

Restoration in West Bugwe CFR in Busia, Eastern Uganda

Early this year, UTGA started to implement its restoration program in West Bugwe Central Forest Reserve (CFR) in Busia District in Eastern Uganda. While the planning had been ongoing even before 2021, the actual field activities started on 10th May 2021. This initial work that will cover a total of more than 100ha is carried out under a joint collaboration between UTGA and the Danish Forest Extension (DFE).

The target trees used in this restoration and rehabilitation program are indigenous species that include *maesopsis eminaei* (musizi), *Markhamia lutea* (musambya), *Azadirachta indica* (neem), *Cordia africana*, *Bridelina micrantha*, *Albizia zygia*, *Prunus Africana* (entaseesa), *Vitex doniana*, *Spathodea campanulata*, *Khaya anthotheca*, *Terminalia brownii*, *Sapium ellipticum*, *Syzygium cardjatum*, *Albizia coriaria*, *Ficus glamosa*, *Bombax buonopocense*, *Albizia gummifera*

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COVID-19
Coronavirus

LOCKDOWN

42 days

Starting 7th June, Uganda re-imposed a strict lockdown that included the closure of schools and suspension of inter-district travel to help beat back a surge in COVID-19 cases. The new measures included the closure of all educational institutions, some bans on travel, the shutdown of open markets, and the suspension of church services. The new restrictions would be implemented for 42 days and an assessment of their impact

after then will help government decide whether to ease or prolong them. Vaccines are being administered especially for people above 50 years and other vulnerable groups including those that have underlying medical issues and comorbidities. Vaccines help to train and prepare the body's natural defenses in the immune system to recognize and fight the virus. If the body is exposed

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COVID 19 LOCKDOWN

to those disease-causing pathogens later, it will be ready to destroy them quickly which prevents illness. When a person gets vaccinated, their risk of infection reduces so they are less likely to transmit the virus to others. Lowering the possibility for pathogens to circulate in the community protects those who can't be vaccinated from the virus especially due to health conditions. To date, Uganda's latest figures include 2353 deaths, 90391 confirmed cases, 7114 cumulative recoveries, 1,424,270 samples tested, 1,027,152 total vaccinations.

Average number of new infections reported each day falls by more than 530 over the last 3 weeks, 37% of its previous peak.

COVID-19 infections are decreasing, with 444 new infections reported on average each day. That's 30% of the peak, the highest daily average reported on June 15.

A second batch of 175,000 vaccines that came in June has been used up!

The 42 day lockdown is slated to end at the end of July 2021 and with dropping numbers in new cases and deaths, it is expected and hoped that the President will be inclined not to extend the COVID restrictions that also include a night time curfew.

The lockdown has had drastic and devastating effects on livelihoods, the welfare of people and on the economy.

UTGA is going to undertake a study of the effect of COVID on forestry in Uganda and will publish the findings. We hope and pray that all people continue to keep safe by practicing the known Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that include wearing masks in public spaces, washing hands with soap and water, keeping a social distance of at least 3 meters from other people and also sanitizing the hands to kill the virus.

It is expected that government will do everything within its power to import the requisite vaccines because as we can see elsewhere, vaccination against COVID 19 is the best and surest way of fighting the Corona virus. Ugandans are waiting till July 30 to resume normal lives.

FSC™ CERTIFICATION IN UGANDA

Opening opportunities, creating benefits for businesses

GROWING DEMAND FOR WOOD AND RELATED PRODUCTS IN UGANDA

Uganda aspires to attain an upper middle-income status by 2040, in line with Uganda Vision 2040.

As the country rolls out its sustainable industrialization for inclusive growth, employment and sustainable wealth creation programs, demand for wood and wood related products continues to grow, projected to reach 105 million tonnes by 2040.

Demand for wood and related products is mainly driven by government projects and businesses in construction, furniture, electricity transmission, fuelwood, paper printing and packaging, to meet requirements of the country's growing population.

THE NEED FOR SUSTAINABLE SOURCING OF WOOD PRODUCTS

Uganda is estimated to have a wood supply deficit of approximately 174,000 tonnes by 2030.

Moreover, a World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) study indicates that over 80 per cent of the timber on the Ugandan market is from informal and/or illegal sources and of low quality.

