



MIGHTY EARTH



RAPID RESPONSE

Deforestation risks of certified
cocoa cooperatives in Côte d'Ivoire

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Introduction

Ninety percent of West Africa's primary forests have been destroyed (1). In Côte d'Ivoire alone, 14 million hectares of rainforest disappeared between 1960 and 2010, and now just 2 million hectares remain (2). In response to this environmental pressure, the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF), the main industry lobby group, and IDH, the Dutch sustainable trade initiative, worked with the Prince of Wales' International Sustainability Unit (ISU) to launch the Cocoa and Forests Initiative (CFI) in 2017. The CFI was signed by the governments of Côte d'Ivoire and neighboring Ghana (which together account for more than 60 percent of global cocoa production) along with most major cocoa manufacturers and traders. More companies have joined since, bringing the total to 35 signatories, which account for about 85 percent of global cocoa trade (3). The CFI framework aims to prevent further deforestation and support producer livelihoods via three key commitments: forest protection and restoration, sustainable agricultural production and increased farmer incomes, and community engagement and social inclusion (ibid). Participating cocoa traders and manufacturers have agreed to eliminate deforestation for cocoa from their supply chains.

This Rapid Response report uses deforestation data between November 2017, when the CFI was signed, and November 2019 to assess cocoa-related deforestation risks in seven certified cooperatives in Côte d'Ivoire. Moreover, it highlights recent deforestation that occurred between September 21 and November 10, 2019 within each cooperative's cocoa-related deforestation risk zone.

(1)<https://www.voicenetwork.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/2018-Cocoa-Barometer.pdf>

(2)https://www.mightyearth.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/chocolates_dark_secret_english_web.pdf

(3)<https://www.worldcocoafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/CFI-Aggregate-Action-Plan-CdI-02.28.19.pdf>

Limitations of the study

The analysis provided here is limited by gaps in cocoa supply chain transparency. One of the main limitations of this study is that there was a slight bias towards selecting certified cocoa cooperatives that have more available information, and therefore exposing them to a more in-depth risk assessment. Because the dataset is not complete, the prevalence of certified coops in this report should not be interpreted to mean that they have a higher risk of deforestation than non-certified coops. This is simply a result of Rainforest Alliance (RA)/UTZ and Fair Trade's transparency in publishing their cooperatives' locations and giving information on some of those cooperatives. However, this report does show that certified coops are not immune from deforestation risks.

A call for further transparency

We recommend that the Conseil Café Cacao (CCC) in Côte d'Ivoire and the COCOBOD in Ghana, as well as other relevant entities, work toward greater levels of traceability and transparency so that the deforestation risks of all non-certified cooperatives (and other buyers and aggregators) can be publicly analyzed.

Assumptions

Our main assumption was that the size of a cooperative is correlated with the average distance travelled by cacao: larger cooperatives source cacao from larger areas. In reality, the distance between producers and coops is likely linked to several factors, including topography, road access, and buying price. Such factors are important to consider when determining the area of

deforestation risk. For example, a large river between a cocoa producer and a coop could prevent deforestation-tainted cocoa from being sold to the closest cooperative, resulting in this problematic cocoa being sold to a more geographically remote cooperative. In addition, due to the complexity of the supply chain, a larger number of members does not necessarily indicate a larger cocoa area, and consequently, deforestation risk.

This report does not state that the featured cocoa cooperatives are directly responsible for specific cases of deforestation. Instead, this report highlights potential deforestation *risks* within the supply chains of certified cocoa cooperatives.

