

Forest-based value chains by product

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Non-Wood Forest Products

Bamboo



Extremely versatile, low environmental impact, climate positive, with an increasing international trade.

BAMBOO IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA (SSA)

83 natural bamboo species

- Countries selected for feasibility studies of value chain and market potential
- SSA countries with substantial bamboo resources

Ghana

Nigeria

Cameroon

Ethiopia

Uganda

Kenya

Democratic
Republic
of the Congo

Zambia

Africa possesses over
30 million hectares of
bamboo forests (7-12%
global bamboo forest area)

But **over 75%** of Africa's
bamboo resources
remain unutilized

Globally, **China is the
largest exporter** of bamboo
commodities, with 75%
of the total export value

The **EU imports** of bamboo
amounted to EUR 1.3 billion,
namely **40% of the global
bamboo trade** in 2022
(EUR 3.2 billion)

EU bamboo imports are
highly dependent on China.
Bamboo from Africa could be
an interesting diversification

Rotterdam, 7-11 June 2027
World Bamboo Congress
in the EU for the first time
in 15+ years



MAIN SPECIES FOR PRODUCTION

Bambusa vulgaris,
Dendrocalamus asper

ORIGIN Plantations or natural forests

PRODUCTS Use of **bamboo for solid products** includes construction materials (i.e. laminated boards, flooring), poles, stick based products, furniture, chips for fibre composites, scrimber, railway sleepers

Other uses include bamboo pulp and paper, residues for charcoal and biochar

KEY FEATURES

- Fast-growing carbon sink (requires few nutrients, grows also on degraded lands)
- Equally suitable as wood for many uses (i.e. construction, furniture, pulp and paper)
- Suitable for outgrower scheme with smallholders

CHALLENGES

- Poor management of plantations and natural bamboo forest
- Value chains not developed in SSA (young industry, low volumes)
- Competition by Chinese products
- Low awareness of real virtues of bamboo

SUSTAINABILITY

Bamboo is an excellent substitute for wood and fossil-based fibres, climate positive, low maintenance and fast growing.

EUROPEAN UNION INTERESTS IN THE VALUE CHAIN

Bamboo value chains show a good potential for high value specialized products to EU and domestic markets. Most promising are chips for high tech fibre composites, laminated board and beams, and treated poles for construction.



POTENTIAL SUPPORT FROM EU, MEMBER STATES AND PARTNERS



INSTITUTIONAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS

→ Support the development and application of norms and laws

→ Support alignment to international product standards



VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT

→ Organizations of actors, technical and commercial trainings, marketing, technology transfer



BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

→ Support tax incentive schemes, conducive investment climate, access to finance

→ Facilitate access to EU markets for quality bamboo products



LONG-TERM INVESTMENTS

→ Research & development

→ Global Gateway projects

FOCUS ON UGANDA



1 million stakeholders involved in the bamboo sector

4 500 hectares plantations (growth to 10 500 hectares by 2040)

Regulations conducive for the bamboo sector

Young sector, still needing development. Limited trade with the EU, with increasing annual value of around USD 0.1 million (2023-2024).

Key EU-Uganda actors

Bamboo Uganda

Kontiki Bamboo Works Limited

Friends of Bamboo (FoB)

Amabanda Uganda Limited

Supporters of the bamboo sector

AICS

ENABEL

Data source:
Forests for the Future Facility (F4F) – Bamboo value chain.
Feasibility study Uganda, 2025;
CEPI Key Statistics 2024.

Read the story

Green Gold: Could bamboo save Ugandan forests?



CASE STUDY

BAMBOO FOR CONSTRUCTION

Bamboo for construction is picking up. Kontiki is an independent Ugandan family company, eco-friendly and involving smallholders. Key products are: treated poles for construction, stick-based products and bamboo seedlings. While laminated board is a new high-end production line.



CASE STUDY

Amabanda Uganda Limited is an innovative EU-owned (Belgium/Uganda) company that exports bamboo chips to EU for bamboo fibres. It also produces poles & laminated boards using bamboo from smallholders.



BAMBOO CHIPS

The supply of high value bamboo chips is forecasted to increase from 108 tons in 2025 to 450 tons in 2027.

The EU bamboo fibre market is emerging as climate positive composites that replace glass fibre, carbon fibre, aluminium. Bamboo fibres are processed into high end composites. Potential applications: construction materials (e.g. facade panels), traffic signs, sports equipment, automotive interiors, furniture, bank cards.

OTHER SSA COUNTRIES

EU/local companies process and sell bamboo products in other countries in the region.

Key actors in other SSA countries

KENYA WeDoBamboo

KENYA Ecopole

ETHIOPIA African Bamboo

*A Global Gateway
flagship initiative*



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