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# Baseline Monitoring and Evaluation Capacity Assessment Report, County of Marsabit



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## ACRONYMS

<b>AWP</b>	Annual Workplans
<b>BHA</b>	Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance
<b>CIDP</b>	County Integrated Development Plan
<b>CIMES</b>	County Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation System
<b>CRS</b>	Catholic Relief Services
<b>CWW</b>	Concern Worldwide
<b>DDU</b>	Data Demand & Use
<b>DFSA</b>	Development Food Security Activity
<b>DHIS</b>	District Health Information System
<b>DHIS2</b>	District Health Information System-2
<b>DQA</b>	Data Quality Assessment
<b>EP</b>	Economic Planning
<b>FCDC</b>	Frontier Counties Development Council
<b>FFP</b>	Food for Peace
<b>GAIN</b>	Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
<b>GDU</b>	Governor Delivery Unit
<b>IBTCI</b>	International Business & Technical Consultants, Inc.
<b>ICT</b>	Information Communication Technologies
<b>ICT4D</b>	Information Communication Technologies for Development
<b>ICTA</b>	Information & Communication Technology Authority
<b>KII</b>	Key Informant Interviews
<b>MEAL</b>	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning
<b>MEASURE</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation to Assess and Use Results
<b>MECAT</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation Capacity Assessment Tool
<b>MOH</b>	Ministry of Health
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>Nawiri</b>	Nutrition Achievements within Resilient Institution
<b>NDMA</b>	National Drought Management Authority
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>OCI</b>	Organization Capacity Index
<b>PREG</b>	Partnership for Resilience and Economic Growth
<b>RDQA</b>	Routine Data Quality Assessment
<b>TMG</b>	The Manoff Group
<b>TWG</b>	Technical Working Group
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Program
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>VE</b>	Village Enterprise
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme

## Executive Summary

The Baseline Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Capacity Assessment of Marsabit County aimed to understand and quantify the functionality of the M&E system within the County Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation System (CIMES) and determine its capacity to: (1) meet the system's performance objectives, (2) identify gaps, and (3) determine appropriate M&E interventions. Nawiri also carried out an Information Communication Technologies for Development (ICT4D) assessment in Marsabit county to: (1) understand the data collection platform each sector uses and (2) to facilitate the efficiency of M&E data collection activities. The M&E capacity assessment was led by the Marsabit County M&E Unit and representatives from: The Department of Health; the Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries; the Department of Trade; the Department of ICT; the Department of Statistics; and the Office of the County Secretary. The summary of key findings of the M&E/ICT4D capacity assessments findings are presented as follows:

- The M&E framework/policy (2020) was drafted and is at the approval stage within the sector departments.
- The County M&E Unit within the Economic and Development Planning Department usually develops the annual multi-sector M&E plan. This plan is developed in consultation with sector offices and kept within the County M&E Unit. However, several weak links exist between the County M&E Unit and the sector offices: The County M&E Unit does not share the annual M&E plan with sector offices, no joint monitoring visits exist, and no data verification mechanisms are in place
- In the Marsabit County, M&E activities are considered of lesser importance. As a result, in sector offices, M&E activities are managed by a delegated person/M&E focal person in addition to his/her main roles, with no clear definition of M&E tasks, responsibilities and/or deliverables. There is a limited capacity for M&E as well as a constrained budget for related activities. The M&E staff at the County Economic and Development Planning Department though, there is no M&E unit in sector offices.
- The M&E technical staff at the County Economic and Development Planning Department, usually prepares quarterly progress reports using the existing quarter reporting template. Once progress reports are submitted by sector offices, the M&E staff at the county consolidates them to generate the overall county quarterly progress.
- The rollout of the electronic-CIMES, or e-CIMES, would require the support of political or senior leadership because it ensures accountability and transparency of county government performance. Moreover, the e-CIMES enhances tracking performance of activities using monitoring indicators, financial monitoring/burn rate, procurement, bid processes, and visualization of performance using the dashboard. As a result of leadership support in some counties, like Machakos, Tana River, and Taita Taveta, the e-CIMES has been rolled out and is successful.
- The county sectors have many databases that are not linked in any way. The sectors understand the importance of linking the databases but do not have the resources or have not identified the responsible parties to oversee the integration. For instance, they already have a server, but it is not functional.



- The M&E technical staff at the County M&E Unit have a good M&E system set-up. However, they require strengthening their capacity on sector M&E plan development, how to conduct evaluation surveys, development of survey protocols, routine monitoring, database management, ensure data quality including DQAs, data analyses, and write-up of analytical reports.
- The sector offices would benefit from strengthening their understanding of M&E plan development, how to conduct routine monitoring, database management system development, how to ensure data quality including DQAs, survey data analyses, conducting trend analyses using secondary information and data, and write-up of analytical reports.

In conclusion, the assessment participants developed an action plan to roll-out and strengthen the M&E system within the county sector offices and with proposed recommendations:

- Through building collaborations with the development partners of WFP and PREG, as well as leveraging the M&E system strengthening activities, Nawiri team would support on an M&E capacity development and execute the implementation of an integrated M&E Policy framework with eCIMES roll-out.
- Considering the commitment of the Marsabit County Government in terms of maintaining their database server, Nawiri team provide a technical support to the ICT department on building their capacity to strengthen the database management system.
- To enhance the quality of M&E data within the County, Nawiri team provide support in developing a Routine DQA guideline and build the capacity of County M&E staff on how to execute the implementation of RDQA within the County multi-sector offices.

## Introduction

The Baseline M&E Capacity Assessment for Marsabit aims to understand and quantify the current M&E capacity areas, identify gaps, and propose a county-based M&E capacity development plan.

### 1.1 Program Overview

The ***Nutrition Achievements within Resilient Institution (Nawiri)*** activity was awarded to Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and its partner agencies, including Tufts University’s Feinstein International Center, Concern Worldwide, The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), International Business & Technical Consultants, Inc. (IBTCI), The Manoff Group, Village Enterprise, and local implementing sub-partners such as the Caritas network. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Nawiri Activity is a multisectoral package of services to support local institutions to sustainably reduce persistent acute malnutrition among vulnerable subpopulations of Isiolo, Marsabit, Samburu, and Turkana Counties in Kenya. CRS leads the Nawiri consortium implementing in Isiolo & Marsabit Counties, while Mercy Corps leads a second and independent Nawiri consortium implementing in the project in Turkana and Samburu (note that both consortiums share the USAID program name “Nawiri”). The Activity is designed to have a robust research phase for the first two years (years 1-2) that will inform subsequent implementation and scale-up in years 3-5. The program is funded by the USAID Office of Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) Development Food Security Activity (DFSA).

