

# Promoting Resilience and Sustainability: Cultivating Organic Change and Sustainable Futures

In the green cashew farmlands of Passouadé in northern Togo and the cashew villages of Goussouambou and Lémagui in the District of Tchaourou in Benin, farming is a way of life. But for years, cashew farmers in these regions have faced tough challenges. Most farmers relied on conventional farming methods, heavily dependent on chemical fertilizers and pesticides. The promise of quick results blinded many to the long-term damage. Fields were overworked, trees aged poorly, and biodiversity steadily declined. Water sources grew vulnerable, and despite all their hard work, farmers often saw disappointing yields and poor-quality nuts.

But in 2024, a new chapter for cashew farmers in Togo and Benin began. The South Grown initiative in Togo and the Fédération Nationale des Producteurs d'Anacarde du Bénin (FENAPAB) in Benin launched their respective transformative projects through the Cashew Matching Grant Fund under the GIZ Business Support Facility for Resilient Agricultural Value Chains. Their mission is to help farmers earn more by shifting to certified organic production, tapping into fair trade markets, and generating extra income through carbon credits. At the heart of these projects lies the objective to improve farmer livelihoods while protecting the environment for future generations and promoting the recycling of cashew waste into charcoal briquettes, a sustainable energy solution for rural households. In one year, over 6,000 producers have already been trained.



## On the way to Organic Farming Certification, Carbon Credit and Digitized Supply Chain

The FENAPAB project builds on strong foundations laid in 2020, when they launched their pioneering 'Cashew Captures Carbon' pilot, engaging 618 farmers managing 1,123 hectares of cashew plantations. Building on these early successes, FENAPAB is now scaling up its efforts reaching **5,176 farmers covering 12,500 hectares**, helping them through trainings to transition to certified organic farming while unlocking a new source of income through carbon credit generation. It's a unique blend of climate action, income diversification, and environmental restoration.

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**We have learned that bio and conventional practices are not the same. Without the training, we would still be using harmful chemicals on our farms. We didn't know we were damaging our future.**

~ Kadi Gorda, Farmer from Goussouambou

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The impact is already visible on the ground. In Goussouambou alone, the local cooperative sold 136 tons of raw cashew nuts this year, a clear reflection of both improved yields and the growing market demand for high-quality, bio-certified cashews. Under this project, 5,176 farmer data; including farm size, production levels, and geolocation is digitized through the Farmerlink app, ensuring full traceability while also tracking carbon credit potential for each farmer.

In Togo, South Grown has taken a similar path, supporting **1,034 farmers** with intensive training on organic farming, environmental preservation, intercropping for food security, and sustainable soil management.

To strengthen transparency and traceability, South Grown introduced the G-Smile digital mapping tool, which captures farm locations and detailed production data. Across the project, 31 cooperatives under the Gamélé umbrella are now on track for both organic and fair-trade certification, unlocking access to premium markets. A key feature of both projects is the strong focus on climate resilience through biodiversity. Farmers are trained on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) such as:

- Use of organic inputs
- Practicing intercropping
- Farm Maintenance after harvest
- Nature Protection methods

Instead of clearing land completely, farmers now preserve beneficial plants, improve soil health, and build resilience against unpredictable weather patterns.

## Voices of Change: A Healthier Way of Farming

For farmers like Kpelafia Esor-Wazina from Passouadé, the journey toward sustainability has changed everything:

“Before, I was just looking for a market for my raw cashew nuts, but partnering with South Grown gave me more than a buyer. They showed me how to run a fully organic farm. Now, people visit my farm to learn, and we’re on our way to getting certified.”

~ Kpelafia Esor-Wazina Farmer from Passouadé

Certification audits are underway, and soon, farmers who meet the standards will be officially recognized as organic and fair-trade producers, unlocking better opportunities in global markets. Yet, the real success stories go beyond increased income.

Across the communities, farmers see healthier soil, cleaner water, and resilient farms.



## What Comes Next: Carbon Credits and Waste turned into Wealth

While the training and certification procedure has been rolled out, the next phase is set to expand impact. South Grown will soon recycle cashew waste into charcoal briquettes, providing a cleaner energy source and new income, especially for women. Not only will this reduce environmental pressure and deforestation, but it will also offer a new revenue stream, particularly for women using wood as source of energy.

South Grown’s long-term vision includes establishing a cashew processing unit in the region of Kara, ensuring that value addition stays within the region and profits flow directly to the farmers.

The Matching Grant Fund is implemented as part of the Joint Action “Business Support Facility for Resilient Agricultural Value Chains” co-funded by the European Union under the Samoa agreement with OACPS and by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by GIZ.

