



The Commonwealth of Dominica

National Forest Policy

March, 2022

“Dominica’s forests are effectively managed so that forest remains healthy, the cover is increased, and the ecological, economical, and socio-cultural benefits provided by these forests accrue to the people of Dominica in a sustainable manner.”



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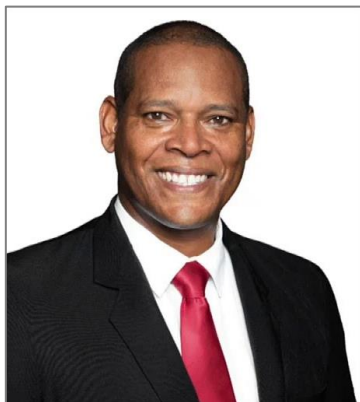
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FOREWORD



Honorable Cozier Frederick
Minister of the Environment, Rural
Modernization, and Kalinago Upliftment

Our forests embody the heart of the country's well-being.

The “Isle of Beauty” is the imprint of our national identity and pride as Dominicans and is embedded deeply in our forest which confer varied social, economic, cultural, and environmental benefits. In this regard, the responsibility of maintaining and enhancing the value of this trust asset belongs to all citizens as we continue to enjoy its multiple gifts which are both so gorgeous and exceptional.

Our forests are our foundation for transformation to a climate-resilient country.

We are mindful that all sectors of society must share a common vision, and be responsible for continuing our country's development toward sustaining the world's pledge for the future, as we continue the implementation of climate resilience strategies and plans. Our forest resources provide numerous ecosystem services like food, water, timber, clean air and medical remedies which all play an invaluable role in climate change adaptation and mitigation. We will strive to ensure that these goods and services will be managed wisely in order to promote development and investments in ecosystems as an attractive economic alternative. This position is expected to be contrary to the wide-scale intensive destructive commercial activities that would adversely impact our forests and the strong commitment to contribute to our Sustainable Development Goals.

Our National Forest Policy is a guide to the sustainable management and use of forest ecosystems, whose objectives shall be achieved through proposed strategies and implementation mechanisms, ensuring the shared vision becomes our reality.

The Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica will ensure that our extensive and diverse forest resources continue to flourish while providing numerous livelihood opportunities to the present and future generations by staying true to the shared vision.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Cozier Frederick', written over a horizontal line.

Honorable Cozier Frederick

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and justification

The Commonwealth of Dominica is one of the islands of the Lesser Antilles which is dominated by mountainous topography, unlike other islands, and thus known as the most heavily forested island of the Eastern Caribbean. With nine volcanos and seven mountain ranges Dominica possesses the best remaining examples of volcanic island ecosystems in the Caribbean. The forest is the habitat of a considerable variety of birds and animals. Among them are many endemic species like two parrots - the imperial parrot, or Sisserou (*Amazona imperialis*), and the red-necked parrot (*Amazona arausiaca*). Historically, most of the population has lived on or near the coast, although Dominica has a very rich and unique history related to its mountains, particularly significant for indigenous Kalinago people and the history of Negre Mawons from the 16th century.

The written history of forest management in Dominica dates back to 1949 when the last formal policy for managing forest resources was developed. That policy was also a legislative basis for the establishment of the Dominica Forest Service, the forerunner of the Forestry, Wildlife, and Parks Division today, and a cornerstone for the conservation, protection, and sustainable use of forest and natural resources, including wildlife and areas of scenic or scientific interest. Many years later, even a long-time after the independence in 1978, or adoption of the first forest-related legislation in 1958 and 1976, the succeeding efforts that have been made towards the revision of the National Forest Policy happened yet in 2010. Since that revised policy was never formally approved, and considering the changes in the national legal framework and the current forest management environment, the need for a comprehensive revision and formal approval of this National Forest Policy is undeniable.

This updated National Forest Policy has been prepared by the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division, with technical support from the World Bank enabled by financial support from PROGREEN, in consultation with all key cross-sectoral partners (Government institutions and agencies), NGOs, private businesses, and private forest owners. In addition, pursuing a participatory approach for the policy formulation, a questionnaire was disseminated and discussed with targeted groups and individuals whose income or livelihoods are directly dependent on the forests and forest resources.

Having in mind diversified functions of forests and natural resources, as well the mandate of the Forestry, Wildlife, and Parks Division which goes beyond the domain of forest management, the connectedness of the forest sector to other sectors of the economy is multiple and causal. Therefore, this updated National Forest Policy is aligned to all existing cross-sectoral strategies, policies, and plans and is envisioned to be a living document that operates on an iterative process that continuously reflects positive changes in the environment.

Recognizing the forest resources as the best opportunity to enhance socio-economic development in Dominica, while making significant contributions in the field of climate change mitigation, this National Forestry Policy is a long-awaited tool seen as a guide to sustainable use and management of forests.

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1.2 Overview of the forest resources

According to the Global Forest Resources Assessment of 2020, reported forest areas as a proportion of total territorial land of the country is 63,83% or 47,87 ha. The proportion of forest area located within legally established protected areas is 26,61%, thus considered as forest cover under the long-term forest management. A large percentage of private forests have been known to have multiple uses, including designating areas for harvesting timber and non-timber forest products, agriculture, housing, etc. in the past to present time.

The following land cover map presents the forest cover through different forest types (Physical Planning Division).

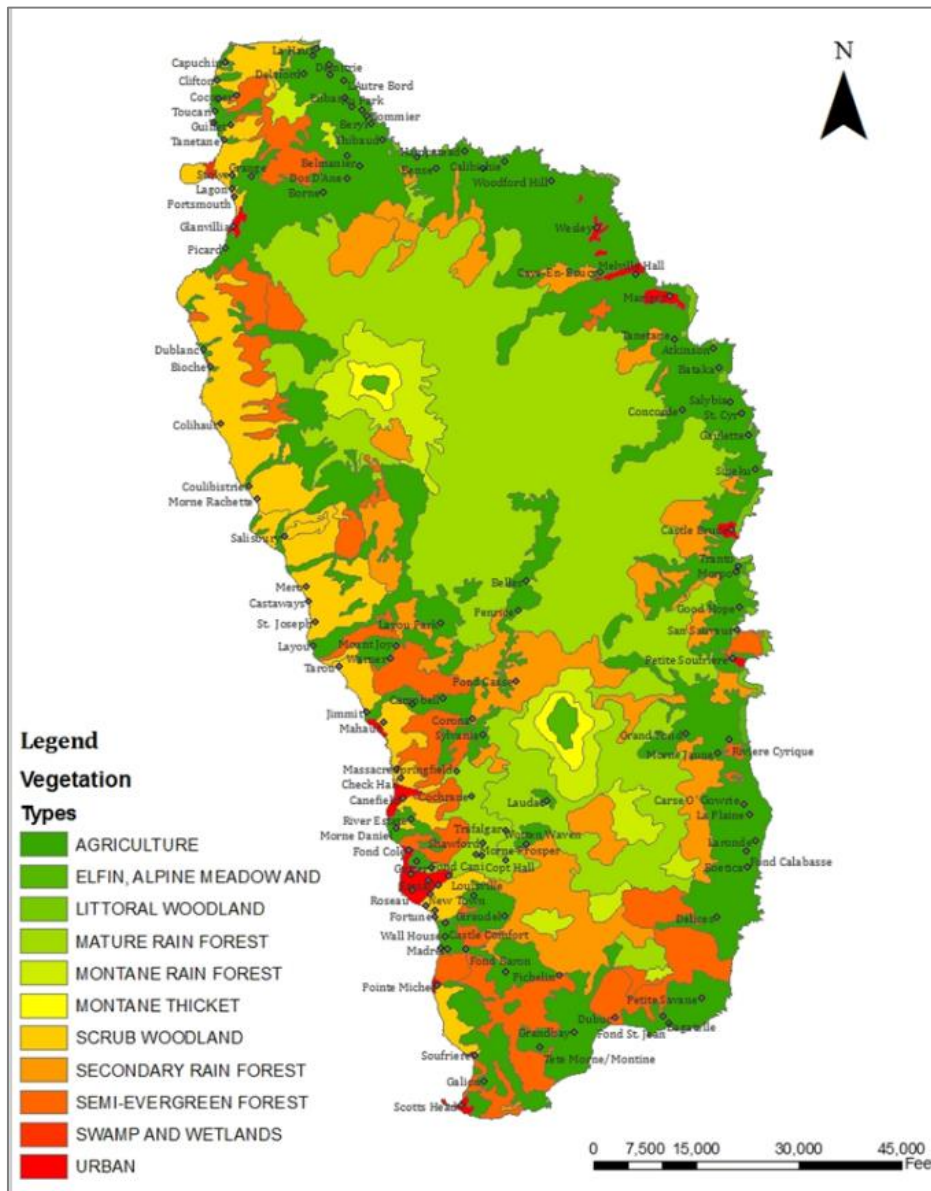


Figure 1 Map of Dominica’s land vegetation types

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The latest data on the forest type definition agreed on in 2019, prepared following the Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories (IPCC), show Dominica has three main forest types divided into six subtypes, namely:

1. Montane Forest

- (a) Elfin forest

The steepest areas are covered with tree ferns, *Melastomaceae Spp* and palms, with canopy height of about 3-6 m, with some scattered taller trees on slightly fewer steep areas. Canopy cover is often quite complete on gentler slopes, but broken on steep slopes; ferns, mosses, ground anthuriums, vines, and epiphytes vary from absent to abundant; trees with buttresses and prop roots are present in some areas and absent in others. At ground level, it varies from humid, quite dark and still, to rather breezy and bright. This variation results from natural factors, especially slope gradient, exposure to the prevailing wind, altitude (and therefore rainfall), and recent climatic disturbances. Tropical or subtropical broad-leaved evergreen shrubland includes small bamboo species and tuft-trees (trees covered with mushrooms and mosses). In the windiest spots and peaks, at an elevation above 3,000 feet, a shrubland vegetation class dominates. Relatively few species are found in this vegetation type: mainly a mixture of bromeliads, terrestrial ferns, sedges and grasses and shrubs, with many Lesser Antillean endemics.

- (b) Cloud Montane

This vegetation class is found on the high summits at an elevation of 2,300 feet or higher. The canopy is about 10 m high with occasional much taller trees. Terrestrial ferns, anthuriums, bromeliads, and epiphytes are very common; moss cover is often several centimetres thick. Cloud and mist cover, with heavy rainfall, is predominant, with only occasional and short periods of sunshine. Some species found in Montane and Lower Montane Rainforest are also found here.

- (c) Montane Rainforest

Lower Montane Rainforest merges with Semi-evergreen Seasonal Forest at lower elevations and with Montane/Cloud Montane Rainforest at higher elevations. Trees are evergreen because there is no water deficit most years. In general, trees of all heights are found, without clear divisions into separate canopy layers. Although there may be a shrub, fern and herbaceous (mainly wild Anthurium) ground cover, this forest class is easy to walk through (if one ignores the incline) except where the canopy has been destroyed and ferns, vines and shrubs colonise the clearing. Away from the edge of the forest, on comparatively gentle slopes without much wind, occasional very tall trees, reaching 45 m or more, are found among the main 30-m canopy. This distinctive forest is often called the *Dacryodes-Sloanea* alliance and is often over-emphasised as being the "typical" rainforest formation. Exposed ridges often have a dwarfed vegetation because of high winds. Landslides are a natural phenomenon in Lower Montane Rainforest and can be seen at various stages of recovery. In comparison to Semi-evergreen Seasonal Forest, the mean canopy height, wind, and incline are greater and there is a greater abundance of vines, epiphytes, ferns and mosses. The trees are more tightly packed and can be much wider in girth. This forest class has been recorded from 650-1,000 feet above the sea level.

