

Koko Bulletin

PREPARED FOR YOU BY S.C.I.D.I. - THE SAMOA COCOA INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

With support from



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The S.C.I.D.I. team at the Samoa Chamber of Commerce office

Talofa and welcome to the first edition of our Koko Bulletin. We aim to publish a Koko Bulletin at least quarterly to keep you updated and informed about the Initiative's progress.

The structure of the Bulletin will follow the Samoa Cocoa Opportunities identified in our consultation workshops. The Koko Bulletin will be published electronically in pdf format and will be accessible via the Initiative's Facebook page or via The AgriChain Centre's website.

We look forward to working with you and your feedback, as the projects that make up the Samoa Cocoa Industry Development Initiative gain traction.

Best wishes,
The S.C.I.D.I. Team

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PLANTS OPPORTUNITY

The site of the first S.C.I.D.I. cocoa nursery has been identified on STEC land near the Faleolo Airport. STEC and S.C.I.D.I. have been discussing the finer details of the planned development during our September visit, including future site access for cocoa farmers wanting to uplift plants, security arrangements, nursery practice, water access, and ingredients needed to create a suitable potting mix.

We anticipate signing the STEC Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in October, and construction to begin shortly after.



Upolu workshop



Cocoa harvest on Upolu farm

As Julian has a very good level of broad horticultural expertise, the team will also aim to gain a better understanding of current seed selection processes and existing knowledge relating to variety selection.

ECONOMICS OPPORTUNITY

An economics related study always starts with questions such as:

- How many _____ are there?
- How much do you harvest?
- What is the price?
- What is the yield?

And so on. In the case of Samoan cocoa, the first few questions that we wish to answer specifically are:

- Where are the trees?
- How many trees are there?
- Is there an easy way to figure out the condition of the overall national cocoa estate?

With this in mind, S.C.I.D.I. has commissioned a pilot drone survey, using the services of local firm SkyEye.

The pilot survey of a small group of representative cocoa farms on both Upolu and Savai'i will allow the team to understand just what type of information would be gained from a whole industry survey, and whether it is viable to extend the pilot into a full national cocoa survey.

POST-HARVEST OPPORTUNITY

The focus to date has been on plants, economics, and knowledge. We will add post-harvest to the list from late November, at our next visit. Dr Hans Maurer will be accompanied by Professor Julian Heyes who specialises in Post-Harvest Technology at Massey University. Julian and Hans aim to sit down with the Samoan science community involved in the cocoa industry, as well as existing processors, to learn more about how Koko Samoa is usually managed once the cocoa pods come off the tree.



Pilot Survey MOU signed

KNOWLEDGE OPPORTUNITY



Savai'i cocoa workshop

SAMOAN COCOA INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

The first meeting of the SCIA establishment committee was held on the 26th of September with invited industry and government representatives in attendance.

At the end of an honest and open discussion during which the project team reiterated its rationale for going ahead with SCIA, and a MCIL representative reconfirmed the Samoan Government's commitment to the project, the establishment committee decided to go ahead with the formation of an inclusive cocoa industry association.

Maoi'autele Brigitta Fa'afiti-Lo Tam, MAF's staff lawyer, advised that an incorporated society status would be appropriate. The establishment committee will meet again on a one day retreat in late October/ early November to discuss and agree on a constitution for the association. Lemauga Hobart Va'ai and his team are in charge of organising this event. It is hoped that the association is able to be incorporated before the end of the year.

There are several knowledge strands the S.C.I.D.I. Team intends to work on during the project. These include gaining institutional knowledge, business knowledge, and farming knowledge.

ON-FARM WORKSHOPS

During our September visit, we focused on farming knowledge. Two farm based workshops were held by Dr Nick Roskrige, from Massey University, focusing on soil condition when planting cocoa seedlings, improving the chance of your planted cocoa seedlings



SCIA Establishment Committee meeting

growing into big, healthy, productive, high yielding cocoa trees.

Nick also covered the principles of cocoa tree pruning and pest and disease control through understory management, the understory being the ground area directly beneath the trees.

Both the Upolu and Savai'i workshops were well attended, and participants clearly demonstrated a thirst for knowledge.

The S.C.I.D.I. Team came away with a clearer understanding about how these workshops need to be pitched, in order to ensure that the learnings are absorbed and implemented into the cocoa farmers' working day.

Hands-on knowledge is critical, but the written word can provide additional reinforcement of what is being learned.

It is clear that the knowledge shared in Dr Nick's workshops would lend itself to being documented and made available in printed format in Samoan. The team is discussing ways as to how this would best be achieved.

KNOWLEDGE HUB

Here are three links to informative, easy to understand PHAMA reports related to the Samoan cocoa industry, available on the internet.

Gender Analysis of the Cocoa Value Chain in Samoa – 2016

<http://phama.com.au/resources/technical-reports/gender-analysis-cocoa-value-chain-samoa/>

Improved Quality of Export Cocoa: Samoa – 2015

<http://phama.com.au/resources/technical-reports/improved-quality-export-cocoa-samoa/>

A comparative study of local and overseas fermentation methods using Trinitario cocoa variety in Samoa – 2016

<http://phama.com.au/resources/technical-reports/comparative-study-local-overseas-fermentation-methods-using-trinitario-cocoa-variety-samoa/>

We intend to regularly point you towards further cocoa related local and international literature in future issues of the Koko Bulletin.

SAMOAN COCOA PRODUCTS SPOTTED RECENTLY...



We will regularly feature Samoan cocoa products found on New Zealand retail shelves and elsewhere.

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