MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE & FORESTRY

STATE DEPARTMENT FOR FORESTRY

Kenya Watershed Services Improvement Project (KEWASIP)

(P178850)

Environmental & Social Systems and Technical Capacities Assessment of Implementing Entities

November, 2025

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List of Acronyms

ASAL	Arid and Semi-Arid Land
BETA	Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda
CALM	Climate Action through Landscape Management PforR
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCDR	Country Climate and Development Report
CEC	County Environment Committee
CFA	Community Forest Association
CIF	Climate Investment Funds
CoG	Council of Governors
CPCU	County Project Coordination Unit
CPSAC	County Project Steering and Advisory Committee
CRI	Climate Resilience Indicator
CSA	Climate Smart Agriculture
DRSRS	Directorate of Remote Surveys and Resource Sensing
DOSHS	Directorate of Occupational Safety and Health Services
EHSGs	Environmental, Health, and Safety Guidelines
EIA	Environment Impact Assessment
EMCA	Environmental Management and Coordination Act
ESF	Environment and Social Framework
ESIA	Environment and Social Impact Assessment
ESMP	Environment and Social Management Plan
ESSs	Environment and Social Standards
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FCMA	Forest Conservation and Management Act
FFS	Farmer Field Schools
FLLOCA	Financing Locally Led Climate Action
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GoK	Government of Kenya
GRS	Grievance Redress Service
Ha	Hectare
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDA	International Development Association
IEMP	Integrated Ecosystem Management Plans

IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IP	Indigenous People
IPF	Investment Project Financing
IWC	Integrated Watershed Committees
IWUA	Irrigation Water Users Associations
KAPSLMP	Kenya Agricultural Productivity and Sustainable Landscape Management Project
KCSAP	Kenya Climate-Smart Agriculture Project
KEFRI	Kenya Forestry Research Institute
KEWASIP	Kenya Watershed Services Improvement Project
KFS	Kenya Forest Service
Ksh	Kenyan Shilling
KWS	Kenya Wildlife Service
KWSCRP	Kenya Water Security and Climate Resilience Project
KWTA	Kenya Water Towers Agency
MoECCF	Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MECCF	Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MRV	Measurement, Reporting, And Verification
MTP	Medium-Term Plan
NBEs	Nature-Based Enterprises
NCCAP	National Climate Change Action Plan
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NECC	National Environmental Complaints Committee
NEMA	National Environment Management Authority
NET	National Environment Tribunal
NGEC	National Gender and Equality Commission
NLERS	National Landscape and Ecosystem Restoration Programme Strategy 2023-2032
NMK	National Museums of Kenya
NPC	Nature, People, and Climate
NPCU	National Project Coordination Unit
NPSC	National Project Steering Committee
NTAC	National Technical Advisory Committee
OESRC	Operations Environmental and Social Review Committee
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety

PAD	Project Appraisal Document
PCE	Private Capital Enabled
PCM	Private Capital Mobilization
PCRA	Participatory Climate Risk Assessments
PDO	Project Development Objective
PES	Payment for Ecosystem Services
PF	Process Framework
PFM	Public Finance Management
PFMP	Participatory Forest Management Plan
PIEs	Project Implementing Entities
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
RMP	Resource Management Plan
SCMP	Sub-Catchment Management Plan
SDA	State Department for Agriculture
SDECC	State Department for Environment and Climate Change
SDF	State Department for Forestry
SDI	State Department for Irrigation
SDW	State Department for Wildlife
SDWS	State Department for Water and Sanitation
SEA/SH	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/Sexual Harassment
SESA	Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SLWM	Sustainable Land and Water Management
THS-UCP	Transforming Health Systems for Universal Care Project
ToR	Terms of Reference
VMG	Vulnerable and Marginalized Groups
WB	World Bank
WCCPC	Water Catchment Conservation and Protection Committee
WIBA	Work Injury Benefit Act
WMP	Watershed Management Plans
WRA	Water Resources Authority
WRUA	Water Resource Users Association

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Report

This document serves as a draft report for conducting environmental and social (E&S) management capacity assessment of Project Implementing Entities (PIEs) for the Kenya Watershed Services Improvement Project (KEWASIP).

1.2 About the KEWASIP

1.3 Objectives & Components

The KEWASIP responds to the critical need to restore degraded landscapes, strengthen the management of Kenya's natural resources, and enhance ecosystem services to improve climate resilience and provide access to diversified livelihoods in Kenya. It has three (3) components: **Component 1. Roots of resilience: policy, legal, and regulatory framework** – strengthens governance structures to promote diversified rural livelihoods, improve information access, build resilience to climate change, and enhance sustainable resource management; **Component 2. Green horizons: sustainable landscape and watershed management** – makes investments in private and community lands to build resilient livelihoods by involving communities in planning and implementation; and **Component 3: Project management, training and capacity building** – involves training and capacity building of stakeholders at the national and county levels will enhance E&S risks and impacts management, sustainability, and understanding of the Bank's Environmental and Social Framework (ESF). These components are further divided into five (5) subcomponents detailed in the KEWASIP's Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF).

1.4 Project Implementing Entities (PIEs)

The KEWASIP's PIEs include the State Department for Forestry (SDF), State Department for Environment and Climate Change, State Department for Wildlife, State Department of Irrigation, Water Resources Authority (WRA), Kenya Forest Service (KFS), Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), NETFUND, KEFRI, CoG and twelve (12) project participating counties – Garissa, Isiolo, Kitui, Kwale, Laikipia, Marsabit, Makueni, Meru, Baringo, Tharaka Nithi, Samburu, and Tana River.

