

# COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF ELGEYO MARAKWET



## Annotated Draft Forest Conservation and Management Policy, 2019

December 2019

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## **Foreword**

Thank you all

His Excellency Alex Tolgos  
Governor,  
Elgeyo Marakwet County

## **Acknowledgements**

**Hon. Abraham Barsosio**

County Executive Committee Member,  
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**County Government of Elgeyo Marakwet**

## **Abbreviations and Acronyms**

ASALs	Arid and Semi-Arid Lands
CECM	County Executive Committee Member
CIDP	County Integrated Development Plans
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
GROOTS	Grassroots Organization Organizing Together in Sisterhood
NDMA	National Drought Management Authority
NEMA	National Environment Management
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WRA	Water Resources Authority

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## **POLICY STATEMENTS**

The implementation of this Policy by the County Government will be guided by the following policy statements:

[to be inserted after conclusion of the first draft]

# **1 INTRODUCTION TO ELGEYO MARAKWET COUNTY**

## **1.1 The Physical and Geographical Context of Elgeyo Marakwet County**

- 1.1.1 Elgeyo Marakwet County covers a total area of 3029.6 km<sup>2</sup> which constitutes 0.4 percent of Kenya's total area. It extends from latitude 0° 20' to 1° 30' to the North and longitude 35° 0' to 35° 45' to the East. It borders West Pokot County to the North, Baringo County to the East, Trans Nzoia County to the Northwest and Uasin Gishu County to the West. The county is wedged in between the Uasin Gishu Plateau to the West and the Kerio River to the East. The Kerio River has its source in the southern highlands of the county and drains into Lake Turkana.
- 1.1.2 The county is divided into three topographic zones namely: Highlands, Kerio Valley and Escarpment: all of them separated by the conspicuous Elgeyo Escarpment. Each of the three zones has attracted a different settlement pattern. The Highlands, which constitute 49 percent of the county area, is densely populated due to its endowment with fertile soils and reliable rainfall.
- 1.1.3 The Escarpment and the Kerio Valley make up 11 percent and 40 percent respectively. These areas have low rainfall and are prone to natural disasters such as drought and landslides. Due to these harsh climatic conditions coupled with high cases of insecurity, these areas have high poverty levels and sparse population.

## **1.2 The Ecological Conditions in Elgeyo Marakwet County**

- 1.2.1 The county is home to two forest ecosystems and water towers namely Kaptagat and Cherangany and hosts the second largest forest cover in Kenya of 37.6%. These ecosystems are a source of many rivers that form the main water divide running along the Escarpment. East of the water divide is the Kerio catchment area which drains into Lake Turkana while West of the divide is the Lake Victoria Basin which drains into Lake Victoria. Lake Victoria Basin includes the Moiben, Chepkaitit and Sabor rivers. The Kerio catchment area includes the Kerrer and Kerio Rivers.
- 1.2.2 The other major rivers in the county are Torok, Chesegon, Embobut, Embomon, Aror, Mong and Kimwarer. The rivers feeding Kerio River have a high potential for supporting irrigation activities and for generation of Hydro-electric power. Another ecological zone is the Kerio Valley. It is narrow, averaging 6.4 km in width and stretches about 150 km in a North-South direction while
- 1.2.3 The County has a relatively cool climate with varied rainfall levels because of the topography that is characterized by three distinct agro-ecological zones namely the highlands to the west, the escarpment (hanging valley) and the lowlands (valley) to the east. The variation in altitude from 900 m above sea level in the Kerio Valley to over 3000 m above sea level in the highlands gives rise to considerable differences in climatic conditions.

1.2.4 The annual mean temperatures on the highland range from 18°C – 22°C, compared to 25°C – 28°C in the valley. The average annual rainfall from 700 mm in the semi-arid Kerio valley to 1700 mm on the Keiyo and Marakwet highlands (Cherangany Hills). The County thus shows a trend of decreasing rainfall from west to east. The eastern lowlands of the county exhibit lower and less reliable rainfall, and are the part of the county that is most at risk of drought and floods.

### **1.3 The Demographic and economic context of Elgeyo Marakwet County**

1.3.1 According to the 2019 National Census report, the County has a total population of 454,480 persons with 227,317 being male, and 227,151 being female respectively, with an average household size of 4.5 and a population density of 150 per square kilometer.

