

Desa'a, Ethiopia

Reversing land degradation and poverty through forest and landscape restoration



Mid-year update 2024

Desa'a, Ethiopia



Project status

Over 18 500 hectares under restoration

More than 18 million trees protected & growing



Our ambitious project in Tigray spans the spectacular mountains and deep ravines of northern Ethiopia within the Eastern Afromontane Biodiversity Hotspot. It focuses on one of the nation's oldest and most treasured dry afromontane forests.

This year, we are set to restore over 4500 hectares—taking us beyond the halfway point towards our ultimate goal to revitalize more than 38 000 hectares by 2030 and bring life-sustaining water back to a region on the frontlines of desertification.

With remarkable progress already made, we're on a strong path towards achieving this target. The spirit of community here is extraordinary, with thousands of residents participating in planting and post-planting activities. The groundwork has been laid, with soil and water conservation structures already in place, and as the rains arrive, planting has begun.



Over 26 000 people live below the poverty line here, making economic resilience for local families a crucial focus. Miheret W. and her family in Kalamín are eagerly anticipating their first apple harvest after joining WeForest's livelihoods scheme in 2021. With five apple seedlings and other tree species, they've transformed their homestead into a thriving agroforestry system, providing food, fuel, forage for bees and fodder and shade for their animals.



In May the Desa'a project received verification under Preferred by Nature (PbN)'s rigorous Ecosystem Restoration Standard (ERS), which considers more than just environmental impact. To be certified, a restoration project also needs to demonstrate social and economical impact – so the verification confirms that WeForest's comprehensive approach and intense engagement of stakeholders is contributing to lifting rural communities out of extreme poverty while restoring and preserving ecosystems.

"This certificate is a testament to the unwavering commitment of the Desa'a communities, the dedicated WeForest

Ethiopia team, and all our allies who have steadfastly supported us," says Dr. Aklilu Negussie Mekuria, WeForest's Ethiopia Country Director. "The insights gained from this validation are shedding light on our path ahead, guiding us to uphold these exemplary standards in all our future projects."

Despite the conflict in the region from 2020 to 2022, the project performed outstandingly, with 92% of the indicators fully met. Only 16 projects, developed by 12 different organizations, have been verified to date – and the Desa'a project is the largest.

Visit the PbN website to read their article on Desa'a [here](#).



You'll receive an annual update in March. Meanwhile, stay up-to-date with our interactive [Desa'a 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](#).



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