



© Christer Sauerberg

# Making Earth Cooler

Transforming Landscapes for Climate, People & Planet

2016 Annual Report



LETTER FROM THE CEO

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEAR

PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

MEASURING OUR IMPACT ON  
CLIMATE, PEOPLE & PLANET

GROUNDING IN SCIENCE

THE SPONSORS & DONORS  
THAT MAKE IT POSSIBLE

INVESTING IN COMMUNICATION  
& MARKETING

THE LEADERSHIP BEHIND  
OUR WORK

GROWING A MOVEMENT



Photograph © Marie-Noëlle Keijzer interviewed at Mint radio  
© Mint Radio

Restoring enough degraded forests to limit global warming is a gigantic task. The UN estimated the need in 2014 to be 350m ha by 2030, or an area the size of India.

No one can do this alone.

It requires more experts trained in best practices, high quality pilot projects to serve as models for replication, a joint funding effort between private and public sectors to reach that kind of scale, as well as active advocacy to pass supportive legislations that drive forest protection and restoration. It also requires technology and tools to show the positive impacts, demonstrating that it works!

All of these have been the WeForest focus during 2016: providing a solid foundations for our next 5 year programme (2017-2021) and preparing us for the challenges ahead.

We can do it, together.

**Marie-Noëlle Keijzer, CEO.**

# HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEAR

## Close to 15 million trees

4.000.274 trees were added during 2016, totalling 14.796.607 trees since 2009.

## An area larger than Paris

3.091 ha have been restored in 2016, totalling 11.405 ha since 2009. This area represents almost 2 times the size of Manhattan and is larger than the city of Paris.



