

DEVOLUTION @10

A Citizen's Perspective



SURVEY REPORT

DECEMBER 2023

Devolution @10: A Citizen's Perspective

Study by

Kenya Devolution CSO Working Group (KDCWG)

December 2023

WHO WE ARE

Act! is a leading Kenyan, non-profit, Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). The organization was established in September 2001 as Pact Kenya and rebranded in 2011 as a fully-fledged local organization. Act! focuses on building the capacity and resilience of individuals and communities, thus empowering them to get involved in the decisions and management of their development.

DEVOLUTION @10: A CITIZEN'S PERSPECTIVE

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Nairobi Office

Woodlands Road, Off Dennis Pritt/ Lenana Road Kilimani

P.O. Box 76390-00508. Nairobi-Kenya

Tel: +254 20 8179231/ 8179240

Cell: +254 722203721/ 771634555

info@act.or.ke

Mombasa Office

Kibaki Flats, off Mombasa- Malindi Road

P. O. Box 10042-82100. Mombasa-Kenya

Cell: +254 722 207 088

info@act.or.ke

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PREFACE

“To meaningfully galvanise and enhance the voice of CSOs and citizens in devolution, KDP facilitated the establishment of the Kenya Devolution CSOs’ Working Group (KDCWG). The membership to KDCWG is through the county-level CSOs’ networks. So far, 61 CSOs’ networks across the 47 counties have committed to the KDCWG.”

The Act Change Transform-led Consortium is currently implementing the Kenya Devolution Programme (KDP) Timiza Ugatuzi, a four-year (2021–2025) national programme funded by the UK Government. The Programme is contributing to addressing challenges facing devolution in Kenya. These challenges include ineffective inter-governmental relations and coordination at national and county levels, inadequate county economic planning and development, trade and investment capacity, limited involvement of the citizens in public decision-making and oversight processes, and limited integration of research and evidence to inform public policy, facilitate peer learning and improve county service delivery.



Omore C. Osendo
Governance Adviser
British High Commission in Nairobi

The KDP is the successor to the Kenya Devolution Support Programme (KDSP) and Agile Harmonized Assistance for Devolved Institutions (AHADI). The Programme is now in its third year of implementation contributing to making devolution more effective in Kenya while emphasising improving service delivery and accountability. At the overall impact level, the Programme aims to improve development results at the county level, while the expected outcomes by 2025 are: 1). more effective, open, and accountable county governments; and 2). county governments improve service delivery. To deliver these goals, KDP–Timiza Ugatuzi has four distinct and interrelated output areas, namely:



Tom Were
Chief Executive Officer
Act Change Transform

The Programme has fostered partnerships with civil society organizations (CSOs), mainly through their networks at the county level to support mobilisation, sensitisation, and capacity building of the citizens to participate and engage with their county governments in devolved governance. The aim is to ensure that the CSOs' networks mobilise and support the citizens for meaningful engagement with their county governments in the county-level policy-making, planning, budgeting, and service delivery processes.

To meaningfully galvanise and enhance the voice of CSOs and citizens in devolution, KDP facilitated the establishment of the Kenya Devolution CSOs' Working Group (KDCWG). The membership to KDCWG is through the county-level CSOs' networks. So far, 61 CSOs' networks across the 47 counties have committed to the KDCWG. As part of its support to the KDCWG, KDP commissioned this study in August 2023 to obtain citizens' perspectives on the impact of devolution and to provide credible evidence for advocacy by the CSOs.

The survey examined the citizens' perspectives on the relationships between the national and county governments, the operationalisation of devolution objectives, and the quality of delivery of devolved functions at the county level such as health, water, agriculture, and trade, among others. It also identifies the gaps and challenges in each of the focus areas and provides recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of devolution. The findings will benefit Kenyan citizens and devolution practitioners, particularly the CSOs, by providing credible evidence for advocacy in devolution implementation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



The Devolution@10 Survey Report is the product of a rigorous process that includes feedback from various stakeholders in the devolution sector. While it is impossible to thank everyone individually, the Kenya Devolution Civil Society Organizations Forum (KDCWG) gratefully acknowledges their contributions to the successful completion of this study.

Special thanks to the citizens/residents of the 15 sampled counties who participated in the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). We thank all of the officials from the county and national governments' ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) for participating in the Key Informant Interviews and providing valuable insights into the development of this report.

Our sincere gratitude goes to the CSO networks in Kenya's 47 counties for their assistance and critical role in recruiting respondents. Similarly, we appreciate the Enumerators' concerted effort to capture the voices of all stakeholders by engaging them in Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant interviews.

Special thanks to the members of the KDCWG Steering Committee for their invaluable insights and support in the design and execution of this survey, as well as in the coordination of data collection. They are Jacob Ngumi and Damaris Kavete of CEREB, Benedine Kipruto of NOREB, Michael Mburu and Sherry Muthaura of CEREB, Dr. Abdulahi Mohamed and Fatuma Yusuf of FCDC, Raya Fahamu and Malusha Abedi of JKP, Chris Owalla and Fridah Jausiku of LRB, Samuel Sikawa and Juliana Rono of Narok Kajiado Economic Bloc, and Cornelius Oduor and Diana Gichengu of Nairobi County.

We are greatly indebted to FCDO for extending financial resources to KDCWG which enabled the success of this study.

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All of your contributions are invaluable as this report will significantly contribute to the body of knowledge on devolution and will also serve as reference material for devolution actors, including development partners, as they design responsive programmes to strengthen the achievements in devolution.

Asanteni sana!



Evans Kibet
National Convener
Kenya Devolution Civil Society Organizations Forum

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

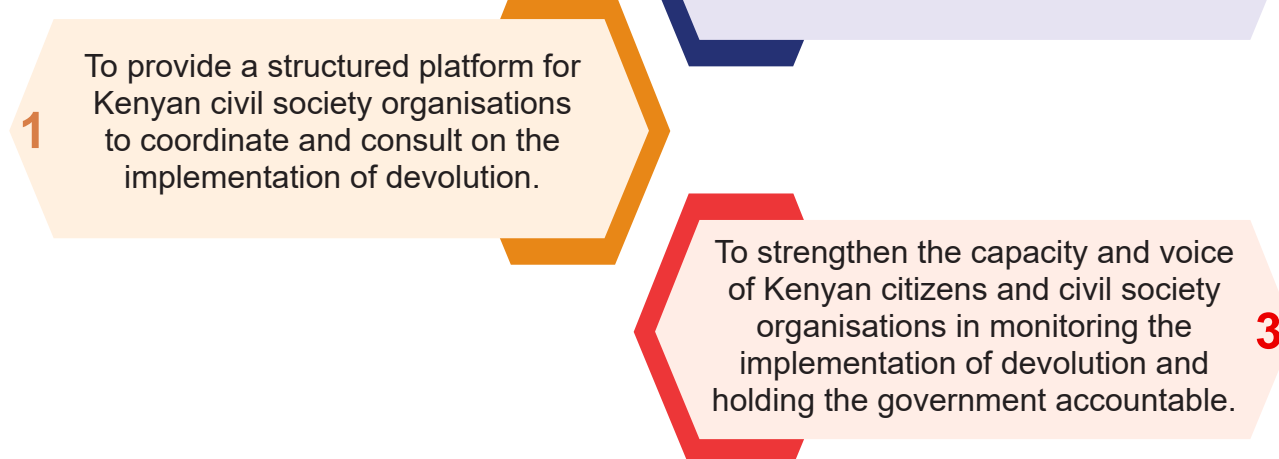
Act!	Act Change Transform
AHADI	Agile Harmonised Assistance for Devolved Institutions
CAF	County Assemblies Forum
CAJ	Commission on Administrative Justice (Ombudsman)
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CHPs	Community Health Promoters
CUIDPs	Comprehensive Urban Investment Development Plans
CHPs	Community Health Promoters
CBEF	County Budget Economic Forum
CIDP	County Integrated Development Plan
COG	Council of Governors
CPSB	County Public Service Board
CRA	Commission on Revenue Allocation
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CUIDP	County Urban Integrated Development Plan
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
IBEC	Intergovernmental Budget Economic Council
IBPK	International Budget Partnership Kenya
IGRA	Intergovernmental Relations Act
IGRTC	Intergovernmental Relations Technical Committee
KDCWG	Kenya Devolution CSOs' Working Group
KDP	Kenya Devolution Programme
KDSP	Kenya Devolution Support Programme
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
OAG	Office of the Auditor General
OCOB	Officer of the Controller of Budget
OSR	Own Source Revenue
PLWDs	Persons Living With Disabilities
SMEs	Small and Midsize Enterprises

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Act Change Transform (Act!) has been leading a team of institutions, CSOs, and the private sector in the implementation of the Kenya Devolution Programme (KDP) - Timiza Ugatuzi since July 2021. Under Output 3 of the KDP–Timiza Ugatuzi, Act! has supported the establishment of Kenya Devolution CSOs Working Group (KDCWG), a national platform of the CSOs with the primary focus on advocating for effective implementation of devolution as contemplated in the Constitution of Kenya, 2010. KDCWG was conceived out of the need for the CSOs to have a unified voice to contribute to addressing the problems affecting devolution in Kenya. The overall objective of the KDCWG is to contribute to effectiveness in the implementation of devolution in Kenya for the realisation of the devolution promise.

Specific objectives of the KDCWG are

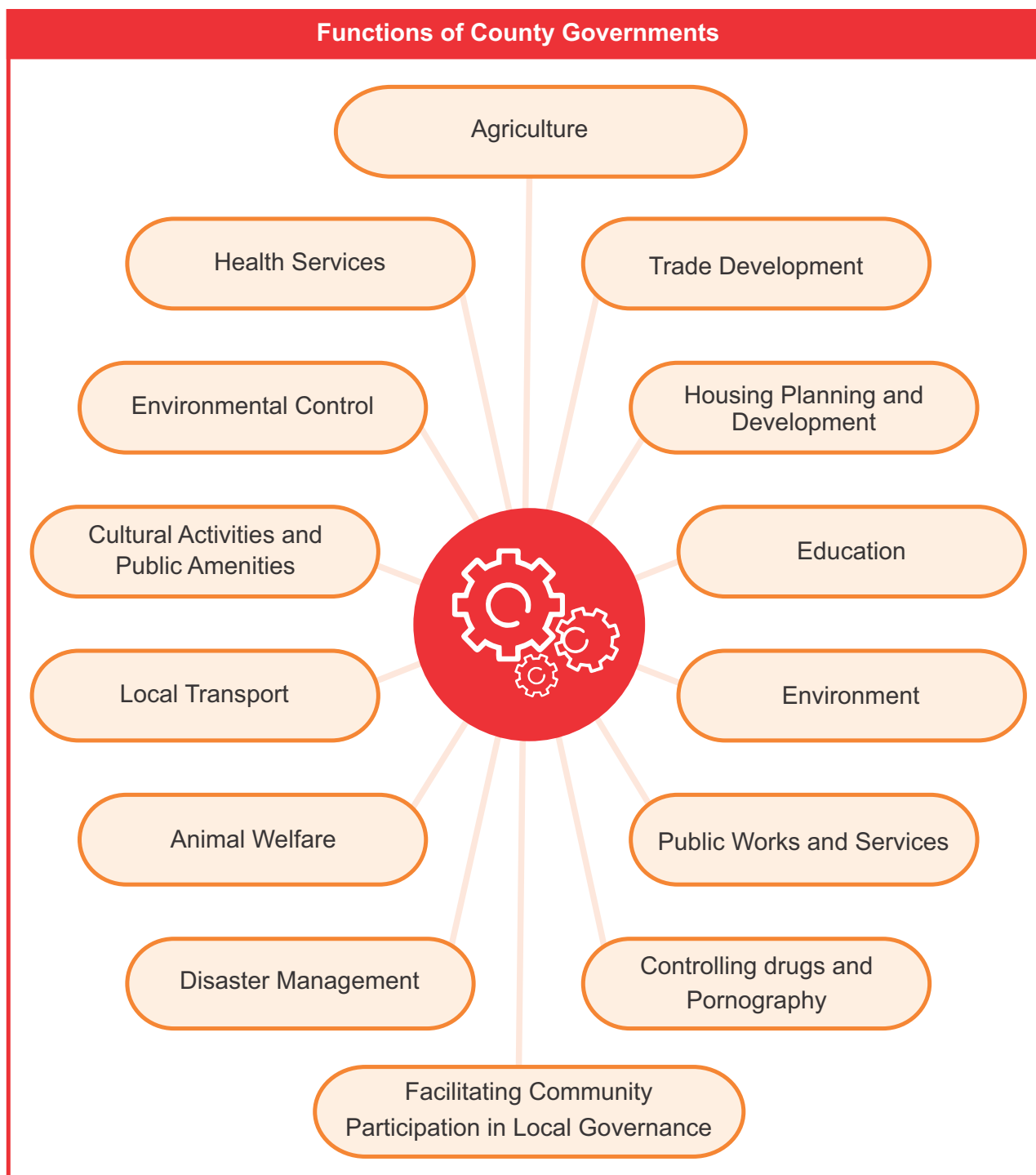


After its formation, the KDCWG requested Act! to support it to generate baseline data on the status of devolution to better understand what is working well and identify areas that need to be improved to strengthen devolved governance. KDCWG required this information to provide credible evidence for its advocacy with the various devolution stakeholders. This request was conceptualised through the devolution survey which began in August 2023 and was delivered by the internal technical resource at Act! The background discussed below influenced the survey.

The implementation of Kenya’s devolved system started in 2013 following the first General Elections under the current Constitution. Article 6(2) of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 provides that the governments at the national and county levels are distinct and interdependent and shall conduct their mutual relations based on consultation and cooperation. The objectives of devolution, are outlined in Article 174 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 and include promoting democratic governance, national unity, self-governance, and participation of the people in decision-making. Others are recognising community rights, advancing the interests of minorities and marginalised groups, ensuring social and economic development with equitable resource sharing, decentralising state organs, and enhancing checks and balances in governance.

The Fourth Schedule of the Constitution outlines the functions of county governments in Part 2. They include overseeing agriculture, county health services, environmental control, cultural activities and public amenities, local transport, animal welfare, trade development, and housing planning and development.

Additionally, counties are responsible for education (pre-primary, village polytechnics), implementing national environmental policies, managing public works and services, controlling drugs and pornography and disaster management, and facilitating community participation in local governance. Upon their establishment, most of these functions were transferred to the county governments in 2013.

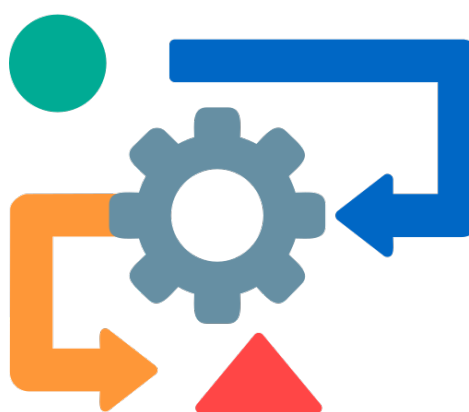


The key structures and systems for facilitating the rollout of devolution were established in the first ten years of devolved governance. At the county level, basic structures in various sectors, including health, education, water, agriculture and urban development were established. The devolved county structures were also established even though the level and status differed with counties.

Despite the considerable strides in service delivery and deliberate actions made by some county governments to decentralise their services to the community level, perennial challenges have continued to plague the implementation of devolution.

Among these challenges are weak legal frameworks, delayed disbursement of **equitable share of revenue collected nationally to county governments**, corruption, limited accountability and transparency, ineffective cooperation and consultation between the two levels of government, and, in some cases, limited citizens' decision-making engagement.

Some initiatives to document the successes and challenges of devolution have been undertaken, however, the focus on citizens' perspectives has received minimal attention. This gap has made it impossible to determine whether devolution has delivered the citizens' aspirations or is on the right track, as well as which areas require further attention. This report assists in bridging the gap by guiding areas that may need to be addressed to improve the effectiveness of Kenya's devolved system.



Methodology

The study applied a mixed-methods approach, collecting quantitative data from a representative sample of citizens from all 47 counties via questionnaires and qualitative data through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs).

The quantitative data analysed consisted of 2056 questionnaire respondents from 47 counties, 15 FGDs and 43 KIIs in 15 sampled counties across all the seven regional economic blocks and Nairobi City County.



Key Findings

Overall, the study provides a comprehensive analysis of the citizens' perspectives on devolution, including the successes and challenges in the various sectors studied.

The survey shows that there has been considerable progress albeit with some key gaps as discussed below.

Citizens considered the consultations and cooperation between the national and county governments as fair.

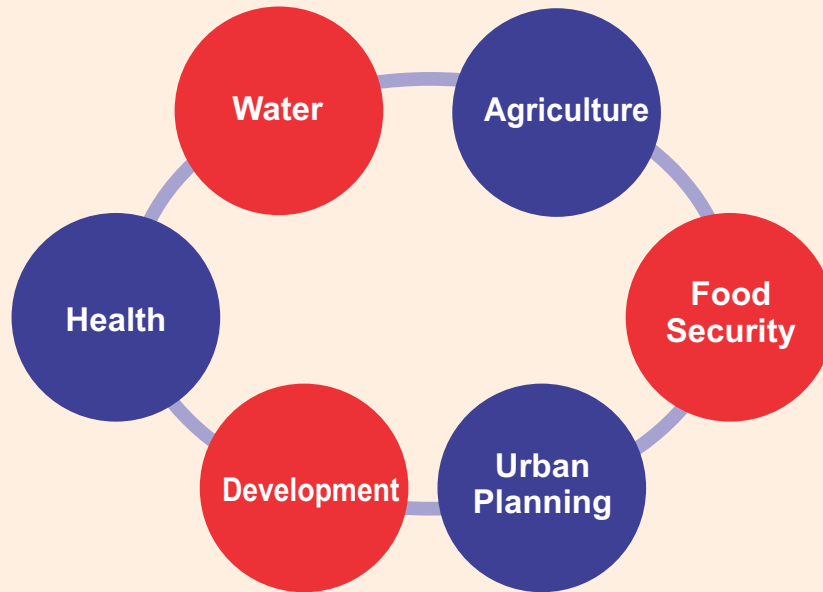
However, perennial challenges like political dynamics, administrative and functional overlaps, communication breakdowns, poor understanding of the Intergovernmental Relations Act (IGRA) 2012, and resource allocation issues constrained the relationships between the two levels of government. These factors have led to some level of distrust and often strained relations between national and county governments thereby undermining the spirit of devolution as anticipated in Article 6 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010.

Despite some progress being made in some counties, achieving diversity in the county public service remains challenging due to systemic issues. Article 232 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 emphasises representation of diverse communities and equal opportunities in public service, which includes gender balance, and inclusion of persons with disabilities (PWDs) and marginalised communities. Corruption, nepotism, political patronage, and policy gaps continue to impede the advancement of diversity. Citizens believe that strengthening legal frameworks, improving transparency and accountability in the recruitment process, engaging and empowering citizens, particularly the marginalized groups, and reforming leadership and institutions at the national and county levels to prioritise diversity and inclusion will go a long way toward increasing diversity.

Most citizens perceive efforts towards decentralisation at the county level as only moderately successful. County governments are at different levels in establishing decentralisation structures such as the village councils, village, ward, and sub-county administrators. Their concern was that the majority of the county governments have not yet enacted the relevant legislation for operationalisation of Article 176(2) of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 and Section 54(1) of the County Governments Act, 2012, on decentralisation. This concern was linked to various challenges, including the reluctance of the county leadership to relinquish control, corruption and mismanagement, political and tribal influence, resource limitations and resistance to change. These obstacles have slowed the implementation of decentralised structures, perpetuating the centralisation of services and decision-making at the county level.

There is inadequate citizen participation in decision-making processes in county governments with some progress being made to enhance self-governance. County governments have continued to engage citizens in development planning and decision-making on issues affecting them. Citizens, on the other hand, believe that meaningful involvement is still a long way off and that effective public participation will only be possible if impediments such as a lack of political commitment, resource constraints, insufficient civic awareness, gaps in access to information, ineffective communication, and weak legal frameworks are addressed. It is necessary to implement effective and robust public participation strategies such as strengthening civic education, improving participation mechanisms, allocating a reasonable budget for public participation, and strengthening legal and policy frameworks.

Considerable improvements have been witnessed in critical sectors such as



Primarily enabled by sustained investments in these sectors by county governments and donors.

However, crosscutting issues such as weak regulatory frameworks, limited resources and infrastructure, corruption and mismanagement continue to plague these sectors. Notable challenges in the health sector such as the disproportionate emphasis on curative rather than preventive services and staff shortages have hampered access to quality healthcare. These sectoral improvements and challenges reflect a complex landscape of progress, as well as ongoing governance and development, needs at the county level. Citizens believe that increased resource allocation and improved governance systems in these critical sectors can significantly improve service delivery.

Citizens' satisfaction levels with the effectiveness of county governments in managing their Own Source Revenue (OSR) varied by county. Similarly, reliance on a limited number of revenue streams and a weak link between revenue collection and service delivery have remained major challenges in OSR mobilisation. Furthermore, insufficient investments in improving the business environment have hampered business efficiency, resulting in negative effects on revenue mobilisation.

County Governments and donors have taken some significant steps towards environmental conservation and natural resource management, promoting climate innovation and youth-driven green businesses. While actions such as tree planting, public education campaigns, policy enactment, and water conservation efforts to preserve the environment and manage natural resources have received widespread support from citizens and stakeholders, the negative effects of climate change remain a critical issue that must be addressed. This area has not received adequate investments from the county governments.

Despite the existence of the legal frameworks on procurement and payment for goods and services, there were critical concerns that the efficiency of these processes had been impacted by limited transparency and accountability. Procurement processes are often influenced by personal connections and kickbacks, resulting in significant delays in payments to contractors without the necessary connections. These practices have undermined fair competition and value for money in the delivery of public goods and services. Addressing these gaps would necessitate strengthening oversight mechanisms and increasing fiscal discipline.



Challenges

The survey identified key challenges for devolution, the most significant of which were widespread corruption and a lack of transparency and accountability across most county governments. These factors have resulted in inefficiencies, which have had a significant impact on service delivery to citizens. Inadequate civic education, public participation, ineffective grievance redress mechanisms, and limited access to information have all hampered effective public engagement in governance.

Human resource challenges such as nepotism, cronyism, favouritism, and tribalism have jeopardized meritocracy and efficiency, particularly in government employment. The survey discovered that unethical recruitment and employment practices, as well as a lack of transparency, contributed to poor service delivery. This has been reflected in the challenges of managing and delivering essential services, as well as infrastructure development across counties.

Finally, the weak financial management systems, poor leadership, and compromised procurement processes as evidenced by delayed disbursements of the equitable share to the county governments by the National Treasury and mismanagement, have undermined effective and accountable governance.

Addressing these challenges would necessitate extensive governance, human resource management, and financial administration reforms.



Proposed Strategies for Dealing with Challenges

1. Establishment of robust anti-corruption measures.
2. Improving finance management and establishing consequences for non-compliance with the PFM Act and related laws.
3. Implementation of open government to improve access to information about government activities, decisions, and actions, including financial management and procurement.

Enhancement of civic education to improve citizen participation in governance and demand accountability from government.

4. Improving OSR collection and management to mitigate resource constraints and operational challenges, reducing reliance on conditional grants from donors and the national government.
5. Establishment of a framework to promote equitable and transparent resource allocation at the county level.
6. Retooling or building capacity for staff providing essential services to citizens in various sectors to improve attitude and service delivery.
7. Improving service efficiency and transparency by digitalizing and automating processes.
8. Promoting youth participation in decision-making and empowerment through targeted programs to enhance their contribution to societal development.
9. Creation of an investment-friendly environment in counties to attract investors who can create jobs and drive economic growth.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Act Change Transform (Act!) is a not-for-profit, non-governmental organisation established in Kenya in 2001. The vision of Act! is to “empower citizens and communities living a productive life in dignity.” Its mission is to “support, partner with, and develop local organisations to be effective agents of lasting positive change.”



The organisation’s holistic approach to development is delivered through capacity development and grants management.



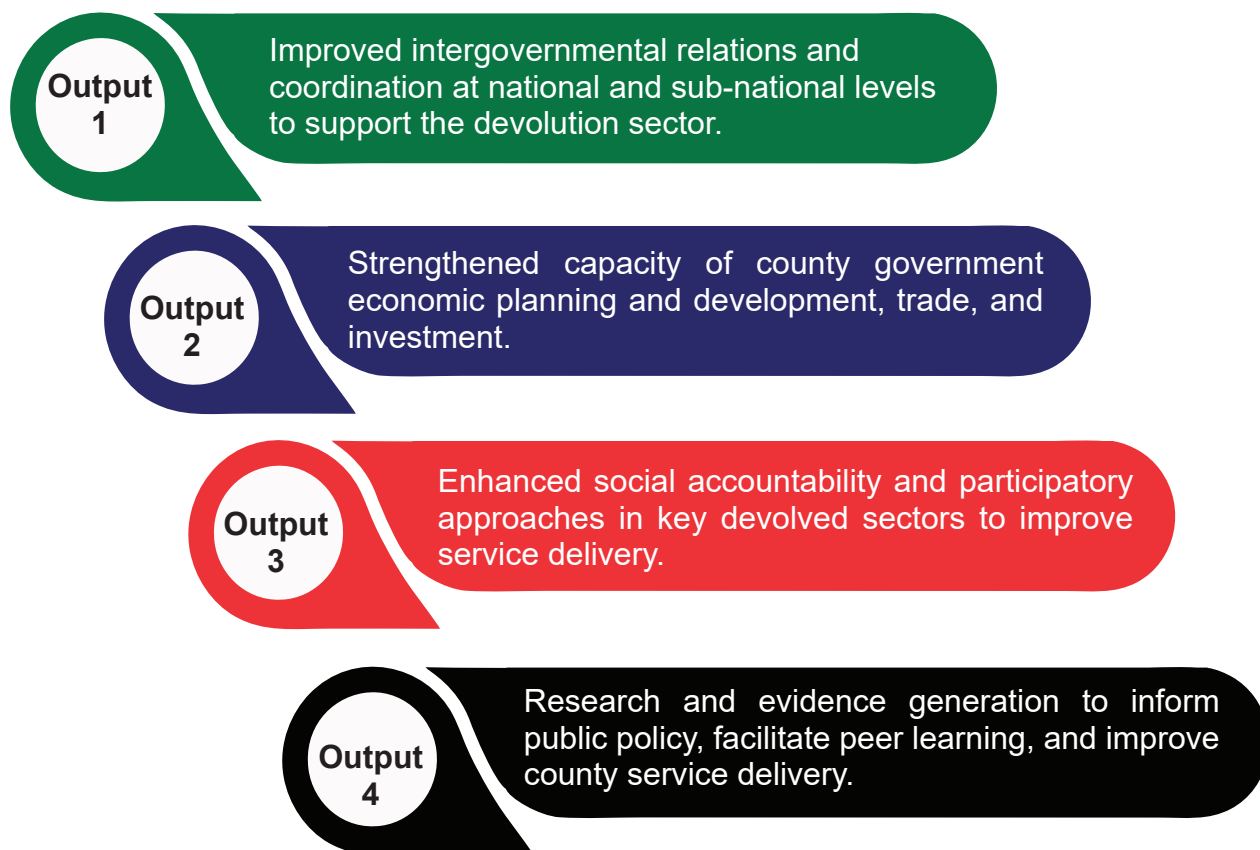
Act! Invests in building the organisational capacity of its partners, including Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and government agencies, and supporting the public and private sectors to deliver quality services.

Act! has supported capacity development for over 400 CSOs across the 47 counties in Kenya and dozens of CSOs in East Africa throughout its two-decade history.

Act! is currently implementing the Kenya Devolution Programme (KDP) - Timiza Ugatuzi through its strategic focus area of Democracy, Governance, and Human Rights, with financial support from the Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO).

The KDP is a 4-year programme (2021-2025) and is a successor to the Kenya Devolution Support Programme (KDSP) and Agile Harmonized Assistance for Devolved Institutions (AHADI). The KDP is in its third year of implementation and is contributing to making devolution more effective in Kenya, with a focus on improving service delivery and accountability. At the overall impact level, the Programme aims to improve county-level development results, with the following expected outcomes by 2025: 1). County governments will be more effective, transparent, and accountable, and 2). County governments improve their service delivery.

To achieve these objectives, the KDP has four distinct but interrelated output areas, namely:



Output 3 of the KDP – Timiza Ugatuzi has a strategic focus on strengthening the voice of Kenyan civil society on devolution at the national, regional, county and decentralised levels. This support is aimed at strengthening the capacity and coordination of CSOs and citizens in advancing the devolution dream as stipulated in the Constitution of Kenya, 2010. Since 2013, CSOs made significant contributions to the country’s development in diverse areas.

Among other things, their contributions have been visible in strengthening the governance systems, enhancing accountability mechanisms, empowering the citizens on their rights and responsibilities in governance processes, and providing technical assistance in capacity building of the county governments as well as contributing to direct service delivery in diverse areas such as health, water, agriculture, and nutrition.

The KDP – Timiza Ugatuzi has supported CSO networks across the 47 counties in creating a platform to strengthen their voices and those of citizens in devolution. The Kenya Devolution CSOs Working Group (KDCWG) has the following objectives to: a). Provide a structured platform for coordination and consultations among the Kenyan civil society organisations in the implementation of devolution; b). Provide Kenyan civil society organisations with a safe and reliable space for continuous learning and knowledge exchange on devolution, and c). Strengthen Kenyan civil society organisations’ capacity and voice in monitoring the implementation of devolution and holding the government accountable.

The KDP - Timiza Ugatuzi provided support to KDCWG, which resulted in this survey. It evaluates the status of devolution implementation in Kenya, with a focus on how it affects the delivery of the devolution dream from the perspective of citizens. The findings will be used by the KDCWG to advocate for better devolution implementation at all levels.



1.2. Survey Context and Rationale

Kenya's devolution is in its eleventh year of implementation dating back to 2013. Devolution has been hailed as one of the most critical components of Kenya's governance system. Article 6(2) of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 provides that the governments at the national and county levels are distinct and interdependent and that they shall conduct their mutual relations based on consultation and cooperation. The objects of devolution are captured in Article 174 of the Constitution.

They include: (a) Promoting a democratic and accountable exercise of power, (b) Fostering national unity by recognising diversity, (c) Giving powers of self-governance to the people and enhancing their participation in the exercise of the powers of the State and in making decisions affecting them, (d) To recognise the right of communities to manage their affairs and to further their development, (e) To protect and promote the interests and rights of minorities and marginalised communities, (f) To promote social and economic development and the provision of proximate, easily accessible services throughout Kenya, (g) To ensure equitable sharing of national and local resources throughout Kenya, (h) To facilitate the decentralisation of State organs, their functions and services, from the capital of Kenya, and (i) To enhance checks and balances and the separation of powers.

The fourth schedule of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 specifies the functions of the county and national governments. Part 2 outlines the functions of county governments, namely: **(1). Agriculture**, including (a). crop and animal husbandry, (b). livestock sale yards, (c). county abattoirs, (d). plant and animal disease control; and (e) fisheries. **(2). County health services**, including, (a). county health facilities and pharmacies, (b). ambulance services, (c). promotion of primary health care, (d). licensing and control of undertakings that sell food to the public, (e). veterinary services (excluding the regulation of the profession), (f). cemeteries, funeral parlours and crematoria; and (g) refuse removal, refuse dumps and solid waste disposal. **(3). Control air pollution, noise pollution, other public nuisances and outdoor advertising.** **(4). Cultural activities, public entertainment and public amenities**, including (a). betting, casinos and other forms of gambling, (b) racing, (c). liquor licensing, (d). cinemas, (e). video shows and hiring, (f). libraries, (g). museums, (h) sports and cultural activities and facilities, and (i). county parks, beaches and recreation facilities. **(5).**

County transport, including (a). county roads, (b). street lighting, (c). traffic and parking, (d). public road transport; and (e). ferries and harbours, excluding international and national shipping regulations and related matters.

The others are **(6). Animal control and welfare**, including (a) licensing of dogs and (b). facilities for the accommodation, care and burial of animals. **(7). Trade development and regulation**, including (a). markets, (b). trade licences, excluding regulation of professions, (c). fair trading practices, (d). local tourism; and (e). cooperative societies. **(8). County planning and development**, including (a). statistics, (b). land survey and mapping, (c). boundaries and fencing, (d). housing; and (e) electricity and gas reticulation and energy regulation. **(9). Pre-primary education, village polytechnics, homecraft centres and childcare facilities (10).**

Implement specific national government policies on natural resources and environmental conservation, including (a). soil and water conservation, and (b). forestry. **(11). County public works and services**, including (a). stormwater management systems in built-up areas, and (b). water and sanitation services. **(12). Firefighting services and disaster management.** **(13). Control of drugs and pornography,** and **(14). Ensure and coordinate the participation of communities and locations in governance at the local level and assist communities and locations to develop the administrative capacity for effectively exercising the functions and powers and participation in governance at the local level.**

Upon their establishment, most of these functions were transferred to the county governments in 2013. The county governments have since been performing the functions mainly with funds from their equitable share of the revenue raised nationally, local revenue and conditional grants. Article 1 of the Constitution states that the sovereign power belongs to the people of Kenya and that the people may exercise the sovereign power directly or indirectly through their democratically elected representatives.

