



Deforestation study

Kenya

Kenya faces significant deforestation challenges, with a forest cover of approximately 7.4%. The annual deforestation rate ranges from 5,000 to 12,000 hectares, driven by agricultural expansion, demand for fuelwood, and infrastructure development.

Critical forests like the Mau Complex and Mount Kenya are under pressure, while community and private forests face degradation from unsustainable practices.

Economic contribution of land use sectors

Agriculture including agro processing

GDP

34.2%

Export

60%

Labour

60%

Major Value Chains

Tea, coffee, horticulture (fruits and vegetables), maize, sugarcane, dairy, beef, and poultry.

Key Actors

Smallholder farmers, large-scale agribusinesses, farmer cooperatives (e.g., Kenya Tea Development Agency), state-owned enterprises, agro-processors, livestock producers.

Tourism

GDP

11%

Export

20%

Labour

5%

Major Value Chains

Wildlife and safari tourism (Maasai Mara, Amboseli, Tsavo), coastal tourism (Indian Ocean), eco-tourism through community conservancies.

Key Actors

Kenya Wildlife Service, private safari operators, hotel chains, local communities, tour guides, transport companies, local artisans.

Aquaculture including fisheries

GDP

0.5%

Export

2%

Labour

~1%

Major Value Chains

Tilapia and catfish farming, capture fisheries in Lake Victoria.

Key Actors

Fisher cooperatives, fish processing companies, Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute.

Forestry

GDP

1.3%

Export

Minimal

Labour

~3%

Major Value Chains

Timber production, charcoal, fuelwood, plantation forests.

Key Actors

Community Forest Associations, private plantation owners, Kenya Forest Service, informal charcoal producers, local traders, cooperatives.

Key biodiverse rich areas

Protected Area Forests

- **Categories:** Game parks, game reserves, nature reserves, forest reserves, national monuments, water catchments, provisional forests.
- **Examples:** Mau Forest Complex, Mount Kenya, Aberdare Ranges, Cherangani Hills, Mount Elgon.

Forests in Unprotected Areas

- **Threats:** Deforestation, charcoal production, land conversion.
- **Examples:** Coastal mangroves, shrublands, private/community managed forests.

Other Biodiverse Rich Areas

- **Examples:** Wetlands (Tana River Delta), savannah ecosystems.

Risks posed by land use sectors

Deforestation

- **Major Players:** Subsistence crop producers, informal charcoal producers, large-scale agricultural investors.
- **Mitigation:** Proving legality of land tenure, providing county and sub-county information, ensuring no deforestation after the cut-off year, specifying deforestation details if before the cut-off date.

Land Degradation

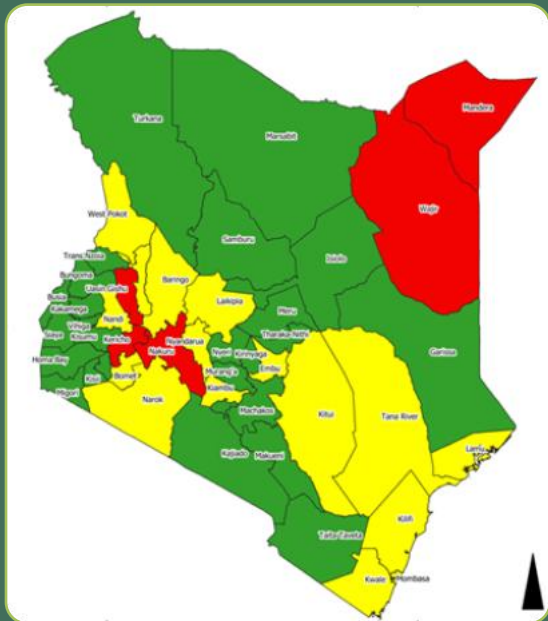
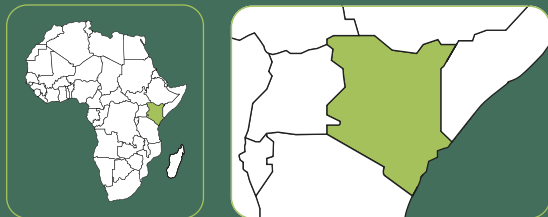
- **Major Players:** Livestock producers in semi-arid regions, smallholders farming steep slopes

High Carbon Stock (HCS) and High Conservation Value (HCV)

- **Major Players:** Commercial agriculture investors, private developers near forest buffer zones.

General statement of country-level deforestation risk

Kenya is a low forest cover country with significant deforestation pressures from agricultural expansion, fuelwood demand, and infrastructure development. Critical forests like the Mau Complex and Mount Kenya are particularly vulnerable.



Deforestation-risk methodology application to investment decisioning

The deforestation risk methodology for Kenya guides investment decision by assessing environmental risks linked to land use. It uses county and sub-county level deforestation rates to classify areas as:

- Low risk: 0–0.2% annual deforestation
- Medium risk: 0.21–0.5%
- High risk: >0.5%

High-risk zones, especially deforestation hotspots or sensitive ecosystems, are often designated as no-go areas unless strong safeguards are in place. Medium- and low-risk areas require tailored mitigation, including:

- Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs)
- Sustainable land-use practices
- Alignment with REDD+ and High Conservation Value (HCV) protocols

This ensures investments promote economic development while conserving biodiversity and reducing deforestation.

Deforestation risk map

- High risk
- Medium risk
- Low risk
- Protected areas

