



2024 Project Update

Mahale Agroforestry Project

Agroforestry systems to reduce pressure on natural forests in Mahale Mountains, Tanzania

Project management and M&E team



Main implementing partner:
Friends of Lake Tanganyika (FOLT)



Richard Ngate
Project Manager, FOLT



Fortunatus Katozi
MEL Officer, FOLT



Sefia Jetha
Partnership Manager
and Technical Advisor
Coordinator



Mahale, Kalambo, Tanzania
Special Projects



Timeline:
2024 - 2029



Targeted ecosystem:
Miombo Woodlands



Greater Mahale
#29947

See the full team at:
www.weforest.org/about-us/#our-team

Project story

The Mahale Mountains are a biodiversity hotspot for primates, including eastern chimpanzee yellow baboon, Angolan colobus, blue monkey, red tailed monkey, vervet monkey, lesser and greater galago; and is the only known place where chimpanzees and lions coexist. However, it is also an area where rising populations, poverty and dependence on the unsustainable use of natural resources is driving deforestation and forest degradation.

This new project, which began in March 2024, aims to deliver positive impacts for people and nature by promoting sustainable land management, primarily through the development of 1500 hectares of agroforestry systems on smallholder farms and riverbanks. These will provide local communities with vital forest products, reduce pressure on natural forests and help prevent forest fragmentation.



Key challenges in the landscape

Deforestation and land degradation through unsustainable agricultural practices such as slash-and-burn land clearance.



Our integrated approach

Improve forest governance and stewardship through:

- After 2029, evaluating the possibility for additional activities including improving forest governance

Conserve and restore the forest through:

- After 2029, evaluating the possibility for additional activities including riverbank and forest restoration.

Strengthening forest-friendly livelihoods and behaviors through:

- Develop agroforestry systems in 15 villages in the buffer zone of Mahale Mountains National Park, where the chimpanzee habitat extends.
- Train approximately 1500 farmers in agroforestry practices and provide them with agroforestry seedlings over 5 years.
- Plant 16+ species: fruit, timber and indigenous tree species, cash crops, nitrogen-fixing and fodder species.
- Promote behaviour change that protects wildlife and their habitats while strengthening sustainable livelihoods.
- After 2029, additional components may include improving forest product value chains.

A long-term vision



Climate

The restoration of the landscape will contribute to both climate mitigation and adaptation: increasing tree cover to sequester carbon while improving water retention and soil stability to help communities adapt to droughts and erratic weather.



Nature

Restoring the project area will protect biodiversity and secure critical ecosystem services like water and soil health. Improved land management will enhance habitat resilience, ensuring the forest continues to sustain both people and wildlife.



People

Strengthened governance and forest-friendly livelihoods will ensure communities see the forest as an asset: one that provides resources while being sustainably managed. By introducing agroforestry to the landscape, the project reduces deforestation-driven income reliance while securing long-term economic stability.



Outcomes

By integrating these interventions, the project will:

- By integrating these interventions, the project will **reverse deforestation** and forest degradation in the Greater Mahale Ecosystem.
- The **long-term** impact of our work will benefit people, nature and climate.

