

Photo © Akilu Mekuria



ANNUAL REPORT

2022

Welcome

Dear Friends of WeForest,

I am thrilled to report on the incredible progress we have made in 2022 towards our mission of delivering impact for People, Nature and Climate.

Our 17 active project sites around the world are conserving and restoring the ecological integrity of [forests and landscapes](#), engaging communities to implement lasting solutions, and making a real difference to forest-dependent communities. Our achievements include over 51 000 hectares under restoration, almost 81 million trees growing, and more than 245 local communities engaged.

We are incredibly proud of the five new projects we launched this year and the 30 new staff members who joined our global team, allowing us to scale our impact. We have also carried out high-quality restoration through planting nearly half a million seedlings, partnering with organizations to protect vital habitats, and deepening and applying scientific knowledge through research partnerships and collaborations.

Our focus on economic resilience for communities has allowed us to upscale agroforestry, farm forest-dependent beekeeping, and establish alternative sources of incomes, improving the livelihoods of over 69 000 families.

In 2022, our programmes – the Great Green Wall, Miombo Belt Regeneration, Wildlife Corridors and Blue Carbon – and our strategic initiatives have continued to grow and evolve, with agroforestry being a critical focus.

As we move forward, our target for 2025 is to have 100 000 hectares under restoration, or 100 million trees growing. We know that with your continued support, we can achieve this goal and make an even greater impact for our planet and its people.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to our mission.



Marie-Noëlle Keijzer
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WeForest.asbl/vzw is a global non-profit organisation headquartered in Belgium (BE 0826.151.968).

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

Our mission in action

Our mission serves as our north star – our guiding light. At WeForest, our primary focus is to deliver the most impact for **People, Nature and Climate** when selecting and developing new projects.

We conserve and restore the ecological integrity of forests and landscapes...

17
active project sites around the world

Nearly
52 000
hectares under restoration

More than
80 million
trees growing

...and engage communities to implement and deliver lasting solutions...

245
local communities engaged

45 community-run nurseries supplying seedlings

89 local associations or cooperatives supported

...for climate...

Up to
339 t
of CO₂ sequestered per hectare, depending on the biome

...nature...

675
tree species planted or regenerating

20 threatened animal species in project landscapes

15 threatened tree species have a real chance of returning

...and people.

More than
69 500
families directly benefiting from restoration

Over
1/3 of these engaged in livelihoods activities

33 000
individuals trained

100 million

2025

trees growing;
100 000 hectares under restoration

2022

80 million

trees growing;
51 800 hectares under restoration

2011

Our progress by 2022 – and our aim for 2025

Highlights of 2022

What we are most proud of

Scaling our impact:

- **5 new projects** launched, and **30 new staff members** joined our global team.
- **WeForest Malawi** was established as a legal entity.
- We expanded **agroforestry models** in Tanzania and Malawi.

Carrying out high-quality restoration:

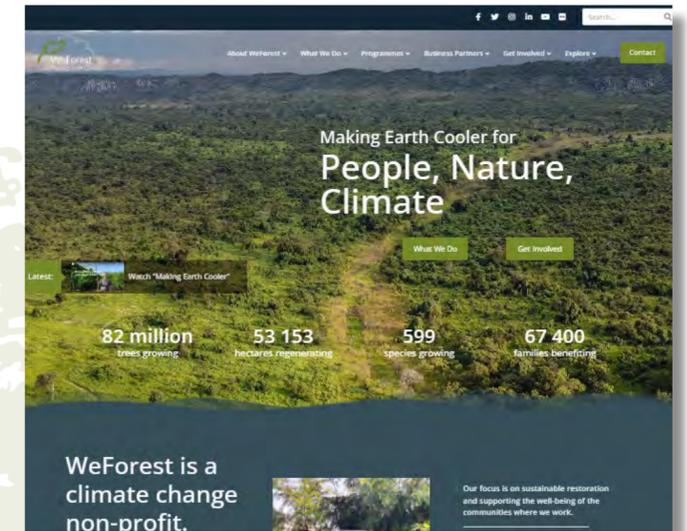
- We planted more than 1.2 million seedlings across 4700 hectares degraded forests, pasturelands and agroforestry plots in **Ethiopia**.
- We're partnering with Fundación Vida Silvestre and WWF NL to protect an important jaguar habitat in **Argentina**.
- Our **monitoring and evaluation** improvements included an improved polygon database, redefined intervention types, and team expansion, including a new remote sensing expert.

Working with communities to improve economic resilience:

- Providing energy-efficient cookstoves in northern Ethiopia has **reduced the use of fuelwood by half**, exceeding our original target of a third.
- Our farm forest-based beekeeping schemes in Zambia showed a total production of more than **48 tons of raw honey harvested in 2022**, corresponding to 49% increase compared to 2021.