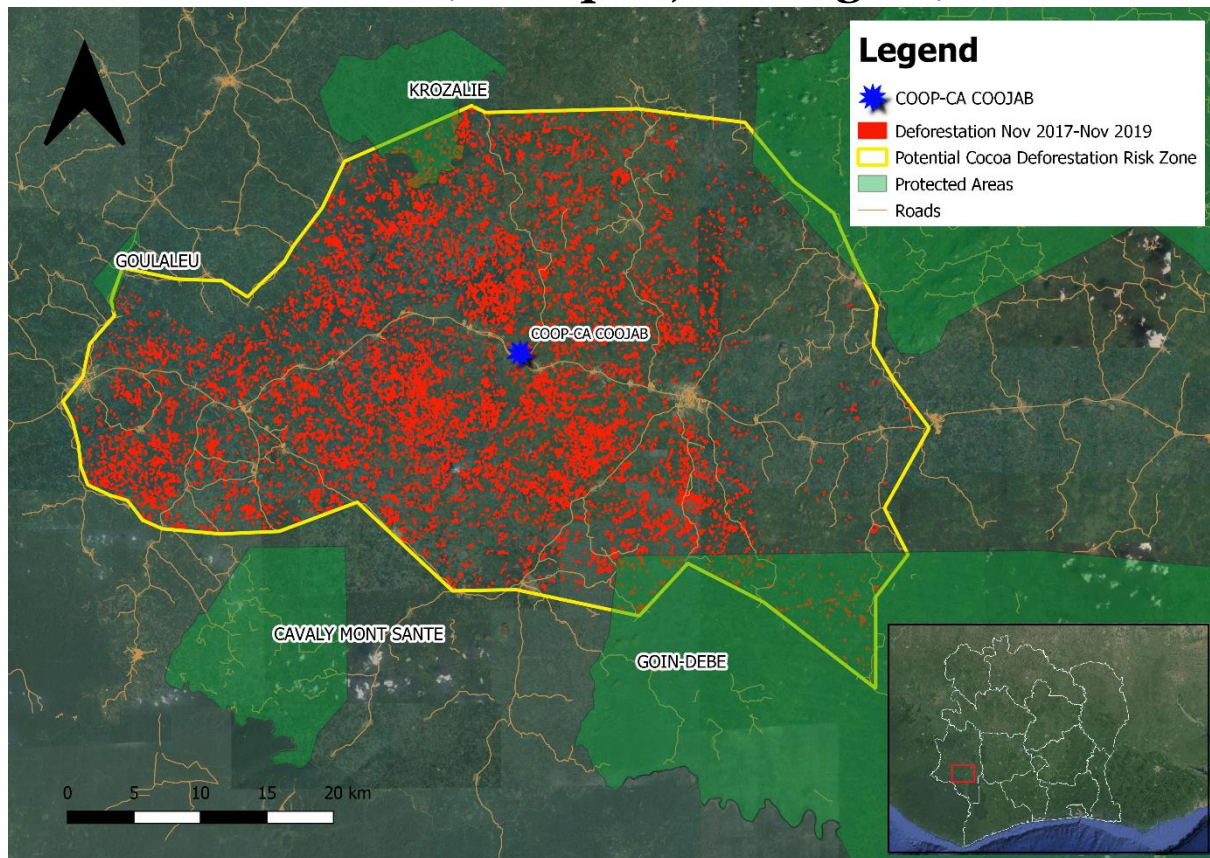
Summary of Cases

Cooperative	Department	District	Size of potential deforestation risk, Nov 2017 - Nov 2019 (ha)
COOP-CA-COOJAB	Bloléquin	Montagnes	14,115
BORIBANA COOP-CA	Bloléquin	Montagnes	6,902
COOPINA COOP-CA	Gagnoa	Gôh-Djiboua	458
COOP-CA-ECAMOM	Méagui	Bas-Sassandra	133
COOPAAPROMAN	Agnibilékrou	Comoé	138
Radee Trading SARL	Abengourou	Comoé	103
SCOOPA-CA	Lakota	Gôh-Djiboua	116

Map of Featured Cocoa Cooperatives



COOP-CA-COOJAB (Bloléquin, Montagnes)



The cocoa-related deforestation risk area for COOP-CA-COOJAB was 14,115 ha between November 2017 and November 2019, and this includes clearance within the boundaries of protected areas. Between October 1 and November 10, 2019, there was 178 ha of deforestation within this risk area.

The 818 members of the cooperative COOP-CA-COOJAB operate in an area of 4,542 ha, of which 3,803 ha was Rainforest Alliance-certified cacao in 2017, producing 2,338 MT of certified cocoa (1). However, the cooperative's certification was cancelled on August 16, 2019, likely because more than 50 percent of the visited plantations did not comply with Rainforest Alliance's pre-defined criteria (ibid).

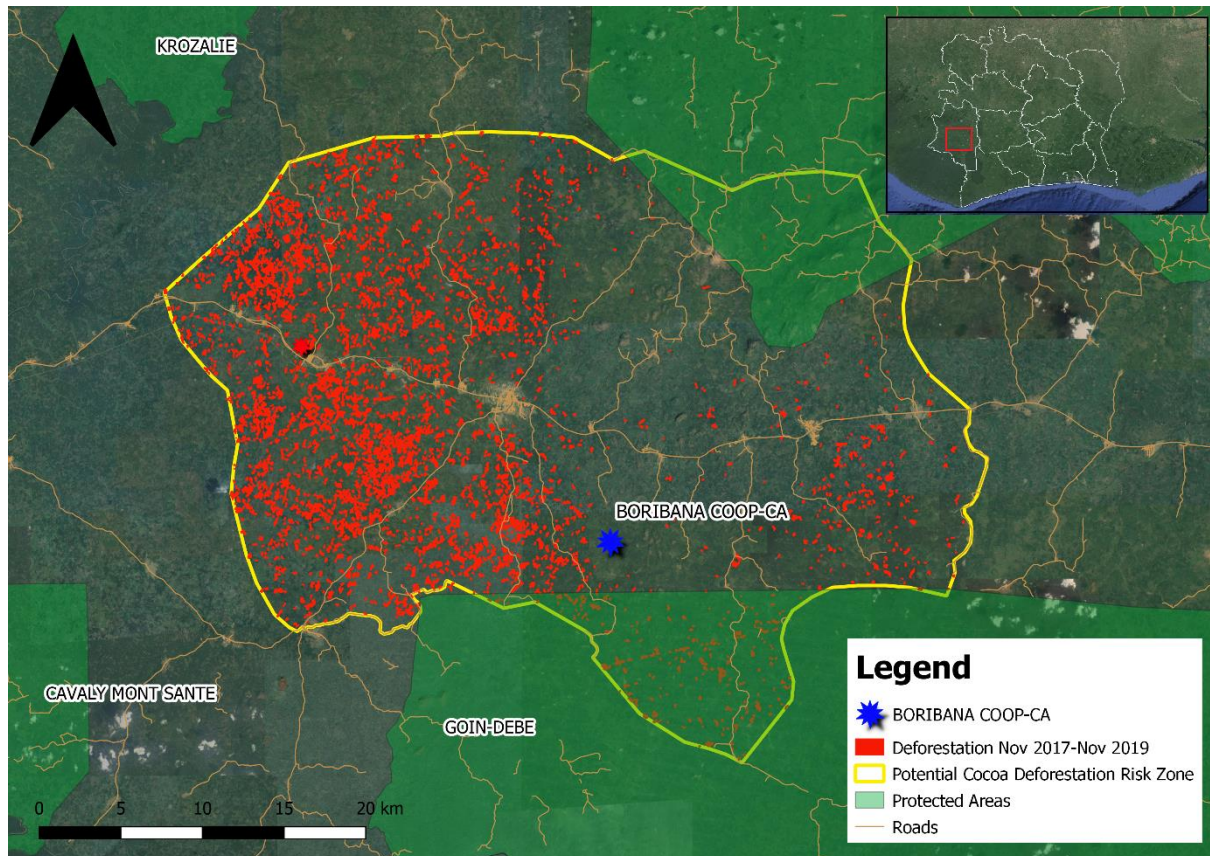
COOP-CA-COOJAB cooperative is located in an exclusively cocoa producing area, with hardly any other crop production. Bloléquin, the department in which this cooperative is located, and Toulépleu, a neighboring department, together account for 75 percent of primary forest loss (55 percent of total loss) that has occurred in southwestern Côte d'Ivoire since 2016 (3). At this rate, the remaining forest in Bloléquin will disappear within 10 years (ibid).

