



## **WCS EU Submission to the EU Public Consultation: 'Deforestation and Forest Degradation – Reducing the Impact of Products Placed on the EU Market'**

### **1. Introduction**

Action to prevent deforestation and degradation of the world's forests, continues to be extremely urgent, with tropical deforestation accelerating.<sup>i</sup> Tropical forest areas decreased in size by around 195 million hectares between 1990 and 2015,<sup>ii</sup> while tree cover loss across the tropics was higher in 2016 and 2017 than in any other year since 2001.<sup>iii</sup> We therefore welcome the attention being given by the EU to respond to the need to ensure its commodity supply chains are free from deforestation and forest degradation, and appreciates the opportunity to respond to this public consultation.

Recent published research by WCS and other scientific partners has highlighted the exceptional benefits of the world's last remaining ecologically intact forests for a wide range of values, including for biodiversity, carbon sequestration, water provision, indigenous cultures and human health.<sup>iv,v</sup> Healthy forests also provide timber and fuel, support crop pollination, biological pest control, maintenance of soil structure and fertility, nutrient cycling and hydrological services, which underpin agricultural production and the rural economy, and supports entire commodity sectors.<sup>vi</sup> Natural forests are also incredibly important for wildlife and harbour 75% of all terrestrial biodiversity.<sup>vii</sup> Furthermore, more than 25% of emissions are removed by intact forests and other ecosystems each year, and additional action on forests and other land use could reduce the remaining net emissions by a further 30% or more.<sup>viii</sup> Potential disease agents are also kept in check in diverse, natural systems with evidence showing that increasing encroachment and human activities in forest frontiers linked to deforestation increases the risk of zoonotic infectious disease outbreaks.<sup>ix</sup>

### **2. EU Legislation Needed**

We fully support action by the EU to develop strong and effective legislation which requires all commodity imports into the EU to be free from deforestation, forest degradation or the conversion or degradation of other natural ecosystems. This should be based on sustainability requirements that contributes to meeting international commitments that governments have already signed up to achieve zero deforestation,<sup>x</sup> rather than being limited to halting illegal deforestation.

It is important that the legislation covers forest degradation as well as deforestation, as in some cases, conversion for commodity production occurs due to small-scale forest destruction by many small-holders over a large area or by the conversion of smaller areas of forest to make roads or provide infrastructure. This process therefore begins as forest degradation, which is less easily detected, but often a first step towards large-scale deforestation. It is also important that the legislation also prevents the conversion of other natural ecosystems to ensure that action to protect forests does not have the unintended consequence of increased conversion of other important ecosystems for commodity production.

We consider that a mandatory, EU-wide due diligence legislation, accompanied by sanctions for non-compliance is likely to be the most appropriate legal tool to respond to the scale of the challenge. We do not consider that EU support for voluntary actions or labelling schemes, even mandatory labelling, provide sufficiently robust alternative approaches. Voluntary initiatives have been underway for many years and have been shown to be inadequate to tackle the issue in isolation. Likewise labelling, even if mandatory, is time-consuming and costly to put into place in relation to its limited impact and is also vulnerable to intentional mislabelling. Deforestation will not be prevented by providing increased information to consumers but requires legally binding measures to prevent the import of products associated with deforestation, forest degradation or the conversion of other natural ecosystems.

### **3. Leveraging Impact**

The EU should leverage the impacts of new legislation so that its impacts on combating global deforestation and forest degradation are as large as possible. A focus only on ‘cleaning-up’ European supply chains will not tackle the issue sufficiently, as, for example, major companies selling to many global markets may simply direct the exports of their sustainably-produced products towards the EU whilst continuing to export products associated with deforestation to other regions. EU-based companies should therefore be required to apply these measures to their entire supply chain, not just to products entering the EU market.

