

PRIMARY

On the front line of deforestation

KEY TAKEAWAY MESSAGES
FROM THE SEMINAR ON DEFORESTATION

Brazil

Indonesia

Democratic Republic of Congo

Thailand

— PRODUCED BY:



— WITH THE SUPPORT OF



Ajuntament
de Barcelona



Agència Catalana
de Cooperació
al Desenvolupament



Generalitat
de Catalunya



Diputació
Barcelona

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE EXPERTS

Commodity-driven deforestation is a multifaceted problem involving many actors in the supply chain: beginning with the act itself of cutting down trees for timber, it goes on to growing certain consumer products (food, timber, animal feed, etc.) in deforested lands, the working and living conditions in these territories, the companies that promote it, the international treaties, global regulations and certifications, and the final role of consumers.

With so many stakeholders and negative impacts happening at both the small and large scale, the decision-making process to solve this issue is highly complex. It is clear that deforestation, like climate change, is a systemic problem rooted in a social life based on unsustainable growth that does not take into account planetary boundaries.

Despite these difficulties, RUIDO Photo and CREAM have organised a seminar within the framework of the PRIMARY project with key actors: people who work in entities related to the production, purchase, regulation and trade of forest products.

The seminar takeaways are the foundations of this report, which summarises the conclusions of the conference drawn by its participants. Intended to briefly describe different approaches or starting points for thinking about shared solutions, it does not reflect the opinion of CREAM or RUIDO Photo on this matter.

1

A MODEL UNDER CRISIS

1.1 — **OIL.** Deforestation will keep happening as long as there is oil to support it, and as long as this non-renewable and polluting source of energy is subsidised. Deforestation and soy and pork production are closely linked to oil. Oil is needed to power mechanical logging and agricultural processes, and to produce oil derivatives, such as chemical fertilisers. Subsidising fossil fuels contributes to making all these processes economically profitable. As a source of greenhouse gas emissions that we have to drastically cut back (and which should therefore no longer be subsidised), and as a resource that will soon reach its peak, we cannot take oil out of the equation if we want to do a comprehensive analysis of the situation.

1.2 — **FOOD SOVEREIGNTY.** So, how will we feed ourselves without oil? With oil being expected to increase (or normalise) food prices, we need a 5-year plan to tackle deforestation. An increase in diesel prices might halt deforestation and stop making soy and pork production profitable. Therefore, it is necessary to promote an oil-free agricultural system that restores degraded lands. Petrochemical fertilisers have degraded farmlands all over the world. Implementing regenerative agriculture would restore the natural functioning of the soil, bursting with underground fauna and microorganisms that create a porous, fertile and moist soil on their own.

1.3 — **TWO-WAY PRODUCER-BUYER PERSPECTIVE.** The decision-making process needs to take into account the vision of both the producing and the consuming countries. Producing countries want sovereignty to decide when and how to achieve sustainable development by themselves, and not be subjected to the whims of trade. Climate change is pressing Europe to take an urgent, firm step to stop deforestation. However, this polarised European vision should also consider the sustainable economic development of those countries that are currently undergoing deforestation activities.

2

MANUFACTURERS AND TRADING COMPANIES

2.1 — **ACCOUNTABILITY.** Companies should issue mandatory public reports on their progress in this area by explaining where their products come from, which of the materials they use are certified as sustainably produced, which are not, etc.

2.2 — **COLLABORATION.** Private and public entities and producing and consuming countries should work in a collaborative network.

2.3 — **ECONOMIC SUPPORT FOR PRODUCERS.** The transition to sustainable production in producing countries could be achieved with financial support or joint financing arrangements. In this sense, businesses have an important role to play, and European NGOs such as IDH are getting successful results.

2.4 — **TRANSPARENCY AND TRACEABILITY.** Current technology allows us to have a clearer idea of where products come from, which helps companies think of new ways to make improvements. However, companies must continue to work on actions to improve these two aspects of the process.

3 FINANCIAL SECTOR AND ECONOMIC MODEL

3.1 — **SUSTAINABLE FINANCE:** The financial sector has a significant role to play as regards working towards a responsible, sustainable finance system, investing in sustainable initiatives that, for instance, tackle deforestation.

3.2 — **LIMITS TO GROWTH:** Deforestation is a systemic problem that is linked to our way of life and our drive to grow indefinitely. A planned degrowth can be a great ally in the fight against imported deforestation.

4 VISIBILITY AND COMMUNICATION

4.1 — It is necessary to keep on highlighting the problem and its negative effects on society.

4.2 — Explaining who is behind deforestation and why do they do it must be an ongoing activity.

4.3 — It is imperative to discuss the shared responsibility between consumers, funding entities, companies and the public administration.

4.4 — Raising awareness about the origin of products and showcasing certified products is a must.

4.5 — It is necessary to improve how to report good and bad business practices. Directly affecting a company's reputation, these initiatives can drive an internal transformation.

5 COHERENT POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

5.1 — The proposed EU directive on Due Diligence on human rights and sustainability by companies is a regulation that is emerging in line with the UN's business principles and human rights. Its significance lies in that it forces companies to take measures that ensure human rights in their supply chain. Among other benefits, this would help maintain product traceability and control their origin, so that no products linked to deforestation can be sold in Europe. This is an important step forward that could be replicated in other countries or continents.

5.2 — It is necessary to focus on policies that are based on stakeholders' responsibility. For example, companies must be held responsible for the environmental and social impacts of their production processes. They should also perform a risk analysis and show evidence they are taking measures for a responsible, deforestation-free production.

5.3 — It must be understood that if we work to make the supply chain responsible in other countries, we must also work to ensure stable working conditions in our country and be consistent.

6 PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

6.1 — Public procurement, consulting, tools, mediations and collaborations need further support in order to obtain more purchasing power and improve processes. Public procurement represents a third of Barcelona City Council GDP and 20% of Spain's GDP.

7 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION PRACTICES

7.1 — It is necessary to reduce meat consumption, especially from intensive livestock production and from animals that compete with our food (pork). Our current food system has a high demand for soy crops to feed pork production. Two thirds of Catalan lands are farmed solely to feed pigs, which compete with us for food.

7.2 — It is necessary to promote meat consumption from extensive, grazing livestock farming. Eating meat produced in extensive livestock farming favours resilient landscapes and is a shared solution.

7.3 — It is necessary to promote consumption of products from regenerative agriculture. Regenerative agriculture is a type of agriculture that does not depend on fossil fuels, takes care of the soil, and maintains its natural fertility. It helps recover land in areas that were not previously farmed, to use less water (because the soil retains humidity), to maintain and adapt food production to arid conditions.

7.4 — Responsible and local consumption. Local consumption should be promoted whenever possible. While making the transition, it is necessary that products coming from abroad are consumed responsibly, buying only certified products. In this sense, it should be stressed that it is not about the individual consumer responsibility alone, but the shared responsibility of all the stakeholders involved. It is also important to improve access to certified products and to encourage citizen participation in policy drafting.

8 LOCAL INITIATIVES

8.1 — **Landscapes that favour production, conservation and inclusion:** It is possible to have areas where production, conservation and inclusion are equally promoted and where all stakeholders are taken into account from an integral point of view, collaborating with both local producing entities and purchasing companies.

9 CERTIFICATIONS

9.1 — They are not the definitive solution. Certification requirements still have room for improvement, but they are a first step to solving the problem when they are considered transitional certifications. For instance, as regards ensuring fair wages, we are still a long way from having an adequate certification system.