Deforestation in Bloléquin is present in all of the protected areas:; Scio, Goulaleu, Krozalie, Gouin and Mt. Sainte/Cavally (4). The nearest of these protected areas is located within 22 km of the cooperative.

- (1) <https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/business/solutions/certification/agriculture/certificate-search-public-summaries/>
- (2) https://www.linkedin.com/in/assande-rodrique-asse-75098a141/?trk=public_profile_browsemap_mini-profile_title
- (3) <https://www.vivideconomics.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/EN-2019-Update-on-Deforestation-in-South-West-Côte-d'Ivoire-1.pdf>

- (4) <https://www.protectedplanet.net/c/world-database-on-protected-areas>
- (5) <https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/business/solutions/certification/agriculture/certificate-search-public-summaries/>
- (6) https://www.linkedin.com/in/assande-rodrique-asse-75098a141/?trk=public_profile_browsemap_mini-profile_title
- (7) <https://www.vivideconomics.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/EN-2019-Update-on-Deforestation-in-South-West-Côte-d'Ivoire-1.pdf>
- (8) <https://www.protectedplanet.net/c/world-database-on-protected-areas>

BORIBANA COOP-CA (Bloléquin, Montagnes)



Within the cocoa-related deforestation risk area, there was 6,902 ha of deforestation between November 2017 and November 2019. Of this amount, 63 ha of deforestation took place between October 1 and November 10, 2019.

The Société Cooperative Agricole Boribana de Bloléquin (BORIBANA COOP-CA) was founded in 2014 for the collection and marketing of agricultural products under the management of Sawadogo Toukounnogo (president) and Kadio Komenan Dominique (director) (1). The cooperative was listed in the 2015 top 2000 list of business companies in Cote de l'ivoire, with a revenue of FCFA 1,012.5 million (2). In addition, it was ranked second best cooperative at the fourth edition of the National Days of Cocoa and Chocolate (JNCC) in 2017 (3).

The cooperative includes 838 farms, totaling 7,086 ha, of which 5,508 ha are covered with RA certified cocoa (4). In the 2018-2019 harvest, the cooperative sold 3,240 MT of certified cocoa, of which 2,324 MT was RA certified and 901 MT was UTZ certified. It is unclear where the remainder is sold (5).

Boribana supplies cocoa to the world's largest cocoa and chocolate products manufacturer Barry Callebaut through its subsidiary's Société Africaine de Cacao (SACO) plant located in Abidjan (ibid).

The cooperative is either on the edge of the protected area Gouin Dèbé, which is categorized as a classified forest (6), or is located within its boundaries. The uncertainty in the precise location of this cooperative is due to slight variations in the GPS coordinates attributed to this cooperative.

Even though the cooperative members received instructions that forbid destruction of High Conservation Value (HCV) and protected areas, and a program has been developed to protect natural ecosystems on member farms, there is still a risk of cocoa-linked deforestation in the supply chain, mainly from non-certified farms. A 2019 audit of certified farms by UTZ-RA did not provide evidence of ecosystem and forest destruction, and none of the sampled farms were found to be located inside the protected areas in the region (4). However, this represented only a selection of certified farms, and the cooperative's non-certified farms were not visited.

(1) <https://business.abidjan.net/AL/a/37040.asp>

(2) https://businessinfo.ci/upload/pdf/BBCo-Top-2000-des-entreprises_29062018.pdf

(3) <https://aip.ci/cote-divoire-la-cooperative-boribana-de-blolequin-deuxieme-meilleure-cooperative-de-cacao/>

(4) <https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/business/solutions/certification/agriculture/certificate-search-public-summaries/>

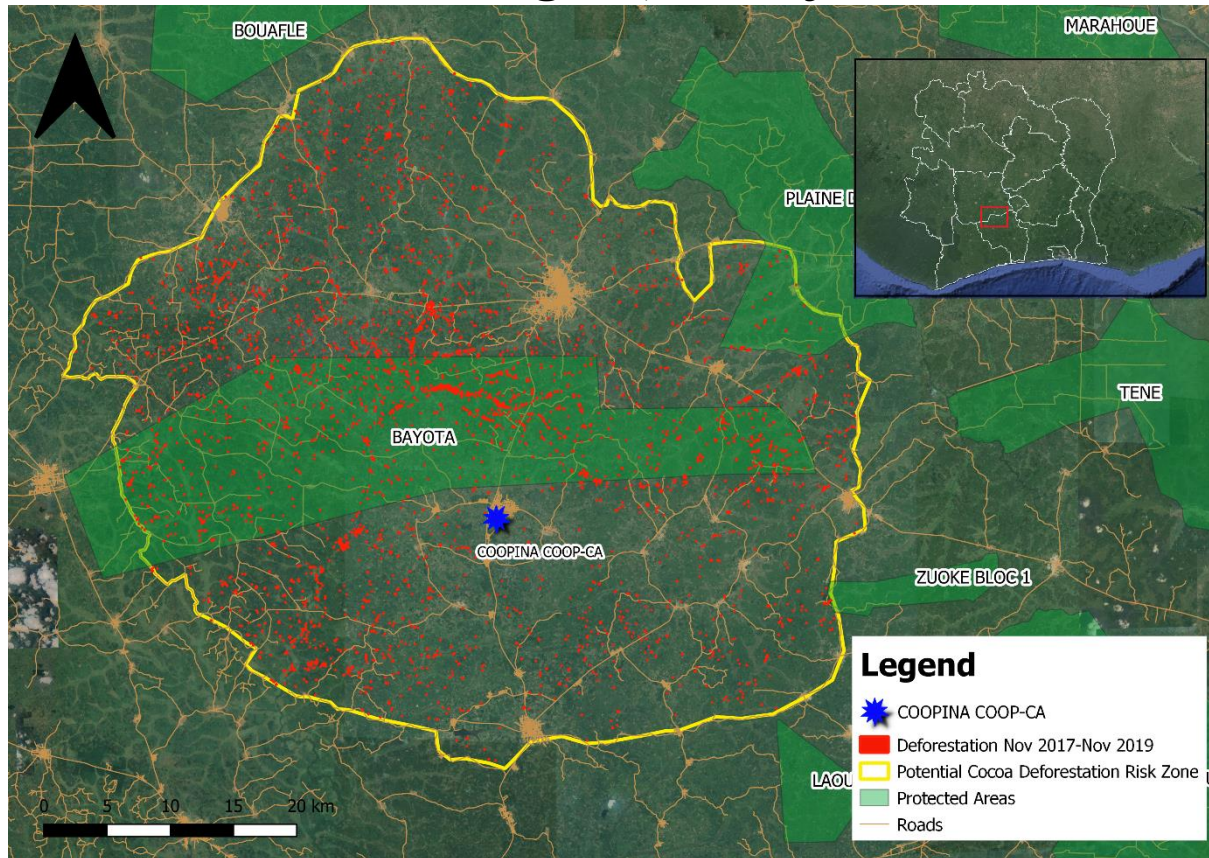
(5) <https://app.rainforest-alliance.cloud/search/document.php?Id=00Pof00000zGABGEA4>

