

Carbon project:

TIST, Central Kenya



VCS 737

A Cool Effect onsite report

June 2025

Afforestation / Reforestation (ARR)



tist

Project specifications

Name of project:

TIST,
Central Kenya

Project type:

Nature-based Removal

Standard:

Verra 737

Methodology:

AR-AMS0001



Expected issuance:

85,000 per year

Crediting periods:

30 years

TIST! We are TIST!

For 7 years, I have had the honor of representing **TIST** to our corporate buyers and donors.

On paper, we've always known that **TIST** was the living definition of the phrase "high quality carbon project." Not only is it one of the first and few afforestation projects, but it has community benefits such as a rotating leadership program which stresses service to one another over hierarchy. **TIST** also creates job opportunities for women and delivers revenue share which incentivizes more tree planting. And as if that wasn't enough, it also has one of the most robust technical systems ever developed for accurately capturing data in the field and ensuring that a tonne removed is actually a tonne removed.

However, none of the stories, photos and news from the project that we had received over the years prepared me for the incredible opportunity to meet the farmers and see the transformative impact **TIST** has on each individual and local community. From the moment we arrived at the first farm, it was clear how vital the carbon project is to its people. 25 years of success has resulted in over 265,919 farmers in 4 countries who have raised over 27,957,722 trees (and counting).

There was one common and consistent theme with everyone who touches **TIST**; pride. In an area of the world where extreme poverty is the norm, these farmers feel honored to be participants and to teach each other how to develop stewardship for the land.

"This is my life and the legacy that I want to pass along to my grandchildren," was both a direct quote and a constant sentiment. Each farmer works to care for the trees that they grow, starting them from seedlings and committing to maintaining them for well over 30 years. Each owns their own land, has a plan for growth and had countless stories of how **TIST** has lifted them up and provided opportunities that they never would have otherwise had.

What an honor it was to participate in a celebration of human ingenuity and a culture dedicated to doing what is right.

Jodi Manning
CEO, Cool Effect
August 2025



Over several decades, the land around Mount Kenya has seen devastating effects from deforestation, erosion, droughts and floods. **TIST** counteracts this by planting millions of native species of trees.

The network of participating farms around Mount Kenya has grown substantially all by word of mouth between local farmers who are **TIST** participants and other farmers who want to join.

265,919

farmers in 4 countries have successfully planted more than

27,957,722

trees and captured over

7,004,254

metric tons of carbon dioxide to date.



What is **TIST**?

The International Small Tree Planting Program (TIST) is an innovative, time-tested afforestation program led by the participants.

Cool Effect has represented **TIST** since 2018.

As part of our due diligence process, Cool Effect conducts project site visits. Cool Effect's first Director of Project Research, Siddarth Yadav, first visited TIST in India in 2019.

In June of 2025, CEO Jodi Manning visited TIST in Kenya.

TIST teaches conservation farming methods centered around agroforestry, minimal soil disturbance, and maintenance of permanent soil cover.

TIST farmers then plant trees in harmony with crops on their land. After a baseline is established, the trees are measured and monitored for over 30 years. Growth of the trees then determines the number of carbon credits earned.

Over the course of 5 days, Cool Effect visited 11 farms all located around Mount Kenya to see firsthand how each farm has adopted these methods.



Jane Kanja,
TIST Leadership Member

Jodi Manning,
Cool Effect

Jane Ando,
Cluster Leader, Murang'a

Objectives of this site visit

- Visit the project sites in Kenya for the first time
- Meet the community led leadership team and see how they manage the project
- Assess the technology and process used to determine baseline and tree growth
- Engage with the Cluster Farms in multiple locations
- Understand how the carbon project benefits each participant



3 pillars

1 Revenue share

TIST farmers receive annual carbon pre-payments for each tree established and 70% of the net profit when credits are sold. Smallholder farmers also derive significant non-carbon related benefits from the sale and use of the fruit and foliage provided by the trees.



2 Technology platform

TIST has a unique custom technology platform developed for use in the fields via mobile technology. **TIST** also has certified “Cluster Servants” responsible for measuring trees each farm in their cluster which promotes accuracy and consistency.



