

7 tips on how to find buyers in the European cocoa market

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The European market is key when you are exporting cocoa products. A large part of the world's cocoa is traded to Europe. The market is dominated by a small group of traders and processors, and this group is most important when selling cocoa in bulk. However, it is possible to work with smaller buyers if your cocoa has interesting and unique aspects.

Simply following the tips in this study is not a guarantee that you will find buyers. This will depend on many different factors, including the quality of your product, the number of competitors and your competitive advantage. Make sure you read the other [CBI tips and studies](#) to get a full picture of all of the aspects of exporting cocoa. The following tips will tell you how and where you can find European buyers for your cocoa.

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1. Know which buyers to target

The cocoa market is built on relationships and trust. The most important thing that an exporter can do is build long-term relationships and meet all the agreements set out in contracts. It is therefore important to know what the strengths and weaknesses of your business are. This helps to determine what you can promise and for you to be confident that you can deliver what you promise. It is also important to know what kind of buyers you are likely to come across, and what kinds of markets they can give you access to.

Know the strengths and weaknesses of your business

European buyers will want information about many aspects of the cocoa that you export. This includes the quality and profile of the cocoa, the available supply, delivery terms, sustainability aspects and compliance data.

Contracts and relationships

Buyers want the assurance that suppliers will fulfil the contract. This assurance is based on physical and contractual aspects, but primarily on relationships and trust. This is especially true for a shifting cocoa market with [historically high prices and possible cocoa shortages](#). Make sure that the contract includes terms you can meet. For more information, read the CBI study on [Tips on how to do business in Europe](#), which covers communication styles, languages and cultural differences between countries.

Quality aspects

Another important aspect that buyers will be looking for is quality. Requirements vary among different market types, but all buyers will want information about the cocoa's quality aspects. Buyers may ask for detailed information about sensory evaluations of the cocoa, especially for specialty cocoa. See the Cocoa of Excellence [Guidelines for the Sensory Evaluation of Cocoa Beans as Chocolate](#) for more information.

Read the CBI study on [Tips on how to do business in Europe](#) for more information about how to present the key unique selling points (USP) of your product.

Compliance

Buyers expect the cocoa production process to meet local laws and regulations. When you target new buyers, it is essential that you understand their requirements. You must deliver what is needed to comply with laws, such as the [EU Regulation on Deforestation-free products](#) (EUDR). Read our studies on [The market potential for certified cocoa](#) and [Buyer requirements in cocoa](#) for more information.

Certification

Buyers might also ask for additional assurance about social and environmental sustainability in the form of certification. When you target new buyers, it is essential that you understand their requirements. You should evaluate the costs and efforts required to comply with certification programmes like the [Rainforest Alliance](#) or [Fairtrade](#). Based on this evaluation, you can determine whether it is interesting for you to join a certification programme. Read the CBI study on [Exporting certified cocoa](#) for more information.

Export and transportation

Next, you must organise your export to ensure that you meet the terms of the contract. Key factors include the relationship between you and your buyer, the transportation method, the delivery terms, the type of cocoa (bulk or specialty) and the volume and value of the shipment.

Read the CBI study on [Tips on how to organise your cocoa export to Europe](#) for more information.

Know the different kind of buyers you are likely to come across

If you know the strengths and weaknesses of your business, it will help you to determine which markets and buyers to focus on. This knowledge can increase your chances of finding buyers and building long-term relationships. The next step is understanding the different types of European cocoa buyers.

The role of the different types of cocoa

Cocoa can be categorised as bulk cocoa or as specialty cocoa. The difference is based on the [variety and flavour of the cocoa, rather than other quality factors](#). It is also influenced by the production, processing and selection of cocoa beans.

Over 90% of the world's cocoa is sold as bulk cocoa. Most of this cocoa is bought or sold by a small group of multinational traders and processors around the world. The European cocoa market is dominated by a small group of traders, processors and manufacturers.

If you export bulk cocoa, you can start your search for buyers by looking at large multinational processors and brands. All these companies buy large volumes of standard qualities. They usually have their own export companies with cocoa-buying stations, or have partnerships with export companies in producing countries, to which you can sell your beans directly. Some of the companies involved in processing and manufacturing also buy cocoa beans via importers.