(6) <https://www.protectedplanet.net/c/world-database-on-protected-areas>

(7)

https://www.globalforestwatch.org/map?map=eyJjZW50ZXIiOiJmb3Jlc3RDaGFuZ2UiLCJtZW51U2VjdGlvbil6ImRhZGFzZXRzIno%3D&modalMeta=umd_landsat_alerts

COOPINA COOP-CA (Gagnoa, Gôh-Djiboua)



Within the cocoa-related deforestation risk area, there was 458 ha of deforestation between November 2017 and November 2019. Included in this amount, 66 ha of deforestation took place between September 21 and November 19, 2019.

The Societe Cooperative Ivoirienne Des Nouveaux Agriculteurs (COOPINA COOP-CA) was founded in 2014 (1). The cooperative is UTZ-RA certified for cocoa. The cooperative has 1,203 farms, totaling 5,850 ha (2), of which 3,126 ha are covered with certified cocoa crops (3).

According to a 2019 RA audit, there has been no land conversion since the group began the certification process. While the cooperative has developed a traceability procedure, and reportedly has physical separation in storage between certified and non-certified cocoa (ibid), there is a risk of non-certified cocoa related to deforestation entering the supply chain. The cooperative is located within five km of Protected Area Bayota which is designated as a classified forest (4). Moreover, the 2019 RA audit demonstrated that certified plantations were not located inside the protected areas of forests, but this cannot be confirmed for non-visited and non-zuited farms.

Cémoi, a chocolate manufacturer based in France, is a known buyer of COOPINA COOP-CA produced cocoa (5). Cémoi is the biggest French chocolate manufacturer as well as a major trader, and ranks in the top 30 chocolate manufacturers in the world.

(1) <https://business.abidjan.net/AL/a/37933.asp>

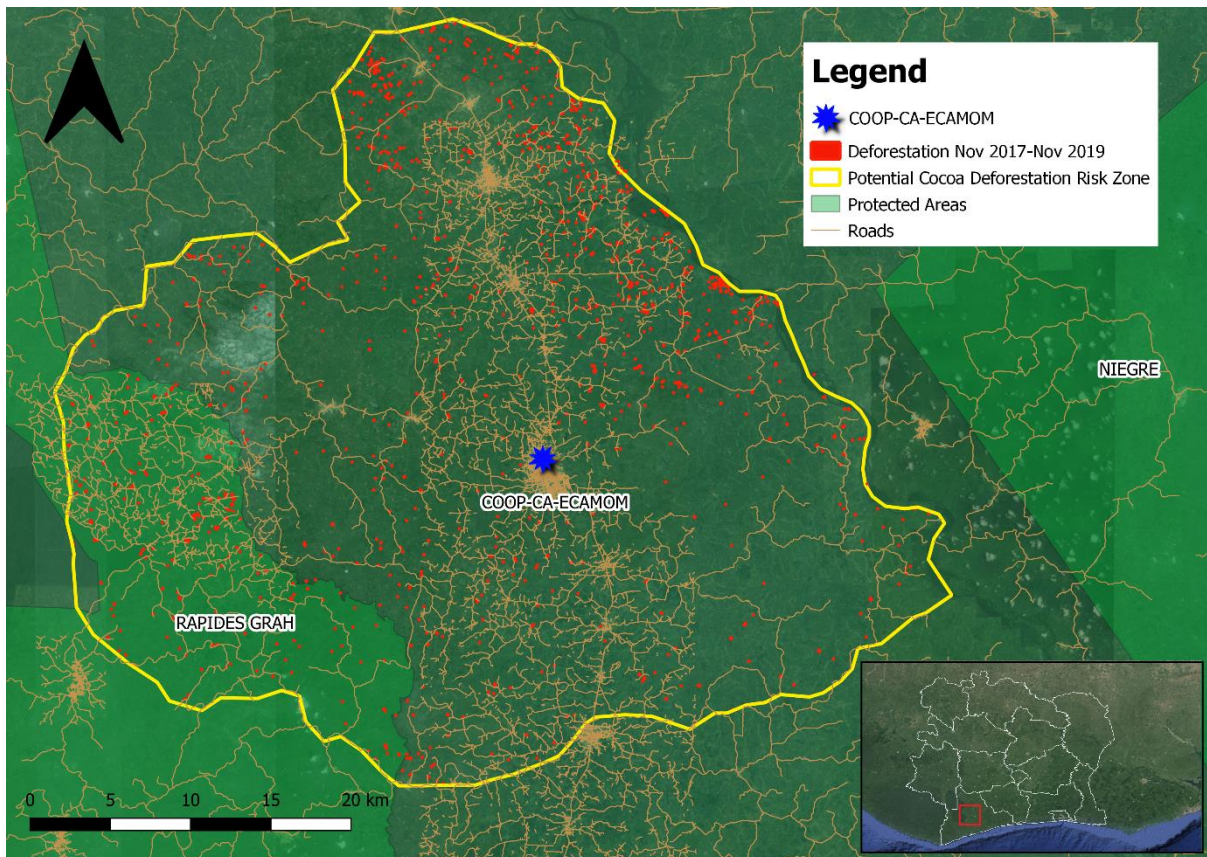
(2) <https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/business/solutions/certification/agriculture/certificate-search-public-summaries/>

