



Cocoa of Excellence (CoEx) Programme: Glossary of terms for flavour evaluation

with matching descriptors and examples of some origins/reference notes for calibration.

Reference: *Cocoa of Excellence Technical Committee, June 2017*

Attribute Intensity	Meaning	Common intensity usage
0	None present	Absent - Low Intensity
1	Just a trace and may not be found if tasted again	
2	Present in the sample	
3 to 5	Clearly characterizing the sample	Medium intensity
6 to 8	Dominant characterization of the sample	Strong intensity
9 to 10	Maximum. Over powers some other flavour notes in the sample	

Descriptor	Description	Examples of Origins/References (for calibration) Refer to Attribute Intensity and Meaning scale
Cocoa	Typical flavour of cocoa beans that are well fermented, roasted and free of defects. Cocoa flavour of chocolate bars.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absent - low intensity = 0 - 2 (unfermented cocoa, some Criollos) Medium intensity = 4 - 6 (fully fermented, Indonesia, PNG and Arriba) Strong intensity = 8 - 9 (West Africa)
Acidity	Perceived at the front of the tongue. Total acidity is the sum of the individual acidities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acid - Fruit: citric or other fruit acids Acid - Acetic: vinegar (you can smell it in the sample) Acid - Lactic: sour milk, yogurt, vomit like in some extreme cases Acid - Mineral / Butyric: metallic tasting, rancid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absent - low intensity = 0 - 2 (West Africa) Medium intensity = 3 - 5 (Arriba, Peru) Strong intensity = 6 - 8 (PNG and Malaysia)
Bitterness	Perceived on the rear of the tongue/ top of the throat. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caffeine (coffee), some beers, grapefruit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low intensity = 1 - 2 (some ancient Criollo) Medium (normal) intensity = 3 - 5 (West Africa) Strong intensity = 6 - 8 (unfermented cocoa)
Astringency	The mouth drying effect that boosts the production of saliva. Perceived between tongue and palate, at the back of the front teeth and inside lips and gums or a mild velvety sensation on sides of mouth and tongue. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raw nut skins, green banana skins, tannins in some wines or beers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low intensity = 2 - 3 (some ancient Criollos) Moderate (normal) intensity = 3 - 4 (West Africa) Medium intensity = 5 - 6 (Arriba) Strong intensity = 7 - 10 (unfermented cocoa)
Fruity / Fresh Fruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fruit - Berry: red or black currant, raspberry, blackberry Fruit - Citrus: orange, lemon, lime, grapefruit, or generic sensation to be a citrus Fruit - Dark: cherry, plum Fruit - Yellow / Orange / White flesh: apricot, peach, pear Fruit - Tropical: banana, passion fruit, pineapple, mango, soursop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absent - low intensity = 0 - 2 (West Africa) Medium intensity = 3 - 5 (some Central America, Venezuela, fermented Asia Pacific) Strong intensity = 6 - 7 (some Central America, PNG, some Trinidad (TSH))
Fruity / Brownded Fruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fruit - Dried: dried apricot, banana, raisin, fig that has undergone the drying process Fruit - Brown: dark raisin, date, prune Fruit - Over ripe: over ripe fruit as a step to over-fermentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absent - low intensity = 0 - 2 (West Africa) Medium intensity = 3 - 5 (fully fermented Indonesia) Strong intensity = 6 - 7 (PNG, some Caribbean origins, over-fermented beans)
Floral (1/2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Floral - Grassy / Green vegetal / Herbal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> fresh cut grass, young green leaf green vegetal, mature crushed leaves, dark green note, green beans, cooked bell peppers, dark green vegetables herbal / dried green herbs like thyme, rosemary, hay, straw 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absent - low intensity = 0 - 2 (West Africa) Medium - strong intensity = 3 - 7 (Arriba, Scavina, some Trinidad (TSH), Ecuador Arriba and some Peru origin beans tend to be floral, herbal, as well as floral orange blossom, earthy)

