

Public Affairs Index for Meru County

Introduction

The Public Affairs Index (PAI) is a framework for monitoring achievements in the delivery of public services at the County level. The PAI helps to identify gaps in public service delivery, to bring out emerging issues for timely attention by stakeholders, and to guide in prioritizing and pinpoint targeting of policy actions. The work on the PAI demonstrates the role of KIPPRA, as a think tank and research intermediary, in strengthening frameworks and tools for coordinating key stakeholders in the research ecosystem in Kenya to dialogue, network and enhance research uptake to inform the implementation of the devolved system of Government. This policy brief provides detailed indicators for monitoring the performance of Meru County in the delivery of public service, across the nine pillars, namely; Fiscal Management, Economic Performance, Human Capital Development, Essential Infrastructure, Environmental Management, Transparency and Accountability, Crime and Justice, Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), and Social Welfare. The policy brief also exemplifies the role of KIPPRA in promoting research take-up to support the devolved system of government in Kenya.

Devolution

The 2010 Constitution of Kenya created a two-tier system of Government: the National Government and 47 County Governments. The main objective of creating the new governance structures is spelt out in Article 174 of the Constitution, which is to devolve power and resources to attain optimal delivery of public services and allow citizens to effectively participate in governance. Also, devolution is aimed at enhancing equity, equality, efficiency and prudence in the use of public resources to meet the needs of the citizens.

The fourth schedule of the Constitution outlines 14 functions now fully devolved to County Governments. Since 2013, about Ksh 2 trillion have been disbursed to the counties to facilitate delivery of public services. The equitable share allocation constitutes the main source of revenue for all the 47 counties, contributing about 90% of the total County revenue. Counties also receive conditional grants as part of the Equalization Fund articulated in Article 204 of the Constitution. County Governments are also authorized to impose taxes and fees, as stipulated in Chapter 12 of the Constitution, to mobilise revenue from own sources.

The County Government Act 2012, the Public Finance Management Act 2012, and the Public Finance Management Regulations 2015 provide a legal framework for devolution and guide fiscal decentralization. County Governments are mandated by the County Government Act 2012 to implement Integrated Development Planning. This involves developing 5-year County Integrated Development plans (CIDPs) to guide planning, budgeting, allocation of resources and to monitor progress of project implementation.

The Public Finance Management Act (PFM) 2012 requires counties to develop budgets based on programmes, projects and other expenditures contained in their Annual Development Plans (ADPs). Besides providing budget ceilings on expenditure, the PFM Act also requires counties to be compliant in keeping and consolidating financial records and statements and submitting financial reports to the Auditor General, National Treasury, and Office of Controller of Budget.

Figure 1: Meru County Demographics and Output



- Total population, 154,5714, 49.67% male, 50.33% female, 27.07 % youth
- County size, 6,936 sq km, population density 220 people/ square km, annual population growth rate 1.3%
- 9 sub-counties, 45 electoral wards

