SMC/School staff
[99] Action against Child Exploitation (ACE) Second Activity Report covering August – 10 October 2025
[100] FGD with CCPC members
[101] FGDs with CCPC members and SMC/school staff
[102] FGD with SMC/school staff

Support to conducive learning environments also included a school reconstruction component, to improve school infrastructure (e.g. roofs, foundations, pilars). For this, a local construction company was engaged as well as the district Assembly Works Department.[103]

CCPC members furthermore underlined the effectiveness of the **remediation packages** to increase school attendance, since parents' inability to purchase bags, learning materials, uniforms, etc. was mentioned as key barrier for school attendance. They perceived that, as a result of these remediation packages, they have seen school attendance increase.[104] This is likely a combined effect of multiple activities, since the FGDs with CCPC and SMC members also pointed at education for parents (e.g. on the law on mandatory education) as effective tool to increase education access.[105]

However, the education activities also face important **challenges**. Most prominently, the FGD with SMC and school staff noted that SMC staff still face significant insults by the parents when they conduct visits due to non-attendance. In fact, the SMC members pointed out that their SMC role is voluntary (not paid) and that many people do not want to join the SMC simply because of the insults.[106] Before the SMC members arrived, the school staff noted that the SMC has been rather inactive as a result.

Additionally, the construction component did not exactly fit the expertise of the IPs and additional support to oversee the quality of construction plans was difficult to find. Therefore, these activities were delayed. By December, the construction activities were still scheduled to take place, while the contract with ACE for Output 1 was scheduled to end in January. This led to quite a rush in the final construction activities.[107]

Furthermore, the project experienced **challenges to recruit enumerators** to collect data for the community register (used to track children at risk). As mentioned in the relevance chapter, the allowance provided by the project was lower than immediate gains that youth could get from working in the mines. Therefore, youth were less interested in working for the project.[108] This challenge regarding the mines was also mentioned in relation to the recruitment of biochar producers (see below).

To what extent has the project made progress towards Output 2: Improving livelihoods of 300 cocoa farming families through the introduction of green technology (biochar)?

This output focused on introducing biochar as a "green technology" to improve soil fertility and boost crop yields. Activities including the set-up of infrastructure to demonstration sites and production centers and the training of farmers to produce biochar themselves.[109]

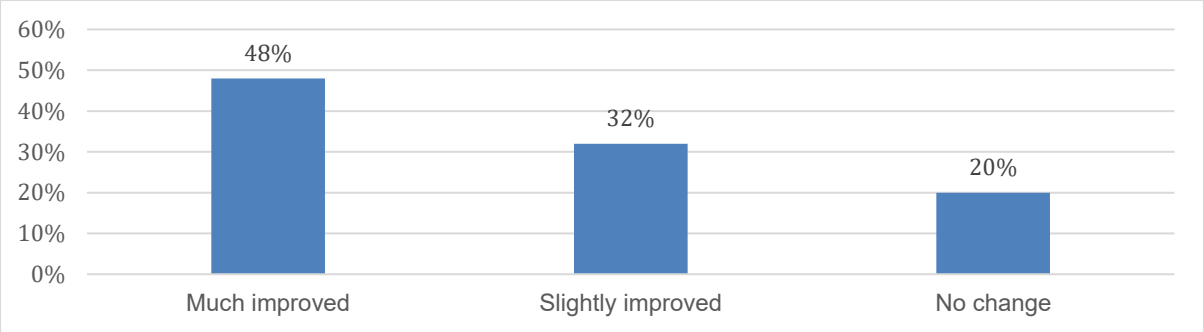
The biochar component of the project shows initial promising results, based on the training and piloting of the biochar sites. Despite the numerous obstacles faced during implementation, farmers observe the benefits of biochar for crop yields.

At the time of the evaluation, all biochar demonstration and production sites were set up and functional. Across the five communities, 300 community members (124 women) attended workshops to learn about using biochar in agriculture, and 53 people were trained on producing biochar (21 women). Following the training, participants were taken to a cocoa farm where practical demonstrations were held on how to apply the biochar they produced.[110]

[103] Interview with a stakeholder, Action against Child Exploitation (ACE) Third Activity Report covering 10 October – 5 Dec 2025
[104] FGD with CCPC members
[105] FGDs with CCPC members and SMC/school staff
[106] FGD with SMC/school staff
[107] Interview with a stakeholder, Action against Child Exploitation (ACE) Third Activity Report covering 10 October – 5 Dec 2025
[108] Interviews with stakeholders
[109] EN Farmers & Tachibana International Ghana. Fourth Activity Report covering Oct 03rd – Dec 15th, 2025
[110] EN Farmers Activity reports

Consultations with beneficiaries and monitoring by implementing partners demonstrate that **the training was effective in enhancing farmers' knowledge and skills** on biochar production. During the evaluation consultations, respondents were able to explain the process and the use of the biochar. "[producing biochar] *is not easy, but we are well-trained and know how to do it."*[111] IP monitoring surveys found that the demonstration sites were actually most effective in enhancing farmers' knowledge on biochar over the past six months.[112]

Figure 1. Percentage of biochar producers who perceived that their knowledge of biochar use improved in the past six months



Source: Final Technical Report, survey with 125 beneficiaries. Compared to the past 6 months, what is the change in your knowledge and understanding level on biochar use and preparation?

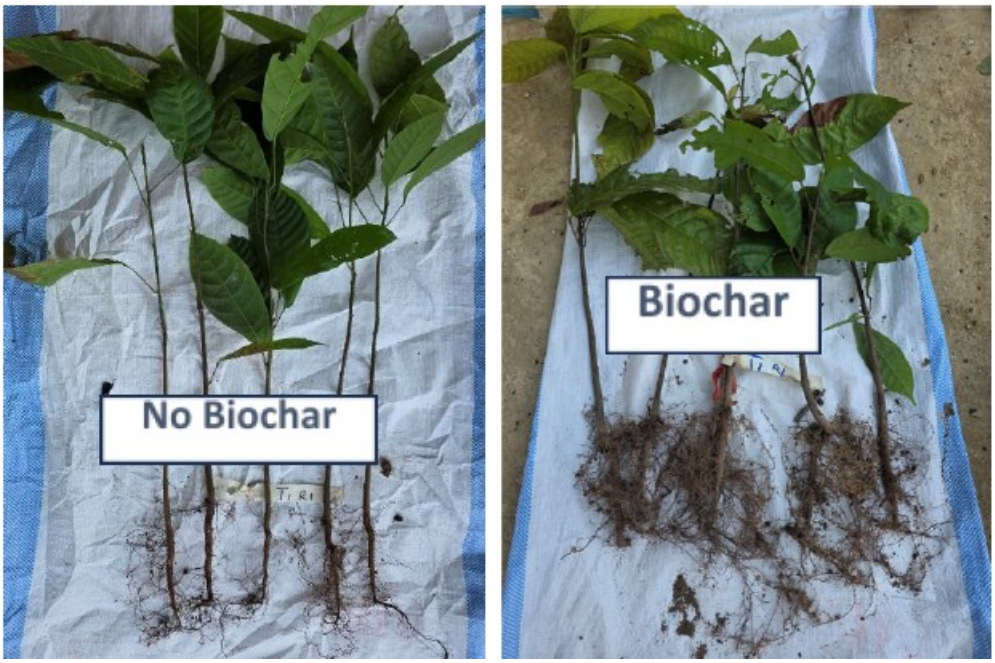
Besides the establishment of the biochar-specific infrastructure, the sites were accompanied with a focus on **occupational health and safety**. IPs reported the use of smoke detectors and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to mitigate risks like dust and extreme heat.[113] The evaluator also observed the PPE, as well as instructions on fire safety, during the FGDs at the production site. FGD respondents informed that "*the process can be dangerous, but we have PPE to protect ourselves*".[114]

The training and construction of production sites were accompanied by activities focusing on **piloting the biochar** and to assess the potential for its use to improve seedling quality and growth. A final biological assessment was conducted of the seedlings after six months, comparing to seedlings not treated with biochar.[115]

Preliminary results of the biochar use in demonstration sites were positive. Project Reports noted that biochar-enriched soil (using a 7:2:1 ratio of soil, compost, and biochar) significantly improved seedling vigor and root development in nurseries.[116] While non-treated seedlings grow longer stems, the stems of treated seedlings are broader in diameter and they developed more spongy fibrous roots systems than those planted without biochar. The IP interpreted this data as positive, considering that the broader stem allows seedlings to have superior robustness, high stability and vigorous ability to withstand harsh field conditions.[117]

[111] FGD with biochar producers
[112] Amos Kojo Quaye (2026) *Use of CPH-Derived Biochar as Soil Amendments to Improve Cocoa Establishment and Yield*. Climate Cocoa project report.
[113] EN Farmers & Tachibana International Ghana. Fourth Activity Report covering Oct 03rd – Dec 15th, 2025
[114] FGD with biochar producers
[115] Amos Kojo Quaye (2026) *Use of CPH-Derived Biochar as Soil Amendments to Improve Cocoa Establishment and Yield*. Climate Cocoa project report.
[116] Amos Kojo Quaye (2026) Guidelines for the use of Biochar in Cocoa Production Systems (Ghana).
[117] Amos Kojo Quaye (2026*) Use of CPH-Derived Biochar as Soil Amendments to Improve Cocoa Establishment and Yield*. Climate Cocoa project report.

Figure 2. Comparison of treated and non-treated seedlings



Source: Amos Kojo Quaye (2026) Use of CPH-Derived Biochar as Soil Amendments to Improve Cocoa Establishment and Yield.

Beneficiaries also noted themselves that plants treated with biochar in demonstration sites were doing better than others.[118] In particular, they appreciated that the seedlings were produced using harmless, natural fertilisers rather than traditional, chemical fertilisers.[119] Some impressions of biochar producers and farmers include[120]:

> *"The plants treated with biochar have greener leaves and their crops are more abundant."*
>
> *"Biochar plants are bigger and have more produce."*
>
> *"The biochar crops did better. They grew better, they are healthier, bigger, and the produce is larger."*

District stakeholders equally noticed the effects of the biochar. One stakeholder even noted that *"the difference* [between biochar produce and produce not treated with biochar] *is clearly visible. We can all clearly see the results. I took some of the biochar on my land to try it as well!"*[121] One stakeholder explained that "*fertiliser also works well, but it is more expensive. Therefore, biochar is a cost-efficient solution to get the same results."*[122]

The evaluator observed the differences in crops at some of the demonstration farms as well. The following picture was taken by the evaluator in Ntakam, showing that the plantain and cocoa plants in the front-right of the image (not-treated with biochar) are smaller than those in the back-left of the picture (treated).

[118] FGD with biochar producers
[119] FGDs with biochar producers
[120] FGDs with biochar producers and with farmers
[121] Interview with a stakeholder
[122] Interview with a stakeholder

Figure 3. Image taken by the evaluator of a demonstration farm

Consultations with the beneficiaries of the biochar production training confirm the potential effectiveness of the project to **improve livelihoods** of cocoa farmers. The following box presents the story of five biochar producers in one FGD, combining their quotes.

"Climate change has affected our produce and therefore our income and ability to provide for our families. When there was a community announcement about the biochar training, we understood that this approach could be beneficial for our farms. So far, we have learned about how to produce biochar, and we have used it in the demonstration farms. In those demonstration farms, we show the difference between crops treated with biochar and those treated with traditional chemicals.

The demonstration farms show us not only that the crops with the biochar are doing better, but also that the use of biochar is cheaper than purchasing chemicals, and that biochar is harmless for us and the environment. Therefore, we are now planning to apply the biochar when we start the seeding season and many other members of the community are interested in using the biochar, as well as in learning how to produce it themselves.

We feel confident to apply the biochar on our farms independently and, furthermore, we would be able to teach other community members how to use it as well."[123]

A training was also provided to biochar producers on the sale and distribution of biochar after completion of the trials. However, for larger-scale production, biochar producers mentioned various **obstacles**, elaborated in the sustainability chapter.

[123] FGD with biochar producers

The consultations with biochar producers as well as the IP project reports pointed to a few **challenges** that affected the project's effectiveness. The most pressing challenges noted across the implementation period included[124]:

- **Environmental Factors:** Limited rainfall in July and August affected the growth of newly planted seedlings on the demonstration farms.[125] Some stakeholders attributed this challenge fully to climate change. Other stakeholders felt that Climate Cocoa could have planned better since "*climate change and changing weather is already a part of our lives for some years now*".[126] Other stakeholders noted that the project should not have solely relied on rain, but rather explored opportunities for irrigation, which they expect to become more and more important as weather becomes less reliable. The same applies to the sole reliance on the sun for drying the pods.[127]
- **Some trials were destroyed** by wandering livestock (goats, pigs and sheep) which resulted in discontinuation of two pilot sites.[128] In some communities, local farmers continued using the demonstration farms as a road for them and their animals. After intervention by local leaders and the landowners this issue was resolved.[129]
- **PPE and safety measures** were provided, but some biochar producers noted gaps in this regard. Some noted that gloves, boots and overalls were insufficient to properly protect them, and cooks were affected by the long hours at the fire, which drained their energy.[130] The complaints by biochar producers were partially explained by the fact that the tools were simply "worn-out" and were already being replaced,[131] while another stakeholder considered that the PPE tools were not sufficient from the start.[132]
- **Community engagement:** The IP noted that community participation was below expectations, particularly in the first months.[133] As mentioned above, recruitment for the biochar production training and for enumerator jobs were affected by youth's interest in the higher income they could obtain in the mines.[134] The initial lack of engagement also delayed the allocation of land for the demonstration farms.[135] Measures were taken to increase engagement in the biochar component, which increased engagement towards the end of the project.

To what extent has the project made progress towards Output 3: Systematically documenting and sharing knowledge on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through biochar technology?