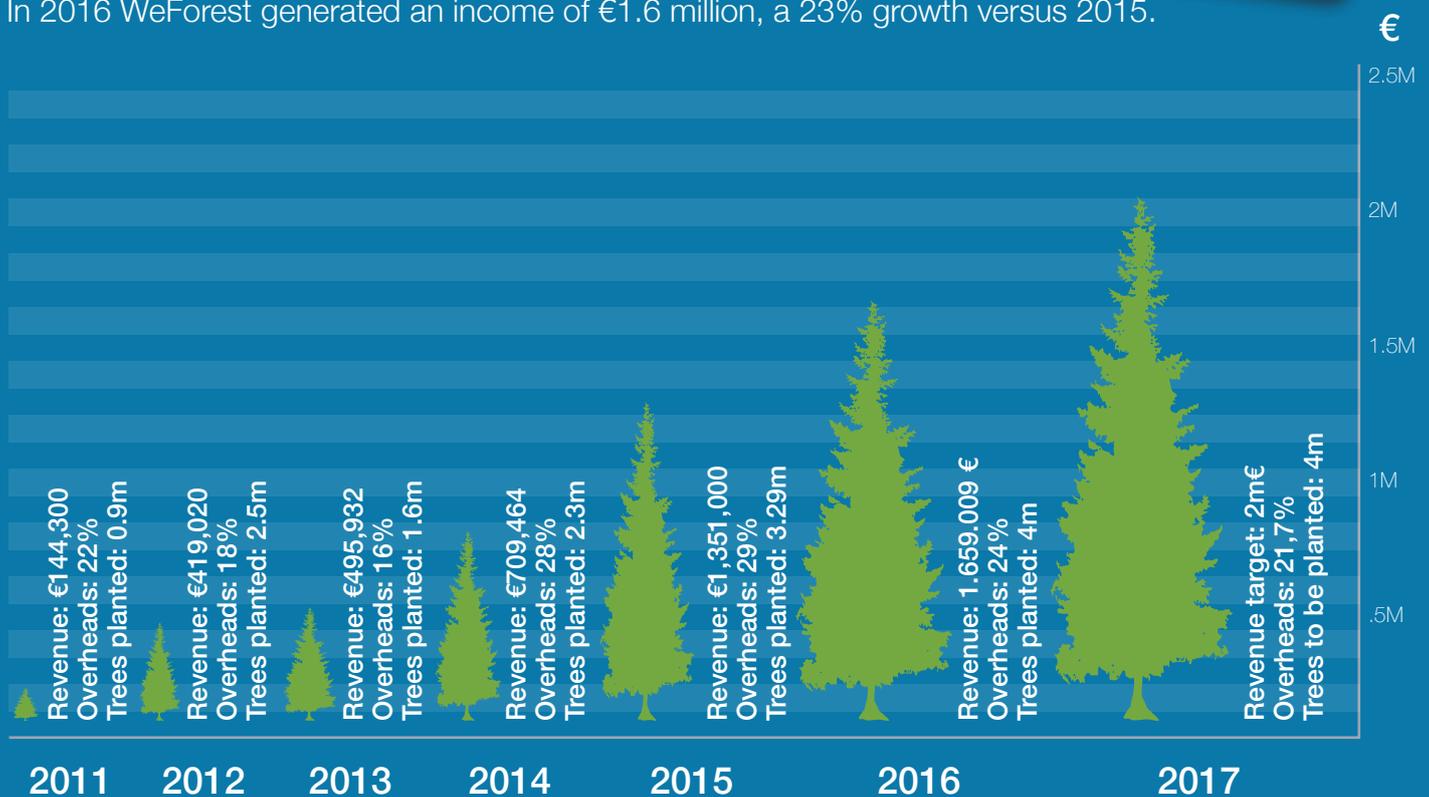
## A new website

As a WeForest partner you want to visualize the real impact of the project you sponsor: a new website was launched during 2016 with rich, interactive and dynamic content. It will continue to develop and provide more details about sponsors and how they contribute today in order to inspire everyone to participate.



## A double digit growth

In 2016 WeForest generated an income of €1.6 million, a 23% growth versus 2015.



The overheads were budgeted at 20%: due to a lower income than expected, and an investment in a new website and mapping system, the actual overheads in 2016 reached 24%, which is a clear decrease versus 2015. Our accounts are audited by Deloitte every year since 2011.

# HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEAR



## Focus remains on corporates

91% of the income generated in 2016 was from corporates, 8% from public grants and 1,5% from individual donations.

## Income diversification for long term resilience and scaling

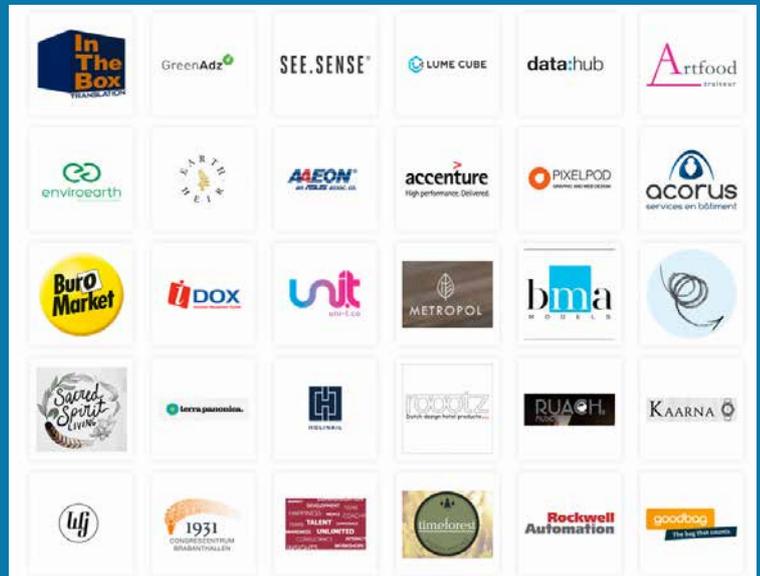
WeForest started to diversify its income stream with public grants from Belgium and a strategic partnership with the **German Development Agency (GIZ)**. In addition, WeForest and its local partners secured the support from the **Finnish Development Cooperation and Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland** to boost its project in Zambia for 2017 and 2018, primarily to support local entrepreneurship in Natural Resource Management. Real scalability will be achieved when every private contribution can be matched by a public grant.



