

Madagascar

Last updated: December 2015

Forest resources

Resources Overview

The forests in Madagascar are among the most highly biologically diverse of the world (12,000 plants, 80% endemic, 5% of global biodiversity). With an estimated surface area of 12.47 million hectares it represents 21% of the national territory.

The forests of the "Island Continent" are usually subdivided in three main domains:

The **Eastern Rain Forests** are dominated by diverse evergreen trees like *Diospyros* spp., *Ocotea* spp., *Revensara* spp., *Gambeya* spp., *Canarium madagascariensis*, *Syzygium* spp., *Symphonia* spp., *Sloanea* spp., *Dalbergia* spp., *Uapaca* spp., *Sarcolaena codomoclamys*, *Leptolaena bernieri* and *Schizolaena viscosa* and palm trees (*Ravinae*);

The **Western Dry Forests** are dominated by six of the eight world's baobabs (*Adansonia* spp), *Dalbergia*, *Stereospermum*, *Givotia madagascariensis*, *Xylia hildebrandtii*, *Tamarindus indica*, *Euphorbia* spp., *Chlorophora greveana*, *Securinega seyrigii*, *Diospyro* spp, *Dalbergia* spp., and palm trees (*Satranala*);

The **Southern Spiny Forests** which have the highest percentage of endemic indigenous plants of the island and are dominated by *Didiereaceae*, *Alluaudia* spp, *Euphorbia* spp., *Pacypodium* spp., *Cyphostemma laza* and *Maerua filiformis*.

In FAO Forest Resource Assessment 2015, it is estimated that primary forests represent about 24% of Malagasy forests. The other 73.5% are considered as disturbed or naturally regenerated forests and 2.5% plantations.

From 2010 to 2015 the total forest area decreased from 12.55 Mio ha to 12.47 Mio ha, of which the primary forests decreased from 3.03 Mio ha to 2.99 Mio ha. The plantation area also slightly decreased, while the area of disturbed forests increased.

Forest Governance

Historically, logging and exporting in Madagascar have been regulated by the [Malagasy government](#). As the main custodian and owner of all national forests, the government of Madagascar, through the DGF (Forestry Service) is supposed to manage and allocate forests to local communities, communes and private sectors.

The political turbulence in Madagascar in February and March 2009 however escalated illegal logging, when illegal poor workers flooded the national parks. An ensuing atmosphere of political instability developed and weakened a state authority that was already ineffectual in terms of the 1990 reform and forest sector law enforcement. The reform was intended to allow more inclusive natural resources management through the implementation of the National Environmental Action

Plan NEAP (1990-2008) along with sustainable and efficient economic recovery. Today, forest governance issues are still severe and access to natural resources is, in the main, unregulated.

In 2012, during a PROFOR workshop, Malagasy stakeholders summarized issues they thought hindered the implementation of good governance in the forestry sector. They included:

- policies and strategies, as well as texts and regulations on the management of forest resources are sometimes contradictory, and generally poorly understood by most stakeholders and therefore poorly applied;
- the capacity of the Forestry Administration is insufficient to carry out their role effectively; i.e. one forestry officer for 26,000 ha of forest reserves in a country where forests are difficult to access, while the typical ratio in Africa is 1/10 000 ha. Forest officers are poorly paid (so tempted by corruption);
- the interests of stakeholders are often competing and poorly managed; and
- forest management is perceived and practiced by the Authority as an exclusive privilege without participation of other stakeholders.

The logging and export is orchestrated by only a few dozen powerful "Timber Barons," a group of exporters who are some of the wealthiest Malagasy citizens and therefore strongly influence regional and national politics and the law enforcement. As a result periodic trade windows are opened regularly and large-scale exports of illegal precious woods clear customs without much difficulty. Thousands of workers are involved in the logging and transporting the precious woods for the Malagasy timber barons. Poverty pushes the people into those informal and criminal activities. Villagers' protests against forest destruction or their refusal to participate in the plundering lead to violent responses by the timber mafia.

Naturally Occurring

[African cherry](#)
[Merbau](#)

Planted

[Caribbean pine](#)
[Okoume](#)

Forest management

Management Overview

The forest sector in the Republic of Madagascar plays a vital role in the life of the Malagasy society. Malagasy people largely depend on forests to satisfy vital needs such as timber, fire wood, medicinal plants and hunting products. Until recently, Madagascar's forests had not experienced the levels of intense logging seen in countries like [Malaysia](#) or [Indonesia](#) due to its smaller trees, challenging terrain, and national policies favoring locally controlled, small-scale operations.

