KEFRI Newsletter

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KEFRI Board Chairman Rt. Gen. Samson Mwathethe (centre) and KEFRI Director Dr. Jane Njuguna alongside KEFRI ICT staff as they received the Digital Transformation Public Sector awards

KEFRI is ISO 14001:2015 and 9001: 2015 certified

Editors note

Kenya's Green Future:
KEFRI Leads the Charge for Forest Cover Expansion

In the heart of Kenya's ambitious environmental goals lies a story of growth, innovation, and commitment a story that is increasingly being shaped by the Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI). The institute's leadership in the country's battle to expand its forest cover has helped turn an important vision into tangible progress.

Kenya's target is clear: to achieve 30% tree cover by 2032. Back in 2018, forest cover was only 5.9%, but through relentless efforts and nationwide initiatives, it has grown to 8.83% by 2021. This steady increase reflects the hard work of many, but KEFRI has played a particularly pivotal role in this journey.

At the forefront of this transformation, KEFRI has worked tirelessly to research and implement effective forest management practices. Through its regional programs across Gede, Kitui, Muguga, Londiani, and Maseno, the Institute has been able to guide sustainable practices and monitor the health of Kenya's forests. One of the Institute's key contributions has been the distribution of over 40,000 kilograms of high-quality tree seeds each year. These seeds are critical to expanding tree cover, contributing to an annual 0.2% increase in the country's forest cover.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of KEFRI's approach is its integration with policy and community. By ensuring that forest conservation aligns with national policies like the Forest Conservation and Management Act of 2016 and Kenya Vision 2030, KEFRI has positioned itself as a key player in the country's broader environmental strategy. The Institute is also working together with local communities to empower them to take charge of their own forests, ensuring that conservation efforts are both effective and sustainable.

Through technology, research, and community partnerships, KEFRI has transformed forest conservation in Kenya. As the country marches toward its goal of 30% forest cover, KEFRI continues to lead the charge, guiding the way for a greener, more sustainable future.

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KEFRI *Newsletter is a Quarterly Magazine produced by Corporate Affairs and Quality Assurance*

JazaMiti Application wins KEFRI two Prestigious Awards at the Digital Transformation Public Sector Forum

KEFRI demonstrated its leadership in technological innovation by securing two esteemed awards at the Digital Transformation Public Sector Forum & Awards 2025, held on 25th February at Pride Inn, Mombasa.

The Institute bagged the Best Public Sector Digital Innovation Award in Natural Resource Management. It was also crowned the Overall Winner in recognition of groundbreaking work in digital innovation for environmental conservation in addition to continued dedication to advancing technology for the public good.

These Awards recognized public sector organizations that have consistently leveraged technology to improve their effectiveness, efficiency, transparency, and service delivery to citizens. The awards were received by KEFRI Board Chairman Rt. Gen. Samson Mwathethe and Director KEFRI Dr. Jane Njuguna.

KEFRI Board Chairman Rt. Gen. Samson Mwathethe (centre) and KEFRI Director Dr. Jane Njuguna alongside KEFRI ICT staff as they received the Digital Transformation Public Sector awards

Download JazaMiti today and be part of the winning team in documenting, monitoring and reporting progress towards 15Billion trees by 2032!

CS Duale Launches the Regreening for The Future Project

Dr. Jane Njuguna Director KEFRI on behalf of the CS Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry Hon. Aden Duale today launched the "Regreening for The Future Project - Integrating Climate Change Adaptation pathways into community-led regreening in East Africa", at Eka Hotel, Nairobi.

The 5-year project aims to integrate climate change adaptation pathways into community led Regreening in East Africa focusing in Makueni, Nyandarua, Homa Bay and Nyamira counties.

The project, an Australian-Kenyan initiative funded by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) and delivered in partnership with World Vision Australia and Kenya, Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI), Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR-ICRAF), The University of Nairobi, Australian High Commission and The United Nations University.

Mr. Christopher Ellinger, Charge d'affaires Australian High Commission in Kenya, emphasized the significance of integrating climate change and adaptation pathways with communities. "The champions of this project is the community and their input is invaluable," he said.

"I am glad to note that this project aims to integrate climate adaptation pathways within a community-led regreening model and will help communities to enhance their capacity to adapt to climate change," said Dr. Njuguna.

Partners of the Regreening for the Future Project

The project will focus on three main areas: integrating climate adaptation research into land restoration to enhance tree cover and resilience, utilizing evidence-based stakeholder engagement to inform policy and developing a monitoring and evaluation framework for adaptation pathways in re-greening communities.

