

Briefing Paper

Climate Change, Food Security and Trade: Institutional Interplay and Information Exchange

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Summary

This briefing paper presents the institutional interplay and information exchange in Murang'a and Makueni counties in Kenya in relation to climate change, food security and trade issues. Findings indicate that, horizontal linkages, that is institutional interlinkages and information exchange among stakeholders within counties, are strong, particularly interministerial and interactions of the private sector with county ministries. However, vertical linkages between counties' stakeholders and the national government were found to be weak.

Introduction

Climate change can gravely hamper food security and disrupt livelihoods, especially in poorer countries. In such instances, trade can be used as an instrument to address some of these challenges as it has the potential to alter food distribution patterns and provide alternative livelihoods. However, in order for trade to be used as a tool to mitigate the impacts of climate change on food security, there needs to be synergy among key players in environment, agriculture and trade.

Against this background, CUTS undertook a study in Murang'a and Makueni counties to understand the institutional interplay and information exchange among county and national ministries, farmers and farmer groups, civil society organisations (CSOs) and the private sector. This briefing paper highlights the main findings of the study and recommendations for enhancing cooperation of stakeholders towards a holistic approach to the critical issues of environment, food security and trade.

Murang'a and Makueni Counties

The Kenyan Constitution (2010) created a devolved governance system comprising of 47 counties. Murang'a and Makueni counties were selected as case studies based on their potential for agricultural export produce and/or vulnerability to climate change.

Murang'a County is located in Central Kenya with seven sub-counties. The county features as the 7th county nationally with the least number of people, about 33 per cent, living below the poverty line. A total of 942,581 people reside in Murang'a out of which 60 per cent are small scale farmers engaged in tea and coffee productions. It is estimated that there are about 60,000 tea farmers in the county.

Makueni County, on other hand, is located in the Eastern part of Kenya with six sub-counties. Of the total 884, 527 residents, it is estimated that 61 per cent live below the poverty line, making the county the 38th out of 47 counties with highest number of people living below the poverty line.

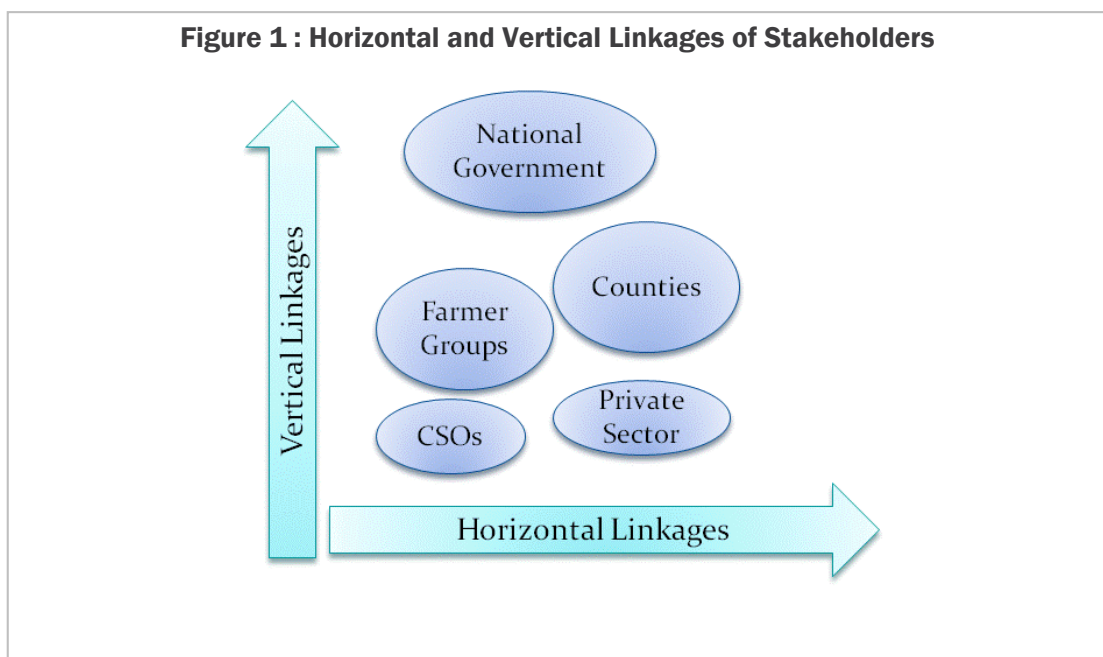
The manifestations of climate change in Murang'a have been observed through landslides, floods and drought in some parts of the County. In 2012, the leading export item of the country, tea, was attacked by frost resulting in losses in millions of shillings. Murang'a County is also experiencing malaria cases, which had never been the case before¹.

