



# **The Ritter Sport Cocoa Policy Statement**

## **For sustainable cocoa cultivation**

Our chocolate can only be as good as its ingredients. Our cocoa plays the key role as the most important ingredient in our chocolate. Sustainability is not always easy to grasp, but for us it consists of the following convictions, why we as a company have been working in cocoa-growing countries for over 35 years and taking responsibility in our supply chain.

We have summarised our essential convictions and goals which are essential for our cocoa cultivation in our Cocoa Policy Statement.

### **1. Our quality and long-term partnerships**

Every cocoa has its own special flavour due to its origin, variety or, for example, the soil on which it grows. Our cocoa is specifically selected and gives our various chocolates their unique character.

Within the framework of long-term partnerships, we work closely with cocoa farmers and their producer organisations in mutual commitments on cocoa volumes over multiple years. Working together is a prerequisite for farmers to have a predictable income base and for us to jointly improve cocoa quality in the long term, for example, to exclude contaminants along the supply chain, and to further enhance the flavour characteristics of cocoa. Higher quality means better conditions for everyone involved in the supply chain.

### **2. Transparency of our cocoa supply chain**

Only those who know where their cocoa comes from, who and under what conditions it is grown, can influence the conditions on the ground. Trust and reliability in the context of long-term partnerships are a basic prerequisite for us. We have been committed to this in our cocoa supply chain for more than 35 years and work closely with cocoa farmers and their producer organisations. Since 2018 we have been sourcing our cocoa for Ritter Sport certified in accordance with Rainforest Alliance Cocoa and/or Fairtrade cocoa programme.

More important than certification, however, is the cooperation in the growing regions through cocoa programmes in which we work together with our local partners and the farmers to bring about positive change. This is a fundamental prerequisite for enabling transparency in the supply chain. Since 2022, we have been able to trace our cocoa back to the producing organisation.

Our next goal is traceability back to the farmer, which we have set ourselves for 2025.

### **3. Adequate livelihood**

We want our cocoa farmer partners and their families to achieve a decent standard of living by generating a reasonable income from cocoa farming and other sources of income. A major role to a living income plays the market price of cocoa in relation to the set farm gate price, in particular in regulated markets. We aim to support this by all our market actions including paying a decent price for certified and high-quality cocoa. That is why we support our supply chain members/partners with income resilience strategies, including such as income diversification, female empowerment, productivity increase (yield/ha) and protection of ecosystems by implementing agroforestry systems. We are committed to ensuring a living wage for everyone involved along our supply chains and especially in the growing countries. In doing so, we respect the internationally recognised United Nations Guiding Principles (UNGP) for Business and Human Rights - as has been documented for years in our Declaration of Principles.

In addition to the certification premium, support services as part of our cocoa programmes have a direct impact on increasing income. We place a special focus on topics that promote both the professionalisation of cultivation and increases in cocoa productivity and quality. By protecting the ecosystems and their biodiversity through ecological farming systems by tree integration and improving soil health, on which cocoa cultivation relies on, we strongly support regional adapted agroforestry systems for a better resilience promotion e.g. for climate change.

This supports a direct and sustainable boost in income for the growers and creates independent of us as supporter and buyer. Further focus of our work is the diversification of income and we are therefore also working on individual approaches with different farmer groups with the aim of making incomes more multi-layered, broader and more independent.

Through active engagement with Multi Stakeholder organisations such as GISCO (German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa) and ISCO we, as a midsize family-owned company, use the wider impact of sharing data collection of farm assessments to develop improvement plans.

### **4. Elimination of illegal child labour, against forced labour and trafficking**

Illegal and harmful child labour is unacceptable under any circumstances.

In all our cocoa programmes, we have introduced CLMRS (Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation System) to detect cases of child labour and actively address resolution measures to reduce and eliminate those and further cases. In serious cases, if the problem is not resolved (addressed and remediated) and/or violates applicable law, this will result in immediate suspension from our supply chain.

Within the topic of illegal labour, we have a focus besides on children in general on young girls, young women and minorities, as particularly vulnerable groups.



We have an internal, effective and digital reporting system for the cocoa sourced for Ritter Sport in place. Within this reporting we aim to distinguish between age groups and gender.

Furthermore, in addition to awareness-raising, training and support programmes within our cocoa programmes, we see issues such as income diversification as another important approach to make household incomes more resilient and thus eliminate the need for child labour.

## **5. Gender strategy and Equal opportunities**

Strengthening equality and the role of women is an important building block in the sustainable development of cocoa cultivation. Equal rights play an important role in combating child labour. As part of our cocoa programmes, we are increasingly committed to the targeted promotion of women and against gender-based-violence and gender-based-discrimination.

Increasing women's business skills improves their self-awareness and their opportunities to contribute to the family income through one's own income. This helps to provide children with an education and prevent child labour.

Additional income generation, improved food security for households and better promotion of education, especially for children, are important aspects of our programmes.