3 Leadership

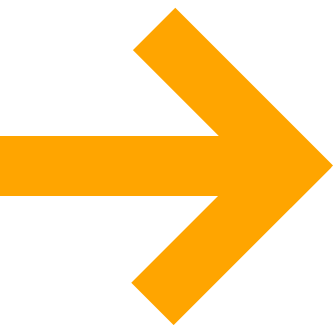
TIST has an award-winning leadership program. Rotating Leadership is one of the original components of Small Group Formation and supports both men and women. 50% of the Leadership Council, quantifiers and people who work with farmers in the field are women.



Revenue share

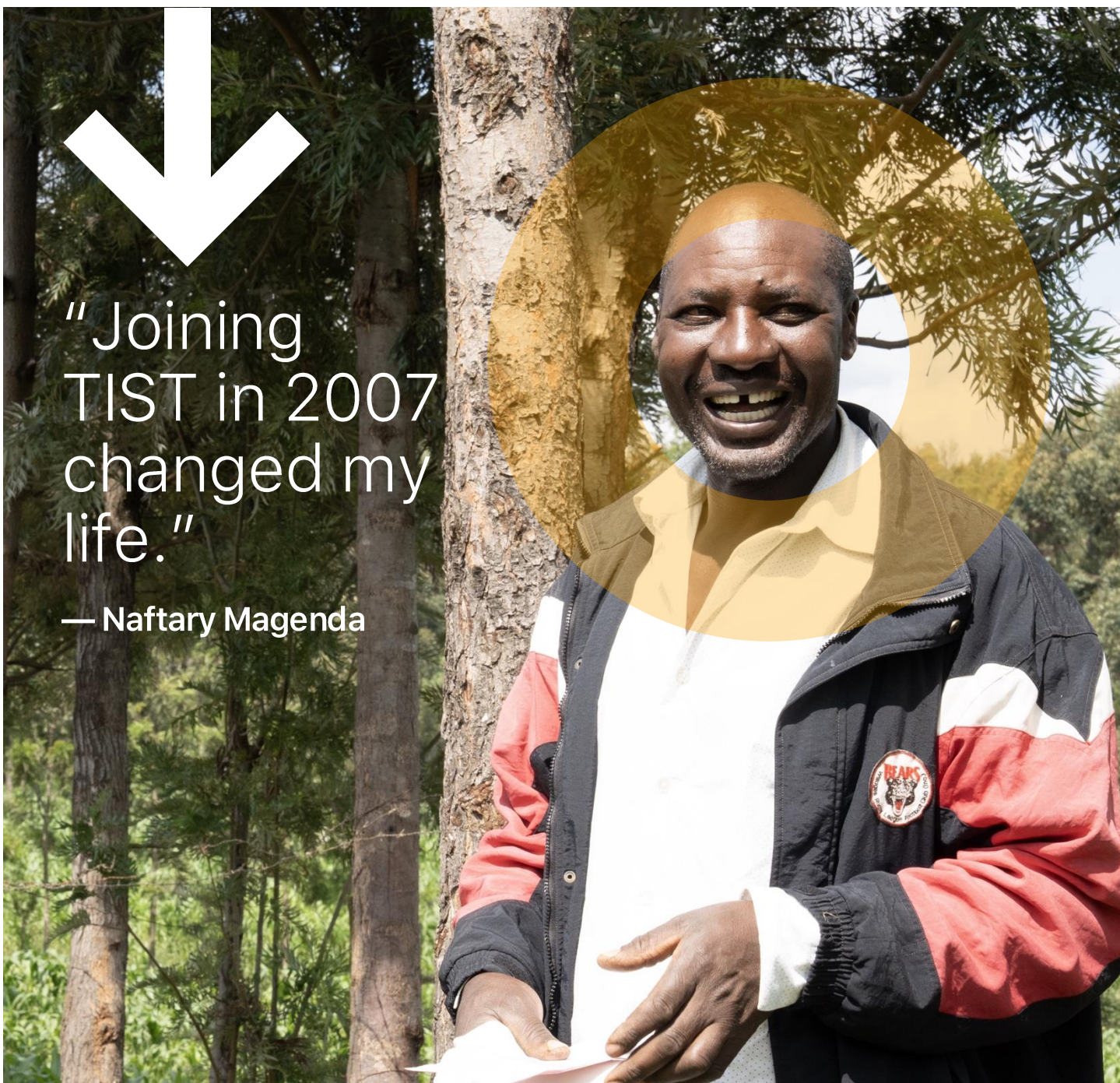
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Naftary Megenda is the owner of 2.3 acres of vibrant and lush fields in Nanyuki which are devoted to conservation farming. Naftary is also a **TIST** training leader who is very proud to be helping other farmers. He receives nearly weekly calls from other farmers who ask for his opinions and advice.





