



CARICOM REGIONAL STANDARD

**Voluntary Sustainability Standard for
cocoa products and chocolate –
Requirements**

DCRS 87:202X

Public Comments - Deadline August 31, 2026



CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ)

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ISBN xxx-xxx-xxx-xx-x
ICS xx.2xxx

AMENDMENTS ISSUED SINCE PUBLICATION

AMENDMENT NO.	DATE OF ISSUE	TYPE OF AMENDMENT	NO. OF TEXT AFFECTED	TEXT OF AMENDMENT

Public Comments - Deadline August 31, 2026

ATTACHMENT PAGE FOR CRS AMENDMENT SHEETS

Public Comments - Deadline August 31, 2026

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Public Comments - Deadline August 31, 2026

Foreword

This CARICOM Regional Standard CDCRS 87:202X has been developed under the authority of the CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ). It was approved as a CARICOM Regional Standard by the CARICOM Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) at its XX Meeting in MM YYYY.

This CARICOM Regional Standard is one of two standards that are outputs of the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) Project entitled “Supporting quality and regulatory infrastructure, value chain specific quality infrastructure services and quality culture promotion in the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States”. The objective of this project is: ‘to increase the economic and social impact from ACP participation in the multi-lateral trading system’. Specifically, ‘this is expected to be achieved through increased competitiveness of SMEs and their products on the local, regional and international markets, increased ACP consumer safety, and increased contribution of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (OACPS) to the operation of the multi-lateral trading system’. In this case, the development of the Voluntary Sustainability Standard for Cocoa Products and Chocolate is the vehicle to meet the objectives.

This standard establishes minimum requirements for sustainability in the production of cocoa products and chocolate, and supports proportionate implementation by entities of different sizes and capacities, including micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. It provides for progressive conformity through defined levels of implementation, including basic compliance, improved practice and advanced or export-ready practice. It also supports value creation for fine flavour cocoa through the preservation of origin identity, product quality, traceability and market differentiation.

CARICOM cocoa industries are diverse in scale, terrain, soil conditions, climate, infrastructure, labour availability and export readiness. These differences are reflected across producing Member States, including Belize, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada, Saint Lucia, Dominica, Guyana and Suriname. Implementation of this standard should therefore be proportionate to the size, risk profile, market destination and resource capacity of the producer, while maintaining minimum requirements for food safety, legality, traceability, ethical conduct and environmental responsibility.

Caribbean cocoa and chocolate occupy a distinctive market position based on fine flavour cocoa, origin identity, cultural heritage, biodiversity, smallholder and community-based production, and craft processing. This standard supports the protection and enhancement of these attributes by promoting sustainable practices that strengthen product quality, market differentiation and value creation.

This standard looks at the steps along the value chain following on from the production of sustainable and traceable cocoa beans as presented in the ISO 34101 series. It sets out the requirements for the production of sustainable Cocoa Products and Chocolate. It guides economic, social and environmental requirements to be met by an entity desirous of meeting the standard and outlines the basic food hygiene and quality assurance requirements.

The application of this standard would allow the producer to be in the position to inform end users or consumers of the sustainability dimensions of the Cocoa products and Chocolate produced, for information and for economic benefit.

There is a growing desire for sustainable products in various markets of the world, particularly the European Union, the UK and North America. Producers of cocoa products and chocolate in CARICOM Member States may benefit economically from the production and sale of sustainable Cocoa Products in these markets, especially in Europe, which makes up the largest market for certified cocoa.

Production and sale of sustainable products are in keeping with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This standard is expected to meet a number of the UN SDGs including numbers, including:

- SDG 1 - No Poverty
- SDG 2 - Zero Hunger
- SDG 3- Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 5- Gender Equality
- SDG 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy
- SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth
- SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities
- SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production
- SDG 13 – Climate Action
- SDG 15 – Life on Land

In formulating this standard considerable assistance was derived from the following publications which were still current when this standard was being developed:

International Organization for Standardization (ISO)

ISO 14001:2026, *Environmental management systems - Requirements with guidance for use*

ISO 26000:2010, *Guidance on social responsibility*

ISO/TS 26030:2019, *Social responsibility and sustainable development — Guidance on using ISO 26000:2010 in the food chain.*

ISO 37000:2021, *Governance of organizations - Guidance*

CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ)

CRS 34:2018, *Cocoa and chocolate products - Specification*

Rainforest Alliance

Rainforest Alliance Supply Chain Requirements v1.5

Fairtrade International

Fairtrade Standard for Cocoa 27.09.2023 v.2.14

1 Scope

This standard establishes the requirements for basic food safety practices and sustainability measures for cocoa products and chocolate in CARICOM Member States, for the production of cocoa nibs, cocoa butter, cocoa products and chocolate to be used for both food and non-food purposes.

EXAMPLE Cocoa powder, cocoa sticks and balls, cocoa butter blends and lotions, chocolate bars, truffles, chocolate powder and chocolate drinks.

This standard does not apply to:

- a) raw, unfermented or unprocessed cocoa beans, wet or dry;
- b) fermented, dried or roasted whole beans; and
- c) other products, food or non-food where the cocoa is used only as a flavouring.

This standard establishes requirements for basic food safety practices and sustainability measures for cocoa products and chocolate in CARICOM Member States.

This standard applies to intermediate cocoa products, finished cocoa products and chocolate intended for food and non-food purposes, including cocoa nibs, cocoa liquor, cocoa butter, cocoa powder, couverture, cocoa sticks, cocoa balls, chocolate bars, truffles, chocolate drinks, cocoa butter blends and lotions.

This standard also applies to origin-labelled, single-estate, community-produced, geographical indication-linked and fine flavour cocoa products and chocolate.

NOTE Where products are intended for non-food use, relevant cosmetic, consumer safety, labelling or other applicable regulatory requirements apply in addition to this standard.

