



ID: 665

Resource Mapping and Economic Potential Assessment of Turkana County, Kenya

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Abstract

This report summarizes a resource mapping study in Turkana County, Kenya, commissioned by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and conducted by the Kenya Industrial Research and Development Institute (KIRDI) under the PROSPECTS programme. The study aims to support social and economic inclusion for refugees and host communities through job creation. Using a mixed-methods approach—desktop research, interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys with 184 stakeholders—the research focused on sub-counties within the PROSPECTS initiative.

Findings reveal that Turkana is rich in resources, with livestock (45%), fisheries (19%), and minerals (11%) being the most prevalent. Seasonal variations affect resource availability, especially in livestock, agriculture, and fisheries. While 49% of producers reported increased availability due to development support, discovery of new resources, high demand, and price increases, 43% reported declines, mainly due to drought. This highlights the need for climate adaptation strategies.

The most traded resources—livestock, fish, agriculture, and charcoal—indicate strong market demand and economic potential. The county government is actively promoting resource development through initiatives in livestock (e.g., slaughterhouse support, dairy goat farming), fisheries (reviving processing facilities, sustainable fishing), and agriculture (irrigation schemes, despite operational challenges).

Key gaps identified include post-harvest losses in fisheries due to limited cold storage, inefficient irrigation systems, and low value addition in forestry. Promising emerging areas include plastic recycling and climate adaptation.

The study recommends further value chain viability assessments, fostering cross-sector collaboration, and establishing a Common Manufacturing Facility (CMF) to boost value addition, productivity, and job creation. Overall, the report provides a strategic foundation for sustainable economic development in Turkana County, offering valuable insights for policymakers, development partners, and local stakeholders.

