3. Technical and Institutional support to private sector, SMEs and entrepreneurs to climate proof their businesses.

The County should adopt a more encouraging approach to businesses by supporting their transition into the green economy, through tools such as tax breaks and incentives for climate smart business and technical support to create climate proof businesses and enterprises.

4. Creation of user friendly community awareness material that effectively communicates county government mitigation and adaptation projects and programs that the community can benefit from.

The county governments are able to utilize the most accessible means of media, like as radio or television, to create weekly shows that give the community with information on climate change and environmental protection, as well as activities focused on these topics. These can be conducted in the native vernacular, making the content accessible to those who have not had access to formal education but have a higher command of the regional languages.

5.Formulation and integration of climate change mitigation and adaptation policies and laws. In the process of drafting its own laws, Kitui County should integrate the guiding principles outlined in the various national statutes and develop implementation guidelines that are comprehensive, addressing all aspects of the vision while simultaneously minimizing the likelihood of misunderstandings. This will result in harmonious laws that will trickle down from the national government to the lowest level of governance, which is found in counties.

6.Integration of home grown solutions to address climate change.

In the past, African governments have looked to other regions for inspiration on how to adapt and mitigate the effects of climate change. On the other hand, it is becoming more and more obvious that the techniques utilized by a cattle rancher in Texas, United States of America, will be very different from the techniques utilized by a pastoralist in Kitui, Kenya. It is absolutely necessary for the county to take into consideration locally developed methods for mitigating the effects of climate change and adapting to them. Such initiatives will have an easier time gaining support from the people of Kitui County.

Summary of findings.

Environmental deterioration and climate change threaten Kitui County. Enacting laws and regulations that strengthen local communities' adaptive capacity, promote sustainable development, and implement a long-term environmental conservation and climate plan is possible. Despite policy and legislative strides made by the county the gap between commitments and execution continues. Below, we discuss policy and legal framework implementation possibilities.

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Policy Brief

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POLICY ALTERNATIVES FOR ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE AT COUNTY LEVEL; LESSONS FOR KITUI COUNTY.



Context to the analysis.

This Policy brief is extracted from the "**REPORT ON POLICY, LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN KITUI AND MAKUENI COUNTY"** that analyses and reviews existing instruments at the Kitui county level as well as international policy and legislative frameworks and best practices, and recommends ways to strengthen their implementation in Kitui County. The main report can be found at: **https://reconcile-ea.org/**

Stronger action is required to meet mitigation objectives.

Introduction

Kitui County's main economic activities are cattle keeping, cultivating tobacco, cotton, coffee, mangoes, and commercial industries. The semi-arid region has been substantially influenced by climatic changes, including erratic rainfall patterns and soil degradation. The county has been intentional about creating policy and legislative structures to mitigate and adapt to climate change challenges.

Kitui County was one of the first counties to have specific legislation on climate change mitigation and adaptation in Kenya. The county outlawed charcoal burning in January 2021, followed by a ban on sand harvesting as detrimental activities that increased the county's climate vulnerability. Despite these strides, the research identified key gaps hindering the county's progress in addressing climate change impact at a social, economic and environmental level.

In addition to conducting a literature review and an analysis of the policy frameworks that are currently in place, the study investigated whether or not the community members of Kitui County had any knowledge regarding environmental conservation laws, climate change policies, or the utilization of renewable energy sources.

Research Findings

Kitui County has three main policy and legislative documents that drive adaptation and mitigation strategies in the county;

1.Kitui County Climate Information Services Strategic Plan. The plan intends to provide meteorological and climatic information to enable local, sub-county, and county level decision making across the primary livelihood groups and strategic climate-sensitive county government planning.

2.Kitui County Integrated Development Plan. The plan includes a Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Objective to improve community adaptability to climate change and variability Climate-proof communities.

Stronger action is required to meet adaptation and resilience objectives.

3. Kitui County Climate Change Fund Regulations, 2018. The regulations' main objective, is to establish the Kitui County Climate Change Fund, provide for its management, operation and winding up procedures, and to promote climate change programs.

Despite these policies, there are clear gaps in understanding and implementation by local communities. The research revealed significant levels of citizen apathy to these policies and a lack of understanding of how these policies translate to climate resilient livelihoods for the communities.

Policy Recommendations

Kitui County has made substantial progress toward meeting its commitments to address the climate catastrophe and the degradation of the environment, but there remains a considerable gap between these pledges and their actual execution. It's extremely important to close this chasm.

1. Creation Kitui County Climate change mitigation and adaptation extension service.

One of the key strategies that needs to be explored is a County Extension Strategy, the primary goal of which is to help the agricultural industry adopt climate-smart technologies. Training is going to be provided for those who provide extension services on climate change as well as cross cutting themes on gender, agroforestry, and food security. The concept encourages the development of a decentralized extension system that is led by farmers and is directed toward the market.

2. Institutional collaboration between national level decentralized offices and county level devolved services.

County governments should organize frequent meetings with stakeholders in the various authorities and offices of the national government decentralized to the county. This will ensure synchronized efforts, assure enforcement, minimize duplication of laws and policies, and provide learning opportunities from each other to come up with better action plans.