



TRANSPARENCE CACAO

ANNUAL REPORT
2025



Commitments, progress and objectives towards responsible cocoa



TRANSPARENCE CACAO was founded in 2015 with the deep conviction that to create high-quality chocolate, it is essential to source more sustainable cocoa.

This means sourcing cocoa with a known origin, cocoa that has a reduced environmental impact, and cocoa that is produced in ways that allow farmers and their families to live with respect and fairness from their work. Achieving this requires working closely with farmers, addressing the needs of communities, and implementing tailored actions to ensure long-term sustainability.

We aim to create a viable business case for the farmers focused on sustainability, improving the living conditions of cocoa farmers and making nature a key ally in this endeavour.

The following report presents the latest updates on TRANSPARENCE CACAO for 2024. It highlights progress across various topics and provides an outlook for the upcoming years.



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OUR COMMITMENTS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE COCOA

2.1. Our core values

Our program is built on the foundations of **TRANSPARENCY AND TRACEABILITY**, which are essential pillars of our sustainable initiatives. This approach allows us to implement a wide range of impactful projects that address key sustainability issues in the cocoa sector:



OUR ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS: We are committed to safeguarding forests and preserving biodiversity, recognizing that healthy ecosystems are essential for both cocoa production and the planet's well-being. Through our program, we promote sustainable agricultural practices that protect natural habitats, prevent deforestation, and restore degraded lands. Our agroforestry initiatives support farmers to plant trees and different crops alongside their cocoa trees, which helps reduce soil erosion, improves water retention, and supports local wildlife. By prioritizing the environment, we aim to minimize the cocoa industry's carbon footprint and foster a healthier environment for future generations.

OUR SOCIAL AND ECONOMICAL COMMITMENTS: At the heart of our sustainability efforts is the improvement of farmers' livelihoods. We work actively to eradicate poverty and address social challenges such as child labor. Our projects focus on empowering farmers by providing training in better agricultural practices, offering financial incentives, and supporting access to resources like healthcare, education, and financial services. We also support community-based initiatives that provide additional sources of income, ensuring a sustainable future for farmers and their communities.

AROMATIC AND FOOD QUALITY: Ensuring that consumers benefit from the full aromatic potential of the cocoa beans is a key aspect of our commitment to quality. By focusing on the high standards of post-harvest processing, we enable cocoa to reach its full aromatic potential offering consumers a richer and more flavourful chocolate experience and allowing farmers to benefit from a higher income.

2.2. Our levels of commitment

TRANSPARENCE CACAO offers different levels of commitment designed to meet the diverse needs and expectations of our customers, allowing them to choose the degree of traceability, quality, and impact on key sustainability topics they wish to support in the cocoa supply chain.

REFERENCE Level: At this level, cocoa beans are produced using traditional cultivation methods. The beans are sourced in alignment with our responsible sourcing charter, which ensures they meet a standard quality base. This charter guarantees transparency and traceability, allowing us to trace the beans back to their origin, and ensuring that the cocoa is not linked to deforestation.



PREFERENCE Level: Cocoa beans at the PREFERENCE level are carefully selected and sorted at the source, ensuring complete traceability to farmers and segregation at every stage to maintain bean integrity. Farmers receive ongoing support, including training in good agricultural practices and agroforestry techniques to preserve biodiversity, enhance productivity, and generate additional income. In recognition of their efforts, PREFERENCE farmers receive a premium for their produce, incentivizing sustainable farming practices and improving their livelihoods. Community support is also provided to address critical social issues, such as combating child labor, promoting income-generating activities, and fostering financial inclusion through banking services. **The PREFERENCE level aims to contribute actively to a more sustainable and socially responsible cocoa industry.**

EXCELLENCE Level: In addition to the PREFERENCE commitments, EXCELLENCE beans undergo controlled fermentation and drying processes, in dedicated infrastructures to preserve their full aromatic potential. Only the highest-quality beans are selected, ensuring exceptional flavour. EXCELLENCE level also applies to all organic cocoa, ensuring that the beans are produced without synthetic pesticides, further enhancing environmental sustainability. **By prioritizing both quality and sustainability, EXCELLENCE delivers the highest-quality chocolate while supporting environmental preservation and social responsibility.**

Only the PREFERENCE and EXCELLENCE levels are part of our sustainability program, as they are designed to go beyond basic quality and ensure that cocoa production is addressing the environmental and social challenges cocoa sector is facing. These levels focus on creating long-term value for partner cooperatives and farmers, by promoting traceability, ethical farming practices, and community support.

The REFERENCE level is designed to serve as an entry point for customers who are beginning their journey toward more sustainable sourcing practices, however we strongly encourage our customers to create more impact by joining the sustainability program at least at the PREFERENCE level.



TRACEABILITY & TRANSPARENCY

3.1. Traceability, a foundation of our program

Our sourcing strategy is built on a fully integrated supply chain, giving us complete control over every step of the cocoa sourcing process, **including full segregated traceability of PREFERENCE, EXCELLENCE cocoa**. This unique structure, combined with our strong presence on the ground, allows us to work directly with farmers and cooperatives in all the countries where we source cocoa.

“ From cocoa to your chocolate, knowing each actor is one of our commitments. Segregated traceability is the foundation of our work. Only by understanding where the cocoa is grown and who are involved in the process, risks can be identified and managed. This way we can increase our impact together. ”

Our commitment to a fully segregated approach, ensuring cocoa mass segregation from the farmers level to the finished chocolate is crucial to us, as it provides full visibility and transparency throughout the entire supply chain, ensuring that the cocoa meets our sustainability and quality standards all the way to our customers.

3.1.1. Local presence and ongoing collaboration with cooperatives

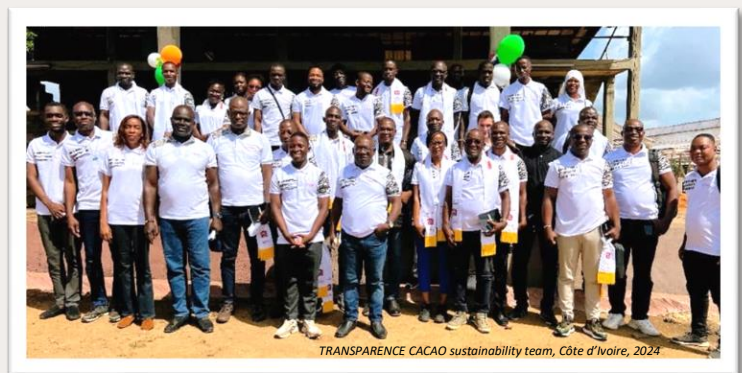
What truly sets us apart is our daily close collaboration with farmers and their communities. Our long-term partnerships with cooperatives in the five origin countries where we source cocoa, together with our dedicated sustainability team in Côte d'Ivoire, enables us to proactively anticipate challenges, respond swiftly to emerging issues, and collaborate intensively with our partners on long-term, impactful projects. By embedding the cocoa supply chain at the heart of our operations, we maintain a continuous dialogue with cooperatives, ensuring real-time support and flexibility to adapt our approach when needs evolve.

3.1.2. Strategic focus on Côte d'Ivoire and strong bonds in South America

Our strategic decision to concentrate efforts in Côte d'Ivoire, the world's largest cocoa origin, reflects our commitment to making a meaningful impact where it is most needed.

With over 30 TRANSPARENCY CACAO employees dedicated to sustainability, we are deeply embedded in the local cocoa community, working in key areas to provide direct support.

In South America, our longstanding relationships with partner cooperatives—some of which span more than 20 years—ensure that we continue to provide focused, expert support in these regions as well.





3.2. Mapping our sourcing

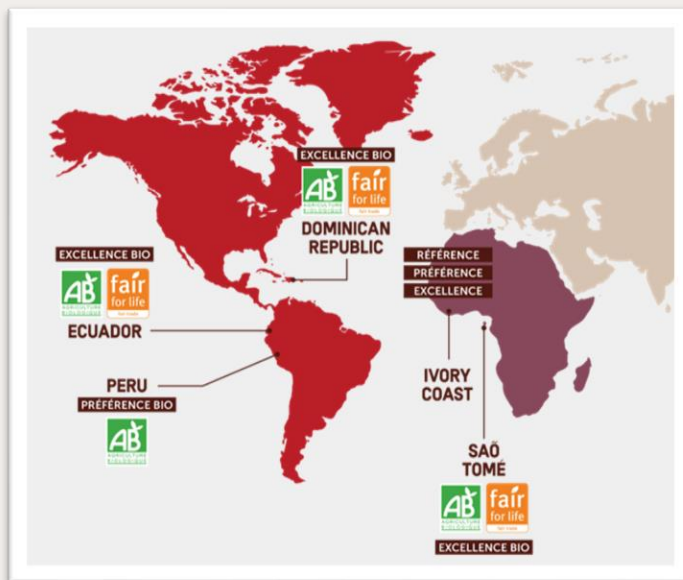
3.2.1. Cooperatives and farmers registration

Traceability is fundamental to our approach and a prerequisite for the successful implementation of all our initiatives. TRANSPARENCE CACAO is deeply committed to segregating 100% of its cocoa, ensuring full traceability to cooperatives and farmers.

To achieve this, we established a comprehensive list of our partner cooperatives, covering our five origin countries: Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Peru, Dominican Republic, and São Tomé.

2024 list of cooperatives can be found [here](#).

