



Deforestation Free Public Procurement Toolkit

Designed to help the Welsh public
sector reduce its tropical forest footprint

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About this toolkit

This Deforestation Free Public Procurement Toolkit has been designed by Size of Wales to help Welsh public bodies ensure that the products and commodities they buy, do not drive tropical deforestation and habitat destruction overseas.

Between 70 and 80 per cent of all tropical deforestation¹ is caused by the production of just a handful of agricultural products – products we buy, use and consume in Wales every day, including beef from South America, soy (embedded in animal products), palm oil, coffee, cacao, timber, paper and pulp. Wales imports significant quantities of these commodities, which are linked to deforestation and land conversion, and negative social impacts, such as child and forced labour and the abuse of Indigenous Peoples' rights. Wales' total overseas land footprint for just five forest risk commodities (beef, soy, palm oil, cocoa and coffee) amounts to 341,000 hectares each year. In addition, investments undertaken by Welsh

organisations, such as public sector pension funds, can contribute to deforestation through investments in companies financing destructive industries, e.g., intensive beef production. By addressing deforestation and habitat conversion within Welsh public sector supply chains, public bodies can help to tackle the climate and nature crises, protect Indigenous Peoples' rights and reduce the risk of future pandemics.

This toolkit reflects the context of Welsh and UK-wide policies and frameworks and demonstrates how Deforestation Free Procurement (DFP) can help public bodies meet their obligations under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WFG Act), the Social Partnership and Public Procurement Act and other key legislation (see [page 12](#) for more detail), helping Wales to become a healthier, resilient, prosperous and globally responsible nation. It also looks at the wider picture of due diligence legislation and practices internationally to highlight the general direction of travel regarding forest-risk commodities and provides inspiring case studies.

Who is this toolkit for?

This toolkit is suitable for public sector workers/civil servants, particularly those with a leadership role and wider view of strategy and policy making in their organisation, procurement practitioners e.g. buyers and relationship managers working directly with suppliers, climate and nature leads and sustainability practitioners, but also any employee who raises purchase orders for food products or other forest risk commodities as part of their role.

It can be used to support Welsh Government's [Sustainability Risk Assessment](#) for high value tenders, but also for lower value procurements, to help reduce the risk of tropical deforestation and habitat conversion across public sector spending.

¹ <https://ourworldindata.org/drivers-of-deforestation>

About Deforestation Free Nation

Deforestation Free Nation (DFN) is a solutions-focussed campaign from climate change charity Size of Wales, in partnership with WWF Cymru.

DFN aims to help Wales reduce its land footprint overseas in relation to forest-risk commodities, supporting Wales to respond to the climate and nature crisis, and stand in solidarity with Indigenous Peoples and forest communities on the frontline of deforestation and climate change.

Our activities include:

1. Raising awareness of the impacts of forest-risk commodities.
2. Advocating for sustainable sourcing, such as ethical certifications, and measures to reduce consumption of forest-risk commodities.
3. Providing a platform for Indigenous Peoples and forest communities on the frontline of deforestation and climate change.
4. Working across society with the Welsh public sector, businesses, schools and communities to help Wales transition to a resilient, healthier and prosperous low-carbon economy.
5. Sharing knowledge, learning and best practice.



Where we are now

We are facing a climate and nature crisis. Despite irrefutable evidence that human-made emissions are heating our planet and destabilising our climate, global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions continue to rise. Fast and deep cuts to global emissions are needed, with trees and forests being an essential part of the solution.

However, despite over 140 countries committing to halting and reversing deforestation and land degradation by 2030 at COP26 in Glasgow, the world remains far from this zero-deforestation pathway. While some gains have been made, forest losses remain alarmingly high. In 2024 alone, we lost 6.7 million hectares of primary tropical forest, mostly to fire and deforestation.² Forest fires triggered by rising temperatures were responsible for 50 per cent of all primary

tropical forest loss in 2024, releasing more than four times the emissions from all air travel in 2023.³ This release of CO₂ contributes to devastating climate impacts, such as record-breaking droughts in the Amazon⁴, leaving communities stranded and killing untold numbers of animals, whilst also displacing Indigenous Peoples from their lands.⁵ The Amazon is at risk of reaching an irreversible tipping point, which could see this biodiverse forest ecosystem converting into savannah, increasing climate impacts and causing food and water insecurity for millions of people. The pressures on tropical forests are intensifying. We need to act now. Without tropical forests, we lose the fight against climate change.

² <https://www.wri.org/news/release-global-forest-loss-shatters-records-2024-fueled-massive-fires>

³ <https://www.wri.org/news/release-global-forest-loss-shatters-records-2024-fueled-massive-fires>

⁴ <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/news/251057/climate-change-made-unprecedented-amazon-rainforest/>

⁵ <https://news.mongabay.com/2023/11/deforestation-in-the-brazilian-amazon-falls-22-in-2023/>



The importance of tropical forests for the UK's national security was made clear in a recent UK Government National Security Assessment.⁶

This report highlighted that the Amazon rainforest – identified as a key ecosystem region critical for UK national security – is currently at 17 per cent deforestation – modelling suggests that the threshold for collapse of the Amazon rainforest is between 20 and 25 per cent deforestation.

The results of such a collapse would be widespread, and include increased migration, political instability and military conflict and increased risk of pandemics. This would have significant knock-on impacts on the UK's food security, as the UK relies on global markets for commodities such as soy and palm oil from South America; both soy and palm are used in livestock feed in the UK, and palm oil is used widely in ultra-processed foods. Our reliance

on complex, international supply chains for food security place us in an extremely vulnerable situation given the rising threats of climate and nature collapse.

While in Wales, we have experienced multiple heatwaves and reduced rainfall, increasing the risk of flash floods, water shortages and heat-related deaths.^{7,8} Over 273,000 homes are at risk of flooding, while extreme weather threatens our ability to grow and access food, with events such as droughts and flooding costing Welsh farmers millions of pounds each year.⁹ In a recent study, 55 per cent of farmers believed that addressing extreme weather linked to climate change is the priority for UK food security.¹⁰ As well as impacting farmers directly, the impact of climate change in 2022-23 increased the average household food bill in the UK by £361.¹¹

If we are serious about limiting global warming to 1.5°C – the limit agreed in the Paris Climate Agreement – we must halt and reverse tropical deforestation and habitat conversion. If we do not do this, we are on course for catastrophic global heating, which will affect *a//* life as we know it. 2024 was the

first year on record that the average global temperature exceeded 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.¹² We cannot let this become the norm. We must act, together, to prevent further deforestation, global warming and runaway climate impacts. We must slow down our consumption of the planet.



© Size of Wales (image is of Ju Kerexu – Guarani leader)

⁶ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/696e0eae719d837d69afc7de/National_security_assessment_-_global_biodiversity_loss_-_ecosystem_collapse_and_national_security.pdf

⁷ <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/about-us/news-and-media/media-centre/weather-and-climate-news/2025/uk-on-track-for-one-of-its-warmest-summers-on-record>

⁸ <https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/newsevents/news/2025/nearly-600-heat-related-deaths-expected-uk-heatwave-researchers-estimate>

⁹ https://www.wwf.org.uk/sites/default/files/2024-03/5126%20-%20FARMING%20IN%20WALES_REPORT_v3.pdf

¹⁰ <https://eciu.net/media/press-releases/2025/majority-of-farmers-report-feelings-of-anxiety-and-depression-in-face-of-drought-and-flooding>

¹¹ <https://eciu.net/analysis/reports/2023/climate-fossil-fuels-and-uk-food-prices-2023>

¹² <https://climate.copernicus.eu/copernicus-2024-first-year-exceed-15degc-above-pre-industrial-level>

A scenic view of a tropical forest with misty mountains and a cloudy sky. The image shows lush green forested hillsides with white mist or low clouds rising from the valleys. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds. In the foreground, some green foliage is visible on the right side.

The importance of tropical forests

The importance of tropical forests

Climate regulation

Protecting existing tropical forests is essential to tackling the climate crisis. Half of all carbon stored in the Earth's forests is found in tropical regions.¹³ This is due in part to the dense, hardwood trees that grow in tropical forests and the continuous levels of sunshine all year round, meaning twelve months of growth, photosynthesis and carbon sequestration. Through the process of photosynthesis trees store carbon both above ground in their wood, bark and leaves, and below ground in their roots, trapping carbon deep in the soil. On the forest floor, leaf litter, seeds, berries and twigs also decompose, transferring carbon and micronutrients into the soil.

When we burn down a forest, we not only release this stored up carbon into the atmosphere, adding to existing human-made emissions from food waste, industry and transport for example, but we also remove the Earth's ability to draw down the carbon we emit from these other sources. For every tree lost we increase atmospheric CO₂ concentrations that drive climate change and reduce the Earth's ability to counter emissions.

Another function of tropical forests is that they create cloud cover, which reflects solar radiation back into space helping to keep the Earth's temperature regulated. In contrast, deforested land absorbs more solar radiation, which increases global temperatures.

¹³ <https://www.grida.no/resources/6948>



Biodiversity

The protection of tropical forests is not just important in our fight against climate change, but it is crucial to reversing catastrophic nature loss. **Tropical forests account for just six per cent of landmass coverage on earth, but hold over 50 per cent of terrestrial plants and animal species.**¹⁴ This rich flora and fauna form a complex ecosystem, with soils, fungi, plants and animals helping to deliver a huge range of ecosystem services. This includes regulating services, from air and water purification e.g. Brazil's Atlantic Forest provides over 60 per cent of the population's supply of drinking water¹⁵ – to flood and drought prevention, and provisional services, such as shelter, food and medicine. Not to mention cultural services, such as spiritual enrichment and inspiration.

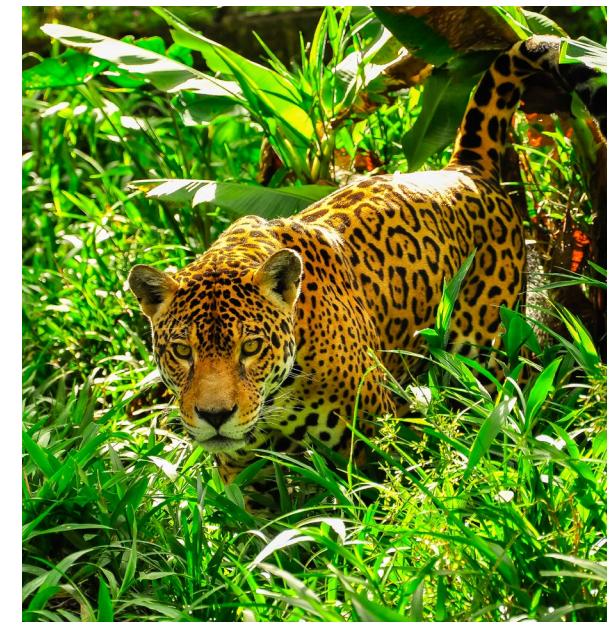
Today, many species are under threat from deforestation, including orangutans in Borneo and the Sumatran tiger in Indonesia. As well as the countless microorganisms and fungi found in healthy forest soils that support a flourishing ecosystem capable of sustaining life.

Indigenous Peoples and Forest Communities

Research widely recognises that Indigenous Peoples and local forest communities play an essential role as guardians of the Earth's forests.^{16,17,18} Indigenous Peoples have been safeguarding biodiverse forest habitats for thousands of years, stewarding and respecting the land, rivers, plants and animals. **Indeed, forests protected by indigenous communities store more carbon and contain more biodiversity than those unprotected.**¹⁹ Nevertheless, Indigenous Peoples and other forest communities are risking their lives to protect their forests, livelihoods and cultures from the impacts of deforestation driven by the global demand for products such as beef, soy, palm oil and timber. Supporting Indigenous Peoples and forest communities, through measures such as fair and sustainable trade, is not only just and ethical in terms of human rights, but it is essential to help preserve and protect the biosphere upon which all life on Earth depends.

