

THE RESTORATION INITIATIVE

Newsletter

Featuring news stories and impact of The Restoration Initiative and our work with partners across the globe

ISSUE 03 - JANUARY TO JULY 2023



Sowing Change: Country Insights on Forest and Landscape Restoration

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Over 470,636 plants produced since project start and additional 200.82 Ha of land restored in Cameroon

News



TRI provides technological inputs, builds capacity on forest and landscape restoration in China



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A man holds a seedling from a tree nursery in Laikipia County, Kenya. Photo - FAO Kenya



*Awa Sanha, a female beneficiary supported by the Restoration Initiative on her Oyster farm in Elia Island.
Photo - P.Campredon*

TRI Relieves Pressure on Natural Resources, Engages Over 1,600 Women in Elia, Guinea Bisau

Women in Guinea-Bissau's Elia Island, located on the right bank of the Cacheu River close to its mouth in the Atlantic Ocean, have been trained by The Restoration Initiative in growing oysters and with this training have been cultivating oysters for the past two years.

The project team visited women in the village to check on the growth of the oysters. One of the women beneficiaries on the Island explained a technique introduced by The Restoration Initiative to meet their cultivation needs.

Awa Sanha, a female beneficiary, said, "We no longer need to take a pirogue to collect wild water oysters; those we cultivate are on the edge of the village. The wild oysters are no longer as abundant as they were in the past, so we need to give them more time to recover".

The project is working with women in Elia to relieve women's workload by enhancing their skills to work more efficiently while reducing pressure on the island's natural resources.

During the first year of the project, consultation with the women enabled them to define their priorities for income-generating activities:

- rice huskers were deployed to save the effort of manual pounding;
- fenced market gardens were equipped with wells,
- women were trained in solar salt production, a less exhausting method that does not require cutting mangrove wood -unlike traditional production which is usually carried out by cooking brine,

- women were also trained on oyster farming on lines;
- women received support for the construction of improved stoves that reduce the wood needed for cooking in half, as well as received support to promote village ecotourism.

Some of these activities contribute to domestic needs and the surplus is sold to generate income for women, usually in weekly markets located at a distance from the villages.

In these mostly economically independent communities, the sale of vegetables, salt or oysters represents the only opportunity for women to make additional incomes, enabling them to access basic necessities and pay for their children's school fees.

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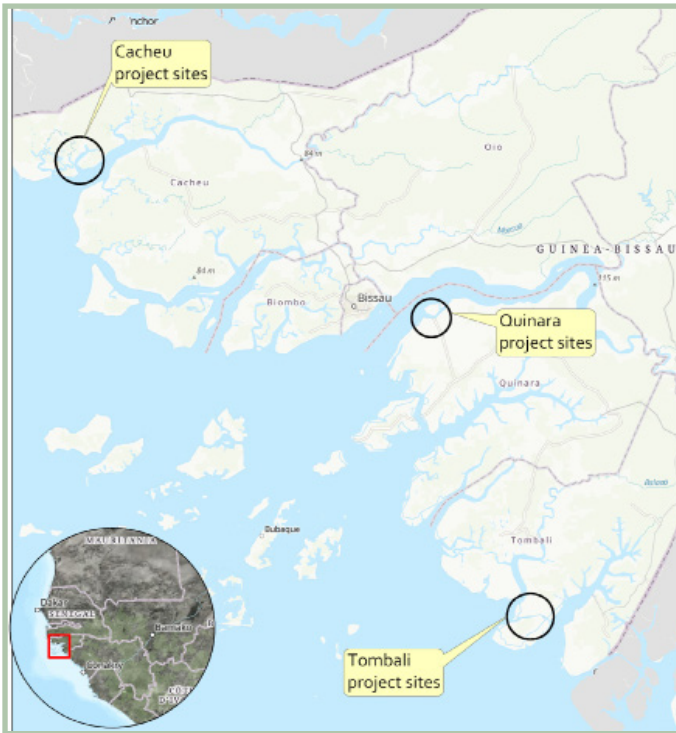
With support from The Restoration Initiative, two of the isolated villages have also received a motorised canoe to transport and sell their products, source portable drinking water (the women of the village of Djobel had to row for almost 6 hours to do this), and respond to a health emergency.