This presupposes that the Government therefore exists not to serve its interests but rather the interests of the people, in which case, the people's level of satisfaction is a critical imperative for the success of devolution. Further, Article 10 of the Constitution lists the participation of the people and inclusiveness under the values and principles of governance in Kenya that bind all state organs, state officers and all persons in Kenya. Read together with Article 174(c) and Article 201(a) of the Constitution among others, these provisions leave no doubt that public participation is a major requirement in Kenya's public governance at both levels of government.

Article 35(1) of the Constitution further provides that citizens have the right to information held by the state while Article 227 of the Constitution states that all state organs and public entities are bound to apply a system that is fair, equitable, transparent, competitive and cost-effective in procurement and contracting of any goods and services. These provisions are backed up by the related values and principles of governance specified in Article 10(2) of the Constitution particularly: good governance, transparency, accountability, inclusiveness, non-discrimination and protection of the marginalised.

The requirements for public participation in decision-making, access to information, transparency, inclusivity and non-discrimination in public governance processes are captured elaborately in the relevant legal legislation that includes the Public Finance Management Act (2012), County Governments Act (2012), Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Act (2015), Urban Areas and Cities Act (2011), Access to Information Act (2016) National Cohesion and Integration Act (2008) and Public Officers Ethics Act (2012). In delivering their functions, the national and county governments and their officials are therefore bound constitutionally and legally to uphold these values and principles of governance.

In the context of the counties, the County Governments Act further outlines elaborate frameworks they should have in place for public participation, public communication access to information and civic education in Parts IIX, IX and X of the Act. Some county governments have also enacted their county-specific legislation on civic education and public participation as well as laws on access to information. Compliance with these laws is intended to ensure that county governments provide inclusive services by Article 174 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010.

To date, the national government has retained and continues to perform some of the functions and resources of the county governments. In general, five to ten years after implementation is a reasonable time frame to evaluate the effectiveness of a governance system. Concerning Kenya's devolution, there must be a detailed citizens' perspective on achieving the constitutional objectives. This gap makes it difficult to determine Kenyans' opinions on whether devolution is on the right track. The survey was informed by the need to close this gap and gain a better understanding of citizens' views on devolution, particularly the objectives and quality of service delivery.

The delivery of public functions requires reliable financial resources and qualified personnel. Article 175(b) of the Constitution states that county governments shall have reliable sources of revenue to enable them to govern and deliver services in their areas of jurisdiction effectively. Article 232 of the Constitution on the other hand stipulates the values and principles of governance in Kenya that binds both the national and county governments. Among others, it lists fair competition and merit as the basis of appointments and promotions; and representation of Kenya's diverse communities as the key values and principles of public service.

Several stakeholders have made notable efforts to document the implementation of devolution, including the Council of Governors (COG), Twaweza East Africa, and the World Bank. Over the years, the COG has issued annual Status of Devolution (SODA) statements. The tenth and latest SODA was released on 30th June, 2023. However, a review of the SODA reports reveals that they primarily present development challenges, budgets, expenditures, and procurement information.

The reports leave a significant gap in terms of the impact of the investments on Kenyans. Such information is required to determine the benefit and value of money for citizens in such expenditures. In addition, the Commission on Revenue Allocation conducted an impact study on devolution. As a result, it is hoped that the report will address these gaps from the government's perspective.



In November 2023, Twaweza East Africa released a survey titled: *Power to the people? Kenyan citizens' experiences and opinions on ten years of devolution in practice*. The survey was conducted online and covered eight counties. Some of its key findings were: 70% of the citizens had some but not a comprehensive understanding of devolution in Kenya; 54% indicated that devolution was being implemented well; 3 out of 4 felt that devolution had led to better services while 68% thought that devolution had led to improved health services at the county level; 62% were concerned that corruption and misuse of funds was the biggest concern in the implementation of devolution; 51% of the citizens are largely unhappy with their county's revenue collection; most citizens understood primarily as taking part in public meetings and reported increasing participation in county decision making; most citizens were however of the view that leaders take little account of citizens' opinions when making decisions at the national and county levels, even though the citizens felt there have been improvements in engagements with the county governments compared to 2018. The survey was primarily quantitative. Importantly for this study, the majority of people were unsure about the impact of devolution, implying the need to investigate whether devolution has produced significant results.

The World Bank also attempted to assess devolution in Kenya with a study titled Making devolution work for service delivery. The study found that intergovernmental coordination and cooperation could have been improved, and that county governments faced numerous challenges in providing high-quality devolved services. In contrast, the national government continued to perform the majority of the functions of the county governments, particularly those related to infrastructure. The national government also kept the funds related to the functions of the county governments, which it continued to carry out.

According to the study, political competition between the national and county governments, as well as political patronage and corruption, had a significant impact on devolution implementation. It states that there have been mixed results on service delivery, “not by any means a massive failure, but not a resounding success”, even though county governments have expanded the investments in their functions. The study also notes that challenges in service delivery, such as quality and efficiency, persisted, as did significant disparities in service.

The study notes that outpatient attendance in the health service increased from 9% to 13% per facility between 2013 and 2018 as the number of facilities increased, as did the number and share of deliveries attended to by skilled health workers. It also mentions that immunisation has stabilised. The enrolment in early childhood development increased at similar rates before devolution, while access to safe drinking water increased by only 3% in rural areas but remained stable in urban areas.

While there have been positive steps towards evaluating devolution, as discussed above, a detailed and comprehensive impact study with an inclination to citizens’ perspectives still needs to be completed. This gap has made it impossible to decide whether devolution has delivered or is on the right track and the areas that need emphasis. Therefore, this report contributes to minimising the gap and provides guidance on areas that may require emphasis to enhance the effectiveness of Kenya’s devolved system.

1.3. Scope of the Survey

This survey covers the period from the inception of devolution in 2013 to 2023. It recognises that devolution in Kenya interfaces with the two levels of government, both the national and county. The survey further recognises that the implementation of devolution involves diverse stakeholders, including national government, county governments, intergovernmental relations institutions, independent commissions and offices, CSOs, the private sector, development partners, and citizens. Underpinning devolution is the provision for consultation, coordination, and cooperation between the two levels of government and across the counties, as stipulated in Article 6 of the Constitution. Consequently, the survey sought to establish the effectiveness of the consultations, coordination and cooperation, as well as the performance of intergovernmental institutions.

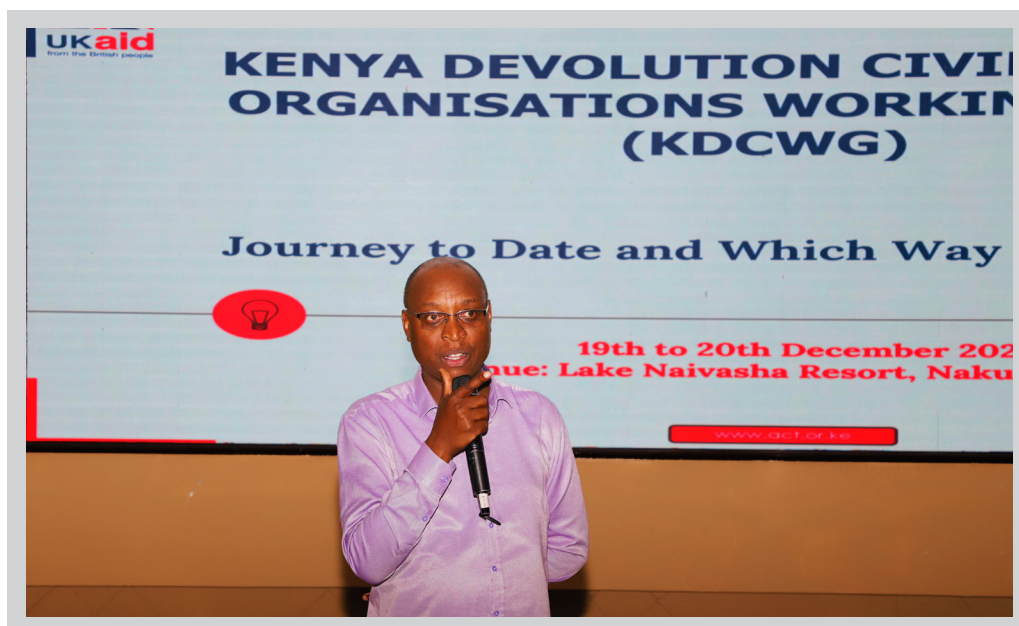
The survey also examined the quality-of-service delivery, decentralisation of decision-making beyond the county headquarters and the effectiveness of stakeholders’ engagement in governance processes. Other areas covered include the performance of the county governments in socio-economic development and the effectiveness of county executives and county assemblies in delivering their constitutional functions listed under the Fourth Schedule of the Constitution. Finally, the study covered an in-depth analysis of the devolved sectors: agriculture, climate change and environmental management. The focus was on how these sectors have met the service delivery aspirations of Kenyans.

Objectives of the Survey

The survey's primary goal was to provide comprehensive baseline information on the status, progress, and challenges facing devolution in Kenya. The findings will inform evidence-based advocacy by the KDCWG in strengthening the effectiveness of devolution.

The specific objectives of the survey were to:

- i. Assess the progress made in implementing devolution objectives as stipulated under the Constitution of Kenya 2010.
- ii. Assess the performance of county governments in fulfilling their constitutional mandates and delivering public services to the citizens.
- iii. Evaluate the effectiveness of the consultations and cooperation between the national and county governments.
- iv. Assess citizens' awareness and quality of their participation in the devolution.
- v. Assess the impacts of devolution on socio-economic development in the key devolved sectors across the country.
- vi. Identify areas for improvement and make recommendations for strengthening the implementation of devolution in Kenya.



2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Study Approach and Methodology

To gain a comprehensive understanding of devolution in Kenya, the study used a mixed-methods approach that included both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. It captured both the measurable results and the nuanced experiences of stakeholders. The quantitative and qualitative data were collected in two phases, as described below.

2.1.1. Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis

In Phase 1 of the survey, quantitative data was collected using a structured questionnaire designed to gather information from a sample of citizens across all 47 counties in Kenya. The questionnaire was administered virtually using Google Forms and received 2056 respondents, giving a margin of error of 2.16% for an unlimited population size with a confidence level of 95%. CSO networks in all 47 counties of Kenya played an important role in mobilising respondents. The online questionnaire was designed to collect information on various aspects of the devolution process, such as the effectiveness of relationships between national and county governments, the performance of county governments, the effectiveness of services, and the effects of devolution on service delivery.

A Likert scale of 1 to 5 was used in rating the parameters of concern, where 1 was the least and 5 was the highest. The questionnaire was disseminated to a wide range of respondents, ensuring a diverse representation of perspectives from the 47 counties and diverse sectors.

In the data analysis phase, the quantitative data was cleaned up and verified using Microsoft Excel, where it was sorted, filtered, and checked for inconsistencies or missing values. This step was essential for ensuring the accuracy and reliability of the data. The data was then analysed using Stata to provide insights into the trends and patterns in the effectiveness of intergovernmental relations between national and county governments, the impacts of devolution on service delivery and the performance of county governments.

2.1.2. Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis

Phase 2 focused on qualitative data collection, which involved key informant interviews¹ (KIIs) and focus group discussions² (FGDs) with key devolution stakeholders. The FGDs and KIIs were designed to identify the reasons for the quantitative perception scores obtained during phase 1 of the research, and they included 43 key informants and 15 FGDs in 15 counties.

The qualitative data was transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis, which is a technique for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) in data. This analysis was critical for understanding the underlying issues driving the devolution process, providing a rich, contextual understanding of its impact on communities. The qualitative findings supplemented the quantitative data, providing a more comprehensive view of Kenya's devolution process.

1 43 KIIs with stakeholders from County Governments (14), the Private Sector (13), and CSOs (16).

2 15 FGDs in 15 Counties comprising of community leaders, CSO, women, youth and PWDs.

2.1.3. Data Presentation

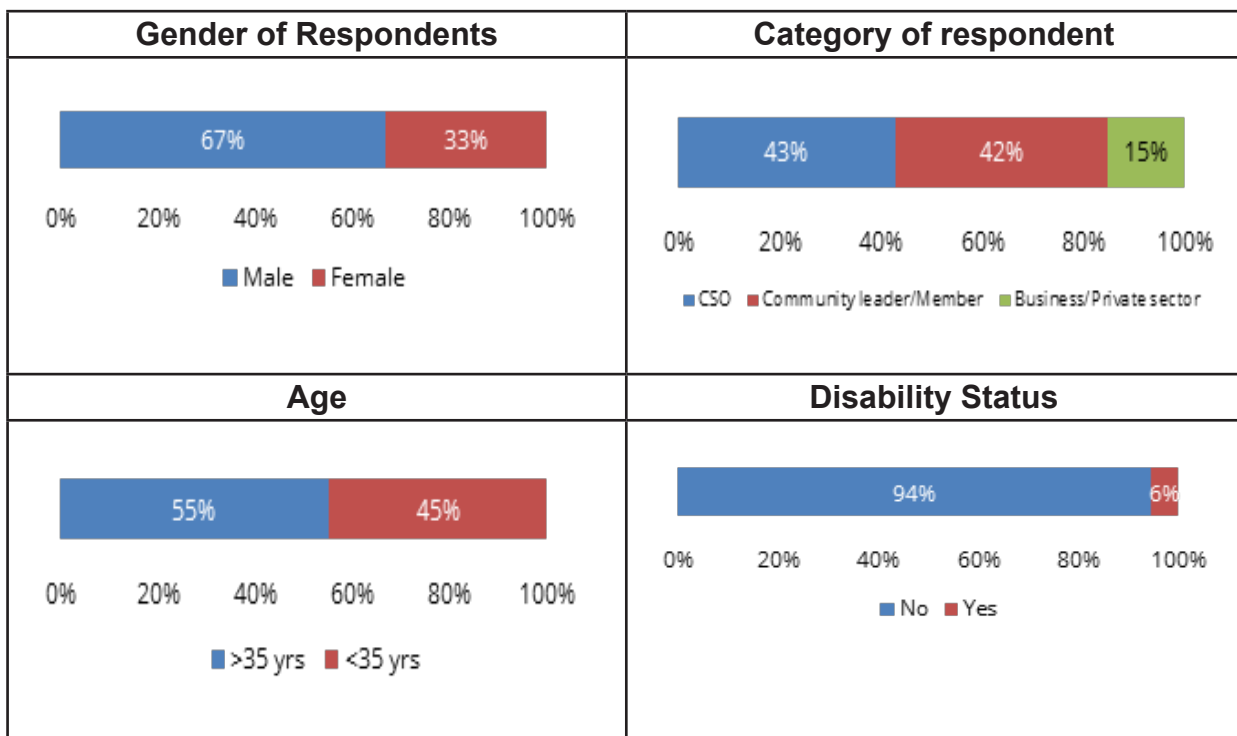
The quantitative data in the report is primarily presented as bar and pie charts to illustrate data distribution, compare different categories, and demonstrate service delivery trends over time. These visual representations enable readers to understand significant trends, patterns, and outliers in the data.

The qualitative data collected through KIIs and FGDs is presented in narrative format. The thematic analysis identifies, analyzes, and reports patterns in data, with themes presented descriptively and supported by relevant quotes to give credibility to the findings. This narrative approach to presenting qualitative data complements the visual presentation of quantitative data, ensuring a thorough and understandable representation of the study’s findings.

2.2. Demography of Respondents

Male respondents contributed more to the quantitative survey, accounting for 66.9% of the total, while female respondents contributed 33.1%. Respondents came from a variety of societal sectors, with CSOs accounting for the largest proportion (42.8%), followed by the business/private sector (41.8%) and community leaders/members (15.5%). The respondents’ age distribution was relatively balanced, with a slight majority of 55% being 35 years old or younger and 45% being older than 35. Persons with disabilities accounted for 5.5%.

Figure 1: Respondents Demographics



Key informant interviews and focus group discussions were conducted in 15 counties as part of the qualitative survey. 43 key informants were interviewed [12% female, 88% male], and 15 focus group discussions (FGDs) were held across the 15 counties with an average of 8 participants each. Table 1 shows a breakdown of participants by gender.

Respondents by Tool Used.

Table 1: Respondents by Tools Used

Tool	Male	Female	Total
Questionnaire	1375	681	2056
KIIs	38	5	43
FGDs			15

2.3. Study Limitations

The study's reliance on an online platform to administer the quantitative survey introduces certain limitations. For starters, Kenya's digital divide may have limited participation from certain demographic groups, particularly those living in areas with limited internet access or who lack digital literacy. This limitation may skew demographic representation against such groups. Furthermore, while anonymity in online responses is beneficial for candour, it can make it difficult to verify the respondent's identity and the information they provide. However, given the diversity of the respondents (CSOs, community leaders/members of the private sector, and people living with disabilities), the representation was quite inclusive.

2.4. Ethical Considerations

Ethical concerns were carefully addressed, particularly in light of the survey's online nature. All online survey participants provided informed consent electronically, while key informants and FGD participants did so verbally. This process entailed clearly explaining the study's purpose, the nature of the questions, and the participants' rights, including the ability to withdraw at any time.

Confidentiality and anonymity were emphasized, with measures to ensure the respondents' identities were not linked to their responses in any data reports or publications. Data security was also a critical consideration, with appropriate measures in place to protect the data from unauthorized access, both during and after the study. The study adhered to high ethical standards in data handling, storage, and reporting to maintain the integrity of the research and respect the participants' information and views.



3. FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the survey findings on the status of devolution in Kenya. The presentation begins with intergovernmental relations, then moves on to the status of decentralisation and public participation, then county performance in devolved functions, and finally an in-depth look at climate change-related sectors.

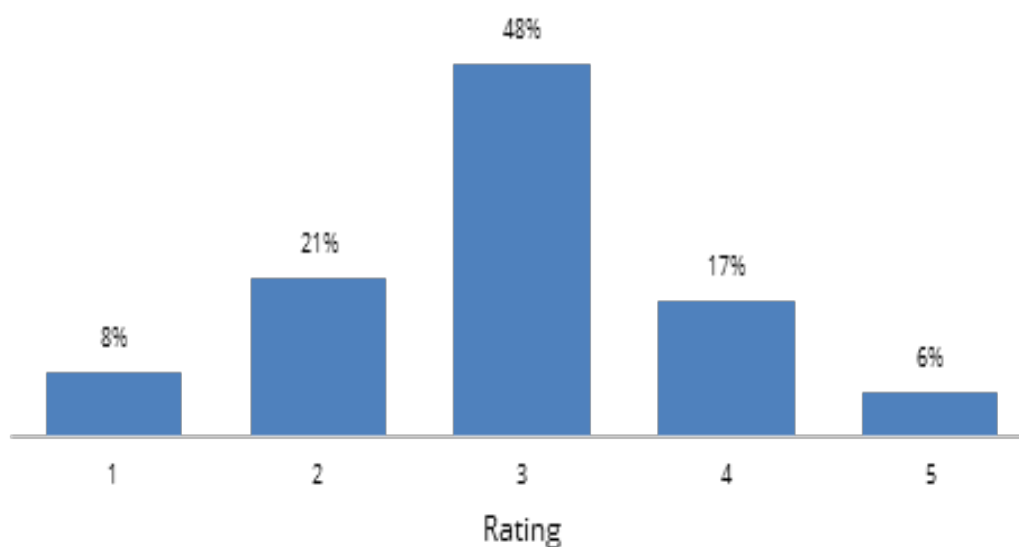
3.2. Consultation and Cooperation between the National Government and County Governments



The consultations and cooperation between the national and county governments are perceived to be moderate, with political dynamics, administrative and functional overlaps, communication breakdowns, and resource allocation issues still presenting significant challenges.

The majority of respondents (48%) rated the effectiveness of consultation and cooperation between the national and county governments as moderate, giving it a score of 3, while 8% and 21% gave it a low rating of 1 and 2, respectively. On the other hand, 17% and 6% rated it as high and very high at scores of 4 and 5 respectively. The business sector was critical, with 36% giving low ratings of 1 and 2, while the CSOs were less critical, with 26% giving low ratings of 1 and 2. Perceptions among gender, age groups, and community members aligned with the overall trend, see **Annex Figure 1**. Overall, with an average rating of **2.9 out of 5**, a large proportion of the respondents (48%) rated the effectiveness of cooperation and consultation between national and county governments as moderate, while 29% expressed dissatisfaction by giving ratings 1 and 2, and only 23% indicated showed satisfaction with the performance, ratings 4 and 5.

Figure 2: Rating the effectiveness of the cooperation, and consultation between the national government and your county government (N=2056).



Factors Hindering Consultation and Cooperation Between the Two Levels of Government

Feedback from key informants and FGDs revealed the complexity of factors hindering consultation and cooperation between the two levels of government.

Respondents identified political dynamics as a significant barrier to collaboration. Furthermore, competition and conflicting agendas between political parties caused tensions and misalignment of priorities at the national and county levels, making it difficult for the two levels of government to work effectively together.

“

“The national government is still fixated in the thinking that they are the most superior to county government and that it is the county government’s responsibility to consult the national government. For example, despite having devolved Controller of Budget Officers within the counties, when it comes to spending resources, county governments are still supposed to get their approvals from the national Controller of Budgets.”

County Director of Public Service (Key Informant)

”

This has been exacerbated by supremacy contests and a general sense of superiority, with each level of government attempting to assert dominance over the other. This standoff is especially evident when there are significant differences in political affiliations between the two levels of government, further straining relationships and jeopardizing the implementation of shared goals.

Administrative and functional overlaps are another source of conflict. Respondents highlighted the confusion and conflict caused by a lack of clarity regarding devolved functions. They expressed concern that the national government and its agencies were allegedly performing functions that are constitutionally the responsibility of county governments, thereby blurring the lines of responsibility and sometimes leaving projects uncertain or completely stalled. This confusion frequently leads to duplication of efforts and a lack of project ownership. Such overlaps often result in incomplete initiatives, undermining the devolution process and the intended benefits for communities.

“

“Duplication of functions amongst the two levels of government has resulted in lack of ownership of responsibilities. For example, the National Drought and Management Authority which is tasked with resources to undertake drought responses in the country has been funded with resources for undertaking water tracking. Equally, the county government Department of Water also undertakes some of these functions but when approached on issues of water, each entity directs the finger at one another and in the process, these resources get lost due to corruption.”

County Director of Civic Education and Public Participation (Key Informant)

”

Communication breakdowns and a lack of shared understanding in implementing the Intergovernmental Relations Act (IGRA) 2012 were also identified as significant barriers to effective consultation and cooperation between the national and county governments.

It was observed that the IGRA is poorly understood and inadequately implemented, resulting in frequent misunderstandings. This has resulted in disagreements over how the two levels of government carry out their functions, highlighting the need for improved alignment and operationalization of existing legal frameworks.

The issue of **resource allocation** was repeatedly raised, with delays in the disbursement of the equitable share and other conditional grants to counties creating a sense of mistrust between the two levels of government, often resulting in disagreements. For example, it was stated that at the county level, priorities were misaligned, with projects often viewed as opportunities for personal gain rather than the benefit of the larger community, resulting in resources being allocated for unintended purposes. When relevant national government authorities, such as the Office of the Controller of Budget, direct their concerns to county governments, the working relationships between the two levels of government are strained.

This situation has undermined the spirit of devolution, which aims to strengthen local governance structures and deliver community-centric outcomes.

Proposed Solutions for Enhancing the Cooperation and Consultation between the National Government and County Governments

The respondents proposed the following strategies for enhancing the effectiveness of cooperation and consultation between the national and county governments.

Finalisation of the unbundling and transfer of the functions and resources to the county governments was cited as crucial in resolving disagreements over administrative and functional overlaps between the two levels of government. The process should be expedited, and once completed, the functions should be transferred to county governments, along with the resources required to support them. The completion of this process would reduce duplication of efforts and conflicts over jurisdiction, resulting in more streamlined governance.

Strengthening institutional frameworks and capacity of the IGR institutions such as the Intergovernmental Budget and Economic Council (IBEC), Council of Governors (COG), and Inter-Governmental Relations Technical Committee (IGRTC) which are regarded as critical actors in achieving effective cooperation and coordination. This process should include aligning government administrative structures and establishing effective communication channels between and among levels of government. Institutional improvements could include establishing relevant joint administrative committees at various levels and ensuring that they follow clear and effective engagement guidelines. Such mechanisms would be extremely useful where both levels of government are undertaking joint initiatives. Strengthening strategic IGR institutions such as the Commission on Revenue Allocation (CRA) and the Office of the Controller of Budget (OCoB) would improve transparency and accountability in resource allocation.

Civic education and public awareness on the roles and responsibilities of the national and county governments are critical for the citizens to understand their rights to services provided by both levels of government as well as how the devolved system operates. Enhanced public awareness can lead to a more informed citizenry necessitating greater coordination and consultations between the two levels of government.

Closely linked with the above is the need to **strengthen the institutions and capacity of leaders and officials** at the national and county levels to enhance their understanding of devolution particularly, the importance of cooperation and consultations.

Suggested actions include training programmes on devolution, leadership skills, effective governance practices and establishing performance scorecards for governors.

Citizens also perceive that the **timely release of funds from the national government to county governments and proper utilization by county governments is critical** for maintaining efficient operations at the local level. Delays in disbursements have had a significant impact on counties' ability to deliver services and implement projects, often resulting in tensions between the two levels of government. Proper fund utilization, with transparency and accountability, has the potential to increase trust and cooperation between the two levels of government.

Effective communication and regular consultations between the two levels of government were also proposed as a way to bridge the existential differences between the national and county governments. Regular coordination meetings, joint decision-making processes, and regular consultations in development initiatives can all help improve relationships.

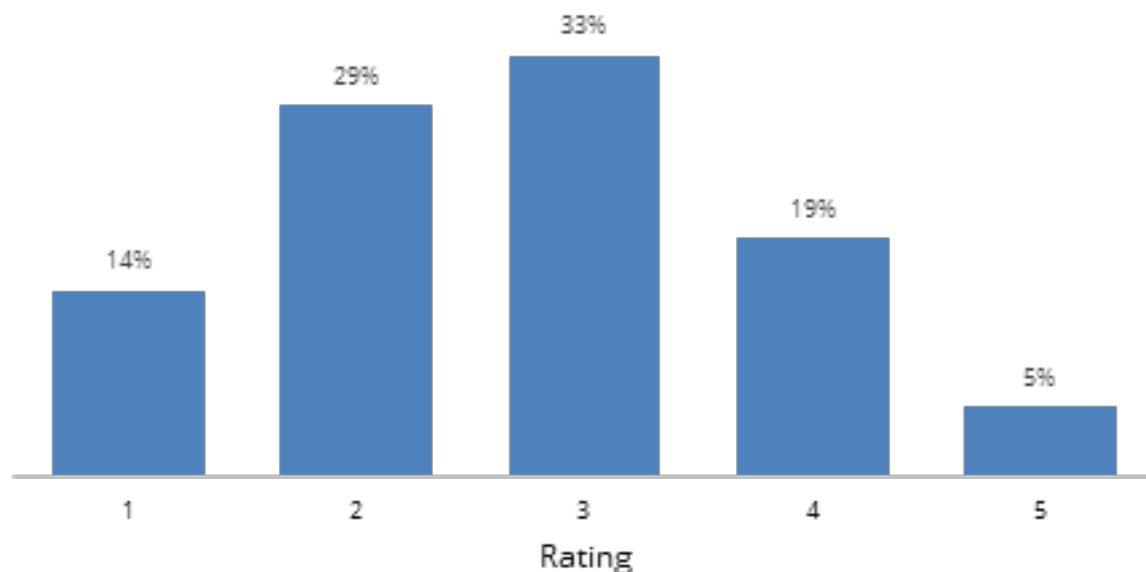
3.3. Diversity in County Public Service



While some county governments have made strides towards inclusivity, systemic issues such as corruption, nepotism, political patronage, and a lack of clear and enforceable policies severely limit the progress of diversity in county public service across Kenya.

The survey assessed the performance of the county governments in fostering national unity by recognizing diversity such as ethnicity, gender, and the inclusion of persons with disabilities (PWD) in the county public services. 14% and 29% of the respondents rated the performance of county governments low by giving them ratings of 1 and 2. 33% perceived the county governments' performance as average, while 19% rated their performance high, and only a very small proportion of 5% rated the performance very high giving them a rating of 5. Respondents from the business sector were critical of the performance, with 20% rating it as 1. Perceptions among the other categories (gender, age groups, CSOs, and Community members) aligned with the overall trend (see **Annex Figure 2**). **Overall**, with an average rating of **2.7 out of 5**, 43% of respondents were dissatisfied with the performance of county governments in diversity in public service by giving them low ratings of 1 and 2, while 33% rated it moderate. Only 24% of the respondents were satisfied with the performance of the county governments giving them a rating of 4 and 5.

Figure 3: Fostering diversity in county public service (N=2056).



Factors Hindering Diversity in County Public Service

“Without a godfather, you cannot get it. Roles are already given before advertisement through godfathers i.e., connectors.”
FGD – Kiambu County

The qualitative respondents consistently reported significant political influence and nepotism in the hiring processes at the county public service. Appointments are primarily motivated by political affiliations, nepotism, overt political agendas, and tribalism rather than merit. Politically connected individuals were given preferential treatment in job

opportunities owing primarily to political patronage. While the County Governments Act gives the County Public Service the authority to manage county public service including employment, in practice, politicians have taken control of the processes and rewarded their political supporters and members of their clans or ethnic groups at the expense of the minorities. Political patronage played a larger role in bribery and other unethical practices in the county recruitment processes. This trend undermines the principles of transparency, fairness, and equality, resulting in a workforce not representative of the diversity of the communities served by county governments.

Deep-seated cultural and social barriers such as the negative and outdated belief systems about gender roles and cultural biases against minority groups disadvantaged these groups in county employment and hurt diversity. It was observed that those in power were hesitant to accept members of other communities into key leadership positions. Women, on the other hand, frequently faced gender-based discrimination. Negative societal attitudes and norms ingrained in some communities have created an environment in which inclusive employment practices in the public sector have become difficult to implement, particularly for women, people with disabilities, and minority ethnic groups.

Gaps in policy and legal frameworks were also identified as a barrier to inclusivity in the county's public service. Even though some county governments have passed relevant laws and policies promoting diversity, such as gender policies and PWD legislation, implementation has proved difficult. For example, in Machakos County, there was a sense of success in inclusivity due to the existence of relevant policies such as the Machakos County Disability Act.

In cases where such policies and legal frameworks exist, implementation must be strengthened due to inadequate enforcement mechanisms and impractical guidelines. Furthermore, the perceived lack of oversight mechanisms for effective enforcement of this constitutional provision was deemed to have allowed for ongoing discrimination and underrepresentation of minorities in the county public service.

This is despite the Public Service Commission mandated by Article 234 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 to ensure representation of Kenya's diverse communities and afford adequate and equal opportunities for appointment at all levels of the public service. Overall, weak legal frameworks and politics allow county leaders to ignore inclusivity provisions and perpetuate discrimination in the public service.

Limited awareness and widespread misconceptions about diversity in county public service were identified as significant barriers to inclusive public service. It manifests as a misunderstanding of the potential and capabilities of people with disabilities, women, and other minority groups. This gap is widespread, affecting both citizens and policymakers. It is observable through lack of knowledge and regard for the qualifications required for public service, with a greater emphasis on discriminatory factors such as the candidate's disability or gender.

Another constraint to achieving diversity in the public service was the **nature of specific jobs**. For example, some job requirements explicitly targeted people with specific physical abilities, which meant that only male applicants without any form of disability could be considered, rather than females, persons with disabilities (PWDs) and other marginalized groups. In Mombasa for example a respondent said, "*Gender we have achieved so much, we are about 45-55% from top most level to the bottom, where we are lacking is in manual jobs*". In cases where a job position was open to all qualified applicants, respondents emphasized the need for more appropriate resources to meet diverse needs, which impeded the employment of a diverse workforce.

Proposed Solutions to Enhance Diversity in the County Public Service

According to the respondents, increasing diversity in the county public service will necessitate a multifaceted approach.

Strengthening the policy and legal frameworks was widely cited as the solution towards enhancing clarity and enforceability of laws on diversity such as Article 54 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 and the provisions of the County Government Act on diversity in public service appointments. Article 54 of the Constitution was particularly emphasised because it confers entitlements to persons with disabilities. It places a duty on the state to ensure progressive implementation of the principle that at least 5% of the members of the public in elective and appointive bodies are persons with disabilities.

