

WORLD BEE DAY 2026

Promoting Beekeeping for Forest Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods in Tanzania

A TaTEDO-SESO Special Feature | 20 May 2026

Global Theme 2026: *“Bee Together for People and the Planet: A Partnership That Sustains Us All”*

A Global Celebration with Local Resonance

Every year on 20 May, the world unites to celebrate World Bee Day — a global reminder of the vital role that bees and other pollinators play in sustaining life on Earth. The 2026 commemoration, coordinated by the United Nations and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), centres on the theme *“Bee Together for People and the Planet: A Partnership That Sustains Us All.”* This theme underscores the indispensable contribution of bees to biodiversity, food security, and the health of ecosystems worldwide.

In Tanzania, the national celebrations are being held in Tabora Region, anchored by the Swahili slogan *“Uhifadhi wa nyuki kwa ustawi wa mazingira na taifa letu”* — *“Conservation of bees for the wellbeing of the environment and our nation.”* This resonant message captures a growing national consensus: the protection of bees is inseparable from environmental stewardship, community prosperity, and sustainable development.

On this occasion, TaTEDO-Sustainable Energy Services Organization (TaTEDO-SESO) is proud to share the story of how beekeeping is transforming lives and landscapes across the Pwani Region of Tanzania through an innovative, community-centred approach to forest conservation.

The Challenge: Breaking the Cycle of Forest Dependency

Across Tanzania and much of sub-Saharan Africa, rural communities face a profound dilemma. Forests are the backbone of their livelihoods — providing firewood, charcoal, timber, food, and land for agriculture. Yet this heavy dependence, driven by limited employment and income alternatives, is also the primary engine of deforestation and forest degradation.

The consequences are far-reaching. Excessive tree cutting, unsustainable harvesting of forest products, and the clearing of land for agriculture degrade ecosystems, diminish biodiversity, reduce water catchment capacity, and worsen the effects of climate change — while deepening the very poverty that drives them. Breaking this cycle requires not just better resource management, but the creation of viable, attractive livelihood alternatives that give communities a tangible stake in healthy forests.

TaTEDO-SES0's Response: The Integrated Sustainable Charcoal Value Chain Project

TaTEDO-SES0 is implementing the three-year Integrated Sustainable Charcoal Value Chain Promotion Project (2023–2026), co-funded by the European Union and contracted through the National Authorizing Officer for the European Development Fund at the Ministry of Finance of the United Republic of Tanzania. The project aims to demonstrate integrated approaches for improving sustainable forest management and charcoal production while advancing environmental sustainability and socio-economic development in rural areas.

Project Coverage

The project is active across five districts of Tanzania's Pwani Region: Kisarawe, Mkuranga, Bagamoyo, Rufiji, and Kibiti — districts where communities depend heavily on forests for their livelihoods and where conservation pressures are acute.

Central to the project's design is the promotion of **Nature-based Solutions (NbS)** that tackle the root causes of unsustainable charcoal production. Rather than treating symptoms, the project addresses drivers: limited income options, weak market access, and the absence of incentives for conservation. Beekeeping has emerged as one of the most promising and impactful of these nature-based interventions.

Why Beekeeping? The Forest-Bee Connection

Bees and forests share a relationship of deep mutual dependence. Forest ecosystems provide bees with the habitat, shelter, and floral diversity they need to thrive. In turn, bees are among the most important pollinators of forest plants, supporting forest regeneration, maintaining plant species diversity, and underpinning the productivity of nearby agricultural landscapes.

When communities earn income from the forest without cutting it down, conservation and livelihoods become the same goal.

Beekeeping harnesses this relationship to create a powerful conservation incentive. Unlike timber extraction or charcoal production, beekeeping requires living, flowering trees and healthy forest ecosystems. Communities that invest in beekeeping have a direct economic interest in keeping forests intact. Honey and beeswax can generate significant and recurring income — providing a compelling, market-driven reason to protect, rather than exploit, natural resources.

Building Capacity: Training, Equipment, and Organisation

Recognising the transformative potential of beekeeping, the project moved deliberately to build genuine, lasting capacity within local communities — going far beyond simply distributing equipment.

Community Organisation

Ten beekeeping groups were established across the five project districts, with two groups per district. This district-level structure ensures geographic spread, facilitates peer learning, and creates a foundation for collective action in marketing and advocacy.

Comprehensive Training

Each group received structured training in all aspects of modern beekeeping, including:

- Apiary establishment and site selection
- Hive management techniques
- Honey production, harvesting, and post-harvest handling
- Bee health management and disease prevention
- Pollination services and ecological principles
- Safe and proper use of beekeeping tools and protective equipment
- Sustainable beekeeping practices for long-term productivity
- Value addition and quality improvement
- Business development and market opportunities within the beekeeping sector

A practical training manual was also provided to each group to support ongoing learning and reference beyond the formal training sessions.



