



MINISTRY OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENT



The Uganda National Forest Stewardship Standard (NFSS) development Process (sharing experiences, lessons, key emerging issues and future outlook).

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Outline of the presentation



A) Introduction

B) The process for development of the NFSS

C) Key results/Achievements

D) Key Lessons learnt

E) Key challenges faced along the process for development of the Uganda NFSS.

F) Key opportunities for advancing responsible forest management

G) Conclusion and future out look

H) Acknowledgements

J) About the Uganda Forest Working

K) About the Standards Development Group

L) About Environmental Alert

A) Introduction



- **The Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC)** is an independent, not for profit, nongovernment organization established to support environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world's forests.

FSC's vision is, 'that *the world's forests meet the social, ecological, and economic rights and needs of the present generation without compromising those of future generations.*'



Forest Stewardship Council®



The FSC National Forest Stewardship Standard of the Republic of Uganda

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Source: <http://envalert.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/FSC-STD-UGA-01-2017-EN.pdf>



A) Introduction



- **Forest certification** - is a voluntary process whereby an independent third party (the “certifier”) assesses the quality of **forest** management and production against a set of requirements (“standards”) predetermined by a public or private **certification** organization.
- It’s voluntary and market driven, but supported by existing policy and legal framework on sustainable forest management and Forest Law Governance and Enforcement.

Note!!: It contributes to the following: **Sustainable Development Goals: 8-** Decent work and economic growth; **12** – Responsible consumption; and **15** – Life on Land.

- **FSC Certification** is about delivering business benefits by guaranteeing environment and social responsibility (FSC). Thus, based on the 3 pillars of **Environment, Social and Economic**.
- **International Generic Indicators – these are** Interim National Standards, which Standard Development Groups shall consider with the option to adopt, adapt, drop or add indicators as appropriate and relevant nationally (FSC, 2015). They were approved on 25th march 2015 and became effective on 1st September 2015.



A) Introduction



Why the national standard based on the FSC principles

- Overall, the **Uganda NFSS meets the Republic of Uganda Constitution, (1995) and other policies and legal framework provisions and requirements for sustainable management of natural resources.**
- **Some of the policies and legislation** in this respect are: *Uganda National Forestry Policy, (2001) (MWE, 2001); National Forestry and Tree Planting Act, (2003) (MWE, 2003); National Environment Policy, (1994) and Act, 1995 (NEMA, 1994 and 1995); National Forest Plan, (2011/12-2021/22) (MWE, 2011); National Development Plan II (NPA, 2015).*
- The operationalization of the Uganda NFSS through implementation of interventions by responsible bodies and stakeholders will increase on the proportion of forest certified by products based on **FSC international indicators, standards and criteria.**
- It also contributes towards **addressing illegal forest products on the market thereby contributing to overall sustainable and responsible forest management.**
- A case in point is the timber, for which **over 80% of the total timber traded in the industry in Uganda is illegal**, thus doesn't meet the minimum requirements for sustainable forest management as provided for under the forestry policies and laws (WWF, 2012).

B) The process for development of the NFSS



- The Uganda NFSS was developed based on the **FSC Principles** and the **International Generic Indicator's**, which were customized to meet Uganda's national context and requirements.

Development of the Uganda NFSS

The process started in 2012. It involved highly consultative involving active participation of various stakeholders based on their mandates, roles and responsibilities including both the duty bearers and rights holders.

Who was involved?

- *Key government ministries, departments and authorities; civil society organizations; academic institutions; private sector (such commercial tree plantation companies); trade unions; religious institutions; cultural institutions; community based organizations; indigenous peoples organizations.*

The FSC principles

Principle 1: Compliance with laws

Principle 2: Workers' rights and employment conditions

Principle 3: Indigenous peoples' rights

Principle 4: Community relations

Principle 5: Benefits from the forest

Principle 6: Environmental values and impacts

Principle 7: Management planning

Principle 8: Monitoring and assessment

Principle 9: High conservation values

Principle 10: Implementation of management Activities

Source: FAO,



B) The process for development of the NFSS



How were the stakeholders involved?