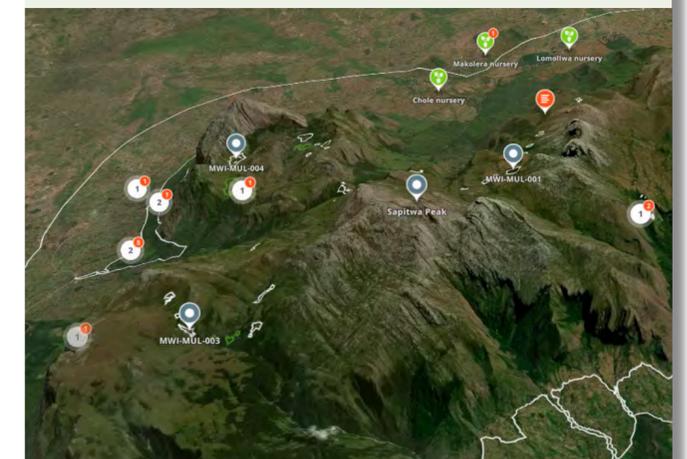
Deepening and applying scientific knowledge:

- We started **research partnerships** with Copperbelt University in Zambia and the University of Maryland.
- A **NASA team** gathered data in our restoration sites in Senegal to gain insights into the ecological benefits of restoring mangroves.



A new look for our digital tools

Have you seen our new website, launched in November 2022? As well as a fresh new look and feel, we've made things easier to find and improved the journey for potential partners. Alongside this we've also transformed our partner pages, with our amazing **Explorerland maps** (now in 3D!) forming the backbone of the pages. We welcome **feedback** from our stakeholders as we continue to innovate and improve our digital tools.



Programmes

Great Green Wall

No. of active projects: **4**

Trees growing to date: **16.5 million**

Species planted or regenerating: **137**

Area under forest landscape restoration to date: **15 900 ha**

Families directly benefiting from our projects: **19 000**

WeForest's Great Green Wall stretches from our most ambitious project in Northern Ethiopia, which started in 2016, to our newest venture in inland Senegal.

Our Desa'a restoration project, covering 38,000 hectares and involving 23 000 farmers, is reversing soil erosion and bringing water back to the region. The new Gewocha Forests project in Amhara has already seen its first planting, and the sites in Machakel and Seret – whose active restoration phases have been completed – continue to be maintained and monitored.

Our Ferlo project in Senegal, a collaboration with three communities, pastoralist experts AVSF and research institutions ISRA and CIRAD, saw its first planting in July 2022 over 54.86 hectares, and aims to regreen 10 000 hectares in Senegal's Sahelian zone.



In Ferlo, we partnered with local communities to plant over 5100 seedlings in an area covering 54.86 hectares. To combat the challenges posed by the region's low rainfall, a Delfino plough created half-moon pits measuring 6 meters in length and 80 centimeters in width. These pits hold up to 1000 litres of water each. Watch a video of this irrigation system from the air [here](#).

In 2022, **Desa'a** saw the planting of an estimated 737 000 seedlings across 4031 hectares. In **Gewocha Forest**, the first 670 hectares were brought under restoration via direct tree planting, assisted natural regeneration and agroforestry.



Our newest project in Ethiopia, **Wof Washa**, launched in October. It will restore 7000 hectares of the country's oldest and most fragile forest, with assisted natural regeneration and enrichment planting, and 3000 hectares of surrounding communal lands will be planted with native and exotic trees. Some 17 000 families depend on the forest here, and supported livelihood activities will include agroforestry and beekeeping.

Programmes

Miombo Belt Regeneration

No. of active projects: **5**

Trees growing to date: **23.1 million**

Species planted or regenerating: **225**

Area under forest landscape restoration to date: **20 700 ha**

Families directly benefiting from our projects: **8 800**

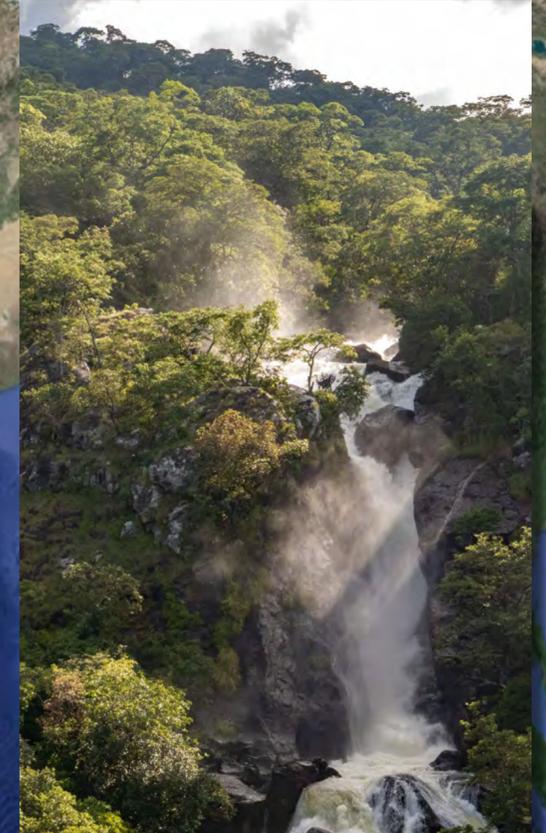
Miombo forests span a vast 2.7 million km² belt across southern Africa, yet they are often overlooked in global discussions on deforestation and biodiversity.

