Suriname

Last updated: February 2016

Suriname has 15.3 million hectares of forest covering approximately 94% of the country's surface area. (FAO, 2015). 91.4% of Suriname's forest area is primary forest, 8.5% is naturally regenerated and only 0.1% planted. Suriname's forests are located within the broader Guianan Moist Forests area, one of the largest continuous tracts of relatively pristine lowland tropical rainforest in the world. Suriname's population of 568,000 mainly lives on the coast, so as a result the country historically had a low rate of deforestation. Between 2004-2013, 16,000 ha of forest was harvested.

Forestry activities contributed roughly 2% to annual national GDP in 2011, while providing employment for approximately 9000 people (Global Forest Watch, 2015). Suriname's estimated annual deforestation rate is approximately 0.02%, with mining for bauxite, gold and kaolin as the main driver of deforestation and degradation.

While most of the country is forest covered, the northern half of the country is where the logging concessions are located.

Forest Management

There are several government institutions that have a role in the management and protection of Suriname's forests.

- The **Ministry of Physical Planning, Land and Forestry Management** is responsible for legislation, while the **Foundation for Forest Management and Forest Control (Stichting voor Bosbeheer en Bostoezicht – SBB)** is responsible for ensuring the Forest Management Act is enforced and as a result plays a key role in the management of production forests.
- The **Nature Conservation Division** (NB – previously attached to the old Suriname forest service) is responsible for enforcing the 1954 Nature Conservation Act.
- The **Forest and Nature Management Authority** (Bosnas) has been working towards establishing a single authority to manage the production and protected forests but this is ongoing.

Suriname's Constitution states that all forested land, except privately owned land (which totals 50,000 hectares), belongs to the state. Of Suriname's 15.3 million ha of forest, an estimated 7.2 million hectares is classified as Permanent Forest Estate (PFE), which is forest areas designated by law or regulation to be retained as forest which may not be converted to other land use (FAO, 2015). Of Suriname's PFE, 5.32 million hectares is designated as natural production forest and 2.19 million hectares is designated as protected forest. An estimated 247,000 hectares of the PFE production forest is under Sustainable Forest Management, including 89,000 hectares that are FSC certified. The remaining 7.29 million hectares do not have a logging designation, according to SBB.

Logging activities can take place only in areas where a timber cutting license (e.g. concession,

community forest, incidental cutting license) has been issued, on privately owned land, or on long lease land. As of 2011, 64 logging concessions had been allocated covering a total area of 1.35 million hectares. 80 communal forests had also been allocated accounting for 0.58 million hectares and a further 3 Incidental Cutting Licenses (ICL) covering 0.17 million hectares.

Many of Suriname's indigenous and Maroon peoples claim most of the forested land in the interior of the country. Although the government has allocated approximately 550,000 hectares of forest to Amerindian and Maroon peoples as community forests, international and regional human rights bodies, including the Inter-American Human Rights System, have recognized that the rights of indigenous and tribal communities to land in the country's interior are more extensive than rights recognized by the government. While having reached agreement on this issue, the state has agreed to work with indigenous and Maroon peoples to produce land ownership maps through the UN-REDD+ program. The International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) stated in their 2015 yearly update that while a specific governmental role was created to work on legislation recognizing the land rights of indigenous communities (the Presidential Commissioner on Land Rights). Suriname is the only country in the Western hemisphere without specific legislation on land rights for indigenous and tribal people.

According to the Forest Management Act (1992) of Suriname, three forms of tenure are granted:

1. *Forest concessions under Article 25 of the Forest Law are issued to concessionaires that hold the rights to harvest and transport timber. These vary in size and duration – they can be extended once for the same duration as the concessions have been granted and include:* 1) Short term: issued for concessions of less than 5,000 hectares for a period of 1 to 5 years; 2) Medium term: issued for concessions between 5,000 and 50,000 hectares for a period of 5 to 10 years; and, 3) Long term: issued for concessions of between 50,000 and 150,000 hectares for a period of 10 to 20 years.
2. *Communal Wood Cutting Permits (HKV) are allocated under Article 58 of the Forest Law and were originally issued to villages for their own use. Commercial logging undertaken in these areas is becoming more common and in these instances must follow the requirements for forest concessions.*
3. *Incidental Cutting Licenses (ICL) under Article 38 of the Forest Law are issued for forest conversion and should be felled in entirety in a single operation. No concession fees are paid but other charges applied based on the cutting register."*

