Quarterly Newsletter – Q 1 2026

Better Yield, Better Life for Small-Scale Farmers!



Cocoa Market Volatility: Navigating Uncertainty, Sustaining Impact

The 2025/2026 cocoa season began with renewed optimism. Following two strong seasons, farmers experienced improved incomes, greater financial stability, and the long-awaited rewards of their labour—investing in their homes, their children's education, and their livelihoods.

However, this optimism was short-lived. A sudden shift in the global cocoa market triggered a sharp price decline, disrupting expectations and raising difficult questions across the cocoa sector: Who truly benefits, and who bears the cost? Yet amid this uncertainty, one thing remains constant—the resilience of our farmers.

At Springboard, we believe that lasting impact must extend beyond favourable market conditions. It means building systems that support farmers not only in times of prosperity, but also during periods of uncertainty. This quarter, our focus has been deliberate: strengthening the cocoa value chain from the ground up, investing in the people behind the produce, expanding access to knowledge, and creating opportunities that drive long-term sustainability. From global exposure within Germany's chocolate industry to hands-on capacity building for our team, from setting up climate-smart demo farms to empowering young agripreneurs through digital learning, we remain committed to one goal: building a stronger, more inclusive, and more resilient agribusiness ecosystem. Because while markets may fluctuate, our commitment does not.

Cocoa Price Crash: Navigating the Harsh Realities Facing Farmers



The 2025/2026 cocoa season has brought with it a difficult reality—a dramatic fall in cocoa prices that continues to affect farmers across our communities. For many farmers, this season was expected to bring relief after years of uncertainty. Instead, they are once again facing reduced incomes, difficult choices, and growing anxiety about the future.

How do we explain a season in which farmers harvested more cocoa than ever before, yet earned far less? In many communities, cocoa prices have fallen from as high as $12 per kilogram to less than $2 per kilogram. For thousands of farmers, this has been devastating.

At Springboard, we recognise that market volatility is one of the greatest threats facing smallholder farmers. This is why our work goes beyond increasing production. We continue to invest in value addition, crop diversification, and alternative income streams that strengthen farmers' resilience against external shocks. Through programmes such as insect rearing, plantain cultivation, premium payments, and local processing, our farmers are better equipped to withstand difficult seasons and protect their livelihoods.

"*When prices fall, it affects everything—our income, our families, even our motivation. We were hopeful this season would be better, but the price drop has made it difficult. Even with more cocoa, we are struggling to meet our needs. But we have to keep going because farming is what we know, and we believe things will improve."*— Mr. Kehinde Alade, Cocoa Farmer, Itaogbolu Community





From Bean to Bar: Springboard Explores Global Cocoa Processing in Germany

As part of our commitment to building a globally competitive cocoa value chain, Springboard participated in a cocoa processing exchange in Cologne, Germany in February 2026. The programme, which was supported by the GIZ, offered SMEs like Springboard a rare opportunity to experience chocolate production from bean to bar. Participants were immersed in every stage of chocolate making—from bean selection and flavour profiling to roasting techniques and quality control standards that define premium chocolate in global markets. The experience not only expanded our technical knowledge, but also challenged us to rethink how African cocoa can be positioned for higher-value markets. Beyond the factory floor, the exchange sparked new ideas around product development, packaging, branding, and export readiness —key elements for transforming local businesses into global brands.

"From bean selection to flavour profiling, the level of precision in chocolate production was eye-opening. It reinforced the importance of quality control and consistency as we work towards building a globally competitive cocoa value chain. Thanks to GIZ for this experience."— Helen Lawrence-Afere, COO, Springboard





Building People, Building Systems: Capacity Strengthening in Lagos and Senegal

At Springboard, we believe that strong systems are built by empowered people. This quarter, our team actively participated in capacity-building initiatives both locally and internationally.

