



# **BUILDING TRUST. CREATING IMPACT.**

**FIRST YEAR IMPACT REPORT**

Published in 2021  
ALDI, ECAMOM, Fairtrade Deutschland & FLOCERT





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. Introduction</b>	page <b>03</b>
1. Project vision	page <b>03</b>
2. Key stakeholders	page <b>03</b>
3. Executive summary	page <b>04</b>
<b>2. Theory of Change and Methodology</b>	page <b>06</b>
1. Theory of Change and KPIs	page <b>06</b>
2. Methodology and data sources	page <b>07</b>
<b>3. ECAMOM</b>	page <b>09</b>
1. History and key highlights	page <b>09</b>
2. Cooperative and member profile	page <b>10</b>
3. ECAMOM's plans and ambitions	page <b>11</b>
<b>4. Economic Empowerment</b>	page <b>12</b>
1. Cocoa production and yield	page <b>13</b>
2. Cocoa quality and Fairtrade sales	page <b>16</b>
3. Implementation of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)	page <b>17</b>
<b>5. Capacity building and democracy</b>	page <b>20</b>
1. Training topics, attendance and satisfaction	page <b>21</b>
2. Fairtrade premium use and impact stories	page <b>25</b>
3. Democratic structures within the cooperative	page <b>30</b>
<b>6. Social and environmental justice</b>	page <b>32</b>
1. Child protection and women empowerment	page <b>32</b>
2. Sustainable land use	page <b>35</b>
<b>7. Infographics</b>	page <b>38</b>
<b>8. Summary and looking ahead</b>	page <b>40</b>
<b>9. Glossary</b>	page <b>43</b>

# 1. INTRODUCTION

This report is a direct outcome of the strategic collaboration between the ALDI SOUTH Group (ALDI), Fairtrade and ECAMOM, a Fairtrade cocoa cooperative from Côte d'Ivoire. It is based on ALDI's commitment towards sustainable cocoa farming and entails an in-depth analysis of ALDI's most important Fairtrade cocoa supply chain. On the following pages we not only present the findings of the first monitoring year – taken as the baseline –

but also provide insights into ECAMOM's work, the challenges the cooperative and its farmers are facing, and the opportunities for Fairtrade and ALDI's engagement. Our aim is to provide a holistic picture of present-day cocoa farming in general, and, specifically, to highlight potential impact pathways that a long-term partnership between the involved actors can enable.

## 1.1 PROJECT VISION

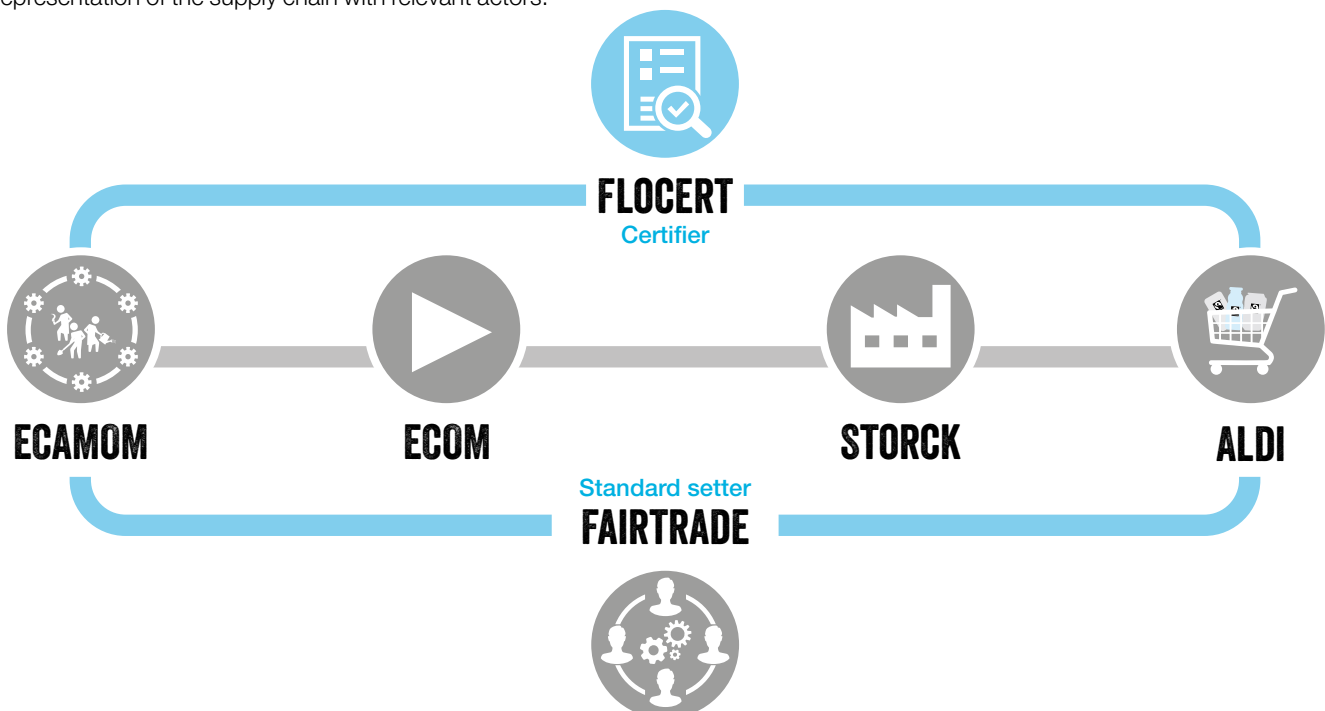
In a series of participative workshops and individual consultations, the stakeholders involved developed the following project vision:

**“Through its direct and long-term engagement with Fairtrade, ALDI and its supply chain actors contribute to responsible cocoa farming at ECAMOM and to a resilient and inclusive cooperative organisation. These actions enable trade on a level playing field.”**

Experience in international trade shows that one key aspect for long-term collaborations on a level playing field is trust. In our project, this applies firstly to the multi-stakeholder setup, enabling all involved parties to contribute to the project's vision. For this reason, the project partners place high importance on the early inclusion of ECAMOM in the scoping and development of the project. Key decisions, e.g. on the vision or the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), were taken jointly and we considered both ALDI's interests and the realities on the ground.

## 1.2 KEY STAKEHOLDERS

From ECAMOM to ALDI:  
Representation of the supply chain with relevant actors.



## ECAMOM

The Cooperative Society of Modern Eco-farmers of Méagui (aka ECAMOM) was founded in 2006. It is located in south-western Côte d'Ivoire. Over the years, the size of the cooperative grew from originally 300 to around 3,600 individual members. ECAMOM received its Fairtrade certification in 2014, which was a crucial step for the cooperative in terms of professionalising its internal structures and gaining further market access.



## ALDI

The ALDI SOUTH Group (aka: ALDI) is a global food retail company and operates in eleven countries on four continents and employs around 155,000 members of staff. ALDI offers between 1,470 and 1,940 core range products in more than 6,700 stores worldwide. Its focus on the essentials and the use of the discount principle has made the ALDI SOUTH Group the leading international retailer it is today.

Simplicity, consistency and responsibility are core values of the ALDI SOUTH Group. The ALDI SOUTH Group assumes responsibility towards customers, business partners, employees, the community, and the environment.



## ECOM & Storck

Storck and ECOM are considered supply chain partners and are linked to the project in the sense that the cocoa sourced is exported by ECOM and imported by Storck. Both play a crucial role with regards to the integrity of the supply chain and may be informed about the project's progress and development with the purpose to foster the business relationship.



## Fairtrade Germany, Fairtrade Africa & Fairtrade International

Fairtrade Germany coordinates the joint monitoring project with ALDI and ECAMOM, working in close collaboration with the regional West African Fairtrade team, as well as with the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Unit at Fairtrade International. Fairtrade Germany presents the report to ALDI, and reports on necessary adjustments and improvements in order to continuously demonstrate significant and useful impacts.



## FLOCERT

The certification and assurance organization FLOCERT manages the entire project, from data collection through to drafting this report. FLOCERT also evaluates the quality of monitoring indicators during an on-site assessment with ECAMOM.



## 1.3 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This first-year impact report marks a crucial step in the collaboration between ALDI and Fairtrade as part of their joint monitoring project. In 2019, ALDI took the decision to team up with its supply chain actors and expand its ambitions for sustainable cocoa sourcing. ECAMOM is a Fairtrade cooperative in Côte d'Ivoire that unites approximately 3,600 farmers.

This year's report serves as the baseline, referring predominantly to 2019 data. Its main purpose is to provide an in-depth understanding of the way ECAMOM operates, the challenges farmers and the community face and the opportunities Fairtrade sourcing provides, and to give guidance on further action by ALDI.

### Key findings are that:

- Fairtrade sales lead to economic benefits for farmers, yet only 20% of the production capacity is actually sold under Fairtrade conditions. The Fairtrade certified cocoa sold by ECAMOM in the season 2019-2020 and mentioned in this report was not yet sold to ALDI but to other Fairtrade licensees. The commitment of ALDI towards ECAMOM started in the season 2020-2021. By doing so ALDI aims to further support the farmers.

- ECAMOM directly and proactively reaches both the farmers (e.g. via agronomists and trainings provided) and the respective communities (e.g. through Premium projects). This can be seen as laying the foundation for creating impact beyond the core business activities of cocoa production and sales.
- Capacity building and awareness raising are central topics and areas for improvement, specifically aspects of farming practices (farm renovation), women's empowerment, child protection and sustainable land use. Here, ECAMOM already conducts trainings and provides support; this should be further strengthened to benefit farmers and the community.

The report will first provide further information on the methodology used and more detailed insights into ECAMOM, before focusing on three major areas:

1. **Economic empowerment**
2. **Capacity building and democracy**
3. **Social and environmental justice**

## 1. Economic empowerment:

- Fairtrade enables higher prices for the cooperative, which are also passed on to the farmers. Yet only 20% of the total sales are sold under Fairtrade conditions.
- First strategic steps towards implementation of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and soil fertility management are conducted by ECAMOM. The figures show, however, that there is still both a lack of understanding and material to hand for farmers.
- ECAMOM is already making substantial investments into processing facilities and further improving the quality of cocoa, yet the cooperative faces challenges such as access to important construction material.

## 2. Capacity building and democracy:

- Despite the low literacy rate among farmers and the wide geographical spread of the community, ECAMOM manages to involve the community in the internal decision-making process. This is also indicated by the high level of trust farmers have in the cooperative management.
- The cooperative conducted 11 trainings with a total of 2,086 participants in 2019.
- ECAMOM is starting to put more emphasis on gender equality, as demonstrated by the additional efforts and incentives undertaken by the cooperative. However, the figures show that there is low participation by women in co-operative management and in trainings provided.
- ECAMOM invested 213,048 EUR into 10 different projects in 2019, funded by the Fairtrade Premium money. The projects carried out by ECAMOM seem to be highly relevant for both farmers and their surrounding community, e.g. the support of a local health clinic or investments in a school.

## 3. Social and environmental justice – Focus on child labour:

- ECAMOM's records and the data show that in terms of child protection, there is both a system in place and general awareness among farmers. All cases of child labour were addressed and resolved.
- Yet when interviewed, farmers had diverging opinions on how to adequately follow up in practice a situation with identified child labour. This might be due to a lack of clarity or knowledge of a clear protocol to follow.

## 3. Social and environmental justice – Focus on sustainable land use:

- ECAMOM's headquarters is located in the city of Méagui, bordering two protected areas.
- GPS mapping of farms is very advanced with all plots being mapped, most of them recently in 2019-2020.
- Deforestation and land conversion findings present a mixed picture. ECAMOM's management is aware of the risks, yet most of the farmers are not.

Sustained Fairtrade sourcing can make a substantial difference to the cooperative and the life of its farmers. Here, further strengthening ECAMOM in its capacity to provide services and support to farmers and the communities is crucial. A central pathway is economic empowerment through Fairtrade sales, yet other topics such as improved farm renovation, women's empowerment or environmental awareness can also lead to long-term changes and impact.

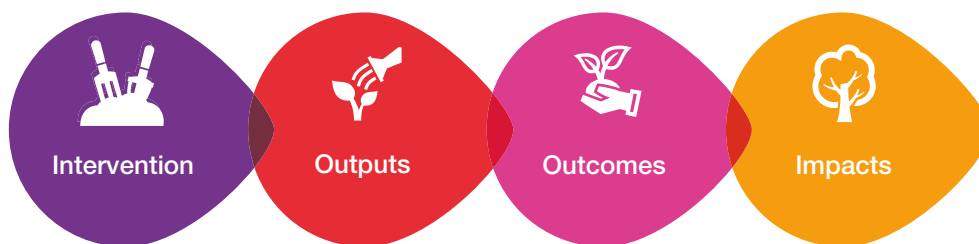


## 2. THEORY OF CHANGE AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 THEORY OF CHANGE AND KPIS

This chapter presents the conceptual thinking behind the project, namely its Theory of Change and the methodology applied to collect and analyze data.

A Theory of Change (ToC) describes the change that an organization wants to see in the world and the contributions that the organization makes towards this. In the context of Fairtrade, a ToC captures the range of activities Fairtrade performs as a system (i.e. its interventions such as the Premium or producer support) and relates these logically to desired immediate, mid-term and long-term changes, also called *output*, *outcome* and *impact*.



Picture source: Theory of Change depiction by Fairtrade International

This means that the benefits ECAMOM receives from Fairtrade certification can be viewed as the interventions, namely:

- Access to international markets and fairer prices;
- The Fairtrade Premium;
- The Fairtrade Minimum Price, which is currently above FOB market price and therefore signifies a price differential;
- Producer and staff management support provided by Fairtrade Africa;
- Cooperative management strengthened via adherence to the FT Standard

These interventions lead to immediate changes (outputs), which in turn lead to further mid- and long-term changes (outcomes). To capture and measure these, a project-specific Theory of Change was developed jointly with ALDI and ECAMOM with the following areas and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

Area	Key performance indicator (KPI)
Economic empowerment	1) Cocoa production and yield are sustainable and economically efficient. 2) Cocoa quality and Fairtrade sales are substantially increased. 3) Implementation of Good Agricultural Practices is strengthened.
Capacity building & democracy	4) Trainings are available, accessible and relevant for farmers and cooperative staff. 5) The use of FT Premium contributes strategically to the development of the cooperative. 6) Democratic structures are strengthened within the cooperative.
Social & environmental justice	7) Protection of children is assured and strengthened at cooperative and member level. 8) Effective measures are taken to foster sustainable land use and reduce deforestation.

Each KPI is then further broken down into data collection points, which are presented in the respective chapters of this report.

## 2.2 METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCES

This section outlines the data sources used and the process applied for data collection, validation and interpretation.