The project will identify knowledge and develop capacity for researchers and farmers to develop regreening projects that anticipate future climate scenarios that are adaptive over time.

It also aims to identify the policy framework and enabling environments that will empower farmers and communities to undertake landscape restoration and regreening activities that are sustainable, enhance food security and build resilience to climate change.

Further, the project is expected to considerably add value to Kenya, which has grappled with challenges related to deforestation, land degradation, and desertification. All these issues have posed a risk to the country's biodiversity.

CS Duale lauds KEFRI's efforts in eradicating Mathenge in Garissa County

Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry Hon. Aden Duale on February 1st 2025, visited the Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI) sub-centre in Garissa to assess ongoing efforts in managing the invasive *Prosopis Juliflora* locally known as Mathenge. His visit began with a courtesy call to the Garissa County Governor HE. Nathif Jama highlighting the government's commitment to addressing environmental challenges in arid and semi-arid regions. Accompanied by the Principal Secretary for Forestry Mr. Gitonga Mugambi, KEFRI Director Dr. Jane Njuguna, Board of Directors, and Senior Management.

Ms. Nellie Oduor Program Director, KEFRI Karura, explaining to CS Aden Duale the various botanical properties of *Moringa Juliflora*

The CS proceeded to inspect key project sites demonstrating innovative approaches to Prosopis control and utilization. At Jamhuri Farm, in Garissa Township, the CS visited the Environmental and Infrastructure Investment Programme (EIIP) Site 1, where KEFRI showcased the mechanical removal and utilization of Prosopis. A key highlight was the demonstration of seed ball technology for grass reseeding, a technique aimed at restoring degraded

landscapes. “The fight against Prosopis is not just about removal but also about restoring our rangelands for sustainable livelihoods,” remarked the CS.

Further, KEFRI demonstrated modern charcoal production using improved kilns, showcasing a sustainable approach to utilizing Prosopis. This initiative aligns with the government’s broader agenda of promoting alternative community livelihoods while addressing environmental degradation. The event culminated in a public baraza, where the KEFRI team exhibited various products derived from Mathenge, including charcoal briquettes, furniture, chicken feed, cake and bread.

Members of the community had the opportunity to engage with experts on the sustainable management of Prosopis. The CS emphasized the importance of research-driven solutions, stating, “Institutions like KEFRI play a vital role in providing scientific solutions to environmental challenges affecting our people.” The visit underscored the government’s commitment to supporting research and community-driven interventions in tackling Prosopis menace. “KEFRI continues to lead in innovative approaches to managing invasive species, contributing to environmental conservation and sustainable development in Kenya’s drylands” Dr Njuguna said.

Prosopis Juliflora originated in the Central and South America and was introduced in Kenya in the 1980s. The World Bank partnered with Kenya’s Ministry of Environment, rallying local communities to carry out afforestation. The idea was to rehabilitate degraded lands. Mathenge is a resilient plant that grows in areas with limited water and thus was recommended to the ASAL counties such as Baringo, Turkana, West Pokot, Garissa, Wajir, Marsabit, Mandera, Tana River and Makueni and Kitui.

Kshs 30M project to Manage *Prosopis Juliflora* in Turkana County

Mr. Patrick Mwirigi, Assistant Regional Director KEFRI Turkana sub-center briefing Dr. John Erus, the Deputy Governor Turkana County

KEFRI in partnership with International Labour Organization (ILO) Prospects and Turkana County Government launched the 'Prosopis Management for Green Jobs & Livelihood Support' Project in the county. The Ksh 30 million project is aimed at sustainably managing *Prosopis juliflora* to create green jobs and improve livelihoods in Turkana West.

With a one-year implementation plan, the project seeks to transform the invasive species into an economic asset through climate-smart technologies, including briquette and biochar production, animal feed commercialization, and entrepreneurial capacity-building. *Prosopis juliflora* also known as Etirae in Turkana dialect has become a menace to the community causing harm to the environment, livestock and humanity. A central feature of the project is the establishment of a Prosopis Training and Incubation Centre.

The state-of-the-art facility will equip community members with entrepreneurial skills and enhance their ability to commercialize Prosopis-based products. Through collaborations with the Turkana County Government, Kenya Forest Service, and business stakeholders, KEFRI seeks to change perceptions of Prosopis from being an ecological nuisance to a valuable economic resource.

The initiative will adopt an Employment Intensive Investment Approach (EIIP), aiming to create 1,040 green jobs and directly benefit around 8,000 households.

“This project is rooted in research and innovation and is designed to empower communities in Turkana West to address the ecological challenges posed by *Prosopis juliflora* while unlocking its economic potential,” said Patrick Mwirigi Assistant Regional Director KEFRI Turkana.