Illegal wood is leading to massive destruction of Uganda's forests, has accelerated the effects of climate change and continues to impose stiff competition to businesses that obtain their wood products from legal sources.

Businesses need to be part of the solution to protect Uganda's forests by procuring wood and related products originating from sustainably managed/FSC certified sources.

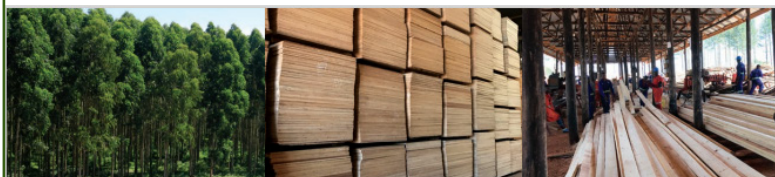
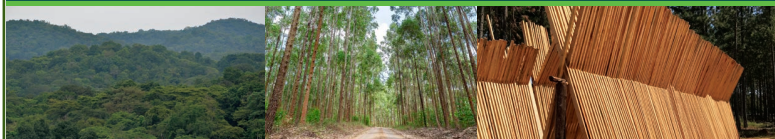
FSC CERTIFICATION: SUPPORTING BUSINESSES TO THRIVE

FSC certification is trusted by businesses worldwide as the sustainable choice to deliver better outcomes for forests, people and markets – today and for future generations. This is because:

- > FSC is endorsed by big brands in businesses and by NGOs;
- > FSC is the global gold standard in forest certification;
- > FSC provides an inclusive platform to engage stakeholders.

By adopting FSC certification, businesses in Uganda can:

- ➔ **Gain market access and competitive advantage:** FSC certification can help businesses gain stronger and more diverse customer base and strengthen their competitive advantage.
- ➔ **Enhance public image:** The FSC brand enhances reputation for businesses and increases the confidence of customers that the wood products they are buying come from responsible sources.
- ➔ **Meet the requirements of investors:** FSC certification provides assurance to investors that businesses take care of the environment and the wellbeing of communities and workers.



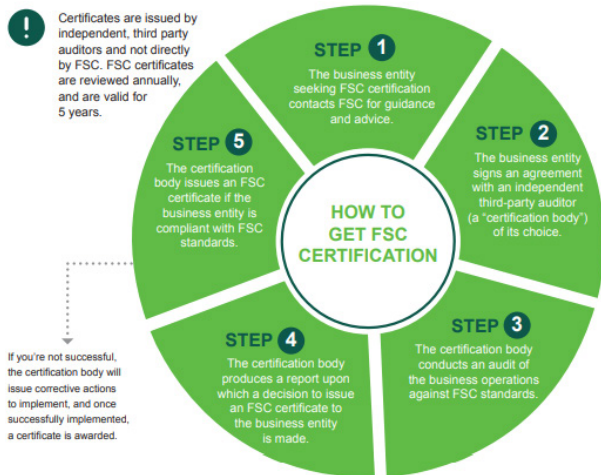
WHAT IS FSC CERTIFICATION?

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, Uganda had 40,000 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, Uganda had three certificates.

HOW DOES A BUSINESS IN UGANDA OBTAIN FSC CERTIFICATION?



Images: National Forestry Authority (NFA) and Forest Sector Support Department (FSSD)

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Why you need to wait & harvest your trees at maturity

Farmers lose when they sell young trees

There is a growing challenge among tree growers of harvesting trees prematurely. Since commercial forestry is a long-term investment, there is usually a tendency for growers to lose patience and unfortunately towards the last stride about 2 to 5 years towards maturity. During the two past decades there has been a general improvement in the quality of planting material and management of forest plantations which has led to a reduction of the prospective rotations for most commercial species. For example, in the past, *Pinus caribaea* would be harvested at 20 to 22 years but the same volumes can now be attained at 15 to 16 years with good practices.

It is important to note that trees gain value at a much higher rate towards maturity and for this matter most of the leading buyers attach a higher value to mature trees. It should however be noted that while tree age may indicate maturity, some forest plantations reach maturity when they have not attained the dimensions required in the market. This is usually due to delayed thinning and substandard management practices. In this case, harvesting should also be delayed. For example, if one delayed the first thinning by two years, the second by three years, the third thinning may need to be delayed to cover the lost years and the same should be done with harvesting.