This standard does not apply to:

- a) raw, unfermented or unprocessed cocoa beans, wet or dry;
- b) fermented, dried or roasted whole beans; and
- c) other products, food or non-food, where cocoa is used only as a flavouring.

2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this standard. Some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ)

- CRCP 5:2010, Code of practice for general principles of food hygiene
- CRS 34:2018, Cocoa and chocolate - Specification

Codex Alimentarius

- CAC/RCP 72, Code of Practice for the prevention and reduction of Ochratoxin - A Contamination in Cocoa

3 Terms and definitions

For the purpose of this document the following terms and definitions apply.

3.1

community cocoa

cocoa sourced from a collective group of neighbouring smallholder farmers, a specific village, or an organised agricultural cooperative

3.2

deforestation-free cocoa

cocoa produced on land that has not been subjected to deforestation or forest degradation after a scientifically or legally specified cut-off date

3.3

designated

to choose someone officially to do a particular job or something for a particular use

3.4

energy efficiency

ratio or other quantitative relationship between an output of performance, service, goods, commodities, or energy, and an input of energy

Note 1 to entry: Both input and output should be clearly specified in terms of quantity and quality and be measurable.

[SOURCE: ISO 50001:2018, *Energy Management Systems. requirements with Guidance for Use*]

3.5

environment

surroundings in which an organization operates, including air, water, land, natural resources, flora, fauna, humans and their interrelationships

Note 1 to entry: Surroundings can extend from within an organization to the local, regional and global system.

Note 2 to entry: Surroundings can be described in terms of biodiversity, ecosystems, climate or other characteristics

[SOURCE: ISO 14001:2026, *Environmental Management Systems. Requirements with guidance for use*]

3.6

employee

individual in a relationship recognized as an “employment relationship” in national law or practice

[SOURCE: ISO 26000:2018, *Guidance on Social Responsibility*]

3.7

estate cocoa

highly specific sub-category of single-origin cocoa where 100% of the beans are harvested and processed on a single, independently managed farm or plantation

3.8

ethical conduct

A way that is morally right or relates to moral principles

3.9**fine flavour cocoa**

characterised by a complex sensory profile, composed of well-balanced core attributes with complementary, aromatic and flavour notes which are clearly perceived and identified

3.10**organisation**

entity or group of people and facilities with an arrangement of responsibilities, authorities and relationships and identifiable objectives

[SOURCE: ISO 26000:2018, *Guidance on Social Responsibility*]

3.11**personnel**

organisation's (3.3) directors, officers, employees, temporary staff or workers, and volunteers

[SOURCE: ISO 37001:2016, 3.25, modified — Notes 1 and 2 to entry have been deleted.]

3.12**requirement**

need or expectation that is stated, generally implied or obligatory

[SOURCE: ISO 14001:2015, *Environmental Management Systems. Requirements with guidance for use*]

3.13**single origin cocoa**

cocoa beans sourced entirely from one specific geographic region or country, never blended with beans from other parts of the world

3.14**stakeholders**

individual or group that has an interest in any decision or activity of an organization

[SOURCE: ISO 26000:2018, *Guidance on Social Responsibility*]

3.15**sustainable cocoa**

Cocoa production that meets present economic needs without compromising the ecological health of the land or the social well-being of future generations.

Note to entry: True sustainability relies on a "triple bottom line":

- **Economic:** Fair pricing that provides farmers a living income.
- **Social:** Strict prohibition of forced or child labour, ensuring safe working conditions.
- **Environmental:** Promoting biodiversity through agroforestry (growing cocoa under a canopy of native shade trees) rather than intensive monoculture.

3.16**sustainability**

state of the global system, including environmental, social and economic aspects, in which the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

Note 1 to entry: The environmental, social and economic aspects interact, are interdependent and are often referred to as the three dimensions of sustainability.

Note 2 to entry: Sustainability is the goal of sustainable development.

[SOURCE: ISO 82:2019. *Guidelines for addressing sustainability in standards*]

3.17

traceable

ability to track the movement of cocoa forward through the supply chain (from farm to chocolate bar) and backward (from chocolate bar back to the exact point of harvest)

3.18

workers

person who performs work, whether an employee or someone who is self-employed

[SOURCE: ISO 26000:2018, *Guidance on Social Responsibility*]

4 Good manufacturing practices

4.1 General requirements

Producers of cocoa products and chocolate shall implement good manufacturing practices appropriate to the size, nature and risk of the operation.

Producers shall:

a) ensure that workers involved in the production of cocoa products and chocolate maintain good personal hygiene, including:

1. washing hands before work, after eating, after using the bathroom and when contamination may occur;
2. wearing clean clothing and suitable hair covering during processing;
3. avoiding handling or processing activities when ill or when symptoms may affect product safety; and
4. using appropriate personal protective equipment;

b) ensure that cocoa products and chocolate are produced in a clean environment, using clean containers, food-contact tools and equipment;

c) ensure that equipment, food-contact tools and containers are cleaned, sanitized, stored and inspected in a manner that prevents contamination;

d) implement cleaning schedules and maintain simple cleaning records;

e) implement pest control measures appropriate to the production area;

f) control glass, brittle plastic and similar materials where breakage may contaminate products;

g) prevent deterioration, mixing, substitution, cross-contact or contamination of raw materials, intermediate products, finished products and packaging materials;

h) identify and control allergens, including milk, nuts, soy or lecithin, gluten-containing ingredients and products processed on shared equipment;

- i) maintain appropriate processing times and temperatures;
- j) verify sanitation, where appropriate, using visual inspection or other suitable methods;
- k) check or calibrate key measuring equipment, including thermometers, scales and moisture meters;
- l) store raw materials, intermediate products, finished products and packaging materials in a manner that maintains product safety, quality and hygiene;
- m) maintain traceability of cocoa materials and products through receiving, processing, storage and distribution; and
- n) manage waste, wastewater and cleaning chemicals in a manner that prevents risks to human health, food safety and the environment.