In general, it is only possible to analyse and identify clear trends from the KPIs once data is gathered for multiple years. What is already possible, however, is to receive an informed picture for each indicator in this first year of the project. Furthermore, the first year also served to develop the cooperative management's capacities and test the different data collection methods used.

In order to gain insights and data beyond the cooperative level, it was decided to develop and implement a survey with questions directly for farmers. Hence, the two main data sources for this report are:

1. Cooperative survey: 44 questions for ECAMOM's management on key data such as production, sales, investments and Premium projects.

2. Farmer survey: Survey with 20 questions for ECAMOM's individual members (farmers) on e.g. farming practices, training participation, awareness of child labour and deforestation.

In total, 100 farmer interviews were conducted and digitized, out of which 99 fulfilled the requirements and were considered in this analysis.

This means that data is available for each main area from both the cooperative survey and farmer survey, which allows for comparisons between data sources. Additional data sources were then used to contextualise the results. These include impact stories (qualitative information about Premium projects) and information provided by the management of ECAMOM and Fairtrade Africa during the data verification process.

## OVERVIEW OF DATA SOURCES USED IN THIS REPORT

Data source	Function	Scope & brief description
Cooperative survey	Main data source	44 questions for ECAMOM's management on key data such as production, sales, investments and Premium projects (among others).
Farmer survey	Main data source	20 questions for individual members (farmers) of ECAMOM on farming practices, training participation, awareness of child labour and deforestation (among others). Total number of farmer surveys included: 99.
Impact stories	Contextual information	3 impact stories with description, budget, number of beneficiaries and outcome. Topics are: drilling a new well, building a school and donating solar panels.
Data verification process	Contextual information	Information provided by the management of ECAMOM during the verification process, e.g. on the challenges, plans and ambitions of the cooperative or on specific topics such as child labour or provision of fertilizers.

### Data reference period

For cocoa production, sales, and Premium payments, the reporting period was the cocoa season from **October 2019 to August 2020**. For all other indicators the reporting period was the 2019 calendar year.







# 3. ECAMOM

## 3.1 HISTORY AND KEY HIGHLIGHTS

ECAMOM is a Fairtrade small producer organization (SPO) located in the south-western part of Cote d'Ivoire within the main cocoa production area of the country.



Picture source: © INS, June 2015.

### Key facts about ECAMOM:

- Founded in 2006 with about 300 members
- Fairtrade certification received in 2014 (with 707 members at the time)
- Currently: 3,581 members (310 women, approx. 9% of total members)
- Area and production capacity: 20,870 ha, 14,600 MT
- Encompassing 17 different sections within the bigger community
- Five people on average living in one household (three adults and two children)
- Estimated average yield in 2019: 700 kg/ha
- Certified as trader with exporting license in 2020
- Other certifications: UTZ and Rainforest Alliance

Fairtrade certification has been a very important step for ECAMOM. With the additional Fairtrade Premium and the producer support provided by Fairtrade Africa, the cooperative was able to invest in capacity building of members, equipment and materials or community infrastructure. Not only did the cooperative invest in trainings for members and staff, but also provided support specifically for women, both in terms of capacity building and financially. Further investments in the community have included the support of a rural health clinic, which is featured as an impact story in this report.

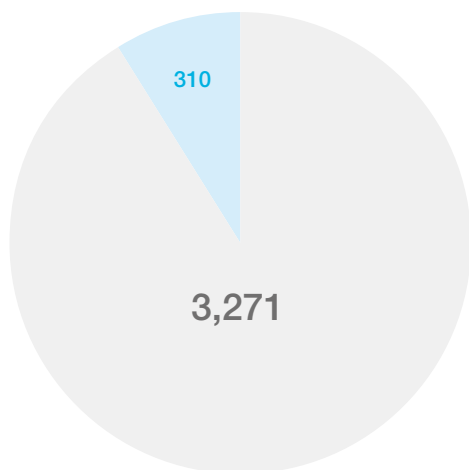
## 3.2 COOPERATIVE AND MEMBER PROFILE

This chapter highlights generic information about the management of ECAMOM and further information about farmers and their communities, such as general literacy rate and how ECAMOM coordinates its efforts to share information.

As stated above, the cooperative consists of 3,581 members, most of whom are men. Yet recent years have seen a growth in female farmer membership to now 9%. Looking at the cooperative management, however, only 3% of the management staff are women (4 out of 129).

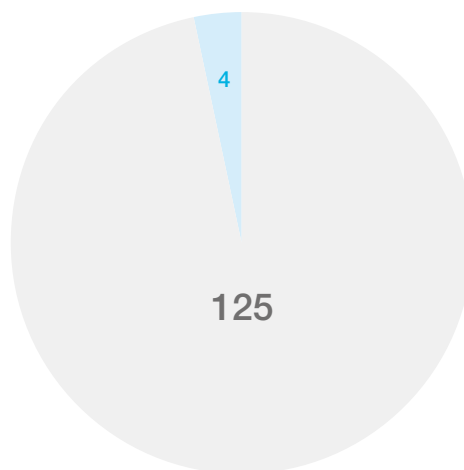
### REGISTERED MEMBERS BY GENDER

● Total male members ● Total female members



### ECAMOM'S MANAGEMENT AND STAFF PER GENDER

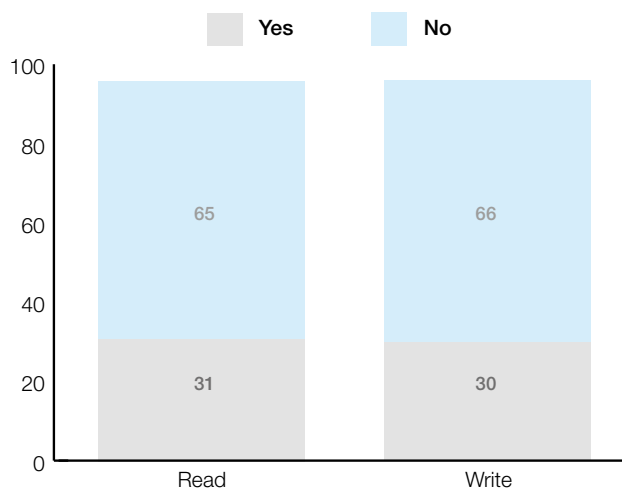
● Total male members ● Total female members



ECAMOM structured the community in 17 sections to make overall coordination and information sharing easier with the cooperative's farmers. One key aspect to keep in mind here is the low literacy rate among farmers (31% according to farmer survey results).

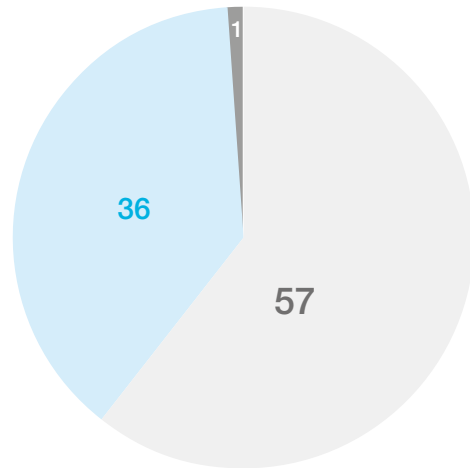
It is common that the older generation began in cocoa farming, and among this generation a low percentage has formal education. Most of the younger farmers however went to school. Yet this poses challenges to ECAMOM, mainly around the information-sharing and capacity-building efforts. Working in sections enables ECAMOM to work with local representatives who serve as multipliers, e.g. to announce cooperative meetings such as the General Assembly.

### LITERACY AMONG INTERVIEWED FARMERS, MEASURED IN THE CAPACITY TO READ AND WRITE (96 RESPONSES)



## SMARTPHONE AND INTERNET ACCESS AMONG PARTICIPANTS OF THE FARMER SURVEY (94 RESPONSES)

- No smartphone
- Smartphone without stable internet
- Smartphone & stable internet connection



In terms of access to technology, 39% of farmers interviewed have a smartphone, yet only one interviewed farmer was stated to have both a smartphone and stable internet connection. This shows that an inclusive strategy by ECAMOM, e.g. for carrying out activities or trainings, cannot currently rely on farmers' access to internet and technology.

### 3.3 ECAMOM'S PLANS AND AMBITIONS

Since ECAMOM's certification in 2014, Fairtrade has facilitated the cooperative's international outlook and has enabled gender to be taken into account in the cooperative's decision-making bodies. Fairtrade sales and Premium have enabled further investments that contributed to the growth of the cooperative in terms of its membership and cocoa production. From ECAMOM's perspective, the commercial partnership with ALDI will enable them to further strengthen their work in these areas, e.g. through the additional Fairtrade Premium and training support provided by Fairtrade Africa.

2020 has been a very challenging year for the cooperative. Covid-19 has made it even more difficult to coordinate across the sections of the community, and required additional time and financial investments into awareness building and distribution of support material. Furthermore, the national elections that took place in the autumn of 2020 were very controversial and accompanied by civil unrest and violent protests, slowing down farming activities on the ground.

Despite these external challenges, ECAMOM was able to function well, provide support to its members and deliver cocoa as per the contracts. In such times, having a stable income source is especially crucial for farmers. Being Fairtrade-certified has been an important aspect in this regard. Not only did the cooperative have Fairtrade Premium funds available and received ad hoc support from Fairtrade Africa, but also, most importantly, the underlying infrastructure, management capacities and a clear strategy were in place.

According to its own strategy, ECAMOM plans to carry out the following activities in the years to come:

- Construction of a rural hospital and providing health insurance for farmers and their community. (A smaller project in a similar direction also features as an impact story in this report: donation of solar panels to local health clinic).
- Self-financing of export activities and strengthening their value chain activities, supported by receiving Fairtrade trader certification in 2020. Granting trader certification is a common practice once a cooperative is maturing in terms of further processing and marketing cocoa.
- Trainings and capacity building for staff and board members, for example around the topics of sustainable farming practices and women's empowerment. Here, ECAMOM plans to invest part of the Premium into income-generating activities run by women.
- Further pursue the transition towards organic cocoa production and certification, aiming for 160 hectares and 80 MT of organic cocoa within the next two years.
- Construct a college to further strengthen access to education, proactively address the topic of child labour and provide further opportunities for everyone in the community, regardless of their origin and gender.

From this list of plans and activities we see that ECAMOM is proactively engaged in the local community and strives to provide relevant support.



## 4. ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

In this chapter we will have a closer look at ECAMOM's economic situation. The Key Performance Indicators are:



- **KPI 1:** Cocoa production and yield is sustainable and economically efficient



- **KPI 2:** Cocoa quality and Fairtrade sales are substantially increased



- **KPI 3:** Implementation of Good Agricultural Practices is strengthened

**KPI 1** includes aspects such as volumes purchased from individual members, organic certification and challenges for farmers and the cooperatives in cocoa production.

**KPI 2** focuses more on the cooperative level and provides information on sales, prices and activities undertaken to improve productivity and quality of cocoa production.

Lastly, **KPI 3** looks at the implementation of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) from two perspectives, namely those of the cooperatives and the farmers interviewed.

## KEY FACTS AND FIGURES:

- Organic certification is only at its very beginning and first steps are being taken (KPI 1). The cooperative plans to dedicate 160 hectares, with 80 MT of organic cocoa production by 2023.
- The Fairtrade Minimum Price (FMP) enabled higher prices for the cooperative in the reference period (215 EUR per metric ton), which was also passed on to the farmers. Yet only 20% of the total sales are sold under Fairtrade conditions (KPI 2).
- Cocoa is the main source of revenue for ECAMOM, accounting for 89% of the total annual gross revenue (KPI 2). The other product, caoutchouc, is sold locally.
- The cooperative invested in a variety of different farming measures at cooperative and farm level to improve productivity and quality of cocoa production, such as improvements in infrastructure for cocoa processing (KPI 2).
- First strategic steps towards GAP implementation and soil fertility management are conducted by ECAMOM. The figures, however, show that there is still a lack both of understanding and material to hand for farmers (KPI 3).

## OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT:

- Increasing Fairtrade sales will not only increase the revenue of the cooperative, but also have a direct positive impact on farmers and their (household) income due to the higher prices.
- The transition towards organic production is just beginning. It is important to keep in mind that such a transition usually takes several years. Yet at the same time it provides substantial opportunities for ECAMOM and its farmers in terms of environmental sustainability and economic profitability.
- ECAMOM understands the importance of GAP and providing related support (trainings and material). Further foundational work and support regarding GAP implementation appears crucial for farmers, including awareness raising, trainings and provision of materials.
- ECAMOM is already making substantial investments into processing facilities and further improving the quality of cocoa (approx. 217,200 EUR in 2019), yet the cooperative faces challenges such as access to important construction material.

## 4.1 COCOA PRODUCTION AND YIELD

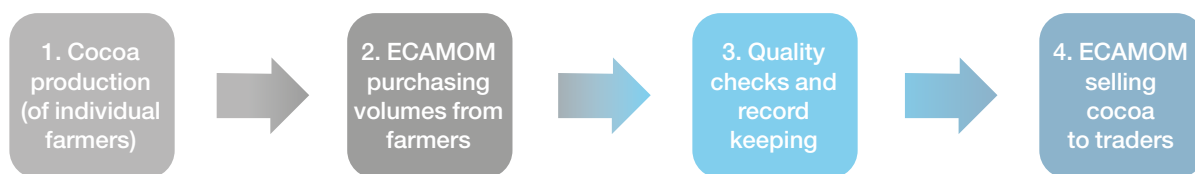


**KPI 1:** Cocoa production and yield are sustainable and economically efficient.

The KPI is being measured through the following data collection points:

1. Cooperative members with organic certification (by gender and age)
2. Volumes of cocoa purchased by cooperative from its members
3. Average number of cocoa trees per hectare

In general, the process of cocoa production and sales from ECAMOM's perspective entails 4 major steps from cocoa production to sales:



The cooperative plans to cover further processing steps on its own, which would also mean achieving higher prices and contributing positively to farmers' income. To do so, ECAMOM wants to install a processing unit in its geographical area of activity. However, it faces difficulty in accessing and purchasing equipment for the processing unit in Côte d'Ivoire. For the moment the cooperative does the semi-processing (husking and roasting) manually, which sometimes causes burns to the workers' hands. For the manufacture of chocolate bars, it sub-contracts to a partner based in the capital, Abidjan.

Throughout this chapter the following terms are used to give insights into ECAMOM's production and sales activities:

- Total purchases (by cooperative from members): The volume ECAMOM bought from its members in the last production cycle.
- Purchases sold under Fairtrade: Fairtrade sales traced back to the volumes purchased from farmers.
- Total sales: The volume sold by ECAMOM to its traders in the last production cycle.
- Fairtrade sales: The volume sold by ECAMOM to its traders that were part of a Fairtrade supply chain, which means that additional premium was paid for these volumes.

This report will also provide data on the prices (per metric ton [MT]) for these volumes. All ECAMOM farmers are also Fairtrade-certified, which means that there are no additional production or sales to those already stated in this chapter.

