

PRACTICAL GUIDE

Global Nature Watch

Analysing your suppliers' forest plots, step by step

For ATIBT and UICCB members

November 2026

Accompanies the EUDR webinar of 12 November 2026

atibt
THE LEADING AUTHORITY ON TROPICAL TIMBER

UICCB
UNION DES INDUSTRIES DE LA CONSTRUCTION ET DU COMMERCE DU BOIS

This guide is neither an official Global Nature Watch guide nor a validation of compliance with the EUDR (Regulation (EU) 2023/1115).

About this guide

This practical guide was produced by ATIBT and UICCB for their members in the timber sector, to make it easier to use **Global Nature Watch** (formerly Global Forest Watch) for checks under the EU Regulation on deforestation-free products (EUDR).

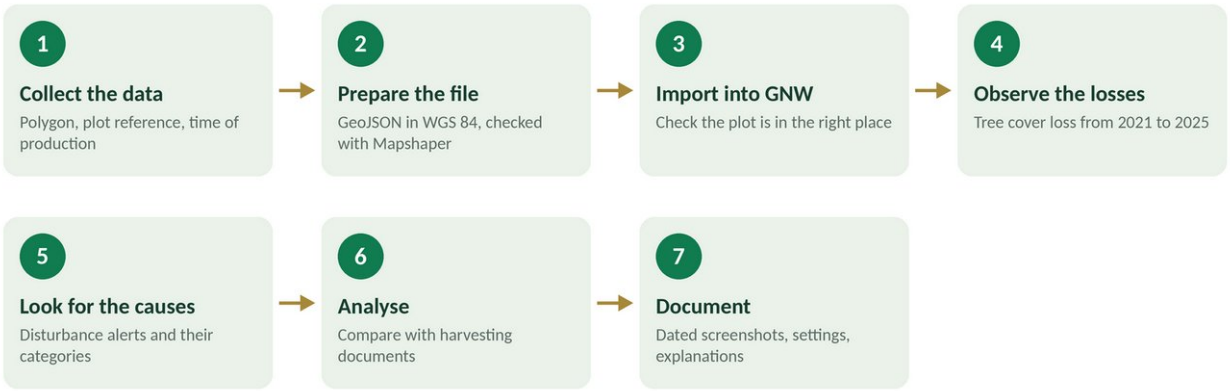
It is neither an official Global Nature Watch guide nor a validation of compliance with the EUDR. It offers a simplified method, adapted to timber supply plots and to the GPS data sent by suppliers. To discover all the platform's features, please refer first to the official resources listed below.

Why use Global Nature Watch?

Global Nature Watch is a free mapping tool that shows tree cover loss and some forest disturbances. It helps identify areas that need further checks as part of due diligence.

> **The principle:** import the GPS coordinates of the plots where the timber comes from, observe changes in forest cover since 31 December 2020, and look for the possible causes of disturbances.

The process in seven steps



Where does Global Nature Watch fit?



Useful links

Resource	Link
Global Nature Watch official website	www.globalnaturewatch.org/
Interactive map	www.globalnaturewatch.org/map/

Resource	Link
Help centre and documentation	www.globalnaturewatch.org/help/
Additional learning resources	globalnaturewatch.org/help/map/additional-materials/

STEP 1

Collect the GPS data from the supplier

Ask your supplier for the **geolocation data of the plots or production areas the timber comes from**, whatever the country of origin or production system: natural forest, forest plantation or other. Preferably ask for:

- **The geographic file outlining the production area**: a polygon for plots of more than 4 hectares, or a GPS point where the EUDR allows it, for plots of 4 hectares or less.
- **The identification of the plot or production unit**: name, cadastral reference, plot number, forest concession, management unit or annual cutting area (AAC), depending on the context.
- **The country of production** and, if possible, the administrative location.
- **The date or time range of production**, as required by the EUDR.
- **Maps, cadastral documents or other supporting evidence** to check the declared boundaries and location.