Theory of Change

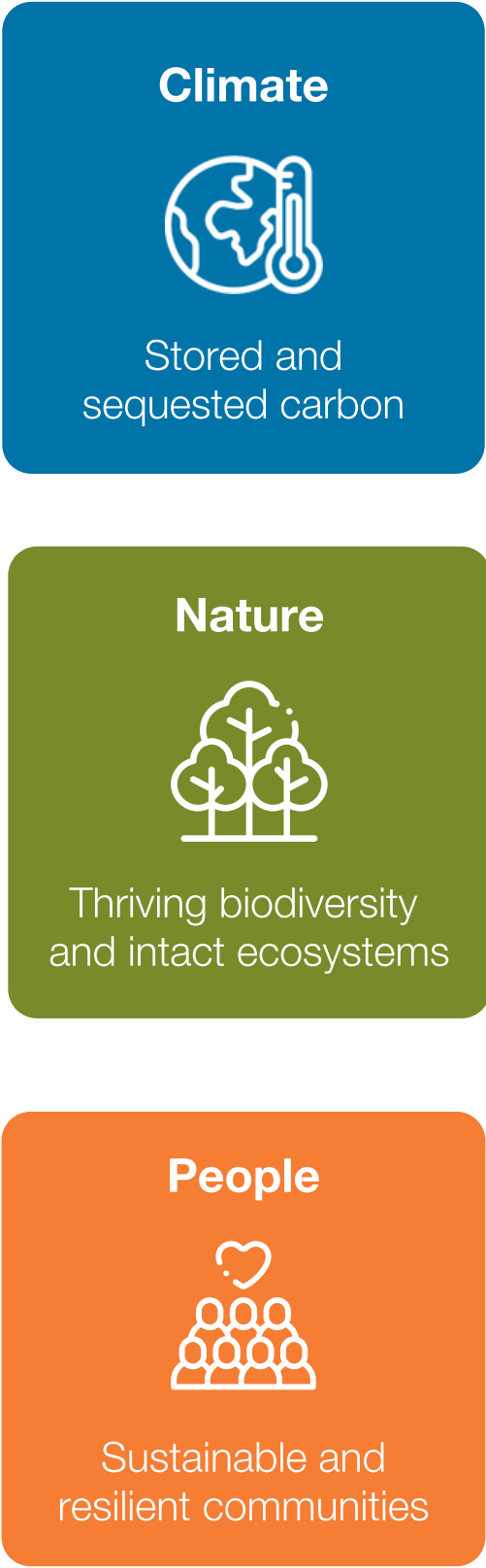
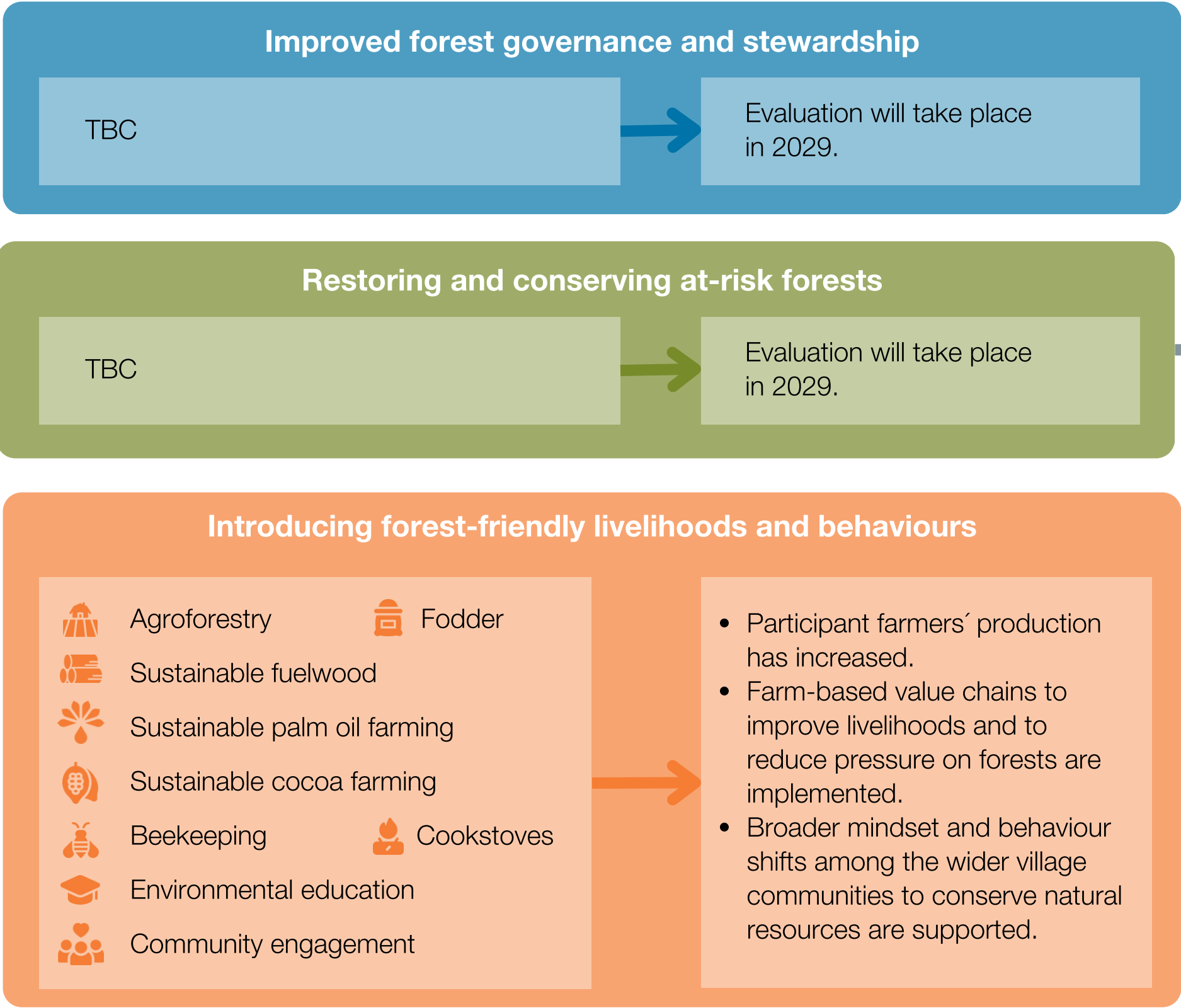
Existing problems in the forest and landscape