Leveraging this initiative to achieve the greatest impact on the problem could also be achieved by supporting countries or jurisdictions to become deforestation-free. This would enable the problem to be tackled more holistically with supporting actions at the deforestation frontier, and would go beyond the EU simply switching to sourcing products from already sustainable areas. This also would also make it easier to put measures in place to ensure that products are free from forest degradation and biodiversity loss and support those regions and countries that are keeping their forests intact. The EU should also ensure the issue is a priority in dialogues with other consuming regions and countries to encourage them to take similar measures, such as China, the United States, India and Brazil.

### **4. Prioritising Supporting Actions in Producer Countries**

Emerging research from WCS indicates that an increasing proportion of tropical deforestation, and therefore deforestation risk in supply chains, occurs in relatively few districts or municipalities at the forest frontier, where agricultural production and natural forests intersect. These areas, which are characterised by low (but rising) production volumes, and the dominance of independent smallholder farmers, lie largely outside the scope of (and are relatively invisible to) existing initiatives designed to reduce commodity-driven deforestation and address deforestation risk.

The ‘embedded risk’ of deforestation (and resulting greenhouse gas emissions per tonne of commodity) is far higher at the forest frontier than in other regions. To support the implementation of potential new legislative proposals to address deforestation in supply chains, we highlight the value of a new ‘risk based’ framing for action on deforestation, that prioritises efforts towards the farm and forests frontier – **the ‘Forest-First’ Approach** – as a low cost-high impact strategy to address deforestation, reduce land use

change emissions and remove supply chain risk. Implementation of this approach requires the inclusion and leadership of smallholder farmers, Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs), and recognises that companies must take a collective action to reduce impacts on landscapes, in order to catalyse transformational sector wide change.

Our ‘forest-first’ approach has four core principles:

- 1) Prioritise areas where commodity production and at-risk forests of conservation importance intersect

Many private companies have committed to removing deforestation from their supply chains yet deforestation continues to accelerate. In order to align with existing private sector priorities, company engagement is prioritised towards major commodity production areas.<sup>xi</sup> However, these areas usually are already largely converted and have little remaining forest cover. They therefore do not represent the areas with the highest future deforestation risk and do not offer the biggest opportunities for risk reduction across sectors. To successfully prevent deforestation and forest degradation, support to producer countries should focus on areas with large remaining tracts of forest (especially ecologically intact forests) at risk of conversion. Focusing on these areas is necessary to avoid leakage of commodities linked to deforestation, whereby markets committed to sustainability source from production areas with low deforestation risk, where forests may have been cut decades ago, while other markets are still supplied with commodities from areas with more recent or ongoing forest loss. It is also crucial to assess deforestation-risk with consideration of future developments so that companies can respond effectively to market and commodity shifts that are resulting in deforestation in new areas or from new or alternative commodities.

Under a “forest-first” approach, policies and supporting actions must first be targeted to areas where commodity production and at-risk forests of conservation importance intersect, and where the greatest gains for forest protection and risk reduction can be realised. These forest frontier areas are, however, often outside established concessions or protected areas and are therefore beyond the scope of existing policy initiatives or actions. Sustainable sourcing policies that are not accompanied by support for actions in areas at highest current and future risk of deforestation will contribute comparatively little to actively reduce deforestation and in so doing will fail to fully mitigate supply chain and sector deforestation risks.

Specific Recommendations:

- *Prioritise actions and investment in producer countries where commodity production and at-risk forests of conservation importance intersect, and where the greatest gains for forest protection and corporate risk reduction can be realised.*
- *Work to prevent the risk of leakage through the emergence of two-tier supply chains, where low risk areas supply European and UK markets and recently deforested areas supply other consumer markets.*
- *Take a dynamic view of deforestation risk so that risk assessments, and public and private sector responses, take future developments into account.*

## 2) Support Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities (IPLCs) and smallholder inclusion

It is crucial that the central role of smallholder farmers and Indigenous Peoples and local communities as key agents of change, and the first line of defence at the forest frontier, is fully recognised. Renewed private sector commitments and actions that incorporate a “forest-first” approach should be founded upon the inclusion and as far as possible the leadership of these groups operating in priority forest landscapes. This also recognises that investments in smallholder agricultural capacity in these areas can have multiple positive outcomes for reducing deforestation, forest degradation, and biodiversity loss, addressing public and private sector exposure to risk, and supporting farmer livelihoods, food security and resilience.

