



WOOD SUBSECTOR IN UGANDA

This factsheet is intended to highlight key features that are relevant to stakeholders in the wood subsector in Uganda.

It is comprised of predominantly Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) foresters, lumberjacks, sawmills, treatment plants, furniture and construction workshops under the jurisdictions of the ministries of Water and Environment; Trade, Industry and Cooperatives; and that of Gender, Labour and Social Development. The National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) and National Forestry Authority (NFA) are sector regulators. The NFA regulates the central forest reserves and district forestry services.

SKILLS & TRAINING

This sector is mainly comprised of apprenticed workers and entrepreneurs. Many Vocational Training Institutes (VTIs) concentrate on basic areas like carpentry and joinery, while skills like understanding of lumbering, the quality and functionality of specific tree species, is not emphasized. This leads to inappropriate placement and resultant quality drawback.



INCOME

Carpenters and sawmillers on average earn between

UGX15,000 (€3.5)
and

UGX100,000 (€23.5)

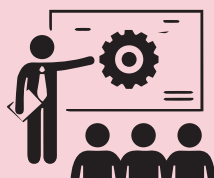
per day depending on their level of skill and quality of product and also on whether they are an employee or business owner.

The inability to match the quality of imported products due to out-of-date production equipment and or poor-quality timber minimises the ability to increase income.



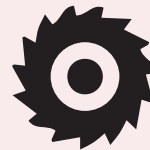
BUSINESS MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

The Uganda Small Scale Industries Association (USSIA) provides a platform for networking and advocacy for all MSMEs. The carpenters and sawmillers that are registered members of USSIA have access to skills upgrading and training, market information and other business development services.



WORKFORCE DIVERSITY

The estimated working population in Uganda is **15.76** million of which **49%** are male.

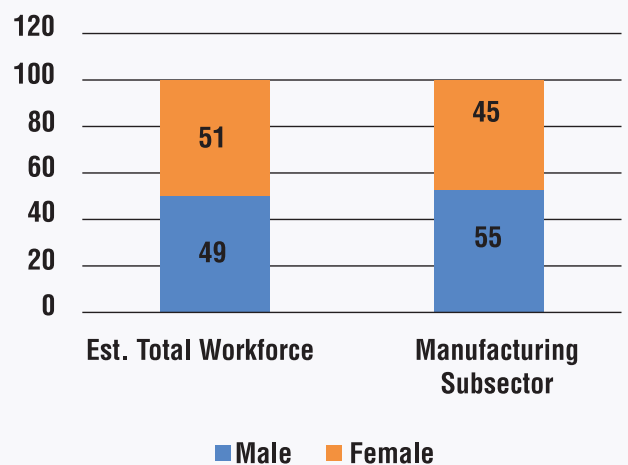


Carpenters and sawmillers are a segment of the manufacturing industry which employs **4.9%** of Uganda's estimated working population.

This is equivalent to about

780,000 labourers, **55%** of whom are men.¹

Male/Female Ratio in the subsector



¹ Labour Market Profile 2016, Danish Trade Council for International Development and Cooperation



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STANDARDS

With the exception of the regulations on the lumberjacks and timber trade from public forests by the NFA, and Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) regulation of inputs like chemicals and machinery used, there is no streamlined regulation of the industry.

There are no basic standards for products and services in the wood sector. Design and quality are dependent on the customers wishes, how much they are able to pay for the product as well as the expertise and mode of equipment employed by the manufacturer.

Sawmillers are not always knowledgeable about the attributes of the wood they work with and thus timber may be misrepresented as suitable for certain uses when it's not. Wood also gets processed before it is properly dried, causing the timber to warp and ruin the finished products. Inadequate technology results in unevenly cut timber that impacts the quality of finished furniture or construction material.

Counterfeit imported finishing products like wood varnish and glue also affect the quality of the final product.



Safety gear and equipment: Workshop goggles, machine gloves, industrial boots, safety clothing, ear protectors, dust and gas mask, smoke sensors, fire extinguishers, power isolators, safety switches, head protection helmet and first aid kit.



To protect the environment: There should be proper management and disposal of treatments, adhesives, solvents and coatings, waste wood repurposing and use of power efficient tools that reduce the carbon footprint.

JOINT VENTURE & PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

There is potential for market penetration in the region and the government policy to Buy Uganda Build Uganda (BUBU) promotes a strong domestic market.

Prospective areas of collaboration:

- Reclamation of wood waste for use in particle boards, medium-density fibreboards, fertiliser and related products giving birth to new industries and ventures
- Standardisation of production and production processes while creating incentives for innovation in the sector
- Financial and entrepreneurial skill training for improved business growth and development
- Exposure and exchange visits to modern facilities
- Creation of opportunities for participation in local and international exhibitions and trade fairs for exposure to international standards and markets, new skills and business ideas.
- Provision of apprentice and training opportunities in the areas of product surface finishing and coating, advanced production skills upgrade and product marketing
- Investment in local production of finishing products so the sector can determine and control quality.
- Establishment of business linkages between the members in the wood value chain of foresters, sawmillers and furniture manufacturers to share learning and harmonise standards across the value chain
- Development of the export market on the basis that Uganda has quality hard wood products which have good prices and value outside Uganda
- Investment in research and product development to improve production efficiency

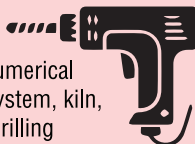


TECHNOLOGY

Wood processing and production at micro and small enterprise level is predominantly labour intensive and informal with low technology equipment. At medium and large-scale enterprise levels, the processes and practices are quite formal with both conventional and computer numerically controlled machines.

The conventional wood workshop should have:

Machinery: Sawdust vacuum extractor, Computer Numerical Control (CNC) router, planer, air spray compressor system, kiln, treatment booth, lathe, jigsaw and general-purpose drilling machine, pedestal drill and double head pedestal grinder.



Tools: Cutter grinder, radial saw and mortising machine, combined thickness and surfacing machine, portable wood turning lathe, wood turning lathe, circular saw machine, sander, pneumatic nail gun and callipers.

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