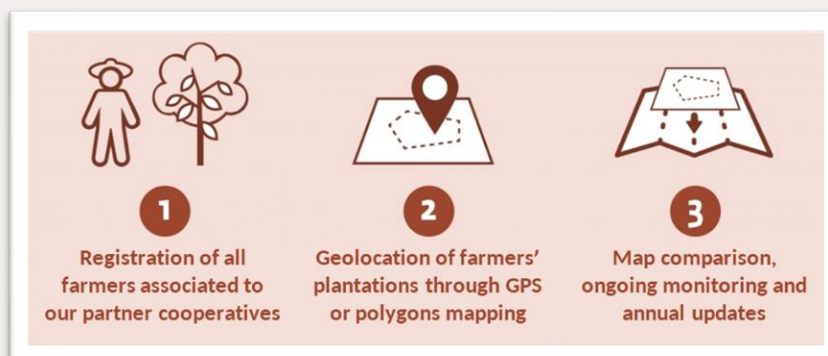
This foundational step also involved registering all farmers associated with our cooperatives, marking a significant milestone towards creating a fully integrated and segregated cocoa sourcing model.



As a result, TRANSPARENCE CACAO is proud to ensure that **100% of our beans are traceable back to cooperatives and farmers**. This traceability is vital for maintaining the integrity of our supply chain and fostering long-term partnerships with the communities we work with.

3.2.2. Achieving full mapping of Cocoa plots

A key component of our traceability efforts has been the mapping of cocoa plots. We have worked diligently to ensure that 100% of the plot boundaries across all our origins are georeferenced. This means that every plot of cocoa is accurately mapped using GPS technology, guaranteeing precise and reliable data for sourcing and quality control.





This georeferencing effort is crucial not only for ensuring accurate traceability but also for fostering greater accountability and transparency throughout the entire cocoa supply chain. By mapping the boundaries of each plot, we ensure that the origin of every bean can be tracked, which is essential for compliance with laws against imported deforestation such as the European Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). This mapping process enables us to demonstrate full adherence to these legal requirements, paving the way for a more sustainable and responsible cocoa industry.

TRANSPARENCE CACAO has successfully achieved 100% of its georeferencing objective across all origin countries in 2024, in line with the EUDR requirements. GPS mapping will continue as and when new farmers will be added to the program.

3.3. Digitalization of our sourcing

3.3.1. A transformative digital traceability system

TRANSPARENCE CACAO has successfully completed a transformative initiative: the implementation of advanced digital traceability systems across our supply chain.

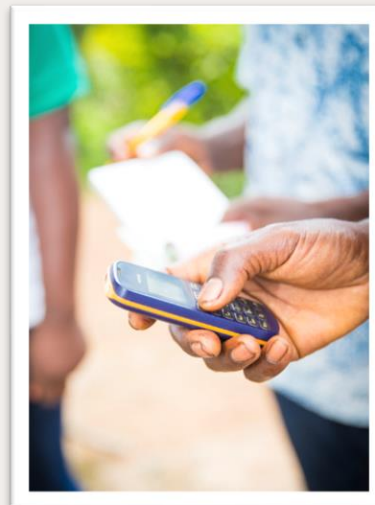
For our cocoa sourced from Côte d'Ivoire, we use Farmforce, a digital tracking system that is revolutionizing how we record and verify data. For our cocoa from Latin America, we utilize Trusty, ensuring robust traceability and data management. These systems enable us to efficiently track and verify the traceability of the cocoa in our origins, particularly for farmers in remote areas. For all our origins we are proud to confirm that in 2024, we achieved 100% digitalization of our sourcing.





3.3.2. Adapting to challenges in remote areas

In regions where conventional registration documents like ID cards are often unavailable, and where even birth dates can be difficult to determine, our innovative solution makes a significant difference. By assigning unique identifiers and providing farmers with mobile phones, in line with the recommendations of the Conseil du Café-Cacao, we enable them to record GPS data, ensuring precise mapping of their plots. What sets this system apart is its adaptability to challenges in remote and inaccessible areas. The synchronization process can be completed later, ensuring compliance with traceability requirements, even amidst local conditions and network unpredictability.



3.4. Commitment to a Zero-Deforestation cocoa supply chain

3.4.1. Publicly Sharing Our Commitment



For years, we have been fully dedicated to ensuring that our chocolate production does not contribute to deforestation. This commitment led TRANSPARENCE CACAO, through its founder Cémoi, to become a pioneering member of the Cocoa and Forests Initiative (CFI) in 2017.

In 2018, TRANSPARENCE CACAO reinforced this commitment by publicly announcing its fight against deforestation through a [press release](#).

3.4.2. Selecting Our Suppliers

We prioritize selecting suppliers who align with our sustainability goals. Our process starts with a thorough initial audit, where we compare farmers' GPS data with forest areas to ensure no deforestation is occurring.

Once suppliers meet our criteria, they are formally engaged in our commitment to a more sustainable cocoa supply chain by signing a dedicated charter.





3.4.3. Transforming Rural Areas

Our efforts to transform rural areas go beyond sourcing cocoa sustainably. We implement various training programs designed to educate farmers on good agricultural practices while raising awareness about critical issues such as the impact of deforestation on the climate. These initiatives aim to empower farmers to make environmentally conscious decisions and improve their livelihoods.



3.4.4. Verifying Our Impact

To measure the effectiveness of our actions, we continually verify our impact on the cocoa farming areas. We use this data to refine and enhance our action plans.

- In 2021, we began the verification of our GPS mapping data through an external consulting firm, further strengthening our sustainability efforts.
- **In 2024, we completed the verification of all GPS mapping data linked to partner cooperatives, utilizing satellite technology.**

Our database creates a digital network that connects all stakeholders in origin countries -TRANSPARENCY CACAO staff, cooperatives, and farmers - allowing for real-time tracking of the cocoa supply chain. Through precise mapping, we not only ensure the traceability of each plot but also strengthen our ability to verify the sustainability of our cocoa sourcing practices.

This mapping system provides valuable insights that allow us to implement targeted actions based on the identified level of risk in each area.

By continuously assessing and mitigating these risks, we ensure that our cocoa supply chain remains free from deforestation. This initiative aligns with the EUDR, reinforcing our commitment to environmental sustainability and compliance with international standards.





3.4.5. Deforestation risk identification and remediation

In the event that deforestation is detected, TRANSPARENCE CACAO, in line with its commitment charter, will notify the cocoa farmer, and any ongoing business transactions will be immediately suspended.

If there are active initiatives related to income generation (such as diversification, agroforestry, or yield improvement on compliant plots) between the farmer and TRANSPARENCE CACAO, these activities will continue to ensure the farmer's livelihood is not disrupted.

In-depth investigation will be conducted to assess the extent and causes of the deforestation. Based on the findings, TRANSPARENCE CACAO will consider corrective actions such as awareness campaigns or reforestation efforts. The farmer will be reassessed periodically, and business relationships will only be reinstated when there is clear evidence of compliance with our sustainability standards.

3.5. Grievance Mechanism and Non-Compliance Policy on Environmental Issues

Our environmental requirements are defined in TRANSPARENCE CACAO standard, designed to minimize negative impacts while maximizing positive contributions to the environment.

The following priorities guide our approach:

- Preventing deforestation
- Avoiding contamination of surface and groundwater
- Using agrochemicals in a responsible manner
- Preserving habitats for plant and animal species
- Protecting wildlife and maintaining biodiversity, including promoting crop diversification within cocoa plantations
- Ensuring proper waste management on farms
- Conserving water and preventing wastage

Any partner wishing to raise concerns, ask questions, or seek advice regarding our environmental impact is encouraged to contact us on our website at <https://www.transparence-cacao.com/contact/>





OUR ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

4.1. Agroforestry at the roots of our program

The challenges posed by climate change and environmental degradation to cocoa production led TRANSPARENCE CACAO to integrate agroforestry into its environmental strategy from the very beginning of the program. As this model enhances farmers' income, diversifies their revenue streams, and helps preserve biodiversity while increasing carbon storage, we firmly believe it is a key solution for more sustainable cocoa production.

This is why, since its inception, TRANSPARENCE CACAO has been actively promoting agroforestry in all five cocoa origins; Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, Peru, and São Tomé and Príncipe. However, the environmental, social, and economic challenges vary between African & Andean countries, which is why TRANSPARENCE CACAO actions and objectives are tailored to address the specific local issues in each country.

4.1.1. *What is Agroforestry and Why is it Important?*



TRANSPARENCE CACAO defines agroforestry as an ecologically based, dynamic system for managing natural resources. By incorporating trees into cocoa farms, this system helps diversify and sustain production, delivering enhanced social, economic, and environmental benefits to farmers.

Agroforestry in cocoa combines the cultivation of cocoa with woody perennials (such as fruit and timber trees) and plants with high nutritional, therapeutic, or market value, all on the same plot.

This approach provides an alternative to intensive farming, supports sustainable cocoa production, and offers additional benefits such as improved food security and supplementary household income from fruit and timber trees.

In South America, we have developed a participatory approach, supported by ICRAF/World Agroforestry, focused on co-designing the Agroforestry System. This approach considers not only the agro-ecodaphic context but also the individual strategies of farmers.

In Côte d'Ivoire, our agroforestry models were developed in 2018 by TRANSPARENCE CACAO, in collaboration with ECOTIERRA and key partners like World Agroforestry (ICRAF), the National Centre for Agronomic Research (CNRA), the National Extension Service (ANADER), the Forest Development Corporation (SODEFOR), and Le Conseil du Café-Cacao (CCC).

