

ROADMAP

Roadmaps aim to inform citizens and stakeholders about the Commission's work in order to allow them to provide feedback and to participate effectively in future consultation activities. Citizens and stakeholders are in particular invited to provide views on the Commission's understanding of the problem and possible solutions and to make available any relevant information that they may have.

TITLE OF THE INITIATIVE	Communication on stepping up EU Action against Deforestation and Forest Degradation
LEAD DG – RESPONSIBLE UNIT	DG ENVIRONMENT – Unit F3 Multilateral Environmental Cooperation CO-LEAD : DG DEVCO – Unit C2 - Environment, Natural Resources, Water DG AGRI – Unit D4 - Environment, climate change, forestry and bio-economy
LIKELY TYPE OF INITIATIVE	Communication
INDICATIVE PLANNING	Q2 2019
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	http://ec.europa.eu/environment/forests/deforestation.htm

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A. Context, Problem definition and Subsidiarity Check

Context

The problem of deforestation and forest degradation has already been highlighted in the 2008 [Commission Communication on deforestation and forest degradation](#)¹. The idea of an EU initiative against deforestation and forest degradation was mooted in 2013 in both the [new EU Forest Strategy: for forests and the forest-based sector](#) and the 7th [Environment Action Programme](#). The initiative is a response to the persistence of the issue of global deforestation and the increasing awareness of the link between deforestation and agricultural expansion. The EU, as a major importer of agricultural commodities, is part of the problem but can also be part of the solution. The initiative is also a response to some of the findings of the [Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade \(FLEGT\)](#)² Action Plan [evaluation](#) of 2016 and the Council [conclusions](#) of 2016 on FLEGT, as well as repeated calls from the European Parliament³ to take action.

The initiative directly contributes to the objectives of the 2008 Communication on deforestation to support “the aims of halting global forest cover loss by 2030 at the latest and of reducing gross tropical deforestation by at least 50% by 2020 compared to 2008 levels”. Among others, the initiative also complements the ‘Reducing carbon Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation’ (REDD+) process. It also contributes to the 2015 [‘Trade for all’](#) Communication on responsible supply chains, a concept strongly supported by the Council in its 2016 [conclusions](#) on the EU and Responsible Global Value Chains. In addition, the [European Consensus on Development](#) of 2017 promotes sustainable agriculture and food systems that contribute to halting, preventing and reversing deforestation.

¹ Including related Council conclusions of 4 December 2008 (16852/08).

² The EU FLEGT Action Plan is a key EU initiative that has major potentials for promoting the halting of deforestation and forest degradation. The Plan (AP) has been in place since 2003, and is a key piece in the EU’s efforts to combat illegal logging and related trade, thereby contributing to halting deforestation. The plan includes a package of supply-side and demand-side measures across different pillars, including development cooperation support, promoting trade in legal timber, investment and finance, public procurement, support to private sector initiatives, better implementation of existing legislation and conflict timber.

³ For example, the European Parliament resolution on [transparent and accountable management of natural resources in developing countries: the case of forests \(2018/2003\(INI\)\)](#) of 4 July 2018 or the European Parliament [resolution on palm oil and deforestation of rainforests \(2016/2222\(INI\)\)](#) of 4 April 2017.

It will also help the EU to meet its related international commitments, in particular the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement on climate change, the UN Strategic Plan for Forests, the UN New York Declaration on Forests, and the Convention on Biological Diversity Aichi targets.

Problem the initiative aims to tackle

According to the [FAO](#), 7.6 million hectares of forests were lost each year between 2010 and 2015, mainly in the tropics⁴. While the rate of deforestation appears to have slowed compared to previous decades, it remains alarmingly high and has been increasing again since 2015⁵. The environmental, economic and social impacts are significant. The livelihoods of more than 1.6 billion people are dependent on forests. Forests are a major provider of various important ecosystem services, and an essential source of timber, food and fiber. In addition, they host 80% of the world's terrestrial biodiversity and they play a significant role in soil condition, the water cycle, and the global carbon cycle. Greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation globally account for about 10⁶%. They are presently in the same order of magnitude as those from the total EU economy, and according to the countries' pledges made in Paris, the full Land use, Land-use change, and Forestry (LULUCF) sector⁷ represents about 25% of the global mitigation potential by 2030⁸.

