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## Zero deforestation: a commitment to change

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### Call for contributions – share your experience

15 September 2016



#### Context and rationale

The growing global demand for food, raw materials and consumer goods is putting increasing pressure on forests, especially in tropical countries. About 70 percent of tropical deforestation is estimated to be due to expansion in the production of just a few commodities, mainly palm oil, beef, soybean, timber and paper, with other such as cacao, sugar and rubber also having a significant impact. The production of these commodities is vital to the economy of producer countries to meet domestic consumption and generate earnings from exports. Much of this supply, however, is not fully legal and expansion is still largely unregulated and unmonitored, often leading to negative impacts on local livelihoods, food and water availability, biodiversity loss and climate change.

Addressing agricultural commodity production and trade is part of the efforts to tackle deforestation, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, enhancing the livelihoods of forest-dependent people, and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. International conventions and associated changes in national legislation have, however, had only limited and localized effects. But much larger and more rapid impacts on reducing forest conversion and increasing restoration are expected from commitments to 'zero deforestation' or deforestation-free supply chains, pledged by companies, transnational corporations, national and sub-national governments. Many followed the New York Declaration on Forests (September 2014), the Amsterdam Declaration (December 2015), supported by the Consumer Goods Forum (CGF) and the Tropical Forest Alliance (TFA2020) amongst others. This ETFRN News will take a snapshot of what is being done, and how commitments could become more effective.

It will focus on engaging corporations, and existing partnerships between, public, private and civil society actors, and hearing how they are beginning to turn 'on paper' commitments into 'on the ground' impacts. It will look at a range of commodities and actors along the value chain, sharing experiences of how private organizations are striving for deforestation-free supply chains, how implementation barriers and challenges are being overcome, how social, economic and environmental impacts and trade-offs (direct and indirect) are addressed, how to enhance links between private commitments and state policy and regulations, and how national, international and civil society initiatives help or hinder them. ETFRN News 58 will increase our understanding of these issues; their relevance (scope and limitations), early impacts; their direct and indirect social and environmental implications (current and potential), and how identified best practices can be scaled up and out.

ETFRN News asks the big questions to the bigger players. But in this issue, beside the usual big policy ‘players’, it also gives an opportunity to big businesses to share their experiences. We so often hear ‘the private sector voice’ via others, but here, we will also hear it directly. The publication aims to work with, not for, all those involved, and private and policy voices will share this platform fifty-fifty, in answering the key questions. Why make zero deforestation commitments and what has changed? What are the challenges to making the commitments effective? What have been the early impacts on the ground? How can social risks be reduced, ensuring that smallholder farmers benefit more from sustainable value chains? How do commitments protect the rights of forest-dependent and indigenous peoples, and do they also see any benefits? What are the best examples of moves towards deforestation-free supply chains, and can these be scaled up and out? How can governments help in this process? This edition will present dozens of stories from around the world, and will as always, bring together the key issues into a single ‘leader’ article to inform and direct future debate and action.

### **What’s in it for you? Why be involved?**

Traditional target audiences of ETFRN News include public and private policy and decision makers, donors, NGOs, development workers and researchers. This issue, however, focuses on a topic which is being led by private companies and corporations, supported by international finance, and as such, it has a scope and readership outside that of the usual supporters and readers of ETFRN News. But at its core, the subject of zero deforestation is a concern to everyone. From national governments and international conventions, UN and other international organizations, national and international NGOs, global corporations to small and medium-sized enterprises, civil society organizations of all shapes and sizes, academia and individuals – reducing forest loss and increasing forest cover will benefit each and every one of us.

- **Governments, donors and international organizations** – findings presented in this edition will help to focus and improve the efficiency of their legal and policy frameworks, including financial and technical support related to public investment in deforestation initiatives, especially those undertaken or led by the private sector, producer organizations or civil society.
- **Corporations, companies and producer cooperatives** – including those involved in production, processing and trade, and whether already committed to zero deforestation or not, this edition will provide insight in what others are doing. How can these developments be beneficial to you? How you can contribute, and which initiatives could you join to learn from your peers.
- **Consumer groups and civil society organizations** – in the broadest sense, including indigenous peoples and forest and farm producer organizations, NGOs, etc. How could you have more impact and on a larger scale? How can you better interact with businesses and government to ensure more impact?

