

Côte d'Ivoire

Côte d'Ivoire: Current Path

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Côte d'Ivoire: Current Path forecast

Chart 1: Political map of Côte d'Ivoire

This page provides an overview of the key characteristics of Côte d'Ivoire along its likely (or Current Path) development trajectory. The Current Path forecast from the International Futures forecasting (IFs) platform is a dynamic scenario that imitates the continuation of current policies and environmental conditions. The Current Path is therefore in congruence with historical patterns and produces a series of dynamic forecasts endogenised in relationships across crucial global systems. We use 2019 as a standard reference year and the forecasts generally extend to 2043 to coincide with the end of the third ten-year implementation plan of the African Union's Agenda 2063 long-term development vision.

Côte d'Ivoire is a lower middle-income country located in West Africa, bordered to the north by Mali and Burkina Faso, to the east by Ghana, to the south by the Gulf of Guinea, to the west by Liberia and Guinea.

The country is a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU/UEMOA). It is the world leading exporter of cocoa, the economic hub of francophone West Africa and exerts significant influence in the region. It has the third largest economy in ECOWAS after Nigeria and Ghana and accounts for more than 30% of WAEMU's GDP.

Côte d'Ivoire suffered an unstable socio-political environment from the late 1990s to the first decade of this century. In 2010, elections plunged the country into deep chaos, which ended with the inauguration of Alassane Ouattara, a former IMF Economist, as Côte d'Ivoire's president in May 2011. He was first re-elected in October 2015 and won the recent elections held in October 2020, which were boycotted by the major political parties.

Due to considerable public investment in infrastructure, education and health, and domestic reforms in the administration and key economic sectors under the auspices of President Ouattara, the overall macroeconomic performance of the country has enormously improved since 2011. However, high levels of corruption and unemployment threaten the country's development prospects. The main challenge remains the implementation of a reform that fosters inclusive growth by encouraging the private sector to create better jobs, build capacity in the agricultural sector, and develop human capital for the sustainable improvement of development indices.

Demographics: Current Path

During the latter half of the 20th century, Côte d'Ivoire had one of the highest population growth rates in sub-Saharan Africa. Its high rate of natural increase, together with the massive influx of immigrants from neighbouring countries, attracted by its comparatively strong economy, were the main reasons for its rapid growth. Migrants account for between 10% and 25% of the Ivorian population. [1] On the entire continent, only South Africa, which has more than double Côte d'Ivoire's population and a much bigger economy, has more migrants. [2] However, the country's population growth rate declined from about 4.9% in 1980 to 2.7% in 2019, slightly above the average of 2.5% for lower middle-income countries in Africa. The population of Côte d'Ivoire was 25.7 million in 2019, and on the Current Path, it is forecast to be 45.6 million by 2043, about a 77% increase over the next 24 years.

The structure of Côte d'Ivoire's population is typical of countries with a low life expectancy and high fertility rates. The total fertility (TFR) rate declined from 6.8 births per woman in 1990 to 4.7 births per woman in 2020, slightly above the average for Africa lower middle-income countries at 4.3. In the Current Path forecast, TFR will slowly decline to 3 births per woman by 2043.

As of 2019, 41.4% of the population was in the below 15 years of age dependency age group, while 3% were in the 65 and above dependency age group. In the Current Path forecast, the share of these two dependency age groups is projected to be 34% and 4.2% respectively by 2043. About 55.6% of the Ivorian population is in the 15–64 working-age group, which is forecast to increase to 61.8% by 2043.

The working-age group, 15 to 64 years of age, is the largest share of the population, and this can be a potential source of growth provided the labour force is well trained and sufficient jobs are created.

Like many African countries, Côte d'Ivoire is experiencing rapid urbanisation. In 2019, about half (50.7%) of the population lived in urban areas, up from 39.3% in 1990. Côte d'Ivoire's urbanisation rate is above that of Africa and of lower middle-income Africa by 7.9 and 1.5 percentage points respectively. On the current development trajectory, the rate of urbanisation in Côte d'Ivoire is projected to increase to 57.2% by 2043, while the rural population dropped to 42.8% from 60.7% in 1990 and 49.4% in 2019.

