



ELGEYO MARAKWET COUNTY INTRODUCTORY PROFILE

Elgeyo Marakwet, located in northwest Kenya and situated along the Kerio Valley Escarpment, is a county with a population of 454,480 and an area of 3030 km². It is among the 47 counties established in Kenya under the two-tier governance system in the Constitution of Kenya (COK) promulgated in the 2010

Elgeyo Marakwet, known as the “County of Champions” for its world-class, award-winning athletics prowess was founded in March 2013 following the General Elections held to operationalize the new political system established by the new Constitution of Kenya (COK). The county is composed of four administrative sub-counties and twenty administrative and elective Wards. 43.6% of residents live below the poverty line, compared to the national average of 36.1%. The county’s annual Gross County Product (GCP) is approximately KSh. 84 billion which contributed 2% to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2020.

The county's economy is primarily composed of both small-scale and large-scale farming, as well as cattle raising for both beef and dairy production. Agriculture is mainly done in the Highlands zone, with crops such as wheat, maize, Irish potatoes, and bananas being grown. The Kerio Valley zone is mostly used for growing crops like mangoes, watermelons, cassava, and green gram, crops which require moderate level of water.

The county is world renowned for its sports exploits and this has led it to be christened the ‘county of champions’. Athletics is the most famous sports activity in the county with the county producing many present and past world record holders, world champions and Olympic medallists as attested in the many past world athletics events. The county sports prowess has attracted world renowned athletes to establish training camps in the county. This coupled with the county’s scenic tourism has created opportunities for sustainable tourism investments whose direct and indirect benefits would supplement incomes from other economic ventures for residents.

The main tourist attraction site is Rimoi Game Reserve which is richly endowed with diverse flora and fauna including elephants whose population makes the Game Reserve the host of the largest herd of elephants found in one location in Central and East Africa. Other tourism niches in the county include sports tourism opportunities (high altitude training area), Kamariny stadium (heritage and history), Irrigation furrows (UNESCO sites), natural caves (Kiplachoch), hot springs (Kureswo), cultural heritage (Tot), international birds’ migratory routes (Tugumoi), community conservancies (Koisungur), Gorges (Cheploch gorge), extreme sporting and adventure activities (paragliding, roller skating and cycling) and several viewpoints and cultural museums.

The County has been a strong advocate for citizen involvement in local governance decisions as evidenced by the county being the first county in Kenya to voluntarily join the global Open Government Partnership (OGP). OGP is a platform promoting sharing, implementation, and institutionalization of successful reforms on transparency, accountability, citizen participation and technology adoption in governance processes. In addition, the enactment of the public participation and equitable development laws for the county have gone a long way in ensuring that development interventions are inclusive, need-based, transparent, and accountable.

However, the county still faces a myriad of development challenges which threaten to impede the achievement of the desired development outcomes. These challenges include high poverty levels, development inequalities, emerging negative climate change impacts, high unemployment levels, limited access to water for domestic use and irrigation and natural resource conflicts. The natural resource conflicts challenge has led to cattle rustling and banditry resulting in human, and livelihood losses in the Kerio Valley. To mitigate on these monumental challenges, the county has adopted and commenced the implementation of several strategies in collaboration with relevant stakeholders albeit with budget deficits.

County Development Priorities

The county's long and medium-term development priorities conform with the national planning framework and are thus aligned to our country's long-term development blueprint, the Kenya Vision 2030, which aims to transform Kenya into an industrialized middle-income nation offering a high quality of life to all her citizens through implementation of successive five-year Medium-Term Plans (MTPs). To achieve the desired programs, policies, strategies, and projects the development priorities have been aligned with Kenya Vision 2030 and its MTP IV (2023-2027), Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), along with other national policies and international commitments. Elgeyo Marakwet County's development priorities have been organized into nine pillars.

- i. **An efficient and high-quality healthcare system:** To guarantee efficient and high-quality healthcare systems, the county through the health sector seeks to enhance healthcare services are accessible, equitable and affordable to all county residents.
- ii. **A modern roads and transport infrastructure:** To modernize roads and transportation infrastructure to enhance accessibility and facilitate the movement of people and goods and improve the county's economy by spurring trade and investment.
- iii. **A water secure community in habitable environment:** To improve access to clean and adequate water in a conserved and protected natural environment, ensuring our communities are water-secure and are living in a habitable environment.
- iv. **Accelerated growth through human settlement and urban development:** To establish a secure land tenure system for residents, as this has been identified as a catalyst for accelerated growth of urban areas, markets, and agricultural investments.

- v. **Food security and wealth creation:** To modernize agriculture through innovations and commercialization of agricultural investments and value additions. This will be accomplished by supporting farmers to access technology, innovations, post-harvest storage and value addition facilities, establishment of model food security farms, promotion of adoption of cash crops farming and processing, increasing land under irrigated agriculture, access livestock extension services, access to Artificial Insemination services, construction, and renovation of cattle dips,
- vi. **Commercial empowerment for investments and industrialization:** To achieve a robust, diversified, modern and competitive business enterprising environment through establishment of industrial parks, business enterprise development zones, revival of dormant mining industries, construction of modern wholesale and fresh produce markets, business incubation centers, holding of business trade fairs, and business loans fund
- vii. **Quality, equitable and accessible education and training:** To enhance access to quality, relevant, and wholistic pre-primary education and Vocational Training Colleges (VTC) through the construction and equipping of additional Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) centers, provision of capitation grants for all ECDE pupils, digitization of learning modules, and establishing ECDE pupils school feeding program, provision of capitation grants for VTC trainees, construction and equipping of more VTC workshops, construction of homecraft centers, development and operationalization of skills incubation units, establishment of water training institute and issuance of technical tools starter packs upon completion of training
- viii. **Empowerment through sports, social welfare, and inclusion:** To improve sports participation, social welfare, improving the wellbeing of vulnerable and special interest groups in the community, increasing youth, women, and People with Disabilities (PWDs) involvement in productive ventures, and improving cultural and heritage preservation.
- ix. **Transformative leadership through accountable governance:** To ensure transparent, responsive, efficient and effective service delivery standards for accelerated, inclusive and sustainable development, through enhancement of ICT connectivity and innovation hubs, holding of joint forums with all stakeholders including Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and national government organs, inclusion of special interest groups in decision making processes, periodically publishing and dissemination of relevant information to citizens, and complying with relevant financial management processes, strengthening project management committees at the local administrative units and enhancing communication and feedback mechanisms

Sincerely,



WISLEY ROTICH
GOVERNOR