The primary goal is to enhance cocoa tree productivity, with the selection of tree species focused on improving cocoa production and boosting farmers' incomes.





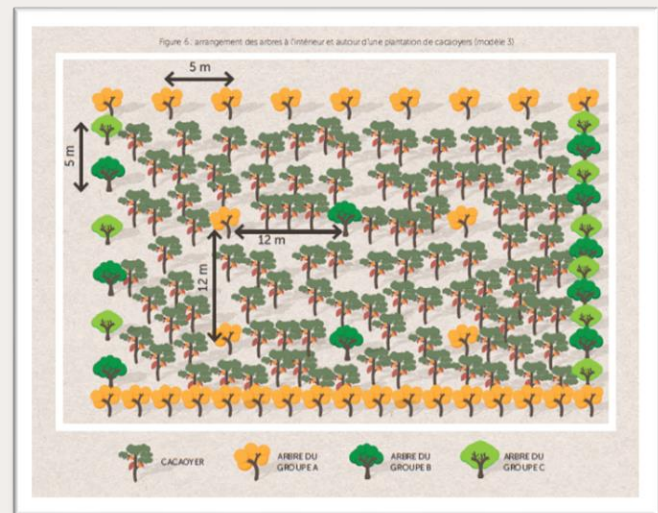
TRANSPARENCE CACAO's agroforestry systems include three categories of trees:

- **Group A:** Slow-growing, high-quality timber trees that provide significant shade when established and offer long-term income potential for farmers.
- **Group B:** Faster-growing species, often fruit trees, that provide shade in the short term.
- **Group C:** Fast-growing leguminous trees with a rapid regeneration rate, serving as a renewable source of wood energy for household use.

NOMS DES ESPÈCES	NOMS USUELS	FAMILLE	ORIGINE	ÂGE MOYEN D'EXPLOITABILITÉ OU DE PRODUCTION	RÔLES PRÉVUS
GROUPE A					
<i>Nyctanthes tomentosa</i>	Ennon	Apocynaceae	Native	25 - 35 ans	Sols d'ombres, ombrage, bois de feu.
<i>Chromolaena odorata</i>	Ancage	Lamiaceae	Native	-	
<i>Dalrymplea hirsuta</i>	Sulavati	Burseraceae	Native	-	
<i>Diospyros mesquima</i>	Yanna	Melastomaceae	Native	25 - 30 ans	
<i>Ficus umbellata</i>	Arbre à l'œuf/Œuf	Apocynaceae	Native	-	
<i>Freziera densiflora</i>	Manigon	Malvaceae	Native	30 - 35 ans	
<i>Albizia leonensis</i>	Aloué	Mimosaceae	Native	10 - 15 ans	
<i>Terminalia grandis</i>	Ngan	Combretaceae	Native	10 - 25 ans	
<i>Terminalia ligustris</i>	Ngan	Combretaceae	Native	10 - 25 ans	
<i>Terminalia mollis</i>	Ngan	Combretaceae	Native	10 - 25 ans	
GROUPE B					
<i>Acacia mangium</i>	Curatoué	Fabaceae	Exotique	-	Production de fruits, ombrage, bois de feu.
<i>Citrus sp.</i>	Buabou	Rutaceae	Exotique	-	
<i>Cordia alliodora</i>	Coccoloba	Boraginaceae	Native	-	
<i>Cordia lutea</i>	Néle C'oua	Euphorbiaceae	Native	-	
<i>Mangifera indica</i>	Mangou	Anacardiaceae	Exotique	07 - 10 ans	
<i>Miconia emmenanthe</i>	Acoué	Euphorbiaceae	Exotique	-	
<i>Podium sp.</i>	Coccoloba	Polypodiaceae	Exotique	-	
<i>Trichostema leucanthum</i>	Aloué	Euphorbiaceae	Native	08 - 10 ans	
<i>Ficus umbellata</i>	Ngan	Apocynaceae	Native	-	
GROUPE C					
<i>Acacia auriculiformis</i>	-	Fabaceae	Exotique	3 ans	Amélioration de la fertilité de sols, bois énergie, utilisation de terres, ombrage.
<i>Acacia mangium</i>	-	Fabaceae	Exotique	3 ans	
<i>Mitrasia</i>	Mitrasia	Mimosaceae	Native	-	
<i>Gliricidia sepium</i>	Coccoloba	Fabaceae	Exotique	3 ans	

The operations of cocoa farms and the challenges to implementing agroforestry practices differ in each country.

In Côte d'Ivoire, for example, the program offers five distinct agroforestry models, each designed with specific guidelines for species selection, spacing, and vegetation coverage. These models aim to enhance both productivity and sustainability. They require at least 30% native vegetation coverage, a minimum of 16 shade trees per hectare, and the inclusion of at least four different species per hectare. The five models include: trees planted inside the farm, trees surrounding the farm, a combination of trees both inside and around the farm, alternating strips of cocoa and other trees, and improved fallow or micro-forest systems. Each model is tailored to suit the local environment and the needs of farmers.



4.1.2. Our achievements so far

In Côte d'Ivoire, our goal is to achieve 50% agroforestry coverage by 2025 (compared to 43% already achieved in 2024), with a long-term target of 100% coverage by 2030.

In South America, 100% of our cocoa sourcing is already under agroforestry systems in Sao Tomé and Dominican Republic, while we reached 60% in Peru and 80% in Ecuador. The challenges we face include restoring aging plantations, enhancing biodiversity, and regenerating degraded soils.





4.2. Improving yield & biodiversity through Agroforestry

In Côte d'Ivoire, since 2018, TRANSPARENCE CACAO has been actively promoting agroforestry as a key component of its sustainable cocoa production strategy, with the development of a comprehensive agroforestry manual and the introduction of five innovative models designed to support both environmental and economic benefits to farmers. In 2024, TRANSPARENCE CACAO contracted a team of experts from FIRCA, ANADER and VEYIAA AGRINOV to update its agroforestry manual. The second edition incorporates field experiences and lessons learned, further enhancing its practical application for farmers.



Between 2018 and 2024, we successfully established over 150 demonstration plots in collaboration with cooperatives and partners such as ECOTIERRA and ICRAF. To support the scalability of these efforts, 84 nursery workers were trained in tree seedling production, and 50 nurseries were created to enable agroforestry roll out. Since 2019, more than **1.72 million seedlings (including 491,348 tree seedlings in 2024 alone) from 27 different tree species have been distributed**, contributing to the expansion of agroforestry practices across the region.

One of the key elements in implementing agroforestry is the training and support of cooperatives and farmers. In partnership with ICRAF, ECOTIERRA and Mangrove, 53 cooperatives have trained field officers who educate farmers on sustainable farming. At the cooperative level, environmental committees, made up of managers, nursery owners, and field officers, oversee agroforestry promotion, demonstration plots, and nursery activities.

To raise awareness and encourage the adoption of agroforestry, TRANSPARENCE CACAO organizes regular awareness campaigns aimed at educating farmers on the benefits of agroforestry and its impact on sustainability. Since 2021, TRANSPARENCE CACAO reached cooperative leaders from 58 cooperatives and 3500 farmers through collaboration with SODEFOR and the Ministry of Water and Forests. These campaigns focused on awareness raising initiatives, including visits to cocoa agroforestry farms previously implemented.



In 2024, 43% of our sourcing was made under agroforestry in Côte d'Ivoire, representing 36,246 farmers. By the end of 2025, we aim to train 100% of the cooperatives and reach 50% of farmers applying agroforestry across 128,000 hectares in Côte d'Ivoire.



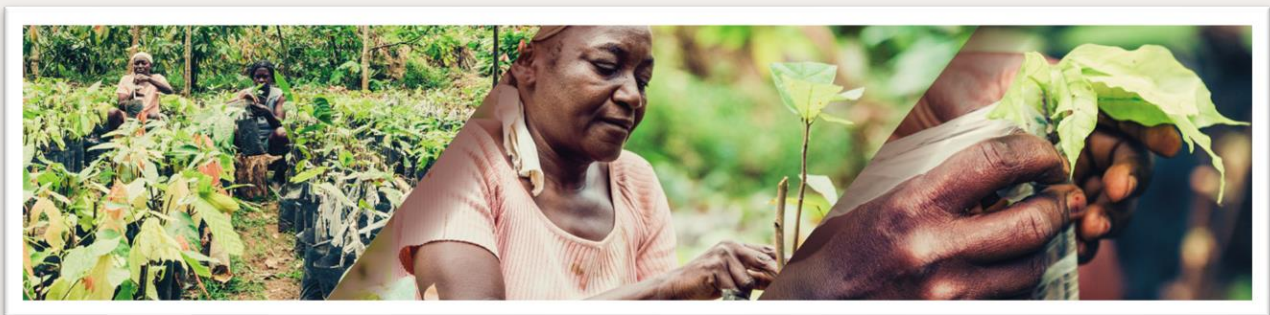


4.3. Renovating aging cocoa farms

In São Tomé and Príncipe and the Dominican Republic, all the cocoa farms we source from are now managed under agroforestry systems. However, both countries are facing challenges related to the renovation of aging cocoa trees, so an extensive project has been implemented to support farmers.

In São Tomé and Príncipe, we have partnered with CECAB, a cooperative representing over 3,000 cocoa farmers, to implement a large-scale renovation program since 2010.

Over the past decade, more than 1,000 hectares of old cocoa farms have been successfully renovated using agroforestry practices. More recently, CECAB has also collaborated on the [Global Environment Facility](#) (GEF) funded project “ 18,000 shade trees of 17 different species. 18,000 shade trees of 17 different species.