This rapid urbanisation will undoubtedly place enormous pressure on the delivery of housing and basic services. If not well managed and planned for, this will lead to inadequate healthcare, poor sanitation, urban slums, and environmental degradation, especially in the main cities such as Abidjan (the largest city), which is the home to more than 5 million people. [3] Good urban planning could foster an inclusive economy by improving service delivery and reducing urban poverty. In addition, adequate and appropriate urban planning is essential to mitigate the impacts of climate change, such as flooding which is recurrent in Abidjan during the rainy season.

Chart 4: Population density map for 2019

The population of Côte d'Ivoire is concentrated in the central and the wetter south-east regions, dominated by Abidjan, the largest city and the country's main maritime outlet. The drier north is, in comparison, much less populated, while the

south-western forest zone (specifically the Tai National Park) is almost completely empty.

The density of Côte d'Ivoire's population amounted to 0.8 inhabitant per hectare in 2019, 0.2 above the average for lower middle-income countries in Africa and almost double the average for Africa. The population density is forecast to increase to 1.4 inhabitants per hectare in 2043, still above the average for Africa and lower middle-income Africa.

Economics: Current Path

From 1960 to 1979, Côte d'Ivoire had a strong economy, though this began to change in the late 1980s when the country experienced almost seven straight years of recession from 1987 to 1993 due to a significant fall in cocoa and coffee prices and high indebtedness. During that time, the country could not meet its foreign debt obligations, but new financial arrangements by creditor banks and a 50% devaluation of its currency (the CFA franc) helped the country toward economic recovery by the mid-1990s. However, political instability from the late 1990s and during the first decade of this century significantly stunted economic growth. Macroeconomic stability, business environment, and public investment in infrastructure have improved markedly since 2012. As a result, Côte d'Ivoire has become one of the fastest-growing economies globally, with an average growth rate of 8% between 2012 and 2019.

The country's vibrant, robust and stable economic growth since 2012 experienced a slowdown and reached 1.8% in 2020 owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet it is one of the few countries that recorded positive GDP growth in 2020. The resilience of the Ivorian economy can be explained in part by the relative diversification of its productive fabric and the monetary stability conferred by its membership to the WAEMU.

In 2019, the size of Côte d'Ivoire's economy was US\$51.9 billion, up from US\$20.7 billion in 1990. Between 2012 and 2019, the size of GDP increased by nearly 70%. By 2043, the economy is projected to grow to US\$176.3 billion, making it the 14th largest economy in Africa in the Current Path forecast for other countries

Although many of the charts in the sectoral scenarios also include GDP per capita, this overview is an essential point of departure for interpreting the general economic outlook of Côte d'Ivoire.

Over the period 1960–1977, the GDP per capita of Côte d'Ivoire was higher than that of South Korea as a result of high economic growth underpinned by massive public investment and high prices of cocoa and coffee on the international markets. The GDP per capita grew about 90% between 1960 and 1979.

However, after years of steady growth, the GDP per capita started to decline in the late 1980s due to deep recessions following both adverse external shocks and subsequent inappropriate domestic policy responses. The GDP per capita shrank by 54.1% between 1980 and 1994 before slightly improving by 5.5% between 1995 and 1999. GDP per capita growth again started to decline from 2000 due to socio-political instability that undermined economic growth.

Since 2012, the country has experienced a steady increase in GDP per capita: it increased by 44.2% between 2012 and 2019. The GDP per capita (PPP) was US\$4 238 in 2019 and is forecast to increase to US\$6 595 in 2043. This will be about 38.5% lower than the average for lower middle-income countries in Africa in the same year. The GDP per capita of Côte d'Ivoire peaked in 1979 at US\$5 645. This level will only be recovered on the current development trajectory in 2036.

