

Belgium: A deforestation exposure assessment

Headlines

12,600 ha

Belgium's average annual deforestation exposure in 2021–2023, from **direct trade**

10,300 ha

Belgium's average annual deforestation exposure in 2021–2023, **adjusted for re-exports**

-48.9%

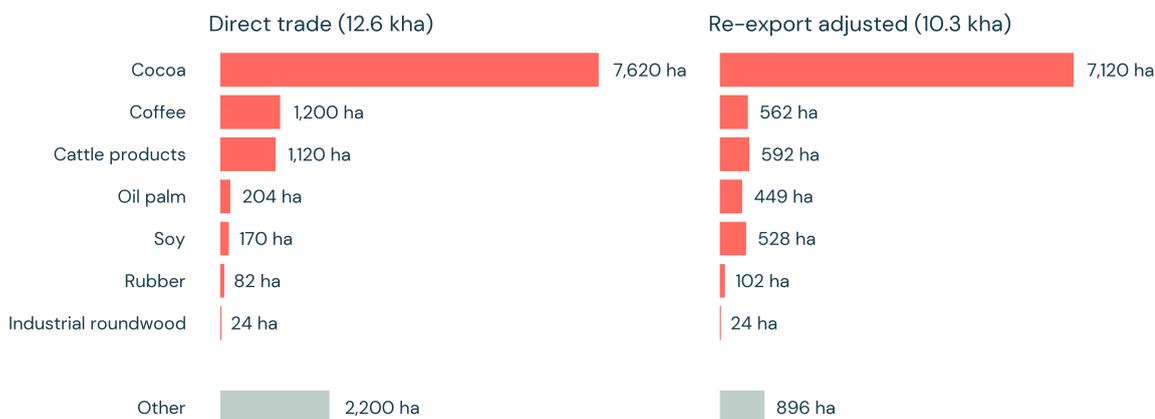
change in total deforestation exposure from 2014–2023, **adjusted for re-exports**

Methods note

This factsheet provides an estimate of the deforestation footprint of Belgium's imports, combining data on global bilateral trade and the deforestation associated with 160+ different agricultural commodities. It is intended to help identify the most likely sources, trends and hotspots in global deforestation exposure. Deforestation exposure is likely to be underestimated for commodities that are often imported in more processed forms, particularly wood and rubber products. Please refer to the end of the factsheet for some key considerations, or read the full [methods note](#) for more detail on data sources and limitations.

Deforestation exposure by commodity and trade perspective

Belgium's total deforestation exposure was larger from the direct trade perspective (12,600 ha per year) and smaller from the re-export adjusted perspective (10,300 ha per year). The re-export adjustment process uses a mass-balance approach to estimate the likely true origins and destinations of products where supply chains involve multiple trade steps. For more information, see the accompanying [methods note](#). Numbers are average annual exposure from 2021 to 2023.



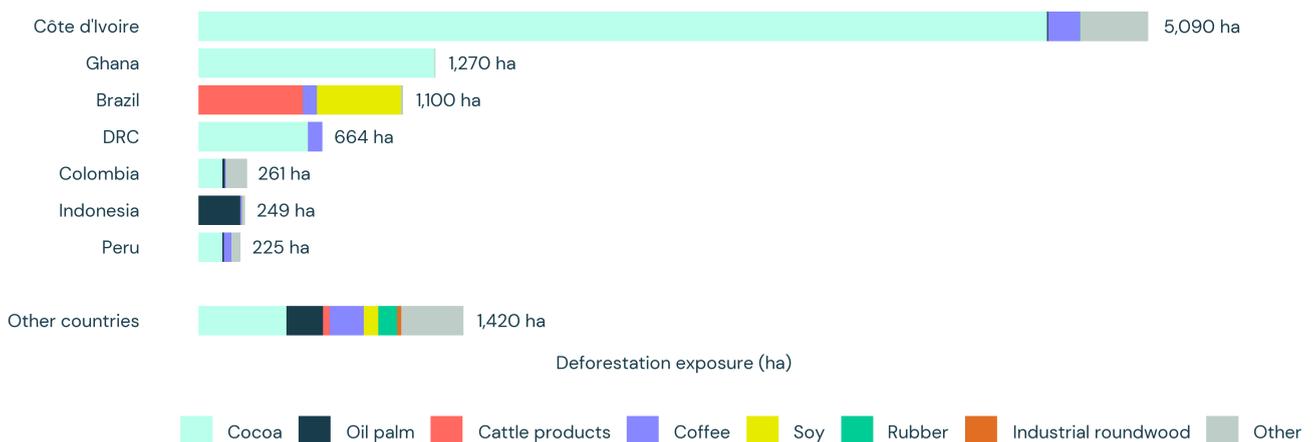
Direct trade deforestation exposure by origin country and commodity

