

Establishing a participatory landscape conservation strategy for *Dendrosenecio cheranganiensis*, *Polyscias kikuyensis* and *Galega lindblomii* in Cherangani Forest (43988-1)

PROJECT UPDATE: 28th February 2025

Report by Olgah Hellens

During the project's inception phase, essential stakeholder outreach was conducted. The county Forest Conservator, the Cherangany Forest Station Manager, and the Community Forest Association (CFA) officials were formally introduced to the project, its team, and objectives. The officials strongly supported and encouraged the proposed research and conservation activities. This collaborative spirit resulted in allocating dedicated space for establishing a project nursery for propagating seedlings for subsequent forest regeneration efforts.

An initial reconnaissance study was conducted to familiarise the project team with the expansive and ecologically diverse Cherangani forest landscape. The team included three community members and two project staff. The team explored key habitats, documenting preliminary observations on vegetation structure and topography. Primary ecological zones were identified, and the project boundary was demarcated. However, locating populations of *Dendrosenecio cheranganiensis* and *Galega lindblomii* presented a significant challenge during this survey. Their small population sizes and restricted distribution within specific and less accessible forest areas made identification difficult in this preliminary phase.

Practical training was conducted to improve the team's ability to identify targeted species. The process incorporated local knowledge from the community members and the use of digital tools like the PLANT SNAP app. During the field study, the location of the targeted species was recorded, habitat features such as topography, possible disturbance factors, population data for the target species and associated plants. This information, combined with expert consultations involving the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) and the Kenya Forest Research Institute (KEFRI) officials, informed the delineation of the project boundary.



Figure 1: Project leader, Ms. Olga with the Asst CFC, TransNzoia Mr. Mavin Omondi



Figure 2: Ms. Olga assessing the health of the native trees at the Kitale Forest stration tree nursery