WeForest Interventions

Project outcomes

Long term impact





2024 Major Achievements

Despite the delays faced in registering the project and because of 2024 exceptional floodings, the project hired and capacitated a team, gathered all the necessary official authorization to start, sensitized farmers in six villages of Kalya Ward and made significant strides in engaging and training 102 farmers, equipping them with the knowledge and tools necessary for sustainable agroforestry practices.

The project developed robust M&E systems ensuring effective tracking and support for ongoing and future project activities.

These achievements represent critical steps toward reducing forest pressures and improving livelihoods in the Greater Mahale Ecosystem.



Potting



Seedling



Germination

Case study

The potting, seedling, and germination process at the Mahale Agroforestry Project Nursery site in Sibwesa Village started in July 2024 and has progressed as follows:

Potting:

In July, soil was prepared and filled into polythene bags or pots. The soil was mixed with organic compost manure to ensure it was nutrient-rich, ready to support seedlings growth.

Seedling:

Selected seeds were planted in these pots. Each type of seed was planted according to its optimal depth and spacing, and the pots were kept in a shaded area to avoid harsh sunlight.

Germination:

Over the following weeks, regular watering and monitoring were done. Seeds began sprouting, indicating successful germination. Some seeds took a long time to germinate, but most began showing growth by August.

2024 activity update



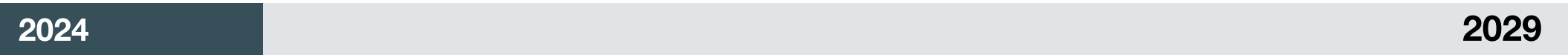
Introducing forest-friendly livelihoods

- The project conducted a consultation survey to understand the social, economic and biophysical context of the landscape.
- **135 farmers** from six villages were registered and trained on agroforestry practices.
- **102 farmers** who completed all four initial training sessions were selected for Cohort A and invited to begin land preparation.
- **154,298 agroforestry tree seedlings** were distributed to 79 farmers.
- The project has developed the outline of the Environmental Education Plan designed to raise awareness and promote sustainable environmental practices among farmers, schools, and traditional leadership.