From a direct trade perspective, on average between 2021 and 2023, Belgium was most exposed to deforestation in Côte d'Ivoire (7,040 ha, 55.8%), followed by Brazil (1,430 ha, 11.3%) and Colombia (556 ha, 4.4%). Across all origin countries, the most important commodities were cocoa (7,620 ha, 60.4%), coffee (1,200 ha, 9.5%) and cattle products (1,120 ha, 8.9%). In Côte d'Ivoire, the most important commodity for Belgium's deforestation exposure was cocoa (6,130 ha, 87%), followed by mangoes (504 ha, 7.2%). In Brazil, the most important commodity was cattle products (1,020 ha, 71.2%), followed by coffee (197 ha, 13.8%).



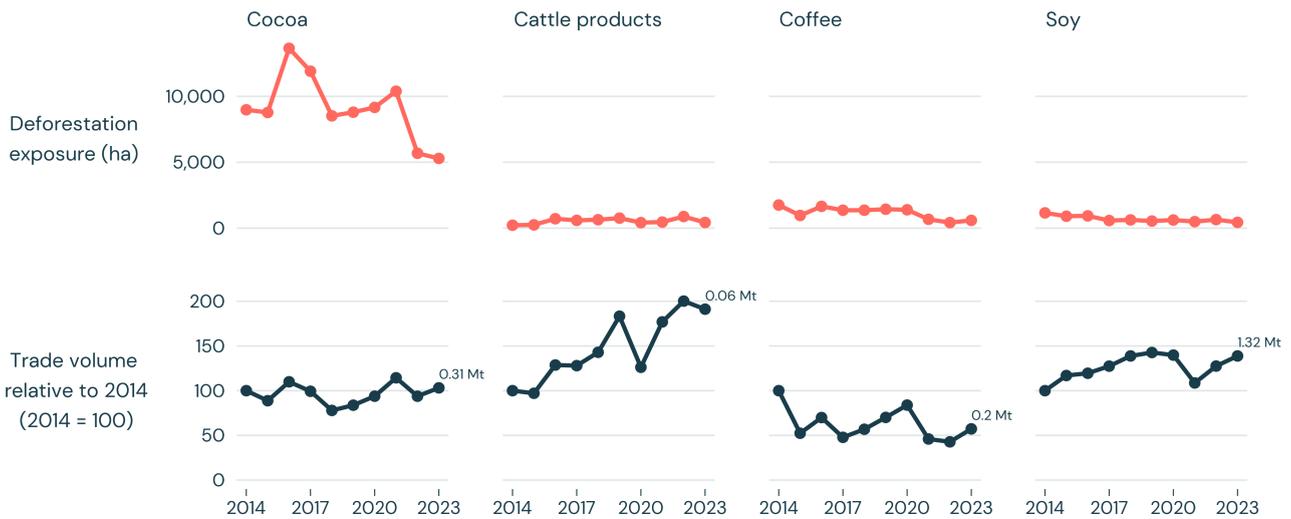
Re-export adjusted deforestation exposure by origin country and commodity

After adjusting for re-exports, on average between 2021 and 2023, Belgium was most exposed to deforestation in Côte d'Ivoire (5,090 ha, 49.5%), followed by Ghana (1,270 ha, 12.4%) and Brazil (1,100 ha, 10.7%). Across all origin countries, the most important commodities were cocoa (7,120 ha, 69.3%), cattle products (592 ha, 5.8%) and coffee (562 ha, 5.5%). In Côte d'Ivoire, the most important commodity for Belgium's deforestation exposure was cocoa (4,550 ha, 89.3%), followed by mangoes (261 ha, 5.1%). In Ghana, the most important commodity was cocoa (1,260 ha, 99.6%), followed by cashew nuts (3.19 ha, 0.3%).



