



## CASE STUDY: DOMINICAN COCOA (DCGI)

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# INDEX

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>1. DOMINICAN COCOA GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION (DCGI)</b>          | <b>3</b>  |
| 1.1. INTRODUCTION   | 3         |
| 1.2.MINIMUM REQUIRED QUALITY                                      | 7         |
| 1.3.GRANTING OF THE DOMINICAN COCOA GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION       | 8         |
| <b>2. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT</b>                                | <b>10</b> |
| <b>3. FUNDING AND INTER-INSTITUTIONAL LINKAGES</b>                | <b>11</b> |
| <b>4. BRAND DEVELOPMENT AND PLACING ON THE MARKET</b>             | <b>13</b> |
| <b>5. BRANDS IN THE GI</b>  | <b>15</b> |
| <b>6. ENVIRONMENT</b>   | <b>16</b> |
| <b>7. BENEFITS OF THE DOMINICAN COCOA GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION</b> | <b>17</b> |
| 7.1 COMPANIES WITHIN THE GI                                       | 18        |
| <b>8. LESSONS LEARNED</b>   | <b>19</b> |

## 1. DOMINICAN COCOA GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION (DCGI)



Figure1: Dominican Cocoa Geographical Indication, Registration No 17, Class 30.

***‘Fine and aromatic cocoa with clear, pure and balanced flavours, maintaining the features that define its identity and appearance’***

### 1.1. INTRODUCTION

About 2.4 million tareas (150,000 hectares) of cocoa are cultivated in the Dominican Republic by approximately 40,000 producers who have a long tradition of planting and harvesting cocoa fruit. Of 36,236 registered farms, 16.5% are devoted to organic cocoa production<sup>1</sup>, which began in 1995 and requires good agricultural practices and care of the fruit, thus developing a culture of sustainable management within the product value chain.

In 2008, on entry of the country into the Dominican Republic-Central America FTA (CAFTA-DR) with the US, the Dominican Republic’s Association of Industry (AIRD) identified three (3) manufacturing sectors to be included in the Industrial Innovation Programme: competing in speed and flexibility . This initiative aimed at boosting the competitiveness of Dominican companies was supported by the National Competitiveness Council (CNC)

<sup>1</sup> Source: [El Cacao, Un Cultivo Clave Que Mantiene La República Dominicana Como Uno De Los Países Líderes En La Exportación De Productos Orgánicos En El Mundo](#). (Cocoa: a key crop that allows the Dominican Republic to remain one of the world's leading organic exporters).

and funded through non-reimbursable cooperation payments from the Multilateral Investment Fund (FOMIN) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). The aim was to promote associations of producers under the 'Cocoa Cluster' scheme.

Consultation workshops were held, proposals were agreed on and medium and long-term strategic goals were defined for ongoing modernisation and improvement of production, industrialisation and placing on the market. Finally, the Cocoa and Cocoa Derivatives Cluster was established.

The country's main cocoa industries and the associations involved in producing and marketing organic cocoa participated enthusiastically.



Location: Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic,  
established in: 2008

No of members: 32 direct and 30,000 indirect.

Sector: Agri|industry

The **Coopetition** strategy consisted of creating synergy within the production chain, making those involved aware of the need for cooperation in activities and processes while continuing to be competitors in the marketplace. The scheme allowed them to focus on and create added value and enhance quality levels for Dominican Cocoa and its derivatives, thus improving its global positioning, profitability and competitiveness.

The Cocoa Cluster strengthened coordination of the links in the value chain, making space available to allow other actors to participate, who were then steadily and seamlessly integrated into the circle created<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Ángel Salvador Villanueva, *Caso de éxito Clúster Dominicano de Cacao y sus Derivados (A success story: the Dominican cocoa and cocoa derivatives cluster)*, BIOCAFCAO presentation.



As a first step, action plans were launched under the Cocoa and cocoa derivatives quality support plan (2012-2014), which also involved defining the quality and qualities of Dominican cocoa with a view to achieving the '**Dominican Cocoa Geographical Indication**' sign.

The geographical indication initiative involved a range of work and the Management Consulting Group entity was contracted to design and oversee the process of obtaining the GI registration in accordance with Law 20-00 on industrial property. To ensure fulfilment of the requirements for the future sign, field research, consultation workshops and interviews with producers were carried out, which were then used for the drafting of the regulations and specifications. The entire value chain was assessed and judged suitable for GI registration.

