

Cacao of Excellence Awards 2023 Edition

Guide for Participation

Revised October 2022



**Recognising, Preserving, Valuing
Cacao Quality & Flavour Diversity
Across the Value Chain**

Empowering a new generation of
producers of excellence

www.cacaoofexcellence.org



Contents

1	About Cacao of Excellence	4
1.1	What matters to us	4
1.2	Theory of Change	5
1.3	Process in brief	5
1.4	Our achievements since 2009	6
1.5	How Cacao of Excellence works	7
1.6	Calendar of activities	8
2	Cacao of Excellence Coordination	9
2.1	Oversight: implementation at the international level	9
2.2	Reception and physical evaluation of cacao bean samples	9
2.3	Evaluation of the cacao beans in liquor and chocolate	9
2.4	Detailed Feedback Reports on each cacao sample	9
3	National Organisation Committees	10
3.1	National coordination	10
3.2	Reception of samples	10
3.3	Selection of samples	11
3.4	Registration and shipment of samples	11
3.5	Safety duplication and storage of samples	11
3.6	Follow-up with producers and national celebrations	11
4	Participating Cacao Producers	12
4.1	Sample submission conditions	12
4.2	Associated information	12
4.3	Feedback on samples submitted	12
5	Cacao Bean Sample Types and Requirements	13
5.1	Commercial and experimental	13
5.2	Samples per origin	13
5.3	Sample requirements	13
6	Data and Photos for Each Cacao Bean Sample	14
6.1	Complete data on samples	14
6.2	Permission and use of the data on bean samples	14
7	Minimum Physical Quality Requirements	15
7.1	Characteristics of the cacao beans samples	15
7.2	Preparation and storage	16
8	Registration, Documents, and Shipment of Samples	16
8.1	Payment of registration fee for each sample	16
8.2	Preparation of cacao bean samples for shipment	16
8.3	Shipping instructions	17
9	Evaluation, Selection, and Feedback	18
9.1	Evaluation of the physical qualities	18
9.2	Evaluation of the cacao bean samples as liquor	18
9.3	Evaluation of the Best 50 samples processed into chocolate	18
9.4	Selection of the 2023 Cacao of Excellence Gold, Silver and Bronze Awards	19
9.5	Feedback to cacao sample producers and National Organisation Committees	19
	Annex A. Quotas of Cacao Bean Samples per Origin	20
	Annex B. Example of the Excel Data Form for Each Sample	23
	Annex C. Data included in the Feedback Report	26
	Annex D. Check List to be Included with Samples	28

Citation: Cacao of Excellence Awards, 2023 Edition: Guide for Participation

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This Guide provides the details on how Cacao of Excellence works and how cacao producers in the different origins can participate. For more information, please visit: www.cacaofexcellence.org

1 About Cacao of Excellence

1.1 What matters to us

Cacao of Excellence **recognises, preserves, values, and promotes cacao quality and flavour diversity** across the value chain to improve smallholder farmers' livelihoods and drive sustainability of the cacao supply chain for thriving, resilient and healthy communities, from origins to consumers. It provides global recognition to producers of superior quality cacao and celebrates the diversity of flavours from different producing origins. Established in 2009, Cacao 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. For more information about our partnerships, please visit <https://www.cacaofexcellence.org/about-us/organisers-partners-sponsors>

Cacao of Excellence is the **entry point for cacao producers to participate in the Cacao of Excellence Awards**, the most prestigious global competition that recognizes the work of cacao farmers and celebrates the quality and flavour diversity of cacaos produced around the world. Held every two years, the Cacao of Excellence Awards bring together leading sensory evaluation experts and the chocolate industry to reward producers of excellence.

Our **VISION** – Excellence in the cacao sector catalysing multiple benefits for resilient and thriving agricultural systems at landscape and global level.

Our **OBJECTIVES** are to:

1. Increase awareness and promote education across the cacao value chain on opportunities to produce superior quality cacao and preserve flavours resulting from genetic diversity, terroir and know-how of cacao producers.
2. Facilitate communication and links between cacao producers and operators in the supply chain to promote market opportunities.
3. Increase the capacity of producing origins to recognize, value and preserve cacao quality and diversity.
4. Improve farmers' livelihoods through increased market value of quality cacao.

Benefits for cacao producers through participation:

- Expert, detailed feedback on the physical and sensory quality of the submitted cacao samples.
- Invitation to a unique networking platform to meet potential buyers and promote superior quality cacao.
- Increased visibility by promoting and displaying the best samples at different events for potential buyers.
- Marketing opportunities through the Cacao of Excellence platform.
- International, regional and national recognition of cacao growers producing beans with exceptional quality and diverse flavours.
- Strengthened capacity to evaluate, identify and recognize excellent cacao.
- Incentive to develop cacao quality and flavour assessment skills at national level.
- Increased knowledge of cacao diversity and quality resulting from the genetic, terroirs and know-how of cacao producers to inform conservation programmes.



1.2 Theory of Change

Excellence in the cacao sector catalyses multiple benefits for resilient and thriving agricultural systems at landscape and global level

Recognising, preserving, valuing & promoting cacao quality and flavour diversity across the value chain to improve smallholder farmers' livelihoods & drive sustainability of the cacao supply chain for thriving, resilient & healthy communities, from origins to consumers.



1. Partnerships

A **Community for Excellence** driving food & land system transformation in the cacao sector, through multi-impact collaborative initiatives.



2. Innovation

Data-driven innovations developed and adopted, preserving and promoting diversity and quality at origins which leads to Excellence in the cacao sector.



3. Genetic Diversity

Safeguard of Cacao Genetic Diversity to ensure long-term health, resilience, quality and diversity of planting materials.



4. Capacity Building

Individuals and organisations across the cacao value chain **develop capacity to adopt innovations** that generate value and resilience across the sector.



5. Awards

Co-elevating Cacao Origins across the world, promoting and celebrating quality and diversity through a culture of Excellence in the cacao sector.

1.3 Process in brief

Deadline for submission of cacao bean samples: 31 January 2023

Registration Fee: 100 USD per sample

Registration fee includes:

- Cacao of Excellence evaluation process and admission in the 2023 Edition.
- A detailed Feedback Report including the analysis results from the physical evaluation, sensory evaluation of sample processed into cacao liquor and for those part of the Best 50, sensory evaluation of sample processed into chocolate – market value of 500 USD.
- Promotion among cacao buyers, traders and chocolate makers in Cacao of Excellence promotion materials.

