

# The Ghana Cocoa Report 2024: Challenges in the Cocoa Supply Chain, Ghana: Addressing Obstacles for Sustainable Growth

Explore the major challenges facing Ghana's cocoa supply chain, key statistics, and recommendations for improving infrastructure, financing, and sustainability in the sector.



## Highlights

A deep dive into the challenges facing Ghana's cocoa supply chain and its global competitiveness.

Key statistics and facts that reveal bottlenecks, inefficiencies, and opportunities for improvement.

Recommendations on addressing these challenges for sustainable economic growth and improved supply chain management.

## Content

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Recommendations on addressing these challenges for sustainable economic growth and improved supply chain management.

**Research Methodology:** This article is based on an extensive review of academic research, government publications, and industry reports. Key data were obtained from the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), the International Cocoa Organization (ICCO), and various trade and agricultural studies. The analysis highlights the primary obstacles within the cocoa supply chain in Ghana and provides insights into possible solutions for improvement.

### Key Statistics and Facts:

1. Ghana is the world's second-largest producer of cocoa, accounting for approximately 20% of global cocoa production.
2. Over 800,000 smallholder farmers are involved in cocoa farming in Ghana.
3. Approximately 30% of cocoa produced in Ghana is lost to inefficiencies in the supply chain, including poor infrastructure and transportation.
4. Ghana's cocoa production has fluctuated between 700,000 and 900,000 metric tons annually over the past decade.
5. Global cocoa demand is projected to grow by 4.5% annually through 2028, highlighting the need for more efficient supply chains in producer countries like Ghana.
6. Poor access to financing impacts over 60% of cocoa farmers in Ghana, limiting their ability to invest in high-yield farming techniques.
7. Around 25% of Ghana's cocoa is still transported by labor-intensive manual means, leading to delays and inefficiencies.
8. The cocoa sector contributes over 20% of Ghana's total export revenue, but supply chain challenges limit its potential for growth.
9. Child labor affects an estimated 20% of cocoa farms in Ghana, exacerbating labor inefficiencies and undermining sustainability.
10. The Ghanaian government has set a goal to increase cocoa production to 1 million metric tons annually by 2025, but supply chain bottlenecks remain a significant hurdle.

## Body of Article/Critical Analysis

### Introduction

Ghana's cocoa industry has long been the backbone of its agricultural sector, providing employment to millions and serving as a critical source of foreign exchange. However, despite its global standing as the second-largest producer of cocoa, the country faces significant challenges within its cocoa supply chain that hinder the full realization of its economic potential. From inefficient infrastructure and logistics to issues of financing and labor, the obstacles are multifaceted and deeply entrenched. Addressing these challenges is crucial for Ghana to maintain its competitive edge in the global cocoa market while ensuring sustainability and profitability for the industry's stakeholders.

### Critical Analysis of the Challenges in Ghana's Cocoa Supply Chain

1.

**Infrastructure and Transportation Bottlenecks** Ghana's cocoa supply chain suffers from poor infrastructure, particularly in rural areas where cocoa is cultivated. Roads in these regions are often unpaved, making it difficult to transport cocoa beans to processing facilities or ports for export. This results in delays, higher costs, and, in many cases, deterioration of product quality due to extended exposure to the elements. Moreover, the lack of modern transportation methods further exacerbates these inefficiencies, with 25% of cocoa still being transported manually, leading to slower delivery times and higher labor costs.

2.

**Access to Financing for Farmers** Smallholder farmers form the backbone of Ghana's cocoa industry, yet many lack access to the capital required to invest in modern farming techniques or equipment. This limited access to financing affects farmers' ability to adopt high-yield practices, invest in fertilizers, and manage farms effectively. As a result, productivity remains low, and farmers continue to face financial instability. Studies indicate that over 60% of Ghanaian cocoa farmers are unable to access affordable credit, significantly limiting their potential to expand production or improve quality.

3.

**Price Volatility and Market Access** Cocoa farmers in Ghana are highly vulnerable to price fluctuations in the global market. As commodity prices rise and fall, farmers' incomes can become unstable, making long-term financial planning nearly impossible. While the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) attempts to stabilize prices through fixed-rate purchasing schemes, these mechanisms are often insufficient to fully insulate farmers from global market volatility. Additionally, limited market access further constrains farmers, as they lack the bargaining power to secure better prices for their produce.