Specific Recommendations:

- *Engage IPLC's in supporting actions in producer countries and reinforce their rights, especially land tenure rights.*
- *Land-use planning processes should be IPLC-led to ensure local ownership and accountability for forest protection commitments.*
- *All supporting actions in producer countries should comply with and strengthen human rights, including the implementation of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) and women's rights and representation.*

## 3) Catalyse collective action between the private sector and small-scale producers

In order to effectively operationalise a “forest-first” approach, collective action is needed both within and between the public and private sectors. Harnessing the expertise and resources of the majority of actors within a sector to focus on reducing deforestation in vulnerable forest areas reduces the risk of ‘leakage’ of forest-risk commodities to other markets. At the same time, it also builds support for a business case for zero-deforestation production by sharing the costs of interventions and therefore reducing the costs of engagement. Where companies are prepared to pool funds to address deforestation across a forest frontier, this can attract public sector funding and support and achieve further cost and risk reduction efficiencies. Public policy has a crucial role to play in leveraging collaboration between companies and other stakeholders and can generate sector-wide shifts in sourcing behaviour, catalysing the market signals needed to sustain demand for deforestation-free commodities.

Specific Recommendations:

- *Private sector engagement must include support for smallholders to follow the transition to deforestation-free production to ensure their integration in value chains and decent livelihoods to create transformative change.*
- *Private sector engagement should include all operators in a priority area and promote the pooling of costs and risks to catalyse action and sector-wide shifts in production and sourcing behaviour.*
- *Promote traceability mechanisms to transparently and rigorously track commodities from their point of origin, through the entire supply chain, to the final market, ensuring that no part of the supply chain causes deforestation.*

#### 4) Support common climate and biodiversity goals through nature-based solutions (NBS)

Given the disproportionately important global role played by ecologically intact forests and other ecosystems for a range of values such as carbon sequestration and biodiversity protection, a forest-first approach should be linked to the implementation of NBS in these high priority forest and agricultural landscapes. Support to reducing deforestation and forest degradation in producer countries should be targeted towards protecting these highly valuable areas.

##### Specific Recommendations

- *Support producer countries in the implementation of locally-developed and accepted land-use plans that include the sustainable management and financing of a network of protected areas.*
- *Adopt the Forest Integrity Index or comparable metrics to measure success in tackling forest degradation and conserving biodiversity, from local to global levels – to maximise biodiversity and climate benefits.*
- *Invest significant proportions of EU development aid dedicated to climate, to implementing NBS in natural, intact areas of forests and other ecosystems.*
- *Implement/support complementary action to tackle unsustainable hunting of wildlife, another major threat to forest biodiversity.*
- *Support producer countries with measures to boost local climate adaptation by preventing deforestation and degradation to safeguard water cycles and stop soil erosion while promoting sustainable, climate resilient agriculture and landscape restoration.*

## 5. Who we are

WCS EU is a Belgian NGO based in Brussels, affiliated to the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). WCS EU draws on WCS's field-based and scientific knowledge to support the development and implementation of EU policies and programmes, in support of global conservation objectives. WCS is a global organisation working to deliver wildlife conservation programmes in over 60 countries, mainly in Africa, Asia, the Pacific and Latin America. WCS operates large field conservation programmes in many of the world's most ecologically intact wild places including tropical forest regions such as the Congo Basin, the rainforests of south-east Asia and Mesoamerica's Five Great Forests. WCS is a partner in the 'Forest for Life Partnership' which brings together five leading organisations to help curb the climate and extinction crises by safeguarding the world's most intact forests. WCS is also implementing flagship EU-funded biodiversity programmes, including as a partner in the Sustainable Wildlife Management (SWM) programme. WCS is committed to conserving world's wildlife through partnerships designed to benefit people and nature.

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## ANNEX

We are pleased to provide here a copy of a briefing developed with Conservation International and Client Earth to provide recommendations to inform the development of EU Forest Partnership Agreements that complement and support the implementation of deforestation-free supply chains in partner countries.