1.5 Rationale for PIEs E&S Capacity Assessment

The rationale for conducting an E&S capacity assessment for PIEs is to determine whether they have requisite internal capacity to manage the various E&S risks and impacts emanating from implementation of the KEWASIP activities. Sample anticipated E&S risks and impacts, identified in the ESMF, include: **Component 1**. Risk of excluding vulnerable and marginalized groups (VMGs) and indigenous peoples

(IPs) from governance structures and rights recognition. Access restrictions in protected areas or land use changes could lead to community displacement. Stakeholder engagement, including with VMGs/Minority and Marginalized Communities (MMGs) may be limited. If ecosystem service benefits aren't fairly distributed, VMGs/MMGs may be left out, exacerbating inequalities and causing social tensions. Undervaluing traditional knowledge through modern governance could lead to cultural identity loss. Resource competition could intensify, causing social/community conflicts with external stakeholders. Promoting climate-resilient landscapes might disrupt existing economic activities and impact living standards. Data privacy concerns and potential misuse of information related to land use and community activities also exist; and **Component 2**. Livelihood restoration activities may disrupt livelihoods, and increase inequalities. Increased management of protected areas may, disrupt livelihoods, exclude VMGs /MCs and affect implementation.

2   E&S Capacity Assessment Methodology

As stated in 1.3 above, the aim of the PIEs' E&S capacity assessment was to determine each institution's capacity to comply with national and World Bank's E&S requirements. Thereafter, and guided by the findings, develop an E&S capacity building strategy for the PIEs during project implementation.

In undertaking the capacity assessment, the following tools and methods were used:

2.1 Desk Reviews and Analysis

The desk review and analysis covered publicly available secondary data on the PIEs; national E&S and World Bank's E&S framework requirements; and developed Environmental and Social instruments such as the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP), Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), Environmental and Social Review Summary (ESRS), Labour Management Procedures (LMP), Security Management Plan (SMP), Process Framework (PF), and Social Conflict Analysis Report (SCAR) and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) Action Plan. The review and analysis provided pertinent information on the E&S requirements, anticipated E&S risks and impacts, and proposed mitigation measures.

2.2 Organisational Capacity Assessment

The institutional capacity assessment involved understanding systems, procedures and processes related to the E&S management for respective PIEs. An E&S management capacity assessment (ESMCA), Appendix A, was developed and administered to focal persons in the PIEs. The questionnaire sought to elicit the following information: Staff count; Mandate; Locations; Number of staff with E&S qualifications; E&S training attended; Previous experience in implementing World Bank-financed projects; Availability of an E&S policy; Annual E&S budget; Experience

in addressing E&S and challenges; Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) in place and challenges; and Process of conducting stakeholder engagements.

2.3 Scope of the E&S Capacity Assessment

This KEWASIP implementing agencies' institutional E&S capacity assessment was conducted for all implementing agencies including KEFRI, State Department for Forestry, NEMA, WRA, State Department for Social Protection and Senior Citizens Affairs, and county governments. This assessment excludes two critical implementing agencies – Kenya Wildlife Services (KWS) and Kenya Forest Service (KFS), which have been assessed separately because of their unique para-millitary character.

3 Findings

3.1 Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, and Forestry (MoECCF)/State Department for Forestry (SDF)

The MoECCF through the SDF is the executing agency for the KEWASIP at the national level providing oversight of all Project activities to be funded. The NPCU established under MOECCF will be the key implementing agency of the KEWASIP project. The NPCU will handle daily project management, monitoring and evaluation, and review and approval of CPCUs' work plans.

The main role of the NPCU in the E&S management process of the KEWASIP will include:

i.   Ensure adherence to relevant policies, legal and regulatory frameworks applicable to Project activities. These include but not limited to; the Constitution of Kenya, 2010; Forest Conservation and Management Act 2016, EMCA Cap 387, Wildlife and Conservation management Act 2013, Water Act 2016, National Land Commission Act 2012, Lands Act 2012, Land Registration Act 2012, Physical Planning Act 2019, National Government and Coordination Act 2013, Climate Change Act 2023, Intergovernmental Relations Act 2012, County Government Act 2012, Occupational Safety and Health Act 2007, Work injury and Benefit Act 2007, Alcohol and Drinks Control Act, HIV and Prevention and Control Act 2011, Energy Act 2006, National Construction Authority (NCA) Act, 2011, Environment and Land Act 2011, Agriculture Act cap 318, Irrigation act 2019, Community Groups Regitration Act 2022, Employment Act, 2007; Public Health Act, 2012; Sexual Offences Act, 2012; Children Act, 2022; Labour Relations Act, 2012; Persons Disability Act, 2025; and the Gender Policy, 2011, National Landscape and Ecosystem Restoration Strategy 2023-2032, Vision 2030, SDGs Framework, National agroforestry Strategy 2025-2035, Bottom Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA) 2022-2027, World Bank E&S framework 2018,;

ii.   Implement the Project E&S instruments including the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP), Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP), Marginalized Communities

Planning Framework (MCPPF) and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harrassment (SEA-SH) Plan, Grievance Redress Mechanism(GRM) Process Framework, Labour Management procedures, ,;

iii. Ensure E&S screening is undertaken per sub-project by the E&S officers under the CPCUs, and the forms maintained in a repository database. Also, ensure E&S issues that must be addressed in the planning, design, construction, and operation phases are identified. In addition, oversee recommend E&S assessments are undertaken or instruments prepared, such as, Vulnerable and Marginalized Groups Plans (VMGPs);

iv. In coordination with the CPCUs and NEMA, KFS,KWS,NCA,WRA and county governments to ensure contractors obtain and maintain validity of all requisite permits and licenses. This will also include the Certificate of Registration of sites as a workplace as per the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OSHA), [2007], Contractor's All Risk Insurance and the Workers' Injury Benefits Act (WIBA) insurance cover for every worker. The contractors shall adhere to the World Bank project policies and E&S instruments;

v. Provide technical support, oversight, and quality control to field staff working on E&S risk management;

vi. Oversee overall implementation and monitoring of E&S mitigation and management activities, compile E&S progress reports from community levels/subprojects, and report to the World Bank on quarterly and annual basis;

vii. Undertake E&S capacity building to national and county level staff and contractors who will be tasked with E&S management;

viii. Ensure that all bidding and contract documents include all relevant E&S management provisions and a budget for ESMP implementation. In addition, ensure that the Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) are comprehensive and cover the full scope of contractor responsibilities and the entire spectrum of E&S requirements across all project phases including planning, design, construction, operation, and decommissioning rather than being limited to construction-related impacts. The assessed institutions should play their oversight role in verifying the adequacy and quality of ESMPs prepared and implemented by contractors and supervising firms.