In total, through these activities, almost all the women in the ten villages (nearly 1,600 women) are involved in the project. The mangroves, for their part, are significantly spared since they benefit from major restoration efforts through other parts of the project.

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Guinea Bissau - Our Journey, Our Impact

TRI Project Sites



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Project Updates and Achievements

The Guinea-Bissau project tapped into its nationally relevant expertise and partnered with two new villages to restore mangroves in their abandoned rice fields, after the original villages were no longer able to participate.

- After 3 years of project implementation, 3 project sites have been named Mangrove Champions, with 767 hectares of mangroves have been restored, either by manual planting of 322,332 propagules and seeds, or by assisted natural regeneration techniques.
- 972 hectares of rice fields have been rehabilitated through the supply of hydraulic equipment such as tubes of different diameters, valves, etc., as well as 48 tons of seeds of rice varieties adapted to the conditions of mangrove rice fields.
- The National Coordination Platform for Restoration was established.
- Community development for women was expanded with the establishment of fenced vegetable gardens with wells, rice threshers and hullers in sheds, improved stoves, horticultural equipment, solar salt, oyster farming, and motorised canoes.

The TRI Guinea-Bissau project established the national mangrove platform, building upon the dynamics of mangrove and rice field restoration achieving satisfactory and encouraging results.

With the distribution of 27.4 tonnes of improved rice seeds adapted to climate change to the communities of the sites concerned by the project, this showcased how social responses to ecological and productive crises in the project sites are being implemented.

Impact in numbers

Adopted policies to support forest & landscape restoration



Area of land under restoration



Area of land under improved management



Value of resources for forest & landscape restoration



TRI knowledge products produced





Women picking up neem tree products at a neem tree plantation. Photo © Fogoh John Muafor



Empowering Women, Generating Incomes in Waza, Northern Cameroon

Located in the far north region of Cameroon in the Logone-et-Chari department, Waza is a community whose forest landscape has experienced excessive degradation due to the very harsh climate. The Restoration Initiative has been working with partners and implementers to encourage the domestication of the neem tree species in the local community.

Introduced in the community by traditional practitioners in the 1970s after the country's independence, the neem tree species was planted in local communities, including Waza, with limited access in the early years only by the village chief who had exclusive tree rights.

Over the years, neem has gradually become indispensable to communities, the environment and the improvement of household incomes.

Due to its strong adaptive capacity and its importance, the TRI Project prioritized it in the context of the restoration of degraded forest landscapes.

For example, strategies have been put in place to promote the domestication of neem in this area of the project (Waza), so that everyone has their own neem tree to use.

Mohamat Bouba, a farmer from Aïssa Hardé community said, "Our landscape was already turning into a desert, but the project has helped reduce the risk of desertification that was threatening our village". Communities have been trained to produce neem oil with multiple therapeutic virtues including for skin care, as antibacterial, antifungal, anti-inflammatory and antiseptic lotion, for treating stomach aches and hair treatment.

Economically, the neem plantations under the project represent an essential output for the empowerment of women in Waza. The capacity of twenty two women was built in neem oil extraction. Women are engaged alongside men in the management and maintenance of the plantation and in the production of neem oil.

The price of a litre of neem oil varies between 3000 and 5000 FCFA depending on the season, which represents 30% of household income in the Aïssa-Hardé community.

Jacqueline Dehimbe, a community member, said "I have been extracting neem oil for a few years. In the context of the project, my husband received neem plants for his field. I market neem oil to buy soap at home, food and send my children to school. The sale of neem oil helps us a lot in our locality despite the difficulties we encounter with the animals and the lack of water to water the plants."