Representing the Director KEFRI, Dr. Joram Kagombe stated the importance of the project in developing and upskilling the community. “This project needs to be market driven with tangible financial returns to ensure posterity upon completion of the project,” he said.

He noted that the project’s success would depend on harnessing research insights and transferring knowledge to the community. KEFRI aims to mitigate the risks associated with the invasive species while maximizing its benefits to improve the livelihoods of locals.

In his remarks, Dr. Erus highlighted that *Prosopis juliflora* covers 352 Hectares of land, “the County is happy to partner with KEFRI and ILO Prospects to find ways of utilizing Prosopis for value addition and livelihood improvement especially amongst youth and women.” he said.

The project implementation areas are Kakuma, Lopur, Melekech, Nasinyono, Lokangai, Morungole, Leteya and Loritit and will be implemented under three pillars namely Restoration, Product value chain and Policy development.

KEFRI Participates in World Wetlands Day

The Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry led the Country in marking the World Wetlands Day at Ondiri Wetland, Kiambu County. World Wetlands Day is a global day celebrated annually on 2nd February to emphasize the importance of restoring and conserving our wetlands.

Eng. Festus Ngeno, PS State Department of Climate Change speaking during World Wetlands Day celebrations at Ondiri Swamp, Kikuyu County

This year’s event was marked under the theme “Protecting Wetlands for Our Common Future”. In his remarks, Eng. Festus Ngeno, PS State Department of Climate Change pointed out that 14000 sq metres of land in Kenya are wetlands. “Wetlands serve as purifying kidneys for the environment and as humanity we have no choice but to protect these eco-systems so as to fight climate change and secure our water sources,” he said.

The Friends of Ondiri Wetland led by the Chairman Mr. David Wakogi thanked the CS of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry Hon. Aden Duale for choosing Ondiri Wetland to mark this year's event. " Our main objective is to make this wetland a modern conservation site and restore it for a sustainable future," he said.

KEFRI Chairman Leads Visit to Chawia Forest and Taita Research Center

On March 5th, 2025, KEFRI Board Chairman General (Rtd) Samson Mwathethe, accompanied by the Board of Directors, the Director, Dr. Jane Njuguna, and Senior Management, visited Chawia Forest in the Taita Hills to assess the ongoing restoration efforts under the Franklinia Foundation Project. This initiative is dedicated to biodiversity conservation, particularly the restoration of endangered species such as *Millettia oblata, Afrocarpus usambarensis,* and *Ocotea usambarensis,* which have suffered due to forest fires, land degradation, and other environmental threats.

The delegation was warmly received by the Furaha Women's Group and the Chawia Community Forest Association, who play a crucial role in conservation efforts. General Mwathethe commended the community for their dedication to environmental restoration, emphasizing the importance of continued collaboration between KEFRI, the Kenya Forest Service (KFS), and local stakeholders in protecting endangered and indigenous species. Dr. Jane Njuguna reaffirmed KEFRI's commitment to community engagement and capacity-building, highlighting the institute's efforts in training local communities in tree nursery management and sustainable conservation practices. She encouraged them to persist in their invaluable work to safeguard the region's forests.

Taita Taveta County, nestled in Kenya's coastal region, is renowned for its rich biodiversity and cultural heritage. Spanning approximately 17,084 square kilometers, it encompasses key towns such as Voi, Taveta, Mwatate, and Wundanyi. As part of their visit, the KEFRI delegation also toured the Taita Taveta Sub-Regional Research Center to gain insights into its scientific research and conservation initiatives. During the tour, the team explored scientific laboratories and tree nurseries, where KEFRI researchers conduct vital studies to enhance forest restoration efforts. Assistant Regional Director Dr. Chemuku Wekesa provided an overview of the center's progress since 2017, emphasizing its commitment to producing high-quality seeds and seedlings.

He also highlighted key collaborations with local communities through initiatives such as the Fondation Franklinia and the Darwin Initiative, which focus on conserving endangered species and protecting the sacred Kaya forests.These initiatives are instrumental in preserving Kenya's biocultural heritage by empowering Kaya elders to uphold traditional conservation practices. Through these combined efforts, biodiversity in Kaya forests and other natural ecosystems is being restored while local communities benefit from sustainable conservation approaches.The visit reaffirmed KEFRI's unwavering commitment to environmental conservation, scientific research, and community empowerment, highlighting the importance of collective action in protecting Kenya's unique ecosystems for future generations.

