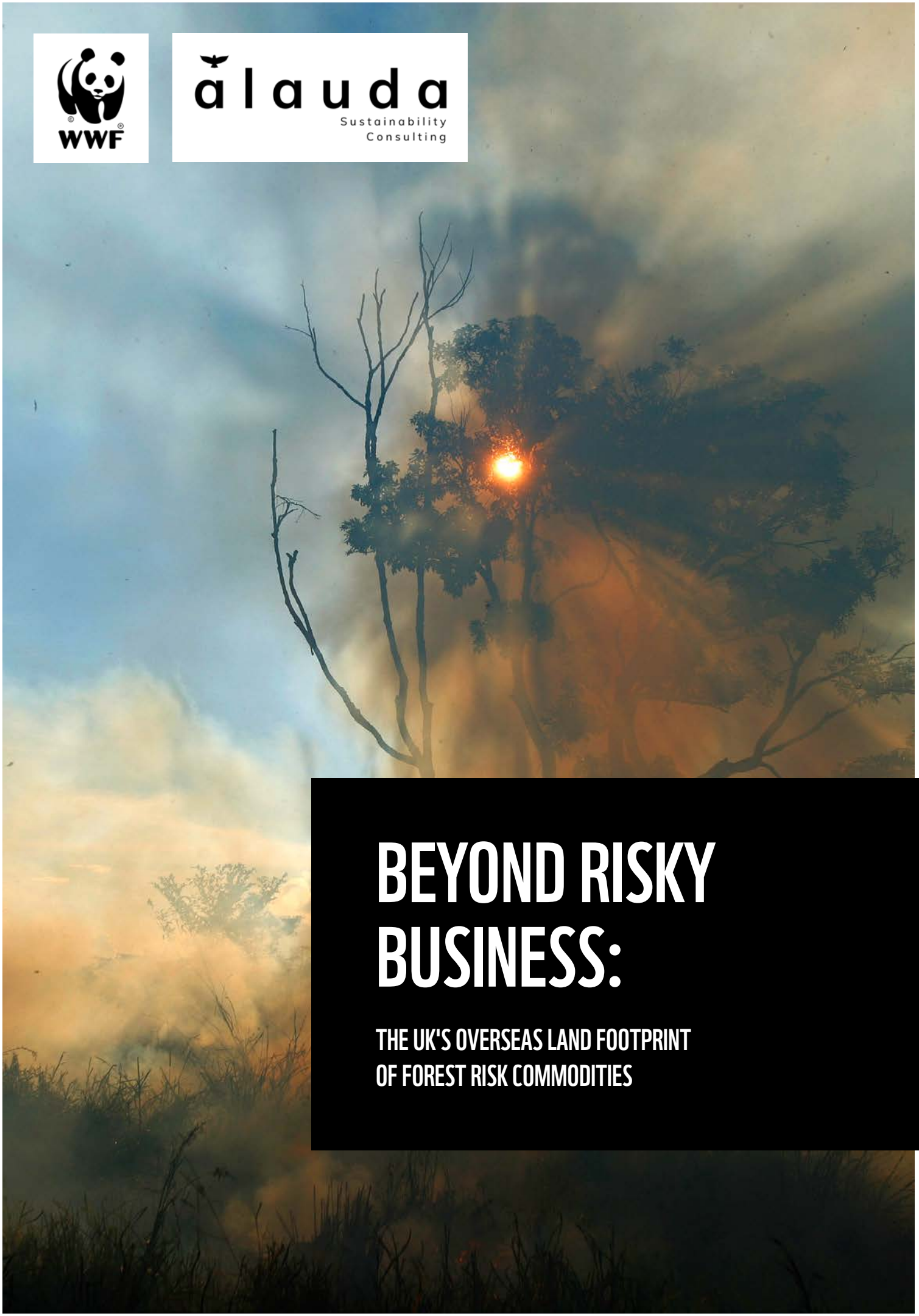
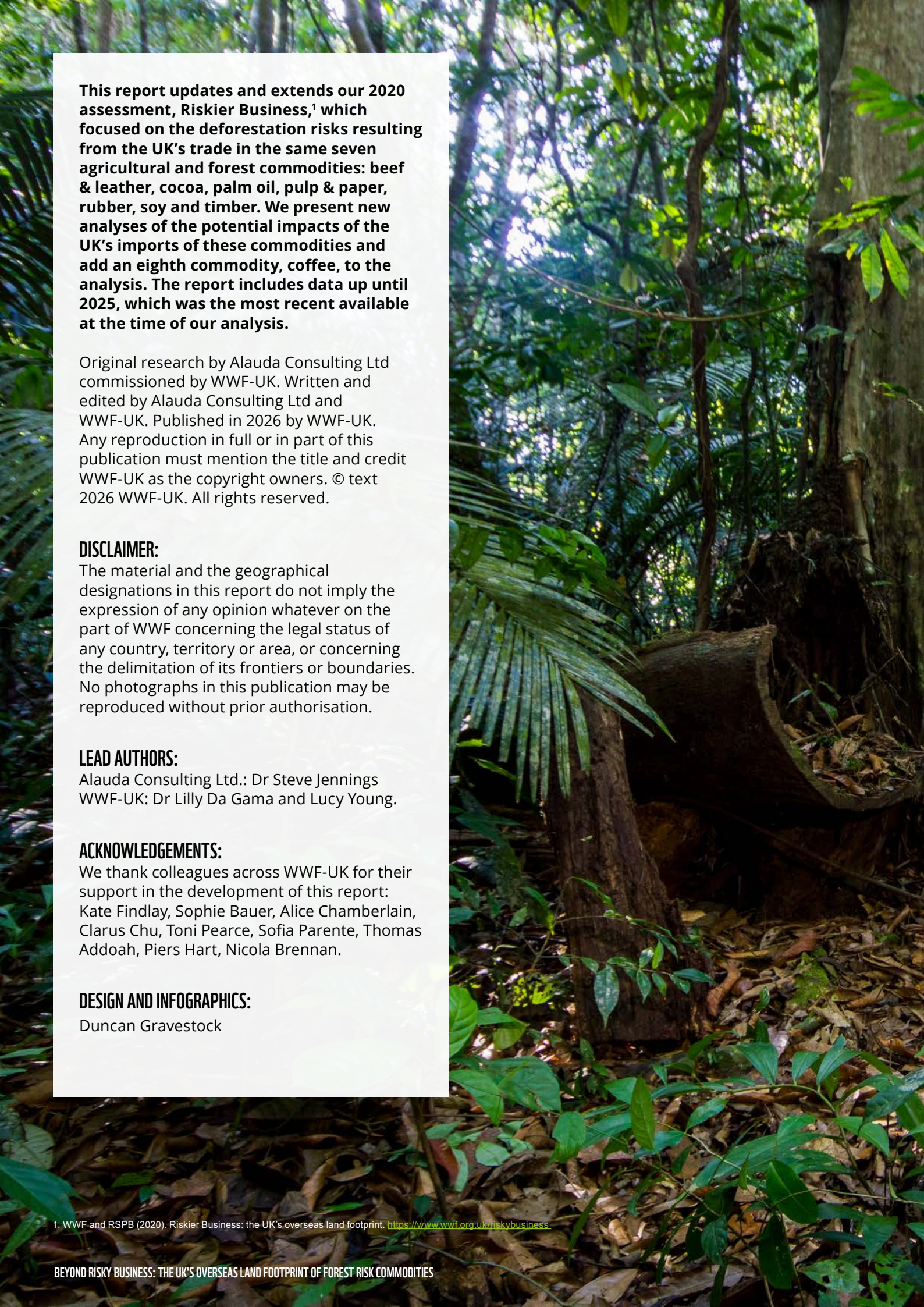


BEYOND RISKY BUSINESS:

THE UK'S OVERSEAS LAND FOOTPRINT OF FOREST RISK COMMODITIES



This report updates and extends our 2020 assessment, Riskier Business,[1] which focused on the deforestation risks resulting from the UK's trade in the same seven agricultural and forest commodities: beef & leather, cocoa, palm oil, pulp & paper, rubber, soy and timber. We present new analyses of the potential impacts of the UK's imports of these commodities and add an eighth commodity, coffee, to the analysis. The report includes data up until 2025, which was the most recent available at the time of our analysis.

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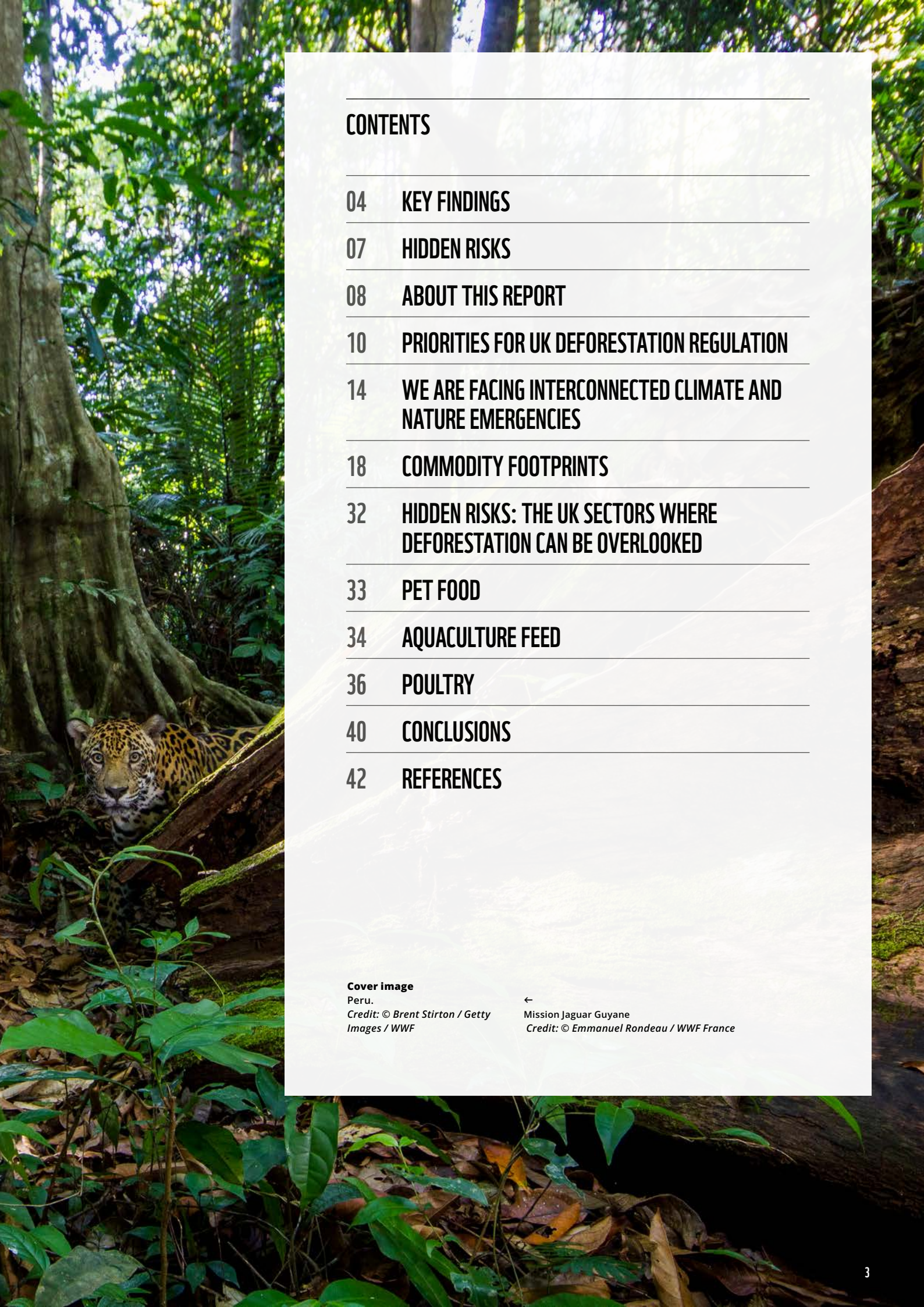
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1. WWF and RSPB (2020). Riskier Business: the UK's overseas land footprint. https://www.wwf.org.uk/riskybusiness



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Peru.
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Mission Jaguar Guyane
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KEY FINDINGS

Tropical forests and other natural ecosystems are essential for biodiversity, climate regulation, ecosystem services and human wellbeing, yet they continue to face severe pressure from deforestation, conversion and degradation. In 2025, more than 4.3 million hectares of primary tropical forest were lost, which is the equivalent of 11 football pitches a minute, while agricultural commodity production is estimated to drive around half of global forest loss and land conversion. Agriculture, forestry and other land-use activities also contribute up to one-fifth of global greenhouse gas emissions, meaning protecting and restoring natural ecosystems is critical to addressing both the biodiversity and climate crises.

