

The ABC Fund invests in Ecookim to improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers in Côte d'Ivoire

- **Ecookim is a union of 29 cooperatives located in rural communities across 12 different provinces in Côte d'Ivoire**
- **The ABC Fund's investment will provide Ecookim members with finance ahead of the 2020/21 cocoa season**
- **In addition to the investment in Ecookim, the ABC Fund has provided a follow-up loan to Socak Katana – the previous loan positively impacted over 3,000 farmers**

Luxembourg, 21 January 2020 – The Agri-Business Capital ('ABC Fund') has provided a loan of EUR €800,000 to the Enterprise Cooperative Kimbe ('Ecookim') ahead of the 2020/21 cocoa production season. Such advanced financing is crucial in ensuring smallholder farmers do not lose the valuable benefits of being part of a cooperative.

Established in 2004, Ecookim is a union of 29 cooperatives located in rural communities across 12 different provinces in Côte d'Ivoire. Ecookim's members have a total cocoa production capacity of over 62,000 tons and operate on 85,000 hectares. Ecookim procures raw cocoa from its members, before processing, transporting, storing and exporting cocoa beans.

In Côte d'Ivoire, cooperatives need to provide smallholder farmers with advance financing before they start to harvest and produce cocoa. Without advance financing, smallholder farmers may sell the cocoa they produce to local traders at a cheaper price for instant payment. However, by selling through local traders, smallholder farmers miss out on the benefits of selling through a cooperative, such as qualification for certification premiums, including Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance and UTZ, which provides a higher income.

The ABC Fund's investment will enable Ecookim to finance its members ahead of the 2020/21 cocoa season. This will help secure revenue and market access for the smallholder farmers responsible for the cocoa production. The ABC Fund's loan offers a lower interest rate under more favorable collateral terms than traditional financial institutions. Moreover, local banks typically only disburse loans to cooperatives once the cocoa beans have been delivered into the warehouse at port, leaving a financing gap to cover the cost of cocoa beans collection and purchase, storage and transport from villages to warehouse.

In addition to the investment in Ecookim, the ABC Fund has provided a follow-up loan to Socak Katana, a separate cocoa cooperative in Côte d'Ivoire. The previous loan provided for the 2019/20 cocoa season positively impacted over 3,000 farmers and created four new permanent positions in the cooperative which employed 12 people, representing a 30% increase. The loan also contributed to Socak Katana being able to double turnover, achieving a 40% increase in volume of sales, and a 36% increase in surface area cultivated during the period.

Jean-Philippe De Schrevel, Founder and Managing Partner at Bamboo Capital Partners commented:

"The ABC Fund has delivered clear on-the-ground impact in the last 12 months. Our investment in Socak Katana ahead of the 2019/20 cocoa season positively impacted thousands of farmers, created jobs and helped the cooperative to scale. Access to finance for smallholder farmers in Africa is a serious and pressing issue, but the ABC Fund provides a tangible and credible solution. We are delighted to invest in Ecookim and provide a follow-up loan to Socak Katana ahead of the 2020/21 cocoa season."

Jerry Parkes, CEO of Injaro Investments, commented:

"I take this opportunity to salute the unsung heroes in this story, West Africa's farmers who have continued to work tirelessly during this global pandemic. I commend the farmers and our investment team in West Africa who have pushed through challenging circumstances to make this investment happen. We are honoured by this opportunity to contribute to rural agricultural livelihoods in Africa and trust that Ecookim and Socak Katana will deliver on the expectations for their 34,000+ members who will ultimately benefit from this financing."



-ENDS-

Media Contacts

Instinctif Partners
+44 78 3767 4600
bamboo@instinctif.com

About the ABC Fund:

The ABC Fund is a blended-finance impact fund which provides catalytic financing to underserved yet profitable segments of agribusiness value chains in developing countries. The ABC Fund deploys loans and equity investments in farmer organisations, rural SMEs and financial institutions. They have potential for high growth and job creation and can also drive social development for their own communities and countries, but they often lack the capital they need to grow their businesses.

The ABC Fund was initiated by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in partnership with, and is currently funded by investments from, the European Union, the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), IFAD, the Luxembourg Government and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA). The IFAD investment was made possible thanks to financial support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

The ABC Fund is managed by Bamboo Capital Partners in partnership with Injaro as investment advisors and with technical assistance led by Agriterria.

About Bamboo Capital Partners:

Bamboo Capital Partners ("Bamboo") is an impact investing platform which provides innovative financing solutions to catalyse lasting impact. Bamboo bridges the gap between seed and growth stage funding through a full suite of finance options – from debt to equity – which it activates unilaterally or through strategic partnerships. Founded in 2007 by Jean-Philippe de Schrevel, Bamboo aims to improve the lives of the world's most marginalized communities while delivering strong financial returns. Since its inception, Bamboo has raised over \$400m and invested in over 30 developing countries. Its investees have positively impacted over 184 million lives and supported 45,000 jobs, including 15,900 jobs for women. The firm has a team of 30 professionals active across Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia. For more information, please visit www.bamboocp.com or follow @bamboocp.

About Injaro Investments:

Established in 2009 by Dadié Tayoraud and Jerry Parkes, Injaro Investments is a private capital investment firm with a long track record in impact investments in Africa. Injaro makes investments in debt, quasi-equity, and equity in African SMEs, deploying capital and solutions to create value for partners and investors. Injaro's experience includes managing Injaro Agricultural Capital Holdings ("IACHL"), a US\$49m impact investment fund focused on SME investments across the agricultural value chain in West Africa. Injaro's investment portfolio has generated \$107m of revenues and benefitted more than 3.7 million persons, mainly comprising smallholder farmers, low-income persons and their families. For more information, please visit www.injaroinvestments.com or follow @injaro on Twitter and Injaro Investments Limited on LinkedIn.

About Ecookim:

Created in August 2004, Ecookim is the union of several leading cooperatives in the coffee-cocoa sector in Ivory Coast. Ecookim is present in the main producing regions of the country, with the mission of respecting quality to conquer international markets. Approved for export since the 2005/2006 campaign, Ecookim is Fairtrade certified since 2010, UTZ certified since 2012 and RainForest certified since 2014.



ABC Fund sponsors and partners:



The views in this press release are the sole responsibility of Bamboo Capital Partners and Injaro Investments. It does not reflect the views of the European Union, IFAD, SDC, the Government of Luxembourg, AGRA, nor the OACPS. This document is for information and illustrative purposes only. This document is not intended as an offer or a recommendation or an invitation to purchase or sell financial instruments.