### **Submissions, timelines and contacts**

If you are interested in contributing, send a **short outline of around 250 words** to the editors Nick Pasiecznik ([npasiecznik@wanadoo.fr](mailto:npasiecznik@wanadoo.fr)) and Herman Savenije ([herman.savenije@tropenbos.org](mailto:herman.savenije@tropenbos.org)) by **15 October 2016**. Please identify one (or more) of the five sections of this edition that the proposed paper may best fit, and consider the guiding questions for each (see over) when preparing outline ideas. All submissions will be acknowledged, with 25-30 to be selected by 1 November against objectives and criteria drawn up for this issue and with a balance between different supply chains, regions, those involved, and policy and practitioners’ perspectives. Full papers with illustrations, are to be requested by 20 December 2016. ETFRN News 58 will be published in June 2017. **International corporations and civil society organizations are strongly encouraged to contribute.** Selected authors will be sent a framework on which to base their full (2500 word) article, and are asked not to be daunted by the job of writing their paper. **A dedicated editor will always be at hand.**

### **And something to celebrate – a quarter of a century of ETFRN News**

*The European Tropical Forest Research Network (ETFRN) was established in 1991, and ETFRN News has provided a wealth of knowledge for almost 25 years on topics of the moment. A decade ago, in response to demands for more in-depth analyses of key issues, the format changed from a newsletter to a book, each with 25-35 articles over 175-275 pages. The informative and well-illustrated content is produced by an experienced team of subject specialists, editors and designers. And the forthcoming ETFRN News 58 will be the tenth edition produced in this format – another milestone to celebrate in ETFRN’s silver anniversary year.*

## Sections and guiding questions

The following questions are not a rigid set that must be all answered by any paper, but are intended as an indicative guide to be considered when preparing a proposed contribution.

### **Section 1 – Zero deforestation definitions and perspectives: what are we talking about? (2-4 articles)**

- What are the different definitions of forests and zero deforestation embedded in the commitments?
- What associated standards and criteria are used, and are these all perceived in the same way?
- How do the differences influence corporate business standards, practices and monitoring/evaluation?
- What are the effects of having timebound versus open-ended commitments?
- What are the implications for including (or not) legal and/or illegal deforestation, and past deforestation?
- How to articulate zero deforestation as a new global norm with inclusive land-use planning

### **Section 2 – From commitment to practice: the private sector experience (12-14 articles)**

- Articles to focus on experiences and perspectives of a single company, actor, commodity or region.
- What were the reasons for deciding upon making a firm and public commitment to zero deforestation?
- What are the explicit (and implicit) targets and how and by whom were the commitments designed?
- What are/were the main technical, operational, financial and institutional challenges in putting the commitments into practice and what has been done in an attempt to overcome these?
- Are they applicable beyond the remits of company concessions, and how are they applied to local suppliers?
- How have internal/external monitoring systems performed, and how has progress (or not) been reported?
- What has been/should be the role and potential contribution of the financial sector, and of public policy?
- What benefits have been felt and seen in terms of sales and other criteria? Has it all been plain sailing?
- What would you have wished to have known beforehand, and what experience can you offer to others?
- What have been the benefits (expected *and* unexpected), and how can best practices be scaled up?

### **Section 3 – Checks and balances (4-6 articles)**

- What are the pros and cons of voluntary agreements versus jurisdictional approaches?
- How transparent are the commitments?
- What monitoring and evaluation checks have been tried, and how is good (enough) governance ensured?
- What progress can we expect in monitoring technologies and what may force that accountability?
- What have been the benefits and what have been the drawbacks, both expected and unexpected?
- What are the internal and external checks that guarantee public accountability?
- What has been/should be the role of independent observers, and are there penalties for breaking the rules?
- What role for externally audited certification schemes, and what of the 'beyond certification' debate?
- What role for consumer-led platforms and initiatives?
- How could smallholder farmers (indigenous peoples and producer organizations) be more involved?
- How could local people benefit more, while avoiding leakage and displacement of smallholder deforestation to new forest frontiers?

