

# Cambodia

Last updated: May 2023

Cambodia is located in Southeast Asia on the Indochinese Peninsula. Cambodia has a tropical climate and is a major producer of timber. One of the key deforestation drivers has been agricultural expansion, both through small-scale clearing for farms and plantations, as well as through granting of forestland for large-scale agro-industrial development through Economic Land Concession. In Cambodia's efforts to combat illegal logging, the government has introduced a moratorium on timber harvesting of natural forests and has allowed for community forest practices since 2003.

## Forest Management

Cambodia's forest lands are owned by the government and by private forest plantation concessions. The following agencies/ministries oversee regulation and management of forest lands and products in Cambodia:

- **Ministry of the Environment (MoE):** Holds jurisdiction over designated protected areas
- **Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF):** Governs over the operation of the development of fisheries, agriculture, and forests in Cambodia, specifically the designated production areas and oversees the implementation of Economic Land Concessions (ELCs)
- **The Forestry Administration (FA):** Serves as the governing authority responsible for managing forests and forest resources. It works under the MAFF.
- **General Department of Customs and Excise of Cambodia:** Responsible for managing, controlling, and levying taxes on any imported/exported good and facilitating international trade.

## Transparency

For information regarding transparency and risk scores in Cambodia, head to these links:

- **Transparency International's [Corruption Perception Index](#)** ranks countries and territories based on perceived levels of public sector corruption according to experts and businesspeople.
- The **World Bank's Worldwide [Governance Indicators](#)** summarize the views on the quality of governance provided by a large number of enterprise, citizen and expert survey respondents in industrial and developing countries.

## Laws and Regulations

Timber in Cambodia can be commercially harvested from planted forests. Most wood processed in

Cambodia is sourced from ELCs, plantations, and community forests. Since 2002, there has been a moratorium on logging in natural forests due to a lack of control of timber harvesting in the area.

## Forestry Laws

- [Law on Forestry \(2002\)](#): Regulates the management, use, conservation, and development of all forests (planted or natural). Outlines the duties of the Forestry Administration, defines permanent and private forests, and the rights of individuals, legal entities and traditional users in terms of forest products. The law has been utilized as the main legal authority in Cambodia on forestry and timber production.
- [National Forest Programme \(2010-2029\)](#): Implemented to ensure conservation and sustainable forest management through a series of objectives:
  - Maximize the contribution of sustainable forestry to poverty alleviation;
  - Ensuring forest-based livelihoods can adapt to climate change; ◦ Adopt macro land-use planning approach to allow for more holistic development;
  - Adopt forest governance, law, and enforcement across all levels;
  - The development of a conflict-management system;
  - Improving institutional capacity to educate future generations;
  - Protect and conserve forest resources;
  - Apply modern, adaptable, sustainable management models;
  - Develop a sustainable financing system
- [Land Law \(2001\)](#): Works to manage property rights in Cambodia. Refers to recognition of rights to land of person who have had peaceful, uncontested possession of the land for a certain period.
  - Article 23: Recognizes the communal rights to immovable property for indigenous communities
- [Sub-decree on Community Forest Management \(2003\)](#): Allows for the establishment and use of community forests in Cambodia. Gives rights to any Cambodian community to establish a "Community Forest (CF)" which manages that area and abides by Forest Administration rules in regards to state forest and resource management. These CFs can only be located on state public property and must be accompanied with a Community Forest Agreement with Management Plan (CFMP).

## Processing/Manufacturing Laws

There are no processing/manufacturing law, but all processing activities, such as sawmill, furniture factory, and retailing (Depot), shall have permits that required by the Law on Forestry (2002).

## Transport Laws

- [Law on Forestry \(2002\)](#): States that all activities related to permanent forest estates, forestry products, and by-products requires a permit for transport quotas, which are delivered by the Head of the Forestry Administration (articles 25-26). Mandates that all forest products and by-products that are harvested need to be assessed by a Forestry

Administration official for quality and quantity prior to the transport of the product from the forest (article 54). Outlines the requirements of the Forestry Administration hammer stamp that is used to mark legal prior to transport and mark illegal logs that are used as evidence for forest offenses. Permitted logs should have four marks (at the base and the end of the log). Impounded logs should have three marks in a triangle position in three locations (base, middle, and end of the log) (articles 65-67). States that the permit process must be completed within one month after harvest (article 69).

