



FSC™ CERTIFICATION IN RWANDA

Opening opportunities, creating benefits for businesses







GROWING DEMAND FOR WOOD AND RELATED PRODUCTS IN RWANDA

Rwanda aspires to reach Middle Income Country status by 2035 and High-Income Country status by 2050, which gives it impetus for growth.

Government of Rwanda considers forestry as one of the key pillars for sustainable development and climate resilience in line with its Forest Investment Programme.

As the country rolls out its industrialization agenda, demand for forest products and services continues to grow mainly driven by government projects and businesses in construction, energy, furniture, packaging, pulp and paper to meet the needs of Rwanda's growing population.

THE NEED FOR SUSTAINABLE SOURCING OF WOOD PRODUCTS

According to Rwanda Water and Forestry Authority, Rwanda is a wood scarce country.

Rwanda's wood demand exceeds supply by a 2:1 ratio, projected to reach 7.5 million tonnes by 2026.

Moreover, a 2019 GIZ market analysis report indicates that most of the wood available on the Rwandan market is of poor quality.

Businesses need to be part of the solution to protect forest resources and improve the quality of wood on the Rwandan market, by preferring to buy wood 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 Rwanda can:

- ➔ **Gain market access and competitive advantage:** FSC certification can help businesses in Rwanda gain stronger and more diverse customer base and strengthen their competitive advantage on regional and international market.
- ➔ **Enhance public image:** The FSC brand enhances the 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 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 and one forest management/chain of custody certificate.

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. In Rwanda, there were no certificates issued.





WHY SHOULD BUSINESSES IN RWANDA OBTAIN FSC CERTIFICATION?

• Satisfying social, environmental and economic needs

It's good for business:



- > Improves business efficiency and stabilizes market access.
- > Emphasizes local economies and practices that favour good relationships between companies 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.

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.

• Helping the government to meet international obligations

By implementing FSC certification, businesses in Rwanda are helping the government 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

HOW DOES A BUSINESS IN 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.

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