(3) <https://app.rainforest-alliance.cloud/search/document.php?Id=ooPofoooooqysTBEAY>

(4) <https://www.protectedplanet.net/c/world-database-on-protected-areas>

(5) Undisclosed source.

COOP-CA-ECAMOM (Méagui, Bas-Sassandra)



Within the cocoa-related deforestation risk area for this cooperative, there was 133 ha of deforestation between November 2017 and November 2019, of which 6 ha occurred between September 24 and November 19, 2019.

The cooperative society of modern eco-farmers of Méagui (COOP-CA ECAMOM) reportedly has 2,442 cocoa members, representing a total cocoa area of 13,000 ha, and sold 8,000 MT of cocoa in 2017 (1). Ecamom has received a renewed export license for the 2019-2020 cocoa season (2), with buyers including Cargill (the second largest cocoa trader in the world), Barry Callebaut (the largest cocoa trader in the world), Nestle (the 6th largest chocolate manufacturer in the world by net sales (3)), and Zamacom (a subsidiary of ECOM Agroindustrial Corporation Ltd., within the top five merchants of both cocoa and cotton in the world (4,5)) (1, 6).

The cooperative is certified for cocoa by UTZ-RA, with 2,839 ha of certified crops (7). Furthermore, the cooperative has been certified for cocoa by Fairtrade since 2013, although it is unclear for how many hectares of certified crops (8).

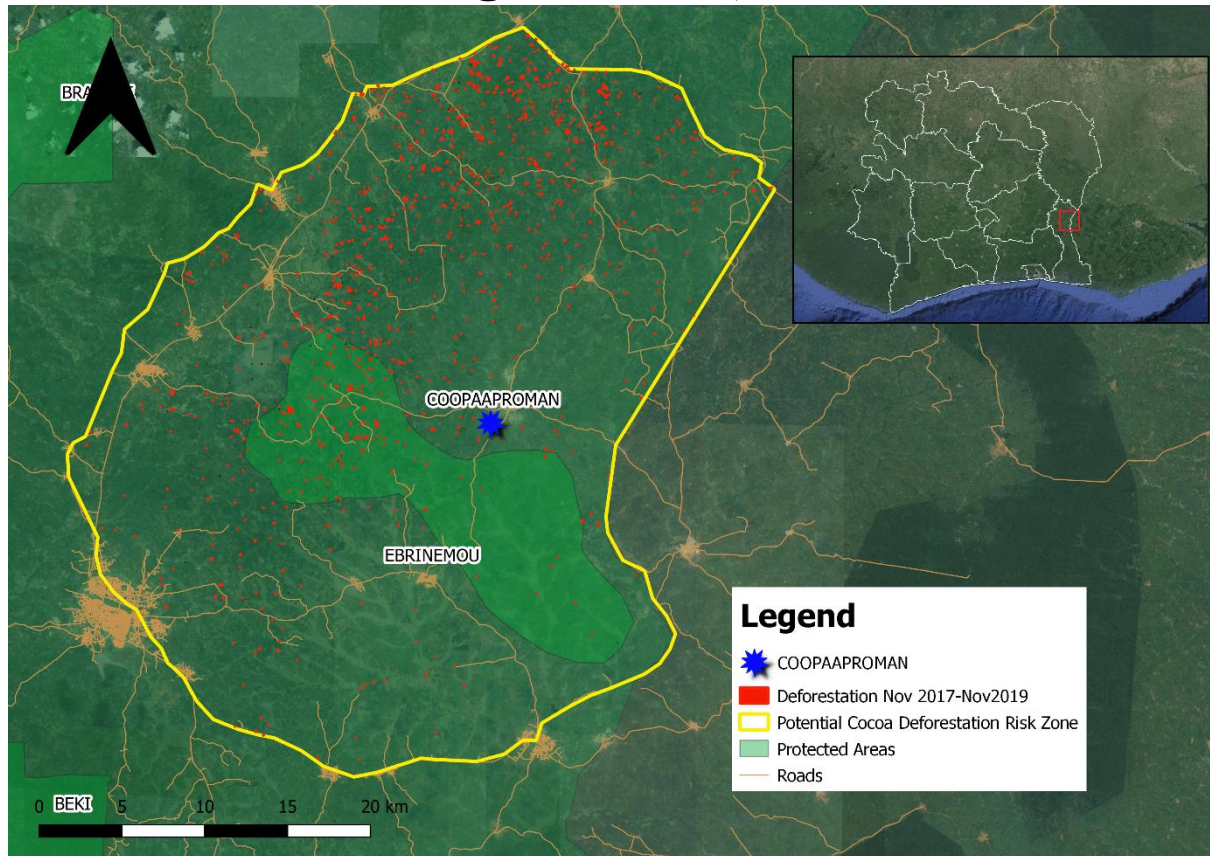
It received an award for 'best cooperative society of Nawa' at a regional celebration of Cocoa and Chocolate National Commodities (JNCC) in 2016 (10) and invested 100 million FCFA in 2018 into improving the living conditions of its producers (ibid).

