



# ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2022

"Collaborative Action for Nature and People"



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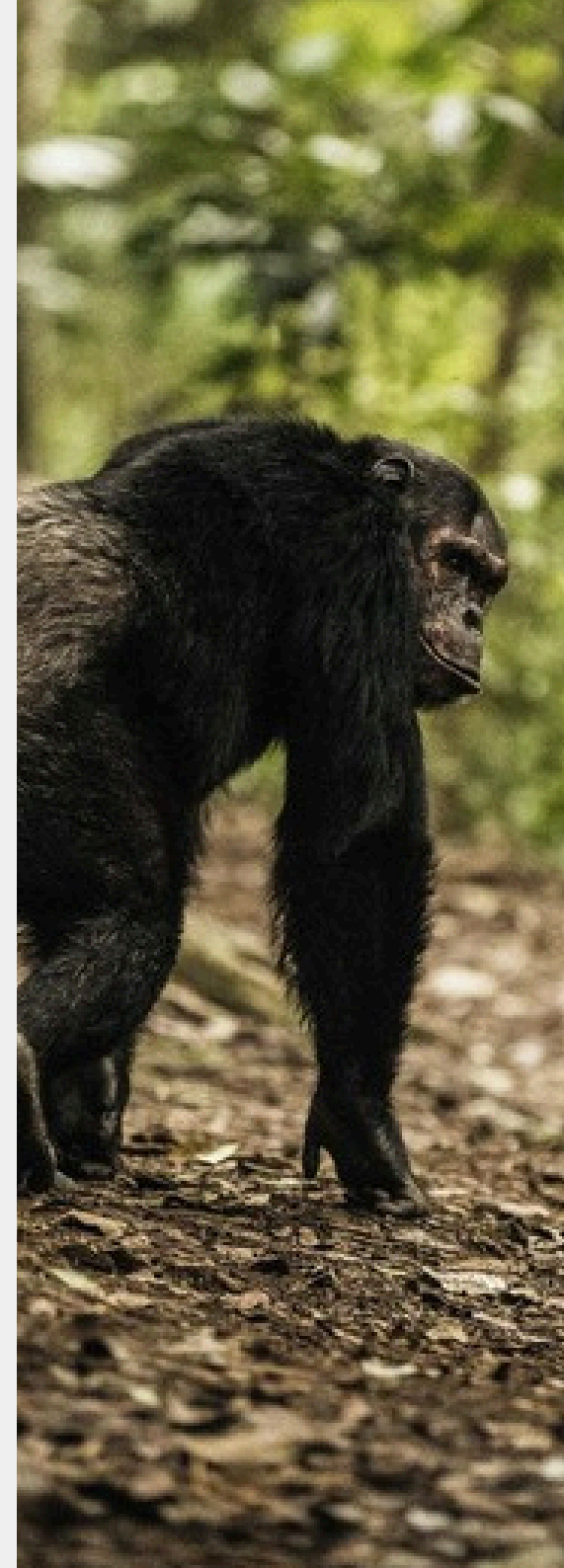
## 1. ARCOS Mission and Governance Structure

The Albertine Rift Conservation Society (ARCOS) was founded in 1995 as a regional conservation organisation with the sole focus on the Albertine Rift biodiversity conservation. ARCOS has grown and upscaled its geographic areas of intervention from the Albertine Rift region to Africa Great Lakes and Africa Mountains.

To achieve its mission, ARCOS builds on the following pillars of its approach:

- We facilitate networking with local, national, and international players to enhance sustainable development through information and experience sharing,
- We empower our network through policy dialogue, capacity building and policy engagement when implementing our work. We work with all kinds of organizations– Non Government Organization(NGOs)/Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), academic institutions, governments and increasingly business.
- Our activities on the ground take an integrated landscape approach focusing mainly in protecting biodiversity and enhancing ecosystem services, building Nature Based Community Enterprises (NBCEs) and building shared vision among stakeholders to address threats.

**Legal status:** ARCOS is registered in Uganda and Rwanda as International NGO and in the UK as a Charity and Company Limited by Guarantee. ARCOS has offices in Kampala and Kigali (Head Office) and Cambridge. In addition, ARCOS has a Board of Directors and Trustees comprised of appointed Board members. These board member include representatives from the Albertine Rift countries, Africa, and other international experts. Within the Board of Directors, a Management Committee is responsible for overseeing and reviewing ARCOS progress. The Management Committee is comprised of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer and the Chief Executive Officer, whose responsibility is to ensure the day-to-day management of the organization.