Product description took account the of organoleptic, soil and climate qualities to produce the following formulation: 'Fine and aromatic cocoa with clear, pure and balanced flavours, maintaining the features that define its identity and appearance.' These qualities are derived from the **geographic environment**, where they have been developing for centuries.

The scientific name for the cocoa tree is *Theobroma cacao* L. The cocoa tree produces large, oval fruits filled with a sweet-sour pulp containing between 30 and 50 seeds from which raw cocoa is obtained.



The tradition of harvesting, sowing and production of cocoa dates back to the time of Spanish colonisation, when the drink was also sweetened with cane sugar, contributing to its popularity in the courts of European, thus cementing its **historic ties**.

The cocoa industry has developed since then, exports mainly leaving from Puerto de Sanchez in the province of Samana in the northeast of the island, which gave its name to *non-fermented cocoa of the **Sanchez Type***, while *later fermented cocoa was given the name **Hispaniola Type (Type I, Type II)***, both names that **culturally identify** them, to be used exclusively for **Dominican Cocoa** and its derivatives.

## 1.2. MINIMUM REQUIRED QUALITY

The control and certification body of the '**Dominican Cocoa Geographical Indication**'



Figure 4 Sánchez Cocoa



Figure 5 Cocoa derivatives



Figure 6 Hispaniola Cocoa, types I and II

is its Regulatory Board. The entire product certification procedure is delegated to the **Comisión Nacional del Cacao (National Cocoa Commission)**, the competent national

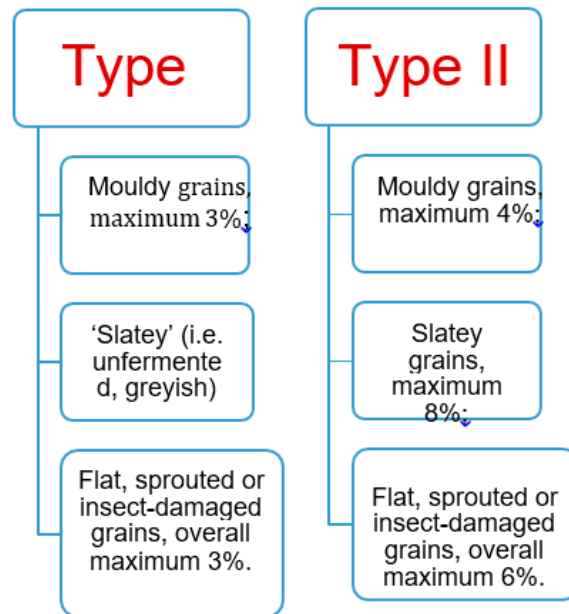


Figure 7 Identity of Dominican cocoa. Own-grown



authority for cocoa.

Finally, in November 2013, the Cocoa and Cocoa Derivatives Cluster received the Dominican Cocoa Geographical Indication from the Oficina Nacional De La Propiedad Industrial (ONAPI) to carry out certification for the Dominican Cocoa GI sign's regulatory body, the

National Cocoa Commission (Comisión Nacional del Cacao) and the Cocoa Department of the Ministry of Agriculture.



### 1.3. PRESENTATION OF THE DOMINICAN COCOA GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION



*El Ministro de Agricultura y presidente de la Comisión Nacional del Cacao, Luis Ramón Rodríguez recibe el certificado de propiedad de manos de los licenciados Juan José Báez, director general de ONAPI e Ivette Yanet Vargas directora de signos distintivos, les acompañan los señores Ligia Bonetti de Valiente, presidenta de la AIRD Laura del Castillo del CNC y Ricardo Munné del Cluster del Cacao.*

Figure 8 Presentation of the Dominican Cocoa GI, ONAPI

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PÁGINA 1 DE 2

NÚMERO 17

REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA  
*Ministerio de Industria y Comercio*  
OFICINA NACIONAL DE LA PROPIEDAD INDUSTRIAL  
Sede: Santiago, Distrito Nacional

"Año del Bicentenario del Nacimiento de Juan Pablo Duarte"