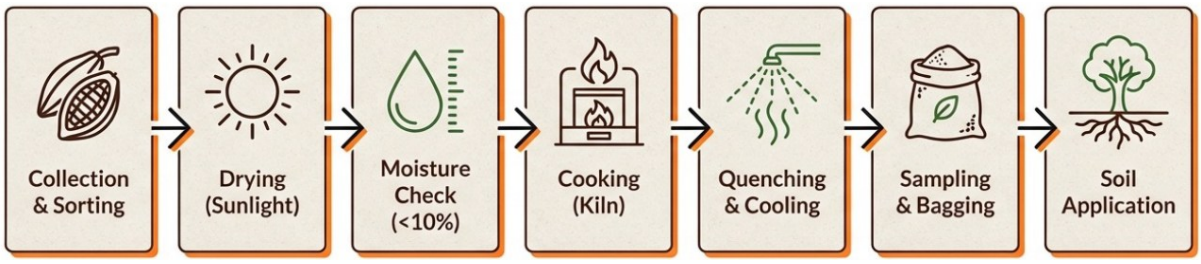
The project aimed to promote the exchange of knowledge and best practices through active participation in conferences and practitioner networks. This component of the project included three activities, namely the research related to biochar and production of manuals; the presentation of Ghana's biochar experience at the Ninth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 9) side event; and the production of a report on the connection between migration and child labour.

The main results of this component link to the development of biochar manuals and to the progress made towards CERES certification and carbon credit generation.

[124] EN FARMERS Activity Reports and FGDs with biochar producers
[125] EN Farmers Activity Reports.
[126] Interviews with stakeholders
[127] Interviews with stakeholders
[128] EN Farmers Activity Reports
[129] Interview with a stakeholder
[130] FGDs with biochar producers
[131] Interview with a stakeholder
[132] Interview with a stakeholder
[133] EN Farmers & Tachibana International Ghana. Third Activity Report covering July 5th – Sept 29th, 2025
[134] Interviews with stakeholders
[135] Interviews with stakeholders

The majority of results under this output are linked to the biochar component, namely the production of **manuals for biochar production** and reports showing the effectiveness of the biochar based on the Output 2 results. The draft Manual of Biochar & Carbon Credit Production (being validated by the government) looks highly practical and easy to use, as it explains the main steps to be taken in chronological order, while also warning for actions that would violate the procedures and cancel the awarding of carbon credits.[136]

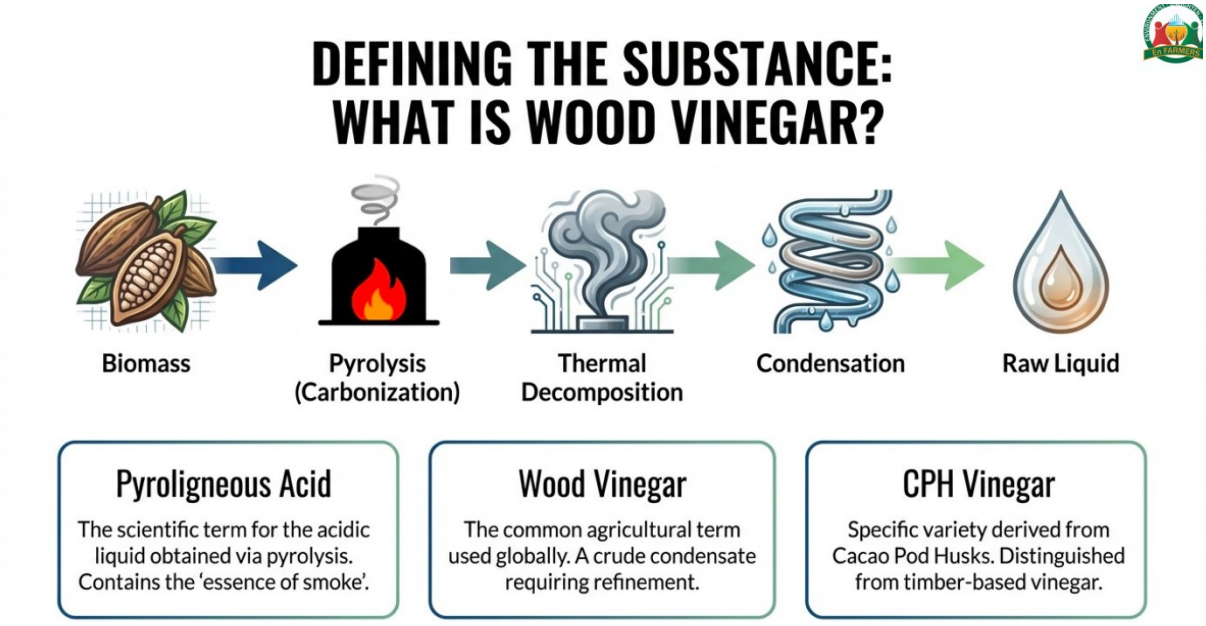
Figure 4. Image taken from the Manual of Biochar & Carbon Credit Production



While the manual is clearly addressed to farmers (easy and practical language), the "*Guidelines for the use of Biochar in Cocoa Production Systems*" are a somewhat more technical and detailed document explaining the correct use of biochar at different stages of cocoa production (nurseries, transplantation, mature farms).[137]

During the project implementation, the Tottori University partner introduced an innovative approach to reduce smoke production during the cooking process and at the same time generate vinegar as part of the biochar process. Besides the practical implementation of the smoke collectors, a "*Manual of Pyroligenous Acid production and use*" was developed to describe the correct process of obtaining this cocoa wood vinegar (pyroligneous acid).

Figure 5. Image taken from the Manual on Pyrogilenous Acid production and use



The manual describes the multiple benefits of the cocoa wood vinegar in agricultural production, as well as the safety precautions and dilution instructions.

[136] Tachibana International Ghana. *Manual of Biochar & Carbon Credit Production. A compliance and operational guide for smallholder farmers.*
[137] Amos Kojo Quaye (2026) Guidelines for the use of Biochar in Cocoa Production Systems (Ghana).

During the last months of the project, Climate Cocoa communities aimed to obtain **certification** for carbon credit generation. The final technical report by the IP noted that a first audit still discovered various gaps, which were subsequently addressed by the team of IPs. At the time of the evaluation, the official certification by CERES is pending.[138]

The Climate Cocoa introduced **Smart Technology** as innovative tool in Ghana to ensure not only the correct and effective production of biochar, but also to connect the community farmers in Bibiani to the international CERES standards (the European Biochar Certificate). Receiving this certificate allows the biochar producers to obtain carbon credits.[139]

The Climate Cocoa project introduced the biochar producers to the Planboo app, a Quality Assurance tool where producers share pictures and data of all steps of the biochar process, to prove that the correct steps and measures were taken. Planboo uses digital Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification technology (dMRV) to measure the actual carbon removal/avoidance[140], which is in itself a rather recent alternative to tradition MRV and is considered more rigorous, quick and accurate in measuring the exact carbon credits earned in climate neutral initiatives worldwide.[141]

Planboo staff also trained the biochar producers on the use of the "green box"[142] which measures the temperature in the fireplace where the biochar is burnt to indicate when the right temperature is reached. Furthermore, it measures whether the biochar was indeed cooked for the correct duration and at the correct time. The green box can collect data offline – an innovation to suit the local context – and sent the data to the Planboo app and to the Planboo office.[143] In addition, the biochar users have a meter to measure the moisture content in randomly selected pieces of biomass. Producers are required to take a picture of the meter to verify that that biomass is dry enough.[144]

Among the consulted biochar producers, only a few were able to use the app. A reason for that was illiteracy among the population. Planboo users were, however, planning to gradually introduce the app to the other producers as well.[145]

A second dimension of this output focused on developing a report on the relationship between **child labour and migration**. This report was not initially planned but it became an area of interest during the project implementation.[146] The title of the final product is "*Rapid Assessment on the link between Migration from Northern Regions and child Labour in Cocoa growing areas*". At the time of the evaluation, this report was under review by ILO HQ staff.

A few challenges occurred during the report development which influenced its completion. Most importantly, the field work was carried out during a "low time" in cocoa production, meaning that many seasonal migrants were not in the Bibiani district.[147]

Lastly, the project participated in the **2025 TICAD conference** in Tokyo to present the experience of Ghana. This was an interesting choice given that many project partners are Japanese, which allowed the Climate Cocoa team to also demonstrate how the use of

[138] Amos Kojo Quaye (2026) Use of CPH-Derived Biochar as Soil Amendments to Improve Cocoa Establishment and Yield.
[139] A carbon credit is a tradable certificate representing the removal or avoidance of one metric ton of carbon dioxide. Credits can be transferred from the farmers that generated the avoided emissions to a buyer. The buyer can then "retire" it to count the avoided emissions or enhanced removals towards a climate change mitigation goal or as a contribution to global mitigation efforts.
[140] https://planboo.eco/
[141] E.g. https://medium.com/@voycey/what-is-dmrv-and-how-does-it-relate-to-carbon-accounting-7c24964c88ac ; https://blog.dclimate.net/dmrv-what-is-it-how-it-works-and-why-it-is-essential-for-bringing-scale-and-accountability-to-the-vcm/ ; and https://crystalchain.io/blog/the-importance-of-dmrv-for-your-biochar-project-attract-buyers-and-unlock-business-opportunities
[142] Also referred to as the Internet of Things in project reports
[143] Interviews with stakeholders
[144] Tachibana International Ghana. *Manual of Biochar & Carbon Credit Production. A compliance and operational guide for smallholder farmers.*
[145] FGDs with biochar producers.
[146] Interview with ILO staff.
[147] Interview with ILO staff

Japanese knowledge contributes to innovation in Ghana. One weakness is that this conference took place in August 2025, so the biochar results were not yet fully visible and not that much evidence could have been presented yet.

5.4. Efficiency

According to the OECD/DAC, the efficiency criterion considers the extent to which available resources can deliver expected activities, outputs, and outcomes in an economical and timely manner. Hence, this chapter will consider to what extent financial, time and human resources were used to achieve expected results in an economic manner. Furthermore, the evaluation reviews the efficiency of monitoring mechanisms.

How efficiently have the financial and human resources been allocated and utilized across the project to achieve its objectives?

The project received a total budget of budget of 1,500,000 USD, (including USD 14,852 for UN Levy) from the Government of Japan, which included the implementation of all activities and the costs of the six project staff members (the CTA, NPC, NPO, finance and administration officer, driver, as well as one technical specialist).

The project implementation was largely efficient and aligned with its budget and ambitions, although the workload for staff was perceived to be far higher than planned on paper.

Of the total 1,485,148 USD **project budget** (after subtraction of the UN levy), 870,378 USD expenditures were made in 2025 (59%) which aligned with the allocated budget for 2025. By the end of February 2026, the ILO Development Cooperation Dashboard indicated that 64% of the budget was spent. This means that, of the remaining 614,297 USD for 2026, only 77,794 USD was spent by the end of February, with less than a month remaining.[148] Contrarily, ILO staff noted that, by the time of the evaluation, approximately 92% of the budget had been spent, indicating that the DC dashboard may not be updated.[149]

The general consensus among the staff is that the project budget was sufficient considering the scope of the activities and considering the project's purpose of supporting the ongoing work of ACCEL rather than a standalone effort. Costs across the project implementation were largely as expected in the initial budget.[150]

Staff perceived that the existing ACCEL structure indeed supported the project's efficiency. "*For example, if we go on monitoring visits on the costs of one project, we will use the visit to monitor the other project as well*". The use of the same project staff also avoided recruitment costs.[151]

One challenge regarding the budget was the fluctuation in exchange rates between USD and the Ghanaian Cedis. The project began when the dollar-to-cedi rate was high, but the cedi appreciated drastically within two months. This caused "strains" because contracts fixed in Ghana Cedis required more dollars than originally budgeted once the local currency gained value.[152]

[148] ILO DC Dashboard for the Climate Cocoa Project.
https://webapps.ilo.org/DevelopmentCooperationDashboard/p/project/109986#azgwy3g
[149] Interview with ILO staff
[150] Interviews with ILO staff
[151] Interviews with ILO staff
[152] Interview with ILO staff

Additionally, some people recruited by the project (e.g. the biochar producers) noted that there were delays in their salary payments ("*our cook and driver haven't been paid since December*") and that the salary was very low ("*we are paid for part-time work but adherence to the regulations requires us sometimes to be away from our farms for a whole day*").[153] However, only one delay in pre-funding by ILO to the IP was noted, in the beginning of the project, and the IP and ILO agreed on a more suitable payment scheme. No other payment issues have been identified since then.[154]

The **staff members** for the Climate Cocoa project were shared with ACCEL Africa. This was a deliberate choice to ensure that there was tight alignment between both projects, and to minimize the time spent on inception activities (e.g. recruitment) in an already pressing timeframe.[155]

While the set-up of HR for the project enabled efficiency and coherence between the two projects, it also created a significant workload for the staff, which exceeded the on-paper estimations of workloads for Climate Cocoa. Some staff felt occasionally overworked as a result.[156]

Interviewed staff were satisfied with the support from the finance teams, country director and other technical teams in the Abuja Country Office. In addition, the project was allocated resources for support from a **technical specialist** in Abidjan, but this person left the office during the project implementation, and the project did not receive technical support since (besides from the CTA).[157]

However, the project had built-in technical expertise through the engagement of various research institutions as project implementing partners. For example, the Tottori University provided support on the use of more innovative kilns and mechanisms for the production of vinegar as side-product of biochar. EN Farmers and Asaasepa had already worked on biochar before. The engagement of Planboo staff also supported the use of technological resources by farmers. Therefore, the project still benefited from sufficient technical and technological expertise.[158]

Stakeholders were mostly satisfied with the frequent and transparent communication by ILO and with the professionalism of ILO, by relying on permission and district staff to facilitate introductions at community-level.[159] However, one stakeholder noted that invitations or notifications of events took place quite last minute, which hindered their planning.[160] One IP also noted that, while their contract had formally ended, participation in closing activities was still expected, requiring them to use resources outside the project budget.[161]

Have project funds and intervention been delivered in a timely manner, and what were the key bottlenecks encountered in implementation?

The project was allocated a rigid timeline of one year, with no opportunity for extensions. This is the system applied under the grant system of the Japanese Government, which funded the Climate Cocoa project. Therefore, from the start, it was known that the one-year was non-negotiable.