The maturity of trees apart from age can be judged from several other factors which include;

- The growth rates
- The standing volumes per unit of space which is derived from the tree sizes, diameter at breast height (dbh).
- The product one wants to put on the market.

Tree value indications

For one to have an indication of the value of their trees, they first need to understand what product(s) they are likely to put on the market plus their value and then make a backward calculation to the standing trees. This will then help provide a starting point for bargaining.

For example, there is a huge disparity in the prices offered for the different sizes of eucalyptus trees whose primary market is utility poles. A number of growers are tempted to sell off their forests at around 6 years say for the GU clones yet one can only be paid for 9Metre poles yet if one waited for 2 or three more years, they could sell 12Metre or 14Metre at 30% to 40% more than

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Selling young trees is a loss

they would have received for the 9 metre pole. This translates to nearly 50% rise in value but with only a 2- or 3-year waiting period. It is therefore advised that if one managed to wait for six years, they would be worth the wait.

In the case of pine and other related species whose primary management objective is to produce timber, again the value accrues at a much faster rate towards the maturity. The bigger the trees, the wider the timber planks that can be cut from them and the higher the prices, the greater the tree value accrued.

For example, a well raised forest at 15 years (and above) can produce up to 14 feet logs from which planks of 9*1 and/ or 12*1 can be cut. These could fetch an average of UGX 840,000/= per cubic meter in the market whereas if the trees were harvested much earlier say at 8 – 11 years, they can only produce smaller sizes say of 3*2, 3*4, 4*2, 6*2 and other even smaller sizes. These can only fetch an average price of UGX 570,000/= per cubic meter on the market. Note that these prices are for standard sized timber that is ready to sell in the market. In order to ascertain the farm gate prices, one needs to reduce these prices by the costs incurred in harvesting and delivering the timber onto the market.

From this, it is clear that waiting a little longer yields better and pays off. However, in spite of this advice, some growers are increasingly falling prey to the temptation of harvesting immature trees. Although some professional users and manufacturers have no room for immature timber from young trees, it is unfortunate that there are some unscrupulous tree buyers who are promoting the harvesting of young trees as long as they can get some sort of product from them. Additionally, they hardly share information on their basis for attaching the prices they offer. UTGA recommends that before a grower makes the decision to sell off their trees, they need to seek for third-party technical input to guide decision making.


Forest Stewardship Council™
FSC™ Eastern Africa





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 over the past 25 years.

The FAO Global *Forest Resources Assessment 2020* indicates that between 2015-2020, Uganda's forests decreased by nine percent from 2.5 million hectares to 2.3 million hectares. This 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 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.

FORESTS CORE TO UGANDA'S DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

Uganda's forests cover approximately 2.3 million hectares. The forests are sources of livelihoods to 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 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, the Government is committed to increase its land area covered by forests from 9 percent to 15 percent by 2025, and to 24% by 2040.

Uganda committed to restore 2.5 million hectares by 2020 as 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). 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 FSC certification for its park management system.

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





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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.



HOW TO GET FSC CERTIFICATION

STEP 1
The government agency seeking FSC certification contacts FSC for guidance and advice.

STEP 2
The government agency signs an agreement with an independent third party auditor (a "certification body") of its choice.

STEP 3
The certification body conducts an audit of the forest operations against FSC standards.

STEP 4
The certification body produces a report upon which a decision to issue an FSC certificate is made.

STEP 5
The certification body issues an FSC certificate if the government agency is compliant with FSC standards.

Images: National Forestry Authority (NFA) and Forest Sector Support Department (FSSD)

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UTGA Nursery updates

UTGA has stocks of, GU7 and GU8 available for sale. Owing to the impressive growth rates and minimal tapering of the trees, many growers have recently decided to limit themselves to planting and growing clonal GU eucalyptus and there was a scarcity. However, they are available at the UTGA nursery. UTGA is offering its available GU seedlings at UGX 700 each.

The Nursery Technician and her team are able to provide timely advice to tree farmers to start planning for the next season. Since the rainy season is near, all nursery managers should be aware of disease challenges like die back, wilting and others which nursery operators are facing.

