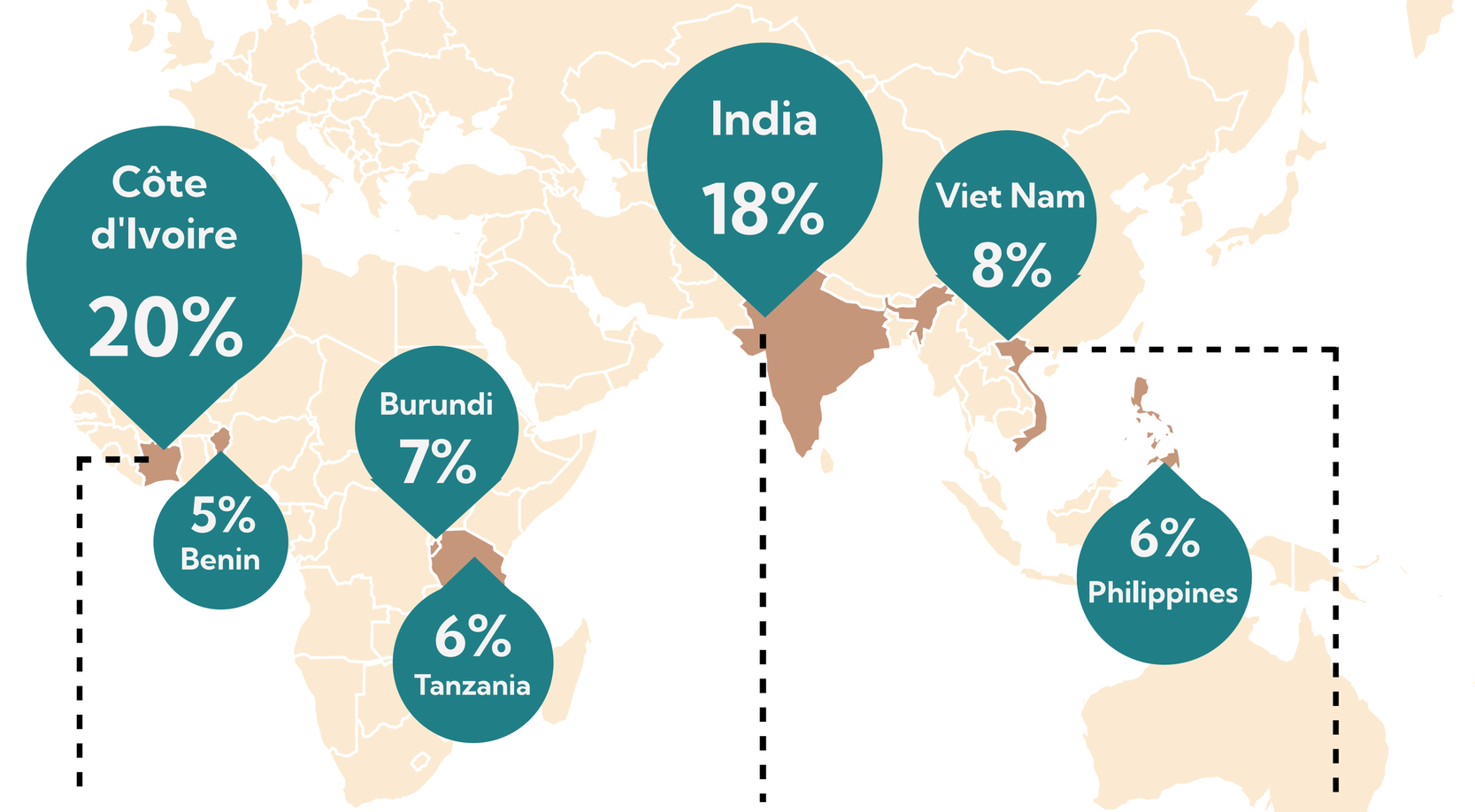
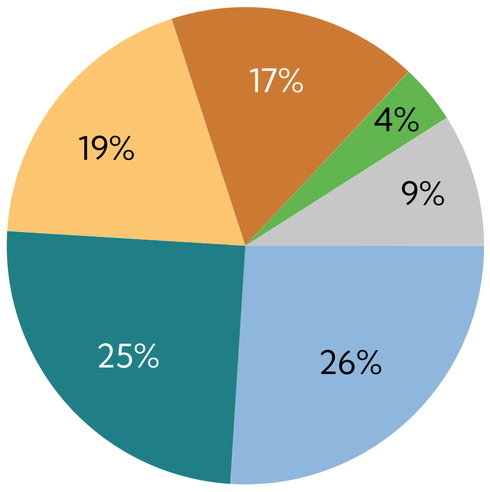
Cashew