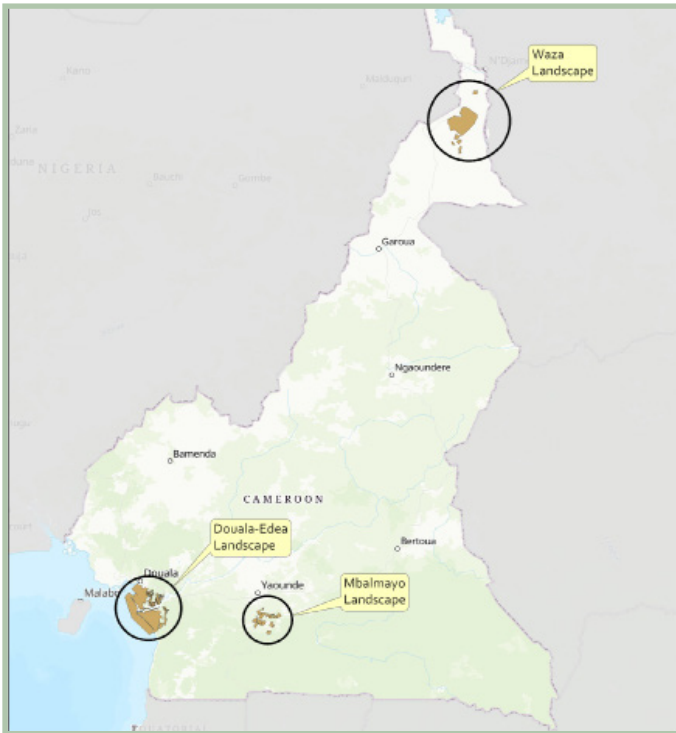
With the support provided by The Restoration Initiative, the culture of planting neem has increased in Waza, not only for restoration but also for improving livelihoods and living conditions of communities.

TRI and its partners have planted more than 25,163 neem trees in private plantations owned by the community with the support of the project. Communities have restored degraded lands in Waza, providing the communities with access to wood resources and shade.



Cameroon - Our Journey, Our Impact

TRI Project Sites



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Additional 160,740 seedlings (plants) produced for planting in three project landscapes, making the total number of 470,636 plants produced since project start; Over 200.82 Ha of land has been restored by establishing new plantations, making the total land restored by plantation establishment to 597,86 ha since project start.

Additional 5,947.84ha of forest under improved management, thus making a total of 8,947.5.14 Ha of forest land brought under improved management to benefit biodiversity.

Impact in numbers

Adopted policies to support forest & landscape restoration



Area of land under restoration



Area of land under improved management



Value of resources for forest & landscape restoration



TRI knowledge products produced



Project Updates and Achievements

The Restoration Initiative in Cameroon provided:

- Support to the Government of Cameroon in the elaboration and launching of the Harmonized Action Plan (2020-2030) for the Restoration of Degraded Land and Forest Landscapes in Cameroon. This document provides detailed action plan and budget for FLR between 2020 and 2030 in Cameroon.
- Support to the Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development (MINEPDED) in preparation of a manual on FLR good practices in Cameroon (Validation workshop planned for the 25/7/2023).
- Support to the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF) on the development and operationalization of an electronic platform for trade and information exchange between suppliers and buyers of bamboo and NTFP products (Validation workshop planned for August 2023).
- Support to 1,639 people (1158 men and 481 women) under the project (including training, plantation establishment, value chain development, material and financial support).



Participants at the inaugural Mukogodo forest Walk Wild event. Photo © FAO

“Walking The Talk” in Kenya’s Mukogodo Region, Friends of Mukogodo Launch Restoration Network

Thousands of Kenyans including men, women, and young people joined in person (400 walkers) and virtually in a 10-kilometre walk on November 19th 2022, which was organised by the ILMAMUSI Community Forest Association (CFA) in Mukogodo.

The Mukogodo Forest is the largest forest in Laikipia County, covering 30,189 hectares of natural forest and it is one of the project sites for The Restoration Initiative (TRI) in Kenya. The walk was held to raise awareness about TRI, the Mukogodo forest restoration and tree planting, as well to motivate local support to restore lands and forest landscapes in the Mukogodo ecosystem.

Out of a total 372 gazetted forests, the Mukogodo is one of the nation’s few remaining dry forests and the only one under exclusive management of an Indigenous community, the Yaaku.

FAO, through TRI, has been supporting ILMAMUSI CFA’s operations and project activities aimed at restoration of the Mukogodo landscape (tree planting, grass reseeding, capacity building of CFA members among others) and the “Walk Wild” event.

Participants in the walk were informed about the achievements of The Restoration Initiative and its activities in Mukogodo forest landscape. The walk also provided an opportunity to raise funds to support forest landscape restoration within the Mukogodo region of Kenya.

Virtual participants joined in thousands as viewers of the event via social and mass media platforms of Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, Instagram, radio and television.