Nawiri is collaboratively working with county governments to implement the following tasks: assess the status of the CIMES implementation; conduct Information Communication Technologies (ICT) infrastructure assessments; procure and support the digitization of the system; build user competencies; and support the County team to conduct regular performance reviews on implementation progress, successes, and challenges. Nawiri plans to build the capacity of departments to streamline other data collection and management systems (e.g., District Health Information System-2 (DHIS2), E-Surveillance, Water Management as a Service Platform) and accompany the county staff to inculcate a culture of data use for decision making, learning and adaptive management by the various departments, county executive leadership, and the county assembly through regular data review sessions.

In October 2020, the Nawiri M&E team conducted a courtesy meeting with the County Government M&E departments of Isiolo and Marsabit. The meeting aimed to understand how the county M&E system functions and what operational challenges were encountered in the roll-out of the CIMES. Moreover, the team gathered preliminary information about the county's M&E system, including the existing CIMES' status, the scope of work of the county M&E Technical Working Group (TWG), detailed operational aspects on their progress, and encountered challenges. The County M&E Directorate appealed for support on the roll-out of the CIMES.

Effective implementation of the CIMES requires a robust M&E framework to provide evidence for the achievement of the policy objectives. Currently, the National and County Governments are rolling-out the e-CIMES to track the performance monitoring of the development sector. The role of counties in service delivery requires them to have adequate and effective M&E systems to assess progress towards achieving sectoral objectives and targets.

By improving data demand and use, Nawiri is supporting the roll-out and implementation of the CIMES among the Nawiri County M&E department stakeholders listed in the textbox. Conducting a comprehensive and systematic multi-sector institutional M&E capacity assessment in two targeted counties is important to build a sustainable and systemic M&E capacity among the County Government Multi-Sector Offices of Marsabit. The baseline assessment contributes to understand and quantify the CIMES' M&E capacity to meet its performance objectives, identify gaps, and then come up with a county-based M&E capacity development plan.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Box 1 - County Level CIMES Stakeholders</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Economic Planning and Results Delivery Commission</li><li>• Department of Health</li><li>• Department of Agriculture, Livestock &amp; Fisheries</li><li>• Department of Trade</li><li>• ICT Department</li><li>• Department of Education &amp; Gender</li><li>• Office of the County Secretary</li></ul>
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## 1.2 General overview of the CIMES

A well-designed M&E system ensures the collection, analysis, and use of data for implementation and learning purposes. The implementation team and relevant stakeholders analyze and present the data to senior management and policymakers in the county for decision-making. To establish a robust M&E system, specific competencies and capacities are required. In the exercise reported in this document, the latter was assessed based on the following competency dimensions:



- technical skills.
- managerial skills.
- existence and quality of data systems.
- available technology; available fiscal resources; and
- institutional experience.

At the county level, tracking the progress towards achievement of the policies, projects, and programs outlined in each CIDP is undertaken through the CIMES. Analyzing the CIMES results helps demonstrate whether resources spent on implementing the CIDP investment programs lead to intended outcomes, impacts, and benefits for the county population. In this way, the CIMES is being used to provide essential feedback to the county budgetary allocation and execution processes, thereby ensuring that future county budget preparation and execution processes are tailored towards maximizing their impact on achieving CIDP targets.

The CIMES also serves as a vehicle for building partnerships within county governments, as well as between national and county governments, the private sector, civil society, and external development partners. Thus, the system will improve stakeholder communication and collaboration, and help in building stakeholder agreement on desirable poverty reduction outcomes and strategies. The CIMES provides an integrated structure and process for counties to engage stakeholders, plan, govern, manage and operate independently and yet in synch with one another.

The Nawiri M&E Plan stipulates that conducting an M&E capacity assessment and strengthening the county government staff is one of the grey areas for Nawiri interventions. Nawiri started working with the county M&E team to achieve the main objective: strengthen the capacity of county governments to collect, analyze, and utilize accurate monitoring data regularly to be responsive to community needs. This objective will be achieved by supporting the rollout and implementation of the CIMES. The CIMES itself is an observation mechanism to be used by County Governors, County Executive Committee Members, and other senior management staff. It allows a regular flow of information throughout CIDP implementation and enables the detection of changes in status and utilization of resources allocated to CIDP priorities. Nawiri will work with county governments to improve the CIMES rollout by supporting technical aspect of M&E activity implementations in each of the counties. In so doing, it will allow county staff to:

- conduct capacity assessments, including ICT and staffing for the CIMES implementation.
- support the procurement of ICT equipment and digitization of the system.
- build the capacity of county M&E staff to adopt open-source tools to collect, visualize and disseminate data, and
- conduct data quality assessments (DQAs) and quarterly reviews to reflect on implementation progress.

As the M&E consortium member in Nawiri, IBTCI is providing support on the rollout and implementation of the CIMES in both Isiolo and Marsabit to improve data demand and use at county levels. The Nawiri M&E team also conducted the baseline M&E capacity assessment in Marsabit, to identify its strengths and weaknesses, and identify any related gaps.

### 1.3 Objectives of Baseline M&E Capacity Assessment

The overall objective of the assessment was to understand and quantify the functionality of the M&E system within the CIMES and determine its capacity to (1) meet the system’s performance objectives, (2) identify gaps, and (3) determine appropriate interventions to the gaps identified. The assessment will be used in monitoring and evaluating the success of strengthening the CIMES’s M&E capacity. Specifically, the assessment focused on:

- Establishing baseline values for the 12 M&E capacity areas in the group assessment and 5 M&E capacity areas in the individual capacity areas.
- Understanding the status of performance in key M&E capacity areas, including organization and human resources, leadership in M&E, data collection, analysis, and reporting practices; learning from results and then practicing adaptive management.
- Identifying the status of data and information sharing platforms, ICT4D, including the ICT infrastructures.
- Determining existing gaps as well as identifying and prioritizing interventions to strengthen the CIMES.
- Using baseline findings to develop capacity-building plans to strengthen the performance of county M&E functions.