> **Caution:** Global Nature Watch analyses areas. For a single GPS point, draw an area around the point to get results.

Key point: the GPS data must locate the plots where the timber comes from precisely. They are the starting point of the analysis and must be consistent with the traceability information provided by the supplier.

STEP 2

Prepare the GPS data

Before using Global Nature Watch, check that the data sent by the supplier are **usable and match the plots where the timber comes from**.

1. Check the geographic information

- Make sure the GPS coordinates are complete and the plots are correctly identified.
- Check that the plot outlines match the maps, cadastral documents or other available references.
- Prefer files in **WGS 84 (EPSG:4326)**, in latitude and longitude. Coordinates in metres (UTM) must be converted.

2. Prepare a compatible file

Format	Note
GeoJSON (.geojson)	Recommended format for importing plot outlines

Format	Note
Shapefile (.zip)	Archive containing the .shp, .shx, .dbf and .prj files
KML (.kml) or KMZ (.kmz)	Common formats in mapping software and Google Earth
JSON (.json)	If the file contains compatible geographic data

3. Convert the file if necessary

If the supplier's data are in another format or in metric coordinates, use the free tool **Mapshaper** (mapshaper.org) to view them, select the relevant plots and export them to GeoJSON (see the Mapshaper practical guide). Export as a **FeatureCollection**, otherwise Global Nature Watch may reject the file:

```
-o format=geojson geojson-type=FeatureCollection precision=0.000001
```

> **Practical tip:** prepare a light file (less than 1 MB, the size recommended by Global Nature Watch) and analyse plots separately if the file contains many areas.

> **Key point:** a correctly georeferenced file and reliable boundaries are essential for a meaningful analysis. Changing the format does not, on its own, check the accuracy of the coordinates provided.