- Between 2011 and 2025, the UK required an average overseas land footprint of 19.3 million hectares each year, equivalent to three-quarters of the total UK land area, to meet demand for just eight agricultural and forest commodities: beef & leather, cocoa, coffee, palm oil, pulp & paper, rubber, soy and timber.
- Overall, the UK's overseas land footprint fell by 7% between 2011 and 2025. This decrease is largely driven by a decline in beef & leather and pulp & paper imports, whilst imports of timber products and soy have increased significantly.
- By far the largest of all the land footprints are those associated with timber and pulp & paper, requiring an average of 6.66 million hectares and 4.48 million hectares per year respectively.
- Despite over a decade of corporate commitments, 8.1 million hectares of the UK's overseas footprint, an area four times the size of Wales, remains located in high- and very-high-risk countries.
- Soy, palm oil, coffee and natural rubber all have more than 60% of the land area supplying the UK located in countries considered to have high and very high risk.
- Greenhouse gas emissions from land-use change associated with these imports are estimated to average 24.2 million tonnes of CO_2e per year, equivalent to around 7% of the UK's annual emissions. While these emissions are included in UK environmental accounts, they are not currently reflected in the UK's carbon budgets or climate targets.

Greenhouse gas emissions from land-use change associated with these imports is estimated to average 24.2 million tonnes of CO_2e per year.

FIGURE 1

EVOLUTION OF QUANTITY OF FOREST RISK COMMODITIES REQUIRED BY THE UK BETWEEN 2011 AND 2025

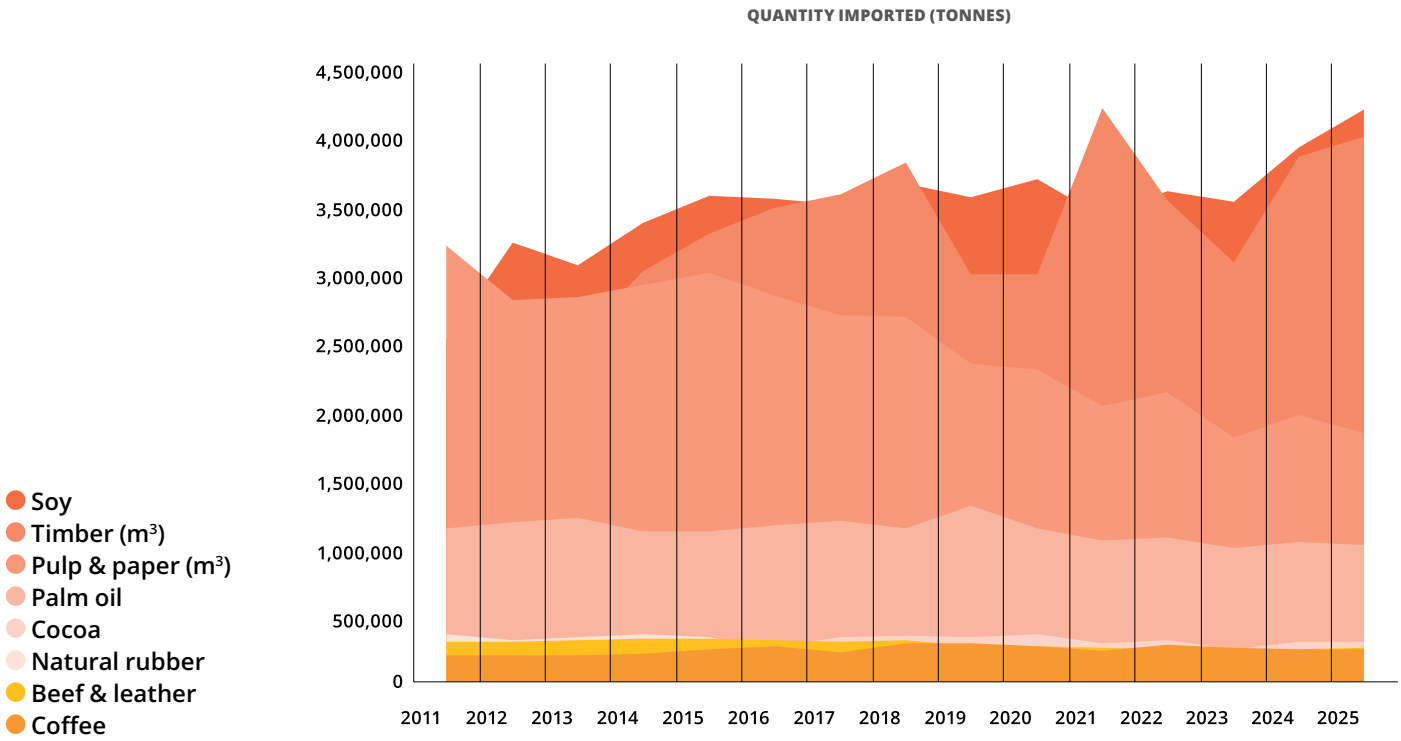


FIGURE 2

EVOLUTION OF UK FOOTPRINT OF EIGHT FOREST RISK COMMODITIES BETWEEN 2011 AND 2025

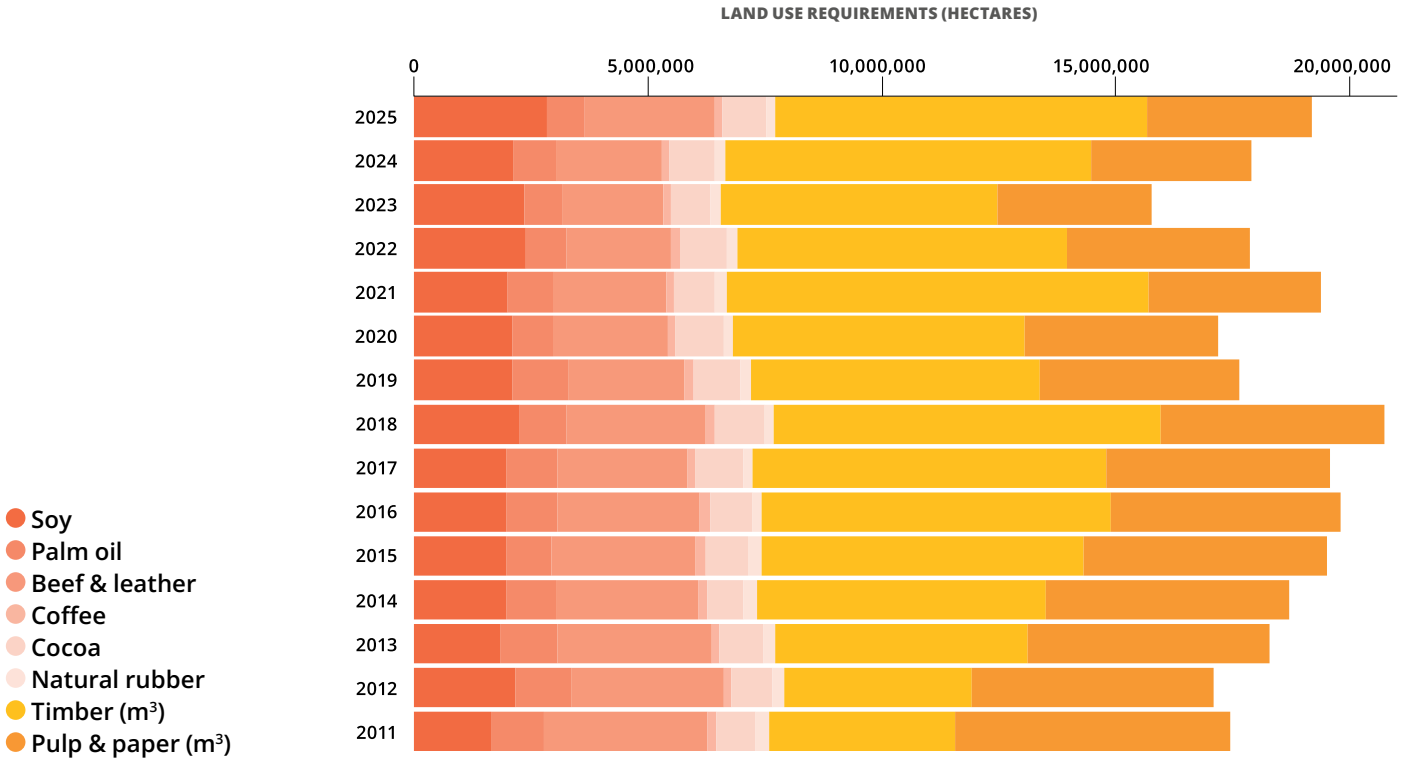
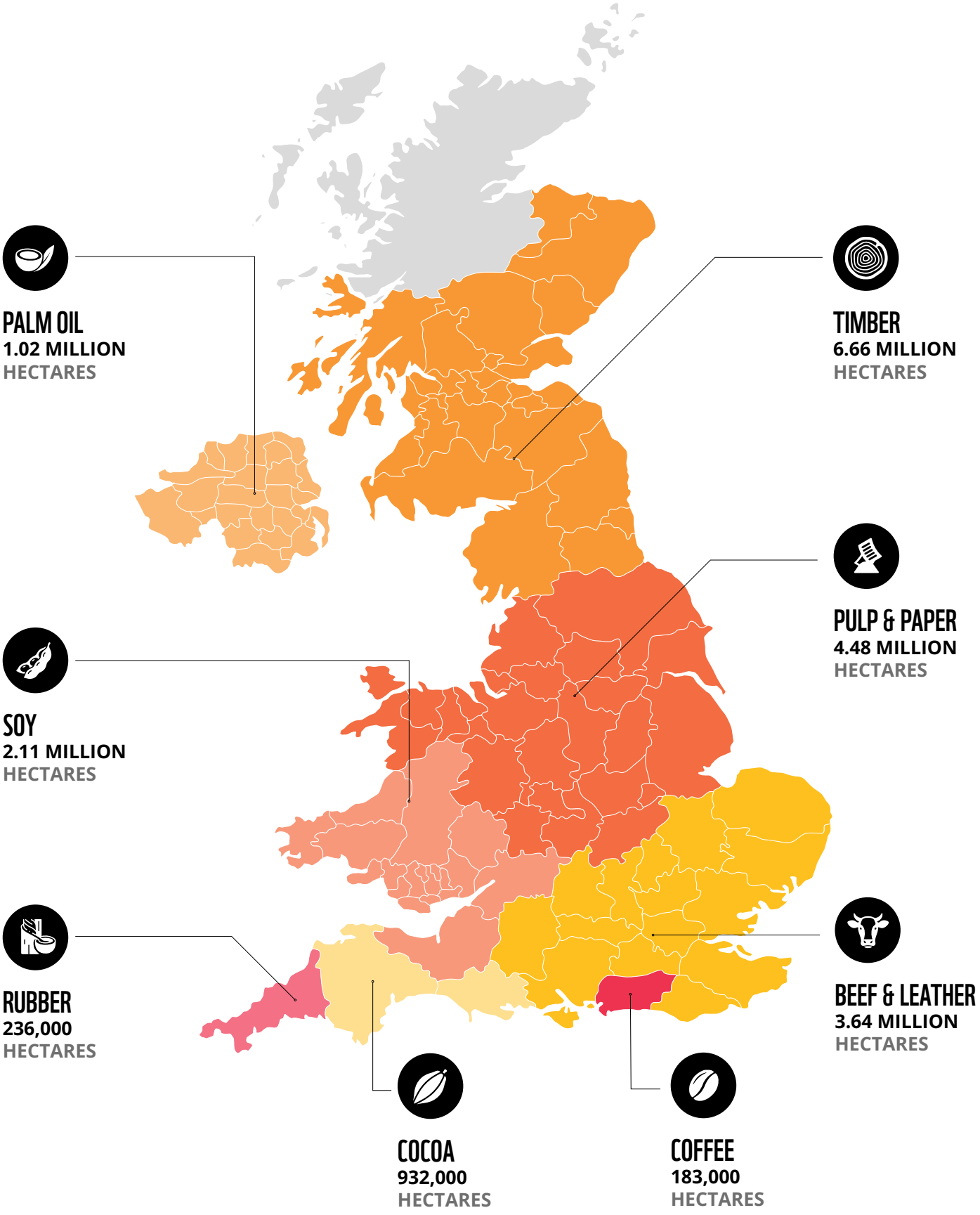


