



UTGA progress report on the Silva Causa Forest Restoration for Carbon Sequestration Project in West Bugwe Central Forest Reserve, Busia District, Eastern Uganda

January - June 2023



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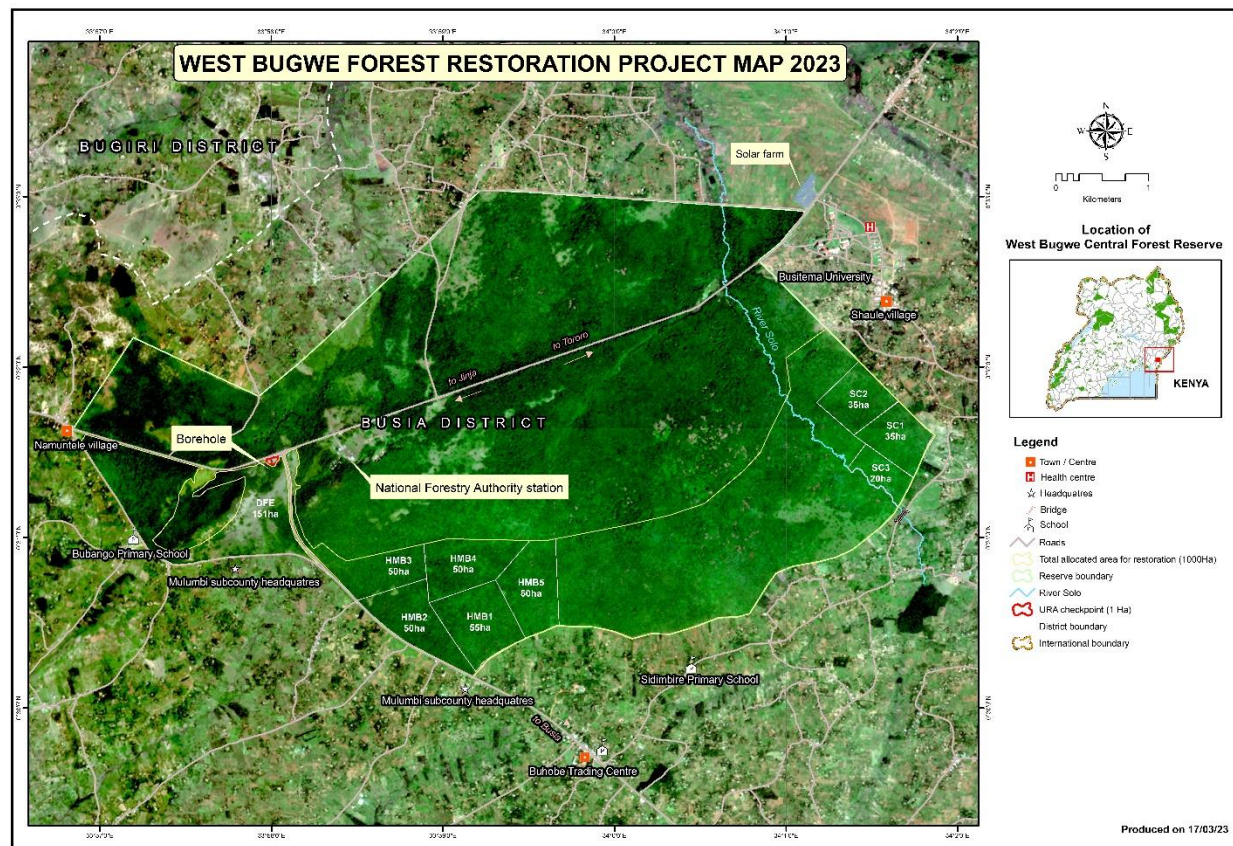
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1.0 Introduction

Uganda Timber Growers Association (UTGA) in collaboration with Silva Causa has been undertaking a forest restoration project in West Bugwe Central Forest Reserve (CFR) since 2022. The project involves the establishment and maintenance of indigenous trees under a carbon sequestration program. UTGA through its collaboration with the National Forestry Authority holds exclusive rights to manage 1,000 hectares in the CFR. UTGA started implementing the forest restoration project from September to December 2022 and has made major strides in the March to May planting season.

