

A photograph of a rubber tree forest. The image shows several tree trunks in the foreground and background, with green foliage and undergrowth on the forest floor. A maroon rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text 'Sainsbury's' in orange and 'Natural Rubber Policy' in white.

Sainsbury's

Natural Rubber Policy

Our Policy on Natural Rubber

Our Scope

- Section 1.** Our Position
- Section 2.** Statement of Intent
- Section 3.** Our Approach
- Section 4.** Roles and Responsibilities
- Section 5.** Governance
- Section 6.** Definitions, external links and FAQs

Our Scope

At Sainsbury's, we seek to build resilient supply chains by sourcing products ethically and sustainably.

This document details our position and sourcing requirements for all suppliers in non-food grocery and General Merchandise across all product areas own-brand and licensed products containing natural rubber.

The following products are out of scope of this document

- Products where rubber is less than 1% of the total weight of the product

This sustainable sourcing policy should be read alongside our Supplier Handbook. Depending on where in the business the products are sold, the General Merchandise Sustainability Guidelines, the Clothing Sustainability Guidelines, or the Responsible Sourcing Manual should also be consulted.

The policy statements outlined in this document are in addition to all applicable legislation. Sainsbury's suppliers must ensure they meet all requirements laid down in law at the point of manufacture and where the products are finally sold to the customer.

Whilst this policy is intended to help suppliers provide products suitable for Sainsbury's own-brand, they do not absolve suppliers of their responsibility to understand and comply with all the quality, legal and safety requirements for their products.



SECTION ONE

Across our combined business, natural rubber is used in a wide range of products from clothing and exercise equipment to toys and gloves. Natural rubber production is linked to the clearance of native vegetation and forests for the establishment of rubber plantations. Furthermore, the prevalence of diseases within plantations require the use of pesticides and herbicides which pose a risk to biodiversity. The processing of natural rubber can also result in hazardous waste and chemicals leaking into waterways.

Although volumes across our business are relatively small, production and use of natural rubber is expected to expand. We need to source rubber sustainably to ensure we play our part in preventing deforestation.

Globally, forests constitute the largest and most significant ecosystems and are a key resource for local communities. Yet, despite their importance, there continues to be an alarming depletion of forests year on year. The demand for forest products is anticipated to increase, emphasising the need for sustainable management of these vital resources for future *generations*.

SECTION TWO

Statements of intent

Through our [Plan for Better](#) commitments, we are committed to sourcing Deforestation and Conversion Free (DCF) forest-risk commodities by 2025, including natural rubber.

- 100% of our natural rubber products will be verified deforestation and conversion free by 31st December 2025
- 100% of natural rubber products will be traceable to origin by 31st December 2025



Our Approach

Natural rubber is a driver of deforestation in tropical forests. By sourcing certified rubber, Sainsbury's can prevent and mitigate its impact on deforestation in these areas.

General requirements	
1.	<p>Products containing rubber must be sourced to the below sustainability standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) • Independently verified recycled material <p>Full chain of custody documentation is required, meaning that both the materials used must be proven to be from sustainable sources, also importantly, the Sainsbury's Argos supplier must have a valid FSC licence</p>
Traceability requirements	
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suppliers of clothing containing rubber should submit traceability information annually via our third party SGS • Suppliers of rubber in all other products should submit traceability information annually via our third party, Track Record Global. • Information required includes country of harvest and sustainability certification <p>Further guidance on validating sustainable supply chains can be found in the General Merchandise Sustainability Guidelines, the Clothing Sustainability Guidelines, or the Responsible Sourcing Manual. Technical colleagues can refer to our Guide to Validating Sustainable Timber Supply Chains on how to submit traceability information to Track Record Global.</p>
Protection of forests and other natural ecosystems*	
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural rubber must not be harvested illegally in contravention of legislation in the country of harvest • Only plantation material grown on land converted prior to 31st December 2020 will be accepted, unless preceded by existing standards or legislation • There must be no deforestation of High Conservation Value (HCV) forests • Species listed on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) appendices must be traded in compliance with the appropriate licencing system • Species categorised on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List as 'CR – Critically Endangered', 'EN – Endangered', or 'VU – Vulnerable' must not be sourced
Respect for human rights*	
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before any activity that may affect indigenous peoples' and local communities' rights, land, resources, territories, livelihoods, and food security, their free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) must be secured
Alternative & recycled raw material	
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If recycled or reused rubber is used, the supplier must provide the appropriate chain of custody documentation beyond Purchase Orders, and certification if available. • Where chain of custody documentation is unavailable, purchase orders or some other form of documentation may be accepted on a case-by-case basis • We support the use of new materials that might replace natural rubber. If an alternative raw material is used, this shall be discussed and approved with the Technical Manager at Sainsbury's on an ad-hoc basis

*Based on definitions agreed by the Accountability Framework Initiative (AFI). Requirements 3 & 4 are included within the [FSC Principles & Criteria for Forest Stewardship](#) and [PEFC Forest Management Requirements](#) therefore if using an approved 3rd Party Scheme please refer to CR&S and Technical Team SME for advice on how to provide additional assurance on these requirements.

