

What is the demand for cocoa on the European market?

Last updated:
26 March 2025

Europe is the largest importer of cocoa beans, cocoa paste, cocoa butter and cocoa powder in the world. Europe is also an important trade hub for cocoa and chocolate products. The demand for certified and sustainable cocoa on the market is high. New EU regulations, such as the European Regulation on Deforestation-free Products (EUDR), are likely going to have a major impact on cocoa imports. As inflation and higher living costs tighten household budgets, consumers may choose cheaper chocolate products. At the same time, rising cocoa prices could reduce demand, which may change the market as affordability becomes more important than luxury options.

Contents of this page

1. [What makes Europe an interesting market for this sector?](#)
2. [Which European markets offer most opportunities?](#)
3. [Which cocoa products from developing countries have most potential on the European market?](#)

1. What makes Europe an interesting market for this sector?

The market for cocoa and chocolate is expanding. In 2024, the global cocoa bean market was [valued at USD 17.2 billion](#). It is expected to grow by almost 7% per year to USD 24 billion by 2029. The [global industrial chocolate market is expected to grow at an average annual rate of 4.5%](#) between 2023 and 2030.

Europe holds the largest share of the global market of cocoa beans, cocoa products and chocolate. The [European chocolate market was valued at EUR 47.3 billion](#) in 2024. This was [43% of the global value share](#), which means that it the world's largest market. This strong demand makes Europe the world's largest importer of cocoa beans and cocoa products. In 2023, the European cocoa market was [valued at USD 9.89 billion](#). The demand for certified cocoa is high, and the premium/organic segment is growing as well.

This study includes data for the European Union (EU) and for Europe as a whole. Here, "Europe" includes all European countries, including non-EU countries in geographical Europe, such as Switzerland, the United Kingdom (UK) and Norway.

Europe is the world's largest importer of cocoa beans

Most imports of cocoa to Europe are cocoa beans (HS code 180100). The EU is the world's largest importer of cocoa beans, making up [58% of global imports](#). Europe's total import of cocoa beans from producing countries was 1.8 million tonnes in 2023 (based on Eurostat and Trade Map data). Africa, particularly the Ivory Coast and Ghana, dominates global cocoa production, supplying over 70% of the world's cocoa (based on [2023/2024 ICCO forecasts](#)).

However, cocoa bean exports to Europe have been declining, at an average rate of 2% each year between 2019 and 2023. Most of this decrease happened from 2019 to 2020, and cocoa bean imports have not recovered from

this decrease. The drop was partly due to the increased processing of cocoa beans in West Africa, where more beans are being processed locally and exported as semi-finished products like cocoa paste, cocoa butter and cocoa powder. You can read more about this in the [next section](#).

Source: Eurostat and Trade Map 2024

In comparison, the global production of cocoa also [decreased by 2% per year](#) between 2019-2020 and 2023-2024. Most of this decline occurred between the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 seasons. This was mostly due to the decrease in production in the Ivory Coast and Ghana. The combined decrease for the Ivory Coast and Ghana made up 98% of the global decrease in production.

Source: ICCO 2024

Around 90% of all cocoa exported to Europe is bulk cocoa. Bulk cocoa is cocoa of low or standard quality and it is traded in large volumes. The main supplying countries are the Ivory Coast, Ghana, Nigeria and Cameroon. European importers mainly focus on importing bulk cocoa beans and products. You can read more about bulk cocoa in the CBI study [Exporting bulk cocoa to Europe](#).

Many of the largest hubs for cocoa trade are in Europe

Many of the world's largest cocoa trading hubs are in Europe. The biggest hubs are the Port of Amsterdam in the Netherlands, the port of Antwerp-Bruges in Belgium, the Port of Hamburg and Port of Bremen in Germany and the HAROPA port in France.

The Port of Amsterdam is the [largest cocoa cluster in the world](#). In 2023, the Netherlands imported 881,000 tonnes of cocoa beans from producing countries. This made up 49% of Europe's total cocoa bean imports. Belgium followed with 312,000 tonnes, Germany with 185,000 tonnes and Spain with 90,000 tonnes. The Port of Antwerp-Bruges in Belgium is [the world's second-largest cocoa port](#). See [section 2](#) for more details about specific markets.

Once cocoa has reached Europe, it is either processed locally or shipped to other European countries. In 2023, 23% of all imported cocoa beans were re-exported within Europe.

The Netherlands and Belgium are the main hubs for the re-export of cocoa beans in Europe. In 2023, the Netherlands re-exported 187,000 tonnes of cocoa beans and Belgium re-exported 185,000 tonnes. For Belgium, this made up 57% of the total cocoa bean imports, and for the Netherlands, it made up 21% of imported cocoa beans. Together, they account for 90% of all re-exported cocoa beans within Europe. France is also an important exporter, with 24,000 tonnes (16% of their total imports) and so is Germany, with 9,000 tonnes (2%).

Switzerland is an important global hub for cocoa trading, although most of the trading out of Switzerland is administrative rather than physical. Many of the largest cocoa and chocolate companies have trading offices in Switzerland, including [Barry Callebaut](#), [Cargill](#), [Hershey](#) and [Nestlé](#).

Source: Eurostat and Trade Map 2024

For exporters, it is important to note that cocoa beans shipped to countries like the Netherlands and Belgium often end up on the market in other European countries.

Europe leads the world in industrial demand for cocoa beans

Grinding is a key step in cocoa processing. Cocoa bean grinding is therefore a good indication for market

demand. Europe is the world's largest grinding region, accounting for 1,745,000 tonnes (37% of global cocoa grinding). Asia & Oceania is next at 1,085,000 tonnes (23%), followed by Africa with 973,000 tonnes (20%) and the Americas with 949,000 tonnes (20%).

Demand was lower than supply in 2019-2021. Global grindings were much lower than global production in 2020-2021, as [cocoa grinding slowed during the COVID-19 pandemic](#). Grinding increased in the next three seasons (2021-2023) as the global market recovered from the pandemic.

Source: ICCO 2024

Cocoa grinding in producing countries has increased steadily as grinding shifts from consuming countries to producing countries. In [2015](#), the Ivory Coast overtook the Netherlands as the world's largest grinder. Global grinding increased by 4% between 2018 and 2023, and by 10% in producing countries. In 2023, 35-40% of the cocoa production in the Ivory Coast was processed locally. The government has a goal of [increasing this to at least 50%](#).

