



Photograph © David Shaw

# Making Earth Cooler

Transforming Landscapes for Climate, People & Planet

2015 Annual Report



Highlights from the year

Celebrating our key sponsors

Project achievements

Doubling our impact every year

COP21

An unstoppable movement



**Visibility** and **momentum** are the key words for us to remember in 2015. Visibility around the exposure of our scientific events, **COP21** and the **Trees4 Climate Manifesto** have given to our **'Make Earth Cooler'** movement. Momentum to develop the movement with 179 corporate partners already working with us to plant nearly 11 million trees!

2015 also was a turning point in the **WeForest** planting operations because additional expertise was added to our team. This enables us to start developing our own high quality projects.

Our work has always been grounded in science. In October we made the decision to create a dedicated science department to engage renowned universities in research programs that help us measure the actual impact of restoring our landscapes. In the end, it is not just about planting trees, it is about stopping global warming.

**Marie Noëlle Keijzer**

**CEO**

# HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEAR

## Over 10 Million Trees

3,290,000 trees were added during 2015, totalling 10,796,333 trees since 2009.

## Almost an Area the Size of Paris

3,137 ha have been restored in 2015, totalling 8,314 ha since 2009. This area represents 1.4 times the size of Manhattan or 80% of the city of Paris.



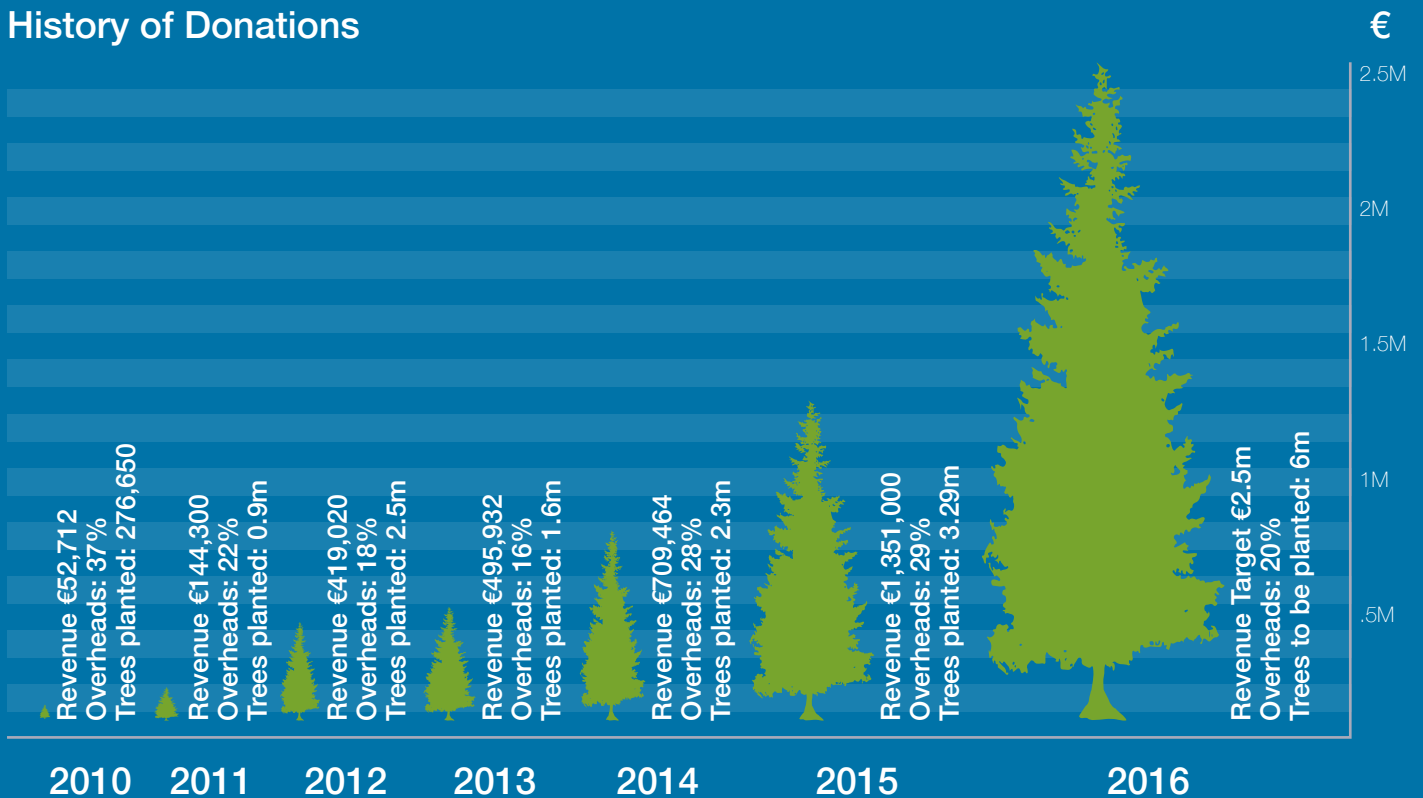
## The Best Carbon Sink is a Tree!