# ESTABLISHING FOREST PARTNERSHIPS FOR PEOPLE, BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE

## Recommendations for EU International Cooperation and Development

Conservation International - Europe, WCS EU, Client Earth, May 2020

**Partnerships are key to leveraging further action to prevent deforestation and forest degradation beyond EU demand for agricultural commodities, whilst achieving crucial co-benefits for people and biodiversity. To be a real game-changer, the EU must propose to its partners a long-term, integrated, ‘win-win’ approach, that meets both EU and partner country interests.**

### Background

Protecting natural forests around the world is crucial to tackling climate change, biodiversity loss and ensuring sustainable development. Forests are essential for increasing the resilience of societies; absorbing carbon; providing timber, food, energy, medicines and livelihoods to millions of people; stabilizing soil and regulating water flows. Furthermore, expanding human activity along forest frontiers linked to deforestation, is known to increase the risk of animal-to-human infectious disease outbreaks with the potential to turn into pandemics.<sup>1</sup> Human health is closely connected linked to environmental health and the current covid-19 outbreak is a stark demonstration of how the misuse of wildlife can have dramatic social and economic consequences.

The European Commission communication on “Stepping up EU Action to Protect and Restore the World’s Forests”<sup>2</sup> encourages the EU to move towards deforestation-free commodity supply chains which is an extremely important and much needed first step to tackle global deforestation. However, this must be accompanied by actions to support partner countries to become deforestation-free, as laid out amongst the five priorities of the communication: “*work in partnership with producing countries to reduce pressures on forests and to ‘deforest-proof’ EU development cooperation*”. In its December 2019 conclusions, the Council also committed to work with partner countries to “*develop and implement inclusive, ambitious and fair policies to promote action against deforestation and forest degradation*”.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, see: Patz et al. (2004) Unhealthy Landscapes: Policy Recommendations on Land Use Change and Infectious Disease Emergence. *Environ Health Perspect.* 112:1092–1098 (2004). doi:10.1289/ehp.6877; and, Loh EH, Zambrana-Torrel C, Olival KJ, Bogich TL, Johnson CK, Mazet JAK, et al. Targeting Transmission Pathways for Emerging Zoonotic Disease Surveillance and Control. *Vector-Borne Zoonotic Dis.* 2015;15: 432–437. doi:10.1089/vbz.2013.1563

<sup>2</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/communication-eu-action-protect-restore-forests\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/communication-eu-action-protect-restore-forests_en.pdf)

Partnering with developing countries is crucial to ensure the implementation of EU deforestation-free supply chains, as well as supporting partner countries to become deforestation-free. This is critically important to make sure deforestation and forest degradation are tackled in a holistic manner with buy-in from partner governments and civil society in partner countries.

Now is a crucial moment to design partnerships on forests with developing countries, with the future Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) under negotiation, and the European Commission working towards a new comprehensive strategy with Africa.<sup>3</sup> The European Green Deal provides a strong basis for EU action to tackle the inter-related challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and deforestation, including through the mobilisation of development and cooperation instruments to support sustainable development in partner countries. Upcoming key international conferences under the UN conventions for climate change and biodiversity also provide opportunities to leverage international support to tackle deforestation globally.

The EU has substantial expertise in building partnerships with developing countries in relation to forests, through fifteen years of implementation of the Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) action plan and related Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs). The FLEGT action plan is instrumental to support timber producing countries to promote transparency, build the capacity of governments, civil society and businesses, and reform relevant policies and lessons can be drawn from its implementation. However, to address the root causes of agricultural expansion on forests and other ecosystems, it will be necessary to go beyond these elements to integrate additional layers, such as land use planning, livelihoods of smallholders and local communities and land tenure rights.