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2. Seasonal Forest

(a) Semi-Evergreen Forest

Semi-Evergreen Forest occupies the zone between Deciduous Seasonal Forest and Lower Montane Rainforest. It is characterized by upper canopy trees with rather thin, often broad, and quite often compound leaves, which may lose some, but not all, of their leaves during a dry spell. There are no, or very few, epiphytes, ground ferns and mosses. Elevation ranges from almost sea-level in ravines to the summit of Morne Espagnol on the North-west coast. Rare forest is very much classified as secondary forests due to heavy farming and residential influences. Upper canopy trees have thin, broad and compound leaves. Some leaf loss may occur during the dry season. In comparison with Deciduous Seasonal Forest, this forest class has a higher canopy and greater canopy cover and trunks with a greater girth. It happens in less windy areas, and generally at a higher elevation.

(b) Semi-Deciduous Forest

Semi-Deciduous Forest merges inland with the Semi-evergreen Seasonal Forest; the upper slopes of high hills are often covered by Deciduous Seasonal Forest and their lower slopes, leading to ravines, covered by Semi-evergreen Seasonal Forest. This class is defined as deciduous because the taller trees tend to lose all their leaves in most dry seasons, although the smaller trees and shrubs are evergreen. Its overall appearance during a normal dry season is of a more or less leafless canopy. Lowland or sub-montane drought deciduous. Bigger trees lose leaves during dry season, smaller trees are evergreen. These zones are intertwined with small to large farms, recently with coppiced areas, shrub, small and large trees.

3. Littoral Evergreen, Dry Scrub Forest, Coastal Wetlands

Behind sandy beaches, rocky cliffs and road pavements, an evergreen forest (on East Coast) or shrubland (on West Coast) is found. The harsh conditions caused by wind, salt-spray, often a thin soil and a water deficit even during part of the wet season, favour an evergreen arborescent flora with thick leathery leaves. *Coccoloba uvifera* (*wézen*, sea grape) is commonly present in this vegetation class, including naked Indian, and patches of National Flower for Dominica, the *Bwa Kwaib* shrub, is found naturally only in the Dry Scrub Forests on the West Coast of the island.

There is evidence of an increase in forest cover for Bamboo species which yet to be justified as a Bamboo Forest, following the National Forest Inventory, planned for implementation in 2022. Mangrove forests are also a significant forest type even though occupy very small portions of coastal lands that don't meet the land coverage to be considered a forest. However, the ecological functions of mangrove forests are diverse. Mangroves provide habitat for thousands of species at all levels of marine and forest food webs. Mangrove forests also stabilize the coastline, reducing erosion from storm surges, currents, waves, and tides.

The invasive forest type species present include African tulip, Lemongrass, Mimosa pigra, and Albizia spp.

The following figure gives an overview of the widespread presence of Dominica's forest cover per definition.

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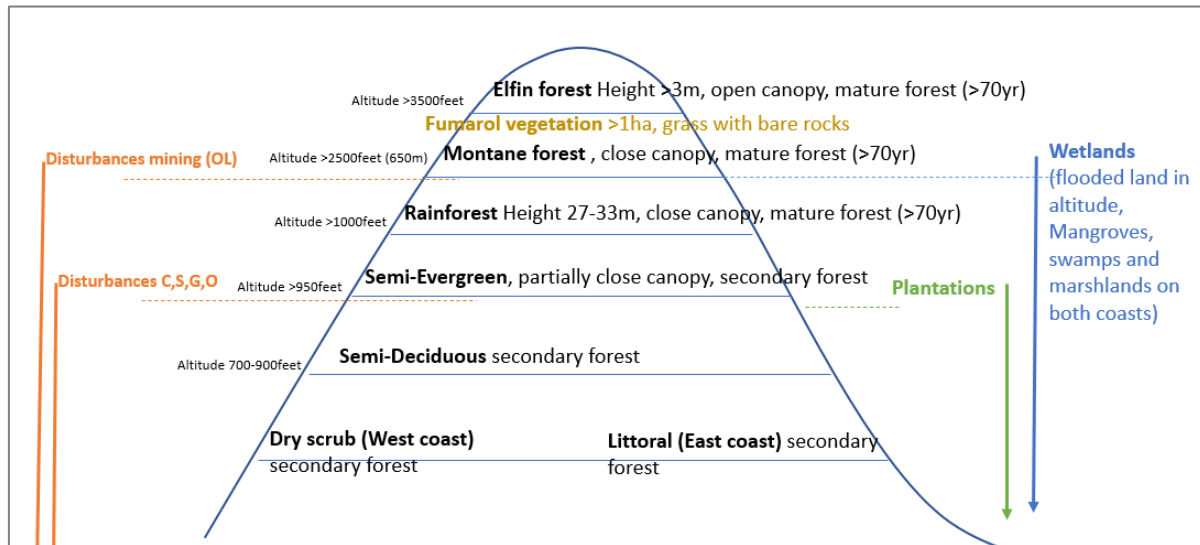


Figure 2 Dominica's forest cover per definition

1.3 Uses of and threats to forests

The main threats facing biodiversity globally are destruction, degradation, and fragmentation of habitats, as well the reduction of reproductive rates through exploitation, pollution, and the introduction of alien species. Dominica, unfortunately, is not an exception.

It has been already well recognized and confirmed that Dominica's biodiversity is under threat directly by human activity and indirectly through the changes brought by climate change and natural disasters (National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2014-2020, National Physical Development Plan of 2016).

Major causes and direct impacts of human activity are:

- Deforestation for unregulated or unsustainable development and agriculture,
- Sedimentation and erosion from quarrying,
- Agro-chemical pollution,
- Over-exploitation of wildlife, and
- Introduction of Invasive Alien Species.

While degradation of the forest is more related to causes of natural events and extreme weather conditions, the main cause of deforestation is increased human activity in residential expansion and agricultural runoff. Road and infrastructure construction within and around forested areas also threatens to fragment habitats bringing more resource users into the fragile environment. Any further clearance of forests for settlement, agriculture, wood harvesting, or other unsustainable resource use will increase erosion, sedimentation, downstream flooding, and degradation of aquatic, and consequently coastal and marine ecosystems.

Priorities for the implementation of safeguards and mechanisms in reducing threats to Dominica's forests should be sought within more regulated and sustainable physical development and controlled land use, particularly in relation to agroforestry practices.

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1.3.1 Physical Development and Land Use

Housing development has been identified as one of the major pressures on Dominica's forest resources. In recent years, more private houses and tourism-driven accommodations are being built in the higher elevations, often in sensitive watershed areas or near water catchment and storage areas. Those concerned about the status of forest resources cite improved land use planning as a major priority. Due to non-existing regulations for the building of septic systems in private dwellings, such as mandatory percolation tests, there is a great threat to water sources that Dominica Water and Sewerage Company Ltd. is relied on to provide the public with potable water. Inadequately controlled changes in land use and activities in the watersheds have a major impact on the quality, quantity, and variability of water resources. Protection and use of natural water sources, river streams, and springs and enabling public access, particularly in the private forests, have been found to be a serious issue, especially in light of the recent hurricane Maria experience. Supply of potable water during the period when national water services are temporarily disrupted caused by disaster or drought goes beyond the matter of protection of natural assets itself, but rather represents the capacity of the country to protect livelihoods building the resistance through adequate protection, sustainable use, and availability of natural resources in case of emergency. Forest management on private forest lands has been in general well-known issue as the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division has no jurisdiction on private lands but rather serves as advisory support to owners about the works they perform upon their request.

The other significant physical development seriously affecting the forest resources, is quarrying. The number and size of quarries has expanded over the years and has created a number of environmental concerns. The Physical Planning Division is responsible for granting approvals for excavation, periodic monitoring of quarry operations, issuing recommendations and instructions to developers on further mining activity. Until recently, quarrying was primarily present in coastal areas along the west coast affecting the dry woodland areas with only one prominent quarry on a larger scale in the Pont Casse area, inside the Morne Trois Pitons National Park boundaries. Most recently, over the last two years, a small local quarry (tarish pit) in the village of Laudat, used for decades only by residents for personal use and for small size community projects, today presents an issue of accelerating concern. With the entrance on the Freshwater Lake Road, the quarry is located and operates within the proposed buffer zone of the Morne Trois Pitons National Park, UNESCO World Heritage Site, with the excavation area being further spread closer to the park boundary. Moreover, out of nine approved quarries¹ currently reported as active, the Laudat quarry is not on that list. This is particularly significant and requires greater efforts in the fulfilment of commitments of the country as the State Party of the UNESCO Convention, particularly in relation to the adoption of the management plan and a buffer zone which have been recognized as key missing instruments, since the world heritage list inscription in 1997.

There are also some other threats to wildlife and habitats not only related to physical planning and land use than to public infrastructure development projects. Stakeholders raised concerns about building sea walls without implementation of proper crab migration corridors thus causing a big risk to the crab population. Lighting on the interior roads, deploying of communication towers, and other disturbances of wildlife are not being considered in a proper way as there is no established official coordination with the

¹ [Physical Planning Approved Quarries](#)

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Forestry Wildlife and Parks Division nor environmental impact assessments for such projects. The ecological component should be considered for such activities as the negative impacts to ecosystems can be very significant (e.g., the explosion of migratory pests and insects, the introduction of invasive alien species, etc.).

Stakeholder consultations reveal that many of the challenges above addressed could be successfully overcome with enforcement of already adopted laws and policies and stronger collaboration between responsible agencies. The introduction of additional incentive/penalty mechanisms to enforce more responsible forest management on private lands has also been suggested.

1.3.2 Tourism

The national parks, nature sites, and trails have been defined as the basis of Dominica's tourism product and represent a flagship of the Nature Island brand. It has been recognized these are the focal points of the nature-based tourism products, and their continuous maintenance and improvement are essential. Therefore, the Tourism Master Plan of Dominica 2012-2022 endorses the recommendation that maintenance, development, and management should be coordinated by one agency, a National Parks Service, which was also foreseen by the draft National Forest Policy of 2010. Despite the planned reform, the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division is still responsible for the management of Dominica's thirteen eco-tourism attractions (Boeri Lake, Boiling Lake, Botanic Gardens, Cabrits National Park, Emerald Pool, Freshwater Lake, Indian River, Middleham Falls, Mome Diablotin Trail, Morne Trois Pitons Trail, Soufriere Sulphur Springs, Syndicate Nature Trail and Trafalgar Falls). Given the fact that the Forestry, Wildlife, and Parks Division mandate goes far beyond the management and operationalization of the eco-tourism sites this has a significant impact on overall Division's efficiency for the management their portfolio. Recognizing that the needs of eco/nature tourists differ from those of cruise passengers, the Master Plan envisions developing a wider range of nature and heritage sites for stay-over tourists, while confining cruise ships and excursionists to selected so-called intensive use sites. The proposed intensive sites are the popular locations - Trafalgar Falls, Emerald Pool, Indian River, and Cabrits National Park. This visitor's management model, bringing cruise ship passengers to just a few selected sites, causes concerns and requires additional resources for on-site management. At Trafalgar Falls and Emerald Pool sites, the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division examines the possibility of increasing respective carrying capacities by establishing new trails (boardwalks above ground and in treetops), one-way traffic systems, and providing more content for visitors in order to reduce the pressure and increase visitor's experience. Besides infrastructure investments, the visitor management system is required to address operational and financial weaknesses in order to improve visitors' experience and increase monetization of user fees. A revision of the fees schedule is needed to improve tracking records as well to re-examine inequalities as it seems cruise visitors are unfairly incentivized to have lower prices and premium entrance to most popular sites.

