Guyana

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Forest Management

Guyana's national forest policy, as set out in its 1997 National Forest Policy Statement, marked a significant shift in emphasis from the development of the country's timber resources to the management of multiple forest goods and services for the national benefit. Under the national forest policy, all forest resources, except those on private property and Amerindian (indigenous) lands, are owned by the state. According to ITTO (2011), a small total of 1.31 million hectares of forest have been gazetted as Amerindian lands.

The Forest Act (2009) made provisions for community forest management and extractive and primary processing forest operations. It established regulation for multiple forest uses, including traditional rights, and provides for the declaration of protected areas. The **Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC)**, a semi-autonomous public agency, holds the management rights for all state forest and administers the Forest Act. This includes collecting and recovering all levies, fines, costs, and expenses related to the forest sector. Guided by a National Forest Plan, the GFC develops and monitors standards for forest sector operations, develops and implements forest protection and conservation strategies, oversees forest research and provides support and guidance to forest education and training. It also issues permits to concessionaires for the commercial harvest of timber.

The country has developed principles, policies and guidelines for improved forest management and timber harvesting practices. Among these guidelines are the Code of Practice for Timber Harvesting, the Guidelines for Conducting Management-level Inventory and 100%-level Inventory, and the Guidelines for the Preparation of Forest Management Plans and Annual Operational Plans.

The Code of Practice for Timber Harvesting, revised in 2002 and based on FAO's Model Code of Forest Practice, prescribes internationally accepted standards for exclusion areas and buffer zones, 100% pre-harvest inventory, road construction, felling, skidding, trucking, operational and camp hygiene as well as occupational health and safety.

In 2000, the GFC introduced a log tracking system in 2000 to assist in verifying the origin of forest produce and control the level of harvesting within state forests. Log tags are assigned to forest concessionaires by the GFC at the start of their annual operations based on their annually approved harvesting quotas. GFC staff are present at all active concessions and control the use of the tags as well as compliance with the Code.

For the commercial harvest of timber, the Guyana Forestry Commission issues permits to concessionaires. The four types of permit include:

- Timber Sales Agreements (TSA): issued for concessions of more than 24,000 hectares and allocated for 20 years
- Wood Cutting Lease (WCL): issued for concessions between 8,000 and 24,000 hectares and allocated for 3 to 10 years.

- State Forest Permissions (SFP): issued for concessions of less than 8,000 ha and allocated for two years. These are usually issued to community-based associations or small-scale operators.
- State Forest Exploratory Permit (SFEP): issued for undertaking exploratory operations such as inventories, environmental and social impact assessments and the preparation of management plans. SFEPs do not include commercial cutting rights. They are a pre-requirement for any large concession.

The country entered into a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the European Commission in 2012. The VPA was scheduled to be ratified in September 2015, but is still in the negotiation phase (November 2015).

Transparency

The Transparency International's (TI) Corruption Perception Index (CPI) measures perceived levels of public-sector corruption, on a scale of 0-100 (0 = 100% corruption and 100 = no corruption). For 2015 Guyana was ranked 119 out of 167 countries, and scored 29 out of 100 on the CPI, indicating a high level of corruption in the country. In comparison, in 2014, Guyana ranked 124 out of 175 countries assessed and scored 30/100 on the Corruption Perception Index. Guyana remains far behind its CARICOM (Caribbean Community and Common Market) peers placing 124th out of 175 countries.

The results of the CPI is supported by the World Bank's set of Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) for all world economies. These indicators are important barometer in terms of risk assessment. The WGI country reports are based on the six following aggregate governance indicators: Voice and Accountability, Political Stability and Absence of Violence, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law, and Control of Corruption. Countries are ranked (percentile rank model) for each of the six governance indicators on a scale from 0 to 100 where 0 corresponds to lowest rank and 100 corresponds to highest rank (better governance).

In 2014, Guyana scored 54.2 in Voice and Accountability; 39.8 in Political Stability and Absence of Violence; 44.7 in Government Effectiveness; 31.7 in Regulatory Quality; 31.7 in Rule of Law; and 26.9 in Control of Corruption.