Cocoa production and yield focusses on the first two steps in the process described above, (1) cocoa production and (2) ECAMOM's purchases from farmers. In terms of volumes, ECAMOM purchased 7,712 MT of cocoa from farmers, which equates to approx. 2 metric tons per farmer per year. Farmers

generally receive higher prices for the volumes attributed to Fairtrade sales, namely 215 EUR more per metric ton (1,472 EUR/MT vs. 1,257 EUR/MT). This significant difference can be attributed to higher prices ECAMOM itself receives for Fairtrade sales and passes on to farmers (see next section).

## COOPERATIVE'S COCOA PURCHASES FROM MEMBERS IN LAST PRODUCTION CYCLE (IN METRIC TONS), SPLIT IN FAIRTRADE/NON-FAIRTRADE

	Metric tons (MT)	Currency	Average price (per MT)
Total purchases	7,712	EUR	1,364.74
Sold under Fairtrade	1,455	EUR	1,472.18
NOT sold as Fairtrade	6,257	EUR	1,257.30

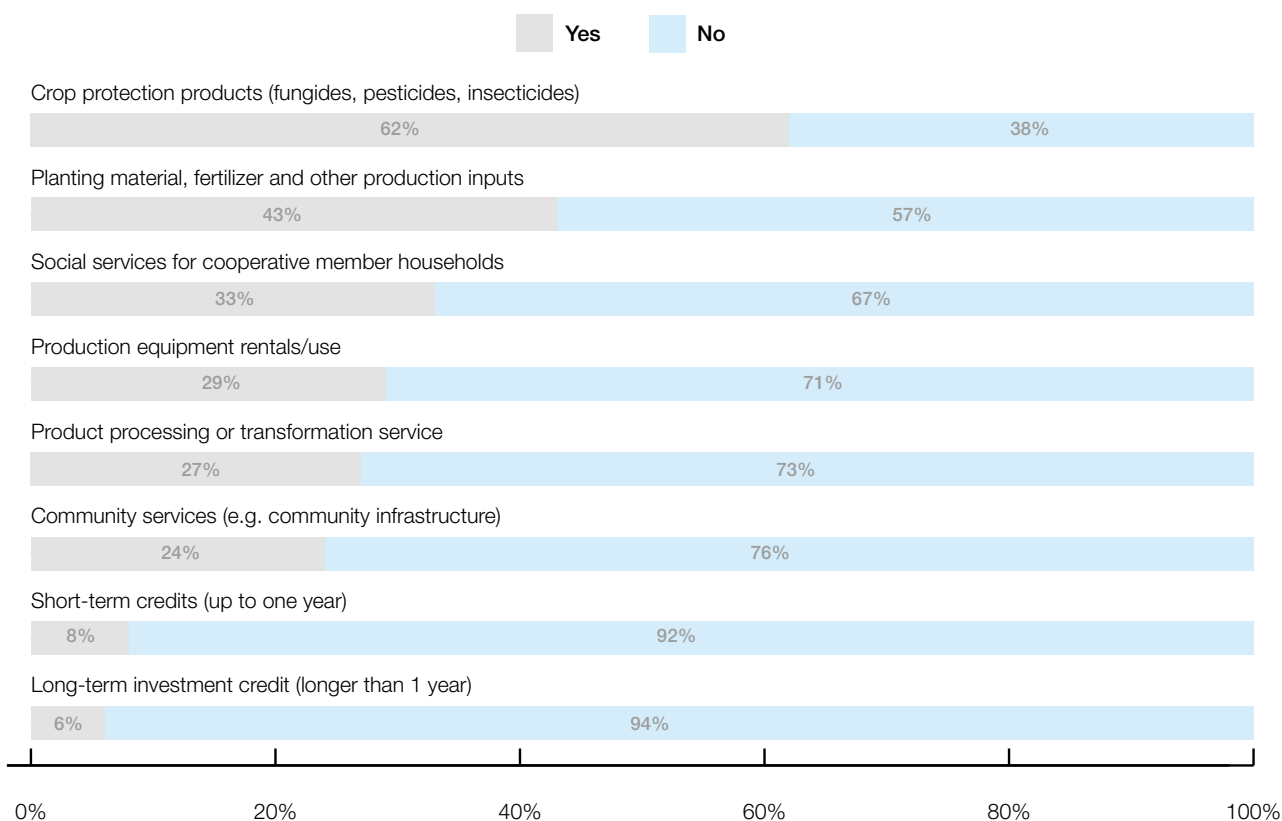
ECAMOM did not produce or sell any cocoa on organic terms, and organic certification is only at its very beginning. 12 of the 3,581 farmers are already in the process of becoming organic-certified, but no farmer is yet certified as such. This is confirmed by the results of the farmer survey, where 2 (out of 93 valid responses) said that they are in the process of becoming organic-certified, and 5 more stated that they are not yet – but plan to become – certified. Yet the cooperative plans to convert 160 hectares into organic area by 2023. This amounts to a general production capacity of 80 MT.

ECAMOM states that farmers generally do have higher production capacities and could produce more than the 7,712 MT that ECAMOM purchased if the demand was there. The major limiting factor for cocoa production itself is the ageing of planta-

tions and cocoa trees. There is a restriction by the Conseil Café Cacao (CCC, the regulatory body of the coffee-cocoa sector in Côte d'Ivoire) on the distribution of cocoa seeds. In this way, the CCC intends to regulate cocoa production across the country. This in turn has led to the fact that ECAMOM has had no access to seeds for the past four years. It is therefore nearly impossible for farmers to obtain improved seeds for the renewal of plantations.

This is backed up by the results in the farmer survey, where the majority of farmers (56 out of 98) stated they had not received planting material, fertiliser, or other production inputs. Further details are explained in the section on implementation of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) below.

### PERCENTAGE OF FARMERS THAT RECEIVED SERVICES



## 4.2 COCOA QUALITY AND FAIRTRADE SALES



**KPI 2:** Cocoa quality and Fairtrade sales are substantially increased.

The KPI is being measured through the following data collection points:

1. Volume of sales by cooperative: Fairtrade and NON-Fairtrade
2. Price per MT received for Fairtrade sales and NON-Fairtrade sales
3. Volume of Fairtrade certified cocoa by grade 1 and 2  
(or other relevant measure to indicate quality and level of processing of cocoa)
4. Quality control and assurance measures applied by the cooperative
5. Investments into facilities for cocoa processing

As part of the key benefits for farmers, Fairtrade guarantees a minimum price. The Fairtrade Minimum Price (FMP) is the minimum price that must be paid by buyers to producers for a product in order to become certified against the Fairtrade Standards. The FMP is a floor price which covers producers' average costs of production and allows them access to their product markets.

During the reference period (October 2019 to August 2020), the FMP was approx. 215 EUR (or 16%) above the market price, which explain the difference in the table below. It is to notice that the Fairtrade volume sold by ECAMOM in the season 2019-2020 and reported in this table was sold to other Fairtrade licensees. ALDI commitment toward ECAMOM started in the season 2020-2021.

Type	Sales volume (in MT)	Percentage of sales	Sales revenue (in EUR)	Percentage of revenue	Average price (EUR per MT)
Fairtrade sales	1,547	20%	2,466,571	22.5%	1,594
Non-Fairtrade sales	6,158	80%	8,493,568	77.5%	1,379
Total sales	7,706	100%	10,960,139	100%	1,422

Increasing the share of Fairtrade sales therefore has the potential to substantially increase farmers' household income. The gap between Fairtrade minimum and market price might disappear in the event of the market price itself increasing. But even in that case, Fairtrade provides farmers with price security, which makes financial planning easier.

At the same time, Fairtrade acknowledges that the low share of Fairtrade sales is a structural problem. Many cooperatives sell significantly less than they could on Fairtrade terms due to the limited consumer demand, which in turn can lead to competition between Fairtrade-certified cooperatives. To address this challenge, the latest revision of the Fairtrade Standard requires new cooperatives to provide proof of (potential) sales contracts with licensees before joining the system. Other activities such as campaigning and partnership-building focus on increasing the demand itself.

To improve productivity and quality of cocoa production, the cooperative has invested approx. 217,200 EUR (142,542,266 XOF) in a variety of different farming measures at cooperative and farm level. This includes, for example, improved access to inputs for cooperative members, and support for improved infrastructure for processing and storage, as well as water management, investments in environmental conservation and adaptation to climate change.

ECAMOM is looking into carrying out further value chain activities (e.g. cocoa processing and direct trade), which might be a relevant driver for creating impact and contributing to the project's vision, namely acting on a level playing field.



## 4.3 IMPLEMENTATION OF GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES (GAP)



**KPI 3:** Implementation of Good Agricultural Practices is strengthened.

The KPI is being measured through the following data collection points:

1. Percentage of cooperative members applying Good Agricultural Practices
2. N° of farm visits by technicians/agronomists
3. Actions taken by cooperative to address main barriers for improvements in cocoa productivity and quality

Data shows that initial strategic investments towards GAP implementation and soil fertility management are conducted by ECAMOM. But there is a lack both of understanding and of available support material (e.g. fertilisers) from the farmers' perspective.

To enable GAP implementation, ECAMOM conducted the following activities:

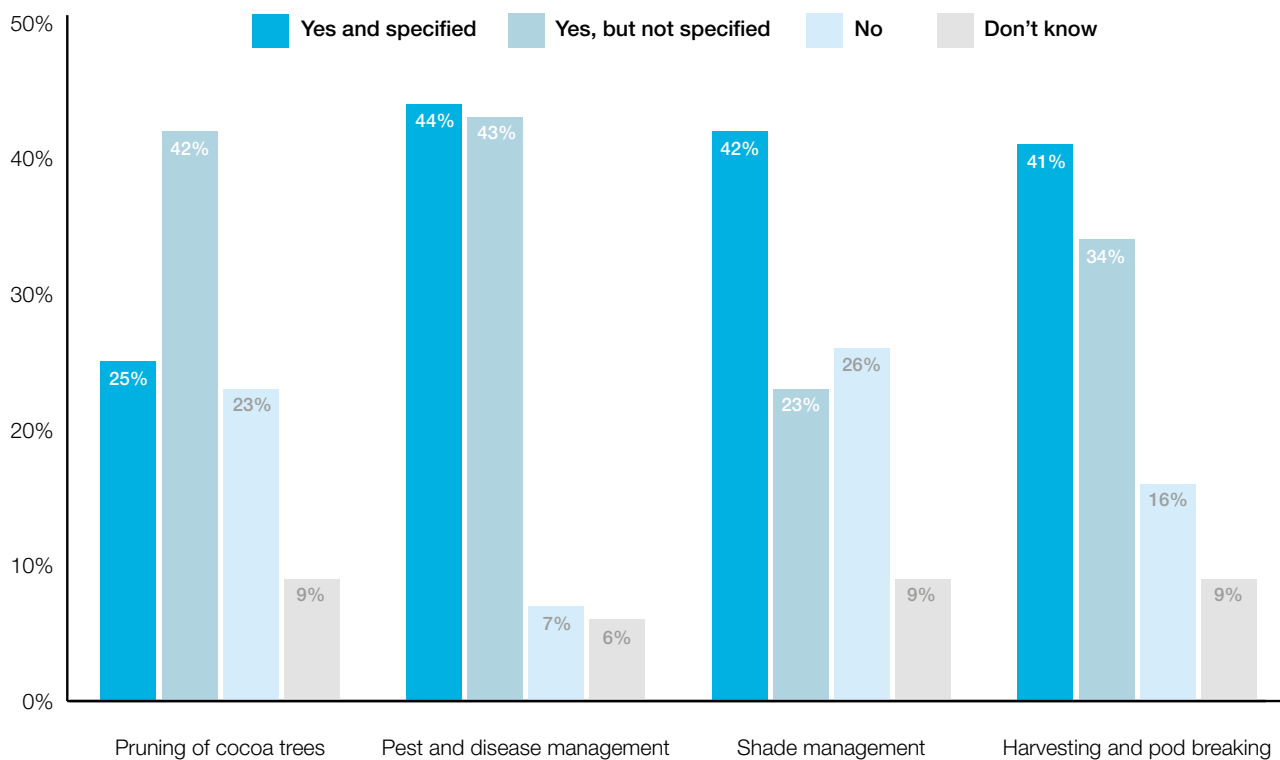
### SUPPORT MATERIAL OR TRAINING FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

GAP	Details
Pruning of cocoa trees	Free saws and tricycles, training of members.
Pest and disease management	Training on integrated pest management for members and phytotreaters. Purchase of pesticides, purchase of personal protective equipment, Medical examination of phytotreaters.
Shade Management	Distribution and planting of shade tree nursery, training of members
Harvesting and pod breaking of cocoa	Distribution of Pelle Bongo for crushing (248), training of members.

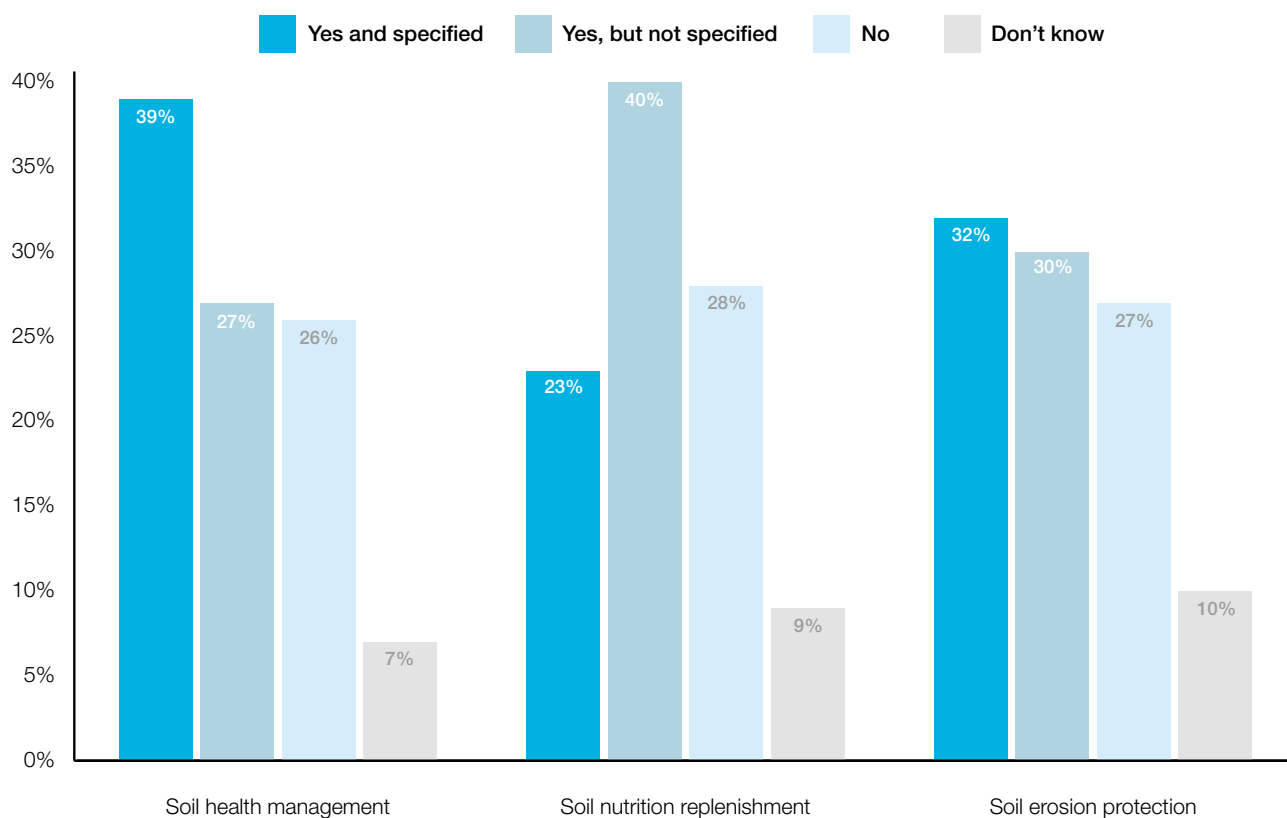


The farmer survey shows that most farmers do implement Good Agricultural Practices (65-87% implementation rate across different GAPs), but fewer implement measures for soil fertility management (max. 67% implementation rate).

