

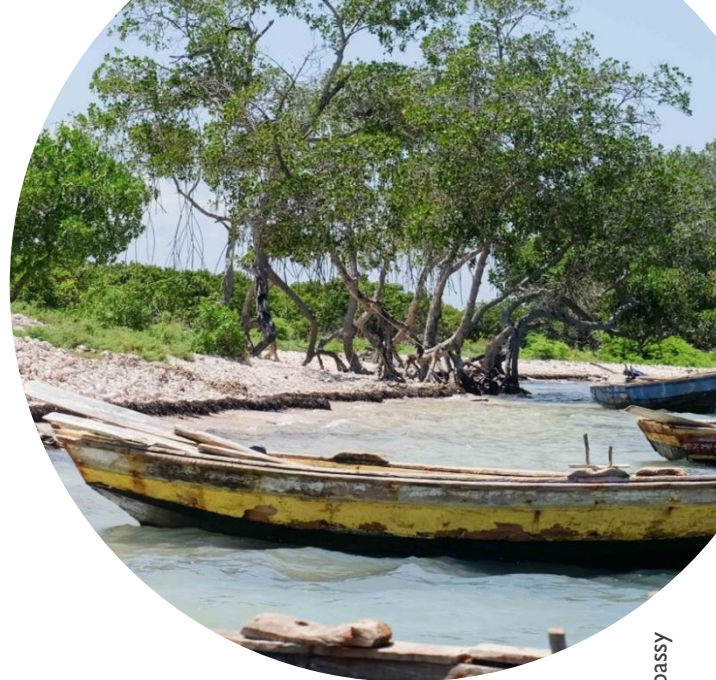


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# USAID/HAITI ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

## FACT SHEET

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Credit: Karl Adams / U.S. Embassy

### BACKGROUND

Widespread deforestation is a critical concern in Haiti and poses a serious threat to the lives of Haitian citizens. This deforestation has led to flooding, dramatic rates of soil erosion, and subsequent declines in agricultural productivity. Haiti's valuable coastal and marine resources have been degraded by sediment deposit and overfishing, resulting in considerable loss in biodiversity. Waste management in Haiti's urban areas is a major challenge, especially in Port-au-Prince, one of the largest cities in the world without a sewer system. Solid waste clogs urban waterways and leads to the spread of waterborne diseases. Landfills are few and do not meet the needs of most municipalities. Medical waste is frequently left untreated, and, with incinerators in disrepair, is often disposed of in public dump sites.

Haiti's depleted tree cover exacerbates the consequences of storms and hurricanes. Recurring droughts followed by heavy downpours cause frequent flash flooding. In 2016, Haitians finally saw the end of the extreme El Niño drought, the worst in 35 years. However, 2018 saw its re-emergence in parts of the North East, North, and West (Cornillon and Ile de la Gonave), leading to slightly lower than average rainfall in several parts of Haiti.

The dearth of reliable rainfall in Haiti is not only detrimental to farmers whose crops wilt and die, but also to ordinary Haitians who depend on water catchment systems for their daily water needs. In 2016, Haiti was struck by Hurricane Matthew, which devastated parts of the country that had been spared the worst of these droughts.

### KEY CHALLENGES

**Deforestation:** Loss of Haiti's forests has resulted from poor agriculture and agroforestry practices, the fragmentation of land ownership, and the production and trade of wood-based fuels.

**Overfishing:** Haitians often live hand-to-mouth; to survive, they frequently have no choice but to exploit natural resources. As a result, fish stocks have sharply declined, and the loss of some key fish species has adversely affected the health of coral reef ecosystems.

**Lack of Available Weather Data:** A scarcity of consistent and reliable evidence-based data about rainfall patterns and other climate related issues in Haiti hinders the ability of farmers and businesses to adapt to changing weather patterns. Without this data, they are unable to make informed choices about when to plant or harvest or make additional agricultural investments.

