January to December

ANNUAL REPORT

2022
Forests are essential to life on earth: they maintain biodiversity and protect land and water. More than 1.6 billion people rely on them for their livelihoods, and they’re critical in the fight against climate change.

What’s more, as the weather becomes deadlier and hurricanes, droughts and floods intensify, forests can offer some protection. Yet the threats against forests are multiplying.

Around the world forests are being plundered for timber and cleared to make way for mines, infrastructure and agriculture. We identify the threats facing the world’s forests, and work with affected peoples, social and environmental organisations and policy makers to devise and deliver solutions.

Our purpose, as a Europe-based NGO, is to address the root causes of this forest destruction from a European perspective. As the number one global trade and aid power, the EU has an immense influence on the world’s forests and the people who depend on them.

Our close work with partners in the global South and Europe shapes and drives our campaigns and is vital to bring about lasting change on the ground.

Fern makes decisions by consensus and all our campaigns are built in close collaboration with social and environmental organisations and movements across the world.
Board members

• Jacques Lauruol (UK), Specialist in NGO finance and financial training

• Mardi Minangsari (Indonesia), Former national coordinator of Indonesia’s forestry monitor network. Since 2016, she has been actively involved in the initiative to reform Indonesia’s palm oil sector

• Margareta Nilsson (Sweden), Head of Programs at the International Land and Forest Tenure Facility. Margareta is a specialist in rights-based forestry, natural resource management and land governance with over 20 years’ experience in international development cooperation in Latin America, Asia, Africa and the Balkans. She maintains a deep interest in ways of communicating and is a trained artist and printmaker.

• Fred Pearce (UK), Author and journalist who has reported on environment and development issues from 67 countries. His books have been translated into 16 languages and won a number of prizes. Specialist in communications, environment and development issues

• Korto Reeves Williams (Kenya), Had decades of experience working on women’s rights issues across Africa, the Middle East and the Americas, with ActionAid International, the United Nations and more. She is a member of the African Feminist Forum

• Flip van Helden (Netherlands), Coordinator for International Affairs team, the Netherlands Ministry of Economic Affairs. Specialist in EU Affairs and FLEGT

• Penny Davies (UK), Worked for the Climate and Land Use Alliance, the Ford Foundation and the UK Department for International Development. She has lived and worked in diverse geographic locations across Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America, and North America. She is passionate about partnering with people, especially in the global South.

Staff

• Daria Andreeva, Communications Project Manager

• Alexandra Benjamin, Forest Governance Campaigner

• Tiziano Biagi, Communications Intern (from September)

• Pierre-Jean Sol Brasier, Strategic Communications Advisor

• Julia Christian, Cocoa and Forests Campaigner

• Cristina Díaz Parada, Partner and General Finance Officer

• Bertrand Grietens, Finance and Human Resources Officer

• Perrine Fournier, Trade and Forest Campaigner

• Indra Van Gisbergen, Forest and Consumption Campaigner

• Marie-Ange Kalenga, Forests, Governance and Development Policy Adviser

• Raphael Koenig, Finance Manager

• Rudi Kohnert, Monitoring and Evaluation Expert and Forest Governance Campaigner

• Hannah Mowat, Campaigns Coordinator

• Amrita Nair, Climate Intern (from September)

• Mark Olden, Media and Press Advisor

• Saskia Ozinga, Founder and Adviser

• Julie Painting, Mentoring & HR Officer

• Kelsey Perlman, Forest and Climate Campaigner

• Martin Pigeon, Forest and Climate Campaigner, focussing on bioenergy

• Nicole Polsterer, Sustainable Consumption and Production Campaigner

• Niya Seklamova, Communications Intern (until June)

• Richard Wainwright, Communications and Change Coordinator.
Our planet’s cascading crises were more visible than ever in 2022, as droughts and floods ravaged huge swathes of the planet with huge human cost. “We have waged war on nature, and nature is striking back, and striking back in a devastating way,” said António Guterres, the UN secretary general while visiting Pakistan, where a third of the country was submerged by flooding.