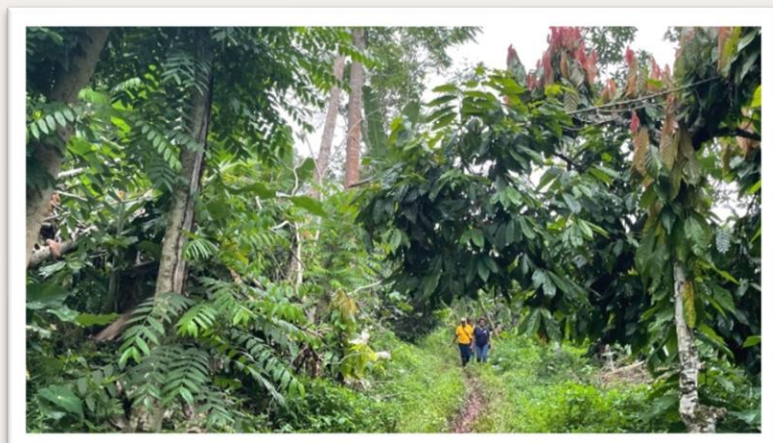


In the Dominican Republic, we launched a similar renovation program in 2023, in collaboration with our partner cooperative CONACADO, with the aim of enhancing the sustainability and productivity of cocoa farms.

This initiative focuses on the revitalization of older cocoa farms by integrating agroforestry systems. The objective is to revitalize these farms, which have experienced a decline in yield over time, by increasing plant density and incorporating agroforestry practices.

This project will not only boost cocoa yields but also improve the overall health of the soil, enhancing biodiversity, and contributing to environmental conservation.

This program is a crucial step in ensuring long-term sustainability for cocoa farmers in the region while also addressing the challenges posed by aging farms and environmental degradation.





4.4. Restoring loss of biodiversity and improving soil health

In Peru and Ecuador, cocoa cultivation faces key challenges, including replacing cocoa farming on degraded soils and preserving fragile forest areas and ecosystems. Efforts are underway to restore degraded land, focusing on soil regeneration and environmental sustainability, to ensure the long-term viability of cocoa production and protect local biodiversity.

To do so, we are leading a regional initiative called “Agro-ecological Regenerative Cocoa” in partnership with the Alliance Bioversity CIAT (ABC), a prominent international research network within the CGIAR, as well as World Agroforestry.

The program focuses on promoting agroforestry practices aimed at regenerating landscapes by restoring degraded soils and establishing cocoa plantations within agroforestry systems.

This approach is designed to recreate ecological corridors that connect forested areas, enhancing biodiversity and environmental sustainability.



Additionally, in Peru and Ecuador, the following initiatives were achieved in 2024 to drive soil regeneration and help restore degraded lands:

- 50 hectares of cocoa farms were renovated in Peru and Ecuador
- 119,340 of grafted plants distributed to farmers in Peru and Ecuador
- 63 composting units were implemented, with 387 tons of compost distributed in Peru
- 4,781 liters of effective microorganisms were distributed to farmers in Peru and Ecuador
- 118 hectares of degraded land were restored in Peru

For more details on our agroforestry strategy in Côte d’Ivoire and South American countries, please refer to the **October 2023 Tropenbos publication**, [*“Cocoa Agroforestry in West Africa: Experiences from the Private Sector and Opportunities for Collaborative Action.”*](#)





OUR SOCIAL & ECONOMICAL INITIATIVES

Through TRANSPARENCE CACAO, we are committed not only to cultivating high-quality, traceable cocoa, but also to positively impacting the lives of the people who grow it. Our mission is to uphold the core values transparency, fairness, and shared progress towards a better quality of life for all.

5.1.MAISON DU PLANTEUR: A true change maker in Côte d'Ivoire

As part of our roadmap, our “MAISON DU PLANTEUR” play a vital role in Côte d'Ivoire to improve the lives of cocoa farmers. In 2021, we transformed our eight fermentation centres into dynamic hubs offering training and a variety of social and economic activities for local communities.

Through this initiative, TRANSPARENCE CACAO aims to revolutionize the traditional approach to local development, making it community driven.

Each MAISON DU PLANTEUR features a unique Sustainability Committee, composed of key members of the local community, such as the village chief, the school principal, doctor, nurse and others. This committee is responsible for designing and proposing projects that directly address the community's needs.



By involving the community in every step of the process, we ensure that the initiatives are not only relevant but also supported by those who will benefit from them, guaranteeing their success and long-term sustainability.

Every year, TRANSPARENCE CACAO selects and finances these projects with the aim of addressing the economic and social challenges faced by the community. **In 2024, 42 projects were implemented within our communities** to tackle key topics such as fighting child labor, alphabetization, women empowerment and income generating activities.

While the MAISON DU PLANTEUR plays a central role in Côte d'Ivoire, our commitment to enhancing farmers' quality of life extends to all our sourcing countries: Ecuador, São Tomé, Peru, and the Dominican Republic. Our cocoa is Fair For Life certified and 100% organic, reflecting our dedication to building long-term partnerships with cooperatives and implementing strategies that empower farmers to live with greater dignity.





5.2. Our roadmap to achieving Living Income

At the heart of our vision lies the belief that a living income is a fundamental human right. This principle serves as our guiding light, and for this reason, we are committed **to enabling all cocoa farmers in our TRANSPARENCE CACAO program to earn a living income by 2030.**

To turn this vision into reality, we have crafted a time-bound action plan, which we will continuously adjust based on relevant developments and new insights. We recognize the urgency of this mission and strive to make living incomes not just a goal, but a tangible reality for all.

Since the start of the program in 2015, we have implemented several initiatives to help farmers earn a fairer income year-round. This strategic approach not only fosters financial stability but also reduces vulnerability during lean months.



5.2.1. Purchasing Practices

At the core of our policy is our commitment to ensuring fair remuneration to farmers, guaranteeing they receive a better price for their cocoa. To bridge the gap between government-set farmgate prices and the Living Income Reference Price (LIRP), we establish premiums that go beyond mere sustenance and offer our customers the option to choose a flexible premium that includes the LIRP.



In 2024, all the cocoa sourced through TRANSPARENCE CACAO benefited from a premium paid to cooperatives.

Additionally, **in Côte d'Ivoire, we provided premiums to 100% of farmers at PREFERENCE and EXCELLENCE levels**, resulting in an 4% to 7% increase over the government-defined 2024 main crop farmgate price. For our REFERENCE range, premiums are paid exclusively to cooperatives to support the implementation of CSR practices.

In our other origins (Ecuador, Peru, São Tomé, and the Dominican Republic), where cocoa markets are liberalized and where most of the cocoa we source is organic, we reference local market prices. **100% of farmers are paid a premium, with prices ranging from 15 to 40% above average conventional prices**, depending on the region and market fluctuations.





5.2.2. Better knowledge for stronger impact

To ensure our program positively impacts cocoa farmers, we regularly conduct surveys to assess the living income gap and gather insights.

In 2023, we took significant steps to address the living income issue within our supply chain. We launched two comprehensive studies to estimate the Living Income and to assess how our partner farmers compare versus benchmark research platforms such as [‘Living Income Community of Practice’](#).

To do this, we partnered with Trust International to conduct a household income survey among two cooperatives in our supply chain. The study, done from January to April 2023, used the Anker methodology, with a benchmark living wage of 143,236 FCFA (Global Living Wage Coalition). It included 200 farmers from our TRANSPARENCE CACAO sourcing, and 100 control farmers not involved in our sourcing nor in any sustainability efforts.

Additionally, a household income survey was conducted among four other cooperatives, part of TRANSPARENCE CACAO REFERENCE and PREFERENCE sourcing, in partnership with Afrique Secours et Assistance (ASA) using our own digital tool and the Anker methodology.

Main key takeaways from our study:

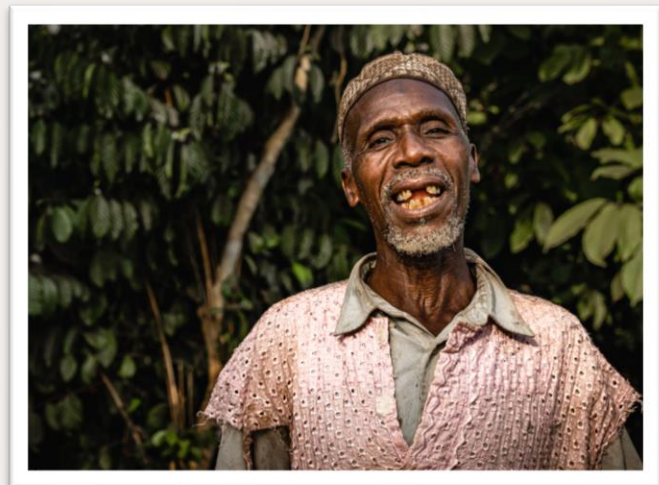
Farmers supported by TRANSPARENCE CACAO reported an average monthly income of 175,302 FCFA, while the control group (not in our sustainability program) earned an average of 152,780 FCFA. Both groups earned on average more than the living income reference of 143,263 FCFA, but significant disparities were observed within each group.

The study found that 38% of farmers still fell below the living income threshold based on ANKER reference wage, with 15% earning less than 50,000 FCFA per month, below the Ivorian agricultural minimum wage.

Regarding gender, women make up only 7% of the total sample, but they are more represented in the lowest income group, accounting for 14%, compared to 3% in the other groups.