Less than 10% of the world's cocoa is specialty cocoa. Some large traders and processors also buy and sell specialty cocoa, but it is mainly bought and sold by specialty buyers. Certified cocoa is mostly considered bulk cocoa, but can also be specialty cocoa. Read the CBI study on [Exporting specialty cocoa to Europe](#) for more information about specialty cocoa.

Figure 1: cocoa stored in a warehouse in the Port of Amsterdam



Source: Ruben Bergsma at Long Run Sustainability

The main buyers of cocoa beans

Most cocoa is imported by a trader or processor. It is not bought directly by a manufacturer, brand or retailer. The main buyers can be broadly categorised into 4 key groups:

- Large traders and processors. Most bulk cocoa is bought by large traders and processors. It is often sold in large batches and is mixed with other cocoa in [shipments of over 20,000 tonnes](#). In these cases, it is very unlikely that a producer or SME (small and medium-sized enterprise) exporter will know the final buyer of the cocoa (the manufacturer of the final chocolate product).
- Mid-sized traders, processors and exporters. These are usually more focused on specific export or import countries. They may buy both bulk and specialty cocoa.
- Small traders and importers. They are more likely to buy specialty cocoa than bulk cocoa.
- Chocolate manufacturers. Some exporters in producing countries can also sell directly to chocolate manufacturers in Europe without the involvement of a trader or processor. This can include sales to private-label chocolate manufacturers that make products for retailers.

Exporters can also find buyers by creating relationships with brands. Traders and processors often buy and ship cocoa specifically for a chocolate manufacturer at the end of the chain (and in some cases for retailers as well). This is typically done when the final buyer needs the cocoa to meet certain sustainability criteria. The chocolate company can ask the trader to buy cocoa with specific criteria or from specific producers. Building relationships with these buyers further down the supply chain can help convince traders and importers to buy your cocoa.

Table 1: The market share and main buyers for different cocoa types

Type	Market share	Main buyers	Buyer cocoa bean volume per year	Category	Examples

Bulk cocoa	Over 90%	Large traders and processors	Between 100,000 and 1,000,000 tonnes	Dominate the cocoa trade and processing market. Often also trade other commodities such as coffee, cotton, grains and oilseeds, nuts, palm, rice, spices and sugar.	OFI (1,019,000 tonnes) Barry Callebaut (988,000 tonnes) Cargill (875,000 tonnes) ECOM (800,000 tonnes) Sucden (525,000 tonnes) Touton (328,000 tonnes) Fuji Group (including Blommer) (200,000 tonnes) ETG (102,000 tonnes) (all volumes for 2021)
		Mid-sized traders and processors	Less than 100,000 tonnes	Usually more focused on specific export or import countries. Usually trade a smaller number of commodities.	Albrecht & Dill Trading GMBH , Cémoi , Cocoasource , Natra
		Small traders	Small volumes	A small number of direct relationships.	Uncommon Cacao , Facta International , SinTag
Specialty cocoa	Less than 10%	Specialty cocoa traders (main buyers)	Small volumes	A small number of direct relationships.	Daarnhouwer & Co , Tradin Organic , Walter Matter , Ingemann Fine Cocoa .
		Large traders and processors	Between 100,000 and 1,000,000 tonnes	Less important in specialty cocoa.	OFI , Barry Callebaut , Cargill , ECOM , Sucden , Touton , Blommer/Fuji Group , ETG , Cémoi

Source: [Cocoa Barometer 2022](#)

Table 2: The market share and main buyers for different cocoa types

Type	Market share	Main buyers	Notes
Rainforest Alliance certified cocoa	1,259,900 tonnes 25%* of global sales (2022)	Rainforest Alliance members	This can be both bulk and specialty cocoa.

Fairtrade certified cocoa	232,847 tonnes Less than 5%* of global sales (2022)	Fairtrade members	This can be both bulk and specialty cocoa.
Organic cocoa	218,786 tonnes Less than 5%* of global production (2021)	Countries with high consumption of organic food products	This can be both bulk and specialty cocoa, but specialty cocoa is more likely.

*Based on [2022 Rainforest Alliance producer cocoa sales](#), [2022 Fairtrade cocoa sales](#), [2021 Organic cocoa production](#) and [2021/2022 and 2022/2023 cocoa production](#).