### PERCENTAGE OF FARMERS APPLYING GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES (GAP)



### PERCENTAGE OF FARMERS IMPLEMENTING SOIL FERTILITY MEASURES



As identified by agronomists and ECAMOM management, the main obstacles to the implementation of GAP and soil fertility management are:

1. Members are not informed of production criteria;
2. Members have not been trained on integrated pest management;
3. Lack of financial means for employing workers to support with the tasks.

An additional challenge identified in the data is the lack of access to fertilisers and seedlings, e.g. for farm renovation. At the moment, farmers have on average 850 cocoa trees per hectare. Yet these trees are relatively old and no longer so productive (see also above on the restrictions of the Conseil Café Cacao). The background context for fertilisers is that the partner organization providing them has very strict payment terms. Farmers have to pay monthly and once they miss a monthly payment, no fertiliser is delivered (yet the paid money is kept). It is therefore no surprise that more than half of the farmers in the farmer sur-

vey stated they have no access to fertilisers for cocoa farming at all (52%), and only four farmers stated they have had access to sufficient fertiliser in the last production cycle.

In response, ECAMOM started partially covering the monthly payments for farmers. Yet this makes it difficult for ECAMOM to plan, and it often ends up with a net loss. The cooperative has therefore set up a savings bank account and aims to change the general terms under which farmers can access fertilisers in future.

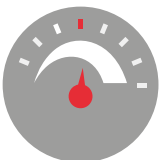
To remediate the problem of farm renovation, ECAMOM initiated a pruning brigade to contribute to the restoration and pruning of cocoa trees. Actions involve planting and composting shade trees (fruit and forest), establishing nurseries to replace old plants, and training on pest and disease management. Agronomists play a crucial role in this process. On average, each of the 31 agronomists conducts 15 farm visits per month, with a more intensive period prior to the harvesting season. This means that approximately 5,500 farm visits are carried out annually and that each farmer is visited once or twice per year, which is a relatively high coverage. Working with agronomists, therefore, seems to be a promising channel for delivering knowledge and inputs to farmers.





## 5. CAPACITY BUILDING AND DEMOCRACY

This chapter on capacity building and democracy covers the topics of trainings, Fairtrade Premium use, and decision-making within the cooperative. These are described by the following Key Performance Indicators:



- **KPI 4:** Trainings are available, accessible and relevant for farmers and cooperative staff



- **KPI 5:** The use of FT Premium contributes strategically to the development of the cooperative



- **KPI 6:** Democratic structures are strengthened within the cooperative

It is inherent in the nature of these topics that they are highly interconnected to this report's other topics. For example, trainings are provided for the application of Good Agricultural Practices (KPI 3) or to create awareness for child protection (KPI 7). Similarly, the Premium projects carried out by ECAMOM affect all areas of the cooperative and of cocoa production. We will refer to these interdependencies throughout the chapter.

## KEY FACTS AND FIGURES:

- The cooperative conducted 11 trainings with a total of 2,086 participants in 2019. Only 7% of these participants were women, which correlates with the overall percentage of female members (KPI 4).
- Nine out of 50 attendees of the last General Assembly were women. ECAMOM's training offered on the topic of women's empowerment is among the best-rated in terms of farmer satisfaction, jointly with child rights and human rights trainings (KPI 4).
- The cooperative also offered different incentives and services to encourage women's participation, e.g. trainings and dedicated loans. This shows the cooperative's general dedication to addressing the topic of gender equality (KPI 4).
- Most projects (six) funded by the Fairtrade Premium fell under the major category "investment in producer organizations". Five of these six projects fall under the subcategory "human resources and administration" (KPI 5).
- 81% of farmers do not know how the Premium has been spent in the last production cycle. Yet at the same time, the Fairtrade Premium was the most recognised benefit of Fairtrade, next to better living conditions. According to ECAMOM's management, this low awareness can be attributed to the illiteracy rate and the fact that farmers usually recognise Fairtrade by its logo and brand, not by terms such as "Premium" (KPI 5).
- The projects funded by the Fairtrade Premium carried out by ECAMOM seem to be highly relevant for farmers and their communities, namely the support of a local health clinic or investments in a school (KPI 5).
- Farmers generally trust ECAMOM's management. 90% of interviewed farmers confirm at least a moderate amount of trust, and 73% even have a very large or absolute amount of trust (KPI 6).

## OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ECAMOM is starting to put more emphasis on gender equality, which is demonstrated in the additional efforts and incentives undertaken by the cooperative. The figures show that there is still low participation by women in cooperative management, with a long way to go since gender is embedded in a social context. An opportunity for ECAMOM will be to further strengthen women's participation in trainings, e.g. by making these trainings more accessible to women, and creating concrete opportunities for women (management positions, access to credits for income diversification, strengthening the collaboration with Fairtrade Africa, etc.).
- ECAMOM still covers parts of their human resource expenses with the Fairtrade Premium. With additional Fairtrade sales, these costs might be covered directly through sales revenues, freeing up even more Premium money for other investments.
- Adjusting the language of the farmer survey (e.g. use of local language and vocabulary as well as pictures) should be considered in order to make it easier to understand.

## 5.1 TRAINING TOPICS, ATTENDANCE AND SATISFACTION



**KPI 4:** Trainings are available, accessible and relevant for farmers and cooperative staff

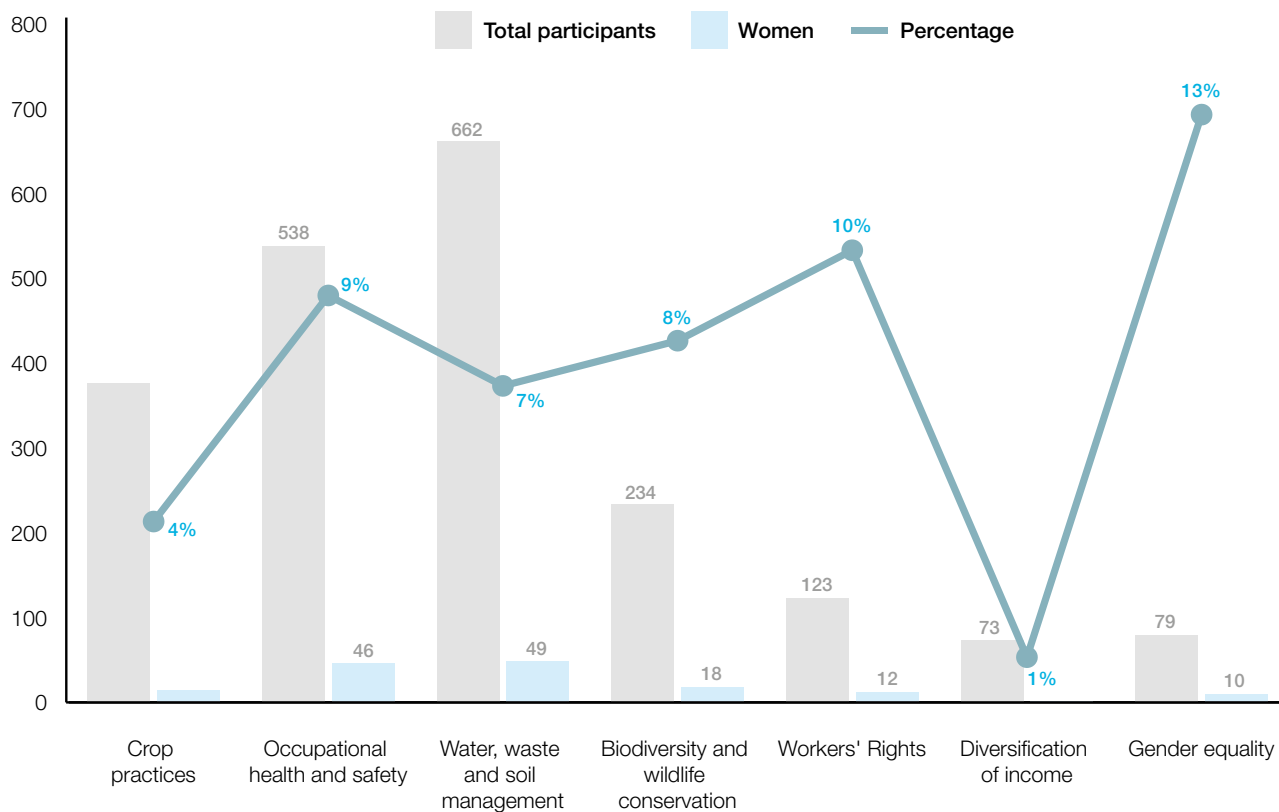
The KPI is being measured through the following data collection points:

1. No and type of trainings provided to cooperative staff, members and members' relatives by training topic, no of participants, and gender
2. Satisfaction of trainings and implementation of learnings on farmer level
3. Satisfaction of trainings and implementation of learnings on cooperative staff level

The cooperative conducted 11 trainings with a total of 2,086 participants in 2019, with participation ranging from 73 to 427 participants. The chart below shows the trainings grouped by

topic and the number of participants, as well as the percentage of female farmers. If there was more than one training in a category, the numbers of all trainings were added up.

### WOMEN PARTICIPATION PER TRAINING CATEGORY



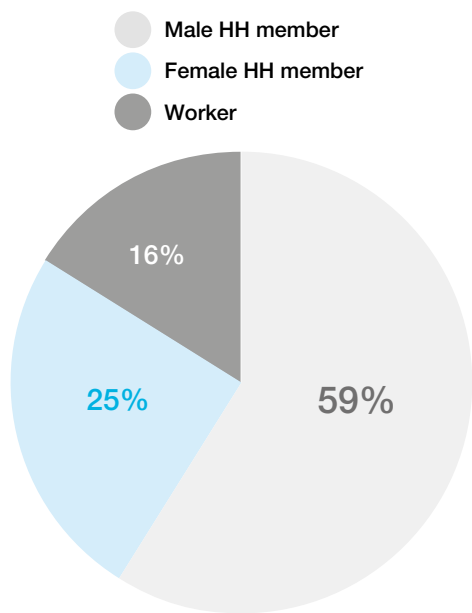
All trainings were carried out by agronomists from within the cooperative and fully financed by ECAMOM. This speaks to the fact that ECAMOM has the willingness to use its financial means and to build up expertise to deliver the trainings, which is important for future strategic decisions.

The trainings on gender equality, workers' rights and occupational health and safety training account for the highest share of women's participation, yet other training topics such as water, waste and soil management also have similar percentages. This shows that women's participation is not only linked to the topics themselves and the low attendance might be due to other factors such as availability.

Similarly, we also asked the farmers in the farmer survey about training participation and satisfaction. The focus was on gaining insights into:

- General attendance of household members (by gender) and workers;
- Satisfaction rate between different training categories;
- Complementary information for specific topics.

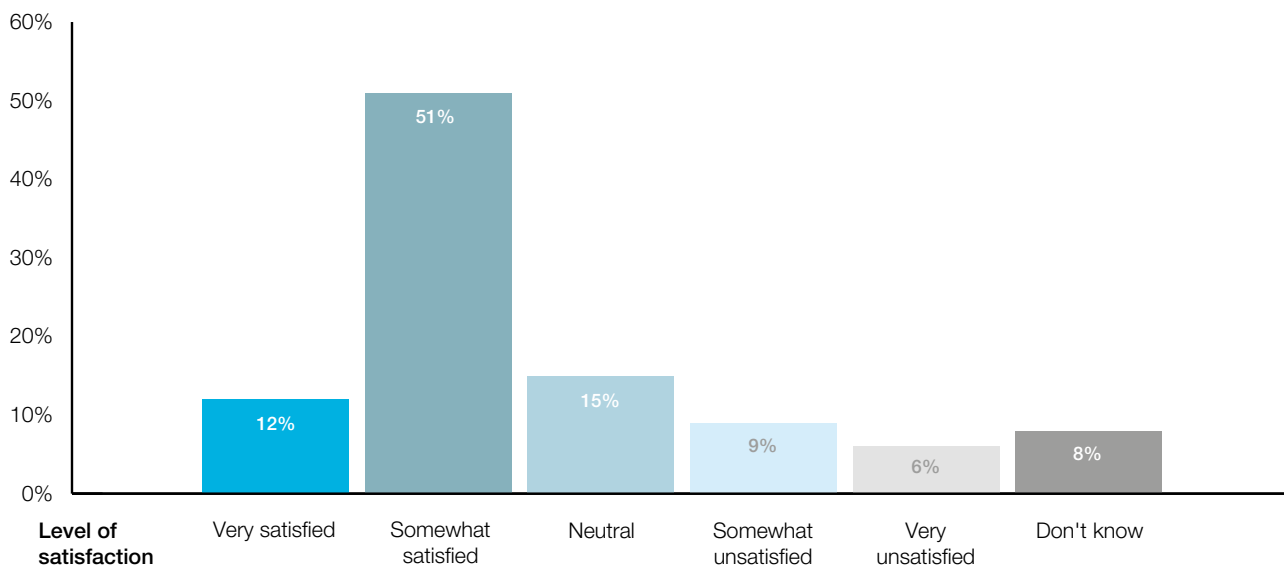
**WHO IN THE HOUSEHOLD JOINED TRAININGS?  
(MULTIPLE ANSWERS PER TRAINING CATEGORY POSSIBLE)**



Starting with general attendance, a relatively high attendance rate can be observed. Across the 15 training categories, in 67% (two-thirds) of the cases at least one person per household joined a training. Also, a higher share of female household members participated in the trainings compared with the cooperative data (25%). This holds especially for the trainings on gender equality and child protection, which also had the highest number of household members joining overall.

