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SOUTH EASTERN KENYA COORDINATION MECHANISM (SEK)

COUNTY STAKEHOLDER ONBOARDING WORKSHOP FOR MAKUENI, KITUI AND TAITA TAVETA COUNTIES

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USAID/KENYA AND EAST AFRICA RESILIENCE LEARNING ACTIVITY COUNTY STAKEHOLDER ONBOARDING WORKSHOP REPORT

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The authors' views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The South-Eastern Kenya (SEK) Coordination Mechanism works in three counties: Makueni, Kitui and Taita Taveta. The mechanism is convened and chaired by USAID- Feed the Future and Food for Peace Programmes. Members of the mechanism are all USAID Implementing Partners operating in the three counties. The mechanism was launched on October 3, 2019 and the founding member Implementing Partners were Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), Accelerated Value Chain Development (AVCD), Kenya Crops and Dairy Market Systems Model (KCDMS), Kenya Investment Mechanism (KIM) and Livestock Market Systems (LMS) which operates in Northern Kenya Counties.

The membership to the mechanism is USAID and USAID Implementing Partners with the following Objectives.

- To coordinate and increase efficiency among its implementing partners, reduce duplication, promote transparency and mutual accountability between USAID/IPS and the three county governments.
- To allow USAID and the IPs to be consistent and coherent in the programming approach to resilience since different development partners define and employ different approaches in their programs.
- To improve accountability and coordination across USAID technical offices as well as mutual accountability among its partners.

In August 2020, the USAID SEK Coordination Mechanism facilitated joint work planning and co-creation processes, as well as cross partner learning as a way of elevating collaboration and reducing duplication among USAID Implementing Partners. To further strengthen the coordination mechanism at the county level, SEK established a county-based coordination structure in each county. The structure is coordinated by County Leads, Deputy County Leads and the relevant county government sectors. The county structure will support coordination and collaboration during program implementation.

The team will be key in enhancing coordination and collaboration among partners in implementation of development priorities in the three SEK counties.

The meeting was attended by the SEK County Leads and Deputy County Leads, Points of Contacts from the three county governments and USAID County Liaison Teams.

The Objectives of the Onboarding Workshop:

- 1) To provide clarity on the SEK Coordination Mechanism, its vision, mission, broad activities and provide a general backdrop of the USAID Journey to Self-Reliance.
- 2) To introduce the various coordination actors in SEK, their roles in implementation of program priorities and points of convergence.
- 3) To agree on the next steps in actualizing the county coordination mechanism and clarify any areas of concern.

In the opening session, Joseph Oyuga, Programme Management Specialist -Farm and Markets USAID, talked about the overall SEK Coordination Mechanisms goals and objectives and the USAID principles towards the Journey to Self-Reliance.

USAID has re-oriented the way it does business to focus on supporting countries on the journey to self-reliance; their ability to solve their own development challenges. This approach prioritises fostering stable, resilient, prosperous, inclusive and self-reliant countries. Self-Reliance is driven by two closely-related elements commitment and capacity. Commitment looks at how the countries laws, policies, actions, governance structures, culture and other norms and how they support progress towards self-reliance. Commitment further includes having an accountable governance system, inclusivity of vulnerable members of the society, gender and social groups and having sound economic policies. Working together with the private and public sector, government, and civil society to address development challenges such as implementation and finances.

Capacity, on the other hand, looks at the political, social and economic development including the ability to work across the sectors. The capacity to plan, provide resources and manage own development hinging on the quality of services of the private and public sector and the government. It also looks at the capacity of the different actors in the development space to provide an enabling environment for the achievement of development goals. Capacity addresses issues of ownership, accountability, collaboration, alignment of activities to budget cycles, transparency, value for money and partnerships in advancing devolution.