### MECAT Assessment Methods

To assess the current monitoring and evaluation M&E capacities and systems in Marsabit County, the Nawiri M&E team adapted the Monitoring and Evaluation Capacity Assessment Toolkit (MECAT) process. The MECAT’s assessment process follows four methods: (1) desk review; (2) individual self-assessment; (3) group assessment; and (4) key informant interviews. Table 1 presents the methods, their associated tool, target group, and role in the Marsabit baseline assessment.

**Table 1: MECAT Methods<sup>1</sup>**

Method	MECAT Specific tool	Target	Marsabit Baseline MECAT
Desk Review	Desk review guidance	Organizational documentation	General review conducted for both counties (Isiolo and Marsabit)
Individual Assessment	Individual assessment Excel workbook	Staff / Individual	Conducted in a workshop
Group Assessment	Group assessment Excel workbook	Organization	Conducted in a workshop

<sup>1</sup> Source: [MEASURE Evaluation: User Guide](#)

## 1.4 Desk Review

The M&E team conducted a desk review that included M&E capacity assessments of health sector units in 25 counties in Kenya, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) M&E capacity assessment covering different sectors done in Marsabit, and an assessment conducted by the Isiolo and Marsabit M&E teams in association with UNDP covering counties supported by the Frontier Counties Development Council (FCDC). Additionally, the USAID RLA and WFP workplan also reviewed and attached as Annex I.

### Individual Assessment

The individual assessment tool is an Excel workbook with questions that assess a person's M&E knowledge, skills, and competencies (Annex II). The individual assessment tool contains five competencies: (1) M&E leadership; (2) data collection and management; (3) evaluation; (4) data analysis, dissemination, and use; and (5) general management. Each competency has a set of subdivisions, and each subdivision may have 2-10 items. Workshop attendees ranked their skills per item using a six-point scale listed below:

1. Entry: Developing awareness/building knowledge; limited skills.
2. Novice : Limited experience, unaware of potential problems, unaware of questions to ask.
3. Proficient: Applies knowledge routinely, basic skills, a moderate amount of experience.
4. Skilled: Solves problems that may arise, aware of questions to ask, and able to access resources.
5. Mastery: Uses knowledge fluently and effectively; advanced skills; extensive experience.
6. Expert: Anticipates problems, poses questions to field/stakeholders, and seeks solutions

The individual assessment Excel workbook automatically assigns a numerical value to the items scored (using a 5-point scale, where 0 is the lowest competency level, and 5 is the highest).

### Group Assessment

The group assessment uses an Excel workbook with questions that assess an organization's current M&E capacity and its ability to meet performance expectations (Annex III). The MECAT group assessment tool requires workshop attendees to follow a participatory approach to assess their department's M&E capacity in 12 capacity areas described below:

- Capacity Area 1: Operates within a robust and integrated organizational structure for M&E
- Capacity Area 2: Deploys adequate and competent human resources to drive M&E
- Capacity Area 3: Operates within an effective partnership and governance mechanism
- Capacity Area 4: Is anchored upon an overarching county M&E plan
- Capacity Area 5: Is delivered through a jointly agreed annual costed M&E plan
- Capacity Area 6: Is sustained and promoted through advocacy and communication
- Capacity Area 7: Is driven by robust systems for routine monitoring
- Capacity Area 8: Incorporates investments to conduct periodic surveys and surveillance
- Capacity Area 9: Promotes the use of unified and robust county databases
- Capacity Area 10: Provides for routine supervision and quality auditing
- Capacity Area 11: Invests in evaluation and research

- Capacity Area 12: Promotes widespread data demand and information use as well as learning from information and then practicing adaptive management

Each capacity area is subdivided into elements and each element contains items organized around four dimensions:

- **Status:** Indicates the existence or otherwise of specific elements that constitute an M&E capacity area.
- **Quality:** Measures the robustness of these elements relative to established norms or standards. This dimension indicates the degree of quality a specific task or deliverable meets according to established quality norms.
- **Technical autonomy:** Assesses the ability of the institution to develop and execute M&E functions without depending on external support. This dimension indicates an organization's internal capacity to accomplish tasks in the 12 capacity areas.
- **Financial autonomy:** Assesses the ability of the institution to financially support specific M&E functions without depending on external funding. This dimension indicates an organization's ability to financially support its undertakings on key tasks in the 12 capacity areas.

The workshop participants scored the 12 capacity areas using a series of statements based on three categorical response scales:

- a 3-point scale (Yes mostly, Yes partly, Not at all);
- a 4-point scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree) or (Less than 1 year, 1–2 years, 2–3 years, Greater than 3 years); and
- a 5-point scale (Weekly, Monthly, Quarterly, Biannually, Annually).

Together, the participants discuss the scale for each element. When they reach an agreement, they select the scale. The group assessment Excel workbook automatically assigns a numerical value to the element (using a 10-point scale, where 0 is the least, implying no capacity, and 10 is the highest).

## 1.5 Participants

The Monitoring & Evaluation Capacity Assessment Tool (MECAT) workshop was facilitated for two days on February 8-9, 2021. A total of 18 participants attended the workshop, of whom 12 were from Marsabit county and six from the Nawiri. The county level participants came from the following offices: the Economic Planning and Results Delivery Commission; the Department of Health; the Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries; the Department of Trade; the Department of ICT; the Department of Statistics; and the Office of the County Secretary. From the Nawiri team, the six team members were: the M&E Lead, the Database Specialist, the M&E Program Specialist, the County Secretary Office and the System Strengthening Specialist, and the MEL associates. The Nawiri team members participated only as facilitators.

## 1.6 Assessments

The main instrument used to collect data was an adapted MECAT, a structured questionnaire that guides assessment participants through a process to assess their M&E capacity, identify gaps, and plan ways to strengthen their M&E systems. The MECAT is adapted from the MEASURE Evaluation Project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for the health sector M&E capacity strengthening programme<sup>2</sup>.

**Individual Assessment:** Using the MECAT Individual Assessment Tool, all 12 participants at the county level rated themselves in the five competencies: M&E Leadership; Data Collection & Data Management; Evaluation; Data Analysis Dissemination, and Use; and General Management. This self-assessment was completed by key M&E staff and directors from the Economic Planning and Governance Delivery Unit (GDU) departments in the county by the M&E focal points within each department. Appendix 1 contains the MECAT Individual Assessment Tool.