ix. Adopt the World Bank's Environment and Social Incidents Response Toolkit (ESIRT), 2018, and notify the World Bank as soon as the E&S officers become aware of an incident. Also, ensure incident notification in line with the national legal provisions (24 hours) to the Directorate Of Occupational Safety And Health Services (DOSHS);

x. Ensure contractors and supervising firms submit to the NPCU monthly monitoring reports on Environmental, Social, Health and Safety (ESHS) performance in accordance with the metrics specified in the respective bidding documents and contracts;

xi. Develop and operationalize the project Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM), ensuring complaints are timely resolved, and,uptake & feedback channels are functional;

xii. In coordination with CPCUs and other implementing entities, ensure adherence to labor management provisions, including worker protection (child/forced labor, discrimination), timely remittance of wages as per government minimum wage guidance, site-specific workers' grievance redress mechanisms, equal employment opportunities for all community groups, and employment priority for local labor, in line with the Labour Management Procedures (LMP).

xiii. Carry out mid-term and close-out E&S compliance audits of the Project;

xiv. Implement the E&S management process and measures as outlined in the PIM;

xv. As necessary, procure qualified consultants to undertake Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs), prepare a Comprehensive Project Report (CPR) or Summary Project Report (SPR) based on the sub-project type and screening outcome, in line with national environmental risk classifications (high, medium, or low risk);

xvi. As necessary, on a part time basis, hire/appoint/deploy/second technical officers, including but not limited to, GBV/SEA-SH advisor, labor specialist and Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) specialist, prior to the start of related technical services activities. The NPCU shall ensure that adequate staffing, budget, and institutional support are provided to maintain these functions throughout project implementation.

While the MoECCF has accumulated significant experience in implementing donor-supported programs through its affiliated agencies (NEMA, KFS, KEFRI, and NETFUND), the SDF currently lacks direct experience with World Bank–financed operations and the application of the Environmental and Social Framework (ESF). The assessment reveals notable capacity gaps at the national, county, and sub-county levels particularly in technical staffing, coordination, and resources for Environmental and Social Risk Management (ESRM).

To achieve full compliance with the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) and strengthen the ministry's institutional performance, the KEWASIP will support a structured capacity enhancement plan. This plan will:

• Hire/Appoint/second qualified E&S specialists (Environmental Officer, Social Officer, GBV/SEA-SH Advisor, OHS Specialist) to the NPCU before the commencement of technical activities;

• Provide adequate budgetary allocations and logistical support (vehicles, ICT tools, monitoring equipment, and communication infrastructure) to enable effective supervision, reporting, and rapid response;

• Operationalize a functional and inclusive project-level Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM), as outlined in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP);

- Implement continuous E&S capacity building and mentorship programs for national, county and sub-county staffs, ensuring consistent application of ESF principles and best practices across sub-projects.

Through these measures, the MoECCF/NPCU will progressively build the technical, financial, and institutional capacity necessary to oversee, coordinate, and report on the full spectrum of E&S obligations under KEWASIP, thereby ensuring compliance with both national legal requirements and the World Bank's Environmental and Social Standards (ESSs).

3.2 Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI)

KEFRI was established as a state corporation in 1986 under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, Cap 250. KEFRI is also mandated under the FMCA, 2016 to undertake forestry research. KEFRI undertakes research and provides technologies and information for sustainable management, conservation and development of forests and allied natural resources. [1]

The Institute is ISO 14001:2015 Environmental Management Systems (EMS)[2] and ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management Systems (QMS) certified and therefore conforms to international standards on environmental and quality management and relevant national legislations, and its research meets international standards.

KEFRI collaborates with FAO, ILRI, NEMA, and National Alliance of Community Forest Associations (NACOFA) – the umbrella organization of Community Forest Associations (CFAs) in Kenya – in the forest landscape restoration (FLR) project. The Institute has previously worked with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), in implementing the "Capacity Development Project for Sustainable Forest Management in Kenya (CADEP-SFM)" project. The overall goal of the project is to ensure sustainable forest management is promoted in Kenya towards the national forest cover target of 10%.

KEFRI was also an implementing agency in the EU-funded programme "Water Towers Protection and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Programme" before the programme encountered challenges following the eviction of forest dwellers and allegations of human rights abuses against the indigenous communities living in the project area.[3]

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[1] https://www.kefri.org/components/vision/vision.html

[2] ISO 14001 is the internationally recognized standard for environmental management systems (EMS). It provides a framework for organizations to design and implement an EMS and continually improve their environmental performance. By adhering to this standard, organizations can ensure they are taking proactive measures to minimize their environmental footprint, comply with relevant legal requirements, and achieve their environmental objectives. The framework encompasses various aspects, from resource usage and waste management to monitoring environmental performance and involving stakeholders in environmental commitments.

https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/kenya/european-union-water-towers-programme-now-comes-end_und_en

These experiences underline the importance of robust Environmental and Social (E&S) safeguards, inclusive engagement processes, and proactive risk mitigation during project implementation.

Under KEWASIP, KEFRI will rely on the project Environmental and Social (E&S) Officers based at the National Project Coordination Unit (NPCU) and CPCUs to provide technical oversight and guidance on E&S risk management. The E&S Officers will support KEFRI staff on E&S safegurads on implementation in:

• Ensuring compliance with the World Bank's Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) and relevant national legislation, including the Environmental Management and Coordination Act (EMCA, 1999 as amended) and the Forest Conservation and Management Act (FCMA, 2016);

• Overseeing environmental and social screening, preparation, and implementation of site-specific E&S instruments;

• Facilitating inclusive stakeholder engagement and ensuring the participation of MCs/VMGs in project activities, consistent with the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP);

• Supporting the operationalization of the project-level GRM to ensure timely and transparent resolution of complaints; and

• Coordinating periodic monitoring, reporting, and capacity-building activities to strengthen KEFRI's internal understanding and application of E&S risk management procedures.

