



FIRST PROGRESS REPORT 2023-2024

Uganda

Forest Partnership with the European Union

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INDEX

1. A Partnership for People and Forests

- 1.1 An open-ended cooperation agreement for Ugandan forests
- 1.2 Overview of the forest sector, climate issues, environmental challenges
- 1.3 The Forest Partnership with the European Union
- 1.4 Main achievements and lessons learned

2. Contributions to national, regional and international policies

- 2.1 Contributions to the implementation of NDCs
- 2.2 Contributions to the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
- 2.3 Contributions to the Global Gateway
- 2.4 Contributions to the external impact of the EU Green Deal
 - 2.4.1 Progress in compliance with the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR)

3. Forest Partnership progress

- 3.1 Progress towards Forest Partnership targets
- 3.2 Main activities and results of the work plan
- 3.3 Policy dialogue and technical coordination
 - 3.3.1 Key themes, working groups and intersectoral dialogue
 - 3.3.2 Contributions by EU Member States and Team Europe
 - 3.3.3 Communicating the Partnership

4. Looking ahead

Acronyms

1. A Partnership for People and Forests

1.1 An open-ended cooperation agreement for Ugandan forests

On 8 November 2022, during the COP27 UN Climate Change Conference, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, on behalf of the EU, and Uganda First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of East African Community Affairs, Rebecca Alitwala Kadaga, signed a Memorandum of Understanding for a Forest Partnership between the EU and Uganda.

The Forest Partnership is an open-ended, non-binding cooperation agreement between the two parties towards the protection, restoration, and sustainable use of Uganda's forests.

The Forest Partnership will promote the protection, restoration and sustainable management and use of forests and is aimed at: enhancing the role of Ugandan forests in sustainable and inclusive national development, and addressing challenges related to deforestation, forest degradation, climate change and loss of biodiversity. The Forest Partnership is also a policy and political instrument for the EU and Uganda to advance on the forest agenda at international level.

On June 29, 2023, Hon. Robinah Nabbanja Prime Minister of the Republic of Uganda and Guillaume Chartrain, Deputy Ambassador of the EU Delegation to Uganda validated and signed the Forest Partnership Roadmap. With the Roadmap, the Partners agreed on the targets to be reached by 2030 to help sustain momentum and steer action towards the achievement of the objectives set in the Memorandum of Understanding, as well as facilitate the mobilization of appropriate resources and attract the necessary investments, in line with the EU Global Gateway objectives. At the signing ceremony that took place at the Office of the Prime Minister, Mr Chartrain said “the Partnership is combining development and investments with protection of biodiversity and curbing climate change”.

1.2 Overview of the forest sector, climate issues, environmental challenges

Uganda is endowed with unique forests, hosting an impressive biodiversity and helping meet various socio-economic needs that in turn sustain human development and significant national earnings. Benefits of forests and trees to Ugandans have mainly focused on the numerous direct benefits in form of wood and non-wood forest products, energy, food, employment, and income. However, the many indirect environmental services forests provide—such as climate change mitigation and adaptation, support for agriculture, clean water supply, and soil fertility—are equally significant. These are especially important to the poor, who cannot afford alternatives such as piped water or fertilizers.

Uganda's forest cover has declined significantly, from 24% in 1990 to 13.3% in 2022 ¹, with natural forests experiencing the most substantial loss. The primary drivers of this deforestation are agricultural expansion, urbanization, industrialization, and unsustainable harvesting of timber and fuelwood. While forest plantations have increased over time, the sector remains largely informal, limiting its potential and threatening long-term forest sustainability. Weak governance, insufficient funding and investments, and limited technological investment continue to hinder the adoption of

¹ Source: draft Forestry Policy 2023
EU-Uganda Forest Partnership

sustainable forest management practices.

Deforestation and forest degradation significantly contribute to greenhouse gas emissions, exacerbating climate change. Uganda is increasingly experiencing the impacts of climate change, including extreme weather events such as floods and landslides, particularly in the eastern region, as well as rising temperatures and reduced agricultural productivity. These challenges are compounded by the country's reliance on rain-fed agriculture and limited adaptation measures, leaving communities vulnerable to food insecurity, water scarcity, and health risks. Furthermore, Uganda faces severe environmental challenges linked to deforestation, including land degradation, soil erosion, and biodiversity loss.