Europe did not escape the weather extremes, with deadly floods, the hottest summer on record, once-mighty rivers drying up, and fires raging across tens of thousands of hectares. The continent’s winter, meanwhile, saw pressure on Europe’s forests intensify, as wood harvests for fuel increased, in response to an energy crisis caused by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, but rooted in the long-term failure to deliver policies to insulate homes sufficiently, or move to large-scale cleaner energy sources fast enough.

Watershed

But at an organisational level, 2022 brought Fern cause for optimism - forests are now near the centre of European Union (EU) and other international policy-making forums.

Increasing numbers of EU-decision-makers now understand how deeply Member States’ policies on trade, energy, climate, development, consumption and much else, affect the world’s forests, and the lives of those who rely on them.

A vivid example came in December 2022, when the EU finally agreed on the text of its long-awaited Regulation on deforestation-free products (EUDR). The Regulation – which Fern played a key role in making a reality – was the fruit of years of hard work and intense political debate, despite behind the scenes lobbying by industry and several Member States to try to weaken it.

Now, for the first time, companies selling commodities on the EU market which are grown in contravention of national law or on land that has been deforested or degraded since 2020 will be blocked from doing so, and sanctioned.

Yet, the work on the Regulation has only just begun. The law will come into force in 2024, and much of the fine detail still needs resolving - including how country risk ratings will work, and how the Regulation will operate alongside the Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs) and Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) that the EU has signed with many forested countries.
VPAs have given our civil society partners in the Congo Basin, West Africa and South-East Asia a crucial foothold in being able to influence their nations’ forest laws and policies. Many of them now want the EU to clarify how the Regulation will impact ongoing forest governance reforms in their countries. If the Regulation is to succeed, EU policy makers must listen to them.

**A year of progress**

The Regulation understandably attracted the greatest attention, but other forest-related legislative files which Fern campaigns on also reached crucial stages in 2022. Since 2009, the EU’s Renewable Energy Directive (RED) has allowed Member States to subsidise burning trees for energy: a disastrous policy which inflicts enormous damage on the climate, forests and people.

At last, the reality of this seems to be dawning among policymakers. In September, the European Parliament voted to end subsidies for burning wood taken directly from forests, no longer considering it renewable. But this fight is far from over.

There was also progress in our climate campaign, with the Land Use Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) Regulation increasing the link between carbon dioxide in forests with their biodiversity and limiting offsetting. The Nature Restoration Law contains specific targets for restoring forests outside of protected areas.

These steps forward are laden with heavy caveats, with the European Council and the lobbies that push Member States responsible for many delays and last-minute changes. This shows the political nature of all the things we work on, and the need for Fern to work even more closely with our partners in the Forest Movement Europe to influence national debates.

**Future vision**

Brussels is a dizzying carrousel: with 705 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) across seven political groups, 27 Member States and as many Directorate Generals, it hard to catch your breath, especially because all our major files hit the political approval process at the same time.

But time to breathe is an essential part of campaigning as it allows you to think about what your main objectives are and how to achieve them. We therefore made space to come together as a full team to develop our 2023-2027 long-term strategy.

It is a vision which we believe will enable Fern to use all levers at our disposal to continue building on our achievements over almost three decades, to be nimble enough to respond to challenges as they arise, and along with our partners to protect forests and the rights of those who depend on them.
On March 30, 2015, I told a conference Fern organised at the European Parliament, that Europe’s supermarkets had been converted into crime scenes. Speaking in part in my capacity as a Fern Board member, I pointed out that millions of hectares of tropical forests around the world were being cleared illegally for soy, beef, palm oil and other commodities. Much of this was being exported and ending up on Europe’s supermarket shelves. This was fuelling climate change and displacing an ever-growing number of traditional communities.

Eight years on, tropical forests are still being illegally cleared for agricultural production. The EU, however, has passed a Deforestation Regulation to end its complicity in it. In 2015, this seemed almost unattainable and utopic. Back then, the consensus was that Europe would never accept the constraints on companies that an agriculturally focussed Deforestation Regulation might imply. Passing the EU Timber Regulation had been difficult - but the timber industry is minor compared with the huge multinational corporations trading in beef, palm oil and soybeans.