All cacao bean samples submitted are assigned a random code by Cacao of Excellence ensuring that the entire process is carried out blindly and that no information about origins or regions is communicated to those involved in the evaluation and to anybody before the Awards are celebrated. The samples go through a rigorous expert evaluation and selection process. All protocols for processing and evaluating the bean samples are part of the International Standards for the Assessment of Cocoa Quality and Flavour (ISCQF),¹ coordinated by Cacao of Excellence.

¹ www.cocoaqualitystandards.org



After a physical quality evaluation including of whole and cut beans, including aromas, all accepted samples are roasted following precise protocols to best express the flavour potential of each cacao bean sample before being processed into liquor. The liquor sensory evaluation is carried out by a panel of international experts, members of the Cacao of Excellence Technical Committee.

The blind evaluation results in the selection of the Best 50 samples to be announced and published on the Cacao of Excellence website. These Best 50 samples are then processed into a dark chocolate and evaluated blindly by a broader panel of professionals, experts, chocolate makers and pastry chefs. The final results are analysed, the Cacao of Excellence Gold, Silver and Bronze Awards are selected, and the winners are celebrated at the Awards Ceremony at the end of 2023.

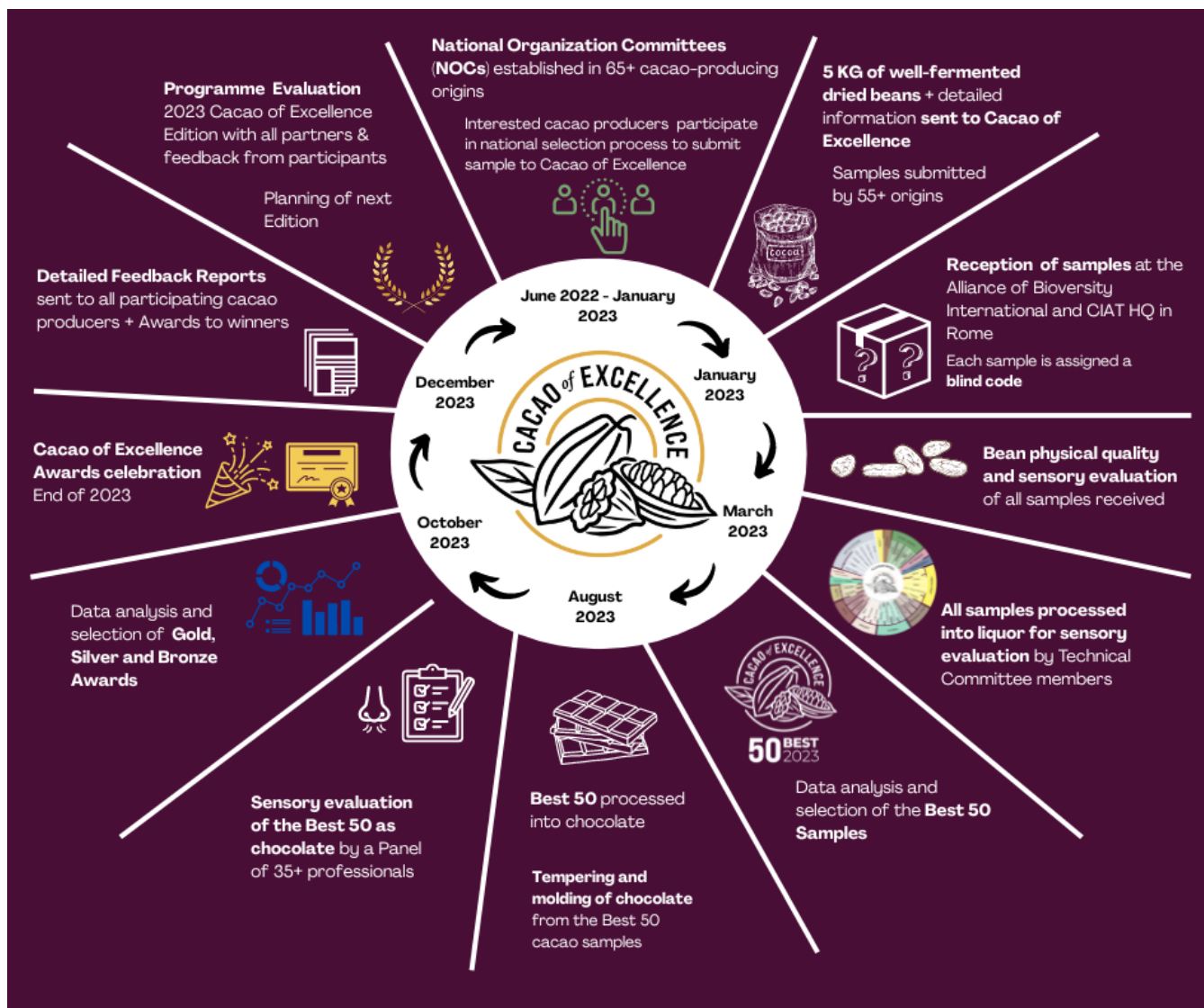
A detailed technical Feedback Report on the physical and sensory evaluation of the beans is sent to all participating producers.

1.4 Our achievements since 2009

- Promotion of cacao origins & capacity building at field, institutional & industry level through collaborations with over 30 public & private organizations.
- Eight prestigious international celebrations of the Cacao of Excellence Awards, convening over 1,000 value chain actors including cacao producers & chocolate companies from all regions of the world.
- Consolidation of the largest dataset on cacao production, flavour diversity & quality assessment of over 1,250 exceptional & unique samples from 55 origins.
- More than 400 cacao samples selected among the best in the world, received Cacao of Excellence Awards, representing thousands of producers, families & communities.
- More than 1,250 detailed Feedback Reports sent to participating producers with recommendations for promoting & communicating on the value of their cacao.
- Innovative products, such as an exclusive limited edition Chocolate Treasure Box to showcase the best producers & cacao origins, and a set of unique reference samples used by sensory evaluation experts in leading industries.
- Leadership of a broad partnership to create the first International Standards for the Assessment of Cocoa Quality and Flavour (ISCQF), that provides a common language on cacao quality & flavour diversity, in English, French and Spanish & implemented around the world.
- A calibrated panel of international experts in cacao sensory evaluation across the industry with extensive experience on trading, buying & processing cacao following market trends.
- Significant contributor, through its Global Network on Cacao Genetic Resources (CacaoNet), to the safeguarding of the only international cacao genetic diversity collections at the Cocoa Research Centre in Trinidad & Tobago and CATIE in Costa Rica.



