Côte d'Ivoire

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Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) has a tropical climate and is a major producer of timber. Côte d'Ivoire is also the world's top cocoa producer. **Deforestation is driven by** extensive agriculture characterized by the expansion of cocoa production, poorly managed and sometimes illegal logging, expanding urbanization and mining. The illegal clearing of forests for cocoa crop production is one of the most **prevalent forms of forest crime** in the country. In Côte d'Ivoire, a number of factors, including the **lack of operational government agencies and weak enforcement of existing regulations**, create barriers for implementing its forestry policies. In efforts to combat illegal logging and deforestation, the government of Côte d'Ivoire signed, on February 19th, 2024, a **Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA)** on forest law enforcement, governance and trade (FLEGT) with the European Union. The VPA-FLEGT aims to improve forest governance and combat illegal logging and associated trade. To reverse the trend of deforestation and restore its forest cover, Côte d'Ivoire adopted, in 2018, a Forest Preservation, Rehabilitation and Extension Policy that evolved into an implementation strategy called Forest Preservation, Rehabilitation and Extension Strategy (*Stratégie de Préservation, de Réhabilitation et d'Extension des Forêts* – PPREF) in 2019. To align the legal framework with the new orientations of the PPREF, the government of Côte d'Ivoire enacted, in 2019, a **new Forest Code (Law No. 2019-675)**. This new Forest Code establishes new categories of forests, like agro-forests, and introduces new provisions on the registration of forests. In 2020, the Special Surveillance and Intervention Brigade (BSSI) was established to address illegal logging and other environmental crimes.

(Note: The Côte d'Ivoire profile will continue to be updated as additional legislation and information is made available).

Forest Management

Forest Governance

In Côte d'Ivoire, forests are owned and managed by private property owners and by the State. The commercial harvest of timber and other forest products is carried out in the rural domain, classified forests, agro-forests, and forests privately owned by individuals.

Prior to the 2019 Forest Code, tree ownership was not explicitly granted to the landowner or planter. In this context, it was the State that granted timber harvesting rights in the rural domain through Forestry Exploitation Perimeters (*Périmètres d'exploitation forestière* – PEFs) (instituted by **Decree No. 94-368** amending **Decree No. 66-421** on forestry operations). The 2019 Forest Code grants ownership of the tree to the owner of the land on which it stands, or to the person who planted it (Article 27). As a result, the State can no longer grant logging rights over these trees. The PEF method of forest management is therefore obsolete. However, the new way of managing and harvesting requires reform including:

- The registration of forests by individuals and private legal entities in their own name (Article 17);
- The obtaining, by natural persons, of documents proving ownership or enjoyment of

customary rights over land. This involves the land title or land certificate in terms of the law on land tenure.

Until these reforms take effect, the PEF method of granting exploitation rights will be maintained for a transitional period of 3 years, as defined by Order No. 0511/MINEF/DGFF/PIF of May 19, 2023.

The 2019 Forest Code **upholds the previously established ownership classifications of forests**, such as the public domain of the State Forest, private domain of the State Forest and forests under private law (natural or legal persons under private law) but it also creates a new category within the private domain of the State Forest called 'agro-forests'. In agro-forests, the State owns natural and planted trees. The harvest of agricultural plantations and the trade of agricultural products in agro-forests are regulated by Decree No. 2019-979. The Code also replaces Forestry Exploitation Perimeters (PEFs) (established by **Order No. 069/MINEF/MININTER/MINAGRA (1999)** with a new concession model, introduced by **Decree No. 2021-437 (2021)**. This allows concessions to be granted in agro-forests.

The following agencies/ministries oversee the regulation and management of forest lands and products in Côte d'Ivoire:

- **Ministry of Water and Forests (*Ministère des Eaux et Forêts* - MINEF)**: The MINEF, also referred to as the forest administration, is responsible for implementing and monitoring government policy on water and forest protection. As such, it is responsible for developing long-term policies for the sustainable management of the country's natural resources, including forests, water and wildlife.
- **Forest Development Company (*Société de développement des forêts* - SODEFOR)**: Placed under the technical supervision of the MINEF, SODEFOR is responsible for managing forests and State lands entrusted to them by the forest administration. SODEFOR is therefore responsible for drawing up and implementing management plans for forest policies related to the National Forest Estate and the classified forests under its responsibility.
- **Ivorian Parks and Reserves Office (*Office Ivoirien des Parcs et Réserves* – OIPR)**: Under the technical supervision of the Ministry of the Environment, the OIPR manages the State's public domain (state-owned forests), including national parks and nature reserves (full or partial).