**Strength through diversity**

Yet it has happened, and the hard work of Fern, as well as that of its allies and organisations in the global South, played an important role. More broadly, the diversity of those who are now engaged in issues around deforestation, land rights, the climate crisis and consumption, is a source of hope. We had Greta [Thunberg] and the whole youth movement making a common cause with the Indigenous Peoples and deforestation movement. The Pope, the Amazon Synod and faith leaders brought a new perspective to issues of Indigenous Peoples, deforestation, and its links to climate change.
and trade. Farmers also spoke out in demand of a level playing field, while consumers are clear that they don’t want their food linked to money laundering, land grabs and killings.

Fern was uniquely positioned to help move the Regulation forward with the European Parliament and the European Commission, because of its understanding of how they work. Its experience working on the EU’s Voluntary Partnership Agreements - designed to stop illegal timber entering the EU by tackling its root causes - also helped provided a roadmap for what a Deforestation Regulation might look like.

Europe sent a very strong signal that deforestation is going to be taken seriously, and that it’s linked to the climate change and biodiversity agendas, which have growing political support in Europe and around the world. But while the new law signifies real progress, there are outstanding issues, including around Indigenous Peoples’ and local communities’ rights.

The European Parliament spoke in support of them: saying that you can’t separate illegal deforestation from the illegal violation of peoples’ human and territorial collective rights. Unfortunately, so far the European Commission has not fully bought into that idea.

There are other unresolved issues, including how to effectively include small farmers in the Regulation.

Connecting with people’s lives

In my 15 years as a Board member, Fern consolidated in many ways. It used to be kind of led by one charismatic individual [Saskia Ozinga] who did an amazing job, but now it has a much wider pool of leaders. Fern has grown slowly and carefully, but it’s also dramatically diversified in terms of its funding sources, which makes it much healthier. Its communications capacity has increased significantly, and its links to some of the key Member States, particularly Germany, have been strengthened.

One of the biggest changes in these last ten years – which I don’t think is positive – is Brexit. It’s meant that Fern went from having a base in the UK to being much more Brussels-based. And the UK’s voice, which was often supportive on Fern’s issues in the European Commission, was largely lost. So it’s all that more astounding what’s been achieved since the UK left the EU.

I think that Fern has done a good job in making it clear that it isn’t an organisation talking about the global South, but one focused on Europeans taking care of their own resources and being in solidarity with the global South.

When I came on the Board, Fern mostly worked on Central and West Africa, and the Mekong region. It’s healthy that this has broadened with Fern’s work in Latin America, bringing Indigenous Peoples’ issues to the fore in the EU, particularly the Brazilian case.

I think Fern’s biggest challenge is that while so many of its issues are fundamentally linked to the things that people in Europe today are concerned about, it’s not always evident or easy for people to see.

Energy and food prices are rising. People are worried about their security. We’ve been through a pandemic. Fern has to show the connection between these and other problems that Europeans face, and the urgent necessity of protecting the world’s forests.

When people’s daily lives are more complicated than they’ve been for a long time, it’s vital to make the link to why a social forests agenda matters.
Number crunching

- **12** PRESS RELEASES
- **9** BRIEFINGS AND REPORTS
- **10** EVENTS CO-ORGANISED
  - As well as 3 partner tours & 1 Forest Movement Europe NGO event in France.
- **55** FORESTWATCH ARTICLES
  - by Fern’s campaigners and partners
- **191** ORGANISATIONS
  - (including 22 Indigenous groups) signed on an open letter to European policy makers asking to respect Peoples’ land rights in the EU Deforestation Regulation.
- **16K** VISITORS read our Forest Watch articles
- **250K** visits to Fem.org
- **8.2K** Fern Twitter followers
- **209** TIMES FERN APPEARED IN THE MEDIA IN 2022
- **1/4** OF OUR ANNUAL COVERAGE was on Fern’s response to the EU Deforestation Regulation.
- **580** ATTENDEES TO OUR WEBINAR on the adoption of the EU Deforestation Regulation.
"For many years, we didn’t think Fern needed a long-term strategy as we thought of ourselves as a group of individuals, each with their own campaigns, their own passions. We believed that the more freedom people had, the more they’d be able to achieve. But as Fern grew, and we took on people to help us deliver already agreed work programmes, we realised we needed more structure, and in 2019 we adopted our first long-term, organisational strategy, for how to achieve our mission and vision. In 2022, as this strategy drew to an end, we threw ourselves into building our new long-term strategy, which will last five years.