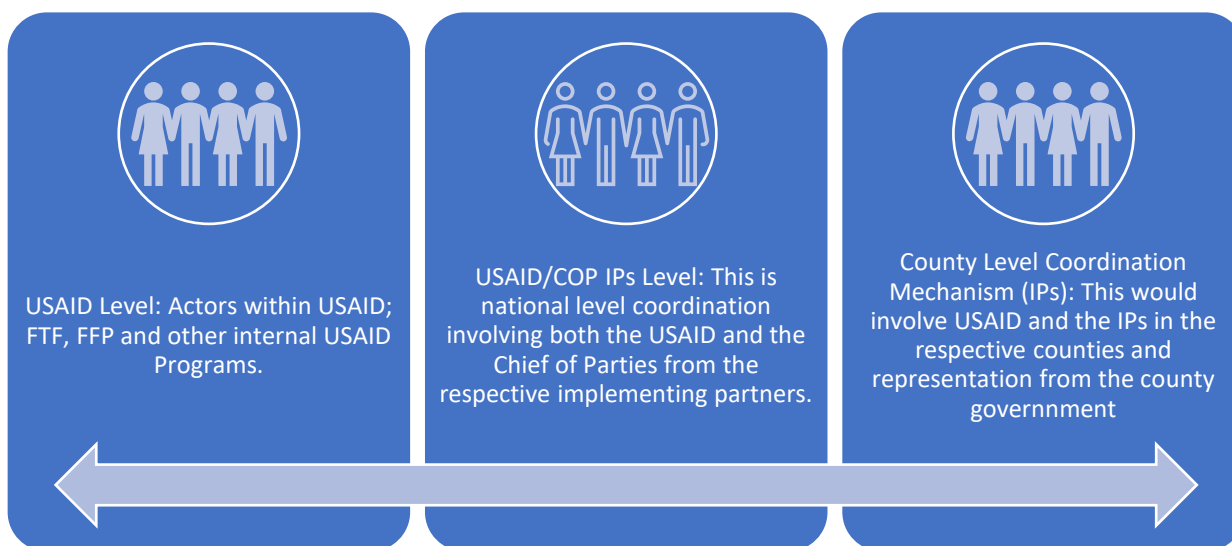
SEK Goal, Objectives and activities

These SEK coordination mechanism approved the following goal, objectives and activities. These will guide programme implementation across the 3 counties.

<p>Goal: To increase agricultural incomes of households and firms by at least 20%; increase capacities for resilience of people and systems by at least 10%; and reduce stunting among children (0-5years) by 10% in SE Kenya counties by 2025.</p>	
<p>Objective 1 To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of USAID investments in South Eastern Kenya counties by reducing overhead costs to below 30% by 2025.</p>	<p>Objective 2 To increase the percentage of local institutions with improved capacity to deliver services for resilience and development by 2025.</p>
<p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IP Coordination and collaboration at the national and county level. • Streamline coordination of activities at USAID. • Strengthen county capacities to own, lead and manage their development programs to enhance self-reliance. • Joint annual work planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation, which include the county governments, USAID, IPs, private sector (business associations) and local institutions. • Participate and contribute to the various sectors donor coordination groups. • Undertake annual value for money audits at project level. 	<p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in the annual budget making process (ADP, CBROP, CFSP) at the county level. • Strengthen the capacity of counties to develop medium term strategies on resilience, food, and nutrition security. • Establish and build the capacity of local institutions such as farmers/producer groups and marketing/business associations to participate in the resilience building and development. • Enhance an inclusive civil society, public and private participation and investment in resilience and development. • Support the county governments to create an enabling business environment e.g., policy, taxes, subsidies, licensing etc.