## Tax Laws

- [Law on Forestry \(2002\)](#): states that the license for export/import of forest products and by-products must be issued by the Ministry of Commerce, after the issuance of a visa by the Head of the Forestry Administration. The exports will be inspected before being sealed into containers by Forestry Administration officials before the products can be transported to a customs warehouse. Any export/import tax must be paid for the export/import to the national budget (article 73).

## Trade Laws

- [Sub-Decree No. 131 \(2006\)](#): States that all imports and exports of forest products are only permitted if the product has a license from the Ministry of Commerce and with authorization from the Chief of Forest Administration.
  - Article 40: Restates the rights of local communities living within or near the Permanent Forest Reserves. These communities will not have to provide a permit for the forest products and by-products and includes the right to barter and sell products.
  - Article 57: States that royalties and premiums shall be paid for all forest products and by-products. All payments should be made before the product can be transferred to a third party. Authorized the Forestry Administration has the right to seize products should the permit holder not pay royalties/premiums by the agreed date.

## CITES

The [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora](#) (CITES) is an international agreement among governments whose purpose is to ensure that the international trade of wild animals and plant species does not threaten the survival of these species. It is up to each country to draft their own domestic legislation to comply with its CITES obligations. Cambodia signed onto the Convention in 1997.

Species under the protection of CITES are listed under three Appendices based on how threatened they are by international trade. The species listed in Appendix I face the highest level of threat. The international trade of species listed in Appendix I is prohibited, unless the purpose of import is noncommercial. The trade of species listed under Appendix II is tightly controlled and may be authorized with an export permit or re-export certificate. Any species listed under Appendix III have been listed at the request of a Party that needs other countries' cooperation to regulate the trade of the species. International trade in Appendix III is allowed with appropriate permits or certificates.

If you don't know if the species you are interested in sourcing from this country is CITES listed, please check this [link](#). If the species is listed, please use this [database](#) to identify the National

CITES Authority. Normally, the CITES Authority is the same agency that oversees forest resources. In Cambodia, MAFF has been assigned the role as Cambodia's CITES Management Authority.

## Forest Resources

In 2010, Cambodia had 7.22Mha of natural forest, extending over 42% of its land area (Global Forest Watch).

The [Law on Forestry \(2002\)](#) establishes two forest types in Cambodia (articles 10-11):

1. **Private Forests**, which are to be maintained and managed by private owners;
2. **Permanent Forest Reserves**, which are state-owned natural and planted forests, classified into three categories:
  1. Production Forests: to be maintained in order to allow for the sustainable production of forest products and by-products. These production forests include forest concessions, rehabilitated forests, community forests, etc.
  2. Protection Forests: maintained for the protection of the forest ecosystems and natural resources, such as reserve forests.
  3. Conversion Forest Land: land that has yet not been designated for use and remains state public land until further notice

## Contacts

### Industry Associations

- The Technical Working Group on Forestry Reform (TWG-FR)
- Cambodia Timber Industry Association
- Rattan and Bamboo Association of Cambodia

### Civil Society Organizations

- [WWF Cambodia](#)
- [Mlup Baitong](#)
- [The Culture and Environment Preservation Association \(CEPA\)](#)
- [Save the Earth Cambodia](#)
- [Mother Nature Cambodia](#)
- [RECOFTC Cambodia](#)

## Tools and Resources

- The [Timber Trade Portal](#), launched by the European Timber Trade Federation and the

**Association Technique Internationale des Bois Tropicaux (ATIBT)** provides country profiles on the timber industry and legislation of producer countries, mainly in tropical Africa, Asia and Latin America.

- **FAO's [TimberLex](#)** which provides access to country-specific legal information on forest management, timber production and trade
- **Preferred by Nature's (formerly known as NEPCON) [Sourcing Hub](#)** provides a country-by-country evaluation of the risk of timber being harvested, transported or traded illegally.
- **[WRI's Global Forest Watch](#)** platform provides data and tools to monitor forests, including by providing near real-time information about where and how forests are changing.

## Citations

For more information, head to these links from our partners:

- [Forest Trends \(2021\) Timber Legality Risk Dashboard: Cambodia](#)
- [Preferred by Nature \(2020\) Timber Legality Risk Assessment Cambodia](#)