1.5 How Cacao of Excellence works



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1.6 Calendar of activities

Date	Activity
August 2022	The 2023 Edition of the Cacao of Excellence Awards is launched. Guide for Participation published: www.cacaoofexcellence.org
September – December 2022	Cacao of Excellence communicates with all cacao-producing origins to establish the National Organisation Committees.
September - December 2022	National Organisation Committees announce the 2023 Edition and encourage broad participation of producers. Producers interested in participating contact their National Organisation Committee for details of participation. Origins are encouraged to organise National Cacao of Excellence Competitions to select the best cacao bean samples representative of the genetic diversity within their origin.
December 2022 - January 2023	National Organisation Committees send a minimum of 5 Kg of well fermented and dried beans with all required information and agreements for the use of each sample.
31 January 2023	Deadline for receiving: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All cacao bean samples and associated Excel Data Forms. 2. Registration fees for each sample submitted. 3. Agreement confirmed on the use of each sample.
February-March 2023	All received samples are blind-coded by Cacao of Excellence. Physical quality evaluation is carried out including whole and cut beans aromas. Accepted samples are roasted following precise protocols to best express the flavour potential and are processed into liquor for sensory evaluation.
February - July 2023	Liquor sensory evaluation is carried out blindly by the international experts of the Cacao of Excellence Technical Committee.
August 2023	The Best 50 samples are selected and nominated for the Cacao of Excellence 2023 Awards. Producers are notified. Names and contact details of the Best 50 producers are published on the website.
August 2023	The Best 50 samples are processed into a dark chocolate (same recipe for all) for blind evaluation by the Cacao of Excellence Technical Committee and a broader panel of professionals, chocolate makers and sensory evaluation experts.
September – October 2023	The results are analysed for the selection of the Gold, Silver and Bronze Cacao of Excellence 2023 Awards.
November - December 2023	Celebrations of the Cacao of Excellence 2023 Awards - dates and venue to be confirmed.
December 2023	Detailed Feedback Reports are sent to all participating producers, including results of the physical evaluation, sensory evaluation of the liquor and for the Best 50 samples, the sensory evaluation of the chocolate and the Cacao of Excellence 2023 Award certificates.



2 Cacao of Excellence Coordination

The responsibilities of the coordination of Cacao of Excellence are summarised below.

2.1 Oversee the implementation at international level

- Ensures that rules and regulations are applied, and that confidentiality and anonymity are maintained during the entire evaluation and nomination process.
- Establishes a Technical Committee - a panel of international experts in sensory evaluation - responsible for the evaluation of each sample through a rigorous, transparent, and fair process.
- Advises on all technical processes including quality evaluation requirements and selection of the additional members of the broader expert panel for the evaluation of the Best 50 samples.

2.2 Reception and physical evaluation of the cacao bean samples

- Acknowledges receipt of submitted cacao bean samples.
- Assigns a blind code to each sample to ensure fair and unbiased evaluation and selection process.
- Implements physical evaluation to ensure that key characteristics are within acceptable limits including an initial sensory evaluation (whole and cut beans) to determine the optimal roasting conditions to best express the flavour potential of each cacao bean samples before being processed into liquor.

2.3 Evaluation of the cacao beans in liquor and chocolate

- Processes all accepted samples into cacao liquor for blind evaluation by the Technical Committee.
- Selects the Best 50 samples across the 4 cacao-producing regions of the world.
- Informs the producers and publishes the list of the Best 50.
- Processes the Best 50 samples into dark chocolate for blind evaluation by the Cacao of Excellence Technical Committee and a broader panel of professionals, chocolate makers and sensory evaluation experts.

2.4 Detailed Feedback Reports on each cacao sample

- Produces a detailed Feedback Report for each bean sample received to be sent to each cacao producer at the end of the Edition.
- For the Best 50 samples, shares information on the chocolate sensory evaluation and contact details of the producer through the Cacao of Excellence website. Information on samples not selected for the Best 50 will remain confidential.
- Summary information on all cacao beans received is used for scientific analysis and reporting whilst ensuring anonymity.



3 National Organisation Committees

For each Edition, participating cacao-producing origins establish a National Organisation Committee that oversees the participation of cacao producers. National Organisation Committees should seek to include as many national stakeholders as possible, such as representatives of the following groups:

- National cacao boards
- Quality control centres
- Export promoting institutions
- Research and development institutions
- Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

Cacao of Excellence confirms a National Organisation Committee in each origin, once roles and responsibilities have been agreed.

National Organisation Committees play a crucial role in ensuring that superior quality samples, representative of the cacao diversity in the origin are selected and sent to Cacao of Excellence. They are encouraged to organise a national Cacao of Excellence competition following the guidelines available on the Cacao of Excellence website.

The responsibilities of the National Organisation Committees are summarised below.

3.1 National coordination

- Oversee the implementation of the Cacao of Excellence Awards process at the national level in an inclusive and participatory manner.
- Ensure that all interested parties participate.
- Ensure that all rules are observed and confidentiality is respected.
- Announce the Cacao of Excellence Awards and guidelines nationally.
- Encourage cacao producers from different regions to participate, particularly producers who have not participated in previous Editions.
- Should not select samples from producers that have already won a 2021 Cacao of Excellence Gold Award or an International Cacao Award for previous editions unless from a different farm, genetic, terroir and/or post-harvest process.
- Ensure that the national evaluation and selection of cacao samples is implemented under the guidance of experts in cacao quality and sensory evaluation.
- Store in optimum conditions during the selection process and secure a safety sample of 5Kg.
- Ship the selected samples according to the maximum quota to Cacao of Excellence by 31 January 2023.

3.2 Reception of samples

- Receive samples from cacao producers and acknowledge receipt.
- Ensure that a minimum of 5 Kg of well-prepared, fermented, and dried beans is available for each sample and that an additional 5 Kg is kept for safety. Samples of less than 5 Kg sent to Cacao of Excellence will be rejected.
- Ensure that all producers have granted permission to Cacao of Excellence for the use of the samples with all associated data and photos.
- Attribute a unique code to identify each sample sent to Cacao of Excellence.



3.3 Selection of samples

- Categorize samples as commercial or experimental. No more than 30% of samples per origin may be experimental.
- Ensure that only one sample per producer is selected.
- Ensure that all samples comply with the Cacao of Excellence Minimum Physical Quality Requirements (section 7).
- Evaluate and select the best samples that represent the cacao diversity of the origin.
- Ensure that no more than the quota of samples per origin is sent to Cacao of Excellence (**Annex A**). Cacao of Excellence will reject extra samples.