Transparency

For information regarding transparency and risk scores in Côte d'Ivoire, head to these links:

- **Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index**
- The World Bank's **Worldwide Governance Indicators**

Laws and Regulations

Forest Laws

- **Forest Code (Law No. 2019-675) (2019)**: Establishes the rules for the sustainable

management of the country's forests. All forests must be registered with the forestry administration (Article 17). The following provisions apply:
    - The commercial harvest of timber is permitted in state-owned forests (agro-forests and classified forests), in the forests of local authorities and in the forests of private legal entities and individuals (see Decree 2019-980 below for more information).
    - The State may concede the management of certain forests in the private forest estate to local authorities, private legal entities and rural communities (Article 56).
    - In state-owned forests and local authority forests, the SODEFOR (for classified forests under its responsibility), local authorities (for local authority forests) and concession holders, under the supervision of the forest administration (for State forests under a concession agreement), are required to develop and implement a management plan (*plan d'aménagement*) (Article 57 and Decree 2021-437 (see below for more information)).
    - Individuals or legal entities governed under private law who own forests must develop, according to surface area, a simplified management plan (*plan d'aménagement simplifié*) or a management plan (*plan de gestion*), implemented under the supervision of the forest administration (Article 58 and Order No. 861 of December 13, 2019).

- **Order No. 007/MINEF/CAB (2021)**: Establishes the rules and procedures for forest registration. This Order applies to natural or created forests, and forested land. To register forests, the previous owner or holder of customary rights must have demarcated the forest, and a technical report must be prepared by the forest administration based on the technical file submitted by the applicant (Articles 3 and 4). Any forest use change of a registered plot must be approved by the Minister of Forests (Article 7).
- **Decree No. 2021-441 (2021)**: Establishes the conditions for independent monitoring of forest and agroforestry activities undertaken by a civil society organization. The decree outlines the responsibilities of independent forest monitors and roles and responsibilities of the Ministry of Water and Forests to conduct analyses on the reports submitted by the monitors.
- **Communiqué No. 00367/MINEF/CAB01/DGFF/PIF/PFPS-nd (2023)**: Establishes the documentation required to resume specific forest sector activities in 2024, such as logging within Forest Exploitation Perimeters (PEFs) and processing.
- **Decree No. 0511/MINEF/DGFF/DPIF (2023)**: Specifies the harvesting rules for legal entities and natural persons under private law for natural forests that have not yet been registered and for trees outside of forests. The decree maintains that PEFs are valid for a transitional period of 3 years from the date of publication and provides guidance and procedures for the transition from PEFs to a new concession model. During this transition period:
    - Forests registered under Article 7 of the Forest Code and, if required, with a simplified management plan (*plan d'aménagement simplifié*) or a forest management plan (*plan de gestion*), as well as trees and forests outside of forests located on registered land or land covered by a forest certificate, are excluded from PEFs;
    - Approved logging companies may be authorized by the forest administration to exploit natural forests and trees outside natural forests located in PEFs to which they are entitled, provided that they submit a written agreement between the owner and the forest operator to the forest administration (Articles 2 and 3);
    - Owners are required to register their forest with the forest administration and draw up a simplified management plan for forests over 25 hectares and a management plan

for forests between 5 and 25 hectares (Article 4).

- Rules for new logging authorizations are provided in Article 5. Logging beneficiaries are also required to carry out reforestation efforts to increase forest resources within their logging areas (Article 6).