These forests are a crucial global carbon stock and support the lives of over 65 million people and iconic wildlife by providing fuel, food, medicinal plants and livestock fodder.

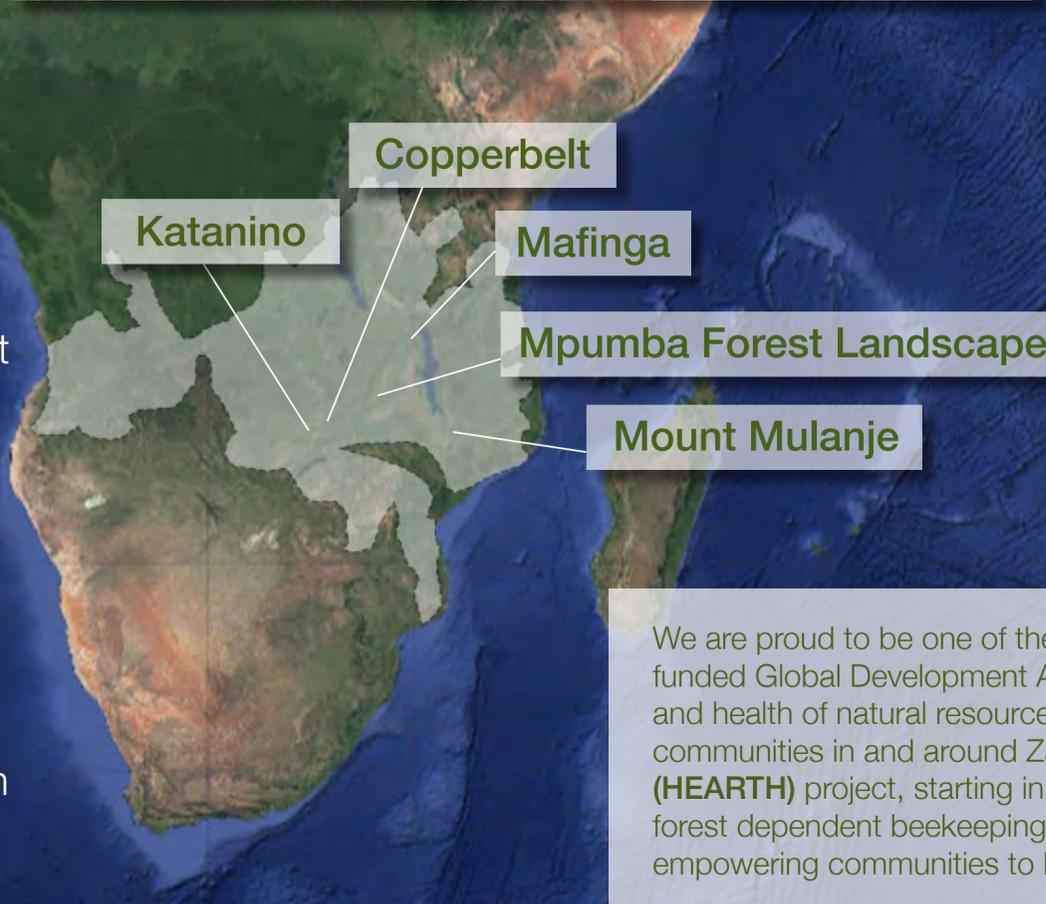
We are dedicated to protecting and restoring miombo landscapes across Zambia and Malawi. Working alongside smallholder farmers, we provide training and materials to create alternative income sources and reduce pressure on the forest. We also support forest-dependent communities in establishing effective forest governance partnerships with the national forestry department, increasing incomes and improving food security.



Our activity in Zambia includes the expansion of our **Copperbelt: Forest on Farms** project. A new initiative to strengthen community forest ownership focuses on the Imanda Community Conservation Area, which contains one of the largest examples of moist evergreen forest (*Mushitu*) in the country.



The **Mpumba Forest Landscape** (MFL) project aims to form a continuous ecologically protected zone linking community-managed buffer zones, protected areas and private reserves.



We are proud to be one of the co-implementing partners in a USAID-funded Global Development Alliance (GDA) to enhance the resilience and health of natural resource-dependent ecological and human communities in and around Zambia's Luangwa Valley. The **Mukungule (HEARTH)** project, starting in January 2023, will involve upscaling farm-forest dependent beekeeping and community forest management, empowering communities to build a sustainable future.

Programmes

Wildlife Corridors

No. of active projects: **3**

Trees planted and growing to date: **3.1 million**

Species planted or regenerating: **262**

Area under forest landscape restoration to date: **1579 ha**

Threatened or near threatened animal species: **14**

The Atlantic Forest, once sprawling across Brazil and parts of Argentina and Paraguay, is now a mere fraction of its former self, with up to 91% of its original extent lost to agricultural deforestation.

Despite this devastation, the forest remains a vital refuge for a staggering variety of life, including over 300 amphibian, 250 mammal, 1000 bird and 200 reptile species.