Respondents expressed concerns that most county governments have not complied with this constitutional requirement. They proposed that there should be specific guidelines on the implementation of this provision. They also proposed that detailed diversity and inclusion policies be implemented for the county public service, outlining clear targets and action plans as well as establishing strong accountability mechanisms to hold duty bearers accountable for upholding diversity principles. It was further proposed that policies or guidelines tailored for public service boards should be enacted, with explicit provisions on the recruitment process.

Accountability and transparency in the recruitment and selection processes were identified as critical for ensuring diversity in the county's public service. Regular diversity audits of the public service were proposed to ensure compliance with this provision and identify any gaps. The use of open and transparent recruitment processes, such as digital platforms, with independent oversight was also suggested as a way to reduce bias and corruption. In addition, affirmative action measures such as targeted recruitment were suggested.

Respondents emphasized the importance of stringent provisions for strengthening diversity, such as requiring that if a department head is from one ethnic community or gender, their assistant be from another to ensure ethnic and gender balance. The need to reserve specific opportunities for marginalized groups such as women, people with disabilities, and ethnic minorities has also been proposed as a means of accelerating progress among underrepresented groups.

Civic engagement and empowerment were proposed as a solution for the realisation of diversity in public service. County Governments should implement civic awareness programs for marginalized groups, particularly people with disabilities, women, and minorities, to provide them with the skills and knowledge they need to participate effectively in public service recruitment and leadership positions. Partnerships between the government and local media, such as radio and television stations, as well as CSOs, are some of the options for effectively delivering civic awareness.

Leadership and institutional reforms at the County Public Service Board to ensure that its membership is diverse, including members of different ethnic groups, genders, and people with disabilities, as well as representatives of religious leaders and civil society organizations. Members of County Public Service Boards should receive extensive training on inclusion policies and inclusive hiring practices, as well as be held accountable for establishing accountability mechanisms to ensure compliance with diversity principles.

At the national level, the National Cohesion and Integration Commission and the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission should be empowered to effectively deal with corruption and discrimination in the county public service.

3.4. Decentralisation of Governance

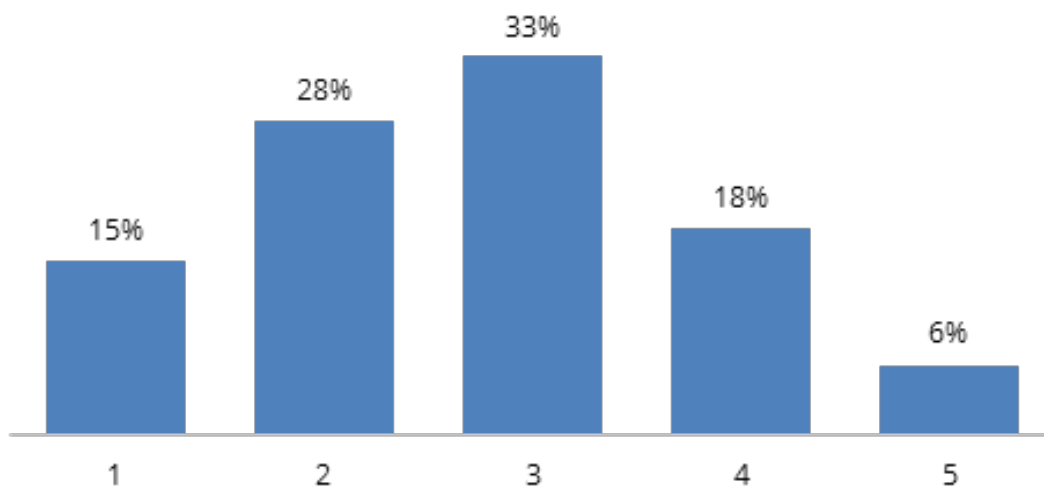


Some progress in decentralizing governance in counties has been evident, but they are merely structural while power has remained at the county headquarters due to reluctance or fear among political leaders to relinquish control of decision-making and control resources.

Only a small percentage of 6% of the respondents gave county governments a rating of 5, the highest in the decentralisation of governance while 18% considered them high by giving them a rating of 4. 33%, however, some respondents rated them moderate by awarding them 3, while 15% and 28% of the respondents rated them lowest and low by giving the, 1 and 2, respectively. Respondents from the business sector and those above 35 years were more critical of the decentralisation process, with 47% assigning the lowest ratings (1 and 2). In contrast, younger respondents below 35 years of age were less critical, with only 38% giving the lowest ratings.

Perceptions among the other categories (gender, CSOs, and community members) aligned with the overall trend, (see **Annex Figure 3**). With an average score of **2.7 out of 5**, 43% of the respondents were dissatisfied with the performance of county governments on decentralising governance by assigning them 1 and 2, while 33% considered them average, and only 24% (ratings of 4 and 5) rated them above average.

Figure 4: Decentralization of Governance Organs, Functions, and Services from the County Headquarters.



Factors Hindering Decentralization of Governance Organs, Functions, and Services.

The major factor was the unwillingness **of county leaders, particularly governors, to relinquish control of power**. The desire to retain power by higher-level officials such as governors was significantly mentioned, implying that they prefer to be the visible face of all initiatives at the county level mainly to secure political loyalty, maintain control over resources, and related political gains.

Even in counties where devolved structures have been established, decision-making and resource allocation are still centralized at the county headquarters. Established offices such as those of Village, Ward, and Sub-County Administrators often lack autonomy and resources for the facilitation of their duties. Respondents also stated that the employment of incompetent personnel chosen for their loyalty to the Governor to run the affairs of the decentralized units had an impact on their operations.

Political manipulation and ethnic affiliations significantly impede decentralisation. The political environment in the counties is dominated by ethnicity, nepotism, and the pursuit of political mileage, which have hampered the achievement of devolution goals. Respondents identified political control, ethnicity, and selfishness as major contributors to the consolidation of power and resources at the county headquarters. In counties with large ethnic groups in charge, leaders tended to favour their communities in the distribution of resources and opportunities. This trend has resulted in imbalances in counties because power and resources are not sufficiently decentralized. The need to gain control over political power and resources frequently impedes the operationalisation of decentralised units. This was primarily due to a misguided fear that they would seize power from the county headquarters.

Resource constraints were cited as barriers to decentralisation. Respondents stated that this factor influenced the operationalisation of the county's decentralised units. While counties such as Kisumu, Bungoma, and Baringo were cited for having established structures up to the village levels, financial and human resource constraints, were mentioned as bottlenecks that hampered the operationalisation of the decentralised structures.

Corruption and mismanagement at the county level were highlighted as factors hindering the decentralisation of resources and services to the local levels. Respondents revealed that county leaders frequently use centralised structures to engage in corrupt practices, influencing procurement decisions and resource distribution to benefit themselves and their cronies rather than the public. These officials were said to be opposed to decentralisation because of their selfish and illegal interests which they believed would be reduced or eliminated through transferring power, resources and decision-making to the local levels.

The lack of county legal frameworks for decentralization was also cited as a reason for the slow pace of decentralization. While the existing legal frameworks spell out the roles and responsibilities of the county decentralised structures and officials, it was proposed that there is a need for the county governments to enact laws to give effect to Article 176(2) of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, and Section 54 (1) of the County Governments Act, 2012, which aim to operationalize the decentralized structures. The need for a conducive environment for village councils, ward, and sub-county administrators to carry out their duties would perpetuate centralisation.

Proposed Solutions to Decentralization of Governance Organs, Functions and Services

Strengthen the legal and policy framework in decentralization by reviewing and amending relevant legislation to clearly define the mandates, resources, and accountability mechanisms for different levels of government within the county and developing comprehensive implementation plans for the decentralization processes, clearly outlining the sequence of functions and services to be transferred; and enhancing oversight and accountability by strengthening the role of the oversight institutions to monitor the implementation of decentralization plans and address any shortcomings.

Promote political will and leadership commitment to decentralization through capacity-building initiatives for governors and county officials on effective decentralization principles and practices and foster inter-county collaboration and knowledge sharing through learning and peer-to-peer exchange of best practices on decentralization initiatives.

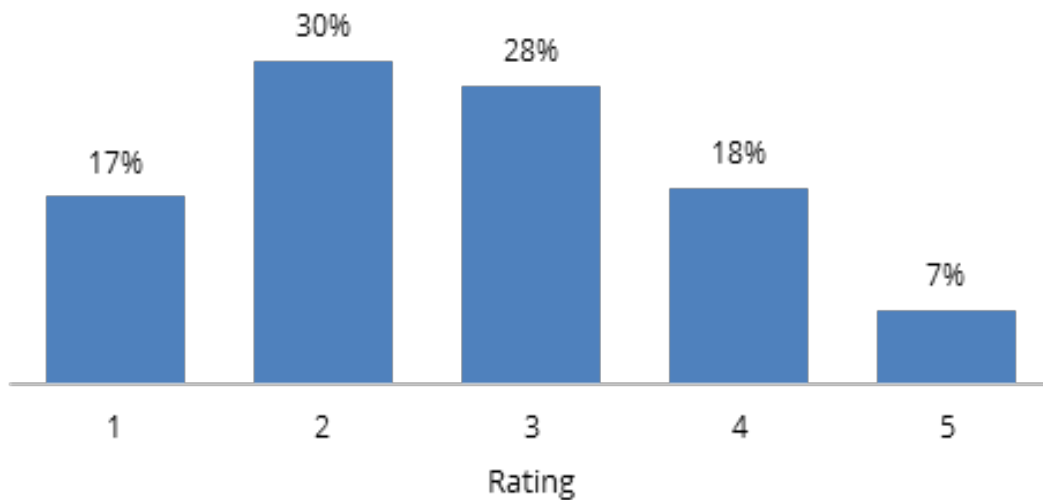
3.5 Citizen Participation in Decision-making



This survey found that county governments have taken some steps to involve citizens in governance processes, however, meaningful participation has been overshadowed by political interests, lack of investment in civic awareness, ineffective communication and weak legal frameworks.

According to the survey findings, 17% and 30% of respondents gave county governments low ratings of 1 and 2, respectively, while 28% rated them moderately at 3. On the other hand, 18% and 7% gave high ratings of 4 and 5, respectively. Compared to other categories, the youth had the lowest proportion of negative ratings (41% rated them 1 and 2). On the other hand, 52% of the respondents above 35 years old and 50% of the private sector gave them ratings of 1 and 2 respectively. Perceptions among the other categories (gender, CSOs, and community members) aligned with the overall trend, (see **Annex Figure 4**). Overall, with an average rating of **2.7 out of 5**, 47% of the respondents were dissatisfied with county governments' performance on public participation as demonstrated by the low ratings of 1 and 2), while 28% considered them average. Only 25% of the respondents rated them 4 and 5, implying that only a small proportion were satisfied with their performance.

Figure 5: Citizen participation in making decisions affecting them, such as the county planning and budget processes.



Perceptions varied among the groups, with those under 35 and CSOs being less critical (awarded the lowest rating of 1) than other categories. Only 3% of CSO respondents gave county governments a 5 on this subject.

Factors Impeding Public Participation

Members of County Assemblies (MCAs) and the executive were said to prioritize their own or their supporters' interests over the needs of the community as a whole. As a result, the majority of citizens saw public participation as a formality. The notion that public participation is merely cosmetic and that citizens' opinions are not reflected in government decisions, reinforces the belief that the processes and forums are primarily meant to **endorse a pre-determined agenda, silencing dissent and excluding critical voices.**

Concerns were raised about collusion between politicians and the county executive, in which politicians were allowed to use public participation forums to advance their agenda. Respondents stated that the MCAs' unwillingness or inability to challenge executive decisions, even if they did not include citizens' inputs, undermines the integrity of public participation processes.

Resource constraints and operational challenges were cited as barriers to effective public participation. Respondents stated that county governments' resources are often insufficient and sometimes the equitable share is not always provided on time. They linked resource gaps to logistical challenges in planning and carrying out public participation events. Similarly, they stated that the late release of documents intended for public engagement, as well as poorly designed and implemented processes, had an impact on the effectiveness and quality of engagements.

Low civic awareness and apathy have also impacted negatively on public participation. Because of a lack of civic awareness, respondents reported that most citizens lacked adequate knowledge and understanding of their rights and responsibilities in public decision-making. The main cause of this gap was county governments' failure to invest adequately in civic education. Low levels of awareness have also made most citizens susceptible to manipulation.

Furthermore, most citizens feel helpless because their proposals are rarely considered in decision-making, despite contributing to public engagement processes. Respondents complained about receiving no feedback on the consideration of their proposals in actual decision-making. As a result, they reported that most citizens are disinterested in future public engagement processes because they believe their participation is pointless and time-consuming. They also reported that the complexity of the documents presented during public participation, inconvenient timings and limited access to information further demotivated the citizens from effective participation.

Ineffective communication and engagement strategies: Respondents stated that in some cases, physical public participation forums are held at inconvenient locations such as the sub-county headquarters thereby excluding large segments of the community, particularly the marginalized groups. They also stated that communication regarding public participation was often released late, making the citizens feel ambushed. The use of English and technical jargon in documents also prevented most citizens from participating effectively due to a lack of understanding of the content. These gaps indicate a systemic failure in the planning and management of public participation.

“*The relevant communication authority should communicate in time, they usually ambush the citizens.*”
KII Respondent”

Economic challenges have resulted in public disinterest and apathy. The competing demands of livelihoods frequently take precedence over civic engagement. As a result, citizens are often faced with the hard option of deciding whether to spend time on economic activities or public participation and return empty-handed. This economic calculus, combined with a lack of trust in county governments' commitment to genuine participation, has discouraged many residents, contributing to low citizen engagement.

The **limited legal frameworks and policies** governing public participation have also affected the participation of the citizens. While some respondents reported that their counties had made progress and had county-specific public participation policies and legislation, others said they lacked such frameworks. It was also observed that, even in counties with public participation laws, the lack of clear, standardized procedures frequently resulted in inconsistent and ineffective public engagement processes.

The failure to enact relevant policies and laws created a vacuum on effective public participation. Furthermore, the lack of legal clarity at the national level due to the absence of a national Public Participation Act has contributed to inconsistencies in public engagement processes across counties. These concerns have stifled citizens' voices and limited constructive participation in county governance.

Proposed Solutions to Increase Public Participation in County Governance and Decision-Making

Strengthening civic education and awareness was proposed as an important step towards cultivating informed citizens who understand their rights and roles in county governance. As a result, it would be prudent for county governments to allocate adequate resources for public engagement to sustain civic education over time rather than just for short periods.

Improving public participation mechanisms is critical for quality and meaningful engagements which are required for better consideration and integration of citizens' proposals in governance processes. As a result, county governments should have mechanisms in place to facilitate effective public engagement and promote inclusivity. They should improve transparency by, among other things, establishing reliable processes for accessing information and timely public dissemination of relevant documents, as well as providing feedback structures. County governments should also hire competent and qualified individuals to lead public participation and minimize political interference in the engagement and decision-making processes.

Increase resource allocation for public participation for adequate facilitation of the planning, engagements and feedback processes. Respondents stated that while some counties have established independent offices with relevant expertise to oversee and manage the public participation processes, existing best practices must be replicated across all 47 counties. They further proposed that the decentralised county structures and officials including those in the villages, wards, and sub-counties particularly the administrators should be empowered and adequately resourced to coordinate these functions. The County Governments Act (2012) assigns coordination of public participation to these administrators in their respective areas of jurisdiction, but they have not been accorded the space and resources necessary for undertaking the function. It was also proposed that county governments collaborate or partner with the CSOs and other stakeholders, including community and religious leaders, to leverage their networks and resources for outreach and mobilisation.

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“Budget allocations for public participation are meagre to facilitate the process thus making it challenging to have public participation forums closer to the people e.g in Kisii county public participation is mostly held at the sub-county level.”

(KII respondent)

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3.6 County Performance in the Key Devolved Sectors

3.6.1 Food Security

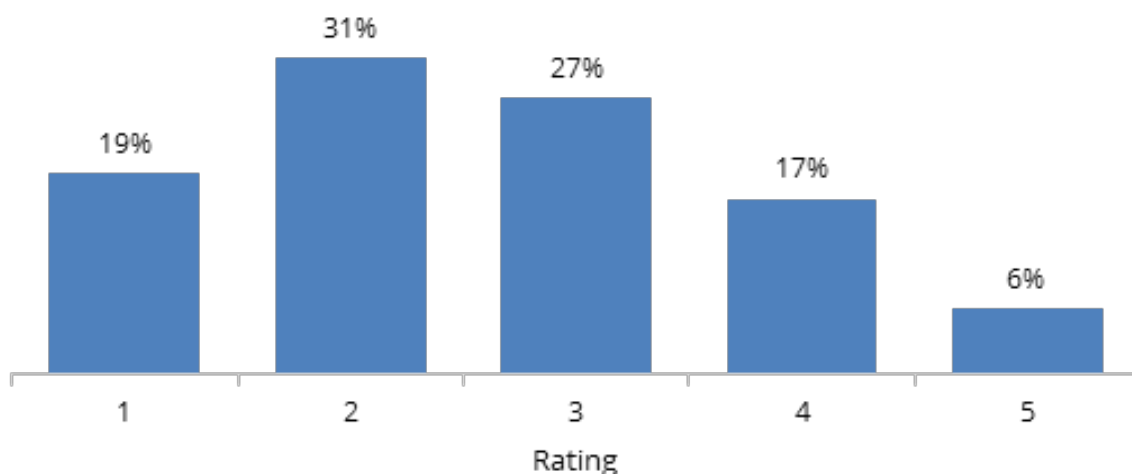


Some improvements have been realised in food security due to interventions, but progress across counties remains moderate to low, mainly due to insufficient investments, mismanagement of the programmes, reliance on traditional farming practices and declining youth interest in agriculture among others.

Respondents' perceptions of their county governments' efforts to improve food security are mixed. 19% and 31% of respondents rated them as very low (1 and 2), respectively. 27% rated them moderately, 17% rated them highly (4), and only 6% rated them extremely high. Respondents under the age of 35 were less critical of county governments, with 47% rating their investments in food security as 1 to 2, the lowest.

On the other hand, respondents above 35 years of age were more critical, with 55% assigning them the lowest ratings (1 and 2). Perceptions among the different groups (gender, business sector, CSOs and community members) were aligned with the overall trend, (see **Annex Figure 5**). **Overall**, with an average rating of **2.6 out of 5**, 50% of the respondents were dissatisfied with the investments by the county governments in improving food security and gave them low ratings of 1 and 2, while 27% rated them average. Only 23% of the respondents showed satisfaction by awarding them (ratings of 4 and 5).

Figure 6: Improvement in food security because of increased investments in agriculture by your county government from 2021.



Factors Hindering Food Security in the Counties

Feedback from the respondents on the factors hindering food security in Kenyan counties revealed the following challenges.

Inadequate financial investments and mismanagement of the programmes have long been a barrier to food security.

Respondents stated that insufficient government investments in agriculture and a lack of prioritization of the sector in resource allocation were major barriers to food security. Respondents stated that the county government's budget allocations for food security were insignificant. Furthermore, there were allegations that the resources were frequently misused in most cases.

It was also noted that the Governors' lack of corporate ownership of the projects initiated by their predecessors had an impact on food security, as such programmes were frequently abandoned. Successive governments and governors tended to prioritize launching new projects. Respondents, including government officials, stated that service delivery programmes in agriculture, livestock, and fisheries development rely heavily or are largely dependent on donor support and funding due to minimal attention from county governments

Water scarcity was identified as a significant barrier to food security. Respondents stated that most farmers in the country relied on rain-fed agriculture but have over the recent years been affected by the changes in climatic conditions. The ensuing unreliable rainfall patterns have therefore had negative impacts on crop production and food security.

Land fragmentation in agriculturally rich countries such as Kiambu has been linked to reduced agricultural land and production. The predominant subdivision of agricultural land into smaller pieces and sale by the natives to real estate developers who have in turn used the property to put up commercial and residential buildings, has resulted in a reduction in agricultural land.

The declining interest among youth in farming due to negative perceptions of agriculture was also identified as a significant threat to food security. Given that agriculture in Kenya is primarily labour-intensive, the youth are the most productive age group capable of effecting meaningful change in food security. They (youth), on the other hand, have considered agriculture unappealing and generally avoided it.

Dependence on external food supplies, particularly from neighbouring counties, has been identified in some counties as a contributing factor to low agricultural investment. Kisumu County, for example, is said to rely on Uasin Gishu County for the majority of its food supply, which explains the low investment in agriculture production that continues to threaten agriculturally rich counties bordering major cities.

“Food insecurity is still a challenge in Kisumu County as it mainly relies on neighbouring counties for food supplies. In case of chaos affecting the borders such as the post-election violence, the county's food security is usually under threat.”

Key Informant from Kisumu County

Proposed Solutions for Enhancing Food Security in the Counties

The following strategic solutions were considered viable towards improving food security at the county level:

Improving irrigation and water management mechanisms through sustainable irrigation schemes, improving the existing irrigation infrastructure, and enhancing water harvesting by among others building dams to provide reliable water for agriculture. The investments in these areas would be beneficial in reducing dependence on rain-fed agriculture thereby improving food security.

Capacity-building and strengthening agricultural extension services with adequate staffing, resources, and training programmes were considered vital towards enhancing the use of modern skills and methods in farming and livestock production as well as disease control. The extension officers would play an important role in supporting the farmers to adopt modern techniques such as greenhouse, hydroponic, drought-resistant crops and smart agriculture to increase productivity.

Strengthening land governance by revising the existing policies and laws where necessary while ensuring active implementation of the existing policies. Controlling land fragmentation and promoting equitable access to land, particularly for women and youth, was suggested as a long-term solution to food security.

Allocation of adequate resources for agricultural development, such as subsidies for farm inputs, research and development, and financial assistance to farmers was proposed as a viable solution. Other areas that would require adequate resources include infrastructure development such as storage facilities and aggregation centres to improve post-harvest produce handling and minimize losses. Others include improvement of market infrastructure, road development, improving communication infrastructure, and electricity infrastructure. It was also proposed that county governments could partner with stakeholders including the private sector to leverage their expertise and resources.

Community engagement and awareness about the importance of agriculture and food production should be enhanced to change the attitude of the citizens towards farming and encourage the youth and marginalized groups to venture into agribusiness. The awareness should also entail encouraging diversification in farming, including cultivating cash crops and indigenous foods to avoid overreliance on traditional food crops.

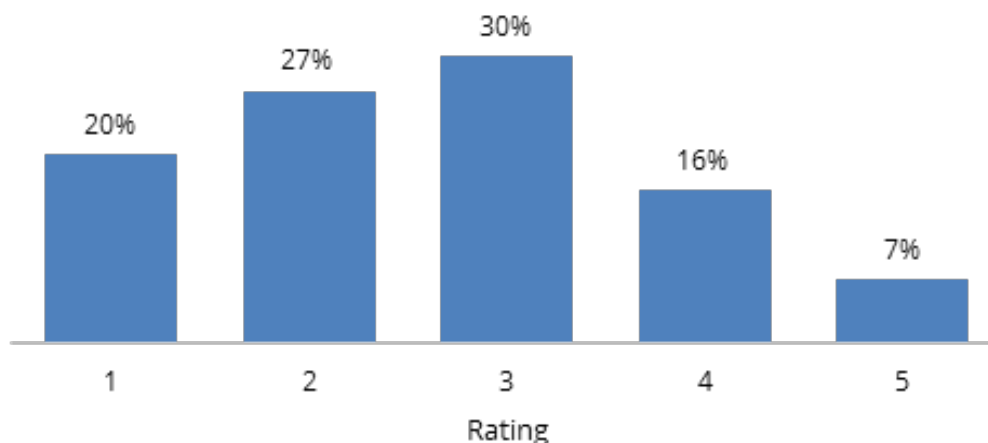
3.6.2 Water Access



Despite some improvements in access to water, most citizens remain dissatisfied with the performance of county governments owing to a lack of adequate, reliable and affordable water services.

County governments' performance in providing access to safe water was rated 1 and 2 by 20% and 27% of respondents, respectively. 30% rated it as moderate (3), 16% as high (4), and only 7% gave it the highest rating of 5. Respondents over 35 were more critical, with 51% giving them the lowest ratings (1 and 2). The distribution of responses across the other different groups (gender, under 35 years, business sector, CSOs and community members) aligned with the overall trend (see **Annex Figure 6**). **Overall**, with an average rating of **2.6 out of 5**, the majority of the respondents (47%) were dissatisfied with the performance of the county governments in improving access to safe, reliable and affordable water and rated them 1 and 2. In comparison, 30% viewed the progress as moderate, and only 23% (ratings of 4 and 5) were satisfied with the services.

Figure 7: Ratings on improvement in access to safe, reliable, and affordable water.



Factors Hindering Water Access in the Counties

The perceptions gathered from qualitative data on access to safe, reliable and affordable water since 2021 as well as increased investments in water services by the county governments show that the challenges are complex and multifaceted.

Most respondents, particularly those in rural areas, expressed concern about **the lack of adequate water infrastructure**. Other challenges include ageing infrastructure and insufficient water supplies. Respondents also stated that the high cost of water infrastructure development is a significant barrier affecting access to reliable water. According to a respondent, in Nairobi City, sometimes the water infrastructure selected is inappropriate.

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“Water availability is a problem in Nairobi County and quite expensive especially in the informal settlements. However, instead of the county government enacting proper policies to enhance water accessibility, they took a different approach towards water service that is building of boreholes that has greatly affected the water table. Additionally, the county has failed to institutionalise water harvesting yet the county experiences above-average rainfall over the years.”

KII respondent Nairobi

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Political interference and county governments’ failure to prioritize the sector in budget allocation were identified as major barriers to access to safe and reliable water. The lack of transparency and accountability in the management of county-level water programmes was also identified as a problem.

Environmental challenges such as pollution from industries that discharge untreated waste into water bodies, unsafe disposal of agricultural chemicals, siltation of dams, and the impact of certain tree species on water levels have been identified as major issues affecting water access.

Proposed Solutions for Addressing Challenges in Access to Safe Water

County governments should **strengthen accountability in the management of water resources** by implementing the relevant legislation and policies to prevent resource misuse. Water companies should be supported to operate efficiently for sustainability while avoiding losses due to water theft and corruption. Relevant policy and legal frameworks should be developed and institutionalized in counties where there is a lack of water guidance.

County governments should increase investments in water infrastructure development and maintenance. These investments should be accomplished by allocating adequate budgets for water development including construction and maintenance of dams and boreholes, as well as upgrading the existing water infrastructure. County governments and water companies should also strike a proper balance between short-term and long-term solutions for water service delivery.

Technology and innovation were proposed as solutions to the perennial challenges of water access. The proposals include researching technological solutions to improve water treatment, using solar-powered pumps, and establishing desalination plants in areas with saline water. It was also suggested that technology could aid in digitalizing water management systems to improve monitoring, billing, and resource allocation.

Promoting water conservation was proposed as a viable way to improve water access. Respondents proposed that this could be achieved by encouraging and incentivizing the public to invest in rainwater harvesting at the individual and community levels. Investing in reforestation programmes, prohibiting harmful practices such as deforestation, protecting and managing water catchment areas, educating communities on water conservation practices and responsible water use, and controlling the planting of eucalyptus trees near water sources could mitigate the challenges on the water.

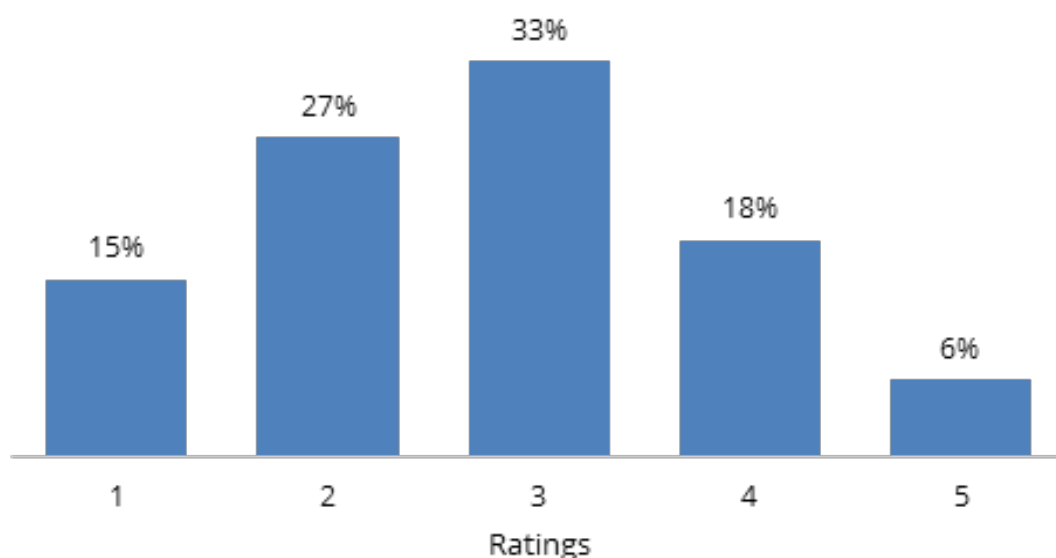
3.6.3 Health Services



Despite some improvements in health services, access to quality healthcare remained low across the counties owing to perceived inaccessibility of the services and poor management, with a strong emphasis on curative compared to preventive services.

The majority of respondents rated county governments 1 and 2 as 15% and 27% respectively for increased investments in preventive and curative health, planning, and risk reduction. 33% of respondents gave them a rating of three, 18% gave them 4, and only 6% gave them a 5. Respondents under 35 were less critical, with 38% giving the lowest ratings (1 and 2). The general pattern of responses across the other groups (gender, >35 years, business sector, CSOs, and community members) aligned with the overall trend (see **Annex Figure 7**). **Overall**, with an average rating of **2.7 out of 5**, a large proportion of the respondents (42%) were dissatisfied with the performance of the county governments on this parameter and rated them 1 and 2, 33% considered them moderate, and only 24% (ratings of 4 and 5) were satisfied with their performance.

Figure 8: Ratings on investments in preventive and curative health, planning, and risk reduction by county governments.



Factors Hindering Healthcare Service Delivery in the Counties

Various explanations for the above ratings emerged from the KIIs and FGDs, which are discussed further below.

Most counties place a **disproportionate emphasis on curative rather than preventive services**, implying a reactive healthcare system that is more inclined towards treating illnesses rather than a strategic focus on proactive prevention. This approach often results in higher healthcare costs and overlooks the value of prevention. Respondents emphasized the importance of preventive health in reducing the demand for health services. However, some counties for instance Kisumu are doing fairly better on preventive health;

“

“There has been great improvement in the healthcare centers in terms of staffing of health workers, establishment of an extensive system to ensure health services trickle down to the community by having in place community health workers, distribution of chlorine to prevent water borne diseases, a campaign in place to discourage open defecation and setting up of modern latrines. There have been concerted efforts between county government and development partners.”

KII respondent Kisumu

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Inadequate healthcare resources and infrastructure have been identified as barriers to quality care at the county level. Shortages of drugs, understaffing, lack of adequate staffing and insufficient or poorly maintained facilities, particularly in rural areas were identified as some of the key challenges to accessing quality health-care services. In Narok County for example a respondent stated;

They also stated that most facilities lack critical equipment and reliable transportation, including ambulance services, which affects referrals. Furthermore, poor road networks were cited as a factor influencing referral services.

Management challenges and governance issues also had an impact on access to high-quality preventive and curative services. Key concerns identified were corruption, political interference, and poor prioritisation of development programmes by the county governments. A respondent stated: *“Health care has been commercialised to the point where the emphasis is no longer on curative services but on extorting money from patients, resulting in compromised quality.”* Respondents also claimed that drug theft and mismanagement in public health facilities had a negative impact on quality access to essential medications and health services.

Cultural practices and beliefs, as well as a general lack of health education, have hampered access to quality preventive health measures. The respondents stated that misinformation and reliance on traditional health practices continue to be predominant across Kenya. They further stated that misinformation about diseases, reliance on traditional remedies, and resistance to modern healthcare practices in some communities have all had a negative impact on health indicators. It was stated that some communities preferred traditional healers over modern medicine.

Proposed Solutions for Addressing Challenges Facing Healthcare Service Delivery

Strengthening preventive measures was the most prioritised by the respondents. Training and sustainable support of community health practitioners including the community health promoters (CHPs) as well as community awareness education and campaigns were identified as viable strategic activities under this. Increasing investments in primary healthcare was also suggested as a viable solution because of its effectiveness in controlling and reducing the prevalence of diseases and deaths, and would among others involve empowering the CHPs through training and equipping them with the required tools.

Increased investments in healthcare infrastructure such as buildings, adequate staffing and equipping healthcare facilities based on need were proposed as a strategic investment. It was also suggested that old and dilapidated health facilities should be renovated, equipped with modern medical equipment supplied with essential drugs and adequate staff at all levels and where necessary should be upgraded as needed.

