


Annual Report 2019



Making Earth Cooler

Transforming Landscapes for Climate, People and Nature



“ We imagine a world where communities and nations sustainably manage their forests and natural resources for the benefit of our climate, our environment and humanity. ”

The WeForest Vision

Welcome from the CEO

Marie-Noëlle
Keijzer, CEO
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Change is often borne out of a crisis. The immediacy of the current global health emergency has its roots deep in the twin problems of environmental degradation and human inequality.

We must ensure that the hard lessons we are now learning are not wasted. In this time of upheaval, there is a huge opportunity to right past wrongs and alter our course to become a more responsible and inclusive world – a cooler world – with harmony between people and planet.

There is a proven solution for climate and health that creates sustainable jobs and can lift entire populations out of extreme poverty, and can work everywhere:

Forest protection and restoration.

Never before have there been so many large corporations committing to protect and restore forests. WeForest welcomed 105 new funding partners and doubled our impact in 2019 compared to 2018. At the end of the year, we even had to put companies on our partnerships waiting list.

And it's not just our own partners. There's Procter and Gamble's pledge to protect and restore nature; Amazon's Right Now Climate Fund; Unilever's \$1bn Climate and Nature Fund...

And while the solution is simple, it's not easy.

Developing solid Forest Landscape Restoration projects, where the ecological aspect is embedded into a wider socio-economic development plan, is complex and takes time. 2019 was a turning point for WeForest. The past ten years has taught us what works and what doesn't. We developed our restoration capacity and are now ready to start restoring more than 85,000 hectares, or 100 million trees, by 2024.

We had to think of solutions to help us scale up and fast-track our project development: expanding our team to run more projects in parallel; scaling up in Ethiopia and Zambia, where we already have large teams; developing partnerships with complementary organisations; joining networks to access opportunities and share best practices.

Restoring the 0.9 billion hectares of degraded land across the world – an area the size of the US – would expand the global carbon sink by 45%. It would take many more NGOs like us to achieve this, and we are encouraging others to replicate what we do.

We all need everyone to take action – and we need it now!

2019 at a glance

In 2019 we doubled our impact: growing, restoring and protecting twice as many trees as in 2018

In 2019 alone we took on the restoration of **4,816 ha**, growing and protecting more than **5 million** trees.



Anticipated CO₂ sequestration from all our projects is more than **2 million tonnes** over the lifetime of tree growth.