- **Decree No. 2021-437 (2021)**: Establishes the framework for managing concessions in classified forests in the private forest domain of the State. To be eligible for the concession regime, the area of interest must meet a certain set of standards, outlined in Article 2 and the Annex. Other rules and stipulations for the concession are provided for in the Decree.
- **Order No. 861/MINEF/CAB (2019)**: Defines the rules on the development and implementation of forest management documents for forests and agro-forests.
  - Classified forests, agro-forests and forests of local authorities are required to develop a forest management plan. Requirements are outlined in Articles 4, 5, 7 and 8. These forest management plans are valid for at least 10 years. They are assessed every 5 years by the forest administration.
  - For forests owned by private individuals or legal entities, a simplified management plan (*plan d'aménagement simplifié*) is required for forests with a minimum surface area of 25 hectares in a single block (Article 13). Forests with a surface area between 5 and 25 hectares must have a forest management plan (*plan de gestion*) (Article 14). This plan is optional for forests of 5 hectares or less. Specific requirements and application details are outlined in the Order.

- **Decree No. 2019-980 (2019)**: Establishes the rules regarding logging in the National Forest Domain.
  - Classified forests and agro-forests in the private domain of the State and Local Authorities are harvested under management concessions (*concession de gestion*). Logging is carried out in accordance with the management plan (*plan d'aménagement*) and technical standards and specifications are defined by the forest administration. Logging quotas are also determined by the forest administration, based on specific standards outlined in Article 4.
  - For individuals or legal persons under private law: Logging in forests is carried out in accordance with a simplified management plan (*plan d'aménagement simplifié*) or a forest management plan (*plan de gestion*) as well as technical standards determined by the forest administration (Article 5).

- **Decree No. 2019-978 (2019)**: Defines the terms for concessions in the private forest domain managed by the State and Local Authorities. The decree outlines the procedures for private legal entities interested in managing a concession within the State forest (Article 4). Procedures for local authorities and rural communities interested in managing a concession in the private domain of the State are provided in Article 5.
- **Decree No. 2022-781 (2022)**: Establishes the conditions for obtaining approval as a forest operator and authorization for forestry exploitation. Individuals interested in acting as a forest operator must apply for approval from the Minister of Water and Forests. Approval confers the status of forest operator, meaning that the operator has the right to practice the profession for 5 years. By decree, the Minister issues the applicant with one of the following three types of approvals:
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    - Approval as a timber and timber service operator;
    - Approval as a wood energy operator; and

        - Approval of non-timber forest product operator.

    - Cases in which a forestry operator approval is not required are detailed in Article 4. Logging authorizations give the authorized logger the right to operate in a specific area within a well-defined timeframe (usually one year), and often sets the quantity to be harvested. Logging authorizations are based on the forest classification, as detailed below:
        - In classified forests and agro-forests in the private domain of the State and local authorities, a logging permit (*autorisation d'exploitation forestière*) is required, which specifies the plots and cutting areas, the quota and validity period for harvesting forest products. Usage rights (*droits d'usage*) are not subject to declaration or authorization.
        - In forests owned by individuals or legal entities under private law:
            - Logging/harvesting of timber or forest products is subject to prior authorization from the Minister of Water and Forests and may only be carried out by an approved operator (Article 7).
            - Forest harvesting carried out under a simplified management plan (*plan d'aménagement simplifié*), or management plan (*plan de gestion*) does not require authorization. Forest owners harvesting an area of less than 5 hectares or trees outside of forests must submit a declaration to the forest administration. In these cases, operators and owners must declare harvesting statistics and comply with all forestry regulation (Article 8).

- **Decree No. 2020-423 (2020)**: Defines the conditions for clearing (*déboisement*) and land clearing (*défrichement*) in the National Forest Domain. The decree details the responsible authorities in charge of granting authorization to clear forested land based on the size of the area to be cleared. All authorizations for forest and land clearing are required to maintain at least 30% of the area of concern.