"Joining
TIST in 2007
changed my
life."

— Naftary Magenda

Revenue sharing

"The payments were small at first but come regularly now. They have figured out how to get us our pay."

Naftary has used the revenue to send his four kids to the university. "Paying for boarding is very expensive. They would not have gone without **TIST**" He wants to use his next payment for "improvements in my house and a biogas digester because my last daughter is almost done with university."



He emphasized the financial aspects of the program including the revenue share, the ability to sell what he grows and support of the program to secure loans from the bank. "Without the carbon benefit, no loan."



Revenue sharing

Naftary also receives additional income from the fruit of **TIST** trees.

He has already sold his crop of avocados in advance and received 7,660KES (\$59.29) which he described as a fortune!

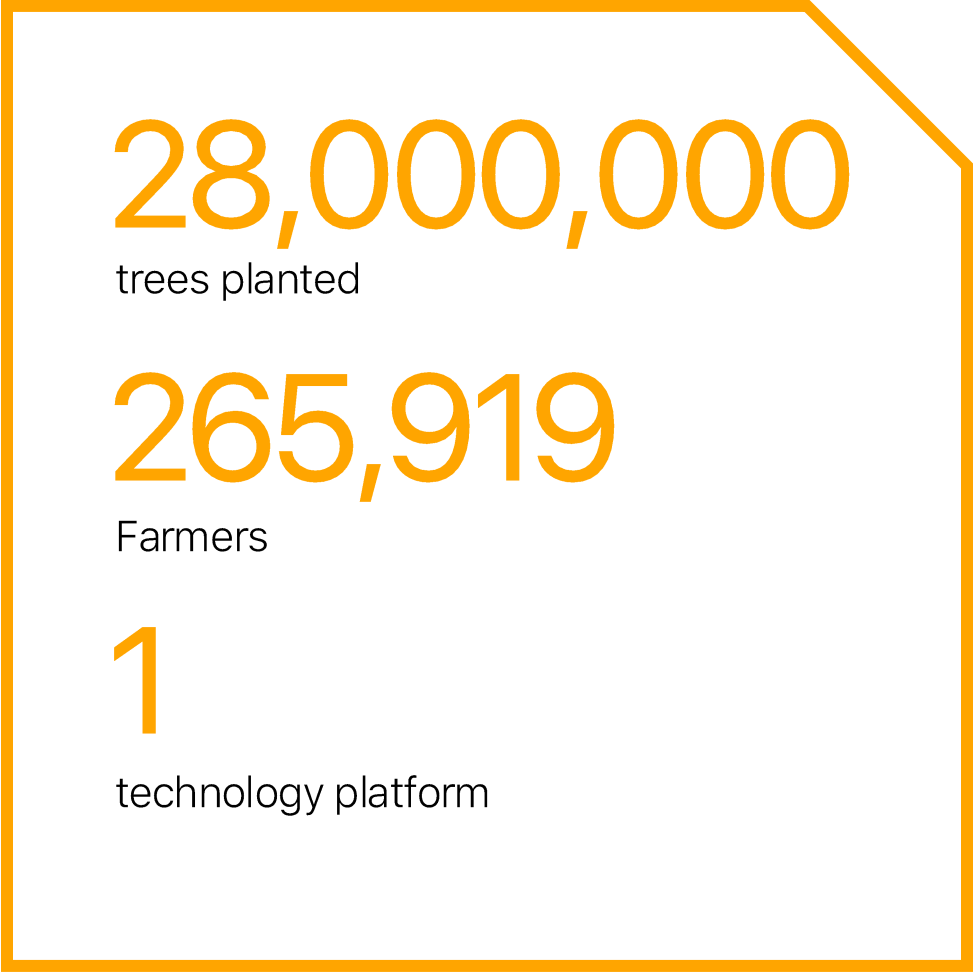


He showed us the 2 trees and the receipt for the crop at harvest. Naftary also sells the oranges he grows and gave them to us as a gift. They were green on the outside but DELICIOUS.