Age does not significantly affect income, but education level does. The survey showed that only 16% of farmers in the lowest income group have at least a secondary education, while over 30% in the highest income group have a secondary or higher education.

Based on the study results, we have adapted our strategy and actions to help TRANSPARENCE CACAO farmers achieve a living income by 2030. This includes enhanced coaching on yield improvement and cost reduction, along with a greater focus on income-generating activities. Our action plan is detailed in the following sections.





5.2.3. Yield Improvement

With TRANSPARENCE CACAO, we focus on improving yield by providing coaching in good agricultural practices (GAP), promoting agroforestry, and ensuring the efficient management of inputs.

This approach empowers farmers to optimize their farming methods, increase productivity, and reduce waste. By integrating sustainable practices such as agroforestry, farmers can not only enhance soil health and biodiversity but also create additional income streams.

Our recent studies, including the 2023 Living Income study and the conclusion of “Cacao Ami des Forêts” (a long-term project benefiting three of our cooperatives and 2,937 farmers), revealed a **substantial 50% average improvement in yield on the supervised plots, with 40% of these plots achieving a minimum yield of 1,000 kg/ha.**

These outcomes highlight the positive impact of our interventions on farm productivity and the long-term sustainability of cocoa farming in the region.

To strengthen our approach, in 2024, we have partnered with Mangrove to support cooperatives in diversifying their income sources, alongside offering coaching on improving yields and adopting good agricultural practices. This collaboration aims to not only enhance agricultural productivity but also equip farmers with the tools and knowledge needed to explore alternative income streams, ensuring greater financial resilience and sustainability for the cooperatives.



Through this project, we have supported 32 cooperatives in 2024 and aim to cover a total of 45 cooperatives by 2025. In collaboration with Mangrove, we are also offering follow-up coaching to over 3,200 farmers to ensure continued progress.

This coaching included the development of a plot plan based on diagnostics and individual support sessions, with personalized development plans created through a participatory approach that considered the farmers' specific needs, resources, and conditions, while Mangrove coaches provided ongoing technical assistance during regular follow-up visits to help farmers address challenges and refine their practices.

Overall, cocoa serves as the primary agricultural income for 70% of the coached farmers, and after 12 months of coaching, 96% of them had implemented pruning on their plots, showing a strong grasp of the practice, while 66% successfully planted complementary trees alongside their cocoa.

Complete results will be available later this year, as coaching continues until 2025.





5.2.4. Income Diversification

We believe income diversification should be pursued through two parallel strategies: widespread agroforestry implementation, allowing for additional crops alongside cacao on the same plot, and the establishment of income-generating activities (IGAs) for both farmers and their spouses.

Agroforestry:

We actively promote agroforestry by offering training, distributing trees, setting up nurseries and demonstration plots. In 2024, 43% of our farmers have adopted agroforestry practices. More details on our agroforestry initiatives can be found under chapter 4.1

Income Generating Activities (IGAs):

Recognizing the need to support farmers beyond cocoa production, we promote income diversification through IGAs for both farmers and their spouses. Gender equality is central to this strategy, providing stability and reducing vulnerability, especially during lean months. More details on Women empowerment can be found under chapter 5.5

As an example, in 2023 TRANSPARENCE CACAO has supported among others a poultry farming project aimed at improving the financial stability of one partner farmer. The initiative began with 50 chicks, marking the start of a new income source for the farmer. Over time, he expanded his poultry operation and, by 2025, became fully independent, managing around 400 chickens. His success in poultry farming enabled him to reinvest in his agricultural activities.



With the profits from his poultry business, he established a nursery, using chicken manure as a natural fertilizer to boost plant growth. He also grew maize, providing a sustainable, cost-effective feed source for his poultry. This integrated farming approach has not only increased his farm's productivity but also diversified his income, ensuring greater financial resilience for his household.

Building on these positive results, we are exploring the possibility of replicating this approach with other farmers, extending the benefits of this model to further strengthen their financial independence and sustainable growth.

In 2024, a total of 9,788 individuals (including 6,963 women - 71% of total number of participants) benefited from IGAs supported by TRANSPARENCE CACAO to diversify household income.

To go further, we are intensifying our efforts to promote IGAs in remote areas, in collaboration with ASA, our external partner. This initiative targets cooperatives located in more isolated regions, with the goal of expanding our current IGA coverage. We aim to replicate successful practices already implemented in other cooperatives and create new sources of income for farmers, thereby enhancing their financial stability and overall well-being. Through this approach, we seek to strengthen the economic resilience of farmers in these underserved areas with the aim to create 1000 additional jobs in the coming years.





5.2.5. Costs Reduction & Access to Services

As part of the income study conducted in 2023 we estimated farmer's production costs. Learnings of our study show that costs for cocoa production represent 13.6% of farmer's gross cocoa revenues, with an average estimated at 250,044 FCFA.

Reduction of production costs

Training in good agricultural practices includes methods to reduce input usage, contributing to environmental sustainability while lowering production costs, thereby improving farmers' economic viability.

In 2023, we supported farmers in valorising their waste, encouraging them to use agricultural by-products (such as cocoa pods) or horticultural waste (like poultry waste) to create compost. To this end, we provided individual coaching to 208 farmers.

Waste valorisation reduces production costs and, in some cases, allows income diversification through the sale of by-products. Additionally, compost use enhances the sustainability of agricultural plots.



In 2024, we launched **pruning and application brigades across 94% of our cooperatives**. The primary objective of these brigades is to alleviate the labor burden on farmers by providing specialized services, which in turn helps **reduce their overall labor costs**. This initiative also **generates employment opportunities in rural areas**, contributing to local economic growth. Additionally, by reducing the physical strain of farming activities, we aim to improve the overall well-being and quality of life for farmers, enabling them to focus on other aspects of their agricultural practices and income diversification efforts.

Access to financial services

In addition to financial management training, we provide farmers with access to essential financial tools, empowering them to better manage their income throughout the year and address various needs. By helping farmers open bank accounts, we enable them to save money and access financial services, including mobile payments. Combined with financial management training, this approach enhances their ability to distribute their income over the year to meet their needs.

In 2024, we supported 5,267 farmers in gaining access to digital payment services, for a total of 8,179 farmers accompanied since 2021.





5.2.6. Risk sharing and retailer’s engagement

We are dedicated to actively engaging our retailer partners to shift their sourcing towards cocoa that support the living income premium and related initiatives. The more partners we involve in this effort, the greater the collective impact we can have on improving the livelihoods of cocoa farmers. By expanding the number of retailers supporting the TRANSPARENCE CACAO PREFERENCE and EXCELLENCE levels, we can help farmers achieve a living income on a broader scale, ensuring long-term financial stability and enhanced well-being for farming communities. This collaborative approach is key to creating lasting change and driving sustainable progress for the entire cocoa supply chain.

We also prioritize risk-sharing with farmers, acknowledging the challenges they face and actively working on collaborative solutions. As part of TRANSPARENCE CACAO, we are committed to establishing long-term contracts with suppliers. To this end, we sign three to five-year contracts with cooperatives, with annual agreement of volumes by both parties.

Living income Activities (Côte d’Ivoire)	2024 REACH			2021-2024 COMBINED REACH		
	Total Participants	Of which Women	% of Women	Total Participants	Of which Women	% of Women
Agroforestry trainings	60 185	4 814	8%	81 100	6 488	8%
Agroforestry implementation	14 863	43	-	36 246	2 899	8%
IGA	2 667	584	22%	9 788	6 963	71%
VSLA	3 004	1 768	59%	14 327	12 279	86%
Banking support	5 267	421	8%	8 179	654	8%

Summary of our Living income activities in Côte d’Ivoire





5.3. Fight against Child Labor

5.3.1. Commitment to eliminating child labor

TRANSPARENCE CACAO is firmly committed to a **zero-tolerance policy against child labor**, as we believe it has no place in our cocoa supply chain. Child labor is a complex issue, and defining it clearly is essential to our policy and actions. Therefore, we adhere to internationally recognized standards to guide our approach.

What is a child and what is child labor? According to the International Labor Organisation (ILO) Conventions No. 138 and 182, as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), childhood ends at the age of 18, marking the transition to adulthood. [ILO Convention No. 138](#) defines different minimum ages for various types of employment: 13 years for light work, 15 years for regular work, and 18 years for hazardous work. Countries may set higher ages, or in the case of developing countries, a slightly lower age. ILO Convention No. 182 further identifies hazardous work as one of the four worst forms of child labor (WFCL).

Our efforts to combat child labor are rooted in TRANSPARENCE CACAO. As a basis, every cooperative within our sourcing formally agrees to the commitments, which include pledges related to child labor and forced labor. These commitments are verified annually through internal and external audits to ensure compliance and accountability.

5.3.2. Primary focus on highest-risk country: Côte d'Ivoire

The risk of child labor varies across cocoa origins, and our primary focus is on Côte d'Ivoire, where the risk is the highest.

In Côte d'Ivoire, our continuous local presence enables us to implement targeted projects focused on addressing child labor and ensuring access to education for children.

Our support includes raising awareness among farmers, distributing school supplies, funding a teacher for the community, and facilitating the delivery of birth certificates.





5.3.3. *Monitoring and remediation: findings from our on-the-ground study*

To combat child labor, it is essential to fully understand the challenges and the situation on the ground. For this reason, in 2023, we launched a study, conducted within four of our TRANSPARENCE CACAO cooperatives, located in key cocoa-producing regions of Côte d'Ivoire: Sassandra, Lakota, Aboisso, and San Pedro. This project is executed in partnership with the organisation Afrique Secours et Assistance (ASA) and the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO) - a governmental agency which is part of the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs.