4.2 Additional food safety and quality requirements

Producers should:

- a) comply with the relevant requirements of CRCP 5, General Principles of Food Hygiene;
- b) apply relevant measures from CAC/RCP 72 for the prevention and reduction of Ochratoxin A contamination in cocoa;
- c) ensure that cocoa products and chocolate comply with the requirements for food additives and contaminants in CRS 34;
- d) assess potential risks of deliberate product contamination or tampering and implement appropriate food defence measures;
- e) assess potential risks of economically motivated adulteration and implement appropriate food fraud controls;
- f) obtain purchased raw materials from approved suppliers;
- g) ensure that certified and non-certified materials are identified and segregated, where applicable;
- h) implement due diligence measures to verify the origin, quality and safety of materials;
- i) ensure that rework is controlled and recorded; and
- j) maintain records related to traceability, supplier approval, product movement, cleaning, equipment checks and corrective actions.

NOTE Low-cost records may include batch sheets, cleaning logs, supplier approval forms, thermometer checks, pest inspection records, allergen control records and visual inspection records.

5 Sustainability

5.1 Governance and sustainability management

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5.1.1 Producers should manage sustainability through economic, social and environmental considerations.

5.1.2 Implementation shall be risk-based and proportionate to the size, nature, resource capacity and market destination of the operation.

5.1.3 Producers shall identify the person or persons with responsibility and authority for:

- a) food safety;
- b) product quality;
- c) traceability;
- d) legal compliance; and
- e) sustainability requirements.

NOTE One person may hold several responsibilities, particularly in micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

5.1.4 Producers shall ensure that workers know the person or persons responsible for the processing operation and understand their own roles.

5.1.5 Producers shall establish a sustainability management plan appropriate to the size and risk profile of the operation.

The sustainability management plan shall address, as applicable:

- a) suppliers and purchased materials;
- b) labour practices;
- c) waste management;
- d) water use;
- e) energy use;
- f) community impacts;
- g) climate-related risks; and
- h) legal and market requirements.

NOTE For micro-enterprises, the sustainability management plan may be a simple written plan, checklist or record that identifies key risks, responsible persons and actions to be taken.

5.1.6 Producers shall maintain information on the name, purpose and legal status of the entity, where applicable.

5.1.7 Producers shall maintain records showing the responsible person or persons and their assigned roles.

5.1.8 Producers shall ensure that workers have access to information on their assigned duties and responsibilities.

5.2 Planning and continuity

5.2.1 Producers shall establish and maintain operational procedures to support consistent product quality, food safety, traceability and business continuity.

5.2.2 Producers shall ensure that operational procedures are communicated to workers and are followed during receiving, processing, packaging, storage and distribution.

5.2.3 Producers shall identify risks that may affect continuity of operations, including hurricanes, floods, landslides, drought, water shortages, power outages and port or shipping disruptions.

5.2.4 Producers shall establish a business continuity plan appropriate to the size, nature and risk profile of the operation.

The business continuity plan shall address, as applicable:

- a) hurricane and severe weather preparedness;
- b) backup water and power arrangements;
- c) protection of raw materials, ingredients, packaging materials and finished products;
- d) disaster recovery and protection of records;
- e) alternative suppliers and service providers;
- f) emergency communication with workers, suppliers, customers and relevant authorities;
- g) post-disaster checks for product safety, quality and contamination risks; and
- h) recovery actions for resuming production and distribution.

NOTE Further information on business continuity can be obtained from ISO 22301, *Security and resilience - Business continuity management systems – Requirements*.

5.2.5 Producers shall establish business objectives that support the long-term viability of the entity and meet relevant stakeholder expectations.

5.2.6 Producers shall consider succession planning, participation of younger persons and women, climate and operational resilience, and continual improvement in business planning.

NOTE For micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, the business continuity plan may be a simple written plan, checklist or record identifying key risks, responsible persons, emergency contacts and actions to be taken before, during and after a disruption.

5.3 Legal

5.3.1 Producers shall comply with all applicable national legal and regulatory requirements related to the operation of the business.

5.3.2 Producers shall conduct transactions in a fair and ethical manner.

5.3.3 Producers shall have the legal right to use the processing premises.

5.3.4 Producers shall conduct business in a manner that respects human rights, prohibits child labour, forced labour and discrimination, and promotes safe and fair working conditions.

5.3.5 Producers should:

- a) identify the person responsible for meeting the legal requirements of the business;
- b) conduct business ethically with customers and suppliers in all transactions and negotiations;
- c) identify relevant stakeholders and update the stakeholder listing at planned intervals;
- d) engage relevant stakeholders to establish and review their expectations; and
- e) maintain communication with relevant stakeholders on matters affecting the business.

5.3.6 Export-related due diligence requirements shall be applied where relevant to the intended market.

5.3.7 For local and regional markets, producers should maintain basic legal, traceability and supplier records appropriate to the scale and risk of the operation.

NOTE Exporters may need to consider relevant market access, due diligence or sustainability-related requirements in the intended export market. These may include, for example, requirements related to deforestation, traceability, geo-location data, supplier verification, human rights and corporate sustainability due diligence.

5.4 Staffing

5.4.1 Producers shall ensure that competent and adequately trained personnel are available in numbers appropriate to the size and complexity of the operation.

5.4.2 Producers should:

- a) document competency and training requirements for personnel;
- b) provide training relevant to assigned responsibilities and maintain training records;
- c) ensure that personnel understand food safety, traceability, environmental and workplace health and safety requirements relevant to their roles; and
- d) use, where available, recognised national, regional or institutional training programmes, including those provided by bureaus of standards, universities, ministries, extension services, cooperatives or industry organisations.