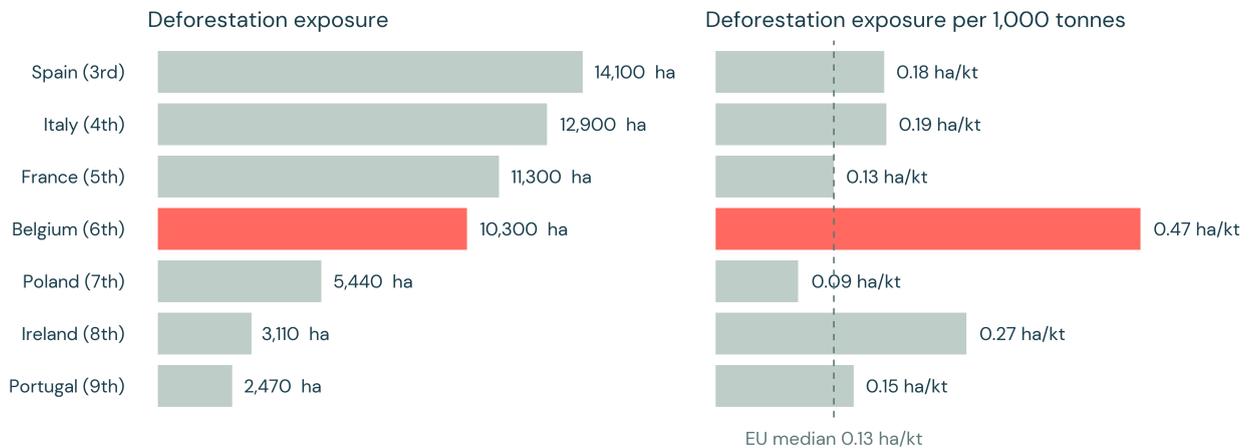
Trends in deforestation exposure and trade volume for top commodities

The following charts show trends in re-export adjusted deforestation exposure and trade volume for the top four commodities (selected based on total deforestation exposure over the last three years of the time series). Overall, Belgium's total exposure decreased between 2014 and 2023 by 7,500 ha, a change of -48.9%. Of the top seven commodities, the biggest change in absolute terms was for cocoa, which saw a decrease of -3,690 ha over the time series (-41.1%). The biggest change in relative terms was for cattle products, which saw an increase of 94.1% (209 ha) over the time series.



Comparison with deforestation exposure of other EU countries

After adjusting for re-exports, Belgium ranks 6th among EU countries for deforestation exposure, accounting for 9.4% of the EU27 total. Looking at the deforestation per 1,000 tonnes of imported material, Belgium ranks 2nd at 0.46 ha/kt, higher than the EU median of 0.13 ha/kt.



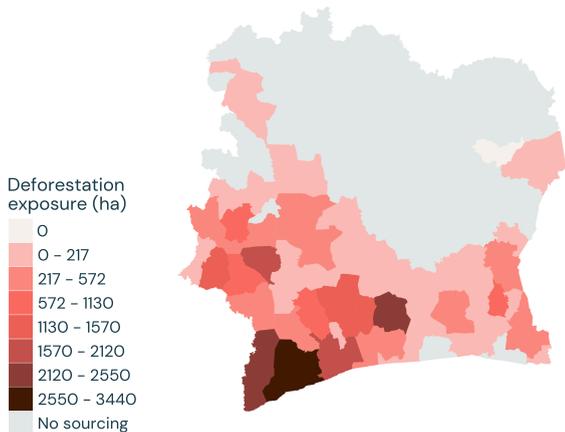
Subnational deforestation exposure

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 commodities can vary substantially between Trase's subnational data and the global dataset used for this factsheet, and can lead to large differences in estimates). See the [methods note](#) accompanying the factsheet for more information.

