

A COMPENDIUM of

MURANG'A COUNTY GOVERNMENT AGRO- ECOLOGY DEVELOPMENT POLICY 2022-2032



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Networking For a greener Africa.



**MURANG'A COUNTY
GOVERNMENT**

McKNIGHT FOUNDATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.....	Table Of Contents
2.....	List Of Abbreviations
3.....	Acknowledgement
4.....	Forward
7.....	About Pelum Kenya
8.....	About Murang'a County
9.....	Executive Summary
10.....	Understanding the Problem
11.....	Finding a Solution
12.....	History And Background Of Murang'a
A g r o e c o l o g y	P o l i c y
D e v e l o p m e n t	
13.....	Process of development of the agroecology policy
17.....	The Outcomes
19.....	Key Lessons and Best Practices
21.....	Key Drivers Of Agroecology Policy
A n d L e g i s l a t i v e D e v e l o p m e n t I n M u r a n g ' a C o u n t y	
23.....	Analysis of Key Drivers and Enablers
o f t h e M u r a n g ' a C o u n t y A g r o e c o l o g y P o l i c y F r a m e w o r k	
25.....	Strategies That Are Enhancing And
A c c e l e r a t i n g I m p l e m e n t a t i o n O f T h e M u r a n g ' a C o u n t y A g r o e c o l o g y P o l i c y	
26.....	Expected Outcomes
28.....	The Challenges Experienced
29.....	Conclusion And Recommendations
30.....	Anexxes
31.....	References

LIST OF ABBREVIATION

ASTGS.....	Agriculture Sector Transformation and Growth Strategy
CASSCOM.....	County Agricultural Sector Steering Committee
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CECM.....	County Executive Committee Member
CSOs.....	Civil Society Organizations
EAOL.....	Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative
FMSS.....	Farmers Managed Seed System
GODAN.....	Global Data for Agriculture and Nutrition
ICE.....	Institute for Culture and Ecology
IPM.....	Integrated Pest Management
KARLO.....	Kenya Agricultural Research and Livestock Organization
KOAN.....	Kenya Organic Agriculture Network
KOFAM.....	Kangari Organic Farmers and Marketers
M&E.....	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCG.....	Muranga County Government
MO.....	Member Organization
MOA.....	Ministry Of Agriculture
MOE&CC.....	Ministry of Environment and Climate Change
MUT.....	Murang'a University of Technology
NGOs.....	Non-Governmental Organizations
OACK.....	Organic Agriculture Centre of Kenya
PELUM.....	Participatory Ecological Land Use Management
PM&ER.....	Participatory Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting
YARD.....	Youth in Action for Rural Development

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FORWARD

The Agroecology framework for Murang'a is crucial at the county level especially because Agriculture is a devolved function, making counties the primary decision-makers for agricultural activities.

The launch of the Agroecology Policy and Act in Murang'a demonstrates that substantial change can originate from the grassroots level. Counties can become the foundation for revolutionary agricultural practices.



The collaborative efforts of PELUM Kenya's Member Organizations (MOs) led by Institute for Culture and Ecology (ICE) have been instrumental from the initial stages of policy development, emphasizing the importance of a multi-stakeholder approach. This collaborative effort brought together diverse opinions, inputs, expertise, and resources, driving the success of the process.

With a supportive working environment now in place, Murang'a's MOs can enhance their agroecology efforts, training farmers and engaging in practices like seed-saving. They can also integrate agroecology principles, which include agricultural practices and social aspects like co-creation of knowledge and participatory action, empowering local farmers. This legal framework is a key enabler of strategic budgeting and planning for agroecology, and Murang'a, an agricultural hub, poised to gain significantly. The Agroecology Development Policy and Act open up local, regional, and international markets for organic produce and products. As the first county to establish such a framework, Murang'a has the opportunity to lead globally in organic exports.

Effective policy processes require passionate individuals. The leadership of Murang'a County, particularly through the then Agriculture CECM, Prof. Kiringai wa Kamau, and Director, Agriculture Mr. Daniel Gitahi has been crucial. Political goodwill, passion, and high-level commitment are vital enablers.

Supportive partners and a multi-stakeholder approach are essential, especially in the context of global climate change. While limited resources are a challenge, early involvement of partners can help overcome this hurdle, ensuring broad participation and contribution throughout the process.

Looking ahead, the goal is for all 47 counties in Kenya to have agroecology policies and Acts, working towards a national policy. Step by step, agroecology will prevail.

Rosinah Mbenya

Country Coordinator, PELUM Kenya

As environmental challenges increase and food security concerns grow, Murang'a County has taken a bold step towards sustainable agriculture by embracing agroecology. It is important to understand the benefits of this shift in policy and the path that led the county to this point.

Agroecology offers an integrated approach to farming that mixes environmental protection with economic viability and social equity. Its principles extend far beyond the field, including sustainably managing resources, conserving biodiversity and mitigating climate change. This is not just about cultivating crops – farmers are nurturing ecosystems, preserving their cultural heritage and investing in the health of their communities.

Achieving an agroecology policy and legal framework in Murang'a required collaboration and perseverance. The journey began with advocacy efforts. These were bolstered with the help of members of the County Assembly, culminating in the passing of the Agroecology Law and the adoption of the policy in March 2023.