Technology platform

TIST relies on a proprietary, transparent, and award-winning technology platform for data collection, aggregation, and verification. It was designed to manage a large, decentralized network of smallholder farmers across thousands of small land plots in remote areas.

An infographic with an orange border and a folded-top-right corner. It contains three statistics in orange text: 28,000,000 trees planted, 265,919 Farmers, and 1 technology platform.

28,000,000

trees planted

265,919

Farmers

1

technology platform

Technology platform

Key components of how **TIST** uses technology:

Mobile data collection. Field staff, known as "Cluster Servants," use mobile devices and GPS to collect data directly from the field.

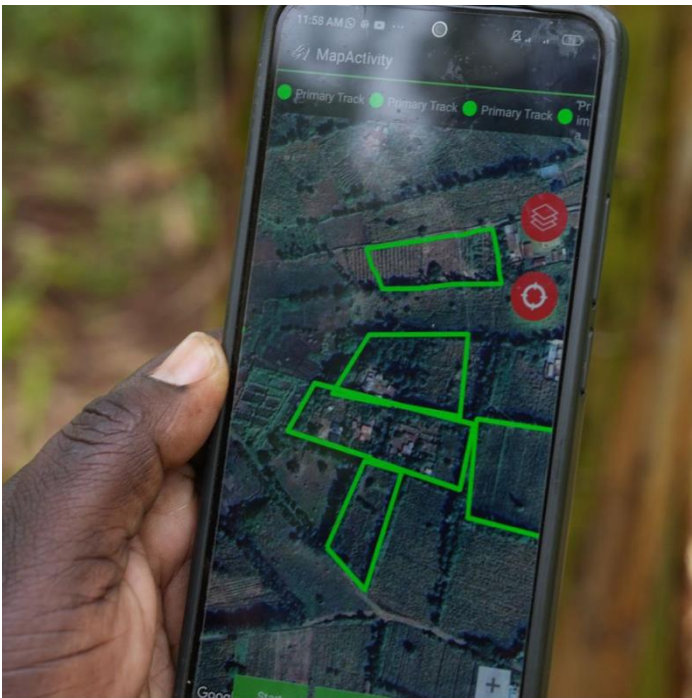
Dynamic, real-time database The field data is synchronized with a central internet-based database. The database is dynamically updated and available on the public-facing TIST website.

High transparency Publicly available quantification data includes location, boundaries, tree count, and species of each grove.

Quality assurance and control. Data collection procedures are standardized on the handheld devices and are routinely checked through staff audits. Since Cluster Servants are rotated, multiple measurements of the same grove help correct for potential errors and track tree growth over time.

Independent verification The data is used for third-party auditors to validate and verify the calculations.

Scalability The system was built to scale, and TIST has demonstrated that it can accurately and honestly track millions of trees across thousands of farms.



Technology platform



Cluster Servants use their custom mobile platform to start the process.

First, they find a starting point via GPS. Then they walk the perimeter until they get back to the starting point. They do this 3 to ensure accuracy. From there, the Cluster Servant answers questions on the mobile platform. The process takes about 5 hours.

A year later they return and repeat the process.and

Credits are not issued until trees are 5 years but at that time credits are issued for all 5 years.

