

Deforestation Free Champions – Charter and Action Plan

We are all part of the deforestation economy - it's in the food we eat, the products we buy, the fuel in our vehicles. When we think of the term *deforestation free* (DF), it's helpful to compare it to the Plastic Free Campaign - you can take steps to reduce or stop using single use plastic, but it's very difficult to get rid of all plastic. This is the same for forest risk. It's very difficult to completely remove all risk of deforestation as it is so embedded in our economy, but we can take practical actions that help to significantly reduce that risk, like using ethical certifications, circularity approaches and reducing waste.

A *Deforestation Free Champion* is a school, business, organisation, community or individual who advocates for tropical forests, people and nature, by learning, raising awareness, acting for change and inspiring others.

Deforestation Free Champion Charter

As a public body Monmouthshire County Council are committed to helping deliver all of Wales' well-being goals included in the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act, including global responsibility, and meeting our biodiversity duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. We believe that becoming a Deforestation Free Champion will not only help us contribute to these goals, but enable us to act as an advocate for tropical forests, people and nature.

To become a Deforestation Free Champion:

1. We commit to tackling our overseas deforestation footprint and habitat loss through our practices and behaviours, for example, through procurement across different stages, such as challenging what we are buying, considering the wellbeing impacts or via effective contract management.
2. We commit to developing and carrying out our Deforestation Free Action Plan and auditing our procurement of forest-risk products and services.
3. We commit to making changes to deforestation-risk commodities in favour of more ethically sourced ingredients.
4. We will review our Fairtrade commitment and ensure it is carried out in our procurement practice.
5. We commit to helping our council learn about the importance of tropical forests, consumption-driven deforestation and what they can do about it.
6. We commit to working with our community, businesses, suppliers and partners, including schools, to raise awareness and support action on consumption-driven deforestation to help create a community of deforestation free champions.

In order to do this, we will develop and carry out the following action plan:

Deforestation Free Champion (DFC) Action Plan

1. **Learn.** Begin with a DF training session/workshop for staff who will be involved in helping to deliver this work and those in decision making/leadership roles. (Size of Wales can deliver this.)
2. **Reflect.** Look at your own practices and behaviours as a council and identify where changes can be made. For example:
 - a. Have you adopted circularity and waste reduction practices across your estate?
 - b. Have you made a public commitment to source sustainably?
 - c. Have you switched to an ethical pension fund for your employees?

You can use the Policies & Practices [template](#) to help you with this.

3. **Audit.** Carry out a DF audit of the services and products you procure as a council and identify areas for change. This will include any forest-risk products and ingredients you procure directly and indirectly, e.g. through services such as catering and cleaning.

You can use the [DF Procurement Toolkit](#) (or [Business Toolkit](#)) and practical [audit template](#) to help guide you through this process. (The Deforestation Free team at Size of Wales will be happy to support you with this).

4. **Act.** Start to implement the changes you have identified in steps 2 and 3. These might include:
 - a. Signing up to the DFC Charter and making your commitment public.
 - b. Creating or updating catering guidance to incorporate DF criteria.
 - c. Reducing ultra processed foods (UPFs) in meals served to staff and the public.
 - d. Increasing the number of plant-based proteins served in school meals and serving less, but better quality meat and dairy.
 - e. Replacing forest-risk ingredients with an ethically certified alternative.
 - f. Reviewing your Fairtrade commitment and ensuring Fairtrade products are given preference over non-certified products, consistent with your Fairtrade status.
 - g. Commit to becoming an RSPO certified council. (*Long-term commitment*)

Please note, that we don't expect you to do all of this at once! This is a journey, so you may want to start with one practical action and continue to make changes step by step. However you decide to begin, we recommend that you sign up to the DFC Charter and make your commitment public.

5. **Collaborate.** Continue to work with and support your community partners to become deforestation free, in particular schools, businesses and farmers. Support local farmers engaged in nature friendly farming practices, to build local food resilience.
6. **Inspire / Raise awareness.** Some of this will happen naturally through conversations with your suppliers, i.e. when you make changes as a result of your audit. However, there will be many other opportunities to raise awareness and inspire others across your work. For example:
 - a. Across your services, there may be opportunities to influence the partners and stakeholders you work with.
 - b. Within your community, e.g. you could share the journey you are on as a council and how you are working with community partners to achieve change.
 - c. Across your staff team, e.g., by organising a DF Lunch and Learn. (Size of Wales could deliver this).
 - d. After signing the DFC Charter and starting your deforestation free journey, you could share your actions and behaviour change publicly to show impact and inspire others.

How will this be assessed?

As part of our action plan and award, MCC will need to have done at least:

- 1 learning session - provided by Size of Wales
- 1 reflection - this will help provide the baseline via the [policy and practice questions](#)
- 1 audit of forest-risk commodities and services, e.g. catering
- 1 policy action - e.g. signing up to DFC charter, a council resolution, creating a deforestation free policy etc.
- 1 practical action - e.g. changing a deforestation risk ingredient, reformulating a dish to reduce forest footprint ("one meal at a time"), taking effective steps to reduce food waste etc. **NB: action has to be something new, not something that would have happened anyway through other commitments/policies.**
- 1 sharing/engagement - e.g. with businesses or the wider community

After 1 year, this will be compared against the baseline to measure the level of change.