However, the 2023-2024 season saw a sharp reduction in both production and grinding. Global grinding was forecasted to decrease by 306,000 tonnes in the year 2023-2024. This was mainly due to a decrease in the Ivory Coast and Ghana, with the Ivory Coast decreasing its grinding by 143,000 tonnes (-22%) and Ghana by 70,000 tonnes (-39%). Together, they accounted for 70% of the global decrease in grinding. European grinding decreased by a smaller margin of 3%, the Americas decreased by 3% and Asia & Oceania by just 1%.

Source: ICCO 2024

This decrease in grinding is due to several factors, mostly because production in these countries has decreased. Read more about this in the section on [developments and events](#).

Europe is the world's largest importer of semi-finished cocoa products

Europe is also the world's [largest importer of cocoa paste, cocoa butter, cocoa powder and chocolate](#). From 2019 to 2023, the combined imports of cocoa paste, cocoa butter and cocoa powder increased by 1%. Cocoa paste imports increased slightly, from 345,000 to 347,000 tonnes. Cocoa butter imports rose by 4% per year, from 238,000 tonnes to 273,000 tonnes. Cocoa powder imports decreased from 58,000 tonnes to 50,000 tonnes. Cocoa powder imports have fluctuated year to year, so it is not clear if the decrease is part of a trend. It could also be due to the timing of when powder is shipped, the trading of powder within Europe and switching between processing powder locally to importing it.

Source: Eurostat and Trade Map 2024

For cocoa paste, the combined data is used for 180310: Cocoa Paste, Not Defatted and 180320: Cocoa Paste, Wholly Or Partly Defatted.

Europe is not a major importer of chocolate. Most of the chocolate consumed in Europe is also manufactured in Europe or is imported from non-producing countries. The Ivory Coast (48,200 tonnes), Colombia (2,000 tonnes) and Malaysia (1,600 tonnes) were the only producing countries that exported more than 1,000 tonnes of chocolate to Europe in 2023.

Europe is the world's largest chocolate producer and exporter

Europe dominates global chocolate production. The EU [produced an estimated 3.6 million tonnes of final chocolate products in 2019](#) (more recent data was not yet published in 2024). Germany was the leading

producer of chocolate as a consumer product, followed by Italy, France, the Netherlands, Belgium and Poland.

Many global cocoa and chocolate companies have their headquarters in Europe. [Barry Callebaut](#) is the largest manufacturer of chocolate and cocoa products. In 2023, Barry Callebaut operated 66 factories globally, with a product sales volume of 2.3 million tonnes. Other large manufacturers in the industrial chocolate market are [Cargill](#), [Cémoi](#), [Fuji Oil/Blomer](#), [Natra](#) and [Puratos](#).

Europe has many chocolate manufacturers of all sizes that all work with different cocoa qualities. Globally, six multinational companies represent the bulk of the market for final chocolate products: [Nestlé](#), [Mondelēz](#), [Mars](#), [Hershey](#), [Lindt & Sprüngli](#) and [Ferrero](#). Except for Hershey, all six multinationals have production plants in Europe. According to the [2022 Cocoa Barometer](#), these six companies accounted for more than 1.7 million tonnes of cocoa in 2020/2021, representing 40% of global cocoa production.

Europe is also the world's largest exporter of chocolate. In 2023, [EU Member States exported 867,000 tonnes of chocolate](#) to non-EU markets. Germany led these chocolate exports, accounting for 26% of the total volume in 2022. They were followed by the Netherlands (14%), Poland (13%), Belgium (11%) and Italy (11%). The UK was the main destination of exports, receiving 36% of all EU chocolate exports.

The value of chocolate exports from Europe to the United States has [greatly increased the last few years](#). The total value was USD 853 million in 2022, compared to around USD 710 million in 2021 and USD 560 million in 2020.

The countries with the highest chocolate consumption per person are in Europe

Cocoa is most commonly consumed in chocolate confectionery. [According to the Global Cocoa Market Study report](#), 43% of global cocoa consumption in 2017 was in chocolate confectionery. A lot of cocoa is also consumed in drinks (such as chocolate milk), but most of the largest cocoa drink markets are outside Europe. The main countries that consume chocolate milk are Brazil, Indonesia, the United States, Mexico and Spain.

The world's average chocolate consumption amounts to an estimated [0.9 kg per person per year](#). European countries have significantly higher averages. In 2023, [people in Switzerland consumed the most chocolate per person](#) at 10.9 kg. They were followed by Estonia (9.0 kg), Germany (8.9 kg), Finland (8.6 kg) and Lithuania (6.9 kg).

Europe has high demand for certified cocoa

Europe is the world's largest market for certified cocoa. The biggest voluntary sustainability programmes are Rainforest Alliance, Fairtrade International and organic certifications.

Rainforest Alliance

Rainforest Alliance has the largest certified cocoa programme, amounting to [1,321,000 tonnes sold in 2023](#). This is over one quarter of the [estimated global production in 2022-2023](#). Europe is the main market for Rainforest Alliance cocoa. In 2023, 75% of Rainforest Alliance certified cocoa was imported by Europe.

The top European importers of Rainforest Alliance cocoa are the Netherlands (445,000 tonnes), France (198,000 tonnes), the UK (188,000 tonnes) and Switzerland (159,000 tonnes). Together, they represent 73% of all Rainforest Alliance imports worldwide. A large share of this cocoa is re-exported to other European countries.

Source: [Rainforest Alliance Cocoa Certification Report 2023](#)

Fairtrade

Fairtrade cocoa sales steadily grew from 2018 to 2022, reaching 233,000 tonnes in 2022. Total Fairtrade cocoa sales in 2022 represented less than 5% of the [estimated global production in 2021-2022](#). Data for 2023 was still unavailable in late 2024.

Europe is also the key market for Fairtrade cocoa. The United Kingdom and Germany are the largest markets for Fairtrade cocoa.

Organic

Europe is an attractive market for organic cocoa. Europe imported a total of 56,000 tonnes of organic cocoa beans in 2023, according to data from [TRACES](#). Organic cocoa imports decreased slightly by 4% each year between 2019 and 2023. Imports of organic cocoa paste, cocoa powder and chocolate increased during this time, but the total volumes were much smaller than the cocoa bean imports.

Organic products are part of the Farm-to-Fork strategy of the EU Green Deal. The [action plan for organic production](#) aims to increase the consumption of organic products. This could lead to an increased demand for organic cocoa or chocolate products. [New regulations were passed in 2022](#) to support this strategy.

Source: [TRACES](#) 2024

The Netherlands is the largest EU importer of organic cocoa beans, at 26,000 tonnes in 2023. They were followed by Belgium (17,000 tonnes), Italy (7,000 tonnes), Germany (4,000 tonnes) and Spain (2,000 tonnes).

