




GOFORREST

2023 Report

Sarah's reflection on 2023

What a year. It's crazy what can happen in 365 days.

Dear Go Forest members,
Enthusiasts,
Nature lovers,

As we reflect on the remarkable journey of 2023, I am filled with immense gratitude for the incredible support, encouragements, and opportunities that have shaped the year. Our community (you!) has been the driving force behind the positive impact we've achieved together.

"May the force be with you" – The force was there.

On a personal level, it was a rollercoaster where the lows were nothing compared to the beautiful highs. I pushed my limits and during a super busy growth year, wrote my own book 'Not your average climate activist' in four months, got to give a keynote at the biggest events (think of Love Tomorrow, Unizo Topseminar, OMConference...), and helped creating new initiatives.

Besides pushing boundaries, two new 'Go's' joined our family: Go Smart Digital focusing on the impact of IT and Go Ocean focusing on the restoration of marine ecosystems.

I've wondered a lot about what success in life really means, and for me it's not the number of newspaper articles, or the number of keynotes... but it's really the happiness purveyed from the impact we make on the field. I get much more goosebumps from a picture of a kid from Argentina wearing a Go Forest t-shirt.

Giving communities a better life and making people happy, in their own circles and on the other side of the world, that is my meaning of success.



To all our members, thank you for entrusting us with your commitment to reforestation, and positive social impact. Your dedication to making a difference in the world has been the heartbeat♥️ of our organization.

Each tree planted is a testament to your environmental leadership, and we are honored to be part of this collective effort.

Your feedback fuels our determination to amplify our message and drive positive change.

The wonderful projects we've undertaken in reforestation across the globe hold a special place in our hearts. We added two new projects last year in Tanzania and Argentina.

Every tree planted is a symbol of hope, resilience, and the collective power of individuals coming together for a common cause.

Your support has translated in tangible, positive transformations in ecosystems and communities. All trackable through your own impact dashboard, of which we are now working on a second version.

Together, let us continue to plant the seeds of change, and inspire others to join this impactful tree-journey.

Let's create a tree-tastic 2024, with so many new things coming up. Stay tuned. We've only just started. Our motivation couldn't be higher.

With all my love and respect,

Sarah – Chief Ecological Officer at Go Forest



Forests as systems

In this report we want to highlight that forests are not just clusters of trees we're planting and managing but that they evolve into systems. Groups of interacting elements, forming a unified whole.

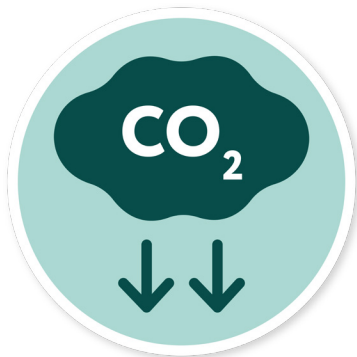
Forests, only when nurtured in the right regions, with the right methodologies, alongside and together with local communities, create systems.

These systems function as powerful engines for ecosystems, capture carbon from the atmosphere, form nurturing grounds for diverse species with a profound impact on local biodiversity, become vital food sources and steadfast water reservoirs, are local workplaces, and support people globally.

After more than three years, we can confidently say that the projects in our portfolio have resulted and continue to result in strong forest systems supporting nature, wildlife and people around the globe.

Allow us to deep dive into our projects, share our data but also share our stories. Allow us to inspire you and make you understand why every one of our projects is needed and your support, however big or small, is making a profound impact.

For our members (aka clients), investing in projects generating forest systems is therefore not just an environmental gesture; it's **a strategic move that offers numerous benefits**. It aligns with sustainability goals, helps mitigate climate change, preserves biodiversity, supports local communities, enhances company reputation, boosts employee engagement, and secures a more sustainable future for all. By offering transparency on the impact we're making together, credibility rises and we're cultivating **a small ecosystem of impact-makers** of our own.