**Group Assessment:** A group version of the MECAT assessment tool was also administered. This version required the assessment to be done collectively and arrive at rankings consensually. Two subgroups were created; the first was comprised of staff from the Economic Planning Department and the second was comprised of the M&E focal points from sector departments. Appendix II contains the adapted MECAT Group Assessment Tool.

## 1.7 Procedures

Before filling out the assessment tools and providing feedback, the stakeholders received instruction about the tool's objectives and how to use them.

# 2. Data Analysis

## Individual Assessment

The MECAT individual tool has a summary page with an average score for all participants for each of the 5 competencies (M&E Leadership; Data Collection and Data Management; Evaluation; Data Analysis, Dissemination and Use; and General management). This average was used to create graphs to represent findings. This graph is presented in the section on Findings below as Figure 1.

## Group Assessment

The adapted M&E Capacity Assessment Tool used in the group assessment automatically generated useful dashboards and preliminary results from the data. The dashboard shows the distribution of the overall

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.measureevaluation.org/pima/baseline-assessments>: MEASURE Evaluation, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), is developed MECAT to strengthens health sector data collection, data quality, and the global capacity for research. This tool is adapted to County M&E capacity strengthening.

scores and for each of the 12 functional areas by dimensions (status, quality, technical autonomy, and financial autonomy). The dashboards provided a visual representation of the gaps in the M&E capacity for each functional unit.

Finally, the Nawiri M&E Team calculated the average index per dimension by adding the scores of each dimension and dividing the aggregate score by four, for each one of the 12 M&E capacities (for example, for organizational capacity the scores for each dimension were, status=6.25, quality=4.96, technical=4.38, and financial=5.00. The simple averaged of these four numbers is 5.15).

### **3. Findings**

Once the assessment was completed, findings were analyzed by workshop participants and an action plan for their respective institutions was developed. The Nawiri M&E team facilitated the process, providing the necessary guidance in both procedures to study participants. Completing this assessment provided the departments with a comprehensive picture of their M&E capacity.

#### **4.1. Capacity Areas of M&E System in Marsabit County**

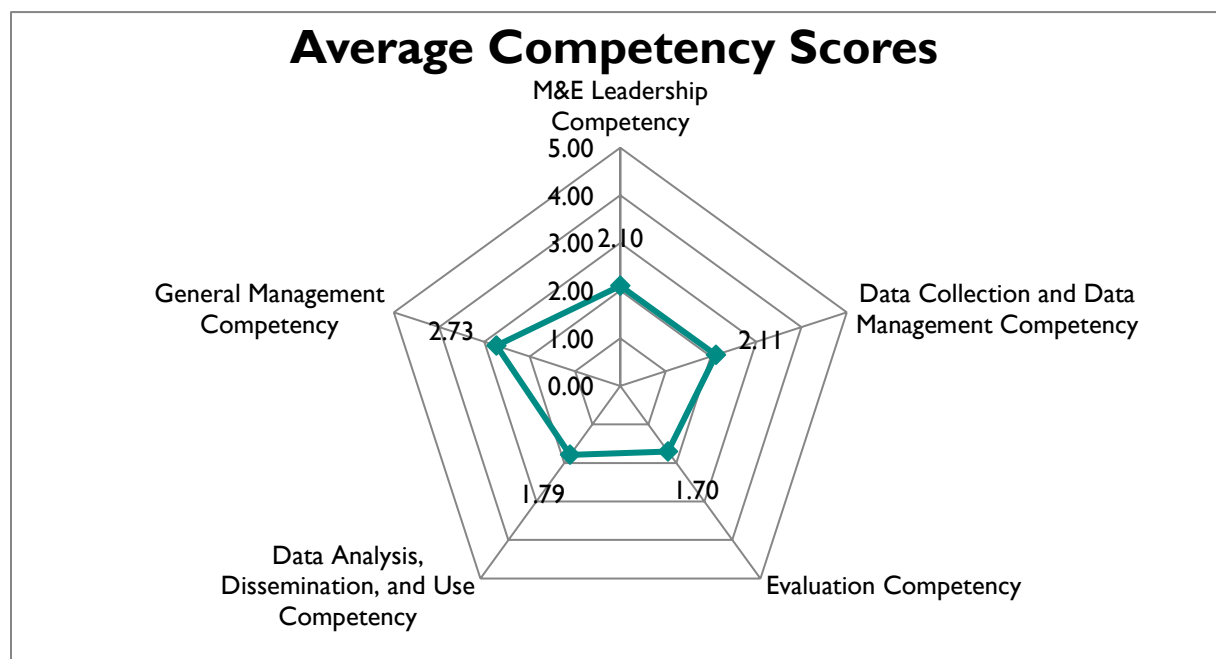
##### **4.1.1. Individual Capacity Assessment**

Each participant rated their M&E capacities in the five competencies previously described aiming to identify their personal capacity building priorities. To understand the general M&E capacities of the group, as well as design and plan the needed capacity building activities, the Nawiri team calculated an average for each competency using the individual ratings from all 12 participants displayed in the summary sheet of the MECAT Individual Assessment Tool. Figure 1 and Table 2 below present this average score.

The average competency scores indicate that in all the five competencies' areas, the results are from entry to novice. Out of a total possible score of 5, the scores ranged from 1.7 to 2.73. The two competencies with the lowest scores are Evaluation (1.7) and Data Analysis (1.8) competencies. While the General Management competency had the highest average score (2.7).



**Figure 1: Baseline values for the Average Individual Capacity Scores by Dimensions, Marsabit County**



**Table 2: Baseline values for the Average Individual Capacity Scores by Dimensions, Marsabit County**

Capacity areas	Average
M&E Leadership Competency	2.1
Data Collection and Data Management Competency	2.1
Evaluation Competency	1.7
Data Analysis, Dissemination, and Use Competency	1.8
General Management Competency	2.7

