Cacao EUDR Overview — Colombia

EUDR Context

Field	Value
eudr_commodity	cacao
country_focus	Colombia
eudr_article9_field	deforestation_risk_assessment
eudr_evidence_type	primary_field_data
deforestation_risk	medium
last_updated	2026-05-26

Overview

Cacao is one of seven commodities regulated under the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR, Regulation 2023/1115). Under Article 2, operators and traders placing cacao or cacao-derived products on the EU market must ensure the product is deforestation-free (no deforestation after 31 December 2020), legally produced in the country of origin, and covered by a due diligence statement submitted to the EU Information System. Binding compliance deadlines are 30 December 2026 for large and medium operators, and 30 June 2027 for micro and small operators.

Article 9 due diligence obligations require operators to collect high-precision geolocation coordinates linking cacao to specific plots of land. For plots exceeding 4 hectares, polygon mapping using WGS-84 (EPSG-4326) projection in GeoJSON format is required. Operators must conduct risk assessments considering the prevalence of deforestation in the sourcing region, corruption indices, land-tenure security, and the presence of indigenous or local communities. Compliant cacao must be stored and transported separately from cacao of unknown or non-compliant origin.

Colombia is the world's third-largest cacao exporter and a strategically important origin for EU buyers. In 2024, Colombia achieved its highest-ever cacao production of 67,678 tonnes, with exports growing over 100%. Unlike West African origins, Colombian cacao is not a major driver of deforestation. The country signed the Cocoa, Forests and Peace agreement and is the only Latin American pilot country in the FAO/GIZ-led EUDR digital tools initiative. This positions Colombia favorably for the EUDR country benchmarking system, though challenges remain in smallholder geolocation and informal land tenure.

Colombian Context

Colombia's cacao sector is dominated by smallholder farmers, with approximately 93% of the estimated 180,000 cacao-farming families cultivating an average of 3 hectares each. Santander is the leading production department, contributing 28,044 tonnes (41% of national production) in 2024, followed by Antioquia with 7,154 tonnes (11%) and Arauca with 6,993 tonnes (10%). Other significant producing departments include Huila, Tolima, and Nariño. Fedecacao (National Federation of Cacao Growers) coordinates extension services, traceability efforts, and international market access through the National Cacao Fund.

Key challenges include an estimated 6,000 tonnes of smuggled cacao annually, limited digital infrastructure in remote producing regions like Tumaco (Pacific coast), and the need to upgrade from single-point GPS coordinates to polygon mapping for thousands of smallholder plots. The Colombian government, through the Ministry of Agriculture and Fedecacao, is investing in genetic improvement, plantation renovation, and digital traceability systems to meet EUDR requirements.

Cleantech Taxonomy Nodes

Relevant existing nodes: CT-AF-001 (Land and Soil — deforestation-free proof for cacao plots), CT-AF-002 (Forests — shade-grown cacao and deforestation monitoring), CT-AF-008 (Crops — cacao varietal improvement and yield optimization), CT-EX-014 (Remote sensing — satellite monitoring of cacao regions), CT-EX-016 (Supply chain traceability — farm-to-port tracking), CT-EX-019 (Due diligence platforms — EUDR operator compliance).

Proposed new extension nodes: CT-EX-022 (Cacao plot-level geolocation and polygon mapping), CT-EX-023 (Cacao agroforestry carbon and biodiversity monitoring), CT-EX-024 (Cacao origin certification and mass balance systems), CT-EX-025 (Cacao smallholder digital inclusion platforms), CT-EX-026 (Cacao climate adaptation and varietal resilience), CT-EX-027 (Cacao landscape-level deforestation risk scoring).

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