The Nursery Technician advises that growers should use systemic fungicides like supazim to fight any fungal infection.

Those who plan to plant in the second rainy season need to have prepared their field. Its not too late to do it now. And then you can book for your seedlings from UTGA.



Reasons why tree growers should join as members

1 Receive member discounts on improved seed, seedlings, tools, equipment, chemicals and other forestry inputs that are collectively procured.

2 Support lobbying & advocacy on the critical issues affecting commercial forestry investments. Join and enjoy the lobby for a fair and supportive tax regime on forestry products among other incentives.

3 Benefit from centralized market development initiatives and collective bargaining, help to develop and access domestic and regional markets.

4 Receive professional advice and services from a team of experienced Technical Advisors (TA). Receive relevant handson training skilling of investors and tree farm managers, supervisors and workers on all areas of the forestry value chain.

5 Receive relevant information through regular newsletters, the UTGA Website and other platforms that strive to leverage issues of commercial forestry to the fore.

6 Network with other growers at regular forest days in each cluster & benefit from the information sharing and collaboration. Promote better forestry skills among tree farmers and communities;

7 Benefit from incentives to private sector forestry investments including land use and forest management planning services that protect the rights of private forest growers to plant, regenerate, manage and harvest their trees;

8 Have a voice to direct research and training needs and be able to mitigate against pests, diseases and any other issues afflicting the wellbeing of trees.

9 Enjoy the benefits of being part of an organized group and be able to leverage and synchronize the interests of the group members and the public.

10 Enjoy Support for treegrower cooperatives and regional coordination. and be part of the drive for group certification to help identify forest products that bring value to tree growers and are coming from responsibly managed forests and processes.

How to join UTGA Visit the UTGAoffice and fill in an application from or download it from www.utga.ug. All new members pay a registration fee of UGX100,000 (one time payment) while both new and running members pay an annual subscription fee.

UTGA members elect new board

During the 14th Annual General Meeting held on 18th March 2021 at Silver Springs Hotel Bugolobi, members elected a new BOD. UTGA changes board leadership every two years and members can be re-elected for one more term. There was a handover board meeting on 8/4/2021 where outgoing members were recognized and their service appreciated. The new board has had training by the Institute of Corporate Governance of Uganda (ICGU).



The outgoing Board Chairperson Dr .Noreda Kiremire receives a plaque from incoming Chair Solomon Oketcho

The elected members of the BOD are;

- Mr. **Solomon Oketcho** – Chairperson
- Mr. **Adison Kakuru** – Vice Chairperson
- Mr. **Samuel kasamba** – Secretary General
- Mr. **Abubaker Mwima** – Treasurer
- Ms. **Jessica Tushemereirwe** – Board member
- Mr. **Asiku Swale** – Board member
- Ms. **Byaruhanga Linda Monica** – Board member
- Mr. **Isanga Joseph** – Board member
- Ms. **Magarete Laloyo** – Board member
- Ms. **Patience Naamara** – Board member

UTGA Chair & GM on TV



As part of making a case for commercial forestry in Uganda to attract and interest new tree growers into the industry, UTGA resolved to consolidate its achievements through increasing the visibility of the association, enriching its value proposition to members & others in the industry and reaching out. This was exhibited when the UTGA Chairperson Mr Solomon Oketcho and General Manager, Mr Dennis Kavuma appeared on a TV programme on UBC to show that commercial forestry is a worthwhile investment.

The 8th Annual UTGA Forest Fair

The forest fair was held concurrently with the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of members of UTGA. This is done to showcase what is happening in the industry and foster a discussion and share information and new knowledge. The fair was a one-day event aimed at creating awareness on commercial forestry through exhibiting and showcasing various forestry products. It was attended by tool suppliers, nursery operators, service providers and bee keepers. Various products were showcased at the fair including aqua soil, pruning saws, fire beaters, reading material, magazines, honey, agro-chemicals, timber, insurance, tropical foods, graphic design, shea butter products, and bamboo products.