The demand for organic and Fairtrade certified cocoa beans is growing on the European market. There has been a sharp increase in sales of cocoa beans that are both organic and Fairtrade certified. Between 2016 and 2020, cocoa beans that were certified with both standards increased by 13.5% per year, to almost [39,000 tonnes](#) in 2020.

For more information, read the CBI study [Exporting certified cocoa to Europe](#).

Premium cocoa is a small but a growing market segment

The premium cocoa segment includes cocoa with [a superior quality and/or value](#). Premium cocoa is often sold at higher prices, above bulk market prices. Premium cocoa has specific qualities, such as low defect quantification, high quality and flavour profiles, a unique origin or sustainability-related qualities. Typically, certification is less important for the premium segment. Speciality cocoa is part of the premium segment and [makes up less than 10% of the market](#).

There is a growing demand for speciality chocolate in traditional European consuming countries like [Belgium](#), [France](#), [Germany](#), [Italy](#), [Switzerland](#) and the [United Kingdom](#). Consumption in this segment is associated with high incomes, but also with consumer awareness and market exposure. Mainstream chocolate companies like Ferrero, Mars and Mondelēz are increasingly investing in premium options. Retailers are developing high-end private label products. This makes speciality chocolates accessible across various price ranges, for different consumers.

Read more about premium and speciality cocoa in the CBI study [The European market potential for speciality cocoa](#).

Recent developments and events significantly impacted cocoa demand

The global cocoa market has changed a lot in the past few years. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the cocoa value chain and global sales volumes. The cocoa market slowly recovered in 2021-2022, as chocolate

demand increased. The four largest public chocolate corporations, Hershey, Lindt, Mondelēz and Nestlé, made [nearly USD 15 billion in profits](#) from confectionery since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, Barry Callebaut experienced a [“progressive volume recovery”](#) in 2022-2023.

However, there have been many new disruptions since then. The demand has been affected by a global rise in consumer prices and inflation rates. New EU regulations are affecting global cocoa supply chains. Production in West Africa has decreased significantly. There was also a substantial increase in the price of cocoa in 2023-2024. These and other factors have had a major impact on demand.

There has been a price surge of cocoa and chocolate

In 2024, the price of cocoa rose steeply from USD 2,000-3,000 per tonne in 2023 to over USD 10,000 per tonne in 2024. The price has risen and fallen between USD 6,000 and 8,000 since then and is expected to stay high in the short term. Due to the changing prices, it is hard to predict prices in the long term. However, some forecasters are expecting the price to [stabilise somewhere between the early 2023 price and the record-high price of 2024](#).

As a result, chocolate companies are [increasing the price of their chocolate products](#). The price of one chocolate bar at the biggest Dutch retailers [went up by more than 10% in the first half of 2024](#). Some companies are also [making their chocolate products](#) smaller.

Rising prices do not necessarily benefit individual producers. The supply shortage is partly caused by lower yields. Prices are going up, but farmers have less cocoa to sell and may not earn more overall. This is especially the case in the Ivory Coast and Ghana, where production has decreased significantly.

Additionally, global market price increases do not always mean higher earnings for producers. In Ghana and the Ivory Coast, the regulators set the farm-gate price for each harvest. The farm-gate price was below the international market price in the 2023-2024 season. This led to smuggling across the borders to other countries, where cocoa can be sold for a higher market price. Estimates suggest [up to 150,000 tonnes were exported illegally out of the Ivory Coast](#) during this period. Ghana is estimated to have [lost up to 160,000 tonnes to smuggling](#) in the 2023-2024 season.

There is a supply shortage

A shortage in the cocoa supply is one reason for the strong price increases. There is not enough cocoa available to meet the demand. A lower supply pushes up the prices.

Cocoa production has decreased for several reasons. Bad weather conditions and [El Niño](#) negatively impacted cocoa yields. In 2023, the Ivory Coast [stopped selling contracts for cocoa exports for the 2023-2024 season](#), due to uncertainty about meeting sales volumes. In August 2024, the International Cocoa Organisation (ICCO) reported a [production deficit of 462,000 tonnes for the 2023-2024 season](#). World production is forecasted to be 14% lower than in the previous season.

This decline is mainly due to a [decrease in production in the Ivory Coast and Ghana](#). The Ivory Coast decreased its production by 501,000 tonnes and Ghana by 204,000 tonnes compared to the previous season. Together, this amounted to 98% of the total reduction in global production. These countries are the two biggest cocoa producers in the world, so this has a large impact on global supply.

Production in West Africa is declining for several reasons. [Droughts, fires and the impact of climate change](#) are reducing the yields. Years of under-investment in cocoa production has prevented farmers from making the necessary investments in their farms. In Ghana, illegal mining (*galamsay*) is [destroying cocoa farms and making farms less productive](#). The [swollen shoot disease has infected 31% of total growing land](#) in Ghana.

Global supply is expected to stay lower in the short-term. However, over-supply is a possibility in the future.

Many new farms are being created in response to the higher price of cocoa. These will start to supply cocoa in 3-5 years, and it is possible that this will lead to an over-supply of cocoa. This is more likely in Latin America, where investments in cocoa are high.

EUDR regulations influence which cocoa can be shipped to Europe

The new [EU Regulation for Deforestation-free Products](#) (EUDR) could further put pressure on the supply. Under the EUDR, companies must prove that their products do not come from recently deforested land or have contributed to forest degradation. Companies may struggle to comply with the EUDR because [over 55% of cocoa from the Ivory Coast is untraceable](#). [Farmers are not receiving](#) enough support to prepare for the EUDR. These and other factors could stop some cocoa from being shipped to the EU. The EUDR also bans the expansion of cocoa production into forests.

This has led to a short-term rush on imports before the regulation becomes active. There have been reports of [stockpiling in Europe before the EUDR](#) enters into force. There was also some [panic buying](#) in early 2024 because of the expected shortage.

In December 2024, the European Union postponed the implementation of the EUDR by one year, to 30 December 2025. Micro and small enterprises will have an additional six months to comply. This means that the industry will have more time to prepare.

For exporters, it is important to prepare your exports in compliance with the EUDR and to support farmers to prepare for this. Read the CBI study [Tips on how to become EUDR compliant in cocoa](#) for more information.

Demand is changing

The price increase in cocoa is also making chocolate more expensive. In May 2024, the consumer price of cocoa and powdered chocolate in the EU was [6% higher than in May 2023](#). This is affecting the demand for chocolate.

The rising cost of living and inflation could make European consumers shift their demand to cheaper chocolate products. This may reduce the demand for organic or speciality cocoa and increase the demand for commercial, bulk cocoa.