Makueni County and the greater Eastern part of the country are one of the driest areas in Kenya. The County has been known for food insecurity and in 2011, drought in the region was declared as a national disaster. Reports indicate that over the last close to two decades, rainfall patterns have become erratic. Out of the 10 rainy seasons in the County, only one season yields enough rainfall to sustain agricultural growth, which was not the case before, when rains would fail only once every two years².

Horizontal and Vertical Linkages

To understand institutional interplay and information exchange, horizontal and vertical linkages among ministries and stakeholders were examined. Under horizontal linkages, inter-ministerial interactions, stakeholder linkages with the relevant county ministries as well as interactions amongst stakeholders from the private sector, civil society, and farmer groups were taken into account.

With regard to vertical linkages, the policy and administrative frameworks; and institutional mechanisms in place that facilitate interactions between the counties' stakeholders and the national government were considered.



¹ A presentation by Paul Murage, Kenya Meteorological Services- Early Warning system at 'Murang'a County Consultative Workshop on the Climate Change Bill & Policy Proceedings' (May 2014).

²Michael Arunga, World Vision Emergency Communications Advisor – Africa, quoted in 'Mapping out Climate Change Adaptation Plans on Kenya's Airwaves'. Inter Press Service News Agency (June 2012)

Horizontal Linkages

Inter-ministerial Linkages

Through funds made available by the Ministry of Finance and Planning in Murang'a County and Ministry of Finance and Socio-Economic Planning in Makeni County, the Agriculture Sector Development Support Programme (ASDSP), based at the Ministry of Agriculture, supports trainings on capacity building and value addition; and promotes value chain development. Thematic groups under the ASDSP have been created to coordinate the programme interactions with other ministries. In addition, the programme develops proposals and fundraises collectively with other ministries.

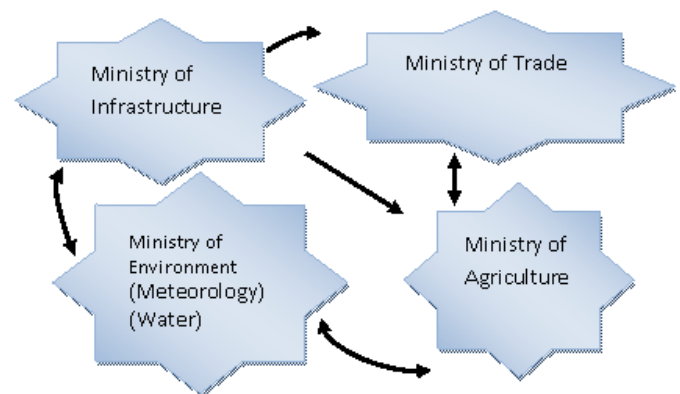
Another important institution in relation to agriculture and climate change is the Kenya Meteorological Services (KMS), which has decentralised its services down to the county level. Under the Ministry of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, the County Directors of KMS have the responsibility to downscale, interpret and disseminate weather information.

In relation to trade, each county has the Ministry of Trade that is mandated to facilitate good business environment for private sector development within the counties. This is done through the construction of market centres, financing of small traders, training and organising trade fairs.

Ministries charged with agriculture, environment and trade collaborate with each other in order to execute their respective mandates.

As illustrated in Figure 2, KMS, under the Ministry of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, liaises with the Ministry of Agriculture in advising farmers on the appropriate seeds for cultivation based on the predicted amount of rainfall the region will receive. This collaboration has seen the KMS take a key role in extension services alongside the Ministry of Agriculture.

Figure 2 : Illustration of Inter-Ministerial linkages on climate, food security and trade issues at the county level



The Ministry of Agriculture also works with the Ministry of Trade in helping farmers in terms of access to markets. This is done through information sharing and collaborative actions with private sector players as well as agents that source supplies from within the counties.

The Ministry of Environment collaborates with the Ministry of Infrastructure during road construction and maintenance projects, whereby key information is sourced from the Ministry of Environment to guide engineers on the design of bridges and drainage facilities as well as the raw materials to be used in road construction. This is particularly relevant to distribution of agricultural products and trade in the face of climate change challenges.