The cooperatives, representing over 2,200 farmers across more than 50 villages, were selected based on their motivation to address child labor issues and their varying levels of experience, challenges, and resources available to fight against this problem. To achieve this, we adopted a bottom-up approach, focusing on field visits to better understand and listen to the farmers and cooperatives involved.

Main key takeaways:

The survey found no cases of children involved in child labor. However, 96 children aged 7 to 17 were identified at risk. Of these, 78% were attending school (49% in primary school, 48% in secondary school, and 3% in Koranic education). Overall, nearly all of the children (93%) reported working alongside their parents, helping with fieldwork during school vacations.

Poverty as a Root Cause

Economic challenges faced by farmers are a key driver of child labor, as families struggle to meet their financial needs. A living income survey conducted using the HEA (Household Economy Analysis) methodology highlighted that many farmers prioritize immediate financial pressures over their children's education, leading to children working on family farms. This difficulty arises from several factors, including large family sizes, rising living costs, dependence on cash crops, and a lack of financial literacy and planning.

We firmly believe that our concrete, on-the-ground TRANSPARENCE CACAO actions, combined with our dedicated efforts towards achieving living income, will play a crucial role in effectively eradicating child labor (see section 5.2 on Living income).





Community Disengagement and overall lack of awareness

The farming communities are aware of child labor issues, with the communities themselves estimating a very high prevalence of 62%. However, cultural constraints and socio-economic challenges hinder effective action. Despite local initiatives implemented on the ground and dedicated campaigns by the Ivorian government, awareness remains insufficient. Only 20% of the surveyed communities spontaneously mentioned the child labor protection activities in place locally.

Moving forward, a more comprehensive and inclusive awareness-raising strategy, involving community leaders, is crucial. Our strategy for 2025 and beyond has been adapted to reflect this approach.

On the ground, resources remain limited

Despite improvements in access to schooling, supported by the government, significant disparities remain across locations. Many villages lack sufficient school infrastructure, forcing children to walk up to 7 kilometers daily. School canteens are often under-resourced, with food supplies not available all year long. In remote areas, the absence of birth certificates also prevents children from accessing education. Furthermore, families facing economic challenges often struggle to afford the costs associated with schooling, prioritizing immediate financial needs over educational investments.

Our community-based approach through the MAISON DU PLANTEUR is a key strength in addressing local challenges. We tailor our responses to meet the specific needs of each community, ensuring precise and tailored solutions to each issue. Actions and results for 2024 are detailed in the following pages.

Opportunities to improve monitoring and remedial strategies

Our study in partnership with ASA and RVO also highlighted several challenges in the current child labor monitoring process, including misunderstandings of survey questions and limited time in the field. While cooperatives have implemented some measures like awareness sessions and school kit distributions, they face difficulties due to limited expertise and resources.

In parallel, we will begin the second phase (2025–2027) of the “*Strengthening Child Protection Systems of Cocoa Cooperatives in Côte d’Ivoire*” project, in collaboration with RVO and private stakeholders. We will work closely with nine cooperatives to carry out targeted activities that enhance their CLMRS or equivalent. This phase will focus on enhancing the CLMRS in nine cooperatives through targeted activities, including awareness sessions for 6,000 farmers, 90 cooperative members, 5,500 children, and teachers.

We will then develop a ‘Children First’ plan with cooperatives to strengthen their existing CLMRS equivalent systems and carry out remediation activities aimed at vulnerable children and child labor cases.

Women empowerment is also a crucial component of the project, with the aim to improve household income. Women from vulnerable households will benefit from financial education and Village Saving and Loan Associations (VSLA) participation. The objective of this project is to refine and strengthen our approach, with the aim of expanding it to all TRANSPARENCE CACAO cooperatives – starting from PREFERENCE and EXCELLENCE fully covered in 2025 - and creating a robust strategy for a child-labor-free supply chain.





5.3.4. Raise Awareness and implement CLRMS or equivalents

We stress the importance of resolving the child labor in collaboration with relevant stakeholders in both the countries of origins and the cocoa industry.

This is one of the reasons why TRANSPARENCE CACAO through CEMOI is a member of the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI). As member we are reporting on annual cases and progress. The ICI annual report aggregated for all members is publicly available [here](#).



The first step in our approach is to raise awareness about child labor among cooperatives, farmers, and local populations near the fermentation centers. With the support of ICI methodology, this year we successfully trained 67 of our cooperatives (covering 69% of total number of cooperatives).

Since awareness is a prerequisite, but not sufficient by itself to assess and remediate individual situations, we target to implement a Child Labor Monitoring and Remediation System (CLMRS) or its equivalent in all PREFERENCE and EXCELLENCE cooperatives by 2025. From our 2024 study, currently 67% of cooperatives declare they implement a CLMRS or equivalent.

Through our regular sensitization events in presence of the Ivorian Ministry of family, women and child (MFFE), we also encourage our partners to report cases linked to child labor to local or national authority.

5.3.5. Birth certification registration and sensitization

In remote areas of Côte d'Ivoire, the lack of legal registration for children can contribute to child labor as an identification document is required at the end of the 5th grade to validate the diploma and continue education.

TRANSPARENCE CACAO has been actively supporting communities since 2022 to register children. Over 3 years, this benefited to 375 students who received support in getting documentation.



Since 2024, the Ivorian government has implemented a new procedure to simplify birth registration. In response, we have adapted our process and are now actively informing parents about this new procedure through targeted communication with our partner cooperatives.





5.3.6. Extra-Support Classes

Within our MAISON DU PLANTEUR, reinforcement classes are a valuable educational resource provided outside regular school hours, designed to meet individual learning needs.

Tutors work closely with children for five months, meeting them twice a week to improve exam success rates and ensure they can continue their education, a commitment that has had a significant positive impact on the community and resulted in outstanding educational outcomes, surpassing regional and national benchmarks.



All fifth-grade students of communities within MAISON DU PLANTEUR are involved in this initiative, with in total 1,000 students in 2023 and 3,821 in 2024. In 2025, we are targeting to reach 5,005 children.

5 th grade exam results 2024 (%)	NIAFOUTA		BEREBY		PAULY		WAGANA		SONGAN		DIANGOBO		KOKOLILIE	
	Girl	Boy	Girl	Boy	Girl	Boy	Girl	Boy	Girl	Boy	Girl	Boy	Girl	Boy
MAISON DU PLANTEUR	100	100	-	-	88,2	95,5	91	84,4	98,6	97,9	86,4	93,5	87,5	91,5
	100				93,3		87,7		98,2		89,3		91,5	
Regional results	82,1		82,4		89,9		86,2		54,0		75,3		73,1	

5th grade exam results (%) in 2024

5.3.7. School Canteen

In Côte d'Ivoire, many children of our partner farmers lack access to school canteens and are forced to leave school for lunch, which often leads to absenteeism. This is where TRANSPARENCE CACAO steps in to ensure that all children have equitable access to nutritious meals

In 2023, we initiated a support activity in two MAISON DU PLANTEUR (Songan and Bereby), benefiting 1,125 children who received canteen meals for four months. In 2024, the initiative will expand to MAISON DU PLANTEUR in Pauly, reaching an additional 200 children.

Additionally, in 2024, we launched two income-generating activities within our communities: one group of 30 women in Bereby working on a cassava transformation project (see more details on Women empowerment section 5.5.2), and another in Songan focused on fish farming. A portion of the production from these activities will help generate supplementary income for the communities. The remainder will be donated to the community canteens, reducing lunch costs for parents and enriching the meals available to the children.

In 2025, we aim to keep on rolling out similar initiatives in new areas to help strengthen children reach and coverage.





5.3.8. Drug and Pregnancy Awareness in Schools



These programs offer educational sensitizations and various activities aimed at raising awareness among students about the dangers of illicit drug use and unintended pregnancies.

The goal is to promote healthy behaviours, prevent drug abuse, and encourage responsible sexual and reproductive health choices, ensuring students can successfully continue their education.

Through MAISON DU PLANTEUR, 690 students were sensitized on these issues in 2022 and 2023. In 2024, an additional 1,786 students were reached.

This proactive approach supports our sustainability objectives, creating a broader impact on the education and awareness of young people, and fostering positive change within our communities.

5.3.9. Christmas Celebrations at MAISON DU PLANTEUR

For us, supporting children also means **giving them moments of joy and carefree happiness**. Every child deserves the chance to experience the simple pleasures of life, and that includes celebrating special occasions!

In 2023, we held the first Christmas celebration at our MAISON DU PLANTEUR in Bereby for 100 children of the farmers we work with.

It was an opportunity for these children to play, sing Christmas songs, dance, and participate in fun little theatre performances. Each child also received a gift from TRANSPARENCE CACAO.



Building on the success of this first celebration, we extended Christmas festivities to an additional MAISON DU PLANTEUR in 2024 in Touih bringing joy to 200 additional children in December 2024.





5.4. Commitment towards no forced labor and slavery

5.4.1. Commitment to eliminating forced labor

Just as we are deeply committed to the fight against child labor, we are equally resolute in our efforts to combat forced labor and slavery. We recognize that forced labor and slavery are a serious violation of human rights and a significant barrier to creating sustainable and ethical supply chains.

What are forced labor and slavery?

