



Terms of Reference (ToR): Updating the Forest Management Plan for West Bugwe CFR

1. Background

The West Bugwe Central Forest Reserve (CFR) is a gazetted Central Forest Reserve located in Busia District, Eastern Uganda. It was first gazetted in 1940 as a multiple-use reserve for watershed protection and soil conservation and is currently in the custody of the National Forestry Authority (NFA) under the National Forestry and Tree Planting Act. As a Central Forest Reserve, it is held in trust by the Government of Uganda for the benefit of its citizens and forms part of the country's Permanent Forest Estate.

West Bugwe CFR is an ecologically significant ecosystem that provides watershed protection, biodiversity conservation, carbon sequestration, and livelihood support to forest-adjacent communities. However, like many Central Forest Reserves in Uganda, it has experienced substantial degradation due to encroachment, illegal harvesting, charcoal production, agricultural expansion, and recurrent fires. These pressures have reduced forest cover, fragmented habitats, and weakened ecosystem services.

In response to this degradation, the Uganda Timber Growers Association (UTGA) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Forestry Authority (NFA) to restore and sustainably manage 1,000 hectares within West Bugwe CFR. This restoration will be carried out in accordance with an updated management plan. The existing Forest Management Plan (FMP) expired in 2024 and requires updating to reflect:

- Current forest conditions and restoration progress;
- Updated forest inventory and spatial data;
- Emerging socio-economic dynamics and stakeholder expectations;
- National forestry policy and regulatory requirements; and
- Compliance with FSC Forest Management Standard requirements, including Principles 7 (Management Planning), 8 (Monitoring and Assessment), and 9 (High Conservation Values).



National legislation requires periodic reviews and updates of Forest Management Plans to ensure sustainable management, zoning, financial planning, and monitoring frameworks. Additionally, FSC certification mandates that these plans be adaptive based on monitoring, stakeholder input, and risk assessment.

To maintain West Bugwe's status as a sustainably managed forest, the updated plan must accurately reflect current conditions and stakeholder needs, supporting long-term restoration and management goals.

2. Objectives

The overall objective of the consultancy is to produce a technically sound, legally compliant, FSC-aligned Forest Management Plan that provides clear direction for the sustainable restoration, conservation, and management of West Bugwe CFR.

Specifically, the assignment will:

1. Update the biophysical, ecological, and socio-economic conditions of the Forest Management Unit (FMU);
2. Integrate spatial analysis and GIS-based management zoning;
3. Incorporate ecological economics and ecosystem services valuation.
4. Strengthen governance, stakeholder engagement, and compliance frameworks;
5. Align management prescriptions with Uganda's forestry laws and FSC certification requirements;
6. Develop a practical implementation framework including monitoring, financial projections, and adaptive management mechanisms.

The scope of work shall include, but not be limited to, activities that directly contribute to producing a comprehensive, FSC-compliant, and stakeholder-informed Forest Management Plan for West Bugwe CFR, and that ensure all tasks support this goal.

The Consultant shall lead and be fully responsible for all technical, field, and stakeholder engagement components of the assignment, with support from the UTGA technical team.



The scope of work shall include, but not be limited to:

3.1 Inception Phase

- Conduct an inception meeting with UTGA and MWE representatives to reach a common understanding of expectations.
- Review existing Forest Management Plans, restoration data, FSC audit reports, inventory records, monitoring reports, MoU provisions, and relevant policy/legal frameworks;
- Develop and submit an Inception Report outlining methodology, detailed work plan, stakeholder engagement strategy, and deliverables schedule.

3.2 Forest Resource Assessment

- Conduct updated forest inventory assessments, including species composition, regeneration status, forest health, degradation patterns, and restoration performance;
- Identify and map conservation zones, degraded areas, restoration blocks, riparian zones, and ecologically sensitive sites;
- Assess the presence and status of Rare, Threatened and Endangered (RTE) species;
- Update High Conservation Value (HCV) status where necessary;
- Apply GIS tools to produce updated spatial datasets and management maps.