KEFRI holds Eco-Regional Research Consultative Commitee Meetings

Rift Valley Eco-Region

KEFRI Rift Valley Eco-Region Research Programme held its Eco-regional Research Consultative Committee meeting in Londiani on February 26th, 2025. The interactive annual meeting brought together stakeholders with the focus on prioritizing research activities for 2025/2026 financial year.

Several research concepts on various forestry issues were presented including commercial forestry, conservation and sustainable management of forest landscape ecosystems, assessing the status of the Chepalungu forest ecosystem and policies for sustainable management of forest in Rift Valley.

Lake Victoria Eco-Region

KEFRI Lake Victoria Basin Eco-region Research Programme held its Annual Eco-region Research Consultative Committee (ERCC) meeting on 28th February 2025 at the Maseno University. This aimed at engaging with stakeholders on the proposed research activities for the 2025/26 FY for their input, response and collaboration.

The Regional Director, Dr. John Otuoma, in his welcoming remarks and overview of the Eco-regional research focus, pointed out the need to promote native and emerging alternative tree species including *Markhamia lutea, Terminalia brownii, Gmelina arborea* and *Maesopsis eminii* under the 15 Billion tree programme.

Dr. Ebby Chagala-Odera, a retired KEFRI tree breeder was honoured to give the keynote address to the stakeholders. She noted that the low forest cover in the Lake Victoria region could be attributed to competing priorities against tree growing such as crop production, wildlife menace, mining among others, and lack of market for forest products among others.

KEFRI research scientists presented several concepts namely: improving native and emerging alternative to Eucalyptus species that are adapted to the region, sustainable payment for ecosystem services (PES), comparative approaches between active and passive restoration to forest and landscape restoration for ecosystem stability in the eco-region, among other research concepts.

National Forest Product Research Programme Karura

The National Forest Products Research Programme (NFPRP) held its Annual Eco-Region Research Consultative (ERCC) meeting at Karura on 3rd March 2025. The session was officially opened by Dr. Musingo Mbuvi, on behalf of the Director Dr. Jane Njuguna. In his opening remarks he noted said,

"The future of sustainable forestry lies not only in conservation but also in strategic commercialization of forest products. By expanding value chains and fostering innovation, we can unlock economic opportunities while ensuring our forests remain a pillar of environmental resilience."

Nellie Oduor, NFPRP Program Director delivered an insightful presentation highlighting the achievements accomplished in the financial year 2024/2025. Key milestones included:

- Advancements in Bio-fuels such as Development of sustainable charcoal and briquette technologies
- Timber Engineering Innovations such as Research on various species, including bamboo, to enhance timber engineering practices
- Non-Wood Forest Products, value addition for indigenous fruits, gums, resins, and aloe.

Drylands Eco-Region

The Dryland Eco-Region Research Programme (DERP) holds its Annual Eco-Region Consultative Committee Meeting in Kitui on 4th March 2025. KEFRI Board of Directors, CEO Dr. Jane Njuguna, Senior Management, research scientists from Garissa, Wajir, Kibwezi and Kitui, alongside key stakeholders from KFS, SEKU, NEMA, REREC, KALRO, local farmers and others attended the event.

The Meeting was officiated by the Director Dr. Jane Njuguna, who highlighted that the meeting paves way for public participation which is essential for fostering collaboration between researchers and stakeholders, enabling them to share findings, critique research, and identify knowledge gaps for future studies of mutual interest.

A central focus of the discussions was the domestication and genetic improvement of high-value tree species uniquely adapted to arid and semi-arid environments such as *Sclerocarya birrea* (Marula), which is renowned for its drought resistance and potential for producing high-quality timber and edible fruits. Similarly, *Terminalia brownii* (Muuku) offers durable wood suitable for construction and furniture, while *Commiphora myrrha* (Myrrh) is valued for its aromatic resin with various applications. *Moringa oleifera* (Moringa), often dubbed the "miracle tree," thrives in dry conditions and provides nutritious leaves and seeds with water-purifying properties. By enhancing the genetic traits of these species, KEFRI researchers aim to improve their growth rates, resilience, and economic value, thereby offering sustainable solutions for communities in the ASALs.

The potential of indigenous fruit trees in Kenya's drylands also garnered significant attention. Species such as *Adansonia digitata* (Baobab), *Ximenia americana* (Wild Plum), *Tamarindus indic*a (Tamarind), and *Vitex payos* (Chocolate Berry) are naturally adapted to arid environments and offer substantial economic benefits. Promoting the cultivation and commercialization of these indigenous fruits can enhance food security and create income-generating opportunities for dryland communities.

