



FSC™ CERTIFICATION IN RWANDA

Working with Government to take care of Rwanda's forests

FORESTS IN CRISIS

Rwanda is one of the few countries with minimal deforestation rates. However, the country is faced with challenges of low tree productivity amidst a growing population and high demand for forest products mainly firewood, charcoal and sawn wood.

Rwanda's consumption of firewood, charcoal and sawn wood exceeds the sustainable supply.

According to Rwanda Water and Forestry Authority, the country's wood supply gap is projected to reach 7.5 million tonnes by 2026 up from 4.3 million tonnes in 2017.

Government of Rwanda, therefore, needs to take fast steps to bridge the supply-demand gap, limit over-exploitation of already low stocked forests and promote sustainable management of its forest resources.

FORESTS CORE TO RWANDA'S DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

Rwanda's forests cover approximately 704,997 ha equivalent to 29.8 per cent of its total land area.

Government of Rwanda considers the forestry sector, one of its key pillars for sustainable development and climate resilience in line with its National Forestry Policy.

Forests are a strong foundation for Rwanda's tourism sector. They protect rare and endangered wildlife, particularly, the mountain gorillas that are major tourists attraction.

The Forests provide approximately 98.5 per cent of Rwanda's primary energy requirements in the form of firewood (83.3 per cent) and charcoal (15.2 per cent).

A 2019 GIZ market analysis report indicates that Rwanda's timber industry generates approximately USD 76 million per year and supports more than 75,000 people with direct and indirect jobs.

GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO PROMOTE RESPONSIBLE FOREST MANAGEMENT


Rwanda was the first country in Africa to pledge to restore two million hectares of degraded land by 2020 as a contribution to the global effort to mitigate climate change under the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100).

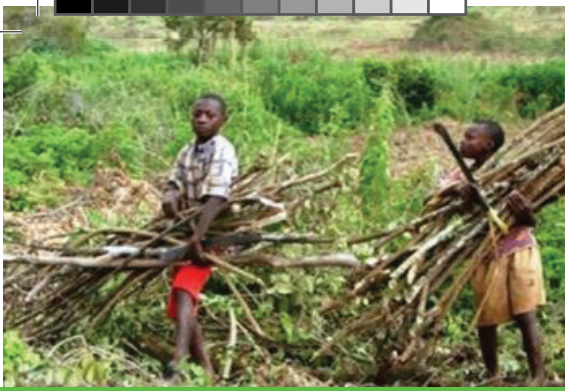
Rwanda Vision 2020, set to increase the country's forest cover by 30 percent by 2020, a target, it achieved one year ahead.

The country has in place its own FSC Interim National Standard approved by the Forest Stewardship Council™ (FSC™) in 2017. The standard is basis for promoting sustainable forest management using the FSC certification system. It is applicable to all forest operations in Rwanda seeking FSC certification.

Thus, promoting responsible forest management using FSC certification is an option for Government of Rwanda to consider.

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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** 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, Rwanda had 10,000 hectares of certified forest area.
- ➔ **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, Rwanda had no certificates issued.

HOW DOES GOVERNMENT OF RWANDA 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.

Images: Valens Uwizeyimana

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