



# MERU COUNTY

## COVID-19 SOCIAL ECONOMIC RE-ENGINEERING RECOVERY STRATEGY

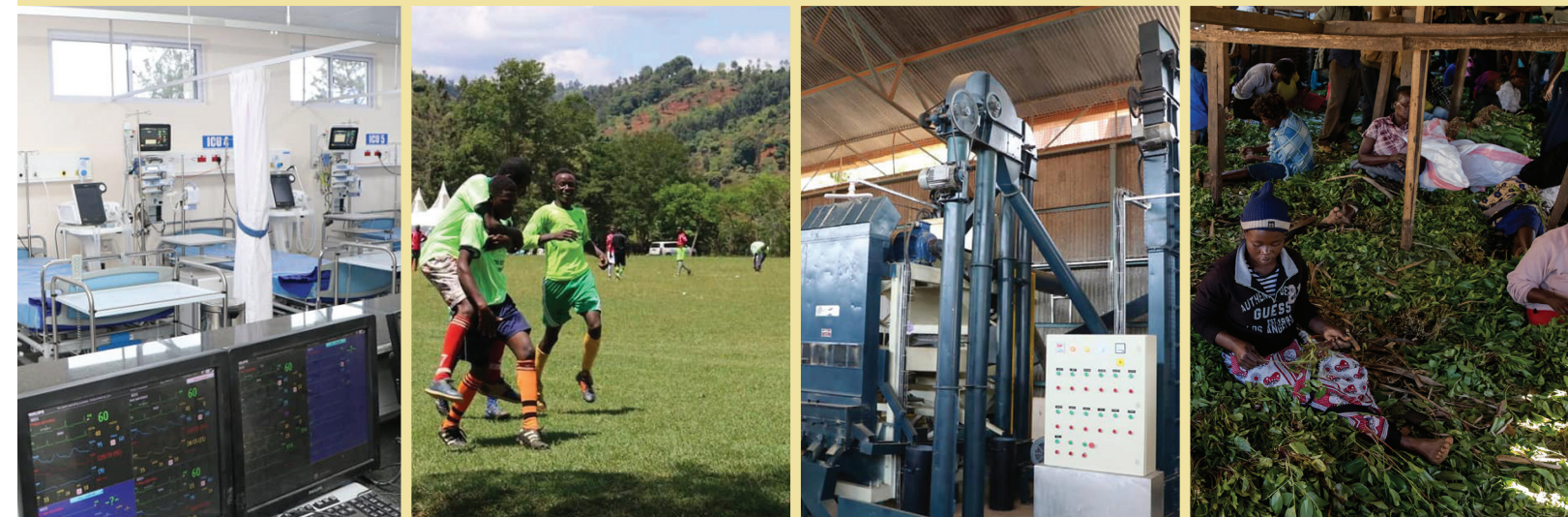
2020/21-2022/23



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## FOREWORD

The advent of COVID-19 in Kenya elicited a proactive response by the whole of the Government of Kenya, at both tiers strengthening inter-governmental relations. We the leaders of the National and County Governments immediately came together and quickly established practical and effective responses to this Pandemic that were geared towards safeguarding the lives and livelihoods of our people.

Acting on the basis of the recommendations and advice given to us by medical and public health professionals, we issued directives that established policy platforms and institutional mechanisms that would mitigate the adverse local effects of this global pandemic. To drive a concerted and coordinated multi-agency response, the National Emergency Response Committee on the Coronavirus Pandemic was established vide Executive Order No. 2 of 2020; bringing together all relevant government departments and agencies so that they would act in unison and synergistically pursue harmonious and complementary agenda, in line with their particular areas of mandate and expertise.

Many Kenyans have demonstrated their patriotism and sense of responsibility through adherence to the social distancing protocols, wearing face masks in public spaces and observing hygiene measures. The compliance to the containment measures demonstrate the individual and collective civil responsibility to protect ourselves, family members and other citizens. As a result, we have, together, contributed to slowing the spread of the coronavirus.

The pandemic has also taught us that as a country, we need to forge partnerships and collaboration within the country and with the rest of the world. Through extraordinary summits, organized for the National and County Governments, we discovered our synergy and commitments in responding to the needs of the citizens, in timely and appropriate manner. Through the use of technology, the National Government has kept a robust diplomatic engagement with our partners in the East African Community (EAC), Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), African Union (AU), and Organization of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), in implementing joint measures to curb the spread of the virus across international borders. As a government, we have also held virtual bilateral and multilateral talks and consultations with our partners on **post Covid-19 economic recovery plans**.

The resolve of the government to expand our healthcare infrastructure through installing new and more medical equipment, recruiting additional healthcare workers, training of healthcare labour force on Covid-19 and increasing the testing capacity, is already bearing the expected outcomes. This notwithstanding, the Covid-19 pandemic will accelerate the realization of the national endeavor to achieve Universal Health Coverage.

The effects of Covid-19 on various sectors of economy cannot be gainsaid. Tourism, trade, manufacturing, Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs), transport and education, to name but just a few, have been adversely affected. Many Kenyans have lost their jobs and livelihoods. The government has implemented various intervention measures to cushion the vulnerable Kenyans from shocks of the Covid-19, and going forward, enhancing our social protection system that is increasingly supporting the elderly, PWDs, orphans and other vulnerable households in the country, is a priority.

Among the welfare measures and interventions instituted to protect the economy include 100 per cent tax relief for persons earning gross monthly income of up to Ksh. 24,000; reduction of Income Tax Rate (Pay-As-You-Earn) from 30 per cent to 25 per cent; reduction of Resident Income Tax (Corporation Tax) from 30 per cent to 25 per cent; reduction of the turnover tax rate from 3 per cent to 1 per cent; temporary

suspension of the listing with the Credit Reference Bureau (CRB); and reduction of the VAT from 16 per cent to 14 per cent, effective 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020. I am also aware that counties have collectively and individually taken measures that complement the efforts to **protect lives and livelihoods of Kenyans**.

The government, in addition to the tax relief measures, rolled out the National Hygiene Programme (*Kazi Mitaani*) for job creation to the youth and to keep our environment clean and healthier. Further, the government has supported MSEs to manufacture basic medical equipment for both domestic use and export. The resilience and entrepreneurial spirit of this country have come out strongly as Kenyans seize the opportunities provided by the Covid-19, to demonstrate that we can expand our manufacturing by exploiting the significant amount of capabilities in the sector. Today, MSEs are producing masks, Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs), hand sanitizers and soap, among other products. This tells us that there are many other potential areas where we can locally produce or manufacture what we need rather than rely on imported goods and services.

During my fourth Presidential Address on the Coronavirus Pandemic in April 2020, I assured the People of Kenya that their government would formulate and implement a vibrant post COVID-19 economic recovery plan. The National and County Governments have been engaging all stakeholders including the private sector, academia, research institutions and development partners; towards the development and re-engineering of socio-economic recovery strategies in the wake of this pandemic. These strategies aim not only at dealing with the present challenges but are also aimed at enhancing Kenya's resilience and response capability in the face of future challenges of a similar nature.

We are taking into account the need to respond to both internal and external shocks arising from significant crisis situations; with a view of formulating enhanced protections for our priority areas of manufacturing, agriculture, tourism, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), housing, transport, education, health and social protection. The two levels of government are committed to transforming the economic and governance systems so as to ensure that the systems are more responsive to citizen needs, especially those of the youth, women and vulnerable members of the society.

The present pandemic situation has underscored the urgent need for Kenya to revitalise her welfare system; and establish a more progressive, effective, agile and sustainable system that meets the fast-changing needs of both current and future generations.

*Together we prosper.*

UHURU KENYATTA, C.G.H.,

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA, AND  
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCES



## TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER

The promulgation of the Constitution of Kenya 2010 brought forth several reforms, key among them a devolved system of governance. Article 10 of the Constitution illuminates the National Values and Principles of Governance, Article 174 espouses the objectives of devolution and the Fourth Schedule articulates the distribution of functions between the National and the County Governments. While the last eight years have seen significant progress with devolution, the COVID-19 pandemic serves to provide more impetus to strengthen the devolved system of governance in achieving inclusive development.

The pandemic has presented an opportunity to critically reassess, rethink and review the existing systems and structures in securing the welfare of Kenyans in a devolved system of governance. This is particularly important considering the critical role of the County Governments in ensuring the delivery and implementation of the Big Four Agenda and the Kenya Vision 2030. The COVID-19 pandemic has also clearly highlighted the essential role of regional economic blocs and the opportunities that can be leveraged in post-COVID-19 to strengthen the devolved system of governance. In spite of the prevailing challenges, the potential in establishing joint regional development blocs to deliver shared services promises a more effective post-COVID-19 recovery strategy.

In responding to the pandemic, counties have come up with county-specific COVID-19 prevention guidelines and strengthened community surveillance while implementing the COVID-19 prevention measures, including social distancing and general hygiene. County Governors also moved to protect their people through movement restrictions, setting up quarantine and isolation facilities in county rooms in hospitals; launching nutrition support systems; and even specifying protocols for funerals and last rights.

The 47 County Governments are committed to continue working together in harnessing their synergies and working closely with the National Government to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and progress further to ensure realization of national development goals. This requires further deepening of the principles of intergovernmental relations as espoused under Article 6(2) of the Constitution, which provides that the National and County Governments are to conduct their mutual relations on the basis of consultation and cooperation. Thus, in discharging their constitutionally defined roles or functions and in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, both levels of Government have been guided by these two key principles of intergovernmental relations.

The recommendations emerging from the County COVID-19 Economic Re-engineering and Recovery Strategy and Specific County Strategies will go a long way in informing the policy process, ultimately strengthening the devolved system of government in the post-COVID period.

**H.E. WYCLIFFE OPARANYA**  
CHAIRMAN, COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS

## UNITY IS STRENGTH; RESOLUTENESS IS THE ESSENCE OF STRUGGLE

The outbreak of Covid-19 is an eye opener on our levels of preparedness for pandemics and calamities that may threaten the existence of our society. If country borders are closed and restricted movement of goods and persons all over the world were to remain in place for much longer, one important question each country would ask is for how long each society would survive. Thus, exploiting opportunities for enhanced self-reliance becomes essential for survival of societies.

The collective response of both the national and county governments to this pandemic demonstrates the importance of interdependence of the two levels of government. Establishing policies, institutions and safeguards that can effectively respond to and mitigate such pandemics is vital. In that regard, the Council of Governors initiated a study by KIPPRA on its behalf to examine county and national policies in the context of the COVID-19 experience and its aftermath. I was privileged to chair the team that undertook this study.

As part of this preparedness is the domestic capacity to produce materials: intellectual, technical and equipment, needed at such times as much as possible.

We in Kenya should realize that the policy of Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) that we threw out of the window in the 80s with the advent of the Washington Consensus may need to be re-examined in view of our experience with this pandemic.

With Covid-19, we have seen the importance of having: a well-functioning health care system to serve the population; proper functioning medical research institutions to develop vaccines; and a good planning of our cities, transport systems, education system and housing to offer services in the midst of the pandemic notwithstanding the threat of being left alone with the closure of international transport highways. We have also seen the importance of good government systems for continued provision of public service in difficult times, proper utilization of resources for longevity of our societies, and socio-economic sustainability in securing livelihood.

The pandemic therefore highlights the need to promote innovations and adopt modern technologies in the path to enhancing self-reliance. Our young population showcased their capabilities with innovations to help in responding to the pandemic. It takes our commitment as government to nurture innovations by re-energizing our institutions of technical training, science, technology and engineering to maintain the momentum for innovation to the level of being commercialized. This also presents an opportunity for our research and policy institutions to relook at the kind of innovation model the country and counties require in economic transformation.

What has happened in the area of health shows the relevance of research as governments and individuals have had to rely on evidence for solutions. Pharmaceutical companies, universities and research institutions all over the world have been actively engaged in research to understand the virus and help come up with vaccine, while others are actively providing evidence to inform policy formulation with the effects of Covid-19. Thus, highlighting the importance of strengthening the link between research and decision making.





## STATEMENT

We in Kenya and the East African Community need to invest even more robustly in research to be capable of implementing evidence-based policies. Evidence is an important tool in forging economic recovery strategies in view of the effects of Covid-19.

This calls for a realistic and appropriate budgeting to support our academic and research institutions. It also calls for the political class to formulate strategic laws and regulations governing our economic and social activities in all sectors of our society. For example, our taxation policies that have led to high costs of energy have not only retarded investment in our economy but also put many counties in jeopardy in the provision of services and creating enabling environment for investments.

Covid-19 has shown the importance of paying more attention and committing more investments to preventive, promotive and public health. "Cleanliness is indeed next to Godliness". During this period of the pandemic, diarrheal diseases and other water borne diseases went down considerably. This is attributed to the access to sufficient portable water both for consumption and hygiene. We could probably reduce our public health bill by investing effectively in water and hygiene.

Studies on economic recovery strategies have shown that counties are vital for the growth of the nation as frontiers for production and provision investments. Deliberate investments should be focused in the areas of food production targeting the weak and vulnerable small holder. The pandemic, however, demonstrated that without a strong value chain, the resilience of our small holder farmers can easily be jeopardized, thereby threatening the very basic foundation of our society.

Finally, the informal sector, provided with enhanced market access as a whole, can contribute even more to the counties and national economy.

**H.E. PROF ANYANG' NYONG'O**  
GOVERNOR, KISUMU COUNTY

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a toll on both lives and livelihoods in Kenya. The National and County Governments quickly adopted a multipronged approach that help to safe protect many citizens from the pandemic. Firstly, was to respond; second, is to allow for recovery; and thirdly, is to allow for thriving. Several measures were instituted at both National and County Government levels to curb the spread of the disease including social distancing, hand hygiene, and preparation of facilities for care and treatment of confirmed cases. As the country progresses to recovery and allow the economy to thrive, County Governments found it necessary to develop a socio-economic strategy to facilitate re-engineering and recovery of their economies from the impact of COVID-19.

As part of KIPPRA's mandate to provide advisory and technical services to the government, the Institute supported the Council of Governors (COG) in jointly developing the COVID-19 County Socio-Economic Re-Engineering and Recovery Strategy (CCSERS) and 47 County Specific COVID-19 County Socio-Economic Re-Engineering and Recovery Strategies. With the spirit of *Thinking Policy Together*, the process involved robust, independent yet consultative evidence-based research and policy analysis which saw collecting views from a wide range of stakeholders including: various committees at Council of Governors such as; health, agriculture, trade, manufacturing, cooperatives, and education, youth, sports, gender and culture. Other committees included; transport, housing, urban development and energy and tourism; and natural resources, water, forestry and mining. Consultative engagements were also carried out with all the County Governments which offered great insights that informed the development of the recovery strategies. Equally, in depth literature review and secondary data was collected, collated and analysed to inform the strategies.

County Governments have the potential to make their economies recover and thrive by leveraging on the following five pillars: Boosting private sector activity; Policy, legislatives, and institutional reforms; Strengthening County Government's preparedness and response to pandemics and disasters; Enhancing Information Communication Technology (ICT) capacity for business continuity; and Investing in human resource development. It will also be critical to institutionalize monitoring, evaluation, regular reporting and communication of the strategies up to grassroots level and across all communities and institutions in the counties.

**DR ROSE NGUGI**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
KENYA INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS (KIPPRA)



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Council of Governors extends its gratitude to all those who participated in the preparation of the County Socio-economic Re-engineering and Recovery Strategy. The development of this Strategy was a combined effort of Council of Governors, County Governments, researchers, development partners, and sector stakeholders. Special thanks go to all County Governments for their active participation and providing data and information that was used in preparation of the Combined COVID19 County Re-engineering and Recovery Strategy and County-Specific Strategies.

We acknowledge the steering committee led by H.E. Hon. Prof Anyang' Nyong'o, H.E Prof. Kivutha Kibwana and H.E. Ndiritu Muriithi who conceptualized and guided the development of this strategy.

