



Cocoa of Excellence National Competitions

Guidelines

Linking to the Cocoa of Excellence Awards 2023 Edition

August 2022

Please Note: These guidelines are intended to help the National Organization Committees to organize Cocoa of Excellence National Competitions resulting in the selection of the cocoa bean samples to compete at the international level for the 2023 Cocoa of Excellence Awards. These guidelines are intended as suggestions and to be adapted.



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Introduction and Objectives of these Guidelines

Cocoa of Excellence is the **entry point for cocoa producers to participate in the Cocoa of Excellence Awards**, the most prestigious global competition that recognizes the work of cocoa farmers and celebrates the quality and flavour diversity of cocoas produced around the world. The Cocoa of Excellence Awards bring together leading sensory evaluation experts and the chocolate industry to reward producers of excellence. Cocoa of Excellence **recognises, preserves, values, and promotes cocoa quality and flavour diversity** across the value chain to improve smallholder farmers' livelihoods and drive sustainability of the cocoa supply chain for thriving, resilient and healthy communities, from origins to consumers. It provides global recognition to producers of superior quality cocoa and celebrates the diversity of flavours from different producing origins. Established in 2009, Cocoa of Excellence is led by the Alliance of Bioversity International and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) and organised in partnership with several public and private sector partners. Each participating cocoa-producing country is invited to establish a National Organization Committee that oversees the participation of cocoa producers from their country based on the requirements and conditions for participation provided by Cocoa of Excellence. For more information about Cocoa of Excellence, please visit: www.cocoaofexcellence.org

Cocoa of Excellence encourages each participating country to organize a national Cocoa of Excellence competitions as a unique opportunity to promote superior quality cocoa and diversity and celebrate at the national level, the skills and know-how of the men and women who produce them. These competitions may be the opportunity to select the best cocoa samples for submission to the 2023 Cocoa of Excellence Awards.

These guidelines are therefore intended to help National Organization Committees to organize Cocoa of Excellence national competitions and make suggestions based on the process, activities and calendar for the selection of the samples to be submitted for the 2023 Cocoa of Excellence Awards. They include suggestions that can be adapted to the specific needs, for the following main activities of a Cocoa of Excellence national competition:

1. Setting up the vision and objectives of the Cocoa of Excellence national competition.
2. Planning the activities and establishing a calendar.
3. Setting up the committee for the selection of the cocoa bean samples.
4. Announcing the competition broadly and providing clear guidelines to participants.
5. Selecting the cocoa bean samples to be evaluated based on established rules.
6. Assessing the quality and flavour of the cocoa samples and selecting the awards.
7. Organizing the national celebrations and award ceremony.
8. Providing confidential detailed feedback to the participating producers.
9. Linking to the 2023 Cocoa of Excellence Awards.
10. Reviewing and evaluating the success of the Cocoa of Excellence national competition and planning the next one.
11. Participating in the celebrations of the 2023 Cocoa of Excellence Awards, in November - December 2023.



1. Setting up the Vision and Objectives

An Organization Committee responsible for the national competition should be formed. This Committee may be the same as the National Organization Committee responsible to organize the participation of the country in the 2023 Edition of the Cocoa of Excellence Awards. If it is not, it should ensure close collaboration and regular communications with the National Organization Committee for the Cocoa of Excellence 2023 Edition.

It is recommended that in order to ensure a transparent, participatory and inclusive process to include representatives from the different institutions involved in the cocoa sector in the country interested in playing a role, such as cocoa boards, producers' associations, cooperatives, the key research institutions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the cocoa and chocolate industry and other relevant stakeholders.

The vision and objectives of a Cocoa of Excellence national competition should be clearly defined by the Organization National Organization Committee. They should give clear direction and dimension to the competition to allow communicating effectively with a wide audience. They should be explicitly stated in the guidelines and any other communication materials presenting the Cocoa of Excellence national competition.

The vision of the Cocoa of Excellence national competition should be broad and targeting a long-term impact linking to the sustainable development of the cocoa value chain in the country.