Carbon sequestration



Wildlife habitats



Local teams





**Our forest systems
up to now**

Let's start close to our headquarters, in **Belgium**, where the main function of the forests is precisely to be multifunctional. They provide us with all their ecosystem services, such as mitigating various natural challenges like heatwaves, droughts, and safeguarding against floods and landslides.

Moreover, they offer valuable resources including food and medicine, while serving as a crucial carbon sink. Additionally, these forests aid in water filtration, air purification, and provide habitats for approximately 80% of terrestrial animal species, representing an invaluable reservoir of biodiversity. On top of that, forests offer a therapeutic escape from the stresses of daily life, providing a rich tapestry of benefits for mental health and well-being.

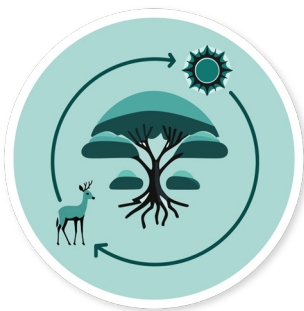
It's important to note that no single technology can replicate all these functions, and none should override the importance of the others.



Across the EU borders and beyond

In **Europe**, the current problem is not fighting deforestation, but expanding, restoring, protecting and managing our existing forests. In fact, many forests have been damaged by extreme events such as windstorms, fires, pests and diseases. It is therefore critical to pursue sustainable best practices in order to have more resilient and resistant forests better prepared to cope with disturbances that are likely to increase in a warming world.

But, we also add other aspects to improve the forest quality while supporting the project economically. In **Spain**, for example, we added mycorrhizae to the saplings we used in a plantation in Caleruega to promote the production of black truffles. This is an excellent example of leveraging nature's processes to enhance forest health while also exploring economic opportunities. It's a win-win situation that not only helps safeguard and build resilient forests (with more developed root systems and symbiosis with the mushroom) but also supports local economies through the cultivation of high-value products.



Interlinked challenges

Climate change makes our forests more vulnerable. For example, due to drought, trees experience reduced resistance against pests and diseases, resulting in elevated mortality rates.



TREES PLANTED IN 2023

14,381



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



In **Armenia**, two of the most important functions of the forests are water conservation and soil protection. In addition to the economic, environmental, social, and cultural benefits, forests maintain the water balance of ecosystems, improve soil fertility to increase agricultural productivity, and protect soil from erosion and flooding. Because creating forests is a very long process, it is essential to start now while it is still possible in order to have established forests in the future.



Into the beautiful African continent

Large forest reserves, like the Magamba Nature Forest Reserve in **Tanzania**, support multiple ecosystem benefits. One of these benefits — which is often neglected — is that the reserve is responsible for the water supply of the villages surrounding the area. When this forest reserve experiences damage or large losses, the water reservoir capacity of the forest becomes threatened as well. By restoring these kind of areas, we ensure continuous water supply to the local communities.



We welcomed CYDO
in our portfolio.

TREES PLANTED IN 2023

3,427



Total of trees planted
in 2023.



First planned visit:
Spring 2024.

3 GOOD HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING



6 CLEAN WATER
AND SANITATION



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES
AND COMMUNITIES



TREES PLANTED IN 2023

17,486



16,321 trees were planted in reforestation activities. The other 1,147 were planted in agroforestry activities.



In holistic approaches to tackle modern challenges, the forest system exists to support an agroforestry or an agricultural economy within — because planting forests is one thing, but ensuring that people no longer cut or burn down forests because they need an income requires a broader approach.

In our project **in the Democratic Republic of Congo**, for example, agroforestry includes planting coffee and cocoa plants between the trees. Additionally, the people — more than 2000 men and women — can work in the reforestation and agroforestry and are supported with fish ponds, beehives, and maize and cassava to plant next to the restoration areas in the context of sustainable agriculture.

Just as in the Democratic Republic of Congo, our agroforestry project in **Madagascar** aims to provide nature based solutions to rural communities in order to increase their resilience to climate change as well as restoring the ecosystem services of trees.

