



# Integrating Climate Risk Management in County Development and Resilience Planning in Kenya

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## Summary

For long, elements of climate risk management have been pursued in Kenya by various national and county government institutions as well as non-state actors without an effective framework for coordination and appropriate guidance. The Adaptation Consortium (ADA), under the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA), sought to remedy this scenario by working with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to develop a Climate Risk Management Framework to guide integration of climate risk management in policies, programmes, plans and institutions in Kenya. This brief highlight key features of the ICRM framework, shares a summary of the capacity building experience, and provides key lessons and recommendations on the integration of ICRM in county development and resilience planning based on ongoing capacity building work with four counties. The brief concludes that incorporating ICRM is key for sustainable development and climate resilience, and that counties can make use of recommended opportunities and entry points to adopt an integrated risk management approach.

## Policy Pointers

- Integrating Climate Risk Management (ICRM) in development and resilience planning by county governments is critical for climate resilience. It is equally vital for sustainable development.
- County government actors should utilise policy, legislation, and county integrated development planning to incorporate ICRM across sectors and programmes at all levels by prioritizing citizen participation and inclusivity.
- Integrated climate risk management requires proper coordination, technical capacity and effective citizen participation. County climate change units should accordingly be operationalized to handle and lead in these aspects.
- For effective implementation, an ICRM action plan should be developed and guided by the recommended ICRM framework with support from climate risk management experts.

## Introduction

Historically, disasters – particularly drought and floods – have had devastating effects on people, environment and the economy of Kenya. Owing to climate changes, such disasters are increasingly having greater and lethal impacts that affect the country’s prospects of poverty reduction and sustainable development. An integrated approach to climate risk management is therefore critical in addressing this situation.

The concept of Climate Risk Management (CRM) bridges the three currently separate spheres of climate change adaptation, disaster risk management and sustainable development. It is an integrated approach to climate sensitive decision-making, which is increasingly viewed as the way forward in dealing with climate variability and change. The need for integration is based on the understanding that while Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) addresses only climate-related uncertainties, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) goes further to deal with a wider range of hazards. However, DRR initiatives will only succeed if they consider the changing climatic conditions, the hazards they cause, and local adaptation needs.

In Kenya, various government institutions have been implementing elements of climate risk management approach albeit in the absence of effective coordination and appropriate guidance. The NDMA, through Ada, has worked with UNDP to address this gap by coming up with a Climate Risk Management Framework whose objective is to provide guidance and help to integrate climate risk management in policies, programmes, plans and institutional arrangements in Kenya.

The ICRM framework aims to foster coordination and complementary practices among the many actors who share a common goal, including staff of the national and county governments as well as those in other development and humanitarian organizations.

One of the key aspects of ICRM is integration of climate information in development decision-making to cope with climate change in order to minimize potential impact. The NDMA, through Ada, is leading the scale-out of the County Climate Change Fund Mechanism (CCCF) which incorporates climate information services, to new counties. This is expected to close the gap on climate information-guided resilience planning while helping finance community-led resilience investments as part of climate risk management.

## Policy Setting

Kenya is responding to the challenges emanating from climate change and disasters, particularly droughts and floods, by instituting a policy and legislative framework creating opportunities for Integrated Climate Risk Management.

The local policy setting is underpinned by the Climate Change Act, 2016; the National Climate Change Framework Policy 2016; and the National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP 2018 – 2022). The NDMA Act, 2016 creates the statutory body responsible for coordination and management of drought risk in the country while a national policy for Disaster Risk Management still in draft form aims to reduce disaster risks and loss through an integrated multi-hazard approach. This partly captures prospects of Kenya’s “Vision 2030”.

The NCCAP 2018 – 2022 has particularly taken cognisance of the impacts of climate risks on Kenya’s socio-economic sectors and identified strategic areas for action. Ideally, adaptation actions are prioritised in NCCAP 2018-2022 owing to the devastating impacts of droughts and floods in the country, and the negative effects of climate change on vulnerable groups. The NCCAP similarly places Disaster Risk Management, targeting mainly floods and droughts, at the top of climate action priorities in the country with the objective to reduce risks that result from climate-related disasters to communities and infrastructure.

## The ICRM framework

The ICRM framework, developed in 2016 was aimed at strengthening management of climate and disaster risks in the country by promoting collaboration across national and county government ministries and departments. This was destined to enhance the degree of synergy between complementary areas of activity.

The objective of the framework is to harness these scattered efforts by bringing together the separate fields to enable disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and sustainable development be pursued as mutually supportive, rather than stand-alone goals. The idea is to enable the integrated climate risk management approach become a central part of policy and planning.

## Capacity building of counties on ICRM: The Devolution and Locally-Led Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management Project

Between January and October 2019, ADA, under NDMA, implemented the Devolution and Locally-Led Climate Change and Disaster Management Project, a pilot project sub-component of the Kenya Accountable Devolution Program (KADP) funded by the World Bank. The project’s goal was to strengthen the capacity of the target counties

of Kwale, Narok, Makueni and Siaya with the view to address climate related vulnerability, risk management and resilience. The target was to build effective and accountable mechanisms for climate resilience in Kenya.