Ministerial Interactions with CSOs/NGOs

There are few CSOs and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) based within the two counties. Due to the limited presence of county-based CSOs, a number of CSOs based in Nairobi have taken up engagement with the county governments, perhaps a continuation of previous engagement with district offices before devolution.

The few county-based organisations mostly undertake local community development projects but with limited

collaboration with the local ministries in charge of trade, agriculture, or environment. Organisations like the Anglican Development Services (ADS) and World Vision interact with county Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Environment to support farmers on environmentally sound agriculture practices and organise workshops, public meetings (*barazas*), and house-to-house visits aimed at building climate change resilience.

Ministerial Interactions with the Private Sector

The private sector appears to have built strong collaborative networks with key ministries in the counties.

In recognition of the role played by the private sector in agricultural production and marketing along value chains, the ASDSP has developed guidelines for public-private partnership. The Ministry of Agriculture involves the private sector in its consultative forums and often uses the private sector to deliver extension services as well as avail agro inputs to farmers, such as seeds and other farm inputs.

Kenya Meteorological Services (KMS) is another government agency that uses the private sector to deliver services, for instance in disseminating down scaled weather information through private community radio stations.

Ministerial Interactions with Farmers and Farmer Groups

Farmers' collaboration with relevant ministries in the counties, other than the Ministry of Agriculture, is mostly supported by the private sector and CSOs. Such indirect interaction can be attributed to lack of awareness as well as organisational challenges amongst farmer groups to build strong associations, which can directly engage with the relevant ministries.

Interaction among Stakeholders

Due to the liberalised nature of the Kenyan economy, a number of private sector players are involved in the agricultural sector. Engagement with the private sector is usually around financing. Financing agencies, both

micro-financing institutions and big commercial banks, are found to be instrumental in training fellow players in the sector on entrepreneurial skills as a strategy to boost business development. Farmers acquire inputs like fertilizers, seeds and machinery from the private sector, and at times even employ extension services, especially on agro-meteorology.

All stakeholders in the agricultural sector have some form of engagement with farmers, be it regulatory, capacity building, or business. Farmers also engage amongst each other through interaction with other farmers' groups. This has been instrumental in helping farmers initiate agricultural development projects and share information and ideas.

There is loose interaction between CSOs and the private sector while farmers and their groups are in most cases the beneficiaries of CSO interventions.

Vertical Linkages

Institutional linkages of Murang'a and Makueni counties to the national government can be examined through the policy and regulatory frameworks and the administrative framework. Such vertical linkages can take the form of formal and informal processes involving different actors, namely politicians and civil servants from the county and national governments, private sector players, and the general public.

In terms of policy and regulatory frameworks in place, there are several policies that address some of the linkages in the three issues; for instance, the promotion of agricultural sector growth and export competitiveness together with sustainable management and use of environment and natural resources. However, their implementation at the county level seems disjointed without adequate mechanisms to promote a coordinated approach amongst the relevant ministries. Moreover, awareness of these policies at the county level is limited among officials and stakeholders.

With regard to the agricultural sector, the ASDSP is the link between the national government and county governments in the administration as well as execution of agricultural sector development.

The Ministry of Environment, Water and Natural

Resources has a more direct administrative link with the counties through KMS, whereby a director has been appointed in each county to downscale weather information and link the county to KMS Headquarters in Nairobi. Other officers at the Ministry of Environment, however, report to their county offices, who in turn coordinate actions with their respective ministries at the national level.

The Ministry of Trade at the county level is linked to the national government in administering the Joint Loans Board (JLB) , where businesses seek loans from the Ministry of Trade. The main activity regarding this administrative role is the vetting of loan applicants and subsequent approval for the loans to be disbursed from the JLB, which is under the Ministry of Trade at the national level.