We started two new projects in **Malawi** and **Zambia**



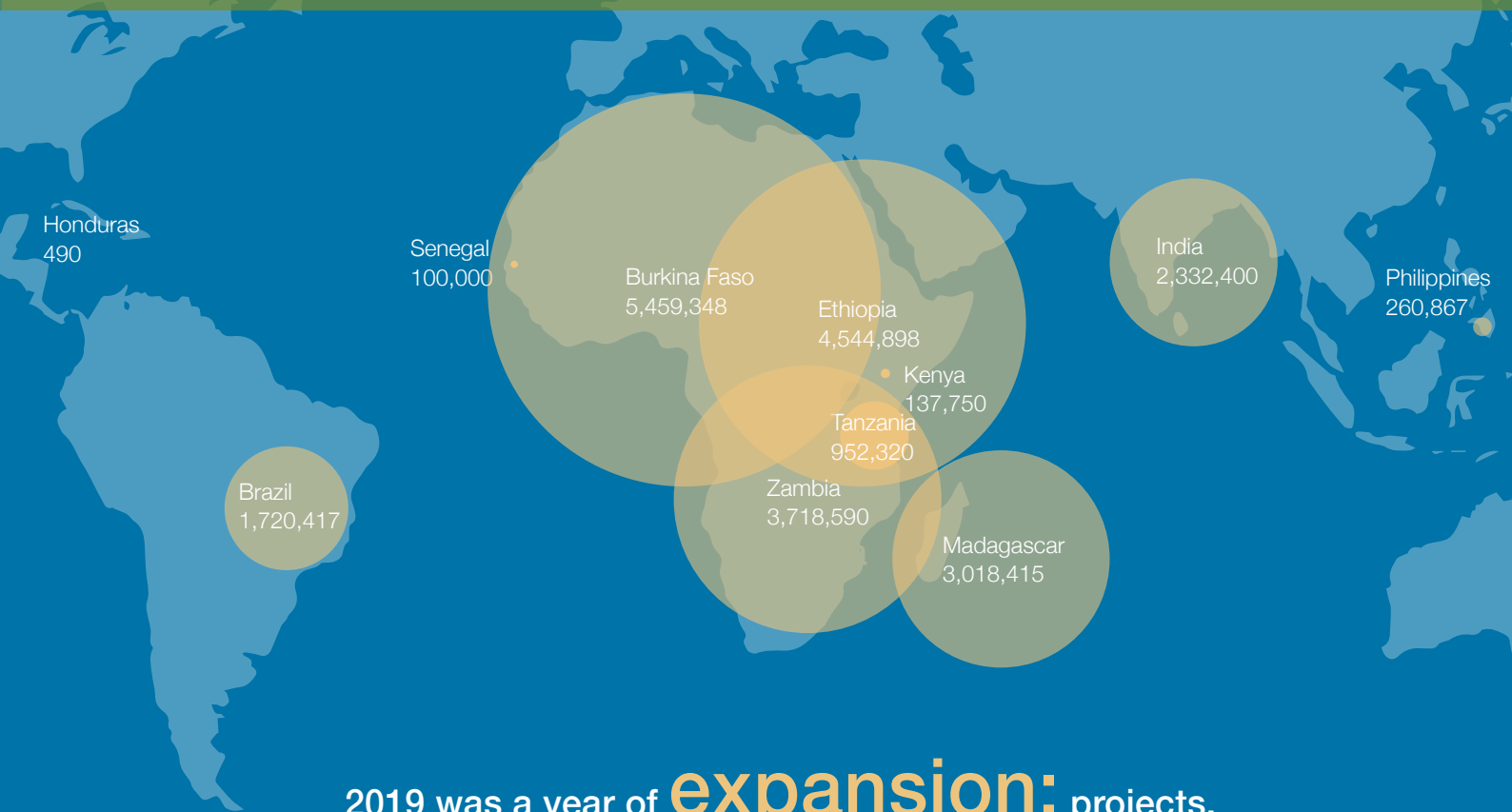
9 projects in **6** countries were active during 2019

Of the **18,164** households that have benefitted from our projects, **30%** were headed by women



2019 at a glance

17,347 ha of forests – 24 million trees –
growing by the end of 2019



2019 was a year of **expansion:** projects,
funding partners and our WeForest team.

We raised **€4.4m***, a **46%** increase on 2018.

105 new funders joined us in 2019.

This was almost double the number in 2018, which was 58.



* before deferred income

What we do

Zambia Katanino, 2019-

The Katanino Forest Reserve in the Copperbelt Province has seen heavy deforestation and forest degradation in the past five years. In October, WeForest Zambia and the Katanino Forest Trust signed a Memorandum of Understanding. Our goal is to restore miombo woodland in the original forest reserve; support local communities to successfully manage the reserve; and reduce pressure on forest resources by developing forest-friendly incomes and introducing improved cookstoves.