FIGURE 3

THE UK'S LAND FOOTPRINT OVERSEAS IN HECTARES (HA) FOR EACH OF THE EIGHT COMMODITIES SUPERIMPOSED ON THE UK MAP FOR COMPARISON. TOGETHER THEY AMOUNT TO OVER THREE QUARTERS OF THE UK'S LAND AREA



HIDDEN RISKS

↓
Close up of a plantation of soy beans ready for harvest. Balsas, Matopiba, Brazil.
Credit: © Andre Dib / WWF-Brazil

While some commodities, notably palm oil, have been under the spotlight for many years, there are hidden deforestation risks associated with lesser considered sectors. The evidence in this report demonstrates the need for a broad scope within deforestation legislation as restricting regulation to a narrow set of direct commodity imports would miss major sources of UK-linked deforestation risk embedded within complex supply chains.

This research finds that:

- Pet food sold in the UK contains an estimated 461,000 tonnes of embedded soy annually, generating around 1.2 million tonnes of CO_2e from land-use change.
- Scottish salmon production uses around 42,300 tonnes of soymeal, with much of the associated land footprint in high-risk countries.
- The largest impact is from poultry, where soy used in UK chicken and egg production requires an estimated 1.13 million hectares of land and is associated with around 10.1 million tonnes of CO_2e annually.

Although some companies have introduced deforestation- and conversion-free soy commitments, gaps remain in certification, legality focused policy and supply-chain traceability, meaning significant deforestation risk remains across these sectors.

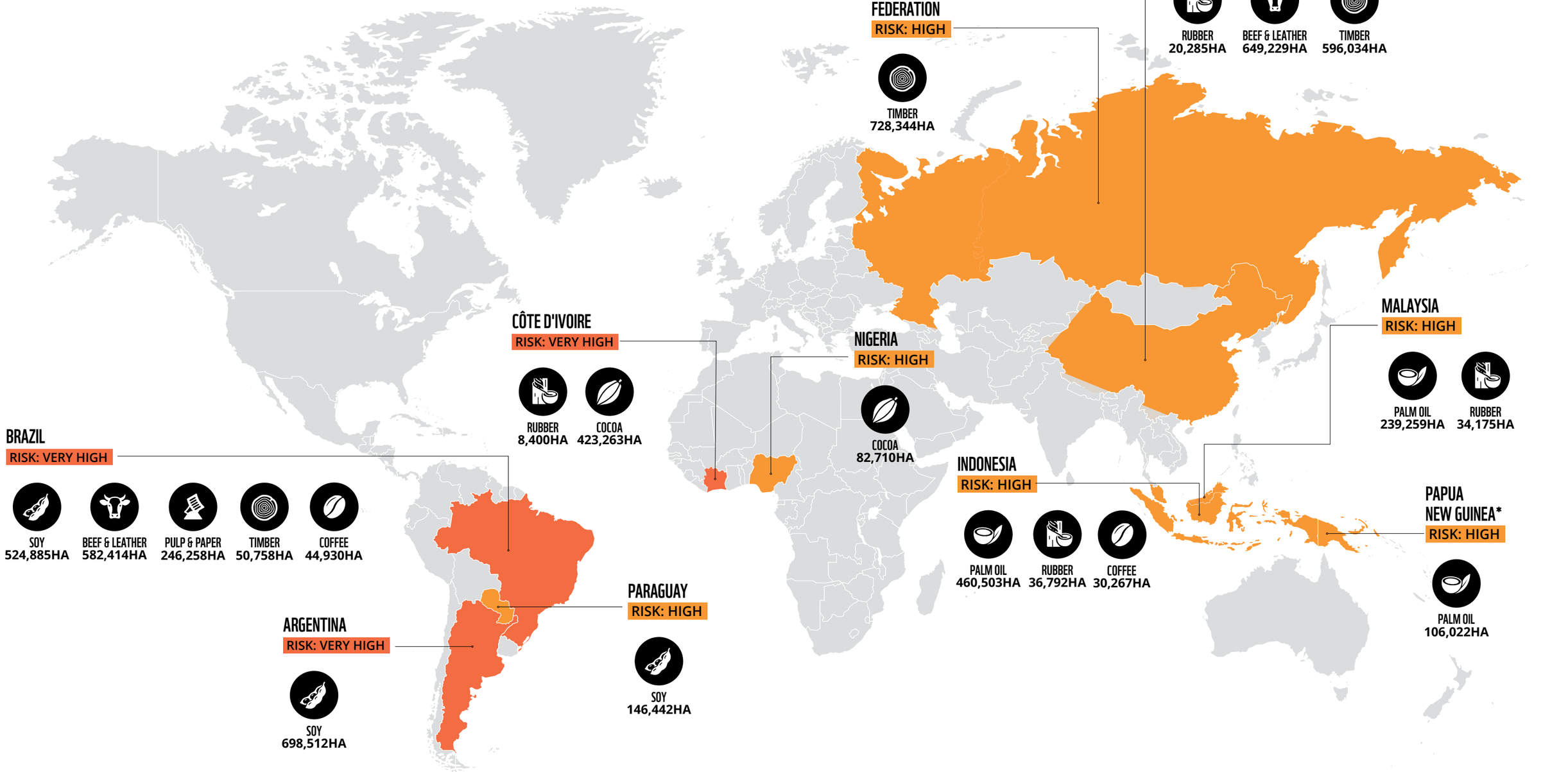


ABOUT THIS REPORT

The first Risky Business report, published in 2017, highlighted key socio-environmental risks associated with the UK trade of the following seven forest and agricultural commodities: beef & leather, cocoa, palm oil, pulp & paper, rubber, soy and timber.[1] The analysis was updated in 2020, extending coverage to 2018 while retaining the 2011 baseline.[2] In this report, we reassess the UK's trade of the same commodities and the associated risks from 2011 to 2025, also adding coffee to the analysis.

These supply chains continue to be associated with deforestation, conversion and habitat degradation, both globally and through UK imports.[3] We provide estimates of GHG emissions due to direct land-use change from the production of these commodities. In addition to our global analysis, we include case studies for three UK sectors: the poultry sector, the pet food sector and the aquaculture sector, and provide preliminary estimates to their exposure to deforestation risk. These three sectors were chosen as they represent 'hidden' impact, meaning many consumers are simply and understandably unaware of the deforestation risk embedded in these products.

FIGURE 4
GLOBAL SNAPSHOT OF THE TOP 10 HIGH AND VERY HIGH RISK COUNTRIES SUPPLYING COMMODITIES TO THE UK



PRIORITIES FOR UK DEFORESTATION REGULATION

The findings presented throughout this report demonstrate that current voluntary approaches, fragmented traceability systems and incomplete market coverage are insufficient to address the UK's exposure to deforestation, conversion and associated human rights risks.[4]

The priorities below are designed to address the specific shortcomings identified in the evidence. Despite significant commitments from governments and businesses through international agreements and voluntary action to eliminate deforestation from supply chains, they have failed to deliver the scale and pace of change required. Governments therefore have a critical role to play in accelerating the transition towards sustainable, deforestation- and conversion-free trade through robust and effective regulatory frameworks.

In November 2026, it will be five years since the UK Government introduced new legislation in the Environment Act to tackle illegal deforestation in UK supply chains. Schedule 17 of the Environment Act introduced three core requirements on regulated businesses: prohibition from using forest-risk commodities or derived products in breach of relevant local laws; to establish and implement a due diligence system; and an annual report on their due diligence exercise. Secondary legislation is necessary to operationalise the requirements of Schedule 17.

In June 2026, the government announced its intention to introduce regulations under Schedule 17 alongside reforms to strengthen the UK Timber Regulation and a consultation with businesses, civil society and international partners on the substance of this proposed Great Britain policy. The EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) will apply in Northern Ireland in phases from 30 December 2026 as part of arrangements which ensure Northern Ireland's unique access to the EU single market is maintained. The government has also stated a desire to align the UK legislation with the EUDR, which would strengthen the regulation and make compliance easier for businesses operating across both markets.[5]

The forthcoming consultation will be a key opportunity to ensure a strong, enforceable and inclusive regulatory framework that reduces the UK's overseas deforestation footprint while supporting producer countries and smallholders to produce and trade agricultural commodities without driving further deforestation or market exclusion.