2. COUNTY COORDINATION STRUCTURE

Ms. Mary Murimi, Consultant Resilience Learning Activity, begun this session by describing the South Eastern Kenya Coordination Mechanism Structure. The structure is indicated below:



The County Level Coordination Mechanism involving USAID, Implementing Partners in the respective counties and representation from the county government is being actualized in the SEK counties of Makueni, Kitui and Taita Taveta. The actualization process has led to the identification of the SEK County Leads and Deputy County Leads as represented in the table below:

COUNTY	IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	COUNTY LEAD	IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	DEPUTY COUNTY LEAD
KITUI	KIWASH	Patrick Mburu	KCDMS	Meshack Mulinge
MAKUENI	KCDMS	Martin Miriti	CASE OVC	Timothy Muli
TAITA TAVETA	AVCD	Ganga Rao	WFP	Margaret Indimuli

2.1 The Role of the County Leads

The County Leads and Deputy County Leads were staff nominated by the respective implementing partners. To ease coordination in the counties, the County Lead and Deputy County Lead Implementing Partners will spearhead liaison. The specific roles are as outlined below:

1. The liaison person for the county during county visits by USAID Implementing Partners and other key stakeholders.
2. Share information on shocks and stresses happening in the county with USAID and Resilience Learning Activity for a coordinated response.
3. Support in mobilization of USAID Implementing Partners in the county and county government officials to attend meetings.
4. Support in convening of monthly meetings in the county to enhance collaboration between USAID Implementing Partners and the county government.
5. Sharing of information related to the county with USAID and Resilience Learning Activity.
6. Other duties as may be assigned by USAID.

The counties will appoint sector-based representatives to join the county coordination mechanism.

3. STRUCTURE AND ROLE OF THE USAID COUNTY LIAISON TEAMS

The objective of this session was to explore the role and structure of USAID County Liaison Teams (CLTs) in implementation of development priorities and how the CLT interfaces with the SEK County Coordination Mechanism. This discussion was led by Joseph Oyuga of USAID who gave the background, purpose and highlighted the role of the County Liaison Teams.

3.1 The Background, Purpose and Role of the County Liaison Teams (CLTs) in Leadership and Coordination

The Background: The County Liaison Teams (CLTs) were formed in 2020 and were initially established for the eight Prosper Counties to strengthen engagement and accountability at the county level in USAID's implementation of its Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) targeting 25 counties. The establishment of CLTs has since expanded beyond the Prosper Counties. Kitui and Taita Taveta counties are part of the targeted counties. The CLTs in these two counties were formed in November 2020.

The Purpose: To improve USAID/KEA two-way communication and customer service at the county level. CLTs represent the Mission's Front Office in the relationship with senior county officials as well as serve as a feedback loop to the Mission on award performance, relationship management and Journey to Self-Reliance strategic approach. The CLTs are expected to coordinate, liaise, and institutionalize knowledge sharing and relationships with counties, thereby strengthening the alignment of USAID's work with county development priorities. CLTs represent the Mission Director at the county level and foster better communication and coordination between USAID and county governments.

Composition: The County Liaison Team constitutes of five staff members per county representing cross-section of relevant USAID Mission offices and sector specific expertise. One member of the CLT serves as the Lead representative while other members are designated as leads for particular issues.

Responsibilities: The CLTs primary responsibilities are representational, representing USAID/KEA Mission to the county. CLT members lay the foundation for transformational partnerships between counties and USAID. They are the face of USAID in the county and are a conduit for the county to share ideas and express concerns to USAID with the knowledge that the CLT will formally follow up and ensure timely and accurate responses to the county. CLT members are required to develop a relationship of trust and be a source of information and contacts with USAID. Some specific expectations are:

- **Develop, Nurture and Maintain Relationships:** with key county officials (Governor, CECs, Speaker, County Commissioner, Communication Officers) other key interlocutors (donors, private sector, civil society organizations, local media). Serve as USAID primary resource on assigned counties for briefing, VIP visits, setting up meetings and other issues of protocol.
- **Manage knowledge:** Work with SPA and EXO to create and maintain an electronic central filing system for each county that is accessible on a read basis for the entire Mission. Prepare and post minutes of meetings from county and/or regional working group meetings and store them in the central filing system and ensure coordinated updating of names and contacts of all county officials. Create lists of key websites, social media handles and media houses relevant to the county.
- **Share information:** Information sharing between USAID and the County, within USAID and between USAID, the county and USAID IPs, providing regular updates on USAID programming to county governments to enable them to have better understanding of USAID portfolio, direct county government to the appropriate expert(s) in USAID/KEA for more information, in close coordination with DOC, leverage trips to the county to identify outreach opportunities and opportunities to highlight USAID's work for videos or stories.
- **Promote Collaboration:** Coordinate with County Government and USAID/KEA technical teams to finalize Collaboration Framework Sector Annexes under MoU, coordinate with county government to establish processes for county government approach of Implementing Partners work plans, coordinate with the relevant USAID technical officers and AORs to facilitate implementation of USAID projects that are harmonised with and support county priorities.

3.2 The County Liaison Teams (CLTs) Interface with the SEK Coordination Mechanism.

- The CLTs are expected to use the SEK Coordination Mechanism as a platform to strengthen coordination and collaboration within the counties. The coordination of the Joint Work Planning

process was greatly facilitated by the SEK Coordination Mechanism between the USAID IPs and county officials.

- The SEK Coordination Mechanism County Leads are expected to spearhead the implementation of the joint work plans together with the county Points of Contacts. With the SEK county leads co-leading the implementation with the County Officials, the CLTs will be better placed to provide high level relationship building, decision making and joint monitoring leveraging on the information obtained from the SEK Coordination Mechanism.

Discussions, Question and Answer Session.

Partners were encouraged to share their views and ideas on the CLT interface with the SEK County Level Coordination Mechanism in an effort to clarify the role of the two coordination bodies and establish clear segregation of duties to ensure collaboration and avoid duplication of efforts in achieving the development goals for the three counties, Kitui, Makueni and Taita Taveta.

The discussion points were:

- The County Leads and Deputy County Leads play a major role in the SEK County Level Coordination Mechanism in ensuring joint work planning, joint implementation of activities, coordination of actors at the county level and sharing information with the CLT on progress, county needs and gaps and learning. The CLT on the other hand, is expected to promote collaboration and coordination with the relevant technical offices, AORs and CORs.
- CLT membership constitutes USAID officials in different sectors who are managers of USAID activities. The SEK Coordination Mechanism membership constitutes of USAID technical teams, Implementing Partners (Project leadership and team leads) and the county technical teams.
- SEK County Level Coordination Mechanism coordinate county level meetings, ensure implementation of activities in each sector, ensure feedback loops to the CLT, escalate issues, needs, and gaps to the CLT and ensure they have been addressed.
- CLT are expected to engage with the Office of the Governor, County Assembly, County Commissioner office and other national projects.
- Consider expanding the SEK Coordination Mechanism to cover all the programs in the counties beyond Agriculture sector. The mechanism incorporates all sectors beyond agriculture. e.g. KIWASH which focuses on water and sanitation.
- Kitui and Taita Taveta CLTs are in the formation stage.
- Consider creating structures within the SEK County Coordination Mechanism that will facilitate joint implementation, coordination and delivery e.g. thematic groups.
- Consider different naming of the CLT and County Coordination Mechanism to avoid confusion. Partners were requested to provide suggestions on what to name the county-based structure.
- Coordination with other counties and donor community: USAID's priority is to focus on the USAID investments in the 3 SEK counties, establish coordination within the counties to ensure layering of interventions, joint implementation, learning and impact on the resilience levels in the communities. There's ongoing engagement with the ASAL Donor Working Group and the Agriculture & Rural Development Working Group to which some are members of the SEK.
- Develop a reference guide clarifying the role and composition of CLT and SEK Coordination Mechanism and share with the participants.

4. COUNTY GOVERNMENT COORDINATION STRUCTURES

The objective of this session was to explore the role of the County Government Points of Contacts in implementation of development priorities. Ms. Mary Murimi requested the County Government Point of Contact to discuss on the County Coordination Structure, the role of County Government Points of Contacts (PoCs) in implementation, leadership, and coordination.