Several factors led to this success. These included the commitment of local politicians, recognition that the county needed to align local policies with global sustainability goals, and strong partnerships with organizations like PELUM Kenya's Mos led by the Institute for Culture and Ecology (ICE), Murang'a University of Technology (MUT) and other partners. Collaborations with leaders provided impactful support in advocacy, knowledge sharing, and capacity building.

But as Muranga proceeds with implementing its agroecology policy, the challenges ahead must be recognized. These include integrating multiple sectors, securing enough funding and demonstrating that agroecology works. However, these challenges also present opportunities for innovation, collaboration and leadership.

Murang'a county aims to become a model of environmental stewardship, economic resilience and social equity. The goal of officials is to establish a Centre of Excellence for Agroecology Research, positioning the county as a hub for innovation and learning in sustainable agriculture.

Other counties considering the agroecology path are advised to engage stakeholders at all levels, from smallholder farmers to policymakers.

The success of agroecology relies on integrating traditional knowledge with modern science, empowering local communities, and recognizing that farming is not just an economic activity but also a cultural and ecological endeavor.

Farmers, researchers, policymakers and citizens are advised to join Murang'a in reimagining Kenya's food system. By working together, they can create a future where agriculture nourishes not just people but also the planet. Farming communities can thrive and the richness of the land can be preserved for future generations.

Prof. Kiringai wa Kamau

CECM Devolution (Former CECM Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries)

Murang'a County



ABOUT PELUM KENYA

Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) Association is a network of Civil Society Organizations / NGOs working with Small-scale farmers in East, Central, and Southern Africa. The Association membership has grown from 25 pioneer members (in 1995) to over 280 members. PELUM Kenya is the Kenyan country chapter of the PELUM Association and has a membership of 63 Member Organizations.

PELUM Kenya network promotes Agroecology principles and practices through the following thematic areas; advocacy and policy influence, networking, capacity development, information, and knowledge sharing. The various Agroecology practices promoted include; organic agriculture, sustainable agriculture, regenerative agriculture, agroforestry, permaculture, conservation agriculture, biodynamic agriculture, family farming, and bio-intensive agri-culture. All PELUM Kenya Member Organizations (MOs) promote agroecology and do not promote GMOs.

Led by ICE, PELUM Kenya's MOs, particularly those based in Murang'a County, played a crucial role in the formulation and launch of the Murang'a County Agroecology Development Policy. They were at the forefront, serving on various committees and investing their knowledge and resources to ensure the successful creation and implementation of this legal framework.

With the support of a now favorable legal environment, the MOs are actively engaging in effectively implementing the Murang'a County Agroecology Policy Development. Furthermore, PELUM Kenya is leading efforts in developing the National Agroecology Strategy and similar legal frameworks for other counties, especially Vihiga.



Some of the produce is grown for household consumption while the surplus is sold locally, regionally and internationally. Dairy farming is also a significant economic activity, with many smallholder farmers engaged in milk production, alongside crop farming. Its proximity to Nairobi city at about 85 kilometers is an opportunity to sell produce in a readily available market.

While the county has a high potential for agricultural production, farmers face numerous challenges like fluctuating market prices, low production, pests and diseases, infertile soils due to over-cultivation and use of synthetic inputs, limited access to modern farming technologies and water scarcity especially during dry seasons. Like other regions in the country and globally, climate change, occasioned by erratic weather patterns, has further exacerbated these challenges.

To address these and more challenges, Murang’a County, in partnership with ICE, PELUM Kenya, and other MOs and stakeholders, launched the ‘Murang’a County Agroecology Policy Development and Act’ March 2023. The policy aims to promote sustainable agricultural practices that enhance productivity, ensure food security, protect the environment, and enhance adaptation to and building resilience against climate change and its effects.



Source:

<https://muranga.go.ke>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Murang'a County Agroecology Policy is a pioneering initiative aimed at transforming agricultural practices in the county by integrating ecological principles, promoting sustainability, and enhancing food security. This policy, implemented in May 2024, emerged from a concerted effort led by the then Director of Agriculture Value Chains, to address challenges such as soil degradation, climate change, and biodiversity loss. Developed in collaboration with various PELUM Kenya Mos led by Institute for Culture and Ecology (ICE), Murang'a University of Technology (MUT) and other stakeholders, the policy emphasizes organic agriculture, soil conservation, biodiversity, food as medicine and sustainable farming practices.

Agroecology is a holistic approach that balances the relationships between plants, animals, humans, and the environment, prioritizing ecological integrity, social equity, and cultural sensitivity.

The policy's primary objective is to enhance the productivity and sustainability of agroecological systems in Murang'a County. It focuses on promoting participatory approaches, increasing awareness of the health and environmental benefits of agroecology, improving productivity through research and technology, and aligning with national and international standards.

Key drivers behind the success of this policy include strong political and executive leadership, multistakeholder engagement, advocacy and support from organizations like PELUM Kenya, financial backing from the county government, market and financial incentives, academic contributions from MUT, and a commitment to national and global goals such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The policy's implementation strategies involve multistakeholder collaboration, training and capacity building, establishment of food pharmacies, market linkages with Nairobi County, and the creation of demonstration farms. These efforts aim to achieve outcomes such as environmental sustainability, economic empowerment, climate resilience, food security, and education.