Field partners

- The Zambian Forestry Department
- Katanino Forest Trust

Indigenous trees under threat

- Mukula (*Pterocarpus angolensis*)
- Padouk d'Afrique

Goals

- 5,300 ha
- 6,360,000 trees

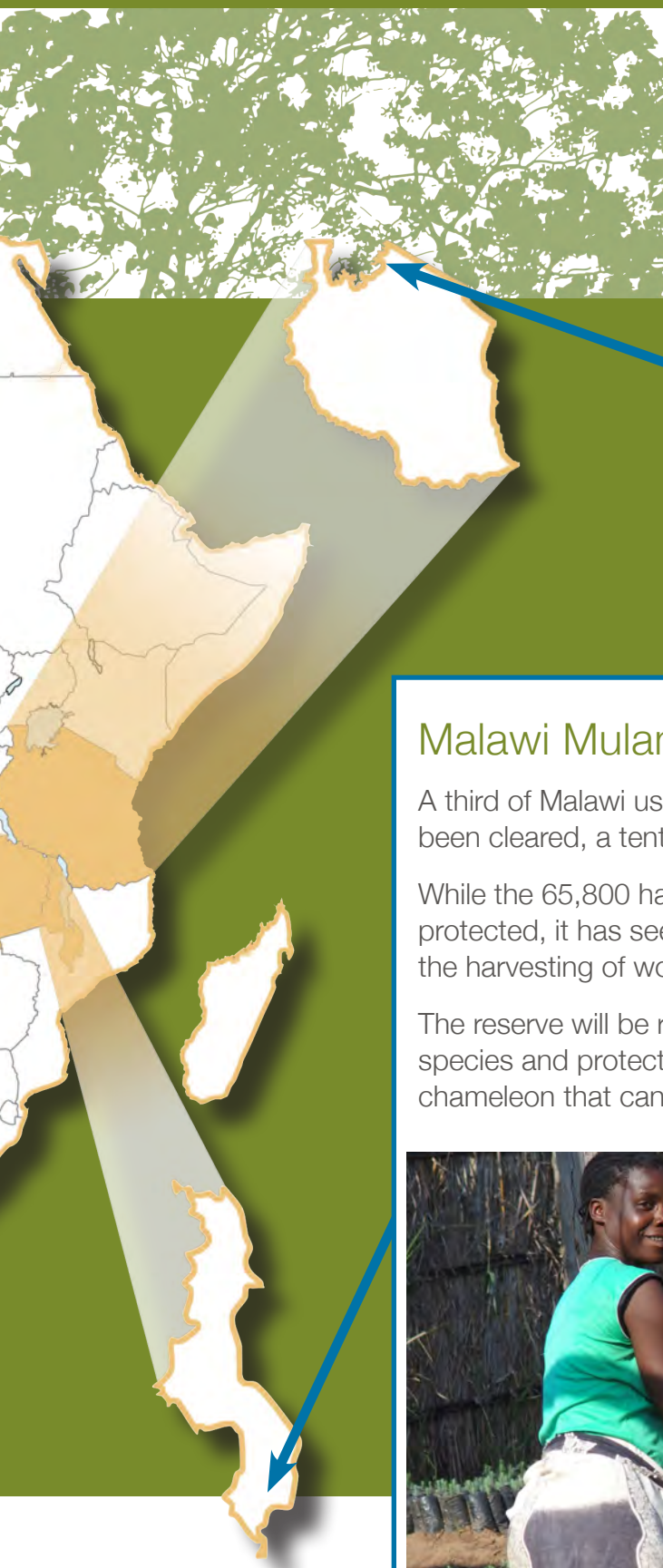
WeForest restores forest landscapes, removing CO₂ from the atmosphere to fight climate change while enhancing the water cycle and biodiversity.

Zambia Luanshya, 2015-

In the Copperbelt province, the miombo forest has suffered from charcoal production. The project in Luanshya, collaborating with the Luanshya Forestry Commodity Association, trains farmers to restore and sustainably manage miombo forests.

The project expanded into neighbouring districts in 2019.

In March 2019, the 20 millionth WeForest tree was planted here!



Tanzania Kinesi, 2015-

Experienced agroforestry workers grow tree seedlings in the nursery at Kinesi. These are distributed to the community, who are trained to tend their trees long-term. Since its inception, the project, which is run in partnership with Global Resource Alliance, has distributed nearly a million trees.

In 2019, the project team opened a second nursery in response to high demand.

Malawi Mulanje, 2019-

A third of Malawi used to be covered with forests. Today, 65% has been cleared, a tenth of that in the last decade alone.

