

Fact Sheet – Bolivia Coca Cultivation Monitoring Report, 2020

Variables	Source	2019	2020	% Change 2019-2020
Area under coca bush cultivation¹				
Area under coca cultivation in Bolivia (rounded to hundred)	UNODC	25,500 ha	29,400 ha	+15%
Area under coca cultivation in the region of the Yungas of La Paz	UNODC	16,296 ha	18,302 ha	+12%
Area under coca cultivation in the region of Tropics of Cochabamba ²	UNODC	8,769 ha	10,606 ha	+21%
Area under coca cultivation in the region of the North of La Paz	UNODC	468 ha	510 ha	+9%
Permitted coca production area in Authorized Zones ³	Plurinational State of Bolivia (Law 906)	22,000 ha	22,000 ha	-
Potential production of sun-dried coca leaf⁴				
Yungas of La Paz	UNODC	18,500 – 21,300 mt	20,800 – 23,900 mt	12%
Tropics of Cochabamba	UNODC	17,900 – 24,200 mt	21,700 – 29,300 mt	21%
North of La Paz	UNODC	480 – 580 mt	530 – 640 mt	10%
Total production of sun-dried coca leaf in Bolivia	UNODC	37,000 – 46,100 mt	43,000 – 53,800 mt	17%
Trading, prices and seizures of coca leaf and controlled substances				
Coca leaf traded in authorized markets in Bolivia	Plurinational State of Bolivia (DIGCOIN)	23,877 mt	19,274 mt	-19%
National nominal weighted average price of coca leaf in authorized markets ⁵	Plurinational State of Bolivia (DIGCOIN)	12.5 USD/kg	9.7 USD/kg	-22%
Estimated value of coca leaf in Bolivia ⁶	Plurinational State of Bolivia (DIGCOIN) – UNODC	USD 432 -534 million	USD 365 – 449 million	-16%
Value of coca leaf production in percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ⁷	INE - UNODC	1.1 – 1.3%	–	–
Value of coca leaf production in percent of the value of the agricultural sector ⁸	INE - UNODC	9 – 11%	–	–
Coca leaf seizures	Plurinational State of Bolivia (DG-FELCN)	322 mt	309 mt	-4%
Cocaine base seizures	Plurinational State of Bolivia (DG-FELCN)	9,153 kg	9,792 kg	7%
Cocaine hydrochloride seizures	Plurinational State of Bolivia (DG-FELCN)	6,403 kg	5,867 kg	-8%
Coca cultivation rationalization/eradication in Bolivia	Plurinational State of Bolivia (DIGPROCOCA-CEO)	9,205 ha	2,177 ha	-76%

¹ The area affected by coca cultivation at the end of 2020 was determined based on the interpretation of very high resolution satellite images.

² This includes the coca-producing zones of Ichilo province in the department of Santa Cruz and of Moxos province in the department of Beni.

³ Since 2017, the area under coca cultivation in Authorized Zones has been regulated by the General Coca Law, Law 906, promulgated in March 2017 (limited to 22,000 ha).

⁴ The potential production of sun-dried coca leaf is in a range with a lower and an upper limit, since these estimates are based on different previous studies. The sum of the regional figures to calculate the result at the national level was made with non-rounded numbers, but the figures in this fact sheet are rounded to hundred. This year, the percentage change in potential production was the same for the lower and upper limits.

⁵ The national nominal weighted average price of coca leaf, based on estimates from the two authorized markets, reported by DIGCOIN, is represented in US dollars (USD). The official exchange rate of the Central Bank of Bolivia was used: 6.96 Bs., as of 12/31/2020.

⁶ The figures were calculated assuming the trading of the estimated potential production of coca leaf (lower and upper limits) using the nominal prices from the authorized coca leaf markets in Bolivia. This year, the percentage change in value of coca leaf was the same for the lower and upper limits.

⁷ The GDP information for 2020 has not yet been published on the INE website.

⁸ The information on the value of the agricultural sector for 2020 has not yet been published on the INE website.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2020 Coca Crop Monitoring Report is the 18th report published by UNODC in coordination with the Plurinational State of Bolivia. This document provides quantitative information on the extent of coca cultivation and potential coca leaf production in the Plurinational State of Bolivia. This report also presents complementary information from state institutions about coca leaf prices, coca leaf trade, rationalization/eradication, and other related topics.

The monitoring results for 2020 show a 15% increase in the area under coca bush cultivation compared to 2019, with an estimated area of 29,400 ha⁹. 62% of the area cultivated with coca was located in the region of the Yungas of La Paz, 36% in the Tropics of Cochabamba, and 2% in the North of La Paz. Compared to 2019, all three regions showed an increase of 12%, 21%, and 9% respectively.

The total survey area covered was 22,088 km², 40% more than in 2019. Additional satellite imagery covering 6,322 km² was acquired to explore new zones and verify the presence and/or expansion of coca cultivations. In these new zones, around 606 ha cultivated with coca were identified, confirming that the majority of the coca cultivation is in the areas that UNODC is monitoring regularly.