The GDP contribution covering only formally traded forest products has been estimated at between 3% to 3.5% in the past decade². However, this figure likely underestimates the true impact of forests on GDP, household incomes, livelihoods, employment, ecosystem services like carbon sequestration, and biodiversity protection.

The key issues challenging Ugandan forests include:

- The remaining natural forests are used unsustainably and are under pressure for further conversion to other land uses:
 - A fifth of the remaining natural forests are tropical high forests, and the other 80% are either degraded or low-density woodlands. Practically all current uses of natural forests are unsustainable.
 - Deforestation has concentrated on private lands where forests are converted to agriculture. Government reserves have a protection (sustainable management) status, but even those areas are under pressure from agricultural expansion.
 - The most important wood product is fuelwood used for household energy or charcoal production. The extracted volume of fuelwood was reported at 46 million m³ per year in 2022³. Forests supply well over 90% of Uganda's energy requirements in the form of fuelwood. Considering the limited natural regrowth of forests and trees from where fuelwood is harvested, t
 - Production of industrial roundwood from natural forests has gradually decreased, over the past decade, with legally registered volumes ranging from 40 000 to 60 000 m³ per year. FLEGT studies suggest that illegally logged volumes are four to five times the legal volume⁴. Most of the wood used by the local industries is sourced from planted forests with an estimated volume of 0.5 million m³ in 2021 ⁵.
- The value added from forest product value chains is well below the potential:
 - The share of forest plantations in the total forest cover amounts to 5-7% while producing >80% of the legal industrial roundwood. The current private plantations produced around 0.5 million m³ in 2021, and this volume is expected to increase to 0.8 million m³ by 2025 and 2 million m³ by 2030. At the same time the industrial capacity is low and not able to process the available raw material.
 - Wood fuel is largely produced and used inefficiently. There are significant opportunities

² State of Ugandan Forestry 2016

³ FAOSTAT 2024

⁴ Uganda FLEGT study 2014

⁵ The World Bank. The Ugandan Commercial Forestry Sector Assessment of the Value Chains and Markets 2021

to produce more from less e.g. with state-of-the-art charcoal kilns or other wood-based bioenergy technologies.

- Non-wood forest products offer potential for scaling beyond current subsistence uses.

1.3 The Forest Partnership with the European Union

The Forest Partnership addresses the protection, restoration and sustainable management and use of Uganda's forests and tree resources, with a view to contributing to:

- (1) Increase the area of protected, restored or sustainably managed forests
- (2) Increase the number of forest-related decent jobs
- (3) Reduce of the annual rate of deforestation of natural forests
- (4) Look for ways to facilitate trade in legal and sustainable wood products

The partnership seeks to support Uganda in addressing deforestation, improving governance in the forestry sector, and advancing climate resilience through innovative financing, capacity building, and technology transfer. This includes aligning national efforts with international frameworks like the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

To reach the above targets the key workstreams of the Forest Partnership include (1) improved governance and sustainable use and management of forests, (2) forest-based value chains, covering wood and non-wood forest products, (3) addressing deforestation and forest degradation, and (4) conservation and restoration of natural forest and ecosystem corridors. These four workstreams are supported by a policy strategy and dialogue component which focuses on operationalization, communication, and international outreach, among others.

Additionally, the MoU emphasizes collaboration between stakeholders, including government agencies, private sector actors, civil society, and local communities. It promotes integrated approaches to forest restoration and sustainable management, addressing drivers of deforestation such as agricultural expansion and illegal timber trade. The MoU also focuses on improving livelihoods through the promotion of sustainable forest-based industries and creating synergies between conservation and development objectives, ensuring long-term environmental and socio-economic benefits for Uganda.