3.3 Socio-Economic and Stakeholder Assessment

- Conduct structured stakeholder consultations including forest-adjacent communities, local leaders, subcounty & district authorities, MWE/NFA staff, and relevant civil society actors, among others.
- Assess forest dependency, livelihood linkages, and community expectations;
- Identify and document conflicts, risks, and governance challenges;
- Ensure alignment with FSC stakeholder engagement requirements.

3.4 Ecosystem Services and Ecological Economics

- Assess ecosystem services, including carbon sequestration, watershed protection, biodiversity conservation, and non-timber forest products;



- Integrate ecological-economic considerations into management planning.
- Strengthen valuation and sustainable financing strategies where feasible.

3.5 Management Planning and Prescriptions

- Review and refine the management vision, objectives, and strategic direction;
- Develop restoration and conservation prescriptions;
- Update protection strategies (fire, encroachment, illegal activities);
- Strengthen the monitoring and adaptive management framework.
- Ensure consistency with FSC Principles and Uganda's forestry regulatory framework.

3.6 Validation and Finalisation

- Present draft FMP to UTGA and MWE for technical review.
- Facilitate a stakeholder validation meeting.
- Incorporate feedback and finalise the document.
- Submit the final approved version in both digital and hard copy formats.

4. Deliverables

The consultant shall submit the following in English:

1. **Inception Report:** Confirming methodology, work plan and field schedule (submitted by the end of Week 1).
2. **Field Data and Interim Report:** Tabulated inventory data, preliminary maps, and a brief update on consultations (mid-assignment).
3. **Draft Forest Management Plan:** Full draft of updated FMP (text, maps, tables) for review by UTGA/NFA and stakeholders (submitted ~third week).
4. **Stakeholder Consultation Report:** Minutes and outcomes of the stakeholder workshop(s), including responses to the draft plan.
5. **The final Forest Management Plan** should be a comprehensive, polished document that incorporates all feedback, including digital GIS files and ancillary materials, demonstrating the quality and completeness of the work.



6. **Presentation:** A briefing (PowerPoint or similar) summarising key findings and recommendations to UTGA management/NFA.

6. Duration

The consultant shall be engaged for a period of one (1) month, starting **5 August 2026**. The consultant will work full-time during this period. The consultant shall submit all deliverables no later than **31 July 2026**.

Proposed Work Schedule:

- Week 1: Inception and document review
- Week 2: Fieldwork and stakeholder consultations
- Week 3: Analysis and drafting of the new management plan; preliminary review with UTGA/NFA.
- Week 4: Validation and finalisation

7. Required Qualifications and Experience

The Consultant shall possess:

1. Advanced degree in Forestry, Natural Resource Management, Ecology, Forest Economics, GIS, or related field;
2. Experience in forest management planning;
3. Demonstrated experience in forest restoration and natural forest systems;
4. Strong knowledge of Uganda's forestry legal and policy framework;
5. Proven experience working with FSC certification standards;
6. Advanced GIS and spatial analysis skills;
7. Demonstrated stakeholder facilitation and consultation experience;
8. Strong analytical, financial modelling, and report-writing skills.
9. Experience working with the MWE, FSC-certified entities, and/or donor-funded forest restoration projects is an added advantage.

8. Mode of Payment



UTGA shall pay the consultant as follows:

- 50% advance payment upon signing of the consultancy contract and approval of the Inception Report and detailed work plan;
- 50% final payment upon submission and formal approval of the Final Forest Management Plan and all agreed deliverables.

UTGA shall make payments in accordance with the organisation's financial procedures and subject the payment to applicable statutory deductions (withholding tax).

9. Ethical and Compliance Requirements

The Consultant shall:

1. Adhere to professional ethical standards;
2. Maintain confidentiality of sensitive information;
3. Avoid conflicts of interest;
4. Comply with Uganda's legal requirements and FSC principles;
5. Ensure that stakeholder engagement is FPIC, inclusive and non-discriminatory.

Candidates are encouraged to submit their resume or CV along with a technical and financial proposal that demonstrates how their qualifications and capabilities are relevant to complete the assignment to info@utga.ug by **31 July 2026**