The TRI project is being implemented through partners in Kenya among which are the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), Laikipia Wildlife Forum (LWF), Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), Kenya Forest Service (KFS), Borana Conservancy, Lewa Wildlife Conservancy (LWC), County Government of Laikipia, African Nature Investors (ANI), Laikipia Conservancies Association (LCA), Northern Rangeland Trust (NRT), IMPACT, community lands among many others.

A total of 1500 indigenous tree seedlings were also planted after the walk at Lokusero secondary school by all the participants.

The seedlings were provided by KFS and some of the seedlings also purchased by ILMAMUSI CFA.

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The Mukogodo Forest is a dryland forest at the northern edge of the Laikipia North Subcounty (Laikipia County of Kenya), surrounded by rangelands.

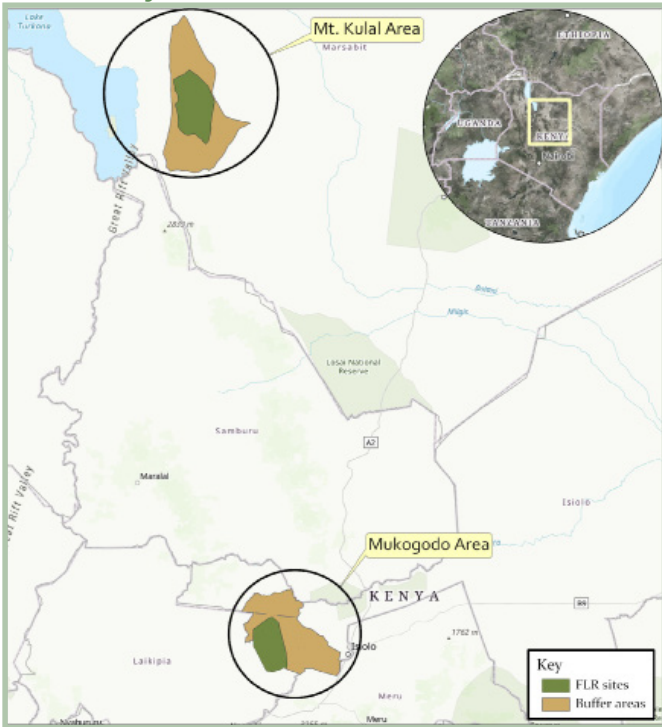
Community Forest Association members gain skills through trainings that contribute to bringing back the glory of the great communities of Mukogodo and their forest.

So far, membership is steadily growing from 270 to 350 members, along with an increase in beehives from 2 700 to 3 100 in less than one year of implementation.

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Kenya (Arid and Semi Arid Lands) - Our Journey, Our Impact

TRI Project Sites



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Project Updates and Achievements

TRI Kenya project and its partners are promoting the use of participatory forest management (PFM) to restore the Mukogodo landscape's vitality and empower communities through self-determination:

- A draft 5-year (2022–2026) forest and landscape restoration implementation plan (FOLAREP) has been developed to restore and sustainably manage deforested and degraded landscapes.
- Capacity needs assessments for restoration monitoring at county and national levels were the base for trainings on tools used for landscape restoration monitoring in Kenya.
- Based on consultations with 50 institutions and review of past and ongoing NTFPS interventions in Kenya, the project steering committee adopted a road map to guide the development of a National Non-Timber Forest Products Strategy in 2023.
- Five water infrastructure solutions have been rehabilitated, reaching over 10 000 beneficiaries.
- Production of more than 296,666 bamboo and NTFP seedlings and 4110 ha of degraded land restored.

The TRI Kenya arid and semi-arid lands project measured 152,661 ha of areas that directly contribute to biodiversity conservation and sustainable land use.

The project trained 831 community members through exchange visits on microcatchment technology.

Overall, the project directly benefited 21,259 people through various project activities.

Impact in numbers

Adopted policies to support forest & landscape restoration



Area of land under restoration



Area of land under improved management



Value of resources for forest & landscape restoration



TRI knowledge products produced





Ms. Wang Xiulian trying out the new equipment purchased with funds from the project © SFF China

TRI Provides Technological Inputs, Builds Capacity on Forest and Landscape Restoration in China

TRI Project team spoke to some of our project beneficiaries in the People's Republic of China. Wang Xiulian, 50 years old, has been working as a technician in Jinpenshan State-owned Forest Farm (SFF), one of the pilot SFFs of TRI-China Project.