Zoonotic disease

Protecting tropical forests can also help reduce the risk of pandemics by providing a buffer between humans and wildlife. Seventy-five per cent of emerging infectious diseases are zoonotic²⁰ – spread from animals to humans – with rising rates of deforestation leading to more frequent interactions between humans and wildlife, particularly through agricultural activity. In fact, since the 1940s, nearly 50 per cent of the zoonoses that have emerged are linked to agriculture.²¹ The deadly Ebola and Nipah viruses are examples of pathogens that have jumped the species barrier into human populations and are directly linked to tropical deforestation.^{22,23}



14 <https://rainforestfoundation.org/our-work/priorities/>

15 <https://www.worldwildlife.org/magazine/issues/summer-2021/articles/restoring-brazil-s-atlantic-forest>

16 <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/sciadv.aaw2869>

17 <http://www.edf.org/sites/default/files/tropical-forest-carbon-in-indigenous-territories-a-global-analysis.pdf>

18 <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41558-021-01042-5>

19 <http://www.fao.org/3/cb2953en/cb2953en.pdf>

20 <https://www.unep-wcmc.org/news/six-ways-conserving-and-sustainably-using-nature-could-prevent-future-pandemics>

21 <https://www.cirad.fr/en/press-area/press-releases/2021/zoonotic-diseases-and-deforestation-covid-19>

22 <https://thecsrjournal.in/csr-how-deforestation-contributes-to-spreading-of-nipah-virus/>

23 <https://europepmc.org/article/MED/33842581>

Why public bodies should act

With an annual procurement spend of £10 billion, the Welsh public sector has a huge role to play in helping to drive sustainable production and eliminate tropical deforestation from the Welsh economy. By adopting a policy of DFP public bodies will be:

1. Helping to **reduce global heating** and mitigating against the worst effects of climate change.
2. **Protecting communities** on the frontline of climate change by **increasing their resilience to climate impacts** through fair and sustainable trade.
3. Contributing to **national and global security through protecting critical ecosystems** which deliver essential services. A 2025 UK Government National Security Assessment²⁴ found that ecosystems like the Amazon rainforest are dangerously close to collapse, with current levels of deforestation sitting at 17 per cent. Threats to these critical ecosystems which support major global food production – including tropical rainforests – will have significant knock-on impacts for the UK’s food security.
4. Contributing to **Wales’ well-being goals** under the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015), and supporting the delivery of the Future Generations Commissioner’s recommendation for the **Welsh public sector to become deforestation free by 2028**.²⁵
5. Complying with the **Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023**²⁶ requiring Welsh public bodies to deliver socially responsible procurement and embed social value in procurement through supporting sustainable livelihoods at home and abroad. The Act requires public bodies to deliver procurement which maximises its contribution to all seven well-being goals, including being a ‘globally responsible Wales’. The Statutory Guidance for the Act includes several references to the impacts of procurement on deforestation, and mitigating actions public bodies and suppliers can take to reduce their deforestation risk.²⁷
6. **Supporting biodiversity and ecological resilience**. Under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 public authorities that exercise their functions in relation to Wales have a legal duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems.²⁸ Public bodies can support biodiversity both directly and indirectly, for example, through sustainable procurement policies and practices.

24 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/696e0eae719d837d69afc7de/National_security_assessment_-_global_biodiversity_loss__ecosystem_collapse_and_national_security.pdf

25 <https://futuregenerations.wales/cym/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Future-Generations-Report-2025.pdf>

26 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asc/2023/1/enacted>

27 <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2026-03/social-partnership-and-public-procurement-wales-act-statutory-guidance-socially-responsible-procurement-srp.pdf>

28 <https://www.gov.wales/section-6-biodiversity-and-resilience-ecosystems-duty-reporting-guidance>

- 7. Helping to reduce our consumption emissions overseas.** To transition to a lower-carbon economy we will need to address the emissions we generate through our consumption of products and services (i.e. Scope 3 emissions), not just the emissions we generate in Wales/domestically.
- 8. Putting into practice Wales' status as a Fairtrade Nation,** tackling modern slavery and embedding fair work practices in supply chains.
- 9. Supporting a local, regenerative and nature-friendly food system.** By supporting ethical certifications and taking holistic measures to reduce deforestation risk, public bodies support smaller, local food producers and those taking action to make farming more regenerative.
- 10. Reducing the risk of future pandemics.** The COVID-19 pandemic put our complex relationship with nature in the spotlight – including the role that deforestation and habitat destruction play in increasing the likelihood of zoonotic diseases. There are risks of sparking further pandemics, as wild animals are forced into closer contact with humans and livestock due to deforestation.
- 11. Demonstrating cross-sector leadership for the UK's due diligence legislation on forest risk commodities.** The UK's Global Resource Initiative taskforce recommends that the public sector should help to lead the transition to sustainable commodities by strengthening existing mandatory sustainable commodity public procurement requirements.
- 12. Collaborating with global neighbours to help tackle tropical deforestation and its associated impacts.** Pioneering countries and states have either implemented or are developing policies to remove imported deforestation from public procurement. (See [best practice case studies](#)).
- 13. Protecting the ability of a public body to carry out its activities by:**
 - a. Reducing physical risk**

This refers to the physical impact of climate change that could affect an organisation's ability to carry out its function, e.g. a singular event, such as flooding, or incremental changes, such as temperature or sea level rise.²⁹
 - b. Reducing transition risk**

This refers to the potential financial impacts if an organisation fails to adapt to changes during the transition to a lower-carbon global economy.
 - c. Safeguarding public trust**

Organisations are increasingly exposed to reputational risks arising from problems in their supply chain; by ensuring sustainable investments and sourcing of goods, public bodies can maintain integrity and public trust.
 - d. Increasing employee engagement**

Sustainability commitments have a positive impact on employee engagement,³⁰ indicating potential gains from higher employee satisfaction and retention.
 - e. Responding to a shift in public attitudes** with 70 per cent of the UK public backing government action to tackle illegal deforestation.³¹

²⁹ <https://www.ceres.org/resources/reports/investor-guide-deforestation-and-climate-change>

³⁰ <https://www.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/topics/environmental-social-governance/importance-of-sustainability-to-employees.html>

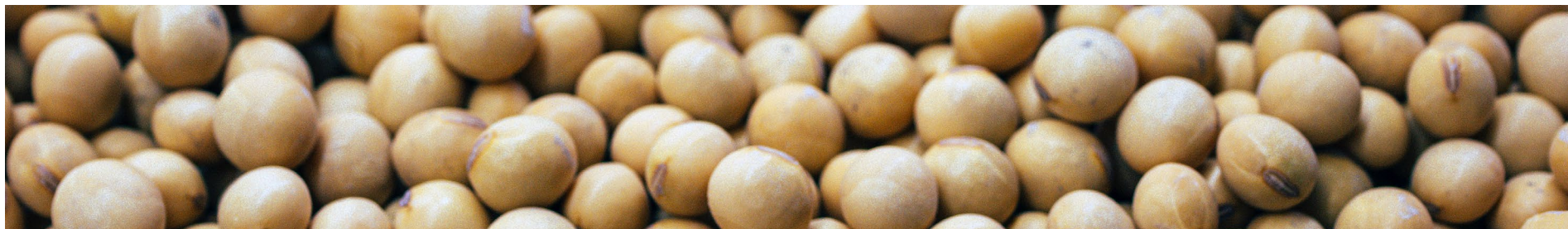
³¹ <https://www.wwf.org.uk/press-release/brits-back-action-tackle-illegal-deforestation>

Benefits of DF Procurement		Alignment with legislation, policies and frameworks
Environmental	Protecting tropical forests and other key habitats	• Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: Resilient; Globally responsible; Prosperous • Future Generations Report 2025: the Commissioner recommended that the Welsh public sector should become deforestation free by 2028 • United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: Life on land; Climate action; Sustainable cities and communities; Good health and well-being; Responsible consumption and production; Industry, innovation and infrastructure • Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023: Socially responsible public procurement to contribute to the WGA well-being goals, promote fair work in supply chains, and consider the global social and environmental impacts of procurement • EU Regulation on Deforestation free products (EUDR): Preventing the consumption of products contributing to deforestation and forest degradation in the EU and globally • Environment Act 2021: Schedule 17 due diligence requirement for forest-risk commodities; Section 6 Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty • Beyond Recycling (Wales' Circular Economy Strategy) 2021 • Climate Change (Wales) Regulations 2021 and associated Carbon Budgets and emissions reduction targets – especially regarding public sector scope 3 emissions
	Reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions	
	Protecting the Earth's ability to sequester carbon	
	Addressing the emissions our consumption generates overseas i.e. not just the production emissions we generate here in Wales	
	Supporting biodiversity and protecting at-risk species	
	Supporting ecosystem services	
	Promoting sustainable resource use, e.g. using recycled wood and paper products and reducing food waste	
	Promoting the use of regenerative and organic food growing systems which benefit biodiversity and sequester carbon	
	Reducing transport emissions associated with food imports	
Social	Reducing the risk of future pandemics	• Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: Healthier; Prosperous; Globally responsible; More equal • United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: Reduced inequalities; Good health and well-being; Gender equality • United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: including the rights to control lands and protection from forced removal • Modern Slavery Act 2015: including the Act's requirement for transparent supply chains in UK businesses • Healthy Weight, Healthy Wales Strategy
	Protecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local forest communities	
	Increasing consumption of nutritious, well-balanced meals	
	Reducing consumption of highly processed foods, which are linked to poorer health outcomes	
	Helping children and young people learn about food production, supply chains and healthy food choices	
Economic	Supporting sustainable, local sourcing and livelihoods	• Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: Prosperous; Vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language; Cohesive communities; Globally responsible; More equal • United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: Decent work and economic growth; Sustainable cities and communities; No poverty; Zero hunger; Reduced inequalities • Community Food Strategy (2025): increasing the amount of Welsh food being bought in schools and hospitals • Fair Trade Nation: Welsh Government's commitment to supporting Fair Trade in public procurement • Economic mission: priorities for a stronger economy: Stronger, Fairer, Greener
	Supporting farming communities in the transition towards resilient and sustainable farming systems, which meet emissions targets and reduce reliance on imported feed	
	Promoting Wales' sustainable brand values by supporting Welsh farming communities to grow sustainable food for Wales	
	Supporting livelihoods in the Global South through sustainable sourcing and fair trade	



Forest risk commodities

Card 1: Forest-risk commodity – soy (in animal products) and beef³²



-  Wales is responsible for imports of 189,000 tonnes of soy a year. The average land area required overseas each year to produce Welsh soy imports is 115,000 hectares – equivalent to an area the size of Conwy.
-  Most imports are in the form of meal (69 per cent) and beans (22 per cent). Only around 9 per cent of imports are in products that are directly consumed by humans. The overwhelming majority of the remainder is fed to livestock.
-  Soy imports have increased steadily since 2011, with an average year on year increase of over 2,000 tonnes. This can be explained by Wales having an increased number of poultry (8.1 million in 2011 to 12.1 million in 2025), and indeed an increasing share of the UK's poultry production (up from 5.0 per cent to 6.6 per cent).
-  The Welsh poultry industry is estimated to be responsible for consuming 52 per cent of Wales' imported soy feed for livestock, followed by dairy (27 per cent).
-  Soy often has a complex supply chain, meaning that tracing soy from farm to fork is a difficult task, especially for downstream companies and organisations. Furthermore, currently no internationally agreed definition of sustainably sourced soy exists.³³ The Roundtable on Responsible Soy (RTRS) is one certification scheme whose criteria includes zero deforestation and land conversion; though this certification is rarely seen on product packaging in the UK.
-  The Amazon Soy Moratorium, established in 2006, has been crucial in reducing deforestation caused by soybean cultivation in Brazil. By pledging not to buy soybeans grown on land deforested after 2008, major traders have significantly limited direct deforestation for soy. However, recent legal challenges seeking to suspend the moratorium put its future at risk.

³² Statistics taken from the upcoming 'Wales and Global Responsibility 2' report, written by Steve Jennings (Alauda Consulting) in collaboration with Size of Wales and WWF Cymru.

³³ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/nov/25/how-can-we-stop-using-soya-soy-linked-to-deforestation>

Card 1: Forest-risk commodity – soy (in animal products) and beef³⁴



Wales is responsible for imports of 10,700 tonnes of beef each year.



Most imports are in the form of fresh or chilled beef (52 per cent). The rest is frozen or in processed meat products such as corned beef.



The average land area required to satisfy Welsh import demand averages 121,000 hectares over the period. This is a land area equivalent to the size of Wrexham country and the Isle of Anglesey combined.

Social impacts

The Guarani Indigenous Peoples live in Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina and Bolivia. They have lost 95 per cent of their ancestral lands due to intensive agriculture, including soy and beef production.



Forest-friendly actions:

- Purchase and serve less, but better quality meat, dairy and eggs, e.g., from locally sourced, ethically certified supply chains. Certifications include: Soil Association Organic, Pasture for Life, Certified Grassfed.