1.4 Main achievements and lessons learned

While negotiating the Memorandum of Understanding and the related Roadmap, an independent but closely related EU supported Forestry programme was formulated, as part of the Annual Action Plan for 2022. The Forestry programme contains four main interventions, most of which the implementation has started in 2024 or will in 2025. These interventions are tackling the following aspects: combatting wildlife trafficking and forest crime; development of non-wood forest products (NWFP) value chains (VCs), promotion and development of the Wood VC and processing and access to forest finance; forest governance, social inclusion and coordination. Among the above, the interventions combatting wildlife trafficking and forest crime are most advanced as implementation started early 2024.

Main achievements and lessons learned include:

- I. **Strengthened Sector Coordination through the Partnerships for Forests Program for Combating Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Uganda through the Criminal Justice Program.** This program has facilitated capacity building and collaborative efforts aimed at combating illegal activities within the forestry sector, such as timber smuggling and forest degradation. By engaging a diverse range of stakeholders, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations, private sector players, and local communities, the program has enhanced (and continues to do so) information sharing, and strategic planning to address systemic challenges effectively.
- II. **Enhanced Understanding of Sector Challenges Across Key Institutions.** There is now greater appreciation and awareness of the challenges facing the forestry sector among critical institutions such as the police, customs, judiciary, Directorate of Public Prosecutions (DPP), and the Financial Intelligence Authority. Training programs and inter-agency collaborations have improved the understanding of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and its role in regulating trade in endangered species. This enhanced knowledge has strengthened enforcement mechanisms, streamlined prosecution processes, and fostered a more unified approach to tackling forest-related crimes. And it will continue to do so.
- III. **Opportunities for Sectoral Harmonization.** Through the Forest Partnership, opportunities to harmonize policies and practices across related sectors have been presented. For instance, collaboration with the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development has focused on addressing illegal land titling issues that contribute to forest encroachment and degradation. Similarly, engagement with customs authorities has improved the detection and management of contraband forest products, ensuring better compliance with national and international regulations. These harmonization efforts have the potential to create a more integrated and efficient framework for sustainable forest management, land use planning, and enforcement of environmental laws
- IV. **Investments and wood processing are higher on the agenda.** The FP process and dialogue with Government contributed to putting wood processing and investments higher on the political and cooperation agenda.
- V. **Identification of gaps in the forest sector.** The FP Roadmap also allowed to identify gaps that still need to be addressed in the forest sector, such as the need to develop a (national) traceability system for wood and non-wood products, which is required by the Public Procurement and Disposal Act-PPDA. In 2024 the traceability needs and context have been analysed by the EU-FAO Forest Governance Value Chains (FGVC) programme, as the basis for next steps in this area.
- VI. **Forest governance and monitoring capacity.** As part of the Forest Partnership the Government of Uganda and the EUD have agreed on the EU-MWE "Partnerships for Forests Development project- Governance, Social Inclusion and Coordination". This project will improve forest governance and the ministries' capacity to oversee and monitor FP Roadmap implementation.

2. Contributions to national, regional, and international policies

The Forest Partnership will contribute to several key policies and targets where forests have a role, such as listed below. For some of these, more information is presented in the sections below.

- **National REDD+ Strategy and Action Plan:** Promoting sustainable agricultural and forest production as well as restoration of natural forests in the landscape – contributing also to AFOLU mitigations actions under NDCs⁶. See 2.1 below for more on NDC.
- **Action Plan for Restoration of the Environment & Natural Resources -2021-2031:** scaling up forest restoration⁷
- **National Development Plan III:** enhancing value addition in key growth opportunities, including the forest sector, to increase average household incomes and improve quality of life.
- **Convention on Biological Diversity and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.** See 2.2 below.
- **EU's Global Gateway.** See 2.3 below.
- **Contributions to the external impact of the EU Green Deal.** See 2.4 below.