3.4 Registration and shipment of samples

- Ensure that the registration fee is paid for each bean sample submitted to Cacao of Excellence.
- Obtain a phytosanitary certificate from the authorities.
- Prepare and package samples and accompanying documents following the sample preparation, packaging and documents instructions in section 8.
- Cover the cost of shipping the bean samples to Cacao of Excellence.
- Ensure that all bean samples are accompanied by the completed Excel Data Form, downloaded from www.cacaofexcellence.org, with all information available on the sample and the producer (section 6).
- Ensure the accuracy of the information provided with each cacao bean sample.
- Send the bean samples to Cacao of Excellence following the shipping instructions in section 8, by 31 January 2023.

3.5 Safety duplication and storage of samples

- Ensure that a safety duplicate of 5 Kg of the same beans is in storage until the edition is completed. This is in case of damage, loss or any questions on bean quality.
- Store samples received in adequate conditions from reception to shipment to Cacao of Excellence.

3.6 Follow-up with producers and national celebrations

- Ensure that all results are communicated to the participating producers.
- National Organisation Committees are encouraged to organise national celebrations for the producers of samples having won Cacao of Excellence Gold, Silver and Bronze Awards. In some origins, celebrations involve Ministries of Agriculture, National Cacao Boards and other organisations providing a public national recognition of achievement. It is also encouraged to produce press releases for news and media coverage.
- Ensure communication and linkages between cacao producers and operators in the supply chains to promote market opportunities.



4 Participating Cacao Producers

Cacao bean producers interested in participating should contact their National Organisation Committee. Contact information is published on the Cacao of Excellence website as soon as the National Organisation Committees are confirmed.

The selection and shipping of cacao bean samples to Cacao of Excellence is the responsibility of the National Organisation Committees.

Participating cacao-producers can be:

- Individual producers
- Associations of producers
- Cooperatives
- Private estates
- National research centres

The responsibilities of participating cacao producers are summarised below.

4.1 Sample submission conditions

- Ensure that only one cacao bean sample is submitted per producer.
- Ensure that the sample is not produced from any modified or artificial fermentations with addition of flavour material, fruit pulp or juices (section 5).
- Ensure that a 5 kg safety duplicate of the sample submitted is stored by the National Organisation Committee until the edition is completed, in case of damage, loss or any questions on bean quality.
- Agree to the terms of use by Cacao of Excellence for the sample submitted.
- Securely package and clearly label the cacao bean sample.
- Submit their cacao bean sample and all associated documentation to the National Organisation Committee responsible for shipping the sample to Cacao of Excellence.

4.2 Associated information

- For the sample submitted, complete the Excel Data Form downloaded from www.cacaoofexcellence.org, with all information available on the sample and the producer (section 6).
- Ensure that direct contact details (address, email and phone) of the producer are included for communication by email and phone.

4.3 Feedback on samples submitted

- Each participating producer receives a detailed Feedback Report from Cacao of Excellence at the end of the Edition (section 9 and **Annex C**).
- The feedback includes the results of the physical and sensory evaluation and in some cases recommendations for further improvement. This feedback is a critical part of the Cacao of Excellence process as it provides an opportunity for producers and National Organisation Committees to better understand the quality and uniqueness of the samples and in some cases improve quality.



5 Cacao Bean Sample Types and Requirements

Cacao of Excellence aims at recognizing and empowering a wide range of cacao producers globally. National Organisation Committees are therefore encouraged to select samples that are representative of the diversity of cacao and producers in the origin and submit samples of different genetic bean types, terroirs and/or prepared by using different post-harvest protocols.

5.1 Commercial and experimental

Cacao bean samples submitted to Cacao of Excellence can be of 2 categories:

- **Commercial Samples** – prepared by cacao producers from commercial farms or a group of farms, possible to reproduce the same quality cacao at commercial scale (several tons per year) in subsequent years.
- **Experimental Samples** – derived from interesting new varieties (newly selected varieties or materials with special quality traits) or through new post-harvest processes (e.g. novel fermentation method, etc.). These samples may not be available yet at commercial scale, but may become so within a few years' time. These samples may be prepared by cacao farmers or by research institutes.

5.2 Samples per origin

For fairness and logistical reasons, Cacao of Excellence limits the total number of samples to be received by each origin based on a maximum quota listed in **Annex A** based on the following criteria:

- **Basic quota** – 2021-2022 cacao production forecasts of International Cacao Organization (ICCO)
- **Additional samples** – one sample is added for origins that received an International Cacao Award in one of the 2017, 2019 Editions or a 2021 Cacao of Excellence Gold Award, for a maximum of 2 samples.

5.3 Sample requirements

- Not more samples than the quota per origin.
- Not more than one sample per producer.
- No more than 30% of samples representing an origin as experimental.
- Samples should not be produced from any modified or artificial fermentations with addition of flavour material, fruit pulp or juices.
- If the above requirements are not respected, Cacao of Excellence will reject these samples.



6 Data and Photos for Each Cacao Bean Sample

6.1 Complete data on samples

A completed Excel Data Form is required for each sample, with all information available on the producer, origin, and mode of preparation of the beans. The data to be provided by producers and National Organisation Committees is described in **Annex B** and the Excel File can be downloaded on the website: www.cacaoofexcellence.org

Cacao bean producers are responsible for the accuracy and quality of the information provided with the samples to the National Organisation Committee, who are in turn responsible for ensuring that each sample is accompanied by its completed Excel Data Form. A key objective of Cacao of Excellence is to connect buyers with producers for linking to relevant market opportunities. It is therefore critical that the producer shares their full contact details, including email address and mobile phone numbers. The accuracy of the data provided is also essential for determining conditions for the processing of the beans. The completed Excel Data Forms should be sent by e-mail to Cacao of Excellence and a printed copy for each sample should be included in the shipment.

IMPORTANT NOTIFICATION Samples not accompanied with a completed Excel Data Form are not traceable and therefore will not be accepted.

Sample producers are welcome to send photos, including a brief description and source to be credited, with a maximum size of 4MB of the following:

- Producers/cooperative representatives in the cacao farm
- Pods (both open and closed) from 5 trees
- Cut fresh beans
- Close ups of flowers

6.2 Permission and use of the data on bean samples

By completing and submitting the Excel Data Form, cacao producers grant permission to Cacao of Excellence to use this data as stated in the guidelines and for research purposes.