- Only source fish and seafood certified by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) or Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC). (Under the ASC standard, farmers must be able to demonstrate that feed ingredients, including soy and palm oil, come from sustainable sources).



- Increase the availability and variety of vegetable proteins on offer in public meals, e.g. beans, chickpeas, lentils and peas (see Monmouthshire County Council's case study on [page 52](#)).
- Include DF criteria in public sector food contracts and work with suppliers to help them respond to changes, e.g., setting targets for the provision of more ethically sourced ingredients.
- Think food use, not food waste. Food production uses vast amounts of resources, including land, water and energy. Reducing food waste can help reduce your impact on forests and other vital fragile ecosystems.

³⁴ Statistics taken from the upcoming 'Wales and Global Responsibility 2' report, written by Steve Jennings (Alauda Consulting) in collaboration with Size of Wales and WWF Cymru.

Card 2: Forest-risk commodity – palm oil³⁵



Wales is responsible for imports of 51,000 tonnes of palm oil, palm kernel oil and palm kernel meal each year. The average land area required overseas each year to produce Wales' imports of palm oil products is 47,000 hectares. This is larger in size than Neath Port Talbot.



Between 2011 and 2025, 81 per cent of this land footprint has been in countries with a high or very high risk for deforestation and/or social issues, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. This makes palm oil the highest risk commodity that Wales imports.

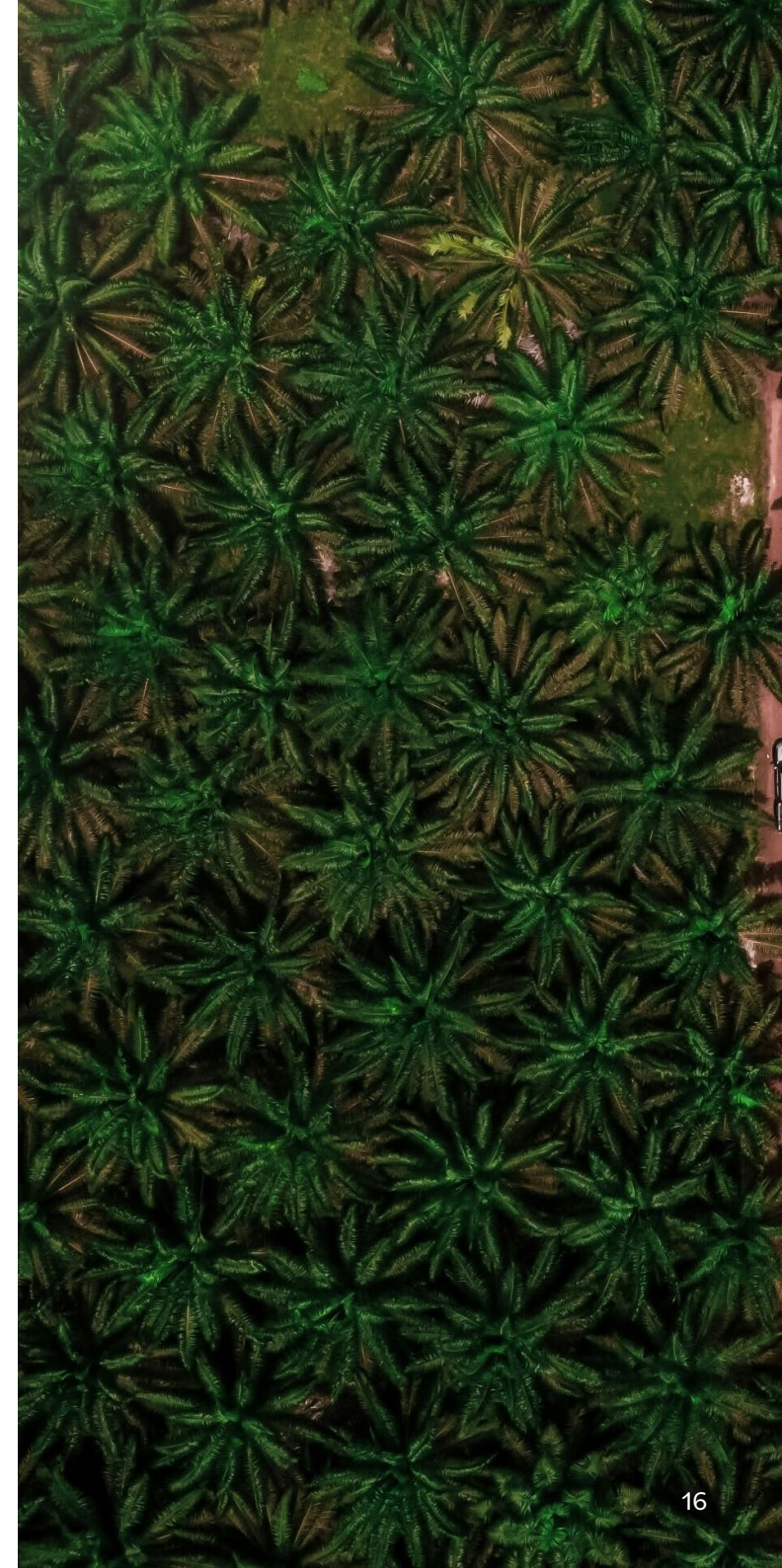


Most imports are in the form of meal (38 per cent), which is used as animal feed, and palm oil (36 per cent) which has numerous uses in cooking, bakery, ready meals, chocolate, confectionary and personal hygiene products such as soap.



Palm oil can be found in over 50 per cent of packaged food products in our supermarkets, and around 70 per cent of cosmetic and household detergents. It has over 200 names, making it very difficult to spot.

³⁵ Statistics taken from the upcoming 'Wales and Global Responsibility 2' report, written by Steve Jennings (Alauda Consulting) in collaboration with Size of Wales and WWF Cymru.





Why is palm oil in everything & should I boycott it?

Palm oil has a long shelf life and neutral flavour and aroma, making it an ideal ingredient in many food preparations. It can be broken down and fractionated into numerous ingredients with varying characteristics, for example, it helps make soap bubbly, lipstick creamy and is often used as an emulsifier to bind oil and water. It is also used as a bulking agent to replace more (financially) costly ingredients, e.g., peanuts in peanut butter. It is a highly productive crop, using much less land to produce the same amount of oil compared to other oil crops.

This is the basis of the industry argument for continued use of palm oil. However, other oil crops would not need to be grown in the tropics, e.g., sunflower oil can be grown on cultivated land in Europe. However, these other oil crops cannot provide such a multitude

of ingredients. It is our demand for ultra-processed foods (UPFs), cosmetics and detergents, that require these particular characteristics that palm oil can provide in abundance.

Size of Wales does not support a blanket boycott on palm oil, as it provides an income for many smallholder farmers, and would mean less demand for companies to switch to sustainable production, allowing unsustainable practices to continue unchecked. Many larger global markets are not calling for sustainable production, so we need to be part of the solution. By increasing the demand for CSPO, rather than just conventional palm oil, we can help provide the incentive for companies to raise production standards in favour of forests, people and biodiversity.



Forest-friendly actions:

- Eat/purchase fewer UPFs, such as ready meals, baked goods and confectionery.
- Only purchase food, cleaning and cosmetic products containing RSPO-certified palm oil (see our guide on [page 23](#) for different RSPO certifications).
- Speak to your catering provider or suppliers about reducing palm oil in their products or sourcing only RSPO certified palm oil.
- Local authorities can work with young people to raise awareness of the impacts of UPFs, the power of junk food advertising and how to prepare and cook nutritious food.
- Monitor and reduce food waste. Food production uses vast amounts of resources, including land, water and energy. Reducing food waste can help reduce your impact on forests and other vital ecosystems.



Card 3: Forest-risk commodity – cocoa and coffee³⁶



- Welsh cocoa imports total 14,000 tonnes per year.
- The average land area required each year to satisfy the Welsh demand for imports is 45,400 hectares. This is equivalent to an area the size of Neath Port Talbot.
- Wales' imports of cocoa come predominantly from West Africa, with 66 per cent arriving from Côte d'Ivoire alone.
- At least 54 per cent of the land area is in countries with high- or very-high risk of deforestation and serious social issues, in particular Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria.



- Welsh annual imports total 54,000 tonnes of coffee. The average land area required to satisfy Welsh import demand for coffee averages 11,500 hectares between 2011 and 2025. This is a land area equivalent to the size of Merthyr Tydfil.
- At least three quarters (76 per cent) of the land area is in countries with high- or very-high risk of deforestation and serious social issues, in particular Brazil, Vietnam, Indonesia, Colombia, Honduras and Peru.
- Most of this coffee is grown on land that was previously primary forest.
- Monocrop coffee plantations are responsible for deforestation, soil erosion and water pollution.

³⁶ Statistics taken from the upcoming 'Wales and Global Responsibility 2' report, written by Steve Jennings (Alauda Consulting) in collaboration with Size of Wales and WWF Cymru.



Shade-grown coffee – *the regenerative way to grow coffee*

The increasing global demand for coffee is driving deforestation and land conversion, as producers clear more land in order to grow coffee in full sun.

However, coffee can be grown using agroforestry principles i.e. with trees, which helps to protect the soil and microorganisms, while providing shade for the coffee plants. Shade-growing slows down the process of transpiration – where water evaporates from leaves, stems and flowers – which in turn helps to increase yield.

Shade-grown coffee also provides habitats for birds and insects who in turn help to control pests that eat the coffee plants, meaning fewer pesticides are required compared to sun-grown coffee. (Read more about shade-grown coffee in the inspiring case study: [Coffee growing on Mount Elgon, Uganda](#)).



Forest-friendly actions:

- Promote the use of Fairtrade coffee and cocoa in your workplace.
- Ensure catered events only use or provide Fairtrade coffee and cocoa, e.g. for use in desserts and confectionery.
- Local authorities that provide public food, e.g. school meals, can ensure they use Fairtrade cocoa in their menu cycle.
- Take part in **Fairtrade Fortnight** – an annual event that promotes and celebrates all things Fairtrade. As Wales is a Fairtrade Nation, many councils organise activities for this celebration.



Fairtrade not only ensures fair prices and decent working conditions for farmers and workers in the Global South, but it also ensures local sustainability and environmental protection. (See our [Certification Guide on page 22](#) to find out more.)

Fairtrade also includes a no-deforestation criterion.

Card 4: Forest-risk commodity – timber, paper and pulp



Welsh imports of timber, paper and pulp have the largest land footprint of all of Wales' forest-risk commodity imports.

Generally, these are grown in North America and European countries at lower-risk of deforestation and social issues. However...



Welsh timber imports use a land area two and a half times the size of Anglesey every year.



18 per cent of Wales' timber imports come from countries that are high risk for deforestation and social issues, including Brazil.



The UK consumes nearly twice as much paper as the global average i.e., 145 tonnes compared to 55 tonnes per person.

Fabrics such as viscose and rayon are made from wood pulp, which is a major driver of tropical deforestation, especially in Indonesia*.

** The UK is the fifth largest importer of Malaysian timber, relying on the Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme (MTCS) to ensure sustainability of the timber sourced from the country. The MTCS, which covers approximately 35 per cent of Malaysia's natural forest, is endorsed by the international Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC), used by UK companies to assess compliance with the UK Timber Regulations. However, a recent Friends of the Earth investigation found that the MTCS is failing to prevent natural forest conversion and degradation, and to uphold Indigenous rights, in violation of PEFC rules.³⁷*



Forest-friendly actions:

- Reduce, Reuse, Recycle:
 - Reduce the amount of new wood, paper and pulp products you purchase as a business.
 - Reuse – for example, second-hand or refurbished furniture. Recycle or donate items you no longer use.
 - Use recycled paper products – this not only protects forests, but reduces the amount of water and energy required to produce paper from virgin pulp.
- Buy wood, paper and pulp products certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC); this includes recycled products. It is important to remember that not all certifications, such as the MTCS in the case of Indonesia, are guaranteed to prevent deforestation; this is why it is vital to practice due diligence with suppliers to verify the provenance of their products. This is also why actions taken to reduce, reuse and recycle wood, paper and pulp products is the best option.
- Ensure any items of clothing or fabrics you purchase as business are responsibly sourced, e.g. certified eco-responsible viscose, FSC certified textiles and Fairtrade cotton.