We would like to thank the Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA) for providing the technical lead throughout the preparation of these Strategies. Specifically, we wish to thank KIPPRA's Executive Director Dr Rose Nguji for guiding the process.

We are also grateful to the COG County Socio-economic Re-engineering and Recovery Committee under the technical leadership of the Chief Executive Officer for their strategic and policy guidance, and the team of reviewers who provided insightful inputs towards the finalization of the Strategies.

We also greatly appreciate the county staff and stakeholders who participated in data and information collation and consultations, and others who verified the contents of various drafts of this Strategy.

Finally, we would like to thank the UNDP for financial support and technical input towards the assignment; and World Bank, UN-WOMEN and GIZ for the technical assistance in quality assurance of this strategy.

This strategy will guide County Governments in bouncing back from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic through planning and budgeting of the policy interventions in the re-engineering and recovery phase.

**JACQUELINE MOGENI, MBS**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This County COVID-19 Re-Engineering and Recovery Strategy 2020/21-2022/23 embeds the principles of response, recovery and thriving. The counties will continue to respond to the crisis while dealing with the immediate effects of the pandemic to contain it, treat the affected, flatten the curve of new infections, and ensure immediate financial assistance and restructuring of County Integrated Development Plans. Towards recovery, counties are mitigating socio-economic impacts as the pandemic is controlled, while also preventing a second wave. To thrive, the re-engineering and recovery strategies are aimed at long-term interventions to prevent or address future disasters and support sustained development across counties. The Strategy also envisages the revitalisation of the county regional blocs in the recovery and re-engineering processes.

### Measures by County Governments to Mitigate the Effects of COVID-19

The Council of Governors through its mandate established under Section 19 of the Intergovernmental Relations Act 2012 has provided a central point for coordination of County Governments' COVID-19 response measures. The COVID-19 pandemic adversely impacted on various sectors particularly tourism, transport, trade, industry (manufacturing and construction) and agriculture. The pandemic has particularly affected micro and small enterprises that form a significant proportion of the establishment and many vulnerable households in the counties have been pushed into poverty. Many vulnerable households depend on farming and informal wages.

The County Governments came up with plans to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic including: Treatment of confirmed cases (recruitment of health workers, procurement of personal protective equipment (PPEs), expanding intensive care units, establishment of quarantine, isolation and testing capabilities); Preventing the spread (COVID-19 prevention guidelines, community surveillance strengthening of border disease surveillance by counties, enforcement of market guidelines, initiating production of face masks at vocational training centres in various counties); Supporting the vulnerable with formation of County Food Security War Rooms; and Raising finance by setting up COVID-19 emergency funds.

### Pillars for County Recovery and Re-engineering Strategies

#### 1) **Boosting Private Sector Activity**

The private sector is dominated by microenterprises (89.2%) and small farm holders (99.0%) majority of whom were adversely affected by the pandemic. As the engine that drives economic activity, it is important to get the private sector thriving by creating an enabling environment at county level. This will facilitate counties in enhancing their contribution to the national cake and expand the basket for own source revenue. To improve the business environment, there is need to:

- (i) Enhance access to affordable credit: For the MSES, initiate and strengthen self-sustaining funds dedicated and easily accessible to MSEs; promote tailor made financial literacy programmes; and establish frameworks for micro-leasing; utilize the SMEs credit guarantee scheme.



- (ii) Provide for worksite: Develop adequate, cluster-informed and well-equipped worksites with workshops, common user facilities, incubation centres and showrooms for artisans, and provide machines and safety gear.
- (iii) Enhance access to intermediate goods: Enhance and promote local manufacture of affordable tools and machinery including strengthening the Numerical Machine Complex.
- (iv) Improve infrastructure and security: Provide for connectivity to roads, electricity, water and drainage and enhance security to reduce crime in continuing to improve Kenya's global Ease of Doing Business ranking.
- (v) Enhance access and diversification of markets for private sector production both locally and regionally including by developing county regional bloc value chains and consolidating markets within economic integration value chains. Also increase market access with greater use of e-commerce to move transactions to the digital economy.
- (vi) Encourage formalization of informal sector with appropriate incentives to provide more sustainable income, stable employment and sustained innovation.

## 2) **Strengthening ICT Capacity**

Less than 15 per cent of households in rural areas use internet and only 5 per cent have gadgets such as desktops, laptops and tablets. As a result, even with 90 per cent of public primary schools being installed with digital literacy infrastructure and devices, continued learning from home is a challenge because only 12.8 per cent of households have access to internet. Further, only 50 per cent of counties are fully connected to the Government Common Core Network (GCCN). Enhancing Information and Communication Technology (ICT) capacity in the public sector and households will enable business continuity and build resilience to future disasters and pandemics. This includes:

- (i) Complete the County Connectivity Project to the Government Common Core Network (GCCN).
- (ii) Enhance connectivity of businesses to ICT by extending the National Optic Fibre Backbone Infrastructure (NOFBI) in trade centres, public buildings and public spaces to boost e-commerce.
- (iii) Enhance household access to reliable, stable and affordable internet connectivity through Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) between County Governments and ICT service providers such as the Goole Loon and Telkom Kenya partnership.
- (iv) Promote household access to and use of ICT by providing devices such as smartphones that are 4G enabled and affordable.

## 3) **Human Capital Development**

Investing in human resource development enhances productivity which supports long term growth and development at county level. With the COVID-19, workers across various sectors reported reduced working hours and only a few who managed to provide new and expanded goods and services during the period managed to enhance their income. As such, human resource development will entail addressing health and education risks exposed by COVID-19. The interventions include:

- (i) Extending the scope of Universal Health Coverage to collectively finance health services for all, including uninsured workers and their families; and investing in community and public health.
- (ii) Investing in technical education, training and skills development to create more employment opportunities.
- (iii) Establishing a pool fund to finance a seasonal public works or employment guarantee scheme.
- (iv) Promoting safety at workplaces with enforcement of guidelines to reduce the exposure of all workers including informal workers to the virus.

## 4) **Policy, Legislative, and Institutional Reforms**

The Constitution gives the National Government the role of policy development, and thus County Governments rely on policy and legislative frameworks passed at the national level for activities in various sectors. Counties also develop their policy frameworks and it is important to improve inter-governmental relations to facilitate the integration and coordination of policies at national and county levels. With the pandemic, there is need reforming the following aspects in various sectors:

- (i) Review the Public Health Act, Cap 242, to consider modern public health trends, developments, challenges and emerging opportunities.
- (ii) Harmonization and rationalization of the various laws on agriculture to streamline operations between the National and County Governments.
- (iii) Enact appropriate legal and regulatory frameworks to regulate and control the protection of data and status of individuals who are confirmed, suspected or recovered cases of COVID-19 and other future pandemics or public health outbreaks that may occur in future.
- (iv) Develop regulations for protection and regulation of information shared, recorded or documented through online platforms including video conferencing platforms and mobile applications.
- (v) Review the Employment Act 2007 to protect patients, or suspected patients, of COVID-19 from discrimination, harassment, unlawful disclosure of their status, stigmatization, reprisals or termination of employment due to fear of COVID-19, infectious disease or on grounds of their health status.





## 5) **Strengthening County Government's Preparedness and Response to Pandemics and Disasters**

The county governments have a weak disaster management framework. A robust, comprehensive and well-coordinated policy and institutional framework for disaster management leveraging on regional bloc synergies is critical in mitigating any losses. This will include:

- (i) Developing a Disaster Risk Management Policy that covers unforeseen disasters that may occur in future.
- (ii) Linking the Disaster Risk Management Policy to policies in relevant sectors given the cross-cutting nature of disaster interventions.
- (iii) County Governments to develop a legal and regulatory framework to provide the legal foundation for a collaborative partnership in institutional participatory management of disasters, including mobilization of the essential resources necessary for the management of all disasters.
- (iv) Developing a legal and regulatory framework that applies to infectious diseases, including catering for medical costs.
- (v) Review of procurement laws including the Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Act 2015 to have clear provisions on emergency procurement and procurement in times of urgent needs and disclosure of information in the case of direct procurement.
- (vi) Ensuring accountability in the use of funds, and development of legal and statutory requirements for audit of the financial statements of emergency funds.

### Support to Key Sectors

#### 1) **Agriculture**

As the sector gradually shifts from an emergency response to re-engineering, recovery and building resilience, counties should aim at building back better especially for the smallholders through:

- (i) Enhancing agro-processing and value addition capacities of counties by adopting appropriate regulations, policies and legislations.
- (ii) Greater exposure to market access by pointing out alternative markets and marketing channels to farmers. Regional blocs can provide greater market access and synergies.
- (iii) Improving disaster surveillance at county level and mitigate risks associated with disasters, such as those related to floods, disease and pest invasion.

- (iv) Facilitating access to quality and affordable inputs including certified seedlings, water, animal feeds, Artificial Insemination (AI) services, fertilizers, livestock vaccination and ploughing services by county tractor hire services.
- (v) Facilitate access to affordable formal finance and advisory and information services.
- (vi) Train and build capacity of farmers on modern agricultural technologies, including integrating best practices.
- (vii) Enhance the role of agricultural cooperatives through development of more sustainable models of financing and customized training of cooperative members. County governments play a vital role in cooperative development through the effective stakeholder engagement and the implementation of well-designed cooperative policies.

#### 2) **Water and sanitation**

COVID-19 has placed high demand on water for hand hygiene, and this has compelled counties to ensure continuity in provision of water. To enhance connectivity of households, there is need to:

- (i) Expand and rehabilitate the existing piped water connection infrastructure to increase access to water.
- (ii) Expand sewer infrastructure to accommodate more households; currently there is low access to piped sewer.
- (iii) Promote the importance of handwashing and construct water and sanitation (WASH) facilities to increase access at the household level.
- (iv) Provide waste collection services at households, promote and facilitate regular waste collection, and embrace environment clean up exercises at neighbourhoods and in towns.

#### 3) **Urban development and housing**

Urban areas have emerged as hot-spots for the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, Nairobi and Mombasa and the surrounding urban areas have recorded the highest confirmed positive cases of the pandemic. Tied to this is the role that adequate housing plays in the home-based care strategy of treating COVID-19 patients. Opportunities and areas of focus for re-engineering and recovery strategies will include the following:

- (i) Promote a National Home Ownership Policy; this would cushion households from future shocks that impede payment of rent.



- (ii) Designate and approve urban areas of different cadres and undertake urban planning as an opportunity to boost investment and stimulate economic activity in the modern sectors. Ensure this is accompanied by appropriate road, water and electricity infrastructure.
- (iii) Fast-track affordable housing in counties through provision of public land to improve housing conditions and improve the turnaround period for transactions for land and construction.

#### 4) **Transport**

There is need to enhance mobility options for residents and improve road conditions to support economic, social and subsistence activities. Towards this goal, there is need to:

- (i) Use labour-based and local resource-based approaches for road development and maintenance.
- (ii) Improve and expand infrastructure for Non-Motorized Transport (NMT) and intermediate transport modes which will also enhance environmental sustainability.
- (iii) Adopt climate-smart road engineering designs to address the problem of floods that destroy roads and bridges and ensure harvesting of storm water for domestic and commercial use.
- (iv) Develop better synergies between car, bus, rail, non-motorised transport and between public and private transport and select the most environmentally friendly solutions.

#### 5) **Tourism**

The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on tourism sectors has been substantial. Re-engineering strategies for the sector include:

- (i) Allocating resources for investment and rehabilitation of tourism-supporting infrastructure, including sports stadia, modern meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (M.I.C.E) venues, and roads leading to the physical tourist attraction sites including cultural heritage sites.
- (ii) Diversify tourism products across all counties to include cultural, sports, agro-tourism, M.I.C.E, nature-based, community-based, adventure, culinary and beach-based tourism products; jetties and floating facilities; amusement parks; and construction and development of public beaches.
- (iii) Develop tourism information and data centres.
- (iv) Upgrading medical facilities to promote medical tourism.
- (v) Construct modern theatre and art gallery to support development of talent in music, visual and performing arts, and upgrading of sports stadia to develop talents in sport across counties.

- (vi) Enforce sanitation and hygiene standards in all accommodation facilities and tourist attraction sites in line with the national guidelines for reopening of hospitality establishments to ensure business continuity.
- (vii) Developing products specifically tailored to enhancing domestic tourism which is less susceptible to shocks. Such products to be affordable, and packages designed to maximize domestic tourist utility. Leverage on regional blocs for joint marketing of tourist attractions.

#### 6) **Health**

The COVID-19 has implications on healthcare systems (public hospitals, isolation centres). The healthcare system will need to strengthen COVID-19 response, and all the other healthcare services. Recovery of the sector calls for collaboration between the National and County Governments for the following:

- (i) Strengthen coordinated mechanism to facilitate care and treatment of confirmed cases of COVID-19.
- (ii) Identify training gaps among the health providers and make available targeted training.
- (iii) Proactively address the mental health needs, including those of the health workforce.
- (iv) Invest in research and development to spur innovation in health sector, including in the area of medicine.
- (v) Legislate and equip health workers and Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) to adequately provide community health and counselling on appropriate maternal, infant and young child nutrition practices amidst the pandemic.
- (vi) Mainstream family health training in medical training colleges curriculum as well as in university medical training programmes.

#### 7) **Education**

The education sector was totally disrupted with closure of all schools, which has led to loss of learning time and teaching time. Recovery of the sector will require significant collaboration between the National and County governments in:

- (i) Preparing guidelines for schools reopening, improving WASH facilities and providing adequate personal protective equipment for teachers, learners and other employees in the schools.
- (ii) Protecting the poorest and most vulnerable learners and enable them to continue learning, such as through targeted conditional cash transfers and learning vouchers.



- (iii) Supporting back to school campaigns and supporting educators on the utilization of computerized devices by giving internet data when they are required to live-stream lessons.
- (iv) Promoting monitoring and addressing psychosocial well-being of students, teachers and education officers and educating them on how to mitigate the spread of coronavirus.
- (v) Carrying out large-scale assessment to identify learning gaps and inform remedial programming and learning opportunities so that all students catch up due to the learning time lost during the pandemic.
- (vi) Strengthen ICT integration in teaching and learning in the education sector by facilitating production of radio, television and online teaching and learning materials and extending the existing distance learning programmes to all rural areas. Hybrid learning encompassing a blend of face to face and digital learning at all levels of education to be encouraged in the education sector.
- (vii) Strengthen collaboration between county and non-state not-for-profit institutions including faith-based organizations in delivery of pre-primary education across counties.
- (viii) National and county governments to review boarding vs day schooling models in guiding areas to promote investments.

#### 8) **Social protection**

Kenya has an estimated 918,00 PWDs (2.2% of the total population) and 1,870,443 older persons aged 65 years and above (representing 3.9% of the population). Social protection interventions require collaboration between the National and County Governments and will include:

- (i) Supporting businesses to access credit guarantee for people whose occupations or employments have been disrupted by the pandemic.
- (ii) Ensuring effective access to essential healthcare and other basic social services, in particular population groups and individuals who have been drawn into vulnerability due to the pandemic.
- (iii) Supporting Child Help Line initiatives and other partners to provide counselling services, address mental health and psycho-social support targeting children and youth in their homes, community and in institutions and quarantine/isolation centres.
- (iv) Facilitating coordination with health, WASH, nutrition and other sectors to ensure that COVID-19 prevention services are accessible to the hard to reach children (in informal settlements, arid and semi-arid counties and other care institutions).
- (v) Use this opportunity to continue efforts to reviewing the more expansive and inclusive safety nets.