Recently referenced by an Oxford University study, trees are the best technology to suck carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and reverse global warming. The 10.7 million trees WF planted since 2009 could contribute during the 20 to 30 coming years to storing up to 497K tons of CO<sub>2</sub>.

## Close to a Triple Digit Growth Once Again

In 2015 WeForest (WF) received a total of €1,351,597 which represents a 91% growth versus 2014.

## History of Donations



Total trees planted at the end of 2015: 10.7 million or the equivalent of 8,314 ha restored  
WeForest financial accounts are audited yearly by Deloitte.



# HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEAR

**Focus remains on corporates (96% of income):** individual contributions represented only 4% of the 2015 income. WF received no public funds in 2015.

**More sponsors than donors:** in 2015, 82% of total income came from corporate sponsors, 14% from philanthropic corporate donors, the rest (4%) from individuals.

### Overheads as an Investment in Growth

2015 results showed a 91% growth, yet these numbers were below the ambitious budget by 37% (€1,351,597 actuals vs. €2,115,000 budget).

The overheads were budgeted at 20% due to a lower income and the need to build a team for future growth, the actual overheads were higher than planned (29%).

Our accounts have been audited by Deloitte every year since 2011.

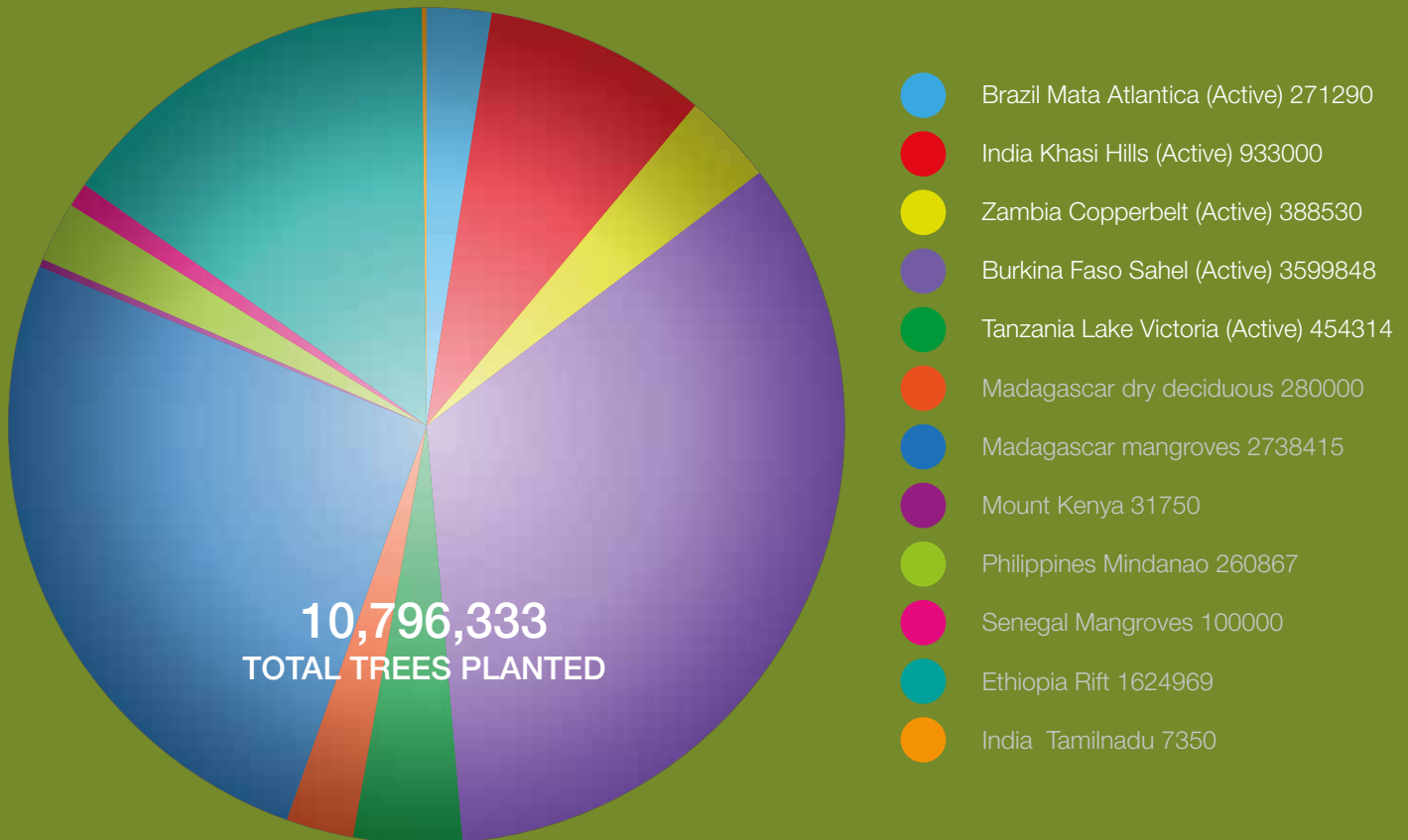
**Deloitte.**



Tanzania: farmers receive trees for their farm (here family Mama, Nicholas and children)

# PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS & IMPACT

## Number Of Trees To Date By Country



## Beyond the Planting of Trees, a Landscape Approach

Trees are a new currency: more and more companies are looking to associate trees with their business activity (rewarding customers for choosing a product) or engaging employees (e.g. when celebrating a specific milestone, an anniversary).