Source: Rainforest Alliance, Fairtrade, IISD and ICCO

The role of producing and consuming countries

Cocoa is shipped to Europe from many different countries. The country of origin is much more important for specialty cocoa than for bulk cocoa. Producers and exporters are more likely to have a relationship with the final buyer of specialty cocoa than for bulk cocoa, or at least know who the final buyer is. If you offer specialty cocoa, learn more about which other countries offer specialty cocoa via the [ICCO list of Fine Flavour cocoa exporting countries](#).

Most bulk cocoa is shipped to one of the main ports in Europe. From there, a large share is transported to other countries in Europe. For example, 20-25% of the world's cocoa trade goes through the Netherlands. But [the largest part is re-exported again to other countries](#). Producers and exporters of bulk cocoa have little to no control over who the final buyer is or which country it is shipped to.

If you are interested in targeting a specific country, read the [CBI country studies](#). There are smaller traders and processors that only operate in specific countries. CBI has published studies on the cocoa market in [Belgium](#), [Eastern Europe](#), [France](#), [Germany](#), [Italy](#), [Scandinavia](#), [Spain](#), [Switzerland](#), [the Netherlands](#) and [the United Kingdom](#).

Tips:

If you are an SME exporter of specialty cocoa, focus on working with specialty cocoa buyers. Examples of small bean-to-bar brands are [Blanxart](#), [Original Beans](#), [Domori](#), [mi joya](#) and [Fjåk Chocolate](#). Examples of specialty cocoa traders are [Bohnekaf-Kolonial](#), [WalterMatter](#), [Le Cercle du Cacao](#), [Tradin Organic](#) and [Cocoanect](#). See the CBI study on [Exporting specialty cocoa to Europe](#) for more examples.

If you are an SME exporter of bulk cocoa, the main buyers are likely to be global traders and processors. Some SME exporters also export bulk cocoa directly to large brands. Research the supplier list of large brands to find potential new buyers. For example, [Hershey's direct suppliers](#) include [Ecuakao](#) (an exporter in Ecuador that sells bulk and specialty cocoa), [Atlantic Cocoa Processing and Export Company](#) (ACPEC) (a bean exporter from Liberia) and [Tafissa](#) (a cocoa processor in Côte d'Ivoire). The [direct suppliers of Mars](#) include [Rizek Cacao](#) (Dominican Republic). The [direct suppliers of Ferrero](#) include [COFINA](#) (Ecuador) and [Colcocoa](#) (Colombia).

Ensure that you can fulfil the terms of the contract. Avoid not complying with your contract in order to make short-term gains, as this could damage your reputation and trustworthiness in the long run.

Use statistical databases and other information sources to collect your own data and define your target market, such as: [International Cocoa Organization \(ICCO\)](#), [International Trade Centre \(ITC\) – Trade Map](#) and [Access2Markets](#). You can also find European commodity traders and chocolate processors in the member list of the [European Cocoa Association \(ECA\)](#). Check the member lists of the European Initiatives for Sustainable Cocoa, such as the [GISCO](#), [Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa](#), [DISCO](#), [Beyond Chocolate](#) and the [French initiative for Sustainable Cocoa](#).

In your target market, check out the websites of big and small chocolate makers, importers and cocoa processors. Some company websites have information about where they buy their cocoa and what kind of cocoa they use. For instance, see the website of the Dutch cocoa importer and distributor [Crafting Markets](#) to read more about their cocoa suppliers' profiles.

2. Choose the right trade fairs and conferences to visit

Trust and relationships are very important in the cocoa industry. Visiting trade fairs is an important way to meet new buyers, build relationships and promote your products. Trade fairs come in various types, focusing on business, sustainability, technology, quality or other aspects. Trade fairs can include European buyers or international buyers.

While many trade fairs went online during the COVID-19 pandemic, most have returned to in-person format in 2024 (although some still offer an online version for remote participation). This online aspect can be interesting for people who want to learn about a specific topic. For sellers who want to meet new buyers, in-person attendance is still the best choice.

There are also many conferences that do not include a trade fair. The main programmes for these events usually include presentations and discussions on important topics. These conferences attract many companies and offer valuable networking opportunities.

It is also possible to present yourself as a seller (exhibit) at a trade fair. This means that you have a booth where potential buyers can visit you. However, this option can be costly, so it is important to consider it carefully. If you attend a trade fair as a visitor, you can visit the booths of possible buyers.

Explore the trade fairs mentioned in this study and research them online to see which ones fit your interests and objectives best.