### **Section 4 – Impacts beyond the supply chain (4-8 articles)**

- How do individual commitments influence developments at a larger scale?
- What impact do we hope to achieve and what can we expect?
- What impacts have international treaties had on the rise of zero deforestation commitments?
- What are current and possible future relationships to other initiatives, e.g. REDD+, FLEGT, the EUTR, etc.?
- Are there lessons or structures from these processes that can help build deforestation-free supply chains?
- What are the complementarities and constraints emerging from civil society and state actors that support or hinder private sector initiatives?
- Where do these private sector commitments fit in the larger public or private policy landscape?
- What innovations in governance and institutional arrangements are emerging associated to the pledges?
- How can the implementation processes for deforestation-free supply chains become integrated into broader territorial or policy frameworks as land use planning, forest and landscape governance, FLEGT, REDD+ and related financing mechanisms?
- Should we move from (voluntary) chains of custody for single commodities to (mandatory) landscape approaches, and if so, why and how?
- How can synergies between corporate strategies, public policy and regulations be enhanced?
- Are institutional challenges being tackled, including unclear property rights, distorted markets and lack of territorial planning, affecting their implementation?
- What are the criteria for quality compensation and what role for financing and investment institutions?

### Section 5 – Cross-cutting issues (ca. 3-5 articles)

- What have been the impacts on rural livelihoods, small and medium-sized enterprises, producer organizations, indigenous peoples, and the forest landscapes in which they live and operate?
- What future roles have governments, NGOs, CSOs, indigenous peoples, and what can be done better?
- How have different groups been involved to date, how are they included in decision-making and how can their engagement be enhanced?
- What roles have financing institutions been playing so far, and what for the future?
- What are the links to carbon finance and carbon markets?
- Who owns emission reductions in zero deforestation supply chains and where should the money go?
- Can zero deforestation commitments help to resolve the many underlying issues, e.g. unclear tenure and land rights, lack of territorial planning, corruption in land allocation, limited law enforcement, etc.?

#### About this ETFRN News

This edition of ETFRN News is produced on behalf of ETFRN by Tropenbos International, in partnership with:

- **EU FLEGT and REDD facilities**,
- **GIZ** – Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH,
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The **European Tropical Forest Research Network (ETFRN)** ensures that Europe-based expertise contributes to the conservation and sustainable use of forest and trees in tropical and subtropical countries. To do so, ETFRN encourages dialogue between researchers, policy makers, business practitioners, and forest users, and promotes greater coherence in European tropical forest research and collaboration with developing countries through partnerships and capacity building. **ETFRN News** is the flagship publication. Each issue enhances our understanding of a topical theme relevant to the international development agenda, bringing together grounded practices, scientific insights, policy and trends. See samples at: [www.etfrn.org](http://www.etfrn.org). Production is coordinated by Tropenbos International, which also hosts the ETFRN secretariat.

ETFRN News 58: Zero deforestation: a commitment to change (June 2017) – forthcoming

ETFRN News 57: Effective forest and farm producer organizations (September 2015)

ETFRN News 56: Towards productive landscapes (November 2014)

ETFRN News 55: Linking FLEGT and REDD+ to improve forest governance (March 2014)

ETFRN News 54: Good business: making private investments work for tropical forests (December 2012)

ETFRN News 53: Moving forward with forest governance (April 2012)

ETFRN News 52: Chainsaw milling: supplier to local markets (December 2010)

ETFRN News 51: Biodiversity conservation in certified forests (September 2010)

ETFRN News 50: Forests and climate change: adaptation and mitigation (November 2009)

ETFRN News 49: Financing sustainable forest management (September 2008)