In Lagos, staff members attended a dynamic Branding & Marketing training organised in partnership with ITC and UKTP. The training equipped SMEs with practical tools for positioning their products competitively, covering storytelling, packaging, market targeting, and digital visibility. At the same time, members of our team travelled to Senegal to engage with the Livelihood Impact Fund (LIF), gaining valuable insights into Monitoring and Evaluation systems. These experiences continue to strengthen our ability to deliver meaningful, high-impact interventions across the agribusiness ecosystem. And we are not stopping here—more training opportunities for our staff are planned later this year.

"The experience with the Livelihood Impact Fund was both inspiring and practical. It gave us a clearer perspective on structuring partnerships and programmes that drive real, measurable change across communities." — Timothy Gbayiegun, M&E Officer

"The Branding & Marketing training highlighted the power of perception in agribusiness. With the right tools in storytelling and digital visibility, SMEs like us can now compete more confidently in both local and global markets." — Zaccheaus Oni, ICT/Media Manager



Branding and Marketing Training in Lagos Organized by ITC and UKTP



M & E Training in Senegal Organized by Livelihood Impact Fund (LIF)

From Learning to Earning: Agribusiness E-Learning Unlocks Funding Opportunities



Our Agro-Reach E-Learning Launchpad continues to empower young people with practical knowledge and direct pathways to funding. With the launch of the second application window in March, participants from tertiary institutions are preparing to access funding opportunities that can help bring their agribusiness ideas to life. So far, we have engaged students from two institutions: the Federal College of Agriculture, Akure (FECA), and Adeyemi Federal University of Education (AFUED). Twenty-nine participants from FECA successfully completed their courses and were awarded certificates, while the graduation ceremony for AFUED participants is scheduled for April 2026.

Our next stop is the Federal University, Oye-Ekiti (FUOYE), where we will onboard and train more than 400 students through the platform. We are excited about what lies ahead.





"Before this programme, I had no idea that learning could translate into earning—especially through an online platform with access to funding opportunities. Now, I feel confident applying for grants because I understand what it takes to build a sustainable agribusiness."— Ehinola Olamide, FECA Student

Setting Up The Climate-Smart Demo Farm in Onipan Community

As part of our project to enhance rural livelihoods within the cocoa value chain, in partnership with GIZ, we have moved into the next phase of establishing a 3-hectare climate-smart demonstration farm in Onipanu Community in Ondo State. The demo farm will serve as a practical learning hub where farmers can experience climate-smart agriculture first-hand. From improved planting techniques and soil management to sustainable farming practices, the site will showcase practical solutions that help farmers adapt to changing environmental conditions. More than just a farm, it will be a centre for knowledge exchange, innovation, and community transformation.



“Farming is no longer what it used to be. The weather has changed, and we need to change with it. This climate-smart demo farm will allow farmers to see, in real time, what better farming can look like and how it can improve their yields.” — John Ibileye, Project Coordinator

Strengthening SMEs: Advancing Cocoa Processing Through Practical Training

In partnership with ITC and UKTP, Springboard hosted 20 SME changemakers at our facility for a three-day intensive Oral Test Factory training programme. The training provided participants with hands-on experience in cocoa processing—from identifying quality beans and testing flavour profiles to producing finished chocolate products. Because of its practical nature, participants did not simply observe the process—they experienced it themselves. The excitement and enthusiasm throughout the training reflected a growing interest among SMEs in moving beyond raw cocoa into value-added products.

“This training was different because we didn’t just watch—we did everything ourselves. Now I feel ready to start experimenting with my own chocolate products.” — Johnson Omotunde, SME Participant













Driving Value Addition

At the heart of our work is a commitment to value addition—transforming raw agricultural products into high-quality, market-ready products. This quarter, we intensified efforts to improve our protein bread production, enhancing both nutrition and customer satisfaction. By focusing on innovation and quality, we are not only increasing product value, but also creating new opportunities for income generation and market expansion. Behind the scenes, we are also working tirelessly to scale our chocolate production—increasing both quality and quantity—as we prepare to expand into local and international markets.