Progress tracker

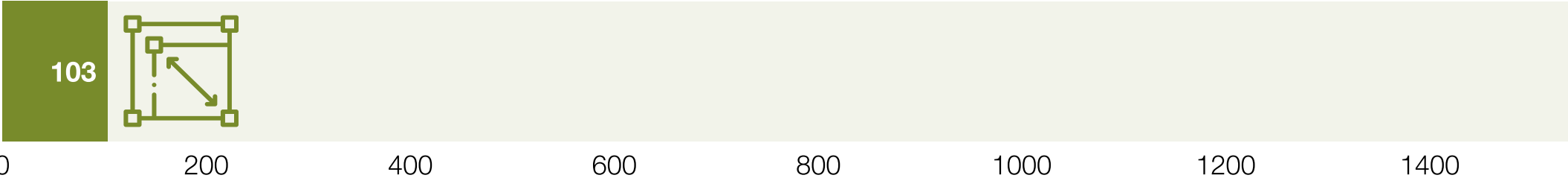
See end of report for our progress tracking methodology



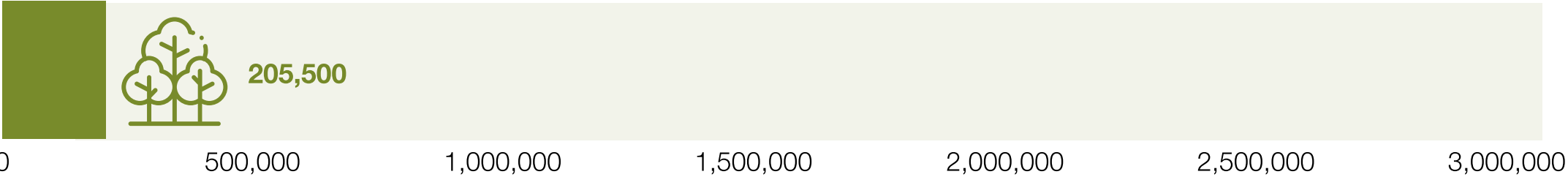
Anticipated CO2 sequestered in the future from project activities



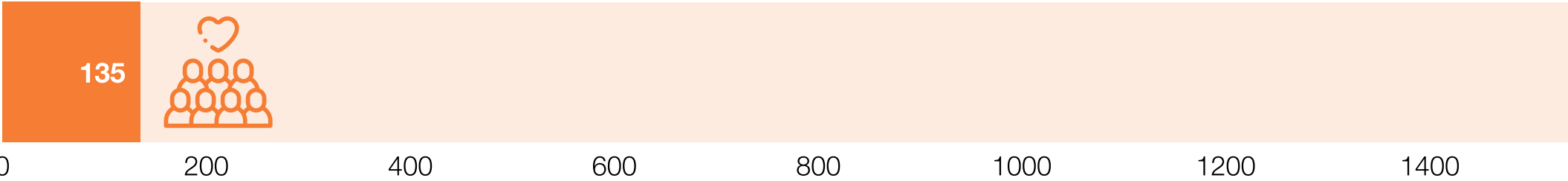
Hectares planted, conserved and restored



Number of trees conserved and restored



Number of households positively impacted



Trees planted to date



Woody species in project to date



For forest conservation and restoration For forest-friendly livelihoods



Case study

The Mahale Agroforestry Project started distributing tree seedlings from 20 November 2024. In the photo is Mr. Serisi Dominiko, who is one of the Mahale Agroforestry Project registered farmers in Lufubu village.

The photo indicates part of his agroforestry plot consisting of young *Acacia polyacantha* (outer row) and *Gliricidia Sepium* (inner row) grown around the cash crop farm. These trees will serve multiple functions, including security, soil fertility improvement, fodder, timber, and fuelwood production. At this early stage, the plants are aligned in well-spaced rows, indicating planned agroforestry indicating integration.