Recent developments give multinationals some advantages over SME exporters

Cocoa bean shortages in the Ivory Coast are impacting local exporters. Shortages in the Ivory Coast have caused some local exporters to default on their contracts. These cocoa bean shortages are [affecting local exporters more than international exporters](#). It is also often easier for multinationals to buy certified cocoa. Local exporters cannot compete because [multinationals have a monopoly on certified cocoa](#).

The cocoa trade market has seen a lot of companies merging over the past years. For example, in 2018, [Fuji Oil bought Blommer](#), the largest ingredient chocolate manufacturer in North America. In 2021, [the Baronie Group took over Cémoi](#). Mars bought the premium chocolate brand [Hotel Chocolat](#) and the snack company [Kellanova](#) in 2024. This could make it more challenging for SME exporters to enter the market.

Tips:

Stay informed about the latest developments in cocoa supply and demand. Regularly check the International Cocoa Organization (ICCO) website for its [monthly review of the cocoa market](#), the latest developments in cocoa bean supply and demand and the cocoa futures markets. Subscribe to the [Confectionery News](#) or [World Cocoa Foundation](#) (WCF) newsletters to receive the latest information.

Visit [EU Access2Markets](#) to analyse European trade dynamics and develop your export strategy. If you select a country as your reporting country, you will be able to follow developments such as trade flows and changing patterns in direct and indirect imports.

Check the [European Cocoa Association](#) website for the latest data on grinding activities in Europe.

Refer to the CBI study [Trends in the European cocoa market](#) to learn more about which trends offer opportunities in the market.

2. Which European markets offer most opportunities?

Europe offers many opportunities to exporters of cocoa beans, cocoa paste, cocoa butter and cocoa powder. The European countries that offer the most opportunities have large and growing import volumes, source directly from producing countries and import cocoa from multiple producing countries.

The Netherlands, Germany and Belgium stand out as the most interesting markets for cocoa bean exporters. Other markets, such as France, Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom and Switzerland are also attractive. These countries are also among the largest importers of cocoa paste, cocoa butter and cocoa powder.

Source: Eurostat and Trade Map 2024

The Netherlands is an important trade hub within Europe

[The Netherlands](#) is the largest importer of cocoa in the world. It handles about 20-25% of the global cocoa trade annually. In 2023, the Netherlands imported 881,000 tonnes of cocoa beans, with 98% coming from producing countries. Between 2019 and 2023, cocoa bean imports decreased by 4%.

The Netherlands is also Europe's largest re-exporter of cocoa beans, re-exporting 187,000 tonnes in 2023. After a large drop from 2018 to 2019, Dutch re-exports have stayed steady from 2019 to 2023. Germany is the most important destination of Dutch re-exports. 77% of Dutch cocoa bean exports were shipped to Germany in 2023. Only a small percentage of Dutch cocoa bean imports is consumed in the Netherlands as finished products. Among members of the Dutch platform DISCO, only [4% of imported cocoa volumes were used for the Dutch consumer market](#) in 2020.

Cocoa paste, cocoa butter and cocoa powder volumes are much smaller than that of cocoa bean imports, but the volumes are still large. The Netherlands is Europe's largest importer of cocoa paste, cocoa butter and cocoa powder from producing countries.

Cocoa paste and cocoa butter imports have been rising, while cocoa powder imports are going down. Cocoa paste imports increased by 3% between 2019 and 2023, and cocoa butter imports also increased by 3%. Cocoa powder imports have dropped by 5% per year. Since the Netherlands was responsible for 80% of all European powder imports from producing countries in 2023, this decrease is similar to the total decrease described in [the first section](#).

Source: Eurostat and Trade Map 2024

The Netherlands has the second-largest cocoa grinding industry globally, after the Ivory Coast. Between 2003 and 2020, [cocoa grindings grew by 1.9% annually](#). By 2023-2024, demand was forecasted at [600,000 tonnes](#).

Although cocoa grinding within the cocoa origin countries has been increasing steadily (before the large decline in 2023-2024), the Dutch cocoa grinding industry is still a key player in cocoa processing. The Netherlands has expertise and a focus on innovation and sustainability. It also has a large [concentration of cocoa facilities and companies](#).

The Netherlands is Europe's largest importer of cocoa paste, cocoa butter and cocoa powder from producing countries. This is especially the case for cocoa powder. In 2023, the Netherlands was responsible for 80% of all European cocoa powder imports.

Source: Eurostat and Trade Map 2024

The Netherlands is the [world's market leader for cocoa powder exports](#), with an export share of about 35%. This cocoa powder is mainly exported to the United States, Germany, Spain, Russia, Belgium and France. Additionally, the Netherlands plays a major role in purchasing and exporting cocoa butter. The Netherlands is therefore an interesting market for cocoa paste, cocoa butter and cocoa powder. It is also a key competitor if you are exporting these products to other countries.

The Netherlands is the world's largest importer of certified cocoa. More than one-third of all Rainforest Alliance sales in 2023 went to the Netherlands. [100% of the cocoa bought by the Retail and Small Manufacturers members of DISCO is certified](#).

The Netherlands is also Europe's largest importer of organic cocoa. The Netherlands imported 26,000 tonnes of organic cocoa beans in 2023, representing 47% of total European organic cocoa imports.

European organic cocoa imports decreased a lot between 2022 and 2023. This is mostly due to a large decrease in imports to the Netherlands. Imports have fluctuated year to year, so it's not clear yet whether this is part of a larger trend.

Germany has a large cocoa and chocolate industry

In 2023, [Germany](#) imported 185,000 tonnes of cocoa beans from producing countries. Germany's import volume from producing countries has been steadily declining. Between 2019 and 2023, imports from these countries fell by 5% each year, driven largely by a sharp drop from 2022 to 2023. This decrease is partly because Germany is buying more cocoa beans from European countries (increasing by 1% each year). Germany plays a limited role in trading cocoa beans, with only 5% of its cocoa bean imports in 2023 being re-exported.

Most cocoa beans enter Germany through [the Port of Hamburg](#), mainly to meet the needs of the production industry for chocolates and other cocoa products. Germany is home to Europe's second-largest cocoa processing industry, including companies like [August Storck](#), [Stollwerck](#) (part of Baronie group), [Schokinag Schokolade Industrie](#), [Cargill](#) and [Barry Callebaut](#).

Germany is Europe's second-largest cocoa grinder, with a forecasted grinding volume of 435,000 tonnes for 2023-2024. After a drop in grinding in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, [German grinding increased again in 2021](#). There was a [decrease in 2022](#) because of rising energy costs in Germany. However, [grinding rose again in 2024](#), even as grinding volumes in the rest of Europe continued to fall. Germany is also [one of Europe's largest buyers of cocoa butter and cocoa powder](#).

