BEHIND THE FSC™ LABEL OF WIJMA CAMEROUN S.A.

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What FSC™ did change in the way of working: case of Wijma Cameroon S.A.

Who are we ?

Creating in 1968 and daughter company of the Wijma group in the Netherlands, Wijma Cameroun S.A. is the first FSC™ certified forest company in the Congo Basin. With more than 350 workers, 4 FMUs and 2 sawmills, Wijma Cameroun primarily provides FSC™ certified hydraulic wood (Azobe, okan, tall) from second and third processing mainly for the Dutch market.

The challenges introduced in the evolution of new trade of FSC™ certified foresters in the Congo Basin, Wijma Cameroun indeed was re-questioned by certain stakeholders during this period of training and learning new practices. Today Wijma Cameroun succeeded in certifying 100% of its forest management and transformation activities, as well as those of its partners and aims to maintain this level of performance.

The challenges for the implementation and follow-up of this responsible forest management policy are palpable on the ground every day. Therefore, we would like to share with you through this newsletter, the challenges, realities and progress of our profession seen by Wijma Cameroun.

Thematic: What FSC™ did change in the way of working: case of Wijma Cameroon S.A.

Forest exploitation in Central Africa largely evolved since the last century. Thanks to the coming of forest certification, its more holistic approach makes possible to take into account environmental considerations that are necessary for the continuation of this activity but also enables a more evenly redistribution of the benefits of the exploitation while integrating broader social concerns.

Entering its 6th year of FSC™ certification, Wijma Cameroun gradually could see the repercussions of FSC™ certification particularly regarding working and well being conditions of employees but also regarding the rigor in the application of the forest operations at all levels of activities in the offices, in the forest and in the sawmills. These results represent a real change of mentality from the management to the operator in the field and it is from now on a new way of working assumed naturally by the entire group.

Testimonies hereafter of Wijma Cameroun’s collaborators employed by the company since the period former to the first FSC™ certificate, illustrate our sayings.
Jean-Marie Peeh, driver of Caterpillar 980 in the forest: “Before certification, I worked under difficult conditions, without safety materials, safety shoes, helmet, uniforms and ear-phones. I was not comfortable. Now after certification, this way of working with safety materials and in forest parks managed according to FSC™ requirements, facilitates my work in the field.”

Simon Tsagadig, technician of heavy machines in the forest: “The major changes in our garage with certification, is that before we did oil changes without black oil collecting tray, filters were not recycled, we worked without safety materials and without suitable vehicles to do the mechanic work. Today everything is well organized both in the forest bases and in the field”.

Antoine Ndnadji, in charge of sawn products: “With the FSC™, there is a clear improvement of safety procedures during the work through the distribution of safety equipments adapted to each working activity, through trainings and sensitizing sessions on risks of accidents at work. There is also a clear dialogue with the management through meetings with union delegates. At the logging houses, there is also an improvement of hygiene and health conditions for the employees with the construction of new latrines, disinfection of houses, organization of free HIV campaigns etc…”

Emmanuel Mba Eyene, responsible for sawmill production: “The employees are protected by means of safety gears. Moreover work is better organized thanks to the implementation of FSC™ procedures”.

Although there still remain challenges ahead of us, we can say that operational procedures implemented in accordance with FSC™ requirements, were definitively integrated in the working practices and reflexes of Wijma Cameroun’s employees and partners. Today we can easily confirm that the success of obtaining and keeping FSC™ certificates largely depends on the work and the conscientiousness of the employees of Wijma Cameroun. We take the opportunity of this letter to congratulate and encourage them!

And in the rest of the world?

In the northern hemisphere, where the forest and environmental legislations already reach a high level, the changes in the work methods that appeared after the arrival of forest certification are not as manifest as in the developing countries. The improvements in terms of workers health and safety and in environmental requirements exist but remain relatively negligible. However, certain evolutions are clearly notable such as for example the improvement of the dialogue between the various stakeholders in particular between the economic and environmental chambers. Also, regarding the social component, and more precisely in the Northern countries, forest certification made it possible to preserve traditions of indigenous people and thus, all forest operators that are FSC™ certified take into account these interests when planning their activities.
International events


- **November 2011**: Social projects for villages nearby CAFECO’s FMU. Electrification of the village Okurigang.

- **December 2011**: During this year 2011, Wijma Cameroon and partners have employed around 180 new persons. The company participates at its scale to the local economical development.