**Dirección de Signos Distintivos**  
**CERTIFICADO DE INDICACIÓN GEOGRÁFICA**

**CACAO DOMINICANO (MIXTA)**

FECHA DE EMISIÓN: 17/10/2013 DURACIÓN: INDEFINIDA

SOLICITUD: 2015-22850 DE FECHA: 15/06/2013

CLASE(S) INTERNACIONAL(ES): 30

TITULAR:

COMISION DE CACAO  
CALLE RAFAEL CAMERON 5155 COMENDANTE  
DIPRQUE JIMENEZ MATA CENTRO DE LOS RUCES  
SANTO DOMINGO, DISTRITO NACIONAL  
REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA

GESTOR:

MANAGEMENT CONSULTING GROUP, SRL  
CALLE ITZAMANA NO. 17, LOS CACAOSUS  
SANTO DOMINGO, DISTRITO NACIONAL  
REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA

DESCRIPCIÓN:

EL LOGO CONSISTE EN UNA MAZORRA DE CACAO LA CUAL, ESTA SUPERPUESTA TRANSVERSALMENTE EN EL MAPA DE LA REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA, A SU VEZ AMBOS ELEMENTOS ESTÁN RODEADOS POR UNA SÉRIE DE RAYOS. EN LA PARTE SUPERIOR LA DENOMINACIÓN INDICACIÓN GEOGRÁFICA Y EN LA PARTE INFERIOR CACAO DOMINICANO. COLORES: PANTONE: NAVY/03 OSCURO MC 70A TINTOS: 10M 15Y02 25M 10Y02C 10Y02C 70P 10K ESTAMOS PROTEGIENDO LA PARTE DE LA MARCA QUE FIGURA LOS COLORES: CIRCULO EXTERNO/MAPA DE LA REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA, SOMBRA DEL MAPA, ESFERA DEL MAPA, RAYOS, TIPOGRAFÍA Y MAZORRA DE CACAO.

LOGO / DISEÑO:

NO SE RECONOCE EL MAPA DE LA REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA

En virtud de los artículos 124 Y 126 de la Ley número 20-00 sobre Procedimiento de Registro de Signos Distintivos del 2000, lo que establece los artículos, se emite el presente certificado 10/10/2013

Lic. Ivette Yanet Vargas Tavárez  
Directora Departamento de Signos Distintivos

ENCUADRO:

Figure 9 Dominican Cocoa GI registration, October 2013



‘The cocoa industry in the Dominican Republic strengthens, adds value to and distinguishes its product through the Dominican Cocoa Geographical Indication (DCGI) Sign. This GI brings together cocoa and cocoa derivatives and will let consumers know that the end-product meets recognised quality and food safety standards.’

Ligia Bonetti De Valiente,  
Association of Industry of the Dominican Republic (AIRD).



Figure 10 Cocoa-growing areas in 2013, own data.

## 2. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT<sup>3</sup>

The Dominican Republic has identified the genetic basis of its crops, using far fewer chemicals, resulting in safer and healthier parasite-free plantations<sup>4</sup>.