The objectives should be more specific. Some examples of objectives can be to:

- Celebrate cocoa quality and flavour at national level.
- Ensure a broad participation of cocoa producers representing the genetic diversity, geographic origins, and best practices for processing cocoa beans.
- Increase awareness along the cocoa value chain in the country on the opportunity to produce high cocoa quality.
- Raise awareness of the importance to conserve the unique cocoa diversity in the country.
- Create linkages between cocoa producers and operators in the supply chains to promote market opportunities and generate quality premiums.
- Increase capacity in the country on physical and flavour evaluation of cocoa samples.
- Increase capacity on best practices for cocoa processing.
- Select the best cocoa bean samples representing the quality and diversity in the country to participate in the 2023 Cocoa of Excellence Awards.

The vision and objectives can be useful afterwards to evaluate the success and impact of the competition at all levels, including the participating producers, cooperatives, buyers, and manufactures.



2. Planning Activities, Partnerships and Budget

2.1 Planning the activities

Regular meetings of the members of the National Organization Committee are recommended to plan activities, agree on priorities, discuss progress and make adjustments.

The National Organization Committee would be responsible for the following activities:

1. Agree on the main activities and responsibilities of its members.
2. Define the specific rules, procedures and requirements for the Cocoa of Excellence national competition including how cocoa bean samples and data are collected and managed.
3. Agree on a calendar of activities with clear deadlines.
4. Agree on a budget based on the costs for each activity and seek financial support.
5. Develop guidelines for the participation in the Cocoa of Excellence national competition with all conditions and requirements for the samples and related information.
6. Ensure confidentiality and anonymity of the samples during the process until the winning samples are selected.
7. Announce the Cocoa of Excellence national competition broadly to cocoa producers from all producing regions of the country and to the value-chain actors.
8. Establish a panel of experts (Selection Committee), that will advise on any technical matters, evaluate cocoa sample quality (physical and sensory) and select the winners.
9. Coordinate the reception of the bean samples and communicate with the producers to ensure that all related forms and information are complete.
10. Attribute a unique identification code to each cocoa bean sample so that anonymity is ensured during the process by the Selection Committee members. No other specific information about the sample should be communicated to those processing and evaluating the bean samples except the date of fermentation and drying and the genetic origin in order to define the best roasting conditions for the liquor processing.
11. Coordinate the quality and flavour evaluation of the bean samples processed into liquor and chocolate and ensure that this is carried out in complete confidentiality and anonymity.
12. Coordinate the celebration of the Cocoa of Excellence national competition and a broad participation of the cocoa value chain actors in the country and agree on a date and venue of the celebrations.
13. Follow-up and provide detailed and confidential feedback to all the cocoa bean producers that provided samples including the results of the physical quality and sensory evaluation with recommendations for improvement if needed.
14. Coordinate the submission and shipping of the winning bean samples for the 2023 Edition of the Cocoa of Excellence Awards by the 31 January 2023.
15. Coordinate the participation in the celebrations of the 2023 Cocoa of Excellence Awards in November - December 2023.
16. Evaluate the strengths and improvements to be made to a future Cocoa of Excellence national competition.
17. Plan the next Cocoa of Excellence national competition.

If the Cocoa of Excellence national competition is to be linked to the 2023 Cocoa of Excellence Awards, when deciding on the rules, calendars and guidelines, the National



Organization Committee should take into consideration the requirements for the 2023 Cocoa of Excellence Awards available in the 2023 Guide for Participation available here: www.cocoaofexcellence.org

The following requirements must be considered:

- Participation fee of 100 USD per cocoa sample entering the 2023 Cocoa of Excellence Awards¹.
- Cocoa bean samples should be collected from the main harvesting period.
- The beans should be stored for a minimum of 6 weeks after drying and before shipping to Cocoa of Excellence to allow the flavour to develop and stabilise prior to the physical and sensory evaluation by Cocoa of Excellence.
- A minimum of 5 Kg of each selected bean sample should be sent by 31 January 2023 to Cocoa of Excellence.
- All bean samples should be accompanied by the completed Cocoa of Excellence Data Form with all information available on the sample.
- No more than one sample per producer should be selected.
- No previous winners of International Cocoa Awards for the years between 2009 and 2019 or 2021 Cocoa of Excellence Gold Award should be selected.
- No more than the quota of samples per country should be sent to Cocoa of Excellence.

