HAKUNA MATATA & ALGETREES
Annual Report

2025

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1. Introduction

1.1 Project Background

The Algetrees project aims to promote agroforestry and community-based reforestation in Tanzania, with a focus on enhancing climate resilience, supporting local livelihoods and restoring degraded land. Implemented through a partnership between Hakuna Matata and local organizations, the project focuses on the production and distribution of a wide range of tree species, including fruit trees, environmental species and fast-growing varieties to farmers, schools and other beneficiaries.

Now, in its sixth year of implementation, Hakuna Matata continues to operate through a decentralized model, working with local partners to reach remote areas with planting materials, training and technical support. Activities are organized around annual planting cycles, referred to as Forestry Plans (FP), which are formally agreed with implementing partners through Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs). The planting campaign 2025 represented a scale-up, with more than 260 thousand seedlings distributed across the Mbeya, Njombe and Tanga Region, targeting both individual and institutional beneficiaries.

This final annual report covers the activities implemented throughout the FP2025 planting season and the subsequent monitoring period. It provides a comprehensive assessment of the results achieved over the year, including the outcomes of distributions, monitoring activities and continued field engagement. The report also highlights lessons learned and areas for improvement, serving as a foundation for strategic planning for the upcoming FP2026 cycle.

The project places strong emphasis on monitoring, learning and adaptive management. Regular field missions are conducted to verify tree survival, assess community engagement and gather practical feedback to improve project effectiveness and accountability.

1.2 Local Team and Partners Involved

The local Hakuna Matata team is composed of the Chief Operating Officer (COO), Stefano Cataldo; the Country Administrator, Azzurra Cori; the Program Manager, Nipaely Lucas.
Two Regional Project Officers, Justin Nchimbi and Vaileth Akon, are responsible for coordinating the on-the-ground implementation of activities with project partners.

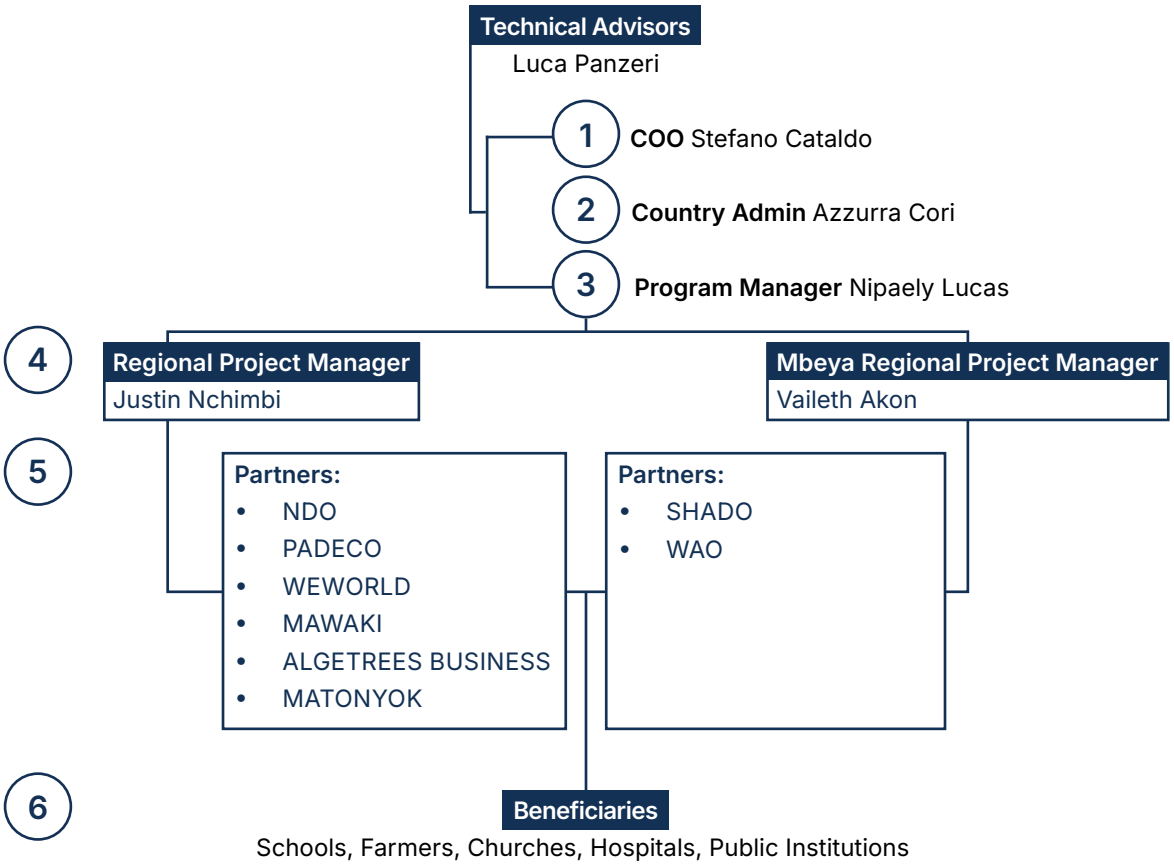
Through Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), the Algetrees initiative establishes formal agreements with individual partners, who are responsible for managing local nurseries, organizing the distribution of seedlings, providing training to beneficiaries and supporting follow-up activities. Their proximity to communities and deep understanding of local dynamics make them key actors in ensuring that planting efforts translate into long-term impact.

Beneficiaries, in turn, are responsible for the planting and day-to-day care of the trees.

The Hakuna Matata team supports partners throughout the implementation phase and is responsible for conducting the final monitoring activities, with the objective of assessing partner performance over the year against the targets and commitments defined in the Forestry Plans (FPs).

The participation of partner staff in both the planning and execution of the monitoring mission is part of a broader strategy to build long-term local capacity for independent monitoring. This is essential to ensure that the Algetrees project continues to generate reliable field data and lessons learned beyond the duration of external missions.