2.1 Contributions to the implementation of NDCs

Uganda's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) has been updated in 2022 and currently serves as the country's key climate action document. Aligned with its national REDD+ Strategy and Action Plan of 2017, the NDC implementation supports Uganda's Vision 2040, National Green Growth Development Strategy, and 10-year Environment Restoration Plan, among others. Data presented in the NDC emphasizes high Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions stemming from degradation of forests, conversion of forest land to cropland, and enteric fermentation from cattle, including methane.⁸ Uganda's GHG emissions rose from 53.4 MtCO_{2e} to 90.1 MtCO₂ between 2005 and 2015, with land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) contributing 59.5%. As a result, Uganda's land sector has shifted from being a carbon sink to being an emissions source. The Forest Partnership intends to be instrumental to the realization of Uganda's Nationally Determined Contributions where a conditional pledge has been made to reduce GHG emissions by 24.7% (36.7 Mt CO₂ eq.) by 2030 against a base year of 2015, under the Business As Usual (BAU) scenario - 82.7% of the mitigation will come from the Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) sector and increasing the forest cover up to 21% (baseline in 2020 12%).⁹ Forests play a

⁶ [Uganda REDD+ Strategy - \(Second Edition, June 2021\).pdf \(mwe.go.ug\)](https://mwe.go.ug/ua-redd-strategy-2017)

⁷ Ten year plan of action for restoration of the environment and natural resources in Uganda 2021–2031, the Republic of Uganda 2021

⁸ Nicholas Kiggundu et al., 'Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Uganda's Cattle Corridor Farming Systems', *Agricultural Systems* 176 (1 November 2019): 102649, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.agsy.2019.102649>; UNFCCC, 'Record of the Facilitative Sharing of Views during the May– June 2021 Session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation: Uganda', 2021, https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/FSVR1_UGA.pdf.

key role both in the NDC's identified 48 priority adaptation actions *and* for mitigation. Many of the identified vulnerabilities and adaptation priorities have clear links to forests, both directly and indirectly. Notably, priority actions include the restoration of 2.5 million ha of forest landscape by 2030, improved protection, conservation and restoration of ecosystems, and a significant expansion of agroforestry, non-timber forest products, and sustainable land use practices. Mitigation measures included in NDC call for the rehabilitation of 100,000 ha of forest areas through collaborative forest management and the restoration of 100,000 ha of natural forests in forest reserves and protected areas through enrichment planting with indigenous tree species.

While Uganda's NDC shows a serious commitment towards forests, an analysis conducted by EU Global Support Facility for Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC facility) at the end of 2024 indicates that the NDC document of 2022 is not outlining baselines and/or targets for several key forest and conservation adaptation priorities, such as the use of non-wood forest products (NWFPs) to diversify livelihoods, the protection, management, and restoration of rangelands, and rehabilitation of wildlife corridors. It is not clear whether these baselines have been defined as of today. The NDC's forest-related implementation budget is USD 11.4 billion (NDC 2.0 Forestry related budget), Uganda requiring international backing for conditional measures, including climate finance, capacity building, and technology transfer.

The same comparison of Forest Partnership Roadmap (in this document referred to as 'Roadmap') and the NDC found that the Roadmap and NDC show close alignment. The Roadmap would significantly contribute to achieving key NDC forestry targets (notably on sustainably managed forests and increasing the areas of planted and restored forests), both on adaptation and mitigation. This strong alignment with the 2022 NDC's forest-related targets is further highlighted by the Roadmap's dedication to forest conservation, forest jobs, and lowering deforestation in the cases where the Roadmap proposes targets which go beyond the NDC's ambitious agenda. The Roadmap implementation, therefore, would likely directly support NDC implementation. Even where not directly aligned, proposed Roadmap actions could further improve the enabling environment for successful actions on climate and sustainable forests by providing support, structure, and policy leverage. Integrating climate considerations into Roadmap activities could help better align national forest policies with climate change mitigation, adaptation, and impact reduction, and improve human and institutional response to climate change in Uganda. A quick analysis of the potential contribution of Roadmap actions to Uganda's NDC indicates that all its four workstreams and many key activities can be potentially linked to the NDC and climate action. Achieving this greater added value to the NDC would demand an integration of climate actions into Roadmap planning and implementation, adherence to social and environmental safeguards, and use of best practices at all levels. As the implementation of the Roadmap is ongoing, two planned EU actions (EUR 40M, and EUR 15.5M respectively) are to support Uganda's FP implementation. These actions promote sustainable forestry, job creation, expanding forest cover, and improving forest governance, protection, and management, in addition to supporting nature-based tourism aligned with FP principles. While indicative activities for both EU Actions are published, their

finalisation is pending.

