



WeForest
Making Earth Cooler

Annual Report 2018



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Vision

We imagine a world where communities and nations sustainably manage their forests and natural resources for the benefit of our climate, our environment and humanity.

Board of Directors

Bill Liao
Marie-Noëlle Keijzer
Astrid Leyssens
Jan Vets
Tom de Fauw

Photo: WaldIm Nembel/Fotalia





LETTER FROM OUR CEO

The people on the streets are shouting it: we need to act for climate and we need to do it now.

We have been repeating for nine years that a simple solution exists to mitigate global warming and its negative impact on people, flora and fauna.

Restoring the equivalent of an area the size of the USA (10 million km²) with forests would help us stay under the 1,5 °C, according to the Oct 2018 IPCC SR1.5 report.

Who is hearing us?

Well, something is starting to happen: every single day new requests arrive from corporates and organisations to join our movement. 128 partners funded us in 2018 and the large majority are regular sponsors, engaging for the long term.

In spite of doubling our teams and capacity during 2018, we are struggling to keep up with the high demand.

This is actually great news and our main focus in the year to come will be to grow the number and size of our forestry projects to enable more partners to join.

Marie-Noëlle Keijzer

CEO of WeForest



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEAR

IMPACT ON THE PLANET

WeForest restores forest landscapes across the globe.

In 2018 we were working in seven different project sites across three continents, protecting a total of 16 different flora and fauna species that are officially endangered. Our approach to forest restoration keeps carbon stored in trees and soil, restores the landscape, improves the water cycle and promotes biodiversity.

RESTORING AN AREA THE SIZE OF BRUSSELS CAPITAL REGION

Our main metric for success is the number of trees planted and the hectares restored.

In 2018 we planted close to 2,4 million trees, bringing our overall tree counter to nearly reach the 19 million. We restored 2,100 hectares across seven active projects, which brings our total direct restoration area to 15,383 hectares since we started in 2009. Close to the size of the Brussels Capital Region.

Our work focuses on the entire landscape and includes the surrounding communities for which we create new sources of income, away from forest destruction. We estimate that our direct restoration area benefited a region 12 times larger (183,000 hectares).

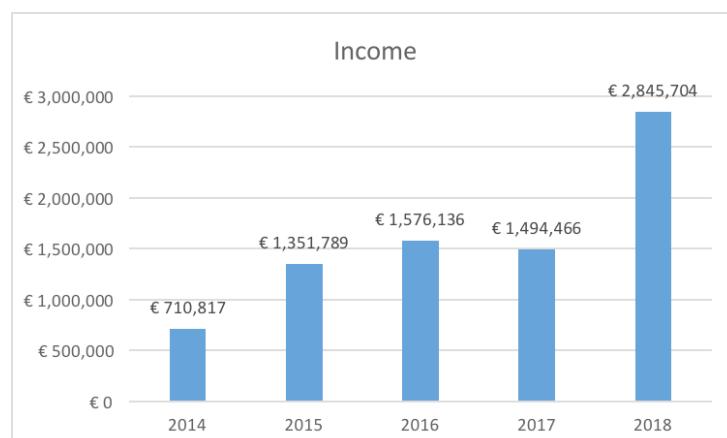


A YEAR OF GROWTH: MORE, LARGER AND RECURRING CONTRIBUTIONS.

Doubling our income

With €2,8 million income in 2018, we doubled our income compared to 2017 (+93%) and exceeded our plans. Our overheads in 2018 were 17% of our income and are spent on growing our impact and strengthening our operational excellence.

Our accounts are audited by Deloitte every year since 2011. The 2018 account audit will be completed by May 2019.



More predictable income

Thanks to a strong pipeline of contracts we developed end of 2017, which included several large pluri-annual agreements, we are now able to forecast future income and plan for additional capacity, which can take six months to one year to develop.



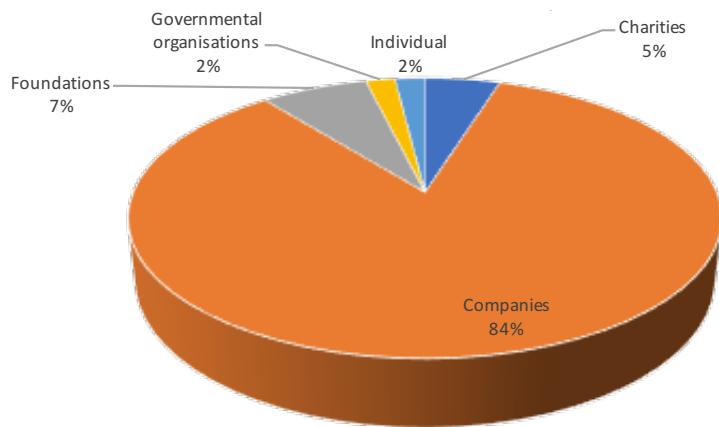
349 partners

128 partners funded us in 2018, bringing the number of all time partners to 349.