Figure 1 ALGETREES Project: Donor and partner relationship



Algetrees Project Organizational Chart

Each partner covers a distinct geographic area:

- SHADO is active primarily in Mbeya, Songwe and Mbozi Districts, working primarily with schools and community institutions in urban and peri-urban settings.
- WAO focuses on the Rungwe Districts (Mbeya Region), where tree planting efforts are integrated into broader livelihood and environmental initiatives mostly serving local farmers.
- NDO is responsible for implementation in the Njombe Region.
- PADECO: partner linked to NDO, they specialize in environmental projects and production of seedlings. Their headquarter is in Ludewa District (Njombe Region).
- WEWORLD: is an NGO working in Mlangali, Ludewa District (Njombe region). They work very closely with schools and education projects.
- MAWAKI: active in Kilolo District (Iringa region), it's a non-profit organization that involves a mission of monks and small institutions.
- MATONYOK: is a non-profit organization active in the Tanga Region in mangrove conservation and reforestation, with 2025 marking the first year of collaboration with our project.

2. Final Monitoring

2.1 Objectives

The final monitoring activities were conducted between April and June 2025 for all implementing partners, except for Matonyok, whose final monitoring was carried out in December 2025.
The full monitoring campaign aimed to:

- Validate the results of tree and mangrove distributions carried out by each implementing partner.
- Assess the final number of trees approved in line with the Forestry Plans and project agreements with implementing organizations.
- Assess partner performance, including beneficiary engagement, planting quality and follow-up practices.
- Verify the implementation quality of tree planting activities across different types of beneficiaries (schools, villages, individual farmers).
- Collect photographic and geolocated evidence to support reporting, communication, and learning.
- Engage directly with beneficiaries, including teachers, students and community members, to gather qualitative feedback.
- Build capacity of local partners, particularly SHADO and NDO field teams, to independently conduct future monitoring using standardized tools.
- Provide a realistic and evidence-based baseline for forecasting future planting targets under FP2026 and subsequent cycles.
- Inform qualitative recommendations for improving species selection, planting techniques, and community support in future campaigns.

The monitoring process supports both financial accountability and the strategic direction of the project. Accurate survival and approval data allow for fair determination of final installments, performance assessment of partners and evidence-based planning for upcoming planting cycles.

2.2 Methodology

The monitoring team adopted a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative data collection with qualitative field observations. The aim was to assess not only the survival and condition of the distributed trees, but also the effectiveness of implementation and community engagement at beneficiary sites. The methodology was designed to be both rigorous and replicable, enabling local partners to carry out future monitoring activities independently.

At the same time, the approach incorporated a degree of flexibility to account for the diversity of planting conditions, site layouts, and beneficiary types encountered in the field. Given the wide range of contexts (from smallholder farmers to schools and community institutions) teams were encouraged to adapt their assessments while maintaining overall consistency. This allowed for a more accurate and context-sensitive evaluation of the project's outcomes.

2.3 Training and Field Mission with the Technical Consultant

As part of the broad monitoring campaign conducted throughout 2025, a one-week field mission was carried out by the Technical Consultant, Luca Panzeri, from 14 to 20 May 2025, focusing on tree planting activities implemented under the FP2025 campaign by SHADO and WAO. This mission served both as a hands-on monitoring exercise and as a capacity-building opportunity for partner staff, while also contributing to the initial data collection and analysis.

Before the mission, a full-day training session was conducted on May 15, 2025, at the Hakuna Matata office in Mbeya, involving the staff of Hakuna Matata, NDO and SHADO. The session combined theoretical instruction with practical field simulation. Participants were introduced to the monitoring framework, data collection tools and common issues encountered during fieldwork. In the afternoon, teams conducted a hands-on simulation assessing tree conditions, practicing GPS and photo documentation and testing field coordination. Also, an initial digital form, prepared using KoboCollect has been tested for further use. This training was essential to ensure alignment across teams and to strengthen the monitoring capacities of local partners.

The mission followed the Mortality Monitoring Field Guideline developed for the project, which provides a flexible but standardized protocol to evaluate tree survival and identify causes of mortality.

Depending on the characteristics of each site, monitors applied one or more of the following methods:

- **Full-Plot Counting:** applied to small plots (typically under 0.25 ha) or where there is a limited number of trees (100-200). This method involved counting all trees by species and recording their condition (alive, dead, or missing).
- **Sample Plot Assessment**: for larger or more heterogeneous fields, one or more 10×10 meter sample plots were established in representative positions (e.g., center, edge, slope). Within each square, the number of live and dead trees was recorded by species. These sample plots were geolocated and, when possible, physically marked to facilitate future monitoring rounds.
- **Transect/Line Walks**: used in cases where trees were scattered across fields, planted along boundaries, or arranged in agroforestry lines. Teams walked a straight path (typically 50–100 meters), recording the condition of all trees observed within a defined buffer zone (e.g., 2–3 meters on either side). This method was useful for quickly assessing dispersed plantings while still producing representative data.

In all methods, the following additional information was collected:

- Main causes of mortality, as observed or reported (e.g. drought, browsing, disease, poor planting)
- Notes on soil quality, shading, and signs of maintenance (e.g. weeding, fencing)
- GPS location of the plot or transect
- Photo documentation of both individual trees and general field conditions

To quantify outcomes, teams calculated the mortality rate using the formula:
Mortality Rate (%) = (Total Planted – Trees Alive) / Total Planted %

Mortality rates were then interpreted using a simple classification:

- Acceptable: <20%
- Moderate concern: 20–30%
- Problematic: >30% – corrective measures recommended

This framework allowed the mission team to adapt to diverse planting contexts while maintaining consistency in data collection and analysis.

The monitoring mission covered a representative sample of approximately 85% of total planting sites from FP2025. Selection aimed at capturing:

- Geographic diversity (across the different implementation areas)
- Variety of beneficiaries (schools, individual farmers, institutions, villages)
- Different planting periods and logistical accessibility
- A mix of high-volume and small-scale recipients

Local partners were actively involved in every step: from planning and identifying plots, to conducting assessments and engaging with beneficiaries. Their presence ensured logistical efficiency and strengthened ownership of the monitoring results. This participatory process helped build local capacity and supported the long-term goal of enabling partners to carry out independent, high-quality monitoring in future campaigns.

Together, the one-week joint mission and the extended monitoring work form an integrated system designed to evaluate project's accountability, planning, and resource allocation processes.

2.4 Monitoring Results

The FP2025 campaign included an extended monitoring effort to track tree survival and partner performance across all planting sites. The main field mission took place between May 14–20, 2025, with follow-up assessments continuing through July. In December 2025, an additional monitoring exercise focused specifically on the newly introduced mangrove component in Tanga, implemented by Matonyok Organization. Together, these efforts provide a comprehensive overview of project outcomes.