Case study

From January to June 2024, the 15 villages from the four wards of Kalya, Buhingu, Igalula, and Herembe in Uvinza district were significantly impacted by flooding due to rising water levels in Lake Tanganyika and its inlet rivers. The floods disrupted daily life, damaging homes, infrastructure, and agricultural lands, while also exposing communities to the danger of waterborne diseases. The cessation of the pontoon service at the Malagarasi River has further exacerbated the difficulties faced by local communities.

The Mahale Agroforestry Project has also been affected by these floods, which have caused delays and complications in conducting village sensitization meetings in Kalya ward. The flooding of the Lugonesi River, which obstructs the path to Ubanda village, posed a particular challenge during these meetings. The facilitating team, along with their motorcycles, had to be carried across the river by local residents. These indigenous people have found a new source of income by helping others cross the river to reach Ubanda village and other areas like Mpanda.



2024 Challenges

- In April and May 2024, Lake Tanganyika's water levels rose to record highs, leading to significant flooding in surrounding regions. In Uvinza district, 15 villages were notably impacted. The floods disrupted daily life, damaged homes, infrastructure, and agricultural lands, and heightened the risk of waterborne diseases. The suspension of the pontoon service at the Malagarasi River further isolated communities. The Mahale Agroforestry Project faced delays in village sensitization meetings, particularly in Kalya ward, due to these conditions. Traveling became challenging, requiring facilitators to be carried across the Lugonesi River to adhere to project timelines.
- Remote farm locations limited farmer engagement and complicated the seedling distribution logistics. To overcome this challenge the project will design a more decentralized approach.
- Seasonal migration due to off-fishing hindered consistent engagement and training. To overcome this challenge the project will take into consideration fishing calendar
- 102 farmers were trained but only 79 received seedlings: 23 farmers could not participate as they were occupied with farming activities. Since November and December is a peak farming period, efforts will be made to work with registered farmers to encourage farmers to organize a collective tree planting day where members help each other.



Looking ahead to 2025

The Mahale Agroforestry Project will continue into 2025, with priorities including:

- Providing agroforestry training to 400 new farmers
- Distributing 742,000 tree seedlings to 371 new farmers.
- Assessing the survival rate for seedlings planted in 2024 and filling the gaps left by the seedlings that perished with up to 50,000 seedlings.
- Conducting environmental education to community members.
- Conducting studies on value chains.

Supporters & Partners

2024 project partners

FOLT were the implementing partners of the project

Village Executive Officers from Kalya Ward engaged on local issues

Uvinza District supported the project

Mahale Mountains National Park Authority supported and actively engaged in the design of the environmental education program

Local Agriculture Extension Officer supported and actively engaged in the agroforestry activities

With thanks to our supporter in 2024:



Contact us

Visti www.weforest.org or for more information or email: contact@weforest.org



How we measure and forecast our impact

Baseline

For the sake of simplicity, the progress bars in this report show a baseline of zero. This represents the concept that the area covered by WeForest forest and landscape restoration (FLR) activities was zero; thus the associated trees conserved and restored, carbon stored and households impacted through WeForest intervention was also zero.

In reality, when a WeForest project begins, our Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning team undertakes a detailed survey on forest structure and regeneration through establishing Permanent Monitoring Plots, and conducts an extensive questionnaire on livelihoods, to establish meaningful baseline values. You can read more about our full MEL activities [here](#).

Hectares planted, conserved and restored

Progress up to 2024

Verifiable cumulative total since the project began of all mapped intervention sites, also known as polygons, of:

- 1) Conservation forest areas, such as forest reserves
- 2) Restoration forest areas, such as Assisted Natural Regeneration and planting areas
- 3) Agroforestry areas on community/farm land

End of Project Target

Target number based on the potential area of land able to be conserved, restored and planted in the project area under the known and expected conditions at project start. However, it is subject to change based on unforeseen opportunities or challenges that may arise.