#### 9) **Gender and youth**

The interventions to address emerging gender issues with the pandemic include:

- (i) Designating gender safe spaces to provide accommodation for Gender-Based Violence (GBV) survivors and create space in County Referral Hospitals to serve as GBV recovery centres.
- (ii) Promoting use of alternative means of Gender-Based Violence safe outreach and awareness-raising that limit direct contact; that is, using traditional methods such as town criers and use of loud-speakers.
- (iii) Supporting gender champions and sign language interpreters to activate and communicate an 'alert chain' to reach GBV survivors or those in imminent danger of injury and harm.
- (iv) Strengthening inclusive community outreach strategies to ensure GBV messaging is localized and clear, and addresses stigma, discrimination and other power dynamics that serve as barriers to accessing GBV services and COVID-19 information among differently able persons.
- (v) Bringing on board key stakeholders to actively engage and sensitize the youth on reproductive health; HIV/AIDS and COVID-19 prevention measures.





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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 County Context

Meru County is one of the counties in the Central Region Economic Bloc (CEREB). The county had an estimated population of 1,545,714 people of whom 49.6 per cent were male and 50.3 per cent were female (KNBS, 2019) as indicated in table 1. Of the population 49,815 (3.6 per cent) were persons with disabilities. The youth constituted 34.0 of the population of whom 51.0 per cent were female. The County has a population density of 220 per km<sup>2</sup>. About 91.0 per cent of the population live in rural areas of whom 53.3 per cent are female. The elderly population (65 years and above) made up 5.0 per cent of the total population of whom 63.5 were female. The population in school going age group (4-22 years) was 42.2 per cent in 2019. In 2015/2016, the overall poverty rate in Meru County was 19.0 cent against the national poverty rate of 36.1 per cent.

In addition, 15.1 per cent of the population were living in food poverty and 59.7 per cent were living in multidimensional poverty, that means being deprived in several dimensions including health care, nutrition and adequate food, drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, education, knowledge of health and nutrition, housing and standard of living, and access to information. According to KDHS 2014, 25.2 per cent of the children were stunted as compared to the average national level at 26.0 per cent.

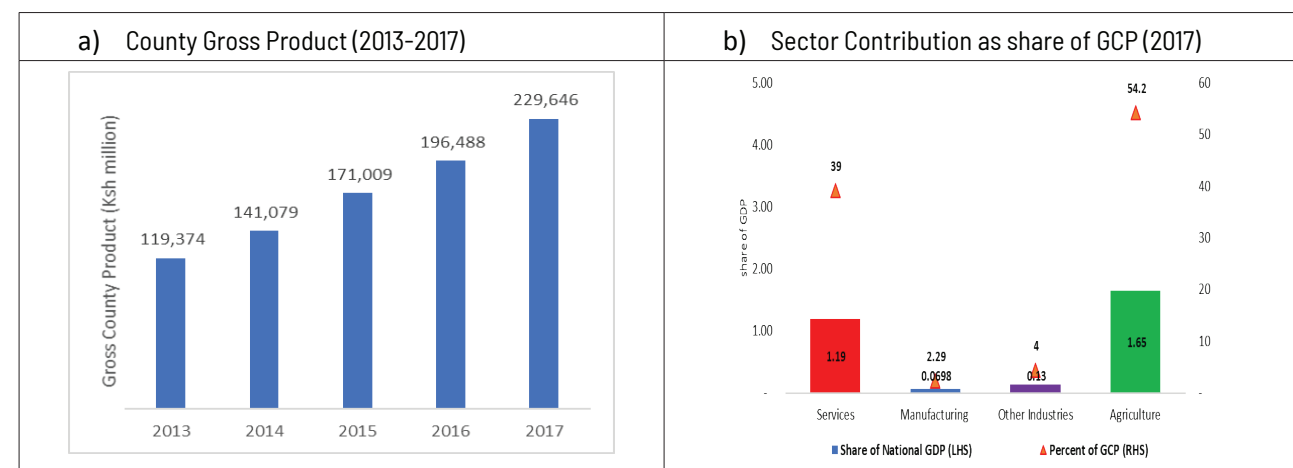
**Table 1: Development indicators in Meru County**

	County	National
Estimated County Population (KNBS, 2019)	1,545,714	2.7% of the total population
Males	767,698	49.6%
Females	777,975	50.3%
Intersex	41	0.002%
Estimated Population Density (km <sup>2</sup> )	220	82
Persons with disability	3.6%	2.2%
Population living in rural areas (%)	91.0%	68.8%
School going age (4-22 years)(%)	42.2%	68.7%
Youth (%)	34.0%	36.1%
Elderly population (over 65-year-old)	5.0%	3.9%
Number of COVID-19 cases (as at 11 <sup>th</sup> September 2020)(MOH); National cases were 35,232 people	86	0.25% of the national cases
Poverty (2015/2016)(%)	19.0%	36.1%
Food Poverty (2015/2016)(%)	15.1%	31.9%
Multidimensional Poverty (2015/2016)(%)	59.7%	56.1%
Stunted children (KDHS 2014)	25.2%	26%
Gross County Product (Ksh Million)	229,646(2017)	1.3 % Share to total GDP (2017)
Average growth of nominal GCP/GDP (2013-2017)(%)	18.5%	15.3 %

Data Source: KNBS (2019)

Meru County Gross County Product (GCP) accounted for 1.3 per cent of total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as at 2017 as reported in figure 1. The GCP increased from Ksh. 119,374 million in 2013 to Ksh. 229,646 million in 2017 representing an average annual growth rate of 18.5 per cent. The agriculture sector contributes 54.2 per cent of GCP while Service, Manufacturing and other industries sector share constituted 39.0 per cent, 2.3 per cent and 4.0 per cent, respectively. The services sector includes such activities as wholesale and retail trade. Agriculture is mainly dominated by Crop farming (coffee, tea, *miraa* and maize) and livestock production while industries and manufacturing include production of consumer goods such as food processing.

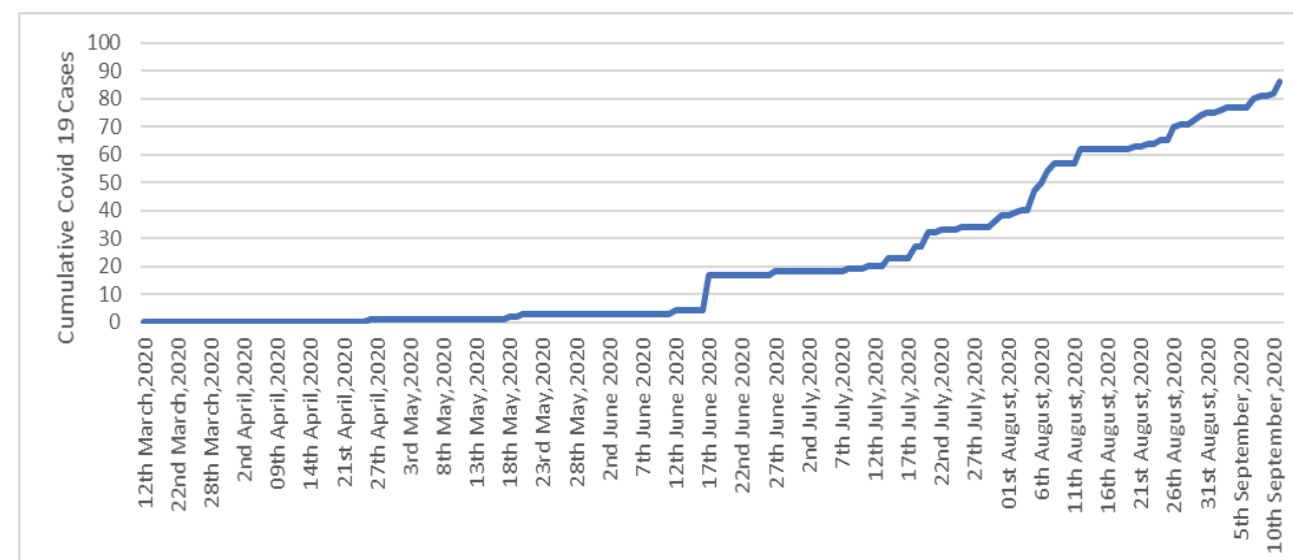
**Figure 1: Structure of the County Economy, 2013-2017**



Data Source: KNBS (2019)

The County first confirmed case of COVID-19 was on 26th April 2020. Since then the number of confirmed cases increased to 86 in 11th September 2020 (MOH, 2020) as depicted in figure 2.

**Figure 2: Cumulative number of COVID-19 Cases (March-September 2020)**



Data Source: MOH

## 1.2 County Fiscal position

Meru county expected to receive a total of Ksh. 11.2 billion in FY 2019/20 as revenue to finance its operations. This comprised mainly of Ksh. 8.1 billion (71.4 per cent) as equitable share, Ksh. 1.5 billion (13.9 per cent) conditional grant, Ksh. 705.0 million (6.3 per cent) generated from own source revenue (OSR) and had Ksh. 820.9 million (7.3 per cent) as cash balance from FY 2018/19. During FY 2019/20, the County received a total Ksh. 9.6 billion which accounted for 85.1 per cent of the expected revenue. This comprised of Ksh. 7.4 billion equitable shares, Ksh. 1.4 billion as conditional grants and Ksh. 311.8 million as cash balance from FY 2018/19. With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the county's revenue streams were adversely affected. This was reflected in the OSR performance where the collections for FY 2019/20 declined by 30.3 per cent from Ksh. 550.1 million realized during FY 2018/19 to Ksh. 383.3 million.

At the beginning of FY 2019/20 the County budgeted to spend a total of Ksh. 11,243.7 million consisting of Ksh. 7,897.7 million allocation for recurrent expenditure and Ksh. 3,346.0 million for development expenditure. Of the recurrent expenditure, Ksh. 4,977.1 million was meant for compensation of employees while Ksh. 2,920.5 million was set aside for operations and maintenance. The County's total expenditure of FY 2019/20 amounted to Ksh. 8.6 billion. Recurrent expenditures (personal emoluments and operations & maintenance) accounted for 74.7 per cent of the total spending, with development expenditure accounting for only 25.3 per cent. This translating to absorption rate of 84.2 per cent for overall budget, 92.3 per cent recurrent expenditure and 64.9 per cent development expenditure. Health sector expenditure accounted for 33.6 per cent of total spending with an overall absorption rate of 92.0 per cent. Absorption rate for health sector recurrent expenditure stood at 98.4 per cent while that for development expenditure stood at 38.7 per cent. At the end of FY 2019/20, the county accumulated pending bills amounting to Ksh. 1,983.5 million consisting of Ksh. 1,555.9 million and Ksh. 427.6 million in respect of development and recurrent expenditures respectively.

## 1.3 County Fiscal Response, Interventions and Budget Re-allocation

With the outbreak of COVID-19, Meru County undertook varied measures to control of the spread and treat the confirmed cases.

**The County established the County Emergency Response Committee** on Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic which was Co-Chaired by the Governor and the Meru County Commissioner. The Committee regularly reviewed the status of preparedness and the National Government directives' compliance by the residents of the county. County Emergency Command Centre was created to monitor and deal with emerging issues on COVID-19 daily and an implementing entity of decisions made by the Emergency response Committee.

**The County re-allocated its budget** and freed Ksh 36.0 million to finance the County COVID-19 Response efforts. These funds were utilized in purchase of masks, oxygen cylinders, ventilators and personal protective equipment for frontline workers. County received about Ksh 152 million from the national government out of the 5.0 billion that was shared with the 47 counties.





**The County prepared for treatment of confirmed cases:** The County created 402 beds across the health facilities in the County to be used for isolation wards and treatment of the coronavirus. In addition to the 398 medical workers in the county, with the support from national government the county has recruited 156 new health workers. In terms of facilities, the county bought 6 ICU, 16 ventilators, 3 HDU beds and partnered with a mission hospital where additional isolation bed facilities were created. County utilized face masks produced locally by local people and polytechnics about 70 per cent apart from those being used by frontline health workers.

**The County implemented working-from-home guidelines,** with various ministries and departments in the County operating with fewer personnel. Working-from-home was resulted into cut-down in recurrent expenditure particularly stationery, travel expenses and daily subsistence allowances.

**In addition, the County promoted COVID-19 safety guidelines.** This including 50 per cent reduction in the seating capacity for passengers per vehicle to observe social distance; hand hygiene; fare collection using mobile money payment systems; the dusk to dawn curfew; and the cessation of movement in and out of Nairobi, Mombasa and Mandera. The County is also suspended all "Mitumba Markets" across the county, closure of bars and restaurants as well as all forms of social gatherings including churches, weddings and limiting number of people to attend funerals. The county recruited 156 health workers and over 398 medical workers were employed including doctor, nurses, community health workers to strengthen the county health systems during the COVID period.

**The County undertook to enhance access to water for hand washing.** This including distribution of water tanks, water and soaps at points of entry, and develop hand washing booths in public spaces in the county including shopping centres, markets and bus stages and other high-risk areas for hand washing to meet the heightened demand for water.

**The County intensified public awareness campaigns.** The county conducted awareness campaigns through radio, TV and other media outlets to reinforce the existing COVID-19 preventive measures and demonstration of hand-washing techniques and stressing the importance of social distancing in public spaces as well as the strict adherence to the laid-out protocols both by the County and National Governments. About 2,000 healthcare workers (HCWs) across the county were trained to help in awareness creation and contact tracing. Jointly with partners in the Central Kenya Economic Bloc (CEKEB) conducted joint screening for those people coming into the county through its borders.

**Enhancing social protection for the vulnerable groups:** The county collaborated with several partners and received a lot of support like food stuffs which were distributed to all vulnerable groups. The county also distributed food items and face masks to Njuri Ncheke elders and vulnerable families across the County.



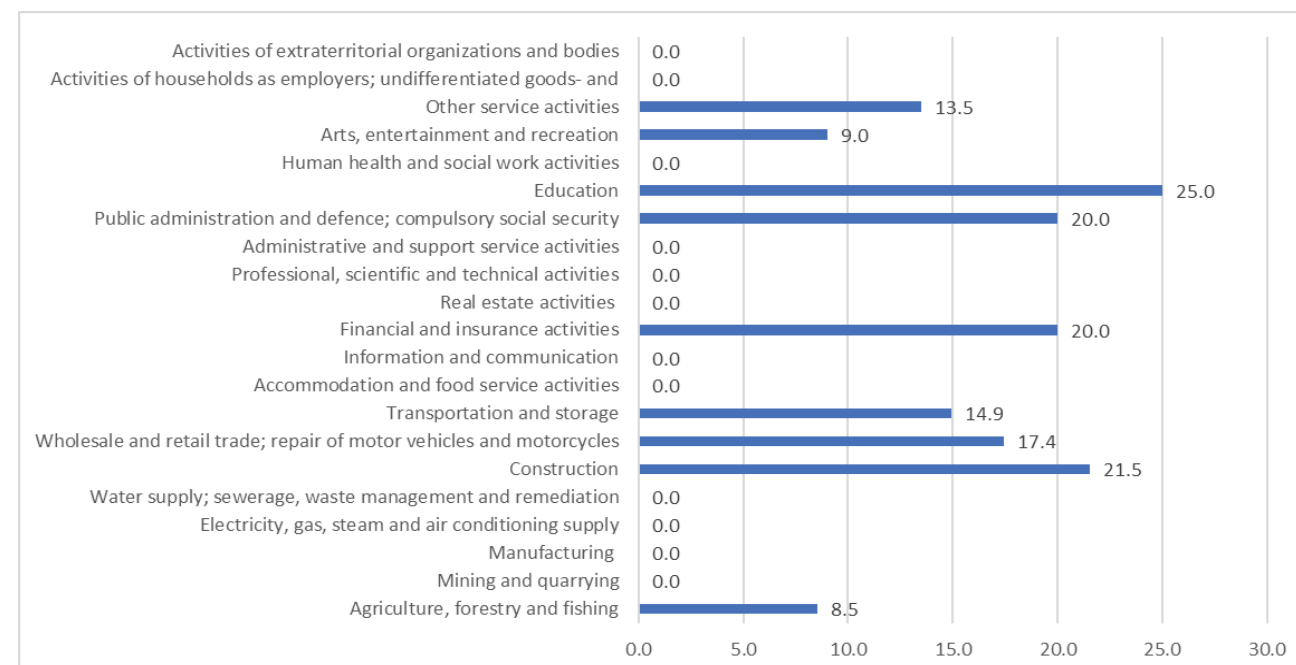
## 2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC EFFECT OF COVID-19

As the country was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, several other shocks hit the county as well including: Desert locusts; floods, landslides; wildfire; and livestock diseases.