To ensure the long term protection and survival of trees, WF's activities must go far beyond the mere planting of trees: trees must lead to healthy and biodiverse forests, support livelihoods of local people, and address local challenges such as soil erosion. Trees must be part of a bigger plan: a landscape restoration approach. Here is how IUCN describes it: "Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) is a process that aims to regain ecological integrity and enhance human well being in deforested or degraded forest landscapes".

WeForest is designing its projects with this holistic approach as the highest guarantee for the long term survival of the trees.





# PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS & IMPACT

## A Project Portfolio in Constant Evolution

2015 was an exciting year for the planting activity: WF managed 5 active projects, completed 2 sites, started due diligence and planning on 3 new ones.



Belhédé women ready to sow June 2015 © Beeldkas

### **BURKINA FASO - Greening The Sahel Desert.**

Despite the political and civil unrest affecting Burkina Faso, WF contributed to restoring a total of 3,314 hectares in the country, totalling 3.4 million trees to date currently around four villages. More villages and target areas for future restoration are being identified. The project partner OZG will carry-out socio-economic and ecological studies to explore the benefits to local communities, measure increase in forest cover and the related economic activities (feed for animals, grasses to produce mats, etc...). In the village of Mentao, refugees from the local refugee camp are also beneficiaries of the project as these women participate in sowing and benefit from the agroforestry products like grasses for their cattle and mats.