## Recommendations

Forest Partnerships should be win-win agreements between partner countries and the EU. They should identify and implement solutions that are inclusive and aim to reconcile different land uses, to reduce deforestation, forest degradation and the conversion of natural ecosystems. This integrated approach should address the root causes of deforestation, including poverty, weak forest governance and land tenure issues, and help achieve a number of linked objectives including biodiversity conservation, climate mitigation and adaptation and socio-economic benefits to Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

## DEFINE TAILORED OBJECTIVES

Forest Partnerships should take a comprehensive and integrated approach which encompasses a wide range of sectors, including wood products, agricultural commodities, small-scale agriculture, energy, mining and extractive activities, as well as infrastructure development.

Each Forest Partnership should be tailored to meet the specificities and needs of the partner country. It should support partner countries in implementing their national policies and international commitments, especially under the UNFCCC, the CBD and the SDGs.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020JC0004&from=FR>

These partnerships should pursue overarching objectives, including, but not limited to:

**1. An inclusive approach that achieves poverty alleviation, secures rights and improves governance**

**a. Supporting Indigenous Peoples and local communities:** Recent research shows the role played by Indigenous Peoples in protecting the world's forests has been underestimated and undervalued, especially the most important large tracts of primary, natural forests.<sup>4</sup> Supporting Indigenous Peoples and local communities to secure and enforce their rights therefore has a significant impact on conserving the world's last remaining forests. Community-led solutions such as community forestry systems, as well as local indigenous knowledge should be promoted and leveraged to support livelihoods and improve conservation management. Forest partnerships should comply with and strengthen human rights, including the rights of local communities and indigenous peoples to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), legal recognition of customary tenure rights, and women's rights and representativeness.

**b. Supporting small-scale producers:** Small-scale agriculture is a major driver of deforestation in many countries, so supporting smallholder farmers to transition to sustainable agricultural practices is key to ensure country-wide sustainable agriculture. There is also a need to support small-scale producers to make sure they are not left behind or disadvantaged as partner countries adopt more sustainable approaches. Support for small-scale producers should include the generation of decent and sustainable jobs, for example by building up negotiating capacities of smallholder farmers and improving labour and land rights in relevant sectors, building capacity to improve the sustainability of agriculture and forestry practices as well as developing sustainable alternative activities. Examples of incentives can include payment for ecosystem services and agreements with local communities on forest protection and sustainable management, to support community forestry, as well as sustainable agriculture and natural resources management practices.

**c. Strengthening legal frameworks and establishing multi-stakeholder and participatory processes:** Forest Partnerships should strengthen legal frameworks in partner countries, including through inclusive multi-stakeholder approaches and dialogues on forest policies and governance (including civil society organisations, Indigenous Peoples and local communities and particularly women), and promote transparency, sustainability and accountability in land management. All sectors that are likely to have an impact on forests and other ecosystems should be included in these processes. At the local level, developing multi-stakeholder approaches can be concretised through sustainable landscapes / jurisdictions.

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<sup>4</sup> Garnett, S.T., Burgess, N.D., Fa, J.E., Fernández-Ilamazares, A., Molnár, Z., Robinson, C.J., Watson, J.E.M., et al. 2018. "A Spatial Overview of the Global Importance of Indigenous Lands for Conservation." *Nature Sustainability* 1 (July): 369–74. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-018-0100-6>



## **2. Supporting partner countries in achieving global climate and biodiversity goals through nature-based solutions:**

**a. Supporting climate mitigation and adaptation:** The world's last remaining intact forests have a huge impact on climate mitigation. Around 30% of emissions are already removed by intact forests and other ecosystems each year, and additional action on forests and other land use could reduce the remaining net emissions by a further 30% or more.<sup>5</sup> Recent scientific papers<sup>6</sup> show that the contribution of degradation of forests and other ecosystems has been dramatically under-estimated and is almost as high as the level of emissions from deforestation. The conservation of forests and other carbon-rich ecosystems is therefore crucial to achieving the objectives of Paris Agreement. As such, Forests Partnerships should support partner countries to implement and enhance their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans, for example, through the inclusion of nature based solutions, such as preventing existing large-scale forest areas from being deforested or degraded, promoting sustainable agriculture, and implementing large scale restoration, reforestation and management programmes that involve Indigenous Peoples and local communities, respect their rights and enhance livelihoods.