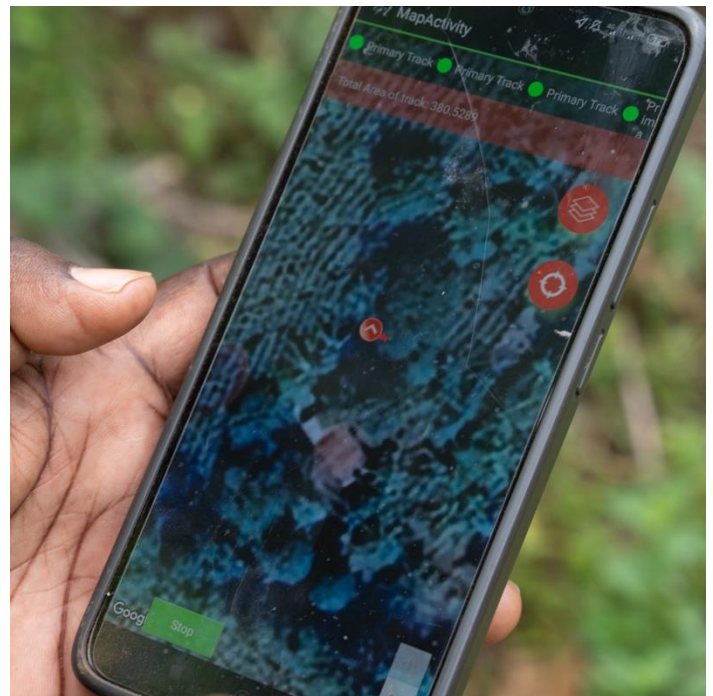
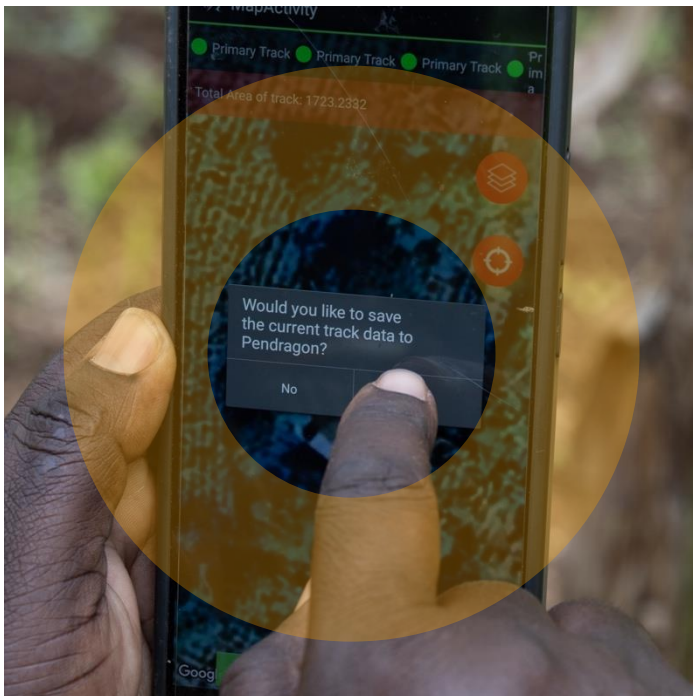
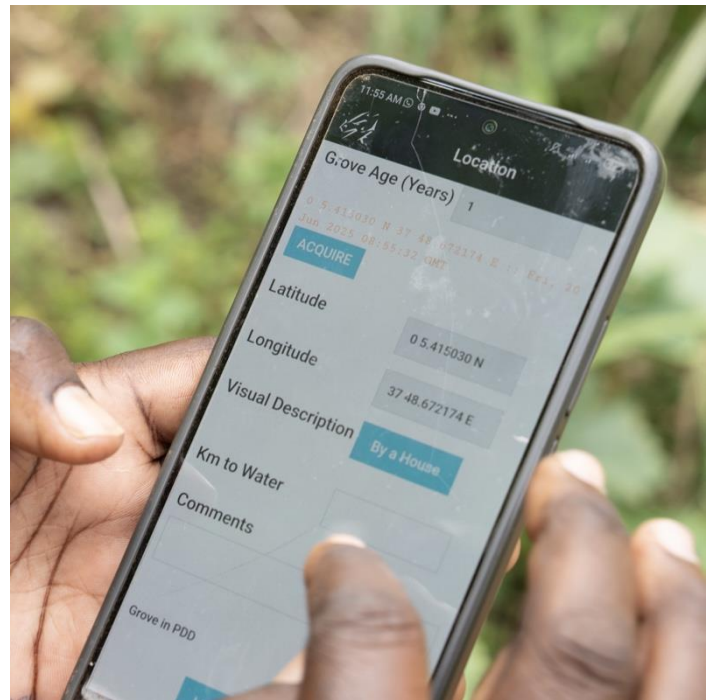
NOTE: TIST's database is comprehensive and advanced. META donated technical support and multiple engineers to build TIST's custom solution.