Germany has Europe's largest chocolate manufacturing industry. In 2022, almost [4.2 million tonnes](#) of confectionery products were produced in Germany, valued at over EUR 14 billion (including non-chocolate confectionery). This makes [confectionery the fourth largest sector of the German food industry](#). For comparison, this is around 10 times larger than the value of [all cocoa exports from Ghana \(USD 1.5 billion\)](#).

A large share of German chocolate is exported, making the country the world's largest exporter of chocolate.

Major markets for German chocolate products include other European countries: mainly France, the United Kingdom and Poland. In 2023, German chocolate exports were estimated at USD 6.3 billion, which was 16.9% of total chocolate exports.

In Germany, there is a lot of interest in the sustainability of cocoa production. In 2023, all members of the [German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa](#) (GISCO) committed to enabling a living income for 90% of all households supplying to GISCO members by 2030. Germany also has [social due diligence laws](#), covering human rights in the supply chains of tropical commodities like cocoa and coffee.

Germany has a large market for certified cocoa, both for local consumption and for re-export to other European countries. The proportion of certified cocoa in German confectionery has [increased steadily since 2011](#). While only 3% of chocolate confectionery contained certified cocoa in 2011, this figure increased to 81% by 2022. Germany is Europe's fourth largest importer of Rainforest Alliance cocoa and it is the country with the most members. [45% of German consumers are aware of the Rainforest Alliance certification](#).

Source: [BDSI](#)

Retailers play a significant role in the demand for certified cocoa. The German retail market is highly consolidated (many companies are merged). In 2020, [Edeka-Group](#), [Schwarz-Group](#) (Lidl and Kaufland), [REWE Group](#) and [Aldi](#) (Süd and Nord) made up [80% of total food sales in Germany](#). By 2022-2023, over 95% of the cocoa purchased by these retailers was certified. They primarily rely on Rainforest Alliance and Fairtrade certification, with a smaller share of organic or niche labelling.

Most cocoa products are produced by private label manufacturers such as [Stollwerck](#) and [Storck](#). Local importers include [Albrecht & Dill Trading](#) and [Walter Matter](#). The biggest chocolate brands are [Milka](#) (owned by Mondelez), [Ritter Sport](#) and [Lindt & Sprüngli](#). Together, they account for [more than 57% of the chocolate tablet market](#). All these companies buy and sell certified cocoa.

Belgium is an interesting market for cocoa bean distribution and chocolate production

In 2023, [Belgium](#) imported 312,000 tonnes of cocoa beans from producing countries, making it the second-largest cocoa bean importer in Europe. The top suppliers were the Ivory Coast, followed by Ghana and Nigeria, with Ecuador and the Dominican Republic as the main Latin American sources.

Cocoa beans enter Belgium via the second-largest cocoa port in Europe, [the Port of Antwerp-Bruges](#). A large share of these imports is re-exported to other European countries. The main destinations are Germany (57%), France (31%) and the Netherlands (5%). This makes Belgium, like the Netherlands, a key entry point for suppliers from producing countries.

Belgium is also a large manufacturer and exporter of chocolate products. The largest chocolate factory in the world is in Belgium. [The Barry Callebaut factory processes over 260,000 metric tonnes of chocolate each year](#). Other key processors in Belgium are [Cargill](#) and [Puratos](#).

Belgium is famous for its high-quality chocolate. The term 'Belgian chocolate' refers to chocolate produced in compliance with the rules of the [Belgian Chocolate Code](#). It ensures key production steps occur in Belgium to protect its reputation. In 2023, [Belgium accounted for 11% of global chocolate exports](#). This made Belgium the second-largest chocolate exporter in the world.

Belgium is also [one of Europe's largest buyers of cocoa butter and cocoa powder](#). However, in 2023, 99% of the cocoa butter imports came from within Europe, mainly from the Netherlands, France and Germany. An even larger share of cocoa powder imports came from within Europe, at 99.8%. This was also the case for cocoa paste, with 97% of Belgian imports coming from other European countries. This makes it challenging for

exporters from producing countries to compete in the market for cocoa paste, cocoa butter and cocoa powder.

Belgium is an interesting market for Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance and organic certified cocoa. In 2021, [65% of the chocolate produced in Belgium](#) was covered by a certification scheme or corporate sustainability scheme. This percentage has increased every year since 2018.

Fairtrade and Rainforest Alliance certifications are important on the Belgian market. The Fairtrade certification has grown a lot in Belgium over the last few years. The retail market share for Fairtrade cocoa [increased from 4.6% in 2018 to 20% in 2022](#). Belgium does not directly import much Rainforest Alliance cocoa, importing less than 1,000 tonnes in 2023. Most of the certified cocoa enters Belgium through other European countries. With 119 members registered in 2023, Belgium has the fourth-most Rainforest Alliance members in the world.

Belgium is Europe's second-largest importer of organic cocoa. Belgium imported 17,000 tonnes of organic cocoa beans in 2023, representing 30% of total European imports.

Switzerland is an important procurement hub

[Switzerland](#) is home to a strong chocolate manufacturing industry that produces many famous international brands. Large manufacturers include [Cailler](#), [Lindt & Sprüngli](#) and [Frey](#). [Over 70% of all chocolate produced in Switzerland is exported](#). Swiss chocolate exports were worth [USD 1 billion in 2023](#).

Many multinational companies have trade offices in Switzerland. However, a lot of the cocoa that is traded by these offices [never reaches Switzerland](#). Instead, it is often transported directly from one country to another country by Swiss firms. Companies base their trade hubs in Switzerland for several reasons, including [tax advantages, Switzerland's financial centre and Swiss regulations and policies](#).

Examples of companies with trade offices in Switzerland include Barry Callebaut, Cargill, Hershey, Nestlé and Ofi. [Cargill's global headquarters for freight trading and shipping operations](#) is based in Geneva, [Barry Callebaut's head office](#) is in Zurich and the [Hershey Trading division](#) is based in Switzerland as well. [Sucden also has an office in Switzerland](#). However, their main processing and manufacturing plants are based elsewhere.

Although some of the largest global cocoa companies are present in Switzerland, the country is only Europe's 8th largest cocoa bean importer, at 57,000 tonnes.

Swiss imports come almost entirely from producing countries, and in 2023 this accounted for 98% of total cocoa bean imports to the country, at 56,000 tonnes. [Switzerland mainly imports cocoa beans from Ghana and Ecuador](#). Switzerland does not physically import significant volumes of cocoa paste, cocoa butter or cocoa powder from producing countries.

