Forest Cover Loss

Tree cover loss measures the decrease in forested areas from 2000 to 2014. Mostly due to agricultural expansion.

What is Tree Cover Loss?

How Do We Know?

Satellite images are used to quantify the area of forest cover. EPI data only include forest cover areas where the tree canopy covers more than 30% of the surface.

Why Does It Matter?

A reduction in the extent of tree cover has a range of negative impacts to the ecosystem:
- Climate Regulation
- Carbon Storage
- Water Supply
- Biodiversity

Drivers of Deforestation

- Small-Holder Agriculture: 40%
- Cattle Pasture: 25%
- Large-scale Agriculture: 20%
- Logging Operations: 10%
- Other Causes: 5%

Best Rate of Improvement

Bosnia and Herzegovina and Paraguay have shown their rate of tree cover loss has slowed substantially from 2000 to 2014.

Fastest Rate of Tree Cover Loss

Georgia has lost tree cover more than any other country in our analysis.

Paraguay, Malaysia, and Cambodia have all lost about 20% of their forest cover this century.

Environmental Performance Index


Deforestation accounts for a 4-14% of global CO2 emissions per year— that’s a 2.2-6.6 billion metric tons of CO2.

Tropical deforestation alone released on average 2.27 billion metric tons of CO2 from 2000 to 2013.