

Potential barriers to effective climate change adaptation by local coastal government in Kenya.

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Abstract

The coastline of Kenya already experiences the effects of climate change. Failure to adapt to projected climatic variability and associated effects will have economic, social and environmental consequences. *Emerging Knowledge for Local Adaptation*, a MASMA funded project is a regional study that intends to evaluate the current capacity of local governance institutions to use “emerging climate change knowledge” to inform adaptation and build resilience. This paper presents the findings of a local governance assessment that used the Capitals approach which measured a governance baseline consisting of 20 factors and 90 indicators in three Counties on the coast of Kenya. Data were generated through content analysis of local government (counties) documents and Key informant interviews (38). Interviewees included officials from various county government departments and other coastal stakeholders. Seven focus group interviews were conducted with community groups in order to triangulate the findings. Results suggest that adaptation measures at local government level are still in transition from being a marginal concern to a mainstream consideration. County governments are ill-prepared for climate related disasters (short-term) and are not yet taking action that could be considered climate change adaptation (long-term). Some reasons for the lack of planned adaptation, include a lack of institutionalization of climate change and leadership, inadequate human capacity and expertise, limited access to reliable information on climate change and coastal vulnerability, lack of involvement in and understanding of integrated coastal zone management, and limited awareness of the importance of ecosystems in climate risk reduction. This paper will present data from the assessment and some of the initial findings.

Key words:-Local governments; climate change adaptation; Emerging Knowledge