Farmers receive trees here Plot 4 Mama, Nicholas and children

### **TANZANIA - Permaculture at the Centre of Landscape Restoration.**

During the last year, the total area restored since the project began reached 368 hectares, a total of 404,314 trees. The project provides important resources for local people in terms of food, income and employment. Over 2000 people, families, schools and institutions have received trees since 2011 and 21 community members are employed. The Friends of the Trees ("Rafiki") club was created for families receiving trees to motivate and inspire others to join. Members of the Rafiki club are entitled to seedlings and training free of charge from the nursery providing they demonstrate a high survival rate of 80% or higher. Since the last report, the number of people with rafiki status has increased significantly from 32.2% to 56.7%. The higher survival rate is achieved thanks to additional training to farmers.

# PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS & IMPACT



Preparing seedlings in the nursery before transplanting them to the field © IPE

## **BRAZIL- Restoring the Atlantic Forest.**

The Mata Atlantica project in Brazil has reached 136 hectares of restored forest corridors, equalling 271,290 trees planted. To monitor the benefits to biodiversity, the team carried out ecological surveys at the Arco Iris Farm. Besides measuring tree height and the number of species, the study revealed a high floristic diversity and healthy growth patterns. 25 camera traps have been installed to monitor the animals that use the corridors and have already captured photographs of ocelots, agoutis and tapirs. Planting in the Arco Iris farm is now complete and a new site at Santo Antonio farm is now starting.

## **INDIA - Restoring India's Cloud Forest.**

A total of 833,000 trees have been planted and protected during 2015 (620ha). This was achieved thanks to the strong engagement of local people, who have developed income generating activities with the help of micro-loans, and the project's 77 community-based nurseries. The WF Director of Planting Projects saw first hand the strong engagement of the locals when she visited the project site in September 2015. Surrounding communities expressed their eagerness to get involved and interest to further expand this project. At local schools, several tree adoption ceremonies took place to engage and inspire children as well. The demarcation of an additional 500 hectares for restoration was completed.



Slopy Khasi Hills need more trees to reduce erosion © WF

## **ZAMBIA - Engaging Smallholder Farmers in Reversing Deforestation.**

This project in the Copper-belt has strongly evolved since WF started working there in 2010. It was designed together with local private sector companies and farmer representatives back in April 2015. So far, 486 farmers have been trained in ANR (Assisted Natural Regeneration) techniques, silvicultural practices, etc. Efforts to promote woman entrepreneurship are underway through the training of local women fruit tree grafting with to aim to start-up home-based nurseries. The Miombo wood-lots where ANR will take place have been identified and a baseline study was started in order to measure the future projects impact on the environment, biodiversity and local communities.



Training 75 farmers to plant trees on their land. April 2015 © WF



# PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS & IMPACT



## Completing 2 Projects

After planting record numbers of trees in the past years, WF chose to close the projects in the south of Ethiopia and Madagascar, where 2,738,418 and 1,624,418 trees had been planted respectively. Local community members have been trained to take care of the trees once the project ends so the ecological and socio-economic benefits can continue into the future.

## Local People Must Benefit

WeForest estimated that from the 3.2 m trees planted in 2015, roughly 184 families directly benefited from additional income.

666 people were directly trained, contributing to capacity building in these 5 countries INDIA, BURKINA-FASO, TANZANIA, ZAMBIA and BRAZIL.

In 2015 WF worked with 125 community nurseries, boosting entrepreneurship.

About 100 people were directly employed by our projects, creating steady jobs and income, mainly for women.



## A Large Variety of Tree Species

In order to promote local biodiversity and provide most benefits to local communities, it is key to plan for a wide variety of tree species. In 2015 a total of 277 different species were planted across all projects.

## Using the most adapted planting methods.

From the 2015 trees, 23% were the result of ANR (Assisted Natural Regeneration).

