

Forestry Statistics 2025

Chapter 9: International Forestry

Release date:

25 September 2025

Coverage:

World

Geographical breakdown:

Country

Issued by: Forest Research,
Northern Research Station, Roslin, Midlothian, EH25 9SY

Enquiries: Official Statistics Team, 0300 067 5238
statistics@forestresearch.gov.uk

Website: <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/>



The Research Agency of the
Forestry Commission

Forest Research is the Research Agency of the Forestry Commission and is the leading UK organisation engaged in forestry and tree related research.

The Agency aims to support and enhance forestry and its role in sustainable development by providing innovative, high quality scientific research, data, technical support and consultancy services.

Contents

Introduction.....	4
Key findings.....	5
9.1 Forest cover: international comparisons.....	6
9.2 Forest area by country	8
9.3 Annual changes in forest area	9
9.4 Forest carbon stocks	11
9.5 Wood removals.....	13
9.6 Production of wood products	16
9.7 Apparent consumption of wood products.....	18
9.8 World trade in forest products	20

Introduction

This chapter contains information about world forestry, presenting global figures by region alongside data for the UK and the EU. Topics covered include woodland area, carbon stocks, wood removals, production and apparent consumption of wood products and international trade in forest products.

The data are produced by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). All of the statistics presented in this chapter have been previously released by the FAO. Further information on revisions, data sources and methodology used to compile the figures is provided in Chapter 10: Sources and Methodology.

Data for the European Union (EU) relate to all 27 current EU members, excluding the UK, for all the years shown. Data for Europe cover 26 of the EU members (excluding Cyprus), Russia and a number of other European countries, including Norway, Switzerland, Serbia and Ukraine. Cyprus is included in the EU total, but is part of FAO's Asia region and is thus not included in the Europe total.

These figures are outside the scope of Accredited Official Statistics. For further information see Chapter 10: Sources and Methodology.

Key findings

The main findings are:

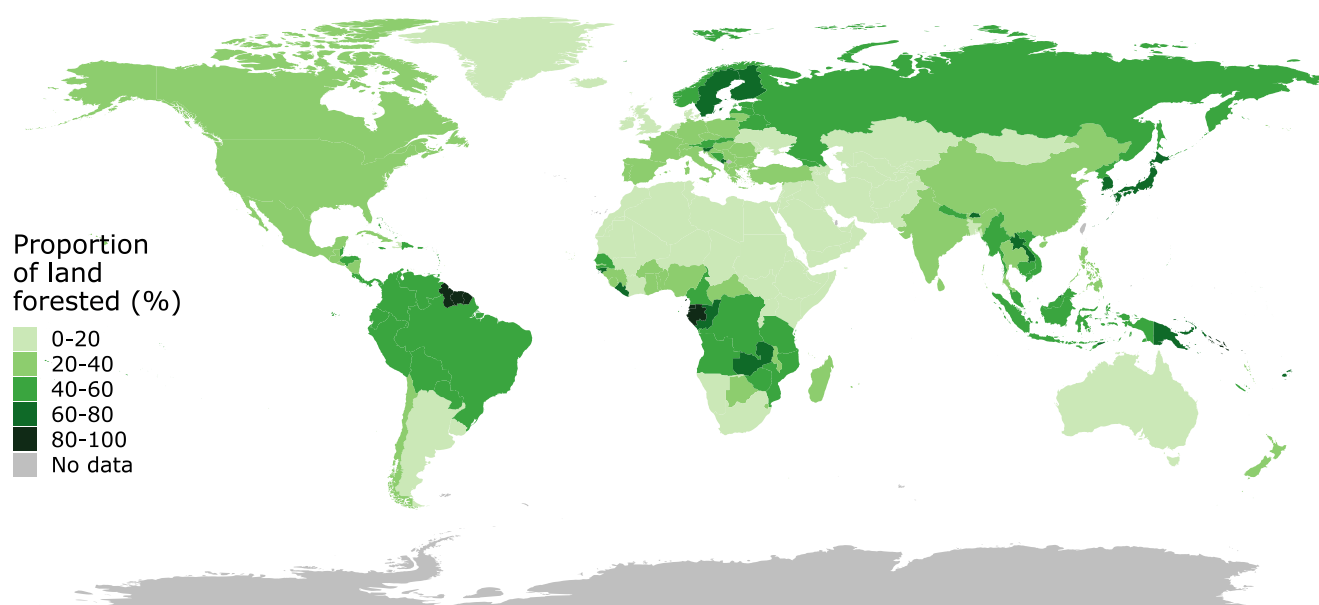
- At around 13% forest cover in 2020, the UK is one of the least densely forested countries in Europe. This compares with 46% for Europe as a whole and 31% worldwide.
- The global forest area reduced by around 4.7 million hectares (0.1%) per year between 2010 and 2020.
- Carbon stocks in forest living biomass have increased in Europe, North & Central America and Asia between 1990 and 2020 but have shown an overall decrease at a global level over this period.
- A total of 3.9 billion cubic metres underbark of wood was removed from global forests in 2023, of which around one half (50%) was used as woodfuel and the remainder as industrial roundwood (for use by wood processors).
- Global production of wood products in 2023 totalled 445 million cubic metres of sawnwood, 381 million cubic metres of wood-based panels and 401 million tonnes of paper and paperboard.
- Europe consumed 26% of all sawnwood, 22% of the world's wood-based panels and 20% of all paper and paperboard in 2023.
- The UK was the second largest net importer (imports less exports) of forest products in 2023, with net imports of US \$8.0 billion. The largest net importer was China, with net imports of US \$29.2 billion.