### a) Labor participation

Agriculture contributed over 80 per cent of county economy and employed most of the county residents. Workers in the agriculture sector lost an average of 8.5 hours per week. The county closed several markets including the famous Gakoromone and Muringine miraa market. In a bid to create more space and avoid huge crowds, officials also moved Muthurua miraa market to Kiani kia Baimula playfield in Igembe Central. Another market at Mutuati was also moved. Apart from moving markets, miraa selling was blocked in Mandera county and Somali which were the main markets. This rendered many people relying on the product jobless. According to the May 2020 KNBS COVID\_19 Survey, the education sector reported the highest level of loss of hours worked (25 hours per week) followed by workers in construction who lost 21.5 hours worked in a day (figure 3). Workers in financial and insurance activities and public administration and defense; compulsory social security lost a total of 20.0 hours per week, each. Workers in wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles and other service activities recorded on average loss of 17.4 hours and 13.5 hours per week, respectively.

**Figure 3: Difference between usual hours worked and actual hours worked during COVID-19 period**



Source: KNBS

According to the May 2020 KNBS COVID\_19 Survey, 62.0 per cent of workers in Meru county recorded decreased income; 3.0 per cent reported increase in income; while 78.1 per cent recorded working as unpaid workers. The county recorded 70.4 per cent of workers working in informal sector and 7.7 per cent never attended to work due to COVID-19 related issues. Other businesses such as bars, hotels, market centres had closed, leading to reduced business activities. workers in the transport sector recorded a loss of 14.9 hours in a week attributed to implications in curfew hours and restrictions of movements, both within and between counties. On average, the county lost 13.6 hours worked in a week.

### b) Agricultural sector

The May 2020 KNBS COVID\_19 Survey found that 30.9 per cent of the households in Meru county had instances where the household or a member of the household could not access the markets/grocery stores to purchase food items, mainly because of movement restrictions (59.1 per cent), closure of the markets/grocery stores (17.8 per cent), concerned about leaving the house due to outbreak (12.9 per cent) and transport limitations (10.2 per cent). A key concern was that the food groups affected most are the nutritious food categories -vegetables and fruits -which are necessary for boosting the immune system of the population.

Further, with restrictions affecting seamless movement of food commodities, 82 per cent of households in Meru county indicated experiencing an increase in food prices. From the KIHBS 2015/16, 27.9 per cent of households purchased food products from open-air markets, 20.5 per cent from kiosks and 31 per cent from general shops. Additionally, 60.8 per cent of the total valued consumed was from purchases, 25.3 per cent from own production, 8.4 per cent from own stock and 5.5 per cent from gifts and other sources. Consequently, an increase in food prices is likely to have had significant implications on household budget.

Disruptions in marketing activity led to loss of income for agricultural producers and traders, such as khat producers and traders, leading to low purchasing power among households. Reduced households' incomes have further reduced demand and consumption of some food groups such as meat products further affecting the livestock market.

Further, was a decline in labor participation. An assessment of the COVID-19 effects on hours worked in agriculture related occupations indicated farm workers recorded the highest difference of 10 hours between the usual and actual hours worked in a week. Other affected include agricultural, fishery and related labourers and subsistence agricultural and fishery workers who recorded a difference of 7 hours and 4 hours respectively between the usual and actual hours worked in a week.

### c) Services sector

Measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 pandemic mainly disrupted flow of 40,000 tourists who visited the Meru National park, Mt. Kenya National park, conservancies, cultural and heritage events annually; this translating to loss of revenue of over KSh.400 Million<sup>1</sup> through lost employment, hotel accommodation, tour

1. Assuming minimum length of stay is 1 day, spending KSh.10,000 per day.



and travel services. Other challenges to growth in tourism sector in the county include deforestation that poses a serious challenge which is the loss or reduction of tree cover and forests and ecotourism sites; dilapidated infrastructure to tourist sites; human/wildlife conflicts, and destruction of wildlife habitat through encroachment and climate change.

The lockdowns in response to COVID-19 interrupted schooling activities in Meru County. While the education stakeholders made concerted efforts to maintain learning continuity during the pandemic period by embracing online learning, the initiative was not effective due to high digital divide within the county. Only 4.3 per cent of households owns Desktop Computer/ Laptop/ Tablet, also about 10.2 per cent of household had access to internet connectivity (Kenya Population and Housing Census (KPHS) (2019)). This indicating virtual learning did not reach most of the students in the county, and those without internet access in rural areas were most disadvantaged.

According to May 2020 KNBS COVID-19 Survey, 95.0 per cent of county residents did not visit any health facility. The fight against cancer initiatives in Meru county through screening at Meru level IV Hospital among other health facilities was disrupted during the COVID-19 period due to the postponement of public screening. The number of respiratory infections such as common cold (head cold), the mild flu and tonsillitis had reduced due to measures established by public health on water, sanitation and hygiene (Washing hands, wearing masks and sanitation). The pandemic also resulted into closure of stadiums and playgrounds; hence the county had not actively participated in sporting activities leading to temporary stoppage of programs in the county geared towards youth empowerment and talent development

#### **d) Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector**

Majority of MSMEs in Meru County operate in the wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (59.2 per cent); manufacturing (13.6 per cent); accommodation and food services (12.6 per cent); and arts, entertainment and recreation (9.1 per cent). Ideally, these are the sectors that were mostly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and needed focus in achieving reengineering and recovery.

MSMEs in Meru County were largely located in commercial premises (88.9 per cent). This implying that most of the businesses in the County faced difficulties in meeting their rental obligations due income disruptions resulting from COVID-19 pandemic. According to the May 2020 KNBS COVID-19 survey all the non-farm businesses attributed non-payment of household rental obligations to reduced incomes/ earnings. For those involved in farm businesses, 87.5 per cent attributed the same to reduced incomes/ earnings while 12.5 per cent were affected by delayed incomes/earnings. Further, the wholesale and retail trade sector lost 17.4 hours in usual and actual hours worked. This is an indicator of the adverse effects on the service sector of Meru County due to the pandemic which implies loss of productivity, output and employment.

Regarding access to markets, 0.2 per cent of the MSMEs in the County depend on export markets and import markets (0.1 per cent) for their material inputs. Therefore, disruptions in the external markets may

not have severe implications to MSMEs operations in Meru County. That notwithstanding, expanding the scope of market for MSMEs is critical for their survival and growth.

#### **e) Infrastructure and housing**

The transport sector measures instituted in response to the pandemic saw an increase in fares charged to cover the operating costs of service providers as well as affecting mobility options for commuters. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, passengers using public transport services saw expenditure on fares increase by 59.1 per cent. Residents responded by changing their travel patterns with 24.1 per cent of the population traveling less often, while 10.5 per cent were unable to travel due to the pandemic.

Meru County Headquarters Meru town is currently connected to the National Optic Fibre Backbone (NOFBI) II. Approximately 92.6 per cent of public primary schools are installed with ICT capacity under Digital Literacy Programme. That said, only 10.2 per cent of the conventional households in the county 'own' internet with 4.3 per cent owning a desktop, computer laptop or tablet. Further, only 2.1 per cent of the households participate in online e-commerce, with men participating more in online e-commerce (2.4 per cent) than women (1.9 per cent). There is a gender divide in use of internet where 21.5 per cent male and 17.2 per cent of the women using internet.

Majority of households (74.0 per cent) own the housing units they occupy while 25.9 per cent of the households under rental tenure. Individuals are the primary providers of rental housing at 94.0 per cent, followed by private companies (2.4 per cent); National Government (1.5 per cent); County Government (0.8 per cent); FBO/NGO/Church based housing at (0.8 per cent); and Parastatals (0.5 per cent). With the advent of COVID-19 pandemic households' ability to pay rent was affected, with 61.6 per cent of the population indicating inability to pay rent on the agreed date. The main reason that made households unable to pay rent was attributed to reduced incomes /earnings, reported by 81.6 per cent of the population.

#### **f) Gender and youth**

In Meru County, GBV cases were reported for 3 women, 1 girl and 1 man as of April 2020 based on data from the Healthcare Assistance Kenya (HAK) Helpline 1195. Approximately 23.5 per cent of respondents had witnessed or heard of domestic violence in their communities since the National Government instituted measures to contain COVID-19. Between March -May 2020, there were a total of 3,090 cases of adolescents (age 10 - 19) presenting with pregnancy at health facilities. Other challenges affecting the youth include unemployment and drug use, especially alcohol and substance abuse.

#### **g) Water and sanitation**

The county government incurred additional cost to ensure continuity in provision of water and sanitation services, this including sinking of 180 boreholes to addressed water issues very well. buying water tanks and placing them in markets for hand washing. Additionally, water companies lost a significant amount of their revenues due to low demand of water and sanitation services mostly from hotels, schools and other institutions due to closure of operations. This may affect the delivery, development and rehabilitation of WASH services.



### 3 KEY PILLARS OF THE RECOVERY STRATEGY

There is need for urgent responses for addressing the social and economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in Meru County, in order for the County to recover and be on an upward growth trajectory. To this end, six (6) pillars have been identified: Boosting private sector activity; policy, legislation and institutional reforms; strengthening County government's preparedness and response to pandemic and disasters; enhancing ICT capacity for business continuity; human capital development and Exploiting Agro processing in Meru.

#### 3.1 Boosting Private Sector Activity

The private sector plays a critical role in the County economy in reducing poverty through income generating opportunities for the vulnerable households. The KNBS 2016 statistics showed that most of the private sector activities (59.2 per cent) are in the services sector with only 13.6 per cent in manufacturing. In terms of size, most of the enterprises in the County are in the micro category (96.8 per cent), 2.6 per cent are small, 0.4 per cent are medium while a paltry 0.2 per cent are large enterprises. Since most firms are micro in nature, this implying that the informal sector dominates the private sector in Meru County. Services sector activities include the wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (59.2 per cent); accommodation and food services (12.6 per cent); and arts, entertainment and recreation (9.1 per cent).

COVID-19 disrupted the operations of businesses and supply chains hence affecting demand and supply of most goods and services in the County. Overall, majority of the MSMEs (77.4 per cent) in Meru County get their raw materials from their peer MSMEs within the County. MSMEs widely sell their products to individual consumers (92.2 per cent) within the county. This means that when some firms are adversely affected this tend to spread fast in the private sector.

The key constraints faced by MSMEs in Meru County include inadequate markets for local products, stiff competition among MSMEs, frequent power interruption, lack of collateral for acquiring credit from financial institutions, shortage of raw materials or stock, numerous procedures for obtaining licenses, poor roads/transport infrastructure and poor security. Other constraints faced by MSMEs in Meru County include; inadequate worksites, lack of public toilet facilities, lack designated areas for waste disposal, frequent power outages, low uptake of AGPO and unfair trade practises manifest occasioned by contract enforcement, counterfeiting, dumping (substandard goods) and misrepresentation (through weight, price, ingredient) (KIPPRRA, 2019). In addition, MSEs face challenges related to poor road infrastructure, multiple licences and permits, fragmentation due to multiplicity of players who offer training and capacity building, lack of training and apprenticeship programme for artisans, and lack of Monitoring and Evaluation of training programmes.

The crisis offered an opportunity to address the County's structural issues, for example, private sector development and collaboration and design new growth models such as - industrial/manufacturing development and innovation and participation in national and global value chains.



- (i) Agro - processing for value addition with important areas of focus include dairy production, banana, coffee, tea, avocados, tomatoes, and cabbages production and processing.
- (ii) The textile and wearing apparel sectors can be enhanced to provide PPEs for use within the County and potentially for the export market.

In strengthening the private sector efforts targeted at improving the business environment in the County, the following will be prioritized.

- (i) Initiating and strengthening self-sustaining funds dedicated and easily accessible to MSMEs in the County; promoting tailor made financial literacy programmes for MSMEs; and establishing a framework for micro-leasing for the MSMEs.
- (ii) Establishing a framework for micro-leasing for the MSMEs By providing loan products including: Inua jamii loan a Post pandemic recovery loan product, Biashara loan to assisting microenterprises access finance for working capital, Mali yangu loan to enable microenterprises to acquire business assets such as machinery and equipment, Kilimo loan to enable small scale farmers to acquire farm inputs to enable them increase their productivity, Pambazuka loan-youth focused loan product aimed at providing the youth with working capital in rural and urban areas who belong to groups, Soma loan aimed at boosting education in the entire county, Individual product across county to help residents maximise their potential through provision of financial services and Soko loan a women focused loan product supporting general traders in open air markets.
- (iii) County government in partnership with other institutions both from public and private spheres will facilitate development of adequate and well-equipped worksites with workshops, common user facilities, incubation centres and showrooms for artisans which is cluster informed and fully serviced. Provision of machines and safety gear should be prioritized to improve the working environment of artisans within the county.
- (iv) Enhancement and promotion of local manufacture of affordable tools and machinery for the MSEs including reverse engineering and mainstreaming the needs of PWDs in infrastructure support services.
- (v) Provision of access to affordable renewable energy in collaboration with the national government and other stakeholders for sustainable development.
- (vi) Collaboration with relevant stakeholders and institutions such as Kenya Institute of Business Training (KIBT) and National Industrial Training Authority (NITA) to provide entrepreneurial training and technical training, apprenticeship and certification programmes to MSEs.
- (vii) Development of appropriate road infrastructure especially the county roads while collaborating with the private sector through PPP's to get financing of the projects.

- (viii) Enhance market access for private sector both locally and regionally by developing the regional bloc value chains, market diversification and facilitating greater use of ecommerce in shifting transactions to digital economy.

### 3.2 Policy, Legislatives, and Institutional Reforms

Meru County mainly had passed laws for finance, revenue administration, childcare facilities, cultural heritage, public participation, access to information, trade licensing, public entertainment, water and environment management. While these are important legislative and institutional frameworks for the various sectors, COVID-19 has presented the opportunity to:

- (i) Formulate legislative frameworks for the control of highly infectious diseases and new and emerging diseases.
- (ii) Strengthen the County's health laws and their enforcement.
- (iii) Develop policy, legislative and institutional frameworks to help protect the County from the spread of disease and address the threat to public health security caused by emerging and re-emerging diseases including public health emergencies.
- (iv) Strengthen intergovernmental relations and coordination in implementation of government policies at national and county level.

### 3.3 Strengthening County Government's Preparedness and Response to Pandemic and Disasters

Pandemics and large-scale outbreaks can claim millions of lives, disrupt societies and devastate economies. It is therefore important for the county to be prepared to minimize the impact of disasters. Accordingly, the County will:

- (i) Ensure technical training of medical personnel engaged in public health facilities including medical officers, doctors, nurses, pharmacists, clinical officers and laboratory technicians for technical training in infection prevention and control.
- (ii) Engage the whole of the community for effective pandemic preparedness and response.
- (iii) Establish strategies for evolving public health priorities for surveillance and response, in collaboration with agencies such as Kenya Medical Research Institute, International Livestock Research Institute and World Health Organization.



- (iv) Strengthen surveillance and response systems, and to act as a potent driver for Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response implementation.
- (v) Train County officers on better coordination between human and animal health surveillance.
- (vi) Maintain surveillance data at County level to allow priority setting and planning, resource mobilization and allocation, prediction and early detection of epidemics, early detection and adequate response to epidemics, monitoring and evaluation of intervention programmes and detection of emerging and re-emerging infections.
- (vii) Promote communication amongst the local and international infectious disease community, including scientists, physicians, veterinarians, epidemiologists, public health professionals, and others involved in control of infectious diseases.
- (viii) Ensure networking among stakeholders involved in COVID-19 and adequate human capacity.