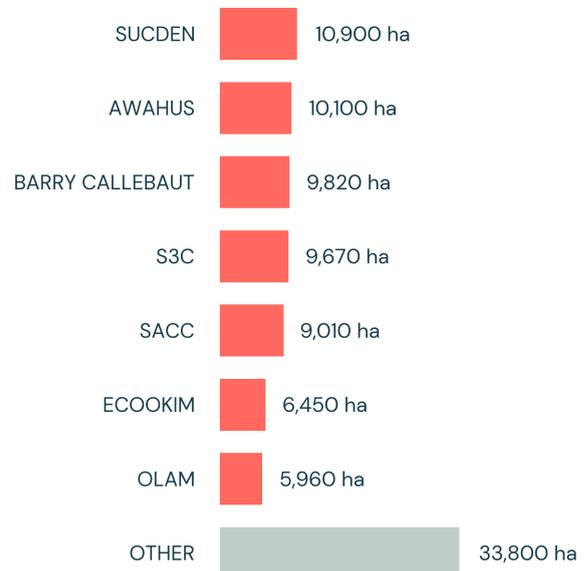
Côte d'Ivoire cocoa: Subnational detail

Trase data estimates that Belgium was exposed to 95,600 ha of deforestation from its direct imports of Côte d'Ivoire cocoa in 2021, the most recent year with subnational data available. Belgium's deforestation exposure was highest in the departments of San-Pedro (3,440 ha, 3.6%), Tabou (2,550 ha, 2.7%) and Divo (2,510 ha, 2.6%). Indirect sourcing accounted for 40.6% (38,800 ha) of Belgium's deforestation exposure, where it was not possible to determine the department of production. In total, Belgium imported Côte d'Ivoire cocoa from 43 exporters in 2021. The exporter groups most exposed to deforestation were SUCDEN, AWAHUS and BARRY CALLEBAUT, which together accounted for 32.2% of Belgium's deforestation exposure. To explore the data in more detail, visit trase.earth

Deforestation hotspots for exports to Belgium



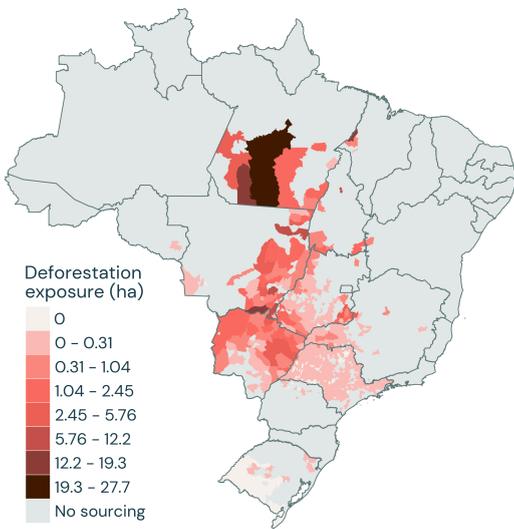
Exporter exposure for exports to Belgium



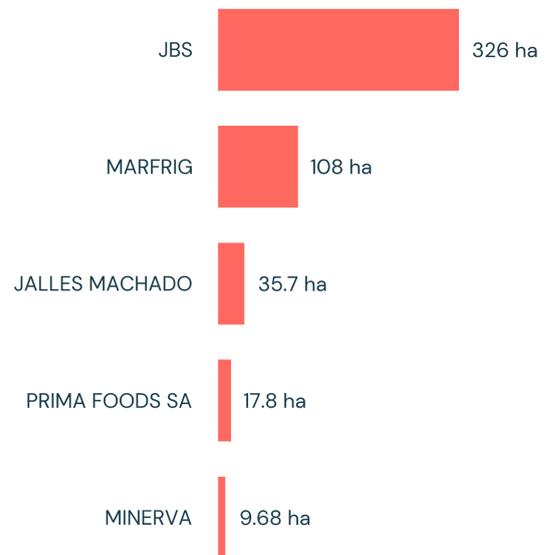
Brazil beef: Subnational detail

Trase data estimates that Belgium was exposed to 498 ha of deforestation from its direct imports of Brazil beef in 2023, the most recent year with subnational data available. Belgium's deforestation exposure was highest in the states of Mato Grosso (91.1 ha, 18.3%), Para (55.3 ha, 11.1%) and Mato Grosso Do Sul (42.3 ha, 8.5%). For 46.6% of Belgium's imports (232 ha), the production location was unknown. In total, Belgium imported Brazil beef from 5 exporters in 2023. The exporter groups most exposed to deforestation were JBS, MARFRIG and JALLES MACHADO, which together accounted for 94.5% of Belgium's deforestation exposure. To explore the data in more detail, visit trase.earth

