

# INNOVATION SERIES

## BUSINESS PROFILE



CHOCOTOGO

LOME, TOGO

[HTTPS://WWW.CHOCOTOGO.COM/](https://www.chocotogo.com/)

### ABOUT CHOCOTOGO

- Company status: Cooperative;
- Number of employees: 17 full-time employees and 45 part-time employees, mainly women and/or young people.



**Komi AGBOKOU,**  
President et Co-founder

After completing his Master's degree in Health Psychology at the University of Lomé in 2001, Komi AGBOKOU enrolled at the University of Tübingen in Germany for a PhD. He then made the choice to return to Togo and support employment creation and entrepreneurship. In 2007, he became the Founding President of the association *Enfant-Foot-Développement (EFD)* supporting youth education, and also works in the energy sector with the project "Sole Africano" providing affordable solar kits.

In 2013 Komi created the cooperative ChocoTogo, which specialises in the processing and added-

value of organic certified cocoa beans (with Ecocert and Fairtrade certifications) in Akébou region. It employs 45 part-time women at the Kpalimé production site and 16 young people at the production site in Lomé. ChocoTogo has received numerous awards including the first prize of "Best Young Company in 2015", and the prize of "Young Agricultural Entrepreneur" at Expo Milano in 2015. The cooperative was also named "Success" in the *Prix Jeunesse de la Francophonie 35<35* in 2016. Komi is also treasurer of the Interprofessional Council of the coffee-cocoa sector of Togo (CCOC-Togo) and Secretary of the Association des transformateurs de café et de cacao du Togo (ATCC-Togo), the association of coffee and cocoa processors.

Komi is one of the 10 entrepreneurs selected for the "Best Young Leader" category for the Togo Top Impact 2020 ranking after winning the first prize for the best entrepreneurial project at the Forum of Young Entrepreneurs in Togo and the second prize for innovation at the Agri-Food Trade Fair in Lomé, Togo.

This series of events is organised by the PAFO and the COLEACP. COLEACP operates within the framework of the development cooperation between the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) and the European Union, with the support of the French Development Agency.

## BUSINESS MODEL

ChocoTogo's mission is to enhance the value of Togolese (small) cocoa production by transforming this raw material into organic, fair trade, artisanal and local products.

ChocoTogo is committed to supporting the sustainable production of organic cocoa, preserving ancient cocoa varieties, such as Amelonado, and processing cocoa into quality products. This creates employment and wealth for women and young people, and raises awareness of cocoa consumption among the local population. ChocoTogo aims to become a major player in the West African organic chocolate market.

The cooperative was created in 2014 by six young Togolese, who participated in the [Fair Young Sustainable Inclusive and Cooperative](#) (FYSIC) training organised in 2013 in Italy with the aim of adding value to cocoa and to the national economy. Togo is a small cocoa producer and exports dried beans to international markets for little money. In addition, the cocoa and chocolate

manufacturing sector was initially not recognised as a business sector in Togo. ChocoTogo's challenge was therefore to promote chocolate production in the villages and to process cocoa beans to generate profit and thus pay its cocoa farmers better.

ChocoTogo harvests cocoa beans from two production sites, in Kpalimé and Lomé, and then processes them to make chocolate and related products. Its products are mainly promoted to the local population to improve their health, as dark chocolate is rich in calcium, potassium, vitamin B1 and antioxidants, as well as having antidepressant properties.

ChocoTogo raises awareness of the value of chocolate in rural areas and trains communities to produce chocolate, a first in rural areas. ChocoTogo is the first Togolese chocolate producer. Its products are sold locally at affordable prices to create local demand. The company also exports to the European Union.



## STRONG RELATIONSHIPS WITH SMALLHOLDERS

ChocoTogo buys cocoa beans at a fair price, which is twice the market price. ChocoTogo works with two producers' unions with more than 100 producers.

## PRODUCTS COVERED AND MARKETS

ChocoTogo processes cocoa beans by hand, using local raw materials and no additives.

Among the wide range of processed products, ChocoTogo produces chocolate bars with cocoa butter and variable cocoa percentage. ChocoTogo has also developed a range of chocolate bars with original flavours by adding spices: 5% baobab, 5% moringa and 5% curcuma. ChocoTogo produces caramelised cocoa beans in 100 g bags.

ChocoTogo also processes cocoa into spread made from peanut paste (45.1%), cocoa paste (18.1%), red sugar (31.6%), soya oil and cinnamon.

All these cocoa products are available on the local market and sold in the majority of the country's

supermarkets. They are also exported to the EU from the ChocoTogo online shop. Wishing to promote the local economy, ChocoTogo also supplies regional companies, such as Asky Airlines, which distributed ChocoTogo chocolate bars to celebrate its 11 years of business.

ChocoTogo is the last link in the cocoa value chain in Togo: the cooperative buys the cocoa beans, processes them, and packages and sells the products. All the packaging (except for the imported glass jars) is produced by hand in Togo in order to create jobs.

The processed cocoa beans and final products are certified organic, Fairtrade and Rainforest Alliance for the cocoa production sites.



## INNOVATIONS: MILESTONES AND EXPANSION PLANS

ChocoTogo was created with personal funds, and reinvested all its profits into the cooperative or the financing of other projects until 2018. ChocoTogo also benefits from a grant of more than 11 million CFA francs from the Agriculture Sector Support Project (PASA) developed by the State of Togo.

The production of processed products was heavily impacted by the Covid-19 crisis in 2020. Since then, ChocoTogo has been working to return to pre-Covid-19 production levels by increasing production, developing new products and markets, and raising awareness of local consumption.

## SUCCESS FACTORS AND LESSONS LEARNED

ChocoTogo has developed a new market in Togo, creating supply and demand for processed cocoa bean products. For example, in March 2014 the cooperative created the first edition of the Chocolate Festival in Togo.

In addition, ChocoTogo has a positive social impact through employing young people and women, who represent 80% of its staff. Employees are paid 400 CFA francs (€0.6) per kg of processed cocoa beans and can process up to 8 kg per day. This remuneration enables the women in particular to maintain their own households.