Anticipated tons of CO2 to be sequestered through project activities

Progress up to 2024

Extrapolated tons of CO2 calculated from the measured areas of different types of land use (for example forest or agroforestry) under “Hectares of forest planted, conserved and restored” to date, and the average amount of projected long-term CO2 per hectare provided from literature review for each land use type in their locations. Although totalled, please note the methodology for calculating these CO2 projections are specific to land-use type, and span a period corresponding to the expected time taken for the trees to reach maturity, which varies between locations.

End of Project Target

As above, but using the target (and not current) number of hectares planted, restored and conserved and their respective area totals as a parameter for calculations. As this parameter is subject to change, the associated CO2 target may also change over time.



Number of trees conserved and restored*

Progress up to 2024

Extrapolated number of trees calculated from the measured areas of different land use types (for example conservation areas, restoration areas or agroforestry) under “Hectares planted, conserved and restored” to date, and the average tree densities observed for each land-use type when mature, known through our MEL activities or scientific literature.

End of Project Target

As above, but using the target (and not current) number of “Hectares of forest planted, restored and conserved” and their respective area totals as a parameter for calculations. As this parameter is subject to change, the associated trees conserved and restored target may also change over time.

*Estimations based on average numbers per hectare

Trees planted to date (2024)

Total

Actual counted number of planted seedlings and saplings of woody (tree and shrub) species in the project to date.

Trees planted for forest-friendly livelihoods and behaviors

Only woody species directly planted for livelihood improvement. This also includes woody fruit, fodder & timber trees, and woody cash crops, exclusively planted on community or farm land.

Trees planted for forest conservation and restoration

Only woody species that were directly planted for ecological reasons, aiding restoration of the natural forest ecosystem.

Woody species in project to date (2024)

Total

Actual observed number of woody (tree and shrub) species:

- Regenerating in the conservation/restoration zones (i.e. in the Permanent Monitoring Plots) and
- Planted, either for restoration or livelihood improvement
- Growing as mature trees in the conservation/restoration zones (i.e. in the permanent monitoring plots).
- Please note, these numbers are not exhaustive and the true species richness is likely to be higher.

Tree species for forest-friendly livelihoods and behaviors

Only woody species directly planted for livelihood improvement. This also includes woody fruit, fodder and timber trees, and woody cash crops, exclusively planted on community or farm land.

Tree species for forest conservation and restoration

The woody species observed in the project area that are not used for livelihood improvement purposes. Where species are used for both livelihood improvement and restoration (which is sometimes the case, as we use native species as much as possible), they have been counted under ‘forest-friendly livelihoods and behaviors’.

Terminology

Conservation

Where native forest canopy cover is still intact, we focus on protecting the forest from any threats and disturbances, such as overgrazing, unsustainable wood extraction and fire.

Restoration

Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR): Where there is reduced forest cover but high potential for natural regeneration, we aim to accelerate natural recovery, typically through preventing soil degradation, reducing competition with weeds, and protecting young trees.

Tree planting

Where there is reduced forest cover and little regeneration potential, we actively plant native trees at a density that corresponds with the regeneration potential.

Agroforestry and tree crops

Where agricultural landscapes exist, WeForest promotes the planting of trees for livelihood improvement. These trees can be used either for direct consumption or sale (fruits, timber, fuelwood) or to support other crops or livestock (agroforestry). Native tree species are prioritized but, where necessary, non-native species may be used.

Mammal and bird species sighted to date

Numbers are included where we have a good level of biological monitoring, for example using camera traps or audio devices - please note that numbers are unlikely to capture the full species richness of the project area and that the absence of reporting does not imply the absence of species.

Other notes

WeForest works in close cooperation with local partner organisations, institutions, community-based organizations and local people. Therefore, our impact can never be fully separated from the work of our partners. WeForest acknowledges that the presented impact numbers cannot be solely attributed to our work, but is also supported through the hard work contributed by all our local partners.