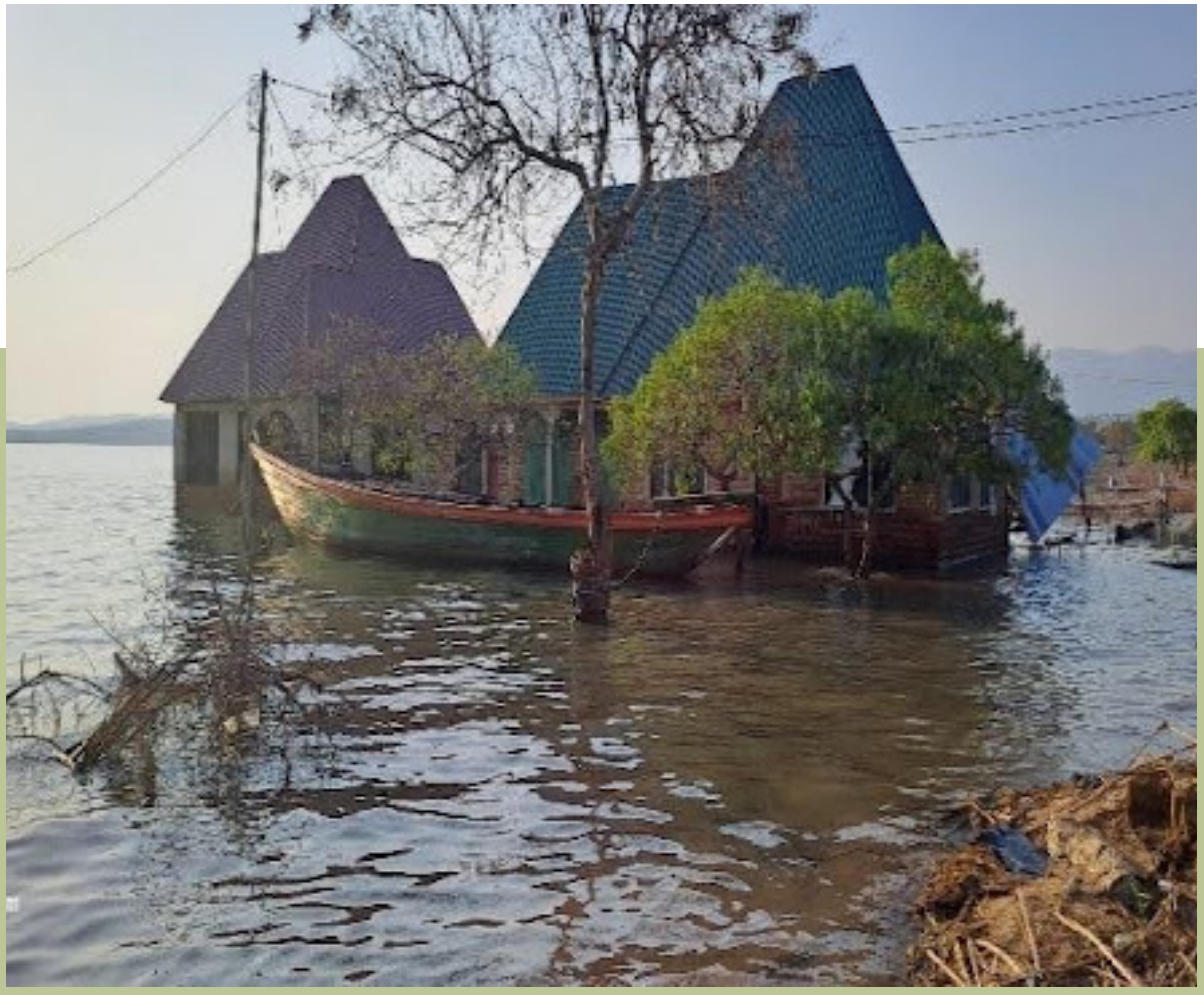
WeForest
Making Earth Cooler

Education First

Mahale Mountains

Agroforestry for people and nature in Tanzania



First update 2024

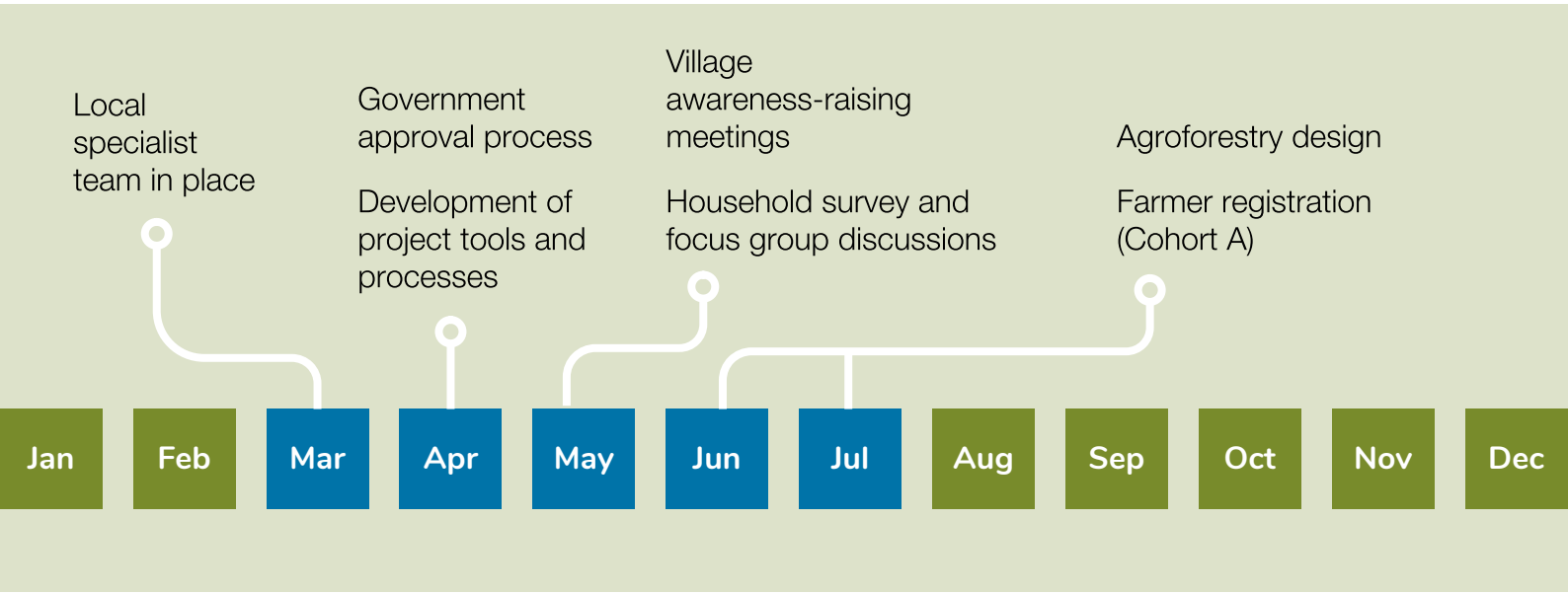
Progress in 2024

	Planned for 2024	Achieved
Participating farmers	100	Farmer registration is ongoing for Cohort A, with the target of 100 by the end of 2024 on track
Ha of agroforestry established	50 ha	100 ha projected (planting will start later in 2024)
# of trees	100 000	200 000 projected
Other	Local specialist team in place (March)	Completed
	Seedling nursery operational	The nursery is being set up; some inputs are ready and seed is being purchased at the time of writing, and we plan to have seeds in tubes by mid-July
	All planned capacity training complete	Completed
	Wider Monitoring Framework (logframe) complete	Logframe development is ongoing with the Mahale M&E Officer. It will be reviewed and finalized by WeForest's HQ M&E Manager.
	Environmental education programme & training materials complete	The programme will start in 2025. As planned, the curriculum and training materials will be ready towards the end of this year

Set-up progress on track

As planned, the project team was in place by March 2024 and moving forward with the year's planned activities.

Since April, the team has set up their operations in Kalya village and held community awareness-raising meetings and focus group discussions, completed the household survey, and begun farmer registration for the first cohort of 100 farmers.



Farmer registration

Registration of the first 100 farmers (Cohort A) will be completed by the end of July, at which point the Farmer Groups will be formed. Each group will be made up of 15 to 25 members, plus a Lead Farmer. They will receive all the training and materials necessary to establish their agroforestry plots and plant their trees at the end of 2024.

The Cohort A farmers come from six of the project's overall target of 15 villages: Sibwesa, Kalya, Tambusha, Kashagulu, Lufubu and Ubanda. Future Cohorts will extend to the remaining villages.

Awareness-raising

Awareness-raising meetings are held before any activity starts to introduce the project and its objectives to the surrounding communities, including all traditional and government leaders as well as the potential project participants. In May, awareness meetings were conducted in the six villages of Kalya Ward: Sibwesa, Kalya, Tambusha, Kashagulu, Lufubu and Ubanda, with almost 600 people attending.

The questions and discussions give a great insight into family priorities and how the project aligns with their aspirations. Some of the questions are shared below and illustrate the interest in how the project will enhance their lives and improve livelihoods, as well as how their agriculture model would become sustainable.