While many efforts have been made lately towards safe and better-managed tourism, improvements in marketing and visitor management and focus on visitors seeking "wilderness" or "peace" destinations, as opposed to mass tourism destinations, are still needed. Managed tourism should predetermine carrying capacity for targeted sites or gradually introduce the limits of acceptable change in reducing impacts from

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mass tourism. At the same time as emphasizing nature-based tourism, the government's major regulatory actions should be strengthened and more robust, particularly in relation to public investments in major development projects such as geothermal power plant, international airport, government-led quarries, and similar.

There was also expressed the need for more support from the tourism sector to sustainable livelihoods in terms of creating more livelihood opportunities, particularly through promotion and branding of local arts, crafts, and Creole cuisine.

Issues related to forest management through the expansion of tourism activities on private lands that have been reported in a few instances are actions such as cutting trees, clearing properties to the rivers' edge, and using heavy equipment in rivers to create swimming pools and wellness oasis.

1.3.3 Timber Extraction

The Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division has a mandate for the sale of trees for people's livelihoods, timber, and small cutting industry, and artisanal crafts, and promotes the sustainable use of waste from the harvesting processes. Forest services to the general public related to timber products include:

- The sale of timber (from two Forest Reserves and from unallocated state lands),
- Issuing of removal permits (for the movement of produce from Forest Reserves and from unallocated state lands, as well as private lands, and
- Issuing of Licenses and Permits (for timber cutting licences and permits for the removal of forest produce).

Although Dominica has not had any commercial lumbering over last decades, individual sawyers continue to operate, but their activity is limited and not seen as threatening to the forest cover. At present, there is no formal system to register sawyers and it is believed that the numbers have declined over the years. Although in some instances illegal taking of timber in specific areas occurs, cutting trees on private lands without proper waste and slope management is seen as a bigger issue. Challenges to this are the discretion of the private persons to access the sites. As well, the traceability system for wood products is limited to basic timber sales with only one tracking process, from identification of timber for harvest, preparation of permits for harvest, production of lumber, and transporting of lumber to storage areas. No system of tracing the origin from storage to industrial use in place.

The Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division envisions many opportunities for more sustainable management of forest resources through improvements in tracing system and the increase of the number of timber by-products (shingles, small artisanal wood pieces, construction material for poultry farms, and similar) which would also raise the direct revenue from forest services.

1.3.4 Non-Timber Forest Products

Forest services to the general public related to non-timber products include the sale of plants and compost sales and issuing of licenses and permits (for hunting and fishing and impounding of animals).

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A major non-timber forest product extracted from the forest in Dominica is the larouman reed (*Ischnosiphon arouma*), used mostly by the Kalinago people for basket-making. There is a concern that this has been over-harvested and that not enough re-planting has been done.

Two species of tree that are under some threats are the bwa bandé (*Richeria grandis*) and the gommier (*Dacryodes excelsa*). Gommier is more under the threat from climate change than from extraction but trees are damaged when they are tapped for gum, which has commercial value. The bark of the bwa bandé is used to make a drink that has been gaining in popularity and is now being commercially bottled. Other species common to extraction are raspberry bush, gum arabic, bay oil, bamboo, and vetiver grass.

Wildlife is still relied on in some communities as a food source. It does not appear as if any of the wildlife is under serious threat from hunting although personnel from the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division recognize that some out-of-season hunting does occur. An annual list of game species is determined by the Wildlife management plan of which the most common hunting species are agouti, land crabs, opossum, and aquatic wildlife.

The Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division representatives have observed that some farmers are poisoning wildlife to prevent crop damage. There is recognition that some animals, such as the red-necked parrot (*Amazona arausiaca*), locally known as the Jaco, can have a devastating effect on citrus crops.

There remains some concern about the killing of turtles during the nesting season. The Forestry, Wildlife, and Parks Division, in collaboration with several NGOs, performs educational activities for local communities on the need for the protection of the turtles and their habitats.

Forest management certification schemes and standards for non-timber forest products covering both environmental and social aspects are seen as a great opportunity for more sustainable management of forest resources bringing tangible benefits to people's livelihoods. This could be particularly significant for the indigenous Kalinago people as this would create new sources of revenue for the community and improve the forest management in the Kalinago territory. With more education opportunities related to non-timber forest products, their sustainable harvest, and use, there is also a lack of educational programs for landscaping, aside from the National Beautification Campaign.

1.3.5 Invasive Alien Species

Invasive Alien Species (IAS) are an economic burden on the agricultural, tourism, fisheries, and forestry industries causing major damage to food production, infrastructure, soil health, and biodiversity, which, in turn, impacts the health well-being of Dominicans. The introduction of the chytrid fungal disease in 2002 caused a 99% decline in the population of the Mountain Chicken Frog (*Leptodactylus fallax*) crippling a major source of income for local hunters and restaurateurs, removing an important natural pest control for farmers, and forcing Dominica to change its national dish. Nevertheless, until Hurricane Maria in September 2017, Dominica managed to keep invasive species at bay due in part to limited trade and development as compared to other islands in the region. However, with the influx of containers, decrease in biosecurity, degradation of natural habitat, and increase in unchecked and unsustainable development, Dominica witnessed a 50% increase in non-native vertebrate species.

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The incursion and establishment of only two vertebrate IAS on Dominica during the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, the Common Green Iguana (*Iguana iguana*) and Cuban Treefrog (*Osteopilus septentrionalis*), represents a 20% increase in vertebrate alien species on Dominica.

The lemongrass plant continues to spread across Dominica's west coast resulting in the loss of precious native coastal habitat, one of the most threatened habitat types in the Caribbean. During the dry season, the burning of lemongrass results in large bush fires, which causes deforestation, erosion, poor soil quality, and reduces biodiversity.

Globalisation, trade, development, and tourism are expected to continue increasing. Therefore, there is a strong and rapid need for the adoption, implementation, and execution of the National Invasive Species Strategy to curb the threat of IAS on Dominica's native biodiversity. This requires cross-sectoral collaboration for effective prevention, rapid response, and control.

1.3.6 Agriculture

Dominica's economy has relied heavily on agriculture in the past with the banana industry as the major export force until the 1990s. Agriculture is still considered a major pillar of the economy, but the number of people engaged in agriculture has been steadily declining over the past decades. Because of this decline, agriculture is no longer considered a serious threat to forest resources. However, farm encroachment in the Central Forest Reserve and poor agricultural practices such as the use of agrochemicals still threaten biodiversity and habitat fragmentation.

Although there has been no documented formal government policy on organic farming, the Government requested the development of the 'Organic Island' concept, yet back in 2006. The initiative required that all agricultural production on the island be produced consistent with accepted organic practices. All inputs used in agricultural production (i.e., germplasm, fertilizer) also required to be certified organic under the proposed program. The initiative, unfortunately, did not come to life although "Insights into the potential for an 'Organic Island'" research study of 2013 suggests that, only from the perspective of domestic consumers, Dominica should continue to pursue the possibility of becoming an 'Organic Island'. The importance of incentivizing the production of organic and artisanal products is still prominent in the "Dynamic Dominica" program presented in late 2019, built on a country's vision of sustainability and resilience.

The Dominica Bureau of Standards and the Ministry of Blue and Green Economy, Agriculture and National Food Security, in cooperation with other stakeholders, currently implement an initiative "Dominica's Good Agricultural Practices" aiming to ensure agricultural practices meet international standards. The initiative is performed as a voluntary farm certification program that targets all commercial farmers involved in primary production for the local and export markets.

1.3.7 Water Resource Management

Compared with many of its sister islands, Dominica boasts an abundance of sparkling clean rivers and water sources. Under the Forestry and Wildlife Act, Water Catchment Rules, all water catchment areas are

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declared as protected forests, and they are managed by the public utility company Dominica Water and Sewerage Company Ltd. (DOWASCO).

Water is essential for support to ecosystems, which renders watershed management an immensely important issue for biodiversity protection. The Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division is responsible for enforcing legislation related to the protection and management of protected areas, and thus supports certain law enforcement functions pertaining to the protection of water catchments in forest reserves. In addition, the representative of the Forestry, Wildlife, and Parks Division is appointed to the Committee for early warning systems operated by Dominica Meteorological Service providing support in data collection on water level, rainfall, and other features on higher elevations.

The Water and Sewerage Act authorizes DOWASCO to access Dominica's water resources without making any payment and according to recent assessments, the sale of that water amounts to close to 90% of a total DOWASCO income. The Forestry, Wildlife, and Parks Division has commenced initial discussions with DOWASCO on possibilities of introducing payment for ecosystem services.

The country currently has one water bottling company and the arrangement for the export of bulk water. Additional requests have been recently made for establishing new water bottling companies. Water is also regularly provided to cruise ships that stop in Dominica.

As elaborated previously, challenges and pressures to the watershed management are growing due to increased numbers of housing and tourism developments. While some public education has occurred in recent times on the relationship between the forest and water resources, the patterns of development indicate that there remains a significant gap in the public's understanding of how the forest contributes to maintaining Dominica's water resources.

1.3.8 Illegal clearing

There is a present concern about the clearing of forest in remote areas for the growing of marijuana. A recent parliament decision on decriminalization of small amounts does not have an impact on large growing farms that require bigger cultivation areas. Mechanisms for reducing the encroachment of forested areas for large marijuana farms could be sought in the creation of a regulatory industry that would, among other regulations, ensure appropriate lands outside forested areas farmers can invest in.

However, given the current regulatory framework, the Forestry, Wildlife, and Parks Division expressed the need of having a better collaboration with the police in cases of large growing farms in the forests, in particular for data collection as to the number and species of trees cut.

2. FOREST POLICY

2.1 Scope and purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this National Forest Policy is to guide the sustainable management of the forest resources of the Commonwealth of Dominica, including the use of these resources, and the impacts and consequences of that use.

The National Forest Policy covers all of Dominica's forest ecosystems and non-agricultural trees, as well as the goods and services that they provide. The forest ecosystem includes all biodiversity components (both flora and fauna), its structural characteristics as well as ecological processes and functions. The Policy thus concerns natural as well as plantation forests and includes forested land that has been deforested or degraded. The Policy also recognizes the important contribution of agro and urban forests to ecological services and biodiversity but outlines these types of forests must be distinguished from natural and plantation forests.

Under the existing institutional and legislative framework, this Policy addresses forests located on both public and private lands including Protected Areas, Unallocated State Lands, the Kalinago Territory, and Privately-owned Land.

In order to reflect new challenges and opportunities and to allow for adaptation to changing conditions, the National Forest Policy is envisioned to be monitored annually and formally reviewed and updated every 10 years.

2.2 Forest Legislation, Policies and Strategies

This section considers laws and policies directly authorizing the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division to manage portfolio under their mandate, as well related cross-sectoral laws and policies, and national strategies and plans.

2.2.1 Forest legislation

The legislative framework that determines the mandate of the Forestry, Wildlife, and Parks Division is based on the following acts and associated regulations:

Act Name	OG reference	Provisions to the forest management
Forest Act	Act 25 of 1958	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- provides for the conservation and control of forests, the declaration of forest reserves on state lands, the declaration of protected forests, and allows for the declaration of prohibited areas within state and private lands;- provides for collaboration between private landowners and the state for the management of these forests and provides a mechanism for compensation to private landowners.