Deforestation hotspots for exports to Belgium



Exporter exposure for exports to Belgium

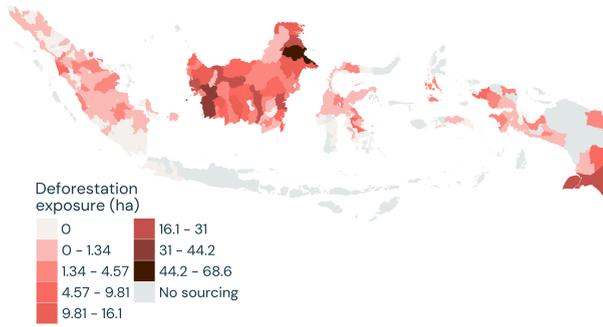


Indonesia palm oil: Subnational detail

Trase data estimates that Belgium was exposed to 583 ha of deforestation from its direct imports of Indonesia palm oil in 2022, the most recent year with subnational data available. Belgium's deforestation exposure was highest in the provinces of Kalimantan Barat (153 ha, 26.3%), Kalimantan Timur (133 ha, 22.9%) and Kalimantan Tengah (91.5 ha, 15.7%). Zooming in to a finer spatial scale, Belgium sourced Indonesia palm oil from 242 kabupaten, while 80% of Belgium's exposure was spread across 27 kabupaten. In total, Belgium imported Indonesia palm oil from 1 exporter in 2022. One exporter group was exposed to deforestation: ROYAL GOLDEN EAGLE. To explore the data in more detail, visit trase.earth

Deforestation hotspots for exports to Belgium

Exporter exposure for exports to Belgium



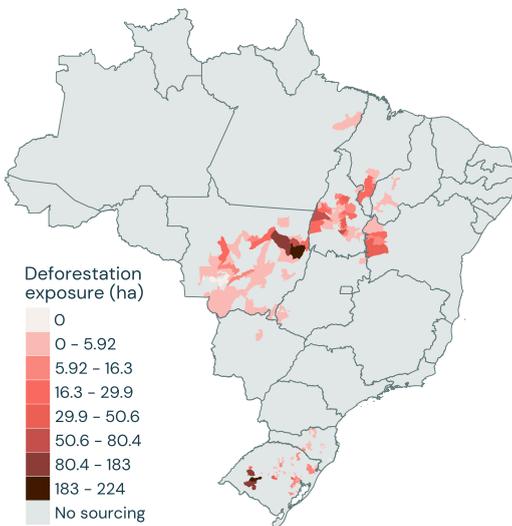
In 2022, Belgium was exposed to deforestation (583 ha) from just one exporter group, ROYAL GOLDEN EAGLE.

Brazil soy: Subnational detail

Trase data estimates that Belgium was exposed to 3,100 ha of deforestation from its direct imports of Brazil soy in 2022, the most recent year with subnational data available. Belgium's deforestation exposure was highest in the states of Rio Grande Do Sul (763 ha, 24.6%), Mato Grosso (609 ha, 19.6%) and Tocantins (578 ha, 18.6%). For 30.9% of Belgium's imports (960 ha), the production location was unknown. In total, Belgium imported Brazil soy from 3 exporters in 2022. Two exporter groups were exposed to deforestation: CARGILL and COFCO. 447 ha of deforestation exposure was linked to trade where the exporter group was unknown. To explore the data in more detail, visit trase.earth

Deforestation hotspots for exports to Belgium

Exporter exposure for exports to Belgium



Interpreting this factsheet

To identify the most important commodities and countries globally for Belgium'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 currently unable to include deforestation exposure estimates for the imports of more processed materials, meaning that deforestation exposure is likely to be underestimated for commodities typically imported in more processed forms – particularly affecting wood and rubber products. 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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