9.1 Forest cover: international comparisons

The FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) is a collation of forest data undertaken by the United Nations FAO at the global level every five years.

The UK is one of the least densely forested countries in Europe, with around 13% of its total land area covered in forest in 2020 (Figure 9.1, Table 9.1). This compares with 46% for Europe as a whole and 31% worldwide.

Figure 9.1 Forest cover as a percentage of total land area, World, 2020



Source: FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment (2020).

Table 9.1 Forest cover as a percentage of total land area: international comparisons, World, 2020

Country	Forest area (million ha)	Total land area (million ha)	Forest area as a percentage of land area (%)
Europe ¹	1,017	2,213	46
United Kingdom	3	24	13
EU ²	159	400	40
Denmark	1	4	15
Finland	22	30	74
France	17	55	32
Germany	11	35	33
Ireland	1	7	11
Italy	10	29	33
Spain	19	50	37
Sweden	28	41	69
Other EU	51	148	34
Russia	815	1,638	50
Africa	637	2,989	21
Asia	623	3,109	20
North & Central America	753	2,133	35
Oceania	185	849	22
South America	844	1,746	48
World	4,059	13,039	31

Source: FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment (2020).

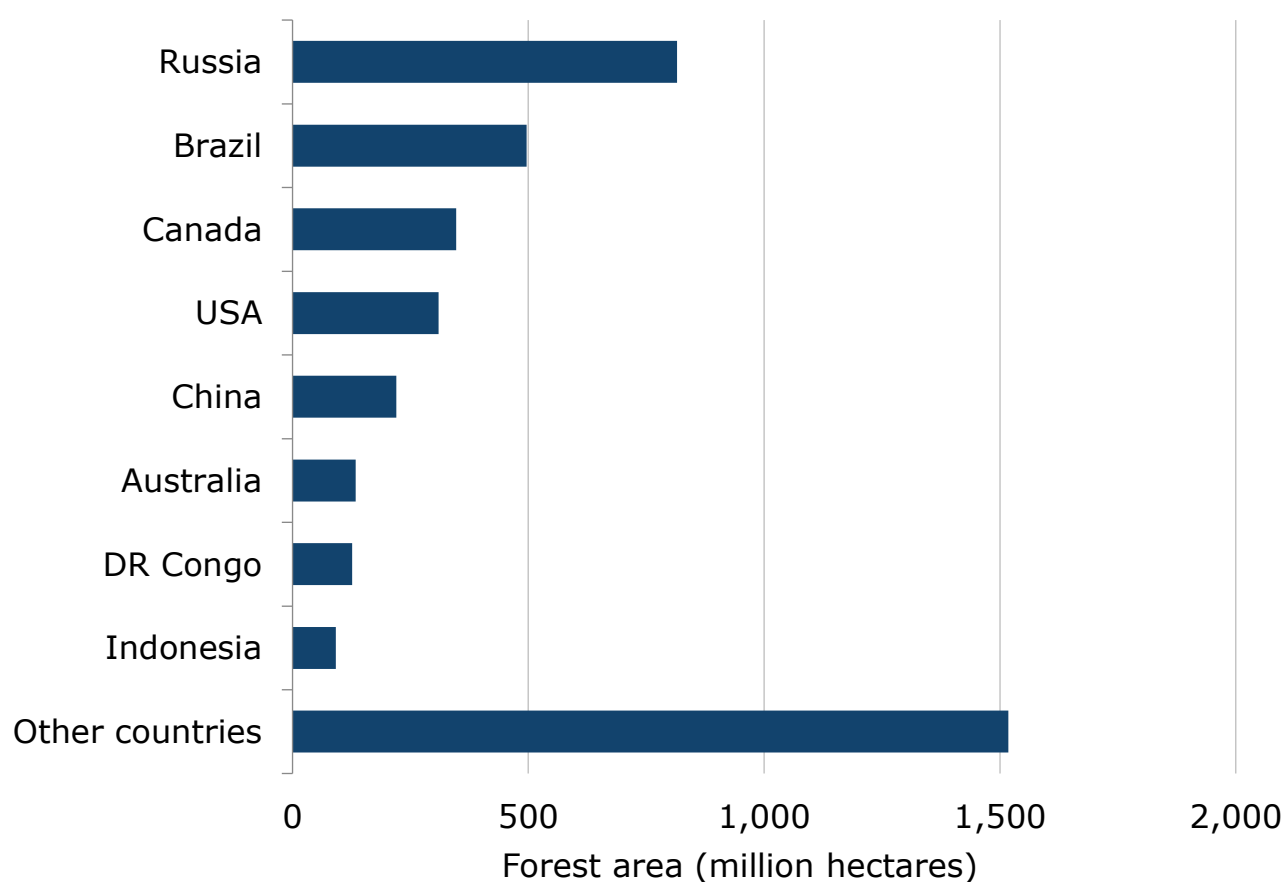
Notes:

1. The Europe region covers 26 EU countries (excluding Cyprus), the UK, Russia and other countries, including Norway, Switzerland, Serbia and Ukraine.
2. The EU covers 27 member states as at September 2025. This excludes the UK. Cyprus is included in EU total but is part of FAO's Asia region.