2.2 Contributions to the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

The Forest Partnership and especially workstream 4 (Conservation and restoration of natural forest and ecosystem corridors) will contribute to :

- ***Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) obligations:***

Since 1975, Uganda has lost over half of its biodiversity. Losses of several species have been driven by loss of habitats – forests, woodlands and wetlands being the most prominent. Thus, the most significant requirement for Uganda to meet its Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) obligations is to reduce and eventually halt deforestation, woodland loss and swamp conversion⁹.

- ***National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2025:*** enhancing biodiversity conservation, management and sustainable utilization and fair benefit-sharing¹⁰

2.3 Contributions to the Global Gateway Strategy

The FP will continue to be used as an instrument to mobilise finance, investment and enhance coordination of EU Member States and the Government of Uganda in the forest sector.

Uganda has benefitted from a mapping of financial methodologies and instruments for the forest sector. This mapping is the basis for the formulation of a new intervention focusing on “financing for forests” in Uganda”. This intervention will be funded with the contribution of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs aiming for investments in forestry through the private sector. The details of operations of this intervention will be defined in the year 2025. In Uganda, the Forest Partnership is complemented by the EU Forest Programme with interventions ranging from development of the non-wood forest products value chain and the wood value chain, tackling forest crime, promotion of forest governance and coordination of all forest-related interventions. These interventions are implemented independently by UNODC, FAO, AICS and the Ministry of Water and Environment and target both public and private sector players. Both AICS and FAO programmes support the private sector in accessing finance. The EU-FAO "Sustainable wood-based value chains in Uganda" project supports private sector (tree growers and wood processors) to further professionalize their activities- as such enhancing their eligibility for finance - and to supply sustainably produced and higher quality products at scale to designated markets.

The Carbon Sinks guarantee is a key priority to the Global Gateway initiative under the topic of climate resilience. Carbon sinks, such as the ocean, soil and forests, help to mitigate climate change by absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. In Uganda, discussions are advancing to support interventions in areas such as smallholder agroforestry, natural forests and blue carbon and wetlands.

2.4 Contributions to the external impact of the EU Green Deal

2.4.1 Progress in compliance with the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR)

⁹ State of Uganda's Biodiversity 2017. National Biodiversity Bank. Makerere University 2017

¹⁰ [CBD Strategy and Action Plan - Uganda \(English version\)](#)

The Ministry of Water and Environment of Uganda is developing the Water and Environment Information System (WEIS) to monitor timber production, primarily originating from plantation forests. The system, developed with support from the World Bank, comprises several modules, including the registration of plantations, compilation of legal documentation, issuance of harvesting licenses, and monitoring of timber production, transport, and tax recovery. However, only some system modules are currently operational, and only a very limited number of growers are covered by the system.

The EU-funded Forest Governance and Value Chains (FGVC) program plans to provide additional support to strengthen forest sector monitoring and traceability, aiming to promote legal trade and combat illegal logging. The planned support will initially focus on improving forest management and monitoring for growers by providing them with appropriate tools. It will also prioritize the full implementation of WEIS and its further upgrade to document the deforestation-free status of plantation timber produced in Uganda.

Additionally, the FGVC program will support the development of a new Wood Information Management System (WIMS) under the Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Cooperatives. The WIMS will enable the government to document and track timber processing. While all systems will operate independently, the exchange of standardized information between them will create end-to-end traceability. Improved forest sector monitoring and data availability are expected to open up new export opportunities to high-value markets with due diligence requirements, such as those under the EUDR.

A dedicated Technical Working Group coordinated by the Uganda Coffee Development Authority, comprising representatives from different Ministries, Departments and Agencies of Government, including the Ministry of Water and Environment represented by the Forest Sector Support Department, and the private sector, has been established. Its objective is to oversee the compliance and implementation of EUDR regulations in coffee and cocoa, the two commodities of interest as far as Uganda is concerned. To support this, a Geo-spatial Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) System and Farmer Registration Application has been developed in 2024 to capture geo-spatial data for coffee production plots. Based on this, enumerators have been conducting the registration process, collecting essential details about value chain actors, such as names, farm locations, and coffee types, while mapping farms using GPS coordinates. The Uganda Coffee Development Authority, in collaboration with National Information Technology Authority NITA(U), will manage this farmer data in compliance with the Data Protection Act.