The Murang'a County Agroecology Policy serves as a benchmark for sustainable agricultural practices in Kenya, offering a model that contributes to environmental conservation, improved livelihoods, and long-term food security for the county's residents.



UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM

The need for an agroecology policy in Murang'a County arises from its status as a national water tower and a key agricultural producer. Farmers in the region have experienced declining yields from their land, despite increasing their inputs. This alarming trend highlights the urgent need for a shift towards agroecology.

Practiced for many decades, conventional agricultural practices has negatively affected soil fertility. Land degradation and the growing challenges posed by climate change now threaten food security and the livelihoods of farming communities.

Murang'a's unique geography—characterized by steep terrain—and its high population density have exacerbated soil erosion and nutrient depletion. In this context, the adoption of sustainable farming practices is not merely beneficial but essential for safeguarding the county's agricultural future.

Some of the development needs along the agriculture sector listed in the CIDPs as County Development priorities included: inadequate and unreliable rainfall for crop and fodder production; low soil fertility for crop and fodder production; unreliable marketing systems; low quality and high cost of inputs and services; inadequate extension services; inadequate pre and postharvest management and value addition investments; and Land subdivision into non economical units and conversion into real estates.

According to the 2018-2022 CIDP, the nutritional status (prevalence of stunting and wasting in children under 5 years: height-for-age, weight-for-height, weight-for-age). Five per cent of children under five years are stunted and wasted.

(<https://www.devolution.go.ke/sites/default/files/2024-03/Muranga-CIDP-2018-2022.pdf>)



FINDING A SOLUTION

These challenges highlighted the urgent need for sustainable solutions. Stakeholders came to a consensus that addressing these problems required more than just technical fixes. They recognized that creating an enabling legal environment was a crucial step towards addressing the root causes of these agricultural issues.

Agroecology was identified as a transformative approach that could address many of these challenges. One of the key concerns recognized by the stakeholders was the lack of a policy framework to support the adoption of agroecological practices.

Despite the potential benefits of agroecology, farmers often lacked access to the necessary resources, knowledge, and incentives to adopt these methods. Moreover, most agricultural policies tend to favor conventional farming practices, which rely heavily on chemical inputs and can contribute to environmental degradation.

To bridge this gap, stakeholders felt that developing a supportive legal framework would be crucial. This framework would provide clear guidelines for the adoption of agroecology, encourage sustainable farming practices, and create opportunities for farmers to access financial incentives and markets. It would also promote research and innovation in agroecological methods, ensuring that farmers have access to the latest knowledge and technologies. Additionally, strengthening legal provisions related to land use, water management, and environmental conservation would help address broader issues of land use management, market access, using food as medicine, soil health among others.

Creating an enabling legal environment for agroecology in Murang'a County is an integral step towards addressing the pressing challenges facing the agriculture, livestock, fisheries, health and other relevant sectors. By doing so, the county can promote sustainable farming practices, enhance food security, and improve the livelihoods of its farming communities in the face of climate change and environmental degradation.

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND OF MURANG'A AGROECOLOGY POLICY DEVELOPMENT

In 2015, Mr. Daniel Gitahi, then the Director of Agriculture Value Chains, Policy, and Strategy at Murang'a County, set out on a mission to tackle pressing agricultural, food and health challenges. Mr. Gitahi's concern was deeply rooted in the deteriorating soil conditions in Murang'a, which had severely compromised the quality and quantity of agricultural produce. This was further exacerbated by the impacts of climate change, rising poverty levels, biodiversity loss, increased cases of con-communicable diseases and worsening water resources. Convinced of the need for a solution, Mr. Gitahi envisioned creating a legal framework centered on organic agriculture to address these multifaceted issues.

In 2017, the Department of Agriculture, under the leadership of the Director of Agriculture Value Chains, Policy and Strategy, took the initiative to draft an Organic Agriculture Policy. Initially, the policy development process was inspired by national efforts to formulate a national organic policy, driven and funded by the Kenya Organic Network (KOAN). However, despite the completion of the draft, attempts to secure budget allocation were unsuccessful, leaving the document shelved.

The turning point came in 2019-2020 when the ICE joined the effort, providing financial support to facilitate the technical refinement of the draft policy. This collaboration enabled the county team to engage in public participation, ultimately leading to the creation of the draft zero agroecology policy.

Building on this momentum, ICE helped to bring additional partners into the fold, including PELUM's MOs within the county, as well as the Murang'a University of Technology (MUT). Together, they established a technical committee that conducted consultative engagements to refine the policy document.

The success of this initiative hinged on a multi-stakeholder approach. Bringing together diverse expertise and resources, including influential political figures like the county assembly speaker and the County Executive Committee Member (CECM) for Agriculture, was pivotal. The team leveraged political goodwill by highlighting the long-term health, economic, social, environmental and other benefits of agroecology, which could potentially reduce healthcare costs. This strategy fostered inclusiveness and a sense of shared ownership, overcoming resource limitations and propelling the policy's success.