UTGA part of Biodev30 taskforce

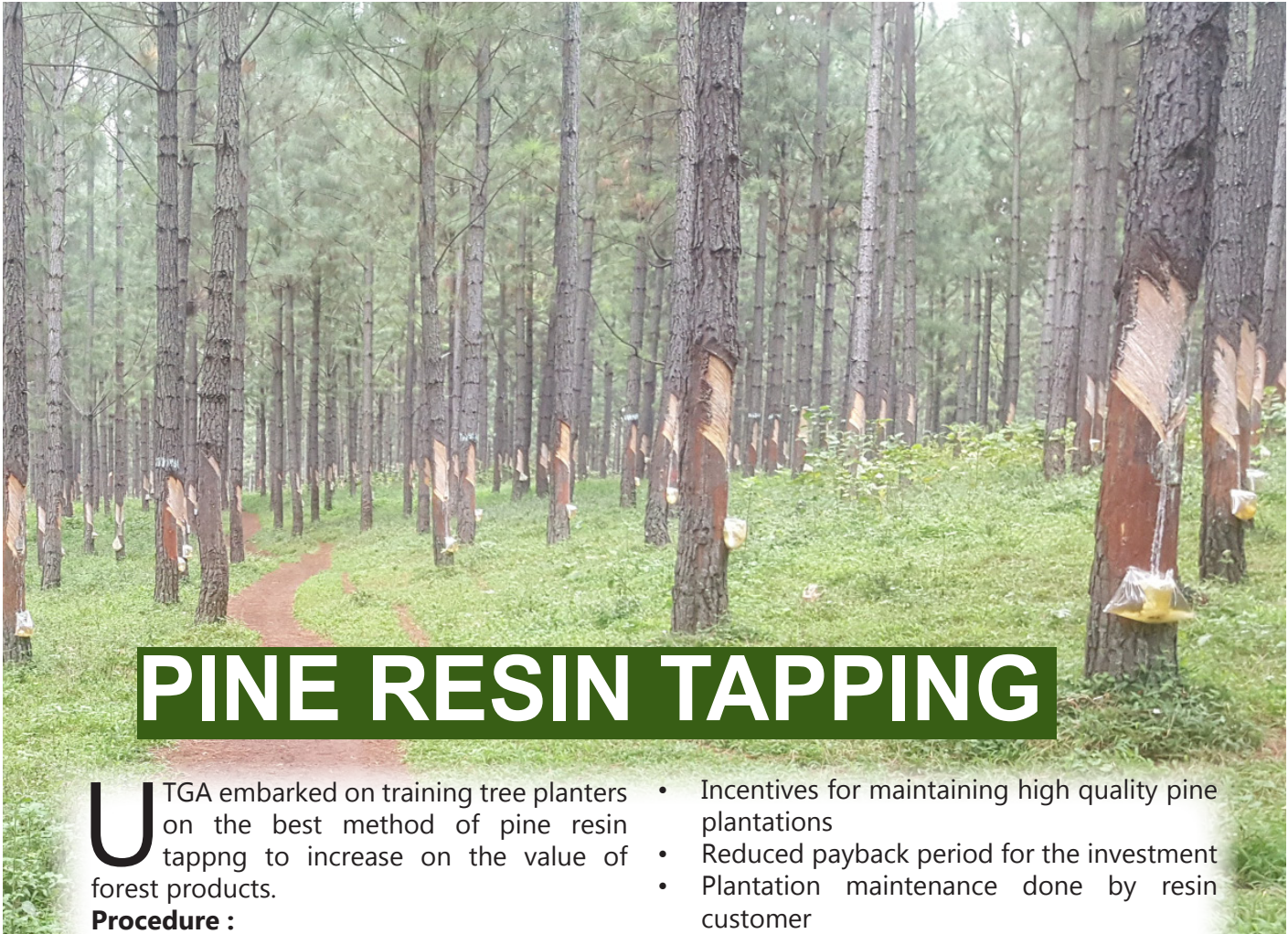
WWF Uganda and Expertise France through WWF France is collaborating with NEMA to implement a two-year project named; BIODEV2030. The project aims to mobilize different stakeholders to identify key sectors contributing to loss of biodiversity and rally them to make commitments to actions that reduce loss of biodiversity.

