






# THE HAITI SUSTAINABLE ENERGY PROGRAMME

Increasing energy access in Haiti and  
supporting new solutions to energy poverty



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# GOALS

» To increase energy access in Haiti's rural south-west

» To demonstrate innovative, sustainable solutions to energy poverty

» To support sustainable national recovery

# Introduction

The Republic of Haiti - that occupies a third of the Caribbean island of Hispaniola - became the first independent Latin American country in the early 19th century. Yet chronic instability and weak governments combined with natural disasters have left it the poorest nation in the western hemisphere.

UN peacekeepers were deployed in 2004 to restore order after an uprising, and today more than 8,000 personnel remain. Moreover, many Haitians are struggling with the aftermath of the 7.0 earthquake which devastated the capital, Port-au-Prince, and surrounding areas in January 2010. More than 200,000 people were killed and hundreds of thousands were left homeless.


Environmental and natural resource degradation is also a major concern. The country is extremely vulnerable due to deforestation, bad cultivation practices, erosion and the degradation of the watersheds. Vegetation cover has fallen to an estimated 2% of the land area (15%, if tree cultivation is taken into account), which has led to widespread biodiversity loss. The degradation of watersheds linked to deforestation is the main cause of floods. 80% of the country is mountainous, which can exacerbate natural disasters and poor land management practices. Rapid urbanisation has also taken its toll on the environment.


However, Haiti has significant tourism potential and there has been some success with exports of crops, including mangoes. Haiti is also taking steps toward strengthening its governance mechanisms and promoting economic development and social inclusion.


Renewable energy has the potential to meet more than 50% of Haiti's electricity demand by 2030. Haiti needs to harness this immense potential to jettison the instability and poverty of the past and transition from a fragile to a developing state.

## SOUTH DEPARTMENT QUICK FACTS

 **Population:**  
700,000 people

 **Surface:**  
2,800 km<sup>2</sup> or 1,100 square miles

 **Main economic activities:**  
agriculture (subsistence-level), vetiver production, fishing and services (mainly informal economy).

 **Capital:**  
Les Cayes, population 70,000



## ABOUT THE SOUTH DEPARTMENT

This southern region - known for its beautiful coastline and its proximity to the Pic Macaya National Park - is one of the few remaining bastions of primary forest and biodiversity in this largely deforested Caribbean nation. It is an area with high potential for tourism and business development, with active economic sectors such as the vetiver industry.

The department however is not immune to some of the environmental problems that plague Haiti. Deforestation, soil erosion, freshwater pollution and coastal and marine degradation all contribute to the chronic poverty and food insecurity in the area.

Specifically, marine and coastal resource management has not been widely considered in national and international efforts in dealing with poverty, disaster responses, risk reduction strategies and preservation of the country's natural resources. The greater Tiburon watershed, for example, has been identified as an area of severe environmental degradation and a priority for watershed restoration. This is especially urgent, as the conservation zone around Pic Macaya has considerable environmental consequences for the entire southern peninsula.

## ABOUT CÔTE SUD INITIATIVE

Launched in January 2011, the Côte Sud Initiative (CSI) is a coalition of United Nations agencies that is spearheading the most ambitious initiative to date to support the sustainable recovery and development of south-western Haiti. The Haiti Sustainable Energy (HSE) programme is a key component of CSI.

The CSI's 20-year vision is to improve the livelihoods of more than 200,000 people in the South Department. This is being achieved through a diverse program which addresses the root causes of extreme poverty, including environmental degradation, vulnerability to natural disasters and limited access to social services.

Environmental restoration efforts include reforestation, erosion control, fisheries management and mangrove rehabilitation. Other activities target small business and tourism development, access to water and sanitation, and improvements in health and education.

CSI has five programmes: Gouvernance Sud, Energie Sud (HSE is part of this component), Mer Sud, Terre Sud, Route Sud. These programmes are executed under the authority and direction of the government of Haiti with the United Nations and partners providing support in coordination and implementation

# Energy Access in Haiti



Between 12.5% and 25% of Haiti's 10.5 million people have regular access to electricity - one of the lowest electrification rates in the world, and the lowest in the western hemisphere.



Fuel, especially dirty fuels like wood, kerosene and charcoal, is a major cash expense for Haitian families; Dirty fuels also pose significant health and safety risks.



Nearly USD2 billion is sent to Haiti each year in remittances from the Haitian diaspora - and about 10-25% is used to pay for some form of fuel, mainly kerosene and petrol.

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Haiti depends on fossil fuels for 85% of electricity generation. This represents 7% of annual GDP and makes Haiti vulnerable to volatile oil prices.



Over 65% of the total electricity production of Eléctricité de Haiti (EdH) - Haiti's state electricity provider - is lost to technical inefficiencies or used by Haitians unable or unwilling to pay.



Renewable energy has the potential to meet more than 50% of Haiti's electricity demand by 2030.



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