Processing/Manufacturing Laws

- **Communiqué No. 00367/MINEF/CAB01/DGFF/PIF/PFPS-nd (2023)**: To resume processing activities in 2024, wood manufacturers are required to submit a factory operating certificate issued by the local forestry services with their request to the Ministry of Water and Forests (Article 6).
- **Decree No. 2021-585 (2021)**: Defines the conditions and methods of processing and commercialization of forest products. Processing or commercializing forest products is subject to approval by the Ministry of Water and Forests (MINEF). There are 4 types of processing approvals in Côte d'Ivoire:
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        - Industrial approval for the processing of timber;
        - Industrial approval for the transformation of wood residue;
        - Approval for the processing of wood in industrial joinery; and
        - Industrial approval for the processing of forest products other than timber.
    - Selling forest products domestically only requires one type of approval. The decree outlines the information and documentation required in the application and describes

the process for obtaining wood processing and approval to commercialize timber.
    - Approvals are issued on an individual basis for a period of 10 years, with the possibility to renew but the approvals are non-transferable.
    - Annual authorization from MINEF is required for all processors except for wood manufacturers and for selling raw or semi-finished forest products domestically.

- **Order No. 1072 MINEEF (2009)**: Establishes the rules for harvesting, transporting and transferring logs in Côte d'Ivoire. Logs harvested from any logging area are exclusively intended for domestic wood processing (Article 1).
- **Decree No. 00624/MINEF/DGEF/DPIF (2011)**: Requires all forest products intended for commercial use, including the manufacturing of goods made from forest products, to obtain authorization to demonstrate the legal origin of the products. The procedures and process for obtaining an authorization are outlined in the Decree.

Transport Laws

- **Interministerial Order No. 36 MINAGRA/MDIE/ET (1997)**: Establishes the rules on the road transport of logs, including night-time transport. The transport of logs is prohibited between 6:00pm and 6:00am (Article 1).

Tax Laws

- **Forest Code (Law No. 2019-675) (2019)**: Stipulates that any natural or legal individual carrying out forest harvesting, transformation, valorization, promotion or sale of forest products is subject to the payment of duties, taxes and fees (Article 74).
- **2024 General Tax Code** and **Taxes and charges in Côte d'Ivoire: Synoptic table of taxes, duties, fees and various levies of the Ivorian tax system (2022)**: This document aims to provide the different types of taxes, fees, duties and levies that relevant individuals are subject to payment and their references in the 2024 General Tax Code (CGI). Taxes relevant to the forest sector are listed below (per Article 1097-99 of the CGI):
    - **Forest taxes**: Taxes due on income from forestry activities and harvesting. For long-term development and operating contracts, these taxes do not apply. Instead, they are included in the annual fee for the operating approval.
        - **Area tax**: 50 francs per hectare/year.
        - **Allocation fee for the Forestry Exploitation Perimeters (PEF)**: 30 francs per hectare.
        - **Renewal tax**: 200 francs per hectare.
        - **General interest tax (TIG)**: 48 francs per hectare.
        - **Timber sales tax, formally known as the felling tax**: 5% of the value of the deliveries of logs, including self-deliveries and regardless of the wood's origin. This is a tax paid by manufacturers to the tax authorities according to the volume harvested. It is included in the tax revenues of the State, which allocates it according to the government's priorities.
        - **Export tax**: The same rate of the value declared to customs.
    - **Special tax for forest preservation and development** (Article 1134 of the CGI): A

recent tax set up specifically to support the implementation of the two strategies of the new forest policy (*Stratégie nationale de Préservation, de Réhabilitation et d'Extension des Forêts – SPREF and Stratégie Nationale de Valorisation des Produits Forestier*s – SNVPF). This tax is due on the delivery of logs, including self-deliveries. The rate is 2.5% on the value of wood deliveries in logs and is paid under the same conditions to the tax authorities as the timber sales tax. The revenue is transferred to the National Forest Fund (*Fonds Forestier National*) to be allocated to the implementation of the above-mentioned strategies.