"What I see in the database must match what I see on the ground or there will be no payment."

— Alice Kambura, Cluster Servant



Technology platform



Leadership

TIST engages equal numbers of men and women as independent contractors and in all leadership positions.

Leadership is fostered through a system of rotating positions, farmer-led learning, and a sense of self-ownership and community.

TIST has specific practices to ensure that women have equal access to leadership roles, especially in areas where this may be countercultural.



Leadership

The **TIST** program's benefits are not determined by land ownership, which is usually patriarchal in the operational countries. Instead, the 'ecosystem service' can be completed by women, the contract can be held by women, and the contract can be transferred by women through inheritance.



Alice Kambura, TIST Cluster Servant from Meru, delivers a lesson on composting for farmers at Makandi Cluster meeting

Leadership

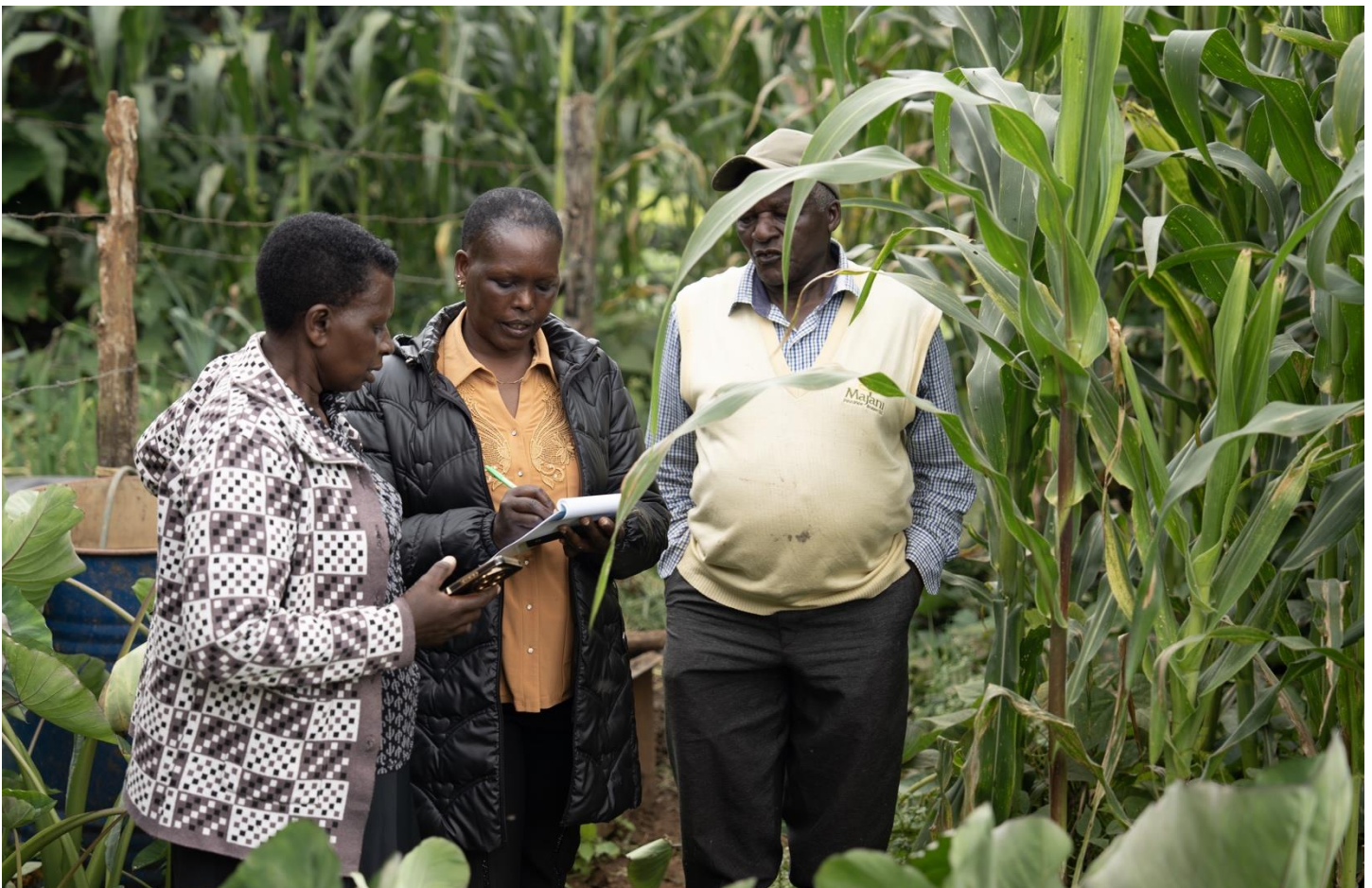
In **TIST**, every member is given the opportunity to lead. The system is based on a hierarchy of small groups, clusters, and a national leadership council.