9.2 Forest area by country

Figure 9.2 shows the countries with the largest forest areas. Around one half (49%) of the total forest area of 4,059 million hectares in 2020 is located in four countries (Russia, Brazil, Canada and the USA).

Figure 9.2 Forest area by country, World, 2020



Source: FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment (2020).

9.3 Annual changes in forest area

The global forest area has reduced from around 4,128 million hectares in 1990 to 4,059 million hectares in 2020. This represents a decrease of around 7.8 million hectares (0.2%) per year between 1990 and 2000; around 5.2 million hectares (0.1%) per year between 2000 and 2010; and around 4.7 million hectares (0.1%) per year between 2010 and 2020 (Table 9.2).

The forest area has reduced in most regions since 1990, except for Europe and Asia (where areas have increased).

Table 9.2 Annual change in forest area by region, World, 1990 to 2020

percentage change in forest area

Region	1990 to 2000	2000 to 2010	2010 to 2020
Europe ¹	0.1	0.1	0.0
UK ²	0.6	0.4	0.4
EU ³	0.5	0.3	0.2
Africa	-0.4	-0.5	-0.6
Asia	0.0	0.4	0.2
North and Central America	0.0	0.0	0.0
Oceania	-0.1	-0.1	0.2
South America	-0.5	-0.6	-0.3
World	-0.2	-0.1	-0.1

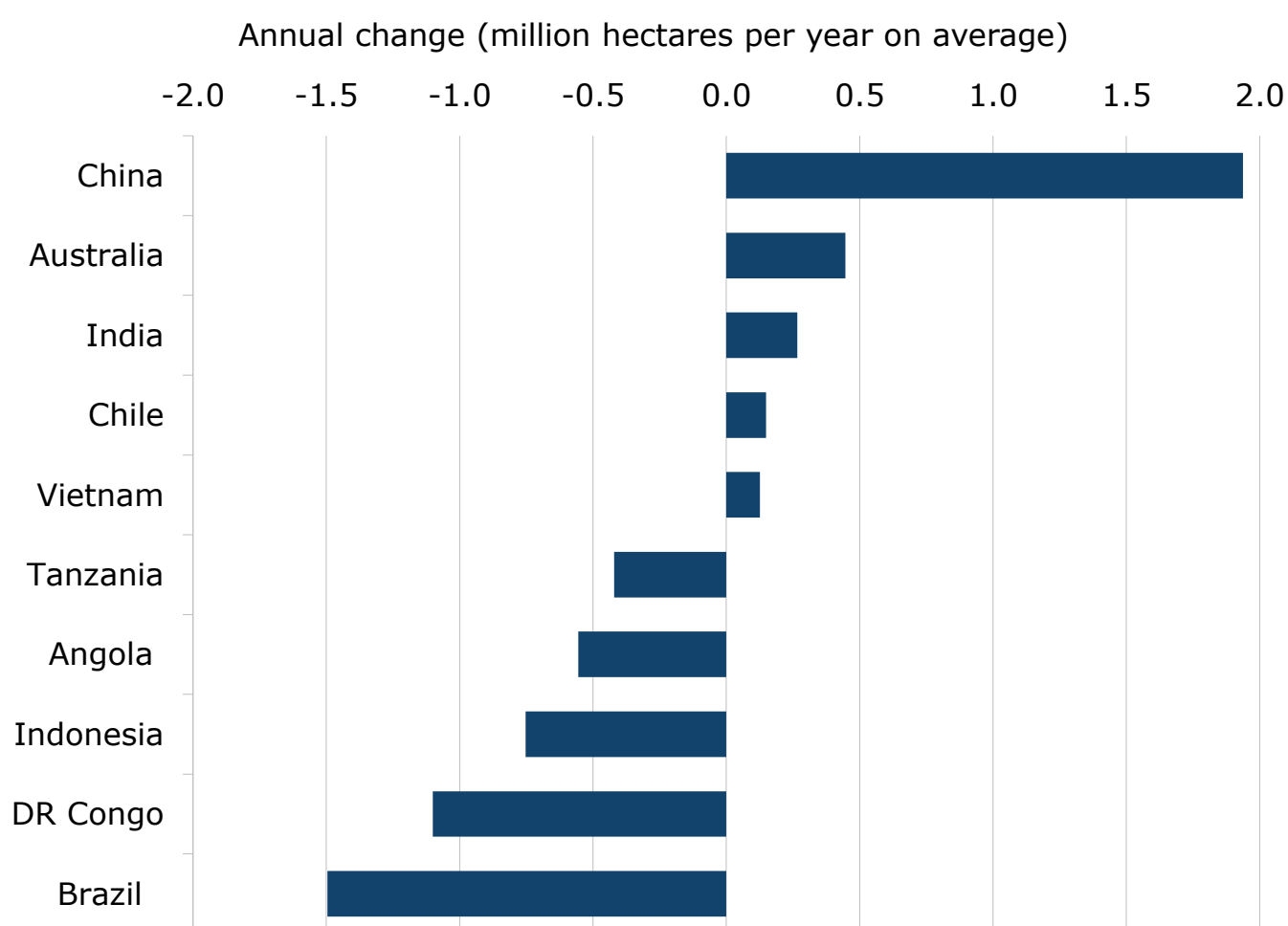
Source: FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment (2020).