It is recommended that the National Organization Committee sets up a calendar of activities with the key dates, such as the reception of samples, celebrations of winners. If the Cocoa of Excellence national competition aims to participate in the 2023 Cocoa of Excellence Awards, it is important that the samples of the winners be sent to Cocoa of Excellence by 31 January 2023.

Setting up the calendar should integrate the celebration date and sending of the sample to Cocoa of Excellence and work backwards estimating the time needed for each activity, with sufficient flexibility in case of delays and unexpected events. It is important to establish the maximum number of samples that will be processed and the time that it will take to conduct the physical and flavour sensory evaluations. An example of a calendar of activities is in **Annex A**.

2.2 Partnerships and budget

It is important to estimate the budget needed for the Cocoa of Excellence national competition, the follow up and financing activities. It could be interesting at this point to involve different professional partners that could be part of the evaluation process and selection.

Example of costs to consider in the budget for the organization of the Cocoa of Excellence national competition include the following:

- Communication and publicity to announce the Cocoa of Excellence national competition.
- Meetings of the Organization National Organization Committee.

¹ Registration fee includes: A detailed Feedback Report on each cocoa bean sample for all participants (valued at 500 USD) plus for those selected in the 50 Best samples, promotion among cocoa buyers, traders and chocolate makers and free tickets to participate in celebrations of the 2023 Cocoa of Excellence Awards.



- Staff cost for the organization.
- Equipment needed.
- Participation of cocoa quality and flavour evaluation experts for the selection of the best samples.
- Venue and organization of the final celebrations.
- Courier for shipping the samples to Cocoa of Excellence and of obtaining the phytosanitary certificates.
- Participation fee of 100 USD per sample entering the 2023 Cocoa of Excellence Awards.
- Participation in the celebrations of the 2023 Cocoa of Excellence Awards in November - December 2023 for producers and organisers.

Sponsorships and in-kind contributions to support the cost of a Cocoa of Excellence national competition could be discussed with:

- Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or governmental institutions with field programmes involving cocoa producers.
- Laboratories or exporting companies with expertise on physical quality evaluation of cocoa beans.
- Chocolate processing companies with expertise and material for liquor and chocolate processing.
- Buyers and traders of cocoa in the country to sponsor the event.
- Any other organization that could benefit from high visibility with the event.

3. Setting up the Committee for the Selection of the Cocoa Bean Samples

The National Organization is encouraged to set up a committee for the selection of the participating and winning cocoa sample, like the Technical Committee of Cocoa of Excellence. The National Organization Committee may identify members with professional experience in the following areas:

- Processing of beans into liquor and chocolate.
- Development of finished products for consumers.
- Bean physical and aroma evaluation, resulting from a cut test.
- Flavour sensory evaluation of a range of cocoa bean origins and *terroirs*, processed into a standard liquor and chocolate.
- Quantitative approaches using scores for flavour attributes and global quality.
- Data analysis of sensory panels for the selection of the best samples.

The Selection Committee may be chaired by one of the members responsible for overseeing the process and making final decisions when there is no consensus among members. The responsibilities of the Selection Committee could be mainly to agree on a technical evaluation and selection process of the bean samples and carry out the evaluation of the samples. It should also advise on the confidential feedback to be provided to each participating producer.