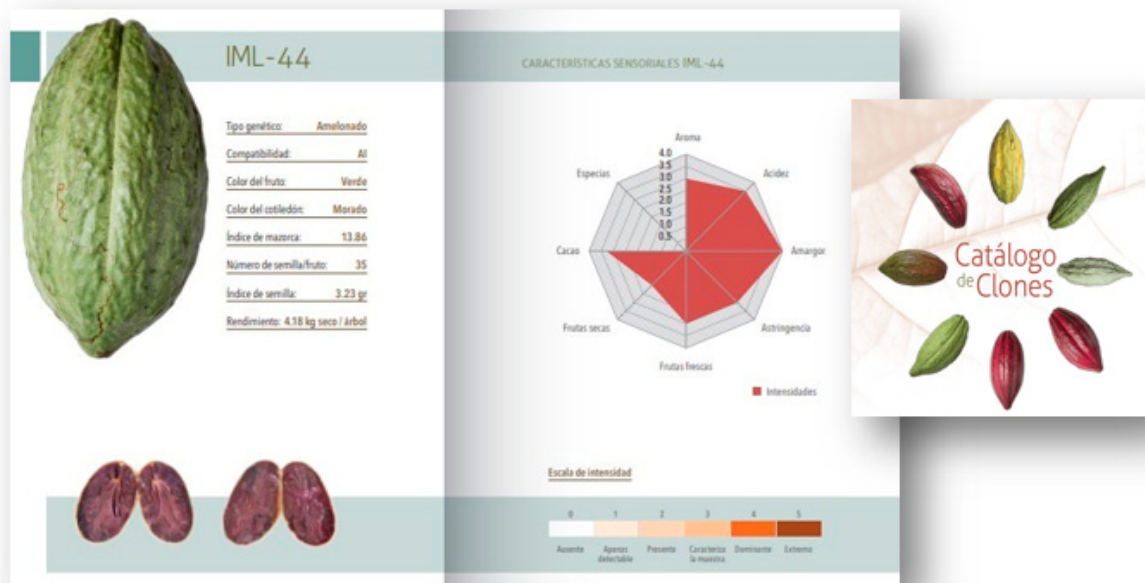


Figure 11 CONACADO, S.A. clones catalogue

The cocoa owes its **reputation** for its ‘fine and aromatic’ quality to the predominance of Criollo and Trinitario clones and hybrids, as well as to the excellent soil and climate and the good agricultural and processing practices applied by operators in the chain, which focus on maintaining and improving the product’s inherent material qualities.

The sector has developed relationships with the main agricultural research centres nationally, developing new clonal varieties that are resistant to diseases and have higher productivity, such as the IML-44 variety obtained by the Dominican Agricultural and Forestry Research Centre (Instituto Dominicano de Investigaciones Agropecuaria y

<sup>3</sup> <https://conacado.com.do/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/catalogo-clones.png>

<sup>4</sup> Source: <https://almomento.net/union-europea-pone-lupa-en-rd-por-drama-cultivadores-de-cacao>. Ángela Rosso Aebischer, 11 September 2021.

Forestales and the Mata Larga Experimental Centre (Centro Experimental Mata Larga) in San Francisco de Macorís.

Care of organic farms is another priority issue, receiving support from the Cocoa Department of the Ministry of Agriculture for ongoing training of field workers. The Dominican Cocoa value chain has obtained and maintained social, environmental and process certifications for the farms of about 27,000 producers.

International organisations, such as the United Nations Development Programme with the Cocoa Platform, provide a forum for analysis, discussion and consensus among the actors in the process, allowing the strategic plans for the sustainable development of cocoa for the 2017-2027 period to be drawn up.

The National Coordinating Committee of Dominican Cocoa Farmers (CONACADO), in cooperation with the Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo, has installed a modern chocolate processing plant in the city of San Francisco de Macoris. Funds have been raised in part using members' contributions.

Isabel Burgos: 'Our recipe is based on high-quality products produced in our own plant. The Qchoc-50 is ideal for us: we combine high-quality equipment with high-quality ingredients to find the right recipe for the best Dominican chocolate.'

### ■ 3. FUNDING AND INTER-INSTITUTIONAL LINKAGES

'Aware that small countries can compete in terms of quality rather than volume with large cocoa-producing countries, and having identified the genetic basis of our cocoa culture, we have ventured into specialty cocoa niche markets: above all in Europe, Asia and America.'<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ing. Reynaldo Ferreira, CEO of the National Cocoa Commission



In the Dominican Republic US\$ 1.00 is paid on each kilo of cocoa exported. The money collected is used to fund the operations of the National Cocoa Commission and the Cocoa Department of the Ministry of Agriculture.

The main associations and companies involved in production and marketing of organic cocoa in the country are: National Confederation of Dominican Cocoa Growers (CONACADO) (49.8% of output), Grupo Rizek (15.8%) and Comercial Roig (13.2%). Important market shares are also enjoyed by S. A., Munné & Compañía, J. Paiewonskye e Hijos, Cortés Hermanos, García y Mejía, Yacao and the Association of Cacao Producers of Cibao (APROCACI).

Good agricultural practices have made the Dominican Republic the world's leading exporter of organic cocoa and one of the 15 'gourmet cocoa'-producing countries. 792,000 tonnes were exported in the 2011-2020 period, for revenues of USD 2.2 billion.

Companies serving the chief export markets use internationally recognised certifiers.



Figure 12 Cocoa producer certifications Source: CONACADO.