Larger partnerships

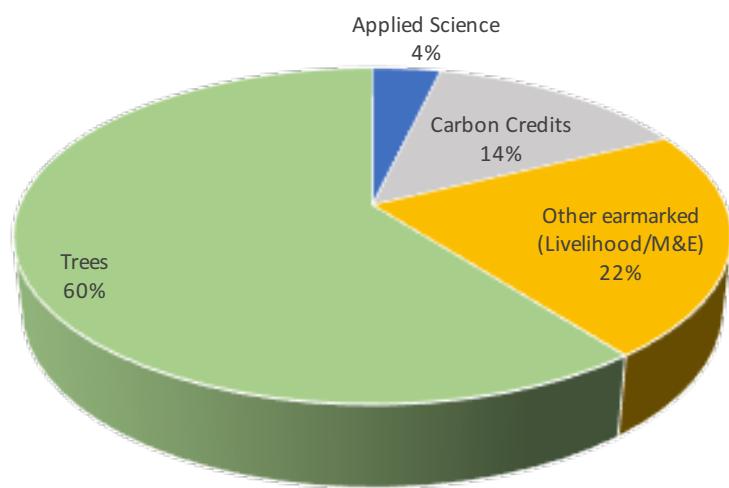
Our top 10 contributors made up 82% of our income, with one large account alone contributing with 41% to our top line.

62% of all accounts were recurring business, showing a very positive trend versus the previous year (+9%).



Mainly private funds

Unlike the previous years, our funding was mainly from corporates and foundations, no major public funding (except FAO) was received in 2018.



Fund's destination

60% of the 2018 funding was meant for trees, 22% for livelihoods or M&E (Monitoring and Evaluation), 14% for carbon credits and 4% for applied science.

FOREST IMPACT ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

By planting trees we contribute to achieving all SDGs and in particular SDGs 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 13 and 15.





HOW WE CHOOSE OUR RESTORATION PROJECTS?

We intervene in degraded tropical areas, in which we identify a clear opportunity for restoration that benefits local communities and the potential for developing a scalable model. There, we aim to be a catalyst, inspiring other actors to act and restore forest landscapes.

Ethiopia Desa'a: protecting the oldest remaining dry afromontane forest

In northern Ethiopia (Tigray and Afar regions), this project is transforming an entire region (150,000 ha) of old dry afromontane forest, known as the cradle of humankind and civilization. It is also one of the few remaining biodiversity hotspots on earth and the last barrier against the desert coming from the north and from the east, yet 70% of it has already disappeared, and the remaining 30% is severely degraded.

Local communities grow crops and raise livestock and totally rely on the forest for water, energy, and feed for their cattle. We combine conservation and restoration techniques, to restore buffer zones around pristine conservation areas. Local farmers are trained to become stewards of their forest, providing them with additional income, secure food production, and access to clean water supply.

Two years later, the results are in: hundreds of thousands of native trees are growing, beehives are installed to double farmers' income - and solar lights have been distributed to help school children do their homework after dark and reduce pressure on the forest.



Amount of trees planted in 2018 / all-time (since 2017)	622.832 / 762.834
Amount of ha's under restoration in 2018 /all-time (since 2017)	640 / 784



Photo: WeForest

Ethiopia Seret, restoring and protecting exclosures (“no-go”zones)

Extensive and poor agricultural practices, grazing, and illegal logging are the main factors responsible for severe deforestation in Ethiopia. Some degraded areas however are more critical than others, if for example they are a key source of water or if located uphill from settlements and can cause landslides. Identifying these exclosures (“no-go”zones) and restoring them with the participation of surrounding villagers, directly benefits the entire community.

Amount of trees planted in 2018 / all-time (since 2016)	41.383 / 64.455
Amount of ha's under restoration in 2018 /all-time (since 2016)	22 / 56

Tanzania, Kinesi: transitioning farmers to permaculture farming

Like in many places in Africa, poverty leads villagers to cut trees to produce charcoal for cooking or to sell on local markets. Deforestation is also exacerbated by the grazing of goats and cows. Our focus is to train rural families so that standing forest are more valuable to them than felled trees.