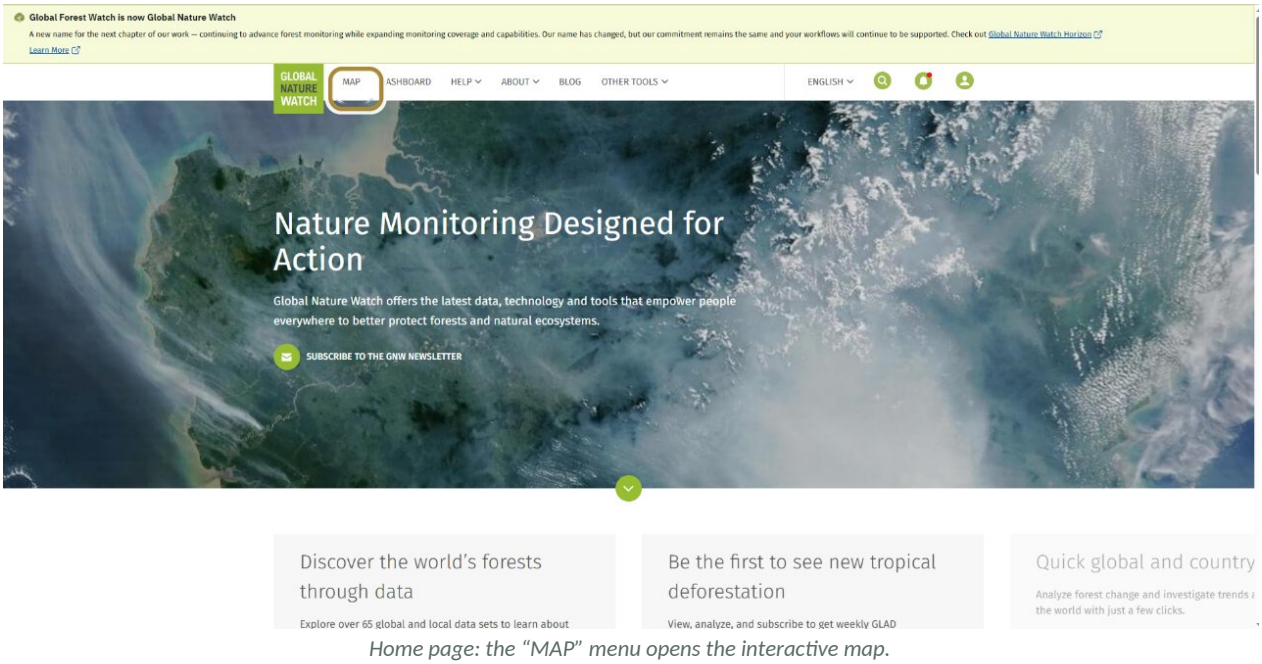
STEP 3

Import the plots into Global Nature Watch

The Global Nature Watch menus are in English: this guide quotes the labels as they appear on screen.

1. Open the platform

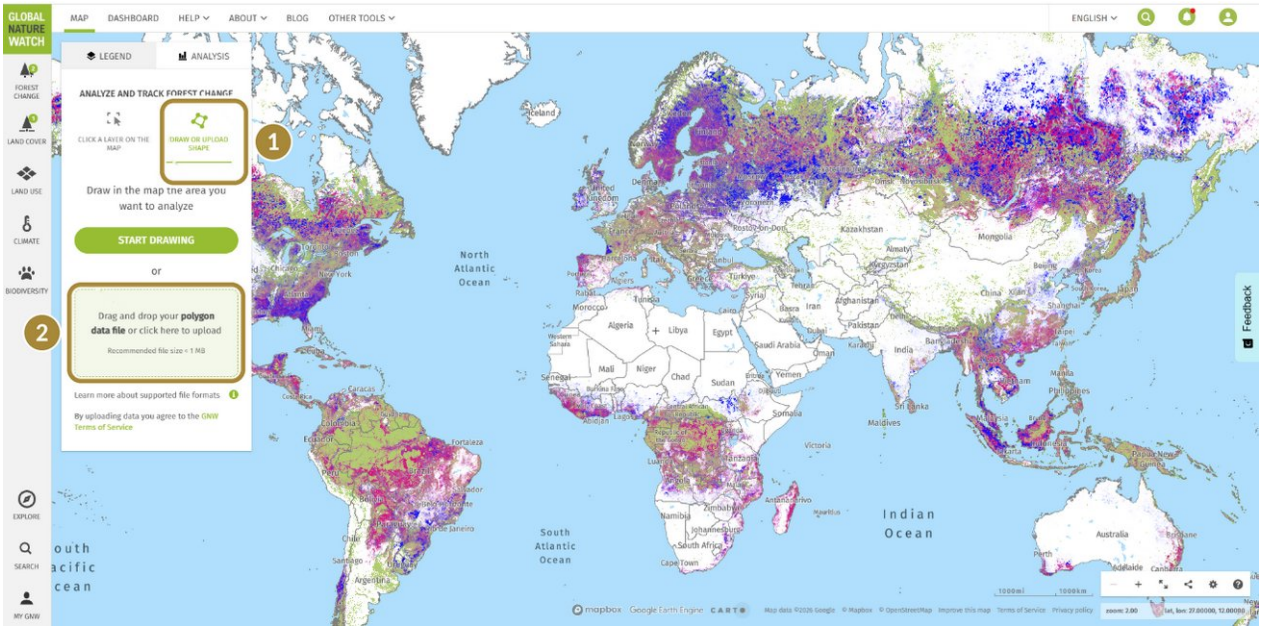
1. Open globalnaturewatch.org.
2. Click **"MAP"** to open the interactive map.