The cooperative is based in the town of Méagui, which is located between two protected areas, Niegre and Nibi Hana, both categorized as classified forests (9). COOP-CA-ECAMOM is within 24km of the nearest protected area; however, there is a river between this protected area and the cooperative, making transporting cocoa beans from these areas to the cooperative unlikely.

The 2019 RA audit report showed that of '70 percent of [certified] plantations visited, native vegetation (trees shading) is not maintained' and that 'the group administrator does not have a plan to progressively increase or restore natural vegetation although 70 percent of the plantations visited have a total native vegetation cover of less than 10 percent.' At the same time, the audit states that the [certified] farms retained all-natural ecosystems and there is no forest destruction' and that the 'group activities did not damage any protected area' (7).

- (1) <http://www.ecamom.com/presentation>
- (2) <https://www.reuters.com/article/cocoa-ivorycoast-licences/ivory-coast-issues-72-cocoa-export-licences-for-2019-20-season-idUSL5N2673XF>
- (3) <https://www.icco.org/about-cocoa/chocolate-industry.html>
- (4) <https://cocoainitiative.org/members-post/ecom/>
- (5) <http://www.dutchcocoa.nl/en/ecom-agroindustrial.html>
- (6) <https://lespagesvertesci.net/entreprise-2470&ecamom-coop-c.a-agriculture-elevage-cafe-cacao-annuaire-agriculture-lespagesvertes>
- (7) https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=2ahUKewjD2Y78kY3mAhXH1AKHW8CAysQFjABegQIARAC&url=http%3A%2F%2Fafricertlimited.co.ke%2Fsummary%2FCOOP%2520CA%2520ECAMOM%25201.pdf&usg=AOvVaw3iFKk4I1EMwjR_WnNXTWBX
- (8) <https://www.fairtradeafrica.net/producers-products/producer-profile/?prod=639>
- (9) <https://www.protectedplanet.net/c/world-database-on-protected-areas>
- (10) <https://aip.ci/cote-divoire-journees-nationales-du-cacao-dans-la-nawa-la-cooperative-ecamom-de-meagui-primee/>
- (11) <http://www.laregionale.ci/page/Culture/118/publicit%C3%A9>

COOPAAPROMAN (Agnibilékrou, Comoé)



Within the cocoa-related deforestation risk area for this cooperative, there was 138 ha of deforestation between November 2017 and November 2019, of which 15 ha took place between October 20 and November 13, 2019.

Societe Cooperative Agricole Anouanze des Producteurs de Manzanouan (COOPAAPROMAN) is located in the village of Manzanouan in the department of Agnibilékrou. It reportedly has 564 members that in the 2017-2018 agricultural season produced 1700 MT of cocoa from 2,993 ha of land (1). This entire production was then sold to Cargill West Africa (ibid).

The cooperative is certified for cocoa by UTZ-Rainforest alliance for 2,221 ha, with 521 ha reserved for conservation and 250 ha for other crops (ibid). Since 2015, with the help of Cargill, the cooperative has mapped out its member farms (ibid).

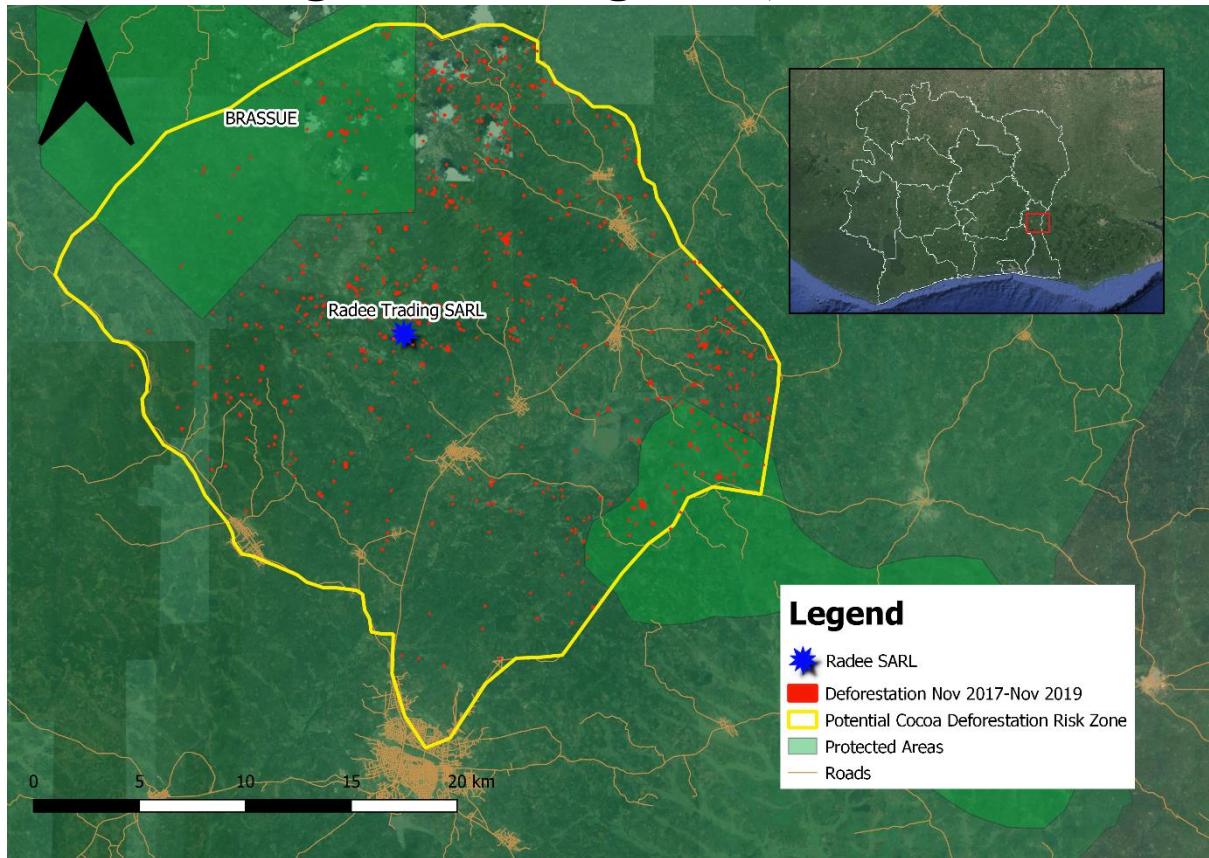
According to the IUCN's protected planet database, the cooperative is located within a protected area called Ebrinenou (2). Based on the GPS coordinates garnered from the RA 2019 audit, 75 percent of member producers' farms are located within the boundaries of Ebrinenou (1). Over time, this forest appears to have been declassified, and on January 5, 2017, SODEFOR's updated lists of forests classified by region does not refer to a forest named Ebrinenou (3).