The policy was formally adopted by the Murang'a County government in on March 9, 2023

PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE AGROECOLOGY POLICY

The development of the Murang'a County Agroecology Policy was a multi-phased process that involved extensive collaboration among various stakeholders, careful planning, and strategic engagement. This process was especially driven by the need to promote sustainable agricultural practices, address environmental, health and food safety and food security challenges. The process was spearheaded by the county government, with significant contributions from organizations like PELUM Kenya and the Institute for Culture and Ecology (ICE), Murang'a University of Technology (MUT) among others.

1. Initial Assessment and Stakeholder Engagement

The process began with an initial assessment of the agricultural landscape in Murang'a County, identifying key issues such as soil degradation, prevalence of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), climate change and its impacts, and loss of biodiversity. The then Director of Agriculture Value Chains, Policy and Strategy in Murang'a County recognized the urgent need for a policy framework to address these challenges through agroecology.

2. County team drafting of zero draft organic policy

Policy was internally driven initially as an Organic Policy that was largely advised by attempt by national level to formulate a national organic policy, a process that was driven and funded by Kenya Organic Network (KOAN).

In 2017, the department under the leadership of Director Agriculture Value Chains, Policy and Strategy wrote an Organic Agriculture Draft Policy. After completing, the team applied for budget but did not get allocation. The draft remained in the shelves.

3. ICE engagement and conversion to draft zero Murang'a County Agroecology policy 2020

In 2019-2020, ICE came on board and through financial support, they facilitated the county team to technically clean the document and undertake public participation thereby producing the draft zero Murang'a County Agroecology Policy.

4. Collaboration with more partners

In partnership with the County team, ICE brought on board more partners including PELUM Kenya's Member Organizations (Mos) within the county. Also on board was the Murang'a

University of Technology (MUT). Together, they formed a technical committee through which they had consultative engagements.

The partners on boarded to clean the document involving various consultative engagement and by 2021 the final policy draft was ready. By then there was already participation of Chair committee of Agriculture.

The drafting of the Murang'a County Agroecology Policy was a participatory process, incorporating input from all relevant stakeholders. Multiple drafts were circulated for feedback, allowing for revisions that reflected the concerns and suggestions of farmers, environmental experts, and other key players.

To ensure the policy's relevance and effectiveness, validation workshops were held, bringing together stakeholders to review the draft policy. These workshops provided a platform for critical analysis and consensus-building.

5. Finalization of the Agroecology Act 2022

The chair engaged committee to also finalize the agroecology Act 2022 and subsequently final round of public participation process commenced.

A need arose to get draft Agroecology Act before Murang'a assembly sine die in 2021. A draft Act was completed internally in collaboration with the County assembly speaker and the executive got approved.

The Murang'a County agroecology development and marketing act was assented in July 2022 and commenced in September of the same year.

6. Presentation of Cabinet Memo

The CECM Agriculture prepared a cabinet memo, which is a summary (maximum 5 pages) of the policy document. It was then presented to the governor and the County cabinet whereby it was adopted. The CECM then wrote to the Clerk of the County Assembly for concurrence which basically means to find out if there were any issues with the document.

7. Formation of platform (MSP) multistakeholder

In September 2022, a Multistakeholder Platform was formed. The platform brought together stakeholders from government, farmers, CBOs, NGOs, PELUM Kenya MOs, Murang'a University of Technology among others.

The steering committee was spearheaded by the county team and five (5) Technical working groups

- I. Policy Implementation
- II. Research, innovations, Knowledge/data management and information sharing
- III. Partnerships, networking membership
- IV. Farmers engagement
- V. Marketing and private sector engagement

8. Policy is tabled before the Assembly

Towards the end of 2022 the policy was tabled before the County Assembly. It was passed by majority.

The commitment of county leadership was crucial in advancing the policy. Their backing ensured that the policy was not only adopted but also allocated the necessary resources for its implementation.

Throughout the policy development process, strong advocacy efforts were undertaken to secure political support at both the county and national levels. PELUM Kenya and ICE were instrumental in mobilizing support from various sectors, highlighting the policy's potential to contribute towards sustainable development and food security in Murang'a County.

9. Policy Accented, Law Legislated

After the validation phase, the policy was finalized and formally adopted by the Murang'a County government on March 9, 2023. This adoption marked the beginning of the implementation phase, with a clear plan outlining the roles of different stakeholders, timelines, and the allocation of resources.

10. Post Launch of the policy

Following the launch of the policy, PELUM Kenya supported the development of a training curriculum on Agroecology for MUT. Also supported was development of a two-year Implementation Framework. The Implementation Framework focuses on multi-stakeholder collaboration, capacity building, market linkages, and the establishment of demonstration farms. These strategies were designed to operationalize the policy, translating its goals into tangible outcomes that would benefit the local community.

PELUM Kenya also supported training of over 35 extension workers who were trained on agroecology, enhancing their capacity to support farmers and communities in adopting agroecological practices.

Summary of the process

- Policy was internally driven initially as an organic policy that was largely advised by attempt by national level
- ICE joined through financial support, to technically clean the document and public participation
- MUT was brought on board during the drafting
- A need arose to get draft Act before Murang'a assembly sine die in 2021
- A draft act was completed internally in collaboration with the County assembly speaker and got approved
- Creation of MSP
- Gazettement of the Act
- Launch process



THE OUTCOMES

The development of Agroecology Policy in Murang'a County has begun to yield significant results, demonstrating the potential of sustainable agricultural practices to transform the region's agricultural landscape. Key outcomes have emerged from efforts in training and capacity building, establishing market linkages, and creating educational platforms like demonstration farms and food pharmacies. These initiatives are not only improving food security and environmental sustainability but also empowering farmers to adopt practices that enhance their livelihoods. The following highlights the key outcomes of these agroecology efforts in Murang'a County.