The drivers of deforestation are multiple and complex, and depend on specific regional and national contexts. An [FAO](#) report (2016) showed how agricultural expansion for the production of commodities (e.g. soy, beef, palm oil, coffee, cocoa) drives about 80% of all deforestation specifically in tropical countries, while mining, urbanisation and infrastructure are responsible for less than 10% each. EU demand contributes to the problem. According to a [Commission study](#) published in 2013, the EU27⁹ imported and consumed 10% of the global production of crops and livestock products associated with deforestation in the countries of origin over the period 1990-2008. This is equivalent to the import and consumption in the EU of a deforested land area of 9 million hectares over that period. The EU is indeed among the major global importers of a number of specific commodities associated with deforestation¹⁰, i.e. palm oil (25% of global imports), soy (15%), rubber (25%), beef (41%), maize (30%), cocoa (80%), and coffee (60%).

Forest degradation is related to the unsustainable extraction of forest products, such as timber, fuelwood, charcoal, (illegal) grazing along with natural causes of degradation, such as climate change, forest fires, pests and diseases¹¹. It reduces the capacity of the forest to provide essential goods and services.

The problem of deforestation and forest degradation will grow further towards 2050, with an estimated global population of almost 10 billion people, which will increase the pressure on land use and demand for commodities. The problem is further compounded by weak governance, unclear land ownership, poor forest management practices, laws and enforcement in many producer countries. Deforestation can also be associated with land grabbing, labour issues and abuses of the rights of local communities and indigenous peoples.

As a consequence, deforestation and forest degradation negatively affect many of the EU's global efforts in the field of biodiversity protection, climate change, sustainable agriculture, sustainable

⁴ Whereas the forest cover rate is stable or moderately increasing in the temperate and boreal zones. See: [Global Forest Resources Assessments 2015](#). Forests and other wooded land cover over 40 % of the EU's land area, with a great diversity of character across regions. Afforestation and natural succession have increased the EU's forest area by around 0.4 % per year over recent decades. On 20 September 2013, the Commission adopted a [new EU Forest Strategy](#), which responds to the new challenges that forests and the forest sector face.

⁵ [Feasibility study on options to step up EU action against deforestation](#) (part II) (2018), COWI, Milieu

⁶ Climate Change 2014: Mitigation of Climate Change. Contribution of Working Group III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

⁷ Land use, land-use change, and forestry (LULUCF), is defined as a "greenhouse gas inventory sector that covers emissions and removals of greenhouse gases resulting from direct human-induced land use such as settlements and commercial uses, land-use change, and forestry activities.

⁸ The key role of forests in meeting climate targets requires science for credible mitigation (G. Grassi and al) in Nature Climate Change.

⁹ Croatia was not considered, as the study was undertaken prior to its accession to the EU.

¹⁰ [Feasibility study on options to step up EU action against deforestation](#) (part II) (2018), COWI, Milieu, ECOFYS.

¹¹ [Feasibility study on options to step up EU action against deforestation](#) (part I) (2018), COWI, Milieu, ECOFYS.

consumption and production, illegal logging, human rights, disaster risk reduction, peace and security, social justice, good governance and the rule of law.

Basis for EU intervention

Article 191 (2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) requires the Union policy on environment to aim at a high level of protection and provides the legal basis for the EU to initiate work in this area. In addition, Article 21(2.f) of the TFEU provides that the Union shall help develop international measures to preserve and improve the quality of the environment and the sustainable management of global natural resources, in order to ensure sustainable development.