# Our Vision

We significantly strive to achieve a vision where all important ecosystems are healthy, viable and rich in biodiversity. They provide sustainable benefits to people, whose livelihoods are much improved as a result of effective policies, respect for nature and strong participation of stakeholders in natural resource management.

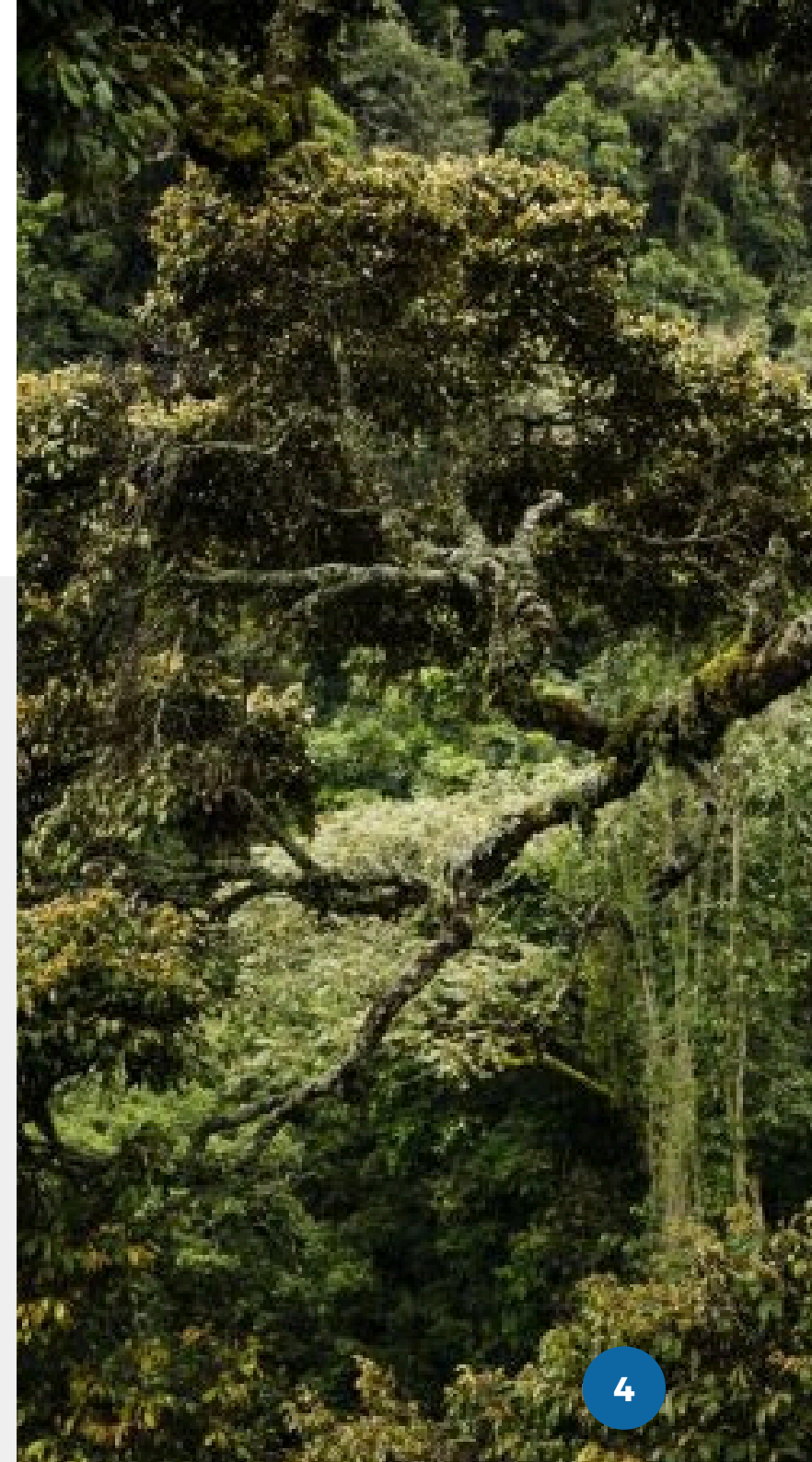
## Our Mission

1

We aim to enhance biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of natural resources in the Albertine Rift region, Africa Great Lakes region and African Mountains through the promotion of collaborative conservation action for nature and people.