[153] FGDs with biochar producers
[154] Interview with a stakeholder
[155] Interviews with ILO staff
[156] Interviews with ILO staff
[157] Interviews with ILO staff
[158] Interviews with stakeholders.
[159] Interviews with stakeholders
[160] Interview with a stakeholder
[161] Interview with a stakeholder

The project activities were implemented within the project timeline, despite a few obstacles. However, the project duration is too short to objectively measure the impact of biochar on farms with different levels of maturity.

All interviewed ILO staff and many stakeholders confirmed that the timeline was far too short to implement this type of project, particularly for properly testing and measuring longer-term impacts of biochar on different types of farms (nursery, mature). Some factors delayed the implementation of the project. The procurement and delivery of the biochar machines took longer than expected, which squeezed the time available for training farmers and actually using the machines in the field.[162]

One of the most significant issues raised by stakeholders was that the project's start time did not align with the local weather (also due to changing rain patterns). Because the project relied on the rainy season, the delay in planting meant they missed the optimal "rain time" for planting.[163]

As a result, at the time of the evaluation, little time is left to demonstrate results or ensure that farmers have fully adopted the new techniques. Stakeholders mentioned that, while they were "*very impressed*" with the results of the biochar, the window to observe these results across a full growing cycle was limited. While activities could mostly be implemented within the timeframe, results and impact of biochar on farm productivity and yields cannot be fully proven.[164]

Has an effective risk management, and monitoring, and evaluation (M&E) system been established and implemented across the intervention?

The project had a dedicated logframe with indicators and an initial risk register and assessment was prepared for the project document, categorized into institutional, social, economic, and environmental risks.[165]

The project's M&E framework was proportional and suitable considering the project's size and scope and fulfilled its purpose. A risk register was established at the design stage, but weaknesses were identified in its content and follow-up.

The **logical framework** included six indicators, of which two at the overall outcome/impact level, one for Output 1; one for Output 2; and two for Output 3.[166] ILO staff confirmed that, considering the scope and timeline of the project, the donor and ILO agreed that a more comprehensive logframe would not be suitable.[167]

The indicators are rather quantitative, but the column "*assumptions*" provides some guidance on how the indicator should be interpreted. ILO staff confirmed that they measured progress based on whether intended activities were completed and whether expected (initial) outcomes were achieved.[168]

There was no separate M&E staff member for the project. ILO staff noted that monitoring was mostly the responsibility of the NPO and the NPC. ILO staff confirmed that the logframe was suitable for them to keep track of the project progress and inform decision-making.[169]

[162] Interviews with ILO staff
[163] Interviews with ILO staff
[164] Interviews with ILO staff
[165] PRODOC
[166] PRODOC
[167] Interviews with ILO staff
[168] PRODOC and interviews with ILO staff
[169] Interviews with ILO staff

"*During our first monitoring to the field, we had indicators in our head of what a good biochar production site should look like. Then, in the field, we saw that there were quite a lot of issues and we needed to implement corrective measures. After 2-3 months we went back again to see the results and then we got what we call a model site for biochar production. We actually replicated that model in the other five communities where we're setting a biochar production site*."[170]

The project advisory board also conducted their independent monitoring, which brought forth issues regarding the employee contracts of certain IPs.[171] The monitoring results were discussed in subsequent board meetings.

Aligned with the decision not to have a too detailed logframe considering the timeline, the project also did not submit interim reports to the donor. However, the Implementing Partners led by EN Farmers and ACE did submit regular and detailed reports to ILO. These reports were of sufficient quality, and balanced between progress and challenges, to develop a clear view of the project's progress.[172]

While the project had an initial **risk register**, there was no evidence of regular follow-up or adaptation of the risk register. Additionally, one of the identified risks was the deeply entrenched norms regarding child labour.[173] Issues that a project aims to address are not a "risk" because they are already existing and taken into account in the project design. Persisting child labour is known and is present, and is therefore not a risk.

Furthermore, one of the main challenges to the project -the change in rainfall patterns- was not identified in this register, despite that this is the core issue the project is working on (climate change is known, but the exact weather pattern in 2025 is not). The project could have identified more nuanced risks more related to the specific nature of Climate Cocoa. For example, such as the identified risks regarding the adoption of technologies and the occurrence of unintended environmental consequences.

However, the evaluation did identify effective adaptive management by ILO given that -even in the short timeline of the project- some solutions were still implemented in response to identified challenges (e.g. increased community participation efforts in the biochar component). In this regard, risk management was quite effective, though responsive instead of preventive.

5.5. Impact

According to the OECD/DAC criteria, impact focuses on the extent to which a Project can create higher-level changes in terms of significance, transformative potential, scope, or timescale.

The project logframe of outputs and outcome envisaged as "outcome/impact" that the combination of the three outputs would create "*strengthened systems to identify, prevent and address child labour*". However, as described in the Coherence chapter, measuring against this formulation would not do justice to the contribution of all three outputs. Therefore, to measure the likelihood of impact, the evaluation used the outcome as formulated in the ToC (sustainable framework for the eradication of child labour) which integrates climate mitigation strategies.

[170] Interview with ILO staff
[171] Interview with ILO and with a stakeholder
[172] Activity Reports of EN Farmers and ACE.
[173] PRODOC

By strengthening community and district-level systems in line with CLFZ criteria, applying an integrated, multi-stakeholder approach to eradicating child labour, and by providing a high-potential solution to strengthen livelihoods, the project is likely to contribute to the reduction and elimination of child labour in Bibiani as a whole, through its combined effort with ACCEL. However, the short timeline of the project creates a gap in evidence on actual impact, particularly of the biochar on the mature cocoa farms.

While the project was still ongoing and the timeline was short, there are some signals that can indicate that impact may take place over the upcoming months. Several interviewed stakeholders perceived that, at the time of the evaluation, the Bibiani District was close to achieving **CLFZ status** by meeting the official criteria.[174] This would be the result of both the longer-term work of ACCEL and the CLFZ-focused contribution of the Climate Cocoa project.

Many stakeholders and community members felt confident that, together with SMCs, local leaders, and district officials, they have the capacity to identify and address child labour effectively and in line with the CLFZ criteria.[175] This strengthened capacity (by Climate Cocoa) is reinforced and enabled by the shift in attitudes and behaviour (achieved by ACCEL Africa).

The project also put sufficient **mechanisms** in place to ensure the effectiveness of these systems. All community-level and district-level stakeholders confirmed that they understand their roles and responsibilities and know how to continue their work as it is now (although additional technical support can always improve processes). Meetings and procedures are in place as well.

Besides the CLFZ mechanisms that were reinforced, the Climate Cocoa project -building on previous results of ACCEL- managed to reinforce **behavioural change** in the communities. CCPC members noted that the awareness-raising activities conducted under both ACCEL and Climate Cocoa have significantly reduced the prevalence of child labour and they perceive that parents are committed to sending their children to school.[176] This suggestion of impact is supported by the previously mentioned finding that any remaining occurrences of child labour are easily resolved within the community.

The biochar may likely strengthen ACCEL's impact on **reduced child labour** considering the links between poverty and child labour, as emphasized by all beneficiaries. While many farmers have already indicated that harmful child labour is nearly absent in their communities, they also underlined that child labour and non-attendance of school may return if communities lack resources for education (i.e. increased poverty).[177] The preliminary biochar results suggest that crops treated by biochar may be more resilient to climate change and result in steadier income for the cocoa (and other) farmers.

While the Climate Cocoa project had a clear focus on the cocoa farmers, the project is clearly beneficial for a broader group of **farmers with different types of produce**. The demonstration farms included various other crops, and the results have been equally positive in the eyes of the beneficiaries.[178] Furthermore, as a side effect of the mechanism that mitigates smoke production during the biochar cooking, the biochar process also produces vinegar which can be used as a harmless pesticide by the communities.[179]

Overall, the project will likely affect a **larger group of beneficiaries in the five communities** than those directly involved in the activities. For example, 300 community members

[174] Interviews with stakeholders
[175] Interviews with stakeholders and FGDs with CCPC members.
[176] FGDs with CCPC members
[177] FGDs with biochar producers, farmers, and CCPC members
[178] FGDs with biochar producers and farmers
[179] Interviews with a stakeholder and with ILO staff

participated in information workshops on the use of biochar. However, some of the farmers consulted for the evaluation did not participate in these workshops, but were still aware of the biochar, saw the demonstration farms, and are highly interested in purchasing biochar.[180]

Consulted farmers did not see any concerns regarding the use of biochar and did not see obstacles for them to use it (depending on the final price). Both farmers and biochar producers in all communities confirmed that they did not know anyone who was not interested in the biochar.[181] Therefore, if the biochar becomes an affordable product, it is likely that a vast number of farmers, potentially even from other communities, will benefit.

A stakeholder indicated that they already started a campaign to **raise awareness of biochar in other communities** and discourage the use of pesticides.[182] Several stakeholders referred to the expansion agents of the Cocoa Health and Expansion Department and the Ministry of Food and Agriculture who have been sufficiently capacitated and involved in supervising the project to ensure they can replicate or promote these efforts in other communities.[183] **"***These agents are already in the communities. It is part of their work*.**"**[184]

The evaluation found no indications that the project would create less or different impact for **women**, as the consulted female CCPC, SMC members, and biochar producers noted the same results as their male colleagues. A group of consulted female CCPC members also confirmed that the project results aligned with gender roles in the community, meaning that trained women also can continue using their new skills and contribute to the community.[185]

For **youth**, the project may impact on their longer-term capacity to build livelihoods through the production of biochar. However, the attraction of the mining activities remains present, which may affect their decision-making and their continuation in the biochar, depending on how the sales of biochar turn out.

Lastly, there is potential for impact of the project at **national level**. Firstly, the achievement of strengthened systems to eradicate child labour links with the **GAAPACL** objectives. For example, Objective 5: *Strengthened communities, increased awareness raising and behaviour change to prevent and remediate child labour* has the achievement of CLFZs as indicator of success.[186] As a pilot district for the CLFZs, the achievements of the project and its lessons learned can provide valuable information to the Ghanaian government for the expansion of the CLFZ across other districts.

Secondly, the results of the research activities under Output 3 are under validation by the national government, in particular the manual for biochar production. Once the document is **adopted by the government**, it can be used across all of Ghana. This likely impact is enabled by the active engagement of key research institutions of Ghana. They actively engage with the relevant government agencies in their work, which enhances the legitimacy of the project results.[187]

A third level of impact of the project is through the use of not only smart, but also **environmentally friendly approaches**. Therefore, the project results have minimal negative

[180] FGDs with farmers
[181] FGDs with farmers and with biochar producers
[182] Interview with a stakeholder
[183] Interviews with stakeholders
[184] Interview with a stakeholder
[185] Consultation with female CCPC members.
[186] Republic of Ghana. Ghana Accelerated Action Plan Against Child Labour (National Plan of Action for Elimination of Child Labour). (2023 - 2027).
[187] Interview with a stakeholder and with ILO staff.

impact on the environment and, on the longer-term, instead contributes to reduced carbon emissions.

The main environmentally friendly practice is the use of biochar itself. The biochar results - when produced correctly- are eligible for carbon credits and the use is harmless for plants and people, as compared to chemicals.

The kon-tiki (or “flame curtain”) kiln was introduced to the project as a more climate friendly method for cooking biochar as compared to traditional kilns. The conical shape of the Kon Tiki kiln creates a vortex airflow that draws emissions back into the centre of the fire. Therefore, research has shown that the kon-tiki method emits significantly less carbon monoxide, other products of incomplete combustion, and nitrogen oxide.[188]

Figure 6. Image of the kon-tiki kiln with smoke collector

In addition to the kon-tiki kiln itself, Tottori University also promoted the smoke collector as tool to get even more benefits from the production.

Capturing wood vinegar is part of the project's strategy to reduce smoke and greenhouse gas emissions during the biochar cooking process, while creating an additional organic resource for farmers.[189]

The vinegar itself is as environmentally friendly as the biochar and can be used as harmless pesticide on various crops.

Source: Manual of Pyroligenous Acid production and use

One challenge for impact is linked to rigorous evidence on the effectiveness of biochar. The project period was **too short** for long term crops like cocoa and as a result the IP reported that there was not enough evidence (yet) of the biochar effects on the cocoa plants.[190]

Furthermore, neither biochar producers nor farmers knew about the **next steps** for the biochar producers to actually sell the biochar.[191] Without knowing the production costs and selling price, it cannot yet be estimated if this will become a viable business that (poor) farmers can benefit from.

Some other barriers to the impact are linked to the sustainability of the established/reinforced mechanisms, which are discussed below.

5.6. Sustainability

According to OECD/DAC criteria, sustainability analyses the extent to which a project’s achievements can be maintained in the future. This section will consider the extent to which jobs and businesses are sustainable and whether stakeholders have capacity, resources, and interest in maintaining the results and mechanisms put in place by the project.

[188] Cornelissen, Gerard, et. Al. (2016) Emissions and Char Quality of Flame-Curtain "Kon Tiki" Kilns for Farmer-Scale Charcoal/Biochar Production. https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0154617
[189] EN Farmers & Tachibana International Ghana. Final Activity Report covering Jan 5th – Jan 30th, 2025
[190] Amos Kojo Quaye (2026) *Use of CPH-Derived Biochar as Soil Amendments to Improve Cocoa Establishment and Yield*.
[191] FGDs with farmers and biochar producers

The Climate Cocoa project has created foundations for sustainability and certain results are highly likely to remain in place. However, various risks may affect the sustainability of voluntary roles in the communities.

The Climate Cocoa project does not have a dedicated exit strategy as it is expected that some of the work may be taken over (or at least monitored) by **ACCEL**. For the stakeholders that benefited from both Climate Cocoa and ACCEL, the continued interaction under ACCEL (with the same ILO team) enables both ILO and stakeholders to reflect on the Climate Cocoa results in the future, and enables ILO to remind stakeholders about the Climate Cocoa achievements (i.e. ensuring that CCPC and SMC members do not feel forgotten, as elaborated below).

The biochar component is among the most sustainable aspects of the project, given that the producers and farmers see a direct benefit from the biochar for increased agricultural yields and therefore income. As long as the biochar production sites and infrastructure remain in place, it is clear that biochar producers are sufficiently capacitated and motivated to continue producing. Therefore, various opportunities exist to **scale the biochar production**.