"I live in Dawu Village, Xinfeng County, Jiangxi Province, only a few hundred meters from the Jinpenshan SFF. I have been familiar with the forest farm since childhood because I live near the SFF. After graduating from a higher vocational school, I met Jinpenshan SFF recruiting technicians. I applied for the job and was lucky to be selected" added Xiulian.

He continued, "At that time, timber was very easy to sell, and the government had vigorously encouraged afforestation with many favourable policies, so working as SFF technician was a perfect job in rural areas. Women in our SFF are very hardworking like men, and we did everything together, from mountain clearing, land preparation, afforestation, farming, breeding, etc. In recent years, as I got older, my main job became managing nurseries. We didn't have any sound equipment before and had to walk into the mountains with straw hats, food, and tools, and we often lived in the earthen houses we built. Later, as the economy improved and more roads were built, it became more and more convenient for shopping, and we no longer grew food, so our work became more manageable. But at the same time, our SFF was also impacted by the external economy", Xiulian said.

He went on to say "Timber sales fell into a loss, and wages could not be paid for several months at the most challenging time.

With the government's help, after the SFF Reform in 2015, our forest farm changed from an enterprise to a public institution, and the government pays our wages. Our current average annual salary improved by 40% more than before. However, after the reform, the target of SFF changed from selling wood to ecological protection and restoration, which is very unfamiliar to us. The lack of knowledge and technology became a challenge. The SFF that I am working in is one of the project's pilot areas, so at the beginning of the project launch in 2019, we were notified and participated in the launch meeting and training. We have been closely involved in various tasks in the past few years of project implementation", added Xiulian.

He informed the project team that the project has given support in many ways. "The first is funds. We used the project funds to purchase many devices, such as laptops, GPS locators, trapping cameras and other equipment. We also carried out afforestation, tending, and biodiversity monitoring, and carried out afforestation, tending, biodiversity monitoring and other work, which significantly improved our work efficiency", added Xiulian.

The project has impacted our communities positively. Through the project, SFF has carried out many forest restoration and ecological service & socio-economic monitoring works, as recruiting personnel from surrounding villages has provided many employment opportunities. On the other hand, Jinpenshan SFF has also launched some financing projects. For example, we lent land to villagers to grow traditional Chinese medicine and other NTFPs, and they can now earn an extra RMB 20,000 to 30,000 per year, which is very attractive to young people.

The People’s Republic of China - Our Journey, Our Impact

TRI Project Sites



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Project Updates and Achievements

The TRI China project supported 16 pilot state-owned forest farms to develop FLR-based innovative forest land restoration plans, which focused on improving key ecosystem services and delivering socioecological benefits to locals.

Some of the achievements are:

- Forest land restoration plans (FLRPs) have been approved by the National Forestry and Grassland Administration (NFGA) and officially issued to three pilot areas (one city and two counties).
- A press conference was held on 18 August, 2022, on the Chinese version of A guide to the Restoration Opportunity Assessment Methodology.
- A webinar on “Typical Technologies and Best Practices for Sustainable Forest Management” was held as part of the project “Sustainable Forest Management in China to Improve Capacity of Forests to Respond to Climate Change”. The webinar was aimed brought together local forestry workers from the project, with a total of more than 150 participants.

The number of individuals engaged by TRI Project in relevant national and subnational capacity-building events was 425.

The project engaged over 1,700 forest rangers and other stakeholders from across China participated in capacity-building events both in and outside the project pilot areas.

The number of direct beneficiaries reached in the People’s Republic of China with Project interventions is 52,000, with over 260,000 people impacted by TRI project.

Impact in numbers

Adopted policies to support forest & landscape restoration



Area of land under restoration



Area of land under improved management



Value of resources for forest & landscape restoration



TRI knowledge products produced





Trainees from Berberati session in a group photo after a training. Photo - TRI / CAR



Women Lead in Restoring Degraded Landscapes and Managing Forests in Mona Sao, Central African Republic

TRI project spoke to Brigitte Agbasso, 52, in Central African Republic. She is a widow and group leader in the community of Yobé and lives in Mona Sao. She cultivates her farm every year, working on one hectare of open forest annually. Read her story in her own words below:

“The village was facing enormous difficulties in finding arable land within 5km of it. The land was severely degraded, and production was insufficient to feed the household members.