### 3.4 Enhancing ICT Capacity for Business Continuity

The status of ICT access and use in the county is low, especially among households. Approximately 50.3 per cent of the population aged 3 years and above own a mobile phone which is above the national average of 47.3 per cent. The perception that individuals do not need to use the internet and lack of knowledge and skills on internet is the leading reasons that the people in the County don't have internet connection. Approximately 97.0 per cent of the internet users in the county rely on mobile phone for connectivity, with a marginal population of 3.0 per cent relying on mobile broad band that uses a sim card for connectivity. In the new normal driven by COVID-19, the County will fast track the implementation of various projects to ensure business continuity and build resilience of the County against future pandemics and disasters as follows:

- (i) Support programmes in partnership with the private sector that will enable households acquire ICT assets such as smart phones and laptops and increase mobile phone ownership from the low of 50.3 per cent to 100 per cent in line with the global agenda for Universal Access to Mobile Telephony.
- (ii) Speed up the construction of fiber-optic broadband networks in rural areas and collaborate with telecom companies to upgrade and improve the communication networks in remote areas.
- (iii) Harness the power of technology and use innovative solutions to bridge the gender digital divide. Collaborate with IT personnel in Universities to support the development of ICT competence and skills among the public and bolster a digital economy.
- (iv) Negotiate with the public primary schools a for community access to ICT infrastructure and collaboratively build and equip youth empowerment, ICT centers and ICT laboratories as provided in the CIDP.

- (v) Enhance internet connectivity to public buildings and key trade centres to boost e-commerce especially for MSMEs in trade and business. The NOFBI programme can be expanded to the sub-county administrative units to further enable deployment of e-governance solutions.
- (vi) Make ICT a standalone sector for planning and budget allocation. This is aimed at giving strategic prominence to planning, budgeting and investment in ICT.
- (vii) Develop and implement ICT policies and procedures to manage ICT and mitigate cyber threats. Collaborate with the national Computer Incident Response Team (CIRT) and the Communications Authority (CA) towards managing cyber threats. This is because enhanced use of ICT is known to raise threats and risks related to cyber-crime and misinformation.

### 3.5 Promoting Human Capital Development

The County population aged 15-64 years (labour-force) was estimated at 776,662 people of whom 700,387 million were working and 76,275 were seeking work but work was not available representing an unemployment rate of 9.8 per cent (Kenya Population and Housing Census, 2019).

According to May 2020 KNBS COVID\_19 Survey, 21.9 per cent of the county labour force worked at least for at least 1 hour for pay; 7.7 per cent had never worked, and 70.4 per cent worked in the informal sector. However, 4.7 per cent of employees did not attend to work due to COVID-19 with other 78.1 per cent of employees working without any pay. On average, workers in the County lost 13.6 hours per week due to COVID-19 and 62.0 per cent of county residents recorded decrease in income while 3.0 per cent recorded increase of income.

The average years of schooling was 7.7 years out of the target of at least 12 years if entire population was to attain completed basic education including primary and secondary education (KIHBS 2015/16). The human development index was 0.5 as compared to the maximum on 1 and national average of 0.52. The HDI at county level measures extent to which the counties can mobilize the economic and professional potential of the citizens. With a rating of 0.5 it means the county lost about 60 per cent of her economic potential due to lack of adequate education and health. About 25.2 per cent of the children were stunted. Childhood stunting is associated with developmental delays that can significantly and adversely impact a person's ability to learn (both during and after the years in school), thereby limiting their ability to reach their full potential. In addition, stunted children tend to perform poorly in school and earn less as adults compared to their well-nourished peers. As a such, this perpetuates inequality across generations.





The NHIF coverage was 32.6 per cent as compared to the average national level at 24.7 per cent while the number of children vaccinated was 83.9 per cent as compared to the average national level at 74.9 per cent. The data indicates about 16.1 per cent of children in the county were at risk of contracting preventable diseases such as polio and measles. From the May 2020 KNBS COVID-19 Survey, 95 per cent of people interviewed confirmed that they did not visit hospital during the COVID-19 period. Recovery and re-engineering strategies will include;

- (i) The County will support creation of job opportunities through the development continued investment in education and training and skills development; and investments within the key sectors of Agri-processing, infrastructure, technology and innovation. This includes diversification of the economy so that majority of county residents do not rely on Miraa farming as main source of income.
- (ii) Create new investments and mechanisms for up skilling and reskilling, for both deeply human skills as well as digital skills. It is critical that employers in the county retrain employees on how to work from home, where applicable. This can be done in collaboration with Meru National youth polytechnic where youths can be trained on technical skills.
- (iii) Protect workers in the informal economy by pursuing innovative interventions to reach them quickly through a combination of non-contributory and contributory pension schemes and facilitating their transition to the formal economy in the longer term.
- (iv) The County shall deepen technical education, training and skills development by establishing more Technical institutions across the 9 sub counties.
- (v) County government of Meru together with National government to look for new market for the Miraa products so that people who rely on it can resume the normal livelihood.

### 3.6 Exploiting Agro processing in Meru

Agriculture is the main economic activity undertaken in Meru county. Maize, beans rice, green grams potatoes, bananas, mangos, macadamia and avocado forms majority of food crops produced as well as dairy farming. The county can diversify its income through agro processing of rice, bananas, macadamia, mango and avocado crops. Meru county accounts for 17% in banana production followed by Kirinyaga at 11%, Muranga at 9.7% and Kisii county at 7.9%. Currently the county has Imenti Community-Based Organization (ICOBO) based in Meru. ICOBO started by growing and selling of passion fruits and tree tomatoes but have now diversified into value addition to banana by making banana floor and banana crisps. ICOBO engages farmers in banana production and exports 12 tonnes of bananas to Hungary after every three months at a price of Ksh 450 per Kg. The county is also involved in macadamia production and processing undertaken by the Meru Nuts company. Kenya is the third largest producer of macadamia in the world behind South Africa and Australia. Kenya produces 42,000 tonnes accounting for 20 per cent of the 200,000 tonnes produced annually.

Agro processing will lead to value addition thus increased household income. Meru is known for miraa farming for export, but the crop is hugely affected by unpredictable markets with majority of European markets banning miraa export.

- (i) The County can take the following intervention measures to support agroprocessing
- (ii) The county to promote and encourage the development of small industries.
- (iii) Promotion of private sector investment in value addition in mango, avocado, banana and macadamia.
- (iv) Promote farming practices that increase productivity as well as fertility of the farms.
- (v) Promotion of agribusiness in the mango, potatoes, avocado, banana and macadamia chain.
- (vi) Promote high and fast yielding avocado, mango and macadamia varieties among small-scale farmers.
- (vii) Develop and implement county spatial plan and land use policy.

## 4 SUPPORT TO KEY SECTORS

### 4.1 Manufacturing

Manufacturing sector is one of the top three sectors in terms of contribution to the Meru Gross County Product (GCP). Manufacturing in Meru County include: - wearing apparel (57.3 per cent), fabricated metal products, except machinery and equipment (13.1 per cent), wood and wood products (10.2 per cent), food products (7.7 per cent), furniture (5 per cent), leather and related products (3.2 per cent). The key products useful in value addition and driving manufacturing include: coffee, tea, avocados, tomatoes, potatoes, cabbages and bananas. Large industries driving manufacturing sector in the county are involved in fish processing, processing livestock products such as milk, and agro-processing such as tea and coffee. Hence, the sector is essential in supporting recovery of the economy of Meru County from the effects of COVID-19 pandemic. This is especially due to its potential in revenue and employment generation. In the recovery, the County will:

- (i) Consider an emergency rescue package for businesses and traders hard-hit by the effects of Covid-19 in the short run. The emergency Fund, supported by development partners and other stakeholders, can be used to identify and support the most vulnerable businesses and entrepreneurs affected by Covid-19. Related, the County will inject some stimulus to cushion the businesses and traders through affordable credit; waiver of some County taxes, cess, and other charges.
- (ii) Covid-19 has increased demand for locally produced goods in the County, and especially Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs), sanitisers, hospital beds and ventilators. It is an opportunity to spur innovation and promote manufacturing and industry development and generation of jobs for the youth.
- (iii) Establishments in the county will adopt to the new pandemic guidelines including rearranging floor plans to allow for social distancing.
- (iv) Establish cold storage and mini fish processing facilities.
- (v) Establish the special economic zones and cottage industries with supporting infrastructures (water, electricity, road network).
- (vi) Engage with investment partners through PPP.

### 4.2 Agriculture and Livestock

Agriculture accounts for the largest share of economic activity in Meru county. More than a half of county economic activity is driven by the agriculture sector. In 2017, agriculture accounted for Ksh. 124,381 million out of the total Ksh. 229,646 million Gross County Product (GCP) amounting to 54.2 per cent of the county's GCP.



About 58.8 per cent of the households produce crops, 47.2 per cent produce livestock, 0.3 per cent practice aquaculture and about 0.4 per cent are involved in fishing. About 12.1 per cent of the households practice irrigation farming. As the agri-food sector gradually shifts from an emergency response to re-engineering, recovery and building resilience, Meru County will adopt the following strategies:

- (i) Develop partnership with the National Government, NGOs, development partners, Research Institutions and the Private sector in enhancing agro-processing and value addition capacities of the county particularly to include khat, bananas, potatoes and horticultural crops.
- (ii) Enhance small holder farmers' adoption of farming as business by linking farmers to product markets beyond the county level, in domestic and external markets, at competitive prices.
- (iii) Invest in storage facilities and driers and cold storage facilities for fresh produce particularly at collection points. The key cause of food crops losses/wastages as identified by households in Meru County are losses related to weevils, storage related, floods and theft related. Significant losses are also experienced with livestock products such as milk and eggs production. Investment in storage and cooling facilities will minimize spoilage and post-harvest losses.
- (iv) Digitize the agri-food sector to support: - training and building capacities of farming households in modern agricultural technologies, provision of advisory and information services, marketing agricultural produce at a wider scope beyond the county level, and improving access to innovative support services including credit and insurance services.
- (v) Improve access to quality and affordable inputs including certified seeds, water, animal feeds, AI services, fertilizers, livestock vaccination and ploughing services by county tractor hire services.
- (vi) Establish programmes for surveillance of disasters such as extreme weather conditions, crop pest and diseases, and livestock disease at the county level equipped with relevant technical specialists and finances to effectively prepare, respond and prevent risks. There is also need for the county to mitigate disasters, such as those related to floods, through institutional capacity development, vulnerability analyses and updates, monitoring and early warning systems, and public education.
- (vii) Build the capacity of farmers in produce handling/ output/ improve product standards, adoption of modern farming technologies (e.g. fodder establishments) and practices and adopt sustainable land management practices to minimize environmental degradation.
- (viii) Strengthen agricultural cooperatives through effective stakeholder engagement and implementation of interventions for more sustainable models of financing and customized training of cooperative members.

### 4.3 Water and Sanitation

Frequent and correct hand hygiene has been emphasized by WHO as one of the measures to curb transmission of COVID-19. This has placed a higher demand for water more so at the households, health care facilities, marketplaces, public places and among essential services providers. According to May 2020 KNBS COVID\_19 Survey, 65.2 per cent households had access to water and soap while 70.8 per cent of the households did not have a designated handwashing facility in their households.

There is low access to piped water which stands at 20 per cent in urban 20 per cent in rural and 42.3 per cent in peri urban areas. In addition is low access to piped sewer among households which is 7.2 per cent urban, 7.1 per cent peri urban and less than 2 per cent in rural households. Sharing of a toilet facility with other households is common which stands at 32.5 per cent rural, 63.8 per cent urban, 66.9 per cent peri urban. Only 23.22 per cent of households use irrigation for farming where the main source of water for irrigation is rivers at 88 per cent, water dam/reservoir at 8 per cent, water from springs at 2.4 per cent.

The county 2018-2022 CIDP intended to achieve the following under WASH, irrigation, environment conservation and management. They include; To promote Provision of adequate, safe and accessible water in rural and urban areas through Boreholes Construction/ rehabilitation of water supply schemes and to support to water service providers and to promote Water resource management.

- (i) The recovery strategy recommends the following for implementation:
- (ii) Expand and rehabilitate the existing piped water connection infrastructure to help increase access to water.
- (iii) Increase water supply in households, institutions and public places through drilling of boreholes and rehabilitation of water supply schemes in all the sub-counties.
- (iv) Integrate public private partnerships arrangements to enhance water provision in the County.
- (v) Map out water resources through a County Water Master Plan to establish the quality and quantity.
- (vi) Develop and implement water and sanitation services policy, law, rule and regulations.
- (vii) Promote protection of water catchment areas, determination and protection of wetlands.
- (viii) Develop and promote ground water recharge strategies.
- (ix) Fast track cutting down of water conservation unfriendly trees.





- (x) Expand sewer infrastructure to accommodate more households.
- (xi) Improve access to safe and improved toilets in schools, health care facilities, workplaces and public places.
- (xii) Support the implementation of Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) initiatives.
- (xiii) Promote the importance of handwashing and construct WASH facilities to increase access at the household level
- (xiv) Enforce the WASH regulation of having toilets in all public facilities such as supermarkets, hotels and banks.

#### 4.4 Urban Development and Housing

Majority of the households (81.5 per cent) did not receive a waiver or relief on payment of rent from the landlord, despite inability to pay, because of the pandemic. Approximately 90.1 per cent of houses are constructed using finished materials for walls, floor and roofing, compared to 9.9 per cent constructed using rudimentary materials. With regard to primary energy source for cooking, 86.3 per cent of households rely on unclean sources of energy such as firewood, paraffin and charcoal, which could adversely affect respiratory health of women and children. For re-engineering and recovery, the County will:

- (i) Develop and implement an addressing system with complete, correct and unique address data in line with the National Addressing System. To be used pandemic and disaster surveillance and emergency response.
- (ii) Fastrack implementation of the affordable housing programme in partnership with the private sector targeting urban centers.
- (iii) Develop a policy to promote home ownership to address the problem of rent distress during times of emergency.
- (iv) Create a fund to cushion landlords and tenants from rent distress during periods of emergency.
- (v) Avail appropriate building technology for use by the public in house construction and improvement in every subcounty, that responds to local cultural and environmental circumstances.
- (vi) Identify and designate urban centers for upgrade pursuant to provisions of the Urban Areas and Cities (amendment) Act, 2019.
- (vii) Develop and implement urban planning and design instruments that support sustainable management and use of natural resources and land in line with the New Urban Agenda and as mitigative measure

to future pandemics and disasters.

- (viii) Formulate and seek approval of urban development plans and development control policies to support investment and development of urban areas.
- (ix) Adopt programmes aimed at an increasing household access to clean energy sources and technologies for cooking to mitigate against exposure to respiratory diseases.

#### 4.5 Transport

The county has a total of 8,574.84 Kilometers of classified road network. Approximately 69.5 per cent of the paved road network is in good condition, 24.0 per cent in fair condition and 5.4 per cent in poor condition. While 10.2 per cent of the unpaved road network is in good condition, 44.0 per cent in fair and 45.0 per cent in poor condition.