We're working to connect fragmented patches of the forest with our project in Pontal, Brazil, partnering with IPÊ to link isolated habitats with the Morro do Diabo State Park, one of the largest protected areas in the region. Our Tietê Forests project, in collaboration with AES Brasil, is restoring forest along the banks of the Tietê River and its tributaries. In Misiones, Argentina, we're restoring 141 hectares through tree planting and assisted natural regeneration, while promoting agroforestry on 49 hectares to boost both incomes and ecosystem services.



This was the first year of restoration activities on private properties in addition to the native forest restoration in our **Tietê Forests** project in Brazil's Atlantic Forest. Sixteen families in Dandara Rural Settlement have dedicated between half and one hectare each to fruit tree-based agroforestry, totaling 14 hectares in all.



In **Misiones**, 2022 saw the recruitment of farmers and setting up of yerba mate agroforestry plots in our new project in Misiones, Argentina, home to one of the largest remaining sub-populations of jaguars. In partnership with Fundación Vida Silvestre and WWF Netherlands, we're committed to preserving and restoring what remains of the Atlantic Forest for generations to come.

Programmes

Blue Carbon

No. of active projects: **2**

Trees planted to date: **20.9 million**

Species planted or regenerating: **17**

Area planted to date: **7020 ha**

Families directly benefiting from the project: **22 750**

Sine-Saloum

Casamance

Blue carbon refers to the carbon captured by oceans and coastal ecosystems, and our focus is on mangroves – specialized trees and shrubs that grow in coastal estuaries. These ecosystems can sequester up to **four times more carbon** than terrestrial forests.

In Senegal, mangroves provide crucial protection from storms and support agriculture, fishing, and shellfish harvesting for both consumption and income. Unfortunately, deforestation and poverty became a vicious cycle when people started using the mangroves for firewood during the 1970s drought.

We partner with local NGO Oceanium to restore degraded mangroves, with 7020 hectares planted by the end of 2022, restoring valuable and productive ecosystems, improving soil quality, and mitigating climate change. In 2023, we'll begin the second phase of planting, targeting another 3000 hectares.



We exceeded our target by 421 hectares in our **Casamance** project, planting an estimated 14.6 million mangroves between 2020 and 2023. We're waiting for certification from VCS and CCB, which we expect to receive by mid-2023.



In **Sine-Saloum**, one of the world's only mangrove flux towers is measuring carbon exchange between our growing seedlings and the atmosphere, helping us to better understand the ecological benefits of restoring mangroves. Watch a video of its construction [here](#). We were also visited by a team from NASA in September, who gathered data on our restoration sites.

Strategic Initiatives: Special Projects and carbon finance

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Special Projects

During 2022 we continued to develop and grow our special initiatives, which include developing the test case for innovative financial approaches to conserving and restoring forests.

In **Apuí** in Brazil's Amazon basin, our partnership with Idesam is creating an income for small farming families through organic coffee agroforestry development. As well as integrating native tree species within the coffee, family farms are protecting the last remaining areas of native rainforest in the area. This forest is under threat. Unless families earn a good income they will have to sell their land, which will be deforested and turned into pasture.

In Tanzania, our seedling distribution project in **Mara** expanded to support farmers and local community organizations to develop agroforestry systems and is now evolving into a Forest and Landscape Restoration project, protecting and restoring the nearby **Butiama Hills**.

Our newest partnership in Indonesia with Yagasu is aiming to harness the opportunity for carbon finance to provide the catalytic funding to support 7000 families to make the transition to an agroforestry system, stabilising and potentially doubling their household income while reducing soil erosion and risks of flooding within one of the most strategically important watersheds in Indonesia: the **Upper Citarum**.

WeForest's carbon finance strategy

Our carbon strategy is guided by our values of Collaboration, Courage, Excellence, Integrity, Passion, and Transparency. Our objectives are to achieve long-term social, economic, and environmental impact through sustainable forest and land management practices, market-driven solutions for local livelihoods, and effective local governance. We achieve this through strategic partnerships and focus on monitoring, evaluation and learning.

While carbon finance has the potential to unlock significant funding needed to restore at scale, we also recognize the potential negative impacts of the current "gold-rush" towards carbon credits. As a values-led organisation we are focused on delivering effective, fair and equitable benefit-sharing and local governance mechanisms that are essential for ensuring carbon finance can deliver on its promise to be a force for good in restoring the world's forests and landscapes.

Our impact

on People

In agroforestry systems, trees are grown together with crops and/or livestock on the same plot of land.

The benefits are manifold: trees increase crop and livestock production for food security, nutrition and income, while also improving natural resources such as soil, water and biodiversity and sequestering substantial amounts of carbon.

