

## 25 years Form International

Form International has celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2018. On June 6<sup>th</sup> the company organised a symposium for more than 100 invited relations by sharing experiences and lessons learned of the last 25 years.

Form International has become an important frontrunning company in the world of sustainable forest management with significant experience in three key areas:

- Reforestation
- Landscape restoration
- Climate investments related to reforestation & restoration



The symposium took place in the gardens of the new office and it was a fantastic tropically warm afternoon during which we reflected with more than 100 participants on some key questions:

- What is the relevance of these topics for society and our partners?
- What is Form's past and current role and added value on these topics?
- What has Form learned on these topics and what are recommendations?
- What should be Form's role and added value on these topics in the future to stay relevant?

The symposium was moderated by Mr. Maas Goote, CEO of DOB Ecology.

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## Welcome and 25 years Form International

**Paul Hol, founder Form International** - In 1993 Paul Hol founded Form Ecology Consultants (at present Form International) in close collaboration with the Wijma Family, a well-known hardwood producing and trading company in the Netherlands. Since 2005, Paul Hol is the sole owner of Form International.



Around 1992 FSC came up and Form was able to assist many frontrunning companies in Cameroon (Wijma), Gabon and various other countries in West & Central Africa. Also Form assisted the first companies in Kalimantan Indonesia to get FSC certification.

Since early this year, Form is again assisting timber enterprises with sustainable forest management of the primary forests on Kalimantan-Borneo.

In 2001 the company started the first reforestation activities in Ghana. From the beginning, the big dream of Paul Hol was to be an important player in the area of large scale reforestation in Africa. With a fantastic spirit and enormous commitment support of some key investment families we have been able to expand the planting operations of degraded forest reserves in Ghana and also in Tanzania.

In 2009 Sustainable Forestry Investments BV (SFI) was established as an impact investor with operations in Ghana and Tanzania. Today more than 15 million trees have been planted at an area of 10,000 ha, we employ more than 2,400 people and extensive investments have been secured from and were committed by investors and the African Development Bank to grow our activities.

In 2015 Paul Hol as CEO of SFI was invited by the World Resources Institute and made a strong commitment at COP 21 in Paris to contribute to AFR100 an initiative to restore 100 million ha of degraded land in Africa by 2030. 100 million hectares is equal to the size of Germany or Nigeria.

These achievements are promising and SFI is at the stage that the activities can be expanded on because the necessary experience, knowledge and capacity is available to plant vast areas of land. On the other hand the growth of SFI is at risk if the company is not able to get the right support from international investments funds who have also made the same commitments in Paris.

Mr Hol concluded his speech by expressing his hope that SFI will be able to mobilise and get the support and funding needed to realise the commitments which have been made in Paris with World Resources Institute and NEPAD - African Union for AFR100 at COP21 to continue to contribute to NEW FORESTS IN A CHANGING WORLD.

## Climate investments and international policy



**Hans Docter, director sustainable economic development at Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs,** highlighted the role of the Dutch Government in Climate Policy and Climate investments. He congratulated Form International for the impressive achievements and especially the large reforestation activities which have been realised in Ghana and Tanzania. He also mentioned that there is a key role to play for the Dutch Government and public sector to facilitate large scale reforestation efforts in Africa.

Hans Docter: *“Form is very relevant as a big player in sustainable forestry in Africa, but also in other regions, so I would suggest to continue to do what they are doing. But I think one of the issues that Form could tackle more is really working with the financial sector how we can unlock more private investment to the sector and how we can entice banks to take long-term risks and come up with financial engineering for sustainability and not just for short-term profit but for long term sustainability and long-term profits.”*

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## Form International - The way forward

**Rik Sools, managing director Form International,** gave a description of milestones in Form International’s history ([see his presentation](#)), but also shared the company’s vision for the future. Form International, through advisory services and delivery of projects aims to create impact on forests, landscapes, livelihoods, environment, biodiversity, productivity, climate, water, soils, etc. Unique to Form’s approach are to include a good mix of knowledge, management, business cases and partnerships for reforestation, landscape restoration, sustainable forest management and climate investments. In its 25 year history the company has always been working on compelling and necessary innovations in the sector, from first FSC certifications, to introduction of Reduced Impact Logging to Africa, growing the largest sustainable teak plantation company in Africa in 10 years. Working strongly from and with the private sector, Form will take its role as an aggregator in projects and landscapes, to improve landscape governance and realise integrated forest and landscape restoration projects with viable business approaches. Examples of innovative and business driven landscape restoration approaches are Form Ghana with its Public-Private-Partnership model for commercial reforestation and landscape restoration, a new Shea Parkland restoration project in the north of Ghana, but Form now also pioneers on a new improved forest management and restoration model for Borneo with The Borneo Initiative in Indonesia. Form intends to continue to innovate and lead alongside our partners with these developments and provide answers and showcases for climate change, forest landscape restoration and sustainable forest management solutions. This in the form of advisory services, but more and more through delivery of on the ground projects for investors and clients including project design, project management and implementation, stakeholder involvement, incorporation of other crops besides trees, partnerships and improving landscape governance. That is the challenge we gladly take.