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Forestry and Wildlife Act	Act 12 of 1976 and Amendments, Act 35 of 1982, Act 12 of 1990 and Act 4 of 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provides for the protection, conservation, and management of wild animals, freshwater fishes, amphibians, crustaceans, and reptiles, and for purposes connected therewith; - provides that wildlife is property of the state and establishes the Forestry Division for the carrying out of the provisions of the Act obligated to enforce the Forestry laws, educate the public about these laws, issue licenses, and permits, and advise the minister on the disposition of the applications for collection of wildlife.
Forestry and Wildlife (Fees) Regulations	SRO No. 19 of 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provides the fees payable for hunting and fishing licences.
National Parks and Protected Areas	Act 16 of 1975 and Amendments, Act 54 of 1986, Act 12 of 1990, Act 8 of 2001 and Act 1 of 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - creates a National Parks System and provides for the management and control of National Parks and Protected Areas; - imposes penalties for breach of the Act and its Regulations.
National Parks and Protected Areas Regulations	SRO No. 54 of 2003	- regulates activities within national parks and eco-tourist sites to protect plants and wildlife in these areas.
	SRO No. 22 of 2008	- provides schedule of user fees payable for visits to eco-tourism sites.
	SRO No. 7 of 2013	- expands the list of eco-tourism sites to include the Waitukubuli National Trail and increase the user fees payable for visits to the sites.

Table 1 Overview of forest legislation

Other cross-sectoral acts and rules that have the biggest influence on the responsibilities of the Forestry, Wildlife, and Parks Division to manage forest resources are the Physical Planning Act, Mines, and Minerals Act, Mining of Pumice Act, Water, and Sewerage Act, and Electricity Supply Act. The following table presents the main provisions of these Acts in relation to the management of forest resources.

Act Name	OG reference	Provisions to the forest management
Physical Planning Act	Act 5 of 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - contains provisions for various types of protective orders and requires the preparation of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) for development projects; - excludes the use of land for the purpose of agriculture or forestry save for any building or engineering activity on that land or the operations of a sawmill, from its definition of 'development'; - gives authority to the Physical Planning Division to regulate building on forest land but does not provide any mechanism for the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division to participate in the decision making of the Physical Planning Board;

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		- provides that an Environmental Impact Assessment is required for mining and quarrying activities and that provisions for the preservation of protected forests may be made in development plans.
Mines and Minerals Act	Act 5 of 1996	- contains provisions pertaining to conservation and protection of the environment which are largely discretionary.
Mining of Pumice Act	Act 1 of 1964	- prohibits mining and exporting of pumice without a licence; - provides for the granting of mining licences; - imposes penalties for the contravention of the Act.
Water and Sewerage Act	Act 17 of 1989	- authorizes DOWASCO to access Dominica’s water resources without making payment.
Electricity Supply Act	Act 10 of 2006	- provides DOMLEC as the licensee under the Act, without payment but subject to Government approval, to harness waterpower anywhere in Dominica and is specifically given exclusive control over a designated stretch of the Roseau and Mural Rivers for the purpose of generating electricity; - provides DOMLEC to acquire private and state lands which are reasonably required for its business as licensee; - allows DOMLEC to remove trees and cut branches within the range of electric lines and which may adversely affect DOMLEC’s operations.

Table 2 Overview of relevant cross-sectoral legislation

A detailed list of all national laws and regulations of importance to the management of the Forestry, Wildlife, and Parks Division portfolio, is attached as Annex 1.

2.2.2 National policies, strategies and plans

The biodiversity conservation, management, and sustainable use of natural resources always have strong linkages with a number of cross-sectoral policies, strategies, and plans affecting their overall management.

The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan is a key strategic document for the management of the country’s biodiversity with a vision and goals grounded on the main objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Government is definite that the basis for development in Dominica is sustainable use of terrestrial and marine biological resources (Objective 4). One of the main tools and approaches towards mainstreaming biodiversity management into the national development agenda is to integrate biodiversity management into existing policies and development programs in support of improved protection and integrated resource management.

The two existing sectoral policies most correlated to the management of natural resources are the National Land Use Policy (2015) and the National Agriculture Policy (2021). Both policies highlight forests and natural resources as the most valuable resources and key assets for the country's development. In particular, the National Land Use Policy recognizes the influence of "the distinct cultural and natural heritage of Dominica" (Policy 1.8.) and the importance of “Enhanced Forest, Natural Environment, and Agricultural Vitality” (Policy 2.0). Furthermore, the National Agriculture Policy also emphasizes the importance of protecting and

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enhancing the vitality of the forest ecosystems aiming to increase resilience to climate change (Objective 1). With its extensive forest cover, Dominica is noted as a sink for greenhouse gasses (GHG) thus the protection of natural forest cover is critical in reducing GHG emissions and is intrinsic to the country's vision of becoming the first climate-resilient country.

The National Resilience Development Strategy 2030 recognizes that “country’s best opportunities are in the conservation of its forests, and it is where it has its best opportunities to enhance socio-economic development while making significant contributions in the field of climate change mitigation.” This has been further corroborated by a target of becoming carbon neutral through 100% domestic renewable energy production, and an increase of forest areas to 67% of Dominica’s landmass, set in the Climate Resilience and Recovery Plan.

Given that all existing national policies, strategies, and plans of the country objectively consider the functions of forests and their enormous contribution to the national goals and commitments, this policy is seen as an additional mechanism for the implementation of requirements proposed as actions needed for the improved management of natural resources of the country.

A detailed overview of main provisions, objectives, and mechanisms of national policies, strategies, and plans that represent the current strategic environment affecting the administration of natural resources under the mandate of the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division has been presented as Annex II.

2.3 Institutional Arrangements

It is known that the management of forests and natural resources, in general, is very dependent on good inter-sectoral collaboration. Well-established communication lines and coordination processes that enable a better understanding of individual concerns and mutual interests are crucial for more efficient and adaptive management.

The review of issues arising in the various forestry-related sectors presented above reveals the extremely fragmented nature of Dominica’s current institutional arrangements for natural resource management, including the management of forest resources. There are many governmental entities, often attached to different ministries, with mandates pertaining to forest areas that are not clearly defined or overlapping, and often without formal cooperation mechanisms in place.

The Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division since 2020 falls under the Ministry of Environment, Rural Modernisation and Kalinago Upliftment after a long-time period of running under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries which certainly has caused changes in operationalization and coordination with other divisions in charge for the management of natural resources.

The only formal institutional arrangement in place between the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division and another Government entity is a Memorandum of Understanding “To undertake a Joint Management Approach for all the Lands Forming Part of the Stewart Hall Water Catchment Protected Forest” of 2013, signed with the Dominica Water and Sewerage Company Ltd.

Shared responsibility for forest management that significantly influences overall law enforcement and management effectiveness is greatly related to unallocated state lands and private forests. Unallocated

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state lands are managed by the Lands and Surveys Division, within the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and consultation with the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division over the allocation of these lands has been minimal and is not based on a formal mechanism. Development of privately owned forested land in Dominica is subject to regulation by the Physical Planning Division which falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Planning, Resilience and Sustainable Development, Telecommunications and Broadcasting. There is also no formal mechanism for the Physical Planning Division to ensure consultation with the Forestry, Wildlife, and Parks Division on developments that affect forest resources, although this occurs through the Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA), yet only for certain projects. The Physical Planning Division is also responsible for the periodic monitoring of quarry operations in the country and is the focal point of the cabinet-approved quarry monitoring team, which is also made up of representatives of the Fisheries, Forestry, Environmental Health Division as well as the Environmental Coordinating Unit.

The establishment or improvement of existing cross-coordination mechanisms is required with other sectors. Tourism is one of the key partners as the whole eco-tourism sector benefits from forest management. Current collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, International Transport, and Maritime Initiatives rests on shared responsibilities for several eco-sites where maintenance of facilities on sites are under the tourism portfolio, often in collaboration with Village Councils and hosting communities. In 2005, under the Tourism Act, the Tourism Licensing Committee has been established which is responsible for certification of tourism services (for taxi drivers, tour operators, tourism facilities, etc.) applying basic standards of operations. The Forestry, Wildlife, and Parks Division has a representative appointed to the Committee. However, improvements in coordination and communication with tourism authorities are needed, particularly to address issues of mutual concern related to eco-sites management, infrastructure development, marketing, branding, and awareness-raising.

In addition, official coordination mechanisms and communication lines are also required with:

- the Ministry of Public Works and the Digital Economy on developments affecting forest resources, in particular, protected areas and their buffer zones;
- the Ministry of Blue and Green Economy, Agriculture and National Food Security in support of sustainable organic agriculture which applies agroforestry principles and environmentally friendly mechanisms;
- the Ministry of National Security and Home Affairs to improve collaboration with the Dominica Police Force related to the data sharing on forest cover cleared for an illegal growing of marijuana and for the education of foresters in self-defence and conflict management, as well with the Fire and Ambulance Services Division on control and monitoring of bush fires;
- the Ministry of Finance and Investment to strengthen collaboration with the Central Statistics Office of Dominica, in particular on protocols for data sharing and information access and the introduction of innovative financial mechanisms for biodiversity.

Improved communication with the Kalinago Council and enhanced conservation efforts on the Kalinago territory should be channelled through the Kalinago Upliftment unit of the parent ministry.

Establishing formal mechanisms that will enhance the overall management of the country's natural resources is required for all cross-sectoral authorities with shared responsibilities for the natural resources management (Table 3).

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Authority	Operational Unit	Areas of mutual concern
Ministry of Housing and Urban Development	Lands and Surveys Division	- developments affecting forest resources, in particular, protected areas and their buffer zones
Ministry of Economic Affairs, Planning, Resilience and Sustainable Development, Telecommunications and Broadcasting	Physical Planning Division	- developments affecting forest resources, in particular, protected areas and their buffer zones
Ministry of Tourism, International Transport, and Maritime Initiatives	Discover Dominica Authority (DDA)	- eco-sites management, infrastructure development, marketing, branding, and awareness-raising
Ministry of Public Works and the Digital Economy		- developments affecting forest resources, in particular, protected areas and their buffer zones
Ministry of Blue and Green Economy, Agriculture and National Food Security	Division of Agriculture	- sustainable organic agriculture and agroforestry principles
Dominica Water and Sewerage Company Limited (DOWASCO)		- watershed management in all terrestrial protected areas
Dominica Electricity Services Limited (DOMLEC)		- maintenance of power plants in forested areas
Ministry of National Security and Home Affairs	Dominica Police Force Fire and Ambulance Services Division	- data sharing on forest cover cleared for an illegal growing of marijuana and bush fire accidents, education in self-defence and conflict management
Ministry of Finance and Investment	Central Statistics Office of Dominica	- protocols for data sharing and information access, ISO quality certification, Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) benchmarking; - introduction of innovative financial mechanisms for biodiversity.
Customs and Excise Division The Dominica Air and Sea Ports Authority (DASPA)		- protocols for control of Invasive Alien Species, illegal wildlife trade, trade in genetic resources etc.

Table 3 Cross-sector entities with shared responsibility for the natural resource management

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2.4 Regional and international instruments

Safeguard mechanisms build into international obligations and commitments require that each Contracting Party shall, in accordance with its particular conditions and capabilities:

- (a) Develop national strategies, plans or programs or adapt for this purpose existing strategies, plans or programs which shall reflect, inter alia, the measures set out in the Convention relevant to the Contracting Party concerned; and
- (b) Integrate, as far as possible and as appropriate, the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources into relevant sectoral or cross-cutting sectoral plans, programs, and policies.

At the regional level, the main safeguard instrument related to forest and wildlife management is the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean, (the Cartagena Convention), which includes a Protocol on Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW). At the global level, Dominica is a contracting Party to several of the international agreements particularly intended to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, including the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the World Heritage Convention of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and others. The following table presents all ratified Conventions by Dominica related to biodiversity protection and sustainable use of natural resources.