The data is used for the following:

- Classify, evaluate and process the samples correctly with optimum roasting conditions.
- Connect producers with buyers the cacao and chocolate industry and promote the Best 50 samples and the winners of Cacao of Excellence Gold, Silver and Bronze Awards by making publicly available the contact information and results of the evaluation and flavour profiles.
- Produce and send the Feedback Reports to each producer.
- Carry out scientific analysis whilst ensuring anonymity.
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of Cacao of Excellence.

For optimum processing and feedback, the following information needs to be accurate:

- **Dominating genetics** – used to determine the roasting conditions, which are different for each type of cacao bean to bring out the full potential of flavours.
- **Planting material, farming practices and post-harvest practices** – used to develop individual Feedback Reports with recommendations to sample producers.
- **Production capacity** – makes it possible to assess and communicate the marketability and reproducibility of each sample.



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7 Minimum Physical Quality Requirements

National Organisation Committees are responsible for evaluating and selecting the samples to be sent to Cacao of Excellence. All activities in cacao production, management and processing ultimately affect flavour development and bean quality.

Therefore, the cacao bean samples should be:

- Selected based on their superior quality and consistency.
- Harvested in the main harvesting season, as much as possible.
- Processed in a way to preserve and enhance their potential flavour development.
- Properly fermented, resulting in moderate bitterness and astringency and low percentages of slaty beans.
- Stored, packaged, and shipped in optimal conditions ensuring that the quality is maintained during transportation.

Cacao of Excellence's purpose is to recognize and celebrate the diversity of cacao and flavours around the world. For this purpose, samples from modified or artificial fermentations will not be accepted, i.e. samples where flavour material, fruit pulp or juices have been added to the fermentation.

Cacao of Excellence carries out a detailed physical quality evaluation of all received samples to ensure basic physical qualities and defects are all within acceptable limits. This information is provided to each producer in a detailed Feedback Report, at the end of the Edition.

7.1 Characteristics of the cacao beans 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 cacao 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 cacao.



7.2 Preparation and storage

National Organisation Committees must ensure the following storage requirements are met for each bean sample to be sent to Cacao of Excellence:

- Remove damaged or empty beans and remaining placentas before bagging.
- Use clean and odour-free jute, cotton or nylon bags.
- Store the cacao bean samples in a cool room (20-22 °C), that is insect-free, with less than 70% relative humidity and no abnormal odours.
- Store each bean sample separately to avoid abnormal odours or infestation being transmitted from one sample to another.
- If necessary, fumigate under expert supervision and according to national requirements to eradicate insects.
- Store the beans for a minimum of 6 weeks after the date of drying and before shipping to allow the flavour to stabilise.

8 Registration, Documents, and Shipment of Samples

8.1 Payment of registration fee for each sample

The registration fee of 100 USD should be paid for each sample sent to Cacao of Excellence. The payment is managed by the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, leader of Cacao of Excellence.

Mode of payment

- Fee: 100 USD per cacao bean sample
- Payment: PayPal – create an account if you do not have one already
- Steps:
 - Click on this PayPal link:
 - Donation to “Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT”
 - Insert the amount of 100 USD
 - Choose “Registration fee Cacao of Excellence 2023”
 - Make the donation choosing one of the 2 options: 1) with PayPal or 2) with credit or debit card

NOTE – You will receive a receipt by email once the payment is processed – please keep this receipt as a proof of payment

8.2 Preparation of cacao bean samples for shipment

- Place each cacao bean sample in strong and well-sealed bags (recommended a double plastic bag), to avoid breakage and loss of beans during transport.
- Clearly label the bag of each bean sample with a unique ID code corresponding to the information in the printed and electronic Excel Data Form.
- Include a printed copy of the Excel Data Form in the bag of each sample to ensure correct identification.
- Place the bags of samples in rigid cardboard box to avoid loss or contamination between samples.
- For each box/package, include a printed copy of the completed Checklist (**Annex D**).
- Send the completed Excel Data Form for each sample to Cacao of Excellence to Andrew Meter by email – a.meter@cgiar.org
- Send any photos by WeTransfer: www.wetransfer.com



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8.3 Shipping instructions

- Ship the sample at the following address:
Cacao of Excellence Laboratory and Training Centre
C/o Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT
Via Baccio Baldini 4b-c
00146, Rome, Italy
- Clearly state the following on each box/package for the courier shipment (e.g. DHL, FedEx, UPS etc.) and shipping documents:
 - Package value of 5 USD - for customs, even if the package contains several samples.
 - Content: Samples of fermented and dried cacao beans without commercial value / for RESEARCH PURPOSE only.
 - NOTE: No EU phytosanitary import requirements for dried or fermented cacao beans
- If shipping more than one sample at a time, these should all be under the same courier shipment number. When the box/package is ready to be shipped, send the following information to Andrew Meter at Cacao of Excellence – a.meter@cgiar.org:
 - Name and contact details of the sender
 - Date of shipment
 - Name of courier
 - Courier's tracking number

IMPORTANT NOTES

- Please indicate all the information above to avoid import taxes and delays at customs that can affect the cacao bean quality if not stored in adequate conditions.
- **Do not put a value higher than 5 USD** for each box/package otherwise you will be asked to cover extra custom charges. Cacao of Excellence is not responsible for covering custom charges upon reception.
- Send the box/package with samples and accompanying documents **by 31 January 2023**.
- Instruct the **courier to deliver the shipment from:**
 - **Monday to Friday from 9:00 to 17:00 Rome time.**
 - The office is closed on Saturdays and Sundays.
- If shipping more than one package at a time, these packages should all be under the same courier shipment number.



9 Evaluation, Selection, and Feedback

Upon reception, each cacao bean sample received by Cacao of Excellence is:

- Acknowledged with a confirmation email to the sender
- Attributed a blind code for identification and registered
- All associated documentation recorded

The blind code ensures that the sample remains anonymous throughout the evaluation and selection process until the celebrations of the Cacao of Excellence Awards.

9.1 Evaluation of the physical qualities

The physical characteristics of all received beans samples are evaluated to ensure that key characteristics are all within acceptable limits. The samples are evaluated first as whole beans including the aroma. Then a cut test is carried out and the beans characteristics recorded. The cut test aroma is evaluated and used to determine the optimal roasting conditions to optimise the flavour potential.

The data recorded and measurements made are listed in **Annex C**.

