

Farming is a business: 1st Nigeria Cocoa Awards for most creative Farmer Training model

GIZ has developed FBS in 2010 with local partners and with support from BMZ, World Cocoa Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. NIRSAL has supported scaling from 2014 to 2016. Since 2014, the Development Commission of European Union (DEVCO-EU) co-finances FBS and other interventions in the framework of the New intra-ACP Commodities programme.

In Farmer Business School (FBS), agricultural smallholders, men and women, young and old discover during five subsequent mornings that agriculture is not a bad fate and learn how to develop it as business. The training enables them to conquer and supply markets, to improve their incomes and to create employment. FBS complements training on Good Agricultural Practice (GAP).

In Nigeria, FBS is implemented by Sustainable Smallholder Agri-Business / Cocoa-Food Link Programme (SSAB-CFLP), Competitive African Rice Initiative (CARI), SEDIN and GIAE in cooperation with Agricultural Development Programmes from 19 states of the Federation. The seven FBS curricula comprise the lead crops cocoa, cotton, rice, tomato, Irish potato, cassava respectively maize. In each of the curricula, 2 additional food products of strategic importance for the livelihoods of the smallholdings are covered. So far, over 250,000 Nigerian farmers and over 92,000 are women graduated from FBS.

Nigeria has recognized the work of GIZ-Sustainable Smallholder Agri-Business Programme (SSAB) with Cocoa Farmers in Nigeria with the award for the “**Most creative Farmer Training Model**” at the 2017 Cocoa Festival Conference and 1st Nigerian Cocoa Awards in Eti-Oni, Osun State. This is the location, where reportedly the first cocoa tree has been planted in 1896.



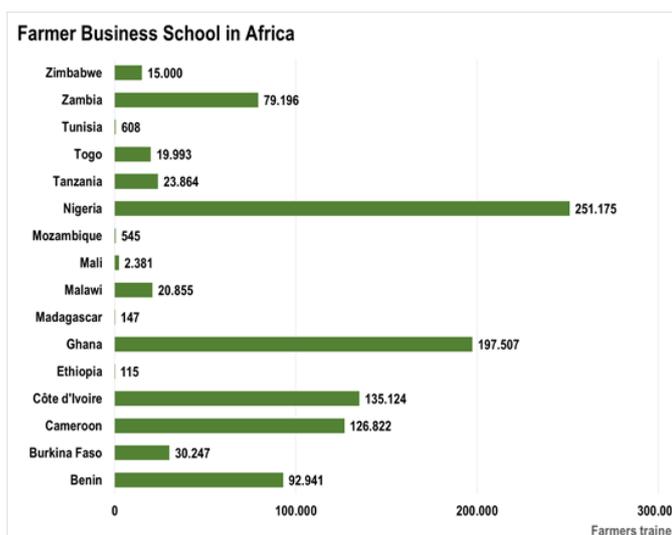
1,000,000 African Smallholders graduated from FBS trainings

Inspired by the successes of the FBS training for cocoa smallholders under SSAB-CFLP, other development programmes, value chain companies have adopted and adapted this approach to other value chains: **In 19 African countries over 1,000,000 Smallholders have graduated from FBS trainings covering over 40 lead commodities.**

Interested in testimonies of farmers and partners? **Videos are available at <https://www.ssab-africa.net/our-work>**

The **Farmer Business School Advisory Facility for Africa** is commissioned and financed by BMZ. It supports since 2017 interested organizations, companies and development programmes to introduce, to adapt and to manage FBS.

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From Farmer Business School to Cooperative Business School: a success story from Cameroon

One module of the Farmer Business School sensitizes smallholders about the benefits of being member of a strong producer organization. Several evaluations of FBS revealed that FBS strengthens existing producer organization and motivates trained groups to register new producer organizations.

Therefore to effectively strengthen agricultural producer organizations, SSAB has developed the **Cooperative Business School (CBS) approach** in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Nigeria and Cameroon. CBS is a one week intensive training for leaders and members of producer organizations. The training focuses on business services for members that are the core mandate of producer organizations and key to strengthen the market position of agricultural smallholdings. To this effect, CBS covers the following areas:

- Understand markets & value chains;
- Transparent strategic & financial management
- Economics of services
- Tools to develop, plan and implement business & technical services of added value for the members

- Develop business plans for investment
- Mobilizing working capital from services and linkages to financial services
- Reminder on leadership principles and the country specific formal framework for producer organizations.