2

We are putting enhancing sustainable development at the forefront in the Albertine Rift region, Africa Great Lakes region and Africa Mountains region.





## 2. Message from the Chairman & Chief Executive Officer

The year 2022 marked the celebration of 28 years since ARCOS was established. As in previous years, ARCOS kept the momentum of acting locally to address global issues through its Strategic Programme Areas; Enhancing Biodiversity Conservation and Ecosystem Restoration, Building Social Capital and Sustainable Community Livelihoods, Promoting Education for Sustainable Development, Promoting Eco-Agriculture and Sustainable Food System, Building Resilience to Climate Change and Supporting Governments and Private Sector to Enhance Green Development Agenda.

In the middle of 2022, ARCOS joined the Circular Bioeconomy Alliance (CBA), an action-oriented partnership that connects the dots between investors, companies, governmental and non- governmental organizations and local communities to advance the circular bioeconomy on the ground while restoring biodiversity globally. The CBA was created by the King Charles III in 2020. Moreover, ARCOS was graced to receive His Majesty King Charles III while on his visit to Rwanda for the occasion of The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). His Majesty paid a visit to one of ARCOS' sites to witness a collaborative landscape restoration for climate resilience in Rwanda.

ARCOS strengthened its resource mobilization, thanks to that, 10 projects (of which 2 were secured in 2022) were under implementation and contributed to its strategic areas and programmes. With 127 staff, ARCOS engaged over 30,000 Farmers and 200 African Nature-based Community Enterprises involved in Climate Resilience & Nature-based Solutions.

When 2022 was coming down, as part of facilitating community experience and knowledge sharing across the African continent, in collaboration with the Government of Rwanda, Canada's Climate Action in Africa Project, and other partners, ARCOS organized the Africa Mountains Community-to-Community Exchange 2022, to celebrate the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development. This event took place in Kigali, Rwanda, during the week that started with the International Mountain Day on the 11th December and ran up to the 16th December 2022.

We are very grateful for the support from different donors, partners, ARCOS members and tireless effort from ARCOS staff. Without you, we would have not achieved much this year. We welcome your continuous collaboration as we also welcome new partnership on our journey to build environmental resilience and keep taking of our mother planet.



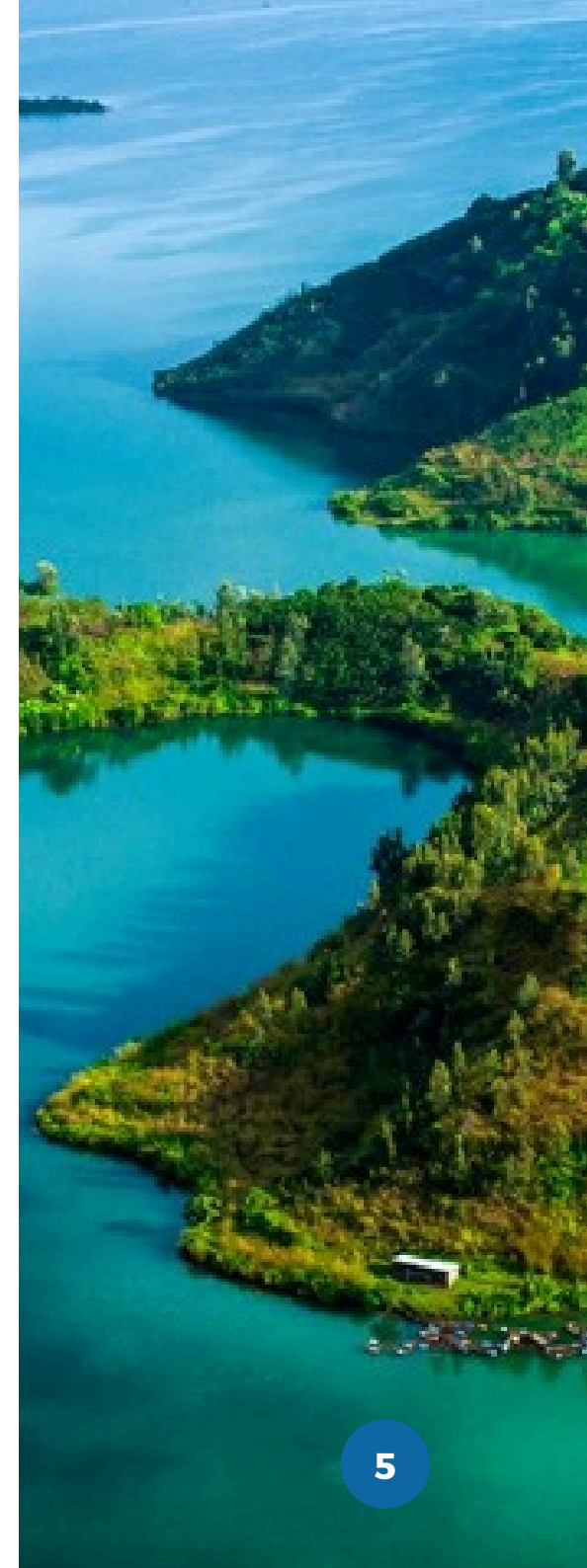
A stylized signature in blue ink.