Across all FGDs, biochar producers expressed their deep interest and willingness to continue producing biochar and to **upscale** it and sell it to the community. At the same time, there seems to be a market for the biochar since all consulted farmers were eagerly waiting to hear about the sales and prices.

To actually meet the market demands and upscale production, biochar producers noted the following key needs:

- Transport: Biochar producers have only one tricycle to collect the pods. They believe that they can obtain more pods quickly if they had more tricycles, so multiple workers could go to the different farms at the same time, or obtain pods and bring biochar to the market at the same time.
- Tents: The current size of the tents for drying the pods sufficed for the purpose of piloting the biochar system, but would not be sufficient to dry a larger volume of pods at the same time.
- Workers: Biochar producers perceived that more staff would be needed, to collect pods, bring biochar to the markets, and actually produce the biochar. The biochar producers feel sufficiently capable to train new workers themselves.

Biochar producers and farmers are currently not aware of the next steps for biochar production after the project, as, for now, the project paid production costs so biochar could be delivered to farmers for free.[192] A stakeholder informed that there is a set price for the sale of biochar which covers the cost of production without creating excessive costs for the farmers. The biochar producers and communities would be informed about the "**handover process**" in the upcoming weeks.[193]

In terms of the **district and community-level structures** on addressing child labour, the feedback on sustainability is mixed. On a positive note, many stakeholders and consulted CCPC members perceive that they have sufficient capacity to maintain the results created by Climate Cocoa. This applies both to the expansion agents of district agencies, and to the community-level actors such as CCPCs and SMCs.[194] "*CCPCs now have really good capacity and knowledge, and everyone is on board and engaged*".[195]

For CCPC members, an important enabler of sustainability is the provision of the bicycles. Considering long distances between the farms, this allows them to continue implementing the monitoring activities that were supported by the Climate Cocoa project.[196]

[192] FGDs with farmers and biochar producers
[193] Interview with a stakeholder
[194] Interviews with stakeholders, FGDs with CCPC members and SMC/school staff
[195] Interview with a stakeholder
[196] FGDs with CCPC members.

As mentioned under the impact section, several district stakeholders are also exploring opportunities not only to maintain the results themselves but expand it further to other communities.

Some stakeholders mentioned that the shift in **behaviour** (mentioned above) is also rather sustainable. Some interviewees perceived that, even in case of increased poverty, the parents likely still abstain from using child labour again. This was explained by the fact that parents truly understand how harmful it can be for their children. [197]

The **risk to sustainability** is the voluntary nature of the CCPC and SMC positions, which therefore rely completely on the motivation of the individual members to continue their work. Interviewed stakeholders noted that, while CCPCs and SMCs have sufficient capacity to do their work, it is still important that they are not completely left alone, which would risk their demotivation. "*We need to check-in with them on a regular basis to show that they are not forgotten*."[198] In this regard, the SMCs may be most at risk, considering that consulted SMC members indicated that their interactions with parents can still be quite challenging (and therefore demotivating).[199]

The evaluator found a **lesson learned** from a previous UNICEF project in Bibiani that also aimed to strengthen SMCs. An interviewed stakeholder explained that the project was effective in (re)activating the SMCs and they were active and committed when the project ended. However, over time, the SMCs slowly became inactive again due to the reliance on the voluntary structure and due to turnover of SMC members trained by UNICEF. The stakeholder explained that some projects have too short timelines to fully institutionalise structures such as the SMC.[200] This provides evidence that the SMCs reactivated by Climate Cocoa may also face the same fate if there is no regular follow-up.

A second risk relates to transport. For certain stakeholders, bicycles were provided, which can be used in the future. However, the engagement of other stakeholders relied on their ability to "ride along" with the IPs. When the project ends, they will again face the lack of transport resources to visit the communities.[201] One stakeholder noted that this issue is not only linked to actual resources of the officials, but also on their reliance on project money to visit communities and their "expectation" to receive an allowance for such travel. This shows that some work is not yet fully accepted as "part of the daily work" but rather seen as something extra that requires an incentive.[202]

5.7 Cross-cutting Issues

How well did the project integrate cross-cutting concerns on gender, non-discrimination, social dialogue, environmental sustainability, and international labour standards.

The project had a strong local-level focus, targeting predominantly the district-level stakeholders and community-level beneficiaries. As a result, the focus on **social dialogue and international labour standards** (ILS) was practically non-existent. However, in this project, this is not perceived as a major weakness given that this project is meant as an addendum or support to the bigger ACCEL Africa project. Its aim was not to be a standalone effort that would require elaborate discussions with tripartite partners. As long as the ACCEL Africa project focuses sufficiently on social dialogue and ILS, the biochar project as "addendum" would unnecessarily pressure the constituents by adding another layer of meetings/reviews on what is practically the same project as ACCEL (for them).

[197] Interviews with stakeholders
[198] Interview with a stakeholder
[199] FGD with SMC/school staff
[200] Interview with a stakeholder
[201] Interviews with stakeholders
[202] Interview with a stakeholder

While the project formally adopted the **Gender Equality** strategy of ACCEL, it did not explicitly identify women's needs in the PRODOC), and did not design activities to address gender dynamics and nuances that affect child labour, notably that women are more traditionally involved in child rearing. The project's gender approach is largely limited to ensuring equal participation in activities, rather than a substantive analysis of women's specific needs. Female CCPC members and stakeholders raised a concern that went unaddressed by the project: girls' access to education is hindered by the absence of sanitary products, meaning that even when parents wish to send their daughters to school, girls may have to stay home during their periods. This issue was not covered by the project's design or remediation packages.

The project was designed to support Ghana's National Action Plan to Eliminate Child Labour (GAAPACL), which includes a pillar on Enhancing Household Income and Livelihoods, including through women's empowerment. The report acknowledges that women's active involvement in biochar training can be counted as a form of empowerment, while noting that the effect of this training on overall gender equality progress remains unclear.

Women did participate meaningfully in practice. Of the 300 community members who attended biochar workshops, 124 were women. Of the 53 people trained specifically in biochar production, 21 were women. An implementing partner technical report observed that women were physically active in the field demonstrations, including in the mixing of biochar with soil, and that in some communities, women described themselves as stronger than the men when it came to farm work. Consulted female biochar producers reported equal satisfaction with the training as their male peers, and found the training equally relevant to their needs and challenges. Female CCPC (Child Labour Prevention Committee) and SMC members also confirmed results consistent with those reported by male colleagues. A group of female CCPC members noted that the project results aligned with community gender roles, and that trained women could continue applying their new skills and contributing to the community. The evaluation therefore found no evidence that the project created less or different impact for women.

Environmental sustainability is not a “crosscutting concern” in the Climate Cocoa project: it is embedded in the project's core rationale and structure. The project frames climate change as both a threat to be addressed and a driver of the child labour problem the project seeks to solve. One of the three project outputs is dedicated explicitly to documenting and disseminating knowledge on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through biochar technology, and the project's Theory of Change articulates a long-term goal of creating an integrated framework that combines climate change mitigation with the socio-economic development of cocoa-producing communities. The project's contribution to SDG 13 on climate action is specifically noted in the report, alongside SDGs 1 and 4, and the biochar component was designed from the outset as an innovative, environmentally friendly alternative to chemical inputs in agriculture.

Across the project's activities, environmental sustainability is woven into both the livelihood and knowledge-sharing components. The introduction of biochar (produced from agricultural waste (cocoa pods) rather than synthetic materials) was intended to improve soil fertility, enhance water retention, discourage deforestation, and reduce reliance on chemical fertilisers. Beneficiaries and stakeholders confirmed that biochar is not only more affordable than conventional fertilisers, but also harmless to people and the environment. To connect community-level practice with international standards, the project introduced the Planboo app and the CERES European Biochar Certificate, enabling producers to track and verify the quality of their biochar production and ultimately to generate carbon credits. CERES certification was pending at the time of the evaluation, but the infrastructure and documentation to support this process were in place. The production of practical manuals further embeds environmental knowledge within the communities and creates resources with

national-scale potential, as the government of Ghana was in the process of validating these documents.

In the course of implementation, the project went a step further than its original design by adopting a more environmentally advanced production method. Tottori University, one of the implementing partners, introduced the kon-tiki (or "flame curtain") kiln as a replacement for traditional kilns. Its conical shape creates a vortex airflow that draws combustion gases back into the fire, resulting in significantly lower emissions of carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide, and other by-products. Beyond the kiln itself, Tottori University also promoted the use of a smoke collector to capture wood vinegar (pyroligneous acid) as a by-product of the biochar cooking process. This cocoa wood vinegar is both environmentally harmless and practically useful as it can be applied directly as a natural pesticide on crops, offering farmers a sustainable and cost-free alternative to chemical pesticides. A dedicated manual on pyroligneous acid production and use was developed to support its uptake.

6. Conclusions

Ghana's economy is highly dependent on its agricultural yields and cocoa farmers rely on seasonal rains and dry periods and plan their cocoa planting accordingly. Climate change has affected previously predictable weather patterns, resulting in cross loss as a result of too much or too little rain. Reduced crop yields are directly linked to income and livelihoods of farmers. When income is affected, children's access to education is affected as well, as families can no longer afford the costs related to schooling. This can result in (harmful forms of) child labour as well. Despite recent progress in reducing and monitoring child labour, challenges remain to fully eradicate child labour, related both to monitoring and referral systems, and to farmers' capacity to ensure education access for children.

Building on the results of ACCEL Africa, the Climate Cocoa project aimed to enhance sustainable frameworks for the eradication of child labour in Bibiani District, including through climate mitigation strategies. On the one hand, under Output 1, the project focused on identifying and addressing persisting gaps in child labour monitoring systems, particularly in support of Ghana's objective to establish Child Labour Free Zones. The capacity building for district and community actors focused on strengthening compliance with CLFZ criteria and the evaluation found evidence to suggest that monitoring and multi-actor collaboration in the district has indeed improved as a result of Climate Cocoa's efforts.

On the other hand, the project's second Output focused on opportunities to make the cocoa farms more resilient to climate change, and more sustainable in their practices, through the introduction of biochar. Despite the short timeline, initial results demonstrate that crops treated with biochar are performing better, are less vulnerable to weather inconsistencies, and produce more cocoa. Beneficiaries are largely convinced that the systematic use of biochar can enhance their livelihoods in the long term.

The two core outputs were supported by a third output documenting and promoting the results of Output 2. In particular, manuals were established allowing the biochar production to be replicated across Ghana in the future, and technologies and processes were established to allow biochar producers to generate carbon credits (once the CERES certification has been obtained). In fact, the project brought innovative, international technologies to the rural communities, enabling them to benefit from best practices of the global community.

While the project made important contributions to sustainable frameworks for child labour, it also faced numerous challenges. Across both core outputs, ILO and its IPs struggled to gauge community participation due to the fast and higher benefits that illegal mining could offer as compared to the project salaries (e.g. for biochar producers and community registry

enumerators). The biochar component was furthermore affected by changes in the weather, by farm animals, and by gaps in protective equipment for biochar producers.

For several issues, ILO and IPs managed to address or mitigate the risks and still deliver results within the stringent one-year timeline. However, with its objective to reduce climate change vulnerability, it could have been more aware of the risks that climate change could have on the project.

Consensus was found among interviewees that the non-extendable one-year timeline was too short for an agricultural project where the results of biochar on farms with different levels of maturity and different crops require more time to become visible and proven. Despite this weakness, beneficiaries are largely convinced of biochar's effectiveness and respondents were unanimously interested in producing, selling, and buying the product (providing some more equipment is available to scale-up the production process).

The strengthened district and community structures, combined with strengthened farm resilience and production, is expected to contribute to reduced poverty, reduced child labour, and increased school attendance. An important enabling factor for this expected impact is the foundation of behavioural change and awareness on the dangers of child labour that was created by ACCEL, and the fact that ACCEL will remain active beyond the Climate Cocoa timeline. At the same time, the strengthened capacity of district actors can allow them to spread knowledge on biochar, CLFZ criteria and child labour monitoring to other communities as well, and stakeholders are committed to do so.

Two key barriers may hinder broader impact and sustainability of the results. Firstly, community monitoring relies heavily on voluntary structures (CCPC and SMC) which have become inactive in the past, and whose members still face certain challenges in their work (e.g. harassment of SMC members). Without continued check-ins and motivation, their active continuation is uncertain.

Secondly, district officials lack resources to travel into the communities and follow-up on or further spread the results. Many departments have only one vehicle and lack funding for fuel. During the project, they could rely on transport by the IPs, but without the project it is unclear how strong their connection to the communities will be.

Overall, the Climate Cocoa project was an innovative and valuable contribution to the Bibiani District and five of its cocoa communities. Despite multiple challenges, the project created and documented results that can function as inspiration for other districts across Ghana and have clear potential to be scaled up.

7. Lessons Learned and Good Practices

Lessons learned

- **LL1. Projects focusing on challenges caused by climate change, particularly in relation to agriculture, should identify risks and mitigation measures on how climate change may affect the project implementation**. In this case, cocoa farmers were affected by changes in the rainy season period and the Climate Cocoa project aimed to demonstrate biochar as solution for crop vulnerability. However, during the project implementation, the team relied on the original rain patterns. When the rain stopped earlier than expected, many crops in demonstration farms died or were negatively affected, which subsequently affected the presentation of biochar as innovative solution. Mitigation measures, such as irrigation solutions, should have been identified in advance, considering the likelihood that the weather would not behave per usual.
- **LL2. Community engagement and presentation of benefits of the interventions should be clearly and systematically communicated in areas affected by illegal mining or other illegal opportunities for quicker earnings**. In both Outputs, the project struggled to recruit workers (enumerators, biochar producers) as the salaries and work was perceived less financially beneficial as compared to the offer at illegal mining sites. In fact, some biochar producers complained about salaries being too low and not yet paid. If a project cannot match the earnings in the mines, it should focus on other incentives or methods to ensure community participation. At the same time, the biochar component initially did not generate much community attention and community members even used the demonstration farms as roads for their cattle (leading to crop destruction). Awareness-raising, presentations, engagement with community leaders, demonstrations, etc. should be a systematic part of the project and should be commenced immediately. Once the project strengthened its community engagement in the biochar component, more interest from community members in the demonstration farms was noted.