Through direct visits to a representative sample of planting sites, the team assessed tree survival, maintenance practices, visibility of interventions and overall quality of implementation. Detailed quantitative results have been consolidated at the end of the extended monitoring phase, providing both common trends and partner-specific observations.

Across all partners, two key indicators are used to evaluate performance:

- The rate of approval vs. trees actually distributed: this percentage reflects how effectively partners planted, distributed and maintained the trees beyond the planned numbers, to compensate for expected mortality. It serves as the main operational performance indicator, showing the partner's management capacity and the quality of implementation.
- The rate of approval vs. trees planned under the FP2025: this percentage is calculated against the official number of trees agreed with each partner in the FP. It represents the contractual reference figure. It also provides a minimum performance benchmark, showing whether partners met the planned targets.

Across the sites, it was evident that survival rates varied depending on site preparation, partner follow-up and environmental conditions, with schools generally underperforming farmer-managed plots. The performance of different species also varied, reflecting differences in altitude, soil moisture and planting technique.

This figure reflects a high level of variation between plots and partners, influenced by how well the beneficiaries were selected, the quality of planting and follow-up, seedling size, and environmental factors.

SHADO

SHADO is responsible for implementation in the Mbeya, Mbozi and Rungwe districts.

Trees planned in the FP	40.000
Trees distributed	48.300
Monitored (TOTAL)	47.250
Trees not monitored	1.050
Trees approved *in person*	26.820
Trees approved *remotely*	609
TOTAL trees approved	27.429
Rate of approval vs. trees distributed	57%
Rate of approval vs. trees planned in the FP	69%

Tree survival in SHADO sites showed very mixed results, from over 80% in some well-managed schools to as low as 5% in plots where trees were not planted or cared for properly. The main issue is that SHADO does not always know the beneficiaries well before the distribution, and in several cases:

- There was no clear focal person responsible for tree care
- Land preparation was not verified before seedlings were delivered
- Follow-up visits were irregular or missing

This leads to unpredictable outcomes. Some sites perform very well thanks to committed individuals or local leadership, while others show near-total failure.

Common challenges included animal browsing, lack of fencing, and poor planting conditions.

WAO

WAO works mainly in the Rungwe districts.

Trees planned in the FP	40.000
Trees distributed	29.641
Monitored (TOTAL)	27.195
Trees not monitored	2.446
Trees approved *in person*	23.334
Trees approved *remotely*	2.099
TOTAL trees approved	25.433
Rate of approval vs. trees distributed	86%
Rate of approval vs. trees planned in the FP	64%

WAO showed more consistent survival rates (86%). This is likely because WAO works directly with smallholder farmers and maintains closer relationships with them. This makes it easier to provide guidance and follow-up after the planting.

Many farmers showed good practices such as mulching, simple fencing, and regular weeding. However, some seedlings were too small or immature at the time of distribution, especially in the later rounds. This was linked to delays in nursery production and pressure to distribute quickly before the dry season. In areas like Tukuyu, where rains continued longer, even late planting was successful. Still, WAO acknowledged the need to improve nursery planning and focus on one coordinated planting period per year (early in the rainy season). This would allow more time for production and better preparation by farmers.

NDO

NDO leads activities in the Njombe region.

Trees planned in the FP	50.000
Trees distributed	55.254
Monitored (TOTAL)	47.197
Trees not monitored	8.057
Trees approved *in person*	29.184
Trees approved *remotely*	5.129
TOTAL trees approved	34.313
Rate of approval vs. trees distributed	62%
Rate of approval vs. trees planned in the FP	69%

NDO worked in Njombe and Wanging'ombe areas. In the first site the major number of trees was delivered (82%), while in the second just a small amount (18%). This was due to the fact that Wanging'ombe area is considerably drier than Njombe. Indeed, the approval rate was 30% in the first case and 69% in the second. Anyway, the seedlings found were in good condition.

Main challenges:

- Difficulty in reaching the beneficiaries. Many of them were not available or unreachable for monitoring
- Lack of rain in Wanging'ombe area
- 2 beneficiaries didn't plant any trees, sign of commitment but also inefficient communication by the team

PADECO

Padeco is an organization working in the Ludewa area.

Trees planned in the FP	30.000
Trees distributed	16.751
Monitored (TOTAL)	14.842
Trees not monitored	1.909
Trees approved *in person*	8.643
Trees approved *remotely*	1.107
TOTAL trees approved	9.750
Rate of approval vs. trees distributed	58%
Rate of approval vs. trees planned in the FP	33%

Main challenges:

- The first beneficiaries list presented by PADECO included WEWORLD, one of the partners of Hakuna Matata. They delivered 9.449 trees to them. Monitoring team spotted the issue and deleted this amount from the distribution to monitor. This fact plummeted the result.
- During the monitoring, some beneficiaries shared with the team that they had not received all the seedlings reported on the list, but less.

WEWORLD

WeWorld is an NGO working in the Ludewa area, mostly with the schools.

Trees planned in the FP	15.925
Trees distributed	14.196
Monitored (TOTAL)	14.196
Trees not monitored	0
Trees approved *in person*	10.033
Trees approved *remotely*	0
TOTAL trees approved	10.033
Rate of approval vs. trees distributed	71%
Rate of approval vs. trees planned in the FP	63%

WeWorld showed that the relationship with their beneficiaries is strong and efficient. It was possible to see good practice for the plantation: watering, mulching, fencing, etc. The monitoring visit was planned very well and the final approval rate was positive, considering it was their first year.
Main issues:

- Due to internal problems, WeWorld team made some mistakes during the data recording.
  For this reason, at the beginning the monitoring team received a wrong list, with a total of 18.158 trees distributed. As soon as the mistake was spotted, the HM team did intense work to find the right number.

- The beneficiaries included 3 villages. WeWorld thought that the villages would have planted in common areas, but mostly they delivered trees to private people. This issue made the monitoring harder and a smaller number of trees were found.

MAWAKI

Mawaki is an organization operating in Kilolo district, Iringa region.

