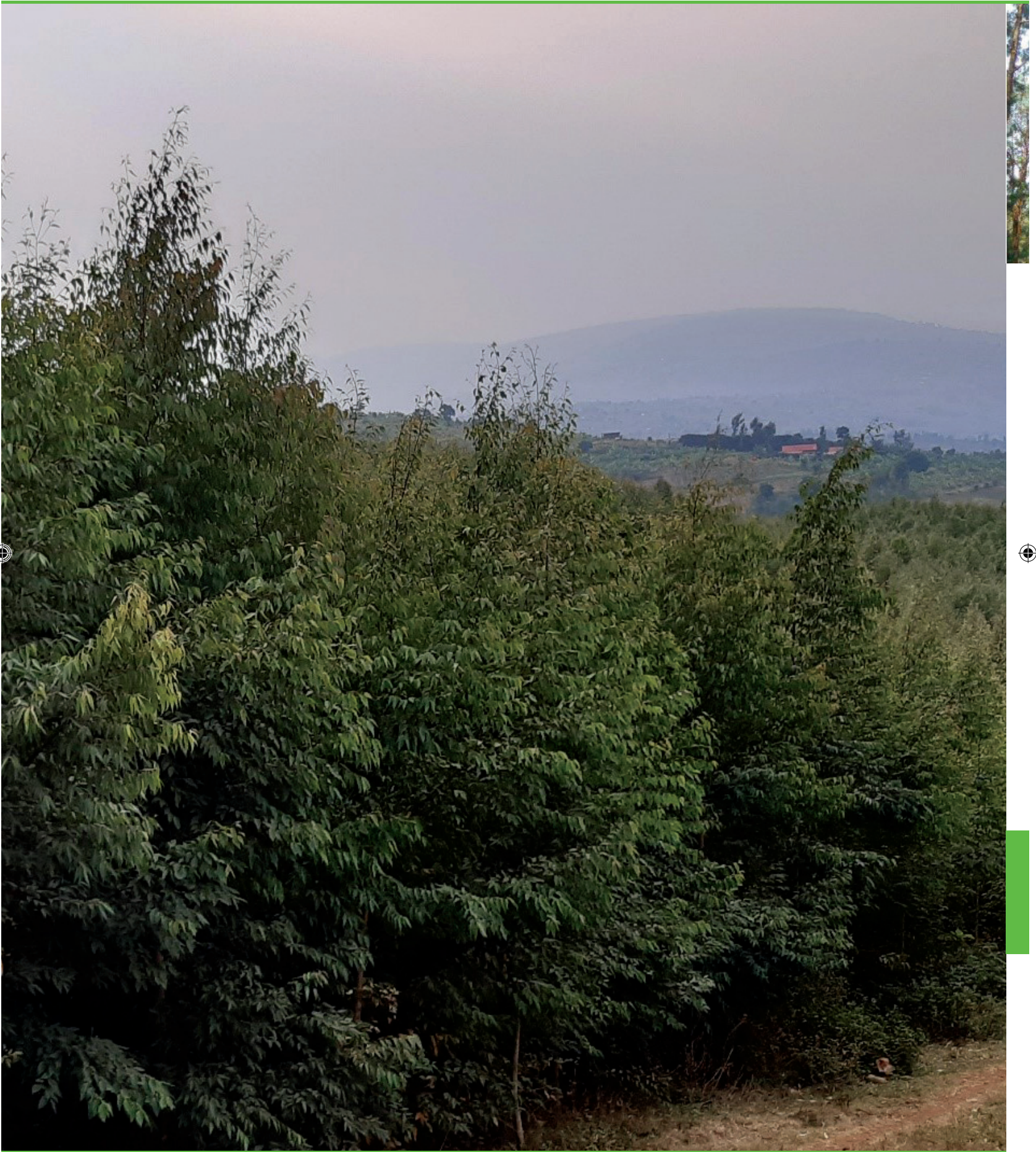




FSC™ CERTIFICATION IN RWANDA

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 solely depends on softwood plantations and woodlots for supplies of majority wood products, supplemented by imports from neighboring countries e.g. Democratic Republic of Congo.

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.

The 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.



7.5 MILLION

tonnes – the wood supply gap projected by 2026

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.

Rwanda's forests support agriculture which accounts for 36 per cent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP).

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.

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 annually and supports more than 75,000 people with direct and indirect jobs.

GOVERNMENT OF RWANDA'S EFFORTS TO PROMOTE RESPONSIBLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

Government of Rwanda is a trend setter in ensuring sustainable forest management of its forest resources.