The opportunities for premium products have been growing significantly. The market [for fair-trade cocoa is large](#) in Switzerland, and so is the market for organic products. The Swiss fair trade promotes long-term and fair trading relationships, stable and transparent prices, fair working conditions and sustainable farming methods. This can be through [Fairtrade International](#), but it can also be through other ethical programmes.

While [82% of all cocoa imported into Switzerland was sourced from "sustainable production"](#), only around one third of this was certified. The rest was verified through company sustainability programmes. The certified share is stable, while the verified share (via company sustainability programmes) is increasing. This could indicate that companies aim to achieve the 100% sustainable target by 2030 by increasing the amount of cocoa that complies with company sustainability programmes.

The United Kingdom is an interesting market for speciality or certified cocoa

The import and export market of cocoa beans in the [United Kingdom](#) has undergone significant changes since the UK left the EU in 2020. Trade with the EU has become more complex and time-consuming. This is [not a short-term disruption but will likely last in the longer term](#).

This disruption has also had a large impact on the trade of cocoa beans. Total cocoa bean imports averaged 109,000 tonnes per year in 2019-2020. They then dropped to an average of 69,000 tonnes per year in 2021-2023. This decrease was mostly because the UK stopped trading cocoa beans with the EU. Cocoa bean imports from European countries decreased from 40,000 tonnes in 2019 to less than 100 tonnes in 2023. Cocoa bean re-exports decreased from 26,000 tonnes in 2019 to less than 100 tonnes in 2023.

Despite these decreases, the United Kingdom remained the seventh-largest importer of cocoa beans from producing countries in 2023. Since the cocoa bean trade with the EU has almost disappeared, exporters also don't have to compete with EU countries on their cocoa bean exports. For exporters, this provides more opportunities for direct exports to the UK.

Source: Eurostat and Trade Map 2024

The UK is a large market for cocoa and chocolate. It is one of the largest chocolate-consuming countries in Europe. The British chocolate market is also becoming more specialised; the increase in artisanal chocolate makers and high-end shops serves more demanding and educated consumers.

Consumers in the UK have high awareness about certification. Rainforest Alliance has [58% brand awareness in the UK](#). It is also a major market for Fairtrade products. Chocolate is the [second-most popular Fairtrade product in the UK](#). Fairtrade chocolate is [sold by many retailers and companies](#). The focus is more on the social side of sustainability in the cocoa trade, which distinguishes it from other markets.

France has a growing interest in sustainability

France is the fourth-largest importer of cocoa beans in Europe, with 147,000 tonnes in 2023. Between 2019 and 2023, imports decreased by 2% per year. However, this is in line with the decline in overall imports to Europe, which also decreased by 2% per year.

About 56% of France's cocoa beans come directly from producing countries. The main origins are the Ivory Coast and Ghana. Smaller exporters are Ecuador, Cameroon and Madagascar.

[HAROPA Port](#) is the main entry point for cocoa beans imported into France, operating as the service cluster [HAROPA](#). [HAROPA includes two of the largest cocoa market players, Cargill and Barry Callebaut.](#)

There is a large cocoa processing industry in France, which has grown in recent years. Cocoa bean imports have stayed steady, but cocoa bean exports decreased from 55,000 tonnes in 2019 to 24,000 tonnes in 2023. This indicates that more cocoa beans are being processed in France.

Interest in sustainability in France has risen strongly in recent years. Retailers are making more commitments and taking concrete action. In 2019, French lawmakers [banned palm oil from the country's biofuel scheme](#). The [French Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa](#) was launched in 2021, developing sustainability commitments further.

France has become one of the fastest-growing markets for certified cocoa. France has historically had lower volumes of certified cocoa, but this has increased in recent years. In 2023, Rainforest Alliance imports rose by 15% to 198,000 tonnes. Fairtrade cocoa imports [grew by 9% to 16,000 tonnes](#) in 2022. Fairtrade products are now sold by [36 French brands and 43 international brands](#) in France.

Tips:

Understand the qualities of your cocoa. Determine whether the quality is suitable for bulk cocoa bean exports, for speciality cocoa or for producing specific qualities of cocoa butter and powder. Quality

demands may be different between European countries. Knowing your position in the overall market should be the starting point of any export strategy.

Read our country studies for more specific information and market insights. Fact sheets are available for [Belgium](#), [France](#), [Germany](#), [the Netherlands](#), [Switzerland](#) and the [United Kingdom](#). Check the [CBI website](#) for all country fact sheets.

See the websites of the national chocolate confectionery associations for more information about the chocolate industry in these specific countries. For example, check the sector associations in [Germany](#), [the Netherlands](#) or [Belgium](#) for more information.

In your target market, check out the websites of big and small chocolate makers, importers and cocoa processors. These company websites will provide some information on their cocoa sourcing and preferences. For example, check the website of the Dutch trading company [Daarnhouwer](#) to read more about their cocoa suppliers' profiles.

Visit European trade fairs to meet potential business partners. Major cocoa trade fairs in Europe include [Salon du Chocolat](#) (the main event is in Paris, but there are related events in Belgium, Italy and the UK) and [Chocoa](#) (Amsterdam). Other important trade fairs include [ISM](#) (Germany), [Anuga](#) (Germany), [PLMA](#) (the Netherlands, for private label manufacturing) and [Biofach](#) (Germany, only for organic produce). Attending events like these can provide you with additional information on the preferences of European buyers concerning cocoa origin, flavour and sustainability certification. By understanding the market better, you can ensure that your specific product meets the demand and requirements.

3. Which cocoa products from developing countries have most potential on the European market?

The European cocoa market is large and diverse, with opportunities for suppliers of different sizes and profiles. The most interesting market segments for each supplier depend on their cocoa quality, type (bulk or specialty), volumes, and whether the cocoa is certified or part of a sustainability programme.

The largest segment is bulk cocoa beans, followed by cocoa paste, cocoa butter and cocoa powder. Sustainable and ethically produced cocoa is also a large segment. Certification is led by Rainforest Alliance and Fairtrade. Company sustainability programmes are growing. Segments like organic and craft/specialty/fine flavour cocoa are interesting for niche exports.

Bulk cocoa beans have the largest share

The bulk market for commodity and commercial quality cocoa beans amounts to 90% of the total chocolate market. It is highly focused on price, by following futures prices and offering limited possibilities for value addition. The bulk market is suitable for exporters who can supply large volumes at standard product qualities.

The main origins for bulk cocoa are in Central and West Africa: the Ivory Coast, Ghana, Nigeria and Cameroon. Latin America also exports bulk cocoa, but its share is much smaller. The Asia Pacific region only exports small volumes of cocoa beans to Europe, as it focuses more on exporting cocoa derivatives.