Trees planned in the FP	16.500
Trees distributed	13.138
Monitored (TOTAL)	11.652
Trees not monitored	1.486
Trees approved *in person*	8.427
Trees approved *remotely*	1.075
TOTAL trees approved	9.502
Rate of approval vs. trees distributed	72%
Rate of approval vs. trees planned in the FP	58%

Mawaki knows the community and the area very well. For Hakuna Matata team the monitoring was quite easy.
Main issue:

- Although the positive percentage, the weakness of the partner is mostly in the production. Even if the FP was not very big, Mawaki didn't manage to produce all the plants inside their list.

ALGETREES BUSINESS

Trees planned in the FP	50.000
Trees distributed	50.000
Monitored (TOTAL)	50.000
Trees not monitored	0
Trees approved *in person*	46.988
Trees approved *remotely*	0
TOTAL trees approved	46.988
Rate of approval vs. trees distributed	94%
Rate of approval vs. trees planned in the FP	94%

Algetrees Business is an initiative developed within the broader Algetrees Project, beneficiaries receive support in the delivery and planting of pine trees on their land. Its objective is to plant pine trees that will be managed for future timber production, with harvesting envisaged after a minimum period of 15 years.

The beneficiaries of Algetrees Business are exclusively staff of partners and individuals directly connected to Hakuna Matata, including collaborators and close associates.

Pine trees represent a long-term economic asset: after approximately 15 years, the timber can be harvested and sold, generating income for beneficiaries. During the growth period, the trees also deliver environmental benefits by sequestering significant amounts of carbon, contributing to climate change mitigation well before they reach maturity.

MATONYOK

Trees planned in the FP	30.000
Trees distributed	40.000
Monitored (TOTAL)	40.000
Trees not monitored	0
Trees approved *in person*	35.080
Trees approved *remotely*	0
TOTAL trees approved	35.080
Rate of approval vs. trees distributed	88%
Rate of approval vs. trees planned in the FP	117%

A new component of the Algetrees initiative was officially launched in July 2025, focused on mangrove restoration in the coastal area of Tanga. The activity, implemented in partnership with Matonyok Organization, involves the planting of 30,000 mangrove seedlings in the Mtimbwani area.

This pilot marks the project's first intervention in a coastal ecosystem and responds to the urgent need to protect fragile mangrove habitats from degradation caused by overharvesting, pollution and unsustainable land use. Mangroves play a critical role in carbon storage, shoreline protection and biodiversity conservation, while also supporting local fisheries and livelihoods. This expansion reflects the project's growing ecological scope and its commitment to addressing both upland and coastal restoration challenges.

The Mtimbwani project is designed around a community-based restoration model, where local stakeholders will be involved in propagule collection, site preparation, planting and ongoing maintenance. Matonyok, a locally rooted organization with experience in environmental education and natural resource management, will lead implementation and coordinate with village authorities.

Main issues:

- Delays in planting due to late seed production.
- Difficult access to some monitoring sites because of muddy or challenging terrain.
- Mapping is challenging due to the extensive, partly inaccessible natural environment.
- Natural factors (tidal fluctuations, crustaceans, insects) contribute to mangrove mortality.

The team periodically replaces dead mangroves and, although the planting process is relatively straightforward, tidal movements can significantly affect performance. To address this, adaptive mitigation measures, such as the construction of embankments, have been adopted.

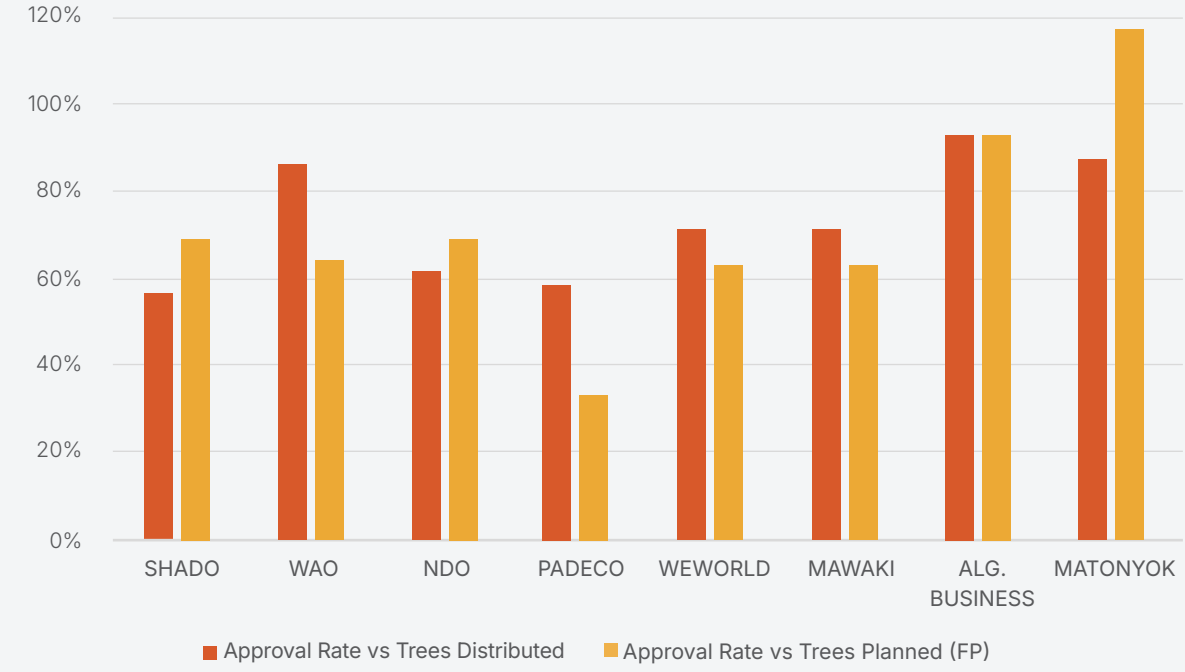
Despite challenges related to natural conditions and logistical constraints, the local team has demonstrated strong technical capacity, adaptability and commitment to the restoration effort.

Overall, the project shows promising results in contributing to ecosystem restoration and biodiversity recovery in the area.