The informal sector is a crucial lifeline for many people in Côte d'Ivoire. Informal employment has grown by more than 90% since the process of liberalisation of the economy in the 1980s; it accounts for 93.6% of jobs in the country. [4]

In 2019, the size of the informal economy represented about 38% of the country's GDP, and by 2043 it is projected to

modestly decline to 31.4%, above the average of 26.4% for lower middle-income countries in Africa.

Although the informal economy provides a safety net for the large and growing working-age population in the country, it impedes economic growth. Reducing informality will allow more people to benefit from better wages and redistributive measures. Therefore, Côte d'Ivoire needs to reduce the size of its informal economy with the least friction possible by reducing the hurdles to registering a business, tackling corruption and improving access to finance.

The IFs platform uses data from the Global Trade and Analysis Project (GTAP) to classify economic activity into six sectors: agriculture, energy, materials (including mining), manufactures, services and information and communications technology (ICT). Most other sources use a threefold distinction between only agriculture, industry and services with the result that data may differ.

The service sector is the dominant sector in Côte d'Ivoire's economy. In 2019, it accounted for 46.4% of its GDP (US\$24.1 billion). On the Current Path, the share of the service sector in GDP will slightly increase to 48.4% (US\$85.3 billion) by 2043.

The service sector was followed by the manufacturing sector at 25.9% of GDP (US\$13.4 billion) in 2019 and will increase to 35.3% of GDP (US\$62.2 billion) by 2043. ICT accounted for 6.3% of GDP in 2019, and by 2043 it is projected to decline slightly to 5.5% of GDP. Energy and materials contributed 1.7% and 2.3%, respectively, and their contribution to GDP is forecast to be 0.9% and 3.3%, respectively, in 2043.

The agriculture sector remains one of the pillars of Côte d'Ivoire's economy, although its contribution to GDP has declined over time. It accounts for about 60% of export receipts and employs two-thirds of the population. [5] It also has the third largest contribution to GDP currently. The contribution of the agriculture sector to GDP was 17.5% in 2019 and is projected to steadily decline to 6.6% (US\$11.7 billion) by 2043, indicating the structural transformation of the economy.

In the Current Path forecast horizon, the manufacturing sector's contribution to GDP will experience the most significant improvement (9.5 percentage points increase between 2019 and 2043). This holds great potential for economic growth, economic transformation, jobs creation and poverty reduction.

The data on agricultural production and demand in the IFs forecasting platform initialises from data provided on food balances by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). IFs contains data on numerous types of agriculture but aggregates its forecast into crops, meat and fish, presented in million metric tons. Chart 9 shows agricultural production and demand as a total of all three categories.

Côte d'Ivoire has considerable agriculture potential. Its geographical position contributes to about 75% of the national territory being suitable for agriculture. The country is a net exporter of major cash crops such as cocoa, coffee, rubber, cotton, palm oil and cashew nuts. It is also self-sufficient in foodstuffs such as cassava, yam and bananas but depends heavily on imports of rice, wheat and dairy products, among others.

Low agricultural productivity, low purchasing prices, high input costs, considerable post-harvest losses and inefficient use of modern farming techniques have contributed to a decline in agricultural production and kept farmers' incomes low. [6]

Agricultural crop production in 2019 stood at 27.4 million metric tons, compared to demand at 26.8 million metric tons. This agricultural surplus is forecast to end by 2022. By 2043, agricultural crop production and demand are forecast to be 35.3 and 47.3 million metric tons respectively. This is equivalent to excess demand for crops of nearly 12 million metric tons that will likely be met through imports.

Poverty: Current Path

There are numerous methodologies for and approaches to defining poverty. We measure income poverty and use GDP per capita as a proxy. In 2015, the World Bank adopted the measure of US\$1.90 per person per day (in 2011 international prices), also used to measure progress towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 1 of eradicating extreme poverty. To account for extreme poverty in richer countries occurring at slightly higher levels of income than in poor countries, the World Bank introduced three additional poverty lines in 2017:

- US\$3.20 for lower middle-income countries
- US\$5.50 for upper middle-income countries
- US\$22.70 for high-income countries.