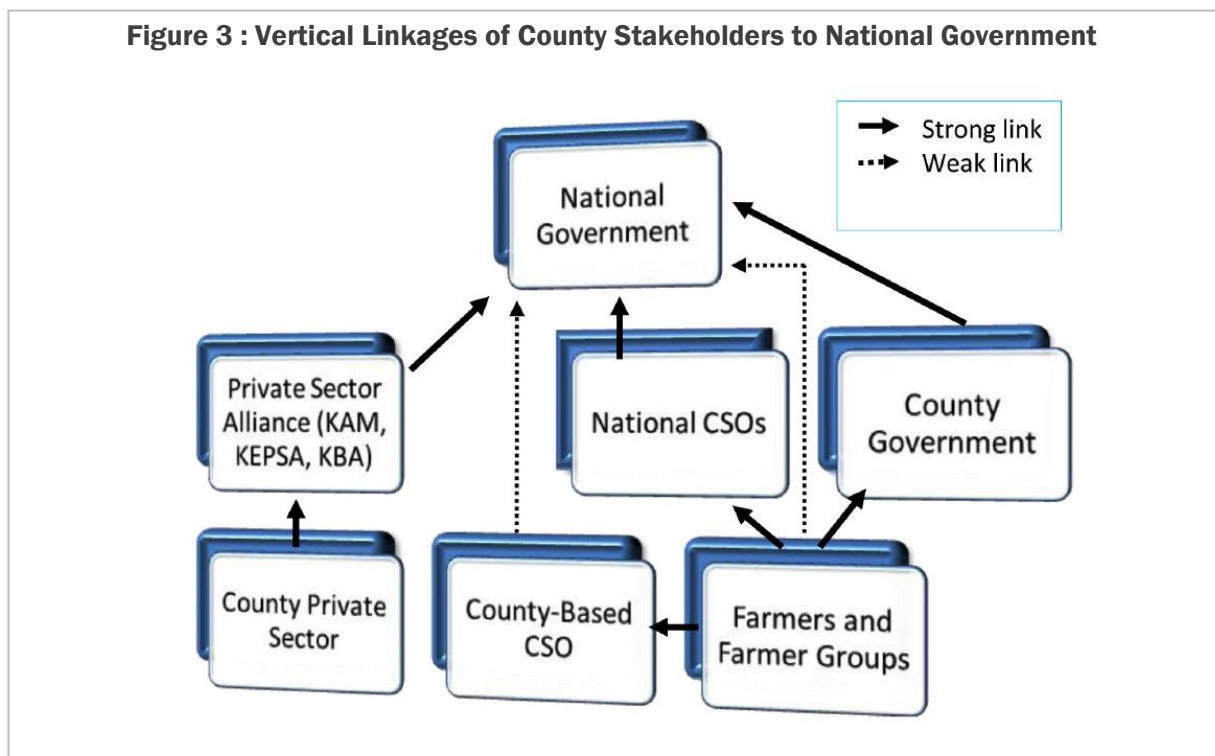
Findings in the two counties indicate that both formal and informal mechanisms are used to represent county issues at the national level.

At the ministerial level, the respective countyministries directly communicate with the national government ministries, usually with regard to large development projects that involve both governments.

At the private sector level, different business associations often engage with the national government on policy related issues to promote their interests. These associations include, *inter alia*, the Kenya Bankers Association (KBA), Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA), Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM), which are instrumental in lobbying and advocating for the interests of the private sector.

County-based CSOs do not exhibit strong movement to effectively bring out their county’s issues at the national level and mostly rely on CSOs based in Nairobi. National CSOs usually engage both local and national governments to advocate for the development interests of the counties from a civil society’s perspective.

Figure 3 : Vertical Linkages of County Stakeholders to National Government



Farmers use a more indirect approach to present their issues at the national level, and this is mostly attributed to low capacity of farmer groups to engage in policy oriented issues. They use the county government officials, political leaders and other agencies, like CSOs, that organise consultative forums at local levels to present their challenges locally and nationally. Indirect engagements are evident in cases when County Assembly representatives, Senators and National Assembly members highlight the challenges of farmers and their demands for better services from the government.

Challenges of Collaboration

In terms of inter-ministerial collaboration, financial limitations have been identified amongst the main challenges undermining effective collaboration both within the government ministries as well as with stakeholders, as the ASDSP is in most cases unable to adequately fund all the activities in the agriculture sector.

Communication within and across ministries is slowed by bureaucratic procedures. For instance, an officer from the Ministry of Agriculture cannot formally communicate with another officer from the trade or environment ministries without following certain procedures. Similarly, communication between the county ministries and their national counterparts, both within the same and across sectors, are faced with bureaucratic procedures. Furthermore, bureaucracies in public institutions are reported to undermine efforts by stakeholders to effectively collaborate with the key ministries. Often, junior officers find it difficult to link other stakeholders, for instance, farmers and community based organisations, to top officials.