Convention	Importance for forest management	Party since
Cartagena Convention	<p>The Convention covers several aspects of marine pollution and pollution from land-based sources and activities for which the Contracting Parties must adopt specific measures that include prevention, reduction, and control. Parties are also required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - protect and preserve rare or fragile ecosystems and habitats of depleted, threatened or endangered species; and - develop technical and other guidelines for the planning and Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) of important development projects. 	1986
United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)	<p>The Convention has three main objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The conservation of biological diversity; 2. The sustainable use of the components of biological diversity; and 3. The fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. <p>Each Contracting Party is requested, as far as possible and as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Integrate consideration of the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources into national decision-making; b) Adopt measures relating to the use of biological resources to avoid or minimize adverse impacts on biological diversity; c) Protect and encourage customary use of biological resources in accordance with traditional cultural practices that are compatible with conservation or sustainable use requirements; 	1994

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	<p>d) Support local populations to develop and implement remedial action in degraded areas where biological diversity has been reduced; and</p> <p>e) Encourage cooperation between its governmental authorities and its private sector in developing methods for sustainable use of biological resources.</p>	
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)	<p>The Convention ultimate objective is to achieve stabilisation of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system; and within a sufficient timeframe to facilitate natural adaptation of ecosystems, ensure food security and sustainable economic development.</p> <p>Under Article 12 of the Convention, Dominica committed to the production of regular National Communications to the Conference of Parties, which among others determine national response measures that will be pursued by the Government to combat climate change. The Initial National Communication in 2001 identifies the following sectors as being the most vulnerable: forestry and terrestrial resources, coastal ecosystems, water resources, human settlements and infrastructure, agriculture, fisheries, and tourism.</p>	1994
UNESCO World Heritage Convention	<p>The Convention sets out the duties of States Parties in identifying potential sites and their role in protecting and preserving them. By signing the Convention, each country pledges to conserve not only the World Heritage sites situated on its territory, but also to protect its national heritage.</p> <p>Specifically, compliance to the paragraph 172 of the UNESCO Convention Operational Guidelines requires that the State Party report and describe any potential major restorations, alternations, and/or new constructions within or the buffer zone and corridors or other areas, where such values can affect the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, including authenticity and integrity. The State Party should also ensure to submit the Environmental Social Impact Assessments, for review, as soon as they become available and prior to making any decisions regarding the operational phase of the project that would be difficult to reverse and to ensure that this phase of the project will not be approved if it would have any negative impact on the OUV.</p>	1995
Convention on International Trade in Endangered species (CITES)	<p>The Convention aims to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten the survival of the species. Because the trade in wild animals and plants crosses borders between countries, the effort to regulate it requires international cooperation to safeguard certain species from over-exploitation. Although many wildlife species in trade are not endangered, the existence of an agreement to ensure the sustainability of the trade is important in order to safeguard these resources for the future.</p>	1995
Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety	<p>The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity aims to ensure the safe handling, transport and use of living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology that may have adverse effects on biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health.</p>	2004

Table 4 List of ratified regional and international agreements

3. STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

3.1 Vision and Mission

In contribution to the overarching country strategy and desired achievement of the climate-resilience agenda, the vision for the effective management of the natural resources' portfolio under the Forestry, Wildlife, and Parks Division mandate has been determined as follows:

Dominica's forests are effectively managed so that **forest remains healthy, the cover is increased** and the ecological, economical, and socio-cultural **benefits provided by these forests accrue to the people of Dominica in a sustainable manner.**

Striving for vision requires the creation of an enabling environment that will empower all stakeholders for the development and implementation of planned strategies and mechanisms. The mission statement of the National Forest Policy is a guiding light for future decision-making and actions.

To guide the **conservation, protection, management, and sustainable use** of forests through close **collaboration, partnership, and participative approach** while **promoting traditional knowledge access and benefit sharing** for sustainable livelihoods.

3.2 Core values and beliefs

- Dominica's forests and natural resources are vital for the social, economic, and cultural well-being of the country. They should be preserved and used wisely for the well-being of present and future generations.
- In addition to the forests, non-agricultural trees outside the forest have also an important role to in biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.
- Dominica's forests are home to many species that occur nowhere else in the world. We have a special responsibility to ensure that these unique creatures survive and prosper.
- All Dominicans have the right of well-managed forest and wildlife resources. Equally, they have a duty for ensuring that natural resources are properly protected, valued and used sustainably.
- The Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division shall perform efficiently, effectively, adaptively and equitably within national laws and regulations and regional and international conventions and agreements.

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- The mutual interests and efforts of all cross-sectoral stakeholders should bring benefits to those whose livelihoods depend on the use of natural resources.

3.3 Overarching Principles

The commitment to the sustainable management and use of forests, their goods and services implies rearranged management framework built on the values and beliefs that have informed the formulation of this policy and will guide its implementation. Grounded on the principles of the ecosystem approach and mainstreaming biodiversity in the national development agenda, seven complementary and interlinked principles were defined that will guide the implementation of this policy. These are:

1. Enforcement and effective control

The Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica shall take all measures to ensure that this policy and its enabling legislation are adequately enforced through provision of adequate personnel and other resources.

2. National policy commitment and Policy integration

The Forest Policy shall be supported by the long-term commitment of all national actors, particularly policy and key decision makers. Policy shall ensure that all decision-making is integrated and multi-disciplinary which requires the forest policy is linked to and harmonized with other relevant policy areas and instruments.

3. Evidence-based management

Policy implementation shall be based, to the maximum extent possible, on tangible evidence and information, including scientific data, results of scientific research, and popular knowledge as the basis of decision-making. Monitoring and evaluation shall form integral parts of policy implementation, with evidence-based decision approaches being used to make management adaptive and responsive.

4. Empowerment, collaboration and participation

The costs, benefits and responsibility for forest management shall be shared among all stakeholders. The value systems, interests and priorities of all stakeholders shall therefore be understood and respected.

5. Inter-generational equity

Patterns of forest use and management shall ensure that there is equitable access to forest goods and services, for the present and future generations. Human beings and communities are part of a larger ecosystem in which all forms of life deserve to be respected and maintained.

6. Raising awareness

The Forest Policy shall raise the visibility of the forestry sector and improve its priority placing in the national agenda so that forests are perceived as the endowment and have a higher weighting in national decision-making processes.

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7. Valuation of forest goods and services

Users and beneficiaries of forest goods and services are aware of, and contribute to, the true cost of forest management and conservation, including paying for costs of environmental degradation caused by unsustainable practices.

3.4 Policy Objectives and Strategies

The definition of policy objectives and strategies based around the ecosystem approach, the primary framework for action under the Convention on Biological Diversity, suggests an overarching strategy that promotes conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in an equitable way through the integrated management of land, water and all living resources.

The main objectives of this policy are, to:

- i. **maintain or enhance the biodiversity and ecological functioning of forests;**
- ii. **increase the area of land covered by forest and other forest vegetation types;**
- iii. **optimize the contribution of forest resources to livelihoods and to the economy.**

3.4.1 Strategies to achieve objectives

- i. **Maintain or enhance the biodiversity and ecological functioning of forests** through:
 - conserving ecologically functional areas of all forest ecosystems found on both State and private lands (including ecological corridors, buffer areas and critically threatened areas);
 - aligning the legislative framework to other legislation addressing species protection or to the national obligations under conventions;
 - restructuring organization of the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division to include horizontal and vertical increases in positions for the forest management;
 - improving coordination mechanisms based on formal institutional agreements with all cross-sectoral authorities whose responsibilities intertwine with the forest management issues;
 - encouraging collaboration with regional and international partners and donors for knowledge sharing on new, innovative, and best practices in forest management;
 - protecting native genetic species and ecosystem diversity which inhabit a multitude of plants, animals, and micro-organisms that inhabit forest areas;
 - addressing negative impacts from invasive species and reducing their occurrence through the adoption of relevant strategic documents and operational plans;
 - introducing mechanisms of co-management approach establishing communication protocols and regular education programs with village councils and local communities.

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ii. **Increase the area of land covered by forest and other forest vegetation types** through:

- implementing a “no net loss of forest” policy which prioritizes stopping or revision of all ongoing deleterious developments and investments to avoid losses and conversion of the primary forest or ecologically sensitive forest vegetation areas;
- improving the current management of forested areas designated as protected areas on State lands through the adoption of management plans and formal definition of buffer zones;
- increasing the knowledge on forest condition and the cover type through continuous monitoring protocols, research, and best science;
- building capacities and skills of Division staff in forest management and implementing educational programs for private forest landowners and Kalinago community;
- promoting the maintenance and sustainable use of forests on private lands and Kalinago territory elaborating guidelines containing minimal forest management practices;
- promoting, supporting, and conducting the rehabilitation and restoration of forest on degraded and deforested State and private lands;
- promoting the maintenance or increasing the land area for forest cover as a mechanism to sequester carbon.

iii. **Optimize the contribution of forest resources to livelihoods and to the economy** through:

- ensuring the sustainable extraction of forest resources (including timber, game animals and other non-timber products);
- promoting the development of sustainable forest-based industries for both timber and non-timber forest products and regulating these industries;
- managing access to genetic resources, protection of intellectual property rights and ensuring fair benefits from the use of forest genetic resources;
- supporting traditional, subsistence and small-scale extractive uses of forests and cottage industries that are legal, sustainable and compatible with conservation objectives, especially those that are capable of bringing livelihood benefits to local and indigenous communities;
- promoting forestry contribution to food security through sustainable agroforestry and supporting initiatives for organic agriculture development;
- supporting sustainable development of nature-based tourism on all forested lands complying with biodiversity objectives and ecosystem-based approach;
- managing forest sustainably for the provision of critical ecosystem services such as water production, carbon sequestration, erosion control, coastal protection, etc.

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3.4.2 Requirements for implementation

Strategies listed under objectives require complementary and simultaneous actions derived here as requirements for the implementation of the National Forest Policy. A horizontal approach for thirteen proposed requirements encompasses three focus areas, as follows:

- A) Governance and planning
- B) Communication and education
- C) Sustainable local development

Focus area of the policy implementation	Requirements
A) Governance and planning	1 - Enforcing the existing national policies 2 - Strengthening the legal protection for forested lands 3 - Establishing enabling management arrangements 4 - Improving management framework for natural resources 5 - Implementing obligations under international agreements 6 - Facilitating effective research and monitoring of forest resources 7 - Developing and implementing financial mechanisms
B) Communication and education	8 - Building capacity of all stakeholders 9 - Ensuring equitable and effective participation of the private sector and civil society 10 - Building awareness and understanding the benefits of the ecosystem services
C) Sustainable local development	11 - Facilitating effective information access and exchange, information management, and use of traditional knowledge 12 - Ensuring that benefits from forest goods and services are equitably distributed 13 - Providing effective technical support for forest management and sustainable forest use

Table 5 Requirements for the implementation of the National Forest Policy

The requirements for the implementation of the policy, in detail presented below, are key mechanisms for the implementation of defined strategies and thus instrumental to the achievement of the policy objectives.

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Focus area A: Governance and planning

1. Enforcing the existing national policies

National Land Use Policy (2015):

Policy 1.0 Investment and Social & Economic Development	
1.8.3 Disturbance of cultural heritage sites will be avoided unless there is no other viable alternative.	1.8.3.1 Notwithstanding Part V, Section 1.8.3, the Morne Trois Pitons UNESCO World Heritage Site will be protected from development and development near the World Heritage Site will be buffered from it. 1.8.3.2 Buffer zones will be established around valuable cultural heritage sites to manage potential negative impacts from development.
Policy 2.0 Enhanced Forest, Natural Environment, and Agricultural Vitality	
2.1.4 Forest lands outside reserves and national parks may be used for private/public investment opportunities that are not wide-scale intensive or destructive activities.	
2.1.5 When assessing impacts of development to the forest system, an ecosystem level approach will be used that:	2.1.5.1 Recognises that forests are complex ecological systems, and ecosystem functions and ecological processes need to be maintained; and, 2.1.5.2 Recognises that an impact to the forest system may extend beyond the immediate site to the landscape scale, and ecosystem functions and ecological processes at the landscape scale also need to be maintained.
2.4.2 Buffer zones will be established around the National Parks and Waitukubuli Trail to protect the Nature Island identity and maintain a natural and high-quality environmental experience.	
2.5.1 Public access points to rivers, beaches, and National Parks will be identified and development will not infringe upon these points of access.	

