Ireland: A deforestation exposure assessment

Headlines

2% of EU’s total deforestation exposure is linked to Ireland's imports, after adjusting for re-exports

2,910 ha Ireland’s average deforestation exposure in 2019-2021, after adjusting for re-exports

Industrial roundwood made up 64.7% of Ireland’s total deforestation exposure in 2019-2021, after adjusting for re-exports

Methodological note

This analysis provides the deforestation footprint of Ireland’s imports and is useful for highlighting hotspots and trends in deforestation exposure from a global perspective. Results should be interpreted against the methods used and their associated limitations. Please refer to the end of the factsheet for some key considerations, or read the full methods note for more detail.

Direct trade deforestation exposure by origin country and commodity

From a direct trade perspective, on average between 2019 and 2021, Ireland was most exposed to deforestation in Argentina (124 ha, 21.4%), followed by Brazil (101 ha, 17.4%) and Vietnam (95.9 ha, 16.5%). Across all origin countries, the most important commodities were soy (173 ha, 29.8%), maize (130 ha, 22.4%) and pepper (piper spp.) (64.8 ha, 11.1%). In Argentina, the most important commodity for Ireland’s deforestation exposure was soy (124 ha, 99.6%), followed by groundnuts in shell (0.297 ha, 0.2%). In Brazil, the most important commodity was maize (86.2 ha, 85.3%), followed by coffee (4.65 ha, 4.6%).
Re-export adjusted deforestation exposure by origin country and commodity

After adjusting for re-exports, on average between 2019 and 2021, Ireland was most exposed to deforestation in Ireland (1,920 ha, 66%), followed by Brazil (207 ha, 7.1%) and Côte d’Ivoire (154 ha, 5.3%). Across all origin countries, the most important commodities were industrial roundwood (1,880 ha, 64.7%), soy (208 ha, 7.1%) and cocoa (189 ha, 6.5%). In Ireland, the most important commodity for Ireland’s deforestation exposure was industrial roundwood (1,880 ha, 98%), followed by cattle products (17.5 ha, 0.9%). In Brazil, the most important commodity was cattle products (70.7 ha, 34.2%), followed by maize (69.1 ha, 33.3%).

Deforestation exposure by commodity and perspective

Ireland’s total deforestation exposure was larger from the re-export adjusted perspective (2,910 ha), and smaller from the direct trade perspective (581 ha). For more information about these different perspectives, see the accompanying methods note. Numbers are average annual exposure from 2019 to 2021.
Deforestation exposure by commodity over time

The following charts show trends over time in re-export adjusted deforestation exposure, for each commodity. Overall, Ireland’s total exposure decreased between 2014 and 2021 by 936 ha, a change of -24.2%. Of the seven EUDR commodities, the biggest change in absolute terms was for oil palm, which saw a decrease of -2,040 ha over the time series (-94.7%). The biggest change in relative terms was for coffee, which saw an increase of 96.6% (17.2 ha) over the time series. The commodities are shown in decreasing order of deforestation exposure over the time series. Note that there is lower confidence in the last data point in the time series (2021) due to data limitations.

Comparison with deforestation exposure of other EU countries

After adjusting for re-exports, Ireland ranks 10th among EU countries for deforestation exposure, accounting for 2% of the EU total. Looking instead at the deforestation per 1,000 tonnes of imported material, Ireland ranks 6th, with its deforestation exposure per 1,000 tonnes (0.26 ha/kt) higher than the EU median of 0.14 ha/kt.
Subnational deforestation exposure

Estimates of subnational deforestation exposure presented in this section will differ from the national-level estimates presented earlier in the factsheet, and are not directly comparable. This reflects different definitions of deforestation (in Brazil, for example, the subnational data includes the conversion of any native vegetation, including ecosystems such as the Cerrado), and other methodological differences (e.g. the time periods used to attribute deforestation to particular commodities). See the methods note accompanying the factsheet for more information.

Argentina soy: Subnational detail

Trase data shows that Ireland was exposed to 165 ha of deforestation from its direct imports of Argentina soy in 2019, the most recent year with subnational data available. Ireland’s deforestation exposure was highest in the provinces of Santiago Del Estero (85.8 ha, 51.9%), Chaco (74.6 ha, 45.1%), and Santa Fe (3.9 ha, 2.4%). Zooming in to a finer spatial scale, Ireland sourced Argentina soy from 99 departments, while 80% of Ireland’s exposure was spread across 8 departments. In total, Ireland imported Argentina soy from 10 exporters in 2019. The exporter groups most exposed to deforestation were VICENTIN, COFCO and GLENCORE, which together account for 68.6% of Ireland’s deforestation exposure. To explore the data in more detail, visit trase.earth

Deforestation hotspots for exports to Ireland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exporter</th>
<th>Exposure (ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VICENTIN</td>
<td>44.7 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COFCO</td>
<td>35.3 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLENCORE</td>
<td>33.3 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOUIS DREYFUS</td>
<td>24.7 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YPF</td>
<td>12.5 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RENOVA</td>
<td>6.85 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARGILL</td>
<td>5.33 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td>2.53 ha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interpreting this factsheet

To identify the most important commodities and countries globally for Ireland’s deforestation exposure, this factsheet uses the best available data linking commodities to deforestation at the global scale, based on conversion of natural forests with canopy cover of at least 25%. Due to data availability limitations, we are unable to extend deforestation estimates robustly to some more processed materials, particularly affecting rubber and wood-based estimates in our results. Deforestation definitions used and commodity coverage is therefore not in full alignment with EUDR definitions and scope. For these reasons, estimates presented in these factsheets should be interpreted with caution and as likely underestimates of the true deforestation footprint associated with commodity use. We refer you to our methods note for further details.

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For methods information, data sources, and frequently asked questions, please refer to the accompanying methods note.

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