While the 65,800 ha Mount Mulanje forest reserve is officially protected, it has seen severe deforestation and degradation through the harvesting of wood for construction, firewood and charcoal.

The reserve will be restored with montane and miombo forest species and protect the Mulanje Cedar tree and the Mulanje chameleon that cannot be found anywhere else in the world.



Field partners

- The Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust
- The Forest Department
- 10 local community nurseries

Species under threat

- Mulanje Cedar tree
- Mulanje chameleon

WeForest is supporting PhD research to assess the Desa'a forest's restoration potential and the relationship between the forest and atmospheric moisture.

Grounded in science



Ethiopia Desa'a, 2017-

74% of the Desa'a forest in northern Ethiopia has disappeared, and the remaining 26% is badly degraded. Over 200,000 people living here rely on the forest for water, energy and to feed their cattle.

During 2019, we scaled up our project at a tremendous rate. By the end of 2019, 3,024 hectares were under restoration, compared to 784 at the end of 2018.

Field partners

- Mekele University
- Tigray Bureau of Agriculture and Rural Development
- Ethiopian Environment and Forest Research Institute

Species under threat

- *Dracaena ombet*
- *Erica arborea*
- *Dobera glabra*

Goals

- 38,365 ha
- 37,329,145 trees



Ethiopia Amhara, 2016-

In Amhara, indigenous trees are planted on community land, gullies and river banks, and farmers plant fruit and timber trees on the degraded areas in their individual homesteads. The project, which is run in partnership with The Hunger Project, distributed 394,579 trees in 2019, with an amazing survival rate of 87%.

By 2019, our Amhara project was 72% of the way towards its goal of restoring 1149 ha.

Ethiopia Seret, 2016-

The project in Seret uses native trees to enrich encroached exclosures - community-owned protected areas where grazing isn't allowed anymore - to stop land degradation, protect natural resources and improve food production.

Of the 729 households benefiting from this 56 ha project, 289 are headed by women.



Brazil Wildlife Corridors, 2014-

Our project, in partnership with Instituto de Pesquisas Ecológicas, aims to grow tree corridors that connect remaining patches of the Atlantic Forest and bring back wildlife. Most of the community-based nurseries involved in this project are run by local women entrepreneurs developing financial independence.

The black lion tamarin, previously thought to be extinct, and the giant anteater have been spotted here.

India Khasi Hills, 2014-

With the KSKHAWUM Welfare Society, WeForest is supporting 75 traditionally forest-dependent villages in the east and north Khasi hills to restore their forests. This community project manages tree nurseries, carries out thinning and weeding and establishes the natural fire lines to protect the forest. It is restoring the greatest number of endangered flora species of all our projects: ten in total.

Women are centre-stage here: the Khasi are one of the world's few matrilineal societies where kinship is traced through the mother rather than the father.

In 2019, two University of São Paulo MSc students finished their studies on the ecological and socio-economic impacts of forest restoration in the Brazil Wildlife Corridors project site.

Grounded in science

Brazil suffered its worst forest fires for decades in 2019. With its partner IDESAM, WeForest supported crucial firefighting activities in Apuí, Brazil, the second most deforested municipality in the Amazonas State. With our support, the Prevfogo de Apuí fire brigade was able to increase its firefighting efforts and prevent new outbreaks with a new water pump, hoses and a truck. Local schools had fire awareness sessions and trainings held for brigade volunteers. In turn, the fire brigade assisted in the transport, delivery and planting of seedlings to restore burned areas.



Fighting fires in the Amazon

© IDESAM

Our impact



Impact on climate and nature

Trees and soil are amazing natural carbon sinks to mitigate global warming

Our projects are restoring 17,347 ha of forests.

We anticipate that carbon sequestration over 20-30 years' growth will be over 2 million tonnes of CO₂, which represents the annual carbon footprint of over 200,000 Europeans.

Forests are essential for water availability and global cooling at watershed, regional and continental levels. In 2019 WeForest joined a new applied science project led by the University of São Paulo and the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD). This flux tower experiment will help us understand water and carbon cycles at our restoration sites in Brazil.

