

FRENCH NATIONAL STRATEGY TO COMBAT IMPORTED DEFORESTATION (2018 – 2030)

Overview for decision makers

The forest ecosystem provides invaluable services to humankind: it contributes to avoid climate change through sequestering carbon, it mitigates extreme climatic events, filters water and offers a protection against floods. It also shelters a remarkable biodiversity gathering 75% of living species. It is also the living space of numerous indigenous communities, and the means of subsistence for more than 1.6 billion persons.

In its Climate Plan announced in July 2017, France has committed to publishing a “*national strategy to end the import of forest or agricultural products contributing to deforestation – including indirect land use changes*”.

According to the FAO, over 129 million hectares of forest were lost worldwide between 1990 and 2015 (an area twice the size of France, and almost 8 times larger than the forest area of mainland France).

- Agricultural production and livestock rearing constitute the main cause of deforestation on a global scale, and a third of this production is destined for export.
- The European Commission's 2013 study on the impact of European consumption on deforestation shows that European countries are responsible for over a third of deforestation linked to international trade in agricultural produce.

Through its national strategy, the French government aims to encourage a European and international dynamics to combat imported deforestation, making the case for a robust and ambitious European initiative on deforestation: since the European Union bears significant responsibility in this area, an exemplary commitment to deforestation prevention is deserved.

The French national strategy to combat imported deforestation (SNDI) aims to end the import of non-sustainable agricultural or forest products contributing to deforestation by 2030.

Scope of the SNDI:

Raw materials involved: the SNDI concentrates primarily on agricultural materials that have the highest level of contribution to deforestation and are mentioned in the Amsterdam declaration (soy, palm oil, beef and its by-products, cocoa and rubber), as well as timber and its derived products. During future revisions, the scope of the strategy may be widened to include other products with potentially significant levels of social and environmental impact: corn, canola, shrimp, cotton, coffee, sugar cane, etc., as well as products obtained via mining.

Within the SNDI, imported deforestation covers imports of raw or processed materials whose production has contributed, directly or indirectly, to deforestation, forest deterioration, or the conversion of natural ecosystems located outside national borders.

Orientation 1: develop, enhance and share knowledge

The strategy's **first objective** aims to deepen knowledge and awareness surrounding deforestation. Relevant research bodies have been mobilized through the National Alliance for Environmental Research (AllEnvi). The issue of determining the size of France's forest footprint should be tackled as a priority.

Orientation 2: develop actions to combat imported deforestation within international partnerships.

Objective 2 aims to establish road maps for each exporter country or region by the end of 2019. They will enable "sustainable territory contracts" to be drawn up with producer countries, as well as an assessment of the feasibility of implementing incentivising measures for sustainable raw materials. For the next five years, the *Agence française de développement* should allocate 60 M€ per year for projects contributing to sustainable management, combating deforestation, and reforestation.

Objective 3 aims to deploy an action plan to combat imported deforestation, to be rolled out by French development operators (the *Agence française de développement* group and *Expertise France*)

Orientation 3: integrate the fight against deforestation into public policy, in order to stimulate French demand for sustainable products

Objective 4 stipulates that France will pursue its political action vis-a-vis the European Commission and other member States, to establish a European initiative on deforestation and forest degradation by 2020.

Objective 5 aims at a better inclusion of deforestation issues in EU trade agreements, particularly by including the ratification of the Paris agreement and compliance with its legally binding obligations as an essential element of EU trade agreements; by promoting, from the drafting of mandates stage, the inclusion of dispositions related to deforestation and the definition of sustainability criteria before granting additional trade preferences on targeted commodities; and by including deforestation issues, in the discussions focusing on the implementation and review(s) of the EU "trade and sustainable development" chapters.

Objective 6 deals with biofuels. The incorporation of biofuels causing direct land use change, that are competing with food cultures, is already capped. Besides, in the frame of the revision of the renewable energy directive which was voted by the Parliament on November 13th, commodities having also an impact on indirect land use change will be capped at their level of 2019, and then progressively eliminated by 2030, according to the criteria the European Commission will define in early 2019. Once these criteria are defined, the cap could be set at the level of 2017 in French fiscal incentives, if lower than that of 2019. France will also improve the traceability of imported consignments in cooperation with each sector.