Notes:

1. The Europe region covers 26 EU countries (excluding Cyprus), the UK, Russia and other countries, including Norway, Switzerland, Serbia and Ukraine.
2. UK figures for 2020 are 2018-based estimates. Revised estimates (from Chapter 1) suggest that Table 9.2 slightly under-estimates the change in forest area in the UK in the most recent time period.
3. The EU covers 27 member states as at September 2025. This excludes the UK. Cyprus is included in EU total but is part of FAO's Asia region.

Between 2010 and 2020, the largest decrease in forest area was in Brazil (1.5 million hectares per year on average) and the largest increase was in China (1.9 million hectares per year on average) (Figure 9.3).

Figure 9.3 Countries with largest changes in forest area¹, World, 2010 to 2020



Source: FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment (2020).

Notes:

1. Top and bottom 5 countries with the largest annual change shown only.

9.4 Forest carbon stocks

Carbon stocks in forest living biomass have increased in Europe and North & Central America between 1990 and 2020, but have shown an overall decrease at a global level over this period (Table 9.3).

The overall decrease has mainly been driven by declines in South America and Africa, where forest areas have decreased. Carbon stocks in biomass also increased slightly in Asia, where carbon sequestered in new plantations has balanced out carbon losses from areas of deforestation.

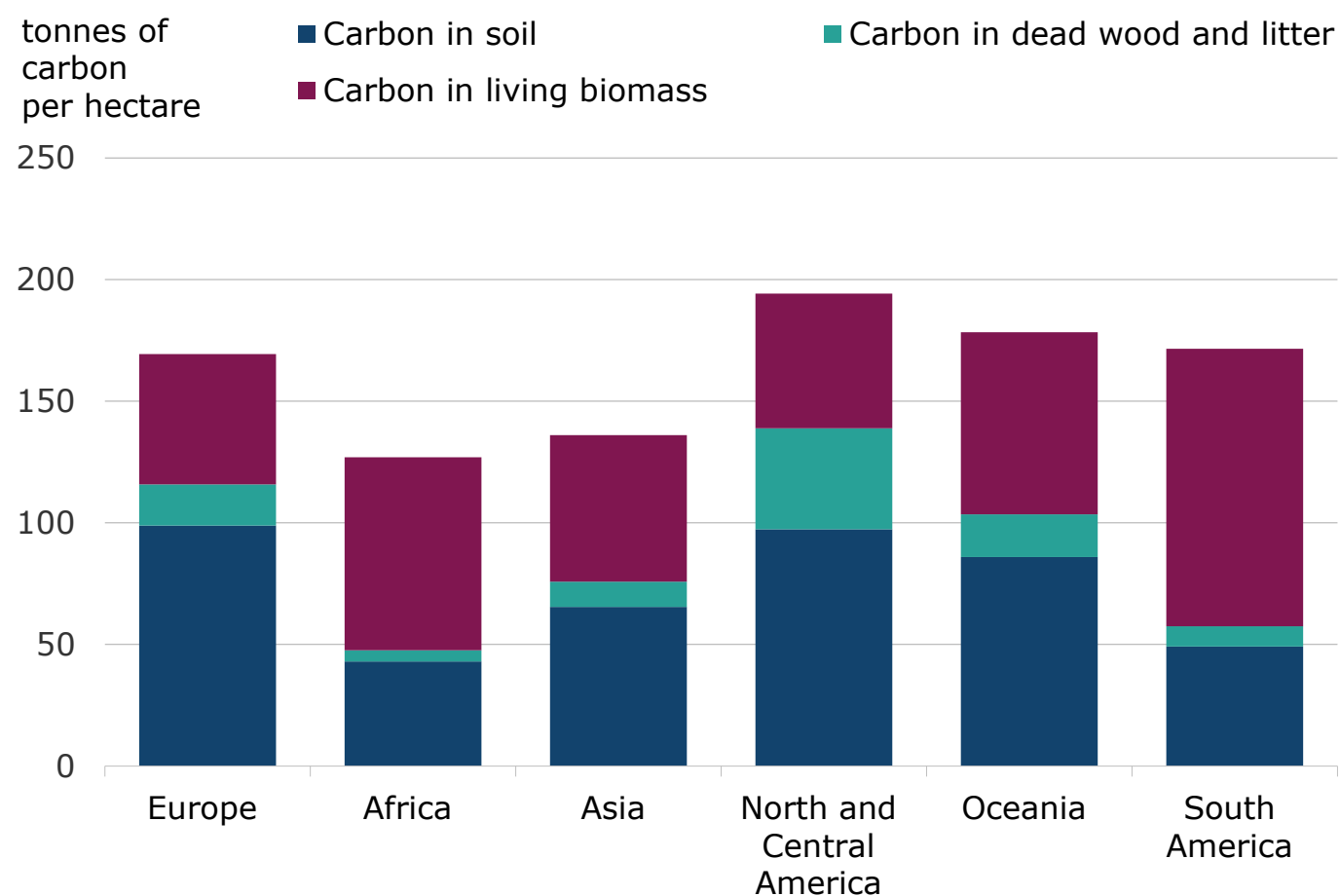
Table 9.3 Carbon stocks in forest living biomass by region, World, 1990 to 2020

Region	giga tonnes of carbon ¹				
	1990	2000	2010	2015	2020
Europe ²	45	48	51	53	55
Africa	59	56	54	52	51
Asia	34	35	36	37	38
North and Central America	39	40	41	41	42
Oceania	14	14	14	14	14
South America	106	102	98	97	96
World	298	296	294	295	295

Source: FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment (2020).