Commercial logging for export is solely focused on the selective logging of rosewoods and ebonies in Madagascar, a practice that can be traced back more than twenty years prior to the [2009 Malagasy political crisis](#). For decades, artisanal loggers extracted high-value trees from most

remaining forests on the island. Between 1974 and 1980, logging was still permitted in some zones, and continued legally until all trees of commercially valuable size had become rare. In addition to an upsurge of rosewood trafficking, when an estimated 1500 containers costing USD220 million in 2009-2010 were illegally exported, the traditional slash-and-burn cultivation and fuel wood production and a political crisis between 2009 and 2013, have all put Madagascan forests under increased pressure.

Logging permits are sold in auctions, and often issued under conditions not guaranteeing compliance with the limits and rules. The boundaries are not marked on the ground prior to exploitation. Loggers often do not respect the limits of forestry permits and lack knowledge regarding exploitable diameters.

The Environmental Action Plan (1990-2008) indicated that 1.5 to 2 million hectares of production forests were to have forest management plans. But in 2013, less than 500 000 ha of forests had a management plan.

Though there is the plan to gradually increase the area of forest plantations there has been a halt of forest plantation growth since 2010, also due to the political crisis.

Transparency

Transparency remains largely deficient in Madagascar, not only regarding forestry. 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 2014 Madagascar scored 28/100 on the CPI, which indicates a high level of corruption in the country. It ranked 133 out of 175 countries assessed in 2014.

The results of the CPI are 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, Madagascar scored 32 in Voice and Accountability; 27 in Political Stability and Absence of Violence; 9 in Government Effectiveness; 26 in Regulatory Quality; 25 in Rule of Law; and 22 in Control of Corruption. These figures are all indications that governance in Madagascar still needs significant improvement.

Many citizens are still unable to hold the forest authorities accountable or to fully participate in the management of forest resources because their rights to land and forest remain insecure, public access to information is very limited, transparency is not clearly dealt within the existing legislation, there are legal inconsistencies, the implementation of laws as well as the capacity is weak.

Tools and resources

Digital Sources

[FAO FRA 2015](#)

[Global Witness & EIA \(2009\): Investigation into the illegal felling, transport and export of precious wood in Sava region Madagascar.](#)

[Madagascar, politique forestière: Bilan 1990 – 2013 et propositions](#)

[Etat des lieux de la gouvernance forestière à Madagascar \(2012\): Rapport de l'atelier du 18 et 19 Octobre 2012.](#)

[Transparency International Corruption Perception Index](#)

[Worldwide Governance Indicators - The World Bank - 2014](#)

[CITES](#)

[WWF](#)

Analog Sources

Office National pour l'Environnement, Direction Générale des Forêts / Ministère de l'Environnement et des Forêts, Conservation International - Madagascar, Foiben-Taosarintanin'i Madagasikara, Madagascar National Parks (2013): Evolution de la couverture de forêts naturelles à Madagascar 2005-2010

Relevant laws

Laws Overview

The Malagasy environmental and forest policy is based on four laws, namely the Environmental Charter (Law 90-033 of 21 December 1990), GELOSE (Law 95-025 of 30 September 1996 - the local management of renewable natural resources), the Forest Law (Law 97-017 of 8 August 1997) and the Protected Areas Code (Law 2001-005 of 11 February 2003). In addition, Law 96-025 AGAR law is supposed to organize the transfer of the management of state-renewable resources to local communities or resident riparian forest areas.

Fifteen years after the introduction of the laws, only a quarter of decrees implementing the Forest Law have been announced. Currently the forest policy is undergoing a revision, a forestry code is being established, a national strategy and action plans being developed.

Forestry Laws

As part of the implementation of the National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP), in the forestry sector, texts resulting in laws and regulations including the Forest Law No. 97 017 of 8 August 1997 were based on four orientations:

- Halting natural resource degradation processes;
- Better management of forest resources;
- Increasing the area and forestry potential; and
- Increasing the forest sector's economic performance.

The texts deal with:

- the definition of forest and forest products;
- the regulations related to forest tenure;

- the organization and missions of the forest service;
- the relationship between the forest administration and regional and local authorities;
- perimeters subject to special regulations; and
- the national forestry fund and fees.