Suriname is engaged in various initiatives and has signed numerous conventions at the regional and international levels with the aim of promoting the sustainable management of its forest ecosystems and organising against illegal use of forest resources. Such initiatives include but are not limited to:

1. participation in UN REDD since 2011;
2. CITES;
3. Amazon Cooperation Treaty;
4. Convention on Biological Diversity;
5. International Tropical Timber Agreement (member of ITTO since 1998);
6. Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage; and
7. Caribbean Environment Programme.

Transparency

According to quality of governance assessments, Suriname scores below average for transparency and regulatory quality indicators. For other governance indicators, Suriname received an average rating.

Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index ranks countries from 100 (perceived very uncorrupt) to 0 (perceived very corrupt) and has ranked Suriname 36/100 in 2014. This is consistent with 2013 and 2012 scoring of 36 and 37 respectively. This is indicative of weak governance and unreliable official documentation.

The World Bank compiles a set of Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) for all world economies. These indicators are an 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 for each of the six governance indicators on a scale from 0 to 100 where 0 corresponds to the lowest rank and 100 corresponds to highest rank. Suriname's latest WGI Country data report covers the period 1996-2014. Suriname scored 64 in Voice and Accountability; 55 in Political Stability and Absence of Violence; 47 in Government Effectiveness; 30 in Regulatory Quality; 50 in Rule of Law; and 31 in Control of Corruption.

Laws and Regulations

Forestry Laws

The Constitution of the Republic of Suriname stipulates that the social goal of the State is to create and stimulate circumstances that are necessary for the protection of nature and maintenance of ecological balance.

The Forest Management Act of 1992, which replaced the Timber Act of 1947, contains requirements intended to promote sustainable forest management practices for the production of timber and non-timber products, including those related to confiscation of illegally-logged timber. It sets out rules regarding timber production and export, as well as defining the various licenses for forest harvesting available. The act also takes into account the interest of forest-dwellers and conservation of biological diversity. Furthermore, it provides rules governing timber production (and, to some extent, timber processing) and export.

The National Forest Policy document was created in 2003 which intended "to enhance the contribution of the forests to the national economy and the well-being of current and future generations with due regard for the conservation of the biodiversity." In 2009 an interim strategic action plan was put in place to strengthen SFM within the country. The policy considers sociocultural, environmental and economic goals equally, which is supported by Suriname's 2012-2016 development plan.

The Environmental Assessment Guidelines Volume I : Generic, second edition, 2009, were established by NIMOS (the National Institute for Environment and Development) for logging, mining, agriculture and energy production and other activities that have a significant impact on the environment. The development of an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) is not yet mandatory because the environmental legislative framework is still in the constitutional process. However, the government states that it has become good practice and is now considered

commonplace.

The National Biodiversity Strategy (NBS) adopted in March 2006 provides the national vision, goals and strategic direction to be pursued to conserve and sustainably use the nation's rich biodiversity and biological resources, foster sustainable management of its natural resources, and support the equitable sharing of biodiversity related services and benefits, provided by ecosystems.

Processing/Manufacturing Laws

Processing capacity in Suriname is relatively low, and processing is not required for exports. Currently, Suriname hosts a single plywood mill and approximately 70 sawmills, most of which are located in and around the capital Paramaribo. Sawmilling capacity ranges between 5,000 and 15,000 m^3 of round log input with most producing less than 2,000 m^3 of finished product annually. TFT reported in 2013 that Suriname's installed capacity of sawmill production is estimated at 340,000 m^3 per year, but production in 2011 only reached 100,000 m^3.

Tax Laws

The direct earnings from Suriname's forestry sector come from forest levies. These are exploration fees, retributions and royalties on harvested and removed timber, grading fees, export duties on unprocessed and semi-processed timber and concession fees. .