The main means of transport used in the County is bicycle (boda boda) 30.5 per cent, followed by walking at 24.1 per cent, motorbike 19.7 per cent, PSV matatus at 19.5 per cent and private car at 2.6 per cent. On average, residents travel 4.6 Kilometers to their workplace which is beyond the threshold for walking but within the threshold for cycling. Approximately 89.0 per cent of the unpaved road network is in poor and fair condition. To enhance mobility options for residents and maintain the roads in good condition to support economic, social and subsistence activities, the County will:

- (i) Sensitize PSV and boda boda operators on COVID-19 prevention measures and assist vehicle owners in retrofitting vehicle designs for social distance, hygiene and ventilation.
- (ii) Expand the county capability for telecommuting and teleworking and develop relevant policies in support of the same.
- (iii) Identify county significant infrastructure projects, with project speed emphasis, for implementation to support economic recovery from the effects of the pandemic.
- (iv) Re-develop bus parks and termini to address crowding and social distancing concerns stipulated in the public health guidelines.
- (v) Focus on increasing the share of unpaved roads in good and fair condition to above 62 per cent which is the national average. For the unpaved road network, focus on adopting the Low Volume Sealed Roads (LVSR) technology for greater network coverage cost effectively.
- (vi) Apply labor based and local resource-based approaches for road development and maintenance, where technically and economically feasible, in line with the Roads 2000 national policy<sup>2</sup>.

2. Roads 2000 programme <http://krb.go.ke/our-downloads/roads%202000%20strategic%20plan.pdf>



- (vii) Improve and expand infrastructure for Non-Motorized Transport (NMT) in urban areas and along roads with heavy -highspeed traffic to promote sustainable mobility options and enhance road safety for all road users. This is in line with the Integrated National Transport Policy 2009 and the Sustainable Development Goals<sup>3</sup>.
- (viii) Adopt climate smart road engineering designs to safeguard road and bridge infrastructure from floods and to harvest storm water for irrigation and productive use. Use the Kenya Urban Support Programme funding to build storm water management systems in urban areas.

#### 4.6 Tourism

The County has 39 profiled and mapped operational and potential tourist attractions in the county. These include the Meru National park, Mt. Kenya National park, Lewa Downs Conservancy and Ngare Ndare Forest Trust as the major tourist attraction sites in Upper Eastern-Kenya. These sites have sustained attraction of adventure tourists and competitive sports like the rhino charge and the Safaricom marathon. These sites offer additional activities mountain climbing, canopy walks, camping, trekking, and diving at waterfalls, bird watching and safari drives. The County is in the process of establishing Nyambene Conservancy that has attraction sites like Igombe Crater, bird watching and breathtaking sceneries. The sector has a high potential especially with neighbouring Isiolo County having an airport and a proposed resort city as a flagship project under the Kenya Vision 2030.

Other tourism assets include cultural and heritage (Meru Museum, Njuri ncheke shrine, songs and dances); 972 Sq. Km of forests to support eco-tourism activities; sports tourism (Kinoru stadium with a capacity of 10,000); and agro-tourism (tea and coffee plantations, floriculture, wheat and miraa farms). Collectively, the attraction sites draw over 40,000 tourists annually.

The hospitality sub-sector in the County is well developed. There are 30 hotels and 2 cottages tourist-class facilities with a total capacity of 1328 beds. Of these, there are two star-rated facilities with a total capacity of 75 rooms and 111 beds. In addition, there are tens of guest houses across the County, that can cater for low-spending tourist including backpackers. These facilities are sufficient to meet the current flow of tourists to the county.

During the 2013-2017 planning period, revenue from accommodation and food services accounted for 0.4 per cent of total GCP. The county government proposes to allocate 5 per cent of total budget to Trade, Investment, Industrialization, Tourism and Cooperative Development sector during the period 2018-2022. There is need to allocate more resources to development of the sector, especially in product development and marketing.

To address the gaps, the County will:

- (i) Identify, develop and market tourism products.
- (ii) Enhance conservation and management of tourism attraction areas and sites.
- (iii) Creation of community conservancies.
- (iv) Enhance accessibility to tourism products and facilities.
- (v) Capacity building (Train service providers in the tourism industry on internationally acceptable standards).
- (vi) Construction of five-star rated accommodation facility at Meru National Park with a 300-bed capacity.
- (vii) Preservation of cultural (cultural information centre).
- (viii) Undertake the operationalization of leopard rock hotel at the Meru National park

#### 4.7 Health

The County has a fairly strong health care system that brings together the Public, Faith-based and the Private Sector to provide health services to its residents and those from neighboring counties. About 58 per cent of all healthcare services in Meru county are provided by the public sector. The county has 183 health facilities of which 116 are public, 44 faith-based, 3 non-governmental organizations and 20 private sectors owned. The sector interventions were skewed towards curative services with high hospital bed occupancy in the public sector. Among the problems facing the health sector include inadequate capacity building for health workers and inadequate machines for screening cancer which has prevailed as a concern in the county. The recovery and re-engineering strategies include;

- (i) Promote construction, upgrading and equipping of health facilities through additional funding to health sector. The county will collaborate with National Government and put up and equip a cancer center at Meru Level V Hospital, this will enable the county to achieve the CIDP 2018-2022 goal of promoting expansion and upgrading of health facilities.
- (ii) Sensitize county residents on enrollment for NHIF and Meru Care cover, to relieve them of out-of-pocket financing of health services, cancer treatment being one of the main causes of morbidity in Meru county.

3. Sustainable Mobility for All: <https://sum4all.org/implementing-sdgs>



- (iii) promote and support public and community health including the installation of hand washing facilities in homes and institutions such as schools, technical training and university institutions; workplaces and health care facilities within Meru county. The county will also ensure that all health centers in the 9 sub counties have enough drugs and other health commodities.
- (iv) Improve the health insurance and assistance system to cover infectious diseases. In the event of emergencies health insurance agencies will allocate part of the health insurance fund in advance to ensure that hospitals provide treatment before charging fees. This can be achieved by establishing Meru County Insurance scheme to cushion the poor.
- (v) Create awareness on availability and importance of free maternity services and address other constraints to access of maternal health services in the county to address fear of contracting COVID19 in event of visiting health facility. Set special facility for serving mother who are expectant and those with small children in need of vaccination. This will reduce fear and risk of infection.
- (vi) Consistently allocate resources towards nutrition specific and sensitive programmes in addition to the current milk programme for ECD children in the various sectors by establishing specific budget lines for nutrition support initiatives.

#### 4.8 Education and training

There county has 813 Early Childhood Development Centers (ECDs) with a total enrolment of 61,870 learners of which 48 per cent is male, and 52 per cent are female. The total number of ECD teachers is 1,202 making the teacher child ratio to be 1:51. The county has 647 primary schools with a total enrolment of 335,879 pupils and 5,520 teachers. School infrastructure expansion through Constituency Development Fund (CDF) has resulted to growth in the number of secondary schools and improvement of school infrastructure. There are 192 public secondary schools in the county which absorbs students from both public and private primary schools. These schools have a total enrolment of 54,682 students against 1,825 teachers. There are three public universities, three private universities, two teachers training colleges and various tertiary colleges offering post-secondary education. In addition, there are several youth polytechnics involved mainly in training on life skills such as masonry, welding, tailoring and carpentry. The recovery strategies are:

- (i) The County government will collaborate with private providers and non-state actors such as faith-based organisations in provision of ECDE services while enforcing public health protocols in schools including provision of WASH and PPEs in the County.
- (ii) County government need to recruit more ECD teachers so that to avoided overcrowded classes.
- (iii) County will extend the free milk progrmmame to other levels such as up to grade 4 to cushion pupils who might be facing risk of malnutrition.

- (iv) The County will deploy teacher assistants from teacher training colleges in the region to co-teach basic education classes; and ensure provision of internet and ICT support among households to support continued learning while out of school.
- (v) The county will integrate ICT into teaching and learning in the education sector- facilitate production of radios and online teaching and learning materials as well as extending the existing distance learning programmes to all rural areas. This will be possible by collaborating with national government to increase ICT coverage in the County.
- (vi) The county Education Department in collaboration with health authorities will establish the safety of school buildings and their surroundings before reopening; provide adequate water and sanitation facilities and enhanced school feeding programme; and promote monitoring psychosocial wellbeing of students, teachers and non-teaching staff as well as educating them on how to mitigate spread of coronavirus both within the learning environments and at community level.

#### 4.9 Social Protection

The County has an estimated number of 48,815 PWDs and 44,76,706 older persons aged 65 years and above. This represents 3.6 per cent and 5.0 per cent of the total county population, respectively. The county is working towards creating an enabling business environment to enable traders recover from COVID-19 through various waivers and extension of fee payment deadlines. The county has partnered with the private sector to supply PPEs, sanitizers and subsidized food to the vulnerable groups.

The recovery and re-engineering strategies are:

- (i) The County Government of Meru will utilize innovative approaches to reach the vulnerable in the informal sector, including agriculture sub-sectors. Expansion will focus on the most vulnerable, but also aim to cover those with significant livelihood risks; immediate measures will focus on livelihood preservation and recovery; enhancing community support schemes will seek to reach informal and small-scale agricultural workers.
- (ii) Ensure basic income security, for persons whose jobs or livelihoods have been disrupted by the crisis, also coordinate social protection programmes and strengthen linkages across various social protection interventions such as giving grants to SMEs.
- (iii) Promote the Universal Healthcare Programme (UHC), to support the vulnerable communities and also register them with NHIF to help them access health service at a subsidized cost.
- (iv) More sensitization of youths, women and PWDs about AGPO so that they are able to exploit business opportunities with government especially those that had their businesses disrupted by the COVID-19.





- (v) Protect vulnerable groups in the population from health costs by enhancing NHIF coverage; improving knowledge of the existing insurance schemes to improve uptake; and subsidizing NHIF premiums for targeted vulnerable populations.

#### 4.10 Gender and Youth

The social and economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have increased households' susceptibility to Gender Based Violence (GBV) in Meru County. Response measures taken to contain the Covid 19 pandemic, such as movement restrictions, lockdown and curfew hours, have led to loss of income, isolation, high levels of stress and anxiety exposing household members to psychological, economic, sexual violence and physical harm as couples spend more time in close contact. To address these challenges, the County will:

- (i) Enhance community awareness and sensitization on gender inequalities, gender-based violence reporting and prevention and reproductive health.
- (ii) Establish a multi-sectoral committee that oversees the implementation of gender policies across various cross-cutting sectors.
- (iii) Designate gender safe spaces to provide accommodation for Gender Based Violence (GBV) survivors and create space in County Referral Hospitals to serve as GBV recovery centers.
- (iv) Promote use of alternative means of Gender Based Violence safe outreach and awareness-raising that limit direct contact i.e. using traditional methods e.g. town criers and use of loudspeakers.
- (v) Support gender champions and sign language interpreters to activate and communicate an 'alert chain' to reach GBV survivors or those in imminent danger of injury and harm.
- (vi) Strengthen inclusive community outreach strategies to ensure GBV messaging is localized and clear, and addresses stigma, discrimination and other power dynamics that serve as barriers to accessing GBV services & COVID-19 information among differently able persons.
- (vii) Bring onboard key stakeholders to actively engage and sensitize the youth on reproductive health; HIV/Aids and COVID-19 prevention measures.

#### 4.11 Environment and Natural Resources Management

The county has a rich ecosystem that includes forests, rivers and hills. Efforts to conserve the environment are hampered increasing population which exerts pressure on the natural resources, encroachment on wetlands, land degradation, deforestation, illegal logging, water pollution, charcoal burning and land pollution.

The major sources of energy for cooking used by households are firewood at 80.8 per cent, charcoal 8.7 per cent, liquified gas at 5.5 per cent and paraffin 3.7 per cent. This has a negative effect on environment management and conservation. Majority of the households in the county dispose their solid waste dump in the compound at 31.7 per cent, 2.6 per cent dump in the street/ open field, 40.7 per cent burn in open air. Only 3.5 per cent is collected by the county government for disposal while 0.3 per cent is collected by private company. Further, 15.03 per cent of households have experienced droughts or floods in the past 5 years that has adversely affected their farming activities.

- (i) Provide and promote alternative sources of clean energy for cooking such as solar energy and bio digesters.
- (ii) Promote afforestation by providing tree seedlings to communities and schools.
- (iii) Develop natural resources utilization policy.
- (iv) Establish and promote community forest associations (CFA) to help in forest conservation.
- (v) Put in place participatory forest management plans (PFMP).
- (vi) Enforce the environment management and conservation policies.
- (vii) Provide capacity building of communities around forest land on forests on Sustainable Forest Management.
- (viii) Impose total ban on wetland cultivation and logging.
- (ix) Reposes all encroached water catchment land.
- (x) Develop land use management and monitoring systems.
- (xi) Provide waste collection services at households, promote and facilitate regular waste collection, environment clean up exercises at neighborhoods and in towns.
- (xii) Promote and facilitate regular waste collection, environment clean up exercises at neighborhoods and in towns.
- (xiii) Segregate waste resource at the source to easily facilitate recycling.
- (xiv) Cushion households from the adverse effects of droughts and floods.

## 5 ECONOMIC STIMULUS PROGRAMME

### 5.1 Economic Stimulus Package

In order to re-engineer and put the economy of Meru County on upward growth trajectory, it is important to either enhance the existing programmes or create new ones which have multiplier effects to productivity and employment creation. The following priority areas when designing stimulus packages:

- (i) Infrastructure - targeting roads, water and electricity.
- (ii) Subsidize farming inputs - certified seeds, fertilizers and mechanized inputs (tractors).
- (iii) Information and communication Technology (ICT) - a greater enabler for business continuity during and after COVID-19.
- (iv) Environment and solid waste management.
- (v) Waivers/concessions - cess, single business permits, parking stickers, water bills, market fees.
- (vi) Prioritization of settlement of payment of pending bills.
- (vii) Provide extension services and market creation for Agriculture.
- (viii) Create a COVID-19 revolving recovery Fund utilizing structures such as table banking, self-help groups and MFIs to small scale traders and businesses in the informal sector.

### 5.2 Financing Economic Stimulus Package

Resource mobilization for implementation of the economic stimulus shall entail collaborations between National and County Government; support from development partners; public private partnerships and non-state actors including NGOs.

### 5.3 Implementation Framework for the Economic Stimulus Programme

Effective implementation of the County COVID-19 Re-engineering and Recovery Strategy will depend on adequate resource mobilization over the 2020/21-2022/23. The implementation will thus be supported through resource mobilization from relevant stakeholders in the County, including the National Government, development partners, NGOs and civil society, faith-based organizations, private sector and individuals. The Annex presents proposed action plan for the County.



## 6 MONITORING, EVALUATING AND REPORTING

The overall purpose of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and reporting is to track progress of the County COVID-19 re-engineering and recovery strategies. Monitoring will be done periodically to track implementation of the work plans while evaluation will be undertaken to measure effectiveness, impact and sustainability in meeting the strategic priorities. Some of the M&E activities will include documenting actions, resources, outputs and measure the impact on expected outcomes.

Monitoring will be undertaken on a continuous basis and reporting on a quarterly basis, at mid-year, annually and at the end of the plan period leading to progress reports. The monitoring framework will track the achievements, assess use and delivery of resources and accomplishment of deliverables.

Evaluation and impact assessment of the plan will involve weighing the extent to which strategic objectives are met and impact created. Evaluation will therefore be based on the implementation framework and theory of change. A theory of change describes how an intervention can deliver desired results and explains the causal logic of how a programme modality or design innovation will reach its intended outcomes.<sup>4</sup>

The County COVID-19 re-engineering and recovery strategies reporting will be informed by annual work plans. All implementing departments in the County will be expected to prepare M&E frameworks for each activity (see sample Annex Table 3). The quarterly progress reports will include information on key indicators against set targets for the quarter.

For accountability purposes, County Governments through the Monitoring and Evaluation Departments (MED)s will review their existing M&E policy to include the County COVID-19 re-engineering and recovery strategies. These strategies will also inform County performance contracting targets and human resource performance management systems. The technical capacity of the M&E unit (focal persons and/or champions), on the County Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation System (CIMES) will be enhanced to monitor and evaluate the implementation of these re-engineering strategies. CIMES guidelines on County Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (COMEC) will also play a key role and responsibility on how County Governments implement these strategies.