³⁷ <https://policy.friendsoftheearth.uk/sites/default/files/documents/2026-03/FOE%20Timber%20Report%20-%20accessible.pdf>

Card 5: Forest-risk commodity – investments and pensions



Many of our financial investments, such as pensions, are tied to environmentally damaging activities, including deforestation and habitat conversion. According to research by Size of Wales and Global Canopy, the Welsh Pension Partnership (WPP), which invests on behalf of the eight local authority pension funds across Wales, invests nearly ten per cent of the total £22.5 billion in investments in clients or holdings with a high risk of being linked to deforestation.³⁸ This takes place through company's involvement in supply chains for forest-risk commodities and similar forest-risk activities such as mining and fossil fuel extraction.

The research found that £1 in every £10 invested by the WPP was at high risk of financing deforestation.



This is having devastating consequences for Indigenous Peoples, biodiversity, climate, and the health of tropical forests.

Local Authority pension funds hold significant leverage through the financing their investments provide. By engaging with their asset managers and the companies they invest in, they can drive change in policies and practices which can reduce the risk of financing deforestation.



Forest-friendly actions:

- Switch to an ethical bank, insurer, or pension pot to make sure your business is not financing destructive industries, such as intensive beef, soy and palm production.
- Engage with your asset manager or directly with companies/clients you invest with to investigate your deforestation exposure from financial investments.
- Embed deforestation free criteria into investment policies, ensuring no public money is used to fund supply chains and companies which cause deforestation.
- Set a strong public policy, committing to eliminate deforestation, conversion, and associated human rights abuses within an ambitious timeframe.
- Redirect investment into nature-friendly and climate-positive projects, such as those promoting regenerative and sustainable farming, supporting Indigenous Peoples' land rights and/or habitat restoration.

For more information on ethical finance, visit [Size of Wales' report on deforestation free public sector pensions](https://sizeofwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Saving-for-the-future-Size-of-Wales-public-pension-report.pdf).

³⁸ <https://sizeofwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Saving-for-the-future-Size-of-Wales-public-pension-report.pdf>

Ethical certification guide

This at-a-glance guide provides the key standards and commitments for the main ethical certification schemes you will find in the UK.*



Pasture for Life

- Animals are grazed on 100 per cent pasture
- Supports animal health and welfare
- Supports biodiversity and healthy soils
- Prohibits soy-based feeds



Certified Grassfed (A Greener World)

- Animals are grazed on 100 per cent pasture
- Supports animal health and welfare
- Supports biodiversity
- Prohibits soy-based feeds



Soil Association Organic

- Improved natural soil health and fertility
- Increases carbon storage in soil
- Supports wildlife and biodiversity
- Significantly reduces the risk of deforestation



European Union Organic

- Improved natural soil health and fertility
- Improved welfare standards for organic livestock
- Prohibits use of GMO plants or animals
- Significantly reduces the risk of deforestation



Forest Stewardship Council

- Prohibits deforestation, forest degradation and illegal logging
- Promotes social and economic well-being e.g. workers and communities
- Requires that the rights of Indigenous Peoples are identified and upheld



Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC)

- Feed ingredients, including soy and palm oil, must come from sustainable sources
- Shrimp farms built after 1999 cannot be situated in mangrove ecosystems and other natural wetlands



Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)

- Wild caught fish and seafood products (removes the need for external feed inputs)
- Reduces pressure on fish stocks and marine environments



Fairtrade

- Increased standards of living with fair prices, decent working conditions and access to basic services
- Environmental protection and climate change adaptation
- Supports gender equality
- Includes a no-deforestation criterion



Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO)

- No new planting on peatlands after 2018
- No further deforestation or burning of land
- Commitment to the protection of rare, threatened or endangered (RTE) species by encouraging sustainable land management practices and preservation of “high conservation value” (HCV) areas
- Commitment to reduce pollution and GHG emissions through sustainable land management practices and prevention of land conversion.

There are four levels of RSPO certification. However, only two of these are physically certified and ensure traceability:



RSPO Certified

This label is used on products that contain palm oil physically certified by the RSPO – this means it is fully traceable along the entire supply chain. In this case, the supply chain model is either:

- **IP (Identity Preserved)** – the certified sustainable palm oil (CSPO) is uniquely identifiable to a single RSPO certified mill and its certified supply base.
- **SG (Segregated)** – CSPO is kept separate throughout the supply chain. Palm oil comes exclusively from a certified source.



Two other types of certification exist, though these cannot assure traceability:

- **MB (Mass Balance)** – CSPO is mixed with conventional palm oil and monitored administratively.
- **RSPO Credits** – the supply chain is not monitored for the presence of sustainable palm oil. Manufacturers and retailers can buy credits from RSPO-certified growers, crushers and independent smallholders, whilst continuing to source unsustainable palm oil.

* While ethical certifications can support traceability and significantly reduce the risk of deforestation, currently, there is no single scheme that can 100 per cent guarantee zero deforestation. This is why a full suite of measures should be used to reduce deforestation risk – not simply using certifications in isolation. When using ethical certifications it is still important to exercise due diligence.

Notes on palm oil

*Currently there is not enough certified sustainable palm oil (CSPO) produced globally to meet demand. Therefore, the Mixed/Mass Balance certification can be used to support suppliers and producers to start moving towards sourcing only CSPO, while increasing demand for sustainable production. However, it is essential for organisations working towards deforestation free, to set targets to begin phasing out the use or consumption of uncertified/unsustainable palm oil.

**Labelling is not always clear, so it can be difficult for the end consumer to know what they are getting. Engaging with suppliers and carrying out a palm oil audit are crucial steps in establishing your baseline and setting targets to source only RSPO certified sustainable palm oil.

***Membership of the RSPO is divided into categories: Ordinary, Associate and Affiliate. These membership categories have different reporting requirements and voting rights at the RSPO General Assembly. An organisation's membership is decided based on their level of involvement in the palm oil supply chain, and the amount of palm oil they purchase, use or trade per year.³⁹ In terms of reporting, both Ordinary and Affiliate members are required to abide by the Code of Conduct for Members of RSPO, and must report annually on progress against this code.⁴⁰ This report is called an Annual Communication of Progress (ACOP) and outlines RSPO members progress towards 100 per cent RSPO Certified Sustainable Palm Oil. This reporting is not mandatory for Associate members, meaning they may be able to claim good practice under the RSPO membership, without necessarily enforcing RSPO certification in their supply chains. All RSPO members are required to also publish lists of their supply palm mills, including RSPO Certified and non-certified mills;⁴¹ however, many members do not publish these reports, according to the RSPO member website.

39 <https://rspo.org/as-an-organisation/membership/membership-categories/>

40 https://rspo.org/wp-content/uploads/RSPO_Membership_Rules_20202.pdf

41 <https://rspo.org/mill-list-submission/>





Deforestation Free Learning Pathway

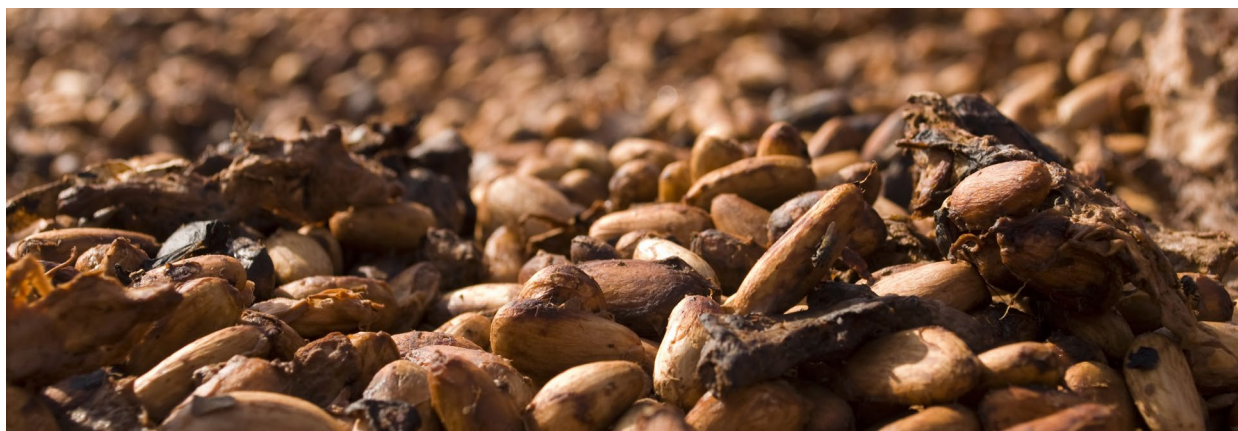
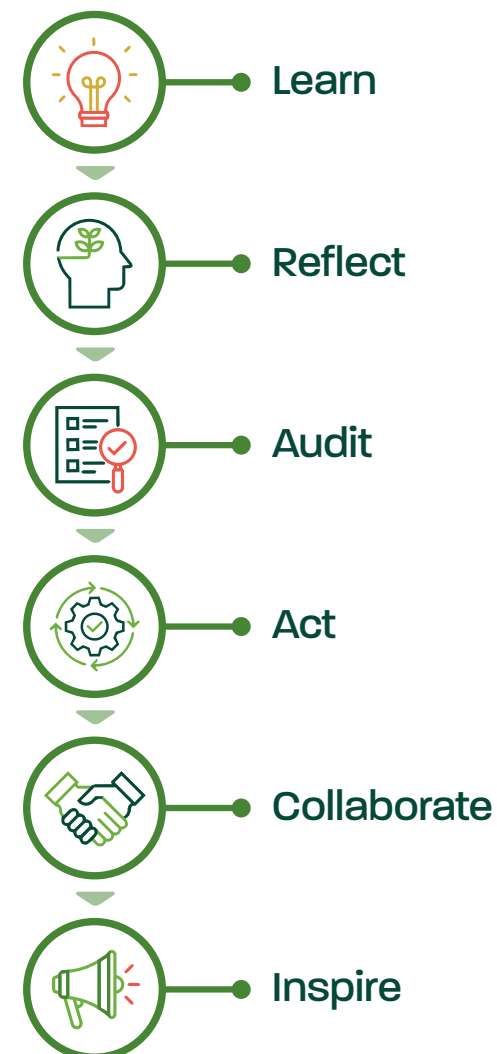
Deforestation Free Learning Pathway

This section outlines the **Deforestation Free Learning Pathway** which **Size of Wales** has developed to support public bodies, businesses, schools and communities on their deforestation free journeys.

Some organisations have committed to become **Deforestation Free Champions** (DFC), acting as advocates for tropical forests, people and nature. To become a Deforestation Free Champion, organisations have to complete all steps of the learning pathway; if you would like

to learn more about this process, read the DFC Charter and Action Plan in Annex A.

We do not expect everyone who wants to reduce their organisational deforestation risk to become Deforestation Free Champions, but we do encourage all organisations to consider any of the steps along the pathway. We also do not expect organisations to become entirely deforestation free, as it would be incredibly difficult to remove all deforestation risk embedded in global and local supply chains. However, each step along the pathway contributes to reducing deforestation risk and delivering positive outcomes for forests and communities.



Learn

This is the first step along the deforestation free learning pathway. This may begin with reading through this toolkit, learning about the various forest risk commodities we in Wales consume, and about the different certifications which can mitigate against deforestation risk.

You might also organise a deforestation free training session/workshop delivered by Size of Wales for staff members, such as: staff with leadership or strategic roles in policymaking in the organisation; procurement practitioners e.g. buyers and relationship managers working directly with suppliers; climate and nature leaders and sustainability practitioners, or any employee who raises purchase orders for food products or other forest risk commodities.



Reflect

Assessing organisational practice and risk

This section has been designed to help you:

- Take stock of any policies that support sustainable sourcing and identify how these are implemented.
- Identify any deforestation risk embedded in financial investments including Local Authority pension funds.

A comprehensive template to guide you in reviewing organisational policies and practices is available [here](#).