In conclusion, through liaison with the project's dedicated E&S Officers and close coordination with the NPCU, KEFRI will enhance its ability to integrate environmental and social safeguards into its research and implementation activities. This arrangement will also help prevent the recurrence of past challenges and promote accountable, inclusive, and sustainable project outcomes.

3.3 National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)

The National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) was esbalished in 2002 by The Environment Management and Coordination Act Cap387 as a national entity with the objective of supervising and coordinating environmental activities and serving as the main national body to implement environmental policies in all sectors within the country. NEMA's twin mandates are: (i) To ensure sustainable management of the environment through exercising general supervision and coordination over matters relating to the environment and; (ii) To be the principal instrument of government in the implementation of all policies relating to the environment.

NEMA has offices in all 47 counties with over 200 officers trained in E&S management. NEMA enforces compliance nationally by monitoring, inspecting, and ensuring

https://wra.go.ke
https://wra.go.ke/the-horn-of-africa-groundwater-for-resilience-project/

adherence to environmental laws through a range of actions, including issuing licenses, permits and conducting site inspections. They are responsible for guiding on waste management, protecting sensitive ecosystems and biological hotspots like wetlands, riparian land, and promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation measures.

NEMA has been implementing the World Bank funded Africa Environmental Health and Pollution Management Program (AEHPMP) which seeks to reduce exposure to mercury and Unintentional Persistent Organic Pollutants (uPOPs) pollution at pilot sites and strengthen the institutional capacity to manage and regulate mercury use in artisanal small-scale gold mining (ASGM) and e-waste in selected countries in Africa.

Through this program, NEMA has gained practical knowledge of the World Bank's Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) and E&S risk management approaches related to pollution control and hazardous waste.

Under KEWASIP, NEMA will work in liaison with the project Environmental and Social (E&S) Officers based at the National Project Coordination Unit (NPCU) and the County Project Coordination Units (CPCUs). These officers will provide technical support and backstopping on E&S risk management, ensuring that both environmental and social dimensions are fully integrated into NEMA's review, monitoring, and compliance activities.Through this arrangement, KEWASIP will leverage NEMA's national environmental oversight capacity while ensuring that social risk management is effectively supported through the project-hired E&S Officers. This collaborative structure will enhance consistency, compliance, and efficiency in the implementation of environmental and social safeguards across all project activities.

3.4 Water Resources Authority (WRA)

The WRA, established under Section 11 of the Water Act, 2016, is a state corporation tasked with regulating water resource management and usage. Acting on behalf of the National government, its mission is to ensure clean water access for all, both now and in the future.[4]

The WRA is currently implementing the World Bank funded, Horn of Africa-Groundwater for Resilience Project (HoAGW4R) in collaboration with Cooperation in International Waters in Africa (CIWA), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Kenya's Ministry of Water, Sanitation & Irrigation and State Agencies including Water Sector Trust Fund (WSTF) and Regional Centre for Groundwater Resources, Education, Training and Research. The overarching objective of the project is to increase the sustainable access and management of groundwater in the Horn of Africa borderlands.[5]

Several Environmental and Social instruments have been developed and are being implemented for HoAGW4R. These include the ESCP, ESMF, SEP, RPF, and LMP. The

ESMF, among other provisions, states that the Project has engaged the services of an Environmental and Social Specialist to assist in coordinating, identifying, resolving, and monitoring the status of all environmental and social issues. The WRA will determine whether the E&S specialists under the HoAGW4R will also support the KEWASIP's implementation or if additional E&S officers will be designated/appointed/recruited and maintained.

Notably, as part of the SEP, HoAGW4R has a robust GRM to address project-related concerns and complaints in a timely and efficient manner. The GRM, inter alia, includes channels to receive SEA/SH/GBV complaints and is structured at three levels: national, basin, and sub-basin or Water Resource Users Association (WRUA) levels.

WRA's experience in implementing HoAGW4R provides a strong foundation for managing environmental and social risks under KEWASIP. Under KEWASIP, WRA will work in liaison with the project's Environmental and Social (E&S) Officers based at the NPCU and CPCUs. These officers will provide technical support and backstopping to WRA on E&S risk management, including environmental and social screening, supervision, reporting, and monitoring of safeguards implementation. The E&S Officers will also work directly with WRA staff to strengthen coordination, data sharing, and compliance with both national and World Bank Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) requirements.

Through this arrangement, KEWASIP will leverage WRA's strong regulatory and technical expertise in water-resource management while ensuring social risk management and community engagement are effectively supported through the project E&S Officers. This collaborative structure will enhance environmental and social performance, promote institutional learning, and strengthen the sustainability of water resource governance under the project

3.5 Kenya Forest Service

The Kenya Forest Service (KFS), is a state corporation, established under the Forest Conservation and Management Act, 2016, is the principal government agency responsible for managing public forests in Kenya. The core mandate of KFS is to conserve, protect, and sustainably manage Kenya's forest resources for environmental stability and socio-economic development. Its functions includes the preparation and implementation of management plans for all public forests, maintenance of national forest information systems, enforcement of sustainable forest use and trade regulations, and support to county governments in building forestry capacity, including the establishment of green zones and arboreta. The Act requires public consultation for major decisions such as boundary changes or revocations of public forests, with Parliamentary approval required for revocation or boundary variations. KFS is also empowered to establish conservancy areas and forest conservation committees, creating mechanisms for community participation and benefit-sharing. The Service maintains a uniformed and disciplined cadre of officers who have powers to search, seize, and arrest in relation to forest offenses, with senior officers holding police-

equivalent powers under the Criminal Procedure Code and the National Police Service Act. This framework allows coordinated law enforcement in forested protected areas.