The overall satisfaction of the interviewed farmers with these trainings is high, with more than half (51%) rated as “somewhat satisfied” and 12% “very satisfied”. In only 15% of the cases, farmers stated that they were “somewhat unsatisfied” or “very unsatisfied” with the trainings provided.

**OVERALL SATISFACTION LEVEL OF HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS WITH TRAININGS**



Comparing the individual training categories provides a more nuanced picture, both in terms of attendance and satisfaction level. Focusing only on household members (not workers), the highest share of women’s participation was within the following categories:

- Gender equality and women’s empowerment (42%);
- Market support/Trader linkages (41%);
- Human resource management; leadership skills, organizational strengthening (38%).

As with the cooperative survey, women’s attendance was relatively comparable across the different training categories. This underlines ECAMOM’s ambition to include women in different aspects of the cooperative and cocoa production.

In order to compare the satisfaction level across the different training categories, the positive responses (“very satisfied” and “somewhat satisfied”) were summarised to calculate a “satisfaction score”, namely the percentage of positive responses. On average, 68% of responses were positive. The highest rated trainings were on:

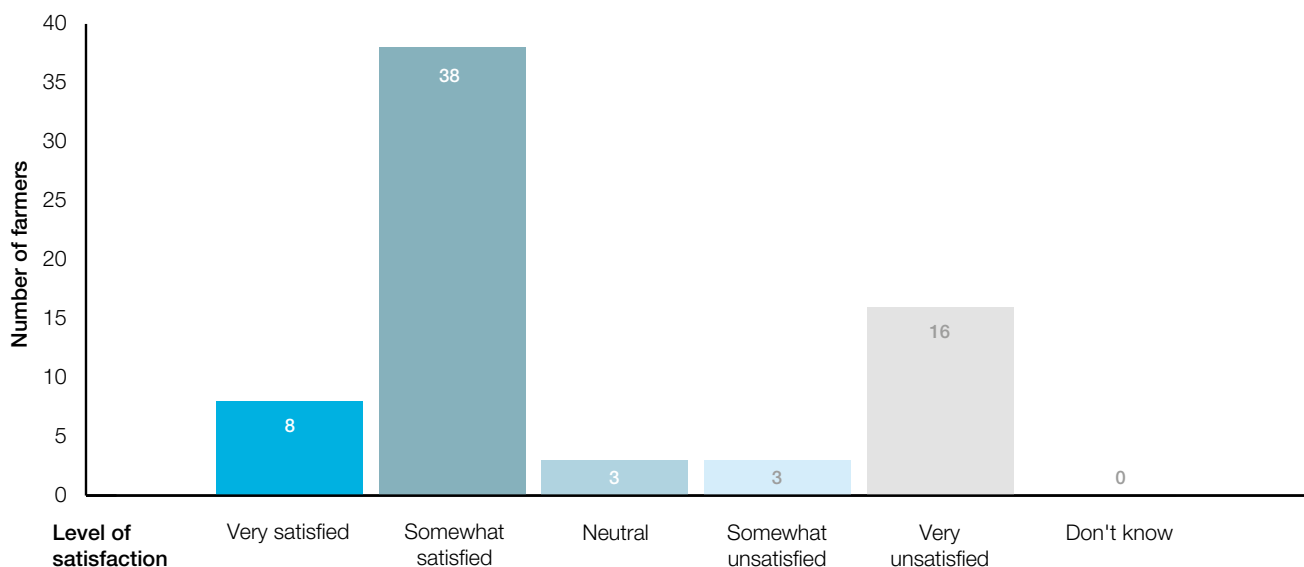
- Occupational health and safety (83% positive)
- Child labour and child protection, YICBMR (80% positive)
- Market support/Trader linkages (77% positive)
- Crop practices to improve general quality and productivity (77% positive)

At the opposite end of the spectrum, reviewing the negative responses, we find:

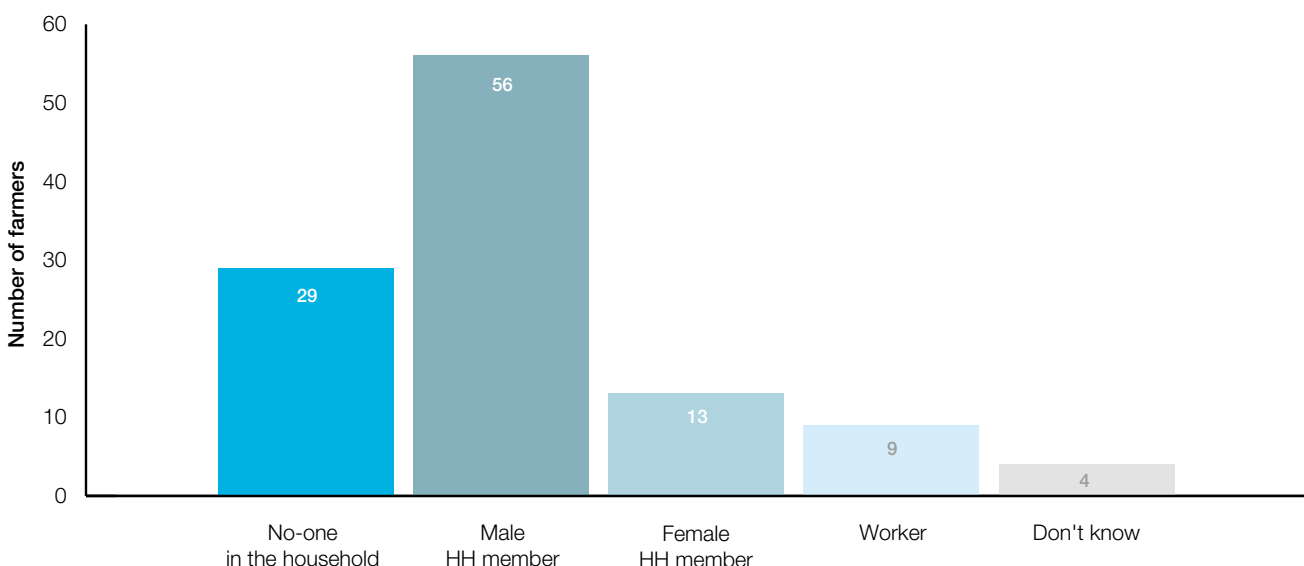
- Water, waste and soil management (28% negative responses);
- Gender equality and women’s empowerment (22% negative responses);
- Biodiversity and wildlife conservation (21% negative responses).

Yet here it is important to mention that there are five further categories with 18-20% negative responses, with the average percentage being 16%. We can draw the conclusion that the cooperative should analyse and improve their training on water, waste and soil management, yet overall the negative responses are relatively low.

### WATER, WASTE AND SOIL MANAGEMENT: SATISFACTION LEVEL



### WATER, WASTE AND SOIL MANAGEMENT: WHO ATTENDED FROM THE HOUSEHOLD?





## 5.2 FAIRTRADE PREMIUM USE AND IMPACT STORIES



**KPI 5:** The use of FT Premium contributes strategically to the development of the cooperative

The KPI is being measured through the following data collection points:

1. Fairtrade premium received (in reference period)
2. Projects financed by Fairtrade premium per premium category and n° of (direct) beneficiaries
3. Knowledge of members about Fairtrade premium projects
4. Plans for further use of Fairtrade premium are transparent and based on needs of farmers & community

This chapter puts the Fairtrade Premium into the spotlight and will provide information on:

1. Overall Premium expenditure of ECAMOM and overview of projects financed in 2019;
2. Responses from the farmer survey on farmers' knowledge about Fairtrade and Premium projects;
3. Impact stories from three selected projects funded by the Fairtrade Premium.

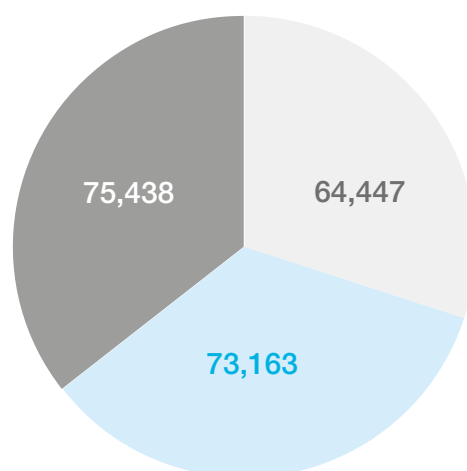
### Overall Premium expenditure of ECAMOM and overview of projects financed in 2019

ECAMOM invested 213,048 EUR in 10 different Premium projects in 2019. Around one third of it (73,163 EUR) was given directly to farmers as Premium payments (services to members), with the other projects falling under the categories "Investment in producer organizations" and "Community services":

The table below lists all Premium projects with their title, the expenditure (in EUR), the major category each belongs to and the number of beneficiaries:

### EXPENDITURE OF PREMIUM PROJECTS PER MAJOR CATEGORY (IN EUR)

- Investment in producer organizations
- Service to member farmers
- Community services



Title of Premium project	Expenditure (in EUR)	Major category	Beneficiaries (estimated)
Premium payment to producers	73,163	Services to member farmers	1,700
School construction (classrooms and office)	53,340	Community services	600
Borehole creation	15,240	Community services	487
Purchase of 250 table-benches	6,858	Community services	500
Deposit to export the product	38,100	Investment in producer organizations	3,642
Health insurance (Staff)	8,740	Investment in producer organizations	96
Purchase of liaison vehicle	7,080	Investment in producer organizations	10
Purchase of electronic scale	6,934	Investment in producer organizations	1,500
Audit invoice	3,021	Investment in producer organizations	3,642
Purchase of office chairs	572	Investment in producer organizations	3

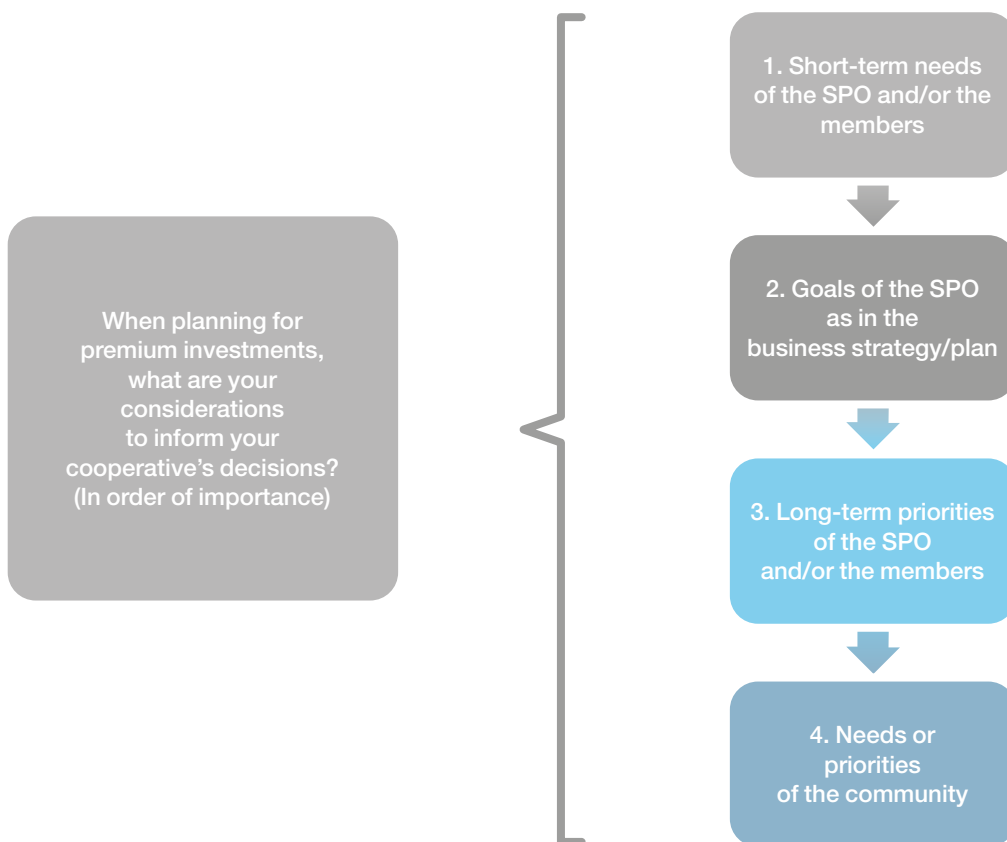
ECAMOM generally distributes part of the Fairtrade Premium directly to farmers. Here, 0.06 EUR/kg is paid to individual producers and a system is in place to trace back every transaction to individual farmers. Farmers are then notified when some of their produce is sold under Fairtrade terms. These direct payments amounted to 73,163 EUR or 34% of the total Premium invested in 2019.

The second biggest Premium project (after the payments to farmers) falls under “Community services” and was the construction of a school. Here, ECAMOM invested 53,340 EUR, and this project is part of the impact stories featured below.

The majority of projects (six) fell under the major category “Investment in producer organizations”. Five of these six projects come under the subcategory “Human resources and administration”, e.g. purchases of office materials, vehicles or health insurance.

The remaining project (“Deposit to export the product”) was used to cover the costs attached to exporting cocoa. This indicates that there is still a need to further build up the basic infrastructure, which should in the long term be directly covered by revenues from (Fairtrade) cocoa sales.

This is supported by the fact that the most important factor for deciding on Premium investments is the short-term needs of the cooperative and its members.

