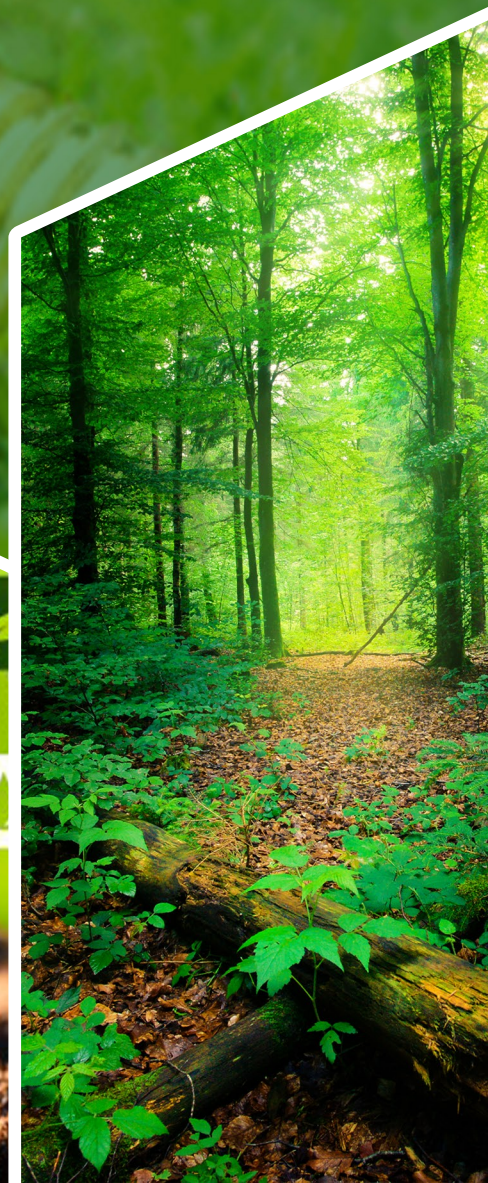


The KENYA INSTITUTE for PUBLIC  
POLICY RESEARCH and ANALYSIS

*Thinking Policy Together*

# The Role of Carbon Markets on Youth Employment in Forestry







## Introduction

Carbon markets, driven by global climate agreements, enable countries to trade carbon credits to reduce emissions.

In Kenya, these markets—particularly in forestry—present a dual opportunity: tackling climate change while creating jobs for youth.

## Key Messages



### 1. Carbon Markets are Growing in Kenya

- Kenya issued **52.4 million** carbon credits through voluntary and compliance markets by 2022, showing significant engagement with carbon trading.



### 2. Youth Unemployment Remains a Major Concern

- Youth aged 15–34 face a **34.5%** unemployment rate, with limited involvement in the growing carbon economy.



### 3. Forestry is Central to Emission Reduction

- Forests absorb up to **30%** of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, making them vital in carbon offsetting and employment creation.



### 4. Kenya's Ambitious Tree Planting Agenda

- The plan to plant **15 billion** trees by 2032 creates a massive demand for forestry labour, especially among youth.



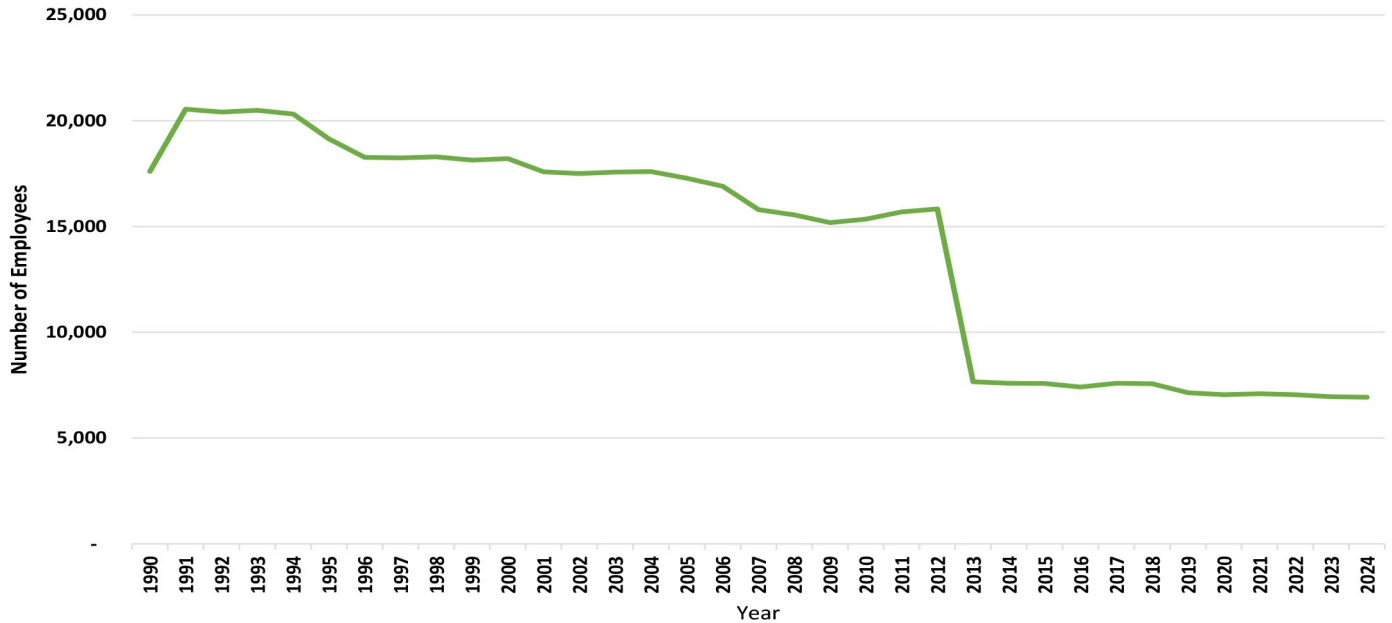
### 5. Alarmingly High Emissions from Agriculture

- Between 2019 and 2022, agriculture contributed **62%** of net emissions, largely from deforestation, livestock, and fertilizer use—above the **22%** global average for the sector.



## 6. Declining Forestry Employment

- Employment in forestry has dropped since 2013 due to shrinking forest cover and public sector contraction—yet this trend can be reversed through carbon market investments.



## Policy Recommendations



### 1. Make Carbon Markets Youth-Inclusive

- Design carbon offset projects that actively recruit, train, and employ youth in forestry roles—from tree planting to forest management.



### 2. Strengthen Regulatory Frameworks

- Refine Kenya's carbon market policies to explicitly integrate youth employment targets within climate action plans.



### 3. Invest in Forestry-Based Vocational Training

- Establish programs focused on climate-smart forestry, carbon monitoring, and agroforestry, tailored for young people.



### 4. Leverage International Climate Finance and Improve Data and Tracking

- Tap into global funding to scale youth-centred forestry initiatives within carbon market frameworks.
- Collect disaggregated data on youth participation and job creation in carbon market projects to guide evidence-based policymaking.