The aim of **objective 7** is to make France protein self-sufficient. This will involve promoting alternatives to the import of plant proteins produced via deforestation, and pursuing initiatives to diversify protein consumption in France in favour of plant-based proteins.

Objective 8 of the strategy aims to implement a “zero deforestation” policy in public purchasing by 2022, via three measures: (i) increasing purchaser awareness via the publication of a guide to sustainable public purchasing, (ii) integrating an objective for zero imported deforestation by 2022 into the “exemplary administration” inter-ministerial initiative; and (iii) solicit the EU to implement a ban on public purchasing of products created via imported deforestation.

Objective 9 of the strategy reinforces anti-fraud inspections, first in the timber sector with the objective of carrying out 175 inspections annually under the EU’s Timber Regulation, and secondly to combat fraud in the used oil sector by implementing enhanced traceability measures.

In objective 10, the strategy aims to increase its influence in the field of deforestation prevention in international and European negotiations pertaining or linked to forests.

Orientation 4: encourage and coordinate the involvement of relevant stakeholders

Objective 11 of the strategy specifically concerns businesses, who will be asked to improve their risk analyses and reporting in terms of combating deforestation. At the European level, this issue will be addressed via the revision of directive 2014/95/EU and its guidelines; at the national level, specific indicators for so-called “zero deforestation” supply sources must be developed by companies within the framework of their CSR reporting.

Objective 12 aims to encourage financial operators to integrate anti-deforestation efforts into their investment policies and strategies in a more explicit and systematic way, with support from “Finance for tomorrow” and the Paris financial marketplace. Their commitment to financing projects using sustainable agricultural and forestry practices could be cemented either through the coalitions of the Global Climate Action Agenda and the One Planet Summit, or by increasing national and international investment in certain funds, such as the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund. The government will support the emergence of green obligations linked to combating deforestation. Finally, the issue of deforestation must be written into the new reporting requirements contained within the European Commission’s action plan for “financing sustainable growth”, due to be published in 2019.

Objective 13 aims to progressively raise the requirement level for certifications, and to ensure they are more widely deployed.

Objective 14 aims to improve environmental information so as to promote responsible consumption. This will involve elaborating a new label “zero deforestation” by 2020 by all stakeholders committed in the platform More globally, it will involve the deployment of environmental information and launching a “general public” information campaign focusing on the links between consumption and imported deforestation, in order to encourage the consumption of products which do not contribute to deforestation.

This objective also seeks to reinforce the responsibility for vigilance on behalf of companies, as outlined in law n°2017-399 of 27 March 2017, by studying the possibility of broadening the scope of the law and developing guidelines for each sector, in order to increase awareness of the risks linked to deforestation. At the same time, France will support an equivalent initiative at the European level, and on the international level will fight for an internationally-binding judicial tool regarding human rights and environmental preservation.

Objective 15 plans to integrate the “zero deforestation” objective into sectoral planning. This involves all plans relating to the livestock sector, as well as plant oils and proteins. For

cocoa and rubber, which are not covered by existing sectoral plans, as well as for timber, a specific sectoral plan focusing on imported deforestation will be drawn up in 2019.

Objective 16 aims to create a national platform to combat imported deforestation, in order to encourage the implementation and monitoring of “zero deforestation commitments” by private operators, notably by facilitating their efforts in terms of traceability and risk analysis in supply chains. The platform steering committee will also elaborate, with the impetus of the State, the “zero deforestation” label mentioned above, to guide consumers in their choices.

Orientation 5: methods for monitoring the SNDI in order to ensure its objectives are achieved

The strategy has established a **body for dialogue, orientation and monitoring** within the National Tropical Forests Group in order to facilitate the implementation and assessment of the strategy, as well as its annual revision and future evaluations.

In 2020, a way point on the implementation of this strategy will enable to assess what remains to reach its goal by 2030 and propose, if so, additional measures to accelerate the achievement of the objective of ending French importations responsible for deforestation (extension of the scope of products cover by the strategy, new binding measures...).

The full text of the Strategy is available at the back of this page <https://www.ecologique-solidaire.gouv.fr/france-veut-mettre-fin-dici-2030-deforestation-causee-limportation-produits-non-durables-0>