In Akamasoa and Tamatave, we support the economic independence of local farmers by educating on and promoting the cultivation of high-value plants with sustainable practices. Learning the agroforestry practices allows them to improve and diversify their income sources through the cultivation of suitable cash crops (cinnamon, coffee, and cloves) with economic opportunities in the region.

At the same time, our mangrove restoration project in Madagascar aims to restore the mangroves that act as a buffer zone between terrestrial and marine ecosystems, ensuring the stability of both environments.

Next to coastal protection, soil protection and biodiversity support, preserving and restoring the mangroves is essential because they serve as nurseries and habitat for a variety of species such as crabs, shrimp, and fish, contributing to the sustainability of these populations. After two years of restoring these mangroves, crabs have come back, providing biodiversity restoration as well as an important food (and economic) source for local communities.



i Did you know that mangroves can mitigate cyclone effects? Mangroves function as a natural barrier, helping to prevent coastal erosion by absorbing the impact of waves and stabilising the soil. They act as a first line of defense against waves and wind.



Across the Atlantic ocean

In the beginning of 2023, **Peru** was in a state of political upheaval. The region of Madre De Dios ended up with precious few opportunities for supply trucks to enter its borders. Gasoline wasn't available, nor the vegetables grown in the nearby Andes. Roadblocks set up by protesters have prevented the flow of even the most basic supplies, crippling the region's economy.

Fortunately, our primary reforestation center on the Tambopata River was its usual self throughout the maelstrom – its usual, isolated, productive self. The Amazon Rainforest served as the people's main source of food: fruits (such as pijuayo, ají, sinamillo, and huasaí), seeds from the manchinga tree, bananas, and plantains supported our team and surrounding local communities throughout the year and especially during this difficult period.

TREES PLANTED IN 2023

27,550



25,801 trees were planted in reforestation activities. The remaining 1,749 trees were planted in agroforestry activities.



The first Go Forest trees - planted in 2020 - finally delivered their first cacao fruits!

2 ZERO HUNGER



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES





In **Argentina**, as in many of our Latin American projects, the forest system empowers indigenous communities to regain their traditional relationship with the natural world and their territories. The indigenous communities, at their turn, empower our restoration initiatives and protect the forest as its their child.

When we lose more than 80% of a forest area — as in the Atlantic Forest in **Brazil** — and all areas restored won't bring back the forest system to the full extent, we plant forest corridors. Corridors of life and energy — created by local communities — that connect remaining forest patches and support biodiversity and endemic and endangered plant or wildlife species.

For example, this year in São Paulo state, we expanded a key forest remnant for the conservation of a key primate species — the black lion tamarin — and initiated the establishment of a large corridor aiming to connect very important gallery forests. Ultimately, these projects facilitate wildlife flux to the Morro do Diabo State Park and form viable mechanisms for forest maintenance and rehabilitation that generates income for small landholders. This income substitutes for the need to grow crops on the agricultural land it was before and sell them.

Also in Paraíba state, where the landscape is one of the most threatened areas of the Brazilian Atlantic forest, the sites planted are helping to improve the connectivity between the forest patches and upscaling the habitat availability for many species, mainly the red handed howling monkey and the blonde capuchin monkey.



172K⁺

trees were planted worldwide.

15ha⁺

planted in the Atlantic Forest of Brazil.

492

gift trees in a box sold.

The Global Result

64K⁺

tons of carbon will be captured during the lifetime of the trees.

40K

trees already planned for 2024.

Goals

We reached or even surpassed our targets in almost every project. Only in our project in the Amazon Rainforest, Peru, the result is lower than our estimations.



**Levelling up our
transparency**

Go Forest wants to be the most transparent partner in trees. It is our mission to make tree-planting transparent, tangible, and accessible to everyone.

We do what we say and we show it, so you can do the same.

And every year is an opportunity to level up this transparency and validate our raison d'être. We are constantly improving our efforts in adding more transparency and better follow-up of our projects.