Notes:

1. A giga tonne is a thousand million tonnes (10^9 tonnes).
2. The Europe region covers 26 EU countries (excluding Cyprus), the UK, Russia and other countries, including Norway, Switzerland, Serbia and Ukraine.

Figure 9.4 Forest carbon stock per hectare by region¹, World, 2020

Source: FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment (2020).

Notes:

1. The Europe region covers 26 EU countries (excluding Cyprus), the UK, Russia and other countries, including Norway, Switzerland, Serbia and Ukraine.

9.5 Wood removals

Around 3.9 billion cubic metres underbark of wood was removed from global forests in 2023, of which almost 2.0 billion cubic metres (50%) was for use as woodfuel and the remainder was industrial roundwood (for use by wood processors) (Table 9.4).

North & Central America and Europe together accounted for just over one half (55%) of all industrial roundwood removals in 2023. Globally, removals of industrial roundwood decreased by 4% between 2022 and 2023.

Almost three quarters (73%) of woodfuel removals in 2023 took place in Asia and Africa.

Table 9.4 Wood removals by region, World, 2000 to 2023

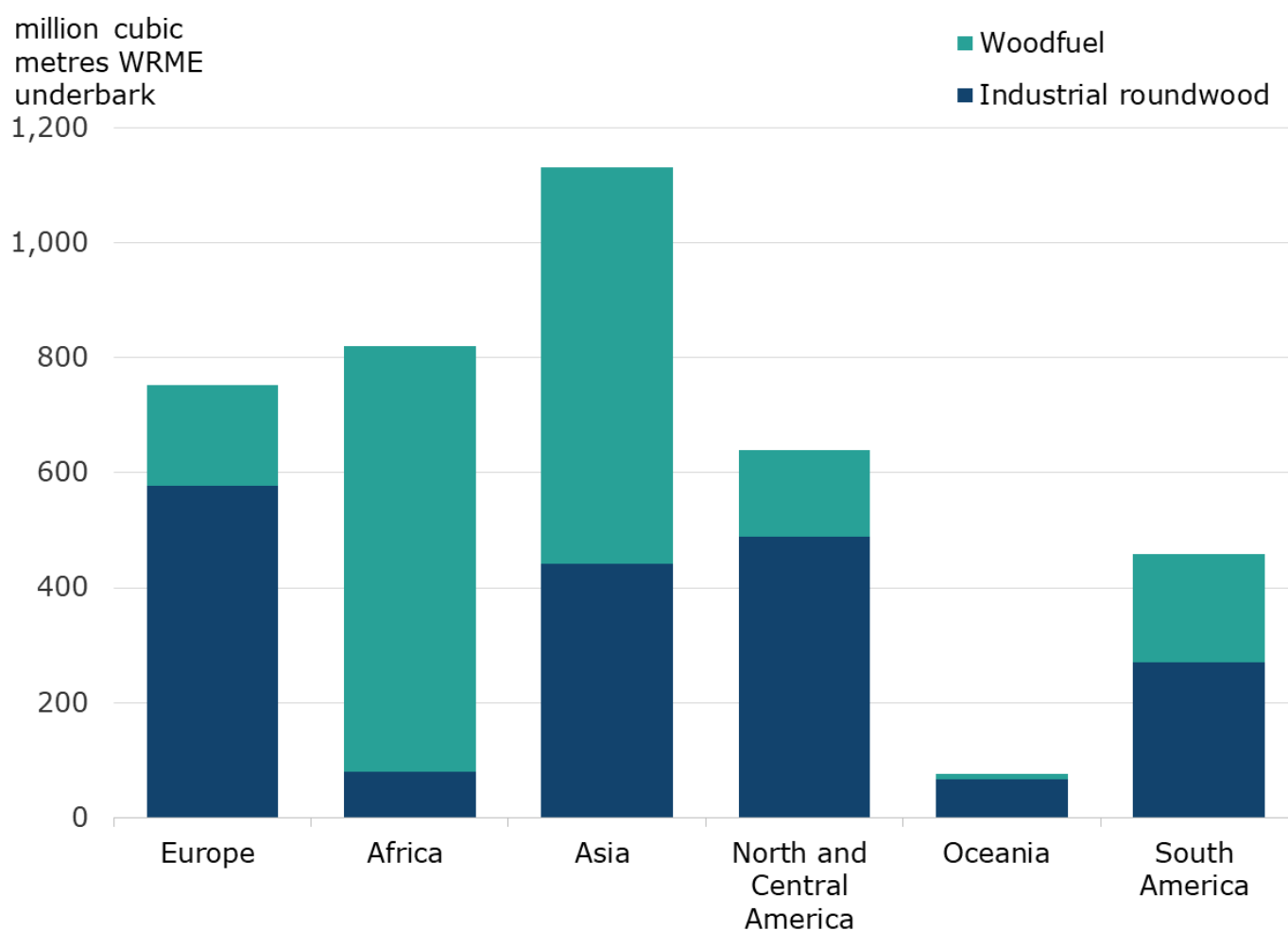
million cubic metres of Wood Raw Material Equivalent (WRME) underbark