Adoption of emerging technology and innovative health monitoring, diagnosis and treatment solutions was viewed as critical to improving access to healthcare at the county level. Innovative practices such as mobile clinics and telemedicine can improve healthcare delivery by increasing the sharing and access to specialised health services beyond the borders of a single county. Investments in research and development for healthcare improvements were also recommended due to their potential to improve access to quality healthcare.

Improving the management and governance of health facilities by enforcing stringent anti-corruption measures in healthcare institutions was identified as critical for enhanced access to quality healthcare services. Specific recommendations include implementing strict legal auditing procedures and increasing transparency in the procurement and distribution of medical supplies. It should also include establishing a trustworthy and confidential whistle blower mechanism for healthcare workers and patients. Measures should be taken to ensure accountability at all levels of healthcare management to tackle and eliminate corruption.

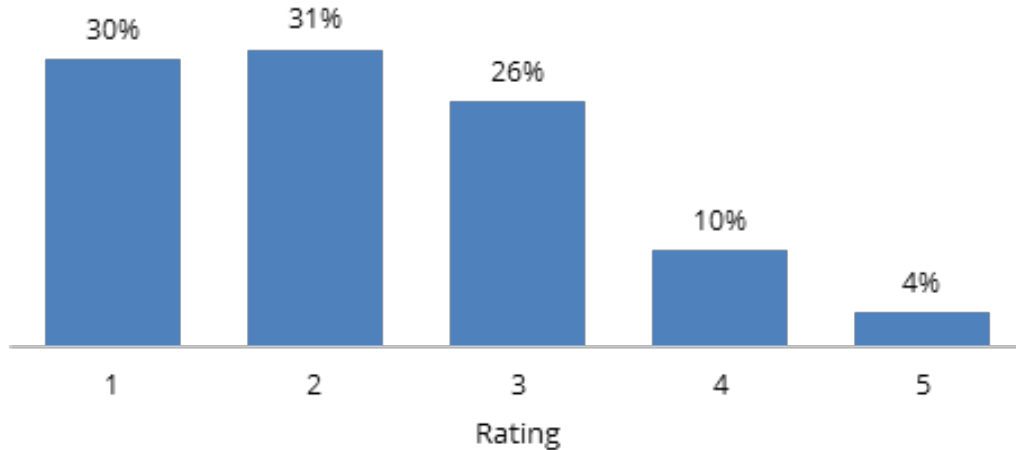
3.6.4 Climate Innovation and Related Businesses



County governments have made some progress in promoting climate innovation and youth-driven green businesses, however, the effectiveness of these interventions has been hampered by insufficient funding to the sector, in training of the youth entrepreneurs, barriers to market access, low awareness of existing programmes, and drug abuse among the youth.

Promoting climate innovation and youth-driven green businesses received a low rating of 1 and 2 from 30% and 31% of the respondents, respectively, while 26% believed that there was moderate progress and rated it 3. In contrast, 10% of the respondents on the other hand gave it a high rating of 4, while only 4% gave it a 5-star rating. Female respondents and those over 25 years were critical of the performance and rated the county governments poorly (ratings of 1 and 2) with 57% and 66% respectively. The general pattern of responses across the other groups (males, >35 years, business sector, CSOs, and community members) aligned with the overall trend, (see **Annex Figure 8**). **Overall**, with a below-average rating of **2.3 out of 5**, 61% of the respondents were dissatisfied with the county governments in promoting climate innovation and youth-driven green businesses and rated them either 1 or 2. In comparison, only 26% of the respondents considered the progress as moderate, and a small proportion of 14% rated them 4 and 5, above average.

Figure 9: Rating the existence of climate innovation hubs and accelerator programmes, subsidies, and incentives to youth-driven green innovation and businesses by county governments.



Factors Hindering Youth-driven Green Innovation and Businesses

Discussions with the respondents revealed several challenges for climate innovation hubs and accelerator programmes in counties which are discussed below.

Barriers to accessing funding for youth-driven green initiatives were identified as a major challenge. Most youth entrepreneurs struggled with financial constraints, particularly because they lacked collateral such as title deeds and payslips which are required to obtain loans. Furthermore, bureaucratic processes have made it difficult and time-consuming to access the funds.

Inadequate youth capacity on climate innovation and entrepreneurship. Most youths lack the training, skills and knowledge on how to develop and sustain green businesses. Respondents also stated that the youth may not be interested in climate innovation hubs or programmes due to a lack of awareness and are instead more focused on immediate job opportunities.

Difficulties in accessing existing climate innovation hubs, accelerator programmes and funding opportunities for the youth were identified as a challenge facing climate innovation and innovations. Some counties lacked climate innovation hubs, platforms for climate innovation, and accelerator programmes. Respondents further noted that even when such programmes did exist, they were not well-adopted by the youth due to a lack of adequate information or a poor understanding of the application procedures. County governments were blamed for failing to implement outreach and awareness campaigns aimed at sensitizing, engaging, and educating young entrepreneurs.

“These are available although not well known by the citizens, not well adopted.”
CSO Network Leader

Drug abuse among youth was also identified as a major issue, diverting the attention of a significant portion of the youth away from productive engagements in green innovation. Furthermore, a lack of comprehensive drug abuse programmes is a contributing factor to youth idleness, encouraging them to engage in destructive behaviour.

Proposed Solutions for Promoting Youth Participation in Youth-driven Green Innovations and Businesses

Designing and implementing informative programmes that resonate with the youth’s interests and realities was considered necessary for their motivation.

Regular climate awareness campaigns could also spark the interest and commitment of young people to work in such businesses.

Allocating more resources and increasing access for youth engaged in green initiatives. Simplifying the grant or loan application processes particularly was noted would encourage young people to apply for the funds. Respondents however stated that it should be accompanied by additional investments in climate innovation hubs and the formation of partnerships with development organizations and CSOs capable of providing the financial support required to drive youth-led green initiatives.

Capacity building and training initiatives were also proposed due to their potential to improve the knowledge and skills of the youth on green initiatives. It should include comprehensive investments in training programmes that cover technical aspects of green innovation, business management, digital marketing skills, and life skills. Such initiatives would provide the youth with the tools they need to turn their ideas into viable businesses.

Promoting market opportunities for youth-driven green products and services was also considered vital. This can be achieved through strategic investments in government-led initiatives that promote and prioritize local green products. Additionally, providing networking opportunities and platforms where the youth can connect with potential investors and markets can significantly impact the success of their ventures.

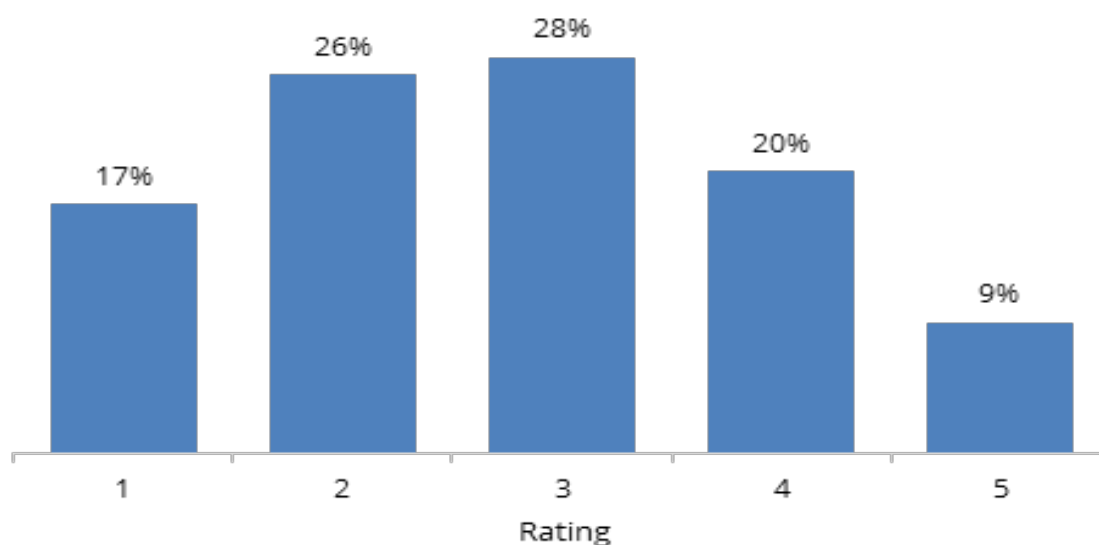
Finally, the **development of relevant policies and guidelines** on youth engagement in green innovation was proposed as critical for sustainability. The policies can help address bureaucratic barriers, such as lengthy and costly registration processes, and streamline procedures for launching such initiatives, making it easier for young entrepreneurs to obtain the assistance they require. The policies would also include mechanisms for incorporating the voices of youth into policymaking.

3.6.5 Urban Planning and Development

! County Governments have made considerable progress in urban planning and development but there are still significant challenges such as transparency concerns in the formulation and implementation of the plans, delays in the operationalization of the plans, and insufficient resources for the implementation of urban development plans.

Average achievement (a rating of 3), which represents a moderate level of achievement, received the most responses (28%) from county governments in urban planning, while a rating of 4 received 20%, indicating that some respondents see progress in this area. 17% and 26% however rated the performance low ratings of 1 and 2 respectively. Respondents from the business sector were more critical of the county governments' performance on urban development, with 51% giving the lowest ratings (1 and 2). The general pattern of responses across the other categories (gender, age groups, CSOs, and community members), aligned with the overall trend, (see **Annex Figure 9**). **Overall**, with an average rating of **2.8 out of 5**, a large proportion of the respondents (43%) showed dissatisfaction with the county governments in formulating County Urban Integrated Development Plans (CUIDPs) and ranked them at 1 and 2, while 28% rated their progress as moderate and only 29% (ratings of 4 and 5) considered them effective.

Figure 10: Rating on the formulation of County Urban Integrated Development Plans and management structures for the county's urban areas.



Factors Impeding the Implementation of CUIDPs

Respondents identified the following factors as critical barriers to urban planning and development.

Low awareness and transparency in the formulation and implementation of CUIDPs were identified as barriers to effective urban planning and development across counties. A large proportion of the respondents were unaware of the existence or progress of CUIDPs in their respective counties. They stated that the county governments frequently failed to effectively advertise and engage the public in planning and development processes, as well as provide feedback to the community members resulting in a lack of information. In some counties, respondents indicated that there were **delays in the formulation and operationalization of urban development plans**. In other counties, on the other hand, the plans were not implemented even though they had been developed. Various factors, including bureaucratic processes and lack of prioritization by the county governments, were cited for non-implementation of the plans.

The challenges associated with urban areas **demarcation and the homogeneity of cities**, which complicated the creation of municipality plans had an impact on urban planning and development in certain counties. Uneven investments and development across urban areas within the same county governments were also observed in some counties. In the cities, the lack of proper demarcation due to their homogeneity made it difficult for the county governments to create the municipalities.

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“They (CUIDPs) are expensive. Cost of doing one is around 70-140 million Kenyan shillings. (Staff) who we are working with are not as qualified as we would need them, those qualified highly are very expensive.”

(KII Tharaka Nithi)

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Inadequate resources and budget allocation were further identified as critical hindrances to the development and implementation of CUIDPs. Respondents indicated that most of the plans that had been finalised were not implemented due to insufficient funding or prioritization by the county governments.

Proposed Solutions for Enhancing Implementation of CUIDPs

To improve the implementation of CUIDPs, the respondents suggested **reducing political influence in urban planning processes**. Establishing independent urban planning committees and oversight bodies to lead implementation would improve policy enforcement and protect the development process from political interference.

The adoption of **innovative funding strategies** would strengthen urban development. The options include partnerships with development agencies and the private sector as well as establishing a transparent and efficient resource allocation.

Improving public participation in urban planning was also recommended as an important requirement in urban planning and development. The county governments should establish reliable mechanisms for inclusive and meaningful community engagements such as physical forums and digital platforms. These mechanisms should integrate feedback systems that would improve communication cycle completion by not only participating in the decision-making process but also providing timely information on decisions made following public participation, as well as explanations for why some of the proposals made were not included in the actual decisions adopted.

Capacity building and training programmes for urban planners and managers were suggested as a crucial requirement in urban planning and development. The options available for the county governments include collaborations with academic institutions and international urban planning experts as well as the private sector and CSOs. Mentorship programmes by experienced urban planners for young professionals and students were also recommended as a viable solution.

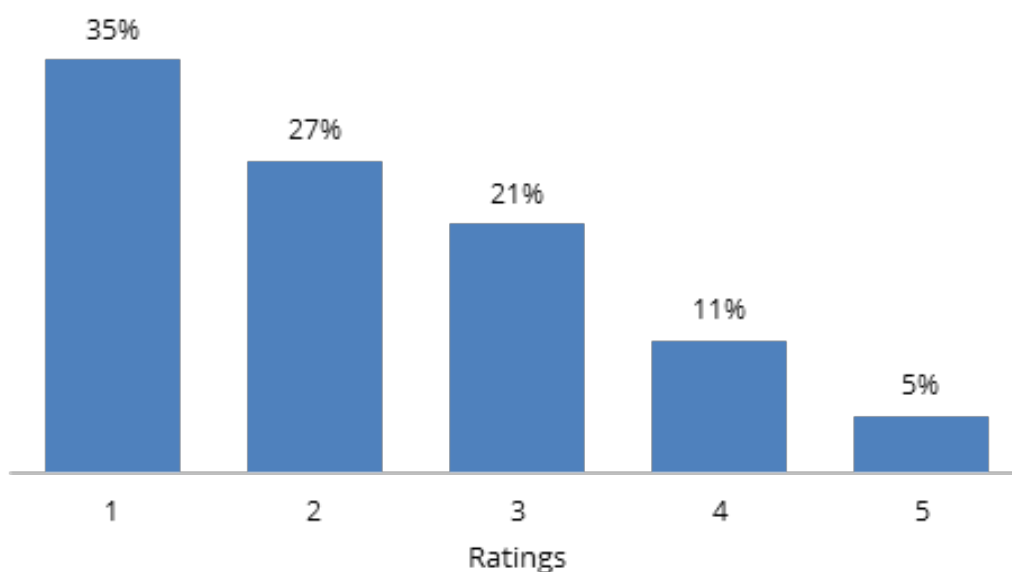
3.6.6 Procurement Openness



The procurement process by county governments has several flaws that are characterized by widespread corruption, lack of transparency, and bureaucratic inefficiencies. Personal connections and corruption influenced tender awards and payments to contractors.

The procurement and payment processes of service providers by the county governments were widely regarded as opaque or lacking transparency, with 35% of the respondents rating it as 1 and 27% as 2. Only 21% of the respondents gave it a moderate score of 3 while 11% rated it 4, and 5% a rating of 5. There were some differences in the ratings by gender, age and industry/occupation. Respondents under 35 years were less critical, with 56% assigning the lowest ratings (1 and 2), making them the least discontented among all the groups. Conversely, respondents over the age of 35 were the most critical, with 67% giving county governments the lowest ratings (1 and 2), making them the most dissatisfied group. The general trend of responses across the other categories (gender, business sector, CSOs, and community members), aligned with the overall pattern, (see **Annex Figure 10**). **Overall**, with a below-average **rating of 2.2**, 62% of the respondents showed dissatisfaction with the procurement and payment processes by the county governments, while 21% viewed the progress as moderate and only 16% (ratings of 4 and 5) indicated the processes were above average.

Figure 11: Rating the openness in procurement and payment of county services to contractors by county governments.



Factors Hindering Procurement Openness and Prompt Payment of Contractors

Deep-rooted corruption and a lack of transparency emerged as the most serious concerns in the procurement process. Respondents expressed concern that tenders were frequently awarded based on personal connections, particularly to politicians, a practice they referred to as “who knows who?”.

Alternatively, it was based on the willingness and ability of the applicants to provide kickbacks indicating a deeply entrenched culture of corruption. The vice has hampered fair competition and efficient resource allocation. These illegalities have had a particularly negative impact on procurement opportunities for marginalized groups such as youth, women, and PWDs.

Respondents identified **delays in payments for goods and services rendered** to the county governments as a major threat to the survival of the businesses. The outstanding dues ranged from months to years, causing financial hardship for the contractors and service providers. In some cases, respondents reported that the delays were deliberate tactics used by government officials to coerce contractors into offering bribes or kickbacks to speed up payments.

Minimal transparency in procurement decisions was identified as a major issue of concern. Respondents noted that access to information on tender opportunities was difficult and that even when advertised, there was often suspicion that the process was primarily intended to provide documentation for legal compliance, with a strong belief that winners were often predetermined.

Inadequate public awareness and participation in procurement processes was identified as another key challenge. Respondents stated that the tenders were often not adequately advertised or were conducted in secret, excluding potential bidders, and creating a breeding ground for corruption. This perception is further reinforced by the difficulty citizens have in obtaining information about procurement opportunities. Citizens struggled to hold officials accountable and monitor procurement processes as a result of these challenges.

Proposed Solutions for Improving Procurement Openness and Prompt Payment of Contractors

Strengthening adherence to the rule of law in procurement was proposed by the respondents. It was emphasised that county governments should ensure strict compliance with the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 and the relevant laws including the Public Finance Management Act (2012), Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Act (2015) and Access to Information Act (2016) in initiating the procurement activities, advertising, evaluation, awards and payments processes.

Respondents also emphasised the importance of **regular training for procurement staff** to improve their capacity and ability to comply with the Constitution and the procurement laws and regulations. They also emphasised that the National Treasury should also streamline the disbursement of equitable shares to county governments to avoid putting counties at a disadvantage with late payments and operational constraints.

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“The law requires the National Treasury to send payments on the 15th of each month, but counties are four months behind. The last minute is when the bulk is cleared, the year ends before the county government accesses the money. The condition to access is too long, the clearance takes time. This is a tactical way of managing money by the treasury.”

KII respondent Tharaka Nithi

”

Promoting the use of digital platforms in procurement processes such as the e-procurement systems were proposed due to their potential in improving transparency and efficiency. Respondents proposed that the e-procurement system should be upgraded to have effective control measures and make it user-friendly.

3.6.7 Transparency and Accountability

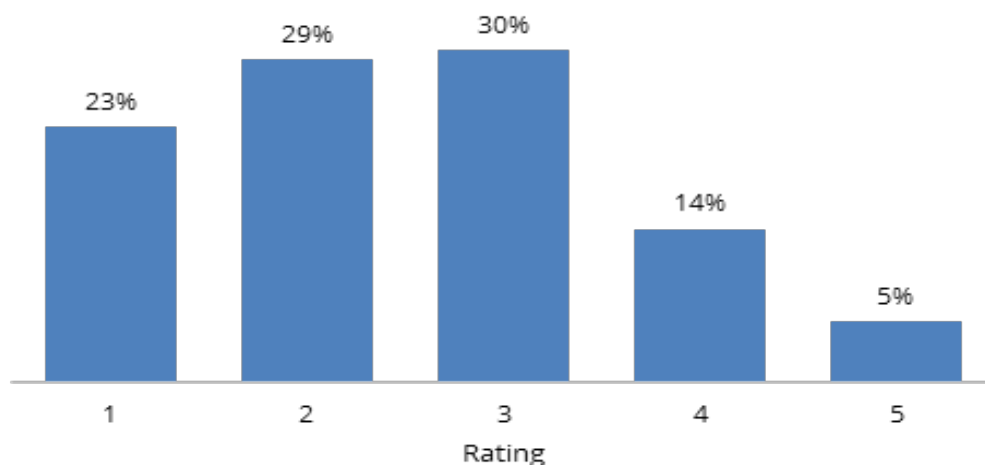


Despite ongoing challenges that have resulted in widespread dissatisfaction, citizens’ perceptions of transparency and accountability show some level of confidence. Ineffective public participation, communication gaps, political interference, bureaucratic roadblocks, and inadequate oversight mechanisms were the primary challenges.

The performance was rated as 1 by 23% of respondents, while 29% gave it a 2. 30% gave a rating of 3, 14% a rating of 4, and 5% rated the performance as a 5. Respondents under the age of 35 were less critical, with 45% giving the lowest ratings (1 and 2), making them the least dissatisfied among respondents by group. Respondents over the age of 35 were the most critical, with 57% giving the lowest ratings (1 and 2), indicating their dissatisfaction.

The general trend of responses across the other categories (gender, business sector, CSOs, and community members), aligned with the overall pattern (see **Annex Figure 11**). **Overall**, with an average rating of **2.5 out of 5**, a large proportion (52%) of the respondents showed dissatisfaction with the performance of the county governments on transparency and accountability in decision-making and governance processes, giving low ratings of 1 and 2, while 30% viewed the progress as moderate. On the contrary, only 19% (ratings of 4 and 5) of the respondents believed the performance of county governments was exemplary.

Figure 12: Rating the level of transparency and accountability in decision-making and governance processes.



Issues Impeding Transparency and Accountability at the County Level

The explanations provided to the responses above regarding transparency and accountability in county government *decision-making and governance processes highlight several shortcomings, which are discussed further below.*

Poor planning and ineffective management of public participation were identified as the key challenges in public participation. Respondents observed that public participation processes including events were often used merely to disseminate government information rather than as meaningful engagements in the decision-making. The inadequacy stems from a lack of political will as evidenced by poor funding for public participation, weak capacity for managing the processes, poor planning, lack of civic education before public engagement, a lack of timely provision of information and lack of feedback mechanisms in most counties.

“*What happens in the public participation is not participation but rather sharing information to the public.*”

KII Machakos

As a result, citizens, particularly the PWDs are rarely prepared for public participation which has resulted in ineffective consultations.

A breakdown in communication between county governments and citizens was highlighted as a barrier to quality and meaningful public participation. According to the respondents, this problem is due in part to the government’s lack of commitment to transparency, as often manifested by their use of documents prepared in technical language for public participation processes. While such documents should be meant for public consumption in preparation for the consultations, they are difficult to understand, thereby limiting the effectiveness of citizens’ engagement.

Political interference and corruption were considered by the respondents as one of the hindrances to transparency and accountability. Respondents explained that the political interests of the county leadership, including the Governors and Members of the County Assembly, often overshadowed the citizens’ needs and preferences. The result was that critical voices have been marginalised from the key decision-making processes such as planning, budgeting and service delivery.

Bureaucratic barriers in accessing information and ineffective accountability mechanisms were further isolated as hindrances to transparency across the counties. The involvement of too many levels of the government in decision-making processes, lack of feedback mechanisms, and general reluctance by the officials to provide information all had a significant impact on the quality of public participation. In addition, weak and often compromised oversight mechanisms have enabled poor governance practices such as corruption and waste to flourish.

Proposed Solutions for Improving Transparency and Accountability at the County Level

Respondents suggested various options including **transforming public participation from an event(s) to processes, decentralising the engagements to the lower levels** such as the villages and communities to localize engagements, **empowering the local county staff such as the ward and village administrators to coordinate public participation** in their areas of jurisdiction and ensuring the **provision of timely, adequate and user-friendly information.**

Other options include holding short engagement sessions, providing timely feedback that encourages citizens to feel appreciated and thus motivating them to attend future sessions and decentralizing the physical meetings to the communities, thereby eliminating or reducing logistical burdens.

Fair and transparent resource distribution was also proposed as a solution for strengthening transparency and accountability. Respondents proposed that budget allocation should take into account the needs of diverse areas while prioritising the preferences of marginalized groups and regions. They believed that taking this approach would help to address or reduce disparities within their counties.

Respondents prioritised investing in civic education because of its potential to empower citizens to participate effectively in decision-making processes. They stated that meaningful civic education would provide citizens with the necessary information to engage effectively. It also has the potential to improve citizens' understanding of their rights and responsibilities in county decision-making processes, thereby increasing their participation as stakeholders.

County governments with public participation policies and laws should ensure **strict adherence to the law**. They should also ensure compliance with the relevant national laws such as the County Governments Act, Access to Information and Public Finance Management Act which contain a variety of legal provisions governing public participation.

The **empowerment of watchdog structures** to effectively oversee public participation processes was also proposed. Respondents believed that empowering the county assemblies and collaborating with civil society in these areas would improve transparency and accountability in decision-making processes at all levels.

3.6.8 Own-Source Revenue

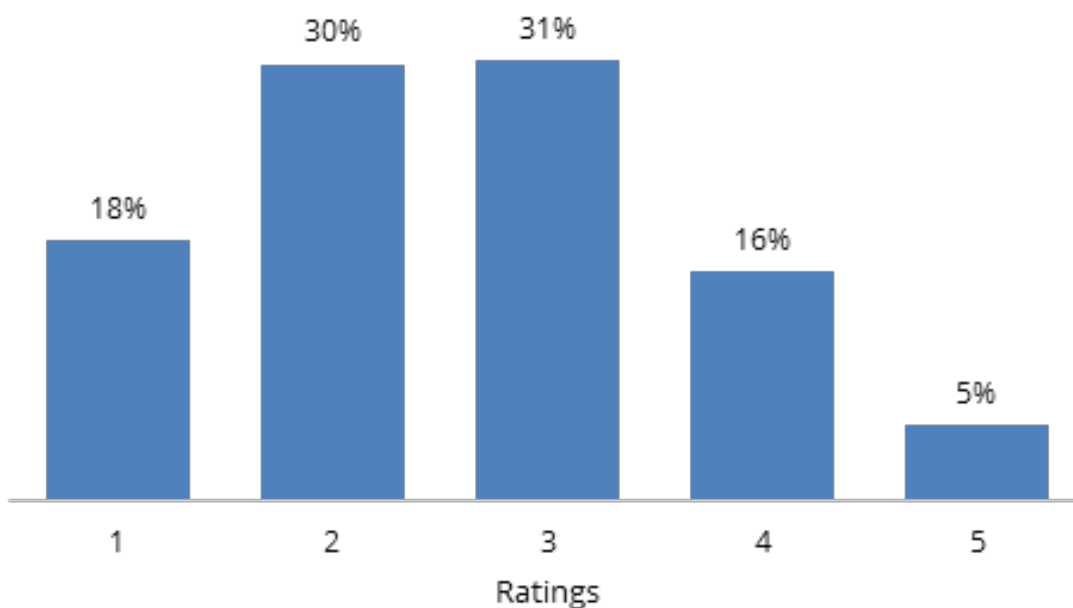


The effectiveness of own source revenue (OSR) mobilization is average while the realisation of full potential has been hindered by significant challenges such as a lack of complete automation in revenue collection, pilferage, corruption, reliance on a limited number of revenue streams, and a weak link between revenue collection and service delivery.

The majority of respondents (31%) rated the effectiveness of OSR mobilization as moderate (3), with 18% rating it as 1 and 30% rating it as 2. On the other hand, only 16% and 5% of respondents gave OSR mobilization a rating of 4 and 5, respectively. Looking at the different categories, male respondents and those under 35 years old were less critical of the performance, with 39% and 42% giving the lowest ratings (1 and 2), indicating that they were the least dissatisfied.

In contrast, the business sector and CSOs were the most critical, with 54% and 55%, respectively, giving the lowest ratings (1 and 2). The general trend of responses across the other categories (females, and community members), aligned with the overall pattern (see **Annex Figure 12**). **Overall**, with an average rating of **2.6 out of 5**, 48% (ratings of 1 and 2 together) being the majority of the respondents showed dissatisfaction with the performance of the county governments on OSR, while 31% viewed the progress as moderate and only 21% (ratings of 4 and 5) were satisfied with their performance.

Figure 13: Rating on implementation of measures for effective Own Source Revenue (OSR) mobilization.



Challenges Facing OSR Mobilization in the Counties

Explanations from respondents revealed several bottlenecks in OSR, which are discussed below.

Respondents stated that **lack of full automation in revenue collection**, allowed room for pilferage and leakages. Manual collection which is still a common practice in most counties was reported to be prone to errors and inefficiencies including high operational costs.

It was noted that some of the counties that had adopted digital revenue collection systems had registered significant improvements in efficiency and transparency in OSR collection. Digitalisation has been credited with improving OSR collection in Narok County.

Corruption was identified as a significant barrier to effective OSR mobilization in most counties. Respondents reported that corrupt practices persisted despite the digitization of revenue collection. They highlighted corrupt incidents among revenue collectors, such as bribery and the diversion of public funds for private use. As one respondent in Kisumu says:

“

“When it was a municipality, Kisumu would generate 1 billion Kshs that was enough to pay all staff salaries, despite the expansion, Kisumu County has not been able to reach this target due to pilferages in revenue collected.”

(KII Kisumu)

”

Limited engagement and awareness of the citizens as well as their lack of appreciation for the importance of tax payments have had an impact on OSR collection in most counties. This factor contributed to tax evasion which impacted OSR collection.

Respondents also identified **over-reliance on a narrow range of revenue streams such as** markets and parks as a key challenge in most counties. Overconcentration on few revenue streams, limited diversification of revenue sources and failure to explore new revenue channels were identified as the causes of low revenue collection among the counties. Most counties. For example, had not fully explored their markets and national parks. Similarly, the majority of the counties had failed to streamline payment systems in areas such as hospital bills, which had the potential to generate significant revenue.

Proposed Solutions for Enhancing OSR Mobilization

Full automation or digitalization of the revenue collection system was proposed as one of the most viable solutions for improving OSR performance. Given that some counties have made significant progress in automation, the respondents proposed that learning and sharing lessons across county governments would increase the adoption of good practices while avoiding potential mistakes. However, emphasis was placed on the importance of user-friendly digital platforms with integrated transparency systems. Complete automation was deemed necessary for better tracking and monitoring of revenue collection.

Respondents also proposed the **establishment of autonomous bodies** to collect county revenues. This proposal was based on the best practices from counties that had established Revenue Boards. In Laikipia County, for example, it was reported that the board's effectiveness led to a significant increase in OSR collection. It was also proposed that counties enact supportive legislation on OSR to address the current legislative gap that exists in most counties.

Motivation to citizens through **enhanced delivery of quality public services** by county governments was proposed as a means of increasing OSR collection. Respondents stated that visible improvements in public services would encourage citizens to comply and pay taxes. To encourage businesses to pay taxes, a favourable business environment and enabling infrastructure are required.

Diversification of revenue sources was also mentioned as a possible solution to increasing OSR. Respondents cited the CRA counties revenue potential report and noted that county governments had a wide range of potentials that they had yet to explore or tap into. They did, however, emphasize that tax systems should be fair to micro and small businesses to encourage them to pay taxes voluntarily.

Staff training on ethical practices was proposed in recognition of the critical role of a competent and honest revenue collection workforce in OSR collection. Respondents proposed that staff be vetted and continuously educated on ethical behaviour, with sanctions imposed whenever they fail to comply with constitutional and legal provisions.

Finally, **legislative and policy reforms** were proposed to address the gaps in most counties. Respondents stated that a strong framework for revenue collection and management is critical to promoting fair tax collection. They also emphasised the importance of reviewing and updating policies regularly to ensure their effectiveness.

3.6.9 Business Environment

Quality and Safety of Markets

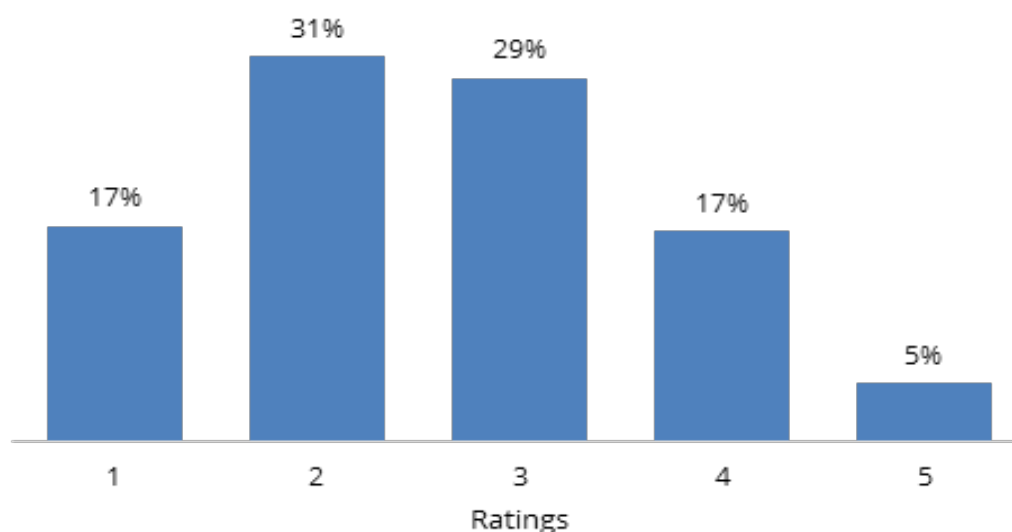


Significant improvements have been recorded in the quality and safety of markets but substantial challenges including outdated infrastructure, poor hygiene standards and low engagement of the stakeholders have affected the realisation of the desired quality.

The majority of respondents (31%) gave a low rating of 2 to county governments' market investments, while 17% gave the lowest rating of 1. 29% rated the investments as moderate (3), while 17% and 5% rated them as high, giving ratings of 4 and 5, respectively.

