



Press Release

Neckarsulm, June 18, 2026

Lidl wins the Fairtrade Award 2026 in the “Company” Category

One step closer to a living wage for cocoa farmers without additional costs for consumers

Lidl is setting new standards for the entire food retail industry: With its 20-year Fairtrade partnership and the new Fairtrade Living Income Program, the food retailer has won the 2026 Fairtrade Award in the "Company" category. Lidl is the first European food retailer to transition its entire private-label chocolate bar assortment in its permanent product lineup—with a minimum term of five years and simultaneously across five countries—to a Living Income program developed by Fairtrade, thereby contributing to living incomes for cocoa farmers in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire.

The program underscores the company's commitment to taking responsibility throughout the entire value chain. As part of its CSR strategy, Lidl focuses on measurable impact and demonstrates that fair supply chains and competitive prices are not mutually exclusive.

“This award represents what becomes possible when ambition and scale come together. With the Living Income chocolate bars, we're not making isolated changes, but rather long-term changes across our entire permanent chocolate bar lineup. In doing so, we're creating better prospects for cocoa farmers, offering our customers fair-trade enjoyment at no extra cost, and at the same time strengthening the sustainability of our supply chains. That is our understanding of responsibility: binding, scalable, and without compromises for the customer,” says Stefan Haensel, Head of Quality & Sustainability, Senior Vice President Lidl Stiftung & Co. KG.

Living Income Chocolate Bars: The Program in Detail

According to estimates, more than 90 percent of cocoa farmers in West Africa live below the poverty line. In Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, as many as 30 to 60 percent live in extreme poverty. At the same time, cocoa prices on the exchanges reached historic highs of over 10,000 U.S. dollars per metric ton in 2024. High world market prices do not fully reach producers and do not solve the structural problems.

Lidl has been committed to fairer conditions in the cocoa sector for more than ten years and was one of the first partners in the Fairtrade Cocoa Program as early as 2014. Since 2020, as part of the “Way To Go” initiative in collaboration with Fairtrade and local partners, more than 2,200 cocoa farmers in Ghana have been supported through additional payments and targeted investments—for example, in sustainable farming methods, productivity, and income diversification.



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“For 20 years now, we’ve shared a strong partnership with Fairtrade that demonstrates that sustainable consumption doesn’t have to be a privilege. Together, we are working to make fair and sustainable products accessible to millions of people, thereby democratizing sustainability. Because we know: reach creates impact,” says Christoph Pohl, Chief Merchandising Officer Lidl Stiftung & Co. KG.

With the Living Income program, Lidl is now taking a decisive step forward: In addition to the Fairtrade minimum price, the Fairtrade premium, and the Living Income Reference Price (LIRP), Lidl pays a fixed amount per metric ton of cocoa, known as the “booster.” This additional contribution goes directly toward increasing productivity and diversifying producers’ income.

The Living Income program for chocolate bars launched in March 2026 in five European markets: Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Austria. It applies to the entire permanent chocolate bar assortment of Lidl’s private labels “Fin Carré,” “J.D. Gross,” and “Vemondo,” is binding for at least five years, and is independent of fluctuations in the global market. Lidl bears the additional costs without passing them on to consumers. The impact is documented in collaboration with Fairtrade through baseline assessments and independently verified by FLOCERT. The program demonstrates that responsible sourcing across the entire bar chocolate assortment at consistent prices is possible and has the potential to become the European industry standard. An important milestone will follow in August 2026, when the booster payment is made for the first time. In the spring of 2027, the first chocolate bars will be available to customers in a redesigned package.

Find more information on the Living Income chocolate bars [here](#).

Further information about Lidl and Fairtrade can be found at www.lidl.de/fairtrade.

About the Fairtrade Award

For the tenth time, Fairtrade Germany is presenting the Fairtrade Awards to honor companies and civil society advocates dedicated to fair trade. The award in the "Company" category recognizes Fairtrade partners who actively champion global trade justice through concrete projects. The prize is awarded across a total of six categories, alongside a public choice award.

About Lidl

Based in Neckarsulm, Germany, Lidl is a part of Schwarz Group and counts among the leading food retail companies in Germany and Europe. Lidl is currently active in 32 countries, where it operates around 12,900 stores and more than 230 goods distribution and logistics centers, while employing over 395,000 members of staff.



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At Lidl, we place a high value on offering our customers the optimum price-performance ratio. Simplicity and a focus on process dictate the daily routines in our stores, regional distribution centers and national headquarters. Lidl Stiftung & Co. KG is based in Neckarsulm, Germany. It is the system provider that supplies the basis for the local activities of the national companies. In coordination with the national companies, it provides the framework for operational business and is responsible for conceiving and designing standardized processes worldwide.

In its daily operations, Lidl assumes responsibility for people, society and the environment. Sustainability for Lidl means meeting its promise of quality every day anew.

Performance, respect, trust, grounded and belonging are the values at the heart of our corporate culture at Lidl. They shape our daily actions and form the basis of our success as a company.

Lidl generated store revenue of 140.2 billion euros in fiscal year 2025. The total revenue of the companies of Schwarz Group for fiscal year 2025 amounted to 185.6 billion euros.