The economic crisis in the 1980s and the socio-political instability from the late 1990s and during the first decade of this century significantly increased poverty in Côte d'Ivoire. The extreme poverty rate at US\$1.90, which was about 4.4% in 1981, reached its peak in 2011 at 38.6%.

However, since 2012, the poverty rate has exhibited a downward trend underpinned by robust economic growth. In 2019, the extreme poverty rate stood nearly at 22% (5.7 million people), about five percentage points below the average of 27.1% for other lower middle-income countries in Africa.

In the current development trajectory, the extreme poverty rate at US\$1.90 is projected to decline to 16.5% by 2043, below the average of 18% for lower middle-income countries in Africa. However, using US\$3.20 as the poverty threshold, Côte d'Ivoire had 41.7% of its population, about 10.8 million people, living in extreme poverty in 2019. This is about eight percentage points lower than the projected average for lower middle-income countries in Africa.

The poverty level at US\$3.20 is forecast to decline to 33.7% (15.4 million people) by 2043, below the average for lower middle-income countries in Africa, which will then be at 38.3%. To sustain economic growth over the long term, it must be inclusive. Policymakers in Côte d'Ivoire should make growth more inclusive by integrating the most vulnerable segments of the population, including women, into the economy and enhancing the human capital formation to meet the needs of the labour market and hence create more gainful employment and accelerate poverty reduction.

Carbon Emissions/Energy: Current Path

The IFs platform forecasts six types of energy, namely oil, gas, coal, hydro, nuclear and other renewables. To allow comparisons between different types of energy, the data is converted into billion barrels of oil equivalent (BBOE). The energy contained in a barrel of oil is approximately 5.8 million British thermal units (MBTUs) or 1 700 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of energy.

Strong economic growth in recent years has driven demand for energy in Côte d'Ivoire. Currently, oil and gas are the dominant energy sources in the country. In 2019, gas production was estimated at 17 million BOE, or 70% of total energy production, while oil production stood at 6 million barrels, or 24.7% of total energy production.

In the Current Path forecast, gas production will significantly increase to reach 35 million BOE by 2043, while oil production will decline to 2 million barrels in the same year. By 2043, gas will account for 79.5% of total energy production, while oil will account for only 4.5%.

Hydro and other renewable energy will account for 2.3% and 13.6% of total energy production by 2043. The energy production from other renewable sources is currently at the embryonic stage. However, several projects are now underway to boost renewable energy production and accelerate the energy transition.

Côte d'Ivoire has vast potential for renewable energy. The country's solar potential is estimated at 2–6 kWh/m² per day [7]. The country's drier northern regions have the highest potential for solar power, and it also has the potential to generate energy from biomass as it possesses plentiful cocoa, palm oil, cotton, coffee and sugar plantations.

Carbon is released in many ways, but the three most important contributors to greenhouse gases are carbon dioxide (CO₂), carbon monoxide (CO) and methane (CH₄). Since each has a different molecular weight, IFs uses carbon. Many other sites and calculations use CO₂ equivalent.

Annual carbon emissions, which were barely 2 million tons until 2011, have increased due to increased economic activity in recent years. Carbon emissions increased from 2 million tons in 2011 to 4.5 million tons in 2019 and are forecast to reach 18.6 million tons by 2043, an increase of 313% between 2019 and 2043, although coming from a very low base. However, this will only constitute about 0.2% of global carbon emissions.

Developed economies must help the country and the many other developing countries deal with the impact of climate change which will disproportionately affect them.

Endnotes

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About the authors

Dr Kouassi Yeboua is a senior researcher in African Futures and Innovation programme in Pretoria. He recently served as lead author on ISS studies on the long-term development prospects of the DR Congo, the Horn of Africa, Nigeria and Malawi. Kouassi has published on various issues relating to foreign direct investment in Africa and is interested in development economics, macroeconomics, international economics, and economic modelling. He has a PhD in Economics.

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