Track record

Kenya Forest Service undertakes its mandate four main forestry development programs: Natural Forest Conservation, Plantation and Enterprise (P&E), Forest Conservation and Management (FCM), Farm and Dryland Forestry (F&DF) and Enforcement and Compliance (ENCOM). The Service has raised over 2.0 Billion tree seedlings over the last 10 years for forestry purposes. The trend has been to increase forest cover and attain the 10% forest and tree cover in gazetted forests, community forests, and establishment of commercial woodlots on private lands.

Green Zones Development Support Project I (2006-2015) was funded by IDB with a budget of Euro 25,034,100. The objective was to promote forest regeneration and conservation for environment protection, and to improve rural livelihoods and incomes of communities living adjacent to the forests. The project was located around the five water towers of Mt Kenya, Aberdares, Mau, Cheranganyi, and Mt Elgon. It therefore covered five conservancies of Eastern, Central Highlands, Mau, North Rift and Western and 17 counties of Kiambu, Murang'a, Nyeri, Kirinyaga, Embu, Tharaka-Nithi, Meru, Nyandarua, Narok, Bomet, Kericho, Nakuru, Nandi, Elgeyo-Marakwet, Kakamega, Trans-Nzoia and Bungoma. The project contributed 0.2% increase in national forest cover through restoration and protection of a total of 309,936.6 Ha of forests. Rural livelihoods and incomes were also improved by Kshs. 121,950 per household per annum against a project target of Kshs. 81,000 (151% achievement).

The Green Zones Development Support Project Phase II (GZDSP II) is a 6-year Project (2019-2025) that focuses on three of the five major Water Towers namely Mt. Kenya, Aberdares and Mau and traverses four conservancies namely; Eastern, Central Highlands, Mau and Nyanza. The objective of the project is to improve forest conservation and livelihoods for sustainable forest management in 15 counties in Kenya'. The project budget is Ksh. 8,500,000 and it is in third year of implementation.

Miti Mingi Maisha Bora Project (2009-2014) funded by Government of Finland to the tune of UA 450,000 to Support forest sector to effectively and sustainably contribute to improving the lives of the poor, restoring the environment and aiding the economic recovery and growth of Kenya and was piloted in 31 forest eco zones. The project supported investment in infrastructure, computers and accessories as well as inventory equipment to facilitate efficient operations in KFS HQ (survey and inventory sections) in pilot conservancy, counties and stations as well as in KFC.

Natural Resource Management (NRM) (2007 – 2013) funded by the World Bank to the tune of Ksh. 1.2 billion and was aimed at enhancing institutional capacity of the Government to improve governance and the management of water and forest resources in a sustainable and participatory manner. The project area was Upper

Eastern, Central, Rift Valley and Western Provinces. They achieved the following, 7,100 ha of degraded forest areas were rehabilitated, Re-established 1,600 km of forest boundaries and mapped forest blocks in Kakamega, Mt. Elgon, Cherengani, Aberdares forest Ecosystems, Funded and completed priority studies for REDD+ readiness activities in Kenya: Detailed analysis of drivers and underlying cause of forest cover change in Kenya , Demand and Supply of wood products in Kenya , Segmentation of National Forest Cover Maps, Charcoal Value Chain Analysis , Grazing systems as REDD+ Strategy Option, Directly supported 4,145 families adjacent to Mt. Elgon and Cherengani Forests with livelihood improvement inputs.

Institutional Capacity and Operational Performance

KFS is governed by a Board Directors comprising public officials, independent experts, and representatives from community and county governments, with the Chief Conservator of Forests serving as Chief Executive Officer and Secretary to the Board of Directors. This chain of command ensures managerial oversight from the Board down to operational forestry staff. The Service maintains operational capacity through trained Forest Ranger Cadres and the Forestry Training College, enabling enforcement of forest management rules. Officers work closely with Community Forest Associations (CFAs) to implement participatory forest management, enhancing compliance and community engagement. KFS also manages human–forest interfaces through the development of green zones and recreational areas, which improve public access while ensuring ranger and visitor safety.

Capacity Assessments of KFS were conducted as part of KEWASIP preparation, covering governance, law enforcement, community engagement, grievance redress mechanisms, human rights-based approaches, and operational resources.

These assessment identified several gaps including operational and institutional gaps. Enforcement coverage is uneven, especially in remote or high-risk forests, and ranger deployment is constrained by inadequate staffing, vehicles, radios, surveillance equipment, personal protective equipment (PPE), and fire control tools. Governance challenges include overlapping roles in forest protection, commercial exploitation, and community engagement, alongside limited oversight of CFAs. Participatory mechanisms remain weak, with many CFAs lacking formal agreements or management plans. Coordination with county governments and other conservation agencies is inconsistent. Additionally, definitions of "sustainable forest management" and penalties for non-compliance are sometimes ambiguous, and centralized monitoring or incident-tracking systems are limited.

In terms of grievance management, communities currently use multiple "front doors" such as chiefs, station suggestion boxes, phone/WhatsApp messages, and CFA committees. However, there is no integrated, trackable grievance redress mechanism (GRM) specific to KEWASIP. Many stations lack custody controls for suggestion boxes, unique case IDs, service-level agreements (SLAs), or systematic feedback loops. First-contact personnel, including CFA scouts, rarely receive standardized HRBA/GRM intake training, and awareness of KEWASIP's specific grievance channels is limited. In high-risk areas, fear of retaliation further suppresses reporting.

Recommendations

To address these gaps, under KEWASIP project, KFS should adopt the project GRM channels which include: toll free line, in-person to project implementing counties/agencies offices, contractors site offices/desk, social media platforms, GRM email address, GRM committees and focal persons (community, county and national) GBV focal person's desk, anonymous/suggestion boxes and E&S officers (CPCU and NPCU).

Incidents and accidents should be acknowledgement within 48 hours for incidents and accidents, investigation within 14 days, and decision within 30 days. Quarterly dashboards should be published to enhance transparency and accountability. Forest Rangers and CFA scouts should undergo at least two-days intake training for HRBA and GRM, with annual refresher sessions.

Operational capacity should be strengthened by deploying additional Forest Rangers to remote and high-risk public forests, ensuring adequate PPEs, radios, vehicles, and fire control equipment. Roles and responsibilities performed by Forest Rangers and Community Scouts in forest protection should be clear and forest management agreement strengthened in the project areas.