Procurement of forest-risk products and ingredients

- 1. Does your organisation purchase food and refreshments in any capacity e.g., for hospital catering, staff canteens or meetings and events etc.?**
 - A Yes** – Due to the saturation of forest risk commodities in global food systems, much of the food we consume comes with a risk of tropical deforestation. Associated risks and impacts can be reduced through sustainable sourcing.
 - B No** – Your forest risk for food is likely to be low.
- 2. Does your organisation purchase any wood, paper or pulp products, such as furniture or tissues?**
 - A Yes** – All wood, paper and pulp products should be sourced sustainably to ensure responsible management of forests i.e. no deforestation, forest degradation or illegal logging.
 - B No** – Your forest risk for timber, paper and pulp is likely to be low.
- 3. Does your organisation purchase any cosmetic or cleaning products for use in its premises, e.g. detergent, washing-up liquid, handwash, soap or shampoo?**
 - A Yes** – Around 70 per cent of cosmetics and household detergents contain ingredients derived from palm oil. If these are not responsibly sourced or certified, they will carry an increased risk of embedded tropical deforestation and habitat conversion.
 - B No** – Your forest risk for cosmetics and cleaning products is likely to be low.
- 4. Does your organisation have existing policies that support sustainable sourcing, including no-deforestation and no-land conversion commitments? For example, the use of ethical certifications?**
 - A Yes** – If yes, which mechanisms exist to enable these policies at different stages of procurement, e.g. are they integrated into the contract process or are certain products restricted or made unavailable on ordering systems?
 - B No** – If no, does your organisation have a cut-off date for the purchase of unsustainable products? E.g. a public commitment to phase out products containing uncertified palm oil by a certain date.

* Some companies achieve ethical certification for the products they manufacture, but this does not necessarily apply to every product they sell. Due diligence should be carried out to ensure that any certifications apply to the products themselves and not just the supplier.



Forest risk investments

1. Does your organisation invest funds in companies driving deforestation, for example through the production of agricultural forest-risk commodities or activities such as mining, infrastructure and construction?

If **yes**, consider exploring the extent of your organisation's exposure to deforestation risk through investment activities. This can be used to target actions on certain investment streams – such as engaging with asset managers or directly with clients/holdings of investments, encouraging them to improve their practices in relation to deforestation.

2. Does your organisation have an ethical investment policy which embeds deforestation-free criteria into decisions around investments?

If **no**, consider developing a time-bound investment policy which incorporates deforestation free criteria. This can be communicated to your asset managers and clients/holdings to drive change in their practices, and inform your organisation's investment plans and priorities moving forward.

3. Is your existing employee pension with an ethical provider?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No – many pension funds are linked to deforestation, habitat conversion and human rights abuses. Call on your pension provider to commit to removing deforestation and habitat conversion from its investment portfolios and/or consider switching to an ethical provider.

Audit

Once you have reflected on your policies and practices, use [this template](#) to record any forest-risk commodities or services you procure, along with any ethical certifications, risk ratings and other relevant information. This audit is intended to provide a baseline for the amounts and types of forest-risk products/ingredients you procure, whether directly or indirectly, e.g. through services such as catering, helping to identify where your risk lies and where action should be targeted.



Act

This section signposts ethical certifications for each forest-risk commodity and proposes supporting strategies, such as ethical banking and investments, that will help reduce deforestation, habitat conversion and social impacts. There are several ethical certifications that support traceability and promote greater social and environmental standards, while at the same time increasing the demand for ethically sourced products. When using certifications, it is still essential to carry out due diligence checks. Prior to and during the procurement process, preference should be given to ethically sourced and certified products, e.g. through initial supplier engagement and ongoing relationship management, and by giving a greater weighting to ethically certified products in your scoring criteria.

Diversify protein sources

Increase plant-based proteins and include a diverse variety of fruit, vegetables, nuts and seeds. See our case study on [page 56](#) on New York City hospitals offering plant-based meals as the ‘default’ option for patients, and the multiple benefits this delivers.

High-protein pulses, such as beans, chickpeas, lentils and peas and protein alternatives, such as organic tofu and tempeh (made from organic soybeans), are high in protein, calcium, iron and fibre, making them an ideal addition to any diet. Switching to plant-based proteins instead of meat, or even blending plant-based and animal proteins to reduce overall meat consumption, can have significant impacts in terms of reducing deforestation risk, providing financial savings for schools, lowering the environmental impact of food production and promoting climate and nature-friendly farming practices. Read our Livewell Report⁴² to see how switching out

meat for plant-based protein could have significant positive economic, environmental and social impacts locally and globally.

Increase the amount of local, seasonal and sustainably sourced ingredients.

Seasonal and locally grown produce not only supports local growers and farmers, but helps to reduce the travel miles associated with imported produce and the energy required to grow out of season.

Just as plant diversity is good for nature’s ecosystems, a diverse variety of plants is essential to support a healthy gut microbiome – our body’s very own ecosystem.⁴³ Research suggests we should be eating at least 30 different plants a week.⁴⁴

⁴² <https://sizeofwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Assessing-the-Viability-of-a-Livewell-and-Deforestation-Free-School-Menu-in-Wales-3.pdf>

⁴³ <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/05/180515092931.htm>

⁴⁴ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2212877816000387>

Meat, dairy and eggs

(Includes imported beef from South America and embedded soy and palm oil used in animal feed)

Serve less, but better quality meat, dairy and eggs, such as locally sourced certified organic or 100 per cent grass-fed animal products. Data suggests that the UK public is strongly supportive of organic produce, with 83 per cent of UK households choosing organic items in their food shops, citing health, environmental and welfare reasons, and to 'back British Farmers'.⁴⁵

Certifications include:

- **Soil Association Organic**, which guarantees nature friendly farming methods.
- **Pasture for Life** and **Certified Grassfed**, which guarantees 100 per cent grass fed beef, lamb and dairy products.

Avoid procuring imported beef from South America, including non-processed fresh and frozen meat, and processed products such as corned beef and burgers. Beef imports from South America are associated with a high risk of deforestation and/or social issues.

Fish and seafood

Only purchase/serve fish and seafood that has been sourced sustainably. This includes:



Wild caught fish and seafood products certified by the **Marine Stewardship Council** (MSC) – this eliminates the need for animal feed made from soy and palm oil, as well as helping to reduce pressure on fish stocks and marine environments.



Farmed fish and seafood products certified by the **Aquaculture Stewardship Council** (ASC) – to achieve certified status farmers must be able to demonstrate that feed ingredients, including soy and palm oil, come from sustainable sources. Additionally, the ASC shrimp standard means that farms built after 1999 cannot be situated in mangrove ecosystems and other natural wetlands.



⁴⁵ <https://wickedleeks.riverford.co.uk/news/organic-market-growth-outpaces-non-organic-with-83-of-uk-households-buying-organic/?utm>

Palm oil

Reduce consumption / procurement of UPFs. Over 50 per cent of packaged foods contain some form of palm oil. The consumption of UPFs is also associated with rising rates of diabetes, obesity and poorer health outcomes.



Only purchase products containing palm oil that has been physically certified by the [Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil](#) (RSPO), i.e. from either Identity Preserved or Segregated supply chains.

(See [page 23](#) for the different types of RSPO certification).

Click [here](#) for a shopping list of common food brands that contain palm oil from RSPO physically certified supply chains.

Coffee and cacao



Only purchase [Fairtrade](#) coffee, cocoa and chocolate products.

Fairtrade not only ensures fair prices and decent working conditions for farmers and workers in the Global South, but it also ensures local sustainability and environmental protection. Through training, farmers are supported to switch to more environmentally friendly practices, such as encouraging wildlife to help control pests and diseases. Since 2019, Fairtrade has included a no-deforestation criterion.

Find out more about how Fairtrade benefits people and the environment in the case study on [page 44: Coffee growing on Mount Elgon, Uganda](#).



Think food use, not food waste: Reduce, Reuse, Redistribute, Recycle

Food waste from households and businesses in the UK has a combined total of 9.5 million tonnes (Mt) every year, producing more than 25 Mt of GHG emissions. Furthermore, 70 per cent of this wasted food could actually be eaten.⁴⁶ Food production uses vast amounts of resources, including land, water and energy. Therefore, reducing food waste can not only help reduce emissions, but it can also protect forests and ecosystems by reducing the demand for forest-risk commodities that will ultimately be wasted.

Public sector food providers can reduce food waste by:

- Ensuring good practice is embedded in kitchens, such as inventory control and menu planning.
- Training staff how to reduce food waste, such as advice on food production, presentation and serving methods. Food manufacturer apetito provides a free [guide](#) for healthcare meal providers to help them reduce food waste in hospital settings.
- Calculating a food waste baseline in order to target interventions.
- Prioritising seasonal food to reduce food miles and waste; the NHS provides a free [seasonality calendar](#) for meal providers to use when choosing ingredients.
- Donating surplus food e.g. with the organisation [Fare Share](#). Guys and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust worked with food delivery organisation [Olio](#) to redistribute unwanted cooked hospital meals to the local community.
- Improving food storage facilities in communal kitchens, staff canteens and food preparation areas.
- Organising a staff Lunch and Learn or awareness raising on the impact of food waste, e.g. taking part in Food Waste Action Week.
- Ensuring food composting/recycling facilities are available to all staff.



⁴⁶ <https://www.bartecmunicipal.com/insight/uk-food-waste-statistics-2025-what-do-the-facts-say/>

Timber, paper and pulp products

Firstly, reduce consumption of timber, paper and pulp products by taking a circular economy / Reduce, Reuse, Recycle approach.

A linear economy is one that takes, makes and produces waste. A circular economy is one that reuses, recycles, repairs and remanufactures existing products, materials and components.

Circular models have been around for a long time, e.g. second-hand clothing, furniture refurbishment and bottle return schemes, and now many organisations are adopting this approach to help reduce carbon emissions and preserve valuable and finite resources.

Inspiring examples of circularity in practice include [Public Health Wales in Cardiff](#) and [Transport for Wales in Pontypridd](#).



Ensure any new timber, paper and pulp products are either from recycled sources or certified by the [Forest Stewardship Council](#) (FSC).

The FSC prohibits deforestation, forest degradation and illegal logging in certified areas, and includes social standards, such as identifying and upholding the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The FSC also certifies recycled forest products, as well as textiles (e.g. fabrics made from wood pulp), rubber, bamboo and cork.



Ethical banking and investments

Many of our financial investments, such as pensions, are tied to environmentally damaging activities, including deforestation and habitat conversion.

According to research by Size of Wales and Global Canopy, the Welsh Pension Partnership (WPP), which invests on behalf of the eight local authority pension funds across Wales, invests nearly 10 per cent of the total £22.5 billion in investments in clients or holdings with a high risk of being linked to deforestation.⁴⁷

Switch to an ethical bank, insurer, or pension pot to make sure your business is not financing destructive industries, such as intensive beef, soy and palm production. You could also engage with the companies/clients you invest with, or set a strong internal policy committing to eliminating deforestation risks from financial investments.

⁴⁷ <https://sizeofwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Saving-for-the-future-Size-of-Wales-public-pension-report.pdf>



Engaging with suppliers

This section aims to help guide your conversations with suppliers, whether at the start of a new contractual relationship or during. It provides a series of questions to help you identify:

- The measures taken by suppliers to ensure sustainable sourcing, including no deforestation and land conversion commitments and measures to protect and uphold human rights.
- Whether products supplied to your organisation are sustainably sourced.

For any downstream company, knowing each step in the supply chain can be challenging for many reasons. For example, the lack of transparency and traceability of certain products, such as soy used in livestock feed. However, with the transition to a lower carbon economy, many companies will come under increasing pressure to provide evidence that the commodities and products they supply are not driving deforestation and land conversion overseas. Engaging with suppliers early on will help them prepare for and adapt to these changes.

Some suppliers will be the direct manufacturers of products, which means it should be easier for them to provide the product information you require. Other companies will be indirect suppliers, selling products made by other manufacturers. Either way, here are some practical steps to identify whether or not a product has a low deforestation risk, including the use of certification schemes and identifying the country of origin.

Questions to ask suppliers:

1. Does the supplier have a public commitment to source sustainably, including no-deforestation and no-land conversion commitments?
2. If not, does the supplier have a time-bound commitment for when they will stop sourcing unsustainable forest risk commodities, e.g. a cut-off date for the use of unsustainable palm oil?
3. Does the supplier have policies that support the protection of biodiversity and ecosystems?
4. Does the supplier have policies and commitments in place to tackle and prevent social issues arising in its supply chains?
E.g. an anti-slavery statement, a public commitment to protect workers' rights or a policy on Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) relating to crops grown on Indigenous lands.
5. Does the supplier exercise due diligence when sourcing products and ingredients, including assessing the risk of deforestation and land conversion in its supply chains?
6. Does the supplier know the country or region of origin of forest risk commodities used in its products? (See our Wales and Global Responsibility report for a list of countries categorised as high and very high-risk for deforestation and/or social issues).
7. Does the supplier have full traceability of its forest-risk supply chains? E.g. supply chain maps used in its operations, concession permits or documentation of Free, Prior, Informed Consent or lack thereof by local/indigenous communities.