They receive trees from our central nursery which they transplant to homesteads, school grounds and plantations and are trained in conservation techniques such as pruning, coppicing and in sustainable agricultural practices including permaculture so that the trees boost agriculture yield and food production. By involving local schools, kids learn to take care of forests from a young age.



Photo: GRA

Amount of trees planted in 2018 / all-time (since 2011)	395.000 / 925.565
Amount of ha's under restoration in 2018 / all-time (since 2011)	359 / 883



Photo: WeForest

India Meghalaya: new farming techniques and alternative fuel sources

The Khasi Hills in the Indian Meghalaya ecoregion is known as the wettest place on earth as well as for its unique biodiversity.

As many places in India, these forests are directly threatened by charcoal production, grazing and forest fires. We therefore train the Khasi tribes on running tree nurseries that provide the trees for enrichment planting and on new farming techniques to stop further forest degradation. We also fund alternative sources of fuel to reduce pressure on existing and the new forests.

Amount of trees planted in 2018 / all-time (since 2011)	416.500 / 2.089.850
Amount of ha's under restoration in 2018 / all-time (since 2011)	500 / 2500



Zambia Luanshya: hundreds of farmers joining the programme every year

In the Copperbelt, hundreds of small-scale farmers sign-up for our programme every year to learn to restore and protect the trees on their farms and develop alternative sources income so that trees do not need to be cut down anymore. Some women are selected for their skills to run their own nurseries: they then sell fruit trees to other farmers for a steady income. Scale is achieved by asking farmers to train other farmers ('train the trainer' model).



Photo: WeForest

Amount of trees planted in 2018 / all time (since 2010)	451.470 / 1.885.431
Amount of ha's under restoration in 2018 / all-time since (2010)	376 / 1.526



Photo: IPE

Brazil Mata Atlantica: reconnecting remaining forest patches for the biggest benefit of wildlife

This project restores forest corridors between two important remnants of the Atlantic Forest, the Morro do Diabo State Park and the Iguacu National park. The forest has been cleared to such an extent that for example in the region of Pontal do Paranapanema, where we work, only 3% remains.

The project relies on strong partnerships with local community-run nurseries and members of the Landless Workers' Movement to carry out the nursery and plant and care for the trees. Private landowners are also engaged in the project by restoring forests on their own land.

Amount of trees planted in 2018 / all-time (since 2014)	397.400 / 1.479.102
Amount of ha's under restoration in 2018 / all-time (since 2014)	200 / 738

Ethiopia Amhara: increase food security and restore native forest

Ethiopia has suffered widespread clearance of forests as a result of agriculture, charcoal production, fuelwood and timber harvesting, causing extensive soil erosion, formation of gullies and the loss of fertile soil.

WeForest, through a bottom-up approach, works to increase food security, reduce environmental pressure and restore community land, river banks and farmlands in the Amhara region. When the rainy season starts (end of June) trees are planted in agroforestry systems on farm and grazing lands as well as in communal lands and gullies.

Through this, the project improves the wellbeing and resilience of the households in the entire landscape by increasing biomass and land productivity. Villagers are also supported to develop sustainable business activities like apiculture to increase their income.



Photo: WeForest

Amount of trees planted in 2018 / all-time (since 2016)	662.588 / 964.504
Amount of ha's under restoration in 2018 / all-time (since 2016)	60 / 584

IMPACT ON CLIMATE, PEOPLE & PLANET



IMPACT ON CLIMATE

Trees are the best carbon sink to mitigate global warming

The trees in our projects absorb between 150 and 250 kg of CO₂ over 20 or 30 years of growth (depending on the species, climate and measurement standard). The close to 19 million trees planted by WeForest until now in all the projects (both active and closed) will eventually- after 20-30 years- withdraw up to 2 million tons of CO₂ from the atmosphere.

This represents the annual carbon footprint of 200 000 Europeans.



IMPACT ON PEOPLE

Our objective is not the planting of trees, our objective is to restore and protect forest for the long-term. Our work is about inventing new solutions so that people do not depend on forests for their survival. With our projects, rural communities benefit from higher and more diversified income, new skills and better health. We make sure trees are worth more standing than felled.

Every family counts

In 2018, across our seven active projects, thanks to our activities:

4057 people were trained

3844 people were employed

6424 enjoyed a higher income.