Trade Laws

- **Decree No. 2021-587 (2021)**: Regulates the import and export of forest products in Côte d'Ivoire.
    - **Exports**: All natural or legal persons engaged in the export of forest products must be issued an exporter approval by the Minister (MINEF). This decree outlines the information and documentation required for the approval application. The exporter approval is issued on an individual basis for a renewable period of one year. Forest product exporters must maintain an export slip that is initialed by the forestry administration with detailed information on the product intended for export, such as type, quantity, level of processing, hygrometric state, volume, origin and destination. Timber and forest products may only be exported if they have undergone at least one level of processing.
    - **Imports**: All legal entities engaged in the import of forest products must have approval from the Minister (MINEF). Information on obtaining importer approval and the application process is detailed in Article 10. Forest products in raw or semi-finished form are permitted for import, and all imported timber or forest products must have documentation of its legal origin.

- **Order No. 00623/MINEF (2011)**: Establishes rules for the export of forest products by ground transport.
    - For the export of forest products by land, an administrative transport document (*Bordereau de route pour l'exportation des produits forestiers par voie terrestre* - BREPF) is required. Article 3 outlines the information that the waybill provides. It is the responsibility of the exporter to fill out the waybill. All exports of forest products by land must be accompanied by the exporter's authorization, the original BREPF document, the customs declaration, and a product itinerary sheet (Article 7).

- **Order n°95-682 of September 6, 1995**: Prohibits the export of raw, squared and cut timber. Article 2 of this decree provided for a transitional period during which SODEFOR could benefit from exceptional exemptions to export timber from its development programs. The terms and conditions of this transitional provision were set out in **Order no. 010 of January 26, 1996**. This prohibition is echoed in Decree No. 2021-587, which states that timber and forest products may only be exported if they have undergone at least one level of processing.
    - **Decree n°2014-179 of April 9, 2014**: Repealed Article 2 of Order n°95-682 but still granted SODEFOR an additional two non-renewable years to complete the execution of current contracts while listing the operators concerned. Once these 2 years had elapsed, the ban became total.

Criminal Laws

- **Forest Code (Law No. 2019-675) (2019)**: Establishes activities and actions in violation of the Forest Code and offenses against forests. The Code details the subsequent penalties for the violations in question.

Bilateral Agreements

- **Côte d'Ivoire – European Union (EU) Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA):** Aims to ensure timber exported to the EU has been produced according to Ivorian laws and regulations. The VPA addresses illegal logging, promotes the legal trade of forest products and improves forest governance. One key component of a VPA includes a timber legality assurance system to verify the legality of timber products and issue FLEGT licenses. In 2013, Côte d'Ivoire began its negotiations with the EU and, in February 2024, the VPA was officially **signed**. For more information on the Côte d'Ivoire – EU VPA, follow this **link**.

Non-regulatory policy instruments

- **National Strategy for the Preservation, Rehabilitation and Extension of Forests (SPREF) 2019-2030**: Identifies efforts for all stakeholders for the preservation, rehabilitation and extension of forests in Côte d'Ivoire. The Strategy aims to improve forest governance, strengthen the protection of forested areas and sustainably manage classified forests, restore degraded forest areas in rural areas and strengthen resiliency for climate change.

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. Côte d'Ivoire signed onto the Convention in 1995.

The species under the protection of CITES are listed in three Appendices based on how threatened they are by international trade. The species listed in Appendix I are the most endangered and international trade in these species is prohibited unless the purpose of import is noncommercial. The species listed in Appendix II are tightly controlled in international trade and may be authorized with an export permit or re-export certificate. Appendix III lists species at the request of a Party that needs other countries' cooperation to regulate the trade in 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 it is, please use this **database** to identify the National CITES Authority. In Côte d'Ivoire, the CITES managing authority is the Ministry of Water and Forests (MINEF).

Forest Resources

Resources Overview

In 2010, Côte d'Ivoire had **13.1 Mha of natural forest**, extending over 43% of its land area.