Hannah (Mowat), Rudi (Kohnert), myself, and an external consultant, Tamsin Omond, oversaw the process. Having this external oversight was essential as, although we’re a flat structure, campaigners naturally have areas they’re most passionate about and Tamsin was seen as a neutral arbiter able to help us process some quite difficult discussions. As well as internal discussions, we brought in the views of our partners and other key contacts, to get their vision for how Fern can make the biggest difference for people and
“Since every partnership is unique, we tried not to have guidelines for the discussions - other than to listen, be open and to make sure it is a genuine partnership”

forests between 2023 and 2027. Clare Bissell, another external consultant, facilitated the conversations with partners, creating a neutral space for them to express themselves in.

Partners are absolutely essential to all of our work. But since every partnership is unique, we tried not to have guidelines for the discussions - other than to listen, be open and to make sure it is a genuine partnership.

A recurring topic of our strategy meetings, was how we can replicate EU level achievements elsewhere, especially in countries with a huge global impact, in particular China. Consequently, we've spent time developing ideas for how to work with Chinese organisations.

To achieve our campaign goals, we require strong communications outreach and a well-managed, financially resilient organisation that can ensure staff are motivated, happy and well supported. We also need to reflect the positive changes we call for by ensuring staff well-being is built into our own ways of working. To ensure the organisation moves with the times and constantly improves, we have established five teams to focus on Organisational Development. These include one dedicated to expanding our gender work to incorporate Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) considerations and a partnerships team to strengthen strategic collaborations with civil society in EU Member States and forested countries around the world.

It is important that our long-term strategy allows us to be nimble enough to deal with the unexpected. COVID, the cost of living crisis, the impacts of the war in Ukraine, and the changing political situation in Brazil - all underline the need to be flexible, in order to be able to respond to what the world throws at you.

We will monitor progress annually and complete a full evaluation after four years to ensure we are always able to meet the changing threats to forests and people.”

Every year, forest NGOs gather for the Forest Movement Europe (FME) meeting to exchange ideas and foster collaborations. In 2022, we coorganised the meeting in Ardèche, France, alongside the French NGO Canopée. Canopée showed us the negative effects of intensive large-scale forestry as well as an inspirational forest community whose livelihood is based on close-to-nature forestry.
This campaign’s long-term goal is to use regulations governing EU market access to reduce human rights violations and deforestation and improve forest governance.

We achieve this by influencing - and where necessary triggering - EU policies and partnership initiatives, creating space for local civil society actors including Indigenous Peoples, local communities, ethnic minorities and smallholders, to be heard.

The EU has a history of using access to its markets as a carrot to tackle global environmental challenges.

Probably the most ground-breaking example until now, has been the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) action plan, which is unique in trying to address the universal causes both of legal and illegal forest destruction: corruption, power imbalances and a lack of clarity over land tenure rights, principal among them.

Fern has worked on FLEGT for two decades – and specifically on the Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs) with forested countries. VPAs are timber trade deals which require inclusive dialogue to strengthen forest laws and governance in timber producing countries. We will continue campaigning to ensure that VPAs create an impetus for positive change and that lessons from this model of inclusive and collaborative partnerships are brought into future EU action.

For years Fern has campaigned for the EU to also ban on imports of products linked to deforestation and human rights abuses. In 2022 this finally led to the EU Regulation on deforestation-free products (EUDR) (see page 6.) The EUDR has so far taken a more unilateral approach than FLEGT, with less input from producer countries and their civil society members. Whilst it is still positive that companies will have to start complying with the EUDR by the end of 2024, we will continue to push for the planned Strategic Framework for Partnerships to ensure national civil society is more involved in the implementation phase.
There are big challenges ahead but over the next five years we will use all possible legislative levers to push for change.