Gender focus

Women make up the majority of the world's poor and are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Therefore we developed a programme to provide them with opportunities to learn valuable skills and become financially independent. In Zambia for example 36% of people engaged are women, and in India as much as 75%.



Sakani, in Zambia, lives with her mother, grandmother and daughter all under one roof. She used to be able to plant enough maize on her land to feed her family thanks to the stream that runs through it. Unfortunately this water dries up for a number of months every year, making it difficult to grow anything. She joined our two-day forest restoration program for local farmers and learned what trees can help boost the growth of crops (Nitrogen Fixing trees) or how trees help rainwater infiltration and recharge the groundwater to build a water reserve for the dry season.



Photo: ZEI

Community nurseries are mostly led by women. In 2018, 76 community nurseries were active across our projects: 36 in India and 19 in Zambia alone.



Useful species

Forests provide valuable food, medicines, handicraft materials and much 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). In Zambia, a new avocado tree specie was added in 2018: avocado trees are resilient and low-maintenance and a mature avocado tree can reach up to 10 meter (and sequester 10 kg of CO₂ per year!)

Alternative income from honey production

Beehives provide extra income and incentivize forest restoration. In 2018, we gave 1841 beehives for the 615 farmers engaged in our projects. On average, one beehive provides an additional \$80 per year, which is a healthy addition to their low income.

Alfred is one of our farmers in Zambia. In the 2018 July harvest he got honey from three of the five beehives that are installed in his land. All together they produced a total of 122 kg of honey, equating to 16% of his annual cash income.



Photo: WeForest



Photo: WeForest

Bamboo for additional income

The climatic conditions and the availability of bamboo has made bamboo crafting a main livelihood activity in the Ri-Bhoi District in India.

The indigenous people of Meghalaya make different handicrafts out of it such as stools, bags and house decorations, which are an attraction for tourists and locals alike. In September, a two days training with 20 participants was organized, with the objective to increase the skills of bamboo crafting and create additional livelihood opportunities.

Some participants, such as Bah Teibor, a youth volunteer of the project, participated for the second time in the training and were able to reinforce their skills.



Women learning Permaculture

After following a plant nursery training course at WeForest training center, Maggie started to grow fruit tree seedlings from seeds in her own nursery in her garden, grafting and selling them. She also engaged in developing a permaculture garden.

During a recent visit she says: *'Thanks to the WeForest training and equipment they provided, I've now learnt a valuable skill that I can bring into practice without investing or losing out on other sources of income. I hope to expand my nursery and permaculture as more people buy my products.'*



Photo: D. van Corstanje/WeForest

IMPACT ON THE PLANET



Fuel efficient and 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 2018, 951 fuel-efficient cookstoves were subsidized across our projects. For example, in Ethiopia Desa'a, the cookstoves reduce the amount of fuelwood needed by 30-50% compared to traditional stoves, this makes it a key component of the strategy to reduce the pressure on forest resources, meanwhile fulfilling a basic need.

In Zambia, we subsidize fuel-efficient and low-pollution Peko Pe cooking stoves for rural families that agree to switch from charcoal. 244 families have already made the switch.



Over 400 plant species

We plant and protect a high diversity of indigenous species. In 2018, the number of species across our projects exceeded 400 (with 160 species in Brazil, 90 in Ethiopia Desa'a and 70 in Zambia Luanshya alone). We also protect threatened species: the Millettia ferruginea and Albezia gummosa in the Amhara region in Ethiopia and the Dragon Tree (Dracaena ombet) Erica arborea and Dobera glabra in the Ethiopian Desa'a forest. Conserving forest biodiversity is a crucial step towards building a healthy and functional forest.



A responsibility towards fauna as well

The black lion tamarin (*Leontopithecus chrysopygus*) was considered extinct in the wild. Though he still remains endangered due to forest fragmentation, he can be seen in our Brazil project site again.

Also, the giant anteater (*Myrmecophaga tridactyla*) was spotted roaming our Brazil restoration sites. This vulnerable species has lost approximately one third of its populations in the last decade. Our work is not just about planting trees, it really is to restore the diversity and resilience of a natural forest, with all its flora and fauna.

GROUNDED IN SCIENCE



Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR)

WeForest is playing a leadership role in FLR and is member of the Global Partnership on Forest and Landscape Restoration (GPFLR), a consortium of proactive stakeholders, engaging decision-makers, the private sector, civil society and other actors in promoting best practices. We collaborate with organizations such as AFR100, PACT, GPFLR & FLoRES.