(1) <https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/business/solutions/certification/agriculture/certificate-search-public-summaries/>

(2) <https://www.protectedplanet.net/c/world-database-on-protected-areas>

(3) http://www.sodefor.ci/pdf/List_fc.pdf

Radee Trading SARL (Abengourou, Comoé)



Within the cocoa-related deforestation risk area for this cooperative, between November 2017 and November 2019, there was 103 ha of deforestation. Of this amount, 10 ha occurred between October 20 and November 13, 2019.

Radee Trading SARL is located in the Abengourou department in the district of Comoé in eastern Côte d'Ivoire. It is located within 3 km of the Brassue classified forest (1).

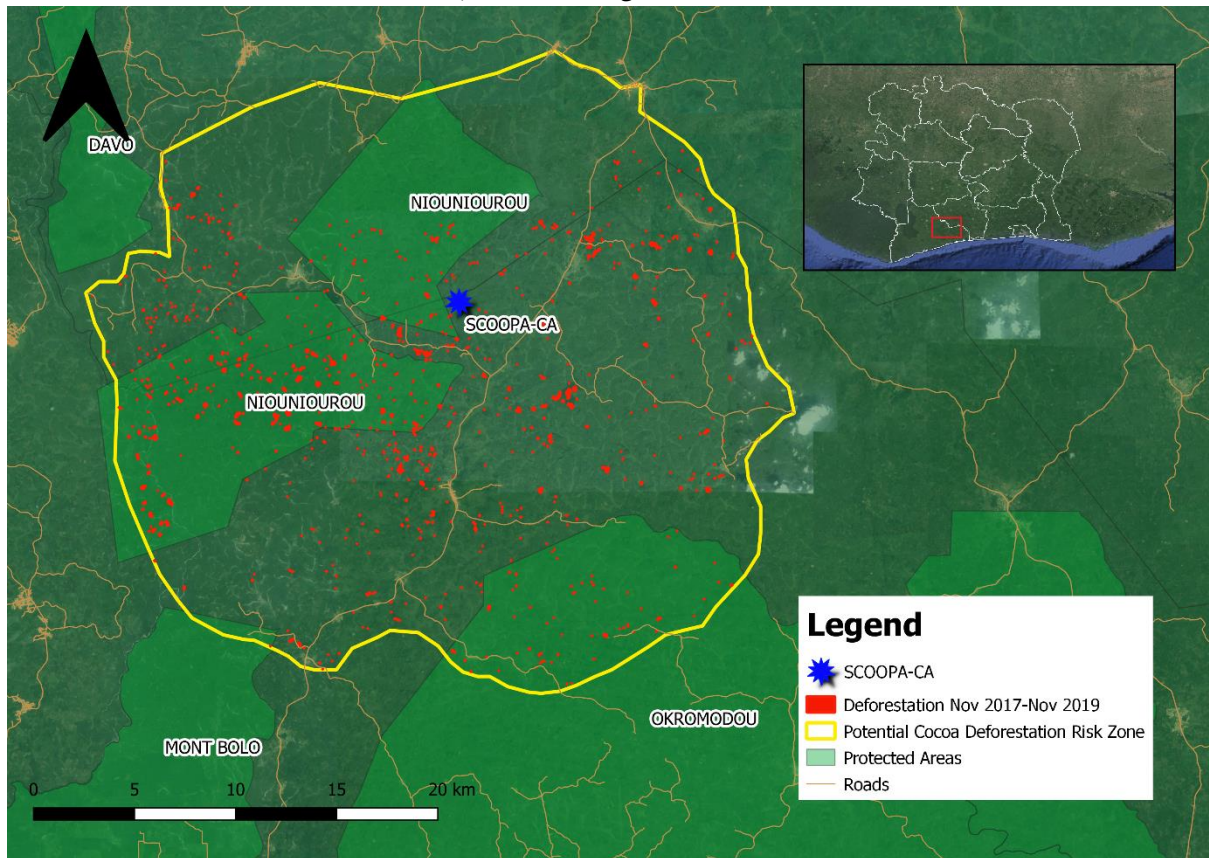
An October 2019 RA audit states that the cooperative uses 8,000 ha of land, of which 6,417 ha is certified by UTZ-RA for cocoa production (3). The cooperative has 1,640 members producing 4,346 MT of cocoa. Certification for cocoa production was last issued on July 18, 2018, and on November 7, 2019, Radee Trading SARL's UTZ-RA certification was suspended. In order to meet UTZ-RA certification standards, each producer is required to have an agricultural management plan. The most recent audit by UTZ-RA was indicated that 74 percent of the cooperative's producers have this, but the plan covering the period 2017-2023 still does not consider criteria related to soil and health erosion, water management, working conditions and climate change. It was also discovered that associated programs are generally not implemented on certified cocoa farms. It is possible that a combination of several certification criteria not being met led to the UTZ-RA certification, but no formal reason is stated.

