

Application of Geographical
Indications
In Uganda:

A case for bark cloth products

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Marie-Sar Agencies

- Founded in 1985
- Incorporated in 1992
- Introduced bark cloth products in 2000

Our Values

- **Responsibility** towards **environment** and **society** through ethical production and adherence to WFTO fair trade principles
- **Capacity building** along the supply chain
- **Creation of employment** opportunities
- Delivery of **high quality** products

“Celebrating indigenous textile
craftsmanship”



Bark Cloth

Bark cloth is processed from fig tree bark (Ficus Natalensis) locally called '***Mutuba***'

Bark cloth is a unique fabric produced in parts of central and eastern Africa. In Uganda, specifically central Buganda, bark cloth production; in processes steeped in ancient culture and tradition; started way back in the 13th century and played significant cultural, financial, social roles.

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Tree protection

Trees are wrapped in fresh banana leaves to protect the delicate area from insects and from drying out; as well as to prepare for new growth

UNESCO Recognition: Dec 2005



- Uganda's bark cloth was proclaimed "a masterpiece of oral and intangible heritage of humanity"
- UNESCO's proclamation of the art of bark cloth making in Uganda as a masterpiece of the world's intangible heritage as well as recognition of the indigenous textile production skills of Ugandan craftsmen.

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Geographical Indications qualifiers for bark cloth

Association of GI for bark cloth

- Unique material bark cloth
- Unique plant varieties Ficus Natalensis fig tree species),
- Traditional equipment ,processing tools, etc)
- Cultural resources and traditional knowledge (traditions, know-how, competences acquired and handed over from generations to generations) and a given territory (village, city, district, region, other administrative body.
- Preservation of local culture

Trends:

Ethical/Eco/Organic/Fair Trade

There is growing interest in production processes that benefit people and animals, do not damage environment, do not use toxic or hazardous chemicals (or disposes of them responsibly) and products that are biodegradable or recyclable.

Consumers and buyers are increasingly seeking products that possess characteristics linked to their origin

This has created a market that cares what the product is made of, where the product comes from and how it is produced. Taking all this into account, bark cloth's score is high and still rising

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Bark Cloth Prospects

- Bark cloth production is environment friendly, sustainable
- Bark cloth is interesting as a new raw material on the international market. .
- Product mix marketed is new and functional, with wide scope for new product development and improvement.
- Market growth resulting from raised levels of awareness created by UNESCO's recognition and contributions to the revitalization of the bark cloth supply chain led to increased rural incomes; is beneficial to the environment; and brought a sense of pride in the nation's heritage and culture
- The planting and management of trees can generate alternative incomes through the sale of carbon credits, and harvest can attract cultural tourism

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Social, Environmental impacts:

Impacts resulting from increase in demand for bark cloth

- Providing new skills and creation of employment opportunities for artisans who, without formal academic qualifications or skills, would otherwise be left out of the job bracket
- Increasing productivity and incomes for farmers, traders and other stakeholders in the value chain
- Raising awareness about environmental and ecological issues
- Certification leading to better earnings by farmers, processors, artisans and traders

Social, Environmental impacts:

- Mobilization of farmers in cooperatives or other large organizations, which organizations can benefit them further
- Promotion of good agricultural practices and improved tree management resulting in increased tree cover and ensuing ecological benefits
- Increasing and diversifying rural employment opportunities through up-scaled but otherwise traditional practices, cultural tourism and the sale of carbon credits
- Strengthening of different actors and sectors in the farming, processing, production, supply and marketing chain

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