Additionally, the cultivation of *Melia volkensii* (Mukau) was highlighted for its potential in the timber industry. This fast-growing, drought-resistant tree produces high-quality timber suitable for making furniture, doors, and window frames. Its adaptability to drylands and rapid growth makes it an ideal candidate for large-scale afforestation projects, contributing to

environmental conservation and providing economic benefits to local communities.
Such initiatives aim to enhance the resilience, productivity, and sustainability of ASALs.

Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI) Central Highlands Eco-Region Research Programme (CHERP) on 20th March 2025 hosted its Eco-Region Research Consultative Committee (ERCC) meeting at KEFRI headquarters, Muguga. The event brought together leading scientists, environmental experts, and stakeholders to deliberate on advancements and strategic directions in Kenya's forestry sector.

The ERCC meeting focused on enhancing tree productivity through germplasm improvement. Scientists presented advancements in genetic techniques aimed at cultivating tree species with superior growth rates and resilience. For instance, the development of improved *Eucalyptus globulus* (blue gum) varieties aims to establish robust forests capable of adapting to climate change and resisting pests. KEFRI has previously established seed orchards and stands for various species, including Eucalyptus, to produce high-quality seeds for afforestation and reforestation efforts.

The complexities of the eucalyptus value chain were also addressed. While species like Eucalyptus globulus are valued for their rapid growth and timber yield, concerns about their environmental impact persists. Experts recommended site-specific management practices and policies to balance economic benefits with ecological sustainability. KEFRI has provided guidelines on eucalyptus planting, emphasizing adherence to site-specific management practices to balance economic benefits with ecological sustainability.

Additionally, the potential of non-timber forest products was explored, focusing on sustainable harvesting and market development for resources like medicinal plants (e.g., *Warburgia ugandensis*) and edible fruits (e.g., *Uapaca kirkiana*).

Coastal Eco Region

The Coastal Eco Region Research Program held its Eco-region Research Consultative Committee meeting (ERCC) in Gede. This brought to the forefront the critical work being done to protect and restore coastal ecosystems in Kenya. At the centre of the discussions was the vital role of mangrove forests, which line the tropical and subtropical coastlines. These unique ecosystems offer habitats for fish and wildlife, protect shorelines from erosion, and act as significant carbon sinks. However, they face mounting threats from unsustainable harvesting, pollution, climate

In response, a range of initiatives have been rolled out, including rehabilitation efforts in Kilifi and Lamu counties. This involved experimental spacing trials and the development of guidelines for establishing mangrove nurseries. The local communities have been key partners in this work, receiving training and support to actively participate in conservation and restoration efforts.

New technologies are also being developed to monitor and manage pest outbreaks that threaten the health of mangrove forests, ensuring their resilience for the future.

Attention was drawn to Kenya's sacred forests and other tropical lowland woodlands, which are under increasing pressure, due to illegal harvesting and land encroachment. These forests harbor rare and endangered species such as *Coffea fadenii, Afrocarpus usambarensis* and *Encephalartos kisambo,* found in Taita Taveta and Kwale counties. KEFRI is spearheading conservation programs for these species while studying the effects of climate change on their limited habitats. A Biocultural Heritage Territory has been proposed to safeguard the Kaya forests an effort that recognizes the deep spiritual and communal ties that local communities have with these landscapes.

The presentations shed light on the ongoing work in natural resource management. Projects include; the evaluation of baobab tree populations in coastal counties, the development of herbal products like natural soap from native species such as *Pilostigima thonningii,* and efforts to rehabilitate Lake Kenyatta to improve water quality and availability. In addition, phytoremediation is being applied to restore areas degraded by mining and chemical pollution, demonstrating how science and innovation can support ecological recovery.

Tree farming emerged as a key area, with the government aiming to increase national tree cover from 12.13% to 30% by 2032. KEFRI is contributing to this ambitious goal by providing high-quality germplasm, enhancing tree breeding particularly for species like *Gmelina arborea* and *Casuarina equisetifolia* and promoting the commercialization of bamboo. Fruit tree production is also being enhanced, with improved varieties of coconut, cashew, citrus, mangoes, and indigenous fruit trees being raised to boost food security and income.

KEFRI inks an MOU with Women Center for Peace and Development

KEFRI Director, Dr. Jane Njuguna (right) and WCPD Director, Ms. Halima Mohammed (left) during the MOU signing ceremony

Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Women Center for Peace and Development (WCPD) on January 17th, 2025, at KEFRI headquarters. The MOU was signed by KEFRI Director, Dr. Jane Njuguna, WCPD Director, Ms. Halima Mohammed, and WCPD founder, Ms. Fatuma Mohammed.