Small group The foundational unit consists of 6 to 12 members who meet weekly. Leadership roles—Leader, Co-Leader, and Accountability Person—are rotated among all members at every meeting. This ensures everyone gains experience and offers their unique gifts.

Cluster As small groups grow, they form clusters, where farmers share information and best practices. Leadership of these clusters also rotates to ensure all members gain experience and learn from one another.

National leadership council This rotating leadership practice continues all the way up to the highest level, the national leadership council.

Some examples of best practice include the use of wood ash on the base of orange trees as a deterrent to ants. Or surrounding seedlings with banana leaves to capture and hold water.



More about the trees

In 100% of the farms we visited, there was no sign that trees were displacing crops. In fact, crops dominated the planting and appeared to be the primary consideration.

All **TIST** farms select tree type based on the available location. Timber trees are planted along the edges of the fields and fruit trees are planted in groves and randomly among the vegetable crops.

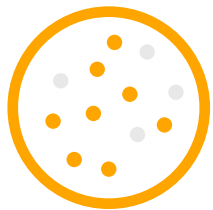
The current balance is about 50/50 but planting fruit trees is becoming more popular. Fruit trees take longer to grow so many start with timber trees on the edges of their crop fields and add fruit trees in amongst the crops where they can supply water to them.

TIST farmers cultivate their own seedlings with cuttings from another **TIST** farmer. First, they germinate the cutting or seed until it sprouts. Then they transfer it into a tube to allow it to build roots. From there, they place the small plants in organic sleeves and leave them to become small trees.

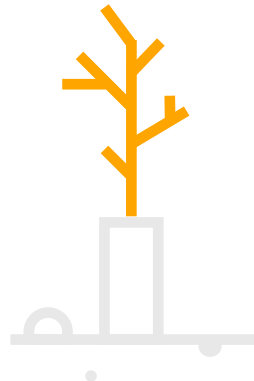
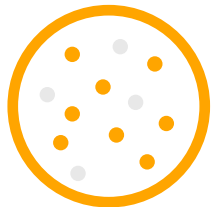
Many farmers have turned seedling creation into a micro business and then sell seedlings to other people, notably the government.



TIST is organized into small groups of subsistence farmers that work together and plant trees. These small groups then form Clusters to coordinate efforts and provide leadership.

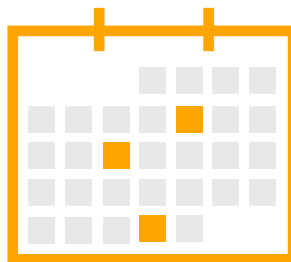


The foundation of the TIST program is small groups of 6-12 farmers.



They practice rotating leadership among members

They meet regularly, often weekly



Clusters meet monthly and regionally

Leader
Guides the cluster, oversees activities, and ensures meeting records are kept

Multiple small groups in a community come together to form Clusters, composed of 200-400 local farmers.

Within each cluster, leaders are democratically elected and rotate every four months ensuring that many members gain leadership experience.

Leader

And share best practices in sustainable conservation farming

Co-leader

Accountability person

Co-leader
Assists the leader and assumes the title after the rotation

Accountability person
Manages the cluster budget and ensures payment processes are followed

Transformative local impact

Pictures say a thousand words.



Proud of their coffee farm



Reading the monthly
“Mazingira Bora”





Thank you to the 265,919 farmers
(and counting) making a difference
each and every day.



Lear Njeri Maina and her husband Cyrus Munyi Kabuta from Kirinyaga