We call on the government, businesses, financial institutions, civil society and the public to help shape an ambitious, effective and inclusive regulatory framework, guided by the following key priorities:



RAISE AMBITION

The announcement confirms a shift from voluntary action to mandatory requirements for businesses using forest-risk commodities. However, the proposed approach should be seen as a step towards, not the completion of, the regulatory framework needed to tackle the UK's deforestation and conversion footprint. While the initial Great Britain framework is expected to focus on illegal deforestation, the government needs to set out a clear, time-bound pathway towards full deforestation- and conversion-free standards, supported by defined milestones and a review mechanism.



MAINTAIN BROAD SCOPE

Align commodity and product coverage with EUDR/Northern Ireland where this raises ambition and reduces business complexity with flexibility to update over time. Alignment with EUDR should be treated as a baseline, not a ceiling. The regulation should cover all major forest-risk commodities and derived products materially associated with the UK's deforestation and conversion footprint, with a mechanism for adding commodities and products as evidence and trade patterns evolve. There is a strong case for expanding this list further. For example, maize, rice and cassava are all among the top ten agricultural commodities linked to deforestation associated with UK consumption, according to the UK government's official statistics.[6]



STRENGTHEN TRACEABILITY

Require robust origin, geolocation and legality evidence, with clear and proportionate information-sharing requirements throughout the supply chain. Credible certification should be used only as supporting assurance, not as a substitute for due diligence.



ENSURE CREDIBLE ENFORCEMENT

Regulators must be given sufficient resources and powers to undertake risk-based checks, require corrective action and investigate non-compliance. Penalties should be effective, proportionate and dissuasive, with public reporting of company due-diligence statements and enforcement outcomes. This will help ensure the framework drives meaningful change throughout the supply chain rather than paper compliance.



SUPPORT INCLUSIVE IMPLEMENTATION

Alongside regulations, the government should support producer countries, smallholders, and Indigenous Peoples and local communities through wider climate and forest finance commitments, assistance to improve market access, while reducing the risk of displacements. The regulations should require businesses to avoid transferring compliance costs unfairly to small-scale producers, provide accessible grievance and remedy mechanisms, and prioritise continued engagement, capacity-building and remediation.

DRIVE TRANSFORMATION

Due diligence must drive transformation across supply chains and production landscapes, not simply create permanent “clean” channels for regulated markets while deforestation and conversion continue elsewhere. Segregated and traceable supply chains may demonstrate compliance in the short term, but they should be a stepping stone towards wider market transformation, and not a means of shifting to easier-to-trace suppliers while excluding smallholders or higher-risk regions that need support. Ambitious UK regulation, combined with diplomatic, trade and development partnerships, should encourage compatible approaches in other consumer markets while supporting implementation in producer countries. This would help reduce fragmented requirements, limit leakage into less-regulated markets and accelerate systemic change.

ALIGN FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

Firstly, complement supply-chain regulation with measures requiring UK financial institutions to understand, disclose and act on deforestation and land conversion risks as part of wider nature risk analysis in their lending, investment and underwriting portfolios. This means requiring TNFD-aligned disclosures and climate-nature transition plans. Secondly, ensure that financial crime regulation and enforcement take account of the relationship between deforestation and financial crime, building on the growing awareness of this issue within the UK and global finance sector. Finally, work with other jurisdictions to implement further measures to ensure adequate scrutiny of financial institutions' links to deforestation and land conversion.

↓
A team of eco-guards from the National Parks Agency patrols the river estuary. The eco-guards check a Chinese ship loaded with uncut timber. It is illegal to export timber from Gabon without processing it in-country.
Credit: © WWF / Mike Goldwater





↓
Organic coffee plantation - Juma Settlement
Credit: © Andre Dib / WWF-Brazil

WE ARE FACING INTERCONNECTED CLIMATE AND NATURE EMERGENCIES

Forests and other natural ecosystems are essential for climate stability, biodiversity, water security and human wellbeing. They store vast amounts of carbon, regulate local and global climates, as well as provide critical ecosystem services and support the livelihoods of around two billion people worldwide. Yet despite their importance, the world continues to lose tropical forests at an alarming rate, with more than 4 million hectares of primary tropical forest lost in 2025 alone,[7] the fourth highest rate since 2002.[8]

The consequences extend far beyond biodiversity loss. Forest destruction and ecosystem conversion increase greenhouse gas emissions, undermine food and water security, reduce resilience to climate change and increase the risk of irreversible ecological tipping points. In the Amazon, for example, over 17% of the forest has undergone conversion, while an additional 17% is classified as being heavily degraded, [9] bringing parts of the biome closer to thresholds beyond which ecosystem change could become self-reinforcing and difficult to reverse as soon as 2030.[10]

Agricultural expansion is the single largest driver of deforestation and ecosystem conversion globally, accounting for around half of all forest loss.[11] Commodities such as beef, soy, palm oil, cocoa, coffee and rubber continue to drive pressure on forests and other valuable natural ecosystems. Many of these commodities are embedded within complex supply chains and appear in products consumed every day in the UK, including meat, dairy, aquaculture products, pet food and manufactured goods. Simultaneously, agriculture, forestry and other land activities contribute up to a fifth of global man-made GHG emissions,[12] greatly hindering our ability to mitigate climate change.

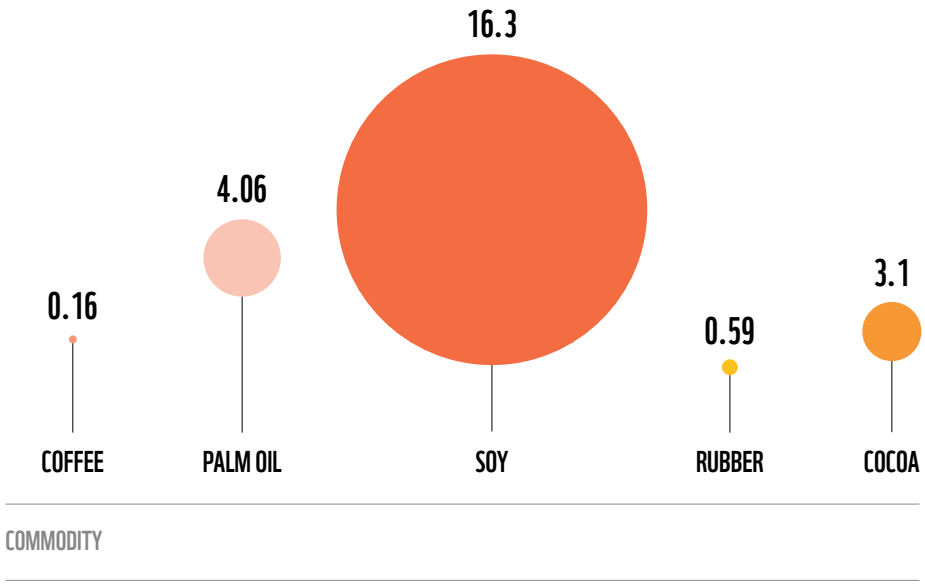
Protecting forests and natural ecosystems is therefore essential not only for halting biodiversity loss, but also for meeting global climate goals and maintaining resilient food and commodity supply chains. This requires action that addresses both deforestation and the wider conversion and degradation of natural ecosystems.

FIGURE 5

AVERAGE ANNUAL GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS FROM LAND-USE CHANGE ASSOCIATED WITH SELECTED COMMODITIES IMPORTED TO THE UK (2011-25)

TOTAL *GHGs (million tonnes CO_2e)*

24.2



↓
Aerial view of triggered forest fire and deforestation for planting soybeans, September 2020, in the Amazon Rainforest, Vilhena - Rondonia state.
Credit: © Andre Dib / WWF-Brazil





↓
Aerial view of triggered forest fire and deforestation for planting soybeans, September 2020, in the Amazon Rainforest, Porto Velho - Rondonia state.
Credit: © Andre Dib / WWF-Brazil

WHY UK ACTION MATTERS

The UK remains a significant importer of commodities associated with deforestation and ecosystem conversion. While many businesses have made voluntary commitments to reduce these impacts, the evidence presented in this report shows that substantial UK-linked land footprints and greenhouse gas emissions remain concentrated in high-risk regions. This continues to have negative impacts on Indigenous Peoples, local communities and nature, placing food supply chains at risk and driving climate change, which undermines domestic and international production.

Voluntary initiatives, certification schemes and corporate commitments have helped drive progress in some sectors. However, more than a decade of voluntary action has not resulted in the scale of change needed to halt commodity-driven deforestation and conversion. Persistent data gaps, inconsistent traceability systems, varying implementation across supply chains and continuing exposure to high-risk sourcing regions demonstrate the limitations of relying solely on voluntary approaches.

This experience highlights the need for effective regulation. Regulation can provide a common baseline across the market, improve transparency and accountability, strengthen traceability and ensure that responsible businesses are not disadvantaged by competitors operating to lower standards.

The UK government has recognised the risks that deforestation and ecosystem conversion pose to climate goals, biodiversity, supply chain resilience and food security.[13] The forthcoming UK Forest Risk Commodities (UKFRC) Regulation therefore represents a significant opportunity to translate existing commitments into measurable action. To be effective, however, implementation must reflect the evidence presented throughout this report by addressing ecosystem conversion beyond illegal deforestation, maintaining broad commodity and product coverage, improving traceability and transparency, supporting producer-country transitions and ensuring credible enforcement.



→
Logging vehicle clearing logs in deforested landscape, East province, Cameroon
Credit: © Brent Stirton / Getty Images / WWF-UK

COMMODITY FOOTPRINTS



SOY

Global soy production has increased more than elevenfold since the 1960s with the global harvested area increasing fourfold.[14] Production – and the expansion of soy cultivation – is concentrated into a smaller number of countries, specifically Brazil (accounting for 36% of global production), the USA (30%) and Argentina (11%).[15] China, in itself a major producer, is also by far the largest importer globally.

Soy is imported as soymeal, soy beans, soy oil, as an ingredient in products (e.g., tofu or soy sauce) and embedded within imported livestock products that have been fed soy (e.g., chicken meat). More than 90% of the soy imported into the UK in any form is used as animal feed.[16] It is primarily fed to monogastric animals (poultry and pigs), usually as compound feed (i.e., combined with other ingredients), and is used widely for fish feed in aquaculture. It forms a smaller part of the diet of intensive beef and dairy cattle. Soybean meal is the predominant form used for animal feed, but a small proportion of whole soybeans are also used in livestock feed.

Between 2011 and 2025, the UK imported an average of 3.46 million tonnes of soy each year. Most imports are in the form of meal (69%) and beans (22%) for livestock feed. Only around 9% of imports are in products that are directly consumed by humans, almost all of which are embedded soy in imported meat or dairy products, but which also include soya products such as soy sauce.

UK soy imports have increased steadily since 2011, with an average year-on-year increase of nearly 70,000 tonnes.