Mr John YONAZI SALEHE  
Board Chair



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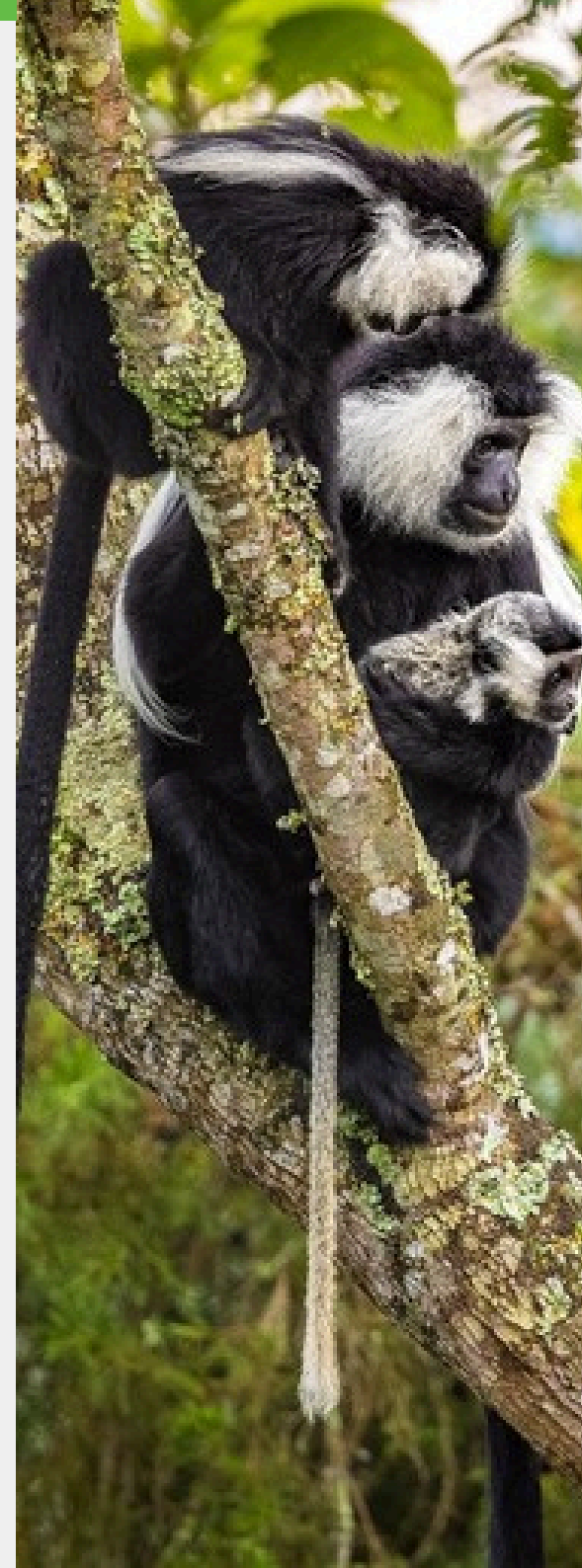
Dr Sam Kanyamibwa  
Founder & CEO