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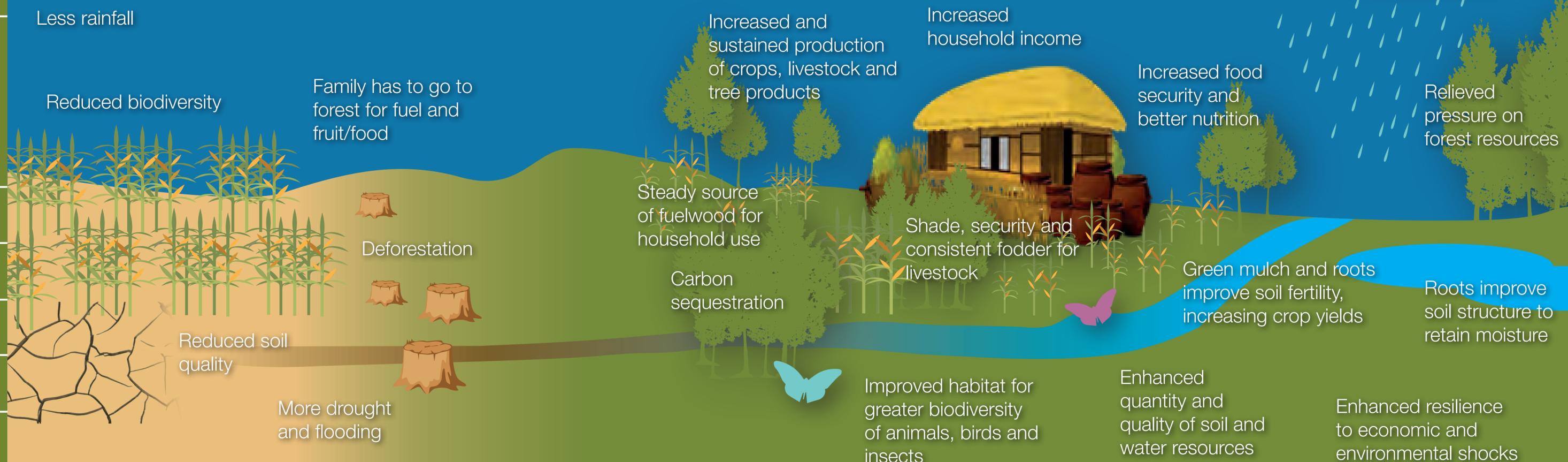
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Conventional agricultural systems: extraction of forest resources

Agroforestry systems: conservation of forest resources



Our impact

on Nature

“ Our world must not only become net zero, but also nature positive, for the benefit of both people and the planet. ”

G7 2030 Nature Compact, europa.eu

Experts say Earth is experiencing the biggest loss of life since the dinosaurs.

The current rate of biodiversity loss is alarming, with over 1 million species at risk of extinction. At WeForest, we prioritize biodiversity in all our projects, recognizing that nature restoration goes beyond saving endangered species.

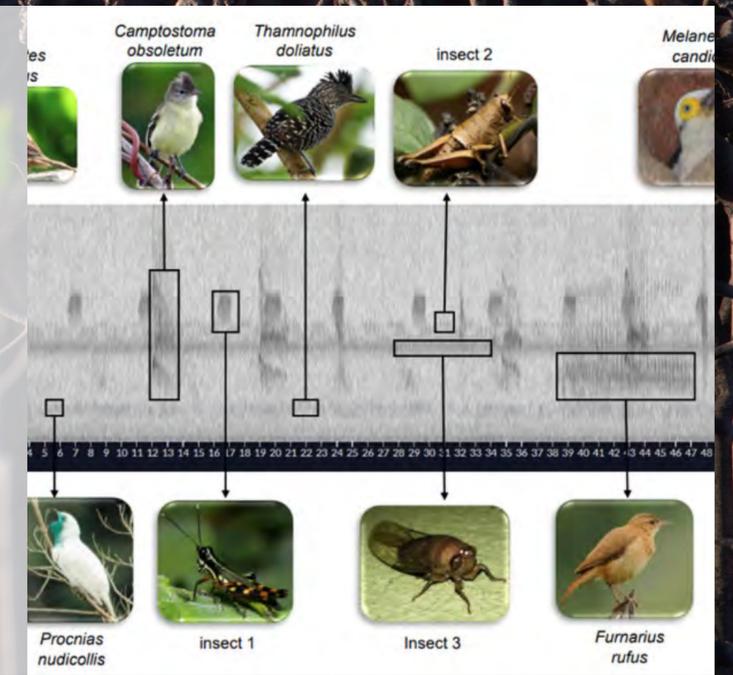
Nature is becoming the ‘new carbon’

Every business relies on nature for resources and ecosystem services such as water, food, fibre, minerals, pollination of crops, water filtration and climate regulation. More than 330 businesses and financial institutions sent a letter to governments in 2022 recognizing the material risks of nature loss and calling for mandatory requirements on nature.

With increasing customer and investor awareness and expectations, action for nature will soon become the foundation of a social licence to operate. A Forest and Nature partnership with WeForest developed around corporate goals and the Global Biodiversity Framework targets provide measurable data for transparent and credible reporting.

Sounds from our sites

Our collaboration with Rainforest Connection in Pontal yielded sound samples of 178 species: birds, frogs, mammals and insects. Analysis is indicating that even our early-stage restoration sites are providing habitats to many species associated with protected forests. Visit the [RFCx Insights platform](#) to listen.



Our impact

on Climate

WeForest was founded with the mission to tackle one of the most pressing global issues of our time: climate change.

As the world faces the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss, forests play a critical role in our collective efforts to combat these challenges.

