



## What are the Cacao of Excellence Awards?

The Cacao of Excellence Awards are an international system for evaluating and recognising high-quality cacao. They bring together samples from producing countries around the world and assess them under standardised conditions so flavour differences reflect farming and post-harvest practices rather than processing variation.

Each edition follows a structured cycle that takes approximately 18 months, from receiving cacao samples to final evaluation. During this period, samples are processed, analysed, transformed into chocolate using a shared protocol, and assessed blindly by an international panel of experts in sensory science, cacao research, and chocolate making. The process culminates in the identification of the Best 50 cacaos, presented as individual chocolates in the Cacao of Excellence Treasure Box.

National Organisation Committees coordinate local selection processes where possible, while producers in other countries submit samples directly. This creates a recurring global system linking local competitions to international evaluation and visibility.

The purpose of the Awards is not promotion alone. They function as a global reference point for cacao quality and as a gateway to international market recognition. By documenting flavour, biodiversity, and producer skill, the process helps farmers access buyers seeking differentiated cacao and supports a shift toward quality-driven markets. For producers, recognition increases visibility and opens conversations that would otherwise be difficult to initiate. For buyers and researchers, the Awards provide a shared framework for understanding quality across origins.

In this sense, the Awards operate as infrastructure: a repeatable system that connects farms, laboratories, jurors, and markets into a shared language of quality.