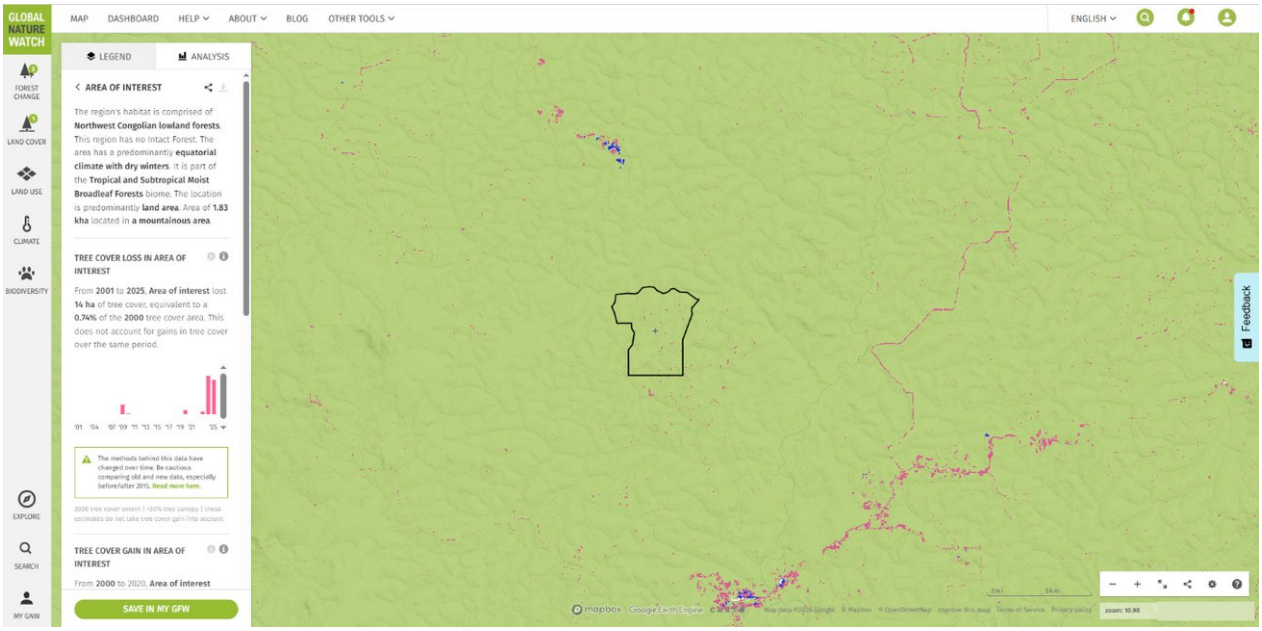
Home page: the "MAP" menu opens the interactive map.

2. Import the supplier's plots

1. Open the **"ANALYSIS"** tab.
2. Select **"DRAW OR UPLOAD SHAPE"**.
3. In the **"Drag and drop your polygon data file or click here to upload"** box, drop or select the file prepared in step 2.
4. Wait for the plot outline to appear on the map.



(1) "DRAW OR UPLOAD SHAPE" option; (2) file upload area.



The imported plot is displayed, with a first summary in the left panel.

3. Check the location of the plots

- Zoom in on the imported area.
- Check that the plots are in the declared country and production area.
- Check that the outlines match the information and documents sent by the supplier.
- If several plots were imported, make sure all areas are correctly shown.

4. Access the analysis results

Once the area is imported, Global Nature Watch shows the indicators available for the selected area, including tree cover loss.