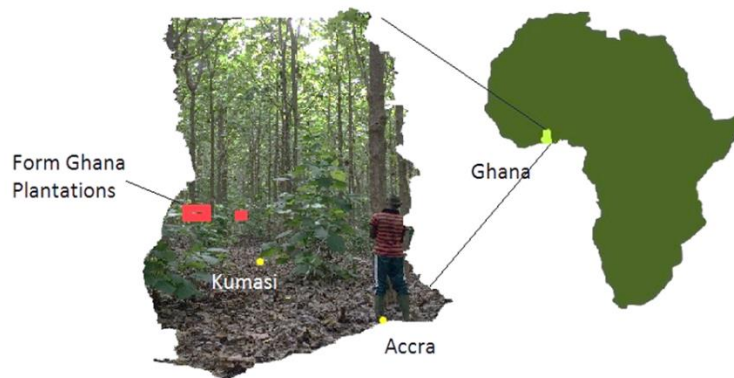


## Form Ghana Ltd.



**Presented by Willem Fourie, managing director and Affum Augustine, plantation manager**

Form Ghana was created in 2007. It started with a pilot plantation established in 2001 which was absorbed in 2007 when in total 1500 hectare of land was acquired from the Forestry Commission of Ghana for planting.



Form Ghana now has planted over 10,000 hectares of which some 8,500 hectares are planted with teak, making it the largest Teak plantation in Africa. The rest of the area is planted with indigenous trees. Total available lease area is around 20,000 hectares.

Form Ghana employs more than 1,200 people of which 30% are female and is FSC certified in 2010 as the first plantation in Western Africa. The carbon sequestered by the plantation has been certified according to the Verified Carbon Standard since 2013. In 2013 the company also developed a new Public Private Partnership model for commercial reforestation with the Forestry Commission, which became the new nationally adopted model.

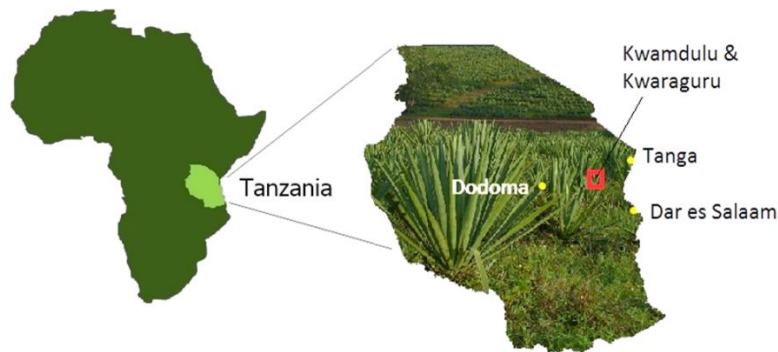
Form Ghana has secured a loan from the African Development Bank (AFDB) and the Forest Investment Program (FIP) in 2017. This is the first direct private sector investment in the forestry sector by the AFDB.

Form Ghana has received various business excellence awards, among which a gold award from the Ministry of Trade and Industrial of Ghana for the best national plantation forest.

**SFI Tanzania Ltd.**

**Presented by Thys Greeff, general manager and Walter Kavishe, financial manager**

In 2013, SFI Tanzania acquired two sisal estates in Tanzania; Kwaraguru and Kwamdulu Estate, near Korogwe and Segera respectively, with a total area of 9,145 ha. The two estates are property of SFI Tanzania and registered in Tanzania’s land registry.



SFI Tanzania’s focus is on a triple-cropping concept: establishment and management of a short rotation sisal plantation (for fibers on the international market), a medium-term tree plantation (eucalyptus for poles and other material wood for the local and regional markets), and ‘long-term’ tree plantation (teak and other hardwood species for timber for the international round wood market), and; as such the position of the company is a mixed producer. SFI aims to have tree plantations next to sisal as alternative land use on each estate, which are well managed, sustainable, and growing in accordance to international growth standards. The principal activities of the company are to establish and manage large-scale sisal and woodlots in a sustainable way through upscaling and improvement of the sisal production and afforestation of fallow land on the sisal estates.