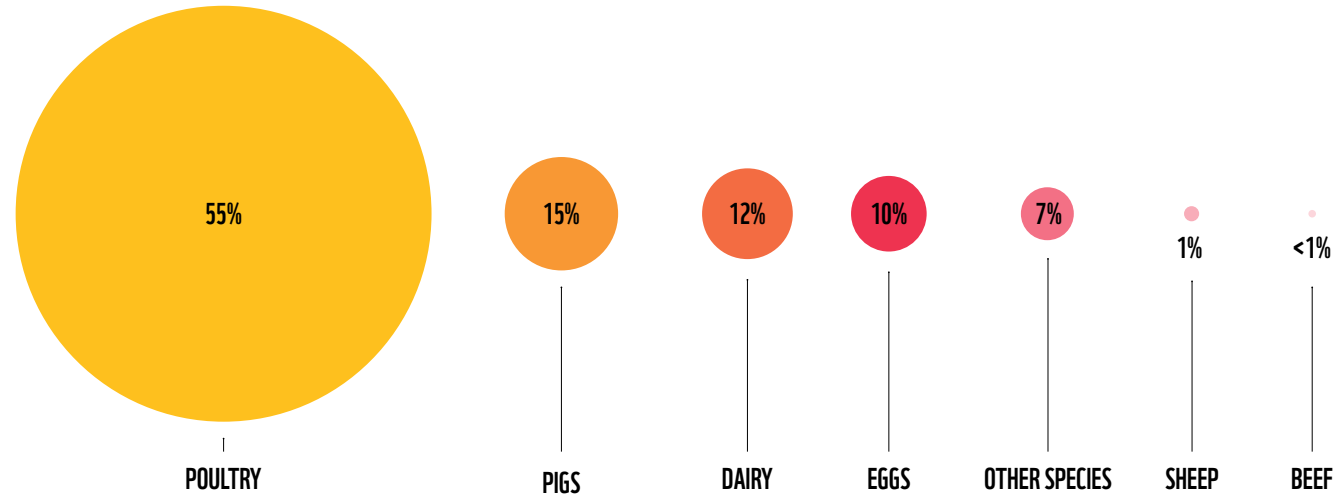
The increase is largely driven by the growth in the UK's poultry population, with more of them housed in intensive poultry units (IPUs) that focus on high-protein feed, of which soy is a major ingredient. Between 2011 and 2025, the UK poultry population has increased by 13% to 183 million birds,[17] driven by increased domestic consumption.[18] Other major users of soy include pigs and dairy cows.

The average overseas land area required to produce UK soy imports each year is 2.11 million hectares. This is equivalent to an area the size of the Scottish Highlands. As the quantity of imports has increased over the period, so has the land required to produce the soy that the UK imports. In 2025, this area of land stands at 2.8 million hectares.

More than two-thirds of this footprint is located in countries that are high or very high risk for deforestation and/or social impacts, including Paraguay, Brazil, and Argentina.

FIGURE 6

SOY USE BY LIVESTOCK TYPE. SOURCE: EFECA (2020) [19]



The sourcing profile has remained largely unchanged over time, with the concentration of supply from high- and very-high risk countries. The only major sourcing countries that have a medium risk profile are the USA, which accounts for 11% of the footprint and Canada, which accounts for 3%.

A recent estimate suggests that just 22% of the UK's soy imports are verified as deforestation- and conversion-free.[20] A further 46% is covered through mass balance certification or the purchase of certification credits. However, these approaches do not guarantee that the soy physically imported into the UK is free from deforestation, conversion or serious social impacts.

A second estimate for soymeal (not all soy) was that 39% of imported meal was compliant with the European Feed Manufacturers Federation (FEFAC) deforestation and conversion standards through mass balance and segregated supply chains.[21] Such insufficiencies in traceability limits not only the ability to capture the entire picture of deforestation and conversion risk, but also the ability of businesses, investors and regulators to identify and manage said risks.

Some soy products are included within both the proposed UK FRC regulation and the EUDR. If implemented respectively, these measures could significantly reduce the environmental impacts of the UK soy imports. Around 18% of the UK's soy imports are both imported from the EU and within the scope of the EUDR, so if sourcing patterns remain, this share of imports should be deforestation-free from 30 December 2026, when the regulation begins to apply to large and medium-sized operators. However, much of the remaining exposure would not necessarily be addressed through an illegality-only approach.

Previous estimates indicate that over 2.1 million hectares of natural and forested land in areas of Brazil which supply soy directly to the UK could be legally converted.[22]

Furthermore, whilst compliance-based supply chains may reduce exposure in regulated markets, wider landscape-level action is required to ensure that transformation is achieved and production linked to deforestation is not redirected to less regulated markets.

PALM OIL

Although a widespread crop in the tropics, global production of palm oil is highly concentrated in just two countries: Indonesia (59% of global production) and Malaysia (30%). The third largest producer, Thailand, accounts for just 5% of global production.[23]

Between 2011 and 2025, the UK imported an average of 1.1 million tonnes of palm oil, palm kernel oil and palm kernel meal, either as commodities or embedded in imported products. Most imports were in the form of meal (38%), which is used as animal feed, and palm oil (36%), which is widely used in food products, including bakery items, ready meals, chocolate and confectionery, as well as health and beauty, and household products. Most of the remaining imports were manufactured goods containing palm-derived ingredients, such as cosmetics, margarine, chocolate and bakery products.

Imports have declined since 2011 by 11%. The drivers behind this are unclear but may reflect a combination of factors, including restrictions on the promotion of foods high in fat, salt and sugar (HFSS), greater use of alternative oils, and the influence of emerging regulation and continuing voluntary commitments to address deforestation.[24]

UK palm oil imports are associated with an average overseas land footprint of 1.02 million hectares, an area roughly twice the size of Northumberland.

Over the period analysed, 80% of this land footprint has been in countries with a high or very high risk of deforestation and/or social impacts.

This includes Indonesia, Malaysia and Papua New Guinea. The Solomon Islands, the fourth-largest source country, could not be assigned a risk score due to insufficient data. The sourcing profile has remained largely unchanged over time, with most imports continuing to originate from high- and very-high risk countries.

Around 84% of UK imports of palm oil and palm kernel oil are certified under the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) Segregated Supply Chain Model,[25] which provides some degree of assurance that production is not associated with deforestation, or the use of child or forced labour. However, these figures on certified imports cover only 22% of all oil palm product imports, as they do not include palm kernel meal nor palm oil used as an ingredient in imported manufactured products.

Some palm oil products fall within the scope of both the proposed UK FRC regulation and the EUDR. If these laws are implemented as planned, these measures could significantly reduce the environmental impacts associated with UK palm oil imports of palm oil. Around 13% of the UK's total imports arrive via the EU and are covered by the EUDR, meaning they would be required to meet the regulation's deforestation-free requirements.



↑
Close-up palm oil being poured out of bottle in Sabah, Borneo, Malaysia.
Credit: © Aaron Gekoski / WWF-US

BEEF & LEATHER

Beef production is almost ubiquitous, with leather production (a co-product of both beef and milk production) similarly widespread. The grazing area dedicated for beef cattle globally encompasses an estimated 1.6 billion hectares[26] – more than one and a half times the size of the European continent. The three largest producers are the USA (18% of global production), Brazil (15%) and China (10%).[27] The world's largest leather producer is China (18%), followed by the USA (15%) and Brazil (13%).[28]

Cattle ranching is the single largest cause of deforestation and land conversion globally,[29] and is a particularly strong driver of deforestation and conversion in South America.[30]

Between 2011 and 2025, the UK imported an average 197,000 tonnes of beef and 141,000 tonnes of bovine leather each year. There has been a steady decline in beef imports since 2011 (*Figure 1*). More than half the imports were fresh or chilled beef (51%), while frozen beef accounted for 22%, with the remainder consisting of processed meat products such as corned beef. The decline reflects reduced beef consumption in the UK,[31] driven by a combination of changing dietary preferences and the rising price of beef[32] during a prolonged cost-of-living crisis.

Leather imports have also fallen, from around 169,000 tonnes in 2011 to 103,200 tonnes in 2025. The reasons for this decline are not wholly clear, but similar trends have been observed across the EU and may reflect reduced consumer spending due to the cost-of-living crisis.[33]

The average overseas land area required to satisfy the UK for beef and leather imports was 3.64 million hectares a year over the period analysed. Over 2.3 million hectares, nearly two-thirds of the total footprint, was linked to beef production.

The sourcing profile has changed over time. In 2011, Brazil, a country with a high risk of deforestation from beef, supplied around one-third of the UK's beef imports. By 2025, that figure had fallen to one-quarter.

Leather imports follow a different sourcing pattern. Ireland, Germany and France are the only countries that account for more than 2% of total overseas land footprint. Overall, leather imports carry a higher risk profile than beef imports, with 49% of the associated land area coming from high-risk countries, particularly China. This contrasts with import volumes, most of which come from low- and medium-risk countries, especially within the EU. For example, Ireland contributes 27% of the leather import volumes and Germany 11%. India is also an important leather sourcing country for the UK. However, because cattle are not typically linked to dedicated pasture systems, the country's leather imports do not generate a measurable land footprint in the same way as other major sourcing countries.

Unlike palm or soy, there are currently no voluntary certification schemes for beef or leather that operate at significant scale, limiting the options available for companies buying beef from high-risk countries. In addition, many ecosystem conversion risks occur legally under national law, meaning legality-based regulation alone cannot address the full environmental impact identified in this report.

In 2025, WWF launched the Deforestation-Free Leather Fund, which aims to pool the resources of member companies to eliminate deforestation and land-conversion from leather supply chains.[34] Some beef products, although not leather,[35] are included within the scope of the EUDR, while some products of both are included within the proposed UK FRC regulation.



↓
Cattle ranching
Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil
Credit: © Jaime Rojo / WWF-US

COCOA

The world's cocoa land footprint is about 10.99 million hectares,[36] an area approaching the size of England. The major producers are Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, producing 36% and 10% of the global output respectively. The majority of global consumption is in Europe and the USA, although demand in other markets is increasing.

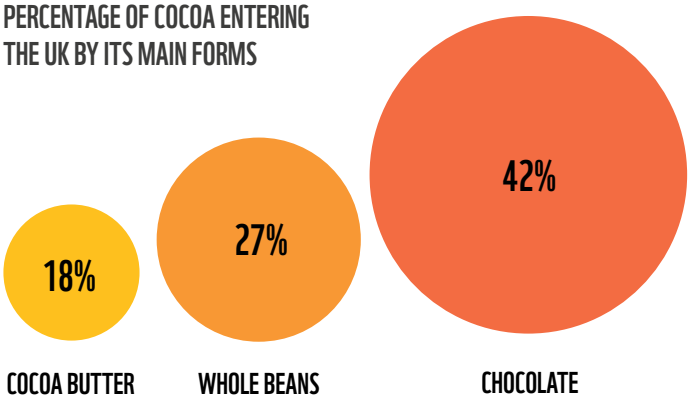
Between 2011 and 2025, the UK imported an average of 291,000 tonnes of cocoa each year. There has been no discernible change in the quantity imported between 2011-25 *(Figure 1)*. Cocoa enters the UK in a variety of forms, including whole beans (27%), cocoa butter (18%) and chocolate (42%).

The average overseas land footprint associated with UK cocoa imports was 932,000 hectares a year, an area larger than the county of North Yorkshire. Most imports originated from West Africa, with 45% coming from Côte d'Ivoire and 18% from Ghana.