Furthermore, the M&E reports will always inform decision making at all county levels including County assemblies to contribute to a strong and sustainable county results-oriented M&E system. At the end of each financial year, annual performance reports will be drafted highlighting key achievements, challenges, lessons learnt and recommendations on the way forward.

4. [https://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/10.1596/978-1-4648-0779-4\\_ch2](https://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/10.1596/978-1-4648-0779-4_ch2)

## 7 COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Communication<sup>5</sup>, a process of creating understanding between two or more parties, is considered effective when the transmitted content is received and understood in the way it was intended. For development of County COVID-19 Socio-Economic Recovery Strategies, Communication for Development<sup>6</sup> (C4D) also referred to as Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) will be utilised. Communication for Development is evidence-based processes that involves a mix of communication channels and approaches to facilitate dialogue, participation and engagement with the target audience for positive social and behaviour change.

The communication channels<sup>7</sup> are the routes, media and techniques to be used to carry the re-engineering and recovery communication messages from the policy makers to the citizens. Based on May 2020 KNBS COVID\_19 Survey, majority of Meru County respondents received information about coronavirus through radio (88 per cent), television (61 per cent) and Friends and family (36 per cent). 22 per cent of Meru respondents received information through mobile even though the survey did not specify whether mobile included both written (short text messages <SMS>) and voice (calls). Government sources and social media followed at a rate of 14 per cent and 12 per cent respectively. Newspapers, Health Care Workers and Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) workers' frequency were all below 4 per cent.

Therefore, the following channels of communication will be utilized:

- (1) Written communication such as: posters, digital (SMS) and online communications (County website, electronic mail and social media).
- (2) Verbal communication such as: radio, telephone, and face to face meetings.
- (3) Non-verbal communication for example: sign language.
- (4) Visual communication that is: Television.

The effectiveness of the different channels would vary depending on the circumstance and the characteristics of the communication. Therefore, to increase buy-in from the members of the public on the county socio-economic recovery strategies, opportunities, interventions and to encourage positive feedback, below (table 2) are the channels of communication.

5. <https://books.google.co.ke/books?id=0VnnHUSAL7cC&printsec=frontcover&dq=creating+understanding+what+is+communication&hl>

6. [https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/UNICEF\\_2017\\_Report\\_on\\_Communication\\_for\\_Development\\_C4D.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/UNICEF_2017_Report_on_Communication_for_Development_C4D.pdf)

7. <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199657681.001.0001/acref-9780199657681-e-1679?rskey=sE6ywS&result=2>

**Table 2: Communication channels with target audience**

	Children 3yrs-17yrs	Youth 18yrs- 35yrs	Men 36yrs- 70yrs	Women 36yrs- 70yrs	PWDs	Aged 71yrs +	Literate & Semi- literate	Rural	Urban & Informal settlements
Barazas <100 persons									
Face to face <100 persons									
Radio									
TV									
SMS									
Website & Email									
Social Media									
I.E.C-Posters, branded gear									
Outdoor-Billboards, Graffiti, Drawings									
Telephone									
Sign language									

> Most appropriate channel to be used.

**NOTES:**

- For purposes of this report, the literacy levels will be measured by whether the target audience can listen, speak, read and write in English and Kiswahili language.
- It is assumed that children under the age of 3 years have not yet fully developed their cognitive abilities to interpret communication.
- Face to face meetings will include virtual meetings, association gatherings, friends, and family.

The communication channels for Persons with Disabilities are radio and telephone calls for the visually impaired and sign language for those with hearing impairment.

The scheduled communication or frequency of messaging are proposed as follows:

Weekly updates on County website & social media.

Bi-weekly broadcast messages (TV interchanged with either local or kiswahili radio station).

Monthly SMS and telephone calls.

Quarterly I.E.C materials - Posters in reception areas and community gatherings (markets, mosques, churches, clinics, huduma centers).

Monthly barazas.





## ANNEX

### Implementation matrix/Action plan

Sector	Strategic Objectives	Activities/ Economic Stimulus	Expected Outcome /Key Result Area	Expected output	Key Performance Indicator	Time frame	2020: 2021/22 (Ksh. in million)	2022/23 (Ksh. in million)	Total Budget (Ksh. in million)	Source of Funds	Implementing Agency/Actor/ Stakeholder
County Revenue Policy	OSR Enhancement; External grants									County Government	County Government
County Expenditure Reforms; Pending Bills	Re-engineer expenditure to be growth oriented and people-centred	Increase expenditure in health sectors and other non-administrative functions such as water, trade, ICT, education, agriculture while systematically reducing expenditure on non-administrative functions	County expenditure that is people-centred and focussed on growth-creating sectors such as health, education, water, infrastructure, ICT etc	Enhanced efficiency and effectiveness in utilization of public resources	No. of CBROP/ year; No. of CFSP/ year; No. of Budget Estimates/ year; No. of PBB/ year; No. of Cash flow management report	Continuous from 2020/21	10	10	20	County Government	County Government
		Reduce the approved budget-actual expenditure gap by fully implementing PFM recommendations and conducting annual expenditure reviews	County expenditure in line with existing National Government and County Government laws	budget and economic forums	No. of budget and economic forums/ year	Continuous from 2020/21	3	3	6	County Government	County Government
				Improved legislation and oversight activities	No. of bills and motions passed; No. of campaigns done; No. of people identified; No. of budgets approved	Continuous from 2020/21	10	10	20	County Government	County Government
		Restructure county functional expenditure classification to encompass stand-alone emerging ICT functions	Fully fledged stand-alone ICT department with a budget	-	-	2020/21	-	-	-	County Government	County Government
	Eliminate pending bills	Systematically and in phase-out approach reduce pending bills owed to suppliers	Improved compliance to procurement regulations	Improved supply chain management	% level of compliance with Public Procurement Regulations	Continuous	-	-	-	County Government	County Government
Agriculture	Diversification of production into fast-maturing vegetable crops through irrigation	Subsidies on fast-maturing vegetable seeds, expansion of area under sustainable irrigation	County residents eat more nutritious food	Increased number of farmers producing fast-maturing vegetables/ crops; Increased availability of nutritious vegetables/crops in the county	Number of subsidized fast maturing seeds; Increased acreage under fast maturing crops; Acreage under sustainable irrigation	2020/2021 FY	8	7	15	County and National Governments; development partners	County Government

Sector	Strategic Objectives	Activities/ Economic Stimulus	Expected Outcome /Key Result Area	Expected output	Key Performance Indicator	Time frame	2020: 2021/22 (Ksh. in million)	2022/23 (Ksh. in million)	Total Budget (Ksh. in million)	Source of Funds	Implementing Agency/Actor/ Stakeholder
	Enhancing agro-processing and value addition capacities of counties	Attracting private partnerships in the county; Strengthen agricultural extension services; Enhance farmers training and farmers information services; Enhance collaboration with research institutions	Transformation of smallholder value chains in the County	Increased private investments in the County; Increased collaborations with research institutes; Enhanced agricultural extension and information outreach systems in the County	Value-addition per worker in the county; No. of agro-processing industries/plants set up in the county; Number of county-private partnerships with farmers; Number of farmers trained in agro-processing; Number of farmers with access to agricultural extension services; Number of collaborations with research institutes	2020/2021 FY	15	15	30	County and National Governments; development partners	County Government
	Investments in storage and cooling facilities especially at collection centres	Construction of storage and cooling facilities in the County	Enhanced food security in the County	Increased storage and cooling facilities; reduced post harvesting losses	Number of storage and cooling facilities developed at the County level	2020/2021 FY	3	-	3	County Government	County Government
	Digitization of the agricultural sector	Building capacities of farming households and agri-food sector labourers in modern agricultural technologies; Investment in digital infrastructure (e.g. data systems)	Digitized marketing, advisory and information, financial and agricultural government operations at the County		Number of users adopting digitized agricultural operations (marketing, financial, etc) at the County level; Proportion of small-scale farmers with access to advisory and information services;	2020/2021 FY	3	3	6	County and National Governments; development partners	County Government
	Enhanced access to agricultural finance	Partner with development partners, such as, the National Government, Private Sector, DFIs and NGOs, in availing access to affordable formal agricultural finance to small holder farmers in the county	Access to agricultural finance will improve farmers access to support services and commodities e.g. access to affordable formal finance to small holder farmers in the county	Increased number of small holder farmers with access to agricultural finance.	Proportion of small-scale farmers with access to agricultural finance;	2020/2021 FY	5	5	10	County and National Governments; development partners	County Government





Sector	Strategic Objectives	Activities/Economic Stimulus	Expected Outcome /Key Result Area	Expected output	Key Performance Indicator	Time frame	2020: 2021/22 (Ksh. in million)	2022/23 (Ksh. in million)	Total Budget (Ksh. in million)	Source of Funds	Implementing Agency/Actor/ Stakeholder
	Disaster surveillance at County level and mitigate risks associated with disasters, such as those related to floods	Establish programmes for surveillance of disasters such as extreme weather conditions at the County level equipped with relevant technical specialists and finances to effectively prevent, prepare, respond and prevent risks; Institutional capacity development; Carry out vulnerability analyses and updates; Invest in monitoring and early warning systems; Conduct public education	Enhanced food security in the County	Increased preparedness of households and communities to mitigate and respond to shocks; Early warning	Placement of a disaster risk management unit at the county level equipped with relevant technical specialists and finances to effectively prepare, respond and prevent risks; Number of weather forecast and flood early warning disseminated to communities; Number of men and women trained to access flood warning and weather forecast/information; Number of men and women trained on Disaster Management; Number of community level contingency and climate change adaptation plans developed	2020/2021 FY	10	10	20	County and National Governments; development partners	County Government
Manufacturing and MSMEs	To enhance innovation	Establish a Fund/Establish a budget line to support innovative activities in the County	Increased county revenues; Increasing levels of employment; Increasing use of new business models	New product brands in the market; Improved processes	No. of new brands in the market; No. of trainings conducted;	3 years	2	-	2	County Government	County Government
					No. of trainings conducted;	2020/2021 FY	6	6	12	County Government	County Government
	To strengthen Partnerships	Attract private partnerships and other stakeholders in the county;	Increased project undertaken by partners	Increased PPP arrangements	Number of county-PPPs; increasing no. of stakeholders' engagements with the County		55	70	125	County Government	County Government
	To enhance skills	Build capacity and skills of traders and businesses persons	Increased productivity; More revenues	Increased No. of personnel trained	No. of persons trained	Continuous	2	-	2	County Government	County Government
	To expand Market Opportunities for MSEs	Designate Particular street on a particular day of the week for MSEs to exhibit	Increased revenue from trading activities	Show cased Meru MSEs products	No. of Inception report	Continuous				County Government	County Government
		Organize Meru MSEs annual Expo & Conference	Increased revenue from trading activities	Show cased Meru MSEs products	No. of Meru MSEs annual Expo & Conference organized		10	10	20	County and National Governments; development partners	County Government

Sector	Strategic Objectives	Activities/Economic Stimulus	Expected Outcome /Key Result Area	Expected output	Key Performance Indicator	Time frame	2020: 2021/22 (Ksh. in million)	2022/23 (Ksh. in million)	Total Budget (Ksh. in million)	Source of Funds	Implementing Agency/Actor/ Stakeholder
	To enhance access to Affordable finance	Establish MSE fund and mobile lending system in MCMC	Increased MSEs survival rates	Operationalization of MSEs support fund	% completion and operationalization of MSE support fund	Continuous	50	50	100	County and National Governments; development partners	County Government
	To enhance value addition (Agro-processing)	Form & Strengthen partnership for construction of Potato and banana cold storage; Create sustainable structures and procedures for operationalizing the cold storage facilities	Increased value addition of Meru Products	Construction of Processing plants	% Completion of Potato and Banana Cold storage plant	2020- 2023	10	-	10	County and National Governments; development partners	County Government
Water and Sanitation	To increase access to clean water	To Develop and rehabilitate water infrastructure	No of water infrastructure developed and rehabilitated	Increased access to clean and safe water	% of the population with access to clean and safe water; % of population covered with piped water	2020- 2023	70	39	109	County Government	County Government
	To increase access to improved sanitation	To develop and rehabilitate sanitation infrastructure	No of sanitation infrastructure developed and rehabilitated	Increased access to improved sanitation	% of the population covered by sewer line	2020-2023	105	53	158	County Government	County Government
	To increase access to improved sanitation					2020-2023	63	31	94	County Government	County Government
Solid waste management	To achieve increased solid waste collection and management	To sensitive communities on importance of safe solid waste collection management and disposal	No of environment clean up exercised in major urban centres and neighbourhoods	Increased access to clean environment	% of population with increased access to safe and clean environment	2020/2021-2021/2022	27	23	50	County and National Governments; development partners	County Government
Environment and Natural Resources Conservation	To increase environment conservation to clean water	To plant trees and increase area under forest	No of free trees seedlings distributed to local communities	Increased forest cover	% Ha under forest cover	2020/2021-2021/2022	13	13	25	County and National Governments; development partners	County Government
	To increase access to improved sanitation		No of trees planted				6	6	12	County and National Governments; development partners	County Government
Droughts and floods control	To mitigate the effects of droughts and floods	To construct dams and dykes to control floods	No of dams and dykes constructed to control floods	Increase safety from the effects of floods and droughts	% of population cushioned from the effects of droughts and floods					County and National Governments; development partners	County Government
Transport	To enhance sustainable mobility options for household	Construct NMT infrastructure across key roads in the County	Increased modal split in favor of NMT	Increase in knowledge management of NMT infrastructure	Knowledge management of NMT infrastructure in good and fair condition	6 months	100	100	200	County Government	County Government
	To enhance health, safety and hygiene in public transport vehicles	Improve public transport vehicle design to address social distancing and hygiene	Compliance to the COVID-19 safety guidelines	Reduced exposure and infection rates attributed PSV use	No. of reported positive cases due to PSV used (based on contact tracing data)	4 months	5	1	6	County Government	County Government



Sector	Strategic Objectives	Activities/ Economic Stimulus	Expected Outcome /Key Result Area	Expected output	Key Performance Indicator	Time frame	2020: 2021/22 (Ksh. in million)	2022/23 (Ksh. in million)	Total Budget (Ksh. in million)	Source of Funds	Implementing Agency/Actor/ Stakeholder
	To improve the road conditions of the road network	Improve quality of the unpaved road infrastructure using labour-based techniques	Improved accessibility and reduced vehicle operation costs	Increased proportion of roads in good and fair condition	Proportion of unpaved road network in good and fair condition	continuous	450	-	450	County Government	County Government
		Improve quality of road network using appropriate technology -Low Volume Sealed Roads (LVSR) for rural roads	Improved accessibility and reduced vehicle operation costs	Increased proportion of roads in good and fair condition	Knowledge management of roads developed using LVSR		50	50	100	County Government	County Government
	To mitigate the damage caused by floods on roads and bridges	Implement green roads design to protect road infrastructure while controlling storm water and harvesting flood water for domestic and commercial use	Resilient road infrastructure that can withstand floods with controlled damage	Number of green roads projects and water harvesting infrastructure	Knowledge management of green roads and quantity of water harvested in cubic meters annually	Continuous	400	200	600	County Government	County Government
Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	To enhance ICT capacity and use	Collaborate with private sector to enhance household acquisition of acquired ICT assets and technologies, e.g. smart phones and laptops	Increased use of ICT for domestic and commercial purposes	Increase in number of households owning ICT assets and technologies	Proportion of households owning ICT assets	1 year	-	-	-	County Government	County Government
		Programme to ensure ubiquitous access to reliable and affordable internet (internet everywhere)	Increased use of ICT for domestic and commercial purposes	Increase in number of households connected to reliable and affordable internet	Proportion of households connected to reliable and affordable internet	1 year	3	-	3	County Government	County Government
		Community access to ICT infrastructure and services in public primary schools	Improved access to ICT infrastructure and services	Increase in number of household able to access ICT through community facilities	Proportion of household able to access ICT through community facilities					County Government	County Government
	Boosting e-commerce and home-based economies through ICT access	Extending the NOFBI project to ensure internet connectivity in public spaces, markets, commercial zones and public buildings	Increased use of e-commerce to boost trade	Increased proportion of population engaging in e-commerce	Proportion of population engaging in e-commerce					County Government	County Government
	Enhance prominence in County planning and budgeting	Designate ICT as a stand-alone Ministry in Meru County Government structure and deploy requisite personnel and capability	Enhance prominence of ICT plans, programmes and projects	Increased budget for ICT	Share of ICT budget in overall county budget					County Government	County Government
	Enhance cyber security	Formulate and implement cyber security policies and procedures and pursue ISO certification on Information Systems Security	Enhanced detection, mitigation and reporting of cyber security incidents	Reduced cyber security incidents	No. of cyber security incidents	2020/21	1	-	1	County Government	County Government