Photo: FLoRES Taskforce

In 2018 our Science team joined the Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) in Bonn, the GPFLR Members meeting, AFR100 Meeting Nairobi, and co-organized the Nairobi FLR workshop in Kenya: a special event organised by WeForest and the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) with the support of PARTNERS.

The event brought together a diverse range of international stakeholders to discuss the need for quality standards for Forest and Landscape Restoration (FLR) in Africa. Representatives from inter-governmental organisations such as the African Union, The World Bank and the African Organisation for Standardisation; research organisations (e.g. CIFOR and WRI); and NGO's such as WWF, Rainforest Alliance, Biodiversity International and the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) took part in the discussions.

Workshops in India and Ethiopia

WeForest conducted three capacity building workshops in 2018, of which two in India and one in Ethiopia, with the aim of strengthening local knowledge and capacity in measuring and monitoring forest-water relationships and enabling the integration of forests and water in FLR strategies.



Photo: WeForest

THE LEADERSHIP BEHIND OUR WORK

In 2018, the WeForest team almost doubled in size: 43 heads scattered across four continents (Belgium, Germany, UK, South Africa, Spain, Ethiopia, Zambia and Brazil). 75% of our team is directly involved in developing and managing the project activities , 25% are in central support functions. This does not include the 31 volunteers who are either part of the board or ambassadors. Gender balance is important in our team as well: 49% of our employees are female.



GROWING A MOVEMENT



A GROWING NUMBER OF CORPORATE PARTNERS

Wex, UCB, Diorapthe, Swift, Treesisters, Nike, Delifrance and Duvel were our top sponsors and most have a pluri-annual commitment. For example, UCB will fund 12,000 ha of the Desa'a project in Ethiopia during 13 years and 20 more years of monitoring to compensate for its unavoidable carbon footprint.



MORE THAN 1 NEW STORY A WEEK

Our news section on the website had 58 new stories over the last year with the top 3 performing stories being:

[The Tyranny of plastic](#)

[Together, let's move Earth Overshoot Day](#)

[#EarthToo](#)

GROWING OUR ONLINE PRESENCE

We had 89.000 website visitors in 2018, which is 11% less than in 2017.

And a total of 9.000 social media followers, 27% more than in 2017.

Facebook: 14.050 followers, 23% more than in 2017

Twitter: 1899, a 12% increase compared to 2017

LinkedIn: 1658, 60% more than in 2017

Instagram: 1750, a 65% increase compared to 2017

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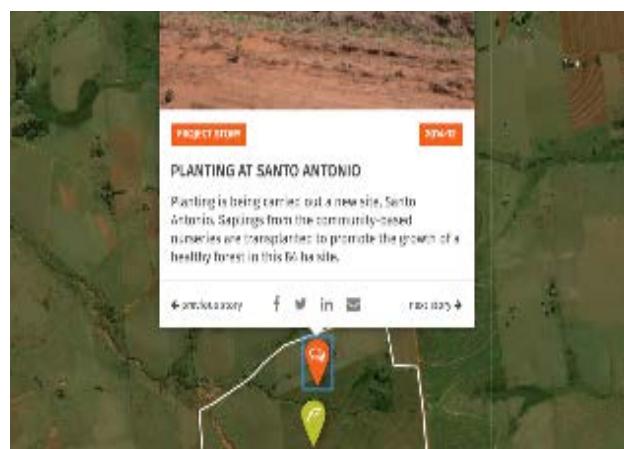
#EarthDay2018 is coming soon (22 April) and you still have time to act and #MakeEarthCooler, #EndPlasticPollution
<https://lnkd.in/dGieUZ>
with Earth Day Network



OUR PARTNERS HELP OUR VISIBILITY

Several very active partners (Cleanfox, Vigo Krankenversicherung, Freshly Cosmetics and Wado) route their visitors to our website and accounted for almost 20.000 visitors last year, an increase of 270% compared to 2017.

NEW PICTURE LIBRARY FOR PARTNERS TO USE MAPS TO SHOW WHERE WE PLANT



WEFOREST IN THE MEDIA

Breaking the vicious circle

Interview with Marie-Noëlle Keijzer on the Belgian news [\(video in French\)](#)



Reforestation is neither a luxury nor a question for hippies

[BNP Paribas Fortis Publication](#)



Insights Benelux is committing to plant 1.000.000 trees until 2025 with WeForest

[Insights Benelux video](#)



A world where
communities and
nations sustainably
manage their forests
and natural resources
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our climate, our
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humanity.

The WeForest Vision



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Photo: D. Law