The signing marked a significant step towards advancing environmental conservation and socio-economic empowerment in Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs), with the aim of equipping women with essential tools and knowledge for sustainable development.

Dr. Njuguna emphasized KEFRI's unwavering support for the ASAL communities, highlighting the critical role women play in driving environmental and socio-economic transformation. "This partnership will implement programs centered on afforestation, climate change adaptation, and capacity-building to empower women as change agents in their communities. Additionally, KEFRI will scale up women-friendly technologies and innovations to boost their participation in industries such as gum and resin collection, ensuring they receive fair economic benefits in this multi-billion-dollar sector," said Dr. Njuguna.

In her remarks, Ms. Halima Mohammed expressed her enthusiasm for the collaboration, emphasizing that it aligns with WCPD's mission to foster peace, development, and gender inclusion. She noted that beyond environmental conservation, the partnership seeks to tackle pressing socio-economic challenges such as poverty and limited access to resources, which disproportionately affects women.

This partnership marks a transformative milestone in KEFRI's efforts to merge environmental stewardship with community development. By empowering women in the ASALs, the initiative sets a precedence for inclusive and sustainable progress.

Performance Contracting Evaluation 2023/2024

Ms. Hamara Ibrahim, KEFRI Board Director (left) receives the PC results from Ms Felistus Mbuva

The Performance Contract for each Institution is signed annually. KEFRI Performance Contract for 2023/2024 Financial Year had been signed by the Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry. The PC was thereafter cascaded to the various departments undertaken.

Performance Contract (PC) a management tool that is used in the Kenyan public sector to measure and improve performance by linking performance to rewards and accountability.

This has helped improve service delivery, lower costs, increase accountability, be customer-focused and be responsive to stakeholder needs.

The PC goes through various stages of negotiation agreement, vetting, and approval before it is signed between the Heads of state corporation and Cabinet Secretary of the respective ministries.

The PC clearly specifies the intentions, obligations, and responsibilities of both parties. Specific targets are set which should be measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART).

After the end of the financial year, the targets set are evaluated to confirm if indeed the organization achieved its targets as agreed. Incentives and sanctions are deployed based on the evaluation results.

The five PC composite scores results range from 1-5 as follows: 1-2.40 (Excellent), 2.41-2.99 (Very good), 3.00-3.59 (Good), 3.60-3.99 (Fair) and 4.00-5.00 (Poor).

KEFRI's PC for 2023/2024 Financial Year was evaluated by the Public Service Performance Management Unit (PSPMU) at KEFRI Headquarters on 31st January 2025.

During the Evaluation exercise, evidence for the various targets were vetted and confirmed as the true reflection of the achievement of each target. KEFRI scored a composite score of 2.8510 which is rated as "Very Good".

This was the best score in the last five years. Management and staff celebrated this great achievement which has elevated KEFRI perfomances

New ISO Champions and auditors undergo training

KEFRI successfully concluded a five-day Implementers ISO training, aimed at enhancing the Institute's conformity to EMS & QMS international standards.

While kicking off the training, the Director KEFRI, Dr. Jane Njuguna, encouraged participants to embrace this opportunity to refine their skills and serve as ambassadors of ISO standards 14001:2015 and 9001:2015 within their respective departments and beyond.

In her opening remarks, Dr. Njuguna emphasized the importance of the training in strengthening KEFRI's commitment to environmental and quality management systems.

She highlighted the Institute's recent recertification by the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) in December 2024, attributing this achievement to the collaborative efforts by all staff in upholding both environmental and quality standards across the organization.

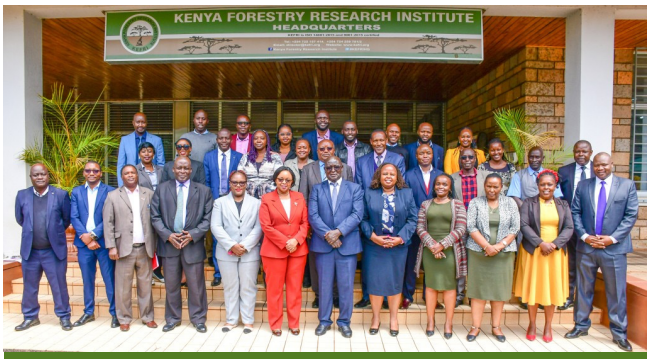
The training program culminated with delegates undertaking internal auditor's certification exam to assess their understanding and readiness to audit the ISO standards.

Upon completion of the training, Dr. Musingo Mbuvi, the Acting Senior Deputy Director Research and Development, urged participants to strive for excellence in their centers and departments.

