

Fact Sheet - Bolivia Coca Cultivation Monitoring report, 2019

Variables	Source	2018	2019	% Change 2018-2019
Area under coca cultivation¹				
Area under coca cultivation in Bolivia (rounded to hundred)	UNODC	23,100 ha	25,500 ha	+10%
Area under coca cultivation in the region of the Yungas of La Paz	UNODC	15,015 ha	16,296 ha	+9%
Area under coca cultivation in the region of Tropics of Cochabamba ²	UNODC	7,787 ha	8,769 ha	+13%
Area under coca cultivation in the region of the North of La Paz	UNODC	325 ha ³	468 ha	+44%
Permitted coca production area in Authorized Areas ⁴	Plurinational State of Bolivia	22,000 ha	22,000 ha	0%
Potential production of sun-dried coca leaf⁵				
Yungas of La Paz	UNODC	17,100 – 19,600 mt	18,500 – 21,300 mt	8% - 9%
Tropics of Cochabamba	UNODC	15,900 – 21,500 mt	17,900 – 24,200 mt	13% - 13%
North of La Paz ³	UNODC	340 – 400 mt	480 – 580 mt	41% - 45%
Total Production of sun-dried coca leaf in Bolivia ³	UNODC	33,300 – 41,500 mt	37,000 – 46,100 mt	11% - 11%
Trading and seizures of coca leaf and controlled substances				
Coca leaf traded in authorized markets in Bolivia	Plurinational State of Bolivia (DIGCOIN)	24,178 mt	23,877 mt	-1%
National nominal weighted average price of coca leaf in authorized markets ⁶	Plurinational State of Bolivia (DIGCOIN)	12.5 USD/kg	12.5 USD/kg	0%
Estimated value of coca leaf in Bolivia ⁷	Plurinational State of Bolivia (DIGCOIN) – UNODC	USD 375 – 461 Million	USD 432 – 534 Million	15% - 16%
Value of coca leaf production in percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ⁸	UNODC	0.9 – 1.2%	1.1 – 1.3%	22% - 8%
Value of coca leaf production in percent of agricultural sector GDP ⁹	UNODC	8.2 – 10%	9 – 11%	10% - 10%
Coca leaf seizures	Plurinational State of Bolivia (DG-FELCN)	331 tm	322 tm	-3%
Cocaine base seizures	Plurinational State of Bolivia (DG-FELCN)	10,483 kg	9,153 kg	-13%
Cocaine hydrochloride seizures	Plurinational State of Bolivia (DG-FELCN)	7,592 kg	6,403 kg	-16%
Coca cultivation rationalization/eradication.	Plurinational State of Bolivia (DIGPROCOCA-CEO)	11,174 ha	9,205 ha	-18%

¹ Area affected by coca crops at the end of 2019 based on very high spatial resolution satellite images.

² Includes the coca-producing zones of the Province Ichilo in the Department of Santa Cruz and the Province Moxos in the Department of Beni.

³ The monitoring results reported for the 2018 have been recalculated according to the current political administrative delimitation provided by the Vice Ministry of Autonomy.

⁴ Since 2017, the area under coca cultivation in Authorized Areas is regulated by the General Law on Coca, Law 906, issued on March 2017 (limited to 22,000 ha).

⁵ The potential production of sun-dried coca leaf is in a range between a lower and upper limit, based on different previous studies. A new study to update yield factors is process. Sums are calculated with non-rounded numbers but the figures shown in this fact sheet are rounded to hundred.

⁶ The national nominal weighted average price of coca leaf in authorized markets is represented in US dollars (USD) for international reference purposes. The official exchange rate of the Central Bank of Bolivia was used for this calculation: 6.96 Bs. as of 31/12/2019.

⁷ Figures calculated assuming the trading of the potential production of coca leaf (lower and upper limits) using the nominal prices from the authorized coca leaf markets in Bolivia.

⁸ Calculated from the 2018 and 2019 GDP (INE), corresponding to USD 40,0 and 40,6 billion respectively.

⁹ Calculated from the 2018 (USD 4,59 billion) and 2019 (USD 4,96 billion) Agricultural Sector GDP (INE) that represent 11,5% and 12.2% of the national GDP respectively.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2019 Coca Cultivation Monitoring report is the seventeenth report published by UNODC in coordination with the Plurinational State of Bolivia. This document provides quantitative information on the extent of coca cultivation and the potential production of coca leaf in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, in addition to the complimentary information provided by the state institutions on coca leaf prices, trading, eradication and other related topics.

The monitoring results for end 2019 showed a 10% increase in the area under coca cultivation respect the same period to 2018, with an estimated area of 25,500 ha¹⁰ of coca cultivation. 64% of the area under coca cultivation was estimated to be in the region Yungas of La Paz, 34% in the Tropics of Cochabamba and 2% in North of La Paz. Compared to 2018, the three regions showed an increase of 9%, 13% and 44% respectively.

The provinces that showed the greatest increase were Sud Yungas and Nor Yungas in the region Yungas of La Paz and Carrasco in the region of the Tropics of Cochabamba. The largest increases in Protected Areas occurred in Madidi and Amboró National Parks and Integrated Management Natural Areas.

The increase in coca cultivation can be explained by a reduction in the levels of rationalization/eradication that were affected during the socio-political conflicts between October and November 2019. Similarly, the self-control of coca producing organizations seems to have lost relevance during the conflict period, favoring an increase in coca cultivation. In addition, the present survey has identified several coca cultivations in locations that correspond to areas deforested in the previous year, evidencing a worrying effect on forest ecosystems, especially in Protected Areas.