Visit trade fairs and conferences in Europe

Interesting cocoa and chocolate trade fairs to visit include:

- [ISM](#) (Cologne, Germany): an annual trade fair for the confectionery and snack industry.
- [Chocoo](#) (Amsterdam, the Netherlands): brings together stakeholders from the entire cocoa supply chain, from producers to consumers. In 2023, it was combined with the World Cocoa Foundation Partnership Meeting. See International Trade Fairs below for more information.
- [Anuga](#) (Cologne, Germany): the world's leading trade fair for food and beverages.
- [Biofach](#) (Nuremberg, Germany): an annual trade fair for organic food, including cocoa products and chocolate.
- [The European Cocoa Association \(ECA\)](#): sometimes also hosts conferences. These could be an interesting way to meet traders and processors. Check their website for events.
- [The World Confectionary Conference](#): brings together companies from the global sweets, snacks and bakery markets. The first event in 2021 was held online, and the next 3 events were held in Belgium (2022 and 2024) and the United Kingdom (2023).

Visit international trade fairs and conferences

Many European buyers have international offices and work internationally. They also visit trade fairs outside Europe. It is possible to meet European buyers at trade fairs outside Europe as well.

- [World Cocoa Conference](#). This event is organised by the [International Cocoa Organization](#) (ICCO) and it is hosted by a different country every 2 years.
- [World Cocoa Foundation \(WCF\) Partnership Meeting](#). This annual event brings together cocoa farmers and experts from companies, governments, universities, civil society and the media. The location usually switches between producing and consuming countries. The 2025 edition will take place in Brazil.
- [Amsterdam Cocoa Week](#). In 2023, the World Cocoa Foundation and Chocoo hosted the Amsterdam Cocoa Week, which featured various events. For example, the [Cacao of Excellence Awards](#) were announced and [Women in Cocoa & Chocolate](#) (WINCC) also held an event.
- [Salon du Chocolat](#) (France and many other countries). At this event, the focus is more on the final chocolate product. The main event is in Paris but there are many events organised around the world. This includes events held in [Mexico](#) in 2022 and 2024. Check out the website for events in your region.
- [Cocoa Association of Asia](#) (CAA). The CAA is an industry association that organises annual conferences in Asia, in addition to many other events.
- [Ghana National Chocolate Week](#). This event is a partnership between the Ghana Tourism Authority, Ghana Cocoa Board and the Cocoa Processing Company (CPC) and chocolatiers. Other events in West Africa are the [African Cocoa Platform conference](#) (Côte d'Ivoire) and the [Agricultural Innovation for Africa Conference](#) (Ghana).
- [Cacao and Chocolate Summit](#). This event focuses on Latin American cocoa. It is held annually in Ecuador.

Figure 2: The 2024 World Cocoa Foundation Partnership Meeting



Source: Photo by Ruben Bergsma at Long Run Sustainability

Prepare your visit to trade fairs and conferences

- Choose the right event to attend. Research the events, their focus and the exhibitor/visitor target. Try to find out if the fair is mainly directed at consumers (like chocolate festivals) or to industry partners (like chocolate makers and cocoa importers). Check if the focus of the event is on bulk or specialty cocoa.
- Read the exhibitor list on the trade fair's website and choose the relevant cocoa companies for your business. Create a list of companies that you want to speak with.
- Many companies plan meetings during the exhibition. This means that key people might not be available at the booth when you visit. Contact the companies beforehand to schedule meetings with a clear purpose. This is a great way to speak to people without distractions.
- Post about your participation in the trade fair online before and during the event.
- Bring short and simple promotional materials. Small and lightweight brochures, flyers or business cards showing your contact details and relevant information are recommended.
- Many exhibitors speak in their native language. This means that they might not speak your native language. English, French and Spanish are important languages in the cocoa sector. You can consider traveling with someone who speaks many languages so that you can speak with exhibitors who may not speak your native language.
- Practice your 'elevator pitch'. This means a short introduction to your company and your product, based on your unique selling points (USPs) from [the first tip](#). Practice your pitch in English and any other languages that you speak, so you can pitch to as many people as possible.
- Talk to other visitors from various backgrounds, including visitors from NGOs, governments, service providers, financial services and other important cocoa stakeholders. If you build relationships with non-industry stakeholders, this can lead to future business opportunities. These people may speak positively about your business and recommend you to potential buyers.