- The process was led by the **Standards Development Group (SDG) – Uganda** that comprised of members (i.e. forestry sector stakeholders) categorized based on the 3 chambers of Environment, Social and Economic. These were selected from the **National Consultative Forum Members**. The forum provided space at the national levels for consultation and soliciting stakeholder's views and concerns on several drafts of the NFSS as part of the processes.
- These forestry stakeholders were targeted and actively involved in the following engagements:
 1. *Capacity building of SDG-Uganda members to enhance their knowledge on forest certification;*
 2. *Stakeholder consultations at national and sub-national levels;*
 3. *Forest/field testing of the draft standard with forest management units under commercial, community and private forests – natural and plantation – to check clarity, appropriateness, applicability;*
 4. *General engagements with the public - for awareness;*
 5. *Targeted SDG meetings – to review, validate and approve the standard at the national level*

C) Key results/Achievements



- a. Formation of the **National Consultative Forum** and the **Standards Development Group-Uganda** as *key structures for overseeing and spearheading the Uganda NFSS development process, respectively;*
- b. **Approval** of the standard by the **FSC** in 2018 and its **launch** by the **Minister of Water and Environment** in June 2018. Thus, Uganda became the **8th** and **1st** Country **Globally** and in **Africa** to have an FSC standard;
- c. **Enhanced coordination and collaboration** among forestry sub-sector stakeholders at all levels i.e. community, local, national, sub-regional and international;
- d. **Recognition of role and contribution of NFSS** in sustainable and responsible forest management by all stakeholders;



Figure 1. Members of the SDG-Uganda meeting with the FSC Director at the Golden Tulip Hotel ahead of the launch of the Uganda NFSS by the Minister of Water and Environment. Photo by: FSC-East Africa Regional Office.



C) Key results/Achievements



e. **Enhanced knowledge and skills of the forestry stakeholders** (*especially the members of the SDG-Uganda*) in respect to forest FSC certification standards and their application to advance responsible forest management at different scales. *This helped in steering the development process, because at all stages there was resident national technical expert and guidance provided through the **National FSC focal point and National Consultants** (i.e. Havila Company Limited);*

f. By-in by **Government Ministries and Agencies** to mainstream the standard e.g. **Forest Sector Support Department, national Forestry Authority, Uganda Wildlife Authority, Uganda National Bureau of Standards, Private sector and small forest growers.**

D) Key Lessons learnt



- There are various initiatives by stakeholders including: civil society and government that are promoting commercial forestry and responsible forest management. These supported the processes side by side as they implemented their own independent interventions.
- Forest certification in Uganda benefited from leveraging on such initiatives and focusing on capacity building for small holder farmers to ensure adherence to the required FSC Principles and Criteria.
- The FSC Modular approach to forest certification is likely to be successful especially amongst small holder farmers that are spread across the country.



E) Key challenges faced along the process for development of the Uganda NFSS.



- i) The experience for development of a national standard has been a “learning-by-doing” process for the SDG and other stakeholders involved which often affected the pace of comprehending the technical requirements and at the same time develop required content in the standard;
- ii) The process for development of the **Uganda NFSS partly depended on the timelines for revision of the FSC IGIs and at the same time integrate them into the draft standard;**
- iii) **The process took a long time and resources, yet it largely depended on project based funding.** Thus, this meant the key project cycles through which resources were derived for facilitating the process ended before conclusion of the process. This meant that facilitating subsequent engagements in respect to development of the standard became difficult. However, this was addressed along the way by soliciting financial and technical contributions from the key stakeholders to support the subsequent engagements



F) Key opportunities for advancing responsible forest management through operationalizing the Uganda NFSS