9.2 Evaluation of the cacao bean samples as liquor

All accepted cacao samples are processed into liquor and evaluated (blind) by the Technical Committee, a panel of international experts in cacao sensory evaluation, following the Cacao of Excellence evaluation form, flavour wheel and glossary. The quantitative data is analysed statistically and the Best 50 samples representing the four cacao-producing regions ((1) Africa & the Indian Ocean, (2) Asia & the Pacific, (3) Central America & the Caribbean and (4) South America) are selected and nominated for Cacao of Excellence Gold, Silver or Bronze Awards.

NOTE – When the selection of the Best 50 samples is completed, Cacao of Excellence notifies all participating producers of the results. The name of the producers of the Best 50 samples is published at this point without connecting them with the blind codes. The producers of these Best 50 samples are invited to send a series of short videos and photos presenting the sample producers and/or cooperatives in the cacao farms. These videos and photos are used for the Awards celebrations.

9.3 Evaluation of the Best 50 samples processed into chocolate

The Best 50 samples are processed into a dark chocolate with the same recipe (see below) and evaluated blindly by a broader panel of about 35 professionals, including the Technical Committee and additional chocolate makers, bean buyers and experts in sensory evaluation.

Chocolate Recipe and Characteristics

% Cacao Nibs	61.00
% Deodorised Cacao Butter	5.00
% Sugar (sugar cane)	33.65
% Soya lecithin	0.35
% Total	100
% Total Cacao	66
Ratio Cacao Mass (nibs) / sugar	1.81
Chocolate fineness	14 - 18 μ



9.4 Selection of the 2023 Cacao of Excellence Gold, Silver and Bronze Awards

The quantitative sensory evaluation data is analysed to select the Cacao of Excellence Gold, Silver or Bronze Awards (honourable distinction, without money value) representing the four cacao-producing regions ((1) Africa & the Indian Ocean, (2) Asia & the Pacific, (3) Central America & the Caribbean and (4) South America). At the time of the celebrations, contact information of the producers and the flavour profile of the bean sample processed and evaluated as chocolate is made public on the Cacao of Excellence website. Information on samples not selected is kept confidential and shared only with the individual producers and in some cases the National Organisation Committees.

9.5 Feedback to cacao sample producers and National Organisation Committees

Following the Awards celebrations, individual and confidential Feedback Reports are sent to all participating producers (see data in **Annex C**). The report includes the results of the evaluation of the physical bean qualities, the liquor sensory evaluation and in the case of the Best 50, the chocolate sensory evaluation. The detailed feedback can be useful to producers when interacting with potential bean buyers and chocolate makers. For samples with defects, recommendations may be provided when identified to a specific post-harvest process.



Annex A. Quotas of Cacao Bean Samples per Origin

Basic Quota Calculations

ICCO 2021-2022 Production Forecast	Basic Quota
More than 50,000 Mt	7
5,000-49,999 Mt	5
1,000-4,999 Mt	4
Less than 1,000 Mt	3
No ICCO data	3
Number of ICA or Gold Awards received in 2013-2015-2017-2019-2021 Editions	Additional Samples
1	+1
2 or more	+2

Quotas of Cacao Bean Sample per Origin & Region

Origin / Region	Basic quota	ICA 2013	ICA 2015	ICA 2017	ICA 2019	Gold 2021	Additional Samples	2023 Quota
Africa & the Indian Ocean							Total :	118
1. Benin	3							3
2. Cameroon	7							7
3. Central African Republic	3							3
4. Congo, Rep. of	5							5
5. Congo, Dem. Rep. of	5							5
6. Côte d'Ivoire	7	2	2		1		2	9
7. Equatorial Guinea	3							3
8. Gabon	3							3
9. Gambia	3							3
10. Ghana	7	1	1	1	1		2	9
11. Guinea	5							5
12. Kenya	3							3
13. La Réunion	3							3
14. Liberia	5							5
15. Madagascar	5	1		1	2	1	2	7
16. Mauritius	3							3
17. Nigeria	7							7
18. Rwanda	3							3
19. Sao Tome and Principe	4							4
20. Sierra Leone	5			1			1	6
21. Tanzania	5			1	1		2	7
22. Togo	5	1	1			2	2	7
23. Uganda	5							5
24. Zambia	3							3



Origin / Region	Basic quota	ICA 2013	ICA 2015	ICA 2017	ICA 2019	Gold 2021	Additional Samples	2023 Quota
Asia & the Pacific							Total :	98
25. Australia	3			1			1	4
26. Cambodia	3							3
27. China	3					1	1	4
28. Fiji	3				1		1	4
29. French Polynesia	3							3
30. Hawaii	3		1	2	1	1	2	5
31. India	5			1			1	6
32. Indonesia	7		1			1	2	9
33. Laos	3							3
34. Malaysia	3	2		1	1	1	2	5
35. Myanmar	3							3
36. Papua New Guinea	5		1				1	6
37. Papua New Guinea – Autonomous Region of Bougainville (AROB)	3					1	1	4
38. Philippines	5				1	2	2	7
39. Samoa	3							3
40. Solomon Islands	5		1				1	6
41. Sri Lanka	3							3
42. Taiwan	3				1	1	2	5
43. Thailand	3							3
44. Timor-Leste	3							3
45. Vanuatu	4							4
46. Viet Nam	4	1			1		2	6
Central America & the Caribbean							Total :	91
47. Belize	3				1		1	4
48. Costa Rica	3	1					1	4
49. Cuba	4							4
50. Dominica	4			1			1	5
51. Dominican Republic	7	1			1		2	9
52. El Salvador	3			1			1	4
53. Grenada	3							3
54. Guadeloupe	3							3
55. Guatemala	3			2		1	2	5
56. Haiti	4							4
57. Honduras	4	1	1				2	6
58. Jamaica	3							3
59. Martinique	3			1			1	4
60. Mexico	5					1	1	6
61. Nicaragua	5		1				1	6
62. Panama	4							4



Origin / Region	Basic quota	ICA 2013	ICA 2015	ICA 2017	ICA 2019	Gold 2021	Additional Samples	2023 Quota
63. Puerto Rico	3							3
64. Saint Kitts and Nevis	3							3
65. Saint Lucia	3							3
66. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	3				1		1	4
67. Trinidad and Tobago	3	1	2		2		2	5
South America							Total :	58
68. Bolivia	4	1	2	1	1	1	2	6
69. Brazil	7			1		1	2	9
70. Colombia	7		1		1		2	9
71. Ecuador	7		2	1	1		2	9
72. French Guiana	3							3
73. Guyana	3							3
74. Peru	7	1		1		1	2	9
75. Suriname	3							3
76. Venezuela	5	1			1		2	7
Grand Total:								365