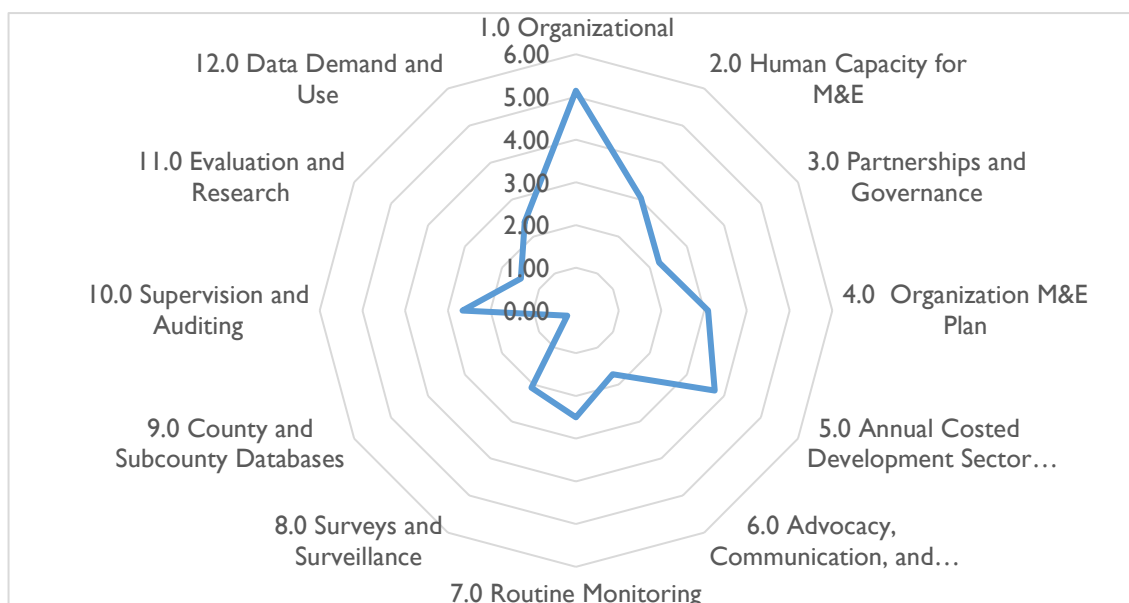
#### 4.1.2. Group Capacity Assessment

Table 3 below shows a combined average from the two group assessments conducted by the Economic & Planning Department and the different sector departments. The Marsabit County Economic and Planning Department has an M&E unit comprising of five staff members, all of whom attended the workshop. The other seven participants were M&E staff representatives from different sectors/units; they were grouped as sector departments for the group assessment. From Table 4, the Economic & Planning department operates using an M&E framework and its own budget. Within the county, per the assessment findings, this department is better equipped than their counterparts elsewhere to execute M&E activities.

Overall, the capacity scores range from 2.0 to 10.0 (out of the total possible score of 10.0), but generally hover around 3-6 which are moderate to highest capacity levels in all four dimensions. This is largely due to better or stronger organizational structures that support M&E. Overall, a higher score was mainly

explained by the existence of structures, guidelines, and supportive policy environments in key capacity areas that support effective M&E.

**Figure 2: Baseline Values for the Average Group Capacity Scores by Dimensions (EPD and Sector units), Marsabit County**



**Table 3: Baseline values for the Average Group Capacity Scores by Dimensions (EPD and Sector units), Marsabit County**

Capacity areas	Status	Quality	Technical	Financial
1.0 Organizational	6.25	4.96	4.38	5.00
2.0 Human Capacity for M&E	3.00	4.17	3.75	1.25
3.0 Partnerships and Governance	3.39	2.10	2.50	1.00
4.0 Organization M&E Plan	3.50	3.05	2.50	3.33
5.0 Annual Costed Development Sector M&E Work Plan	6.67	3.33	0.00	5.00
6.0 Advocacy, Communication, and Cultural Behavior	5.00	1.88	0.00	0.00
7.0 Routine Monitoring	3.75	2.50	2.50	1.25
8.0 Surveys and Surveillance	2.50	2.08	1.25	2.50
9.0 County and Subcounty Databases	0.0	0.94	0.0	0.0
10.0 Supervision and Auditing	3.75	1.88	3.75	1.25
11.0 Evaluation and Research	2.50	2.22	1.25	0.00
12.0 Data Demand and Use	2.50	2.08	2.50	2.50

**Table 4: Baseline values for the Capacity Scores by Dimensions for Economic & Planning Department, Marsabit County**

Capacity Areas	Status	Quality	Technical	Financial
1.0 Organizational	7.50	7.31	6.25	10.00
2.0 Human Capacity for M&E	4.00	5.92	5.00	2.50
3.0 Partnerships and Governance	2.86	1.98	3.00	1.00
4.0 Organization M&E Plan	7.00	6.10	5.00	6.67
5.0 Annual Costed Development Sector M&E Work Plan	10.00	6.67	0.00	10.00
6.0 Advocacy, Communication, and Cultural Behavior	5.00	2.50	0.00	0.00
7.0 Routine Monitoring	2.50	1.88	2.50	2.50
8.0 Surveys and Surveillance	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
9.0 County and Subcounty Databases	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
10.0 Supervision and Auditing	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
11.0 Evaluation and Research	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
12.0 Data Demand and Use	1.67	1.67	2.50	2.50

**Table 5: Baseline values for the Capacity Scores by Dimensions for Sector Departments, Marsabit County**

Capacity Areas	Status	Quality	Technical	Financial
1.0 Organizational	5.00	2.60	2.50	0.00
2.0 Human Capacity for M&E	2.00	2.42	2.50	0.00
3.0 Partnerships and Governance	3.93	2.23	2.00	1.00
4.0 Organization M&E Plan	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
5.0 Annual Costed Development Sector M&E Work Plan	3.33	0.00	0.00	0.00
6.0 Advocacy, Communication, and Cultural Behavior	5.00	1.25	0.00	0.00
7.0 Routine Monitoring	5.00	3.13	2.50	0.00
8.0 Surveys and Surveillance	5.00	4.17	2.50	5.00
9.0 County and Subcounty Databases	0.00	1.88	0.00	0.00
10.0 Supervision and Auditing	7.50	3.75	7.50	2.50
11.0 Evaluation and Research	5.00	4.44	2.50	0.00
12.0 Data Demand and Use	3.33	2.50	2.50	2.50

## 4.2. Key Findings in each Capacity Area are outlined below:

**Capacity Area 1: Organizational Structure:** Strong leadership and enabling structures are critical for proper implementation of any policy, and dedication to M&E at the county level depended on the presence of relevant policies articulating its importance. At the time of the survey, the county M&E department and sector offices assessed the existing M&E framework in line with constitutional requirements for the multi-sector operations. The existing M&E framework was developed through a participatory and inclusive process requiring the involvement of all relevant stakeholders in the different stages of the project cycle; from conceptualization, design, planning, implementation to monitoring and evaluation. The M&E activities described in the CIDP (2018-2022) were geared towards addressing each county's mission and outlined key M&E activities, such as generating basic reports, data collection, and surveillance. Despite the inclusion of broad mission and vision statements in these strategic documents, the institutional values required to implement them ethically are either below or at a moderate level. M&E framework/policy was drafted and is under review for final approval within the involved sectors (e.g. Agriculture, Health, Trade, Education, etc.).