National Agriculture Policy (2021):

Objective 1: Enhance the resilience of production systems to climate change, natural disasters and hazards and minimize their impact on the environment, while preserving biodiversity and protecting ecosystems.	Government shall ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protection and enhancement of the vitality of forests and natural environment systems in line with the National Forest Policy and National Land Use Policy; - Maintenance of existing protection for designated forested areas; - Prevention of conversion of protected lands into agricultural uses; - Support for biodiversity of the forest and natural environment system through conservation of habitats and related wildlife and reforestation activities; - Integration of planning at the level of the watershed and coastal zone; - Promotion of watershed restoration (e.g., creating buffer zones on steep slopes or around aquatic ecosystems and planting vegetation in those zones; reforestation activities with agroforestry species; improved drainage, etc.); - Promotion of ridge to reef approaches in the management of the natural resources; and - Adoption of a producer centric strategies to conserve biodiversity, protect ecosystems and minimize the impacts of production systems on the environment.
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2. **Strengthening the legal protection for forested lands** through revising, developing, declaring, and enforcing legal instruments (laws and regulations), with particular attention to revisions to:

The Forest Act
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - defining “forest types” and amending the definition of “forest produce”; - provisions that reflect more recent practices in forest management such as promoting reforestation and implementation of education programmes; - provisions for the recreational use of forests; - provisions for the regulation and control of trade in forest produce including intellectual property protection; - review of the enforcement provisions to enhance protection of forest officers and deter contravention of the Act; and - drafting of provisions which better regulate farming and construction on forest land and in buffer zones.
The Forestry and Wildlife Act
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - broadening the definition of wildlife to include a wider range of species (microorganisms, germplasm, bioprospecting); - drafting of more robust enforcement provisions so that forest officers and park wardens can more effectively carry out their functions of protecting forest resources; - the establishment of an appropriate structure of fines to discourage inappropriate use of forest resources.
The National Parks and Protected Areas Regulations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to revise the user fees, and expand the number of sites listed as ecotourism sites as a component of enabling revenue generation through payments for ecosystem services and the establishment of suitable fees systems.
The Mines and Minerals Act
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to revise provisions pertaining to Environmental Protection including conservation, reinstatement, and reforestation and declare them mandatory rather than discretionary.
The Mining of Pumice Act
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to address the overlap with the Mining Act and the Physical Planning Act and to provide for up-to date penalties.
The Physical Planning Act
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provisions or rules specific to quarrying activities in Protected Areas; - provisions to better regulate farming and construction on forest land and in buffer zones.

Comprehensive revision of the legislation and/or the drafting of new legislation is needed to support this forest policy. It will be also necessary to amend existing legislation or pass new laws which mandate reforestation of cleared forests so that there is ‘no net loss’ of forest extent or quality. New enabling laws should also be developed to create an appropriate framework for access and benefit sharing of forest resources. Also, beyond amendments to the existing legislation such as the Physical Planning Act, consideration should be given to implementing new legislation or regulations specific to quarrying which should contain provisions prohibiting or restricting quarrying activities in Protected

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Areas. Generally, there should be a review of forest-related legislation to ensure conformity with the terms of the policy and enforcement of forest-related legislation.

3. Establishing effective organisational structures for the management of the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division portfolio, including by:

- Establishing the “Forestry Advisory Committee” for improved cross-sectoral coordination and implementation of the National Forest Policy, including but not limited to:
 - ensuring effective monitoring, evaluation and reporting of the policy implementation,
 - strengthening structures and mechanisms for effective inter-agency and inter-sectoral communication, collaboration and coordination, especially with respect to the management of forested areas utilized for physical development and tourism;
 - harmonizing with sectoral strategic and work programmes and plans,
 - coordinating with other institutional bodies in support of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), such as Council on Environment, Climate Change and Development (CECCD) and National Climate Change Committee.
- Restructuring organization of the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division to include horizontal and vertical increases in positions to reflect the actual functions and duties of the Division today which extend beyond traditional forestry and encompass management of all terrestrial ecosystems and services they provide;
- Optimising the use of existing resources and mechanisms, in the public and private sector, to strengthen decision making in the management of natural resources.

4. Improving management framework for natural resources through the adoption of management plans and buffer zone plans for protected areas, forest management plans, invasive species management plan and other relevant.

Particular attention and prompt action should be taken towards the adoption of management plans for three national parks (Morne Trois Pitons, Morne Diablotin, and Cabrits), as well proclamation of buffer zones for the Morne Trois Pitons and Morne Diablotin National Parks. Management plans for protected areas are proven mechanisms to improve management and raise management effectiveness thus representing an important endowment to international obligations corroborating the Government’s commitment to protecting the natural heritage.

In addition, the adoption and enforcement of the National Invasive Species Strategy and Management Plan is needed for better prevention and improved protection of biodiversity and forest resources that are heavily impacted by the Invasive Alien Species.

5. Implementing obligations under international agreements, to facilitate and support forest conservation, use and management including through:

- fulfilling existing international commitments and obligations, particularly related to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the UNESCO World Heritage Convention;

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- harmonizing relevant policies and programmes with the National Forest Policy, including optimizing synergies with existing and proposed policies and programmes;
- promoting the implementation of international environmental agreements through national legislation; and
- representation on national delegations involved in international environmental negotiations and reporting.

6. Facilitating effective research and monitoring of forest resources, including through:

- ensuring that accurate national forest inventories are completed on a timely basis;
- promoting use of the best available technologies (including Geographic Information Systems, remote sensing and computer-based modelling);
- collecting ecological, social and economic data (including through conducting economic valuations of forest resources in Dominica);
- accessing opportunities for international or regional agreements for carbon sequestration; and
- establishing in-situ or ex-situ breeding programs for threatened species directly impacted by the IAS with the hope of reintroduction once the IAS is removed or controlled.

7. Developing and implementing financial mechanisms for the sustainable financing of forest management, including by:

- providing adequate annual budgetary allocations from the central budget for activities and programmes under the mandate of the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division (such as forest research and monitoring, capacity building, equipment, tools, vehicles and similar);
- facilitate revenue collection through application of appropriate fees, introducing of payments for ecosystem services, taxes, penalties and charges for offences, and caution fees or bonds to ensure restoration of degraded lands following potentially negative activities and development;
- creating mechanisms to directly channel funds from users to forest management, including through the use of payments for ecosystem services schemes that can provide incentives to private landowners;
- ensuring harmonisation of incentives for forest management with other fiscal policies (e.g., taxation and subsidy schemes);
- taking advantage of opportunities offered by new global environmental markets (e.g., carbon offset, debt for nature swaps);
- partnering with the private sector to include sponsorship of forest management, biodiversity conservation, and awareness-raising;
- estimating financial impacts from intangible contributions of forest for the government budget (monetary value of carbon sequestration); and
- introducing innovative financial mechanisms for sustainable forestry (PES, equity investments, charges/royalties on natural resources, etc.).

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Focus area B: Communication and education

8. **Building capacity of all stakeholders** (government, civil society and the private sector), and particularly the Kalinago community, for participatory forest management, so that they can effectively participate in the conservation and wise use of forest resources, including by:
 - providing resources to assist Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Community-based Organizations (CBOs) to effectively participate in management (this may include provision of technical assistance, financial or material resources, access to and rights to manage lands, offices and facilities);
 - improving and adapting the skills mix and increasing the number of staff in key government agencies at technical and professional levels;
 - improving administrative and management efficiency and effectiveness of the involved government agencies;
 - continuing and strengthening formal training provided at the technical, undergraduate and graduate levels;
 - institutionalizing mechanisms for continuing professional education of forest managers in the public service; and
 - building partnerships between management agencies and academic institutions to strengthen the use of relevant research by management agencies and to provide research priorities for management to academic institutions.

9. **Ensuring equitable and effective participation of the private sector and civil society** in the planning and management of forests and wildlife including by:
 - institutionalizing co-management and other forms of participatory forest management, including mechanisms for stakeholder participation in the development, implementation, review and evaluation of all policies, plans and reports;
 - implementing technical instruments such as standards for forest products and services, technical guidelines, codes of conduct, Standard Operating Procedures, requirements on development permits, forest certification programmes, and Memorandums of Understanding with private landowners and civil society, and private sector organizations for co-management of forest and wildlife resources;
 - facilitating management of private forests to advance the objectives of this National Forest Policy;
 - enhancing the participation and enabling allocation of appropriate management responsibilities to civil society and the private sector; and
 - assessing the introduction of incentive programs for best practices and voluntarism.

10. **Building awareness and understanding the benefits of the ecosystem services** and intrinsic values of forests and the principles of forest conservation and sustainable use through valuation and knowledge raising of:

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- Provisioning services that are obtained from ecosystems, such as food, fibre, fuel, genetic resources, biochemicals, natural medicines, pharmaceuticals, water, and building materials.
- Regulating services obtained from the regulation of ecosystem processes, including air quality maintenance, climate regulation, water regulation and purification, erosion control, waste treatment, regulation of human diseases, biological control, pollination, and protection from extreme weather and climatic events.
- Cultural services obtained from ecosystems through spiritual enrichment, cognitive development, reflection, recreation, and aesthetic experiences including cultural diversity, spiritual and religious values, knowledge systems, educational values, inspiration, aesthetic values, social relations, sense of place, cultural heritage values, and tourism.
- Supporting services that are necessary for the production of all other ecosystem services, such as the production of atmospheric oxygen (through photosynthesis), primary production, soil formation and retention, nutrient cycling, water cycling and provisioning of habitat.

Focus area C: Sustainable local development

11. Facilitating effective information access and exchange, information management, and use of traditional knowledge for management of forests in Dominica including by:

- establishing a national database with protocols for data sharing and access, building on initiatives of the Dominica Bureau of Standards and encouraging the assimilation of other data sources from all relevant agencies;
- collecting and recording traditional knowledge on forest use, management and cultural relationships;
- leading on an initiative to develop and maintain a national system for the collection and storage of data, relative to forest, and relevant to monitoring the effects of climate change and climate variability; and
- initiating and facilitating the endorsement of the draft Access and Benefit-Sharing legislation.

12. Ensuring that benefits from forest goods and services are equitably distributed to the people of Dominica, including by:

- developing and supporting community-based programmes to benefit stakeholders in management and use of forest resources;
- providing technical and financial support for sustainable forest-based industries and small businesses; and
- ensuring equitable access of the population to forest goods and services, including recreation, educational and cultural heritage values.

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13. Providing effective technical support for forest management and sustainable forest use including:

- enabling extension services and technical training to stakeholders, in particular to farmers, private landowners, and other civil society and private sector organisations and communities involved in using and managing forests;
- facilitating the introduction of forest management certification and standards with a focus on environmental practices and social aspects including local community access and indigenous peoples' rights,
- encouraging certification schemes for wild harvest collection through the branding and labelling of consumer products; and
- recording and sharing ancient knowledge and skills of creating valuable and functional craft items particularly present in the Kalinago community.

Having in mind the existing institutional and legislative context, as well as changes and requirements proposed, the priority matrix for the policy implementation has been determined to highlight the importance through the levels of priority for specific actions in contribution to the national development agenda (Table 6).