Training and Capacity Building:

Over 35 extension workers have been trained in agroecology, enhancing their capacity to support farmers and communities in adopting agroecological practices. Additionally, MUT has developed a curriculum specifically designed to train farmers, extension workers, researchers, and other interested parties on agroecology. This educational initiative addresses capacity building and ensures stakeholders are equipped with essential knowledge and skills.

Food Pharmacies:

Food pharmacies serve as outlets for agroecology produce and products. They play a key role in reaching out to communities, educating them on the importance and impact of agroecology, and teaching them how to prevent or manage non-communicable diseases through dietary choices. The concept has attracted partnerships and support, with one food pharmacy operational as of May 2024 and commitments from donors to establish three more.

Market Linkages:

The Murang'a County government is collaborating with Nairobi County to establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to position Nairobi as a market for agroecology produce and products. Given Nairobi's proximity and high population, there is a significant opportunity to tap into an existing market. Efforts are ongoing to link farmers to these markets, thereby supporting sustainable agricultural practices and motivating farmers by providing access to market opportunities.

Establishment of Demonstration Farms:

Demonstration farms have been set up in each sub-county of Murang'a. These farms act as practical learning centers where farmers can observe and learn about successful agroecology practices firsthand.

Budget Allocation: The county government's commitment of 10 percent of its annual agriculture budget to agroecology demonstrates strong political and financial commitment.

Establishment of a County Agroecology Desk: The county government set a side a team that is dedicated to agroecology thus giving it focus and time. With the team in place, tasks were executed in time, efficiently and effectively.

Market Linkages: Establishment of aggregation centers and Food farmacies to promote organic certification and local food networks, facilitating market access for agroecological produce and products.



KEY LESSONS AND BEST PRACTICES

The development and launch of the Murang'a County Agroecology Policy Development provided valuable insights that can guide other counties aspiring to implement similar policies. The journey revealed several key lessons that can help navigate the complexities of establishing agroecological practices. Here are the essential lessons learned from this process:

Key Lessons Learned

1. Multistakeholder Involvement is Vital:

- Engaging stakeholders throughout the entire process is crucial. This includes farmers, local communities, NGOs, the private sector, and international partners, ensuring continuous sharing of tasks, ideas, and effective resource mobilization.

2. Government Support and Collaboration:

- Strong government support is essential. Effective collaboration between the County Executive and the Assembly facilitates coherence, commitment, and efficiency.
- There is need for frequent update sharing with both the executive and assembly, additionally sensitization forums are key towards knowledge sharing and synergy building. Additionally, MCAs need to be exposed to agroecological practices, their benefits among other aspects of agroecology.

3. Education and Research:

- Research is vital for developing an evidence-based legal framework. There was no much background research about agroecology. This brings forth an opportunity for research around the sector.
- Investing in research is key towards identification of identify best practices and innovative solutions tailored to local needs.
- Collaborating with institutions of higher learning is crucial for capacity building among key stakeholders, including farmers and extension officers.

4. Partnerships for Resource Mobilization:

- Resources, including finances, can be scarce. Working with like-minded partners from government, NGOs, and the private sector is important for resource mobilization.
- Strategies for raising resources should be consultatively developed and executed to ensure sufficient resources for the set agenda.

5. Awareness Creation is Important:

- Sensitizing all relevant stakeholders about agroecology, its importance, challenges, and benefits is crucial. This ensures they can understand and make informed decisions at their own levels.

6. Continuous Stakeholder Engagement:

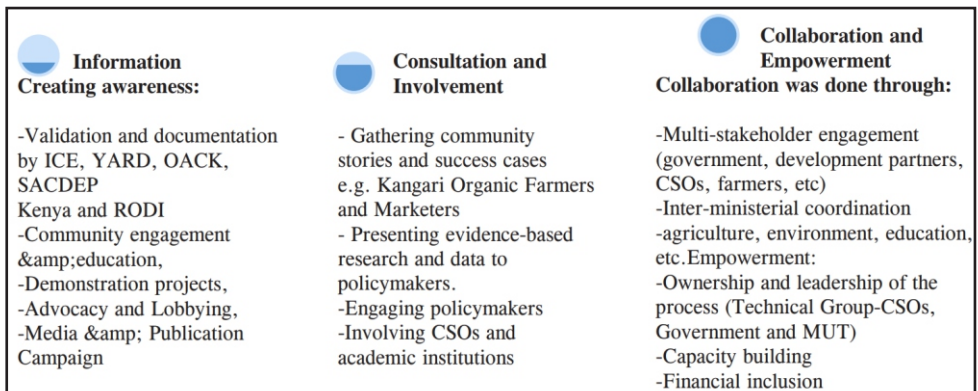
- While some stakeholders expressed interest later in the process, it is important for interested groups to get involved as soon as they learn about such an endeavor. Early, continuous, and consistent engagement enhances maximum support and involvement throughout the process.