The Ivory Coast, Ghana, Cameroon and Nigeria supply 83% of Europe's cocoa bean imports. However, this volume is decreasing. Total imports decreased by 240,000 tonnes from 2019 to 2023. This includes a decrease of imports from the Ivory Coast by 4% per year, Ghana by 5% and Nigeria by an average of 4%. In contrast, imports from Cameroon increased by 1% during this period.

Source: Eurostat and Trade Map 2024

At the same time, European cocoa bean imports from all other countries grew by 6% per year between 2019 and 2023, amounting to a total increase of 64,000 tonnes. This increase was mainly driven by exports from Ecuador, which rose by 22,000 tonnes (6% per year) and from Guinea, which rose by 31,000 tonnes (65% per year). However, these volumes are still much smaller than the volumes imported from the key African countries.

Source: Eurostat and Trade Map 2024

Certification (mostly Rainforest Alliance) is increasingly required in the bulk cocoa market as an entry requirement. This is due to the stricter sustainability demands of manufacturers and retailers in Europe. See the [section on certification](#) for more details.

Europe has a large market for cocoa paste, butter and powder

Europe has a large market for cocoa paste, cocoa butter and cocoa powder imports. This is partly because processing has shifted to producing countries. The Ivory Coast [introduced financial incentives in 2017](#) to attract multinational companies to invest in local processing. The Ivory Coast is planning to [increase its grinding capacity further](#). The goal of these investments is to increase value addition locally and make the economy less vulnerable to global market changes.

As a result, many multinational companies have expanded their grinding operations in producing countries, especially in the Ivory Coast. Barry Callebaut leads the way in the Ivory Coast with a processing [capacity of almost 200,000 tonnes](#). In 2021, [Cargill completed a USD 100 million expansion of its processing site](#) in the country, raising its capacity to 170,000 tonnes. Ofi operates [two grinding facilities in the Ivory Coast](#). [Guan Chong](#) also opened a new grinding facility in 2022.

Although local grinding adds value, it doesn't always directly benefit cocoa farmers. However, exporters could capture more value at origin by processing cocoa before exporting to Europe.

[The tax benefits were stopped in 2023](#). This was necessary so the country could access a loan programme by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This decision could make local grinding less attractive to multinational companies in the future.

The main exporters of cocoa paste are also the largest cocoa producing countries in Central and West Africa. However, Asia also has a share in the market, with Indonesia in the top 5. The main exporters of cocoa butter and cocoa powder are the Ivory Coast and Ghana, but Brazil, Malaysia and Indonesia are also important suppliers.

Source: Eurostat and Trade Map 2024

Certified cocoa is important in the European market

Europe is the world's largest market for certified cocoa. Large volumes of Rainforest Alliance and Fairtrade cocoa are imported every year. The largest supplier of certified cocoa beans to Europe is the Ivory Coast. Next are Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon and Ecuador.

Rainforest Alliance and Fairtrade certification are heavily focused on West Africa. In 2023, the Ivory Coast exported 859,000 tonnes of Rainforest Alliance certified cocoa, followed by Ghana (134,000 tonnes), Nigeria (92,000 tonnes) and Ecuador (89,000 tonnes). Together, this accounted for 86% of total Rainforest Alliance exports.

For Fairtrade cocoa, the largest exporters were the Ivory Coast (156,000 tonnes), Ghana (27,000 tonnes), Peru (15,000 tonnes) and the Dominican Republic (13,000 tonnes). These exports were sent globally, although the main destination of the exports was the European market.

Source: [Rainforest Alliance](#) and [Fairtrade](#) 2024

Rainforest Alliance certification is most beneficial for producers that supply one of the main chocolate brands or leading retailers. It is less essential if you sell to smaller brands or to private label manufacturers that do not have sustainability commitments.

It is important to note that not all certified cocoa production is sold as certified. In 2022, Rainforest Alliance producers were able to sell 59% of their production as certified, and for Fairtrade this was 33%. This can be due to a lack of demand, multi-certification (the farmer group can sell under multiple standards) or low-quality cocoa. This also happens with [various other standards](#).

Producers should make sure that the certification they choose meets market demand and buyer requirements. Make sure that certification is economically possible and that it ensures long-term relationships with buyers.

Organic cocoa is under pressure

When it comes to organic cocoa production, the Ivory Coast and Ghana play a much smaller role. [Sierra Leone has the largest organic area](#) dedicated to organic cocoa, accounting for about 34% of the total organic area in 2021. Other significant organic producers are Peru (17%), the Dominican Republic (14%) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (13%).

These four countries are also the world's largest exporters of organic cocoa to the EU, with the Dominican Republic in the lead. In 2023, the Dominican Republic exported 17,000 tonnes of organic cocoa to the EU, followed by Sierra Leone (12,000 tonnes), the Democratic Republic of Congo (8,000 tonnes) and Peru (7,000 tonnes). Together, they accounted for 78% of organic cocoa exports to the EU.

Read more about organic cocoa in the CBI study [Exporting organic cocoa to Europe](#).

Source: TRACES 2024

The organic market is under a lot of pressure. Some producers and exporters have difficulties finding buyers for fully organic cocoa. Some producers are forced to sell organic cocoa as conventional cocoa, because they can sell it more quickly for a higher price due to the price increase or because of the lack in demand. Chocolate is still a luxury product, and the rising prices have caused consumers to switch from organic or artisan chocolate to more affordable bulk chocolate products. This trend may be cyclical, so demand might increase again if consumer purchasing power rises.

Specialty, craft and fine flavour cocoa are an interesting niche market

The commodity market makes up around 90% of the cocoa market. The other 10% is considered the speciality market. Fine flavour cocoa is part of the speciality market.

There is an increasing demand for speciality and premium chocolate products worldwide. These products are

made from high-quality cocoa, often defined as [fine flavour cocoa](#). Fine flavour cocoa has a higher quality and is usually produced in smaller volumes. It is estimated that only [5% of the world's production is fine flavour cocoa](#). Fine flavour cocoa is part of the speciality market.

The ICCO designates [countries that produce fine flavour cocoa](#). The countries that produce more than 50% of fine flavour cocoa (according to ICCO designation) are Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Peru and Trinidad and Tobago in Latin America, as well as Madagascar in Africa and Papua New Guinea and Vietnam in Asia.

Ecuador is the world's main exporter of fine flavour cocoa. [70% of Ecuador's cocoa production can be considered fine flavour cocoa](#), although not all this cocoa is sold as fine flavour cocoa. Peru and the Dominican Republic also have significant fine flavour cocoa exports. Despite the small market share of fine flavour cocoa, it is the fastest-growing segment in the chocolate market. This could offer an opportunity for suppliers of high-quality cocoa.

