

# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## A WORD FROM JEAN-PAUL, MANAGING DIRECTOR

*When pioneering dryland afforestation, success can only be planned in the long run.*

*It is a process of trial and error. It is also the ability to manage the downs while keeping an eye on the future.*

*In BGF we are intensely planning our forestry activities for the next 5 years starting in 2023 with new and improved ways to serve our customers, the tree owners.*

*In this we are very lucky to have an excellent partner, a big brother called KEFRI (Kenya Forestry Research Institute), willing to help us motivating others to plant trees in the drylands as a business. We are humbled and also immensely grateful. It is worth noting that our Senior Director Forestry, Jan Vandenabeele has been elected Chair of the Steering Committee of the Kenya Commercial Tree Improvement Strategy representing Better Globe Forestry. It shows confidence and appreciation in the knowledge acquired since we started our operations.*

## ANOTHER MILESTONE FOR BGF

**KEFRI AND BGF SIGN AN AGREEMENT ON ESTABLISHING A SEED ORCHARD OF *MELIA VOLKENSII***

In a modest ceremony in the HQ of Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI) in Muguga, on the outskirts of Nairobi, on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> October, KEFRI and BGF signed both a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two partners, and a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). The latter specifically dealt with the establishment of a seed orchard of *M. volkensii* (mukau), BGF's flagship species in its planting programmes in Kenya. The significance lays in the fact that KEFRI under cooperation with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has for almost 20 years been implementing a genetic improvement programme of the tree species, resulting in impressive gains in both yield and shape of the trees. Under the deal, KEFRI will share the latest crop of improved material, the F2 generation in technical terms, to be planted in a seed orchard close to BGF's Kiambere plantation in Kitui county. It can be anticipated that a reasonable harvest of seed will be available after 4 years of planting, to increase in the next years. The seeds will be used in BGF's farmers programme, as well as in its Kiambere plantation. So far, BGF has been collecting its seed from a network of selected trees in the wide neighbourhood of the Kiambere plantation, and according to KEFRI statistics, the use of the improved seeds will result in a net gain of 17% in height of the trees, as well 25% in girth, compared to previous levels of research results. Both factors combined will yield a substantial higher volume in each tree. The form of the stem will also be straighter, resulting in less losses during sawmilling. Needless to say, we can't wait to plant it.



Proudly displaying the signed copies of the MoU and MoA. Present, first row from left to right: Jean-Paul Deprins (MD BGF), Joshua Cheboiwo (Director KEFRI), Jan Vandenabeele (Senior Director Forestry, BGF), Jane Njuguna (Senior Deputy Director of KEFRI), back row ltr: Paul Tuwei (Principal Research Scientist), Joram Kagombe (Deputy Director, KEFRI), Joseph Machua (Senior Research Scientist, KEFRI) and Betty Njoki (Partnerships & Resource Mobilization, KEFRI)

## BGF MAKES FURTHER PROGRESS TOWARDS FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL (FSC) CERTIFICATION

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) truly appreciates BGF's efforts to become certified. During 25<sup>th</sup>- 28<sup>th</sup> of October they provided a very practical training, given by prof Nelson Turyahabwe of Makerere University, Kampala, and came in strength to assist the professor in his efforts. Annah Agasha (Regional Coordinator), Paul Opanga (Labour Issues Manager) and Paul Alele (Regional Director) were present to answer any tricky question. BGF plans on certifying firstly its Kiambere plantation, and one farmer group, making it a group certificate. To prove compliance, we need to be at par with mainly two standards: (i) the Interim National Standard of Kenya, and (ii) the Group Standard (FSC-STD-30-005).

During the 4 days, Prof Turyahabwe went through the 10 FSC principles:

- Compliance with laws
- Workers' rights and employment conditions
- Indigenous peoples' rights
- Community relations
- Benefits from the forest
- Environmental values and impacts
- Management planning
- Monitoring and assessment



- High Conservation Values (HCVs)
- Implementation of management activities

He made sure they were well understood, through permanent interaction with his trainees. Those included all senior BGF staff, while the Managing Director was present during the opening and closing sessions. As a reminder, by December BGF committed itself to be compliant with the above 10 principles and is in the process of identifying a certification body (an independent third-party auditor) which will conduct an audit of the forest operations against the FSC standards. The audit will clarify whether any corrective actions need to be implemented, after which the certificate can be awarded. This will make BGF the first private company in Kenya to be FSC certified.



Day one (25<sup>th</sup> Oct) of the training. Prof Turyahabwe (standing), Jean-Paul Deprins (sitting, left), Annah Agasha (sitting, right) and some participants



The complete team and its FSC trainers

## BGF BEING RECOGNIZED IN KENYAN FORESTRY WORLD

The Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI) and the Gatsby Trust organized a two-day Workshop in Naivasha on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> October, to implement the **Kenya Commercial Tree Improvement Strategy (KCTIS)**. This task force included both Government, private sector, NGOs and Development Partners, all in all 25 participants. KCTIS came into being as an answer to the growing wood deficit in the country, for which commercial forestry has to be promoted, to achieve bigger yields on an ever-shrinking area of land. This includes issues like use of quality seeds, species-site matching and proper silvicultural management. The quality seeds can either be imported-when appropriate- but mostly have to be produced locally through tree species improvement programmes. Therefore, the formulation of KCTIS, which execution requires guidance to be provided by a Steering Committee, representing the stakeholders.

The participants raised various issues (funding, laws and regulations, communication etc) during lively discussions, after which the Steering Committee was composed. It consists of 10 members, with Better Globe Forestry elected as the chair, and represents a broad spectrum of national actors from various sectors, balancing government and private sector.

**Composition:** (1) BGF (chair), (2) Council of Governors (vice-chair), (3) Kenya Association of Manufacturers (Treasurer), (4) KEFRI (secretary), and ordinary members (5) Forestry Society of Kenya, (6) Farm Forestry Small-holder Producers Association of Kenya, (7) Aberdare Technologies, (8) Japan International Cooperation Agency, (9) Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service and (10) Kenya Forestry Service.

The election of BGF as chair, in the person of its Senior Director Forestry is a recognition for the technical competency and entrepreneurial integrity of BGF.



Group photo on day one of the Naivasha workshop