Forced Labor: According to ILO Convention No. 29 (1930), forced or compulsory labor refers to work that is demanded from someone under the threat of punishment, for which the person has not volunteered. It includes two main elements: a) **Involuntary Labor:** Work done without the worker's free and informed consent, often through deception or lack of knowledge about the conditions. b) **Threat of Sanctions:** The use of penalties to force someone into work, whether through direct coercion, verbal threats, or by seeing others being forced.

Slavery: Slavery is a socio-economic system that exploits humans through coercion and violence. According to the 1926 Geneva Convention, slavery is defined as the condition where the attributes of ownership are exercised over an individual. Slavery often overlaps with human trafficking that involves the recruitment, transport, transfer, housing, or reception of people through force, threats, fraud, deception, abuse of power, or exploitation of vulnerability for exploitation purposes.

5.4.2. Findings from our on-the-ground study

In 2024 we conducted a study in two of our partner cooperatives to carry out a risk assessment on forced labor and slavery, assessing the challenges encountered on the ground and strengthening our action plan. No cases of forced labor were identified within our supply chain in 2024. However, our study highlighted several risk factors related to forced labor in cocoa farming, such as the role of poverty, which can push workers into exploitative situations like debt bondage. The lack of effective labor regulations and oversight leads to no consequences for violators. The absence of formal contracts in family-run businesses also increases the risk of forced labor. Additionally, community liaisons lack the legal knowledge to properly address these risks, and workers fear retaliation for reporting abuses, further compounded by the lack of formal complaint mechanisms.

Based on the findings, we have developed a tailor-made action plan in collaboration with the cooperatives and communities. Our approach involves not only enforcing strict policies and standards within our own operations but also working closely with partners, cooperatives, and local communities to raise awareness, provide education, and ensure that workers are treated with dignity and respect.

Through proactive monitoring, training, and collaboration with relevant stakeholders, we aim to eliminate all forms of forced labor and slavery within our supply chain, creating a fairer, safer, and more just environment for all involved.





5.5. Empower Women

Our belief is that empowering women through education and entrepreneurship is one of the most effective ways to drive change in the cocoa sector.

Access to education equips women with the skills and knowledge needed to improve agricultural practices, manage resources, and make informed decisions. Entrepreneurial opportunities allow them to diversify their income and build economic independence, benefiting both their households and communities.

Their participation in education and entrepreneurship not only enhances their personal growth but also benefits the wider community by fostering economic resilience and breaking the cycle of poverty.

By investing in women, we are investing in a brighter, more sustainable future for the entire cocoa sector.



5.5.1. Education

Every year, we offer training and courses to provide participants, particularly women, with essential skills and knowledge, with a strong emphasis on literacy.

By focusing on alphabetization, we help them gain the foundational skills necessary to engage fully in the value chain, from harvesting to marketing and sales.



These educational opportunities empower them to make informed decisions, and ultimately to improve their financial independence and overall well-being.

Through the MAISON DU PLANTEUR initiative in Côte d'Ivoire, we have been actively supporting women in rural areas by offering alphabetization courses.

Since 2022, we have reached a total of 549 women, with 301 of them benefiting from these courses in 2024 alone.





5.5.2. Entrepreneurship

The first beneficiaries of our **Income Generating Activities (IGA)** are predominantly women, with **6,963 individuals, making up 71% of the participants in these activities in 2024.**

By participating in IGAs, women are able to diversify their income streams, improve their financial independence, and contribute significantly to their families' well-being. This focus on women not only fosters gender equality but also strengthens the entire community by ensuring that women have the tools and resources to thrive.

As an example of our community activities, in 2024, together with one of our partner customers, **we supported a group of 33 women in the Bereby region in establishing a cassava processing workshop.**

Cassava is a key ingredient for food security in Côte d'Ivoire and is deeply integrated into daily life. However, due to its limited storage life, it often spoils before it can be consumed, highlighting the importance of being able to process cassava into flour, placali, and attieké.



The transformation process involves several stages, including grinding, pressing, and cooking, which requires machinery that communities often cannot afford.

By investing in the necessary machinery and facility, TRANSPARENCE CACAO's IGA empowers this group of women to generate income through the sale of attieké and placali in the local market, while also providing part of their production free of charge to nearby canteens to support local food security, and further assist them in establishing a Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) to reinvest part of their income into community and empowerment initiatives.

Access to credit and loans can significantly enhance women's financial independence, enabling them to become more self-reliant. Having the ability to save and access small loans empowers women to invest in their businesses, address personal or family needs, without depending solely on external financial support. This system not only helps women access financial resources but also fosters a culture of saving and financial responsibility, promoting long-term economic stability.

In 2024, within our partner cooperatives, a total of **521 VSLA's were actively operating**, all linked to our supply chain. These associations provide crucial financial services, offering saving options and small loans to **14,327 members, including 12,279 women.**





Although there is still work to be done to support women in cocoa fields (our living income study showed that only 8% of farmers were women), significant progress has been made.

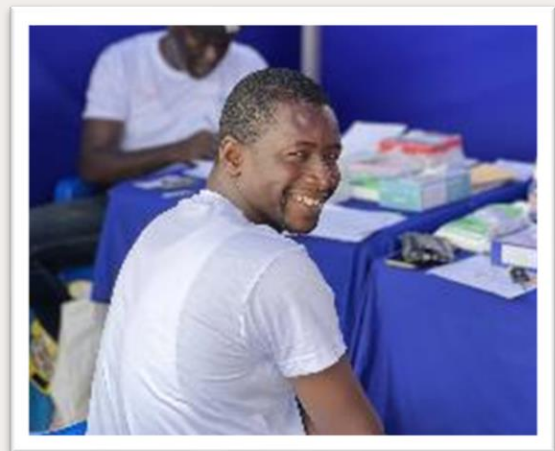
As a result of these efforts, **in Côte d'Ivoire, in 2024, women held 20% of leadership positions within farmer groups. Additionally, 66% of cooperatives now have women in decision-making roles, with a total of 128 women in leadership positions.**

Similar progress is seen in our South American operations. **In Ecuador, women make up 21% of cooperative members and hold 17% of management positions. In Peru they represent 34% of our partner cooperative Board of Directors, with a woman also serving as president.** In other committees, such as the vigilance council, fair trade committee and education committee, women hold 25% of positions in Ecuador and Peru.

5.6. Access to health

Recognizing that good health is fundamental to the wellbeing of farmers and their families, as well as to enhance their productivity and quality of life, we have prioritized efforts to ensure that those within our supply chain have access to essential health services. This has involved providing farmers with the necessary resources and support to access both preventative and curative healthcare, which is often limited in rural areas.

In Côte d'Ivoire, one key initiative we have been deploying for 4 years to provide better access to health services to our communities, is the CARAVANE SANTE initiative in partnership with Caravane Santé Afrique (CSA). This mobile health service that has been visiting remote farming communities, with the objective to run yearly screening, prevention, and raise awareness about chronic and viral diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, HIV and viral hepatitis B and C. This initiative aims to help improve the living conditions of TRANSPARENCE CACAO partner farmers and local communities.



More information can be found on our partners website [here](#)

In 2022 and 2023, 723 individuals benefited from this service, and we reached 1,086 more in 2024

Within MAISON DU PLANTEUR, we also run yearly educational campaigns on diseases prevention as well as on drugs & pregnancy sensitization. See more details in chapter 5.3.8





Access to clean and safe water also remains a key challenge in many of our communities.

In 2024, we renovated two water pumps in Touih village, providing 1,600 inhabitants with access to drinking water. This project marks a major step forward for the community, as these pumps are a vital water source for many families.

Access to safe drinking water is a critical need, as many community members previously had to travel long distances to fetch water or rely on unsafe water sources, exposing them to serious health risks. This rehabilitation will not only improve the quality of life for the people of Touih but also strengthen the community's resilience.



Countries in South America must not be forgotten, and similar actions are being deployed there with the goal of improving access to healthcare for our partner farmers and their families.

In Peru and Ecuador, we have established "social safety nets" for farmers and their families in the event of health issues.

In São Tomé, we collaborate with our partner cooperatives to fund health expenditures for farmers and support education programs.





AROMATIC & FOOD QUALITY

6.1. Aromatic quality

Our TRANSPARENCE CACAO standard incorporates requirements to ensure the consistent adherence to quality standards throughout all stages of production.

Our PREFERENCE farmers and cooperatives receive training on post-production best practices to ensure the highest quality cocoa. This training covers a range of essential processes, from proper fermentation techniques to effective drying methods, which are key to enhancing the flavor and aroma profiles of the beans.

The training also emphasizes the importance of maintaining hygiene and avoiding contamination during post-harvest handling. By focusing on these critical aspects of post-production, we aim to help farmers improve both the quality of their cocoa and their overall productivity. This contributes to the overall sustainability of the supply chain, as it ensures that farmers adhere to high standards while minimizing waste and maximizing their economic returns.



Under EXCELLENCE, the wet freshly harvested cocoa beans are sourced directly from farmers instead of the dried cocoa beans. Once harvested, the fresh beans are transported to specialized fermentation centers, where they undergo a controlled fermentation process. This fermentation takes place in designated boxes, which are designed to regulate temperature, humidity, and airflow, providing optimal conditions for the beans to develop their full flavor potential.



After fermentation, the beans are transferred to solar beds for drying, ensuring that they retain their optimal moisture content and are protected from contaminants such as mold.

The drying process is closely monitored to maintain the highest standards of quality, as this step is essential to preserving the beans' flavor and texture.





