

MUBENDE GROWERS CLUSTER MEETING



Participants at the Mubende Cluster meeting listen to a UTGA facilitator

UTGA held a cluster development meeting for the Mubende cluster on the 7th and 8th November 2018. The two day event commenced with a field day at the Kirangwa plantation of Dr. Godfrey Bahigwa and a half day meeting the next day at the Pride Traveler's Hotel, Mubende.

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UTGA PASSES FSC MAIN AUDIT



The main assessment of the UTGA-FSC group certification scheme was conducted between 14th and 15th December 2018. The audit followed the selection of soil association as the certifying body and preparations in partnership with CMO. Out of the six member plantations only three of them were able to close out their major and some minor non conformances (Corrective Action Requests) and these were the ones considered for the main assessment. They included;

1. Buyigi Estates,
2. Isabella Investments
3. Kirangwa Plantation.

The ones that were not part of the sample but who now need to quickly work on the issues that needed attention at this initial stage but are still part of the scheme included BakWood plantation, Besepo limited and Eden Forestry

Company. These will then be included in the certificate during the extension of scope. As the norm is, those that made it were fronted to the soil association from which the lead auditor Dr. Severinus Jembe sampled one of the plantations to represent the group. Buyigi Estates was chosen for the main assessment although the documentation of all the other two was also tabled and considered. The lead auditor worked closely with Mr. Steve Nsiita who was the local expert.

The activity started with preliminary preparations by UTGA who were working closely with CMO.

The certification team was led by Michal Brink as the group manager while Peter Mulondo was the Resource Manager for the UTGA group scheme and the plantation management of the forest management unit. The four days of



The initial engagement in the field between the auditors and the plantation managers at Buyigi Estates

final preparations both in the field and on desk culminated into a two day main assessment that took place on 14th and 15th December.

The audit involved;

1. An opening meeting.
2. A Document review process that closed off the first day.
3. A field visit.
4. A closing meeting.

Being a main assessment, the auditors carried out a 100% check against all principles, criteria and indicators using the National Forestry Stewardship Standard (NFSS) for Uganda. The group scheme was the first to be audited against this standard since its approval by FSC in June 2018 and it was the first time a group scheme was being audited against a National Standard.

Results

1. The auditors did not find any major non conformity and therefore no Major CAR was raised.
2. Four minor non conformities were raised.

The group was therefore declared fit for certification. After a review process, the certificate will be issued not later than 90 days from the audit.



Peter Mulondo (UTGA), Anna Agasha (FSC East Africa), Dennis Kavuma (UTGA) and Michal Brink (CMO) after the closing meeting



Michal Brink from CMO, with UTGA staff during internal preparations for the FSC main assessment

The audit was also attended by a team of four officers from FAO/SPGS and the FSC East Africa regional manager as observers.

MUBENDE CLUSTER GROWERS MEET



There were 2 groups at 2 different sites within the same plantation for the cluster meeting. Each handled specific forestry issues



The meeting brought together tree growers from the areas of Mityana, Mubende, Kyegegwa, Kyenjojo, Fort Portal, Kasese, Kabarole and other areas which are within the Mubende cluster. The main objective of the meeting was for participants to benefit

from selected practical field demonstrations of best forestry practices, have a platform for networking, information sharing through training, other field exposure and experiences and getting feedback on pertinent issues specific to their areas of operation in the commercial forestry sector.

Another aim was to introduce UTGA as a body to prospective members and encouraging them to join the Association which is a voice for players in Uganda's commercial forestry industry. The meeting attracted 54 participants on the first day in the field while 42 participants attended the in-house meeting the next day.

They included SPGS clients, UTGA growers, other tree growers in and outside the cluster, service providers including suppliers, contractors, nursery operators, district forestry officials, officers from the National Forestry Authority, security officers, local leaders and UTGA staff.

The activity is one of five cluster meetings for key commercial forestry stakeholders conducted in contribution to the SPGS III project results in the

period 2018-2020.

Preparations

A reconnaissance visit had been conducted before the activity to perform a cluster-based needs assessment that helped to identify the technical and information gaps that needed to be addressed during the meetings.

The field day

Outstanding issues identified for discussion during the meeting included pine resin tapping as a source of interim revenue, species choice and site-species matching, the purpose, benefits and processes of thinning, timely thinning for maximum sawlog volume production and pruning, eucalyptus pole sourcing information covering information on pole selection, common challenges, maximize pole production with reference to qualities of good poles, age, strength, chemical penetration, form, knots, dimensions, pole harvesting and its effects on pole quality, post-harvest handling, pole seasoning, coast implications and fu-



The 2nd group of participants at the UTGA Mubende cluster meeting

MUBENDE CLUSTER GROWERS MEET

ture prospects for transmission pole production, logistics and marketing issues.