5.5 Responsibility

5.5.1 Producers shall assign responsibility and authority for the safety, quality and traceability of cocoa products and chocolate, and for the social, economic and environmental impacts of the operation.

5.5.2 Producers shall ensure that responsibility includes claims made on labels, packaging, documentation and marketing materials.

5.5.3 Claims shall be accurate, verifiable and supported by appropriate records.

NOTE Claims may relate to sustainability, origin, fine flavour, organic production, fair trading practices, regenerative practices, climate-smart production, deforestation-free production or other product attributes.

5.5.4 Producers should maintain policies, procedures or records appropriate to the size and risk of the operation to demonstrate management commitment and accountability.

6 Economic (operations) requirements

6.1 Production

6.1.1 Producers shall ensure that production meets defined product specifications and customer requirements.

6.1.2 Producers shall plan and supervise operations to ensure the production of safe, sustainable and commercially viable cocoa products and chocolate.

6.1.3 Producers shall ensure that equipment used for production and processing is suitable for the intended purpose.

6.1.4 Producers shall develop and apply documented formulations, recipes or processing methods for cocoa products and chocolate.

6.1.5 Producers shall control recipe versions and ensure that changes to formulations, ingredients, allergens, processing steps or product claims are recorded.

6.1.6 Producers shall use standard operating procedures where food safety, traceability, allergen management, product quality or critical processing controls are involved.

6.1.7 Producers shall identify each production batch using a batch code or equivalent system that enables traceability from raw materials to finished products.

6.1.8 Producers shall maintain production records for each batch, including, as applicable:

- a) raw material or bean lot identification;
- b) formulation or recipe version;
- c) processing date;
- d) processing parameters;
- e) allergen information;
- f) packaging materials used;
- g) batch code;
- h) yield or quantity produced; and
- i) person responsible for production.

6.1.9 Producers shall establish a procedure for product withdrawal or recall where a product presents, or may present, a risk to food safety, legality or consumer protection.

6.1.10 Producers shall establish the basis for product shelf-life, taking into account product type, ingredients, packaging, storage conditions and available product safety or quality information.

6.1.11 For fine flavour cocoa products and chocolate, producers shall apply sensory quality control appropriate to the size and risk of the operation.

6.1.12 Sensory quality control shall include, as applicable:

- a) basic flavour evaluation;
- b) screening for defects;
- c) control of roast profile or other flavour-critical processing steps; and
- d) records linking bean lots to finished product flavour characteristics.

NOTE Production records may include simple batch sheets, recipe cards, roast logs, sensory notes, packaging records and finished product release records.

6.2 Training

6.2.1 Producers shall provide training to workers relevant to their assigned responsibilities.

6.2.2 Training shall include, as applicable:

- a) food safety and hygiene;
- b) allergen awareness;
- c) traceability procedures;
- d) safe equipment use;
- e) cleaning and sanitation;
- f) labelling requirements;
- g) workplace health and safety;
- h) environmental practices;
- i) use of equipment and standard operating procedures;
- j) product handling and storage; and
- k) basic sustainability recordkeeping.

6.2.3 Producers shall ensure that only workers with appropriate training or supervision are involved in the production of cocoa products and chocolate.

6.2.4 Producers should maintain records of worker training and development activities.

NOTE Training may be provided through internal instruction, on-the-job training, coaching, recognised programmes, extension services, cooperatives, industry associations, ministries, universities or bureaus of standards.

6.3 Contracts

- 6.3.1 Producers shall ensure that contracts or supply agreements with suppliers are documented.
- 6.3.2 Producers shall conduct transactions with suppliers, buyers and consumers in a fair and transparent manner.
- 6.3.3 Producers shall follow fair operating practices.
- 6.3.4 Producers shall ensure that the terms and conditions for supplying products are defined and met.
- 6.3.5 Buyers should ensure that prices are fair and based on agreed market arrangements, supply, demand and product quality.
- 6.3.6 Pricing practices should, where feasible, consider cost of production, quality, origin, fine flavour attributes, traceability, sustainability performance and the need to support viable livelihoods for cocoa producers.

NOTE Value in Caribbean fine flavour cocoa markets may be linked to quality, rarity, origin identity, cultural heritage, traceability and product storytelling, rather than commodity volume alone.

- 6.3.7 Producers shall avoid conflicts of interest that may affect supply agreements.
- 6.3.8 Producers should establish an agreed method to resolve conflicts or disagreements with suppliers and buyers.
- 6.3.9 Producers should document supply agreements to ensure that products are safe for consumers or users and meet agreed product specifications.

6.4 Traceability

- 6.4.1 Producers shall establish and maintain a traceability system appropriate to the size, risk profile and intended market of the operation.
- 6.4.2 Producers shall record, as a minimum, the supplier's name, quantity received, date of receipt and lot number assigned to each lot of raw cocoa beans or cocoa materials received.
- 6.4.3 Producers shall maintain traceability from raw materials to finished products, including batch records for cocoa products and chocolate produced.
- 6.4.4 Producers shall apply one or more of the following traceability models, as applicable:
 - a) basic lot traceability for products intended for local or regional markets;
 - b) segregated or identity-preserved traceability for fine flavour, origin-labelled, single-estate, community-produced or other differentiated product claims; and
 - c) enhanced due diligence traceability for export markets requiring additional evidence, including geolocation, legal origin, supplier verification or deforestation-free information.

6.4.5 Where fine flavour cocoa beans or differentiated cocoa lots are used, producers shall record the lot numbers linked to the cocoa products or chocolate batches produced.

6.4.6 Where different cocoa materials are used, producers shall maintain product separation, as applicable, during:

- a) processing;
- b) storage; and
- c) labelling.