4.

**Sustainability Issues and Child Labor** Sustainability remains a key challenge for the cocoa supply chain in Ghana. Child labor is prevalent in the industry, with around 20% of cocoa farms estimated to rely on underage labor, often due to financial constraints and lack of alternative labor options. This not only raises ethical concerns but also hampers the ability of Ghanaian cocoa to meet international sustainability standards. With growing demand from consumers for ethically sourced products, this issue poses a significant risk to the competitiveness of Ghanaian cocoa on the global market.

5.

**Supply Chain Inefficiencies and Losses** Ghana loses approximately 30% of its cocoa production to inefficiencies within the supply chain, including post-harvest losses, delays in transportation, and lack of proper storage facilities. These inefficiencies not only reduce the overall output of the industry but also lead to financial losses for farmers and exporters alike. Moreover, the lack of effective storage infrastructure exposes cocoa beans to moisture and pests, further degrading the quality of the beans.

6.

**Labor Shortages and Aging Workforce** The cocoa sector in Ghana is heavily reliant on manual labor, yet labor shortages are becoming more pronounced as the younger generation seeks employment opportunities outside of agriculture. The aging population of cocoa farmers poses a significant threat to the sustainability of the industry, as fewer young people are willing to engage in cocoa farming. This labor shortage, coupled with the inefficiencies of manual harvesting methods, reduces productivity and output.

7.

**Climate Change and Its Impact on Cocoa Production** Climate change is increasingly affecting cocoa production in Ghana, with unpredictable weather patterns, increased temperatures, and changing rainfall distribution negatively impacting crop yields. The cocoa plant is highly sensitive to climate variability, and without significant adaptation strategies, Ghana risks seeing a decline in its cocoa output. Droughts, in particular, have become more frequent, threatening the sustainability of cocoa farming.

8.

**Insufficient Research and Development (R&D)** There is a noticeable lack of investment in research and development aimed at improving cocoa farming techniques and supply chain logistics. Without sufficient R&D, the sector struggles to innovate or adopt more efficient methods for growing, processing, and transporting cocoa. R&D could play a critical role in introducing new, climate-resistant cocoa varieties, improving post-harvest handling, and reducing wastage in the supply chain.

9.

**Logistical Challenges at Ports** Exporting cocoa from Ghana's ports is often marred by delays and inefficiencies due to poor port infrastructure and bureaucratic hurdles. These delays can lead to higher shipping costs and affect the competitiveness of Ghanaian cocoa in international markets. With port congestion and slow processing times, exporters face added challenges in ensuring their products reach global markets in a timely and cost-effective manner.

10.

**Fragmented Supply Chain Governance** The cocoa supply chain in Ghana is highly fragmented, with numerous intermediaries involved from farm to export. This complexity often leads to inefficiencies, miscommunication, and increased costs. Strengthening governance mechanisms, improving coordination among stakeholders, and reducing the number of intermediaries could streamline operations and reduce the financial burden on farmers and processors.

## Projections and Recommendations

To overcome the challenges in Ghana's cocoa supply chain, several strategic

interventions are needed. First, investment in infrastructure development, particularly in rural road networks and storage facilities, would significantly reduce supply chain inefficiencies and post-harvest losses. Second, improving access to affordable financing for smallholder farmers is critical to ensuring they can adopt modern farming practices and invest in higher-yield techniques.

The government and private sector should collaborate to create training programs focused on sustainable and ethical farming practices. Addressing the issue of child labor through educational programs and alternative labor solutions will also be crucial in ensuring Ghanaian cocoa meets international standards. Furthermore, promoting research and development initiatives will encourage innovation in the cocoa sector, particularly in developing climate-resilient cocoa varieties and improving logistics.

## Conclusions

Ghana's cocoa supply chain faces numerous challenges that impede the sector's full potential for economic growth and development. However, by addressing key issues such as infrastructure deficiencies, labor shortages, and financing constraints, Ghana can strengthen its cocoa industry and remain a dominant force in the global market. Ensuring sustainable practices, improving supply chain governance, and investing in modern technology will be essential for the future success of Ghana's cocoa industry.

## Notes

Tackling these challenges requires a holistic approach that involves the government, private sector, and international partners.

Long-term sustainability depends on addressing issues of labor, financing, and infrastructure at both the farm level and throughout the supply chain.

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