At least 54% of this footprint is in countries with high- or very-high risk of deforestation and serious social impacts, in particular Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria. Child labour and forced labour are frequently reported from the cocoa farms in these countries. Since 2011, the risk profile of UK cocoa imports has worsened, with an increasing proportion of supply coming from Côte d'Ivoire and a declining share from Ghana, which is classified as a medium-risk country.

Climate change is already disrupting global cocoa supply chains, exposing vulnerabilities and driving up prices. Recent droughts in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire have contributed to reduced yields and a subsequent sharp increase in cocoa prices.[37] Climate impacts, alongside increasing global demand, have driven further deforestation for cocoa production in countries such as Liberia and Cameroon.[38]

FIGURE 7
PERCENTAGE OF COCOA ENTERING THE UK BY ITS MAIN FORMS



The major third-party certification schemes that are used in cocoa are Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance and organic certification, all of which offer varying degrees of assurance of deforestation-free cocoa. Although UK-specific data is limited, around 12% of UK chocolate was Fairtrade certified in 2023, and an estimated 140,000 tonnes of cocoa was Rainforest Alliance certified in the same year.[39] However, the supply-chain models used are not specified, meaning the physical connection between certified material and UK imports is unknown. In addition, some cocoa may be certified under more than one scheme. This highlights the need for better traceability in regulation.

Some cocoa products fall within the scope of the EUDR. If this is implemented, it is likely to bring about significant reductions in the environmental impacts of the UK cocoa imports, as around 65% of imports both originate from, or pass through, the EU and are covered by the regulation. Cocoa is also expected to be included within the UK FRC regulation.

COFFEE

Coffee is grown in 81 countries, primarily throughout Latin and South America, Central and East Africa, and Southeast Asia.[40] Brazil and Vietnam dominate global production, accounting for 30% and 17% respectively. There are two main varieties of coffee: Arabica (Coffea arabica), which represents 57% of global production and is typically cultivated at higher altitudes, and Robusta (Coffea canephora), which accounts for the remaining 43% and is usually grown in lowland areas.

Between 2011 and 2025, the UK imported an average of 239,000 tonnes of coffee each year. There has been a significant increase in the quantity imported over the period, which seems to be driven by a rapid increase in the number of high street cafe chains, increased adoption of home-brewing equipment, and younger people embracing speciality coffee drinks.

Imports are principally in the form of unroasted, non-decaffeinated beans (66%), followed by roasted, non-decaffeinated beans (22%).

The average overseas land area required to satisfy the UK demand for coffee averages 183,000 hectares per year over the period analysed. This is approximately the same size as the Welsh county of Ceredigion. At least two-thirds (65%) of this footprint is in countries with high- or very-high risk of deforestation and serious social impacts, in particular Brazil, Indonesia, Colombia, Honduras and Peru. While the overall risk profile has remained constant over the period, the relative importance of individual sourcing countries has changed, with Brazil becoming a more significant supplier and Indonesia less so.

Several Voluntary Sustainability Systems (VSS) operate within the coffee sector, including Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance and organic certification. Other schemes, such as 4C and proprietary schemes such as Starbucks' C.A.F.E. Practices, also play a major role. Although no UK-specific data is available, an estimated 55% of global coffee supply was certified in 2022.[41]

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Coffee plant, native to Ethiopia but has been cultivated in Colombia since the last century.
Credit: © Andres Felipe Trujillo / WWF-Colombia



Some coffee products fall within the scope of the EUDR. Around 24% of the UK's imports are both sourced via the EU and covered by the regulation, which requires products within its scope to be deforestation-free. If the legislation is implemented as planned, then the deforestation risk of UK coffee imports is likely to decrease. Coffee is also expected to be included within the UK FRC regulation.[42] However, according to Fairtrade estimates, 85% of coffee growers globally are smallholders.[43] Implementation approaches to the UK FRC regulation that rely solely on compliance costs borne by producers risk excluding farmers from regulated supply chains, driving leakage and limiting the effectiveness of the policy. Therefore, inclusive implementation of policy and aligning financial systems with the policy is essential for reducing the risk of deforestation and strengthening our supply chains.

TIMBER

Trees grow everywhere on the planet other than Antarctica, so categorising these organisms requires a fair amount of generalisation. Therefore, for this analysis, we distinguish between softwoods (conifers) and hardwoods (deciduous), as the two typically follow different production and supply chain models: softwoods follow a volume-based approach, while hardwoods usually follow a value-based approach. Softwoods account for around one-third of all roundwood production, and hardwood for two-thirds.[44]

The natural characteristics of softwoods, including their relatively fast growth and long fibres, make them well suited to large-scale, highly mechanised and standardised production. As a result, a small number of species, such as pine and spruce, can be used in a wide range of products, from paper and packing to prefabricated buildings via short value chains.

By contrast, hardwoods such as oak, birch and teak typically grow more slowly and produce shorter fibres. Their ability to grow in any area of the planet allows for a much wider range of species, which then translates into unique physical properties such as strength, durability or sheer beauty. Their slower growth rates generally result in lower yields compared to softwoods, supporting more specialised and higher-value supply chains.

Pulp and paper products are treated separately here, as their supply chains are distinct from those of timber products such as fuel wood, plywood, sawn wood and furniture.

Between 2011 and 2025, the UK imported an average of 24.9 million m^3 each year, measured as Wood Raw Material Equivalent (WRME). Import volumes nearly doubled over this period, rising from 16.2 million m^3 in 2011 to 30.8 million m^3 in 2025 (*Figure 1*).

Fuel wood is the largest import (30% of the total) and was the main driver of this overall increase. Fuel wood imports increased from 1.3 million m^3 in 2011 to 12.1 million m^3 in 2025, largely due to its use in biomass electricity generation.

The average overseas land footprint associated with UK timber imports averaged 6.66 million hectares a year over the period analysed, equivalent to about half the land area of England. As import volumes increased, the area required to produce it has risen sharply, from 3.98 million hectares in 2011 to 7.95 million hectares in 2025. At least 15% of the land area is in countries with high- or very-high risk of deforestation and serious social impacts, particularly Brazil and the Russian Federation.

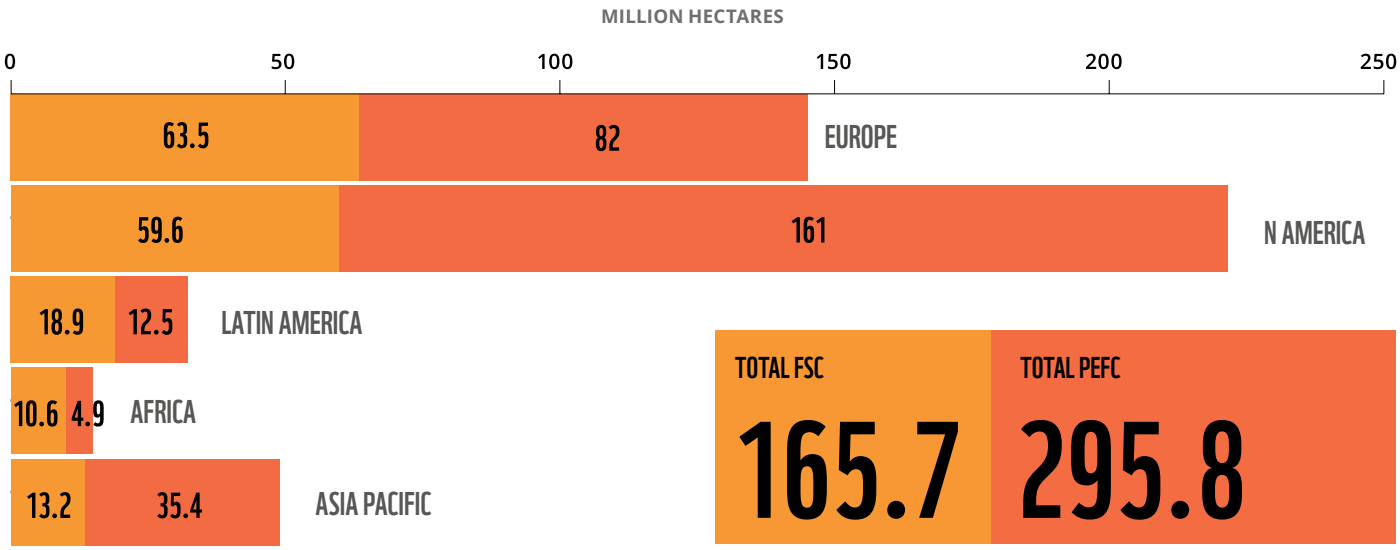
While imports from Brazil increased slightly over the period, imports from the Russian Federation fell rapidly from 2021, declining from 1.3 million m^3 to almost zero. This reflects multiple trade embargoes placed on the Russian Federation as a result of its invasion of Ukraine. This change has slightly reduced the risk profile of the UK's imports.

There are two internationally recognised systems for the certification of sustainable forestry management and its supply chain – the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC). FSC has just under 166 million hectares certified globally (of which 63.5 million hectares are in Europe). PEFC similarly has 300 million hectares certified globally, strongly concentrated in Europe and North America (*Figure 8*).

FIGURE 8

AREA OF FOREST CERTIFIED TO FSC[45] AND PEFC[46] STANDARDS

Note that there are areas with dual certification.



Although they are broadly similar, the FSC has greater support from major environmental NGOs, a result of its open and balanced governance structure and stricter safeguards on aspects such as biodiversity conservation and workers' rights. Independent comparisons have concluded that the FSC system is stronger, more transparent and more consistently applied than the PEFC system.

The procedure for estimating GHG emissions from land-use change does not include timber, and we do not therefore provide an estimate here.

Timber products are regulated under the Timber and Timber Products Placing on the Market Regulations (UKTR), which prohibit placing illegally harvested timber on the market. This UKTR is due to be strengthened and is likely to become aligned more closely with the EUDR.[47] This could have a significant impact on UK imports, as 56% of timber imports both originate from the EU and fall within the scope of the EUDR.



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WWF UK and WWF Germany worked with WWF CARPO on a two-year EU-funded campaign (2010-2011) to raise awareness among EU consumers of the links between their consumption of timber products and the effects on communities and forests in the Congo Basin region.
Credit: © Brent Stirton / Getty Images / WWF-UK



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Eucalyptus tree plantation Atlantic forest Brazil
Credit: © Vanessa Sequeira / WWF

PULP & PAPER

Paper and pulp products are made from wood fibre sourced from either plantations or natural forests. In recent decades, the sector has shifted away from hardwood pulp sourced from natural forests towards 'fast wood' plantations, especially eucalyptus and acacia. The industry has also undergone significant restructuring, as digital technologies have severely reduced demand for newsprint and other paper products. At the same time, recycling rates for paper and paperboard have increased, while demand for packaging, driven in part by e-commerce, and personal hygiene products continues to grow.

The cellulose fibres used to make paper and card are derived directly from pulp grade logs, wood chips and wood reclaimed from other manufacturing processes (e.g. furniture making), as well as recycled paper. Although there has been a steep rise in the use of recovered and recycled paper in recent decades, it is important to note that paper is not infinitely recyclable, and some products still require fresh fibre from tree species with specific technical characteristics.