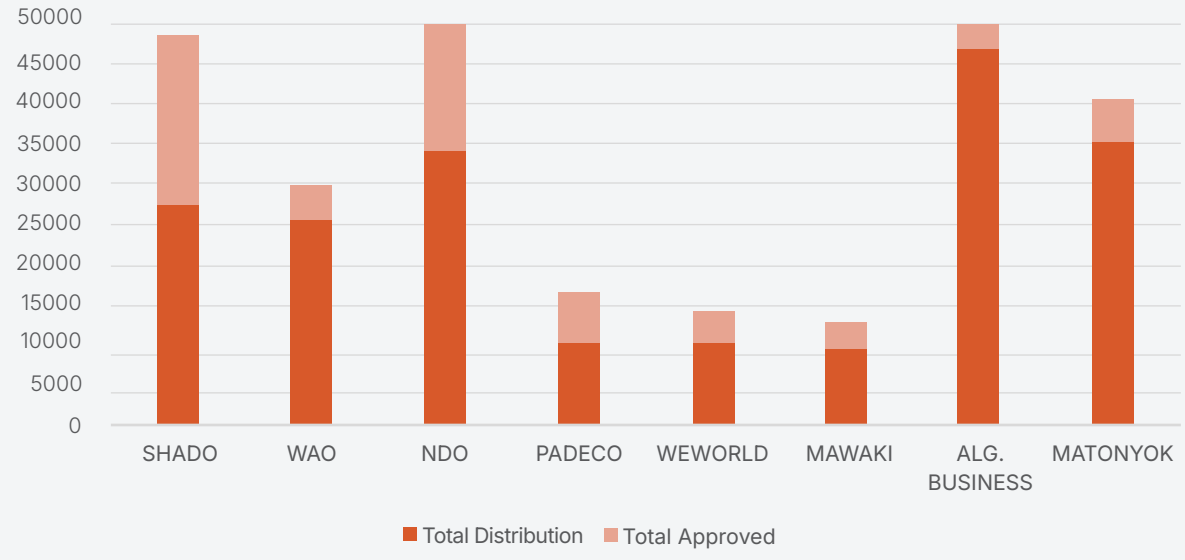
Overall Monitoring Result

	Total Planned In The FP	Total Distributed	Total Approved	% Monitored In Person	% Approved Vs Distributed	% Approved Vs Planned In The FP
SHADO	40.000	48.300	27.429	98%	57%	69%
WAO	40.000	29.641	25.433	92%	86%	64%
NDO	50.000	55.254	34.313	85%	62%	69%
PADECO	30.000	16.751	9.750	89%	58%	33%
WEWORLD	15.925	14.196	10.033	100%	71%	63%
MAWAKI	16.500	13.138	9.502	89%	72%	58%
ALG BUSINESS	50.000	50.000	46.988	100%	94%	94%
MATONYOK	30.000	40.000	35.080	100%	88%	117%
TREEDOM			323			
TOTAL	272.425	267.280	198.851	94% (average)	74% (average)	71% (average)

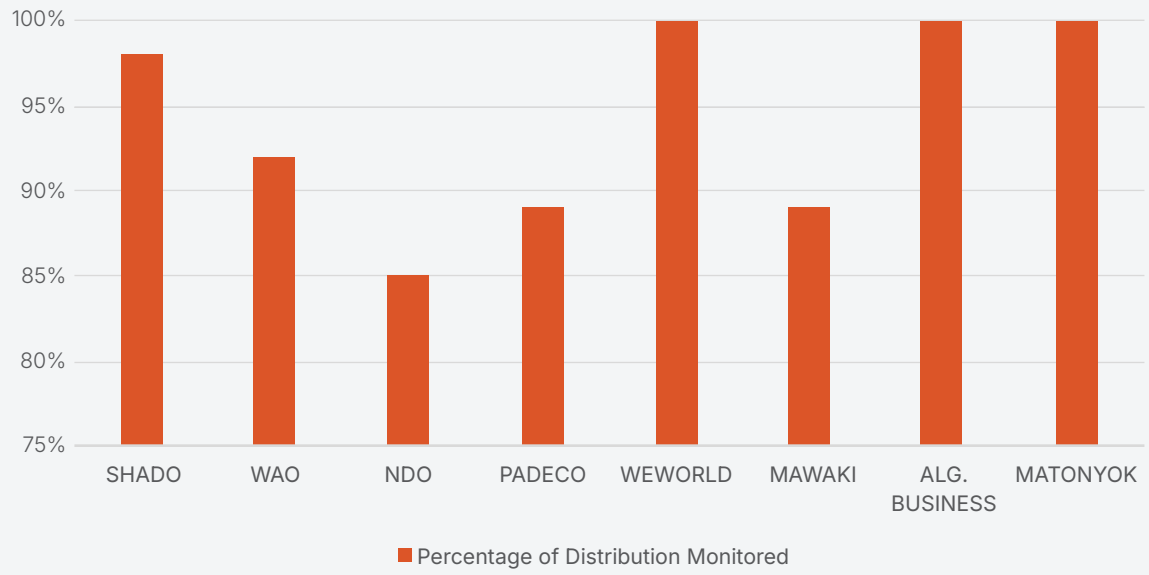
Trees Approval Rates by Partner



Approved Trees vs Distributed



Percentage of Distrubtion Monitored



From all sites visited, a few common points stand out:

- Survival rates are strongly linked to the relationship between partner and beneficiary.
  Where this connection is strong (e.g. WAO farmers), results are more stable.
  Where it is weak (e.g. one-time distributions with little follow-up), outcomes vary widely.
- Schools generally can perform well, especially when a motivated teacher or staff member is involved.
  Still, this depends on internal commitment and organization.
- Seedling quality and timing matter. Late distributions and small seedlings reduce survival, especially when the dry season begins early.
- Species choice makes a difference. Grevillea, Avocado, and Papaya performed well.
  Moringa and Cashelina were more vulnerable to drought and poor soil.

All the partners expressed interest in adapting their approach based on monitoring feedback.

- SHADO is considering working more with known and recurring beneficiaries.
- WAO is planning to simplify its calendar by focusing on a single annual planting cycle, with better-prepared seedlings.
- NDO will focus only on Njombe, casting off the nursery in Wanging'ombe.
- PADECO will pay more attention to the selection of beneficiaries.
- WEWORLD will focus more on data recording, putting one person in charge of the project.
- MAWAKI are aware that their weakness this year was production.
  They are going to start earlier and to reach their Forestry Plan next year.

These changes could lead to more reliable results in the upcoming FP2026 campaign.