2.0 Location

The project is located in West Bugwe Central Forest Reserve (CFR) Bulumbi and Busitema sub counties in Busia District, Eastern Uganda as shown in the map below.



For this project the planting area is as follows;

| Compartment | Year of planting | Area Restored (Ha) |
|-------------|------------------|--------------------|
| SC1 | 2022 | 35.90 |
| SC2 | 2023 | 35.30 |
| SC3 | 2023 | 20.20 |

3.0 2023 Activities

3.1 Planning and monitoring

The UTGA team (the General Manager, Program Officer and two local support staff) conducted four planning and monitoring visits to the project area. These were conducted mainly to;

- Plan the tree planting activities and engage with local contractors, staff and the community on proper implementation of the field activities.
- To prepare for FSC certification and conduct internal assessments.
- Deliver seedlings and oversee the preparation and management of the holding nursery.
- Check on the progress of the tree planting activities
- Provide technical backstopping for successful tree planting.
- Monitor the working condition.

3.2 Tree planting and species section

The restoration followed natural forest restoration guidelines for Uganda and standards stipulated in the SPGS tree planting guidelines.

The restoration planting included a combination of row plantings and liberation where the forest cover constitutes of bushes of invasives and a few shrubs. One-meter-wide planting rows were created from the forest boundary inwards. The planting rows were created four meters apart and the trees planted at a four-meter spacing along the rows to achieve a general spacing of 4M x4M. This implies that the planting intensity will be 625 seedlings per hectare.

Preparations for planting included, opening one meter planting rows, pitting, seedling transportation followed by the actual planting.

The restoration planting was done in two phases in April and May this year. First to restore 35 hectares which was increased up to 39.77 hectares and in May the 20 hectares were planted. Both plantings have received good rains as the season went on till early June. A total of 37,356 seedlings were used.

The plantings were done using an assortment of indigenous tree species that had been maintained in the local holding nursery. UTGA purchased the seedlings earlier and maintained them in a holding nursery for them to attain the desired sizes. The choice of species was based on earlier performance in terms of growth and survival but also guided by the National Forestry Authority (NFA) Forest Management Plan & recommendations for the CFR. Some of these included; *Prunus africana*, *Khaya anthotheca*, *Albizia zygia*, *Albizia gumifera*, *Antiaris toxicaria*, *Azzeria africana*, *Makhamia lutea*, *Worbugia ugandensis* and *Albizia coriaria*.

3.3 Forest protection

The two forest patrol men continued working to protect the planted area from any substantive damage especially from the community. There are plans to recruit two more as the planted area grows bigger.

3.4 Mapping

After the plantings UTGA worked closely with the NFA mapping team to update the forest map to show all the planted compartments. 70 hectares had been mapped out, yet an extra 20 hectares were also demarcated.

4.0 FSC certification

The UTGA FSC group certification scheme had its annual surveillance in March 2023. The whole 1000ha restoration project area was prepared and added onto the UTGA FSC group scheme. Preparations included internal assessments, putting proper forest management systems in place, community engagements and conducting trainings e.g.; first aid trainings, FSC trainings among others. Two of the audit days were at the West Bugwe forest restoration project site. Apart from getting the 1000 hectares FSC certified for forest management, UTGA also included the certification (verification and validation) of two ecosystem services namely; carbon sequestration and biodiversity conservation that are as a result of the restoration work.