Elite FBS trainers from MINADER Regional Delegations have been qualified as CBS trainers. They have trained over 600 leaders and members from 30 Cooperatives since June 2017.

Let's listen the story from COOPLANTAB of Ntabako, Yabassi, Cameroon

From 2013 to 2016, we were a simplified cooperative made up of 17 members but only 7 were active. Our sole activity was group sales of cocoa. Each year, we sold in average some 16 tons of cocoa on behalf of our members through 6 groups sell session. We made zero profit for the cooperative. Our bank account was thus inactive. We did not organize our general assemblies and there was mistrust and hatred amongst members.

In March and May 2017, things changed:

All our members had the Farmer Business School Training. Already in June, the same year we had the opportunity to participate in the Cooperative Business School.



COOPLANTAB management team

This is what we have already achieved by using the tools and skills from FBS and CBS:

- Fusion of two simplified cooperatives in one cooperative according to the OHADA norms with a board of directors. Our 28 members are all FBS-trained.
- Farm size of all members has been measured. Work and production is planned and Good Agricultural Practices are applied by all members,
- We have almost tripled group sale: 42 tons of cocoa being sold in 10 sells session. We achieved a higher prices for our members' cocoa due to better quality. The cooperative made a profit of 420.000 FCFA for the first time.
- Buyers from other divisions scramble now to purchase cocoa from the cooperative.
- We have over 450.000 FCFA savings on the cooperative bank account at MC2 of Nkongsamba
- We have monthly general assemblies with minutes
- New members knocking at the door of our cooperative seeking for membership
- True harmony, joy and friendship exist in our cooperative due to better business for each and every one.

Technical business services for cocoa farmers: Concepts developed and experience from in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo

Technical business services can generate youth employment and make farming more competitive and attractive.

Young professional service providers can help smallholders to use recommended production techniques and inputs for more income.

To achieve this, these services must be viable for the service providers and the clients.



GIZ SSAB-CFLP and private partners have brought technical business services for cocoa smallholdings such as pruning, spraying and GPS measurement to scale as commercial models:

- **175 young service providers have been qualified.**
- **So far, they have served over 31,000 cocoa smallholders in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo.**

As technical business services for farmers we understand any service that is provided on site by a person hired by the farmer. In the case of cocoa production, examples comprise GPS measurement of plots, motorized pruning, spraying of insecticides or fungicides, cleaning of farms, cocoa harvesting and pod breaking. This generates employment and income for the youth who act as providers. Attractiveness of these employments rise where motorized equipment is used. On top of this, the farmer clients receive services and quality inputs geared towards higher yields and higher incomes on existing farms. The intensification strategy building on technical services avoids deforestation by land expansion at low productivity levels. Embedded in businesses of agro-dealers, producer organizations and/or off-takers technical business services constitute a huge opportunity for youth employment in rural areas. Technical business services thus address some of the aforementioned challenges.

However, young rural professionals still lack the expertise, skills and financial resources to develop targeted and economically viable business services that (i) cocoa smallholders demand for and (ii) provide sufficient income throughout the year, too. For some technical services, lack of appropriate technology is also an issue.

This type of service provision to cocoa farmers and in agriculture in general is a very recent development. Together with partners SSAB-CFLP has pioneered the technical business services GPS Measurement, motorized pruning and motorized spraying. The modes of delivery are customized to the country specific needs, opportunities and capacities of partners.

In a technical paper, we share our approaches and lessons learnt towards scaling-up and sustainability in the following areas:

- **Setting up business service models** that are on demand and viable for service providers
- **Operationalizing the services and related capacity development:**

To this effect we refer to the following service delivery models that have been put into practice:

- **Independent service providers or employees of Business Service Centres (BSC) in Côte d'Ivoire**
- **by employees of farmer-based organisations in Togo**
- **by Rural Service Centres (RSC) providers of BSC in Ghana**

Interested to learn about the underlying tools and the experience ? >> [click here](#)