Further analysis reveals that the responses across the different categories (gender, age group, business sector, CSOs, and community members), aligned with the overall pattern, (see **Annex Figure 13**). Overall, with an average rating of **2.6 out of 5**, 48% of the respondents were dissatisfied with the county governments on the investments of quality and safety of the county markets, and rated them 1 and 2, while 29% viewed the interventions as moderate (rated them 3) and only 22% were satisfied with their performance and gave them ratings of 4 and 5.

Figure 14: Rating on improved quality and safety of the county markets under current county governments.



Challenges facing Market Quality and Safety

Incomplete market structures and outdated market infrastructure were identified as hindrances to access to quality and safety of markets. Respondents expressed concerns about the prevalence of stalled market structures across the country. They also stated that the design of some of the markets in operation did not suit the preferences of small and medium-scale businesses and therefore was not beneficial to them. One of the main complaints was that some traders preferred open-air markets over closed and storey buildings which has been the government's standard design for markets.

Security concerns and poor hygiene were cited by the respondents as common issues in the county markets. Respondents indicated that the markets lacked proper drainage and waste disposal systems. They stated that the supply of clean water in the markets was often a challenge hence the traders were forced to buy water from vendors at exorbitant prices.

Poor management and enforcement of market regulations were also identified as a major problem in the markets. The respondents stated that cartels controlling markets and politicians meddled in the management of the markets contributing to inefficiencies, unfair practices, and poor allocation of resources.

Limited and ineffective consultations with the traders, business community and citizens during the construction or upgrading of the markets were also identified as issues affecting the quality of the markets. Respondents stated that county governments lacked effective mechanisms for consultations with the traders and the market community when designing and managing markets. They also expressed serious concerns about political interference in market management and construction. Politicians frequently made unilateral decisions about where and how markets would be built without consulting the traders and users of the facilities. As a result, it is common to find complete market structures that are no longer in use, referred to as “white elephants.”

Management and efficiency of market operations are also affected by **poor separation of roles**. This was mainly evident in the lack of autonomy for the management of the municipalities, and urban and town entities under the counties. In Uasin Gishu, a respondent says;

“

“The County government lacks understanding of separation of powers i.e the markets at the town centers are meant to be managed by the Municipality Town Boards however the Directorate of Trade Is still carrying out these functions resulting in the inefficiencies experienced in the county markets.”

(KII, Uasin Gishu)

”

Proposed Solutions for Improving Market Quality and Safety

Finalisation of the incomplete market structures and upgrading the existing facilities were prioritised by the respondents. They proposed that the county governments should allocate adequate funds for the markets including for improvements to existing ones and completion of stalled and incomplete infrastructure while ensuring standard quality.

Enhancing security measures in the markets was also proposed by the respondents as a priority. The respondents recommended that the markets be well-lit with perimeter security lights, provision of safe and reliable water, provision clean ablution blocks, provision of storage facilities including cold storage services, proper waste management systems and regular garbage collection among others.

Strict enforcement of management standards and regulations to manage vendor activities was equally identified as important. Respondents observed that effective enforcement would make the market environment more favourable for the traders while also helping to address overcrowding and unregulated roadside vending thereby improving safety and hygiene.

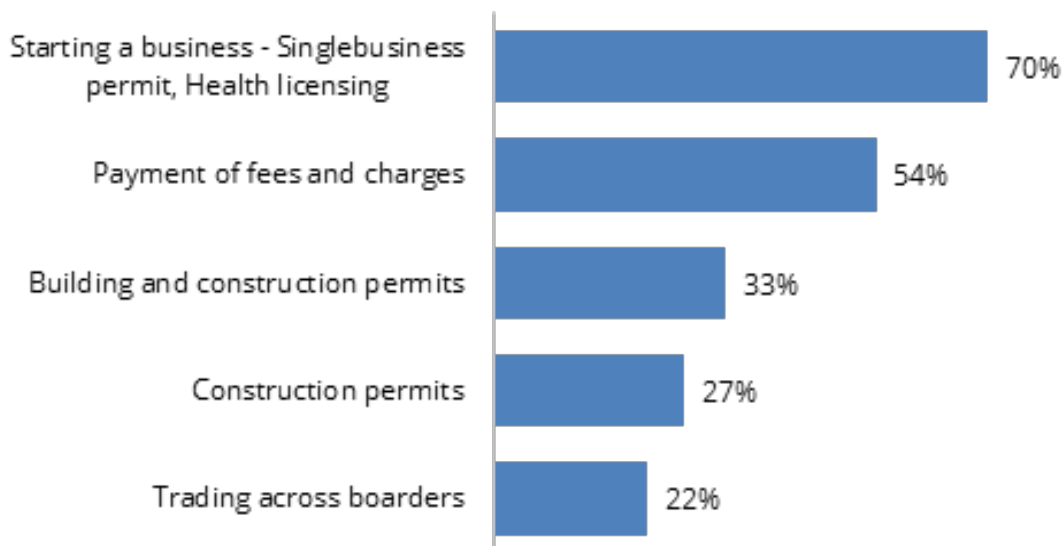
3.6.10 Ease of Doing Business



County governments have taken some notable steps to improve the ease of doing business, but significant challenges such as high taxes, complex bureaucratic procedures, and harassment and extortion by cartels continue to have a negative impact.

The majority of respondents (70%) reported that the ease of starting or doing business at the county level, including obtaining single business permits and health licenses, had improved. Over half of them, 54%, thought there had been a significant improvement in fee payment, while only 33% thought the process of obtaining building and construction permits had improved. Similarly, only 27% of the respondents thought there was an improvement in the issuance of construction permits, and only 22% thought there was an improvement in cross-border trading.

Figure 15: Improvement in ease of doing business under the current county governments in the following areas:



Factors Hindering Ease of Doing Business in the Counties

High taxes and licensing fees have impeded the growth of businesses, particularly micro and small ventures. Respondents linked this problem to a lack of meaningful engagement of the business community in the policy and legislative development processes. This disparity was reflected in county policies and laws that were unfriendly to the business community and failed to address their concerns thereby impeding their growth.

Bureaucracy and inefficiency in government offices were identified as significant barriers to doing business. This challenge manifests itself in a variety of ways, including nonresponsive county government officials and complex licensing procedures.

Harassment by county enforcement officers (askaris) and cartels was also identified as a key concern among businesses. This problem primarily affected micro and small businesses in county markets, often resulting in an unfriendly business environment that discouraged investment.

Inter-county tariffs and double taxation were highlighted as a major problem, particularly for businesses that operated between two or more counties. Businesspeople complained about double taxation which raised the cost of doing business and reduced profitability. The problem also impacted traders who purchased goods from other counties. In addition to affecting individual businesses, this challenge has hindered economic integration within regional blocs among neighbouring counties.

Proposed Solutions for Improving Ease of doing Business in Counties

Strengthening the involvement of the business community in decision-making by the county governments was proposed as key to improving the ease of doing business. The respondents believed that meaningful involvement of the business community in the various governance processes at the county level, including formulation of the relevant legislation and tax policies would result in a business-friendly environment. They also proposed that businesses be involved in the enforcement and service delivery processes.

Respondents also proposed **streamlining the processes for business registration** at the county level by adopting one-stop shops. This was primarily proposed for county licensing, which includes the issuance of health and construction permits. They also proposed digitizing the services, noting that this would help to reduce registration-related issues as well as leakages in OSR.

Provision of post-COVID-19 recovery support for the businesses was likewise suggested as necessary for economic recovery. Respondents proposed that the approaches could include establishing funds to assist affected businesses and enacting policies that have the potential to reduce the economic impacts on small and medium enterprises.

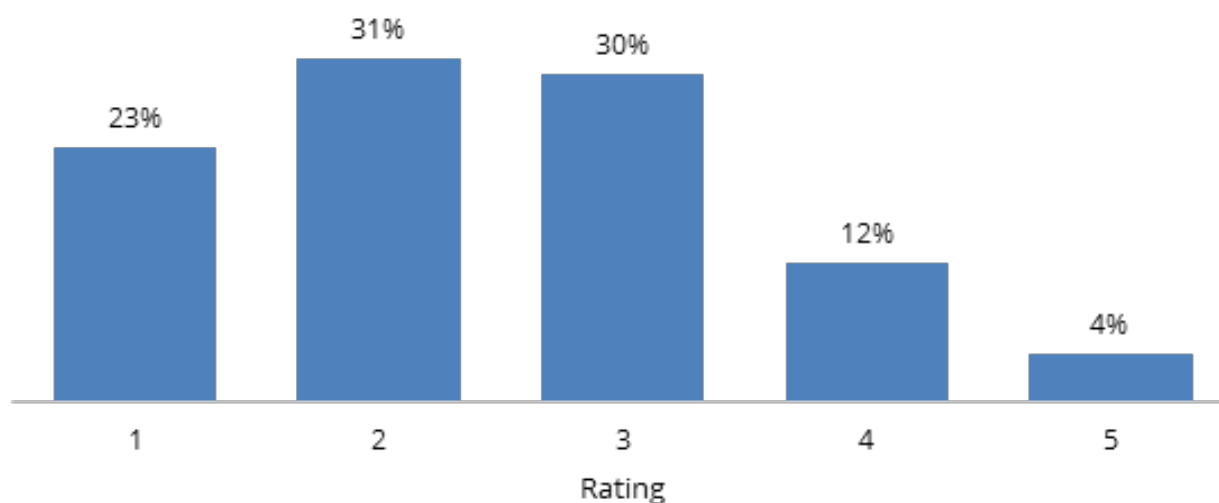
3.6.11 Business Incentives and Investment Opportunities



There has been some notable progress in business and investment incentives, but there is widespread dissatisfaction with the programmes, particularly among micro and small businesses, who are concerned about inadequate infrastructure, high taxation, a lack of effective consultations, and unfair competition practices.

County governments were generally rated poorly with 23% and 31% of the respondents giving them low ratings of 1 and 3 respectively while 30% rated them as moderate. On the other hand, only 12% and 4% rated the county governments' performance as high with ratings of 4 and 5 respectively. Further analysis reveals that females and those under 35 and above 35 years were critical of the county government's performance, with 49%, 48% and 59% of the respondents giving them the lowest ratings (1 and 2). see **Annex Figure 14**. **Overall**, with an average rating of **2.5 out of 5**, 54% of the respondents showed the greatest dissatisfaction with the actions taken by the county governments on incentives to business and investment opportunities with low ratings of 1 and 2, while 30% viewed the progress as moderate and only 16% (ratings of 4 and 5) rated them above average

Figure 16: Rating of county governments on the implementation of the relevant measures to improve the environment and incentivize business and investment opportunities.



Challenges to the Incentives for Business and Investment Opportunities

Lack of incentives and support for small businesses was identified as a major gap in promoting business and investment in the counties. Respondents expressed concerns that county governments had not prioritised supporting businesses resulting in a lack of or limited funding for small businesses which they considered necessary for expanding and providing capital for business start-ups at the county level.

This survey found that **security concerns and inadequate infrastructure** are significant disincentives for businesses. Poor conditions in most markets which include unhygienic operating environments, lack of or poor sanitation, and poor waste management were captured as critical hindrances for business growth and development.

High taxation and unrealistic revenue targets were also cited as significant impediments to business growth and development. The respondents considered the tax policies unfriendly to business development hence the inability to spur growth.

The study also identified a **lack of meaningful engagement with the business community** in county decision-making processes as a major barrier to responsive policies for business growth and development. Respondents were particularly critical of the exclusion of businesses from the formulation of trade and investment policies, such as taxation, which had a direct impact on business growth and development.

Proposed Environmental Solutions and Incentives for Business and Investment Opportunities.

Formulation and implementation of policies that promote fair competition and provide support for small and medium enterprises. Respondents stated that such policies would create a stable and predictable political and economic environment thereby encouraging long-term business investments. They also proposed the establishment of funds for business support such as affordable loans or grants, particularly for the youth and women in business.

Active and meaningful involvement of the business community in decision-making and policy formulation was prioritised because of its potential in the adoption of responsive policies and actions. Respondents believed that if the county governments implemented mechanisms to improve effective consultations with businesses, they would enact policies that provide incentives for business and investment.

Strategic investments in market infrastructure development were equally proposed due to the ability of such infrastructure to attract business and investments. The primary infrastructural development proposed were good road networks and reliable and affordable electric power. Respondents stated that these infrastructures have great potential for attracting businesses to invest in the counties.

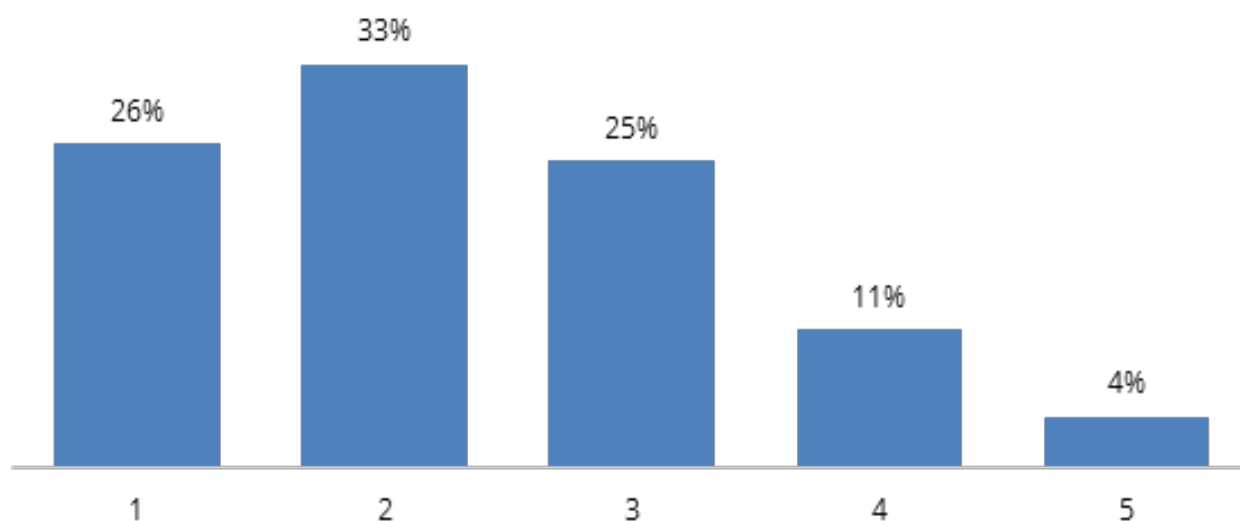
3.6.12 Access to Information on Doing Business and Investment



County governments have made minimal investments in information for doing business and investments which has resulted in challenges in providing and accessing relevant information.

The majority of respondents, 23% and 31% rated the county governments low at 1 and 2 respectively, in terms of access to business information, while 25% rated them moderate (3). On the other hand, only 11% and 4% rated their performance as high at 4 and 5 respectively. Further analysis reveals that both female respondents and those over 35 years old were critical of the performance of the county governments though females were more considerate with 56% rating the performance 1 and 2 compared to those over 35 years. Among this category of respondents, 66% rated the performance as low with ratings of 1 and 2 (see **Annex Figure 15**). **Overall**, with an average rating of **2.3 out of 5**, 59% of the respondents showed the greatest dissatisfaction with the performance of the county governments on business information provision (ratings of 1 and 2), while 25% viewed the progress as moderate and only 15% (ratings of 4 and 5) rated them above average or believed that they were in the right direction.

Figure 17: Rating on access to relevant information and data for doing business and investment.



Factors Hindering Effective access to Information and Data for Business and Investment in the Counties.

The outdated information and data sources were identified as a major challenge. Respondents expressed concern that the available data on business and investment, particularly on government websites, was outdated and not available at a single location, but rather in various county offices. They also stated that county governments lacked promotional programmes highlighting business and investment potentials and opportunities.

Proposed Solutions for Enhancing Availability and Access to County Information and Data for Business and Investment

Regular updates of business and investment information on the county websites and online platforms were suggested as the most viable means for enhancing access to information on business and investment. Respondents proposed that the county governments should regularly update the information and ensure the provision of comprehensive and up-to-date information on business and investment opportunities on their online portals. The websites should therefore be informative, user-friendly, and accessible.

The adoption of a one-stop centre for information provision was proposed as a way of enhancing quick access. In addition to having the information in various offices and departments, respondents suggested that county governments should promote systems for collecting the information on business and investments in a central location and making it available proactively or on request to the entrepreneurs and investors as well as to other stakeholders through dedicated data centres or online repositories.

The establishment of county investment departments or units with defined responsibility for marketing counties was proposed as a visibility strategy. Respondents suggested that each county should establish a business and investment unit to lead continuous research and generation of information on the county business and investment opportunities and share that information with stakeholders. The unit should be adequately funded to effectively market the respective counties as investment destinations through various means such as investment conferences, exhibitions and media engagements.

3.6.13 Environment Conservation and Natural Resources Management



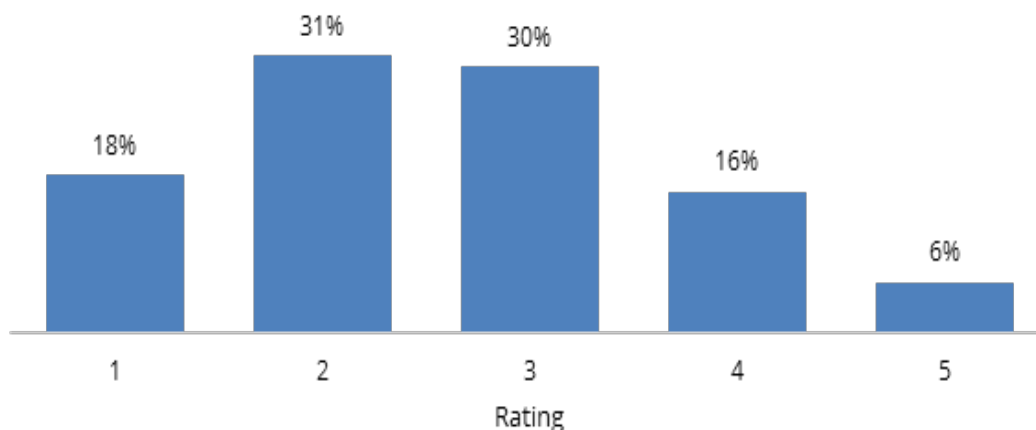
County governments have taken some action on environmental conservation and natural resource management mainly tree planting, policy enactment and resource protection measures however effectiveness of these interventions has been hindered by resource limitations, political interference, public apathy, and inadequate expertise.

The majority of the respondents rated the performance of the county governments as below average. 18% rated them very low (1), with 31% rating them low (2). On the other hand, 30% rated the performance moderate (3), while 16% and 6% rated it high (4) and satisfactory (5).

Further analysis reveals that female respondents were less critical of government investment in the sector, with 42% giving them a low rating of 1 and 2, while respondents under 35 years rated them 44% and male respondents 45%.

The general trend of responses across the other categories (over 35 years, business sector, CSOs, and community members), aligned with the overall pattern (see Annex Figure 16). Overall, with an average rating of 2.6 out of 5, 49% of the respondents were dissatisfied with the county governments 30% considered them moderate and only 22% rated them above average.

Figure 18: *Prioritization of the actions and investments in the conservation of the environment and natural resources by your county government since 2021.*



Actions and Investments for Environmental Conservation and NRM

Tree planting and afforestation initiatives were the most common areas of investment in environmental conservation across the counties. Respondents indicated that there were plans to plant millions of trees and that some county governments had formed ward-based climate change committees to oversee their environmental conservation programmes. Similarly, some county governments are considering compensatory programmes to encourage community maintenance.

Enactment of climate change policies and bills would be a significant step towards enhancing environmental governance. Most county governments have taken positive steps to regulate environmental conservation through diverse approaches such as controlled tree cutting, sand harvesting and charcoal burning. Among others, they have instituted permit and notification requirements, attempting to prevent unauthorized exploitation of natural resources. However, the effectiveness of the measures is frequently dependent on the actual implementation and operationalization of these legal frameworks, which in some cases are still pending or inadequately executed.

Water conservation efforts, such as protecting water catchment areas and building water reservoirs, were identified as critical actions that county governments have prioritized in recent years. To prevent environmental degradation, county governments have also prioritized riparian land protection and sand harvesting regulation.

Sustainable climate change, afforestation, and responsible waste management all require **public awareness and education campaigns**. One of the most popular proposals among respondents was the hiring of extension officers to educate the public about sustainable agricultural practices and the importance of relevant interventions such as terraces in preventing soil erosion.

Factors Impeding Environmental Conservation and Natural Resource Management Initiatives in the Counties since 2021

Financial and human resource limitations were identified as the major barriers. Respondents expressed concerns over insufficient funding for environmental and natural resource management initiatives by the county governments. They pointed out that this factor affected the level and quality of public interventions in these sectors.

The lack of appropriate structures for enforcing existing laws and policies was identified as a major impediment. While most counties had policies and legislation in place, particularly for environmental management, and had established relevant committees, the policies and legislation had yet to be fully implemented, and the committees were not functioning as required by the relevant statutes.

Political interference, corrupt practices and lack of political will have affected the effectiveness of the environmental interventions. Respondents claimed that some county leaders were exploiting environmental resources for personal gains rather than allocating funds to the appropriate programmes. Political control and influence over resources often overshadowed a genuine commitment to conservation. Furthermore, respondents reported that environmental conservation was not always a priority for county leadership, resulting in the sector being underfunded and receiving little attention.

Inadequate public participation and awareness posed another significant challenge in the management of the environment and natural resources at the county level. County governments have not conducted meaningful civic education in these areas resulting in minimal understanding of the importance of the sector. As a result, conservation programmes have been hampered by a lack of community appreciation.

A shortage of qualified personnel and technical expertise in environmental conservation and natural resource management was also identified as a barrier to the growth of the sector. Respondents stated that the county governments lacked adequate staff with the necessary competencies to carry out their environmental and natural resource management mandates. They claimed that this was primarily due to the politicization of recruitment and appointments in counties.

Proposed Solutions for Robust Environment Conservation and Natural Resources Management

Strengthen the legal and policy frameworks related to environmental conservation by updating and harmonizing existing environmental laws and policies to eliminate discrepancies and ensure alignment with national guidelines and best practices, developing and implementing comprehensive county conservation strategies with clear goals, priorities, and action plans tailored to local contexts, and enact laws and regulations for efficient management of natural resources (sustainable use and protection of resources like water, forests and wildlife).

Increase resource mobilization and allocation for environmental conservation by allocating adequate budget resources specifically for environmental conservation initiatives in county development plans and budgets. Further, explore alternative funding mechanisms such as public-private partnerships, access to climate finance, and leveraging community contributions through innovative schemes, and invest in human resource development by training and equipping county personnel with the necessary skills and knowledge for effective environmental management.

Promote innovation and technology in environmental conservation by utilizing technology such as satellite imagery and other advanced tools for monitoring environmental changes and resource utilization, developing and adopting innovative solutions like green technologies, sustainable farming practices, and renewable energy sources, and promoting digital platforms for effective communication and engagement, leveraging digital tools to disseminate information, connecting with communities, and facilitating active participation in environmental initiatives.

Build partnerships and utilize expertise for environmental conservation by collaborating with CSOs, CBOs, and development partners to harness their knowledge, resources, and networks for implementing conservation initiatives and community empowerment. This includes collaborating with universities and research institutions to study local environmental issues, developing evidence-based solutions for sustainable resource management, and exchanging knowledge with other countries and regions to learn and implement best practices in environmental conservation efforts.

3.7 Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries Production

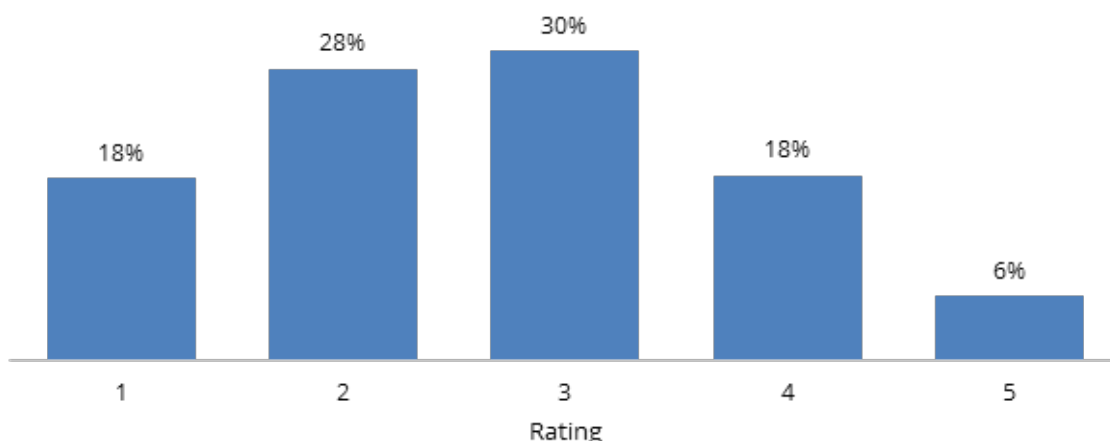


This sector remains largely supported and heavily reliant on funding from donors and development partners, while county governments' investments have been less visible.

This sector received ratings of 1 from 18% and 2 from 28% of the respondents. 30% of respondents rated it moderately (3), while 18% and 6% rated it highly (4 and 5 respectively). According to an analysis of the various categories of respondents, those under the age of 35 were less critical of the government's investments in the sector, with 41% giving the lowest ratings of 1 or 2.

The general trend of responses across the other categories (gender, over 35 years, business sector, CSOs, and community members) was however aligned with the overall pattern, (see **Annex Figure 17**). **Overall**, with an average rating of 2.7 out of 5, 46% of respondents were dissatisfied with the investments in the sector by the county governments (ratings of 1 and 2 combined), while 30% thought it was average and only 24% (ratings of 4 and 5) rated the investments satisfactory.

Figure 19: Ratings of county governments' support on the realization of increased incomes from agricultural, livestock, and fisheries production.



Factors Hindering Investments in Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries Development

The major source of concern is the overreliance on donor funding for sector investments. Despite the importance of this sector in food security, county governments have been allocating insignificant budgets to it. They have largely focused on staff salaries, yet still, key informant respondents who included government officials stated most counties' staffing requirements are inadequate.

The development components of this sector on the other hand have been almost entirely dependent on donors. Notably, the county governments appear to have become complacent as a result of their reliance on external funding. There is a sense that donor funding has made the government overlook this critical sector. Respondents also reported that donor-funded programmes in the sector have been compromised by widespread corruption, for instance, in farm inputs procurement and programme implementation.

Urbanization and changing land use patterns have had significant effects on agricultural productivity in some counties. In counties such as Kiambu, large proportions of agricultural land have been converted into buildings reducing the area available for agricultural production. This development has resulted in decreased agricultural activity as most farmers have been left with small plots that are less economically viable for large-scale or commercial farming.

The **absence of or minimal value addition in agricultural products** has been identified as a major issue affecting farmers' economic returns. Respondents stated that the majority of the farmers in Kenya sell their produce in raw form, which fetches low prices and thus provides a low return on investment. The sale of raw materials also results in missed opportunities for employment and higher incomes.

Inadequate market access for agricultural, livestock and fisheries products was highlighted as another challenge. Respondents stated that the market is often unreliable and that farmers particularly those producing perishable goods are frequently forced to sell their goods at throwaway prices due to a lack of markets and proper storage facilities. County governments have not made adequate investments in supporting the farmers to market and store their produce despite the economic importance and potential of the sector.

Another source of concern is the **inadequate and poor infrastructure required to support agricultural development.** Respondents cited poor road networks across the country as having a significant impact on the transportation of produce to markets, resulting in increased costs and losses.

“Extension service has gone low. The government is no longer hiring extension officers.”
CSO Network Leader, Machakos County

Lack of dependable market infrastructure and adequate storage facilities were also mentioned as having an impact on farmers' economic returns. Inadequate extension services were also cited for the lack of minimal support to farmers, resulting in low production.

Proposed Solutions for Increased Investments in Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries Development

Develop and implement comprehensive land-use plans aimed at protecting agricultural land and encouraging sustainable farming practices, introduce land consolidation programmes and promote agroforestry and other integrated farming systems for sustainable agricultural development.

Improve value addition by investing in agro-processing facilities, training farmers in post-harvest techniques, processing and packaging, value addition practices, and promoting market linkages for value-added products.

Improve market access by developing and upgrading market facilities, including cold storage, sorting and grading centres, and transportation networks, supporting farmer cooperatives and marketing groups, and promoting digital marketing and e-commerce platforms to connect farmers directly with consumers and reduce reliance on middlemen.

Bolster investment and capacity building in the agriculture, livestock and fisheries sectors by increasing budget allocations, investing in critical infrastructure (road networks, irrigation systems, etc.), collaborating with research institutions in developing climate-resilient agricultural technologies and best practices, strengthening extension services, and training farmers in climate-smart agricultural practices and introducing them to new technologies for sustainable development in the sectors

3.8 Climate Change, Pandemic Preparedness and Response

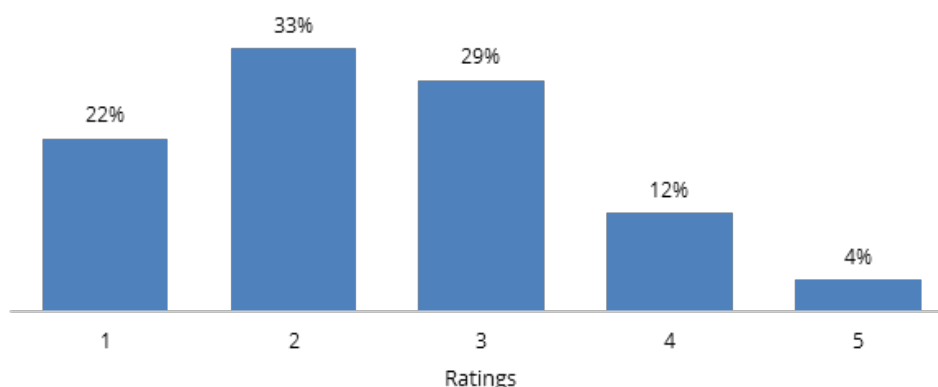
! Most county governments have the relevant legislative and policy frameworks in place and they have allocated resources for infrastructure improvements, and community engagement; however, the effectiveness of these interventions varies across counties. Overall, citizens rated the performance of county governments in increasing resource allocation in these sectors as below average.

County governments were evaluated based on whether they have increased funding for climate change and pandemic mitigation and adaptation strategies since 2021. They received a low rating of 1 and 2 from 22% and 33% of the respondents respectively, while 12% and 4% gave them a high rating of 4 and 5 respectively. On the other hand, 29% of the respondents gave them a moderate rating of 3.

Analysis of the different categories of respondents reveals that respondents aged over 35 years were more critical of the performance of the county governments in these sectors, with 60% giving the lowest ratings (1 and 2), making them the most discontented among all the groups.

The general trend of responses across the other categories (gender, under 35 years, business sector, and CSOs) was aligned with the overall pattern (see **Annex Figure 18**). **Overall**, with an average rating of **2.4 out of 5**, 55% of respondents showed dissatisfaction with the performance of county governments and gave them low ratings of 1 and 2, while 29% viewed the progress as average and only 16% (ratings of 4 and 5) ranked them above average.

Figure 20: Increased resource allocation for mitigation and adaptation strategies on preparedness and response toward the impact of climate.



Resource Allocation for Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies

Factors Hindering the Effectiveness of Climate Change, Pandemic Preparedness and Response

Most respondents stated that the relevant **legislation, policies and strategies** have been developed by most county governments. They include environment and climate change acts and policies as well as the requisite action plans. These policy documents have committed the county governments to allocate percentages of their budgets for enforcement and implementation of the relevant initiatives. Respondents indicated that Kisumu County Government, for instance, allocated 2% of its budget to climate change action, while Garissa County established a dedicated climate change fund with Kshs 80 million.

As part of their adaptation strategies, some counties have created spatial plans that designate areas for forests and elaborate waste management. These policies and plans are fundamental, laying the groundwork for long-term climate change mitigation and disaster preparedness. However, the effectiveness and implementation of the policies differ.

The knowledge of specific budget allocations to implement the policies remains unclear, with most respondents unaware of the precise figures. This situation indicates a lack of transparency or engagement with the public in budgetary processes. Funding from external sources such as the World Bank through the Financing Locally–Led Climate Action (FLLoCA) programme, was acknowledged, but respondents expressed concerns that the translation of the funds into tangible actions remains unclear.

The respondents also indicated that most counties have **formed disaster management committees and departments**, which include representatives from various sectors. These units are responsible for emergency response and support at the county level with funding from their counties. Nairobi County Government for instance allocated Kshs. 100 million and Nyeri County Government Kshs. 1 billion shillings for disaster management in the current fiscal year (2023/2024).