6.4.7 For origin-labelled, fine flavour or niche market products, traceability records should include, where available:

- a) country, community, estate or farm origin;
- b) variety or cocoa type;
- c) fermentation or drying centre;
- d) flavour notes or sensory records;
- e) certificates of analysis or quality records; and
- f) information supporting the origin story or product claim.

NOTE At the time of development of this standard, CROSQ is in the process of developing a CARICOM Regional Standard for fine flavour cocoa beans.

7 Social requirements

7.1 Labour

7.1.1 Producers shall comply with applicable national labour legislation and regulations.

7.1.2 Producers shall pay workers regularly and in accordance with applicable minimum wage requirements.

7.1.3 Producers shall pay national insurance or other statutory contributions, where required by national legislation.

7.1.4 Producers shall comply with national requirements relating to:

- a) the minimum age for workers; and
- b) the conditions under which young workers may perform non-hazardous work.

7.1.5 Producers shall ensure that workers are treated fairly and without discrimination.

7.1.6 Producers shall provide workers with a written contract, job letter or other record of agreed work terms, where applicable.

NOTE For micro and small enterprises, contracts, job letters and labour records may be simplified, provided they show fair terms, wages, working hours, safety requirements and non-discrimination.

7.2 Freedom of association and worker communication

Producers shall respect the right of workers to organize, communicate and raise work-related concerns without retaliation, discrimination or intimidation.

Producers shall, where applicable:

- a) allow workers to join unions or other worker organizations;
- b) allow worker representatives or unions to communicate with workers; and
- c) allow collective bargaining in accordance with national legislation.

7.3 Human rights, child labour, forced labour and non-discrimination

7.3.1 Child labour

Producers shall not use child labour.

Producers shall comply with national legislation relating to the minimum age for employment and the conditions under which young persons may perform non-hazardous work.

Producers shall take reasonable measures to ensure that child labour is not used in the supply of cocoa materials.

7.3.2 Forced labour

Producers shall not use forced, bonded, compulsory or involuntary labour.

Producers shall ensure that workers are free to leave employment in accordance with agreed terms and applicable national legislation.

7.3.3 Non-discrimination and equality

Producers shall not discriminate against workers on the basis of age, race, sex, disability, religion, nationality, social origin, political opinion, sexual orientation or any other status protected by national legislation.

Producers shall support equal opportunity and fair treatment, including equal pay for work of equal value, where applicable.

Producers shall not discriminate against workers because of pregnancy, breastfeeding or family responsibilities.

7.3.4 Violence, harassment and reporting

Producers shall not allow workplace violence, bullying, harassment or sexual harassment.

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Producers shall provide a safe and confidential way for workers to report discrimination, violence, harassment or other work-related concerns.

Reports shall be handled without retaliation, discrimination or intimidation.

Records of reported incidents and actions taken shall be maintained, where applicable.

7.4 Health and safety

7.4.1 Producers shall comply with applicable national occupational safety and health legislation and regulations.

7.4.2 Producers shall provide and maintain, as applicable:

- a) safe drinking water;
- b) a designated eating area;
- c) clean toilets and hand-washing facilities appropriate to the number of workers;
- d) a well-stocked first aid kit;
- e) tools and equipment required for workers to perform their jobs safely;
- f) personal protective equipment required for assigned tasks;
- g) a safe working environment; and
- h) adequate and safe worker housing, where provided.

7.4.3 Producers shall provide workers with training to perform their jobs safely.

7.4.4 Producers shall identify the person responsible for health and safety matters.

7.4.5 Producers shall display or make available emergency contact information, including the person responsible for health and safety, local emergency services, medical facilities and pharmacy, where available.

7.4.6 Producers shall establish health and safety procedures appropriate to the size and risk of the operation.

These procedures shall include, as applicable:

- a) evacuation during hurricanes, floods or other emergencies;
- b) safe shutdown of equipment;
- c) safe storage of fuel, gas and other hazardous materials;
- d) electrical safety checks after flooding or water damage;
- e) control of mould risks after water damage;
- f) safe restart after prolonged power outage; and

g) inspection of the premises, equipment, raw materials, packaging and finished products after a disaster.

7.4.7 Producers should prepare a health and safety plan appropriate to the operation.

The health and safety plan should include emergency response arrangements, first aid arrangements, emergency contacts and responsibilities.

7.4.8 Larger operations should appoint a Health and Safety Officer or establish a Health and Safety Committee, in accordance with national legislation, where applicable.

NOTE For micro and small enterprises, the health and safety plan may be a simple checklist or record covering emergency contacts, evacuation actions, equipment shutdown, first aid, disaster safety checks and corrective actions.

7.5 High risk areas

7.5.1 Producers shall identify areas, activities, equipment and materials that may present a significant risk to worker health and safety.

7.5.2 Producers shall assess risks associated with cocoa and chocolate processing, including, as applicable:

- a) grinders, melangers, winnowers, roasters, presses and other moving equipment;
- b) blades, moving parts, pinch points and crushing hazards;
- c) steam, hot surfaces, heated equipment and high-temperature roasting;
- d) LPG, fuel storage and other flammable materials;
- e) electrical load, wiring, wet areas and power supply interruptions;
- f) noise, dust, fumes and emissions;
- g) manual lifting and handling of cocoa beans, ingredients and finished products;
- h) repetitive strain from manual or repeated processing tasks;
- i) exposure to cleaning chemicals, moulds, pests, pesticide residues or contaminated raw materials; and
- j) risks from poor drying, storage or handling of cocoa materials.

7.5.3 Producers shall implement controls to reduce identified health and safety risks.

7.5.4 Producers shall record work-related health and safety incidents and take corrective action, where required.

NOTE Cocoa and chocolate processing may present risks from noise, moving parts, heat, manual handling, repetitive work, cleaning chemicals, mould, pesticide residues and emissions from high-temperature roasting, including polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons.