Good practices

- **GP1. Strong coordination framework among international agencies to divide work and share experiences**. The large volume of actors working on child labour and agriculture across Ghana is almost impossible for the government to fully manage and align. Therefore, the ILO, UNICEF and JICA themselves established a coordination framework to manage complementarity specifically in the Bibiani District. The actors mapped their interventions to avoid overlapping efforts and exchanged lessons learned and other information that could influence other actors' work. As a result, none of the district and community stakeholders saw any overlaps between the interventions of the three organisations.
- **GP2. Effective use of international knowledge and technologies to enhance the project's environmental sustainability**. The project targeted rural communities in one district of Ghana yet managed to connect these rural farmers with international organisations (Planboo, CERES), as well as Japanese organisations to ensure the farmers would benefit from the most up-to-date technologies and trends in biochar, certification, carbon credits and overall sustainable farming technologies. This allows the cocoa farmers of Bibiani to become an example for other farmers in Ghana as well as for other farming communities in Africa. At the same time, it demonstrates that even the most remote and poor communities can take leading roles in promoting environmental sustainability.
- **GP3. Using research institutions to track project progress from an agricultural and biological perspective, building a strong evidence and scale up case for the use of biochar**. The Climate Cocoa project implementing partners included research

organisations both inside Ghana (CSIR-Soil Research Institute) and in Japan (Tottori University). The involvement of these partners meant that the project could benefit from the most modern biochar and cooking techniques recommended by the experts and that all progress of the biochar plantation was documented by renowned national and international experts. The documentation of results by renowned institutions means that 1) the likelihood of validation and adoption of the guidelines by the government is higher since the national institutions frequently engage with the government, and 2) that the results are more likely to be trusted by donors and international partners, increasing opportunities for ILO to replicate the work.

8. Recommendations

Based on the evaluation findings, conclusions, lessons learned and good practices, the following recommendations are proposed to ILO.

Recommendation 1: Build a case study of the biochar component for scaling up across other ILO agricultural projects, in possible combination with entrepreneurship/financial literacy trainings.

Initial results of the biochar component are promising and may present an option both for more resilient crops as well as for income generation through biochar sales. At the same time, it can contribute to more environmentally sustainable farming practices and reduction of harmful pesticides (through the vinegar).

As this is not yet a common practice in ILO, rather an innovative experiment, there is an opportunity for other ILO offices and projects to learn from the experience in Ghana. To facilitate the use of results, ILO should take the following steps:

- First, conduct additional evidence gathering after set periods of time to gather more substantial evidence of the effectiveness of biochar and its correct use, to build a solid evidence case for its use in ILO projects (supported with academic literature).
- Prepare documents (e.g. infographs) and presentations for ILO HQ to disseminate the experience and support the development of ILO guidelines for integrating biochar in livelihoods projects.
- Consider developing the biochar training as optional addition to entrepreneurship and similar ILO training models so that they can be attached if relevant.

Addressed to:	When:	Priority:	Resources:
ILO Ghana and Abidjan teams	During the next year (March 2026-2027)	Medium	Some resources needed to conduct additional research or develop materials to share with ILO HQ

Recommendation 2: Support the national and local governments to identify solutions to the illegal mining site in Bibiani.

Many stakeholders reflected on the illegal mining site as key issue in Bibiani District, particularly in Nkatieso and Beposo. Besides the obstacle of the mining site for project recruitment, it is also a place where child labour still takes place and where -due to the illegality of the site – no health and safety measures are in place. Given the nature of the mine – more surface and artisan level instead of the traditional tunnels with 1000s of workers – it is not possible to identify one responsible entity to work with.

Considering the scope of this type of illegal mining in Ghana, some interviewees did not deem it realistic to “close” the site since there is no government capacity to monitor and close all illegal mining activity in the country. ILO and international partners, together with the government, should explore whether solutions can be found either to enhance other opportunities in key mining locations or potentially (partially) legalise and regulate some of the sites, which can contribute to safe work.

Actions ILO can consider include:
- Exchanging with other countries with similar mining sites on solutions
- Assess the potential impact of different legalization and policy options on OSH and child labour (feasibility studies and ex-ante evaluations)

Addressed to:	When:	Priority:	Resources:
ILO Ghana, Abuja, and Abidjan teams, as well as ILO specialists (OSH, FUNDAMENTALS, etc). In close cooperation with constituents	During the next years as this may require a longer term engagement	High	This may require an additional project with technical support. Fundraising may be necessary.

Recommendation 3: Integrate follow-up mechanisms with SMCs and CCPCs into ACCEL activities.

Various stakeholders noted that the voluntary nature of the SMCs and CCPCs is a key risk for their sustainability, as the activeness of the committees depends on motivation. Past projects have shown that, if the project is too short, the work is not sufficiently institutionalized and the committees slowly disappear.

At this time, the CCPCs and SMCs are still active and motivated, and the ILO and government should use this momentum to continue motivating and supporting these structures or at least ensuring regular follow-up.

Actions ILO can consider include:

- Integrating follow-up with CCPCs in ACCEL. Since ACCEL is already supporting the CCPCs, it should not take additional resources to also check in whether the tools and records provided through Climate Cocoa are still actively used.
- Utilise engagement with CCPC to also check in on the SMCs. Some SMC members are also part of the CCPC so the ILO would not necessarily need to add another visit. Engagement with the CCPC should simply ensure direct communication with the SMC representative and check-in on their progress.
- Explore with high-level district officials the integration of CCPC and SMC monitoring by the district departments as part of the daily work. While transport options may be limited, there is a need to make district staff aware that this work is part of their job, not project dependent. Some influence from the higher-level officials may be necessary for this purpose.

Addressed to:	When:	Priority:	Resources:
ILO Ghana and Abidjan, in close cooperation with constituents	Until the closure of ACCEL	High	Low, to be integrated in ACCEL activities as much as possible

Recommendation 4: Ensure that each community-level project has a dedicated strategy for community engagement, including female community members.

The project experienced some initial hiccups due to the lack of community participation, particularly in the biochar component. At the same time, when this issue was identified, the situation was effectively rectified through additional community activities. This shows that not all IPs are fully aware of how and when to conduct community engagement activities and the importance of such activities at different project stages.

At the same time, the project set targets to ensure the engagement of women, but there was no clear assessment of the needs of women and how to address them. In most cases, FGDs showed that women were equally trained and satisfied as men, but in one situation the project

results (bicycles) were not suitable. Therefore, future projects should have a stronger focus on identified women's needs beyond mere participation numbers.

Actions ILO can consider include:

- Engaging community leaders and female community members in project design, to cocreate issues and proactively identify potential risks
- Develop guidelines for IPs on how to continuously engage and work with communities
- Develop guidelines or instructions for IPs on the different elements of "gender mainstreaming" which go beyond the participation rates of women.

Addressed to:	When:	Priority:	Resources:
ILO Ghana, Abuja and Abidjan	For future projects	Medium	Low, some staff time to be dedicated to identifying or developing such guidelines

Recommendation 5: Adjust the design of risk registers to be living documents that focus on potential events rather than existing challenges.

While the project had a risk register and dealt with certain risks quite effectively, some stakeholders perceive that the challenges related to the demonstration farms could have been better predicted and mitigated. A review of the risk register in this regard found two main challenges. Firstly, the risk register mostly identified existing challenges to which the project is responding, or which are already included in the project design. As such, a challenge is no longer a risk. The identification of risks requires ILO staff to imagine what situations are not currently happening/taken into account in the design, but which may or may not occur.

Secondly, even in a short project, the risk register has to be an evolving document and updated on a regular basis as the project progresses and more contextual factors are known. This allows ILO not only to respond to challenges, but to anticipate and mitigate them before they can occur.

Actions ILO can take include:

- A dedicated brainstorm session during the proposal stage that differentiates between "what challenges exist that our project design should address/consider" and "what challenges could potentially occur that may need to be mitigated or addressed along the way".
- Adding a dedicated session on the risk register to monthly or quarterly meetings, for the purpose of giving all staff a moment to reflect on evolving circumstances and contexts and how they may affect the project.

Addressed to:	When:	Priority:	Resources:
ILO Ghana, Abuja and Abidjan	For future projects	Medium	Low, some staff time to be dedicated to developing the risk register and discussing it in meetings.

Annex 1. Terms of Reference (ToR)

Terms of Reference

Final Independent Evaluation of Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs Intervention on Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change for the Elimination of Child Labour in Cocoa-Producing Areas in Ghana

janv.2026

Key-elements	
Titles of intervention to be evaluated	Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change for the Elimination of Child Labour in Cocoa-Producing Areas in Ghana
TC Code	MO100125
Administrative Unit	CO-Abuja
Country	Ghana
Donor	Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Total Budget	1,500,000 USD, of which USD 1,485,148 is for the ILO project and USD 14,852 is for UN Levy.
Type of evaluation	Final Independent Evaluation
Evaluation Timing	February 2026 – June 2026
Evaluation Manager	Abderrahim El Moulat, REO

1. Introduction and Background

1.1. Introduction

The project supports Ghana's efforts to eliminate child labour in cocoa-producing communities by establishing Child Labour Free Zones (CLFZ) and enhancing climate resilience. In partnership with JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency), it introduces biochar technology to improve soil fertility, increase yields, and boost household incomes—reducing economic reliance on child labour. The initiative combines green technology, community capacity building, and awareness campaigns to promote education, child protection, and sustainable livelihoods. It aligns with Ghana's national strategies and SDG 8.7, offering a replicable model for integrated development.

1.2. Project Description

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA) plays a central role as the donor and strategic enabler of the project "Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change for the Elimination of Child Labour in Cocoa-Producing Areas in Ghana."

The project aims to support the Government of Ghana's efforts to strengthen resilience to climate change and eliminate child labour in cocoa-producing communities by advancing the Child Labour Free Zones (CLFZ). The initiative takes a comprehensive, multi-layered approach, targeting both institutional systems and community-level capacities to identify, prevent, and address child labour effectively.

Project Strategy

The long-term impact of the project is to reduce child labour and improve the livelihoods of cocoa-farming families in Ghana by integrating climate change adaptation strategies, enhancing community and institutional capacities, and promoting sustainable, climate-resilient agricultural practices. This will be achieved through the establishment of child labour-free zones, the adoption of green technologies such as biochar to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and improve soil health and strengthened knowledge-sharing and capacity-building initiatives. By ensuring better access to education and social protection for children, these efforts will contribute to a more sustainable and climate-conscious cocoa sector.

The project envisions that by advancing the Child Labour Free Zone(s) (CLFZ) in partnership with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), it will achieve the following outcomes:

Outcome 1: Strengthened systems for identifying, preventing, and addressing child labour at both the institutional and community levels.

Output 1.1: Child Labour Free Zone Mechanism strengthened in Bibiani Ahwiaso Bekwai District
Output 1.2: Livelihoods of 300 cocoa farming families improved through the introduction of green technology (biochar)
Output 1.3 Knowledge on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through biochar technology systematically documented and widely shared.

2. Objectives & Scope of the Evaluation

2.1. Objective of the Evaluation

ILO considers evaluation as an integral part of the implementation of any projects and interventions. The evaluations are conducted to achieve accountability, improve management and foster learning to support the knowledge base. As an integral part of Japan's development cooperation framework also, the evaluation of this project serves multiple strategic purposes for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA). It is not

merely a procedural requirement, but a vital mechanism to ensure that Japan's international interventions deliver meaningful, measurable, and sustainable results.

2.1.1. Specific Objectives

The evaluation of this project serves as a strategic instrument to ensure that development cooperation efforts are impactful, accountable, and aligned with Japan's foreign policy priorities. The specific objectives are:

1. Assess Relevance

To determine the extent to which the project's design and interventions respond to the needs of cocoa-producing communities in Ghana, particularly in relation to child labour elimination, climate resilience, and livelihood improvement.

2. Measure Effectiveness

To evaluate whether the project has achieved its intended outcomes, including:

- The establishment of Child Labour Free Zones (CLFZs).
- The adoption of biochar technology by cocoa farmers.
- Improved access to education and social protection for children.

3. Evaluate Efficiency

To assess the optimal use of financial, human, and technical resources in delivering project results, and to identify any bottlenecks or areas for improved resource allocation.

4. Determine Impact

To analyze the broader developmental effects of the project, including its contribution to:

- Reducing child labour.
- Enhancing household income and food security.
- Promoting climate-smart agriculture and environmental sustainability.

5. Ensure Sustainability

To examine the likelihood that the project's benefits will be maintained beyond its duration, through institutional capacity building, community ownership, and integration into national policies and frameworks.

6. Promote Learning and Knowledge Sharing

To generate actionable insights, lessons learned, and best practices that can inform future Japanese-funded interventions in Africa and globally, especially in the areas of ethical supply chains, green technologies, and child protection.

7. Support Strategic Visibility

To provide evidence of Japan's leadership in sustainable development and human rights, and to showcase the project's achievements at international platforms such as TICAD 9.

2.2. Evaluation Audience

The primary users of this final evaluation are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA), the ILO Country Office (CO), key implementing partners, National Government of Ghana, as well as and its relevant ministries and institutions, the ILO relevant Technical Units and tri-partite constituents in Ghana. The final evaluation findings, recommendations and lessons learned will also be used by the ROAF to inform the design and implementation of any future projects and initiatives related to Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change for the Elimination of Child Labour in Cocoa-Producing Areas.

2.3. Evaluation Scope

2.3.1. Period and Scope of the Evaluation

The project "Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change for the Elimination of Child Labour in Cocoa Producing Areas in Ghana" spans a period of 12 months, starting in March 2025. In accordance with the ILO Evaluation Policy, a final independent evaluation is mandatory at the end of the project, given that the budget exceeds USD 1 million.

The evaluation will be managed by a certified ILO evaluation manager, supervised by the EVAL department, and conducted by an external consultant. A minimum of 2% of the total budget (approximately USD 30,000) is exclusively allocated to this activity, ensuring a rigorous and high-quality evaluation.

This process will not only ensure accountability to financial partners, particularly the Government of Japan, but also help capitalize on lessons learned to improve future interventions in cocoa-producing communities.