The trees grow either from seeds that are directly sown (in Burkina-Faso) or grown in nurseries to be then transplanted (for all other sites).

The planting density per ha ranging from 833 trees (India) to 2000 trees (Brazil) depending on the agro-ecological zone.



# SPONSORS AND DONORS THAT MAKE IT POSSIBLE

179 corporates have worked with WF since 2009, including 21 large multinational brands. 99 companies were new in 2015. 76% are recurring partners (donated more than once)

One of 2015's main contributors was **Ecosia**, the only search engine that plants trees for every search you make on the internet! Here are a few examples of the other great brands that have either joined or continued supporting our movement.

- Barclays
- Brabantia
- Brussels Airport
- COTY inc
- Delifrance
- Deloitte
- Europcar
- Fondation Yves Rocher
- Illustration Ltd
- Insights
- Kwadraat
- Marriott
- Swift



## June 2015 Scientific Meeting



WeForest organised a three-and-a-half-day scientific meeting hosted by KU Leuven (Belgium) on Why Forests matter for Water and Climate. WeForest invited a group of 35 international experts in the fields of Earth and plant sciences. The objectives of the meetings were:

- To elucidate the current state of knowledge on the importance of forests for water and other Earth system processes.
- To prepare a policy brief to raise awareness of new findings on the importance of forests in strategies addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation, water management and land-use planning, providing policy makers with concise and clear information and encouraging multiple sectors to engage in sustainable forest management as part of broader landscape management.

## October 2015 New Science Department

A dedicated science department was created to develop and strengthen WeForest's forest restoration initiatives:

- through the integration of project research and
- by advancing the understanding of forest landscape restoration and the role forests play in mitigating and adapting against climate change and poverty.
- It builds on WeForest's mission and strategy by generating, communicating and promoting applied reforestation knowledge and solutions.

## December 2015 Global Landscape Forum in Paris (COP21 side event).

From the June scientific meeting a 4-page policy brief 'Managing Forests for Water and for Climate Cooling' was produced and launched at the Global Landscape Forum (during COP21) in Paris, during which other high-level meetings and events took place.

## Publications

- Gutierrez, V., Keijzer, M-N., 2015. **Funding forest landscape restoration using a business-centred approach: an NGO's perspective.** *Unasylva* 245 (66), pp. 99–106. [Click here to read](#)
- Van Noordwijk M. Bruijnzeel S. Ellison D. Sheil D. Morris C.E. Sands D. Gutierrez V. Cohen J. Sullivan C.A. Verbist B. Murdiyarto D. Gaveau D.L.A. Muys B. 2015. ASB Policy Brief No. 47: **Ecological Rainfall Infrastructure: Investment in Trees for Sustainable Development.** ASB Policy Brief 47. Nairobi: ASB Partnership for the Tropical Forest Margins.
- WeForest, 2015. **Managing Forests for Water and for Climate Cooling.** WeForest. [Click here to read](#)



# LEADERSHIP

## A Growing Team of Professionals

13 people worked for WF in 2015, (representing close to 6 FTE), located in Belgium, Germany, UK and Ireland.

From that team, 4 people were directly involved in developing and managing the planting activities and 5 focused on customer support and business development.

6 active volunteers contributed with their expertise throughout the year.

New talents joined the team in October, which enabled WF to start a dedicated science department.



## The WF Charity in the USA

In October 2015 the WF Employer Identification Number was granted in the State of Delaware for the WeForest Inc. (501©3) charity # 47-4487818, which will kick-start the WF development in North America.

# GROWING A MOVEMENT

## WF Mission

“WeForest aims to contribute to the scaling-up, monitoring and reporting on the impact of forest and landscape restoration, contributing to the realization of the NYDF (New York Declaration on Forests) and the Bonn Challenge”.