We have developed a set of more detailed questions surrounding palm oil and animal feed, which may be helpful for investigating these supply chains with suppliers. We have also developed a Deforestation Free Business Toolkit, which public bodies can direct suppliers towards for more information on forest-risk commodities and the actions they can take to reduce risk.

Collaborate

Work with and support your suppliers and stakeholders to take deforestation free actions. This may vary depending on the type of suppliers you use and specific circumstance, but some examples of collaborative efforts to reduce deforestation risk could include:

- Championing local farmers who integrate regenerative, organic farming practices which reduce environmental impact and support local supply chains.
- Supporting smaller, local growers and suppliers to compete for public sector contracts. For example, as part of the Welsh Public Sector Collaborative Food Group Food Framework, contracts were split into smaller lots to encourage participation from smaller, Welsh-based suppliers.
- Working with your Local Food Partnership to deliver support for local producers and community organisations promoting local, resilient food systems.
- Supporting suppliers on frameworks or through the procurement process to better understand how to meet deforestation free criteria, through mechanisms such as reducing meat content, ethical certifications and responsible sourcing.
- Working with local schools to support food system education and inviting pupils to participate in the design of school meals, enabling them to have a say in where their food comes from.



Inspire

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:

- Across your services, there may be opportunities to influence the partners and stakeholders you work with.
- Within your community, e.g. you could share the journey you are on as a public body and how you are working with community partners to achieve change.
- Across your staff team, e.g., by organising a DF Lunch and Learn. (Size of Wales could deliver this).
- Share your commitments and actions publicly to show impact and inspire others.
- Promote DF events in your community, for example by running a **Fairtrade Fortnight** event to raise awareness of ethical certifications and encourage community members to make ethical choices when buying coffee and cacao.





Inspiration / motivation

Stories from the frontline of deforestation

The Guarani People, Brazil

The Guarani are one of the most populous Indigenous peoples of Brazil, whose ancestral territory is in Brazil's Atlantic Forest.⁴⁸ The Atlantic Forest contains about five per cent of the world's biodiversity in plant and animal species and is considered a priority region for environmental conservation – one of the five global hotspots.⁴⁹ The forest's rivers and springs are responsible for the vast majority of Brazil's freshwater supply, serving 130 million people.⁵⁰ However, the Atlantic Forest and the Indigenous people who inhabit this biome are threatened by the expansion of agribusiness in the region, especially soy monoculture. Historically, the forest used to cover 1.2 million km² – about a quarter the size of the Amazon. Today, after centuries of deforestation, land-use change and urban expansion, just 12 per cent of this precious habitat remains in protected areas and patches of fragmented forest,⁵¹ often surrounded by mono-crop plantations.

In Guarani culture, people's lives are intertwined and connected to the lives of all other beings in the forest. They do not see themselves as separate from nature. They feed, protect and respect the earth, plants, animals and insects, regarding their lives as equal and never seeking to gain power over nature, nor to exploit it.

“To maintain, our nhandereko – our way of life – the forests and all their beings must also be kept alive.”

Indigenous leader, from the
Commissao Guarani Yvyrupa

However, powerful economic forces are destroying and exploiting the forest for agribusiness, ore production and large-scale infrastructure projects, such as railways and hydroelectric plants. In the first five months

48 <https://super.abril.com.br/mundo-estranho/quais-sao-os-povos-indigenas-mais-numerosos-do-brasil/>

49 <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2530064418301317>

50 <https://phys.org/news/2020-03-destruction-atlantic-forest-fragment-local.html>

51 https://www.worldwildlife.org/documents/548/7nxri5veo8_WWF_Forest_Pathways_Report_2023_Web.pdf



of 2025, Brazil became the top soy bean exporter with 51.53m tonnes, a five per cent increase from the same period of 2024.⁵² Much of this “productivity” comes from land that has been violently taken from Indigenous peoples like the Avá Guarani, whose ancestral territories have been cleared for soy monocultures, cattle ranching, and eucalyptus plantations. In Western Paraná, over 60 per cent of the Avá-Guarani’s Indigenous Land is dominated by agribusiness, leaving just one per cent for traditional farming.

Industrial-scale soy cultivation eliminates natural habitats for wildlife that control pests, forcing the heavy use of chemical pesticides. The Avá Guarani people report that villages near soy plantations are routinely sprayed, sometimes deliberately, with pesticides reaching their homes, fields, and communities. As a result, exposure to pesticide drift is constant, causing health problems such as stomach pains, headaches, and diarrhoea. Pesticide use also contaminates local water sources, affecting drinking water quality and aquatic life.

The soy grown in Brazil, often on deforested land, is not only a driver of biodiversity loss and ecosystem destruction overseas, but

also has direct impacts on Welsh rivers and land. Much of this soy ends up in animal feed for intensive livestock systems in Wales, particularly poultry and dairy farms. Imported animal feed, particularly soy, is high in phosphorus. After being consumed by livestock, this phosphorus is excreted in nutrient-rich manure. When this manure is spread on farmland, these excess nutrients leach into rivers and groundwater, linking deforestation abroad to freshwater pollution at home.⁵³ This global-local connection highlights how consumption patterns in Wales contribute to both environmental degradation and human rights abuses overseas and river pollution domestically, demonstrating the need for more sustainable feed sourcing and farming practices.

The Guarani fight to protect their lands and, as a result, they experience discrimination, abuse, threats and intimidation daily.⁵⁴ Many have been murdered, and if their villages are close to agribusiness plantations, they are routinely sprayed with pesticides, affecting the health of their children, plants and animals. Spiritual landmarks have been flooded and villages destroyed to grow crops such as soybeans, which are exported and used as animal feed.

52 <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2025/sep/29/agriculture-deforestation-farming-soya-cultivation-eating-brazil-amazon>

53 <https://www.soilassociation.org/media/27139/stop-killing-our-rivers.pdf>

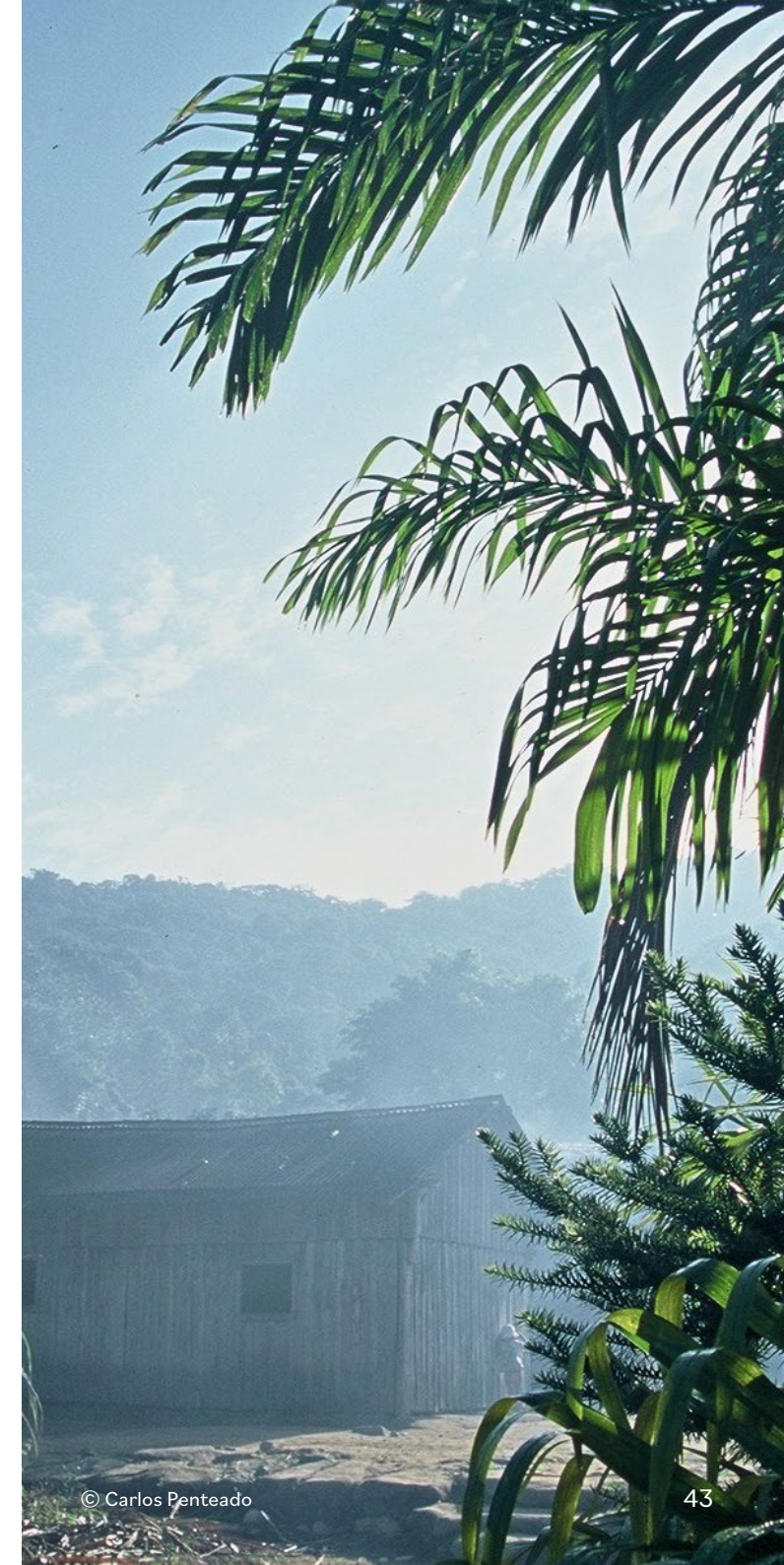
54 <https://www.survivalinternational.org/news/11886>



“In Brazil, the Indigenous peoples, the original peoples of this land, have always suffered a lot of violence. They lost their lands and were murdered because of colonization. And today, our rights are still being attacked. Our lands and our forests continue to be destroyed. And we even lost our lives because of very powerful economic interests.”

Indigenous leader, from the
Comissao Guarani Yvyrupa

To protect their culture, existence, and as such, their forests, the Guarani people need the global support of governments, NGOs, businesses and civil society. The Guarani people call on people worldwide to support their struggle to protect forests and restore their ancestral lands – to listen to the voices of those who have a unique knowledge of how to care for forests. For governments, businesses and organisations, this means supporting the demarcation of Indigenous lands and respecting internationally recognised human rights frameworks, such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It means ensuring that the products and commodities they buy do not infringe upon these rights. For example, requiring suppliers to have full traceability of their forest-risk supply chains or documentation of Free, Prior and Informed Consent for commodities grown on Indigenous lands. It means doing all they can within their operations and procurement practice to reduce tropical deforestation and land conversion to protect Indigenous communities and tackle the climate and nature crises. These are real ways to strengthen the protection of the place where we all live – the forests, the rivers. This fight is not just for the Guarani people, but for everyone. It is a fight for the good life, a fight for the life of the Planet.



Coffee growing on Mount Elgon, Uganda

This case study explains how a Fairtrade co-operative in Uganda is able to secure an income for its members and help them adapt to climate change, protect biodiversity and strengthen local and global food security.

The Mount Elgon Agroforestry Community Co-operative Enterprise (MEACCE) has a combined membership of 3,832 farmers. The beautiful Mt Elgon has a tropical climate, high altitude and volcanic soils. Many different plants thrive there and the conditions are ideal for coffee growing.

However, this rich and fertile landscape is under threat. In recent years, the region has been experiencing warming and dramatic changes in its weather patterns. Floods and mudslides arrive with ever more frequency, washing the precious soil away down the mountain. Coffee plants are very sensitive to even the slightest change in conditions.



MEACCE are also a big part of the Mbale Trees Programme, funded by the Welsh Government and Size of Wales. Having met their 2025 target to distribute 25 million trees, the programme is now aiming to support communities to plant 50 million trees by 2030. Member farmers receive free trees to plant on their small holdings. Planting trees for shade among coffee plants has improved the quality and the yield by an average of 150 per cent.

Whilst growing high quality coffee, farmers are able to take measures that protect their environment. Tree growing and agroforestry (growing crops with trees) has helped diversify income, conserve nature, increase forest cover and stabilise soils to minimise the threat of landslides. Fruit trees also provide food and additional income for farmers and their families.