Currently, SFI Tanzania has sisal plantation area of more than 3,000 hectares, and 300 hectares with tree plantations. SFI Tanzania employs over 1,200 people, of which 36% is female, they are offered access to health care and education and training opportunities to enhance staff skills and attitude. Clean water access is ensured, and the project has invested in community water and sanitation projects. SFI runs a teak outgrower program and enables up to 300 local farmers to intercrop food crops between sisal plants and planted trees. Over 100 hectares is designated as conservation areas and biodiversity corridors which are fully protected and restored with native species and function as refuges for wildlife and biodiversity.

**Total land area leased (duration 99 years)**

<b>Kwamdulu:</b>	<b>4,640 ha</b>
<b>Kwaraguru:</b>	<b>4,505 ha</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>9,145 ha</b>

## Perspectives on ecological restoration

**Maas Goote, CEO DOB Ecology**, presented the following key statements for an open and critical debate with the audience:

- The absence of the landscape perspective makes the Paris Agreement a flawed instrument.
- Migration from Africa will be reduced if we take Africa's potential in landscape restoration seriously.
- Large scale reforestation is needed in Africa, but cannot be financed today: International financial institutions are too risk averse where it comes to investing in forestry.



These statements sparked a lively debate that centred around climate investments, reforestation and landscape restoration. The gap between political commitments and finance reaching projects on the ground was debated from international policy, financial and project perspectives as these groups were present in the audience and access to finance is a bottleneck facing many practitioners in these fields including Form international.

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## Conclusion: Access to finance is the main bottleneck

Form international and SFI were able to realise the first 10,000 hectares, with private investments. We now have the capacity, experience, and land available to be able to expand at a faster pace. SFI has invested about 50 million dollars of private funds and aims to have a total of 150 million dollars committed by 2022, for reforestation projects in Ghana, Tanzania and other African countries. This is only possible with financial support from the public sector, institutional investors and climate funds.

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## Speech Ambassador H.E. Mrs. Irene F. Kasyanju of Tanzania



**Ambassador H.E. Mrs Irene F.M. Kasyanju of Tanzania** congratulated Form International with the 25 years of anniversary and planted a tulip tree together with Isabelle Hol, the youngest daughter of founder Paul Hol.

Mrs Kasyanju highlighted that deforestation is a widespread problem around the world and across Eastern Africa. Rising demand for charcoal results in a loss of many hectares annually for fuel wood just in Tanzania. Fires, illegal harvesting still contribute largely to deforestation.

The major effects of deforestation in Tanzania, for example, have been deterioration of ecological systems with negative impacts on soil fertility, water flows and biological diversity. Soil erosion has also become a serious problem in many parts of the country, particularly in the central region. Deforestation has also affected watersheds. There is extensive evidence of reduced dry season river flows and drying up of springs and groundwater. There is also increased sedimentation of rivers and dams and a greater frequency of dangerous and damaging flash floods.



The effects of deforestation are causing changes in weather patterns with few heavy rains across the regions. For example, waters from the highlands of Mt. Kilimanjaro are decreasing while many people are dependent on that water for survival. Groundwater supplies have also been depleted because of reduced infiltration of rainfall into the soil caused by deforestation. The diminishing water table also is taking its toll on plants and trees. The depletion of forest resources is affecting the health of agriculture industries, not to mention the health of the people. Further decline could cost our country more in terms of tourism, energy and agriculture. All our efforts must be made active now to reverse the economic threat.

Thanks to collaborative planning by leaders in Tanzania, plans for conservation programs have been put to fight **deforestation** and climate change. These governmental, non-governmental organization and the local partners have put so much efforts to help address the issue of deforestation simultaneously across our Nation. Such projects have not only helped in addressing the issue of climate change but also in resiliency for people and wildlife.

**Ambassador H.E. Mrs Irene F.M. Kasyanju** took the opportunity to acknowledge with highest appreciation the support that the Dutch Government and Form International are extending to Tanzania in the forestry development. A lot has been achieved since 2013 in terms of establishing new forestry plantations in Tanga Region, doing major repairs and maintenance of infrastructure and equipment, as well as provision of training for workers, to mention a few.

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### Thank you

We would like to conclude by especially thanking all employees of Form International, Form Ghana and SFI Tanzania for their effort and support during the past 25 years. Without their commitment, hard work and passion these wonderful achievements and example projects would not have been realised. We much look forward to carry the good work forward and look forward to many more years of working together, as well as with all our partners across the world. Together we hope to safeguard and create a bright future for New Forests in a Changing World!

*Hattem, June 2018*