Laws and Regulations

Forestry Laws

No. 6/2009, the Forests Act 2009 (implemented October 2010) repealed the 1998 Forests Act, the Guyana Timber Export Act (1998), the Timber Marketing Act (1998) and the Forests (Exploratory Permits amendment) Act 1997. The Forestry Act (2009) promotes community participation in sustainable forestry, and includes a declaration of Protected Areas and a Code of Practice. The Act improves coordination with mining and as a result a public consultation before a license for mining or petroleum prospecting can be granted. The Act also allows for the Forestry Commission to enter into forestry concession agreements and community forest management agreements.

The 2011 Guyanese National Forest Plan implements the Forests Act 2009 (No. 6 of 2009), and aims to manage and utilise the forest resources of the nation in a way that is considerate of protecting and conserving vulnerable species. The plan also aims to ensure that productive capacity of the forest is maintained or enhanced.

The National Forest Plan provides the framework through which the National Forest Policy is implemented and therefore requires periodic update to complement changes in the policies governing the forest estate. The Plan comprises several programme areas which are executed through a number of activities, many of which are long-term and continuous, whilst some are more short term. These programme areas include:

1. National Forest Programme: Implementation of forest policy, legislation and sector plans, monitoring and evaluation of implementation and feedback to inform reviews and updates;
2. Forest classification: Preparation of forest resource information and development of procedures to ensure that forest allocation and use is integrated and co-ordinated with national land use planning and land use conflicts are managed or resolved;
3. Forest resource planning and allocation: Continued implementation of fair and transparent procedures for the allocation of forest resources and preparation of forest resource management plans using the best information available on resource capabilities and potential;
4. Forest operation monitoring and regulation establishment, monitoring and enforcement of working standards and guidelines which allow appropriate returns to operators whilst maintaining the ecological functions, ecosystem integrity and sustainability of the resource;
5. Forest industry investment: Continued implementation of guidelines and provision of support to attract investment in the forest sector that is consistent with the capacity of the forest resource base;
6. Forest products marketing: Promotion of improved marketing through research, provision of market information and expertise and the development of quality standards for forest products;
7. Forest research: Effective utilisation of human and other resources to coordinate priority forest research activities and critical problem areas;
8. Forest sector information: Promotion of awareness, understanding and appreciation of forestry issues and forest values by dissemination of knowledge and information;
9. Forest sector education and training: Development of training capacity and improvement of delivery to provide forest sector personnel skilled, trained and educated to nationally recognised standards;
10. Social development programme: Development of partnerships to deliver social services to communities and to monitor and regulate the social impacts of forest operations.

The National Forest Policy was established in 2011, and compliments the Forest Plan as the main aims are: the promotion of sustainable forest activities, improving sustainable forest resource yields, protecting watersheds and to quantify environmental services to generate forest incentives. The policy has the following objectives:

1. to promote sustainable and efficient forest activities which utilise the broad range of forest resources and contribute to national development while allowing fair returns to local and foreign entrepreneurs and investors;
2. to achieve improved sustainable forest resource yields while ensuring the conservation of ecosystems, biodiversity, and the environment;
3. to ensure watershed protection and rehabilitation: prevent and arrest the erosion of soils and the deforestation and degradation of forests, grazing lands, soil and water; promote

natural regeneration, afforestation and reforestation; and protect the forest against fire, pests and other hazards;

4. identify, quantify and assist in the marketing of environmental services to generate forest incentives for national development.

The Guyana Forestry Commission was re-established under the Guyana Forestry Commission Act (2007). The role of the Forestry Commission is to develop the forests of Guyana in a sustainable manner. The commission is responsible for developing forest policy; inspection, verification and certification of forest products and administering the Forests Act.

The Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation Act provides for the "sustainable management and utilization of approximately 360,000 hectares of Guyana's tropical rainforest dedicated by the Government of Guyana as the programme site for purposes of research by the Iwokrama International Centre to develop, demonstrate and make available to Guyana and the international community systems, methods and techniques for the sustainable management and utilization of the multiple resources of the tropical forest and the conservation of biological diversity; and for matters incidental thereto". The Act came into force in 1996 and was revised in 2012. The Act aims to implement an agreement between the Commonwealth secretariat and the Republic of Guyana. The Centre is responsible for the establishment and maintenance of Rainforest Wilderness Preserve and identifying areas suited to sustainable multiple resource utilisation.

In October 2013 Germany signed an agreement with Guyana using funding from the German Development Bank to support tropical forest protection. The full text in German can be found here.

The Forest Regulation was consolidated in 1973 and makes provision for the cutting and removal of forest produce of state forests.