7. Beyond Policy Development, Implementation is Key:

- While the development and launch of the policy and act are crucial milestones, implementation is equally important. In Murang'a, with support from PELUM Kenya, an implementation plan was developed. As of May 2024, 20% (check the latest milestone and update) of this plan had been successfully executed. This underscores the importance of not only crafting comprehensive policies but also ensuring their practical application to achieve the desired outcomes.

THEMATIC AREAS IN DEVELOPMENT OF MURANG'A COUNTY AGROECOLOGY POLICY

The county adopted a multisectoral and multistakeholder approach in developing the agroecology policy, as illustrated in the diagram below. This collaborative framework involved various sectors and stakeholders, ensuring comprehensive and inclusive policy development for agroecology practices



Source: PELUM Kenya

KEY DRIVERS OF AGROECOLOGY POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENT IN MURANG'A COUNTY

The development and implementation of the Murang'a County Agroecology Policy (2022-2032) are anchored on a combination of political, social, economic, and environmental factors. The following key drivers have been instrumental in the success of this policy:

1. Political and Executive Leadership

- **Leadership Commitment:** Political and executive leaders in Murang'a were and still are dedicated to making significant impact on agroecology, emphasizing local leadership over external influence. The leaders would several meetings often to get updates on progress, share lessons and strategies to ensure the successful formulation and launch of the Agroecology legal framework. The then speaker of the County Assembly was keen on leaving the legal framework as a legacy after his tenure and would therefore keenly follow up on progress. The then CECM for Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries on the other hand was proactively working with the Executive arm of the county government.
- **County Department Coherence:** Integration of the agroecology agenda into county departments enhanced a combination of environmental, health, social, economic and other dimensions.

2. Multi-Stakeholder Engagement

- **Co-Created Collaborations:** Promoting collaborations between the government, NGOs, CBOs, CSOs, research institutions, and the private sector enhanced knowledge sharing and synergy building.
- **Participatory Approaches:** Inclusion of farmers, indigenous communities, and other stakeholders in the policy-making process ensured, inclusivity, sense of ownership, relevance, efficiency and effectiveness.

3. Advocacy and Support

- **Strong Advocacy:** PELUM Kenya through MOs led by the ICE provided robust advocacy, mobilizing global communities, civil society organizations, farmer groups, and thought leaders.
- **Consistent Partnership:** Continuous support from these and other organizations, institutions and stakeholders is essential in maintaining the momentum and ensuring the improvement of Agroecology practices.

4. Support from Murang'a County Government

- **Cross-Sector Collaboration:** Engagement with other county ministers and fostering collaborations across various sectors for a unified approach to sustainable agriculture.

5. Financial and Market Support

- **Eyeing Nairobi County:** Murang'a's proximity to Nairobi places an already market for organic produce. Governments from the two counties are already working towards creating a sustainable market for agroecology produce and products from Murang'a.
- **Export Market:** With Murang'a already being a key exporter of farm produce, increased production of organic produce is bound to enhance market access not only locally, but also regionally and internationally.
- **GODAN Guarantee Fund:** Plans for the creation of this fund to provide low-interest loans and financial incentives for farmers adopting Agroecology practices.

6. Academic and Research Institutions

- Educational Collaborations: MUT was involved in the formulation of the Murang'a Agroecology Development policy. Murang'a University of Technology through the Mariira campus which has since introduced a course in agroecology to enhance capacity building through education and training.

7. Food Systems Paradigm

- **Value Chain Approach:** Adoption of a practical value chain approach to food systems, ensuring sustainable practices from farm to fork.
- **Food Pharmacy Initiative:** Establishment of food pharmacies to educate communities on using food as medicine, creating markets for Agroecology produce, and reducing healthcare costs. This approach is about using food as medicine as opposed to vice-versa.



Analysis of Key Drivers and Enablers of the Murang'a County Agroecology Policy Framework

The key enablers outlined below were instrumental in the successful development and will be crucial in the subsequent implementation of the Murang'a County Agroecology Policy Development. With strong leadership, robust advocacy, financial support, and inclusive stakeholder engagement, Murang'a County aims to establish a sustainable agricultural benchmark in Kenya, contributing to food security, food sovereignty, environmental conservation, and improved livelihoods.

Key Drivers	Description	Impact
Political Will and Leadership		
Legacy and Dynamic Leadership	-Collaboration between the Assembly and the Executive arms of county government. -Believing in African-led sustainable development. -Dynamic county leaders who focused on supporting practical solutions for local communities.	-Motivated local leaders and communities to support agro ecology initiatives. -Strengthened community-centered agro ecology agenda.
Alignment with Global and National Policies.		
- National Strategy Alignment - Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	- Alignment of the National Agro ecology Strategy - Commitment to SDGs and the Paris Agreement on climate change.	-Facilitated smooth integration of agro ecology into the county agenda. -Created a conducive environment for promoting agro ecology.
Advocacy and Support from Civil Society		
- ICE and other PELUM Kenya MOs -Global Data for Agriculture and Nutrition (GODAN)	-Advocacy and leadership support from ICE and other PELUM MOs, bringing together global community, civil society, and farmers. -Support with knowledge and innovation enablers, including data and evidential research tools.	-Strong advocacy and mobilization of resources and support for agroecology initiatives. -Informed decision-making and policy development based on evidence.