One of the objectives of the project was to build capacity at the county level on integrating climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. This was aimed at boosting the counties' integrated development planning process with focus on utilization of the ICRM framework. To achieve this, departmental technical officers from the counties teamed up with relevant county assembly committee representatives, civil society organization representatives and county directors of meteorology as well as county NDMA officers. They were trained and guided to undertake participatory development of ICRM action plans for their respective counties. This was a participatory multi-stakeholder process involving training on the ICRM framework, gap analysis on county climate risk management capacity, and development of possible actions.

The training sessions and participatory action planning, conducted between July and August 2019 generated key lessons and recommendations for incorporation of ICRM in county integrated development planning and resilience building, as summarised below:

## Lessons and challenges for integrating ICRM in county planning & programmes

The following lessons were shared by the four participating counties and challenges identified during the ICRM learning and planning process:

- Effective and systematic public participation by citizens, their input, buy-in and support for policy, is of utmost importance as demonstrated by the instance of Makueni County. The main highlighted challenge was the high financial cost of public participation at all levels in the county.
- Lessons from Makueni County further demonstrated that leadership and collaboration at the very top of governance institutions were important for the success of every policy or planning process.
- Other counties recorded challenges of non-collaboration or lack of cooperation between county assemblies and county executive officers as an impediment to policy and legislative processes. This also hindered the approval of county plans and programmes.

- The recently created climate change units in the counties should provide leadership and coordination for climate risk management but are not operationalized.
- Also conspicuous was the lack of technical capacity from some of the county representatives on ICRM. The learning exercises demonstrated that joint training of participants from several counties fostered sharing of knowledge and experiences. However, the main challenge to this would be insufficient financial resources.
- The ICRM framework was appreciated and endorsed as useful and practical for integration of climate and disaster risk management in county plans and processes.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Kenya has a great opportunity to achieve climate and disaster resilience through effective application of the integrated climate risk management framework. Lessons drawn from the work with Kwale, Narok, Makueni and Siaya counties not only reveal various gaps and challenges facing the integration process of climate risk management at county level, but also highlight some opportunities. As demonstrated by Makueni County, adoption of the CCCF mechanism is a key enabler for ICRM as it combines the critical element of climate information in climate risk management and flow of finance to local development investments prioritized by communities to build climate and disaster resilience.

Policy makers and the executive leadership in counties keen on pursuing integrated climate risk management as part of their resilience strategies should take the following recommendations into account:



ICRM Workshop in Kisumu

<sup>1</sup>A Climate Risk Management Framework for Kenya – Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation at National and County Levels



## Entry points for ICRM to development planning

- The county can either develop an ICRM policy or include ICRM within a policy addressing climate change, such as a climate change policy.
  - A county working on a climate change or disaster management legislation can use this as an instrument to entrench ICRM in development and resilience planning.
- ICRM activities should be directly included in the county
- integrated development plans across sectors for effective implementation.

## Enablers for integrating ICRM

- An institutional framework for coordination of ICRM is necessary; operationalization of the climate change unit in a county enables this.
- Departmental technical staff require progressive training to develop understanding and build skills for ICRM integration, considering that ICRM concepts are relatively new in county development planning.
- Multi-stakeholder engagement across sectors is needed to ensure embedment of the ICRM framework within development planning at all levels.
- The process of ICRM mainstreaming, including policy development, institutional coordination, public participation and capacity building ought to be budgeted for and funded to be fully achieved.
- Effective public participation must be enabled for ICRM as all people at risk of climate impacts have the right to participate in decisions that affect their lives and their first-hand knowledge of issues affecting them is critical for action planning.

## Endnotes

1. Republic of Kenya (2016). A Climate Risk Management Framework for Kenya - Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation at National and County Levels. National Drought Management Authority.
2. Republic of Kenya (2018). National Climate Change Action Plan (2018 - 2022). Ministry of Environment & Forestry, Nairobi.

## About this policy brief

This policy brief aims at informing policy makers on the effectiveness of the CCCF mechanism and the work under the Devolution and Locally-led Climate and Disaster Risk Management project supported by the World Bank. ([Link to other policy briefs](#))

## About Ada Consortium

The Adaptation (Ada) Consortium is implementing the County Climate Change Fund mechanism that supports mainstreaming climate change into planning and budgeting, to prepare them access climate finance from different sources and strengthen public participation in the management and use of those funds. The CCCF mechanism has been piloted successfully in five Kenyan Counties - Isiolo, Garissa, Kitui, Makueni and Wajir — and is now being scaled out nationwide. The scale-out is funded by the Republic of Kenya, the Embassy of Sweden - Nairobi, UKaid, IFAD and the World Bank.

## Imprint

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**Cover image:** Kwale and Makueni County participants working on their ICRM action plan in Kwale.

**Credit:** Hausner Wendo, ADA Consortium



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