Annex B. Example of the Excel Data Form for Each Sample

The Data Form can be downloaded on the Cacao of Excellence website: www.cacaofexcellence.org

Description of the data
A. Sample Information
Origin of the sample:
Sample number: Identification of the cacao bean sample by the producer or National Organisation Committee
Type of sample: <i>Commercial or Experimental?</i>
If experimental, what type of sample? <i>Accession in genebank, Local native variety, New processing method, Other</i>
If other type of experimental sample, please describe.
B. Sample Producer
Type of producer: <i>Individual producer, Producer association, Cooperative, Research station, Private estate, Other</i>
Name and last name of the individual producer
Name of cooperative, association, Research station, Private estate or other
How many represented. How many men, how many women ?
Location of the farm or plantation: local/ street address, town, district, region
Location of the farm or plantation, GPS latitude coordinates (example, 10.1234):
Location of the farm or plantation, GPS longitude coordinates (example, -100.1234):
C. Contact details of the producer
The producer contact for the sample should be the producer themselves or an authorized contact.
Type of producer contact: <i>Individual producer of the sample, Representative of cooperative/ association etc., Producer's relative, Neighbour, Other</i>
Producer contact first and last name
Contact person email address and phone number
D. Sample Sender - Person responsible for submitting the sample to Cacao of Excellence
Date information sent (dd/mm/yyyy)
Sender first a and last name
Sender email and phone number
Sender organization
Comments on the sender
E. For samples that represent one producer: household and income sources
Size of the household - how many people are included in the household? How many men? How many women?
How many members of the household are involved in the cacao production activities?
How many people are employed to work in the cacao production activities?
Does the household have other income generating activities besides cacao production? <i>Which activities ?</i>
What would be an approximate percentage of income derived from cacao production activity?
Are you part of a producer association or cooperative? Please provide the name
F. Description of the farm and agricultural practices
Size of the farm from which the sample was obtained, in hectares (ha)
Plot(s) number on the farm represented by the sample (if available)
Density of cacao trees on the farm where the sample came from (trees/ha)
Productivity of the farm where the sample came from (Kg dried beans/ha/year)
If commercial sample, what is the quantity of beans (tonnes/year) of the same origin that can be reproduced with similar quality in following years?



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Description of the data
Average age of the trees from which the sample was obtained (years)
Start and end of the dry season (month of the year)
Start and end of the main harvesting period (month of the year)
Type of farming practices: <i>Traditional management, Intensive plantation, Agroforestry system, Other</i>
Type of certification: <i>None, Certified organic, Rainforest Alliance, UTZ, Fairtrade, Others</i>
Use of fertilizer? If yes please specify
Use of pesticides? If yes please specify what products
Use of permanent shade trees? If yes, name of dominant shade tree species.
G. Genetic origin of the sample and propagation technics
Local name(s) of cacao variety
Dominating genetic origin of variety: <i>Criollo (as anciently cultivated or similar), Trinitario, Forastero, Nacional, Other type</i>
If a cross, what are the names of the parents (mother x father)?
If experimental sample, describe the genetic origin.
Type of tree propagation technique mainly used: <i>Seed, Graft, Other</i>
If grafted, what is the rootstock (if known)?
If grafted, what type of grafting is used: <i>Top graft, Patch bud graft, Graft on mature tree, Other</i>
H. Information on the fermentation process and timing for the sample
When was the fermentation started for this sample? (dd/mm/yyyy)
Where was the sample fermented? <i>On-farm, At Cooperative or association post-harvest center, On experimental station, Other</i>
Time between harvest and pod breaking (in days)
Pre-drying of wet beans before fermentation? <i>Yes / No</i>
Weight of cacao sample collected for fermentation (Kg wet beans)
Duration of fermentation (days)
Fermentation carried out in: <i>Wooden boxes, Heaps, In bags, Other</i>
Estimated weight of fermentation mass in 1 box, heap or bag (Kg wet beans).
Number of turns during fermentation.
Number of days after fermentation started when beans were turned (days).
Were any aromatic materials, fruit pulp or juice added? <i>Yes / No</i>
Note that samples from modified or artificial fermentations with addition of flavour material, fruit pulp or juices are not accepted.
EXPERIMENTAL SAMPLE ONLY - If micro-fermentation was done: weight of wet beans in netted bags placed in a fermentation mass (Kg wet beans)
EXPERIMENTAL SAMPLE ONLY - If micro-fermentation: weight of total cacao mass (Kg wet beans)
Fermentation method: The method described is how it is usually done in the region? If not, what is the main difference?
I. Information on the drying process and timing for the sample
When was the drying of the sample initiated? (dd/mm/yyyy)
Where was the sample dried? <i>On-farm, At Cooperative or association post-harvest center, On experimental station, Other</i>
Drying method(s) applied to this sample:
Direct sun drying - <i>Yes / No</i>
Indirect sun drying (e.g. ventilated tunnel, greenhouse type) - <i>Yes / No</i>
Artificial drying (or "mechanical" or "forced" drying) - <i>Yes / No</i>
If use of a combination of drying methods is used, please specify



Description of the data
Provide details below on the relevant drying method(s) used for the bean sample.
Direct sun drying: Duration of direct sun drying process (days)
Direct sun drying: What type of surface was the sample dried on? <i>Side of road/asphalt, Cement Floor, Wood, Bamboo, Metal, Other</i>
Direct sun drying: If other type of surface, please specify
Direct sun drying: Thickness of bean layer on the drying surface (cm)
Indirect sun drying: Duration of indirect sun drying (days)?
Indirect sun drying: What type of surface was the sample dried on? <i>Cement Floor, Wood, Bamboo, Metal, Other</i>
Indirect sun drying: If other, please specify
Indirect sun drying: Thickness of bean layer on the drying surface (cm)
Indirect sun drying: Please describe the construction of the solar dryer.
Artificial drying ("mechanical" or "forced"): Duration of artificial drying (days)?
Artificial drying: Thickness of the bean layer (cm)
Artificial drying: Type of dryer used: <i>Tray and fire, Samoa type, Other</i>
Artificial drying: If other type of drier, which?
Artificial drying: Source of heat used: <i>Wood, Waste, Gas, Fuel, Others</i>
Artificial drying: If other sources of heat used, please specify
Duration of total drying process (days), calculated from answers above
Drying method(s): The method described is how it is usually done in the region? If not, what is the main difference?
J. Physical quality evaluation of the bean samples and storage
Has a cut test been done? <i>Yes / No</i>
If yes provide the % of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • slaty beans • violet beans/not fermented • violet-brown beans/semi-fermented • brown beans
Moisture content of beans (%)
Temperature and relative humidity of sample storage's place (degrees Celsius °C)
Any pest control carried out during storage? <i>Yes / No</i>
K. Other comments
Add any comments on sample if needed