Figure 2 Seedlings that were never planted

2.5 Challenges

The monitoring mission helped uncover a number of practical and structural challenges that directly affected the survival and success of the FP2025 planting campaign. These challenges varied across partners and locations, but several recurring issues emerged from the field.

- **Weak Beneficiary Engagement**: In several SHADO-managed sites, one of the main obstacles was the limited knowledge of the final beneficiaries before distribution. Without prior contact or verification, many plots were assigned to individuals or institutions with unclear responsibility for planting and maintenance. This led to: Poor or delayed planting, lack of motivation or ownership and trees being lost, neglected, or never planted at all. This issue was most visible in community or school plots, where no single person was accountable but recurring schools and beneficiaries showed more consistent performance.
- **Limited Follow-Up and Field Presence**: Across partners, logistical and financial constraints limited the capacity for systematic pre and post-distribution follow-up. In rural or remote sites, teams struggled to visit all beneficiaries in a timely manner, which affected monitoring, technical support, and early correction of planting errors. Follow-up was also uneven: some farmers received multiple visits, while others were left on their own, especially those located far from central roads or partner offices.
- **Seedling Quality and Distribution Timing**: In particular in WAO and MAWAKI areas, late nursery production and rushed planting were significant challenges. Some seedlings were distributed when they were still too small or fragile, especially in the last weeks of the rainy season. In areas with early drought onset, this likely contributed to higher mortality. This was partly due to spread-out planting calendars and pressure to distribute as many seedlings as possible in a short time. In the long term, these risk compromising both quality and consistency.

- **Exposure to Animals and Lack of Fencing**: A general issue experienced by most partners, animal browsing (mainly by goats and cows) was a common cause of tree loss. While some beneficiaries had basic fences or protection measures, many did not. This problem was especially acute in open plots or fields close to grazing areas. Fencing materials were rarely provided, and without proper planning, this left newly planted seedlings vulnerable.
- **Data and Plot Tracking Gaps**: During monitoring, some teams encountered difficulty in locating specific planting sites or species, especially when distributions had not been mapped or tracked clearly at the time. This underlines the need for better field documentation during the planting phase, including GPS marking and individual plot references.

2.6 Lessons Learned and Recommendations

These challenges are not unusual in large-scale tree planting programs, especially in decentralized systems involving multiple partners and hundreds of beneficiaries. However, they highlight important areas for improvement:

- Clearer selection and preparation of beneficiaries
- Stronger and more systematic pre and post-distribution follow-up
- Focused planting calendars aligned with nursery capacity
- Improved field-level data collection and plot identification

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- Focused planting calendars aligned with nursery capacity
- Improved field-level data collection and plot identification

Below are the key lessons learned, along with corresponding recommendations for the upcoming FP2026 cycle.

Strengthen Beneficiary Selection and Preparation. Beneficiaries who were known, engaged, and properly prepared before distribution achieved better results. Conversely, plots assigned to unfamiliar individuals or institutions (without adequate preparation or commitment) often lead to failure.

Develop a short pre-distribution checklist to verify land preparation, planting plans, and contact persons.

Prioritize recurrent or returning beneficiaries who have proven capacity and motivation.

Consider small-scale site assessments prior to distribution for new beneficiaries.

Ensure Consistent and Systematic Follow-Up: Monitoring confirmed that regular follow-up (particularly within the first few weeks after planting) has a direct impact on survival rates. Beneficiaries who received visits, guidance, or reminders tended to maintain trees more actively.

- Establish a basic follow-up schedule (e.g. 2–3 visits per site) aligned with local partner capacity.

Assign clear responsibilities within partner teams for post-distribution contact.

- Where resources are limited, explore community-based monitoring, such as involving village leaders or school staff.

Align Distribution Timing with Nursery Readiness: late planting and small, underdeveloped seedlings significantly affected performance in several sites. This was often the result of overlapping planting windows, rushed decisions, or pressure to distribute before the rainy season ended.

- Plan a single, well-timed planting season per year, ideally at the start of the rains.
- Synchronize nursery production calendars with distribution deadlines.
- Avoid last-minute expansions of the planting list that stretch nursery capacity.

Promote Basic and Regular Plant Maintenance: beyond planting, the long-term success of trees depends on proper and regular maintenance (especially during the first few months). Lack of weeding, soil compaction, competition with grasses, and absence of mulching or watering can compromise growth, even when planting is done correctly.

- During training and follow-up, emphasize simple but essential maintenance practices, such as weeding, mulching, and loosening the soil.
- Encourage the designation of a responsible person per site or group to oversee regular care.

Improve Field-Level Data and Plot Identification: in some cases, teams had difficulty locating plots or understanding which species had been planted, especially where distributions were conducted quickly or without clear documentation. This limited the quality of monitoring and feedback.

Improve data recording and double-check the beneficiaries lists before starting the monitoring: one of the main issues was the incoherence between the beneficiaries' lists submitted to the Hakuna Matata team and what the monitoring staff found on the field. The partners must provide right and complete lists, or the work for the monitoring team won't be smooth.

