



FSC[™] CERTIFICATION IN UGANDA

Working with Government to take care of Uganda's forests





FORESTS IN CRISIS

Uganda has lost more than 50 per cent of its forest estate in the last 25 years.

The FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 indicates that between 2015-2020, Uganda's forests decreased by nine per cent from 2.5 million hectares to 2.3 million hectares. The loss is largely attributed to a rapidly growing population and competing land uses e.g. settlement, agriculture and charcoal production.

The National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) estimates that at the present rate of deforestation, Uganda will have no natural forests by 2050.

Deforestation deprives Uganda of revenue. Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) estimates a loss of 23 billion Uganda shillings (USD 8 million) annually.

Government of Uganda, therefore, needs to take bold steps to reverse the loss of forest cover and ensure sustainable management of its forest resources.



2050

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FORESTS CORE TO UGANDA'S DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

Uganda's forests cover approximately 2.3 million hectares which is 9 per cent of the country's total land area. The forests are sources of livelihoods to approximately 87 per cent of rural households, contribute approximately 88 per cent of the energy requirements, and deliver vast ecosystem services.

The forests host wildlife such as mountain gorillas and chimpanzees that are major tourist attractions, contributing approximately 61 per cent income derived from tourism.

The forestry sub sector contributes about 3.5 per cent per annum to Uganda's gross domestic product (GDP) and provides jobs for about one million people.

GOVERNMENT OF UGANDA'S EFFORTS TO PROMOTE RESPONSIBLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

Despite the challenges, Government of Uganda is taking positive steps to ensure sustainable forest management of its remaining forest estate.

Under Uganda Vision 2040, Government is committed to increase its land area covered by the forests from 9 per cent to 15 percent by 2025, and 24 per cent by 2040.

Uganda committed to restore 2.5 million hectares by 2020 as a contribution to the global effort to mitigate climate change under the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100).

In 2018, the Ministry of Water and Environment, in partnership with the Forest Stewardship Council™ (FSC™), launched the National Forest Stewardship Standard (NFSS) for the Republic of Uganda. The NFSS is applicable to all forest operations in Uganda seeking FSC certification for forest management.

For example, the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), a Government agency responsible for the management and protection of wildlife in and outside protected areas, is adopting use of the NFSS for Uganda, to strengthen responsible forest management of its park management systems for the conservation of Uganda's wildlife.

Government of Uganda's efforts to manage its forests sustainably can be enhanced through adoption of FSC certification.



WHAT IS FSC CERTIFICATION?

FSC certification confirms that forests are being managed in a way that preserves biological diversity and benefits the lives of local people and workers, while ensuring they sustain economic viability.

The FSC system monitors how forests are managed. It puts in place mechanisms to label and trace timber and other products all the way to the consumer. It does this through two kinds of certification: Forest Management Certification and Chain of Custody Certification.