Within six months, KFS should complete and publish Participatory Forest Management Plans for all CFAs and sign Forest Management Agreements for implementation. Multi-agency coordination protocols with the National Police Service and KWS should be strengthened for a central forest incident tracking system and routine performance audits. Medium-term priorities should include refresher training on enforcement, HRBA, and conflict-sensitive patrols; enhanced technical capacity in GIS and forest monitoring; diversified funding sources; and periodic institutional capacity assessments.

Implementing these measures will reduce escalation and livelihood friction, improve procedural trust, and strengthen KFS operations in alignment with World Bank ESF standards and international good practice. Within the first 90 days, success should be evident in SLA-compliant GRM performance, refreshed training, and improved operational coverage, laying a solid foundation for KEWASIP delivery in forested landscapes.

Conclusion

KEWASIP will actively support KFS in implementing these recommendations, providing technical guidance, capacity-building support, funding and tools to strengthen grievance management, HRBA practices, operational coverage, and overall institutional performance. This collaboration will reduce conflicts at forest-community interfaces, stabilize livelihoods, enhance procedural trust, and ensure that KFS operations align with ESF and international good practice, laying a solid foundation for effective KEWASIP implementation in forested landscapes.

3.6 Kenya Wildlife Service

The Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), established under the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act (2013), is responsible for conserving and managing wildlife, regulating protected areas, licensing activities, managing user rights, and enforcing compliance. Management plans for parks, reserves, and conservancies are developed in collaboration with county committees and neighboring communities, subjected to public consultation, gazettement, and, where applicable, Parliamentary approval. KWS also establishes County Wildlife Conservation and Compensation Committees, supports Community Wildlife Associations, and administers a Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC) Compensation Scheme to address injuries or deaths caused by wildlife. Security operations, including the use of firearms, are coordinated with the National Police Service (NPS), ensuring legal compliance and operational coordination.

As part of KEWASIP preparation, capacity assessments of KWS were carried out to evaluate mandate, governance, law enforcement practices, community engagement, grievance mechanisms, and operational resources.

These assessments identified several gaps. Grievances are currently reported through multiple, uncoordinated channels, including chiefs, suggestion boxes and WhatsApp. Without a unified, trackable system. KWS Wardens rarely receive standardized training on human-rights-based approaches (HRBA) or grievance intake, resulting in inconsistent first-contact handling. Enforcement coverage is uneven, particularly in remote or high-conflict areas, and critical operational resources such as vehicles, radios, PPE, and trauma kits are insufficient. Training on HRBA, de-escalation, evidence handling, and firearms re-qualification occurs irregularly, while after-action learning and community engagement practices are inconsistently applied. Limited awareness of KEWASIP-specific grievance channels, unclear HWC procedures, and fear of retaliation further exacerbate risks of conflict escalation.

To address these gaps under KEWASIP project, KWS should adopt the project GRM channels which include: toll free line, in-person to project implementing counties/agencies offices, contractors site offices/desk, social media platforms, GRM email address, GRM committees and focal persons (community, county and national) GBV focal person's desk, anonymous/suggestion boxes and E&S officers (CPCU and NPCU).

Incidents and accidents acknowledgement within 48 hours, investigation within 14 days, and decision within 30 days. Quarterly dashboards should be published to ensure transparency and accountability. Frontline rangers and CFA scouts should receive HRBA and grievance intake training, with annual refresher sessions.

A single Use-of-Force (UoF) policy aligned with UN principles should be issued, supported by standardized post-incident reporting, periodic firearms re-qualification, and adequate operational resources, including PPE, radios, and trauma kits. Joint-operation MoUs with the NPS should formalize rules of engagement, vetting, and incident follow-up. Over the medium term, standardized after-action reviews, a central

incident database, conflict-sensitive patrol schedules, and periodic institutional capacity assessments should be conducted to monitor and strengthen performance.

Implementing these measures will reduce human-wildlife conflict, stabilize livelihoods, build procedural trust, and enhance KWS operational and institutional capacity. These steps will align KWS operations with World Bank Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) standards and international good practice, establishing a robust foundation for KEWASIP delivery in sensitive wildlife landscapes.

3.7 Council of Governors

The Council of Governors (CoG) is established under section 19 of the *Intergovernmental Relations Act (IGRA) 2012*. In fulfillment of its constitutional mandate to coordinate the implementation of Inter-County Projects and Agreements and Leveraging Capacity building for county governments, the Council has developed a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) as well as Sexual Harassment an Exploitation Policy. This initiative arose from the lessons and requirements drawn from the implementation of World Bank–supported programmes including the Financing Locally Led Climate Action (FLLoCA) Programme, the Kenya Urban Support Programme (KUSP), the Kenya Devolution Support Programme (KDSP), among others.

The GRM serves as a structured platform for counties, communities, and stakeholders to raise concerns, provide feedback, and seek resolution on matters relating to governance, service delivery, and project implementation. It enhances accountability, transparency, and citizen participation in devolved service delivery.

The Legal unit together with the Environment sector focal point provides policy guidance, technical support, and capacity building to counties in addressing environmental, social, and health safeguards. This ensures that county projects and programmes not only comply with national and international safeguard standards, but also promote sustainable development, social inclusion, and public health protection.

Further, the CoG, through its mandate on monitoring of inter-county projects and agreements, will leverage the GRM and ESH Sectors to strengthen oversight and harmonize implementation across counties in the context of KEWASIP programme.

CoG will play a crucial role in coordination, harmonization, and oversight of project activities across counties. Specifically, CoG will:

   i.   Facilitate alignment of KEWASIP implementation approaches among county governments;

  ii.   Coordinate dissemination and operationalization of the project-level Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) across participating counties;

 iii.   Provide capacity-building support in liaison with CPCUs to county project teams on Environmental and Social (E&S) risk management, including grievance handling, Labor Management, stakeholder engagement, and SEA/SH prevention;

iv.   Collaborate with the NPCU to ensure that lessons from other Bank-financed programs inform KEWASIP's E&S management and inter-county coordination systems; and

v.   Support monitoring and reporting on E&S compliance and social accountability measures in collaboration with relevant county focal points.