Implementation requirements	Priority
1 - Enforcing the existing national policies	High
2 - Strengthening the legal protection for forested lands	High
3 - Establishing enabling management arrangements	High
4 - Improving management framework for natural resources	High
5 - Implementing obligations under international agreements	High
6 - Facilitating effective research and monitoring of forest resources	High
7 - Developing and implementing financial mechanisms	Moderate
8 - Building capacity of all stakeholders	High
9 - Ensuring equitable and effective participation of the private sector and civil society	Moderate
10 - Building awareness and understanding the benefits of the ecosystem services	Moderate
11 - Facilitating effective information access and exchange, information management, and use of traditional knowledge	High
12 - Ensuring that benefits from forest goods and services are equitably distributed	High
13 - Providing effective technical support for forest management and sustainable forest use	Moderate

Table 6 Implementation priority matrix

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GLOSSARY

BIODIVERSITY is the variability among living organisms; this includes diversity within species (genetic diversity), between species and of ecosystems.

CO-MANAGEMENT is a process of management by which government shares power with stakeholders, with each given specific rights and responsibilities.

CONSERVATION is an integrative approach to the protection and management of biodiversity that uses appropriate principles from biological, social science and economic fields

FOREST COVER is the percent of a fixed area covered by the crown of an individual plant or delimited by the vertical projection of its outermost perimeter.

DEFORESTATION is the long-term or permanent loss of forest cover.

ECOSYSTEM is a dynamic complex of plant, animal and micro-organism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit.

ECOLOGICAL CORRIDOR is a route that allows movement of individual species from one area to another.

ECOLOGICAL PROCESSES is a continuous action or series of actions that is influenced by one or more ecosystems.

ECOSYSTEM SERVICES include benefits people obtain from ecosystems through four categories of ecosystem services. These are: provisioning services (food, water, genetic resources, natural medicines, building materials), regulating services (climate regulation, water regulation and purification, erosion control, waste treatment), cultural services (spiritual, recreational, education, scientific and cultural benefits), and supporting services (soil formation and retention, nutrient cycling, water cycling and provisioning of habitat).

ENVIRONMENT is all land, area beneath the land surface, atmosphere, climate, surface water, ground water, seas, marine and coastal areas, seabed, wetlands and “natural resources”.

FORESTS are ecosystems occurring on areas of land with existing or potential tree canopy of at least 60% that cover, a minimum land area of 1 ha, and 3 m minimum tree height.

FOREST DEGRADATION is changes within the forest which negatively affect the structure or function of the stand or site.

FOREST MANAGEMENT include all measures and actions which determine the extent to, and conditions under which forest resources are conserved, accessed, used, transformed and marketed.

FOREST PRODUCTS correspond to goods that are physical objects of biological origin.

HABITAT is the place where an organism or population naturally occurs.

INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES are non-native organisms (plants, animals, pathogens, and the like)

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whose introduction and/or spread impacts human health and well-being; disrupts trade and threaten biological diversity.

LIVELIHOODS comprises the capabilities, assets and activities required for a means of living.

NATIVE SPECIES are plants, animals, fungi, and micro-organisms that occur naturally in a given area or region.

NATURAL RESOURCES are the living plants, animals, organisms and other biological factors within the environment and the geological formations, mineral deposits, renewable and non-renewable assets, and the habitat of the living plants, animals, organisms and other biological factors.

NON-TIMBER FOREST PRODUCTS are products of biological origin other than wood derived from forests.

PRIVATE LAND is land other than State land.

PROTECTED AREA is a geographically defined area which is designated and managed to achieve specific conservation objectives.

REFORESTATION is the re-establishment of forest formations after loss of cover due to human-induced or natural perturbations.

STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION is a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over the decisions and resources which affect them.

STATE LAND means any land which belongs to and is vested in the Commonwealth of Dominica.

SUSTAINABLE USE is the use of biological diversity in a way and at a rate that does not lead to its long-term decline.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

TIMBER includes trees when they have fallen or been felled, and all wood whether cutup or fashioned for any purpose or not.

TREE is a woody perennial with a single main stem, or in the case of coppice with several stems (includes bamboos, plants, stumps, brushwood and canes), having a more or less definite crown.

WATERSHED is the specific land area that drains water into a river system or other body of water.

WILDLIFE includes wild fauna and flora and micro-organisms.

ANNEXES

Annex I - List of national laws, policies, plans and international agreements

Policies and Plans

National Land Use Policy 2015-2025

National Agriculture Policy 2017-2027

National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2014-2020

National Resilience Development Strategy 2020-2030

Dominica Climate Resilience and Recovery Plan 2020-2030

Tourism Master Plan 2012-2022

Medium-Term Growth and Social Protection Strategy, 2006

National Climate Change Adaptation Policy and Action Plan, 2002

Low-Carbon Climate Resilient Development Strategy, 2012-2020

Draft National Invasive Species Strategy, 2020

Draft National Physical Development Plan, 2016

Draft Dominica Climate Change, Environment and Natural Resource Management Bill, 2019

Laws and Regulations

Forest Act, Act 25 of 1958, Chap. 60:01

National Parks and Protected Areas Act, Act 16 of 1975, Chap. 42:02

Forestry and Wildlife Act, Act 12 of 1976, Chap. 60:02

Physical Planning Act, Act 5 of 2002

Development and Planning Corporation Act, Act 19 of 1972, Chap. 84:01

Mines and Minerals Act, Act 5 of 1996

Mining of Pumice Act, Act 1 of 1964

Water and Sewerage Act, Act 17 of 1989, Chap. 43:40

Electricity Supply Act, Act 10 of 2006

Plant Protection and Quarantine Act, Act 10 of 1986, Chap.58:40

State Lands Act, Act 27 of 1958, Chap. 53:01

Public Health Act, Act 15 of 1968

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Solid Waste Management Corporation Act, Act 19 of 1996

Litter Act, Act 4 of 1990, Chap. 40:61

Title by Registration Act, Act 1 of 1886 Chap. 56:50

Land Acquisition Act, Act 7 of 1946, Chap.53:02

Land Management Authority, Act 20 of 1973, Chap. 58:01

Bush Fire Act, Act 1 of 1915, Chap. 42:61

International Agreements

Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean (Cartagena Convention)

Protocol on Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA),

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Convention on International Trade in Endangered species (CITES)

UNESCO World Heritage Convention

Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

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Annex II - Detailed overview of national policies and strategies

National Land Use Policy 2015-2025	
<i>Vision for Dominica's Land Use Planning System</i>	Dominica is The Nature Island of the Caribbean. To honour this vision for Dominica, the nation's settlements, agricultural lands, rivers, forests, coastal zone, and biodiversity must be well managed. Building a high quality of life and a prosperous future for Dominica depends upon investment, social and economic development, protecting and enhancing the vitality of the forest systems and agricultural areas, and increasing resilience to climate change.
<i>POLICY 1.0: Investment and Social & Economic Development</i>	<p>1.8 Recognise the influence that the distinct culture and heritage of Dominica has had on its built form.</p> <p>1.8.3 Disturbance of cultural heritage sites will be avoided unless there is no other viable alternative.</p> <p>1.8.3.1 Notwithstanding Part V, Section 1.8.3, the Morne Trois Pitons UNESCO World Heritage Site will be protected from development and development near the World Heritage Site will be buffered from it.</p> <p>1.8.3.2 Buffer zones will be established around valuable cultural heritage sites to manage potential negative impacts from development.</p>
<i>POLICY 2.0 Enhanced Forest, Natural Environment, and Agricultural Vitality</i>	<p>A healthy forest and natural environment system, coastal system, river system etc. collectively ensure that ecological functions can sustain life on the island, while contributing directly to the environmental, economic, and social well-being of the people of Dominica.</p> <p>2.1 Protect and enhance the vitality of forest and natural environment systems.</p> <p>2.1.1 Forest resources will continue to flourish while providing a range of opportunities to earn a livelihood for present and future generations.</p> <p>2.1.2 Land use planning of the forest system will be tailored to the five categories of forested areas: Forest Reserves; National Parks; Unallocated State Lands; Carib (Kalinago) Territory; and privately owned land.</p> <p>2.1.3 The existing protection for designated forested areas will be maintained.</p> <p>2.1.4 Forest lands outside reserves and national parks may be used for private/public investment opportunities that are not wide-scale intensive or destructive activities.</p> <p>2.1.5 When assessing impacts of development to the forest system, an ecosystem level approach will be used that:</p> <p>2.1.5.1 Recognises that forests are complex ecological systems, and ecosystem functions and ecological processes need to be maintained; and,</p> <p>2.1.5.2 Recognises that an impact to the forest system may extend beyond the immediate site to the landscape scale, and ecosystem functions and ecological processes at the landscape scale also need to be maintained.</p> <p>2.1.6 Hilltops, hillsides, and valley lands of the forest system will be maintained to minimise degradation of the lower forest system.</p> <p>2.1.7 The biodiversity of the forest and natural environment system will be supported by:</p> <p>2.1.7.1 conserving the habitat and related wildlife corridors of threatened or endangered species and protecting the habitat and corridors with buffer areas;</p> <p>2.1.7.2 conserving the critical habitats of wildlife and inland fisheries within the forest system; and,</p> <p>2.1.7.3 Re-forestation activities that assist the forest system and natural environment system with regeneration.</p>

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National Agriculture Policy 2017-2027	
<p>Objective 1</p> <p>Ecosystem Management and Biodiversity</p>	<p>Government recognises the importance of ecosystem services for the effective functioning of production systems and food and nutrition security. Dominica is noted to be a sink for greenhouse gasses (GHG), which is largely attributed to the extensive forest cover on the island. Improved ecosystem management and biodiversity can provide a number of ecosystem services, which can lead to more resilient, productive and sustainable systems that may also contribute to reducing, or removing greenhouse gases. Government shall adopt an ecosystem approach, working at landscape scale and ensuring intersectoral coordination and cooperation for effective management of the country’s natural resources and climate change responses. Government therefore shall ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protection and enhancement of the vitality of forests and natural environment systems in line with the National Forest Policy and National Land Use Policy; - Maintenance of existing protection for designated forested areas; - Prevention of conversion of protected lands into agricultural uses; - Support for biodiversity of the forest and natural environment system through conservation of habitats and related wildlife and reforestation activities; - Integration of planning at the level of the watershed and coastal zone; - Promotion of watershed restoration (e.g., creating buffer zones on steep slopes or around aquatic ecosystems and planting vegetation in those zones; reforestation activities with agroforestry species; improved drainage, etc.); - Promotion of ridge to reef approaches in the management of the natural resources; and - Adoption of a producer centric strategies to conserve biodiversity, protect ecosystems and minimize the impacts of production systems on the environment.
National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2014-2020	
<p><i>Value of biodiversity</i></p>	<p>Dominica is committed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engaging the public and private sectors to ensure that development policies and business practices designed around short-term needs do not compromise the biodiversity upon which the future of humanity ultimately depends; - Catalyzing global efforts to recognize and conserve the option value of biodiversity and avoid its loss.
<p>Goals</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The conservation and sustainable management of Dominica’s terrestrial and marine biodiversity to ensure intra- and inter-generational equity. 2. The promotion of sound and sustainable agricultural practices and technology within existing agricultural human capital so as to minimize the loss of agro-biodiversity, and reduce vulnerability to desertification, soil loss, and the contamination of water resources. 3. To ensure that biotechnology knowledge and concerns are widely distributed so that all life is guaranteed and benefits derived are equitably shared.