Grounded in science

Nature sustains life

A healthy and functional forest needs biodiversity – and biodiversity needs a healthy and functional forest.

We plant and protect a high diversity of indigenous species. Our projects in Brazil and India protect the highest number of tree species: 127 and 70 respectively.

We also protect endangered species. Animals listed as threatened on the IUCN Red List have been spotted in the forests we are restoring.

The Dragon tree (Dracaena ombet), listed as an endangered plant resource on the IUCN Red List, is considered one of the most important flagship tree species in Afar and eastern lowland Tigray. The local community uses the tree as feed for their livestock, as medicine, to build houses and make various household materials. One of the priorities of WeForest's Desa'a project is to save the Dragon tree from extinction.

A dragon of a tree





**No bees, no trees –
no trees, no money**

Beehives provide extra income and incentivize forest restoration – bees need to forage in the forest, so no-one cuts the bees' trees! In 2019, we provided 947 beehives for the benefit of 253 households. Beekeeping can generate an income of nearly \$500 per household per year. By the end of 2019, families in our projects in Ethiopia had harvested honey with an estimated value of \$84 per household – roughly 10% of the current average annual income.



Impact on people

We don't just grow trees – we restore and protect forests for the long-term

With our projects, rural communities take care of their natural capital and benefit from higher and more diversified incomes, new skills and better health.



A further 2,982 households directly benefitted from our projects in 2019, bringing our all-time total to 18,164.

30% of these households were headed by women. Women make up the majority of the world's poor and are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

Farmers value trees from which they can harvest products and earn income. Alemayhu and Yeshalem are from Laydamot village in Amhara. The husband and wife own 1.05 ha, and used to plant only maize in their backyard and harvest once a year. Since enrolling in the project in 2017 they now have Rhamnus, apple, improved avocado and coffee trees. "The avocado and apple trees matured fast and allowed me to support my family and send some money to my son at university," says Alemayhu. "Trees have so many benefits: wood for fuel, cleaning and cooling the air, stopping soil erosion, and income. Our community is learning a lot from this project, and we want to restore many of our degraded lands."



Agroforestry: trees supporting families

Our funding partners...

105 new partners funded us in 2019, bringing our all-time number of funders to 439

The explosion of interest in funding forests in 2019 means we can deliver an even greater impact in the next decade.

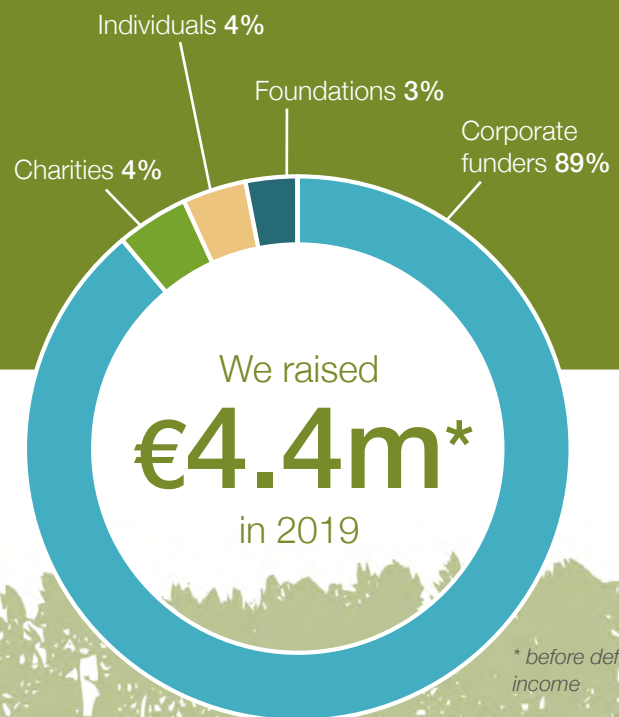
The number of partners who joined us was double that of 2018, and there was more demand for restoring forests than we could meet.

