The Amsterdam Declarations towards deforestation-free and sustainable commodities were launched in 2015. Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom signed these declarations. The Amsterdam Declaration regarding palm oil supports the private sector-driven commitment towards 100% sustainable palm oil in Europe that was signed by European initiatives for sustainable palm oil (ESPO).

Relevant private sector related alliances and organisations
- ESPO – European Sustainable Palm Oil initiative: includes national alliances from eight European countries and Caobisco (Association of Chocolate, Biscuit and Confectionery Industries of Europe), FEDIOL (European Vegetable Oil and Protein meal Industry Federation) and IMACE (European Margarine Association).
- ESPOAG – European Sustainable Palm Oil Advocacy Group.
- Voluntary certification schemes: Round Table for Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), International Sustainability and Carbon Certification (ISCC), Rainforest Alliance (RA).
- Mandatory certification schemes: Indonesian Sustainable Palm Oil (ISPO) and Malaysian Sustainable Palm Oil (MSPO).
- IDH – Sustainable Trade Initiative (incl. palm oil).

Monitoring of progress
The main indicator chosen is “volume of certified palm oil (palm oil and palm kernel oil) imported into the signatory countries”. EUROSTAT and ITC (UN-COMTRADE) are the primary sources for obtaining trade data of EU28 and Norway. Information on volume of certified palm oil imported into the EU is not registered through customs data and has to be provided by the private sector or voluntary sustainability standards. At the moment, such (aggregated) information is not available. Other relevant third party monitoring initiatives for in-country deforestation include for example FAOSTAT, TRASE, Global Forest Watch, GRAS, SPOTT and landscape / jurisdictional initiatives in producing countries.

Monitoring of progress on palm oil is based on monitoring by ESPO (mainly food sector).

Status of palm oil production and European import
The main producer countries are Indonesia (over 50% of global production and 50% of European imports in 2017) and Malaysia (around 30% of global production and 22% of European imports in 2017). In Indonesia, palm oil is mainly planted and expanding on the islands of Sumatra, Kalimantan and Papua. Palm oil is also expanding into Papua New Guinea. In Malaysia, palm oil is mainly planted in West Malaysia and Sabah. Both Kalimantan and Sabah are situated on the island of Borneo. Not all palm oil is traded on the world market. In 2017, Indonesia produced 42 million tons and exported 31.1 million tons (74%). The largest palm oil importers were India, EU28 and China. In 2017, the AD countries accounted for 71% of total European palm oil import. Within Europe, palm oil is mainly used for energy purposes (biofuel, electricity and heating), food products and industrial application (oil for cosmetics, detergents etc.)

Share of European palm oil import per ADP country (2017)

Source: EUROSTAT for EU countries; ITC-COMTRADE for Norway.
Towards deforestation-free, sustainable palm oil

With a growing world population and consumption the use of vegetable oils is expected to grow significantly. Palm oil is the most efficient crop and substitution by other vegetable oils will not lead to clear environmental or climate change benefits (WWF-DE, 2016) and more land would be needed. Oil palm is therefore expected to expand significantly. The deforestation aspect of palm oil production is considered important because it is associated with a negative carbon balance (climate change) if expansion occurs over peatlands and primary forests. Palm oil expansion is associated with (legal and illegal) deforestation, fires, the drainage of peatland, loss of biodiversity, social and human right issues as well as land rights issues of local and indigenous communities. Increased production is mainly planned on the islands of Borneo and Papua, in West Africa, some Latin American countries and the Philippines.

The AD-Partnership assumes that increased demand for certified sustainable production with a cut-off date on deforestation – like RSPO and ISCC - can help to prevent deforestation and enhance sustainability. However, depending on the country context, certification does not equal no deforestation at landscape scale as deforestation may occur for other reasons. Unsustainable palm oil may also be sold to less concerned countries or consumed domestically.

In order to address wider deforestation and other sustainability issues, multi-stakeholder (jurisdictional) initiatives on landscape scale and spatial planning are crucial.

Within Europe, palm oil used for biofuel is mainly ISCC certified and regulated by the EU Renewable energy Directive. The use of vegetable oils for biodiesel (incl. palm oil) is limited to 7%.

The AD-Partnership is closely cooperating with and supporting the important private sector led European Sustainable Palm Oil initiative (ESPO). ESPO strives for 100% RSPO certified by 2020 (food sector) and brings together the national initiatives in Europe. In 2016, the certified volume for Europe reached 69% (ESPO, 2017) of total import. In the AD-countries the national initiatives reached (2016):

- Denmark: 90%
- France: 98%
- Germany: 79%
- Italy: 100% (but limited to few multinational members)
- Netherlands: 90%
- Norway: 100%

United Kingdom: 86 or 105% (sources differ)

However, ESPO does not cover all uses in a country or the whole food sector and is working to include more companies.

The Africa Palm Oil Initiative (APOI) brings together nine West and Central African governments, companies throughout the supply chain, and non-governmental organisations in an initiative focused on securing a sustainable palm oil industry in the region. Sabah State (Malaysia) already committed to zero deforestation and sustainable palm oil production (by 2025). Unilever and Marks& Spencer committed to preferential sourcing from such jurisdictions. IDH is implementing landscape initiatives in West Kalimantan, South Sumatra and Aceh in Indonesia.