These include **BCS ÖKO-Garantie** (Germany), **Demeter** (Germany), **IMO-Control** (Germany-Switzerland), **Bio Suisse** (Switzerland), **Japanese Agricultural Standard-JAS** (Japan) y National Organic Program- NOP (USA). The funds generated by the price premium on cocoa sold under the certified organic, fair trade or other signs are invested in education, health, greenhouse construction and various infrastructure projects.

However, despite holding the necessary health certifications, derivative products exported to the European Union have faced barriers at ports of entry due to RASFF<sup>6</sup> alerts on food safety, causing significant financial loss, with producers concerned above all that such incidents may affect the reputation they have earned.

Another factor affecting Dominican cocoa, highlighted in the *Barómetro Cacao 2020* (Cacao Barometer 2020) report is the precarious circumstances of independent producers, with an estimated 92,000 small producers, representing 3,144 ha, lacking protection.

## ■ 4. BRAND DEVELOPMENT AND PLACING ON THE MARKET

*'We sat around a table to discuss and look for solutions, to think about how we could strengthen the cocoa farmers' organisations that needed fresh financing to allow producers to make investments'<sup>7</sup>.*

Public-private dialogue was launched and possible solutions analysed. A decision was reached jointly with the National Cocoa Commission, the Cocoa Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and members of the Cocoa and Cocoa Derivatives Cluster to form Cacao, Inc./DR Cacao Foundation, Inc.

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<sup>6</sup> Rapid Alert System For Food And Feed. 2020 Report.

<sup>7</sup> Ing. Reynaldo Ferreira, CEO of the National Cocoa Commission during his presentation to the Cocoa Committee of Central America and the Dominican Republic (SICACAO) in October 2021, speaking on the DR experience of organic cocoa production and marketing.

**The main aim of this foundation is to protect the reputation of Dominican Cocoa and its producers.**



Location: Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

Year of creation: 2018

Sector: Cocoa and cocoa | derivatives E-mail:

[info@drcocoafoundation.org](mailto:info@drcocoafoundation.org)

Website: [www.drcocoafoundation.org](http://www.drcocoafoundation.org)

*'We have drawn up our 15-year strategic plan and are currently working on actions in the short-term to: a) represent the sector; b) manage projects with a positive impact; c) lay the basis for administering differentiated quality signs for cocoa. We want the DCGI to apply to raw cocoa only and to add value to derivatives with other certifications.'*<sup>8</sup>

**The National Cocoa Commission is in the process of handing over management of the DCGI to the DR Cacao Foundation/Fundación de Cacao Dominicano, which under this agreement will be able to act as the certification, management and control body.**

The body is therefore equipped with: i) a certification management function operated in accordance with the ISO/IEC 17065 standard (Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services); ii) a verification management operated in accordance with the ISO/IEC 17020 standard (Conformity assessment — Requirements for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspection); and iii) a testing laboratory operated in accordance with the ISO/IEC 17025 standard (General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories).<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Richard Peralta Decamps, legal consultant of the DR Cocoa Foundation.

<sup>9</sup> Source: [https://drcocoafoundation.org/wp/?page\\_id=31](https://drcocoafoundation.org/wp/?page_id=31)

## 5. GI BRANDS

If there is one thing that sets chocolate makers apart, it is their passion. The quality of Dominican cocoa has allowed new 100% Dominican brands to emerge that stand out for the colour, aroma and flavour that make them a high-quality product. Dominican

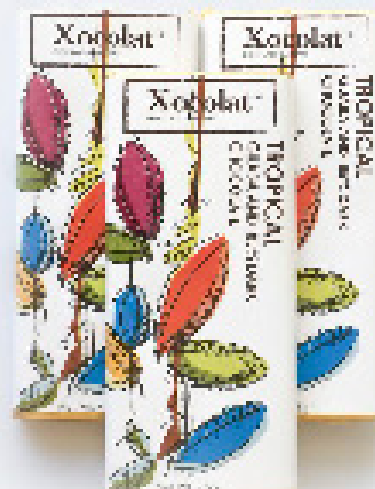


cocoa derivatives result in brands that create synergy to benefit the raw material.