4. Announcing the Competition and Providing Guidelines for Participation

4.1 Announcement: communication of rules and deadlines

It is recommended that the National Organization Committee announces and widely promotes the Cocoa of Excellence national competition in all cocoa producing regions of the country and to a diversity of cocoa producers, large and small. The National Organization Committee may encourage cocoa producers to participate through a press radio and social media release, and send information and guidelines broadly, i.e., to all stakeholders in the cocoa industry, associations and non-governmental organizations implementing cocoa development programmes. The main information to communicate is the following:

- The vision and objectives of the Cocoa of Excellence national competition and the link with the 2023 Cocoa of Excellence Awards if connected.
- Deadlines for submission of samples, results and celebrations.
- Who can participate - eligibility criteria.
- How to participate - requirements for the samples and associated data.
- Quality requirements of the bean samples.

4.2 Deadline for receiving the cocoa samples

The National Organization Committee should establish the deadline for receiving the cocoa bean samples based on the following considerations:

- The main cocoa harvest period.
- The time needed to process all samples by the Selection Committee in advance of the Cocoa of Excellence national selection and celebrations.
- The dates of important events to partner for the Cocoa of Excellence national competition celebrations.
- The deadline for submission of sample to the 2023 Cocoa of Excellence Awards - by 31 January 2023.

4.3 Who can participate and how many samples they can send

The National Organization Committee should decide on the requirements for the bean producers invited to participate and the numbers and characteristics of the bean samples that will be accepted. If there are specific requirements of fermentation and drying process, these should be mentioned. The National Organization Committee may propose a total number of samples that will be accepted, depending on the capacity to process them, with a maximum of one sample per producer to ensure broader participation. The Organization Committee may want to have different categories of submission such as experimental and commercial samples.

At the international level, Cocoa of Excellence requires that:

- No previous winners of International Cocoa Awards for the years between 2009 and 2019 or 2021 Cocoa of Excellence Gold Award be selected.



- No more than one sample per producer be sent.
- A maximum of 1/3 of the samples per country be experimental.
- No samples from modified or artificial fermentations with addition of flavour material, fruit pulp or juices.

4.4 How producers can participate

The National Organization Committee should specify the following in their guidelines:

- The quantities of the bean samples (Kg) for submission, taking into consideration the quantities needed for:
 - Cut test for physical quality evaluation
 - Assessment of cocoa butter content
 - Processing into liquor for the Selection Committee members
 - Processing into chocolate for the Selection Committee members
 - Processing into chocolate for tasting during the national celebration
 - Processing into chocolate for eventual distribution to potential bean buyers and chocolate makers.
- A 5 Kg of the same beans should be available from the producers, stored in optimum conditions, to send to Cocoa of Excellence by 31 January if linked to the 2023 Cocoa of Excellence Awards.
- All the required information for each sample to be provided in a form or template such as the Cocoa of Excellence Data Form that can be used to facilitate the compilation of data for samples that will participate in the 2023 Cocoa of Excellence Awards. The Data Form can be downloaded from: www.cocoaofexcellence.org
- The detailed address to send the samples in the country, with a focal person's full name, email and phone numbers.
- Who and how the cost of shipment of the beans and the participation fee of 100 USD per sample entering the 2023 Cocoa of Excellence Awards, if linked, will be covered (i.e. by the producer, the Organization Committee or another party).

4.5 Quality requirements of the bean samples

No ingredients should be added to the fermentation, such as flavour material, fruit pulp or juices.

An evaluation of whole beans and a cut test should be done for each bean sample and characteristics (qualities and defects) should be within the following internationally acceptable limits:

Whole beans:

- Maximum 3% external mould.
- Maximum 3% with other defects: broken, insect-damaged, germinated, rotten or empty beans, etc.
- Properly dried with moisture content ideally between 6.5% and 7.5% and to a maximum of 8.5%.

Cut beans:

- Maximum 3% slaty.
- Maximum 4% of internal mould.



The following are desirable characteristics:

- Absence of off-flavours, i.e. smoke, mould, earth, dirt or excessive acidity, bitterness and astringency.
- Absence of foreign matter and cocoa residue, i.e. broken, flat, shrivelled and clumped beans or placenta, pod husk or shell fragments.
- Reasonably uniform in size.
- Bean count of 100 beans/100g or less is desirable, but not required.
- Stored for a minimum of 6 weeks after drying and before shipping to allow the flavour to stabilise prior to flavour testing.
- The colour of cut beans changes from fully purple (unfermented or partially fermented) to chocolate brown (fully fermented). The colour however can vary depending on the variety and genetics. A good fermentation contributes to the reduction of bitterness and astringency of cocoa.