### 3. Acting Locally to Address Global Issues Through ARCOS Strategic Programme Areas

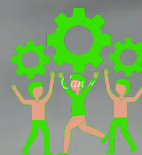
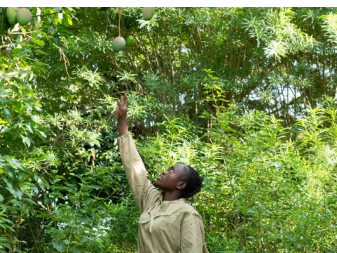
*The year 2022 marked the second year of the implementation of the ARCOS 2021-2030 strategic plan based on 6 strategic areas. The strategic plan has Enhancing Biodiversity Conservation and Ecosystem Restoration, Building Social Capital and Sustainable Community Livelihoods, Promoting Education for Sustainable Development, Promoting Eco-Agriculture and Sustainable Food System, Building Resilience to Climate Change and Supporting Governments and Private Sector to Enhance Green Development Agenda as pillars.*



In the year 2022, ARCOS accomplished remarkable milestones in various areas to further its conservation efforts. From expanding their full-time staff in Rwanda and Uganda to extensive reforestation initiatives and the mobilization of biodiversity data, ARCOS displayed a deep commitment to preserving the rich biodiversity of the Albertine Rift region.



# 28 Years of Existence



127

ARCOS full-time employed staff by the beginning of 2023.



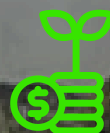
40,000

Hectares under restoration in the region.



40,000

Households engaged by ARCOS in sustainable landscape restoration and biodiversity conservation.



350,000\$

Money invested in green community businesses through ARCOS Community Fund. 600+ small green enterprises were created since 2017 thanks to the Fund.



30,700

Through the Eco-Schools Programme, ARCOS successfully mobilized a total of 30,700 students and their wider school communities, empowering them to actively participate in environmentally sustainable initiatives within their local landscape.



3,400,000

Biodiversity data mobilized and hosted on ARCOS Biodiversity Information System (ARBIMS) to guide informed decision making.



+5,000,000

5 Millions trees planted between 2021-2022. By 2030, 100 Millions trees will be planted and grown.



### 3.1. Enhancing Biodiversity Conservation and Ecosystem Restoration



#### Indicators

Number of trees planted and grown, hectares restored and increased number of species as a result of rehabilitation activity.

In 2022, ARCOS achieved significant results through its Biodiversity Conservation and Ecosystem Restoration efforts. ARCOS planted and grew 2,500,000 trees, resulting in increased species variety, providing essential resources such as food, fuelwood, and medicine for local communities. Additionally, 12,500 degraded hectares were under restoration, leading to improved soil fertility and doubled yields for households practicing Sustainable Agriculture and Land Management (SALM) practices. The rehabilitation of Nyagasenyi remnant forest also contributed to an increase in the number of plant, bird, and butterfly species, enriching the local biodiversity.



**2,500,000**

Trees planted and grown. This increased variety of species (including fruits, agroforestry, woodlot and fodder crops; friends of farmers). Increased availability of vital resources such as food, fuelwood, and medicine for local communities.



**12,500**

Number of hectares under restoration This increased soil fertility. Households testify that since they started practicing SALM Practices their yield doubled.



**27**

Richness in butterflies increased from 25 up to 27 species.



**55**

Richness in bird species increased from 45 up to 55.





40,000

Households fostering increased awareness & participation of local communities in conservation and landscape restoration efforts.



USD 270,000

Village-Based Saving and Loan Associations (VSLAs) enabled communities to save about \$270K per year.



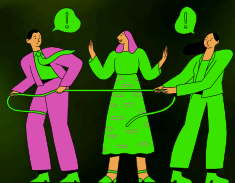
300

Project proposals from community were awarded grants or loans, further promoting entrepreneurship and sustainable livelihoods at the community level.



7,000

Green jobs through various initiatives such as tree nursery development and value chains development.



30

The establishment of local social engines through community groups also helped address around 30 cases of social conflicts.

## 3.2. Building Social Capital and Sustainable Community Livelihoods

### Indicators

Number of farmers engaged, FNAs & VSLAs established/engaged.



ARCOS achieved remarkable outcomes in 2022. They successfully engaged more than 40,000 community groups, fostering increased awareness and participation of local communities in conservation and landscape restoration efforts. These communities reported a better understanding of environmental issues, climate change, and their role in ecosystem restoration, leading to enhanced social cohesion and transformation.