Sector	Strategic Objectives	Activities/ Economic Stimulus	Expected Outcome /Key Result Area	Expected output	Key Performance Indicator	Time frame	2020: 2021/22 (Ksh. in million)	2022/23 (Ksh. in million)	Total Budget (Ksh. in million)	Source of Funds	Implementing Agency/Actor/ Stakeholder
Energy	To increase access to clean energy sources and technologies for cooking by households	Enhanced household use of clean energy and technology for cooking; distribution of clean cook stoves and clean energy alternatives to charcoal, kerosene and firewood	Increased number of households with access to clean energy and technology for cooking	Proportion of households with access to clean energy and technology for cooking		Continuous	80	27	107	County Government	County Government
	To improve the quality of life of residents through provision of affordable and decent housing	Fastrack implementation of the affordable housing programme with a focus on improving living conditions in informal settlements	Enhanced quality in informal settlements due to improved housing conditions	Increased proportion of households provided with affordable and decent housing	No. of housing units provided	2020-21	100	-	100	County and National Governments; development partners	County Government
		Map flood risk settlements and implement flood disaster mitigation plans including relocation and re-settlement of households	Reduced flood risk and disaster incidents in human settlements	Increased number of households relocated from flood risk areas	No. of households relocated from flood risk areas	2020-21	130	-	130	County and National Governments; development partners	County Government
	To increase access to clean energy sources and technologies for cooking by households	Enhanced household use of clean energy and technology for cooking; distribution of clean cookstoves and clean energy alternatives to charcoal, kerosene and firewood	Increased number of households with access to clean energy and technology for cooking	Proportion of households with access to clean energy and technology for cooking		2020-21	5	-	5	County and National Governments; development partners	County Government
Tourism	To enhance socio-economic benefits from the tourism sector	Tourism sector development master-plan; Rehabilitate infrastructure leading to tourism attraction sites	Growth in revenue generation from tourism	Increased visitor numbers to the county; increased awareness of the diversified tourism product offering	Number of local and foreign visitors; revenue collected by county government from tourism.	3 - 5 years	10	-	10	County and National Governments; development partners	County Government
		Niche tourism product developed, marketing incorporating aspects of COVID-19.	Diversified tourism experiences / product; Sanitation standards in tourism upheld	Increased number of tourists visiting the County; increased awareness and practice of sanitation in tourist products	Number of niche tourism products developed; Number of cultural sites preserved; Number of high-altitude training camps developed.	3 - 5 years	100	100	200	County and National Governments; development partners	County Government
		Tourism infrastructure development	Enhanced accessibility of sites; Expanded accommodation facilities	1 five star hotel; Improved roads and accessibility; Increased contribution to GCP	Number of high spending tourist arrivals; Revenue from tourism	2-5 years	300	300	600	County and National Governments; development partners	County Government
	To capacity build Tourism service providers	Setting up of virtual conferences/ meetings for improved standards of service in the hotel and hospitality industry through trainings		Training session for tourism service providers	No. of training sessions for tourism service providers	Continuous	5	-	5	County and National Governments; development partners	County Government



Sector	Strategic Objectives	Activities/ Economic Stimulus	Expected Outcome /Key Result Area	Expected output	Key Performance Indicator	Time frame	2020: 2021/22 (Ksh. in million)	2022/23 (Ksh. in million)	Total Budget (Ksh. in million)	Source of Funds	Implementing Agency/Actor/ Stakeholder
	Improve access to quality and affordable health services	Provide appropriate antenatal care	Improved health condition of pregnant women		Number of women benefitted	2 years				County Government	County Government
		Promote additional funding to the health sector	Health infrastructure development		Number of health facilities improved and equipped as per norms	2 years	270	230	500	County Government	County Government
		Recruit high number of public health officers	Efficient and effective service delivery		Number of health officers recruited	1 year	40	40	80	County Government	County Government
		Enhance Medical Supplies	Increase % of availability of essential Medical products		Number health centres stocked with essential medical products.	2 years	230	250	480	County Government	County Government
		Improve immunization coverage in the County	Reduced mortality		Number of immunization outreaches	1 year	2	2	3	County Government	County Government
	To improve sanitation in the County	Enhance construction of latrines	Increased latrine coverage		% of homesteads with latrines	1 year	15	15	30	County Government	County Government
		Drill boreholes at County health centres and public areas	Improved access to safe water in public places		Number of boreholes drilled	2 years	70	70	140	County Government	County Government
	Strengthen collaboration with health-related sectors	Pollution control; Improvement in veterinary services; Construction of latrines	Improved service delivery		% change of health sector development	1 years	500	500	1000	County Government	County Government
	Minimize exposure to health risk factor	Health promotion including health information; Micro-nutrient deficiency control; Infection prevention and control	Reduced mortality rate		Number of patients treated	2 years	2	2	3	County Government	County Government
Education	To improve service delivery in schools	Promote infrastructure development	Improved training environment		Number of school facilities renovated and constructed	2 years	100	101	201	County Government	County Government
		Train teachers on how to instruct remotely	Improvement in teaching skills		Number of teachers trained	1 years	5	5	10	County Government	County Government
		Recruitment of ECDE teachers	Efficient and effective service delivery		Number of ECDE teachers recruited	2 years	46	50	96	County Government	County Government
		Recruitment of VTCs Instructors	Efficient and effective service delivery		Number of VTCs instructors recruited	2 years	46	50	96	County Government	County Government

Sector	Strategic Objectives	Activities/ Economic Stimulus	Expected Outcome /Key Result Area	Expected output	Key Performance Indicator	Time frame	2020: 2021/22 (Ksh. in million)	2022/23 (Ksh. in million)	Total Budget (Ksh. in million)	Source of Funds	Implementing Agency/Actor/ Stakeholder
		Capacity building of school Board of management	Improvement in the management capacities		Number of trainings held	1 years	10		10	County Government	County Government
		Tools and equipment	Improvement in availability of tools and equipment		Number tools and equipment procured	2 years	50	50	100	County Government	County Government
	Enhance transition and retention rates in schools	Disbursement of bursaries	Increase of school attendance		No. students of supported with bursaries	2 years				County Government	County Government
		Promote school feeding programmes	Increase in number of students attending schools		% of students attending schools	1 years				County Government	County Government
		Enhance back to school campaigns	Increase in number of students attending schools		% students attending schools	1 years				County Government	County Government
	To provide safety in schools	Provide surgical masks to students; Provide PPE to school employees	Reduction in cases of COVID-19		Quantities of PPE and surgical masks supplied	1 years	20	30	50	County Government	County Government
	Strengthen social well-being of students	Promote guidance and counselling in schools	Increase retention and attendance in school		Number of schools where guidance & counselling	1 years				County Government	County Government
Social Protection	Promote social protection activities	Provide medical insurance coverage	Reduction in treatment cost during emergencies		Number of people covered by insurance	1 years				County Government	County Government
		Enhance cash transfer to vulnerable groups	Reduced poverty level		Number of people who benefitted from cash transfers	1 years				County Government	County Government
		Women Social Economic Empowerment( TWaweza)	Enhanced women empowerment		No. of women trained; Seed capital; No of PWDs Trained	2 years	5	6	11	County Government	County Government
		Social Services			No. of homes constructed; No. of street children rescued; No of vulnerable reached by relief	2 years	7	10	17	County Government	County Government
		SGBV/FGM/family protection			No of safe homes; No of adolescents capacity built; No of meeting held	2 year	22	30	52	County Government	County Government
		Gender Mainstreaming			No of lactation rooms established; Workload analysis	1 years	5	-	5	County Government	County Government





Sector	Strategic Objectives	Activities/ Economic Stimulus	Expected Outcome /Key Result Area	Expected output	Key Performance Indicator	Time frame	2020: 2021/22 (Ksh. in million)	2022/23 (Ksh. in million)	Total Budget (Ksh. in million)	Source of Funds	Implementing Agency/Actor/ Stakeholder
		Social inclusion/ affirmative action				2 years	15	15	30	County Government	County Government
Human Resource	Provide safety in workplaces	Provide adequate personal protective equipment for employees	Reduced cases of COVID-19 in workplaces	Improved staff safety in the workplace.	Number of protective equipment provided	1 year	5	-	5	County Government	County Government
	Improve staff digital skills	Implement policy guidelines on skills development among the staffs; Training and capacity building of staffs on use of ICT in service delivery	Improvement in remote working	Improved staff technical performance	Percentage of staff trained on digital skills	Continuous	10	-	10	County Government	County Government
	Mainstream occupational safety and health into the sectors of the economy	Train workers on safety and health	Increased control of COVID-19 transmission	Improved staff technical performance	Percentage number of workers trained	1 year				County Government	County Government
Youth Directorate	Improve psychosocial support to affected youth in registered groups	Conduct inter-county Youth Exchange Programs Meetings.	Increased improvement in psychological support in youth	Increase in improvement in psychological support in youth	No. of improved psychological support to affected youth in registered groups.	1 Year	2	2	4	County Government	County Government
	Invest in Agri-business based technology among the youth.	Implementation of youth apprenticeship, attachments, internship, mentorship and volunteer programs	Increased number of investments in technology	Increase in number of investment in technology	No. of investments in Agri-business based technology	1 Year	2	2	4	County Government	County Government
	Promote industrialization	-Trainings on labor market information access points	Increased amount of funds in youth empowerment in order to meet covid-19 demands	Increase in amount of funds for youth empowerment in order to meet the Covid-19 demands	No. of youth empowered	1 Year	2	2	4	County Government	County Government
	Conduct continuous monitoring and evaluation	Sensitization campaign on drug abuse, HIV ,creation of youth health friendly center's	Increased number of people doing the monitoring and evaluation	Increase in number of people doing monitoring and evaluation	No. of monitoring and evaluation of campaigns	1 Year	2	2	4	County Government	County Government
Sports Directorate	Preparation of outdoor training environments	Upgrading of stadia-Nkubu, Maua, Timau, Kirwiro baseball complex	Increased number of stadia	Increase in number of stadia	No of stadia upgraded	1 Year	10	11	21	County Government	County Government
	Develop a detailed protocol	Development of a post covid sports policy	Increased number of policies	Increase in number of policies	No of policies	1 Year	2	2	4	County Government	County Government
	Provide education to participants	Organize media outreach	Increased number of campaigns	Increase in number of campaigns	No of campaigns	1 Year	0	1	1	County Government	County Government

Sector	Strategic Objectives	Activities/ Economic Stimulus	Expected Outcome /Key Result Area	Expected output	Key Performance Indicator	Time frame	2020: 2021/22 (Ksh. in million)	2022/23 (Ksh. in million)	Total Budget (Ksh. in million)	Source of Funds	Implementing Agency/Actor/ Stakeholder
Culture Directorate	Provide seed capital for diversification of individual creative artists' economic safety nets.	Establishment of SACCO'S and issuance of seed capital	Increased amount to be issued	Increase in the amount to be issued	Amount issued; No. of artists assisted	1 Year	2	2	4	County Government	County Government
	Encourage a structured peer to peer counselling and mentorships amongst creative artists	Mobilization of participants and formation of peer/ focus groups per specific genre- music, painting, sculptors, designers, drama...	Increased number of counseling's	Increase in number of counseling's	No of counseled participants	1 Year	1	1	1	County Government	County Government
	Encourage creative artists to do productions with a calling theme on Covid 19 pandemic prevention and mitigation.	Production of songs, dances, poems, talk shows, talent shows, chants, coral verses etc. through zoom	Increased number of publications	Increase in number of publications	No of Publications	1 Year	1	1	2	County Government	County Government
	Promote better cohesion and individual well-being.	Engage prominent media (Radio, TV and social media) personalities to package talk shows and activations around psycho-social discussion and counselling.	Increased number of enlightens in work community	Increase in number of enlighten in the working community	No. of media talk shows held.	1 Year	1	1	1	County Government	County Government
	Hold cultural festivals and national celebrations at the sub county levels to reduce crowd, cost and movement of people	Plan and Hold a county festivals	Increased planned and held county festivals	Increase in the number of county cultural festivals	No of festivals	1 Year	4	5	9	County Government	County Government
Meru youth service	Relief support to vulnerable youth in informal settlements	identifying vulnerable youth in informal settlements; acquire and distribute food and other necessities.	Increased number of vulnerable youths identification	Increase in number of vulnerable youths identifications	No of vulnerable youths identified	3-5 Years	2	3	5	County Government	County Government
	Labor intensive jobs	Garbage collection and disposal, cleaning rivers, beaches, and planting of trees in our water towers.	Increased number of labor worked	Increase in number of labor works	No of youths recruited	3-5 Years	2	3	5	County Government	County Government
	Every Youth A Skill Campaign	training and capacity development	Increased number of trained and capacity development	Increase in number of training and capacity developing skills	No of trained skilled campaigned	3-5 Years	3	4	7	County Government	County Government
	Commercial Infrastructure Development	provide shades, tuck-shops, and other commercial infrastructure	Increased number of commercial infrastructure development	Increase in number of provision shades, tuck-shops and commercial infrastructure	No of infrastructure developed	3-5 Years	3	4	7	County Government	County Government



**COUNTY COVID-19 SOCIAL ECONOMIC RE-ENGINEERING  
RECOVERY STRATEGY 2020/21-2022/23**

Sector	Strategic Objectives	Activities/ Economic Stimulus	Expected Outcome /Key Result Area	Expected output	Key Performance Indicator	Time frame	2020: 2021/22 (Ksh. in million)	2022/23 (Ksh. in million)	Total Budget (Ksh. in million)	Source of Funds	Implementing Agency/Actor/ Stakeholder
	Strengthening Youth owned and led small and medium sized enterprises	Disburse seed capital	Increased disbursed seed capital	Increase in available seed capital	Amount disbursed to youths	3-5 Years	3	4	7	County Government	County Government
	Actioning the Youth in Agribusiness policy	Provide incentives to the youth e.g greenhouses appliances and equipment's etc	Increased provision for more incentives for the youth	Increase in tax incentives for investments in depressed areas for the youth	No of equipment	3-5 Years	1	2	3	County Government	County Government
Meru County Alcoholic Drinks Control Board	Reopening of affected hospitality industry	Develop Reopening of bars policy	Enhanced developed policies	Enhancing Policy document in place	No of Policy document in place	1 Year	2	3	5	County Government	County Government
		Amendment of 2016 Alcoholic Act	Increased in revised amendment of 2016 alcoholic act	Amending of alcoholic Act in place	No of Amended Act in place	1 Year	2	3	5	County Government	County Government
		Training of board and staff members	Increased trained staff members	Increasing the number of board and staff members trained	No. of board and staff members trained	1 Year	1	2	3	County Government	County Government
		Hold Public awareness and education	Increased public forums and awareness creation	Increasing awereness creation	No of Forums held	1 Year	3	4	7	County Government	County Government
			<b>Grand Total</b>				<b>3748</b>	<b>2659</b>	<b>6407</b>		





## COUNTY GOVERNMENTS



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