"Value addition is the future. When we process what we produce, we do not just sell—we create experiences that people are willing to pay more for." — Daniel Olufemi, Chocolatier





Strengthening Our Future: elea Foundation Invests in Springboard

During Q1 2026, Springboard received a new equity investment from the elea Foundation. This investment represents a strong vote of confidence in our mission to build a more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable agribusiness ecosystem for small-scale farmers. The investment will enable us to deepen our support for rural communities by expanding climate-smart agriculture, farmer diversification, cocoa processing, youth agribusiness training, and market access initiatives. At a time when many cocoa farmers are facing uncertainty, this partnership gives us greater capacity to continue building long-term resilience and opportunity.

"This investment is not only about growing Springboard—it is about creating a more secure future for the thousands of farmers and families we serve." **— Helen Lawrence-Afere, COO, Springboard**

Thank You

As always, none of this would be possible without your continued support. Together, we're proving that when small-scale farmers thrive, entire communities rise. Let's keep building a future where agriculture works for everyone.

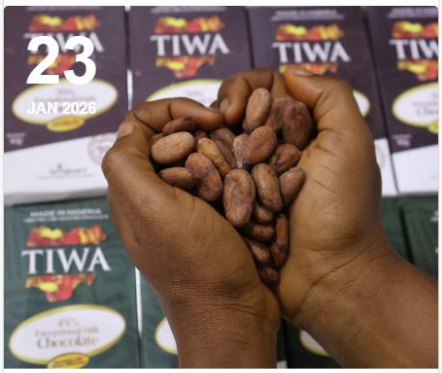
Kindly click here to visit our YouTube channel to learn more about the Springboard's journey.

With gratitude,

Helen Lawrence-Afere

Better Yield, Better Life

DID YOU MISS OUR PREVIOUS NEWSLETTER? READ HERE!



Springboard Fourth Quarter Newsletter 2025

Our shared focus remains clear: rural wealth creation, value addition, and sustainability. As we approach 2026, our strategy will continue...

https://springboardnig.com/2026/01/23/springboard-fourth-quarter-newsletter-2025/

News Letter, News Updates



Springboard Third Quarter Newsletter, 2025

Greetings from the Springboard Team, We're excited to share with you the progress and developments across our departments over the...

https://springboardnig.com/2025/10/15/springboard-third-quarter-newsletter-2025/

Farmers, News Letter, News Updates



Springboard Second Quarter Newsletter, 2025

We welcome you to the second edition of our 2025 newsletter! Hope your spirit is enlightened as you read this...

https://springboardnig.com/2025/07/08/springboard-second-quarter-newsletter-2025/

Farmers, News Letter, News Updates

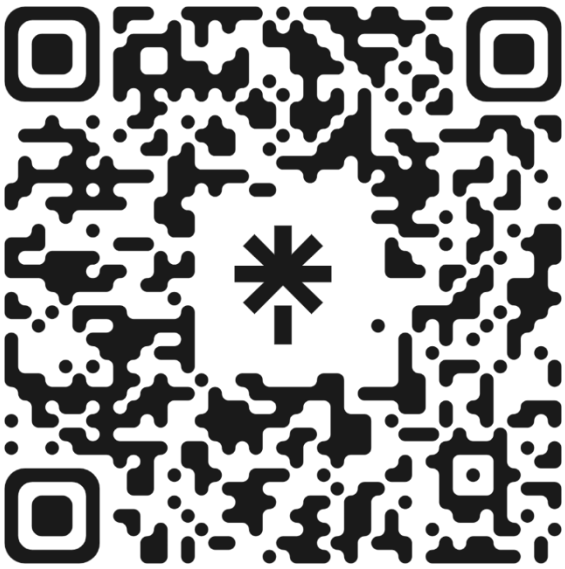


First Quarter Newsletter, 2025

Hello! As we move into the year, Springboard continues to make strides in empowering farmers, fostering sustainable livelihoods, and driving...

https://springboardnig.com/2025/04/09/first-quarter-newsletter-2025/

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