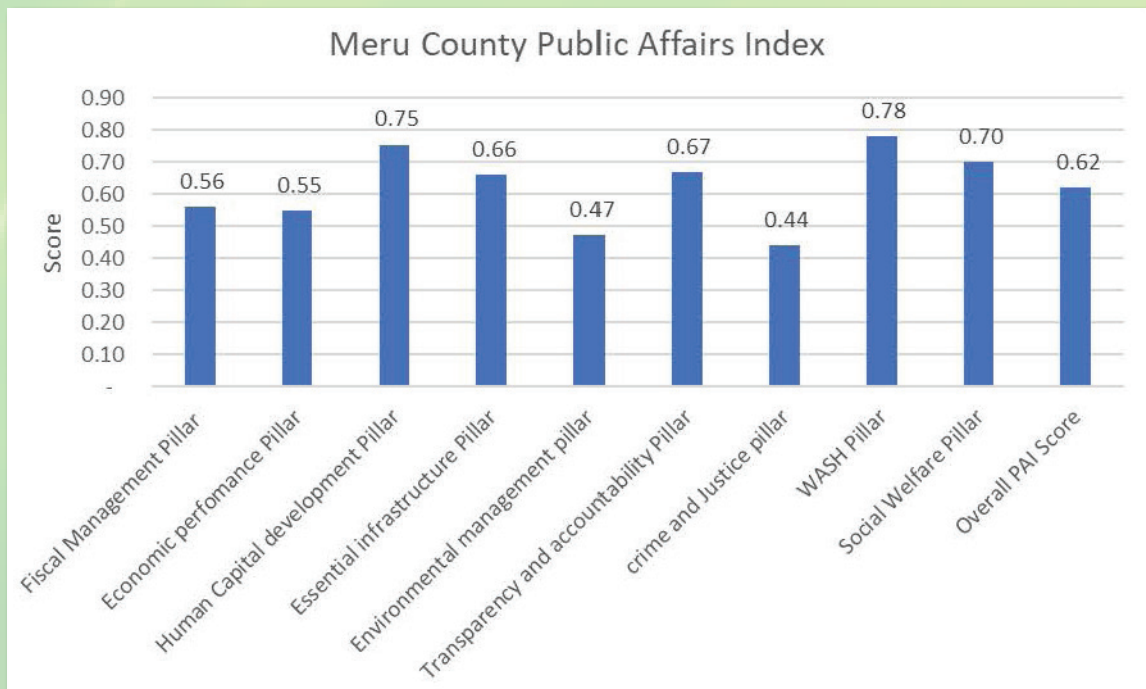


- Sectors driving county economic growth: agriculture (40.01%), wholesale and retail trade (4.87 %) and manufacturing (3.57 %),
- Overall poverty: 19.40%
- Multidimensional poverty: 59.73%

Public Affairs Index

The Public Affairs Index (PAI) is measured using 9 pillars namely Fiscal Management; Economic Performance; Human Capital Development; Essential Infrastructure; Environmental Management; Transparency and Accountability; Crime and Justice; Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and Social Welfare. The scores range from zero to one, zero being the lowest, while one is the highest. Meru County has an overall PAI score of 0.62. The County has high scores on the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) (0.78), Human Capital (0.75) and Social Welfare (0.70) pillar. The lowest score for the County is on Crime and Justice (0.44) and Environmental Management (0.47) pillar. The demographics and output for Meru County are reported in Figure 1, while the County Public Affairs Index pillar scores are reported in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Meru County Public Affairs Index scores



Data Source: KIPPRA Public Affairs Index report

Fiscal Management Pillar

This pillar has four sub-pillars, namely:

1. Compliance to PFM regulations measured by development expenditure to total expenditure (benchmark is 30%) and personal emolument to total revenue (ceiling at 35%)
2. Commitment to settling pending bills measured by percentage of recurrent expenditure pending bills to total recurrent expenditure and percentage of development expenditure pending bills to total development expenditure

3. Budget execution measured by recurrent expenditure absorption rates and development expenditure absorption rates
4. Revenue mobilization measured by ratio of own source revenue to equitable share, achievement of own source revenue targets, own source revenue regulatory framework and revenue management

The Fiscal Management index for the County is 0.56. The scores for the sub-pillars and indicators are given below

Scores	Areas of Concern
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compliance to development: 0.28 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance to PFM regulations on development expenditure: 0.44 • Compliance to personal emolument to total revenue ceiling: 0.13 2. Commitment to resettling pending bills: 0.62 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolution of recurrent expenditure pending bills: 0.95 • Resolution of development expenditure pending bills: 0.30 3. Budget execution: 0.70 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recurrent expenditure budget execution: 0.92 • Development expenditure budget execution: 0.62 4. Revenue mobilization: 0.56 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own source Revenue (OSR) to equitable share: 0.07 • Achievement of OSR targets: 0.63 • OSR regulatory framework: 0.67 • Revenue management: 0.89 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Budget allocation to development expenditure is below the 30% allocation stipulated by PFM regulations 2. Low compliance to PFM regulations on personal emolument to total revenue ceiling of 35%, which could constrain revenue allocations to development, programmes 3. High percentage of development expenditure pending bills that could weaken expansion of capacity for economic activities and affect public service delivery 4. Low development expenditure budget absorption rate that could affect implementation of the CIDP 5. High fiscal dependence on National Government Equitable Share