He emphasized the goal of achieving minimal to zero non-conformances in their operations, reinforcing KEFRI's dedication to maintaining high standards in its research and administrative functions.

KEFRI welcomes Kenya Water Towers Agency Staff

On January 27th, 2025, Dr. Jane Njuguna received 24 staff redeployed from the defunct Kenya Water Towers Agency (KWTA) as per the directive from the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry Hon. Aden Duale. Several other staff were redeployed to various agencies within the Ministry.



KEFRI Senior Management alongside newly absorbed Kenya Water Towers Agency staff

KWTA was dissolved following the Cabinet sanctioned rationalization of State Corporations with overlapping or duplicating mandates. The Agency became the first one in a raft of measures to be undertaken by the government. “No one will lose a job, we will ensure everyone is deployed to a new station,” CS Duale said while making pronouncement to dissolve the Agency in January 2025.

While welcoming the new staff to KEFRI, Dr. Njuguna urged them to feel at home and be ready to deliver optimally since excellence at KEFRI is not an option. She added that the additional workforce will enable KEFRI hasten its speed in achieving its mandate especially in delivering high quality seeds for the 15B tree growing programme.

The staff were deployed in various departments including research, communication, ICT, administration, human resources among others.

Seed Centers receive boost towards seed collection

KEFRI Board Chairman Rtd. Gen. Samson Mwathethe, alongside the Board of Directors, the Director KEFRI, and Senior Management flagged off eight new vehicles and three motorbikes for distribution to KEFRI seed centers spread throughout the country.

In his remarks, the Chairman emphasized that the automotives will significantly improve seed collection, production and distribution of quality tree seeds. Further urging the teams to exercise professionalism and prudence in their use of the newly acquired automotives.

The Director KEFRI, Dr. Jane Njuguna, reiterated KEFRI's commitment to achieving Kenya's 30% tree cover target by 2032 through increased seed collection and distribution to accelerate landscape restoration efforts.

KEFRI Receives Project Vehicle from JICA

Mr. Makoto Shinkawa, the Chief Representative JICA and Dr. Jane Njuguna, Director KEFRI flagging off newly received JICA project vehicle

Mr. Makoto Shinkawa, the Chief Representative Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Kenya handed over a project vehicle to Dr. Jane Njuguna, Director KEFRI on 22nd January 2025, during his visit to the Institute's Headquarters at Muguga.

KEFRI and JICA enjoy a longstanding working relationship that has seen the establishment of *Melia volkensii* and *Acacia tortilis* orchards in Tiva, Kitui county. "The ongoing projects will help enhance seed and seedling production in the drylands. We also envision expanding our scope by setting up fruit tree orchards as well as expansion in commercial forestry," said Dr. Njuguna.

Mr. Shinkawa, remarked that the vehicle will aid officers as they carry out field work in the country's drylands with a focus on Kitui County. This is in line with JICA's commitment to strengthen their research collaboration and restoration efforts.

KEFRI and JICA have enjoyed a productive relationship, primarily focused on forest research, conservation, and sustainable development initiatives. Their collaboration is aimed at enhancing forestry practices, improving livelihoods, and promoting environmental sustainability in Kenya and the broader region. Through these efforts, KEFRI and JICA have significantly contributed to the sustainable management of forests and improved the community's involvement in environmental conservation

Change of JICA Project Representatives

On February 3rd 2025, KEFRI bid farewell to JICA Chief Advisor Mr. Katsuro Saito and Dr. Yasuko Inoue JICA Expert on Forest Policy/Extension whose term under the "Project for Strengthening Forestry Sector Development and Community Resilience to Climate Change through Sustainable Forest Management and Landscape Restoration" (SFS-CORECC) came to an end.

Launched in February 2022, the SFS-CORECC project aimed to promote sustainable forest management and landscape restoration, supporting Kenya's goal of achieving and maintaining over 30% tree cover.

Dr. Jane Njuguna and Senior Management as they bid farewell to outgoing JICA representatives

The Director KEFRI, Dr. Jane Njuguna, expressed her appreciation for JICA's unwavering support and invaluable research contributions throughout the project.

Dr. Njuguna reflected on the endearing partnership between KEFRI and JICA in dryland forestry research. "Our collaboration with JICA has been instrumental in advancing sustainable forest management and enhancing community resilience to climate change," she stated.

Mr. Saito expressed gratitude for the opportunity to work with KEFRI, highlighting the Institute's dedication to sustainable forestry and community development. As Mr. Saito and Dr. Inoue return to Japan, KEFRI wished them the best in their future endeavors. The Institute also warmly welcomed Ms. Michiko Nishikawa, the incoming Expert on Forestry Policy/Extension.