SECTION FOUR

Suppliers:

- All suppliers will provide goods that meet the corporate policy
- Suppliers of GM or clothing will provide information to Track Record Global or SGS as requested to enable them to carry out assessments on our rubber supply chain
- Suppliers for non-food grocery will update EVOLVE with details of the sustainability certification

Sainsbury's

- Sainsbury's is accountable for informing TRG and SGS of in scope products via the new line product trackers

Track Record Global (TRG) and SGS

- TRG will validate sustainability claims on our rubber supply chains for General Merchandise
- SGS will validate sustainability claims on our rubber supply chains for clothing



SECTION FIVE

Governance

This policy has been agreed by the GM Steering Committee and will be reviewed annually by the Head of Environment, or Head of Technical – Seasonal-Tech as required. All changes will be communicated to the suppliers.



Definitions

What other definitions might be relevant to your commodity?

Where relevant, our definitions align with [Accountability Framework Initiative \(Afi\)](#)

- **Deforestation:** The loss of natural forest as a result of (i) conversion to agriculture or other non-forest land use; (ii) conversion to a plantation; or (ii) severe or sustained degradation.
- **Conversion:** Change of a natural ecosystem to another land use or profound change in the natural ecosystem's species composition, structure, or function
- **Deforestation and Conversion Free (DCF):** a volume of commodity produced on land that was not subject to conversion or deforestation past a defined cut-off date.
- **Recycled materials:** Rubber materials proven to be from a preferred post-consumer waste stream.
- **Licensed product** – Exclusive license of a brand is an agreement through which Sainsbury's Argos leases the use of another company's brand in association with a product, for an agreed period of time, within an agreed territory (UK). Sainsbury's Argos may or may not be involved with product development, however, we do always scrutinise supply chain (Technical and Ethical audits) and will always collect full technical files.



External links

- [FSC and FSC Principles & Criteria for Forest Stewardship](#)
- [CITES/IUCN](#)

FAQs

Does small components (e.g. rubber gasket) in the product fall into the scope?

If the component constitutes less than 1% of the total weight of the product, then it does not fall into scope. Please speak to your technologist if further clarity is required.

Can we produce non-FSC rubber products before 2025?

Sainsbury's will accept stock which includes uncertified natural rubber which arrives in the UK before 2025. However, suppliers will need to have a clear transition plan to demonstrate how you plan to move to certified rubber by 2025. For products in scope of the EU Deforestation Regulation, we will not accept uncertified rubber into the UK after 30th December 2024.

Where can I source FSC rubber from? Is there a website that can direct me to suppliers?

Details of suppliers of FSC rubber can be found on the [FSC Certificates Public Dashboard](#)

Can I use the FSC trademark on my product?

Sainsbury's and Argos has an FSC license but use of the FSC logo is not mandatory. For further guidance on the FSC trademark please see: [Use the FSC trademarks | Forest Stewardship Council UK](#) and consult the supplier guide.

Who should suppliers contact if they need further advice?

For any questions, please reach out to the buying or technical teams



Our Policy on Natural Rubber

The information in this document may be supported by other Sainsbury’s Documents.
The information outlined in this document is in addition to all applicable UK and EU legislation.

Sainsbury’s suppliers must ensure they meet all legal and regulatory requirements both at the point of manufacture and where the products are sold to the consumer. Whilst this document is intended to help you supply products suitable for the Sainsbury’s brand (i.e. all brands owned by Sainsbury’s), they do not absolve you of your responsibility to understand and comply with all the quality, legal and safety requirements for your products or the products you supply.

For the purpose of this document Sainsbury’s means Sainsbury’s Supermarkets Limited and Argos Limited only. Sainsbury’s Argos is the trading name of both:

- 1)Argos Limited, Registered office: 33 Charterhouse Street, London, EC1M 6HA.. Registered number: 01081551
- 2) Sainsbury’s Supermarket Limited, Registered office: 33 Charterhouse Street, London, EC1M 6HA. and Sainsbury’s Supermarkets (NI) Ltd, Upper Galwally, Belfast, BT8 6FX Registered number: 03261722

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PL011-V1	Deforestation Lead, CR&S and Technical Lead, Seasonal	Creation of policy	29/02/2024
PL011-V2	Deforestation Lead, CR&S and Technical Lead, Seasonal	Updated cut off and sunset dates	Sept 2024
PL0011-V3	Deforestation Lead, CR&S and Technical Lead, Seasonal	Head office location updated	June 2025