



Information sheet: Forestry in Suriname

Geography and demography

Suriname is a stable democracy situated between French Guiana to the east and Guyana to the west. The southern border is shared with Brazil and the northern border is the Atlantic coast. Suriname is the smallest sovereign state in terms of area and population in South America. The country is the only Dutch-speaking region in the Western Hemisphere that is not a part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Suriname is extremely diverse ethnically, linguistically, and religiously. Suriname's geographical size is around 163 800 km², which is more than four times the size of the Netherlands, and it has an estimated population of about half a million people. The country can be divided into two main geographic regions. The northern, lowland coastal area has been cultivated, and most of the population lives here. The southern part consists of tropical rainforest and sparsely inhabited savanna along the border with Brazil, covering about 80% of Suriname's land surface.

Forest composition

Approximately 90% of Suriname's total land area is classified as forest land (14.8 million ha). The vegetation of Suriname has been categorized into three main types: hydrophytic forest (1.3 million ha), xerophytic forest (150 000 ha) and mesophytic forest (13.4 million ha). Commercially the mesophytic forest is seen as the most valuable vegetation.

The logging activities take place in the forest belt (ca. 4.5 million ha with a productive area of 2.5 million ha). This belt is delineated as the northern and easily accessible part of the country. Several inventories, covering a total area of 683 700 ha, have been carried out by the Forest Service (LBB) and the FAO in the period 1949-1986. As an outcome of these inventories an average net commercial volume of 22 to 30 m³/ha has been found. The Surinamese forest is characterized by a relative high species richness.

Concession policy

In accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Surinam (1987) all forests, except for those on privately owned land, belong to the state. Forest on private land does not cover more than 50 000 ha.

To realize the timber production, the government grants timber concessions and in certain cases short-term incidental wood cutting licenses. In accordance with the Forest Management Act (1992), the concessions are granted varying in size and duration as follows:

- Short term: <5 000 ha (1 - 5 years)
- Medium term: 5 000 - 50 000 ha (5 - 10 years)
- Long term: 50 000 - 150 000 ha (10 - 20 years)

Each of these types of concessions can be extended once for the same duration as the concessions have been granted.

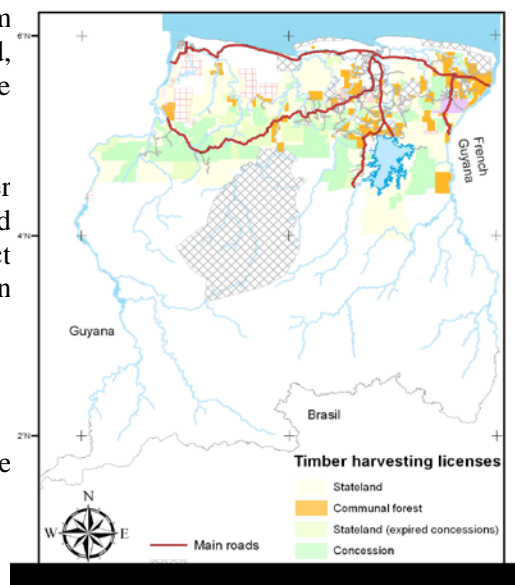


Figure: Overview of the timber harvesting licenses in Suriname (October 2009)

Some 20% of the roundwood production comes from communal forests granted to forest depended tribal communities.

Table 1: The total area and number of the different licenses granted

	Number	Total area (x1000 ha)	Average area (ha)
Concessions	56	1063,6	18992
1. Short term	30	121,3	4042
2. Medium term	22	447,3	20331
3. Long term	4	495,0	123758
Communal forest	85	550,5	6459
Incidental cutting license	2	173,7	n/a

Annual Timber production

Based on a first estimate, the National Forest Policy (2003) assumes a potentially annual sustainable cut of 1.0 - 1.5 million m³ if started from a cutting cycle of 25 years with a logging intensity of 10 to 15 m³/ha and if a steady expansion of the package of currently lesser-known species is realized. The precautionous approach suggests an annual allowable cut between 555 000 and 937 000 m³, still far greater than the current annual cut.

The current annual cut is stabilized around 150 000 to 180 000 m³/year. Companies owned by foreign investors account for proximately 10% of that production. An average of 10% of the total processed and unprocessed wood is exported. The export is mainly unprocessed timber. Foreign investments account for 30-40% of the total export. The export is mainly to the Asian Markets.

Forest Charges

Table 2: Current Levels of forest charges in Suriname

Concession size	5.000 – 50.000 ha	50,001 – 100,000 ha	100,001 – 150.000ha
Annual Area Fee per ha	0.009 USD/ha	0.018 USD/ha	0.036 USD/ha
Exploration Fee	0.0036 USD/ha		
Grading Fee	0.072 – 0.108 USD/m ³		
	Grade A	Grade B	
Royalty (retribution)	6.0 USD/m ³	5.5 USD/m ³	