She said “The WWF experts who often passed through Mona Sao stopped off one day in the village to announce that a project led by FAO would be carried out in our village to propose alternatives to improve our agricultural activities and avoid impacting our valuable protected areas”.

Village chiefs and prominent community leaders from the clustered villages of Pissa, Bombé, Boyama, Boyali and Bongombé in the southwest of the country had long sought to protect nearby forests and surrounding environments. It was through in-person meetings at the project sites that the TRI CAR project first learned of the coordinated efforts among three villages to establish a community forest.

She continued, “The TRI project has trained us to establish tree nurseries and collect seeds in the forest. Each household with fallow land will repurpose it to restoration actions and be responsible for planting trees and benefiting from agricultural seeds to maintain the trees in their fields. Our nursery site has grown so well.

Thanks to the project, we plan to pool a share of land for the cooperative’s agricultural production and set up a village savings bank to support the members” added Brigitte.

The TRI project in the Central African Republic (CAR) is focused on the five subprefectures in the southwest of the country, which is mainly forest area, including the prefecture of Lobaye and the commune of Pissa.

TRI project also supported the development of a simple forest management plan with two major sections, including capacity building and support in putting together and submitting an application for the allocation of community forests.

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“Our community has been impacted positively as the community has understood that our forest trees can be planted.

We have also chosen our income-generating activities and the project is training us in forming agricultural cooperatives to support our work and now we work as a cooperative”.

- Brigitte Agbasso, a female beneficiary, 52, in Central African Republic..

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Central African Republic - Our Journey, Our Impact

TRI Project Sites



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Project Updates and Achievements

The project continued to expand demonstration sites and first baseline studies, including with active participation of local communities. The development of a simple management plan for a forest area is a new opportunity to enhance the knowledge and adoption of management practices.

- National and subnational policy and regulatory frameworks are increasingly supportive of restoration and sustainable land management (SLM), thanks to the updated forest code, and this is expected to foster reforestation initiatives in the field.
- National policy and regulatory frameworks are also increasingly supportive of the provision of ecosystem services and the development of a Wood Energy Resource Management Master Plan for the Bangui/Bimbo catchment area.
- The restoration of native ecosystems through assisted natural regeneration is underway as part of a process to establish community forests in Guitto Forest. (material and financial support).
- Production of more than 296,666 bamboo and NTFP seedlings.

TRI Central African Republic (CAR) project continued to expand demonstration sites and first baseline studies, including with active participation from local communities.

The development of a simple management plan for a forest area is a new opportunity that the CAR project is implementing to enhance the knowledge and adoption of management practices.

Project support directly benefited 6,000 people.

Impact in numbers

Adopted policies to support forest & landscape restoration



Area of land under restoration



Area of land under improved management



Value of resources for forest & landscape restoration



TRI knowledge products produced



Photonews



Participants at a TRI supported workshop on Forest and Landscape Restoration in China, Photo - SFF China



Kenyan beekeeper Nicholas Kodei checks some beehives at his home in Arjiju, Laikipia County, Kenya within the Mukogodo Forest. Photo - FAO Kenya



Rice planting being carried out by women of Elia Village, Guinea Bisau. Photo - IUCN / Pierre Campredon



Lokusero, Laikipia County, Kenya - Women belonging to the Olingo Lelatia Women Group work collecting firewood in the Mukogodo Forest. Photo - FAO Kenya



Communities establishing an NTFP nursery in Cameroon Photo - IUCN / John Muafor



Inspection on plant reforestation site in Bombe, Central African Republic, Photo - FAO / Seigneur Yves Wilikoesse



Group photo during a distribution of seedlings to farmers in Cameroon. Photo - IUCN / John Muafor



Women working on a solar salt site in Guinea Bissau. Photo - IUCN / Pierre Campredon

The Restoration Initiative (TRI) unites 10 countries and three Global Environment Facility agencies – the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP).

The Restoration Initiative works together with governments and strategic partners to overcome existing barriers to restoration and to restore degraded landscapes.

A publication of the The Restoration Initiative
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