## Trees 4 Climate

In June 2015 WeForest reached out to 4 other partners in France (Yves Rocher Foundation, Livelihoods/Danone, Pur Projet and Kinomé) and drafted a manifesto for trees, to get attention on the solution that trees represent for our climate ahead of COP21 in Paris. It was signed by people like Paul Polman (CEO from Unilever), Desmond Tutu (Peace Nobel prize), Jacques Rocher (CEO Groupe Yves Rocher) and other personalities. In total, it has collected over 150 signatures from planting organizations and companies and close to 1000 signatures from individuals. The plan is to continue to leverage that community to help achieve the NYDF (New York Declaration on Forests) in the coming years.

# GROWING A MOVEMENT

## 2015 Talks, Panels and Dates

- **FAO, HQ Rome, January 19-21, 2015**  
'What we really need to know'. Monitoring and Assessment of Drylands: Forests, Rangelands, Trees and Agrosilvopastoral Systems. Workshop organised by FAO and WRI.
- **Jakarta 3-6th March 2015**  
'Planting trees for landscape restoration in the tropics', Community Payment for Ecosystem Services market place event. Organisers: The Indonesian Community PES Consortium, Community Forestry International and Kemitraan.
- **Bloomberg TV - March, 27th, 2015** [Click here to view](#)  
Bill Liao, WF co-founder interview 'profitably planting 400 billion trees'
- **Paris-Brussels, June 1st 2015:**  
Trees4Climate Manifesto was launched.
- **Leuven June 8-9-10, 2015**  
WF scientific meeting hosted by KU Leuven (Belgium) on Why Forests matter for Water and Climate. See above page 10.
- **La Première Belgium June 10, 2015**  
WeForest CEO in a 4-min interview to talk about the role trees play to cool our climate. [Click here to listen](#)
- **FAO HQ Rome, Italy June 30 –July 01, 2015**  
'Business-centred approach to investment in forest landscape restoration: WeForest's approach'. Keynote talk. Organisers: The Global Mechanism and FAO.
- **Delaware, USA October 7, 2015**  
WeForest Inc. (501©3) registered under # 47-4487818,
- **Brussels, October 22nd 2015**  
Crowdsourcing week: presentation to a group of international entrepreneurs. [Click here to view](#)
- **Paris, December 5, 2015.**  
Policy Brief Launch. See above page 10.
- **Paris 'COP21' December 6, 2015**  
Marie-Noëlle Keijzer, WeForest CEO and co-founder meeting with Al Gore, founder of the Climate Reality Corps.



WF CEO talking to Al Gore in Paris  
December 2015 at COP21 © WF



# GROWING A MOVEMENT



Training 75 farmers for them to plant trees on their land April 15 © WF

Want to join the global movement to Make Earth Cooler?

[contact@weforest.org](mailto:contact@weforest.org)

Tel +32 (0) 23 08 49 43  
[www.weforest.org](http://www.weforest.org)

WeForest.asbl/vzw is a non-profit organisation in Belgium (BE 0826.151.968.) and a charity in the USA (EIN 47-4487818). Donations are tax deductible in USA and most of Europe.

## Outreach in a Few Numbers

179 corporate partners

3552 newsletter subscribers

69,701 website unique visitors, 88,604 total website visits

8000 facebook friends

534 LinkedIn followers

2128 signatories of the Trees4Climate Manifesto (Co-authors: Kinomé, Livelihoods Venture, Pur Projet, WeForest, Yves Rocher Foundation). [www.trees4climate.org](http://www.trees4climate.org) You can still sign it!

Organizations engaged in reforestation ask COP21 to consider trees and forests as a solution for our climate challenge and urge leaders to deliver on their promises.

1. Trees are one of the most powerful tools we have to address global warming both for mitigation and adaptation.
2. Trees are essential to human life and we have no substitutes for them.
3. We need to stop cutting our trees and accelerate reforestation.
4. On the path to COP21 we urge all participating parties to take action to put the trees and forests back where they belong”.

A world where communities, and nations, sustainably manage their forests, landscapes and natural infrastructure to mitigate climate change, enhance livelihoods, increase resilience and safeguard biodiversity.

The WeForest Vision