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# USAID/HAITI REFORESTATION & AGROFORESTRY

## FACT SHEET

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Credit: Tony Marcelli

### 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.

While the destruction of Haiti's natural forests is a cause for serious concern, there are signs that tree cover is increasing. Recent analysis of satellite imagery suggests that, while pristine forests may only cover a small percentage of the country, a growing percentage is covered by new, less dense forest systems. This new growth is due largely to the increase in agroforestry systems across the country.

### KEY CHALLENGES

**Wood-based fuels:** The dependence on wood-based fuels, such as firewood, charcoal, and kindling, are the primary drivers of deforestation. Over 70 percent of Haiti's annual energy consumption is supplied by approximately 4,000 kilotons of wood harvested annually in Haiti.

**Lack of alternative income sources:** Rural communities in Haiti depend on wood from trees as a source of income. Farmers cut trees on their land, or common land, to earn money to pay for school fees or other unexpected expenses.

**Land use policies:** Poor urban planning affects the availability of arable lands for viable agriculture. As a result, farmers move up the hillsides and practice unsustainable agricultural activities in areas that should otherwise be devoted to agroforestry and reforestation. This is due primarily to a lack of enforcement of best land use practices and policies.

**Limits to government capacity:** The Ministry of Environment in Haiti is a relatively new agency, and similar to local, regional and other national institutions, has limited 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 helps Haiti protect its fragile environment and conserve its precious resources. To help build a more sustainable Haitian economy, USAID is focused on growing industries that profit from sound management of natural resources and safeguarding the environment while improving public sector officials' ability to respond to environmental degradation.

Agroforestry systems: Through its natural resource management programs, USAID introduces innovative technologies to farmers focusing on high-value horticultural crops to free up space for agroforestry and reforestation initiatives targeting ecologically vulnerable hillsides.

Promoting market-based solutions: To improve livelihoods and enhance landscape management, USAID extensively collaborates with the private sector to open access to markets for high value crops, including cacao and banana, and promotes sustainable production practices that revitalize the agricultural sector.

Improving watershed stabilization: Collaborating with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Environment, USAID and its partners work with sub-watershed management committees to build local capacity to restore and protect targeted deforested landscapes and implement disaster risk reduction plans.

## KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Reforestation through agroforestry: The U.S. Feed the Future program in Haiti included a focus on a cacao agroforestry-based system, an approach that combines cacao trees with shade trees grown as part of the production system. Improved varieties and production techniques resulted in significant yield increase and improved quality, which makes farming more profitable and farmers more likely to plant tree crops. The total export value of cacao by beneficiary farmers was \$6.8 million in 2019. In addition, Feed the Future has protected more than 23,000 hectares of degraded lands through the installation of productive and landscape restoration agroforestry systems. Together, these Feed the Future activities have permitted to plant more than six million fruit and forest seedlings since 2013.

In 2017, USAID launched its reforestation project focused in the North and North-East departments of Haiti aiming to plant five million trees and preserve 15,000 hectares of forest. The project will achieve also aims to increase farmer investments in productive agroforestry systems, mangrove restoration and best land management practices.