Production & Trade

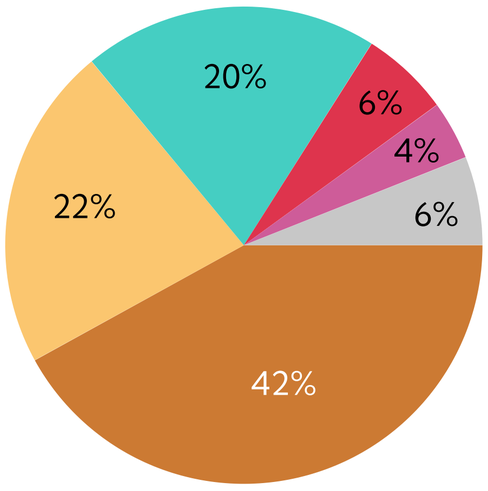
Global top-7 cashew producers



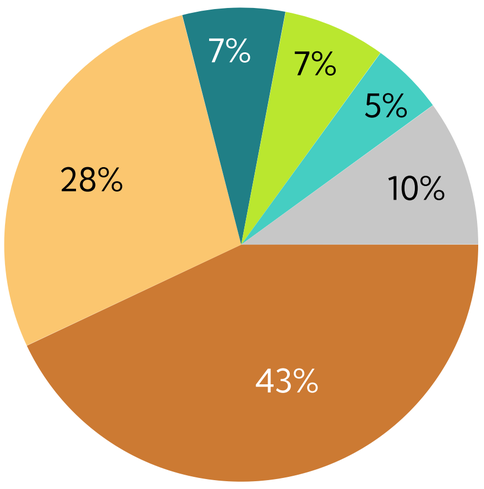
Top 5 EU27 + UK recipients of Côte d'Ivoire exports



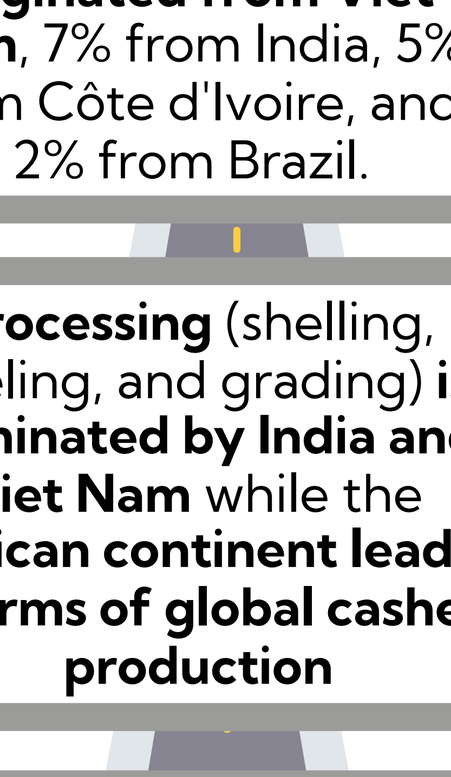
Top 5 EU27 + UK recipients of India exports



Top 5 EU27 + UK recipients of Viet Nam exports



Italy · France · Netherlands · Austria · Germany · Spain · Czech Republic · Greece · Belgium · Other EU27+UK countries



In 2021, **78% of non-EU imports of cashew to the EU and UK originated from Viet Nam**, 7% from India, 5% from Côte d'Ivoire, and 2% from Brazil.

Processing (shelling, peeling, and grading) **is dominated by India and Viet Nam** while the **African continent leads in terms of global cashew production**

Considering the top-7 cashew exporting countries to the EU and the UK in 2021, **85% of cashew originated from processing countries** (Viet Nam and India) and only **11% from producing countries** (Côte d'Ivoire, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Indonesia, and Ghana)

In **2020**, the top 7 producing countries **comprised 70% of cashew production worldwide**. Other countries with **3% share or more** in global cashew production are **Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Brazil, Indonesia,** and **Mozambique**

The **Netherlands is the largest importer of cashew in the EU**, followed by **Germany and Italy.** Most of the imports of cashew to these three countries originate from Viet Nam (52 tons, 33 tons, and 9 tons, respectively)

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Environmental Risks

Cashew nuts are among the tree nuts with the largest water use per kilogram.