7.6 Local communities

7.6.1 Producers shall respect local communities affected by the production of cocoa products and chocolate.

7.6.2 Producers shall assess the potential legal, social, economic, environmental and cultural impacts of the operation on the local community.

7.6.3 Producers shall consult with local communities, where appropriate, on issues affecting community development, livelihoods, culture and the environment.

7.6.4 Producers shall support local participation, where feasible, including youth engagement, women-led enterprises, community-based production, skills development and local employment.

7.6.5 Producers shall purchase locally produced goods and services, where feasible.

7.6.6 Producers should support fair benefit-sharing from origin branding, community identity, cultural heritage, cocoa tourism and other value-creation activities linked to local communities.

7.6.7 Where community narratives are used in labelling, marketing, tourism or fine flavour cocoa promotion, producers shall ensure that such narratives are truthful, respectful and supported by appropriate evidence.

NOTE Evidence-based narratives include marketing materials, packaging labels, and digital content detailing community histories, ancestral farming techniques, or estate folklore should be completely truthful, respectful, and backed by verifiable historical or geographic evidence.

7.6.8 Producers should participate in local community groups or initiatives, where appropriate.

8 Environmental requirements

8.1 Waste

Producers shall:

a) identify, monitor and record waste and by-products generated during the production of cocoa products and chocolate;

b) record waste and by-products by type and quantity, where practicable;

c) reduce, reuse, recycle or recover waste and by-products, where feasible;

d) establish a simple waste management plan based on a circular approach, appropriate to the size and nature of the operation;

e) store and handle non-hazardous and hazardous waste safely in designated areas until disposal or recovery;

f) ensure that wastewater, cleaning chemicals and other potentially hazardous materials are managed in a manner that prevents contamination of products, workers, the community and the environment; and

g) train workers on waste reduction, waste separation and safe handling of waste during processing operations.

Waste and by-products may include cocoa shells, packaging waste, rejected product, wastewater, cleaning chemicals, broken moulds, filters, expired ingredients, pod husks, cacao pulp and bean shells, where applicable.

By-products may be reused or processed for food, feed, cosmetics, compost, fertiliser or energy recovery, where feasible.

NOTE Where by-products are used for food, feed, cosmetics, fertiliser or other purposes, relevant safety, quality and regulatory requirements apply.

8.2 Water

Producers shall:

- a) identify the source and intended use of water in the processing operation;
- b) monitor water use throughout the production process;
- c) use simple monitoring methods, where appropriate, including meter readings, tank volume estimates or cleaning-water logs;
- d) ensure that water used in production is of suitable quality for its intended purpose;
- e) train workers to use water efficiently and minimise water wastage;
- f) monitor and manage wastewater generated during processing;
- g) protect local water sources from contamination by wastewater, cleaning chemicals or other pollutants; and
- h) discharge wastewater in accordance with applicable requirements.

Producers should:

- a) assess water quality and availability from available sources;
- b) take action to maintain a consistent supply of suitable quality water;
- c) consider water harvesting, storage or reuse methods, where feasible;
- d) consider water restrictions that may occur after droughts, hurricanes or other disruptions;
- e) record climatic or operational conditions affecting water availability, where practicable;
- f) treat wastewater before discharge, where required; and
- g) develop a water management plan appropriate to the size, nature and risk profile of the operation.

NOTE For micro and small enterprises, water records may include simple meter readings, tank level estimates, cleaning-water logs, wastewater observations or records of water shortages

8.3 Natural environment

Producers shall:

- a) manage processing operations to prevent or minimise adverse impacts on land, vegetation, forests, biodiversity, air, water sources and the natural environment;
- b) take reasonable and proportionate measures to avoid sourcing cocoa from areas converted from natural forest or legally protected ecosystems after the applicable cut-off date required by national law or the intended export market; and
- c) maintain supplier, origin or traceability records appropriate to the size, risk profile and intended market of the operation.

Producers should:

- a) assess the environmental risks and impacts associated with cocoa processing and chocolate production; and
- b) implement mitigation measures appropriate to the identified risks.

NOTE Reasonable and proportionate measures may include supplier declarations, origin records, farm or community information, purchase records, certificates, inspection records or other available evidence.

8.4 Hazardous products

8.4.1 Producers shall train workers in the safe use, storage, handling and disposal of hazardous products used in processing operations.

8.4.2 Hazardous products may include cleaning chemicals, lubricants, fuels, LPG cylinders, boiler chemicals, pest-control chemicals, laboratory reagents and other chemicals used in the operation.

8.4.3 Producers shall store hazardous products safely and in a manner that prevents contamination of cocoa products, chocolate, packaging materials, workers, the community and the environment.

8.4.4 Producers shall dispose of hazardous waste, including empty containers, in accordance with applicable requirements.

8.4.5 Producers should maintain records of the use, storage and disposal of hazardous products, where applicable.

8.5 Energy

Producers shall:

- a) record electricity and fuel used in the production of cocoa products and chocolate, where practicable;
- b) identify opportunities to reduce energy use during processing, storage and distribution;
- c) use energy-efficient fixtures, equipment or practices, where feasible;
- d) train workers in practices that reduce electricity and fuel consumption; and
- e) maintain equipment to support efficient energy and fuel use.

Producers should:

- a) consider renewable energy sources, where feasible, including solar, wind or biomass;
- b) implement practical actions to reduce energy costs and improve energy efficiency;
- c) establish energy objectives, targets or action plans appropriate to the size and nature of the operation; and
- d) for advanced or export-ready operations, calculate greenhouse gas emissions where required by the intended market, customer or sustainability claim.

NOTE 1 For micro and small enterprises, energy records may include electricity bills, fuel receipts, generator-use logs or equipment maintenance records.