**b. Conserving biodiversity and enhancing forest ecosystem integrity:** Forests harbour more than 75% of the world's terrestrial biodiversity.<sup>7</sup> Biodiversity continues to be under threat and greater ambition is needed at the global level to conserve it. Forest partnerships should therefore complement efforts to reach new targets to be agreed under the forthcoming EU Biodiversity Strategy, as well as the global post-2020 biodiversity framework under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). This should support partner countries in implementing their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and can cover forest conservation, species-focused conservation programmes, forest and ecosystem restoration as well as watershed management, including by and with the respect of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. A cornerstone of national efforts to conserve species and intact forest ecosystems should be a comprehensive protected areas network that is representative of all elements of biodiversity, effectively and equitably managed, adequately financed and respected in sectoral development plans. The EU should also continue to lead global efforts to reduce defaunation in tropical forests by tackling the unsustainable hunting of wildlife which is a major threat to forest biodiversity.<sup>8</sup>

**c. Forest and biodiversity-proofing EU development and cooperation funding:** forest partnerships should provide an opportunity to exchange with partners on phasing out funding for projects that drive deforestation, forest degradation, ecosystem conversion and related human rights violations. This could be made concrete through guidelines / methodologies to forest and biodiversity-proof development and cooperation funding, and proactive engagement with relevant partners on this topic – including cooperation with other donors.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://nature4climate.org/about/purpose/>

<sup>6</sup> For example, Erb, K., Kastner, T., Plutzer, C. *et al.* Unexpectedly large impact of forest management and grazing on global vegetation biomass. *Nature* 553, 73–76 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1038/nature25138> and Maxwell et al. (2019) Degradation and forgone removals increase the carbon impact of intact forest loss by 626%, *Science Advances* 5(10), DOI: 10.1126/sciadv.aax2546

<sup>7</sup> FAO, 2016 State of the World's forests

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.acp.int/content/sustainable-wildlife-management-programme-launches-inaugural-programme-newsletter>

### **3. Supporting efforts to change drivers linked to demand and consumption patterns:**

**a. Promoting sustainable trade in forest and agriculture commodities:** Sustainable trade between partner countries and the EU should go beyond improving the sustainability of the EU value chains to also include support to mechanisms of compliance with potential EU measures to reduce imports causing deforestation. Involving other major trade partners and investors active within partner countries would also be relevant to make sure that other trade and investments are also deforestation-free, beyond only EU supply chains. This objective should be supported by the continuous development of information and monitoring systems – e.g. mapping and remote sensing tools.

**b. Building capacity to drive behaviour change:** Work to increase the sustainability of supply chains should include enhancing the capacity of relevant stakeholders, such as local communities, smallholders and governments. This could include north-south and south-south exchanges to share best practices, including local indigenous knowledge and access to education and continuing training, particularly for women and girls.

## **MONITOR AND MEASURE THE IMPACT**

The EU and partner countries should determine together concrete and quantified targets and related indicators to monitor the implementation of the Forest Partnerships and measure their social and environmental impacts. Environmental indicators should include the amount of area under conservation measures, the quantity of carbon sequestered, biodiversity status, and ecosystem integrity.<sup>9</sup> Social indicators should include or relate to the jobs created/maintained and related incomes, in particular of smallholders, involvement and land rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Specific targets on participation should be put in place, to make sure Forest Partnerships are inclusive and ensure a representative participation of sectors and stakeholders – particular attention should be given to the participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, as well as women.

