

EU Deforestation Regulation: Engagement with non-EU countries

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Commission sets out framework for engaging with country partners and benchmarking principles

[Communication](#) from the Commission on the Strategic Framework for International Cooperation Engagement in the context of Regulation (EU) 2023/1115 on the making available on the Union market and the export from the Union of certain commodities and products associated with deforestation and forest degradation

Update

The European Commission has published a Communication on engagement with non-EU countries in relation to halting deforestation and successfully implementing the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). The Communication explains the process the Commission will use to classify (or “benchmark”) countries as low, standard, or high risk. Country classification will determine the type of due diligence assessment EU companies must make, and the frequency of controls by EU Member State authorities. The Communication also provides an overview of ongoing EU initiatives that support exporting countries in preparing for implementation of the EUDR and sustainable deforestation-free production.

Impacted products

Cattle, cocoa, coffee, palm oil, soybeans

What is changing?

The European Commission has published a Communication on a Strategic Engagement Framework on Deforestation, setting out its work with exporting countries to meet the objective of halting deforestation and successfully implementing the EU Deforestation Regulation [2023/1115](#) (EUDR). It also describes the general principles the Commission will use when classifying (“benchmarking”) countries as being at low, standard, or high risk of deforestation.

Benchmarking

By 30 December 2024 (or 30 June 2025: see [EU Deforestation Regulation: Commission proposes 12 month delay to implementation](#)), the Commission will assess producer countries' risk status in relation to deforestation and forest degradation on the basis of scientific evidence. It will then "benchmark" the countries as low, standard, or high risk.

None of these risk categories will lead to a ban on products. However, obligations of EU operators and EU Member States will vary according to the level of risk. EU companies importing from a low-risk country will not have to undertake the full risk assessment required under due diligence. And controls by EU Member State authorities will be lower for commodities/products from a low-risk origin.

Benchmarking will be based mainly on data from the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), including hectares of forest loss per year, and percentage of forest cover lost annually. On the basis of this data, most countries are expected to be classified as low risk. High-risk countries will be those that are subject to sanctions by the UN Security Council and the EU Council.

Countries not identified as low or high risk will be in the standard risk category. The Commission will engage with these countries and assess their greenhouse gas emissions, existing agreements on deforestation, deforestation laws, and compliance with human rights laws. These assessments may be carried out at regional level.

There will be regular reviews of the country classifications, with a first review foreseen for 2026.

Support for non-EU countries

The EU will enter into bilateral dialogues with exporting countries to identify and support sustainable and deforestation-free production. Current initiatives include:

- Sustainable Agriculture for Forest Ecosystems (SAFE) programme: active in Brazil, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Zambia to support smallholders to transition to deforestation free supply.
- Technical Facility on Deforestation-free Value Chains: providing, on request, expertise on technical requirements (e.g. geolocation, land-use mapping, and traceability).
- Forest Partnerships: focused on improving forest governance and ensuring sustainability of trade in forest products.
- AL-INVEST Verde: in 12 Latin American countries, supporting the transition to sustainable production models.
- EUDR Engagement in Southeast Asia: dialogue and training on the key traceability requirements.

- Sustainable Cocoa Initiative: in Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, and Ghana, with activities including capacity building to monitor deforestation, development of traceability systems, and improvement of standards and certification.
- Multi-stakeholder Platform on Protecting and Restoring the World's Forests: brings together participants, including from non-EU countries, meeting regularly to discuss preparation for EUDR implementation.
- Terre Verte programme: supporting development of workers' agriculture and forestry sectors as part of the EU–Morocco Green Partnership.

Timeline

The Strategic Engagement Framework provides a basis for ongoing cooperation with partners and stakeholders through outreach, dialogue, and dedicated support measures.

Background

Under the EUDR, the Commission has committed to engaging in a coordinated way with producer countries and developing a strategic framework for this engagement (Regulation [2023/1115](#), Art. 30.1). The Strategic Engagement Framework is based on the following principles:

- continue dialogue and cooperation with relevant non-EU countries
- support for actions
- building on good practices
- supporting stakeholder engagement in non-EU countries
- human rights-centred approach
- transparency and access to information
- synergies with other EU policy initiatives
- coordination with relevant development partners.

Sources

[Communication](#) from the Commission on the Strategic Framework for International Cooperation Engagement in the context of Regulation (EU) 2023/1115 on the making available on the Union market and the export from the Union of certain commodities and products associated with deforestation and forest degradation

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