The Impact Platform

Since August 2023, every Go Forest member can access a personal — and publicly available — dashboard on our impact platform to follow up on their positive impact and projects of choice. Why?



Transparency



Impact measurements



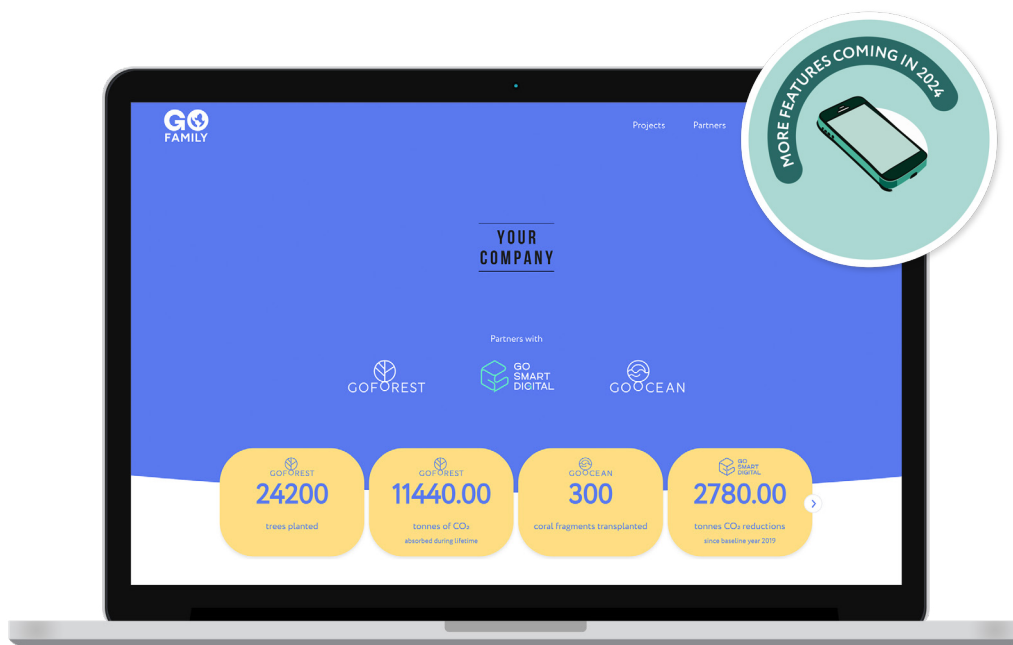
Accountability



Stakeholder engagement

The dashboards are meant to cultivate trust by openly sharing details about where and how trees are planted, fostering credibility with all stakeholders. The promise for regular updates on maintenance and monitoring ensures continuous accountability, better measurement of impact, and engagement of stakeholders.

Additionally, transparent communication serves as a catalyst for education and inspiration: by informing others about the importance of environmental conservation and sharing their efforts openly, companies encourage widespread participation in similar endeavors.



The credibili-tree tool

With our Credibili-tree tool, companies can easily calculate the minimum number of trees they should plant to gain credibility and, therefore, positive brand perception by their consumers.

In 2023, Go Forest partnered with communication agency Bubka and Prof. Dr. Gino Verleye (IMEC, UGent, VUB) to investigate the credibility of tree-planting initiatives and developed a free tool to help companies out on this topic.

The tool can show companies in 19 different sectors the minimum number of trees they should plant to gain credibility and, therefore, positive brand perception by consumers. As a general rule, the number of trees increases with the size of the company, and companies in the travel and leisure sector, the energy industry, the IT and printing sector, the government, and the health sector face the highest threshold.

This tool focuses solely on how consumers perceive tree-planting efforts. Its purpose is to aid companies that plant trees not only for carbon sequestration or ecological goals but also as a key component of their marketing or communication strategies. We recognized a need for these companies to have guidance; it doesn't establish a rigid rule for everyone, as every tree planted for any reason holds significance!

