

“As we approach the last quarter of 2024, the gap is closing on the coffee sector to put itself in compliance with the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). Rarely had a new regulation in our sector created such opportunities for innovative solutions which quality will depend on their capacity to guarantee data reliability and to address the devil in the details!

Traders are stepping up and taking the lead to play their historical role as risk managers. With some opting for reputable outsourced solutions and others paving the way to having their own analysis and risk mitigation systems in place. At Touton, we decided to leverage on our deep understanding of the local reality, based on our solid network of local offices and partners, to upgrade our inhouse capacity, and to build reliable EUDR-compliant supply chains.

Over the past year, we have designed our own map analysis tool by using open-source credible map layers. This tool will allow us to verify all shipments heading to the European Union (EU) making Touton the custom clearing operator. This multi-expertise-built system cross-checks the geodata and ensures proper risk management for all the other elements covered by the regulation, including legality checks and indigenous populations. Alongside getting ready to incorporate EUDR in our daily operations and responsible sourcing methods, we are constantly monitoring the sector to anticipate and meet customers' requests in terms of information verification. Touton is committed to checking all its supply coming into the EU regardless of whether compliance criterion is to be customs cleared by us or our customers.

Traceability tools and Standard Operating Procedures left aside... we have seen some positive trends coming from origin countries since June 2024. Brazil jumped into harvest period ready to sell EUDR compliant coffee. The country has proven so far to be up to the challenge with shipments accompanied by the necessary geodata lists and legality checks. Vietnam has shown goodwill and first signs of stepping-up to the challenge. It will make the most of the remaining weeks to get ready. East Africa remains tardy with the overdue emergence of national platforms. Private companies are engaging to map plantations in the region, but private sector alone will not be able to cover entire countries. The route to the EU market is a team-race, not a competition, and efforts need to be maintained at country-level.

The coffee sector is in a turmoil, some are realising now the level of investment needed whilst other have already invested tenfold. From recruiting staff, deploying field teams to map (and remap!), to building IT systems, analysing risks, and archiving evidence, we, at Touton, have already invested significantly to guarantee our ability to continue supplying the EU market.”

Thomas Delbar

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