# HIGHLIGHTS

## FROM THE YEAR

**228 companies and counting**  
**38 new companies joined the WeForest movement: totalling 228 brands since 2009. 96% of the trees that were planted were for partners that have embedded tree planting in their activity and make recurring contributions.**



### Individual contributions are now easy

WeForest focuses on corporate engagement. However for the first time we joined a crowdfunding platform: the first campaign with GlobalGiving in the USA generated (between March and December 2016) 220 donations, and an income of 12.290 USD, with an average of 56 USD per person.

[www.weforest.org/page/get-involved#sponsortrees](http://www.weforest.org/page/get-involved#sponsortrees)

### More sponsors than donors

More and more companies contribute to WeForest as sponsors (84%) (and not so much as donors (charitable donations), even if WeForest is tax deductible in most of Europe and USA. Why is that? Responsible companies consider this investment in 'People, Planet and Climate' as essential to sustain their activity and protect their brand: CSR is therefore embedded in their business for the long term. WeForest contributes to sponsors by featuring their impact on the website.

WeForest contributes to sponsors by featuring their impact on the website, social media and newsletters. [www.weforest.org/page/our-partners](http://www.weforest.org/page/our-partners)

# PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS & IMPACT

## Number of Trees to Date by Country



### 15 million trees in 10 countries since 2009

We only intervene in tropical degraded areas where we identify a clear opportunity for restoration that benefits local communities and the potential for a scalable model. We aim to be a catalyst, inspiring other actors to act and restore forest landscapes. Using the principle of adaptive management, we continuously improve our projects and disseminate outcomes and lessons learned to other stakeholders.

### A diverse project portfolio

7 active projects in 5 developing countries, with a strong focus on Tanzania, Zambia and Ethiopia during 2016.



# PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS & IMPACT



Amhara and  
Tigray regions

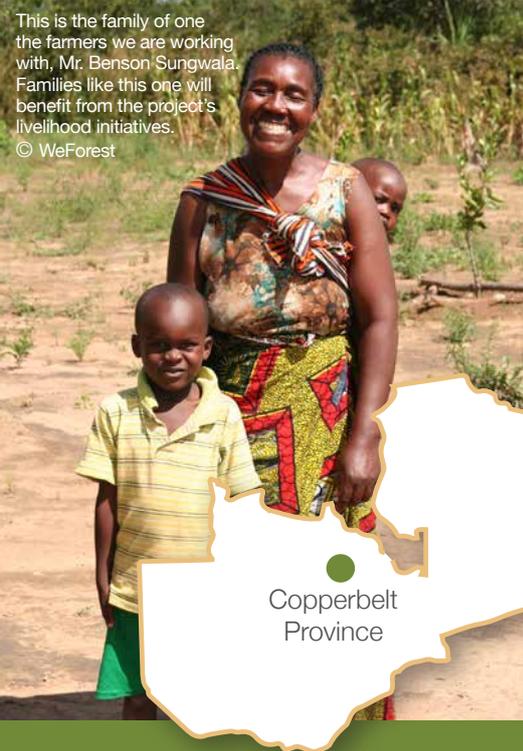


## Combatting desertification in Ethiopia.

WeForest began its projects in Ethiopia towards the end of 2015 and spent 2016 designing and planning with its local partners and the local communities to restore the degraded lands. Our sites are in the Amhara and Tigray regions, both of which suffer from severe land degradation, erosion and drought. We hired a project manager (Aklilu), who works closely with local, regional and national stakeholders to reforest, by increase resilience and then disseminate best practices.

