Palm Oil Traceability & Certification

EUDR Context

Field	Value
eudr_commodity	palm
country_focus	Colombia
deforestation_risk	medium
last_updated	2026-05-26

Overview

Traceability and certification are the operational backbone of EUDR compliance for Colombia's palm oil sector. The supply chain runs from approximately 6,000 growers through 68 extraction mill clusters (núcleos palmeros) to refineries, exporters, and ultimately EU importers. Each link in this chain must be mapped and documented to satisfy the regulation's due diligence requirements. Colombia's relatively consolidated mill infrastructure—compared to the highly fragmented structures in West Africa—provides a structural advantage for building traceable supply chains.

The Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) is the dominant voluntary certification scheme operating in Colombia. Over 20% of national production is RSPO-certified, and the standard's chain-of-custody models (Identity Preserved, Segregated, Mass Balance) provide a foundation that can be adapted for EUDR compliance. However, RSPO certification alone does not satisfy the EUDR, which requires plot-level geolocation data and a December 2020 deforestation cutoff date that may differ from RSPO's audit timelines.

Fedepalma's "Uniendo Eslabones" (Joining Links) strategy, operational since 2018, has invested in digital traceability platforms connecting smallholder producers to mills and international buyers. This three-year initiative developed classification and traceability protocols for raw materials from plantation to finished product, creating data infrastructure that aligns well with EUDR requirements.

Colombian Context

Colombia's palm oil supply chain has four distinct stages that must be traced: plantation (finca), extraction mill (planta extractora), refinery/processing, and export. Approximately 85% of producers are smallholders cultivating fewer than 50 hectares, which creates a significant data collection challenge. Many smallholders lack formal land titles (particularly in conflict-affected zones like Tumaco), complicating the legality proof required under EUDR

Article 3.

Solidaridad and Satelligence have partnered with Colombian supply chain actors to deploy satellite-based deforestation monitoring at the mill catchment level. This technology enables mills to verify that their sourcing areas remain deforestation-free, providing the evidence base needed for EUDR due diligence statements. The Daabon Group, one of Colombia's leading organic palm oil producers, has pioneered full traceability from plantation to export for its EU-bound products.

RSPO-certified operations in Colombia have demonstrated that achieving traceability is feasible: 99% of certified hectares are verified deforestation-free. The challenge lies in extending this model to the remaining 80% of production that is not yet RSPO-certified, particularly in the Pacific coast zone where informal land tenure and conflict dynamics complicate data collection.

EUDR Compliance Requirements

For traceability and certification to satisfy the EUDR, Colombian palm oil operators must:

- **Plot-level registration**: Register every supplying plantation with GPS polygon coordinates (not just centroid points), linked to a unique identifier in the operator's due diligence system.
- **Chain-of-custody documentation**: Maintain records showing the flow of fresh fruit bunches (FFB) from registered plantations to specific extraction mills, with batch-level segregation or at minimum mass-balance tracking.
- **Satellite monitoring integration**: Use remote sensing data (Sentinel-2, Planet, or equivalent) to verify no forest loss on registered plots after the December 31, 2020 cutoff.
- **Legality verification**: Document that each plantation holds valid environmental permits (licencias ambientales), complies with Colombian forest reserve restrictions, and meets labor law requirements.
- **Periodic review**: Update risk assessments annually and respond to new deforestation alerts within the sourcing base.

Existing RSPO certification provides a strong starting point but requires supplementation: operators must add geolocation data at the precision level required by EUDR implementing acts, apply the 2020 cutoff date consistently, and include Colombian legal compliance documentation that goes beyond RSPO's scope. The high-oleic hybrid segment (110,000+ ha) is particularly well-positioned for premium EUDR-compliant channels given its newer plantings and better documentation.

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