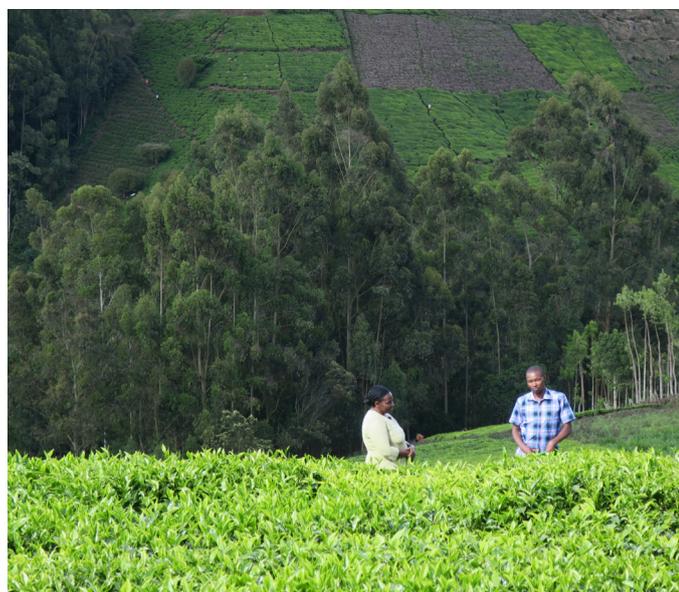


# MOUNT KENYA SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPE AND LIVELIHOODS PROGRAM



**In Kenya, approximately 12 million people live on degraded land and food productivity has fallen behind the rate of population growth. Mount Kenya is a biodiversity reservoir, an important agricultural area, and a national water tower—a source of water for the surrounding watershed. The landscape has been impacted by increasingly frequent extreme climate events with direct consequences to agricultural production and food security, illegal deforestation, land degradation and commodity markets, resulting in farmland extending up the fertile slopes of the mountain and encroaching into protected forests, further threatening the water supply. Existing initiatives are operating in silos, missing opportunities for exchanging learnings and building synergies to optimize resources and ensure sustainability of efforts.**

To mitigate these challenges, the Rainforest Alliance is advancing five strategic and interconnected interventions to deliver conservation and efficient management of resources and ecosystem services, along with improved rural livelihoods in a vibrant, more equitable rural economy. This initiative is generously being supported by the IKEA Foundation.



*Tea and coffee landscape, central Kenya*

## 1. INTEGRATED LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

Establishment of a Landscape Management Board (LMB) to catalyze and coordinate collective action by all parties that use land or have influence over land use in the landscape. The results-based, multi-stakeholder governance structure enables the government, the private sector, civil society, and local communities to collaborate around a shared vision of the landscape where people and nature thrive in harmony.

## 2. REGENERATIVE AND CLIMATE-SMART AGRICULTURE

The Rainforest Alliance uses climate risk mapping, training, and digital technology to support the implementation of best agricultural practices tailored to the landscape. The focus is on regenerative practices, helping reduce the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides towards more resilient agro-ecosystems. To enhance their resilience, local farmers and forest communities receive training and support to manage farms more sustainably as a business and use innovative technology to inform their crop production and marketing decisions.

## 3. PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

The Rainforest Alliance is actively engaged with the public sector in Mount Kenya, including county government agencies, tea and coffee research initiatives, and civil society organizations. We are expanding these partnerships further, aiming to engage key stakeholders such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Kenya Forest Service, among others. By working closely with key stakeholders in the region, we are finding collaborative solutions in the short-term, and creating incentives to build the capacities of smallholders and deep-rooted change in the long-term.

We are also drawing on our relationships with communities, authorities, and our network of partners, to support the private sector in going beyond certification and promoting sustainable land management, biodiversity conservation, and social inclusion in the landscape. Our private sector engagement strategy includes sensitizing companies sourcing from the landscape, inviting them to participate in the LMB, and involving them in market-based incentives, such as premiums and long-term sourcing agreements, to secure the commitment of farming communities in conserving natural resources, farming sustainably, and diversifying their income.

**4. LIVELIHOODS DIVERSIFICATION**

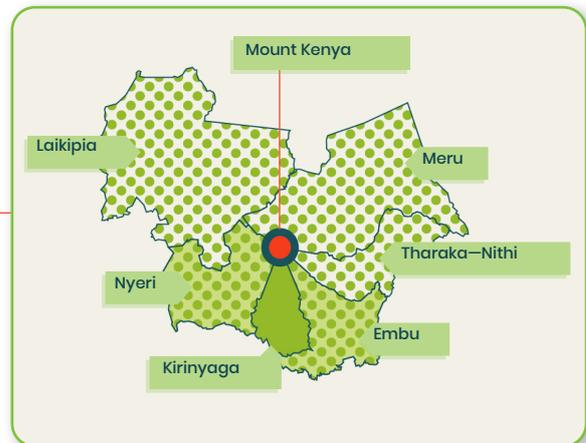
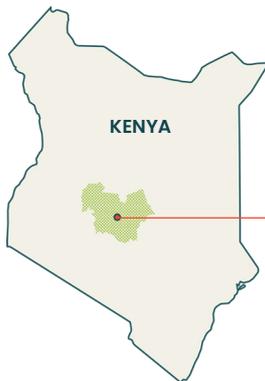
To increase resilience at the household level, we are focused on diversifying sources of income for coffee and tea farmers through on- and off-farm interventions to decrease farmer vulnerability and create market opportunities for entire communities. Some of the alternative economic activities we are exploring include high-value fruit trees, such as macadamia and avocado—which also serve as excellent shade trees—horticultural crops, dairy farming, and rearing small livestock. Small businesses trading in clean energy solutions fostered through our renewable energy interventions in Mt. Kenya, support the uptake of renewable energy products.

**5. CONNECTING LANDSCAPE AND FINANCE**

RA is piloting the creation of a blended landscape finance mechanism that can support the LMB operations and investments, making it self-sustaining in the long-term. The aim is to engage financial players interested in contributing to and benefiting from landscape governance, climate-positive management, and conservation. We will also work with compatible investors in the landscape in partnership with micro-finance institutions to serve small-scale farmers.



*Smallholder tea farmer, Samuel, pointing at reforested area with a small stream protected by his surrounding farm in Mataara of Kenya's Central Province.*



**Implementation area:**

- Mount Kenya focal counties: Kirinyaga and Embu

**Partner communities:**

- 50,000 coffee and tea farmers
- 1,000 community forest association members
- 250,000 farmers cultivating a mix of food crops, tea, and coffee will benefit indirectly in the broader landscape through capacity building on climate smart agriculture, entrepreneurial approach to farming, and improved environmental management

**Desired impacts:**

- Multi-stakeholder governance and integrated landscape management with full participation of local communities, private sector and public sector
- Strengthened farmer groups' monitoring and decision-making capacities and further adopt regenerative and other climate-smart agricultural practices
- Companies and public sector entities engaged to incentivize and build capacities of smallholders
- Pipeline of investment opportunities attracts landscape investments