Farmers have been selling their Fairtrade and organic certified coffee locally for years. However, a recent success means the coffee is also shipped to Wales and is available to buy via the Jenipher's Coffi [website](#). Access to local and international markets, at Fairtrade prices, provides even greater financial resilience for farmers.



“Climate change is affecting us every day, and it is making our work much harder. That’s why we are part of the 25 million tree planting scheme as we want to make the region more resilient to flooding and mudslides and helping tackle climate change for all of us. Since being part of the scheme, we have also seen our coffee quality improve as the trees provide shade and offer some protection to the crops from the changing weather patterns”.

Jenipher, Wetaka Sambazi.
Vice Chair of MEACCE

An aerial photograph of a vast, dense tropical forest. A river winds through the landscape, its banks covered in thick vegetation. The forest extends to the horizon, with some distant hills visible under a clear sky. The text 'Best practice case studies' is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif font on the left side of the image.

Best practice case studies

Best practice case studies

The Copenhagen Model

In 2001, the City of Copenhagen set ambitious food targets for its municipal kitchens. Today, of the 70,000 meals served in approximately 1,000 institutions and facilities, including schools, care homes and staff canteens, almost 90 per cent are made from organic ingredients using the same budget. This was achieved by working closely with food producers, investing in staff training, as well as kitchen renovations to improve storage of produce, and by providing advice on reducing food waste, such as menu planning, food production, presentation and serving methods. Some institutions even have arrangements in place with local shops, such as bakeries, to take surplus products, further reducing food waste.

The transition to organic has had multiple benefits for citizens and the environment, including increased access to freshly made, nutritious meals, particularly benefiting young and elderly populations, and reduced pressure on biodiversity through nature-friendly farming methods.

The City of Copenhagen's current food strategy goes even further by applying the lens of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, linking public food and consumption across various goals. Approaches include seasonality and diversity, reduced meat consumption in favour of alternative protein sources, sustainably sourced soy and palm oil, ethical certifications, greener packaging and vehicles and a no-flight policy.

The role of procurement is key to this strategy as the SDG lens is also applied to the tender process and gives weighting to suppliers who meet certain criteria, such as Fairtrade.

Procurement officers work with suppliers to identify which goals they currently meet and opportunities to meet more targets across the 17 goals. Additionally, follow-ups are made during the contract period to enable procurement teams to report back on their progress against the goals.

Inclusive approaches to food, such as on-site preparation, involvement in the process and communal eating, aim to improve levels of food literacy, as well as support community cohesion and a deeper understanding of nature and biodiversity.⁵⁵



⁵⁵ <https://maaltider.kk.dk/sites/default/files/2022-06/The%20City%20of%20Copenhagen%20Food%20Strategy%202019.pdf>

France's 'Zero Deforestation' Public Procurement Policy^{56,57}

In 2018, France adopted a National Strategy Against Imported Deforestation to end the importation of products that contribute to deforestation and indirect land-use change by 2030. The forest-risk commodities outlined in the strategy include beef (and its byproducts, e.g. leather), soy, palm oil, coffee, cacao and timber (and its byproducts).

Five French Government ministries collaborated to develop the strategy which aims to reduce the country's social and environmental impact beyond its national territory and contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The strategy aims to influence the behaviours and practices of government stakeholders, including producers, businesses, investors and consumers, in relation to forest-risk commodities as both raw ingredients and packaged products.

56 <https://www.esdn.eu/newsflash/detail/frances-eco-responsible-public-services>

57 <https://www.gouvernement.fr/en/ending-deforestation-caused-by-importing-unsustainable-products>



As part of the strategy, France adopted a ‘zero deforestation’ public purchasing policy and produced a zero deforestation guide for public sector procurement, which includes the following criteria:

- State and public bodies must purchase at least 50 per cent quality and sustainable products as part of their catering services, (of which at least 20 per cent should be organic).
- Piloting at least one vegetarian meal per week in all schools for a 2-year period.
- Using only Fairtrade certified coffee and cacao, and RSPO physically certified palm oil.⁵⁸
- Caterers that produce more than 200 meals a day must develop a plan for reducing animal protein in meals in favour of more plant proteins, such as lentils and beans.

Furthermore, since January 2021, criteria taking into account deforestation risk has been included in the calls for tenders published by the State and standard clauses drawn up to support public buyers. Public procurement must consider deforestation risk when directly or indirectly purchasing forest-risk commodities.

To help facilitate this shift towards sourcing healthier, better quality and more sustainable public food, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food set up a digital service called *Ma Cantine*. This service aims to support behaviour change by:

- Supporting catering managers to track their purchases so they can, for example, monitor the quantity of organic, sustainable and quality produce they order, and reduce waste
- Providing feedback data to help monitor progress and support public policy
- Improving transparency and communication with service users

So far, nearly 65 per cent of the estimated collective catering facilities have registered with the service, with data suggesting an average of 12.2 per cent organic produce share for 2025.⁵⁹

In February 2026, the French Government released its National Strategy for Food, Nutrition and Climate (SNANC).⁶⁰ This new strategy complements the work of the zero deforestation public purchasing policy, by setting national objectives to increase the consumption of plant proteins and to limit consumption of red

and processed meats – especially imports. It places emphasis on the deforestation risk associated with animal products, especially soy production for animal feed.⁶¹



⁵⁸ Physically certified palm oil is fully traceable along the entire supply chain, as opposed to ‘RSPO Mixed’, which contains both certified sustainable palm oil (CSPO) and conventional (non-certified) palm oil, or RSPO credits, where companies can buy credits from a sustainable palm oil producer, but continue to source unsustainable palm oil for use in their products.

⁵⁹ <https://beta.gouv.fr/startups/ma-cantine-egalim.html>

⁶⁰ <https://agriculture.gouv.fr/SNANC-20252030>

⁶¹ <https://www.fern.org/publications-insight/article/frances-new-food-strategy-targets-ready-made-meals-and-increased-plant-based-consumption/>

The Welsh Public Sector Collaborative Food Group⁶²

Size of Wales worked in collaboration with the procurement team at Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) to develop the Deforestation Free Business Toolkit to help Welsh Public Sector bodies make responsible purchasing decisions that avoid contributing to deforestation, habitat loss and social impacts overseas.

This work builds on CCBC's role as leader of the Welsh Public Sector Collaborative Food Group (WPSCFG), which replaced the National Procurement Service in 2021. The WPSCFG works collaboratively across the Welsh public sector to create accessible food frameworks that meet the diverse needs of all public sector participants.

As part of a move to improve public sector food procurement, the WPSCFG took the existing individual food procurement frameworks and contracts and attempted to bring them together under one larger framework for 19 Public Sector bodies in Wales. This included food and catering services for schools, care homes, civic sites, two housing associations, Natural Resources Wales and the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

⁶² https://sizeofwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Size-of-Wales-CCBC-Case-Study_Long-Version-Final.pdf



Alignment to the Welsh Procurement Policy Statement and maximising the opportunity for sustainability in keeping with the WFC Act was embedded in the framework. Achieving outcomes that benefited and supported social value, and Wales' well-being goals also supporting the foundational economy of Wales, presented an excellent opportunity to incorporate mandatory deforestation free criteria into the procurement framework from the very beginning and followed on from the work done to create the Deforestation Free Toolkit.

These mandatory criteria includes the provision of less, but better quality meat and dairy e.g., certified organic & pasture fed, a reduction in ultra-processed foods (UPFs) to both reduce palm oil consumption and negative health impacts, the sourcing of RSPO physically certified palm oil (where reduction is unavoidable), the provision of MSC/ASC certified fish & seafood, along with increased variety, seasonality and diversity of plant-based foods and protein rich legumes, and Fairtrade coffee and cacao.

The inclusion of these measures as contract specific requirements meant that suppliers would have to ensure that their business, if successful in winning a place on the framework, would have to commit to and demonstrate their ability to meet these mandatory criteria.

The WPSCFG framework includes 19 public sector bodies, each with designated geographical zones. Over 150 commodity lots were established to encourage participation from smaller, Welsh-based suppliers. The WPSCFG team engaged with 403 suppliers in Wales, with over 50 attending informational sessions. Ultimately, 77 suppliers expressed interest, and 26 submitted bids. Of these, 19 Welsh suppliers were awarded spots on the framework, along with three from England. Valued at an estimated £228 million, this four-year framework promotes sustainable local engagement across Wales in a way not done before.



Wales' first Deforestation Free Champion Council⁶³

In January 2025, Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) signed the Deforestation Free Charter, a council-wide commitment to finding alternatives to products which pose a deforestation risk, including promoting local food, buying fair trade and organic products and using its platform to advocate for reducing our global deforestation footprint among partners, communities, and suppliers. In doing so, they became Wales' – and possibly the world's – first Deforestation Free Champion Council.

This commitment recognises the impact of the council's procurement practices, such as school meals, on tropical deforestation, which contributes to climate change and threatens the lives of Indigenous Peoples. It also aligns with MCC's objectives of tackling climate change and inequality by leveraging the power of public spending to deliver change.

This move was spearheaded by Monmouthshire school students, who presented to the council in December 2024 on the work they undertook with Size of Wales to explore and tackle embedded deforestation within school catering supply chains.

⁶³ <https://sizeofwales.org.uk/wales-map/monmouthshire-county-council/>





After a series of in-depth workshops exploring the key commodities driving tropical deforestation, the students audited their school menu for forest risk. They successfully identified dishes that were likely to contain embedded deforestation, which in turn prompted them to explore how challenging it would be to remove that risk in practice.

The students began by examining a popular chicken korma dish on the school menu, identifying that the imported chicken used was highly likely to have been fed on soy associated with deforestation risk. They explored the option of switching to organic chicken, which would have ensured that the

soy used in animal feed was also organic and not grown on deforested land. However, through their analysis, they concluded that both the cost implications and the availability of a consistent supply would make this option impractical at scale.

The pupils then investigated alternative protein sources, including beans, pulses and legumes, and went on to develop a chickpea korma recipe as a viable replacement. When the recipe was stress-tested against catering requirements, the students found that the dish cost approximately half as much per portion as the original chicken-based meal, while meeting school food standards and performing

as well as, or better than, the original dish from a nutritional perspective. In addition, the chickpea-based dish created value for UK farms, supported organic farming practices, and contributed to improved soil health.

The reformulated meal demonstrated a clear win-win: reducing deforestation risk and environmental impact while improving affordability, resilience and nutritional quality. On this basis, the students made a compelling case for the dish to be adopted onto the school dinner menu, illustrating how young people's involvement can lead to practical, evidence-led improvements in public sector food provision.

Inspired by the action of local schoolchildren, MCC signed up to the Deforestation Free Charter and the following pledges:

- 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.
- We commit to developing and carrying out our Deforestation Free Action Plan and auditing our procurement of forest-risk products and services.
- We commit to making changes to deforestation-risk commodities in favour of more ethically sourced ingredients.
- We will review our Fairtrade commitment and ensure it is carried out in our procurement practice.
- We commit to helping our council learn about the importance of tropical forests, consumption-driven deforestation and what they can do about it.
- 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.



© Size of Wales / Richard Stanton

This work aligns with related MCC policies and strategies, including its statutory commitment under the Well-being of Future Generations Act – especially the ‘Resilient’ and ‘Globally Responsible’ Wales goals – as well as the council’s Climate and Nature Emergency and Local Food Strategies.

Furthermore, the council’s [Local Food Strategy](#) includes a core theme of maximising social value and minimising environmental impact through public-sector procurement, citing Fairtrade and deforestation free options as recommendations.

The students continued to engage with deforestation free supply chains as they transitioned from primary into secondary education. A number of pupils went on to attend Haberdashers’ Monmouth School, where they shared their learning and successfully encouraged the school to switch its coffee supply from a product of unknown origin to a Fairtrade, organic coffee grown through agroforestry systems by an all-women collective in Uganda.

Building on this success, the students are now auditing a wide range of products procured by the school for forest risk and making practical recommendations for replacement where items are identified as high risk. As part of this process, they are actively contacting suppliers to request certification information and greater transparency about supply chain risks, demonstrating growing confidence in engaging directly with procurement systems and commercial actors.

The same group of students, (alongside peers who had previously secured a commitment from the local authority and who now attend Monmouth Comprehensive School), also collaborated to send a joint message to global leaders at COP30. Sharing a platform with Indigenous leaders, they communicated a message of hope and agency: that communities, including young people, are not waiting for action from national leaders, but are already taking meaningful steps themselves.