Speciality cocoa is mainly sourced from Latin America and the Caribbean. Ecuador is the largest supplier to Europe, exporting 108,00 tonnes in 2023. The Dominican Republic followed with 36,000 tonnes, and Peru with 27,000 tonnes. European imports from Ecuador grew the most, with an increase of 6% per year between 2019 and 2023. Imports from the Dominican Republic increased by 1% per year during this period, and imports from Peru decreased by 4% per year.

For more information about fine flavour and speciality cocoa, see the CBI study [Exporting specialty cocoa to Europe](#).

Company sustainability programmes fulfil sustainability commitments

Company sustainability programmes are becoming increasingly important. These programmes are developed by cocoa traders, processors or manufacturers. In Switzerland, for example, the share of cocoa sourced through a company sustainability programme for members of the Swiss Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa (SWISSCO) rose [from 27% in 2019 to 45% in 2023](#).

Company sustainability programmes are not considered certification programmes, because they are not independently developed and audited. They are often [less complex and less transparent](#) than certification programmes. The standards are usually not publicly available.

Many brands made 100% certified commitments in the 2010s. However, by the 2020s, these commitments shifted toward broader “sustainable”, “responsible” or “ethical” sourcing. They usually meet this standard through a combination of cocoa that is certified, sourced through their own sustainability programme or sourced through the sustainability programme of their suppliers.

There are many combinations in the market. These are shown in the table below for the six largest chocolate brands in the world.

Table 1: Responsible sourcing commitments of the six largest chocolate brands

Manufacturer	Volume (in tonnes, 2021)	Commitment	Details	Year
--------------	--------------------------	------------	---------	------

Mondelez	400,000	100%	Cocoa Life	2025
Nestlé	391,000	100%	The Nestlé Cocoa Plan, along with Rainforest Alliance certification	2025
Mars	365,000	100%	Builds on existing certification requirements from Fairtrade and Rainforest Alliance	2025
Hershey	220,000	100%	Fair Trade USA and Rainforest Alliance, and other independently verified programmes through our suppliers that meet our Cocoa Key Requirements	achieved
Ferrero	208,000	100%	100% of the cocoa in our products is sourced through independently managed sustainability standards such as Rainforest Alliance, Cocoa Horizons or Fairtrade Foundation.	achieved
Lindt & Sprüngli	145,000	100%	100% of our cocoa beans are sourced through the Lindt & Sprüngli Farming Programme or other sustainability programmes	achieved

Source: [Cocoa Barometer 2022](#) and company websites 2024

Many traders and processors also have their own sustainability programmes. These include [Ofi Cocoa Compass](#), [Barry Callebaut Cocoa Horizons](#), [Cargill Cocoa Promise](#), [Ecom Cocoa Charter](#), [Sucden](#), [Touton PACT](#), [Blommer Sustainable Origins](#), [ETG](#) And [Cémoi Transparence Cacao](#). Some of these are also part of the sourcing strategies of global companies and their brands. The volumes of cocoa under these programmes are usually not reported separately but combined into one “sustainable cocoa” volume. The table below shows the volumes and shares that are publicly reported.

Table 2: Company sustainability programmes of the largest traders and processors

Manufacturer	Total cocoa volume (in tonnes, 2021)	Volume for company programme (tonnes)	Programme(s)	Source
Ofi	1,019,000	Not reported	Not reported	2023 sustainability report Ofi
Barry Callebaut	988,000	233,000 (2021/2022)	233,000 tonnes via Cocoa Horizons	Cocoa Horizons website
Cargill	875,000	429,000 (2021/2022)	49% via Rainforest Alliance, Fairtrade, Promise Verified or customers' own programmes	2023 ESG report Cargill
Ecom	800,000	186,000+ (2022)	93% of 200,000+ tonnes is verified or certified sustainable	2022 Cocoa Sustainability Report Ecom
Sucden	525,000	52,000 (2022)	10% via Rainforest Alliance and Fairtrade cocoa sales	2023 Responsibility Report Sucden

Touton	328,000	150,000 (2023-2024)	150,311 tonnes is certified or part of a sustainability programme	2023-24 Sustainability Report Touton
--------	---------	------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------

Source: [Cocoa Barometer 2022](#) and company websites

For producers and exporters, it could be interesting to be part of a company sustainability programme. This could lead to a long-term commitment and partnerships with the brands or traders. However, be sure to ask detailed questions before agreeing to join a programme. Make sure that the conditions and financial incentives are attractive enough to make the commitment. Ask for clear details about the requirements and expectations. Talking with your buyers will also provide more insights.

Tips:

For producers, joining Fairtrade or Rainforest Alliance could give you more opportunities on the market. Also consider organic certification and whether this is possible for your cocoa production. It takes time and effort to switch to organic certification. Check the Nitidae report about [the transition towards organic cocoa production](#) or read the CBI report [Exporting organic cocoa to Europe](#) for more details. Speak with your buyers to make sure that there is demand for certified cocoa.

For exporters, consider getting Fairtrade and Rainforest Alliance certified as a supply chain actor. This is usually an easier certification process than certification for producers. Exporters usually need to have a license to buy and sell certified cocoa. However, first discuss this with the farmer groups and buyers that you work with. Read our studies on [certified cocoa](#), [organic cocoa](#) and [specialty cocoa](#) to learn more about specific market dynamics and opportunities in these segments in Europe.

If you offer high-quality cocoa, focus on the premium, speciality and fine flavour cocoa markets in Europe. Try to establish direct trade relationships with smaller traders and chocolate makers. Read the CBI study on [Buyer requirements](#) and [How to do business on the European cocoa market](#) to learn more.

To learn more about organic certification, read [this guide about the principles of organic cocoa production](#). Read the [Manual for Pesticide Use in Cocoa](#) for information about using pesticides, policy changes, the EU Green Deal, bio-alternatives and an analysis of pest threats.

Think about how you can make your cocoa more appealing to European buyers by adding extra sustainability components. Many European buyers want to make extra sustainability claims around the cocoa that they buy. For example, add a living income project or a carbon component to certified cocoa. Promote sustainable and ethical aspects of your production process. Support these claims with a certification that has enough demand in your target market and is cost-beneficial for your product. Talk to your potential buyers about this decision.

Be aware that many cocoa buyers now require compliance with new EU legislation, including extra information on traceability and GPS mapping. Read the study [Tips to go green in cocoa](#) and [Tips to become more socially responsible in cocoa](#) for more details.

Long Run Sustainability carried out this study in partnership with [Ethos Agriculture](#) on behalf of CBI.

Please review our [market information disclaimer](#).