Institutional Support and Capacity Building		
<p>-Murang'a County Government</p> <p>-Collaborative Support from Murang'a University of Technology</p>	<p>-Commitment and political will from the county government.</p> <p>-Partnerships with MUT for research and education integration</p>	<p>-Provided a strong foundation for the agro ecology initiative.</p> <p>-Significant role in capacity building and equipping stakeholders with knowledge and skills.</p>
Financial Incentives and Market Linkages		
<p>- Market Linkages</p> <p>GODAN Guarantee Fund</p>	<p>-Strategic partnership with Nairobi county as a key and readily available market</p> <p>-Establishment of aggregation centers and food pharmacies to promote local food networks and organic certification.</p> <p>-Planned creation of a fund to provide low-interest loans for farmers adopting agro ecological practices</p>	<p>-Improved market access and profitability for organic farmers.</p> <p>Financial incentives to encourage the adoption of sustainable practices</p>
Multi-stakeholder Engagement and Participatory Approaches		
<p>-Inclusivity</p> <p>-Education and Training</p> <p>-Existing Agro Ecology Initiatives</p>	<p>-Participatory approaches include farmers, indigenous communities, NGOs, CSOs and other stakeholders in policy-making.</p> <p>-Capacity building through education and training programs for farmers, extension workers, and policymakers.</p> <p>-Murang'a has agro ecology champions e.g. Kangari Organic Farmers and Marketers (KOFAM)</p>	<p>-Ensured policies were relevant, effective, and had community buy-in.</p> <p>-Equipping stakeholders with the knowledge and skills needed for agro ecology.</p> <p>-Motivated farmers to embrace agro ecology practices in Murang'a</p>

Source: Key Informant Interviews with Farmers and Professionals of Agro Ecology

STRATEGIES THAT ARE ENHANCING AND ACCELERATING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MURANG'A COUNTY AGROECOLOGY POLICY

To effectively and efficiently implement the Agroecology Policy in Murang'a County, stakeholders are actively engaged in the following activities and initiatives:

Implementation Plan

PELUM Kenya, along with other partners, supported the development of a two-year Murang'a County Agroecology Development Implementation Framework. Through the Memorandums of Understanding (MOs), PELUM Kenya remains actively involved in implementing the Policy. This plan serves as a guide for tracking progress. As of May 2024, 20 percent of the Implementation Plan has been achieved through the steps outlined below:

Multistakeholder Collaboration:

A multistakeholder forum meets regularly to monitor progress and discuss the next steps for implementing the Agroecology Policy. This forum ensures the involvement and information sharing among all stakeholders, including government bodies, NGOs, educational institutions like Murang'a University of Technology (MUT), and local communities.



EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The Murang'a County Agroecology policy aims to revolutionize agricultural practices in Murang'a County by prioritizing sustainability, organic farming, and agro ecosystem health. The expected outcomes from implementing this Act can be grouped into nine (9) key areas:

1.Environmental Sustainability

- Enhanced agro ecosystem Health: Improved biodiversity, biological cycles, and soil biological activity through sustainable farming practices.
- Reduced Environmental Impact: Decreased reliance on chemical inputs leading to reduced pollution and preservation of natural resources.
- Soil and Water Conservation: Adoption of practices such as minimum tillage, contour plowing, and composting to prevent soil erosion and landslides, and protect water sources.

2.Economic Empowerment

- Increased Organic Production: Achieving the target of having at least 30% of agricultural output as organic products, opening new market opportunities for farmers.
- Better Incomes for Farmers: Enhanced livelihoods through training, access to fair markets, and increased productivity.
- Market Infrastructure: Development of robust infrastructure for marketing and commercialization, ensuring that organic products reach broader markets and fetch better prices.

3.Climate Resilience

- Adaptation to Climate Change: Improved resilience of farming systems to cope with unpredictable weather patterns and soil degradation.
- Innovation and Sustainable Solutions: Development and use of natural farm inputs through research collaborations, leading to sustainable agricultural solutions.

4.Food Security, Sovereignty and Safety

- Stable Food Supply: Diverse and resilient farming systems ensuring a steady supply of food, capable of withstanding environmental shocks.
- Quality Assurance: Implementation of standards and guidelines to ensure organic produce meets international quality standards, facilitating access to international markets.
- Food Safety Measures: Regular training for growers, monitoring, and enforcement of food safety standards in handling, grading, packaging, transporting, and storing organic products.

5.Education and Capacity Building

- Training and Education: Provision of information, training, and education on organic farming practices to residents of Murang'a County.

- **Integration in Technical Institutes:** Establishment of organic production courses and farming units within technical training institutes to promote practical education and skills development. Murang'a University of Technology is the first institution in Kenya to offer a course in agroecology.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Creation of a stakeholder platform for coordination, knowledge sharing, and collaborative problem-solving among farmers, government agencies, research institutions, and civil society organizations.

6. Research and Technology Integration

- **Enhanced Research Collaboration:** Strengthened partnerships with academic and research institutions like Murang'a University of Technology to promote Agroecology research and integrate new technologies and practices.
- **Support for Innovation:** Support innovations such as value addition and development of natural pesticides and herbicides through research collaborations, supporting sustainable agricultural practices.