Policy Recommendations

- County Government to enhance controls at the budget planning stage to ensure that a minimum of 30% of the total County budget is allocated to development expenditure
- The County Public Service Board to comply with SRC guidelines and implement an optimal staffing structure to reduce spending on emoluments
- The County Government Department of Finance and Economic Planning to strengthen budget monitoring and evaluation framework to effectively monitor budget implementation and recommend corrective actions
- Inculcate a culture of the public service among state officers to enhance political commitment in compliance with PFM regulations
- The National Treasury to impose penalties such as withholding cash transfers to counties that breach financial commitments
- County Government to maintain comprehensive records of expenditure arrears including age and composition for effective management of obligations
- County Government to consider putting in place clear rules on transparency in reporting on budget implementation, including fully disclosure of arrears and contingent liabilities to enhance accountability and oversight that will help reduce accumulation of pending bills
- County Government to build capacity of County officials on revenue and expenditure forecasting to come up with realistic targets
- County Government to formalize mechanisms for recovering outstanding revenues amounts including empowering counties to legally seek redress for non-compliance through the courts
- County Government to automate revenue systems, update business registers, and establish systems to monitor revenue arrears

Economic Performance Pillar

This pillar is measured using six indicators, namely: growth of the economy (benchmark at 10% growth), diversity of the economy (manufacturing contribution to GCP at 15%), labour participation, enabling business environment, financing growth, and income equality. The score for Meru County on this pillar is 0.55. The scores for the indicators are given below

Scores

1. Growth of the economy: 0.52
2. Diversity of the economy: 0.24
3. Labor participation: 0.86
4. Enabling business environment: 0.23
5. Financing growth: 0.81
6. Income equality: 0.65

Areas of Concern

1. Economic growth that is below the National aspiration of 10%
2. Low level of economic diversity.
3. Weak business enabling environment to propel growth of private sector

Policy Recommendations

- County Government to Improve worksite related infrastructure such as electricity, water and internet connectivity to support the MSEs, which are the bedrock for economic transformation
- County Government to support growth of manufacturing firms that use raw materials sourced in the County and encourage consumption and use of locally manufactured goods in promoting the Build Kenya, Buy Kenya initiative
- County Government to collaborate with National Government in setting up Special Economic Zones and Industrial Parks by providing adequate land

Human Capital Development Pillar

This pillar is measured using three sub-pillars, namely:

1. Health, measured by percentage of births attended by skilled health personnel, percentage of children 12 -23 months fully vaccinated, and percentage of non-stunted children
2. Education, measured by adult literacy rate, and school enrolment rates
3. Life expectancy at birth

The score for Meru County on this pillar is 0.75. The scores for the sub-pillars and indicators are given below

Scores

1. Health: 0.86
 - Percentage of births attended by skilled health personnel: 0.87
 - Percentage of children 12 -23 months fully vaccinated: 0.84
 - Percentage of non-stunted children: 0.87
2. Education: 0.73
 - Adult literacy: 0.78
 - School enrolment: 0.67
3. Life expectancy at birth: 0.68

Areas of Concern

1. Low primary school enrolment rates, which could have employment, poverty and social implications in the long-run

Policy Recommendations

- County Government to work with the ministry of education and local authorities to increase the school enrolment rates

Essential Infrastructure Pillar

This pillar comprises of seven indicators, namely: access to work, transport affordability, housing quality, internet connectivity, percentage of schools with ICT connectivity, mobile money subscription and percentage of household with access to electricity. The score for Meru County is 0.66. The scores for the indicators are given below