5. Selecting the Cocoa Bean Samples

Cocoa of Excellence national competitions are a great way to recognize and celebrate the range of cocoa diversity and producers in the country so the National Organization Committee is encouraged to select samples of different genetic bean types and *terroirs*.

If the Cocoa of Excellence national competition is to be linked to the 2023 Cocoa of Excellence Awards, the National Organization Committee should give preference to new producers i.e. that have not previously won an International Cocoa Awards for the years between 2009 and 2019 or 2021 Cocoa of Excellence Gold Award be selected, or at least ensure that samples are from a different farm, genetic bean type, *terroir* and/or post-harvest process.

The number of winning samples should be in line with the quota set by Cocoa of Excellence for the country or have a ranking to facilitate the selection of the samples.

To ensure complete anonymity during the processing and selection, samples should be given a unique 3-digit blind code at reception by a member of the National Organization Committee not involved in the evaluation of the samples. No information on the identity and location of the farm should be revealed until the selection process is completed.

Samples received should be acknowledged as well as all completed information and minimum requirements.

All samples should first go through a physical quality evaluation to ensure that the moisture content, presence of defective beans, mouldiness, smoky flavours, cut tests results, are all within acceptable limits as described in section 4.5. Beans with defects above the limits should not be further evaluated and considered rejected. This information should be recorded in the Feedback Report for each bean sample to provide to the producers at the end of the process, (see section 8). On the basis of this physical analysis, all accepted samples are selected for further processing and sensory evaluation.



6. Assessing Quality and Flavour and Selection of the Awards

The National Organization and Selection Committees agree on the next step for further evaluation of all accepted samples. The beans can be processed into liquor and/or chocolate for sensory evaluation. It is recommended to follow the protocols of the International Standards for the Assessment of Cocoa Quality and Flavour available for download at: www.cocoaqualitystandards.org

If samples are evaluated as liquor and/or chocolate, particular attention must be paid to the protocols followed, documented and shared with the Selection Committee. The roasting time and temperature may be adjusted based on the bean genetics, size and moisture content but the rest of the process should be standardised so that samples are comparable, i.e. the only difference in the quality and flavour is attribute to the beans and not the process.

The sensory evaluation of the liquor and/or chocolate must be carried by experienced professionals completely blind, meaning that the evaluators must not be able to recognise or identify any of the bean samples. The evaluators should be selected based on their expertise in sensory evaluation of cocoa. In order to ensure transparency of the process, the National Organization and Selection Committees should provide information on the names and organizations of the people involved in the evaluation and selection of samples. National Organization and Selection Committees must ensure no conflict of interest and avoid cocoa producers of the samples or closely associated to the samples to be part of this evaluation and selection panel.

The National Organization Committee agrees at the beginning on how many samples will be selected and rewarded, and if there will be a ranking (i.e. 1st, 2nd, and 3rd position) or if all the winning samples will have an equal rating (i.e. the best 3). There are pros and cons for each of these options. For the 2023 Cocoa of Excellence Awards, the 50 best samples are selected based on the liquor evaluation, then these are processed into chocolate and the Cocoa of Excellence Awards are selected in each of the 4 cocoa producing regions: (1) Africa & the Indian Ocean, (2) Asia & the Pacific, (3) Central America & Caribbean and (4) South America.



7. Organizing National Celebrations and Award Ceremonies

The National Organization Committee is encouraged to organize celebrations for the Cocoa of Excellence national competition with a public ceremony and announce broadly the date and the venue of this important event through all media channels. This should be done well in advance and may coincide with other important cocoa and chocolate-related event in the country.

It is important to invite all the organizers, partners and sponsors, participants, cocoa producers' associations and cooperatives, cocoa buyers, traders, manufacturers as well as official governmental representations from the ministry of agriculture, natural resource or environment depending on where cocoa production is nested in the country.