Region	2000	2010	2020	2022	2023
Industrial roundwood	1,690	1,723	1,995	2,012	1,925
Europe ¹	519	533	626	613	578
UK	8	8	8	8	7
EU ²	335	331	343	381	353
Africa	71	72	77	80	79
Asia	273	379	454	444	441
North & Central America	631	484	522	541	489
Oceania	47	57	74	68	66
South America	147	198	241	264	270
Woodfuel	1,795	1,864	1,926	1,965	1,961
Europe ¹	109	155	169	181	176
UK	0	1	2	2	2
EU ²	85	115	119	131	128
Africa	551	644	713	728	741
Asia	808	764	708	695	690
North & Central America	129	129	145	157	150
Oceania	13	11	10	10	10
South America	185	162	177	189	188
Total roundwood	3,485	3,587	3,922	3,977	3,886
Europe ¹	628	687	795	795	754
UK	8	10	10	10	10
EU ²	420	446	462	512	481
Africa	623	715	790	808	820
Asia	1,081	1,144	1,162	1,139	1,132
North & Central America	761	614	667	699	640
Oceania	60	68	83	78	76
South America	332	359	418	453	458

Source: FAO (2025).

Notes:

1. The Europe region covers 26 EU countries (excluding Cyprus), the UK, Russia and other countries, including Norway, Switzerland, Serbia and Ukraine.
2. The EU covers 27 member states as at September 2025. This excludes the UK. Cyprus is included in EU total but is part of FAO's Asia region.

Figure 9.5 Wood removals by region¹, World, 2023

Source: FAO (2025).

Notes:

1. The Europe region covers 26 EU countries (excluding Cyprus), the UK, Russia and other countries, including Norway, Switzerland, Serbia and Ukraine.

9.6 Production of wood products

Global production of wood products in 2023 totalled 445 million cubic metres of sawnwood, 381 million cubic metres of wood-based panels and 401 million tonnes of paper and paperboard (Table 9.5).

Europe produced just over one third (35%) of all sawnwood in 2023 (mainly in EU countries), with 27% each in Asia and in North & Central America. Overall, sawnwood production decreased by 4% between 2022 and 2023, with reductions in all major producing regions.

Wood-based panels were more commonly produced in Asia, accounting for three fifths (60%) of global production in 2023. Just over one fifth (22%) was produced in Europe (mainly in EU countries) and 11% in North & Central America. At a global level, wood-based panel production increased by 1% between 2022 and 2023.

Asia also accounted for over half (53%) of paper and paperboard production in 2023, with almost a quarter (22%) in Europe and a further 19% in North & Central America. At a global level, paper and paperboard production decreased by 3% between 2022 and 2023.

Table 9.5 Production of wood products by region, World, 2000 to 2023

Region	2000	2010	2020	2022	2023
Sawnwood (million cubic metres)	392	393	482	463	445
Europe ¹	130	139	168	165	156
UK	3	3	3	3	3
EU ²	98	98	108	110	102
Africa	8	9	12	12	12
Asia	68	103	141	123	122
North and Central America	147	102	126	127	121
Oceania	8	9	9	9	9
South America	32	30	25	26	25
Wood-based panels (million cubic metres)	178	284	363	376	381
Europe ¹	59	71	85	88	86
UK	3	3	3	3	3
EU ²	48	53	58	59	56
Africa	1	2	3	4	4
Asia	46	151	208	216	227
North and Central America	61	42	45	46	44
Oceania	3	3	3	3	3
South America	8	15	19	19	18
Paper and paperboard (million tonnes)	325	392	399	414	401
Europe ¹	100	106	99	99	88
UK	7	4	4	3	3
EU ²	83	91	82	82	72
Africa	4	4	3	3	3
Asia	95	170	197	210	214
North and Central America	111	94	81	82	75
Oceania	4	4	4	4	3
South America	11	15	15	16	16

Source: FAO (2025).

Notes:

1. The Europe region covers 26 EU countries (excluding Cyprus), the UK, Russia and other countries, including Norway, Switzerland, Serbia and Ukraine.

2. The EU covers 27 member states as at September 2025. This excludes the UK. Cyprus is included in EU total but is part of FAO's Asia region.

9.7 Apparent consumption of wood products

Apparent consumption (defined as production + imports – exports) of wood products around the world totalled 441 million cubic metres sawnwood, 381 million cubic metres wood-based panels and 401 million tonnes of paper and paperboard in 2023 (Table 9.6).

Around 37% of all sawnwood in 2023 was consumed in Asia and around one quarter in North & Central America (27%) and in Europe (26%). Reflecting the decreased production of sawnwood (see Table 9.5), apparent consumption of sawnwood decreased by 3% overall between 2022 and 2023.

Asia consumed 58% of the world's wood-based panels in 2023, around one fifth (22%) was consumed in Europe and 14% in North & Central America. Apparent consumption of wood-based panels worldwide increased by less than 1% between 2022 and 2023.

Over one half (55%) of all paper and paperboard in 2023 was consumed in Asia, 20% in Europe and a further 19% in North & Central America. At a global level, apparent consumption of paper and paperboard decreased by 3% between 2022 and 2023.