7. Policy and Legal Framework Development

- **Strong Governance:** Establishment of a board responsible for overseeing and coordinating agroecology and organic agriculture initiatives.
- **Effective Policy Implementation:** Development and enforcement of laws and regulations that foster sustainability and environmental conservation through collaboration with the Murang'a County Assembly.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Implementation of a Participatory Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting (PM&ER) system to track policy impact and ensure effective data management and reporting.

8. Resource Mobilization and Financing

- **Funding for Initiatives:** Leveraging resources from government departments, development partners, and the private sector to support agroecology initiatives.
- **Comprehensive Communication Plan:** Development of a communication plan to engage stakeholders and promote knowledge sharing within the agroecology sector.

9. Regular Policy Review

- **Continuous Improvement:** Conducting policy reviews every four to five years within the policy's ten-year span (2022-2032) to ensure relevance and effectiveness.

THE CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED

The process of formulating, launching and subsequent enactment of Muranga Agroecology Development Policy came with challenges some of which are as below:

- County staff Capacity on policy and legal matters - County staff often lack knowledge on matters pertaining policy and in particular the Agroecology Policy and legal matters around it. It was therefore important to enlighten them on the same. Community policy literacy levels in rural communities – Much as the policy largely addressed issues touching on rural livelihoods, the policy literacy levels are generally low, thus understanding on policy and its importance and impact was equally not easy.
- General understanding of the policy process/ Cycle – there is a policy process/ cycle that the county follows, including public participation. Many people however, are not conversant with this process.
- Time target limitations by drafters – The drafters were working on tight deadlines. It was a challenge to meet these deadlines especially considering that many of them had numerous competing engagements.
- Availability of public finances for driving the process – Resources were scarce. It took the interventions and contributions by partners to get the process done.
- Last-minute partners engagement – While there was an opportunity for many partners to participate in the process from the beginning, some of them offered support at last-minute, limiting their participation.



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Murang'a County Agroecology Policy Development and Legislation framework demonstrate a comprehensive and strategic approach to promoting sustainable agricultural practices. By aligning local initiatives with international, regional, and national legal frameworks, Murang'a County is poised to enhance food security, environmental sustainability, and the livelihoods of its farmers.

Commitment to aligning county policies with national and global goals, such as the National Agroecology Strategy, SDGs and the Paris Agreement, underscores the county's dedication to sustainable development.

Key Recommendations:

- **Strengthening legal frameworks:** There is need for robust laws and policies to support agroecological practices.
- **Promoting sustainable practices:** Adoption of environmentally-friendly farming methods is important for long-term agricultural sustainability.
- **Capacity building:** Training farmers and stakeholders to enhance knowledge and skills in agroecology and the role of each stakeholder is important.
- **Research and innovation:** There is need for increased research to drive advancements and improvements in sustainable agriculture.
- **Market development:** It is important to create and expand markets for agroecological products.
- **Financial incentives:** Providing financial support to encourage farmers to adopt sustainable practices is essential.
- **Monitoring and advocacy:** There is need for regular evaluation and advocacy to ensure the policy's effectiveness and ongoing improvements.
- **Stakeholder involvement:** To strengthen impact, it is vital to proactively include government agencies, civil society, and research institutions in the policy-making process.
- **Education and technology:** Continuous education, engagement, and adoption of innovative technologies that lead sustainable agriculture is key.
- **Beyond an Agroecology Policy:** Counties need to continuously promote adoption of agroecological practices and ensure monitoring and evaluation of the same. Working with relevant sectors such as health would also be important to ensure collection and analyzing of relevant data.

Annexes:

PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES OF THE MURANG'A COUNTY AGRO ECOLOGY DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Goal of the Agro Ecology Policy:

To sustainably produce, increase farmers' incomes and enable access to safe and healthy foods in Murang'a County

Vision

To be a leading County in supplying safe and healthy quality food products from agro ecology production systems and serving all niche local, national and export market segments in Kenya.

Mission

To increase production of both quality and volumes of organically produced foods, beverages and animal products by encouraging use of safe chemicals and fertilizers including organic products, integrated pest management practices and sustainable farming and tillage systems that also promotes value addition and inclusive, responsive and participatory human health awareness and governance systems within existing farming structures for a more sustainable and equitable environment within Murang'a County.

Broad Objectives

The Murang'a County Agro ecology Policy is based on a broader objective: To support productivity and sustainability of agro ecology production systems in Murang'a County.

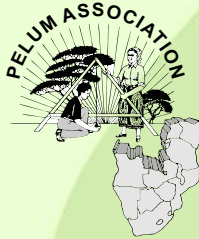
Specific Objectives:

- 1.To support sustainable and participatory approaches to introduction of agro ecology production systems and practices in the County.
- 2.To support increased awareness on health benefits to life and environment, prioritize marketing strategies, data/information and consumption for agro ecology products in Murang'a County.
- 3.To support increased productivity and incomes through collaboration with research, education institutions and technology integration of agro ecology with conventional agriculture.
- 4.To promote adoption of agro ecological approaches for sustainable soil systems and agricultural practices in the county.
- 5.To implement standards of production in the sub sector that is in line with both national and internationally set market standards.

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