If the EUDR is to succeed, NGOs’ role in producer countries will be crucial. So we’ll work together to increase awareness and find ways to use it to push for change. We’ll also ensure that the smallholders who produce goods that fall under the legislation - cocoa farmers in West Africa and oil palm producers in Indonesia for instance - are properly supported. They want better access to EU markets, not to face extra burdens or costs.

During the implementation phase, we’ll work with partners to use strategic partnerships to push for more inclusive dialogues and to monitor deforestation and human rights violations on the ground and use evidence gathered to ensure the EUDR’s enforcement and sanctions mechanisms kick in. We will also explore the using other EU legislation on forced labour and Corporate Due Diligence to trigger and enforce improvements in producer country legislation and forest governance.”

In June 2022, our partner, the Articulation of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil (APIB), visited Brussels to advocate for the recognition and protection of Indigenous Peoples’ rights and land rights within the new EU Deforestation Regulation. While touring Europe, they also mourned Dom Phillips and Bruno Pereira, journalists who were killed whilst investigating illegal logging. Photo: Daria Andreeva.
“Our new long-term strategy also focuses on reducing the consumption of forest risk commodities. Agriculture is the biggest driver of deforestation globally. The largest proportion of this comes from meat and dairy production. Our long-term goal is therefore to help reduce EU meat and dairy consumption to a level where it no longer causes social harm and forest destruction – while still ensuring that EU citizens get the protein they need. To do this, we will focus on the new EU Sustainable Food Systems Law, which creates some opportunities for this dietary transition. We will also be campaigning to reduce pulp and paper consumption. Its use has exploded with the boom in online purchasing (which accounts for 50 per cent of all paper used in the EU), as well as the increase in take-away foods, and the ban on single-use plastic packaging. Roughly three billion trees are cut down every year globally to meet demand for paper packaging. As the world moves beyond plastic, we need to ensure we aren’t substituting one destructive model for another. We will do this by focusing on the EU’s Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation.”

Julia Christian
Cocoa and Forests Campaigner

In November 2022, Indonesian NGO and civil society representatives joined us in Brussels to meet EU policy makers and NGOs and look for ways to ensure EU policies and trade support Indonesia to tackle deforestation and enhance tenure rights.
“European forests are being assailed from different directions. They are threatened by the climate crisis, with soaring temperatures fuelling droughts, forests and pest outbreaks. And they are under extreme duress from the destructive clearcutting that prevails across the continent: three-quarters of EU forests are managed under this model, in order to feed the relentless demands of the bioenergy industry, the pulp and paper sector, and others.

The way Europe’s forests are managed is also having a deleterious effect on rural communities: in the past two decades increased mechanisation has meant that employment in the forest sector has fallen by a third across the EU.

It is time for Fern to make the link between improving forest governance, protecting forests and providing secure futures for foresters – and to show these things are reconcilable. We aim to bridge the artificial divide that many see between resilient forests on the one side, and foresters on the other. There will be a very strong social element to our new campaign, and our specific goal is for EU policies to stimulate economic alternatives for foresters, increasing social justice at the same time as the health of forests.

We will achieve this by improving the quality of and access to data on forests, promoting the views of civil society organisations and underrepresented forest stakeholders, and pushing for regulation and incentives for less intensive forest management.

Our new long-term strategy will also campaign to challenge carbon offsets. To meet its target of carbon neutrality by 2050, the EU accepts it will have to incentivise carbon removals. We recognise the need for increased carbon removals, but relying on the flawed logic and methods of carbon offsets is a recipe for failure.
Finance that has narrowly focused on carbon often leads to monoculture plantations with low resilience and in many cases, little money is channelled to the foresters doing the work. We can only be sure that the carbon stored in land will be increased if finance is used to improve forestry, not plant trees, and if adequate funds actually get to those doing the work. We will ensure proper standards for forest finance that reward the right people for the right work that doesn’t delay climate action.

www.fern.org/issues/european-forests

Reducing bioenergy

"The EU’s Renewable Energy Directive (RED) has helped create an addiction to burning wood in Europe in the name of clean energy. The market incentives for burning biomass that are baked into the RED, have created havoc in Europe’s ancient forests, while worsening the climate and biodiversity crises. Yet the EU continues to cleave to this discredited policy in the face of mounting opposition and overwhelming scientific evidence. Fern has worked on this issue for around a decade, and while we haven’t achieved our ultimate goal of reducing the burning of biomass for energy, and ending the subsidies which support it, we’ve built powerful and effective networks which have helped raise awareness of the damage it is causing.