A practical session on Apiary establishment at Kibiti



Apiary established by Nyuki ni Mali group in Mkuranga, Pwani

Equipment and Tools

To enable practical implementation from the outset, each group received a comprehensive equipment package: ten modern beehives, two bee smokers, one honey-pressing machine, two complete bee suits with gloves, beeswax, brushes, and additional beekeeping tools. Across all ten groups, this amounted to a total of 100 new beehives deployed in the field.

Monitoring and mid-term evaluation findings are encouraging: approximately 80 percent of the distributed hives have successfully attracted bee colonies — a strong indicator of appropriate siting, good hive management, and healthy local bee populations.

Early Results: A Story of Growing Momentum

The initiative has begun generating concrete, measurable results that testify to both the technical viability of beekeeping and the enthusiasm of participating communities.

100	new modern beehives established across 10 community groups at project launch
80%	of distributed hives successfully colonised by bees — a strong adoption indicator
225	additional hives procured by groups using their own resources, demonstrating confidence and self-investment

325	total active hives now operational across the five districts
40 kg	honey harvested in a single season by the Umoja ni Nguvu Bembeza Group, Kisarawe
TZS 480K	income earned from one harvest by one group — with many more groups in earlier stages of production

Perhaps the most telling indicator of success is the community groups' decision to invest their own resources: participating groups collectively acquired an additional 225 beehives, bringing the total to 325 active hives across the project area. This self-investment reflects genuine confidence in beekeeping as a viable livelihood — and signals a trajectory of growth that extends well beyond the life of the project.

Several groups completed their first honey harvests between June and August 2025. The Umoja ni Nguvu Bembeza Group from Kisarawe District recorded a standout result — 40 kilograms of honey sold at TZS 6,000 per 200 grams, generating TZS 480,000 in income from a single harvest season. Other groups are at earlier stages of production, with harvests expected to increase as hive populations grow and management skills deepen.

Opening Markets: The Nane Nane Exhibition 2025

Producing quality honey is only part of the journey — connecting producers to buyers is equally essential. In August 2025, four of the project's beekeeping groups participated in the Nane Nane Exhibition in Morogoro, Tanzania's premier annual agricultural fair.



Mikongweni Green Development Group during the Nanenane Exhibition in Morogoro



Nyuki ni Mali Group from Mkuranga during Nanenane Exhibition in Morogoro

Market Linkage in Action

At the Nane Nane Exhibition, the groups showcased their honey products to a national audience of buyers, traders, and agribusiness professionals. Beyond sales, the event enabled the groups to raise their profile, establish contacts with potential partners, and gain direct market intelligence on pricing and consumer preferences — experience that will inform their marketing strategies going forward.

Market participation of this kind is a critical step in the transition from subsistence production to sustainable enterprise. TaTEDO-SES0's support for exhibition participation reflects a commitment to building the full value chain — not just production, but processing, branding, and market access.

Broader Impact: Conservation, Livelihoods, and Partnerships

The beekeeping initiative illustrates a principle at the heart of TaTEDO-SES0's work: that environmental conservation and poverty reduction are not competing goals — they are, when approached thoughtfully, mutually reinforcing.

By generating reliable income from forest ecosystems in their natural state, beekeeping reduces the economic pressure on communities to clear land or harvest timber unsustainably. Families with diversified income sources are more resilient to shocks, less dependent on any single resource, and better positioned to make long-term decisions about land and forest management. At the same time, the pollination services provided by thriving bee colonies enhance agricultural productivity for surrounding farming communities — a benefit that extends well beyond the beekeepers themselves.

These outcomes are the product not only of technical interventions, but of deliberate partnership. The project brings together community groups, local government authorities, the European Union, and TaTEDO-SES0's own expertise in sustainable energy and natural resource management. This multi-stakeholder approach amplifies impact, builds local ownership, and ensures that conservation benefits outlast the project's formal duration.

Looking Ahead

As the project moves into its final phase, TaTEDO-SES0 remains committed to deepening the gains already achieved. In the period ahead, the project will:

- Continue close monitoring and technical support for all ten beekeeping groups
- Strengthen the organisational and governance capacities of groups to operate independently and sustainably
- Support the development of stable, long-term market linkages for honey and beeswax products
- Explore value addition opportunities, including processing, packaging, and quality certification
- Document and disseminate lessons learned to inform replication and scale-up in other regions

The vision is straightforward: communities that thrive economically because their forests are standing, not because they have been cleared. Bees are a bridge to that future.

On World Bee Day 2026, TaTEDO-SES0 reaffirms its commitment to a future where people and nature thrive together — truly embodying the spirit of “Bee Together for People and the Planet.”

About TaTEDO-SES0

TaTEDO-Sustainable Energy Services Organization (TaTEDO-SES0) is a Tanzanian non-governmental organization with over 35 years of experience in sustainable energy, natural resource management, and community development. TaTEDO-SES0 works with rural and peri-

urban communities, government partners, and international donors to advance clean energy access, forest conservation, and sustainable livelihoods across Tanzania.

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