Political interference in the work of county officials has also been identified as a challenge. Since the counties were formed recently, it is reported that county politicians are eager to show results to the electorate. Interviewees indicated that the challenges from political interference far outweigh the positive aspect of political will, in terms of assuming coherent and holistic approaches to the issues.

Due to absence of a fully functional coordination mechanism that can bring together the three ministries to engage with stakeholders, the civil society, private

sector, and farmers are forced to identify key public officials in each of the ministries for engagement, which hinders coherent responses to the issues.

The main challenge in collaboration with the private sector is the little interest the latter has in activities that do not result in direct financial benefit. Due to the nature of their operations, private companies tend to see continuous engagements as affecting the efforts they would put into profit-oriented activities, which consequently hinders any effort for sustained dialogue to address the challenges encountered in trade and agricultural sectors as a result of climate change.

Similarly, collaboration with farmers and farmer groups, particularly small scale farmers, is hampered by their tendency for immediate or short term benefits when engaging with stakeholders. The long term benefits associated with government programmes make it difficult to sustain interaction with farmers, especially during planning and strategising.

Inflexibility on the part of farmers to change traditional methods of planting has also been identified as a challenge. Farmers' adherence to good agricultural practices to address climate change has been inconsistent, which is cited by KMS as the major problem in increasing agricultural productivity in light of the challenges posed by climate change.

Farmers in Murang'a identified that the main challenge working with CSOs is inconsistency in the latter's advisory services which confuses farmers and at times leads to farm losses. For instance, interviewed respondents alleged that farmers in Murang'a were encouraged to invest in quails by a number of NGOs since the market was lucrative. The farmers were promised high returns but the market prices for quail eggs dramatically fell from Kenya Shillings 120 to Kenya Shillings 10 each, causing huge losses among farmers who had heavily invested in the rearing of quail. Some CSOs are also accused of engaging in county politics instead of improving livelihoods in the counties.

Lessons Learned

Direct engagement of CSOs, farmer groups, and the private sector in the two counties with relevant ministries in charge of trade, climate change, and

agriculture vary based on the nature of the stakeholder group. The private sector has been found to have stronger interaction with relevant ministries, while CSOs' engagement with the Ministry of Agriculture is limited to mobilising farmers for forums. Engagement of farmer groups with relevant ministries has been found to be indirect, mostly through the private sector, CSOs and other agencies.

The coordination of public institutions is relatively stronger within the counties; and weaker between the counties and the national government; in other words, there is a strong horizontal linkage but weaker vertical linkage of institutions and stakeholders working on environment, food security and trade. More, therefore, needs to be done to promote vertical linkages, as they are instrumental in supporting horizontal linkages in terms of finances and technical assistance for a holistic response to climate change, food security, and trade issues.

Key Recommendations

There is need to strengthen the existing government programme at the county level, specifically the ASDSP, to promote agricultural sector development and food security. This would help promote effective inter-institutional collaboration as the programme involves different stakeholders.

The three key ministries at the county level need to institute a joint mechanism to promote better coordination and coherence in approaches. Such a mechanism would also be instrumental in promoting joint resource mobilisation strategies and in coordinating with the national government to address the three issues of climate change, food security and trade in a more coherent and holistic way.

Consultative meetings among the key ministries in charge of agriculture, environment, and trade need to be held consistently. Such meetings would build synergy and promote greater collaboration amongst the ministries. In addition, for a bottom-up approach, stakeholders from the private sector, farmer groups and

CSOs need to be more involved in such meetings.

Though climate change has been understood by policy makers to mean direct threat to agriculture, trade and livelihoods, the interlinkages of these three issues and the need for a collaborative interministerial approach to address them still remain largely wanting. It is therefore important for the Ministry of Environment, in particular, through the Climate Change Units and the KMS, to take the lead in creating more awareness at the ministerial levels as well as undertake joint activities with relevant ministries.

The respective county ministries, CSOs, farmer groups and the private sector should establish a coordinating agency or forum to bring together all players in agriculture, trade and environment to tackle the three issues through capacity building, research, business and/or service delivery in a more coherent manner.

Addressing bureaucratic challenges of protocol at both county and national government levels presents an important area of improving the linkages between national and county governments. Barriers in the form of bureaucratic procedures need to be removed to effectively bring all respective ministries together and respond to food security, trade and climate change issues in a holistic manner.

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