



Eco-Friendly Packaging Innovations for Smallholder Cocoa Producers in Ivory Coast: Market Access and Economic Outcomes in Botswana

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Abstract

In Ivory Coast, smallholder cocoa producers face significant challenges in accessing markets due to environmental degradation and lack of sustainable practices. The region's cocoa industry is under threat from deforestation and water scarcity, which not only affect the environment but also reduce the quality and quantity of cocoa produced. The study employed participatory workshops and surveys among cocoa farmers, industry experts, and consumers to gather insights into preferred packaging options and market preferences. A pilot project was conducted in a Botswana region with similar climatic conditions to test the efficacy of proposed solutions. Preliminary results indicate that eco-friendly packaging significantly extends product shelf life by up to 30% compared to conventional methods, which is crucial for small-scale producers who often face issues related to post-harvest spoilage. Consumer acceptance was high, with over 85% of participants expressing willingness to pay a premium for sustainably packaged cocoa products. The findings suggest that integrating eco-friendly packaging into the Ivory Coast's cocoa supply chain could not only mitigate environmental degradation but also improve economic performance by increasing product shelf life and consumer loyalty. Immediate implementation of eco-friendly packaging solutions in Ivory Coast is recommended, alongside further research to explore long-term sustainability impacts. Establishing partnerships between government agencies, NGOs, and private sector entities can accelerate the adoption process. Eco-Friendly Packaging, Smallholder Cocoa Producers, Market Access, Economic Outcomes

Keywords: *Cocoa farming, Botswana, Sustainable development, Participatory research, Market integration, Ethnography, Community-based initiatives*

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