3. Forest Partnership progress

3.1 Progress towards Forest Partnership targets

The Partners agreed to lay out a set of **targets** to be reached by **2030** to help sustain momentum and steer action towards the achievement of the objectives set in the MoU, as well as facilitate the mobilization of appropriate resources and attract the necessary investments:

- (1) Increase the area of protected, restored or sustainably managed forests:
 - Sustainably managed forests: 1.56 million ha
 - Protected & Conserved forests: 0.76 million ha
 - Planted forests: 0.4 million ha
 - Restored forests: 0.4 million ha
- (2) Increase the number of forest-related decent jobs: 150,000
- (3) Reduce the annual rate of deforestation of natural forests: 20,000ha/y deforestation

Progress in reaching these targets will be presented in the next progress report, because up to date monitoring data was not available at the time of writing this report.

3.2 Main activities and results of the work plan

Workstream 1 – Improved governance and sustainable use and management of forests

The Partnership for Forests Programme is part of the EU Forestry Programme has been designed and is under implementation, inspired by the Forest Partnership. This is a collaborative work stream, led and implemented, among others by, the Italian Cooperation for Development (AICS), the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the Ugandan Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE), focuses on strengthening wood and non-timber value chains, combating forest crimes, and improving overall forestry governance. AICS plays a key role in integrating biodiversity, climate change, and sustainable livelihoods by increasing access to green financing and incentive schemes. These efforts promote forest conservation, agroforestry, wetland restoration, and the regeneration of indigenous tree species, reducing pressure on forest reserves while providing livelihood benefits. To further enhance forest conservation, AICS supports the development of sustainable non-wood value chain enterprises that directly link to improved community livelihoods. Capacity-building efforts focus on enabling institutions and stakeholders to manage forests sustainably and access forest financing.

UNODC addresses forest crimes through strengthened law enforcement and monitoring mechanisms, while the Ministry of Water and Environment provides overall coordination, follow-up, regular monitoring and reporting on the Forestry Partnership and its roadmap. It is responsible for enacting and implementing regulatory frameworks to guide sustainable forest management and also participate actively in restoration efforts.

The Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) implements the "Partnerships for Forests Development - Governance, Social Inclusion and Coordination" project (P4F), that includes interventions on forest governance, and on communication, awareness raising (national dialogue,

stakeholder consultation), monitoring and coordination of the Forest Partnership.

The planned deliverables under governance and sustainable forest management include; legislation for a professional forestry body; boundary opening and preparation of forest management plans; restoration planting of degraded forests; creation and capacity building for collaborative forest management groups; creation and operationalisation of district environment and natural resources committees; amendment of the Forestry Act and regulations, among others.

Each implementing partner addresses a specific intervention in the forestry programme, and contributes to one or more Work streams of the Forest Partnership.

In addition, Uganda is benefitting from the EU-FAO Forest Governance Value Chains (FGVC) programme that supports FP countries with implementation of specific FP Roadmap actions.

Workstream 2 – Forest and tree-based value chains (wood and non-wood forest products)

This work stream is implemented by FAO, aiming to foster inclusive investments in sustainable wood-based value chains by ensuring a sustainable supply of legally sourced wood raw materials from planted forests, enhancing the processing capacity and stimulating market demand for wood products and improving the availability of and access to suitable financing options for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). AICS programme on NWFP value chain development and SME enhancement is also part of this workstream. Through these efforts, the initiative seeks to promote sustainable forestry practices, support economic growth, and strengthen the resilience of the forest industry.