The potential production of sun-dried coca leaf in Bolivia was estimated in a range of 37,000 mt for the lower limit and 46,100 mt for the upper limit, which represents an increase of 11% for both ranges compared to 2018. UNODC is currently carrying out a new coca cultivation yield study in Bolivia with the objective to update yield factors for each region by conducting harvest tests and direct survey of producers.

The 2019 data reported by the Plurinational State of Bolivia on rationalization in Authorized Production Areas and eradication in Unauthorized Areas (according to the General Law on Coca, Law 906), showed an 18 percent reduction, equivalent to an area of 9,205 ha, compared to 2018.

Of the total reported 9,205 ha of rationalization/eradication areas, 1,598 ha were analyzed with different methodologies. From this sample it was verified that 73% corresponds to effectively rationalized/eradicated coca cultivations.

According to official data from the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the volume of coca leaf traded on the two authorized markets reached 23,877 mt, representing stability compared to 2018. 90% of the total coca leaf traded in these markets took place in the Villa Fatima market in the department of La Paz. The remaining 10% was traded at the Sacaba market in Cochabamba department. According to the General Directorate of Coca Leaf and Industrialization (DIGCOIN), 38% of the coca leaf was destined for the department of Santa Cruz; 15% for Tarija; 13% for Cochabamba; 12% for Potosi; 9% for Oruro and the remaining 13% for other departments.

¹⁰ Figure rounded to the nearest hundred

The socio-political conflicts at the end of 2019 caused the closure of the main market for the distribution and sale of coca leaves in La Paz, generating a reduction in the volumes of coca leaves marketed and an over-supply of this product, which led to a slight reduction in the price of the “taque de coca”¹¹ from US\$ 12.8 per kilogram in 2018 to US\$ 12.7 per kilogram in 2019. On the other hand, in the main market of Cochabamba there was no greater variation in the distribution, sale and marketing of the coca leaf with respect to the previous management and prices showed an increase according to the data reported by DIGCOIN, but the price of coca leaf in this market increased from US\$ 9.5 per kilogram in 2018 to US\$ 10.6 per kilogram in 2019.

As a result, the average national nominal price of coca leaf traded on authorized markets remained stable compared to 2018, reaching USD 12.5 per kilogram in 2019, according to the official exchange rate of the Central Bank of Bolivia (Bs. 6.96).

Based on pre-2010 yield factors¹², the value of coca leaf production in Bolivia was estimated between US\$ 432 million (lower limit) and US\$ 534 million (upper limit).

According to official data from the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the seizure of coca leaves diverted for illicit purposes decreased by 3 percent, reaching 322 mt in 2019. The departments where the largest volumes of coca leaves were seized were La Paz with 71%, followed by Cochabamba with 11% and Santa Cruz with 10%. Compared to 2018, the seizure of cocaine base decreased by 13% as well as the seizure of cocaine hydrochloride which decreased by 16%. At the national level, the departments of Cochabamba and La Paz had the highest percentage of seized cocaine base with 36% and 23% respectively, followed by the departments of Oruro and Santa Cruz with 13% and 12% respectively. The largest amount of cocaine hydrochloride was seized in the departments of Santa Cruz (55%) and Cochabamba (27%).

¹¹ Article 4 of Chapter I of the Regulations of Law 906 defines the Coca Taque as a unit of measurement that represents fifty (50) pounds of coca leaf in its natural state.

¹² Idem 5, Summary of results of the monitoring of coca cultivation in Bolivia, 2019

Impact of COVID-19

The data reported in this report reflects the behavior of coca cultivation as of December 31, 2019. The pandemic caused by the disease known as COVID-19 did not have a major impact on the production process of coca cultivation, because the first cases in Bolivia were registered in March 2020. It is expected that the harvest and production will be affected as of March 2020.

Although partial and anecdotal information is currently available based on the available data and the findings of the report made by UNODC¹³, the impacts discussed here try to offer a preliminary perspective of the potential impacts of the pandemic on issues related to coca cultivation in Bolivia.

About the cultivation and production of coca leaves

It is expected that the seizures of coca will decrease due to the restriction measures that affect the illegal transportation of the product and also considering how much staff are dedicated to the seizure operations. At the same time the staff should assist in enforcing the quarantine measures.

Due to the closure of the main markets for the trading of coca leaf, an accumulation and over-supply of the collected product is expected, which could lead to a reduction in the price of coca leaf.

It is very likely that the area under coca cultivation will increase in the producing regions, due to lower levels of rationalization/eradication activities carried out for the control of surplus crops. These activities were temporarily suspended as of March 2020.

The production of coca cultivation in Unauthorized Areas is expected to increase due to the lack of control of this crop. On the other hand, it is estimated that in Authorized Areas there will be less production due to an oversupply of the product and low demand in local markets.

It is likely that crop yield will decrease during the pandemic period due to the increased cost and difficulty in obtaining equipment and inputs needed for crop maintenance and improvement. This may be due to border closures that have made it difficult to import such equipment and inputs.

About UNODC monitoring activities

Due to the quarantine imposed by the Bolivian Government, the activities of the Coca Crop Monitoring were modified for remote work, using computer applications and virtual meetings for the coordination of the technical team. The field information was obtained through a joint work between the technical teams of the Yield Study, the Validation of the R/E Information and the Coca Cultivation Survey.

The Coca Cultivation Yield Study in Bolivia has partial data on yield factors and socio-economic information by regions, its activities have also been affected by mobility restrictions. The Coca-Cocaine Efficiency Study in Bolivia has begun with the information collection stage, through confidential interviews with key informants. These are carried out through virtual platforms, as a measure to prevent contagion in the penitentiaries.

¹³ COVID-19 and the drug supply chain: from production and trafficking to use. UNODC (2020) https://www.unodc.org/documents/islamicrepublicofiran/2020/05/Covid-19-and-drug-supply-chain-May_2020.pdf