



Forest Governance in Suriname



With a land surface of **163,800 km²** Suriname is, relatively speaking, a rather small country. But in absolute terms the country is characterized by an infinite extensive rainforest that covers **93 percent** of the land area. While in other places of the world forests are being lost at great speed as a result of agriculture development, logging and urbanization, Suriname's forest stands primal and solid. Suriname stands out as **one of only eleven countries in the world, known for high forest cover and low deforestation rates (HFLD)**.

Suriname's forests form part of the **Guiana Shield tropical forest ecosystem**, one of the largest contiguous and relatively intact forested eco-regions in the world.

Although Suriname's forest cover and deforestation rate currently maintain the country's HFLD status, the **trend in the deforestation rate appears to be strongly increasing**, and if it continues to increase linearly, the annual deforestation rate may exceed 0.5% around 2025 (total forest cover will by then have fallen below 90%).^[1]



Suriname is inhabited by **four majority indigenous people groups** (Kali'na, Lokono, Trio, Wayana) and **six Maroon tribes** (Saamaka, Ndyuka/Aucaners, Paamaka, Aluku (Boni)), Matawai, Kwinti) who live in approximately 230 villages spread across Suriname.

Indigenous and Maroons are forest people; they have developed unique ways of life, including traditional knowledge systems, that are adapted to the forest environment and that have enabled them and the forest, to not only survive, but to thrive.

SURINAME:
The greenest country in the world

93% of land is Rainforest

Part of the Guiana Shield Tropical Forest Ecosystem



The main **threats** to the forest are:

- Logging for national use, for export and illegal logging.
- Large scale goldmining.
- Small scale illegal goldmining.
- Community forests that communities sublet to large companies for logging.
- Weak oversight from the government.

FIGHT FOR THE LAND RIGHTS LAW!

The Indigenous and Maroons have come a long way in their struggles to **protect and preserve the delicate and intricate co-existence of humans and forests**.

An important step was taken in **April 2020** when a group of parliamentarians submitted a proposal for a **Land Rights Law**, for indigenous and tribal people, to the Surinamese parliament. Passing the law by Parliament is the first of many challenges that still have to be addressed to secure the rights of the forest people.

COMMUNITY BASED MONITORING

There are different communities and organizations in Suriname that have undertaken **community based forest-monitoring initiatives (CBFM)**. To date, there have been **17 formal experiences**, which have not only generated valuable information about the forest and its ecosystem services, but have also started to lay the ground for a robust CBFM system in the country. There are also many experiences of community monitoring, which are carried out autonomously, and which are essential to control their territory, face threats and take advantage of the forest in a sustainable way.^[2]

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^[1] Author: Maureen Silos. Consultancy for ACT-S in the framework of A2.0

^[2] Sara Ramirez – Consultancy ACT – S / A2.0