NOTE 2 The ISO 14060 family of standards can assist in the measurement and reporting of greenhouse gas emissions.

8.6 Climate resilience and adaptation

8.6.1 Producers shall identify climate-related risks that may affect the safety, quality, continuity and sustainability of cocoa products and chocolate.

8.6.2 The assessment shall consider Caribbean conditions, including hurricanes, flooding, landslides, drought, heat stress, water shortages, saltwater intrusion, pest and disease pressure, power outages and port or shipping disruptions.

8.6.3 Producers shall implement adaptation measures appropriate to the size, nature, location and risk profile of the operation.

8.6.4 Adaptation measures may include:

- a) improved drainage and flood protection for processing, storage and waste areas;
- b) safe storage of raw materials, packaging materials and finished products before and during severe weather;
- c) water harvesting, water storage or water-use efficiency measures;
- d) backup power arrangements for critical processing, refrigeration, lighting or communication needs;
- e) protection of records, labels, batch information and traceability documents;
- f) maintenance of buildings, roofs, gutters, drains, equipment and storage areas;
- g) post-disaster inspection of premises, equipment, raw materials, packaging and finished products;
- h) alternative supplier, transport or service arrangements; and
- i) worker training on emergency preparedness and safe restart after disruption.

8.6.5 Producers should review climate-related risks and adaptation actions at planned intervals, and after major weather events or operational disruptions.

NOTE For micro and small enterprises, climate resilience and adaptation measures may be recorded in a simple checklist, emergency contact list, business continuity plan or maintenance record.

Annex A (informative)

Simple sustainability checklist for micro and small cocoa/chocolate businesses

This checklist provides simple guidance for micro and small cocoa and chocolate businesses to assess basic sustainability practices. It may be used as a self-check tool, internal record or supporting document for continual improvement.

Table A.1 – Simple checklist

No	Sustainability area	Checklist item	Yes	No	Action required
1	Responsibility	A responsible person has been identified for food safety, quality, traceability and sustainability.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	Legal compliance	The business complies with applicable legal and regulatory requirements.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	Good manufacturing practices	Products are prepared in a clean environment using clean equipment, containers and tools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	Cleaning	A simple cleaning schedule is used and cleaning records are maintained.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5	Pest control	Pest control measures are in place for the processing and storage areas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6	Supplier control	Raw materials are obtained from known or approved suppliers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7	Traceability	The supplier, date received, quantity received and lot or batch number are recorded.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8	Batch records	Production batches are recorded and linked to ingredients, processing date and finished products.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9	Product separation	Fine flavour, origin-labelled, certified or other differentiated materials are kept separate where required.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10	Claims	Sustainability, origin, fine flavour, community, estate or other product claims are truthful and supported by records.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
11	Worker hygiene	Workers follow basic hygiene practices, including handwashing and clean clothing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
12	Training	Workers receive training or supervision for food safety, traceability, equipment use and sustainability practices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
13	Labour practices	Workers are treated fairly and in accordance with national labour requirements.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
14	Child and forced labour	Child labour, forced labour and discrimination are prohibited in the operation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
15	Health and safety	First aid, emergency contacts and safe working procedures are available.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
16	Hazardous products	Cleaning chemicals, fuels, lubricants, LPG cylinders and other hazardous products are safely stored and labelled.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

No	Sustainability area	Checklist item	Yes	No	Action required
17	Waste	Waste and by-products are separated, reused, recycled or safely disposed of where feasible.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
18	Water	Water used in production is suitable for its intended purpose and wastage is minimised.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
19	Wastewater	Wastewater and cleaning chemicals are managed to prevent contamination of products, workers and the environment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
20	Energy	Electricity and fuel use are monitored through bills, receipts or simple records.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
21	Energy efficiency	Equipment is maintained and practical energy-saving actions are used.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
22	Climate resilience	Risks from hurricanes, flooding, drought, landslides, heat, water shortages and power outages are considered.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
23	Business continuity	A simple emergency or business continuity plan is available.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
24	Community	Community identity, cultural heritage or origin stories used in marketing are truthful and respectful.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
25	Improvement	Corrective actions are recorded and followed up where gaps are identified.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
NOTE 1 For micro and small enterprises, records may include simple checklists, notebooks, invoices, receipts, photographs, batch sheets, supplier forms, training notes, cleaning logs and corrective action records.					
NOTE 2 This checklist is not intended to replace legal requirements, certification requirements or customer-specific requirements.					

**Annex B
(informative)
Guidance on sustainability and origin claims**

B.1 General

This annex provides guidance on sustainability, origin and product differentiation claims used for cocoa products and chocolate. It supports truthful communication, consumer confidence, traceability and market differentiation for CARICOM cocoa and chocolate products.

Claims should be accurate, verifiable, clear and not misleading. Claims should be supported by records appropriate to the type of claim, the size of the business and the intended market.

Claims may relate to sustainability, origin, fine flavour, single estate, community production, geographical identity, ethical trading, climate-smart practices, deforestation-free production, organic production, regenerative practices or other product attributes.

B.2 General principles for claims

Producers should ensure that claims:

- are truthful and capable of verification;
- do not exaggerate the scope or impact of the claim;
- are supported by traceability records, supplier records, production records or other evidence;
- clearly identify whether the claim applies to the product, ingredient, process, producer, community or supply chain;
- are reviewed before use on labels, packaging, websites, social media, export documents or promotional materials;
- comply with applicable legal, labelling, consumer protection and market access requirements; and
- are updated or removed where supporting evidence is no longer valid.

B.3 Sustainability claims

Sustainability claims should be supported by evidence relating to relevant economic, social and environmental practices.