About monitoring

We monitor forests rather than individual trees due to the intricate, interconnected nature of these ecosystems. Forests represent long-term, complex systems where trees coexist in a delicate balance, influencing each other's growth and survival.

By focusing on the forest as a whole, we can grasp the health of the entire ecosystem, ensuring its resilience and sustained vitality. While individual trees are crucial, the emphasis on forests allows us to observe patterns, like an approximate 80% survival rate or the natural cycle of birth and death within the broader context. This approach facilitates a deeper understanding of ecological dynamics, enabling us to implement measures that support not just singular trees but the enduring health and diversity of the entire forest ecosystem.





Team Go Forest in the field

Our vision on transparency is a modern and achievable one — with as little travel impact as possible.

As described above, we work with satellite monitoring of our specific polygons, digital solutions to compare and make calculations, digital tools to communicate the results, and strong partnerships to ensure the long term outcomes of our projects. One of these digital solutions is our work with Genvision.

Nevertheless, periodically, it becomes essential for us to step away from our offices and venture into the field. Concretely, we make sure that once or twice per year, someone from the Go Forest team or from our large and trustworthy network of freelancers (who might be close because of other climate project visits), visits the projects and checks whether everything has been executed properly.

This year, our field visits took us to Germany, Peru, and Madagascar. When we visit, we have clear goals:



Verify that all trees were planted using tree registries kept for every planting activity. The data in the registries is compared to our Tree Purchase Orders and the reality in the field.



Verify that maintenance and monitoring activities are well executed. Measuring the impact of natural regeneration on the field. Survival rates of 100% in the first year & 80% after three years.



Meet all of our seasonal, part time, or full time field workers. Check whether local employment happens according to our standards. Research how more local involvement would be possible.

Next to these three main activities we also:

- Build relationships and establish bonds to fight the climate crisis
- Collect photos and videos for our library
- Learn continuously and explore methods for increased transparency
- Share best practices
- Explore more projects in the same region

In this way, Go Forest offers a transparent solution to tree planting and we can guarantee a high quality implementation of our projects.

You the planet gets what you paid for!

From fields to stages & from stages to streets

Because awareness is as important as planting the trees in the first place, Go Forest often takes the stage to talk about our approach to nature restoration, the responsibilities we must take as individuals and companies, and the small steps we can take to reach positive impact on a big scale. Because we focus a lot of our efforts on companies, this year, we went on the street to also encourage individuals to plant trees.



Meaningful partnerships

Because we cannot do this work alone, we also want to highlight the meaningful partnerships we've built during 2023.



Team expansion Go Forest

A word by our newest colleague Charlotte

Joining Go Forest in the summer of 2023 marked a significant career switch for me. Having followed their inspiring journey for over a year, I was drawn to their mission, values, and unique approach. I'm incredibly grateful to have had the opportunity to join such an impact-driven company in their mission.

Already, I've learnt so much from this experience. What just continually astonishes me is the unwavering motivation, drive, creativity, and dedication that our team brings to the table each day. We aim to bring value, awareness, transparency, and impact. It is this shared purpose and values that drives our team to push our boundaries, step out of our comfort zones and to consistently challenge each other.

Not only our mission and values, but also our positive messaging and out-of-the-box-style has resonated with people and companies alike. The support for our team and projects is inspiring, and I've had the privilege of connecting with numerous enthusiasts and impact-makers during our third-year anniversary party, many other events, or virtual meetings. These connections are probably what I'm most grateful for. The sense of belonging to a community dedicated to positive change is just something truly special. I can't wait to find out what



Be the change. Be part of our mission.

We are ready to challenge ourselves, challenge the market, and challenge all of our stakeholders to do it better, more transparently, and with even more enthusiasm — if that's possible.

If you want to be part of our journey, reach out and we'll figure out how tree planting fits your strategy and goals best!

We're on our way to half a million trees with a target of 1 million trees by the end of 2025

Contact us

Book a meeting