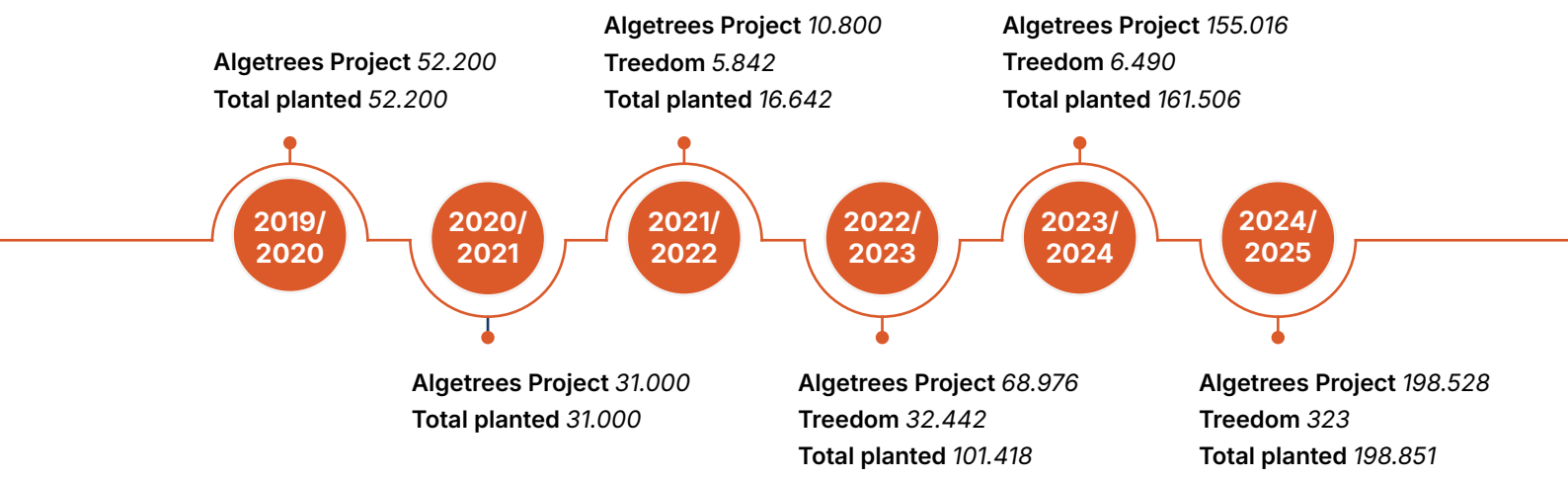
3. Project Impact

3.1 Target

The Algetrees project focuses on large-scale tree planting as a nature-based solution to combat climate change and increase carbon sequestration. The initiative aims to restore degraded landscapes, support biodiversity, and strengthen the resilience of rural communities.

Hakuna Matata has committed to planting 1 million trees by 2030 as part of its long-term environmental strategy. To achieve this, the organization not only leads to technical coordination, but also provides financial support to its local partners for the production, distribution and monitoring of trees.

As of today, a total of 561.617 trees has been planted under the project, marking a significant step toward the 2030 target.



	Algetrees Project	Treedom	Total planted
TOTAL	395	202	2

Considering that the project's annual target is to plant at least 170,000 trees per year, the goal of reaching 1 million trees can realistically be achieved within the next three years, by 2028.

3.2 Beneficiaries

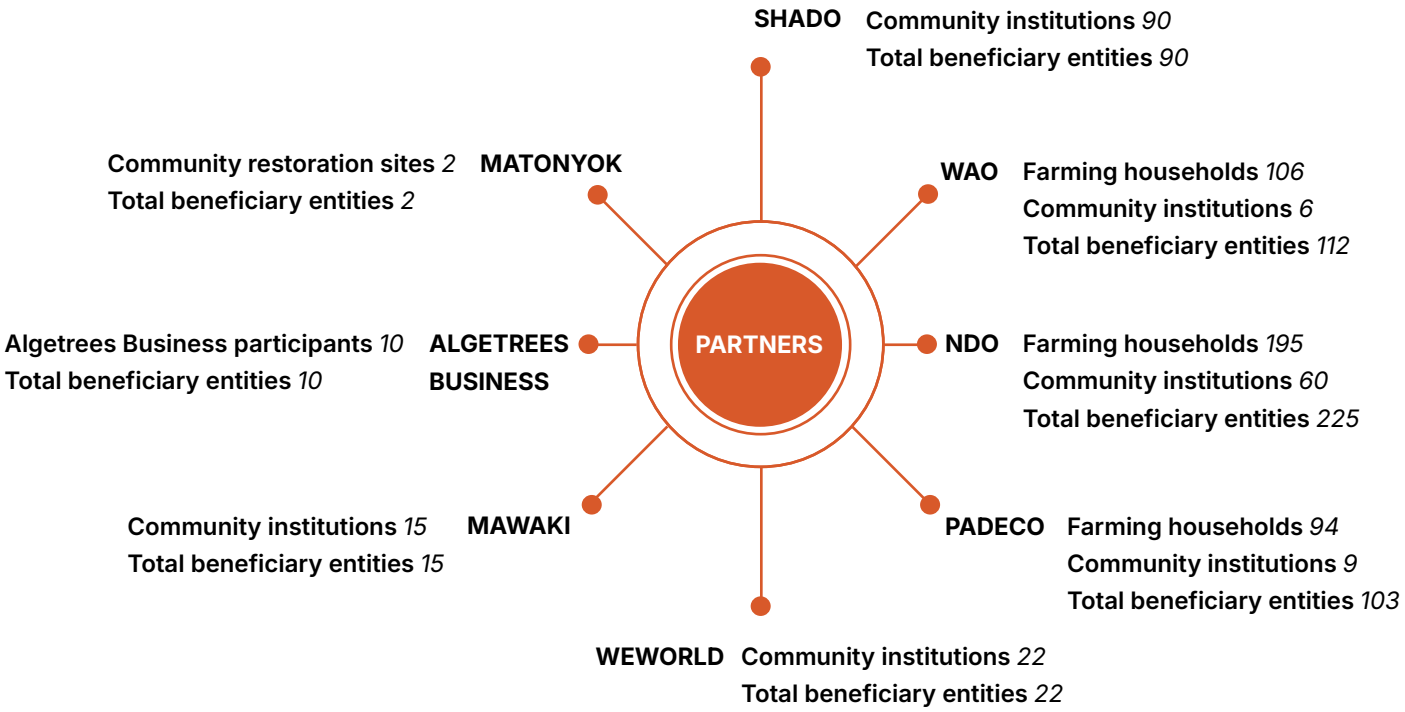
Hakuna Matata places equal emphasis on the social impact of the project. Every year, hundreds of beneficiaries - including farmers, schools and community groups - are actively involved. In the 2025 planting season, a total of 609 direct beneficiary entities were reached. The positive effects of tree planting are widely recognized, from improved soil and microclimate conditions to strengthened community ownership and environmental awareness.

Direct beneficiary entities

Category	Unit	Description
Farming households	395	Smallholder farmers receiving seedlings and training
Community institutions[1]	202	Schools, faith-based organizations, health facilities and public institutions
Community restoration sites	2	Villages involved in mangrove restoration
Algetrees Business participants	10	Collaborators and associates involved in the pine timber pilot initiative
Total beneficiary entities	609	

[1]The 202 community institutions include: 42 local and public institutions, 2 health service providers, 20 faith-based institutions and 138 educational centres.