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.





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



Forest

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. Rwanda had 10,000 hectares of FSC certified forest area.

CHAIN OF CUSTODY CERTIFICATION



Sawmill



Factory



Processor

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. Rwanda had no certificates issued.





WHY SHOULD GOVERNMENT OF RWANDA CERTIFY ITS FORESTS?

• Meeting international obligations

By implementing FSC certification, Government of Rwanda 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 million hectares of degraded land it pledged under the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100).

afr100

• 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 Rwanda can be identified and conserved as biodiversity hotspots.
- > Rwanda'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:



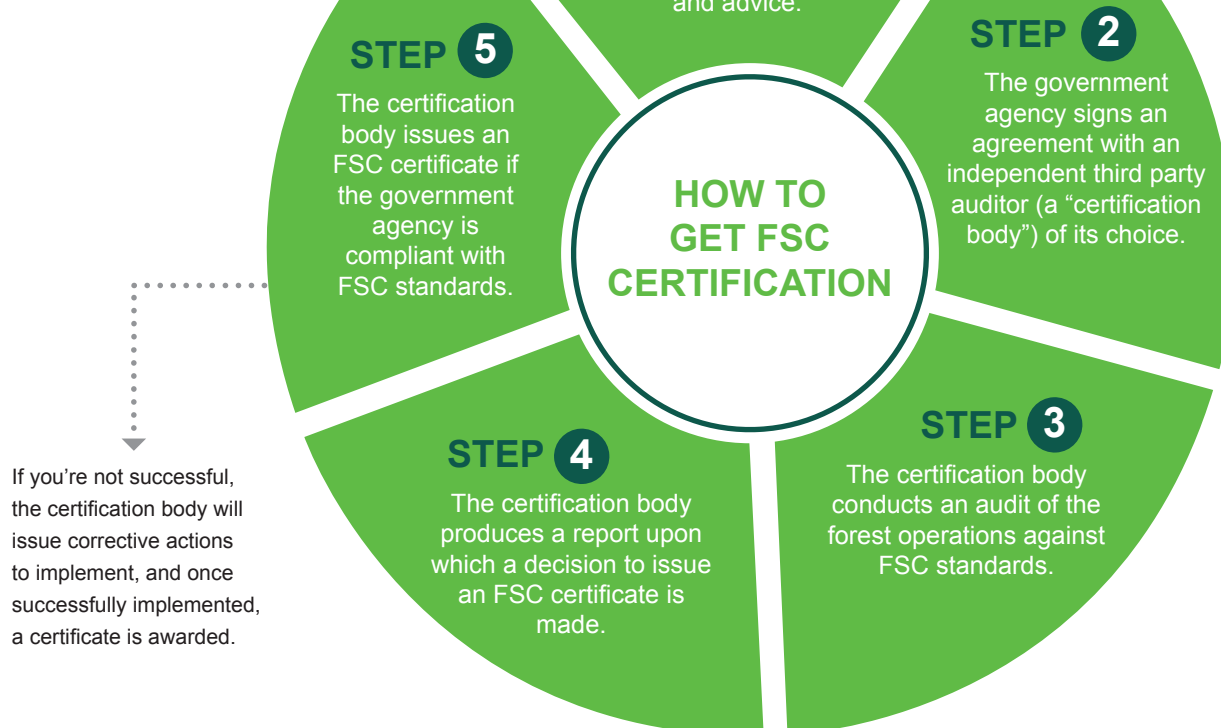
- > Improves business efficiency and stabilizes market access.
- > Emphasizes local economies and practices that favour good relationships between the government and all relevant stakeholders, including local communities.
- > Requires that all workers have right protection, receive proper training and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



HOW DOES GOVERNMENT OF 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.



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.

PLEASE CONTACT US:

Annah Agasha
Coordinator, Eastern Africa
Email: a.agasha@fsc.org

 Africa FSC
 @FSC_Africa
 www.fsc.org/en | www.africa.fsc.org

INFORMATION SOURCES

- > The Forest Stewardship Council: <https://fsc.org/en>
- > Wood Supply Chain in Rwanda: A Market Analysis report, 2019. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
- > Ministry of Lands and Forestry: Forest Investment Program for Rwanda, 2017
- > Rwanda National Forestry Policy 2018
- > The Rwanda Forest Sector Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022
- > Rwanda Water and Forestry Authority: <http://rwfa.rw/index.php?id=35>
- > FSC Interim National Standard for Rwanda, 2017