2.3.2. Geographical Scope

The final evaluation will cover the **Bibiani Ahwiaso Bekwai District** in Ghana, where the project is implemented.

2.4. Evaluation Criteria and Key-Questions

The evaluation should be carried out in adherence with the ILO Evaluation policy and guidelines, as well as UNEG norms and standards. It should, as well, be guided by the OECD/DAC main evaluation criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability) in addition to ILO cross-cutting criteria. The final evaluation will be guided by the following main evaluation questions, to be refined during the evaluation design and planning stage:

Relevance & Strategic Fit - **Is the intervention addressing the right issues?**

1. To what extent is the project aligned to the needs and priorities of tripartite stakeholders and beneficiaries identified in the project documents and during implementation?
2. How well do the project support national development commitments, regional priorities, and relevant SDGs?
3. Did the project design reflect a logical, realistic, and purposeful approach toward achieving its objectives in national context?

Coherence - **How well does the intervention fit within the broader context?**

4. How well does the project complements and aligns with other ongoing ILO programmes in Ghana and across the region?
5. Are there any overlaps, synergies, or potential duplications with other donor-supported projects or national programs?

Effectiveness - **Is the intervention achieving his intended results?**

6. To what extent is the intervention likely to achieve its intended objectives by the end of the implementation period?
7. Has the intervention been effective in Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change for the Elimination of Child Labour in Cocoa-Producing Areas in Ghana?
8. What are the key success factors and challenges encountered in achieving the expected outcomes?
9. Has the intervention followed its Theory of Change, and have the assumptions and development hypotheses been validated by performance data?
10. What unexpected results, both positive and negative, have emerged from the intervention?

Efficiency - **Are resources being used optimally?**

11. How effective was the technical support and backstopping provided by ILO technical teams?
12. How efficiently have the financial, human, and technical resources been allocated and utilized across the project to achieve its objectives?
13. Have project funds and intervention been delivered in a timely manner, and what were the key bottlenecks encountered in implementation?
14. Has an effective risk management, monitoring, and evaluation system been established and implemented across the intervention?

Impact Orientation - **What difference has the project made?**

15. How has the intervention contributed to long-term improvements in the lives of beneficiaries, particularly women and youth in Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change for the Elimination of Child Labour in Cocoa-Producing Areas?
16. What tangible changes has the intervention brought at the policy and practice levels in terms of governance, technical capacity on Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change for the Elimination of Child Labour in Cocoa-Producing Areas?
17. What lessons can be drawn from the impact of the project to inform future Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change for the Elimination of Child Labour in Cocoa-Producing Areas interventions?

Sustainability - **Will the benefits last beyond intervention's completion?**

18. Are the intervention's results structured to ensure long-term sustainability beyond its lifecycle?
19. How effectively has the intervention built local ownership, institutional capacity, and stakeholder commitment to sustain its outcomes and impacts?
20. What are the main risks to the sustainability of the intervention's achievements, and how have these risks been mitigated?
21. To what extent are national institutions and implementing partners prepared to sustain the outcomes without continued ILO support?
22. Have realistic and effective exit strategies been developed and implemented to ensure ongoing benefits for beneficiaries and partners?
23. Will the intervention's beneficiaries, such as Cocoa farming families, Children in cocoa-farming communities and Local community leaders continue to experience improved access to Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change for the Elimination of Child Labour in Cocoa-Producing Areas after the end of ILO support?

Cross-Cutting Issues

24. To what extent did the intervention mainstream gender equality and non-discrimination principles into its design and implementation?
25. How effectively did the intervention promote strong and independent worker and employer organizations and facilitate constructive social dialogues?
26. Were there any efforts to promote environmentally friendly practices in the context of Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change for the Elimination of Child Labour in Cocoa-Producing Areas?

3. Evaluation Approach and Modalities

3.1. Evaluation Methodology

The final evaluation should comply with evaluation norms and standards, ethical safeguards, specified in ILO's evaluation procedures and guidelines (see Annex II). The ILO adheres to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) evaluation norms and standards, as well as to the OECD/DAC Evaluation Quality Standards. This is a final independent evaluation and as such, the final methodology and evaluation questions will be determined by the successful consultant in consultation with the Evaluation Manager.

The evaluation is expected to apply a mixed-methods approach, using both quantitative and qualitative data to address the evaluation questions and triangulating data sources and methods to increase the validity and rigor of the evaluation findings. The evaluation should also be participatory, engaging, as much as feasible, with the key stakeholders of the intervention in Cocoa-Producing Areas in Ghana at all stages of the evaluation process (See Guidance Note 7 in Annex II). The bidding consultants are encouraged to propose innovative approaches and methods to allow the evaluation to rigorously assess the intervention's results and impacts across Ghana, to derive holistic and integrated lessons learned on the support to Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change for the Elimination of Child Labour in Cocoa-Producing Areas in Africa, as well as to formulate strategic and actionable recommendations to guide ILO future interventions on the thematic area.

The evaluation should use, but be not restricted to, the following methods:

- **Desk Review**: Of the project's documentation and literature, including the project's documents, progress reports, monitoring reports, financial reports, relevant associated research and studies, and any other documentation related to the intervention. The evaluator should also conduct a brief literature review on Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change for the Elimination of Child Labour in Cocoa-Producing Areas processes and best practices in Africa and globally, as a benchmark against which the interventions' design and implementation strategies should be assessed. Preliminary findings from the desk review will be used to refine the evaluation scope, questions and methodology.
- **Interviews with the Main Stakeholders**: Remote or in-person interviews will be conducted with ILO relevant staff in Ghana, as well as with the intervention's partners, beneficiaries and key stakeholders in Ghana. Interviews will also be conducted with ILO specialists both at the regional and HQ offices. The list of stakeholders to consult as part of the evaluation will be consolidated by the evaluation manager in consultation with ILO staff in CO Ghana, and the evaluator will be tasked with performing any relevant sampling exercise to optimize the data collection process.
- **Focus-groups with beneficiaries:** In the main implementation areas, ensuring a proper representation of women and vulnerable groups.
- **Quantitative Monitoring Data**: Collected by the management throughout the implementation of the intervention. The evaluator should analyze any available such data at the country-level and across countries and triangulate the conclusions with the findings from qualitative sources to strengthen the evaluation validity and credibility.

3.2. Evaluation Process

The evaluation will be conducted and managed as per the following process:

1. **Inception Phase**: An inception meeting will be organized by the evaluation manager after the completion of the hiring process of the evaluation consultant and the finalization of the contract. The meeting will gather intervention's managers, the evaluator and the evaluation manager, and will be the opportunity to refine the evaluation scope and questions, to discuss its methodological aspects, as well as to clarify its logistical details. At the end of this phase and following the desk review and preliminary interviews with relevant ILO staff, the evaluator will submit an inception report detailing the evaluation plan, including its methodological approach, its data collection tools and its timelines. The evaluation Inception Report is to be approved by the evaluation manager.
2. **Data Collection Phase**: During which the evaluator will deploy the agreed evaluation approach, including the data collection activities with the identified evaluation respondents.

3. **Stakeholders' Consultation Workshop**: To be organized by ILO staff and facilitated by the evaluator and gathering the main stakeholders in Ghana. During the consultation workshop, the evaluator will present the preliminary findings of the evaluation, explore the evaluation stakeholders' interpretation of the early findings and recommendations, and gather further information with the stakeholders to narrow any data or knowledge gap related to the evaluation questions.
4. **Reporting Phase**: After the completion of the evaluation data collection and interpretation, the evaluator will submit a draft evaluation report, to be reviewed and circulated by the evaluation manager to consolidate feedback and comments from the evaluation main stakeholders. A final report will be, subsequently, submitted by the evaluator addressing the stakeholders' feedback, before being subjected to quality control as per ILO evaluation guidelines and quality standards by the evaluation manager, the ILO Regional M&E and ILO EVAL/HQ. The final report should be ultimately validated and approved by EVAL/HQ.

3.3. Evaluation Management

The final evaluation will be managed by an ILO certified Evaluation Manager not linked with the intervention and implemented by a selected independent evaluator, following a transparent selection process. The roles and responsibilities in the evaluation process will be as follow:

- **The Evaluation Manager:** Will be responsible for the overall management of the evaluation process, ensuring that the evaluation is conducted as per its ToRs and initial plans and that its final deliverables are up to ILO quality standards. More specifically, the evaluation manager will:
    - Finalize the evaluation ToRs with inputs from key stakeholders.
    - Select the independent evaluator in coordination with EVAL.
    - Review and approve the inception report.
    - Brief the evaluator on ILO evaluation policies, guidelines and procedures.
    - Coordinate with ILO CO teams on the data collection logistics.
    - Review and circulate the first draft of the evaluation report for comments by the key stakeholders.
    - Ensure the final version of the evaluation report addresses stakeholders' comments and meets ILO requirements.
    - Approve the draft version of the evaluation report and submit it to EVAL for final approval.
- **The ILO Country Teams:** Will provide any logistical assistance to the evaluator as may be required and will be responsible for:
    - Providing relevant and necessary documentation on Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs intervention to the evaluator.
    - Preparing a list of recommended interviewees in their respective countries.
    - Coordinating logistical arrangements during the data collection phase.
    - Reviewing and providing comments on the draft evaluation reports.
    - Organizing and participating in the stakeholder consultation workshop.
- **The Selected Evaluator:** Will be responsible for conducting the evaluation as per ILO evaluation guidelines and quality standards. More specifically, s/he will be responsible for:
    - The design of appropriate and targeted evaluation approach and methodology, as well as their associated data collection tools and schedule.
    - The conduction of appropriate and agreed on data collection activities, ensuring a proper participation of the evaluation stakeholders and its main respondents.

- The facilitation of a virtual stakeholders' consultation workshop to present the preliminary findings of the evaluation and facilitate a discussion around the evaluation recommendations and lessons learned.
- The submission of draft and final evaluation reports in line with ILO evaluation guidelines, quality standards and templates as outlined in Annex II.
- Address and integrate feedback and comments received on the evaluation outputs.

3.4. Evaluation Deliverables

The selected consultant is required to deliver the following evaluation outputs:

- **Inception Report:** Including a detailed evaluation approach, a detailed work plan and the associated data collection instruments. The inception report should follow ILO EVAL Checklist 3 and include:
  - Description of the evaluation methodology and instruments to be used in sampling, data collection and analysis;
  - Data collection tools;
  - Detailed fieldwork plan (virtual or in person) developed in consultation with the Evaluation Manager and ILO country teams;
  - Agenda for the stakeholders' workshop;
  - The proposed evaluation report outline.

The inception report will be reviewed and approved by the evaluation manager after being circualted to the evaluation stakeholders for their comments.

- **Draft and Final Evaluation Reports:** In English (maximum 30 pages, excluding), strictly following ILO template (Annex I) and ILO/EVAL Checklist 5 "Preparing the Evaluation Report"(Annex II). The evaluator will submit a draft evaluation report to the evaluation manager, who will have approximately seven days to consolidate both his/her comments on the analytical strenght of the report, its findings, lessons learned and recommendations, as well as comments and feedback from the evaluation stakeholders. Once the stakeholders' feedback on the draft report is shared with the evaluator, he will have seven to ten days to address all comments before sending a final draft evaluation report. The evaluation manager will again review the final evaluation report, before sharing it with the ILO Regional Evaluation Specialist for quality review. Once the final evaluation report is deemed staisfactory by the ILO Regional Evaluation Specialist, it will be submitted to EVAL/HQ for a final quality review. The evaluation report will be considered as final after its review and validation by EVAL/HQ, and the selected evaluator should be available to address comments and feedback at each step of the quality assurrance process.
- **Evaluation Executive Summary:** To be appended to the final evaluation report, following ILO template (Annex II).

4. Evaluation Timelines

The evaluation process should start Mid-March 2026, after the finalization of the contract, and last approximately **26 days**. The evaluation will be conducted following the below approximate schedule:

Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Number of days consultant	Approximate Dates
Inception Meeting with the evaluator and the ILO teams	Evaluation Manager	One week after the signature of the consultancy contact.	1 day	Mid-March 2026
Desk Review; Preliminary Interviews Deliverable: **Inception Report**	Evaluator	Two weeks after the signature of the consultancy contact.	3 days	End of March 2026

Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Number of days consultant	Approximate Dates
Field-work Data Collection (remotely and/or in-person)	Evaluator	Three weeks after the signature of the consultancy contact.	10 days	Mid-April 2026
Stakeholders' Consultation Workshop (remote)	Evaluator	Five weeks after the signature of the consultancy contact.	1 day	Mid-April 2026
Draft Evaluation Report	Evaluator	Six weeks after the signature of the consultancy contact.	7 days	End of April 2026
Consolidated feedback on the draft evaluation report	Evaluation Manager	Seven weeks after the signature of the consultancy contact.	-	Early May 2026
Final version of the evaluation report	Evaluator	Nine weeks after the signature of the consultancy contact.	3 days	Mid-May 2026
Total working days			**26 days**	

5. Evaluation Budget & Required Qualifications

5.1. Payment schedule and modalities

The consultancy for this final evaluation shall commence mid-March 2026 and conclude no later than mid-June 2026 after which the contract will expire. The ILO standards for payment is output-based and payments will be made upon the submission and approval of deliverables as outlined in section 3.4 of the present ToRs. Payments will be made following the below schedule:

- 20% for Inception Report;
- 30% for Draft Evaluation Report, and ;
- 50% for the Final Evaluation Report along with the Evaluation Executive Summary.

A budget for this evaluation has been allocated to cover the evaluator's fees, potential costs of international and domestic travels and the organization of the consultation workshop with stakeholders. The evaluation budget includes:

- Fees for the evaluator for **26 non-consecutive workdays**. The bidding consultant should provide, as part of their financial proposal, daily fees in US dollars.
- Cost of international travel, if relevant, from the evaluator's home to Ghana. In accordance with the relevant ILO rules, the ILO will provide pre-paid air tickets in economy class and by the most direct route.
- Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) during the field mission, if relevant. The ILO will pay DSA at the standard UN rate for the dates of the trips to cover lodging, meals and incidentals while on travel, as per ILO policy.
- Cost of the consultation workshop organization.