The establishment of local social engines through community groups also helped address around 30 cases of social conflicts, promoting sustainability and resilience. Moreover, the initiation of Village-Based Saving and Loan Associations (VSLAs) enabled communities to save about Rwf 270 million per year, fostering financial independence. The engagement and training of these groups in business planning and enterprise development led to the creation of over 7,000 green jobs through various initiatives such as tree nursery development and value chains development. Additionally, around 300 project proposals from these groups were awarded grants or loans, further promoting entrepreneurship and sustainable livelihoods at the community level.





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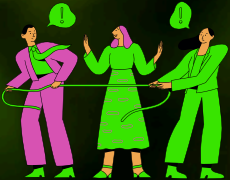
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### 3.3. Promoting Education for Sustainable Development



#### Indicators

Increase the number of students, schools and community members engaged in Education for Sustainable Development program, combatting Gender-Based Violence.

Through the Education for Sustainable Development area, ARCOS conducted thorough School Environmental reviews and Climate change vulnerability assessments, resulting in a significant increase in students' awareness of eco-thinking and environmental values. By establishing "Green Learning Zones" in every school, promoting eco-friendly practices, and creating Climate change adaptation action Zones to restore degraded areas and pilot climate-resistant seeds, the program showcased tangible efforts towards a sustainable future.

the program played a vital role in addressing social issues by training 20,016 parents and community members members, on combating Gender-based violence (GBV) and addressing barriers that hinder girls' education and environmental plus business development aspects. The engagement of 12,976 students from 25 Eco-Schools in impactful debates further heightened awareness about critical environmental concepts.



12,976

Students from 25 Eco-Schools in impactful debates further heightened awareness about critical environmental concepts.



16

Number of new schools that joined the Eco-Schools Programme. New schools have improved knowledge and understanding of eco-thinking, eco-citizenship.



25

Schools that successfully establish and maintain Green Learning Zones and Climate Change Adaptation Zones, showcasing the adoption of eco-friendly practices and efforts towards restoring degraded areas.



20,016

Number of students, teachers, parents trained on GBV and environmental aspects and now echoing eco-friendly behaviors, waste reduction efforts, and community-led conservation projects.





30

Hectares of degraded agricultural land were under restoration, contributing to biodiversity conservation and improved ecosystem resilience.



1,043

One solar-powered and gravity irrigation systems, benefiting 1,043 farmers and covering 24 hectares of land in Bugesera and Rutsiro districts, enhancing agricultural production and food security.



18,750

Trained individuals from 750 community groups on Sustainable Agricultural Land Management (SALM) practices, driving transformative change in their landscapes and significantly benefiting women and youth, with 55% of the beneficiaries being women and youth.



164  
People

One constructed selling point facilitated access to markets for local fruits and vegetable producers by establishing a mini selling point in Rutsiro, Gisiza site.

### 3.4. Promoting Eco-Agriculture and Sustainable Food System

#### Indicators

Number of arable land under restoration, yield productivity and facilitate linking farmers to the market.



During the year 2022, ARCOS demonstrated significant impact through its strategic area of "Promoting Eco-Agriculture and Sustainable Food System," fostering positive change in agricultural practices and livelihoods. ARCOS's efforts in promoting environmentally friendly and climate-smart agriculture practices yielded tangible results. A sample of 10% of trained farmers reported noticeable improvements, such as reduced rainwater run-off and erosion at the farm level, enhanced capacity to cope with emerging pests and diseases, and a remarkable doubling or even tripling of crop yields after consistent application of Sustainable Agricultural Land Management (SALM) practices.

In pursuit of strategic agriculture sector development, ARCOS conducted three Value Chains Assessment initiatives in four landscapes (Rulindo, Bugesera, Gicumbi & Kirehe in Rwanda). The produced reports are now serving as invaluable reference tools guiding value chain-oriented investments and resource mobilization efforts both nationally and at the organizational level.

ARCOS' commitment to promoting eco-agriculture and sustainable food systems has had a lasting impact on local communities. Through the implementation of climate-smart practices and the establishment of essential irrigation infrastructure, farmers have experienced increased productivity and resilience in the face of environmental challenges. The Value Chains Assessment initiatives have paved the way for strategic agricultural development and investment, further bolstering food security and sustainable livelihoods at both local and national levels.

### 3.5. Building Resilience to Climate Change



significant milestones were achieved in "Building Resilience to Climate Change," fostering knowledge exchange and collaborative efforts among mountain communities facing climate challenges.