In response to the growing consensus over the harm caused by burning trees for energy, the multi-billion Euro bioenergy industry has increased its lobbying efforts exponentially. Over the next five years, we will support the network to battle the lobbyists and finally remove the market and governmental incentives for biomass burning. This, in turn, will reduce the amount of wood that is imported and burned for energy in the EU. Our long-term goal is to reduce the use of woody biomass for energy production to pre-2009 levels by 2030, with the reduction trend already in place by 2027. This is an opportune moment to initiate this work as wood burning is high on the political and media agenda due its links to both the climate and the financial crises."

www.fern.org/issues/bioenergy

"There is overwhelming evidence that increased trade is directly and indirectly linked to deforestation and other environmental destruction.

Until now, our trade campaign has worked to lessen this damage as the EU’s pursued a host of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with forested countries – specifically the FTAs with Vietnam, Indonesia and the Mercosur bloc (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay).

As these deals are implemented or negotiated, we’ll continue to work on them, and continue to use trade as a lever to empower civil society in those countries, as a way of protecting forests and respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

We will also respond to the evolving threat to forests posed by the global rush to exploit so-called transition minerals: the nickel, lithium, cobalt, copper and other raw materials needed to push the world to a clean energy future.

If we destroy forests and ignore human rights in the name of clean energy, we’ll simply be continuing along the same path that brought us to this ecologically perilous point in the first place.

The inescapable truth is that trade is founded on an extractive model, and if we want to respect planetary boundaries, then we need to reduce consumption.

As part of our new long-term strategy, the trade campaign will therefore push the EU to develop alternative trade models and policies: focused on a just energy transition and a zero carbon economy. As with all of our work, this will entail supporting civil society in forested countries to create and use space to convince decision-makers and amplify their concerns.”

www.fern.org/issues/free-trade-agreements
Publications and videos

9 FERN REPORTS AND BRIEFINGS

- REPORT/ IMPROVING FOREST GOVERNANCE IN RELATION TO PALM OIL
- REPORT/ TEN THINGS THE LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL ON EU FOREST OBSERVATION, REPORTING AND DATA COLLECTION NEEDS TO CONSIDER
- REPORT/ A GENDERED PERSPECTIVE OF THE PROPOSED EU REGULATION ON DEFORESTATION-FREE PRODUCTS
- BRIEFING NOTES/ USING TARIFFS TO INCENTIVISE SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL
- BRIEFING NOTES/ SIX PROBLEMS WITH BECCS
- BRIEFING NOTES/ A CARBON BOMB IN THE HEART OF EUROPE
- BRIEFING NOTES/ COP27: CONGO BASIN COUNTRIES MUST INCREASE AMBITION TO PROTECT THE WORLD’S SECOND GREEN LUNG
- BRIEFING NOTES/ FERN’S ANALYSIS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT’S RAPPORTEUR’S DRAFT POSITION ON THE EU REGULATION ON DEFORESTATION-FREE PRODUCTS
- BRIEFING NOTES/ EUROPE’S DARK WINTER

2 VIDEOS

- MANAGING FORESTS FOR THE FUTURE: THE BENEFITS OF CLOSE-TO-NATURE FORESTRY (AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH, FRENCH AND PORTUGUESE)
- WHAT IS THE EU REGULATION ON DEFORESTATION-FREE PRODUCTS AND HOW CAN IT BE IMPROVED? (AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH, SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE)
Bakary Traoré is Executive Director of Initiatives for Community Development and Forest Conservation (IDEF) in Abidjan. He explains what motivates him, how IDEF is making a practical difference to people’s lives, and its relationship with Fern.

“I was born in Abidjan, but I grew up in a small town. I’m the son of farmers, so I know this environment, I know the people. The cocoa fields paid for my schooling at one point. This is where I come from, which means that [I have] a passion [for protecting the environment].