- In Tigray, the strategic partnership with GIZ, (German Development Cooperation Agency) enabled us to start the restoration of the Desa'a Forest, one of the only remaining larger forest areas in the North of Ethiopia. It is a biodiversity hotspot, home to IUCN red listed species, and has an important function for climate mitigation and adaption in a region at risk of desertification.
- In parallel, a collaboration with Trees For Farmers and Mekele University has been set up to convert unproductive community land (also called "exclosures") to forests that provides ecosystem services and non-timber forest products to the local population.
- In Amhara, soil erosion is a severe problem. WeForest teams up with The Hunger Project - a grass root organization that mobilizes local communities – aiming to rehabilitate degraded areas and integrate trees in the landscape. An ambitious partnership, where communities are getting trained to take ownership of their natural capital and to sustainably manage their land.

# PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS & IMPACT



This is the family of one of the farmers we are working with, Mr. Benson Sungwala. Families like this one will benefit from the project's livelihood initiatives.  
© WeForest

## Empowering Farmers in Zambia

The pilot project we initiated in the Copperbelt to restore miombo forests while diversifying the farmers' income grew in 2016 through regional, national and international partnerships. We focused on creating market linkages for sustainably harvested biomass and honey. The project received a grant from the Civil Society Environment Fund (CSEF), a four-year programme to empower civil society in implementing projects and promoting sustainable development in Zambia. Co-funding is provided by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and DGIS and implemented by FFD and AgriCord in the framework of Farmers Fighting Poverty Programme. Thanks to this support we can double now the impact of each euro invested! Matthias was hired to be our local Project Manager.

### 10 Restoration principles guide us towards successful projects.

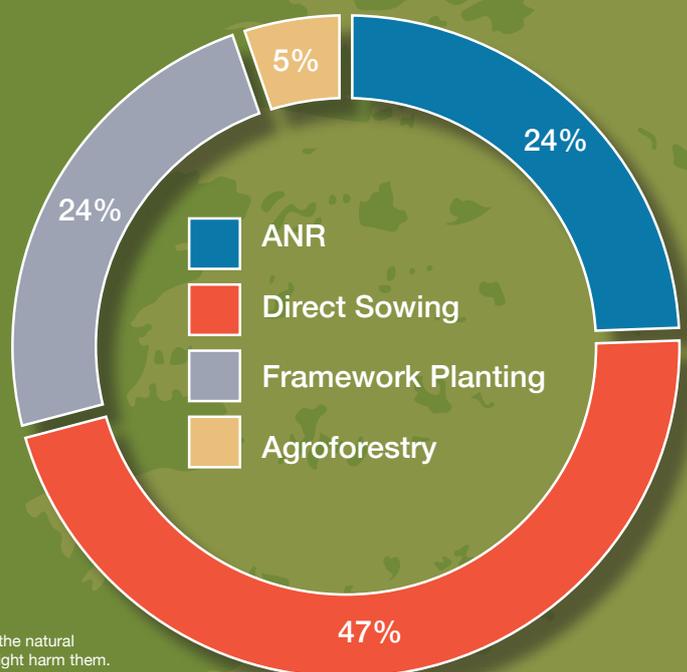
- 1. Intervention
- 2. Tropical Focus
- 3. Root Cause
- 4. Community Engagement
- 5. Women Empowerment
- 6. Ecosystem Services
- 7. Livelihood Improvement
- 8. Inclusiveness
- 9. Collaboration
- 10. Context-Driven

### 4 Restoration methods

Each project has its most adapted planting method. See the proportion used during 2016 on the graph.

With ANR (Assisted Natural Regeneration<sup>1</sup>) we protect and nurture wild seedlings present in the area, and plant native species in gaps and open areas to increase diversity, also called "enrichment planting"<sup>2</sup> Other trees grow from seeds that are directly sown or in nurseries to be transplanted. The trees that were not sown were planted through framework planting with a large number of pioneer and climax tree species and some agroforestry.