55% of our active partners in 2019 were recurring funders.

This was a **14%** increase on the number in 2018.

Recurring funders mean that we can rely on a stable income for the long term. For example, UCB will fund 12,000 ha of the Desa'a project in Ethiopia over 13 years.

29% of our recurring partners contributed sponsorships of more than €10,000, an increase of 11% on the number contributing over this amount in 2018.



* before deferred income

“ Since we started working with them in 2015, WeForest has demonstrated the highest ethical standards. I recommend them as a business partner for reforestation projects. ”

Tijn van Eldere,
Chief Executive Officer, Brabantia

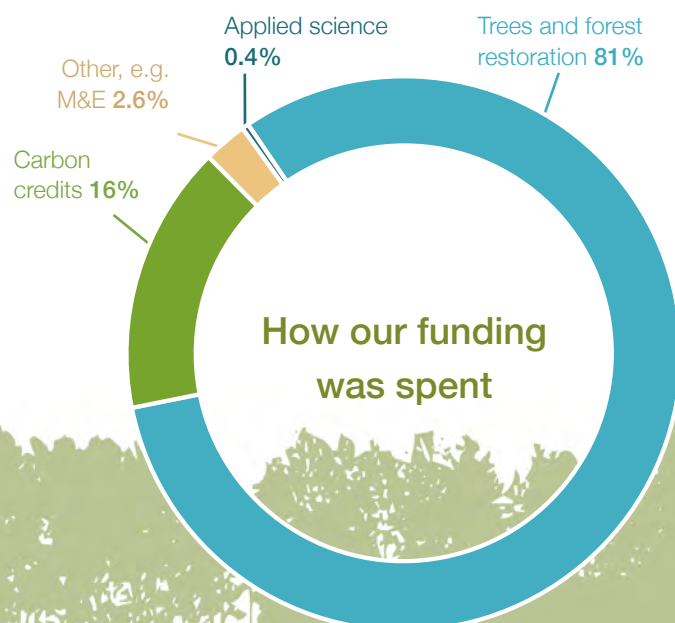
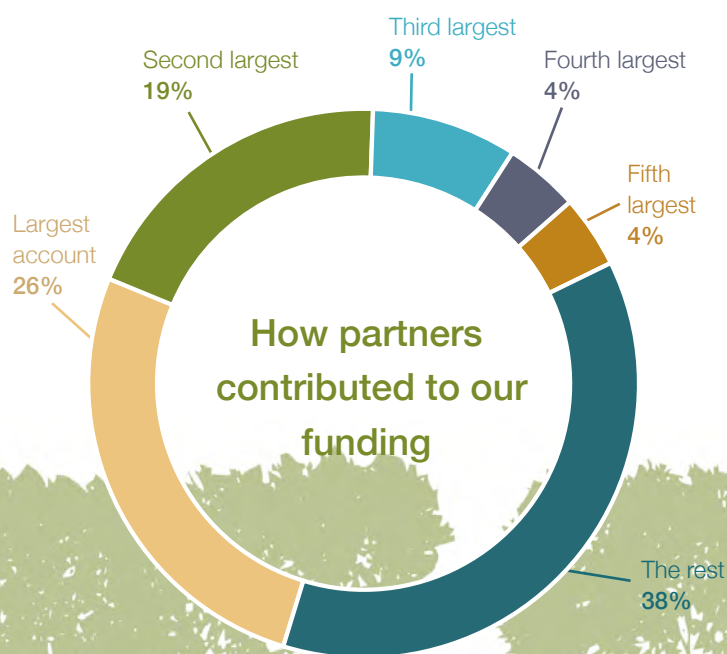
...help make it happen

Ten contributors represented over half of our income in 2019



“ I want to thank each and every one of the partners who funded our projects during 2019. We couldn't have done it without you. ”

Marie-Noëlle Keijzer, CEO, WeForest



Who we are

Board of Directors



Bill Liao,
Co-founder



Marie-Noëlle
Keijzer, Co-
founder & CEO



Tom de Fauw



Astrid Leysens



Jan Vets

In 2019, 46% of WeForest's employees were women.