Science anchors our mission

WeForest's dedication to advancing knowledge and best practices in climate science is reflected in our strong partnerships with academic research institutions and scientific organizations. Through these collaborations, we contribute to the dissemination of data and knowledge gained from our projects.

- We now have detailed carbon maps of our restoration sites in **Pontal** thanks to research carried out as part of the **NewFor project** in Brazil with the University of São Paulo and Wageningen University. Overall, the results are very good news: they indicate that although still young, the carbon stocks found in WeForest's restoration sites in Pontal compare favourably to similar aged restoration sites in the Atlantic Forest.

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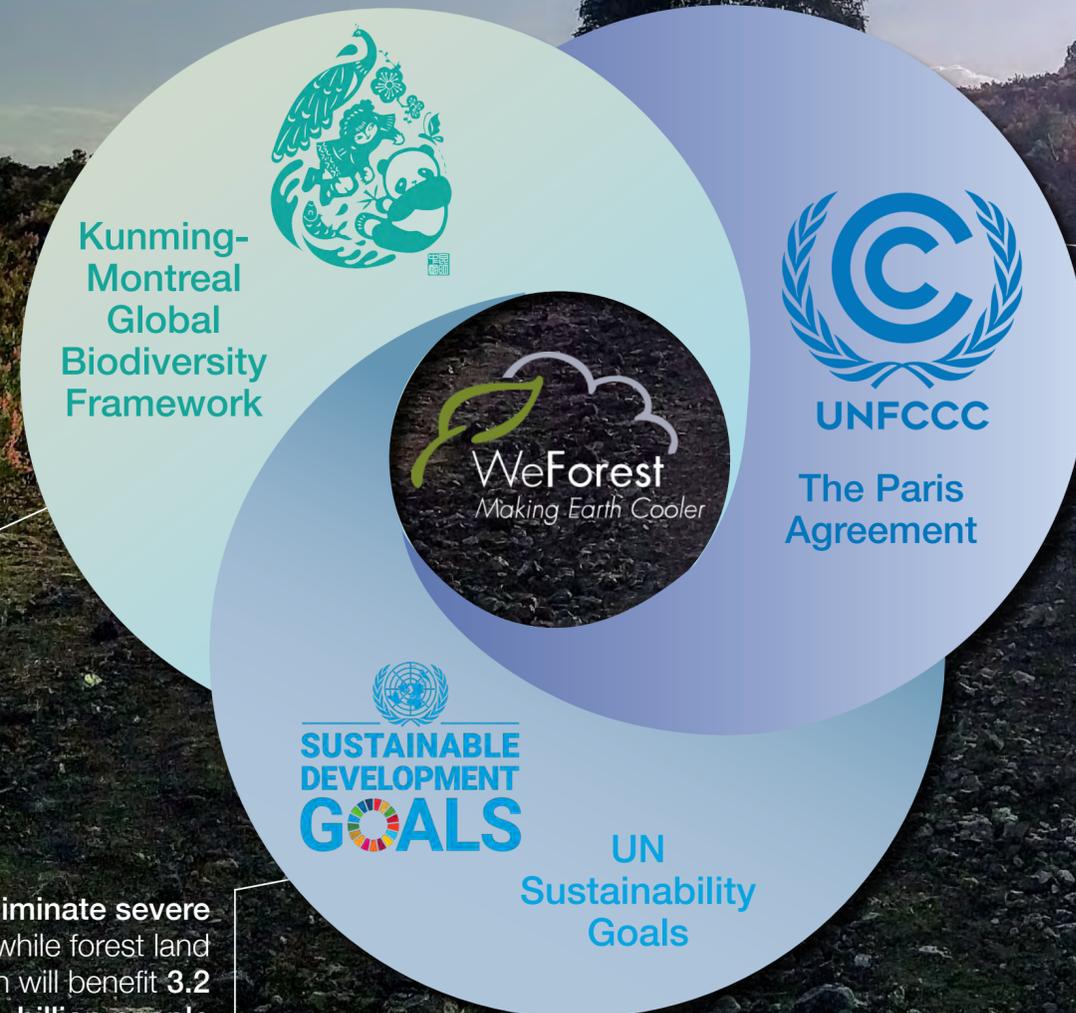
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Requires the preservation or restoration of **30% of the world's ecosystems**

Aim to **eliminate severe poverty**, while forest land regeneration will benefit **3.2 billion people**

Carbon objectives can be met using up to **1/3 nature-based solutions**

At WeForest, we are proud to be at the nexus of the **2030 UN sustainability agenda**, working to restore and protect forests to mitigate the impacts of climate change and preserve biodiversity.

Our work is not only about planting trees, but also about empowering communities and promoting sustainable livelihoods. Through our projects, we strive to create a future in which people and nature thrive in harmony.

Our impact

Monitoring and Evaluation

WeForest's project monitoring and evaluation (M&E):

- Keeps track of project progress and success by comparing with targets;
- Identifies needs for adaptive management when targets and data do not align;
- Supports lessons learned and sharing across projects within WeForest;
- Supports transparent communication of project progress to all stakeholders, such as funders.