### Restoration techniques



<sup>1</sup> ANR is a method that enhances the natural processes of forest restoration, focusing on encouraging the natural establishment and subsequent growth of indigenous forest trees, while preventing any factors that might harm them.  
<sup>2</sup> Planting trees to increase the population density of existing tree species or to increase tree species richness by adding tree species to degraded forest; often used as part of assisted natural regeneration schemes.

# PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS & IMPACT

## Our contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's).

Besides being an amazing carbon sink, trees directly contribute to soil, water, biodiversity and livelihoods. When you plant a tree you impact all SDG's and contribute more specifically to goals #1,2,5,6,8,13,15.



WeForest partners with rural communities living alongside degraded forests. Through a holistic approach that combines ecological restoration with livelihood development, we seek to reconcile the needs of rural families with the need to conserve, manage and restore the world's forests.



# PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS & IMPACT

## IMPACT ON PEOPLE

We empower local communities to take care of their natural capital and promote resilient livelihoods. Families benefit from higher and more diversified income, new skills and better health. We make sure trees worth more standing than felled.

### More families engaged



In 2016, the number of people employed across our projects was 153. 5.865, people received training and 5.472 households brought home a steady income thanks to our projects, not counting the future benefits for climate and biodiversity that we will all enjoy!

### Women entrepreneurship



Women make up the majority of the world's poor and are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change. That's why we have a special programme to provide them with opportunities to learn valuable skills and become financially independent. In Zambia, 46 women received training and resources to set up their own nurseries and can now earn a living selling fruit trees.

### Valuable forest products



Forests provide valuable food, medicines, handicraft materials and more. In Amhara, Ethiopia, participatory discussions involving the local villages took place to empower them to choose which species should be planted. Among others, they chose gešo, a common ingredient found in tej (Ethiopian honey wine) and talla (Ethiopian beer).

### New fuel-efficient, healthier cooking stoves



Producing charcoal causes large swathes of forests to be cleared and, when used for cooking, charcoal exposes families to toxic smoke. Across the globe, household air pollution from cooking fires kills more children every year than AIDS and malaria combined. In Zambia, we subsidize rural families to switch from charcoal to fuel-efficient and low polluting Peko Pe cooking stoves. 192 families made the switch in 2016.

### Honey production



Beehives provide extra income and incentivize forest restoration. In Zambia, we funded 1.000, beehives, for the farmers engaged in our project and partnered with BeeSweet to secure the sale of the farmers' honey. Farmers can earn around \$80 per year per hectare of forest, a healthy addition to their average farm income of \$300.

# PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS & IMPACT

## IMPACT ON THE CLIMATE & PLANET

WeForest restores forest landscapes across the globe. So far, we have worked spanning 10 countries and 3 continents. Our approach to forest restoration keeps carbon stored in trees, restores the landscape, improves the water cycle and promotes biodiversity.

### More forests restored



In 2016, we restored over 3.000 ha. Our direct impact now totals 11,405 ha spanning a variety of different forest types - from cloud forest to wet Miombo woodland. Our plan is to double this impact in the next 5 years, scaling these projects and adding new projects to our portfolio.

### Compensating for the carbon footprint of 100,000 Belgians



Trees are the best carbon sink to mitigate global warming. By funding 11.405 ha of forest restoration, our partners are helping to keep an estimated 782.452 ton of CO<sub>2</sub> stored in trees after they have completed their growth curve in 20 to 30 years. This amount of carbon represents the annual carbon footprint of 100.000 Belgians or 50.000 Americans .

### 324 diverse plant species



We plant and protect a high diversity of indigenous species. In 2016, the number of species across our projects grew to a total of 324. We also protect threatened species. In the Desa'a Forest in Ethiopia, we are now conserving the endangered *Dracaena ombet* tree. Conserving forest biodiversity is a crucial step towards building a healthy and functional forest.