Mr. Amos Mwasi, the Chief Officer for Livestock and Fisheries Taita Taveta County, begun by stating his department as the most active department in the SEK Coordination Mechanism platform due to the numerous activities being implemented by the Department for Livestock and Fisheries. He acknowledged the coordination and joint implementation of activities with the departments of Trade, Cooperatives and Tourism.

Mr. Mathew Gitau, the Economic Advisor Office of the Governor County Government of Taita Taveta, is a new addition in the coordination platform. He noted that County Agriculture Sector Coordination Committee (CASCOM) has been established in Taita Taveta county and the membership is opened to all departments and not just the agriculture sector. The current membership includes the department of forestry, Office of the County Commissioner, partners, and other stakeholders outside the county government representing gender and other interests.

Ms. Patricia Koki, the Agribusiness Expert, Department for Agriculture County Government of Kitui, mentioned CASCOM as the County Coordination Structure in the Agriculture sector that meets on a quarterly basis with different actors in the agriculture sector. CASCOM has ensured timely implementation of activities in Kitui County. CASCOM membership is opened to all sectors and not just the agriculture sector. The County Government of Kitui is yet to meet the CLT. Ms. Patricia expressed an eagerness to start planning, coordinating, harmonization of activities with the USAID Implementing Partners and conducting the geographical mapping of USAID partners in Kitui County to avoid duplication of efforts. She reiterated the need to have sectoral representation in the SEK Coordination Mechanism with the recommendation of establishing a county thematic structure in the SEK Coordination Mechanism according to the identified thematic sectors in the Joint Work Plans.

The Joint Work Plans were aligned to the County Integrated Development Plans (CIDP) and the Annual Development Plan (ADP). Therefore, the County Coordination Structure needs to ensure reporting is done against the CIDP and ADP.

Closing Remarks

Joseph Oyuga, USAID in his closing remarks defined the success of county level coordination mechanism as; Joint collaboration, development of joint work plans, joint implementation of activities, monitoring and evaluation plan, joint field visits between the USAID Implementing Partners and the County Governments, transparency in budgets and working towards the Journey to Self-Reliance where the development activities are Kenya-led, Kenya-managed and Kenya-financed.

- An established county leadership spearheading the coordination of all Implementing Partners, effective and efficient management of activities and contribution to financing development initiatives.
- Impact seen through improvement in resilience, nutrition, capacity, and reduced humanitarian caseloads in the counties.

5. NEXT STEPS/WAY FORWARD

- RLA to develop a reference guide clarifying the role and composition of CLT and SEK Coordination Mechanism and share with the participants.
 - i. Relook at the role of CLT and the SEK Coordination Mechanism to establish any duplication and establish ways of optimizing the roles.
 - ii. Resilience Learning Activity to share the minutes of the meeting and the goals of the SEK Coordination Mechanism.
 - iii. Resilience Learning Activity to share the names and contacts of the SEK Coordination Mechanism county leads and the County Government Points of Contacts.
 - iv. County leads and POCs to convene the first SEK Coordination Mechanism meeting to establish ways of working and coordination, begin the joint work plan review process and decide on who should be included in the coordination meetings, e.g., the County Communication Directors. The SEK Coordination Mechanism should be county-led.

ANNEX I: Participant list: SEK Coordination Mechanism Stakeholder Onboarding Workshop held January 19, 2020.

	First Name	Last Name	Email	Organization	Job Title
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12	Faith	Nyamai	faith.nyamai@wfp.org	WFP	Programme Associate
13	Mathew	Gitau	njorogematt@gmail.com	Taita Taveta County Government	Economic adviser
14	Kelvin	Musikoyo	KMusikoyo@resiliencelearning.org	RLA	Program Officer
15	Patricia	Kumisya	kokimbisi@gmail.com	Kitui county	Agribusiness expert
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