I was a student when I got involved in environmental and forest management issues. I was working a bit as a journalist at the time, covering the NGOs working on the environment. Then I got into the NGO world by doing an internship.

I founded IDEF with two friends in 2014. We created it to protect Côte d’Ivoire’s remaining forests and help people adapt their farming practices so that they respect the environment. We wanted to see if forestry companies respect the rules, which are very well defined, and help people change their farming practices - so they don’t have to use pesticides, or destroy forests to be able to farm.

Since 2020, we’ve carried out independent observations in three specific areas, forestry, agricultural production, including cocoa and oil palm, and mining.

Part of our work involves going into the field to collect technical data and question local communities, as well as gathering governance data, after which we publish independent observation reports.

Changing laws takes a lot of time.

You have to raise awareness, advocate, push the government, have meetings. But if you restore a school or build a water borehole, the result is there and you’re responding to people’s concrete, everyday needs. Working directly with communities made us realise it was necessary to provide these kinds of practical solutions. It’s not the core of our work, and we don’t lose sight of the profound transformation we want, which involves trying to amend legislation and push for structural change.

Fully committed

I don’t have a typical day.

Today I’m in the office writing a report, answering questions, having meetings, signing documents, answering the phone. But because there are bureaucrats who haven’t gone into the field for decades and have problematic positions we have to bring them back to reality, and that means having lots of meetings in Ministries. Despite the fact that there are always meetings in Abidjan, I spend 80 per cent of my time outside the capital.

We have 12 permanent members of staff. Depending on the nature of a project, we also recruit field agents.
who stay in the community. For example, we have an agroforestry project supported by ClientEarth, where we're helping communities create community forests. We put a lot of emphasis on people's personal responsibility, so there's no pressure to be in the office all the time. Everyone manages their time as they wish, but they know that if they've made a commitment to a partner, they cannot fail them, or if they have a deadline to meet, they have to do it. We try to do things in a very transparent and professional way, it's important to be fully committed.

I first met [Fern's] Julia [Christian] in around 2014, when she came to Abidjan, but it was only in 2020-2021, when the issue of the European regulation on cocoa [the Regulation on deforestation-free products] arose, that we reactivated our discussions. Knowing Julia already helped create a fluid working relationship. We don't have a project with Fern, or a contractual relationship, but there's a fluidity of communication. We think that having NGOs like Fern based in Europe, which have direct access to EU actors, helps us to be more effective. There are very concrete benefits of the working relationship between us. For instance, last year Fern invited me to contribute to the exchanges between policy makers and civil society during a tour of Europe.

A fair price

What motivates me? I often say this, but when you arrive in the villages and you see the people, you have the feeling that they don't need much to get by, to be happy, but they don't even have the minimum. People just need the minimum and the minimum is to live off the fruits of their labour. Here, they don't live from the fruits of their labour, they survive. There is only one thing to do, and that is to pay a fair price for cocoa.

Besides that, I, like everyone else, look at the economic trajectory of my country. I know that for the moment, we haven't managed to make this transition to another form of economy that is not based on food and raw materials.

If tomorrow we no longer have any forests, the consequences will be disastrous. There won't be enough investment for schools, for health. So we have to fight to protect this environment so that the ecosystems remain and we can continue, even if there is a transition phase, to grow the crops that sustain us. This is the source for my motivation and commitment.

“People just need the minimum and the minimum is to live off the fruits of their labour. Here, they don't live from the fruits of their labour, they survive.”
Nadia Hadad is Executive Director of Madani, in Jakarta, Indonesia. She explains how Madani is trying to bridge gaps between NGOs, the private sector and the government to find innovative solutions to overlapping environmental crises – and how her children inspire her work.