The group participants rated the four dimensions (i.e., status, quality, technical and financial) related to an organization M&E capacity. The group participants assessed the status of organizational M&E capacity and scored as 6.25 which is quite above an average value. This was due to the M&E activities included in the CIDP, CIMES and CADP. The group participants also indicate the quality dimension of an organizational M&E activities scored as 4.96 which is below an average level. More efforts need to exert to improve the quality dimension of an organizational M&E capacity. Moreover, the technical capability of County M&E team in terms of developing and execute M&E functions have been assessed. The result indicate that the group scored at 4.38 which is below an average value. The financial dimensions which demonstrate the commitment of the county government in allocating budget for the execution of M&E activities scored at average level. This is because of the County Economic Planning and Health Departments allocated budget for development and execution of an M&E activities. In summary, across the four dimensions assessed, scores ranged in Organizational Structure from 4.4 to 6.3.

**Capacity Area 2: Human Capacity for M&E:** In this assessment, the human capacity for M&E was assessed by examining the existence of policy documents or guidelines that seek to develop the skills, competencies, and career paths for staff undertaking M&E-related functions. No sector offices reported a clearly defined skillset for personnel tasked with leading M&E functions nor did any county sector offices have workforce development plans, perhaps due to limited planning at the policy level. All sector offices reported that they did not recognize the need for M&E structure and human resources. As a result, most sector offices did not have designated M&E staff, rather M&E activities are considered secondary. Moreover, in the sector offices, M&E activities are managed by a delegated person/M&E focal person in addition to his/her main roles, with no clear definition of M&E roles and responsibilities and with limited M&E capacity and budget for activities. However, in County Economic and Development Planning Department, there is an M&E Unit with M&E technical staff. The overall score for all dimensions is rated at a low level. ***Across the four dimensions assessed, scores ranged in Human Capacity from 1.3 to 4.2.***

**Capacity Area 3: Partnerships and Governance:** A functional M&E system requires governance structures, such as TWGs; local leadership that coordinates stakeholders; and routine communication channels to facilitate the exchange of information. These mechanisms are particularly important for creating synergies and harnessing resources from partners and stakeholders to support the implementation of M&E functions. Group assessments across the sectors indicated that county and sector offices had limited capacity to coordinate partners and stakeholders. The biggest challenges were a lack of a specific M&E guideline to support and coordinate M&E activities, a lack of clearly defined roles and responsibilities relating to M&E functions, and the absence of an M&E-specific TWG to bring partners together. Most sector offices did not have a separate M&E policy and often relied on the CIDP (which has a bearing on M&E). In most sector offices, respondents reported limited capacity to share M&E communication products (newsletters, bulletins, etc.) and decisions with relevant stakeholders in a timely manner. ***Across dimensions assessed, scores in Partnerships and Governance ranged from 1.0 to 3.4.***

**Capacity Area 4: Organization of a County Level M&E Plans:** An M&E plan provides direction and focus of efforts to track performance against set targets. The development of such a plan should be undertaken in a participatory manner by bringing together broad-based multi-sector offices for technical and financial resource leveraging. At the time of the assessment, most sector offices reported that do not have M&E plans and only the County M&E department has them. In the CIDP, the M&E components are clearly stated. ***The overall scores are very low. Across dimensions assessed, scores regarding the organization of a County M&E Plan ranged from 2.5 to 3.5.***

**Capacity Area 5: Annual Costed M&E Workplan:** In Marsabit, the county M&E department had Annual Workplans (AWPs) that outlined M&E-related activities. A bigger challenge, however, was the near absence of proper structures to carry out M&E activities to the lower levels. None of the sector offices surveyed had M&E units or directorates in place to implement M&E. The staff at the County M&E Unit/department within the Economic and Development Planning develops the annual multi-sector M&E workplan. This workplan is developed in consultation with sector offices and kept with the County M&E Unit. In terms of sharing the annual M&E plan, conducting joint monitoring visits, and verification mechanisms, there is a weak link between the County M&E Unit, Economic and Development Planning, and sector offices: resources were generally reported as being inadequate to implement the M&E activities for all sectors. This lack of resources affects the reporting of data and the overall implementation of effective M&E activities. In most cases, information and data are received as stipulated in guidelines. Overall, the M&E gaps are largely due to limited technical capacity issues associated with understaffing and limited allocation of budget to the roll out the M&E activities. ***Across dimensions assessed, scores regarding the existence of a costed M&E Work Plan per development sector ranged from 0 to 6.7.***

**Capacity Area 6: Advocacy, Communication, Culture, and Behavior:** Advocacy for M&E is likely absent in Marsabit county for two reasons: first, the systems are not yet fully developed, and second, the institutional memory has not embraced the concept of advocacy for data needs and use of data for decision making. Although participants in the group assessment mostly reported that the senior leadership in the county supported M&E, county sector offices often lacked a written strategy to comprehensively guide advocacy for M&E. In addition, many sector offices lacked an M&E sector-specific communication strategy, meaning these activities are carried out on an ad hoc basis. The pertinent scores indicate that this area is almost at a poor level. ***Across dimensions assessed, scores regarding Advocacy, Communication, Culture, and Behavior ranged from 0 to 5.***

**Capacity Area 7: Routine Monitoring:** The CIDP document reported the availability of clearly defined mechanisms for guiding data collection, transfer, and reporting, as well as the necessary tools for data collection. The County M&E Unit, Economic and Development Planning, the M&E technical staff usually gather quarterly progress reports using the reporting template. Once the progress reports are shared by sector offices, the M&E team consolidates the sector quarterly progress reports from the different sectors. There is no sharing of progress report to sector offices. ***Across dimensions assessed, scores regarding Routine Monitoring ranged from 1.3 to 3.8.***