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National Biodiversity Targets	<p>1. By 2020 at the latest, all residents of the Commonwealth of Dominica will be aware of the value of biodiversity, and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.</p> <p>2. By 2020, at least 15% of areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity.</p> <p>3. By 2020, pollution, including from excess nutrient, has been brought to levels that are not detrimental to ecosystem function and biodiversity.</p> <p>4. By 2020, at least 20% of terrestrial, inland water and 15% of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem service, are conserved through comprehensive ecologically representative and well-connected systems of effectively managed, protected areas and other means, and integrated into the wider land and seascape.</p> <p>5. By 2020, ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stock has been enhanced, through conservation and restoration, including restoration of at least 15% of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation, and to combating desertification.</p>
Cross-sector challenges	<p>Cross sector issues affecting conservation of biodiversity in Dominica include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Tourism – Tourism development, hotels and trails can result in habitat modification. Pollution and diseases negatively impact biodiversity, > Agriculture - poor agricultural practices; use of hybrid varieties; deforestation, pesticide use, and redirection of water courses negatively impacts the resource base, > Land use planning – subdivision of lands lead to fragmentation of ecosystems; unauthorized and uncontrolled development makes no provision for ecosystem protection; infrastructure development does not always respect environmental resources; conversion of land from forest or scrub land to agriculture or housing, ecosystems and their associated resources are lost, etc.
Forests on private lands	<p>Dominica’s flora and fauna occupy approximately 65% of the island. Since 20% of Dominica's forested land is protected by law, this means that 45% of forest are in private hands. The challenge here is that the Forestry Act does not provide protection for forest on private land.</p>
Mainstreaming Tools and Approach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The integration of biodiversity management into existing development programs that are already part of the economic and social fabric of the country. As the economic plight of the people improves, squatting, deforestation, and overexploitation of natural resources is expected to decrease. 2. Enhanced complementarity between agriculture and biodiversity management. Biodiversity development, management and monitoring can and should be an integral part of agricultural development. 3. Advance the Protected areas management system which is already an integral part of the national work program of Dominica, and has several reporting requirements tied to international obligations. 4. Direct financial investment in biodiversity including valuation assessment of biodiversity indicators. 5. Maintain a Green House Gas (GHG) emission > 0. As a signatory to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Dominica is obligated to report to the Conference of Parties on its GHG emissions and efforts to reduce global warming. Maintaining natural forest cover is the most effective way to reduce GHG emissions, and is also an excellent biodiversity conservation strategy. It is possible that GHG levels can rise above zero while the forest remains intact, however, deforestation will definitely increase GHG emissions. This CO₂ sequestration makes Dominica eligible for benefits under the Clean Development Mechanism.

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National Resilience Development Strategy 2020-2030	
Resilience Development Objectives	<p>Resilience for Dominica can be summed up as comprising of seven multiple development objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The promotion of food security and self-sufficiency through Climate Resilience Agriculture and Fisheries Development; 2. Enhancing the resilience of Ecosystems and sustainable use of natural resources (forestry, marine, water resources); 3. Enhancing Infrastructure Resilience; 4. Promotion of Sustainable Human Settlements/Communities; 5. Provision of adequate and sustainable social protection systems with the ability to respond rapidly to the impact of shocks at the individual and household levels; 6. Implementing a Comprehensive Risk Management Framework (including National Vulnerability Risk Resilience Fund) and pursuing the Low Carbon Development Pathway (the greening of the economy); 7. Economic empowerment and innovations through sustainable Climate Financing.
Forest Resource Management	<p>Dominica as a small island state has understood that its best opportunities are in the conservation of its forests, as it has actually done so far, and it is where it has its best opportunities to enhance socio-economic development, while making significant contributions in the field of climate change mitigation. The conservation and restoration of the forest and landscapes is an impending step to the socio-economic growth of the country. The forests can play a key role in the socio-economic development of Dominica in three ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - as a source of recreation in particular for the nation's urban population but also for visiting tourists. The importance of forests to support nature tourism is being increasingly recognized. Forest resources and, in particular, the National Parks and eco-sites are key components of Dominica's Nature Island brand –a brand which is celebrated in agriculture, eco-tourism, water resources and people, - as a source of wood raw material for small-scale industrial use, construction and energy (the use of wood for energy is in decline and currently approximately six percent of the population depends on wood for energy), and - as an ecological entity primarily for the protection of watersheds, as a provision of wildlife habitats and the preservation of genetic resources and biodiversity. <p><u><i>i. Productive/Sustainable Utilization</i></u></p> <p>It has been posited that the current volume of fallen lumber in Dominica's forest could return millions of dollars to the country through harvesting. The Sustainable harvesting of forest timber products and avoiding wastage of other valuable portions from lumber production not only create livelihood opportunities but the sustainable thinning of forest timber also adds to the building resilience of the forests by managing the Carbon stocks and aiding in Carbon sequestration. The resources of the forest can also be used for bio fuel including bio-methane gas. The production of biomass from high calorific wood pellets.</p> <p><u><i>ii. Carbon Footprint/Carbon Credit</i></u></p> <p>A new updated national forest inventory to include a GHG inventory is needed for the country to be able to obtain relevant data, particularly as it relates to changes in the island's forest cover and carbon sequestration, especially following recent passage of severe storms such as Hurricane Maria and its devastating effect on the island's forestry sector.</p>

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	<p>A good plan to manage the forest resources in Dominica, including improved carbon measurement, has the potential to lead the country to obtain payments for results for their actions. Those economic benefits would serve to scale up the efforts of the Low Carbon Climate Resilient Development Strategy 2012-2020 and the National Land Use Policy Draft 2014 whose political action is extremely important for the success of REDD+.</p> <p><i>iii. Biodiversity</i></p> <p>Addressing vulnerabilities and building resilience will ultimately entail improving land management practices, including reducing threats such as unsustainable tourism development, mining, agriculture and climate change. Undertaking timely updates of the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan is also essential in ensuring the implementation of the country’s obligations under the Convention for Biological Diversity, as well as serving as a strategic framework to guide the continued conservation and protection of Dominica’s vulnerable natural resources.</p> <p><i>iv. Ecosystems</i></p> <p>Climate change is contributing to compromising the structure and functions of the forest that are currently under threat from various deforestation and degradation activities.</p>
Dominica Climate Resilience and Recovery Plan 2020-2030	
Pillars and Result Areas	<p>The Climate Resilient Recovery Plan is based on three main pillars and six result areas.</p> <p>Pillar I) Climate-Resilient Systems</p> <p>Result Area 6 - Protected and Sustainably Leveraged Natural and Other Unique Assets (reflects staying true to Dominica’s Nature Island “brand” by valuing the unique assets of the country, maintaining a pristine environment, and carefully monetizing them to support the resilience agenda. It focuses on geological resources, fresh water, marine environment, lands and forests, as well as conceptually recognizing the value of Dominica’s culture, history and knowledge of resilience gained through recent events.)</p>
Climate Resilience Targets by 2030	<p>Target 20 - Becoming carbon neutral through 100% domestic renewable energy production, and an increase of protected forest areas to 67% of Dominica’s land mass.</p> <p>This will be achieved by leveraging its large domestic renewable energy resources (hydro power, geothermal power, solar power) that can produce electricity more cheaply than using imported fossil fuels. It will also increase forest coverage from the current level of 62 percent of land mass to 67 percent of landmass, thereby further sequestering carbon emissions.</p>
Implementation Plan	<p>Twenty targets will be realized through about fifty planned or ongoing initiatives closely aligned to the six results areas of the strategy. Those directly related to forest management, are:</p> <p>Forestry/Ecosystem Audit/Protection Plans (The ecosystem of Dominica is a unique asset which is important to tourism and national identity; Preservation of the ecosystem is important for the long-term sustainability of Dominica; Could form the baseline data for a green bond).</p> <p>Debt for Nature Swap (Urgent need to create the fiscal space to support reconstruction and resilience efforts, as well as blue economy investments; Regulatory protection regime in place with viable enforcement mechanisms).</p>

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	<p>“Roots” National Tree Planting Initiative (Get the right tree in the right place and ensure quality over quantity; One million trees planted; Legacy and machinery in place for the country to continue the national effort).</p> <p>Geothermal Export to Neighbouring Islands (Urgent need to raise revenues to finance the Climate Resilience agenda; Alignment with Dominica’s branding as the Nature Island; Reduced Greenhouse Gas contributions).</p>
Draft National Physical Development Plan	
Focus Areas	<p>Environmental protection is identified as a key value of the people of Dominica. Tourism is identified as a key opportunity to increase economic development. The focus on both environmental protection and tourism builds on and leverage Dominica’s existing assets many of which are natural features.</p>
Vision	<p>In 2035, Dominica will have retained forest cover over 65% of the land mass including protected National Parks and Forest Reserves and privately owned forests as a way to protect biodiversity, prevent erosion, mitigate climate change, and provide opportunities to earn a sustainable livelihood without destructive activities.</p>
Policies	<p>Natural Environment</p> <p>A. National Parks and Forest Reserves</p> <p>ii) The National Parks and Forest Reserves are important to the natural environment, for mitigation and adaptation to climate change, and to the identity of Dominica. In accordance with the National Land Use Policy (2.4) and the National Parks and Protected Areas Act permitted uses in National Parks and Forest Reserves shall continue to be conservation and commemorative uses, and recreation uses and low-impact tourism uses that are compatible with preserving the natural beauty of the area including the flora and fauna.</p> <p>iii) In accordance with the National Land Use Policy (2.4.2), and as required to retain the UNESCO World Heritage site designation for Morne Trois Pitons National Park, the area adjacent to National Parks and Forest Reserves shall be considered a transition zone. The width of the transition zone shall be as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Private lands adjacent to Morne Diablotin National Park: 200 metres; - Forest Area adjacent to Morne Diablotin National Park: 500 metres; - Private lands adjacent to Morne Trois Pitons National Park: 200 metres; - Public lands adjacent to Morne Trois Pitons National Park: 300 metres; and, - All other cases: 150 metres. <p>iv) Within the transition zone adjacent to National Parks and Forest Reserves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development shall only be permitted if it will not have negative impacts on the National Park or Forest Reserve, and if it is compatible with Dominica’s “Nature Island” identity and with maintaining a natural and high-quality environmental experience; - The Government may consider acquiring the transition zone lands; and, - Programmes to promote land uses that are compatible with the National Parks and Forest Reserves will be encouraged.

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Implementation Plan	<p>B. Illegal Development</p> <p>i) With the exception of infrastructure built by the Government as described in this Plan, any other development built without a planning permission is considered illegal development</p> <p>C. Land Use Compatibility</p> <p>ii) To assess land use compatibility, the Government may require technical studies, and has established required criteria.</p> <p>D. Technical Studies to Aid Decision-Making</p> <p>i) To better assess the appropriateness or evaluate the land use compatibility of a proposed development, the Government may require certain technical studies at the proponent’s expense prior to issuing any approval.</p> <p>G. Institutional Strengthening</p> <p>i) The Government will continue to work towards institutional strengthening to better achieve the goals and intended outcomes of the National Physical Development Plan including through the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarify which department has jurisdiction over sectors/issues where there is uncertainty; - Amend legislation to address any loopholes that permit activities that are counter to the long-term vision of Dominica and/or that are not in conformity with the policies of the Plan (e.g., amend legislation to require planning consent for a transfer that subdivides land); and, - Conduct continuous capacity building to ensure Government agencies and other key stakeholders have the knowledge and resources to implement the NPDP or to support its implementation.
Tourism Master Plan 2012-2022	
Tourism Development Structure Plan	<p>National parks and forest reserves are considered as central Dominica’s tourism product that must be preserved at all costs. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - designation of buffer zones around the protected areas to check future development; - environmental and social impact assessments undertaken as part of the tourism development process so that appropriate levels of acceptable change are established and incorporated in the management plans; - ensuring that environmentally sensitive design principles are applied in any form of development within the protected areas and buffer zones; - working in conjunction with park managers to jointly present, interpret and market potential tourist resources and sites; and - assisting with the establishment of baseline data and on-going monitoring of visitor use and impacts, and to vary management systems accordingly.

Table 7 National strategies, policies and plans