Tips:

Read about the trade fairs in this section and search for others online to see which trade fairs are the most interesting for you. Check the [ICCO website](#) or [ECA Events Page](#) for a list of events. The list could include interesting events that are not listed in this study.

Search for key words such as “cocoa” or “chocolate” on the website of the event. For example, [Anuga](#) had 443 exhibitors that used the word “cocoa” in their company description in 2023. On the ISM website, you can choose key words to find buyers. The term “cocoa confectionery” was used by 105 exhibitors. Search through these lists to find the exhibitors that are most interesting for you.

Consider participating in awards and competitions during events and trade fairs, such as the [Cacao of Excellence Awards](#). This is a good way to show the quality of your cocoa beans and raise awareness about your company. You should start planning for this a long time before the event.

Use the [trade fair benefit check](#) after your exhibition. This free software is a tool to calculate the costs and benefits for exhibitors. It is available in different languages.

3. Visit the websites of sector associations to look for buyers

Sector associations play a crucial role in the cocoa industry, by advocating for the best interest of their members. As associations, they can achieve more as a whole than individual companies can on their own. Many European companies are members of one or more associations.

Sector associations may be international and may focus on specific aspects of the cocoa sector, such as specialty cocoa, trade or supply and demand. But there are also some national associations. These associations advocate for the cocoa industry in a specific country or region. They often represent the economic interests of their members and promote the cocoa or confectionery industry of their country.

Examples of sector associations are:

- The [International Cocoa Organisation](#) (ICCO): an inter-governmental organisation for cocoa with different countries as its members.
- The [Federation of Cocoa Commerce](#) (FCC): aims to provide a contractual and operational framework in the best interest of all stakeholders in the cocoa sector.
- The [European Cocoa Association](#) (ECA): a trade association for companies involved in cocoa bean trade and processing, warehousing and logistics in Europe.
- The [Fine Cacao and Chocolate Institute](#) (FCCI): an independent organisation that researches social and environmental sustainability and quality topics in cocoa.
- The [Fine Chocolate Industry Association](#) (FCIA): focuses on supporting fine chocolate professionals.

Some sector associations are national. These are associations for the cocoa industry in a specific country or region. They represent the economic interests of the members and promote the cocoa or confectionery industry in their country.

Examples of national associations are:

- The [Royal Belgian Association of the Chocolate, Pralines, Biscuit and Confectionery](#) (ChoPraBisCo): the national association in Belgium.
- The [Dutch Association for the Bakery and Confectionery Industry](#) (VBZ): the national association in the Netherlands.

- The [Association of the German Confectionery Industry](#) (BDSI): the national association in Germany.
- The [French Chocolate Union](#) (Syndicat du Chocolat): the national association in France.
- The [Association of Swiss Chocolate Manufacturers](#) (CHOCOSUISSE): the national association in Switzerland.
- The [Unione Italiana Food](#): the national association in Italy.
- [Caobisco](#): the association of Chocolate, Biscuit and Confectionery Industries of Europe.
- The [International Confectionery Association](#) (ICA): the international association for companies in the confectionery industry.

Examples of national associations outside Europe are the [Cocoa Merchant's Association of America](#) (CMAA), the [National Confectioners Association](#) (NCA) and the [Chocolate and Cocoa Association of Japan](#) (CCAJ).

Tips:

Use the translation function of your web browser to read the website links included in this study in your own language.

Look at the lists of the members of sector associations, as these may include interesting companies to contact. Visit the websites of the associations listed in this chapter to search for potential buyers. Focus on associations in countries where there is high demand for cocoa. The main importers of cocoa in Europe are the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and France.

Consider becoming a member of a trade association in your country or region. This could make you more credible in Europe and help you build your network. Examples of associations and authorities in exporting countries are the [Cocoa Association of Asia](#), [Caribbean Agribusiness](#), [GEPEX](#) (Côte d'Ivoire), [Ghana Export Promotion Authority](#) – GEPA (Ghana) and [ANECACAO](#) (Ecuador).

4. Advertise your cocoa product and business online

The cocoa market is typically a people's market. This means that face-to-face contact and long-term trade relationships are crucial. New connections are usually made through common contacts, relationships or in-person meetings. Many buyers do not visit websites to find new suppliers or search for new suppliers online.

