

How KFS plans to increase forest cover to 10 per cent by 2022

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Kenya Forest Service Chief Conservator of Forests Julius Kamau plants a tree.

The Kenya Forest Service plans to rehabilitate a total of 4,015,545.2078 acres of heavily degraded forest land in the country.

The KFS has laid out a strategy aimed at increasing the forest cover from the current 7.2 per cent to 10 per cent by 2022. To achieve the target, KFS needs Sh48 billion.

Under the strategy, Kenya needs to plant 1.8 billion seedlings between now and 2022 to achieve 10 per cent tree cover.

It has urged both state and non-state actors to help in the implementation of its plan.

"Attaining the 10 per cent tree cover by 2022, one creative avenue for the service is in forming partnerships with among others, non-state actors through tree planting initiatives that aim to spur a tree growing culture among our youth today," KFS chief conservator of forests Julius Kamau said.

Kamau said their business is to plant, manage, grow and protect trees.

He said the partnerships will be key in enhancing the forest cover.

Other key agencies that took part in the initial development of the strategy include Kenya Water Towers Agency, Kenya Forestry Research Institute and the National Environment Management Authority.

Kenya's forest cover was 6.99 per cent in 2010, according to a comprehensive National Forest Resources Assessment and Mapping report by the service.

There are five forest types in the country.

The Western rainforest natural forest (mixed indigenous) are found in Kakamega and Nandi. It covers 357,350.8957 acres — about 3.5 per cent of the total forest area.

This figure is based on the forest cover mapping of 2013 using 2010 satellite imageries.

The Montane forests natural forest (mixed indigenous) which include Mt Kenya, Aberdares, Mau, Cherangany, Mt Elgon, Matthews Ranges and Chyulu Hills covers 3,360,282.053 acres, making 32.9 per cent of the total forest area.

The Coastal forest natural forest (mixed indigenous trees) are found in Arabuko Sokoke, Dakatcha, Boni, Shimba Hills, Kayas covering 731,112.0345 acres, at 7.2 per cent of the total forest cover.

Dryland forests natural forest (mixed indigenous trees) found in Hilltops in Eastern and Northern Kenya and Lake Victoria regions covers 4,633,999.60 acres, making 45.4 per cent of the total forest cover.

Forest plantations both in public and private forests covered 461,384.5718 acres making 4.5 per cent of the total forest cover.

The strategy is premised on total seedling production of 1.8 billion over four years.

Some of the intervention includes the rehabilitation of degraded natural forests in gazetted forests and water towers covering 741,315 acres. This will require 330,000,000 seedlings.

Some 247,105 acres of water towers and wetlands outside gazetted forests will also be rehabilitated.

Some 2,016.3768 acres of degraded national parks, game reserves and wildlife conservancies will regenerate naturally.

The degraded mangrove ecosystems covering 42,096.807 acres will also be rehabilitated with 18,739,600 seedlings.

Some 76,602.55 acres of industrial forest plantation areas will also be restocked using 34,100,000 seedlings.

KFS said 370,657.5 acres of commercial private forests plantations will be established with 165,000,000 seedlings.

Some 123,552.5 acres of bamboo plantations will also be grown. It will require 55,000,000 seedlings.

KFS said 864,867.5 acres of trees in farmlands will be established using 385,000,000 seedlings.

Some 172,973.5 acres of woodlots, botanical gardens, boundary planting will also be established using 77,000,000 seedlings.

Another 1,341,780.15 acres of degraded dryland forest landscapes will be rehabilitated using 597,300,000 seedlings.

Further, some 34,594.7 acres of infrastructure such as roads, along railway lines, dams, schools, corporates will be greened using 15,400,000 seedlings.

This brings the total number of seedlings needed to 1,787,539,600.

Source: <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2019-10-13-how-kfs-plans-to-increase-forest-cover-to-10-per-cent-by-2022/>