Direct beneficiary entities by implementing partner



	Farming households	Community institutions	Community restoration sites	Algetrees Business participants	Total beneficiary entities
TOTAL	395	202	2	10	609

While the project tracks beneficiary entities, each entity represents a larger number of individuals. The overall impact can be approximated by estimating the number of people reached:

- Households: assuming an average household size of 5 people in rural Tanzania, the 395 farming households correspond to approximately 1.975 people benefiting directly from the trees.
- Schools: with 138 educational centres involved, and assuming a conservative average of around 200 pupils per school, the project potentially reaches about 27.600 students through environmental education and school-based tree planting activities.

These numbers indicate that the project reaches more than 29.500 people, considering farming households and students in educational centres alone. The estimates provide an indicative view of the broader social impact generated by the project beyond the directly recorded beneficiary entities. The actual figure is likely higher due to additional outreach through other entities. However, it is difficult to provide a reliable estimate for these other entities, so they are not included in this calculation.

Figure 3 School children and teachers with the trees they planted

Figure 4 Maria Nyahi standing next to a neem tree planted in 2023.

3.3 Impact Stories

Algetrees project is mainly focused on combatting climate change through trees plantation. But during these years, Hakuna Matata's staff realized that also the social impact is very significant and powerful.

Here below few samples will report how this project can be defined a "win-win" project, because all stakeholders involve can get positive improvements by trees plantation.

Schools and pupils

During the monitoring at WeWorld implementation sites, the team conducted several interviews to gather first-hand feedback from the field. Most of the schools reported that the project is having a highly positive impact on pupils and the school environment.

One of the most appreciated aspects is the planting of fruit trees, which not only contribute to enriching the pupils' diet with fresh produce, but also offer a potential source of income for the school.

Some schools mentioned that selling surplus fruits could help fund essential items, such as school supplies or classroom materials.

In addition to fruit trees, the environmental or forestry species were also valued. These trees provide shade, serve as natural boundaries within the school compound, and help create a more pleasant and greener learning environment.

Private farmers

Farmers benefit directly from Algetrees tree plantation in their everyday life. Like the story of Maria Nyahi, a single mother of three children in Njombe region.

In 2023 she planted Neems in her garden, and after 2 years these trees are big enough to provide her leaves which she uses for preparing local medicines, very efficient against flu and stomach problems.

In addition, she also planted Guava and Avocado trees, which can support a more balanced diet and a small source of income for her family.

Figure 5 Signboard marking the water source protection area under the authority of the Milo Village Council, where activities are restricted according to the land use plan

In support of government environment vision

Tanzania's Government actions to combat climate change include tree plantation. Considering the shared objective, Hakuna Matata started to look for collaboration with the local institutions.

Due to this, special attention was given to species such as Mivengi (Syzygium cordatum) and Mikuyu (Ficus sycomorus). Communities expressed the belief that these trees could play a role in protecting water sources by stabilizing the soil and maintaining the microclimate. This practice is not only supported by local community members but is also encouraged by local and public institutions, which view it as an important strategy for watershed protection and climate resilience.

Syzygium cordatum and *Ficus sycomorus* are particularly suitable for these purposes, though their application must be context specific. While *Syzygium cordatum* thrives in wetlands and along riverbanks, *Ficus sycomorus* requires sufficient space and may cause damage if planted near infrastructure.

Their integration should therefore be carefully planned and complemented by additional soil and water conservation measures.

Disability involvement and work inclusion

The project adopts a rights-based approach that places people with disabilities and their families at the centre, recognising inclusion as both a matter of equity and a driver of social impact. Partners are encouraged to promote participation across all project phases, from nursery activities to planting and maintenance, while maintaining flexibility. This approach serves as a guiding principle to strengthen community ownership, social inclusion, and long-term sustainability.

In 2023 SHADO managed to hire a person with disability in its staff, who was a support in the nursery. But also, some students from the close Vocational Training Centre (VTC) in Iyunga (Mbeya) provided casual labour in the nursery, when required. For the future, in nursery activities could be introduced work internships, in order to provide the know-how in nursery management.

The inclusion of people with disabilities is a core pillar of Algetrees and requires further strengthening. For this reason, starting from the 2026 implementation year, the official methodology to be adopted by all partners includes a dedicated section on disability inclusion and mandates the completion of two self-assessment tools to evaluate partners' efforts and progress in this area.

4. Next Steps

Building on the results and lessons learned from FP2025, the Algetrees project has refined its methodology, which all partners commit to adopt by signing the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Starting from 2026, the methodology emphasizes the inclusion of people with disabilities as a core principle of project implementation.

To harmonize reporting and project management, a series of annexes has been introduced, to be completed by each partner at every stage of the project. All annexes are pre-filled where possible and accompanied by detailed guidance, ensuring standardized and consistent documentation across partners.

In addition, starting from 2026, the timing of the second partner instalment will be adjusted: it will be disbursed only after the seedlings have been distributed to beneficiaries, aiming to accelerate implementation and reinforce accountability.

This updated framework is expected to improve the quality of project execution, strengthen inclusion practices, ensure consistent reporting, and support the achievement of long-term goals, including higher tree survival rates and enhanced social and environmental impact.

5. Conclusion

The FP2025 cycle of the Algetrees project achieved strong environmental and social results. A total of 198.851 trees were approved, bringing the project total to 561.617 trees planted and steadily advancing toward the 1 million tree goal by 2030. Survival rates varied across sites, reflecting differences in beneficiary engagement, follow-up, seedling quality, and planting conditions.

The project reached 609 beneficiaries, including farmers, schools, and community institutions, generating tangible social benefits such as improved school environments, fruit production for nutrition and income and practical skills for community members. Inclusion of persons with disabilities was strengthened, with dedicated roles in nurseries, while the 2026 methodology introduces mandatory self-assessments to monitor and enhance progress in this area.

Lessons learned from FP2025, such as improved beneficiary selection, coordinated planting schedules, systematic follow-up and consistent maintenance, will guide the FP2026 cycle, ensuring more reliable and impactful outcomes.

Overall, FP2025 confirms Algetrees as a “win-win” initiative, delivering measurable environmental impact while fostering social inclusion, community ownership and stronger local partner capacity.

6. Annexes

An interactive map collecting all monitoring points related to the project's activities for 2025 is available. The map can be accessed at the following link: AlgetreesMonitoring2025. Upon request, detailed data and photos are available to support further analysis and sharing.