“*The county government appointed a Disaster Management Committee to help manage disasters in the county. The county government has also set aside an emergency kitty as a response strategy for emergency cases related to natural disasters within the county. This is a revolving fund worth 100 million shillings every year.*”

CSO Network Leader

The internal coordination mechanisms supplement the work of the committees and departments, as well as external organizations such as the Kenya Red Cross, to manage disaster risks. However, the **effectiveness of collaborative efforts has not been evaluated** consistently. It is also unclear how these funds will be distributed or utilized.

Corruption, misplaced priorities, and lack of requisite equipment were identified as major hindrances to mitigation and adaptation. Respondents stated that insufficient budgets hampered effective planning and response in most counties. In some cases, county governments failed to anticipate the occurrence of disasters and thus failed to allocate adequate resources. Respondents also expressed concerns that budget documents are frequently unavailable to the public, making it difficult to track resource utilization.

Proposed Solutions to Improving Mitigation and Adaptation Strategy

Infrastructural improvements to combat the effects of climate events such as El Nino were emphasised. It should include road expansion and maintenance. Respondents reported that in some counties, most major roads were being repaired and caravans were being placed to prevent destruction, while in others, tanks for water harvesting were on their way. These infrastructure investments are critical for increasing community resilience to climate variability.

Public awareness and community training were also proposed as important for enhancing preparedness and response. The respondents explained that regular and targeted awareness would promote citizen preparedness, resulting in the elimination or minimisation of the effects of disasters in their counties. They also noted that some counties have established mechanisms for information dissemination and awareness and that these mechanisms have been used to alert those at risk, such as those who are likely to be affected by floods, to seek higher grounds.

Similarly, equipping citizens with the knowledge and skills necessary to respond to emergencies was also identified as critical for effective response. These trainings could cover a wide range of topics, including fire-related incidents and accidents. In Laikipia County, for instance, the government sensitised the pastoralists about potential dangers and encouraged them to sell livestock ahead of El Niño rains in 2023. This is an example of a proactive approach that could be replicated throughout Kenya to help communities respond effectively to disasters.

3.9 Overall Challenges Facing Effectiveness of County Governments



The survey also sought to understand the perceptions of citizens on the top challenges facing county governments in carrying out their constitutional functions effectively. This issue was processed using two open-ended questions in the quantitative data tool which asked respondents to identify the two most pressing challenges and solutions for strengthening devolution in Kenya. Respondents identified several challenges, which were then grouped by theme during data analysis.

The five issues discussed below and organized by clusters emerged as the most significant crosscutting challenges reported by respondents.

Corruption, lack of transparency and accountability emerged as the most significant set of challenges across counties. These problems manifest as bribery, nepotism, and favouritism in the process of obtaining services from the county governments. It was, however, very common in the employment and procurement processes.

Poor service delivery and inadequate infrastructure were identified as the second major hindrances to the effectiveness of the county governments. Respondents stated that this problem was evident through gaps in key services such as the prevalence of poor road networks and insufficient healthcare services among other factors. The problem indicates that county governments face difficulties in effectively managing and delivering essential services and infrastructure development.

Poor civic education, public participation, grievance redress mechanisms, and challenges with access to information were identified as the third most critical challenges. Lack of political commitment to compliance with the constitutional provisions on public participation, lack of or ineffective civic education, and the absence of effective public participation mechanisms were identified as the main concerns. Similarly, limited access to grievance redress mechanisms as well as difficulties in obtaining information from county governments were cited as major barriers in achieving devolution objectives.

Nepotism, cronyism, favouritism and ethnicity in the county public service and access to county services were noted as prevalent practices across county governments. Even though these practices are unconstitutional and illegal, they have persisted and severely harmed meritocracy in employment across county governments, resulting in inefficiency. They have also jeopardized the quality of services provided by county governments, primarily due to incompetence and inadequate monitoring and evaluation of contracted services.

Finally, the **weak finance management systems, poor leadership, and compromised procurement processes** were cited as problems across counties. Delayed disbursement of equitable share of the revenue collected nationally to counties, poor resource mismanagement, and low absorption of development budgets have undermined devolution's effectiveness. Overall, poor leadership has enabled and encouraged the prevalence of corruption and loopholes in financial mismanagement that encourage as well a lack of transparency in procurement processes,

These problems have also contributed to ineffective oversight in the implementation of budgets and development programs at the county level, limiting county governments' ability to provide effective and accountable governance.

The challenges are largely a manifestation of systemic weaknesses in county governments. Comprehensive reforms in governance, human resource management, and financial administration would be necessary to turn around the situation to enhance the effectiveness of county governments in the delivery of the functions.

4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusion

The study utilized primary data from the citizens to assess the implementation of devolution in Kenya and its impacts as outlined in the Kenyan Constitution (2010). The report focuses on what hasn't worked well and what can be done to improve service delivery in various sectors. It provides a comprehensive assessment of service delivery across 16 thematic areas including, health, agriculture, urban planning and development, water services, decentralization, and public participation. The in-depth analysis of the quantitative and qualitative feedback provides succinct challenges for the different sectors, as well as citizens' perspectives on what needs to change to make the devolution dream a reality.



Citizens rated county procurement and payment to contractors and service providers as very poor and the most worrying, with respondents raising significant concerns about the processes' adherence to established regulatory frameworks, transparency, and fairness.

Consultations and cooperation between the national and county governments are reasonably fair although perennial challenges such as political dynamics, administrative and functional overlaps, communication breakdowns poor understanding of the Intergovernmental Relations Act (IGRA) 2012, and resource allocation issues remain areas of concern. These factors have often created distrust, misaligned priorities, and stalled projects, ultimately straining relations and undermining the spirit of devolution that aims to empower communities with effective service delivery.

Achieving diversity in the county's public service remains difficult due to systemic issues such as corruption, nepotism, and political patronage, which, combined with insufficient policies, continue to impede diversity progress.

Several county governments have made progress in establishing decentralization structures such as village councils and village, ward, and sub-county administrators' offices, while others are still lagging due to challenges such as county leadership's reluctance to relinquish control, corruption and mismanagement, political and tribal influences, resource constraints (financial and human), and entrenched resistance to change among long-standing officials.

There has been some progress in citizen participation in decision-making processes in county governance to improve self-governance and engage citizens in development planning and decisions on issues that affect them. However, there are obstacles such as political interests, resource constraints, insufficient civic awareness, ineffective communication, economic burdens, and weak legal frameworks.

County governments have not promoted the transparency levels required by the Constitution and relevant statutes, including the Access to Information Act and the Public Finance Management Act. Transparency gaps have posed a significant barrier to the effectiveness of citizens' participation in county decision-making processes, as well as their oversight role. This situation is believed to be largely deliberate due to a lack of political will, and it has allowed corrupt practices to flourish in the counties.

Critical sectors such as health, water, agriculture, food security, and urban planning and development have seen some improvements. The sectors however continue to face challenges such as weak regulatory frameworks, limited resources and infrastructure, corruption, and mismanagement.

There is moderate satisfaction with the effectiveness of county governments' efforts to mobilize resources for OSR. However, challenges such as a lack of full automation in revenue collection, which leads to corruption and inefficiencies, reliance on a limited range of revenue streams, suboptimal efforts to improve the business environment, and a weak link between revenue collection and service delivery continue to be significant barriers to OSR mobilization. The result is over-reliance on the Equitable Share and the conditional grants from donors and the national government.

The county governments have taken significant steps towards environmental conservation and natural resource management as well as promoting climate innovation and youth-driven green businesses. While actions like tree planting, public education campaigns, policy enactment, and water conservation efforts to preserve the environment and manage natural resources have received significant praise from the citizens and stakeholders, there is insufficient support by county governments for active youths to spearhead climate innovations and youth-driven green businesses, a supportive environment for young entrepreneurs, and more investments or innovative funding strategies and strengthening of the regulatory frameworks in the environmental sector.

Despite the legal frameworks defining the fundamental principles for managing procurement and payment processes in county governments, the two are regarded as highly opaque, with limited transparency and accountability and complex deep-seated issues. Citizens are increasingly concerned about rising levels of corruption and financial mismanagement across counties.

There is a lack of or diminishing economic opportunities in counties, with little emphasis on job creation and empowerment of small and medium enterprises/businesses as well as attracting investments that offer employment to the youth.

4.2 Overall Recommendations

The study identified **key policy, legal, and strategic actions** that should be taken to make devolution effective for citizens. The national and county governments, as well as other stakeholders in the devolution space, will need to work together to carry out the recommended actions. When these policy, legal, and strategic recommendations are implemented, they have the potential to solve the problems associated with devolution.

- 1.** The survey findings suggest high-level recommendations for strengthening county governments and implementing devolution across thematic areas, such as **improving public participation and civic education** to engage citizens in county governance. Civic education should be implemented as a necessary prerequisite for active and meaningful public participation in governance and decision-making processes.
- 2.** **More open government and information sharing** are needed to improve quality service delivery and value for money in public service including development programmes.

3. **Improving anti-corruption measures, enforcing good finance management, and addressing violations of the Public Financial Management Act and other laws is necessary.** The establishment of transparent systems and strict enforcement of the law can combat or mitigate the vice.
4. **Providing job opportunities and empowerment** is a top priority. Governments should do more to create jobs, attract investment, and empower small and medium-sized enterprises/businesses to create economic opportunities.
5. To **address resource constraints and operational challenges**, county governments should develop strategies to diversify revenue sources and reduce reliance on conditional grants from donors and the national government. Increased budget allocations for key sectors, as well as timely fund disbursement, will help address operational challenges such as late project implementation, staffing, service delivery delays, and so on.
6. Establishing a **transparent and equitable resource allocation framework** at the county level through participatory budgeting. Citizens should have a say in how resources are allocated and used across all sectors. They should conduct regular audits of their sectors in collaboration with the OAG, as well as public disclosure of budget utilization, to improve accountability and build trust among citizens.
7. **Rigorous capacity building of staff who provide essential services to citizens in various sectors** is critical to service delivery success. This can be accomplished by collaborating with academic institutions to provide various specialized training, NGOs and CSOs with technical experts who can serve as mentors for county staff, and peer learning events with other counties that have excelled in public service delivery.
8. **Digitalization, automation of services and innovation in service delivery** in the various sectors is critical in promoting efficiency and transparency. Adopting digital solutions and innovation can transform service delivery, improve operational efficiency, and reduce corruption. This can include automating revenue collection systems, digitizing market management, water management, healthcare services, and using technology to improve public service delivery, as well as developing innovative problem-solving approaches in governance and service provision.
9. **Strategic investment in infrastructure development and regular maintenance** are required. This includes improving market facilities such as clean water, toilets, and security, enhancing healthcare infrastructure, and ensuring public spaces are safe and well-maintained.
10. **Youth engagement and empowerment** through targeted programs are critical. This includes providing opportunities for education, entrepreneurship (via skill development and loans), and employment. Young people should be involved in decision-making processes and given opportunities to contribute to societal development.
11. **Providing a conducive investment environment in the counties** is crucial as it will help create employment opportunities and spur economic growth. To encourage investment and support small businesses, county governments should develop business-friendly policies, establish a predictable legal and regulatory framework, review and reform taxation regimes, and ease land access.

Furthermore, county governments should provide financial assistance, loan programs, and tax breaks to promote investment and entrepreneurship. To ensure fair competition and attract investments, infrastructure development and corruption prevention are also required.

Furthermore, **Annexe 2** contains sector-specific recommendations.

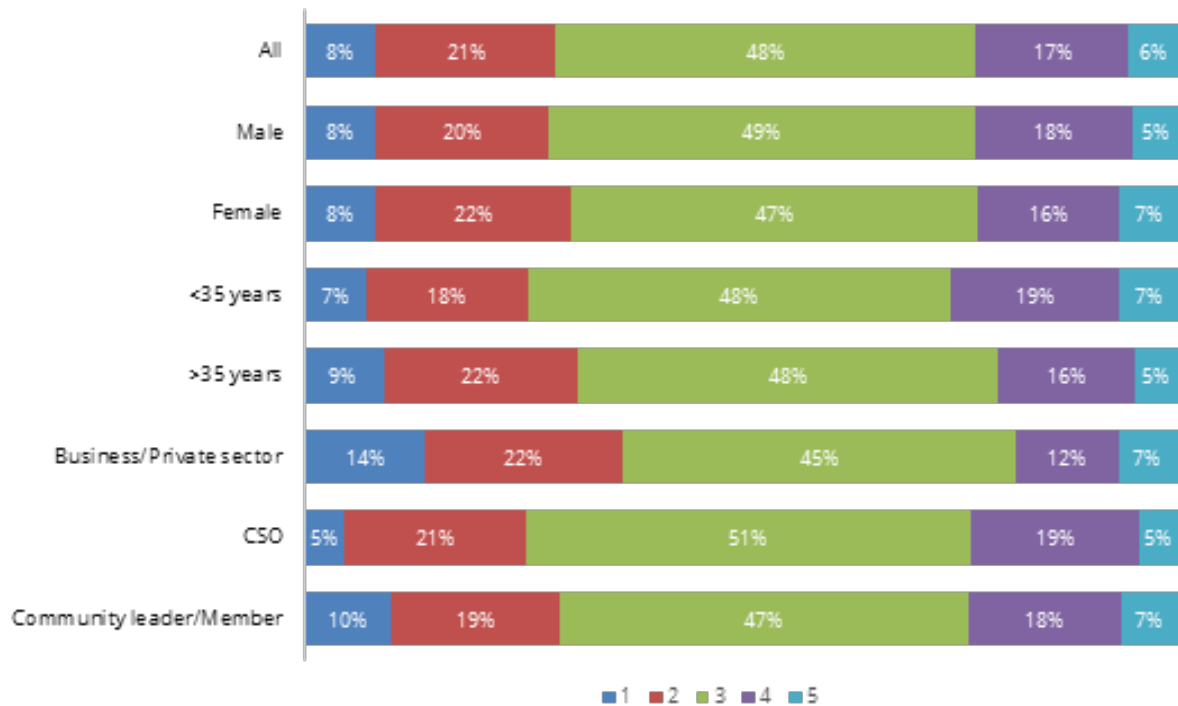
Lastly, the study found that citizens' perceptions of the last ten years of devolution varied. The county governments are now in the third phase of implementation, and citizens are hopeful that once the appropriate governance systems and existing laws, policies, and other regulatory frameworks are fully implemented, the county governments will become more responsive and accountable to the needs of their constituents. Achieving the devolution dream requires the combined and sustained efforts of all devolution actors, including the national government, non-governmental organizations, religious leaders, academic institutions, experts, and citizens.



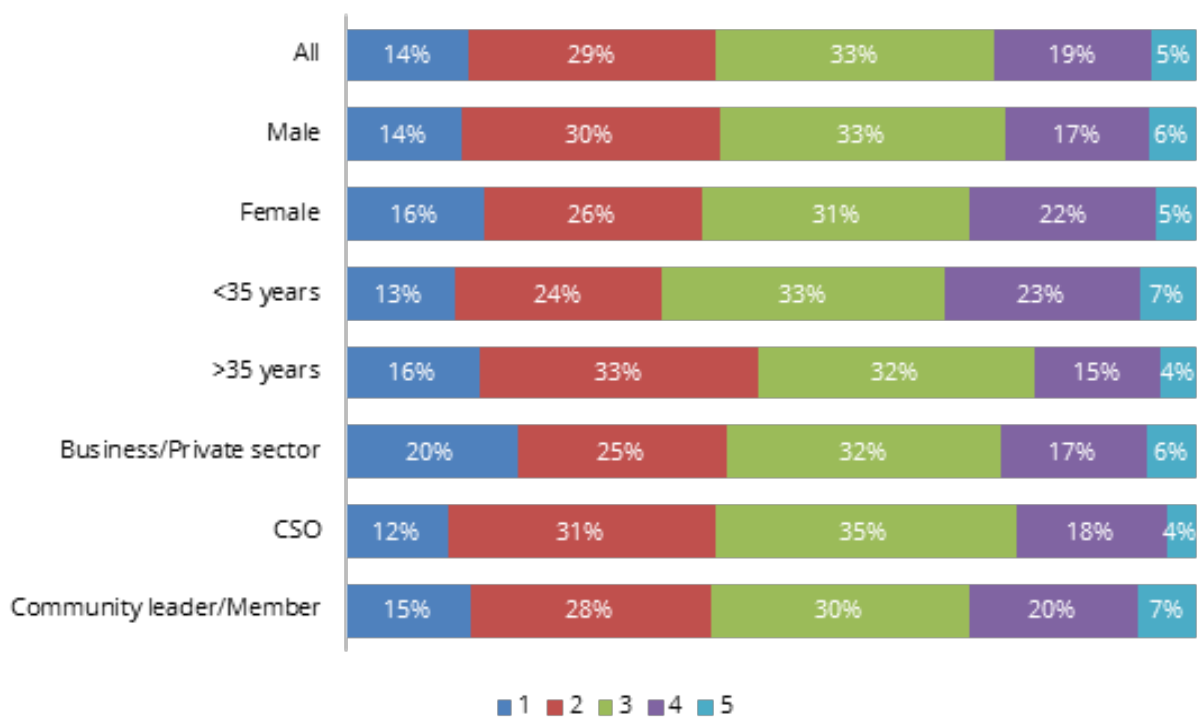
ANNEXES

Annexe 1: Extra Graphs

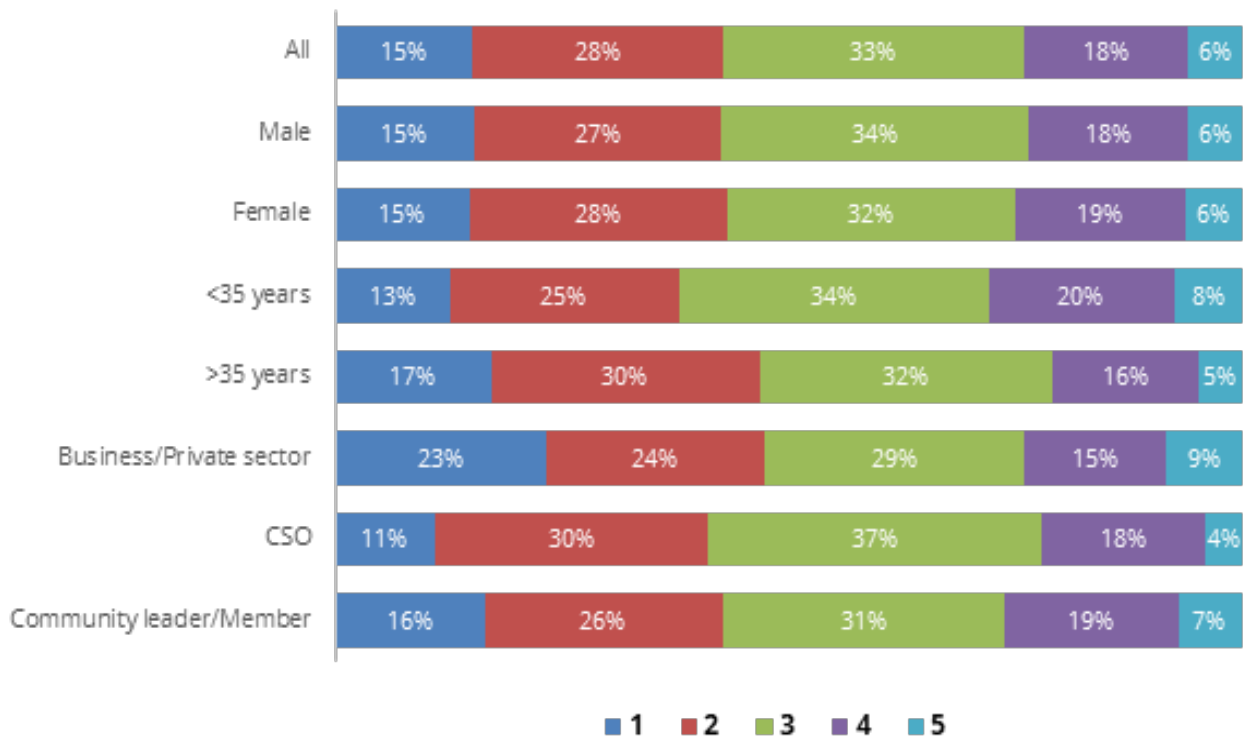
Annexe Figure 1: Ratings of the Effectiveness of the Cooperation and Consultation between the National Government and County Government by Categories



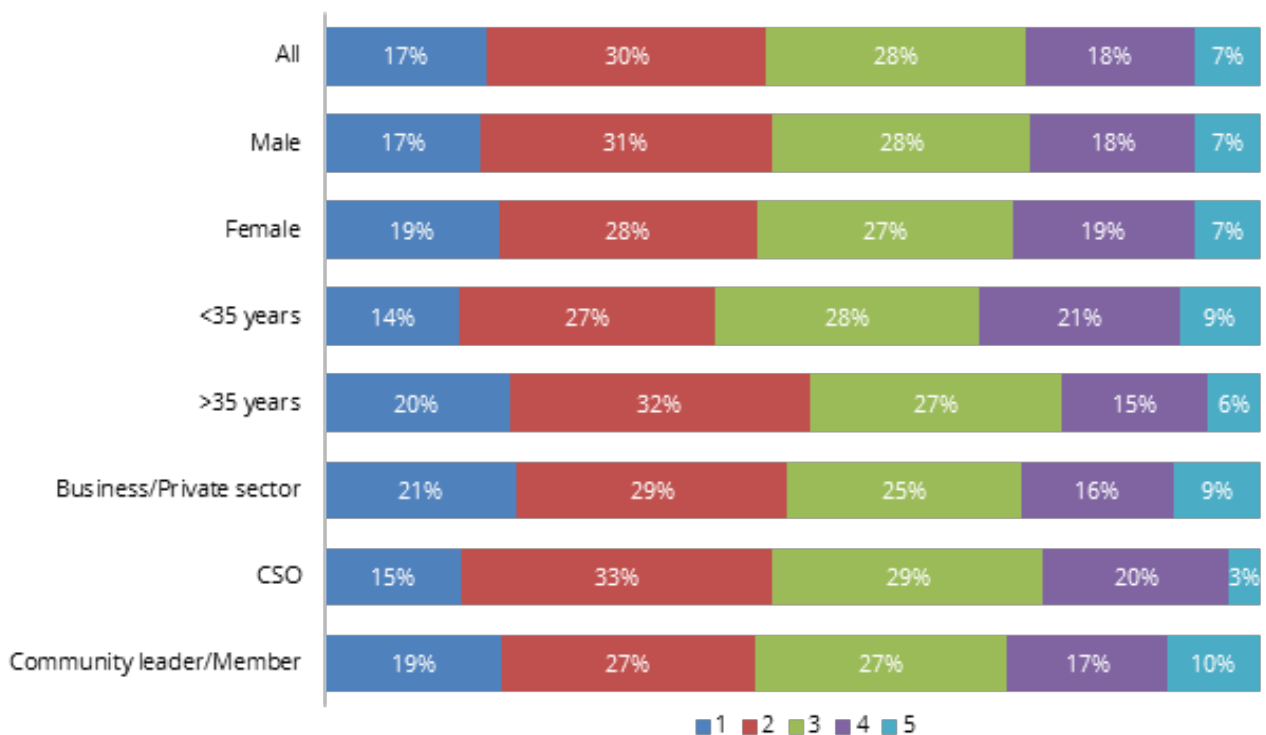
Annexe Figure 2: Ratings of Fostering Diversity in County Public Service by Categories



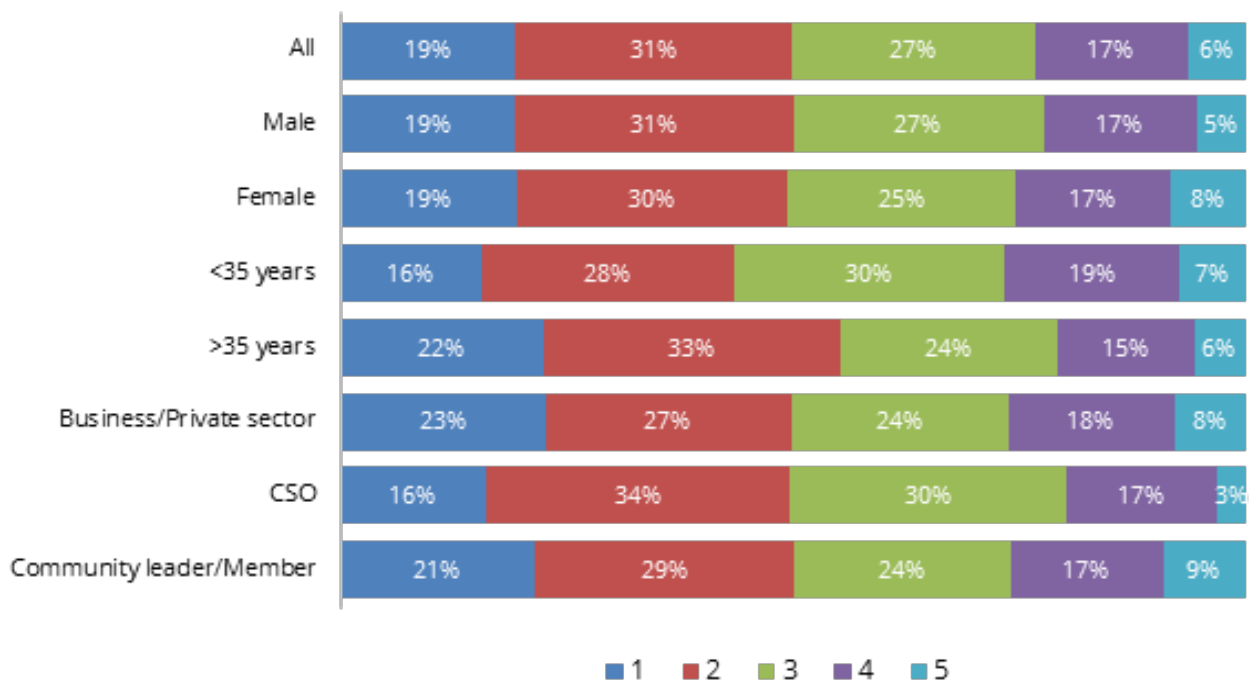
Annexe Figure 3: Ratings of Decentralization of Governance by Categories



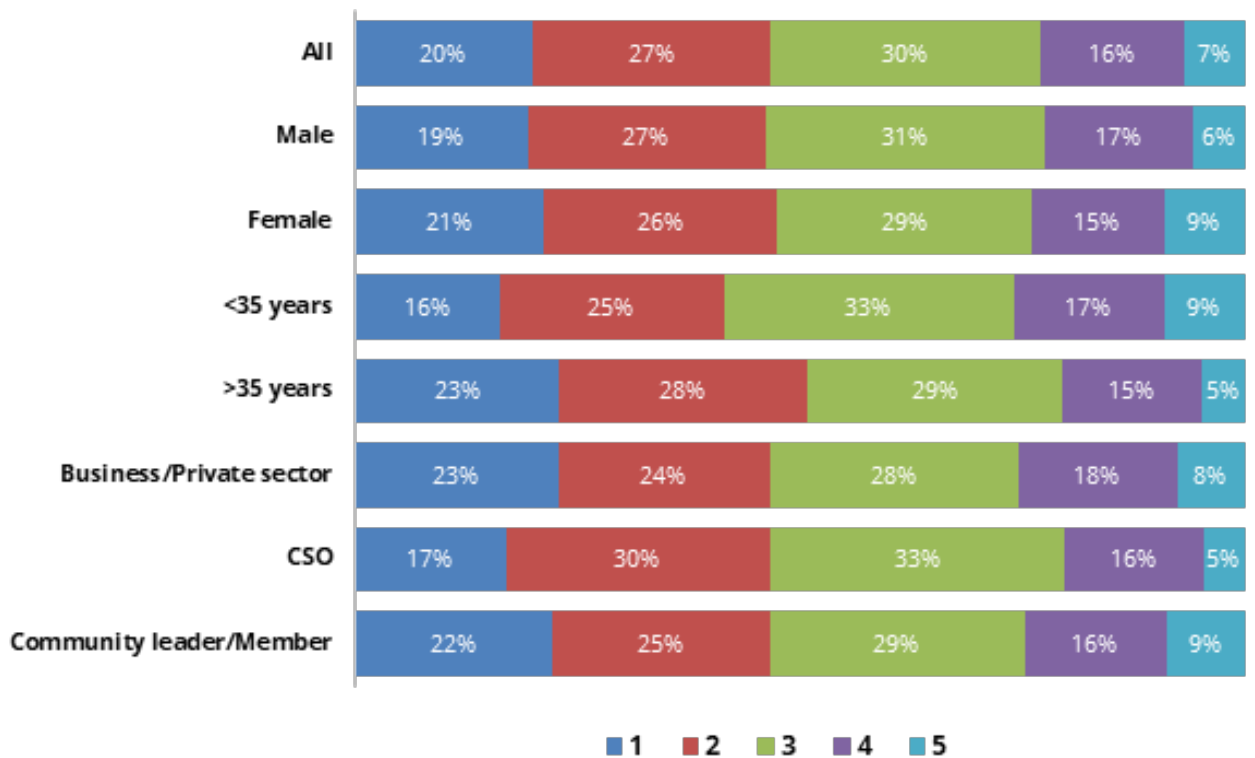
Annexe Figure 4: Ratings of Citizen Participation in Making Decisions Affecting them, such as the County Planning and Budget Processes by Categories.



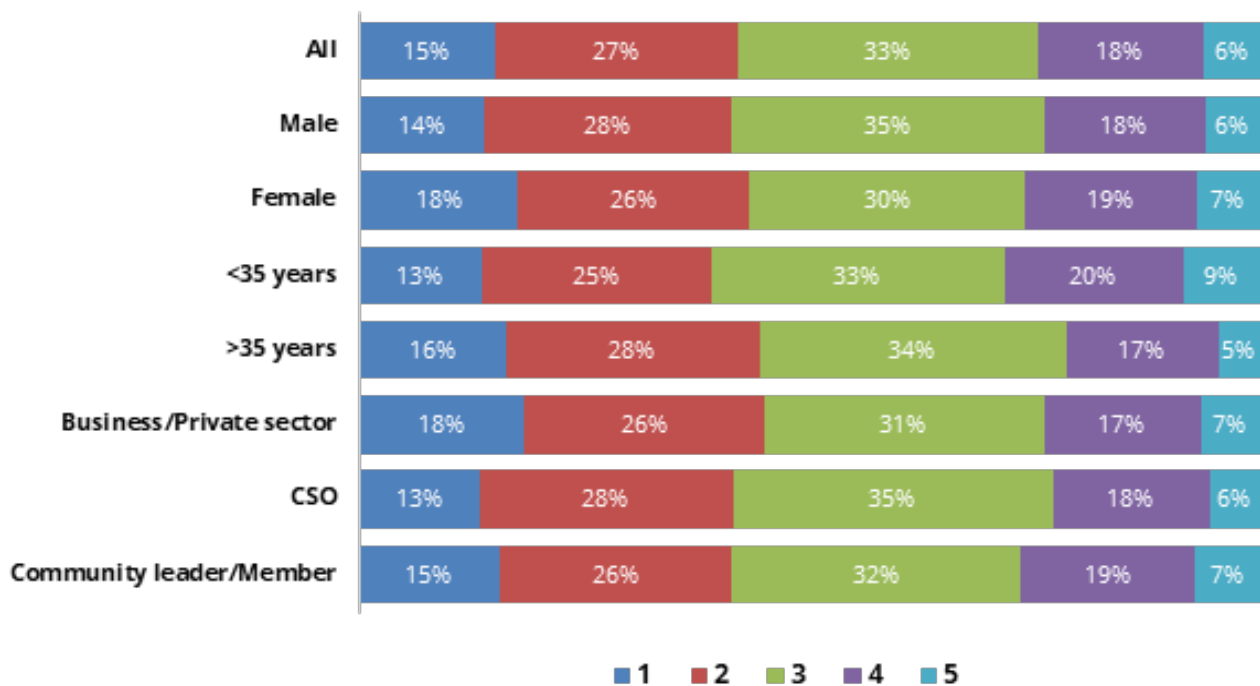
Annexe Figure 5: Ratings of Improvement in Food Security because of Increased Investments in Agriculture by your County Government from 2021 by Categories.