FOREST MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION

CHAIN OF CUSTODY CERTIFICATION

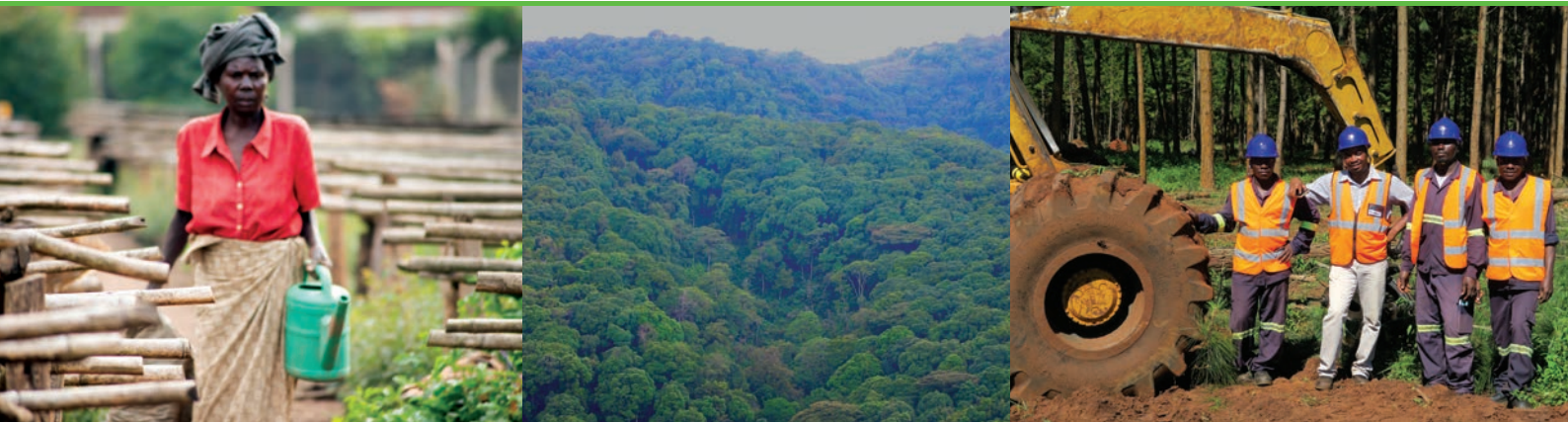


Forest Management Certification confirms that individuals, governments and private companies are managing their forests in a way that protects water, soil and wildlife, benefits the wellbeing of local communities and workers while ensuring they sustain economic viability.

As of January 2021, over 221 million hectares of forest were FSC certified in 79 countries. In Africa, more than nine million hectares of forest were FSC certified. Uganda had 40,000 hectares of certified forest and four forest management/chain of custody certificates.

Chain of Custody Certification ensures that FSC certified materials and products are checked at every stage of processing from the forest all the way to the consumer.

As of January 2021, a total of 447,751 chain of custody certificates were issued in 130 countries. In Africa over 300 chain of custody certificates were issued; in Uganda, there were three certificates.



WHY SHOULD GOVERNMENT OF UGANDA CERTIFY ITS FORESTS?

• Meeting international obligations

By implementing FSC certification, Government of Uganda is able to:


- > Meet the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which FSC supported to formulate. FSC certification contributes to 14 of the 17 goals and 40 targets.




- > Attain its commitment to restore 2.5 million hectares of degraded land it pledged under the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100).

afri100

• Satisfying social, environmental and economic needs

It's good for people: 

- > Indigenous Peoples and local communities are consulted, their land and user rights are protected and this reduces conflicts.
- > FSC certification requires forest managers - on both public and private lands - to engage local communities and to protect customary rights of Indigenous Peoples, ensuring their voices are part of the certification process.
- > Workers can have better conditions, fair wages and protection of their rights.
- > Certified businesses pay their taxes, which generate social and economic benefits for the people.

It's good for the earth: 

- > High conservation value areas in Uganda can be identified and conserved as biodiversity hotspots.
- > Uganda's endangered plants and animals and the habitats they live in can be protected.
- > Soil and water quality can be improved.

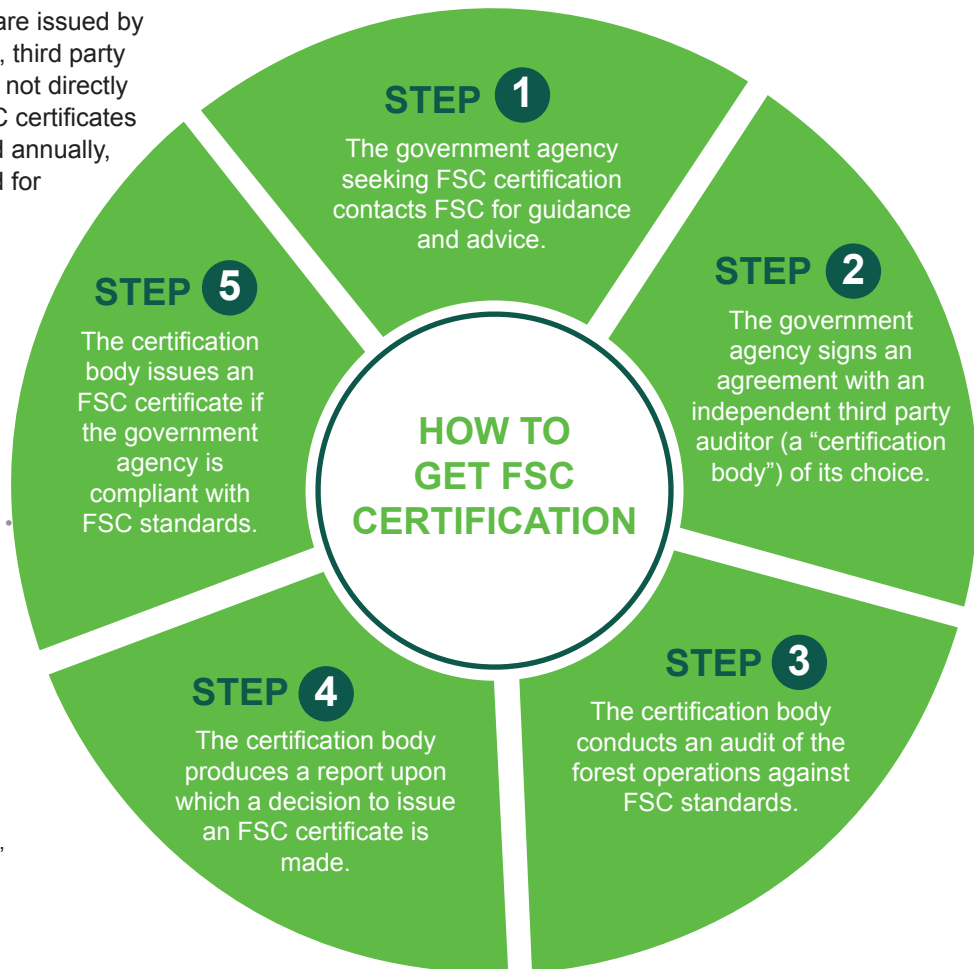
It's good for business: 

