



COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF MARSABIT.
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Department of Lands, physical planning, Energy and Urban Planning
Marsabit Municipality.

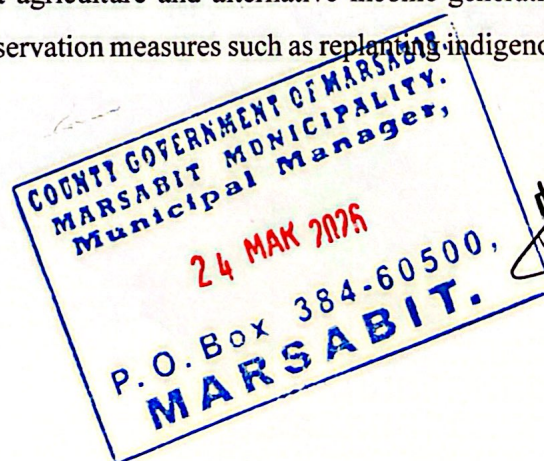
**STAKEHOLDER SENSITIZATION AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON AITE
WETLAND RESTORATION HELD ON 29TH MAY 2025.**

INTRODUCTION

The Aite Wetland, located within Marsabit Municipality, has long been a lifeline for pastoralist communities, wildlife, and the broader ecosystem. Over the years, however, the wetland has faced severe degradation due to climate change and encroachment. Recognizing its ecological and socio-economic importance, Marsabit County in collaboration with national climate change Authority initiated a restoration program, anchored in participatory governance and community involvement.

Public participation formed the cornerstone of this initiative. Consultations were held across Saku ward and surrounding villages, bringing together elders, women groups, youth representatives, and pastoralist members. These forums provided a platform for residents to voice their concerns, share indigenous knowledge, and propose solutions. Stakeholders; including county officials, NGOs, and development partners facilitated discussions, ensuring that technical expertise complemented local perspectives.

Community members emphasized the urgent need for reliable water sources, highlighting the importance of constructing water pans, small dams, and irrigation systems to sustain both households and livestock. Livelihood diversification emerged as another priority, with participants advocating for climate-smart agriculture and alternative income-generating activities to reduce pressure on the wetland. Conservation measures such as replanting indigenous vegetation, fencing,



and community-led patrols were also strongly supported, reflecting a collective commitment to safeguarding biodiversity.

The process was not without challenges. Limited funding constrained the scope of planned interventions, while awareness gaps meant that some residents underestimated the wetland's ecological significance. Additionally, balancing pastoralist grazing needs with conservation goals required careful negotiation to avoid conflict and ensure inclusivity.

Despite these hurdles, the participatory approach yielded significant benefits. It enhanced transparency, fostered community ownership, and ensured that restoration strategies aligned with local realities.

Objectives of public participation

The objective of this public participation is to document and communicate the voices, concerns, and aspirations of the community and stakeholders regarding the revival of this critical ecological resource. The report seeks to provide a transparent account of how residents, pastoralist groups, women, youth, and local leaders engaged in shaping the restoration agenda, ensuring that their priorities are integrated into county development planning.

Specifically, the report aims to:

- Capture community perspectives on water security, livelihoods, and biodiversity conservation.
- Highlight challenges and opportunities identified during consultations, such as resource constraints, awareness gaps, and conflicting land-use interests.
- Provide evidence for decision-making, ensuring that county departments and development partners align interventions with local needs.
- Strengthen accountability and inclusivity.

- Promote ownership and sustainability of the restoration project by embedding community-driven solutions into implementation strategies.

Ultimately, the report's objective is to serve as a bridge between citizens and government, ensuring that the restoration of Aite Wetland is not only an ecological initiative but also a socially inclusive and sustainable development effort that enhances resilience against climate change while safeguarding livelihoods.

Conclusion

The restoration of the Aite Wetlands has provided valuable insights into the intersection of environmental sustainability and community well-being in Marsabit Municipality. Through consultations and participatory monitoring, community perspectives were captured on critical issues such as water security, livelihoods, and biodiversity conservation. Residents emphasized the wetlands' role in safeguarding water availability, supporting grazing and farming activities, and preserving habitats for local flora and fauna. These voices underscore the wetlands' importance not only as an ecological asset but also as a foundation for social and economic resilience.

The consultations also highlighted challenges and opportunities. Resource constraints, limited awareness of wetland conservation practices, and conflicting land-use interests emerged as persistent barriers. At the same time, opportunities were identified in strengthening community-led conservation, expanding livelihood programs linked to eco-friendly practices, and fostering partnerships with county departments and development partners. These findings provide evidence for decision-making, ensuring that interventions are aligned with local needs and realities.

Importantly, the restoration process has strengthened accountability and inclusivity. By involving diverse groups—including women, youth, and pastoralist communities—the project has promoted shared responsibility and equitable participation. This inclusivity enhances the

legitimacy of interventions and builds trust between the municipality, communities, and external partners.

In summary, the Aite Wetlands Restoration Project has demonstrated that effective environmental management must be rooted in community perspectives, responsive to local challenges, and inclusive in its approach. The evidence gathered provides a strong foundation for county departments and development partners to design interventions that are both environmentally sound and socially equitable. Sustaining these gains will require continued collaboration, resource mobilization, and a commitment to balancing ecological restoration with livelihood security. The project stands as a model for how community-driven conservation can deliver lasting benefits for people and nature in Marsabit Municipality.