**Knowledge Exchange and Learning Workshops:** ARCOS organized two regional workshops on climate change, providing a crucial platform for mountain communities to share experiences and best practices. Through these workshops, communities engaged in valuable knowledge exchange, fostering collaboration and mutual support in addressing the impacts of climate change. The workshops' positive impact has been reflected in the enhanced understanding of climate challenges and the implementation of innovative solutions by these communities.

**Documenting Adaptation Solutions:** In a proactive move, ARCOS successfully documented 18 concrete adaptation solutions in the East African Mountains. These documented solutions serve as valuable resources for mountain communities to adapt to climate change challenges effectively. As these communities face unique climate-related impacts, the availability of actionable strategies and evidence-based solutions has significantly improved their resilience and capacity to respond to changing environmental conditions.

**Establishment of East Africa Mountains Stakeholder Platform:** ARCOS achieved a major milestone by establishing and operationalizing the East Africa Mountains Stakeholder Platform. This collaborative and participatory space has become a dedicated forum for various stakeholders to collectively address climate change issues affecting mountain communities. By fostering discussions, knowledge-sharing, and solution development, the platform prioritizes the unique needs and vulnerabilities of these regions. Its establishment has strengthened cooperation and coordination among stakeholders, resulting in more comprehensive and targeted initiatives to build resilience and ensure sustainable development in mountain areas.



### 3.6. Supporting Governments and Private Sector to Enhance Green Development Agenda



#### Indicators

Adoption rate of green agriculture practices, productivity increase, cooperatives income increase and green job created.



Significant achievement were attained in promoting a circular economy and sustainable agriculture practices as part of this strategic area. After joining the Circular Bioeconomy Alliance (CBA), ARCOS started promoting circular economy in its focal landscapes. The training of 4,000 tea farmers led to an impressive 80% adoption rate of green agriculture practices, resulting in increased productivity, improved soil fertility, reduced chemical inputs, and efficient water management.

Furthermore, ARCOS' efforts in establishing circular economies in the Cyohoha and Rukeli watersheds involved the production and planting of 400,000 seedlings, creating 1,500 green jobs in tree nurseries' management and planting campaigns, leading to a 10% increase in the annual income of cooperative members due to employment opportunities and seedling sales. These achievements underscore ARCOS' commitment to environmental sustainability and its instrumental role in advancing the government's green development agenda.



4,000

Trained tea farmers on green agriculture practices, with an impressive 80% adoption rate, leading to increased productivity, sustainable soil and water management.



1500

Green jobs in tree nurseries and planting campaigns led to a 10% increase in annual cooperative income through employment and seedling sales.