“There are so many organisations in Indonesia working on environmental issues, especially now with climate change, that it’s really important we connect with each other and don’t duplicate our work. So when our eight founders – who’d all been long-time activists with other NGOs in Indonesia – founded Madani in 2016, we really wanted to focus on bridging relationships between NGOs: amplifying our voices to make a bigger impact. We’re pushing the government to fulfil its climate commitments, and we work on issues related to energy, but energy tethered to the land sector. We have four programmes: focussing on climate change, palm oil (which is now expanding to other commodities), green development in local areas and biofuels. We facilitate relationships between the government, the private sector and civil society. They can all have different positions. But if we can’t find a middle ground, then we can’t move forward. So we place ourselves as a bridge. We don’t have to agree on everything, but let’s just try to sit at one table try to understand our different positions, and then we’ll work something out from there. It doesn’t mean that we don’t have our principles or positions that can’t be negotiated - no deforestation, for instance, is an absolute. Sometimes it’s tricky and we need to be really strategic on how we can get our message across so that it’s not counterproductive.

Different contexts

I’m a mom with two boys and I start my day with the normal motherly duties and chores at home, then I usually get to work around 9 or 10 am depending on the traffic. I live in East Jakarta and our office is in South Jakarta. Without traffic, I can get there in 40 minutes, but with traffic it’s one and half to two hours, so it’s quite a headache. The good thing with Madani, is that we don’t have very strict working hours. When I get to the office, I try to coordinate things: I’m in charge of overseeing the whole organisation, including the management aspect. Mostly, my time is occupied with meetings, both internally and externally. I’ve known Fern for a long time. I think Fern approached us as we have the same interest in EU
deforestation policy. Our work is to increase the alignment between stakeholders in the EU and Indonesia about the EU Regulation on deforestation-free products. I’m happy that we were able to work together, although our approach may not be completely similar. You’re working from the European context and we’re working from here.

Hope
I was born into an NGO family. My father was a founder of one of the first NGOs in Indonesia, and he has a passion for the environment and sustainability and development. My mother is also active in the women’s movement and women’s health, so I think it’s in my genes, or maybe it’s how I was brought up. During my younger years, maybe I was trying to rebel and I went to work in a corporation, but after six months, I’d had enough, and I began working for an Indonesian NGO focussing on development.

It’s not easy to do this line of work because you stumble upon so many things that will frustrate you because of the system, and one can think something is never going to change no matter what I do. Hope is all that keeps you going.

“You cannot just accept what’s happening right now because the future is at stake. It’s the future of our children, and we need to do something. We cannot just sit back and do nothing.”

I’ve been doing this a long time and without hope, you will break down and just stop moving. My hope comes firstly from my children. I need to ensure that they have a good future. More people realise that there’s something wrong with this system and we need to act. We still have a lot of work here in Indonesia because that level of awareness is not there yet, so we need to educate the people.

You cannot just accept what’s happening right now because the future is at stake. It’s the future of our children, and we need to do something. We cannot just sit back and do nothing.”
Financial results in 2022

SOURCES OF INCOME

TOTAL INCOME
4,304,842 EUROS *

- 45% Third Country(s) Public Body(s)
- 39% Other(s)
- 13% European Commission
- 3% EU Member State(s) Public bodies

* The 2022 income figure includes a direct reserve contribution of €420,000 from the Ford Foundation.

EXPENDITURE BY CATEGORY

TOTAL EXPENDITURE
3,761,453 EUROS

- 38% Staff
- 34% Grants to partner organisations & networks
- 12% Consultants
- 7% Travel and meetings
- 3% Administration and other costs
- 3% Publications

EXPENDITURE BY CAMPAIGN

TOTAL EXPENDITURE
3,761,453 EUROS

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- denkhausbremen
- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
- Environmental Paper Network
- European Climate Foundation
- European Commission
- European Union Delegation to Liberia
- European Union Delegation to RoC
- European Union Delegation to Vietnam
- Ford Foundation
- Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, United Kingdom
- Full Circle Foundation
- Minor Foundation for Major Challenges
- Moore Foundation
- Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Norad
- Oak Foundation
- Open Society Policy Centre
- Waterloo Foundation

*The 2022 income figure includes a direct reserve contribution of €420,000 from the Ford Foundation.
In April 2022, our strategic communications adviser, Pierre-Jean Sol Brasier visited our partners APIB and Mídia NINJA in Brazil. He returned inspired and with a deeper understanding of the significance of the 2022 elections for the country and the people we work with.
The EUDR prevents companies from selling palm oil, soy, beef, rubber, coffee and other commodities linked to deforestation on the EU market.