THE NEW FACE OF THE COCOA BUSINESS

IFCIC will support the development of a niche, branded, value-added Caribbean cocoa industry by creating a model nexus that
- showcases innovations along the value chain for a successful bean-to-bar model.
- encourages value addition through intermediary manufacturing support or product diversification through incubator services.
- provides apprenticeship training at every segment of the value chain.
- offers a range of ‘knowledge services’ to propel private sector investment and growth.
- creates a museum and visitor centre that links to cocoa-based agro tourism development.
- cultivates a supportive environment to nurture business development.

THE NERVE CENTRE OF A BILLION DOLLAR INDUSTRY

The cocoa industry is an almost $100 billion dollar industry, poised to grow by another 20% over the next decade. According to World Cocoa Foundation between 40-50 million people depend on cocoa for their livelihood.

While most of the cocoa in the global market is traded as ‘bulk cocoa’ there is a small but emerging segment of the market referred to as ‘fine’ or ‘flavour cocoa’ which fetches a significant premium price, often 3-4 times that of bulk cocoa. Consumers in this higher end of the market segment are becoming more selective, demanding better quality, advanced standards of food safety and origin-specific flavours with quality certification and traceability, and are prepared to pay higher prices for products that meet these sophisticated standards. Many countries in the Caribbean are already regarded as exclusive fine cocoa producers; which offers an opportunity to build a niche fine cocoa industry.

The International Fine Cocoa Innovation Centre (IFCIC), the nucleus of the Caribbean cocoa industry’s development established under an EU/ACP Science and Technology funded project, is the brainchild of The UWI Cocoa Research Centre and its partners.
A 21ST CENTURY COCOA INDUSTRY

The International Fine Cocoa Innovation Centre hopes to become a showpiece to the world by building a bean-to-bar model. Centred on the cutting-edge science and technology, it will be based on a triple helix university-private sector-government partnership approach and a complementary push-pull strategy driving productivity improvements on one end while supporting value-added product development and market innovations at the other end.

It will showcase advances that will result in

- Productivity enhancements that will push cocoa production closer to its potential yield of 8,000 kg per ha.
- Creative solutions to reduce cocoa's production cost through mechanisation.
- Improved technologies to monitor and enhance cocoa quality, certification and traceability.
- Small-scale manufacturing and value addition solutions.
- Product diversification, branding and niche marketing opportunities.
- Growth of new business clusters around the cocoa sector.

AN 85-YEAR-OLD TRADITION OF INTERNATIONAL COCOA RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY DISSEMINATION

Trinidad and Tobago

- One of the first countries with a rich legacy of cocoa cultivation on a plantation scale for export.
- The country of origin of Trinitario cocoa, a fine flavour bean with a range of flavour notes.
- Recognised internationally for its fine cocoa quality.
- Home to the oldest and most successful breeding programmes and one of the world’s most prestigious cocoa research centres.

The UWI Cocoa Research Centre

- An 85-year-old tradition of international cocoa research and technology dissemination.
- Custodian of the largest and most diverse cocoa collection in the world, the International Cocoa Genebank, Trinidad (ICG.T).
- Poised to shape IFCIC as the UWI Cocoa Research Centre’s main outreach and knowledge centre.
A multi-purpose fine cocoa innovation centre is set for completion in 2017. It will house a modern model pilot cocoa orchard, a fine chocolate and couverture factory, teaching theatres, incubators, a restaurant kitchen and labs and a fine cocoa museum and visitor centre.

The IFCIC: Triple Helix Model
Envisioned as a triple helix of university-industry-government relationships, the IFCIC project will harness the comparative advantages and innovations in building an industry that will provide a viable diversification option for Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean, and a blueprint for development and transformation of other sectors in the Caribbean. By transforming the Caribbean’s fine cocoa sector, IFCIC will ensure the sustainability of this region’s cocoa and pioneer a contemporary approach for food crop security in the Caribbean. For the first time ever, an innovation centre will integrate agriculture, food processing, research and commercialisation for a single food crop – cocoa. The pilot IFCIC facility will showcase innovations along the entire value chain, from production and processing to small-scale manufacturing, product development and marketing.

IFCIC is ambitious, achievable and revolutionary. It will embrace scientific and technological knowledge and research to revolutionise the value chain - production, processing, manufacturing and marketing. It will be a creative environment that nurtures local, regional and international collaboration, public and private sector investment.

It will work with stakeholders in Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and the wider Caribbean region wherever fine cocoa is grown and be a resource for

- Rural cocoa farmers – individuals and co-operatives.
- Regional chocolatiers.
- Academic research institutions.
- Caribbean governments.
- Private companies involved in commercialisation and innovation.
BUILDING BLOCKS OF IFCIC

Model Pilot Cocoa Orchard
IFCIC will test and showcase methods to maximise cocoa yields, and reduce cost of production through improvements in orchard design and plant architecture, internal drainage and irrigation, fertility and pest management, mechanisation, shade management and pollination efficiency.

Model Cocoa Post-Harvest Processing Facility
This post-harvest processing facility will handle between 30-900 kg of wet cocoa with mechanised pod cracking; demonstrate different cocoa fermentation systems and solar cocoa drying systems and illustrate best practices in cocoa processing and quality management.

Chocolate and Couverture Factory
The chocolate factory will showcase innovations in small-scale manufacturing to support intermediary value-addition by farmers or farmer groups and linkages with the international fine cocoa industry. Three chocolate processing lines with flexible capacity will allow multiple product development and product streams.

Incubators
IFCIC will support new product and business development (for e.g. confectionary, beverages, health and beauty aids sectors) by providing a well-equipped incubator facility and complementary services for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to rent, learn, experiment and fine-tune their start-up operations with minimal investment risk. The incubator will promote further evolution of the local fine cocoa sector through its provision of technical, business, logistical and market support to small businesses that will form part of the industry’s present or future value-added supply chain. It will also house a sensory facility, quality control and certification centre to support market development.

Restaurant, Kitchen and Laboratory
Catering to students and professionals in the food and beverage industry – chefs, restaurateurs, bakeries, and chocolatiers, this facility will offer practical chocolate-making courses as well as other courses to inspire new products and recipes that can help sustain Caribbean tourism.

Chocolate Academy
This will provide a wide range of training opportunities from short courses and educational programmes to apprenticeships on any value segment aimed at building human capacity in the art and skill of conceptualising creative new cocoa derivative products including cocoa-based cuisine, confectionaries, beverages, nutraceuticals and cosmetics.

Fine Cocoa Museum and Visitor Centre
Another element aimed to bolster cocoa-based agro tourism in Trinidad and Tobago is IFCIC’s Fine Cocoa Museum, which will trace the evolution of the cocoa sector in Trinidad and Tobago and the unique role of the twin-island Republic in global cocoa history. Visitors will travel along the cocoa value chain from bean-to-bar, enjoy interactive mini-chocolate tempering and molding and have the opportunity to take away memorabilia, literature, chocolate and other products sold in the Museum’s gift shop.

PARTNER WITH US
The IFCIC project is led by The UWI Cocoa Research Centre in partnership with the Cocoa Industry Board, Jamaica, Newer Worlds, UK and the Caribbean Fine Cocoa Forum, with additional support being sought from government and private sector agencies. To discover more about this pioneering project and its partnering opportunities, contact us at

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