We measure activities, outputs and outcomes using project-specific logframes to keep track of all these indicators (see table).

Baseline information is collected early in the project.

“There are many worthy and essential ways of helping the environment; WeForest cuts to the very essence of the problem.”

Harry Lyon-Smith, Director, IllustrationX

Trees and Biodiversity

Indicators summarise **restoration activities** and their expected impact on reducing the drivers of deforestation

Every hectare planted or protected is mapped to generate **polygons** that are assigned to sponsors

In most projects, forest structural data is collected from **permanent monitoring plots** designed to track forest dynamics

Remote sensing solutions strengthen our M&E from the sky

In some projects, we monitor **animal presence** and frequency with camera traps or audio devices for specific projects

Environmental indicators include biomass growth, tree density, survival rate and species diversity

Governance

Governance support depends on the **local situation**

We track **governance documents** such as forest management plans and by-laws, whose drafting we support in consultation of local communities

We monitor **community compliance**, such as number of offences in relation to local forest laws

We track the functionality, accountability and self-sustainability of **governance structures** we set up, such as forest management groups

Indicators include number of offences, governance structure income generation, meetings held

People

Annual surveys of local households are carried out using mobile data collection tools

We keep track of **materials and training** provided for different livelihood support schemes developed in consultation with communities

Later, we collect data on the **benefits generated** by the schemes (yields and/or income) and any difficulties encountered

With schemes that **mediate loss of access to the forest**, we quantify their efficiency in reducing the need for additional forest products

Indicators include people trained, agricultural produce increase through agroforestry, income generated

Funders

You make it all possible

Our generous community of more than 600 businesses, foundations and individuals all share a common goal: to take action on climate and nature and see a real and measurable impact.

Discover all our Business Partners [here](#).



Using our partnership to engage, inform and inspire

- During 2022, **Nike** – who financed the first part of our collaboration with RFCx to collect audio in Pontal – used some of the data for a series of meditative instrumentals on their app, immersing the listener in the sounds of the Atlantic Forest. Find out more [here](#).
- Logistics company **DB Schenker**'s employees covered over 30 million km to celebrate their 150th anniversary, raising funding for the restoration of more than 150 hectares of forest in Ethiopia and Brazil. Read about it [here](#).

Network

We're part of a huge ecosystem of like-minded organizations

From our project partners working in the field and our research collaborators optimizing restoration approaches and advancing scientific knowledge, to huge global movements and alliances bringing together organizations and institutions worldwide to issue a rallying cry to heal our planet.

Project partners:



Global alliances and consortium initiatives:



Research partners:



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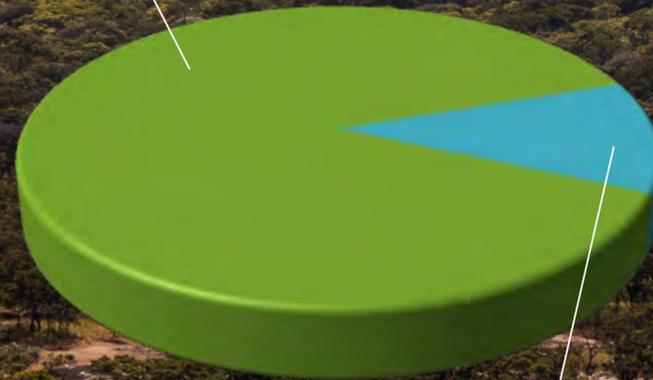
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Where your money goes

We raised **7.3 million** euros* in 2022.

In 2022, **88%** of our funding came from **corporates**



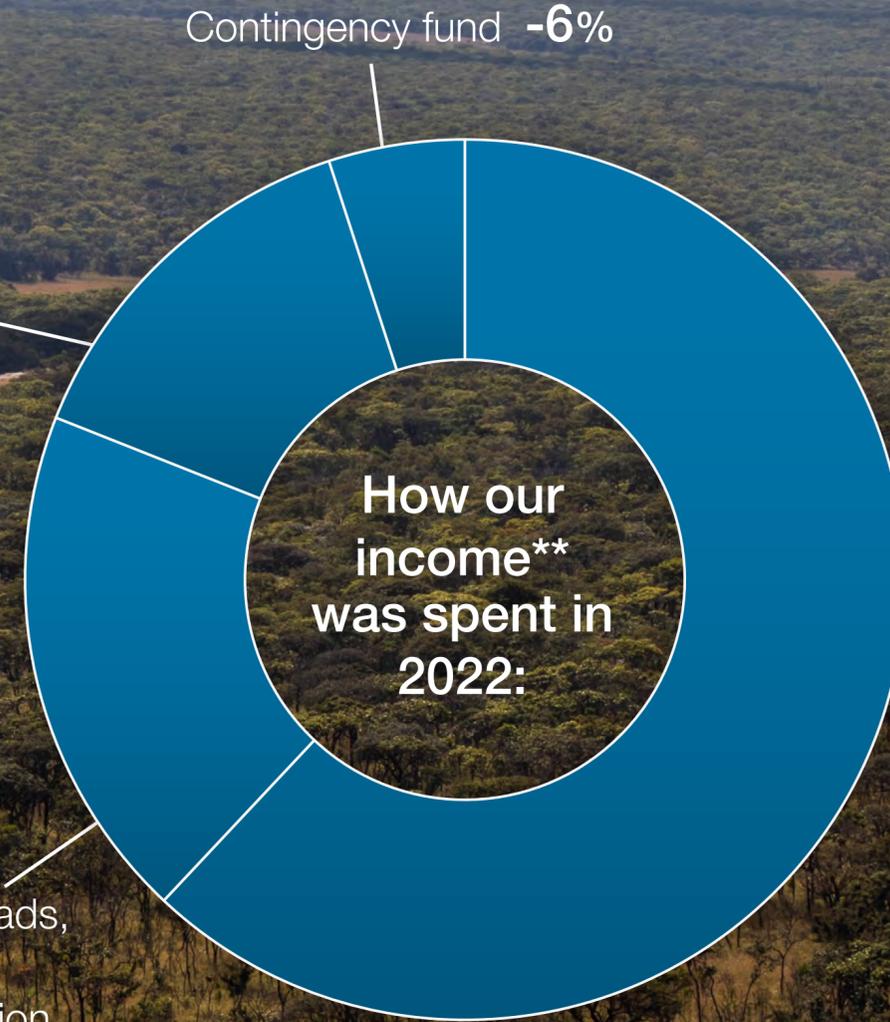
12% came from **philanthropic donors** including trusts and foundations