- i. **Most of the timber and several other forest products on the market in Uganda are illegal.** Thus, they do not meet the minimum requirements for responsible forest management;
- ii. There are **few certified timber products** on the market;
- iii. There is **increasing interest in sustainable and responsible forest management and even related demand for certified timber and forest products**;
- iv. The **private sector (including: commercial tree planting companies and private planters e.g. Uganda Timber Growers Association)** has made progress and set foundation ground for production of certified products based on the FSC standards and the National Forest Stewardship Standard;
- v. There is now **enhanced technical knowledge, expertise and competences resident with the Standards Development Group**, (whose **Secretariat** is hosted at **Environmental Alert**) in respect to understanding and application of forest certification. Also there is a FSC Africa and East Africa Regional Office.
- vi. The **Uganda Forest Stewardship Standard** provides very good and well contextualized **content**, which can feed into the **planned/ongoing forestry policy and legislation in respect to sustainable/responsible forest management** in Uganda. This will make it more enforceable & operational



G) Conclusion and future out look



Conclusions

- It is quite evident that the process for standard development as exhibited during stakeholder's consultations at the national, sub-national, local and community levels and during forest testing of the draft standard resulted in **meaningful comprehension and understanding of the FSC Principles and Criteria and contextualizing them in Uganda's own situation**. Thus, the process led to **increased awareness and appreciation of the value forest certification and responsible forest management** will contribute socially, economically and environmentally for sustenance of livelihoods and overall development of the country.
- With the **approval, launch and coming into force of the standard since 1st September 2018**, all forestry sector stakeholders are looking forward to implementation of the standard because it will contribute to responsible forest management in Uganda through forest certification.
- Some stakeholders have already initiated processes for operationalization of the standard. Some of these include: the private sector i.e. the **timber plantation companies and the Uganda Timber Grower's Association** in collaboration with the WWF-UCO are applying the standard to inform group certification process by smallholders.



G) Conclusion and future out look



Future outlook

- Moving forward, after approval and launch of the Uganda NFSS, the following are some of the key steps and actions to advance full operationalization of the standard to contribute to responsible forest management through forest certification.
 - a) Organizing a national stakeholder's workshop to disseminate the approved standard and development of a shared road for implementation/operationalization of the standard. This will involve active participation of members of the National Consultative Forum and the SDG-Uganda;
 - b) The SDG-Uganda Secretariat hosted at Environmental Alert, will continue advancing the coordination role for the SDG-Uganda and other forest stakeholders for active participation in the implementation these earmarked actions. Besides, they will pursue structured resources mobilization with partners for full operationalization of the Uganda NFSS.



H) Conclusion and future out look



Future outlook

c) Further actions will be pursued based on the SDG-Uganda roles and responsibilities. These will include:

- i) Popularizing the standard among key stakeholders (including: Local Governments, Universities, Training Colleges) by printing hard copies and conducting targeted dissemination;*
- ii) Development and implementation of the National Risk analysis and the social and environment impact assessment for the standard;*
- iii) Technical backstopping and support to users of the standard;*
- iv) Monitoring of implementation of the standard;*
- v) Conducting survey to further define High conservation value areas in Uganda;*
- vi) Identification of sites that qualify to be intact forest landscapes in Uganda;*
- vi) Domesticating and implementation of the FSC ecosystems services procedure;*
- vii) Support the process for regulation and certification of the chain of custody at all scales in Uganda;*
- viii) Providing technical guidance on conflict and grievance redress mechanisms for use of NFSS.*