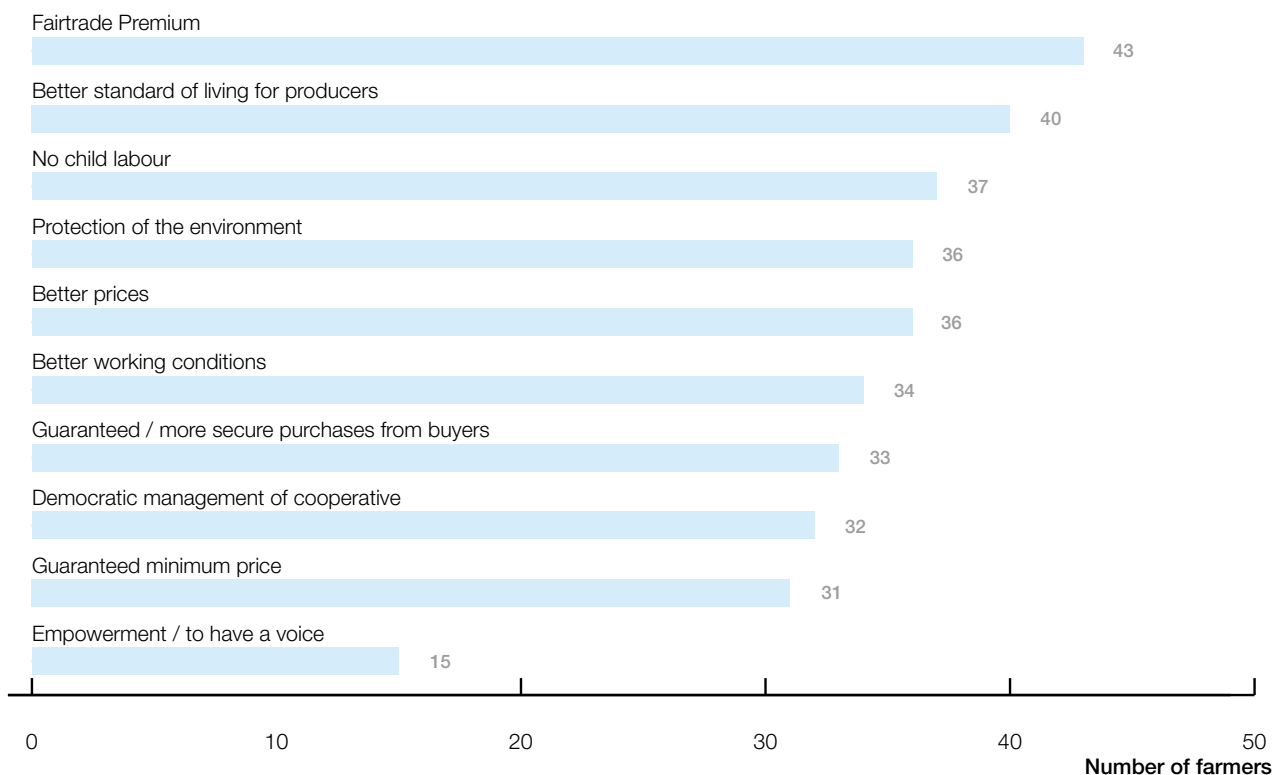


The information provided on the number of beneficiaries per Premium project is arbitrary. For example: the second lowest investment “Audit invoice” (3,021 EUR) has the highest number of beneficiaries (3,642) as all members benefit from it. The construction of a school will benefit 600 people directly, yet promises a significantly higher impact.

**Responses from farmer survey on knowledge of farmers about Fairtrade and Premium projects**

When asked about associations with Fairtrade, the Fairtrade Premium was the most recognised benefit of Fairtrade, cited by nearly 50% of farmers (43 out of 87). This was followed by “Better standard of living for producers” and “No child labour”. The following diagram shows all 10 aspects and how many farmers proactively stated that they associate that aspect with Fairtrade:

## FARMER ASSOCIATIONS WITH FAIRTRADE – NUMBER OF FARMERS STATING SPECIFIC ASPECTS (OUT OF TOTAL)



The low score of “Empowerment / to have a voice” might be due to the fact that this terminology is well known in the Global North, yet not so much in the cultural context of Côte d’Ivoire. Most of the other aspects do actually lead towards the farmers being empowered and having a voice.

Moving forward, it is important to better understand the language farmers know and speak, and also to keep in mind that the illiteracy rate is at around 70%. The latter means that farmers usually recognise Fairtrade by its logo, not the term or word “Fairtrade”.



## Fairtrade Premium – selected projects and their impact

This chapter features three projects financed with the Fairtrade Premium in 2019 or previous years, and how they impacted the farmers and the communities. These three projects are:

1. Water as a source of life. A new well at Felixkro;

2. Construction of a school to bring education closer to the children of the Sokora section;

3. Donation of solar panels to the local health clinic.

### Impact project 1: Water as a source of life. A new well at Felixkro

The borehole is located in Felixkro, a village of a section of ECAMOM named Pascalkro. Before the project, women used to walk 1km to fetch water from the nearby river. This was not only exhausting, but also dangerous during the rainy season due to floods and reduced water quality. The project therefore contributes to the wellbeing of women specifically and of the entire community in general.

#### Key facts about the Premium project:

- 15,245 EUR (10,000,000 XOF) of the available Premium invested into drilling the well and raising awareness among members and the community to keep the site clean.
- Beneficiaries: 120 cooperative members (comprising 18 women and 102 men) and their entire community of approx. 1,500 people.

#### Outcomes and learnings:

- Women have more time to devote to field activities, management of household and education of children.
- Waterborne diseases are not contracted by members and their communities.
- Inspiring peers and setting best practice examples.



Picture: Community members using the well in Felixkro, a project financed with the Fairtrade Premium

### Impact project 2: Construction of a school to bring education closer to the children of the Sokora section

Sokora is about 8km from Méagui, the nearest town, and is surrounded by 20 smaller villages. Previously, the children living in Sokora and its nearby villages left early in the morning to travel about 3km to the nearest school in Bathelémykro, which was especially risky during the rainy season. As well as being dangerous, the long way reduced the time children had to learn in daylight or play after school.

This is what led the cooperative to the construction of the new school.

#### Key facts about the Premium project:

- 41,161 EUR (27,000,000 XOF) invested in the construction of three classrooms, one canteen for students, one director's office and accommodation for six teachers.
- Beneficiaries: The school has 290 students (138 girls and 152 boys) and, in addition, the project supports their parents and the entire community of approx. 1,000 people.

### Outcomes and learnings:

- The success rate at the entrance to the sixth grade rose from 47% to 100%, and the class attendance rate increased from 67% to 100%.
- The proximity of the school allows students to have more time to study for their lessons.
- The number of girls in school has increased.
- The closer the school is, the more satisfactory the school results are, with fewer worried parents.



### Impact project 3: Donation of solar panels to the local health clinic

The local health clinic is at the entrance of Kragui, a village located 15km away from Méagui. The village is not electrified during the night, which means that healthcare was difficult, if not impossible. In order to provide electricity, ECAMOM offered four solar panels and two batteries with the necessary supplies.

#### Key facts about the Premium project:

- 762 EUR (500,000 XOF) invested in solar panels and supplies.
- Beneficiaries: 440 cooperative members (51 women and 389 men) and their community (approx. 7,000 people).

### Outcomes and learnings:

- The local health clinic now has the conditions for storing vaccines and certain medicines. There are fewer deaths and necessary medical evacuations to the next hospital. Serious cases requiring major surgery remain exceptions.
- A health centre that is functional at all times saves lives and provides an additional sense of safety within the community.

## 5.3 DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES WITHIN THE COOPERATIVE



**KPI 6:** Democratic structures are strengthened within the cooperative.

The KPI is being measured through the following data collection points:

1. Specific measures taken by cooperative to inform members on planning and decision-making processes (e.g. around Fairtrade premium)
2. Participation of members at events for decision-making and planning (per type of event and number of farmers per age and gender).
3. Knowledge of members about decision process for premium use and how to influence it

This section of the report is focused on the participation of members in the cooperative's decision-making and the farmers' perception of the cooperative management.

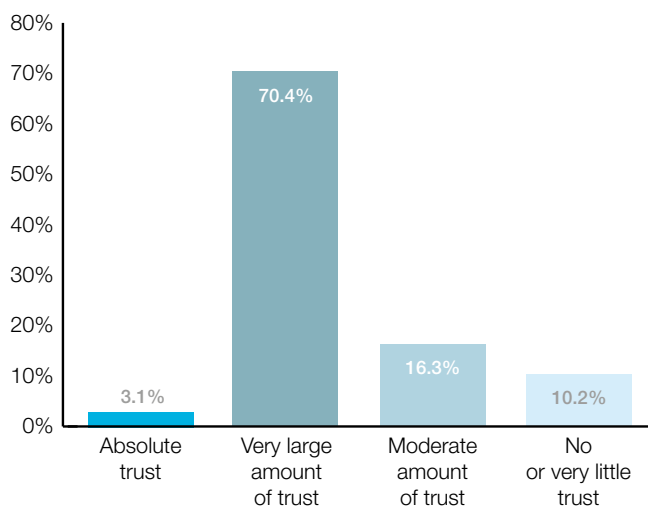
Starting with the General Assembly (GA), ECAMOM held consultation meetings with selected representatives and members, both to share information prior to the assembly and to involve members strategically in the decision-making process. In addition, ECAMOM organised consultation meetings with all its members, identical to the General Assembly in terms of topics and decisions. Here, the disclosure of information is translated into the local language, and during the meetings there is a live translation to allow illiterate members to participate. Delegates are then designated to represent the members at the General Assembly.

If we look at the overall attendance at the General Assembly, Covid-19 restrictions limited assembly to 50 participants, out of which nine were women (18%) and 94% of participants were between 25 and 54 years old. This indicates a serious effort by ECAMOM to include women further in decision-making processes.

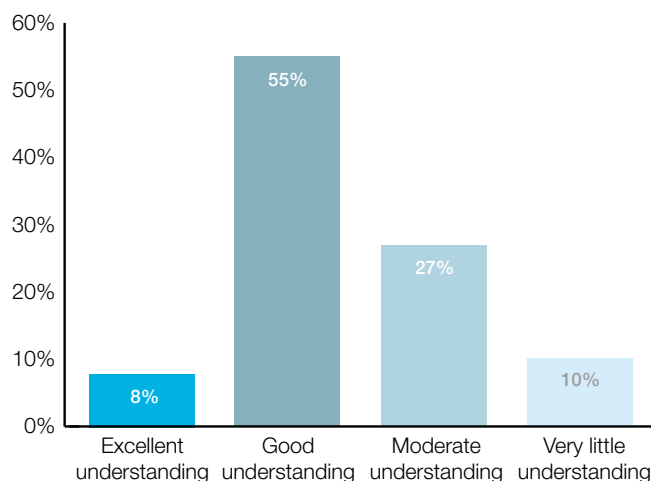
The farmer survey provides additional insights into farmer participation and inclusion in decision-making. Overall, farmers trust in ECAMOM's management: 90% of farmers interviewed state they have at least a moderate amount of trust, and 73% even have a very large or absolute amount of trust.

Similar numbers appear when asked if farmers think that the management knows their priorities, with the majority of farmers stating a good (55%) or excellent (8%) level of understanding.

### TRUST LEVEL OF INTERVIEWED FARMERS TOWARDS ECAMOM

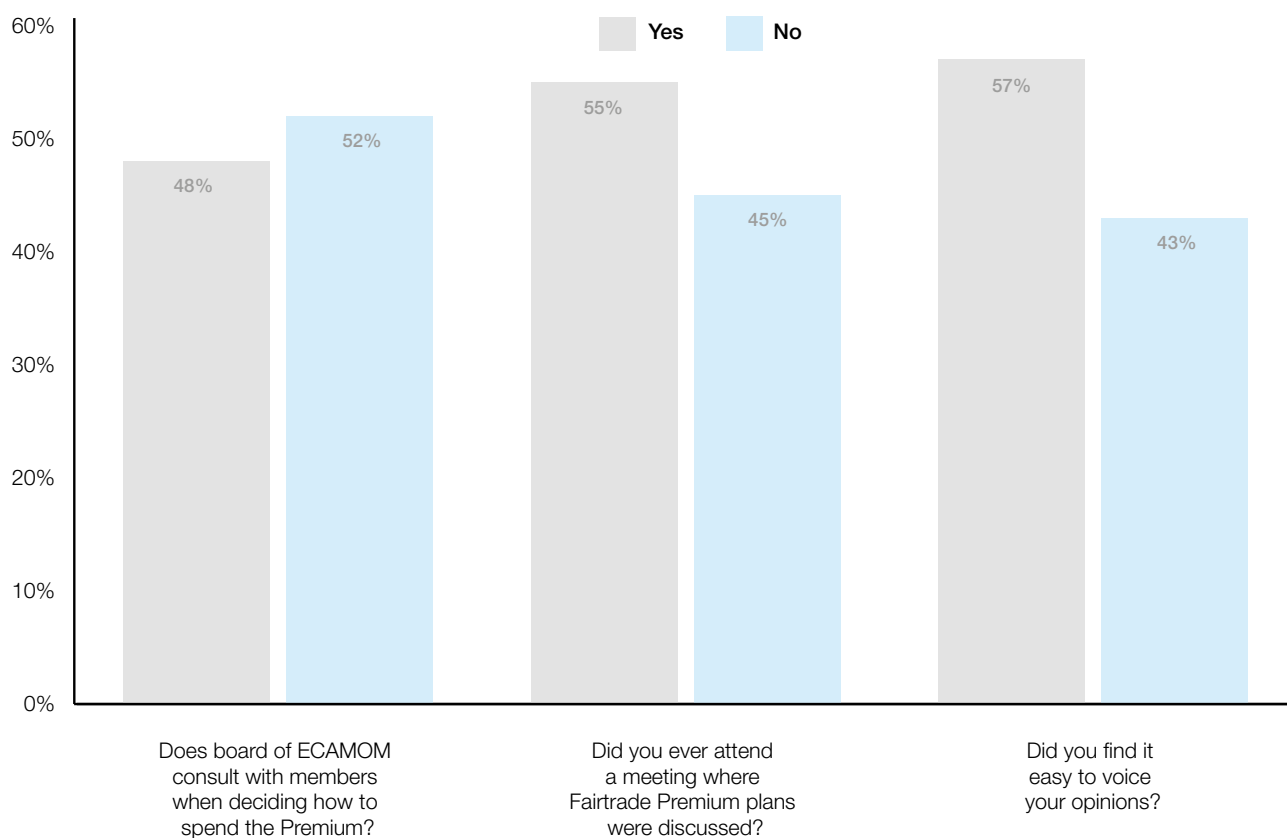


### DO YOU THINK THAT THE MANAGEMENT OF YOUR PRODUCER ORGANIZATION UNDERSTANDS WHAT YOUR PRIORITIES ARE?



The level of participation in decision-making shows a diverse picture. The majority of farmers (57%) finds it easy to voice opinions and 55% already attended a General Assembly. Yet fewer farmers (48%) state that the management consults with them on how to spend the Fairtrade Premium.

### PARTICIPATION OF INTERVIEWED FARMERS IN DECISION-MAKING (SPECIFIC TO FAIRTRADE PREMIUM)



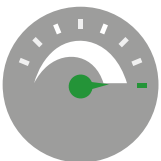


## 6. SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The two main topics and Key Performance Indicators addressed in this chapter are:



- **KPI 7:** Protection of children is assured and strengthened at cooperative and member level



- **KPI 8:** Effective measures are taken to foster sustainable land use and reduce deforestation

These topics differ significantly in content. For these reasons the key facts and recommendations will be presented separately. In addition, it is important to acknowledge that each KPI is embedded in a broader context, namely

- Social inclusion and justice in the case of child protection
- Environmental awareness and climate change adaptation in the case of sustainable land use and deforestation

### 6.1 CHILD PROTECTION AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT



**KPI 7:** Protection of children is assured and strengthened at cooperative and member level

The KPI is being measured through the following data collection points:

1. Specific activities addressing child protection and support; and number of children reached
2. Engagement of children in farming activities
3. General awareness of members about protection of children



Social inclusion is a process by which efforts are made to ensure equal opportunities for all, and pays specific attention to empowering marginalised and disadvantaged groups in society. In the case of cocoa-farming communities, this is applicable for children and youth, women, people with a disability and, if applicable, indigenous people (amongst others).

