

VENEZUELA AND GUYANA

The region still holds large forest areas; about 60% of Venezuela is covered by natural forest, and 90% of Guyana is forested^[1]; 84% of the whole deforestation front is covered by natural forests. Deforestation is lower compared to other fronts, and main pressures originate from mining and smallholder farming. Guyana has been active in adopting measures in the context of REDD+ to protect its forests and as such has maintained low annualized deforestation rate, averaging 0.053% since 2018^[2].

Drivers of deforestation

Mining 	Deforestation related to gold mining has been an increasing driver of deforestation in both Venezuela and Guyana, especially around 2012 ^[3,4] . In Guyana, mining is estimated to account for up to 84% of deforestation ^[5] . Infrastructure and road-building related to mining are also important ^[6] .
Smallholder farming 	Small-scale shifting agriculture has been a persistent and large driver of deforestation in Venezuela, responsible for the majority of deforestation every year from 2001 to 2015. In Guyana, small-scale agriculture is also a primary driver of deforestation ^[1] .
Large-scale agriculture 	Large-scale commodity crop agriculture has been a persistent but minor driver of deforestation, responsible for approximately a quarter of deforestation in Venezuela from 2001 to 2015 ^[1] , and a far smaller proportion in Guyana ^[1] .
Cattle ranching 	Small-scale shifting agriculture in Venezuela is often accompanied by some livestock activities and thus is paired with agriculture as a driver of deforestation ^[7] .
Commercial logging 	Forestry is a consistent but very minor driver of deforestation in Venezuela, responsible for just a small percentage of overall deforestation in recent years ^[1] .

- Primary cause of forest loss and/or severe degradation
- Secondary cause of forest loss and/or severe degradation
- Less important cause of forest loss and/or severe degradation

Underlying causes

In Guyana, market forces, such as increasing gold prices followed by the expansion of other markets in the country, are likely responsible for the rise and subsequent recent decrease in deforestation.

Countries, region	Venezuela and Guyana, Amazon
Forest type	Tropical moist forest primarily
Total area	20.6Mha
Forest area in 2018	18.5Mha (89.7% of total deforestation front area)
Forest loss 2004-2017	0.2Mha (1.3% of forest area in 2000)
Location of deforestation	Southern Venezuela and northern Guyana
Total forest core area in 2018	15.4Mha (83.3% of forests in 2018)
Fragmented forests 2000-2018	0.2Mha (1.2% of forest area in 2000)
Accumulated burned area, 2002-2019	0.2Mha (1.1% of forest area in 2000)
Deforestation trend	Increasing, with oscillations
Future trends	Recent political instability in Venezuela may impact deforestation

Responses

Deforestation monitoring	As part of its REDD+ efforts, Guyana has developed and instituted an intensive, nationwide forest monitoring system ^[4] .
REDD+	Guyana has been an early and active REDD+ participant, including through a major agreement with Norway ^[4] .
Protected areas	Venezuela has a relatively large share of its land in protected areas, but in one study these protected areas were found to be not as effective in limiting deforestation as they have been in other countries ^[8] .

- Deployment at wider scale
- Actively used and expanding
- Project-specific, experimental



Main outcomes

The most prominent driver of deforestation, particularly in Guyana, continues to be mining, though mining activity has decreased in recent years^[9]. Future trends are likely to depend on changes in the underlying market drivers that influence mining.

Recommended future actions

- Continue deforestation monitoring associated with REDD+, which has been significant as a response to deforestation, especially in Guyana.
- Ensure protected areas are managed effectively.
- Incorporate methodologies and technologies which allow for more real-time, predictive monitoring to address deforestation proactively and to support better land-use planning.
- Ensure expansion of protected areas to meet CBD target and continue to maintain so that protected areas are managed effectively.
- Ensure decisive action on the increasing deforestation from gold mining, which can have lasting negative impacts on Guyana's REDD+ efforts.



References

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