Table 9.6 Apparent consumption of wood products by region, World, 2000 to 2023

Region	2000	2010	2020	2022	2023
Sawnwood (million cubic metres)	393	390	473	457	441
Europe ¹	121	110	111	118	113
UK	10	9	10	9	9
EU ²	90	82	79	86	77
Africa	10	17	17	15	16
Asia	84	134	195	167	164
North and Central America	142	94	124	128	121
Oceania	8	8	8	9	8
South America	27	26	19	18	18
Wood-based panels (million cubic metres)	181	281	366	379	381
Europe ¹	57	67	79	85	83
UK	6	6	6	6	6
EU ²	46	48	51	57	53
Africa	2	3	6	7	7
Asia	50	148	206	209	219
North and Central America	64	46	56	59	53
Oceania	2	3	3	3	3
South America	6	12	14	15	15
Paper and paperboard (million tonnes)	325	391	400	413	401
Europe ¹	90	95	86	88	79
UK	12	11	7	7	6
EU ²	72	74	71	70	61
Africa	5	7	9	9	8
Asia	103	178	207	214	219
North and Central America	110	90	80	82	75
Oceania	5	5	4	4	3
South America	12	16	16	16	16

Source: FAO (2025).

Notes:

1. The Europe region covers 26 EU countries (excluding Cyprus), the UK, Russia and other countries, including Norway, Switzerland, Serbia and Ukraine.

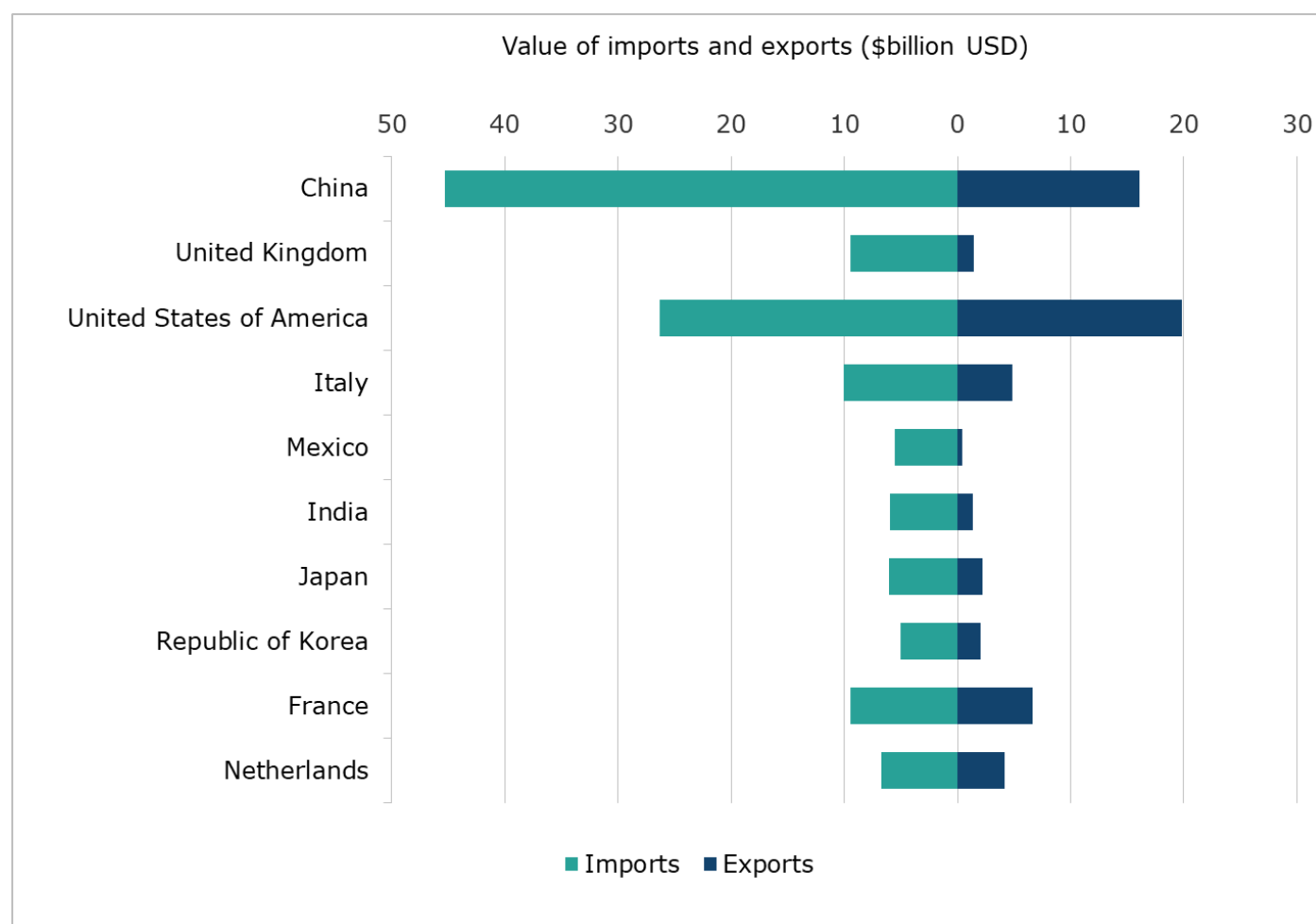
2. The EU covers 27 member states as at September 2025. This excludes the UK. Cyprus is included in EU total but is part of FAO's Asia region.

9.8 World trade in forest products

Figures 9.6 and 9.7 show the largest ten net importers and exporters (ranked by value) of forest products in 2023. This covers trade in roundwood, sawnwood, wood-based panels, wood pulp and paper and paperboard, but excludes trade in secondary processed wood (e.g., furniture made from wood). Values are expressed in US dollars (USD; the units reported in the data published by FAO).