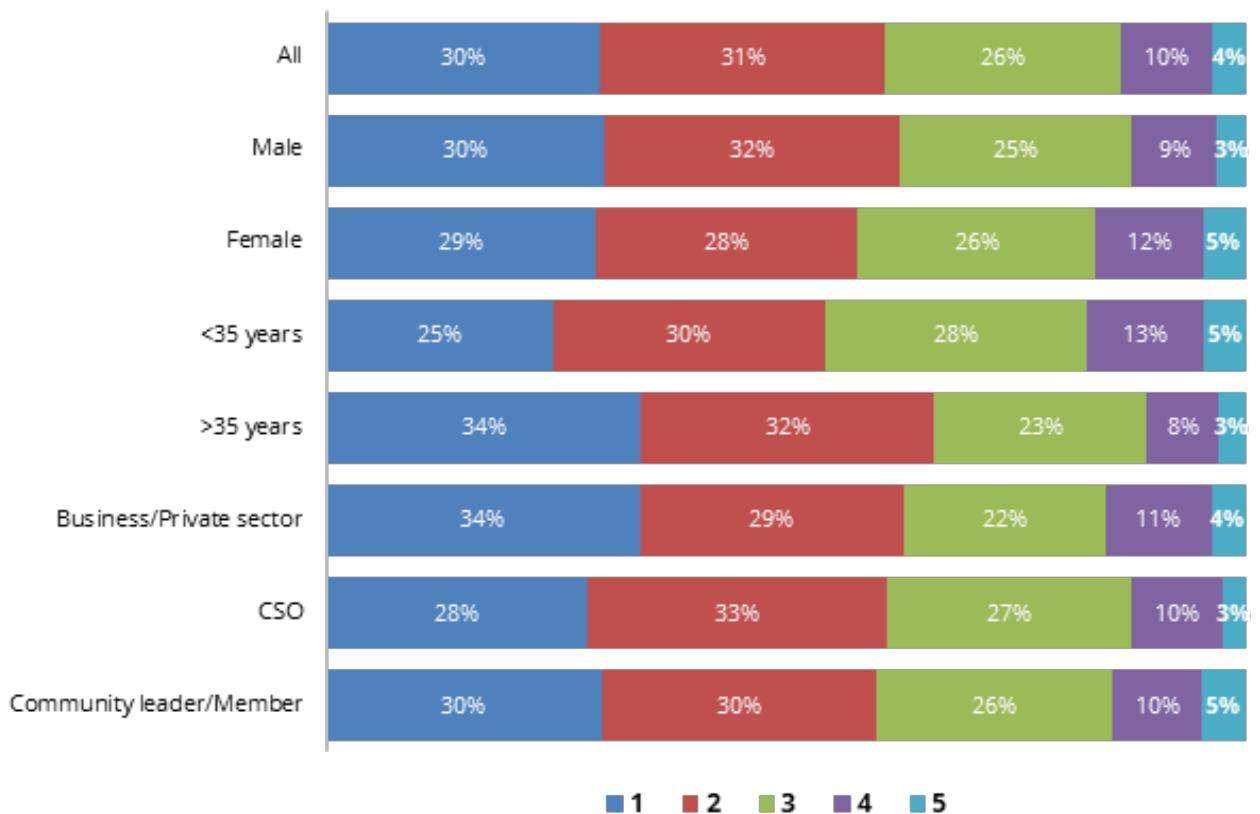
Annexe Figure 6: Ratings on Improvement in Access to Safe, Reliable, and Affordable Water by Categories.



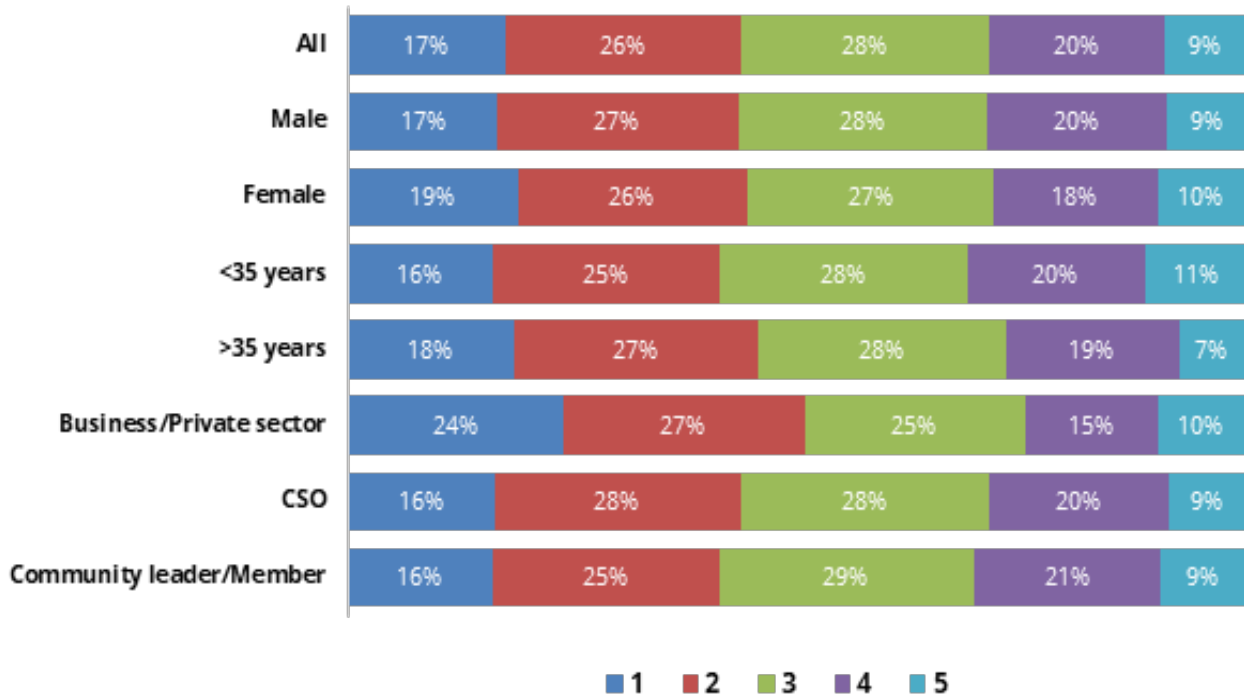
Annexe Figure 7: Ratings on Investments in Preventive and Curative Health, Planning, and Risk Reduction by County Government by Categories



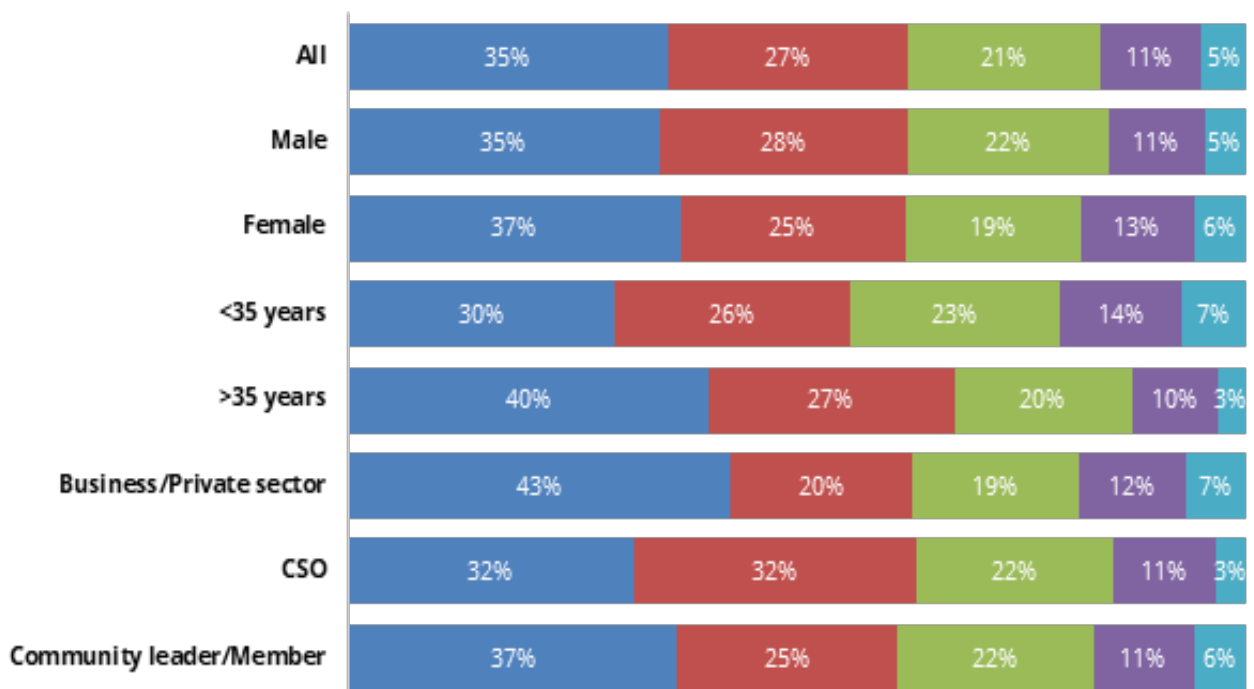
Annexe Figure 8: Rating the Existence of Climate Innovation Hubs and Accelerator Programmes, Subsidies, and Incentives to Youth-driven Green Innovation and Businesses by County Governments by Categories.



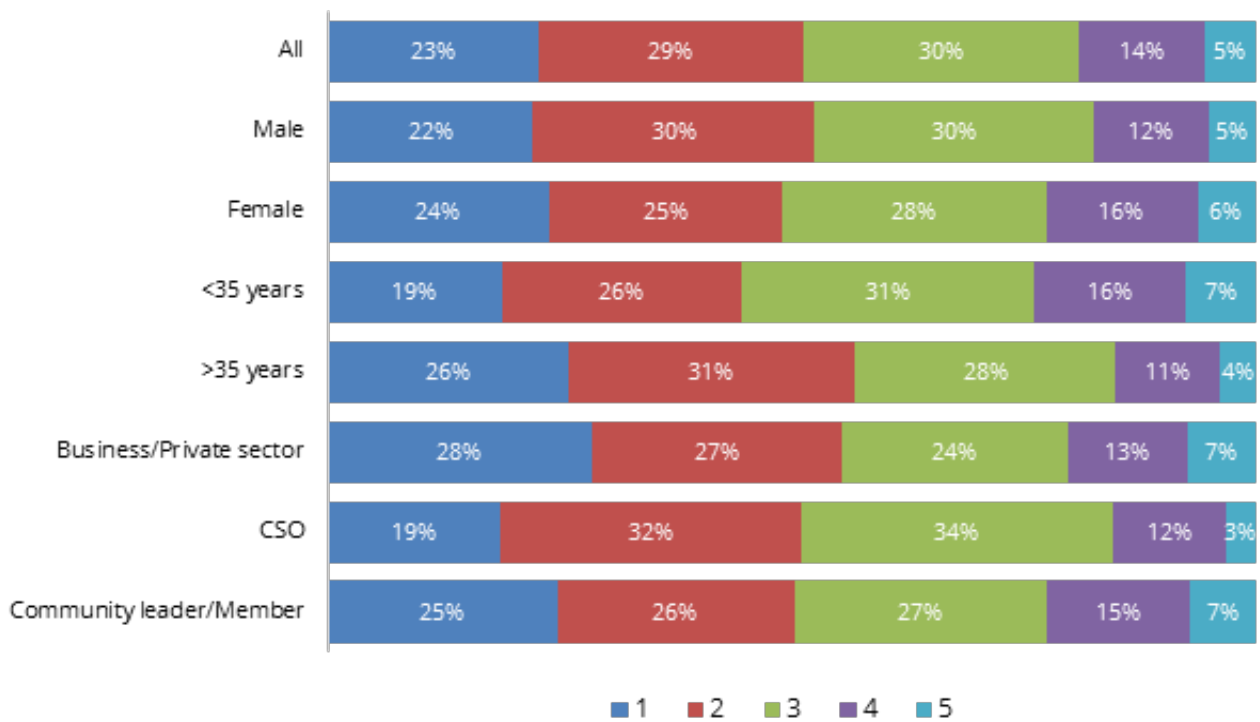
Annexe Figure 9: Rating on Formulation of County Urban Integrated Development Plans and Management Structures for the County's Urban Areas by Categories.



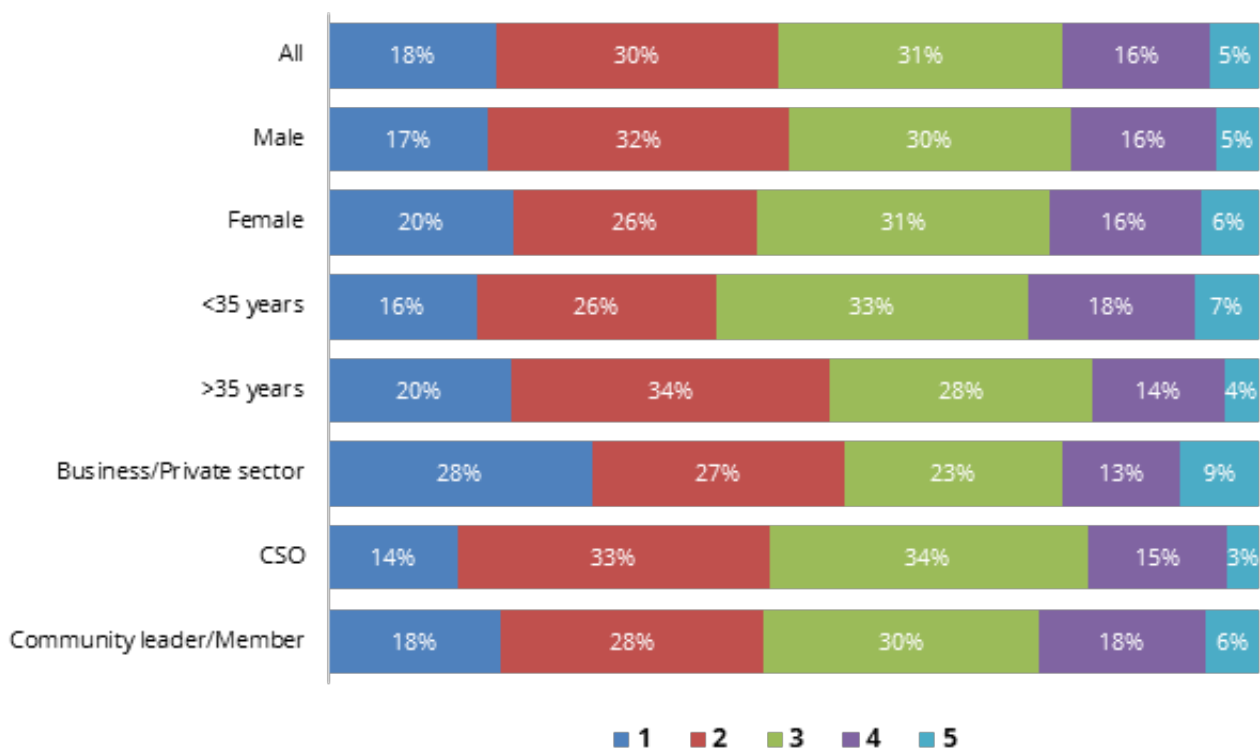
Annexe Figure 10: Rating the Openness in Procurement and Payment of County Services to Contractors by County Governments by Categories



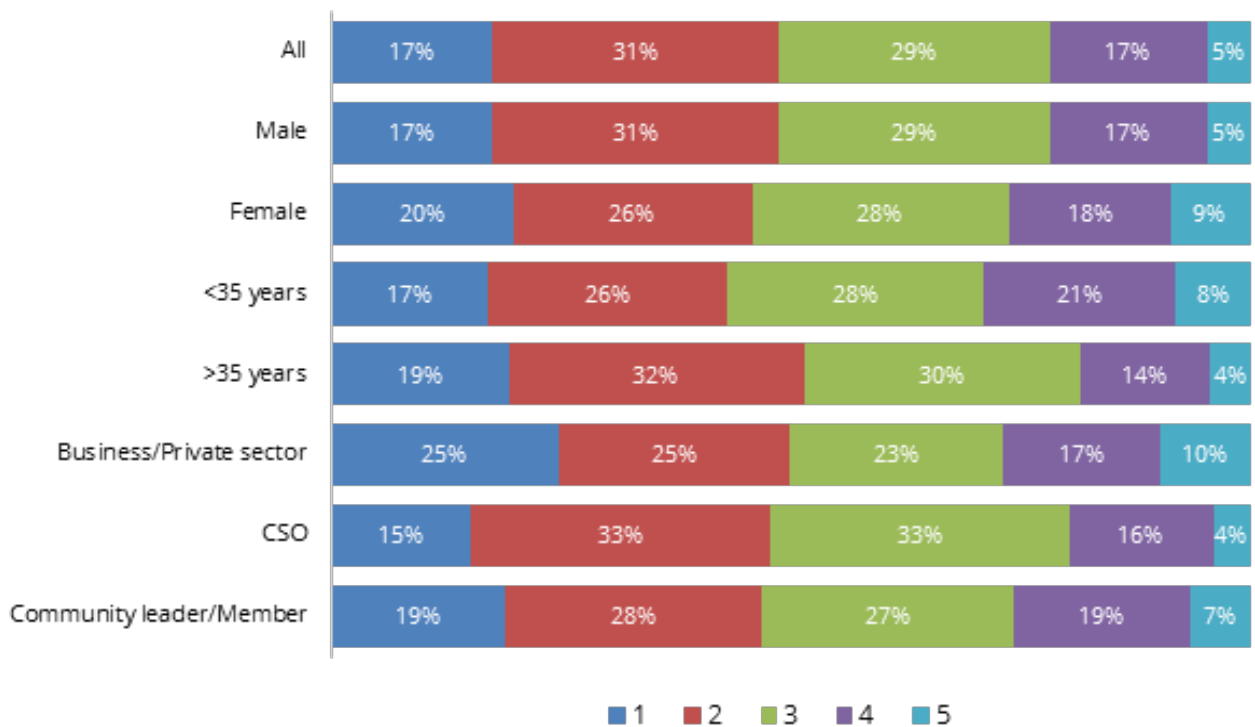
Annexe Figure 11: Rating the Level of Transparency and Accountability in Decision-making and Governance Processes by Categories.



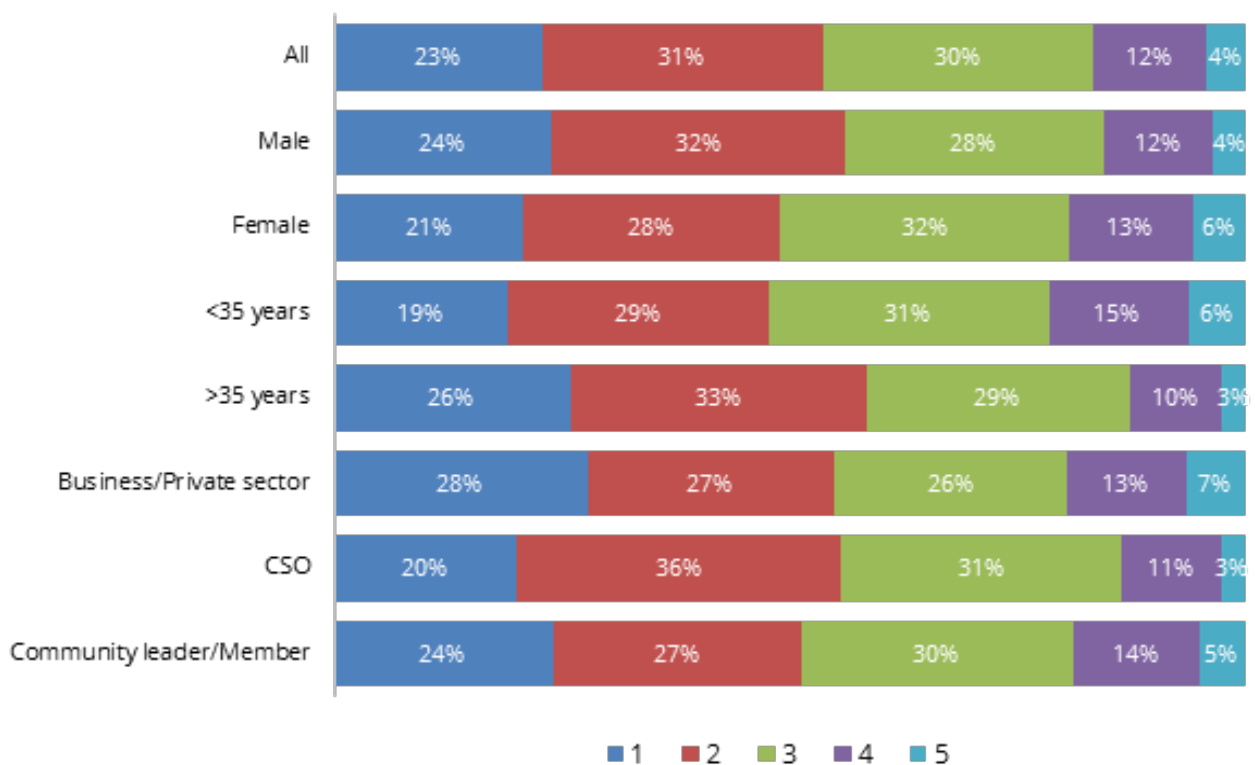
Annexe Figure 12: Rating on Implementation of Measures for Effective Own Source Revenue (OSR) Mobilization by Categories.



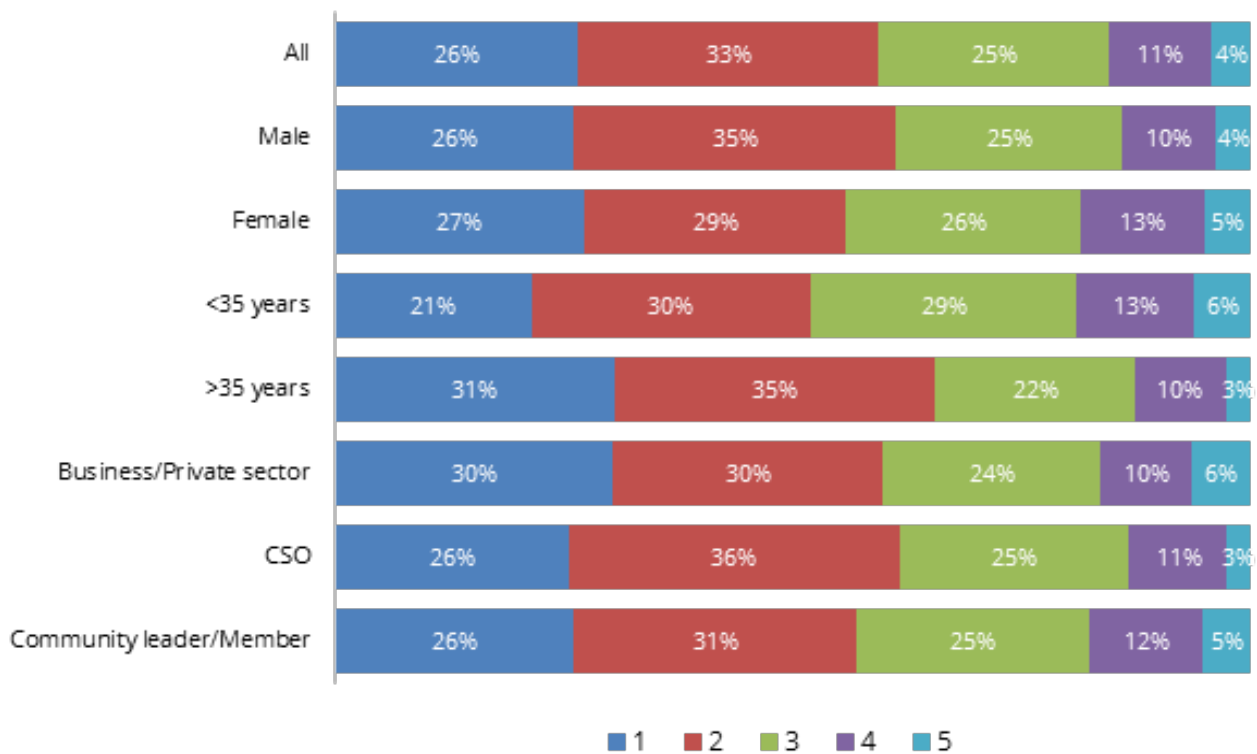
Annex Figure 13: Rating of Improved Quality and Safety of the County Markets under Current County Governments by Categories.



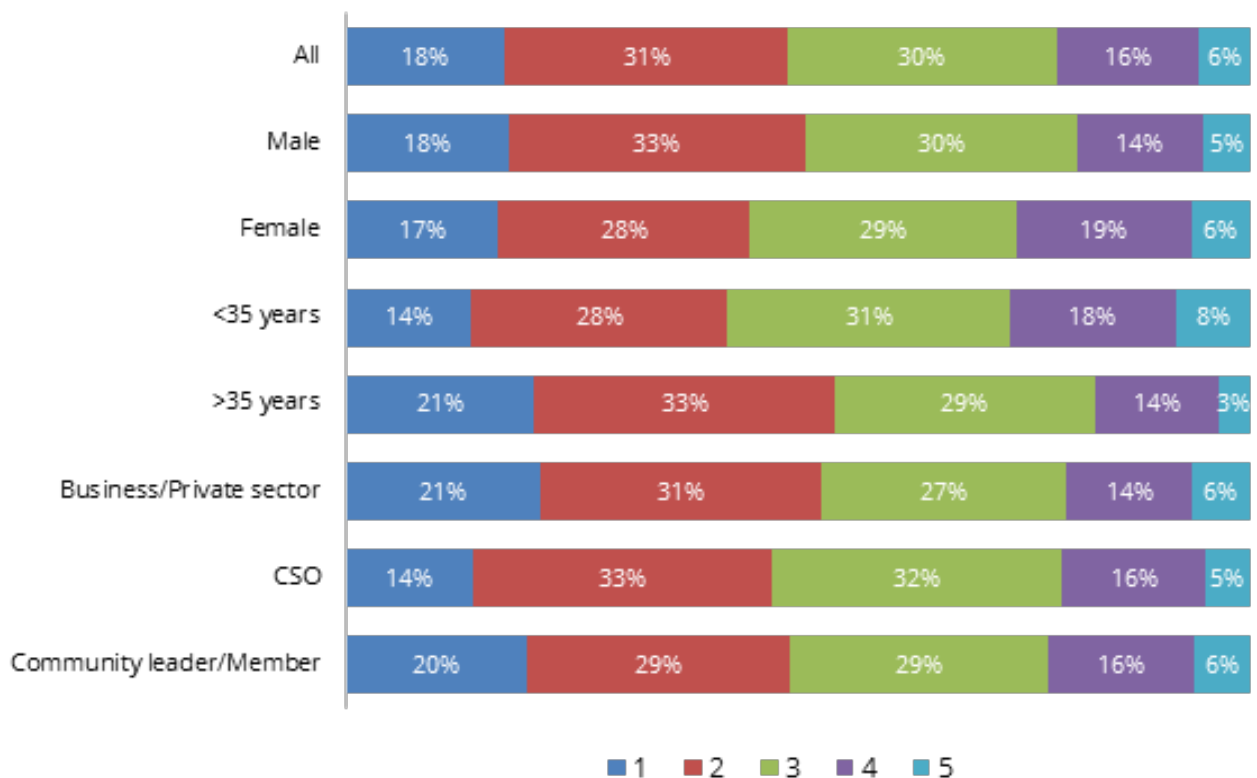
Annexe Figure 14: Rating of County Governments on Implementation of Relevant Measures to Improve the Environment and Incentivize Business and Investment Opportunities by Categories.



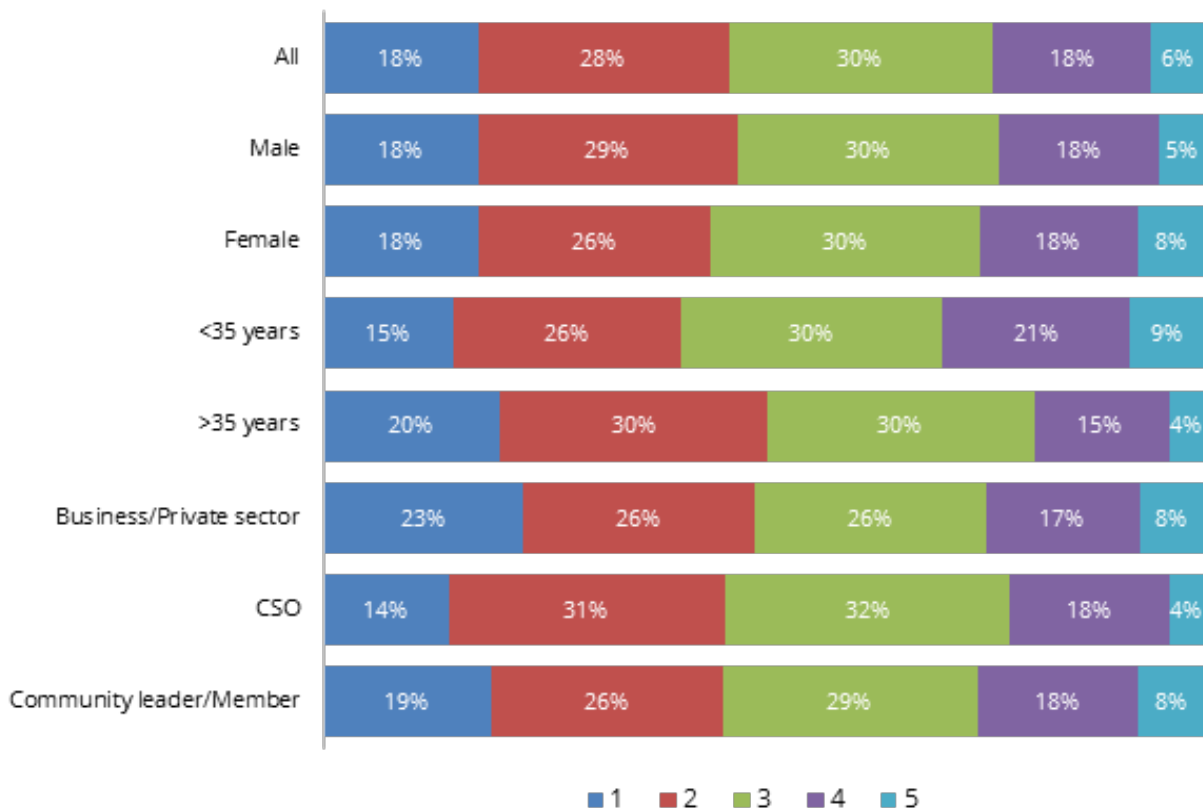
Annexe Figure 15: Rating on Access to Relevant Information and Data for Doing Business and Investment by Categories.



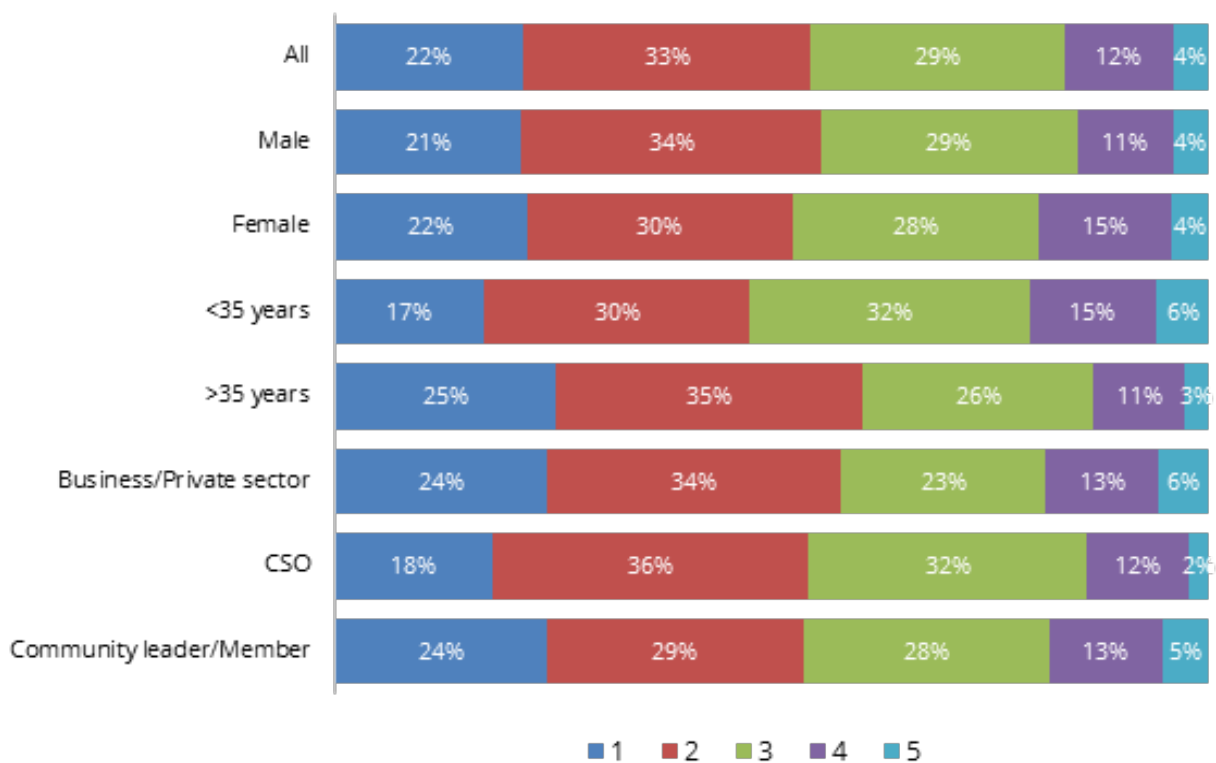
Annexe Figure 16: Ratings of Prioritization of the Actions and Investments in the Conservation of the Environment and Natural Resources by your County Government since 2021 by Categories.