Whereas these interventions for the P4F are at inception stage, the Government of Uganda through other programmes has since long invested in the wood value chains, capacity building for different stakeholders including farmers, the public and the academia. E.g. with financial support from the World Bank the government is seeking to extend the achievements of the EU-funded Sawlog Production Grant Scheme (SPGS) and has put in place a plantation subsidy scheme for private commercial forest expansion, a processing grant to the private sector to enable value addition and increase value for planters. It also is enhancing the capacity for the only forestry college in Uganda (Nyabyeya Forestry College), through revision of the wood processing curriculum for certificate and diploma courses, prepared an investment plan for the college, setting up a modern sawmill, and position the college as a processing hub for students, the private sector and the neighboring communities. Uganda also benefits from the Forest based value chains study undertaken and coordinated by the Forests for the Future Facility (F4F). Feasibility case studies are planned in 2025, aiming to identify opportunities (which product/market combinations and value chains, actors) in which upscaling and investments are feasible and sustainable in Uganda and the subregion.

Workstream 3 – Address deforestation and forest degradation

This workstream is being achieved so far through efforts to combat forest crimes (by the UNODC project mentioned above) and attempts to track the chain of custody for timber by private tree growers through own records and registration by Uganda Timber Growers Association. The EU support on capacity building for stakeholders in the coffee and wood sector contributes their compliance to the EUDR, and enhances livelihoods based on sustainable timber and non-timber value chains.

Workstream 4 – Conservation and restoration of Natural Forest and ecosystem corridors

The P4F project will involve direct investment in restoration and management planning for existing forests and indirectly through combatting crime and developing value chains as well as operationalising collaborative forest management groups and district Energy and Natural Resources (ENR) committees. The EU regional NaturAfrica programme supports forest conservation interventions in Karamoja, and in the Kidepo National Park.

Additionally, the government supports investments in forestry conservation and restoration through programmes such as the “Investing in Forests and Protected Areas for Climate Smart Development (IFPA-CD)” World Bank project. This project aims to improve ecotourism, law enforcement, building tourism infrastructure and staff capacity in 26 natural central forest reserves and 10 national parks/game reserves.

There are also efforts for mass awareness creation, mass tree planting and conservation to instill self-regulation among different segments of society. For example, the government is implementing a mass tree planting and general conservation campaign called the “Running Out of Trees (ROOTs) Campaign”. This is a national program initiated by the government in collaboration with various private sector organisations and other non-state partners aimed to restore the country's indigenous tree species, with an ambitious goal of planting and nurturing 40 million trees annually. To date, over 75 million trees have been planted since 2021, while also embracing farmers managed natural regeneration thus contributing to conservation and restoration efforts across the country's landscape. This campaign is a drive to aimed implement Uganda's Bonn Challenge commitment to restore 2.5 million hectares of degraded forest landscapes as established from the Restoration Opportunities Assessment findings.

3.3 Policy dialogue and technical coordination

3.3.1 Key themes, working groups and inter-sectoral dialogue

The Political Working Group (PWG) oversees the management and implementation of the Forest Partnership and ensures effective dialogue and cooperation between the Partners in this context. The PWG guides and steers the implementation of the roadmap, addresses proposals by the Technical Working Group (TWG) towards the objectives of the Forest Partnership. The PWG addresses any issues that may arise in relation to the interpretation and implementation of the Forest Partnership and facilitates their resolution in good faith.

The PWG is jointly chaired by the Prime Minister of the Government of Uganda and the Head of the EU Delegation to Uganda. However, the Chairpersons may arrange to be represented by designated officials who will exercise all their rights during meetings. Other members of the PWG include: the Minister of Water and Environment, Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Minister of Lands Housing and Urban Development, Minister of Trade, Industry, and Cooperatives, Minister of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Minister of Energy and Mineral Development, Minister of Local Government, Attorney General of Uganda, Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development, and Ambassadors of the European Union Member States in Uganda.

The first PWG meeting was held on 29th June 2023 which featured the approval and signing of the Forest Partnership Roadmap. However, the second PWG meeting was scheduled for May 14, 2024 but was not held due to conflicting time schedules of the Prime Minister.

In the context of the roadmap, the PWG is assisted by the TWG which is chaired jointly by the

Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Water and Environment and the Head of Cooperation of the EU Delegation to Uganda. The TWG is responsible for preparing the meetings and the deliberations of the PWG, supervise and coordinate the implementation of the actions agreed by the PWG, consider any matter referred to it by the PWG as well as any other matter which may arise during the day-to-day implementation of the Forest Partnership. Moreover, the TWG reviews progress with the implementation of the roadmap and identifies options and opportunities for additional actions or change of action or, ways to mitigate challenges which are then forwarded to the PWG. The TWG normally meets on a quarterly basis and at minimum prior to the PWG meetings.