The non-legislative initiative will touch upon several areas of Union policy. Given the global dimension of deforestation and forest degradation, coordinated EU-level action is more efficient and effective. By acting jointly, the EU and its Member States will have much bigger market leverage and political clout.

B. What does the initiative aim to achieve and how

The overall objective is to step up EU action against tropical deforestation and forest degradation by developing a more coherent and comprehensive approach to the problem.

This framework will aim at increasing the coherence of existing EU policies and tools, taking full advantage of synergies across policy areas and better mainstreaming deforestation considerations throughout relevant EU policies. The initiative will help better implement and communicate actions already undertaken by the EU and its Member States, support existing commitments by governments and the private sector, promote collaboration and the exchange of good practices, and raise awareness.

The initiative may include actions to address, in an integrated and mutually supportive manner, demand and supply dimensions to promote sustainable value chains, the role of finance and investments, and information, transparency, traceability and monitoring of the supply chain, EU consumption and the financial sector.

Possible actions may include:

- 1) Build effective partnerships with producer countries in the tropical domain to support the uptake of sustainable agricultural and forestry practices, including afforestation, by both local communities and foreign investors, reduce pressure on forests, improve land governance and promote better conservation and management of tropical forests as well as alternatives livelihoods.
- 2) Promote sustainable and transparent supply chains for sustainably produced commodities and sustainable provision of related services.
- 3) Facilitate improved access, particularly by smallholders, to public and private investment and financial support, including through public-private partnerships, for sustainable value chains and sustainable landscapes. Achieve enhanced transparency of investment flows associated with deforestation, forest degradation, illegal logging and illegal land acquisition.
- 4) Strengthen international cooperation with other major consumer countries to ensure responsible and sustainable supply chains at the global level and reduce the risk of 'leakages'.
- 5) Better mainstream considerations to prevent tropical deforestation and forest degradation throughout relevant EU policies.

C. Better regulation

Consultation of citizens and stakeholders

Extensive consultations of stakeholders have taken place as a follow-up to the 2013 study '[The impact of EU consumption on deforestation](#)', and as input to the 2018 '[Feasibility study on options to step up EU action against deforestation](#)'. This included a stakeholders' conference on 'Tackling illegal logging and deforestation: progress made and opportunities for action' on 21-23 June 2017, a workshop on palm oil on 2 October 2017, as well as numerous exchanges with stakeholders and producer countries.

An additional online public consultation will provide another opportunity for all relevant stakeholder groups (i.e. private and public sector, researchers and academia and civil society organizations), as well as the general public to share their views. The consultation aims to ensure that all relevant stakeholders that may have an interest in forests have an opportunity to express their views on the problem of deforestation and forest degradation and on an EU approach to tackle them. It will be accessible in 23 official EU languages on the ['Have your say' portal](#) and via [the dedicated webpage of DG Environment](#). Replies to the questionnaire can be submitted in 23 official EU languages. The results of the consultation will feed into the development of the initiative and will be collected in a summary report, which will be published on the consultation webpage shortly after the end of the public consultation.

Evidence base and data collection

The 2013 study on ['The impact of EU consumption on deforestation'](#) provided a comprehensive analysis of the impact of EU consumption on deforestation. It was complemented by a [Commission conference in 2014](#), bringing together stakeholders from governments, the private sector and civil society from both producer and consumer countries. The ['Feasibility study on options to step up EU action against deforestation'](#) was published in February 2018 to consolidate the evidence base and assess possible policy interventions to step up EU action against deforestation and forest degradation. This initiative will also build on significant research by the [EU Joint Research Centre](#) and within [various projects](#) funded under the EU research programmes (in particular FP7 2007-2013) in the fields of land use, REDD+ and forest monitoring.

An impact assessment will not be necessary for the development of the Communication given that the nature of the initiative is non-legislative and its purpose is to set out a more coherent policy framework for existing policies and tools.