Restoration efforts in Mida Creek

Mangrove forests are one of Kenya's most valuable yet vulnerable ecosystems, playing a critical role in coastal protection, biodiversity conservation, and carbon sequestration. However, these vital habitats face increasing threats from unsustainable harvesting, degradation, pollution, and climate change.

Recognizing this, the Mangrove Restoration Project at Mida Creek has been a top priority for KEFRI Coast Eco-Region Research Program (CERP). The program has made significant progress in rehabilitating degraded mangrove areas by planting seedlings, developing sustainable nursery practices, and advancing monitoring technologies for pest and disease control. Additionally, local communities in Kilifi and Lamu have been actively involved in restoration activities, receiving training to develop conservation skills that contribute to long-term ecosystem health and sustainability.

Beyond environmental protection, mangrove restoration is also critical for supporting local livelihoods. Many coastal communities rely on mangroves for fishing and eco-tourism; hence the loss of these forests directly threatens their economic stability. By restoring and safeguarding mangrove forests, the program not only enhances coastal resilience but also ensures the continued availability of resources for generations to come.

As part of efforts to identify sustainable wood alternatives, CERP has initiated Bamboo Trials in Baolala. Bamboo has been recognized globally as an eco-friendly substitute for timber, offering a fast-growing, renewable resource that reduces pressure on natural forests. The trials in Baolala aim to assess the adaptability of different bamboo species to coastal conditions and determine their potential for commercial use. This initiative can transform local economies by providing new sources of income for farmers and entrepreneurs while promoting sustainable land use.

From mangrove restoration and bamboo trials to forest conservation and climate-smart innovations, the Coastal Eco-Region Research Programme (CERP) is playing a crucial role in shaping the future of environmental sustainability.

A Game Changer in Conservation in Indonesia

In the heart of Indonesia's lush rainforests, where towering trees shelter a vast array of biodiversity, illegal logging has long posed a grave environmental challenge. The destruction of these forests not only threatens countless flora and fauna but also accelerates climate change by reducing the planet's natural ability to absorb carbon dioxide. However, a new wave of technology is offering a groundbreaking solution to this crisis.

Harnessing the power of artificial intelligence (AI)-equipped drones, researchers and conservationists are now able to monitor vast stretches of rainforest with unprecedented efficiency. These high-tech drones capture real-time aerial footage, which is then processed through an advanced AI system capable of detecting illegal logging activities within seconds. Unlike traditional monitoring methods that require manual patrols and satellite imagery, which can take days or even weeks to analyse, this cutting-edge approach provides instant alerts, allowing law enforcement agencies and environmental watchdogs to respond swiftly and effectively.

The AI technology not only identifies unauthorized logging sites but can also differentiate between legal and illegal activities by analysing patterns, vehicle movements, and even the sound of chainsaws. This level of precision has significantly improved the accuracy of forest surveillance, ensuring that interventions are targeted, and resources are efficiently allocated.

Indonesia, home to some of the world's most biodiverse rainforests, has made significant strides in environmental protection by integrating AI into conservation efforts. With deforestation rates still a pressing concern, the government and environmental organizations are scaling up these AI-powered drone initiatives, reinforcing the nation's commitment to sustainable forest management.

As this technology continues to evolve, it offers a glimpse of a future where forests can be safeguarded more effectively, preserving Indonesia's ecological heritage for generations to come. By embracing innovation, the fight against illegal logging is gaining momentum-one intelligent drone at a time.

Ondiri Swamp Marathon

KALRO Mkulima Exhibition

International Day of Forests

Graduation

Ms. Margaret Njenga graduated with a Master's degree in communication studies from Moi University. She is currently working at KEFRI Headquarters in the office of the Deputy Director, Forest Products and Entrepreneurship Development as a Senior Office Administrator.

Staff Movement

P/No.	Name	Date of Exit	Mode of Exit
5748	Stephen M. Gitonga	28/02/2025	Retirement
5797	Samuel Auka Othuon	27/01/2025	Retirement
5798	Teresia Wangari Ngigi	07/04/2025	Retirement
5816	Hezron Andrew Oduor	09/02/2025	Retirement
5907	Benson Ogundo Bomwanga	22/02/2025	Retirement
6216	Peter Lubanga Chibayi	16/02/2025	Retirement
7071	Obelai Cephas Opae	07/03/2025	Resignation
7150	Lillian Cheruto Konuche	09/03/2025	Resignation
7303	Samuel Mwanzia	17/01/2025	Resignation

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