A detailed budget and contract with the evaluator will be prepared by the ILO Regional Office for Africa.

5.2. Evaluator Required Experience and Qualifications

The independent evaluator will be selected following a selection process managed by the Evaluation Manager and based on proven experience and qualifications meeting the consultancy requirements. Selection will be based on the following criteria:

- A master's degree in any of the following, social sciences, development studies, economics, or other related graduate qualifications.
- A minimum of 5-7 years of professional experience specifically in evaluating international multi-country development or capacity-building initiatives, including UN projects/programmes, and with policy level work and institutional building related work.
- Experience in qualitative and quantitative appraoches applied to evaluation.
- A good understanding of ILO mandate and tripartite structure.
- Experience in facilitating workshops to present and discuss evaluation findings.
- Have no previous or current involvement – or offers of prospective employment – with the ILO in the relevant countries.
- Knowledge and previous experience on Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change for the Elimination of Child Labour in Cocoa-Producing Areas in Africa, as well as in the intervention countries or sub-regions will be an asset.
- Fluent English, both spoken and in writing.

Annex I: Structure of the Evaluation Report

The evaluation report will be structured as follows:

1. Cover Page

Containing project details (project title, project number, donor, start and end dates, budget, relevant technical sector, ILO management unit, geographical coverage) and evaluation details (type of evaluation: independent, ILO management unit, start and end dates of the evaluation mission, name(s) of the evaluator(s), date of report submission).

2. Executive Summary
3. Background, Brief Description of the Project, and Its Intervention Logic
4. Purpose, Scope, and Intended Audience of the Evaluation
5. Methodology and Limitations
6. Review/Analysis of Project Implementation
7. Detailed Presentation of Findings for Each Evaluation Criterion
8. Conclusions
9. Recommendations (including intended recipients, priority level, and necessary resources)
10. Lessons Learned and Good Practices
11. Annexes (including terms of reference for the evaluation, documents used, people interviewed, evaluation schedule, lessons learned).

Annex II : ILO/EVAL Guidelines & Templates

1. Code of conduct form (To be signed by the evaluator)

http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_206205/lang--en/index.htm

2. Checklist No. 3 Writing the inception report http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_165972/lang--en/index.htm

3. Checklist 5 Preparing the evaluation report

http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_165967/lang--en/index.htm

4. Checklist 6 Rating the quality of evaluation report

http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_165968/lang--en/index.htm

5. Template for lessons learned and Emerging Good Practices

http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_206158/lang--en/index.htm

http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_206159/lang--en/index.htm

6. Guidance Note 7: Stakeholders participation in the ILO evaluation

http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_165982/lang--en/index.htm

7. Guidance note 4 Integrating gender equality in M&E of projects

http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_165986/lang--en/index.htm

8. Template for evaluation title page

http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_166357/lang--en/index.htm

9. Template for evaluation summary: http://www.ilo.org/legacy/english/edmas/eval/template-summary-en.doc

Annex 2. Evaluation matrix

The evaluation matrix includes the operationalised questions for the main evaluation questions. There is no operationalisation for the "cross-cutting" questions as they are mainstreamed across the criteria.

Table 3. Relevance

QUESTION	SUB-QUESTIONS	METHODS & SOURCES	INDICATORS
To what extent is the project aligned to the needs and priorities of tripartite stakeholders and beneficiaries identified in the project documents and during implementation?	To what extent does the project respond to the priorities of constituents, and include them in the design?	- Desk research on project design and constituent needs - Interviews with ILO and stakeholders	Alignment of project activities and objectives with key priorities of constituents listed in documentation and by respondents Extent to which respondents perceive that the project aligns with constituents' (most pressing) needs Evidence of consultations with constituents in the project design, in documentation and from respondents.
	To what extent does the project respond to the needs of community members?	- Desk research on project design and beneficiary needs - Interviews with ILO and stakeholders - FGDs with communities	Alignment of project activities and objectives with key priorities of communities listed in documentation and by respondents Extent to which respondents perceive that the project aligns with communities' (most pressing) needs in relation to the prevalence of child labour
	To what extent does the project respond to the needs of women?	- Desk research on project design and women's needs - Interviews with ILO and stakeholders - FGDs with communities	Alignment of project activities and objectives with key priorities of women listed in documentation and by respondents Extent to which respondents perceive that the project aligns with women's (most pressing) needs
How well do the project support national development commitments, regional priorities, and relevant SDGs?	To what extent does the project contribute to national development plans?	- Desk research on project design and national plans - Interviews with ILO and stakeholders	Alignment of project objectives with objectives reported in national development plans Extent to which respondents perceive that the project contributes to the achievement of national plans
	To what extent does the project contribute to regional development plans?	- Desk research on project design and regional plans - Interviews with ILO and stakeholders	Alignment of project objectives with objectives reported in regional development plans Extent to which respondents perceive that the project contributes to the achievement of regional plans
	To what extent does the project contribute to the SDGs?	- Desk research on project design and the SDGs	Alignment of project objectives with the objectives of the SDGs, particularly 8.7, but also related to poverty and climate change

		- Interviews with ILO and stakeholders	Extent to which respondents perceive that the project contributes to the achievement of the SDGs
Did the project design reflect a logical, realistic, and purposeful approach toward achieving its objectives in national context?	Do the outputs logically link to the expected outcome?	- Review of the ToC and identified results, and prior project evidence - Interviews with ILO and stakeholders - FGDs with beneficiaries	Evidence (e.g. from ILO research or prior projects) suggesting the activities are suitable to achieve the outcomes. Signs of effectiveness suggesting the link between outputs and outcomes Extent to which respondents perceive that the chosen activities and outputs were most suitable and logical to achieve the outcomes
	Do the outputs mutually reinforce each other to achieve the outcome?	- Review of the ToC and identified results - Interviews with ILO and stakeholders - FGDs with beneficiaries	Extent to which different activities and outputs build on each other to achieve results. Extent to which respondents perceive mutual reinforcement among the outputs.
	Does the design take into consideration the context and culture of Ghana?	- Review of the ToC and identified results - Interviews with ILO and stakeholders - FGDs with beneficiaries	Evidence of a needs assessment conducted for project design, including contextual factors influencing needs and priorities Evidence of a risk register taking into account potential hindering factors Extent to which respondents perceive that the project activities were suitable for the needs and context of Ghana

Table 4. Coherence

QUESTION	SUB-QUESTIONS	METHODS & SOURCES	INDICATORS
Does the project explore synergies and complementarities with other ongoing initiatives?	How well does the project complement and align with other ongoing ILO programmes (ACCEL, Accelerator 8.7., Trade for Decent Work) in Ghana and across the region?	- Desk research on ILO projects in Ghana, involving child labour and climate change - Interviews with ILO and stakeholders - FGDs with beneficiaries	Evidence of joint activities, joint coordination, cost-sharing and other approaches to ensure complementarity Extent to which respondents perceive that the project is complemented by other ILO projects
	Are there any overlaps, synergies, or potential duplications with other donor-supported projects or national programs?	- Desk research on other UN projects in Ghana, involving child labour and climate change - Interviews with ILO and stakeholders	Evidence of joint activities, joint coordination, cost-sharing and other approaches to ensure complementarity Evidence of duplicating activities or overlaps in approaches Extent to which respondents perceive that the project is complemented by other ILO projects

Table 5. Effectiveness

QUESTION	SUB-QUESTIONS	METHODS & SOURCES	INDICATORS
What progress did the project make towards its intended results?	What progress did the project make towards strengthening Child Labour Free Zone Mechanisms in Bibiani Ahwiaso Bekwai District	- Desk research on project reports and M&E data - Interviews with ILO and stakeholders - FGDs with beneficiaries	Examples of increased capacity of stakeholders and share of respondents who agree that their capacity increased Evidence of the existence of the Child Labour Monitoring systems and their functioning, satisfaction of stakeholders with the system Evidence of the functioning of School Management Committees and their influence on learning conditions Satisfaction of beneficiaries with remediation packages (disaggregated) Share of respondents who agree that the project overall made progress towards the CLFZs. (disaggregated)
	What progress did the project make towards improving livelihoods of 300 cocoa farming families through the introduction of green technology (biochar) Were the results equal for women, migrants, and PWD?	- Desk research on project reports and M&E data - Interviews with ILO and stakeholders - FGDs with beneficiaries	Share of stakeholders who are satisfied with the relevance and results of local stakeholder meetings, and evidence of them taking place (disaggregated) Share of beneficiaries who agree that they built capacity and knowledge on the use of biochar as fertiliser (disaggregated) Examples and evidence of the use of biochar by farmers in targeted communities Share of stakeholders who agree that they have the capacity to deliver future biochar trainings
	What progress did the project make towards systematically documenting and sharing knowledge on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through biochar technology	- Desk research on project reports and M&E data - Interviews with ILO and stakeholders - FGDs with beneficiaries	Evidence of the production and dissemination of the greenhouse study. Share of respondents who confirm that they read and understood the study Share of respondents who agree that the TICAD9 side event increased their knowledge and awareness Share of respondents who agree that the project results increased their knowledge on biochar and climate change
What progress did the project make towards its intended outcome?	What progress did the project make towards strengthened systems for identifying, preventing, and addressing child labour at both the institutional and community levels?	- Desk research on project reports and M&E data - Interviews with ILO and stakeholders - FGDs with beneficiaries	Share of respondents who agree that the project created progress towards strengthened systems for identifying, preventing, and addressing child labour Share of respondents who agree that they have increased capacity to identify, prevent and address child labour Evidence of the (improved) functioning of monitoring systems at national and community levels
	What factors supported or hindered the achievement of the outcome?	- Desk research on project reports and M&E data - Interviews with ILO and stakeholders - FGDs with beneficiaries	Factors hindering the project implementation, most commonly reported by respondents and in documentation Factors supporting the project implementation, most commonly reported by respondents and in documentation

	What unexpected results, both positive and negative, have emerged from the intervention?	- Desk research on project reports and M&E data - Interviews with ILO and stakeholders - FGDs with beneficiaries	Results not listed in the ToC, most commonly reported by respondents and in documentation
	To what extent do the project results validate the Theory of Change?	- Analysis of the above	Evidence of the causal link between activities, outputs and outcome.

Table 6. Efficiency

QUESTION	SUB-QUESTIONS	METHODS & SOURCES	INDICATORS
How efficiently have the financial, human, and technical resources been allocated and utilized across the project to achieve its objectives?	How efficiently did the project use its financial resources?	- Desk research on project reports, budget - Interviews with ILO and donor	# of targets met/exceeded within the budget % of budget spent within the project duration Examples and evidence of cost-sharing and savings made Extent to which respondents perceive that the project was efficient in its spending
	How efficiently did the project use its human resources, including the support from ILO technical staff?	- Desk research on project reports, budget - Interviews with ILO	Examples of inputs provided by technical staff Extent to which respondents perceive that project staff and technical staff's inputs were sufficient
	How efficiently did the project use its technical resources?	- Desk research on project reports, budget - Interviews with ILO and donor	Examples and evidence of the use of technical resources in the project Extent to which respondents perceive that the use of technical resources enhanced its efficiency
Have project funds and intervention been delivered in a timely manner, and what were the key bottlenecks encountered in implementation?	Was the project delivered in a timely manner?	- Desk research on project reports - Interviews with ILO and stakeholders	Examples and evidence of delays, reported in documentation and by respondents # of activities delivered within the planned schedule Extent to which respondents perceive that the project was timely
	What factors, if any, caused delays?	- Desk research on project reports - Interviews with ILO and stakeholders	Examples and evidence of delaying factors, most commonly reported in documentation and by respondents/
	What measures were taken to mitigate delays?	- Desk research on project reports - Interviews with ILO and donor	Evidence of a risk register, regularly updated. Evidence of shifts in work plans, activities, and approaches to address delays
Has an effective risk management, monitoring, and evaluation system	Did the project include a risk manager, which was regularly updated and discussed?	- Desk research on project reports, meeting notes - Interviews with ILO	Evidence of a risk register, regularly updated. Evidence of HR allocated to monitoring the risk register Evidence of discussion of risks in the meeting notes

been established and implemented across the intervention?	Were the indicators and monitoring tools suitable to measure progress, including for women, migrants, PWD?	- Desk research on project reports - Interviews with ILO and the donor	Alignment of indicators with SMART or RACER frameworks Evidence of quantitative and qualitative indicators Alignment of indicators with outputs and outcomes
	Was the project's monitoring system suitable to inform decision-making?	- Desk research on project reports, meeting minutes - Interviews with ILO and the donor	Evidence of use of M&E data for decision-making as reported in minutes Examples of adjustments made based on M&E data Extent to which respondents are satisfied with the M&E approach for decision-making.

Table 7. Impact

QUESTION	SUB-QUESTIONS	METHODS & SOURCES	INDICATORS
What initial signs of impact of the project are visible at policy and community level?	How has the intervention contributed to long-term improvements in the lives of beneficiaries, particularly women and youth?	- Desk research on project reports and M&E data - Interviews with ILO and stakeholders - FGDs with beneficiaries	Evidence and examples of changed behaviour, changed knowledge, attitudes and practices as a result of the project interventions. Extent to which respondents perceive that the project contributed to long-term improvements Extent to which beneficiaries expect to maintain new and improved practices and behaviour.
	What tangible changes has the intervention brought at the policy and practice levels in terms of governance and technical capacity? And did it strengthen social dialogue?	- Desk research on project reports and M&E data - Interviews with ILO and stakeholders - FGDs with beneficiaries	Evidence and examples of changes at policy-level: policy change, improved constituent capacity, budget lines allocated, etc. Extent to which respondents perceive that the project's outputs contributed to change at policy and practice levels. Extent to which respondents perceive that the project's outputs contributed to strengthened social dialogue
What lessons can be drawn from the impact of the project to inform future Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change for the Elimination of Child Labour in Cocoa-Producing Areas interventions?	This question will be approached through the overall analysis of all criteria combined, and not as separate question. It will be reflected in the Lessons Learned and Good Practices in the evaluation.		

