Cacao Geolocation & Traceability

EUDR Context

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

Overview

The EUDR mandates that operators provide geolocation data for every plot of land where a regulated commodity was produced. For cacao, this means that each farm or parcel must be identified with latitude and longitude coordinates to at least six decimal digits of precision. Plots exceeding 4 hectares require polygon mapping that accurately traces the perimeter using multiple GPS points, submitted in GeoJSON format with WGS-84 (EPSG-4326) projection through the EU Information System.

Traceability in cacao supply chains requires linking each physical batch of cacao beans to its specific plot of origin, maintaining this identity from farm gate through aggregation points, fermentation and drying facilities, domestic transport, port loading, and EU customs entry. Operators must ensure that compliant cacao is never mixed with cacao of unknown or non-compliant origin. All geolocation data, risk assessments, and chain-of-custody records must be retained for a minimum of five years.

For cacao specifically, traceability is more fragmented than for commodities like palm oil or soy because most cacao is cultivated on small, often unregistered plots by families with informal land tenure. National cadastral and mapping systems in producer countries frequently lack coverage of remote cacao-growing areas, making farm-level geolocation both costly and technically challenging.

Colombian Context

Colombia's cacao traceability landscape is shaped by the dominance of smallholder production (93% of farmers on plots averaging 3 hectares) and the geographic dispersion of cacao across mountainous terrain in Santander,

humid lowlands in Arauca, and conflict-affected Pacific coast zones in Tumaco and Nariño. Fedecacao has been advancing a national cacao traceability system, but coverage gaps remain, particularly in remote departments where basic digital infrastructure is limited.

Colombia is the only Latin American country participating in the FAO/GIZ-led EUDR pilot initiative, which deploys open digital tools — specifically the WHISP (World Heritage Information System for Plants) and GROUND platforms — to support geolocation and traceability. During pilot workshops, local organizations in Tumaco reported significant challenges in digitizing farm records and geolocating plots in areas with poor connectivity and limited GPS device access. Fedecacao presented its traceability progress alongside these remaining infrastructure gaps.

Since most Colombian cacao plots are under 4 hectares, single-point GPS coordinates (rather than full polygon mapping) may suffice for EUDR compliance, which reduces the technical burden on smallholders. However, aggregation at cooperative collection points still requires robust batch-level traceability systems to maintain the farm-to-port chain of custody. GIZ has highlighted Colombia's potential to become a regional reference in the use of interoperable digital traceability tools.

Cleantech Taxonomy Nodes

Directly relevant existing nodes: CT-EX-014 (Remote sensing and satellite deforestation monitoring — provides the satellite imagery layer for deforestation verification of geolocated plots), CT-EX-016 (Supply chain traceability platforms — blockchain and IoT infrastructure for cacao chain of custody), CT-EX-017 (Precision agriculture data platforms — field-level data collection for smallholder cacao farms).

Proposed new node: CT-EX-022 (Cacao plot-level geolocation and polygon mapping) — covers the specific tools and processes for collecting, validating, and submitting geolocation data for cacao plots under EUDR, including mobile GPS tools, polygon digitization for plots over 4 hectares, and integration with the EU Information System. Also relevant: CT-EX-025 (Cacao smallholder digital inclusion platforms) for addressing connectivity and device access gaps in remote cacao regions.

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