1.3.2 The population distribution at sub-county level is: Keiyo North, 99,176; Keiyo South, 120,750; Marakwet East, 97,041; and Marakwet West having 137,513 persons. This translates into 99,861 households being resident across the County.

1.3.3 The main sources of household cooking energy in the county are firewood, charcoal and paraffin. This has however contributed to vegetation degradation and increase in related health complications amongst the population. The number of households with electricity coverage in the county stands at 25,419 households representing 30.38 % distributed as follows; 51.94% access in Keiyo North, 37.79% in Keiyo South, 26.85% in Marakwet West and 4.8% access rate in Marakwet East.

1.3.4 The Renewable energy share in the total energy consumption is quite negligible: the population with primary reliance on clean fuels, such as solar energy and biogas, is less than 1%. Energy intensity measured in terms of primary energy and GDP is also low as the county utilizes only 4 Kilowatts which is below 1% of the current countrywide usage.

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The goal of this Policy is to provide for sustainable forest management of forests, support expansion of forestry on private and community land, and the development of the socio-economic and environmental value of forests, and contribute to the constitutional obligation for Kenya to maintain a minimum national tree cover of ten percent of the land area.

### **5.2 Objectives of the Elgeyo Marakwet County Forest Conservation and Management Change Policy**

The objectives of this policy are to:

1. Provide a county-level framework to guide and govern the implementation of the forest policy, including through the County Integrated Development Plan, Sectoral Plans with meaningful public consultations and awareness.
2. Put in place and strengthen institutional structure at the county level to support coordination, mainstreaming and implementation of forest activities
3. Put in place strategies, actions and interventions to reduce vulnerability to the impacts of climate change by building adaptive capacity, enhancing climate change resilience through forestry activities. a
4. Map out and Catalyse the County's transition to cleaner energy sources to lower pressure on forests and trees.
5. Incentivize the public, communities and private sector involvement in taking up forestry and tree planting activities including investments.
6. Facilitate widespread and participation, ownership and oversight of the County's forestry activities and integrate implementation of meaningful public consultation and awareness in all elements of forestry decision by the county government and provision of feedback to the public on the impact the consultation had on decision making.
7. Provide a framework for the County to mobilise resources for its forestry actions and ensure effective and transparent utilisation of the resources.
8. Mainstream intergenerational, equitable, inclusive, and gender mainstreaming across all aspects of the County's forestry actions.
9. Enhance research and use of science and technology in policy decisions and sustainable management of resources.
10. Support the collection of scientific and other information, data, impacts, actions, mainstreaming, effect of climate change interventions and other relevant aspects to inform county decision making, and for sharing with the national government.

### 5.3 Guiding principles for the Policy

The governance and management of climate change by the Elgeyo Marakwet County Government will be informed by the mandatory national values and principles of governance set out in article 10 of the Constitution, together with principles stipulated in articles 43, 60, 69 and 232 of the Constitution. More specifically, the following principles shall apply:

1. **Right to a clean and healthy environment:** under the 2010 Constitution every person in Kenya has a right to a clean and healthy environment and a duty to safeguard and enhance the environment.
2. **Sustainable development** as a principle of national governance in Kenya and as normative basis for observing equity. The Constitution of Kenya creates a duty on every person to cooperate with the State, and with other persons, to protect and conserve the environment and ensure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources
3. **The mainstreaming of climate change considerations into forestry activities,** including during planning, budgetary and expenditure processes.
4. **Affirmative action, equity, inclusivity and equality:** The implementation of affirmative action is important in order to enhance opportunities for vulnerable members of our population, including the marginalized such as indigenous peoples, local communities, the youth, persons with disability. Gender mainstreaming in order to enhance equity in participation, or consideration of the interests of the disadvantaged gender, more often women, is important. Decision making concerning forestry should internalize the need for equality, while taking into the account constitutional requirements for affirmative actions in favour of vulnerable and marginalized groups, and the obligation for gender mainstreaming.
5. **Decentralization** of forestry activities to the lowest levels of county government administration.
6. **Implementation of meaningful public consultation and public awareness** in all elements of forestry decision by the county government and provision of feedback to the public on the impact the consultation had on decision making.
7. **Transparency, accountability and good governance** in the selection forestry conservation and management options for the County.
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