Under KEWASIP, the CoG will work in liaison with the project Environmental and Social (E&S) Officers based at the NPCU and the CPCUs. These officers will provide technical backstopping to CoG and county teams, ensuring consistent application of ESF principles, effective grievance redress, and strengthened safeguards compliance across all counties.

Through this arrangement, KEWASIP will leverage the CoG's institutional framework and track record in coordinating devolved projects to enhance transparency, accountability, and inter-county learning on environmental and social risk management. The CoG's involvement will also help bridge identified capacity gaps at the county level and strengthen the project's overall E&S governance and grievance management systems.

3.8 County Governments

Apart from the national government, County governments (47) form another level of governance system in Kenya. This governance structure is anchored in the Constitution of Kenya, 2010. Twelve (12) county governments will be involved in the KEWASIP implementation

The main role of County Governments in the E&S management process includes:

i.   Ensure the voice of local communities is heard in proposed subprojects;
ii.   Monitoring and implementation of ESMPs for projects within their county;
iii. Authorize waste management;
iv.   Review master plans for compatibility with the approved zoning; and
v.   Adjudicate community land issues, if any.

Most counties have established departments that handle environmental and social issues. For instance, Marsabit County has a Department of Culture, Gender And Social Services, and Laikipia County, a Department For Water, Environment & Natural Resources and Climate Change.

All Counties have gazetted the County Environmental Committees (CEC) as required by EMCA, Cap 387, which are supposed to act as coordination forum for environmental issues in the counties. However, the current technical capacity, personnel, and funding at county level remain insufficient to fully implement and monitor the broader E&S functions required under KEWASIP. Some of the CECs are not operational and others have not undergone training and capacity building on how to manage environmental issues in the counties.

To address these gaps, KEWASIP will provide targeted capacity building on E&S, logistical support, and technical backstopping within the first year of project implementation and thereafter, periodically throughout the project implementation period through the project E&S Officers at the national (NPCU) and county (CPCUs) levels. These will be done through structured trainings on job mentoring, and peer-learning forums, coordinated by the NPCU in collaboration with the CoG and the respective CPCUs.

Funding for CPCUs operations, including E&S activities, will be drawn from county-level KEWASIP budget allocations as defined in the Inter-Governmental Participation Agreements (IPAs).

Each participating County Government shall assign one (1) Environment Officer and one (1) Social Officer to the CPCUs not later than thirty (30) days after signing the IPA with the MoECCF. The two officers shall be retained and maintained at the CPCUs throughout the entire project implementation period to ensure continuous Environmental and Social (E&S) risk management oversight at the county level.

This arrangement will ensure that counties have both the human and technical capacity to fulfill their general E&S mandates and meet KEWASIP's safeguard compliance requirements.

Through other World Bank-funded PforR programs [Kenya Urban Support Program (KUSP), Kenya Devolution Support Program (KDSP), and Financing Locally led Climate Action Program (FLLoCA)], majority of the counties have nominated the Environmental and Social focal points to support the management of E&S risks and impacts for the projects implemented by the counties. The focal points have undergone training carried out by the respective Project Implementation Units (PIUs), the World Bank, DOSHS, and NEMA on the E&S management and have acquired necessary competencies to manage, supervise and monitor the E&S risks on a project implemented by the counties. However, the personnel are still not enough to support the management of E&S issues, ensure compliance of E&S regulations, and provide the required support to new and on-going projects being implemented by the counties.

The CPCU's role on E&S management includes:

i. Ensure adherence to relevant policies, legal and regulatory frameworks applicable to Project activities.

ii. These include but not limited to; the Constitution of Kenya, 2010; Forest Conservation and Management Act 2016, EMCA Cap 387, Wildlife and Conservation management Act 2013, Water Act 2016, National Land Commission Act 2012, Lands Act 2012, Land Registration Act 2012, Physical Planning Act 2019, National Government and Coordination Act 2013, Climate Change Act 2023, Intergovernmental Relations Act 2012, County Government Act 2012, Occupational Safety and Health Act 2007, Work injury and Benefit Act 2007, Alcohol and Drinks Control Act, HIV and Prevention and Control Act 2011, Energy Act 2006, National Construction

Authority (NCA) Act, 2011, Environment and Land Act 2011, Agriculture Act cap 318, Irrigation act 2019, Community Groups Regitration Act 2022, Employment Act, 2007; Public Health Act, 2012; Sexual Offences Act, 2012; Children Act, 2022; Labour Relations Act, 2012; Persons Disability Act, 2025; and the Gender Policy, 2011, National Landscape and Ecosystem Restoration Strategy 2023-2032, Vision 2030, SDGs Framework, National Agroforestry Strategy 2025-2035, World Bank E&S framework 2018,;

iii. Coordinate all E&S development activities in the county under the KEWASIP. This includes partnering with relevant lead agencies at the county level for technical support including with the Directorate of Occupational Safety and Health Services (DOSHS), National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), Department of Labour and the Department for Social Protection;

iv. Apply the E&S screening tool for all sub-projects and identify E&S issues that must be addressed in the planning, design, construction, and operation phases. Also, recommend the E&S assessments to be undertaken or instruments that need to be prepared. The E&S screening forms should be maintained in a repository database;

v. In coordination with the E&S officers at the NPCU, undertake recommended E&S assessments and/or prepare the recommended E&S instruments, based on the E&S screening undertaken per sub-project;

vi. Ensure contractors obtain and maintain validity of all requisite permits and licenses including the Certificate of Registration of sites as a workplace as per the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OSHA), [2007], Contractor's All Risk Insurance and the Workers' Injury Benefits Act (WIBA) insurance cover for every worker;

vii. Oversee overall implementation and monitoring of E&S mitigation and management activities, compile E&S progress reports on all KEWASIP sub-projects within the county and submit to the NPCU on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis;

viii. Undertake/support E&S capacity building to county, sub-county personnel and contractors who will be tasked with E&S management;

ix. Ensure that all bidding and contract documents include all relevant E&S management provisions and a budget for ESMP implementation;

x. In coordination with the NPCU, adopt the World Bank's Environment and Social Incidents Response Toolkit (ESIRT), 2018, and notify the World Bank as soon as the E&S officers become aware of an incident. Also, ensure incident notification in line with the national legal provisions (24 hours) to the Directorate Of Occupational Safety And Health Services (DOSHS);

xi. Operationalize the project Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM), ensuring complaints are timely resolved, and, uptake & feedback channels are functional; and,

xii. In coordination with NPCUs and other implementing entities, ensure there is adherence to labor management provisions including worker protection