Since 2000, illegal logging has been reduced by a co-operation between SBB (Foundation for Forest Management and Production Control), NIMOS and the police, including the district commissioners. This has been strengthened by several policy initiatives (e.g. the zero-tolerance policy for un-tagged logs: no un-tagged logs can leave the country via official ports) (FCPF).

Forestry Advisory Assistance to the Ministry of Natural Resources in Suriname, 1999: http://www.fao.org/3/a-x6825e.pdf

Suriname has low logging concession fees and low taxes on timber export. The forest carbon partnership found that a low tax on gold and outdated mining legislation that did not take logging activities into account were driving deforestation in 2013.

Trade Laws

Foundation for Forest Management and Forest Control (Stichting voor Bosbeheer en Bostoezicht – SBB) sets out in the sustainable forest management plan that logging activities must only take place where a cutting license is issued and on long lease, privately owned land. SBB must approve any harvesting activities based on a harvesting plan which includes the cutting area the logs will be removed from, as well as species and size information of all inventoried trees. To reduce the impact on the surrounding forest areas logging should follow the Reduced Impact Logging (RIL) system.

Once trees are felled they are tagged with a uniquely number label (provided by SBB). The trees are reported on a cutting register using their unique label number. Once SBB approves the register and retribution payment has been made, the timber can be transported and processed (UNREDD RPP).

The unique number is entered in the LogPro Log Tracking System (developed in 1998 by an FAO

consultant) and processed. A forest guard will check the origin of the logs based on their label numbers; the location of the felled trees (as well as other factors such as the concession border and landings) will be gathered by GPS, and GIS is used to gather the relevant information into a map.

The timber can then be transported with documentation that must be presented at regular guard posts, mills and ports. These points are checked regularly by forest guards using the unique ID numbers assigned to each log (UNREDD RPP).

The unique label number indicates where the log was cut, when it was transported, and if the retribution has been paid. Before any log can be exported, it must be graded, have its origin checked, and any relevant retributions or taxes must be paid.

Suriname is currently not engaged in discussions on legal timber trade with the EU with regard to the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan nor with the US in response to the US Lacey Act.

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.

Suriname acceded to the treaty in 1980. Entry into force was 1981. Aniba rosaeodora (rosewood) is listed on Appendix II, though there are no current CITES international trade suspensions, export quotas or reservations in place for the species. Cedrela fissilis and Cedrela odorata are both CITES Appendix III listed. These are termite and rot resistant as well as being light weight, and so are most commonly used in furniture used to store clothing.

A Contact list of Suriname CITES officials, including Management and Scientific Authorities can be found here.

Forest Resources

Roughly 8,000 hectares of forest are plantations established by the Forest Service. Pinus caribaea comprise 60% of these 8,000 hectares, which is used for building, crates and pallets as well as for pulp manufacture. The other species represented in these 8,000 ha are either indigenous broadleaf species, such as Cedrela spp., Cordia alliodora or Simaruba amara, or an exotic species, such as Eucalyptus globulus.

In a 2013 TFT report, it was indicated that Suriname has a number of trees species that are restricted for harvesting and trade, including:

- Bolletrie (Manilkara bidentata) – permitted by the Foundation for Forest Management and Forest Control (Stichting voor Bosbeheer en Bostoezicht – SBB), the agency responsible for management of forest production, on a case by case basis.
- Hoepelhout (Copaifera guianensis)

- Inginoto (Bertholletia excelsa)
- Rozenhout (Aniba spp.)
- Sawari (Caryocar nuciferum)
- Tonka (Dipteryx odorata & punctata).

As of November 2015, there are 29 timber species on the IUCN Red list, which range from lower risk to critically endangered. Three species are of particular note are:

- Aniba rosaeodora (Endangered): Bois De Rose
- Virola surinamensis (Endangered): Baboonwood
- Vouacapoua americana (Critically Endangered)

For the full list of IUCN Red list species, please visit their website.