The National Organization Committee may consider issuing 2 types of certificates: (1) an award for the winning samples as an honourable distinction, without money value and (2) participation and recognition for the participants that have been through a preliminary selection.

In addition to a certificate, the National Organization Committee may consider providing additional rewards such as:

- Cash prize.
- Cocoa seedlings.
- Farming and cocoa processing equipment and tools.
- Training in cocoa production, fermentation, drying, physical quality evaluation, cocoa liquor and chocolate making for sensory flavour evaluation.
- Payment of participation fee of 100 USD per sample if entering into the 2023 Cocoa of Excellence Awards.
- Participation in the 2023 Cocoa of Excellence Awards and events in November - December 2023.

Sponsorship in cash and/or equipment, training and travels may be interesting for partners benefiting from being closely associated to the national celebration, such as agricultural banks, nurseries, equipment companies, research institutes, non-governmental organizations etc.

The National Organization Committee should publish the results of the competition in news and media and ensure that potential bean buyers and chocolate makers can access the names and contact details of the winning producers and the characteristics (quality and flavour profiles) of their beans. This provides visibility of superior cocoa quality production in the country and the work of the producers and create business opportunities, including those for commanding quality premiums.



8. Feedback to Participating Producers

The National Organization Committee is strongly encouraged to follow up with a confidential and detailed feedback report to each participating bean producer with the results of the physical quality evaluation, sensory evaluation of the liquor and chocolate as appropriate. Most importantly, this feedback could include recommendations for improvements if needed. This information should be recorded during the process from the reception of the beans to the sensory evaluation and selection of the winners. The feedback should be confidential and not shared with anybody else than the National Organization and Selection Committees and the individual producer.

The National Organization Committee should ensure that the feedback is received by each participating producer and that they are available to answer any questions. This contributes directly to improving quality as the producers implement the recommendations. These could then participate again in a future Cocoa of Excellence national competition.

9. Linking to the 2023 Cocoa of Excellence Awards

Cocoa of Excellence encourages countries that organize a Cocoa of Excellence national competition to align the selection of the best samples with the 2023 Cocoa of Excellence Awards. The National Organization Committee should keep in mind the requirements and conditions to participate in the Cocoa of Excellence and consult the Guide for Participation in the 2023 Cocoa of Excellence Awards Edition available at: www.cocoaofexcellence.org

Some recommendations for the selection of the cocoa bean samples are that they should be:

- Harvested in the main harvesting season.
- Processed, to preserve and enhance their potential flavour development.
- Selected based on their high quality and consistency.
- Properly fermented, resulting in moderate bitterness and astringency and low percentages of slaty beans.

The National Organization Committee should ensure that:

- No previous winners of International Cocoa Awards for the years between 2009 and 2019 or 2021 Cocoa of Excellence Gold Award be selected.
- Only one sample is provided per producer.
- Samples are not produced from modified or artificial fermentations with addition of flavour material, fruit pulp or juices.
- Bean producers maintain a safety duplicate of at least 5 Kg of the beans in storage until the Edition is completed in December 2023, in case of damage, loss or any questions on bean quality.
- All bean samples are accompanied by a completed Data Form (separate Excel File) with all information available on the sample. The Cocoa of Excellence Data Form can be downloaded at: www.cocoaofexcellence.org
- No more samples than the quota per country are sent to Cocoa of Excellence.



- The beans are stored for a minimum of 6 weeks after the date of drying in a cool room (20-22 °C), that is insect-free, in humidity less than 70% and with no abnormal odours.
- A phytosanitary certificate is obtained from the authorities of the country.
- A minimum of 5 Kg of each bean samples are sent. Samples of less than 5 Kg will be rejected.
- Shipping instructions are followed to avoid import tax costs for Cocoa of Excellence.
- The cost of shipping the bean samples to Cocoa of Excellence Italy is covered by the country.
- The bean samples are sent to Cocoa of Excellence to be received no later than 31 January 2023.