Specialist programme support (including M&E fund) **16%**

HQ overheads, general administration **21%**

Contingency fund **-6%**

Restoration and conservation activities **69%**



Our financial accounts are audited externally every year by **CDP**. They are published by the National Bank of Belgium and are available [here](#) (search 'weforest').

* before financial audit

** based on recognised income

Who We Are

Meet some of the team

In 2022 WeForest had 77 passionate people working in Africa, Europe and South America. Find out about our team [here](#).



Dr. Natalia Guerin is WeForest's Country Manager in Brazil. A teacher in high school inspired her to become a biologist, and her PhD thesis proposed restoration models that combined timber production with ecological gains using native species of the Atlantic Forest. "What I like the most about the job at WeForest is being able to interact with different people and landscapes, and working together to come up with solutions for the challenges in each project," she says. "Also, following the growth and evolution of the young forests is really fulfilling!"



Omar Sall, WeForest's Senegal Biodiversity Expert, studied Environmental Sciences and later focused on the Sustainable Management of Forest and Agroforestry Ecosystems. "Coming from the greenest part of Senegal, Casamance, I enjoyed all the benefits that nature offered us during my childhood," he says. "However, very early in the 2000s we started to feel the direct effects of climate change. This motivated my interest in studying agronomy and forestry to have the tools to preserve the natural resources of my region."



It's lucky for WeForest that Mulanje Field Manager **Thokozani Chavura** didn't follow her first ambition! As a child she wanted to be a lawyer, but her father's passion about nature and the environment inspired her to study forestry, as she wanted to protect and contribute to changing and balancing the depleting natural resources in Malawi. "I decided to specialize in informatics so that I can transform data into knowledge that professionals can use in transforming degraded forests into healthy ones," she says.

30
new staff members joined us in 2022

77
staff members in total

48%
women

52%
men

14
nationalities

69%
of staff members work in the field

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Charting a course for success

WeForest's governance operates under a set of guiding principles that embody the qualities of true leadership: accountability, integrity, stewardship, transparency – and unwavering commitment.

As of January 2022, a new Board has taken the reins, charged with ensuring that WeForest stays true to its mission while remaining financially viable.

This dynamic team of strategic leaders is responsible for setting the direction of our organization and for disseminating our core values, making critical decisions, and ensuring that we remain accountable and transparent in all that we do.

Our Trustees are appointed by the General Assembly and commit to three-year renewable mandates.



Bill Liao
Co-founder & Chairman



Marie-Noëlle Keijzer
Co-Founder, Vice-Chair & CEO



Laurent Durieux
Science & Research Trustee



Soumaya Graine
Legal & Ethics Trustee



Olivier Lefebvre
Governance Trustee & Secretary



Helena Michielsen
Treasurer



Louise Quy
Partnership Trustee

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Looking to the Future

The year 2023 marks a new phase in the fight against climate change and biodiversity loss.

WeForest has dedicated much thought and effort to its carbon strategy, exploring opportunities for carbon funding to scale up interventions and ensure long-term impacts.

The “nature positive” movement has led to businesses setting out their own strategies and goals, and WeForest aims to propel and deepen its outcomes towards the shared goal by building on its robust network of partnerships.

Protecting and restoring forests and landscapes is essential to reversing the double planetary crisis of climate change and biodiversity loss, and nature-based solutions can deliver up to one third of the progress needed to reach the 1.5° Paris target.

WeForest’s model sits at the nexus of the United Nations’ sustainability agenda, and the organization is committed to remaining a best-in-class organization that blends cutting-edge science and local knowledge, solidifies partnerships, and disseminates learnings and values.

Let’s take action together to make 2023 the year of nature positive change and protect and restore our planet for future generations.



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