The project is expected to achieve its objectives through;

- i) Raising awareness among stakeholders on causes of biodiversity loss & how to curb it;
- ii) Conducting in-depth studies to assess the leading threats to biodiversity and the economic sectors involved, and;
- iii) Convening multi stakeholder dialogues to establish a common vision and set voluntary commitments involving different sectors including the Private Sector.

Uganda Gazettes a National Timber Standard

UTGA participated in the development of a timber standard for Uganda with other government stakeholders like Makerere University, Uganda National Bureau of Standards, Sawlog Production Grant Scheme under FAO, National Forestry Authority. The standard will be used to promote the use of graded timber. The timber standard was gazetted in October 2020. The National Timber Standard will be used for grading and is going to be instrumental in facilitating timber exports.



PINE RESIN TAPPING

UTGA embarked on training tree planters on the best method of pine resin tapping to increase on the value of forest products.

Procedure :

A downward V-shaped narrow groove (1.5 to 2.5mm wide) is tapped on the tree stem just enough to reach the cambium.

Grooves are tapped downwards after every one to two days.

The first groove is tapped 1.7m above the ground.

The Groove is tapped to 50-60% around the tree's circumference.

Resin oozes out and flows down the stem to well-located container (plastic bag) that has water. No chemicals are used in this process.

Advantages of Resin tapping

- Increased profitability

- Incentives for maintaining high quality pine plantations
- Reduced payback period for the investment
- Plantation maintenance done by resin customer
- FSC Standards for certified forests
- Interim revenue
- More forestry jobs created
- Compensation for mortality of trees at market prices.
- Flexible entry and exit of UTGA negotiated contract
- Favorable payment terms

NB

Resin tapping is relatively new in Uganda and further studies are being carried out on profitability, scope of products from resin tapped log and the possibility of planting trees exclusively for resin.

World Bank hires UNIQUE for UTGA study

In April this year, the World Bank contracted a firm of forestry consultants, UNIQUE FORESTRY and LAND USE to work with UTGA Board, growers and secretariat to make an assessment of UTGA's current capacity as a service provider to members, its position in the timber industry in Uganda and propose ways of leveraging its forte and its ability to build & create positive change along the forestry value chain in Uganda.

Since then, UNIQUE has been having engagements with a number of small, medium and large scale growers, members of the UTGA Board collectively but also individually, the UTGA secretariat and other players in Uganda's forestry industry e.g

SPGS, FAO among others. They have interrogated, discussed, shared and received feedback.

They've made physical visits to UTGA facilities and made reference to multiple studies especially the recent work done by a consultant, Mike Howard.

UNIQUE will draft and compile a new Business Plan for UTGA which will be a basis for prospective support from the world Bank. The new UTGA business Plan will help identify salient & relevant areas that will help to highlight the importance and pathways that need to be taken by UTGA for positive impact on livelihoods and propel forestry as a tool of investment, social, economic and environmental development in Uganda.

Restoration in Eastern Uganda

From page 1

Restoration work begun on 10th May 2021 and continued up to 8th June 2021.

To ensure that the seedlings stay in the ground after planting, security personnel were deployed to protect them. The restoration process included activities of: -

1. **Pitting and lining out.**

Workers from within the neighboring communities were employed and trained in pitting and lining out. Approximately 50 people were employed in the restoration process.

2. **Seedling sourcing**

The seedlings were obtained from various areas (nurseries) which included Tororo, Jinja and Mbale. When delivered to the planting area, a temporary nursery was setup as a storage area for the seedlings.