### Wildlife conservation



In Brazil, three animal species listed as threatened on the IUCN Red List were spotted in the patches of forest our partner is restoring. The forest provides important habitat for the tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*), the black lion tamarin (*Leontopithecus chrysopygus*) and the white lipped peccary (*Tayassu pecari*).

### Restoring the water cycle starts with trees



We know that forests are essential for water availability and global cooling at multiple scales: at watershed, regional and continental levels. This is visible especially in the tropics, where forests contribute to increasing cloud cover and cooling our planet. Ethiopia is one of the countries that is suffering once again from the El Niño-induced drought, where below average rains have led to new symptoms of drought. Livestock deaths and water shortages are being reported: 9.2 million people are already without safe drinking water. Restoring the degraded forests will eventually help bring water back to this region, hopefully avoiding such dramatic crises in future.



## GROUNDING IN SCIENCE

### WeForest started a dedicated science department end of 2015 with 2 priorities:

- Strengthen the reforestation project strategy and execution through the integration of applied research,
- Support the organisation's activities in ways that advance the understanding of forest landscape restoration and the role forests play in mitigating and adapting to climate change.

**New research partnerships** were initiated in 2016 and include the following institutions: Copperbelt University (Zambia), Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, KU Leuven (Belgium), Mekele University (Ethiopia). Official partnerships are expected in 2017.

### 2016 Research activities

**A research committee** was formed with Dr. Pedro H.S. Brancalion, Prof. Robin Chazdon, Dr Ricardo A.G. Viani, Dr Carla Morsello, Dr Edson Vidal, Dr. Laury Cullen and Dr Victoria Gutierrez (from WeForest). This led to an MOU with following research partners: University of Sao Paulo (LASTROP, EACH), IPE, University of San Carlos (LASPEF).

Research on ecological and socio-economic impact of forest corridors started in Pontal do Paranapanema, Brazil. 2 MSc students were recruited and started with data collection in October.

### Joining global expert networks

In June, WeForest joined the Water Footprint Network and the Water Footprint Research Alliance. [waterfootprint.org/en/waterfootprint.org/en/standard/water-footprint-research-alliance/](http://waterfootprint.org/en/waterfootprint.org/en/standard/water-footprint-research-alliance/)

### WeForest collaborates with FAO's Forest and Water Programme in different ways:

- Speaking at the "Forest and Water in Action" session. Asian-Pacific Forestry Week, Pampanga, Philippines, 22-26 February 2016.
- Contributing to the monitoring framework expert workshop 27-30 September 2016, Stockholm, hosted by FAO's "Forest and Water Programme" and the Swedish Water House.



### Growing a team of scientific advisors [www.weforest.org/page/about-us](http://www.weforest.org/page/about-us)

#### Three new experts joined in 2016:

- Sampurno Bruijzeel (Kings College London and VU University of Amsterdam). Sampurno has been involved in grant applications for researching dry-season flows at WeForest's India project site.
- Iain Woodhouse (Geographer and GIS specialist at Edinburgh University). Iain is involved in researching forest cover changes using GIS technology in Zambia.
- Daniel Murdiyarso, CIFOR. Daniel has collaborated with WeForest since the Forest-water-climate nexus workshop in 2015. He has been involved in grant applications and collaborated in the writing of a scientific article.

# SPONSORS AND DONORS THAT MAKE IT POSSIBLE



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

Between 2009 and 2016, WeForest has partnered with 228 companies, large and small from multiple countries including Fortune 100 companies (some of which are not yet disclosed).

The average contribution per account in 2016 was 28.000€.