Based on the results of the Cocoa of Excellence National Competition, National Organization Committees are encouraged to organize national celebrations for the selected and winning producers and publicise in the news and media. It may involve Ministries of Agriculture, National Cocoa Boards and representatives of the value chain and cocoa and chocolate industry to publicly recognise the achievement.

10. Reviewing and Evaluating Success and Planning the Next Competition

Once the Cocoa of Excellence national competition is over and feedback is provided to all producers, the National Organization Committee may want to review and identify the following:

- the aspects that worked well and should be repeated
- the unexpected problems faced and how they could be resolved
- the most difficult activities, why and how difficulties could be overcome
- the improvements that can be implemented
- how the Cocoa of Excellence national competition was received in the country and the main benefits and constructive criticism
- how the process and outcomes contributed to the objectives and vision set initially

It is important that organizers are open to receiving feedback, reviewing process and proposing improvements for the next edition in an inclusive and participatory manner. It can take a few competitions before the process is well established, where participants are familiar with the process and partners and sponsors motivated to be associated with such a successful event. Cocoa of Excellence national competitions can grow progressively, get the recognition from the cocoa sector and raise awareness of the importance of cocoa in the country.



11. Participating in the 2023 Cocoa of Excellence Awards Celebrations

All producers and National Organization Committees participating in Cocoa of Excellence and any interested actors in the cocoa value-chain are cordially invited to the celebrations of the 2023 Cocoa of Excellence Awards in November - December 2023. This prestigious event celebrates the cocoa bean producers that received an Cocoa of Excellence Awards as well as the ones selected in the 50 best samples with the participation of the international press and the chocolate industry leaders. Cocoa of Excellence convenes producers, buyers and chocolate makers, organise tasting of the chocolate made from the 50 best samples and discussions with the Cocoa of Excellence Coordination and the Technical Committee. This is a unique opportunity to meet and exchange with experts in sensory evaluation, cocoa processing and chocolate making. Cocoa of Excellence also facilitates meetings between chocolate makers, bean buyers and the cocoa producers that participated in the 2023 Edition.



Annex A – Example of a Calendar of Activities

Date	Activity
	Meetings to decide on the organization of a Cocoa of Excellence national competition, the main activities and related budget and funding.
	Guidelines and forms for participants in the Cocoa of Excellence national competition published.
	Announcement of the Cocoa of Excellence national competition, to the cocoa producers from all producing regions of the country and the cocoa value chain actors through different media channels.
	Deadline for Reception of all cocoa samples by the National Organization Committee and attribution of blind codes for evaluation.
	Physical quality and sensory evaluation of whole and cut beans of all received bean samples (cut test).
	Accepted samples processed into liquor for blind sensory evaluation.
	Blind sensory evaluation by the selection committee of all liquor samples.
	Analysis of results from the liquor evaluation and best samples selected.
	At this point, the best samples selected from the liquor sensory evaluation can be attributed a Cocoa of Excellence National Award.
	If time allows in the calendar, the best samples can be processed into chocolate for blind sensory evaluation.
	Blind sensory evaluation by the selection committee of the best samples into chocolate.
	Analysis of the results from the chocolate evaluation and best samples selected for the Cocoa of Excellence National Award.
	Celebration of the Cocoa of Excellence national competition winners with the participations of producers, partners and sponsors, government representatives and cocoa sector stakeholders.
	Publication of the information of the winning samples and the producers.
By 31 January 2023	Shipping of the selected samples to Cocoa of Excellence for participation in the 2023 Cocoa of Excellence Awards Edition with all required documents completed (- see Guide for Participation at: www.cocoaofexcellence.org)
	Confidential feedback provided to all participating producers on the results of the physical quality and sensory evaluation (beans, liquor and chocolate) with recommendations for improvement if needed.
	Participation in the 2023 Cocoa of Excellence Awards Celebrations in November - December 2023.
	Evaluation for future Cocoa of Excellence national competitions.
	Planning of the next Cocoa of Excellence national competition.