The UK was the second largest net importer (imports less exports) of forest products in 2023, with net imports of US \$8.0 billion (Figure 9.6). The largest net importer in 2023 was China (US \$29.2 billion). United States of America (US \$6.5 billion) and Italy (US \$5.2 billion) were the third and fourth largest net importers respectively.

Figure 9.6 Largest net importers of forest products, World, 2023



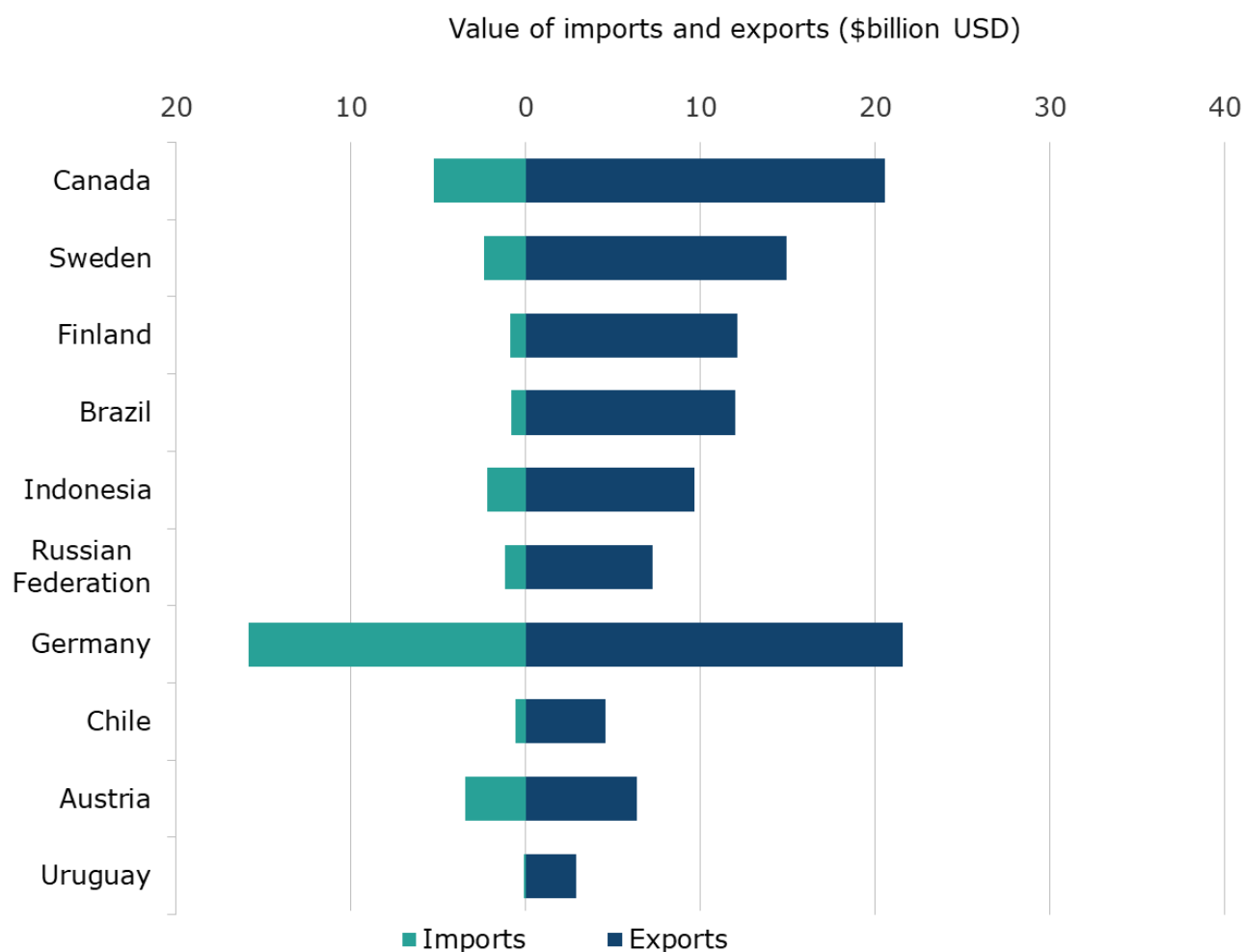
Source: FAO (2025).

Notes:

1. Excludes trade in secondary wood products.

The largest net exporters (exports less imports) of forest products in 2023 were Canada (with net exports valued at US \$15.3 billion), Sweden (US \$12.5 billion) and Finland (US \$11.2 billion) (Figure 9.7).

Figure 9.7 Largest net exporters of forest products, World, 2023



Source: FAO (2025).

Notes:

1. Excludes trade in secondary wood products.

Alice Holt Lodge	Northern Research Station	Forest Research in Wales
Farnham	Roslin	Talybont Research Office
Surrey, GU10 4LH, UK	Midlothian, EH25 9SY, UK	Cefn Gethiniog
		Talybont-on-Usk
		Brecon
		Powys, LD3 7YN, UK
Tel: 0300 067 5600	Tel: 0300 067 5600	Tel: 0300 067 5709

info@forestresearch.gov.uk

www.forestresearch.gov.uk

Forest Research will consider all requests to make the
content of our documents available in alternative formats.

Please send any such requests to: research.info@forestresearch.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2025