## **6. Our goals for climate-friendly cocoa cultivation**

### **a. No deforestation policy**

We do not source any cocoa from deforested areas for our Ritter Sport brand. \*  
(\*in accordance with RFA certification, cut-off date 2014 and Fairtrade certification, cut-off date 2018).

Cocoa production or processing must not take place in protected areas or their officially designated buffer zones (except where it applies to with applicable law) nor in converted areas after the cut off dates as set by the certifying organisations. We create transparency through polygon mapping of the cocoa farms in our supply chain. Our goal is to have mapped and monitored the farms of all cocoa farmers in our supply chains by 2025. This way, we can ensure that no further deforestation takes place within the supply chain.

Within the scope of our cocoa programmes, we promote training for farmers and their families in order to raise awareness of environmental issues related to economic farming (good agricultural practices).

All our cocoa programmes also include promoting the diversification of cocoa farmers' incomes in order to create alternative incomes. Thereby reducing the pressure on the income situation from cocoa cultivation and the resulting measures, such as deforestation to create new cultivation areas, in the long term and in a sustainable way.

## b. Compliance violation & mitigation plan

Through continuous monitoring, re-verification, and remediation, farmers who do not initially meet compliance standards are supported with guidance and corrective actions. When potential risks or non-compliance are identified:

- Alerts are analysed using satellite systems, then there is
- field verification conducted,
- corrective action plans are implemented,
- farmers receive technical support and guidance and
- continuous monitoring is applied until compliance is confirmed.

Exclusion of suppliers is considered only as a last resort after verification and remediation process have not led to a mitigation.

## c. Our agroforestry approach

We are committed to establishing agroforestry systems for all our cocoa sourcing by 2035. By agroforestry systems, we mean the combination of an agricultural production system, such as cocoa cultivation, with other forestry trees. Agroforestry systems support healthy ecosystems, ensure biodiversity conservation, soil protection and health and help to make cocoa cultivation more climate resilient and stable for the future. So it can enhance carbon storage and stable yields.

A healthy agroforestry system requires less input of pesticides. We consider a functioning agroforestry system to be an individual system adapted to local climatic needs.

We have set ourselves the following milestones:

- By 2024, we will establish an effective, digital reporting system within the company for our existing agroforestry programmes.
- By the end of 2025, 100% of our cocoa supply chains for Ritter Sport will be covered by an agroforestry programme.
- By the end of 2030, we will have established agroforestry systems for 75% of our cocoa sourcing.



#### d. Our approach to the use of pesticides in our cocoa supply chain

Our goal is to reduce the use of pesticides in our cocoa supply chain to the absolute minimum to protect the people in the cocoa-growing countries and to protect the consumer. In order to achieve this, we only buy Rainforest Alliance or Fairtrade-certified cocoa products. Both organisations have strict requirements for the use of chemicals in cocoa farming. Both standards clearly define:

- what pesticides are permissible and
- which ones are banned,
- how integrated plant protection needs to be implemented and
- what pesticide management should look like.

The regulations on the use of chemicals in these standards are regularly updated and consider the latest scientific findings with regard to the toxicological assessment of the substances, environmental relevance (persistence) and the risk to insects.

- Rainforest Alliance: [Rainforest-Alliance.org](https://rainforest-alliance.org)
- Fairtrade: [Fairtrade-Deutschland.de](https://fairtrade-deutschland.de)

Based on the standards (Rainforest Alliance and Fairtrade) and the ECA/CAOBISCO/ICCO manual on the use of pesticides (pesticide use in cocoa), we have drawn up our own list to define what must not be used for our cocoa raw materials.

We have implemented in all our cocoa programmes educational trainings for good agricultural practices as well as trainings in handling integrated pest management and work safety. Also, we support the implementation of Management tools to steer, control and monitor all necessary farm activities.

Our approach goes beyond only cultivation; we support the improvement of healthy soil by e.g. soil regeneration programmes. We promote integrated agriculture projects such as compost-making for smallholder farmers or large-scale compost-making on our own El Cacao plantation and provide support for natural agro-input packages.

On our own El Cacao plantation in Nicaragua, we pursue the approach of integrated farming: this means that we use natural cycles to keep the use of mineral fertilisers and pesticides low and avoid them as much as possible in the long term. This principle applies to all the pesticides we use as well as to the framework of our good agricultural practices and enables us to use agricultural resources in a truly sustainable way.

## 7. Grievance Mechanism

We offer a complaints procedure (grievance mechanism) that allows everyone in our own business area and people along the entire value chain to report violations or risks anonymously, confidentially, through different channels such as written or online. Our grievance mechanism ensures confidentiality for complainants and protects them from



retaliation. This procedure ensures that all reports received are reviewed transparently and fairly.

Our goal is to identify potential problems in our own business area and in the value chain at an early stage and to take appropriate remedial action.

The complaints mechanism was established by Alfred Ritter GmbH & Co. KG on January 1, 2024, is continuously being developed, and is available in 42 languages. Further information on the process, procedure, etc. can be found in our rules of procedure via the following [Link](#).

Waldenbuch, June 2025

*Asmus Wolff*

Asmus Wolff / COO