Annexe Figure 17: Ratings of County Government Support on the Realization of Increased Incomes from Agricultural, Livestock, and Fisheries Production by Categories.



Annexe Figure 18: Increased Resource Allocation for Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies on Preparedness and Response toward the Impact of Climate by Categories.



Annexe 2: Thematic-Specific Recommendations

The table below summarises the recommendations under each thematic area.

#	Recommendation	Recommendation Type	Responsible Entity	Other Contributing Entities
Cooperation, Coordination, and Consultation between National and County Governments				
1	Strengthen the legal framework and oversight of intergovernmental relations in Kenya by reviewing and amending IGRA 2012 and enacting comprehensive guidelines/frameworks as well as empowering the Intergovernmental Relations Technical Committee (IGRTC)/Council of Governors (CoG) to clarify functions, address overlaps, streamline communication, resolve disputes, monitor implementation, and enforce compliance.	Legal/Policy	CoG/IGRTC	IGRTC Senate National Assembly Summit County Governments/ County Assemblies
1.1.				
1.2.	Foster political will and collaboration between national and county governments by organizing regular (quarterly) intergovernmental dialogues and retreats for open dialogue and joint problem-solving and promoting national-county partnerships for specific projects to facilitate targeted interventions.	Operational	Summit	CoG IGRTC
1.3.	Enhance civil society engagement and public oversight in the context of intergovernmental cooperation by supporting CSOs in monitoring and advocating for effective collaboration, raising public awareness, and understanding of the devolution process through civic education campaigns, and strengthening transparency and citizen participation mechanisms by facilitating public access to information and ensuring community engagement in decision-making and development initiatives.	Strategic	County Governments	CoG State Department for Devolution CSOs

#	Recommendation	Recommendation Type	Responsible Entity	Other Contributing Entities
1.4.	Establish permanent or ad-hoc sector-specific committees/technical working groups with representatives from National and County Governments, including experts, civil society, and private sector actors, to address specific issues related to devolution, facilitate joint decision-making, and resolve intergovernmental conflicts. These units can manage shared functions, oversee collaborative projects, and serve as a platform for information exchange and collaboration.	Operational	CoG/IGRTC	Relevant Ministries CSOs NGOs Academia Private Sector Institutions
2	Diversity in County Public Service			
2.1.	Strengthen legal and policy frameworks regarding county public service to align with national diversity and inclusion guidelines by developing enforceable affirmative action plans with specific targets for underrepresented groups, establishing transparent and merit-based recruitment procedures, and enacting robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess and ensure accountability in achieving diversity goals.	Legal/Policy	CoG/County Governments/ County Assemblies	IGRTC Senate National Assembly Summit
2.2.	Strengthen County Public Service Boards (CPSBs) to enhance diversity in county public services by providing specialized training for Board members and public service officials to effectively manage diverse workforces, ensure workplace accommodations for persons with disabilities and marginalized groups, and allocate adequate resources for necessary training, infrastructure, and technology to support and sustain inclusive employment practices.	Strategic	CoG/County Governments	CPSBs CSOs NGOs Private Sector Institutions

#	Recommendation	Recommendation Type	Responsible Entity	Other Contributing Entities
2.3.	Foster transparency and accountability in achieving diversity in county public services by regularly publishing comprehensive data and reports detailing the representation of various groups within the county public service, establishing effective whistleblowing mechanisms to encourage reporting and address discriminatory practices, and reinforcing the authority and capabilities of oversight bodies like the Commission on Administrative Justice (CAJ) and relevant committees to investigate and act against instances of discrimination in public service recruitment and employment.	Operational	CPSBs/County Governments	IGRTC CoG CAJ
2.4.	Enhance intersectoral collaboration in promoting diversity in county public services by forming partnerships with CSOs, NGOs, and other community groups for joint outreach, education, and advocacy efforts. Additionally, engage media platforms to enhance awareness, showcase positive inclusivity examples, and collaborate with other counties and government agencies to exchange best practices and insights for effectively achieving diversity in public service.	Operational	CoG/IGRTC	Relevant Ministries CSOs NGOs Academia Private Sector Institutions
3	Citizen Participation in Decision-making			
3.1.	Strengthen legal and policy frameworks for public participation by enacting and enforcing county public participation acts, policies, and guidelines that are consistent with national frameworks such as the Public Participation Act, and ensuring clear procedural frameworks, communication protocols, accountability mechanisms, and guidelines for inclusive and meaningful engagement that represent diverse groups and foster equitable participation.	Legal/Policy	CoG/County Governments/ County Assemblies	CAJ IGRTC Senate National Assembly Summit

#	Recommendation	Recommendation Type	Responsible Entity	Other Contributing Entities
3.2.	<p>Enhance civic awareness and education by implementing comprehensive civic education programmes to inform citizens about their participation rights and responsibilities, conducting targeted programmes for marginalized groups such as rural communities, women, youth and PWDs, and utilising diverse communication channels, including both traditional and modern media platforms, to disseminate information in accessible formats and languages.</p>	Operational	County Governments	CSOs NGOs Private Sector Institutions Media Houses Community Leaders
3.3.	<p>Strengthen partnerships and collaboration for enhancing citizen participation by partnering with CSOs and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) to leverage their expertise and networks, particularly for reaching marginalized groups and facilitating community-driven engagement; engaging with media organizations to utilize various media platforms for raising awareness, disseminating information, and fostering public discourse on participation issues; and establishing connections with other counties to share best practices and innovative approaches for improving citizen participation initiatives.</p>	Strategic & Operational	County Governments	CSOs NGOs Private Sector Institutions Media Houses Community Leaders
3.4.	<p>Build trust and transparency in citizen participation by implementing decisions informed by citizens' input and providing feedback on how their contributions influenced outcomes; holding officials accountable by establishing mechanisms for reporting and addressing concerns about manipulation or exclusion in public participation processes; and promoting independent oversight by strengthening the role of the County Public Participation Committees and other oversight bodies to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of public participation initiatives.</p>	Strategic & Operational	County Governments	CSOs NGOs Private Sector Institutions Media Houses Community Leaders

#	Recommendation	Recommendation Type	Responsible Entity	Other Contributing Entities
4	Decentralization of Governance			
4.1.	Strengthen the legal and policy framework in decentralization by reviewing and amending relevant legislation to clearly define the mandates, resources, and accountability mechanisms for different levels of government within the county and developing comprehensive implementation plans for the decentralization processes, clearly outlining the sequence of functions and services to be transferred; and enhancing oversight and accountability by strengthening the role of the oversight institutions to monitor the implementation of decentralization plans and address any shortcomings.	Legal/Policy	CoG/County Governments/ County Assemblies	IGRTC Senate National Assembly Summit
4.2.	Promote political will and leadership commitment to decentralization through capacity-building initiatives for governors and county officials on effective decentralization principles and practices and foster inter-county collaboration and knowledge sharing through learning and peer-to-peer exchange of best practices on decentralization initiatives.	Strategic	County Governments	CSOs NGOs Private Sector Institutions Media Houses Community Leaders
5	Environmental Conservation and Natural Resource Management			
5.1.	Strengthen the legal and policy frameworks related to environmental conservation by updating and harmonizing existing environmental laws and policies to eliminate discrepancies and ensure alignment with national guidelines and best practices, developing and implementing comprehensive county conservation strategies with clear goals, priorities, and action plans tailored to local contexts, and enact laws and regulations for efficient management of natural resources (sustainable use and protection of resources like water, forests and wildlife).	Legal/Policy	CoG/County Governments/ County Assemblies	IGRTC Senate National Assembly Summit

#	Recommendation	Recommendation Type	Responsible Entity	Other Contributing Entities
5.2.	<p>Increase resource mobilization and allocation for environmental conservation by allocating adequate budget resources specifically for environmental conservation initiatives in county development plans and budgets. Further, explore alternative funding mechanisms such as public-private partnerships, access to climate finance, and leveraging community contributions through innovative schemes, and invest in human resource development by training and equipping county personnel with the necessary skills and knowledge for effective environmental management.</p>	Strategic	County Governments	CSOs NGOs Private Sector Institutions Media Houses Community Leaders
5.3.	<p>Promote innovation and technology in environmental conservation by utilizing technology such as satellite imagery and other advanced tools for monitoring environmental changes and resource utilization, developing and adopting innovative solutions like green technologies, sustainable farming practices, and renewable energy sources, and promoting digital platforms for effective communication and engagement, leveraging digital tools to disseminate information, connecting with communities, and facilitating active participation in environmental initiatives.</p>	Strategic	County Governments	CSOs NGOs Private Sector Institutions Media Houses Community Leaders
5.4	<p>Build partnerships and utilize expertise for environmental conservation by collaborating with CSOs, CBOs, and development partners to harness their knowledge, resources, and networks for implementing conservation initiatives and community empowerment. This includes collaborating with universities and research institutions to study local environmental issues, developing evidence-based solutions for sustainable resource management, and exchanging knowledge with other countries and regions to learn and implement best practices in environmental conservation efforts.</p>	Strategic	County Governments	CSOs NGOs Private Sector Institutions Media Houses Community Leaders

#	Recommendation	Recommendation Type	Responsible Entity	Other Contributing Entities
6	Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries Production			
6.1.	Develop and implement comprehensive land-use plans aimed at protecting agricultural land and encouraging sustainable farming practices, introduce land consolidation programmes and promote agroforestry and other integrated farming systems for sustainable agricultural development.	Strategic	County Governments	CoG Ministry of Lands Private Sector CSOs NGOs
6.2.	Improve value addition by investing in agro-processing facilities, training farmers in post-harvest techniques, processing and packaging, value addition practices, and promoting market linkages for value-added products.	Strategic	County Governments	CoG Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, and Cooperatives (MoALFC) Private sector Market associations NGOs
6.3.	Improve market access by developing and upgrading market facilities, including cold storage, sorting and grading centres, and transportation networks, supporting farmer cooperatives and marketing groups, and promoting digital marketing and e-commerce platforms to connect farmers directly with consumers and reduce reliance on middlemen.	Strategic	County Governments	CoG CSOs Private Sector Market Associations
6.4.	Bolster investment and capacity building in the agriculture, livestock and fisheries sectors by increasing budget allocations, investing in critical infrastructure (road networks, irrigation systems, etc.), collaborating with research institutions in developing climate-resilient agricultural technologies and best practices, strengthening extension services, and training farmers in climate-smart agricultural practices and introducing them to new technologies for sustainable development in the sectors.	Strategic	County Governments	CoG Private sector Research Institutions NGOs/INGOs CSOs

#	Recommendation	Recommendation Type	Responsible Entity	Other Contributing Entities
7	Climate Change, Pandemic Preparedness and Response			
7.1.	Strengthen legal and policy frameworks in disaster management and climate change by reviewing and updating existing policies to align with national laws and policies, addressing gaps and inconsistencies, developing comprehensive county-level preparedness and response plans detailing specific actions, resource allocation, and risk mitigation strategies for climate change and potential pandemics, and enacting clear regulations for land-use planning and environmental protection, integrating disaster risk reduction and climate resilience into spatial planning and infrastructure development.	Legal/Policy	CoG/County Governments/ County Assemblies	IGRTC Senate National Assembly Summit CSOs
7.2.	Enhance community resilience and participation in disaster management and climate change adaptation by conducting comprehensive risk assessments and investing in early warning systems to identify and alert communities about potential disaster risks, running regular training and awareness campaigns to educate communities about disaster preparedness, climate change adaptation, and pandemic prevention measures, and empower communities and CBOs by involving them in planning, implementing, and managing disaster preparedness and climate adaptation initiatives.	Strategic	County Government	CoG NDMA Private sector Research Institutions NGOs/INGOs CSOs
7.3.	Increase resource mobilization and allocation for climate change and pandemic mitigation by prioritizing the areas in county development plans and budgets with a clear breakdown of funds, leveraging public-private partnerships and climate finance, and investing in essential emergency response infrastructure such as fire departments, ambulance services, and drainage systems.	Strategic	County Government	CoG County Assemblies Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs

#	Recommendation	Recommendation Type	Responsible Entity	Other Contributing Entities
7.4.	Improve disaster management implementation and coordination by strengthening committees for better stakeholder coordination, investing in infrastructure and equipment to enhance emergency response and communication, and developing comprehensive contingency plans for various disaster and pandemic scenarios, including evacuation strategies and resource mobilization protocols.	Strategic	County Governments	CoG NDMA Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs
7.5.	Foster innovation and collaboration in disaster management by utilizing advanced technologies like drones and satellite imagery for effective disaster monitoring and response, partnering with research institutions and universities to explore climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies and engaging in knowledge exchange with other counties and countries to share best practices and learn improved preparedness and response techniques.	Strategic	County Governments	CoG NDMA Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs
8	Food Security			
8.1	Enhance financial resources and investment in food security by increasing budget allocations for agricultural development, infrastructure, and farmer support services, exploring alternative funding mechanisms like public-private partnerships and climate finance, and improving budget allocation processes focusing on participatory budgeting and transparent resource management.	Strategic	County Governments	CoG MoALFC Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs
8.2.	Adopt sustainable agricultural practices by promoting crop diversification, including cash crops for economic resilience, investing in climate-smart agriculture research for drought-resistant crops and soil conservation, strengthening agricultural extension services for farmer education in modern farming methods, and offering incentives like subsidies, loans and training for the adoption of innovative technologies such as precision agriculture and greenhouse farming.	Strategic	County Governments	CoG MoALFC Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs

#	Recommendation	Recommendation Type	Responsible Entity	Other Contributing Entities
8.3	<p>Implement comprehensive land use and management strategies by encouraging land consolidation and cooperative farming to improve land efficiency, promoting urban agriculture and vertical farming in cities for better land resource utilization, and developing spatial planning strategies that integrate agricultural land use into broader territorial development plans, thus preventing urban encroachment on productive farmlands.</p>	Strategic	County Governments	CoG MoALFC Ministry of Lands Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs
8.4	<p>Engage youth in agriculture by making it more appealing and profitable through investments in infrastructure, market access, and value chain development. County governments should also provide technical training and mentorship to young farmers to equip them with essential agricultural skills and knowledge, provide financial support, including more accessible access to credit and land, encourage young entrepreneurs in agriculture, and promote agriculture as a modern, profitable, and rewarding career choice to change public perception and attract more youth participation.</p>	Strategic	County Governments	CoG MoALFC Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs
8.5	<p>County governments should increase investment in agriculture to reduce reliance on food imports and ensure food security. This can be accomplished by establishing effective marketing networks and distribution channels for intra- and inter-county trade, connecting producers directly with consumers, encouraging investments in food processing facilities to reduce post-harvest losses, adding value to agricultural products, and creating new job opportunities, all of which will benefit the local economy and food self-sufficiency.</p>	Strategic	County Governments	CoG MoALFC Ministry of Lands Market Associations Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs

#	Recommendation	Recommendation Type	Responsible Entity	Other Contributing Entities
8.6.	Implement land consolidation initiatives, such as land pooling and cooperative farming, to reduce fragmentation and increase land use efficiency. Counties can also promote urban agriculture and vertical farming to make the best use of limited urban spaces, such as rooftop gardens, and create comprehensive spatial planning strategies to incorporate agricultural land use into larger territorial development plans, preventing urban encroachment on productive agricultural land and ensuring sustainable land management practices.	Strategic	County Governments	CoG MoALFC Ministry of Lands Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs
9	Water Access			
9.1.	County governments should invest in water infrastructure development, prioritizing new water sources, boreholes, treatment plants, and distribution networks, especially in rural areas, upgrading and maintaining existing water infrastructure to reduce leakages and enhance efficiency, exploring alternative water sources, including rainwater harvesting, desalination, and wastewater treatment technologies, to diversify water sources and bolster water security, and implement sustainable water resource management practices, focusing on protecting water sources from pollution, promoting soil conservation, and managing watersheds effectively to ensure a sustainable and reliable water supply.	Strategic	County Governments	CoG Ministry of Water, Sanitation, and Irrigation (MoWSI) Regional Development Authorities (RDAs) Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs
9.2.	Enforce environmental laws and regulations to protect water sources from industrial and agricultural pollution. This can also be achieved by promoting environmental conservation practices such as tree planting and soil conservation to protect watersheds and prevent soil erosion, integrating water resource management with environmental planning by developing comprehensive plans that prioritize environmental sustainability and adapting to climate change, ensuring a harmonized approach to managing water resources and preserving the environment.	Operational	County Governments	MoWSI RDAs Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs

#	Recommendation	Recommendation Type	Responsible Entity	Other Contributing Entities
9.3.	Invest in innovative water management technologies, such as smart metering, leak detection, and water quality monitoring systems to enhance efficiency and service delivery. Counties can further support research and development focused on water-efficient technologies and drought-resistant crops, adapting to climate change and addressing water scarcity challenges. This approach leverages technology to improve water management and sustainability, ensuring more effective use of water resources.	Strategic	County Governments	MoWSI RDAs Research Institutions Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs
9.4.	Empower communities by establishing and enhancing Water User Associations (WUAs) for effective water resource management and participation in decision-making processes and launching extensive public awareness and education campaigns to inform communities about water conservation, sanitation, hygiene, and the importance of safeguarding water sources. Additionally, county governments can provide accessible training for local communities in water infrastructure maintenance, water quality testing and hygiene practices, thereby fostering community-based water management and ensuring sustainable water use and protection.	Strategic	County Governments	WUAs MoWSI RDAs Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs
10	Health Services			
10.1	To improve healthcare outcomes, preventive health measures should be prioritized, with a focus on community health education, sanitation initiatives, and early disease detection. This strategy entails promoting healthy lifestyles through awareness campaigns that encourage healthy eating, regular physical activity, and responsible sexual behaviour. Furthermore, county governments should incorporate preventive services into primary care to proactively manage health risks and prevent diseases.	Strategic	County Governments	Ministry of Health (MoH) Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs

#	Recommendation	Recommendation Type	Responsible Entity	Other Contributing Entities
10.2	Increase budget allocations for health services, focusing on infrastructure, equipment and essential drugs. This involves expanding and modernizing healthcare infrastructure, increasing recruitment, retention, and training of healthcare professionals, and improving access to critical medicines through efficient procurement and equitable distribution systems.	Strategic	County Governments/ County Assemblies	MoH Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs
10.3	Implement community-based and culturally sensitive health education campaigns that tackle misinformation and encourage responsible health behaviours.	Operational	County Governments	MoH Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs
11	Climate Innovation and Related Businesses			
11.1	Improve financial support and access for youth-led green businesses by creating dedicated funding mechanisms that are specifically designed for youth, focusing on climate innovation and green entrepreneurship, and simplifying access to existing funding sources. Furthermore, leveraging public-private partnerships and collaborating with private-sector entities can help youth-led green initiatives grow and sustain.	Strategic	County Governments/ County Assemblies	Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MoYAS) Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs
11.2	Strengthen youth engagement in climate innovation by implementing structured capacity-building programmes offering targeted training and mentorship in green business and climate innovation and establishing climate innovation hubs and accelerators for resource access, idea exchange, and professional guidance. County governments can also foster partnerships with universities and research institutions for specialized courses and research opportunities in climate innovation and green technologies.	Operational	County Governments/ County Assemblies	MoYAS Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs

#	Recommendation	Recommendation Type	Responsible Entity	Other Contributing Entities
11.3	<p>Improve market access for youth-driven green businesses by organizing market outreach events, trade shows, and networking opportunities for connecting businesses with customers and investors. County governments can also launch marketing campaigns and branding initiatives to increase consumer awareness and adoption of sustainable products and services offered by young entrepreneurs. This can be accomplished by developing and deploying digital platforms such as online directories, marketplaces, and e-commerce platforms to showcase and sell products and services from green businesses.</p>	Operational	County Governments/ County Assemblies	Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs
11.4	<p>Enhance policy and governance to support youth-driven green initiatives by developing policies incentivizing green entrepreneurship, including tax breaks, subsidies, and reduced licensing fees for youth-led businesses. This can also be achieved by strengthening collaboration between government agencies such as the Ministry of Environment and Youth Affairs to align policies and programmes for climate innovation and youth green businesses.</p>	Legal/Policy	County Governments/ County Assemblies	CoG/IGRTC Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs
12	<p>Urban Planning and Development</p> <p>Improve county development planning and implementation by lowering bureaucratic barriers and expediting the approval of Comprehensive Urban Investment Development Plans (CUIDPs) and sectoral plans. This can be further improved by prioritizing implementation with adequate resource allocation, clear timelines, and critical project completion accountability mechanisms.</p>	Operational	County Governments/ County Assemblies	Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs

#	Recommendation	Recommendation Type	Responsible Entity	Other Contributing Entities
13	Procurement Openness			
13.1	Fully utilize e-procurement platforms, raise public awareness about their roles in procurement and access to tender opportunities, strengthen internal audit mechanisms, and publish procurement documents, such as tenders, contracts, and payments, to improve transparency and accountability in county government.	Strategic	County Governments/ County Assemblies	Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs
13.2	Enhance inclusivity and equitable access in procurement for marginalized groups, such as SMEs, youth, women and PWDs, through capacity-building programmes, enforcing a 30% reservation for these groups in procurement contracts, streamlined tendering processes, and mentorship. Enhance inclusivity and equitable access to procurement for marginalized groups, such as SMEs, youth, women, and people with disabilities, through capacity-building programs, a 30% reservation in procurement contracts, streamlined tendering processes, and mentorship. Furthermore, local content procurement should be prioritized to stimulate local economies, with collaborations with NGOs and CBOs providing the necessary support and training to enable effective competition in procurement processes.	Operational	County Governments/ County Assemblies	PPRA AGPO Secretariat Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs
13.3	Improve procurement integrity and efficiency by training government officials in ethical procurement, anti-corruption strategies, effective process management, and regular stakeholder engagement to refine procurement policies.	Operational	County Governments/ County Assemblies	PPRA Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs

#	Recommendation	Recommendation Type	Responsible Entity	Other Contributing Entities
13.4	Foster a culture of knowledge sharing, and best practices exchange between counties and internationally recognized models in procurement and anti-corruption to enhance procurement practices.	Operational	County Governments/ County Assemblies	PPRA Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs
14	Transparency and Accountability			
14.1	Strengthen public participation through structured participatory processes that include clear agendas, feedback mechanisms, and decision-making opportunities for citizens. Accessibility and inclusivity must be prioritized, with shorter, localized meetings in accessible venues and simplified materials to include vulnerable groups such as women, people with disabilities, and youth.	Operational	County Governments/ County Assemblies	CoG Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs
14.2	Improve governance communication and transparency by simplifying county government documents and communications, avoiding complex language and jargon, using multiple channels to communicate clearly and informatively with different audience segments, sharing information in accessible formats, and holding regular press briefings and town hall meetings.	Operational	County Governments	CoG Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs
14.3	Combat political interference and corruption by strictly enforcing anti-corruption laws, holding officials accountable, protecting whistle-blowers, encouraging ethical leadership by signing codes of conduct for county government officials, and conducting regular asset declarations and lifestyle audits to deter corruption and enhance transparency.	Strategic	County Governments/ County Assemblies	CoG Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs

#	Recommendation	Recommendation Type	Responsible Entity	Other Contributing Entities
14.4	Develop and operate open data platforms to provide public access to government data, and promote investigative journalism by assisting independent media in investigating and reporting corruption and malpractices in governance.	Strategic	County Governments	CoG Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs
15	Own Source Revenue			
15.1	Increase own-source resource mobilization by developing and implementing fully automated revenue collection systems, establishing semi-autonomous Revenue Boards with dedicated resources and legislation to manage OSR collection, and investing in technology infrastructure to ensure the smooth operation of digital revenue systems.	Strategic	County Governments	CoG Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs
15.2	Promote transparency in revenue collection by strengthening internal auditing and oversight, including regular social audits involving citizens for increased transparency and corruption detection, publishing transparent data on revenue collection, budgets and spending, and implementing secure whistle-blower protection mechanisms and harsher tax evasion and corruption penalties.	Strategic	County Governments	CoG Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs
15.3	Foster citizen participation and education in revenue collection and utilization by investing in civic education campaigns that educate citizens about the importance of OSR and its relationship to service delivery. This can also be accomplished by utilizing digital platforms such as mobile apps, SMS, and social media to facilitate effective communication and education about tax obligations, payment procedures, and service delivery improvements to foster a more informed and involved citizenry.	Operational	County Governments	Kenya Revenue Authority Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs

#	Recommendation	Recommendation Type	Responsible Entity	Other Contributing Entities
15.4	Diversify and expand revenue streams by looking into new revenue sources outside of traditional markets and parks, such as property taxes, tourism levies, and environmental charges, and integrate informal sectors into the tax system through simplified registration and payment procedures.	Strategic	County Governments	Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs
16	Markets Quality and Safety			
16.1	Budgetary resources should be allocated to complete ongoing market construction projects, plan new infrastructure development, build markets with proper facilities such as drainage, ventilation, lighting, and sanitation, and modernize market equipment and technology by providing cold storage, fire safety equipment, and digital tools for vendor registration and revenue collection.	Strategic	County Governments/ County Assemblies	Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs
16.2	Improve health and hygiene in markets by enforcing strict hygiene and sanitation standards, conducting regular inspections to detect and prevent hazards, implementing robust waste management systems for cleanliness, and bolstering market security measures with proper lighting.	Operational	County Governments/ County Assemblies	Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs
17	Ease of doing business			
17.1	Reduce costs and regulatory burdens for traders by reviewing and lowering tax rates and licensing fees, streamlining business registration and licensing procedures, encouraging policy collaboration with the business community, and lowering inter-county tariffs to avoid double taxation.	Strategic/Legal	County Governments/ County Assemblies	Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs
17.2	Improving efficiency and transparency by digitizing government services, training and empowering government officials on business regulations, customer service and anti-corruption practices, enforcing anti-corruption measures and creating grievance redressal mechanisms for businesses to report and resolve issues related to harassment, delays, or unfair treatment from government officials or cartels.	Operational	County Governments	Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs

#	Recommendation	Recommendation Type	Responsible Entity	Other Contributing Entities
17.3	Supporting business growth and investment by providing post-Covid-19 recovery assistance; upgrading infrastructure, such as roads, transportation networks, and energy access, to create a favourable environment for business operations and attract investment; and promoting entrepreneurship development programs, incubation centres, and access to resources for innovative businesses and startups.	Strategic	County Governments/ County Assemblies	Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs
18	Business Incentives and Investment Opportunities			
18.1	Improve targeted business support programmes by establishing dedicated funds and support programmes for SMEs and startups, streamlining loan and grant application processes, offering mentorship and business development services, and creating affordable and accessible spaces for entrepreneurs and startups to operate, network and access resources.	Operational	County Governments	Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs
18.2	Create mechanisms for active engagement with the business community, such as regular meetings, focus groups, and online platforms, and actively involve the private sector in developing policies that affect businesses, such as taxation, regulations, and infrastructure development plans.	Operational	County Governments	Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs
19	Access to Information on Doing Business and Investments			
19.1	Improve online information platforms by creating and maintaining user-friendly, comprehensive county websites and establishing a centralized data repository with up-to-date information on licenses, permits, regulations, tax rates, infrastructure and sector-specific investment opportunities.	Strategic	County Governments	Private sector NGOs/INGOs CSOs

Annexe 3. Overview of People Interviewed

Key Informant Interviews

County	Number of Respondents by Category			
	County Government	CSO	Private Sector	Total
Baringo	3	1	1	5
Bungoma	1	1	1	3
Garissa	1	1	1	3
Isiolo	1	1	1	3
Kiambu	0	2	0	2
Kilifi	1	1	1	3
Kisii	1	1	1	3
Kisumu	1	1	1	3
Machakos	1	1	1	3
Mombasa	1	1	1	3
Nairobi	1	2	0	3
Narok	0	1	1	2
Nyeri	0	1	1	2
Tharaka Nithi	1	1	1	3
Uasin Gishu	1	0	1	2
Grand Total	14	16	13	43

Annexe 4

Summary of findings

Finding	Status	Issues
The consultations and cooperation between the national and county governments	Low	Political dynamics, administrative and functional overlaps, communication breakdowns, and resource allocation. 77% rated moderate and below. Only 23% rated it as satisfactory
County government inclusivity	Low	Corruption, nepotism, political patronage, and a lack of clear and enforceable policies. 77% rated moderate and below. Only 24% rated it as satisfactory
Decentralization of governance	Low	Reluctance among county leadership to relinquish control of, political and tribal influences, and resource decision-making to decentralized county organs. 76% rated moderate and below. Only 24% rated it as satisfactory
Citizen participation in decision-making	Moderate to low	Political interests, resource constraints, inadequate civic awareness, ineffective communication, economic burdens, and weak legal frameworks. 75% rated moderate and below. Only 25% rated it as satisfactory
County performance in critical areas		
Food security	Low	Insufficient financial resources and mismanagement of projects, water scarcity, reliance on traditional farming practices, land fragmentation, declining youth interest in agriculture, and dependence on external food supplies. 77% rated moderate and below. Only 23% rated it as satisfactory
Water Access	Low	Insufficient water infrastructure, particularly in the rural areas, political interference in project management of water projects, environmental degradation like pollution and siltation, and lack of transparency and accountability. 77% rated moderate and below. Only 23% rated it as satisfactory

Finding	Status	Issues
Summary of Findings Health Services	Low	Emphasis on curative over preventive services, limited resources, and infrastructure, management issues like corruption and political interference, and socio-cultural barriers like traditional beliefs and lack of health education. 77% rated moderate and below. Only 24% rated it as satisfactory
Climate innovation and related business	Very Low	Inadequate funding to the sector, inadequate training for young entrepreneurs, difficulties in market access, low awareness of existing programmes, and the prevalence of drug abuse among the youth. 87% rated moderate and below. Only 14% rated it as satisfactory
Urban planning and development	Moderate to Low	Inadequate awareness and transparency in the formulation and implementation of the plans, delays in operationalization of the plans, challenges related to demarcation and homogeneity of cities, and insufficient resources and budget allocation for urban planning and development. 71% rated moderate and below. 29% rated it as satisfactory
Procurement openness	Very Low	Process lacking transparency and fairness, with concerns about personal connections and corruption influencing awards and delaying the payments to contractors. 83% rated moderate and below. Only 16% rated it as satisfactory
Transparency and accountability	Very low	Ineffective public participation, communication gaps, political interference, bureaucratic hurdles, and weak oversight mechanisms. 82% rated moderate and below. Only 19% rated it as satisfactory
Own Source Revenue	Low	Lack of full automation in revenue collection, pilferage, corruption, reliance on a narrow range of revenue streams, and a weak link between revenue collection and service delivery are key hurdles. 79% rated moderate and below. Only 21% rated it as satisfactory

Finding	Status	Issues
Business environment (Markets)	Low	Outdated infrastructure, poor hygiene, inadequate management and stakeholders' engagement, and inefficient waste management are key concerns of citizens and traders. 77% rated moderate and below. Only 22% rated it as satisfactory
Ease of doing business	Improved (70% of respondents)	High taxes, complex bureaucratic procedures, harassment from county government officials and cartels, and limited post-COVID-19 support.
Business incentives and investment opportunities	Very Low	Security concerns, inadequate infrastructure, high taxation, limited engagement with the business community, dominance of large companies, and unfair competition practices. 84% rated moderate and below. Only 16% rated it as satisfactory
Access to information for doing business and investment	Low	Websites and online platforms lack comprehensiveness and user-friendliness. Data is often scattered, outdated, or inaccessible. 79% rated moderate and below. Only 15% rated it as satisfactory
Environmental conservation and natural resource management	Low	Resource limitations, ineffective governance, political interference, public apathy, and inadequate expertise. 79% rated moderate and below. Only 21% rated it as satisfactory
Agriculture, fisheries and livestock production	Moderate to Low	Rapid urbanization, lack of value addition, inadequate market access, insufficient investment, limited expertise and infrastructure, climate change, and weak political will. 76% rated moderate and below. Only 24% rated it as satisfactory
Climate change, pandemic preparedness and response	Very low	Efforts are suboptimal, a need for improved implementation, transparency, and community engagement. 84% rated moderate and below. Only 16% rated it as satisfactory

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Act Change Transform (Act!)Nairobi Office

Woodlands Road, Off Dennis Pritt/ Lenana Road Kilimani
P. O. Box 76390-00508. Nairobi-Kenya
Tel: +254 20 8179231/ 8179240
Cell: +254 722203721/ 771634555
Email: info@act.or.ke

Act Change Transform (Act!)Mombasa Office

Kibaki Flats, off Mombasa- Malindi Road
P. O. Box 10042-82100. Mombasa-Kenya
Cell: +254 722 207 088
Email: info@act.or.ke