Forest Products

Forest products in Suriname include roundwood, sawnwood, fiberboard, plywood, particle board, and hewn square poles. Most of Suriname's forest products are used domestically. In 2012, 484,000 m^3 of roundwood and 138,000 m^3 of sawnwood were produced. Of that volume, 109,216 m^3 of roundwood and 11,000 m^3 of sawnwood were exported. These figures were a slight increase from 2011, which saw 413,000 m^3 of roundwood and 113 m^3 of sawnwood produced, with 92,000 m^3 of roundwood and 6000 m^3 of sawnwood exported.

In 2011, more than 150 different timber species were harvested. Gronfolo, also known as Mandioqueira or Quaruba (Qualearosea), was the most cut timber species, comprising 19% of 2011's harvest with a volume of 67,664 m^3. In terms of 2011 harvest volume, Gronfolo was followed by Basralocus, also known as Angelique (*Dicorynia guianensis*), with a volume of 58,994 m^3, or 16% to the total harvest. Other timber species that have also made a significant contribution to the total harvest volume are:

- Purpleheart (6%) (*Peltogyne paniculata*),
- Kopi (5%) (*Goupia glabra*),
- Wana (4%) (*Ocotea rubra*),
- Bolletrie (4%) (*Manikara bidentata*),
- Walaba (3%) (*Eperua*),
- Gele Kabbes (2%) (*Vatairea guianensis*),
- Kimboto (2%) (*Pradosia ptychandra*), and
- Wana Kwari (2%) (*Vochysia tomentosa*).

These 10 species accounted for 65% of Suriname's total industrial roundwood production in 2011.

Between 2004 and 2012 Suriname’s wood products export value increased by $11 million to $14.3 million. Though 75% of logs were consumed domestically in 2012, the most important export market of Surinamese timber in 2012 were China (69% of exports), India, Netherlands, Taiwan

and South Korea, Germany, and Belgium. The 2013 EUTR legislation means that any logs being sold to European countries must demonstrate legality through supply chain information. There is a clear split between the Asian market (which prefers logs) and European markets (which predominantly buys sawn wood).

Production Status

For decades, timber production had stagnated at 150,000 – 200,000m^3/year, approximately 20% of the potential sustainable timber production. However, timber production in recent years has increased to an estimated 247,377 m^3 in 2010 and 366,000 m^3 in 2011.

In 2011 there were 149 valid logging and exploration licenses with a total surface area of approximately 2.4 million ha. Of these 149 licenses, 68 were concessions, with a surface area of approximately 1.4 million ha. There were 80 Communal Timber Cutting Licenses (HKVs) and community forests with a total surface area of approximately 584,000 ha and 3 Incidental Cutting Licenses (ICLs) with a total surface area of approximately 170,000 ha.

Poor access and long distances to markets challenge commercial harvesting in many of these forests, so production is not economically feasible.

Contacts

Industry Associations

- Suriname Trade and Industry Association was established in 1950 and represents 235 members from sectors such as banking, industry, timber, agriculture, mining, tourism, transport, insurance, commercial services, and trade.

Civil Society Organizations

- Tropenbos International includes programmes of research, capacity building and institutional development, managing programmes in DR Congo, Colombia, Ghana, Indonesia, Viet Nam and Suriname. The Suriname office was established in 2003 to promote "wise use" of the forest so that the country can maintain its high forested and low deforestation status and at the same time improve the national living standards.
- Conservation International is a global environmental organization that has worked in Suriname for the last 20 years.
- The WWF Suriname Office, established in 1999, co-ordinates conservation efforts across the 3 countries of Suriname, French Guiana (Guyane), and Guyana.
- The **VIDS (Vereniging van Inheemse Dorpshoofden in Suriname)** is an association of indigenous village leaders (known as Captains) from each of the 35 indigenous villages in Suriname. Each Captain is elected by the community or chosen in accordance with traditional practices. Established in 1992, the VIDS' goals and objectives are to promote and defend the rights of indigenous peoples, to speak for indigenous peoples on the national and international levels and to support sustainable development in Suriname.
  Address: PAS gebouw, Verl. Keizerstraat 92, Paramaribo, Suriname tel. 597 520130 fax. 597 520131, e-mail: vids@sr.net
- The **Association of Saramaka Authorities (VSG)** is a representative organization of

traditional Saramaka village leaders formed in March 1998 in response to increasing pressure from multinational logging companies and the failure of the Surinamese government to recognize and respect rights to their ancestral lands. The VSG presently represents 61 Saramaka villages with a total population of approximately 20,000 persons. Address: Reinastraat 4a, Paramaribo, Suriname 597 464263 e-mail: tooka@sr.net

