



## PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT

**Period of report:** MAY 2024

**Project:** Forest Restoration in West Bugwe Central Forest Reserve

**Service Provider:** Uganda Timber Growers Association (UTGA)

**Partner:** Grow For It (GFI)





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## 1.0 Introduction

UTGA through its ongoing collaboration with the National Forestry Authority (NFA) holds exclusive rights to manage 1,000 hectares for restoration in the West Bugwe Central Forest Reserve in Eastern Uganda.

This report provides progress on this year's forest restoration activities implemented through a collaboration between Uganda Timber Growers Association (UTGA) and Grow for It/Silva Causa/to restore 35 hectares in two compartments of 10 hectares and 25 hectares. The project involved restoration planting and tree management in the degraded forest using an assortment of indigenous tree species.



## 2.0 Activities

### 2.1 Planning and monitoring

The UTGA team (the CEO, Program Officer and two local support staff) conducted two planning and monitoring visits to the project area with the aim of;

- a) Priding oversight on the season's tree planting activities including agreeing on the compartment location, planting methods ant timelines.

- b) Engaging with local contractors, staff and the community on proper implementation of the field activities. This included initiating the remobilization of labor for the restoration planting.
- c) Providing technical backstopping for successful restoration planting.
- d) Monitoring the existing project activities for compliance with certification requirements and to ensure that all activities met the requirements of the FSC standard.
- e) Delivering seedlings and overseeing the preparation and management of the holding nursery.
- f) Stakeholder engagements especially with local community leaders and the NFA leadership particularly on the progress of revamping the roadside community market.

## **2.2 Restoration planting and species selection**

The major restoration plantings for this year were done during April and May. Restoration planting was done in 35 hectares separated in two compartments of 25 and 10 hectares each with a total of 21,875 seedlings planted. The restoration planting was done in compartments SC/GFI (25Ha) and SC/GFI (10Ha) as shown in the map later.

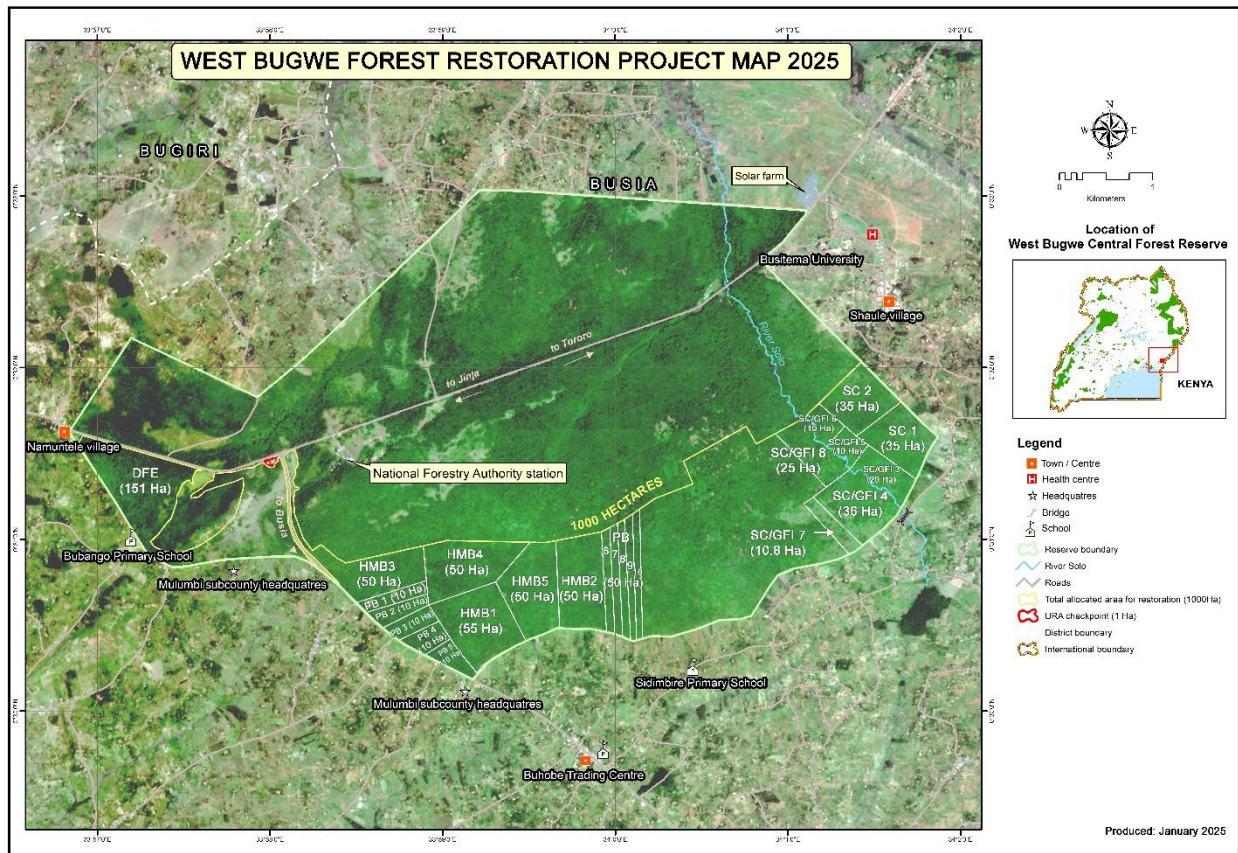
The planting was done using an assortment native tree species mainly sources from the UTGA and NFA nurseries. They were procured and delivered earlier to allow them season further in a holding nursery. The choice of species was based on earlier experiences with performance in terms of growth and survival but also guided by the National forestry Authority (NFA) forest management Plan & recommendations for restoration. These included; *Prunus africana*, *Khaya anthotheca*, *Albizia zygia*, *Albizia*, *Gumifera*, *Antiaris toxicaria*, *Makhamia Lutea*, *Worbugia ugandensis* and *Albizia coriaria*.