There was knowledge imparting on other best forestry practices e.g. compartmentation, good tree stocking & tree growth, health & safety,

The final part of the day was dominated by presentations from product and service providers who included Aquadines Limited which is supplying forestry investors with chemicals for pest and weed control and an assortment of forestry tools and equipment, Ryra Investments which has partnered with UTGA to supply planting hydrgels like aquasoil, plus a number of forest contractors operating in the cluster.

A representative from the UTGA Board, Mr. Vincent Kaija attended and he talked to fellow growers on the need to approach issues as a group.

Day two

The following day, a meeting was held at a conference hall at the Pride Travelers' Hotel in Mubende.

There were presentations made by UTGA staff plus updates and discussions with the members in a question and answer session. Some of the key issues presented discussed included;

- A recap of the field day activities
- Opportunities for additional revenue from Forest Plantations like resin tapping
- Introduction of the FSC group certification scheme for the Mubende cluster and its future.
- Updates on timber trade including prospects for value addition and processing, marketing, transportation.
- The need for a collective effort “Coalition of the willing” and timber trade export prospects
- Uganda Timber Growers SACCO, the UTGA nursery and forestry services provided at UTGA
- Seed updates on species, prices, a call for orders and related information.

2018: The state of the World's forests



The periphery of the Bugoma forest in Bunyoro also has plantations to provide poles, fuelwood and timber which protects the natural forest from encroachment

Continued from last issue

Looking ahead, there is a need to learn from successful experiences in community forest management, recognizing the importance of scientific and technical support, training, capacity-building and access to markets, market information and adequate financial resources, as well as the need for clarity in setting out the rights and responsibilities of different parties. All these measures

SUPERHERO

From tackling poverty and hunger to mitigating climate change and conserving biodiversity, the positive impacts of forests and trees are fundamental to our existence.

will need to be in place if forest pathways to sustainable development are to be strengthened. Access to land, resources and investments in and around forests can propel women, youth and other rural entrepreneurs to be agents of change in the transformation to a sustainable world.

Strengthening tenure rights presents an opportunity to enhance gender equitable access to forests and trees, as well as encouraging a long-term, sustainable approach to forest management. Studies highlight the entrepreneurial role that women play, especially in the informal sector, and their leadership role in community and participatory forest management. The enterprise and

energy of youth is just as vital for the future of the sector. Investment in training, capacity-building and the development of producer organizations can help persuade young people to see the value of making a living by the forest and resist uncertain migration. Investing in the informal sector by increasing economic activity, improving employment conditions and fostering a more sustainable approach to forest management can have a positive impact that stretches from forest to farm to town to city. Providing economic incentives to smallholders and communities to manage trees on forest lands is likely to prove rewarding.

A positive enabling environment is fundamental for attract-

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ing the private sector to pro-sustainability activities.

Both the formal and informal forest sectors include large numbers of small or micro businesses, while at the other end of the scale there are some very large companies. On a small scale, priorities often include training to improve land management practices, the promotion of agroforestry, the development of producer organizations, better access to markets and the availability of suitable financing arrangements. On a larger scale, there may be a need to address potential barriers to investment, often financial or infrastructure-related. Policy interventions are likely to include a mix of regulatory approaches and incentives to engage in activities that are not necessarily covered by the market, such as ecosystem services and sustainable forest manage-

WATER FOUNTAIN
Our forests are our water fountains. They provide much of the drinking water for over 1/3 of the world's largest cities.

ment. At the same time, it will be important to address potential barriers to investment and remove incentives to clear forests. Partnerships with the private sector will be crucial in developing private governance initiatives, such as voluntary certification schemes and commitments to 'zero-deforestation' supply chains.

Acting with forests in mind to achieve the SDGs

To accomplish the historic ambition of ending hunger and poverty and transforming to a sustainable world, the 2030 Agenda expects sectoral ministries to change the way they work and to coordinate policies across government.

Actions on forests, agriculture, food, land use, rural and national development must synchronize in the future if sustainable development is

to be realized. Although drivers vary significantly between countries and regions, policymakers must recognize the need to manage trade-offs and set out concrete measures for better aligning multiple objectives and incentive structures. This integrated approach is critical for progressing towards the SDG targets. Establishing SDG implementation platforms composed of key sectors in natural-resource use and management is one way of managing cross-sectoral coordination and overcoming difficulties in governments that have sector-based ministries and agencies, with their own resource allocations and accountability arrangements. SDG implementation platforms would bring together different ministries and government agencies with other key stakeholders working in dialogue and coordinated action, with a focus on achieving the SDGs and benefitting from interlinkages, identifying and addressing barriers to change and monitoring progress.

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LIFE INSURANCE
The livelihoods and food security of around 250 million rural poor depend on vibrant forests and trees.

UTGA News is a digital newsletter for the Uganda Timber Growers Association. It is published monthly (once a month) to briefly summarize recent forestry-related publications, projects, activities, news and other useful forestry information.

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