6.2. Chemical and pesticides policy

6.2.1. *Strict adherence to European pesticide regulations and alignment with international standards*

Our starting point is the strict adherence to European pesticide regulations, specifically Regulation 396/2005 (February 2005) on maximum residue levels, as well as the amendments to Council Directive 91/414/EEC.

All our activities and products fully comply with the relevant regulations concerning quality and safety, in line with the commitments made to our customers.

We also align our practices with recognized international certification standards such as Fairtrade and Rainforest Alliance, which include:

- [Fairtrade communication on the use of Ref listed active substances](#)
- [Rainforest integrated pest management white paper](#) and [highly hazardous pesticides](#)

6.2.2. *Commitments towards organic cocoa*

We are proud of the collaboration with the four cocoa origins (Ecuador, Peru, the Dominican Republic, and São Tomé and Príncipe) out of which almost all cocoa sourced is organic certified, in addition to being part of TRANSPARENCE CACAO. In the end the best chemical and pesticides policy is not to use chemicals nor pesticides at all.

Those volumes are adhering to the relevant pesticide policies, including:

- **Rainforest Alliance Standard 2020** and Annex S07 Pesticides Management, which includes a list of prohibited pesticides based on FAO/WHO guidelines for Highly Hazardous Pesticides.
- **Fairtrade Hazardous Material List**, which is also based on FAO/WHO guidelines and was revised in April 2020.

6.2.3. *Proactive Monitoring and Consumer Health Focus*

Through CEMOI, TRANSPARENCE CACAO is actively engaged in various cocoa industry initiatives. We stay informed about industry developments and contribute to the continuous improvement of collective procedures.

We closely monitor regulatory changes and proactively prepare for them. With a focus on consumer health, we aim to eliminate any potential controversial substances from the cocoa production process. This effort is supported by the active involvement of our agronomists in the field. In partnership with cooperatives and farmers, they communicate regulatory updates and collaborate to find sustainable solutions.





6.3. Chemical inputs and pesticides reduction strategy

Through TRANSPARENCE CACAO, we strive to minimize the overall use of pesticides. We firmly believe that, by implementing good agricultural and environmental practices, the need for chemical inputs can be significantly reduced. Additionally, we place great emphasis on the safety of those applying pesticides. In line with our TRANSPARENCE CACAO policy, we ensure that no vulnerable individuals, such as children, pregnant women, or individuals with respiratory conditions, are involved in handling chemicals. These safeguards are embedded in our standard and are verified annually through audits.

6.3.1. *Better understanding for stronger action plan*

To assess and improve our pesticide policy, we conducted a 2023 study in two partner cooperatives to analyze pesticide use and develop corrective action plans. The study revealed that cooperatives do not consistently manage inputs as part of their organizational functions, especially regarding member services. As a result, when cooperatives don't support pesticide supply, farmers either buy through Conseil Café Cacao or develop their own strategies, which don't always lead to increased productivity.

The study also showed that nearly two-thirds of farmers are illiterate, limiting their ability to read pesticide labels and technical product sheets. While farmers recognize the dangers of pesticides, they mainly see them as essential tools for production, with economic factors often outweighing health and environmental risks. In the two cooperatives, 94% of farmers use application brigades, and 70% of applicators use the required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), though 74% of them report that their PPE is not always in good condition.

As a result, a reinforced pesticide management system has been implemented as a pilot test in those two cooperatives, focusing on defining a clear and shared policy on fertilizers and agrochemical products, developing farm development plans, negotiating and formalizing commitments with farmers, supplying and applying the products, and monitoring and evaluating the actions to ensure their effectiveness.

In parallel our overall action plan has been strengthened through increased awareness campaigns, systematization of application brigades (with provision of additional protective equipment to the teams) ensuring that the application of pesticides is carried out safely and efficiently.

6.3.2. *Awareness raising*

A key part of our sustainability efforts is raising awareness and providing training to cooperative staff and farmers on the safe storage, correct use of pesticides, integrated pest management (IPM), and health and safety practices.

To assist with this, we have created an educational manual that highlights best agricultural practices, along with a list of banned agrochemicals and contaminants. To address literacy challenges, the guidebook is designed with a visual format and includes images of key inputs, in addition to product names and active ingredients, to enhance identification and understanding.





Each year, we conduct comprehensive training sessions to enhance knowledge and equip individuals with the skills needed to handle pesticides in a way that minimizes health risks, protects the environment, and ensures the safety of everyone involved in cocoa farming.



In 2024, 100% of our partner cooperatives were sensitized on this topic.

Additionally, pesticide management is incorporated into all internal audits with cooperatives to ensure compliance. During these audits, we evaluate the cooperative's adherence to safe pesticide practices, proper storage, and handling.

This helps identify any areas of non-compliance, allowing us to take corrective action or provide additional training where necessary to maintain safety and environmental standards.

During quality control checks at each stage of the process, if a prohibited agrochemical is detected or if acceptable levels are exceeded, our traceability system enables us to quickly identify the specific cooperative involved.

Once the cooperative is identified, we initiate a targeted round of training focused on the specific problem, ensuring that the necessary corrective measures are taken. This process helps reinforce proper pesticide handling and ensures that similar issues are prevented in the future.

6.3.3. Health & Safety

In 2022, we conducted a pilot program involving three cooperatives, supported by a technical partner, to assess and address health and safety risks within our operations.

The first step in this process was conducting a thorough risk assessment for each activity within the cooperative, identifying potential hazards and developing a detailed action plan to mitigate these risks. Once the risks were understood, an Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) policy has been introduced, which includes training for staff on-site and ongoing coaching from our technical partner to guide the cooperative through the implementation of the OHS procedures. To ensure long-term effectiveness, a monitoring system is put in place to track the cooperative's progress and ensure they have fully integrated the OHS practices into their daily operations.

Following the pilot, three TRANSPARENCE CACAO staff members were trained to take on the responsibility of implementing the Health & Safety system across all cooperatives.

By 2024, 10 cooperatives have successfully adopted the OHS initiative, and we are aiming to expand the program to cover 20 cooperatives in 2025. This program is essential for fostering a culture of safety within our cooperatives, protecting the health and well-being of all workers, and ensuring a safer working environment throughout our supply chain.





6.3.4. *Application teams*

In 2024, we introduced pruning and application brigades directly across 94 of our cooperatives. One of the key objectives of these brigades is to optimize the use of pesticides by implementing more efficient practices. The brigades consist of trained teams who are well-versed in the authorized pesticide list and best usage recommendations, ensuring that only the necessary and approved chemicals are used in the most effective way. This initiative not only enhances agricultural practices but also helps reduce the overall reliance on pesticides, leading to more sustainable farming.

Additionally, these brigades significantly contribute to minimizing health risks for farmers. TRANSPARENCE CACAO supports the safety of all application teams by providing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to ensure safe handling and application of pesticides. We also conduct regular training sessions on good agricultural practices, focusing on the safe use and proper application of chemicals, as well as best practices for managing farm health and safety.

Finally, cooperatives are also taking proactive steps to produce organic pesticides using locally available ingredients, demonstrating their commitment to sustainable farming practices. By leveraging local resources, these cooperatives are reducing their dependency on chemical pesticides, promoting environmental sustainability, and minimizing the potential negative impacts of synthetic chemicals on both the ecosystem and farmers' health.

6.3.5. *Promoting natural fertilizers*

As part of our sustainability efforts in South America, we have been collaborating with various projects aimed at scaling up the production and use of efficient microorganisms to improve soil health and promote sustainable farming practices. In Peru, this collaboration has resulted in the production and distribution of 1,200 liters of bioles (a type of liquid organic fertilizer derived from beneficial microorganisms), which were made available to farmers to help enhance soil fertility and boost crop productivity.

Similarly, in Ecuador, the initiative led to the production of 3,391 liters of bioles further supporting farmers in both countries to reduce their dependency on synthetic chemicals and improve the overall health of their cocoa farms. This project is part of a broader effort to foster sustainable agriculture and increase resilience against environmental challenges, thereby improving the long-term viability of cocoa production in the region.





VERIFICATION

7.1 Seriousness of Our Approach

Our commitment to excellence is embodied in the TRANSPARENCE CACAO (PREFERENCE & EXCELLENCE) standard, comprising 174 requirements organized into four pillars: traceability & transparency (including the segregation principle), the quality of life of farmers (encompassing our measures against child labor and the implementation of our strategy for achieving a decent income), the environmental quality (addressing deforestation and embracing agroforestry practices), and finally, aromatic and food quality (covering pesticide management and post-harvest best practices).

This standard has undergone a thorough comparison with existing international norms such as ISO 34101 and ARS (in 2020 by Bureau Veritas). The analyses revealed a significant alignment of requirements, underscoring the seriousness of the TRANSPARENCE CACAO initiative.

7.2 Audits

Our EXCELLENCE organic supply chains are certified Fair For Life, with some also holding Fairtrade certification.

All cooperatives in Cote d'Ivoire go through an annual internal audit with respect to our TRANSPARENCE CACAO standard. In addition, our PREFERENCE cooperatives undergo annual external audits (conducted by Bureau Veritas) based on our TRANSPARENCE CACAO standard. A verification of our communication and claims is also part of this verification. The audit cycle spans three years, involving all PREFERENCE cooperatives and includes a sampling of representative farmers.

Our remaining REFERENCE cooperatives undergo both internal and external audits when seeking certification (Rainforest Alliance - 22%, Fairtrade - 11%).

More information available here [Fr]:

<https://www.bureauveritas.fr/magazine/cemoui-chocolats-responsables>





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