- > Improves business efficiency and stabilizes market access.
- > Emphasizes local economies and practices that favour good relationships between the government and all relevant stakeholders, including local communities.
- > Requires that all workers have right protection, receive proper training and are paid a fair wage, which means better conditions for workers and their dependants.

HOW DOES GOVERNMENT OF UGANDA OBTAIN FSC CERTIFICATION?



Certificates are issued by independent, third party auditors and not directly by FSC. FSC certificates are reviewed annually, and are valid for 5 years.



If you're not successful, the certification body will issue corrective actions to implement, and once successfully implemented, a certificate is awarded.

ABOUT THE FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL™ (FSC™)

FSC is an international non-profit, multi-stakeholder organization that provides the world's most trusted sustainable forest management solution. It has over 25 years of experience in promoting responsible forest management, bringing together experts from the environmental, economic and social spheres.

FSC works with governments, businesses, Indigenous People's organizations, community forestry groups and various other categories of stakeholders to ensure that forests and wood supply chains are managed responsibly.

FSC leverages on the power of consumers, and the market, to save forests. It empowers governments, businesses and consumers to identify and choose products from responsibly managed forests.



THE 10 FSC PRINCIPLES AND CRITERIA FOR FOREST STEWARDSHIP

The 10 FSC Principles and Criteria are essential requirements for responsible forest management. To obtain FSC certification, a forest owner or manager needs demonstrate how these requirements are met.



01 COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS

Comply with applicable laws, regulations, treaties, conventions and agreements.



02 WORKERS' RIGHTS AND EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS

Maintain or enhance the social and economic wellbeing of workers.



03 INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS

Identify and uphold indigenous peoples' legal and customary rights of ownership, use and management of land, territories and resources affected by forest management activities.



04 COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Contribute to maintaining or enhancing the social and economic wellbeing of local communities.



05 BENEFITS FROM THE FOREST

Efficiently manage the products and services of the managed forest area to maintain or enhance long-term economic viability and the range of environmental and social benefits.



06 ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES AND IMPACT

Maintain, conserve and/or restore ecosystem services and environmental values of the forest area. Avoid, repair or mitigate negative impacts.



07 MANAGEMENT PLANNING

Align the management plan with the scale, intensity and risks of activities. Ensure there is documentation to guide staff, inform stakeholders and justify management decisions.



08 MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

Show that progress towards achieving objectives, impacts of activities and condition of the managed area are assessed and adapted in line with scale, intensity and risk of activities.



09 HIGH CONSERVATION VALUES

Maintain and/or enhance high conservation values in the managed forest area.



10 IMPLEMENTATION OF MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Select and implement management activities that are in line with economic, environmental and social policies and objectives.

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INFORMATION SOURCES

- > The Forest Stewardship Council: ic.fsc.org/en
- > Third National Development Plan (NDP111) 2020/21 – 2024/25
- > Food and Agriculture Organization: Forest Resources Assessment 2020 report for Uganda
- > Worldwide Fund for Nature: https://www.wwfuganda.org/our_news/stories/?uNewsID=32763
- > National Environment Management Authority: <https://www.nema.go.ug/>
- > The FSC National Forest Stewardship Standard of the Republic of Uganda, 2018