(1) <https://www.protectedplanet.net/c/world-database-on-protected-areas>

(2) <https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/business/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Certified-Farms-CoC-Operations-September2019.pdf>

(3) <https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/business/solutions/certification/agriculture/certificate-search-public-summaries/>

SCOOPA-CA (Lakota, Gôh-Djiboua)



Within the cocoa-related deforestation risk area, between November 2017 and November 2019, there was 116 ha of deforestation, of which 15 ha occurred between October 20 and November 7, 2019.

Societe Cooperative des Producteurs d'Adama Kouamekro (SCOOPA-CA) is located in the Lakota department of Gôh-Djiboua. The cooperative has 665 producers that operate on 692 farms and 2,900 ha of land. Of this land, 2,369 ha is certified for cocoa production (1), 375 ha is reportedly used for conservation and the remainder is used for other crops. In the 2018-2019 growing season, the cooperative sold 1,085 MT of certified UTZ-RA cocoa beans to Barry Callebaut and aims to produce 1,391 MT of cocoa in the 2019-2020 season.

SCOOPA-CA is involved in several sustainability initiatives concerning productivity, agroforestry and reforestation, including SSRTE, Literacy and Fairtrade (ibid). The cooperative distributed 2,646 shade trees to its members, although most of the farms visited in the UTZ-RA audit have vegetation cover of less than 15 percent (1). (A robust agroforestry system would be closer to 30 percent shade.) During the 2019 UTZ-RA audit, there were criteria that the cooperative did not comply with, one of which related to farms not having maintained native vegetation adjacent to aquatic ecosystems (ibid). The cooperative is located within the boundaries of Niouniourou classified forest (2), therefore there is a risk that cocoa sourced by this cooperative may have contributed to deforestation within Niouniourou.

- (1) <https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/business/solutions/certification/agriculture/certificate-search-public-summaries/>
- (2) <https://www.protectedplanet.net/c/world-database-on-protected-areas>

Glossary

- **CFI** – Cocoa & Forests Initiative
- **RA** – Rainforest Alliance
- **SODEFOR** - La Société de développement des forêts (forest development agency). Ivorian state-owned company responsible for maintaining and expanding forests under its jurisdiction.
- **UTZ-RA** – UTZ-Rainforest Alliance (UTZ and Rainforest Alliance merged in January 2019.)
- **WCF** - World Cocoa Foundation

Methodology

The first step in the analysis of this report was to create a database of cocoa supply chain information in a geographic information system (QGIS) (1,2,3,4,5). This database was generated using publicly available information for Côte d’Ivoire (e.g. administrative boundaries and roads) and cooperative information from certification bodies UTZ, RA and Fairtrade. This information was then supplemented by protected area information (6) and deforestation data from November 2017 until November 2019 from both Vivid Economics (ibid) and Global Forest Watch GLAD Alerts (7). Finally, supply chain links were added from various sources, when available.

Criteria used to select cooperatives

In order to select which cooperatives to include in the report, the following criteria were assessed;

- Presence of deforestation - Using satellite images from two periods: 1 November 2017-November 2019 and September/October-November 2019 for most recent deforestation.
- Proximity to a protected area - If a cooperative was located closer to a protected area than another, it was seen to have a higher deforestation risk associated with that protected area (e.g. illegal deforestation and loss of high-value forests).
- Whether it was located within a known cocoa region or not - If a cooperative was located in a purely cocoa producing region, it was more likely that deforestation could be attributed to cocoa production.
- Number of members/size of area covered by cooperative – The higher the number of members, or the larger the amount of land covered by the cooperative, the larger the associated deforestation risk area.
- Topography and landscape - If a cooperative and deforestation were separated by a large body of water or inaccessible terrain, then they were not considered linked.

Cocoa-related deforestation risk zone

Throughout the report a ‘cocoa-related deforestation risk zone’ is referred to. This was calculated using the aforementioned deforestation alerts, the cooperative locations and the mapped road network in Côte d’Ivoire. The average distance a cocoa bean travels before it reaches a cooperative is in the range of 25-46 km (7). Using this figure, cooperatives were categorized into small (0-800 members), medium (800-1000 members) and large (1000+ members). The average distance a cocoa bean travels was then applied to these categories, with 25 km, 35 km and 45 km assigned to small, medium and large cooperatives respectively. This was used when mapping the road network surrounding the cooperatives, by following the set distance down all roads leading away from the cooperative. These limits were then plotted and joined with all other points in order to form a

potential deforestation risk zone around the cooperative. A buffer zone of 2-3 km was also applied to each road when mapping, due to the presence of unofficial dirt track roads that potentially could be used to transport cocoa.

- (1) <https://mapcruzin.com/free-ivory-coast-arcgis-maps-shapefiles.htm>
- (2) <http://download.geofabrik.de/africa/ivory-coast-latest-free.shp.zip>
- (3) https://gadm.org/download_country_v3.html
- (4) <https://www.protectedplanet.net/c/world-database-on-protected-areas>
- (5) <https://www.maphubs.com/>
- (6) IMAGES. Use permitted under a Ministerial Communication (“Communication en Conseil des Ministres”) in July 2018
- (7) https://www.globalforestwatch.org/map?map=eyJjZW50ZXIiOmsibGFoIjoyNywibG5nIjoxMnosImJlYXJpbmciOjAsInBpdGNoIjowLCJ6b29tIjoyfQ%3D%3D&menu=eyJkYXRhc2VoQ2FoZWdvcnkiOiJmb3Jlc3RDaGFuZ2UiLCJtZW51U2VjdGlvbi16ImRhdGFzZXRzIno%3D&modalMeta=umd_landsat_alerts
- (8) Cocoa consultant
- (9) Rainforest Alliance

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