## **2.3 Mapping**

Through collaboration with the National Forestry Authority mapping team an update the forest map was done to show all the compartments restored. The compartments restored are SC/GFI (25Ha) and SC/GFI (10Ha) as shown in the map below.



## An updated map of the West Bugwe Central Forest Reserve showing the compartments under restoration



For this project the planting so far is as follows;

Compartment	Year of planting	Area Restored (Ha)	Status
SC1	2022	35.0	Restored
SC2	2023	39.77	Restored
SC/GFI3	2023	20.0	Restored
SC/GFI4	2024	36.0	Restored
SC/GFI7	2024	10.8	Restored
SC/GFI 8	2025	25	Restored
SC/GFI 5	2025	10	Restored
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>176.57</b>	

### **3.0 FSC certification**

The UTGA group scheme underwent an annual surveillance audit in March 2025 and this restoration project was visited for site assessment. There were no major issues/shortcomings identified. This gives continued assurance for sustainable forest management.

The area restored is therefore still FSC certified for sustainable forest management and provision of certified ecosystem services. During the field monitoring visits every compartment and operation was checked to ensure that it meets the available standards. This provides assurance for maintaining the requisite environmental and social safeguards.

### **4.0 Community engagements**

All the workers participating in the restoration planting came from the two sub counties surrounding the forest reserve. 55 workers including women, men and youth were deliberately chosen. They are employed on a seasonal basis and will return to do the maintenance activities during the next wet season, in September 2025.



### **5.0 Maintenance activities**

- a) Preliminary survival assessments were done to ascertain the success of the plantings and were found to be above 90% for both compartments. It will be done again in September in order to inform the level of replacements that may be done.

- b) Spot weeding and liberation; this is done in the compartments where restoration planting was done previously but also during the main planting operations.
- c) Other maintenance activities will be done in the next rainy season (September 2025).

## 6.0 Planned activities

Activity	Timelines
Maintenance activities including survival assessments, spot weeding, blanking, liberation.	Ongoing
Complete verification of carbon ES	December 2025
Community tree planting – seedlings raised at the UTGA nursery.	Ongoing
Boundary marking of compartments (with paint)	Ongoing
FSC internal audit	September 2025
Additional restoration planting	2026 and onwards

## 7.0: Challenges

- Verification of the ecosystem service claim for carbon sequestration has not yet been achieved.

UTGA received training support from partners. UTGA is still in the process of mobilizing financial resources needed to conduct a baseline assessment of the species diversity and carbon storage. This will not only help in validation and verification of the ecosystem service but also provide a basis for measuring the impact of the restoration efforts in future.

- Maintenance and expansion of FSC certification has been slow due to financial constraints. UTGA is working with partners to mobilize financial and technical support to expand the group certification scheme.
- It is expected that as the certificate grows, it will become cheaper as more members contribute. This wasn't included in the forest restoration budget even if it's found to be necessary.

## **8.0: Appreciation**

GFI's continued contribution to UTGA's general vision, direction and efforts to promote sustainable forestry management. The support enables UTGA to continue and develop further, the actual programs through which UTGA is able to demonstrate to its members and the communities, that there are benefits that accrue from planting trees as part of forest cover restoration efforts to protect and conserve biodiversity and to help mitigate against climate change.