This chapter's KPI 7 specifically refers to child protection. Women's empowerment will be presented alongside it with the intention of consolidating the findings of different parts of this report. Moving forward, a project could be considered to expand the scope and, jointly with ECAMOM, explore which other groups might suffer from social exclusion, e.g. in terms of community participation and decision-making.

### KEY FACTS AND FIGURES:

- ECAMOM committed to concrete action steps to foster women's empowerment, e.g. the Women's School of Leadership with Fairtrade Africa and a dedicated loan scheme to enable income diversification for women.
- ECAMOM has a system for child protection in place based on the Standard of the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI). All cases of child labour were addressed and resolved.

- Awareness-raising activities were carried out in the community. Yet results from the farmer survey show that most farmers probably don't know the details of the system that is in place or how to respond if they observe a case of child labour.

### OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- This report does not include ICI data, which is sensitive in nature. Moving forward, however, it might be worthwhile to discuss with ECAMOM to what extent ICI data could be integrated systematically into this report.
- Fairtrade Africa decided to provide additional producer support to ECAMOM as part of the West Africa Cocoa Programme (WACP) as of 2021. This can be seen as a significant opportunity to further address the topics of women's empowerment and child protection, e.g. through training delivery and strengthening the internal child protection system.

### Focus on women's empowerment

The previous chapter on capacity building and democracy mentioned aspects of women's inclusion and empowerment, e.g. training participation, positions held within the cooperative's management, and dedicated projects carried out via the Fairtrade Premium to support income diversification of women.

Having noticed the low participation of women in trainings, Fairtrade Africa set up a Women's Leadership School within the cooperative in 2020. A first round of a 12-month programme will start with six women, empowering them to develop and implement income-generating activities within their community. The programme will then be extended further in the future.

Additionally, ECAMOM's management recognises the challenge and is motivated to address it. From Chapter 4 we know that only 3% of management staff are women and that aspects such as childcare responsibilities make it more difficult for women to participate in trainings and decision-making. Here, the focus on providing educational opportunities comes into play. From the Premium project in Sokora, we know that building a school

enabled a significant increase in school attendance, which in turn benefits the main caregivers.

Another important step in the direction of gender equality is that the cooperative offered different incentives and services to encourage women's participation, e.g. dedicated loan schemes as well as the Women's Leadership School in collaboration with Fairtrade Africa. This shows a general openness by the cooperative to address the topic of gender equality. Additionally, ECAMOM:

- arranged gender training/sensitisation for cooperative representatives, management and/or staff, as well as for cooperative members and relatives (women and/or men);
- provided vocational training/support for women to set up/strengthen income generation activities;
- will further scale up the Women's Leadership School after the first round with Fairtrade Africa.

**Focus on child labour**

ECAMOM applies the system of the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI). ICI is a Swiss-based, non-profit foundation that works to ensure a better future for children in cocoa-growing communities. Fairtrade International joined ICI as a non-profit contributing partner in 2019, and both organizations have already started working together to enhance the effectiveness of their respective efforts towards child labour reduction. ICI and Fairtrade will also seek to coordinate trainings and other programmes to deepen their collective impact in cocoa communities.

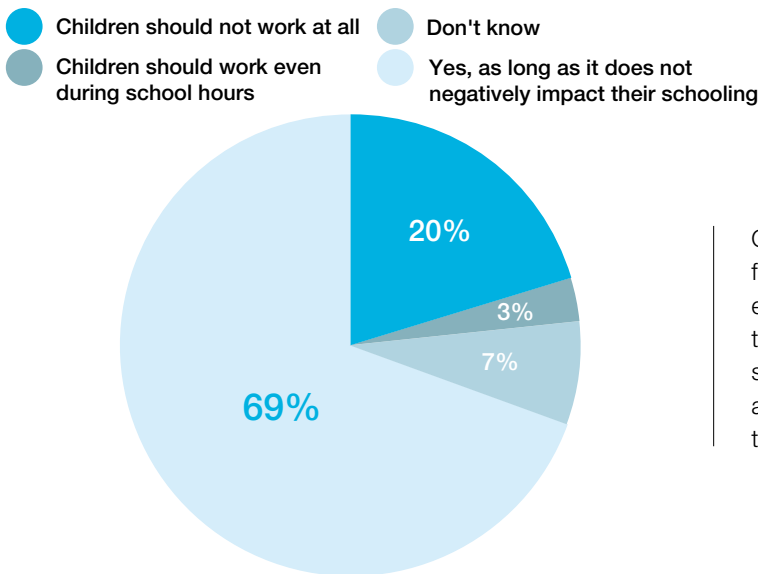
Working with the ICI Standard implies the development of a Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation System (CLMRS). A specific action conducted by ECAMOM is the collection of data and information at household level to detect cases of child labour within the cocoa farming community.

When a case of child labour is detected, ECAMOM proceeds with sensitisation and puts remedial actions in place. All cases of child labour were brought to the cooperative, addressed and resolved successfully. All of them were light cases, such as carrying heavy loads or use of dragging tools. This does not mean, of course, that there are no undetected issues of child labour. Yet it indicates that ECAMOM takes the issue seriously and follows up whenever there is a case reported.

The cooperative has furthermore carried out local awareness-raising activities. This involved collecting information and raising awareness among 1,418 member households. To do so, the cooperative used 32 picture boxes and awareness posters.

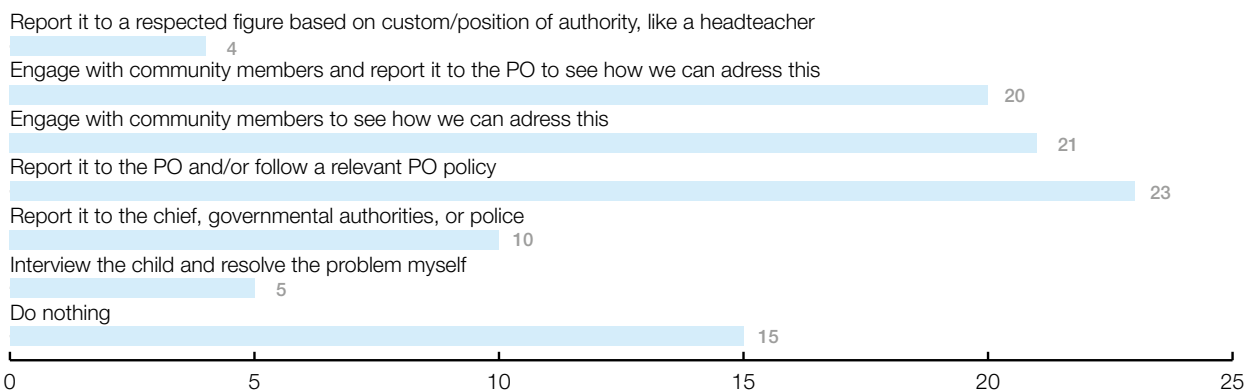
Based on the diverging responses of how farmers would approach a situation of child labour, it is unclear to what extent that remediation system and awareness translate into action by farmers and community members themselves. More specifically, farmers were asked the following question: "If children go to school, should they help on the family farm after school, on weekends and during holidays, as long as the work is not exploitative or dangerous?"

**RESPONSES TO CHILD WORK AND SCHOOLING (98 RESPONSES)**



Overall, there seems to be a decent level of awareness among farmers in terms of child protection. The big majority states that either children should not work at all (20%) or only in such a way that it does not impact schooling (69%). Similarly, most farmers state that they would report a case of child labor they observe, although the communication channels and pathways differ between farmers.

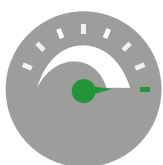
**WHAT WILL YOU DO IF YOU IDENTIFY A CASE OF CHILD LABOUR (98 RESPONSES IN TOTAL)**



This diverging opinion on how to follow up such a case might point to a lack of clarity or clear protocol to follow. These aspects, taken together, argue the need for an opportunity to invest further in awareness raising and in sharing more information about the child labour remediation system in place.

It is important to keep in mind that Fairtrade certification itself does not require cooperatives to have a system for child protection at the moment. Due to the importance of the topic, Fairtrade is currently revising its Standard, alongside building strategic partnerships (e.g. with the ICI) and setting up its own programmes, such as the Women's School of Leadership. For further information on how Fairtrade and FLOCERT address the topic of child labour, visit Fairtrade's website under Child labour (fairtrade.net) and listen to a podcast with Bronwyn Page-Shipp, FLOCERT Regional Manager for Africa and the Middle East, at: <https://www.flocert.net/podcast-with-bronwyn-page-shipp/>.

## 6.2 SUSTAINABLE LAND USE



**KPI 8:** Effective measures are taken to foster sustainable land use and reduce deforestation

The KPI is being measured through the following data collection points:

1. Awareness of deforestation among cooperative management and farmers (e.g. impact it can have on long-term profitability and quality of cocoa production, protected areas and land use / misuse)
2. Specific activities and measures taken by cooperative to track deforestation & sustainable land use
3. GPS mapping of farms

Climate change has directly affected ECAMOM in the last production cycle (e.g. lack of rainfall), and climate change adaptation is high on the cooperative's internal agenda. This year's

report focuses on deforestation and sustainable land use and therefore provides a first baseline for further addressing the topic of climate change adaptation.

### KEY FACTS AND FIGURES:

- ECAMOM is located in proximity to two national parks with protected areas (approx. 30km away from the main city).
- GPS mapping of farms is very advanced and ECAMOM confirmed that all 3,930 plots of 3,257 farms are mapped.
- ECAMOM's management is aware of the topic of deforestation and land conversion, yet thinks that this will mainly impact the community, not cocoa production.
- Farmers' awareness of the topic (according to survey results) seems to be relatively low, with the majority of farmers (77 out of 98) stating that they are not at all affected by deforestation and land conversion.

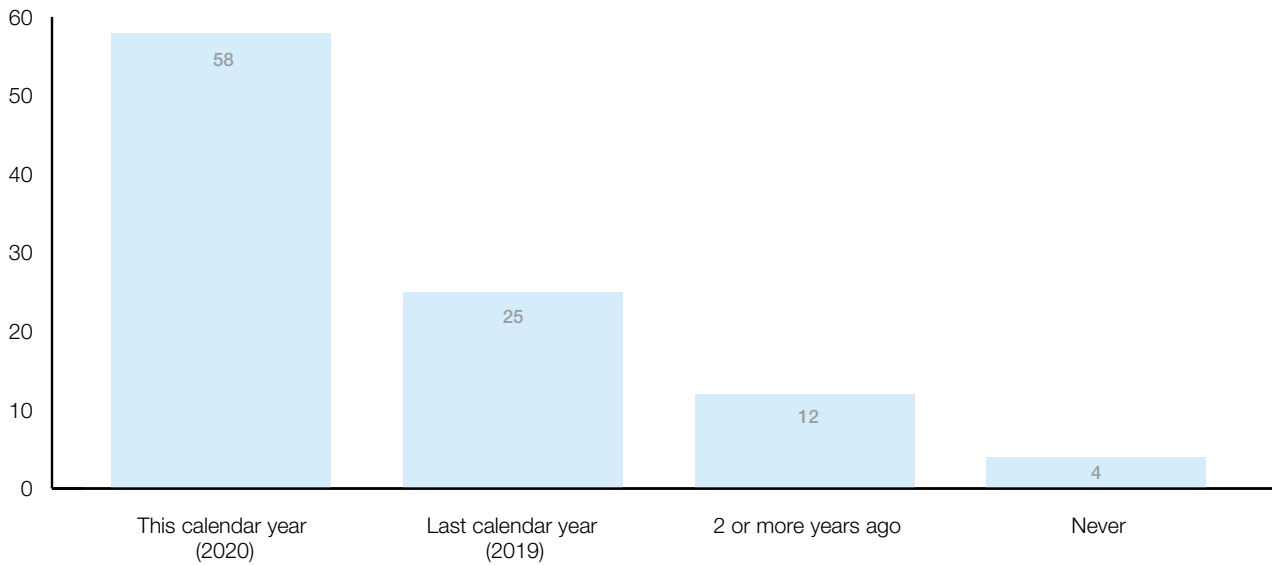
### OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- It's hard to tell from the data how big the risk of deforestation actually is for ECAMOM and its farmers. A detailed analysis, e.g. with satellite images, would go beyond the scope of this project, but could still be explored as an additional pilot project.
- Agronomists could include awareness-raising activities in their trainings and service provision, e.g. when training farmers on farm renovation.

What we can observe is that general awareness, capacities and infrastructure are all in place to address the topic of sustainable land use. This might be due to the geographical location of the cooperative. ECAMOM is based in the city of Méagui. Satellite images indicate that protected areas surround ECAMOM, namely the “Forêt classée de la Niégré” to the east and the “Parc National de Tai” to the west, both of which are approximately 30km away from the main city.

GPS mapping of farms, for example, is very advanced, as confirmed by both the cooperative data and the information received in the farmer survey. ECAMOM confirmed that all 3,930 plots of 3,257 farms are mapped. And among the interviewed farmers, almost all farms and plots were mapped recently (84% of farms in 2019-2020, with the big majority in 2020). Four farmers stated that their farms were never mapped. This might be due to a misinterpretation of the question or the absence of the farmers, while their fields were being mapped by the agronomists.