I) Acknowledgements



- The process in Uganda from inception up to completion was supported and funded through contributions by the following partners: **WWF-Uganda Country Office (with financial support from DANIDA), Environmental Alert, Care International in Uganda, Global woods, Forest Stewardship Council, SDG-Uganda members, Uganda Timber Grower's Association, Havilah Company Limited, the Forest Sector Support Department, The Ministers of Environment, Anti-Corruption Coalition Uganda**). These are appreciated for the financial and technical inputs into the process.
- The **UFGW steering committee** is appreciated for the strategic policy guidance and inputs throughout the process. The **SDG-Uganda** are equally appreciated for the untiring technical inputs and backstopping through the whole process.
- **Environmental Alert** is appreciated for hosting the SDG-Uganda Secretariat and continuously mobilizing and coordinating forestry stakeholder's active participation in the process. The respective Environmental Alert staff who support this included: *Mr. Ceaser Kimbugwe; Dr. Charles Walaga (PhD), Mr. Herbert Wamagale; and Dr. Joshua Zake (PhD)* are equally thanked.
- The **FSC Focal in Uganda (Mr. Edward Mupada)** is very much appreciated for the technical backstopping provided to the SDG-Uganda and creation of the linkages with FSC international. Likewise the **National FSC Consultants** and the **certification body consultants of Soil Association** and **FSC National Consultants i.e. Havilah Company Limited** and are thanked for their technical inputs and guidance they provided throughout the process.

J) About the Uganda Forest Working



- **Uganda Forest Working Group (UFWG)** is a network of forestry stakeholders composed of multidisciplinary membership that cuts across several sectors of development.
- Current members include: *National NGOs, Community Based Organizations, Community Based Organizations, Forest Resource User Associations, Academia and research institutions as well as individual members* engaged in the development and sustainability of the forestry sector in Uganda.
- **UFWG** was formed in **2001** to provide a platform where the various stakeholders in forestry sector met and deliberated on and influenced developments in the sector as well as independently monitor implementation of the National Forestry Policy and National Forest Plan (NFP).
- **The UFWG Secretariat is hosted by Environmental Alert.**
- **Vision:** The Vision of UFWG is, *‘sustainably managed forestry sector contributing to improved livelihoods, national economy and ecological integrity.’*
- **Mission:** The Mission of UFWG is, *‘to promote the development of the forestry sector and stimulate all forestry stakeholders to respond appropriately to changes and challenges within the sector.’*

K) About the Standards Development Group - Uganda



- The **SDG-Uganda** comprises of key forestry stakeholders including: *research and academia, civil society, private sector and government ministries, departments and authorities*. These were selected during the **national consultative forum**, which informed the development of the NFSS for Uganda. The stakeholders are categorized into the **social, economic and environment chambers** to meet the **FSC requirements for stakeholder engagement**.
- The **SDG Uganda** has **27 members** and is certified by **FSC International**. ***Its major role was to develop the Uganda NFSS based on the FSC guidelines and principles.*** This is a role which was **delegated to them by the UFWG** during the national consultative forum on the Uganda NFSS.
- The **SDG Uganda** has a **Secretariat**, which is **currently hosted at Environmental Alert**. The role of the secretariat is to mobilize and coordinate stakeholder's participation in the formulation and implementation of the Uganda NFSS.



L. About Environmental Alert



Environmental Alert was founded in **1988** and is officially registered **Non Government Organization** with board. Thus, in 2018 – EA made **30 years** of contribution to **food security and sustainable environment and natural resources management in Uganda.**

Environmental Alert is a **1st prize winner of the Energy globe award** for environmental sustainability- 2005 under the category, earth.

Environmental Alert is a member of the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)** and a Member of The IUCN National Committee for Uganda.

Environmental Alert envisions, ***'Resilient and dignified communities, managing their environment and natural resources sustainably.'***

Environmental Alert's mission is to, ***'Contribute to improved livelihoods of vulnerable communities by Enhancing agricultural productivity and sustainable natural resources management.'***

Further information about Environmental Alert is available at: <http://envalert.org/>

Environmental Alert hosts Secretariat for following networks:

- a) **The Network for Civil Society Organizations in Environment & Natural Resources Sector (ENR-CSO Network)** <http://enr-cso.org/> ;
- b) **Uganda Forestry Working Group** <http://ufwg.envalert.org/>;
- c) **The Standards Development Group;** and
- d) **Promoting Local Innovation in ecologically oriented agriculture and natural resources management (PROLINNOVA-Uganda Network)** <http://www.prolinnova.net/uganda>.
- e) **National CSO network on Renewable Energy.**

Thank you for listening. For God and my County.