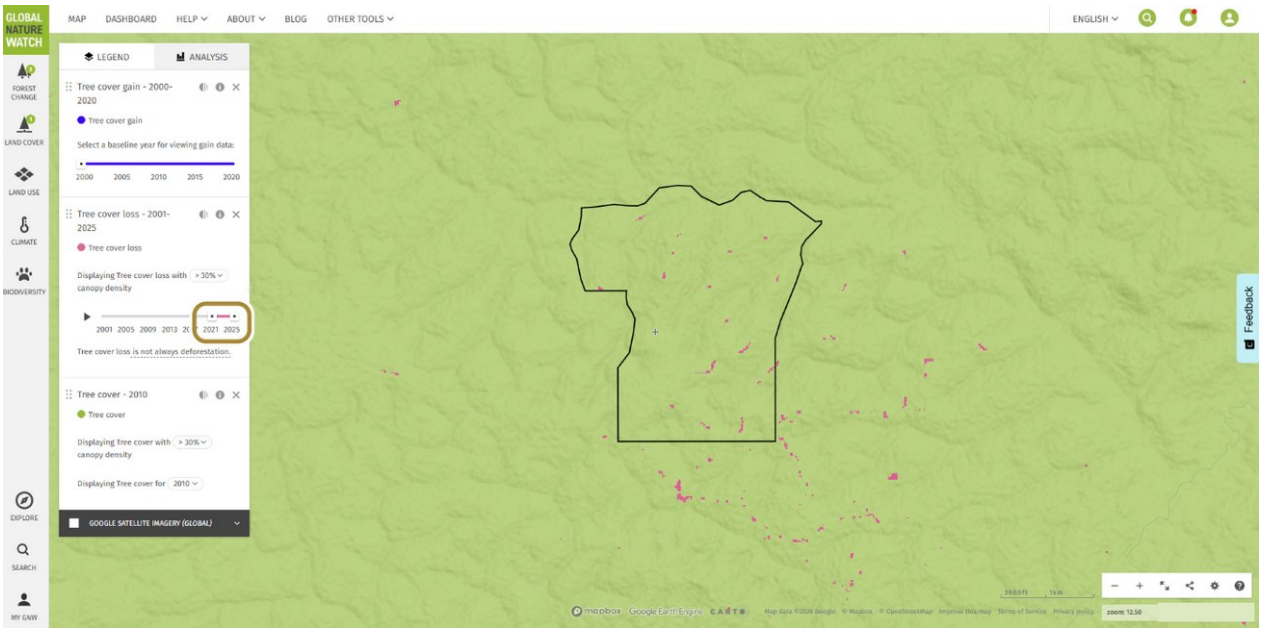
Key point: before interpreting the results, always check that the area shown matches the production area declared by the supplier.

STEP 4

Observe tree cover loss

1. In the left menu, click **FOREST CHANGE**.
2. Find the **Tree cover loss** layer and turn it on.
3. Open the **LEGEND** tab.
4. Set the period to **2021 to 2025**, i.e. after the 31 December 2020 cut-off date.
5. Look at the cover loss pixels **inside the plot outline**.

In the **ANALYSIS** tab, look at the available results, including the areas of cover loss and their year-by-year change.



"Tree cover loss" layer set to 2021–2025: pink pixels are cover loss (coordinates hidden).

How to interpret it? Tree cover loss means that a loss of tree canopy was detected. It is **not automatically** deforestation within the meaning of the EUDR: it can be a harvest, a track, a log yard or a windthrow.

Loss data have a 30 m resolution, with an adjustable canopy density threshold (> 30 % by default).