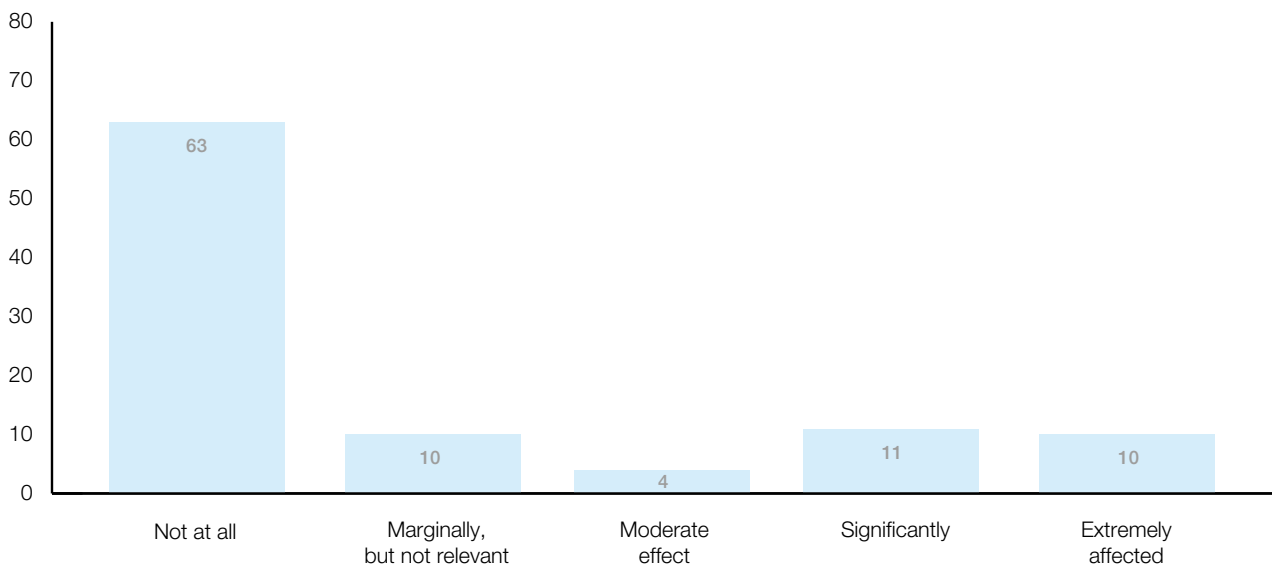
### WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME THAT YOUR FARM WAS MAPPED WITH GPS COORDINATES? (99 RESPONSES)



Looking at deforestation and land conversion shows a mixed picture. ECAMOM states that they will be extremely affected by deforestation and land conversion. Yet they also state that this effect will mainly be at community level and not so much affect cocoa production, quality and profitability. Another challenge might be that ECAMOM does not have data on protected areas and forest zones.

Among farmers, the big majority state that they will not be affected at all by deforestation and land conversion (64%) and only 10% state that they will be extremely affected.

### TO WHICH EXTENT ARE YOU AFFECTED BY DEFORESTATION AND LAND CONVERSION? (98 RESPONSES)



This might also be due to the fact that the big majority of farmers (79%) state that their farm or one of their plots does not border a protected area. Yet 11 of the 98 responses (11%) state “Don’t know”, which means that there is room for creating further awareness among farmers on that topic.

Measures carried out by ECAMOM to address deforestation and to foster sustainable land use are:

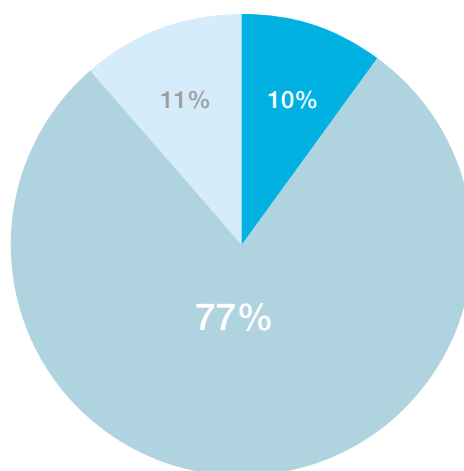
- Reforestation of plots (2,635 shade trees planted);
- Distribution of food crop seeds to foster food security;
- Provision of school loans to reduce pressure on farmers to earn money for schooling;
- Establishing support groups for maintenance of plantations;
- Improved fireplace distribution to use less firewood.

Most of these activities are part of ECAMOM’s development plan, highlighting their strategic importance. Agronomists were responsible for implementing three of the five measures, which also shows that there is expertise available and that ECAMOM is willing to invest in it. Further activities planned by ECAMOM are to:

- Strengthen the mutual aid workforce;
- Subsidise improved stoves to make them accessible to the entire community;
- Compost plants to improve soil quality and avoid the search for new productive land;

### DOES YOUR FARM (OR ONE OF THE PLOTS OF YOUR FARM) NEIGHBOUR WITH A PROTECTED AREA? (98 RESPONSES)

● Yes ● No ● Don’t know



- Strengthen the practice of agroforestry;
- Raise producers’ awareness of deforestation and its consequences.

Sustainable land use specifically and climate change adaptation in general will play a central role in ECAMOM’s activities in the years to come. From the previous chapter on economic empowerment, we also know that ECAMOM struggles to access new cocoa seedlings for farm renovation. For these reasons, it will be relevant to further focus on this topic as part of this project leverage it via the agronomists.

# 7. INFOGRAPHICS

**20% OF TOTAL ECAMOM SALES WERE FAIRTRADE**

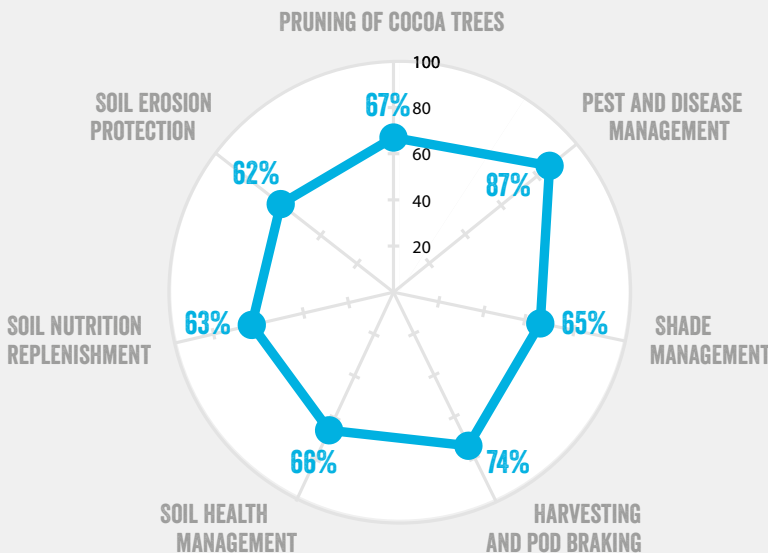
## FAIRTRADE PREMIUM EXPENDITURE

**FAIRTRADE PREMIUM INVESTMENT CATEGORIES**  
**TOTAL AMOUNT: 213,048 EUR**

**30.25% INVESTMENT IN PRODUCER ORGANIZATIONS**  
**34.34% SERVICE TO MEMBER FARMERS**  
**35.41% COMMUNITY SERVICES**



## AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES APPLIED BY MEMBERS (%)



**1,547 MT**   
**FAIRTRADE COCOA SALES**

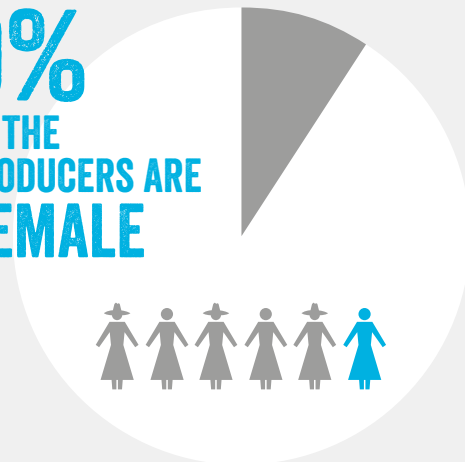
**7,706 MT**  
**OF COCOA**  
**ELIGIBLE TO EXPORT AS FAIRTRADE**



**11 TRAININGS**  
CONDUCTED WITH A TOTAL OF  
**2,086** PARTICIPANTS.  
**7% OF THESE WERE WOMEN**



**9%**  
OF THE  
PRODUCERS ARE  
**FEMALE**



**FARMERS HAVE**  
**ON AVERAGE**  
**850**  
COCOA TREES  
PER HECTARE



**3%** OF MANAGERIAL  
POSITIONS  
HELD BY **WOMEN**



**GPS MAPPING**  
OF FARMS IS  
VERY ADVANCED:  
ALL 3,930 PLOTS  
OF 3,257 FARMS  
ARE MAPPED





## 8. SUMMARY AND LOOKING AHEAD

The facts and figures of the previous chapters present both a realistic and encouraging situation. The cooperative and its farmers face a number of different challenges at production level or economic insecurities due to a lack of long-term trading relationships. On top of that, the year 2020 has been challenging with the Covid-19 pandemic and elections.

Yet we could also identify many promising improvements. The cooperative has strategic plans for Premium investments that will benefit both farmers and the community, the management is able to reach all farmers to encourage participation and provide support through agronomists, and topics such as women's empowerment and child protection are taken seriously.

The overview below lists a number of opportunities we see to further strengthen ECAMOM, its farmers and the community. The icons to the left of each recommendation indicate to whom it is addressed.



### Economic empowerment – focus on Fairtrade sourcing

- Increasing Fairtrade sales will not only increase the revenue of the cooperative, but also have a direct positive impact on farmers and their (household) income due to the higher prices. Additionally, ECAMOM has a system in place to trace back each single sales transaction and notify the farmers. This provides an additional link between Fairtrade sales and farmer income, which could be used by ALDI to formulate claims about the impact of Fairtrade cocoa sourcing on farmer income.
- The transition towards organic production is just beginning. It is important to keep in mind that such a transition usually takes several years. Yet at the same time, it provides substantial opportunities for ECAMOM and its farmers in terms of environmental sustainability and economic profitability. Here, ECAMOM is currently looking for a buyer who will purchase 80 MT of organic cocoa as of 2023.





### **Economic empowerment – focus on sustainable and improved cocoa production**

- ECAMOM understands the importance of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and providing related support (trainings and materials). Further foundational work and support regarding GAP implementation seems to be crucial for farmers, including awareness raising, trainings and provision of materials. Here, linking training directly with the provision of material (e.g. fertilisers) might yield the most benefit for farmers.
- Access to seedlings and support in farm renovation are crucial to address the challenge of ageing cocoa trees. Due to the restrictions of the national cocoa board (CCC), seedlings cannot be purchased. What is possible, however, is to train farmers to conduct farm renovation measures themselves, e.g. by learning how to renew trees and grow their own seedlings. ECAMOM's agronomists can play a central role in this process.
- ECAMOM is already making substantial investments into processing facilities and further improving the quality of cocoa, yet the cooperative faces challenges such as access to important construction material.



### **Social and environmental justice – focus on child protection and women's empowerment**

- ECAMOM is starting to put more emphasis on gender equality. The figures show that there is a good reason for this (e.g. the still low participation by women in cooperative management) and there is also probably a long way to go as these changes are embedded in a social context. There will be an opportunity for ECAMOM to further strengthen women's participation in trainings, e.g. by making these trainings more accessible to women, and by creating concrete opportunities for women (management positions, access to credits for income diversification, strengthening the collaboration with Fairtrade Africa, etc.).
- Strengthen awareness-raising activities for child protection. The information and data provided show that there are both willingness and a system in place for child protection, yet the implementation on the ground can be further strengthened. One idea could be to add the topic of child protection to the agenda in consultation meetings held within sections of the community. Further actions could entail additional trainings provided by ECAMOM itself or Fairtrade Africa.



### **Capacity building and democracy**

- Despite the low literacy rate among farmers and the wide geographical spread of the community, ECAMOM manages to involve the community in the internal decision-making process. Next steps could be to focus on involving more farmers in training activities and further build the capacities around sustainable farming practices.
- The Fairtrade Premium can play a central role in fostering participation and decision-making. ECAMOM still covers parts of its human resource expenses with Fairtrade Premium money. With additional Fairtrade sales, these costs might be covered directly through sales revenues, freeing up more Premium money for other necessary investments.
- In terms of Premium projects, the cooperative already provides highly relevant services to the community. Ideally, the reason for taking decisions changes from the short-term to long-term needs of the community. Here, higher Fairtrade sales and Premium would be crucial to enable ECAMOM to plan and invest strategically.



### **Social and environmental justice – focus on sustainable land use**

- Mapping of farms is very advanced, yet awareness among farmers is low in terms of sustainable land use and the risks of deforestation. This is particularly true for the expected long-term implications of deforestation on cocoa production itself. Any awareness-raising activity (e.g. training on the risk of deforestation) could be linked to the aspect of farm renovation (see above) and the farm visits carried out by agronomists.
- We have learned that the effects of climate change can already be felt by the farmers. This means that any strategic decisions and actions should be taken within the broader perspective of climate change adaptation.



In 2021 ECAMOM will become part of Fairtrade's West Africa Cocoa Programme (WACP). This means further producer support by Fairtrade Africa and, most likely, additional data collection at cooperative and household level. This creates the opportunity to include calculations on farmers' household income, which in turn will make the contribution of ALDI's Fairtrade cocoa sourcing more visible.

Additionally, we gained further insights about ECAMOM, including plans, challenges and opportunities. This will enable us to improve the existing monitoring framework and make it more relevant. Specific aspects to look into could be to:

- Consider formulating concrete pathways of change which link interventions, outputs and outcomes more intentionally.
- Include more specific indicators on cocoa quality sold and the processing steps ECAMOM conducts. This might enable us to link investments to the prices received. Here, a qualitative case study (impact story) on investment in the producer organization could be considered for inclusion in next year's report.
- Be aware of the illiteracy rate when conducting a farmer survey: show participants the Fairtrade logo when asking about Premium projects or what Fairtrade stands for.
- Link the different parts of the monitoring framework (e.g. areas and KPIs) to the SDGs more explicitly.

All these projects would require additional investments and close alignment with Fairtrade Africa's activities within the scope of the West Africa Cocoa Programme (WACP). For this reason, the suggestion is to focus on one aspect at a time and develop the implementation strategy jointly.

- Another opportunity is for ALDI to invest into ECAMOM beyond the sourcing of cocoa. The recommendations below list some first ideas for such additional investments. It is crucial, however, to discuss these with all the project's stakeholders:
- Financial support for the Women's School of Leadership.
- Pilot project on climate change adaptation: As stated in the chapter on sustainable land use, the project partners could consider investing in a project to further understand the risks of deforestation and climate change for the cooperative and its farmers, and to then develop concrete countermeasures.
- Living income project: The intention of such a project could be to close the gap between the farming households' current financial situation and the living wage benchmark according to Fairtrade's methodology. We have seen that ECAMOM has a system in place to track individual transactions, and the additional support provided through the West Africa Cocoa Programme (WACP) includes additional data collection at household level. The project partners could, therefore, develop a strategy and project to increase household income mid- and long-term.
- Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) pilot project: Fairtrade is currently developing a methodology to track and report on HRDD, which includes aspects of child protection.

Doing so promises to be a step forward, both in further developing the partnerships which underlie this report, and in achieving the joint vision of responsible cocoa farming and trade on a level playing field.



## 9. GLOSSARY

- CCC** = Conseil Café Cacao (the regulatory body of the coffee-cocoa sector in Côte d'Ivoire)
- ECAMOM** = Cooperative society of modern eco-farmers of Méagui
- FMP** = Fairtrade Minimum Price
- GA** = General Assembly
- GAP** = Good Agricultural Practices
- ICI** = International Cocoa Initiative
- KPI** = Performance Indicator
- SPO** = Small Producer Organisation
- WACP** = West Africa Cocoa Program
- YICBMR** = Youth Inclusive Community Based Monitoring and Remediation

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April 2021