The State Land Regulations of 1973 provides details for grants, licenses and permissions for land use. This includes surveying, grants for small scale cultivation, leases, grazing permissions and various licenses including for occupation and cutting. The State Lands (Amerindians) Regulations which were also consolidated in 1973, defines the rights of the Amerindians to occupy a portion of the unlicensed state lands for the purpose of residence. The forest may not be cleared and may only be used for residential purposes. Certain species may not be cut at any time and Amerindians may not cut from land that has not been granted to them (unless specified in other regulations).

Processing/Manufacturing Laws

A Code of Practice for forest operations is outlined in article 35 of the Forests Act. This also includes stakeholder engagement on the reclassification.

Article 61 grants Forest Officers the power to request permit, license or certificates to cut and process timber.

Article 38 states that no person shall build, relocate or make any alteration to a primary conversion plant (initial processing site) without a permit issued by the Commission.

Within the Forests Act, Article 11 outlines the terms of a Community forest management agreement. This allows community groups (those who live within the forest and have strong ties to

the land) to manage local forests on a sustainable basis.

All decisions regarding cutting and production of forest products are subject to Article 30 which gives the Minister the authority to make an order that may prohibit the cutting of certain species or other forms of declaration that aims to protect tree and plant species.

Transport Laws

The Public Lands (Private Roads) Act was consolidated in 1998. The Act allows the minister the ability to give permission for the construction of roads on public land where necessary or useful for mining, woodcutting etc. The Act allows for the attachment of conditions to the permit such as the right to cut timber on public land.

The Forest Regulations (1973) under Section 42 Article 8 states that the Minister may grant permission to a lessee or permit holder of a wood cutting tract to construct and use ways of transportation (such as roadways) in any state forest as may be necessary to facilitate the transportation of timber or other forest produce. Article 29 outlines that every person who has a business purchasing timber for resale must keep record of the time of each purchase; each purchase of timber grown in Guyana; the species, measurements and quantity of timber; the name and address of who sold the business the timber and the numbers of any permits under which timber was transported. This record (book) can be inspected at any time.

Article 37 describes decisions in relation to importing forest products. Section 2 of the Forests Act states that no person shall import into Guyana any forest produce that has been unlawfully obtained or exported from any country.

Article 43 forbids any person from certifying forest produce as compliant with international standards for the purpose of export unless the Guyana National Bureau of Standards has accredited that person.

Export of forest produce is covered under Article 44 which states that no forest produce may be exported without an export certificate issued by the Commission. To receive certification, the product must conform to all applicable standards established under the Guyana National Bureau of Standards Act 1984.

Trade Laws

Forests (Amendment) Regulations 1982 were created to support Timber Sales Agreements which grant exclusive rights to cut/obtain forest product over any area of state forest. The agreement sets out the payment of royalties.

Under the Forests Act, Article 13 states that any holder of State Forest Authorisation is required to fulfil the duties and obligations outlined in the Act including (but not limited to) payment of any fees. Article 80 outlines the various regulations to prescribe fees, levies and charges. This includes application and renewal fees for state forest authorisation, permit, licence or certificate.

To ensure quality control of timber, no person shall sell timber unless it has been graded and marked in accordance with guidelines (Article 42). The act also states under Article 45 that forest produce may not be sold for a price that is below the market value.

Under Article 74, the Commission has the power to charge interest on any unpaid payments by permit/license holders and recover unpaid sums and any interest charged as a civil debt. The

Minister has the power to create different classes of exploratory permit or specify the forms of content; specific criteria to consider and the manner of forestry applications. Under Article 81 the Minister may also put qualifications/restrictions on any authorisation granted. The Minister may also require that a holder of a state forest authorisation, permit, licence or certificate needs to keep books, records or registers to use as part of reporting to the Commission.

Guyana is in the process of negotiating a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA). These bilateral trade agreements are part of an EU strategy to prevent illegally logged timber entering the EU market. Though countries voluntarily sign up to the process, once a VPA is signed it is legally binding. The timber producing country is responsible for developing systems to verify that its timber exports are legal. Guyana began negotiations in December 2012.

CITES

CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) is an international agreement among governments whose purpose is to ensure that international trade in wild animal and plant species does not threaten the survival of these species. A total of 181 countries have agreed to the CITES regulations, which is a legally binding agreement. It is up to each Party to CITES to draft its own domestic legislation in order to comply with its CITES obligations.

