

Casamance Mangroves Senegal

Mid-Year Update 2023



Project status:

Year 1
out of 5 (phase 2)

3418 hectares
under restoration so far

17.5 million trees
planted and growing



Phase one of the Casamance project concluded last year when we finalized the planting of 3418 ha with nearly 8 million more seedlings – that’s 17.5 million mangrove seedlings planted since the project’s launch. Since January this year, the project’s restoration activities have been focused on monitoring the sites that were planted between 2020 and 2022, collecting survival data and identifying any areas where remediation may be necessary.

Phase 2 – to expand the area under restoration in Casamance by another estimated 3000 ha – is now in planning, and planting can begin in 2023. Another important focus has been preparing for the socio-economic activities which will support the communities to take up mangrove-friendly livelihoods, allowing the restored areas to regenerate and grow.

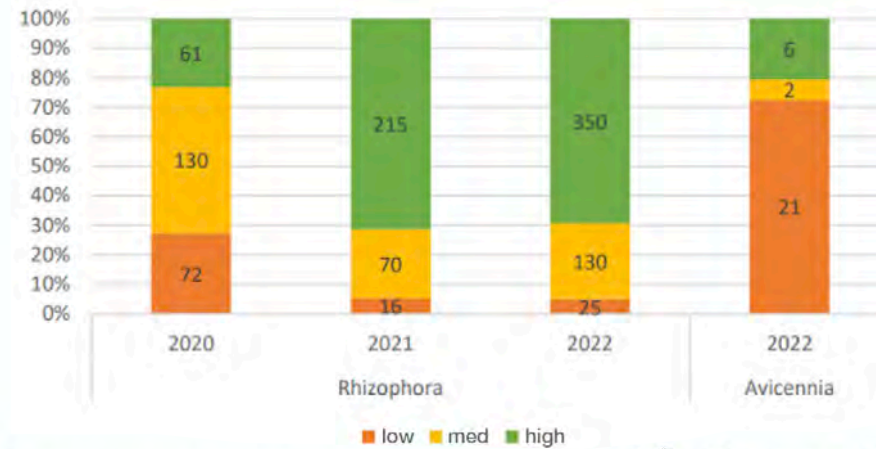
Read on to find out more about what’s been happening in the project in 2023.

Monitoring is carried out throughout the year to assess the survival of seedlings. We use three density classes to evaluate the survival of planted Rhizophora and identify areas for potential remediation:

- **High:** density of living seedlings > 70% of target planting density (3500 seedlings/ha for Rhizophora, 700 sdl/ha for Avicennia).
- **Medium:** density > 10% , but < 70% of target planting density (between 500 & 3500 seedlings/ha for Rhizophora, between 100 & 700 seedlings/ha for Avicennia).
- **Low:** density < 10% of target planting density (< 500 seedlings/ha for Rhizophora & < 100 seedlings/ha for Avicennia).

To date, the monitoring conducted during 2023 across all planted areas from 2020-22 shows **> 75% of the planted areas have medium or high densities remaining.**

3.6% (115.5 ha) are of low density. Remediation options will be considered once a clear cause is determined. Remediation is typically considered after three years, when we have good monitoring data and clear evidence that the remediation is likely to be successful.



The graph (top) shows the number of sampling point counts of each density class (low: orange, medium: yellow, high: green), separated by species (Rhizophora or Avicennia) and planting year. In the case of the Avicennia species – intended to represent around 10% of the planted area in total – it is a challenging species to successfully re-establish. Survival rates remain challenging, and will continue to be a key focus of our work in the coming years.



February 2022



December 2022

Eclosio, an international NGO specialized in market systems development (MSD) and market analysis and development, is partnering with WeForest to roll out the socio-economic activities in nine municipalities across both regions of our mangroves project. The participatory analysis phase was completed at the beginning of 2023 and identified the key focus products as salt, honey, madd (*Saba senegalensis*, a fruit), carp and oysters. During the rest of 2023 Eclosio will provide support in Entrepreneurship and Markets, including the development and implementation of business plans and marketing strategies, sustainable production and operating charters, exchange visits and networking opportunities for local producers.

This area of the Casamance delta, Djibabouya, was planted between June and September 2020. By February 2022 the seedlings were around 30cm tall (left). By December, they had doubled in height and we can already see the distinctive aerial roots starting to form (right).



Certification of the project against the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) and the Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards (CCB) is progressing. We've received the VCS deed and CCB statement, and the next steps are as follows:

May 2023–October 2023:

- Conduct a clear gap assessment on methodology transition. (By October we will know if we are able to implement the new methodology in-house or whether expertise is needed, and of what type).
- Design the framework for the project's carbon estimation/simulation: the needed data, the model and the analysis methods

October 2023–March 2025:

- Conduct necessary studies and analyses (if required)
- Rewrite PDD climate section

October 2025: Start monitoring report

December 2025: Conduct validation and verification audit with new methodology

Q4 2026*: Receive VV statement and first issuance (at the same time).

**We have built in significant margins here, given the current Verra delays we have experienced – it is not possible to guarantee dates.*



How do we know our restored forests are growing and making an impact?

Every hectare under restoration is mapped with GPS points to generate polygons (areas on a map) that are assigned to sponsors. Permanent monitoring plots are established in our sites and our forestry and science teams conduct surveys to monitor progress of biomass growth, tree density, survival rate and species diversity, among other indicators. Where social impacts are also critical, we measure socio-economic indicators such as the number of individuals or families directly benefiting, people trained, and income generated from forest-friendly livelihood activities.

Please visit our [What We Do](#) webpage for more information.



You'll receive an annual update in March. Meanwhile, stay up-to-date with our interactive [Casamance map](#), and check out the [photos](#) on Flickr.

You can find an overview of all communications assets and guidance on how to communicate about your partnership with WeForest [here](#).