STEP 5

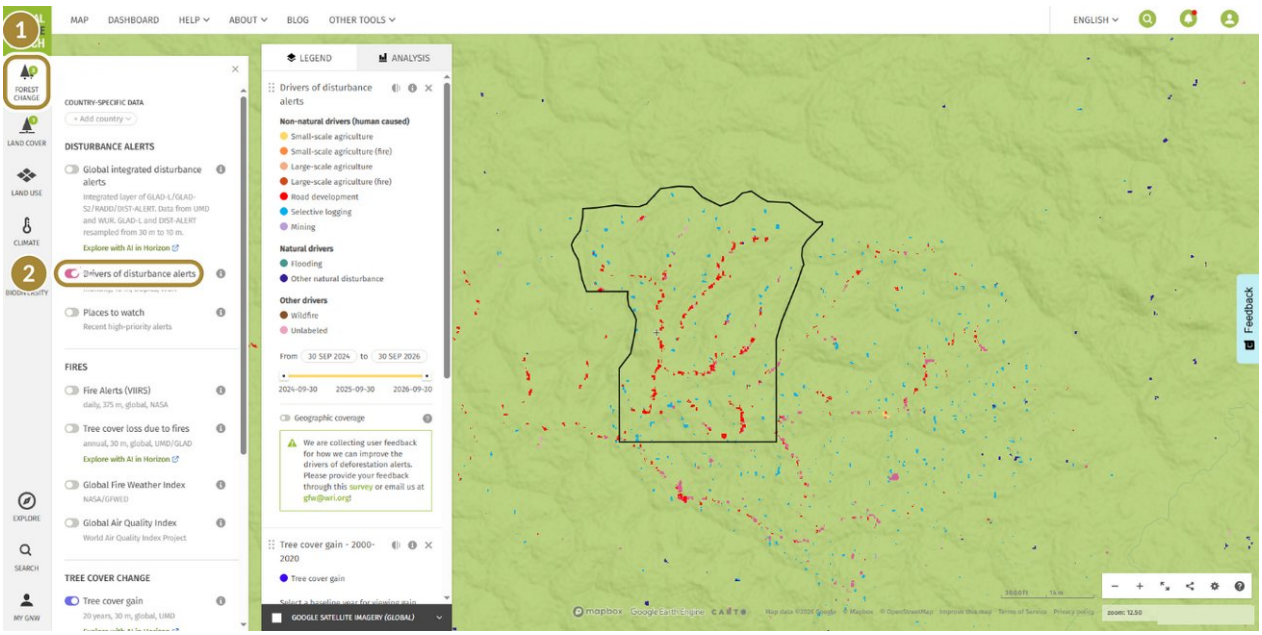
Look for the possible causes of disturbances

1. In **FOREST CHANGE**, scroll down to **DISTURBANCE ALERTS**.
2. Turn on **Drivers of disturbance alerts**.
3. Open the **LEGEND** tab to read the categories.
4. Use the date sliders to choose the period to examine.

Colour	Category	Meaning
Light blue	Selective logging	Selective forest harvesting
Red	Road development	Construction of roads or tracks
Yellow / orange	Small- or large-scale agriculture	Disturbance associated with agriculture
Light pink	Unlabeled	Disturbance whose cause has not been classified
Other	Mining, Flooding, Wildfire…	Mining, flooding, fires, other natural disturbances

Tip: to distinguish the colours more easily, show one layer at a time. The cover loss layer and the disturbance drivers layer can overlap.

Important: disturbance alerts do not cover all years of cover loss. At the time of writing, this layer only goes back to about September 2024: cover loss from 2021 to 2024 is not explained by these alerts.