- Organization of Indigenous People in Suriname - OIS - established in 1992.
- Suriname Conservation Foundation works for the protection of the Tropical Rain Forest and the Conservation of Biodiversity in Suriname.

Government Ministries

- The **Forest Service (LBB) of the Ministry of Physical Planning, Land and Forest Management**. *Contact: Mr. B. Drakensteyn; Ministry of Physical Planning, Land & Forest Management, Cornelis Jongbawstraat 10-14 PO Box 436*
- The **National Environmental Council and the National Institute for Environment and Development in Suriname** (NIMOS) was established in 1998 to implement and monitor national environmental policy, including impact assessments. *Contact: Nationaal Instituut voor Milieu en Ontwikkeling in Suriname Onafhankelijkheidsplein 2 Paramaribo Tel: (597) 520043/520045 Fax: (597) 520042*
- The **Nature Conservation Division (NB) of the Forest Service** is the CITES authority and is responsible for issuing permits for export of CITES species and therefore also for the enforcement of laws on hunting and wildlife (the Game Law 1954). *Contact: Cornelis Jongbawstraat, Ministry of Physical Planning, Land & Forest Management, 10-14 PO Box 436*
- The **Foundation for Forest Management and Production Control (SBB)** was established in 1998 and mandated by the Forest Service (LBB) to manage forest production and is therefore responsible for the supervision and control of all logging. TSBB also carries out forest monitoring and forest production statistics. *Contact: Rene Somopawiro sbbsur@sr.net*
- The **Ministry of Natural Resources (NH)** is directed to ensure an assessment of existing and future drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, including mining and energy production activities. *Contact: Ministry of Natural Resources, Mirandastraat 1115, Paramaribo, T : 474-666/ 473-428*
- The **Ministry of Regional Development (RO)** has the responsibility to inform all relevant forest dependent groups, in particular forest-dependent communities and Indigenous and Maroon communities, and ensure they have been effectively consulted regarding the implementation of the UNREDD+ plans and strategies. *Contact: Ministry of Regional Affairs, Roseveltkade, Paramaribo, T : 471214/269*

Tools and Resources

- Forest Carbon Partnership (2013), Suriname Readiness Preparation Proposal
- FAOSTAT Gateway
- WWF (2001), Northern South America: Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana, northern Brazil, and eastern Venezuela

- Tropenbos International (2009) Rapid Assessment of Existing Financial Mechanisms for Sustainable Forest Management in Suriname
- FAO (2010), Global Forest Resources Assessment, Country Profile: Suriname
- FAO (2015) Global Forest Resources Assessment, Desk Reference
- FAO (2010) Description of Plantation Resources, Suriname.
- Global Forest Watch (2015), Country Profile: Suriname.
- FAO Stat (2014) Global exports of wood and paper products.
- Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF). 2013. Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP): Suriname.
- Forestry Advisory Assistance to the Ministry of Natural Resources in Suriname, 1999.
- ITTO (2011): Status of Tropical Forest Management: Suriname.
- US Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs (2012) 2012 Investment Climate Statement – Suriname, Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, US Department of State.
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- Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment (unknown) Environmental Impact Assessment Profile: Suriname
- TFT (2013), Country Guide to Timber Legality: Suriname.
- IUCN (2015) List of Threatened Species, Suriname
- FAO (2015) Global Forest Resources Assessment: Country Profile Suriname
- Butler, R. A. (2013) Deforestation rates for countries outside Brazil, Mongabay [online, published 26th June, 2013].
- IWGIA (2015), Yearbook article on indigenous peoples in Suriname

Citations