However, there are still ways to promote your product online. The focus should be on becoming more visible and well-known in the industry. If more buyers learn about your business and products then they are more likely to find you in the future.

Use your own company website to promote your product

Many companies promote their products successfully on their own website. This is most common for companies that sell chocolate, but can also include cocoa derivatives. The cocoa is usually specialty cocoa, because the quality and the story behind the cocoa are usually more important to buyers of specialty cocoa than of bulk cocoa. Examples of producers and exporters that market their products on their websites are [Ingemann](#) (Nicaragua), [Kokoa Kamili](#) (Tanzania), [Diogo Vaz](#) (São Tomé and Príncipe) and [Marou](#) (Vietnam).

It is not common for companies to show the prices of their cocoa or derivatives on their websites. Often, the price is not mentioned on the website at all. Potential buyers then contact the company to ask for the prices.

Use other platforms to promote your product

There are many other platforms to promote your company and your product. Social media is often used to promote companies. The most important social media platform for business is LinkedIn.

You can use LinkedIn to discuss interesting projects, trips or events your company is involved in and to promote new products or business. If you post engaging content on LinkedIn, you will increase your visibility and awareness of your company products. LinkedIn has many [articles that can help you to market yourself](#). You can also search for articles on other websites, such as this article on [15 Ways to Boost Your Personal Brand](#).

Instagram is another tool for promoting your business or product. However, this is more interesting for exporters of specialty cocoa with a story. These stories can be about the unique quality aspects of the cocoa, or about sustainability. See, for example, the Instagram pages of [Gsl Agro Group](#) (Venezuela) and [Mark Rin Chocolate](#) (Thailand). Buyers of bulk beans or bulk product do not look for new suppliers on Instagram, so it is important to consider which market you want to reach.

YouTube is a platform to tell stories in a more visual manner. However, be sure that you can create interesting and high-quality videos before starting with this option.

Newsletters (emails with news about the organisation and product) are another great option. Many organisations publish newsletters, and many people in the cocoa sector read these newsletters. Sign up to many different newsletters to read examples of other projects or companies. Talk to these organisations about your project or story and try to get your project mentioned in a newsletter. If your cocoa is certified, you could also ask your certification programme to write a story about your cocoa.

It is not common to post paid advertisements for cocoa beans and cocoa product sales on these platforms.

Tell your story well

Your story should be consistent and unique. The story you tell is very important, which is why your website should be inspiring. See, for instance, how [ABOCFA](#) (Ghana) or [Xoco Gourmet](#) (Honduras) present their story in a clear and attractive way. They do this by talking about their impact and key partners. They use photos of farmers and their plantations. Also, take a look at the website of [Nahua Cacao](#) (Costa Rica), which provides interesting information about the flavour profile and specific technical data about the cocoa. The website of [Kakaw Export](#) (Nicaragua) is a good example of how to present the origin of the cocoa.

Tips:

Learn more about how you can use social media to increase your visibility. For example, see the series published by Dame Cacao. This includes articles on [social media basics for growing a small business](#), [how to use Instagram for your small business](#), [creating better content on Instagram](#), [crafting an engaged Instagram audience](#) and [how to make effective adverts on Instagram](#). The focus of this platform is on chocolate as an end product, but it gives relevant tips that you can use for any cocoa product.

Explore options for generating visitors to your website. One way of doing this is through search engine optimisation (SEO). SEO improves your visibility on online search engines. Making small changes to your website can positively impact your position on search result lists. For instance, see these tips [to create a Google-friendly website](#).

Ideally, your websites should be available in clear English. Consider translating your website into the language(s) of your main target market(s). If needed, work with a professional translator or prioritise translating key pages instead of the entire website.

Read the CBI study on [how to become more socially responsible in the cocoa sector](#) for more information about storytelling.

5. Look for more information about buyers on online databases

You can also use free and paid databases to find more information about potential buyers.