For details on brands and their activity with us, see our website [www.weforest.org/page/our-partners](http://www.weforest.org/page/our-partners)



# INVESTING IN COMMUNICATION & MARKETING

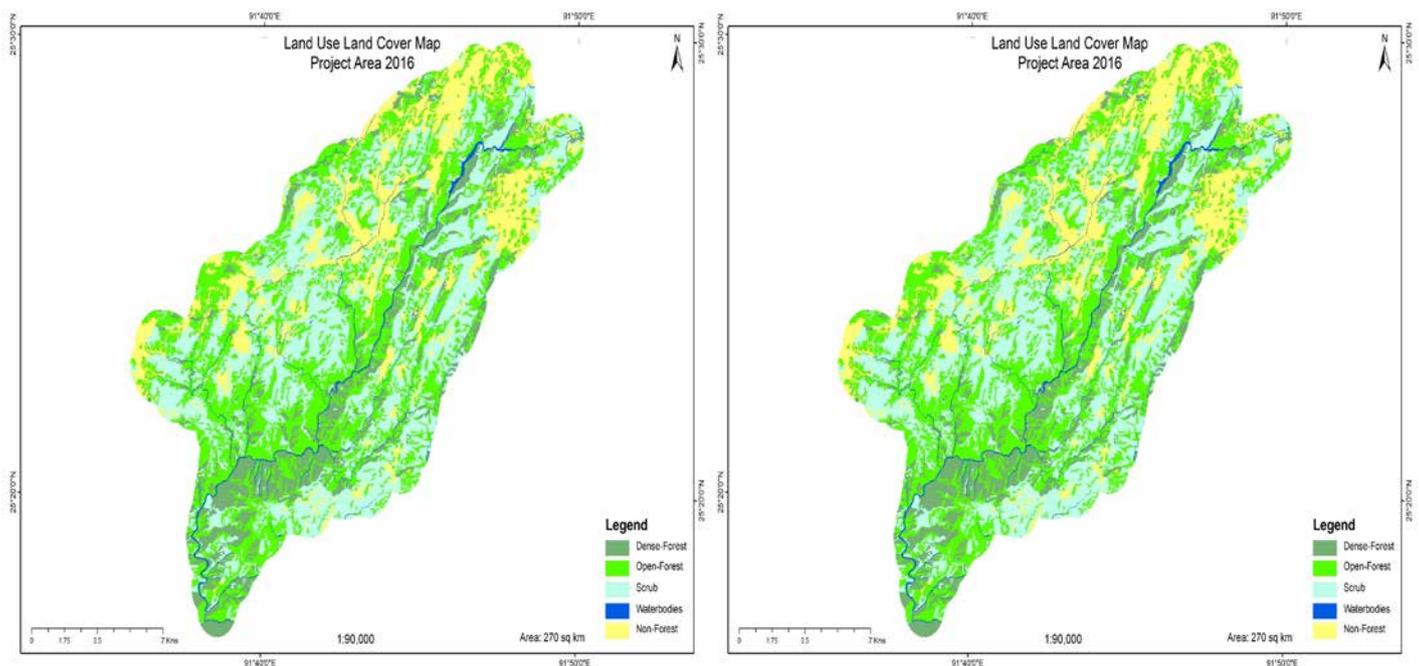
In 2016 WeForest continued to improve its communication on projects to give corporate partners visuals and specific information on their positive impact on People, Planet and Climate.

## Maps to make the impact 'real'

Tailor-made maps linking company contributions to specific planting locations show where your trees are growing. This expertise is provided by the 'Open Forests' team. For these maps, GPS points are collected to build donor specific polygons. In Zambia for example, the participating farmers use a GIS3 application run on tablets and smartphones to provide these GPS points. Drawing the exact boundaries of the multiple forest plots we are restoring can be quite a job where multiple donors contribute: in India alone, we already have more than 40 of them.

## The power of Satellite imagery

The restored areas are also monitored via satellite images for vegetation surveys. This for example, helped identify the progress in India which was achieved thanks to firelines: (the forest cover grew 37% and forest density gained 9% between 2011 and 2016).