Between 2011 and 2025, the UK imported an average of 19.2 million m^3 WRME. Import volumes declined significantly over this period, from nearly 25 million m^3 in 2011 to just 14 million m^3 in 2025. Coated paper and paperboard (20% of imports), wastepaper (20%) and chemical wood pulp, soda or sulphate, other than dissolving grades, (16%) are the largest imports into the UK.

The average overseas land area associated with UK pulp and paper imports averaged 4.48 million hectares per year over the period analysed (*Figure 3*). This is around twice the land area of Wales. As import volumes decreased, so too did the area of land required to meet UK demand.

At least 7% of the land area is in countries with high- or very-high risk of deforestation and serious social impacts, primarily Brazil. However, most pulp and paper products imported from Brazil originate from plantations in the south and centre of the country, where deforestation rates are lower than in the Cerrado and Amazon biomes.

The FSC and PEFC certification systems apply to pulp and paper as well as timber.

Pulp and paper products are within scope of the UKTR, which prohibits placing illegally harvested timber on the market. They are also covered by the EUDR, which means that the majority of the UK's pulp and paper imports (63%) are expected to be deforestation-free once that regulation is implemented.

NATURAL RUBBER

Although the rubber tree (*Hevea brasiliensis*) is native to Brazil and the Guianas,[48] most natural rubber is now produced in Southeast Asia. A second type, synthetic rubber, is made from petrochemical feedstocks derived from crude oil. It is produced in a range of forms with different technical properties. More than half of global rubber production is synthetic, meaning the price of natural rubber is influenced in part by the prevailing price of crude oil. Where the two materials can be used interchangeably, the competitive advantage between them is often determined by oil prices.

Rubber trees are grown in plantations, both large-scale and smallholder. Individual trees are tapped on alternate days with the latex collected in suspended vessels, and most plantations have a rest period where tapping is adjourned in the dry season. Natural rubber production is dominated by smallholder farmers, particularly in Indonesia, Malaysia, and India.[49]

Natural rubber is used in a wide range of ways, from engineering and industrial applications, to tyres, bouncing balls, boots, balloons and latex gloves, but around 70% of global production is used in the manufacturing of vehicle tyres.[50] Although synthetic and natural rubber are substitutable for many uses, natural rubber is preferred for tyre production as it provides the highest level of unvulcanised strength and high 'tack' (the ability of tyres to 'stick' to the road surface).

Between 2011 and 2025, the UK imported an average of 264,000 tonnes of natural rubber each year. Import volumes declined significantly over this period (*Figure 1*).

Almost 39% of the UK's natural rubber imports were in the form of vehicle tyres, with a wide range of products and different grades of raw material making up the remainder. The main sourcing countries are Thailand (19%), Indonesia (14%) and China (11%).

The average overseas land footprint associated with the UK's demand for natural rubber averaged 236,000 hectares per year over the period, an area the same size as the county of Gloucestershire.

At least 62% of the overseas land area is in countries with high- or very-high risk of deforestation and serious social impacts.

Four voluntary sustainability standards are used in the natural rubber sector. The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is a system designed principally for verifying forest management and chain of custody for wood and timber products and it has also been used for rubber. Recent data does not appear to be available, but in 2007 an area of 397,305 hectares was certified (approx. 0.6% of the global harvested area). The Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) and the Rainforest Alliance also operate certification schemes for natural rubber, although recent data on certified areas is not readily available. The Global Platform for Sustainable Natural Rubber (GPSNR), which includes many of the largest companies in the sector, aims to verify its members' sustainability criteria.[51] In addition, the Sustainable Natural Rubber Initiative (SNR-i) has developed a set of voluntary sustainability guidelines and criteria for members. However, there is no independent third-party auditing or certification, so the initiative relies on company self-assessment.[52]

Certain natural rubber products are included within the scope of the EUDR. Given that around 43% of the UK imports both enter the UK via the EU and are covered by the regulation, suggests that the EUDR, if implemented, will play a significant role in reducing deforestation risk in UK supply chains. Natural rubber is also expected to be included within the proposed UK FRC regulation.[53]

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Latex is sliced and drained from a tree inside a forest near Pyaw Daw Wa village in the Tanintharyi region, Myanmar. The latex is removed from the tree by making incisions into the bark and collecting the fluid in a process called 'tapping'. The latex is then refined into rubber and prepared for commercial processing.
Credit: © Stephen Kelly / WWF-Myanmar



HIDDEN RISKS: THE UK SECTORS WHERE DEFORESTATION CAN BE OVERLOOKED

Agricultural and forest commodities enter supply chains in different forms. Some are imported in their original form or after primary processing, while others are used as ingredients in food, consumer products and animal feed. While some of the uses are obvious, including roasted dried coffee and pieces of plywood, others are much less apparent. For example, palm oil may be used as an ingredient in bakery products, while soymeal is fed to livestock.

This section examines three hidden, and subsequently, often-overlooked sources of deforestation risk commodities in the UK: pet food, aquaculture feed and poultry feed.



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Digger on palm terrace at sunset in the Sabah Softwoods in Sabah, Borneo, Malaysia.
Credit: © Aaron Gekoski / WWF-US

PET FOOD

Pets enrich the lives of millions across the UK, with 51% of adults caring for an estimated 10.2 million dogs and 11.3 million cats. However, the environmental footprint associated with producing pet food ingredients, including impacts such as to for example deforestation overseas and habitat loss which endanger animals, are often hidden from animal lovers making every day purchasing decisions for their pets.

Around 1.8 million tonnes of cat and dog food are sold in the UK each year.[54] Pet food contains several potential sources of deforestation risk. Here, we focus on two key sources: soy that is embedded in meat-based pet food and imported beef used in pet food formulas.

The quantity of meat within dog and cat food has been estimated by Leenstra et al. (2018) [55]. As pet food can contain meat from different livestock species, the amount of embedded soy varies depending on the mix of ingredients used. To estimate this, we apportioned meat content across four livestock categories, beef, poultry, sheep and pigs, based on their relative share of UK production.[56] These quantities are then multiplied by established conversion factors to estimate the quantity of soy embedded within them. The origin of this soy was estimated using the same approach applied elsewhere in this report for pet food, both imported and produced in the UK.

We estimate that an average of 461,000 tonnes of soy is embedded in the dog and cat food consumed by UK pets each year.

This represents approximately 8% of all soy imported into the UK.

This volume is comparable to that consumed directly by people through products such as soy milk, tofu and soy sauce. Most of this soy (94%) is not present in pet food directly but is used as livestock feed before being embedded into meat-based pet food.

The soy associated with UK pet food is linked to an estimated 1.2 million tonnes of CO_2e emissions from land-use change each year. When all sources of GHG emissions of dog food are considered, not just those linked to soy.

The full climate footprint of dog food in the UK could be as high as 11.6 million tonnes of CO_2e annually, once all sources of GHG emissions are considered, not just those linked to soy.[57]

That is roughly equivalent to the emissions of a city with a population between 385,000 and 951,000 people,[58] somewhere between the size of Cardiff and Liverpool.

A second potential source of deforestation risk is in the beef that is imported, either in the form of imported pet food or offcuts from beef imported into the UK for human consumption. Whilst we are not able to estimate the scale of this risk, it is probably minor, as our analysis suggests that most of the pet food that the UK imports originates from the EU.

The UK pet food sector is dominated by two companies, Mars and Nestlé, who between them account for around three-quarters of cat and dog food sales in the UK. Both companies have deforestation policies on soy and beef. However, Mars' policy applies only to sourcing from Brazil, Argentina and Mexico,[59] rather than all sourcing regions. In addition, both companies policies appear to cover direct purchases of beef and soy, but not soy that is embedded within the meat that they purchase.[60]

AQUACULTURE FEED

Aquaculture is a growing sector in the UK. Farming of carnivorous fish such as salmon and trout has been associated with a number of environmental issues, including pollution of coastal waters and spreading parasites to wild-living fish. Less obvious are the environmental impacts of the feed that is given to captive-reared fish, much of which is sourced overseas or on the high seas.

A portion of fish feed is fish – either purpose-caught or the trimmings from fish processed for human consumption. The former has potentially serious impacts for marine ecosystems.[61] In coastal West Africa, where several large fishmeal plants supply the European and North American aquaculture trade,[62] fishmeal production has been linked to food insecurity and an increase in bushmeat hunting.[63] But soy is also a key ingredient in aquaculture feed and can also be associated with deforestation and land-conversion.

Due to limited data concerning other species, we focus here on salmon aquaculture. Salmon is the UK's most popular seafood and an increasingly important export. To estimate the quantity of soy embedded within UK salmon, we combined annual production data from 2011-24 with published feed conversion ratios and estimates of the proportion of soy used in salmon feed. The feed conversion ratio is not a constant, with some farms achieving even lower figures,[64] but a general estimate for Scottish salmon farming is a ratio of 1.11 (meaning that 1.11[65] kilograms of food are required to produce 1 kilogram of salmon). The proportion of soy in salmon feed is proprietary information and not publicly available, but an independent assessment concluded that soymeal accounts for around 21% of the average Scottish salmon diet.[66]

Using this approach, we estimate that 42,300 tonnes of soymeal is used in Scottish salmon aquaculture each year. Given that this is for salmon alone, it appears broadly consistent with Efeca's estimate of 47,200 tonnes of soy used in UK's fish feed in 2019, despite using different methodology.[67]

This represents around 1% of all the UK's soy imports. The land area required to supply this demand is in the region of 19,300 hectares each year. Based on the overall risk profile for soy, at least 65% of this (12,600 hectares) is located in high- and very-high risk countries, including Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay. We estimate that the GHG emissions from land-use change for this soymeal generates around 240,000 tonnes CO_2e each year.

One of the leading sustainability certification systems for aquaculture is the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC). Since 2025, all ASC-certified farms, which include some salmon farms, are required to source their feed from feed mills certified under the ASC Feed Standard. These standards include provisions for deforestation- and conversion-free feed.[68] However, two other widely used standards in the sector, GLOBAL G.A.P.[69] and Global Seafood Alliance (GSA)[70] do not currently include equivalent requirements on feed sustainability.

FIGURE 9

TONNES OF SOYMEAL USED IN SCOTTISH SALMON AQUACULTURE (OUR ESTIMATE) AND EFECA'S ESTIMATE OF OVERALL USE IN UK FISH FEED



Some of the companies involved in aquaculture are also taking voluntary action. For example, Mowi, one of the largest aquaculture companies in the world and whose assets include a salmon feed plant in Scotland, has sourced only ProTerra-certified deforestation- and conversion-free soy since 2021.[71]

While salmon is the UK's most significant aquaculture species, it is not the only one. Although information is not available to estimate the soy use of the sector as a whole, it is likely to exceed the number for salmon alone. In addition, the UK imports significant quantities of farmed fish, which will add to the deforestation and conversion risk. However, import statistics do not distinguish between farmed and wild-caught fish, making it difficult to estimate the scale of this impact or its associated risk profile.

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Example of raw soy product which was harvested from a sustainable farm, Cerrado.
Credit: © Ana Paula Rabelo / WWF-UK



POULTRY

The UK's poultry population is estimated to have increased from 162.5 million in 2011 to 183.3 million in 2025.[72] This represents an estimated increase of 20.8 million animals, a 13% increase in those fourteen years.

