

## Côte d'Ivoire calls on private sector to boost investment in rubber value addition

16 June 2025 | News

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Côte d'Ivoire is aiming to diversify its value-added rubber product offerings amid overcapacity in primary processing. The country's Rubber and Oil Palm Council has announced it will no longer issue permits for new first-stage rubber processing plants or expand existing ones until further notice.

The decision, announced on June 4, is intended to address the imbalance between industrial capacity and raw material supply. The first-stage segment, which converts raw latex into solid natural rubber, is currently oversaturated.

To rebalance the sector, the Council is encouraging private investors to shift their capital toward second-stage rubber processing. This includes manufacturing tires, molded rubber products, and other technical items, as well as leveraging rubber seeds and timber for added value.

This strategic reorientation could accelerate emerging sectors like bioenergy. One example is the New Energy Company (SODEN), which announced plans on June 3, 2025, to build a 76 MW power plant in Divo using agricultural waste, including end-of-life rubber trees.

At the same time, the Eni Group is transforming rubber seeds into vegetable oil for its biorefineries. Following a successful pilot, the company signed an agreement with the government on May 28 to develop a national biofuels industry. These projects offer new energy sources and additional income for small-scale producers.

This policy also supports the government's goal of achieving 100 per cent first-stage processing of Côte d'Ivoire's rubber by 2025. With the ban on new facilities, the regulator asserts that current infrastructure can absorb the country's total output, which reached 1.67 million tons in 2023, according to official data.