Descriptor	Description	Examples of Origins/References (for calibration) Refer to Attribute Intensity and Meaning scale
Floral (2/2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floral - Earthy / Mushroom / Moss / Woodsy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - earthy, smell of dampness coming up from the soil after the rain - mushroom, damp moss, rich base note associated with earthy - woody, decomposing wood • Floral - Orange blossom: orange blossom flavour specifically • Floral - Flowers: scent / perfume of flowers such as jasmine, honeysuckle, rose, lilac 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absent - low intensity = 0 - 2 (West Africa) • Medium - strong intensity = 3 - 7 (Arriba, Scavina, some Trinidad (TSH), Ecuador Arriba and some Peru origin beans tend to be floral, herbal, as well as floral orange blossom, earthy)
Woody	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wood - Light wood: ash, beech, maple, white pine, cut cocoa tree • Wood - Dark wood: oak, walnut, teak • Wood - Resin: pine pitch, cedar, resin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absent - low intensity = 0 - 2 (various origins, varies by clone and fermentation) • Medium intensity = 3 - 5 (West Africa, often, but not always, associated with well fermented beans)
Spicy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spicy - Spices: nutmeg, cinnamon, cloves, cardamom, paprika, tonka, vanilla, pepper • Spicy - Tobacco: the smell of pipe tobacco or dried tobacco leave • Spicy - Savory / Umami: sodium glutamate, umami effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absent - low intensity = 0 - 2 (most origins, Spicy is a less common attribute) • Medium intensity = 3 - 5 (some Ivorian beans, the spice tobacco is seen in West Africa, particularly Ivorian beans)
Nutty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutty - Nut flesh: the edible kernel of a nut, hazelnut, macadamia nut, pecan nut, walnut, peanut, cashew • Nutty - Nut skins: sharp astringent sensation like skins of hazelnuts and walnuts and other raw nuts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequently just as a trace / mild note = 2 - 3 • Can be pronounced = 5 - 8 (some ancient Criollo)
Sweet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sweet / Caramel / Panela / Browned sugar / Sucrose: describes liquors with a characteristic sweet flavour from a range of white refined sugar to unrefined caramelized cane juice (panela) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absent - low intensity = 0 - 2 (West Africa) • Medium intensity = 3 - 4 (some Venezuela) • Strong intensity = 5 - 8 (some ancient Criollo)
Roasted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A measure of the extent of roasting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 = no browned notes, raw beans • 5 = medium roast • 10 = severely burnt
Off Flavours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dirty / Dusty: unpleasant character, dusty road • Meaty / Animal / Leather: cured meat, ham, rendered fat, rancid animal fat, leather store, horse saddles with dirty animal notes like sweat or urine • Over-fermented / Rotten fruit: decomposition of fruit, associated with over-fermentation or non-uniform fermentation • Putrid / Manure: wet decomposing vegetal matter, wet center of a compost heap, farm yard animal manure • Smoky: contamination from burning vegetative matter, other smoky off flavours, diesel fumes • Mouldy: characteristic of mould growth, blue cheese • Other Off Flavour: insecticide, petroleum, paint, tires, chemicals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More frequently found in unfermented / badly under-fermented cocoa beans • Can also be associated with use of some diseased beans in fermentation or improper fermentation • Associated predominantly with diseased beans and some severe over-fermentation / non-uniform fermentation • Absorbed during drying or storage in a smoke-filled room • Beans can show internal mould in cut test and not necessarily taste mouldy. Beans showing no internal mould in the cut test may taste mouldy either because of sampling variation or contamination with mould taint flavours
Global Quality	<p>It reflects the overall impression of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the expressed flavour potential 2. the uniqueness of the sample 3. the balance of flavour and cleanliness of the finish <p>It celebrates the expression of genetics and terroir diversity through the farmer's knowhow/savoir-faire.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No off flavour must be present and bitterness and astringency must be in balance and in moderate/normal range in giving a high scoring (>6) for Global Quality. • Zero for Global Quality means a serious and overwhelming flaw is present. This is not a "veto" but is a clear statement of the quality - or in this case lack thereof.