Wales in particular has seen a disproportionate increase, of nearly 50% over the same period. The expansion of intensive poultry production has created local environmental pressures. In the Wye catchment alone, more than 20 million chickens generate over 4,000 tonnes of phosphate from poultry manure used as a fertiliser.[73] This enters the river causing toxic algal blooms, oxygen depletion and degradation of the riverbed habitat.[74] Despite rising domestic production, the UK still imports small quantities of poultry and is expected to expand poultry production even further through initiatives such as the Poultry Sector Growth Plan.

From a deforestation and conversion perspective, soy used in poultry feed is a major source of deforestation risk within the UK's agricultural commodity supply chains. This is not the only deforestation risk connected with livestock feed in general, or poultry feed specifically.

For example, maize is a component of many poultry feeds, and maize imported from South America represents a significant deforestation risk.[75]

The deforestation risk associated with poultry can be divided into two categories: soy used to feed birds reared in the UK, and soy embedded in imported poultry products and eggs.

↓
Intensive chicken farm
Credit: © Polawat Klinkulabhirun / Shutterstock / WWF-UK



FEED FOR UK-REARED CHICKEN (POULTRY AND EGGS)

Imports of soymeal and soybeans together account for 51% of all UK soy imports. Using the same approach for the full commodity analysis, but this time focusing only on meal and soybeans, we estimate that they originate predominantly in Argentina (at least 37%) and Brazil (at least 32%).

Around 90% of soymeal and soybeans are used in livestock feed.[76]

An estimated 55% of that is fed to poultry for meat production and a further 10% for egg production.

We estimate that supplying soy to the UK poultry sector requires around 1.13 million hectares of land each year. This represents 54% of the total land area associated with UK soy imports. The land footprint for soy used in poultry feed has increased from 775,000 hectares in 2011 to 1.64 million hectares in 2025.

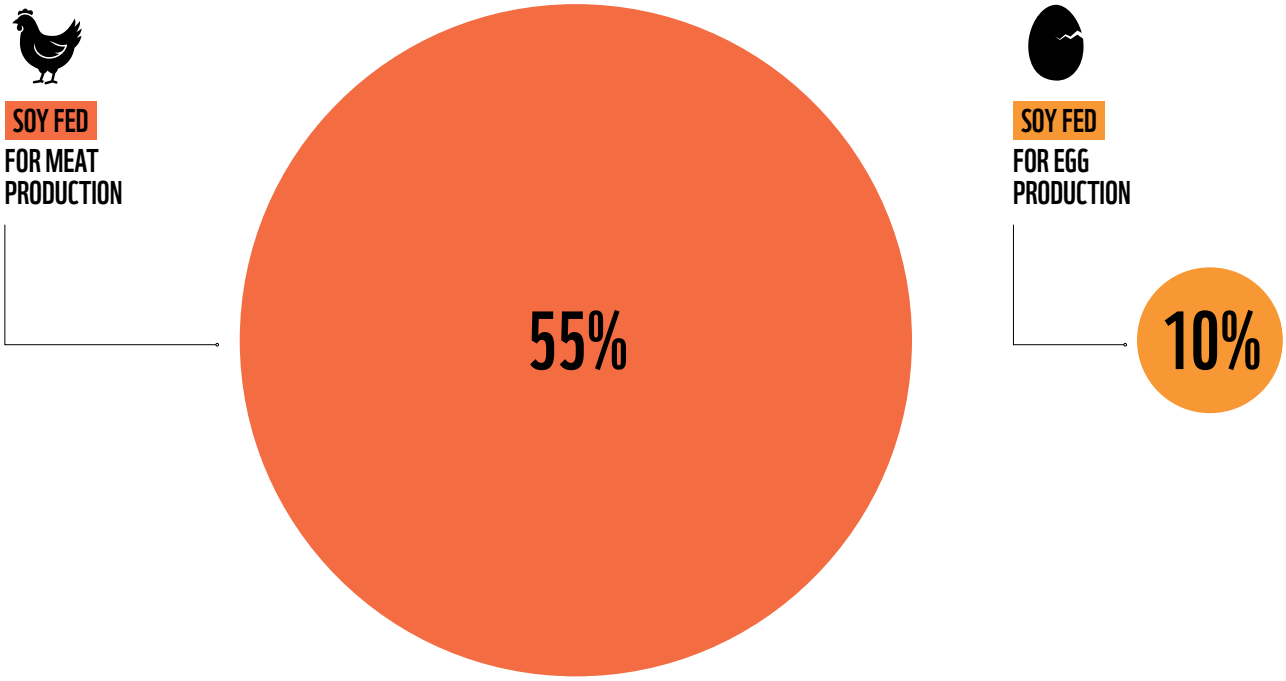
The estimated GHG emissions from land-use change averaged 10.1 million tonnes CO_2e per year. This is equivalent to the annual emissions of around 830,000 people, similar to the population of Leeds City District.

Despite the progress in supply-chain commitments, the risk remains high.

Only around 39% of imported soymeal (though not all soy products) is estimated to comply with FEFAC deforestation and conversion standards via mass balance and segregated supply chains.[77] As mass balance systems do not guarantee that the physical soy imported is free from deforestation and land conversion substantial risks remain within the poultry sector.

FIGURE 10

PERCENTAGE OF SOY USE FOR POULTRY MEAT AND EGG PRODUCTION



UK IMPORTS OF POULTRY AND EGGS

We estimate that the soy embedded within UK imported poultry meat averages 260,000 tonnes each year between 2011 and 2025, with imported eggs accounting for 22,000 tonnes.

Almost all the eggs (98%) and poultry meat (90%) were imported from the EU, predominantly the Netherlands, Ireland and Poland. An analysis of trade[78] and production[79] data indicates that around 41% of the EU's soymeal and bean supply originates in Brazil, with a further 18% from Argentina. These are both classified as high-risk countries for deforestation and social impacts, meaning that at least 59% of the soy embedded in imports of poultry meat and eggs is exposed to deforestation risk. The remaining soy comes from medium- to low-risk countries. Given the dominance of the EU as a supplier of imported poultry meat and eggs, the implementation of the EUDR will play a critical role in reducing the deforestation and conversion risks associated with these imports.

FIGURE 11

PERCENTAGE OF EU'S SOYMEAL FROM BRAZIL AND ARGENTINA



Outside the EU, the only substantial direct imports of either poultry meat or eggs from a high-risk country are poultry meat imports from Brazil, which accounts for 2.2% of total UK imports.

Many of the UK's largest poultry producers have committed to purchase deforestation-free soy, but the strength of the commitments varies. For example, Avara Foods had stated that all of the soy they use would be deforestation free by January 2026, with a cut-off date of 2020.[80] 2 Sisters Food Group recently extended their commitment to include conversion as well as deforestation, and, from July 2026 source only from farms where deforestation and land conversion has not occurred for over 18 years.[81] This represented a significant strengthening of their previous commitment, which only committed to attempt to exclude material associated with deforestation.[82] Moy Park committed to sourcing deforestation- and conversion-free soy by 2025, with a deforestation cut-off date of 2020. However, its commitment only applies to illegal deforestation of primary forests and High Conservation Value Forest.[83] Given the inclusion of all deforestation and conversion in a number of these voluntary standards, regulation must seek to match this level of ambition in order to drive sector wide transformation and prevent ongoing exposure to risk in UK supply chains.

Commodity expansion linked to deforestation and conversion is supported not only through trade but also through financial flows. Financial institutions therefore play an important role in enabling, perpetuating or reducing deforestation risk, highlighting an opportunity for connected policy, such as the Poultry Sector Growth Plan, to align sustainable growth and finance.

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Aerial view of the Cerrado and soy monoculture, Ribeiro Gonçalves, Brazil
Credit: © Adriano Gambarini / WWF-Brazil



CONCLUSIONS

This report shows that, although the UK's overseas land footprint associated with key agricultural and forest commodities has declined since 2011, UK demand has a substantial overseas footprint, much of it in regions facing elevated risks of deforestation, ecosystem conversion and human rights abuses. Further, there are sharp increases in the imports of some of the highest risk commodities including soy, timber and coffee. The forthcoming UK Forest Risk Commodities (UK FRC) Regulation represents the most significant opportunity for the UK to translate long-standing commitments into tangible outcomes. To be effective, however, the regulation must address ecosystem conversion beyond illegal deforestation, maintain broad commodity and product scope, strengthen traceability requirements, include credible monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, support producers and smallholders through the transition, and align with international frameworks such as the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR).

While progress has been made through certification schemes, corporate commitments and voluntary initiatives, the evidence suggests that these approaches alone have not delivered the scale or pace of change required. UK supply chains continue to be associated with substantial land footprints in high- and very-high-risk regions, while significant traceability, transparency and data gaps remain across a number of commodities. The persistence of these risks, despite more than a decade of voluntary action, demonstrates the need for robust regulatory frameworks that create a consistent baseline across the market, reward responsible businesses and provide greater accountability.

Significant increases in imports of commodities such as soy and coffee demonstrate that demand continues to grow in high-risk sectors, while commodities embedded within supply chains, such as soy used in livestock, aquaculture and pet food production, remain major drivers of the UK's overseas environmental footprint.

Deforestation risks are present across a diverse range of sectors and products, including direct commodity imports, derived products and commodities embedded within complex supply chains. This reinforces the importance of maintaining broad commodity and product coverage within future regulation and ensuring that efforts to tackle deforestation are not restricted to a narrow set of supply chains.

The evidence also points to the need for action beyond commodity regulation alone. Deforestation and ecosystem conversion are driven by wider market, financial and policy incentives. Achieving lasting change will require greater alignment between trade policy, financial flows, corporate reporting requirements and nature-positive development pathways in producer regions. Alongside efforts to eliminate deforestation and conversion from supply chains, investment is needed to support sustainable production, ecosystem restoration and the rights and livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

The UK government has recognised that biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation and climate change present growing risks to economic resilience, food security and national security. The findings of this report reinforce that assessment. Reducing the UK's contribution to deforestation and ecosystem conversion is therefore not only an environmental imperative, but also an investment in more resilient supply chains, greater economic stability and long-term food security. We cannot hope to tackle the global climate and biodiversity crises without simultaneously bringing about a halt to the deforestation and conversion embedded within commodity production.

Alongside efforts to eliminate deforestation from supply chains, greater investment is needed to restore degraded areas and preserve nature in producer landscapes, support sustainable production systems and secure the livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in producing regions.

The UK now has a clear opportunity to lead by implementing ambitious, comprehensive and enforceable deforestation regulation, aligned with wider climate, nature, trade and finance policies. The government can help turn international commitments into measurable outcomes for forests, climate, biodiversity and people.

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Somewhere along Dawei road, smoke arises from a man-made wildfire in a forest that is supposed to clean up the land for replacement plantation most commonly with betal-nut or rubber, near the Thai border in Htee-Khee area.
Credit: © Minzayar Oo / WWF-Myanmar



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The rainforest canopy at sunset. Tambopata National Reserve in the Peruvian Amazon Basin. Peru.
Credit: © Day's Edge Productions / WWF-US



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