

# FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION (FLR) WITH FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS (FBOs) IN TANZANIA

## Overview

Faith groups are planting millions of trees a year across East Africa and globally. They plant trees for a variety of spiritual, social, economic and environmental reasons, including to address climate change, degradation and loss of forest cover.

In Tanzania, faith-based organizations (FBOs) reported planting over 22 million trees from 2016-2021 alone, with plans for millions more in the coming decade. The potential for faith groups in Tanzania to contribute their tree planting efforts to global and national landscape restoration goals is enormous, yet unexplored.

Faith groups hold vast assets in the form of land, influence, human resources and sustained dedication to care for nature underpinned by their faith teachings. Collaborations between faith and conservation actors to strengthen faith capacity to grow trees according to best scientific practice has the potential to be hugely impactful in restoring connectivity in critical landscapes within Tanzania.

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)'s Beliefs and Values Programme (BVP) and the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) Faith for Earth Coalition are partnering to test faith & restoration approaches in Tanzania in

support of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030).

This flagship project supports the aspirations of the Tanzania Forest Policy (1998) and the government's global commitment to restore 5.2 million hectares by 2030, which pledges to promote collaboration between government, NGOs and local communities in management of forest resources. Working in partnership with the Tanzania Forest Services Agency (TFS) national and regional offices, the faith and restoration initiative will address the main challenges identified by the policy, including:

- Low motivation;
- Limited awareness and technical capacity of local communities to engage in forest conservation;
- Weak voices of faith actors in advocacy around forest conservation and protection at the regional and national levels.



## WWF TCO & FBOs Partnership

The WWF Tanzania Country Office (WWF TCO) is now engaging with multi-faith groups on restoration at the national level, through the National Interfaith Committee of Tanzania. This platform has mobilized multi-faith organizations across Tanzania on tree growing for restoration through dialogue on the connection between beliefs, values and restoration, and by strengthening the capacity of FBOs to grow trees according to best scientific practice.

Through this national interfaith platform, WWF TCO facilitated an awareness raising and training workshop session for FBOs using the UNEP/WWF/ Trillion Trees Faith [Tree Growing and Restoration Guide](#). A total of 70 trees were planted in the CCT Church compound in Dodoma to mark the formal engagement between WWF and faith-based organizations in the country.

Working alongside the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT), WWF recognizes that the participation of faith groups in FLR will greatly contribute to Tanzania's restoration goals.

WWF is also supporting a faith-based restoration project in the Ruvuma landscape in southern Tanzania. Through a multi-faith network, more than 150 faith representatives are participating in restoration activities, and have planted more than 50,000 trees on faith owned lands. With an initial target to restore 400 ha of degraded faith lands, participating religious groups have come forward offering instead 4,000 ha of their lands to be restored through tree growing and assisted natural regeneration. Additional stakeholders in this pilot project include TFS under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT), local government authorities, and a women's tree growers' group.



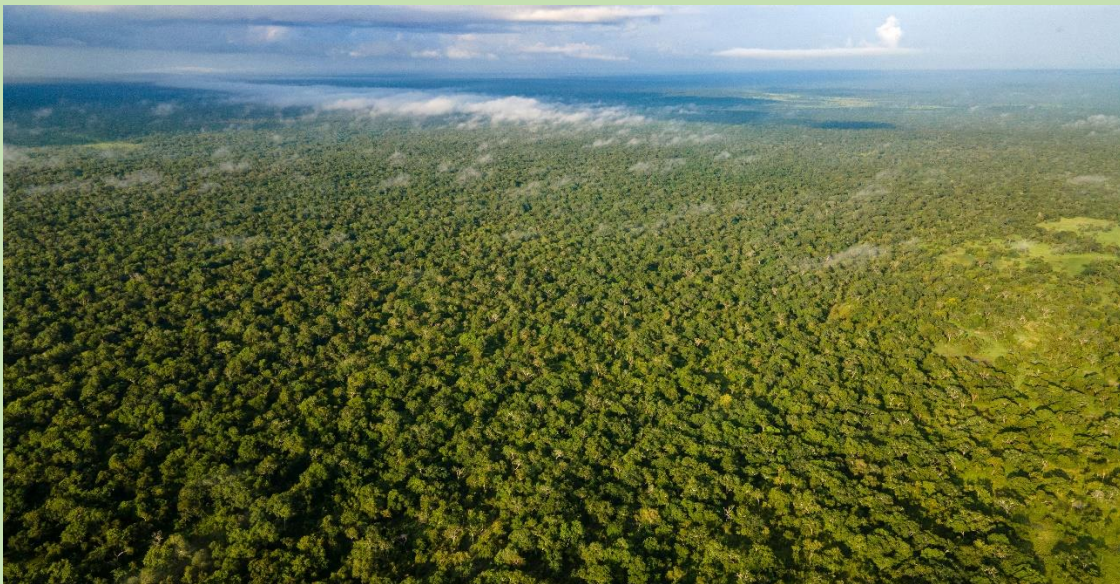
## Activities:

1. Identification of faith actors in Tanzania already active in or interested in tree growing for restoration.
2. Facilitation of a national level dialogue engaging different faith-based organization leaders through Tanzania's Interfaith committee, on delivering and upscaling FLR initiatives in Tanzania.
3. Facilitation of an awareness raising and training workshop session for FBOs using the UNEP/WWF/ TT Faith Tree Growing and Restoration Guide.
4. Undertaking a tree planting exercise in one of the selected sites in a chosen landscape as a marker for this initial formal engagement with the faith-based organizations in the country.
5. Initiation of a faith & restoration pilot project in the Ruvuma Landscape.



## Project Results:

1. FBOs are now new partners in landscape restoration in Tanzania: The first Faith & Restoration network was established at the national level, with 14 FBOs from across the country.
2. Faith representatives from this network committed their FBOs to develop restoration action plans including developing a fundraising strategy.
3. The capacity of participating FBOs was strengthened regarding understanding the basics of restoration and best practice in tree growing.
4. The WWF TCO is now for the first time bringing in faith actors as major partners in its conservation work, especially in its Forest Programme/ FLR strategy and workplans. This includes supporting FBOs in gaining recognition as important actors in national environmental conservation efforts.
5. The foundational relationships developed through this project enabled the WWF TCO to receive a grant in July 2023 from WWF's Innovation Funds of US \$75,000 to engage with FBOs on faith and restoration in the globally important Ruvuma landscape, in southern Tanzania.
6. In the Ruvuma project, 150 faith representatives have so far planted 50,000 trees. From an initial goal of 400ha of faith land to be restored, faith groups have offered 4,000 ha of their lands for restoration.



**This flyer was developed in February 2024. For more information, please contact:**

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