Scores

1. Access to work: 0.60
2. Transport affordability: 0.86
3. Housing quality: 0.90
4. Internet connectivity: 0.28
5. Percentage of schools with ICT connectivity: 0.93
6. Mobile money subscription: 0.64
7. Access to electricity: 0.40

Areas of Concern

1. Low internet connectivity
2. Limited access to electricity by households
3. Very high average distance to work

Policy Recommendations

- County Government to expand ICT infrastructure by fast-tracking implementation of County Connectivity Project Phase III
- County Government fast-track access to electricity through the rural electrification programme

Environmental Management Pillar

This pillar has four sub-pillars, namely:

1. Clean energy use, measured by percentage of households with access to clean cooking energy
2. Forest management measured by forest management best practices and forest management regulatory and institutional frameworks
3. Climate change management measured by climate change regulatory framework and climate change management best practices
4. Solid waste management measured by solid waste management regulatory framework and solid waste management best practices

The score for Meru County on this pillar is 0.52. The scores for the sub-pillars and indicators are given below

Scores

1. Clean energy use: 0.13
2. Forest management: 0.60
 - Forest management best practices: 1.00
 - Forest management regulatory and institutional frameworks: 0.20
3. Climate change management: 0.68
 - Climate change regulatory framework: 0.43
 - Climate change best practices: 0.93
4. Solid waste management: 0.48
 - Solid waste management regulatory framework: 0.25
 - Solid waste management best practices: 0.71

Areas of Concern

1. Limited use of clean energy
2. Weak forest management regulatory and institutional frameworks
3. Weak climate change management regulatory and institutional frameworks
4. Weak solid waste management regulatory frameworks

Policy Recommendations

- County Government to promote and encourage use of clean energy by household including use of local cooking technologies such as improved jikos, biogas, briquettes, smokeless jikos and supplementing with reduction of cost for accessing LPG and electricity
- County Government to develop forest management policies to guide implementation of the 15 forest functions that are fully devolved
- County Government to work with development partners to strengthen their climate change regulatory framework
- County Government to strengthen solid waste management frameworks by developing policies and legislations

Transparency and Accountability Pillar

This pillar has two sub-pillars namely: control of corruption measured by corruption and economic crimes incidences and quality of public participation measured by public participation best practices and public participation regulatory and institutional frameworks

Meru County has a score of 0.67. The scores for the sub-pillars and indicators are given below

Scores

1. Control of corruption: 0.91
2. Quality of Public Participation: 0.43
 - Public participation best practices: 0.86
 - Public participation regulatory and institutional frameworks: 0

Areas of Concern

1. Weak public participation regulatory and institutional frameworks

Policy Recommendations

- County Government to develop policy and legislative frameworks to appropriately guide the process of public participation
- County Government to undertake continuous civic education by partnering with development partners and non-Governmental organization that conduct civic education for effective public participation
- County Government to establish and provide public participation directorates with adequate budgets to facilitate public participation activities
- The County Executives and County Assembly to work together to ensure systematic engagement of the public, citizens' opinions and priorities are incorporated in decision making and the process of public participation is not overshadowed by political interests

Crime and Justice Pillar

This pillar is measured using incidences of GBV crimes and all offenses. Meru County has a score of 0.44. The scores for the indicators are given below

Scores

1. Prevalence of GBV crime: 0.57
2. Prevalence of all offenses: 0.31

Areas of Concern

1. High GBV crime rates per 100,000 population
2. High other crimes rates per 100,000 population

Policy Recommendations

- County Government to establish a coordination framework for seamless implementation of National and County Government security initiatives
- County Government to increase access to quality and comprehensive support services to GBV victims and survivors
- County Government to strengthen the capacity of institutions and service providers handling GBV across the health and the criminal justice system
- County Government to protect vulnerable persons by implementing a witness protection programme for GBV victims and survivors
- County Government to fast-track implementation of GBV offenders' rehabilitation and reintegration into the community
- County Government to eliminate harmful cultural practices such as early child marriages, forced marriages amongst others are practices, which contributes to GBV

Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Pillar

This pillar is measured using two indicators on access to improved sanitation and access to improved water. The County has a score of 0.78. The scores for the indicators are given below

Scores

1. Access to improved sanitation: 0.86
2. Access to improved water: 0.70

Areas of Concern

Policy Recommendations

- County Government to support County Water and Sewerage Service Companies to implement pro-poor tariffs to increase access to WASH services
- County Government to scale up implementation of physical plans by investing in sanitation infrastructure to adequately enhance access to sanitation services by the unserved and underserved populations
- County Government to establish a coordination framework to enhance collaboration among players in WASH sector at both the County and National level as well as development partners
- County Government to increase investments in water harvesting, digging wells, and create awareness on home water-treatment to increase access to improved water

Social Welfare Pillar

This pillar has four sub-pillars, namely:

1. Poverty measured by percentage of non-food poor households and percentage of non-multidimensional poor households
2. Health sector budgeting measured by health budget execution, attainment of Abuja Declaration on health budgeting, attainment of pre-devolution health budget target
3. Social sector budgeting measured by ECDE budget execution and social welfare budget execution

Female labour participation and female literacy rates. Meru County has a score of 0.72. The scores for the sub-pillars and indicators are given below

Scores

Areas of Concern

1. Poverty: 0.63
 - Percentage of households with no food poverty incidences: 0.85
 - Percentage of households with no multidimensional poverty incidences: 0.40
2. Health sector budgeting: 0.87
 - Budget execution: 0.75
 - Attainment of Abuja Declaration: 1.00
 - Attainment of pre-devolution health budget: 0.86
3. Social sector budgeting: 0.65
 - ECDE budget execution: 0.46
 - Social welfare budget execution: 0.85
4. Female empowerment: 0.65
 - Female labour participation: 0.55
 - Female literacy: 0.70

1. High percentage of households are deprived of essential services
2. Low ECDE budget absorption rate that could affect investment in children's early development and achievement of development goals.
3. Low female empowerment characterized by low female labour participation rates

Policy Recommendations

- County Government to consider developing County specific social protection cash transfer programmes to supplement the National Government programmes to increase reach to vulnerable population
- County Government to promote programmes that directly and indirectly reduce food poverty such as kitchen garden initiatives, nutrition programmes and other empowerment programmes.
- County Government to identify and address causes of low absorption of social welfare budgets and have in place mechanisms to map out the vulnerable members of the society
- County Government to consider partnering with private sector and development partners to initiate programmes that build skills in self-employment and employability among the youths with a particular focus on females to increase their labour participation

Acknowledgement

KIPPRA wishes to acknowledge funding of the Public Affairs Index work by the Research and Innovation Systems for Africa (RISA) Fund, a multi-country project funded by the U.K. Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) focusing on strengthening research and innovation systems in target countries, combining the fund manager requirements of two funds under the RISA umbrella: Strengthening Research Institutions in Africa (SRIA) and African Technology and Innovation Partnerships (ATIP). KIPPRA also thanks the RISA Fund team as well as the FCDO team who worked closely with KIPPRA colleagues and the research stakeholders in Kenya – the collaboration made it possible to deliver a high quality project on time.

About KIPPRA Policy Briefs

KIPPRA Policy Briefs are aimed at a wide dissemination of the Institute's policy research findings. The findings are expected to stimulate discussion and also build capacity in the public policy making process in Kenya.

KIPPRA acknowledges generous support from the Government of Kenya, and development partners who have continued to support the Institute's activities over the years.

Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis

For More Information Contact:

Bishops Road, Bishops Garden Towers
 P.O. Box 56445-00200, Nairobi
 Tel: 2719933/4
 Cell: 0736712724, 0724256078
 Email: admin@kippra.or.ke
 Website: <http://www.kippra.org>
 Twitter: @kipprakenya