EU deforestation observatory

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EU deforestation observatory with global forest satellite maps is now online

EU observatory on deforestation and forest degradation

Update

The European Union has developed a set of deforestation satellite maps. They include a global map of forest cover for the year 2020; and a global map of forest cover changes 2016–2022, along with the reasons for the changes. These maps may help operators to assess deforestation risk under the EU Deforestation Regulation 2023/1115. They also map data on the production and trade of commodities affected by the EU Deforestation Regulation (that is, products related to cattle, cocoa, coffee, palm oil, soybeans, rubber, and timber).

In May 2025 the European Commission adopted Regulation 2025/1093, which classifies countries according to three levels of deforestation risk (low, standard, and high) in relation to the affected commodities.

Impacted products

products related to cattle, cocoa, coffee, palm oil, soybeans, rubber, timber

About the EU deforestation observatory

Under Regulation 2023/1115, from 30 December 2024 “deforestation commodities” (products related to cattle, cocoa, coffee, palm oil, soybeans, rubber, and timber) can only be sold on the EU market if they are “deforestation free”. This means that after 31 December 2020 no deforestation may have taken place on the land where the commodities were produced.

Satellite maps are a good way of monitoring changes to forest cover over time. Launched on 8 December 2023, the EU Observatory on deforestation and forest degradation presents maps and datasets based on the European Commission Joint Research Centre’s 30 years of expertise in geospatial technologies, developed under its Copernicus Earth Observation programme.

Under the section “Global Forest Monitoring”, two components are particularly relevant for supporting compliance of agri-food products with the EU Deforestation Regulation.

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- Global map of forest cover for year 2020: this interactive map shows global forest cover in 2020 (the cut-off date in the EU Deforestation Regulation) at 10-metre spatial resolution. The map will be updated over time as additional data become available. The methodology used by the Commission to develop this map is due to be published in March 2024.
- Global map of forest cover changes and their drivers: this map highlights global forest disturbances which could be the result of (for example) deforestation related to all agricultural production, forest harvest, selective logging, forest fires, extreme events, or insect defoliations. Data are available for the period 2016–2022.

The observatory also includes data and further maps on Global forest attributes that can be used to assess forest degradation (relevant to timber products under the EU Deforestation Regulation), as well as longer-term information on Tropical moist forest (1990–2021).

There are also maps and graphics related to production and trade in deforestation commodities based on FAOSTAT and UN COMTRADE data.

Under the section EU tools for forest monitoring are links to digital tools (software packages) that are useful for further analysis of satellite data and landscape patterns.

Timeline

The information in the EU deforestation observatory will be continually updated as new data become available.

What are the major implications for exporting countries?

The Commission emphasises that the maps provided by the EU deforestation observatory have no legal value, that is, they cannot be used to definitively demonstrate compliance with the EU Deforestation Regulation. Further actions, such as farm visits or photographic evidence, may be required to establish that deforestation has not taken place in a specific location.

However, this tool will be helpful to EU importers when carrying out the duty of due diligence required by the Deforestation Regulation.

Recommended Actions

Suppliers to the EU of commodities and products affected by the Deforestation Regulation should check the information provided on these satellite maps.

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Feedback on the maps relating to content, design, or functionality, can be emailed to jrc-forest-observatory@ec.europa.eu. Feedback emails should include the issue in the subject line, and a short summary at the beginning of the email.

Background

The creation of this deforestation observatory was announced in the European Commission's 2019 Communication Stepping up EU Action to Protect and Restore the World's Forests. A further goal for the observatory is the creation of an early warning system for potential deforestation or forest degradation activities.

Resources

Online resources from the European Commission:

- EU observatory covering deforestation and forest degradation worldwide goes live (press release, 8 December 2023)
- Frequently asked questions: EU observatory on deforestation and forest degradation [download]
- EU Communication (2019) on stepping up EU action to protect and restore the world's forests

Sources

EU observatory on deforestation and forest degradation

Visit the AGRINFO website to view the latest AGRINFO Update newsletters and search the database.

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