Annex C. Data included in the Feedback Report

	Data
1.	CoEx Sample Code
2.	Date of Report
3.	Origin
4.	Region
5.	Producer
6.	Results: Liquor, Best 50, or Award
7.	Background – key figures 2023 Edition
8.	Purpose
	Producer – Contact details
9.	Full name
10.	Type
11.	Contact person
12.	Phone of contact person
13.	E-mail of contact person
	Location of the Farm
14.	Address
15.	Town
16.	District
17.	Region
18.	Country/origin
19.	GPS latitude coordinate
20.	GPS longitude coordinate
	Sample sender – Contact details
21.	Name
22.	Organisation
23.	Phone
24.	E-mail
25.	National Organisation Committee (NOC) Contact details
	Shipment history of bean samples
26.	Date of reception – at Cacao of Excellence c/o the Alliance of Bioersivity International and CIAT, Rome, Italy
27.	Date of start of physical assessment and transformation in the Cacao of Excellence lab.
	Description of the farm and agricultural practices
28.	Size of the farm (ha)
29.	Productivity (Kg dried beans/ha/year)
30.	Type of farming practices
	Genetic origin and sample type
31.	Weight of sample sent (g)
32.	Dominating genetic origin
33.	Local name of cacao variety
34.	Type of sample (commercial / experimental)
35.	If commercial, estimated production volume in coming years (tonnes/year)

	Data
	Fermentation
36.	Date
37.	Duration (days)
38.	Method used
39.	Container type
40.	First turn
41.	Total number of turns
42.	Total weight of fermentation mass (kg)
	Drying
43.	Date
44.	Duration (days)
45.	Method used
46.	Specific type
47.	Thickness of the drying bean layer (cm)
	Storage conditions
48.	Temperature (°C)
49.	Relative Humidity (%)
50.	Pest control during storage
	Whole unroasted beans
51.	External bean aroma
52.	External bean appearance
53.	Bean count (/100g)
54.	Average weight per bean (g)
55.	Cleaning loss (%)
56.	Moisture content (%)
	Cut beans
57.	Link to cut test photos
58.	Cut test aroma
59.	Cut test appearance
60.	% purple / violet
61.	% partly purple
62.	% light brown
63.	% medium brown
64.	% dark brown
65.	% mouldy
66.	% slaty
67.	% internally infested
	Internal bean fissuring
68.	Fissuring grade 1 (%)
69.	Fissuring grade 2 (%)
70.	Fissuring grade 3 (%)
71.	Fissuring grade 4 (%)
	Roasting conditions for processing into liquor
72.	Temperature (°C)
73.	Time (minutes)
74.	Nibs' yield (%)



Data

	Liquor characteristics
75.	Cacao butter content (%)
76.	Liquor fineness (µm)
	Cacao liquor sensory evaluation
77.	Cacao
78.	Acidity
79.	Bitterness
80.	Astringency
81.	Fresh Fruit
82.	Browned Fruit
83.	Floral
84.	Woody
85.	Spice
86.	Nutty
87.	Caramel / panela
88.	Roast Degree
89.	Off-flavours
90.	Global Quality
91.	Off-flavours detected
92.	Key sub-attributes
93.	Comments on flavour
94.	Comments on post-harvest
	Chocolate sensory evaluation (for Best 50)
95.	Cacao
96.	Acidity
97.	Bitterness
98.	Astringency
99.	Fresh Fruit
100.	Browned Fruit
101.	Floral
102.	Woody
103.	Spice
104.	Nutty
105.	Caramel / panela
106.	Sweetness
107.	Roast Degree
108.	Off-flavours
109.	Global Quality
110.	Off-flavours detected
111.	Key sub-attributes
112.	Chocolate flavour profile description
113.	Cacao of Excellence Award (Gold, Silver, Bronze – where applicable)
114.	Speech made by chocolatier/international expert at the Awards celebration – Gold Awards
115.	Annex 3B. – Overview image of cut test
116.	Annex 3C. – Evaluated and labelled cut test photos of beans



Annex D. Check List to be Included with Samples

Each cacao bean sample shipment/package should be accompanied by the verified Checklist below to ensure that all requirements are met. The Checklist can be downloaded on the Cacao of Excellence website: www.cacaoofexcellence.org

Requirements for accepting samples	(✓)
Eligibility of samples	
1. All samples are a minimum of 5 Kg of fermented and dried cacao beans.	
2. A safety duplicate sample of 5 Kg is stored and available until December 2023.	
3. No samples are prepared by modified or artificial fermentations, i.e., flavour material, fruit pulp or juices added to the fermentation.	
4. No more than 1 sample per producer is submitted.	
5. No samples are submitted by previous winners of a Cacao of Excellence Gold Award in 2021 or an International Cacao Awards in earlier editions	
6. The number of samples submitted does not exceed the quota allocated to the samples' origin.	
7. No more than 30% of the total number of samples are experimental.	
8. All bean samples comply with the Minimum Physical Quality Requirements and Selection Criteria.	
9. Registration fees of 100 USD were paid following the instructions in the 2023 guide.	
Documents and shipping	
10. Samples are prepared and shipped following the instructions in section 8 of the Guide for Participation.	
11. A symbolic package value of maximum 5 USD for customs is indicated, even if the package contains several samples. If no value or another value is indicated you will be required to pay custom charges.	
12. The contents indicated are samples of fermented and dried cacao beans without commercial value / for research purpose only.	
13. All required information about the samples is completed in the Excel Data Form.	
14. A completed Excel Data Form for each sample is sent via email to Andrew Meter (a.meter@cgiar.org)	
15. A printed copy of the completed Excel Data Form is enclosed in the shipment for each sample.	
16. The courier is informed that reception of samples at the Cacao of Excellence Lab in Rome, Italy is restricted to Mondays to Fridays from 9:00 to 17:00 Rome time.	
17. An email has been sent to Andrew Meter (a.meter@cgiar.org), with the following information: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Name and contact details of the sender b. Date of shipment c. Name of courier d. Courier's tracking number e. Completed Excel Data Form for each sample 	
18. Any photos associated to samples are sent to Andrew Meter (a.meter@cgiar.org) through WeTransfer	
19. This Checklist is enclosed in the package(s) containing the samples.	





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