3. **Temporary nursery setup**

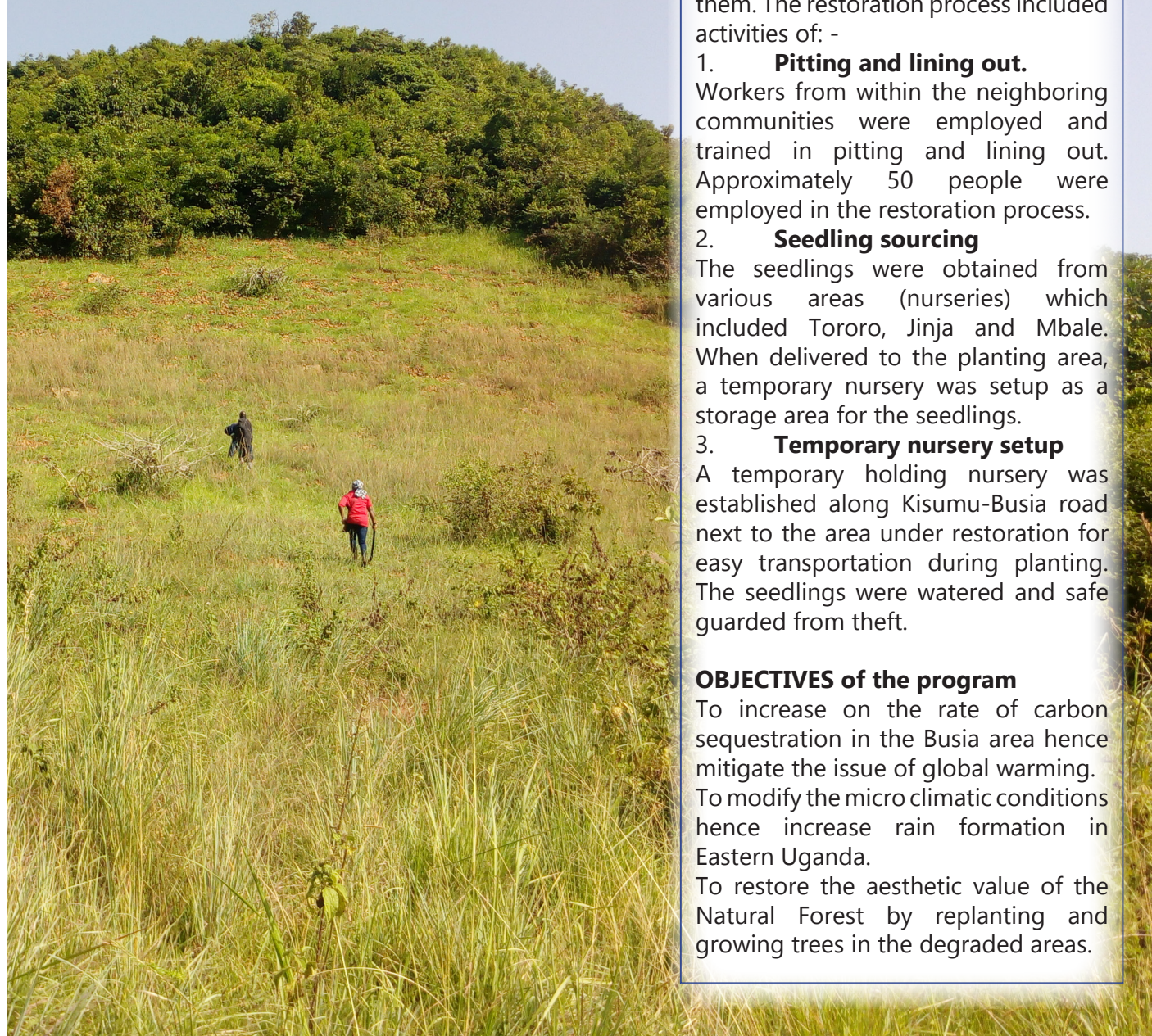
A temporary holding nursery was established along Kisumu-Busia road next to the area under restoration for easy transportation during planting. The seedlings were watered and safe guarded from theft.

OBJECTIVES of the program

To increase on the rate of carbon sequestration in the Busia area hence mitigate the issue of global warming.

To modify the micro climatic conditions hence increase rain formation in Eastern Uganda.

To restore the aesthetic value of the Natural Forest by replanting and growing trees in the degraded areas.



UTGA News is a digital newsletter for the Uganda Timber Growers Association. It is published quarterly to briefly summarize forestry-related publications, projects, activities, news and forestry information. Do you have news, content, or ideas that you want to share in upcoming newsletters? Please send us your articles, views on your organization, partnerships, projects, group, field stories, successes, challenges, fact sheets, papers, books, guides

or other resources, upcoming or past. UTGA News is a great way to reach a wide audience of foresters, natural resource persons, practitioners, scientists and the publics across the Uganda, East Africa and across the globe. If you have friends (*of forestry*) or anyone you think will benefit if they receive UTGA News, please send their email addresses to dennisk@utga.ug.

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