HQ (Brussels)

Alice Pirson, Executive Assistant
Nicolas Dupont, Finance and Admin Director
Alexandra Apergi, Management Controller
Diane Plessia, Human Resources Director
Jessica Chalmers, Director of Partnerships
Pascaline Haedrich, Marketing Manager
Louise Tideman, Sponsorship Officer
Anna Roesinger, Manager Carbon & Technologies
Rachel Cohen, Science Officer
Claire Parfondry, Livelihoods Programme Manager

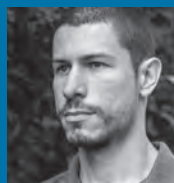


At WeForest for part of 2019:
Manon Koningstein, Chief
Marketing & Comms Officer
Charlotte Van Campenhout,
Writer

Ibrahim Hanci, Accountant
Maurah Van Impe, Sales Assistant
Vicky Gutierrez, Chief Science Officer

Brazil

Ricardo Cesar, Country Representative



Ethiopia

Aklilu Negussie Mekuria, Country Director
Yemane Gebru Hagos, Socio-economic Expert
Birhane Etay Reda, Forestry Expert
Tadelle Gebreyohannes Reda, Project Manager
Elsa Ayele Nigatu, Finance Officer
Negusse Gebreyohannes Yigzaw, Monitoring & Evaluation Expert
Kiflom Haftu Shiferaw, Driver



At WeForest for part of 2019:
Ashenafi Alefe, Finance
Manager

What's next?

In 2019, in-country project staff made up 61% of the WeForest team.

Southern Africa

Matthias De Beenhouwer, Director, Southern Africa
Ruben Foquet, Project Support Officer, Katanino
Sefia Jetha, Project Manager, Luanshya
Fainess Lumbwe, Project Manager, Katanino
Chris Ngambi, Finance and Admin Manager, Zambia
Mulako M. Muimui, Lead Extensionist, Zambia
Dean Mpande, Agriculture Extension Officer, Katanino
Alex Mwape, Driver, Katanino
Sara Banda, Forestry Extension Officer, Katanino
Leonard Gondwe, Field Manager, Malawi



*At WeForest for part of 2019:
Elizabeth Khombe, Finance and Admin Officer
Nsangu Tembo, Lead Extensionist
Katwenge Nanguzgambo, Monitoring & Evaluation Officer
Kennedy Sakala, Extensionist*

As environmental awareness increases, we're expanding.

As the world wakes up to the fact that climate change can no longer be tackled with a 'business as usual' approach, it's our responsibility to meet the growing demand by scaling up.

Our plan was to reach 25,000 ha by 2021. We've reached that goal two years early, and will be redefining new targets in 2020.

After a decade of establishing ourselves as the partner for businesses wanting to help restore the world's forests, we're now ready for the next ten years with new approaches and ambitious objectives.

By the end of 2019, **3** new projects with a total capacity of **16,268 ha** were ready to start.

Building upon corporate and scientific partnerships, WeForest empowers communities to sustainably advance and implement innovative, high standard, scalable and lasting solutions to restore forest landscapes.

WeForest's Mission

Find out more at
www.weforest.org

contact@weforest.org

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WeForest.asbl/vzw is a non-profit organisation in Belgium (BE 0826.151.968).

Donations are tax-deductible in USA and most of Europe.

WeForest is a member of and supports the secretariat of the **Global Partnership on Forest and Landscape Restoration (GPFLR)**. Nearly 30 governments and international and non-governmental organizations have now joined GPFLR, which was launched in 2003 by IUCN, WWF and the Forestry Commission of Great Britain.

WeForest is collaborating in the FAO initiative **The Economics of Ecosystem Restoration (TEER)**, which aims to establish costs and benefits of ecosystem restoration to inform and guide restoration efforts and to encourage investment in Forest Landscape Restoration.