Table 8. Sustainability

QUESTION	SUB-QUESTIONS	METHODS & SOURCES	INDICATORS
Are the intervention's results structured to	How effectively has the intervention built **local** ownership,	- Desk research on project reports and M&E data	Extent to which respondents perceive that local stakeholders have the commitment and capacity to maintain and sustain the results.

ensure long-term sustainability beyond its lifecycle?	institutional capacity, and stakeholder commitment to sustain its outcomes and impacts?	- Interviews with ILO and stakeholders - FGDs with beneficiaries	Evidence of institutionalisation of practices at local level (HR, financial, technical resources) Evidence of ownership and capacity reported in documentation and by respondents.
	To what extent are **national** institutions and implementing partners prepared to sustain the outcomes without continued ILO support?	- Desk research on project reports and M&E data - Interviews with ILO and stakeholders	Extent to which respondents perceive that national stakeholders have the commitment and capacity to maintain and sustain the results. Evidence of institutionalisation of practices at national level (HR, financial, technical resources) Evidence of ownership and capacity reported in documentation and by respondents.
	Will the intervention's **beneficiaries**, such as Cocoa farming families, Children in cocoa-farming communities and Local community leaders continue to experience improvements?	- Desk research on project reports and M&E data - Interviews with ILO and stakeholders - FGDs with beneficiaries	Extent to which respondents perceive that beneficiaries will maintain and sustain their new and improved practices to combat child labour Evidence of follow-up plans, next-steps and other approaches taken by community leaders to maintain the results.
	Have realistic and effective **exit strategies** been developed and implemented to ensure ongoing benefits for beneficiaries and partners?	- Desk research on project reports - Interviews with ILO and stakeholders	Evidence of the existence of exit plans, co-developed by ILO and key stakeholders, referencing division of responsibilities and next steps. Extent to which stakeholders are aware of the exit strategy and contributed to it.
What are the main risks to the sustainability of the intervention's achievements, and how have these risks been mitigated?	Which factors are most expected to hinder sustainability?	- Desk research on project documentation - Interviews with ILO and stakeholders	Risk factors most commonly listed as hindering sustainability, as reported in documentation and by respondents.
	What measures were taken to mitigate these risks?	- Desk research on project documentation - Interviews with ILO and stakeholders	Evidence and examples of risk mitigation actions taken to ensure sustainability, as reported in documentation and by respondents.

Annex 3. Documents reviewed

Project documents

ACE Project Reports:

- Action against Child Exploitation (ACE) First Activity Report covering June – July 2025
- Action against Child Exploitation (ACE) Second Activity Report covering August – 10 October 2025
- Action against Child Exploitation (ACE) Third Activity Report covering 10 October – 5 December 2025

Amos Kojo Quaye (2026) *Use of CPH-Derived Biochar as Soil Amendments to Improve Cocoa Establishment and Yield*. Climate Cocoa project report.

Amos Kojo Quaye (2026) Guidelines for the use of Biochar in Cocoa Production Systems (Ghana).

EN Farmers. Turning waste into 'agricultural gold' – a technical guide for sustainable cocoa farming in Ghana.

EN Farmers Project Reports:

- EN Farmers & Tachibana International Ghana. First Activity Report covering May 6th – 23rd, 2025.
- EN Farmers & Tachibana International Ghana. Second Activity Report covering May 24th – July 4th, 2025.
- EN Farmers & Tachibana International Ghana. Third Activity Report covering July 5th – Sept 29th, 2025.
- EN Farmers & Tachibana International Ghana. Fourth Activity Report covering Oct 03rd – Dec 15th, 2025
- EN Farmers & Tachibana International Ghana. Final Activity Report covering Jan 5th – Jan 30th, 2025

ILO (2025) Development Cooperation Project Document: "Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change for the Elimination of Child Labour in Cocoa Producing Areas in Ghana. A project towards advancing Child Labour Free Zones and Enhancing Income through Biochar Technology in Cocoa-Producing Areas". CO-Abuja, 10 January 2025

Tachibana International Ghana. *Manual of Biochar & Carbon Credit Production. A compliance and operational guide for smallholder farmers*.

Paul Asamoah Kukwah (2026) *Rapid Assessment on the link between Migration from Northern Regions and child Labour in Cocoa growing areas – The case of Bibiani-Anhwiaso-Bekwai Municipal*. Climate Cocoa project report.

Documentation of Child Labour Projects Implementation by UNICEF, ICI, ILO and JICA in Bibiani/Anhwiaso/Bekwai Municipal. Feb 2025

Other sources

Afele, John Tennyson, et.al. (2024) "Understanding and addressing climate change impacts on cocoa farming in Ghana". *Environmental Challenges, Volume 14, January 2024.*

Cornelissen, Gerard et. Al. (2016) Emissions and Char Quality of Flame-Curtain "Kon Tiki" Kilns for Farmer-Scale Charcoal/Biochar Production. https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0154617

Danso-Abbeam, G., Baiyegunhi, L. J., & Ojo, T. O. (2020). Gender differentials in technical efficiency of Ghanaian cocoa farms. Heliyon, 6(5).

Food Empowerment Project (2022). *Child Labor and Slavery in the Chocolate Industry*. Retrieved from Food Empowerment Project at https://foodispower.org/human-labor-slavery/slavery-chocolate/

ICI (2025) Briefing: USDOL Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labour 2024. https://www.cocoainitiative.org/sites/default/files/resources/ici_brifing-on-usdol-findings-on-the-worst-forms-of-child-labour-2024_oct2025.pdf

ILO (2023) Issue Paper on child labour and climate change https://www.ilo.org/publications/issue-paper-child-labour-and-climate-change

Kaschek, T. S. (2021). Exploring the experiences of female small-scale organic cocoa farmers about gender-based inequality in agency and empowerment in light of the Sustainable Development Goal 5: A case study from rural Ghana.

Ministry of Employment and Labour of Ghana (2023) Guidelines and Protocols for Establishing Child Labour Free Zones (CLFZs) in Ghana. https://www.melr.gov.gh/files/publications/Establishing_Child_Labour_Free_Zones_(CLFZs)_in_Ghana.pdf

Republic of Ghana. Ghana Accelerated Action Plan Against Child Labour (National Plan of Action for Elimination of Child Labour). (2023 - 2027). https://www.cocoainitiative.org/sites/default/files/resources/Ghana_Accelerated_Action_Plan_Against_Child_Labour.pdf

Ying Shan, L. (2023). “Chocolate is set to get more expensive as cocoa prices soar to seven-year highs.” CNBC. 12 June 2023. https://www.cnbc.com/2023/06/13/chocolate-is-set-to-get-more-expensive-as-cocoa-prices-soar-to-seven-year-highs.html.

Thévenon, Olivier, & Eric Edmonds (2019) “Child labour: causes, consequences and policies to tackle it.” OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers, No. 235

USDOL (2023) Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor. https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ILAB/child_labor_reports/tda2023/Ghana.pdf

Annex 4. List of interviews respondents

Table 9. Stakeholder interviews

#	Organisation	# of participants	# of women
In-person meetings			
1	Ministry of Food and Agriculture in Bibiani	1	1
2	Cocoa Health and Expansion Division	1	0
3	CRADA	1	0
4	Ghana Education Service	2	1
5	Social Welfare Division	1	0
6	EN Farmers	1	0
7	Asaasepa Food Systems Ltd	2	0
8	Child Labour Unit	1	1
Online interviews			
10	Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs	1	1
11	UNICEF Ghana	1	1
12	Action Against Child Exploitation (ACE)	1	1

Table 10. ILO staff interviews

#	Name	Gender	Position
1	Bismark Quartey	M	National Project Coordination
2	Robert Pwazaga	M	National Project Officer
3	Ama Serwaah Boateng	F	Finance and Administration Officer
4	Minoru Ogasawara	M	Chief Technical Advisor

Table 11. Beneficiary consultations

#	Beneficiary group	# of participants	# of women
1	Biochar producers in Beposo	5	4
2	CCPC members in Beposo	8	4
3	Biochar producers in Nsuontam	8	4
4	Farmers in Nsuontam	8	2
5	Farmers in Aboduabo	14	4
6	Biochar producers in Aboduabo	4	1
7	SMC and school staff in Nkatieso	3	2
8	CCPC members in Nkatieso	5	3
9	Biochar producers in Nkatieso	11	8
10	Biochar producers in Ntakam	6	1
11	Farmers in Ntakam	8	3

Annex 5. Evaluation Timeline

	February				March				Apr
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Kick-off call with ILO									
Initial desk research and interviews									
Elaboration of the methodology									
Submission of the Inception Report **(8 February)**									
Online interviews and IR revisions									
Field mission **(16-20 February)**									
Analysis and report writing									
First Draft Evaluation Report (**5 March**)									
Validation Workshop									
Receipt of feedback and resubmission of the Evaluation Report and Executive Summary									

Annex 6. Lessons learned and good practices

Lessons learned

Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change for the Elimination of Child Labour in Cocoa-Producing Areas in Ghana

Project DC/SYMBOL: GHA/24/02/JPN
Name of Evaluator: Loes van der Graaf
Date: 5 April 2026

The following lesson learned has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson may be included in the full evaluation report.

LESSON LEARNED 1	**Projects focusing on challenges caused by climate change, particularly in relation to agriculture, should identify risks and mitigation measures on how climate change may affect the project implementation**
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	In this case, cocoa farmers were affected by changes in the rainy season period and the Climate Cocoa project aimed to demonstrate biochar as solution for crop vulnerability. However, during the project implementation, the team relied on the original rain patterns. When the rain stopped earlier than expected, many crops in demonstration farms died or were negatively affected, which subsequently affected the presentation of biochar as innovative solution. Mitigation measures, such as irrigation solutions, should have been identified in advance, considering the likelihood that the weather would not behave per usual.
Context and any related preconditions	The Biochar project aimed to reduce the vulnerability of crops to the changes in weather patterns as a result of climate change. As Ghana relies heavily on agriculture, the resilience of crops to changing rain and drought patterns strengthens the local economy.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	Farmers and community members
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	When the rain stopped earlier than expected, many crops in demonstration farms died or were negatively affected, which subsequently affected the presentation of biochar as innovative solution.
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	More staff time allocated to regular updates to the risk register.

LESSON LEARNED 2	**Community engagement and presentation of benefits of the interventions should be clearly and systematically communicated in areas affected by illegal mining or other illegal opportunities for quicker earnings.**

Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	If a project cannot match the earnings in the mines, it should focus on other incentives or methods to ensure community participation. At the same time, the biochar component initially did not generate much community attention and community members even used the demonstration farms as roads for their cattle (leading to crop destruction). Awareness-raising, presentations, engagement with community leaders, demonstrations, etc. should be a systematic part of the project and should be commenced immediately. Once the project strengthened its community engagement in the biochar component, more interest from community members in the demonstration farms was noted.
Context and any related preconditions	In both Outputs, the project struggled to recruit workers (enumerators, biochar producers) as the salaries and work was perceived less financially beneficial as compared to the offer at illegal mining sites. In fact, some biochar producers complained about salaries being too low and not yet paid.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	Community members and youth
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	Without sufficient initial attention to community engagement and awareness, the project's offered benefits will not outweight the earnings in the mines, from the views of beneficiaries.
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	Focus on community engagement strategies and training for implementing partners at the start of the project

Good practices

Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change for the Elimination of Child Labour in Cocoa-Producing Areas in Ghana

Project DC/SYMBOL: GHA/24/02/JPN
Name of Evaluator: Loes van der Graaf
Date: 5 April 2026.

The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.

GOOD PRACTICE 1	**Strong coordination framework among international agencies to divide work and share experiences**
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	The large volume of actors working on child labour and agriculture across Ghana is almost impossible for the government to fully manage and align. Therefore, the ILO, UNICEF and JICA themselves established a coordination framework to manage complementarity specifically in the Bibiani District.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	This is particularly relevant in countries with a large number of agencies (including small NGOs and private actors) and where the
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	The actors mapped their interventions to avoid overlapping efforts and exchanged lessons learned and other information that could influence other actors' work. As a result, none of the district and community stakeholders saw any overlaps between the interventions of the three organisations.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Efficiency of the interventions of all agencies by enhancing reinforcement and mitigating duplication of efforts
Potential for replication and by whom	
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	

GOOD PRACTICE 2	Effective use of international knowledge and technologies to enhance the project's environmental sustainability.
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	The project targeted rural communities in one district of Ghana yet managed to connect these rural farmers with international organisations (Planboo, CERES), as well as Japanese organisations to ensure the farmers would benefit from the most up-to-date technologies and trends in biochar, certification, carbon credits and overall sustainable farming technologies. This allows the cocoa farmers of Bibiani to become an example for other farmers in Ghana as well as for other farming communities in Africa. At the same time, it demonstrates that even the most remote and poor

	communities can take leading roles in promoting environmental sustainability.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	The project enabled ILO to test new methods and approaches that can be used to inspire other communities in Ghana and worldwide to strengthen progress towards the just transition.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	The project benefited from the most innovative tools regarding biochar, through involvement of international universities. Connections with other international actors (Planboo) allows Ghanaian farmers to receive carbon credits.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Additional income for farmers through carbon credits; positive impact on climate change.
Potential for replication and by whom	Can be replicated by other projects that use a new technology, particularly in the field of agriculture.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	Strong contribution to ILO's objectives on the just transition.

GOOD PRACTICE 3	**Using research institutions to track project progress from an agricultural and biological perspective, building a strong evidence and scale up case for the use of biochar**
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	The Climate Cocoa project implementing partners included research organisations both inside Ghana (CSIR-Soil Research Institute) and in Japan (Tottori University). The involvement of these partners meant that the project could benefit from the most modern biochar and cooking techniques recommended by the experts and that all progress of the biochar plantation was documented by renowned national and international experts.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	The project had the budget for active involvement of research institutions, which is particularly useful when a new approach is tested.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	The documentation of results by renowned institutions means that 1) the likelihood of validation and adoption of the guidelines by the government is higher since the national institutions frequently engage with the government, and 2) that the results are more likely to be trusted by donors and international partners, increasing opportunities for ILO to replicate the work
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Impact on other communities in Ghana when the guidelines are adopted by the government
Potential for replication and by whom	Other ILO projects can adopt the approaches of the project, since evidence on the results are available.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or	Contribution to ILO's goals on the Just Transition.

ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	