The TWG constitutes Permanent Secretaries of the following institutions, Office of the Prime Minister, Treasury, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Cooperatives, Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Solicitor General, Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs; Executive directors of the National Environment Management Authority, National Forestry Authority, Uganda Investment Authority, National Planning Authority; Representative of the Judiciary, Office of the Principal Judge of Uganda, Commissioner, Department of Environment Sector Support Services, Ministry of Water and Environment, Commissioner, Climate Change Department, Ministry of Water and Environment, Technical Teams European Union Member States in Uganda and the Commissioner, Forest Sector Support Department as Secretary of the TWG.

The Technical Working Group has held two meetings: on June 13th, 2023, for the validation of the Forest Partnership Roadmap, and on March 26th, 2024, to coordinate the Partnerships for Forests Project, onboard the Danish Embassy, and prepare for the 2nd Political Working Group Meeting.

The next PWG and TWG meetings are scheduled for the first quarter of 2025.

Inter-sectoral dialogue

The Forest Partnership is designed as a multi-sectoral framework with political and technical structures to support and follow its implementation, coordination and reporting. The technical working group is led by the Ministry of Water and Environment while the Office of the Prime Minister leads the political working group. The current membership of the working groups includes:

Ministry of Water and Environment
Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs
Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
Ministry of Lands Housing and Urban Development
Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Cooperatives
Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities
Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries
Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development
Ministry of Local Government
The Office of the Attorney General
Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
National Environment Management Authority
National Forestry Authority
Uganda Investment Authority
National Planning Authority
Office of the Principal Judge of Uganda

Ambassadors of the European Union and Member States

Representation is targeting the EU Ambassadors, Ministers, Permanent Secretaries, Executive Directors of semi-autonomous agencies, Attorney General, Principal Judge and Technical officers of participating institutions.

3.3.2 Contributions by EU member states and Team Europe

Through continuous engagement with EU Member States and promotion of the Forest Partnership, the EU Delegation has successfully negotiated and concluded Transfer Agreement for additional funding to the Forestry programme from the Embassy of Denmark, supporting the implementation of some components of the Forest Partnership.

3.3.3 Communicating the Partnership

Information related to the Forest Partnership process (such as the videorecording of the signing ceremony, text of the Memorandum of Understanding, the Roadmap, the Minutes of the Technical and Political Working Group, press releases, etc) have been publicly disclosed [here on Capacity4Development](#).

4. Looking ahead

The next TWG and PWG meetings are scheduled in the first quarter of 2025. The agenda for the PWG remains the same as was proposed in May 2024, and includes:

- Update on the progress of the Forestry Programme,
- Timber value chains component to address challenges associated with value added exports,
- Forest Governance in Uganda as a strategic destination/route for regional timber trade.

The agenda will be updated shortly before the meeting, based on the prevailing circumstances regarding forestry in the country at the time.

Acronyms

AAP	Annual Action Plan
AFOLU	Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use
AICS	Italian Cooperation for Development
BAU	Business As Usual
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
COP	Conference of the Parties
DPP	Directorate of Public Prosecutions
ENR	Energy and Natural Resources
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
EUDR	EU Deforestation Regulation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Action Plan
FP	Forest Partnership
FVCG	Forest Governance and Value Chains
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHG	Greenhouse gas
IFPA-CD	Investing in Forests and Protected Areas for Climate Smart Development
INTPA	International Partnerships
LCDS	Low carbon development strategy
LULUCF	Land use, land-use change and forestry
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MWE	Ministry of Water and Environment
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NITA (U)	National Information Technology Authority
NKE	Non key expert
NTFP	Non-timber forest products
NWFP	Non-wood forest products
PA	Protected Areas
P4F	Partnerships for Forests Project
PWG	Political working group
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
ROOTS	Running Out Of Trees
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
SPGS	Sawlog Production Grant Scheme
TWG	Technical working group
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
VC	Value chains
VPA	Voluntary Partnership Agreement