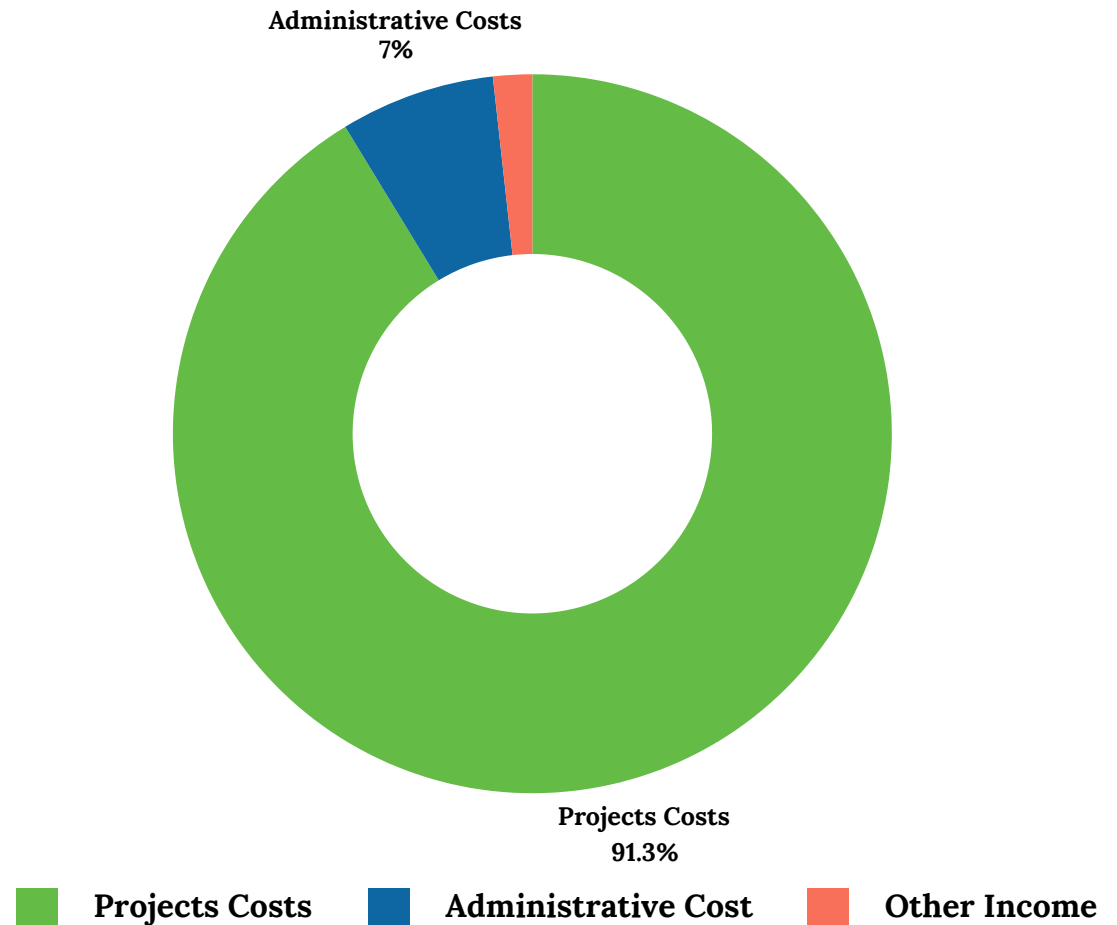


One Continental exchange of Nature-based Community Enterprises was organized in Kigali and gathered 200 individuals.





## 4. ARCOS Finance and Operations in 2022



ARCOS, obtained a significant amount of funds from various sources including donors and other income. The majority of these funds were utilized in implementing projects, while a minor portion was spent on administrative purposes. The total amount of grant received by ARCOS was \$1,608,545, and the other income received from its fixed assets and reserves was \$30,865. The total expenditure on project costs amounted to \$1,604,830. As a result, the total income for the entity was \$1,639,410. These figures suggest that ARCOS has been successful in acquiring adequate funds to support its projects while also managing its administrative expenses efficiently. The financial statement highlights ARCOS' ability to generate and utilize funds effectively, indicating sound financial management practices.

## 5. Gratitude to Our Partners

Our work is possible thanks to the financial support of our Funding Partners and the collaboration of our Strategic Partners. In 2022, we have worked closely with a range of local, regional and international organizations/institutions to deliver our projects with the greatest potential impact. Our gratitude goes also to our strategic partners that accompany ARCOS with guidance towards a smooth implementation of our initiatives.

### Funding Partners

- Alinea International
- Audemars-Watkins Foundation
- Bristol University
- CISU - Civilsamfund i Udvikling
- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
- Global Nature Fund
- Government of the Netherlands
- Livelihoods Funds
- One Tree Planted
- Realize Impact
- Rwanda Green Fund
- Sainsbury's
- The African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative
- UN Environment

### Strategic Partners

- Danish Outdoor Council
- dipcoop intl
- East African Community, Secretariat
- European Forest Institute
- Foundation for Environmental Education
- GRID-ARENDAL
- L'Autorité du Bassin du Lac Kivu et de la Rivière Rusizi
- Ministry of Environment Rwanda
- Ministry of Water and Environment, Uganda
- Nature Tanzania
- Rwanda Forest Authority
- Rwanda Water Resources Board
- SORWATHE
- The International Union for Conservation of Nature
- University of Rwanda
- World Resource Institute







## 6. Facing the Future

The year 2022 was concluded with tremendous achievements as highlighted in this report but not nearly fast enough. We believe that, with the incredible collaboration with our network of stakeholders (that marked the past years), which keep turning our cause bold, we will attain more milestone than ever before.

2022 marked the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In the thirty years since, the world has come a long way in the fight against climate change and its negative impacts on our planet but yet there is a long way to go. The journey still reserves the fight against unfair sharing of natural resource, deforestation, poverty, curbing and mitigating consequences of the changing climate, to list a few.

With over 150 staff and 9 projects at the beginning of 2023, ARCOS anticipate to actively shaping biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration as well as community development in the Albertine Rift region and beyond. Besides, ARCOS will keep being the Hub for Sustainable Mountain Development in Africa.









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