The audit was a great success with no corrective action requests (CARs) at the closing meeting. For the ecosystem services, validation and verification were done for biodiversity conservation so a claim can be made for this ecosystem service. For carbon sequestration, only validation was done due to absence of baseline data from the forest. Verification can only be done after a baseline analysis has been done for this particular forest. We hope to have this done before the next audit. UTGA's certificate has now expanded to 2332 hectares.

5.0 Community engagements

As part of community engagements and support, all the labor is still sourced from the communities surrounding the forest reserve. Some of the light work like tree planting, spot weeding are set aside for women. The project has created jobs for 69 community members.

An apiculture demonstration was set up and has so far showed good results. We hope to scale this up to benefit the neighboring communities.

Several community meetings have been held both for FSC purposes but also to see how best the project can benefit the community.

UTGA has also lobbied NFA to allow the community to re-establish and access a roadside market to sell their farm produce as a way of contributing to improvement of

their household incomes. We believe that this will eventually lead to a reduction of pressure on the forest.

For the future and as we move into the second part of the year, in terms of beating up, maintenance, UTGA will do survival assessments of the previous season's plantings, and this will inform the rate of beating up but prior to that, maintenance of planting lines and spot weeding will be done. This is planned for the September/October planting season.

Deliberate replacements continue to be done in the earlier plantings. UTGA is planning to conduct a baseline analysis for carbon sequestration ecosystem service. This will be the starting point for monitoring growth rates. At the moment we have succeeded with the FSC certification of carbon sequestration as an ecosystem service although only validation was done. Verification will be done after a baseline analysis has been done. NO carbon credits will be sold by UTGA however, Hammerbacher will be free to further their interest in the claim based on their level of support and area that has been restored with the funding that they have procured.

There are also plans to offer free seedlings to community members. This is in the 2023 work plan.

6.0 Activity work plan 2023

| | Activity | July | August | Sept | Nov | Dec |
|----|---------------------------------|------|--------|------|-----|-----|
| 1 | Community engagements | | | | | |
| 3 | Survival counts | | | | | |
| 4 | Spot weeding & line maintenance | | | | | |
| 5 | Maintenance of holding nursery | | | | | |
| 6 | Blanking | | | | | |
| 7 | Planning & Monitoring Visits | | | | | |
| 8 | FSC Preparations | | | | | |
| 9 | Reporting | | | | | |
| 10 | Request for funds | | | | | |

7.0 Budget Status

| BUDGET STATUS | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| | | Amount (DKK) | Amount (DKK) | |
| 1 | 35HA | 262,500 | | 2023 |
| | Terms | | | Payment Status 2023 |
| | 35% | 1st disbursement | 91,875 | Paid on 17th Feb 2023 |
| | 35% | 2nd disbursement | 91,875 | <i>Not yet paid</i> |
| | 30% | 3rd disbursement | 78,750 | <i>Not yet paid</i> |
| 2 | 20 HA | 150,000 | | |
| | Terms | | | |
| | 40% | 1st disbursement | 60,000 | Paid on 12th May 2023 |
| | 50% | 2nd disbursement | 75,000 | <i>Paid</i> |
| | 10% | 3rd disbursement | 15,000 | <i>Not yet paid</i> |

8.0 Pictorial



Community members participate in preparing the community roadside market



The desk review and a visit to the holding nursery during the FSC audit.



Forest workers doing the tree maintenance and protection



The FSC auditor and UTGA group manager planted a tree each during the audit



The audit team after assessing the river that goes through the restoration area



Some of the new plantings

9.0 Conclusion

The UTGA and Silva Causa restoration project in West Bugwe CFR has registered good progress at the halfway point. There is no doubt that it will become a forest restoration milestone that will ensure shared success for Silva Causa and UTGA.



We would like to appreciate and acknowledge the support of **Grow For It (GFI)**, the organization that has facilitated and supported this work by providing the requisite finance. It is also proper to make special recognition of **Implement Consulting Group (ICG)** for providing the funding to make this project become a reality. ICG and GFI have provided financial support for 35 ha and 20 ha respectively.