

LAIKIPIA COUNTY

Overview

Laikipia County, Kenya, is making great strides and has ambitious plans to address climate change. Laikipia County has Mt. Kenya (a World Heritage Site, a Biodiversity Hotspot, etc.) and contains numerous game ranches that boast all of the "Big 5". It takes its unique ecosystems, climate and culture seriously. For example, in the past 11 years Laikipia and the adjoining Counties have developed a rapidly growing reforestation program that improves soil carbon, crop productivity, water quality and restores the earth's natural ability to absorb and store carbon dioxide (CO₂). That program has been recognized globally as the best of its type. The county has also set ambitious goals and begun work to replace traditional three-stone cook fires with more efficient stoves to dramatically improve indoor air quality and reduce the pressure on forests. In addition, Laikipia County is seeking viable business partnerships to help expand access to electricity (currently 17% of residents have power in their homes) and clean vehicles.

Kenya is at a crossroads. With the recent discovery of coal resources, the country can choose to take the typical route to development—increase wealth by exploiting the carbon-rich natural resources. However, the visionary government of Laikipia County is seeking partnerships that will allow them to leap-frog this antiquated economic growth model and leverage fossil-free distributed electricity generation technologies including electric vehicles and micro-grid systems. The success of communication technology in the past 10 years provides a model for future development.

With annual CO₂ emissions estimated to be below 2 metric tonnes per capita and 47% of residents living on less than a dollar a day, the realization of these plans will require an ambitious and coordinated effort. But this must be done and Laikipia County is poised to set a clean development path for similarly challenged jurisdictions to follow.

Specific Actions and Commitments

Laikipia County is committed to achieving comprehensive best-in-class measurement, reporting, and validation (MRV) standards by 2018. The UNFCCC and others have quantified greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, but not at a level of detail sufficient to set county priorities and to accomplish actions with the highest environmental and social returns. We are now measuring our vehicle fuel use and kerosene use, and calculating the CO₂ inventory from fossil fuel use. We have measured the electricity use in the County. We have no gas pipelines, or oil production, and thus no fugitive emissions. At this time, we can only estimate the land use and waste burning pollution using global metrics. Improving those estimates is a high priority. Understanding Laikipia County's current GHG emissions profile at a granular level will serve as the foundation for future action with the goal of tripling the county's gross domestic product by 2030 without increasing net per capita GHG emissions.

By 2020,

- 65% of households using efficient cook stoves
- 20% increase in forested lands
- 12 solar or wind micro-grid pilots (through public-private partnerships)

- World-class waste management and recycling pilots in 3 largest urban areas (through public-private partnerships)
- 1 sub \$2,000US electric concept vehicle

Request for Technical Assistance

Laikipia County is seeking expert technical assistance to help design fiscally and technically sound policies and implement world-class solutions now. Laikipia County recognizes that to lead the developing world to a cleaner future will require leveraging the discoveries of the clean-tech industry and learning from the experiences of developed countries.

Offer of Technical Assistance

Laikipia County can help other developing and developed jurisdictions by sharing its success creating a world-class process of reforestation and land-management - the TIST Program. We know that avoiding and reducing emissions will not be sufficient to avoid the dangers of climate change, unless action is taken to restore and maintain healthy natural carbon sinks. Our expertise extends to organizing community-based tree-growing programs proven to meet the highest verification standards, and sharing those results and program information through the internet. Even with severe droughts and logistical challenges, to date, our TIST Program has produced over 1.1 million live trees, with emission reductions of over 144,000 tonnes. This approach will continue to help the county meet its goals, and can help other countries meet their GHG goals.

Policy Issues

Laikipia County requires greater clarity on international protocols and agreements for GHG accounting. For example, there is a large British military base located in the County with more than 10,000 troops rotating through for training, more than 1,000 fossil fueled vehicles—numerous helicopters and jet aircraft, etc. From a Policy perspective, are the emissions from this base the responsibility of Laikipia County, or of the Government of Kenya, or of the Government of the UK?

Funding

Laikipia County is seeking public-private partnerships, international compliance and voluntary carbon credit revenues, and outside private business investments to make these ambitious plans a reality. Technical support from the State of California, the innovative companies located in California, and other signatories to the Under 2 MOU would be extremely welcome.