KAH KOW opened a shop in the Zona Colonial in Las Damas, which functions both as a sales outlet and cocoa museum, with educational displays showing cultivation of the cocoa pods and the processing of cocoa beans, as

well as their use in crafts and industry. Visitors can also take part in a workshop to make their own chocolate or process soap.

The XOCOLAT gourmet chocolate shop offers a wide range of products using organic Hispaniola cocoa.





CACAOTECA

*'We grow our cocoa in such a way that the beans ripen with unique flavour notes. Complex and subtle, this 78% dark chocolate allows all the aromas of cocoa to emerge. This is pure cocoa with a touch of cane sugar... and that's all! It's much more intense than our 63% chocolate. You can be sure that whichever bar you prefer, it will be 100% natural, handmade and will contribute to making our island a better place.'*

**Pre-launch registration of marks prior to product launch is a general business practice, accompanied by creation of domain names, as well as branding and communication of product history and the meaning of product names.**

## ■ 6. ENVIRONMENT

With coffee, cocoa covers 12.13% of the country's forested area and protects 67% of its water sources. These crops are combined with other fruits, thus **reducing deforestation** in cocoa-growing areas. These surrounding crops also benefit from the good agricultural practices applied to obtain on-farm certifications.



**Expansion of cocoa  
production area to 2022**





## 7. BENEFITS OF THE DOMINICAN COCOA GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION (DCGI)

**CONACADO** currently brings together **10,000 producers** on small and medium farms in the cocoa growing areas nationally, **accounting for direct 580 permanent jobs** and **70,000 indirect jobs**. It boasts a **25% export share**. The good agricultural practices applied have resulted in 123 organic producers, or **16%** of all members, and 98 producers transitioning to organic<sup>10</sup> **CONACADO** produces 30 metric tonnes of bitter chocolate powder in its new processing plant, placing it on the market as a basic ingredient used in the manufacture of finished products.

The reputation of Dominican Cocoa and the work carried out by the companies has encouraged national growth of new finished products and the expansion of growing areas.

**Cocoa beans and their derivatives** were worth an overall US\$ 218.21 million in 2021. The Netherlands is the main market, accounting for 26% of exports by value,

<sup>10</sup> Source: <https://latinoamerica.rikolto.org/es/noticias/dominicana-nos-ensena-de-cacao-organico>

followed by the United States with 23%.<sup>11</sup>

## Next steps for the sector:

Fifteen-year strategic plan to fill existing market gaps. This phase will involve preparing for stricter specifications, including quality processes as required for international certifications.

## 7.1. COMPANIES WITHIN THE GI

Agrícola Ganadera Edita García Santos, C. x A. (RECA)  
 Antonio Martínez Llano, Sucesores SRL  
 Association of Cocoa Producers of the Cibao Region (APROCACI)  
 ASOPROCON  
 Biocafcao, S. A.  
 Cítricos Tropicales  
 Chocolate Antillano, S.A.  
 Comercial Roig, SRL  
 CONACADO Agroindustrial  
 Conacado, Inc.  
 COOPCANOR Cacao  
 Cooperativa Red Guaconejo  
 Cortés Hermanos & Co, SRL  
 Fundelosa & Chocal  
 IDEPAC  
 José Paiewonsky e hijos, SRL  
 Munné & Co., SRL  
 Oko Caribe, S.A.  
 Rizek Cacao, SRL Xocolat SRL Yacao, S. A.

| IP registration fees        |             |
|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Geographical indication (1) | US\$ 224.00 |
| Trade name (11)             | US\$ 87.00  |
| Mixed marks (15)            | US\$ 127.00 |

<sup>11</sup> Source: <https://prodominicana.gob.do>

## ■ 8. LESSONS LEARNED

- Cocoa planting in the south and southwest of the country increased between 2013 and 2022, boosting production.
- Organic cocoa producers have a real commitment to the environment, taking great care with both their cultivation practices and fermentation processes and adopting good agricultural practices.
- There is now much greater attention to detail on the farms.
- The installation by CONACADO of a chocolate processing plant has acted as an incentive for new generations to continue the sustainable production of Dominican Cocoa. The plant currently provides 110 direct jobs.
- In 2013 the ICC certified 40% of farms as organic, a figure which has now (2022) reached 60%.

[www.caripi-hub.com](http://www.caripi-hub.com)