The most recent development has been the establishment of a Youth Environmental Charter by the cluster of schools involved in the pilot, alongside additional local schools in Monmouth. The Charter sets out a shared set of environmental priorities, including a town-wide deforestation awareness day, embedding the project's learning into a collective, youth-led agenda for ongoing local action.



© Size of Wales / Richard Stanton

New York City (NYC) 'Plant-based by default' hospital catering

In 2019, NYC Health + Hospitals began offering plant-based meals as part of a 'Meatless Monday' pledge, in all of its 11 hospitals. Building on this, they have developed their 'Plant Based Default' menu, whereby they offer a plant-based meal to patients each day as the 'Chef's Recommendation'. Patients are free to decline and choose other plant-based or non-plant-based options, but monitoring from the programme shows that 95 per cent of patients who received the plant-based meal were satisfied.⁶⁴ Patients were supported by staff and educated on the benefits of plant-based foods, and were offered advice from nutritionists if they wished to learn more, right up until they were discharged.⁶⁵ The health benefits associated with plant-based eating were shared with patients, which include: lowering the risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, some cancers and obesity, and helping with weight management, hypertension and hyperlipidaemia.⁶⁶



© NYC Health+ Hospitals

Menu items were designed by staff and tested with patients, to ensure only items which achieved 80 per cent or more satisfaction were introduced into the meal rota. These recipes were developed to be culturally-relevant and familiar to patients, drawing from NYC's diverse communities. Since the

programme was introduced fully in March 2022, NYC Health + Hospitals has served over two million plant-based meals, with 98 per cent patient satisfaction. Food-associated carbon emissions were estimated to have been reduced by 36 per cent, and savings made of 59 cents per tray.⁶⁷

64 <https://www.pcrm.org/news/news-releases/more-90-patient-satisfaction-new-york-city-health-hospitals-plant-based-meals>

65 <https://www.nychealthandhospitals.org/pressrelease/nyc-health-hospitals-now-serving-plant-based-meals-as-primary-dinner-option-for-inpatients-at-all-of-its-11-public-hospitals/>

66 https://www.nyc.gov/assets/foodpolicy/downloads/pdf/NYCHospitals_PlantBasedDefaults_2025.pdf

67 https://www.nyc.gov/assets/foodpolicy/downloads/pdf/NYCHospitals_PlantBasedDefaults_2025.pdf

Good Food for All: Bury Council's journey to sourcing local, organic food for schools⁶⁸



Bury Council, in Greater Manchester, has been on a five-year journey of transformation to deliver sustainable food procurement for 54 schools across the borough. In 2020, the catering team at Bury Council made the decision to re-write their menu - and with it, the entire system of procurement they adopted to bring food to schools. Alongside this in 2021, Bury Council published the 'Bury Food Strategy', which highlighted their changing approach from a focus on healthy weight, to a whole food-systems approach. The goal was to ensure that healthy, nutritious and sustainable food is made accessible to all, through the development of a 'resilient and diverse' local food economy.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ <https://www.foodforlife.org.uk/media/psrn2sty/bury-impact-report.pdf>

⁶⁹ <https://councildecisions.bury.gov.uk/documents/s25025/Bury%20Food%20Strategy.pdf>





The Bury Council catering service began by moving from a pre-prepared meal model to on-site production kitchens in schools, where catering staff were trained to use whole, raw ingredients to create nutritious, balanced meals. This led to at least 75 per cent of all school food in Bury being prepared freshly, on-site. They also worked in partnership with the Soil Association to gain a better understanding of what ‘good’ food looks like, how to remove ultra-processed foods from their menus and source whole ingredients as locally as possible – while keeping within their tight budget and being able to provide a range of meal options for different requirements: vegetarian, vegan, dairy free, gluten free, halal, and different combinations of all.

Part of their procurement re-design was a choice to move away from their old procurement system, which favoured large, national wholesalers, to a bespoke procurement model which prioritised smaller, local suppliers. They work with cooperatives such as Organic North, who provide a platform for small, local producers to pool their product and provide at scale for larger buyers like the council. This new procurement framework gives the council greater control over their suppliers, and the downstream impacts of

their supply chains. This includes supporting and promoting growers who use sustainable farming practices, ensuring that meat and eggs are sourced only from the UK and that all ingredients are free from additives. They also purchase seasonally, with two menus across the school year to adapt recipes for in-season produce from local suppliers.

Their focus on local, ethical and organic food sourcing has led to Bury catering service being awarded the Sustainable Food Places Silver Award in 2024, followed by Soil Association’s Food for Life Gold Award in 2025. The latter places great emphasis on local, healthy, ethical and climate friendly food sourcing, and is only awarded to organisations which use a minimum of 15 per cent organic and 5 per cent free range ingredients. Bury catering service has gone above and beyond these organic commitments – sourcing all fruit, vegetables, eggs, flour and yoghurts from organic certified producers – equating to 25 per cent of their total food spend. Bury catering service also spends 5.1 per cent of their total food spend on MSC certified seafood and 9.2 per cent on certified Fairtrade produce. Though the meat they source is not yet organic, they only purchase Red Tractor certified meat



products – from only British farms. In addition, for some menu items containing mince, they have begun reducing the meat content by 25 per cent, replacing it with lentils and packing in more vegetables to the tomato sauce base. This will not only reduce the cost of these meals – pulses are a cheap and effective protein source – but also reduce the reliance on meat products which contain embedded soy and palm oil.⁷⁰

The council have committed to working with schoolchildren to ensure the changes in the school menus are well-received. This has included delivering education on food literacy in schools, teaching children about food supply chains and what makes a healthy, nutritious meal. They have worked with Cool Food Pro and students to calculate the carbon impact of school meals, and to help them better understand the impact of their food choices. Bury catering service has worked with school and pupil councils to receive feedback on the new menus, which allows them to proactively respond and adjust recipes where needed. They report that children have adapted to the new meal types and are shifting their preferences towards fresh, home-cooked meals, and so reducing the risk of plate waste.

⁷⁰ <https://sizeofwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Assessing-the-Viability-of-a-Livewell-and-Deforestation-Free-School-Menu-in-Wales-3.pdf>



The results? The bespoke procurement framework, developed with YPO (Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation) allowed them to achieve approximately £50,000 cost savings in the first year – even while purchasing greater volumes of organic produce, and delivering a fair price for local producers. The catering team has achieved the green Kitchen Standard through their

efforts to measure and reduce food waste, and carefully manage energy and water. Estimates suggest actions on food waste have saved an equivalent of 757,608kg CO2e annually. The introduction of auto-enrolment for free school meals has increased uptake by 18.4 per cent, allowing a further 400 children to access healthy, sustainable meals every day.⁷¹

⁷¹ <https://food2030.eu/news/good-food-for-all-how-bury-is-rewiring-its-food-system/>

The actions Bury Council has taken to transform food procurement will have indirectly reduced their deforestation risk in several ways:

- Switching to on-site production using whole ingredients and developing a bespoke procurement framework gives the catering team more control over the ingredients they source, including whether they hold ethical certifications such as FairTrade, which includes a deforestation free criteria;
- Reducing ultra-processed foods, which often contain palm oil or palm derivatives (over 50 per cent of packaged foods contain some form of palm oil – a key driver of deforestation in Malaysia and Indonesia), by cooking more from fresh, whole-food ingredients;
- Using only British meat, which eliminates the risk of beef being imported from Brazil – Brazilian beef is the number one driver of tropical deforestation linked to forest-risk commodities;
- Sourcing organic eggs and yoghurt, which reduces the embedded forest risk through soy and palm oil based animal feed. (Under the organic certification, farmers must feed their animals 100 per cent organic feed, and organic growing standards significantly reduce the risk of tropical deforestation.)



Glossary

Glossary of terms

Biodiversity

The richness and variety of life on Earth; biological diversity.

Carbon sequestration

This refers to biological, chemical or physical processes that remove and store carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, e.g. photosynthesis.

Due diligence

A process of checks and measures performed by an organisation to ensure it has done all it can to reduce the risk of deforestation and land conversion in its supply chains.

Ecosystem

An ecosystem refers to the interaction of living and non-living things within a natural environment, an ecological system.

Ecosystem services

This refers to the life-sustaining benefits we receive from healthy functioning ecosystems, e.g. clean air and water, food and medicine.

Forest degradation

This refers to the process in which forest health is degraded by a negative factor or factors, e.g. illegal logging, agriculture, climate impacts, forest fires and disease. Degraded forests can no longer function well and are less capable of sustaining life e.g. through the provision of ecosystem services or as habitats for wildlife.

Greenhouse gases (GHGs)

When in check, greenhouse gases help to keep the Earth's temperature regulated by trapping heat from the sun i.e. the greenhouse effect. Without this, the Earth's temperature would be around 33°C cooler and life as we know it would not exist. However, when GHG levels accumulate in the atmosphere, e.g. as a result of increasing levels of human made carbon emissions, the Earth's temperature increases as more and more of the sun's radiation is trapped at the Earth's surface. GHG gases include water vapour, carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide.

Land conversion, land use change

This describes the process in which the natural environment is transformed by human activity, such as clearing forests in order to grow crops or graze cattle.

Monocrop

The practice of growing a single crop species or cultivar on the same area of land, without crop rotation. Soy and palm oil are often grown in monocrop plantations.

Tipping point

This refers to a threshold in one of Earth's systems that, if crossed, would lead to large and potentially irreversible changes. Climate scientists have identified nine tipping points in the Earth's system, including Amazon rainforest dieback, Greenland ice sheet disintegration, coral reef die-off and Atlantic meridional overturning circulation breakdown.⁷²

⁷² <https://www.carbonbrief.org/explainer-nine-tipping-points-that-could-be-triggered-by-climate-change>



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An aerial photograph of a lush tropical rainforest. A dark, winding river flows through the center of the image, reflecting the sky. The forest is dense with various shades of green, including many palm trees. The word "Appendix" is overlaid in large white text on the left side of the river.

Appendix

Annex A: Deforestation Free 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.

Public bodies are required, under the Social Partnership and Public Procurement Act (2023), to leverage public money through procurement to deliver on the well-being goals outlined in the Well-being of Future Generations (WFG) Act 2015, including the goal to be a 'globally responsible' Wales. The legislation also requires public bodies to consider the social, economic and environmental impacts of public procurement, ensuring ethical and fair supply chains are supported. The Statutory Guidance for the Act includes several references to deforestation, indicating that public bodies should consider the risks of deforestation when procuring goods, and ensure suppliers monitor deforestation risk and source products with ethical certifications. The WFG Commissioner has recommended, in their 2025 Future Generations report, that:

“The public sector must become deforestation free by 2028, ensuring supply chains do not contribute to global deforestation, habitat loss or human rights violations, including child labour and the abuse of Indigenous Peoples' rights.”

Deforestation Free Champion Charter

As a public body, [name] is committed to helping deliver all of Wales' well-being goals included in the Well-being 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 assessing the deforestation risk we are exposed to through investments in public sector pension schemes including the Wales Pension Partnership, and commit to embedding deforestation free criteria in our investment policies moving forward.
4. We commit to making changes to deforestation-risk commodities in favour of more ethically sourced ingredients.
5. We will review our Fairtrade commitment and ensure it is carried out in our procurement practice.
6. We commit to helping our public body learn about the importance of tropical forests, consumption-driven deforestation and what they can do about it.
7. 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 commit to 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 public body 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 public body 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 [Forest Risk Commodity 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 public body. (*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

Work with and support your suppliers and stakeholders to take deforestation free actions. This may vary depending on the type of suppliers you use and specific circumstance, but some examples of collaborative efforts to reduce deforestation risk could include:

- a. Championing local farmers who integrate regenerative, organic farming practices which reduce environmental impact and support local supply chains.
- b. Supporting smaller, local growers and suppliers to compete for public sector contracts. For example, as part of the Welsh Public Sector Collaborative Food Group Food Framework, contracts were split into smaller lots to encourage participation from smaller, Welsh-based suppliers.
- c. Working with your Local Food Partnership to deliver support for local producers and community organisations promoting local, resilient food systems.
- d. Supporting suppliers on frameworks or through the procurement process to better understand how to meet deforestation free criteria, through mechanisms such as reducing meat content, ethical certifications and responsible sourcing.
- e. Working with local schools to support food system education and inviting pupils to participate in the design of school meals, enabling them to have a say in where their food comes from.

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 public body 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.

You can download the full DF Charter and Action Plan [here](#).



**We must act, together,
to prevent further
deforestation, global
warming and runaway
climate impacts.**



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