# INVESTING IN COMMUNICATION & MARKETING

## Drones

'Parrot Drones' became a WeForest sponsor in 2016 and besides funding trees for one of their smart products, they also donated drones for the monitoring of our activities. These will be used for visualizations before and after planting, measuring changes of forest cover and growth.

The first drone training for our team is scheduled early 2017.

In Brazil drones help us monitor impact.  
Photograph (C) WeForest

# Parrot®



## Camera Traps show that animals are returning

In Brazil our focus is to connect remaining forest patches with forest corridors so that wildlife (jaguars, ocelots, pumas, tapirs...) can circulate and reproduce.

In order to measure if wildlife is actually returning, 'camtraps' were installed by our partner IPE: seeing animals thrive is already a huge reward!

[www.weforest.org/newsroom/caught-camera-puma](http://www.weforest.org/newsroom/caught-camera-puma)

Forests benefit native wildlife.  
Here, a camera trap captures  
a puma moving through the  
intervention site in Brazil  
Photograph © IPE



# INVESTING IN COMMUNICATION & MARKETING

## A New website

In 2016 WeForest invested in creating a new website with following key features:

- Visual project updates.
- Enhanced sponsor pages.
- Automated interface with salesforce CRM to update tree counters and sponsors' impact.
- Blogpost to keep sponsors informed of the latest news from the projects, and allowing them to share their impact with their stakeholders.



# LEADERSHIP



40 professionals were actively engaged with WeForest in 2016, including 15 employees/consultants (10 full time equivalent), and 25 volunteers, all scattered across 14 countries and 5 continents!

The core team is located in Belgium, Germany, UK, Ethiopia and Zambia. From that team, 5 people were directly involved in developing and managing the project activities and 6 focused on customer support and business development.

# GROWING A MOVEMENT

## The WeForest Mission

“We advance innovative, scalable and lasting solutions to restore forest landscapes for climate, people and planet.”

2016 month by month...

- March: WeForest was sponsored by ‘Salon du Running in Paris.
- March: partnership with 1% for the planet.
- April: Visit to Indian nursery & polygon for audit & collection of video footage.
- May: Aklilu Negussie joins our team to manage Ethiopia projects.
- August: Matthias Debeenhouwer joins our team to manage the Zambia project.
- July: Morocco dryland restoration project pre-assessment visit.
- June: WeForest CEO keynote speaker at Essentials, the annual Salesforce user conference in Mechelen, Belgium.
- July: Photo shooting in Brazil.
- July: PM Modi of India visits Khasi Hills project.
- October: Launch of new website.
- November: WeForest CEO speaker at Crowdsourcing week in Brussels Belgium.
- November: WeForest signed the Marrakesh Declaration for Sustainable Development of the Oil Palm Sector in Africa [www.tfa2020.org/en/activities/african-palm-oil-initiative/](http://www.tfa2020.org/en/activities/african-palm-oil-initiative/)
- November: The Thai princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn visits the Khasi Hills project area.



Salon du Running  
Photograph (C) WeForest



PM Modi of India visits Khasi Hills project  
Photograph (C) WeForest



Crowdsourcing week in Brussels Belgium



Thai princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn

# GROWING A MOVEMENT



## Outreach in a few numbers

- 228 corporate partners (+27% versus 2015).
- 4,372 newsletter subscribers (+23% versus 2015).
- 61,239 new website unique visitors, 82,854 total website visits between October and December (new launch).
- 9,875 Facebook fans (+23% versus 2015).
- 712 LinkedIn followers (+33% versus 2015).

## The next 5 years

For the period ahead (2017-2021) WeForest will focus on 5 objectives:

1. Developing and disseminating Forest Landscape Restoration best practices,
2. Continuing to leverage science to measure our impact,
3. Ensure financial resilience to sustain and double our impact,
4. Gain visibility through our numerous partners to inspire all into action,
5. Be a great place to work.

## You can be part of making this happen.

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

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.