Q: Why don't the agroforestry systems use fertilizer? That's usually important in our current way of farming.
A: The agroforestry trees themselves are specially chosen to help improve and sustain critical nutrients in the soil to increase crop yields, and include nitrogen-fixing species such as Gliricidia sepium. Additionally, training on compost will be given. Species and planting techniques are always selected with the local context in mind, taking into account the surrounding crops, soil, water, altitude, rainfall and many other factors.

Q: Same with irrigation: we find it useful for establishing crops and improving yields. Why isn't this included?
A: That's another benefit of agroforestry systems! They help to attract and secure moisture in crop fields by reducing runoff, intercepting rainfall and binding soil together, helping control erosion. In addition, seedlings will be distributed for planting at the beginning of the rainy season to help establish the agroforestry plots while it's wet, so that additional irrigation is not needed.

Q: We'd like to be sure that we have access to markets for the cash crops that we'll be growing in our agroforestry plots, as this is crucial for income for our families.
A: A market study will take place in 2025 to determine which cash crops are most viable for developing and supporting a local value chain.

Q: Could tree planting in farms attract more wild animals from nearby Mahale National Park?
A: The agroforestry species used will for the most part not attract wild animals, but rather protect agricultural crops from them.

The attendance and discussion throughout the meetings underscored a strong community interest in the project's success and a shared vision for positive, tangible changes.

Project approval & tool development

Project approval and clearance is needed from various national, regional and district offices. As this process was being completed, the team worked to prepare for the project's start, gathering the tools and setting up the processes needed: doing the planning and calculations for the planned agroforestry systems, drawing up the Rules of Engagement and Memoranda of Understanding for participating farmers, and preparing the training materials for the Farmer Groups.

Agroforestry design

Three different configurations for agroforestry systems are possible that all maximise the ecological and economic impact. The crops and fruit systems will increase food nutrition and security as well as providing consistent sources of livestock fodder and fuelwood, and timber will provide wood for construction and fuelwood for household use.

	1. CROP & LIVESTOCK SUPPORT	2. FRUIT TREES	3. WOODLOT
Plot size	1.5 acres	0.5 acres	0.5 acres
Techniques	live fencing around plot; alley cropping within plot	orchard	mixed woodlot
Benefits for families	food, fuelwood, increased crop yield	food, cash income from fruit	fuelwood, cash income from timber
Benefits for crops	fertilization, green manure, security and pest alleviation	-	fertilization, green manure
Benefits for livestock	fodder	fodder	fodder

Household survey and focus group discussions

105 households were surveyed in Kalya, Tambusha, Kashagulu and Sibwesa villages to provide a baseline by which the project's livelihood impact will be measured as it progresses. The data, which was collected using a digital platform called KoboCollect, is being compiled into a report.

The project team also worked with village leadership to organize two focus group discussions in each of these four villages: one for men and one for women. There was strong participation and cooperation from the local communities, with the discussions providing important insight into community opinions and needs. Both activities laid a solid foundation for the project's next steps, ensuring transparency and that the communities are well-informed.

Flooding poses challenges

The project's lakeside location may be beautiful – but it can sometimes bring surprises! Regional flooding of Lake Tanganyika and its inlet rivers has impacted roads and village where FOLT have their main offices, to Kalya ward where the project team is located, there have been several issues related to transportation, which the team valiantly overcame with a bit of creativity. As vehicles could not be used, motorcycles and canoes helped them navigate the flooded areas, and to get to Ubanda Village, community members carried them across the Lugonesi River!

Around 700 households in five of the six project villages have been affected by the flooding, with some delays experienced in the planned project activities – but there's nothing that can't be caught up later. Fortunately the team was able to move forward unhindered with the most important activities to date: farmer registration and nursery set-up.

What is agroforestry?

Agroforestry combines agriculture and forestry: trees and shrubs are grown around or among crops or pastureland. It plays a critical role in successful forest restoration by:

- reducing the pressure on forest resources and incentivising sustainable forest management by alleviating poverty;
- compensating the loss of access to forest resources;
- ensuring reliable incomes to fund sustainable forest management.

The value of an agroforestry system is in its diversity; selecting and distributing a variety of environmentally and socially appropriate tree species. In Tanzania, our programme grows between 45-70 species each year that have specific uses. Some trees, such as timber, are harvested sustainably and replaced. Planting fast-growing species in dedicated woodlots reduces pressure on the natural and degraded forests we are working to restore. Others, such as fruit and nitrogen-fixing trees, are pruned year after year providing food, soil fertility and numerous other benefits. Of course, all the types of trees sequester carbon as they grow.

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 Mahale 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.