Guyana acceded to and ratified the Convention in 1977.

CITES tree species that grow in Guyana and that are listed by CITES are Aniba rosaeodora, Cedrela fissilis, Cedrela lilloi, Cedrela odorata, Swietenia macrophylla, Swietenia humilis and Swietenia mahagoni. Four other Cedrela species are regulated under Annex D only (in the European Union, Annexes A, B, C and D replace Appendices I, II and III).

For more information about CITES species in Guyana, their status and trade names please consult:

CITES and Timber A guide to CITES-listed tree species

Species+ database

Guyana CITES Authority

For more information about European Union's classification of CITES species, go to:

UK Guidance on CITES Imports and Exports

Forest Resources

According to the Global Forest Assessment report by FAO, published in 2015, Guyana's forest resources cover 16.5 million hectares, which is roughly 84% of the country (21.5 million hectares) and includes tropical rainforest, seasonal forest, dry evergreen forest, marsh forest and mountain forest. 6.5 million (39%) hectares are classified as primary forest; the rest are other naturally regenerated forests.

Guyana's forests form part of the wider Guiana Shield Rainforest that also covers Suriname, French Guiana, Venezuela and Brazil and is one of the largest expanses of untouched tropical

rainforest in the world.

Guyana's tropical climate, unique geology, and relatively pristine ecosystems support extensive areas of species-rich rain forests and natural habitats with high levels of endemism. Approximately 8,000 species of plants grow in Guyana, half of which are found nowhere else. There are approximately 1,815 known species of fishes, amphibians, birds, reptiles and mammals.

Guyana has historically experienced rates of deforestation close to zero though a recent estimate by the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) places this at around 0.5% between 2010 and 2011, which is still one of the lowest in the world. However, Global Witness reports increased deforestation rates between 2010 and 2013.

The majority of deforestation has been attributed to increased mining activity for gold and bauxite, which represents 60% of Guyana’s exports and accounts for 93% of the deforestation in the past years.

Commercially important species

The species most favored by international markets are *Chlorocardium rodiei* (greenheart), *Peltogyne venosa* (purpleheart), *Eperua* spp (wallaba) and *Hymenaea courbaril* (locust). Species commonly harvested for industrial roundwood include *Peltogyne venosa* (purpleheart), *Chlorocardium rodiei* (greenheart), *Swartzia leiocalycina* (wamara), *Mora excelsa* (mora), *Goupia glabra* (kabukalli). There are restrictions in place on harvesting *Carapa* (crabwood), *Hymenaea* (locust) and *Manikara bidentata* (bulletwood).

Many non-timber forest products (NTFPs) are harvested by local communities, but only a few are extracted commercially. Significant volumes of canned *Euterpe oleracea* (palm heart) are exported. Nibi and kufa (rattan-like *Heteropsis flexuosa* and *Clusia* spp) are used for furniture making and exported to the Caribbean, UK and the US. Latex, dyes and crabwood oil are also produced.

Forest Products

Production Status

Most of Guyana’s forests, which cover about 84% of the country, are still intact and unthreatened by the expansion of agriculture. In its timber production forests, Guyana is pursuing a well-designed forest management and control system, and the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) is reportedly well organized with a substantial field presence. It has recently instituted improved tracking and monitoring systems, and made high-quality training available to forest operators to ensure ongoing sustainable management.

The latest FAO figures (2015) indicate that Guyana has an estimated Permanent Forest Estate (PFE) of 16.5 million hectares (ha), comprised of 14.3 million ha of natural production forest, 1.7 million ha of protection forest and 12,000 ha of planted forest. According to the ITTO (2011), at least 520,000 ha of production PFE and 332,000 ha of protection PFE are being managed sustainably. The protection PFE covers the Kaieteur National Park, Conservation International’s conservation concession, and a conservation area set aside in the Iwokrama forest. The Iwokrama forest is currently the only FSC certified area in Guyana. The 12,000 hectares of planted forest, mainly *Pinus caribaea,* were established in the 1960s and were originally intended to supply a

pulp industry but are now maintained as permanent sample plots under the management of the GFC.

The New Forest Act, which became effective in 2009, promotes the participation of Amerindians and local communities in sustainable forestry activities and allows communities to be awarded forest concessions to operate on a commercial basis to improve their livelihood. According to the ITTO, by the end of 2011, more than 60 Community Forestry Organizations and over 400 State Forest Permissions were in operation.