According to the 2019 Forest Code, Côte d'Ivoire has the National Forest Domain, which is made up of all forests of the State, local authorities, natural persons and legal entities under private law. The **National Forest Domain** is divided into 3 categories:

- **Forest domain of legal entities under public law**:
  - **State forest domain** which includes a public and private domain.
    - **The public domain of the State forest** includes integral nature reserves, national parks and partial nature reserves.
    - **The private domain of the State forest** includes:
      - **Classified forests** in which forests are determined by virtue of a regulatory act defining the forest's limits and its allocations.
      - **Agro-forests** where agricultural plantations and forest trees coexist.
      - **Forests acquired or created by the State in the rural domain**: Forests other than classified forests, agro-forests, parks and reserves, belonging to legal entities under public law, legal entities under private law and to natural persons.
      - **Botanical gardens**
    - **Forest domain of local authorities:** Made up of forests classified in the name of local authorities, forests granted to local authorities by the State, forests acquired or created in rural areas by local authorities and botanical gardens.
- **Forest domain of legal entities under private law:**
  - **Natural or man-made forests on land regularly acquired by private legal entities**
  - **Community forests** consist of any forest belonging to a given community and registered in its name.
  - **Sacred forests** are any forests reserved for cultural and/or religious expression.
- **Forest domain of natural persons**
  - Natural forests on land owned by natural persons or on land over which individuals have customary rights.
  - Forest plantations on lands in which natural persons have ownership rights, customary rights or a lease.

Contacts

Below are incomplete lists of government ministries, industry associations, civil society groups, and research institutes involved with forestry, trade, and efforts to combat illegal logging and associated trade.

Industry Associations

- Union of Industrial Wood Producers of Côte d'Ivoire (SPIB)
- Ivorian Union of Forestry and Wood Industrial Groups (SIGEFIB)
- National Union of Wood Products Producers of Ivory Coast (SYNAPPL-CI)
- National Union of Secondary Forest Product Operators (SYNEPSEFOR)
- National Union of Ivorian Wood Professional Groups and Organizations (SYNGOPIB)
- **Union of Agricultural and Forestry Companies (UNEMAF)**
- Union of Timber Exporters and Traders of Ivory Coast (SENBCI)
- Federation of Forestry Operators of Côte d'Ivoire (FENEFCI)

Civil Society Organizations

- Ivorian Observatory for the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (*Observatoire ivoirien pour la gestion durable des ressources naturelles* – OI-REN)
- Federation of Networks and Associations of Energy, Environment and Sustainable Development (*Fédération des réseaux et associations de l'énergie, de l'environnement et du développement durable* – FERREADD)
- **Association of Owners of Natural Forests and Plantations (***Association des propriétaires de forêts naturelles et plantations* **– APFNP)**
- **Nitidæ**
- **Initiatives for Community Development and Forest Conservation (***Initiatives pour le développement communautaire et la conservation de la Forêt* **- IDEF)**
- **Wild Chimpanzee Foundation (WCS)**
- Association des ONG de l'environnement (AOE)
- **ClientEarth (Ivory Coast)**

Government Ministries and Agencies

- **Ministry of Water and Forests (MINEF)**
- **Forest Development Company (*Société de Développement des Forêts* – SODEFOR)**
- Ivorian Parks and Reserves Office (*Office Ivoirien des Parcs et Réserves* – OIPR)
- **General Directorate of Taxes (DGI)**

Research Institutes

- *Centre Technique Forestier Tropical* – Côte d'Ivoire (CTFT-CI)
- *Institut des forêts* (IDEFOR/DFO)
- ***Institut national de l'information géographique et forestière* - Ivory Coast**
- **ONF Côte d'Ivoire**

Tools and Resources

For more information regarding forest legality in Côte d'Ivoire, head to these links:

- **Forest Trends Illegal Deforestation and Associated Trade (IDAT) Risk - Côte d'Ivoire**
- **FAO TimberLex**
- **FAO (2020) Global Forest Resources Assessment: Côte d'Ivoire**
- **Preferred by Nature: Timber Sourcing Hub – Côte d'Ivoire**
- **Timber Trade Portal: Côte d'Ivoire**
- **VPA Africa-Latin America Facility (Côte d'Ivoire)**
- **Global Forest Watch (GFW) Country Profiles**
- **E-bordereaux:** A mobile app that transmits forestry data for Côte d'Ivoire in real time. The app is available on tablets and smartphones.
- **SINFORSTATS (SODEFOR Statistical Information System)**
- **BoisLégal**

References

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- **Schneider et al. (2024)** ***Ending Deforestation from Cocoa in West Africa with New Data-Driven Resources***