(child/forced labor, discrimination), timely remittance of wages as per government minimum wage guidance, the workers grievance redress mechanisms (site-specific) is constituted, equal employment opportunities for all community groups and employment priority for local labor.

Capacity Building Strategy

To strengthen the capacity of the Project Implementing Entities (PIEs) to manage E&S risks and impacts in compliance with national requirements and the World Bank's ESF, KEWASIP will implement a phased and targeted capacity-building program.

The training will integrate modules on access restriction management (ESS5), enforcement of safeguards, grievance handling, SEA/SH prevention, and continuous mentorship at the national, county, and community levels.

Level	Responsible Party	Audience	Topics/Themes that May Be Covered	Implementation schedule	Indicators	Budget(indicative)
NPCU: National level	NPCU E&S, World Bank	• NPCU staff responsible for overall implementation of ESMF. • Relevant Implementing Agency Staff	• Identification, assessment and management of E&S risks.Selection and application of relevant E&S risk management measures/ instruments. • E&S monitoring and reporting. • Incident and accident reporting. • Application of project workers Code of Conduct. • SEA/SH prevention and response • Stakeholder engagement, public participation and information disclosure.	• Year 1- 2 capacity building workshops • Year 2-5- Continuos mentorships	• 100% NPCU trained on ESF	• 30,000,000

Level	Responsible Party	Audience	Topics/Themes that May Be Covered	Implementation schedule	Indicators	Budget(indicative)
			• Operationalizing the Project grievance mechanism • Workers' grievance redress mechanism • Minority and marginalized groups • Requirements of applicable WBG EHS Guidelines • Climate change resilience measures in project planning and implementation • Understanding of E&S risks • Occupational and community health & safety management • Land acquisition and resettlement • Labor management			

Level	Responsible Party	Audience	Topics/Themes that May Be Covered	Implementation schedule	Indicators	Budget(indicative)
			• Management of access restrictions and livelihood restoration • World Bank ESF application and requirements.			
County level	NPCU national staff	• Relevant County level staff • Contractors	• Identification, assessment and management of E&S risks • Selection and application of relevant E&S risk management measures • ESMP implementation monitoring and reporting • Incident and accident reporting	• Year 1: County-level induction and capacity-building workshops (at least 2 per county). • Years 2–5: Continuous mentorship through quarterly follow-up sessions, peer-learning exchanges, and joint monitoring missions.	• 12 counties with designated E&S officers within 30 days of IPA signing. • 100% of CPCUs trained on ESMP implementation and GRM operations. • 90% of counties submitting quarterly E&S reports.	• 50,000,000

Level	Responsible Party	Audience	Topics/Themes that May Be Covered	Implementation schedule	Indicators	Budget(indicative)
			• Application of project workers Code of Conduct, • SEA/SH prevention and response • Stakeholder engagement • Minority and marginalized groups • Workers' grievance redress mechanism • Handling of e-waste and other hazardous materials • Land acquisition and resettlement • Occupational and Community health and safety management • Labor management		• Functional GRMs in all 12 counties by Year 2.	

Level	Responsible Party	Audience	Topics/Themes that May Be Covered	Implementation schedule	Indicators	Budget(indicative)
			• Compliance with legal and regulatory framewok • Management of access restrictions and livelihood restoration • World Bank ESF application and requirements.			
Community level	NPCU staff	Community members	• Basic OHS measures and PPE • Community health and safety issues • Workers Code of Conduct • SEA/SH prevention and response • Grievance redress mechanismWorkers' • grievance redress reporting and feedback channels	• Year 1: Community sensitization campaigns prior to subproject commencement. • Years 2–5: Continuous awareness creation through community meetings, GRM forums, and quarterly	• 80% of project communities sensitized before subproject rollout. • 100% of communities aware of GRM processes. • Reduction in SEA/SH and OHS incidents.	• 60,000,000

Level	Responsible Party	Audience	Topics/Themes that May Be Covered	Implementation schedule	Indicators	Budget(indicative)
			- Minority and marginalized groups - Environmental awareness and conservation practices - Cultural heritage preservation during construction - Gender equality and inclusion in project benefits - Environmental and Social risks and impacts management - Labor management - Management of access restrictions and livelihood restoration - Benefit sharing mechanisms	SEA/SH and OHS refresher sessions.	At least 12 livelihood restoration plans implemented where access restrictions occur	

4   Conclusion

The Environmental and Social (E&S) capacity assessment reveals that the Project Implementing Entities (PIEs) are at varying stages of institutional and technical preparedness. While the entities possess a solid institutional foundation and relevant experience from other donor-funded programs, additional capacity is required to effectively manage the environmental and social dimensions of KEWASIP.

To address these gaps, KEWASIP will operationalize the capacity-building strategy outlined above, with emphasis on early, structured training in the first year and continuous mentorship, refresher sessions, and technical backstopping throughout implementation. The strategy incorporates clear timelines, performance indicators, and a dedicated five-year budget of KSh 70 million, ensuring sustained institutional strengthening across the national (NPCU), county (CPCUs), and community levels.

This approach will progressively enhance technical competencies, coordination, and accountability mechanisms within all implementing entities enabling full compliance with national E&S regulations and the World Bank Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) requirements, while promoting sustainable, inclusive, and risk-informed project delivery.