Commercial harvesting in Guyana is selective due to the dispersal of valuable tree stocks over a wide area, and as a result logging rates remain low. On average, 2–3 trees are felled per hectare, with an average yield of about 7 m^3. This extraction rate is less than half the maximum allowable cut of up to 20 m^3 per hectare on a 60-year cycle, as listed in the national forest plan guidelines.

The 2014 State of the World's Forests report estimates that the forest sector in Guyana generates US$96 million dollars, contributing 4.1% to the GDP, and employing about 9,000 people, or 2.8% of the labor force. According to TTF, in 2011 total industrial log production was 294,627 m^3 and total timber forest products were 434,883 m^3.

Wood exports make a significant contribution to Guyana's foreign-exchange earnings. According to the TFT, in 2012 Guyana's wood exports valued US$35 million dollars. Only companies holding forest concessions are permitted to export logs. In 2009 the Government also introduced a national log export policy that increased the export commission rate on key species used locally in production, with the aim to encourage local wood processing, stimulate more value-added activities in Guyana, increase the use of lesser-used species, and ensure that domestic downstream processors of logs receive adequate supplies of materials.

Guyana's leading wood trade partners are China, USA, India, Columbia and the Caribbean. In 2012 China became the country's leading trading partner, accounting for around 40% of all exports.

Contacts

Industry Associations

The Forest Products Development and Marketing Council of Guyana (FPDMC) was created in 2005 and formally launched in 2008. The goal of the council is to develop and market Guyana's forest products and promote sustainability. Working with stakeholders they conduct quality assurance reviews, develop lesser used species (LUS) and share marketing information.

Civil Society Organizations

WWF Guianas focuses on developing community engagement within conservation. Promoting the sustainable use of natural resources. WWF Guianas is particularly focused on the use of natural resources in the region, as unsustainable mining (particularly for gold) threatens the pristine forests of the region.

The Forest Peoples Programme is a UK NGO which was established in 1990 and works to specifically support indigenous forest people through capacity building, advocacy and practical projects.

ECO1 is an environmental NGO formed in 2007 by Guyanese wanting to do more to protect the integrity of the natural environment, to heighten environmental awareness and promote environmental and social sustainability in Guyana.

The Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation and Development (IIC) is an international not-for-profit organisation, established in 1996 under a joint mandate from the Government of Guyana and the Commonwealth Secretariat to manage the Iwokrama forest, a unique reserve of 371,000 hectares of rainforest, "in a manner that will lead to lasting ecological, economic and social benefits to the people of Guyana and to the world in general".

North Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDB) is a registered Trust and an established non-governmental, non-profit, community-based organisation currently representing 16 communities. It is an autonomous body, initially comprising of representatives from 12 indigenous communities in the North Rupununi. In 1996, it was legally established to link the 12 communities with the Iwokrama International Centre for Rain Forest Conservation and Development, government agencies, and other institutions, on issues relating to community development in the North Rupununi. The NRDDB is recognised as one of the leading community based organisations in Guyana.

The Amerindian Peoples Association (APA) is a non-governmental Indigenous Peoples organization in Guyana. It is primarily an advocacy organization that seeks to promote and defend the rights of the Indigenous Peoples of Guyana.

Government Ministries

Department of Governance, Natural Resources and The Environment

Guyana Forestry Commission is a government authority responsible for advising the government minister on forest policy, regulation and laws. The Guyana Forestry Commission is responsible for the management of all state forest land, guided by a National Forest Plan. The Commission also develops and monitors the standards for forest operations, protection and conservation strategies, research and education and training.

Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM) aims to provide dynamic partnership within community institutions and groups to become internationally competitive and improve quality of life. Guyana joined CARICOM in 1973.

Tools and Resources

- Guyana Fourth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity (2010)
- FAO (2015): Global Forest Resources Assessment 2015 – Country Report Guyana
- TFT (2013): Country Guide to Timber Legality: Guyana
- FAO (2014): State of the World's Forests
- FAO (2015): Global Forest Resources Assessment 2015 – Country Report Guyana
- The Guyana Forests Act (2009) FAOLEX
- The Forest Regulation (1973) FAOLEX

Citations

- TFT (2013): Country Guide to Timber Legality: Guyana
- FAO (2015): Forest Resource Assessment. Country Guide Guyana.
- Stabroek News (2014): Guyana still in very corrupt category of Transparency International Index