## **LEVERAGE INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

### **1. Building a “Forest Diplomacy”**

The EU should leverage the impacts of Forest partnerships in international dialogues and processes. Focusing on ‘cleaning-up’ European supply chains will not be sufficient to tackle the issue of deforestation and forest degradation. As stated in the 2019 communication, the EU consumption represents around 10% of the global share of deforestation. If the focus is only on EU supply chains, multi-national companies may simply direct the exports of their sustainably produced products towards the EU market whilst continuing to export products associated with deforestation to other regions. To maximise the impact of forest partnerships, the EU should invite other major consumer countries to participate and contribute to those, or favour knowledge exchanges to aim at joining forces or

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<sup>9</sup> WCS is working with a consortium of scientific partners to develop a new composite index of forest integrity, soon to be published, which will, for the first time will provide a fine scale global index of ecological integrity. Measuring forest integrity is just as important as measuring change in forested area, because reduced ecological integrity affects most of the benefits that forests provide (for biodiversity, climate and Indigenous People and local communities), over huge areas.

replicating such partnerships. The EU must ensure the issue is a priority in bilateral and multilateral dialogues with other major consuming regions and countries to encourage them to take similar measures. This would deliver on the objectives of the Green Deal, the related communication stating that the EU “will use its diplomatic and financial tools to ensure that green alliances are part of its relations with Africa and other partner countries and regions, particularly in Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific”.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, the EU should work to align key environmental governance mechanisms and institutions (REDD+, FLEGT, Convention on Biological Diversity, UNFCCC) to specifically promote the vital role of community forestry in natural resources management globally, and to embed it as a best practice model and essential safeguard in these mechanisms and institutions, including practical application of such key aspects as land tenure, FPIC and benefit sharing. The EU can also promote a focused effort to expand in-country application of community forestry according to best practice standards, leveraging the influence that REDD+, FLEGT, CBD, UNFCCC provide.

## **2. Securing adequate financial resources**

Sufficient financial resources should be secured to support the development of the Forest Partnerships. Inter alia, we recommend that the future Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) includes a substantial mainstreaming climate and biodiversity target – in line with the European Parliament’s position for a 45% target for climate and environment related spend – and that a specific envelope is earmarked/mobilised for forests. Clear guidelines on forest funding should be defined for the related programming process to make sure this issue is prioritised by EU delegations in priority partner countries.

An EU commitment could also leverage an ambitious global financial commitment for forests at the upcoming CBD and UNFCCC COPs, especially as forests are so pertinent to both the global biodiversity and climate agendas

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<sup>i</sup> NYDF Assessment Partners (2019). Protecting and restoring forests: A story of large commitments yet limited progress Five-year assessment report. Climate Focus (coordinator and editor) <https://forestdeclaration.org/images/uploads/resource/2019NYDFReport.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> Keenan, R. J., Reams, G. A., Achard, F., de Freitas, J. V., Grainger, A., and Lindquist, A. (2015). Dynamics of global forest area: Results from the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment. *Forest Ecology and Management* 352, 9-20.

<sup>iii</sup> World Resources Institute (2018). 2017 was the second-worst year on record for tropical tree cover loss. June 03, 2020. <https://www.wri.org/blog/2018/06/2017-was-second-worst-year-record-tropical-tree-cover-loss>

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<sup>10</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/european-green-deal-communication\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/european-green-deal-communication_en.pdf)

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<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.wcs.org/our-work/solutions/climate-change/intact-forests>

<sup>v</sup> Watson, J., et al. 2018. The exceptional value of intact forest ecosystems, *Nature Ecology and Evolution*, 2, 599 – 610. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41559-018-0490-x>

<sup>vi</sup> FAO (2016). *State of the World's Forests - Forests and Agriculture: Land-Use Challenges and Opportunities*. Rome.

<sup>vii</sup> FAO (2016). *State of the World's Forests - Forests and Agriculture: Land-Use Challenges and Opportunities*. Rome.

<sup>viii</sup> <https://nature4climate.org/science/n4c-pathways/>

<sup>ix</sup> <https://www.wcs.org/get-involved/updates/wcs-issues-report-on-links-between-ecological-integrity-and-human-health>

<sup>x</sup> For example, UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15 which includes a commitment to halt deforestation

<sup>xi</sup> Tropical Forest Alliance (2019) A 'commodity first' approach to identifying landscapes for private sector engagement <https://www.tropicalforestalliance.org/assets/Uploads/TFA-Commodity-First-Landscapes-April-2019.pdf>