**Limits to government capacity:** The Ministry of Environment in Haiti is a relatively new institution and is still building its capacity to enforce environmental laws and regulations. Poorly defined or enforceable land-use strategies, complicated land-tenure issues, and poor water management systems leave Haitians at risk.

## USAID STRATEGY & ACTIVITIES

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) assistance is to help Haiti protect its fragile environment and conserve its precious resources. Focused on sustainable change, USAID promotes environmentally friendly activities that focus on resilience, community-based solutions, and market-based financial development.

**Implement Community Priorities:** USAID is working with local stakeholder groups to assess and set priorities. In one instance, USAID organized a community-brainstorming event to ensure a participatory approach during the planning phase of a reforestation project. In addition to generating ideas for solutions, this created a culture of collaboration with local communities, local and national government officials, civil society organizations, implementing partners and international stakeholders.

**Improve Resilience to Economic and Natural Shocks:** USAID is developing resilience to shocks by supporting access to a variety of productive assets such as small animal husbandry and credit to support alternative sources of income during periods of stress. This strategy offers an opportunity for significant innovation, including payment for ecosystem services mechanisms, and building institutional capacity to address the impacts of natural disasters.

**Support Innovative Approaches:** USAID is promoting innovative techniques that increase Haiti's capacity to adapt to erratic rainfall, droughts, and floods. For example, USAID has introduced the use of greenhouses equipped with drip irrigation and solar panels. These innovative techniques allow farmers to focus on high-value horticultural crops which increase their earnings over a shorter period of time and frees up farmland for other agro-forestry and reforestation initiatives in ecologically vulnerable hillsides.

## KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Reforestation through local agroforestry solutions:** In 2017, USAID launched its reforestation award focused regionally, in the North and North-East departments of Haiti. This five-year agreement has the goal of planting five million trees and preserving 15,000 hectares of forest by working through increased farmer investment in long-term agroforestry and soil conservation practices.

In the last decade, USAID's Feed The Future (FTF) program in Haiti also planted over five million trees across the country. At the end of 2018, FTF had worked with over 15,000 cocoa growers in the North to increase cocoa productivity. The activity helped cocoa growers improve shade management in old cocoa plots by pruning 4,452 hectares. As a result of improved varieties (e.g. cacao "super-trees") and production techniques, the value of cocoa export for USAID's AVANSE beneficiaries increased almost twofold to \$5.2 million.

**Conservation of Marine Biodiversity:** With support from USAID's Caribbean Marine Biodiversity Program, Haiti has designated its first marine protected area, the Three Bays National Marine Protected Area, which encompasses approximately 80,000 hectares of mangroves and coral reefs along the northern coast of Haiti. Other results from the program include: 60,000 mangrove seedlings being transplanted from a nursery bed or greenhouse location to parts of the protected area; environmental protection agreements signed with local fishers' associations; alternative livelihoods training completed in four communities; the hiring and training of wardens to patrol the Three Bays National Marine Protected Area; and draft bylaws prepared to establish the National Conservation Trust Fund.

**Addressing Climate Risks by Installing Weather Systems:** The Climate Smart Solutions program implemented under USAID's Appui à la Recherche et au Développement Agricole (AREA) has made tremendous progress in Haiti by assembling and installing six low cost solar-powered wireless weather stations to provide researchers, agronomists and others with reliable meteorological data. To ensure sustainability, AREA has trained Haitians to build, maintain and use data from these weather stations located in the West department, including the Bas-Boën, Kenscoff and Montrouis, and the Association Nationale des Agriculteurs Pour l'Avancement de l'Agriculture Haïtienne. The devices post data on the internet important to anyone planning, planting, harvesting or managing crops. These resources help farmers know how rainfall and temperatures have changed over time and are likely to vary in the upcoming season. With improved technology, millions of Haitian farmers can access weather and climate data to better inform decision making and improve their livelihoods.