Laws related to Forestry

Law n° 60-004 of 02/05/60 on the national private domain

Law n° 2005-018 of October 17, 2005 on International Trade in Endangered Species of wild flora and fauna (CITES introduction to Malagasy law) specifying offenses and penalties relating to the import or export of protected species.

Forestry Decrees

- Decree n°60-338 of 09/07/60 fixing from October 1, 1960 the terms of reference and methods of repair parts on fines, judgment money, seizure and confiscation
- Decree n° 61-078 of 02.08.61 (effective) laying down detailed rules for the application of Ordinance No. 60128 of 10/03/60
- Decree n°69-085 of 2/25/59 controlling butterfly hunting
- Decree n° 82-312 of 07/19/82 regulating the manufacture of charcoal
- Decree n° 85-072 of 03/13/85 establishing a national operation of ""action for the tree""
- Decree n° 87/110 of 03/31/87 setting the terms of forest logging, timber licenses and user rights
- Decree n° 2006-097 of 01/31/06 laying down rules for implementing the law on International Trade in Endangered Species of wild fauna and flora
- Decree n° 98003 of 8/1/98 on the production and marketing of forest seeds
- Decree n° 98-781 of 09/16/98, as amended by No. 2005-849 of 12/13/05, laying down the general conditions for application of the law amending forestry legislation
- Decree n° 98-782 of 09/16/98 on logging regulations
- Decree n° 2000/383 of 07/06/00 relating to reforestation with its implementing Decree No. 9398/00 of 09/05/00
- Decree n° 2001-068 of 01/24/01 establishing the conditions for products seized, confiscated
- Decree n° 2001-1123 of 12/28/01 on rules for managing National, Provincial and Regional Forest Funds
- Decree n° 2005 849, 12/13/05 revising the general requirements of the law 97017 of 8/8/97 amending the forest legislation

- Decree n° 2010-137 of 03/23/10 regulating the integrated management of coastal and marine areas in Madagascar
- Decree n° 2010/141 of 03/24/10 relating Prohibition of logging, transportation and export of rosewood and ebony in Madagascar

Ordinances

- Ordinance n° 60-123 of 10/03/60 on the classification of land of Madagascar into zones oriented forestry, pastoral or agricultural
- Ordinance n° 60-128 of 10/03/60 laying down the procedure for the punishment of violations of forest law, hunting, fishing and the protection of nature,
- Ordinance n° 75-014 of 11/18/75 ratifying the Conservation on International Trade in Species of Wild Fauna and flora threatened with extinction
- Ordinance n° 83-010 of 05/03/83 amending Ordinance n° 60128 establishing the procedures for the prosecution of violations of forestry hunting regulations, hunting and the protection of nature
- Ordinance n° 2011 - 001 of 08/08/11 relating Regulations and Punishments regarding offenses on rosewood and ebony

Interministerial Orders

- Interministerial Order n° 2915/87 of 06/30/87 driving the exploitation of secondary forest products
- Interministerial Order n°1941 of 04/11/89 establishing entrance fees in strict nature reserves, national parks, special reserves and forest sites
- Interministerial Order n°6686 of 07/01/00 regulating the exploitation and marketing of forest products and accessories
- Interministerial Order n° 7204/2005 of 06/20/05 temporarily suspending collection of dead woods and export of rosewood and ebony
- Interministerial Order n° 16030/2006 of 09/14/06 on procedures for logging and marketing ebony, rosewood and palisander
- Interministerial Order n° 17914 of 10/18/06 extending the suspension of the granting of mining licenses and forestry permits in classified reserve denominated ""conservation sites and sites of sustainable forest management
- Interministerial Order n° 10885/2007 of 07/03/07 banning export of all categories of natural forest timber
- Interministerial Order n° 18633/2008 / MEFT / MEM of 10/17/08 setting global temporary protection of the sites covered by the Interministerial Order n° 17914/2006 / MEFT / MEM 10/18/06 and lifting the suspension of the granting of mining and logging permits for certain sites.
- Interministerial Order n° 2009/003 of 01/28/09 authorizing the exceptional export of raw ebony and rosewoods in the SAVA region

- Interministerial Order n° 38244/2009 of 09/21/09 authorizing the exceptional export of raw or semi-finished precious woods