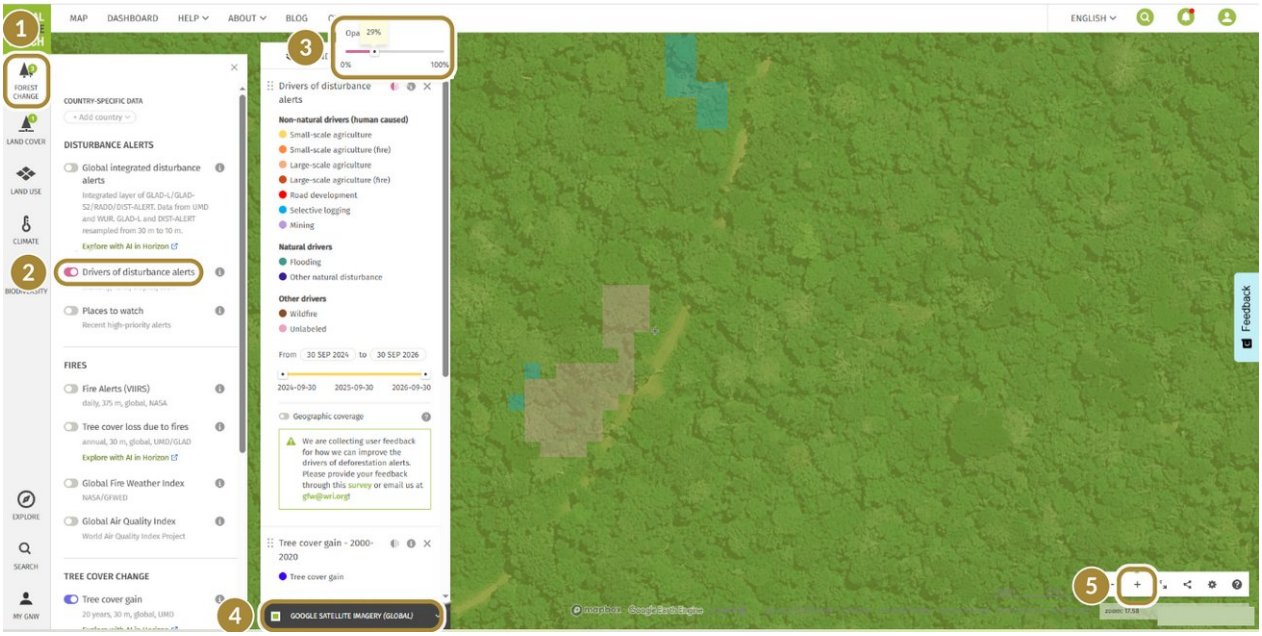
(1) FOREST CHANGE menu; (2) "Drivers of disturbance alerts" layer turned on: roads in red, selective logging in light blue (coordinates hidden).

STEP 6

Analyse the information

If cover loss or alerts appear in the plot:

1. Locate them on the map.
2. Check whether they correspond to tracks, felling areas or other infrastructure.
3. Zoom in on the plot. In the **LEGEND** tab, use the **Opacity** setting to make the patches more transparent, and tick **Google Satellite Imagery** at the bottom of the panel to show the satellite image. Roads, tracks and felling areas are then easier to spot.
4. Compare your observations with the harvesting maps and the supplier's information.
5. Ask for explanations or evidence when the cause remains unclear.



(1) FOREST CHANGE; (2) Drivers of disturbance alerts; (3) opacity setting; (4) Google Satellite Imagery box; (5) zoom. The alerts overlap the visible tracks (coordinates hidden).

Example: red alerts lined up along a track may correspond to a forest road being opened. This interpretation must be checked against the harvesting documents.

Caution: A pink **"Unlabeled"** alert does **not automatically** mean agricultural conversion or degradation: its cause is not determined by Global Nature Watch and must be checked.

Likewise, an alert classified as **"Agriculture"** is an automatic classification, not a conclusion: it must be checked as a priority against the harvesting documents and, if necessary, in the field.

STEP 7

Record the results of your check

For each plot analysed, keep a record of the checks carried out:

- the GPS file sent by the supplier, the plot reference and, if available, the official map of its boundaries;
- the date you consulted Global Nature Watch and screenshots of tree cover loss and disturbance alerts;
- the **settings used**: canopy density threshold, period shown, layers turned on. Without them, a screenshot is hard to reproduce;
- any anomalies observed, and the explanations and evidence provided by the supplier.

Key point: these records document your analysis and justify the additional checks carried out under the EUDR.

KEY POINTS FOR THE EUDR

An analysis aid, not a certificate of compliance

- **Tree cover loss** is not automatically deforestation. Relevant changes since **31 December 2020** must be examined, as well as the other EUDR requirements.
- Conversely, **the absence of loss or alerts does not prove compliance**: small felling gaps may not show at 30 m resolution.
- Global Nature Watch cannot assess **degradation** within the meaning of the EUDR (conversion to plantation). This is checked in the management and harvesting documents.