The provinces that showed the greatest increases were Murillo, Inquisivi and Sud Yungas in the region of the Yungas of La Paz, Franz Tamayo and Bautista Saavedra in the North of La Paz and Tiraque (Cochabamba), Ichilo (Santa Cruz) and Moxos (Beni) in the region of Tropics of Cochabamba. The largest increases in protected areas occurred in the Amboró and Carrasco national parks.

The potential production of sun-dried coca leaf in Bolivia was estimated at 43,000 – 53,800 mt, which represents a 17% increase compared to 2019.

Data reported by the Plurinational State of Bolivia on rationalization/eradication (R/E), coca leaf trade, prices and seizures of coca leaf and controlled substances correspond to the period January to December 2020.

In 2020, rationalization in Authorized Production Areas and eradication in Unauthorized Areas (according to the General Law on Coca, Law 906), was reported at 2,177 ha, a decrease of 76% compared to 2019 (9,205 ha).

Of the 2,177 ha of rationalization/eradication reported by the Plurinational State of Bolivia, 131 ha were validated with support of UNODC (see chapter 5 for more details). R/E tasks were interrupted from April to July 2020 due to the COVID-19 related quarantine.

The significant reduction in the tasks of rationalization/eradication of coca cultivation in Bolivia coincides with the increase in coca cultivation in 2020.

According to official data from the Plurinational State of Bolivia, reported through the General Directorate of the Coca Leaf and Industrialization (DIGCOIN), the volume of coca leaf traded in the two authorized markets reached 19,274 mt, which represents a reduction of 19% compared to 2019. 40% of the coca leaf traded was destined for the Department of Santa Cruz; 14% for Tarija; 12% for Cochabamba; 11% for Potosí; 10% for Oruro and the remaining 12% for other departments.

⁹ Figures rounded to the nearest hundred.

In 2020, due to the rigid quarantine established by the Government of Bolivia to contain the pandemic caused by COVID-19, authorized markets had to be closed, which caused the lack of data recording during the April-May period and influenced normal coca leaf trading patterns.

The average nominal price of coca leaf sold in authorized markets, reported by DIGCOIN, decreased by 22% from USD 12.5 per kilogram in 2019 to USD 9.7 per kilogram in 2020, according to the official exchange rate of the Central Bank of Bolivia (6.96 Bs).

Based on pre-2010 yield data, potential coca leaf production was estimated at 43,000 – 53,800 metric tons with a estimated value of US\$ 365 – 449 million.

According to official data from the Plurinational State of Bolivia, seizures of coca leaf decreased by 4%, reaching 309 mt in 2020. Compared to 2019, the quantities seized of cocaine base increased by 7% (9,792 Kg) and the seized of cocaine hydrochloride decreased by 8% (5,867 Kg).

Impact of COVID-19

The data in this report reflect the status of coca cultivation as of December 31, 2020. The pandemic caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in the country has influenced the circulation, transport and coca leaf trading in 2020.

Based on available data and the findings of the monitoring report and UNODC research brief¹⁰, an attempt is made to offer a perspective on the impacts of the pandemic and its effects on coca cultivation in Bolivia.

About the cultivation, production and trading of coca leaves

Mobility restrictions and the closure of the main authorized coca leaf markets due to the rigid quarantine established to contain COVID-19 pandemic, led to the accumulation and oversupply of the coca leaf, causing a reduction in its price¹¹ according to the analysis of the data reported by DIGCOIN.

Coca leaf production was not affected, on the contrary, the rigid quarantine and the impediment of mobility from the countryside to the city contributed to the producers allocating more time to the care and management of their crops.

The increase in the area under coca cultivation in Bolivia coincides with the reduction of R/E tasks. These tasks were temporarily suspended in the April-July 2020 period, which also affected the supervision and control of coca crops in the producing regions.

About seizures and traffic of controlled substances

Despite the interruption of the production and supply chain, specialized government groups continued to seize coca leaves and controlled substances. However, the seizures of coca and cocaine hydrochloride decreased in 2020.

About UNODC activities

Due to the quarantine established in Bolivia and the danger of contagion in 2020, the activities of the Coca Crop Monitoring were modified for telematic work, using computer applications and virtual meetings for the coordination of the technical team. The field missions to obtain information were reduced and information obtained by different UNODC studies related to coca cultivation was used.

¹⁰ RESEARCH BRIEF, COVID-19 and the drug supply chain: from production and trafficking to use. UNODC <https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/covid/Covid-19-and-drug-supply-chain-Mai2020.pdf>

¹¹ According to the World Drug Report 2021, the price of coca leaf in the quarantine period increased in cities that are not coca producers. This information was not recorded by DIGCOIN because it was marketed directly by retail producers to the consumer.