



Deforestation study

South Africa

Deforestation risks in South Africa are relatively low due to the dominance of semi-arid landscapes and minimal natural forest cover (0.1% of land area). However, habitat loss occurs from agricultural expansions, urbanization, and mining activities.

Sensitive biomes like the Fynbos and Indian Ocean Coastal Belt face the highest pressures, with loss concentrated in biodiversity hotspots.

Economic contribution of land use sectors

Agriculture including agro processing

GDP

2.3-2.6%

Export

~8.5% (agricultural exports)

Labour

5.9% direct employment (1.2M small-holder farmers, 8.5M in the value chain)

Major Value Chains

Citrus, maize, wheat, wine, table grapes.

Key Actors

Large-scale commercial farmers, smallholder farmers, state initiatives.

Tourism

GDP

2.9% (direct contribution), 7% total

Export

Significant, especially from eco-tourism

Labour

~10% of national employment (~725,000 direct jobs)

Major Value Chains:

Eco-tourism and national parks.

Key Actors

Park authorities, private investors, conservation NGOs, local communities.

Aquaculture including fisheries

GDP

1.2%

Major Value Chains

Abalone farming, artisanal fishing.

Key Actors

Artisanal fishers, aquaculture enterprises, feed manufacturers, processors.

Forestry

GDP

~1%

Labour

\$1.9 billion timber sales

Major Value Chains

Timber, charcoal, fuelwood.

Key Actors

Large-scale FSC-certified companies (e.g., Sappi, Mondi), informal loggers, fuelwood producers.



Key biodiverse rich areas

Protected Area Forests

- **Categories:** National parks, nature reserves, special nature reserves, mountain catchment, world heritage sites, protected environments, forest nature reserves, forest wilderness areas, marine protected areas.
- **Examples:** Cape Floristic Region (Fynbos biome).

Forests in Unprotected Areas

- **Examples:** Eastern and coastal regions, particularly the Indian Ocean Coastal Belt.

Other Biodiverse Rich Areas

- **Examples:** Coastal lagoons, peatlands, estuarine systems (e.g., St Lucia Wetlands, Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany hotspots).

Risks posed by land use sectors

Deforestation

- **Major Players:** Agricultural expansion, logging companies.
- **Mitigation:** Sustainability standards compliance, selected projects, deforestation risk mapping, impact investment strategy, crop renewal, good agricultural practices, forest protection and monitoring, farmer certification programs, sector-specific risk awareness, collaboration with sustainability initiatives.

Land Degradation

- **Major Players:** Infrastructure developers, agribusiness (e.g., sugarcane and tea producers in KwaZulu-Natal).

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

- **Major Players:** Commercial plantation infrastructure developers.

General statement of country-level deforestation risk

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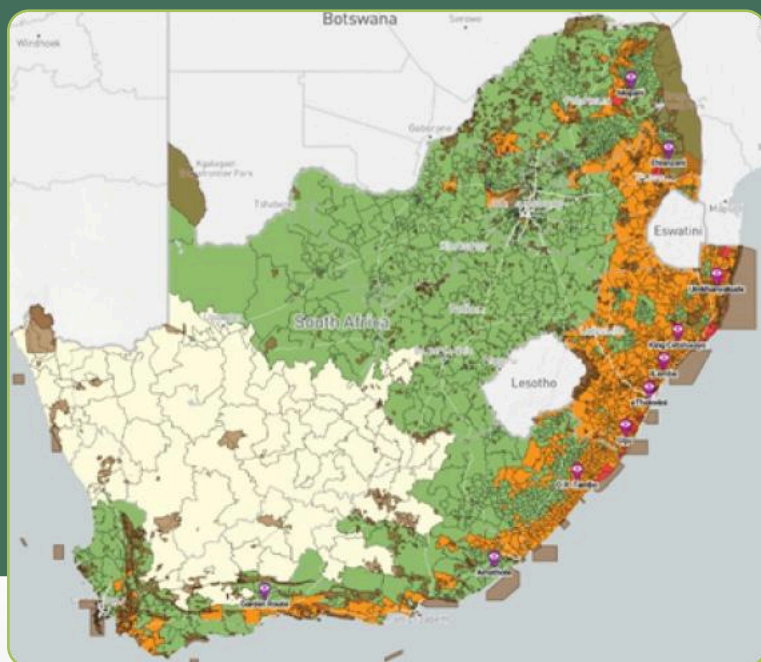
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Deforestation-risk methodology application to investment decisioning

South Africa's deforestation risk methodology informs investment decisions by assessing habitat loss, ecosystem sensitivity, and environmental risks. Tools like Map Hubs and Global Forest Watch help map project sites against biodiversity and deforestation data, classifying areas as:

- High-risk: Typically avoided; require strict EIAs and strong mitigation.
- Medium-risk: Require sustainable land use and restoration plans.
- Low-risk: Preferred for investment; focus on sustainability and resilience.

This approach supports national conservation goals and promotes sustainable development while minimizing ecological harm.



Deforestation risk map

- Highest deforestation risk
- Medium risk
- Limited risk
- Low risk
- Protected areas