The water footprint of cashews is not only attributed to **irrigation of the crops**, but also to the **cashew processing methods** (roasting or steaming) used and **washing the processing equipment.** Water stress from cashew production is particularly relevant in dry producer countries such as Mali and Burkina Faso.

Water Footprint

14,218 m3/ton

is the average global water footprint of cashew production

Land use & Deforestation

15,204 ha

of forest were at risk in 2018 due to cashew production in Tanzania

There are **significant deforestation risks associated with cashew production**, particularly in Tanzania and Indonesia, which comprise 59% and 27%, respectively, of the deforestation risk embodied in global cashew production. Although these are not relevant countries in terms of EU and UK imports, their **deforestation risk can be indirectly imported via the processing countries** (Viet Nam and India), which import a significant part of the cashews they process from such producing countries.

Cashew production can lead to **soil and water contamination** in the surrounding areas due to **poor solid and water waste management.**

Some of the **by-products of cashew production and processing**, such as cashew apple and cashew nut shell liquid or CNSL, end up as production residues, which can be environmentally damaging.

Although fertilizer and pesticide use in cashew farms can contribute significantly to acidification and eutrophication, in West African countries, **cashew farms are mostly smallholdings** that **use less chemical inputs** than other producing countries (e.g., Brazil)

Contamination

90%

of the cashew apples in African cashew producing countries are not utilized and are dumped as solid waste

Emissions

1.56 kg CO2eq

is the carbon footprint per kg of cashews

In cashew supply chain, **greenhouse gas emissions (GHG)** are associated with the **cultivation, processing, and distribution stages**. In cultivation, and namely in countries such as Brazil, there are **significant nitrous oxide emissions** from the commonly used agricultural practices (fertilization and pest management) in cashew farms.

Cashew processing operations across West Africa tend to **rely on fossil fuels and biomass as sources of energy**, which are well-known sources of GHG emissions.

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Social Risks

Labour conditions

In the cashew industry, **precarious employment** – temporary and without formal registration – and **long working hours and low wages based on piece rate** (payment by volume/weight) are common. **Welfare benefits** for workers, such as sick leave, pension, or holidays, are also **inexistent** in most cases. **Safety equipment is usually not provided** by the employer nor is medical treatment for injuries sustained in the workplace.

33 €/month

is the basic salary of workers in cashew processing units in Maharashtra (largest cashew producing state in India). It is 3x lower than the estimated living wage in India's rural areas.

Child Labour

Child labour has been found in cashew production in Viet Nam, Guinea, and Brazil. It has been linked to participation in family work on the farms and to school absenteeism. Although child labour has significantly decreased in cashew production in recent years, **there is still risk** that cashews are cultivated in combination with crops where child labour is still utilized and that some sub-contracted cashew processing units still allow it. The existence of gender differences in cashew-related child labour are not known.

Health & Safety

Physical and environmental hazards

leading to severe pain, eye damage, and respiratory and skin infections, have been reported among cashew processing workers.

Processing cashew nuts has considerable health and safety risks related to **poor ventilation, minimal sanitation, and lack of protective equipment.** During the processing of cashew kernels, the liquid released (CNSL) can cause **skin burns and infections, as well as eyesight damage.** The **lack of safety equipment**, such as gloves or bandages, **and of basic washing facilities** aggravates these issues.

Musculoskeletal problems (e.g., joint ache and arthritis) can also be developed due to repetitive movements, forceful contractions, and sustained positions, and so can **respiratory diseases** such as asthma.

Gender Issues

Female workers, with **low education** and a **lower socio-economic background**, are considered a **useful labor force** in the cashew industry. They **receive lower wages,** tend to **work longer hours** and **have a lower bargaining power** due to their vulnerable socio-economic condition.

Discrimination is highly present in the industry because the different types of work performed by women and men are translated in **higher wages for men.** In Benin and Tanzania, harvesting, collecting, shelling, and peeling raw cashew nuts is **mostly done manually by women** while men engage in more mechanical processing jobs while also having access to land and finance.

90%

of the workers in the cashew industry in India, in 2020, were women

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