Evidence may include:

- supplier records;
- worker training records;
- labour and health and safety records;
- waste, water and energy records;
- traceability records;
- environmental management records;
- community engagement records;
- certificates or inspection reports, where applicable; and
- corrective action records.

A general sustainability claim should not be used where only one limited practice is being implemented. In such cases, the claim should be specific.

EXAMPLE 1 “Packaging made with recyclable material” is more specific than “sustainable chocolate”.

EXAMPLE 2 “Produced using recorded energy and water reduction practices” is more specific than “eco-friendly”.

B.4 Origin claims

Origin claims should identify the geographical source of the cocoa material or product. Origin claims may refer to a country, island, estate, farm, community, cooperative, region or geographical indication-linked area.

Producers should maintain evidence to support origin claims, including, where available:

- supplier name;
- farm, estate, community or cooperative identification;
- country or area of origin;
- lot or batch records;
- purchase records;
- fermentation, drying or processing records;
- certificates of analysis or quality records;
- transport or delivery records; and
- records linking cocoa lots to finished product batches.

Where cocoa from different origins is blended, the origin claim should not imply that the product is from a single origin, single estate or single community.

B.5 Fine flavour claims

Fine flavour claims should be supported by evidence of origin identity, suitable cocoa type, quality control and sensory characteristics.

Evidence may include:

- supplier or estate records;
- variety, clone, hybrid or cocoa type information, where known;
- fermentation and drying records;
- roast profile or processing records;
- sensory notes;
- cut test or quality assessment records;
- batch records; and
- customer or buyer specifications.

A fine flavour claim should not be used only as a marketing term without evidence that supports the flavour identity and quality of the cocoa material or product.

B.6 Single estate, community and cooperative claims

Single estate claims should be used only where the cocoa material is sourced from one identified estate or farm.

Community claims should be used only where the cocoa material is sourced from an identified community, village, cooperative or producer group.

Producers should maintain records to demonstrate the link between the stated estate, community or cooperative and the finished product.

Where community identity, cultural heritage or traditional knowledge is used in marketing, the information should be truthful, respectful and supported by appropriate evidence.

B.7 Deforestation-free and environmental claims

Deforestation-free claims should be supported by appropriate evidence of legal origin and land-use status.

Evidence may include:

- supplier declarations;
- farm, estate or community records;
- geolocation data, where required by the intended market;
- purchase records;
- inspection records;
- certificates or verification reports; and
- other information required by national legislation or the intended export market.

Environmental claims such as “climate-smart”, “regenerative”, “low carbon”, “carbon neutral”, “biodiversity-friendly” or similar claims should be used only where the producer has appropriate evidence to support the claim.

Where greenhouse gas or carbon claims are made, the method used to calculate or verify the claim should be documented.

B.8 Ethical, fair trade and social claims

Claims related to fair trading, ethical sourcing, living income, worker welfare, youth inclusion, gender inclusion or community benefit should be supported by relevant records.

Evidence may include:

- supplier agreements;
- payment records;
- labour records;
- worker training records;
- community benefit records;
- participation records for women, youth or community groups;
- complaint or grievance records; and
- third-party certification or verification records, where applicable.

Claims should not imply certification or third-party approval unless such certification or approval has been obtained and remains valid.

B.9 Use of certification marks and third-party marks

Where certification marks, conformity marks or third-party logos are used, producers shall comply with the rules of the certification body, scheme owner or mark owner.

Producers should maintain current evidence of certification, licence, approval or permission to use the mark.

B.10 Records supporting claims

Records supporting claims should be retained for a period appropriate to the product shelf-life, customer requirements, legal requirements and intended market.

Records may include paper-based files, electronic records, photographs, invoices, batch sheets, supplier declarations, certificates, inspection reports, maps, geolocation records or digital traceability records.

B.11 Examples of claim wording

The following examples in Table B.1 may assist producers in developing clear and supportable claims.

Table B.1 - Examples of claim wording

Claim type	Preferable wording	Avoid where unsupported
Origin	"Made with cocoa from [country/community/estate], supported by batch traceability records."	"Pure Caribbean origin" without traceability evidence.
Fine flavour	"Made with fine flavour cocoa lots assessed for flavour and quality."	"Premium fine flavour" without quality or sensory records.
Community	"Produced using cocoa sourced from [named community/cooperative]."	"Empowering communities" without evidence of community participation or benefit.
Environmental	"Energy use is monitored through electricity and fuel records."	"Carbon neutral" without greenhouse gas calculation or verification.
Deforestation-free	"Cocoa sourced from suppliers with origin and land-use records."	"Deforestation-free" without supporting evidence.
Ethical	"Suppliers are required to comply with child labour and forced labour prohibitions."	"Ethically perfect" or broad claims without records.
NOTE Claims should be proportionate to the level of evidence available. Simple, specific claims are usually more suitable for micro and small enterprises than broad sustainability claims.		

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CARICOM REGIONAL ORGANISATION FOR STANDARDS AND QUALITY

The CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) was created as an Inter-Governmental Organisation by the signing of an agreement among fourteen Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). CROSQ is the regional centre for promoting efficiency and competitive production in goods and services, through the process of standardisation and the verification of quality. It is the successor to the Caribbean Common Market Standards Council (CCMSC), and supports the CARICOM mandate in the expansion of intra-regional and extra-regional trade in goods and services.

CROSQ is mandated to represent the interests of the region in international and hemispheric standards work, to promote the harmonisation of metrology systems and standards, and to increase the pace of development of regional standards for the sustainable production of goods and services in the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), and the enhancement of social and economic development.

CROSQ VISION:

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Working together to facilitate the growth, resilience and sustainable development of CARICOM through the advancement of an internationally recognised Regional Quality Infrastructure

Public Comments - Deadline August 31, 2026



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ISBN xxx-xxx-xxxx-xx-3x

ICS xx.xxx.xx