One type of database is the Chamber of Commerce for different European countries. Many of these have information about companies available for free, or for a small fee. Examples of country Chambers of Commerce are:

- The [Belgian Chamber of Commerce](#) (CBE)
- The [British Chamber of Commerce](#)
- The [Dutch Chamber of Commerce](#) (KVK)
- The [French Chamber of Commerce](#) (CCI)
- The [German regional Chamber of Commerce](#) (Industrie- und Handelskammern – IHK) and the [Chamber of Crafts](#) (Zentralverband des Deutschen Handwerks – ZDH)
- The [Swiss Chamber of Commerce](#)

Your country's embassy in your target market could also help you find potential buyers and give you more information about the competition. Embassies usually have a commercial team to help you with your enquiries. There are also European Chambers of Commerce with offices in your country or region, including:

- [BritCham Indonesia](#) (British and Indonesian businesses)
- [German-Brazilian Chamber of Commerce and Industry](#) (AHK Brasil)
- [The Netherlands-African Business Council](#) (NABC)

There are also many online databases with market leader information that you must pay to access. Examples are [Statista](#) or [Euromonitor](#). In some cases, a basic summary of a report can be accessed for free.

Tips:

Try making contacts in your existing business network first. This may be the best place to start. Personal recommendations and connections are a great way to expand your network.

Use the national Chamber of Commerce websites to search for information about key buyers. The websites may also publish data about the cocoa or chocolate industry.

Search the internet using key search terms to look for other databases. Interesting sources are [ICCO](#), the [State of Sustainability Initiative](#) (SSI), the [World Resources Institute](#) (WRI) and the [Global Cocoa Market Study](#).

6. Do not focus on online buyer-seller platforms to sell your cocoa products

Face-to-face contact and long-term trade relationships are key in the cocoa market. Cocoa beans and cocoa derivatives are normally not sold online. If you are looking for new buyers, then it is better to look for them in the other ways described in this study or other [CBI studies on cocoa](#).

Tips:

Many cocoa buyers continue to do trade in the traditional way. Most buyers will not buy cocoa from an online buyer-seller platform. It is important to keep investing in relationships with them. Contact

buyers in different ways to increase your sales opportunities.

Online commerce platforms for cocoa beans and cocoa products usually focus on high quality or specialty cocoa. Examples are [Almacena Platform](#), [Cocoa Hub](#), [Leroma](#), [Green Trade](#), [Producers Market](#) and [Tridge](#). Read the CBI study on [Tips to go digital in the cocoa sector](#) for more information about online commerce platforms.

7. Contact other organisations that can provide support

It is also possible to get help through government organisations and NGOs to find buyers and sell your products.

Embassies, business support organisations/trade promotion agencies and Chambers of Commerce often organise matchmaking programmes and trade missions. The organisers of these missions have strong relationships with businesses in your target market. This means they can help you identify, screen and meet potential buyers.

To find a matchmaking programme and/or trade mission in your sector, check the websites of European trade promotion organisations. They target mostly small and medium-sized enterprises in certain partner countries that aim to export their products. Agencies include:

- The Dutch [Centre for the Promotion of Imports from Developing Countries](#) (CBI): supports the transition towards inclusive and sustainable economies.
- The Belgian [Trade for Development Centre](#) (TDC): a programme by Enabel, the Belgian development agency.
- The German [Import Promotion Desk](#) (IPD): supports companies from developing and emerging countries exporting to the European market.
- The Finnish [Finnpartnership](#): promotes business between Finland and developing markets, with a focus on creating positive development impacts in target countries.
- [Open Trade Gate Sweden](#) (OTGS): supports companies from developing countries to export to Sweden and the European Union (EU).
- [Swiss Import Promotion Programme](#) (SIPPO): promotes the export capacity and helps companies improve their exports in their countries.
- [International Trade Center](#) (ITC): provides support to grow trade opportunities for small businesses, business support organisations and policymakers in developing and least-developed countries.
- [COLEAD](#): a network of companies, professional organisations and experts committed to inclusive and sustainable agriculture.
- The [Institute for Agriculture & Trade Policy](#) (IATP): works to ensure fair and sustainable food, farm and trade systems.

Tips:

Contact the embassy or trade promotion organisation in your country to see what kind of matchmaking facilities they can offer you. To find out if your country has an embassy in your target market, visit the [Embassy WorldWide](#) website.

Check the websites of embassies, import promotion agencies and Chambers of Commerce to see what kinds of export programmes they currently have.

Read the other CBI studies on exporting cocoa. The study '[Tips for organising your cocoa export to Europe](#)' gives more information on payment terms, insurance and customs policies. It also describes the logistics and distribution processes and packaging aspects. The study '[Tips for doing business with](#)

[European cocoa buyers'](#) is about European business culture, sales pitches and marketing information. It also covers quotes, pricing strategies, margins and promotions.

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

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