**Capacity Area 8: Surveys and Surveillance:** Most county sector offices do not have a database for ongoing surveillance activities in the county but none for surveys conducted. The second weakest aspect was a database for all surveys conducted in the county. The county does not have access to a copy of survey protocols of all surveys conducted to confirm that the proper authorities have authorized the research carried out. Moreover, researchers rarely provide feedback to the county to help in decision-making. The county team capacity has limited expertise to quickly utilize the findings in decision making. ***Across dimensions assessed, scores regarding Surveys and Surveillance ranged from 1.3 to 2.5.***

**Capacity Area 9: County and Subcounty Databases:** This capacity area scored lowest in all dimensions. The county sectors have many databases that are not linked in any way. The sectors understand the importance of linking the databases but do not have the resources or have not identified the responsible parties to oversee the integration. For instance, they already have a server that can be used for hosting an integrated database as well as the county dashboard, but it is not functional. Moreover, all sector offices reported having various types of database platforms that were not linked to the national databases for data aggregation. The databases are not largely designed to respond to the decision-making and reporting needs of county actors. In the workshop, the participants mentioned that the e-CIMES developed by the National Treasury has not been rolled out in the county due to, seemingly, a lack of sufficient support from political or senior leadership, as the system ensures accountability and transparency of county government procedures and performance including showing the distribution of awarded tenders/contracts. Moreover, the e-CIMES enhances tracking of the performance of activities using monitoring indicators, financial monitoring/burn rate, procurement, bid processes, and visualization of performance using the dashboard. As a result of leadership support in some counties, like Machakos, Tana River, and Taita Taveta, the e-CIMES has been rolled out and is successful. ***Across dimensions assessed, scores regarding county and sub-county Databases are all 0.***

**Capacity Area 10: Supervision and Auditing:** All participants reported that there are no supportive supervision guidelines to support routine data collection at the sector office level, except in the health sector. The absence of the Routine Data Quality Assessment (RDQA) guidance on undertaking data quality audits is highlighted in the reflections. The County M&E Unit, Economic and Development Planning, the M&E technical staff have a good M&E system set up. However, they require strengthening their capacity on Sector M&E plan development, how to conduct evaluation surveys, development of survey protocols, routine monitoring, database management, ensure data quality including DQAs, data analyses, and write-up of analytical reports. This capacity area scored among the lowest. ***Across dimensions assessed, scores regarding Supervision and Auditing ranged from 1.3 to 3.8.***

**Capacity Area 11: Evaluation and Research:** This capacity area scored lowest, with all the four dimensions scoring zero in most county sector offices. The county did not have an inventory, register, or database of institutions undertaking research and evaluation. Additionally, there was no county-specific research



agenda, limited capacity on how to design and execute evaluation surveys, development of survey protocols, data collection, and ensure data quality, data analyses, and write-up of analytical reports. ***Across dimensions assessed, scores regarding Evaluation and Research ranged from 0 to 2.5.***

**Capacity Area 12: Data Demand and Use:** In the county, data use plans were not in place. Some offices had only a data use approach captured in the DHIS2 or in the draft M&E work plans, where these were being developed. The participants, however, recommended conducting an assessment to find out user needs before developing the data use plan. An additional observation is that the use of the data generated from supportive supervision processes is not often effective. Data demand and use lag behind partly due to a lack of a culture of evidence-informed decision making. The sector offices would require strengthening their capacity on developing database plan and database management system, ensure data quality including DQAs, use of available time-series data through conducting trend analyses, and write-up of analytical reports. ***Across dimensions assessed, scores regarding the Data Demand and Use ranged from 2.1 to 2.5.***

## 4. ICT4D Assessment

Nawiri carried out an ICT4D assessment in the county to establish the extent to which is being utilized within the M&E context to facilitate efficiency in carrying out M&E activities. The assessment focused on the following areas:

**Data platforms:** The focus was to establish data collection systems being used for data collection within the different departments in the county, both routine and non-routine, and whether they are inter-linked. The assessment established that the health department has one of the most robust systems: the DHIS2 that is used to collect routine data from the health facility level and transmitted through the sub-county, county, and up to the national level. Other existing systems include: Periscope and Pre-paid Water Systems used by the Water Department, elocust3m used by Agriculture Department, and the Early Warning System used by National Drought Management Authority (NDMA). There are other systems used for non-routine data collection systems, namely Kobo and EpiCollect5. These two systems are not linked to any database and as such store data on the device's memory from which stored data is manually extracted. These systems are independent and not linked in any way.

**Data security protocols:** the participants assessed the existence of data sharing protocols. This is particularly important when it comes to integrating systems as it details what data can be shared, in what format, how frequently as well as the retention period. Findings indicate that there is no data sharing protocol but rather the county relies on the ICT policy developed by the national government through the ICT Authority (ICTA).

**Data analysis:** the participants established what software is used by the county for data analysis. It was reported that the county does not use any statistical software for analysis but rather relies on Microsoft Excel for doing simple summaries and tabulations.

**Data visualization:** the participants established the software used to present or visualize data, and if a dashboard exists. Per findings, a county-level dashboard does not exist since data is not integrated. However, the departments use Microsoft Excel to generate visuals for the various reporting requirements.

The Health Department also uses the DHIS2 platform which provides a dashboard summarizing aggregated data from the different sub-counties.

**Support:** Areas of support as requested by the county include capacity building on Microsoft Excel and Einfo for data analysis and presentation, acquisition and repair of the ICT infrastructure that includes the existing server that can be used for data storage and hosting the county dashboard, purchase of gadgets to support data collection, and operationalization of the e-CIMES system.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Results from the baseline assessment of Marsabit County's M&E capacity to perform M&E functions show that several opportunities are available to strengthen the county's department and the individual sector offices in their overall ability to identify, collect and use data for decision making. Most performance areas that are critical for establishing status, quality, financial and technical capability need to be strengthened to achieve the rollout of the CIMES objectives. The ongoing finalization of the M&E framework and the commitment by the county M&E team presents key opportunities to address the gaps discussed in earlier sections. In conclusion, the key findings of the M&E/ICT4D capacity assessments and the developed action plan are presented as follow:

- Building collaboration with WFP, participate in the dissemination and launching of the draft M&E framework/policy (2020) and integrated within the sector departments.
- The County M&E Unit within the Economic and Development Planning Department usually develops the annual multi-sector M&E plan. This plan is developed in consultation with sector offices and kept with the County M&E Unit. In terms of sharing the annual M&E plan as well as conducting joint monitoring visits and verification mechanisms, there is a weak link between the County EP M&E Unit and the sector offices. To fill these gaps, a capacity building activity need to carry out to strengthen the County M&E system.
- In Marsabit County, M&E activities are considered of lesser importance. As a result, in sector offices, M&E activities are managed by a delegated person/M&E focal person in addition to his/her main roles, with no clear definition of M&E roles and responsibilities and with limited M&E capacity and budget for related activities. This led to absence of M&E unit in the sector offices. However, in the County Economic and Development Planning Department, there is an M&E Unit with M&E technical staff.
- The rollout of the e-CIMES would require the support of political or senior leadership because it ensures the accountability and transparency of county government performance. Moreover, the e-CIMES enhances tracking of the performance of activities using monitoring indicators, financial monitoring/burn rate, procurement, bid processes, and visualization of performance using the Dashboard. As a result of leadership support in some counties, like Machakos, Tana River, and Taita, the e-CIMES has been rolled out and is successful. Thus, through leveraging the concreted efforts of other development partners' (such as PREG and WFP) M&E system strengthening activities, support the implementation of County M&E Policy framework with eCIMES roll-out.

- The county sectors have many databases that are not linked in any way. The sectors understand the importance of the databases linkages but do not have the resources or have not identified the responsible parties to oversee the integration. For instance, they already have a server, but it is not functional. Thus, the county government took leadership in terms of maintaining the server. Moreover, providing technical support to the county ICT department complemented by refresher training is key to mitigate the technical gaps.
- The County M&E staff would require strengthening their capacity in development of Sector-based M&E plan, how to conduct and execute an evaluation survey, development of survey protocols, monitoring the database management system, ensure data quality including DQAs, data analyses, and write-up of analytical reports. Thus, Nawiri M&E team would support on development of the Routine DQA guideline and build their capacity to execute the conduct of RDQA within sector offices.
- The sector offices would require strengthening their capacity on M&E plan development, how to conduct participatory monitoring, survey data collection and analyses, conducting trend analyses using secondary data and write-up of analytical reports. Thus, Nawiri M&E team provide technical support on the development of M&E plan and implementation processes.

The summary of identified capacity gaps and proposed recommendations are summarized in the following table.

**Table 6: Action Plan Developed in the Workshop**

Identified weaknesses or gaps	Action to be taken	Timelines	Responsibility
Lack of M&E directorate/unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Advocacy: Strengthen existing M&amp;E unit within planning department instead of establishing new unit &amp;</li> <li>➤ Appoint M&amp;E focal persons for all the departments.</li> </ul>	Financial year June- July 2021	The chief officer planning & Economic development to follow up with CS to activate the appointment of focal persons.
	Define JDs for M&E Focal person	17 <sup>th</sup> Feb. 2021	Head of Planning and Director M&E Results Delivery
No M&E training curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develop M&amp;E guideline/plan</li> <li>➤ Sensitization of executive, county assembly, and M&amp;E focal persons</li> </ul>	End of March 2021	Chief officer planning
CIMES system not Operationalized.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Training the staff</li> <li>➤ Purchase of system tools, i.e. Computers &amp; Other ICT equipment's</li> </ul>	March-August 2021	CO planning, MED, Nawiri & other partners

Identified weaknesses or gaps	Action to be taken	Timelines	Responsibility
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Integrate CIMES with other existing systems</li> </ul>		
No functional M&E Structure in the County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Activate County /Sub County &amp; Ward Monitoring &amp; Evaluation Committee</li> <li>➤ Train the committees, Train M&amp; E Focal persons</li> <li>➤ Training of Executive and Assembly on M&amp;E</li> </ul>	March-June 2022	CO planning & Partners
The server is not functioning optimally. Inadequate PCs, tablets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Repair and maintain servers.</li> <li>➤ Procure laptops, tablets</li> </ul>	Financial year June- July 2021	County/Nawiri/Other partners
No linkage between departmental M&E plan and County Annual workplan.	Provide linkage between departmental M&E and Annual workplan.	Financial year June- July 2021	CO planning & Partners
No M&E Champion	Identify M&E champion amongst county leadership	Financial year June- July 2021	Deputy CS/Deputy County Secretary (proposed) to lobby for M&E
No departmental Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Avail departmental research</li> </ul>	Financial year June- July 2021	County government of Marsabit.
No regular data quality audit and field visit supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develop tools and guidelines for RDQA</li> <li>➤ Build capacity on DQA</li> </ul>	Financial year June- July 2021	County/Nawiri/other partners

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## Annexes:

- I. **Annex I: Development Partners PREG and WFP: PREG Partners Collaboration Matrix - M&E Systems Strengthening Activities in Isiolo, Marsabit, Turkana, and Samburu.**



Annex IV M&E  
Systems Strengthenin

- II. **MECAT individual assessment tool**



MECAT Individual  
Assessment Tool\_FIN/

- III. **MECAT group assessment tool**



MECAT Group  
Assesment Tool\_FINA

- IV. **Conclusions Drawn from Desk Reviews**

### Gaps observed from the reviews

- Lack of M&E budget within the county.
- Inadequate staffing where the focal people from the various departments are usually busy and overwhelmed with other duties when needed to go for field monitoring visits.
- No designated official focal point persons from each department in charge of M&E.
- The County has not operationalized the CIMES.
- Turnover in leadership and frequent transfer of technical staff has also been a challenge. Most officers are also on contract so once the contract expires, they take off to other jobs with the skills acquired.
- They lack facilitation to take the M&E policy document through the necessary public participation forums.
- Lack of capacity and sensitization on M&E in the County departments
- There is a weak M&E culture in the County with many taking the function of auditing
- Logistical challenge especially in terms of vehicles needed to be used to carry out quarterly field visits.
- No M&E champion.
- Support required
- Training/capacity building of focal M&E persons selected from all departments
- Setting up/operationalization of the CIMES



- Sensitization of executive and county assembly members on Monitoring and Evaluation
- Capacity building for staff on eCIMES
- Advocating for the approval of the M&E policy
- Development of the M&E bill
- Departmental M&E officers should be recruited to work solely on the M&E function in the departments.

These findings were presented to the M&E county team and resonated with the issues they are confronting. The Marsabit County staff stated that their priority would be to see the CIMES operationalized before any other assessment could be conducted on M&E capacities. They later agreed to conduct an adapted MECAT assessment and proceeded with the group and individual assessment.



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